

Circular World Maps of the Joseon Dynasty: Their Characteristics and Worldview

Oh Sang-Hak

Abstract

The introduction of Western geographical knowledge played a key role in bringing about change in the production of traditional world maps in the East. The emergence of “circular world maps” was one of the consequences of this change. Although circular world maps were produced in order to represent the expanded understanding of geography as galvanized by the East’s encounter with Western geographical knowledge, these maps depended on the East’s traditional conception of the world in terms of content and style. Based on *Shanhajjing* (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*), which described the imaginary world beyond human experience, mapmakers established the structure of the four separate parts of the world—internal continent, internal sea, external continent, and external sea—and created place names in each area: names recorded in historical documents are included in the internal continent, and place names related to Taoist immortality (*sinseon sasang*) in the internal sea. The understanding of the world implied in circular world maps still remains within the Sinocentric worldview and the concept of *cheonwon jibang*, which defines the heavens as round and the earth as square. In addition, the maps reflect the cosmographical concept of “unity of heaven, earth, and man” and the Taoist idea of immortality rooted in the desire for health and longevity.

Keywords: circular world map, *Shanhajjing*, *cheonwon jibang*, Sinocentric worldview, *sinseon*, Taoist idea of immortality

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Introduction

The Joseon dynasty produced two world maps known worldwide: *Honil gangni yeokdae gukdo jido* (Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals, hereafter *Gangnido*) produced in 1402, and the circular world maps made in the late Joseon dynasty. Suggestive of cultural exchange between East and West, *Gangnido* is considered one of the best maps available in the world at the time. Circular world maps, which were prevalent among ordinary people in the late Joseon dynasty, attracted academic attention for quite a long time due to their particular shapes and contents. They were also introduced to the West early on because of their uniquely Eastern expression of cosmography.¹

Circular world maps, unlike the Sinocentric world maps made in China, depict the world as a circle. They are usually titled *cheonhado* (world map) or *cheonha chongdo* (complete world map). Drawn in the center is an internal continent surrounded by an internal sea. Outside the internal sea is a ring-shaped external continent, and outside of that lies an external sea. The internal continent consists of real countries, but the internal sea, external continent, and external sea are filled with imaginary countries found in documents like *Shanhajjing* (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*) (see figure 1). Most existing circular world maps are drawn in this manner with similar contents. Few are available in single manuscripts; most are in folders

1. Circular world maps, both in copied manuscripts or woodcuts, were introduced to the West prior to and following the 1900s. The ones who introduced the atlases to the West were Henri Cordier, Maurice Courant, Yi Ik Seup, H. B. Hulbert, and Carlo Rosetti. Maurice Courant of Lyons published the map in volume 2 of his *Korean Bibliography* as a photo print in 1895. In 1896, Henri Cordier published the map, housed at the British Museum, also in a photo print. Neither of them mentioned where it originated from and when they were made, however (Nakamura 1967, 3-4). *Corea e Coreani*, published in 1904 in Italy by Carlo Rosetti, carries an original circular world map with place names given in English. It also contains no details about the map (Rosetti 1996, 299-300). Yi Ik Seup was the first Korean to publish a study of circular world maps (Yi I. 1892, 336-341). Hulbert also discussed the maps briefly (Hulbert 1904, 600-605).

or books along with maps of foreign countries like China, Japan and Ryukyu as well as those of the eight Korean provinces. Circular world maps make up the largest single category among extant maps, including more than ten woodcut maps that are still in use to this day. Although the maps were widely circulated among ordinary Koreans, no identical world maps have been uncovered in China and Japan, despite the fact that they all belonged to the same cultural zone. Hence, it is assumed that they were produced solely in Korea.

Korean and foreign scholars have long studied circular world maps, delving into when they were made and what they contained.²



Fig. 1. Circular World Map in Woodcut. Housed at the National Museum of Korea.

2. Prominent studies include the pioneering works of Nakamura (1967), Yi C. (1976), Unno (1981), and Bae (2000).

But accurate facts about their origins, the background of their production, and the worldviews they reflect have yet to be ascertained. This paper aims at re-illuminating the significance of circular world maps based on the research done thus far. I first look into the emergence and origin of the maps, then their characteristics in terms of shape and content, and lastly, the worldviews represented in them.

Background and Origin of Circular World Maps

Popularization of Maps

Based on analysis of existing copies of circular world maps, the prevailing view is that they were made in the seventeenth century or thereafter. No circular world atlases or folders, believed to have been made earlier, have been uncovered. Why were they made in or after the seventeenth century? Circular world maps contain mostly what was recorded in documents, including *Shanhajing*. In other words, the world they depict is not the changed world of the seventeenth century, but that of the past, that could be attributed to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Why, then, were these maps not produced in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, instead of being made in the seventeenth century or thereafter? It is possible that those produced in the fifteenth or sixteenth century have all been lost, and that only those made in the seventeenth century or thereafter remain. This possibility is very slim, however, given the embrace of cartography beginning in the fifteenth century.

As Yang Seong-ji noted in the early Joseon dynasty, the private possession of maps, unlike books, was banned in principle.³ But this prohibition, not expressly stipulated in law, lost validity due to the relaxing of state authority in the wake of the Japanese invasion

3. *Seongjong sillok* (Annals of King Seongjong) 138, 2nd lunar month of 13th year of King Seonjong's reign. The memorial to the throne recorded in the annals is also found in Yang Seong-ji's *Nuljaejip* (Collected Works of Yang Seong-ji).

(1592) and Manchurian invasion (1627). The two invasions disrupted social stability giving rise to more regional mobility than before. Consequent active exchanges between regions through industry, trade, and travel boosted public demand for maps, which in turn expedited the private production of maps. As a result, distinguished geography scholars emerged from among nongovernmental figures such as Hwang Yeop, Yun Yeong, and Jeong Cheol-jo,⁴ referred to by Kim Jeong-ho in his *Cheonggudo* (Map of Korea), in the late Joseon dynasty, as well as Jeong Sang-gi, who produced *Dongguk jido* (Map of the Eastern Country).

Along with an increased demand for maps, atlases underwent a change in format, being printed as folders or books instead of flat sheets. Earlier maps were made mostly from scrolls or mounted alone on screens. Since the seventeenth century, however, maps were produced in book form as with Western atlases. Earlier maps were inconvenient to carry and could only accommodate a limited number of maps. To be sure, map folders have been used previously, but they only covered the maps of Korea's eight provinces at most. Later atlas folders and books covered not only the entire territory of Korea and its eight provinces, but also foreign maps, maps of the capital, and circular world maps. Circular world maps were published mostly in the front of atlas folders and books. The changed cartography at the time reflected the fact that maps were no longer monopolized by the privileged, but had begun to spread to the masses.

Introduction of Western Geographic Knowledge and Its Expanded Recognition

Although closely related to the increasing popularization of maps, the emergence of circular world maps was directly affected by external factors. The appearance of a new world map, not previously available, is all but impossible without a changed understanding of geographical knowledge. It is all the more so with circular world maps,

4. "Introductory remarks" in Kim Jeong-ho, *Cheonggudo* (Map of Korea).

which were widely produced mainly in the private sector and circulated until the end of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, no clear internal change in the geographical world can be found in Korea over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hence, the cause has to be found outside, i.e. in the Western geographical knowledge introduced into Korea through China.

Beginning in the early seventeenth century, maps and geographical books, like Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (Great Map of Ten Thousand Countries), Giulio Aleni's *Zhifang waiji* (Unofficial Accounts of Foreign Countries), and Ferdinand Verbiest's *Kunyu tushuo* (Explanatory Diagram of the Earth), were introduced into Korea, and gradually influenced Korean intellectuals. Of course, they could not wholly accept the world image depicted in Western maps from the beginning. As they gradually acknowledged the advancements made by Western scholarship, including astronomy and the Roman calendar, however, they understood that the image shown in Western maps was not absurd but factual. The mere fact that European missionaries were working in China supported the Joseon intellectuals' belief in the existence of Europe. Although they could not accept the round earth theory, their geographical knowledge expanded substantially.

However, it was difficult for Joseon people to accommodate the expanded geographical world—with five continents—only relying on the existing Sinocentric worldview, according to which the world consisted of one continent centered on China. Under such circumstances, ancient Chinese classics like *Huainanzi* (Book of the Masters of Huainan) and *Shanhaijing*, plus Zou Yan's ideas, attracted new attention. Their accounts of the world far surpassed the "world of the *zhifang*" or "Sinocentric sphere."⁵

Chen Zusui derided the geographical knowledge offered by the

5. The term *zhifang* is derived from the title of an official mentioned in *Zhouli* (Rite of Zhou). These officials are in charge of maps and tributes from vassal states. Thus, the "world of *zhifang*" or "Sinocentric sphere" refers to China and its tributary states from a Sinocentric point of view (Yi Won-sun 1992, 18).

Kunyu wanguo quantu as heresy, likening it to Shuhai, referred to by Zou Yan and *Huainanzi*.⁶ Shuhai, a legendary figure who is said to have measured the distance between the Arctic and Antarctic on foot as ordered by King Yu,⁷ is often cited rhetorically when the scale of the world is discussed. Yi I-myeong, who had a particular interest in cartography, viewed the belief in the Earth as a globe, contained in Western world maps, as similar to Yukou's "ten continents" theory and Buddhist "four great continents" theory.⁸ It was difficult for Confucians to understand Western world maps, which depicted a world surpassing by far China and its tributary states.

Yi Jong-hwi, who was assertive and believed in China's superiority, was a prominent figure who linked Matteo Ricci's world directly with Zou Yan's "nine great continents" theory. He likened the small oceans in Western world maps to *bihae* (tiny sea) and large oceans to *yeonghae* (vast oceans). Unlike ordinary Confucian scholars, he accommodated Zou Yan's worldview as factual by maintaining that Matteo Ricci drew six continents in his map because he had not observed all the nine continents. He added that Zou Yan's studies had merely failed to be passed down in the 2,000 years after his death.⁹ Scholars who tried to surpass the limits of Sinocentric geography interpreted Zou Yan's worldview in a positive way.

Yu Man-ju, the author of *Heumyeong*, was able to expand his geographical perspective through Western world maps, realizing the importance of oceans and paying consistent interest to the foreign countries surrounding China. This interest in foreign countries, interestingly, was linked to an attraction to *Shanhaijing*.¹⁰ He boldly embraced *Shanhaijing*, which most contemporary Confucian scholars regarded as heretical. For Yu Man-ju, who refused to recognize China and its tributary states as the only world, *Shanhaijing*, which

6. Hunakoshi (1970, 628).

7. "Topography" in *Huainanzi* (Book of the Masters of Huainan), *juan* 4.

8. "A Letter to Westerner Kögler" in *Sojaejip* (Collected Works of Yi I-myeong).

9. Yi Jong-hwi, *Susanjip* (Collected Works of Yi Jong-hwi), *gwon* 4.

10. Park (1997, 18).

described regions other than China and its tributary states, was an important text that satisfied his perception of the world.

As Joseon intellectuals obtained Western geographical knowledge through Western world maps and books, they came to realize that the world was far wider than the "Sinocentric sphere." Their perception of the world was expanded incomparably from the past. As a result, they paid attention to ancient documents like *Shanhaijing* and Zou Yan's ideas, which encompassed broader areas than China and its tributary states. Circular world maps were made to contain this expanded world perception with their basic materials sought not from the West but from Eastern traditions, such as *Shanhaijing*.

Origin of Circular World Maps

Even if it is true that circular world maps were produced under the historical conditions and backgrounds described above, the question still remains of where they originated. It was very unusual in East Asia to draw world maps in a circle; the attempt to delve into their origin is closely related to defining the nature of the maps.

The view of the world as a circle is not limited to specific cultural zones; it is found in a number of places. Circular world maps can be found in ancient Babylonia, Greece, the T-O map of the Middle Age, *Mappa Mundi*, and Islamic world maps. As the circle is the most fundamental and basic diagram that can be drawn, the depiction of the world as a circle has been found in many cultural zones. Accordingly, some renowned scholars ascribe the origin of circular world maps to wheel maps in the West and Islamic countries.¹¹

However, it would be a stretch to presume that they were linked to other circular world maps like the medieval *Mappa Mundi* because no circular world maps consisting of an internal continent, internal sea, external continent, and external sea have been found anywhere else in the world.¹² Most other world maps consist of continents sur-

11. No (1992, 35).

12. McCune (1990, 1).

rounded by oceans; no similarities are found with the external continent of the circular world map. Due to this structural difference, it would be unreasonable to seek the origin of circular world maps in Western circular world maps like the T-O map. It would also be hard to imagine that Islamic circular world maps were introduced to Korea in time to affect the emergence of the circular world map in Korea. The temporal and spatial divergence is too great, and the geographical worlds depicted in them differ too greatly.

Recent research, recognizing the impact of Western maps, regards the circular world map as having originated directly from single-circle world maps. Unno Kazutaka reasoned that the circular world map was rooted in the single-circle world maps (see figure 2) recorded in *Sancai tuhui* (Illustrated Compendium of the Three Pow-



Fig. 2. *Shanghai yudi quantu* (Complete Geographic Map of the Mountains and Seas) in *Sancai tuhui*.

ers) and *Yueling guangyi* (Enlarged Annotation Monthly observance).¹³ Bae Woo Sung shares this view with Unno, but unlike Unno, he uses the term “single-circle world map” to also refer to the oval world maps shown in Matteo Ricci’s *Kunyu wanguo quantu* and Aleni’s *Wanguo quantu* (Complete Maps of All Countries).¹⁴ Both sought the origin of the form of the circular world map in its Western counterpart. They viewed Asia, Africa, and Europe as equivalent to the internal continent of the circular world map, and the North and South American continents to the external continent of the same.

This assertion overemphasizes the impact of Western world maps. A close comparison of circular world maps and Western world maps like the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* were not conspicuously similar enough to be considered as belonging to one system. The analogical inference of the American continent as the external continent, in particular, was similar to the assertion of Yi Ik Seup, who first introduced the circular world map to the West.¹⁵ But the circular world map markedly differs from Western world maps in terms of not only overall composition but also details in form. Had it originated in Western circular maps, the circular world map should at least be similar in form, which is not the case, however. In addition, there should be some consistency between the two in terms of details like place names, but no Chinese translations of place names are found in the circular world maps.

Given these facts, it is hard to assume that the circular world map, though having emerged in social backgrounds in which the perception of the world expanded under the influence of Western world maps, was directly based on Western world maps. It is more likely that the circular world map was made as a result of a new perception of the world, rather than having directly originated from existing maps, including Western world maps. This will become clearer when we analyze the form and content of circular world maps.

13. Unno (1981, 29-30).

14. Bae (2000, 55-56).

15. Yi I. (1892, 336-352).

Characteristics of Circular World Maps

The Meaning of a Circle

The circular world map consists of an internal continent, which resembles a man's profile, surrounded by an internal sea. This sea is encircled in turn by a ring-like external continent and an external sea. Overall, the map resembles a medallion portrait of a man with his head turned to the left.¹⁶ Still another term for it is wheel map.¹⁷ What, then, does the circle in the circular world map symbolize? Few clear-cut answers are given by the existing research. This may be due to the assumption that it is only natural for the terrestrial world to be depicted as a circle in a *cheonhado* (or world map)—literally, a map of the “world beneath the heavens.” This is a very important consideration in understanding the world represented by circular world maps.

As mentioned above, it is extremely rare in East Asia for the earth to be depicted as a circle. Because the concept of *cheonwon jibang* (round heaven, square earth) dominated Sinocentric East Asia, maps of the terrestrial world are mostly square. Thus, if the circle in the circular world map represents the terrestrial world, this could only have been impossible without an enormous change to the geographical perception of the world. Unless one overcomes the cosmological view of “round heaven, square earth” and accepts a new worldview, it would be very unlikely that the earth would be drawn as a circle. Accordingly, it is unlikely that the circle in the circular world map was intended to represent the earth.

In both East and West, the sky and celestial bodies were perceived as circles. This perception gained empirical credence with the observation of the revolutions of the moon. Even the *huntian* theory, which some scholars consider the root of earth theory, defined the earth as flat, merely likening it to an egg yolk. Most celestial maps produced in East Asia, accordingly, represented the sky as circular.

16. Nakamura (1947, 3).

17. Unno (1996, 40).

Thus, the circle in circular world maps represents not the earthly world but the sky.

The titles and names of outer rings on the circular world map also reflect the fact that the map describes not only the geographical world but a particular cosmology. Most circular world maps are titled “world map” or “complete world map,” with a small number being titled “great ultimate map.” Some feature octagons and *yin-yang* symbols, referred to in the *Yijing* (Book of Changes), around the circle. In Chinese philosophy, the “great ultimate” refers to the state of unity before the division of *yin* and *yang*, when the heaven and earth are in perfect harmony. The drawing of heaven and earth in the outer ring of the circle appears to be an attempt to express *yin* and *yang*, or the balance of heaven and earth (see figure 3).



Fig. 3. *Taegukdo* (Great Ultimate Map). Housed at the National Museum of Korea.

The persistence of the traditional “round heaven, square earth” theory in circular world maps is evident in existing prints of the map. *Yeoji goram dobo* (Maps of the Geographic World), housed at the National Library of Korea, unlike other prints, is heavily annotated (see figure 4). The owner of this circular world map, originally a woodcut, painted it and wrote notes in the margins, making it possible to infer his contemporaries’ perceptions of the circular world map. The characters for *cheonwon jibang* and a *yin-yang* symbol are drawn in the upper left-hand corner of the map. This clearly demonstrates that the circular world map was based on *cheonwon jibang*, the traditional concept of heaven and earth. The notes in the margin of the map are also not limited to the simple territorial world but describe both heaven and earth. Based on these facts, the circle of the circular world map can be said to denote the sky, representing the traditional concept of “round heaven, square earth.”

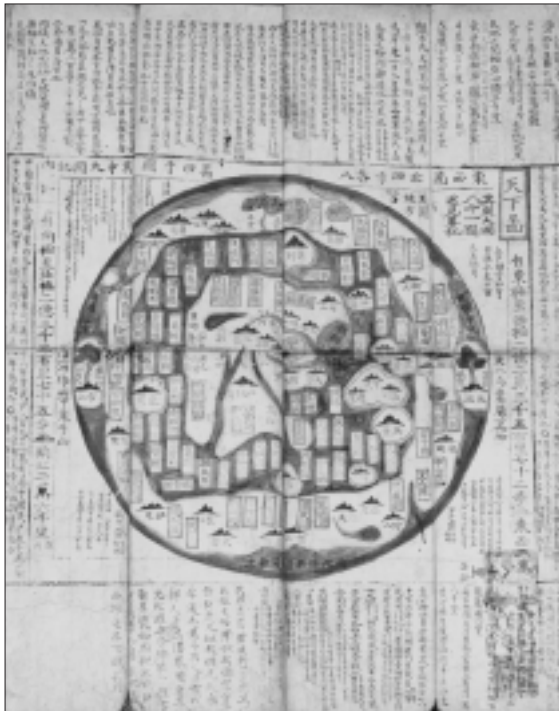


Fig. 4. Circular World Map Printed in *Yejoi goram dobo* (Maps of the Geographic World). Source: Yi Chan (1991).

Structural Features

Although circular world maps represent the traditional idea of “round heaven, square earth,” their structure differs greatly from that of previous maps. Where does the peculiar structure of the four areas (internal continent, internal sea, external continent and external sea) come from? Given that world maps depicting the geographical world were produced based on knowledge accumulated over a long historical process, circular world maps are more likely to have a historical, rather than spontaneous, origin.

Nakamura Hiroshi, the first researcher of circular world maps, asserted that they were developed from *Sihai huayi zongtu* (General Map of Chinese and Foreign Territory within the Four Seas), a Buddhist map, based on his observation of the similar ways in which the two maps depicted the shape of outline of the internal continents.¹⁸



Fig. 5. *Sihai huayi zongtu* (General Map of Chinese and Foreign Territory within the Four Seas) in *Tushubian* (Compilation of Illustrative and Writings). A transcribed copy housed at the National Museum of Korea.

18. Nakamura (1947, 154).

*Sihai huayi zongtu*¹⁹ was collected in Chung Huang's *Tushubian* (Compilation of Illustrative and Writings) which was published in 1613 (see figure 5). The map shows the southern-most part of the four continents mentioned by Buddhist scholars. It is based on the three maps²⁰ contained in *Fuzu tongji* (Records of Buddhist Masters) of the Buddhist scriptures written by Zhi Pan. The place names are from a number of books including *Xiyuzhuan* (Account of the Western Region) and "Hongfan," a section of the *Book of History*.

Despite the claim that *Sihai huayi zongtu* is similar to the circular world map, their depictions of the internal seas differ from each other. Unlike Sinocentric maps that depict China and its tributary states, *Sihai huayi zongtu* describes the world as centered around the Indies. An essential difference between the two maps is that no Buddhist place names can be found in circular world maps. Though area names given in *Shanhaijing*, such as Zhangjiaoguo (land of long-legged people), Zhangbiguo (land of long-armed people), Chuanxinguo (land of people with holes in their hearts) and Junziguo (land of gentlemen), appear in both maps, they are arranged in different directions. A closer examination of the outlines of internal continents in both maps also reveals dissimilarity. Hence, it is very difficult to assert that the circular world map originated from the Buddhist world map. What is more, it is impossible that a map representing the Buddhist worldview would circulate among Confucian scholars in a society dominated by Neo-Confucianism.

Reminiscent of circular world maps is Zou Yan's geographical worldview. Kim Yang-seon, based on Wi Baek-gyu's *Hwanyongji* (Description of the Ocean World), contended that circular world maps represented Zou Yan's worldview, calling them "Zou Yan-style

19. It must have been very difficult for the *Sihai huayi zongtu* (General Map of Chinese and Foreign Territory within the Four Seas) to circulate in Korea, a Confucian society, as the map expressed a Buddhist worldview. Prints of the map housed at the National Museum of Korea and National Library of Korea, however, confirm that the document was copied on a limited scale.

20. *Zhengantu* 震旦圖, *Hanxiyu zhuguotu* 漢西域諸國圖, and *Panshi xituwuyintu* 盤師西土五印圖.

world maps."²¹ Wi Baek-gyu argued that Zou Yan called the sea around China *bihae* i.e. encircled by a continent that is in turn encircled by a vast ocean; he also called the continent beyond the *bihae* the "end of the earth."²² This contention arises from Wi Baek-gyu's emphasis on the concentric circle structure of Zou Yan's "nine great continent theory." However, Zou Yan's original theory is somewhat different. Zou Yan's structure has nine continents surrounded by a tiny sea, which is encircled by a continent, the outside of which is surrounded by a large ocean. Wi Baek-gyu's descriptions are compatible with circular world maps, calling them "nine continent maps" that represent Zou Yan's "nine great continent theory." Upon closer examination, however, a difference is found between the circular world map and Zou Yan's "nine great continent theory." Accordingly, the circular world map cannot truly be called a "Zou Yan-style map."

The image of the world as a series of concentric circles consisting of an internal continent, internal sea, external continent and external sea²³ is found in such ancient documents as *Shanhaijing*, *Huainanzi*, and *Erya* (Moving Toward Correctness). In *Shanhaijing*, China is surrounded by countries located in the sea, which are encircled in turn by countries located outside the sea. Surrounding all of this are the Dahuang countries. The world of *Erya* of China, four seas, four continents, and four oceans. In *Huainanzi*, the scope is expanded to include nine continents, *bayin*, *bahong*, and *baji*. This series of concentric circles is based on an ancient Chinese understanding of geography, and thus closely linked to Sinocentrism.

What is significant in circular world maps is the concentric circle structure represented in *Shanhaijing*. A close relationship between the two is evident in the fact alone that many place names in the

21. Kim Y. (1965, 64).

22. Wi Baek-gyu, *Hwanyongji* (Description of the Ocean World).

23. Strictly speaking, the concentric circle structure, consisting of center and circumference, is not a circle. Because the land was believed to be square, it can be said instead to be somewhat closer to a square.

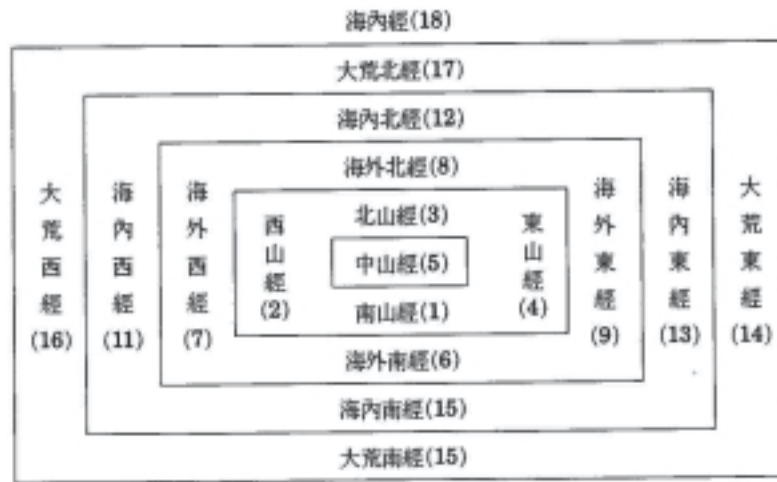


Fig. 6. Diagram of *Shanhaijing* in a Geographical Format drawn by John S. Major; quoted from Seo (1996, 305).

maps come from *Shanhaijing*. *Shanhaijing* consists of roughly three sections: “Wuzanshanjing” (The Classic of Five Mountains), “Haijing” (The Classic of the Seas), and “Dahuangjing” (The Classic of Great Continents), with the world described in each differing from the others. Three sections differ from each other in terms of content and descriptive style because they were produced by three different authors from different historical eras. “Wuzanshanjing” is close to the real world, while “Haijing” and “Dahuangjing” are mostly imaginary.

Although the production dates and authors of the three sections of *Shanhaijing* differ, the following diagram is based on the geographical scope described (see figure 6). With “Zhongshanjing” (The Classic of Central Mountains) positioned in the center, the diagram expands to the circumference, and the region described in “Dahuangjing” is drawn in the outermost ring. Joseon people usually understood *Shanhaijing* as a coherent book rather than one written at different times and by different authors. Hence, it would not have been difficult for them to perceive a concentric circle structure

through *Shanhaijing*, as shown in the diagram.

Judging from these facts, it is quite possible to draw the concentric circle structure, consisting of internal continent, internal sea, external continent and external ocean, shown in circular world maps, even without referring to similar maps. The structure of “Wuzanshanjing,” “Haineijing,” “Haiwaijing,” and “Dahuangjing” in *Shanhaijing* is reminiscent of the dual structure of circular world maps. Given that no maps similar to those have been discovered in China or Japan, there is a strong possibility that the concentric circle format of circular world maps originated from documents like *Shanhaijing*, rather than from other maps that existed earlier. Furthermore, the fact that actual countries are recorded in both the internal continent of circular world maps and “Wuzanshanjing” in *Shanhaijing*, and that the imaginary nature of “Haijing” and “Dahuangjing” is also found in the internal sea and external continent of circular world maps strongly suggest that the concentric circle structure of circular world maps originated from *Shanhaijing*.

Granted that the series of concentric circles expanding from the center to the circumference originated from *Shanhaijing*, a question remains unresolved: the shape of the internal continent describing actual countries. It is possible that the creator of the circular world map drew the external continent, comprised of imaginary countries, without referring to other maps. The situation differs completely with the internal continent, which is a drawing of the actual world centered around China. The map of the internal continent simply depicts China, India and countries to the west of China. It could not have been created without reference to other maps. It appears, therefore, that the internal continent was drawn in Korea based on maps introduced from China. A conspicuous difference between the two maps is that Mt. Kunlun, purportedly the center of the world, is located in the center of the earth in circular world maps, from which four rivers flow and Western countries are proportionately described.

Content of Maps

Most circular world maps are identical in structure, having an internal continent, internal sea, external continent, and external sea. But there are slight differences among manuscripts with regard to place names. There are usually over 168 place names, but some woodcuts have fewer. A transcribed manuscript kept at the British Museum has as many as 168 location names.²⁴ The characteristics of circular world maps can be determined by analyzing these place names.

Examining where the maps' place names originated from is important for learning their nature. Several scholars have already completed in-depth studies on the matter. According to their research, most place names in circular world maps come from *Shanhaijing*, with the rest hailing from Chinese history books such as *Hanshu* (History of the Former Han), *Xiyuchuan* (History of the Western Region), *Shujing* (Book of Document), *Yugong*, *Tangshu* (History of the Tang), as well as Taoist books like *Dong tianfu diyuedu ming-shanji* (Records of Grotto Paradises Sacred Mountains and Rivers) and *Shizhouji* (Records of the Ten Continents). Many place names given in the internal continent denote countries that existed at the time. The internal sea includes some actual countries like Japan and Ryukyu, but most other names are imaginary; as with the external continent and external sea.

Place names given in circular world maps are overwhelmingly from *Shanhaijing*. Hence Ogawa Takuji even assumed them to be *Shanhaijing* maps.²⁵ As circular world maps were produced anew in the late Joseon dynasty, however, it is difficult to define them as the maps of *Shanhaijing*, a book from ancient China. Given that their place names come mostly from *Shanhaijing*, however, it is evident that *Shanhaijing* was the basis of the maps.

Shanhaijing is a compilation of prehistoric ideas rooted in ancient people's dreams and the subconscious. It may be said that this early

24. Bagrow (1966, 204-205).

25. Ogawa (1910).

spirit was transmitted to Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity), evolving later into Taoism.²⁶ But *Shanhaijing* was inevitably treated as a heretical book by Confucians, who stressed practicality and realism. After Confucianism took root in the Han dynasty, *Shanhaijing* was regarded not as scripture but as a strange book even by Chinese Confucian scholars. Nonetheless, the document has survived as some Taoists, stylists, and poets continued to read it.

Shanhaijing was introduced into Korea early, and its reception by Korean scholars differed little from that of their Chinese counterparts. Yi Gyu-bo (1168-1241) found *Shanhaijing* to be strange,²⁷ the perception of which appears to have prevailed among Confucian scholars in the Joseon dynasty. The prominent scholar Yi Deok-mu (1741-1793) regarded the book as incoherent.²⁸ So did Yi Ik, a leader of the Silhak school.²⁹ Jo Gu-myeong (1693-1737), criticizing the contents of *Shanhaijing*, pointed out mistaken arrangements of place names.³⁰ Though treated as a heretical book by most scholars, *Shanhaijing* was an important text in explaining the expanded world for some scholars like Yu Man-ju, who broadened their perspective under the influence of Western geographical knowledge.

Then, why was *Shanhaijing* used as the basis of circular world maps? Written in *Shanhaijing* are descriptions of various regions, including the unknown world, that can encompass an expanded perception of the world. It is not the only book that contains such descriptions, however. There are many other such books, like *Huainanzi*, *Mutianzichuan*, *Baopuzi*, and *Bowuzhi*. But, being devoid of a consistent system of concentric circles like *Shanhaijing*, it is all

26. Jeong (1985, 25).

27. "Questions about *Shanhaijing*" in Yi Gyu-bo, *Dongguk isangguk jip* (Collected Works of Yi Gyu-bo).

28. "*Shanhaijing* Annex Donghwang" in Yi Deok-mu, *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo* (Complete Work of Yi Deok-mu), *gwon* 62.

29. Yi Ik, *Seonghosaseol* (Collected Works of Yi Ik), *gwon* 28.

30. "On Reading *Shanhaijing*," in Jo Gu-myeong, *Donggyejip* (Collected Works of Jo Gumyeong).

but impossible for circular maps to have been produced from those books. The most important factor supporting the assumption that circular world maps were produced based on *Shanhaijing* is the fact that their descriptions coincide with the classic's compass points. Chapters of "Classic of Mountains" and "Classic of Seas" depict place names in accordance with the directions of center, east, west, south, and north. These compass points serve as criteria for positioning various place names on the maps.

Let me offer an in-depth analysis of place names from *Shanhaijing*, recorded in circular world maps. In comparing the chapter titles of place names in *Shanhaijing* with location names in circular world maps, it becomes apparent that they are almost identical. The only difference, perhaps, is that Mt. Yitian, Mt. Suwen, and Mt. Dai, recorded in *Shanhaijing*'s "Dahuang dongjing", are located to the south of the external sea in circular world maps.³¹ But upon closer examination, the positions of these place names in circular world maps correspond not to the south of the external continent, but to the southeastern edge of the external continent. It is difficult to accurately divide areas depicted between the north, south, east, and west poles. The place names depicted in different locations in *Shanhaijing* and circular world maps are confined to those positioned at the edges of the map. This suggests that place names in circular world maps were allotted based on the directions contained in sections of *Shanhaijing*. Given that erroneous place names and changed positions were liable to be made in the extensive course of transcription and woodcut printing since the initial creation of the maps, the accord in directions found in ordinary prints of circular world maps can be said to be nearly perfect.

Another important fact can be noted from a comparison of *Shanhaijing*'s chapter titles and place names given in circular world maps. That is, the place names in the map's internal continent, internal sea, and external continent are mostly identical to those recorded in *Shanhaijing*'s "Classic of the Five Mountains," "Classic of Internal Sea,"

31. Bae (1997, 72).

"Classic of External Sea," and "Classic of Great Continents." The only detectable error is that Pousang (Sacred Tree), recorded in *Shanhaijing*'s "Classic of the East External Sea," is posted outside the external continent in order to indicate where the sun and moon rose and set.

All in all, it can be assumed that circular world maps are based on the structure of *Shanhaijing* with a series of concentric circles; also, the place names given in *Shanhaijing* are posted in the map's corresponding areas in accordance with prescribed directions.

Placement of Imaginary Names and Other Location Names

In addition to place names from *Shanhaijing*, circular world maps include place names from history books, such as *Shujing* (Classic of Books), *Hanshu* (History of the Former Han), *Tangshu* (History of the Tang), *Suishu* (History of the Shu), but also from Taoist texts like *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji* (Records of Grotto Paradises, Sacred Mountains and Rivers). Place names derived from history books are mostly found in the internal continent, among which the majority were exchange partners with China at the time, such as the Central Asia and India. These areas do not go beyond the traditional "Sinocentric sphere." Meanwhile, in order to examine the nature of circular world maps, it is important to draw the attention to Taoist place names within the maps, which are assumed to have been recorded in *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji*.

Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji is included in *Daozang* (Taoist Canon), a compilation of Taoist texts edited by Du Guangting in 901. A number of place names are found in it.³² In the circular maps, the imaginary place names taken from the compilation are found inside the sea, an area where Taoist immortals were thought to live and

32. *yuedu zhongshan* 嶽瀆衆山, *zhongguo wuyue* 中國五嶽, *shida dongtian* 十大洞天, *wuzhen haidu* 五鎮海濱, and *qishi erfudi* 七十二福地. *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (Records of Grotto Paradises, Sacred Mountains and Rivers) in *Daozang* 道藏 (Taoist Canon).

human beings were not allowed to enter. Unno claimed that as many as seventeen imaginary place names can be found in circular world maps.³³ But there were slightly fewer in ordinary circular world maps. Place names from *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji* found in circular world maps are positioned in each area according to the direction recorded in the document.

“Five outer mountains” from among the imaginary place names recorded in the maps are located in each direction with Mt. Kunlun, the purported center of the world, serving as the core. Located outside the “Sinocentric sphere,” the “five outer mountains” are difficult to find in traditional Chinese world maps and geographical documents because Chinese geography was traditionally centered around the “five mountains” within the “Sinocentric sphere.” During the Han dynasty, these five mountains were closely related to the concept of the five primary elements. Emperor Wudi held memorial rites at Mt. Songyue, designating it as the central.³⁴ Taoist texts, covering a world much larger than China and its tributary states, regarded the “five outer mountains” as “five mountains” in a genuine sense and distinguished them from the five mountains inside “Sinocentric sphere.”³⁵

In addition to the five outer mountains, the “three gods mountains”—Mt. Bangjang (Fangzhang), Mt. Bangnae (Fenglai), and Mt. Yeongju (Lingzhou)—are positioned to the east of the internal sea. The three mountains, reputed locations where immortals live and elixirs of immortality are produced, were perceived to be located in Balhae or Eastern region since ancient times. They were thus thought to lie to the east of China. Jeong Ryeom of the Joseon dynasty in the reign of King Myeongjong told Chinese Taoists that there were “three gods mountains” in Korea. It was common to find the existence of the “three gods mountains” in Korea. Mt. Geumgang was also called

33. Unno (1981, 35-36).

34. Unno (1981, 102).

35. *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshanji* (Records of Grotto Paradises, Sacred Mountains, and Rivers) in *Daozang* (Daoist Canon).

Bongnae; Mt. Jiri, Bangjang; and Mt. Halla, Yeongju.³⁶ Reflecting this perception, a complete map of the eight Korean provinces included the names of Bongnae, Bangjang, and Yeongju alongside Mt. Geumgang, Mt. Jiri, and Mt. Halla, respectively. Mt. Wongyo and Mt. Busang, both related to the sun and moon, are positioned close to where they rise.

Also noteworthy is that the locations of the rising and setting of the sun and moon, as well as that of sacred trees, are depicted. To the east, where the sun and moon rise, Mt. Yupa and Busang tree are depicted. Mt. Bang and the Bangyeoksong pine tree are also depicted to the west, where the sun and moon set. *Shanhaijing's* “Classic of the Great Eastern Continent” and “Classic of the Great Western Continent” mention many mountains where the sun and moon were supposed to set. It is unclear Mt. Yupa and Mt. Bang were selected from among the many mountains. It may be presumed that Mt. Bang was chosen because a sacred tree called the Geogyeksong pine tree was drawn there;³⁷ it is not the case with Mt. Yupa, however. Mt. Yupa has no sacred tree and is not located near the rising or setting of the sun or moon. It is presumed that Mt. Yupa was chosen because it is located in the East Sea, a great distance away or farthest from the center. Also depicted there is a sacred tree called Busang, mentioned in the “Classic of the Sea’s East.”

The inclusion of the locations of the sunrise and sunset, and moonrise and moonset in the East and the West can be seen as an attempt to correspond them with the sky and the earth, an influence of Western geographical knowledge based on astronomy.³⁸ However, the traditional method of aligning the positions of the stars with locations on the earth, could have been more effective. *Cheonjido* (Heaven and Earth Map), which shows locations of the stars in the sky and

36. Yi N. (1986, 343).

37. While in circular world maps, a sacred tree called the Bangyeoksong pine tree (盤格松) is drawn on Mt. Bang, in *Shanhaijing*, a sacred tree named Geogyeksong pine tree (柜格松) is located at Mt. Bang.

38. Bae (1998, 368).

on the earth, better reflects the corresponding relationship between the sky and the earth.³⁹ It would thus be more appropriate to believe that the maps tried to show where the sky and the earth meet. Circular world maps are still based on the traditional view that the heaven is round and the earth is square. As this differs from the theory of the round Earth, circular world maps have east and west poles, and the locations of sunrise and sunset, and moonrise and moonset visibly represent the poles. By positioning sacred trees like Busang and Bangyeoksong, in addition, they underscored the mystical nature of those locations.

The drawing of sacred trees at locations where the sun and moon rise and set, offers an important clue to understanding circular world maps. A. L. Mackay, identifying trees drawn in the north as cosmic trees, a feature of Northeast Asian shamanism, linked circular world maps to tree worship.⁴⁰ The trees featured in the maps are large and awe-inspiring. Given that pine trees are one of the ten traditional symbols of longevity,⁴¹ the trees in the maps can be regarded as deeply related to “Taoist idea of immortality.”

Why were such imaginary place names recorded in the maps? This is a very important question with respect to the worldview reflected in the maps. Unno stated earlier that circular world maps are Taoist maps, produced to counter the Western world maps.⁴² Bae Woo Sung objected, arguing that the maps do not represent “Taoist idea of immortality,” but are Korean versions of Western circle maps.⁴³ It is just as problematic to view circular world maps as a reflection of the Taoist ideology of immortality as it is to deny that they are such.

Except for those place names derived from *Shanhaijing* that appear in the internal sea and internal continent, most place names come from Taoist texts, corresponding to an imaginary land where

39. Oh (1999).

40. Mackay (1975, 27-38).

41. Yi N. (1986, 67).

42. Unno (1981, 32-33).

43. Bae (2000, 54).

immortals live. Recording Taoist place names may have been unavoidable in describing the world beyond the traditional “Sinocentric sphere.” Place names in Confucian scriptures, which dealt mainly with China and its tributary states, were inadequate to describe the world beyond the knowledge of the sphere. Even so, it is evident that circular world maps were related to “Taoist idea of immortality” when Taoist immortal-related place names were listed north of the internal sea and sacred trees were drawn to indicate where the sun and moon rise and set. This indicates that the meaning contained in the maps went beyond borrowing place names from Taoist texts merely for the purpose of describing the world outside China and its tributary states. This is evident upon reviewing the nature of the worldview contained in circular world maps.

Worldview of Circular World Maps

Cosmographical Expressions: “Round Heaven, Square Earth” and the “Three Powers”

What can be noted first in the worldview represented in circular world maps is the fact that they are based on the concept of the “round heaven, square earth.” The description of the world as a circle was not a departure from the idea of the “round heaven, square earth.” While medieval Islamic circular world maps and the “unicircular” maps produced by missionaries are based on “round earth theory,” Korean circular maps adhered to the idea of the “round heaven, square earth.” The circle used in circular world maps represents the sky rather than to the shape of the world; the circle represents where the sky and the earth meet each other.

Based on the premise that the circle in circular world maps is believed to represent the earth, recent research has stressed that the circle is closely related to those found in Western “unicircular” world maps. But circular world maps must be understood as a cosmography, representing both the earth and the sky. In other words, makers

of circular world maps believed that heaven and earth met at the poles. Hence, it is not so difficult for the four poles of the earth to symbolize the sky. Similar examples of how the sky and earth were simultaneously represented, such as *cheonjido* (Heaven and Earth Map) (*cheonjido*) (see figure 7), are not difficult to find in earlier maps.

The cosmological characteristics of circular world maps are further reinforced by the notes written in the margins of the maps. A majority of circular world maps do not have notes, but some have simple notes, which include astronomical data such as the distance between heaven and earth, the sizes of stars, and the distances between the four poles. The circular world map, recorded in *Yeoji goram dobo*, which is housed at the National Library of Korea, in par-

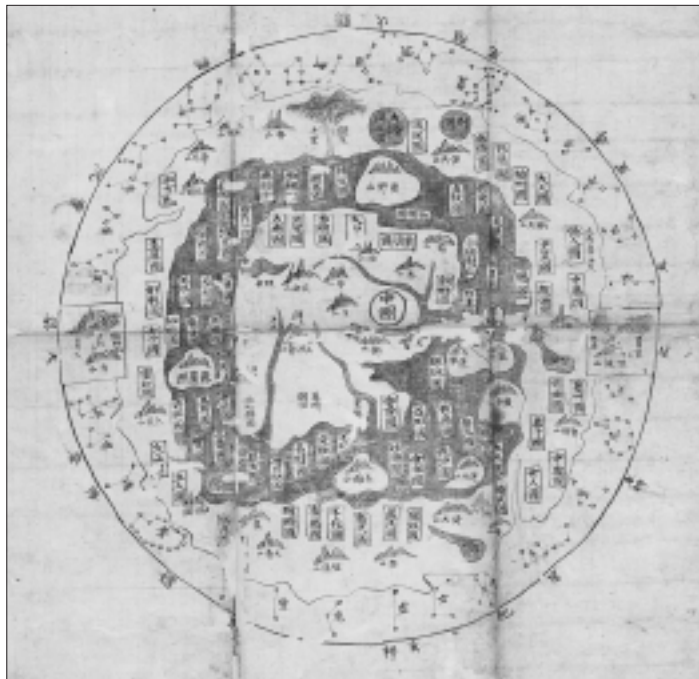


Fig. 7. *Cheonjido* (Heaven and Earth Maps). Housed at National Museum of Korea.

ticular, has detailed margin notes (see figure 4). Outside the circle of the map the general roles of heaven, earth, rivers and seas are underscored.⁴⁴ It is noticeable that in the upper margin note of the map a passage suggestive of the theory of the three powers—heaven, earth, and man—is found.⁴⁵

These descriptions of the three-power theory are not original but quoted from *Yijing* (Book of Changes). What is to be stressed here is that the map's image is not confined to the earth but is linked even to heaven and the world of human beings. One map that demands particular attention with regard to cosmography is the *Tiandi quantu* (Complete Map of Heaven and Earth), recorded in the *Sancai yiguan tu* (General Map of Three Powers) made from a wood block in China in 1722.⁴⁶

This map, as indicated by the title, reflects the idea of three powers. Its structure is similar to that of circular world maps, with the heavens positioned in the outer ring of a concentric circle and a world map drawn inside the circle (see figure 8). The world map is an abridgement of Western world maps, with differences in general outlines from Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, *Sihai huayi zongtu* (Complete Geographical Map of the Mountains and Seas), recorded in *Sancai tuihui* (Illustrated Compendium of the Three Powers), and Verbiest's *Kunyu quantu* (Complete Map of Heaven and Earth). Unlike Matteo Ricci's world map, the map positions China in the center, in keeping with the Sinocentric worldview. What is significant about this picture is that many of the place names in the *Tiandi quantu* are positioned in the Pacific Ocean and the North Sea. But the

44. 天地爲襄藏萬物 江海作帶束千山。

45. 三才 天有四時之才 地有生養收藏之才 人有五常之才。三才 川開子方 地闢丑方。

46. *Sancai yiguan tu* (General Map of Three Powers) is an atlas edited by Lu Anshi in 1722 (Li 1996, 17). *Tiandi quantu* (Complete Map of Heaven and Earth) is included in *Daqing Wannian yitong tianxia quantu* (Complete Map of the Qing Emperor), now housed at the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies (ancient relics 4709-55). A transcribed copy of the map is recorded in "Map of Countries," housed at the National Library of Korea (ancient 2802-1) (see figure 8).



Fig. 8. *Tiandi quantu* (Complete Map of Heaven and Earth) in the *General Map of Three Powers*. Manuscript. Housed at National Library of Korea.

directions shown in *Shanhaijing* do not accord exactly in the map as they do in circular world maps. Some traditional Chinese world maps carry *Shanhaijing*'s place names, but it is rare for them to list as many as the map does. The recording in the map of so many *Shanhaijing* place names might suggest a connection between the two. Given the times when they were produced, however, it is appropriate to regard them as being different.

Notable throughout this map is the fact that the *Tiandi quantu* reflects the cosmographical nature of circular world maps. The simultaneous representation of the heaven, earth, and man denotes the consistency of the "three powers," as the title says, which means that the three powers are positively reflected in the map. This indicates

that the simultaneous representation of heaven, earth, and man, a characteristic similar to that of circular world maps, was possible in China and Korea, as they belonged to the same cultural zone. The only difference is that the circular world map's internal-external continental structure is altered in the *Tiandi quantu* into a shape typical of Western world maps.

The Sinocentric Worldview

As discussed above, circular world maps can be defined as cosmographies, which depict not only the geographical world or the earth but also the heavens. Then, what ideology lies behind the geographical world represented in maps? Can we assume, as Unno Kazutake claimed, that circular world maps, in a bid to counter Western geographical knowledge, represented the "Taoist idea of immortality"?

Given that Korean society was dominated by Neo-Confucianism, however, it is unlikely that maps exhibiting the Taoist idea of immortality would have circulated widely and over a long period of time among Confucian scholars in Korea, where Taoism was much less influential than in China. It would be appropriate to regard the maps as being possessed of a Sinocentric perspective of the world.

At the center of circular world maps is an internal continent with China positioned in the middle. China is surrounded by the five mountains of Song, Hua, Heng, Tai, and Heng, as well as the countries to the west and north of China. Strictly speaking, Mt. Kunlun, the purported center of the earth, should have been drawn precisely in the center of the map. In many cases, however, Mt. Kunlun is drawn somewhat off-center.

In addition, most circular world maps emphasize China, drawing it in a larger circle unlike other countries. Despite having been made in Korea, the maps do not focus on Korea as much as on China. It is common in many parts of the world for people to perceive their countries as the center of the earth and significantly emphasize them in cartography. But because Korea was Neo-Confucian and Sinocentric, this type of representation could not exist. Korea merely present-

ed itself as a “little China,” secondary to China.

Examination of a curbed woodblock of a circular world map reveals an interesting fact. The name of a country called “China” is significantly framed in a circle, and the country referred to as “Korea” appears in name only without a frame, while other neighboring countries are framed in rectangles (see figure 1). This difference is suggestive of the hierarchy of China, Korea, and other countries; that is it mirrors the traditional view of China as the central culture and country in the world, with Korea as a “little China,” and others as uncivilized countries.

Depicting not only an internal continent similar to the “Sinocentric sphere” as well as an imaginary external continent, circular world maps differ greatly from traditional world maps which are based on the idea that China is the center of the world, Korea is a “little China,” and the other countries are uncivilized. But they merely extend the “Sinocentric sphere” and do not replace the Sinocentric worldview with another perceptive. Confucian scholars did not reject circular world maps, despite many of the place names originating from the *Shanhaijing*, because they upheld the Sinocentric worldview. Had China and Korea been positioned not at the center but in the corners of maps, circular world maps would not have been so well received.

“Taoist Idea of Immortality”

The characteristics of the three-power theory contained in the maps, interestingly enough, are linked to the Taoist idea of immortality as well. The fundamental principle of Taoist immortality is the unity of the three spirits or powers—heaven, earth, and man. If this unity is understood in terms of space and time, then heaven, earth, and man occupy an interrelated space, and the past, present and future are also interrelated.⁴⁷ The depiction of heaven, earth, and man as one interrelated space in circular world maps embodies the unity of the

47. Do (1994, 199-200).

three powers, which is the basic principle of Taoist immortality, and represents the oneness of heaven, earth, and man. Due to this connection with Taoist immortality, place names related to Taoist immortals, the locations of the sunrise, sunset, moonrise, and moonset, and the locations of sacred trees, which symbolized immortality, were indicated on the maps.

The *Irwol oakdo* (Sun, Moon, and Five Mountains Painting) (see figure 9) is also related to this ideology behind circular world maps. This painting appears on the folding screen that stands behind the royal throne. Featuring the sun and moon, which are believed to symbolize the king, and Korea’s five famous mountains, this painting was interpreted as representing the authority and dignity of the king.⁴⁸ But this interpretation overemphasized the fact that the painting screen was placed behind the royal throne. That the painting did not represent royal authority is easily evidenced by the fact that similar paintings are now found in many private homes. What does the painting represent then? It is no less than the heaven and earth as expressed in circular world maps.

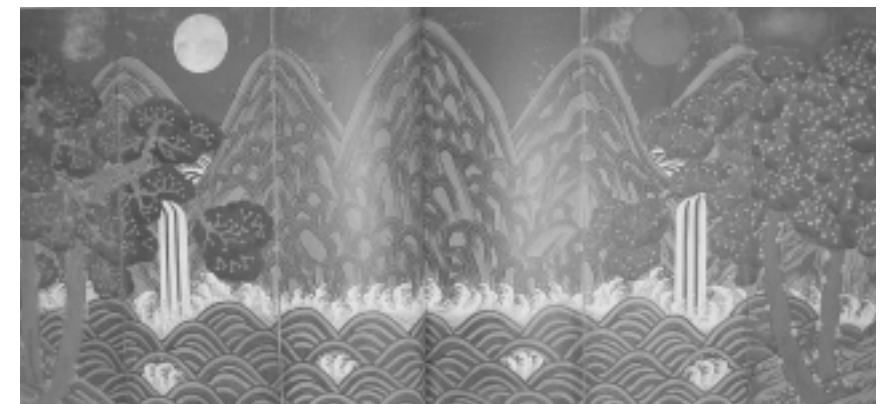


Fig. 9. *Irwol oakdo* (Sun, Moon, and Five Mountains Painting). Housed at National Palace Museum of Korea.

48. Kim C. (1991, 189).

The sun, moon, and five mountains are based on *eumyang ohaeng ron* (*yin-yang* and five primary elements), and the pattern of waves signifies the four seas. The pines positioned to the east and west are squarely related to the images in circular world maps. In other words, the images in the painting coincide neatly with the sun and moon transit points, the five mountains centered around Mt. Kunlun, the seas circling the continents, and the sacred trees. The painting, in addition, features a majestic waterfall, which suggests the distinction between the world of Taoist immortals and the secular world. All in all, the “Sun, Moon, and Five Mountains Painting” merely depicted heaven and earth as it was perceived at the time. It was only natural that the painting should be placed behind the royal throne, as it was considered an image of the world. To be sure, reflected in the painting are desires for the king’s eternal health and immortality.

The fact that the painting was placed behind the royal throne is very important to the interpretation of circular world maps. In Korea, Confucian principles prevailed not only in state institutions and policies but also in the daily lives of people. Outside the official arena, however, Confucian principles alone were not always enough. With regard to people’s private religious lives, shamanism, the Taoist idea of immortality, and Buddhism remained influential. Confucianism accommodated other religions and customs so long as they did not contradict Confucian principles. This was not impossible, given that geographic records like *Dongguk yeoji seungnam* (The Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea), compiled by Confucian scholars, always included a chapter on temples. The desire for health and longevity and the yearning for an ideal land were common even to Confucian scholars who abided by strict Confucian principles. Accordingly, the “Sun, Moon, and Five Mountains Painting” could well be placed behind the royal throne. The Taoist idea of immortality, thus, naturally also appeared in circular world maps.⁴⁹ This was

49. Standing beside Nakseonjae, a villa in Changdeokgung palace, is a stone prop titled Soyeongju 小瀛洲. Judging from its construction style, the prop appears to have been made in the Joseon dynasty. The engraving of Soyeongju, a place name

possible so long as the maps did not negate the theory of “round heaven, square earth” and the Sinocentric worldview.

Conclusion

Circular world maps, which were widely circulated among ordinary people during the late Joseon era, attracted attention from many scholars due to their shape and content. In the process, research was done on their publication time, content and place names, and their origins. But it is still unclear what ideology and worldview lay behind the maps. In this paper, I examined unique features and the worldview they represent.

The emergence of circular world maps in the seventeenth-century Joseon dynasty can be attributed to external factors rather than internal ones. Since the seventeenth century, Korea had access to geographical knowledge of the West through China, and as a result its geographical worldview expanded significantly. Circular world maps were produced to cope with this change, but they still relied on traditional means of description and content. By referring to *Shanhaijing*, which depicted various worlds beyond human experience, they drew the internal continent, internal sea, external continent, and external sea, and added place names. Among these were actual place names recorded in historical documents as well as a considerable number of imaginary place names related to the Taoist immortality.

Circular world maps were first and foremost based on the idea of “round heaven, square earth.” The “circle” in the circular world maps signifies not the roundness of earth but of the sky. Second, they adhered to the Sinocentric worldview. Although the maps cover areas beyond the “Sinocentric sphere,” comprised of China and its tribu-

related to Taoist idea of immortality, on a stone structure in a palace indicates that Taoist idea of immortality was influential in unofficial matters, even in a society dominated by Confucian principles. The general interest in Taoist idea of immortality can also be observed by a number of folding screens with paintings related to Taoist immortals, which decorated the houses of nobility at the time.

tary states, there was no change to the idea that China was the center of the world. Third, in terms of cosmography, the maps reflect the concept of the “three powers (heaven, earth, and man).” All three are depicted, rather than the earth alone, in order to symbolize the unity of the three. Fourth, they reflect the Taoist idea of immortality, the desire for eternal health and longevity, since they include place names found in Taoist texts and sacred trees, which marked the points of the solar and lunar transits. This ideology persisted in the unofficial arena as a basic human desire, even in the Joseon society dominated by Confucian principles.

All in all, circular world maps were made based on the traditional Sinocentric worldview, the idea of “round heaven, square earth,” and the Taoist idea of immortality. They can also be defined as cosmographies unique to seventeenth-century Joseon, since they depicted not only the geographical world but also the heavens.

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GLOSSARY

<i>bahong</i> (Ch.)	八紘	<i>Daishan</i> (Ch.)	待山
<i>baji</i> (Ch.)	八極	<i>Daozang</i> (Ch.)	道藏
Balhae	渤海	<i>Daqing wannian yitong</i>	大清萬年一統
Bangjang	方丈	<i>tianxia quantu</i> (Ch.)	天下全圖
Bang(san)	方山	<i>Dongguk yisangguk jip</i>	東國李相國集
Bangyeoksong	盤格松	<i>Donggyejip</i>	東谿集
Banmok cheonri	盤木千里	<i>Dongtian fudi yuedu</i>	洞天福地嶽瀆
<i>Baopozhi</i> (Ch.)	抱朴子	<i>mingshanji</i> (Ch.)	名山記
<i>bayin</i> (Ch.)	八殫	<i>Erya</i> (Ch.)	爾雅
Bongnae	蓬萊	<i>Geogyeoksong</i>	柎格松
<i>Bowuzhi</i> (Ch.)	博物志	<i>Haijing</i> (Ch.)	海經
Busang	扶桑	<i>Hanshu</i> (Ch.)	漢書
<i>Cheonggudo</i>	青邱圖	<i>Heng(shan)</i> (Ch.)	恒山
<i>Cheongjangwan</i>	青莊館	<i>Heng(shan)</i> (Ch.)	衡山
<i>jeonseo</i>	全書	<i>Hongfan</i> (Ch.)	洪範
<i>Cheonhado</i>	天下圖	<i>Honil gangni yeokdae</i>	混一疆理歷代
<i>Cheonjido</i>	天地圖	<i>gukdo jido</i>	國都之圖
<i>cheonwon jibang</i>	天圓地方	<i>Huainanzi</i> (Ch.)	淮南子
<i>Chuanxinguo</i> (Ch.)	穿心國	<i>Hua(shan)</i> (Ch.)	華山
<i>Dahuangjing</i> (Ch.)	大荒經	<i>Heumyeong</i>	欽英
<i>Dahuang</i> (Ch.)	大荒	<i>Hwanyongji</i>	奩瀛誌

<i>Irwol oakdo</i>	日月五嶽圖	<i>Suishu</i> (Ch.)	隨書
<i>Junziguo</i> (Ch.)	君子國	<i>Suwen(shan)</i> (Ch.)	蘇門山
<i>Kunyu wanguo</i>	坤輿萬國	<i>Tai(shan)</i> (Ch.)	太山
<i>quantu</i> (Ch.)	全圖	<i>Tangshu</i> (Ch.)	唐書
<i>Mutianzichuan</i> (Ch.)	穆天子傳	<i>Tiandi quantu</i> (Ch.)	天地全圖
<i>Sancai tuhui</i> (Ch.)	三才圖會	<i>Wanguo quantu</i> (Ch.)	萬國全圖
<i>Sancai yiguantu</i> (Ch.)	三才一貫圖	<i>Wongyo(san)</i>	圓嶠山
<i>Seongho saseol</i>	星湖僊說	<i>Wuzanshanjing</i> (Ch.)	五臟山經
<i>Shanghai yudi</i>	山海輿地	<i>Yeongju</i>	瀛洲
<i>quantu</i> (Ch.)	全圖	<i>Yitian(shan)</i> (Ch.)	倚天山
<i>Shanghaijing</i> (Ch.)	山海經	<i>Yeoji goram dobo</i>	輿地攷覽圖譜
<i>Shizhouji</i> (Ch.)	十洲記	<i>Yijing</i> (Ch.)	易經
<i>Shujing</i> (Ch.)	書經	<i>Yueling guangyi</i> (Ch.)	月令廣義
<i>Sihai huayi</i>	四海華夷	<i>Yupa(san)</i>	流波山
<i>zongtu</i> (Ch.)	總圖	<i>Zhangbiguo</i> (Ch.)	長臂國
<i>Sojaejip</i>	蘇齋集	<i>Zhangjiaoguo</i> (Ch.)	長脚國
<i>Song(shan)</i> (Ch.)	嵩山	<i>zhifang</i> (Ch.)	職方
<i>Songyue</i> (Ch.)	嵩岳	<i>Zhongshanjing</i> (Ch.)	中山經
<i>Soyoungju</i>	小瀛洲	<i>Zhouli</i> (Ch.)	周禮

(Ch.: Chinese)