

An Advocacy for the Dual Name of *East Sea/Sea of Japan*

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There are many countries without any conflicts on geographic name with neighboring countries. For example, we don't remember any sea name dispute on Gulf of Mexico, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Aegean Sea, Black Sea, North Sea, Bering Sea, etc. However, countries which newly became independent are often raise controversies with former colonizing forces or neighboring countries. Unfortunately, Korea and Japan are having the case for the sea name.

Of course, both countries have their own reasons for the naming. Japan desires to maintain currently recognized name, Japan Sea, while Korea demands to juxtapose both names *East Sea* and Japan Sea, based on historic justifications. The request for the naming issue was raised by Korea since 1990 and the discussion resumes as “one recognized name” vs. “one more realistic dual name”. Instead of premature justification or defense, let us try to understand the founding arguments from each party for a desirable solution of the sea name.

1. The claim “one recognized name” is based on the belief that there is no rational reason to change a name which is widely well-known in the world, and the change would provoke confusions among sailors to endanger safe operations of ships. Of course, no name is eternal. But human wisdom tells us current name should last as long as possible.

As the Japanese appeal emphasizes, Matteo Ricci named the sea as ‘Japan Sea’ for the first time in 1602. Japan acknowledge that there was a time where other names such as ‘Sea of Korea’ were used at the same time as ‘Japan Sea’ especially in 18th century.

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But little by little ‘Japan Sea’ gained popularity and when the map of LaPerouse was published in 1797, it drove most of the maps to use the name ‘Japan Sea’. Therefore, it is reasonable that IHO, after thorough examination, finally chose ‘Japan Sea’ in 1927 conference for the sea between two countries.

1.1 Korea tries to disclose another aspects behind the allegation of Japan. There is no doubt that Matteo Ricci’s map of 1602 opened the eyes of the Japanese people to discover the world and his map played an important role on intellectual level. However, paradoxically Japanese people were totally uninterested in the inscription of ‘Japan Sea’. It was 200 years after the Matteo Ricci’s map when Shiva Koukan and Ine Takako put the name ‘Japan Sea’ on the maps in Japan.

If we would like to understand this peculiar phenomenon, we have to be aware of the fact that Japan geographically has the form of islands laying down from north–east to south–west and this geographic situation made impossible to name its seas around. For the name ‘*East Sea/Japan Sea*’, it is more reasonable to put as ‘North Sea’ from the viewpoint of the people in the southern parts of Japan. However, for the people in the northern part of Japan, it should be called ‘South Sea’ whereas ‘West Sea’ is more reasonable for the people in the east part of the country. Therefore, there was no way for Japan to reach consensus in naming the sea. This reflects the reason why they had been indicating the sea by simply using four directions.

1.2 It is also true that European maps shifted from ‘Sea of Korea’ or ‘East Sea’ to ‘Japan Sea’ after the publication of LaPerouse’s Atlas. However, prominent cartographers such as W. Faden, Wyld, Delamarche, Jorsh, Wilkinson, Bonati, Pierro, etc. continued to use ‘Sea of Korea’ based on their beliefs. Both W. Faden and Wyld were Royal Geographers. And Russia, which shares the coast of the sea, was interested in the name since 18th century in expanding through this sea to the Pacific Ocean. Russia sent several ships to investigate various aspects of the sea and its islands. Majority of Russian maps and encyclopedias inscribed this sea as ‘Sea of Korea’ or ‘East Sea’.

China, another big limitrophe country, shared the coast of the sea. until 1870. According to Chinese scholars’ researches on old Chinese historic documentations, Manchurian tribes called the sea as ‘East Sea’ for 2000 years and the name continued to be used during the era of Tsing dynasty.

1.3 Even though many European maps switched to ‘Japan Sea’ after the publication of LaPerouse’s Atlas, Japanese official maps used the name ‘Chosun Sea (Korea Sea)’. Takahasi Kageyasu, in charge of cartographies in Japanese Shogunate Government, made two maps in 1809 and in 1811 on the request from the government. He named the sea as ‘Chosun Sea’ and his disciples followed his naming.

From 1870 to the end of 19th century, there were several maps with the dual names of ‘Japan Sea’ and ‘Chosun Sea’. Japanese maps in 19th century were using ‘Great Japan Sea’ on the side of Pacific Ocean.

1.4 The most important historic fact to take into consideration is that Japan occupied Korea from 1909 to 1945, when Korea was treated as Japanese colony. This is why Korea was not able to have any information on IHO conference and the discussions on ‘Japan Sea’ on S-23, not to mention that participation in IHO conference was not allowed. As a result, all of the world is automatically following the IHO’s inscription without knowing all the historic drama which Korea went through, and the name ‘Dong Hae (East Sea)’, before 1990, could be found only on the maps of South Korea and North Korea.

1.5 Japanese Foreign Ministry reported these results from a recent investigation on the naming issue. Surprisingly, about 30% of important major media and maps were not following their government’s naming and used dual naming on *East Sea/Japan Sea*.

When officials from both countries met to negotiate on the naming issue, as recommended by IHO, Japanese delegates repeatedly asserted the legitimacy of the name which is already approved and recognized instead of discussion, making the meeting unable to reach conclusions. Korea wishes to have “realistic dual name” as stipulated by IHO. However, first we have to look back to the past in order to learn what kind of double or dual names for the sea we had in the history.

2.

2.1 Three names

In the history of cartography, there is one map with triple names on the sea. It is the first marine atlas of the world, ‘Secretes of the Sea’ by Sir Robert Dudley. His map ‘Particular Map of Great Islands of Japan and Iezo (Hokkaido) with the Kingdom of

Korea and Surrounding Islands’ contains three names: ‘SEA OF KOREA’, ‘The Northern Sea of Japan’ and ‘The Southern Sea of Iezo’.

What attracts our attention is the difference of letters and forms. ‘SEA OF KOREA’ is written all in capitals while two other names are in small letters. Both two names in small letters have definite articles ahead while ‘SEA OF KOREA’ has none. We cannot jump into the conclusion on what the author had in his mind, however, generally such differentiation indicates the difference of emphasis between the names.

2.2 Two names on the sea

Two names to take out from the considerations

There are maps with two names for this sea. But if these two names are not related to two countries, they could be taken out from the consideration. One example is the map ‘Island of Japan, Peninsular of Korea’ by Vincenzo Coronelli in 1692. The author was a Franciscan Monk, commonly called Friar Minor, the well-known cartographer in Venetian Republic where European cartography started in 15th century. He made numerous terrestrial and celestial globes and maps. On his map of Japan and Korea, from southern part of Korea sweeping through northern coast is named as ‘Sea of China’ while Japan is encircled with ‘Oriental Ocean’. As these two names do not have any relationship with the issue, it should be taken out of the consideration.

Two double names

Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a big traveler and historian, was born in a cartographer family and became a cartographer. In his ‘Map of the Island of Japan’ in 1679, he put two names on the sea between Japan and Korea, ‘ORIENTAL OCEAN’ in big font capitals and ‘SEA OF KOREA’ in small font capitals. We presume the author had some hesitation in choosing the sea names. His ‘ORIENTAL SEA’ was influenced by Jesuit Monk Philippe Bret’s map 1650 and ‘SEA OF KOREA’ is named after A. Montanus who published a famous stories of Dutch delegates’ journey to Edo. Two names related to Korea are forming double names. As these names are one-sided name, they are not appropriate names.

Two divided names

Gilles and his son Dider Robert de Vaugondy took over cartographic materials from Sanson family. They became prolific cartographers in the middle 18th century and they

were in favor of the name 'Sea of Korea' for the sea, because they were convinced that it was more suitable name for geographical point of view. However, when Gilles was making 'Map of Empire of Japan', he inscribed both names exceptionally. He put 'Sea of Korea' near east coast of Korea and 'Sea of Japan' near west coast of Japan. These two dividing names seem to be motivated to express the impression of impartiality and fairness in the author's mind. However, in reality, both countries do not wish to divide the sea and have two names.

One dual name

When a name of similar nature is repeated, it is called a 'double name'. Serving double scotch means to serve two shots of scotch, similarly, having a double life means to have one usual life and another hidden life. But when two names with different origins are to be united, they make one dual name. Conforming to IHO and UNGEGN Regulations, this name is a desirable name. We have such a name in the map by Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688). The cartographer was an astronomer sent to China as a Jesuit missionary. Studying Chinese geography, he could not agree with his predecessors' naming. Being unsatisfied with the name given by Matteo Ricci, Julio Aleny, etc., he tried to name especially *Japon Sea* in his own way. He consulted Manchurians about its name and he was told Autochthones called it as *East Sea*. On the other hand, he also learned that the northern part of *East Sea* was called by some Chinese people as 'Small Sea', while in larger southern part it was called as 'Big Sea'. He could not deny what his big seniors, however, he could not ignore local realities either. Finally, mixing the names in both parts, he wanted to neutralize contradicting aspects and named 'East Sea of Japan'.

Certainly we praise the way of his process and respect his intention as rather laudable. He didn't want to put one-sided name and looking for the way to embrace both names. He juxtaposed two names to make a dual name. However, when we apply the naming in real world, we face embarrassing results. East part of Japan is Pacific Ocean where the sun rises. Anyway, long time ago, Verbiest showed us the way to follow in order to build more peaceful world among neighbors.

3. Conclusion

Almost the entire world is suffering from all kinds of conflicts among the countries. Geographical naming is one of them. But if we look back to the past, we have much to learn from it to promote mutual understanding and friendship. Above all, we have to be aware of the fact that the coast of *East Sea/Japan Sea* is shared by Japan, Russia, North Korea and South Korea. China, which was a coastal country up to 1870, is actively participating in the development of the area of Najin Port directly relayed to China by railroad.

Under such circumstances, if one country occupy the name of the sea, it would damage the fairness for the others. Although China and Russia, following IHO's naming, are not strongly asking for the name change, they certainly would welcome a more realistic name. North Korea also wholly agrees with South Korea on the naming issue. South Korea is definitely turned to share friendship and understanding with its neighbors, and is firmly looking for the implementation of IHO and UNGEGN resolution to establish one dual name for *East Sea/Japan Sea*.