

Peregrination of the name Korea

SOH Jungchul* and KIM Inwhan*

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1) We know well that the name 'Korea' came from the name of the dynasty before Chosun Kingdom. However, if someone asks if it is the direct literal translation into English or the result from the series of transformations. Another unanswered question is that whether the name 'Korea' is the translation for 'Hankook' or 'Daehan', or both.

2) We know that 'Korea' came from 'Koryeo', the original meaning of which is 'The Country with High Mountains and Beautiful Sceneries'. Even though, most of us would hesitate to answer the question whether 'Korea' is the direct transcription in English or the result of the process with several transformations.

3) As it is for names referring to unknown seas, a number of countries' names are originated from old maps. For example, China, Japan, America and Australia came from old maps. The name Korea is not an exception. Korea is the name which went through some steps and transformations.

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1) Historically, the name Korea first appears as 'Conray' in the map by Vaz Dourado. He first used the name in 'Costa D. Conray' in 1568 map, and then switched to 'Costa D. Comray' in 1571 and 1573 maps. The name again appeared in Linschoten's famous book, 'Itinerary...' in 1596 as 'Costa de Comray'. Judging from our point of view, Vaz Dourado inserted 'n' or 'm' by mistakes. Coray and Corai were the name told by Japanese merchants to Portuguese traders to explain the country between China and Japan.

2) There were another names for Korea, which were older than Corai; they were Cory and Cori. The names were used by Arabian traders to call 'Koryeu' and Arabian people

* Professor Emeritus, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea

** Professor Emeritus, Ewha Womans University, Korea

still use Cory and Cori. The names appear in Teixeira's 1595 map. In this map, Korea was described as an island with a long downward-narrowing triangular shape. The name 'Cory' appears on mid-south area, however, it was not for a country name nor provincial name. We presume that the cartographer himself was not sure about the name which certainly came from many Arabian maps.

Godinho de Eredia used the name 'Coria' for Korea and 'Mar Coria' for the East Sea. Godingho de Eredia and Vaz Dourado were born and educated in Asian Colony of Portugal. We believe that they were influenced by the Arabian maps. The name 'Coria' given by Godinho de Eredia has an '-a' which is a suffix for feminine nouns.

3) 'Corai' survived in the competition between the names 'Corai' and 'Cori'. However, Corai had to be adapted to Portuguese linguistic rules. Portuguese language, similar to French, avoids diphthongal forms and makes a suite of two vowels into one vowel. Therefore, 'Corai' became 'Core'. Further, any feminine nouns in Portuguese should have an added suffix '-a', making the final form of the name 'Corea', which applies similarly in the Spanish. Nevertheless H. Savenije says that the name 'Core' was used without the suffix 'a' in Linochoten's 'Itinerary...' in 1596.¹⁾

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1) After Portuguese maps declined, Dutch maps succeeded to Portuguese and Spanish maps. However, Korea was sometimes omitted or appears as an island. H. Savenije explains that it is because Koreans themselves considered their land almost as an island except one spot of the country.²⁾ But it seems more reasonable to think that many of Dutch cartographers didn't pay much attention to the existence of Korea. When Korea appears in the Dutch maps, the name is 'Corea' as in the Portuguese maps. The maps were produced in collaboration with British cartographers, and the name changes again to be 'Korea'.

2) The ages of Dutch maps came to an end during the latter half of 17th century and French maps led by Sanson inherited Dutch tradition. The French cartography is represented by G. Delisle and J.B. D'Anville, however, French maps was leading the European cartography with many cartographers such as Sanson, De Fer, Bonne, Janvier, Rober de Vaugondy and so on. French maps adopted Portuguese 'Corea' and

¹⁾ Henny Savenije, p.5, 'Old Western Maps and Sea Names'.

²⁾ H. Savenije, p.6, *ibid.*

they applied French linguistic rules to change it as 'Corée'.

3) If we care about French maps, it is because almost of them transcribed East Sea as 'Mer de Corée'. Prominent geographers and cartographers such as Guillaume Delisle and DeFer supported 'Mer Orientale' and other cartographers including Robert de Vaugondy inscribed 'Mer de Corée' on the Korean side and 'Mer du Japon' on the Japanese side. Some others insisted 'Mer Septentrionale du Japon' or 'Mer du Japon', however, the objective statistics reveals that 'Mer de Corée' is used in the majority of the French maps in 18th century. We support 'Mer de Corée', and the name is an exonym, not an endonym. Applying the similar reasoning, 'Sea of Japan' cannot be acceptable because the name is used by many European maps after La Pérouse's Atlas and recognized internationally by I.H.O. in 1927 after Japanese colonization of Korea. In 18th century, the name 'Korea' flourished because of prevailing use of '*Sea of Korea*'.

4) At the end of 18th century, French maps declined because of French Revolutions and defeats in the wars against England which caused social insecurities and economic digressions. The glorious age of French maps in 18th century made ways for English maps from the beginning of 19th century.

It is true that in 18th century English maps were under quite strong influence of French maps as for the Asian regions. England was not running far behind in map-making and English cartographers were more prompt in adopting La Pérouse's Atlas to follow this inscription of 'Mer du Japon' for the East Sea. However, England dispatched many maritime explorers to the most of the oceans to play a major role in exposing the name of Korea.

In 18th century, many British cartographers, such as H. Moll, I. Green, E. Bowen, T. Bowen, J. Gibson, Laurie & Whittle, Salmon, R. Sayer, Dunn, Kitchin, Wilkinson, Jeffreys, Faden, Wyld, Russel and so forth, preferred the name '*Sea of Korea*' for the *East Sea*. During the latter half of the century, some of them used 'Gulf of Korea' for the *East Sea*. Continuing Portuguese-Dutch-French traditions, the spelling of Korea was 'Corea' in the first half of the 18th century and some cartographers began to use 'Korea' instead of 'Corea'.

Lovell marked Korea as 'Kaoli or Korea' in 'East, West Tartarya' in 1737. He should have made a mistake by accident. We believe the 'K' from 'Kaoli' caused him to unconsciously use 'Korea'. Similar case can be found in Barbut's map in 1740, 'The Kingdom of Korea (called as Kau-Li-Qua by Chinese and Solno Koron by Manchurians)'. Because of several appearance of 'K', the cartographer might have confused to use 'Korea' instead of 'Corea'.

5) The case of T. Kitchin needs different interpretation. On his 'A Map of Quan-Tong or Lea Tong Province and the Kingdom of Corea' in 1745, he wrote the country name as Corea but he used '*Sea of Korea*' for the *East Sea*. We are convinced that the mistake was instinctive and originated by some linguistic motivations. E. Bowen also made the same mistake, which might be reasonable to presume that E. Bowen followed Kitchin's notations including the mistake. T. Bowen published a Dutch map 'Wereld (The World)' in 1772, and he inscribed 'Zee van Korea' for the *East Sea*. Neale named the *East Sea* as '*Sea of Korea*' in his 'Present Asia' in 1783. Jeffereys also used '*Sea of Korea*' in his 'Asia' in 1785. Sayer and Conder made some difference in their maps of Asia in 1787 and 1790 by using 'Gulf of Korea', while Palarer used '*Sea of Korea*' in his edition on 'Asia' in 1792. In this way we presume that the name 'Corea' did not suddenly disappear, but 'Korea' was first used for the name for the East Sea and began to spread as the name for the country.

For the most of the mistakes which caused to use 'K' instead of 'C', we can understand better in terms of the linguistic rules and principles. In Latin languages such as Spanish, Portuguese and French, /k/ sound is produced when 'c' is combined with 'a', 'o' or 'u'. And the spellings which start with 'k' are mostly from foreign words. However, in Anglo-German languages, the /k/ sound is commonly produced by 'k' itself. Therefore, Korea should normally be realized to start with 'K'. It is the reason why 'Corea' in Latin languages has changed to 'Korea' in English.

4. Conclusion

'Corai' survived in the competition with 'Cori', and couldn't avoid the Portuguese linguistic principles to become 'Corea'. The name 'Corea' passed through French and Dutch and finally reached English. Then the basic English inhabitation rules combined with accidental mistakes of some cartographers led to the name 'Korea'.

During the end of the last century, there were some opinions to change the name back to 'Corea'. However, it is not so simple to retrieve the name which already went through linguistic evolutions. It is interesting that the name Korea seems to justify R. Barthes' comment, "the signified (signifié) freely changes its form, regardless of its content".