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Features beyond a single sovereignty:

Features common to two or more nations

On Correcting the Inscription of “Sea of Japan”

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Abstract

As a reason of opposing the replacement of the inscription of “Sea of Japan”, Japan holds that the inscription of “Sea of Japan” in the map is prevalent in the world, so if it is replaced as the other name, it would lead to confusion.

Therefore the paper clarified the injustice arising from details of occurrence and devolution of the name “Sea of Japan” through the maps published in Japan.

In particular, it emphasized that the name “Sea of Japan” was inscribed by force in the place of the East Sea of Korea during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea.

On Correcting the Inscription of “Sea of Japan”

The name of the sea east of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is being inscribed differently in the maps by its coastal countries, as the East Sea of Korea, Eastern Sea and “Sea of Japan”, and mentioned as such in broadcasts, communications and publications.

Hence, this question is now inflicting negative influences on the service of standardized geographical names and the social - economic life.

The question of correcting the name of this sea was submitted to the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1992. Since then, it has been officially recommended in every conference that the countries concerned should reach an agreement on this issue, but no agreement is reached still now, due to different opinions of the parties concerned.

The geographical name “Sea of Japan” inscribed in disregard of the requirements of the times and contrary to the principles of justice should be corrected as soon as possible for the following reasons:

1) The geographical name of “Sea of Japan” is the outcome of the Japanese colonial rule of Korea.

Until the 19th century, Japan had known the Pacific Ocean east of Japan as “Sea of Japan” and recognized the sea area between Korea and Japan as the Sea of Korea (Since in the DPRK this sea is called the East Sea of Korea, it is mentioned as such in this paper) and inscribed it as such in all its maps.

Some typical maps in which the present Pacific Ocean was inscribed as “Sea of Japan” are given by the chronological order of Japan in Appendix 1.

By the early period of Meiji Japan had inscribed in almost all its maps the Pacific Ocean east of Japan as “Great Sea of Japan”, “Sea of Japan”, “Great East Sea of Japan” and “Great Oriental Sea of Japan” and the East Sea of Korea as the Sea of Korea. (See Appendices No. 1 and No. 3)

As the name of the sea east of Japan came to be fixed as the “Pacific Ocean” throughout the world with the extending domain of man’s cognition of the world, Japan, from about the year 1861, started inscribing in its maps the name of the sea east of Japan differently as North Pacific Ocean, South Pacific

Ocean, Ocean, Great Orient Sea or South Sea; as for the Sea of Korea, it inscribed as “Inner Sea of Japan” or “Great Sea of Japan”, while leaving the inscription of the name of Sea of Korea as it was in almost all of its maps.

The analysis of over 50 maps published in Japan reveals the facts that the name of “Sea of Japan” indicative of the sea east of Japan disappeared from there, that the inscription of the Sea of Korea or Inner Sea of Japan, or no inscription, was made for the East Sea of Korea, and that only 5 maps bore the inscription “Sea of Japan” for the sea concerned. (See Appendix No. 2)

Such a state of affairs concerning the inscription of the sea name remained unchanged until the 21 year of the Meiji period (1888).

It was just before and after 1910 when Japan subjugated Korea by means of “Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty” and started its colonial rule over Korea that it started inscribing on a full scale “Sea of Japan” for the East Sea of Korea.

As it was the time when Japan had already annexed the whole of the Korean Peninsula, it was able to “justify” its inscription of “Sea of Japan” in place of the East Sea of Korea without any restrictions, either geographically or politically; in 1929, it inscribed “Sea of Japan” in the Document 7-16, 7-17 (S-23) “Boundary between Ocean and Sea” of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), making it legalized internationally.

Such historical records of Japanese inscription of “Sea of Japan” testify to the fact that the international usage of the name “Sea of Japan” for the Sea of Korea originated from the Japanese occupation of Korea.

Therefore, the name “Sea of Japan” flying in the face of the demands of the times should be corrected at an earliest time possible.

Korea is an independent and sovereign state, and it can never tolerate such a legacy of the colonial period.

After its occupation of the Sakhalin Island south of 50th parallel North in the Russo-Japanese War, Japan renamed the Tartar Strait “Mamiya Strait”, the La Perouse Strait “Soya Strait” and the waters covering the area from the Java, Indonesia, to the Guam “Sea of Great East Asia” (Asahi Shimbun, dated December 16, 1942). Correction has been made of these names following the Japanese defeat, and they are now called by their original names.

Therefore, the claim that only the name “Sea of Japan” must be left as it is, has no ground.

2) The inscription of “Sea of Japan” is unreasonable in the light of the international practice in the inscription of sea or ocean in the maps.

It is the international practice in the inscription of the sea and ocean in the world map that geographical names are called after continent, region and place according to the order of continent, peninsula and island. But there is no precedent of such an exclusive inscription as “Sea of Japan” for the sea area shared by several sovereign states.

3) The inscription of “Sea of Japan” is contrary to the principle of the standardization of geographical names.

The principle of the standardization of geographical names is to give only one name to one geographical feature fairly and squarely and then protect and use the name concerned.

For this reason, geographical names assume legal character and are placed under legal protection.

In the inscription of the sea name in question, however, the DPRK has actually inscribed it as the East Sea of Korea, the ROK as the Eastern Sea, and Japan as “Sea of Japan”, interfering with the work of the standardization of geographical names and the social life.

Therefore, “Sea of Japan” should be replaced with the already-approved name common to all countries in the world.

Japan, in its paper “The Naming of ‘Sea of Japan’ ” submitted to the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names as Document E/conf. 94/Inf, argued that if other name is fixed in place of “Sea of Japan” it might give rise to confusion.

We consider that this anxiety of Japan can be removed easily, in view of the fact that though the names of countries and cities are changed –which actually took place in recent years– the world quickly becomes accustomed to them these days when the whole process of the state affairs and social life is put on IT basis.

The DPRK emphasizes that there is no change in its principled position that the sea name in question should be replaced in a short span of time through consultations between countries concerned.

Appendix 1

The maps in which “Great Sea of Japan”, “Sea of Japan” “Great East Sea of Japan”, “Great Eastern Sea of Great Japan” were inscribed east of Japan for the sea east of Japan and “Sea of Korea” for the sea east of Korea.

- (1) 司馬江漢作「地球橢圓圖」 日本東海
寬政四年刊
- (2) 司馬江漢作「地球圖」 日本東海
寬政四年刊 (1792)
- (3) 高橋景保作「新訂萬國全圖」大日本海
文化七年刊 (1810)
- (4) 阿部喜任作「萬國全圖」 大日本海
天保九年刊 (1838)
- (5) 箕作省吾作「新製輿地全圖」 大日本海
弘化元年刊 (1844)
- (6) 白井通氣作「新訂萬國全圖」 大日本海
嘉永三年刊 (1850)
- (7) 杉田玄端作「地學正宗圖」 日本海
嘉永三年刊 (1850)
- (8) 作者不明「地球萬國方圖」 大日本海
嘉永六年刊 (1853)
- (9) 工藤東平作「沿海要強之圖」 大日本海
嘉永七年刊 (1854)
- (10) 橋本玉蘭鎌作「萬國輿地分圖」 日本海
安政二・三年刊 (1855 1856)
- (11) 松田綠山作「地球萬國全圖」 大日本東海
安政三年刊 (1856)
- (12) 岡田春燈作「萬國輿地略圖」 大日本海
安政五年刊 (1858)
- (13) 玄々堂綠山作「銅鑄大日本國細圖」 大日本大東洋
刊年不記
- (14) 「明治改訂萬國輿地分圖」 日本海
明治三年刊 (1870)

On the Japanese seashore across the East Sea of Korea: 日本內海
On the Korean seashore across the East Sea of Korea: 朝鮮海

were inscribed simultaneously

Appendix 2

Among over 50 maps published in Japan, only 5, listed below, bore inscriptions of the “Pacific Ocean” or other names for the sea east of Japan, and “Sea of Japan” for the sea east of Korea.

- 1) 佐藤政养作 [官 新刊-于地路]

(文久元年刊 1861.) 太平洋

- 2) 安倍 泰行乡撰 [地球-于地全图]

北太平洋, 南太平洋, 日本内海

- 3) 石田松雅堂藏版 [掌輿地万国全图]

明治四年 1871. 北太平洋, 南太平洋, 大洋

- 4) 江岛阳明题言 [輿地万国全图] 1871.

北太平洋, 南太平洋, 大洋, 大日本海

- 5) 西宫柳缩图 [万国新图] 明治九年 1877. 北太平洋, 大日本海

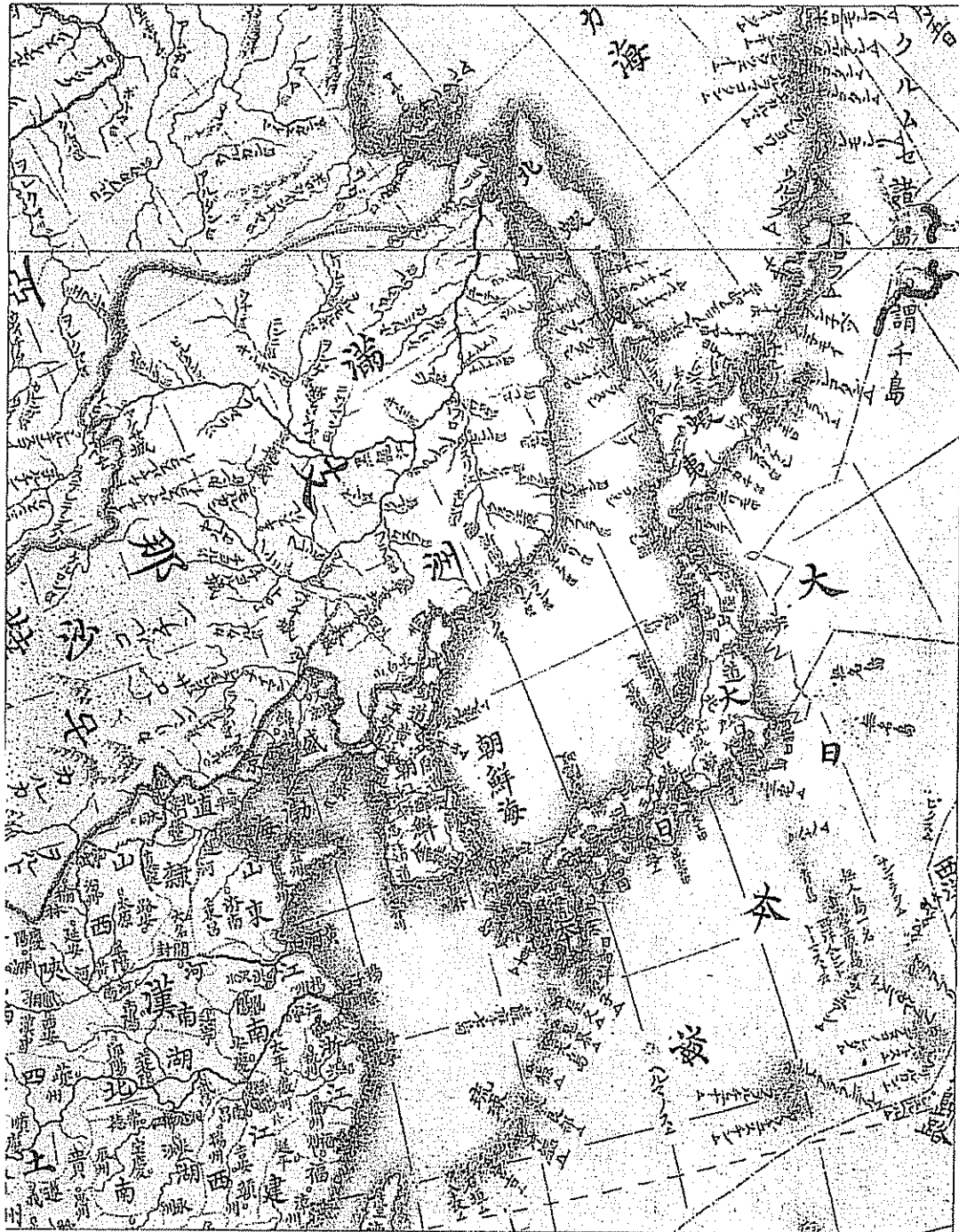
- 6) 三轮次郎编 [万国輿地全图] 明治二十一年刊 1888.

南太平洋, 北太平洋, 大洋

East Sea of Korea was inscribed as “Sea of Korea” (朝鲜海)

Appendix 3-1

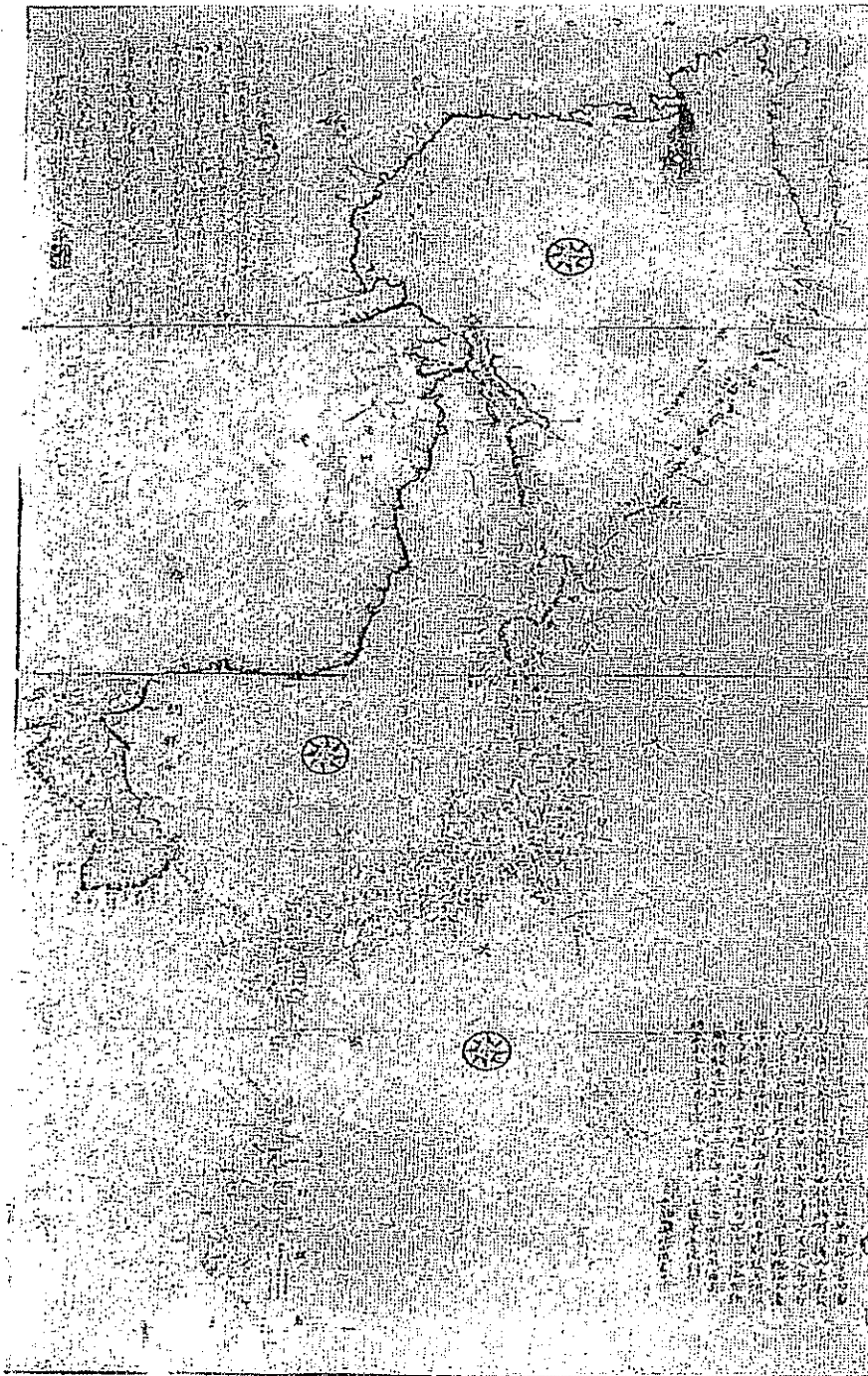
Japanese map in which the Sea of Korea was inscribed on the seashore of Korea.



高橋景保「新訂万国全図」

Appendix 3-2

Japanese map in which the Sea of Korea was inscribed on the seashore of Korea.



工藤東平の沿海要強之圖（嘉永七年刊）P.11参照