

Problematic of the Appellations of the Names of the Seas and Oceans and Policies of the UNGEGN

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Preamble

In this communication we will try on the one hand, to recall succinctly the role and the objectives of the UNGEGN as well as its recommendations with regard to this sea and on the other hand, to treat the problematic of the denomination of the seas and oceans. Also, we will attempt to raise the legitimacy of the antecedence of the appellations and the problematic of the supports of diffusion of the toponyms notably the cartographic supports as determining tools

in their diffusions and promotions at the national and at the international level.

Introduction

If the Names of places always constituted and certainly will constitute for a long time the political stakes of a great importance it is not less important that these ones must be the factors of closeness and understanding between the different peoples and nations of this world and not only parameters of litigations and confrontations. It is one of the goals for which was created since 1959 the UNGEGN and it is in this sense that it doesn't stop activating to promote the normalization of the geographical names as well on a national scale that on an international scale and to contribute thus, to a better understanding between the different peoples of our planet..

I. PROBLEMATIC OF THE DENOMINATIONS OF THE SEAS AND OCEANS:

If it is admitted that the name of place is an element charged of a weight and of an important cultural message, it is also one of the most meaningful marker of the belonging of this named space because to name a space means to take possession of it . A place only exists if it is named; The name of a place plays a cultural role and a technical role at a same time compared to the multitude of other information that it conveys. It is for this reason that the names of places are witnesses among so many others of the civilization of a nation and make part of the heritage of a country. What explains that the countries are very jealous of their toponymy.

If naming a terrestrial place name posed apparently no problem to our predecessors, it is not the same for the seas and the oceans: the denomination of these last was on the one hand, taken in charge very late and on the other hand they constitute by definition liquid spaces therefore changing, moving and especially spaces of a surface with very badly definite contours, very little surrounded, badly known, sometimes feared and therefore not easy to name with precision.

The man didn't feel the need to name the maritime spaces until it is too late that is to say that once he began to travel the seas and the oceans in search of other civilizations, other

continents and other needs. In their quest of discovery, the first pioneers while establishing the first maritime maps of the discovered maritime spaces, have more tried to make cartography of these spaces without insisting too much on their appellations. The first maps only included very few toponyms; report the names of the immediate beaches, the islands and straits only and very few names of seas.

Thereafter and with the progression of the discoveries and the implication of several nations in the research of new continents and new wealth, notably from the 18th century, the denomination becomes more an act of demand and of appropriation. It is in this sense that most of the parts of these spaces were named. The established maps included in addition to the new assigned names, a few former autochthonous names. These last were generally, transcribed according to the subtleties of the discoverer's language that by the same opportunity 'nationalized' all what can be done so.

If in the previous time the assignment of the names to places was not the responsibility of the political authorities, the denominations resulted from a convenient, spontaneous and especially oral use, henceforth with the arrival of this new comings, the names will be for some of them 'politicized' and transcribed forever under a form or another. They will henceforth be connected to another civilization and are going to glorify and to honor especially some personalities and to perpetuate their memory thus, notably the discoverer of such or such passage, sea or island to the example of the Pérouse, Berrine .. etc.

The peoples of non maritime tradition, that 'turned the back to the sea' have been subjected to more prejudices as regards to their toponymic heritage .

It is the case of the peoples of this region. the Chinese maps of the Extrême Orient for example didn't include names of seas 'except exception'(1)

This absence of appellations of the seas is especially meaningful that the chinese tradition recommended not only the correct transcription of the names of places but insisted also already on their 'normalization', that is to say the writing of the names of places under a correct form and on the political stake that the denominations constitute . Indeed Confucius recommended 500 years before Jesus Christ" **to return to every thing its true name" and that: "if the names don't suit the things, there is confusion, if there is confusion, the things don't execute themselves, if the things don't execute themselves, the decorums and the harmony are disregarded. Decorums being disregarded, the torments and the**

other punishments are not proportioned to the mistakes. The torments and the other punishments not being proportioned anymore to the mistakes, the people doesn't know anymore where put the hand nor the foot''

The few denominations of the maritime spaces in this region did not express that the seas were not considered yet like *bàng* places?

Because non frequented and therefore of no utility and so non named!!!

(1) to see notably the works of Mr. Philippe Pelletier.

II. WHAT APPELLATION: SEA OF THE EAST? SEA OF JAPAN? SEA OF CHINA? SEA OF KOREA? OR OTHER?

- problematic: the antecedence of the appellations and the legitimacy of the cartographic supports

The literature treating the historic and the problematic of the appellation of this sea is abundant enough. I am not going to bring practically no contribution on this topic, nevertheless my contribution will be centered on the problematic of the legitimacy of the antecedence of the appellations as determining factor as well in the demand and the consecration of the toponym on the national and on the international level.

Indeed if we conduct a retrospective of the denomination of this sea what we note?

We note in the first time that before the 16th century the tools of diffusion and promotion of the toponyms: maps, works, oral etc. are very rare but that the support the most widespread and the more claimed as well by the some that the other is without no doubt the maps.

Before the 16th century, we record that two known maps including the appellation of this sea,

one Chinese and the other Korean (1). On one it is mentioned country of Korea and on the other sea of the East..

The Sea of Japan toponym appears in the international cartography with the first European maps (1).

Is the European cartographic support the principal reference and enjoys the necessary credibility?

(1). notably from 1926 that in the absence of Korea, the toponym Sea of Japan was adopted by the Hydrographic International Office.

- Duality of the appellations

It is from the arrival of the European and with their important cartographic production notably with the map of the world of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) that the duality and the competition between this different appellations makes its apparition.

The use of sea of the East sometimes and sometimes the sea of Korea or the sea of Japan and to one degree least sea of china will be from this date present on almost all the published cartographic documents. : from the map of Matteo Ricci until the modern maps.

Several Korean maps used the toponym Sea of Japan as several Japanese maps used the one of Sea of Korea or Sea of the East. from the map of Takahashi Kageyasu (1809), without forgetting the one of Von Siebold as European map but achieved yet with the help of this last and other Japanese cartographers, while passing by the map of Ajia tido (1889), the map of OjuKakguk T'ongsok Chôn-Do (1896) and the map of the world (1855) published by the Korean minister of education.

III. policies of the UNGEGN concerning the denomination of the sea object of our seminary.

If our friends the Koreans conducted an account of the different appellations of this sea to show the pre-eminence of such or such appellation, it appears to our sense that without going as far as counting all maps and documents on which appeared such or such appellation, **that a shared space can only have a' shared appellation and accepted by the ones and by the others.** No appellation of a shared space, that is not the subject of an agreement between the concerned parts can enjoy an exclusive use completely on the international level. It is in this perspective that several recommendations have been adopted by the different Conferences of the United Nations on the normalization of the geographical names notably the sixth among them..

Brief recall of the goals and objectives of the UNGEGN:

The group of the Experts has notably as goals:

- a) to underline the importance of the normalization of the geographical names to the national and international levels and to demonstrate the advantages capable to ensue from this normalization.
- b) to Gather the results of works accomplished by the national and international organisms that deal with the normalization of the geographical names and to facilitate the diffusion of these results next to the Members states of the organization of the United Nations.

It also has for principles:

- 1) the group of the experts acts as consultative organism.
- 2) the decisions of the Group of experts are submitted as recommendations in the Conferences of the United Nations on the geographical names; if they are approved, they are submitted as one or several resolutions to the economic and social Council for definitive approval with the demand that the members states assure them an advertisement and a diffusion as large as possible by the means and suitable circuits as the professional organizations, the scientific and research establishments and the establishments of higher education. The decisions of the Group of experts have a nature of recommendations.
- 3) The Group of experts doesn't approach the questions concerning the national sovereignty.
- 4) in the practice of its functions The Group of experts conform to the principles of the

charter of the United Nations and to the disposition below: the international normalization of the geographical names must be founded on the national normalization.

Policies of the UNGEGN:

by its recommendation III/20 n° on the normalization of the names of the topographic details that spread beyond a same sovereignty, the sixth Conference of the United Nations on the normalization of the geographical names recommends on the one hand that when the countries in which spread a same geographical detail give to this detail a different name, they endeavour to agree on an unique name to this detail and on the other hand that when the countries in which spread a same geographical detail have different languages and don't succeed in agreeing on an one same toponymic form, it is of general rule in international cartography that we accept the toponymic forms of each of the interested languages. The practice consisting in adopting one only or some of this toponymic forms as excluding the other systematically would not be justifiable nor appropriate. Only some technical reasons could sometimes make necessary, notably in the case of maps of small scale, to give up using some toponymic forms corresponding to one or to the other of the considered languages.

Other recommendations in relation to this topic have been adopted by the previous Conferences. (To see annex 1)

Otherwise at the time of the last Conference that was held in Berlin in August - September 2002, the report of the works of the Committee III underlines, after a large debate with regard to the problematic of the appellation of this sea, what follows.:

"The Committee encouraged the three countries to continues their efforts to find a solution acceptable to all taking into account relevant resolution, or else accepts to differ, and to report the outcome of their discussions to the next Conference. The chairman stated in his summary that individual countries cannot impose specific names one the international community and standardization can only be promoted when a consensus exults."

It is to say that this problematic was always the subject of a debate within the group of the

Experts of the United Nations charged of the normalizations of the geographical names.

CONCLUSION:

' to name the things badly is not to add to the misfortune of the world'

'Mal nommer les choses c'est ajouter au malheur du monde'

Albert Camus.

'The conquering peoples imposed their own toponymic 'software' to the territory that they appropriated'

George P, 1990.

In conclusion it is to note:

1) that this sea shared by several nations had at all times historically more or less several appellations legitimate ones and the others.

2) that these appellations have been used indifferently as well by the Koreans that by the Chinese that the Japanese without any distinction. (1)

3) no appellation imposed itself in an indisputable way on the international level.

4) that the antecedence of a toponym or another doesn't emerge in a distinct and indisputable way.

5) that late, on the international level, the use of Sea of the Japan, notably on the of the seas and oceans map published by the OHI, imposed itself to the detriment of the other appellations.

6) that in a logic of recuperation, of reconquest, of history restitution, the Korean authorities started a big campaign of sensitization of the international community so that this sea

recovers its former appellation .

7) in a worry of good will, they propose that it is named sea of the East instead of sea of Korea.

8) that the international community recommends the understanding between the peoples sharing this sea in order to find a satisfactory appellation for all. And recommend meanwhile the simultaneous use in the international cartography of the two appellations that is to say sea of Japan and sea of the East..

(1) Chinese map of 1530 and Korean map also said of P'alto ch'ongdo of 1481.(see also on this topic the works of Mr. Philippe Pelletier)

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