

The essential facts to understand Takeshima

# Ahn Yong-bok's Statement and the Takeshima Dispute

Written by

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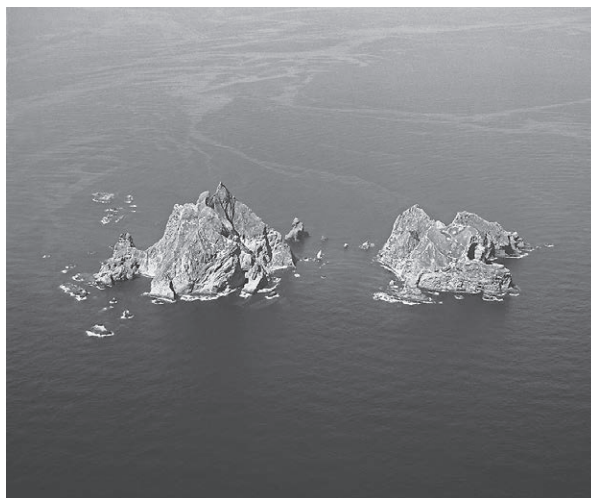
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## Ahn Yong-bok's Statement and the Takeshima Dispute

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Do you know the island called Takeshima in the Sea of Japan? It is located 220 kilometers from Matsue, Shimane Prefecture, and 215 kilometers from Uljin, a town on the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, and is a solitary island far off in the ocean consisting of Mejima Island (Higashijima Island), Ojima Island (Nishijima Island) [Photo 1], and several rock reefs. Today, this island is known as “Dokdo” in the Korean Peninsula, while in Japan it was called “Matsushima” during the Edo period and also called the “Lyanko Islands” after the Meiji period.

The Lyanko Islands were named Takeshima on January 28, 1905, when the Meiji Government decided to place it under the jurisdiction of the Governor of the Oki Islands, which belonged to Shimane Prefecture,



[Photo 1] Takeshima (on the left is Nishijima Island with an altitude of 168 m, on the right is Higashijima Island with an altitude of 97 m)

because Takeshima “had no trace of occupation by any other states.” The Lyanko Islands were incorporated into the present-day Okinoshima Town in Shimane Prefecture, because NAKAI Yozaburo, who was hunting sea lions on the Lyanko Islands at the time, requested the Meiji Government to lease the Lyanko Islands to him.

However, there are currently about 40 members of the Korea Coast Guard permanently stationed at Takeshima, and they are refusing to let the Japanese approach. The military occupation of Takeshima by the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) began around the end of August 1954, and the dispute over the territorial rights of Takeshima still continues between Japan and the ROK. What led to Takeshima, which is Japanese territory, becoming a site of dispute between the two countries? The Takeshima dispute occurred due to the action taken by the Government of the ROK on January 18, 1952, when it established the Syngman Rhee Line on the high seas and included Takeshima in the ROK side of the line. What was the reasoning behind the Government of the ROK’s decision to make Takeshima its territory? From the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, history textbooks for Korean middle school students explained the historical background of the Takeshima dispute as follows.

Dokdo, an island attached to Utsuryo Island, has long been considered Korean territory. In the early Joseon era, people living on Utsuryo Island were relocated to the mainland to prevent people from being exiled, but after the government temporarily loosened control of the island, Korean fishermen continued to use it as a fishing base. During the reign of King Sukjong in the Joseon era, Ahn Yong-bok, a fisherman living in Dongnae, chased away Japanese fishermen coming and going

from Utsuryo Island, and traveled to Japan to confirm that Dokdo was Korean territory. Even after that, Japanese fishermen often continued to illegally approach the vicinity of Utsuryo Island to catch fish. Therefore, the Korean Government encouraged its people to move there, established government offices, and put the area up to Dokdo under its jurisdiction. However, Japan forcibly incorporated Dokdo into its territory during the Russo-Japanese War.

(The second volume of *National History*)

What is taught in Korean history textbooks is based on the country's history where, at the end of the 17th century, a fisherman called Ahn Yong-bok travelled to Japan and made the Japanese side acknowledge "Dokdo" (Takeshima) as Korean territory. Reflecting this historical narrative, a stone monument [Photo 2] was erected on Utsuryo Island to honor Ahn Yong-bok's achievements, and he is considered a Korean national hero.

This is why the ROK recognizes the fact that Japan incorporated Takeshima into Shimane Prefecture in January 1905 during the Russo-Japanese War as a seizure by Japan.

However, there are no documents that record that Ahn Yong-bok expelled Japanese fishermen from Utsuryo Island and negotiated with the lord of the Tottori Domain to make Utsuryo Island and Takeshima Korean territory on the Japanese side. For this reason, this book will look into the history of Japan and the ROK concerning Takeshima and find out what kind of history unfolded in Oki and the Tottori Domain, where Ahn Yong-bok smuggled in at the end of the 17th century.



[Photo 2] Monument of Ahn Yong-bok

### **(1) Travel to Utsuryo Island during the Edo Period**

The origins of the Takeshima dispute can be traced back to Utsuryo Island at the end of the 17th century. According to *Samguksagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), Utsuryo Island became part of the Korean Peninsula in the 6th century (in 512). However, from the 14th century to the 15th century, some of the residents of Utsuryo Island became Japanese pirates (*wako*) and attacked the coast of the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, in 1417 the Government of Korea decided to relocate the islanders from Utsuryo Island to mainland Korea and make it an uninhabited island.

A Korean history textbook states, “people living on Utsuryo Island were relocated to the mainland to prevent people from being exiled.” This tells the history of the people of Utsuryo Island, who became Japanese pirates and attacked the Korean Peninsula. In the ROK, the policy of turning Utsuryo

Island into an uninhabited island was called the Repatriation Policy, and this policy continued until recently. The Government of Korea kept Utsuryo Island uninhabited from the 15th century to the 19th century.

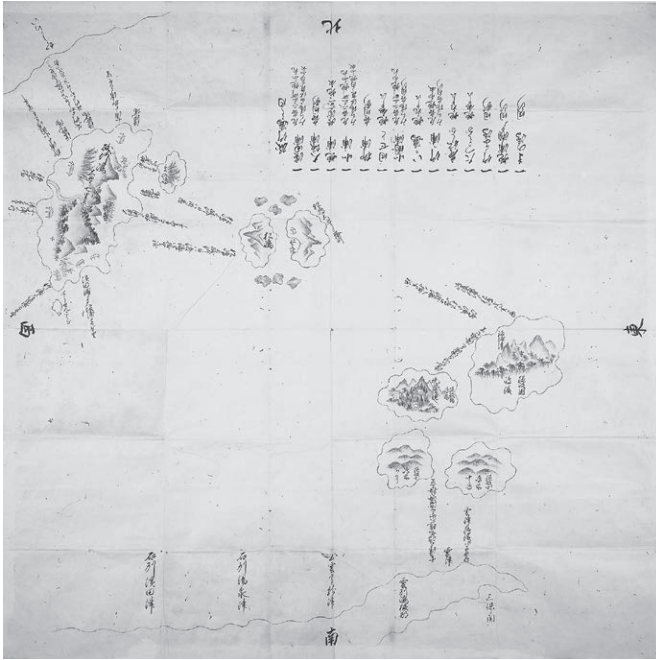
The Ohya and Murakawa families in Yonago of the Tottori Domain decided to move to Utsuryo Island to engage in fishing activities. This was because in 1618, when IKEDA Shintaro (Mitsumasa), who was going to be the lord of the Tottori Domain, moved from Himeji to the Tottori Domain, the Ohya and Murakawa families requested ABE Shirogoro, a supervisor dispatched by the Shogunate, to issue permission to travel to Utsuryo Island. The Ohya family and the Murakawa family, who received permission from the Edo Shogunate to travel to Utsuryo Island, traveled to the island in sequential orders, and engaged in catching abalone and hunting sea lions.

Currently, the Tottori Prefectural Museum owns an illustrated map of Utsuryo Island (“Illustrated map of Takeshima submitted by Ihe-e Kotani”) [Photo 3]. In the map, “abalone catching” and “teppo-ba” (gun range) are clearly depicted, but “teppo-ba” indicates that it was used as a sea lion hunting site. This map shows that the entire Utsuryo Island area was a rich fishing ground for abalone and sea lions.

The Ohya and Murakawa families traveled to Utsuryo Island to engage in fishing activities from around April to August, which also coincides with the breeding season for sea lions. On Utsuryo Island, abalone and seaweed were harvested and dried in the sun, and oil was extracted from sea lions. Dried abalone, in particular, was offered as gifts to the Shogun’s family and senior members of the Shogunate, and it was highly prized.

When the Ohya and Murakawa families crossed the sea to Utsuryo Island, they borrowed guns from the Tottori Domain and received a traffic pass [Photo 4] from the ship magistrate before setting sail. The borrowed guns were





[Photo 3] "Illustrated map of Takeshima submitted by Ihe-e Kotani"



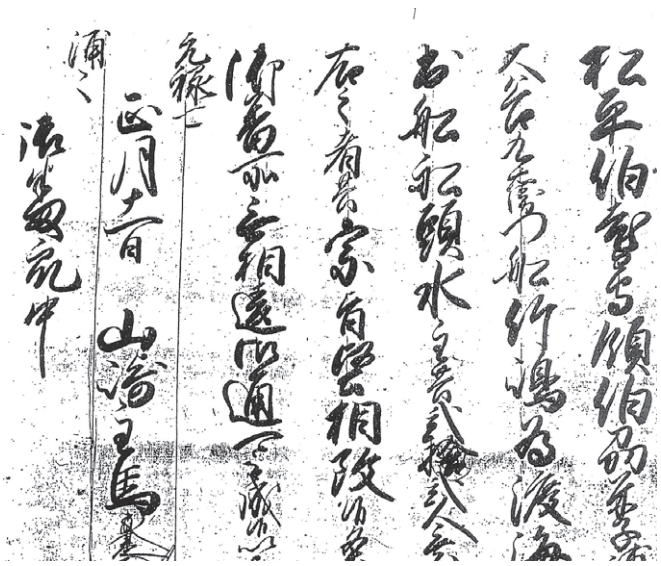
(Partial enlargement)

used to hunt sea lions, and hunters from Hoki (western Tottori) were in charge of shooting them.

Meanwhile, abalone hunters from Oki engaged in catching abalone on Utsuryo Island, and some of the sailors were also employed from Oki. For this reason, the Ohya and Murakawa families always stopped at Oki before travelling to Utsuryo Island and hired abalone hunters and sailors. A few abalone hunters and five sailors boarded from Oki.

The ship that travelled to Utsuryo Island had a sail that was approximately 10 m wide, with the capacity to carry approximately 30 metric tons. According to the record of the Genroku era's traffic pass, there were a total of 22 people on board, of which one-third of them were from Oki.

According to *Takeshima Study* written by OKAJIMA Masayoshi, the waterways leading to Utsuryo Island were Yonago, Kumozu, Chiburi, and



[Photo 4] Traffic pass



Fukuura, in that order, and ships would wait for good wind at Dogo in Oki Islands. The precise location where the ships waited for the favorable wind was Fukuura in Minamigata Village (part of the former Goka Village). It was customary to pray for a safe voyage at the Benzai-Tenno (Heavenly Maiden) Shrine [Photo 5] on Bentenjima in Fukuura.

With regard to the Benzai-Tenno Shrine, the *Inshū Shichō Gakki* (Records on Observations in Oki Province) (“Minamigata Village Note”) written by SAITO Toyohito of the Izumo Matsue Domain, states the following.

There is a solitary island in the sea with growing trees, shaped high. On top of it, the Benzai-Tenno is enshrined, and a torii gate was built facing

the village. Those who cross to Isotakeshima stay there and predict the clear weather and wind. They also pray for their safe return.



[Photo 5] Fukuura Benzai-Tenno Shrine Hall

Isotakeshima was the name of Utsuryo Island at the time, and people who crossed the sea to Utsuryo Island would anchor their ships on Bentenjima and pray for a safe voyage. In the *Dajoruiten Part 2* (Vol. 96) (Meiji Government’s document) compiled during the Meiji period, the following

is written about the Benzai-Tenno Shrine. “At that time, Benzai-Tenno Shrine was built as a place to pray for the peace of the Ohya and Murakawa families, and for the peaceful sea and waves. Even today, whenever any repairs are carried out for the main hall of the shrine, the two families must always be informed of it.”

The Ohya and Murakawa families’ travels to Utsuryo Island were interrupted in 1693 due to a conflict with Korean fishermen. Only Benzai-Tenno Shrine on Bentenjima stays the same, still reflecting its elegant appearance on the sea of Fukuura.

In the past, men of the sea would park their ships under Benzai-Tenno Shrine, pray for a safe voyage, predict the wind, and when the wind was favorable, they would set sail for Utsuryo Island. According to the *Kokudaiki* (History of the Province) in the *Inshū Shichō Gakki*, it took two days and one night to reach Takeshima from Oki, and one day from Takeshima to Utsuryo Island.

However, fishing activities on Utsuryo Island had also come to an end.

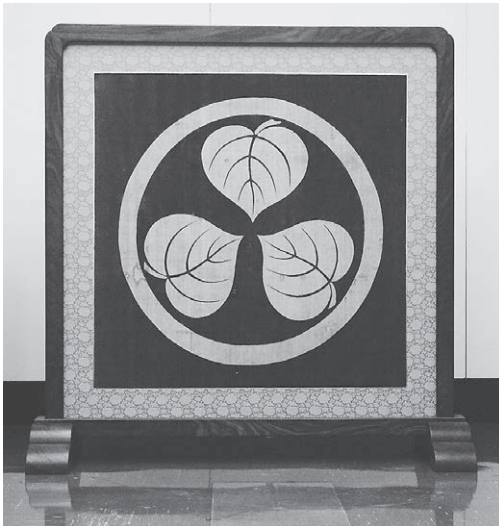
## **(2) Travelling to Utsuryo Island and Encountering Korean Fishermen**

Almost 80 years after travelling to Utsuryo Island began, the Government of Korea kept the island as an uninhabited island. As a result, the Ohya and Murakawa families continued their fishing activities without encountering Korean fishermen. However, in 1692, when the Murakawa family’s boat approached Utsuryo Island during their turn, they found that Korean fishermen were catching abalone and seaweed on the island. Therefore, the Murakawa family’s boatmen brought back Korean straw sandals, dried abalone, chunks of Korean miso, and other items as evidence of a crime of cross-border invasion.

On March 16, 1693, fishermen from the Ohya family departed from Fukuura for Utsuryo Island. When they arrived at Utsuryo Island, they found abalone and seaweed caught by Korean fishermen already being dried on the beach, and that the Ohya family's small boat was being used without permission. For those Japanese who had a traffic pass issued by the Tottori Domain and were travelling to Utsuryo Island using the Aoi crest [Photo 6] as their ship's seal, what they saw on the island was perceived as a violation of their territorial waters.

The Ohya family's boatmen asked Korean fishermen not to violate their territorial waters. In response, one of the Korean fishermen said that he had come to catch abalone by government order, and that he was one of the forty-two people (divided into three boats) who had arrived.

Feeling that Utsuryo Island would be taken if things continued as it were,



[Photo 6] A ship's seal with the Aoi crest on a *tokaibune* (sea-crossing boat).

the boatmen of the Ohya family decided to bring two Koreans, Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon, who also appear in Korean history textbooks, back to Japan as living witnesses of the border crossing, in order to seek the ruling of the Shogunate.

The ship carrying Ahn Yong-bok set sail from Utsuryo Island on April 18, and arrived

at Fukuura, Dogo, Oki Province on the 20th. This was because there was a guardhouse in Fukuura. The ship left Fukuura on the 23rd, stopped at Dozen on the way, left there on the 26th, and arrived at Unshu Nagahama on the same day. It was on the 27th that they returned to Yonago.

The Ohya family immediately reported the incident to the Tottori Domain, and both Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon were detained by the Ohya family in Nada Town. Meanwhile, on the last day of April, the Tottori Domain sent a *haya-bikyaku* (an express postman) to the Edo Shogunate and sought instructions from them.

According to the *Takeshima Study*, the personality of Ahn Yong-bok was said to be “fearless and violent,” and the Ikeda Family’s *Oyagura Diary* describes that Ahn Yong-bok, who was kept in Yonago, made a fuss because he wanted some recreation. Although he was prohibited from going out, he was allowed to drink alcohol, with “a limit of about three sho (cups) a day.”

Instructions from the Shogunate reached Tottori on May 26. At that time, the Shogunate ordered the Tottori Domain to escort Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon to Nagasaki, and let the Tsushima Domain, which was the diplomatic contact point with Korea, protest against the Government of Korea regarding the fishermen crossing the border.

While waiting for the Shogunate’s instruction, Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon were temporarily transferred to the castle town of Tottori Castle. The details of the transfer are recorded in the Tottori Domain’s *Takeshima Study*, which describes that no women and children were allowed to come and view the transfer of Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon, as there was a risk that the two would cause trouble while being escorted.

At that time, both Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon had their IDs with them. Park Eo-doon was a fisherman in Ulsan, while Ahn Yong-bok, whose

original name seems to be Yong-bok, belonged to the navy in Dongnae, Gyeongsang Province. In addition, Park Eo-doon was an ordinary citizen, but Ahn Yong-bok was a servant with “the lower class status.”

Soon after that, the Tottori Domain, following the orders of the Shogunate, escorted Ahn Yong-bok to the magistrate’s office in Nagasaki. At first, the Tottori Domain could not decide whether to take the sea route or the land route. In the end, a safe land route was chosen, and Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon travelled in *kago* (means of transportation), accompanied by more than ten people, including a medical doctor and a cook.

The party left the Tottori Domain on June 7 and arrived in Nagasaki on the last day of June. On July 1, Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon were handed over to the Nagasaki Magistrate’s Office, where a full-scale interrogation was carried out by an interpreter dispatched from the Tsushima Domain. The circumstances eventually became clearer, and Ahn Yong-bok, who had testified that he had been working as a fisherman under government orders, answered the Tsushima Domain that he “was harvesting abalones for a living” when questioned in Korean.

Based on this statement by Ahn Yong-bok, the Tsushima Domain decided to protest to the Korean Government about the border-crossing behavior of Korean fishermen.

### **(3) The Tsushima Domain and Ahn Yong-bok’s Statement after Being Repatriated**

On the first day of November in 1693, the ship carrying Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon was moored at Jeolyeongdo in Busan, and the two were handed over to the Government of Korea. In doing so, the Tsushima Domain requested the Korean side to prevent the recurrence of violations of territorial

waters. In response, the Government of Korea, which intended to avoid friction with the Edo Shogunate, was cooperative, forbidding them from crossing the sea to Utsuryo Island and promising to punish Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon severely.

However, soon after that, an unexpected situation occurred within Korea. The Korean Government that had been cooperative with the Tsushima Domain was overthrown, and a government considered to be a hard-liner came to power. Following this, the treatment of Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon also changed completely.

The reason for the change was that Ahn Yong-bok, who was handed over to the Korean Government, gave a different statement from the one he made while in the Tsushima Domain. When interrogated by the Tsushima Domain, Ahn Yong-bok stated that he “was harvesting abalones for a living,” while back in Korea, he testified, “I was lost while transporting taxes and drifted on to Utsuryo Island. Japanese fishermen came there and took me away.” Park Eo-doon stated the same thing as Ahn Yong-bok, both of whom were taken away together. There was, however, one point for which Ahn Yong-bok made a different statement to that of Park Eo-doon.

Ahn Yong-bok stated that during the voyage from Utsuryo Island to Oki Islands, after dinner he witnessed an island that was “very large” compared to Utsuryo Island. However, the Korean Government did not believe the statement of “very large island,” because there was no island larger than Utsuryo Island between Utsuryo Island and Oki Islands. The Government of Korea then asked Park Eo-doon about the existence of the “very large island,” and Park Eo-doon stated that, “There is no large island between Utsuryo Island and Japan.”

Now, the question is why Ahn Yong-bok stated that there was a “very



large island” while being questioned by the Korean Government. There was a reason for why he did so. Ahn Yong-bok, who was visiting Utsuryo Island for the first time, saw the silhouette of an island in the northeast of Utsuryo Island twice during his stay on the island, and visually estimated that it would take a day’s boat ride to get there. Furthermore, he was informed by the fishermen who were traveling with him to Utsuryo Island that the island was Usan Island.

Ahn Yong-bok believed that there was an island within a day’s boat ride away from Utsuryo Island, and that it was called Usan Island. When Ahn Yong-bok was being taken from Utsuryo Island to Japan, he saw a large island on the way. It was exactly as he estimated, “a day’s boat ride,” and he saw the island on the water after dinner on the next day.

The ship carrying Ahn Yong-bok left Utsuryo Island on April 18 and arrived at Fukuura on Oki Islands on the 20th. Thus, “after dinner on the next day” when Ahn Yong-bok encountered the “very large island” must have been April 19, and at that time they were in front of Oki Islands, which is much larger than Utsuryo Island. The “very large island” that Ahn Yong-bok saw was not Takeshima, because Takeshima is a reef, which is much smaller than Utsuryo Island.

However, three years later, Ahn Yong-bok smuggled into Japan to claim that the “very large island” was Usan Island, and that Usan Island was Japan’s Matsushima (Takeshima). However, Takeshima is located to the southeast of Utsuryo Island and is in a different direction from Usan Island, which is located to the northeast of Utsuryo Island. Ahn Yong-bok truly believed that Usan Island was Matsushima (Takeshima). This geographical misunderstanding of Ahn Yong-bok is the origin of today’s Takeshima dispute.

Moreover, an incident that occurred on the Korean side would have an impact on the evaluation of Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon. Park’s wife and

children complained to the local government office in Ulsan, appealing, “Park Eo-doon, who went fishing with Ahn Yong-bok and others on Utsuryo Island, was taken away by Japanese fishermen.” This incident caused the development of a perception that Ahn Yong-bok and Park Eo-doon were victims of abduction by the Japanese side, rather than people who had committed cross-border violations. With the change of government within Korea, distrust towards the Tsushima Domain grew stronger among the Korean side.

In such a situation, the Tsushima Domain, which acted as a negotiator, was inevitably put in an ambivalent position. For the Tsushima Domain, which protested against the Korean side concerning Ahn Yong-bok and others crossing the border under the instructions of the Edo Shogunate, Korea was also an important trading partner.

Moreover, the Tsushima Domain had reached a turning point. In the Tsushima Domain, the lord of the domain, SO Yoshitsugu, died at the young age of 24, which led to a move to reconsider negotiations with the Korean side. In particular, ABIRU Sobei and SUYAMA Shoemon recognized Utsuryo Island as Korean territory from an early stage. The understanding of these two people was based on the “Uljin Prefecture” section of the *Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* (Survey of the Geography of Korea) (existing as the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* [Revised and Augmented Edition of the Survey of the Geography of Korea]) created in the 15th century, in which Utsuryo Island was placed under the jurisdiction of Uljin Prefecture, and Utsuryo Island was stated as “visible” from the Korean Peninsula.

This geographical awareness was shared by the Korean side. When negotiating with the Tsushima Domain, they claimed sovereignty over Utsuryo Island on the basis of the descriptions in the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam*.

However, the situation was different in the case of TADA Yozaemon

of the Tsushima Domain, who was directly involved in negotiations with the Korean side. TADA Yozaemon faithfully followed the orders of the Shogunate and strongly claimed sovereignty over Utsuryo Island, based on the fact that Japan had effectively controlled the island for 80 years, during which the Korean side had abandoned it. There was also internal conflict within the Tsushima clan over the ownership of Utsuryo Island.

Faced with the sudden death of their lord, the Tsushima Domain decided to request the Shogunate to suspend the territorial dispute. The Edo Shogunate emphasized “good neighborly friendship” and made Utsuryo Island a Korean territory. Therefore, on January 28, 1696, the Edo Shogunate forbade crossing to Utsuryo Island, withdrew the traffic pass given to the Ohya and Murakawa families to travel to Utsuryo Island, and informed the Tottori Domain of the prohibition of crossing the sea to Utsuryo Island. At that time, the issue of attribution of Utsuryo Island had been settled on the Japanese side. However, in May of that year, an unexpected incident occurred in Oki.

#### **(4) Ahn Yong-bok’s Incident of Illegal Entry into Japan**

On May 20, 1696, 11 members of Ahn Yong-bok’s party smuggled into Oku Village (a part of the former Togo Village) on Dogo, Oki Province, claiming that they had a request for the Tottori Domain. The Japanese side has a record regarding this smuggling incident of Ahn Yong-bok, which is called the *Genroku Kyu Heishinen Chosenbune Chakugan Ikkan no Oboegaki* (Memorandum on the Arrival of a Boat from Korea in 1696).

This memorandum records that Ahn Yong-bok visited Japan to make allegations against the Tottori Domain and describes his interactions with the officials on duty in the domain. When he arrived, Ahn Yong-bok had a license plate that read “Tongjeong Taifu (通政太夫)” and called himself “Third Rank

Dangsangwan Officer Ahn (三品堂上臣、安同知).” When he was brought in by the Ohya family in 1693, the status written on the plate (identification tag) that Ahn Yong-bok was wearing on his waist indicated his status as “the lower class.” However, when he smuggled into the Tottori Domain in 1696, he had become a high-ranking government official. Generally speaking, “Tongjeong Taifu” was a rank equivalent to the Shosanmi (Senior third rank) in Japanese rankings. The “Third Rank Dangsangwan” indicates a senior vassal who could communicate directly with the king. Moreover, Ahn Yong-bok was wearing a black hat designed to look similar to a crown with hanging crystal cords and a light-yellow cotton jacket, pretending to be a government official.

Ahn Yong-bok told the official on duty that he and Park Eo-doon had been taken away on a ship belonging to Yonago of the Tottori Domain four years ago. He further explained that this time, after breakfast on March 18, they left Korea on 13 boats and arrived at Utsuryo Island in the evening of the same day. Of the 13 boats, those who travelled on 12 boats were still on the island, harvesting seaweed and abalone and cutting bamboo trees. According to Ahn Yong-bok, Park Eo-doon was at that time on Utsuryo Island, but the 11 of them, including Ahn Yong-bok, decided to come to the Tottori Domain to report something to the lord. Unfortunately, the weather turned bad, and so they decided to stop by at Oku Village.

However, the bad weather did not seem to be the only reason for Ahn Yong-bok to stop at Oki, because he complained about their plight as follows.

He said, “We had prepared some food when we left Korea, but we have eaten it all, and now we do not even have enough rice.”

It was true that Ahn Yong-bok was in short supply of rice. After the conversation with the official on duty, Ahn Yong-bok presented six packages of “dried abalone” and a letter to the headman of Oku Village and the official on

duty. In the letter, a note was added after the main part, which read “lettuce, green vegetables, and fruits please.” The Oku Village headman returned the six packages of “dried abalone” and at the same time gave them lettuce, green onions, torrey nuts, Japanese parsley, and ginger.

Then, the next day, Ahn Yong-bok sent a note explaining that they had run out of rice and would not be able to have dinner. When the headman and others went to check the situation, Ahn Yong-bok explained, “We are in trouble because we have run out of rice. In Korea, when foreign ships arrive, we are supposed to provide them with food, but do you not do the same here?”

In response, the village headman said that his village would act appropriately when a foreign ship washed ashore in the area, but that Ahn Yong-bok and others should have prepared food including rice since they had come to make allegations. Ahn Yong-bok agreed with the village headman and said that it was natural for the Japanese side to feel suspicious of them. He continued to explain that they had left Utsuryo Island on May 15 and arrived in Japan straight from there, and that they did not plan to stay in Japan for long.

The headman and others mentioned that they wanted to check the condition of the boat first to confirm their statements, and Ahn Yong-bok agreed, saying, “That makes sense,” and showed them the inside of the boat in which only about 450 g of the remaining white rice was found. The headman informed the official at the guardhouse of the situation with the Koreans, while telling Ahn Yong-bok that the village area had little rice left due to a poor harvest the year before, and therefore all they had was poor quality rice, if any. The village headman offered to arrange some rice for Ahn Yong-bok if he would not mind the quality of the rice, and Ahn thankfully accepted the offer.

The village headman explained that it would take a little while until the

village received rice from the guardhouse. In the meantime, the village people would collect around 6.75 kg of white rice from Oku Village and combine it with the rice arriving from the guardhouse after it was washed, to make a total around 18.5 kg of rice. Ahn Yong-bok's response was that it would be enough for the dinner on the 21st and three meals on the 22nd. Based on this estimate, the village continued to provide rice to Ahn Yong-bok and others whenever they were able to prepare some.

According to the *Genroku Kyu Heishinen Chosenbune Chakugan Ikkan no Oboegaki*, which was recorded by the Japanese side, Ahn Yong-bok disguised himself as a government official, but it seems that he smuggled in without preparing enough food.

At that time, what had Ahn Yong-bok prepared, given that he was planning to visit the Tottori Domain to make allegations? Among the things that Ahn Yong-bok had in his possession were eight maps created based on the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam*. Ahn Yong-bok showed the maps and told the official on duty that Utsuryo Island, which belonged to Dongnae-gu, Gangwon Province of Korea, was Takeshima, and Matsushima was Jasan Island, which was also located in Gangwon Province.

However, it was in fact Uljin Prefecture in Gangwon Province that had jurisdiction over Utsuryo Island, while Dongnae-gu was in Gyeongsang Province. It seems that Ahn Yong-bok's geographical understanding was not accurate.

Similar inaccurate understanding also appeared when Ahn Yong-bok indicated the distance between Takeshima (Utsuryo Island) and Korea as approximately 120 km, and the distance between Utsuryo Island and Matsushima as approximately 200 km. Despite such a description, Ahn Yong-bok also said that he had left the Korean Peninsula after breakfast in the



morning, and arrived at Utsuryo Island in the evening of the same day, and then left Utsuryo Island and arrived at Matsushima on the same day.

However, the boat Ahn Yong-bok boarded was a small boat about 9 m long and 3.6 m wide, with two masts (one of which was made of bamboo). Physically, it would be almost impossible to reach Matsushima from Utsuryo Island on the same day with such a small boat, which he described as about 200 km away from the destination.

In addition, Ahn Yong-bok called Jasan Island (Usan Island) on the map he brought with him Matsushima (present-day Takeshima), but the present-day Takeshima was not depicted on that map. We can assume that the eight maps brought by Ahn Yong-bok had been drawn based on the article in the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam*.

In fact, when confirmed with the *Taejong Sillok* (The Annals of King Taejong) that the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* cited as its source, “15 households” with “86 men and women” were supposed to be living on Usan Island (Jasan Island). It is impossible for 86 people to live on Matsushima (present-day Takeshima), which is nothing more than a rocky reef. Thus, this Usan Island is Utsuryo Island. The description in the *Taejong Sillok* that 15 households settled on Utsuryo Island confirms this, while the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam* includes no description of the present-day Takeshima (“Dokdo”). As is clear from these facts, the eight maps that Ahn Yong-bok brought with him only depicted the two Utsuryo Islands, but not Takeshima.

For this reason, in the *Book on Our Country [Land]* and *Daedong Jiji* (Geography of the Great East), which were created at a later time based on the *Sinjeung Dongguk Yeoji Seungnam*, Usan Island was deleted from their main texts.

It seems that Ahn Yong-bok smuggled into the Tottori Domain without

knowing this fact and, using the eight maps as evidence, attempted to claim that Japan's Takeshima was in fact Korea's Utsuryo Island, and Matsushima (present-day Takeshima) was Korea's Usan Island.

However, while in Oki, Ahn Yong-bok only expressed that he had a request for the Tottori Domain and did not give any details about the request. Therefore, the official on duty informed the Tottori Domain through his subordinate that Ahn Yong-bok and others had come from Korea to Hoki Province to make allegations. Around the same time, Ahn Yong-bok and others set sail for the Tottori Domain, and arrived at Akasaki in the Tottori Domain on June 4.

When Ahn Yong-bok arrived in Akasaki, his boat displayed a cotton ship's mark on the front of it, on which "Taxation General of the Two Islands of Utsuryo Island, Joseon. Vassal Ahn on Board (朝鬱兩島監稅將臣安同知騎)" was written on one side, and "Korean Officer Ahn on Board (朝鮮國安同知乘舟)," on the other side. This ship mark was found among the belongings of Ahn Yong-bok and others examined by the officials at the Oki guardhouse, and was prepared in advance. The word "Dongji (同知)" on this ship's seal is the name of an interpreter in Dongnae-gu, Korea, and the "Dangsangwan (堂上官)," the title that Ahn Yong-bok used to call himself, was actually the one referring to a high-ranking official during the Joseon era. Ahn Yong-bok used the Korean high official title without permission and smuggled into the Tottori Domain. In addition, there was no real government official's position called "Taxation General." Inferring from the meaning of the *kanji* characters, it could mean a taxation officer in charge of Korea's Utsuryo Island and Usan Island. However, there were no people living on Utsuryo Island, which had been an uninhabited island under Korea's deserted island policy, and Matsushima (present-day Takeshima), which Ahn Yong-bok called Usan

Island, was a rocky reef that was uninhabitable. For these reasons, it is clear that “Taxation General” was a false official position.

Despite such a situation, the Tottori Domain ended up being manipulated by Ahn Yong-bok and others. When the Tottori Domain was informed of the arrival of the ship at Akasaki, they urgently dispatched YAMAZAKI Shume, the ships magistrate. As Yamazaki encountered the boat carrying Ahn Yong-bok and others at Nagaohana, he decided to moor their boat for the time being at the mouth of the Kachibe River in Aoya and question them to understand the situation at the Sennenji Temple, which was located nearby.

TSUJI Banan, a Confucian from the Tottori Domain, conducted the hearing of Ahn Yong-bok and others, trying to find out about the reason for their visit to Japan through written communication, but the attempt was reportedly unsuccessful. Therefore, the Tottori Domain transferred the group of Korean people to Karo by horse and *kago*, and provided the Tozenji Temple as their temporary lodging.

When the Tottori Domain was about to move Ahn Yong-bok and others from Tozenji Temple to Tottori Castle town, they received instructions from the Shogunate to hand over Ahn Yong-bok and others to the Tsushima Domain, or to send them back to Korea without letting them make their allegations. At the same time, an interpreter was sent from the Tsushima Domain.

Responding to the instructions from the Shogunate, the Tottori Domain moored the boat of Ahn Yong-bok and others at Lake Koyamaike, and built a boathouse for foreigners on Aoshima Island, located in the lake, to accommodate them. However, Ahn Yong-bok and others had left the Tottori Domain before the interpreter from the Tsushima Domain arrived there.

According to the *Tsuko-Ichiran* (Compilation of Records on Foreign Relations), edited by the Edo Shogunate, “When 11 Koreans came to Inaba Province, this incident was reported to the Edo Shogunate, and then they were sent back to Korea following the instructions from the Shogunate.” *Inpu Nenpyo* (An Official Historical Document from the Tottori Domain) records the event as “This foreign boat was expelled from the sea of Karo.”

This background can be confirmed with the memorandum, “The visit of Koreans to Inaba Province: what happened, including reporting to Minister Abe and his response.” This memorandum outlines the treatment given to Ahn Yong-bok, and the sequence of events behind the smuggling into the Tottori Domain. It records the fact that the Shogunate instructed the Tottori Domain to send Ahn Yong-bok to Nagasaki or to expel him. The Tottori Domain had expelled Ahn Yong-bok in accordance with the instructions of the Shogunate.

Ahn Yong-bok was sent back by the Tottori Domain without negotiating with the lord of the Domain or making Utsuryo Island and Usan Island Korean territory.

It was late August when Ahn Yong-bok and others landed back in Korea. Ahn Yong-bok and others arrived at the prefectural border in Yangyang, Gangwon Province, and told the local official, Sim Pyeong, that they had made an allegation case in Japan. When Sim Pyeong reported this to the central government, the central government ordered Ahn Yong-bok and others to be sent to the capital city, and a hearing was going to be conducted by the central government.

Ahn Yong-bok’s statement made during the hearing is recorded in the *Sukjong Sillok* (The Annals of King Sukjong). The Korean history textbook has been written based on Ahn Yong-bok’s statement.

The history textbook describes Ahn Yong-bok’s smuggling incident as

follows. “Ahn Yong-bok, a fisherman living in Dongnae, chased away Japanese fishermen coming and going from Utsuryo Island, traveled to Japan, and confirmed that Dokdo was Korean territory.” However, did this textbook really convey the historical truth?

### **(5) The Statement by Ahn Yong-bok**

What kind of statement did Ahn Yong-bok make? We will now read his statement recorded in the *Sukjong Sillok* and examine the details of the statement. When Ahn Yong-bok was asked about the reason why he smuggled into Japan, he made the following statement.

There were various kinds of trees, many hawks, crows, and cats in the mountains of Utsuryo Island, and there were also many Japanese people who visited to stay at the island. All of my companions were afraid, but I (Ahn Yong-bok) raised my voice and said, “Utsuryo Island has always been the territory of Korea. Why have you, Japanese people, crossed the border? We will tie you all up,” and then moved further ahead of the boat and scolded them loudly.

The Japanese people on the island said, “We have originally been living in Matsushima (the name of Takeshima at the time), and we happened to come here to fish, but we are now heading to Honjo (Matsushima).” So, I said, “Matsushima (present-day Takeshima) is Jasan Island. That is also our land. Why are you allowed to live there (Matsushima)?”

Finally, the next morning, I pulled the boat and landed on Jasan Island, where I found Japanese people boiling fish oil in pots that were lined up. When I smashed them with my cane and scolded them loudly,

those Japanese people packed up their pots and other items onto the ship, hoisted the sails, and headed home. I chased them by boat, but suddenly I was hit by strong wind and ended up drifting onto the Oki Islands.

As the lord of the island (lord of Oki Islands) asked me about the reason for my visit, I answered, “During my previous visit, a note written by the Kanpaku (Shogun) designating Utsuryo Island and Usan Island as Korean territory was issued. However, it seems that it has not been thoroughly practiced in this country (this place). Now your people are invading our boundaries again. Can this be called reasonable? Therefore, I request that you tell this fact to the Tottori Domain.”

However, I received no response. I became absolutely furious and immediately got on the boat to head for the Tottori Domain. At that time, I tentatively called myself the “Taxation General for both Utsuryo and Jasan Islands,” and notified the Tottori Domain through other persons. Then, the Tottori Domain sent some people and horses to welcome me. I was wearing civilian clothes for officials, a black cloth hat, leather shoes, and got on a *kago*. The others rode on their horses’ side by side and proceeded toward the Tottori Domain.

The lord of the island (the lord of the Tottori Domain) and I sat facing each other on the seats of honor, and many others sat down alongside each other on the lower seats. The lord of the Tottori Domain asked me, “Why did you come here?” and I answered, “I believe it is clear that an official note recognizing the two islands (Utsuryo Island and Usan Island) as Korean territory was clearly issued. However, the lord of the Tsushima Domain took it away, sent false envoys between the Shogunate and the Korean Government, and claimed that Utsuryo Island



was Japanese territory. Isn't this a crime of feigning the law? I would like to appeal to the Kanpaku (Shogun) and clarify the crime (committed by the Tsushima Domain)." The lord of the Tottori Domain allowed me to do so.

Therefore, I let Lee In-Seong, who was accompanying me, write a complaint and was about to submit it to the Shogunate. But the father of the lord of the Tsushima Domain came forward and told the lord of the Tottori Domain from the bottom of his heart, "If this complaint is received by the Shogunate, my son (the lord of Tsushima) will definitely be charged with a serious crime and killed. Please do not submit the complaint." This request was granted, and the complaint was not submitted to the Kanpaku (Shogun).

On the previous day, however, 15 Japanese people who had violated the border were captured and punished. Following this, (the lord of Tottori Domain) said to me, "The two islands have already been returned to Korean territory, and if anyone violates the border again in the future, the lord of the Tottori Domain will treat all of them as illegal trespassers and severely punish them. Furthermore, if you send an official government letter and dispatch an interpreter officer to us, then I will severely punish those who violate the boundary."

On top of this, (the lord of the Tottori Domain) offered and provided me with some food and chose a vassal to escort me back home, but I declined, saying, "It would cause trouble if I went with him."

*(Sukjong Sillok, Volume 30, the 9th month of the 22nd year  
of the reign of King Sukjong (1696))*

## **(6) Let's Consider the Takeshima Dispute**

Have you noticed anything when reading the statement by Ahn Yong-bok? There are some significant discrepancies between the actual history that has been revealed so far and Ahn Yong-bok's statement. Can you point out which parts they are?

Below is Ahn Yong-bok's statement divided into several sections. What kind of problems can you detect when comparing Ahn Yong-bok's statement with historical facts? Think about the following nine items and clarify the historical facts.

- (1) Regarding the reason for his decision to smuggle into Japan, Ahn Yong-bok stated that he had encountered Japanese fishermen on Utsuryo Island, was hit by strong wind while chasing them, and drifted to Oki Islands. Ahn Yong-bok also stated that 15 Japanese fishermen who had travelled to Utsuryo Island were punished. Were these statements true?
- (2) Ahn Yong-bok stated that Japanese fishermen were living on Matsushima (present-day Takeshima). Did people live on Matsushima (present-day Takeshima) at that time?
- (3) Ahn Yong-bok stated that he pulled a boat and landed on Matsushima (present-day Takeshima) at dawn. Is there a place on present-day Takeshima where you can pull a boat ashore?
- (4) Ahn Yong-bok stated that Japanese fishermen had pots lined up and were boiling fish oil on Matsushima (Takeshima). On which island were the Ohya and Murakawa families extracting oil from sea lions?
- (5) Ahn Yong-bok stated that in Oki, he claimed that Japanese fishermen were infringing on the boundaries of Korea and requested that the Tottori Domain be informed of this fact. What was Ahn Yong-bok requesting while in Oki?

- (6) Ahn Yong-bok stated that the Shogunate had issued a note confirming that Utsuryo Island and Usan Island were Korean territory. Did the Shogunate give Ahn Yong-bok, who had been captured as a living witness to cross-border violations, a note stating that Utsuryo Island and Usan Island were Korean territory?
- (7) When Ahn Yong-bok smuggled into the Tottori Domain, he tentatively called himself the “Taxation General for both Utsuryo and Jasan Islands,” and the Tottori Domain sent some persons and horses to welcome him, and then that he entered Tottori Castle town, travelling in a *kago* and with horses. Is that true?
- (8) When Ahn Yong-bok met with the lord of the Tottori Domain, he said that the Tsushima Domain had stolen the Shogunate’s note that confirmed Utsuryo Island and Usan Island as Korean territory and was trying to send a false messenger to take over Utsuryo Island. Was the Tsushima Domain fighting with the Korean side for sovereignty over Utsuryo Island without permission from the Shogunate?
- (9) Ahn Yong-bok stated that when he tried to complain to the Shogunate about the crimes committed by the Tsushima Domain with the permission of the lord of the Tottori Domain, the father of the lord of Tsushima Domain came and begged the lord of the Tottori Domain to spare the life of the Tsushima’s lord. But SO Yoshitsugu, the lord of the Tsushima Domain, died young at the age of 24, the year before Ahn Yong-bok smuggled into Japan. Is there any credibility to this statement by Ahn Yong-bok?

Now, what do we notice when we divide Ahn Yong-bok’s statement into nine items and compare them with historical facts?

There seem to be quite significant discrepancies between what is described in Korean history textbooks. Based on Ahn Yong-bok's statement, the Korean side made Takeshima Korean territory. For this reason, whenever the Japanese side mentioned the Takeshima dispute, the Korean side has labeled it as "Japan's territorial ambitions" and dismissed it as "wild remarks." However, the statement made by Ahn Yong-bok was obviously false evidence. The question is why such false evidence has been considered a historical fact on the Korean side. Next time, we would like to clarify that fact.

In order for Japan and the Korean Peninsula to maintain mutual trust and good-neighborly relations going forward, it will be a prerequisite that the Takeshima dispute be resolved.

After WWII the bilateral relations between Japan and the ROK deteriorated rapidly after the Government of the ROK declared the "Syngman Rhee Line" and forced Takeshima into its territory, immediately before negotiations to normalize diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK. The day the Takeshima dispute will be resolved will also be the beginning of new Japan-ROK relations.

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[Profile of the Author]



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Dr. Shimojo majored in Japanese history. He served as the Chair of the First to Third Shimane Takeshima Issue Research Group and was also the former director of the Web Takeshima Issue Research. He is the author of *Japan and Korea: How To Overcome History* (Tendensha), *Does Takeshima Belong to Japan or Korea?* (Bunshun Shinsho), and other publications.