

Changes in Naming the Sea of Japan during Late-Qing Dynasty Period - A Survey of Chinese Historical Documents

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<Abstract>

From mid - 19th century to the beginning of the Second Opium War, the Sea of Japan was a bordering waters of China's territory, and from Tang Dynasty in early 7th century it got proper names on the Chinese part, most commonly known as the East Sea in the documents of that time. The name of the Sea of Japan began to appear but only in personal writings of some of the Chinese officials and scholars as late as mid - 1880s, and its earliest use in official documents was first found in the Portsmouth Treaty concluded between Japan and Russia("日俄朴司茂斯和約") after the war between the two countries and to be adopted later gradually by the governments of some other countries. Still, up till now, the Sea of Japan as a proper name has not yet been universally accepted by all its coastal countries. It is, therefore, suggested hereby that neighborhood interests, transitional process of the names and geographical features be all taken into consideration in the extensive discussion of this problem towards the normalization of the name of this waters.