

The Senkaku Islands Constitute an Intrinsic Part of Japan **(Summary)**

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The Senkaku Islands were known since ancient times as markers for navigational purposes but were not inhabited or administered as territory by any country until Japan made a declaration to incorporate them into her territory in 1895. This incorporation was based on the modern international law that any islands *terra nullius* can be acquired through occupation and by declaring its incorporation.

No objections were expressed at that time by any country, including the Qing Dynasty. Moreover, before 1970, both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China acknowledged that the islands were the territory of Japan, in official statements, in maps made with government approval, and in the party newspaper, *The People's Daily*, as well.

In 1968, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) published its findings of surveys of the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands and it stated that there might be the existence of huge natural resources deposits below the seabed. Thereafter, claims emerged from China and Taiwan to the Senkaku Islands as their territory.

China argues that there are many old records in books and other documents which mention the Senkaku Islands. However, descriptions of the Islands alone cannot at all be used as justification to claim territorial rights. It is true that in many old Chinese books, Japan and its geography are described. But these were never meant to say that Japan was Chinese territory. In China's official documents, not a single mentioning can be found that the Senkaku Islands were Chinese territory. This can be well-verified by the fact that the Qing Dynasty's highly regarded and official statutory encyclopedia, *Qing Huidian*, 1889 edition, contains a "Map of Taiwan," a "Map of Tainan City," and a "Map of Taitung," but none of these maps depicted the Senkaku Islands within their numerous attached islands. In the era of the Ming Dynasty, even Taiwan was not regarded as Ming territory, even though it was mentioned in a lot of books of that time.

China even argues that the Ryukyu Islands, today's Okinawa, was a Ming and Qing tributary state. But this does not at all mean that the Ryukyus were Chinese territory. The tributary system was commonly practiced in East Asia, since China never admitted to equal relationships with other countries. To conduct trade with China, other countries had to accept the tributary system. If tributary countries were under China's sovereignty, the independence of Korea, Vietnam, and so on are menaced. This is very dangerous thinking that negates the rule of modern international law. Such outdated and Sino-centric thinking sometimes underlies their arguments. Today, this way of thinking is a threat to global stability.

It should be added that China even presents fraudulent material to justify its claim of sovereignty over the Senkakus, such as the Xi tai hou réscript, which bestowed to Sheng Xuanhui the three Senkaku Islands as an award to his submitting tablets made from wormwood and herbs collected from the three islands. This paper exposes the réscript as fraudulent.