

Japan Coast Guard Activities On and Around Takeshima

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1. Introduction

Takeshima consists of two small islands—one to the east and one to the west—and surrounding reefs, lying 85 nautical miles northwest of the Oki Islands. It has a total area of 0.23 square kilometers, almost equivalent to Hibiya Park in Tokyo. As an inherent part of Japanese territory, it has been used as fishing grounds since the early years of the Edo period (1603–1868), and for Japan, the cabinet decision to incorporate it into Shimane Prefecture in 1905 was self-evident.

Following Korean independence, however, President Syngman Rhee of South Korea asserted sovereignty over the seas around Takeshima, establishing the “Rhee Line” in January 1952 (The Rhee Line was repealed when the Japan-Korea Fishery Agreement came into effect in December 1965). In May 1953, it emerged that Korean fishermen had gone ashore on Takeshima to collect abalones and other seafood. When Japan protested violation of its territory, South Korea made a competing territorial claim and the Takeshima dispute began.^{1 2}

¹ Miyoshi Masahiro, “The ‘Critical Date’ of the Takeshima Dispute,” *Review of Island Studies*, January 29, 2015, <https://www.spf.org/islandstudies/research/a00016/>. Translated from “Takeshima mondai to kuritikaru deto,” *Tosho Kenkyu Journal*, Volume 3 No. 2 (April, 2014), pp. 28-49; published by the OPRI Center for Island Studies.

Professor Takai Susumu describes events as follows.

For a while . . . Japan's effective control over the territory was undisturbed. At the time, however, the Korean government was preparing to embark on forceful occupation. In January 1953 it ordered the seizure of Japanese fishing boats operating within the Rhee Line, and in April a "volunteer security force" landed on Takeshima and set up camp. Korea thus shifted to showing through action that it intended to occupy the islets.

On May 28, 1953, the *Shimane-maru*, a research vessel of the Shimane Fisheries Experiment Station, came across a group of about 30 Korean nationals gathering seaweed and shellfish on Takeshima. [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs] reacted on June 22 with a note protesting operations by Korean fishers in Japan's territorial waters.³

Records show that the Japan Coast Guard (then officially known in English as the Maritime Safety Agency, but referred to throughout this essay as the Japan Coast Guard) became involved with Takeshima on June 17, 1953, when it "conducted special control and surveys of the area around Takeshima" and this is believed to have been its first involvement. The first detailed description, however, in the Japan Coast Guard White Paper—published as *Kaijo hoan no genkyo* (The Present State of Maritime Safety)—appeared following incidents in May 1978 in which Japanese fishing boats were ordered to leave the waters around Takeshima by South Korean vessels.

On April 30, 1978, a new Territorial Sea Act came into force in South Korea,

² Tsukamoto Takashi, "The Meaning of the Territorial Incorporation of Takeshima (1905)," *Review of Island Studies*, December 25, 2014, <https://www.spf.org/islandstudies/research/a00014/>. Translated from "Takeshima ryodo hennyu (1905) no igi ni tsuite," *Tosho Kenkyu Journal*, Volume 3 No. 2 (April, 2014), pp. 50-66; published by the OPRI Center for Island Studies.

³ Takai Susumu, "Kankoku Takeshima ryoyuron no saiginmi," *Tosho Kenkyu Journal*, Volume 2 No. 1 (October, 2012), p.60; published by the OPRI Center for Island Studies. This paper discusses in detail how Takeshima was treated after World War II, official views from both Japan and South Korea on the territorial status of Takeshima, and other matters.

claiming waters up to 12 nautical miles from the country's land. Japanese fishing boats operating around Takeshima were ordered to withdraw outside South Korean territorial sea. Due to concern over unforeseen events involving Japanese fishing boats, the JCG deployed patrol boats several times per month to areas of sea near Takeshima to monitor whether Japanese vessels were fishing there. Particularly in the two months following the start of the squid fishing season from May 1, and around November, which is the best season for catching squid, the JCG had two vessels in constant operation, depending on circumstances, and was on special alert.

The August 1979 publication of *The Present State of Maritime Safety* included the following. "As citizens become increasingly concerned about the oceans, the April 1978 intrusion of Chinese fishing boats into the waters around the Senkaku Islands and the South Korean orders for Japanese fishing boats to leave waters around Takeshima in May of the same year have dramatically raised public interest in Japanese territory and territorial seas."⁴

Kaijo Hoancho 30-nen shi (Thirty Year History of the Japan Coast Guard) covered the events as follows.

Following a massive incursion of Chinese fishing boats into the sea around the Senkaku Islands and South Korean orders for Japanese fishing boats operating in the waters around Takeshima to withdraw, on May 30, 1978, the Liberal Democratic Party established a special research committee on Japanese territory and territorial waters within the party's Policy Research Council in order to survey the extent of Japan's national territory (focused primarily on islands and reefs where Japanese citizens were not presently residing). In response to these movements, within the government itself an interministerial committee of concerned ministries and agencies has been meeting as necessary to study measures regarding the effective control, defense, confirmation, naming, and proper handling of uninhabited islands as national assets.

It continued by giving details on activities, including surveying of remote

⁴ *Showa 54 nendo-ban: Kaijo hoan no genkyo* (The Present State of Maritime Safety: 1979 Edition), 1979, p. 14.

uninhabited islands, placing of survey markers, and monitoring and management by aircraft.⁵

Concerning the incidents within Japanese seas around the Senkaku Islands, the main objective was to defend these islands, over which Japan exercised effective control. Takeshima, however, was under illegal occupation by South Korea, so it is thought that the Japanese response there was to maintain that it was an inherent part of Japanese territory and to continue making surveys and observations until the problem was solved. As a result, it was necessary at the time to maintain effective control over the Senkaku Islands through the use of patrol ships, aircraft, or any other methods, but this was not required for Takeshima. Further—and I will discuss this later—I have the impression that, apart from when the problem initially emerged, the JCG did not actively respond to the Takeshima situation, perhaps because it was conducting surveys at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Concerning this matter, in the present paper I will determine the JCG's response to the Takeshima issue from records including *The Present State of Maritime Safety* and accordingly, as they are officially released state records concerning the JCG as a public body, I will consider the matter using these and other related documents. Naturally, as there is a limit to my ability to conduct surveys and many of the records from the early days of the JCG have been lost, it will be difficult to escape the criticism of insufficiency. Nonetheless, I believe the records of actions, although only supporting evidence, will provide some kind of reference.

2. Teaching Materials Prepared by Japan Coast Guard Academy

Around the time of its initial involvement with Takeshima, the Japan Coast Guard Academy prepared the three textbooks *Kaijo keibiron* (Maritime Safety Theory) I, II, and III, as teaching materials. The third volume was prepared in October 1956, and its Chapter 14 covered the Takeshima issue (pp. 1–4).⁶ I

⁵ *Kaijo Hoancho 30-nen shi* (Thirty Year History of the Japan Coast Guard), 1979, pp. 153–54.

⁶ Nemoto Takahiko, who prepared these textbooks, later made a name for his courage when, as captain of the main 450-ton patrol vessel *Kusakaki* on the Rhee Line, he boarded a South Korean guard ship for direct negotiations at sea. He eventually retired as head of the

quote here a section on “Patrol Vessel Activities.”

In response to South Korean fishermen illegally coming ashore on Takeshima and conducting illegal fishing activities in the surrounding waters, the Japanese government immediately sent a document lodging a strong protest with the South Korean government. After consultation with the Japan Coast Guard, the National Police Agency, and the Immigration Bureau, and in the light of existing South Korean claims, it concluded that doing nothing could lead to an unfavorable result, concerning future possession of the territory. As such, it decided on the following three points.

1. To establish territorial rights to the islands.
2. To prevent future violations of territorial rights.
3. To establish Japanese fishing rights around the islands.

It conducted patrols by JCG vessels as necessary in an attempt to prevent illegal South Korean actions. However, not only did Korean fishermen continue to cross to the islands but there were also incidents in which police officers, brought in support from Ulleungdo, fired at patrol boats. The Japanese government is responding by protesting strongly, and trying to use reason as much as possible in continuing to seek repentance from South Korea. Incidents in which patrol boats were fired at include the shooting at the *Hekura* on July 12, 1953, and at the *Oki* on August 23, 1954.

In this way, it can be seen that the issue was being discussed as extremely serious within the JCG.

3. Special Control and Surveys of the Area around Takeshima

The introduction stated that the Takeshima dispute began when South Korea claimed territorial rights after Japan protested violation of its territory when the *Shimane-maru* of Shimane Prefecture’s Fisheries Experiment Station discovered in May 1953 that South Korean fishermen had gone ashore on Takeshima to collect abalones and other seafood. After the *Shimane-maru* found the South Korean fishermen, the JCG worked together with relevant ministries and

Japan Coast Guard School in Maizuru.

government offices, and decided on June 17 of the same year to strengthen management of illegal entry and fishing in the waters around Takeshima. Based on this, on June 27, the patrol vessels *Oki* and *Kuzuryu* conducted the first Takeshima control survey, going ashore to place markers and ordering six South Koreans to leave the island.

South Korea responded by illegally occupying the islands from 1954, building a lighthouse and stationing guards. Around this time, South Korean officials fired at patrol boats once in 1953 and twice in 1954. Following the shooting at the *Oki* in August 1954, the JCG consulted with ministries and government offices before deciding not to respond in force. Instead, seeking to achieve a peaceful resolution through diplomatic negotiation, based on an official request from MOFA, since 1967 the JCG has conducted surveys with the aim of accumulating materials concerning Takeshima's current situation.⁷

I would like to look at another record concerning the first survey. *Kaijo Hoancho no omoide* (Memories of the Japan Coast Guard) was published on May 12, 1979, with a foreword by Okubo Takeo, the first head of the JCG. The editor appended an explanation of the special control of Takeshima from June 17, 1953, as follows. "Takeshima has been used as fishing grounds since ancient times as an inherent part of Japanese territory, but since the establishment of the Rhee Line in 1952, there has been a dispute over ownership between Japan and South Korea that continues to the present day. Following a policy of seeking peaceful resolution through diplomatic negotiation, based on an official request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since 1967 the Japan Coast Guard has been conducting annual surveys to accumulate material."⁸

Japan Coast Guard Annual Report 2007 states that, "In following this government policy, the Japan Coast Guard regularly sends patrol boats to the waters around Takeshima, continuing observations and providing guidance in avoiding capture from the standpoint of securing the safety of Japanese fishers."⁹ Despite the suggestion of ongoing surveys around Takeshima, they receive no mention in subsequent JCG annual reports.

⁷ *Kaijo Hoancho 30-nen shi*, pp. 28–29.

⁸ *Kaijo Hoancho no omoide* (Memories of the Japan Coast Guard), 1979, p.174.

⁹ Japan Coast Guard Annual Report 2007, p. 20.

Hyogo Hitoshi gives his memories of the first survey as follows.

(a) The Background to the First Control Survey

The first control survey was successfully conducted on June 27, 1953, by the *Oki* and *Kuzuryu* patrol vessels, which placed markers with the writing, “*Takeshima, Gokamura, Ochi-gun [county], Shimane Prefecture,*”¹⁰ and ordered six South Korean fishermen to leave the island. There was, however, an earlier failed attempt by the *Kuzuryu* and *Noshiro*, which was unable to conduct a survey on land in the early hours of June 23.

The ships came together in top secret at Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture, leaving port in the evening of June 22 and arriving in waters near Takeshima before dawn on June 23. Weather conditions were unfavorable with a low-pressure front approaching and northeasterly winds of 12 or 13 meters per second. It was decided at first that the waves were too high to lower a boat into the water, so initially the survey around Takeshima was completed from at sea. As there was a duty to place markers that day, however, and the island was visible, it would have been highly regrettable not to accomplish this, so Commander of the two patrol vessels (named I fleet) enforced the orders to lower the boat and conduct a survey on land, even while understanding the extreme difficulty. Eight survey team members, including police and immigration officers boarded the boat and set off from the *Kuzuryu*, but sea conditions continued to deteriorate, and it

¹⁰ There are two photographs of Takeshima among the 25 in the frontispiece to *Kaijo Hoancho 10-nen shi* (Ten Year History of the Japan Coast Guard), 1961. One shows a photograph of Takeshima, described as “nothing but rocks,” behind two coast guard officers at what the author estimates as around 200 meters offshore. The other shows a marker with the writing, “*Takeshima, Gokamura, Ochi-gun [county], Shimane Prefecture,*” and two coast guard officers from behind. One of the officers is carrying out some kind of work at the base of the marker, wearing a cap and a holster at his waist carrying what is probably a Type 14 Nambu pistol, while the other is wearing work clothes. The caption notes this is “a marker for Gokamura, Shimane Prefecture,” with the following explanation. “The South Korean government illegally invaded Takeshima in Shimane Prefecture in May 1953, oppressing Japanese fishing boats in the area, and there have been a number of incidents of boats being seized illegal. From June 1953, Japanese vessels have been patrolling around Takeshima and placing sovereignty markers among other activities.”

also began to rain. Despite vigorous rowing from the coxswain and crew, the boat was unable to make headway through the wind and waves, instead drifting further from the island. It was a task too great for human effort, as the boat was tossed about like a leaf in the violence of natural forces, and it seemed it could meet disaster at any moment. After spending some time in the boat being buffeted by the wind, all members were relieved to be hoisted back onto the *Kuzuryu*.

Unfortunately, as he was being lifted from the boat back on to the main vessel, Officer K. fell into the sea while still fully armed. Luckily, he floated alongside the boat and Officer I. was able to swiftly grab his belt and lift him safely out of the water.

The *Noshiro* patrol vessel also lowered its boat into the sea, but the crew was unable to achieve its goal. When being hoisted back onto the ship, one member was injured on a scupper and the ship returned to base so he could receive treatment.

The *Oki*, which was patrolling the east coast of South Korea to protect fishing boats at the time, was rapidly deployed to Urago Bay in the Oki Islands where it joined together with the *Kuzuryu* and completed the mission as previously described.

(b) The *Oki* Patrol Boat Shooting Incident

Hearing that South Korea had stationed police officers on Takeshima, the *Oki* patrol boat made a secret departure from Ine Port on August 22, 1954, to check this information. It arrived three nautical miles from Takeshima before dawn on August 23. The vessel immediately conducted a survey while at sea, but was unable to find anyone resembling a guard, so it was decided to approach closer. At around 700 meters from the southern part of the island, the *Oki* suddenly came under machine-gun fire.

At that moment, Officer K. was on the upper bridge taking photographs and Officer H. was making a rough sketch of the island. Officer H. was making observations with binoculars and, at the moment that he saw white

smoke rising from the middle of a hill on the island, he warned Officer K. and they both lay down.

Without having time to communicate by speaking tube with the bridge, Captain T. understood the seriousness of the situation, turning the vessel around and moving at full speed away from the island to safety.

Although the incident lasted just a little over 10 minutes, it is an unpleasant memory of coming under machine-gun fire for the first time since the end of the war. I do not know exactly how many rounds were fired, but it must have been around 400, clearly targeting the bridge of the *Oki*. As evidence, several bullets hit the ventilation pipe for the battery compartment near the bridge. Appropriate measures were decided beforehand, so fortunately there was no loss of life, and this is a joy for which there is no substitute.

Even though the control survey was a difficult and dangerous task, it was completed without incurring any casualties. While this was partly due to luck, it was also certainly the result of the efforts of all members of the coast guard from the commander down.

Through the long task, there were many accounts of failures and what was happening behind the scenes, so I would like to note that it is a shame I cannot bring them all to light.¹¹

Next, I will quote from an account by Ogawa Kenji, helmsman on the *Kuzuryu*.

As part of work to mark thirty years of the Japan Coast Guard, I am honored and deeply moved to have been given this opportunity to write about my memories of participating in the first control survey around Takeshima.

On the evening of June 22, 1953, I was on board the *Kuzuryu* patrol vessel, which left Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture together with the *Noshiro* patrol vessel under top secret conditions. We had not been told exactly what we would be doing, but it was connected to dealing with South Korean

¹¹ *Kaijo Hoancho no omoide*, pp.175–76.

fishermen who had recently illegally gone ashore at Takeshima. After we left, it was finally announced that we would complete this task and points related to control and form a control squad.

At around five o'clock the following morning, we were woken up by the ship's microphone. When we arrived up on deck, Takeshima was visible in the distance ahead surrounded by thin mist, while black-tailed gulls welcomed us by flying around the sky over the ship. Now I know how very important the small, remote islands are for Japan, but at the time I had the irresponsible thought, "What's the value of these islands that nobody can live on?"

We lowered the lifeboat at 6:03 am, and the 16 members of the inspection squad boarded and headed for Takeshima. Although it was just one nautical mile away, and it seemed we could easily row from there, around five minutes after we set off from the main ship, a sudden eastern wind began gusting, mixed with light rain. When we were just 500 meters from Takeshima's eastern island, the boat would not go any further and the boat appeared certain to be overturned by the waves, so we had to turn the bow in the direction of the wind.

Before boarding the boat, there were some signs of a storm coming, but we did not expect a gale of around 15 meter-per-second winds in just over ten minutes. Even now I cannot forget the faces of the crew then, rowing desperately and looking reproachfully at me, the coxswain, as I shouted encouragement. Incidentally, the average age of the rowers then was 24. After battling for 30 minutes, we heard the microphone saying something above our heads. The *Kuzuryu* approached with the message, "Cancel the mission. Return to the ship."

While coming alongside the main vessel amid the raging waves and watching for gaps between them to move on board, Officer K. misjudged and fell into the sea. Fortunately, he fell to the rear, and I immediately grabbed him by the collar and I was able to pull him up, avoiding disaster. Remembering how he was carrying a pistol and did not have a life jacket sends a shiver down my spine.

When we moved to raise the boat, an order came from the bridge. "There has been an injury on the *Noshiro*. Take the chief nurse to the *Noshiro*." Officer N. from the *Noshiro* had fallen in the sea and injured his face.

We once again rowed the lifeboat in the raging sea, taking the chief nurse over, but faced further problems returning to the ship. *Noshiro* had been driven by the current and so we were unable to move away from the leeward side, as due to rolling, the gunwale was firmly stuck against it, and we could not thrust away. As *Noshiro* finally moved backward, the bow anchor dropped above Officer S.'s head. "Watch your head, S.!" I shouted and he barely escaped injury.

By divine grace, we got back safely to ship and this valuable experience of operating a boat in stormy conditions became very useful in our later duties.

As the task was cancelled due to unforeseen events, a new pairing of the *Oki* and the *Kuzuryu* went back to Takeshima on June 26.

We approached the islands in the early morning of June 27, lowering boat no. 2 around half past five in the morning. There was no sign of the stormy weather of our previous attempt and the weather was unbelievably fine. In around 10 minutes, we went ashore on the east island of Takeshima.

Takeshima consists of an east island (with a highest elevation of 125 meters and an area of 10 *cho* [around 0.09 square kilometers]) and a west island (with a highest elevation of 157 meters and an area of 15 *cho* [around 0.14 square kilometers]). It lies around 85 nautical miles northwest of the Oki Islands.

After World War II, the US Army used it to practice aerial bombardment. I heard that many South Korean fishermen were killed by practice bombing because they did not know this and went ashore on the island while fishing. Because of the bombing there were no trees on the island and the surface of the rock was exposed at the highest point with only a little greenery visible

on the slope.

From early morning, more than thirty squad members rapidly went ashore from two boats. Undoubtedly startled, six South Korean fishermen with red eyes like rabbits—rather than just from being half-asleep—came rushing out of a small barrack hut near the shore to meet us.

Their eye trouble was the result of freediving for *wakame* seaweed and other seafood. They had come from Utsuryo Island [Ulleungdo], and more than ten days had already passed but the vessel to take them away had not arrived yet.

They had no food, so collected rainwater and ate only what they could catch, such as *wakame*, *tengusa* algae, and abalones. When we approached to ask questions, we had to turn away due to the unpleasant smell and only one of the fishermen understood Japanese.

When I went to light the cigarette I had given him, he also asked for matches, but didn't get them as illegal entrants should not be indulged.

My assignment was to place markers. In the gravel, I buried a plain wooden marker—five *sun* [about 15 centimeters] square by one and a half *ken* [about 2.7 meters]—on which was written “Takeshima, Gokamura, Ochi-gun [county], Shimane Prefecture,” and a warning sign with the words, “Other than Japanese citizens and foreign citizens who have completed the proper procedures, it is forbidden to enter the territorial waters within three nautical miles of the island without the permission of the Japanese government.”

As I had heard the US military was still performing aerial bombardment practice, I was not inwardly calm.

The survey took around one and a half hours, after which the commander told the fisherman, “This island is Japanese territory, so you cannot come here again. You will be arrested if you do.” They listened to the interpreter's words meekly anyway, but we cannot know what they were thinking

inside.

As for expelling them from the island, they just had a rowing barge, so we had no choice but to leave them there. Before leaving, we rechecked the signs we'd put in place. As we looked back from the open sea, the South Korean fishermen were naked and preparing to go fishing. Returning to the ship, I sensed their endurance and great vitality, became apprehensive that they might try to live on the islands, and prayed that they would not throw away the signs I had put in place with my own hands.¹²

I will further include an account by N., the chief oiler on the *Okī* patrol boat, from the December 1999 edition of *Hachikan: 50-nen no koseki* (The Eighth Region: Fifty Years At Sea)

I think it was around April 1953 that we were ordered by the captain to go to Ine Port and borrow a fishing boat. We loaded it on the *Okī* patrol boat, and headed for Takeshima. Near the islands, we lowered the fishing boat and approached Takeshima. They were small rocky reefs and there were several seals in the water around them, but as the boat got nearer, they dived beneath the surface. The seabed was clearly visible and there was a lot of *wakame* and other seaweed. We went ashore, took photographs of the island, and returned. [Author's note: This took place before the first survey].

Around the end of June that year, on a patrol of Takeshima, six men boarded the cutter belonging to the *Okī* with a sign reading "Takeshima, Gokamura, Ochi-gun [county], Shimane Prefecture," and put it up on the island. At the time, there were several South Korean fishermen living on the island, sleeping on bamboo mats in hollows in the rocks and collecting rainwater in a drum container. When we asked, they said that they had been on the island for three or four days, collecting *sazae* sea snails and other seafood and waiting for a ship from South Korea to come and pick them up. We told them to return to South Korea because the island was Japanese territory and then we left.

We went back to Takeshima around July 10. As the island was approaching,

¹² *Kaijo Hoancho no omoide*, pp.176–78.

I was off duty and viewing it from the bridge, when the watch reported to the captain he could see people on the island. Just then, as I was checking what was happening on the island, I heard 12 or 13 gunshots and simultaneously a loud clanging nearby. When the mate said to the captain, who was observing through binoculars, "They have a gun on the island," at the same time, the captain turned the vessel around and moved away. When we checked the bridge and nearby later on, there were bullet traces on the ventilation pipe for the battery compartment.

It happened in an instant, so we didn't feel afraid, but I remember how we were all discussing it together on our way home. Thinking about it now, it was a deeply historic event.¹³

Next I will include the following account, also from *The Eighth Region: Fifty Years At Sea*, by M. , a junior mate and gunnery officer on the *Hekura* patrol boat from 1954 to 1958.

At that time, five new patrol vessels were stationed within the jurisdiction of the Eighth Regional Coast Guard Headquarters: the 450-ton *Oki* and the 270-ton *Kuzuryu* in Maizuru, the 450-ton *Hekura* and 270-ton *Nagara* in Sakaiminato, and the 270-ton *Noshiro* in Hamada. In rotation, they conducted special control and surveys around Takeshima. From around 1953 to 1954, they were able to approach right up to the islands. When there was no sign of regularly stationed soldiers, crew members went ashore to check whether the previously placed Shimane prefectural marker was there, replacing it with a new marker if it was not, before returning. In most cases, however, the markers had been removed without trace and if they had been fixed in place with concrete, they were cut away from the base. After soldiers were stationed on the east island with a gun support near the highest point, they threatened any patrol boats by taking a battle stance and aiming guns at them, so it was no longer easy to approach. From 1954 until the following year, our ship *Hekura* also came under fire with bullet traces in two places. Fortunately none of the crew or important parts of the ship were hit and we could complete our duty safely with no hindrance to movement. After that, we put up a bulletproof screen around the bridge to

¹³ *Hachikan: 50-nen no koseki* (The Eighth Region: Fifty Years At Sea), 1999, p. 86.

minimize damage, but the ship was not fired on again.¹⁴

As detailed above, the first Japan Coast Guard survey of Takeshima took place from June 22 to June 28, 1953, and as Hyogo Hitoshi in particular had responsibility for writing a report, it is reasonable to assume the content is accurate.

During the fourth survey, conducted on July 12, 1953, the *Hekura* patrol vessel was fired on from Takeshima. There was no loss of life, but it is clear that from this point South Korea claimed the territory and was willing to use force to back its claim. Surveys of Takeshima continued after this time.

4. Statements Regarding Takeshima in the Japan Coast Guard White Papers and Annual Reports

A. The Japan Coast Guard White Papers Era

Apart from references to capture of Japanese fishing vessels by South Korea, the author does not find anything related to Takeshima in the early publications of the JCG White Paper. The paper published in May 1966 includes a section titled “Nik-Kan gyogyo kyotei no seiritsu to kaijo keibi” (The Japan-Korea Fishery Agreement and Maritime Safety) after the coming into effect of the agreement on December 18, 1965, giving the history since the establishment of the Rhee Line and the stance of the JCG toward the agreement. Although it devotes an unprecedented amount of space to the topic, it does not mention Takeshima. The name “Takeshima” appears for the first time in the 1979 edition, describing the problems that arose after—as previously touched on—Japanese fishing boats operating around Takeshima were ordered to withdraw by South Korea in May 1978.¹⁵ After that there was no mention of Takeshima for some time until the JCG White Paper published in August 1982, which talked about the islands after a general discussion on the international environment surrounding maritime safety.

In recent years, maritime safety involves more international contact and

¹⁴ *Hachikan: 50-nen no koseki*, p. 94.

¹⁵ *Showa 54 nendo-ban: Kaijo hoan no genkyo*, p. 14.

duties. As a new order is forming in the oceans, in waters claimed by Japan, the Japan Coast Guard is upholding those claims, while strengthening its engagement with foreign vessels and other elements in order to secure the effectiveness of its rights. With the increased activity of foreign vessels, there are more navigational safety issues and Japanese vessels are often becoming embroiled in conflict and friction with other countries. The growing number of cases with international aspects makes maritime safety more complex and challenging. Many of these cases are deeply connected with sovereignty, control, or international interests and face, often reflecting the severe nature of international relations.

The Japanese public very rarely becomes aware of these international cases. Citizens only take an interest when they have clearly become conflicts between Japan and other countries, but this is usually avoided before they develop to this stage, so they do not come to the fore. At root, however, there is an underlying tension, which means there is a possibility the cases could develop into incidents or conflicts at any time, given a catalyst.

In fact, there have been many tense situations in which JCG patrol boat activities have been prevented by warships or hindered by threats or the use of force by groups of armed fishing boats.

International territorial disputes in particular often involve the most serious issues of national interest and pride, and there is a danger that tense relations may mean trouble does not remain in one area, but becomes a broader flashpoint between countries. The JCG continues to make the utmost efforts to prevent such a situation from occurring. As the body with responsibility for managing these cases, however, the JCG wishes that the various issues such as territorial disputes and demarcation problems that constitute the major cause of such troubles can receive smooth diplomatic resolution, securing stable international relations.

Although somewhat abstract, the writer expresses concern over the international environment surrounding Japan, appending a form of request. Having done so, the writer continues on the topic of territorial seas.

Particular care is required in defense of Japanese waters in the Northern Territories and Takeshima, where there are territorial disputes, and around the Senkaku Islands where many Chinese and Taiwanese fishing boats operate. . . South Korea continues its illegal occupation of Takeshima, and used to hinder operations by Japanese fishing vessels. Recently, however, while it objects to surveys by patrol boats approaching the islands, Japan instructs its ships to conduct operations safely and exercise self-restraint, so there have been no problems for the moment. . . Nonetheless, although these waters seem superficially calm, they still require any action to be cautious. This is especially true in the waters around the Northern Territories and Takeshima, where the harsh reality is that they are occupied by the Soviet Union and South Korea, respectively. Although our basic stance is that they are an inherent part of Japanese territory, we must fit our response to the actual situation.¹⁶

From this extract, it is possible to discern that JCG surveys of Takeshima were ongoing. In the August 1983 JCG White Paper, defensive measures in important areas of sea were described as follows.

South Korea continues its illegal occupation of Takeshima in the southwest of the Japan Sea, having built a lighthouse and other facilities, as well as permanently stationing guards. Recently, Japan has issued instructions for safe operations and exercise of self-restraint in neighboring waters and there have been no problems with South Korea. The JCG deploys patrol vessels to the area to gain an understanding of local movements, while taking action to prevent unexpected situations, such as capture of Japanese fishing boats.¹⁷

Until 1993, almost the same wording appeared in the JCG White Paper each year. There was a slight alteration in the White Paper published in November 1996.

¹⁶ *Showa 57 nendo-ban: Kaijo hoan no genkyo* (The Present State of Maritime Safety: 1982 Edition), 1982, pp. 7–8.

¹⁷ *Showa 58 nendo-ban: Kaijo hoan no genkyo* (The Present State of Maritime Safety: 1983 Edition), 1983, p. 18.

South Korea continues its occupation of Takeshima in the west of the Japan Sea, having built a lighthouse and permanently stationed guards, as well as constantly guarding the surrounding sea with warships. While the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has brought issues surrounding Takeshima under the spotlight, the JCG continues to follow the government policy of seeking a peaceful solution to the issue through diplomatic channels. In line with this, from the standpoint of ensuring the safety of Japanese fishing vessels, it takes into consideration fishing periods for various kinds of seafood and fishing activities by Japanese vessels, continually deploying patrol vessels to conduct monitoring and give instruction on avoiding capture.¹⁸

However, this text remained unaltered through until the 2000 White Paper. After this, perhaps due to the prominence of issues surrounding suspected spy ships, pirates, and the Senkaku Islands, for a while Takeshima was not mentioned. (During this time, the JCG White Paper became the JCG Annual Report).

B. The Japan Coast Guard Annual Report Era

(1) JCG Annual Report 2003

This year there was a detailed report with considerable coverage in the “Takeshima shuhen kaiiki” (Waters Around Takeshima) section within *Tokushu 1: Kokkyo o mamoru kaijo hoancho; kokkyo no saizensen ni okeru taio* (Special Feature 1: The Japan Coast Guard Protecting National Borders; Activities on the Front Line). This was a compilation of material that had been published several times before, however, with no new content.¹⁹

(2) JCG Annual Report 2005

The JCG Annual Report 2004 also gave detailed information on Takeshima, including postwar relations between Japan and South Korea, but the content

¹⁸ *Heisei 8 nendo-ban: Kaijo hoan no genkyo* (The Present State of Maritime Safety: 1996 Edition), 1996, pp. 35–36.

¹⁹ *Kaijo hoan repoto 2003* (Japan Coast Guard Annual Report: 2003 Edition), 2003, p.34.

was almost the same as the previous year. In 2005, the following information on the present state of Takeshima was given. "In July 1954, South Korea permanently stationed guards on Takeshima, while building accommodation, a lighthouse, lookout posts, antennas, and other facilities. It has continued to upgrade facilities to the present day, completing mooring facilities for 500-ton vessels in November 1997 and a manned lighthouse in December 1998."²⁰

(3) JCG Annual Report 2007

This year's report repeats the coverage from 2005 and 2006, but is notable in including information on marine surveys around Takeshima. In a section titled *Kaiyo chosa to kaiyo ken'eki* (Marine Surveys and Marine Rights and Interests), there are details of some problems between Japan and South Korea in a subsection headed "Heisei 18 (2006) nen no Takeshima shuhen kaiiki o meguru kaiyo chosa" (2006 Marine Surveys in Waters Around Takeshima), within the individual survey reports "Nihonkai nanseibu kaiyo chosa (4-gatsu)" (Marine Survey in Southwest of Japan Sea [April]) and "Takeshima shuhen kaiiki ni okeru hoshano chosa no Nik-Kan kyodo jisshi (10-gatsu)" (Joint Japanese-South Korean Radioactivity Survey in Waters Around Takeshima (October)).

There is a territorial dispute concerning Takeshima between Japan and South Korea, and the exclusive economic zones of both countries are not established, as claimed areas overlap in the waters around Takeshima. For at least the past four years, South Korea has conducted marine surveys in these waters, despite Japanese protests. On each occasion, Japan has calmly and appropriately responded in accordance with international law through such actions as demanding surveys cease and lodging a firm protest through diplomatic channels.

In December 2005, the JCG learned that South Korea was moving to give a South Korean name to the submarine topography in the area. This would mean giving new names to several underwater features, such as renaming Tsushima Basin as Ulleung Basin, and Syun-yo Bank as Isabu Tablemount.

Under these circumstances, with the idea of presenting an opposing

²⁰ *Kaijo hoan repoto 2005* (Japan Coast Guard Annual Report: 2005 Edition), 2005, pp.22–23.

proposal in mind, the JCG is gathering necessary data and conducting marine surveys to create a basic sea chart.

Japan planned to use the survey ships *Meiyo* and *Kaiyo* to conduct a survey in the waters around Takeshima, submitting a notice to mariners on April 14, warning other vessels traveling in the vicinity. On the same day, South Korea demanded through diplomatic channels that the survey be cancelled. What is more, there were reports that the South Korean government would use all means, including boarding and capturing vessels, to hinder a marine survey, if Japan attempted one. This kind of behavior is not only out of line with Japan's stance regarding the area of sea in question but also in contravention of international law.

Although a Japanese marine survey would not be problematic in terms of international law, to avoid unforeseen circumstances, Japan held diplomatic negotiations on April 21 and 22. As a result of those negotiations, South Korea agreed not to submit its planned names to the international group the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names, so Japan cancelled its planned survey.²¹

Then, in July of the same year, an issue arose related to a South Korean survey of currents around Takeshima.

From the April negotiations, Japan felt that some kind of framework was needed to ensure marine surveys could be carried out smoothly within the waters in question. It proposed to South Korea negotiations regarding such a framework, and that neither country should conduct surveys during that time. Despite this proposal by Japan, South Korea planned a survey of currents around Takeshima, ignoring Japanese protests, and conducting the survey on July 5. Through diplomatic channels Japan demanded that this activity cease and made further protests. At the same time, the JCG took appropriate action, such as by demanding by wireless radio from patrol vessels in the area that activities cease.²²

²¹ *Kaijo hoan repoto 2007* (Japan Coast Guard Annual Report: 2007 Edition), 2007, p.2.

²² *Kaijo hoan repoto 2007*, p.30.

Another survey took place that year in the waters around Takeshima. This was a radioactivity survey conducted jointly by Japan and South Korea in October, described as follows.

Given that South Korea had conducted a survey of currents in July, Japan considered conducting its own survey at an appropriate time. This became a survey of radioactivity, as was conducted every year.

For more than 13 years, the JCG has conducted surveys as to whether radioactive materials dumped in the Japan Sea by the former Soviet Union and Russia are affecting the marine environment. Until now, there has been no data showing adverse effects, but such factors as the form and durability of radioactive materials dumped by Russia are unclear, so ongoing radioactive surveys are necessary to discover any problems at the earliest possible stage. This survey is extremely important for ensuring the health of not only Japanese citizens but also those of countries around the Japan Sea. This is apparent from the radioactive surveys conducted jointly by Japan, Russia, and South Korea in 1994 and 1995. Further, South Korea has never previously protested about these surveys by Japan.

Japan planned to conduct the regular annual survey this year at an appropriate time, but South Korea expressed opposition. Because of this, diplomatic negotiations were held in September and Japan and South Korea reached agreement to conduct a joint survey. This was conducted by the JCG survey ship *Kaiyo* and a South Korean survey vessel from October 7 to October 15.

The survey was conducted as follows.

- The survey was conducted in six locations: three places in Takeshima waters regularly surveyed by Japan and three more suggested by Japan.
- Surveyors from other countries were on board both Japanese and South Korean vessels.
- International Atomic Energy Agency representatives were on board both Japanese and South Korean vessels.
- There was mutual exchange of accumulated materials and survey results.

The JCG plans to continue necessary radioactivity surveys in the Japan Sea as appropriate.²³

5. Summary

Based on its decision to “strengthen management of illegal entry and fishing in the waters around Takeshima” on June 17, 1953, the JCG began the first control survey of Takeshima by the patrol vessels *Oki* and *Kuzuryu* on June 22 of the same year. It is clear that crew members went ashore on Takeshima to place markers, warned six South Koreans on the islands to leave, and later continued surveys related to Takeshima.

However, South Korea permanently stationed guards on Takeshima, and there were several incidents in which Japanese boats were shot at. From a certain point, the JCG continued surveys based on a request from MOFA; it is not possible to say whether these were as thorough as in 1953, but the duties of thorough observation and surveying remained. Even so, concerning the level of engagement, while it was important to maintain effective control of the Senkaku Islands, in the case of Takeshima—an inherent part of Japanese territory under the effective control of South Korea—it should be understood that as peaceful methods, surveying and monitoring were all that was possible.

One may also surmise that as the JCG is not involved directly with diplomatic issues between Japan and South Korea, only major movements or changes were covered, and Takeshima would not necessarily be included each year continuously in JCG white papers and annual reports.

Nonetheless, the JCG fulfilled its duties that were closely connected to Takeshima, and certainly shouldered part of the burden of upholding the true claim that Takeshima is an inherent part of Japanese territory.

²³ *Kaijo hoan repoto 2007*, pp.30–31.