

Dual Names of the Sea and Islands in the World Atlas: The National Geographic's View

By Yearn Hong Choi, University of Seoul

“Japan and South Korea are locked in a battle over water. They’re fighting over what to call the sea that lies between them. Japan says it’s the Sea of Japan; Korea argues that it’s the East Sea. What’s at stake besides national pride? Millions of maps and newspaper references. When the New York Times wrote a story that called it simply “the body of water between the two countries” and published a map that left the sea’s name blank, the Korean media called it a major victory. Koreans have been writing to newspapers and organizations around the world, pushing for a name change for the sea. A worried Japan has struck back with its own official barrage of letters and lobbying. The big test will come with next year’s publication of a key navigation reference, *Limits of Oceans and Seas*, by the International Hydrographic Organization.”

Parade. August 24, 2003. p.16.

Land lies in water; it is shadowed green.
Shadows, or are they shallows, at its edges
Showing the line of long sea-weeded ledges
Where weeds hang to the simple blue from green.
Or does the land lean down to lift the sea from under,
Drawing it unperturbed around itself?
Along the fine tan sandy shelf
Is the land tugging at the sea from under?

Elizabeth Bishop, “The Map” in her first poetry book, *North & South*, 1946.

Introduction

The body of waters between Korea and Japan has two names: East Sea has been in existence for more than 2000 years, and Sea of Japan has been in existence for the past 500 years. The Korean people want to use dual names, East Sea/Sea of Japan. The East Sea had been in existence at least 700 years before the name of Japan emerged in the Islands. The Korean people cannot deny the prevailing name, Sea of Japan, over the waters. Since the last part of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, Japan has been a powerful nation over Korea, because Japan colonized Korea during that period. During that period, the ocean became the major route of transportation, and navigation science and technology were rapidly advancing. Cartographers and Mapmakers in the world adopted Sea of Japan over the waters between Korea and Japan.

The Korean people who lost their personal names under the Japanese rule regained their lost names, and want to regain the East Sea since mid-1990s. However, the Japanese Government does not care such a proposal to use dual names over the body of waters between Korea and Japan. It has claimed that the Japanese colonialism and imperialism were nothing to do with the name of Sea of Japan. The United Nations has maintained a neutral position toward the Korean proposal. If there are disputes over the body of waters between the two nations, the United States suggests the peaceful resolution between the two nations. Unfortunately, Japan has not responded to the Korean proposal to resolve the disputed name of the sea. Until a peaceful resolution, using dual names over the same body of water is only possible, and desirable (Choi, 2001, 2002).

I am going to investigate the history of the Persian Gulf/Arabian Gulf and of the Falklands/Malvinas. The Persian Gulf has been the prevailing name, but the Arab people challenged the name, and proposed the Arabian Gulf. The Falkland Islands has been the prevailing name, but the Argentine people have been calling the Islands Malvinas. The National Geographic Society made a policy to use dual names over the Gulf and the Islands on their maps.

The Persian Gulf/Arabian Gulf

The name of Persian Gulf may imply the fact that the Gulf belongs to Iran. That can be so. The body of water shared by Iran and other Arab nations should be neutral. The name of Persian Gulf has been challenged by Arab nations, and Iran defends the Persian Gulf from the ground that the Arabian Gulf has meant the Red Sea historically. The Arabian Gulf is, therefore, not a very desirable name that can replace the Persian Gulf, or dual use of Persian Gulf/Arabian Gulf (Malmirian, 1998).

The ancient Persians, the principal settlers of the southern part of present day Iran, had established trade relationships with the West, and for this reason, the Greeks for the first time referred to the sea situated in the south of Iran as the Persian Gulf. The name of Persian Gulf had existed long before Iran emerged as a nation.

A world map drawn by Herodotus in the 5th century before Christ (B.C.), a famous historian, divided the then world into two main parts, namely Asia and Europe, and upon which the Red Sea was called the Arabian Gulf, precluding any confusion with the Persian Gulf. The Red Sea was identified as the Arabian Gulf. The Red Sea, not the Arabian Sea or Arabian Gulf, has been well established in the world maps.

In the 2nd century AD, another Greek historian Flavius Arrianus in his famous book, *Anasis*, pertaining to "Military Adventure of Alexander in India," recounting the seafaring of Nearchus, Alexander's Macedonian admiral, who upon his King's orders, sailed from India via the Delta of the Indus, through the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, reaching the entry of Euphrates, has called the Persian Gulf, "Persiconkaitas" which literally meant the Persian Gulf.

Cladius Ptolemaens, the celebrated Greco-Egyptian mathematician/astronomer in the 2nd century, wrote a geography book in the Latin language in which he called this sea “Percicussinus” meaning the Persian Sea or Persian Gulf. The Latin word of Sinus Percicus has been translated into other languages of the world: Gulf Persique in French; Persian Gulf in English; Persisher Gulf in German; Golfo Persico in Italian; Persidskizliv in Russian; and Persusha Man in Japanese. All these languages use the name of “Pares” which is meaning Persian.

After The Arabian conquest of Iran, Persian Gulf was called Bahr Farsi, meaning the Persian Sea. The Ottoman called it Persian Gulf or Persian Sea. The Arabian Gulf had been in existence before the Persian Gulf, but it exclusively referred to the Red Sea or Qolzon Sea. The Greeks were the first people who used both names for the two seas, i.e., the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

Since the 5th century, the geographical designation of the landlocked sea of the Persian Gulf has remained unchanged and since then, the name of the Persian Gulf has established itself in the living languages of the world.

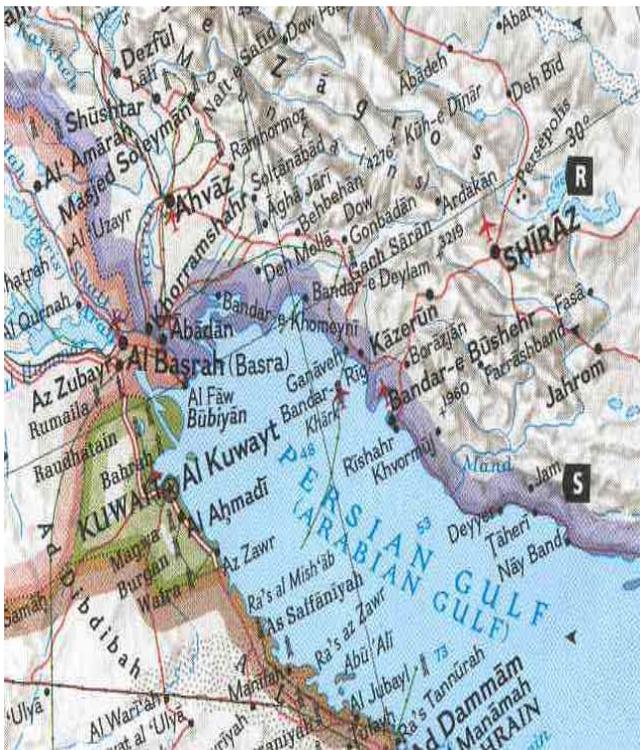
Outside the region, not many people cannot identify the Red Sea as the Arabian Gulf. The Arabian nations, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar want to call the sea the Arabian Gulf. Iraq invaded Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in 1990. The Gulf War pressured the United States military authorities to adopt the Arabian Gulf over the Persian Gulf, because liberating Kuwait from Iraq’s military occupation was the purpose of the US’s participation in the Gulf War in 1991. Saudi Arabia was the base of the US troops. The US State Department consented to use the name of the Arabian Gulf. The National Geographic Society reviewed the dual names of the Persian Gulf and The Arabian Gulf, but not to use the dual names in 1991. The issue reemerged in 2002. In 2003, it decided the dual names. The National Geographic Society is a non-profit and non-governmental organization. It does not need to collaborate with the governmental authorities at all. A group of map editors, composed of six senior cartographers, recommes the name changes to the map policy committee. The committee makes the formal decision. Once the decision is made, all project directors of the National Geographic Society follow the decision. David Miller, senior edit cartographer and category manager of the National Geographic Society, told me: “the National Geographic Society considers legitimacy of changing the name of the sea or islands. The map editors review the rationale of the name changes. It requires the consensus when they make the name change.” (Interview at his office on August 4, 2004)

The National Geographic Society uses the dual names in the way of the East Sea(Sea of Japan) or Sea of Japan(East Sea) over the body of waters between Korea and Japan, because the dual names are most legitimate and desirable. The more the National Geographic Society knows about the Koreans’ reasoning of dual names, the more it consents to use the dual names. Miller continued to say: “Until Japan and Korea propose a neutral name over the sea, the National Geographic will use the dual names.” (Interview at his office on August 4, 2004). I told him some have been proposing the neutral name such as “Blue Sea” or “Green Sea” which is poetically contrasting to the Yellow Sea between China and Korea. But the chance of adopting such a neutral name is nil at the present time.

National Geographic Map 1



National Geographic Map 2



Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas

The Falkland Islands are a group of islands in the South Atlantic. The two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, lie 300 miles (480 km) east of the Argentine coast. About 200 smaller islands form a total land area of approximately 4,700 sq. miles (12,200 sq km). The capital and only town is Port Stanley. The total population of the islands is 2000 (www.falklands-malvinas.com).

Argentina has claimed the islands since 1820. Britain has occupied and administered the islands since 1933 and had consistently rejected Argentina's claims. The Falkland War, started after Argentina invaded and took control of the islands in April 1982, and ended quickly by the British victory (Thornton, 1998).

The War was quickly over, but the name of the islands is still Las Islas Malvinas to Argentina. They still think they lost their islands to the "imperialistic injustice."

Argentine versions state that various Spanish and Portuguese seamen were first to see the islands. The most documented case is that of Esteben Gomez on the ship of San Antonio of the famous Spanish expedition headed by Magellan, who discovered the isles on the way to Spain in 1522. Argentine historian Maria Laura San Martino de Dromi lists maps dated 1522 through 1561 showing the Malvinas off the mainland coast. Malvinas were originated from here.

According to the Encyclopedia Britanica, the English navigator John Davis on the Desire (1592) may have been the first person to sight the Falklands.

The English captain John Strong heading a British expedition made the first recorded landing in the Falklands in 1690. The British claimed the islands for the Crown, and named the Sound between the two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, after Viscount Falkland, a British naval officer. The name was later applied to the whole island group.

In 1764, French navigator Louis Antoine de Bougainville found the island's first permanent settlement on East Falkland. During subsequent years, a French fishery is manned by people from St. Malo (hence "illes Malouvines" from which the Argentine name "Islas Malvinas" is derived).

The British are the first to settle in the West Falkland in 1765.

In 1767, the Spanish bought out the French settlement (Port Louis) in the East Falkland island. For Spain, this meant a French recognition of the Spanish rights to the island. In 1770, a Spanish flotilla arrived at the islands asking the British to leave. The British officer in charge of the garrison, captain Hunt replied:

"I have received your letters by the officer, acquainting me that these islands and coast thereof belong to the King of Spain, your master. In return, I am to acquaint you that the said islands belong to his Brittanic Majesty, my master, by right of discovery as well as settlement, and that the subjects of no other power whatsoever can have any right to be settled in the said islands

without leave from His Britannic Majesty or taking oaths of allegiance and submitting themselves to His Majesty's Government as subjects of the Crown of great Britain.”

This is the first documented sign of the conflict between Britain and Spain regarding the islands.

Shortly thereafter, the Spanish revisited with a much superior force convincing the British garrison to leave on July 14, 1770.

In 1774, the British withdrew from the island (for economic reasons according to British sources). Spain maintained the settlement on East Falkland (which is still called Soledad Island) until 1811, when Spain was about to lose control of its colonies in the American Continent.

In 1816, Argentina became an independent nation. Four years later, the Buenos Aires government proclaimed its sovereignty over the Falklands. In 1828, Argentine warlord, and later governor of Buenos Aires Juan Manuel de Rosas sent a governor, Mr. Veruet, together with a garrison and settlers for menial work to the islands. That was the first recorded Argentine settlement in the islands.

In 1831, the American warship USS Lexington destroyed the Argentine settlement on East Falkland in reprisal for the arrest of three US ships that had been hunting seals in the area. Afraid that the US seized the islands, the British reinvaded the islands, forcefully deposed Vernet and sent the argentinians back to the mainland in 1833. By 1885, a British community of some 1,800 people on the islands was self-supporting.

In 1964, the islands' position was debated by the United Nations Committee on de-colonization. Argentina based its claim to the Falklands by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), by which Spain and Portugal had divided the New World between themselves, and the islands' proximity to South America. Britain based its claim on its “open, continuous, effective possession, occupation, and administration” of the islands since 1833 and its determination to grant the Falklanders self-determination as recognized in the United Nations Charter. Britain asserted that far from ending a colonial situation, Argentine rule and control of the lives of the Falklanders against their will would, in fact, create one.

In 1965, the General Assembly approved a resolution inviting Britain and Argentina to hold discussions to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. These protracted discussions were still proceeding in February 1982 shortly before the Falkland War started in April 1982 (Chronicle of Falklands/Malvinas: History and War of 1982).

The National Geographic Society uses the dual names in the way of Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). The dual names are fair to the Great Britain and the Argentina, according to the National Geographic.

National Geographic Map 3



Summing Up

The National Geographic maps print the East Sea(Sea of Japan) or Sea of Japan(East Sea). They have made enormous impacts on the cartographers and mapmakers in the world. The National Geographic prints seven or eight million maps in English and some other languages. Miller told me that the East Sea(Sea of Japan) or Sea of Japan(East Sea) had a stronger case over another sea name such as the Persian Gulf(Arabian Gulf). He explained: “Not all maps print the Arabian Gulf. If the space allows, the Arabian Gulf is printed in parenthesis. But all maps, however small in scale, the National Geographic prints dual names of East Sea(Sea of Japan) or Sea of Japan(East Sea).” He pointed out the most respected and circulated college textbook, *Geography: Realms, Regions, and concepts* by H.J. de Blij and Peter O. Muller, which uses East Sea(Sea of Japan) in all editions (Blij and Muller, 2002). See Figure 1 and 2.

National Geographic Map 4



Figure 1. East Sea (Sea of Japan) Blij and Muller, 2002

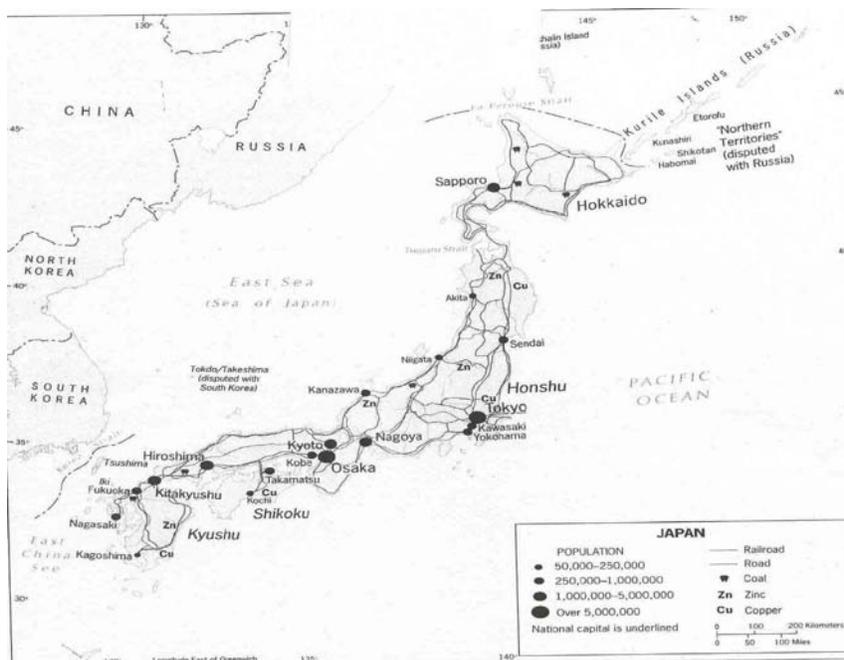
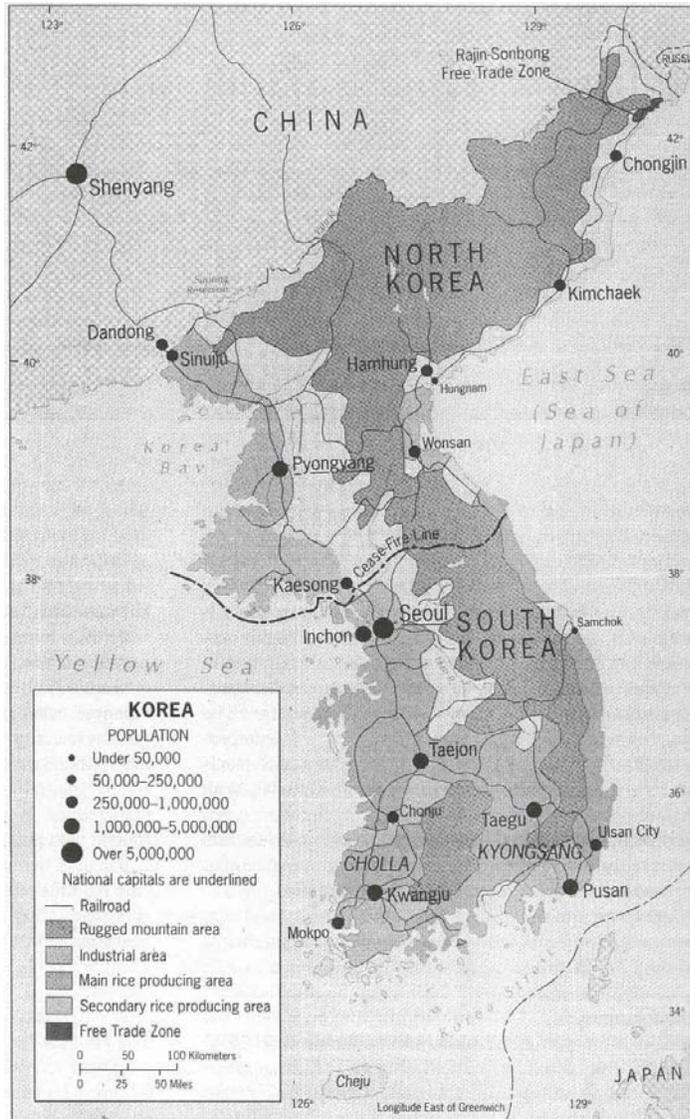


Figure 2. East Sea (Sea of Japan)Blij and Muller, 2002



The National Geographic Society is also going to change the British Isle into Britain and Ireland, because Ireland is no longer an island of Great Britain. So the new name is fair to Ireland.

Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, and South Africa have proposed a new name of Southern Ocean over the sea in between the South Pacific and South Atlantic and the Antarctica. The National Geographic is not sympathetic to it.

The French partner of the National Geographic uses La Manche over the English Channel. The National Geographic has not heard any serious complain or desire to use the dual names of the English Channel/La Manche, so that it does not need to change the name of the English Channel into the English Channel/La Manche.

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Appendix //My Poem

Oh, East Sea

Our sea lost its name
Into the waves of Japanese imperialism
At the turn of the century,
After we lost our own names.

But the Japanese imperialists are defending
Sea of Japan
With Matteo Ricci and the mapmakers.

They don't want to know the historical fact,
"East Sea emerged 600 years before Japan emerged."

They don't want to see many ancient maps showing
East Sea, Oriental Sea, Chosun Sea and Korea Sea.

Listen, the Japanese imperialists!

The sea is our commons.
Do you know the tragedy of the commons?
The sea makes the Earth beautiful,
Living, Green and Blue.
Do you see the Earth
As we see?

We don't claim an exclusive use of East Sea
Over Sea of Japan. We are humbly asking the simultaneous use
Of East Sea/Sea of Japan
On the waters in between Japan and Korea.
A shared sea should keep a shared name.
Don't you think so?

My fellow human beings,
You use your cognitive power.
You use your reasoning power
To change the ugly course of history
From the Imperialism into the peaceful sailing
Of our blue sea.

What's our lives for?
We should search for the beauty of justice-as-fairness
For the humankind
And for the sea.