

Three Truths about the Senkaku Islands

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Press Secretary/Director-General for Press and Public Diplomacy

- 1. The Senkaku Islands are an inherent part of the territory of Japan in light of historical facts and based on international law**
 - From 1885, surveys of the Senkaku Islands had been thoroughly conducted by the Government of Japan through the agencies of Okinawa Prefecture and by way of other methods. Through these surveys, it was confirmed that the Senkaku Islands had been not only uninhabited but showed no trace of having been under the control of the Qing Dynasty of China. Based on this confirmation, the Government of Japan made a Cabinet Decision on January 14, 1895, to erect a marker on the Islands to formally incorporate the Senkaku Islands into the territory of Japan. These measures were carried out in accordance with the ways of duly acquiring territorial sovereignty under international law (occupation of *terra nullius*). Also, these islands were neither part of Taiwan nor part of the Pescadores Islands which were ceded to Japan from the Qing Dynasty in accordance with the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed in April of 1895. Therefore, Japan did not seize the islands as a result of the Sino-Japanese War.
 - Since then, the Senkaku Islands has been under the valid control of Japan. For example, a resident of Okinawa Prefecture who had been engaging in activities such as fishery around the Senkaku Islands made an application for the lease of the islands, and approval was granted by the Meiji Government in 1896. After this approval, he sent workers to those islands and ran the following businesses: collecting bird feathers, manufacturing dried bonito, collecting coral, raising cattle, manufacturing canned goods and collecting mineral phosphate guano (bird manure for fuel use). The fact that the Meiji Government gave approval concerning the use of the Senkaku Islands to the individual, who in turn was able to openly run these businesses based on the approval, demonstrates Japan's valid control over the Islands.
 - The Senkaku Islands are not included in Taiwan nor the Pescadores Islands which Japan renounced under the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951. The Senkaku Islands have been placed under the administration of the United States of America as part of the Nansei Shoto Islands, the administrative rights over which were reverted to Japan in accordance with the Agreement Between Japan and the United States of America Concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands signed in 1971.
 - A United Nations agency conducted an academic survey in 1968 which indicated the possibility of the existence of petroleum resources in the East China Sea, which urged the Government of China and Taiwan authorities to begin to make their own assertions about territorial sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands since 1970. Prior to this, there had been no objection expressed by any country or region to Japan's sovereignty over the islands.
 - None of what the Government of China claims historical, geographical or geological evidences gives valid grounds for China's assertions about territorial sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands from the international law standpoint. There is a description of "the Senkaku Islands, Yaeyama District, Okinawa Prefecture, Empire of Japan" in a letter of appreciation dated 1920, sent from the then consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki concerning the distress around the Senkaku Islands which had involved Chinese fishermen from Fujian Province. In addition, an article in the People's Daily dated 8 January 1953 made clear that the Ryukyu Islands "consist of 7 groups of islands [including] the Senkaku Islands." Moreover, "World Atlas" published in China in 1960 treated the Senkaku Islands as part of Okinawa.
- 2. The Government of Japan's acquisition of the Senkaku Islands aims at the peaceful and stable maintenance and management**
 - The Government of Japan's decision to acquire the property rights to the Senkaku Islands is not a major change of the current situation. The Government of Japan has consistently responded in a calm way. The lands of the three islands that are now owned by the Government of Japan were previously owned by the Government of Japan until 1932. A private citizen acquired the lands later, and the Government of Japan has decided to reacquire the lands this time. Moreover, the Government of Japan has consistently retained ownership of Taisho Island, which is also the part of the Senkaku Islands.
 - In recent years, China has actively made inroads into the ocean, and has taken provocative actions around the Senkaku Islands. Wave after wave of government-owned vessels and activists' boats have entered the territorial waters of Japan, which has caused mounting concern in Japan. Under those circumstances, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government planned to purchase the Senkaku Islands. The Government of Japan will never approve the own assertions of China, but is concerned that some movements could have a substantial impact on the Japan-China relationship in practice.
 - The Japan-China relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships for Japan. Recognizing that an amicable relationship between the two countries is essential for the peace and stability of East Asia, Japan has strengthened cooperation from a broader perspective. The transfer of the ownership is the practical and best measure from a broad perspective of Japan-China relations for the purpose of ensuring a continued peaceful and stable maintenance and management of the Islands over the long term.
- 3. For whatever reasons, acts of violence shall not be condoned**
 - It is extremely regrettable that anti-Japanese protests have occurred in numerous regions in China, and that they resulted in acts of throwing stones and other hazardous objects at Japanese diplomatic establishments, acts of violence targeting Japanese nationals, as well as arson, destruction, and looting of Japanese-affiliated companies.
 - For whatever reasons, acts of violence shall not be condoned, and dissatisfaction with difference in opinions should be expressed in a peaceful manner. This is a shared interest of the international community.