

# **The Truth About the Senkaku Islands: An Undeniable History**

**By Seki Hei**

**(with document collection and editing by Ishiwi Nozomu)**



Picture #1=The true state of Japan's maritime patrols off the coast of the Senkaku Islands. (Picture Credit=Councilor Nakama Hitoshi of the Ishigaki City Council)



Picture #2=A map on which the Senkaku Islands are colored in the same shade of red as Taiwan. This map, published in the book *The Authentic Story of Taiwan*, was reputed to have been made by French cartographer Pierre Lapie in 1809, but this copy of it is almost certainly a forgery. (See Chapter 2)

# Îles Diaoyu/Senkaku : une carte française du 19e siècle pour arbitrer le conflit Chine-Japon

La controverse autour de la souveraineté des îles Diaoyu ou Senkaku (selon la Chine ou le Japon) ne cesse de s'envenimer. Pour l'ambassadeur de Chine en Belgique, une carte ancienne démontre le bon droit de la Chine sur cet archipel.



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Deux lignes au détour d'une carte ancienne. Et si la vérité était aussi simple ? Voilà l'argument développé par l'ambassadeur de Chine en Belgique, à propos du conflit opposant la Chine et le Japon pour la souveraineté des îles Diaoyu/Senkaku, un petit archipel inhabité au cœur de la mer de Chine orientale.

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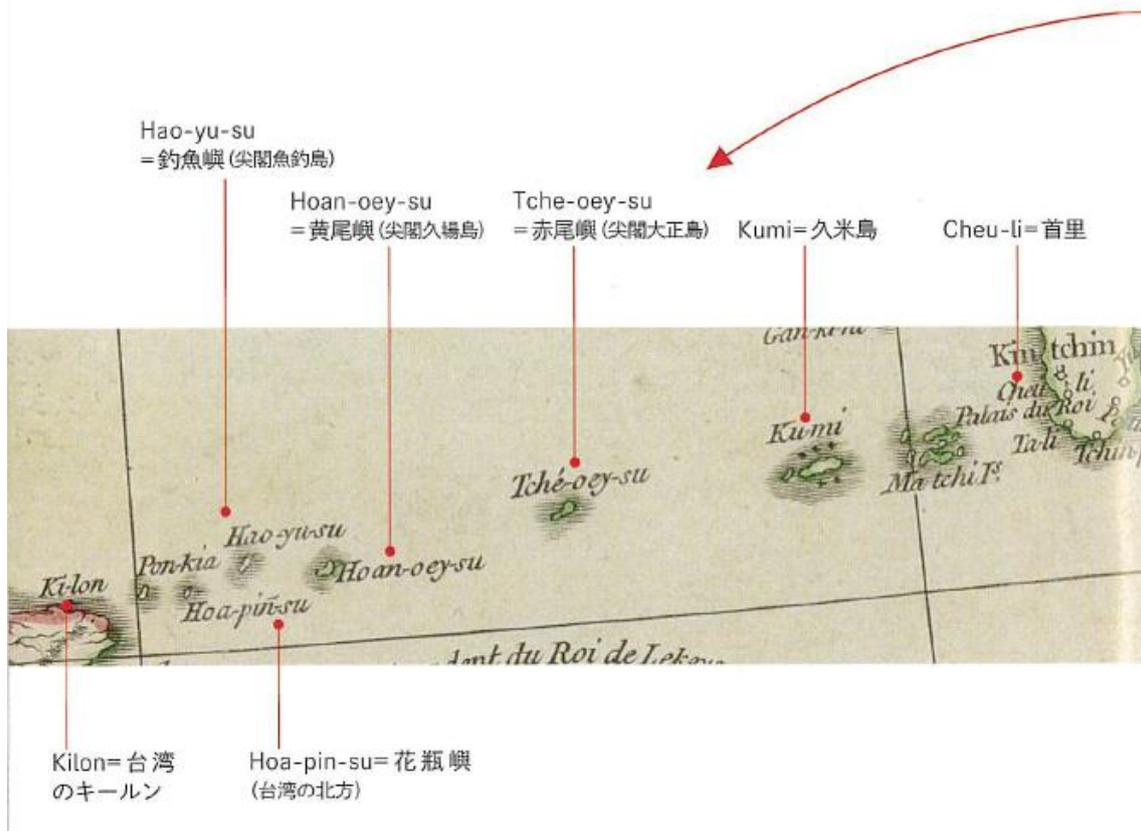
Envoyer

Le conflit territorial autour de ces îles, contrôlées par le Japon et revendiquées par la Chine, vire à l'exhumation de documents historiques censés prouver la souveraineté de l'un ou l'autre. Dernier coup en date, une lettre ouverte publiée par Liao Liquiang, l'ambassadeur de Chine en Belgique, sur le site de [L'Echo.be](http://L'Echo.be) et repris par la presse officielle chinoise.

Intitulé "Pourquoi les îles Diaoyu Dao appartiennent à la Chine", l'article légitime la volonté chinoise de récupérer les cinq îles volcaniques d'une superficie totale de 7 km<sup>2</sup> par la découverte d'une carte

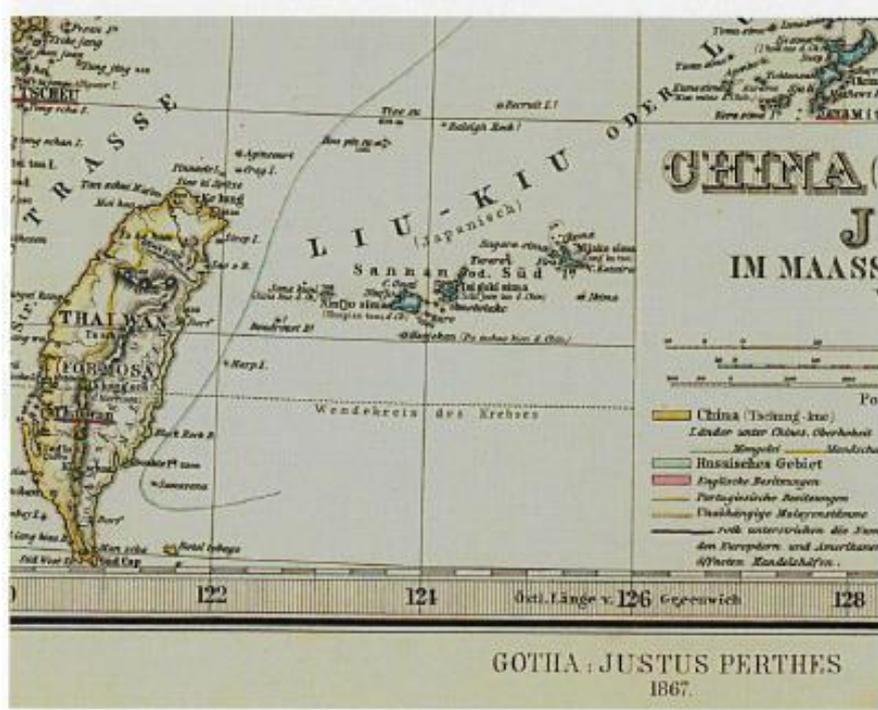
Picture #3=The online broadcaster *France Info* (<https://www.francetvinfo.fr>) uncritically published a propaganda announcement by the Chinese embassy in Belgium in the above article. The forged map is inserted at the very top of the article, whose title in English is "The Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands: A Nineteenth-Century French Map to Settle the China-Japan Dispute". (See Chapter 2)





Picture #5=D'Anville's map incorrectly places the Senkaku Islands in a neat line from west to east. (See Chapter 5)





Picture #8=By the eve of Japan's Meiji Restoration, German maps were already drawing a boundary line west of the Senkakus, placing them within the Japanese sphere. The above picture, which gives the date of "1867" in the bottom margin, is Map 43c (China, Korea, and Japan) of the fiftieth anniversary edition of Stieler's Handatlas by Augustus Heinrich Petermann. (See Chapter 5)



Picture #9=The lower-right inset box on Adolf Stieler's 1804 *Map of China* (full width) includes the Ryukyu and Senkaku Islands together as one territory. Professor Ishii Nozomu purchased this map at a used bookstore in Germany and it is currently the only copy existing in Japan. (See Chapter 5)

## Explanation of Key Terms

**Ryukyu Kingdom:** A kingdom within the Japanese nation that existed from c. 1400 to 1873. It is believed that the people of the Ryukyu Kingdom were descended from Japanese people who brought their culture and language to the Ryukyu Islands during and after the Jomon period of Japanese history (14,000-300 BC). Ancient works of history claim that the royal family of Ryukyu was founded by the son of the Japanese samurai Minamoto no Tametomo. Japanese forces attacked and conquered the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609 as part of Tokugawa Ieyasu's campaign to unite Japan under his authority. The Ryukyu Kingdom was then placed under the tutelage of Japan's Satsuma Domain, while remaining a tributary state of Ming and Qing China.

**Yaeyama:** The old name of Ishigaki Island. It also refers to the Yaeyama Islands, an archipelago consisting of Yonaguni, Iriomote, Ishigaki, and other smaller islands.

**Chogyosho (Tiao-yu-su):** Believed to have been an old name for Uotsuri Island, but the name varied between accounts. The oldest record containing this name dates to the year 1534.

**Chogyodai (Tiao-yu-tai):** A variant of the name Chogyo-sho that was initially used by the Ryukyuan government official Tei Junsoku.

**Chogyoto (Tiao-yu-tao):** Another name for Uotsuri Island, which was initially used by Oshiro Nagayasu near the start of the Meiji period of Japanese history (1868-1912).

**Kobisho/Kobosho/Komosho (Hoan-oey-su):** Believed to have been old names for Kuba Island before the island had a fixed name.

**Sekibisho/Sekisho/Sekikansho (Tche-oey-su):** Believed to have been old names for Taisho Island before the island had a fixed name.

**Senkaku Islands:** An island group comprised of Uotsuri Island, Minami Kojima, Kita Kojima, Kuba Island, Taisho Island, and various smaller islets. They became collectively known as the *Senkaku Shoto*, literally meaning "Pinnacle Islands" in English, after their incorporation into Japanese territory. In Chinese, they are referred to as the Diaoyu Islands.

**Ming Dynasty:** The line of emperors who ruled mainland China from 1368 to 1644. From the perspective of Japanese history, the Ming Dynasty reigned over China from the final decades of Japan's Northern and Southern Courts period (1336-1392) to the early Edo period (1603-1868).

**Qing Dynasty:** The line of emperors who ruled mainland China from 1644 to 1911. From the perspective of Japanese history, the Qing Dynasty reigned over China during Japan's Edo period (1603-1868) and Meiji period (1868-1912).

**Chinese tributary system:** A cornerstone of the foreign policies of both Ming and Qing China, under which foreign nations that could not be subjugated by force were instead officially designated as vassals of China and permitted to conduct trade with China in the form of tribute missions. Whenever a new king ascended to the throne in Ryukyu, the Ming Emperor dispatched an envoy to affirm his status as a vassal of China, and Ryukyu reciprocated by sending trade and tribute missions to China almost every year. China's other tributary states included the nations of Southeast Asia and the Netherlands.

**Island of Taiwan:** By the sixteenth century, this large island off the coast of southern China was a trading post between its aboriginal inhabitants, who had lived there for centuries without forming any state societies, and merchants from Japan, China, and Portugal. In 1624, the Dutch conquered the southwestern portion of the island. Soon after, Spain colonized the northern town of Keelung, which was also captured by the Dutch in 1642. In 1661, much of the western coast of the island fell under the control of Ming loyalist Koxinga, but was ultimately incorporated into Qing China in late 1683.

**Taiwan-fu:** A site located on the southwest side of the island of Taiwan that was selected in 1684 as the seat of the Chinese prefectural government following Taiwan's incorporation into Qing China. From Taiwan-fu, China ruled the island as a part of Fujian Province, though its power was limited to Taiwan's western coastline. Starting in 1875, China embarked on a campaign to conquer the eastern side of the island that it called, "opening up the mountains and pacifying the savages". By 1878, China had brought almost all of the island's coastline under its administration. The island was upgraded in political status to the Province of Taiwan in 1887, only to be surrendered to Japan in 1895. It was Japan that first extended government authority to the mountainous interior and the Three Northern Islets, which had always remained outside the jurisdiction of Taiwan-fu.

**Keelung:** A city on the northern tip of the island of Taiwan. Though the city's official Chinese name is Jilong, the name Keelung, derived from a language spoken by Taiwan's aboriginal people, remains in widespread use.

**Three Northern Islets:** A group of small isles, Huaping Islet, Mianhua Islet, and Pengjia Islet, situated north of Keelung.

**Taiwan:** The region on the southwest side of the island of Taiwan that was ruled in succession by the Dutch and Koxinga, before becoming the site of Taiwan-fu during the era of Qing rule.

**Opium War:** A war over the opium trade that was fought in the early 1840s between China and Great Britain. China's attempt to enforce a ban on opium was opposed by Great Britain, a major exporter of the drug.

**Treaty of Nanking:** The treaty that ended the Opium War in 1842. In accordance with the agreement, China ceded Hong Kong to Great Britain and opened five "treaty ports" to foreign trade.

**First Sino-Japanese War:** A war between China and Japan that began in 1894 over the sovereignty of Korea.

**Treaty of Shimonoseki:** The peace treaty of 1895 that concluded the First Sino-Japanese War, under the terms of which China ceded Taiwan and the islands under Taiwan's jurisdiction to Japan. After World War II, Taiwan was handed to the Allied Powers, who transferred control to the Republic of China, which still governs the island to this day.

## **Why Learn the History of the Senkaku Islands?**

The Senkaku Islands are a group of remote islands scattered in the sea north of the Miyako and Yaeyama Islands (Sakishima Islands). In 1895, Japan incorporated the Senkaku Islands into its territory as a part of Okinawa Prefecture. For several decades thereafter, the Senkakus were inhabited by a community of Japanese people, most of whom were engaged in fishing and fish processing.

And yet, Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands are now subject to almost daily intrusions by Chinese fishing vessels and warships masquerading as police patrols. Chinese citizens have attempted to land on the islands on numerous occasions. Today, Japan is fighting a desperate struggle to save the Senkaku Islands.

We can trace the start of these problems to September 24, 2010. On that date, the Japanese government succumbed to Chinese pressure and released the captain of a Chinese fishing vessel that had been impounded by a patrol boat of the Japan Coast Guard for illegally entering the waters around the Senkaku Islands. It was this incident that gave China the idea that it could seize control of the Senkakus if enough pressure was applied to Japan. In the seven years since then, China has been taking an increasingly aggressive stance towards the Senkakus.

China asserts that the Senkaku Islands have been described in historical documents as Chinese territory for many centuries, but China only started making this claim in the year 1970. In Japan, most authorities involved in the debate seem to think that Japanese ownership of the Senkaku Islands can be defended on the basis of international law alone, without any need to delve into the far reaches of history. However, the task facing Japan today in its fight to protect the Senkaku Islands is to win over public opinion both at home and abroad. Certainly, the key to doing this is to demonstrate the justness of Japan's historical claims to the islands.

## **Preface**

By Seki Hei

Recently, as the eyes of the world have been focused on the crisis over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the "Senkaku Islands dispute" has been fading from the attention of the public and the media. And yet, in the seas around the Senkaku Islands today, the gravity of the threat from China has risen like never before.

Between the start of 2017 and the completion of the manuscript of this book on July 2, Chinese government ships had already encroached on Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands on seventeen separate days. The encroachment of June 26 involved four government ships trespassing into Japanese waters in succession, one of which was reportedly armed with machine guns.

Intrusions on Japanese waters by armed Chinese government vessels have thus become regular occurrences, which means that Japan's sovereignty and territorial integrity are now under daily threat.

At the same time, the US Department of Defense has revealed this year in its annual report to Congress that the Marine Corps of the People's Republic of China is training special units to conduct surprise raids, including an amphibious landing on the Senkaku Islands. This leaves little doubt that China is preparing to seize the islands with armed force.

This danger posed by the Chinese military looms larger with each passing day, and an armed confrontation between China and Japan over control of the Senkakus may eventually be unavoidable. Unless the Japanese government moves quickly to create a defense system to guard the Senkakus from attack, we will not be able to protect Japan's sovereignty and territorial integrity from China's depredations.

In addition to that, Japan needs to counter the "three warfares" being waged by the Chinese government: public relations war, legal war, and psychological war. To outdo China at its own game, Japan must greatly step up its efforts to disseminate accurate information concerning the Senkaku Islands and win over public opinion.

In particular, it is very important that Japan appeal for support at home and abroad by letting the whole world know that the Senkaku Islands have never been Chinese territory and that Japan's ownership of the islands is both legally and historically legitimate. If we expect to prevent China from ultimately gaining control of the Senkakus, our first priority must be to thoroughly rebut China's false territorial claims on the islands.

That is the reason why I wrote this book, which was produced with invaluable assistance from Ishii Nozomu, a specialist in Chinese classical literature and associate professor at Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University.

For over a decade, Professor Ishiwi has been utilizing his expert knowledge and skill at deciphering classical Chinese texts to collect and organize an impressive archive of Chinese sources on the Senkaku Islands. He has also gathered, translated, and analyzed many Western documents and maps connected to this issue.

The wealth of information that Professor Ishiwi has discovered provides us with conclusive proof that the Senkaku Islands are legally and historically Japanese, and do not belong to China. Some of the documents obtained by Professor Ishiwi have even been officially registered in the records library of Japan's Cabinet Secretariat.

This book was composed on the basis of the research I conducted sifting through Professor Ishiwi's document collection. It is my contribution to defeating China in the information and public relations war being waged against Japan, and so I wrote it in a non-technical style that I hope will be easily understandable to the general reader.

I believe that the most significant quality of this book is its meticulous examination of historical sources written in classical Chinese to demonstrate beyond any shadow of a doubt the illegitimacy of China's claim to the Senkakus. The reader will find that, ironically, it is the Chinese themselves who, through these historical sources, have supplied us with the clearest evidence against the very assertions now being made by the current government of China. When one accurately analyzes the many documents written by Chinese intellectuals and bureaucrats of the Qing and Ming dynasties, it is easy to see that the Senkaku Islands have never been a territory of China.

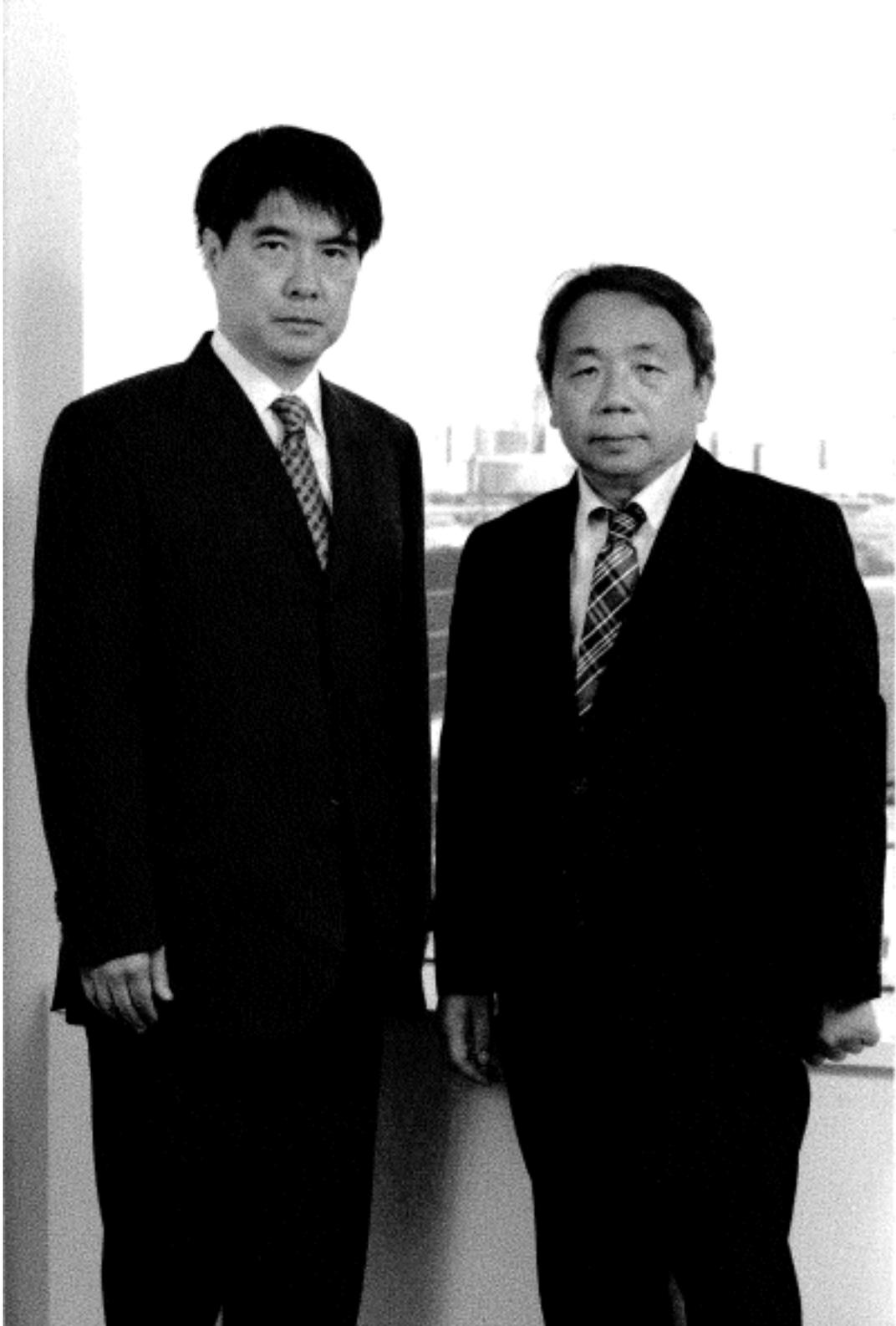
Therefore, this book contains a definitive refutation of the lies peddled by the Chinese government and people that the Senkakus are "an inherent part of China". Readers will, I hope, find it an indispensable tool in winning the public relations war with China. Anyone who reads this book will surely be well-prepared to rebut the deceitful arguments put forward by the Chinese side.

Such being the case, it is my earnest desire that this book may be read by as many people as possible. Both my collaborator Ishiwi Nozomu and I believe strongly that we can save the Senkaku Islands if we stand together to defend the rightness of Japan's case.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to Professor Ishiwi, who graciously granted me full access to his compilation of rare documents, and to Ohara Michiyo of the publisher Fusosha, who worked tirelessly to edit the manuscript of this book. I thank the both of you from the bottom of my heart!

Summer, 2017

**Introduction: To Save the Senkakus, Win the History War with China**



## **Our Day of National Humiliation: When the Japan Democratic Party capitulated to China**

Seki Hei: When did you first begin to take an interest in the Senkaku Islands as a political problem?

Ishiwi Nozomu: I suppose that it started with the 2010 boat collision incident near the Senkaku Islands. On September 7 of that year, two patrol boats of the Japan Coast Guard approached a Chinese fishing vessel illegally operating in Japan's territorial waters. Instead of heeding orders to stop, the fishing vessel repeatedly rammed into the patrol boats. The captain of the fishing vessel was charged the next day with interference with the duties of a government official, though China made stern demands that he be repatriated without delay. Before long, China raised the stakes further by restricting the export of rare-earth metals to Japan and detaining China-based employees of the Fujita Corporation for allegedly trespassing on a military installation. The cabinet of then Prime Minister Kan Naoto of the Japan Democratic Party quickly buckled under the pressure and freed the captain.

Seki Hei: Even after that, China maintained a hard-line stance and demanded an apology from the Japanese government. In the Diet of Japan, a resolution was passed requesting that the government make public the video of the incident. In the end, only seven minutes of the original two-hour-long video was released, and it was shown only to a selected group of thirty Diet members. The opposition Liberal Democratic Party urged the government to make the entire video public, but this was rejected by Chief Cabinet Secretary Sengoku Yoshito as being "inappropriate due to various considerations."

Ishiwi Nozomu: It was in the midst of this acrimonious debate that an anonymous Internet user under the name of "sengoku38" leaked the footage to Youtube. Mr. Seki, what were your impressions of the full video?

Seki Hei: I had a good idea of what I would see before the video was leaked. The Coast Guard doesn't impound ships except in the most extreme circumstances, so I fully expected to see the Chinese fishing vessel attack the patrol boats without provocation. When I did see the actual video, I was not particularly surprised. As expected, it was all

quite typical of the way China operates. Japanese people are probably the only ones who would be shocked by it.

Ishiwi Nozomu: At the time of the collision, I happened to be in Suzhou, China, and I first heard about it on the local news, but I wasn't terribly surprised. The thought that ran through my mind was, "Oh, they're at it again..." The Chinese people standing around me didn't show much reaction either. However, when I returned to Japan a few days later, I was very alarmed to hear talk on the news that the Japanese government might release the Chinese captain. I thought to myself, "Surely, the Japanese government would not do something so foolish!"

Seki Hei: Yes, I was far more stunned by the release of the captain than by the initial incident. Under normal circumstances, he should have been given a serious trial. And yet, the Japan Democratic Party surrendered so completely that it even overrode the rule of law for the sake of gratifying China's demands. I have called September 24, the anniversary of the day on which the Chinese captain was released, "The Day of National Humiliation". We have still not recovered from the incalculable damage that this illegal move did to Japan's national security.

Ishiwi Nozomu: I agree with you. I was so stunned by this sequence of events that it led me to start researching the history of the Senkaku Islands. Still, my connection to the Senkakus does go back somewhat earlier than that. In order to investigate conditions in Hong Kong during the 1997 transfer from British to Chinese rule, and also to study the Cantonese language, I spent two years in Hong Kong starting the year before the handover. At that time, the Diaoyu Islands Protection Movement was actively campaigning in Hong Kong for China to assert its sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, known as the Diaoyu Islands in Chinese, but this was barely covered by the Japanese media.

In September 1996, one of the movement's leading activists, Chen Yuxiang, attempted to go ashore on the Senkakus as a protest against Japan's control of the islands. He entered Japan's territorial waters on board a chartered cargo ship and started swimming towards the islands, but drowned on his way to the shore. In Hong Kong, he was treated as a hero. His memorial service was attended by over 2,000 people, though the Hong Kong media reported it as 50,000 people.

Seki Hei: He dived into the sea on his own accord and got himself killed for it. I don't regard him as much of a hero. He was just a disgruntled Chinese man violating Japan's territorial waters.

Ishiwi Nozomu: A Hong Kong TV crew, which was accompanying Chen Yuxiang in his bid to land on the Senkakus, witnessed him being swiftly rescued by the professionals of the Japan Coast Guard. They captured it all on film, ironically with a Japanese-made video camera! [grins] The Hong Kongers who saw the broadcast, even the news announcer, were visibly disappointed. Although they had yearned to see just how wicked the Japanese people could be, they were put in a rather awkward situation when the video instead showed Japan in an entirely positive light!

Seki Hei: Propaganda war is one of China's oldest tricks, but that time it really backfired on them! [laughs]

Ishiwi Nozomu: Around then, for a period of about a year, the Hong Kong media were running stories on the Senkaku Islands every day. The newspapers and television stations were constantly flaunting old historical documents that purported to prove China's ownership of the Senkakus. I am an expert in the Chinese classics, so my interest was certainly stimulated. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but have some doubts about the claims being made on these TV programs. Though I was not yet undertaking serious research on the Senkaku Islands problem, even back then I had the impression that they were selectively presenting only the parts of the documents that were favorable to the arguments of the Chinese side. After the maritime collision incident of 2010, I began to study the matter in earnest.

Seki Hei: So, it was academic curiosity that initially motivated your work. Still, it is remarkable that you saw through China's real agenda so early on.

Ishiwi Nozomu: One earlier occasion on which the Senkaku Islands were given widespread attention was in 1978 during the negotiations for the Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship. At that time, Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping of China unilaterally proposed that the thorny issue simply be shelved and left for future generations to resolve. He said, "Our generation may not be wise enough to solve this problem, but the next generation will be wiser than us and may be able to solve it." Mr. Seki, what was the state of Chinese public opinion on the Senkaku Islands back then?

Seki Hei: The Senkaku Islands never even crossed the minds of Chinese citizens at that point. The same was true of the territorial disputes over the South China Sea Islands. They were not brought up at all. Ordinary Chinese people only began to talk about the Senkaku Islands very recently, in the context of China's efforts to step up its overseas expansion and incite its citizenry. Naturally, the 2010 boat collision sent the Chinese into a frenzy. Mr. Ishiwi, you mentioned that you have been observing the Senkaku Islands since the handover of Hong Kong, but was it the incident of 2010 that made you conscious of its ramifications as a political problem?

Ishiwi Nozomu: Yes, I felt a real sense of impending crisis, as it appeared that my country's very survival was now at stake. When the news hit, every street corner in Japan was abuzz with talk of the Senkaku Islands, the embargo on exports of rare-earth metals, and the detention of the Fujita Corporation employees. All the ordinary citizens, even old men and women at train stations and cafés, suddenly became active participants in a national discussion. The only other political problem I can think of that has attracted so much attention from the majority of ordinary Japanese people was the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attacks.

Seki Hei: The added shock of the video served as real wake-up call that shook the Japanese people from their post-World War II complacency. In that sense, the incident did have a silver lining.

Ishiwi Nozomu: I suppose that I myself was one of the Japanese people awakened by the crisis. I abandoned my studies on Chinese classical literature, my own field of expertise, and since then have been researching the Senkaku Islands seven days a week!  
[grins]

Seki Hei: Wow! Seven days a week? Don't you do anything else with your life?  
[laughs] Still, that's an admirable level of dedication. It's easy to see how you became the world's foremost expert on the history of the Senkaku Islands.

Ishiwi Nozomu: It was also partly because other academics were not already researching the history of the Senkaku Islands. And yet, you would think that scholars of the Chinese classics should be falling over each other to enter this critical field of study.

Seki Hei: As you already know, Japanese scholars have no interest in defending Japan's national interests...

Ishiwi Nozomu: Yes, indeed. Even my own research is regarded by my colleagues as heresy. Nonetheless, I believe firmly that classicists like myself must not do all our work atop the ivory tower, but rather must maintain our connection to society. There are a number of classicists studying Ryukyuan sources written in classical Chinese, and they should be the ones taking the lead to unravel the mysteries of Senkaku Islands history.

Seki Hei: However, that research is not work for your university. Even the masses of documents that you have acquired were purchased at your own expense... Doesn't your wife ever get mad and scold you for wasting time on things that don't bring in a paycheck? [grins]

Ishiwi Nozomu: ...That does happen from time to time.

Seki Hei: I'm not surprised! [laughs] I could never have gotten away with that without a tongue-lashing from my better half! [grins] You have a good wife!

Ishiwi Nozomu: Well, my wife is right-wing, so it's not too big a deal.

### **Why we must protect the Senkaku Islands at any cost**

Ishiwi Nozomu: I often hear left-wing activists, as well as many entirely disinterested people, ask why we shouldn't just let China have "those tiny, far-off, inconsequential isles". So, what are the reasons why we must protect the Senkaku Islands? Let's touch upon this matter again.

Seki Hei: The Senkaku Islands are not only strategically important to the preservation of Japan's national security, but are also very economically valuable. If Japan were to lose the Senkaku Islands, it would also lose a large swath of its territorial waters and its exclusive economic zone surrounding the Senkakus. If the Chinese were to seize the islands, they would construct military installations on them, just as they are already doing in the South China Sea. This would present a direct threat to Japan's safety.

Furthermore, the loss of the Senkaku Islands would entail far-reaching consequences beyond their immediate strategic significance. In the case of an armed invasion of the Senkakus by Chinese forces, even Japan's current constitution would allow for a counterattack, but that would mean war between China and Japan. Even if the war were strictly localized to the Senkaku Islands, leftist media outlets such as the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* would surely question the sensibility of spilling Japanese blood over a few deserted islands. In that situation, would the incumbent prime minister have enough resolve to order the Japan Self-Defense Forces to fight China at the risk of the lives of Japanese soldiers? If not, China would annex the islands, and that would be just the start of our troubles. I have no doubt that China's next target would be Okinawa. Should Okinawa be captured as well, the US-Japan alliance would be in danger of collapsing. Japan's geopolitical significance to the United States derives from America's bases in Okinawa, without which the alliance would be meaningless. In fact, the Chinese government is already taking active steps to have America's military presence in Okinawa removed.

Ishiwi Nozomu: Indeed, there has been something suspicious about the recent upsurge of the anti-base movement in Okinawa.

Seki Hei: Yes, China has been manipulating the movement from behind the scenes. The Second International Academic Conference on the Latest Developments in the Okinawa-Ryukyu Problem took place in May of 2016 to discuss issues relating to Okinawa, but strangely it was held not in Naha or Tokyo, but rather in Beijing. Moreover, its listed sponsors were Chinese organizations, including the China Institute of Strategy & Management and the Beijing University Department of History.

More baffling still were the subjects discussed there. It was reported that the participants traded opinions on Okinawa's right to self-determination, the US military bases in Okinawa, and the prospect of Okinawa becoming an independent country, though these are all issues with major implications for Japan's sovereignty and national security. The fact that they conferred on such sensitive matters at an event hosted by Chinese research institutes is highly irregular conduct and blatant interference in Japan's internal affairs.

The China Institute of Strategy & Management, which was the lead sponsor of the conference, counts among its members a number of leading officers of the Chinese Army, including a former defense minister who served as the organization's director. We can therefore discern that the Chinese military is pulling the strings of this "research group", even though it remains unclear which specific government agency it belongs to. The fact that the group's headquarters is located at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, a facility of the Chinese government accommodating foreign dignitaries, leaves little doubt that it is doing much more than run-of-the-mill research.

Although the event was billed as an "international academic conference", all the non-Chinese invitees were Japanese citizens from Okinawa. The Japanese in attendance included several academics, such as a professor from Okinawa International University who has long advocated for the removal of the US military bases and independence of Okinawa, as well as journalists representing the *Okinawa Times* and *Ryukyu Shimpo*. The separation of Okinawa from Japan and dismantlement of its US military bases would be China's greatest ambition fulfilled. Thus, the hand of the Chinese government is clearly visible behind the rise of the anti-base movement in Okinawa.

Ishiwi Nozomu: And if the Senkaku Islands fall, Okinawa will fall too...

Seki Hei: Exactly. And the fall of Okinawa will mean the end of Japan. That is the reason why the Senkakus are so important. They are the bulwark standing between China and us. Japan absolutely could not surrender them without jeopardizing the peace in Asia and its own survival as a nation.

Ishiwi Nozomu: However, if China were to invade the Senkaku Islands, it would require considerable courage and conviction on the part of the prime minister to have the Self-Defense Forces mobilize for war against the Chinese military. Under what circumstances would the prime minister be able to make such a momentous decision?

Seki Hei: The prime minister would likely be unable to act without the support of the Japanese people, but for that two conditions will have to be met. Firstly, the Japanese people must understand the significance of the Senkaku Islands. If most people continue to think of the Senkakus as tiny isles not worth sacrificing the lives of soldiers for, then the prime minister will also lose the will to take decisive action. The only way that we can sway public opinion is by supplying as many people as possible with the

information that will make them realize how crucial the Senkaku Islands are to Japan's national security.

Secondly, the Japanese people must themselves bear the determination to defend every piece of Japan's territory, even small and uninhabited islands, no matter the human cost.

Ishiwi Nozomu: That determination did certainly exist in the one or two years after the 2010 boat collision incident when the Chinese captain was set free, but now it seems to have faded.

Seki Hei: And yet, intrusions of Chinese ships into Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands are now an everyday occurrence, and the danger is that China's aggressions will be normalized to such an extent that the Japanese people become entirely desensitized to them. It appears that the same sort of trend has unfolded just this year with regard to the North Korean nuclear crisis. The Japanese people greeted North Korea's first missile launch with understandable fear and tension. Nonetheless, as the weapons tests became more and more frequent, people eventually started asking each other, "Shouldn't the missiles be coming around this time?", as if it were routine table talk. [grins]

Ishiwi Nozomu: Yes, the feelings of the Japanese people towards the Senkaku Islands dispute are the same. They are already being desensitized to it.

Seki Hei: The US Department of Defense released its annual report to Congress on June 6, 2016, revealing that China's military is augmenting the strength of its amphibious units in preparation for future landing operations. Obviously, the target of these operations will be the Senkaku Islands. The People's Liberation Army of China has been training its Marine Corps to carry out a surprise attack on the Senkakus. What prevents China from intervening is that the Senkaku Islands, being under Japanese administration, are currently protected under the terms of the US-Japan Security Treaty.

However, if the Japanese government fails to explicitly affirm its sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, it follows that they would no longer fall under the purview of the treaty. The real problem is that, even though the Senkakus are controlled by Japan, Japanese people are not permitted to go ashore on them, even as Chinese government vessels continuously infiltrate the waters around them. In this sense, it is with good

reason that many are making the argument that the Senkaku Islands are already slipping out of Japanese control. Though the Senkaku Islands are indisputably Japanese territory, the more important question is whether or not they are effectively under the authority of the Japanese government.

Ishiwi Nozomu: Looking back at the history of the islands, it was in 1819 that a member of the Ryukyu royal family made an official landing on the islands and spent three days there surveying them for a source of fresh water. That was before the Senkaku Islands were a territory of Japan. And yet, now that the islands are a territory of Japan, what could be the reason for preventing Japanese citizens from landing on them?

Seki Hei: As I said before, this is exactly why it is so essential that the people of Japan gain a proper understanding of the Senkaku Islands dispute. Mr. Ishii, the work that you are doing is truly of the utmost significance, not only for demonstrating that the Senkaku Islands are a traditional Japanese territory, but even more notably for making clear that they have never historically been a part of China. It has always been easy to see that China's claim to the Senkaku Islands is not legitimate under prevailing international law, but you have helped remind Japan and the world that China has never even had a historical connection to the Senkakus.