

## Panel discussion

**KIM Jong-Geun\***

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Maps represent the whole or partial part of the world. These pictorial media have three kinds of symbols—points, lines, and polygon—and toponyms. Due to the improvements in cartographic technology, modern maps represent the world or specific areas accurately and objectively. Because of these traits, people usually regard maps as scientific and impartial media. However, critical geographers argue that maps are not neutral and objective but subjective and political media. Toponyms in maps also have similar character. The geographers have revealed the political traits of toponyms by unveiling the process of place-naming. This academic trend in place-name studies gives us new insight into understanding place-name related issues.

As we know, most of the place-name conflicts in the world is related to the history of modern Western imperialism. When the imperialists of Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, France and other Western empires discovered new territories in Asia, Africa, America, and Oceania from 15th to 19th centuries, the imperial explorers drew maps and inscribed new place-names. Diverse western style names were placed in geographical features of the new lands. So the Western style place-names in new territories symbolize the history of imperialistic colonization.

However, Western explorers could not place toponym in East Asia because there were nations existed for long time and they used their own place-name. However, for their convenience of navigation, Western explorers put names on water bodies – *East China Sea*, *South China Sea*, and *Sea of Japan*. Along with founding the IHB and its publication of ‘Limits of Oceans and Seas’(1929), these names upgraded to a world standard name of water-bodies of East Asia. But most of the members of IHB were empires and their colonies could not join the bureau. This means indigenous water-body-names were not adopted as standard toponym.

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\* Research Fellow, Northeast Asian History Foundation, Korea.

From the late 20th centuries, the third world countries have started to raise objection to using the exonyms. For example, Burma was changed to Myanmar, Batavia was changed to Jakarta, and Bombay was changed to Mumbai. As Western style place names in the colonies symbolize colonization, the change of these exonyms to endonyms explains the liberations of colonies. Moreover, for the justice and peace among world nations, the UN encourage to use vernacular endonym.

After joining the UN in 1991, the government of Republic of Korea have insisted using *East Sea* with *Sea of Japan* for the water-body between Korean peninsula and Japanese archipelago. Korean people liberated from the Japanese empire in 1945, and regain its territory. There are two Korean islands in *East Sea/Sea of Japan*, Ulleungdo, and Dokdo. Especially, Dokdo was illegally annexed by the Japanese empire during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Because of this history, Koreans regard Dokdo as the symbol of liberation from Japan. In this context, Koreans cannot bear the situation of using maps illustrating Dokdo in the middle of *Sea of Japan*. However Japan and Russia do not want change the sea name. As a proper member of the world, Koreans have a right to be respected on their reasonable opinion. For the realization of world justice and peace, *East Sea* should be promoted as a standard sea name and used in tandem with *Sea of Japan*. I believe all of participants of this conference will understand Koreans emotions on *East Sea/Sea of Japan* and hope all of yours support Korean's opinion.