

Sea of Far East in a Global Era
: An Examination for the international Standardization of
geographical names for the regional cooperation

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Abstract

In global era, the region of East Sea Rim should be the field of cooperation and harmony to keep up the sustainable development as well as to preserve resources and environment. To this aim, this paper discussed the standardization of the sea name which is called 'East Sea' or 'Japan Sea' internationally in the aspect of reciprocal comprehension and cooperation. This argument may be a premise for coexistence, mutual prosperity and a symbol of cooperation. This paper inquires into the ecosystem of the east sea for fundamental understanding, interprets the change of the sea name as a historic process, proposes an appropriate alternative. The results are as follows;

1. Because the movement of tides had a close connection with a human life, the east sea was historically the activity sphere of Koreans.
2. The transforming process of sea name was divided into three times; first, the era of a premodern domestic centralism, second, of a geographical discovery and imperialism, third, of a liberation and internationalization and globalization, and the implication of each times was investigated.

At the same time, the place name regarded as a cognition of place, I associated the phases of cognition with it. Then, I traced the transforming process as follows. The east sea began as 'East Sea' of domestic centralism, became altered from 'Orient Sea' to 'Korean Sea' or 'Japan Sea' in cognition of Western. In era of imperialism, 'Korean Sea' was forced to discharge and then only 'Japan Sea' met the era of single inscription. 'East Sea' revived in consequence of liberation and now used with 'Japan Sea' together.

Objectively, it is desirable that the name of the same place be united into one. Therefore, the name of the east sea, the center of East Sea Rim, should be standardized the single name which can be accepted internationally. As an alternative, I proposed 'Far East Sea' as the symbolic name of the east sea which can embrace locality, placeness, and historicity. I expect the emergence of place name to which international society and nations related the east sea can agree, and hope the name 'Far East Sea' is considered as one of the alternative.