

JOONG-GUN HISTORY



Joong-Gun is named after the patriot Ahn Joong-Gun (2 September 1879 to 26 March 1910) who assassinated Hiro Bumi Ito the first Japanese Governor-General of Korea, known as the man who played the leading role in the Korea-Japan merger. The 32 movements in this pattern represent Mr Ahn's age when he was executed at Lui-Shung prison in 1910.



Figure 1 - Picture sourced from Wikipedia

At a turbulent time in Korean history, Ahn Joong-Gun (also An Chung-gun or An Jung-geun) sacrificed himself in order to assassinate Hiro Bumi Ito, the man regarded as the chief architect of the Japanese plans to occupy and rule Korea.

Hiro Bumi Ito had been the first Japanese Resident-General of Korea, from 1905 to 1909. On 19th November 1905 Ito pressured the Korean government into signing the 'Protectorate Treaty', which gave Japan the right to occupy Korea. After news of this leaked out the Korean people began to form anti-Japanese guerrilla groups.

As a well known educator, Ahn Joong-Gun had established his own school, Sam-Heung (Three Success) school. In 1907, with the Emperor Ko-Jong being forced to abdicate and the oppression of his country worsening, Ahn went into self-exile in Manchuria where he set up his own 300-man guerrilla army. He led several offensives against the Japanese until he was eventually defeated in 1909.

In October 1909, Ahn decided the only way forward was to assassinate Hiro Bumi Ito. Knowing that he would have no possible means of escape and disguised as Japanese, Ahn Joong-Gun lay in wait at Harbin Station, Manchuria. As Ito stepped off the train on 26th October, Ahn Joong-Gun shot him. Ahn was captured and imprisoned at Lui-Shung prison (Port Arthur). Despite five months of barbaric torture his spirit never broke and on 26th March 1910, he was executed.

Unfortunately, as with other attempts to highlight the plight of the Korean people, this event only served to make the Japanese more determined to clamp down on Korean activists and culminated in the Japanese troops being deployed to surround the palace. On August 22nd 1910, with no means of escape Emperor Sunjong was forced to approve the treaty of annexation, which had already been signed by his ministers. This effectively brought the Yi dynasty to an end after 519 years.

Mr Ahn's love for his country was preserved in the calligraphy found in his cell it simply said, 'The Best Rivers and Mountains'; he reputedly wrote this in his own blood after severing a finger. It would take another 35 years for Korea to realise the independence that Ahn had fought and died for so bravely.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Jung-geun

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