

The Formation and Accumulation of Joseon's Overseas Knowledge: Focusing on the *Map of Joseon, Japan and Ryukyu in Yuditu*

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Abstract

Joseon restricted maritime trade, but she still actively collected overseas information including documents and maps from envoys and messengers to avoid getting involved in the conflicts between China and Japan diplomatic system. The "Map of Ryukyu" (琉球國圖) in Haedong Chegukki (海東諸國紀, The Account of Various Countries across the Eastern Sea) was drawn in the 15th century, when Joseon, Ryukyu and Japan still had international maritime trade, and it has since become a representative map of Ryukyu. In later years, due to the issues of Japanese pirates and fake envoys, the relationship between Joseon and Ryukyu was strained, and their official exchange was limited to the occasions when they paid tribute to China. This situation limited Joseon's access to the geographical information about Ryukyu, and even Joseon's maps of Ryukyu drawn in the late 19th century were still based on the ancient map, containing oversimplified and erroneous data. However, an increase of information about Ryukyu is found after a careful perusal of different maps. This study draws on the "Map of Joseon, Japan and Ryukyu" (朝鮮日本琉球國圖) in Yuditu (輿地圖, Map of the Empire) to examine the geographical information about Ryukyu, which aims to understand how Ryukyu-related geographical information developed in Joseon, and how maritime geographical information of East Asia circulated in the early modern era.

Keywords: Joseon, Ryukyu, Ryukyu Map, Yuditu, Information Exchange