

Local Communities and the Construction of Military Bases in Korea
during and after the Russo-Japanese War:
The Case of the Gulf of Yeongheung

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This paper focuses on the establishment of military bases in the Gulf of Yeongheung in northeastern Korea in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). With this war, Japan's invasion of and intervention in Korea came into full force. How did Japan proceed with the establishment of military bases in Korea? What significance did the construction of these facilities have on the communities and the people of the regions slated for such development? How did people react to Japan's invasion and the construction of these military bases? Many of the facts relating to these problems are as yet unclear. In this paper, I therefore consider these issues through a study of the example of the Gulf of Yeongheung in northeastern Korea. As documentary materials, I draw on the reports of local government officials (*gaksadeungrok*) in Korea, along with the Japanese military documents that are held by the National Institute for Defense Studies and the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR).

Hamgyong in northeastern Korea was a battle front between the Japanese and Russian armed forces during the war of these nations. Although this area had been under Russian military occupation at the outbreak of the war, Japanese forces gradually pushed north into Hamgyong, as the conflict turned in their favor. At this time, the Japanese set up a military base on the Gulf of Yeongheung to provide rear support for their armed forces. The military base was built at the site of a fishing village. The Imperial Japanese Navy supervised its construction. The expropriation of land and the building of the military base at Yeongheung were carried out with an iron fist, resulting in the forced dispersal of large numbers of Korean people, although a few clung tenaciously to their lands. However, the Japanese army oppressed the people, causing their dissatisfaction to grow.