

# Changes in Foreigners' Settlement Space in Seoul, Korea, 1882 to 1910: *Focusing on Chinese and Japanese Demographic Changes and Commercial Activities*

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## Abstract

*From 1882 to 1910, Seoul was a special foreigners' concession called a mixed-residential quarter. During this period, external influences changed the landscape of the Korean capital. Hence, the changes in foreigners' settlement space in Seoul are an important element in our understanding of power dynamics among the nations surrounding Korea. Chinese power reinforced its predominance over Seoul immediately after that city's opening, but Japanese power gradually came to the forefront in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, with Japan eventually occupying most of southern Seoul after the Russo-Japanese War. Between 1882 and 1910 more than 90 percent of foreign residents of Seoul were Chinese or Japanese. Therefore, it is possible to understand transitions in the foreigners' settlement space through an evaluation of the activities of Chinese and Japanese merchants and changes to their respective spaces. Such an analysis shows that the Chinese space had a dot-type distribution without a specific direction, whereas the Japanese space had a radial-type expansion centered on the Japanese legation. Furthermore, it shows that parts of the Chinese space were replaced with an augmented Japanese space. Hence, this further suggests linkages between changes in the foreigners' space and changes in political power, commercial activity, population, and lifestyles, painting a distinct picture of Seoul in the decades immediately following the open-port period in Korea.*

**Keywords:** open-port period in Korea, Seoul, mixed-residential quarter, foreign concessions, Chinese in Seoul, Japanese in Seoul, Sino-Japanese War, Russo-Japanese War

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## Introduction

Foreign concessions were common in the 19th-century trading ports of East Asia.<sup>1</sup> In such open-port cities, certain quarters were set aside for foreign concessions or settlements to both protect foreigners and limit their residential and commercial activities. However, the foreigner settlement of Seoul, the capital of Korea, differed from its counterparts in other East Asian cities. Seoul had a mixed- residential arrangement that allowed foreigners to live throughout the entire city, including alongside native Korean residents and without any legal divisions by nationality.<sup>2</sup> After opening some of its ports to trade, Korea found itself in crisis due to the political interference and economic despoliation by neighboring nations. Such a crisis was bound to manifest itself in Seoul, which became an arena for competition among international powers.

As such, changes to the foreigners' settlement space in Seoul reflect not only a simple spatial transition but also shifting power relations among the nations surrounding Korea. As with preceding studies, this one investigates spatial information regarding the Seoul mixed-residential quarter and presents the changes of space in concrete form. Further, it is hoped the data in this study will prove significant in our understanding of the urban history of Korea in the late 19th century while also contributing to our understanding of urbanization during the Japanese colonial era.

## Review of Existing Research

There have been quite a few studies of the Japanese residential and commercial areas of Seoul after the foreign inflow into the city from 1882 (C.

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1. This process could be found in Shanghai 上海, Hong Kong 香港, and Tianjin 天津 in China; Yokohama 横濱, Kobe 神戸, Niigata 新潟, Hakodate 函館, and Nagasaki 長崎 in Japan; and Incheon 仁川, Busan 釜山, Mokpo 木浦, Wonsan 元山, and Gunsan 群山 in Korea.
  2. Mixed-residential quarters were allowed in some open-port cities in Japan. However, Japan only permitted this when it could control foreigners after installing a concession. Hence, the mixed-residential quarters of Japanese cities were different from that of Seoul.

Park 2002a; 2002b; J. Kim 2003; Y. Lee 2013). However, there have been fewer studies of the Western and Chinese settlements in Korea. And there have been no remarkable findings since the study on Western settlements in the Jeongdong 貞洞 area of Seoul (C. Kim 2002). However, reports and records of Westerners who visited Korea during this period have come to be better known, and these contain important spatial information that is expected to become important data for further studies of foreign settlements in Seoul.

It is, however, safe to say that there has been no research on the Chinese settlements, save for some studies on the Chinese who resided around Seoul's Supyogyo 水標橋 Bridge area in from the 1880s to the early 1890s (Son 1975; K. Park 1994). Recently, there has been an increase in studies on Chinese merchants in Korea during this period (Junghyun Park 2010; H. Kim 2010).

To date, research on the Seoul settlement in the late 19th century have not focused on all countries that had settlements in Seoul, but only on certain ones. This present study is meaningful in that it examines the settlements in Seoul of all foreigners—Chinese, Japanese, and Westerners—and represents in concrete form the settlement patterns by nationality.

## **Research Methodology**

The key objective of this study is to read the spatial information of Seoul and visualize it on a map using historical data of the late 19th century and early 20th century. Most of this historical data is abstract and unclear because it was created before the modernization of documentation formats and recording methods. Therefore, it is not easy to acquire detailed spatial information through it. However, the document “Gakgukgagye” 各國家契 (Seoul History Compilation Committee 1996), which records details on houses purchased by foreigners in Seoul, includes the locations and dimensions of the land holdings, between 1886 and 1889. It is a rare source of spatial information about the foreign settlement in the early days of the Seoul mixed-residential quarter.

With the exception of the aforementioned document, most spatial information found in historical data was compiled in Japanese by the

Japanese government and newspapers. In the 1870s, Japan began publishing daily newspapers. Articles related to Seoul and its foreign residents were published almost daily in the *Asahi shimbun* 朝日新聞, *Yomiuri shimbun* 讀賣新聞 and *Mainichi shimbun* 毎日新聞. Spatial information during the period can also be obtained from Japanese diplomatic documents. In addition, we can derive spatial information from secondary sources, such as works published by the city's Department of Surveying under the Japanese colonial government (Keijo-fu 1936) and the Japanese Settlement Corporation of Seoul (Keijo kyoryu mindan 1912). After compiling and organizing all information related to foreigners' activities and containing spatial data in the above sources, I recorded these activities on a map of Seoul using Photoshop and QGIS. The results from Photoshop and QGIS were then arranged in chronological order to create new spatial information based on historical data.

Modern land registration in Korea based on surveying began in 1908, and a cadastral map and land register of the entire city of Seoul were completed in 1912. Spatial information on land holdings was then obtained through linkages between this 1912 cadastral map and land registers. All information above was then recorded on a map using Photoshop and QGIS, and then arranged in chronological order. Through this process, changes in foreigners' settlement patterns in Seoul were clarified.

## Research Subjects and Definition of Terms

This study targets the period from 1882, when foreigners started to reside in Seoul, to 1910, when Korea became a Japanese colony. The period from 1882 to 1910 allows us to scrutinize changes in the foreign population of Seoul and changes to their areas of residence and areas in foreigners as they began to live in Seoul. The official name of Seoul at that time was Hanseong 漢城 (Seoul became the official name only in 1945). However, for convenience, this study uses Seoul to denote Hanseong. The geographic space discussed in this study is also limited to the inner four main gates of old Seoul, an area encircled by the Seoul city wall.

## Process and Character of Seoul's Opening

### *Circumstances of Seoul's Opening*

It was not originally the government of Korea's intention to allow foreigners to reside within Seoul city walls. When surrounding nations began to call for Seoul's opening, the Korean government looked negatively upon opening the capital to foreign residents. However, as the country's capital and largest city, Seoul presented to foreign nations the most attractive market in Korea. The opening of Seoul was connected to the intentions of foreign powers and geopolitical dynamics among various concerned nations.

Korea had traded with China and Japan even before its ports were opened to foreign intercourse. It traded with China through envoys and with Japan through the Choryang waegwan 草梁倭館 (Japanese Trade Facility) installed at Busan. The Choryang waegwan was a base of Korean-Japanese trade managed by premodern rules and regulations. Korea's first modern trade treaty was the Jo-Il suho jogyu 朝日修好條規 (Korea-Japan Treaty of 1876). However, at the time the Korean government failed to recognize that the character of this treaty differed from those of premodern times. Since the Korean government had a long history of trading with Japan, they judged that it was safe to sign this new treaty.<sup>3</sup> Such naivety reveals the Korean government's lack of understanding of the modern treaty. Accordingly, the Korean government did not regard the Jo-Il suho jogyu as opening the country's ports to Western countries.<sup>4</sup>

Because the Korean government could not fully comprehend the impact of opening its ports, foreigner entry into Seoul was still restricted even after the 1876 treaty with Japan. The Japanese were not allowed to deviate from the Japanese concession at Busan, and the only Chinese who could enter Seoul were diplomats who visited as envoys and the merchants accompanying them. Officially, Seoul was still a city off limits to foreigners.

3. *Gojongillok* 高宗實錄 (Veritable Records of King Gojong), *gwon* 13, 13th day of the 1st lunar month, 1876, 2nd article.

4. *Gojongillok* 高宗實錄 (Veritable Records of King Gojong), *gwon* 13, 24th day of the 1st lunar month, 1876, 2nd article.

This rule was broken with the Imo gullan 壬午軍亂 (military revolt of 1882). As the result of this uprising, Chinese and Japanese soldiers came to be stationed in Seoul along with their military suppliers. The Chinese army was stationed in Samganjeong-dong 三間井洞 (Obi 1885, 35), while Japanese troops were stationed at Waeseongdae 倭城臺. Chinese military merchandisers settled in Seoul without legal authorization, and this marked the beginning of foreigners residing in Seoul. The number of Chinese merchandisers who settled in Seoul in the immediate wake of the Imo gullan in 1882 is known to be forty (Junghyun Park 2010, 5).

Following the Imo gullan, Korea signed treaties with different nations opening its ports for trade. It signed the Jo-Mi suho tongsang joyak 朝美修好通商條約 (Korean-American Treaty of Amity) on May 22, 1882, and the Jo-Cheong sangmin suryuk muyeok jangjeong 朝清商民水陸貿易章程 (Korea-China Commercial Treaty) on August 22, 1882. Korea also signed an amended Jo-Il suho jogyu sokyak 朝日修好條規續約 (Korea-Japan Treaty) on August 30, 1882, with additional provisions to the treaty of 1876. In particular, the Jo-Cheong sangmin suryuk muyeok jangjeong prescribed the opening of the Yanghwajin 楊花津 area to the south of Seoul. Based on this treaty, the Chinese Hanseong gaejangwon 漢城開棧權 (right to commercial activity in Seoul) was limited to Yanghwajin. However, there was no measure for closing and moving those Chinese stores that had opened in Seoul after the Imo gullan. Therefore, 82 Chinese from 22 families were residing in Seoul as of February 1883 (K. Park 1995, 117). On July 25, 1883, Korea entered into the Jo-Il tongsang jangjeong 朝日通商章程 (Korea-Japan Commercial Treaty), which added a provision regarding the most-favored-nation status. This provision granted to Japanese the same rights to commercial activity in Seoul that Chinese merchants enjoyed. The Jo-Yeong suho tongsang joyak 朝英修好通商條約 (United Kingdom-Korea Treaty) was signed in November 1883 and ratified in April 1884. The Jo-Yeong suho tongsang joyak marked the official opening of Seoul, which was legally guaranteed by treaty. However, Japanese and Chinese merchants were already residing in Seoul, so it is fair to say that Seoul's opening really commenced with the Imo gullan of 1882.

*Mixed-Residence Quarter of Seoul and its Characteristics*

China exercised a strong influence over Korea based on tradition of *sadae* 事大 (submission to the greater or larger power, a system of international relations particular to premodern East Asia), making it difficult for the Korean government to establish new concessions or to deport Chinese merchants. The Korean government failed to recognize the severe consequences of the opening of Seoul to foreign residents, and neglected the growth of Chinese merchants there. That meant that the Chinese in Seoul increased geometrically. Chinese merchants spread throughout Seoul within a few months of their arrival there in 1882, creating a situation the Korean government could not handle. In addition, the government had no contingencies to stop Japanese merchants who entered Seoul from claiming the same rights as their Chinese counterparts. In the end, Chinese merchandisers expanded their sales from the Chinese military to the general Korean public and foreigners, and their power rapidly increased. Japanese merchandisers also expanded their commercial activities in Seoul.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, Seoul was reborn as a mixed-residence quarter, which was completely different from the general concessions of other cities. Foreigners were permitted throughout the city, and Koreans and foreigners lived side by side. Several countries in East Asia had opened ports and installed concessions, but there was no case where an entire city was open to foreign residents. This can be interpreted as an indication of the weakness of the Korean government. The Korean government intended to cancel the mixed residence and open the area of Yongsan 龍山 instead of Seoul as a designated foreign concession (Junhyoung Park 2012, 104). However, it was forced to maintain the mixed-residence of Seoul due to a lack of capital and competence. The Korean government was unable to formulate clear guidelines for the residency of foreigners, resulting in the mixed-residence nature of Seoul in its entirety.

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5. *Yomiuri shimbun*, July 23, 1885, 2.

## Division of Foreigner Settlement Space in Seoul before the Sino-Japanese War (1882–1894)

### *Settlement Space in the Initial Mixed-Residence: Foothold of Diplomatic Missions*

Though the entirety of Seoul was opened to foreigners, limits were set for their consulates and resident associations. In particular, trivial conflicts between Chinese and Japanese had the potential to develop into military confrontation, so these two nations came to mutual agreement on their residency areas. Chinese residents were centered around Supyogyo Bridge, where their merchants had first settled, while the Japanese were centered around Nihyeon 泥峴, location of their legation.<sup>6</sup> Nihyeon did not enjoy a flourishing commerce relative to the Supyogyo Bridge area. Yet despite its disadvantageous environment commercially, Nihyeon was selected by the Japanese because it was deemed safe<sup>7</sup> and familiar, as a temporary Japanese legation had been installed there as far back as 1882.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, commercial activities were not considered when Westerners first decided on their settlements as they had little interest in commerce. Instead, they concentrated on political or social activities, including religion, education, and medicine, so there were few Western merchants compared with Chinese and Japanese. Just a handful of Western shops, such as German and American shops supplying weapons and alcohol to the Korean government existed (Gilmore 2009, 106). Accordingly, it can be said that there were no real commercial activities by Westerners aimed at

6. The diplomatic document “Yongsan-geup hanseong japgeo yakjeong an” 龍山及漢城雜居約定案 (Stipulation for a Mixed-Residence in Yongsan and Hanseong) records that the mixed residence of the Chinese was first limited to the area around Supyogyo Bridge 水標橋 and that of the Japanese to Nihyeon 泥峴 (what is currently the area around Myeongdong). These records are repeatedly cited by Keijo gyoryu mindan (1912) and Keijo-fu (1936) and spread from there to many other sources (Son 1975). Thereafter, the area around Supyogyo Bridge came to be accepted as the orthodox area of Chinese activity. However, a later study (Junhyung Park 2012) confirmed that this stipulation was broken.

7. *Asahi shimbun*, April 22, 1885, 1.

8. *Yomiuri shimbun*, August 27, 1882, 1.



the general Korean public.

Paul Georg Von Möllendorff (1847–1901) was the first Westerner to reside in Seoul. He had worked at the German consulate in Shanghai before being named the Tongniamun chamui 統理衙門參議 (Advisor to the Korean Foreign Ministry) at the recommendation of Li Hongzhang 李鴻章. Arriving in Seoul in December 1882, Möllendorff first resided in Bakdong 薄洞, around Gyeongbokgung Palace 景福宮 (S. Lee 2012, 159). His residence was distant from the Jeongdong area, which came to be known as a foreigners' street, and which was lined with the houses of high-ranking Korean government officials. The next Westerner to reside in Seoul was the American diplomat Lucius H. Foote (1826–1913). He first resided at Möllendorff's house before moving his official residence to Jeongdong in 1883, which led to Jeongdong becoming a street of foreign residents (S. Lee 2012, 125). Afterwards, the British and other Western consulates began to take their place in Jeongdong. Foreign consulates settled in that area most likely because it was an advantageous place of retreat in case of emergency (Sands 1999, 53). Such tendencies in location selection by Western diplomatic offices were common in the open ports of East Asia. Another likely advantage of Jeongdong was its convenient access to daily necessities. Although there were no restrictions on where to live in Seoul, it was natural to choose a residence around consulates for the greater likelihood of public order and access to information relevant to the foreign community. The high number of foreign residents in Jeongdong led in turn to the emergence of commercial venues selling Western goods, though mainly run by Chinese (Gilmore 2009, 106).

Settlement space by nationality evolved more implicitly in the case of Seoul. There was no legal enforcement, and land surveying was not done to define precise boundaries. Hence, land division could be imperfect and flexible depending on the situation. Furthermore, there were already about 200,000 Koreans residing within the 17 square kilometers of Seoul, so there was no space to create a special foreign concession. Chinese, Japanese, and Western people developed their respective settlements around Supyogyo Bridge, Nihyeon, and Jeongdong, but even in these areas they were compelled to reside side by side with the Koreans already living there.

### *Activities of Chinese Merchants and the Expansion of Chinese Settlement Space*

As for location choice of personal residences by nationality following Seoul's opening, Japanese and Westerners selected areas around their consulates, showing a characteristic preference for safety. In contrast, Chinese showed a tendency to occupy areas advantageous to commercial activities regardless of the location of their consulate. Such a difference led to a rapid increase in the Chinese population and their spatial extension.

In Seoul in 1885, there were 15 shops run by Japanese, including nine owned by Japanese and six rented. Some 20–30 shops were run by Chinese. There was no significant difference in commercial activities between Chinese and Japanese residents of Seoul.<sup>9</sup> Some records even assert that Japanese merchants were more active than Chinese ones<sup>10</sup> and that a considerable number of Chinese merchants returned to China after their army had retreated by the Treaty of Tiensin in 1885.<sup>11</sup> By 1887, Japanese commercial activity in Seoul had increased to about 45 shops.<sup>12</sup> However, by 1888, the situation had completely changed and in terms of numbers Chinese merchants started to overwhelm Japanese ones. Some records say this was due to the fact that the quality of Chinese products was superior to that of the Japanese.<sup>13</sup> In addition, records from 1893 reveal that the Chinese merchants had simply overwhelmed the Japanese, seizing commercial supremacy in Seoul.<sup>14</sup>

Another factor behind the rapid growth of Chinese merchants was family composition. In those days, the ratio of women among Chinese families in Seoul was lower than among other nationalities.<sup>15</sup> The Chinese

9. *Yomiuri shimbun*, June 23, 1885, 2.

10. *Asahi shimbun*, August 30, 1885, 3.

11. See *Yomiuri shimbun* (December 20, 1885, 2). China and Japan signed the Treaty of Tianjin 天津 in 1885 following the Gapsin coup of 1884 (Gapsin jeongbyeon 甲申政變), and by its terms both countries agreed to withdraw their armies from Korea.

12. *Asahi shimbun*, April 10, 1887, 4.

13. *Asahi shimbun*, August 15, 1888, 4.

14. *Yomiuri shimbun*, July 7, 1893, 3.

15. Comparing the sex ratio of the Japanese and Chinese populations in Seoul in 1906, there

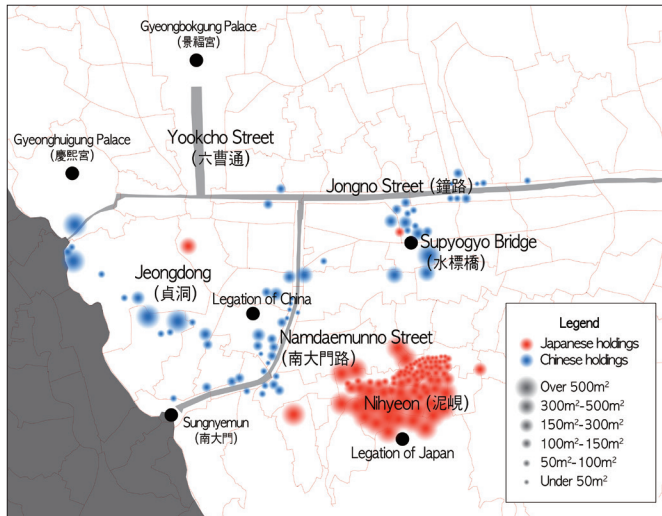
at that time focused only on economic activities rather than familial life. In other words, Chinese men came to Seoul alone to concentrate on commercial activities by leaving their family members in China. Many Chinese came to Seoul empty-handed and accumulated wealth in a short period (Junghyun Park 2010, 7),<sup>16</sup> and they quickly expanded their influence in Seoul.

Such a rapid growth in Chinese merchants caused the Chinese population to spread to various areas of Seoul beyond Supyogyo Bridge. Figure 1 depicts the purchase of Korean houses by Chinese and Japanese in the period 1885–1887. This map reveals that most Chinese purchases occurred in the Jangtong-bang 長通坊 and Gyeonghaeng-bang 慶幸坊 neighborhoods around Supyogyo Bridge. Nonetheless, quite a few Chinese purchases were made in Jeongdong, Sogongdong 小公洞, and along Namdaemun-ro Street 南大門路. From this, it can be seen the Chinese expanded across the entirety of Seoul. In contrast, Japanese housing purchases in the same period were concentrated in Nihyeon. The data for Figure 1 dates to between 1885 and 1887, just three years after mixed residence began in Seoul. Thus, it may be confirmed that Chinese in Seoul expanded their residential space rapidly. Another record from 1894 shows the number of Chinese merchants had by then reached 3,000, with their commercial power rapidly increasing (Sakurai and Beisen 1894, 115–116).

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were 9,665 Japanese men and 7,449 women. On the other hand, there were 1,340 Chinese men, and only 23 women. The male ratio was generally high for other foreigners, but not as extreme as the Chinese case (Tonggam-bu 1908, 27, 39).

16. There was one case of a Chinese merchant opening a store only a month and a half after running a street stall. Gong Liande 鞏連德, the owner of the store Gongshenghe 公盛和 (Gongseonghwa in Korean), opened a sundries stall with a capital of 60 *ryang* 兩 in October 1883, recorded sales of 40 *ryang* 兩 in just a month and a half, purchased a building of 13.5 *gan* 間 in the Jangtong-bang 長通坊 area, and employed one sales clerk (Junghyun Park 2010, 7).



**Figure 1.** Land holdings by Chinese and Japanese in Seoul, 1887–1889

Source: Seoul History Compilation Committee (1996, 219–340).

## Changes to Foreigners' Settlement Space between the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War (1894–1904)

### *Confrontation between Chinese and Japanese Merchants and the Influence of the Sino-Japanese War*

Most Japanese and Chinese residents of Seoul were merchants, and they continued to compete with each other in order to gain the upper hand. However, immediately before the Sino-Japanese War, the population of Chinese (2,500–3,000) overwhelmingly surpassed that of Japanese (848).<sup>17</sup> The Chinese already occupied major commercial bases in Seoul.<sup>18</sup> Among the city's foreign merchants, the Chinese exerted the greatest influence. As Seoul was the most powerful base of Chinese merchants in Korea, Japanese there faced difficulties conducting commercial activities, difficulties they did

17. *Asahi shimbun*, June 10, 1894, 1.

18. *Yomiuri shimbun*, July 7, 1893, 2.

not face in other regions.<sup>19</sup> Attempting to resolve such a situation, Japanese merchants targeted Namdaemunno Street and Jongno Street 鍾路, major commercial centers in those days, and made every effort to enter that part of Namdaemunno Street close to the Japanese district of Nihyeon. However, they could not outpace the Chinese merchants.

The Sino-Japanese War provided the Japanese an opportunity to change this situation. With Japan's victory in that war, Japanese merchants could begin establishing their commercial supremacy in Seoul. At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, most Chinese merchants returned home.<sup>20</sup> A couple of stores, including Itae-ho 怡泰號, remained, but even these soon closed their businesses and returned to China en masse, as if the move was orchestrated.<sup>21</sup> As a result, commercially Seoul became nearly empty. Japanese merchants seized this opportunity and advanced to Namdaemunno Street, Jeongdong, where the Chinese merchants had once held commercial supremacy, and Jongno Street, the primary area for Korean merchants (this was possible because some Korean merchants had also fled to Seoul's outskirts to escape the war).<sup>22</sup>

Japanese people secured stability for their commercial activities in Seoul following their victory in the Sino-Japanese War. Consequently, the Japanese settlement space in Seoul expanded, leading to a rapid increase in the city's Japanese population.<sup>23</sup> Japanese merchants saw the absence of the Chinese as an opportunity and thought they should take over the trade in articles previously monopolized by the Chinese merchants, and were concerned that the Chinese merchants could turn the tables if they returned to Seoul.<sup>24</sup> And indeed, Japanese merchants felt a sense of crisis when they heard that Chinese merchants were returning to the city in 1895: a branch of Dongsuntae 同順泰 opening at Incheon harbor; Yochang-ho 要昌號<sup>25</sup>

19. *Yomiuri shimbun*, January 10, 1895, 5.

20. *Asahi shimbun*, July 19, 1894, 1.

21. *Yomiuri shimbun*, July 28, 1894, 2.

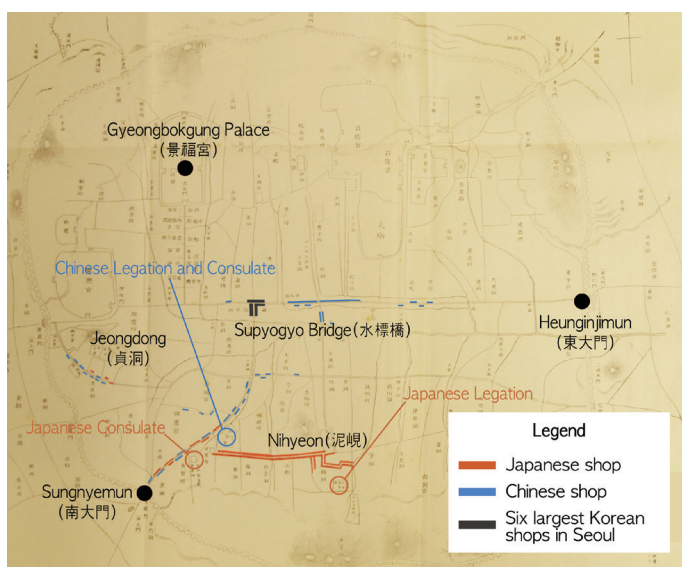
22. *Asahi shimbun*, September 21, 1894, 2.

23. *Asahi shimbun*, September 27, 1895, 2.

24. *Yomiuri shimbun*, January 13, 1895, 1.

25. The original article says Yochang-ho 要昌號, but since the Chinese store located in Jeongdong was named Anchang-ho 安昌號, this is presumably a mistake.

opening a store at Jeongdong; Deokhueng-ho 德興號 and Sangseong-ho 雙盛號 returning to Korea; and Itae-ho 怡泰號 constructing a new store.<sup>26</sup> Another newspaper article of September 1895 noted that Japan's trade volume had dropped 15,100 won within one month, demonstrating that Chinese merchants were able to restart their business activities in earnest in the wake of the recent war.<sup>27</sup> Thus, though Japanese merchants had achieved some stability to their commercial enterprises in Seoul, they were still on alert regarding Chinese merchants.



**Figure 2.** Locations of Chinese- and Japanese-owned shops in Seoul in 1895 relative to major Korean shops

Source: *Nikkan tsusyo kyokai* (1895).

26. *Asahi shimbun*, September 6, 1895, 2.

27. *Asahi shimbun*, September 6, 1895, 2.

*Japanese Victory in the Sino-Japanese War and Expansion of the Japanese Settlement Space*

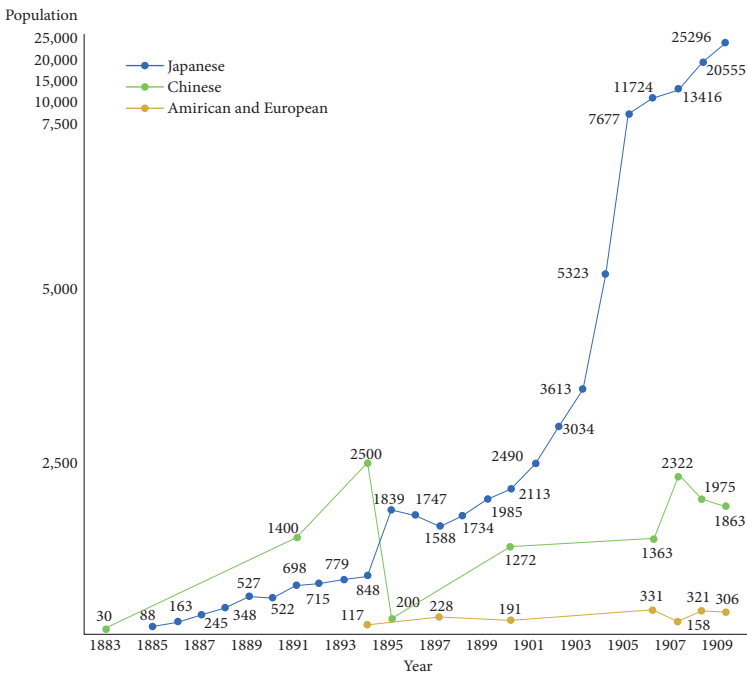
According to a survey by the Hanseong-bu 漢城府(Seoul City Administration), by May 1895 the number of Chinese merchants who had returned to Seoul from China immediately after the Sino-Japanese War was 227, all of them were big-name merchants.<sup>28</sup> However, their number and scale were still insignificant relative to the 3,000 Chinese merchants active in Seoul immediately before the Sino-Japanese War. Figure 2 shows the expansion of Japanese merchants into Jeongdong, the space occupied by Westerners and Chinese, beyond Namdaemunno Street. Another indicator of the expansion of Japanese settlement space is the transfer of the Japanese consulate to Namdaemunno Street in 1896. The consulate played a more important role in local life than the legation. As mentioned above, the Japanese had a tendency to build their settlement space around the consulate, so the transfer of the Japanese consulate to Namdaemunno Street indicates that their settlement space had expanded there.

Though number of Chinese merchants was much smaller compared to before the Sino-Japanese War, this number continued to rebound, reaching 1,271 by 1901 (Tsuneya 1901, 87). And competition between Japanese and Chinese merchants for commercial supremacy continued. In this, Chinese merchants showed a slowdown in their activities, even as their Japanese counterparts showed even faster growth. The Japanese population in Seoul reached 3,600 by 1904, an annual increase of 100 to 500 between 1895 and the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 (see Fig. 3). In terms of foreign nationals residing in Seoul, one record from 1901 reports 1,992 Japanese; 1,272 Chinese; 95 Americans; 7 Russians; 39 British; 36 French; 9 Germans; and 5 others. A total of 3,456 foreigners lived in Seoul, but the actual Japanese population was possibly even larger since the statistics did not include soldiers and military police (Tsuneya 1901, 86). Thus, when one considers the number of Japanese soldiers in Seoul, the Japanese population of the city overwhelmingly exceeded that of the Chinese.

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28. *Asahi shimbun*, May 9, 1895, 2.

Chinese commercial supremacy expanded to many bases following the opening of Seoul, including Supyogyo Bridge, Namdaemunno Street, and Jeongdong. The Japanese developed their commercial supremacy centered on Nihyeon where the Japanese consulate was located. Hence, the Japanese seized most of the southern part of Seoul, including southern Jongno Street and eastern Namdaemunno Street. The Japanese and Chinese sometimes clashed for commercial supremacy, with competition most severe in Namdaemunno Street. However, Japanese merchants, gaining the political and military upper hand in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, began to gradually seize commercial supremacy as well. As a result, Chinese merchants retreated to the periphery of Gyeongungung Palace 慶運宮 in Jeongdong, while the vicinity of the Chinese legation, located across from the Japanese consulate, came to be occupied by the Japanese.



**Figure 3.** Demographic trends of foreign residents in Seoul, 1883–1909  
*Source:* Seo (2015, 52).



Change of Foreigners' Settlement Space after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1910)

Japanese Occupation of the Southern Part of Seoul and the Extension of their Settlement Space

Figure 3 shows the rapid increase in the Japanese population of Seoul from 1904. Such a demographic change meant that buildings and lands owned by Japanese increased proportionally. Table 1 shows Japanese ownership of land in Seoul in 1909. Land area owned by the Japanese was approximately 1.53 km<sup>2</sup>, excluding forests and fields. The total area of Seoul at the time, excluding forests and fields, was merely 13.37 km<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the area owned by the Japanese in Seoul reached 11.44 percent of the entire Seoul area.<sup>29</sup> According to retrieved data, in June 1909, the number of Japanese families in Seoul was 7,311, but the number of landowners was only 398 (Tonggam-bu 1909). Japanese people who entered Seoul after 1904 were not completely settled, so they tended to lease rather than purchase land. However, the fact that 398 Japanese possessed 11.44 percent of Seoul by 1909 indicates that the Japanese who entered Seoul before 1904 had accumulated immense wealth.

Table 1. Japanese land holdings in Seoul (1909)

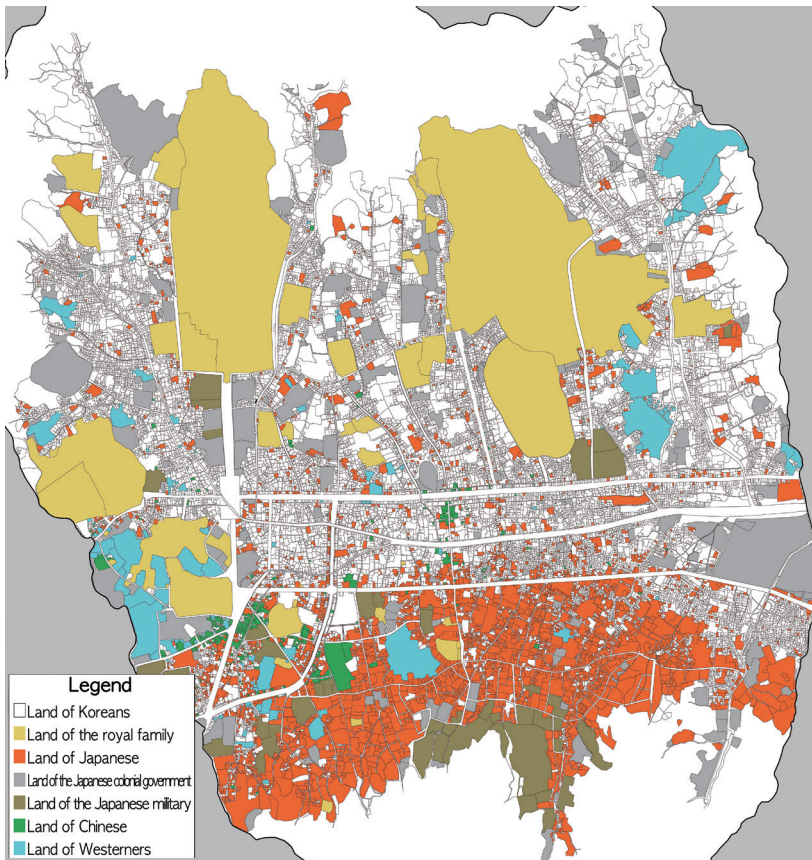
Land Use	Land for Housing	Farm/Forest/Field	Sum
Number of Owners	398	90	488
Area (坪)	331,958	130,660	462,618
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	1.097	0.432	1.529
Total Price (in won 圓)	9,626,782	82,457	9,709,239
Price (in won 圓) per 1m <sup>2</sup>	8.77	0.19	6.35

Source: Tonggam-bu (1909, 5, 8, 14).

29. “Choegeun Joseon sajeong” 最近朝鮮事情 (Recent Situation of Joseon) published in 1906 mentions that the Japanese possessed 63,600 pyeong 坪 of housing lots and 23,500 pyeong 坪 of farmland (Arakawa 1906, 51). Compared with Table 1, between 1906 and 1909 Japanese housing lots increased five-fold and farmland six-fold, or an average total increase of 5.3 times.

As shown in Figure 4, most southern parts of Seoul were owned or used by the Japanese. This reveals that Japanese power rapidly increased in the three years after 1909 (Table 1), because Figure 4 is based on data of 1912. Following the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Japanese ownership of land increased rapidly, a trend that continued even beyond 1910.

### *Changes to Chinese and Western Settlement Space*



**Figure 4.** Land holdings in Seoul by nationality (ca.1912)

Source: Keijo-fu (1912), Joseon chongdokbu (1913).

Note: This map was made by recording on Keijo-fu (1912) the addresses and owner nationality information found in Joseon chongdokbu (1913).

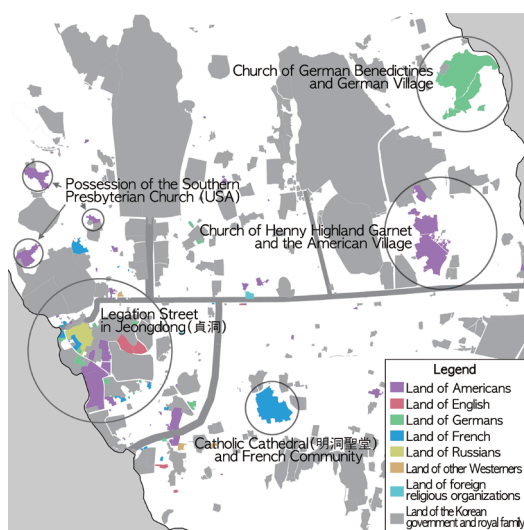
As mentioned above, Figure 4 reflects data recorded in 1912. The Chinese and Western populations changed little after 1904, so it can be assumed that there was also no great change to Chinese and Western settlement space from 1904 to 1912.

First, as for change in Chinese settlement space, the Chinese lost their commercial supremacy along Namdaemunno Street, except for the limited area around Supyogyo Bridge and Jeongdong. Their settlement space was pushed to western Seoul following the rapid expansion of the Japanese settlement space on the city's southeast side.

In contrast, the Western settlement space expanded to various locales in addition to the Jeongdong area they had settled in earlier. Figure 5 demonstrates the foreigners' tendency to congregate by nationality, except in the Jeongdong area where all legations and consulates were densely located. Jeongdong was crowded with Gyeongungung Palace and various Korean government offices, which were built in Jeongdong following the establishment of the Daehan jeguk 大韓帝國 (Korean Empire) in 1897. Westerners who entered Seoul after 1897 had no space to settle in Jeongdong, so they began to expand to other areas of Seoul. Furthermore, Jeongdong's geographical advantage as a convenient location for diplomatic activity disappeared following Korea's loss of its diplomatic rights in 1905.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Christian churches played an important role in the expansion of Westerner settlement space. Most Westerners entering Korea, with the exception of diplomats, came for educational or medical missionary work. Therefore, churches became an important stronghold. Each Western country built its own church and national religious communities naturally grew around the location of these churches.

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30. Jeongdong was the political heart of Seoul, and thus Korea, where Korean government offices and Western diplomatic missions were concentrated.



**Figure 5.** Land ownership by Western nationals in Seoul (ca. 1912)

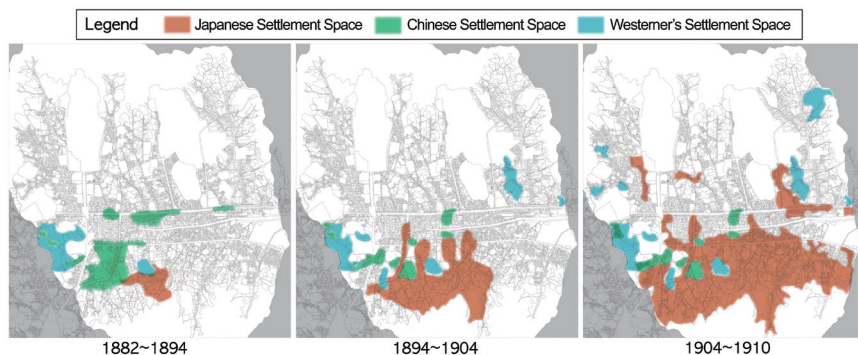
Source: Keijo-fu (1912); Joseon chongdokbu (1913).

Note: This map is made by marking on Keijo-fu (1912) based on the address and nationality information found in Joseon chongdokbu (1913).

### *Colonization of Seoul*

As Japan actively carried out the colonization of Korea after the Russo-Japanese War, the impact was felt in the spatial configuration of Seoul. With the rapid expansion of Japanese settlement, Seoul was bisected into a northern Korean space and a southern Japanese one. After the Russo-Japanese War, the expansion of Japanese settlement space was no longer confined within the Seoul city walls. The traditional system of the Seoul city walls began to collapse with the expansion of Japanese settlement. The walls around Sungnyemun 崇禮門 (the official name of Namdaemun, or the main South Gate of the Seoul city walls) were torn down through political pressure of Japan and the Japanese settlement space subsequently expanded to Yongsan along the new Gyeonginseon 京仁線 (Seoul-Chemulpo Railroad). This expansionist tendency continued during the Japanese colonial era between 1910 and 1945. If we are to analyze the colonization of Korea through changes in the spatial layout of the capital Seoul, it is safe to

say that the colonization of Korea had already begun at the end of the Russo-Japanese War.



**Figure 6.** Changing foreigner settlement patterns in Seoul (1882–1910)

*Note:* This map is based primarily on geographical data from Keijo gyoryu mindan (1912), Keijo-fu (1936), and Seoul History Compilation Committee (1996), to which was added data from the land register of Joseon chongdokbu (1913).

## Conclusion

The Korean government had no established plans on how to handle foreign concessions once Seoul was opened to foreign settlement. Thus, foreigners' settlement patterns in the city fluctuated in accordance with various other factors: geopolitics, military developments, diplomatic relations, Korean government policy, and economic realities. In the years following Korea's opening, it was China and Japan that exercised the greatest influence on Korea. The geopolitical conflicts between these countries impacted commercial activities in Korea, something manifested in the demographic changes of Chinese and Japanese residents of Seoul. The demographic changes of these nationalities led to changes in the settlement space of Seoul.

The fact that foreigners' settlement spaces were connected to changes in the power dynamics, commerce, and politics of Korea originated from the fact that Seoul was a mixed-residence quarter without clear division among concessions. Figure 6 shows changes in foreigner settlement patterns

in Seoul, sorted by Chinese, Japanese, and Westerners, between 1882 and 1910. It is impossible to clearly delineate foreigner versus Korean space since Seoul was a mixed-residence quarter where foreigners lived side by side with Koreans, but it is possible to show approximate chronological trends in residency space by national group.

In conclusion, this study examined changes in residency spaces in Seoul and their relation to political and commercial factors concerning the surrounding powers, namely Japan and China. It can be confirmed that China and Japan exerted a powerful influence on spatial changes in Seoul. Between 1882 to 1910, the Japanese and Chinese, who continuously accounted for more than 90 percent of the foreign population of Seoul, played definite roles in effecting such changes. As described above, changes in foreigner settlement space in Seoul can be divided into three main periods between 1882 and 1910. During the first, from 1882 to 1894, the Chinese rapidly expanded their presence in Seoul, but in a dotted manner with an unclear center. In the second period, from 1894 to 1904 in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Chinese settlement space shrank while the Japanese settlement space expanded, instigating rivalry between the Chinese and Japanese. During this period, Japanese spread out in a radial manner, centered on Nihyeon. Finally, from 1904 to 1910, Japanese came to occupy the entire southern parts of Seoul, absorbing or pushing out formerly Chinese space after the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). The dotted extension that characterized Chinese settlement patterns and the radial extension of Japanese space may be viewed as the main patterns in foreigner residency space in Seoul.

Through this study, I was able to confirm the characteristics and aspects of the spatial changes in Seoul focused on the unique port-opening period (1882–1910) of Korea. It is hoped this study might contribute further to our understanding of the urban space of Seoul in the decades between Korea's opening and its colonization by Japan.

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