# Japan has incorporated the Senkaku Islands into its territory through lawful means under the international legal framework which existed at that time, and maintained valid control over them.

Until the second half of the 19th century, the Senkaku Islands were uninhabited islands around the Ryukyu Islands that did not belong to any country.

Recognizing that the feathers of albatrosses and the shells of great green turban were found to sell well overseas, from around 1889, Japanese fishermen began to move into the Senkaku Islands. In order to manage the fishermen, the Japanese Government carefully confirmed that the Senkaku Islands were not only uninhabited, but also not under the control of any country, including Qing, and then incorporated them into Okinawa Prefecture by a Cabinet decision on January 14, 1895. This action is in accordance with the practice of acquiring territorial rights under international law.

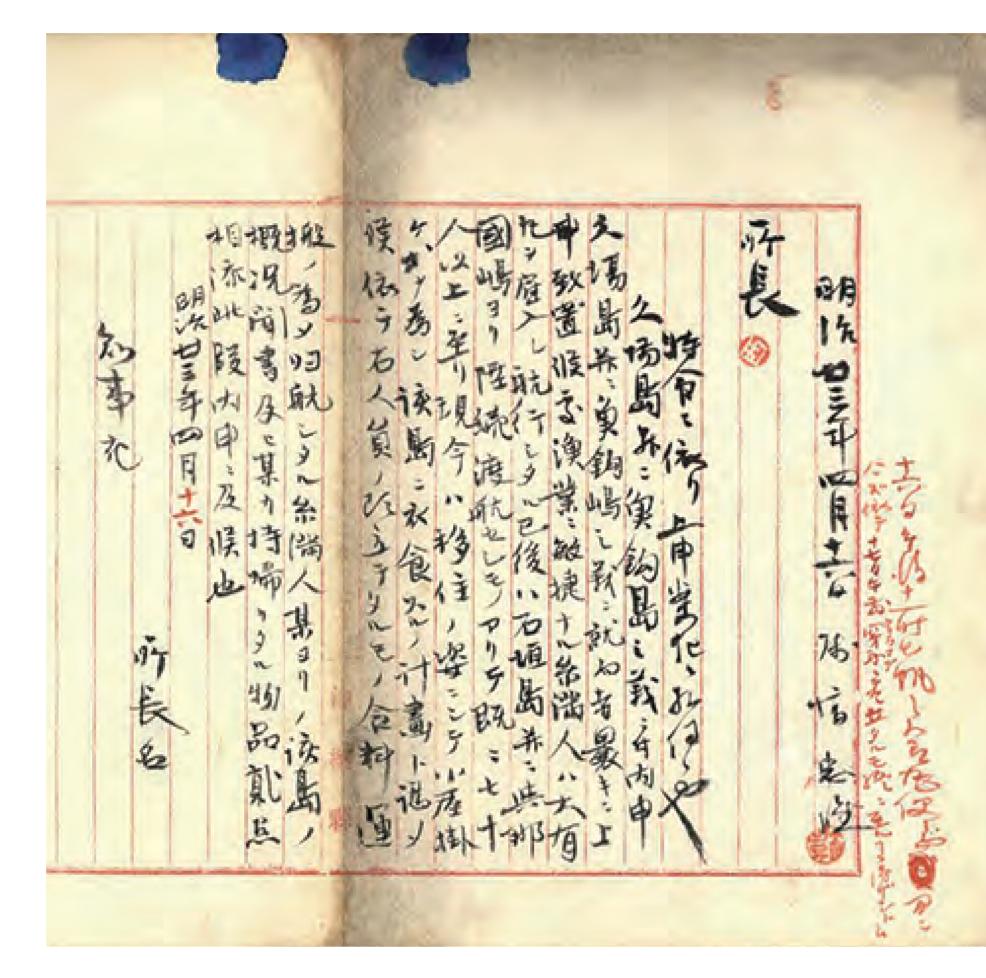
In 1896, private businessman Koga Tatsushiro began full-scale development of the islands with the permission of the Government. Many Japanese people settled on the Senkaku Islands, engaging in activities such as the production of bonito flakes and the collection of feathers. At the height of the period around 1908, as many as 99 households, with a total of 248 Japanese people, lived on the Senkaku Islands. In addition, the Government has maintained open and valid control over the islands through measures such as land surveys and business permits.

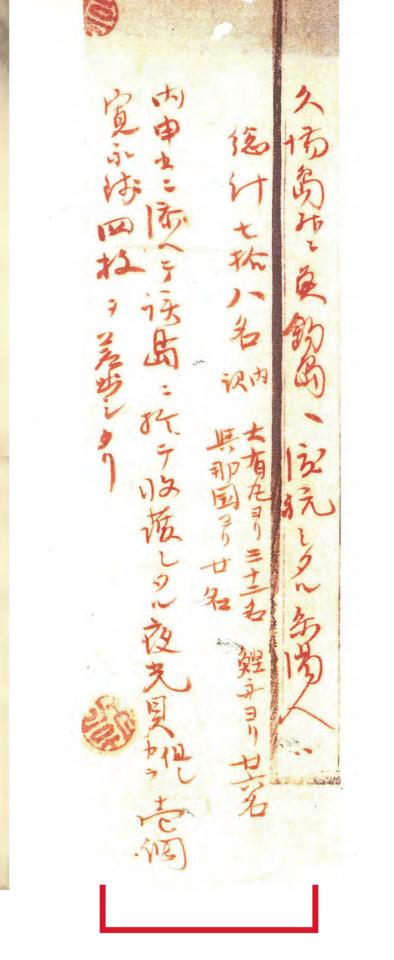
After WWII, the Senkaku Islands were not included in the territories Japan renounced under the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which entered into force in 1952, and were placed under US administration as part of "Nansei Shoto(Islands) south of 29°north latitude" (Article 3 of San Francisco Peace Treaty). The fact that the Senkaku Islands were part of areas placed under US administration was clearly stipulated in a proclamation issued by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR). However, there were no protests from China at all.

Later, under the Agreement between Japan and the United States of America concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands, administrative rights over Okinawa including the Senkaku Islands were returned to Japan.

### Documents concerning the Yaeyama Islands – Kuba Island

According to this document, a total of 78 people went to Kuba and Uotsuri Islands, which indicates that there were already many fishermen operating around the islands by that time.



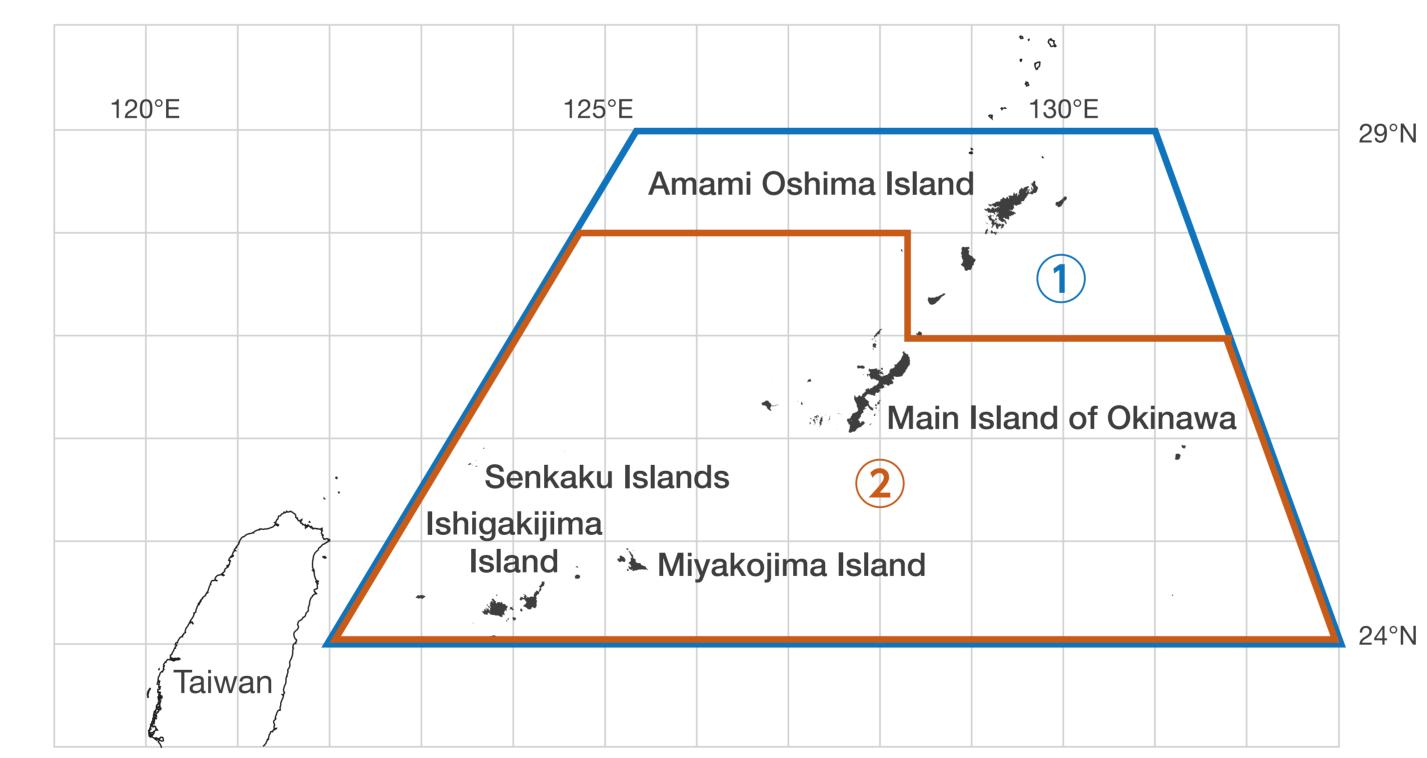


1890 (Meiji 23) [Repository] Okinawa Prefectural Library

#### **Excerpt (Provisional Translation)**

A total of 78 Itoman fishermen went to the islands of Kuba and Uotsuri. They consisted of 32 persons traveling on the Daiyu Maru, 26 on bonito ships, and 20 from Yonaguni Island. The report was accompanied by one yakogai (green turban snail) shell harvested on said islands, for which I disbursed four Kan'ei coins. [Hanawa's personal seal]

### The limit of the area of the Ryukyu Islands shown by USCAR's proclamation etc.



- 1 Area of the Ryukyu Islands shown by Civil Administration Ordinance No. 68 (Provisions of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands) (February 29, 1952)
- 2 Area of the Ryukyu Islands shown by Civil Administration Proclamation No. 27 (Geographic Boundary of the Ryukyu Islands) (December 25, 1953)

# China and Taiwan began making their own assertions about the Senkaku Islands only after a UN agency report had indicated the existence of potential oil reserves in the East China Sea.

In 1969, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), the United Nations, published a report stating that waters around the Senkaku Islands "may be one of the most prolific oil reserves in the world."

It was only after the publication of this report that China and Taiwan, both of which had never claimed territorial sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands, began making their own assertions about the Islands. They are making claims over the islands without valid grounds under international law, and they cannot change the fact that they had never claimed sovereignty at any point in history until the early 1970s.

In recent years, activities by China Coast Guard vessels have been identified almost every day in Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands, and intrusions into Japan's territorial sea have also been occurring. In response to such unilateral attempts by China to change the status quo by force, Japan has repeatedly lodged strong protests and requested the withdrawal of Chinese vessels. With the determination to defend Japan's territory as well as territorial sea and airspace, the Japanese Government will continue to take a calm and resolute approach to the situation in close coordination with relevant organizations.



A JCG patrol ship maintaining surveillance of CCG vessels Photo: Japan Coast Guard

The Senkaku Islands have been Japanese territory since 1895, and no country had expressed objection to Japan's territorial sovereignty over the islands.

However, in the early 1970s, when it was discovered that there were oil reserves in the sea around the Senkaku Islands, China and Taiwan began to claim that the Senkaku Islands belonged to them. China has sent ships to the waters around the Senkaku Islands in a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force.

<sup>\*</sup>USCAR...United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands