

Discussion

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Both South and North Korea have insisted that the *Japan Sea* should be called the *Japan Sea*/the *East Sea* officially in the international society, because not only the name of the *Japan Sea* but also the name of the *East Sea* has been used historically. We have to think seriously how to deal with this problem. Instead of making a few comments on the assigned papers, I will make my presentation regarding this problem in order to playing my role as a discussant.

Geographical names are regarded as reflections of the power relations at that time when they were designated. The *Japan Sea* was named as it was not because it was right but simply because Japan was superior to Korea in terms of power relations at the time when the modern sea names were designated internationally early in the 1900s. That is why such Korean arguments that the *Japan Sea* should be also called as the *East Sea* were not respected so much in the situation in which Japan was superior to South Korea in terms of power relations.

However, the situation has been different. The power relations between Japan and South Korea have been changed into a new stage, from vertical relations in which Japan was superior to South Korea into horizontal relations in which South Korea is going to catch up with Japan. The international society cannot any more ignore such South Korean insistence and has to deal with this problem. If South Korea can overcome Japan in terms of power relations in the future, the international society might respect the South Korean insistence and call the sea the *Japan Sea*/the *East Sea* or the *East Sea*/the *Japan Sea*. Moreover, No one can deny the possibility that the *Japan Sea* will be replaced by the *East Sea* in terms of the international official name.

Regarding the proper name, in Japan, the name of ‘Chosen (朝鮮 in Japanese)’ is more generally used than that of Kan (韓 in Japanese)’ not as the name of a country but as the geographical name. The Korean peninsula is usually called ‘Chosen Hanto’ not ‘Kan Hanto’ in Japan. North Korea and South Korea are also usually called ‘Nanboku Chosen (南北朝鮮)’ not ‘Nanboku Kan (南北韓).’ In Japan, ‘Kankoku (韓国)’ is usually

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regarded only as the name of a country which was established as an independent nation in 1948 at the southern part of the Korean peninsula under the US military rule. North Korea is also usually called ‘Kita Chosen (北朝鮮),’ not ‘Hokkan (北韓).’ Regarding the name of language, ‘Chosen go (朝鮮語)’ was generally used in Japan, but now the name of ‘Kankoku go (韓国語)’ is more popular especially among the young people. When NHK, the Japanese public broadcast organization began the learning program of the Korean language during the 1980s, NHK had to decide which name of the program should be adopted, ‘Chosen go (朝鮮語)’ or ‘Kankoku go (韓国語).’ It was a fact that ‘Chosen go (朝鮮語)’ was more generally used in Japan until the 1980s, but it was also important that Japan had better use ‘Kankoku go (韓国語)’ in order to respect South Korea as the only legitimate government in the Korean peninsula from the Japanese government’s view points. As result, NHK decided to adopt as the name of learning program, ‘アンニョンハシムニカ? ハングル講座 (Annyeong Hasimnika? Hagul Koza),’ that is translated into ‘안녕하십니까? 한글 강좌’ in Korean. This name can be translated into ‘Hello, English Alphabet,’ in English. I was afraid it is very curious name, but NHK decided it considering such difficult situations between Japan and Korea. I think that the name of ‘Kankoku go (韓国語)’ is more popular than ‘Chosen go (朝鮮語)’ now. Actually, we, the University of Tokyo, use such compromising name, ‘Kankoku Chosen go (韓国朝鮮語)’ in the curriculum. I imagine that the name of ‘Kan (韓)’ or ‘Kankoku (韓国)’ will be more and more used instead of ‘Chosen (朝鮮)’ if South Korea can achieve the reunification by absorbing North Korea.

Anyway, on the one hand, South Korea should be more powerful and overtake Japan in terms of power relations in order to realize its hope regarding the name of sea rather than appealing to Japan or the international society. That is the shortest cut and the most effective way. On the other hand, Japan must maintain its superiority over South Korea in terms of power relations in order to keep the name of the *Japan Sea* intact. This is a real common law of the international relations even though these arguments might be too simple, but short of intellectuality.

But I agree that such arguments are anti-intellectual because intellectuality has to be used for rejecting, amending, and alleviating such ‘a world where the stronger prey upon the weaker.’ We, Japanese, must not be satisfied with the contemporary real world where Japan is superior to South Korea, but must imagine the possibility that South Korea might catch up with and moreover overtake Japan in the foreseeable future.

Actually, I watched a very interesting drama whose name was ‘Daidai Sonson (代々孫々) 2016’ in last June in a Japanese Shimokitazawa theatre. The title means ‘from one generation to another generation, and so on.’ The drama consisted of a plot that South Korea had ruled Japan as a colony in 2016. I think that the colonial imperialism cannot be legitimized any more, but we, Japanese, must prepare for the situation that the relations between Japan and Korea will be reversed, that is Korea will be superior to Japan in terms of power relations. Japan is now placed in difficult positions because Japan has been overtaken by China which Japan aggressively invaded in the past. Japan have to consider seriously how to deal with such China. Japan will also have to deal

with Korea in such the similar situations as China. I think that the Japanese people have to think of different logic from the simple power relations to deal with the various problems lying between Japan and Korea. Regarding the problem of sea names, Japan also must take how to deal with this problem into serious consideration.

I might be criticized that my argument is also consistent with the logic of power politics as it is because it is based on the argument that we have to seriously consider how to deal with the situation that we lose the advantage of strength even though it is rather liberal regarding its view of our shared history.

That is why I agree with the argument that a new idea and logic is necessary to overcome power politics. Prof. Chi's paper is very suggestive in arguing that the name of the *Japan Sea* took root in the historical context related with the Japanese colonialism and the US hegemony searching for the international stability, so that the logic of post-colonialism and the fact that various actors participate the political process is necessary for dealing with this problem now. On the one hand, I agree with Prof. Chi in terms of the fact that we have to develop a new idea or logic to deal with this problem. On the other hand, however, I also insist that the following considerations are necessary to make such a new idea or logic convincing not only for the Korean people but also for the people all over the world including the Japanese people.

First, such a new idea and logic has to be convincing enough for the people all over the world including the Japanese people to accept and prefer because it searches for changing the status quo. That is why we have to invest more energy to change the status quo than to maintain the status quo. It is important for such idea and logic should be recognized, accepted, and supported in the international society. Taking our shared past history that Japan ruled Korea for 36 years from 1910 until 1945 into serious consideration, I understand why the Korean people insist that the name of the *East Sea* has to be designated as an international official name. However, huge energy is necessary to challenge the status quo and convince the related actors and the international society to accept the challenge. I am afraid that the Korean effort for succeeding such a challenge is insufficient. The Korean government and people must convince why Japanese government and people, and the international society had better accept it. In other words, Korea has to make Japan and the world understand, accept, and congratulate such a challenge by explaining which benefit such a challenge can give if the name of the *East Sea* is designated.

Second, if South Korea consider it as a challenge against Japan, it is much more difficult to be accepted especially by Japan. It is exactly Japan that has a veto power regarding the challenge against the status quo. We know that the Japanese government is rather nervous regarding this problem. According to the Japanese MOF's website, the Korean argument that the name of the *East Sea* has to be accepted officially should be rejected as unreasonable. Besides, the Japanese government suspects that Korea is searching not only for the dual name as the *Japan Sea*/the *East Sea* but also for the single name as the *East Sea* at last. The Japanese government might consider this problem as a Korean challenge against Japan. Japanese common people also might take it as Korean

challenge or depreciation against Japan even though the Korean government and people never think so. Recently, the prejudice or belief that the Korean identity is anti-Japanese is widely accepted in the Japanese society. It is easy or comfortable that the Korean people think such a prejudice might be only reflections of the Japanese paranoia without any reasonable grounds, but such atmosphere comes up to a point that it is easily disrespected as groundless in Japan.

Such a challenging strategy might be regarded as an effective way to depreciate against Japan for Korea, but I never think it is a wise strategy for achieving such a goal that the name of the *East Sea* has to be officially adopted. The Japanese approval, collaboration, and even support is necessary for Korea to achieve such a goal. In other words, it is important that the Korean government and people should prevent the Japanese government and people from adopting excessively defensive posture regarding this problem. The Korean government and people should not put this problem in the nationalistic context of Japan versus Korea.

Basically I think this problem is not so serious among many similar problems due to our shared history. By integrating our wisdom, we can find out better solutions to this problem. However, our efforts is not so satisfactory to achieve such an important task. How can we find good solutions by preventing the way Korea challenges against Japan?