

# Frontier Maps from the Late Joseon Period and the Joseon People's Perceptions of the Northern Territory

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## Abstract

*Joseon people's territorial consciousness was constantly changing according to Joseon's diplomatic relations with China and the Jurchens, or to the cartographer's historical consciousness and political orientation. When the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele was erected in 1712, diverse opinions were presented with regard to this issue. Some regarded the Tumen river that was referred to on the stele as being one and the same with the Dumangang river, while others pointed out that despite the two rivers' sources being different, they still converge at a certain point in the end. Still others viewed the two rivers as separate, even assuming the existence of another demarcation river between the two countries.*

*Changed perceptions of border regions are faithfully reflected in the border region maps of the late Joseon period. In the maps that are presumed to have been drawn prior to the erection of Mt. Demarcation Stele, the northern territory is roughly or erroneously illustrated, while in the maps that were later produced, the location of the Seonchullyeong pass is clearly marked. In the maps describing the topographies of Joseon and the Chinese northeastern area, there are margin notes that refer to the Seonchullyeong pass as "280 km north of the Dumangang river" or as "the border of Goryeo." This tells us that the Joseon people's active appropriation of the old areas of the ancient states permeated in the maps they produced.*

**Keywords:** the Amnokgang (Yalu) river, the Dumangang (Tumen) river, Tomungang, northern border of Joseon, Seonchullyeong pass, Mt. Baekdu, the Demarcation Stele, Pye sagun (Four Old Outposts)

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## Introduction

Based on maps made in the past, we can gain geographical insight into the period in which they were produced. Old maps represent the spiritual world of the people who lived at that time, their perceptions of their home and neighboring countries, and their historical consciousness.<sup>1</sup> It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that Joseon began to employ more precise methods of scaling, such as *simni bangan* (a reduction scale of 1:10 *ri*), which allowed them to produce more correct and detailed theme maps. However, it has been observed that in many of the world maps or military maps produced in this period, the real shapes of land surfaces are quite transformed and certain features of the land surfaces are exaggerated from the perspective of the cartographer. In particular, such tendencies are more pronounced in the maps of the frontier regions in Pyeongan-do, Hamgyeong-do, and other northern border provinces.

Although it was usually accepted that the northern border of Joseon was marked by the Amnokgang (Yalu) river and the Dumangang (Tumen) river, Joseon people's territorial consciousness was constantly changing according to Joseon's diplomatic relations with China and the Jurchens, or to the cartographer's historical consciousness and political orientation. In 1712 (38th year of King Sukjong's reign), the Qing erected the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele, on which the demarcation line between the two countries was described as "the Amnokgang (Yalu) river in the west, and the Tomungang (Tumen) river in the east," thus rekindling interest in the northern territories among Joseon people in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. Diverse opinions were presented with regard to this issue. Some regarded the Tomungang (Tumen) river that was referred to on the stele as being one and the same with the Dumangang river, while others pointed out that despite the two rivers' sources being different, they still converge at a certain point in the end. Still others viewed

1. For the classification of Joseon maps according to their subjects and the changing style of mapmaking, see Han and Bae (1995, 19-36).

the two rivers as separate, even assuming the existence of another demarcation river between the two countries.

These diverse territorial perceptions are reflected in history and geography books as well as old maps of the time. This study, then, examines the territorial consciousness presented in the various maps of Pyeongan-do and Hamgyeong-do provinces that were produced during the late Joseon period. There might be some difference of opinion as to whether the maps cited in this paper can be considered representative of that period. However, in terms of production dates and content, they are believed to represent the territorial perceptions and security consciousness of the late Joseon period.

### Formation of Perceptions of the Northern Territory during the Late Joseon Period

In the early seventh century, Joseon underwent two invasions by Qing China. Pyeongan-do and Hwanghae-do provinces suffered the most severe damage, and suffered a heavy burden due to the frequent visits of the Qing envoys, who aimed to monitor the military activities of Joseon. There was also concern on the part of Joseon about the possible recurrence of war, because the western part of the country would be engulfed in war in the event that the Qing dynasty lost its stronghold on mainland China, causing it to retreat back to its original territory. The official position of the Joseon government was to attack the northern area in retaliation for the Chinese invasion, but due to inadequate defenses, it was nearly forced to abandon its plan.

Despite adverse conditions that made it difficult to monitor the northern areas, Nam Gu-man insisted on an aggressive policy of restoring the four outposts at the Amnokgang river as well as allowing any Joseon people to move to the area by taking advantage of the power vacuum that followed the retreat of the foreign residents, who had been living along the river. This was based on the assumption that, considering the topography of northeastern China, Qing would not invade Joseon territory even in the event of a collapse. Following

his proposition, outposts were built at Muchang, Jaseong, Yeoyeon, and Uye in 1674 (9th year of King Sukjong's reign).<sup>2</sup> However, the outposts were soon abandoned due to strong opposition to the restoration because of the difficulties in defending the outposts and the possibility of the residents' border transgressions.

In the northeastern region, the situation was no better. Though this areas did not suffer any direct damage from war, Joseon residents there faced economic difficulties due to suspension of trade with the foreign residents living on the other side of the Dumangang river as well as due to the opening of markets in Hoeryeong and Gyeongwon. As the foreign residents in the mountainous areas near the upper stream of the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers evacuated the region, the Joseon government moved the Musan garrison to the Dumangang river shore in 1674 (15th year of King Hyeonjong's reign). As more people flocked to the region to cultivate farmland, the Joseon government upgraded its administrative status to *dohobu* (regional military command) in 1684 (10th year of King Sukjong's reign). Disputes continued over the abolition of the Musan *dohobu*, mainly due to concerns over the residents' illegal border crossings, but Musan maintained the status of *dohobu*. After that point, the amount of cultivated land gradually increased, along with the population, with most residents engaging in farming, ginseng harvesting, and hunting. This situation incited China to fix its boundary with Joseon by erecting a demarcation stele at Mt. Baekdu.

Following China's claiming of Mt. Baekdu as its boundary with Joseon in 1712 (38th year of King Sukjong's reign), Joseon renewed its recognition of the northern territory. In 1710 (36th year of King Sukjong), the residents of Wiwon county, Pyeongan-do province, ille-

2. It was on March 28, 1683 (9th year of King Sukjong's reign) that army officers were placed at the four outposts. This fact is not recorded in *Joseon wangjo sillok* (Annals of Joseon Dynasty) nor in the *Bibyeonsa deungnok* (Records of the Border Defense Council), because these outposts were abolished not long after they had been established. A historical record on this is found in Seong Hae-eung, "Pyesagun bokchi ui" (On the Restoration of the Four Outposts), in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip* (Complete Works of Seong Hae-eung).

gally crossed the border. Having become enraged by this incident, the emperor of Qing China issued an edict that the border between China and Joseon be more clearly marked, and dispatched Mu Kedeng, supervisor-in-chief of Wula, as a diplomatic envoy to the region. Mu Kedeng and Bak Gwon, Joseon's reception official, confirmed that the border between Qing and Joseon would lie along Mt. Baekdu and the Amnokgang and Tomungang (Tumen) rivers. Mu Kedeng identified the sources of the Amnokgang and Tomungang (Tumen) rivers at Mt. Baekdu and erected a demarcation stele at the southeast of Lake Cheonji, proclaiming the border as "the Amnokgang (Yalu) river in the west, and the Tomungang (Tumen) river in the east."<sup>3</sup>

At that time, Joseon authorities believed that they would acquire the areas south of the Amnokgang and Dumanggang rivers by erecting the stele. Later, the Joseon government actively pushed forward the development of the northern border region, proclaimed Mt. Baekdu as the birthplace of the nation as well as the national object of worship, and continued to establish new towns and fortresses in the region, allowing people to move there and cultivate the land around Mt. Baekdu or in the upper areas of the Amnokgang and Dumanggang rivers.<sup>4</sup>

Joseon people took a greater interest in the northwestern region after the eighteenth century. As Joseon's increased exchanges with the Qing gave Joseon more accurate information regarding the Qing's economic, military, and cultural affairs, along with stabilized relations with the country, arguments arose that Joseon had to recognize

3. Bak Gwon, a reception official, and Yi Seon-bu, governor of Hamgyeong-do province, came under criticism because they did not accompany the Chinese envoy when he climbed Mt. Baekdu. Later, debates ensued as to whether the "Tomungang (Tumen)" inscribed on the demarcation stele referred to the Dumanggang river and which river should serve as the border between Joseon and China if the Tomungang (Tumen) river was not the Dumanggang river. This is because the river source starting from the demarcation stele was not connected to the Dumanggang river.

4. For more information about the implications of the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele and development of the northwestern region, see Kang (2000, 31-87).

the strong power of the Qing and introduce its culture, which resulted in the creation of the Northern Learning (Bukhak) School. But at the same time, having more geographical knowledge about the Liaodong region and the heritage sites of the ancient Goguryeo kingdom increased their will to recover the old territory of Goguryeo and to inherit the history of Goguryeo.

### Changed Perceptions of Borderland Defense

After the second Manchu invasion of Korea in 1636 (Byeongja Horan), calls for retaliation for the invasion were prevalent in Joseon,<sup>5</sup> and there also was a prevailing sense of crisis over another invasion by Qing. This sense of crisis was based on the assumption that the Qing might attack Joseon again if it had to retreat to its earlier base at Ningguta due to internal revolt or Mongol invasions.

In this context, Joseon was grappling with the issue of where to set up defense lines in preparation for possible war while the distinction between frontier and interior areas was made even within the northern borderland.<sup>6</sup> According to this, frontier areas included the villages around the Amnokgang river north of the Cheongcheongang river in Pyeongan-do province as well as Samsu, Gapsan and the Six Garrisons in Hamgyeong-do province, an area adjacent to enemy territories and situated on the expected route of the Qing armies, with the rest being regarded as interior areas.

The defense system in late Joseon period consisted of three stages—the defense of shore areas, defense of routes leading to the interior, and defense of major posts. Although the villages and garrison forts around the Amnokgang river, which would be subject to direct attack in the event of war, were considered to be of strategic importance, Joseon placed greater priority on safeguarding the strate-

5. Jeong (1993, 23).

6. On the sense of crisis over the possible invasion of the Qing and perceptions of frontier and interior areas during the late Joseon period, see Bae (1995, 71-84).

gic defense lines north of the Cheongcheongang river, which stretched to the Yellow Sea through the Jeogyuryeong and Gangnam mountain ranges, as well as on defending Anju and Pyeongyang, the major strongholds in Pyeongan-do province, in order to check the enemy's advance into the interior. Therefore, the shore areas were regarded as a region that Joseon might be forced to give up in the event of a military emergency.

Joseon's defense strategy was based on the assumption that in the event of its army being overpowered or placed in a geographically disadvantageous position, it would be more effective to set up defense lines at strategic points rather than fight along a front line. While the Amnokgang river valley had extensive defense zones, the interior mountainous areas had lots of rugged mountain passes and road junctions. Therefore, it was considered ineffective to maintain a linear defense position along the river in the face of massive attacks. Such a strategy would only be effective in holding back small-scale intrusions. To ensure a national defense system for Joseon, it was necessary to put greater emphasis on safeguarding the major posts leading to the capital area, though it was also necessary to guard the border areas along the river and maintain observation posts in order to monitor the enemy's moves and be able to issue alarms. It was in consideration of the strategic importance of the major posts that Joseon made greater efforts to reinforce its defense systems at Anju, Yeongbyeon, and the rugged mountain passes in the region north of the Cheongcheongang river in preparation for a possible invasion by the Qing.

In the case of Hamgyeong-do province, the Six Garrisons (Gyeongheung, Gyeongwon, Onseong, Jongseong, Hoeryeong, and Musan) were most likely to be invaded by the Chinese or other foreign enemies, so it was highly probable that any villages there could see military conflict at any time. The Six Garrisons could cope with small-scale intrusions by concentrating their military forces, but in the case of large-scale attacks, they could not expect military support from the central headquarters of the northern camp in Gyeongseong. For that reason, as a security measure, the Joseon government estab-

lished northern headquarters in Jongseong and stationed the *bukbyeongsa* (provincial military commanders in Hamgyeong-do) there at times when foreign intrusions were most likely to occur.

After the Manchu invasion of 1636, Hamgyeong-do saw the possibility of a Chinese invasion as far less likely, because of the Jurchens move to Shenyang and Beijing and the resultant stabilized international situation. Nonetheless, basic defense measures were still taken, with *bukbyeongsa* being stationed at the Jongseong camp in order to continue observation, intelligence, and surveillance activities. His tasks included issuing alerts in times of emergency by raising the fire beacon and training soldiers for combat.

*Daedong chongdo* (Complete Map of Korea) (figure 1)<sup>7</sup> clearly reveals the notion of defense maintained by the Joseon people until the mid-eighteenth century, wherein the river valley areas in Pyeongan-do and Hamgyeong-do provinces were regarded as frontier areas, and the rest of the southern region as interior. In this map, Mt. Baekdu and the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers lay almost in a straight line, with Jeogyuryeong and Hamgyeong mountain ranges connected in a single line. Compared to the maps produced in the early Joseon period, this map more clearly illustrates the mountain ranges and watercourses and describes the locations of administrative posts and military camps in detail (figure 2).<sup>8</sup> The southern regions are depicted in greater detail than the northern regions of Pyeongan-do and Hamgyeong-do, nevertheless with little distortion of the topography. However, the shore areas in the border region are arranged in an almost straight line, while the hilly strategic passes are highlighted.

Defense systems in the Amnokgang river valley underwent great

7. This map, kept at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University (Ref. No.: *godae* 4709-41), was made in the mid-18th century. For information on the production date and the characteristics of the map, see Yi Gi-bong (2004, 27-28).

8. This map is contained in *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (Revised and Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea), produced in the early Joseon period. For more detailed information on this, see Yi Gi-bang (2004, 31-32).



Fig. 1. *Daedong chongdo*  
(Complete Map of  
Korea).



Fig. 2. *Paldo chongdo* (Complete Map of the Eight Provinces).

changes with the abolition of the border forces command system (*gyewon jangje*) in 1678 (4th year of King Sukjong) and with the implementation of a system of military camps on both sides of the border (*gangbyeon jwau yeongjangje*).<sup>9</sup>

In the event of a foreign invasion, the border forces command system was designed to have the troops in the six districts east of the Amnokgang river move to the Cheorong fortress in Yeongbyeon under the command of the army officer of Manpo in Ganggye-bu county, who would assume the role of Right Border Control Commander, and to have the army officer of Changju in Changseong-bu county defend Neunghan fortress in Gwaksan in the capacity of Right Regional Control Commander. Under this defense system, troops in Isan, Changseong and Ganggye were supposed to leave their own camp to form combined forces at Guseong in order to fight off any intruders into Uiju.

Compared with the border forces command system, the "border defense system on both sides of the river" appointed the army officer of Manpo in Ganggye-bu county as Right Regional Control Commander, to have him take charge of the defense forces in Ganggye, Wiwon and Isan for the purpose of defending the upper region of the Amnokgang river. In addition, the magistrate of Changseong-bu county was appointed Left Regional Control Commander, to take charge of the forces in Changseong, Byeokdong and Sakju and defend the lower region of the river. This was intended to protect even small villages and towns that were topographically difficult to defend, rather than pursuing the earlier strategy of retreating backward from

9. The Right Border Control Commander (*ugye wonjang*) of Changju in Changseong was replaced by the Right Regional Control Commander (*uro yeongjang*), while the *cheomsa* (special expertise army officer) of Manpo in Ganggye-bu county, who had served as the Right Border Control Commander (*jwagye wonjang*), was appointed as the Left Region Control Commander (*jwaro yeongjang*). All military forces of the six counties around the Amnokgang river, except for Uiju-bu county, fell under the control of these commanders, with all command rights shared by them. *Bibyeonsa deungnok* (Records of the Border Defense Council), *chaek* 34, 4th day of the 2nd lunar month, 4th year of King Sukjong's reign.

the river areas.

Military clashes became much less likely as Joseon-Qing relations stabilized after the late seventh century and the border between the two countries was set at Mt. Baekdu in 1712 (38th year of King Sukjong). However, illegal border crossings of both Joseon and Qing people emerged as a more serious problem. It raised the question of how to operate and manage watch posts along the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers. The number of watch posts established along the Amnokgang river—from the original locations of the Four Outposts to Uji—amounted to 230, while the Dumangang river area had seventy watch posts.

Though it varied according to period and location, each watch post team consisted of one commissioned officer and 2-10 soldiers, and they were supposed to be on duty alternately at each post. Permanent watch posts were established in the middle and lower reaches of the Amnokgang river, where invasions were most likely and which could be used as a route for smuggling. In comparison, at the upper reaches of the river, where the Four Outposts used to exist and there was a threat of Qing people illegally crossing during the ginseng harvesting season, the number of watch posts was adjusted according to how much ginseng had been grown and how easily people were sneaking into the region. The main task for the watch posts established along the Dumangang river was to keep an eye on the movements of the Qing residents along the river. Though there was little possibility of a massive attack, it was necessary to keep watch over this area.

The watch posts also helped in monitoring and preventing nationals from both sides from making illegal border crossings of the river. It was for this purpose that the Joseon government established and operated permanent watch posts in high numbers along this river. If it had been merely for the purpose of observing or gathering information on the regions along the river, the government would only have required several posts in specific areas advantageous for monitoring and lookout activities. However, thorough controls were almost impossible to maintain because the narrow widths of the

Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers made it quite easy to ford both, in addition to the fact that the residents of the two countries made frequent mutual visits. Indeed, since the end of the eighteenth century, the border had become a mere nominal separation.

*Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo* (Complete Map of the Two Border Districts in the Northeastern Territory) (figure 3),<sup>10</sup> which is estimated to have been produced during the middle years of King Yeongjo's reign, depicts the defense facilities in the northeastern region as well as the topography of the Manchu region. In this map, a mountain border divides the frontier areas from inland areas, but the border does not seem so different from other mountain borders. In *Aguk chongdo* (Map of Korea) (figure 4),<sup>11</sup> which uses the same style as found in the Jeong Sang-gi-style map, characterized by highly realistic depictions of the topography, the topography on either side of the boundary is highlighted. Although the rugged mountain ridges that form strategic defense lines are also clearly marked, the mountain borders that divide frontier and inland areas are not particularly highlighted. Instead, the locations and names of each watch post and *bongsu* (smoke signal station) are described in detail, which can be seen as a change in the style of map making. In *Pye sagun do* (Map of Four Old Outposts) (figure 5),<sup>12</sup> the names, locations, and numbers of not only towns and garrisons but also watch posts are described in detail. This reflects the changing times, when the possibility of armed clashes had decreased while the problem of illegal border crossing had become more important.

10. This map is contained in *Haedong jido* (Atlas of Korea) (Ref. No.: go 4709-22) kept at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University. For information on the production date and the characteristics of the map, see Bae (1995, 79-81).

11. This map is a Jeong Sang-gi-style map, which is characterized by its realistic topographical depictions and was produced in the latter half of the 18th century. For detailed information, see Yi Gi-bong (2004, 45-46).

12. Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies (1995, 228).



Fig. 3. *Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo* (Complete Map of the Two Border Districts in Northeastern Territory).

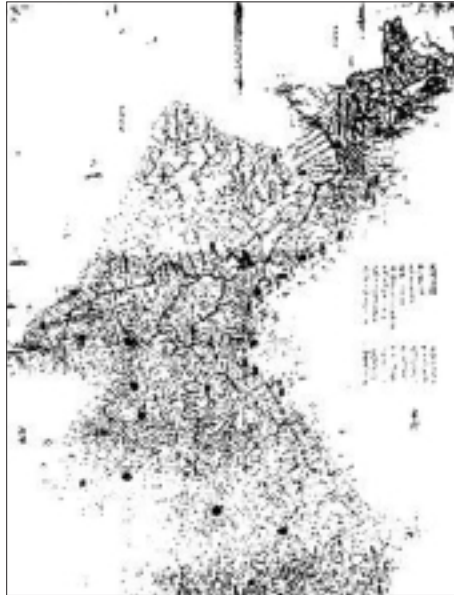


Fig. 4. *Aguk chongdo* (Map of Korea).



Fig. 5. *Pye sagun do* (Map of Old Four Outposts).

### Changed Perceptions of Northern Borderlands

The changed perceptions of territory during the late Joseon period are best understood through seeing how the northeastern region of China was viewed at the time, as Joseon people thought it to be an area under their control. Immediately after the border was set, a claim was made that the Tumen river, which was inscribed as the demarcation line on the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele, was not the Duman-gang river, and even the idea that Joseon territory reached as far as the Seonchullyeong pass was widely accepted as valid.

With few exceptions, almost all history books compiled during the late Joseon period included detailed commentary on the boundary of the ancient states of Korea when dealing with the issue of historical and geographical veracity.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the territories of the states that occupied Manchuria and the north of the peninsula, such as Old Joseon and Balhae, became the focus of inquiry, and the northern borderline of Goryeo was also considered to have been further northward in light of their importance. In other words, the Seonchullyeong pass stele and the nine fortresses, which Yun Gwan built after conquering the Jurchens during the reign of King Gwangjong of Goryeo, were believed to be located not around Hamheung in Hamgyeong-do province, but “700 *ri* north of the Duman-gang river,” as described in *Goryeosa jiriji* (Geographical Appendix to the *History of Goryeo*). This was not merely a verification of location, but an expression of the Joseon people’s fervent desire to recover lost territory. It also reflects their regret over the fact that Kim Jong-seo stopped his advance at the Dumangang river rather than advancing to the Seonchullyeong pass when the Six Garrisons were established during the early Joseon period, as the Jurchens’ power was weak at the time.<sup>14</sup>

13. For the issue of the territory of ancient states dealt with in the history books from the late Joseon period, see Han (1989).

14. 昔尹璠拓境 至速平江 遣碑尚在 至金宗瑞 以豆滿為境 國人猶恨. “Cheonjimun baekdusan” (Lake Cheonji at Mt. Baekdu), in Yi Ik, *Seongho saseol* (Collected Works of Yi Ik), *gwon* 2. Similar information is also found in “Baekdusan jeonggye” (Border Demarcation

In *Dongguk paldo daechongdo* (Great Map of the Eight Provinces of Korea) (figure 6),<sup>15</sup> which employed the same style as found in *Dongguk yeoji seungnam* (Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea) from the early Joseon period when viewed in terms of the genealogy of maps, the Seonchullyeong pass is depicted in a straight line with Mt. Baekdu in the region north of the Dumangang river.



Fig. 6. *Dongguk paldo daechongdo* (Great Map of the Eight Provinces of Korea)

Along with this, the idea was spread that the Seonchullyeong pass should have been included within Joseon territory when fixing the boundary at Mt. Baekdu, but instead they lost about 40km<sup>2</sup> of territory because they failed to do so. At that time, the Qing dynasty

at Mt. Baekdu), in *Mangi yoram* (Book of All the Important Techniques of Governance).

15. This map is kept at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University (Ref. No.: *garamgo* 912.51-Y73). For information on the production date of this map, see Yi Gi-bong (2004, 59).

demanded that Joseon fix the boundary between the two countries; however, it was not an attempt to divide the territory by force of arms, but a request to confirm and establish the boundary between the two. On that account, the Joseon leaders were criticized for their having lost hundreds of square kilometers of territory because they coped with the situation in a passive manner. They also claimed that Joseon could have taken more land if they had insisted that the territory of Joseon, which succeeded Goryeo, reached as far as the Seonchullyeong pass, just as Seo Hui managed to gain the six garrison settlements east of the Amnokgang river (*gangdong yukju*) through diplomatic bargaining with the Khitan general in the Goryeo period.<sup>16</sup>

Bak Nae-gyeom, who served as a *bukbyeongsa* in 1827 (27th year of King Sunjo's reign), insisted that Seonchullyeong pass was originally supposed to mark the national boundary. He also claimed that the primary purpose of Mu Kedeng's visit to Joseon in 1712, when the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele was erected, was to negotiate the boundary between Joseon and the Qing, specifically defining Seonchullyeong as the borderline between the two. However, he stated that the Joseon government was not interested in the pass, and the reception official Bak Gwon, who was commissioned to take charge of the area regardless of his will, was so old and ill that, upon arriving at Gapsan, he was unable to go any further. According to Bak's account, Mu Kedeng, who was waiting for Joseon officials to arrive at the Seonchullyeong pass, dashed up to Bak Gwon and hastily determined the boundary between the two countries with Mt. Baekdu as the divide. As a result of this, Korea lost Mt. Baekdu, as well as the Seonchullyeong pass.<sup>17</sup> Even though this assertion is far

16. 頃年 穆克登之來定界也 未知奉命者 能舉此為言 如徐熙之於蕭遜寧耶. "Yun Gwan bi" (Stele of Yun Gwan), in Yi Ik, *Seongho saseol, gwon 2*. For the opinions of Joseon scholars who deplored the loss of the northern territory with the erection of the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele in 1712, see Jo (1974, 166-167).

17. 蓋兩國定界 本在於先春嶺 嶺有高麗侍中尹瓘所立碑 而肅廟壬辰 穆克登奉康熙旨 來到先春嶺 要與更定疆界 廷臣皆憚遠役 百般厭避 朴判書權 年已七十餘矣 以其無勢力 差出遠接使迫送之 朴公到甲山 老病無以前進 逗遛十數日 穆胡諜知之 一日一夜 疾馳七百餘里 登分水嶺督促之 朴公不得已使差員軍官輩往接之 穆胡遂立碑定



from the truth of what transpired during the demarcation of the northern boundary, we can see that this sentiment—that the Seonchullyeong pass was the original boundary and that it was necessary to recover their territory up to the pass—was widespread among the public.

Hong Gyeong-mo proclaimed Joseon's sovereignty over the old areas of the ancient states, emphasizing that the region where Yun Gwan built the nine fortresses had been Korea's territory since its foundation through various dynasties, such as the three Joseon states (Dangun Joseon, Gija Joseon and Wiman Joseon), Goguryeo, and Balhae.<sup>18</sup> He also claimed that Yun Gwan advanced to the Seonchullyeong pass in order to secure difficult areas appropriate for defense while Kim Jong-seo lost about 300 km<sup>2</sup> of land because he relied only on the Dumangang river for defense.<sup>19</sup> He went on to say that as a result of not recovering the Seonchullyeong pass, Joseon had failed to take back the historical relics of the nation's founder, to say nothing of the old areas of the ancient states. He lamented:

If we had used the Seonchullyeong pass as a stronghold for defense, we could have seized the entire region from the south of the Huntong river to the seas, and as well reincorporated the old territories of Balhae and Buyeo into our dominion. This could have been done in a single action. The Dumangang river is only a stream that flows between valleys. That is why we could not rely on this river for defense, and as a result we have had Haegwan and Aldong, where the great founder of our nation was born, taken by barbarians, and still have not recovered the area. What is worse, we failed to fix the Seonchullyeong pass as a boundary and are still

界而去 從此以後 分水嶺以北 白頭大澤 亦入於胡地 而我國坐失先春嶺矣 可勝歎哉. Bak Nae-gyeom, *Bungmak ilgi* (Diary in the Northern Land).

18. 夫高麗九城之地 則三朝鮮 句麗 渤海之古疆也 昔東扶餘 以檀君之裔 居東海之濱而後 爲高氏所并 則自開闢以來 爲東國之有也. Hong Gyeong-mo, "Silla jinheungwang buksunbi" (Monument Stone of Silla King Jinheung's Tour around the Northern Territory), in *Gwanam jeonseo* (Complete Works of Gwanam), *gwan* 27.

19. 忠肅之不界豆江 而界先春 蓋亦有可據之險也 節齋之據豆江之險 而縮地七百里 已甚非計也. Hong Gyeong-mo, *Gwanam jeonseo*, *gwan* 27.

being deprived of the old river areas of the Goryeo dynasty. How regrettable this all is!<sup>20</sup>

Their interest in the Seonchullyeong pass was not simply limited to academic disputes or contentions over its geopolitical location. It offered an important basis for the claim that since the territory of the ancient states reached as far as the pass, they had to recover the lost territory.

The belief that the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers could not define the border of the nation, and the Manchu region, the old territory of Goguryeo and Balhae, was their territory, dated back to the early Joseon period. However, until the seventeenth century, Joseon could not afford to pursue an aggressive policy of reclamation or expansion of its territory against the claim on the northern border. When delimiting the borderline at Mt. Baekdu, the Joseon authorities had no choice but to focus on defining the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers as the border between Joseon and China. In comparison, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, their interest expanded to the northeastern region of China. These changes in perception were based on Joseon's ongoing development of the northern border areas, and this expanded scope served as another stimulus for their reclamation of the northern territories.

Some began to insist that the Tumen river, which was inscribed on the demarcation stele as the boundary between the two countries, did not refer to the Dumangang river, and that since the courses of the Tumen river were traced to the Sunghua river, the northern boundary of Joseon should have been drawn along the Sunghua and Heilong rivers. The claim that the Bungyegang river should be the boundary was also widely accepted and adopted. Because the location of this demarcation river differed from the river's source and where it flows, it is difficult to find what it exactly refers to. There-

20. 我據先春 則混同之南 以至於海 皆可奄有 渤海扶餘之域 復歸版圖 此一舉手之間也 夫豆江一溪澗也 既不可依其險 而奚關幹東 日月胚胎之地 又陷於腥氈 而不之收 且不據先春而縮麗朝之舊界 豈不惜哉. Hong Gyeong-mo, *Gwanam jeonseo*.

fore, it is merely presumed that there was a river that emerged from Mt. Baekdu, flowed at a certain distance from the mainstream of the Dumangang river, and finally joined the Dumangang river downstream. All records of various data put together, it is most probable that the present Hailanhe river, which joins the Dumangang river near Onseong, was considered the Bungyegang river.

In *Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo* (Complete Map of the Two Border Districts in Northeastern Territory),<sup>21</sup> which is assumed to have been produced in the mid-eighteenth century, the pass is positioned north of the Dumangang river, emphasizing that the river area around the pass was achieved in the Goryeo period. In addition, the map distinguishes between the source of the Tumen river around the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele and the source of the Bungyegang river, and links the two rivers with a wooden barricade, indirectly suggesting that the actual boundary between Joseon and China was not the Dumangang river, but the Bungyegang river.



Fig. 7. Part of *Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo*

21. The map is kept at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University (go 4702-22A). For further explanation, see Kang (2000. 253).



Fig. 8. The source of the Bungyegang river and the source of the Tummunang river (part of *Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo*)

In the early nineteenth century, Seong Hae-eung argued that the source of the Bungyegang river was different from that of the Tumen river, and that it emerged from the eastern flank of Mt. Baekdu, flowed east, and joined the Dumangang river near Onseong, unlike the Huntong river or the Heilong river, neither of which flows northward.

In fact, the Dumangang river and the Tumen river are one and the same. However, people thought that the Bungyegang river rose from Lake Cheonji and flowed east, and they began to distinguish between the two rivers, referring to the Bungyegang river as "Dumangang." From the watershed, the earth slopes downward a

distance of approximately 20 to 30km to the source of the Bungyegang river, and another 40km to the source of the Dumangang river. The Jinjangsan mountain lies along between the two rivers, which flow toward and reach Hailan. . . . The Bungyegang river meets waters from various valleys at Hailan and joins the Dumangang river when it reaches Geongatoo (or Jianjiatui in Chinese) in Onseong.<sup>22</sup>

This passage states that the source of the river connected to the demarcation stele is the Tumen river, which flows and meets the Dumangang river, and that aside from this river, there is another river called Bungyegang. Seong Hae-eung criticized the circumstances under which the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele was erected by Qing China, and argued that they had to identify and confirm the existence of the Bungyegang river to the last instance and prove that it was a different river from the Tumen river. However, Seong further stated that they failed to do so and thus failed to reclaim the old areas by asserting the Bungyegang river as the boundary between the two countries.

Jeong Yak-yong stated that the Dumangang river had other names such as Tongmusu, Domunsu, Ayagogang, Tomungang, and Aehogang, and that it emerged from the Eoyunha river, which ran down from the southeastern valley of Mt. Baekdu.<sup>23</sup> The Bungyegang river starts from the eastern valley of Mt. Baekdu, flows east, and meets waters from various valleys, before finally flowing into the Dumangang river outside of the Donggwanbo bank. They estimated the distance from the river's source to its confluence to be about

22. 豆滿土門實一也 而人見分界 亦自天池發源而東流 遂以土門豆滿 分之爲二 指分界爲豆滿 自分水嶺 土墩訖于杉谷分界江之源 幾六七十里 赤巖豆滿江之源 可八十里 平麓進行 從兩水間爲眞長山 訖於海關 …… 分界江會海關 諸谷水至穩城 伴加堆 合豆滿江. Seong Hae-eung, “Baekdusan gi” (Journal of a Trip to Mt. Baekdu), in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip* (Collected Works of Yeongyeongjae), *gwon* 46.

23. 滿水出白山之東南陔 此卽豆滿河也 水有六名 金時稱 統門水 亦稱徒門水 明時稱阿也苦江 今稱土門江 亦稱愛濤江 我邦稱 豆滿江 譯語之變也. Jeong Yak-yong, “Mansu” (Full Waters) 1, in *Daedong sugyeong* (Waterways in Korea), *gwon* 6, *Yeoyudang jeonseo* (Collected Works of Yeoyudang), *gwon* 6.

80km. Jeong Yak-yong also claimed that the reason it was named Bungyegang was because it had served as a demarcation line between the two countries, and insisted that this was why the river should not be called the “Tumen river.”<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, there is no clear explanation given as to when and on what occasion the river was named that way.

We are apt to think of the Bungyegang river as a border river between Korea and China on the grounds that *bungye* means “border.” However, this is a misunderstanding caused by the phonetic representation of the Jurchen words *punggagang* (*fengjijiang*), which referred to today's Hailanhe, using the Chinese characters *bungyegang* (*fenjijiang*).<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, this misunderstanding paradoxically testifies to the increased interest in the northern territory during the late Joseon period.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, Joseon people adhered to the notion of the Bungyegang river as a border river, regardless of whether it was geographically true or not, which encouraged them to recover their old territory in Manchuria and provided the grounds for the idea that it was legal for Joseon people to cross the Dumangang river to clear the land and live there during the nineteenth century.

Criticism of Kim Jong-seo's activities and the erection of the Mt.

24. 分界河 出長白山東麓 東流合諸谷之水 至潼關堡外 入于滿水 源流可二百里也 按白山東麓之水 上者阿几河 下者爲分界河 曾以此水界兩國 故有斯目焉 我人或以此 別稱土門江 非也. “Mansu” 2, in *Daedong sugyeong*.

25. Yi Gang-won (2007, 112-114). This article attempts to clarify the true facts regarding the rivers, without considering the meanings of their names described in old maps.

26. The entry titled “Baekdusan jeonggye” (Border Demarcation at Mt. Baekdu) is included in the “Gunjeong” (Military Administration) chapter of *Mangi yoram* (Book of Ten Thousand Techniques of Governance), which was compiled by the government in 1808 (8th year of King Sunjo's reign), while Hong Se-tae's “Baekdusan gi” (Account of Trip to Mt. Baekdu), which gives an account of the general circumstances in which Mt. Baekdu was established as the borderline between Joseon and Qing with the erection of the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele, and “Gullyeo daeseong” (Great Military Accomplishments), which insists on using the Bungyegang river as the demarcation line between the two countries, are also published in the same source. This reflects the increased interest in the areas around Mt. Baekdu and the areas north of the Dumangang river.

Baekdu Demarcation Stele, and the popular understanding of the Bungyegang river were all based on an imprecise understanding of the geography of the region. However, through this, we can see that aggressive approaches to and perceptions of the northern territories were widespread during the late Joseon period.

### Concluding Remarks

Even after the Manchu invasion of 1636, Joseon experienced a “sense of crisis” in relation to Qing China for a good period of time and was preparing for a possible war with the Qing. After the Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele was erected in the early eighteenth century, Joseon put forward a policy to reclaim its northern border territory, but there still existed the possibility of a Qing invasion. It was not until the late eighteenth century that Joseon’s sense of crisis nearly completely faded away. Meanwhile, historical perceptions of the northern borderland and old areas were actively expressed earlier on. It was widely accepted among people that the Seonchullyeong pass, where it was said that Yun Gwan erected a stele after defeating the Jurchens during the Goryeo period, was located about 30km north of the Dumangang river. There was also a claim that because the water-course starting from Mt. Baekdu Demarcation Stele did not bear any relation to the Dumangang river, the borderline between Joseon and Qing China had to be redefined based on the location of the Bungyegang river.

These changed perceptions are faithfully reflected in the border region maps of the late Joseon period. In the maps made during the early Joseon period, Pyeongan-do and Hamgyeong-do provinces are drawn as being located on the same latitude, without any clear borderline between Joseon and China, while only Mt. Baekdu, along with the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers, are marked on the map. Likewise, in the maps highlighting the Jurchen areas, Mt. Baekdu and the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers are described as being on the same latitude, while the Gangnam and Jeogyuryeong mountain

ranges, which correspond to the strategic defense lines of Pyeongan-do province, as well as the Hamgyeong mountain ranges in Hamgyeong-do province, are highlighted. This depiction is also found in the maps produced in the mid- and late-eighteenth century, which clearly distinguish between the frontier areas around the Amnokgang and Dumangang rivers and the interior areas located south of the rivers.

In comparison, the maps produced in the late eighteenth century to early nineteenth century, including both general national maps and maps of strategic military sites, clearly show the ridges of Mt. Baekdu, suggesting that the need for strategic defense lines based on the sense of crisis in relation to the Qing had faded. This also means that the distinction between frontier and interior areas had been blurred, thus resulting in the decreased sense of regional discrimination.

As mentioned above, whereas the distinction between frontier areas and interior areas persisted for quite a long period of time, the people of Joseon became actively aware of the importance of the northern borderland and the boundary of the ancient states from the early eighteenth century. In the maps that are presumed to have been drawn prior to the erection of Mt. Demarcation Stele, the northern territory is roughly or erroneously illustrated, while in the maps that were later produced, including ones that imitated the maps from early Joseon, the location of the Seonchullyeong pass is clearly marked. In the maps describing the topographies of Joseon and the northeastern part of China, there are margin notes that refer to the Seonchullyeong pass as “280 km north of the Dumangang river” or as “the border of Goryeo.” This tells us that the Joseon people’s active appropriation of the old areas of the ancient states permeated in the maps they produced.

By examining the border region maps of the late Joseon period, we can see that the discriminatory perception of the river areas as frontier or peripheral areas had changed, and also presume that positive approaches to the reclamation of the northern territory were already prevalent in Joseon society.

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**GLOSSARY**

<i>bongsu</i>	烽燧
<i>bukbyeongsa</i>	北兵使
<i>Bukhak</i>	北學
<i>Bungyegang</i>	分界江
<i>dohobu</i>	都護府
<i>Donggwambo</i>	潼關堡
<i>fenjijiang</i> ▶ <i>punggagang</i>	
<i>gangbyeon jwau yeongjangje</i>	江邊左右領將制
<i>gangdong yukju</i>	江東六州
<i>gyewon jangje</i>	繼援將制
<i>punggagang</i>	豐家江
<i>Seo Hui</i>	徐熙
<i>Seobuk pia yanggye malli illamji jeondo</i>	西北彼我兩界萬里一覽之全圖
<i>simni bangan</i>	十里方眼
<i>wonjeopsa</i>	遠接使