

Panel discussion

KIM Young Won*

I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on the issue. Through our previous seminars over a long period of time, we are certain that our position is well justified and supported by the international community as a whole. For this reason we firmly believe that time is on our side and the issue will be solved in the not-too-distant future. The solution will never be zero-some, but win-win for Korea and Japan.

Now it is high time we evaluated on what we have achieved. We succeeded in bringing up this issue in the international community and enhancing understanding of people about this issue. As a result many people are familiar with this issue and recognize the existence of the naming issue between Korea and Japan. Thus international community including many map makers, scholars, school teachers are interested in resolving this issue at an early date. But our success has brought about some side effects. Relevant international organizations, among other things, IHO, seems to be concerned about the protracted discussion on the issue.

Some countries are very cautious in dealing with this issue because of their bilateral good relations with both Korea and Japan. Although this is an isolated issue, but the issue seems to be dealt with in connection with other history-related issues such as comfort women issue, Dokdo territorial issue, etc. thus further complicating the resolution of the issue. Under such circumstances, the issue runs the risk of being politicized. Some countries claims that Korea has politicized the issue. This criticism is wrong.

In this regard, I would like to reaffirm our positions to help you better understand the nature of this issue from various aspects. But I do not see any reason to go into detail to explain why Korea's claim can be justified. But I will sum up our points as follows:

- The name used by the local people should be given the highest priority. International community has no authority to prevent us from using our own name.

* Visiting Professor, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea.

- It is absurd that the water body adjacent to Korea's land territory is called *Sea of Japan*.
- When there is disagreement on a certain issue, interpretation should be made in such a manner as to satisfy both parties concerned.

Now many of world's prominent cartographers and the press are beginning to recognize the validity of the name *East Sea* and use both names. It demonstrates that the name *Sea of Japan* is not firmly established and the single use of the name *Sea of Japan* should be reconsidered.

I hope that participants here will understand the nature of this issue and come up with solution in the days to come. In this respect, I appreciate the suggestions made by Professor Stoltman yesterday. As he suggested, the role of the Civil society groups represented by publishers, teachers, scholars and general publics will become more important for a fair and equitable solution of the issue. Therefore, the two governments should not make the civil society groups as peripheral groups, but need to encourage them to do their part for the governments.

In conclusion, I believe that Japan will lose nothing but gain respect from international community by resolving the issue through mutual agreement with Korea. Peaceful and amicable solution will help promote the bilateral relations. With a number of sensitive historical and political issues facing the two countries, solution of this issue may serve as a good starting point for Korea and Japan to create a win-win situation for the future.