Frank Hoffman has posted an interesting discussion of the virtually all-Hangŭl map on which I posted (June 30) That posting included a link to an on-line article I published: “A Unique 18th Century Korean Map”. I repeat the link here:

<http://www.eai.or.kr/type/panelView.asp?>       
bytag=p&catcode=&code=eng\_report&idx=12287&page=1

I judged the map to be a product of the 18th century based on the placenames and linguistic analysis of the orthography of those names. I also made comments on the physical state of the map and consulted a Korean paper expert, who happened to be lecturing in New York, Lee Seung-chul (**이승철**) He considered it to be of the 18th century on the basis of the darkness of the paper.

Frank is reasonably suspicious of the accuracy of such an analysis, saying:

“… paper and ink, though, are almost impossible to date if they are older than the 1910s. And the age of its paper, based on its coloration [citing my footnote 10] is really not at all acceptable, and I’m not sure why the consulted expert, Prof. Lee Seung-chul, would have said so. The coloration of any paper, both Western papers and hanji, varies \***widely**\* depending on the archival conditions over the centuries. The same is true for ink. In addition to the analysis given by Professor Ledyard these would be essential pieces of evidence when trying to look into the issue if such a map is original or a forgery.”

I accept this criticism. Frank is an art historian and has expertise that I don’t. He will be even more suspicious when he knows that Li Seung-chul was not shown the map itself (we were in New York but the map was at that time in France). Rather, I showed Prof. Li a professionally taken photograph commissioned by the owner, which was printed out in color on a large scale (91.5x60.3cm) —almost as large as the map itself (103x63cm). There’s no question that a thorough examination of the physical state of the map is highly desirable.

Still, I have no doubt whatever that this map is original. We have a map unlike any other known map in the Chŏng Ch’ŏk (鄭陟) genre and of the type 全圖,(a map showing all eight of the traditional provinces and their districts (varying between 330 and 335 depending on the date). And how could such a map be forged? Its data, apart from a few misspellings, are accurate and the districts are positioned where they should be. Information on the margins of the map is generally accurateand and useful. The rivers, mountains, and coast lines are typical of those generally drawn on all Chŏng Ch’ŏk-style maps. The only thing that sticks out, and loudly, is the exclusive use of Hangŭl for district names. For some unknown reason the name “Paektusan” is written in Chinese, as is the name of the insignificant island Nokto (鹿島) “Deer Island.” A mysterious appearance of a tiny character 半(반,“half”) written alongside a few district names in P’yŏngan Province, which I cannot explain, is curious. But aside from that, everything looks like dozens of other Chŏng Ch’ŏk maps with the single exception of all the Hangŭl names and notes on the Gabor Map. How can something hitherto unknown that suddenly appears be a forgery? A forgery of what?? If it is a forgery, then any great map or work of art that appears for the first time is a forgery. I call it a game-changing innovation. As I pointed out in my on-line article, all of us in Korean Studies are now living in pretty much a 100% Hangŭl publishing environment, both in the North and the South. The North went in that direction long before the South. In the South soon after 1945, fiction and poetry were published almost all in Hangŭl, while in most newspapers and general publishing the hancha remained on the the pages until some time in the mid or late 1980s, when the Hangŭl-only trend began for most newspapers and general publishing. That said, we have an unknown person who sometime in the 18th century broke the “all-hancha” pattern for cartography by creating a map in Hangŭl. He was already pointing the way a couple of centuries ago.

When my earlier posting on this Hangŭl map first appeared and I stated that the Catholic martyr Kim Taegŏn had had also drawn a map of Korea in 1845 or 1846 with all the place names in Hangŭl. Someone noted that it wasn’t in Hangŭl, but in French romanization. I felt a little embarrassed. I had seen an article in a Korean newspaper discussing that map, but had failed to clip the article. I was pretty sure that it had mentioned Hangŭl place names. So, when another posting said it wasn’t Hangŭl but French romanisations, I was taken aback. Well, it turns out that we were both right.

In an earlier post, Frank Hoffman checked out and posted remarks by Prof. Li Jin-Mieung (이진명), who had clearly gone to the Bibliothèque Nationale Française (BNF), Département des Cartes et Plans (DCP), and looked into the the 19th century map connected with Kim Taegŏn. He discovered not one but three maps of Korea, as follows:

1. BNF DCP Ge C 10622: La Corée d’après l’original dresse par André Kim (김대건/金大建) 57x112cm

2. BNF DCP Ge B 257: <해좌전도>/海左全圖, *Haejwa Chŏndo*, 54x97cm

3. BNF DCP Ge C 9317: <순한글 조선전도> *Sun Hangŭl Chŏndo*,60x97cm

Map 10622 is not described by Prof. Li, but in his comment—“Korea according to the original drawn by André Kim” (Kim Taegŏn) —it is implicit that this map is a copy of an earlier map, which isn’t described either.

Map 257 is a well known map drawn during the first half of the 19th century. See the complete map in color inYi Ch’an (李燦), <韓國의 古地圖>, *Hanguk ŭi ko chido*, (Pŏmusa 범우사) Seoul, 1991, Plate 57 on p. 97, and plate note 57 on p. 389. This is a map in the Chŏng Sanggi (鄭尙驥) style, developed during the mid-years of the 18th century. It was a revolutionary style that quickly pushed the Chŏng Ch’ŏk maps, in vogue from the last third of the 15th century, out of fashion for serious cartographers. It was the first appearance of a systematically scaled map, and that quickly became standard. Not that the scale system was all that accurate, but at least it represented a closer profile of the Korean peninsula in an outline that we would recognize today. Square grids were laid out (though not shown) and a consistent scale was applied. The flaw in this was that, as the longitudes narrowed as the map extended further and further into the north, P’yŏngan and Hamgyŏng provinces became much larger in relation to the provinces in the latitudes to the south. The famous Kim Chŏngho, who flourished in the early 1860s and created the masterful *Taedong Yŏjido* 大東輿地圖, which brought the shape of the north into a closer accuracy. But even Kim Chŏngho did not not achieve perfection. It seems to me to be possible, and even likely, that the *Haejwa Chŏndo* could have been the map that Kim Taegŏn copied as a basis for his map with Hangŭl place names.

Prof. Li gives his own title to Map 9317: *A Complete Map of Korea in Pure Hangŭl.* He says, “This map is similar to the *Haejwa Chŏndo* (which is completely in Chinese— GKL); it is an old map of Korea which has the place names in pure Hangŭl without a single Chinese character. Beside the Hangŭl placenames there are French transcriptions which would have been placed after the Hangŭl names to indicate the pronunciation (for the French missionaries—GKL ), perhaps by Father Ridel, who would have donated the *“Pure Hangŭl Map of Korea”* together with the *Haejwa Chŏndo* to the Bibliothèque Nationale Française.”

I’m not so sure that Prof. Li is is correct about the “donation” of the maps to the BNF. Why would Father Ridel have done that? Kim Taegŏn would have substituted Hangŭl for the Hancha and added French transcriptions for the benefit of the French missionaries in Korea. Kim Taegŏn had spent years in Macao and Hongkong, and served as a translator for French admirals. He even accompanied an admiral as an interpreter in Nanking for the signing of the treaties ending the Opium Wars. This role stretched out over several years of service to the French fleet at the behest of missionaries. He could speak decent French and be of great assistance to navigators in the vicinity of Korea’s West coast. This activity had taken him to Macao, Shanghai, Taiwan, Manila, and the Liaodong Peninsula. (See the long article on him and the map of his sea travels in the 한국 가톨릭 대사전 (published in Seoul , 1985 and again in 1989 by the 한국 교회사 연구소). Given this background, I think that he would have made what Professor Li calls the *“Pure Hangŭl Map of Korea”* in the course of his many voyages with the fleet. He would have based it on the all-Chinese *Haejwa Chŏndo*, which he somehow would have acquired. Such a map would have had great value for his consultations with various admirals and navigators. Given the great stress of his capture by Korean authorities and his beheading on 16 September 1846, he doubtless would have had little time to arrange the posting his map to Paris. I suspect that the maps were still on the ship that landed him in Hwanghae Province for his last return to Korea, and that the French Admiralty at some point donated it and the other maps to the BNF.

Frank asks: How does the 18th century map you discuss, if indeed it is original and from the 18th century, as all your analysis strongly suggests… how does such a map figure into the social history of the late ChosOn period?

The only possible response is, Well, not very strongly. In popular terms, Hangŭl didn’t really take off until the late 15th century. When you consider that from that time on wives and husbands exchanged letters in the vernacular, poets had easier going in developing a greater variety of genres, Confucian scholars were more active in promoting *ŏnhae* (언해/諺解) versions of the Confucian classics, Buddhists did the same for important sutras, vernacular lexicography had a rich development, and novelists imagined more and longer and more developed narratives. All that continued through the 16th and 17th centuries, and by the 18th century there was a small but worthy corpus of vernacular literature. But none of that seemed to rub off on cartographers, who did not respond to the vernacular opportunity. Even the nationalist cartographer Kim Chŏngho didn’t put a single hangŭl syllable on his marvelous map. Part of this, I think, is due to the iconic power of Chinese characters and to the fact that anyone who could not demonstrate hancha literacy was going to go nowhere in a country where education, status, and power were on everyone’s minds. The maker of the Gabor Map seems to have been a voice in the wilderness.

Frank says: “My question to Professor Ledyard and others here would be: The new Korean National Museum has a very impressive section on Korean maps also, and last time I visited I was surprised to see many with place names in Han'gŭl from the 19th century. How does the 18th century map you discuss, if indeed it is original and from the 18th century, as all your analysis strongly suggests… how does such a map figure into the social history of the late ChosOn period?  …From before the Tonghak Movement, I would have looked at him with utter disbelief. Still, they are there. Now there is one for the 18th century, and interestingly that appears at an auction overseas...

As for how the Gabor Map figures in the late Chosŏn period, one can consider the great growth of markets and trade in the middle and late 17th century and all of the 18th century. That helped to encourage social mobility, of which there was a considerable amount, much of it in the lower social orders. Slaves fled from their masters and in an active market place could find niches for profit. Second and third sons could more easily find work in the economy. Many would have depended on Hangŭl literacy to advance. I doubt that such people needed Hangŭl maps to travel. I wandered through the provinces without maps a lot in my younger days and never got lost. If in doubt there was always an obliging person who would point me in the right direction. The bus drivers always told me just where to go. I’m sure that social skills were all that was necessary for any Korean to get from one place to another.

Gari Ledyard