



The truth of Dokdo:

Comments by the Northeast Asian History Foundation
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01 Concerning the claim that Japan has long recognized the existence of Dokdo

Japan's claim

- Japan has long recognized the existence of Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo].
 - Japan's recognition is confirmed by a variety of written documents and maps, including the Kaisei Nippon Yochi Rotei Zenzu ("Revised Complete Map of Japanese Lands and Roads," 1779) by Sekisui Nagakubo, which is the most representative cartographic work of Japan, complete with longitudinal and latitudinal lines.

The truth behind the claim

- In the original edition of The Revised Complete Map of Japanese Lands and Roads, which is a map privately made in 1779, Ulleungdo and Dokdo are uncolored as is the Korean Peninsula. Also, the two islands are located outside the grid of Japan's longitudinal and latitudinal lines, indicating that the islands are outside of Japanese territory.
- Meanwhile, there are a number of old Japanese maps published by the Japanese government, including The Chosen Tokai Kaiganzu ("A Map of the Eastern Coast of Korea," 1876), which was published by the Ministry of the Japanese Navy, that places the two islands within Korea's territory.
- Since 1696, when the Tokugawa Shogunate officially banned Japanese fishermen from crossing the East Sea to Ulleungdo Island, Japanese people gradually became confused about the two islands, and not only did they refer to the islands in several different names such as Matsushima (松島), Riyanko Island (ランコ島), Ranko Island (リヤンコ島), and Takeshima (竹島), but also was the islands' geographic location completely forgotten in the end.

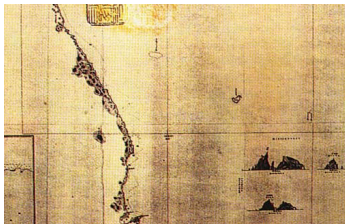


Fig. 1 The Chosen Tokai Kaiganzu ("A Map of the Eastern Coast of Korea", 1876) by the Japanese Ministry of the Navy: The map indicates that the two islands are within Korean territory.

02 Concerning the claim that there is no evidence that Korea recognized the existence of Dokdo in the past

Japan's claim

- There is no evidence that Korea recognized the existence of Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] in the past.
 - There is no clear evidence to back up Korea's claim that Usando is the current island of Dokdo. Also, Usando is presumably another name for Ulleungdo or an island that is inexistent in reality.

The truth behind the claim

- One can safely conclude that Korea recognized Dokdo's existence as early as when Ulleungdo was first inhabited, because in fair weather, Dokdo is within easy range of the naked eye from Ullengdo. Thus, such recognition enabled many government documents published during the Joseon period to contain a clear description of Dokdo: Sejong Sillok Jiriji ("Geographical Records in The Annals of King Sejong," 1454), Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam ("The Newly Enlarged Geographical Survey of Korea," 1530), Dongguk Munheon Bigo ("Reference Compilation of Materials on Korea," 1770), and Mangi Yoram ("The Book of Ten Thousand Means of Governance," 1808).
 - The records of Dokdo in the latter two documents, Dongguk Munheon Bigo (1770) and Mangi Yoram (1808), present a particularly clear description stating: "Ulleungdo and Usando are lands of Usanguk [or the State of Usan], and Usando is the island that Japanese call Songdo [i.e. Matsushima]." No other record of this period contains a clearer statement which shows that Usando is an old name of Dokdo.

- An important Japanese document on the An Yong-bok Incident, "One-volume Memorandum Concerning the Korean Boat that Came Alongside the Sea-shore in the 9th Year of Genroku (元禄九丙子年朝鮮舟着岸一卷之覚書)", which was discovered in Oki Island in 2005, also clearly shows that Ulleungdo and Dokdo were islands under the jurisdiction of Gangwon-do (or Gangwon Province) of Joseon. (See Fig. 5 below.)

- Although some old maps made in Korea may not fully capture the exact size and location of Dokdo, largely due to a lack of advanced cartographic technique, this is insufficient to prove that Korea did not recognize the existence of Dokdo at this time.
 - Almost all old Korean maps, made either in private or public, include the two islands Ulleungdo and Dokdo in the East Sea, showing that Korean people in the past clearly recognized the existence of both islands.



Fig. 2
Dokdo Seen from Ulleungdo: One can see Dokdo from Ulleungdo in the naked eye.

03 Concerning the claim that Japan established its sovereignty over Dokdo by mid-17th century

Japan's claim

- Japan used Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] as a stopover port en route to Utsuryo [i.e. Ulleungdo] Island and also as fishing grounds. Thus, Japan established its sovereignty over Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] by mid-17th century at the very latest.
- In 1618 of the early Tokugawa period, the two families, Oya and Murakawa in Yonago of Tottori-han received permission from the Shogunate for passage to Utsuryo Island, engaging in a kind of Shogunate-approved fishing monopoly and sending abalones to the Shogunate to pay their tribute. Thus, Takeshima was naturally used as a stopover en route to Utsuryo Island and as fishing grounds for catching abalones and sea lions.

The truth behind the claim

- A permission or a license is not necessary to make passage to one's domestic islands. Therefore, the very fact that government permission for passage was issued by the Shogunate, clearly shows that the Tokugawa Shogunate did not regard Ulleungdo and Dokdo as Japanese territories.
- A Japanese document, Onshu Shicho Goki ("Records on Observation in Oki Province," 1667), which was published in mid-17th century, illustrates how the Japanese of their own accord did not consider Dokdo as Japanese territory: "The Oki Island marks the northwestern boundary of Japan".

- In 1877, the Dajokan, or the Grand Council of State, officially admitted on the basis of a Korea-Japan agreement concluded in the late 17th century, that Dokdo was not Japan's territory: "Regarding Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo] and the other island [i.e. Dokdo], it is to be understood that our country has nothing to do with them".

- Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan also produced a similar report under the title, Chosenkoku Kosai-Shimatsu Naitansho (Confidential Inquiry into the Particulars of Korea's Relations with Japan, 1870), after a secret investigation which was conducted on the "background of how Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo] and Matsushima [i.e. Dokdo] became annexed to Joseon", thereby publicly recognizing Matsushima [i.e. Dokdo] as Korea's territory.

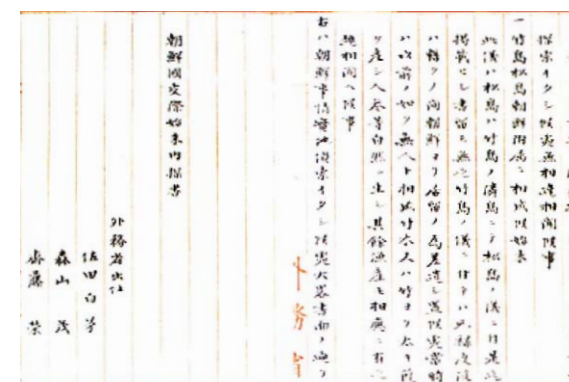


Fig. 3
Chosenkoku Kosai-Shimatsu Naitansho (Confidential Inquiry into the Particulars of Korea's Relations with Japan, 1870): This document, issued in 1870 by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, clearly states that both Ulleungdo and Dokdo are Korea's territories.

04 Concerning the claim that Japan did not ban the sailing of Japanese ships to Dokdo

Japan's claim

- At the end of the 17th century, Japan prohibited the passage of ships to Utsuryo Island [Ulleungdo], but did not ban ships to Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo].
- A Korea-Japan negotiation over fishing around Utsuryo Island in 1696 led the Shogunate to prohibit the passage of Japanese ships to Utsuryo Island, but did not ban ships to Takeshima. Thus, it is clear that Japan regarded Takeshima as national territory at that time.

The truth behind the claim

- When issuing the prohibition of passage to Ulleungdo in the late 17th century, the Tokugawa Shogunate asked the Tottori-han if there were “any islands attached to Tottori-han other than Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo].” Here, the Tottori-han answered that “no other islands belong to the han, including Takeshima and Matsushima”, showing that both islands were not under the jurisdiction of the Tottori-han.
- Moreover, as clearly explained by the subtitles of the Japanese documents owned by the Oya Family, “Matsushima [i.e. Dokdo] in Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo]” and “Matsushima in the Vicinity of Takeshima”, Dokdo was and still is widely regarded as an island attached to Ulleungdo. Therefore, the 1696 prohibition of passage to Ulleungdo naturally meant the prohibition of passage to Dokdo as well.

- The confusion over the official name of Dokdo in Japan, following the prohibition of passage to the two islands, again reveals that Japan at the time did not clearly recognize the existence of Dokdo, not to mention its passage to the island.

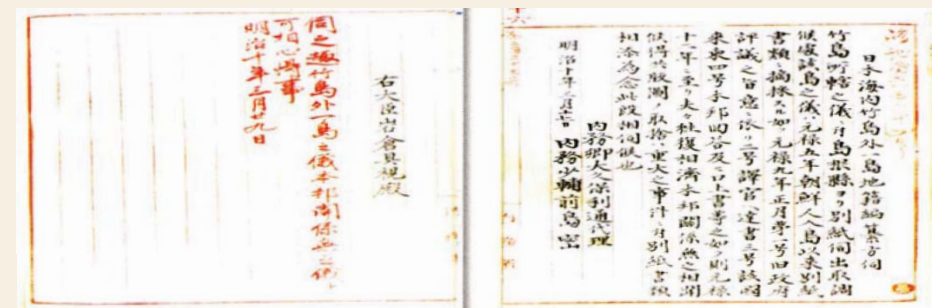


Fig. 4

The 1877 Daijokan Order: The Japanese Grand Council of State, or Daijokan, of the Meiji government officially notified the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the basis of the prohibition of passage to Ulleungdo issued by the Shogunate in the late 17th century that, “Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo] and the other island [i.e. Dokdo] are not related to Japan”.

05 Concerning the claim casting doubt over the report by An Yong-bok

Japan's claim

- The deposition by An Yong-bok, on which Korea bases its claim, contains many points that conflict with factual evidence.
- The reports by An Yong-bok concerning his voyage to Japan are not credible because they do not correspond to Japan's records of the incident, and are believed to have exaggerated the facts, in An's effort to be pardoned for his illegal trespass into Japan.

The truth behind the claim

- Japan's doubts over Korea's official records concerning An Yong-bok's activities on his voyage to Japan are hardly justified, considering that the Joseon dynasty also conducted thorough investigations via the Border Defence Council (Bibyeonsa, defacto state council) on the same issue.
- It is absolutely arrogant and hence totally unacceptable for Japan to assert that Korea's official records are not credible only because certain facts in Korea's records are not included in Japan's records.
- ※ The records of An's activities in Japan are included in several important government publications of the Joseon dynasty such as Sukjong Sillok ("Veritable Records of King Sukjong"), Seungjeongwon Ilgi ("Diaries of the Royal Secretariat"), and Dongguk Munheon Bigo ("Reference Compilation of Documents on Korea") as well as Japanese texts such as Takeshima Kiji, Takeshima Tokai Yuraiki Basho Hikae ("Excerpts from the Record on the Background of the Passage to Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo]"), unauthorized Edition of the Chronology of the Hoku Family, Inpu Nenpyo, and Takeshima Ko (A Study of Takeshima).

- An Yong-bok's work in Japan facilitated the development of state-level talks on Ulleungdo and Dokdo between Joseon and Tokugawa Japan, and eventually led Japan formally to recognize the two islands as Korean territories.

- As a territorial dispute emerged between Korea and Japan via the An Yong-bok Incident, the Tokugawa Shogunate inquired Tottori-han in 1695, about the time in which Ulleungdo/Dokdo came under the Tottori-han's jurisdiction. Later, the han sent the Shogunate an official letter, stating that neither belonged to Tottori-han.

- The Shogunate's order banning Japanese passage to Ulleungdo was issued in January 1696, but almost 8 months passed before the order was actually delivered to the residents of Yonago. Until then, the fishermen of Yonago were able to set sail to Ulleungdo. Thus, it is unsuitable to argue that An's statement is false, of seeing Japanese fishermen in Ulleungdo in May of the same year.

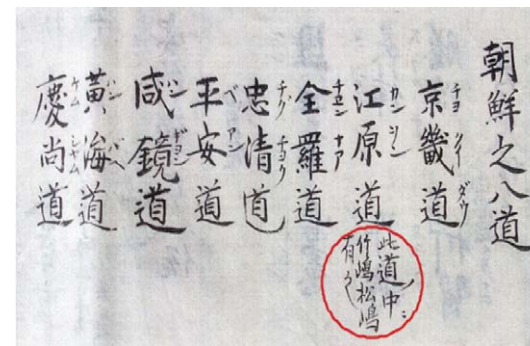


Fig. 5 Appendix to the Investigation Report on the An Yong-bok Incident in 1696: The report containing the details of An's activities in Japan during his second visit is attached to this memo in which Takeshima [i.e. Ulleungdo] and Matsushima [i.e. Dokdo] are clearly stated as Joseon's territories belonging to Gangwon-do, one of Joseon's eight Provinces.

- A Japanese investigation report on the An Yong-bok Incident which was discovered in 2005, "One-volume Memorandum Concerning the Korean Boat that Came Alongside the Seashore in the 9th Year of Genroku", has an appendix containing the names of Joseon's eight provinces taken from a Joseon map carried by An. The appendix also shows Ulleungdo and Dokdo placed under the name of Gangwon-do, clearly proving that An stated to the Japanese investigators that the two islands are under the jurisdiction of Gangwon-do.

06 Concerning the claim that Japan incorporated Dokdo into Shimane Tottori-han in 1905

Japan's claim

- Japan reaffirmed its intention to claim sovereignty over Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] by incorporating the island into Shimane Tottori-han in 1905.
 - After receiving a request from Nakai Yosaburo, a resident of the Oki Island of Shimane Tottori-han, to incorporate the Lyanko Island [i.e. Dokdo] into Japanese territory, the Japanese government reaffirmed through a Cabinet decision made in January 1905, of its intention to claim sovereignty over the island. Consequently, in February of the same year, the Governor of Shimane Tottori-han issued an official notification that Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] was to be put under the jurisdiction of the Okinoshima branch of the Shimane Prefectural Government. The notification was later conveyed to the public via newspapers.
 - Japan registered Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] into the State Land Register, and established a license system for sea lion hunting, which maintained until 1945 when it came to an end due to World War II.
 - It is doubtful that the Seokdo island in the Imperial Ordinance No. 41, issued by the Korean Empire in 1900 refers to Dokdo, and even assuming that this was true, there is no evidence that Korea has ever exercised effective control over Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo].

The truth behind the claim

- It is farfetched logic and self-contradictory for Japan to argue that they reaffirmed the incorporation of Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] into its territory in 1905, while also maintaining that the island has always been Japan's territory. For such an argument to be even slightly plausible, Japan should have taken same measures in reaffirming its sovereignty over the rest of its entire territory as well.
 - The act of reaffirming a state's intention to possess a territory it already owns can be seen as nothing but an excuse that is unacceptable under international law, and there has been no precedent of such actions.

- Japan's diplomatic documents after the 1950s show that Japan tried to explain the 1905 incorporation of Dokdo in that the island was terra nullius ("empty land"), but the excuse was later changed to the "reaffirmation of the intention to take possession," again revealing that Japan's grounds for its assertion was weak indeed.

- The 1905 incorporation of Dokdo into Shimane Tottori-han by Japan, was initiated as part of a strategic movement to win the Russo-Japanese War, and was a preliminary step to colonize the Korean Peninsula. It was an illegal and invalid attempt made to violate Korea's territorial sovereignty over Dokdo, which had already been fully established.
 - Japan's incorporation of Dokdo in 1905 was illegal under international law because the island was not terra nullius at the time when the measure was taken. The territorial sovereignty of Korea over Dokdo had been fully established with a new administrative division given to the island via the Korean Imperial Order No. 41 (1900).
 - Korea took action as soon as it was informed about Japan's maneuvers and reaffirmed that Dokdo was Korea's territory (1906). However, Korea was not able to lodge a diplomatic protest due to the Japanese Protectorate Treaty of 1905, which deprived Korea of its diplomatic rights.
 - Records show that a Japanese seal fisherman named Nakai Yosaburo, fully aware that Dokdo was Korea's territory, planned to petition to the Korean government, for exclusive rights to fish and hunt sea lions in the Dokdo area. The fisherman was later persuaded to change his mind by Japanese officials (Kimotsuke Kaneyuki and Yamaza Enjiro), in the Ministry of Navy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to submit instead a formal request to the Japanese government to incorporate the island into Shimane Tottori-han as part of its territory.
 - Meanwhile, another Japanese official (Inoue) in the Ministry of Internal Affairs opposed the idea by stating: "If we incorporate the useless rocks that are currently deemed as Korea's land, it will surely raise doubts among foreign states watching us, leading them to believe that Japan plans to annex Korea".
 - The Korean Imperial Ordinance No. 41 issued in 1900 is clear evidence that Korea had effective control over Dokdo.
 - Considering the geographical conditions surrounding Ulleungdo and the everyday life of Ulleungdo islanders who called Dokdo as Dokseom (or Dolseom, both literally meaning "rocky island"), there is no doubt that the name "Seokdo" (literally "rocky island") in the Ordinance refers to Dokdo.
 - As clearly shown by an Ulleungdo settler (Hong Jae-hyeon)'s testimony in 1947 and incidents such as the 1948 Bombing of Dokdo, Dokdo had been and continued to be an important fishing ground for the Ulleungdo residents before and after 1905.

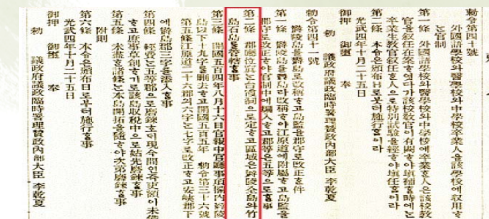


Fig. 6 The Korean Imperial Ordinance No. 41 (1900): The Korean Empire made a clear statement that Seokdo [i.e. Dokdo] is under the jurisdiction of Ulleung-gun, or Ulleung County.

07 Concerning postwar measures taken by the Allies

Japan's claim

- In the drafting process of the Treaty of Peace with Japan, the United States Korea's rejected request to include Takeshima, in the relevant articles of the Treaty, as one of the areas Japan would renounce, claiming that Takeshima was under the jurisdiction of Japan.
- It is also clear from declassified US documents that Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] was not recognized as Korea's territory, whose independence was recognized by Japan and to whom Japan renounced all rights, titles and claims under the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951.

The truth behind the claim

- Initially, the US recognized Dokdo as Korea's territory, and the temporary change in US' position was only due to strategic lobbying by Japan.
- Japan has failed to show logical consistency in its assertion that Dokdo, of which there is no provision in the San Francisco Peace Treaty, should be Japan's territory, while at the same time refusing to accept the Kuril Islands (or "Four Northern Territories" as they are called by Japan) as Russian territory, although the islands are clearly acknowledged as such in the Treaty of Peace with Japan.
- The General Headquarters of the Allied Powers during its occupation of Japan applied Directive SCAPIN-677 without issuing any other specific orders, and the Japanese government also acknowledged after the ratification of the San Francisco Peace Treaty that Dokdo was excluded from its jurisdiction.

- In October 1951, the Japanese government submitted to the Lower House, the Map of Japanese Territory drawn according to the San Francisco Peace Treaty. In this map, Dokdo lies outside the line marking the boundary of Japanese territory, showing that the island is not Japanese territory.

※ The Directive SCAPIN-677 provides that Dokdo along with Ulleungdo, belongs to the area which is excluded from Japan's governmental or administrative authority.

- SCAPIN-677: "3. For the purpose of this directive, Japan is defined to include the four main islands of Japan (Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku) and the approximately 1,000 smaller adjacent islands, ... and excluding (a) Ullung Island, Liancourt Rocks ...".

● The Allied Forces' decision to exclude Dokdo from Japan's territory, between World War II and the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, was part of postwar measures to implement the results from the Cairo Declaration (1943) and the Potsdam Declaration (1945).

- In conclusion, Dokdo was rightly included as an area Japan should relinquish because it was Korea's territory, which Japan usurped through violence and for greed during the Russo-Japanese War, which heralded the start of Japan's full-scale land-grabbing war.



Fig. 7 The Map of Japanese Territory ("The Treaty of Peace with Japan", Mainichi Newspaper, 1952): The map shows that the Japanese Government acknowledged that Dokdo was excluded from the Japanese territory following the establishment of the Treaty.

● After the war, Dokdo was separated from Japan according to the Allied Powers' decision to be under the US Forces' rule until the island along with numerous other islands in accordance to a UN resolution was handed over to the Government of Korea which was established on August 15, 1948. The San Francisco Peace Treaty merely confirmed these facts.

08 Concerning the designation of Dokdo as a bombing range for the US Forces in Japan

Japan's claim

- In 1952, Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo] was designated as a bombing range for the US Forces stationed in Japan, which shows that Takeshima was treated as part of Japan's territory.
- The Japan-US Joint Committee established for the purpose of implementing the Japan-US Administrative Agreement, designated Takeshima as a bombing range for the US Forces stationed in Japan, and notified this information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The truth behind the claim

- The Korean Government's protest led the American Air Forces to immediately exclude Dokdo from its bombing range and to send the Korean Government an official notification of the action. Additionally, that Dokdo was located within the KADIZ and hence outside the JADIZ which was newly set up at the time also confirms that the island is Korea's territory.
- The continued use of Dokdo as a bombing range for US Air Forces and repeated bombings in 1952 that inflicted damage to Korean fishermen working around the island, were results from Japan's incitation as clearly shown in the records from the Diet of Japan.
- ※ The following are words exchanged between Yamamoto, a Diet member from the Shimane constituency, and Ishihara, Vice-minister of Foreigner Affairs, in a Foreign Affairs committee meeting held in the House of Representatives on May 23, 1952.

- Yamamoto: "As for the designation of the military practice area for the Occupation Forces, I think that if the vicinity of Takeshima is designated as a practice area, it would help Japan get confirmation of its territorial sovereignty over the island. Please tell me if that is what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intends."

- Ishihara: "It seems that things are sought after in various ways, largely from such an idea."



Fig. 8
Opening a memorial monument for the 1948 Dokdo bombing victims (June 8, 1950): A ceremony was held to open the memorial stone erected at Dokdo for the Dokdo fishermen who lost their lives at the 1948 Dokdo Bombing Incident. The governor of Gyeongsangbuk-do attended the ceremony.

09 Concerning the effect of Korea's control over Dokdo

Japan's claim

- Korea is illegally occupying Takeshima [i.e. Dokdo], against which Japan has been consistently making strong protests.
- The occupation of Takeshima by Korea is an illegal occupation undertaken on absolutely no basis of international law. No measure taken by Korea during the illegal occupation with regard to Takeshima has any legal justification.

The truth behind the claim

- Japan has never established its territorial sovereignty over Dokdo, in any period in history, and Japan's claim on the Korean island is nothing but a unilateral, invalid, and illegal attempt to infringe upon Korea's territorial sovereignty over Dokdo.
- Japan made an attempt to establish territorial sovereignty over Dokdo via measures taken in 1905, but Korea had already established its territorial sovereignty over the island before that.
- ※ There are a number of important historical documents in both Korea and Japan, which clearly state that Dokdo is Korea's territory as shown before.

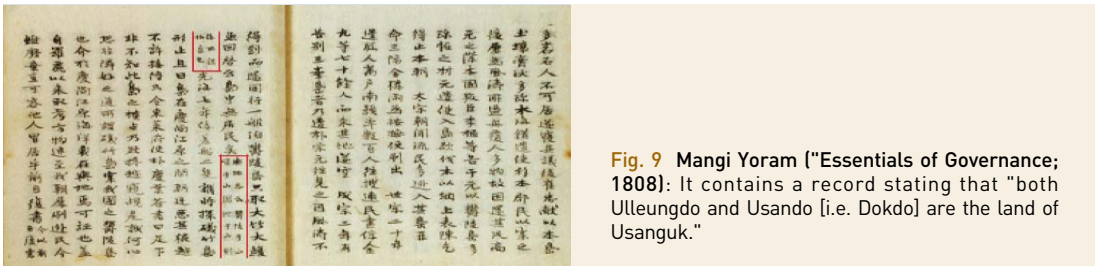


Fig. 9 Mangi Yoram ("Essentials of Governance; 1808): It contains a record stating that "both Ulleungdo and Usando [i.e. Dokdo] are the land of Usanguk."

10 Concerning Japan's proposal to submit this issue to the International Court of Justice

Japan's claim

- Although Japan proposed to Korea, to refer this dispute over Takeshima to the International Court of Justice, Korea has rejected this proposal.
- The Japanese Government proposed to Korea twice, in September 1954 and in March 1962 respectively, to submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice, but Korea rejected the proposal.

The truth behind the claim

- A remarkable self-contradiction exists in Japan's position that while refusing to bring the issue of Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands or the "Four Northern Territories" to the International Court of Justice, Japan asserts that the Dokdo issue should be solved through a decision from the Court.
- Dokdo is an island of great historical meaning, in that it is an area that Korea has finally restored from the aftermaths of Japanese imperialists' harsh colonial rule, which devastated the Korean people and the land. It is an obvious fact that Dokdo is an integral part of the Korea's territory, and Korea sees absolutely no reason as to why Korea should turn to a court, the matter that is all too clear. The only appropriate solution here is for Japan to relinquish its assertion which is based on its dark colonial history that inflicted so much pain on its neighbors.



Fig. 10 Dokdo, a touchstone for a future-oriented relationship between Korea and Japan