

Articles

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Korea's post-World War II perception of Dokdo began to take shape around 1947 and 1948. Japan occupied Dokdo in 1947 and began warding off Korean fishermen from the area. In the meantime, United States B-29 bombers started training there, killing many people (all Koreans) and destroying a number of fishing boats. Around the same time, Korean newspapers reported that Parangdo, known to the Korean people as "Jeodo" and located south of Marado, was also vulnerable to Japanese invasion. United States and Soviet forces were occupying the Korean peninsula, and there was much uncertainty as to whether Korea would eventually become independent and unified. Under the circumstances, reclaiming Tsushima from Japan was raised as a retaliatory measure.

In 1947, the South Korean Interim Government (SKIG) dispatched an official survey team to Dokdo, and the Korea Alpine Association established the Academic Research Team on Ulleungdo and Dokdo. The official survey team and the Korea Alpine Association set up a stone plaque declaring Dokdo as Korean territory. The academic survey of Dokdo in 1947 and the Dokdo bombing incident in 1948 played a key role in shaping Koreans' perception of Dokdo as a part of Korean territory.

The most comprehensive study on the three islands (Dokdo, Parangdo, and Tsushima) was presented in the petition sent to General MacArthur by the Patriot Old Men's Association in August 1948. It formed the basic framework of the newly formed Korean government's understanding of Korean territory as well as the Korean government's territorial proposal to the San Francisco Peace Conference.

The Korean government endeavored to prove Korean sovereignty over Dokdo at the San Francisco Peace Conference but failed. The first reason for the failure was that the research and survey reports gathered during the 1947-48 period were not transferred to the Korean government. Second, with the onset of the Korean War, the Korean government did not have the wherewithal to give due attention to territorial issues. Third, the Korean government did not even know that Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo was being challenged by Japan, and thus, did not take action or formulate a serious and decisive stance on the issue.

Keywords : Dokdo, Tsushima, Parangdo (Jeodo), Dokdo bombing incident of 1948, Korea Alpine Association, Patriotic Old Men's Society

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I. Foreword

It was in 1952 that Japan first took issue with Korea's claim to sovereignty over Dokdo for the first time after its defeat in the Pacific War. The Korean government's declaration of the Peace Line (also called the "Syngman Rhee Line" by the Japanese) on January 18, 1952 led—ten days later—to protests from the Japanese government, which claimed that Dokdo was Japanese territory, thus starting the territorial dispute over the islets between the two countries.

In fact, Japan's claim to sovereignty over Dokdo started in 1946-1947, i.e. prior to the establishment of the government of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). In its preliminary contacts with the United States before the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951, Japan was engaged in brisk lobbying activities to persuade the United States in its favor concerning the Dokdo issue.¹

In connection with such careful preparations made by Japan, it is necessary to see how the Korean government viewed the country's

sovereignty over Dokdo and what kind of measures it took toward the islets during the United States Forces' occupation of the country right after the end of the Pacific War and after the establishment of the South Korean government in August 1948.

According to a preceding study on how Koreans viewed Dokdo after their liberation from Japan's colonial rule, Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo was confirmed by the Potsdam Declaration in July 1945, by SCAPIN No. 677 (January 29, 1946) and No.1033 (June 22, 1946), and by the San Francisco Peace Conference (1951).² SCAPIN (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers Instruction) 677 was a Memorandum entitled "Governmental and Administrative Separation of Certain Outlying Areas from Japan", while SCAPIN 1033 was a memorandum entitled "Area Authorized for Japanese Fishing and Whaling", which established "the MacArthur Line."

How Koreans viewed Dokdo and what kind of policies the Korean government took toward it are as important as the relevant decisions made by the Allied Powers. They provide an important source of background information for understanding the territorial dispute over Dokdo in the post-1952 period. Immediately after liberation from Japan's colonial rule, Koreans' view of Dokdo and their government's policy toward it did not become the focus of attention, mainly because the islets were clearly the country's territory, historically and in actuality.

This study aims to trace the changes in Korea's perception of and policies related to Dokdo from 1945, the year of Korea's liberation, to

1951, before the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty. That is, the objective of this paper is to look at Korea's perception of and policies related to Dokdo prior to the onset of Korea and Japan's dispute over Dokdo. The focus of this study is to analyze the historical and administrative basis of the diplomatic stance taken by the Korean government at the San Francisco Conference and the Korean government's approach to the Dokdo issue. It also seeks to examine how much importance the Korea government attached to Dokdo policies and Dokdo awareness prior to the San Francisco Conference; analyze the historical inertia of the policy position taken by the Korean government at the San Francisco Conference, which was based on the aforementioned policies and awareness; and analyze if such prior history on Dokdo policies and awareness are coherent and consistent enough to serve as the basis of a general territorial policy. Such an analysis is thought to be necessary because the prevalent situation must have reflected what was on the minds of not only the Korean diplomats and high-ranking government officials concerned, but also the Korean people at the grass roots level.

II. Korea's View on Dokdo during the United States Forces' occupation of Korea

Until now, there have been no studies on how Koreans viewed Dokdo during the United States Forces' occupation of Korea after the end of the Pacific War.

The maps, atlases, textbooks and official documents published or made during the United States Forces' occupation paid no particular attention to Dokdo. USAMGIK used the L751 series of maps published by the Army Map Service (AMS) on a scale of 1:50,000. The most detailed series of maps among those available at that time did not include Ulleungdo or Dokdo.³ The best and most accurate document among the geographical information kept by USAMGIK on the Korean Peninsula

¹ Jung Byungjoon, 2005, William J. Sebald and the Territorial Disputes over Dokdo, *Historical Review*, No. 71; Jung Byungjoon, 2005, Draft of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Peace Treaty with Japan – ancillary maps (March 1951) and Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo reconfirmed, *The Institute for Korean Independence Movement Studies* No.24; Jung Byungjoon, 2006, *The Views of Korea, Japan and the United States of the Territorial Disputes over Dokdo*, 史林, No. 26.

² Shin Yongha, 1997, *Dokdo under Japan's Colonial Rule over Korea and the Process of Having It Returned to Korea, A Study of Dokdo as the History of National Territory*, Chisik Sanŏpsa.

was JANIS 75 (Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study of Korea: Study of the Combined Information of the Army and Navy - Korea, the Joint Intelligence Study Publishing Board) (April 1945), which was a collection of information on Korea to be used in operations against Japan during the Pacific War. Compiled for the purpose of waging war, it contained information on major transportation facilities, roads, and major cities. However, JANIS 75 did not include any information on Ulleungdo and Dokdo; nor did similar documents concerning Japan, i.e. JANIS 81 (Northern Japan), 84 (Southwest Japan), 85 (Central Japan) and 86 (Nansei Shoto),⁴ because Ulleungdo and Dokdo were not objects of the United States Forces' military interest.

Information on Dokdo was not included in any of the geography or history textbooks published in South Korea during the United States Forces' occupation of Korea. However, the Chindan Society organized by Korean scholars took a step toward the publication of geography and history textbooks: their ultimate aim was the removal of any vestiges of Japanese colonial rule and the rediscovery of positive factors in Korean history.⁵ The first Korean-language map drawn up after the liberation was the "Appended Map of Korea", which was published by the Printing Office of the interim government under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.⁶ It most probably does not contain any information on Dokdo, although I have not yet had a chance to check it.

³ National Archives of the United States, Cartographic Records, Records of the War Department, Office of the Chief of Engineers, RG 77, File L-751.

⁴ RG 319, Entry 82a, Reports and Messages 1918-1951, boxes.403-404, 413-420.

⁵ The Chindan Society had already finished compilation of national history and geography textbooks for elementary and middle school in October 1945. The society was headed by Song Sukha, who led an expedition team on an on-site survey to Dokdo in 1947. (Maeil Shinbo, 5 October 1945).

⁶ First Publication of Korean Language Map, Seoul Shinmun, 28 October 1947.

1. On-site Survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo conducted in 1947

The on-site survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo jointly carried out by the South Korean Interim Government and the Korea Alpine Association in 1947 served as an occasion to draw Koreans' attention to Dokdo. According to research thus far, *Dong-A Ilbo's* "Japan unable to Abandon Habit of Aggression: Raising the issue of Sovereignty over Dodo," dated July 23, 1947, was the first newspaper article concerning the islets to be published after the liberation. The article, which read as follows, had a conspicuous impact on Koreans' view of Dokdo and the direction of the countermeasures ultimately taken:

Dokdo is a group of two uninhabited islets located 49 miles southeast of Ulleungdo in the East Sea. One of them measures one and a half miles around, and the other about half a mile around. Even in the distant past, they were clearly part of the country's territory as a fishing ground and/or a defense base. Recently, Ulleungdo's residents made a plea to the U.S. Occupation Forces authorities via the Gyeongbuk-do Office, as a Japanese person living in Sakai, Shimane Prefecture, Japan has been insisting that one of the islets belongs to him, and is not allowing Koreans to fish there, and is thus invading our country's territorial waters. In 1906, before the signing of the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty, Japanese officials landed on one of the islets illegally to conduct a survey, which caused serious agitation among Joseon Dynasty officials. With the signing of the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty, the matter did not draw the proper attention from Koreans, and the Japanese [insisted that] the islets inherently belonged to their country.⁷

The article demonstrates Koreans' early conception of Dokdo and

⁷ *Dong-A Ilbo*, dated 23 July 1947.

confirms the following points. First is the geographical recognition of Dokdo and its dimensions by the Koreans of that time. Koreans recognized Dokdo as a group of two uninhabited islets, with Seodo measuring 1.5 miles around and Dongdo measuring 0.5 mile. Second is the awareness of Korea's historical sovereignty over the islets. This article states that Dokdo has clearly been Korea's fishing ground and defense base for a very long time: in 1906, a Japanese official illegally landed on Dokdo to conduct a survey, causing much uproar among Joseon government officials. This seems to be in reference to the report by Governor Shim Hungt'aek of Uldo and the press coverage that ensued. Third, the articles said that at that time (in July 1947) a Japanese person living in Sakai, Japan insisted that one of the islets belonged to him and prohibited Koreans from fishing near it, invading the country's territorial water as he pleased. Sakai must have meant the Sakaiminato area, Tottori Prefecture, which served as a forward base for fishing ships leaving for Okishima or Ulleungdo or Dokdo. Sakai Minato was a port through which the Japanese traded with Korea, including Ulleungdo, during the period following the First Sino-Japanese War. Until 1910, 80-90 percent of the foreign trade through the port was with Ulleungdo.⁸ The Japanese living in Sakai must have been Okumura Ryo or someone associated with him. After illegally incorporating Dokdo into its territory in 1905, the Shimane Prefectural Office granted the fishing rights to Takeshima Fishing Co. established by Nakai Yosaburo among others. The rights were taken over by Nakai Yosaburo's son (中井養一) in the 1910s, passed on to Okumura Heitaro, who ran a canned food factory in Ulleungdo in the 1920s, and finally to Okumura Ryo (Okumura Heitaro's son) in 1938.⁹ After the end of the Pacific War, the Japanese in Korea,

⁸ Hō Yōngran, 2005, Japanese voyages to Ulleungdo in the late 19th century and early 20th century and the issue of sovereignty over Dokdo, an unpublished thesis, p. 12.

⁹ Tamura Seizaburo, 1965, A New Study of Takeshima, Shimane Prefecture, pp. 103-105; Hō Yōngran, 2005, Op Cit, pp. 22-23.



fig.1 Location of Dokdo (carried by The Dong-A Ilbo)

including those stationed in Ulleungdo, returned home to Japan. Thus, it is guessed that the “Japanese person living in Sakai, Japan who insisted that one of the islets belonged to him and who prohibited Koreans from fishing near it” was Okumura Ryo (who was granted the fishing rights by the Shimane Prefectural Office and lived in Sakaiminato, Tottori) or someone associated with him. In mid-1947, there were reports including the following that the Japanese were illegally fishing near Dokdo:

Recently, a group of 7 or 8 Japanese, including a police officer and a medical doctor, engaged in the illegal act of crossing the MacArthur Line and landing on Dokdo, which is 48 miles from Ulleungdo and 128 miles from Japan, or located near Jeju, thereby interfering with Korean fishermen's activities. It is reported that, at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, the USAMGIK asked SCAP to reduce Japan's fishing zone of the Japanese (from latitude 40° N and longitude 135° E to latitude 26° N and longitude 123° E) to prevent them from intruding on our fishery zone. With the utmost attention paid to the matter, we expect the SCAP to take appropriate steps as Dokdo is naturally part of

our land both historically and geographically.¹⁰

As stated in the article quoted above, a group of seven to eight Japanese, including a police officer and doctor, landed on Dokdo and stopped Koreans from fishing near it in 1947. It is guessed that they were from Sakai, Tottori Prefecture, Japan. Subsequently, Ulleungdo-based fishermen submitted a plea to the authorities, asking for remedial steps to be taken against the illegal occupation of the islets by the Japanese. This shows that, in the post-liberation period, the Dokdo issue drew the Korean public's attention due to the Japanese fishing outside their designated zone and their illegal occupation of the islets. The identity of this group of Japanese requires further research.

According to my research, an article in *Hanseong Ilbo* was the first press item to show a map indicating the location of Dokdo in the post-liberation period. The map indicates SCAPIN No. 1033, i.e. the MacArthur Line, clearly marking Dokdo as a part of Korea.

In response to the illegal occupation of Dokdo by a group of Japanese, Korea took the following steps. First, the Interim Government of South Korea carried out an on-site survey of Dokdo and examined related literature. Second, the Korea Alpine Association carried out an on-site survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo. Third, the Interim Government of South Korea asked the USAMGIK to reduce Japan's fishing zone.

The South Korean Interim Government organized a committee to respond to Ulleungdo fishermen's plea concerning the illegal occupation of Dokdo. Shin Sukho, who headed what later became the National Institute of Korean History, said that SCAP should confirm that Dokdo is Korean territory on the basis of geographical and historical facts, and that Dokdo would become important, militarily and economically, for Korea after independence.¹¹ This shows that there were limitations as to what

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Journal of Northeast Asian History*, vol. 5 no.2 (Dec 2008), 5-53

Koreans could do regarding the Dokdo issue, as the country had not yet recovered full sovereignty over the islets.

In August 1947, the South Korean Interim Government launched a search committee on Dokdo headed by Civil Affairs Minister An Chaehong. On August 4, a meeting was held in the office of the Civil Affairs Minister, with various experts invited to attend.¹² Ch'u Inbong, an official in charge of Japanese affairs, said that the committee would submit a report to SCAP stating that Dokdo was Korean territory based on historical facts after carrying out an on-site survey of the islets.¹³ The attendees decided to examine literature concerning Dokdo and carry out an on-site survey.¹⁴ On the first day of the meeting, a Japanese geographer's thesis concerning Dokdo's incorporation into Gangwon-do was presented as evidence of Korea's sovereignty over the islets.¹⁵ It is possible that the writer of the thesis was Hibata Fukiko (樋畑雪湖).¹⁶

The South Korean Interim Government decided to dispatch its own team to Dokdo to conduct an on-site survey. The four-member team, which reported directly to the Civil Affairs Minister, arrived in Daegu on August 16.¹⁷ According to USAMGIK records, the team, comprising

¹¹ Director Shin Sukho of the National History Research Institute, "Dokdo naturally belongs to Korea." *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 July 1947.

¹² Headline: "The Dokdo issue emerges as a grave one. The Government will launch a special committee to discuss it." (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 3 August 1947)

¹³ *Dong-A Ilbo*, 3 August 1947

¹⁴ Headline: "Dokdo is Korean territory, says Ch'u, an official in charge of affairs concerning Japan." (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 3 August 1947)

¹⁵ Headline: "Literature showing historical evidence concerning Dokdo being part of Korea is found. The government committee submits it to SCAPIN." *The Dong-A Ilbo*, 5 August 1947; Headline: "Literature showing historical evidence concerning Dokdo being Korean territory is found." *Tonggwang Shinmun*, 7 August 1947

¹⁶ Hibata Fukiko (樋畑雪湖), 1930, *On Japan-Korea Relations concerning Dokdo in the Sea of Japan*, Historical Geography, Historical Geography Society of Japan. (I am indebted to Dr. Hō Yōngran for informing me of the existence of this thesis.)

¹⁷ Headline: "The Dokdo survey team takes on the trip on August 16." (*Daegu Shibo*, 17 August 1947).

delegates from the Fisheries Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, and Korean History and Geography Association, left for Ulleungdo and Dokdo on August 16.¹⁸ According to Shin Sukho, the team, composed of Shin Sukho himself, Ch'u Inbong, Lee Bongsu (the Education Ministry official in charge of textbook compilation), and Han Kijun (an expert at the Fisheries Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture), was dispatched on a survey mission under the instruction of the Civil Affairs Minister An Chaehong.¹⁹ Kwōn Taeil, an official from the Gyeongsangbuk-do office, and one of his staff also joined the team. The team then joined forces with the survey team from the Korea Alpine Association.

In addition to the aforesaid team, twelve government officials joined the Dokdo on-site survey team from the Korea Alpine Association. Among the officials were Ok Sūngshik and another member of the National Geological Institute; one from the Suwon Agricultural Research Center; three from the National Science Museum; one from the National Museum of Korea; one from the National Quarantine Laboratory; one from the Gyeonggi Province Microbiology Center; a wireless technician from the Ministry of Communications; an electrician from the Ministry of Commerce, and one from the National Folk Museum.

It appears that their mission was carried out very quietly and clandestinely. Indeed, the dispatch of the team was not reported by any central newspaper: only *Daegu Shibo* (published in Daegu, where the team had a stopover) made a brief report on the team's departure for Ulleungdo/Dokdo.²⁰

As far as I have been able to determine, USAMGIK made no public

¹⁸ USAFIK, United States Army Military Government in Korea, South Korea Interim Government Activities, no.23, August 1947, prepared by National Economic Board and Statistical Research Division, Office of administration, p. 7.

¹⁹ Shin Sukho, 1948, On where Dokdo belongs, *Sahae*, December 1948 issue, p. 90. Lee Bongsu later rose to a mid-ranking position at the Ministry of Education.

²⁰ Op Cit.

mention of the team's mission. The aforementioned fact is found in a report on the activities of the South Korean Interim Government, and it appears to be the only record kept by USAMGIK concerning the team's mission. The USAMGIK record states that Dokdo, comprising two islets located to the "southwest" (as per the original text) of Ulleungdo, was a useful forward base for fishery that had become the subject of territorial dispute. It says that while the islets used to be occupied by Japan, they are now a part of Korea's fishing zone as defined by the MacArthur Line and that the permanent sovereignty over the islets is an issue that will be decided upon at the forthcoming Peace Conference with Japan.²¹

It has not been confirmed whether the South Korean Interim Government team drafted a separate report from that of the Korea Alpine Association after the joint survey. At a session held to report the findings of the mission at the Korea Alpine Association on September 2, 1947, Ok Sūngshik did a presentation on geography and submitted a report on the results of a geological study of Ulleungdo and Dokdo conducted in 1948. Shin Sukho's thesis on the sovereignty over Dokdo, published in the history magazine *Sahae*, will be discussed again later in this study.

Established in September 1945, the Korea Alpine Association was based at the National Folk Museum of Korea in Seoul, with folklorist Song Sukha acting as its chairman, and journalist Hong Chongin and botanist To Pongsōp as its vice chairmen.²² Song Sukha (1904~1948), a scholar of repute, belonged to a nationalist organization.²³

²¹ USAMGIK, August 1947, South Korea Interim Government Activities, no.23, prepared by National Economic Board and Statistical Research Division, Office of administration, p. 7.

²² Korea News Service (조선통신), 1947, Almanac of Korea 1948, p. 454. Hong Chongin served as the President for *Chosun Ilbo*. He headed the teams which carried out four on-site surveys of Dokdo. To Pongsōp, a reputed botanist, was serving as Dean of the College of Pharmacy. Later, he defected to North Korea and served as a senior scientist at the North Korean Institute of Science (북한 과학원 후보원사). (Past and Present of the Study of Flora Koreana: To Pongsōp, Seoul Shinmun, 11 November 1947).

²³ Born in Ulsan, Song Sukha entered the University of Tokyo's College of Business & Economics, but dropped out and returned home to Korea. In 1932, he, jointly with Son Chint'ae and Chung

Song Sukha and To Pongsöp also served as senior members of the Chindan Society.²⁴ The society set itself the following tasks: conducting academic research and surveys, undertaking resource surveys, drawing up a land use plan, and making creative recommendations. The tasks were quite similar to those of the Korea Alpine Association. With USAMGIK's support, the Korea Alpine Association carried out the following activities: scientific study of Mount Halla in February-March 1946; study of Mount Odae and Mount Sobaek in the summer of 1946; survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo in 1947; and a second study of Dokdo in 1952.²⁵

According to Hong Chongin, it was Song Sukha who had proposed a survey of Dokdo. Song Sukha is said to have reasoned that there was a high possibility that the Japanese would claim sovereignty over Dokdo, a pair of small, uninhabited rocky islets. Thus, an on-site survey had to be quickly undertaken to raise public awareness regarding the existence and status of Dokdo so that the Korean people develop a strong sense of ownership over Dokdo.²⁶ Song Sukha went on to say, "It would be wise to push ahead with the plan to dispatch a team of surveyors to Dokdo

Insöp, established the Korea Folklore Society. He also published a magazine, Korean Folklore, out of his own pocket. In 1934, he was one of the promoters for the establishment of the Chindan Society. After the liberation, he served as a professor at Seoul National University. In 1946, he played a leading role in the establishment of the National Folk Museum of Korea by persuading the USAMGIK with 1,000-plus items kept. He passed away of high blood pressure in 1948. [Son Chint'ae, 1949, "Cherishing the memory of the late Song Sukha, Minsöng, the November issue; The Life and accomplishments of Song Sukha, National Folk Museum of Korea, 1996, the 50-Year History of the National Folk Museum of Korea, pp. 314-317; Yonhap News, 19 November 2004; *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 November 2004.

²⁴ Yöronsa, 1945, The political parties and organizations that decide the future of Korea, pp. 16-20.

²⁵ The survey of Hallasan Mountain was joined by Capt. Knezvich and 1st Lt. Mason (both of whom were anthropologists) of the USAMGIK as well as 18 specialists in the areas of climate, religion, wind speed, anthropology and linguistics; Headline: "A group of Mount Halla surveyors returns with lots of results." Chosun Ilbo, 18 March 1946.

²⁶ Hong Chongin, 1978, Thinking over the Dokdo issue again, The Shin Dong-a, November issue, pp. 163-164.

quietly."²⁷ Hong Chongin's recollection—made twenty-one years later—corresponds to recorded fact. In an article he wrote after the on-site survey of Dokdo in 1947, Hong Chongin stated, "We did not make any public announcements about our Dokdo survey trip until the very last moment as it had been planned from the very beginning as a surprise trip."²⁸ It was only after their arrival in Ulleungdo that their plan to conduct an on-site survey of Dokdo was disclosed to the public. The survey, carried out by eighty experts in 1947, laid important groundwork for the country's claim to sovereignty over Dokdo.

The Korea Alpine Association organized the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team ("Survey Team"), inviting along experts from diverse fields. The Survey Team was made up of the fifteen-member Headquarters Team and the Survey Team. The Headquarters Team oversaw the activities of the Survey Team.²⁹ The sixty-three members of the Survey Team were divided into eight groups: the ten-member Social Science A-Group (history, geography, economy, sociology, archaeology, folk studies, linguistics); the eleven-member Social Science B-Group (everyday life); the six-member Zoology Group; the nine-member Botanical Group; the four-member Agriculture/Forestry Group; the two-member Geology/Ore Group; the eight-member Medical Science Group; and the eight-member Press Coverage Group (photography and wireless).³⁰ If we look at the members of the Survey Team by their alma

²⁷ Hong Chongin, 1978, Op Cit, p. 164.

²⁸ Report on the activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(1), Hong Chongin, The *Hanseong Ilbo*, 21 September 1947.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ There was a slight difference from what is stated in the foregoing and the press reports of that time concerning the lineup of the team: The Social Science Group-A (history, geography, economy, archaeology, folk, linguistics); the Social Science Group-B (everyday life); the Biology/Physics Group (flora); the Biology/Physics Group (fauna); the Geography/Ore Group; the Agriculture/Forestry Group; the Medical Science Group; the Marine Group; the Meteorology Group; the Press Coverage Group; the Headquarters Group. [Headline: "The Ulleungdo Survey Team is dispatched by the Korea Alpine Association." *Hanseong Ilbo*, 3 August 1947; Headline:

mater or affiliation, two were from the College of Liberal Arts and Science, Seoul National University (“SNU”); one from the College of Business & Economics, SNU; two from the Suwon College of Agriculture; one from Daegu National University of Education; two from a college of pharmacy; six from the college of Medicine, SNU; one from the college of medicine of a women’s university; eleven were middle school teachers; one came from the Rural Development Administration; three from the National Science Museum of Korea; one from the National Museum of Korea; two from the Korea Institute of Geoscience & Mineral Resources; one from the National Quarantine Lab; one from the Gyeonggi-do Microbiology Center; one wireless expert from the Ministry of Communication; one electrician from the Ministry of Commerce; and one from the National Folk Museum. It is clear that the lineup boasted some of the top scholars and technical experts of the time. The utilization of human resources from universities, government and public offices, and related agencies shows that the survey had been meticulously organized by the South Korean Interim Government. Also, the fact that experts from such diverse disciplines were mobilized simultaneously demonstrates that it was the product of thorough planning and preparation. The Team was joined by the four-member Dokdo Survey Team from the South Korean Interim Government, two officials from the Gyeongsangbuk-do Office, and police officers from the Gyeongbuk Provincial Police Agency, bringing the total number of the Team’s members to more than eighty.³¹

The Survey Team left for Ulleungdo and Dokdo on August 16, 1947.³² Formally, it was a scientific survey carried out by a private

“The Ulleungdo Survey Team starts activities on Ulleungdo and Dokdo.” Seoul Shinmun, 22 August 1947].

³¹ As Ulleungdo belonged to Gyeongsangbuk-do, several members from the province joined the team.

³² The official name was the “Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team.”

organization, but the Team planned to carry out an official investigation in response to the illegal occupation of Dokdo by the Japanese.

It was a *de facto* official survey activity, as evidenced by the fact that the Team was joined by the four-member team dispatched by the South Korean Interim Government, two officials from the Gyeongsangbuk-do Office, and police officers, and by the team’s use of a coastguard ship.³³ The survey mission received official support from the South Korean Interim Government. Hong Chongin said that he and Song Sukha had privately asked Admiral Son Wōnil of the Coast Guard for a ship that would carry the team to and from Ulleungdo/Dokdo.³⁴ The request was accepted with the approval of USAMGIK and the South Korean Interim Government. As gathered from various sources, the survey team’s itinerary was as follows:³⁵

August 16

The first team (lecturers) left in the morning, followed by the remaining members in the afternoon. The sixty-three-member Korea Alpine Association team arrived in Daegu, to be joined thereafter by the four-member South Korean Interim Government Dokdo Survey Team, two

³³ An article written by Hong Chongin entitled “Our country’s territory in the East Sea; A record of a bloody scene”, was carried in Chosun Ilbo, 17 June 1948. It was only in mid September 1947 that 500~700-ton ships started serving the Pohang-Ulleungdo route periodically (i.e. 3 times a month): Daegu Shibo, 1 August 1947; Tonggwang Shinmun, 24 August 1947.

³⁴ Hong Chongin, 1978, Op Cit, p. 164.

³⁵ Headline: “The Ulleungdo Survey Team is dispatched by the Korea Alpine Association.” *Hanseong Ilbo*, 3 August 1947. Headline: “The Dokdo Survey Team takes a trip on August 16.” Daegu Shibo, 17 August 1947; Headline: “Dokdo is surveyed.” Daegu Shibo, 22 August 1947; Headline: “The Ulleungdo Survey Team finds fur seals unexpectedly at Dokdo.” Chosun Ilbo, 23 August 1947; Headline: “The team makes it to the top of the Sōng’inbong Peak: Korea engaged in scientific activities.” Kong’op Shinmun, 28 August 1947; Report on the activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(2), Hong Chongin, *Hanseong Ilbo*, 24 September 1947; Hong Kup’yo, Upon finishing the survey of Dokdo’s uninhabited islets (a travesty), Geonguk Gongnon, the November 1947 issue kept by Adan mun’go. I am grateful for Adan mun’go for allowing me access to, the relevant materials.

officials from the Gyeongsangbuk-do Office, and police officers.

August 17

Lecturers held a lecture session at Daegu National University of Education, and all the Team members gathered in Pohang in the afternoon.

August 22

In Ulleungdo, Survey Team-A left Namyang-dong and stayed overnight in Daeha-dong. Survey Team-B left Nari-dong, passed through Cheongbu-dong, and stayed overnight in Hyeonpo.

August 23

Survey Team-A left Daeha-dong, passed through Hyeonpo, and spent the night in Cheonbu-dong. The Survey Team-B left Hyeonpo, passed through Daeha-dong, and spent the night in Namyang-dong.

August 24

In the afternoon, the entire Team gathered in Do-dong. The Medical Science Group spent two days in Do-dong, two days in Cheongbu-dong, and a day in Nari-dong, treating patients there. They climbed Seongin Peak and returned to Do-dong.

August 25

The Team rested, put the collected materials in order, and held a special lecture session at Usan Middle School.

August 26

The Team left Do-dong at 9:30 a.m., and at 10:30 p.m. arrived in Pohang, where they spent the night.

August 27

The Team left Pohang and stopped over in Daegu.

August 28

The Team arrived in Seoul.

Let's take a closer look at the Survey Team's activities in Dokdo. The survey was carried out on August 20. As Hong Chongin stated, the Korea Alpine Association's on-site survey of Dokdo was described as a "surprise visit," but it was, nonetheless, the very first activity undertaken by the Team. Docking at Dokdo was only possible if the winds, waves, and other weather conditions permitted, and it is no different today even with a pier. On the day of the survey, the weather conditions were so favorable that Hong Chongin even said that the "extremely favorable weather conditions" were heaven's blessings.³⁶

Therefore, agreeable weather conditions may have played a role in the Team's decision to make the Dokdo expedition its first activity. However, it probably reflects the priority and key objective—survey of Dokdo—of the Interim Government, which supported the Team's activities. It was only on the day after having arrived in Ulleungdo that the Headquarters Team informed all the members that an expedition to Dokdo would be their first official activity.

Concerning the time of their departure from Ulleungdo to Dokdo, the records show slight variations: 4:30 a.m. on August 20 (*Daegu Shibo* and *Hong Kup'yo*); 5:00 a.m. (*Hong Chongin*); and 5:10 a.m. (*Chosun Ilbo*).³⁷ The team was composed of seventy-two people, including officials dispatched by the Interim Government and police officers from

³⁶ Report on Activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(2), Hong Chongin, *Hanseong Ilbo*, 24 September 1947.

³⁷ Headline: "A team of Koreans surveys Dokdo." *Daegu Shibo*, 22 August 1947; Headline, *Chosun Ilbo*, 23 August 1947 Op Cit. Hong Chongin, Op Cit.

the Gyeongbuk Provincial Police Agency. Song Sukha, the team leader, who suffered from high blood pressure, could not join the team as he had become exhausted after having gotten lost during a hike the night before. A company of four led by Sök Chumyöng, a butterfly specialist, could not accompany the main group either as they were unable to get back in time for the departure to Dokdo after having gone astray on their way back from Seongin Peak.³⁸

Daejonho, a 300-ton coastguard ship that had been used as a minesweeper by the Japanese Navy, approached the southern end of Dokdo at some time past 9:00 a.m. with the Team aboard. The Team switched to a lighter, which took them to Dongdo (east islet of Dokdo). They landed at 9:40 a.m. (according to Hong Chongin) or 9:50 a.m. (according to *Chosun Ilbo*). *Chosun Ilbo* reported that the Team left Do-dong, Ulleungdo and arrived at Dokdo after a stopover at Sambongdo (another name for Dokdo). This appears to have been the result of an error in the reading of the contents of the cable message sent from Ulleungdo.

The Team reported that they had collected valuable information concerning the wildlife and geography of Dongdo and Seodo. The team did not have any land surveyors, so the Geology/Ore Group measured everything with the naked eye.³⁹ According to Ok Süngshik's report, the islets were composed mainly of basalt, trachytic rocks, and talus. It was also surmised that Dokdo's volcanic activity had come to an end after an eruption of basalt and then trachytic rock.⁴⁰

The Flora and Fauna Groups carried out a survey of the wildlife on

³⁸ Hong Chongin, 1978, Op Cit, p. 164.

³⁹ Brief Report on the Geological Survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo, the Geology/Ore Group, Ok Süngshik, p. 3. The 16-page report was drawn up on sheets provided by the Geology and Mine Research Institute, the Ministry of Commerce. At that time, Ok Süngshik was the Chief of the Physical Survey Section of the institute.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 10 and 14.

the islets. They caught three young animals that looked similar to the fur seals inhabiting Seodo.⁴¹ At that time, the press reported that the Team had caught fur seals, but according to Sök Chumyöng, the creatures they caught were actually sea lions (or “todo” in Japanese).⁴² Sea lions are social animals, and the Team naturally found a large group of them resting in Dokdo, using Dokdo as their “peaceful sanctuary.” The photos taken by Ch’oe Kyebok (of *Daegu Shibo*) of the three young sea lions caught by the team were printed in the newspapers.⁴³

Residents of Ulleungdo referred to these animals as “gaje” and used the term “gajegul” (gaje caves), indicating that they lived in and around the island.⁴⁴ Yun Pyöngik, a team member from the Severance Medical College, dissected the bodies of the young animals and said that they were southern sea lions (sc. *Zilophus Iabatus* Gray / “ashika” in Japanese / 海驢 in Chinese characters), adding that the Korean name “gaje” can be found in certain literary classics of the Joseon period (Sök Chumyöng). He asked USAMGIK to designate these animals as a natural monument.⁴⁵

At that time, the press reported that the Team had found on Dokdo Indian white cabbages (*Pieris canidia*), which were also found in Korea, China, and Taiwan, but not in Japan.⁴⁶

The Team's survey of Dokdo was completed at around 3:30 p.m. on the same day after about five and a half hours of survey activities. The

⁴¹ Nature of Ulleungdo, Suk Woo-myung, The Seoul Shinmun, dated September 9, 1947; Hong Kup'yo, Upon finishing the survey of the uninhabited islets of Dokdo (a travesty), Geonguk Gongnon, November 1947 issue.

⁴² Steller's sea lion or *Eumetopias jubatus*.

⁴³ Photos of Dokdo, The Daegu Shibo, dated August 31, 1947.

⁴⁴ Gaje found at Dokdo, Yun Pyöngik, The Seoul Shinmun, dated November 15, 1947.

⁴⁵ Gaje found at Dokdo, Op Cit, dated November 18, 1947.

⁴⁶ Headline: “Evidence showing Dokdo belongs to Korea are found.” The Kong'öp Shinmun, dated October 15, 1947. The newspaper said that a majority of the relevant materials were given by Lee Munyön of the Joseon Travel Agency, Busan Office, who paid a visit to Dokdo. It is not known whether Lee was part of the team.

time taken shows that it could not have been but a general, surface survey. They did not have sufficient time to carry out a survey of all the rocks comprising Dokdo. It is noteworthy that the Team set up a signboard in the name of the South Korean Interim Government and the Korea Alpine Association in Dongdo.⁴⁷ In the first post-liberation survey of Dokdo, the Survey Team set up the wooden signboard to indicate that the islets were Korean territory, thus fulfilling the task of reconfirming the country's sovereignty over Dokdo, the primary objective of the survey. No record remains on the exact phrasing on the signboard, but it probably indicated that Dokdo is Korean territory. It is guessed that the signboard was removed by a group of Japanese who illegally landed on the islets in 1952. The Japanese set up a two-meter-high wooden signboard that read "Takehima, Gokomura, Ochi-gun, Shimane Prefecture." In October 1953, the Korea Alpine Association removed this signboard and set up a granite plaque that read "Dokdo 獨島 Liancourt" on the front and "Korea Alpine Association Ulleungdo-Dokdo Scientific Survey Team, Korea Alpine Association, 15th Aug 1952"⁴⁸ on the back.

The Team left Dokdo at 3:30 p.m. and arrived at Do-dong, Ulleungdo at 8:30 p.m. after completing the Survey Team's most important tasks: a basic survey of the islets and a reconfirmation of Korea's sovereignty over them.

In Ulleungdo, the Team carried out a survey of the island, including Seongin Peak. It was the first time a Korean expedition surveyed Seongin Peak.

During the thirteen-day trip, the Team spent a total of nine days on the survey, including one day in Dokdo (August 20) and four days in Ulleungdo (August 21~24).

⁴⁷ An article written by Hong Chongin entitled "Our country's territory in the East Sea; A record of a bloody scene", Chosun Ilbo, 17 June 1948.

⁴⁸ A photo of the granite pole set up at that time was released recently, Lee Jeonghun, Headline: "Takehima is removed from Dokdo in 1953." The Weekly Dong-A, 15 March 2005, No.476.

The survey findings were made public in various ways, including the holding of report sessions and exhibitions, the publication of individual contributions in newspapers and magazines, and the release of relevant materials and reports.

The Korea Alpine Association held a report session on September 2 at the National Science Museum of Korea (국립과학박물관) on socio-economics (Hong Chongin), linguistics (Pang Chonghyŏn), geography (Jeong Honghŏn), archaeology (Kim Wŏnryong), flora (To Pongsŏp), fauna (Sŏk Chumyŏng), agriculture and forestry (Kim Chongsu), geography (Ok Sŏngshik), and medical science (Cho Chungsam).⁴⁹ Naturally, these figures went on to play leading roles in academic and practical activities concerning the establishment and maintenance of Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo.

The Korea Alpine Association held an exhibition of the findings of the scientific survey of Ulleungdo at the gallery on the 4th floor of Donghwa Department Store, Seoul for nine days from November 10, 1947. The items displayed included photos, wildlife specimens, mineral ores, agricultural and forestry samples, post-Stone Age archaeological and folklore materials, and the findings of the Medical Science Group.⁵⁰ The exhibition, which cost 30,000 Won, was covered by the advance from the publisher Jeongeumsa for the publication of the Team's report.⁵¹ Visitors to the exhibition showed particular interest in the photos of Dokdo. It was probably the first time that photos of Dokdo were publicly displayed in Seoul.⁵² Hong Chongin said that one of the purposes of the

⁴⁹ Headline: "The Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team holds a report session." Seoul Shinmun, 9 September 1947; Headline: "The team holds a report session on the 10th." Kong'ŏp Shinmun, 9 September 1947; Report on the activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(3), Hong Chongin, *Hanseong Ilbo*, 25 September 1947.

⁵⁰ Headline: "Exhibition on the results of the survey of Ulleungdo." The Doknip Shinbo and The Seoul Shinmun, 5 November 1947.

⁵¹ Hong Chongin, 1978, Op Cit, p. 166.

⁵² The whereabouts of these photos is unknown.

exhibition was to “inform the people of matters concerning Dokdo, a group of remote, uninhabited islets that have become a subject of territorial dispute.”⁵³ On November 7, high-level Ulleungdo officials, such as Hong Sōngguk (Nam-myōn Chief), Sō Hoam (education superintendent), and Han Ch’angsuk (a reporter with *Daegu Shibo*), paid a visit to the exhibition, donating squid and various handicraft works.⁵⁴ This served as an occasion to let more people know that squid was a specialty product of Ulleungdo. According to Hong Chongin, additional exhibitions were held in Daegu and Busan,⁵⁵ the details of which are unknown.

In the meantime, Ch’oe Kyebok, a *Daegu Shibo* photographer, held an exhibition, displaying fifty photos of Ulleungdo and Dokdo in Daegu on September 15, in cooperation with the Gyeongsangbuk-do Office.⁵⁶ *Daegu Shibo*, dated August 31, 1947, carried three photos, including Ch’oe Kyebok’s panoramic photo of Dokdo and the Team’s sea lion photos.⁵⁷ *Daegu Shibo* also published Ch’oe Kyebok’s Ulleungdo photos for several days.⁵⁸

The following members of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team contributed articles to various newspapers and magazines:

- Kwōn Sanggyu (reporter), “Travelogue of the trip to Ulleungdo, a remote island in the East Sea (1) and (2),” *Daegu Shibo*, dated August 27 and 29, 1947.
- Sōk Chumyōng, “History of Ulleungdo,” *Seoul Shinmun*, dated

⁵³ On holding a report session concerning the survey of Ulleungdo, Hong Chongin, *Seoul Shinmun*, 15 November 1947.

⁵⁴ Headline: “Ulleungdo dignitaries pay a visit to the exhibition.” *Daegu Shibo*, 8 November 1947.

⁵⁵ Report on the activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(3), Hong Chongin, *Hanseong Ilbo*, 25 September 1947.

⁵⁶ Dokdo photos taken by Ch’oe Kyebok, *Daegu Shibo*, 20 August 1947.

⁵⁷ Dokdo photos, *The Daegu Shibo*, 31 August 1947.

⁵⁸ Ulleungdo photos, *The Daegu Shibo*, 3-5 September 1947.

September 2, 1947.

- Kim Wōnryong, “Women of Ulleungdo,” *Seoul Shinmun*, dated September 6, 1947.
- Sōk Chumyōng, “Nature of Ulleungdo,” *Seoul Shinmun*, dated September 9, 1947.
- Hong Chongin, Op Cit. (1)~(3), *Hanseong Ilbo*, dated September 2, 24 and 25, 1947.
- Sōk Chumyōng, “Humanities in Ulleungdo,” *Shincheonji*, February 1948 issue.

Comments on Dokdo were included in some of the aforesaid articles on Ulleungdo. The following articles focused solely on Dokdo:

- “Dokdo is a place like this,” *South Korean Economic Daily*, dated August 27 and 28, 1947
- Hong Kup’yo, “Upon finishing the survey of the uninhabited islets of Dokdo (a travelogue),” *Geonguk Gongnon*, November 1947 issue.
- Shin Sukho, 1948, “Regarding Dokdo’s ownership,” *Sahae*, December 1948 issue.

The source of the 1947 article in the *South Korean Economic Daily* appears to have been a police officer from the Gyeongbuk Provincial Police Agency who had joined the survey team. The article said that Dokdo was inextricably tied to Ulleungdo, that it was called Dokseom (“lonely island”), and that it had been Korean territory since Ulleungdo was first discovered. It referred to the following factors as the reasons for the territorial dispute with Japan over Dokdo: first, it was so far away from Korea proper, while the Japanese inhabiting the Oki Islands Shimane Prefecture found it relatively easy to make voyages to the islets thanks to their advanced marine technology; second, the residents of Ulleungdo could no longer carry out fishing activities near the island since Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910; third, it had been left as an

uninhabited islet and generally served as a refuge for the survivors of shipwrecks. The article added that a single Korean family was living in Dokdo.⁵⁹

Regarding sovereignty over Dokdo, the article claimed that two months after the establishment of the Japanese Resident-General's Office in 1905, around ten Japanese officials were dispatched to Ulleungdo to claim Japan's sovereignty over Dokdo. It also stated that the governor of Ulleungdo reported this to the central government and that this report was kept in Ulleungdo. Furthermore, as evidence that Dokdo is Korean territory, the article referred to the MacArthur Line and the fact that Dokdo is marked as Joseon's territory in *Korean Marine Directory*, written by a Japanese person in 1907. In short, the 1947 *South Korean Economic Daily* article is noteworthy in that it lays out most of the key arguments for Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo to which Korea has referred to ever since.

In December 1945, *Geonguk Gongnon*, a magazine published in Daegu, was launched by Cho Sangwan (pen name: Hyeonam), the founder of Hyeonamsa. It published the travelogue of Hong Kup'yo, who had been a part of the Team. Like Ch'oe Kyebok, Hong is thought to have been a *Daegu Shibo* reporter judging from the fact that he said he had joined the Team while engaged in the research of wide-ranging reference materials on Dokdo. He returned to Pohang on the Daejonho on August 21 after finishing his part of the mission.⁶⁰

Shin Sukho also contributed an article (somewhat akin to an official report of the survey team) to the December 1948 issue of *Sahae*, a history magazine.⁶¹ Thus, he became the first Korean scholar to deal with

⁵⁹ Dokdo is a place like this, *The South Korean Economic Daily*, 28 August 1947.

⁶⁰ Hong Kup'yo, *Op Cit.* p. 21.

⁶¹ Shin Sukho said that the article was to make a report on how the team was organized, along with the results of the survey to the Civil Affairs Minister An Chaehong. (Shin Sukho, 1948, *Op Cit.* p. 99).

the historical basis of Korea's claim to sovereignty over Dokdo in the post-liberation period on the strength of the materials he had collected. In short, his article was a summation of the materials concerning Korea's claim to sovereignty over Dokdo. He concluded his article as follows:

- (1) Dokdo, called Sambongdo during King Seongjong's reign, became the country's territory in the 15th century.
- (2) During King Sukjong's reign, Japan recognized Korea's sovereignty over Jukdo (Ulleungdo). Thus, it would be correct to assume that such a recognition extended to Songdo (Dokdo), which was inseparably connected with Ulleungdo.
- (3) According to the testimony of Hong Chaehyŏn (who moved from Gangneung to Ulleungdo in 1883), it is clear that Dokdo is part of Korea's territory, as people from Ulleungdo went fishing there until 1904—a fact confirmed by the *Korean Sea Directory* published by the Japanese Navy.
- (4) It is clear that Japan illegally incorporated Dokdo into its territory during the Russo-Japanese War based on a report by the Ulleungdo Governor to the central government in March 1905, the *Gazetteer of Japan*, and other Japanese geographical books.
- (5) Dokdo was and is inherently Korean territory. Geographically, it makes the most sense for Dokdo to belong to Korea. Thus, even after Japan's illegal incorporation of Dokdo into its territory in 1904, many Japanese official or semi-official records, such as the *Korean Sea Directory* and the *Korean Marine Directory*, and the Japanese scholar Hibata Fukiko (樋畑雪湖) still recognized Dokdo as Korean territory.
- (6) The MacArthur Line designates Dokdo within Korea's fishing zone.⁶²

⁶² Shin Sukho, 1948, *Op Cit.* pp. 98-99.

Although the Korea Alpine Association originally planned to publish a report of the survey activities,⁶³ it is not known whether the report was actually published in the end. At that time, Hong Chongin said that a science booklet entitled “Ulleungdo” would be published toward the end of the year (1947).⁶⁴ Judging from the remark that the 30,000 won for the exhibition—paid by Jeongeumsa as an advance for the publication of the team’s report—could not be repaid, the report appears not to have been published.⁶⁵

At present, the Dokdo Museum keeps a report on the findings of the geological study of Ulleungdo and Dokdo conducted in 1948 by Ok Sŭngshik, who was dispatched as a member of the survey team by the Interim Government.⁶⁶

I have not been able to find detailed records concerning the activities of the survey team in the documents of the Interim Government. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Interim Government, scholars, the media, and even ordinary people developed great interest in the Dokdo issue as a result of the team’s on-site survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo in 1947 and all the report sessions, exhibitions, press reports and individual reports that followed. It should be noted that the 1947 survey was carried out to counter Japan’s illegal occupation of Dokdo, thereby laying the basis for Koreans’ heightened interest in the issue in the ensuing period.

⁶³ Report on the activities of the Ulleungdo Scientific Survey Team-(3), Hong Chongin, *The Hanseong Ilbo*, 25 September 1947.

⁶⁴ On holding a report session concerning the survey of Ulleungdo, Hong Chongin, *The Seoul Shinmun*, 15 November 1947.

⁶⁵ According to Hong Chongin, the Korea Alpine Association paid visits to Dokdo to conduct seven separate on-site surveys, i.e. in 1947, 1952 and 1953, but lost many of the materials collected in the turmoil of the Korean War, making it impossible to publish a report. (Hong Chongin, 1978, Op Cit, p. 169).

⁶⁶ The report written on 17.5cm × 26cm sheets of paper is part of the donation made by Mr. Lee Chonghak (pen-name: Saun) to the Dokdo Museum. I am indebted to the museum for providing me with a photocopy of the report.

2. U.S. Air Force’s bombing of Dokdo and Koreans’ heightened Dokdo awareness

If the scientific survey of 1947 served to attract Koreans’ attention to the Dokdo issue, the bombing of the islets by the U.S. Air Force in June 1948 served as an occasion to decisively heighten Koreans’ Dokdo awareness. The 1947 survey was led by a private organization with the goal of confirming the country’s sovereignty over Dokdo, while the tragic incident of 1948 served to greatly arouse the entire Korean nation’s awareness of the Dokdo issue.

Press reports from that time contained the findings of the on-site investigation.⁶⁷ Hong Sŏnggŭn set out on a fact-finding trip and collected the relevant testimonies. An American named Mark S. Lovmo also searched and organized relevant materials kept by the U.S. Air Force. The two contributed greatly to uncovering the truth.⁶⁸

Based on existing research and materials, the incident appears to have unfolded as follows:

At around noon on June 8, 1948, twenty B29 bombers of the U.S. Far East Air Forces (FEAF) bombed and strafed (the U.S. Air Force denied the “strafing”) Dokdo on four occasions. The bombers belonged to the 93rd Bombardment Group of the 93rd Bombardment Wing of the Fifteenth Air Force based at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. The 93rd Bombardment Group was composed of the 328th, 329th, and 330th Bombardment Squadrons. Placed under the control of the U.S. Strategic Air Command (SAC) for three months, they were to carry out bombing

⁶⁷ Cho Ch’unjŏng, 1948, Truths about the bombing of Dokdo, *Minsŏng*, August 1948 issue; Han Kyuho, 1948, on-site report of the tragic incident at Dokdo, *Shincheonji*, July 1948 issue.

⁶⁸ Lovmo’s report is being updated on the Internet. The content on the bombing of Dokdo in 1948 is provided in a Korean-language file entitled “In-depth study of the Dokdo bombing on June 8, 1948” (May 2003) (<http://www.geocities.com/mlovmo>).

training from Okinawa on a total of twenty-one occasions in preparation for wartime operations. The bombing targets were set by the FEAF Headquarters. The bombing practice on Dokdo was the third of the twenty-one missions assigned to the 93rd Bombardment Group.

Twenty bombers of the 328th, 329th and 330th Bombardment Squadrons dropped seventy-six multi-purpose bombs with a combined weight of about 1,000 pounds on Dokdo within a radius of 300 feet with the help of a reconnaissance plane.

According to the press reports of the time, the bombing resulted in a serious calamity, sinking twenty-three fishing vessels and inflicting twenty-four casualties (nine killed, five missing, two seriously injured, and eight lightly injured), resulting in damage estimated at 5 million won.⁶⁹ Fishing vessels that arrived there the following day started moving the injured to medical facilities. The Ulleung Police Station dispatched a rescue ship at around 9:00 a.m. on June 9 to the site to transport the dead and the survivors. When the incident was reported by the local press on June 11, the Korean people responded with great anger.

Early on, it was known only that “unidentified airplanes dropped bombs and machine-gunned” the island. On June 15, FEAF said that it had been using a series of small rocks near larger rocks in the East Sea as a bombing range for some time.⁷⁰ According to SCAPIN No.1778, dated September 16, 1947, SCAP designated Dokdo (“Liancourt Rocks, Take-Shima” in the original text) as a bombing range for FEAF, and further provided that the range would only be used after notifying—through

⁶⁹ For more details on the casualties and other losses, refer to: Hong Sönggün, 2003, Analysis of the bombing incident from an International Law perspective, *The History of the Study of Korea’s Sovereignty over Dokdo*, The Association for the Study and Preservation of Dokdo (독도연구보존협회), pp. 387-390.

⁷⁰ Kyunghyang Shinmun and Chosun Ilbo, 16 June 1948.

the Japanese civil authorities—the inhabitants of the Oki Islands and certain ports on Western Honshu.⁷¹ SCAPIN, instructions from SCAP to the Japanese government, was also sent to the U.S. 24th Corps in Korea for its reference. Thus, there is no doubt that USAMGIK was notified of SCAPIN No.1778. There was a high possibility that USAMGIK failed to consider the safety of Korean fishermen near Ulleungdo and Gangwon-do, as it did not have a definite grasp of the sovereignty over the islets in connection with SCAP’s designation of them as a bombing range. It appeared that the U.S. Air Force had been using Dokdo as its bombing range since September 1947.⁷² On June 16, 1948, FEAF said that a number of its B29 bombers from the Okinawa base had dropped practice bombs from a height of 23,000 ft, after judging that the area was suitable for bombing practice based on a reconnaissance plane’s inspection of the area for half an hour, and that the incident had occurred due to its inability to distinguish fishing vessels from rocks.⁷³

On June 17, USAMGIK Commanding General John R. Hodge said that the incident had nothing to do with an USAMGIK airplane and that he was waiting for the findings of the investigation [carried out by relevant authorities].⁷⁴ Both USAMGIK and FEAF announced they were ending the use of Dokdo as a bombing range.⁷⁵ In a 1992 interview with KBS, Donald McDonald, who had been the Second Secretary in charge of Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul at the time of the incident,

⁷¹ “Liancourt Rocks Bombing Range:1947-1952” (<http://www.geocities.com/mlovmo/temp.html>).

⁷² In 1948, witnesses of the Dokdo bombing incident said that similar bombings had been carried out on other occasions in 1947 and 1948. (Hong Sönggün, 2003, *Op Cit*, pp. 377~378). Hong Kup’yo, who paid a visit to Dokdo in August 1947, said that an Ulleungdo resident was killed by machinegun fire from a plane while trying to land on Dokdo in April 1947. (Hong Kup’yo, *Op Cit*, p. 21).

⁷³ Seoul Shinmun, 18 June 1948; Headline: “FEAF officially admits its B29s bombed Dokdo.” Saehan Minbo 2-13, early and mid-July 1948, p. 11.

⁷⁴ Chosun Ilbo, *Dong-A Ilbo* and Seoul Shinmun, 17 June 1948.

claimed that the accident had been caused by a mistake, the result of a training run ordered by an Air Force unit chief, rather than someone in a higher position.⁷⁶

Koreans expected that punitive measures would be taken against the commander in charge and that a fact-finding investigation would be carried out. However, the USAMGIK hurriedly closed the case by simply making pecuniary compensation amounting to less than half the loss/damages incurred by the victims after conducting an on-site investigation in early July. According to press reports of that time, the compensation paid to those belonging to the fishery cooperatives of Jukpyeon and Mukho stood at 2,480,000 won and 3,250,000 won, respectively, against losses of 5,200,000 won and 8,000,000 won, respectively.

On June 8, 1950, right before the outbreak of the Korean War, a memorial epitaph was set up for those killed in the incident at a ceremony attended by Gyeongsangbuk-do Governor Cho Chaech'ŏn.⁷⁷

The incident occurred during the transition period when administrative power was being transferred from the U.S. Occupation Forces to the Korean authorities after the May 10 election to establish the South Korean government. Accordingly, it influenced Korean sentiment in various ways, including Koreans' view of Dokdo.

First of all, they felt that their countrymen's lives and dignity were being relentlessly trampled upon. Press reports carried such headlines as "Barbaric act of using fishermen as bombing practice targets" or "Facts should be disclosed and the commander punished." General Hodge asked them to wait until the findings of the investigation became available. Military Governor William Dean said that an apology would be made after the investigation. However, the case was closed with no official

⁷⁵ The *Dong-A Ilbo* and The *Chosun Ilbo*, dated June 23, 1948.

⁷⁶ A KBS interview with Donald McDonald on November 12, 1992; *Discovery of Modern History*, pp. 272-273.

⁷⁷ The *Chosun Ilbo*, dated June 8, 1950; The *Hanseong Ilbo*, dated June 9, 1950.

apology forthcoming from the U.S. authorities. The Korean press strongly criticized such an attitude, condemning the "one-sided investigation and low level of compensation." They went on to say, "Compensation without an official apology reveals nothing more than contempt for Koreans."⁷⁸ In its editorial, *Chosun Ilbo* pointed out, "Koreans are genuinely committed to uncovering the truth and finding out who should be held accountable. We will not back down because of mere monetary compensation alone."⁷⁹ USAMGIK stressed that it was an accident, rather than the result of ill intentions, and expressed its concern over the tide of anti-American sentiment among Koreans.

Amid the tumultuous political situation in the country, the Dokdo bombing incident fanned the flames of public resentment toward USAMGIK and Japan, taking USAMGIK aback. A USAMGIK report said that all political parties and social organizations condemned the incident as a barbarous act, with some of them suspecting that the incident might have been associated with the United States' intention to rearm Japan.⁸⁰ On May 8, Civil Affairs Minister An Chaehong said that Kimijima, ex-Vice President of the Bank of Joseon [during the colonial period], had paid a visit to Korea in February 1948 in response to USAMGIK's request for advice on a financial matter. On June 4, a Busan correspondent of the Korea News Service (조선통신) reported that Mizuda Naomase, a former high-ranking Japanese official at the Governor-General's Office in Korea, had come to Korea at the invitation of USAMGIK, along with two other Japanese officials named Shiobara Jizaburo and Kimizima Idhiro.⁸¹ General William Dean issued a

⁷⁸ "This is the fate suffered by a weak and small country. – The Dokdo incident and our voice," *Saehan Minbo* 2-13, early and mid July 1948, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Editorial: "On the handling of the Dokdo bombing incident." *Chosun Ilbo*, 9 July 1948.

⁸⁰ USAFIK, South Korean Interim Government Activities, no.33, June 1948, USAMIG, prepared by National Economic Board, p. 152.

⁸¹ USAFIK, South Korean Interim Government Activities, no.33, June 1948, USAMIG, prepared by National Economic Board, p. 180.

statement denying both USAMGIK's invitation of Mizuda and two other Japanese and their visit to Korea.⁸² However, the local press countered his claim, saying that Kimijima and Okumura had indeed been to Korea. The Korea News Service reporter even said that he had the relevant photos.⁸³ As rumors spread that the former high-ranking Japanese officials of the Governor-General's Office in Korea had paid a clandestine visit to Korea, eleven political parties, including the Korea Independence Party and the Democratic Independence Party, launched an anti-Japan struggle committee on June 15 and criticized the United States' attempt to rearm Japan.⁸⁴ An intelligence unit of USAMGIK noted that there was widespread rumor that Japan was trying to regain control over Korea under the U.S. Forces' supervision, that Japanese troops would be used to suppress the rebels in Jeju, and that the pilots of the planes involved in the Dokdo bombing were Japanese.⁸⁵ Referring to the rumor about the Japanese dignitaries' visit to Korea, Han Kukmin said, "In connection with the issue of Dokdo's sovereignty, which was raised last year, the rumor leads me to suspect that some political maneuvers are going on between USAMGIK and Japan."⁸⁶

On June 17, General Hodge issued two statements: one on the Dokdo bombing, and the other on the rumors concerning the Japanese dignitaries' visit to Korea. He said such rumors were Communist propaganda, flatly denying that there was any truth to them.⁸⁷ On the same day, the Public Relations Office of the USAMGIK announced that the rumor about Mizuda's clandestine visit to Korea had been spread by a

⁸² Chosun Ilbo, 10 June 1948; Seoul Shinmun and *Dong-A Ilbo*, 11 June 1948.

⁸³ Chosun Ilbo, 11 June 1948

⁸⁴ Seoul Shinmun and Chosun Ilbo, 16, 18 June 16 and 18, 1948.

⁸⁵ Headquarters, USAFIK, G-2 Weekly Summary, no.144, 18 June 1948.

⁸⁶ Han Kukmin, What caused Dokdo to be bombed?, *Saehan Minbo* 2-13, early and mid July 1948, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁷ Kyunghyang Shinmun, Seoul Shinmun and *Dong-A Ilbo*, 17, 18 June 1948.

reporter of *Minju Chungbo* in Busan, who was also a South Korean Labor Party member, in an attempt to fan anti-American sentiment among the Korean people.⁸⁸ General Hodge's statement helped dispel the rumor about Japanese involvement in the Dokdo bombing incident. However, it was clear that the tragic incident, combined with anti-Japanese sentiment, became a powerful source of unity among the people of the newly independent Korea.⁸⁹

The incident served to formulate a national consensus on Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo and jumpstarted domestic and international efforts to confirm that Dokdo is Korean territory. A multitude of newspapers and magazines carried articles attesting to Dokdo's status as Korean territory. *Saehan Minbo* said that Dokdo, also known as Dolseom ("rocky island"), had been called Sambongdo ("the island with three peaks") since the reign of King Seongjong of the Joseon Dynasty, and that it had been renamed Dokdo by the residents of Ulleungdo after the redevelopment of Ulleungdo started in 1881. It also said that although Dokdo had been called Takeshima (Japanese), Liancourt Rocks (French), and Hornet Rocks (British) since the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, it was clearly a part of Korean territory.⁹⁰ Those injured or killed during the bombing were all Korean fishermen from Gangjin, Mukho, and Ulleungdo who had been fishing there because the islets were assumed to be Korean territory. Upon the occurrence of the incident, USAMGIK dispatched a team of army surgeons, investigators and relief workers to Dokdo, showing that Dokdo was under the jurisdiction of USAMGIK.

⁸⁸ USAFIK, South Korean Interim Government Activities, no.33, June 1948, USAMIG, prepared by National Economic Board, p. 181.

⁸⁹ A member of staff at the United States Embassy in Seoul said that any hint of the revival of Japanese imperialism or intrusion upon Korean rights would rapidly unite various factions in Korea into one, particularly with the help of Communist propaganda. [Military Attaché in the United States Embassy at Seoul, Joint Weeka, no.25 (19 June 1948) p. 9].

⁹⁰ "Dokdo (also called Dolseom, meaning "rocky island") is ours." *Saehan Minbo* 2-13, early and mid July 1948, p. 11.

The New York Times reported, “Coastal residents were involved in the accident while fishing in the area for their livelihood as they have done for many generations.”⁹¹

Koreans nationwide sent messages of consolation and funds to the bereaved families.⁹² All these measures and perceptions were clear and positive proof that Dokdo was Korean territory. Neither the Japanese government nor SCAP was involved in the investigation or the subsequent handling of the incident. In effect, the Dokdo bombing incident served to establish a national consensus that Dokdo is indeed Korean territory and that the Korean people need to pay more attention to Ulleungdo’s sister islets where the tragedy occurred.

In an op-ed piece, Professor Shin Yŏngch’ŏl of Choongang University used expressions such as “Our sea, protected for thousands of years with our ancestors’ blood,” “Dokdo of the East Sea!” and “Our brethren make a living by fishing near it.”⁹³ Concerning the association of the Dokdo bombing incident with the issue of sovereignty over the islets, Hong Chongin, who was a part of the 1974 Dokdo expedition, wrote as follows:

It is nonsense to unduly worry about the country’s claim to sovereignty over Dokdo due to the possibility of a territorial dispute with Japan. The blood spilt by our brethren on the islets in that incident will help to reinforce Dokdo’s status as Korean territory. May the granite plaque (set up jointly by the Korean Alpine Association and the scientific survey team dispatched to Dongdo of Dokdo by the government) stand there forever.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Chosun Ilbo, 19 June 1948.

⁹² Chosun Ilbo, 26 June 1948; *Dong-A Ilbo*, 25 July 1948.

⁹³ An article of condolence on the Dokdo bombing incident, Chosun Ilbo, 22 June 1948.

⁹⁴ An article written by Hong Chongin entitled “Our country’s territory in the East Sea; A record of a bloody scene”, Chosun Ilbo, 17 June 1948.

3. Territorial issues involving Dokdo, Parangdo and Daemado (Tsushima): Plea of Uguk Noinhoe (Patriotic Old Men’s Association of Korea)

In regards to Koreans’ Dokdo awareness, the summer of 1947 saw Korea’s response to Japan’s provocation, on-site survey, confirmation of Korea’s sovereignty over Dokdo, and the establishment, sharing, and spread of a public consensus. Although Korea had been liberated, it was only natural for Koreans to harbor anti-Japanese sentiments: Korea was on a difficult journey toward unification and independence and it was Japan that had been the cause of the national division and military occupation. The news that Japanese fishing vessels had illegally entered Korean fishing zones fanned the flames of Koreans’ anti-Japanese sentiment further still.

In this respect, 1947 was a significant year for Koreans. In addition to their renewed attention toward Dokdo, Koreans’ interest in the territorial issue extended to Parangdo in connection with the illegal entry of Japanese fishing vessels into the Korean fishing zone near the island, which they viewed as a Japanese attempt to invade Korean territory. On October 22, 1947, *Dong-A Ilbo* carried the following article:

We have repeatedly reported on the Japanese pirates’ claim to sovereignty over Dokdo. Dokdo is clearly our territory, and Japan’s insistence reveals the characteristic traits of an aggressor. Koreans are upset once again, this time, by their attempt to extend their evil to a group of small islets in the West Sea. The island in question is located at latitude 32° 30’ N and longitude 125° E in the West Sea, 150 km from Jeju and 290 km from Mokpo (Korea), 450 km from Nagasaki (Japan), and 320 km from Shanghai (China). Its geographical location makes it unnecessary to argue about our country’s sovereignty over it. However, a while ago, the Japanese government positioned it within the MacArthur Line, claiming it as their territory. It happens to be the only area in the South Sea that is

both a habitat for marine wildlife and large fishing grounds.⁹⁵

As with the Dokdo issue, Koreans' attention became focused on Parangdo as a result of Japanese provocation (i.e. Japan's illegal entry into a Korean fishing zone and its attempt to incorporate it into its territory). At present, there is no way of checking the source of the information contained in this newspaper article and the relevant facts, but the map attached to the article shows that it referred to the site of the present-day Ieodo Ocean Research Station.

It is assumed that the aforesaid article represented the first Korean claim to Parangdo. However, the article was very inaccurate about the location of the island. In fact, the "group of small islands" which constituted "both a habitat for marine wildlife and large fishing grounds" did not actually exist. It is also unclear as to where the writer of the article obtained the information to the effect that the Japanese had put it within the MacArthur Line.

Parangdo referred to Socotra Rock (the site of today's Ieodo Ocean Research Station), located south of Marado. It was discovered by a British merchant ship in 1900 and named after it. It came to be called Parangdo (from about 1984) and Ieodo (from about 2001). The British ship reported its location as longitude 125° 07" E. The water depth was measured to be about 5.5 meters by the British survey ship *Waterwitch*, which carried out its mission in 1901, under the orders of the British Royal Navy.

Similar to the Dokdo expedition, a thirty-member Korea Alpine Association survey team led by Hong Chongin embarked on a survey trip to the site on September 18, 1951 (the day on which the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed). The team, comprising geography, history,

⁹⁵ Headline: "Japan claims sovereignty over Parangdo, showing the characteristic traits of an aggressor." *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 October 1947.

linguistics, marine, meteorological and oceanic divisions, left Busan on a ten-day schedule on a Korean naval ship with the mission of proving Korea's sovereignty over the rock.⁹⁶ However, the team failed to spot it. At that time, the country was at war (the Korean War). As indicated by the use of a naval ship in wartime, the survey was organized and supported by the government. It is thought that the team was unable to locate it due to the lack of information on its exact position. The aforesaid newspaper report said that its location was latitude 32° 30' N and longitude 125° E, but it is actually located at latitude 32° 7' 8" N and longitude 125° 10' 8" E. Another attempt made in 1973 also failed due to the lack of accurate information on its location and given that the rock is submerged in water.

This is why the residents of Jeju used to refer to it as the "legendary island of Ieodo."

It was only in 1984 that a joint team from Cheju National University and KBS succeeded in spotting it. The work carried out by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to build the Ieodo Ocean Research Station began in 1995 and was completed in 2003.

To an inquiry from the U.S. State Department in 1951, an official at the Korean Embassy in Washington D.C. merely replied that Parangdo was located in the East Sea, demonstrating the dearth of relevant information.

It is thought that the imminent signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Japan prompted Koreans to take greater interest in Dokdo and Parangdo. They also expressed their interest in the issue of sovereignty over Daemado (or "Tsushima" in Japanese). It is highly possible that Koreans raised the issue of sovereignty over Daemado in response to Japanese movements around Dokdo and Parangdo, which they regarded as acts of invasion. To them,

⁹⁶ Headline: "A Parangdo survey team leaves for the site." *Chosun Ilbo*, 22, September 1951.

Japan appeared to be looking for another opportunity to invade their homeland instead of showing regret over its harsh colonial rule over Korea and offering just compensation.

It is not clear when Korea first laid claim to sovereignty over Daemado after Korea's liberation, but members of the Interim Congress of South Korea submitted a proposal (proposed by Hō Kanryong and consented to by fifty members) for a "recommendation for the return of sovereignty over Daemado to Korea at the San Francisco Peace Conference" to a plenary session of the Congress in January and February 1948.⁹⁷ In 1948, Kim Chongryul wrote an article to the effect that Korea should ask Japan to return Daemado, just as China had done concerning the Ryukyu Islands. He said, "It is necessary to cut off Japan's hands and feet to stop its impudent acts of robbery. They appear gentle on the outside, but they are wicked at heart. The Ryukyu Islands and Daemado are like Japan's hands and feet. China and Korea should join forces to cut off its hands and feet."⁹⁸ He asked for the return of Daemado to Korea, which was Korean territory, as a punitive measure against Japan's wrong doings. What he said reflected the Korean sentiment toward Japan. The demand, thus formulated in early 1948, won support from the general Korean public, and eventually, the Korean government adopted it as its official position.

In the end, the intrusion of Japanese fishermen upon Korean fishing zones near Dokdo and Japan's attempts to incorporate Parangdo into its territory from 1947 onwards led to Korean countermeasures, including the surveys of the islands and calls for the return of Daemado to Korea. The Korean government's emphasis on the country's sovereignty over Dokdo, Parangdo and Daemado, while making preparations for the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951, was a response to Japanese

⁹⁷ Seoul Shinmun, 25 January 1948 and *Dong-A Ilbo*, 17 February 1948.

⁹⁸ Kim Chongryul, 1948, *The Relations between Daemado and Korea: Let's ask for the return of Daemado*, Shincheonji, March 1948 issue, pp. 69-75.

activities in 1947 and thereafter.

How Koreans felt about Dokdo was reflected in the letter of petition sent by Patriotic the Old Men's Association of Korea to General MacArthur in August 1948. Established in January 1946 by senior citizens aged sixty and over,⁹⁹ the association—headed by Lee Pyōnggwan—was a right-wing organization opposed to foreign trusteeship over Korea. In 1946, it asked General MacArthur to compel the Japanese government to return to Korea the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty document signed in 1910.¹⁰⁰ In August 1946, General MacArthur obliged the Japanese government to return Korea's eight Seals of State of Korea that had been taken by force and kept at the Imperial Household Agency of Japan, as well as the document for which the Koreans had asked for.¹⁰¹ Cho Sōnghwan, one of the leaders of the Provisional Government of Korea, served as the head of the Patriotic Old Men's Association.¹⁰² Supposedly encouraged by the substantial result of their activities in 1946, the association sent another letter to General MacArthur asking him to have Japan "return" "Dokseom" (Dokdo), "Ulleungdo," Tsushima and Parangdo to Korea in August 1948.¹⁰³

The petition summarized Koreans' view of Dokdo, Parangdo and Daemado, particularly in the post-1947 period. The letter was significant in that it most accurately highlighted the historical basis of Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo among all the documents that had been drawn up prior to the establishment of the South Korean government in 1948.

⁹⁹ *Dong-A Ilbo*, 9 January 1946; Joongang Shinmun, 12 January 1946.

¹⁰⁰ *Dong-A Ilbo*, 18 February 1946.

¹⁰¹ Chosun Ilbo, 15 August 1946 and *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 August 1945.

¹⁰² Lee Shiyōng, another leader of the Provisional Government of Korea, also served as Vice President of the association. *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 July 1947.

¹⁰³ NARA, RG 84, entry #2828, Japan: Office of United States Political Advisor for Japan (Tokyo), Classified General Correspondence (1945-49, 1950-), box no.34. U.S Political Advisor for Japan, no.612 (16 September 1948). Subject: Korean Petition Concerning Sovereignty over Dokseom, Ulleungdo, Tsushima, and the "Parangdo".

However, the letter did a disservice to the country by insisting on Korea's sovereignty over Parangdo, whose location remained unclear, and over Daemado, to which the international community could not agree. In short, such requests eroded the credibility and reliability of the petition.

Also, by requesting the "return" of Doksŏm (Dokdo), the petition assumes that Dokdo is Japanese territory. That is, despite the fact that the petition includes accurate and detailed historical evidence on Dokdo, the petition as a whole took a passive and defensive position. That is why the Office of the U.S. Political Adviser for Japan, which received this petition, was critical of it.

Nonetheless, the letter contained Koreans' belief that they should defend the islands in question (i.e. Dokdo and Parangdo) against Japan's conspicuous (since 1947) attempt to invade them and restore the status of Daemado as a part of Korean territory in response to Japan's actions. Noteworthy points are as follows:¹⁰⁴

First, concerning Dokdo, Ulleungdo was Korean territory both historically and in actuality. After frequent Japanese invasions of the island, its status as Korean territory was confirmed as a result of bilateral contacts in 1693. Following Japan's re-invasion in 1881, its legal status as Korean territory was reconfirmed at a meeting in Tokyo, with Korean Ambassador Plenipotentiary Sŏ Sangu and his deputy Paul Georg von Möllendorf representing the Korean government.¹⁰⁵

The petition was the first document drawn up by the Korean government on the subject of Dokdo to have mentioned the name Nakai Yosaburo. It stated the relevant facts accurately, except for the erroneous statement

¹⁰⁴ Cho Sŏnghwan, Chairman, Patriotic Old Men's Association to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander, SCAP. Subject: Request for Arrangement of the Lands Between Korea and Japan. (5 August 1948) ("the request letter" hereinafter).

¹⁰⁵ The request letter, p. 2.

concerning Nagai's place of residence (i.e. "Tottori Prefecture" rather than Shimane Prefecture). It was also the first document drawn up by the Korean government in this context to have mentioned such facts as the Japanese officials' hesitant attitude toward Nagai's request to have Dokdo (or Takeshima) incorporated into Japanese territory while knowing that it belonged to Korea, the incorporation of Dokdo as a part of Shimane Prefecture through the issuance of a public notice by the Shimane Prefectural Office (rather than by the central government), and the naming of "Docksum" or "Dokseom" (referring to Dokdo) as "Liancourt Rocks" or "Takeshima" outside Korea. The letter of request reads as follows:

After Ulleungdo's status as Korean territory was reconfirmed, Japan instead drew up a plan to occupy Dokseom, a group of islets nearby, instead. In 1904, Nakai Yosaburo, a fisherman from Tottori Prefecture, submitted a request to the Ministries of Navy, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Agriculture and Commerce of Japan asking for the incorporation of Dokseom into Japanese territory. At first, Japanese officials took a hesitant attitude concerning the request in consideration of the delicate international situation of that time. However, following the country's victory in the war against Russia, they took measures to incorporate the islets, naming them Takeshima through Public Notice No. 40 of the Tottori Prefecture Office. The move was carried out so stealthily that other countries, including Korea, remained entirely in the dark. Even if Korea had known about it, there was little it could have done as the country was more or less under Japan's control. On some world maps, the islets were labeled "Liancourt Rocks" after the French whaling ship that spotted them. They were also named "Palleada Rocks" (in 1854) and "Hornet Rocks" (1855) after the Russian warship and the British warship, respectively, that spotted them.¹⁰⁶

This part of the petition concerning the sovereignty over Dokdo and

Japan's invasion of Dokdo contained accurate and detailed information. It said that Japan should "return Dokdo, which it is illegally occupying," to Korea.

The letter also asked for the transfer of Daemado to Korea based on the following reasons:

1. To ensure the permanent removal of a threat to the survival of the Korean nation.
2. To block the possibility of the robbers (i.e. Japan) invading the Asian Continent.¹⁰⁷

This showed that the request for the transfer of Daemado to Korea was not merely an issue of sovereignty. The letter of request said that geographically, Daemado was closer to Korea than to Japan; that historically, the name Tsushima (Daemado) stemmed from the word "Duseom," meaning "two islands"; that Daemado remained a tributary territory to both Korea and Japan following its conquest by the Joseon Dynasty in the early Joseon period; that Korea's control of it would serve to thwart Japan's desire to advance toward the Asian continent; and that the linkage between Korea and the island would contribute to its economic survival. The letter of request added that the transfer of the island to Korea stood to reason since the Potsdam Declaration stipulated that "Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine," without mentioning Okinawa and Daemado.¹⁰⁸

Finally, concerning Parangdo, the petition said something akin to the thrust of the aforementioned article *Dong-A Ilbo* of October 2, 1947.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

It added that Japan appeared to be occupying one island after another, including Dokseom, Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, and Parangdo. The petition asked SCAP to re-designate the boundary between Korean and Japanese territories.

The petition addressed to General MacArthur was submitted to the Office of the U.S. Political Adviser for Japan. What is interesting is the way in which the document was handled. At that time, William J. Sebald was the U.S. Political Adviser for Japan, a man noted for his friendly attitude toward Japan. In 1947, he insisted that Dokdo should be designated as Japanese territory, raising an objection to the draft of the Peace Treaty with Japan in which Dokdo was designated as Korean territory. The petition was reviewed by R. B. Finn, a staff member at the Office of the U.S. Political Adviser for Japan. He, too, was known for his pro-Japanese attitude, and went on to insist that the U.S. State Department announce Dokdo as Japanese territory in April 1953.¹⁰⁹ While handling the petition, Finn referred to Japan's claim over Ulleungdo and Dokdo based on a pamphlet entitled "Minor Islands Adjacent to Japan Proper" which had been drawn up by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 1947. It contained inaccurate facts and erroneous information. For instance, it asserted, "There is no Korean name for Liancourt Rocks" or that "Liancourt Rocks are not marked on the maps published in Korea."¹¹⁰ This shows that in August 1948, the Office of the U.S. Political Adviser for Japan relied solely on the contents of a pamphlet drawn up by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Upon reviewing the petition, an officer at G-3, the U.S. Far East

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum by R. B. Finn to Leonhart, RG 84, Japan, Tokyo Embassy, Classified General Records 1952-63, Box 23, folder 322.1 "Liancourt Rocks". Both Finn and GHQ political adviser William J. Sebald were friendly to Japan as a result of studying and serving there when the two countries remained friendly to each other.

¹¹⁰ Jung Byungjoon, 2004, William J. Sebald and the Territorial Dispute over Dokdo, Historical Review, No.71.

Command, criticized it harshly, saying, “The name “Docksom” is unidentifiable, the name and location of Parangdo are not known to us, it is written in broken English, the letter contains many historically inaccurate facts, and what it says about Daemado is quite opposite to known historical facts.”¹¹¹ He also pointed out that he was under the instruction of the U.S. State Department not to make any comment concerning Syngman Rhee’s recent demand concerning Daemado until an official commentary had been made by the State Department. He also said that the SCAP need not issue a reply to the letter of request from an unidentifiable association and recommended that a copy of the letter be submitted to SCAP’s Diplomatic Section for reference.

On August 27, R.B. Finn at SCAP’s Diplomatic Section and Lt. Col. Anderson at G-3 talked about the letter of request over the phone, deciding not to take any action other than to submit a copy to the Diplomatic Section for reference.¹¹²

To sum up, when the petition insisting on Korea’s sovereignty over Dokdo was submitted to SCAP in August 1948, the staff members of SCAP’s Diplomatic Section and the Office of the U.S. Political Advisor for Japan were already relying on the contents of the pamphlet drawn up by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although the letter contained accurate information about Dokdo, it effectively recognized Japan’s incorporation of Dokdo into its territory by asking for its “return” to Korea. It also did a disservice to the country by insisting on the country’s sovereignty over Parangdo, whose location remained unclear, and over Daemado, which clearly belonged to Japan. In short, it eroded the credibility and reliability of the petition by including such requests. Those involved at SCAP’s Diplomatic Section and the Office of the U.S.

¹¹¹ GHQ, FEC, G-3 Section, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Subject: Petition of Patriotic Old Men’s Association of Seoul, Korea (25 August 1948).

¹¹² GHQ, FEC, Check Sheet, G-2 to Diplomatic Section, Subject: Petition of the Patriotic Old Men’s Association of Seoul, Korea (27 September 1948).

Political Advisor for Japan would later represent the United States in the process leading up to the signing of San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951. Under such circumstances, it was only natural that similar demands made by the Korean government throughout 1950-1951 went unheeded. Furthermore, the petition was placed in a filing cabinet at the Office of the U.S. Political Advisor for Japan without being delivered to the U.S. State Department, thus preventing any chance that officials at the Department would learn that Dokdo was another name for Liancourt Rocks or Takeshima.

It is not known what led the Patriotic Old Men’s Association to submit such a petition to SCAP, completely bypassing relevant government institutions. Chairman Cho Songhwan of the association passed away in October 1948, just two months after the submission of the letter of request, which was the last petition filed by the association.

III. Summary and conclusion

It can be said that the events of 1947 and 1948 laid the foundation of Koreans’ post-liberation perception of Dokdo. Dokdo became the first target of Japan’s invasion of Korea in the early 20th century. Even after the country’s liberation, Dokdo was intruded upon by the Japanese. Thus, Koreans developed a particular attachment to Dokdo. Japan’s illegal occupation of the islets in 1947 and the U.S. Air Force bombing incident of 1948 opened Koreans’ eyes to the fact that Dokdo remained vulnerable to outside invasion, making them realize the importance of protecting the country’s sovereignty over the islets. In 1947, newspaper reports that Parangdo, located south of Marado, also remained exposed to the possibility of Japanese invasion, put Koreans on alert, and anti-Japanese sentiment heightened considerably. The Korean public, the government, scholars, and the press were united on the need to defend the country’s sovereignty over Dokdo, following the scientific survey of Ulleungdo and Dokdo carried out by the Korea Alpine Association and

the team dispatched by the South Korean Interim Government in 1947 and the countermeasures taken in response to the U.S. Air Force's bombing of Dokdo in 1948.

With Japan's move to claim sovereignty over Parangdo, Koreans started discussing the need to ask for the return of Daemado (or Tsushima in Japanese) to Korea as a retaliatory measure. In 1948, the Patriotic Old Men's Association sent a petition to General MacArthur asking him to implement measures to protect Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo, Parangdo and Daemado, which summarized Koreans' general view of the territorial disputes with Japan at that time. Such a view laid the groundwork for the Korean government's position on territorial issues in connection with the imminent San Francisco Peace Conference between the Allied Powers and Japan.

The Korean government failed to obtain confirmation of Korea's sovereignty over Dokdo in the San Francisco Peace Treaty (signed in 1951) despite its various efforts in 1947 and 1948. The failure occurred for a number of reasons. First, the results of the scientific surveys of Dokdo conducted during the USAMGIK period were not handed over to the newly established Korean government; nor were sufficient efforts made to effectively utilize historical evidence, the findings of the on-site surveys, research materials, and relevant reports in newspapers, magazines and academic journals or submitted to exhibitions in 1947. Similarly, the response of SCAP and Koreans to the 1948 Dokdo bombing incident, the issue of confirming the sovereignty of Dokdo, and the petition of the Patriotic Old Men's Association were not reflected in the preparation process of the San Francisco Peace Conference. Evidentiary and factual materials were not transferred. What did get passed along was just the awareness that Dokdo, Parangdo, and Daemado belonged to Korea.

Second, the Korean government did not take territorial issues into serious consideration for the San Francisco Peace Conference. Amid the turmoil of the Korean War, the country's priority was staving off the

Communists, with preparations for the conference in San Francisco understandably taking a backseat. And even at the San Francisco Conference, obtaining the status of an Allied Power and becoming one of the signatories to the treaty were placed at the top of the agenda. Second on the agenda was getting compensation from Japan and taking punitive measures against war criminals. Such issues as the designation of fishing zones and territorial boundaries were relegated to third priority. Even in the matter of territorial designation, the Korean government committed the folly of placing its priority on the return of Daemado, as if the Dokdo issue was not the most important.

In conclusion, the Korean government did not do what it could have done and left much to be desired in terms of its credibility, rationality and presentation of the evidential materials. With multiple objectives (Daemado, Dokdo, Parangdo), Korea's handling of territorial issues was unfocused. Their stance was interpreted as emotional and a form of political propaganda.

Korea, as a new country, lacked diplomatic power, experience, skills, and human resources at the San Francisco Peace Conference. It was impossible for Korea to vie against Japan, which had had more than fifty years of diplomatic experience as an imperialist power. Furthermore, with the Korean War raging on, survival was the utmost priority for Korea. To boot, pro-Korean U.S. officials and politicians offered no help. Thereafter, Japan instigated disputes over Dokdo, but despite being isolated and without a helping hand, Korea succeeded in defending Dokdo against Japan's meticulous plans and provocation.