

## Wrap-up and conclusion

### *The naming issue: towards the future*

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When the organizing committee of this seminar had a series of brainstorming sessions early this year, given its venue being Jejudo (island), its members noticed the island's preferably used nickname, 'Island of Peace.' As a matter of fact, it was the place where the last leader of the Soviet Union met the Korean president right after the cold war period and upgraded the diplomatic relationship between the two countries. Since this historical event, many international meetings, either political, technical or academic, have been held in this island.

The committee members, however, also recognized the unhappy reality for Koreans that the body of waters surrounding the island, except the western part, was named 'Japan Sea' in the publication of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). This 'hard-to-accept' fact gives an awkward feeling to Koreans, but it could also be a good starting point to organize a seminar, along with the keyword 'peace.' An island will be a hub of peace by connecting people, culture and history, and even the future.

Peace and the naming issue - how do discourses surrounding these two topics, one being philosophical and political, whereas the other looking practical and technical, relate? An easy way to connect them would be like this: The naming issue of *East Sea* and *Sea of Japan* evokes controversies between countries concerned, which also stresses the third-party actors uncomfortable, so there is strong ground to solve this problem and it will contribute to promoting peace in this area.

This argument looks simple but fancy. But the problem still persists: Are there really controversies in naming the sea area which exist beyond already established cartographic conventions and consistencies? Can solving a naming problem, which occupies such a small part among so many 'giant' issues, bring a real peace? What is peace in nature?

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This seminar on sea names, not just the current one, but the whole series in the past, seeks for answers to these questions by sharing arguments and counter-arguments as well as informative case studies and opinions. I believe this 22nd seminar in Jeju succeeded in finding some clues on which to go forward, through presentations, comments and discussions.

Conspicuous among others was Joseph Stoltman's insightful comment on peace and the possible contribution of dual naming to making peace. He argues that peace is more than no war and it rests on the resolution of such issues as geographical naming. In this context, he continues, the *East Sea/Sea of Japan* dual naming will produce mutual benefits in foreign relations, international collaboration, good will between neighboring countries, and maintaining cultural heritage contained in each name. Dual naming, by giving equitable and fair treatment of each name, will preserve cultural identity and social justice. His view shares much with 'human' focus to make a way forward for the naming issue<sup>1</sup>.

A very important point raised in this process of peace-making through dual naming was to clarify benefits that Japan would take by accepting this proposal, in the situation that *Sea of Japan* being already recognized internationally. As Kimiya Tadashi clearly argues, in order to achieve the change of status quo from the single to dual naming, the Korean side should have strong appealing power and logic to the Japanese society about the benefits that Japan and international society will receive by the change. I think this point should be considered seriously afterwards.

With regard to the method of naming, other views than the dual naming were also recognized. One way will be to use endonyms in the domestic context, '동해 (Donghae)' and '日本海 (Nihonkai)' in this case, and use a third name in the international context. This 'contextual naming,' proposed and consistently argued by Paul Woodman, could also be an option if parties concerned reach a consensus. In the IHO context, in its publication "Limits of Oceans and Seas," maintaining the current name (*Japan Sea*) in the text and noting another name (*East Sea*) in the appendix, proposed again by Michel Huet, could also be a choice for the Korean side, but it would take a long way to persuade the Korean society due to its subordinate nature.

The seminar has sought to find facts and extend arguments on the basis of these facts. One difficult problem is the cases where different views exist in interpreting and applying the facts. One typical issue will be colonial and post-colonial argument in naming the sea. It is an undeniable fact that Korea was under the colonial rule of Japan and in this colonial period 'Japan Sea' was adopted by IHO. But contrasting views persist: the Korean side argues that *Sea of Japan* is a trace of colonialism and restoring *East Sea* will be a post-colonial process, while the Japanese side argues that the establishment of the name has nothing to do with colonialism. This Japanese view was clearly conveyed by Hakoda Tetsuya, a Korea specialist writing for a renowned newspaper in Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> Choo, S. (2014), Bringing *human* into the game: a way forward for the *East Sea/Sea of Japan* naming issue, *Journal of Korean Cartographic Association*, 14.3, pp.1-13.

Peder Gammeltoft introduced the case of 'Nordic agreement' between Denmark, Norway and Sweden for the name *Skagerrak*. It is certain that the sea name between Korea and Japan has much more complicated elements, but I hope 'East Asian agreement' comes true some time in the future. I believe this academic forum, attended by Japanese scholars and journalists as well as experts from the world, will make it earlier.