

East Sea/ Sea of Japan :

From Justice as Fairness ¹

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The South Korean people want to recover the name of East Sea, that has been in existence for the last 2000 years from the sea that has been named Sea of Japan for the last century or two centuries. The East Sea was lost under the Japanese colonial rule, 1909-1945. The South Korean Government, and citizen groups have made sincere efforts to recover the old name of sea, but the Japanese Government has been continuously rejecting it. The South Korean Government has been proposing to use the Sea of Japan/East Sea, but the Japanese counterpart has been rejecting it. Alas! This is a sad state of human civilization in the 21st century.

This paper is to present the unjust reasons for Sea of Japan, and just reasons of simultaneous use of Sea of Japan/East Sea. The simultaneous use of Sea of Japan/East Sea has been adopted by many famed map drawers and makers. If the world society does not like to use the simultaneous use of the two names, the Oriental Sea, Blue Sea or Green Sea is readily available. Such a name is very neutral to Koreans and to Japanese. The Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean are good neutral names for the Japanese people should recognize. The United States has not claimed the American Sea or US Sea from the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. Any nation in the Mediterranean Sea has not imposed its name in the sea. The Caribbean Sea is the sea of all island nations in the region.

Naming the sea should not reflect one nation's wealth and power. We live in a civilized world. First of all, sea is our commons, not one nation's properties. The sea and ocean are making the Earth only planet in the universe. They are symbolizing our precious life. We should pursue our common sense in naming the sea.

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Sea of Japan: Unjust, Inappropriate Name

Japan wants to keep Sea of Japan, not the simultaneous name of Sea of Japan/East Sea, because Sea of Japan has been in use in the last century or two. The Korean people do not want to remove Sea of Japan from maps. They just want to use the simultaneous use of the two names. That is the United Nations' basic principle when the name of the sea is in dispute between the nations surrounding the sea. The Japanese Government has explained that it did not influence the map drawers and makers in the United States and European nations in the last century or two. It has not recognized the power and influence it has had in the international society in the 20th century in the rapidly advancing science and technology including shipbuilding and navigation. Korea was lost in the shadow of the Japanese imperialism and superpower status in World War I and World War II. Korea lost its sovereignty to Japan even before the beginning of the 20th century. When the Japanese Navy defeated the Chinese Navy and the Russian Navy in the last decade of the 19th century, Korea was colonized. The Japanese Army invaded Manchuria in 1935, and later China. Korea was the first victim of the Japanese colonialism, and disappeared in the world society completely in the important time of expansion of scientific knowledge and technology. The Japanese Government does not admit this fact.

The Japanese Government has strongly denied the fact that the Sea of Japan was a product of Japanese war power, and asked the world people to see Mateo Ricci's map produced in 1662. It is very true that Mateo Ricci used the Sea of Japan in his map. He was not a professional map drawer or maker, but his map made a great influence over the following generations. However, Ricci is just one name. Even before 1662, The Sea of Chosun (old name of Korea), the Sea of Coree (old name of Korea) and East Sea had been appeared in the maps. Korean people did not influence Western map drawers and makers. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Western map drawers and makers used Sea of Chosun and Sea of Japan interchangeably. Some maps used Sea of Chosun, and some used Sea of Japan.

The name of the sea was not a serious matter to the navigators in the 18th century. It has become a serious matter when the modern ships started to sail oceans. The sea has become the properties of the advanced nations that possessed the power of navigation in the 20th century. The sea has become the means of transportation, fishing, mining grounds, oil field, and the battle-ground in the 20th century. American Commodore Perry's black ship at the Tokyo Bay forced the Tokugawa Government to open the door to the United States and Western nations. The Meiji Restoration quickly modernized the Island nation. Modern Japan advanced military and navigation technologies, and invaded the Korean Peninsula in the last part of the 19th century and conquered the Asian Continent in World War II. The first part of the 20th century has shaped the name of the sea. Expansion of knowledge and information was quick. Oceanography and navigation were the 20th century phenomenon.

Is It Fair?

It may not be fair to the Japanese people to reject the Korean people's wishes and hopes to recover East Sea in the world map. Some Japanese scholars and intellectuals have been proposing a neutral name, Blue Sea or Green Sea, which is contrasting to the Yellow Sea, sea between China and Korea. Color of water is blue in the East Sea/Sea of Japan, because of the depth of the water. The Yellow Sea is only 50 to 60 meters deep. The Korean people are satisfied with the slow acceptance of the world maps using the simultaneous use of Sea of Japan/East Sea, though.

It is interesting to know the National Geographic Society's decision to use the two names of the body of water between Korea and Japan.

"We always work hard to make our maps the best and most accurate possible. But sometimes there are two well-respected and widely used names for the something, so which name to use isn't really clear-cut. That is the case here with the East Sea/Sea of Japan issue, so we want to recognize both names to make the maps as accurate as possible." (Allen Carroll, chief cartographer)

Rand McNally, one of the largest map-makers in the United States used Sea of Japan (East Sea) in its 1997 world atlas (Rand McNally and Co, 28-31). The most comprehensive World Atlas ever created at www.encarta.com/miscrosoft/2000) also included East Sea in its description of the sea, naming it Sea of Japan (East Sea). The Humanitarian Response Planning Map, 1 988 publication by the United Nations Environmental Programme Global Resources, also named the geographic feature, Sea of Japan (East Sea). The map posted at www.reliefweb.int/map.nsf/wLatestmaps) in 1988 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian affairs (OCHA) used Korean word Tonghae (Donghae) for the East Sea, and named it as Sea of Japan (Tonghae).

It should be noted that using parenthesis around East Sea is not exactly in compliance with the concurrent use requirement. But, it is a sign of progress, which takes the issue a step in the right direction.

The Cartographic Satellite Atlas of the World, which the Canadian Warwick Publishing Inc. published in 1997, complied with the standardized practice and used the generic terms, Tong-Hae/Nippon-Kai (Japan Sea). Encyclopedia Britannica in its 1998 CD-Rom named the sea as East Sea (Sea of Japan) in Korea-related sections, while using Sea of Japan (East Sea) in Japan-related sections. The New York Times and the Merriam-Webster Atlas 2001 are currently using the same pattern. In 1999, the Bulletin 49(2) (Geographic Map of Korea, p.135) published by the International Geographical Union, identified the geographic feature as East Sea (Sea of Japan), giving East Sea priority. One year later (2000), “Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts” by HJ. De Blif and Peter O. Muller (John Wiley & Sons, inc.) replaced all its old names of the sea with East Sea (Sea of Japan) throughout the book. The US National Council for Geographic Education in its 1998 seminar at Indianapolis, Indiana, convinced the authors of the book of the validity of using East Sea. An earlier version of the book (1997) offered no reference to East Sea, only identifying the geographic feature as Sea of Japan.

The Internet maps at

www.atlapedia.com/online/maos/political/Korea, produced by the Latimer Clarke Corp. in 1998, marked the sea in question as East Sea/Sea of Japan. A 1998 German atlas identified the geographic feature as Japanisches Meer (Japan Sea) and Ostmeer (East Sea) in compliance with the concurrent use principle.

Sea without Name

The joint use of East Sea/Sea of Japan or Sea of Japan (East Sea) has been acceptable by many, but rejected by some. To them, the sea has no name. For example, since January 2001, CNN abandoned its use of Sea of Japan, airing maps of Korea and Japan with no particular name in reference to the sea. The move, apparently meant to strike a balance between Korea and Japan, is nevertheless significant because it suggests that the company finally has recognized the invalidity or unfairness of using Sea of Japan. The Catalogue of Admiralty Charts and Publication, put out in 2001 by the British Hydrographic Office, identified all the seas in the region except for the East Sea. Given the importance of well-documented sea maps for navigational safety, this trend of not identifying the sea should be reconsidered. The Beijing Office of the United Nations Development Programme has been working on a project known as the Tumen River Economic Development since 1991. It has published three maps in 2000. These maps, all published in China and distributed a year later, bear no identification of the sea, even though they identified all other seas in the region. The maps were entitled “Tumen River Economic Development Area and Northeast Asia,” “Economic Centers of Northeast Asia,” and “Economic Map of the Tumen River Economic Development Area.” The North Korean map, published in 2001 by the UN Department of Public Information Cartographic Section, did not name the sea we know as East Sea. The International Hydrographic Organization has distributed the map showing the sea without a name. Avoiding the disputed name of the sea becomes a blank without a name.

Politics as Usual

IHO staff want to avoid the controversy surrounding Sea of Japan/East Sea. They identify themselves as technical experts, and thus avoid the political controversy.

What is political? What is technical? In this world, everything is political. Webster's Dictionary defines political in the following:

1a: of or relating to government, a government or the conduct of government. b: of, relating to, or concerned with the making as distinguished from the administration of government policy.

2a: of, relating to, or involving politics and especially party politics. B: adept at, sensitive to, or engrossed in politics.

3: organized in governmental terms.

4: involving or charged or concerned with acts against a government or a political system.

IHO claims that it is not a political organization, but a technical organization. The IHO in 1929 named Japan Sea in its first publication of the "Limits of Oceans and Sea," that was eight years after the formation of the IHO. That was a political act. Did IHO name the sea with any serious academic consultation with old maps and Asian nations? It was named by Japan's visible and invisible political influence.

Time has changed. Naming the sea with a sense of justice as fairness can be political, ethical, and moral to all mankind. It can be an academic, or technical effort. The IHO cannot avoid the difficult decision-making. "Difficult" seems "political" to the IHO. Majority rule by the IHO members in naming the sea can be a decision tool, but justice as fairness should be. Naming the sea should consider historical, scientific, moral and ethical consideration. The wealth of the nation or superpower status should not prevail in the civilized world.

Sea as Our Commons

Re-naming the sea is not just seeking another name. Sea of Japan cannot seek the cooperation among the surrounding nations. Cooperation for ocean life and environment is absolutely necessary in the 21st century. Russian nuclear ships and radioactive materials have been disposed in the Sea. Japanese have disposed radioactive waste materials in the Sea. Yellow Sea is polluted from pollutants from the Yangtze River and Yellow River, and coastal industrial cities. Overexploitation of marine resources is becoming serious by the ocean liners and deep sea fishery assisted by advanced science and technology. Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) has been organized for marine environmental cooperation under the United Nations Environmental Programme. NOWPAP programs should be expanded to maintain the marine and ocean environment and ecosystems.

The sea does not care national prestige and boundary line. The sea needs international environmental care and management. The 21st century will require more regional and global cooperation, because one planet Earth requires one-ness of all nations on Earth. Japan and Korea cannot resolve the name of the sea. Then, the international cooperation for their commons cannot be expected. They should learn the management of Mediterranean Sea, and North Sea. Asia nations have not learned the lesson from European nations who are using one currency, Euro dollar. Outdated nationalism, emotional sentiment, lack of common bondage will make the Asian nations regionally cooperative.

We should pay attention to sea and oceans: Convention on the High Seas, Convention for the Prevention of marine Pollution for Land-based Sources, International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution at the Sea by Oil, International Convention for the Pollution from Ships, International Convention relating to Intervention on the High Seas in case of Oil Pollution Casualties, and Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matters among many others. International peace in international sea can be only achieved by intergovernmental cooperation for the commons.

NOWPAP's first intergovernmental meeting, held in Seoul on September 14, 1994, adopted the action plan for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the Northwest Pacific Region. China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Russia were the participating nations. North Korea did not participate after the first meeting. The second meeting was held in Tokyo on November 16, 1996 to approve the programme document, and work plan and budget for the biennium 1997/1998. However, it was decided that further trust fund arrangement and establishment of a regional coordinating unit were to be discussed at a later time. The third meeting, held in Vladivostok, the Russian Federation on August 9, 1998, endorsed the revision of the work plan and budget for the biennium 1997/1998, and decided on the procedure for the establishment of a network of regional activity centers. The fourth meeting held in Beijing on April 6 and 7, 1999, further reviewed progress in the implementation of NOWPAP in 1997-1998 and adopted a work plan and budget for the 1999-2000 biennium, decided on the need to establish a regional coordinating unit in the future, and requested the executive director of UNEP to prepare a proposal for its creation for the consideration of the 5th meeting.

Four regional centers were proposed:

+The Data and Information Network Regional Activity Center, Beijing, China.

+The Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center, Vladivostok, Russia.

+The Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Center, Taejeon, Korea.

+Special Monitoring Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center, Toyama, Japan.

The fifth meeting was held in Incheon on March 20, 2000. The trust fund was set in the meeting: Japan, \$135,000; South Korea, \$100,000; Russia, \$50,000; and China, \$40,000. China proposed the following principles for contributions:

- (a) the common but differentiated principle;
- (b) the level of economic development should be commensurable with the obligations to be assumed;
- (c) the voluntary and proactive principle;
- (d) the principle of honoring the pledged contribution; and
- (e) mobilizing other financial resources for funding.

All participating nations showed interest to invite the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) to their nations. Once the RCU is established, regional activity centers will be well coordinated and other environmental programs for the Northwest Pacific Sea will be effectively launched. Many hoped to create the RCU in the next meeting in Toyama, Japan.

The sixth meeting was held in Tokyo on December 4-6, 2000. The participating nations were Japan, South Korea, Russia and China. In Resolution 2 of the sixth meeting, the NOWPAP members agreed in principle to establish a co-hosted NOWPAP RCU in Toyama, Japan and Pusan, South Korea, subject to the confirmation of all members on the basis of their review of the detailed plan prepared by Japan and South Korea regarding the modalities of the RCU operation. The meeting also requested the members to confirm and approve the proposal of the co-hosted RCU so that the consensus of the NOWPAP region could be conveyed to the 21st Governing Council of UNEP. As an interim measure, the meeting requested UNEP to operate the RCU under the authority of the UNEP executive director.

The sixth meeting also decided to establish and implement a new activity on the 'assessment and management of land-based activities' within the NOWPAP work program. Following that decision, UNEP Division of Environmental Conventions, in collaboration with the UNEP Coordination

Office of the Global Program of Action (GPA) for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities and UNEP/Global Environmental Facility (GEF), was requested to assist the NOWPAP members in the development of a strategy to improve the land-based activities for sea environmental quality and let them incorporate the strategy into the 2002/2003 work program.

The seventh meeting was held in Vladivostok, Russia on March 20-22. The participating nations were the same as before. North Korea participated in the meeting as an observer. In the meeting, the NOWPAP trust fund of \$315,000 was established, and the member nations should submit their land-based activities for sea environment should be submitted to the GEF executive office. The NOWPAP executive office, independent from the UNEP executive office, was proposed. In the meeting, the Korean delegates proposed to change Sea of Japan in the NOWPAP maps to a simultaneous name such as Sea of Japan/East Sea or a neutral name such as NOWPAP sea area.

The Sea of Japan has finally challenged by the Korean delegates at the NOWPAP meeting. NOWPAP's success will start in the changing name of the sea from Sea of Japan into a neutral name or simultaneous name. I hope Japan does not rock the NOWPAP's success.

International Regime's Role

The UN organizations persuade the disputed nations to resolve the name of the sea. Japan is not cooperating to resolve the name of the sea. If Japan cannot accept the Sea of Japan/East Sea, it does not deserve the respect and admiration from the international community. It should be ostracized. It is a shame. John Rawls' justice-as-fairness is the only ethical framework for replacing Sea of Japan by East Sea, but certainly Sea of Japan/East Sea is only acceptable practicable framework for the people who appreciate and navigagte the sea (Rawls, 1971).

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