

Japanese Military Cartography in the Korean Peninsula, 1873-1910

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For the development of historical GIS in Asia-Pacific areas, the research on the cartography in the past is necessary. In order to represent the landscapes and territories described in the maps of each period on GIS planes, cartographical features of those maps should be scrutinized along with the research of their technical background. This presentation intends to follow the development of Japanese military map making in the Korean Peninsula up to its annexation and examine their cartographic aspects .

In the first stage, Japan had to depend on heavily on charts and maps made by foreign countries for the preparation of the maps of Korea, because of the lack of information. At the same time Japan carried out hydrological survey along the Korean coast in spite of the reaction of Korean military. It is well known the armed conflict provoked by the presence of a Japanese surveying ship lead the conclusion of the treaty in 1876. Military officials in attendance upon the diplomatic officials conducted inland survey and produced the maps of main routes since this treaty.

The out break of Sino-Japanese War in 1894 raised the demand for military maps and the Provisional Department of Land Survey was organized and dispatched to Korea, China, and Taiwan. In Korea, surveyors in disguise mapped many areas, but most of them had to confront with people's nationalistic resistance and the department was dissolved in 1896.

However secret survey by a few topographers was maintained and after the out break of Russo-Japanese War in 1904 new Provisional Department of Land Survey was again organized. Japanese topographers in Korea had to endure the stout resistance again, although the survey itself was not formally illegal since the treaty in 1905.

In order to fill the growing demand for topographical maps, those prepared by secret survey were published for civil use in 1911. The date of survey was erased in these maps to conceal their illegal nature. We confirmed the time of survey (1895-1908), examining the catalogue of original military maps which had been preserved at the Japanese Imperial Land Survey. In order to confirm their accuracy, we compared the latitude and longitude of many points recorded in these maps with those in the maps which were prepared with triangulation since 1910 by the Japanese colonial government. Although the accuracy is not high because of the nature of the survey process, the contents of these maps should be revived in historical GIS.