

# Activities of the First Russian Diplomat Karl I. Waeber in Korea during the Establishment of Russo–Korean Relations (1885–1888)

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## 논문 요약

이 글은 주한러시아공사 베베르의 초기 활동을 사료 및 공간자료에 근거하여 연구한 것이다. 이를 통해 베베르공사가 한러관계 수립, 한국에서 러시아의 지위 강화 및 1884년 한러수호조약 체결과 그 준비를 위한 한러교섭의 증대를 위해 어떤 노력을 기울였는지를 보여주고자 했다. 이 연구는 러시아문서관에서 발굴한 사료를 활용함으로써, 수호조약 체결을 둘러싼 교섭 과정과 수호조약의 주요조항들 그리고 한러수호조약(1884.7.25) 체결이전에 러시아령으로 이주해간 한인들의 권리와 러시아 시민권 획득을 결정할 당시 복잡한 어려움 등에 대한 역사들을 세밀하게 묘사하고 있다. 이에 한러관계와 19세기말 러시아의 대한정책에 대한 새로운 정보들을 우리에게 제공하고 있다.

주제어 : 러시아외교관 베베르, 한러관계, 1884년 한러수호통상조약, 이주한인 시민권, 국경교역

## I. Introduction

The research is devoted to the activities of Karl I. Waeber, one of the outstanding diplomats of the late 19th–early 20th centuries, the key figure in the history of Russo–Korean relations in light of Russian archival sources. From 1885 to 1897 the Russia’s first diplomatic representative in Seoul Karl Waeber was the principal conductor of the Russian policy in Korea. He is credited with developing the conditions and the conclusion of the first Russo–Korean treaty in 1884, which marked the beginning of an official good–neighborly relations between the two states. Karl Waeber has had a marked impact on all areas of relations between Russia and Korea—the economy, culture, education, and military affairs. He assisted the Russian researchers and travelers in exploring the country and organizing expeditions, military—in the training of Korean troops, entrepreneurs—in carrying out their mission in Korea, to protect their rights in the country.

### 1. The Context of the Study.

Karl Ivanovich Waeber was born on July 5, 1841 in the family of Johann Heinrich Waeber, teacher of Sciences at Libau Orphan School. Information about the early life, training in Libau district school and in the Eastern department of St. Petersburg University was found in the formulary list of his father,<sup>1)</sup> certificate of completion of the

1) Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire (hereinafter AVPRI). Fond (hereafter F.) Department of personnel and economic affairs. Formulary lists. Opis (hereinafter: Op.) 464,

uchilische (college) with the second degree,<sup>2)</sup> petitions addressed to the University rector on acceptance as a student and on transfer to the Sino–Manchu razriad (class) and matrikula,<sup>3)</sup> a diploma issued by the Board of the St. Petersburg University to Karl I. Waeber confirming his attending full course of study on Sino–Manchu razriad of the Eastern Department and his degree of the candidate from October 11th, 1865,<sup>4)</sup> certificate (copy) to Karl I. Waeber on absence of objections to the contract on the service in Asian Department from St. Petersburg University.<sup>5)</sup>

After graduation, Karl I. Waeber was sent to serve in the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he steeped himself in the subject of China.

The first important assignment was given to charge Karl I. Waeber, considering his many years of experience of diplomatic service in Japan and China, as well as the authority of an expert in the history and culture of the Far East. It was in 1882 when, following Japan, the United States signed a treaty on trade and friendship with Korea. England, Germany and other powers followed the example of the United

States. It was decided to sign the treaty identical with the US–Korean agreement on maritime trade. Being the Russian consul in Tianjin, Karl I. Waeber back in 1882 was sent to Vladivostok to determine the most desirable conditions for the Russo–Korean trade agreement, and on his return to Tianjin he was authorized to sign the agreement with Korea on friendship and trade.

K.I Waeber went from Chefoo in June 8th, 1884 and arrived in Seoul on June 26th. The next day the negotiations began, culminating in the signing of the Treaty between Russia and Korea, on June 25th, 1884, which is also called the first Russo–Korean Treaty of Amity and Commerce. The treaty opened for Russian trade four ports: Incheon, Wonsan, Busan, Seoul and Yanghvajin. In addition, Russian citizens were given the right to travel as far as 100 Korean li to the places and ports open to foreign trade without passports, and after receiving the passport from the Russian consul for the signature and seal of the Korean local authorities—throughout Korea; import and export goods that were not prohibited by the treaty and freely conduct business with Korean or other subjects. King Kojong’s advisor Moellendorff was very helpful during signing of the treaty.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Data

At the center of this study—the detailed coverage of the goals and objectives, Waeber faced in Korea, in the archival documents and publications of documents, specific forms and conditions for their implementation, the impact exerted by them on the Russian government’s

Delo (hereafter D.) 606, List (hereinafter: L.) 1.

2) Certificate of completion of the 2nd degree, issued by the district school in Libau for Frederick Waeber. Libau, December 20, 1860 // TsGIA St. Petersburg. F. 14(St. Petersburg State University), Op. 1, D. 1892, L. 16.

3) Petition K.I. Waeber addressed to the Rector of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg P.A. Pletnev on April 28th, 1861 // TsGIA St. Petersburg. F. 14, Op. 1, D. 1892, L. 16, L.1; Matriculation No 188, issued to students of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg Karl Waeber // TsGIA St. Petersburg. F. 14, Op. 1, D. 19, L. 8.

4) Diploma issued by the Council of the Imperial University of St. Petersburg to K.I. Waeber on hearing their full course of study at the Chinese–Manchu category of the Eastern Department and approval by the degree of the candidate of October 11th, 1865 № 2671 // TsGIA St. Petersburg. F. 14, Op. 1, D. 1892, L.14, L. 38 verso.–39.

5) Ibid. p. 1 verso.

policy toward Korea; analysis of the most complex international circumstances, against which the certain decisions were taken.

Solving these problems will allow to fully evaluate Waeber's contribution to the establishment of Russo-Korean relations, show the caliber of his personality, restore historical justice towards this outstanding diplomat, one of the pioneers of the dialogue between Russia and Korea.

The need for a comprehensive study of documents reflecting the diplomatic activity of Karl I. Waeber is shown by the fact that, until recently, in Russian and foreign historiography there were no special studies dedicated to the service of this talented Russian diplomat in Korea, who, in the most difficult and tragic period of Korean history in the late XIX-early XX century, made a major contribution to the strengthening of Russia's position in Korea and struggle for the preservation of its independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Without analysis of documentary materials about the contribution of K.I. Waeber, whose name is associated with all potentially significant events in the history of Russo-Korean relations, it is impossible to objectively evaluate the reasons for its success and downs.

The study will be based on sources, extracted mainly from the Russian departmental archives (i.e., documents of management and record keeping). The important materials for the topic contain the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire Russian Foreign Ministry, where all Waeber's depeches are stored.

The documentary basis for this research is formed from references, certificates, petitions and Matriculation of the student of the St. Petersburg

University Karl I. Waeber, his reports, telegrams and notes as a Charge d'Affaires and Consul General of Russia in Korea, as well as his correspondence with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Military and Navy, Amur governor-general and military governor of the Maritime region, with P.A. Dmitrevsky, A.P. Cassini, M.A. Hitrovo and other Russian diplomatic representatives in Korea, China and Japan. Much research has been carried out with the documents and materials that are stored in various fonds of the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire under Russian Foreign Ministry (AVPRI) in Moscow, Archive of Orientalists at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IVR RAN) in the St. Petersburg, Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA), the Central State Historical Archives in St. Petersburg (TSGIA SPb.).

The range of issues, which the author will try to address in this study is not intended to be an exhaustive exposition of them. The work is largely complicated by the difficulty of finding materials due to fragmentation and extreme scarcity of documents, primarily biographical., those concerning the documents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An important role in the understanding of the problem could play the materials of private origin, but, unfortunately, they almost did not survive. Until now we were not able to find Waeber's personal papers in the Russian Archives. Nothing is known about the existence of any diaries or memoirs, which would allow the restoration of the facts from the biography of a Russian diplomat. All said, further investigation to more fully show the life and activities of K.I. Waeber is required. This applies in particular to the period after his departure

from Seoul in September 1897 and retirement in 1900 until his death in January 8th, 1910. Attempts undertaken by Russian and foreign researchers in this field until now have not yet brought any results.

In this research the author is trying to show in detail how diplomatic activities and views of Karl Ivanovich Waeber during the preparation and signing of the Russo–Korean agreements of 1884 and 1888 reflected in the documents. In the course of the study, the documents showing Waeber’s personal contribution to the formation and the establishment of Russo–Korean diplomatic, trade and economic relations, his activities during negotiations and the signing of the Russo–Korean agreements in 1884 and 1888, expansion of Russo–Korean contacts will be examined.

The statement of Karl Waeber’s activities in the study covers the period from the preparation to the signing of the first Russian–Korean agreements.

## II. K.I. Waeber’s contribution in the preparation and signing of the Russo–Korean Treaty 1884

The documents, showing Waeber’s personal contribution to the formation and the establishment of Russo–Korean diplomatic, trade and economic relations, his activities during negotiations and the signing of the Russo–Korean agreements in 1884 and 1888, expansion of Russo–Korean contacts, are mainly represented in the fonds “St. Petersburg. Glavny archive,” “Official on the diplomatic part of the Amur Governor–General,” “The Embassy in Tokyo,” “Japonsky stol,” “Kitaisky stol”

in the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire. The majority of them consists of Waeber’s reports to St. Petersburg, instructions given to him by the Russian ambassador to China, the telegrams.

The most important could be considered to be the secret reference of the Russian envoy in Beijing E.K. Butzow to K.I. Waeber from June 16th, 1882, with the instructions to depart to Korea for negotiations in order to establish official relations with Korea, referring to the signing of the treaty, both general and specific agreement on border issues,<sup>6)</sup> and to visit Vladivostok to familiarize himself with the border issues.

In Waeber’s report to E.K. Butzow on his visit to Vladivostok there are the evidence of border relations between Russia and Korea, and his views on issues to be discussed with the Korean side during negotiations.<sup>7)</sup>

The instructions of the Russian charge d’affaires in Beijing S.I. Popov, which Waeber strictly adhered to while signing the treaty, required from him to sign with Korea “the treatise, which should be identical to the English–Korean and Korean–German Treaties signed in Seoul late last year.” The instructions referred to the status of the Korean state and indicated that in negotiations and discussions with the Korean ministers he should avoid “any explanation on the Korean vassal relations with China” and leave this purely political question “absolutely

6) A copy of the secret relation of the envoy in Beijing to consul in Tianjin on June 16, 1882 № 62 // AVPRI. F. “St. Petersburg. Main archive, 1–9.” Op. 8, 1891, D. 18, L. 60.

7) A copy of the secret report of the consul in Tianjin on August 14, 1882, № 130 to envoy in Beijing // AVPRI. F. “An official on the diplomatic matters at the Amur Governor–General.” Op. 379, 1880–1884, D. 311, L. 193–204.

aside.” Instructions also required from Waeber, that “The point of signing a treatise with Korea should be done without participation of the Chinese ... so as an admission of Chinese participation in the said case would be equal to our recognition of vassal position of Korea.<sup>8)</sup>”

Meanwhile, the situation in Korea after the defeat of reformers began to change for the worse. The struggle between China and Japan for dominance on the Korean peninsula intensified. The Chinese government had adopted a policy of violation of the status quo, unceremoniously interfering in the internal affairs of Korea. From this point on the commander of the Chinese troops in Korea Yuan Shihkai, who received the rank of manager of the diplomatic and commercial affairs in Korea, started to use unlimited power in Seoul. The number of Chinese troops in Seoul reached 2,500. The Japanese government also started to take responsive measures. It sent to Korea two battalions of troops and pulled to its shores its naval forces. There was a real threat of the outbreak of war between China and Japan. The situation was discharged only after the signing of the Tianjin Convention between Japan and China in April 6th, 1885, which provides for the refusal of both sides to send their military instructors to Korea, and their commitment to withdraw their troops within 4 months. In the case of “serious disturbances” in Korea, China and Japan have agreed to send there their troops, again, after mutual written communication of this intention.

The eight days after the signing of the Tianjin Convention the international situation around Korea once again become nearly explosive.

On April 14th the British navy occupied the Korean island Komundo with the port of Hamilton. Russian diplomacy saw in this act of British aggression, the desire of the ruling circles of Great Britain to create a support base for the preparation of the attack on the Russian Far Eastern possessions, primarily in Vladivostok. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided not to let the influence of England to be established in Korea, and to accomplish the objective of the withdrawal of its ships from the occupied islands. Such was the complex internal and external political situation in Korea, when in April 1885 the Russian government made a decision on the appointment of its Charge d’Affaires and Consul General in Korea Karl Ivanovich Waeber.

The project instructions drawn up by Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before Waeber’s departure to Korea as Charge d’Affaires and Consul General, is important because it gives us an idea of the tasks that were put in front of him in Korea and by which he had to be guided in the performance of his duties. In addition to political issues instructions also related to the proposal on the sending of Russian instructors to teach Korean troops, as well as issues related to trade and administrative relations on the Russo–Korean land border. Instructions were subjected to discussion at the Special meeting convened on April 21st at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and were approved by Nicholas II on April 25th. The instructions stated that the first thing upon Waeber’s arrival to Seoul will be exchange of the instruments of ratification of an agreement with Korea signed in 1884, and that with the establishment of a permanent Russian representative office in Seoul all his efforts should give Russia’s relations with Korea

8) A copy of the instructions given to the Russian–imperial envoy in China to Waeber. Beijing, March 24, 1884 № 34 // AVPRI. F. “The Embassy in Tokyo.” 1883 D. 595, L. 33–34.

the direction, “most appropriate to Russian interests.<sup>9)</sup>”

Instruction required from Waeber “the depth of vigilance and extreme caution” as the ultimate goal of Russia’s efforts in Korea should not be to purchase provisions identical with those used by other powers, but to consolidate Russian “dominant influence” in the country. The achievement of this result, said in a statement, “will correspond to the development of the Russian Pacific outskirt,” on the other hand, if fell under the influence of any other power, “Korea can become for us in the Far East, if not dangerous, then, in any case, the neighbor to be reckoned with in the era of political upheaval.” To successfully counter the intrigues directed against the consolidation of Russian influence in Korea, Waeber was instructed to gain the “full trust of the Korean government, and teach him to let in us in his interests and assumptions.” To do this, Chargé d’affaires at first was allowed to give the Korean king and his ministers assurance that “the Imperial Cabinet take in the fate of Korea the most active part, and that it will always be ready to give it a truly moral and material assistance, if there were circumstances that could threaten the independence or integrity of this country.” In addition, the great importance was attached to the establishment of personal relations between the Russian charge d’affaires in Korea with the Korean government and the King himself. Pointing to the fact that until now the representatives of Russia kept in touch only with von Moellendorff who showed the willingness to serve the interests of Russia and was very useful at the conclusion

9) Humbly report by N.K. Giers on April 25, 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Iaponskii stol.” Op. 493, D. 49, L. 37; Project instructions to Waeber Highly approved by April 25, 1885 // Ibid.

of a treaty between Russia and Korea signed in June 25, 1884, at the same time instruction called Waeber’s attention on that he ought, not thrusting Moellendorff, at the same time set possibly strong ties with Korean ministers and with the Korean King, so that they did not fall under anyone’s exceptional influence.

Instructions indicated to Waeber that the explanation of relations established between Korea and foreign powers could serve as the effective means to build confidence to Russia in the Korean government. In this regard, the focus was put forward on the question of Korea’s relations with China. At the same time instructions explained that one can not foresee the time when, as a result of excessive increase in population of Manchuria, as well as the growth of its prosperity, there will be developed a need to extend the limits of its habitat and acquire the ports on the Pacific Ocean, Manchuria fell short of. In this case, China’s first prey would be Korea. Further, instructions noted that under the above circumstances, none of powers, remote from Korea, are not able to provide the slightest counteraction to the onslaught of the Chinese, and only “Russia, as an immediate neighbor, will not only be able, but will be in the need for fencing own interests, to take Korea under her protection.” Therefore, according to the instructions, “the only guarantee of the security of Korea consists in possibly close rapprochement with Russia, which, for its part, is ready to provide all the best to promote the development of Korea’s defensive means.” Therefore Waeber was instructed to talk to the Korean government, in compliance with the required circumspection, about the sending of Russian officers and noncommissioned officers to train Korean troops.

As for the more delicate issues that P.G. von Moellendorff discussed with Russian representatives—namely, the establishment of a protectorate over Korea and concessions to Russia one of the Korean ports, the instruction explained that to address these issues it will require “especially favorable circumstances” and they can be solved only under condition of the preservation of peace, because otherwise it would take from the Russian “excessive strain of those, yet barely sufficient means at our disposal to defend our outskirts in the Pacific.” Only after ascertainment of the sincerity of Korean government’s offers was Waeber allowed to enter into negotiations, bearing in mind that their goal should be asking the following questions: “How great will be the sacrifice that would be required from us in order to provide in reliable manner Korea from any whatsoever external events and whether these sacrifices are sufficiently counterbalanced by the benefits that we will be able to draw from our dominant position and from concessions of the port to us.”

When resolving the question of the concession of one of the Korean ports to Russia, instructions attached paramount significance to precise clarification of the circumstances of the occupation of the port of Hamilton by British fleet. Waeber was instructed to investigate very carefully, whether the occupation of the port committed by the British happened with the consent of the Korean government and on what terms. If he would find out that the Korean government did not take any part in this, Waeber ought to “keep it out of any concessions to England and try to entice to announce Hamilton the open port available for flags of all nations, in which case it would have lost

its character of exclusively English station.” The final part of the Instructions relating to issues was associated with the signing of the agreement with Korea on the overland trade. During the negotiations, Waeber ought to achieve such benefits and advantages that Russia could actually use and do not require from the Korean government concessions that not represented for her practical value. These concessions could give to other powers a reason, based on the principle of most favored nation treatment, to achieve identical or equal benefits. In the first place, according to the instructions, Waeber had to obtain the consent of the Korean government for the provision of Russian citizens the right of free trade within the 50-verst border zone or within the boundaries of contiguous with the South Ussuri region Korean province Hamgyong and permanent residence for purposes of trade in one of the border Korean cities and free travel, such as within Hamgyong. In addition, Waeber himself was entitled to discuss on the spot the issue of banning the transit of Chinese and Japanese goods through Korea and the prohibition of navigation of foreign vessels on the river Tumen, especially the Chinese, in order to direct to transit trade necessary for Manchuria through Korea by the Russian territory from Hunchun to Expedition Bay, which would have forced China to open the Songhua River for selling Russian goods in Manchuria, and put an end to the stay of Chinese troops and officials in a radius of 100 miles from the Russian border.<sup>10)</sup>

10) Full text of the instructions see: Draft secret instructions state councilor Waeber. Gatchina, 25 April / May 7, 1885 // AVPRI. Fond “Kitaiskii stol. Vsepoddanneishie doklady.” 1885. D. 3, L. 20–41; Copy of the royally approved on the 25th day of November 1885 secret instructions to State Councilor Waeber // AVPRI. Fond “Japonskii stol.” Op. 493, D. 214, L.

In addition to these issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia considered it necessary to include in the treaty the following points: recognition of all Koreans who migrated to Russian territory before signing the treaty of 1884 as Russian citizens, with extension on all of them the same rights with Russian citizens; recognition the right of the boundary commissioner in South Ussuri region to visit the northern part of Korea to protect Russian citizens living there and to lead negotiations with the local authorities; the right of the officials sent by Maritime Governor-General to travel overland to the Russian representative in Seoul; mandatory passports for Russian citizens traveling to Korea and for Koreans, passing into Russia.

The careful examination of the data in the instruction of the domestic and foreign situation of Korea and truly daunting tasks to be solved by Chargé d'affaires in Korea, attest to the fact that that they could be coped with only by man who was deeply knowledgeable about the complicated problems of international relations in the Far East and Korea in particular, with in-depth knowledge of the history of Korea, China and Japan, to be fluent in Russian Far Eastern policy characteristics and the various aspects and intricacies of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Western, especially English, diplomacy. Such a man was Karl Ivanovich Waeber, endowed with attentiveness, prudence, caution, and self-determination, when it was required by the circumstances. Therefore, his appointment by charge d'affaires to Korea was entirely justified.

### III. Karl I. Waeber's arrival in Seoul and the beginning of his activities

Being appointed by Charge d'Affaires and Consul General in Korea K.I. Waeber went to the site of future service in July 1885, but his arrival to Korea was delayed due to the fact that he arrived in New York only on July 29th., 1885, and could not get onto the ship, which left from San Francisco to Japan on August 3rd, and therefore was forced to stay in America until the next passage on September 2nd. On the steamer "New York City" he sailed to Japan, where the military ship "Razboinik" went to Korea. Meanwhile, until K.I. Waeber was in the way, there have been significant changes in Korean foreign policy situation, which led Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make adjustments to the original instructions given to Chargé d'affaires.

The second mission of A.N. Speyer to Seoul ended in failure in June – early July 1885.<sup>11)</sup> King Kojong, fearing the wrath of China, on the advice of pro-Chinese dignitaries, in particular Foreign Minister Kim Yunsik, abandoned aspiration for the dispatch to Korea of Russian military instructors, conveyed earlier through Moellendorff, and gave

11) In December 1884, after Kojong and his entourage addressed through Russian diplomatic representatives in Tokyo to Nicholas II with the proposal to establish a protectorate over Korea, the Russian Foreign Ministry sent a secretary of the Russian mission in Tokyo A.N. Speyer to Korea for more information on events December 1884 in Seoul and the Korean government's intentions. In June 1885 Speyer was again sent to Seoul requested to observe the negotiations concerning the British occupation Port Hamilton and agree with the Korean government draft conditions of stay in Korea Russian military instructors. – See. More: Pak B.B. Two missions A.N. Speyer in Seoul // *International relations in the Pacific region in the XIX–XX centuries. Inter-university collection of scientific papers.* Khabarovsk, 1997, pp. 73–88; *Russian diplomacy and Korea (1860–1888)*. Book. I. M.–Irkutsk–SPb., 1998. p. 116–149.



consent to the invitation of American military trainers. In August the same year, by insistence of the Chinese representative in Seoul Yuan Shihkai, were sentenced to death four Korean dignitaries who opposed China's interference into internal and international affairs of Korea.<sup>12)</sup> At the same time Chinese warships were concentrated on the roads of Incheon, and the Chinese Army began accumulating on the banks of the border river Yalu. Confident that the King Kojong via Russia wants to rid their country of Chinese suzerainty, Li Hongzhang decided to return to Seoul King Kojong's father—Daewongun, who was exported back in 1882 in the city of Baoding, to elevate him to the throne, if King Kojong will switch side with Russia. Daewongun entered Seoul on September 23rd, 1885, just before the arrival of Russian charge d'affaires in Korea K. Waeber. All actions of China pointed out that it intends to render all, including the military, opposition to the establishment of predominant Russian influence in Korea.

The Russian government was not quite prepared for any complications in the Far East, that would be able to worsen relations with China. In addition, attempts of the British diplomacy to provoke a conflict between China and Russia urged the latter to continue to pursue the course on the preservation of the existing order in Korea and to seek the withdrawal of the British fleet from the islands Komundo and from the port of Hamilton. In accordance with this course the telegram was sent to Waeber, who was already on his way to Korea through America, with orders that “on his own initiative, he did not go with

12) See Appendix N 1 to Dispatches of charge d'affaires in Korea Weber to Foreign Minister N.K. Giers. Seoul, 11th August 1886. N 39 // AVPRI. F. “Japonskii stol.” Op. 1, D. 493, L. 132.

the Korean government in any explanation about the earlier proposals from Korea about a Russian protectorate and military instructors and confined to the role of a simple transmitter if such proposals will be repeated.<sup>13)</sup>”

Arriving in Korea on September 24th, 1885, K.I. Waeber presented the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Korea Kim Yunsik a letter of minister of Foreign Affairs N.K. Giers, approved by the tzar.<sup>14)</sup>

In October 2nd, 1885 K.I. Waeber and Kim Yunsik signed protocol on exchange of ratification documents and letters of the Treaty between Russia and Korea in 1884.<sup>15)</sup> After the fulfillment of all formalities related to the representation to the Korean government, Waeber, adhering strictly to the guidance given by Giers, assumed his duties.

Shortly after the first meeting with King Kojong's confidant Waeber, in order to prove that Russia has no “any plans of encroachments on the independence of Korea and the falsity of such rumors,” made a trip to Shanghai. There on October 21st, 1885 he sent to St. Petersburg first detailed report on the situation in Korea. Waeber described the political situation in the country in a few words: “the secular dominance of Chinese influence,” which makes Koreans around to obey the requirements of China. According to him, devotees of the party formed during the opening of the country, that was seeking to follow the

13) Telegram to Weber. 21/9 July 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Kitaiskii stol. Humbly report.” 1885, D. 3, L. 57.

14) Draft letter of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs. Gatchina, April 25, 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Kitaiskii stol.” Op. 491, 1885. 3. D. L. 40-41.

15) Protocol. Filed in Hanyang (Seoul) October 2, 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Mission in Seoul.” Op. 768, 6. D. 1881-1908, L. 8-8 verso. ; *Ku Hanguk vegyo munseo* (Diplomatic Documents of old Korea). T. 17. Seoul, 1968. pp 6-7.

example of Japan, after the suppression of unrest in Seoul in December 1884, fled from Korea to Japan. And although a consequence of this was increased Chinese influence, the Korean government since that time intensified attention to Russia. “It is premature to be talking about the existence of the Russian party—wrote about this K.I. Waeber, —but it seems to me undeniable that the relatives of the energetic Queen [Min Myeongseong] and the king himself to us very inclined. I think it is quite possible that when von Moellendorff in February [1884] brought in the question of Russian instructors, he expressed the desire of the king, though it was not on official orders. When it came to be publicized, the king, fearing the strong opposition from China and not knowing how much he can count on real and immediate protection of Russia, did not dare to move forward, for which he would forfeit the throne, if not his life, before we would be able to provide assistance and support.”<sup>16)</sup>

In such circumstances, the British floated rumors of Russian claims to Korea, on the establishment of Russian protectorate over it in order to justify the seizure of Port Hamilton by the British fleet. The Chinese government, fearing the expansion of Russian influence in the East, saw in the rapprochement with Great Britain, with which it had a common hatred of Russia, a guarantee against Russian forays into Korea. In his report Waeber noted that the British laid a telegraph cable connecting Hamilton to Hong Kong, and started to drive on the island warehouses and fortifications that indicated England’s desire

16) Report of the Charge d’Affaires in Korea Weber to State Secretary Giers. Shanghai, 21st October 1885. N 7 // AVPRI. F. “Kitaiskii stol.” Op. 491, 1885. 3. D. L. 78–82.

to retain the positions there. According to Waeber, to prevent the final capture of port Hamilton by England “in view of the provision of the known pressure on public opinion in England, it would not be useless if one of our warships while passing will be going down to Hamilton to replenish its reserves ... to show that we are not quite indifferent to the capture of the island by them. Korea would be very grateful to us for such moral support”. At the same time Waeber again raised the question of the sending of two warships to Chemulpo (Incheon. —B.P.): “Russia could oppose gradual sinification of Korea only by demonstration of her Navy and providing real support to the Korean King.<sup>17)</sup>” Thus, Waeber’s report contained proposals, realization of which would require more active Russian actions in order to protect the sovereignty and integrity of the Korean state.

Waeber’s report from Shanghai was met in St. Petersburg with great attention. Giers decided to submit a report to Alexander III and accompany it with a humble note: “K.I. Waeber’s report about Korea introduced herewith,—he wrote,—is the first, which is made not just on the basis of some quickie impressions drawn by the persons who visited this country only for a short time. Mr. Waeber is intimately familiar with the Extreme Orient, and therefore one can not handle without attention to the submitted information.” In connection with this Giers drew czar’s attention to the fact that, according to the Waeber’s data, China enjoys in Korea undisputed predominance and very jealously» guards her. To such predominance only the King “and some members of the royal family are not sympathizing, but “these persons do not

17) Ibid.

rely on the support in the country, and only rely on foreign aid to ward off the danger that threatens the king because of return to Korea of his father, who was removed by the Chinese government from Korea after the riots in 1882.”

As regards the Waeber’s proposal for the shipping to Chemulpo of two warships, Russian foreign minister believed that its implementation will depend primarily on the funds available to the Ministry of the Navy in the Pacific. “But apart from this consideration,—said Giers,—one can hardly overlook the benefits that can be expected from the aforesaid measure, is very mysterious, and that, on the other hand, the Chinese government possibly will see in this measure the confirmation of rumors about our designs on Korea and find it necessary to make a decisive step in order to guarantee that country from external interference.” In addition, Giers drew attention to the fact that the Korean King, being encouraged by the hope on Russia’s support, can make a misstep that will put the Russian government in the “false position.” Based on these considerations, Giers offered to draw Waeber’s attention to the above circumstances and instructed him to “closer examine the situation in Korea, and, meanwhile, advised the King not to spoil its relations with China.” Regarding Waeber’s proposal about the entry of Russian military ship at the port of Hamilton, Giers said that he could not agree with his opinion that the visit of the Russian military vessel will produce “beneficial for us pressure on public opinion in England.<sup>18)</sup>”

18) Humbly note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs December 17, 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Kitaiskii stol.” Op. 491, 1885 3. D. L. 83–85.

Following the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Waeber’s suggestions, stated in his dispatch from Shanghai on October 21st, 1885, were examined in the Ministry of the Navy. Managing this Ministry Adjutant General I.A. Shestakov believed that one set of Russian ships in the port of Hamilton “may initiate the dispatching of the English ships to Vladivostok.” As for the dispatch of the two warships to Chemulpo, Shestakov, recognizing Chemulpo inconvenient station place in terms of marine service, did not see, however, obstacles to the departure of ships, if “political interests of Russia” requested this. Introducing the above considerations of the Manager of the Ministry of the Navy at the discretion of the czar, N.K. Giers in the humbly note dated December 23rd, 1885 at the same time supplied other materials, that given a reason to believe that the Chinese government continues to accuse Russia in plotting against Korea, which explains the significant strengthening of the Chinese troops on the borders with Korea<sup>19)</sup>.

During the first three months (October–December 1885) of his stay in Korea K.I. Waeber collected a wealth of material on the domestic and foreign political situation of the country, which allowed the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make adjustments to the original instructions given to him at appointment to the post of charge d’affaires and Consul General in Korea in May 1885. The essence of this new information about Korea and policy of Powers, mainly China, Japan and England, was described in the dispatch by Giers to Waeber from January 16th, 1886, which was seen as a new instruction. In the dispatch

19) Humbly note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs December 23, 1885 // AVPRI. F. “Japonskii stol.” Op. 1, D. 493, L. 55–56.

it was noted that the aim of Russian policy in Korea should be the consolidation of Russian influence in the country and rendering support to the Korean King only on the condition that the King will rely on any Korean party capable to defend the independence of Korea<sup>20</sup>). The above position by N.K. Giers regarding support of King Kojong could be explained primarily by the Russian government's unwillingness to be drawn into an armed conflict with China over Korea.

Giers wrote that one can not give the Chinese government a pretext for armed intervention in Korea, which would lead to its absorption by China, and this, in turn, might involve Russia in a conflict with the empire of Bogdo. "Such considerations...,-wrote Giers,-oblige you ... to focus all your efforts on establishing good relations with Korea, which as far as possible meet the needs of our border possessions and did not take away from the king hopes for our support, and advise him to refrain from actions that could ultimately ruin his relations with China" <sup>21</sup>). With regard to the port of Hamilton, occupied by the British, then Giers instructed Waeber to support the efforts of the Korean government for the withdrawal of British ships. In this case, Waeber had the duty to provide specific clarification to retinue of the king, that favorable for England, decision on Hamilton will encourage other maritime powers to new conquests in Korea.

Thus, in the Giers's dispatch on January 16th, 1886 were formulated those major tasks that needed to be solved by K.I. Waeber in the deteriorating international situation around Korea at the beginning

20) Copy of secret dispatch State Secretary Giers to Chargé d'affaires and consul-general in Korea on January 16, 1886. N 9 // AVPRI . F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 1, D. 493, L. 63-67.

21) Ibid.

of the second half of the 80s. XIX century.<sup>22</sup>) Thus, even the first months manifested differences in specific measures in Waeber and the Ministry of foreign Affairs approach in relation to Korea.

#### IV. Karl I. Waeber, Kim Yunsik and Cho Byonsik : from confrontation to agreement on treaty on land trade

The Treaty between Russia and Korea signed in 1884 dealt with only maritime trade. Russia was more in need of overland, not sea, trade, for which she had not had means. In the context of economic and financial weakness in its Far Eastern border regions, where the local mining and processing industry were in the state of its infancy, and agriculture barely meet the needs for food of the population and military garrisons stationed in the Ussuri region, the country was deprived of the opportunity to exercise the rights and privileges conferred on it under the treaty.

Therefore, immediately upon arrival in Seoul, according to the instructions, K.I. Waeber started the drafting of the "Rules for the overland trade" (or the second Russo-Korean treaty) and to negotiate with the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this issue.<sup>23</sup>) The first draft was made by Waeber in April 1885. While working on them, Waeber proceeded from the fact that Russia should not seek from the

22) Letter from the Director of the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry Zinoviev to charge d'affaires in Korea Weber on May 20, 1886 // AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 1. D. 493. L. 78.

23) See more: AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol. Dispatches from Seoul." Op. 493, D. 116, pp. 63-67; Kojong Sidae sa. Vol. 3, pp. 30-34.

Korean government such benefits and advantages that it could not actually use, so as not to give other nations the reason to seek the same benefits on the basis of the principle of most favored nation. At the same time, Waeber sought to ensure that the Russian trade was put in not less favorable terms than the Chinese. However, the beginning of the Russo–Korean talks, in which from Korean side participated the president of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs Kim Yunsik and King Kojong’s advisor on foreign affairs O.N. Denny,<sup>24)</sup> went slowly due to the fact that the Korean government was evading the discussion of the project and because of the opposition from England and Germany’s representatives. The latter warned the Korean government that in case of the establishment of a 5% tax on the value of the goods on the overland trade on the Russo–Korean border, their governments will also demand that English and German goods would be charged a fee not between 5 and 20% of their value, but 5%. The letter, Waeber sent to Kim Yunsik, reflect the confrontation between them, found primarily in the discussion on the establishment of a 50– verst zone of free and duty–free trade on both sides of the Russo–Korean border, following the example of how the trade was executed on both sides of the Russo–Chinese border in the Far East.<sup>25)</sup> This item was included in the instructions to Waeber from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the insistence Maritime Governor–General. Waeber himself believed that to establish a zone of free and duty–free trade on the border

24) Report of the Charge d’Affaires in Korea K. Weber to Foreign Minister N.K. Giers. Seoul, January 11, 1887 № 5 // AVPRI. F. “Japonskii stol.” Op. 493, 1888–1891. D. 175, L. 12–22 verso.

25) *Ku Hanguk vegyo munseo* (Diplomatic Documents of old Korea). T. 17. Seoul, 1969. p. 14.

with Korea will be difficult in view of the weak development of the industry and commerce in the outskirts of Empire, as he wrote to Giers in the report dated 11th January 1887.<sup>26)</sup>

In January 1887 in the course of negotiations the positions of both sides became clear on other matters discussed. The draft “Rules for the land trade,” compiled by Waeber, stipulated for authorization of the boundary commissioner in the South Ussuri region of the right to protect the interests of Russian citizens in North Korea. Since in the South Ussuri region lived a significant portion of Koreans who moved there before signing of the treaty 1884 Waeber had to decide the question of their citizenship: to gain recognition of them as Russian subjects, the extension to them of all the same rights as Russian citizens; recognition of the right of the boundary commissioner in South Ussuri region to visit the northern part of Korea to protect Russian citizens living there and negotiations with the local authorities; the right to travel overland to Seoul officials sent Maritime Governor–General to the Russian representative in Seoul.

Kim Yunsik for his part, offered to record in the “Rules” the statement that the Korean government has the right to call Korean nationals, who have moved there before signing the treaty of 1884, outside of Russia.

With this in mind during negotiations, Waeber made a new draft of the “Rules,” which was presented to St. Petersburg for consideration. Given all of the above circumstances, and taking into account Kim

26) Report of the Charge d’Affaires in Korea Weber to Foreign Minister N.K. Giers. Seoul, 11th January 1887. N 5 // AVPRI. F. “Japonskii stol.” Op. 493, D. 175, L. 12–20.

Yunsik's counter project submitted during the negotiations, Waeber made a new project of the "Rules of the overland trade" and in a report dated January 11, 1887 submitted it to St. Petersburg for consideration. It was discussed in detail in the Asian Department of the Foreign Ministry with the participation of Priamur Governor-General Baron A.N.Korf and as a result have been completed and sent to Waeber to Seoul to guide the "Remarks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the draft of the "Rules for the overland trade with Korea" delivered by Councillor of State Waeber.<sup>27)</sup>" Then the draft was also sent to be referred to the Minister of Finance I.A. Vyshnegradskii. After a thorough discussion Waeber was instructed to make every effort to persuade the Korean government to sign an agreement with Russia. The instructions stated that it was necessary to lead negotiations on the most important issues. Particular importance was given to the establishment of the export rate not exceeding 5 % of value of the goods.<sup>28)</sup>

Instructions were received by Waeber in October 1887. He immediately reported to Giers his thoughts on some points of the "Rules." Central among them he considered the dispute over the duties and citizenship of Koreans who migrated to Russia before 1884, suggesting that Korean agents will not agree on including cattle in the number of goods that are exempt from duties. Indeed, during the negotiations Kim Yun sik insisted that cattle intended for export to Russia, also will be charged with a fee. In addition, Kim Yunsik said that the duty on imported

27) AVPRI. F. "Mission in Seoul." Op. 768, 1881-1895. D. 1, L. 1-4.

28) Instructions Foreign Minister Giers to charge d'affaires in Seoul Weber. St.Petersburg, July 20, 1887 № 106. // AVPRI. F. "Mission in Seoul." Op. 768, 1881-1895. D. 1. L. 55-57 verso.

Russian goods to Korea, representing 5 % of their value can be increased to 7 %, if the Chinese government, in turn, agree to increase up to the same amount of the fee on items of its overland trade with Korea. But, having a strong resistance from the Waeber he was content with the statement of the latter, that if the Russian government deems it possible to agree to such a condition, the Russian mission in Seoul will officially notify the Korean government about that fact.

The article on the Korean nationality, in the original Waeber's draft of the "Rules for the land trade" said: "All the Koreans who have migrated to Russia before the conclusion of the agreement between the two countries in 1884 and took Russian citizenship, will have both in Russia and in Korea the same rights as other Russian subjects." Kim Yunsik recognized the validity of such a formulation, but, according to Waeber, "was ashamed to put in the Rules the article," in which the Korean government would openly renounce from its former subjects, and that would "make a bad impression on the people who does not understand international issues." Therefore Kim Yunsik said that he would submit the article for consideration of his government, offering at the same time to integrate in it the following clarification: "As Russian subjects in Korea, and Korean subjects in Russia will have the right, at their request, to return home, and authorities will have to issue a passport, if there are no obstacles to it." Waeber agreed.<sup>29)</sup> Thus, the talks revealed that the Russian side refused to include in the text of the article statement on the conditional increase in the rate to 7 % of the value of goods, and Korean—an article about the citizenship of Koreans who

29) *Ku Hanguk vegyo munseo* (Diplomatic Documents of old Korea). T. 17, Seoul, 1969, p. 62.

migrated to Russia before 1884.

Therefore, Waeber found it possible to agree on a compromise. The essence of this compromise was outlined in detail in a letter addressed by K.I.Waeber to the new president of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs of Korea Cho Byonsik from February 28th (March 22nd) 1888.<sup>30)</sup>

K.I. Waeber and Kim Yunsik in April 1887 agreed to limit themselves by the introduction into the text of the “Rules” of the entry on the right of Russian and Korean subjects to return freely to their homeland on their own will and the levying of a fee of 5% of the value of goods. But at the same time, they agreed that upon the signing of these rules the Collegium of Foreign Affairs of Korea will present Waeber the copy of the circular instructions to the border authorities of Hamgyong province that Koreans who migrated to Russian territory before signing of the treaty 1884, and adopted the Russian citizenship, will exercise the same rights as other Russian subjects in Russia and Korea, and Waeber will present to the Collegium of Foreign Affairs of Korea official announcement on consent of the Russian government on increasing taxes, but not more than 7% of the value of goods.

K.I. Waeber kept his promise, and in August 6, 1888, sent to new president of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs of Korea Cho Byonsik the letter with formal agreement of the promise of the Russian government on the conditional increase of duties.<sup>31)</sup>

Cho Byonsik also sent to Waeber a copy of the prescription of Korean government border authorities with respect to Korean immigrants.

However, the Russian representative was not satisfied with the content of this prescription, since, contrary to the original agreement, in the final part of the regulations there was the phrase, according to which the Koreans, who took Russian citizenship, could at any time go back to Korea and take Korean citizenship. Waeber insisted on the deletion of the phrase, otherwise refusing to sign the treaty.

In the morning of August 8th, 1888 Cho Byonsik agreed to change the content of the final phrase of the regulations, but said that as in this case he needs to enter with a report to King Kojong, which would take time, he asks Waeber not to postpone the signing of the treaty. Waeber agreed, and the same day signed the “Regulations on Border Affairs and Trade on the Tumyn Jiang (Tumangang) concluded between Russia and Korea in Seoul on August 8, 1888.” “Convention with Korea on border relations and trade on the Tumyn-jiang, –reported Waeber in August 13th, 1888, –finally signed by the President of Korea’s Collegium of Foreign Affairs Chjo [Cho Byonsik.-B.Pak], the Royal Advisor Denny and myself on the 8th of this month. Korean Dignitaries inexperienced in international affairs as they are, and resulting from that their mistrust, partly the influence of others, unfriendly covering the conclusion of the Convention and the establishment of border relations between us and Korea, were the reason for the length of our negotiations. Only time and a large proportion of patience promised under such conditions more favorable outcome of this issue.

Being sure that the rules in this form meet all the requirements, providing our border trade with more benefits than those negotiated by treaty for maritime trade, I did not consider it possible to break

30) *Ku Hanguk vegyo munseo* (Diplomatic Documents of old Korea). T. 17, Seoul, 1969, pp. 62~63.

31) *Ibid.* pp. 88~89.

off the negotiations without the risk of damage to their final outcome. I hastened the signing of the convention also because the President of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs Chjo was recently appointed governor of the province of Ham-Kyung (Hamgyondo.-B. Pak), adjacent to our borders, and so I was afraid that with the appointment of a new President the matter may again be delayed indefinitely.<sup>32)</sup>

Clarification of certain articles of the treaty and the difficulties Waeber met during negotiations, were given in his "Explanation regarding some points of Convention on border relations with Korea," sent by him to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>33)</sup>

Thus, several issues in the settlement of which were interested both the Russian and Korean sides, remained unresolved. Exchange by the official documents on Fees and settlers did not take place due to the fault of the Korean side. Waeber's attempt in 1889 to exchange by the official notes have been unsuccessful. About how and why the exchange by notes did not take place, K. Waeber wrote in detail in a report to Director of Asian Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs I.A. Zinoviev in April 20th, 1889.<sup>34)</sup>

However, the signing of the Russo-Korean agreement on overland trade was met with great satisfaction in Russia and Korea. In connection with the successful negotiations by K.I.Waeber with the Korean government the "News and stock exchange newspaper" from July 14th

32) Report of the Charge d'Affaires in Korea K. Weber to State Secretary N.K. Giers. Seoul, August 13, 1888 N 48 // AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 493, 1888-1891. D. 2, L. 129-130.

33). Annex to Dispatches charge d'affaires in Korea K. Weber to State Secretary NK Giers. Seoul, August 13, 1888 N 48 // AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 493, 1888-1891, D. 2, L. 131-134.

34) AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 493, 1888-1891. D. 2, L. 249-253.

1888 noted that "by the efforts of our diplomacy, we have attained the opening of free access to Korea" and that "Russians gained its own and will be eligible to move to the southern shore of Tyumen (Tumen.- B. Pak)." Ministry of Foreign Affairs also welcomed a message from Waeber about signing a treaty with Korea on the overland trade. N.K. Giers found it necessary in Most humbly report to describe in detail the history of Russo-Korean talks on the conclusion of the treaty, the main provisions of the signed treaty and the difficulties faced by Waeber when deciding on the rights of Koreans who migrated to Russia before the signing of the first Russo-Korean Treaty June 25, 1884 and took Russian citizenship.<sup>35)</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Thus ended Karl Ivanovich Waeber's first period of diplomatic activity in Seoul in 1885-1888. During these years, the Russian diplomat was able to introspect deeply about the essence of the foreign policy of the Korean state, explore its socio-political and economic situation and establish close ties with the known state and public figures in Korea. But the most important thing was that during his stay in Korea K.I. Waeber and King Kojong established very close and friendly relations. Lieutenant-Colonel of the General Staff F. Vebel touring Korea by

35) Vsepodanneysny report Foreign Minister with tzar's note "S [oglasen (agree). - B.P.]." Gatchina, November 23, 1888 // AVPRI. F. "Japonskii stol." Op. 493, 1888-1891. D. 2, L. 217-220.



land in 1889, wrote on this subject: “The relationship of our charge d’affaires to the Korean king are, apparently, a mutual arrangement. During the 4-year stay of... Waeber in Seoul, the young king had time to get used to him more than to any of the representatives of other nations, which were often changed. He is very willing to confer with Waeber on various issues, quite alien to our own interests, but requiring specific information on international law. Relations of our mission to the palace occur daily... In Seoul people are saying that the king has recently expressed this way: “For 4 years Waeber never led me astray, all the advice given to me was good, and I quite believe him.<sup>36)</sup>”

36) Report on a business trip to Korea General Staff Lieutenant-Colonel F. Vebel. 1889 // RGIA DV. F. 701, Op. 6, D. 27, L. 183.

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ABSTRACT

Activities of the First Russian Diplomat Karl I. Waeber in Korea During the Establishment of Russo–Korean Relations(1885–1888)

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This paper studies diplomatic activities and views of Russian diplomat Karl Ivanovich Waeber during the early stages of his service in Korea based on archival and published sources. It shows his personal contribution to the establishment of the Russo–Korean relations, strengthening of Russia’s position in Korea, expansion of Russo–Korean contacts during the preparation and signing of the Russo–Korean treaty of 1884. Retrieved from the records obtained from the Russian archives, this paper describes in detail the history of Russian–Korean negotiations upon the conclusion of the treaty, the main provisions of the signed treaty and the difficulties faced by K.I. Waeber when deciding on the rights of Koreans who migrated to Russia before the signing of the first Russian–Korean Treaty June 25, 1884 and took Russian citizenship. It provides us with unique information about the development of Russo–Korean relations and Russian policy in Korea at the end of the XIXth century.

Keywords : Russian diplomat Waeber, Russo–Korean relations, Russo–Korean treaty of 1884, Russian citizenship, border trade

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