

THE XIXth CENTURY KOREAN MAP OF RUSSIA' PRIMORSKY TERRITORY

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In the second half of the 19th century, when Russia and China signed an Agreement in Peking, according to which Russia acquired Ussury Territory, Korea represented itself as a centralized feudal country. Since 1637 there were feudatory relations with Manzhus, which occupied China and in 1644 proclaimed the establishment of the Qing Dynasty. To the middle of the 19th century this dependence from China was more or less nominal. It was limited mainly by the yearly sending of the Embassy to Peking with tributary gifts, although Qing China was anxious for to hold Korea in the position of the vassal country.

After Japanese invasion of 1592-1598 and devastating Manzhu's conquest, Korea governors were feared of further assault from its neighbors, and since the middle of 17th century they began promoting the so called policy of isolation from the outside world. The same policy was promoted by Qing China, which was apprehended penetration of new ideas from Europe and increasing competition of European countries over Asia.

The Korea government prohibited for the inhabitants of maritime territories to cooperate with foreigners if they approach the country, and even to construct the long voyage vessels. According to the 1784 Korea Legal Code, the persons who crossed the border with Manzhuria for collecting Ginseng, were punished capitally. Those Koreans who entered the inner territories of China, after extradition, they were executed by brutal 100 slashes. Local authorities who didn't report about crossing of the border by subordinate population to the higher-ups, were dismissed from their posts¹.

The Peking Russia-Chinese agreement was signed in 1860, it confirmed the conditions of the Aihun agreement of 1858, which passed the left-bank territory from Argun-river till Amur estuary to Russia, and declared belonging to Russia all the territories east to the Ussury river. Peking agreement was signed without the participation of Korean court representatives. It declared: "... The border line between the two countries from Sungacha river further crossing Hangkai lake, stretching to Belenghe (Tur) river, from its estuary the line is crossing mountain range, stretching to the Hibu/Hubtu river estuary, and since then along the mountains between Hunchun-river and the sea till the Tumen-river. The territories situated east belongs to Russia state, situated to the west – to China state. The border line is setting against the Tumen river for 20 Chinese li before its flowing into the sea"².

On April 27, 1861 Russia Tsar Alexander II approved the draft of "The Rules for Russians and Foreigners Settlement in Amur, Primorsky Territories of East Siberia". According to the Rules the settlers intending to migrate for Amur territory, if they do it at their own expenses, were provided with selection of free plots of public land about 100

¹ P.K[afarov]. O Manzah I Koreitsah = About Manzu and Koreans // Izvestiya Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva = Russian Geographical Society Proceedings. – 1870. – Volume YI. – Part 1. – P. 22.

² Quote after: Пак Б.Д. Россия и Корея. Изд. второе, дополненное. М., Институт востоковедения РАН, 2004. – Стр. 69.

dessiatina (approx. 2 ¾ acres) for temporary possession or for absolute possession. They were exempted from the head-money forever, excused from military service for 10 years, and besides were released from land use payment for 20 years³.

In August 1884 the France-China war was broken out. Japan used this situation for expanding its influence in Korea. There wasn't any doubt in aggressive intention of Japanese government for Korea after the coup, which occurred in December 1884. At the same time noticeably increased the profound effect of China towards Korea.

In this situation the King Kojong 高宗, bearing in mind to find out the alternative power which could help to protect the country from the encroachment of Japan and China upon Korea independence, sent in the end of 1884 a mission of high officials, namely Kwong Dong Su (權東壽), Kim Young Won (金鏞元), Kim Gwang Hong (金光薰), and others to Russia Primorsky Territory.

Upon returning to Korea they submitted to the court a few documents, including a Russia Lands Map, which reviewed the main results of the trip. It was published in 1994 by the Korean Academy of Spiritual Culture together with the other rarity documents about the territories, which were situated to the north of the Korean border⁴. The subtitle indicates, that in addition to the Map there is a description of the contemporary Qing China and Russia relations 清俄形情, the disposition of the military fortifications 關防兵將, quantity of Koreans living within the territory 戶口多少我民, the border line 交界相對.

The Map consists of 10 folios. Besides the landscape with the mountain ranges, rivers, valleys, roads and settlements, there is a text written on the fields of the folios. It is written in Chinese language. It is 漢文 “hanmun”, or Korean version of subsequent variety of 文言 “wenyan” - ancient Chinese language spread over Korea. It differs slightly from Chinese “wenyan” in characters, spelling of geographical titles, names.

The Map is accompanied with the ‘Comments on the Status of China-Russia Border Territories’ 清俄輿地形情釋義序. The authors of the Comments are indicated, they are Kim Gwang Hong 金光薰 and Xing Son Uk 申先郁, the members of the mission of Korean officials to Russia Primorsky Territory in 1884-1885. It could be presumed that both were the authors of the Map as well. In 1884 they visited already Primorsky Territory⁵.

Since the beginning the territory is described as “*a vast, virgin plain with amount of land suitable for agricultural cultivation*” (Lutundao 鹿菴島 // Russia Lands Map 俄國輿地圖 Folio 1).

As it is shown in the manuscript, there were many Koreans, who inhabited that time the Primorsky Territory. That's why one of the main ideas of the work was to declare valid the presence of Koreans outside the state, to describe how many of them (farms 戶

³ Complete Set of Russia Empire Legislation // Op. cit. P. 76

⁴ 江北日記 . 江左輿地記 . 俄國輿地圖 Diaries of the Mission to the Left Bank of the River. Notes about the Lands on the Left Bank of the River. Russia Lands Map 韓國精神文化研究院 Korean Academy of Spiritual Culture Publishing House. Sonnam, 1994.

⁵ Pak B.D. Op. cit. – P. 150; Нарочницкий А.Л. Колониальная политика капиталистических держав на Дальнем Востоке, 1860-1895. М., 1956, стр. 371-375.

and people 口) lived in Primorsky Russia, where did they set up their settlements, how big was the adjacent territory and how did they live there.

The description of every colony begins with the geographical definition of the place compare to the nearest known settlements. The first one – Lutundao 鹿菴島 - is defined relatively to the villages, which were situated to the south of Tumen river, at the Korean territory, as Xishuiluo 西水羅, Zaoshanbao 造山堡, Qingxing 慶興. In Lutundao there were living 113 families (戶 hu) of “our people”, means Koreans, numbered 822 persons. *“They don’t pay taxes and duties, not provide compulsory labor service, just concerned themselves with descendants education. They highly esteemed customs and religion of their country. They do not conform to the Russians morals and habits, because they didn’t forget the gracious patronage of the ruling dynasties, which raised them during a few hundred years”*. (Lutundao 鹿菴島 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖 Folio 1).

“Peasants are heartily working on the land and in the forest, obtain different revenues, as a result they are wealthy, food and commodities are in abundance. Their head-dresses, wedding and funeral clothing comply with the customs of their country. In spite of the Russians condemnation they don’t follow Russian habits, but are praising, not leaving behind the concepts of their own country (means Korea). They choose from their environment the patriarch with stainless reputation, nominating them as a foreman for to rule the others”. (Yanqiu 延秋 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 3).

It was important for the mission to show to the King that the Koreans while living in Russia remained faithful to their Motherland, retained their native language, traditions and customs.

There is a description of local crafts and businesses, for example: *“There are rice, kaoliang, millet gathered here, crucian, carp, perch caught in the waters, barley and other agricultural specimens are raised on the lands, white-blue salt excavated”* (Lutundao 鹿菴島 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 1).

“Peasant’s fields are arranged tightly and accurately, as checkers at the chess-board. The corns are succulent and high. In case of emergency they could render to neighbors food assistance... People and goods – all are in abundance”. (Luodong 羅洞 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 1).

There is record about the time when Koreans were migrated from Xianjindao 咸鏡道 province (now Hamgen province of North Korea), crossed Tumen 豆滿江 river for Primorsky Territory. *“In the bad harvest years Ji-Geng (1879-1880) the people from Qingyuan 慶源 were migrated. They developed virgin lands and began living here”* (Yanqiu 延秋 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 3).

The same year Ji-Geng described in the other place – Zhixinxu 芝新墟. The reasons of the migration was to escape from the bad harvest years consequences, as well as be saved from political oppression and economic poverty, and it have to be mentioned, important role played Russia government incentive policy towards immigrants. *“Town-dwellers became panic-stricken, villagers were thrilled with horror. They suddenly began cultivate virgin lands, migrating everywhere. Refugees, male and female, crossed the border, entering Russia. Under an implicit obedience they intended to live there”* (Zhixinxu 芝新墟 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 3).

The Map is full with the account of Russia's military camps, its artillery fortification, cavalry disposition, and other military installations. Here is the evidence, that in addition to the above purposes of the mission, there was also an intelligence goal – to use information gained from the Korean settlers for to make secret investigation about the border, foreign policy and geography of neighbour countries.

“Military and naval forces are estimated at 500-600 soldiers. There are 5 big cannons installed on the coast, ... the mines are allotted” (Muxuyuying 木許隅營 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 2).

“North and South military camps – are two fortified station with 2000 cavalry. There are 1500 infantry corps, 200 patrol-guard units, 120 artillery gunners, one police officer, more than 50 different military troop leaders... Provision and forage are in abundance, warehouses are full.” (Yanqiuying 延秋營 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖. Folio 2).

“There are few military units (ying 營) quartered in the East and West. The armed guards are 1000 soldiers, commander-in-chief possesses 5000 soldiers” (Hunchun 琿春 // Russia Lands Map 俄國與地圖 Folio 2).

The Map of Russia Primorsky Territory assumed to be one of the first important and rare documents related to the early history of Russia-Korea relations.