

**PRESSRELEASE**

**J A P A N**

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**Japan-China Relations  
surrounding the Situation of the Senkaku Islands**

**1. Introduction**

- Japan attaches great importance to its relationship with neighboring China. Since 1972 when diplomatic relations were normalized, Japan has continuously and consistently supported the reform and door-opening policies that China has undertaken and has offered cooperation so that China can play a significant role in the international community. At the same time, Japan has made every effort to further develop the bilateral relations with China. In particular, Japan has made great contributions by taking the lead in providing assistance for and promoting investment in China as China pursued its economic openings. Japan has provided 45 billion dollars worth of official development assistance (ODA) to China since 1979 because of the importance Japan places on China's role on the global scene. Japan was also a strong supporter of China's accession to the WTO.

**2. China's Attempt to Change the Existing Order**

- Despite such developments in the bilateral relations, it is regrettable that the Japan-China relations currently face great tensions over the Senkaku Islands, which are an inherent part of the territory of Japan.

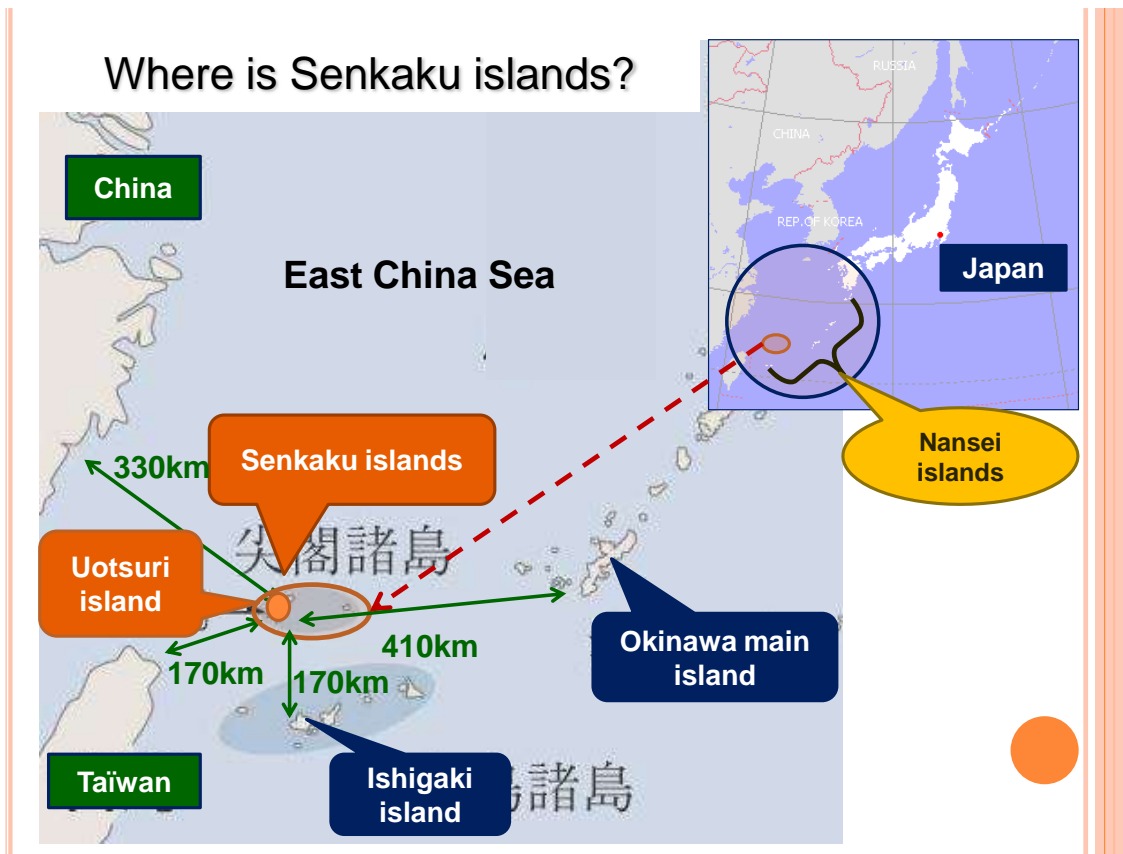
- China has been intensifying its maritime activities around the islands in recent years, especially since 2008. In light of such maritime activities by China, former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara announced last April his plan to purchase the Senkaku Islands and develop a variety of facilities on them. There is no doubt that the Senkaku Islands are clearly an inherent territory of Japan in light of historical facts and based upon international law, but from a broad perspective, in an effort to minimize any negative impact on the bilateral relations, the Government of Japan decided to purchase the islands and transferred the ownership of the islands from a private citizen to itself under domestic civil law.
- Nevertheless, this purchase decision has been met by an overreaction by China. China has been sending its government vessels to waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands which have repeatedly intruded into Japan ' s territorial waters. Most recently, large-scale anti-Japanese protests occurred in regions throughout China, resulting in violence towards Japanese nationals, as well as arson, destruction, and looting of Japanese-affiliated companies. Under no circumstances should act of violence be condoned. In addition, the Chinese Government is now making an argument, which is incorrect and entirely irrelevant to the Senkaku Islands, that Japan, defeated in World War II, is now attempting to overthrow the post-war international order against the will of the victors.
- Japan solemnly stands against any attempts to change the status quo by use of coercion or intimidation, any acts of violence, and any publicity which ruffles national sentiment.

### **3. Japan's Policy for Asia-Pacific**

EMBASSY OF JAPAN  
IN DENMARK

- Japan's basic position that the Senkaku Islands belong to Japan is unshakable. Japan actually exercises valid control over the islands. Japan's ally, the United States, is fully committed to the defense of the Senkaku Islands, administered by Japan, in accordance with Article 5 of the Japan-US Security Treaty.
- At the same time, Japan is committed to continue dealing with the current situation in a calm manner from a broad perspective. In fact, Japan will maintain close communications with China in an effort to ease tensions.
- Japan, as a peace-loving nation, has consistently made great contributions to peace and prosperity of Asia after World War II. This is indeed a hallmark of Japan supported by its people, and will never change. Japan is committed to contributing to peace and prosperity of the region as a responsible and democratic country in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### 4. Historical facts and international law

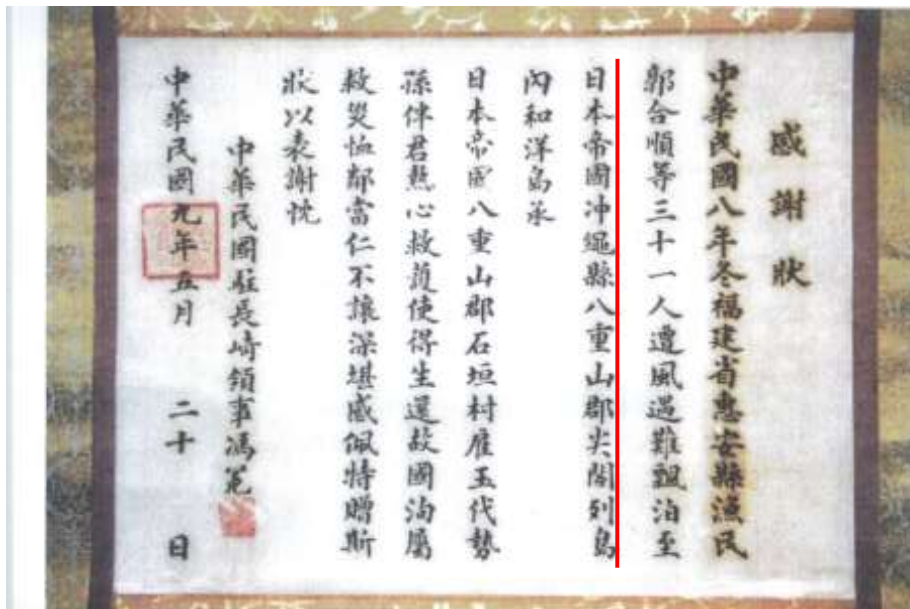


- From 1885, surveys of the Senkaku Islands had been thoroughly conducted by the Government of Japan. Through these surveys, it was confirmed that the Senkaku Islands had been not only uninhabited but showed no trace of having been under the control of the Qing Dynasty of China. Based on this confirmation, the Government of Japan made a Cabinet Decision on January 14, 1895, to 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 USA 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 USA signed in 1971.
- An UN's 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.



**[Letter of appreciation from the consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki] (provisional translation)**

In the winter of the 8th year (1919) of the Republic of China, 31 fishermen from Hui'an Country, Fujian Province were lost due to the stormy wind and were washed ashore on the Wayo Island, of **the Senkaku Islands, Yaeyama District, Okinawa Prefecture, Empire of Japan.**

Thanks to the enthusiastic rescue work by the people of Ishigaki village, Yaeyama District, Empire of Japan, they were able to safely return to their homeland. With a deep response and admiration toward the people of the village who were willing and generous in the rescue operation, I express my gratitude by this letter.

Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki 馮冕  
20 May, the 9th year (1920) of the Republic of China



"World Atlas" published in China in 1958 (second printing in 1960) treats the Senkaku Islands as part of Japan



## 5. 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 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.

● 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.

## **6. 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.

For further details, kindly contact

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