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Japanese Imperial Maps of the Meiji Era : Analysis of the explanatory notes and legends

1. Japanese Imperial Maps of the Meiji era in the Library of Congress collection
2. The Japanese Imperial Maps of China in the Meiji Era
3. The Japanese Imperial Maps of the Korean Peninsula in the Meiji Era
4. The explanatory notes and legends
5. Conclusion

In the process of researching Japanese Imperial maps, it was found that many maps prepared by Japanese Imperial Army were housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. USA¹. We investigated them and found a lot of maps of foreign countries which had been drawn by the Japanese army officers in the Meiji Era². Our research revealed the fact that Japanese military officers, though their methods were rudimentary, got information in China and the Korean Peninsula and prepared maps before the establishment of the Imperial Land Survey for the Sino-Japanese War³.

These maps are important materials for providing geographic information about the past. In this presentation, I will give an overview of Japanese Imperial Maps of the Meiji Era, focusing on an analysis of the explanatory notes and legends. Since the notes offer text, they are valuable as materials which tell us the backgrounds of the map makers.

The explanatory notes of the maps of China show when and where surveyors investigated for making the map. And the information is offered what kind of scale was adopted, and how makers surveyed the land. In the legends, villages, castles and roads are particularly important because they were drawn in most maps. They were classified according to the feature still more detail. There is a possibility that Common way of drawing of legends had been established around 1884. Same can be said about the maps of China and the Korean Peninsula.

¹ Imazato, S. and Hisatake, T. 2009. Japanese overseas maps in the Library of Congress and the Library of American Geographical Society, In *Japanese Modern Cartography concerning Asia-Pacific Areas: Approaches to Gaihōzu*, ed. S. Kobayashi, 55-69, Osaka University Press. (in Japanese)

² Watanabe, R., Yamachika, K. and Kobayashi, S. 2009. Map making of Korean Peninsula by Japanese army officers during 1880s: The study of the maps in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. *Map (Japan Cartographers Association)*, 47(4):1-16. (in Japanese)

Yamachika, K., Watanabe, R., and Kobayashi, S. 2010. The route maps of the Korean Peninsula drawn by Japanese army officers during 1880s. *Proceedings of the 14th International Conference of Historical Geographers, Kyoto 2009*, 307-308, Kyoto University Press.

³ Kobayashi, S., Watanabe, R., and Yamachika, K. 2010. The travel and surveying for the preparation of maps in East Asia by Japanese army officers during the 1880s. *The Shirin (The society of Historical Research)*, 93:473-505. (in Japanese)