

East Sea in Korean Lives through the Ages

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Introduction

It is well described in Professor Sang Tae LEE(李相泰)'s earlier research that the word East Sea has been continuously used by Korean people for 2000 years since the era of the Three Kingdoms.¹

In the era of the Three Kingdoms, alters for sacrifice were set up to worship the Gods of the East Sea, West Sea and South Sea and worshipping rituals were continued for 1400 years at a national level.

Also in many Korean literary works, East Sea has been described and cherished by Korean people as a holy place and it became a spiritual home for Korean People.

In this paper I intend to look and review, through history and records of 2000 years, how the East Sea influenced Korean lives and what recognition and perceptions Koreans have had from the East Sea and how it was described in historical and literary works.

The word "East Sea" was also often used as Haedong(海東, East of the Sea), Dongguk(東國, Eastern Country), Samhan(三韓, the three Han countries) to describe the country of Korea. It was used to describe the country of Korea usually in diplomatic documents from China. Chinese people also used the same word East Sea to identify Korea. On the coins produced in the Goryo(高麗) era, the inscription Donghae Tongbo(東海通寶, currency of East Sea) was used.

The most important part of Korean's concept about the East Sea was that they regarded it as a God(神), so for a long time they conducted regular sacrificial rituals at a national level. They carried out the same rituals for the West, South and North Sea

In the era of the Shilla(新羅) Kingdom the altar for the East Sea rituals was located in Uljin, however from the Goryo(高麗) era it was placed in Yangyang(襄陽). The governments at the time sent their officials to conduct the rituals twice annually, in spring and autumn.

Regarding the East Sea as a God by Korean people and their governments at

1) 李相泰, <歷史 文獻上의 東海 表記에 대하여>(『史學研究』 50, 韓國史學會, 1995) 및 <朝鮮時代의 東海 認識에 關한 研究>(『歷史와 實學』 32, 歷史實學會, 2007)

the time and conducting these rituals at national a level at the regional localities for a long time carries a very significant cultural and historical meaning.

Also an interesting fact, that many scholars from the 16th century till the 19th century were interested in and focused their studies on the theories of there being no tides(東海無潮汐論) in the East Sea.

² On the east coast, from Uljin to the north, due to the topographical formation, the gap of water level between tides were only about 20 to 30 centimeters. As a result people thought there were no tides and for some 300 years many scholars tried to explain this with theories both from philosophy and in a scientific way. As this phenomena did not occur in China, Korean scholars took this subject matter as their own.

Many Korean writers took the East Sea as their special theme together with the Mt. Diamond(金剛山). There are many poems and essays written from subject matters based on the East Sea.

Here I shall show you a couple of examples, HEO Mok(許穆)'s '*Hymn of the East Sea*(東海頌)' and JEONG Cheol's '*Songs of the Eastern Territory*(關東別曲)'.

Through these songs and hymn, you can see how the East Sea gave writers and poets at the time inspiration and stimulation and how they shaped their works from these influences, also how these literary works were reflecting emotions and sentiments of traditional Koreans at the time as well as how these facts influenced their descendants.

I . East Sea in Korean History

A. Records in *History of the Three Kingdoms*.

The first record about the East Sea in Korean history was in the *History of the Three Kingdoms* which was compiled in the 12th century. Summary of the records are as follows.

In 37 BC the kingdom Goguryo(高句麗), which branched out from its mother country Buyeo, was founded by Jumong(朱蒙, King Dongmyeong). In 59 BC Buyeo, the mother country of Goguryo moved its capital to Gaseob-won(迦葉原) on the East Sea (coast) from central Jilin, an inland province of China, after receiving God's revelation and changed the kingdom's name to Dong Buyeo(東夫餘, Eastern Buyeo).³ The location of Gaseob-won on the East Sea

² 具萬玉, <朝鮮後期 潮汐設斗 東海無潮汐論>(『東方學誌』 111, 延世大學校 國學研究院, 2001)

³ 『三國史記』 卷13, 高句麗本紀 1, 東明聖王

(coast) is presumed, in today's terms, to be on the lower reaches of the Tumen River.

Although this is a mythological story, in the first century BC the name East Sea was already used by Koreans and it shows the name 'East Sea' they were using at the time was the present East Sea. A fisherman called Gojuri(高朱利) offered the eyes of a whale in East Sea to the King in the year 47.⁴ The whales are most representative famous animal in East Sea till today.

According to the record, in the year 56 King Taejo(太祖王) of Goguryo conquered a small chiefdom Okjeo(沃沮) and expanded his territory toward the East Sea.⁵ Records tell us in March 416 on the shore of the East Sea of the Shilla(新羅) Kingdom, a huge fish with horns was caught and it was so big as to fill an entire cart.⁶ Also in July 639, many fish and turtles died as a result of the East Sea becoming red and hot.⁷

When King Munmu(文武王) who united the three kingdoms in 676 AD died in 681, he was buried in a big rock in the East Sea according to his will. His people believed that he was transformed to a mighty dragon in the East Sea. The rock where his body was buried was called Daewang-seok(大王石), the rock of the king, the greatest. His kingdom during his rein often suffered from the harassment of Japanese pirates. The king in his will pledged that he would stamp out the vexing Japanese pirates by becoming a mighty dragon in the East Sea after his death.⁸

KIM Chunchu(金春秋), the father of King Munmu was sent to Goguryo as an envoy in the year 642 and was arrested there. He tricked the king of Goguryo by using a fable about a rabbit and a turtle was able to escape from that dangerous situation. The story of the fable was that the Dragon King of East Sea invited a rabbit to steal the rabbit's liver to cure his illness, however the rabbit tells the dragon king that he left his liver at home so he would go home and fetch it and thus escaped from the dragon king.⁹

There are too many historical records about the East Sea from the Goryo era(918~1392) to tell, which I skip here.

4 『三國史記』 卷14, <高句麗本紀> 2, 閔中王

5 『三國史記』 卷15, <高句麗本紀> 3, 太祖大王

6 『三國史記』 卷3, 新羅本紀 3, 實聖尼師今

7 『三國史記』 卷5, 新羅本紀 5, 善德王

8 『三國史記』 卷7, 新羅本紀 7, 文武王 下

9 『三國史記』 卷5, <新羅本紀> 5, 太宗武烈王

B. Examples of the name East Sea representing the Korean peninsula.

In Korean historical material the Korean kingdoms were represented by the name of East Sea, for example, when they said East Sea they actually meant Haedong(海東, East of the Sea), Dongguk(東國, the Eastern country), Samhan(三韓, the Three Countries of Han People). In the *History of Goryo*(高麗史), WANG Geon, the King Taejo sent a letter to GYEON Hweon of the latter Baekje Kingdom, saying in one of the paragraphs, "the disconnected kingdomhood in the East Sea must be resumed"¹⁰

Also in the Brief History of Goryo, it is recorded as describing "the currencies in our Eastern Country are Samhan Jungbo(三韓重寶, the valuable currency of Samhan), Dongguk Tongbo(東國通寶, the currency of Dongguk), Dongguk Jungbo(東國重寶, the valuable currency of Dongguk), Haedong Jungbo(海東重寶, the valuable urrency of Haedong), Donghae Tongbo(東海通寶, the currency of East Sea).¹¹ Naturally the description of the countries here, Samhan, Dongguk, Haedong, Donghae(East Sea) are Korea.

A scholar of the Goryo dynasty, Lee Gyu-bo said "I was born in East Sea, the country where sun rises first." Some Chinese called Koreans, people of the East Sea or masters of the East Sea.

Shown in a travelogue to Beijing is a paragraph that was written by an unknown Chinese scholar saying "in reply to the master of the East Sea".¹² Considering the above records, one can easily recognize that in Korea and China in the past they often called Korea as East Sea. Also the name attached to the Korean coins as the currency of East Sea is very interesting.

II. Rituals paid to the God of the East Sea

In ancient times in East Asia, rituals were paid to important mountains, rivers and seas in the land at a national level. Rituals paid to the four seas, East, West, South and North were recorded from the unified Shilla.

Paying rituals to the seas were on the second level of the ritual scale in the national ritual system. For these rituals, altars for sacrifice were constructed in various places. The altar for the East Sea was located on the coast at Toehwa-Gun(退火郡, present Gyeongbuk, Heunghae-gun), the location of the

¹⁰ 『高麗史』 卷1, 太祖 11年 正月 乙亥. 李相泰, 2007, p.503.

¹¹ 『高麗史節要』 卷35, 恭讓王 2

¹² 『蔚山紀程』 卷3, 留館 甲子年(1804) 1月 19日(己酉)

altar for the South Sea was on the coast at Geuchilsan-gun(居柒山郡, present Pusan Dongrae), for the West Sea on the coast at Sisan-gun(屎山郡, present Gunsan-si Impi-myeon), for the North Sea at Mt. Biraesan(非禮山), Siljik-gun(悉直郡, present Samcheok-si).¹³

Except the altar for sacrifice for the West Sea, all altars were located, in today's terms, on the East Coast of the peninsula. So one can say three out of four rituals paid to the seas in the Shilla era were paid to the East Sea. In the Shilla dynasty there were three locations of alters for sacrifice, one was on the north coast of the East Sea, one on the mid coast, one toward the south coast. One also can see people of Shilla had great faith and inspiration from the East Sea.

In the Goryo dynasty the paying of rituals to mountains, rivers and seas continued, they were excluded from the national ritual system at the beginning. However at a later stage they were reinstated as a third level ritual. The rituals for the East Sea was carried out a little further north at Yangyang(襄陽) in Gangwon province(江原道). Here a shrine was constructed instead of an altar for sacrifice. They named this shrine 'the shrine for the East Sea' or 'the shrine for the Dragon King of the East Sea' The reason they built the shrine at Yangyang was that it was located directly east of Goryo's capital Gaekyeong(開京).¹⁴

In 1414 the national ritual system was reorganized by king Taejong(太宗) of the Joseon(朝鮮) dynasty. Here rituals to the seas including the East Sea rituals were elevated to the second level as important rituals. Twice every year, in February and August the reigning king would send officials to conduct the rituals.¹⁵

The shrine for the East Sea was located on the east coast at Yangyang the same as in the Goryo dynasty, the shrine for the South Sea to the south of Naju in Jeonla province, the shrine for the West Sea to the west of Pung Cheon in Hwanghae province, however rituals for the North Sea were abolished. The silk gifts to the seas at the rituals were distinguished by color, dark blue for the East Sea, red for the South Sea, white for the West Sea.¹⁶

Not only were the rituals for mountains, rivers, seas, including the God of the East Sea conducted at the locations mentioned but also they were conducted jointly at the suburb of Weungu-dan(圓丘壇, Tiandan 天壇 or Nam-dan 南壇), south of Seoul, also jointly at the suburb of Sancheon-dan(山川壇, Didan 地壇 or Buk-dan 北壇), north of Seoul. Although the rituals at Wungu-dan were abolished after king Seong-Jong's reign, however the rituals

¹³ 『三國史記』 卷32, 雜誌 1, 祭祀

¹⁴ 『高麗史』 卷58, 志 12, 地理 3, 東界 襄州, 卷 63, 志 17, 禮 5, 吉禮小祀, 雜祀

¹⁵ 『太宗實錄』 14年 8月 21日 辛酉.

¹⁶ 『世宗實錄』 <五禮志>, 吉禮序例, 神位

at Sancheon-dan continued until the Joseon dynasty perished. Especially during persistent droughts rituals for the rain were conducted here.

After 1456 the shrine for the East Sea at Yangyang was moved to Gangleung(江陵) for a while and rituals were conducted there. The shrine for the West Sea was moved to Incheon, the shrine for the South Sea was moved to Suncheon and rituals were conducted there. The reason the shrines were moved was to align directions with the newly moved capital, Seoul.¹⁷

After that the shrine for the East Sea was moved to Jeongdong (accurate East) in Gangleung for a while, then it was moved back to Yangyang in 1536. The shrine for the East Sea was located at Yangyang since the Goryo(高麗) dynasty and when the new dynasty moved the shrine to a different location, Yangyang people became dissatisfied so possibly to remedy Yangyang people's dissatisfaction it was moved back to its original location. There are some complex tales about this.¹⁸

Further to the south on the shore at a small village near Samcheok-si, there is a small shrine even today called Haesindang(海神堂, shrine for the God of the sea). Considering this shrine, one can assume that there was also a separate shrine in Gangleung. One can also see there were other small shrines in various places along the east coast for rituals to be paid to the Gods of the seas.

III. Theories of no tides in East Sea(東海無潮汐論)

The theme 'why there are no tides on the coast of the East Sea?' was one of the reasons for scholars having a great interest in and discussion about the East Sea in the late Joseon era.

Above Uljin(蔚珍) to the north, due to the topographical formation, the gap between high and low tide was only 20~30 centimeters. As a result ordinary people could not see the difference in the water level, so they thought there were no tides in the East Sea. Considering that the difference between high and low tides in the West Sea(Yellow Sea) was 8~10 meters, one can imagine how much interest it would have raised amongst scholars.

Due to these factors, after the 16th century, many scholars of neo-Confucianism were absorbed by this subject. As the characteristics and theories of neo-Confucianism were based on Confucian idealism, that natural principles were functioning in the same way as our body and soul, scholars in the time later Joseon era gave much attention to this particular phenomena.

¹⁷ 『世祖實錄』 2年 3月 28日 丁酉.

¹⁸ 『惺所覆韻稿』 卷 16, 文部 13, <重修東海龍王廟碑>

Here I would like to introduce you a short summary of the superior research of Professor GU Man-ok's 'Theories of No tides in the East Sea'.¹⁹

Studies about this phenomena 'Theories of no tides in the East Sea' were started first by a scholar called SEONG Hyeon(成愼, 1439~1504) in the 15th century, then after the 17th century it became a full scale subject that continued to the 19th century. More than 20 eminent scholars expressed their theories and opinions in their essays and briefs.

The majority of their theories were based on philosophical idealism according to neo-Confucianism. However after the 18th century some scholars of practical studies accepted western scientific theories and tried to explain the phenomena in a scientific way. They actually measured the height of the water proving there were indeed high and low tides in the East Sea. Many theories of no tides in the East Sea can be categorized into 6 main theories.

The first one was based on the theory of Ti-yung(體用), one of the very typical Chinese idealism based on two factors of Ti(體) and Yung(用), Ti meant the base of everything, Yung meant the function. Its explanation of no tides was that the Korean peninsula in the West and South was gentle and the working(用), as a result there were indeed tides. However in the North and East of the peninsula, the base body(體) was so strong as to be no tides. This theory was started by the founder of the theory of no tides in the East Sea, SEONG Hyeon.

The second was based on the theory of Yinyang(陰陽) in Yijing(易經), in which Yang was corresponding to East and North, Yin corresponding to West and South. The belief was that Yin had expansion and contraction while Yang did not, as a result there were tides in the West and South but none in the East and North. This theory came from LEE Sang-hyung(李尙馨), HONG Yang-ho(洪良浩), HAN Won-jin(韓元震) and many others from the neo-Confucian idealist scholars.

The third was based on the respiration of land and Sea and this was by far the most popular theory. This theory was that land and Sea also breath like humans, as a result there were tides, in the West Sea there were tides as the West part of the land was the equivalent of a man's abdomen, so its movement to breath was big, however the East Sea is the equivalent of a men's back so even if it breaths no movement shows. Sympathisers for this theory were many, including JO Ik(趙翼) and Jang Yu.

The fourth was based on topography, the secondly popular theory after the respiration theory. This theory was based on the Chinese notion that all lands under the sky in the West and North were on higher ground and lands in the East and South were on lower ground. As a result the East Sea had no tides as the land and the sea had less strength. Some scholars said that the location of

19) 具萬玉, Ibid

the East Sea was near the north which was located on higher ground, so water could not come up to that height. These theorists were LEE Hang-bok(李恒福) and KIM Si-hyang(金時讓). HEO Mok(許穆) told that the East Sea was located in the north east and he regarded the East Sea which contained a lot of sand and as a result there were no tides. KIM Man-joong(金萬重) told that there were tides in East Sea although they were weak because of the topographical conditions as it lay between the Korean peninsula and Japan.

The fifth was the open and shut theory. East Sea was open to the north and south, so there were no interference for the flow of the ocean currents, as a result there were no tides, however the West Sea was closed by the Liaodong(遼東) peninsula, and the flow of the ocean currents were obstructed by this topographic feature and as a result the sea overflows, thus tides occur. They also distinguished between the inland sea and the open sea, pointing out that the East Sea was an open sea, thus no tides, however the West Sea was an inland sea to have a big gap between the high and low tides. This assertion was from HAN Back-gyum and CHO Ick, which seemed a little scientific.

Number six theory was the scientific theory on the basis of lunar and solar gravitation and something to do with latitude. This theory was proposed by the scholars of practical studies such as LEE Ick(李瀼) and JEONG Yack-yong(丁若鏞) in the 18th century after being influenced by western science. Also SIM Jeong-jin(沈定鎭) proved the presence of tides in the East Sea by actually measuring the height of the water on sea rocks.

After the 17th century western science was disseminated to Korea, and it was influencing Korean scholars, and educated people to understand issues on the basis of scientific knowledge. Through the changes in understanding of the 'Theories of no Tides in the East Sea', one could observe how western scientific theories were influencing Koreans.

From the examples shown above, after the mid Joseon dynasty, many Korean scholars were focusing their studies on the "'Theories of no Tide in the East Sea" and were presenting their theories and opinions. In China there is no places that does not have tides, so there was no interest in studies of 'theories of no tides' and as a result this particular theme was pursued purely by Korean scholars. Considering all these facts, one comes to understand that the East Sea gave great inspiration to the of the Joseon era.

IV. East Sea in Literary works

There are too many poems, essays and writings to count in Korea with the subject matter based on the East Sea. However I would like to introduce you to two poems, one from HEO Mok's(許穆) and one from JEONG Cheol's(鄭澈). They were both Confucian scholar and government official in 16-17 century.

In 1661 when HEO Mok was holding a government post as the magistrate of Samcheok(三陟), he wrote the Hymn of the East Sea(東海頌).²⁰ JEONG Cheol the governor of Gangwon province in 1580, wrote the *Songs of Gwangdong*(關東別曲, *Songs of Eastern Territory*)²¹, after and while traveling to Mt. Diamond and the coast of the East Sea.

A. HEO Mok's the Hymn of the East Sea(東海頌)

The Hymn of the East Sea was not only imposing but also it was extremely popular because this hymn was engraved on the stone tablet of East Sea of Samcheok. HEO Mok was demoted after failing in a political struggle and was sent to the province of Samcheok in a magisterial post.

He ruled this province until the year 1662. In the period of his rule in this area, the east coast had many natural disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis. People believed that these natural disasters occurred as the God of the East Sea was angry with the people. To soothe the angry God they decided to write poems praising the God, engraving them on a stone tablet and erected it near the sea.

As HEO Mok himself was a famous calligrapher, he himself wrote the poem on the stone tablet in a seal character style that originated from ancient China. So this stone was called the Samcheok East Sea stone tablet. As the typhoons and tsunami disappeared from the coast of the East Sea after the erection of this stone tablet, people believed it was a miracle. The calligraphy and the poem on the stone tablet were magnificent and people believed miracles could be delivered by this stone tablet.²² As a result many people would make prints of the monumental inscription and keep them in their homes. Increasingly many people started to believe if they keep the inscription from the table, they would be protected from evil spirits and disasters. Even today many Korean people still believe in it and have the reproduction of the

²⁰ 『尾叟記言』 卷28, 原集 下篇, 山川, <東海頌>

²¹ 『松江歌辭』 上卷, 關東別曲

²² 『星湖僊說』 卷29, 詩文門, 東海碑

inscription hanging on their living room wall and I am also one of the believers.

The poem does not contain any incantation or sorcery asking for prevention of tsunami or typhoons but contains general praise of the East Sea and a prayer for peace. He expressed his respect for the endlessly wide and big East Sea, and described it as a great ocean as many rivers flow into this sea.(in fact the East Sea conforms to a great ocean as it has oceanic ridges, trenches and under water volcanoes etc).

He also mentioned in this poem the interesting fact that the East Sea did not have tides, consisted of sands, thus calling it a sand sea and that the location was at the north and east. He also described the East Sea was at the end of the east where the brilliant Sun rises and it was entry door for the Sun. He also recognized in his poem that there were precious creatures like mother of pearl and with these creatures there were good wishes and noble virtue.

He also mentioned that there was every possible wicked goblin lurking, which caused natural disasters like typhoons and storms. He also mentioned that the East Sea was connected to Japan, Sakhalin, Malaysia, Burma, Persia and India, and many different races and people with different traditions live around it. However these people were well taught by holy men like Confucius, they lived in harmony and peace and he wished this harmonious and peaceful living would continue in the future.

One would interpret this as him wishing a peaceful life for all the countries in the world that were connected to the East Sea. The poem starts like this,

*The sea has no end, many rivers flow
No one can measure how big and wide it could be
Sand sea lying at the east and west,
and no inflow or ebbing tides
Thus called a great ocean*

*As blue water touches the sky
Waves are wide and far
Where the sea moves it becomes dark and cold
As the place of the rising Sun and a door to the Sun
So spirits receive the Sun gratefully.*

B. JEONG Cheol's *Songs of the Eastern Territory*(關東別曲)

Songs of Eastern Territory were written after JEONG Cheol had traveled around the east coast and Mt. Diamond while he held the office of the governor of the Gangwon province. This is a travelogue and is written in the form of long poems. The latter part of these poems describe scenic spots and impressions of the area starting from the outer Mt. Diamond down along Uljin, East Sea, and the east coast. These lyrics are more famous for the reason of being written in Korean in the 16th century as opposed to other lyrics written in Chinese including the song of the East Sea.

While visiting and enjoying beautiful places like outer Mt. Diamond, Samil-po(三日浦), Younglang-ho(永郎湖), Nanksan-sa(洛山寺), Gyongpo-dae(鏡浦臺), Jukseoru(竹西樓) and Mangyang-jeong(望洋亭) on the east coast, he was much inspired by the natural beauty of these places and translated this beauty into his poems, observing the magnificent sunrise from the pavilion Euisang. He described the sunrise 'as if many dragons and colourful clouds of fortune were soaring into the sky'. At Gyongpodae he described the calm and cheerful sea like a painting. When he climbed up Mangyang-jeong to satisfy his desire to see and find out what else would lie over the horizon, he was overwhelmed by the violent sound of waves and spouts of angry whales.

On a very clear night under a full moon with waves lapping he settled at a pavilion Mangyang-jeong. He was drinking and fell asleep. In his sleep he met a Taoist fairy, they talked and drank the alcohol from the East Sea which the fairy brought with him. He felt as if he became a Taoist fairy flying around in the sky. He wanted to share this mysterious drink and pleasure with everyone in the world but the Taoist fairy disappeared into the sky on the back of a crane. He then suddenly woke up from his dream. I would like to introduce a part of his poem to you.

*To find out the door of sky
I climbed up to Mangyang-jeong
It is all sky outside the sea
What would there then be outside the sky
Who made whales startle that were already angry
They spout and make waves, putting the sea in disarray
As if sprinkling powder of silver mountains
As if white snow falling down from the sky in the middle of summer.*

This poem described many beautiful scenes of the East Sea. Appointing himself as a Taoist fairy shows his generous and flamboyant personality. Further more in this poem one can detect his patriotism, his love for humanity and benevolence. This is an excellent work.

Conclusion

The name of the sea, East Sea(東海, Donghae) has been used by Koreans and Chinese since the first century BC. Furthermore this name represented Korea, as people said East Sea meaning Korea. Coins issued in Korea in the 13th century bore the inscription of this very name. In the examples shown above, East Sea had a great influence on Korean lives. In history books people have learnt many interesting stories and historical facts from the East Sea. In the Three Kingdom era, Buyeo kingdom moved its capital to the east coast, there is also a record that Goguryo kingdom claimed its territory to the East Sea.

There are many records about whales which were representative of the East Sea. A king of Shilla wanted to be buried in the rock of the East Sea so that he could become a mighty dragon of the East Sea. When a diplomat was detained in an enemy kingdom, using a fable of the East Sea, the rabbit and the turtle, he was able to escape from the enemy country.

The East Sea was regarded as a God and a mighty being due to its vastness, power, imposing and mystical appearance and as a result religious rituals were carried out at a national level twice a year for 1500 years. Many shrines and altars for rituals were built in different regions. Sometimes there were struggles between regions for the rights to the rituals.

Due to natural topography there was little difference in the water level between high and low tides on the east coast, as a result many Korean researchers and scholars took interest in this phenomena, resulting in many scholars taking their study themes from this fact. Withstanding that their theory were more focused on Confucian metaphysical philosophy and less scientific, however this showed many Korean scholars and (researchers) were very interested in the natural phenomena of the East Sea and searched for an explanation.

The East Sea with beautiful scenery and startling natural phenomena gave much inspiration and ideas to writers and poets who left many impressive works. All in all the ideals expressed in these work were loyalty to their mother country, wishing for harmony and love of humanity for all nations in the world.

The name of East Sea has been very familiar to Korean people and has been used by Korean people for many thousands of years. We hope this name is permanently used not only by Korean people but also by all humanity.

요 약

동해는 BC 1세기부터 한국과 중국에서 바다의 이름으로 사용되었고 심지어는 한국이라는 나라의 이름으로 사용되기도 하였는데, 그것은 13세기에 발행된 동전에도 동해통보(東海通寶) 새겨져 있었다. 그만큼 동해는 한국인들의 생활에 큰 영향을 주었다.

동해는 한국의 역사책에서 많은 역사적 사실과 흥미 있는 이야기들을 전해주고 있다. 삼국사기에는 부여가 동해안으로 수도를 옮기고, 고구려가 동해까지 영토를 개척한 기록이 있으며, 또한 이 바다의 명물인 고래에 관한 기록도 많다. 신라의 한 임금의 죽음 후 동해 바위 속에 묻혀 스스로 동해의 용이 되겠다고 맹세하였고, 한 외교관은 적국에 갇혔다가 동해의 용왕과 토끼와 거북이의 설화를 이용하여 죽음의 위기에서 탈출하기도 하였다.

동해는 그 광대하고 신비스러운 위용 때문에 신앙의 대상이 되어 국가적인 차원에서 1,500여년간 매년 2회씩 제사를 드렸고, 많은 제단과 사당에서 지역적인 제사가 행해졌으며 그 제사의 주도권을 두고 지역 간에 경쟁이 벌어지기도 하였다. 동해에는 지역적 특징 때문에 조수(潮水)가 거이 없었으므로 이것이 많은 한국의 유학자들에게 중요한 학문적인 테마가 되기도 하였다. 그것을 설명하는 이론들은 유교의 형이상학적인 것들이 대부분이었고 과학적인 것은 적었지만, 한국의 학자들이 동해의 자연 현상에 대하여 깊은 관심을 가지고 연구하였음을 보여준다. 이는 중국에는 없었던 한국 유학자들만의 고유한 학문 테마가 되었다.

동해는 또 아름다운 풍광과 놀라운 자연 현상 때문에 한국의 시인과 수필가들에게 많은 영감을 주어 훌륭한 작품들을 남기게 하였다. 그 작품들의 이상은 결국 모국에 대한 충성과 함께 세계만방의 인류에 대한 사랑과 조화를 역설하는 것이었다.

동해는 한국인들과 함께 몇 천년 동안 사용된 친숙한 이름이었다. 우리는 이 이름이 한국에서뿐만 아니라 인류사회에서 영구히 사용되기를 바란다.

