



Hand-coloured manuscript map in eight parts, backed on paper with manuscripts, some tears and staining along the folds, sketch drawing on verso, folding into original pasted covers.

MANUSCRIPT MAP OF KOREA SHOWING DOKDO

東國輿誌 [- Geographical depiction of the Eastern country - Korea]

Author

ANONYMOUS

Publication date

1836

Publisher

Publication place

Korea,

Physical description

Hand-coloured manuscript map in eight parts, backed on paper with manuscripts, some tears and staining along the folds, sketch drawing on verso, folding into original pasted covers.

Dimensions

1003 by 584mm. (39.5 by 23 inches).

Notes

Rare manuscript administrative map of Korea, showing Dokdo island.

The map is part of a larger geographical and historical record of Korea titled 東國輿誌 (Dongguk Yeoji) which is written on the cover of current example.

The text next to the title ‘上之二年丙申十月廿日’ dates the map to the twentieth day of the tenth month of the second year of King Heonjong’s reign (1836). The map provides a detailed look at the eight provinces of Korea, including their number of households, local administrators, and fortifications, as well as the distances from certain cities to the capital. The map also includes a representation of Dokdo, which is an island located between South Korea and Japan.

To the upper right of the map lists the eight provinces 京畿, 忠清, 全羅, 慶尚, 江原, 咸鏡, 黃海, 平安 and their administrative details, including the number of households for each province, the number of local administrators and of large and small fortifications, the distances from certain cities to the capital.

“Koreans have been making and using maps for more than fifteen centuries. Since most of their country’s borders were naturally determined by the sea, they had a general concept of Korea’s outline at an early date, and their deep consciousness of samch’olli kangsan (three thousand li of mountains and rivers) gave their mapmakers a general idea of what went within that outline. Underlying these imprints on the national psyche were a strong tradition of administrative and cultural geography and a nationally conceived theory of geomantic analysis. All these factors contributed to the production of interesting map” (Ledyard).

The style of this map, albeit from the nineteenth century, lends to the style of the Korean cartographer Chong Ch’ok (1390-1475). The towns are represented by their names in coloured circles. “A map completed in 1463 by Chong Ch’ok had great influence and is believed to have been taken as a model by later mapmakers, so that we have a reasonably good idea of how the peninsular outline was conceived as well as of the cartographic detail involving rivers and mountains, placenames, and other features” (Ledyard).

Mountain ranges are especially notable in their sawtooth patterns. “In general the most distinctive aspect of Korean maps is the strong visual presence of mountains, indicative of the special relationship that the Korean people have to their mountains physically and spiritually, as well as geomantically, and journeys to mountains in Korea are still part of its culture, religion and philosophy today” (Pegg).

It is important to note that the controversial island now known as Dokdo is depicted below the list of provincial names to the right of the peninsula, labelled with its ancient toponym ‘于山島’. Located between South Korea and Japan, the island has been a source of territorial dispute between the two countries for several decades. To Koreans, Dokdo is of great cultural, historical, and strategic significance.

Dokdo has been a part of Korea’s history and culture for over 1,500 years. There is evidence that ancient Koreans used the island for fishing and other maritime activities. Over the years, Dokdo has also become a symbol of Korean national identity and pride, and for Koreans, Dokdo represents their country’s sovereignty and a connection to their cultural and historical heritage.

Bibliography

Pegg, Richard. *Cartographic Traditions in East Asian Maps*. Chicago, The MacLean Collection, 2014, pp.85-117; Harley, J.B. and David Woodward. *The History of Cartography, Volume 2, Book 2, Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies*, 1994. Chapter 10: Cartography in Korea, by Gari Ledyard, pp. 235-345

Provenance

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