

European Cartography of Korea in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

UNNO Kazutaka

Meijo College, Osaka

As many scholars have pointed out,¹⁾ was a Portuguese Ruy de Araujo, then the chief of the trading house in Malacca, who referred to Korea firstly among Europeans. He states in his letter dated Feb. 6, 1510, addressed to Afonso de Albuquerque, that men called 'Gores' would come to Malacca for trade after a forty days' voyage. Albuquerque, then the governor-general of India, also mentioned 'Gores' in his letters to the King, dated April 1, 1512, and Oct. 20 and Nov. 30, 1513, respectively.²⁾ However, we are not supplied with the detailed information of 'Gores'. These letters just say that the people so called came on voyage to the Malacca region. Where 'Gores' were living was not touched on. Probably the first book referring to the place 'Gores' inhabited is Tomé Pires' *Suma Oriental* (ca. 1515). In the fourth part of the book, he writes what he heard from Chinese: "Between the Chinese and the Tartars are certain places where there are the *Guores*."³⁾ And another place of the book says, "The *Lequeos* are called *Guores*—they are known by either of these names. *Lequeos* is the chief one."⁴⁾ Generally, Portuguese confused Korea with Riu-Kiu in the early period. This was because the people in Riu-Kiu carried Korean goods to Malacca and sold them.⁵⁾

It was in the chart of the world(1561)⁶⁾ of Bartolomeu Velho that Korea firstly appeared on European cartography. In it, one of the islands is called 'Core', which lies off the shore of a

1) e.g.: Yoshitomo Okamoto, *Jūroku-seiki Nichi-O Kotsu-shi no Kenkyū* (A Study on the History of Traffic between Japan and Europe), 1942, pp.68, 81, 84; Armando Cortesao (tr. ed.), *The 'Suma Oriental' of Tomé Pires*, The Hakluyt Society Second Series Nos. 89, 90, 1944, p.128.

2) Yoshitomo Okamoto, *Ibid.*, p.8484.

3) Armando Cortesao, *Ibid.*, pp.127—128.

4) Armando Cortesao, *Ibid.*, p.128.

5) Historical materials preserved in Riu-Kiu say that their government level trade with Malacca was conducted thirteen times during the half century between 1463 and 1511. This figure reflects only what the existent historical records ascertain and, undoubtedly, one or two ships officially set out for Malacca annually for trade purposes from Riu-Kiu. The details are given in the following literature:

Jun Obata, *Chūsei Nanto Tsūko Boekishi no Kenkyū* (A Study on the History of Foreign Traffic and Trade in Riu-Kiu During the Middle Ages), 1939(Reprint 1968), pp.503—538.

Further, the government level trade between Riu-Kiu and Siam started in 1419 and was conducted until 1570, lasting for a century and a half, as is seen in the same book, pp.429—455.

On the other hand, official trade between Korea and Riu-Kiu is mentioned in the *Kojyo Sa* (History of the Kojyo Dynasty), 1451, the *Ijo Silrok* (Veritable Records of the I Dynasty), 1413—1865, and Sin Suk-ju's *Haetong Jekuk Ki* (Description of the Countries in the East; Japan and Riu-Kiu), 1471. It was conducted from 1389 until the end of the fifteenth century without interruption.

6) Collection of the Biblioteca Academia di Belle Arti, Firenze.



Fig.1 An example of the breast-shaped peninsula type: Luiz's chart of the East Indies, 1563. MS.

breast-shaped peninsula, 'Puturus', attached to the northeastern area of China, with its tip to the south. The place name 'Core', as well as 'Gore', may derive from the Chinese pronunciation Kao-li of Koryŏ, which was an ancient dynasty of Korea (918–1392). This chart is followed by Lazaro Luiz's chart of the East Indies (1568).⁷⁾ and Fernão Vas Dourado's atlas (1596).⁸⁾ The former calls the little island 'Chosião', which seems to come from Japanese pronunciation 'Chōsen' of Josŏn. Josŏn was the Korean dynasty immediately after Koryŏ. In the latter atlas the words 'Costa de Conrai' are seen in the middle of the breast-shaped peninsula, besides the name of the 'Chore' island. This indicates that the peninsula, too, is part of Korea. The atlas was the first

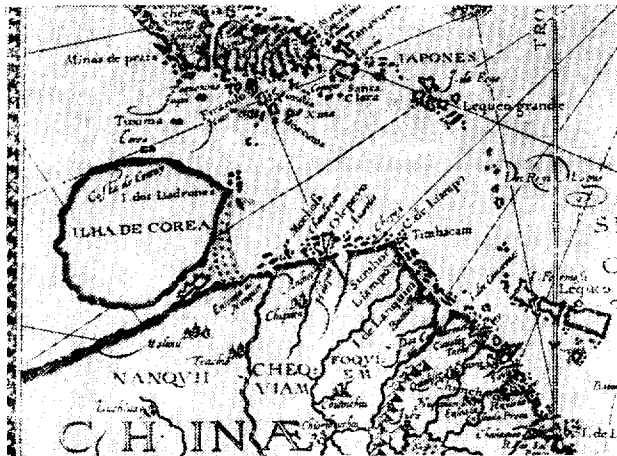


Fig.2 Korea (Ilha de Cosea), in a map of the East Indies, appendix to J.H. van Linschoten's *Itinerario*, 1596.

7) Collection of the Academia de Ciencias, Lisboa.

8) Collection of Duque de Alba, Madrid.

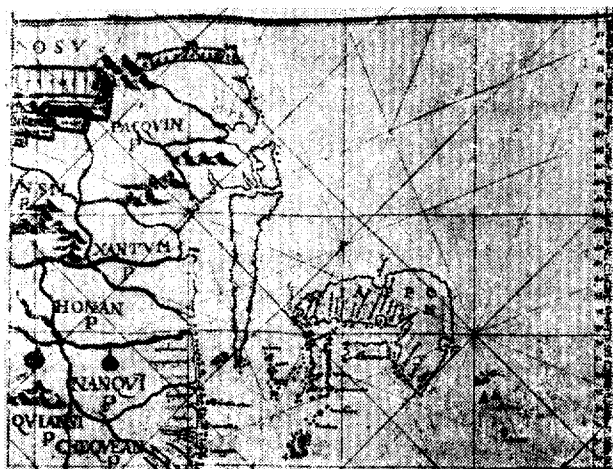


Fig. 3 An example of the icicle-shaped island type: J. Martines' chart of the East Indies, 1591, MS.

to show this. Considering that Japanese used the name Kōrai along with Chōsen for Korea in those days, 'Conrai' may be the misspelling of 'Courai'. The supposition is strengthened by the fact that Vas Dourado uses large quantities of Japanese materials.

The map of the East Indies, appendix to Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* (1655), describes a large and almost circular island called 'Corea', besides the namesake, little island. Plainly the author here detaches the said breast-shaped peninsula from the continent and changes it into an island. As Martino Martini points out in his *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655), there were two tides of theories among Europeans about Korea's shape, namely of peninsula and peninsula and island, even in the middle of the seventeenth century⁹⁾; so that Linschoten may well be mistaken. Korea is depicted also as a big island but icicle-shaped in the chart of the East Indies written by Joan Martines in 1591.¹⁰⁾ Separated from the continent by a narrow strait, the island has no place name, but it is undoubtedly Korea as described in Chinese cartography. This is so because *Ku-chin hsing-shêng chih t'u* (古今形勝之圖 Map of ancient and modern places of fort, 1555), or *Huang-ming yü-ti chih t'u* (皇明輿之圖 Map of the territory of the imperial Ming, first printed 1536, reprinted 1631), published in China, describe the Yalu River so wide that the Korea strikes us as an island. One of these, *Ku-chin hsing-shêng chih t'u*, was sent to Spanish royal house from Manila in 1575, sixteen years before the chart of Martines was written.¹¹⁾

In Petrus Plancius' map of the world (Van Linschoten, *ibid.*, appendix), which was made in 1594, three years after Martines' chart, Korea had similarly an icicle shape, though it was

9) Martino Martini says to the following effect: There exist among Europeans various pieces of incorrect information about 'Corea' and the issue at stake now is as to whether it is an island or (part of) a continent. However, the investigations I have made about 'Corea' reveal that it is a peninsula and that it is, therefore, impossible to circumnavigate the country in any way. Those who refer to it as an island are assuming 'Fungma' (對馬, Tsushima) as 'Corea'. (*Novus Atlas Sinensis*, 1655 Latin edition, p. 168)

10) Collection of Königliche Bibliothek, Berlin.

11) The map has been kept by Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla.



Fig.4 A part of the *Ku-chin hsing-shêng chih t'u*(古今形勝之圖), 1555.

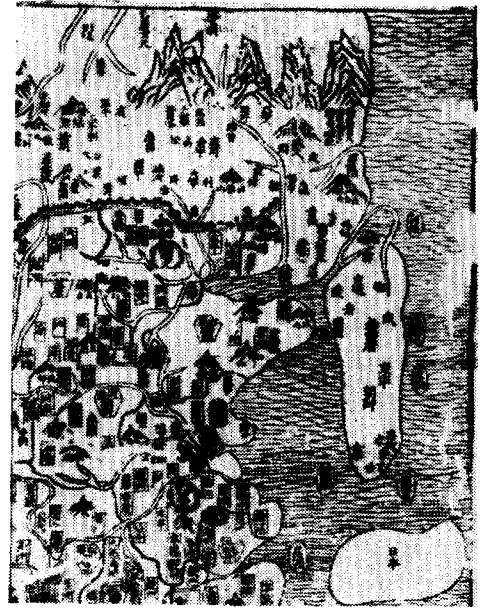


Fig.5 A part of the *Huang-ming yü-ti chih t'u*(皇明輿地之圖), 1536, reprinted edition of 1631.

delineated as a peninsula whose north part was attached to the continent. 'Tiauxem' and 'Corea' were recorded as names of the peninsula in this map. In Luis Teixeira's map of Japan, contained in the enlarged edition of Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* published in 1595, Korea took a shape of a carrot-like island, lying from north to south with its middle part

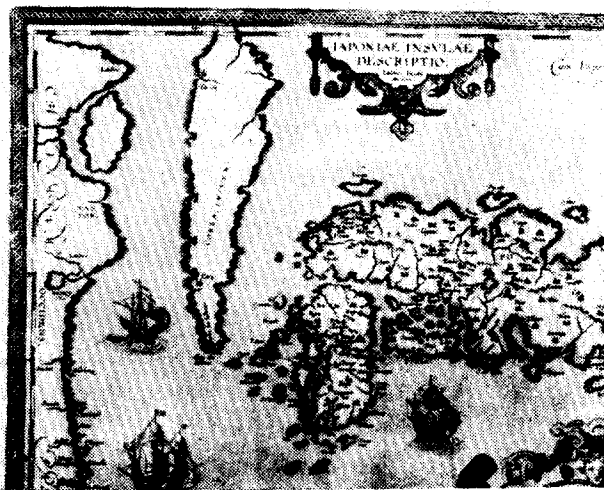


Fig.6 An example of the carrot-like island type: L. Teixeira's map of Japan, in A. Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, 1595.



Fig. 7 A part of F. Rughesi's map of Asia 1597.

bulging out. Two years later, Fausto Rughesi's map of Asia was published in Rome in 1597.¹²⁾ Although the shape was delineated as that of a carrot, and he clearly showed Korea as a peninsula, calling it 'Corai' on the map. Even in the aforementioned P. Plancius' map, printed in 1594, it was depicted as a peninsula, with the part of the peninsula connected to the continent being drawn unusually narrowly. Here it should be noted that Rughesi's Korea was so clearly marked that no one could fail to identify it as a peninsula. This was probably because Rughesi could use knowledge obtained from both the folding screen map of China and the Chinese atlas which the Jesuit Michael Ruggerius (羅明堅) had brought back to Rome from China in 1590 after staying in China for eight years.¹³⁾ It is also possible that the shape was based on the *Huang-ming yü-ti chih t'u* mentioned above.

As all these maps have shown, there had been some versions of Korea's shape in sixteenth century European cartography: first, a breast-shaped peninsula and nearby islets, second, an icicle-shaped island or peninsula, third, a carrot-like island which could be viewed as a variation of the icicle shape, fourth, a carrot-like peninsula. It does not follow, however, that this transformation of Korea's shape on the maps took place one by one precisely in accordance with the passage of time. Each shape was coexistent throughout the sixteenth century.

In the early seventeenth century, Korea was, first of all, delineated in a small map of China

12) Rughesi's map of Asia is reproduced in R. Almagia's *Carte Geografiche a Stampa*, Monumenta Cartographica Vaticana, Vol. 2, 1948.

13) The fact that M. Ruggerius brought Chinese atlas and his fold-screen map of China to Rome is stated in Matteo Ricci's memoirs (P.M. D'Elia, *Fonti Ricciane*, Vol. 1, 1942, Libro II, Cap. XI, pp.250—251) and in Nicolas Sanson's map of China entitled *La Chine Royaume*, 1656.

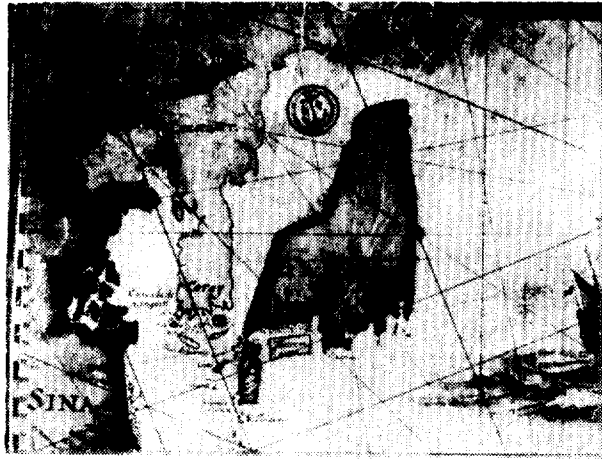


Fig. 8 A part of H. Gerritsz's chart of the Pacific Ocean, 1623, MS.

on baroque title page of the 1617 German edition¹⁴⁾ of N. Trigault's *De Christiana expeditione opud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Iesu*. Apparently, the peninsula that extended from north to south had its southern part wider than in the previous maps. Given the fact that Trigault stayed in China from 1610 to 1613, it is likely that he consulted Chinese maps. It may be pointed out

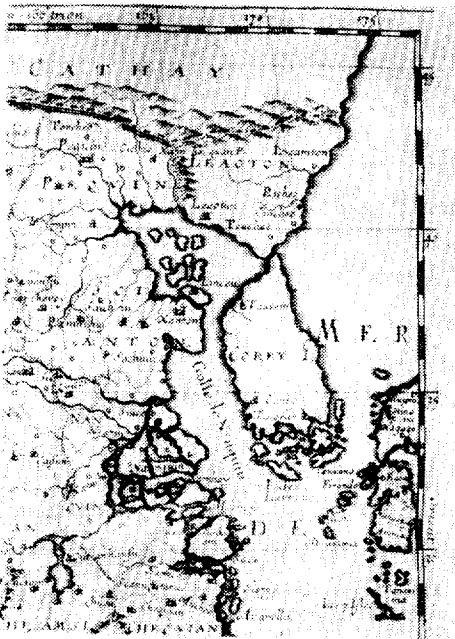


Fig. 9 An example of the modified carrot-like island type: N. Sanson's map of China, in his *L'Asie*, 1652.



Fig. 10 A part of M. Boym's map of China, ca. 1653, MS.

14) *Historia von Einfuehrung der Christlichen Religion in dass grosse Königreich China durch die Societet Jesu*.

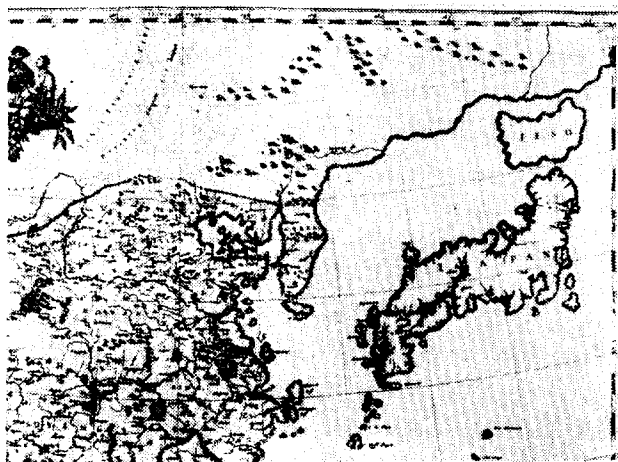


Fig. 11 A part of M. Martini's map of China, in his *Novus Atlas Singnsis*, 1655.

in this connection that in the first edition (1615) of the same book a map of China on the title page depicted Korea as an icicle-shaped island.¹⁵⁾ Therefore, he must have had no certain information about Korea. The map of China, contained in Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol.3, (1625), also indicated that Korea was a wide peninsula, although the whole shape was not available because Korea's east coast was outside the map.

On the other hand, Portuguese seem to have acquired quite accurate information on Korea's coastline in the 1610's. Manuel Godinho de Erédia's atlas (1613)¹⁶⁾ and his presumed atlas (ca. 1615-ca. 1622) provided a rather practical figure despite their simplicity. Presumably, in those days, Dutch also obtained credible intelligence on Korea, which was perceived from the figure of Korea in a chart of the Pacific Ocean (1623)¹⁷⁾ drawn by Hessel Gerritsz, a cartographer working for Dutch East India Company. This chart simply cited 'Coray' as a placename, but its elaborate delineation of east and west coastline of the peninsula seemed quite real. In general, Korea's contours depicted in published maps were bound to go out of date. In the maps published in the middle of the seventeenth century, such as Claes Janszoon Visscher's map of the world (1650) and Franois van den Hoeye's map of the world (1661), Korea still remained a carrot-like (Teixeira type) island.

Nevertheless, the shapes of the carrot-like island were varying in the meantime. In Joan Blaeu's map of the world published in 1648, the southern part of the island was wide, the coastline of this area was sharply indented, and a number of off-lying islets were depicted. This map indicates that at that time the cartographer had received more accurate information on the southern part of Korea than before. The map of China in Nicolas Sanson's *L'Asie* published in 1652, inherited this type of Korea, but the width being far greater than the length, the Korea

15) Korea as seen on the title page of the 1618 Latin edition of Trigault's same book is apparently copied from the above-mentioned German edition.

16) Collection of Bibliothèque Royale, Bruxelles.

17) Collection of Musée de la Marine, Paris.

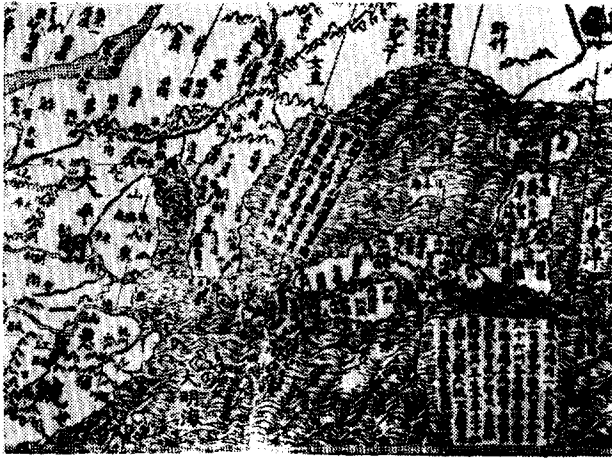


Fig. 12 East Asia, in M. Ricci's map of the world, 1602.

looked short and thick.

In the middle of the seventeenth century two more types of Korea came into being. One was drawn in the map of China made around 1653 by Michael Boym, a Jesuit who had come back from China. This type was a long and narrow peninsula with its end turned toward the southwest. The other type was delineated in *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655) by Martino Martini, who was also a Jesuit just returned from China. He drew a peninsula that had a salient in the middle of the east coast. The Boym type was found in N. Sanson's map of China (published in 1656), his map of Asia (published in 1667) and Giacomo Cantelli da Vignola's map of Tartaria (published in 1683). Korea drawn in Martini's atlas seems to have followed the one depicted in Matteo Ricci's map of the world (1602), for both contours assumed affinity. Martini type was prevalently adopted in cartography in the latter half of the seventeenth century: for example, maps of China contained in Jean de Thévenot's *Relations de divers Voyages*, vol. 2 (published in 1664), Johann Nieuhoff's *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie* (published in 1665), and Athanasius Kircher's *China Monumentis* (published in 1667).

Some of the types I have mentioned had been coexistent until the mid-eighteenth century. What made an epoch was Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville's map of Korea, which was contained in Jean Baptiste du Halde's *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, published in 1735.

This paper is a revised and enlarged version of "Early European Cartography of Korea" which was read by the present writer at the Tenth International Conference on the History of Cartography (Dublin, 1983).