

Why not silence the Republic of Korea in dealing with the naming issue of the Sea of Japan?

Professor SHIMOJO Masao, Takushoku University

In order to justify the stealing of Takeshima Island, South Korea is obstinately calling the 'Sea of Japan' the 'East Sea', even involving the United States in the matter. Let's completely abolish their propaganda covered with lies and fabrications.

Naming issue turns into territorial dispute

The *Sankei Newspaper* of January 29, 2012 reports: "in the United States a state bill asking for parallel appellation of the 'Sea of Japan and the East Sea' was turned down by a narrow margin of one vote," and "1.2 million Korean Americans and Koreans in America vehemently supported passage of the bill." The bill requested textbooks used in the state of Virginia simultaneously use the names 'Sea of Japan' and the 'East Sea'. The bill was submitted to the Education and Health Committee of the Virginia Senate by Senator Dave Marsden from Annandale, where many Korean Americans live. The result was eight votes against and seven for the bill. That was a truly close call.

Regarding the assertion of the double appellation of the 'East Sea,' the movement first started with the Korean Society in Chicago and then spread nation-wide to Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C. collecting signatures and lobbying lawmakers. The reason for the particular timing of the Korean Society for their campaign was that the International Hydrographic Organization's (IHO) general assembly, held once every five years, is slated for April 23 through April 27 this year in Monaco, where 'the ocean and sea boundaries', guideline for making sea charts, are to be revised. They intended to submit a bill that claims a parallel appellation of the 'East Sea' was approved in a state assembly in the United States, and with this assurance to justify their assertion at the IHO general assembly. Virginia State Senator Dave Marsden helped to submit the bill and even commented that the name 'East Sea' was used as far back as two thousand years ago. Without Japan's knowledge, Korean propaganda has thus permeated America and has taken a life of its own.

The campaign to officially call the Sea of Japan the East Sea on an international scale first started in 1991, when Korea joined the United Nations, and in the following year it

submitted a proposal regarding the naming of the 'Sea of Japan' to the UN Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names. In 1994, the United Nations "Maritime Law Treaty" went into effect. In February 1996, Korea launched the construction of port facilities on Takeshima ("Dokdo" in Korean), Japanese territory unlawfully occupied by Korea, further accelerating the movement to justify the Korean acquisition of Takeshima. Clearly, their reasoning is that if they state that Dokdo is located in the 'Sea of Japan,' this will sound inconsistent to the claim of Dokdo as Korean territory. The Koreans intentionally linked the Sea of Japan appellation issue with the Takeshima territorial question.

In fact, the International Union for Protection of Dokdo, organized across the United States by Korean organizations, is fervently conducting political activities with the 'Sea of Japan' appellation issue as their secondary objective. On November 29 of last year, the Internet edition of the Korean Yonhap News reported that Korean organizations in the United States requested a meeting with Secretary of State Clinton to discuss the 'East Sea' appellation. On December 10, Kow Chankun, Executive Chairman of the International Union for Protection of Dokdo, reportedly said, "those who have substantial influence over the International Hydrographic Organization are the US State Department and Senators and Representatives of the US Congress. We will eagerly lobby them to our cause."

Japan should bear it in mind that that the appellation of the 'Sea of Japan' is not merely an issue of a description on a map, but a grave territorial issue.

Mixing up historical issues

This very aggressive move speaks volumes of the Korean government's political strategy. The Korean government legislated an organization to continuously address the Takeshima issue on March 16, 2005, about a week prior to the enactment of the "Takeshima Day," and in April, they started a planning body that would establish the historical truth for their purpose of establishing peace in Northeast Asia. The planning body was named the "Northeastern Asian History Foundation," a state policy organization. The foundation engages in a wide range of international propaganda activities against Japan, including historical issues such as the "comfort women," Yasukuni Shrine and the content of Japanese history textbooks. The Northeastern Asian History Foundation is deeply involved in the recently rehashed comfort women

dispute and the movement to resist adopting newly published history textbooks which frequently takes place in the Yaeyama district of Okinawa and other parts of Japan.

Not only that, the Northeastern Asian History Foundation was behind the scheme of Japan's handing over to Korea of the *Joseon Uigwe* ("The Royal Protocols of the Joseon Dynasty"), which was mentioned in a statement by former Japanese Prime Minister Kan made in 2010. The Foundation demanded the return of the Royal Protocols as a token of Japan's deep reflection over the past. This fact was revealed in the *Weekly Chosun* (dated December 24, 2010, Internet edition) in an interview with Northeastern Asian History Foundation's Chairman, Chon Jejun. In order to realize the return of the Royal Protocols, Chairman Chon summoned head of the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management to Korea and proposed the idea to Japanese Diet members who are from the Matsushita Institute and urged them to include this matter in Kan's statement.

And now, they are using a historical issue in which they can claim an absolute advantage over Japan, in addressing the 'Sea of Japan' appellation issue. Their claim is: "In the Korean Peninsula the 'Sea of Japan' has been called the 'East Sea' for over two thousand years. However, in 1929, when "the ocean and sea boundaries" to be used as a basis for making sea charts was compiled by the Hydrographic Organization, the Koreans were deprived of the opportunity to assert the 'East Sea' appellation due to colonial rule by the Japanese. The name 'Sea of Japan' was predominantly used as a result of Japan's imperialist and colonialist power in the first half of the 20th century." This assertion is a sheer historical fabrication, but they use this line of thinking as a tool to excoriate Japan within the international community.

Korea is working in cooperation with Russia and China. In September, 2010, a Chinese fishing boat collided with a Japanese patrol boat, and the *Asian Weekly of Hong Kong*, dated September 26, 2010, stated "following the example of the unlawful occupation of Takeshima by the ROK, if we learn a valuable lesson from the incident of taking Dokdo back from Japan, then recovery of Diayutai Qundao may become a reality." Immediately after this, on November 1, 2010 President Medvedev became the first Russian President to visit Kunashiri Island (Kunashir). With the Northern Territories question still in a truly tense situation, Japanese diplomatic efforts in general have dangerously deteriorated.

We should firmly resolve that Japan's national interests must not be further damaged. In this paper, I will argue against the sheer lies that the Koreans are making in claiming that historically, the 'Sea of Japan' has been called the 'East Sea', and hope to provide the Japanese government, concerned organizations and people with powerful sources to refute the Koreans.

The lie that the appellation "East Sea" predates the birth of Christ

Korea is ardently trying to increase international support for the parallel appellation of the 'East Sea,' holding 'East Sea' seminars across the world which, in turn, are directed towards influencing the general assembly of the IHO. At such seminars, they refer to the depiction of 'East Sea' as seen in *Samguk Sagi* or *History Book of Three Kingdoms (Authentic Book of Kokuryo)* and the Monument of Gwanggaeto the Great as historical evidence to support their calling the 'Sea of Japan' the 'East Sea.' It was in 37 B.C. that 'East Sea' appeared in *History Book of Three Kingdoms*. This is the main reason why Koreans boastfully claim that the appellation 'East Sea' existed two thousand years ago and therefore predates the birth of Christ.

In *History Book of Three Kingdoms*, it is true that the description of the coast of the East Sea appears. But this 'East Sea' is not the 'Sea of Japan.'

In the first place, the original location of Kokuryo was located somewhere around the Liaodong Peninsula, to the west of the Korean Peninsula. Though currently Korea regards the history of Kokuryo as a part of their history, the Korean state lineage does not include Kokuryo. Regarding the history of Kokuryo, China and Korea, since about 2003, have disputed whether Kokuryo is of Korean lineage or whether its local governance was Chinese. In order to gain the upper hand in the Kokuryo dispute, the Koreans made two dramas, *Ju Mong* and *Legend*. The former related to King Dongmyeong, the founding father of Kokuryo and the latter to Gwanggaeto the Great, who later restores the kingdom. From the Chinese historical point of view, both Ju Mong and Gwanggaeto the Great have nothing to do with Korean history. Needless to say, the 'East Sea' described in history books and a monument cannot be possibly identified with the 'Sea of Japan' since these were directions designated by the Chinese.

Let's take a closer look. On one hand, the monument to Gwanggaeto the Great bears characters/letters indicating East Sea, but those letters referred to the number of graveyard

keepers and the names of regions where they lived. It would be nothing more than a farfetched interpretation to assert that 'East Sea' refers to the 'Sea of Japan'.

On the other hand, *History Book of Three Kingdoms* states, "There is a place along the 'East Sea'. It is called Kahabaru." What does this East Sea indicate? The key to solving this question can be found in the following description in *Yonbio Chonga* or *Epic for Enthronement*, which was compiled at the beginning of the Joseon Dynasty. "Outside the four seas lies another sea. Beside the East Sea there is Bohai. Therefore, we call them the 'East Sea' or Bohai, which are also called great sea. Our country lies to the east of Bohai. Therefore, the name of east of the Sea appears."

Here the 'East Sea' specifically refers to Bohai. It is not just in *Epic for Enthronement* that the name appears. Lee Zui-gwan, in the middle of the Joseon Dynasty Era, mentions "the 'East Sea' of China, namely the west sea of our country" and later in that period Tae Hung Ha states, "China's so-called East Sea is actually the west sea of our country."

China used the four seas to indicate direction. Those seas lying to the east of China like Bohai and the Yellow Sea are generally referred to as the 'East Sea'. Therefore, Korea calls itself east of the Sea, meaning it lies to the east of the 'East Sea'. And in *Epic for Enthronement*, Bohai is the 'East Sea'.

Meaningless competition over numbers of old maps

When Koreans discuss historical issues, they tend to interpret historical documents and materials on the basis of their selfish, current views. This tendency is clearly seen in their interpretation of the *General Map of Eight Provinces* (See the photo 1 on page 6) in the *Newly Revised Map of East Country*, on which they rely as a proof of the authenticity of their 'East Sea' appellation. Korea maintains that in the *General Map of Eight Provinces*, which depicts the Korean Peninsula, the characters 'East Sea' appears, which is proof enough to call the 'Sea of Japan' as 'East Sea'.

In reality, however, 'East Sea' merely refers to the place of the 'East Sea shrine' of the east ocean deity, which is to the east of the Korean Peninsula. Kim So-chok, who participated in the compilation of the *Newly Revised Map of East Country*, explains in the postscript to the atlas, "The general map on the first page of the book indicates



Photo 3: Map of Fuchien

Liang Cheng-zhi in March of the second year of Zhi-zu, namely, 1457. Liang states, “Shrines in the south, east and west are all settled according to Kaesong, and directions are divided.” As policy of the Korean dynasty, apart from the standard then exercised in the Koryo Dynasty, Cheng also proposed to set up a “north sea shrine at Jiashan, upstream of the Yalu River.” Jiashan, upstream of the Yalu, is an inland region and there is no sea called the ‘North Sea’. Trying to deify the north sea shrine in this inland place signifies that it was necessary to enshrine the northerly direction, not a sea itself. This letter to the Emperor by Liang Cheng-zhi indicates that the four seas of north, south, east and west are conceptualized directions and not actually referring to real seas. As the Chinese say “Within the four seas all men are brothers,” the four seas indicate directions and this convention was followed on the Korean Peninsula.

In terms of modern historical materials, Koreans quote phrases from *The Patriotic Song* written around 1907 as a proof that called the ‘Japan Sea’ the ‘East Sea,’ which goes “Until that day when Mt. Baekdu's worn away and the ‘East Sea’s’ waters run dry...” This, too, is nothing but a wish born out of the modern mind.

Kankai Tsuugyo Shishin or *The Transport and Fishing Guide of the Korean Seas*, published in 1903 by Kuzuu Shusuke, divides “the Korean Seas” into traditional ‘East Sea’, South Sea and West Sea, and clearly states that the ‘East Sea’ is coastal water

This method of description shows that the *Newly Revised Map of East Country* follows the *Book of Great Ming Lineage* of the Chinese Ming Dynasty. In the *Book of Great Ming Lineage* (Map of Fuchien, Photo 3 on the left), in order to distinguish between the coastal sea and the outer ocean, a description of ‘the sea to the east’ appears.

Furthermore, the appellation the ‘east sea’ in the *General Map of Eight Provinces* historically does not refer to an ocean area but to direction. A typical example of this is a letter presented to the Emperor by

along from Toman River of the northeastern Hamgyon Province and to Pusan in the southeastern Kyonsan Province. The 'East Sea' is just a part of the 'Sea of Japan', which forms a great Mediterranean-style body of water.

The same recognition also appears in Park Eun-sik's *The Complete History of Korea*. Park records the geographic characteristics of Korea as follows: "Korea is a peninsular country located at the projecting tip of southeastern Asia. Its boundaries are along the great sea in the east, separated by the 'Sea of Japan', facing the Yellow Sea and to the south of two Chinese provinces, Shandong and Chiangsu." *The Complete History of Korea* was published in 1915, and even after *The Patriotic Song* was written, it was generally recognized that outside the coastal waters lies the 'Sea of Japan'.

By contrast, the appellation 'Sea of Japan' was adopted in the *Kanei Suiro Shi* or *Hydrographic Book of the Seas in the World*, published by the Japanese Navy Hydrographic Agency in April, 1883, and also followed by *Hydrographic Book of Korea*, published in 1894 by the hydrographic department. It is clearly stated the range of the 'Sea of Japan' is "roughly 900 *Ri* (3,600 kilometers) in length from north-northeast to south-southwest, and 600 *Ri* (2,400 kilometers) at widest from east to west, and that each of the Japanese islands forms the sea boundaries in the east and the south, while the coastline of Korea and the Heilongjiang coastal province compose the west and northwest boundaries."

The sea charts made by the Japanese hydrographic department were drawn on the basis of British and Russian charts, which show that the name of 'Sea of Japan' was officially recognized world-wide.

But the Japanese Government has never appealed to the fact that there is no historical evidence authorizing an appellation of 'East Sea', even on its own official homepage. Instead, the Japanese Government has mainly based its arguments on whether or not there are more historical maps depicting 'Sea of Japan' than those depicting the 'South Korean Sea' or the 'Korean Sea', and has been totally indifferent to the Takeshima issue. Korea followed suit and competed with Japan in compiling a number of old maps. As a result, on one hand, according to Korean counts, there are more maps depicting 'South Korean Sea' or 'Korean Sea', and on the other hand, according to Japanese surveys, there are more maps stating 'Sea of Japan'. This is an utterly vain and circular argument and no one can expect a fair conclusion from this. Thereafter, Korea has

deliberately promoted an international campaign against the appellation 'Sea of Japan', closely working with those who are involved in the IHO and the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

These anti-Japanese maneuvers staged at the international level ever since 1992 finally culminated in series of interviews published in the *Korea Herald*, Internet edition of May, 2010, a Korean-English language newspaper. The interviewees were the 13 most influential figures on the issue, including Peter E. Raper, former chairman of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), Paul Woodman, former member of the UNGEGN, Norman Cherkis, member of the US Board on Geographical Names, and Ki-suk Lee, convener for the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation, UNGEGN, who is also Emeritus Professor at Seoul National University and President of the 'The Society for East Sea'.

Being unaware of the historical fact that the ranges of the 'Sea of Japan' and the 'East Sea' claimed by the Koreans do not overlap, these eminent people were in-sync with the appellation 'East Sea.' Now it is not too much to say that part of the UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the IHO are under the influence of Korean maneuvering.

To illustrate this point, let's look into the opinion of a Professor Hanmaoly of Beijing University, who can supposedly read Chinese Han characters. Professor Hanmaoly makes a definitive conclusion concerning the 'East Sea' which appears in the congratulatory address on the east sea written in the *Complete Manners and Rules of Great Jin* of the "Later" Jin Dynasty, which was established in the northeastern part of China in the 10th century: the East Sea refers to the 'Sea of Japan' today. Following the Jin Dynasty, the Professor maintains that the Qing Dynasty, established in the Chinese northeast after the Jin, undoubtedly called the 'Sea of Japan' the 'East Sea'.

However, according to a "mountains, hills, seas and rivers" clause written in the *Complete Collection of Manners and Rules of Great Jin* (34 volumes) and the *History of Jin* (34 volumes), the 'East Sea' refers to the East Sea Shrine enshrined in Laizhou in the Chinese province of Shandong, and has nothing to do with the 'Sea of Japan', not at all representing a sea.

The 'East Sea Shrine' was inherited by the Qing Dynasty. In *Imperial Protocol* and

Thorough Study of Imperial Documents, it is stated that the 'East Sea' is enshrined at Laizhou in Shandong Province. Also the *History of Great Qing Lineage* (136 volumes) clearly states the location of the 'East Sea Shrine,' that one of the four seas is enshrined 18 *Ri* to the west of the city castle in Laizhou in Shandong Province. Just as in the Jin Era, in the Qing Dynasty, it was known that the 'East Sea' refers to the holy shrine in the city of Laizhou in the Province of Shandong.

Professor Hanmaoly also maintains that the appearance of "Korean East Sea" in the *Map of Liadong to Korea* in *The Summary of Sea Defense* is evidence for the 'East Sea' appellation. But in the *Map of Liadong to Korea* also appear such characters as 'Korean South Sea' and 'Korean West Sea', in addition to Korean East Sea. These descriptions all refer to coastal areas. Ignoring the Korean South Sea and Korean West Sea, Professor Hanmaoly singly picks out the 'Korean East Sea' to present as evidence of the 'East Sea' appellation. The professor uses only that which is agreeable to his theory. Willful misinterpretation of documents is also seen by Professor Rainer Dormels of the University of Vienna. Professor Dormels mentions *General Maps of Four Seas and China* as evidence of the authenticity of the 'East Sea' appellation. But the *General Map* is merely another example showing four seas with China in the center, and has no connection to the 'Sea of Japan' at all.

Bravely present the fact to their face

As we have seen so far, there is no historical evidence to support the Korean assertion of an 'East Sea' appellation. To summarize their viewpoints, 1) they misinterpret the phrase 'East Sea', which in fact only refers to direction and area name where a deity is enshrined, refers to the 'Sea of Japan', 2) they confuse the term 'east sea', which was actually used by the Chinese to indicate the Bohai and the Yellow Sea areas to the west of the Korean peninsula, with the 'Sea of Japan', 3) though 'East Sea' only refers to the 'coastal waters' east of the Peninsula, they interpret this to refer to the entire 'Sea of Japan'. Knowingly or not, they constantly repeat these three patterns of mistakes.

Nevertheless, Korean propaganda is yielding benefits. In 2000, the double depiction of the 'Sea of Japan' and the 'East Sea' was supported by only 2.8% of Koreans surveyed, but, in 2009, the percentage jumped to 28%.

As I have previously mentioned, the campaign to call the 'Sea of Japan' the 'East Sea' is

fully supported by the Korean Government. In 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was then Korean Foreign Minister, reportedly distributed English language leaflets calling the 'Sea of Japan' the 'East Sea' and 'Takeshima' as 'Dokdo' at the concert held on United Nations Day sponsored by the UN Secretary-General.

Mr. Ban, as foreign minister, once said that the "Takeshima issue is of higher priority than the relationship between Japanese-Korean." After Mr. Ban became UN Secretary-General, his influence can hardly be underestimated. Those in the UN Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the IHO often make comments that are favorable toward Korea in the 'East Sea' appellation issue, and one of the present high-ranking officials of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names is a Korean. One prominent interviewee after another from relevant international organizations appeared in the aforementioned series of interviews in the *Korea Herald*. These are hardly coincidences. Here in Japan, the Administration of the Democratic Party of Japan is so weak-kneed that no one will openly say that "Takeshima is unlawfully occupied by Korea". Under these circumstances, how can Japan compete with Korea?

What Japan should do is not squabble over the number of old maps that state either 'Sea of Japan' or 'East Sea', but to assert the fact that Korea has no historical evidence for the appellation of 'East Sea' at the IHO General Assembly. If we fail to do so, the Korean argument, that the dual naming of the 'East Sea' is merely compensation for Japan's past—a repetition of the Korean tendency to raise historical issues for the sake of claiming victim status—may easily win over participant countries which are not familiar with the true situation. What is worse, confusion brought up by a false interpretation of history may send shockwaves throughout 'East Asia'. As I mentioned in the beginning of this paper, in China, people are voicing support for the campaign to rob the Senkaku Islands, following the Korean incident of stealing Takeshima.

Just before I submitted this paper to the editor, news broke out that the singular naming of the 'East Sea' is to be discussed in the New York State Assembly. The Japanese Government should lose no time in exposing the lie of the Korean assertion that the 'Sea of Japan' has long been called the 'East Sea', and do its best to keep our national interests intact.

About the Author: Shimojo Masao

Born in Nagano Prefecture in 1950, Mr. Shimojo completed a doctorate course and graduated from the Graduate School of Kokugakuin University. He went to South Korea in 1983 and taught at Samsung General Research Institute as chief lecturer and at Incheon University as visiting professor. Mr. Shimojo returned home to Japan in 1998 and since 1999, has been professor at Takushoku University. He is the most prominent expert on the Takeshima issue and chairs the “Takeshima Study Group” of Shimane Prefecture. *To Which Country, Japan or Korea, Does Takeshima Belong?* (Bunshun New Books) is among his many books.