

Abstract

This paper investigates the development of current English namings for the marginal sea between the continent and Japan. Historically, the traditional endonyms "Hokkai" and "Donghae" have not been reflected in the English naming. The English expression "Sea of Japan" started in the 18th century. "Japan Sea" appeared in the 19th century, and this took over the majority share in the USA by the end of 19th century. The usage of this wording in the IHO publication "the Limits of Oceans and Seas" is probably a reflection of this trend. Since then, the Hydrographic Department and the Geospatial Information Authority (ex Geographical Survey) in Japan continue to subscribe to this wording. Currently in the world, "Sea of Japan" is more widespread, and it is recognised as the standard by MoFA Japan, US-BGN et al.

Preface

Teikyo University research group on geographical names conducted a research (2006-2009) on the evolution of sea names in the East Asian region. The objective of the study was to revisit the existing theories, and to gather map images on the abovementioned topic. We have done intensive research in archives and libraries, mainly in Holland, England, Portugal, and Russia. We made an attempt to identify all the historical maps that cover the East Asian region in the collection of each library, and examined the morphology and the names of seas on each map. The results from this research activity were published in the form of a book (Tanabe et al, 2010). The general findings are presented at several occasions, including the IGC 2008 (Tunis), and the 16th Seminar on Sea Names (Den Haag, 2010).

In the course of this research, the presence of two forms in English names "Sea of Japan" and "Japan Sea" drew the attention of the author. In existing literature, especially in Japanese, there is hardly a distinction between the two. Both are translated as "Nihonkai" and treated as if they are identical. The author has looked into the origins of current naming in English, the relationship with local appellations, and changes over time in the prevalence of expressions. Any views expressed in this paper are the authors' own, and do not represent the views of any organisation.

Introduction

In ancient and medieval times, in East Asia, seas were only given names by coastal features, such as bays and straits. Beyond that, it was just "the sea", or the "big sea". Based on Sino-centric viewpoint, names emerged such as "East Sea", "South Sea", "West Sea", and "North Sea". Traditionally, the inhabitants of Korea called the sea along the east coast of the peninsula, 동해 ("Donghae" - east sea) and, the inhabitants of Japan called the sea along the north coast of the islands, 北海 ("Hokkai" - north sea), if not just "the sea". Initially the shape of the sea was unknown, hence these names do not indicate a specific area, they are just distinction of seas according to the direction.

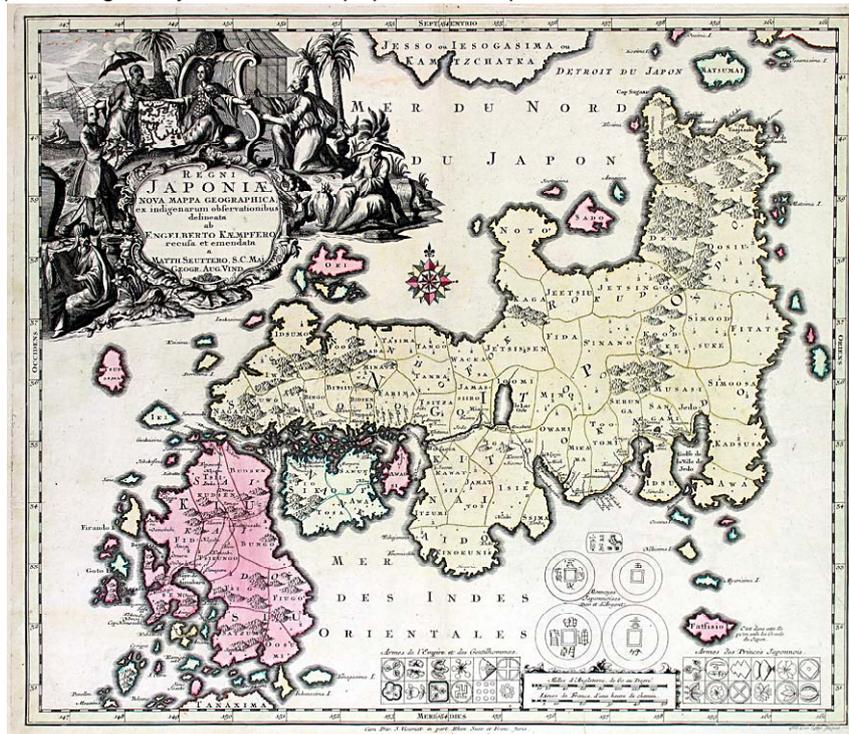
Only after the age of exploration and the European advancement to the world, the custom of limiting the seas and giving them each a name has started in East Asia. Europeans grasped the sea east of Korea and the sea north of Japan as one entity and attempted to attach a single name to it. Various names existed in the earlier period, such as Mare Cin, Mar Mangi, and Mare Orientale. There was also a period when Korean Sea was popular. After the expeditions of Kruzenshtern and La Perouse to this sea, the name that they preferred - Sea of Japan - became the standard.

Although most of the namings were done in languages other than English in the early period, the focus of this paper will be on the English namings. The standardised names were basically in English (and French), when *Limits of Oceans and Seas* (IHO 1928, 1937, 1953) was agreed and published. These days, English is the de-facto common language in the world.

Reflection of endonyms in the English naming

1) Hokkai: In the Portuguese - Japanese dictionary (Compagnia de Iesu 1603), there is an entry as "Foccai" with the definition "Mar do norte", however there is no map in with "North Sea" in English in this area.

In other western languages, there are maps indicating "Mer Septentrionale du Japon", or "Noord See van Japan" (North Sea of Japan). For example, there is a map by Seutter (1708) [Plate 1] which is based on information provided by Engelbert Kaempfer, a German physician who stayed in Japan between 1689 and 1692. It is likely that Kaempfer was aware of the local naming and this was taken into consideration when deciding on this name. However it is not clear whether all 'north sea of Japan' on other maps were based on the knowledge of local naming. There were also "Mer Occidentale du Japon" (i.e., west sea of Japan), although they were not as popular as 'septentrionale'.



[Plate 1] Regni Japoniae, M. Seutter (1708)

2) Donghae: Similar to "Hokkai", "East Sea" in English had never appeared in historical maps. The closest to "East Sea" are probably those made by Senex (1711) and Bowen (1744) with "Eastern Sea". "Eastern Sea" appears in the transition from "Oriental Sea" to "Korean Sea", and thus "Eastern" should be regarded as a variant for "Oriental". Although "Orient" does mean "East", it is used here as a name for the region, not as a direction. As the Society for East Sea (2004) states,

"... we must not conclude that Oriental Sea refers to Korea's East Sea. Rather, the term Oriental in the old maps published in the 18th century seems to indicate the sea east of the continent in a broad sense. ...

... We recall that Europeans traditionally referred to Orient a vast region to the east of Turkey, including Asia Minor, China, Korea and Japan. As the 18th Century set in, they started to subdivide the Orient into Near East, Middle East and Far East. In the process, they must have searched for better names than the vague Mer Orientale or Oriental Sea. They eventually opted for Sea of Korea."

Both Senex and Bowen soon shifted to using "Korean Sea", after their "Eastern Sea" maps. "East Sea" verbatim did not appear in any of the western historical maps (up until early 20th century) we have investigated. This does not deny the possibility that there might have been namings in other European languages that is based on the knowledge of local naming in Korea, just like the case of "Mer Septentrionale

du Japon".

"Donghae" may have been there for a long time, but "East Sea" in English seems to have appeared only since the late 20th century. On Korean official nautical charts, it appears that the 1995 version is the first one with the phrase "East Sea". Although we have not made an exhaustive search, we found a 1974 map published by Chungang Chido Munhwasa (中央地図文化社) in Korea with "Eastern Sea". This suggests that there had been attempts to translate "Donghae" into English before the official maps in Korea started to use "East Sea", and also that the translation for "Donghae" may not have been standardised yet in the 1970s.

English naming: Sea of Japan or Japan Sea?

The first map in the history with the name equivalent to "Sea of Japan", which we have encountered in our investigation, is one of the East Asia maps created by Diogo Homem, dated 1568 (original map in the collection of Dresden royal library). The name "Mare de Japā" appears to be given to the Pacific Ocean side of Japan, although the shapes are heavily distorted. The first map we found with "Sea of Japan" in English is a map of Japan by Bowen (1752). Here as well, the named sea is part of the Pacific Ocean. In the translation of La Perouse's *Voyage autour du monde de La Perouse, 1797* (*Voyage round the world by the Boussole and Astrolabe under the command of La Perouse, 1799*), "Sea of Japan" appears in the sea between the continent and Japan [Plate 2]. Arrowsmith's maps with "Sea of Japan" contributed to the wide acceptance of the name for this sea.

An occurrence of "Japan Sea" was found in a book published in 1818, although this expression is equivalent to "seas surrounding Japan". In Hall and Clifford (1818), we can see that both Luu-choo and Insu (Yezo) are in "Japan Sea". There are maps in 1840s with the name "Japan Sea" in the marginal sea.



[Plate 2] Chart of Discoveries... (part) English translation (1799) of La Perouse (1797)

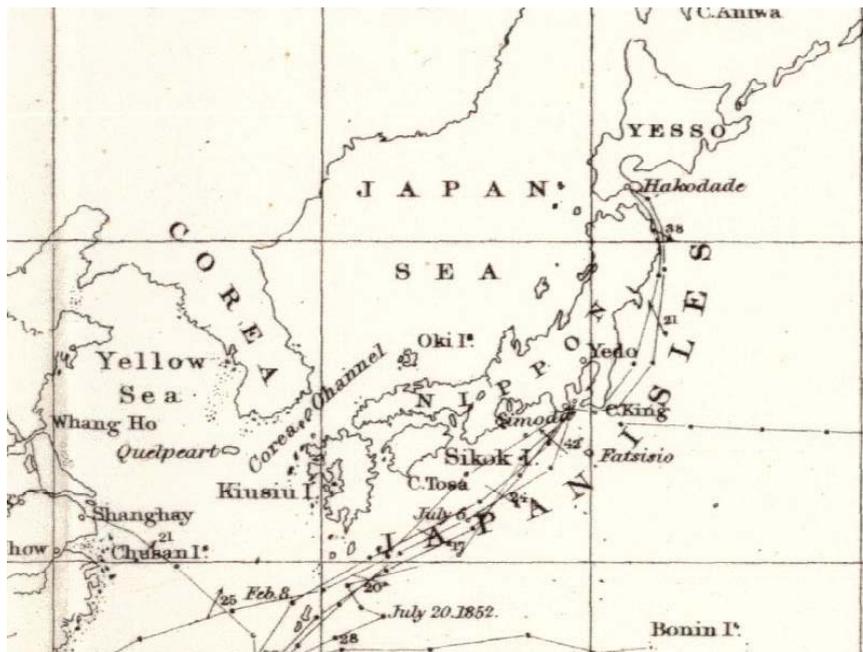
In Britain, "Sea of Japan" and "Japan Sea" were used concurrently, even within an institution. This can be observed in the British Admiralty charts [Table 1]. "Sea of Japan" is used in the chart "Pacific Ocean" (No. 2683), created in 1859 under John Washington. The same appellation is continued on the same chart in 1887 then under William James Lloyd Wharton. This chart is revised in 1894 and 1900, but there is no change in the appellation. Wharton produced another chart in 1914 with "Sea of Japan". On the other hand, in "North West Pacific Ocean" (No. 2459), created under Frederick John Evans, "Japan Sea" is used in all nine versions from 1877 to 1919 (collection of Cambridge University Library). Evans created the chart

"Japan" (No. 2347) as well, and all its versions also have "Japan Sea".

[Table 1] Sea of Japan / Japan Sea in Admiralty Charts

chart no	name	ed year	orig year	rev years	naming	captain
-	The Coast of china, the Japan islands and Oriental Archipelago	1853			Sea of Japan	R.H. Laurie
2683	Pacific Ocean	1859	1859	orig	Sea of Japan	Washington, J
2683	Pacific Ocean	1873	1859	1871	Sea of Japan	Washington
2459	North West Pacific Ocean	1886	1877	1884	Japan Sea	F.J. Evans
2683	Pacific Ocean	1887	1887	orig	Sea of Japan	Wharton
2683	Pacific Ocean	1887	1887	orig	Sea of Japan	Wharton, Will
2683	Pacific Ocean	1894	1887	none	Sea of Japan	Wharton
2683	Pacific Ocean	1900	1887		Sea of Japan	Wharton
2347	Japan (Nihon, Kiusiu and Shikoku and part of the Korea)	1909	1876	1883, 1885,	Japan Sea	F.J. Evans
2483	Atlantic and Indian oceans with the western portion of Pacific Ocean	1914	1886	1908, 1913	Sea of Japan	Wharton
2347	Japan (Honshu, Kiushu and Shikoku and part of the Korea)	1916	1876	1883, 1885,	Japan Sea	F.J. Evans
2405	The Kuril Islands (from Honshu to Kamchatka)	1916	1855	1883, 1885,	Sea of Japan	
2459	North West Pacific Ocean	1916	1877	1884, 1893,	Japan Sea	F.J. Evans
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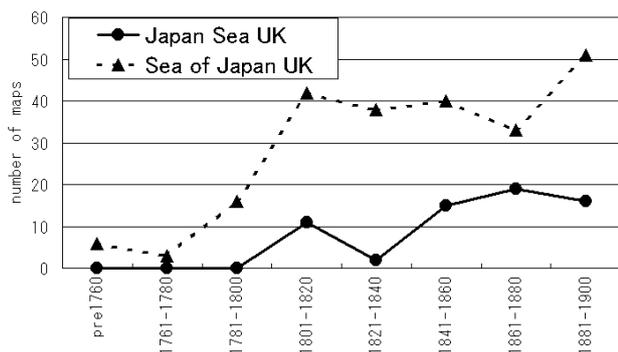
(Collection of: National Maritime Museum Greenwich, Caird Library)



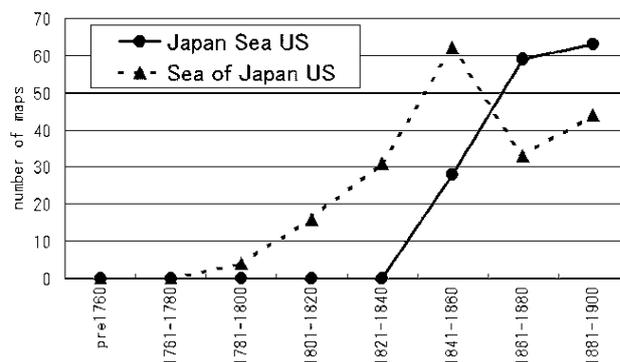
[Plate 3] World Map (part) M.C. Perry (1856) Narrative of the expedition of an American squadron to the China Seas and Japan, Vol. 3

In the late 1800s, "Japan Sea" started to gain popularity especially in the USA, which seems to have continued into the early 20th century. [Fig 1-3] show the count of maps with "Sea of Japan" and "Japan Sea" held in the collections of the U.S. Library of Congress (MoFA 2005), Berlin State Library (MoFA 2008), Bibliotheque Nationale de France (MoFA 2004), British Library (MoFA 2003), and Cambridge University Library (Watanabe 2003), by the year of creation and country of publication. At each library, an exhaustive search of maps created in the 19th century that includes the area in question was carried out. It has to be pointed out that this method is rather flawed, as different impressions of a certain map are counted each as

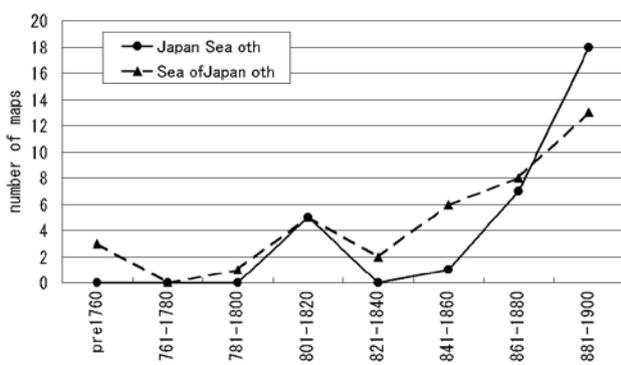
one map, the same as an original map by a different creator. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the collections held in these libraries represent the general tendencies in the world. However the results probably reflect the rough trend.



[Fig. 1] counts of maps published in the UK



[Fig. 2] counts of maps published in the USA



[Fig. 3] counts of maps published in countries other than the UK or USA

[Table 2] Maps in English, published in Japan

Year	Title	Creator / Publisher	Naming	Source
1876	Nihon Ezo Chishitsu Yoyaku Zu	Lyman, Benjamin Smith - Geological	Japan Sea	DavidRumsey
1897	Map of Japan for travellers	Welcome Society of Japan	Japan Sea	Lib. of Congress
1899	Topographical map of the Japan Empire	Imperial Geological Survey of Japan	Sea of Japan	Lib. of Congress
1900	Topographical map of the Japan Empire	Toyodo	Sea of Japan	Berlin State Library
1900	Northern / Central / Western Japan	Murray's handbook	Sea of Japan	Berlin State Library
1904	Western Portion of the Japan Sea	Hydrographic Office	Japan Sea	Berlin State Library
1906	Map of Japan for travellers 6th edition	Welcome Society of Japan	Japan Sea	alabama uni
1910	General map of Japan	Japan Tourist Bureau	Japan Sea	alabama uni
1912	Map of Japan	Motohara Printing	Sea of Japan	St Petersburg Uni Ori
1912	Topographical map division IV	Imperial Geological Survey of Japan	Japan Sea	alabama uni
1915	imperial geological survey of japan	Imperial Geological Survey of Japan	Sea of Japan	Uni CA lib
1925	1:2,000,000 Map of Japan	Japan Imperial Land Survey	Japan Sea	Isobe
1937	1:1,000,000 Kanazawa	Japan Imperial Land Survey	Japan Sea	Isobe
1977	Atlas of Japan	Geographical Survey Institute	Japan Sea	GSI
1990	Atlas of Japan	Geographical Survey Institute	Japan Sea	GSI

In the UK, "Sea of Japan" remained to be the majority throughout the 19th century, while in the USA the number of "Japan Sea" exceeded that of "Sea of Japan" from 1861. In the period 1891 to 1900, "Japan Sea" had a share higher than 70%. It is most probable that in the IHO meetings leading to the *Limits of Oceans and Seas* publication, the prevalent naming in USA at that time was adopted, hence "Japan Sea" rather than "Sea of Japan".

In Japan, private institutions such as the "Welcome Society of Japan" started to adopt the US style "Japan Sea" in maps for foreign tourists to Japan in the end of 19th century. Earlier on, an American geologist Benjamin Smith Lyman produced a geological map of Hokkaido with "Japan Sea" (1876).

The central government of Japan seems to have initially adopted "Sea of Japan", and the shift to "Japan Sea" seems to have taken place in the first 20 years of the 20th century. The Geological Survey of Japan produced an item with "Sea of Japan" in 1915, while the Hydrographic Office already used "Japan Sea" in 1904. After the IHO meetings for "the Limits...", the central government in Japan seems to have standardised the wording to "Japan Sea". The Ministry of Land Infrastructure and Transport (in charge of hydrography and land survey) continues to use this wording until now, probably due to the official status of the IHO publication.

However, nowadays in the world, "Sea of Japan" is more popular (e.g. the US Board of Geographical Names lists "Sea of Japan" as the primary entry, while "Japan Sea" is listed as a variant), and the current standard in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs is "Sea of Japan". The reasons for the rise of "Japan Sea" and the return to "Sea of Japan" are yet to be made clear.

References

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Imperial Geological Survey of Japan (1915) Imperial Geological Survey of Japan: with a catalogue of articles exhibited at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held at San Francisco, United States of America in 1915

Hall, B. and Clifford, H.J. (1818) Account of a voyage of discovery to the west coast of Corea, and the great Loo-Choo island

Society for East Sea (Donghae Hyeophoe 2004) East Sea in World Maps - Maps in the British National Library