

The necessity of new approaches in the research on historic maps regarding the sea between Korea and Japan (*Tonghae*)

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1. Introduction

In an incident reported online on May 14, 2004 by Germany's most prominent political magazine 'Der Spiegel' Japanese embassy staff discovered three tiny words on a brandnew world map issued by cartographic publisher Kober-Kümmerly+Frey that made them turn pale with horror: "Ostmeer/Japanisches Meer" (German for "Eastern Sea/Sea of Japan") it said there somewhere in the lower right corner of the map scaled 1:25 million. The map was destined to be presented by German printing machine manufacturer MAN just a few days later at the world's biggest printing fare "Drupa" in Duesseldorf. According to "Der Spiegel" the Japanese embassy subsequently tried hard to prevent the publisher from releasing the map and even threatened to spoil the presentation party at "Drupa" by sending out its lawyers. As a result the presentation of the map that had already been scheduled was cancelled. Kober-Kümmerly+Frey's director Tim Kober stated that the publisher's time-consuming inquiries had resulted in reasonable certainty concerning the equality of the term "Eastern Sea" and "Japanese Sea". Evidence could be found in 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' and 'Financial Times' as well as in various publications of RandMcNally's huge U.S. publishing house. Even the New York Times would use both designations whenever U.S. warship "Kitty Hawk" hoisted anchor to leave its Japanese port of registry. "Der Spiegel" adds in its comment: "Mr. Kober's line of argument is backed up by the *International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)* responsible for matters of jurisdiction concerning the maritime world order. The organization's publication "Grenzen der Ozeane und Meere" ("The Oceans' and Seas' borders") has up to now only quoted 'Japanese Sea' as a result of a conference held in the late twenties, when Korea was occupied by the Japanese and therefore not given the chance to participate. Meanwhile the IHO agreed to take into account the Korean point of view, too (Neubacher 2004)."

However, 'Der Spiegel' did not take the matter too seriously and referred to it calling

it a "bizarre" and "negligible" "geographer's burlesque". While the incident illustrates the fruitfulness of the Koreans' efforts to thwart the exclusive use of the denomination 'Japanese Sea' as well as the pressure exerted by the Japanese pushing the international community for perpetuation of the status quo, it also shows that the international community itself seems amused rather than concerned.

The further development seems interesting.

While the two parties' fervor in bringing forward their respective arguments will be of decisive importance, too, the argument's credibility might tip the scales. According to the Japanese many publishers who used to use both denominations meanwhile re-confined themselves to using the term "Sea of Japan" only (MOFA 2006 a).

Historic maps are an important means of argumentation for both sides. Accordingly both parties conducted several studies on the subject of historic maps. I will take a closer look on those studies. With regard to this analysis I will subsequently try to survey other arguments brought forward by the opponents and thereupon present suggestions for the development of a more effective strategy redounding to the Korean negotiators' advantage.

2. Previous studies on historic maps

Intending to substantiate their arguments the Koreans as well as the Japanese brought forward studies on ancient maps. Trying to link the term "Sea of Japan" to Japan's imperialistic past, the Koreans repeatedly stressed out that the *International Hydrographic Organization IHO*, founded in 1919, had officially adopted this denomination in the year 1929 when Korea was occupied by the Japanese and the Koreans hence didn't have the chance to officially file a protest. In a pamphlet published by the *Korea Society for East Sea* entitled "The Name Used for Two Millennia East Sea" one chapter is captioned "The name of the sea changed in 1929 during the Japanese occupation". This suggests the term "Sea of Japan" had not become a standard denomination before the early 20th century, a period of time, that is, when Korea had just become a Japanese colony. In a pamphlet called "Sea of Japan" the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs complains that the ROK as well as the DPRK would 'argue that the name "Sea of Japan' became widely used from the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of Japan's expansionism and colonialism". The Ministry also stresses out that 'the name "Sea of Japan' appears with overwhelming frequency in the maps produced in Europe during the first half of the 19th century". And: "The government ended its policy of isolationism as late as 1854, thus Japan played no direct

role in promoting the use and acceptance of the name 'Sea of Japan' in European maps from the late 18th century to the early 19th century". In some respects the controversy is therefore centering the question when the name "Sea of Japan" actually became the standard denomination. Korean and Japanese scientists conducted related research studying ancient maps in various libraries all over the world. I would like to present the results of some of these studies in the table below:

Table 1

Year of publication	Place where maps are kept	Researchers' provenance	Period of maps' creation	Number of maps featuring denomination of sea
2001	British Library	Korea	18 th century	90
2002	US Library of Congress	Korea	Before 1800	102
2003	British Library/University of Cambridge	Japan	1801 - 1861	58
2004	Various libraries around the world	Korea	17 th to 18 th century	594
2004	<u>Bibliothèque nationale de France</u>	Japan	16 th to 19 th century	407
2005	US Library of Congress	Japan	14th to 19th century	1.435

It becomes clear that although it was the Koreans who first conducted research the Japanese included a lot more maps in their studies.

In the following the results of the Korean and the Japanese research, both published in table form, will be presented. The Korean research led to the conclusion that most of the historic maps were bearing reference to Korea.

Table 2

구분	영국 캠브리지대학 도서관			영국 국립도서관			미국사우스 캘리포니아 대학			경희대학교 해정문화 연구소			합계		
	수량	한국 해	일본 해	수량	한국 해	일본 해	수량	한국 해	일본 해	수량	한국 해	일본 해	수량	한국 해	일본 해
16세기	3			1									4		
17세기	24			1	1		7						32	1	
18세기	29	20	1	81	71	6	103	95		121	47	2	334	233	9
19세기	7	6	6	7		4	43	30	9	109	10	79	166	46	98
합계	63	26	7	90	72	10	153	125	9	230	57	81	536	280	107

Sea of Korea / Sea of Japan 명칭 고지도의 시기별 분포현황 [자료 = 민족정기모임]

Aus: Kim Chun-chin (2006)

Table 3

Table 1. Sea Names in Old Maps by Periods

References to	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	Total
Korea *	-	39	341	60	-	440
Japan	-	17	36	69	1	123
China	16	28	10	-	-	54
Others	13	41	80	12	-	146
Total	29	125	467	141	1	763

* References to Korea include the East sea, the Sea of Korea (Corea), the Sea of Joseon (Korea), the Oriental Sea, the Gulf of Korea, Mer de Coree, Mar Corai, Кореѣцкое Море (Sea of Korea), and the Eastern Sea.

Sources: Collection of old maps and atlases preserved at the British National Library and the Cambridge University Library, London, UK; East Asian Map Collection ("Sea of Korea" Map Collection), East Asian Library, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA; Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, USA; Russian State Library, Russian State Archives of Ancient Documents, and Russian State Archives of the Navy, Moscow, Russia; French National Library (BNF), Paris, France; Hye Jung Cultural Research Institute, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea; Hiroo Aoyama's survey in 1995.

Aus: KOIS (2006)

The Japanese research however yielded the result that the Japanese name was prevalent.

Table 4

Results of research on maps owned by the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*

	1550-1600	1601-1650	1651-1700	1701-1750	1751-1800	1801-1850	1851-1900	unklar	Summe
Sea of Japan	0	2	12	9	10	99	105	17	254 (62,0%)
Oriental Sea	0	6	8	3	0	0	0	15	32 (7,8%)
Sea of Korea	2	0	1	12	36	6	0	11	68 (16,6%)
Others	5	19	6	3	2	5	0	16	56 (13,7%)
Total	7	27	27	27	48	110	105	59	410

Source: MOFA (2004)

Table 5

Results of research on maps owned by the *U.S. Library of Congress*

Country	Until 1600	1601-1700	1701-1800	1801-1860	1861-1900	Total	Percentage
Japan	1	3	47	417	642	1110	77.352
Korea Sea	0	2	94	82	10	188	13.101
China Sea	3	11	8	0	0	22	1.533
Eastern Sea	0	0	1	0	1	2	0.139
Oriental Sea	0	4	14	1	1	20	1.394
Total	36	107	302	563	722	1730	

Source: MOFA (2005)

Despite all the differences studies of both countries agree in the following:

1. Names directly referring to Korea or Japan are most frequent by far in maps made before the year 1900.
2. While in the 18th century names referring directly to Korea are more frequent in the 19th century names referring directly to Japan are prevalent. \

It becomes clear that the denomination 'Sea of Japan' was used most frequently worldwide even before the era of Japanese imperialism.

Previous research basically aimed two goals: research promoted by the Koreans intended to point out that in historic maps of the 18th century Korean names predominated, while the Japanese wanted to point out that the name 'Sea of Japan' was widely used in Europe even prior to Japan's opening in 1854.

Having made this clear it is now necessary to analyse the research's results focusing different questions.

3. New perspectives in studying historic maps of the sea between Korea and Japan

It would be interesting to scrutinize from when exactly names referring to Japan obtained wide acceptance in western cartography. And: Were any distinctions made regarding the map's countries of origin?

In the following I would like to find answers to these questions.

These answers could provide a basis for further analysis. Examining the issue of gradual disappearance of the name 'Sea of Korea' and prevalence of the name 'Sea of Japan'.

The following publications provide a good basis for the abovementioned analysis:

- studies published by the *Korea Society for East Sea* and the *Korean Overseas Information Service* in the Korean pamphlet entitled 'East Sea in Old Maps with Emphasis on the 17-18th Century' and
- results of Japanese research conducted between 2003 and 2005 in the United Kingdom (British Library/University of Cambridge), France (Bibliothèque nationale de France) and the United States (US Library of Congress)

The reason why is that the abovementioned studies include lists quoting year and country of making of the maps as well as denomination of the sea.

Only maps directly referring to Korea and Japan in the name of the sea have been included.

Here are the results:

Table 6¹⁾

Korean studies						
	USA	England	France	Germany	Others	Sum
Until 1600						
1601-1700			- : 9			- : 9
1701-1710		2 : -	2 : 1		- : 1	4 : 2
1711-1720		5 : -			1 : -	6 : -
1721-1730		1 : -	6 : -		1 : -	8 : -
1731-1740		1 : -	3 : 1		2 : 1	6 : 2
1741-1750		3 : 1	11 : 2	3 : 2	- : 1	17 : 6
1751-1760		4 : 1	11 : 1	1 : -	5 : -	21 : 2
1761-1770		10 : 3	6 : -	1 : -	4 : -	21 : 3
1771-1780		8 : -	13 : 3		3 : 1	24 : 4
1781-1790		10 : -	5 : -			15 : -
1791-1800	5 : -	25 : 2	2 : 1	3 : -		35 : 3
1801-1810						
1811-1820						
1821-1830						
1831-1840						
1841-1850						
1851-1860						
1861-1870						
1871-1880						
1881-1890				- : 1		- : 1
1891-1900						

Source: Lee, Ki-Suk (et.al) (2004)

Table 7
Japanese studies

	USA	England	France	Germany	Others	Sum
Bis 1600			- : 2		- : 1	- : 3
1601-1700			- : 7	- : 1	- : 10	- : 18
1701-1710			2 : 3		- : 1	2 : 4
1711-1720		3 : -	- : 2			3 : 2
1721-1730		2 : -	4 : 2		- : 1	6 : 3
1731-1740		1 : -	5 : 2			6 : 2
1741-1750		2 : 2	10 : 3	- : 3		12 : 8
1751-1760		5 : 2	14 : 3			19 : 5
1761-1770		8 : 3	9 : 2			17 : 5
1771-1780		8 : -	17 : 4		- : 1	25 : 5
1781-1790		6 : 1	7 : 4	- : 1	3 : -	16 : 6
1791-1800	3 : 1	15 : 10	4 : 1	2 : -	1 : -	25 : 12
1801-1810	8 : 8	14 : 14	3 : 2	1 : 9	2 : 1	28 : 34
1811-1820	8 : 8	5 : 28	2 : 20	- : 2	1 : 1	16 : 59
1821-1830	24 : 21	3 : 17	4 : 14	- : 5	1 : 6	32 : 63
1831-1840	21 : 39	2 : 19	- : 31	- : 11	- : 5	23 : 105
1841-1850	2 : 43	1 : 17	- : 64	- : 15	- : 6	3 : 145
1851-1860	3 : 71	- : 24	- : 35	- : 21	- : 16	3 : 171
1861-1870	- : 56	- : 9	- : 14	- : 9	- : 4	- : 92
1871-1880	- : 64	- : 27	- : 7	- : 20	- : 11	- : 129
1881-1890	- : 93	- : 28	- : 21	- : 11	- : 13	- : 166
1891-1900	- : 131	- : 23	- : 14	- : 30	- : 16	- : 214

Quellen: MOFA (2003), MOFA (2004), MOFA (2005)

1) Figures left of colon refer to number of maps quoting denominations referring to Korea, figures right of colon refer to number of maps quoting denominations referring to Japan. Yellow highlights mark ratio in favour of Korea(denominations referring to Korea outnumbering those referring to Japan).

It becomes clear that Japanese research is much more comprehensive in regard to the number of maps analysed as well as the period of time being subject to the analysis. The Koreans analysed only the period most favourable to them, i.e. the 16th and 17th century. The Japanese studies are by far more significant.

By means of the rearrangement I carried out it becomes evident when and in which countries to what extent names referring to Korea or Japan respectively were dominant:

- In the 18th century names referring to Korea are prevalent. Studies of both countries show the same results.
- Before and after denominations referring to Japan are more frequent.
- From the 1860ies on there are no more names referring to Korea.
- There are differences concerning the map's country of origin. In Germany from the 1810s on there were no more references to Korea, in the US, however, names with reference to Korea stopped appearing in the 1860ies.

Since the Japanese research was conducted only in the UK, the US and France, mainly maps from these countries have been considered.

It might be interesting to conduct research on the maps kept at the National Austrian Library in Vienna. At the times when Vienna was the capital of a big empire many delegations visited the city. Maps used to be a light but beautiful present, that is why in Vienna maps from all over the world are kept, most of which have not been sufficiently examined so far. The cartographic collection in Vienna is said to be one of the biggest in Europe. But in other European libraries, as well, there are collections of historic maps that have not yet been examined.

4. Paradigm shift in the *Tonghae* controversy

As a matter of fact names like 'Sea of Korea' gradually disappeared from European maps during the first decades of the 19th century. The approach of many Korean pamphlets that place emphasis on Japanese imperialism's influence on nomenclature therefore has to be considered a policy no longer sustainable.

If Korean officials keep bringing forward the argument the widespread use of the name "Sea of Japan" was a direct result of Japanese imperialism, they risk ridicule and loss of credibility.

It is therefore necessary to perform a paradigm shift, replacing propaganda with objective scientific research.

What was causing the prevalence of the denomination 'Sea of Japan' resulting in its almost exclusive use from the 1860ies on? Does the fact that the Europeans called the

sea adjoining to Korean and Japan "Sea of Japan" prior to the era of Japanese imperialism mean that amendments are unthinkable and unrealistic?

Searching for reasons why the sea referred to as "Sea of Korea" at first would later be renamed "Sea of Japan" the Japanese propagandists never really went out of their way: 'From the 17th to 18th centuries, partly because the shapes of northeastern part of the Asian continent and the Japanese Archipelago were not fully understood, various names were used for this sea area ...'. "From the late 18th century to the early 19th century, a number of explorers investigated the area, including the French explorer Jean La Pérouse, English explorer William R. Broughton, Russian explorer Adam J. von Krusenstern. They explored the areas surrounding the Sea of Japan, clarifying the shape of the Sea of Japan and the topographical features of the coastal areas. After this period, maps drawn in Europe began using the name 'Sea of Japan' or 'Japan Sea' and the name became established and internationally accepted".

This suggests that geographic factors were decisive. However if something like the denomination 'Sea of Japan' was to be attributed from a geographer's point of view it would probably be attributed to the sea *east of Japan*. Geographically Japan is divided into *Omote-Japan* and *Ura-Japan*, *Frontside-Japan* and *Backside-Japan*. Political and cultural life takes place mainly in the *Frontside-Japan*, not along the backside facing Korea. From a culture-geographical point of view it thus doesn't make sense to refer to the sea between Korea and Japan as the 'Sea of Japan'.

For what reason was the sea named mainly after Korea in the 18th century and named mainly after Japan in the 19th century? This question definitely deserves further study. I'd like to point out a few thoughts in the following.

Talking about the European perspective of the time we have to distinguish several ways of getting hold of information on remote foreign countries. In the given case it definitely makes a difference whether the discoverersthemselves advanced as far as the Japanese island chain by ship in order to directly obtain knowledge about the sea between Korea and Japan or whether it was second hand knowledge on the rest of East Asia passed on by the Chinese. In China Europeans were allowed inspection in maps drawn by the Chinese some of which were directly based on Korean maps. Once a geographical denomination had been established it would be adopted by other cartographers as well.

However, on the maps printed in the 19th century the name 'Sea of Japan'was used with increasing frequency and actually became prevalent around the middle of the century. Unfortunately hints shedding light on the reasons for this change can hardly be found on any of the maps themselves. The above mentioned pamphlet issued by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs quotes Adam J. Krusenstern: 'People also call this

sea the Sea of Korea, but because only a smallpart of this sea touches the Korean coast, it is better to name it the Sea of Japan".

Practically it is Japan's size that tips the scales according to this quotation.

Meanwhile there have been a lot of publications in Europe about Japan evocing a certain curiosity about the country. Although at first both countries were completely unheard of to the Europeans, the level of knowledge on Japan increased significantly while Korea remained widely unknown. In the late 17th century one of the founders of the research on Japan was the German explorer Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716). Kaempfer's "Geschichte und Beschreibung Japans" ("History and Description of Japan") published in 1727 was the first comprehensive scientifically systematic work on Japan published in Europe. The book was translated into many European languages and had an extensive impact. "From Kant to Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire to the Diderot's encyclopedia, everywhere Kaempfer was quoted and used, whenever the subject was constitution, religion or religious freedom or else the historical development of mankind. In all these fields Japan provided the western scholars of the Age of Enlightenment with valuable information and arguments" (Michel 1991).

The fact that European intellectuals were debating about Japan (and not about Korea) may not have directly led to the substitution of the denomination "Sea of Korea" by "Sea of Japan", on the other hand one has to admit that it is quite comprehensible, when naming the sea adjoining to two countries one refers to the name of the country known better. Korea and Japan both had decided on politics of isolation. In Europe the Japanese politics of isolation was subject of public debate while the Korean was not. The significance and the profile of the countries involved played a decisive role in the process of denominating the sea. The fact that the desire for correction of the name arose is resulting from the Korean people's growing self-consciousness after the democratization of the country, its economical growth and the increasing global political significance. Just like the increasing significance of Japan in Europe led to the universal spread of the denomination "Sea of Japan", the increasing significance of Korea might lead to the use of two equivalent names. As a premise the image of Korea among educated Europeans has to become more distinct.

5. Designation of *Tonghae* in current maps

Referring to the Technical Resolution A 4.2.6 of the *International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)* South Korea demands that during a transition period, i.e. as long as no consensus on the naming of the sea between both countries has been reached, the designations "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan" ought to be denoted simultaneously on

international maps: 'It is recommended that wheretwo or more countries share a given geological feature (such as, for example, a bay, strait, channel ore archipelago) under a different name form, they should endeavor 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 form 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.'

But there is obviously a discrepancy because it is written that "the name form of each of the languages in question should be accepted for charts and publications". For instance "English Channel" is the English naming whereas "La Manche" is the French naming. However, the designations "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan" respectively would be both English. Therefore according to the Technical Resolution A 4.2.6. onlythe diction Tonghae/Nippon-kai comes into question.

Here we are confronted with another problem. Many South Koreans would demand that if one already uses the Korean name one should utilize the official transcription of the Republic of Korea. Then one would have to write "Donghae". However international scientific organizations such as the AKSE (Association of Korean Studies in Europe) keep on using the McCune/Reischauer transcription.

The transcription of the Korean Democratic People's Republic (North Korea) as well as the official South Korean transcription from 1984 to 2000 is a variant of McCune/Reischauer. But without arranging with the interested world public (e.g. associations of scientists specialized in Korean Studies) or North Korea respectively the South Korean government introduced a new transcription, which is heavily disputed even in the own country. Actually the most important Anglophone daily newspaper "Korea Times" does not utilize it.

Nonetheless the new South Korean transcription system has continued to spread vehemently. It would make sense if international Korea experts and representatives of North and South Korea get together to deliberate on an expedient Romanization.

The pamphlet "The Name Used for Two Millennia East Sea" of the Korea Society of East Asia mentions "Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas" as a further example regarding the usage of two names in case of conflict. Such a statement is dangerous indeed. Even if one out of rejection of the British Imperialism does not like to use the designation "Falkland Islands", these islands however are actually within the military sphere of influence of the United Kingdom. It is the similar case with Tokdo and South Korea. Thus one could write "Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas" and "Tokdo/Takeshima" at the same time, but honestly which Korean wants that?

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between territories belonging to only one

country and international bodies of water. If South Koreans demand that the designation East Sea/Japanese Sea has to appear simultaneously on international maps, then one would have to investigate how Korean atlases wield e.g. the naming for the 'English Channel/La Manche' and the Persian Gulf/ Arabic Gulf respectively.

A further problem is the question whether it is wise to internationally propagate the name "East Sea". The use of the designation Tonghae is an old tradition. To amend it into Han'guk-hae, Choson-hae or Koryo-hae would seem like a breach with tradition.

Actually even in South Korea the English naming "East Sea" is put into question. Meanwhile some Korean assemblymen favour the term "Sea of Korea". This could finally lead to the compromise "Sea of Korea/Japan".

Also of interest is the North Korean variant "East Sea of Korea", which is a direct translation of Choson Tonghae. Eventually a contribution for the internationalization of the Korean language could be the Korean denomination "Tonghae".

6. Conclusion

Japan responded to the Koreans' challenge of renaming the sea between Korea and Japan with intensive and comprehensive research. One has to concede that the Japanese, having examined all the maps made before 1900, have conducted a more thorough and internationally more creditable research than the Koreans who confined themselves to examining maps from the 17th and 18th century only. Korea should now strive to make up by doing equally comprehensive research. The task to be performed by Korean scholars should not be to generate arguments for biased political statements, but to support the politicians in determining their argumentations and measures on firm scientific ground.

Even if profound research leads to the result that historic maps from as soon as the early 19th century have used denominations primarily referring to Japan, this doesn't automatically mean that the name "Sea of Japan" cannot be changed. A different strategy has to be developed.

Whenever circumstances change it makes sense to change certain names, too. In Germany, for instance, the city of Chemnitz that had been renamed "Karl-Marx-Stadt" was re-renamed "Chemnitz". In North Korea "Songjin" was renamed "Kimch'aek". As soon as circumstances change e.g. in case of a political breakpoint certain geographical denominations will be changed just as well. The term 'Arabian Gulf' had been completely unknown before 1960. These days many international maps use the name 'Persian-Arabian Gulf'.

The political state of affairs in East Asia has changed. Korea is playing an increasingly important role in world politics. In the era of political associations like EU, NAFTA or ASEAN cooperation between nations on an equal footing is becoming more important. In the future cooperative projects will become more and more urgent in the Northeast Asian region. Consensus between all the parties participating is essential.

The name 'Sea of Japan' has never really been accepted by the Koreans. Isolation, powerlessness and different priorities prevented the matter from appearing on the international agenda.

The name for *Tonghae* had been replaced by 'Sea of Japan' on foreign maps for the simple reason that the images of Korea and Japan as seen in foreign countries had changed to the disadvantage of Korea. As soon as the image of East Asia changes in favor of Korea one of the consequences will probably be that the name for *Tonghae*, just as well, will change.

Hopefully the sea between Korea and Japan will be given a name that both parties can agree on before too long.

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