Tushima is located closer to the Korean peninsula than Japan; it is less than 50 km away from the Korean island of Geoje. From the Kankoku Lookout in Wainaru, at the northern end of Tushima, the landmarks of Busan, South Korea's second largest city, can be seen on clear days and even its fireworks at night. Since the beginning of history, the island has been a geographical mirror of Korea and Japan; its people have survived by negotiating the politics between the two. Indeed, the reason that the people of Tushima are described as 'cunning' in a number of historical and literary documents may be due to their strategies for survival.

Over 90% of Tushima consists of mountains and a rural coastline meaning that there is almost no flatland for agriculture. Residents can only make a living with fishery and hunting. This has resulted in an economic dependence on Korea, its closest neighbor yet a foreign country. Tushima's particular relationship with the Korean Peninsula and the rest of the islands of the Japanese Archipelago is illustrated in the earliest historical account of the island, which appears in the Biographies of the Wuhan, Xianbei and Dongjy in the 'Book of Wei' of the Records of the Three Kingdoms. The passage mentioning Tushima describes the navigation route from Korea to Japan: Daifang Commandery – Geumgyeong Daeyo – Tushima Province – present-day Ail Island – present-day Kyushu. It demonstrates that Tushima was a key point in maritime travels to Japan from ancient times. The passage also mentions Tushima's farmlands and the underdeveloped nature of its traffic routes.

After the middle ages, Tushima became a base for Japanese raiders and the powerful So clan was able to monopolize trade rights with Joseon by controlling the raiders. The system of governance by So clan endured through the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1952 and up to the Meiji Restoration. The So clan established Japanese settlements at three Joseon ports for trade and diplomatic purposes, and it was due to such economic and diplomatic concessions acquired from making use of its geopolitical position that Tushima could survive and the So clan's governance could be continued. Tushima's prosperity depended on peace between Korea and Japan, and therefore the island endeavored to avoid war even before the 1952 Invasion. Upon unifying Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi sent word to Tushima to request the King of Joseon for his surrender. Joseon obviously declined. Even when Joseon eventually sent a diplomatic envoy (Joseon Tonginsa) to Japan, it was under the condition that Tushima was to give up the leader of Japanese raiders. However, when peace negotiations fell apart and the invasion of 1952 commenced, Tushima became an informant of Toyotomi, guided the Japanese troops, and even participated in battles.

After the end of the war, Tushima acted as mediator for conciliatory diplomatic relations between the Tokugawa Edo Bakufu and the Joseon Dynasty in order to survive. When the Joseon Dynasty demanded a statement of apology for the invasion and the Bakufu refused, Tushima forgave an apology and succeeded in dispatching a mission for reconciliations. Once diplomatic relations were recovered, Tushima was able to maintain its trade concession once again and even re-established a Japanese settlement in Busan. It was through such trickery and diplomatic aptitude that Tushima was able to successfully act as an intermediary between Korea and Japan.
Hun Chun is situated in the borderlands of China, North Korea, and Russia. This fortuitous geographic location has allowed the region to become an international logistics hub for Northeast Asia. The Tumen River Development Program, proposed by Jilin Province in 1990, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that followed in 1991, laid down the building blocks for the region’s development. The end of the Cold War in East Asia led to improved international relations in the region, and brought about the possibility of multilateral, rather than bilateral, economic cooperation. Globalization has led to an increase in the frequency of cultural exchange. As a result of this, Hun Chun has become an extremely hybrid place in a short period of time.

The Border Economic Cooperation Zone in Hun Chun is a national border economic cooperation zone that was approved by the state council in September 1992, with a planned area of 21.77 square kilometers. In April 2000 and February 2001, the state council approved respectively the establishment of the Hun Chun Export Processing Zone and the Hun Chun Russia-China Trade Zone within the cooperation zone, implementing a ‘three areas in one’ management mode. In April 2012, the state council approved the establishment of China’s Tumen River Region (Hun Chun) International Cooperation Model Zone, which ushered in the historical opportunity for leapfrog development.

The Hun Chun Export Processing Zone is one of the first 15 export-processing zones in China, with a planned area of 2.44 square kilometers. With the continuous adjustment of national industrial policies and increasing requirements for the transformation and upgrading of export processing trade, export processing zones experienced rapid development. They feature a characteristic industrial pattern of woodwork processing and seafood processing, supplemented by cross-border e-commerce and bonded logistics. At present, the planned area has been adjusted to 1.038 square kilometers, and the area consists of ‘seven connections and one level’. The Hun Chun China-Russia Trade Zone covers an area of 9.6 hectares. It was put into trial operation in December 2001, and officially put into operation in June 2005. It is the only border trade functional zone open to Russia in Jilin Province, meeting the need for the development of border trade.

At present, there are 808 registered enterprises in the Border Economic Cooperation Zone, including 71 foreign-funded enterprises from eight countries and regions including Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, the United States, Hong Kong. It has successfully introduced a number of well-known enterprises both at home and abroad, and has come to develop a characteristic industrial system. In the Cooperation Zone, the non-ferrous metal industry continues to grow. The development of new and high technology industries has accelerated and the tertiary industry has emerged. These developments taking place in the Cooperation Zone have meant that Hun Chun has come to experience the full force of globalization. An increase in the cross-border flow of goods has been accompanied by the flow of information, capital, services, and people. The result of this has been the emergence of a fluidity and hybridity in the region. This is best observed in its cityscape, an example of which is the system of signage used in Hun Chun. Following the guidelines of the Hun Chun government, all of the signs in the city are in three languages: Chinese, Korean, and Russian. The ‘three language landscape’ of Hun Chun demonstrates how the region’s fluid and hybrid nature has brought about unique regional cultural characteristics.

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Shuri Castle was used to project the image of Ryūkyū’s past, as a place of coexistence and peace. This tied in with Okinawa’s strong tradition of peace movements that had taken root around the US military base. Amidst the attempt to relocate Kadena air base to Henoko and the resistance that emerged, many peace activists in Okinawa further called for the removal of US bases to Guam. However, the geopolitical atmosphere of the region changed in 2010 with the sinking of the Cheonan warship in the West Sea of Korea, and calls for US military base transfers from Okinawa fell silent. In the 30 years since its restoration, Shuri Castle stood as a beacon of peace in East Asia. Its presence acted as a reminder that these islands, which have played such a crucial role in US strategies in East Asia, were once a peaceful and prosperous place of trade. It is therefore hoped that Shuri Castle will be soon be restored so that it may once again project our aspirations for peace East Asia.

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