

## Panel Discussion

Moon Myung-Ho\*

It is very meaningful to hold the International Seminar on the Sea Names and the East Sea in Gyeongju, Korea's ancient capital adjacent to the East Sea. Tomorrow, we will visit the underwater tomb of King Munmu on the East Sea. He was the first ruler ever to see the Korean peninsula completely unified in 668 A.D. In his last will, he wished, "Bury my body in the East Sea. I will become a dragon and defend the East Sea and the country."

Many Korean people think the cooperation between Korea and Japan is important for the peace and prosperity in Asia, although we had the sad and miserable relations with Japan for 35 years in the 20th century. However, Japan nowadays makes several cases that damage the cooperative mood.

As for the naming of the East Sea, many historians and geologists of Korea and other neighboring countries have shown evidences supporting the naming of the East Sea. But Japan insists on the use of only Sea of Japan name. In their papers, Prof. Soh Jung-Chul, Kim Shin, Lee Sang Tae and Yi Sang Kyun clearly explained the history of the East Sea and the righteousness of the use of the East Sea name. But Japan does not accept it. Japan deprived of the Korea's East Sea name during its illegal occupation of Korea. Even Japanese do not accept the parallel use of two names on the map. The international society recommends the parallel use until this problem will be solved.

Then, what can Korea do in solving the naming problem? I would like to suggest some viable options. First, we should continue our efforts to promote international understanding and strengthen international public opinions. Korean-American groups in the United States succeeded in their campaign to include the term "*East Sea*" and "*Sea of Japan*" in all Virginia State public school textbooks approved by the Virginia State Board of Education.

Second, understanding and cooperation from China and Russia is important for this

---

\* Editor in Chief, Korea Journalists Society, Korea

matter. The two countries play very important role for the peace of not only in Asia but also in the world and there are many Korean residents and descendents. Prof. Choi Jongnam and Prof. Yoon Okkyong's paper includes very interesting finding of their research: Those who participated in Korea-related educational program shows the higher degree of familiarity to the naming of the East Sea than those who did not. Korea should be more active in helping geography and history teachers of the United States, China, Russia and other countries gain access to historical materials and to other programs related to the East Sea.

Third, I suggest the cooperation between South Korean geologists and North Korean geologists. Earlier, North Korea argued for the name of 'East Sea of Korea'('조선동해'), but nowadays, as far as I know, it accepts the East Sea name. It is desirable for two Koreas give one voice in this matter.

Fourth, the cooperation with conscientious Japanese intellectuals is also helpful. Japanese poetess Aki Sagawa said that there are some Japanese who make efforts to promote friendship with Korea. In an interview with the Dong-A Ilbo, Tadakazu Kimura, president of Asahi Shimbun, mentioning about the controversy of the East Sea naming, expressed his view about a project to do to make the area as a symbol to promote peace.

Now, we should think of projects that need to be carried out by Koreans. First of all, an institution that deals with matters concerning the East Sea name and Dokdo needs be strengthened. So far, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Northeast Asian History Foundation and the Society for East Sea have been instrumental in dealing with the matters. But we need to upgrade this kind of institution to cope with Japanese anti-East Sea naming activities. It is more effective to establish an integrated institution in the Korean Prime Minister's Office.

Also important is more support to scholars and institutions which are interested in doing research on the East Sea and maritime laws. It is desirable to have more research, to find more evidences and to develop more rational with regard to this subject.

To the last but not the least, I want to emphasize the strengthening of the national power, because it affects the international negotiations and international disputes settlement.