

## **A proposal for international standardization of the "East Sea"(so called in Korea)**

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While we have been holding seminars and discussions on the ancient and historical names for the geographical features known in Korea as "East Sea"(東海), the inertia of international practice from the past is seen in the cartographies of some countries in the world that still print it as "Sea of Japan."

In fairness there cannot be a conscious will or intention behind this, because one cannot fail to see its lack of international objectivity once one glances at the map and notices the three different national territories that enclose the water; namely, those of Korea, Russia and Japan.

"East Sea," on the other hand, may be geographically and historically appropriate for Korea and Russia, and the features are indeed located in the eastern hemisphere of the globe, but from the viewpoint of Japan her people have right to protest, we recognize, because it is to the west of her main island.

For an international standard name for the water, therefore, we have to find one that satisfies the sensitivities of each and all three countries, and for this I should like to propose "Blue Sea(青海)". 青海 or 滄海 have been seen already in the ancient records, so it is not out of blue. It makes a nice color contrast to the Yellow Sea to the west, and 玄海, which means "black sea"(the strait between Korea and Japan) to the south. Above all it is absolutely neutral to the national sentiment of all three countries.

I am happy to tell you, by the way, that the idea came from a Japanese scholar, in the person of Prof. Ito Shuntaro(伊東俊汰郎) of Reitaku University(麗澤大學). He offered that name in passing in a footnote to my raising of the issue for the occasion of the October 1994 conference of the Japan Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization held in Japan. (See 「比較文明 11」 1995)