Discussion on place names based on Compass directions

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There are two types of names based on compass (cardinal) directions. One is formed from the self-centric viewpoint, depicting features in the absolute direction from one's location. The other is a relative one among two related features: one feature can be named "North" due to being located north of the other feature. For the latter naming, a translated name would not be problematic, as the relative location of the two features involved would not change regardless of where the viewpoint is. However, when the former naming is to be used widely, there needs to be a qualifier indicating where the viewpoint is. This can be done by adding explicitly the regional name as a prefix, or by adhering to the language of the original viewpoint (i.e. not using the translated name). However, considering the evolution of marine toponyms, while the absolute directional names for seas should be respected within the language community, they may not be best suited for international use.

INTRODUCTION

We have discussed on the origin and evolution of place names earlier (Tanabe and Watanabe 2014, Tanabe et al 2010 etc.). Basically, place names originates from common nouns in daily conversation, and evolves into a proper noun, with the exception of commemorative names which are named after a specific person or a historical event. Japanese examples of place names derived from common nouns can be "Higashiyama" (east mountain - direction), "Ohkawa" (big river - size), "Shirahama" (white beach - colour), "Maenoumi" (sea in front - relative location), "Araku" (newly developed - event), etc. Place names containing the name of the initial settler or past owner also started as common nouns. Eventually these words became fixed to a specific place among the local people and became proper nouns.

Names with the four compass (cardinal) directions occur widely in the world. Examples in Japan include the aforementioned Higashiyama (East Mountains, Kyoto), as well as Nishiyama (West Mountains, Niigata), Minamiyama (South Mountain, Nagoya, also origin of the name for Nanzan University), Kitayama (North Mountains, Kyoto, known

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for the beautiful pine timber). Hokkaido (North Sea Road) is the administrative name of the northern region (as well as the name of the island), Tokaido (East Sea Road) is the area of the major traffic route in Japan between Tokyo and Kyoto, Nankai (South Sea) railways extend south from Osaka, and Saikai (West Sea) is the name of a national park. Just to pick 東海 (East Sea), there are numerous examples in East Asia. There is a 東海市 (East Sea City) in both Korea (Gangwon-do) and Japan (Aichi Pref.), another 東海村 (East Sea Village) is located in Ibaragi Pref., Japan. In China there is a 東海鎮 (East Sea Town) within Nantong City in Jiangsu province, 東海県 (East Sea County) under Lianyungang City also in Jiangsu province, 東海大橋 (East Sea Bridge) in Shanghai City, 東海島 (East Sea Island) in Guangdong province, etc.

We need to note that there are two types of directional place names. One is, as mentioned above, formed from the self-centric viewpoint, depicting features in the absolute direction from one's location. The other is based on relative location of two (or more) related features, for example, there exist three small lakes next to each other in Bad Staffelstein, Bavaria, Germany, that are named Ostsee, Mittelsee, and Westsee. This relationship of one feature being located either west or east to the other, does not depend on the viewpoint.[1]

SEA NAMES BASED ON DIRECTIONS

Black Sea and Red Sea (North Sea and South Sea)

In ancient Rome, the sea we know as the Black Sea was called Pontus ("sea") or Pontus Euxinus ("hospitable sea"), and the Red Sea as Sinus Arabicus ("Arabic bay"). With the advancement of Turkish tribes into the region, the names Karadeniz (Black Sea), and Kizildeniz (Red Sea) became prevalent. The Turks appeared in history earlier than the Mongols, they established the Turkish Kingdom in 6th Century AD in the area spanning from what is now central Asia to western China. Part of the Turks, especially the Seljuks headed west and by 11thC conquered the Anatolian peninsula as well as current Iraq and Syria. They are known as Turchia by European historians by the end of 12thC (Encyclopaedia Universalis 1992).

The naming of Karadeniz and Kizildeniz cannot be understood without the Asian "five elements" theory (Wu-xing 五行 philosophy). This theory or philosophy attempts to explain all natural and human phenomena by the five elements, wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. This was initially advocated in ancient China around 7thC BC. The elements are connected to directions as well as colours as shown in the table below:

行 elements	木 wood	火 fire	土 earth	金 metal	水 water
方位 direction	東 east	南 south	中央 central	西 west	北 north
色 colour	青（緑）blue/green	紅 red	黄 yellow	白 white	黒(玄)black

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[1] Administrative names of this type has become rife with local authority mergers (or splits). West Tokyo City, East Osaka City, and North Nagoya City all sprang up recently from such events. Many new railway station names are derived this way as well. Most of these are criticised as an inconsiderate compromise among the communities involved, or lacking a proper identity as a place.

Based on the five elements theory, we can see that Karadeniz which literally translates to "Black Sea" actually indicates north sea, and Kizildeniz meaning "Red Sea" indicates south sea. Had it been directly expressed as North and South Seas, it would have been in conflict with other point of views (south sea for the Turks is east sea for the Egyptians, and west sea for the Arabians), but as they were expressed in colours whose relation to directions was not shared universally, the translated names were accepted and established as standard names. For the Turks, the Mediterranean is in

Figure 1. The Five elements Theroy (五行説)

the east and therefore Akdeniz (White Sea), but as there was already an established precedent name "Mediterranean", "White Sea" did not gain international usage.
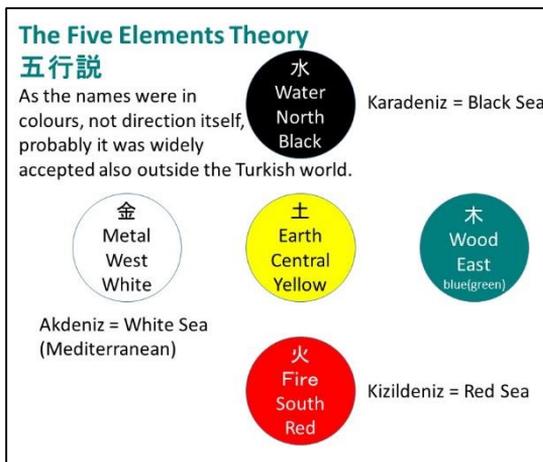
North Sea

Hokkai (North Sea) for Japan was the original name for the *Sea of Japan*, and there also exist a Hokkaido in the north of Japan ("-do" in Japanese indicates an administrative region, just as in the Korean language), but here we will be dealing with the sea between the European continent and the Great Britain island, whose internationally established name is North Sea.

The name North Sea may appear as a self-centric directional naming by the Dutch, but the prevalent theory is that it is not the case. For the Dutch their only sea was to the north of their area, so for them that was "the sea". However this sea was divided by the Wadden (Frisian) Islands into South Sea (Zuiderzee) and North Sea (Noordzee). Hence the name Noordzee is based on its relative location to Zuiderzee. Not only from Dutch point of view but also from anywhere in the world, Noordzee is located north of Zuiderzee, hence the translated name such as North Sea makes sense (in other words, Zuiderzee (South Sea) is located in the North of Dutch territory but it still makes sense).

As for some information points, in the earlier days this sea was called the German Sea or the German Ocean in English (originally Oceanus Germanicus in Latin) until WWI (Scully 2009)[2]. In 1932, Zuiderzee was closed off by the construction of Afsluitdijk and

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[2] An alternative explanation to the origin of the name North Sea refers to the northern Germanic people who were active in this sea. They were known as Vikings or Norsemen. Historical records show the attack of Vikings on the east coast of England in 793AD, raids of Dorestad (Duurstede, Netherlands) in 830s, establishment of the Duchy of Normandy (France) in 911, Cnut's conquest in 1016 and the Norman Conquest of 1066. These are manifestation that the North Sea was under the control of Norsemen. In major European languages, this was reflected in the name of the sea. From "the sea of Northmen" came the name "North Sea".

was turned into a lake, now called Ijsselmeer. What is the remainder of Zuiderzee is now known as Waddenzee.

East Sea

There are many "East Sea"s in the world. In the East Asian region, as there is the Pacific Ocean and its marginal seas to the east, many language communities call their littoral seas as "East Sea". In Chinese, Dong Hai (東海 - *East Sea*) corresponds to the East China Sea, in Vietnamese, South China Sea is Bien Dong (East Sea), in Japan the Pacific Ocean,

Figure 2. The former Zuiderzee in the 15th century

east to the capital (Kyoto) is Tokai (東海 - East Sea). In the Korean language, Donghae (東海 - *East Sea*) is the sea east to their peninsula. In Europe, the sea east to the Jutland peninsula of Denmark is called East Sea in many languages (Ostsee in German, Oostzee in Dutch, Ö stersjön in Swedish, Itämeri in Finnish etc).

All these East Seas mentioned above are based on self-centred absolute directions, except for Finnish which is a translated toponym under Swedish influence. These names of "East Sea"s were not in usage outside the language community. Internationally, they have other names as indicated above, and in general, each language community does not insist on translating their "East Sea"s to other languages. The Germanic language community will call the Baltic Sea "Ostsee", but they will not translate it into English as "East Sea". When a Japanese person sees a 東海 in a Chinese document, s/he can understand that it refers to East China Sea. However if that Chinese document is translated into English, and 東海 is translated as "East Sea", the situation becomes rather ambiguous which sea it is referring to. Internationally, it will be rather confusing to have many "East Seas".

Cultural and emotional attachment also apply to all "East Sea"s. They have a distinct existence in the language community in which it belongs: For example「東海の小島の磯の白砂に われ泣きぬれて 蟹とたはむる」[3](Ishikawa 1910) is a tanka poem which is a signature work of the well-known Japanese writer and poet Takuboku Ishikawa (1886-1912). When people appreciate this poem, is understood without doubt that 東海 (*East Sea*) is the Pacific Ocean, not any other "East Sea"s in the world.

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[3] (Translation) On white sands of a rocky shore in a small island in Tokai, I'm drained in tears playing with a crab

FISHERMEN AND NAVIGATORS - EVOLUTION OF MARINE TOPONYMS

Before reaching the conclusion, the authors would like to recapitulate on the evolution of marine toponyms (Tanabe and Watanabe 2014). Initially people living by the coast were fishermen. The sea provided them with livelihood, and so it was an important entity for them and they named the sea from their viewpoint. It could just have been "sea in front", or after the name of the village such as "sea of Negishi", or by the direction "sea in the east". These were local names that were not used outside the community, and with the lack of advanced navigation and knowledge of the globe, they were not sure of the extent of the sea, i.e. that the American continent was the shore on other side of the sea. Under such conditions, it is understandable that the sea was called by direction: for example sea of north, south, east, or west. This was the nature of initial endonym for seas.

Large seas were named for its integrity, only when the European navigators have succeeded in traversing it. Names of seas have been given by the people on board the ships who were not the inhabitants (endonymic population) of the sea. The original names of large sea have been, therefore, in European languages. They were easily translated and disseminated rapidly in European society, and became used throughout the world. The Pacific Ocean was named for the first time by a Portuguese Magalhanes as "Mare Pacificum", which was not only translated into other European languages but also written in Chinese characters, and shared among the East Asian region (太平洋: the name is based on the same writing but read differently between Chinese, Japanese, and Korean). Similarly, the French navigator La Pérouse traversed the sea between the Asian continent and the Japanese archipelago for the first time in the end of 18th century, defined the extent and the shape of the sea and endorsed the name "La Mer du Japon". This was followed by a russian navigator Krusenstern complementing the findings of La Perouse and giving the name "Японское море" in the beginning of 19th century. These events finalised the name in Europe for this sea. The name was translated for example into English as "Japan Sea" and also into Chinese characters and imported into the East Asian region (Watanabe and Yaji 2010).

It is ambiguous whether to call such names endonym or exonym. Basically there are no inhabitants of large seas, and the notion of high seas suggests that all people on earth have equal rights on navigating through these seas. Scholars such as Kadmon (2007) suggested a third category for marine names, as well as Matthews (2012) who has also recognized the necessity of a third notion and proposed another terminology "allonym", based on the superimposed or overlapping characteristics carried by the maritime names. Tanabe and Watanabe investigated the naming process and proposed the notion "Precedent Toponym" as the third category (Tanabe and Watanabe 2014, Tanabe 2015).

CONCLUSION

Place names with cardinal directions can be seen widely around the world. Many of these have been formed naturally from common nouns. Within the local area, people are familiar with this kind of toponym and there is no confusion over which feature the name corresponds to. However, in a wider, more global context, names evolved from common nouns tend to be weak in one of the important functions of place names, which is identifying a unique place. Nishiyama (West Mountain) can be either the mountains to

the west of Nagano City in Nagano Prefecture, or the mountains west of Nagaoka City in Niigata Prefecture. We cannot judge from the name itself, which one it is referring to. In order to establish a one to one correspondence of the geographical feature and the place name, we will need to add a regional name as a prefix. The example of "Ohshima" (Big Island) was described by Watanabe (2016), and this can apply to directional names as well. Between different language communities, as long as the name is in the original language, it is possible to identify the unique geographic entity even if the names were semantically identical. Tokai, Donghae, Tong Hai, Bien Dong, and Ostsee all share the same literal meaning, but signifies different seas. When one attempts to translate these place names into other languages, it diminishes the place identifying function of toponyms, and causes unneeded confusion. While translating the term for compass direction in relative directional names would not cause much issues, probably it is better not to translate absolute directional names containing no regional prefix. Reflecting on the process of the naming of large seas, it could be said that these absolute directional names for seas should be respected within the local language community, but they may not be the most suitable ones in international use.

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