

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

**A drifters' record in the Edo era that contains the names of the Senkaku Islands**
**No.2 Shimoda Nikki**
**NEW** 1795

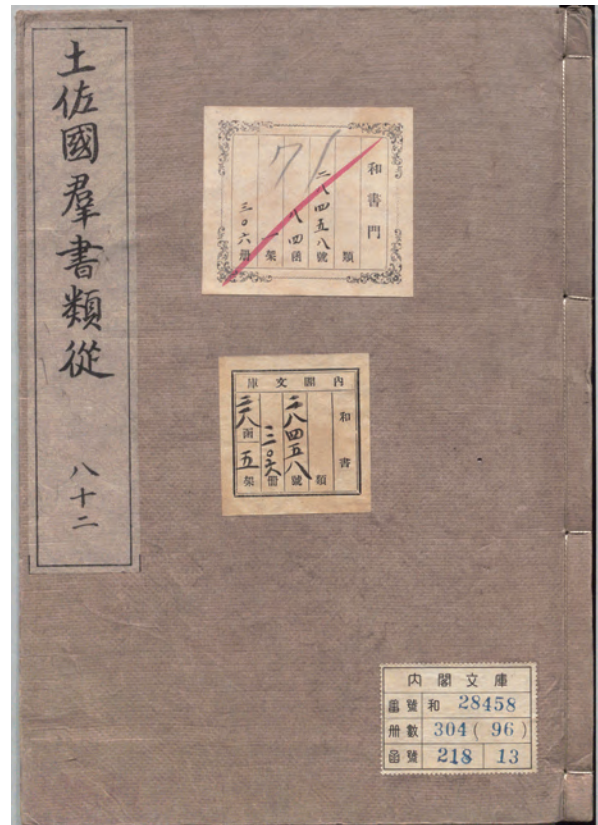
**Overview**

The *Shimoda Nikki* is a collection of documents related to an incident in which the Ryukyu people drifted to Tosa Province in 1795. It is compiled as a part of the *Tosanokuni Gunsho Ruiju* (\*1), a series of publications containing historical materials of Tosa Province.

The *Shimoda Nikki* is divided into several volumes, and descriptions of the Senkaku Islands can be found in the volume (\*3) recorded by ISHIKAWA Pechin (\*2), one of the drifters. He explained what had happened from their departure from Yaeyama until they were cast ashore in Tosa Province.

The party departed from Tomari Village (in Naha) by maran-sen (a type of Ryukyuan ship) (\*4) in March 1794 to collect rice paid as tax (\*5) on the Yaeyama Islands. On their return, they encountered a storm and drifted to China. After that, they joined up with another party that had similarly travelled to Miyako Island to collect rice paid as tax and had fallen into distress on their return journey. According to the descriptions, the group saw the Senkaku Islands (Uotsuri, Kuba, and Taisho Islands) from afar on their way back to Naha via Fuzhou, where the Ryukyu-kan (\*6) was located. (There is mention of Uotsuri and Kuba Islands (“魚釣台久場島,” which is pronounced “Iyokon Kohashima”) on May 9, 1795, and of Taisho Island (“Kumeaka Island,” which is an old name of the island) on May 10, 1795.)

The group went past the Senkaku Islands as they sailed toward Naha, but experienced distress again and drifted to Shimodaura of Tosa Province.



\*1 The series (*Sosho*: a compilation of documents) was edited by Shunpo YOSHIMURA (a Japanese classical scholar of Tosa Province who worked at the Books Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs) during the early part of the Meiji era. The original draft is thought to have been burnt during the WWII, and the sets of *Tosanokuni Gunsho Ruiju* held in the repository of the National Archives of Japan are believed to be copies of the original. Manuscripts are also held in the Historiographical Institute of The University of Tokyo and other institutions, but the origins of these manuscripts are unknown. (Extracted from Hiroataka TERASHIMA, “Newspaper History” in ‘The Complements for Tosa Province Gunsho Ruiju (collection of literary classics and historical records)’ (1880): Study of Variant Books and Texts,” *KITANOMARU* No.52 (The Journal of the National Archives of Japan).

\*2 A physician from the Yaeyama Islands, dispatched from the Shuri Royal Government and serving as a medical officer. “Pechin (親雲上)” is a title indicating one’s status in the Ryukyu Dynasty. It is mostly pronounced as “Pechin” in the Ryukyus, but the *Shimoda Nikki* says that it is pronounced “Haikin.”

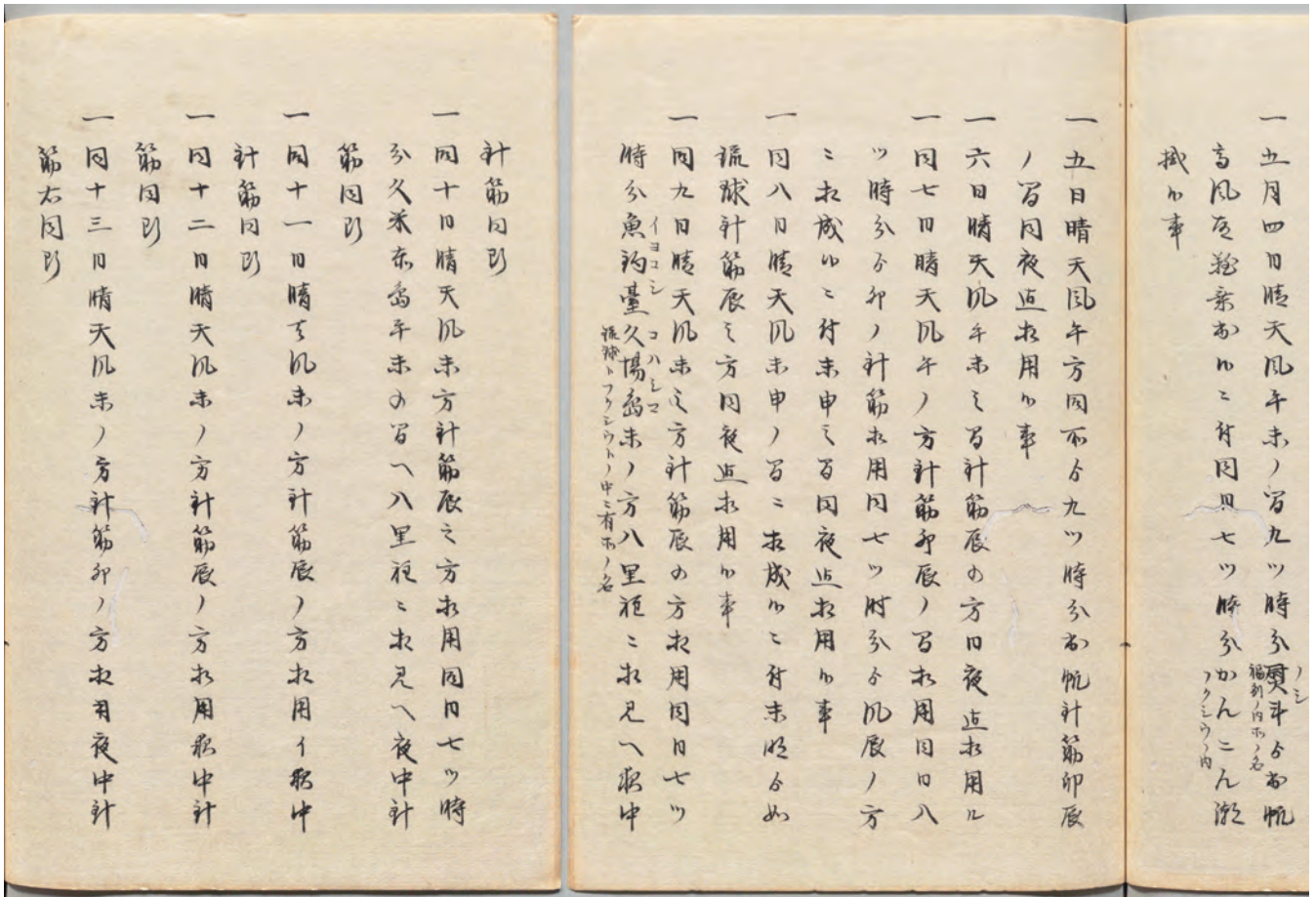
\*3 The title of the volume is “A journal of the time when we drifted to Dongtai County in Yangzhou Province of Jiangnan on our return journey from the Yaeyama Islands in the Year of the Tiger”

\*4 “Maran-sen” refers to a private ship used for maritime transportation.

\*5 The tax was paid to the Shuri Royal Government, which was the central government of the Ryukyu Dynasty. At the time, millet was shown at the top of cargos loaded in the Yaeyama Islands.

\*6 The Ryukyu-kan was an accommodation facility in Fuzhou where the Ryukyu people stayed. (It was an organization under China’s postal system, officially named “Juen-eki.” As only the Ryukyu people were permitted to use the facility, it was commonly known as “Ryukyu-kan.”)

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**Excerpt [English translation]**

- On May 4, the weather was fine with a southerly wind. We departed from Noshi of Fuzhou at about 12 noon. (text omitted)
- On May 9, the weather was fine with a southwesterly wind. We advanced in the southeast direction following the compass needle, and at about 4:00 p.m. of the same day, saw Uotsuri and Kuba Islands (“魚釣台久場島(\*1)” which is pronounced “Iyokoshi Kohashima”; the name of a place that lies between Ryukyu and Fuzhou) about eight nautical miles ahead in the southwest direction. We used the compass needle in the same way at night.
- On May 10, the weather was fine with a southwesterly wind. We advanced in the southeast direction following the compass needle, and at about 4:00 p.m. of the same day, saw Kumeaka Island (\*2) about eight nautical miles ahead toward the south. We used the compass needle in the same way at night.

\*1 In the copy held in the National Archives of Japan, it is explained that the Uotsuri and Kuba Islands (“魚釣台久場島”) are pronounced as “Iyokoshi Kohashima.” However, the one held by the Historiographical Institute of The University of Tokyo says the word is pronounced “Iyokon Kohashima.” The latter is believed to be the correct pronunciation.

\*2 Kumeaka Island is an old name of Taisho Island.