

1. Epilogue

Territorial disputes have been and still are a major cause of many international clashes. They sometimes paralyze people's reason and drive them to become insular and nationalistic as demonstrated by the Falkland Islands sovereignty dispute several years ago.

At present, Japan is involved in three territorial disputes over the Chishima Islands, the Senkaku Islands, and Takeshima. None of these disputes seem likely to be resolved in the near future. The most plausible way to settle a territorial dispute is to turn to international laws. However, in order to persuade the countries concerned to accept and conform to such laws, some common ground must be established first with regard to how to view and understand facts pertaining to the dispute in question. The territorial disputes that Japan is involved in are now deadlocked as the countries in conflict have been prioritizing their own national interests and national sentiments. I believe a more objective and detailed portrayal of the historical footsteps of the disputed region shall provide positive inspiration to move forward.

Takeshima (竹島: Dokdo in Korean¹) has long been the object of a territorial dispute among Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. After WWII came to an end, the concerned governments came into conflict with each other in the wake of several historical moments: the establishment of the Syngman Rhee Line in 1952; the conclusion of the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1965; and the rise of the issue of the 200-nautical-mile territorial waters in 1977. The amount of historical studies in terms of documents and papers on Dokdo and pertinent international laws presented at every point of conflict were in no way inconsiderable.²

This paper studies the issue in depth by critically reviewing *Historical-Geographical Study of Takeshima* (竹島の歴史地理的研究) written by Kenzo Kawakami in 1966 and by setting out my arguments in turn. I chose this book for three reasons: first, it is the most empirical among Japan's voluminous works that deal with the historical study of Takeshima; second, the author served as an inspector at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when he wrote this book, which was, in fact, commissioned by the Japanese government; and third, this book is considered by many Japanese to have provided the biggest foundation for those claiming that Takeshima is Japanese territory for justifiable reasons.³

*This chapter was translated from pp. 97-125 of "Japan's Annexation of Takeshima in 1905 (1905年日本の竹島領土編入)" from the 24th Series of *Journal Collection of the Joseon History Research Society* (朝鮮史研究會論文集) (1987).

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¹ The names Takeshima and Ulleungdo came to be used after centuries of continued name changes amidst tumultuous history. In order to avoid confusion, the name currently in use has been added next to the historical name of any island mentioned in this paper. Dokdo is still a small, uninhabited rock island measuring approximately 20,000-30,000 square meters in area where no tree is grown and no potable water is found.

² Refer to *List of Documents about the Dynamics Surrounding Dokdo* (1978) compiled by Yang Tae-jin; *List of Documents Concerning Takeshima (Dokdo)* (竹島(獨島)關係資料目錄) compiled by Satoko Ooguchi (National Diet Library, News of Asia and Africa, Vol. 17, Issue 11 [1980]).

³ "Takeshima=Dokdo Issue and Japan (竹島=獨島問題と日本國家)", published in the 182th issue of *Study of Joseon* (朝鮮研究) and written by Hideki Kajimura (1978), is criticizing Kawakami's book for leaps in its logic.

The goal of this paper is to bring to light how Japan associated itself with Dokdo after the Meiji Restoration and why Japan decided to annex Dokdo in 1905. This paper also briefly touches on pre-modern times as it is needed for the development of arguments, while excluding all discussions about pertinent international laws.

Kawakami continuously emphasized in his book that he presented facts only from a scholarly perspective and refrained from taking sides regarding the ongoing territorial dispute. Is that so?

2. Recognition of the Existence of Takeshima and of the Island as National Territory

1) Recognition of Dokdo and Takeshima by the Joseon Government and Edo Shogunate

Dokdo first appeared in Joseon government documents approximately 200 years earlier than in Japanese documents. *Sejong Sillok Jiriji* (世宗實錄地理志, Geography Section of the Annals of King Sejong's reign) – compiled in 1432 in actuality but published as a part of *Sejong Sillok* in 1454 officially – details the following in its section about Uljin-hyeon, Gangwon-do:

The two islands of Usan and Mureung are located in the center of the waters directly to the east of Uljin-hyeon. The two islands are not far apart from each other, and thus one can be viewed from the other, on a clear day.

In short, the document suggests that an island in addition to Ulleungdo, which had been known since the Silla period, exists and that the former is visible on the latter when the weather is fair. In Korea, this island of Usando is currently called Dokdo. Kawakami asserts that Usando never existed and thus it cannot be present-day Dokdo.⁴ He provides two historical documents as supporting evidence. The part about Uljin-hyeon in *Goryeosa Jiriji* (高麗史地理志, Geography Section of the History of Goryeo), compiled in 1451, reads, "Ulleungdo: located in the center of the waters directly to the east of Uljin-hyeon. It was named Usando in the Silla period and was also called Mureung or Ureung.... Some say that Usan (于山) and Mureung (武陵) are two separate islands not far apart from each other and that one can be viewed from the other, on a clear day." Also, *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* (新增東國輿地勝覽, Revised and Augmented Survey of Geography of Joseon), compiled in 1531, says in the part about Uljin-hyeon, "Usando and Ulleungdo: also called Mureung or Ureung. The two islands are located in the center of the water directly to the east of Uljin-hyeon. ...According to one theory, Usan and Ulleung are names that refer to one island." To sum up, *Goryeosa Jiriji* introduces one island in the body of the document and the claim by some that it is actually two separate islands in the notes, whereas *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* introduces two islands in the body and the claim that they are one island in the notes. Kawakami concludes that the former stuck to the facts by introducing the existence of one island and the latter just built on the former's statement regarding the erroneous assertion of the existence of two islands.

Kawakami's conclusion is based first on the year in which each book was compiled. Indeed, he admits

⁴ Kawakami, op. cit., pp. 94-120

that *Sejong Sillok* as a whole was published a year ahead of *Goryeosa Jiriji*. However, when isolating the part about Uljin-hyeon, the former describes an event that occurred during the reign of King Sejong that is not found in the latter. That is why Kawakami argues that this part of *Goryeosa Jiriji* must have come into being earlier than the corresponding part of *Sejong Sillok*. However, it is only natural that an event during the Joseon period is excluded from *Goryeosa Jiriji*, which is a book dedicated to the history of Goryeo. As such, the absence of the event cannot be taken as proof that the book is older than the other.

Kawakami's second basis for his assertion is that Dokdo cannot actually be viewed from Ulleungdo. Thus, he states that Usando mentioned in *Sejong Sillok* cannot be Dokdo. He also interprets the phrase "one can be viewed from the other, on a clear day" in the note of *Goryeosa Jiriji* as concerning Ulleungdo and mainland Joseon, instead of Ulleungdo and Dokdo. First of all, Kawakami's interpretation is out of context and arbitrary. It has been conclusively demonstrated that Dokdo can be viewed from Ulleungdo based on physical calculations.⁵ Japanese documents published afterwards also say that Takeshima (Dokdo) "can be viewed from high-altitude points on the peaks of Ulleungdo"⁶ and "50 li⁷ into the surrounding waters of Ulleungdo, it comes into sight."⁸ This concurs with the information in *Sejong Sillok*. Although some of the details stated in *Goryeosa Jiriji* seem to have been mixed up, it clearly shows that the Joseon people at the beginning of the 15th century were aware of the existence of an island separate from Ulleungdo. The fact that this particular historical document is a government-compiled geography book conveys that Joseon on a national level was recognizing the island as its territory.

The biggest shortcoming of Kawakami was that he continued to deny the existence of Usando in pursuit of his theory, although many documents and maps of the 16th century and afterwards depict Usando.⁹ For example, Volume 30 of *Sukjong Sillok* (肅宗實錄, Annals of King Sukjong's reign), compiled in 1728, records the travels of An Yong-bok, who made two passages to Japan around the late 17th century due to the bilateral dispute about Ulleungdo. An Yong-bok wrote, "Songdo is Jasando, which is also Korea's territory" and "we have designated Ulleungdo and Jasando as the border of Joseon." Kawakami admits that An was aware of the existence of present-day Dokdo but diminishes the value of An's remarks as historical evidence by saying

⁵ Physically speaking, Dokdo can be viewed from any location on Ulleungdo at an altitude of 120 meters or higher (refer to pp. 232-234 of *Korea's Territory* written by Lee Han-gi and published by Seoul National University Press in 1969), and the highest peak on Ulleungdo reaches as high as 985 meters. However, Kawakami makes a groundless argument in writing, "it was difficult to climb to an elevated point on Ulleungdo as it was covered with a dense forest" (p. 281).

⁶ Shukichi Kuzuu, *Kankai Tsugyo Shishin* (韓海通漁指針, Guidelines for Crossing the Waters to Korea for Fishing), (Tokyo: Kokuryukai, 1903), p.123.

⁷ Li: one Japanese li (unit of length) at the time was equivalent to ten Korean li. Therefore, 50 li here should be taken as 500 Korean li (translator's note).

⁸ *Chigaku Zasshi* (地學雜誌, Geography Journal), Issue 210, p. 415.

⁹ Usan (于山) and Ulleung (鬱陵) were originally two phonetic representations in Chinese characters of one Korean word, but each came to refer to a different island. Usan is sometimes written differently and erroneously as Gansan (干山), Cheonsan (汗山), Jasan (子山), Usan (宇山), and Ulsan (亏山). Some Japanese scholars still argue that Usando is Jukseo (竹嶼, Boussole Rocks) one nautical mile to the east of Ulleungdo. However, this does not fall in line with the statement "風日清明, 則可望見 (It can be viewed on a clear, breezy day)." Also, the report of Raporte, a customs officer at Busan Customs who investigated Ulleungdo in June 1899, introduces Usando and Jukdo (竹島) as the two large ancillary islands of Ulleungdo (September 23, 1899 issue of *Hwangsung Shinmun* [皇城新聞, Hwangsung Daily]). Therefore, Kawakami's denial does not make sense.

that they contain fabricated information. However, the fact that An called Dokdo Jasando and declared it Korea's territory along with Ulleungdo, let alone the credibility of his remarks, is sufficient to refute Kawakami's theory that Usando never existed. Also, *Yeojigo* (輿地考) of *Jeungbo Munheon Bigo* (增補文獻備考, Revised and Enlarged Edition of a Reference Compilation of Documents on Korea), published in 1908, uses Usando to refer to present-day Dokdo in phrases including, "*Yeojiji* (輿地志, National Geographical Survey) illustrates that Ulleung and Usan are both Usanguk's territory. Usan is referred to by the Japanese as Songdo (輿地志云擊陵于山皆 于山國地, 于山卽倭所謂松島也)" and "Songdo is Usan (芋山), which is also our country's border." Considering that *Jeungbo Munheon Bigo* is a government-compiled collection of documents created over a period of 200 years to complement *Sukjong Sillok*, it is clear that the Joseon government was aware of the existence of Usando as a part of its territory. Many other Joseon and Japanese documents refer to present-day Dokdo (Takeshima) as Usando. For example, Jang Ji-yeon's *Daehan Sinjiji* (大韓新地志, New Geography Textbook of the Korean Empire), published in 1907, states that Usando is located to the southeast of Ulleungdo. Also, *Chosenkoku Chishi Tekiyo* (朝鮮國地誌摘要, Abstract of the Book of Geographical Features of Joseon) written by Horoku Kondo in 1876 and *Newly Compiled Geography Book of Joseon* (新撰朝鮮地理誌) written by Saijiro Ota in 1894 state that Usando, entirely separate from Ulleungdo, exists in the East Sea.

The first map of Joseon that marked Usando as an island entirely separate from Ulleungdo was *Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* (東國輿地勝覽, Geographical Survey of Joseon) compiled in 1499.¹⁰ Among the ancient maps created afterwards and discovered today, hundreds are marked with Usando. As they were made in ancient times, the positions and sizes of Ulleungdo and Usando are not always accurate. However, the fact that so many of them are marked with both Ulleungdo and Usando signifies that the existence of Usando was widely known throughout Joseon. Awareness of Usando was even further raised in the late 19th century when the Joseon government undertook the development project of Ulleungdo. *Daehan Yeojido* (大韓輿地圖, Map of the Korean Empire's Territory), published in 1899 by the Ministry of Education of the Korean Empire (currently housed at Seoul National University's Kyujanggak Archives), is a clear testament to Joseon's recognition of the island at the time. This map illustrates Ulleungdo and Usando at comparatively accurate positions considering that it dates back to the 19th century.

The abovementioned facts appear to be sufficient to prove that Kawakami's argument for the non-existence of Usando is groundless. The Joseon government already recognized Dokdo by the name of Usando as a part of its territory in the 15th century and reaffirmed this recognition in the 19th century with several eras of turbulent history in between.

The very first Japanese document that mentions present-day Takeshima is *Inshu Shicho Gakki* (隱州視聽合記, A Collection of Observational Records of Inshu), written in 1667 by Toyonobu Saito who was

¹⁰ Choie Seo-myeon, "Dokdo as Illustrated on Maps," *Tongil Ilbo* (May 27-29, 1981).

a local public official of Izumo. In this book, Matsushima is used to refer to Dokdo and Takeshima to refer to Ulleungdo. It was around then that the shapes of the two islands became known in detail in Japan because the Japanese began to make passages to Ulleungdo. On the contrary, the Joseon government carried out the repatriation policy and prohibited its people from advancing to Ulleungdo from the mid-15th century onwards.¹¹

In 1617, a Japanese merchant vessel owned by Jinkichi Oya of Yonago drifted to the shores of Ulleungdo after being wrecked in a storm. The crew noticed that the island was rich in natural resources. After the vessel returned to Japan, the ship owner Jinkichi Oya along with Ichibe Murakawa requested permission from the Shogunate government to sail to Ulleungdo. Having attained the government's permission the next year, the two houses of Oya and Murakawa began to log and collect natural resources on Ulleungdo. These two houses referred to the island designated in this permission statement as Takeshima Hairyo (receipt of Takeshima), but what the Shogunate government granted was a passage license to Ulleungdo. The two houses also obtained a passage license to Matsushima (Dokdo) around 1661 with the aim of doing some fishing in the surrounding waters on their way to Takeshima (Ulleungdo). Their ultimate goal was to reach Takeshima (Ulleungdo), and Matsushima (Dokdo) was no more than a location for a brief stopover. As the sizes of the two islands were considerably different, the Japanese documents created back then used such phrases as "Matsushima within the territory of Takeshima"¹², "Matsushima near Takeshima"¹³, and "a small island near Takeshima"¹⁴, treating Matsushima as an ancillary island of Takeshima. As can be seen here, the Japanese who made passages between Japan and Ulleungdo appear to have been unaware of the fact that the island called Matsushima was Joseon's territory.

In 1693, the crew sent by the house of Oya and a party of Joseon fishermen from Gyeongsang-do including An Yong-bok clashed on Ulleungdo. The two houses of Oya and Murakawa made a petition to the Shogunate government to ensure their fishing rights, and this incident developed into what is now called Takeshima Ikken (the Ulleungdo Dispute), a dispute over fishing rights and sovereignty over Takeshima (Ulleungdo). It is obvious that Tsushima-han attempted to take away Ulleungdo from Joseon during this process. The Joseon government seemed agitated at first, but An Yong-bok crossed the water to Japan twice to strongly assert Joseon's sovereignty over Ulleungdo and Usando. An's move served as the cue for most of the government officials in the Joseon court, including Prime Minister Nam Gu-man, to take a firm stand against Japan. As it was historically evident that Ulleungdo had been Joseon's territory since the Silla period, the Shogunate government ultimately chose to take sides with Joseon and obstruct Tsushima-han's attempt. In January 1696, the Japanese government officially recognized that Ulleungdo was Joseon's territory by withdrawing the passage license to Takeshima granted to the houses of Oya and Murakawa and thus settled the Takeshima Ikken.¹⁵ Although the pertinent diplomatic document did not overtly mention the name Matsushima, it is believed that sovereignty over Matsushima was also dealt with in the same manner as this island was considered an ancillary island of Takeshima. As the fishery around Matsushima (Dokdo) in the 17th century was

¹¹ The Joseon government withdrew its people from all islands to protect them from the attacks of Japanese raiders and to prevent them from evading taxes.

¹² Kawakami, *op. cit.*, p. 74

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 80

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78

¹⁵ Masanari Kitazawa, *Historical Investigation of Takeshima* (竹島考證) (1981). Kitajawa also recognizes Ulleungdo as Takeshima and Usando as Matsushima (as mentioned in Volume 1).

considered by the Japanese as a bridgehead to advance into Takeshima (Ulleungdo), the prohibition of the passage to Takeshima could not but bring an end [to voyages to Matsushima also]. This is proven by the fact that the houses of Oya and Murakawa did not attempt to cross the water just to reach Matsushima (Dokdo) after the government's action.

However, some fishermen from the Sanin region appear to have secretly sailed to the island after the Shogunate government's prohibition of the passage to Takeshima (Ulleungdo) during the Genroku period (1688-1703 – translator's note).¹⁶ Also, one of the books handed down among common people states that Matsushima (Dokdo) belongs to the Oki Province.¹⁷ One other book was even written without knowing Takeshima (Ulleungdo) belonged to Joseon.¹⁸ However, what is written in such books by people lacking professional knowledge cannot be taken as evidence that supports national sovereignty over the island.

Another piece of evidence that shows the Shogunate government's perception of the island is a government-commissioned map created after Takeshima Ikken. The first government-commissioned map of Japan is *Nihon Yochi Rotei Zenzu* (日本輿地路程全圖, Complete Map of Japanese Lands and Roads) released in 1773 by Sekisui Nagakubo, a geographer from Mito-han who was deeply involved in the compilation of the *Geography Book of Dai Nihon Shi* (大日本史, History of Great Japan). This map was Japan's first to utilize latitude and longitude. What's more, Nagakubo also published a colored wooden print of *Nihon Rotei Yochizu* (日本路程輿地圖, Map of Japanese Roads and Lands) in 1778. Of particular note regarding his map is that Japan's mainland and islands are all colored but Takeshima and Matsushima, along with Joseon's mainland, are left uncolored.¹⁹ Additionally, maps created by the Japanese government after Takeshima Ikken did not recognize Takeshima and Matsushima as Japan's territory. Also, another government-commissioned map entitled *Dai Nihon Enkai Yochi Zenzu* (大日本沿海輿地圖, Map of Japan's Coastal Areas), which was created by Tadataka Ino in 1821 and is thought to be one of the earliest modern maps of Japan, does not depict Takeshima and Matsushima. It turns out that this matter was ambiguous around the mid-17th century but the Shogunate government was clearly aware of the existence of Matsushima (Dokdo) and did not recognize it as its territory after talks with the Joseon government in the late 17th century.

In conclusion, the Japanese came to learn about Dokdo in depth in the 17th century as they tried to advance to Ulleungdo, which belonged to Joseon. After it was clarified through bilateral talks that Ulleungdo was Joseon's territory, Dokdo – Ulleungdo's ancillary island – naturally became irrelevant to discussions of Japan's territory.

2) The Meiji Government's Recognition of Takeshima

Japan fell into confusion with regards to the matter of Ulleungdo and Dokdo from the Shogunate period to the early Meiji Revolution period through its continued contact with the Western world. First, French

¹⁶ Refer to *Takeshima No Zu* (竹島之圖, Maps of Takeshima) from the Petition for Crossing the Waters to Takeshima (竹島渡海之願) written by Takayoshi Toda.

¹⁷ Michian Kitazono, *Takeshima Zusesu* (竹島圖說, Illustrated Book of Takeshima) (宝曆年間)

¹⁸ Takeshiro Matsuura, *Takeshima Zasshi* (他計甚麼雜誌, Takeshima Journal), 1894

¹⁹ Choi Seo-myeon, op. cit.

and British ships that advanced into the East Sea separately discovered Ulleungdo in the late 18th century. However, the island came to be recognized as two different islands, referred to as Dagelet and Argonaut. This mistake was the result of inaccurate location measurements. Dokdo was discovered by a French ship later in 1849 and named the Liancourt Rocks. For this reason, Western maps made around the mid-19th century are mostly marked with two islands in the East Sea, both of which are presumably Ulleungdo, or with three islands when including Dokdo. Information collected by Western ships was combined with Japan's knowledge about Takeshima and Matsushima and led to even greater confusion. This issue has already been dealt with by various studies.

Chosen Zenzu (朝鮮全圖, Complete Map of Joseon) made by the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Office in 1875 and *Nihon Zenzu* (日本全圖, Complete Map of Japan) made by the Japanese Ministry of Culture and Education in 1877 place Takeshima and Matsushima in the position of Ulleungdo and no island in the position of present-day Takeshima (Dokdo). With the existence of Argonaut refuted, Ulleungdo came to be called Matsushima, which was the opposite of the naming practices used during the Edo period, and maps marked with only one island in the East Sea were published. Some privately made maps were marked with three islands still. As can be seen here, the Japanese government from the 1870s to the early 1880s remained disoriented about the existence of the two islands. Amidst the three-island, two-island, and one-island theories, few were based on a proper understanding of the location of the two islands. This fact more than suffices as counterevidence for Japan's claim that Takeshima has long been a part of its territory.

With the Japanese government's recognition of the two islands gradually being straightened up, so did sovereignty over the islands. As developments concerning this matter were not organized by pertinent ministries in a uniform manner, let me parade important facts individually. First of all, the Japanese Ministry of Home Affairs announced its decision regarding sovereignty over the two islands for the first time. It was initiated by a geography official who had made inquiries in October 1876 about Takeshima located in the coastal waters of the Shimane Prefecture to compile a cadastral book.²⁰ The Shimane Prefecture investigated how the two houses of Oya and Murakawa came to make inroads into Takeshima (Ulleungdo) and developed it into a report entitled "Case of the Compilation of Cadastral Records on Takeshima and One Other Island in the Sea of Japan (日本海内竹島外一島地籍編纂方伺)," which was submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs along with maps of Takeshima (Ulleungdo) and Matsushima (Dokdo). This proves that the authorities of the Shimane Prefecture recognized Matsushima as an ancillary island of Takeshima and thus dealt with them as a pair. The Ministry of Home Affairs investigated records about Takeshima Ikken during the Genroku period, compared the result with the abovementioned report submitted by the Shimane Prefecture, and announced that the two islands belonged to Joseon, not Japan. However, as "the decision regarding a territorial issue is critical," the Ministry of Home Affairs relayed this report to Dajokan (太政官) on March 17, 1877 and waited for its deliberation. The supporting documents contained the fact that "one other island" referred to Matsushima, along with its correct

²⁰ This matter follows "Case of the Compilation of Cadastral Records on Takeshima and One Other Island in the Sea of Japan (日本海内竹島外一島地籍編纂方伺)" from *Collection of Official Documents* (公文録) compiled by Dajokan in 1877 and currently housed at the National Official Archives Museum (國立公文書館) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

location and form. The Research Bureau of Dajokan concurred with the Ministry and wrote in its report as follows:

Case of the Compilation of Cadastral Records on Takeshima and One Other Island in the Sea of Japan
Inquired upon by the Ministry of Home Affairs

We would like to ask for your approval for the directive proposal below regarding the inquiry made by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which concluded that the two islands were irrelevant to Japan after examining a series of inquiries and replies exchanged between the Joseon government and the Shogunate government in the wake of the entry of Joseon people into the islands in the 5th year of Genroku (1692).

Directive Proposal

We hereby clarify that Takeshima (present-day Ulleungdo – translator’s note) and one other island inquired upon by the Ministry of Home Affairs are irrelevant to Japan.

This directive proposal was approved and finalized by Vice Premier Tomomi Iwakura and Deputy Ministers Shigenobu Okuma, Munenori Terajima, and Takato Oki. It was officially issued as a directive to the Ministry of Home Affairs on March 29 of the same year. Dajokan, which was Japan’s highest decision-making body at the time, declared that the two islands in question were not Japanese territory based on the document submitted by the Ministry and the Shimane Prefecture, which views Takeshima (Ulleungdo) and Matsushima (Dokdo) as a pair. This directive was delivered to the Shimane Prefecture by the Ministry on April 9 of the same year, putting an end to the issue.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs first became aware of the two islands by the report made by Hakubo Sada, a Ministry official who was dispatched to Joseon in 1870 for an inspection. His report entitled *Chosenkoku Kosai Shimatsu Naitansho* (朝鮮國交際始末内探書, Confidential Inquiry into the Particulars of Foreign Relations of Joseon) writes as follows:

1. How Takeshima and Matsushima became a part of Joseon’s territory

Details of how Takeshima and Matsushima became a part of Joseon’s territory

Although Matsushima is located next to Takeshima, no pertinent records exist. As for Takeshima, Joseon temporarily stationed some people there for residential purposes after the Genroku period....²¹

This report was seemingly written based on an understanding that Matsushima (Dokdo) was handed over to Joseon in the wake of Takeshima Ikken during the Genroku period, but it was a loosely written report.²²

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was compelled to make an arbitrary decision on sovereignty over these two islands due to the Matsushima development issue that emerged in 1876. In June 1876, a Heigaku Muto submitted a petition entitled “Discussion on the Development of Matsushima” to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Within two years or so, a commercial agent dispatched to Vladivostok named Toshihito Wakise and civilians including Sadaaki Kodama, Shichirobe Saito, and Rinjabu Shimomura submitted similar proposals and

²¹ Japanese Diplomatic Documents (日本外交文書), Vol. 3, p. 137.

²² This is pursuant to Volume 2 of *Historical Investigation of Takeshima* (竹島考證) written by Masanari Kitazawa.

requests.²³ They repetitively asked for the Ministry's permission to develop Matsushima, an island in the East Sea rich in natural resources that they presumed to belong to Japan or to be of unknown nationality. They all commonly instigated anxiety that global powers were after this island. Matsushima here refers to Ulleungdo.

The opinions of the officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were split over this matter. Archives Bureau Director Koki Watanabe said that Takeshima (Ulleungdo) belonged to Joseon and, should the island of Matsushima exist, Matsushima may be considered Japan's territory. His remark, which split the two islands into two countries, served as the precursor to Japan's modern theory that defines present-day Takeshima (Dokdo) as Japanese territory. However, Watanabe was well aware that Ulleungdo had an ancillary island called Usando and was at a loss as to what to make of it.²⁴ Also, he was not certain whether there existed three islands or two islands in the East Sea and, most importantly, was not aware that Matsushima in the said requests indicated Ulleungdo.

Another government official (name unknown) said Matsushima referred to Usando, an ancillary island of Ulleungdo that belonged to Joseon, and thus the development request should not be approved as it would be an invasion of another country. The second unidentified government official argued that an inspection of Takeshima and Matsushima must take place first to find out if the two islands were actually Ulleungdo and Usando or another pair of ownerless islands. The third unidentified government official did not bring up the sovereignty issue but asserted that Matsushima should be inspected regardless of the existence of Joseon residents as global powers were eyeing this island. Public and Consular Affairs Bureau Director Taichi Tanabe clearly knew from the beginning that Matsushima mentioned in the development requests referred to Ulleungdo of Joseon. However, he stated that approval should not be given if Matsushima referred to Usando, while it was fine to enter into negotiations with Joseon if it referred to an island of unknown nationality.

Only a small number of officials shared Watanabe's view that Matsushima should be annexed to Japan. Though opinions were split over whether Matsushima referred to Ulleungdo or Usando, most recognized that it belonged to Joseon or that Joseon was involved in control of the island. The officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to reach a consensus, and thus an inspection of the object of these requests finally took place.

In July 1880, a battleship named the *Amagi* sailed to Matsushima and concluded that it was Ulleungdo.²⁵ As the island, which had long been the center of attention due to rich natural resources and development potential, was found to be Joseon's territory, all development requests were turned down and this matter came to a close. Another island Takeshima (Dokdo) was determined to be a barren rock island that did not arouse any interest. On November 29, 1881, the Ministry of Home Affairs inquired upon the status of Ulleungdo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by submitting the directive of Dajokan mentioned earlier that excluded Takeshima and Matsushima from Japan's territory.²⁶ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time

²³ In January 1877, Takayoshi Toda submitted the Petition for Crossing the Waters to Takeshima (竹島渡海之願) to the governor of Tokyo-fu, which was turned down in June the same year. It must have been processed quickly as Tokyo-fu was under control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Takeshima in this document also refers to Ulleungdo.

²⁴ Koki Watanabe believed Usando was Jukseo (竹嶼).

²⁵ *Suiro Zasshi* (水路雜誌, Hydrographic Journal), Issue 41, pp. 34-37.

²⁶ Sutezo Nishimura, secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, inquired upon this to another secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs according to Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3824 housed by the Diplomatic Archives (外交史料館) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

voiced no objection against this directive. The Ministry also did not make any remark about the division of sovereignty over Takeshima and Matsushima until 1905.

As for the Japanese Navy, what its authorities thought of the sovereignty issue involving the island can only be conjectured based on the Navy's publications because original documents of the time are non-existent. The Hydrographic Bureau of the Navy mainly referred to the nautical charts made by the UK, and these UK-made charts clearly depicted the two islands from 1860 onwards. Therefore, the Japanese Navy appears to have been aware of the locations of these islands around the late 1870s at the latest. A nautical chart drawn by the Japanese Navy in the 1880s displays the two islands in their proper positions. However, as a nautical chart is indicative only of geographical positions, sovereignty must be checked using the hydrographic map that serves as the guide to the chart.

The Japanese Navy began to work on the compilation of *Kanei Suiroshi* (寰瀛水路誌, Hydrographic Map of the World) that targets the entire world in March 1880.²⁷ The second edition of Volume 2 of *Book of Korea and Russia* (1886) from *Kanei Suiroshi* illustrates Ulleungdo and the Liancourt Rocks. However, as this is a hydrographic map of the world, it does not provide the basis for sovereignty. In March 1889, the compilation of *Kanei Suiroshi* was suspended, and the Japanese Navy shifted its focus towards the waters of Northeast Asia with Japan at its center. First of all, the territorial waters of Japan were dealt with in a more in-depth manner in a separate collection of maps entitled *Nihon Suiroshi* (日本水路誌, Hydrographic Map of Japan), which was published in a series starting in 1892.²⁸ This hydrographic map series depicts Taiwan and Penhuledao, which newly became Japanese territory pursuant to the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, as well as the Chishima Islands and Shimushu Island on the northernmost end. However, it does not include the opposite side of Taiwan across the Taiwan Strait and the Kamchatka Peninsula. In short, *Nihon Suiroshi* apparently dealt only with the territory and territorial waters of Japan, and it did not mention the Liancourt Rocks (Dokdo) at all in the part about the Sea of Japan. As stated earlier, the Japanese Navy's nautical chart clearly illustrated this island in its proper position. Thus, the Navy was well aware of the island. The comparison between the map attached to *Kanei Suiroshi* in 1897 and the map attached in the wake of Japan's annexation of the island reveals more insight. Around 1900, the Hydrographic Bureau of the Japanese Navy excluded this island from the territory of Japan. In addition, the 1894 and 1899 versions of *Chosen Suiroshi* (朝鮮水路誌, Hydrographic Map of Joseon), also compiled by the Japanese Navy, both illustrate Ulleungdo and the Liancourt Rocks next to each other.²⁹ It is indisputable that the Hydrographic Bureau of the Japanese Navy clearly recognized Takeshima (Dokdo) as Joseon's territory around the late 19th century.

To sum up, the Japanese government never showed isolated interest in Takeshima (Dokdo) during or after the Meiji Restoration. Also, all of the pertinent ministries of the Japanese government obviously viewed Dokdo and Ulleungdo as Joseon's territory, though each differed in the extent of the details they considered acceptable.

²⁷ Japan Coast Guard, *Nihon Suiroshi* (日本水路誌, Hydrographic Map of Japan) (1971), pp. 69-70.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123

²⁹ While the Japanese Navy conducted a few inspections of Ulleungdo, what information they had on the Liancourt Rocks was all obtained through the hydrographic maps of the UK's Royal Navy.

3. Japan's Invasion into the Islands Located in the Border Area of Joseon

1) Conflicts over Ulleungdo

After the Meiji Restoration, which brought about a fever for advancing into the outside world, the Japanese began to cross the water to Ulleungdo irrespective of their government's policy. In 1881, Joseon's officials in charge of searching and suppressing invaders and insurrectionists discovered a large group of Japanese people illegally logging and fishing on Ulleungdo. In June of the same year, the Joseon government officially demanded that the Japanese government forbid its people from making the passage to Ulleungdo. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs apologized to Joseon as it fully accepted Joseon's sovereignty over Ulleungdo, while taking care of the development requests for Matsushima. However, as the Japanese government did not take any concrete measures, Japanese citizens continued to make illegal passages to Ulleungdo and thus this led to repeated complaints from the Joseon government. The Japanese government, in fear that a full-scale diplomatic dispute might arise, issued the prohibition of the passage to Ulleungdo through the Ministries of Home Affairs and Justice in March 1883. In September of the same year, the Japanese government dispatched Home Affairs secretaries and ships to force out the Japanese citizens on Ulleungdo. As a result, 254 Japanese, who were mostly loggers, were sent home. This was the outcome of the first diplomatic negotiation over Ulleungdo between the Meiji government and the Joseon government.³⁰ People forced off the island were smugglers who had illegally entered into Joseon, but they were all acquitted. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time raised an objection against the acquittal of these people in consideration of the Joseon government.³¹

This incident served as momentum for the Joseon government to revise its Ulleungdo policy. The repatriation policy, which had been in place for centuries, was withdrawn, and a more aggressive pro-development policy was adopted. In May 1882, Yi Gyu-won was dispatched to Ulleungdo as a military inspector. Based on his report,³² the Ulleungdo Development Order was issued in December of the same year. An island superintendent was appointed to govern Ulleungdo, and measures were taken to help people settle on Ulleungdo during the same year. Ulleungdo began to be accepted as a part of Joseon's territory not only on a geographical level but also on a social level. In 1883, Kim Ok-gyun was appointed as the Officer of Southeastern Island Development and pushed ahead with an array of development plans in earnest. Unfortunately, these plans did not come to fruition due to his political downfall. The administrative system of this island underwent restructuring several times afterwards, and the island came to be headed by an island chief instead of an island superintendent. Thanks to such benefits as tax exemption to encourage the relocation of people, the population of Korean residents on Ulleungdo steadily grew.³³ In October 1900, Ulleungdo was finally promoted to a county and headed by a county magistrate. As shown by these changes, Ulleungdo was transforming from a primitive island into a part of Joseon's civilized world from the 1880s onwards. However, it

³⁰ "Prohibiting the Japanese from Crossing the Water to Ulleungdo of Joseon (2)," Japanese Diplomatic Documents (日本外交文書), Vol. 14, 15, and 16.

³¹ "Bringing Home the Japanese Who Violated the Prohibition of Crossing the Water to Ulleungdo of Joseon," Vol. 4 (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3824)

³² Yi's report entitled *Ulleungdo Inspection Diary* indicates that the Japanese on the island believed it to be the territory of Japan and even erected a pole reading "Matsushima of the Japanese Empire". Yi expressed strong indignation, and introduced An Yong-bok's story. Korea Information Service, *Dokdo* (1965), pp. 126-148.

³³ The population of Korean residents reached 2,500 in the late 19th century.

became an easier target for Japanese invaders than other regions of Joseon as its administrative body was not functioning as efficiently and properly as that of the mainland.

Even after the eviction of the Japanese from Ulleungdo in 1883, Japanese citizens continued to make passages to Ulleungdo without permission. Their main purpose at first was logging. However, as lumber became scarce due to reckless deforestation, Japanese fishermen began to sneak to Ulleungdo for fishing. The Joseon government repetitively demanded their eviction in 1888, 1895, 1898, and 1900, and this shows how persistently Japanese citizens made illegal passages to Ulleungdo. According to a survey conducted by the Japanese government back then, approximately 200 Japanese people were staying on the island around 1900. This number went up to over 1,000 during fishing seasons. These Japanese people who illegally entered the island gradually became permanent settlers.³⁴ Furthermore, the Japanese government's attitude towards this matter began to change. As explained earlier, the Japanese government officially apologized for and attempted to prohibit its nationals' illegal entry. However, after the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese government mostly ignored Joseon's demand for the eviction of Japanese intruders³⁵ and ultimately came into conflict with the Joseon government over this matter.

This change in attitude was accompanied by the surfacing of the Japanese government's plot to reinforce its readiness to invade Joseon in the late 19th century. Around this time, Japan's ambition to acquire the rights of Joseon's railways and mines, as well as to plunder communication rights, became increasingly conspicuous. Fishery was no exception. In 1889, the Japanese government forcefully concluded with Joseon *Nihon Chosen Ryokoku Tsugyo Kisoku* (日朝兩國通漁規則, Japan-Joseon Treaty to Share Fisheries) packed with unfair provisions including extraterritoriality, which gave permission to Japanese fishing ships to keep operating in the coastal waters of Joseon and deplete resources in a reckless manner. Many studies have shown that it led to frequent clashes between Japanese fishermen and Korean fishermen whose livelihood was threatened.³⁶ However, around the late 19th century, the Japanese government took a step forward, from merely helping their fishermen advance into the waters of Joseon, by undertaking a more aggressive policy.³⁷ First, the Deep-Sea Promotion Act was enforced in 1898 and government grants were given to those who crossed the sea to Joseon for fishing. Bokushin Maki, Director of the Fisheries Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and the highest-ranking government official in charge of this matter, inspected the coastal areas of Joseon for a month in June 1899. Based on the result of this inspection, he had Kankai Tsugyo Kumiai (韓海通漁組合, Association of Fishermen Sharing Fisheries in the Sea of Joseon) established in every fu and prefecture that year and had Chosenkai Tsugyo Kumiai Rengokai (朝鮮海通漁組合聯合會, Foundation of the Association of Fishermen Sharing Fisheries in the Sea of Joseon) founded as their central administrative body

³⁴ This is based on a report included in "About Logging on Ulleungdo" (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3532).

³⁵ In September 1899, the Japanese government ordered the Japanese people on Ulleungdo to evacuate, but it was part of its policy towards Russia.

³⁶ Park Gu-byeong, "Study of the Relations between Korea and Japan Regarding Modern Fisheries" *Report of the National Fisheries University of Busan*, Vol. 7, Issue 1 (1967); Han U-geun, "Penetration of Japanese Fishermen after the Opening of the Port," *Oriental Studies*, Issue 1 (Dankook University, 1971).

³⁷ Keiichi Yoshida, *Chosen Suisan Kaihatsu Shi* (朝鮮水産開發史, *History of the Development of Fisheries of Joseon*) (Shimonoseki: Chosuiikai), pp. 165-174.

the next year. In 1902, the Fisheries Association of Foreign Territorial Waters Act was enacted in an aim to encourage Japanese fishermen to settle overseas rather than merely share a fishing ground. Each fu and prefecture adopted protection measures in line with the central government policy for fishermen advancing into the waters of Joseon. In short, the government and civilians were closely cooperating to force themselves into the waters of Joseon in the late 19th century. This turned the waters of Joseon into a fishing ground dominated by foreigners, taking away the livelihood of the native fishermen.

What happened to Ulleungdo was just an extension of this trend. As stated earlier, over 1,000 Japanese fishermen stayed on Ulleungdo during fishing seasons. Kawakami stated that these Japanese fishermen were legally fishing on Ulleungdo pursuant to the Japan-Joseon Treaty to Share Fisheries.³⁸ However, not even this unequal treaty could fully justify their acts because they did not pay the fisheries sharing tax specified in the treaty. As a rule, Japanese fishermen fishing off the coast of Ulleungdo were required to pay the fisheries sharing tax to Joseon's maritime customs via the Japanese Consulate in Busan and receive a license every year. They were also mandated to pay export duties for taking caught fish out of Joseon. The fact that these Japanese fishermen did not meet the said requirements is evidenced by the failure of the Japanese consulate in Busan to accurately identify the Japanese residing on the island. As shown by most Japanese documents created back then, they directly accessed Ulleungdo as they pleased, caught fish, and returned to their home country. What the Japanese fishermen were doing was unjustifiable even by the standards of the unequal treaty. It was not much different for timber logging and exporting. Undeniably, timber was logged and taken out of Ulleungdo by the Japanese illegally in the early days. Some Japanese appear to have paid a meager sum to locals in later days, but, as this port was not an open port, export was not permitted. In short, any transfer of timber to Japan was illegal, and no taxes were paid. What's more, all the Japanese who stayed on the island without a permanent residence were illegal aliens. In conclusion, the activities of these Japanese on the island were unjust aggression at best.

Such acts did not just incur legal problems but also resulted in frequent clashes between the people of the two countries.³⁹ Island Chief Bae Gye-ju reported the many illegal acts of the Japanese on the island in detail at the time, which contributed to bringing attention to the background of the longstanding dispute between the two countries today. According to Bae, the Japanese came to the island every year, armed with swords and guns, and committed illegal activities such as intimidating local residents, sexually harassing women, and plundering people's possessions. The local residents of Ulleungdo were seriously being plagued by them.⁴⁰ Island Chief Bae went to Japan in July 1898 and asked the police of the Shimane Prefecture and Tottori-han to crack down on these criminals. He also filed a suit at the Matsue District Court against some Japanese for illegal logging and theft. According to the Japanese prosecutor who was in charge of this case, (due to the considerable number of Japanese residing on the island and the suppression of the locals which has created a state of anarchy) "Korean residents were frequently threatened by those using violence, and it is hard to imagine what might happen should this violent group continue to gain power."⁴¹

³⁸ Kawakami, *op.cit.*, pp. 198-199

³⁹ One Japanese government official reported that people from Japan were on good terms with the locals. However, it is in no way credible as it was ordered by his government back home to be written as such. From "About the Trips of Japanese and Korean Officials to Ulleungdo" (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3532) written by Gonsuke Hayashi.

⁴⁰ Japanese Diplomatic Documents (日本外交文書), Vol. 32, pp. 287-288.

⁴¹ "About Cracking Down the Japanese Who Cross the Water to and Stay on Ulleungdo" (Document of Ministry of Foreign

After Island Chief Bae submitted his detailed report to the central government, it developed into a diplomatic dispute between Joseon and Japan.⁴² Such clashes were often covered by *Hwangsung Shinmun*. Although the Joseon government repeatedly demanded the Japanese government to evict its people from the island, the latter continued to overlook such conflicts as if they were non-existent. U Yong-jeong, an inspection commissioner appointed to investigate the matter, and Masaske Akatsuka, a consular assistant of the Japanese Consulate in Busan, jointly visited the island to look into the situation on site in June 1900. When this investigation failed to provide a solution, the Joseon government once again demanded the eviction of the Japanese from the island based on the treaty both nations had signed. The Japanese government admitted that the treaty did not permit the stay of the Japanese on the island but denied any responsibility to force the Japanese off the island. It held the Joseon government responsible for turning a blind eye to their stay for more than a decade and demanded that the Joseon government allow them to reside there.

Friction caused by Ulleungdo continued in this manner for some time between the two countries. In December 1905, the Japanese Minister to Korea, Hayashi, used the frequent outbreaks of conflicts to Japan's advantage and proposed the stationing of Japanese police officers on Ulleungdo under the pretext of controlling the Japanese on the island.⁴³ Of course, Japan had no right to station its police officers on the island pursuant to the treaty. However, Japan set out the logic that Japanese police officers needed to stay on the island on a permanent basis on behalf of the Joseon government, which it claimed lacked the power to evict the Japanese. This is no less than pure robbery. However, while the Joseon government remained undecided over how to respond to this move, Japan hurriedly put the plan into action. In March 1902, one chief inspector and four policemen were dispatched from the Japanese consulate in Busan to stay on the island permanently. These police officers claimed to be in charge of protecting and holding the Japanese on Ulleungdo in check, but little is left to our imagination as to what these armed officers must have done on this island they invaded. One of the chief inspector's reports reveals how these police officers were often in confrontation with County Magistrate Sim Heung-taek, who tried to stop the Japanese from smuggling timber.⁴⁴ In 1904, a receiving office for the Japanese was established on the island, and regular services between Ulleungdo and Sakai as well as between Ulleungdo and Hamada were launched.⁴⁵

In short, the Japanese staying on the island gained a strong foothold based on their government's support on the brink of the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. A considerable number of Japanese people illegally resided on the island, smuggling timber and poaching for fish, under the protection of Japanese police officers. To sum up, Ulleungdo was more easily invaded and dominated by imperialist Japan than the mainland as it was located on the frontier of Joseon.

Affairs (外務省記録) 3532)

⁴² "About Granting Special Permission for Logging on Ulleungdo," Japanese Diplomatic Documents (日本外交文書), Vol. 32.

⁴³ "About the Construction of a Police Substation on Ulleungdo," Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3532

⁴⁴ Chief Inspector Takayoshi Arima, "Report Dated April 28, 1903" (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3532)

⁴⁵ The Japanese staying on Ulleungdo were mostly from the Oki Islands, Shimane Prefecture. Also, the ratio of Japanese immigrants to Joseon residents in Joseon was the highest on Ulleungdo. Ulleungdo was an ideal destination for many Japanese seeking to move to Joseon in many ways (Keiichi Yoshida, op.cit, pp. 469-470).

2) Fisheries around Takeshima by the Japanese

As in the 17th century, Dokdo began to be used again for a stopover by the Japanese who were sailing to Ulleungdo. This change served as the basis of Japan's annexation of Dokdo later. Let us take a look into how the island was managed in effect.

After the late 19th century, Japanese fishermen from the Sanin region began to drop by Dokdo frequently on their way to Ulleungdo for fishing.⁴⁶ This is evidenced by the recollections of those fishermen.⁴⁷ Yozaburo Nakai from Saigocho, Okinoshima was one of those fishermen who went back and forth between Ulleungdo and his hometown. He paid attention to sea lions that inhabited Dokdo in flocks as the prices of leather and oil kept skyrocketing right before the Russo-Japanese War. He began to catch sea lions on Dokdo in full scale in 1903 – an operation entirely different from shellfish gathering he used to do during off-hours.⁴⁸ The second revised edition (1907) of *Chosen Suiroshi* compiled by the Hydrographic Bureau of the Japanese Navy states the following about fishing in the coastal waters of Dokdo at the threshold of the 20th century:

Takeshima [Liancourt Rocks]: Koreans refer to it as Dokdo and our fishermen call it Ryanko Island. In November of the 37th year of the Meiji period (1904 – translator's note) when the battleship *Tsushima* made an inspection of the island, many huts thatched with reed were found on the east side – all in shambles due to storms. Scores of people sail to this island from Ulleungdo during the summer months to catch sea lions. They build huts on the island and stay there for about ten days at a time, several times throughout the hunting season.

Ulleungdo (also known as Matsushima or Dagelet Island): Abalone gathering is the major industry on this island. A substantial amount of dried abalone is exported every year. Sea lions inhabit an island called Takeshima located to the southeast of Ulleungdo. Residents on Ulleungdo began to catch sea lions circa the 37th year of the Meiji period. Sea lions can be caught for six months from April to September, and three groups of fishing ships regularly stay here for sea lion hunting (five sea lions are caught per group on average). Also, Japanese abalone divers are gathering abalone here using two sets of diving apparatus and two steam ships. They gather 1,130 *geun* (one *geun* is about 600 grams) of abalone per day on average.⁴⁹

Early on, the Japanese government and Joseon government had a dispute over the nationality of “the scores of people from Ulleungdo.” As this short phrase alone cannot provide any evidence, let us take a look at more historical documents. The passage above is extracted from the reports of the battleships *Niitaka* and *Tsushima*. The report of the former holds greater significance. The log of *the Niitaka* dated September 25, 1904 reads as follows under the title “Information Obtained from Those Who Witnessed the Liancourt Rocks on Matsushima:” Liancourt Rocks:

Koreans refer to it as Dokdo, while our (Japanese) fishermen call it simply Ryanko Island. The gap

⁴⁶ “This is where abalone-hunting divers stop over for two to three days on their way to Ulleungdo. They sometimes set aside two to three days from their stay on Ulleungdo to take a fishing trip there when the weather permits.” (Fukuichi Okuhara, *Jukdo and Ulleungdo* (竹島及鬱陵島) [1907], p. 11)

⁴⁷ Kawakami, op. cit., pp. 200-208

⁴⁸ Yozaburo Nakai, “Petition to the Government to Annex Takeshima and Grant the Right to Rent the Island” (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 1417)

⁴⁹ *Chosen Suiroshi*, pp. 451-457

between the two islands is wide enough to moor a ship, but it is customary to haul smaller boats onto the land. When storms rage, people flee to Matsushima aided by the wind. Those who came here for sea-horse hunting use the 670-*seok* (one *seok* is about 180 liters) *wasen* (a traditional Japanese boat made with wood – translator’s note). They build huts and stay there for about ten days at a time, making considerable profits. Sometimes the island accommodates 40-50 people at a time. However, no shortage of fresh water has been reported yet.⁵⁰

Another document of significance is geographer Akamaro Tanaka’s paper written in August 1905 based on all the reports of the Navy and the Takeshima inspection report from *Shimanezenshi* (島根縣誌, Records of the Shimane Prefecture), which reads as follows:

On the east side stood huts thatched with reed. These huts belong to Takeshima Fishery Company owned by Yozaburo Nakai, etc. (All huts and ships were carried off by the storm on August 8, 1905.) These were originally used by fishermen who come to the island for seal hunting during the summer months. However, they have been completely destroyed and only the wreck can be found.... Fishermen operate with a 670-*seok* (one *seok* is about 180 liters) *wasen* with Ulleungdo as their base.... When the hunting is over or when it is difficult to moor the ship due to wind and waves, they sail to Ulleungdo wind-aided.⁵¹

Tanaka’s paper also includes descriptions of the period after Japan’s annexation of Takeshima. These historical documents in combination clearly indicate that the Japanese took the lead in sea lion hunting that began around Dokdo circa 1903. However, it is unlikely that no Korean was involved in sea lion hunting at the time. *Chosen Suiroshi*, which never fails to make a distinction between Japanese people and Joseon people when referring to the inhabitants of Ulleungdo, refers to those who sailed to Dokdo from Ulleungdo for fishing as merely *island residents*. Kawakami also admits that Joseon people took part in sea lion hunting, though he adds that they were hired by the Japanese.⁵² Then, it is indisputable that Japanese fishermen were mainly dedicated to sea lion hunting.

What should be noted here is that Japanese fishermen belonging to the group led by Yozaburo Nakai are described as *island residents* of Ulleungdo. Headquartered on Ulleungdo, they sailed to Dokdo from time to time for fishing and returned to Ulleungdo in the event of a storm. As discussed earlier, their fishing practices around Dokdo were made possible only by Japan’s invasion of Ulleungdo.

Then, how were the Joseon residents of Ulleungdo related to Dokdo at the time? Despite Kawakami’s continued denial, it was repeatedly affirmed earlier in this paper that Dokdo came into sight from Ulleungdo and that the people of Joseon were well aware of the existence of Dokdo. The report of the *Niitaka* also backs the fact that Joseon had been using the name Dokdo since long before Japan’s annexation of the island.⁵³

⁵⁰ The Battleship *Niitaka*’s Action Log (軍艦 新高行動日誌) possessed by the War History Bureau (戦史部) of the Ministry of Defense

⁵¹ “Geographical Knowledge about Okinokuni Takeshima,” *Chigaku Zasshi* (地學雜誌, Geography Journal), Issue 210 (1906).

⁵² Kawakami, op. cit., pp. 188-190

⁵³ The phrase “Koreans write it as.....” in the documents cited here indicates that the county magistrate and other

Kawakami asserts that the people of Joseon were ignorant of fishing in an attempt to preclude the possibility of Joseon residents on Ulleungdo having sailed to Dokdo. Kawakami goes on to say, mainly based on *Kankoku Suisanshi* (韓國水産誌, Fishing Records of Korea), that the people of Joseon on Ulleungdo began fishing after 1907 when the Japanese taught them squid-fishing. He also argues that no Korean divers were engaged in abalone gathering. He concludes that Koreans may have known of the existence of Dokdo but they were by no means capable of fishing around the island.⁵⁴ However, this argument is refuted by the very document referenced by the author himself. The 2nd edition of Volume 2 of *Kanei Suirosi* compiled by the Japanese Navy states the following about Ulleungdo, “Specialties include fish and shellfish such as abalone as well as vegetables.... The people of Joseon come to the island in the spring and the summer to build traditional Joseon boats, which are used to transport local produce to the mainland. They also gather and dry shellfish in massive amounts.”⁵⁵

In September 1899, Kenzo Takao, the embassy clerk dispatched to Ulleungdo by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in his report as follows, “The number of natives stands at more than 2,000 of 500 households. Half are dedicated to fishing, and the other half to farming. Some of them are carpenters who make boats.”⁵⁶

Many other European and Japanese documents from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century mention the fishing practices of the Joseon residents on Ulleungdo, especially abalone gathering.⁵⁷ It is highly arbitrary of Kawakami to disregard all those documents. Kawakami also belittles Joseon’s navigational technology at the time as “immature.” However, hordes of Joseon people were crossing the waters between the mainland and Ulleungdo, a distance much farther than the distance between Ulleungdo and Dokdo. It was only natural for Joseon fishermen making a living by abalone gathering to sail to an island that not only was rich in abalone but also was clearly visible from Ulleungdo. I have secured a testament from one senior Joseon local of Ulleungdo about crossing the waters to Dokdo for fishing just as the recollection of the Japanese fisherman about sailing to Takeshima for fishing introduced earlier.⁵⁸

However, the fishing business of Joseon fishermen from Ulleungdo was unduly oppressed by the invasion of Japanese fishermen. *Kankoku Suisanshi* says “the Japanese were in charge of abalone gathering and no local of Ulleungdo was engaged in the business,”⁵⁹ and this shows that Joseon abalone divers have been weeded out by the Japanese who have imported the latest technologies such as diving apparatuses.⁶⁰ Joseon at

intellectuals were also aware of Dokdo. However, some books were still referring to the island as Usando.

⁵⁴ Kawakami, op. cit., pp.177-187

⁵⁵ *Kanei Suirosi* (寰瀛水路誌), p. 400

⁵⁶ Kenzo Takao, “Report Dated October 3, 1899” (Document of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外務省記録) 3532)

⁵⁷ William R. N. Blakeney, *On the Coasts of Cathay and Cipango, Forty Years Ago*, (London: 1902); William Elliot Griffis, *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, (London: 1905).

⁵⁸ Hong Jae-hyeon, who was born in 1862 and moved to Ulleungdo circa 1883, said, “The people of Ulleungdo were aware of Dokdo from the early days of settling on Ulleungdo and frequently sailed there to catch sea lions and gather seaweed and abalone. I also crossed the waters to Dokdo tens of times.” Korea Information Service, *Dokdo*, p. 30. As for information about Joseon people from Gangwon-do and Ulleungdo on Dokdo catching sea lions, refer to p. 655 of Volume 1 of *Oju Yeonmun Jangjeon Sango* (五洲衍文長箋散稿, Encyclopedia Written by Oju).

⁵⁹ Korean Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Kankoku Suisanshi* (韓國水産誌, Fishing Records of Korea), Vol. 2, p. 715.

⁶⁰ Refer to Park Gu-byeong’s “About the Three-Nautical-Mile Territorial Water Principle Applied to the Fisheries between

the time must not have been able to pay attention to the fishing rights involving the tiny island of Dokdo with most of the fisheries of Ulleungdo being controlled by the Japanese. As such, unsurprisingly the Japanese took the lead in the sea lion hunting that began on Dokdo in 1903.

Based on the notion of something that resembled actual management, Japan apparently had an advantage over Korea regarding Dokdo prior to its annexation of the island. However, historically speaking, this was what imperialism was about: carrying out management regardless of national borderlines. The management of Dokdo by the Japanese in the early 20th century derived from their advance into Ulleungdo based on Japan's invasion policy.⁶¹ Japan's annexation of Dokdo is justifiable only when it can be proven that Dokdo was an ownerless island and that the people and the government of Joseon, in grave peril of an imminent invasion by Japan, did not object to Japan's move at the time. This paper already revealed that Dokdo has never been considered an ownerless island. The second condition shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Yozaburo Nakai first began to hunt sea lions in the coastal waters of Dokdo in 1903, but a notably increasing number of fishermen came to the island from the next year onwards to hunt sea lions in a reckless manner. This resulted in a sharp decrease in the total sea lion population. Nakai departed for Tokyo to petition the government to drive out all of his competitors and grant him full control of fisheries around Dokdo.

4. Japan's Annexation of Takeshima

1) Japan's Demand for Military Assistance

With the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese government came to discover the value of Dokdo from a perspective entirely different from that of Nakai.

The Japanese Cabinet said in a meeting held before the outbreak of the war that "it was essential to forcefully place Korea within the scope of its authority."⁶² Also, Japan forced Korea to accept the provision to "allow Japan to temporarily occupy the locations needed for military strategic reasons"⁶³ specified in the Korea-Japan Protocol. Then, Japan initiated a program of military domination across Joseon that cannot be justified by any treaty. This chapter shall place a focus on the military facilities of the Japanese Navy. Before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan was pushing ahead with the improvement of military telegraph lines and watchtowers. After the initiation of the war, it began to build such facilities in Joseon.

In June 1904, the Vladivostok Fleet from Russia appeared on the Joseon Strait and sank Japanese transport ships, raising tensions in this area at once. The Japanese Navy built watchtowers in the southeastern region of Joseon including Jukbyeonman Bay, Ulsan, Geomundo, and Jejudo as well as the Japanese coastal areas of Kyushu and western Honshu and connected them with submarine telegraph lines. The number of

Korea and Japan in the Late 19th Century" published in the 1st issue of *Hanil Yeongu* (韓日研究, *Study of Korea and Japan*) in 1972.

⁶¹ The relationship between Dokdo and Ulleungdo continued to become more and more intertwined afterwards. In the 1930s, as many as 40 fishermen from Ulleungdo (two to three among them were Japanese) were found to be regularly sailing to Dokdo for fishing. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Changes in Fisheries of Takeshima* (竹島漁業の變遷) 17, (1953), pp. 36-37.

⁶² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Chronological Table and Key Documents of Japan's Diplomacy* (日本外交年表並主要文書), Vol. 1 (1965), pp. 217-219.

⁶³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Chronological Table and Key Documents of Japan's Diplomacy* (日本外交年表並主要文書), Vol. 1 (1965), pp. 223-224.

watchtowers in Joseon amounted to about 20, each of which represented a forced military occupation.⁶⁴

(Caption)

Dokdo as illustrated in the Japanese battleship *Niitaka*'s log dated September 25, 1904. The sentence in Chinese characters reads, "Ryanko Island (Dokdo) viewed through a telescope on a watchtower on the southeastern edge of Matsushima (Ulleungdo)."

On July 5, it was decided that two such watchtowers were to be built on Ulleungdo and connected with Jukbyeonman Bay – the Japanese Navy's anchorage on mainland Joseon – using submarine telegraph lines. The construction began in earnest from August 3 (for the East Matsushima Watchtower in the southeastern part manned by six people and for the West Matsushima Watchtower in the northwestern part also manned by six people), and both were put to use on September 2. The construction of submarine telegraph lines began on September 8 under the threat of the Russian fleet and was completed on September 25.⁶⁵ The watchtowers on Ulleungdo provided direct communication with the Navy base in Sasebo via mainland Joseon. The military occupation of the Japanese Navy on Ulleungdo signified that the sovereignty of Joseon, which had been already threatened by the Japanese expanding their influence on the island, was further violated.

While patrolling the waters surrounding Ulleungdo for construction works and supply activities, the Japanese Navy came to gain much information about Dokdo in close proximity.⁶⁶ Moreover, the Japanese Navy was aware of Dokdo's value before Yozaburo Nakai made a petition to the Japanese government. Before the Japanese government made official its decision to annex Dokdo, the Japanese Navy initiated action. On November 13, 1904, the Navy's Military Order Bureau ordered the battleship *Tsushima* to "inspect whether the Liancourt Rocks were suited as the location of a telegraph station (not a wireless station)."⁶⁷ It meant an inspection of the feasibility to build a watchtower connected to Ulleungdo by submarine telegraph lines. The *Tsushima* headed for the Liancourt Rocks on November 20. This was the very first Dokdo inspection conducted by the Japanese government. The captain of the *Tsushima* reported that it was deemed feasible to build a structure on the island despite geographical limitations.⁶⁸ In conclusion, the Japanese government back then took interest in Dokdo for its military value only.

As it was impossible to carry out the construction on Dokdo during the winter months, the Japanese Navy came to confront the Baltic Fleet without having built the watchtower in question. In this Battle of the Sea of Japan, the surrounding waters of Ulleungdo and Dokdo served as the major battlefield, and thus the military value of Dokdo was further highlighted.⁶⁹ The Japanese Navy crafted a plan on May 30 immediately after this

⁶⁴ Military Order Bureau of the Navy, *Top Secret of the 37th Year of the Meiji Period: History of Eight-Year Sea Battle* (極秘明治 37: 8 年海戦史), Part 4, Vol. 4, pp. 1-27, 218-276.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-57

⁶⁶ The *Niitaka*'s log introduced earlier was created while it was engaged in the construction of submarine telegraph lines near Ulleungdo.

⁶⁷ *Tsushima Senji Nisshi* (軍艦對馬戰時日誌, Battleship *Tsushima*'s Wartime Log) possessed by the War History Bureau (戰史部) of the Ministry of Defense

⁶⁸ *Top Secret of the 37th Year of the Meiji Period: History of Eight-Year Sea Battle* (極秘明治 37: 8 年海戦史), 備考文書, pp. 366-367

⁶⁹ The name Takeshima (Dokdo) became widely known in Japan as a result of the report about this battle.

battle to dispatch the battleship *Hashidate* on June 13 for a closer inspection of the island.⁷⁰ On June 24, it announced a comprehensive facility plan for the waters of the East Sea including Ulleungdo and Dokdo. This plan specified the construction of a large-scale watchtower (North Matsushima Watchtower manned by nine people) and a wireless telegraph station on the northern edge of Ulleungdo. It also specified the already proposed construction of one watchtower (manned by four people) on Dokdo and a connection between these two watchtowers by submarine telegraph lines, which would then be also connected to the watchtower on Oki. This plan completely ignored the national boundaries of Korea. Groundbreaking for the new watchtower on Ulleungdo took place on July 14, and the new watchtower was put to use on August 16. The construction of the watchtower on Dokdo began on July 25 and was put to use on August 19. Submarine telegraph lines were constructed between Dokdo and Matsue, instead of between Dokdo and Oki, due to the establishment of a peace treaty between Japan and Korea in September. This construction began at the end of October, and the telegraph lines connecting Ulleungdo, Dokdo, and Matsue were activated on November 9.⁷¹ The military communication network system connecting Joseon's mainland (Jukbyeon), Ulleungdo, Dokdo, and Matsue was put in place in 1905.

In conclusion, Dokdo in the East Sea was no more than a tool of military action to the Japanese government. It was also closely interrelated with the military occupations undertaken by Japan in different corners of Joseon.

2) Viewpoints of Japanese Government Officials

In early fall of 1904, Yozaburo Nakai went to Tokyo in an aim to petition the government for the exclusive right to fish in the waters of Dokdo. His understanding of sovereignty over Dokdo is highly important as he was one of those who were knowledgeable of the frontier situations. *Shimanezenshi* compiled by the Shimane Prefecture Educational Association in 1923 states in the section about Takeshima, “Overfishing of various species in a competitive manner led to many harmful consequences in the 37th year of the Meiji period (1904). Nakai at the time visited Tokyo to request that the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce petition the Joseon government to grant him the right to rent the island, thinking the island was Joseon's territory (words underlined by the citer).” In a row with the Korean government early on, the Japanese government claimed that this was an error produced by those who edited the document.⁷² Was it really an error? There exist two documents that show the process of Japan's annexation of Takeshima through the testimony of Nakai. One was transcribed by Fukuichi Okuhara on March 25, 1906. This document, introduced in Fukuichi's book *Jukdo and Ulleungdo* (竹島及鬱陵島) as “Mr. Nakai's Story”, states as follows:

Mr. Yozaburo Nakai believed Ryanko Island belonged to Joseon and decided to petition the Joseon government to grant him the right to rent the island. In 1904, as soon as the fishing season was over, he went straight to Tokyo and asked Kantaro Fujita from Oki – an official of the Fisheries Bureau at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce – to arrange a meeting with Maki – the head of the Fisheries

⁷⁰ Hashidate *Senji Nisshi* (橋立戦時日誌, Battleship *Hashidate*'s Wartime Log) possessed by the War History Bureau (戦史部) of the Ministry of Defense

⁷¹ Military Order Bureau of the Navy, op. cit., pp. 20-21, 93-95.

⁷² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Monthly Review of Overseas Research* (海外調査月報) (November 1954), p.68.

Bureau. Maki willingly agreed to help him and requested the Hydrographic Bureau of the Japanese Navy to check the nationality of Ryanko Island. Mr. Nakai then met with Kimotsuki – the head of the Hydrographic Bureau – and heard from him that, though the nationality of the island is yet to be established, it is only right for the island to be annexed to Japan as it is closer to mainland Japan by ten *li* than to mainland Joseon and as many Japanese are engaged in the management of the island. Mr. Nakai made up his mind and submitted his petition for Japan’s annexation of Ryanko Island and for the right to rent the island to the Ministers of Home Affairs; Foreign Affairs; and Agriculture and Commerce.... After that, Mr. Nakai visited the local office of the Ministry of Home Affairs and explained his situation to Secretary Inoue. He also met with Yamaza – the head of the State Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – with the help of Kuwata – a Doctor in Law and a member of the House of Peers – who was from the same hometown. Dr. Kuwata exerted influence for him and Mr. Nakai’s petition was submitted to the Shimane Prefecture Office for its consideration. The Shimane Prefecture Office reported this petition to the Oki Provincial Office, and it was decided in the Cabinet council to annex the island. Ryanko Island was named Takeshima.⁷³

This document clearly conveys two facts: first, Nakai was planning to petition the Joseon government for the right to rent the island, believing it belonged to Joseon; second, it was the Japanese government that transformed his petition into a petition for the annexation of an ownerless island.

Another document is the background description submitted by Nakai to the Oki Provincial Office. One of the supporting documents that were attached to this background description, entitled “Overview of the Management of Takeshima,” states as follows:

Believing the island to be an ancillary island of Ulleungdo and a part of Joseon’s territory, I visited Tokyo to plan my next step before making an appearance at and seeking the support of the Japanese Residency-General of Korea. This was when Bokushin Maki, the head of the Fisheries Bureau, fueled my suspicion that the island may not belong to Joseon. After spending much time on research, I was told by General Kimotsuki – the head of the Hydrographic Bureau – that the island was ownerless. Thus, I submitted to the three Ministers of Home Affairs; Foreign Affairs; and Agriculture and Commerce a petition for the government to annex the island and lend it to me afterwards. I also submitted the original copy to the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, the official in charge at the Ministry of Home Affairs said that my petition was likely to be turned down despite my detailed explanation. According to him, the seizing of a small barren rock island, speculatively belonging to Joseon, is expected to arouse the suspicion that Japan harbors the ambition to annex Korea, and this disadvantage outweighs the advantages. I pulled myself together and ran to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to strongly make my case to Enjiro Yamaza, the head of the State Affairs Bureau. I regained my spirit after Yamaza said it was time to push forward with the annexation of the island because a watchtower connected with wireless telegraph or telegraph lines would be useful as a lookout to detect enemy ships. He advised me to submit my petition hurriedly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying

⁷³ The same sentence is found in “Takeshima Enkakuko (竹島沿革考, Study of History of Takeshima)” written by Fuchuichi Okuhara (*History and Geography* (歴史地理), Vol. 8, Issue 6 (1906), pp. 27-32).

what the official at the Ministry of Home Affairs mentioned was an undue concern. As a result, Takeshima was finally annexed to Japan.⁷⁴

This document, having been created years after the annexation, confuses the Joseon government with the Residency-General of Joseon. However, as this was written by Nakai himself, the response of the Japanese government to the issue is stated in a much more detailed manner. This document and the one mentioned earlier are important in several aspects.

First, the official at the Ministry of Home Affairs was clearly against the annexation of Takeshima. As stated earlier, the Ministry of Home Affairs concluded in 1877 that Takeshima (Dokdo) was Joseon's territory along with Ulleungdo, and its staff members must have been exposed to records and information pertaining to this conclusion. What's more, they were hesitant about predicating the notion that the island was ownerless even while Japan was launching an invasion of Korea.

Second, those who incited Nakai to ignore the concern expressed by the official at the Ministry of Home Affairs and to push ahead with his petition for the annexation were Bokushin Maki, Kaneyuki Kimotsuki, and Enjiro Yamaza. The footsteps of these three are highly interesting. Bokushin Maki served for long time as the head of the Fisheries Bureau at the Ministry of Agriculture and commerce, the highest authority in fisheries administration. He is known for his contributions to the advancement of Japan's fishing industry around this time by encouraging Japanese fishermen to go across the sea.⁷⁵ However, his policy aimed at inciting Japanese fishermen to penetrate into coastal areas of Joseon and extend their influence. Kaneyuki Kimotsuki was a naval specialist who worked in the Hydrographic Bureau throughout his career and laid the foundation for Japan's hydrographic administration. This bureau remains dedicated to the updating of hydrographic information in peacetime but turns into a strategic organization that offers information necessary for military action in wartime. During the Russo-Japanese War, Kimotsuki focused on facilitating the military operations in the coastal waters of Joseon and Manchuria as the head of the Hydrographic Bureau.⁷⁶ Enjiro Yamaza was known throughout the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a hardliner and an advocate of the policy to advance into the continent along with Jutarō Komura, both having been heavily influenced by Genyōsha (玄洋社)⁷⁷. Before he took office as the head of the State Affairs Bureau, he had worked for long time at the Japanese consulate and legation in Joseon, crafting plots to maximize the gains of Japan.⁷⁸ Naturally, Joseon's sovereignty and stance were never a point of consideration for these bureaucrats while pushing ahead with the annexation of Dokdo.

Third, both documents reveal what Japan took as the basis for the annexation. Kimotsuki's claim that Dokdo was completely ownerless around 1904 goes against the knowledge recorded by the Japanese Navy's Hydrographic Bureau. However, Kimotsuki continued to assert that this ownerless island should be preempted

⁷⁴ Promotion and Document Division of Shimane Prefecture (島根縣廣報文書課), *Documents Involving Takeshima* (竹島關係誌料), Vol. 1 (1953). This document is presumed to have been created in 1910 based on the date of the last line.

⁷⁵ "Naomasa Maki Who Served as Director of the Fisheries Bureau for 8 Years," *Suisankai* (水産界, Fishing World), Issue 975 (1966).

⁷⁶ Japan Coast Guard, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-24, 83-88.

⁷⁷ Genyōsha (玄洋社): a supranational organization founded in 1881 (translator's note)

⁷⁸ Takashi Hasegawa, *Enjiro Yamaza* (山座圓次郎) (1967); Masao Ichimata, *Biography of Enjiro Yamaza* (山座圓次郎傳) (1974).

by Japan on the pretext that Nakai began to fish there in the previous year. This was literally no more and no less than a pretext. In truth, the Japanese government's move was prompted by the assertion that the island was needed for military facilities to fight against the Russian fleet as shown by Yamaza's remarks. In conclusion, the annexation of Takeshima was part of a military action taken by Japan across Joseon for war readiness, which infringed upon Joseon's sovereignty. It took the form of an annexation, instead of a simple military occupation, as it was driven by the request of a fisherman who aimed at winning exclusive fishing rights. For Japan, the military occupation of the entire territory of Joseon was the prerequisite for the annexation of the nation. In this context, this annexation of Takeshima was the first important step.

Backed by the instructions given by the abovementioned three officials, Yozaburo Nakai submitted on September 29, 1904, the Petition for the Japanese Government to Annex Ryanko Island and Lend the Island to the three Ministries of Home Affairs; Foreign Affairs; and Agriculture and Commerce. The Japanese government decided to annex the island by approving this petition on January 28, 1905.

3) Japan's Official Announcement and Joseon's Response

On February 22, 1905, the Shimane Prefecture issued Shimane Prefecture Public Notice No. 40 that changed the name of the island from the Liancourt Rocks to Takeshima and designated the island as being under jurisdiction of the Oki Province. However, the Japanese government did not undergo formalities of making the notice public by publishing its issuance in its national gazette. Japan had the experience of establishing sovereignty over an island through negotiations with foreign countries in 1876 regarding the Ogasawara Islands. At the time, Japan held a series of talks with the UK and the US that had interests in the islands and gained their understanding. Japan then announced its rule over the islands to the twelve European and American nations.⁷⁹ As for Takeshima, Japan did not even notify Joseon of its annexation, let alone inquire into the sovereignty issue, although some officials of the Japanese government expressed concern that it speculatively belonged to Joseon. Apparently, Japan at that time did not recognize Joseon as an independent nation.

Joseon became aware of Japan's annexation of Takeshima one year later in March 1906. A group of Japanese officials led by Yutaro Kannishi, secretary of the Shimane Prefecture, dropped by Ulleungdo after taking a tour around Takeshima for an inspection. Kannishi's party met with County Magistrate Sim Heung-taek on March 28 and informed him of the annexation. Shocked at the unexpected news, Sim reported to the central government the next day as follows:

Dokdo, which belongs to our county, is located about a hundred *li* away from Ulleungdo in the open sea. Early this month on the 4th day at around nine o'clock, a steamer docked at Dodong Harbor on Ulleungdo. A group of Japanese government officials got off the ship, came to the county office, and said they came to inspect Dokdo, which had recently been annexed by Japan. This group from the Shimane Prefecture included Fumiske Azma, governor of the Oki Islands; Yutaro Kannishi, the secretary; Heigo Yoshida, the head of the Tax Inspection Bureau; Kanhachiro Kageyama, chief inspector and the head of the substation; one police officer; one assembly member (of the Shimane Prefecture assembly – translator's note); one doctor; one engineer; and over ten attendants. They first asked about the number of households, population, land area, and agricultural yield. Then, they asked

⁷⁹ Akio Yasuoka, *Meiji Restoration and Territorial Issue* (明治維新と領土問題) (Kyoikusha, 1980), pp. 196-213.

about and recorded our personnel information and expenses. I hereby report the details of their visit and request you to take a look into the matter.

-5th day of the 3rd month of the lunar calendar in the 10th year of the Gwangmu era (1906)⁸⁰

Although the visit of Kannishi's party to Ulleungdo is a widely known incident today, no examination of this document has been conducted in Japan. During a dispute with the Korean government in the past, the Japanese government questioned the authenticity of the document. The Japanese government's contention is grounded on the fact that "Kannishi presented a sea lion caught on Takeshima to the county magistrate. The county magistrate offered cordial thanks for the present and for their effort to catch it. If the county magistrate thought of Takeshima as an ancillary island of Ulleungdo, he would not have responded this way."⁸¹ This assertion is ignorant of the conditions of Ulleungdo at that time. As stated earlier, Japanese soldiers and police officers were already stationed on Ulleungdo on a permanent basis, and over 300 Japanese residents were residing on the island, mainly in Dodong, the location of the county office. The fact that Kannishi's party freely investigated the number of households, the population, and the geographical features of Ulleungdo, which was Joseon's territory, flatly shows the dynamics between the two countries. It is highly likely that County Magistrate Sim could not openly raise an objection to the conduct of Kannishi's party due to the pressure of Japan. His polite reception of the guests cannot be taken as his approval of their remarks. Therefore, it is unreasonable for the Japanese government to entirely deny this document. Moreover, Kawakami did not even once bring up Sim's report, while he portrayed the meeting of Kannishi's party and Sim in detail in his book. Considering that this document contains a wealth of valuable information and thus has been widely referred to by many historians in Korea, Kawakami's failure to mention the existence of the document can only be interpreted as an intentional cover-up.

Sim's report clearly states that Dokdo belongs to Ulleungdo. It also informs the central government of the unexpected announcement of the Japanese government officials that Dokdo has become a part of Japanese territory and asks for the central government's guidelines. An island that used to be called Usando in early days is referred to as Dokdo here. Theories abound regarding the origin of the name Dokdo. However, as mentioned earlier in this paper, Joseon people had been referring to the island as Dokdo and denoted it as such in many documents long before Japan's annexation.

Sim's report was delivered to the governor of Gangwon-do, and the acting governor Yi Myeong-rae sent this to Park Je-sun, the Minister of State Affairs in the central government. Upon receiving this report, Park is said to have remarked that the Japanese claim of Dokdo being their territory is unfounded and to have ordered a thorough investigation of the current situation as well as the acts of the Japanese on Dokdo. A Joseon administrative document containing this piece of information is reportedly in existence, but its complete text has yet to be disclosed.⁸² However, the repercussions brought about by Sim's report were well conveyed by newspaper articles published back then.

Joseon's leading newspaper *Hwangsung Shinmun* published an article entitled "Details of the Report of

⁸⁰ Yang Tae-jin, *Collection of Documents about Korea's Border and Territory Issues* (Gapjamunhwasa: 1979), p. 11. The 5th day of the 3rd month of the lunar calendar is March 29 of the solar calendar.

⁸¹ *Monthly Review of Overseas Research* (海外調査月報) (November 1954), p. 68.

⁸² Academic discussion, "Shedding New Light on the Dokdo Issue", 24th Series of *Review of Korean Studies*

the County Magistrate of Uldo” on May 9.⁸³ This article elaborates on how the county magistrate of Uldo, Sim Heung-taek, made a report to Joseon’s Ministry of Home Affairs about the visit of Kannishi’s party. This article is nearly identical to Sim’s report introduced earlier and is considered to have been written based on interviews with the Ministry’s officials. It provides undisputable evidence about the existence of Sim Heung-taek’s report.

Another national newspaper *Daehan Maeil Shinbo* (大韓每日申報, Daehan Maeil Newspaper) also dealt with this incident in its issue dated May 1 as follows:

Article Title: Nothing Remains Unchanged

According to a report made to the Ministry of Home Affairs by Sim Heung-taek, the county magistrate of Uldo, a group of Japanese public officials came to our county and made an investigation of the size of the land and the number of households on Dokdo, claiming that the island was now their territory. The Ministry responded that, while it was understandable for them to record such information during an excursion, it was entirely unreasonable to refer to Dokdo as their territory and thus what was reported was quite surprising.⁸⁴

Although the former half of this article is a mere summary of Sim’s report, the latter half is significant as it provides the reaction of the central government. It reveals that the Joseon government had also recognized Dokdo as its territory from the beginning. That is why the government officials of Joseon found the behavior of the Japanese officials incomprehensible and suspicious. Thanks to these news reports, many Joseon people must have been informed of Japan’s annexation of Takeshima and must have come to view it as an invasion of Joseon. For example, Hwang Hyeon who resided in Gurye, Jeolla-do at the time wrote in his memoirs that the Japanese are claiming false dominium over Dokdo, which belongs to Joseon.⁸⁵

In summary, the central government, the county magistrate of Uldo, and civilians of Joseon all considered Japan’s annexation of Takeshima to be an invasion at that time.

Japan had already begun to govern Korea under a residency general around then even before the country was formally annexed. For this reason, the Joseon government was unable to aggressively respond to this matter. With the entire country balancing on a razor’s edge in fear of being taken over by Japan and losing its sovereignty, it could not afford to pay attention to trifling matters such as a small rock island. However, it is highly significant in dealing with the Dokdo issue from the historical perspective that Japan’s annexation of the island sparked strong opposition from the Joseon people.

Conclusion

In 1905, the Japanese government annexed Dokdo into its territory. Those claiming that it was a just, reasonable move can be categorized into two groups: the majority group and the minority group. The majority group led by Kawakami asserts that Dokdo has been Japanese territory since early modern times and thus the annexation in 1905 is a mere reconfirmation of that fact. The rationale of the minority group is that Dokdo in

⁸³ Korea Culture Development, *Hwangsung Shinmun* (皇城新聞), Vol. 13 (1976), p. 30.

⁸⁴ Korea Newspaper Research Institute (韓國新聞研究所), *Daehan Maeil Shinbo* (大韓每日申報), Vol. 2 (1976), p.1818.

⁸⁵ Hwang Hyeon, *Maecheon-yarok* (梅泉野錄, Hidden History of the Late Period of Joseon Written by Maecheon) (National Institute of Korean History: 1971), p.375.

1905 was an ownerless island and Japan only occupied it before others. As for the former, this paper already proved its falsehood based on Dajokan's official announcement in 1877 that Dokdo is outside Japanese territory. As for the latter, half of the facts paraded here are more than sufficient to disprove that argument. Joseon has maintained conscious dominium over Dokdo since the 15th century and promptly raised an objection as soon as it found out about Japan's annexation in 1905. The Dokdo dispute did not break out in 1952 but at the time of Japan's annexation.

The majority and minority groups are unanimous in that this annexation of the island in 1905 had nothing to do with Japan's invasion of the Korean peninsula, which occurred around the same time. However, the fishing business of the Japanese on Takeshima, which served as the momentum for Japan's annexation of the island, did stem from the move on the part of the Japanese to make inroads into Ulleungdo. Another reason why the Japanese government so hurriedly annexed the island was to build a watchtower there and connect it to Ulleungdo with submarine telegraph lines. Most importantly, the Joseon people at the time perceived Japan's annexation of Takeshima as another infringement upon their sovereignty and another encroachment on their territory that was already being stamped upon by Japan.

A territorial issue must be carefully yet thoroughly examined in a case-by-case manner based on all the relevant historical facts. In Dokdo's case, historical facts must include a series of developments leading up to Japan's annexation of the island and the accurate dynamics of relations between Japan and Korea before and after 1905.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ The original paper written in 1987 said the author of *Inshu Shicho Gakki* was Hosen Saito and the position of Kim Ok-gyun was the Officer of Southeastern Island Development and Whaling. The former has been revised as being Toyonobu Saito and the latter as being the Officer of Southeastern Island Development. The description about Sekisui Nagakubo's *Nihon Yochi Rotei Zenzu* (日本輿地路程全圖, Complete Map of Japan's Lands and Roads) is also revised due to the request of the author (editor's note).