Joseon Maps and East Asia

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Abstract

This paper has examined how the people of Joseon understood East Asia as depicted in its old maps. A great majority of Joseon maps of the world and foreign countries were made from imported source maps. Naturally, the consciousness of the original cartographers was transplanted along with the information in the maps. Once they were copied and used in Joseon, however, East Asia came to be understood from the Joseon perspective. The most important factor seems to have been their Sinocentric worldview.

While Gangnido presents an excellent overview of all the continents, Matteo Ricci's World Map gives a panoramic view of the vast world, comprehensive enough to include even the New World. We should pay close attention to this. The sizes of Joseon and Japan give some clues to understanding the stance of fifteenth-century Joseon. Quite a few Joseon intellectuals did not see that the vast world presented in Matteo Ricci's map conflicted with the Sinocentric geographical notion.

Inverted maps of Japan were very popular among Koreans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. And Ryukyu was remembered as a commerce state in the minds of Joseon people. Many Joseon intellectuals believed that the Netherlands was a country in Far Southern Sea and actively engaged in trade with Japan.

Keywords: Joseon maps, East Asia, Sinocentrism, *Gangnido*, Matteo Ricci, *Shanhaijing*, Gyoki-style map, *Haedong jegukgi*, Tsushima island, Ryukyu

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Introduction: Joseon's View of Neighboring Countries and the International Situation in East Asia

Perhaps it is human nature to be curious about the world beyond the horizon and to yearn to go there. This might be what was on the minds of Magellan, who traversed the Pacific Ocean in search of spice, and Zheng He, a Ming explorer who commanded a huge fleet of vessels and sailed as far as Africa. But there is more to it than that. To understand how Asians in general and the people of Joseon in particular viewed the outside world demands an understanding of the specific conditions in which they lived. In this regard, it is particularly important to examine the international situation surrounding the Joseon dynasty at the time.

During the time of Goryeo dynasty, the Mongol Empire connected the East and the West. Tibetan documents stored at Songgwangsa temple, Suncheon, Jeollanam-do province, provide evidence of the cultural exchange between Goryeo and Mongol. By the time of Joseon's foundation, the Ming dynasty was the dominant power on the Asian continent. Ming employed an inward-looking foreign policy, and Ming rulers prohibited their subjects from having free maritime contact with foreigners. As far as the opportunity for official contact with the external world was concerned, the international setting of Joseon was less favorable than that of Goryeo.

Nonetheless, the lack of channels for official contact with foreign countries in Joseon did not mean there was little change to its geographical outlook. The framework of international relations of Joseon was put in place in the fifteenth century. *Sadae* ("serving the great") relation with the Ming was established, and *gyorin* (friendly diplomatic relationship) was maintained with the Japanese bakufu (shogunate), although there was no maritime contact with other East Asian countries. In addition, Joseon had tributary relations with the daimyos of Tsushima Island and West Japan and received envoys from the Ryukyu Islands (today's Okinawa) for a while. Besides diplomatic channels, Japan made contact with Joseon via unofficial ones, including plundering. Indeed, Japanese pirates were a source of

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great distress to Joseon throughout the fifteenth century.

In terms of Joseon's experience of foreign contact and its view of the outside world, the seventeenth century was another impressive era. Portugal's advance to the East and the discovery of Japan occurred in the sixteenth century, of which Joseon had no knowledge. It was not until the seventeenth century that Joseon came to acknowledge a European power, i.e., the Dutch, which seized control over trade in Asia.

This new era began shortly after the end of the Japanese Invasion of 1592 (Imjin Waeran). The Imjin Waeran was primarily a war between Joseon and Japan, but it also involved the Ming and the Ryukyu Islands. The war had a serious impact on not only the winner and loser but also on their neighbors. After the seven-year-long war came to an end, Ming, the longtime hegemon in East Asia, went into decline, whereas the Manchurian tribes living in the vast lands to the north emerged as a new power. The latter claimed to stand for the Later Jin dynasty, which was later officially renamed as the Qing dynasty.

The Qing tried to claim hegemony in East Asia by force. The intent of the Qing was manifested in foreign trade as well. Inheriting the Ming policy of banning maritime contact, the Qing blocked common people's contact with the outside world. After putting down rebellious forces in the sea, it forced tributary trade on foreign ships that entered its ports for commerce. The absence of the Ming in East Asia created a new opportunity for Japan. The bakufu opened four ports (Tsushima, Satsuma, Matsumae and Nagasaki) and made contact with Joseon, the Ryukyu Islands, Ezochi (Hokkaido) and the Dutch. Controlling diplomacy and commerce established by the four ports, the bakufu believed that a new international order was created with Japan at the center.

Seventeenth-century Joseon was involved with the changing international world both directly and indirectly. It was defeated in two wars with the Qing and as a consequence was forced into a king-subject relationship. Obtaining information about the Netherlands from Dutch merchants, who had drifted into its territory due to a

shipwreck, and from exchanges with Beijing and Edo, Joseon began to take a new look at its old neighbors such as Japan and the Ryukyu Islands. Thus, it is critical that the international context be understood prior to examining the Joseon intellectuals' view of East Asia as visible in old maps from that era.

The World and Sinocentrism, or the World and China

Ryukoku University in Japan has a world map called *Honil gangni yeokdae gukdo jido* (Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals, hereafter *Gangnido*), which was made in Joseon in 1402. Joseon was founded in 1392, 100 years before Columbus' discovery of America, and *Gangnido* has been praised as the best depiction of the pre-Columbus world. At the bottom of the map are notes written by Kwon Geun, a Joseon official. He wrote, "[This map] is quite neat and well done. Indeed, one knows what the world is like without even venturing outside. Looking at the map, one can gauge the distance of a location, which provides very helpful information for governing the nation. . . . "2 This gives us a glimpse into how Confucian scholars, intellectuals, and the leaders of the Joseon dynasty tried to understand the surrounding areas and the world.

According to Kwon's notes, Joseon obtained Li Zemin's world map *Shengjiao guangbeitu* (Map of Vast Reach of Resounding Teaching), and Qingjun's *Hunyi jianglitu* (Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains), merged the two, and added the maps of Joseon and Japan to produce *Gangnido*. In *Gangnido*, Joseon and China are depicted with exaggerated proportions, but the outlines are relatively accurate.

^{1.} Ledyard (1987). The map, 176cm x 164cm in size, is owned by Ryukoku University in Japan. For this paper, I used Oh Gil-sun's copy of the *Gangnido* map published in *Hanguk gwahaksa hakhoeji* (Journal of the Korean History of Science Society) as reference for the names of locations and places. Oh Gil-sun (2005).

 [&]quot;Yeokdae jewang honil gangni doji" (Integrated Historical Map of Dynasties and Kings), in Kwon Geun, Yangchonjip (Collected Works of Kwon Geun), gwon 22.



Fig. 1. Gangnido.

Africa and Arabia look small, but have quite realistic contours. Joseon obtained the two source maps from the Ming. How did the Ming, which maintained a no-maritime-contact policy, learn about other continents, such as Europe and Africa? It was undoubtedly the influence of the Mongol Empire. Islamic maps were introduced to the Mongols, who commanded a world empire stretching over Eurasia, leaving its traces in the source map of Joseon's *Gangnido*.³

Gangnido contains an Asian perspective on and interpretation of the world. Daming yunyitu (Integrated Map of the Great Ming), housed by the Imperial Palace Museum of Beijing, is believed to have been a source map for Gangnido or very similar to it.⁴ The way that China, Europe, Africa, and Arabia are depicted in the two maps is quite similar, which points to the fact that those continents presented in Gangnido and their different sizes are reflective of the worldview of the people of Ming China.

The notes and detailed information on the Chinese continent depicted in *Gangnido* are based on the geographical knowledge acquired during the Mongol Empire. For example, Beijing is emphatically marked as Yandu or the capital of Yan. Although the creator of the original map relied on geographical information from the Mongols, Nanjing, the capital of the early Ming period, is recorded as the imperial capital. Limited knowledge might be the reason, but obviously, the era of the Ming dynasty was the temporal reference point in the map. The sizes of Joseon and Japan give some clues to understanding the stance of fifteenth-century Joseon.

While *Gangnido* presents an excellent overview of all the continents, Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (Great Map of Ten Thousand Countries) gives a panoramic view of the vast world, comprehensive enough to include even the New World. It differs from *Gangnido* in that it not only shows vestiges of the Age of Exploration here and there but also includes some strategically placed keys that help viewers understand the outside world from the East Asian perspective. The map was made in Beijing in 1602 and introduced to Joseon in 1603.

The Kunyu wanguo quantu contains some vestiges of Magellan—who is duly credited for making the Era of Exploration possible. Examples include the Strait of Magellan, the surrounding seas, and the name Mowalani (meaning Magellan) written on the imaginary southern hemisphere. Matteo Ricci wrote, "Magellan passed through the straits 60 years ago and Europeans named the sea, the land, and

^{3.} Much research has been done regarding *Gangnido*, including Ogawa (1928); Yi (1976); and Ledyard (1994).

^{4.} Yi (1991).

the strait after his name in honor of him."

Not far from the Strait of Magellan, the Sea of Magellan, and the Land of Magellan is the word ninghai, a Chinese word meaning "peaceful sea." Today, it is translated as taepyeongyang in Korean, whose literal meaning is "vast peaceful ocean." Obviously, the term ninghai in Kunyu wanguo quantu lends itself to the name, El Mar Pacifica, i.e. Pacific Ocean. Matteo Ricci made world maps of many different kinds after this one, and in some he uses the word tauratau taur

Magellan set off on his journey around the world in search of

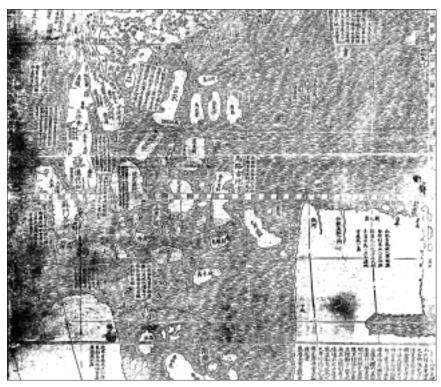


Fig. 2. Kunyu wanguo quantu (Great Map of Ten Thousand Countries).

spice. Matteo Ricci wrote on the sea off Java in Southeast Asia, "With so many islands scattered all over, sailing is very difficult. Here grow incense, clove, camphor and odoriferous, sapan wood, pepper and flake."

In producing *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, Matteo Ricci meticulously changed the locations of the old continent and the New World from its source map of the world made in Europe. In this expedient method, the standard meridian is placed in the Pacific Ocean and the Chinese continent lies at the center of the folding screen. Knowing that the Chinese people regarded their land as the center of the world, he wanted to present his extensive knowledge of the world in a way that did not conflict with the Chinese geographical view. He also tried to show the world outside East Asia in a way that was easy for them to understand.

Now, let us examine how he portrayed the Sinocentric world order in the map. One can see four Chinese letters "Da-Ming-Yi-Tong" written over China, which means "The Great Ming unified the world." The sea between Taiwan and Japan is named "Da-Ming-Hai," meaning the "Great Ming Sea." Matteo Ricci inserted the following notes off the coast of Luzon, the Philippines: "The civilization of the Great Ming reaches very far, between 15 degrees and 42 degrees north latitude. Many other countries from around the world pay tribute to China as well. This map provides only a rough representation."

Matteo Ricci was especially careful in his presentation of Europe. He wrote that Europe is rich in resources, international commerce is active, and European merchants travel everywhere in the world. He added, "There are thirty countries in Europe and each employs the righteous law of prior kings. They never believe in paganism of any sort and only worship the divine church of God, the Lord on High." He referred to God, using the term, the Lord on High. Calling God the Lord on High implies that God is human.

Early on in Han-Tang Confucianism, Heaven was understood as the personalized being. Of course, in Neo-Confucianism of the Song dynasty, Heaven was newly interpreted as something that could be comprehended by *li* (natural law), that is, the God of Reason. How-

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Quite a few Joseon intellectuals did not see that the vast world presented in Matteo Ricci's map conflicted with the Sinocentric geographical notion. We should pay close attention to this. To them, Sinocentrism did not simply concern the Chinese continent or its rulers; rather, they regarded it as a universal culture that should be sought out by all of the humanity. They believed that the displacement of the Ming by the Qing signified the disappearance of Sinocentric culture on Chinese land and took pride in the fact that they were the only ones who preserved Sinocentric culture. They regarded themselves as culturally Sinocentric and, at the same time, viewed the Qing as a barbarian nation in terms of lineage, which was a logical fallacy. Yet few took issue with it.

This conception is mirrored in the fact that the maps of East Asia made in Joseon after the Ming's displacement by the Qing kept the Ming as their temporal reference point. Now, let us move on to the next map.

The name of the map, *Cheonha gogeum daechong pyeollam*do, reveals what the producer of the map thought of the world and what he tried to represent in it. *Cheonha* means "the world," *gogeum* means "the past and present," i.e., history, and *daechong pyeollam* means "comprehensive view." That is, the cartographer tried to present on a piece of paper a comprehensive view of the world and its history that was deemed to be of relevance.⁶

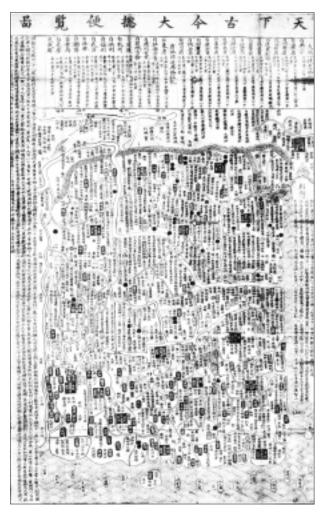


Fig. 3. Cheonha gogeum daechong pyeollamdo (Comprehensive and Synoptic Map of the Ancient and Modern World).

The center of the map shows clearly the spatial reality of the world from the perspective of the producer. Located at the center of the map, which signifies the center of the world, is Chinese territory. Beyond the Chinese borders are neighboring countries, of which Joseon is the only one that is highlighted. The map was made in 1666; by then, Joseon was well aware that the Qing had replaced the Ming as the sovereign of Chinese territory. Despite that, the map

^{5.} Jeong (1998).

^{6.} Bae (2006).

adheres to the time period of the Ming era. The provincial boundaries drawn in solid lines and engraved geographical designations indicate the administrative divisions and major cities of the Ming dynasty.

It is precisely for that reason that the distances indicated in the upper part are based on the four ancient capitals of China. The distances from each province to Nanjing and to Beijing are cited from *Daming yitongji* (Comprehensive Geography of the Great Ming), while those to Luoyang and Xian are from *Tongdian* (A Comprehensive Guide to Administration). The itineraries are reconstructed based on the four capitals. The four capitals are used as a device to symbolize that China is a complete world by itself. In the mind of the cartographer, the Sinocentric world of China existed only up to the collapse of Ming.

In the four corners of the map are the names of places on the periphery of the Sinocentric world. Europe is not there. Was the producer unaware of the existence of Europe? Judging from the notes on the map, he seemed to have known of Matteo Ricci or his astronavigational technique for measuring the celestial system. But none of the European nations in Matteo Ricci's map are seen in this one.

Instead, there are countries with mysterious names, such as the land of long-legged people, the land of long-armed people, the land of people with holes in their hearts, the land of women, the land of giants, the land of dwarves, etc. These names come from *Shanhaijing* (The Classic of Mountains and Seas), an Eastern document describing the fabled mysterious world. Notably, geographical designations that appear in *Shanhaijing* also appear in Matteo Ricci's map. For instance, there is the land of goblins to the northeast of Asia, the land of one-eyed people above the Caspian Sea, and next to it is the land of women.

Matteo Ricci used *Shanhaijing*, an Eastern classic describing the mysterious world to enable people to understand how big the world is. Then, why did the producer of *Cheonhagogeum daechong pyeollamdo* apply mysterious names from *Shanhaijing* to the countries around China?

Probably, he wanted to show that Joseon was the only preserver

of the "universal culture of the world" by portraying the historical period when Sinocentric culture existed on the Asian continent. In this aspect, the producer's intention is well reflected in the map. The existence of the wide world shown in *Kunyu wanguo quantu* was already known in his lifetime. In order to represent the world in the map by any means, the author chose mysterious place names from *Shanhaijing*; it differs little from what Matteo Ricci did in his map.

Japan and Tsushima Island

Gangnido is the oldest map made in Korea which includes a map of Japan. It is well known that the map of Japan in *Gangnido* was copied from a map of Japan made by a Japanese monk named Gyoki, also known as "Gyoki-style Map" The Joseon diplomat Bak Don-ji obtained the map in Japan and brought it home in 1401, a year before the production of *Gangnido*.⁷ The main feature of "Gyoki's Map" is that the sixty-six prefectures spread across the islands of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu are depicted to resemble a tortoise shell.⁸

The map of Japan in *Gangnido* is positioned with the west to the top of the map, as in "Gyoki-style Map." In contrast to the map of Joseon, which is exaggerated, the map of Japan is drawn on a much reduced scale. "Gyoki-style Map" represents the Japanese worldview of the three Buddhist kingdoms during the ancient and medieval age, and the conception of Japan as a divine country.⁹ But Joseon had never held such a view of Japan.

Even when a map is copied without the control of the producer, the copied map is imbued with the consciousness of the original producer, bearing his traces here and there. Yet a copied map is not completely free of the consciousness of the copier and his social

^{7.} Sejong sillok (Annals of King Sejong) 80, 2nd lunar month of 20th year of King Sejong's reign.

^{8.} Yi (1991).

^{9.} Kuroda (2001).

context either. The map of Japan in Sin Suk-ju's *Haedong jegukgi* (Chronicle of the Countries in East Asia) is a good example. Sin Suk-ju compiled the book in response to the King Seongjong's order in 1471. At the very beginning of the book are six maps of foreign lands ("Map of Countries in East Asia"; "Map of Mainland Japan"; "Map of Western Japan and Kyushu"; "Map of Iki Island, Japan"; "Map of Tsushima Island, Japan"; and "Map of the Ryukyu Islands") as well as maps of three southeastern ports on the Korean peninsula ("Map of Jepo"; "Map of Busanpo"; and "Map of Yeompo"). In particular, the "Map of Countries in East Asia," "Map of Mainland Japan," "Map of West Japan and Kyushu," and "Map of the Ryukyu Islands" have a bearing on the realities of Joseon-Japan relations and Joseon's stance toward them.

The international context among these countries included friendly relations between Joseon and the Bakufu; tributary relations between Joseon and the daimyos of Western Japan; the problem of Japanese pirates concerning Joseon, Iki Island, and Tsushima; and Joseon-Ryukyu relations. Friendly relations between Joseon and the Bakufu are represented by the distance between Busan and Kyoto in the "Map of Countries in East Asia" and the "Map of Mainland Japan." The itinerary depicted the Joseon envoy's travel route on their mission to Kyoto. Names of the daimyos of Western Japan appear in the "Map of Mainland Japan" and the "Map of Western Japan and Kyushu." The relative importance of various Japanese tribes in Joseon-Japan relations is expressed using different font sizes for their names and sometimes, symbols. ¹⁰

The maps of foreign lands are positioned correctly. The directions and place names of Japan and Ryukyu are also correct. This reveals the fact that the knowledge of the producers of the original source maps remained intact. *Haedong jeguk chongdo* (Complete Maps of Countries in East Asia) is essentially a representation of the marine world surrounding Joseon, Japan, and Ryukyu. Judging from the "distances from Japan" information appearing in several places

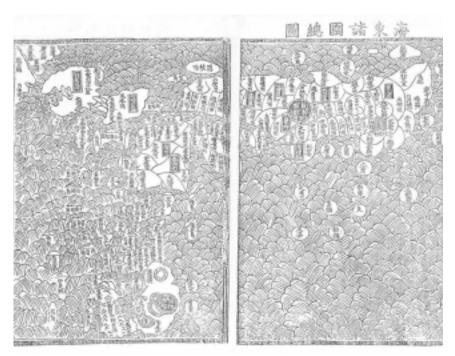


Fig. 4. Haedong jeguk chongdo (Complete Maps of Countries in East Asia).

on the maps, we can guess that the source maps were created by Japanese who had been to Ryukyu. The original cartographers seemed to have made the maps for navigational purposes, and the fifteenth-century Joseon cartographers depicted the marine area using a similar perspective in the atlas. For this reason, the maps of Japan published in *Haedong jegukgi* bear strong connotations of the Japanese worldview as represented by the Japanese creators of their source maps.

Switching directions and place names in producing a map has significant meaning, because it means that the mapmaker sees the world with himself at the center. It also symbolizes the obliteration of all memories of navigation in the seas of East Asia. Inverted maps of Japan were very popular among Koreans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, an era marked by the relaxation of military ten-

^{10.} Robinson (2005).

sion and the maintenance of peaceful exchange between Joseon and Japan.

Abridged atlases were widely available in seventeenth-century Joseon; in many of these maps, Japan is positioned at inverted longitudes. There are two types. The first highlights Kyoto, the capital and the residence of the Japanese king, and Edo, today's Tokyo and the residence of the shogun, like the "Map of Japan" in *Haedong jido* (Maps of Korea). Depicted around them are administrative divisions, Mt. Fuji and some other mountains, and islands. Hokkaido is recorded as Ezochi, with another place also named Ezochi located directly across from it, which was meant to imply that it was also populated by the Ainu. ¹¹

The other type presents a different picture of Japan from the first. For instance, Bingo and Iwamishu are shown to be separate islands rather than part of Honshu, and about sixty prefectures have the names of local specialty goods written next to them. ¹² Also, Ezochi is shown in a different location.

Although it may be going too far to say that the two maps are totally unrelated to the map of Japan in *Haedong jegukgi*, they are so different in contour and content that it would be farfetched to believe that they are merely variations of the *Haedong jegukgi* map. One crucial difference is that the land of *raksasa* (demons) which exist in the *Gangnido* and the "Complete Map of Countries in East Asia" in *Hae-*

dong jegukgi, are not found in these maps. ¹³ Joseon's concern with the nagging problem of Japanese pirates is reflected in many of the maps, such as the "Map of West Japan and Kyushu," the "Map of Iki Island," the "Map of Tsushima Island," the "Map of Jepo," the "Map of Busanpo," and the "Map of Yeompo." Joseon employed both hardline and conciliatory policies to solve the problem of Japanese pirates who had plundered the coastal regions of the Korean peninsula since the late Goryeo period. An example of a hard-line measure was King Sejong's dispatch of Yi Jong-mu to raid Tsushima, while a conciliatory one was the permission of trade and granting of public posts to Japanese people. Allowing Japanese to reside in three ports (Jepo, Busanpo, and Yeompo) was part of the effort to induce Japanese pirates into a peaceful and friendly relationship with Joseon.

Of the maps noted above, the "Map of Tsushima Island" is particularly eye-catching. ¹⁴ Tsushima is a long island that stretches from north to south, but it is depicted in the map as having a curved shape ⊃, a result of trying to make it fit within the margins of the book. The map shows the details of the coastline and terrain, and Japanese phoneticization of port names are listed in Chinese characters.

Now let us take a look at *hunagoji* (訓那申) in the "Map of Tsushima Island." The contemporary Japanese name for this place is *Funagosi*, which is a Japanese phoneticization of the Chinese word *chuanyue* meaning "turning over ships." The Chinese term is pronounced as *hunagoji* in Korean. ¹⁵ The Korean word *hunagoji* and the Japanese *funagosi* share the same phonetics. Therefore, it is plausible

^{11.} The "Map of Japan" in *Haedong jido* (Maps of Korea) comes with notes written on it, while other Joseon maps of Japan belonging to the same category do not. Regarding the size of Japan, it says that it takes 60 days to travel from east to west and 12 days from north to south. A large part of the notes are devoted to explaining the itinerary of Kyoto-Osaka-Kyushu-Tsushima-Joseon, and it is mentioned at the beginning that the Japanese *ri*, a standard unit of distance, is one-tenth that of Joseon. Japanese pronunciations of place names provided in Korean are not found, however. Interestingly, the itinerary has detailed information on the condition of waterways off the southern coasts of Gyeongsang-do province, which are reachable from Tsushima. Some major place names in Japan, such as Kyoto (capital) and Osaka, appear at the end. It is also recorded that a large part of Osaka belonged to the shogun.

^{12.} Unno (1999, 40-41).

^{13.} According to Oda, the word *raksasa* comes from a Sanskrit word meaning "demon." In Xuanzang's *Datang xiyuji* (Journey to the West of the Great Tang Dynasty), the Land of Raksasa is marked as "the Land of She-devils in the Southern Sea." The story about this place, which has its origin in Buddhist mythology, was soon transformed into that of the "Land of Women" and became widely known in China. Oda (1998, 27-36). Although its relationship to the story is hard to verify, it is not uncommon to find remarks on the "Land of Women" in Joseon books and maps.

^{14.} The basic contour of the island in this map resembles that of the one in Haedong jeguk chongdo.

^{15.} Yi (1992).

that, in this map, the geographic information and place names introduced from Japan are written in Korean phonetics using equivalent Chinese words.

Then, why was Tsushima Island not drawn in its real shape but instead curved? Probably, the outline was compromised in the process of fitting the map to the physical dimensions of the book *Haedong jegukgi*. But we can consider other possible explanations. The map of Tsushima in *Gangnido* is curved, with a simplified shoreline and little information, compared to the *Haedong jegukgi* map. It is unlikely to be due to the influence of "Gyoki-style Map," the Japanese source map used for the production of *Gangnido*. "Gyoki-style Map" shows no island of similar appearance. Besides, Tsushima Island in *Gangnido* is positioned far from mainland Japan and close to Joseon, instead. The shape and position of the island in *Gangnido* suggests the geographic view of the island held by the people of Joseon.

The "Map of Tsushima Island" in *Haedong jegukgi* demonstrates the explosive increase of information about the island in Joseon. The fact that *funagosi* is recorded as "訓那串" implies the profound influence of Joseon in map making. It is drastically different in meaning from simply copying the original. In the maps, the island maintains a bent shape as in *Gangnido*. Despite the increase of new information about the island, its basic outline hardly differed from the one in *Gangnido*.

The role of Tsushima Island in Joseon-Japan relations grew in importance with the advent of envoy diplomacy in the seventeenth century. Evidence of how the people of seventeenth-nineteenth century Joseon viewed the island can be seen in the upper right corner of many maps of Joseon. Some maps depicted Tsushima as curved, while others were completely different. *Dongguk jido* (Map of Korea), which was first created by Jeong Sang-gi and revised by Jeong Hang-ryeong and Jeong Cheol-jo, is a prime example of a complete map of Joseon during the eighteenth century (figure 5. *Aguk chongdo*). It includes a rough drawing of Tsushima Island. The shorelines are simplified yet close to accurate.

While these maps of Japan and Tsushima were widely circulated



Fig. 5. Aguk chongdo (Map of Our Country).

in Joseon, Japanese maps made in the Edo period were introduced to Joseon in the eighteenth century. These include *Busang jido* (Map of Japan, 1662), *Honcho zukan komoku* (Outline Map of Japan, 1687), *Nihon kaisan chorukuzu* (Map of the Seas, Mountains, Lakes and Lands of Japan, 1691), and *Nihon enbizu* (Round Map of Japan). Joseon intellectuals such as Yi Ik, Jeong Yak-yong, and Yi Deok-mu studied the maps and learned Japanese geography. Yi Ik and Yi Deok-mu separately obtained copies of *Nihon enbizu*, and Jeong Yak-yong kept a copy of *Honcho zukan komoku*.

These three had the keenest interest in Japan among the Silhak scholars of the late Joseon period. Yi Ik was well-versed in a variety of Japanese books, while Yi Deok-mu was famous for his extensive knowledge of Japan. Jeong Yak-yong held a favorable view of Japan's Confucian scholarship. Their view of Japan was the most progressive among intellectuals of their time. Yet it was not that easy to take a neutral stance toward Japan. Jeong Yak-yong still expressed concerns about the possibility of another Japanese invasion of Korea. In *Nihon enbizu*, Yi Deok-mu inverted Japan by mapping it from the perspective of Joseon.

Ryukyu and the Birth of a "Treasure Island"

Ryukyu is today's Okinawa. As an independent country until the sixteenth century, it had direct and indirect exchange relations with Goryeo and Joseon. Historical records confirm that Ryukyu envoys entered Joseon ports thirty-seven times between 1389 (the first year of King Chang's reign) and 1500 (the sixth year of King Yeonsan's reign). Through such contact, Joseon came to learn that Ryukyu was a leading power in the international trade network of East Asia. Broad geographic information was accumulated about Ryukyu from the reign of King Sejong to that of King Seongjong. The "Map of

Ryukyu" (figure 6) in *Haedong jegukgi* (1471) appears to be a sailing map, just like the "Map of Mainland Japan" and the "Map of Western Japan and Kyushu." Maritime distances from Japan are written on the map and the names of islands near the main islands of Japan are recorded in their contemporary Japanese phoneticization of Chinese letters. But the phonography on the "Map of Ryukyu" from different from that of the "Map of Tsushima Island."

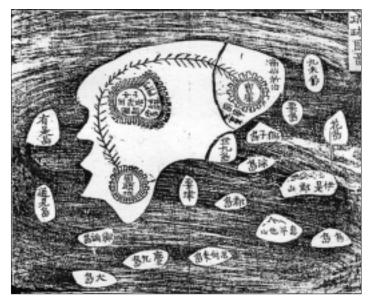


Fig. 6. "Map of Ryukyu" in Haedong jegukgi.

For example, the Japanese name for "Bird Island" (鳥島) is Torishima. Unlike in the "Map of Tsushima Island," the name of "Bird Island" was not recorded in Chinese letters whose phonetic sounds are close to Torishima. This indicates that the "Map of Ryukyu" in *Haedong jegukgi* was faithful to the source map. The Joseon people's stance toward local phoneticization is not apparent in the map.

Direct contact between Joseon and Ryukyu was officially discontinued fifty years after the release of *Haedong jegukgi*. Unofficial contact between the two countries' envoys continued in Beijing for some

^{16.} Ha (1989, 2004).

relations.

time (1530-1638), but even this was completely stopped in 1662.¹⁷ The discontinuation of a direct relationship meant that Joseon no longer needed a navigation map to Ryukyu.

Around the end of direct relations with Ryukyu, new types of Ryukyu maps were circulated in Joseon. The following map (figure 7. Zheng Ruozeng's "Map of Ryukyu") was made based on a source map produced by Zheng Ruozeng, a Ming official and geographer. His map was cited in many books upon production, including *Kwangyutu* (Comprehensive Map), *Tushubian* (Collections of Books and Pictures), *Sancai tuhui* (Collected Illustrations of Heaven, Earth, and People). Joseon intellectuals saw in those books a map of Ryukyu resembling a layout of the royal capital. While the "Map of

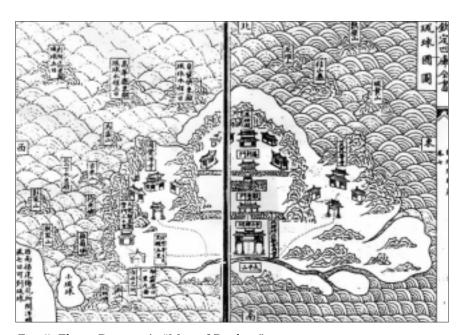


Fig. 7. Zheng Ruozeng's "Map of Ryukyu"

Ryukyu" in *Haedjong jegukgi* was a sailing map that focused on navigational information, such as the directions to and location of Ryukyu, this was closer to a layout of the loyal capital, focusing on palaces, ports, and temples.¹⁸ Information on ports, such as Naha, were included, but less for sailing and trade in the East Asian seas than for Chinese envoys' trips to Ryukyu, which symbolized the tribute-investiture relations between China and Ryukyu, and its Sinocentric culture.¹⁹ Kumejima had a large settlement of ethnic Chinese people. The ethnic Chinese played a reading role when Ryukyu was officially recognized by the Ming and established tributary trade

The new Ryukyu map did not replace the "Map of Ryukyu" in

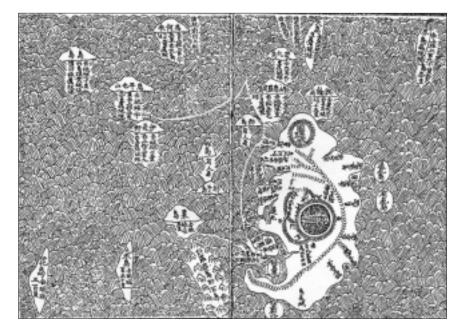


Fig. 8. "Map of Ryukyu" in Gupokdo (Nine-Piece Painting)

^{17.} Son (1999).

^{18.} Tanaka (1993).

^{19.} Bae (2007).

Haedong jegukgi however. Instead, it was transformed and reinterpreted to serve another purpose than as a sailing map. The "Map of Ryukyu" (figure 8) in *Gupokdo* (Nine-Piece Painting)²⁰ is included in a Joseon atlas provincial areas during the mid-eighteenth century. Maps of this type were widespread in the populace from a century earlier. It roughly depicts the main island of Ryukyu, which housed the capital, and adjacent islands. The capital is where the Chuzan king lived. The Chuzan king concluded the period of Three-Zan Kings (Nanzan, Chuzan, and Hokuzan) and established a unified kingdom. The map shows the basic outline of royal palaces and gates; interestingly, the king's living quarters are separate from those of the royal family and officials.

The basic contour of the map is similar to that of the *Haedong jegukgi* map, but it is very rough. Notably, it bears few of the characteristics of a navigation map. The distance markings from Japan are gone, and the orientation of the map is inverted. This symbolizes the perspective from Joseon, looking "down," i.e. south, towards Ryukyu. The Joseon intellectuals no longer remembered Ryukyu as a place they could reach by sailing. To them, it existed only as an image which had nothing to do with sailing. What kind of image was it, then?

What is striking about the "Map of Ryukyu" in *Haedong jido* are the national treasury, treasure houses, and the National Fortress on the main island. The area around the national treasury, which resembles an isle in *Haedong jegukgi*, is portrayed here as part of the main island. The treasury is located 900 *ri* from the fortress wall surrounding the capital, and the treasure houses are its core facility. Next to them is a berth of commercial ships. Ryukyu enjoyed a golden age when it controlled marine trade in East Asia, but it did not last long due to the European advance to the East. It is in this context that direct relations between Joseon and Ryukyu came to an end in the sixteenth century. The map reveals that Ryukyu was remembered as a commerce state in the minds of Joseon people.

This was also the case with some Silhak scholars. In *Bukhak ui* (Discourse On Northern Learning), Bak Je-ga referred to Ryukyu as "a country that accumulated wealth through foreign trade." Jeong Yak-yong wrote that Ryukyu "became a prosperous and militarily strong nation by adopting technology from China." The image of a commerce state was embellished further and changed into that of a "treasure island." From there, it became a legend that lingered in the memories of Koreans up until the 1940s. The *Donga Ilbo* ran an article in the December 25, 1947:

During the reign of King Injo in Joseon, Ryukyu was invaded by Japan and the king was captured and taken to Japan. The grief-stricken prince sailed to Japan to save his father, loading his ship with treasures, but ended up drifting into Jeju Island. The Jeju Magistrate Yi Gi-bin asked the prince what was in the ship, and the prince replied that it contained a special stone and a cloth. The stone was square with a depression in the middle. Water that was poured into the depression transformed into liquor (*jucheonseok*). The cloth was woven of spider web and completely leak-proof; even water would not drip through it. It could cover anything, no matter how large (*mansanjang*). Yi Gi-bin tried to steal the stone and cloth, so the prince threw them overboard. The furious magistrate took all the treasures he could find in the ship and killed the prince and everyone else aboard.²²

It has been historically proven that the Jeju Magistrate Yi Gi-bin plundered a ship that drifted to the island in 1611. According to *Joseon-wangjo sillok* (Annals of Joseon Dynasty), Ryukyu envoys were aboard the ship loaded with a large quantity of treasure.²³ Later, the actual incident was turned into a legend. The Ryukyu envoy became a Ryukyu prince, and money became first precious treasures, then

^{20.} Yeungnam University Museum (1998, 74).

^{21.} Ha (1999, 259-320).

^{22. &}quot;Legends of Mystery: A Liquor-making Stone and A Cover-all Cloth," *Donga Ilbo*, December 25, 1947.

^{23.} Gwanghaegun ilgi (Annals of King Gwanghaegun) 62, 1st lunar month of 5th year of King Gwanghae's reign.

national treasures. The story of the *jucheonseok* and *mansanjang* appeared for the first time in Yi Jung-hwan's *Taengniji* (Ecological Guide to Korea), a well-known Joseon geography book.²⁴ This transformation of the story of a Ryukyu prince is somehow related to the lost memories of sailing to Ryukyu and replacing them with the image of a marine state.

The Dutch and Taiwan

While Joseon was struggling to cope with the aftermath of the Japanese invasion of 1592 and Manchu Invasion of 1636 (Byeongja Horan), the Northeast Asian seas were wrapped in turmoil once again. At the center of it were the Dutch and Taiwan, the Dutch's main base in Asia. Joseon indirectly acquired information about the Dutch from envoys returning from missions in Beijing and Edo and the books and documents they brought back with them. The information was too fragmented and groundless to gain the support from Joseon intellectuals. Thus, many Joseon intellectuals believed the Netherlands were a Southeast Asian country.

Among European countries, Portugal and Spain were at the forefront of Eastern trade during the Age of Exploration. Their fame did not last long, though. The Spanish Armada was defeated by Great Britain, and the shogunate barred Portuguese commerce ships from entering Japanese ports under the pretence of preventing Christian missionary activities. This gave the Dutch an opportunity to nudge in. The year Matteo Ricci made the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, the Dutch established the East India Company and spurred on Eastern trade. Eager to secure a trade base with China, they occupied Taiwan in 1624 and built fortifications. Taiwan became a hub of international trade among Europe, China, and Japan, from which the Dutch garnered enormous profits.²⁵

Taiwan functioned as the ground of anti-Qing groups for a while before its incorporation into the Qing. Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga), born to the Taiwanese pirate Zheng Zhilong, and his Japanese wife, established a power base in Fujian province in 1650 and began to launch anti-Qing military activities. In response, the Qing ordered an evacuation from Fujian and adjacent coastal areas. Pushed back by the Qing, he occupied Taiwan in 1661 which was under Dutch control. He died due to internal strife in 1662. His son Zheng Jing and grandson Zheng Keshuang continued to resist until their surrender in 1683. The Qing incorporated Taiwan as part of Fujian Province. ²⁶

Joseon learned about the existence of the Netherlands, Japan's ban on foreign ships and its relations with the Netherlands, and the marine conditions in East Asia from Hamel, who was shipwrecked in Joseon, and its envoys to Beijing and Edo. But the quantity and quality of the information was too limited to allow a full grasp of the situation. It was therefore impossible for Joseon people to acquire trustworthy information on the correct location of the Netherlands.

In *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, Matteo Ricci marked the Netherlands as "Great Place in Asia" (*Daniya*).²⁷ The Netherlands declared independence from Spanish domination in 1581, but international approval of Dutch independence only came about in 1648 after the Eighty Years' War. Considering that *Kunyu wanguo quantu* was made in 1602, it is not strange that the newly independent nation did not get special emphasis in the map.

In books published in the Qing period, the Netherlands is recorded as a country in the Southeastern Sea. Reedless to say, this notion came from the fact that Dutch people were engaged in Eastern trade based in Taiwan. In *Daqing yitongzhi* (Comprehensive Geography of Great Qing), which was released during the Qing dynasty, Holland was listed after Joseon, Vietnam, and Ryukyu. The editor of the book described the "Netherlands as being in the Southwestern

^{24. &}quot;Sansu" (Mountains and Rivers), in *Taengniji* (Ecological Guide to Korea).

^{25.} Kim (2001, 50-60).

^{26.} Im (2000, 74-83).

^{27.} Akioka (1988).

^{28.} Choe (1987, 33-34).

Sea. It is also known as *Hongyi* (Red Barbarian) or *Hongmaoguo* (Red Hair Country). Its tributary path runs through Fujian and reaches Beijing." The notion that the Netherlands was located in the Southwestern Sea was associated with the fact that Taiwan, which is southwest of Beijing, was its marine trade base. *Daqing yitonzhi* has a relatively detailed description of the Dutch construction of fortifications in Taiwan.²⁹ It was imported to Joseon and used as a reference book among Joseon intellectuals.

In Joseon, the Netherlands was often called "Aranta," "Aran," "Hwaran," "Haran," "Hongmo" (Red Hair), or "Hongiguk" (Country of Red Barbarians). 30 But it was more commonly called "Namman" or Southern Barbarians. Joseon intellectuals believed that the Netherlands was one of Southeast Asian countries, which was engaged in tributary relations with China and Japan. Yi Geung-ik, the author of *Yeollyeosil gisul* (Narratives of Yi Geung-ik), mentioned in the book that the Netherlands was a country in Far Southern Sea and actively engaged in trade with Japan. 31

Although quite rare, a few Joseon scholars evidenced an almost accurate understanding of the location of the Netherlands. Jeong Yakyong, who boasted the most systematic scholarship among Joseon scholars of the eighteenth century, read *Wakan sansai zue* (Collected Illustrations of Heaven, Earth, and People in Japan and China), a Japanese encyclopedia compiled during the Edo period. Noting in the book that the distance between Japan and the Netherlands was

12,900 ri, he interpreted this as meaning 129,000 ri, 32 since Korean ri was ten times that of Japanese ri. He accepted the description of the Netherlands in the book, which stated that "The country of red-haired people is located to the northwest and has a cold climate. The Netherlands is a state within the country." He figured that the Netherlands was somewhere between Europe and North Africa. A Dutch ship had to sail about 90,000 ri to reach Guangdong Province, China, and tens of thousands of ri to get to Japan. So he had no doubt that the entire distance would be around 120,000 ri. Jeong Yak-yong made this calculation based not only on unicircular world maps such as the Kunyu wanguo quantu but also on double hemisphere world maps like Jigu jeonhudo (Map of the Old and New Continents of the Globe).

Conclusion: What It Means to Know Another Place

This paper has examined how the people of Joseon understood East Asia as depicted in its old maps. The most important factor seems to have been their Sinocentric worldview, since Sinocentrism was the primary principle that regulated the daily lives of Joseon people. They viewed the world through the prism of Sinocentrism. The same outlook applied to newly-acquired European world maps, their ponderings of the location of the Netherlands, which was becoming a strong power in international trade in East Asia, and even to their attempts to grasp the changing international order in East Asia after the Ming's replacement by the Qing. It might have been different if the cartographers of unicircular world maps had not attempted a compromise by placing the Chinese continent at the center of their maps. But it did not happen in East Asia.

After Sin Suk-ju's production of Haedong jegukgi, many maps of

^{29. &}quot;Holland," in *Daqing yitongzhi* (Comprehensive Geography of Great Qing) 423; *Wen Yuange sikuchuanshu* (Complete Collection of the Four Libraries Edited by Wen Yuange) 483:704-705.

^{30.} The term "Aranta," a Chinese transliteration of Holland, was used in Joseon and had Buddhist connotations, even before the country itself was recognized. According to *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (Revised and Augmented Study of the Geography of Korea), a Buddhist monk from the West visited Goryeo, saw Mt. Cheonbo, and said it resembled the Aranta temple sites in Three Heavenly States. "Buddhist Haven Hoeamsa Temple, Yangju, Gyeonggi-do Province) in *Sinjeong donggukyeoji seungnam* 11.

^{31. &}quot;Hwangdangseon" (Strange Foreign Vessels), in Yi Geung-ik, *Yeollyeosil gisul* (Narratives of Yi Geung-ik) 11:366.

^{32. &}quot;Yu Deuk-gong pilgie daehan pyeong" (Critique on Yu Deuk-gong's Writings) in Jeong Yak-yong, *Dasan simunjip* (Collection of Jeong Yak-yong's Works) 22. If he believed that the Netherlands was located in Europe, he should have thought that France, its neighbor, was also in Europe, but he had no real interest in the existence of France.

Japan and Ryukyu were circulated in Joseon. Joseon maintained stable relations with Japan from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Japanese maps of various kinds produced in the Edo period were transmitted to Joseon. Yi Ik, Yi Deok-mu, and Jeong Yak-yong learned about Japan from those maps. Their view of Japan was advanced in comparison to that of their contemporaries, but it was not completely objective. Various maps of Ryukyu were produced in the late Joseon period despite the severed diplomatic ties. Yet the memories of sailing that lurked in Sin Suk-ju's *Haedong jegukgi* were absent from those maps. Ryukyu was remembered only as a commercial state, and as time passed, its image was mystified into that of a treasure island.

A great majority of Joseon maps of the world and foreign countries were made from imported source maps. Naturally, the consciousness of the original cartographers was transplanted along with the information in the maps. Once they were copied and used in Joseon, however, East Asia came to be understood from the Joseon perspective. In some cases, the consciousness of the original maps remained intact, while in others, it was transformed. In this aspect, the maps made or used in Joseon were reflective of changes in international relations in East Asia and Joseon people's understanding of the changing circumstances and their neighbors.

Now, it remains to find answers to the question raised in the first part of the paper. What did it mean to Joseon intellectuals to travel and learn about the outside world? We might find a clue in Kwon Geun's notes in *Gangnido*, which state that "one can know the world without even going outside." This is related to traditional Eastern ideas about travel. Laozi wrote, "One knows the whole world without taking a step outdoors, sees the Way of Heaven without taking a look out the window. The farther one goes, the less one knows. Therefore, the sage knows without acting, sees without looking, accomplishes without doing." In other words, the further one travels, the harder it becomes to understand the world and know the

Way of Heaven. From the Taoist standpoint, any kind of action, even going outdoors or looking out the window, is artificial and unnatural. Taoists claim that one can reach a state of true understanding by doing nothing.

Confucian scholars have a different interpretation. Shao Yong, a Confucian scholar of the Northern Song dynasty, wrote, "One can contact heaven and earth directly without going outdoors." He thought that a person could understand the world without having to travel. But his emphasis was not on doing nothing. Lu Zuqian, who coauthored *Jinsulu* (Reflections on Things at Hand) with Zhu Xi, interpreted the tenets of *Daodejing* (the Book of the Way) as meaning that one must understand the Way of Heaven through internal reflection. Confucian scholars of the Song dynasty stressed that one can understand the way of the world by refining one's inner mind, rather than through the futility of travel.

This does not mean, however, that people of the East did not regard world travel as important. A Chinese saying states, "One must travel 10,000 *ri* and read 10,000 books." This means that it is just as important to expand one's experience through travel as it is to understand the truth of the world by reading books.

Seo Geo-jeong, a Confucian scholar of Joseon in the fifteenth century, did not agree with the notion that "one can understand the world without going outside the gate." Nor did he agree that one can understand the truth of the world just by reading books. He thought that it was essential to expand one's knowledge and experience by traveling around the world in order to write well and practice good governance.³⁴ Obviously, this did not mean that it was pointless to read 10,000 books. According to Seo Geo-jeong, a scholar requires both reading and travel in order to find their aim in life and achieve it. Reading is essential, whereas travel is practical.³⁵

^{33.} Daodejing (Book of the Way), chap. 47.

^{34. &}quot;Song Ji seonsaeng sinwon seoyusi seo" (Ode to Mr. Ji Sin-won's Journey to the West), in Seo Geo-jeong, *Saga munjip* (Collected writings of Seo Geo-jeong), *gwon* 4.

^{35. &}quot;Song iseojang siseo" (Ode to Scribe Yi), in Seo Geo-jeong, Saga munjip, gwon 5.

Neo-Confucianism was adopted in Joseon as the operating principle of society. Rulers, scholars, and officials alike shared a Confucian worldview and value system. They tended to regard the perfection of the inner mind as the precondition or foundation for exploration of the external world. Nevertheless, their attitude toward the world was more realistic than the Taoist idea of attaining knowledge by doing nothing. The way in which they understood the outside world was based on this principle.

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GLOSSARY

Aguk chongdo (Ch.)	我國摠圖	Daodejing (Ch.)	道德經
Aran	阿蘭	funagosi (J.)	訓那串
Aranta	阿蘭陀	Gangnido	疆理圖
bakufu (J.)	幕府	Gupokdo	九瀑圖
Bukhak ui	北學議	Gyoki (J.)	行基
Cheonha gogeum	天下古今	gyorin	交隣
daechong pyeollamdo	大總便覽圖	Haedong jeguk chongdo	海東諸國總圖
chuanyue (Ch.)	船越	Haedong jegukgi	海東諸國記
Daiming yitongzhi (Ch.)	大明一統志	Haedong jido	海東地圖
Daming yunyitu (Ch.)	大明混一圖	Haran	夏蘭
Da-Ming-Hai (Ch.)	大明海	Honcho zukan komoku	本朝圖鑑綱目
Da-Ming-Yi-Tong (Ch.)	大明一統	(J.)	
Daniya (Ch.)	大泥亞	Hongiguk	紅夷國

(01.)	分工 国		(さく) (二)
Hongmaoguo (Ch.)	紅毛國	ninghai (Ch.)	寧海
Hongmo	紅毛	Qingjun (Ch.)	淸濬
Hongyi (Ch.)	紅夷	Ryukyu (J.)	琉球
Honil gangni yeokdae	混一疆理歷代國	sadae	事大
gukdo jido	都之圖	Satsuma (J.)	薩摩
hunagoji (J.)	訓那串	Shanhaijing (Ch.)	山海經
Hunyi jianglitu (Ch.)	混一疆理圖	Shao Yong (Ch.)	邵雍
Hwaran	和蘭	Shengjiao guangbeitu	聲教廣被圖
Imjin Waeran	壬辰倭亂	(Ch.)	
Jigu jeonhudo	地球前後圖	sing (Ch.)	性
Jinsulu (Ch.)	近思錄	Songgwangsa	松廣寺
jucheonseok	酒泉石	Taengniji	擇里志
mansanjang	萬山帳	Taipinghai (Ch.)	太平海
Kunyu wanguo quantu	坤輿萬國全圖	Taipingyang (Ch.)	太平洋
(Ch.)		Tongdian Ch.)	通典
Laozi (Ch.)	老子	Torishima (J.)	鳥島
li (Ch.)	理	Tsushima (J.)	對馬島
Li Zemin (Ch.)	李澤民	Wakan sansai zue (J.)	和漢三才圖會
Lu Zuqian (Ch.)	呂祖謙.	Yandu (Ch.)	燕都
Namman	南灣	Zheng Chenggong (Ch.)	鄭成功
Matsumae (J.)	松前	Zheng He (Ch.)	鄭和
Nihon enbizu (J.)	日本圓備圖	Zheng jing (Ch.)	鄭經
Nihon kaisan	日本海山	Zheng Keshuang (Ch.)	鄭克塽
chorukuzu (J.)	潮陸圖	Zheng Zhilong (Ch.)	鄭芝龍

(Ch.: Chinese; J.: Japanese)