

I M P A C T

CRITICAL THINKING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES



RESEARCH INSIGHTS

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Impact Objectives

- Research on the development of cities and architecture in the open ports (international settlements and foreign concessions) of East Asia
- Investigate the history and architecture of the Japanese consulate, banks, schools and spinning companies

How Europe, the US and Asia impacted each other's societies

Professor An-Suk Son is investigating the societal and cultural impacts of East Asian open ports. He talks about the type of research he is currently engaged in and some of the collaborations his team have created to aid their studies



How did you become involved in these investigations?

My research began in the field of Chinese modern

history and Sino-Japanese relations history. However, when I was at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, I encountered materials related to Shanghai and decided to devote myself to Shanghai City research. After that, I focused on researching the Shanghai foreign settlement and making use of the illustrated news magazine *The Young Companion*, which was published in the 1920s. The publication provides a fascinating insight into the societal and cultural impacts of East Asian open ports across a range of different countries.

What type of research is underway at The Research Center for Non Written Cultural Materials at Kanagawa University in Japan?

There are four main research projects that are currently underway at our Research Center: a joint research and compilation project on the Multilingual Version of Pictopedia of Everyday Life in Medieval Japan; 20th-Century

European Popular Culture as Seen through the Media and the Body; Reorganization of Religious Services and the Establishment of Japanese Shrines in the Border Areas of Imperial Japan; and Research on Wartime Japan's Propaganda *Kamishibai*.

Can you talk about your collaborations with other academic institutions and the importance of these collaborations to your research?

Since we are studying the cities in East Asia, the cooperation of many different research organisations in China, Taiwan and South Korea is indispensable. In particular, we are actively engaged in the exchange of activities with the History Research Institute of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Modern History of Taiwan Academia Sinica and the Academy of Chinese Studies of Incheon National University in South Korea.

What approaches are you adopting in your project?

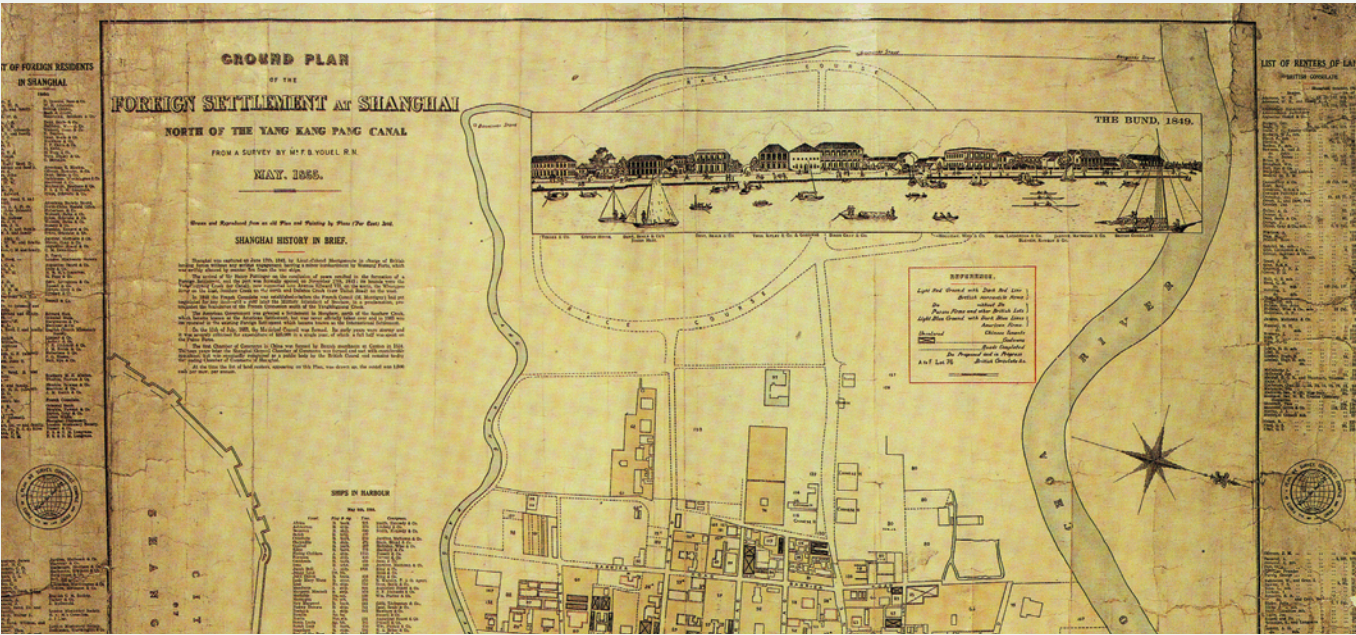
The foreign settlements research project is important not only from the findings we hope to make, but also for the promotion of joint research by experts from a wide

range of different fields. For example, many Japanese spinning factories were expanding into Shanghai before the war - these spinning companies left many factories and company housing buildings in their wake, but in order to investigate the substance and impact of these companies, it is necessary to approach and analyse the situation from different areas of expertise and perspectives. Therefore, we are looking at things from the point of view of history, architecture and economics, with a view to achieving a well-rounded picture of the impacts.

What are you planning to work on next?

For the time being, I would like to depart from our focus on Shanghai and proceed with my research investigation that looks at the foreign settlements of Guangzhou and Xiamen (Amoy) in South China. I am particularly interested in the process by which the modern cultures of the west were introduced to Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and then expanded to other cities in North China such as Tianjin, via Shanghai. Of course, within this process, we also expect to determine the effects of western culture on Japan and the Korean Peninsula. ►

Ground Plan of the Foreign Settlement at Shanghai (1855; excerpt from Shanghai Library (ed.) “Maps of Old Shanghai (Lao Shanghai Ditu)”, 2001 Shanghai Pictorial Press)



Cultural impacts of East Asian port concessions and settlements

A team based at The Research Center for Non Written Cultural Materials, Kanagawa University is investigating the development of cities and architecture in the open ports of East Asia, which is hoped will shed light on the effects of Western influence on Japanese society and culture

It is difficult for us to imagine from the vantage point of the 21st century, but it was not so long ago that travelling to and from countries around the world required long journeys on ships. Equally, trade between countries was done by carrying cargo on massive ships and there were an almost unimaginably large number of shipping routes on the seas and oceans around the world. To accommodate trade between countries, there were also ports at locations in specific countries, many of which in East Asia were opened as a result of unequal treaties with Western powers.

These treaty ports were often established following military action, where Western powers, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, defeated military powers in China, Japan and Korea, then agreed terms that were extremely favourable towards the successful nations. It is fascinating to

consider the impact these treaty ports had on the countries in which they were located.

For instance, foreigners would pour into these areas where the treaty ports were formed and, as a result, restaurants, foreigners clubs, churches and even racecourses were built to accommodate these new citizens. The impact was ultimately colonisation, with foreign powers essentially commandeering specific areas in China, Japan and Korea and transplanting a slice of British, North American or European life. It is therefore interesting to consider the cultural and societal impacts of these arrangements and to what extent they continue to exist, even though several decades have passed since the closure of the unequal treaty ports.

THE IMPACTS OF FOREIGN SETTLEMENT
It is with ideas such as this in mind that a

team based at the Research Center for Non Written Cultural Materials at Kanagawa University in Japan is looking at the open ports of East Asia. The team is led by Professor An-Suk Son and is specifically interested in investigating the history and architecture of the Japanese consulate, banks, schools, hospitals and spinning companies. Spinning companies were those that worked with fibres such as silk, spinning them into yarn to be used in a wide range of textiles. Of course, the period of time in which the team's studies are focused was great for industry, and spinning companies were an essential part of this.

A foreign settlement is based on a contract where a government (such as the Japanese or Chinese) transfers the operating rights within a port to a foreign entity or entities. When such powers as the UK or US make an agreement to open a treaty port, it would

generally include a foreign settlement, so a foreign entity would essentially control an area in Japan, Korea or China. As a result, that area, although located in the East, would have significant Western influence.

North China Daily News, magazines, including *The Far Eastern Review*, pictures, leaflets and photo books that have been discovered in various archives. These include the Shanghai Municipal Archives,

demonstrate how each area of expertise (and the researchers contained within those areas) can come together to generate findings that are more expansive than those that would be generated if they all conducted research independently. Ultimately, the findings should provide fascinating insights into how different cultures came together to influence and shape each other over time - and how many of these influences continue to this day. Given that the world is becoming increasingly globalised, it will be interesting to see the extent of homogeneity and what this means for the people living in the locations being studied today. ●

Our team is composed of experts from a wide range of different fields, including history, architecture and economics

The research is therefore focused on a wide variety of existing buildings that were developed during the time of foreign settlement. ‘Our team is composed of experts from a wide range of different fields, including history, architecture and economics,’ outlines Son. ‘We are looking at consulates, ports, factories, hospitals, schools, banks, etc., that are located at the various concessions and settlements. It has been approximately 150 years since the foreign settlement was established, so it is very surprising that the historical use of buildings and/or the landscape has hardly changed.’

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL EXCHANGES
There have been previous studies which have focused on similar ideas to that of Son and his team. One of the key ideas behind this research has been to look at the exchanges between Europe, the US and Asia over East Asian open ports, and how they had a significant impact on each other's society and culture. However, the majority of previous studies have placed an emphasis on Shanghai in China, Yokohama in Japan and Incheon in Korea. What makes Son's project original and exciting is that it refocuses these previous studies by utilising new materials that have come to light in the years since.

For instance, the team is studying English newspapers from that time, such as the

Taiwan Academia Sinica and the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Importantly, the team hopes to expand the focus of previous studies to include places such as Qingdao and Guangzhou, with a view to securing a comparative perspective between the developmental relationship of cities in North China, Central China and South China, and the various foreign settlements they were part of.

FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
In addition to the specific research aims, in terms of shedding some light on the societal and cultural impacts of treaty ports more than a century ago, the team also wants to foster relationships that will benefit other modes and forms of research in the future. ‘Our foreign settlements research project is extremely important for the promotion of joint research from different fields,’ observes Son. ‘For example, many Japanese spinning companies were expanding into Shanghai before the war. The spinning companies left many factories and company housing buildings, but in order to investigate the substance of these spinning companies, it is necessary to approach and analyse it from different fields such as history, architecture and economics.’

By solidifying these collaborations over the course of this project, the team hopes to



Combined presentation session with the research group of Seizo Uchida (March 2019)

Project Insights

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