

International Hydrographic Organization and East Sea

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East Sea has been marked, on the world map made in the West Europe, as Mare Oceaneum(Carpini, 1245), Ocean Orientalis(Waldsssmuller, 1507), East Sea(Zang Huang, 1613), Mar Coria(Manuel Godinho, 1615) and so on.

International Hydrographic Conference was opened in London in June, 1919 at the motion of the United Kingdom Government. The conference was participated by 18 countries including US, French, Japan and United Kingdom colonies such as Australia, India and Egypt. Korea, however, failed to attend because it was annexed by Japan.

The 1919 conference adopted the resolution on the Limits of Oceans and Seas(Resolution, Section IV-13). Its member states submitted all materials on the limit of competent seas to IHO in accordance with the resolution. IHO primarily arranged these materials and made the tentative plan in Feb 15, 1923. Because this tentative plan was made under the influence of Japan's representatives, such as Navy major Sakonji, Yamakuchi Kumahiro and engineer So Kazei, "East Sea" was, for the first time, marked as "Japan Sea" on the plan. The plan was distributed to its member states. The limits of 48 oceans and seas and their names were registered on this circular letter. Korea, however, could not submit any opinion to IHO. As a result, "East Sea" have thus far been marked as "Japan Sea" on every marine chart and relevant world maps including the book entitled "Limits of Oceans and Seas" and its revised editions, which were published in 1929, 1937, 1952 and 1986.

Korea finally participated in IHO in 1957 and paid the 12th largest amount of charges to IHO among its 70 member states. Ever since 1994, Korea has been keeping to request IHO and its member states to change the currently used "Japan Sea" into "East Sea". On the other hand, Korea has gone through the process of listening to comprehensive opinions from its member

states.

IHO is trying to apply the same policy in marking the place names on an international basis(A.4.1). It is also implementing the Resolution on the Standard of Place Names(A.4.2) adopted in 1974 for the purpose of the international standardization of place names. The A.4.2.6 of this Resolution required that the place names, such as East Sea, under the influence of the sovereign state be marked as it is until the existing name is changed into a new name. By complying with this principle, "Japan Sea" should be marked as "East Sea" on the book of "Limits of Oceans and Seas", which is expected to be published in 2002 (21 century).

A4.2 International Standardization of Geographical Names

A4.2.6 It is recommended that where two or more countries share a given geographical feature (such as, for example, a bay, strait, channel or archipelago) under a different name form, they should endeavour to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned. If they have different official languages and cannot agree on a common name form, it is recommended that the name forms of each of the languages in question should be accepted for charts and publications unless technical reasons prevent this practice on small scale charts. e.g. English Channel/La Manche.