

A travel journal on the fisheries situation around the Senkaku Islands

No.14 Nanto Tanken [The Exploration of Southern Islands]

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Overview

This is a travel journal by Gisuke SASAMORI (a former samurai from Aomori Prefecture), and describes his observations from his 1893 visit to Okinawa Prefecture including the Okinawa Main Island, Miyako Islands, and Yaeyama Islands (*1).

The journal records interviews of migrant workers who traveled to the islands to collect albatross feathers, as well as SASAMORI's direct observations. The journal also includes an account of the visit by the group of fishermen led by Tadashi NODA to Okinawa Prefecture with plans to engage in fishing activities around the Senkaku Islands, including the fact that the group's visit caught the attention of the Okinawan people.

In the appendix, as his personal opinion concerning the administrative matters of the southern islands, SASAMORI recommended that an integrated administrative office be established in the Sakishima Islands (a collective term covering the Miyako and Yaeyama Islands as well as the Senkaku Islands).

*1 The following are the contents related to the Senkaku Islands
 July 1: Hearing the situation of the uninhabited island Kobashima (Kuba Islands) explained by Kansuke HANAMOTO and others at the Naha Public Office
 September 1: Interview with Tadashi NODA, a fishing operator, and his party on the uninhabited islands (the Senkaku Islands).
 September 3: News of Tadashi NODA and his party
 September 5: Giving a send-off for Tadashi NODA and his party

Excerpt [English translation]

According to Kansuke HANAMOTO, the island is 60 miles away from Yaeyama in the north-northwest direction. He departed from Ishigaki Island on the fourteenth day of the Lunar New Year and arrived on the island on the sixteenth day of the same month. Thereafter, he engaged in the work of gathering albatross feathers (text omitted).

September 1, strong winds and rain (text omitted)

Tadashi NODA, a former samurai from Kumamoto Prefecture, arrived at the port last night on his visit to the island. He was accompanied by five people and 11 fishermen, and they came in two fishing boats (text omitted).

With the aim of developing the southern islands, they first attempted to fish around the uninhabited island of Kuba, southwest off the coast of Ryukyu. Venturing further, they explored various uninhabited islands and selected a good place to use as a center for establishing a base for the purpose of making great profits from fisheries in the south seas (text omitted).

Fifth day of the same month, fine weather (text omitted)
 I gave a send-off for Tadashi NODA, a fishing operator on the uninhabited islands, who headed to the Sakishima Islands (text omitted).

Personal views on administrative matters of the southern islands (text omitted)

I would like to express my personal views on the administration of the three broad areas of Sakishima, Okinawa, and Oshima, respectively. First, with regard to the Sakishima Islands, I present the following key points regarding the organization that should be established on the islands:

- establish an island government office on Sakishima
 The 20 islands of Miyako Island, Yashima Island, the Yaeyama Islands, Kushima Island, and the three uninhabited islands of Kumeaka Island (present-day Taisho Island,) Kuba Island, and Uotsuri Island combined, shall be governed under the Sakishima office. (text omitted).

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