

Japanese government — assert the foundation for Japan’s territorial dominion over the Senkaku Islands!

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This past June 10, a Japanese patrol boat on security rounds and a sport fishing boat from Taiwan collided in the Japanese territorial waters of Uotsuri Jima in the Senkaku Islands.¹ About an hour later, the fishing vessel sank, but the Japanese patrol boat was able to rescue all sixteen who had been aboard. Continuing the incident caused by this incursion of the Taiwan sport fishing boat into Japanese territorial waters, a ship of activists from Taiwan, accompanied by three Chinese coast guard vessels, violated the same territorial waters on the 16th, and President Ma Ying-jeo of the Republic of China repeated Taiwan’s territorial claims for the Senkaku Islands. This latest stage in the territorial dispute with Japan displayed an unyielding posture that was “impossible to exclude the outbreak of hostilities.”

In response to these territorial violations and unreasonable announcements, the Japanese government was about to make a protest to Taiwan, but one can only say that their legs were kicked out from under them when, foolishly, a mistake was committed by the director-general of the Japanese Coast Guard in ordering an apology to be made.

Concerning the Senkaku Islands, Chinese and Taiwanese fishing fleets have made repeated incursions into nearby waters conducting illegal operations even to the present. There was an incident in October, 1996, when activists from Hong Kong and Taiwan approached Uotsuri Jima in the Senkaku Islands, and four people landed on the island and planted Taiwanese and Chinese flags. Can one say that the Japanese government’s forbearance in not raising a firm opposition to that incident (as with this one) is anything but *permissive* of these offensive, provocative acts against Japan’s claims?

To begin with, both China and Taiwan have acknowledged the fact that the Senkaku Islands are Japanese territory. Under international law regarding “uninhabited remote territories” (the granting of dominion to countries with exclusive possession of lands that have no occupants), a cabinet decision on Jan. 14, 1895, assigned the five islands — including Uotsuri Jima — and three reefs that make up the Senkaku Islands to the prefecture of Okinawa as a result of a ten-year investigation there. Maps of every nation, and text books in China, acknowledged publicly that they were Japanese territory.

In June of 1968, however, the UN Asian Far East Committee announced the possibility of a treasure trove of oil and natural gas under the continental shelf of the East China Sea near the Senkaku Islands. With that, both China and Taiwan suddenly began asserting territorial claims over the Senkaku Islands, and without support under international law they began to redraw maps and include those territories as their own.

Given such skillful swindling and plundering of resources, one can’t help but be suspicious that they are scheming to expand their hegemony in the East China Sea. Here

¹ Many English-language publications refer to the Senkaku Islands as the Pinnacle Islands.

is the evidence that Chinese and Taiwanese claims of sovereignty have been falsified since 1968.

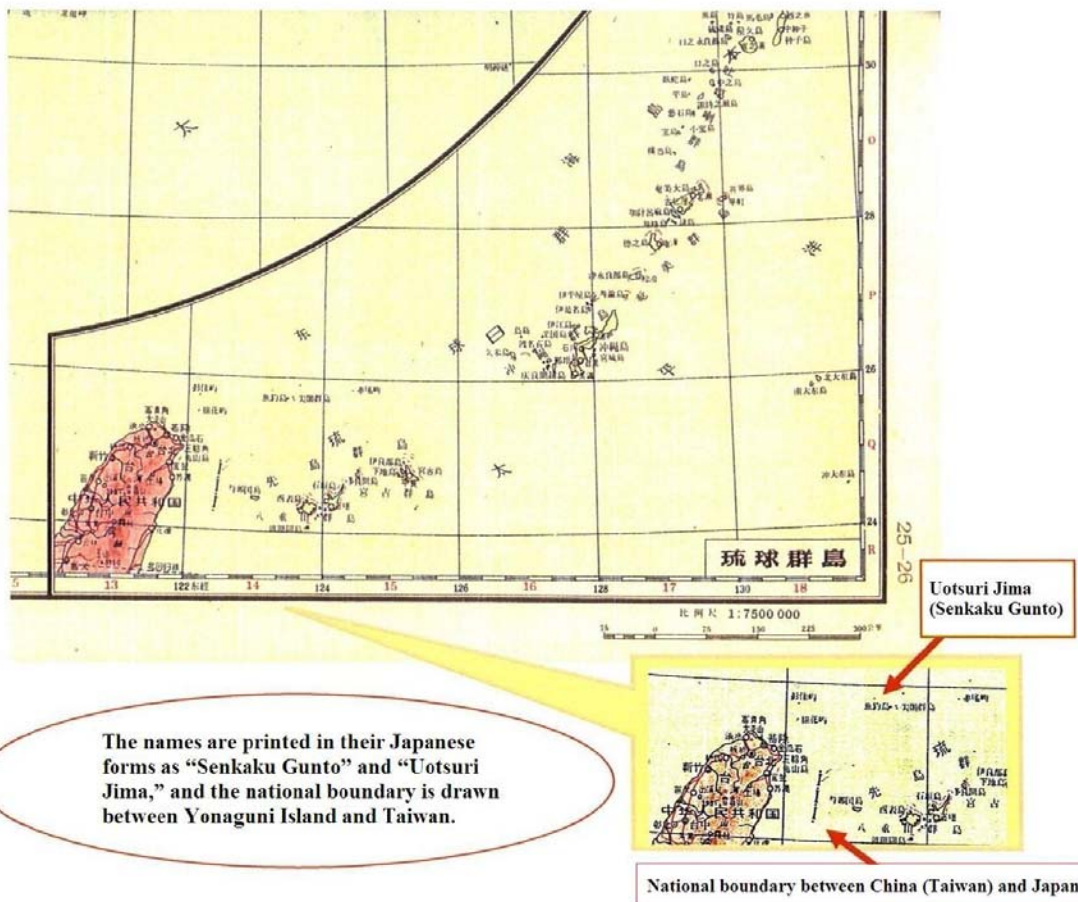
(1)

Below is a map showing the environs of Okinawa which was published in China in 1960 in *The World Map Album* (Beijing Map Publishing Co.).

Instead of using the Chinese name of the island, Diaoyu Dao (釣魚島), the name is printed in the original Japanese as Uotsuri Jima (魚釣島). A line is drawn between Yonaguni Island and Taiwan in accordance with UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

In the publication of maps in China, the publisher would by no means take it on themselves to decide where to place national boundaries. Support by the Chinese themselves can be drawn from this map for the Japanese government's stated public position that "there is no territorial dispute between Japan and China."

From: *The World Map Album* (Beijing Map Publishing Co., 1960).

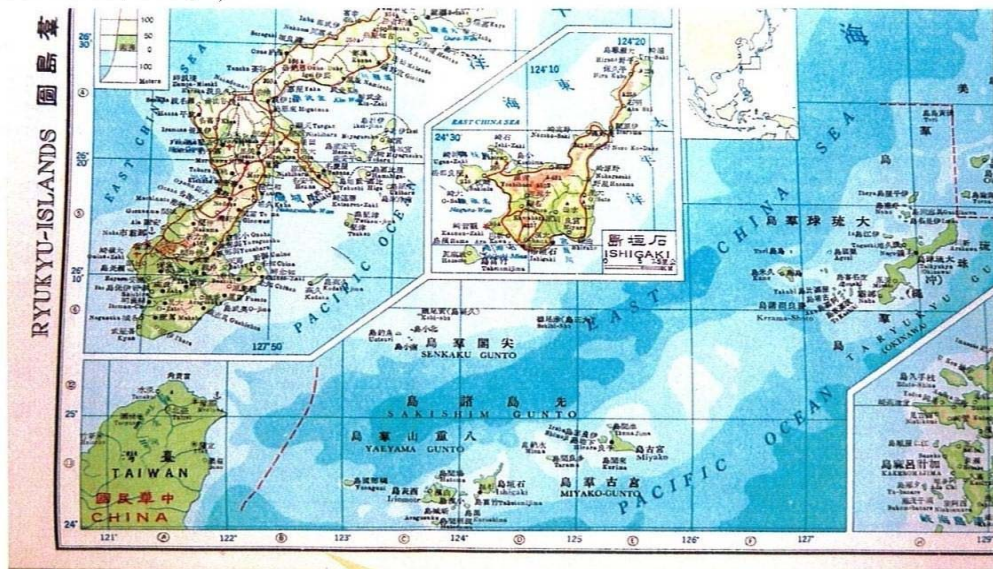


(2)

Next is a map from Taiwan. According to *World Map Album, Vol. 1 — East Asian Nations*, published in 1965 jointly by the National Defense Studies Institute and the Chinese Institute for Geoscience, the national boundary (a red line) between Taiwan and Yonaguni is actually closer to Taiwan, and the Senkaku Islands are clearly shown to be Japanese territory. The names are given in their Japanese form and appear as “Uotsuri Jima” and “Senkaku (Gunto)” (尖閣[群島] rather than the forms used in Taiwan (Diayudao and Diayutai Qundao [釣魚台群島], respectively). One can say that this recognition by the National Defense Studies Institute, charged with administering national defense, symbolizes the Taiwanese opinion.

In the middle-school textbook *Basic Intermediate Geography* (1967), too, the Senkaku Islands are not shown to be the territory of Taiwan. In the text of this book, the range of the Ryūkyū Islands is described as “Latitude 24° – 30° north, longitude 122.5° – 131° west” (the actual text has “The Ryūkyū Islands are composed of 55 islands scattered about between 24° and 30° north latitude and between 122.5° and 131° east longitude”). If we go by this, the Senkaku Islands fall smack inside the waters of the Ryūkyū Islands. In other words, they didn’t consider the Senkaku Islands to be part of Taiwan.

From *World Map Album, Vol. 1 — East Asian Nations* (joint publication by the Taiwan’s National Defense Studies Institute and the Chinese Institute for Geoscience, 1965)



We can clearly understand the acknowledgement of Japanese sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands by the placement of the national boundary (the red line) and the usage of Japanese names



National boundary

(3)

In 1919, 31 fishermen from Fujian province were shipwrecked in the vicinity of Uotsuri Jima, and they were rescued by Koga Yoshitsugu and others who were fishing for skipjack. All were repatriated without incident, and on May 20, 1920, Koga and three others received letters of gratitude from the Chinese consulate in Nagasaki.

The letter said:

In winter of the eighth year of the Chinese Republic [1919], Guo Heshun and 30 other fishermen of the county of Hui'an in Fujian province, adrift in a gale and in dire straits, washed ashore *in the seas of Wayôjima [another name for Uotsuri Jima] in the Senkaku Islands in the Yaeyama district of Okinawa prefecture of the Empire of Japan*. At this point, Mr. Tamayose Magatomo of Ishigaki village office and others of Yaeyama district, desperately came to their aid and the shipwrecked fishermen were safely repatriated. We would like to convey our deepest appreciation for this kindness. This letter of gratitude expresses that.

The letter of gratitude from the Chinese consul in Nagasaki (1920).

感謝狀

中華民國八年冬福建省惠安縣漁民
郭合順等三十一人遭風遇難飄泊至
日本帝國沖繩縣八重山郡尖閣列島
內和洋島承
日本帝國八重山郡石垣村雇玉代勢
孫伴君熱心救護使得生還故國洵屬
救災恤鄰當仁不讓深堪感佩特贈斯
狀以表謝忱

中華民國駐長崎領事馮冕
五月二十日

Under the name of the consul, Feng Mian, is the official seal “Chinese Consul-in-Residence, Nagasaki.” Above the date appears, “Seal of the Consulate of the Republic of China in Nagasaki.”

What must be noted in this document is the point where it says, “[Uotsuri Jima] in the [Senkaku] Islands in the Yaeyama district of Okinawa prefecture of the Empire of Japan.” It shows that the government of the Republic of China (today the People’s Republic of China) recognized the Senkaku Islands — including Uotsuri Jima — as the domain of Japan within the waters of the Ryūkyū Islands.

These letters of gratitude were sent to four people: Tamayose Magotomo, Tomigawa Yoshisuke (the then-mayor of the village of Ishigaki), Koga Yoshitsugu (the owner of a dried bonito factory on Uotsuri Jima), and Matsuo Robunasto (the interpreter).

As the records — the map from China, the map and textbook from Taiwan, and the letter of gratitude — show on these points, there can be no mistake that the Senkaku Islands are historically and by international law the sovereign territory of Japan. It is clear that the Chinese and Taiwanese claims of dominion are baseless, arbitrary, and false.

The Japanese government cannot simply express the perspective that “there is no territorial problem with China” — they must refute it and show the reasons. In addition, they must be made to accept the responsibility to educate the Japanese youth by means of accurate historical records.

Those involved who are prudent should prepare for an ideological argument and deal with unreasonable Chinese and Taiwanese violations of Japanese territorial waters in a resolute manner. In addition, they must make efforts so as not to cause harm to Japan’s national interests.