

**'DONGHAE', 'NIHON KAI', 'SEA OF JAPAN' OR 'EAST SEA': IS IT A QUESTION OF  
QUALIFICATION AND CATEGORIZATION IN EXONYM, ENDONYM, ALLONYM, OR  
TRANSLATED NAME?**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

In what follows, we are going to ask a number of questions concerning the classification of exonyms, endonyms or allonyms regarding the name of the sea between Japan and Korea, known internationally as the 'Sea of Japan '.

Is the problem of this sea naming a matter of qualification of exonym, endonym, allonym or translated name as it was recently found particularly in the relevant recorded publications or is it a completely different question?

We will try not to answer this question, but rather to make other questions that we hope will raise interest.

**BRIEF OF THE GENESIS:**

We're not going to dwell too much on the genesis of the sea naming' problem, its origins or the legitimacy associated with the prior art and the use of a particular name in comparison to another one.

Works on this subject are very abundant and sufficiently discussed, especially during the UNGEGN meetings since the 90 and during the 17th international seminar on sea and oceans names devoted exclusively, at least during the early years, on this subject.

We only recall and point out that because of short-term circumstances related to some particular historical events (Colonization, International Cartography especially the Western one, absence of Korea at the international scene in the first half of last century etc.). The name of 'Sea of Japan'' was adopted at the international level.

**PROBLEM**

The exclusive naming of "Sea of Japan " at the international level is being challenged by Korea especially since the 90's.

Starting from the premise that the names are part of the cultural and historical heritage of a nation (see Resolution VIII / 9, adopted in 2002 by the UNGEGN), from the importance of preserving them as well as from the principle that a shared space must have a shared name, (See in particular the UNGEGN resolutions No. I / 8, II/25 and III/20 and the IHO'one No. A 4-2-6 (1974), the Republic of Korea is militating for long time, for an international use of the

name 'East Sea' in parallel to 'Sea of Japan' or any other mutually agreed naming, in accordance with the recommendations of international specialized bodies, the IHO and the UNGEGN.

If Korea disputes this exclusive use, Japan on the other hand, rejects any other name than 'Sea of Japan'. (Lee Ki Suk, 1999)

**REGISTERED POSITIONS RELEVANT TO THE QUALIFICATION AND CATEGORIZATION OF THIS SEA NAMING:**

In an article entitled '*Donghae and Nihonkai-East Sea and Sea of Japan: Are they exonyms or allonyms, and is there a messing term?*' (Naftali K.2007 and 2010), Mr. Kadmon Nafatali raises the question of qualification of this sea in terms of terminology.

He concludes that the terms exonym, endonym or allonym do not represent accurately the specific nature of that sea and that it might be wise for the UNGEGN and its Working Group on Terminology to think about another term in order to be able to qualify it in particular for its part located in the 'High sea' or 'international waters'.

In his article: '*The Sea of three endonyms : How maritime names like 'East Sea or Sea of Japan fit into two categories'*' (Paul Woodman, 2009), Mr. Paul Woodman argues for its part that the name of this sea, which is only one set, can be categorized three times, as an endonym, as from Japan: Nihon-Kai (translated Sea of Japan), from Korea: Donghae (translated the East Sea) as well as from Russia: Yaponskoye More (also translated Sea of Japan).

In one hand, he conceives that a place name can not be both an exonym and an endonym and in the other hand, for this sea' case, the name can only designate the entire sea and not just a single portion. (Woodman, 2009).

In his article: '*Is exonym an appropriate term for names of features beyond any sovereignty?*' (Jordan, 2010), Mr. Peter Jordan attempts to synthesize these two perspectives.

Finally a fourth position is saved and leads to say that for international waters, which are under no sovereignty, it is possible to use for the sea subject of our paper, the two names translated, it means East Sea, Sea of Japan (Choo, 2010).

Contrary to Mr. Kadmon, Mr Paul Woodman, and, to some extent, to the proposals of Mr Peter Jordan and Mr Choo, we believe from our side that the question raised specifically to this sea, may be part of another perspective other than the toponym which may designate this sea, whatever exonym or endonym or allonym or translated name.

If there is no doubt that 'Donghae' is an endonym for Korea, 'Nihon-Kai' for the Japanese, the fact remains that in all cases and according to the approved definitions 'Sea of Japan' and 'East Sea' are two exonyms despite they are also classified as 'translated'. A translated name does not remain an exonym?

This assertion is supported by the exonym' definition (see below). It is also supported and strengthened by the fact that if a place name has to be considered as such, there must be a minimum degree of difference between the exonym and the corresponding endonym. Same as the provisions and exceptions taken at the third UN Conference on Standardization of

Geographical Names in 1977, in resolution III/19, which exclude from the census of the list of exonyms, - the categories of names: those that deviate from the official name only by omission, addition or alteration of diacritics or of the article, those who deviate from the official name by variation or derivation and those created by the translation of a generic term - can not be applied to the name of that sea neither to the one under which it is internationally known nor under the one proposed by the Korean side.

Moreover, it should be noted that even if for this category of names, it is not necessary that it would be recorded, the resolution cited above, precises that nevertheless, they are indeed exonyms.

'Sea of Japan' or 'East Sea' (whatever the used language) do not then respond to any criteria or exceptions listed in the resolution mentioned above that allows excluding them from the lists provided in the resolutions II/28 III/19 and UNGEGN.

But the main claim of Korea and Japan, supported by an intense activity either scientific or other, does not aim to convince the international community for the one about a simultaneous and systematic use of the exonym 'Easter Sea' next to the other largely devoted exonym 'Sea of Japan' on all media and documents : maps, atlases, newspapers or other! (See: M. Choo, 2010 and Lee 2010) and for the other to refuse any name other than the exonym 'Sea of Japan'?

The claim for the use of endonyms Donghae and Nihon Kai in their original forms or in romanized or transcribed forms is not each side's first preoccupation.

The claim and main request made to the international community, is rather the international use of the exonyms 'East Sea' - 'Sea of Japan'!

Mr Choo, of South Korea, Vice President of the Society of the East Sea, does not exceptionally propose, and for an international use only, that it is preferable to use the translated form of the sea rather than the endonym itself either Korean or Japanese? (Choo, 2010).

This approach is not opposite to the various UNGEGN recommendations mainly the No. II/29, V/13 and the IV/20 related to the reduction in the use of exonyms internationally?

Monsieur Choo explains this preference: ' Donghae is an endonym which has long been used by Korean in their language. Why not use this original form instead of the translated one, East Sea? I would argue that due respect should be given to the specificity of oriental languages. Such languages as Korean, Chinese and Japanese have completely different writing script and etymology from those using roman alphabets and it is therefore very difficult to convey the meaning of the names in the international use. The need for translation of names happens here' (Choo, 2010)

Can this argument be applied to other languages with no Latin script? The answer is yes.

In this case don't we risk then to encourage the use internationally of the exonyms and then be in contradiction with the UNGEGN policies and resolutions related to the reduction of exonym internationally ?

As noticed, the problem of this sea naming is for some, focused on the recovery (Korea), for the others on the conservation (Japan) of an national toponymic heritage related to a maritime space shared between the two countries for an international use and considered of great historical importance and charged of a great affective and emotional value for both.

Should we then, for this, consider a new terminology to describe the sea, as proposed by Mr. Naftali Kadmon, or as suggested by Mr. Paul Woodman, it is not necessary because the sea has indeed three endonyms?

As we were trying to mention above, we believe that the question that arises at the moment, is that relating to the use internationally of the exonym 'East Sea ' next to the devoted exonym ' Sea of Japan'.

Because if it is clear that Donghae and Nihon Kai are two endonyms respectively Korean and Japanese used exclusively by each country on their maps as well as on other documents, the fact remains that the international community is rather stingy about using the one as the other also.

Does the international community will be sufficiently sensitized for a simultaneous use of the two endonyms Donghe and Nihon Kai (By the way, is it really what is asked from it?) Or both exonyms - 'East Sea, Sea of Japan' (Korean claim) or continue to use only the Japanese exonym 'Sea of Japan' (Japanese claim)?

In conclusion we can say, in the case of this sea, it is requested by both Korea and Japan, from the international community to use the two exonymic names 'East Sea' 'Sea of Japan' but not the endonymic ones or to use any other new name mutually agreed by both parties, for Korea (Shin Gil-Sou, 2010) and only 'Sea of Japan' for Japan.

### Some definitions related to our subject:

**Allonym (005):** Each of two or more toponyms employed in reference to single topographic feature. Exemples: Hull, Kinsgton upon Hull; Vesterhavet, Nordsee,; Swanesa, Abertawe, ; Johanesbourg, Egoli.

**Allonym, standardized (006):** Each of two or more standardized toponyms given to a single topographic feature. Exemple: Biel and Bienne; Casablanca and Dar al Bayda; Kaapstad and cape town; Matterhorn and Monte Cervino.

**Endonym (076):** Name of geographical feature in one of the language occurring in that area where the feature is situated; Exemple: Varanasi (not Benares) Aachen (not Aix la Chapelle) Krung Thep (not Bangkok) al Uqsur (not Luxor) Teverya (not Tiberias)

**Endonym standardized (077):**endonym sanctioned by a names authority: Example: among the allonyms Hull and Kinsgton upon Hull (England), the latter is the standardized form.

**Exonym (081):** Name used in a specific language for geographical feature situed outside the area wher the language has official status and differing in its forme the name used in the official language or languages of the area where the geographical feature is situed. Exemple: Warsaw is the inglish exonym for Warszawa; Londres is French exonym for London; Mailand is german for Milano. The officially romanized endonym Moskva for Mockba is nor an exonym, nor is the Piyinform Beijing while Peking is an exonym. The United Nations recommends minimizing the use of exonyms in international usage.

**Translation (350):** (a) the process of expression meaning, presented in a source language, in the word of a target language:

(b) A result of this process. In toponymy it is sometimes applied only to the generic element of a name. Exemples: Mer Noire (French for Russian Cornoje More) Casablanca (Spanish for Arabic Dar al Bayda) Lake Como (English for Italian Lago di Como) Mont Fuji (English for Japnese Fuji San)

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