

# A REBUTTAL TO CHINA'S FRAUDULENT CLAIMS ON THE SENKAKU ISLANDS

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## **China's online propaganda campaign**

On December 30, 2014, the PRC's State Oceanic Administration launched a website entitled "Diaoyu Dao: The Inherent Territory of China."<sup>1</sup> The site is China's platform for its claims on the Senkaku Islands, which the Chinese call "Diaoyu Dao and its affiliated islands. It contains the following tabs:

Basic Facts on Diaoyu Dao (visitors must click on the "Homepage" tab to find this)

Natural Environment

Historical Basis

Historical Literatures [sic]

Legal Documents

Books and Essays

News & Trends

Videos

The Chinese want the world to believe that they have effective control of the Senkaku Islands, and are hoping to succeed in presenting that control as a fait accompli. For that very reason we should be suspicious of the News & Trends section, which documents the China Coast Guard's numerous violations of Japanese territorial waters in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands. It behooves Japan to, without delay, repudiate China's claims by demonstrating that they have absolutely no historical basis, and to transmit video footage showing the Maritime Safety Agency's patrol boats in action.

Incidentally, the China Coast Guard operates under the oversight of the State Oceanic Administration.

The following four arguments in the Basic Facts section (paraphrased here for the sake of intelligibility)<sup>2</sup> form China's rationale for its acts of provocation:

1. Diaoyu Dao and its affiliated islands are an integral part of China; China's sovereignty over them has been established both historically and in terms of international law.
2. China had jurisdiction over "Diaoyu Dao" and its affiliated islands several hundred years before Japan discovered them.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> The website's content is in three languages: Chinese, Japanese, and unidiomatic English.

3. In accordance with the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Diaoyu Dao and its affiliated islands were ceded to Japan, along with Taiwan and its affiliated islands. However, all were returned to China after World War II in accordance with provisions of the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration, and the Japanese Instrument of Surrender.
4. China's determination to protect the fruits of its victory in an anti-Fascist war will not be shaken. China has the confidence and capability to thwart Japan's acts in defiance of historical fact and international law, and to maintain peace and order in the region.

The reference to victory in an anti-Fascist war suggests an opportunistic historical perception that capitalizes on the fact that 2015 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II.

Unfortunately, there is a fatal flaw in that historical perception and in the State Oceanic Administration's website, which maintains that the Senkaku Islands are an integral part of China, *and* that they are islands affiliated with Taiwan. The creators of the website do not offer any evidence supporting these claims.

In this article I will analyze two of the State Oceanic Administration's claims: (1) the Senkaku Islands were under Chinese jurisdiction several hundred years before Japan discovered them, and (2) they are islands affiliated with Taiwan.

### **The history of Chinese claims on the Senkaku Islands**

The PRC government claimed the Senkaku Islands as Chinese territory on December 30, 1971. The government of Taiwan (Republic of China) had issued a diplomatic statement six months earlier, on June 11, declaring them Taiwanese territory.

The motivation for these declarations was the reversion of Okinawa, including the Senkaku Islands, to Japan on May 15, 1972. Following in the footsteps of Taiwan, the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement asserting that the Senkaku Islands are affiliated islands of Taiwan and, like Taiwan, have been an integral part of China since ancient times. The statement said also that the PRC would without fail recover Diaoyu Dao and other islands affiliated with Taiwan.

The PRC's fixation on the Senkaku Islands can be explained by the Chinese intention of absorbing Taiwan by designating the Senkaku Islands as its affiliates.

The State Oceanic Administration's assertion in its website's Basic Facts section that the Senkaku Islands became Chinese territory through provisions in the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration, and the Japanese Instrument of Surrender is based on the aforementioned statements issued in the 1970s. Since then the PRC government, intent on possessing the Senkaku Islands, has taken aggressive action in that direction. In 1992 the

PRC enacted the Law of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. In 2008 PRC government ships made incursions into waters off the Senkaku Islands. Furthermore, on May 5, 2010, a multitude of comments pertaining to the Senkaku Islands dispute were posted to a website commemorating the Eighth Route Army,<sup>3</sup> the precursor of the PLA (People's Liberation Army).

Four months later, on September 7, the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that rammed a Japanese Maritime Safety Agency patrol boat was arrested and charged with obstructing the work of government officials. Prior to that Chinese vessels were persistently and illegally fishing in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands. Subsequently, such brazen acts on the part of the Chinese expanded to the South China Sea. Today the PRC bears sole responsibility for the disruption of peace and order in the region, its lofty proclamation notwithstanding (see 4. above).

This provocative behavior is reminiscent of the Nagasaki Incident, which took place about 130 years ago during the Qing dynasty. On August 1, 1886 China's Beiyang Fleet (battleships *Dingyuan*, *Zhenyuan*, *Jiyuan*, and *Weiyuan*) entered Nagasaki harbor. Chinese sailors went ashore without permission and ran amok, committing acts of violence throughout the city. At that time the Chinese were intent on vaunting their naval prowess. However, the four vessels involved in the Nagasaki Incident were captured, attacked and sunk, or sank in the subsequent First Sino-Japanese War. The Nagasaki Incident loomed large in that war, and foreshadowed the collapse of the Qing dynasty after the Russo-Japanese War.

Today, more than 100 years after the fall of China's last imperial dynasty, the PRC is again resorting to dangerous, provocative behavior. Why is that we Japanese don't seem to be able to learn from history?

For years China has been bombarding Japan with the "historical basis" for these claims. The PRC cites (*Voyage with a Tailwind*),<sup>4</sup> a navigational guide supposedly compiled in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as proof that China had jurisdiction over the Senkaku Islands several hundred years before Japan discovered them on the grounds that the islands were sighted by Chinese envoys as early as the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), during journeys to the Ryukyus (present-day Okinawa prefecture). The Japanese have consistently and patiently, but firmly, refuted these claims.

### **Japanese scholar's opinion cited as international law**

The PRC insists that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory both historically and in terms of international law. Here we have the rare case in which the Chinese turn to a Japanese source: *The Senkaku Islands*, a book written by the late Inoue Kiyoshi, and issued

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<sup>3</sup> [www.balujun.org](http://www.balujun.org) (in Chinese)

<sup>4</sup> *Shun feng xiang song* (顺风相送).

in 1972. Inoue's book is listed as a reference on the Books and Essays tab of the State Oceanic Administration website.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese esteem Inoue because of his stance on the Senkaku Islands:

We must hasten to resolve (and resolve correctly) the dispute over the ownership of the Diaoyu Islands. Because of Japanese imperialism, false patriotism will arise among our countrymen. Historians must take the high road and Oact to resolve the dispute and forestall the completion of the first phase of infringement of a foreign nation's territory (which would pave the way for the second and subsequent phases).<sup>6</sup>

Inoue believed that Japan had taken advantage of its victory in the First Sino-Japanese War and seized the Senkaku Islands when the attention of China and the Western powers was focused elsewhere.

But first we must ascertain that the Senkaku Islands were indeed affiliated islands of Taiwan and establish the date on which Taiwan came under Chinese jurisdiction. Claiming territorial rights without a firm historical basis is imperialism at its most intrinsic.

Unfortunately, Inoue does not establish such a historical basis in his book. He maintains that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory because the name "Diaoyu Island" appears in written Chinese records, including the following:

Date	Title
1534	<i>Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus</i> <sup>7</sup>
1562	<i>Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus: Updated Version</i> <sup>8</sup>
1683	<i>Account of a Mission to the Ryukyus</i> <sup>9</sup>
1719	<i>Record of Messages from Zhongshan (the Ryukyus)</i> <sup>10</sup>
1756	<i>A Short History of the Ryukyus</i> <sup>11</sup>
1800	<i>Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus</i> <sup>12</sup>
1808	<i>A Short History of the Ryukyus, Continued</i> <sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/node\\_7219356.htm](http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/node_7219356.htm).

<sup>6</sup> Inoue Kiyoshi, *Senkaku retto* (Senkaku Islands) (Tokyo: Daisan Shokan, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> *Shi Liuqiu lu* (使琉球錄).

<sup>8</sup> *Chongbian shi Liuqiu lu* (重編使琉球錄).

<sup>9</sup> *Shi Liuqiu zalu* (使琉球雜錄).

<sup>10</sup> *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* (中山伝信錄).

<sup>11</sup> *Liuqiuguo zhilue* (琉球国志略).

<sup>12</sup> *Shi Liuqiu lu* (使琉球錄).

<sup>13</sup> *Xu Liuqiuguo zhilue* (続琉球国志略).

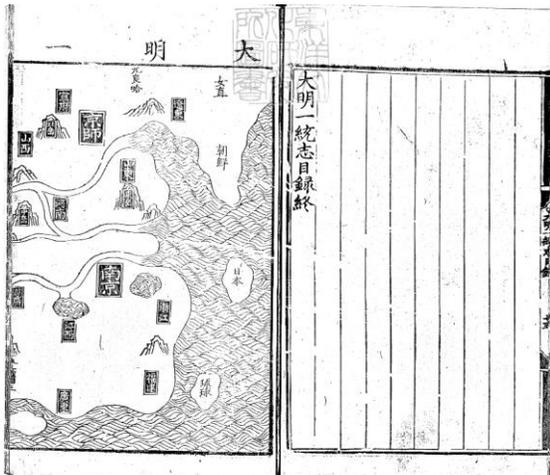
## Taiwan was a foreign land during the Ming dynasty

The mention of a place name in a written work does not prove that the Senkaku Islands were Chinese territory several hundred years before Japan discovered them. To prove that the islands were under their jurisdiction at that time, the Chinese must establish that Taiwan is described as belonging to Ming China in official regional topographical works like *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty*,<sup>14</sup> or official histories such as *History of the Ming Dynasty*.<sup>15</sup>

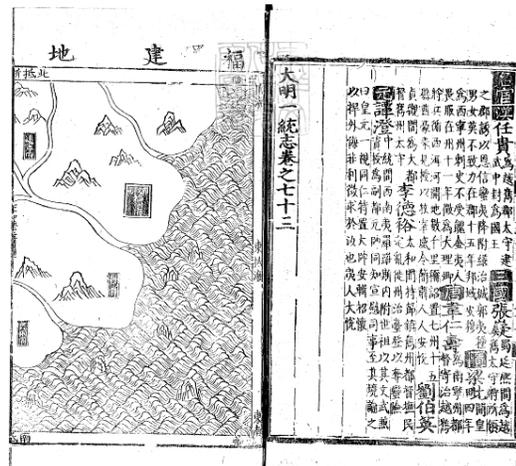
Inoue Kiyoshi boasted that he did everything that a historian could possibly do. However, it is surprising that he refers to neither of these works, because an examination of the descriptions in the *Comprehensive Gazetteer* and the maps in the *History of the Ming Dynasty*, both imperially commissioned, should reveal whether Taiwan (Jilong) was under Ming China jurisdiction.

The sections of *History of the Ming Dynasty* dealing with geography reveal that Taiwan was considered a foreign land, as were Korea, Annam (Vietnam), Japan, and the Ryukyus. This is unambiguous evidence that Taiwan was not Chinese territory during the Ming dynasty. Furthermore, in the sections that deal with foreign barbarians, the Penghu (Pescadores) Islands and Taiwan are described as affiliate islands of the Ryukyus!

These descriptions are proof that Taiwan was not part of Ming China. For a more visual analysis we can consult the volume of the *History of the Ming Dynasty* entitled *Comprehensive Maps of Ming China*, which shows all of China's territory and does *not* show Taiwan (see Maps 1 and 2). In other words, Taiwan is not depicted across the Taiwan Strait from Fujian province.



Map 1: "Atlas" in *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty*



Map 2: "Map of Fujian in *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty*

<sup>14</sup> *Daming yitongzhi* (大明一統志).

<sup>15</sup> *Ming shi* (明史).

This makes perfect sense, of course, since Taiwan did not become Chinese territory (Taiwan prefecture) until the Qing dynasty (1683-1895). On December 22, 1683, Admiral Shi Lang conquered Taiwan, about which he wrote the following in “Observations on the Conquest of Taiwan,” which appears in *Draft History of the Qing Dynasty*.<sup>16</sup>

During the Ming dynasty markers were placed on Jinmen Island.<sup>17</sup> Travelers sailed from there and ended their journey at Penghu Island. Taiwan is a foreign land inhabited by barbarians, and does not yet belong to China.

Prior to 1683 Taiwan was a foreign land, and decidedly not Chinese territory. China annexed Taiwan on the advice of Shi Lang, who reported that Taiwan “is important to the defense of four provinces, and must not be relinquished.”

The historical facts that I have laid out notwithstanding, the PRC insists that Taiwan has been Chinese territory since the Ming dynasty. By doing so, the Chinese are revealing themselves as imperialist forgers of history who disregard historical facts and international legal principles.

### Taiwan prefecture did not include the Senkaku Islands



Were the Senkaku Islands included in the new prefecture (Taiwan prefecture) established by the Qing Chinese? To answer that question, we must consult two works, both bearing the same title, *The Gazetteer of Taiwan Prefecture*, and both published in 1698.

According to the gazetteer compiled by Jiang Yuying, Jilong Fort defines the northern boundary of Taiwan. In “Boundaries” (*Jiangjie*) Gao Gongqian, the compiler of the other gazetteer, places it at Mt. Jilong, 2,315 *li*<sup>18</sup> from the southernmost point in Taiwan. Both Jilong Fort and Mt. Jilong are today located in the northernmost part of Taiwan near Keelung (Jilong) City.

The Senkaku Islands, which the PRC defines as a core interest, are located approximately 170 kilometers northeast of Keelung, the border of Taiwan prefecture. The islands are not affiliated with Taiwan.

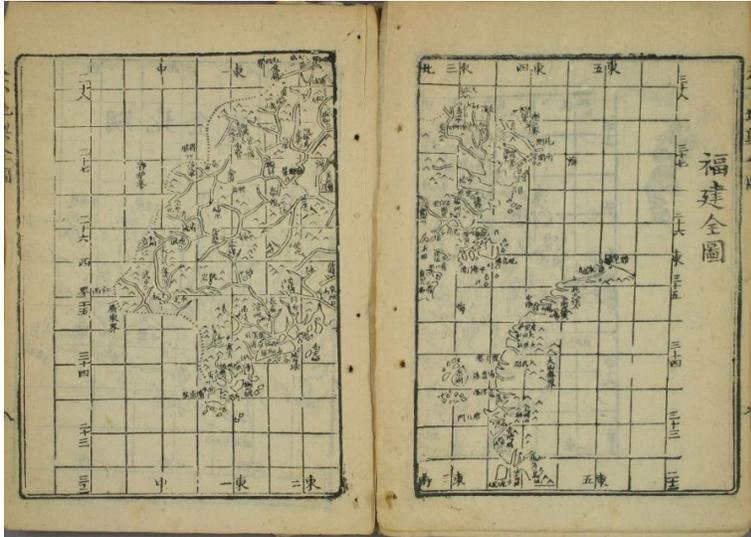
Map 3: *Comprehensive Map of Taiwan Prefecture*

<sup>16</sup> *Qing shi gao*.

<sup>17</sup> Also known as Quemoy Island and Kinmen Island.

<sup>18</sup> One *li* is approximately equivalent to 6,640 feet.

This position is corroborated by “A Comprehensive Map of Taiwan Prefecture” included in Gao Gongqian’s gazetteer, and by “Map of Three Prefectures Including Taiwan.” The Senkaku Islands are nowhere to be found on either of these two maps (see Map 3). Diaoyu Islands and its affiliates were not an integral part of China.



Map 4: Map of Fujian in *Enlarged and Revised Gazetteer of the Vast Realm*

When Admiral Shi Lang advised that Taiwan should never be relinquished, he provided a map of Taiwan. An early Qing-dynasty work that shows Taiwan is “World Atlas”<sup>19</sup> in the revised edition of the *Gazetteer of the Vast Realm*<sup>20</sup> compiled during the Ming dynasty by Cai Fangbing. In a map of Fujian, which appears in the Preface of the *Enlarged and Revised Gazetteer of the Vast Realm*,<sup>21</sup> published in 1686, only the western side of Taiwan’s Central Mountain Range and the Penghu Islands are shown.

Missing are Pengjia Islet, Mienhua Island, and Huaping Island, all situated between Taiwan and the Senkaku Islands (see Map 4).

The image of Taiwan that appears in *Enlarged and Revised Gazetteer of the Vast Realm* is similar to that found in the *Complete Atlas of the Empire*,<sup>22</sup> the result of a geographical survey Qing Emperor Kangxi commissioned the Jesuits to conduct in 1708; its maps were drawn on the basis of modern measurements (see Map 5). Drawings of Taiwan in later Qing-dynasty atlases, such as the *Yongzheng Atlas*<sup>23</sup> and the *Qianlong Atlas*,<sup>24</sup> do not include the Senkaku Islands. Furthermore, the Senkaku Islands do not appear on the map of Taiwan in the *Imperial Encyclopedia*,<sup>25</sup> published in 1728, or on the regional map of

<sup>19</sup> *Tianxia diyu quantu* (天下地輿全圖).

<sup>20</sup> *Guang yu ji* (廣輿記).

<sup>21</sup> *Chongding guang yu ji* (重訂廣輿記).

<sup>22</sup> *Kanxi huang’yu chuanlan tu* (康熙皇輿全覽圖圖).

<sup>23</sup> *Yongzheng shipai tu* (雍正十排圖).

<sup>24</sup> *Qianlong shisanpai tu* (乾隆十三排圖).

<sup>25</sup> *Gujin tushu jicheng* (古今圖書集成).



Map 5: Map of Taiwan in *Complete Atlas of the Empire*



Map 6: Map of Fujian in *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing Realm*

Fujian<sup>26</sup> including Taiwan in the official *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing Realm*,<sup>27</sup> published in 1744 (see Map 6).

The Chinese need to provide valid proof. They cannot claim that China had jurisdiction over “Diaoyu Dao” and its affiliated islands several hundred years before Japan discovered them simply because an envoy headed for the Ryukyus spotted the Senkaku Islands.

Qi Kun, a Qing envoy who made a journey to the Ryukyus in 1808, provides us with a straightforward example in *One Hundred Verses from the East*.<sup>28</sup> Sailing from Fuzhou in Fujian province, his ship passed Mt. Jilong on Taiwan, then the Diaoyutai (Senkaku) Islands, Chiwei (Taisho) Island, and the Taiwan Strait. Qi described Mt. Jilong as “China’s border.” He did so because Mt. Jilong was established as the boundary when Qing China took possession of Taiwan.

Therefore, the Senkaku Islands, e.g., Uotsuri and Taisho islands, located between Mt. Jilong and Kume Island in the Ryukyus, were not owned by

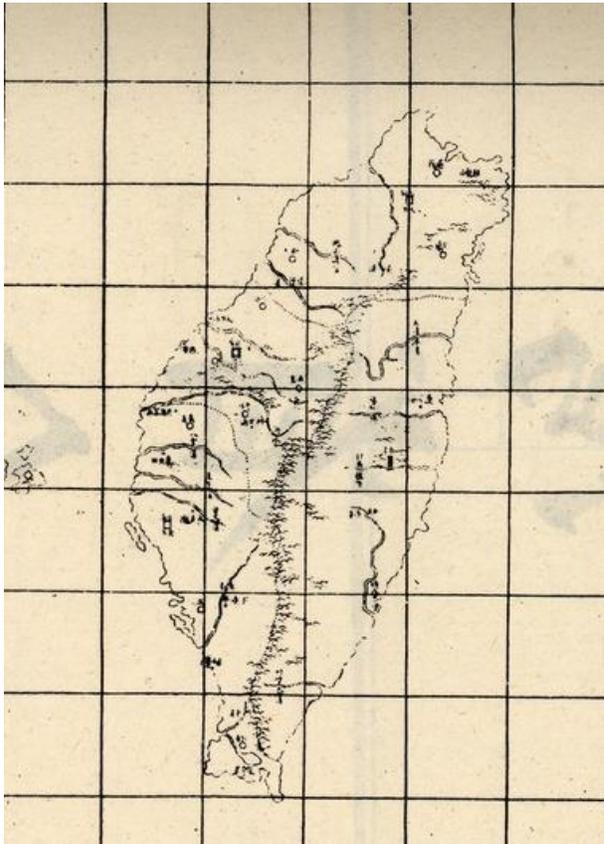
<sup>26</sup> *Fujian dili zhi tu* (福建地理之圖).

<sup>27</sup> *Da Qing yitong zhi* (大清一統志).

<sup>28</sup> *Dongying baiyong* (東瀛百詠).

any nation. The Chinese have been attempting to use sightings of the Senkaku Islands in a *Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus* (1534) and subsequent works like *Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus: Updated Version*, *Account of a Mission to the Ryukyus*, *A Short History of the Ryukyus*, *Record of a Mission to the Ryukyus*, and *A Short History of the Ryukyus, Continued* to support their claims.

Qi Kun may have glimpsed the Senkaku Islands after passing the Chinese border, but a sighting is obviously not grounds for the claim that they are Chinese territory. There was no change in the perception of the border of Taiwan prefecture, i.e., Mt. Jilong, even after China acquired Taiwan during the Qing dynasty.



Map 7: Map of Taiwan prefecture in *Pictorial Section of the Collected Statutes of the Qing Dynasty*

Ding Shaoyi wrote about a journey he made to Taiwan in 1847 in *A Brief Account of the Eastern Seas*,<sup>29</sup> which was published in 1873. In a section entitled “Boundaries” (*Jiangjie*) Ding describes Tamsui and the base of Mt. Jilong as marking Taiwan prefecture’s northern border. His mention of Tamsui can be explained by the establishment of the Tamsui district in 1723. Taiwan’s boundaries remained unchanged; its northern boundary was still Jilong.

Several years after the publication of *A Brief Account of the Eastern Seas*, Wang Zhichun, who had a keen interest in diplomacy and national defense, began writing *Pacification of a Distant Land*,<sup>30</sup> which was published in 1891. The map of Taiwan (“Taiwan Houshan Map”) included in his book does not show the Senkaku Islands.

Once Taiwan became Qing territory, the size of the controlled area grew larger with the passage of time. However, the boundaries of Taiwan, which are the boundaries of exactly one island have not changed since 1684. In 1887 Taiwan’s status was upgraded from prefecture to province. The first governor of Taiwan province, Liu Mingchuan, described the island’s length as at least 700 *li* from north to south, and from east to west at least 200 *li* at its narrowest, and 300-400 *li* at its widest.

<sup>29</sup> *Dongying shilue*

<sup>30</sup> *Guochao rouyuan ji* (国朝柔遠記).

The map showing Taiwan in its entirety in the *Pictorial Section of the Collected Statutes of the Qing Dynasty*,<sup>31</sup> compiled during the First Sino-Japanese War and published in 1899, again, does not show the Senkaku Islands (see Map 7). There is absolutely no basis for the Chinese claim that “China was forced to sign the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan, under which the entire island of Taiwan and all of its affiliated islands including Diaoyu Dao, were ceded to Japan.”<sup>32</sup>

The Senkaku Islands were never affiliated islands of Taiwan province. Nor did they become Chinese territory by virtue of the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration, or the Japanese Instrument of Surrender.

### **The boomerang effect of China’s claims**

I believe that I have demonstrated the degree to which claims made by China’s State Oceanic Administration (which seeks possession of the Senkaku Islands) deviate from both historical fact and international law, and disrupt the “regional peace and order,” the safeguarding and maintenance of which the PRC professes to be dedicated to. Its subordinate agency, the China Coast Guard, operates under a fraudulent historical perception, which it uses as an excuse to justify its acts of provocation: repeated violations of Japanese territorial waters in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands. The situation becomes perfectly clear if we turn to a statement made by Inoue Kiyoshi, and simply substitute “China” for “Japan.”

We object to the [Chinese] imperialistic seizure of the Diaoyu Islands because it is the objective of the current [Chinese] imperialistic aggression. Once it is accomplished, a point of departure will have been established for further [Chinese] imperialist aggression.

Earlier I mentioned the Nagasaki Incident. We must be mindful that in the past, provocative Chinese acts against neighboring nations, like that incident, have always placed China squarely on the road to ruin. If the PRC hopes to become a superpower, it should strive to act with dignity, instead of being unpleasantly self-assertive.

\*Note: This article was first published in Japanese in *Seiron*, May 2015 Issue.

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<sup>31</sup> *Qinding da Qin huidian tu* (欽定大清會典圖).

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.diaoyudao.org.cn/en/index.htm>