

Naming of the Sea: A Poetic Mission to the Mapmakers

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Introduction

Name of the sea, East Sea and Sea of Japan, has been in the diplomatic battle between Japan and Korea, since Korean people demanded the joint use of the two names on the sea between Japan and Korea. Strange to say, the Japanese Government has been not sympathetic to this nominal demand at all, because Sea of Japan has been the prevailing name in almost all maps in the past 100 years or more. The Japanese Government did not understand, and has not shown any compassion o the Korean people's legitimate complaint. In the last stage of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, the Korean people lost their names and were forced to have Japanese names. The name of East Sea was disappeared in the waves of Japanese imperial power emerging around the turn of the 20th century. The United Nations set up a principle of using the two names, when the two nations dispute on a single name of the same sea. But the Japanese Government denies stubbornly the use of the two names, even though it is regarded as a civilized nation with the UN membership. I propose hereby to educate the map makers to ponder the name of the sea or the place of Earth as a poet or a poetess when they print the map. Name of the sea is a serious matter not only to the Korean people, but also to the map makers. The map makers are, first of all, educators and intellectual members of their society. This article for the necessity of educating the map makers, because debating Japanese Government on the name of the sea between Japan and Korea is becoming useless.

I came across a children's book and found a striking message for all adults to appreciate, including all map makers. The Apollo astronaut said to us that understanding of the places is more important than voyaging to new place or places. He further said that we would face the age of assimilation. What a joy to find his words in a children's book!

Michael Collins, command module pilot of Apollo 11, wrote a very interesting and important message to us in his essay, "Into the Unknown" as an introduction to Marco Polo, a children's book published in 1992.

"In a physical sense, we have already gone to most places that we can. That is not to say that there are not new adventures awaiting us deep in the sea or on the red plains of Mars, but more important than reaching new places will be understanding those we have already visited. There are vital gaps in our understanding of how our planet works as an ecosystem and how our planet fits into the infinite order of the universe. The next great age may well be the age of assimilation, in which we use microscope and telescope to evaluate what we have discovered and put that knowledge to use. The adventure of being

first to reach may be replaced by the satisfaction of being first to grasp. Surely that is a form of exploration as vital to our well-being, and perhaps even survival, as the distinction of being the first to explore a specific geographical area.

The explorers whose stories have been told in many books. Their voyages and expeditions were journeys of mind as much as of time and distance, through which they—and all of mankind—were able to reach a greater understanding of our universe. That challenge remains, for all of us. The imperative is to see, to understand, to develop knowledge that others can use, to help nurture this planet that sustains us all.” (p.8)

William H. Goetzmann, editor of World Explores series for the children book, wrote an interesting essay as well in the same book.

“As we reach out into the darkness of outer space and other galaxies, we come to better understand how our ancestors and confronted oecumene, or the vast earthly unknown. We learn more again the meaning of an unknown 18th-century sea captain’s advice to navigators:

And if by chance you make a landfall on the shores of another sea in a far country inhabited by savages and barbarians, remember you this: the greatest danger and the surest hope lies not with fires and arrows but in the quicksilver hearts of men.

At its core, exploration is a series of moral dramas. Explorations represent the process of learning in their most expansive and vivid forms.”(p.10)

Those who are interested in the past exploration should now search for justice and fairness in the place and culture, or the international relations. Names of the places including the sea should be reviewed from an international perspective. All names are poetic or poetically made sometime ago, after all.

The Map-makers

Pulitzer prize winning writer, John Wilford starts his famous *The Mapmakers: The Story of the Great Pioneers in Cartography—from Antiquity to the Space Age* (2000) with a simple question, what is map? He explains that the fundamental nature of the map is simply taken for granted. Indeed, the term map is often used metaphorically to explain other types of knowing and communicating. In everyday conversation, the word map is used to convey the idea of clarification: someone maps out a plan or maps out of his future or, if he seems to be a little dense, has someone ask him, Do I have to draw a map? (p.13) Does the map clarify the name of the sea? Not yet. The Sea of Japan in the map does not present the fairness to the Korean people, because Sea of Japan is their East Sea, so that the Korean people are registering their discontent to the mapmakers who use Sea of Japan only on the sea between Japan and Korea. The *National Geographic* and some map makers accepted that proposal, but many map makers do not print the two names on the sea in their maps. The latter do not provide the justice and fairness to the Korean people and those who are seeking justice and fairness.

The uses of maps in human communication continually increase and diversify, reflecting the range of interests, knowledge, and aspirations—of what can be or should be “apprehended.” (p.14) Modern maps should increase and enhance the knowledge of the land and the seashores, islands and high seas. The map should lead the users of maps to the land and sea with justice and fairness. It should not be only for the rich and powerful nations. It should be fair to all nations. Fairness should be derived from the political history of the land and the sea, and international relationships of the nations. Sea of Japan and East Sea are the two legitimate names of the sea to Japanese people and Korean people. Sea of Japan, eliminating East Sea, has been the prevailing name of the sea since Japan emerged as a powerful military nation around the turn of the century and finally colonized Korea. Therefore, it contains pieces of sad and unfortunate political histories of Japan over Korea. Modern maps should print the two names of sea between Japan and Korea. That is the appropriate duty and mission of the map and the mapmakers. That is not a tangle of the two names. The map should bring civility over wilderness. The two names in this case are making the civility of the map and mapmakers. One name over the vast sea between Japan and Korea is not just, wild, and defiant.

Wilford made a great effort to disclose the historical map makers from Ptolemy, Marco Polo, Prince Henry of Portugal, Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, Magellan, Francesco Rosselli, the first known specialized map in Florence, Italy, Louis XIV, a great financier of the mapping survey of France and James Cook who surveyed the Pacific, American West Coast and Hawaii, NASA that has made satellite photos of the Earth readily available among many great heroes. However, the art and science of map making have not yet fully discussed the names of sea, island, strait and land. Advanced topography and cartography are not necessarily resolving the disputed names of the sea, island and strait. Of course, not all names are in dispute, but the art of mapmaking should spend more time and efforts on the name or naming of the sea, island and strait in dispute. Naming the parts of the moon and stars in the galaxy is always poetic and even romantic beyond social scientific endeavors

Marston Bates and Donald Abbott suggested a number of fundamental points about the utility and practice of modern mapping in their *Coral Island: Portrait of an Atoll* (New York: 1958). Now, as before, maps are considered an essential part of science, and not only the physical sciences, but more the social sciences as well; there is still much to be learned about the world and ourselves through mapping (p.268).

Maps, for example, played an important role in the European conquest and colonization of Africa in the 19th century. They traced the routes by which explorers pushed inland marked the locations of mines and trading centers for commerce, guided soldiers in their seizure of land, and then provided documentary evidence in the claiming of conquered territory. In a study of cartography and empire building in West Africa, Thomas J. Bassett, a University of Illinois geographer, cited examples of European maps as instruments to legitimize the colonizer’s dominion over the colonized (1994).

In 1964 an international convention agreed to give the panhandle of the Antarctic a neutral name, the Antarctic Peninsula, with the northern half called Graham Land and the

southern half, Palmer Land. The British named the panhandle Graham Land, for the First Lord of the Admiralty James R.G. Graham, when it was discovered in January 1820. Many American scholars believe that Nathaniel B. Palmer, a New England sealing captain, was the first to sight the continent, in November 1820. It was unlikely that the matter would ever be settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. So the international convention was necessary (p.313).

Many of the lunar names still in use were applied by Giovanni Batista Riccioli, a Jesuit priest who published a map in 1651. Like Langrenus, a Flemish astronomer to the Spanish court, Riccioli assumed that the dark smudges on the lunar surface, name mare, or sea. Those who identified were given such fanciful names as Sea of Fertility, Sea of Serenity, Sea of Tranquility, and Ocean of Storms. He also adopted and expanded on Langrenus's practice of naming craters for scholars, scientists, and other prominent people (p.429).

John Wilford concluded: hard work still has its reward. We discussed our small part in man's quest to understand where he is, and possibly why, and this made us feel happy—and a little important. The sum of knowledge was greater by a fraction, or fraction. Here, in the magnificent depths of Earth, we talked of Mariner 9, which at that moment was discovering and surveying the grandeur of Mars. We felt a return of appropriate humility(p.473).

Poet's Sense of Geography

The poet expresses his personal reactions to the place and things—what he sees, hears, thinks, and feels. In the prehistoric times, the stone-age men and women invented fire and tools to survive must have expressed their minds toward their places and things. Their earthenware in the museum shows the rain pattern they designed with their finger nail or a sharp stone. Before the written language, American Indians must have amazed at the beauty and grand sound of Niagara Fall. They must be the poets without written language in their heart.

Elizabeth Bishop (1911–1979) was a poet whose vivid sense of geography won her many honors. She was more the observer with a vivid sense of place. She visited the Nova Scotia of her childhood, spent two years in Europe shortly after she graduated from Vassar, and traveled to North Africa, Mexico, Key West, and Brazil. She had stopped off in Rio de Janeiro en route to sailing the Strait of Magellan, but suffered a violent reaction after eating a cashew fruit. When she recovered she stayed on in Brazil for 15 years.

Bishop wrote sparingly, publishing only five slim volumes of poetry in 35 years, but what she wrote received high acclaim. In 1945 her work was selected from among over 800 entries in the Houghton Mifflin Poetry Competition, and the 30 poems submitted were published the following year as *North & South*. This collection, together with her second volume, *A Cold Spring*, earned her the Pulitzer Prize for 1956. She received the National Book Award for *The Complete Poems* in 1970, was the first American to receive the Books Abroad/Neustadt International Prize for Literature—she was chosen by an

international jury of writers—and the National Book Critics Award for Geography III, her last book of poems, in 1977.

As one can tell from her titles, her lifelong passion for traveling influenced her poetry. “I think geography comes first in my work,” she told an interviewer, “and then animals. But I like people, too. I’ve written a few poems about people.”

Appropriately, one of her earliest poems, “The Map,” describes “Labrador’s yellow, where the moony Eskimo has oiled it” and points out that because of cramped space the names of seashore towns run out to the sea and cities cross neighboring mountains. Yet maps are not merely guides to geographical places, nor are they aesthetic objects only. As with most of her poems, “The Map” one sees is not just the colors of the rainbow confined to irregular shapes. One sees Bishop’s poem as a guide to the way she views and senses the patterns of life. I present here her poem, *The Map* (Elizabeth Bishop, 1979).

*Land lies in water: it 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 life the sea from under,
Drawing it unperturbed around itself?
Along the fine tan sandy shelf
Is the land tugging at the sea from under?*

*The shadow of Newfoundland lies flat and still.
Labrador’s yellow, where the moony Eskimo
Has oiled it. We can stroke these lovely bays,
Under a glass as if they were expected to blossom,
Or as if to provide a clean cage for invisible fish.
The names of seashore towns run our to sea,
The names of cities cross the neighboring mountains
--the printer of here experiencing the same excitement
As when emotion too far exceeds its cause.
These peninsulas take the water between thumb and finger
Like women feeling for the smoothness of yard-goods.*

*Mapped waters are more quiet than the land is,
Lending the land their waves’ own conformation:
And Norway’s hare runs south in agitation,
Profiles investigate the sea, where land is.
Are they assigned, or can the countries pick their colors?
--What suits the character or the native waters best.
Topography displays no favorites; North’s as near as West.
More delicate than the historians’ are the map-makers’ colors.*

Poetic sense of place starts with the name of the place in the history and folklore. The places, and people living in the place, inspire the poets to compose his or her poems. American poet Elizabeth Bishop wrote a poem on Rio Janeiro. She wrote: "In Rio de Janeiro, dozens of new sambas are composed for each year's carnival. Although sambas concerning love outnumber all others, there are always some about world events, such as landing on the moon, and Brazilian politics and life in general. This sampling from 1965, a year after the "rightist" revolution, comments on, or pokes fun at power failures, government turnovers, and the hopelessly bad urban trains." Poetry is the poet's means of explaining the things around him or her with metaphor. Please read her Rio.

*Rio de Janeiro,
My joy and my delight!
By day I have no water,
By night I have no light.*

*Kick him out of office!
He's a greedy boy!
I've nothing to investigate,
What I want is joy!
Justice has arrived.
"Pull" won't work again.
Some have fled to Uruguay;
Some have fled to Spain!*

*Marshall, Illustrious Marshal,
Consider the problem
Of the suburbs on the Central!
I'm sorry for poor Juvenal,
Hanging in the old Central
All year long
He works in Leblon
And lives in Delight
And gets to work mornings
Late at night.
Oh, Marshal!*

*Come, my mulata,
Take me back!
You're the joker
In my pack,
The prune in my pudding,
Pepper in my pie,
My package of peanuts,
The moon in my sky.*

I also write my poem from Rio. As a poet, I fell in love of Rio de Janeiro which is one

of the three most beautiful ports of the world. Rio de Janeiro in Portuguese is River of January in English. I wrote a short poem under Rio.

Rio de Janeiro

*A Portuguese ship crossing the Atlantic
Sailed to the river.
It was January.
So the explorers named the river
As Rio de Janeiro,
River of January,
The most beautiful name in Portuguese.
(The River was later found as the Bay).*

*Rio de Janeiro became one of the most beautiful ports
With its granite rocks which distinguished
The inner sea from the outer sea.*

*The Korean explorers could name Rio de Janeiro
As the Han-Ryo-Soo-Doh,
A waterway from the Island of Leisure Mountain
to City of Beautiful Water
In their South Sea.*

Naming of a place or an object itself is a poetic endeavor. Kim Chun-soo, a famed Korean poet (1922-2004), wrote: it is nothing until the poet names the flower. All names are products of poetic endeavor with special meaning in the political, social, and historical exploration contexts. Elizabeth Bishop is the first American poet who discovered the poetic meaning from the places she visited or traveled.

Kim's poem, "Flower," is my translation from Korean into English. Naming is a poet's job. The mapmakers should be poetic in printing the names in their maps.

*You were
Nothing but an object
Before I call your name.*

*When I call your name,
You come to me, and
Become a flower.*

*When I call your name,
Please call my name, my dear!
You should be the same color and fragrance
As mine.
Then, I will go to you,*

And become your flower.

We want to be something:

You for me, me for you;

To be something

Unforgettably meaningful.

Before the map was drawn, the name of the place had been there, and the history had been written. Poetry and geography had been written and interwoven before the history was written. Modern men and women did not know this simple axiomatic truth. John Wilford, in his *The Mapmakers: Story of the Great Pioneers in Cartography from Antiquity to the Space-Age*, wrote that the origin of the map is lost to history, but the historians can trace the first map in existence, but naming of the places in the map is beyond the historians' imagination. No one knows exact when or where or for what purpose someone in the primitive age started to name his or her fellow human beings, places, plants and animals surrounding him or her. As some sense of here in relation to there produced the map, so that sense produced the name of one person in relation to another person. Here, the historians, geographers and mapmakers should invite the poets to search for the legitimate name or names in the maps and the intellectual mind behind the names. That is an effort to establish justice and fairness in the final stage of mapmaking. How many poems have been written on the sea between Japan and Korea by the poets and writers in the two nations and in other nations? Poetry can tell the readers on historic, cultural, political places of the sea. Literary works can go beyond the philosophic treatise. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (1821) seeks for our reconciliation---Vershung—that is, we are to accept and affirm our social world positively, not merely to be resigned to it. "When we look at the world rationally, the world looks rationally back."

In the 19th century, Hegel proposed reasonable pluralism, not Utopian philosophy, which guaranteed a fair system of cooperation over time from one generation to the next, where those engaged in cooperation are viewed as free and equal citizens and normal cooperating members of society over a complete life. Under reasonable pluralism, Sea of Japan and East Sea have had valid reasons for their long existences. Two names on the same body of water may sound unacceptable to some people in Japan and in the world, but they are practically possible under the condition of social and political world. The name of the sea should not be decided by the simple majority rule of the nations in the International Hydrological Organization, International Maritime Organization and in the United Nations. Majority rule is a product of utilitarian value, because justice is not served by such a principle of utility. In *A Theory of Justice* (1971), John Rawls proposed a conception of justice that he called "justice as fairness." According to justice as fairness, the most reasonable principles of justice are those that would be the objects of mutual agreement by persons under fair conditions.

Two names, Sea of Japan and East Sea, not excluding one, can be a reasonable choice to the two nations and among the nations from Hegel to Bishop, and to the children who read Michael Collins' message and to the children of the future. That is the way to prepare the age of assimilation. That is the way to enlighten the map makers.

That will persuade Japanese Government to accept the two names on the sea between Japan and Korea. In the age of assimilation with the help of worldwide web, the map makers may print all the names existing in the history, poetry and folklore on the places. They should make efforts to accommodate all the names into the given space as much as possible. This is the way we expand our knowledge on the places on Earth. Endonyms and exonyms will contribute to human understanding of the places of land, sea and island. Poetry will serve toponymy that will serve a crucial purpose in expanding human knowledge on the place on Earth. The map should print the two or three names of the sea. Human intelligence is advancing to accept plural names. Naftali Kadmon, a famed Hebrew University professor, said that multiple names for a single geographical feature are a widespread fact of life. He hopes the peaceful solution, adopted by Norway, Sweden and Denmark concerning the form of the maritime name Skagerrak, will be flowered by other countries (Kadmon, 2006).

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