

The Historical Problems concerning the Process of Sea Name Popularization

YOSHII, Kenichi
(Japan, Niigata University)

Preface

The report of Prof. Lee Ki-Suk on our International Symposium in Niigata city was deeply impressed on our mind. I agreed with his message at that time that the problems of sea name was the last treatment for the colonial period. We need to have a plan for solving the problems about the naming of this sea.

I prepared the report how and when the naming of the Sea of Japan popularized in Japan. I hope that my report will be useful in order to solving the problems on the naming of this sea.

1. The naming of North Sea

In Japan, the people used to name the East Sea as the North Sea from Tokugawa feudal times till Meiji period. Most of Japanese maps which were drawn by European used the Sea of Japan in those days. There were another maps which named it as the North sea. Depend on my research, the documents of the shogunate and early Meiji government used to call it as the North sea. But after the textbook adapted the naming of the Sea of Japan and the sea maps used too, Japanese government began to use the Sea of Japan.

Although the textbooks used the new name, the people did not begin to use at the same time. They began to use it in order to making progress economic and cultural exchange between surrounding countries before the Russo-Japanese War. After the Battle of the Japan Sea, all Japanese people called it as the Sea of Japan. Some people became known famous because of advocating the sea as the territorial waters of Japan.

2. The process of adopting the Sea of Japan on the textbooks

One textbook in early Meiji period used the North sea. The geographical textbook of FUKUZAWA Yukichi which published in 1869 began to use the Sea of Japan for the first time. He translated CORNELL'S FIRST STEPS GEOGRAPHY published at New York. The teachers of the Keio Private School published the textbooks which adopted the Sea of Japan. The Japanese Department of Education began to use the Sea of Japan in a short time. In regard to the textbooks, the naming of Sea of Japan popularized about 1874.

3. The process of adopting the Sea of Japan on the sea maps

Japanese Navy called it North sea between the last days of the shogunate and early Meiji Period. The Hydrographic Department of Japanese Navy was coached by the British Navy in the technical matters. Most of early Japanese sea maps were the revived publication of British sea maps. Those publication used the naming of the Sea of Japan. For these reason, the Hydrographic Department began to use the Sea of Japan about 1882.

4. The sea name of the textbooks published by the Government House of Korea

Through my research on the textbooks in the period of colony, it was clear that the task for changing the sea name from the East Sea to the Sea of Japan had been gotten to work from the periods of the Protective Policy of Japanese Government.

When the Government House of Korea governed, they published the textbooks by themselves. They certainly used the naming of the Sea of Japan. Though the Korean feel like it common knowledge, Japanese people don't know the fact. Moreover, they don't see that there were those textbook including the chapter of the Sea of Japan which described that he considered the Sea to his own property and the Sea was the big pond of Japanese backyard. The Korean people were forced to use the naming of the Sea of Japan through the textbooks published by the Government House of Korea which based on Japanese textbooks.

Conclusion

I know that Korean named it the East Sea from old times and became attached to it. I admit that they have good reason to correct the sea name. Because Japanese Government forced them to use the sea name during the colonial period. Though there were some serious problems in connected with the naming of the Sea of Japan, Japanese attached the present sea name. They need to know why the naming of the Sea of Japan internationalized. When they understand it, we can talk with each other about the attached sea name.

For solution on those problems, it is need that each people will find out a plan which can agree with all of them. As I have mentioned, Japanese people had called it as the North Sea in past time. When some people began to use the naming of the Sea of Japan, they only want to make progress economic and cultural exchange between surrounding countries. But during the colonial periods, Japan was guilty which forced and internationalized the naming of the Sea of Japan.

I agree with using two names as the international naming. But it's not a final conclusion. I wish that the people who are living in those surrounding local areas of this sea will accord with the new naming of this sea thorough talking with each other.