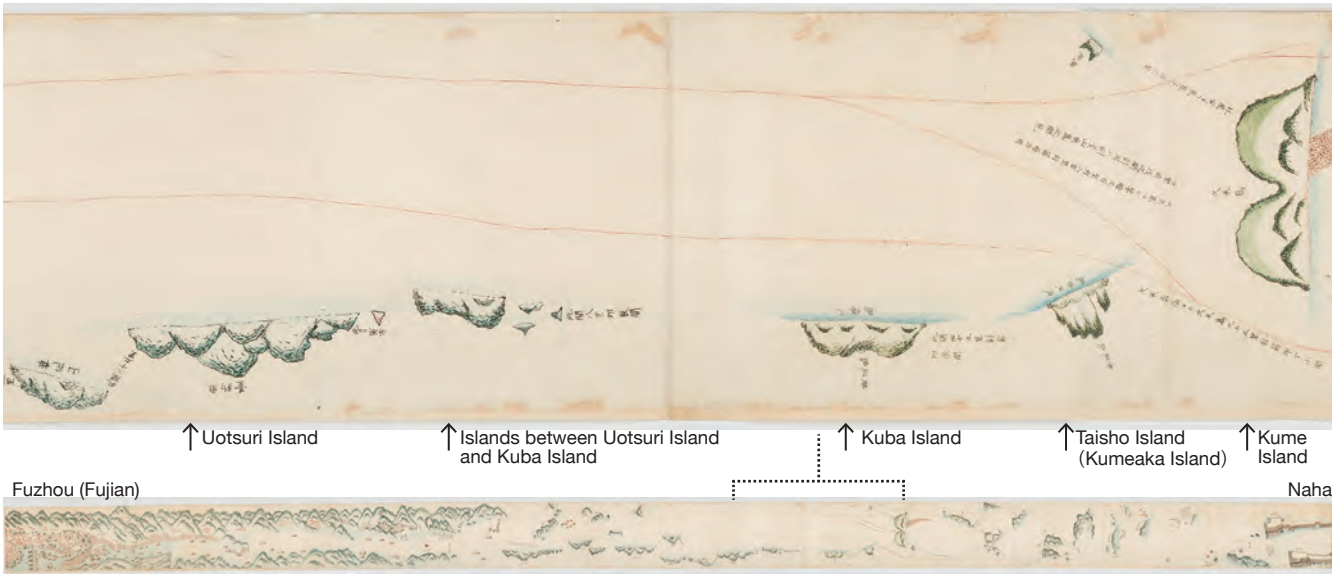


Period I Documents showing that the Ryukyu people had geographical awareness of the Senkaku Islands

A Ryukyu scroll depicting the Senkaku Islands on a navigation route between Naha and Fuzhou

No.1
NEW

Tobin Kokaizu
Year of production unknown



Repository: Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum

Overview

This is a scroll that depicts a navigation route between Naha Port in the Ryukyu Dynasty and Fuzhou Port in China. The year of its production is unknown. Based on the route shown here, vessels would depart from Fuzhou Port, pass Uotsuri Island, Kuba Island, Kumeaka (Taisho) Island, and Kume Island, then sail back to Naha Port.

The Senkaku Islands also appear in Chinese records, such as the records by Chinese Envoys of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. (See the column on p. 19.) In the scroll, with respect to Kuba and Taisho Islands, their Chinese names used in the records of Chinese Envoys (i.e. Kobi-sho, Sekibi-sho) and those used in the Ryukyus (i.e. Kuba Island, Kumeaka Island) are shown above and below their pictures, respectively.

Several islands are shown between Uotsuri Island and Kuba Island. While it is unclear which of the Senkaku Islands they represent (*1), we can tell that the Ryukyu people had specific knowledge about the islands that lay along their navigation route between Naha and Fuzhou, including the Senkaku Islands.

*1 The scroll shows five islands between Uotsuri Island and Kuba Island. There are indeed five islands between them: Tobise, Kitakojima, Minamikojima, Okinokitaiwa, and Okinominamiwa.

Excerpt [English translation]

Uotsuri Island
East from here
When we sail eight *ri* (*2) in the southeast direction there is an island called Kobi-sho or Kuba Island
When we sail 45 *ri* in the southeast direction by the compass needle there is an island called Sekibi-sho or Kumeaka Island
From Kumeaka Island, we sail 95 *ri* due east to Kume Island by the compass needle

*2 *Ri* is a unit of distance in pre-modern East Asia. Its actual distance may sometimes differ.

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