

It's a sheer lie that the Senkaku Islands have been Chinese territory since the Ming Dynasty

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China has increasingly manifested its intention to invade the Senkaku Islands. Using Chinese sources, I will clearly prove that the historical evidence which China relies upon to boldly assert its territorial right over the Senkaku Islands is invalid.

Heated controversy over the Senkaku Islands

Ever since the incident involving an attack by a Chinese fishing vessel against a Japan Coast Guard patrol boat, the Japanese people have finally begun to realize the issue of traditional Chinese hegemony. Chinese history repeats itself: whenever a new dynasty is established and its national power strengthens, China invariably carries out armed invasions into neighboring countries and places them under control and in a position of subservience through a traditional Chinese tributary system.

The current Chinese Communist Party government is no exception to the Chinese tradition of hegemony. As soon as the People's Republic of China was proclaimed on October 1, 1949, the Chinese Communist Party invaded Turkistan (present-day Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is a part of this) and put Tibet under Chinese rule. And now, China is claiming territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands and Nansha Islands. The Republic of Korea and China are competing over the ownership of Riido (Socotra Rock) located in the South Korean Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is a reef 4.6 meters below the sea surface (the Chinese name of the reef is *Suyanjiao*).

Ever since the Senkaku Islands became a part of Japanese territory by a cabinet decision made on January 14, 1895, except during the period of U.S. Army occupation following her defeat in the Second World War, Japan has been, for all practical purposes, in control of the Islands.

It was only after a treaty authorizing the reversion of Okinawa to Japan was signed by Japan and the United States in June, 1971 that China and Taiwan began to show their interest towards the Senkaku Islands. The Senkaku Islands were included in the treaty as part of the Okinawa Archipelagoes. Regarding the Senkaku Islands, the Taiwanese

government announced, in a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that “the islands belong to a province of Taiwan and are part of the Republic of China’s territory,” and the Chinese government also stated on December 31, 1971, “The Senkaku Islands are appendant islands of Taiwan and as such these islands have been irremovable Chinese territory ever since ancient times. It is illegal to include the Chinese island of Diaoyudao in the list of areas to be returned in the treaty of reversion between the US and Japanese governments.” The statement also announced that the Chinese people are firmly determined to regain islands like Diaoyudao, which are appendant to Taiwan.

Today, the Chinese government regards the Okinawa Archipelagoes as the primary archipelago line and the Senkaku Islands as a core interest, along with Taiwan, apparently based on the statement then made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The diplomatic problem which was thus started and remains unsolved suddenly became a most heated issue after the incident brought about due to a collision caused by a Chinese fishing boat two years ago. As they say, “Better late than never”—now is a good time to rightly assess traditional Chinese diplomatic positions and promptly apply a strategic response. To help in such an action, this paper intends to examine the Chinese assertions that the Senkaku Islands are part of the Republic of China and, based on Chinese sources and their historical point of view, that they have been irremovable Chinese territory since ancient times.

On January 31 of this year, the Japanese government named 39 non-inhabited islands as part of Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone. Then, on March 3, the Chinese State Oceanic Administration named 71 islands, including the very small islands of Senkaku, and reefs and announced them in a show of retribution against the Japanese action. One day after Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Fujimura Osamu announced the naming of the non-inhabited islands, the organ of the Chinese Communist Party, *The People’s Daily*, dated January 17, stated their historical position: the Senkaku Islands are, just like Tibet and Taiwan, China’s “core interest”, an unyielding national interest from the Chinese national security point of view, and as such “intrinsic Chinese territory since old times.”

Furthermore, on March 15, following the decision made by the Naha District Public Prosecutors Examination Commission, the captain of the Chinese fishing boat was compulsorily indicted, and commenting on the indictment, press officer Liu Weimin of the Chinese foreign ministry asserted: the Senkaku Islands and appendant islands have

been intrinsic Chinese territory from ancient times, and Japan has no right to execute any official affairs in that particular area of the seas and, therefore, any legal procedures Japan may impose on the Chinese people are illegal and invalid. On the next day, two oceanic research vessels belonging to the Chinese State Oceanic Administration crossed into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands. In response to questioning by the Japan Coast Guard, the captains of the oceanic research boats said, “We are conducting navigational duties around these waters. These islands, including Diaoyudao, are Chinese territory.”

Evidence contrived by Inoue Kiyoshi about the Chinese territorial claim over the Senkaku Islands

It is simply amazing that the evidence the Chinese use to support their historical assertion was provided by a Japanese scholar. Former Kyoto University professor Inoue Kiyoshi published in 1972 a book entitled *The Senkaku Islands—Historical Analysis on Diayutai Islands*. In the preface to the book Inoue writes, “Did Japan rob China of the Senkaku Islands during the Sino-Japanese War? If so, the Senkaku Islands must have been automatically returned to China, based on the territorial clause of the Potsdam Declaration, the moment Japan unconditionally accepted the Potsdam Declaration, which was issued by the Allied countries, including China, and surrendered. If Japan were to claim once again that the Senkaku Islands are Japanese territory, it would be nothing more than a recurrence of Japanese Imperialism.”

Overlapping the statement by the Chinese foreign ministry in December 1971, China clearly made the most of Inoue’s book. In fact, immediately after the “collision incident” at the Senkaku Islands, on September 15, 2010, press officer Jiangyu from the Chinese foreign ministry emphatically said, “The Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory.”

What motivated Inoue to write *The Senkaku Islands—Historical Analysis on Diayutai Islands* was to clarify the two points: 1) Diayutai Islands were not originally “no-man’s land”, but Chinese territory since the Ming Dynasty and 2) Japan’s ownership of the Senkaku Islands was an act of robbery prompted by victory in the Sino-Japanese War.

Similar views were held in Taiwan and China at the time, but since it was a study done by a Japanese scholar, the book was translated into Chinese at a very early stage and

well read and received in China. Is there historical authenticity in Inoue's view that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory?

Flaws in the Chinese arguments

According to Inoue's assertion, the evidence supporting the claim that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory lies in the fact that the Senkaku Islands were used as a navigational reference during the Ming Dynasty (14th to 16th century) and Qing Dynasty (17th to 20th century), when Chinese Imperial missions were sent to the tributary state, the Ryukyu Kingdom (present-day Okinawa Prefecture). In one of the voyage guidebooks of the Ming, *Shunfen Xiangsong* or *Fair Winds Voyage* (1403), an island named *Diaoyuyu* among the Senkaku Islands is seen.

China also depends on records of the Imperial missions sent to the Ryukyu Kingdom since the Ming Dynasty onward as evidence to support their assertion that the Senkaku Islands are historically Chinese territory. In *Record of Mission to Ryukyu* by Chen Kan (1534), *Revised Record of Ryukyu Missions* by Guo Rulin (1562), *Assorted Record of Ryukyu Missions* by Wang Ji (1683), *Zhongshan Chuanxinlu* by Xu Baoguang (1719), *Summarized Record of Ryukyu* by Zhou Huang (1756), *Record of Ryukyu Missions* by Li Dingyuan (1800), *Continued Summary of Ryukyu* by Zhai Kun (1808) and others appear reference to the Senkaku Islands (*Diayuyu* or *Diayutai*) and in *Zhongshan Chuanyinlu* and *Summarized Record of Ryukyu* appears a "voyage chart" depicting Diayuyu, Huangweiyu and Chiweiyu.

Among these, *Record of Ryukyu Mission* states "Kumejima (the town of Kumejima in Okinawa Prefecture) belongs to Ryukyu," and *Assorted Record of Ryukyu Envoys* designates the area between Kumejima and Chiweiyu as a "national boundary". Based on these descriptions, China maintains that the area up to Kumejima is Ryukyu territory and that to the west of Chiweiyu, including the Senkaku Islands, is Chinese territory.

Where is the northern boundary of Taiwan?

In the autumn of 2005, *Marine Country*, one of the lost volumes that was a part of *Six Phases of Fleet Life*, was located at an antique book fair in China. In the book, there is a description: "At 5 o'clock of the 13th I saw Diayutai." China regards this as unarguable evidence showing that the Senkaku Islands were Chinese territory.

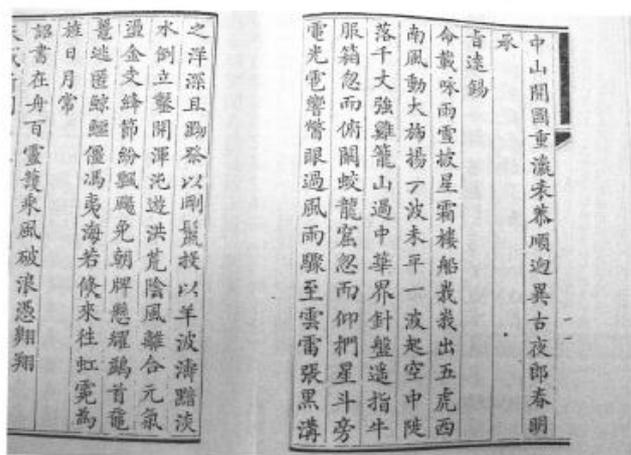
However, there is no authentic evidence to support the assertion that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory, based on the description in *Marine Country*.

Marine Country recorded the experiences of the main character in *Six Phases of Fleet Life*, who accompanied Imperial Mission Zhai Kun and went to the Ryukyus in 1808. Mission Zhai Kun left Fuzhou early in the intercalary month of May of 1808 and sailed through Wuhumen, Jilongshan, Diayutai, Chiweiyu, Heigouyang, Gumishan and Machishan, and entered the port of Naha on the evening of the 17th of the leap month of May.

Zhai Kun's essay, *Hundred Verses of the East Sea*, includes *Eight Verses from the Voyage*, which depicts the voyage leaving the port of Taiping and entering Naha Port in the Ryukyus. Near Taiwan, Zhai Kun wrote a five-letter verse entitled *Jilongshan*, which is a mountain in the province of the Taiwan. In that verse, Zhai Kun refers to Jilongshan as "seemingly the Chinese national boundary". The mountain of the province of Taiwan, Jilongshan, is the boundary of the Qing Dynasty.

When the boat was nearing the Ryukyus, Zhai Kun wrote another verse on Gumishan (Kumejima) and in a footnote to the verse he stated, "This mountain is within the boundary of the Ryukyus. That is, Diayutai and Chiweiyu, located between Jilongshan and Gumishan, are consequently no-man's land, neither belonging to the Qing Dynasty nor to the Ryukyus.

Zhai Kun's recognition that "Jilongshan is the Chinese boundary" is also confirmed by the description "passing Jilongshan, the Chinese boundary" in another of Zhai Kun's rhymed verse following *Eight Verses from the Voyage*. (Photo 1)



Why, then, did Zhai Kun refer to Jilongshan in the province of Taiwan as the Chinese border?

The Qing Dynasty made Taiwan a Chinese possession in 1684 (the 23rd year of Kangxi) and established Taiwan as a province. In the *Book of Taiwan Province*, (Photo 1)



(Photo 2)

is 2,325 *Ri* (approx.1,296 kilometers) away and makes the boundary.” Jilong Castle, near the present-day city of Jilong, and Mount Jilongshan mark the northernmost boundary of Taiwan.

This is the evidence of Zhai Kun’s description in *Hundred Verses of the East Sea*, that “Jilongshan is the Chinese border.” The fact is, Zhai Kun’s recognition of Jilongshan as the boundary between Qing China and Kumejima is the boundary of the Ryukyus constitutes unarguable evidence, but the description “At five on the 13th, I saw Diaoyutai” does not make for unarguable evidence that the Senkaku Islands are Chinese territory.



(Photo 3)

the Senkaku Islands. What is actually shown is the area up to Jilongshan, which is considered to be the northernmost part of the province of Taiwan. In the *Book of Great Qing*, published in 1744 (the 9th year of Qianlong) (Photo 4) the northernmost

published during the Kangxi years by Jiang Yuying, there is the description: “To the north, Jilong Castle is 2,315 *Ri* (approx.1,296 kilometers) away,” and also in *Revised Book of Taiwan Province*, published in 1693 (the 35th year of Kangxi)(Photo 2) compiled by Gao Gonggan and others, it is

written that “To the north Jilongshan

The boundary of the province of Taiwan is also drawn in the *General Map of Taiwan Province* in the *Book of Taiwan Province*. Based on this map, the *Boundary Map of Taiwan Province* in the government-compiled *Imperial Collection of Old and New Books* (published in 1728), depicted in

Photo 3, the map does not depict



boundary of Taiwan is Jilongcheng. The *Map of Taiwan Province* in the *Book of Great Qing* does not show the Senkaku Islands. The same is true of the *Marine Country Travel Record* (1793). The Senkaku Islands are not part of the province of Taiwan and therefore not Chinese territory.

(Photo 4)

Republic of China inherits boundaries of Qing Dynasty Taiwan

It was after the Qing Dynasty establishment of the province of Taiwan that Taiwan became part of Chinese territory. In the *Map of the Great Ming (Foreigners Section)* compiled by the government in 1461 during the Ming Dynasty, the Penghutao (Pescadores) Islands, located between Fuchien Province and Taiwan, are a possession of the Ryukyus. The *Map of the Great Qing*, compiled during the Qing Dynasty, also refers to Taiwan as follows: “It’s been a remote, barbaric land since ancient times and does not belong to China—and is called east wilderness. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, Japanese people gathered there and Zheng Zhilong joined them. Later Dutchmen came to stay.” In the first edition of the *Map of the Great Qing*, the following sentence states: “It belongs to Japan.” So long as the Senkaku Islands did not belong to Taiwan, which China owned during the Qing Dynasty, the natural conclusion is that Ming China did not possess the Senkaku Islands.

Following the *Map of the Great Qing*, geographical recognition that Jilongshan and Jilong Castle mark the northern boundary of Taiwan is also consistently maintained in books compiled during the period of the Chinese Republic, such as in *Dynasty Document Review* (1912) and *Qing History*. Even when China became a republic after the Qing Dynasty, the Senkaku Islands never became a part of Taiwan.

I have already mentioned that Chinese historical recognition is based on Inoue’s *Senkaku Islands—Historical Analysis on Diayutai Islands*. However, Inoue’s study had been refuted early on by Okuhara Toshio, then assistant professor at Kokushikan

University. Professor Okuhara is a scholar specializing in international law and he made it clear that the Senkaku Islands are not a part of Taiwan, not only from the point of international law, but also from a historical point of view, based on the *Book of Taiwan Province* and the *Book of Jilong City*. Regrettably, after Okuhara Toshio, there has been no significant progress made in the study of Japanese history. Therefore, based on international law, Japan maintains that the Senkaku Islands are Japanese territory, while China asserts that the Senkaku Islands have been Chinese territory since the Ming Dynasty based on their own historical recognition. Both sides never agree and Japan has no strong countermeasures against assertions made by the Chinese, who firmly clutch Inoue's book as if it were the gold standard.

As I have shown in this paper, if one reads the Chinese sources, which clearly state that "Jilongshan is the boundary of China and Gumishan (Kumejima) is the boundary of the Ryukyus," it will be clear how arbitrary in nature Inoue's study is.

Let me repeat again. The Senkaku Islands were in no-man's land until Japan made them a part of Japan. China has no historical precedent to claim a territorial right over the Senkaku Islands.

Some final thoughts

There is very a similar way of thinking or *modus operandi* between China and South Korea. The former claims that the Senkaku Islands have been Chinese territory since the Ming Dynasty and constitute a "core interest", while the latter unlawfully occupies Takeshima, claiming that "Takeshima has been Korean territory as far back as the sixth century." In this regard, as I mentioned in my paper, "Why not silence the Republic of Korea in dealing with the naming issue of the Sea of Japan?" (uploaded at this site: http://www.sdh-fact.com/CL02_1/86_S4.pdf), it is worth noting that immediately after the attack by the Chinese fishing boat, the Hong Kong-based *Asian Weekly*, dated September 26, 2010, commented: "Following the example of the unlawful occupation of Takeshima by South Korea, we should occupy the Senkaku Islands." This kind of thinking, that Japan's territorial problems with other countries can work advantageously toward their own territorial problem, is seen in many occasions. Professor Yin Yanjun of Kanto Gakuin University asserts, "China and Russia should cooperate in their territorial problems and exert strong pressure toward Japan," in *Youth Reflection* (Internet edition) dated December 14, 2010, and Yu Zhirong of the Chinese Fisheries

Research Institute said on Twitter, dated February 21, 2012, “If necessary, we should address the issue in cooperation with countries like South Korea and Russia having territorial problems with Japan.” Japan can hardly afford to sit by and be easy prey to them in dealing with the Senkaku Islands, Takeshima and the northern territories.

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Born in Nagano Prefecture in 1950, Mr. Shimojo completed a doctorate course and graduated from the Graduate School of Kokugakuin University. He went to South Korea in 1983 and taught at the Samsung General Research Institute as chief lecturer and at Incheon University as visiting professor. Mr. Shimojo returned home to Japan in 1998 and since 1999, has been professor at Takushoku University. He is the most prominent expert on research on Takeshima and chairs the “Takeshima Study Group” of Shimane Prefecture. Among his many books are: *Japan and South Korea: Way to Overcome History* (Tenden-sha) and *To Which Country, Japan or Korea, Does Takeshima Belong?* (Bunshun New Books).