

Legitimacy for Restoring the Name

# East Sea



# 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

- ❖ Historically, the sea area between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago has been called “East Sea” in Korea for the past 2000 years.<sup>1)</sup> Until the 19th century, maps published in Europe designated this area with various names such as “Sea of Korea,” “East Sea,” “Sea of Japan,” and “Oriental Sea.” The name “Sea of Japan,” however, was not widely used even in Japan until the mid-19th century. It is worthy of note that, as late as 1870, even many Japanese maps referred to this body of water as “Sea of Joseon (Korea)”<sup>2)</sup> instead of “Sea of Japan.”<sup>3)</sup>
- ❖ The name “Sea of Japan”, however, came into wider use in the 20th century with the advent of Japanese imperialism and military expansion in Asia. Following continuous onslaughts from Japan in the late 19th century, Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910. But even before that, Korea had already been deprived of its diplomatic representation by Japan in 1905. It was against this backdrop that the International Hydrographic Organization published the first and second editions of *Limits of Oceans and Seas: S-23*<sup>4)</sup> in 1929 and 1937, with “Japan Sea” used to designate the sea area between Korea and Japan. Furthermore, when the third edition of *S-23* was published in 1953, Korea was in the middle of the Korean War<sup>5)</sup> after a short period of liberation from the Japanese colonial rule in 1945.
- ❖ After the war and with the restoration of law and administration, Korea has steadfastly exerted its vigorous effort to regain the legitimacy of the name “East Sea.” For instance, in the process of negotiations between Korea and Japan on the Fisheries Agreement in 1965, the two countries, unable to reach an agreement on the name of the sea area, agreed to maintain their respective names in each of their texts of the Agreement - that is, “East Sea” in the Korean version and “Sea of Japan” in the Japanese version. Academic circles, historians and cartographers in Korea have continuously endeavored to restore the name “East Sea” on world maps. Such efforts were culminated when the Korean government officially raised the issue at the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names immediately following its admission to the United Nations as a full member in 1991.

- 1) Numerous references, such as *History of the Three Kingdoms (三國史記)*, the monument of King Gwanggaeto, and *Map of Eight Provinces of Korea(八道總圖)*, reveal that “East Sea” has been used in Korea for more than 2000 years.
- 2) Joseon was the Korean dynasty lasting from 1392 to 1910.
- 3) Various Japanese maps such as *Simplified Map of Japan's Periphery(日本邊界略圖)* by Takahashi Kageyasu in 1809, *New World Map(新製輿地全圖)* by Mitsukuri Shogoin in 1844, and *Japan's Northeast Marginal Boundary Map(本邦西北邊界略圖)* by Yasuda Raishu in 1850 referred the sea area as “Sea of Joseon”.
- 4) *S-23* is a major source of reference for the names and borders of waters around the world.
- 5) The Korean War broke out in 1950 and lasted until 1953. The third edition of *S-23* was approved at the 1952 IHO Conference and published in 1953.

三國史記卷第十三

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書事兼史禮部事集賢殿大學士監修國史上柱國致仕臣金富軾奉 宣撰

高句麗本紀第一 始祖東明聖王

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三國史記卷第十三

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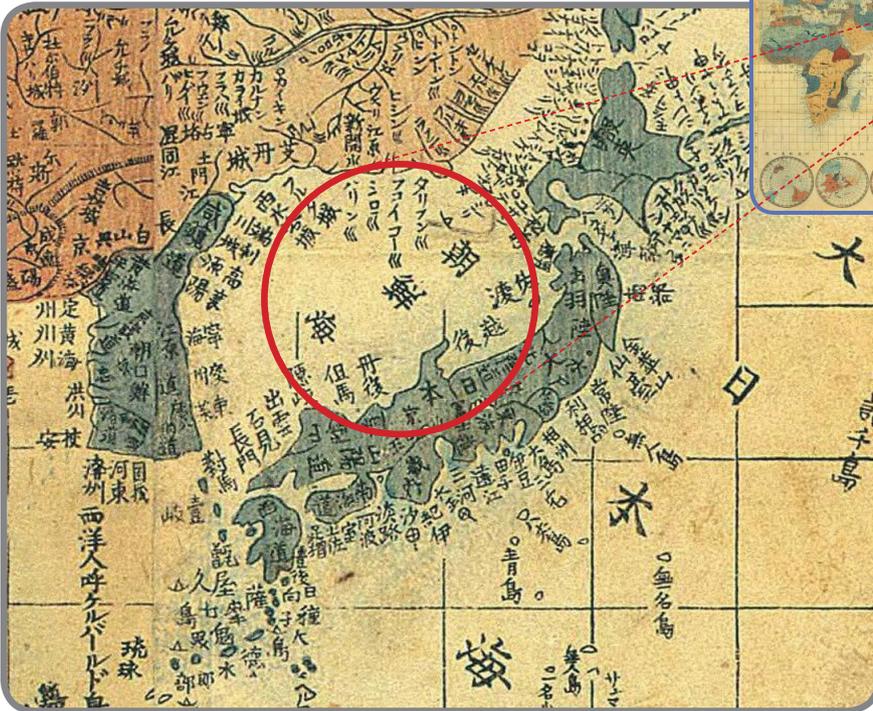
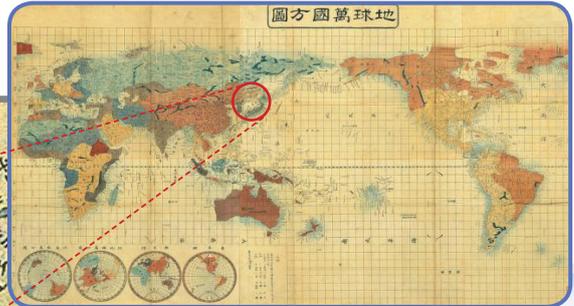
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**DONG HAE**  
(East Sea, 東海)

*History of the Three Kingdoms, Korea*

This seminal book recounts the history of ancient states in Korea and the name "East Sea" was used when describing historical events that occurred around B.C. 50.

圖方國萬球地



**JOSEON HAE**  
(Sea of Joseon, 朝鮮海)

*Newly Revised World Map, Japan*

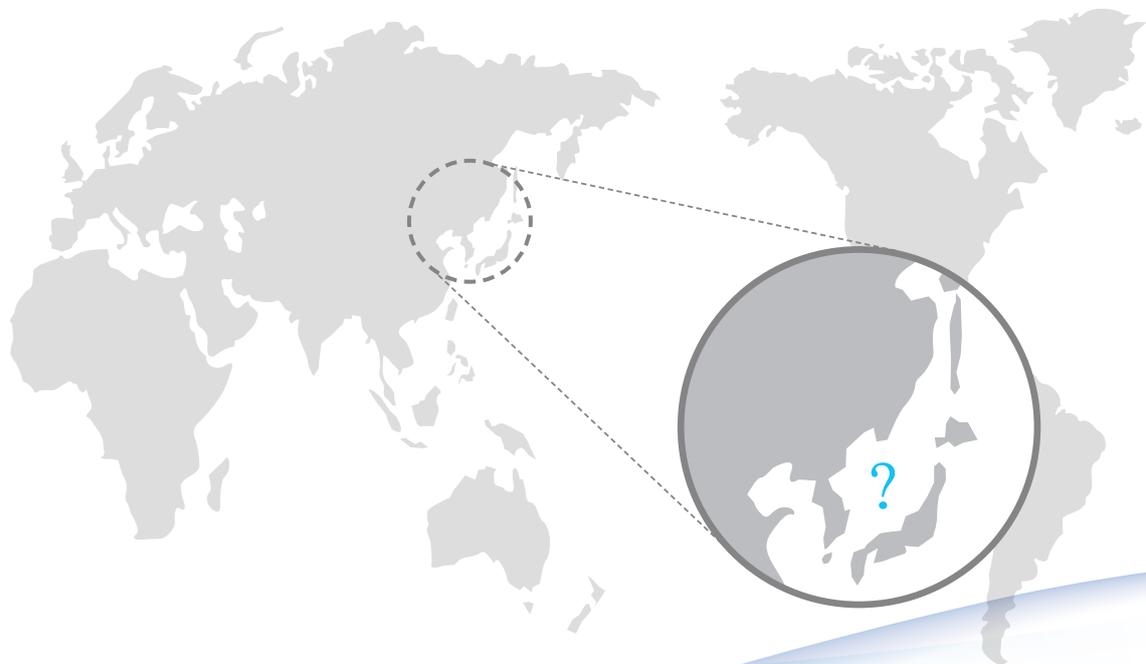
A Japanese map published in 1853 indicates the sea area between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago as the "Sea of Joseon (Korea)"; and the Pacific Ocean on Japan's side as the "Sea of Japan." This world map is based on one of maps by Takahashi, a Japanese government astronomer.

## 2. PRACTICES and RESOLUTIONS for the CONCURRENT USE

- ❖ Lying between Korea and Japan and extending north toward Russia, the sea area includes the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the countries encircling the area. In other words, several countries share jurisdiction and sovereign rights over the sea area.
- ❖ When there is a geographical feature shared among two or more countries, its designation is generally standardized through consultations among the countries concerned. If the effort to standardize fails, however, the names used by each of the countries are used concurrently. This general rule of international cartography is also confirmed in the International Hydrographic Organization Technical Resolution A.4.2.6. and the United Nations Resolution on the Standardization of Geographical Names III/20.
- ❖ In following these cartographic rules and resolutions, Korea has made continuous efforts to seek a mutually agreeable solution through bilateral consultations with Japan. However, Japan's intransigence and inflexibility have prevented any meaningful discussion, resulting in constant deadlocks.
- ❖ Therefore, under these circumstances, Korea is of the view that both "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan" should be used concurrently in accordance with the established general rule of international cartography. <sup>6)</sup>

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6) The concurrent use of different names is well evident in such cases as English Channel / La Manche, Dover Strait / Pas de Calais, and Bay of Biscay / Golfe de Gascogne.



## International Hydrographic Organization Technical Resolution

### A4.2.6. International Standardization of Geographical Names (1974)

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It is recommended that where two or more countries share a given geographical feature (such as, for example, a bay, strait, channel or archipelago) under a different name form, they should endeavour to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned. If they have different official languages and cannot agree on a common name form, it is recommended that the name forms of each of the languages in question should be accepted for charts and publications unless technical reasons prevent this practice on small scale charts. e.g. English Channel/La Manche.

## United Nations Resolution on the Standardization of Geographical Names

### III/20 Names of features beyond a single sovereignty (1977)

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The Conference,

Considering the need for international standardization of names of geographical features that are under the sovereignty of more than one country or are divided among two or more countries,

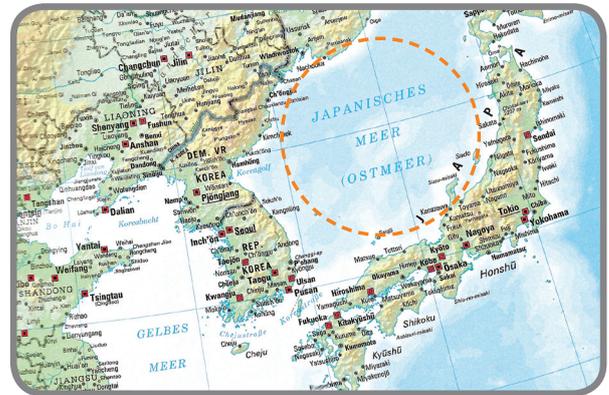
1. Recommends that countries sharing a given geographical feature under different names should endeavour, as far as possible, to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned;
2. Further recommends that when countries sharing a given geographical feature do not succeed in agreeing on a common name, it should be a general rule of international cartography that the name used by each of the countries concerned will be accepted. A policy of accepting only one or some of such names while excluding the rest would be inconsistent in principle as well as inexpedient in practice. Only technical reasons may sometimes make it necessary, especially in the case of small-scale maps, to dispense with the use of certain names belonging to one language or another.

### 3. INCREASING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT for CONCURRENT USE

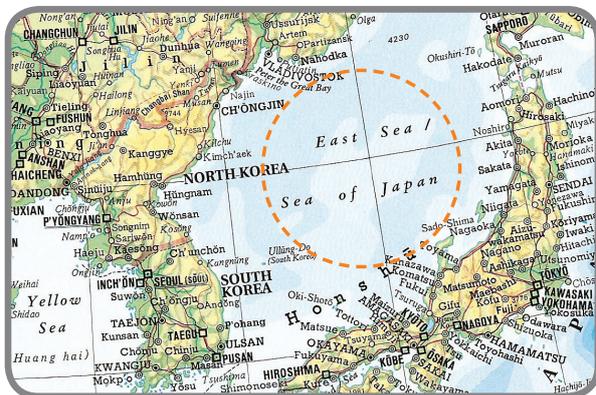
- ❖ The international community is increasingly supporting the Korean view on the concurrent use of the names in question, that is, “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan.” The steady increase in the use of both names by many internationally respected cartographers and the media clearly indicates that the legitimacy of “East Sea” is gaining wide acceptance.
- ❖ For instance, studies carried out independently by Japan and Korea show that the maps using both names concurrently are on the increase, rising from 2.8 percent in 2000 to 10.8 percent (18.1 percent in case of commercial maps) in 2005, and then to 23.8 percent in 2007. This suggests growing support and understanding for the legitimacy of the name “East Sea.”



► *Family Reference Atlas of the World, Second Edition, National Geographic, 2007*



► *Meyers Universalatlas mit Länderlexikon, Meyers Lexikonverlag, 2008*



► *Webster's Consise World Atlas, Barnes & Noble Books, 2002*



► *Asia, Kummerly+Frej, 2003*

## 4. JAPAN'S MISLEADING INTERPRETATION of the UN PRACTICE

- ❖ Japan has continuously put forward a false argument that the name “Sea of Japan” is authorized by the United Nations. However, this is totally untrue. It is the United Nations Secretariat, not the United Nations itself, that uses the name “Sea of Japan.” The Secretariat explains that it has been using this name just for practical reason in the absence of an internationally agreed appellation. For certain, the United Nations Secretariat has neither authorized the name “Sea of Japan” nor has the authority to do so.
- ❖ In this regard, the United Nations Secretariat stated that the use of the name “Sea of Japan” in the Secretariat’s documents is not an official position of the United Nations, but rather a practice of the Secretariat. Furthermore, it has clarified that this practice is without any prejudice to the position of any Member States of the United Nations on a particular appellation and that it does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat. It also emphasized that the practice should not be interpreted as advocating or endorsing any party’s position, and can in no way be invoked by any party in support of a particular position on the matter.

## 5. LEGITIMACY for RESTORING the NAME ‘EAST SEA’

- ❖ Geographical names are part of cultural heritage and a reflection of people’s identity and history. “East Sea” is a name that has been used for more than 2000 years and is still in use by 75 million Koreans. While “East Sea” is less known today due to historical circumstances of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, its legitimacy is firmly grounded in historical documents and world maps.
- ❖ In addition, given the geographical feature of the sea area, the concurrent use of both names “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan” is in line with the general rules of international cartography.
- ❖ As such, many of the world’s prominent map producers and the media have begun to use “East Sea” and “Sea of Japan” simultaneously. With increasing awareness of the legitimacy of the name “East Sea” in the international community, this trend of concurrent use is expected to rise continuously.

## Legitimacy for Restoring the Name 'East Sea'



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