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Citation: Japan's Territories Series, Japan Digital Library (March 2018)
http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en/digital_library/japan_s_territories.php

Survey of Yaeyama by Antei Tashiro and Survey of Senkaku Islands by Okinawa Prefecture in 1885*

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ABSTRACT

The Senkaku Islands were incorporated into Japanese territory on January 14, 1895 pursuant to a Cabinet decision by the Hirobumi Ito government. The decision came 10 years after the 1885 survey of the islands by Okinawa Prefecture. The writer's intention of this paper is to examine why Okinawa Prefecture conducted its survey in 1885, as well as to trace the life of Antei Tashiro, who conducted a comprehensive survey of the Yaeyama Islands at exactly the same time.

SUMMARY

The Senkaku Islands were known among sailors as a landmark on East China Sea voyages for many years before their incorporation into Japanese territory. More recently, the 1968 report of a possible seabed oil deposit in 1968 has spurred debate among the key figures in Japan and China on territorial rights to the islands, but ultimately there is no doubt in that they were terra nullius prior to 1895.

Through the Senkaku Islands debate to date, there appears to have been no discussion that focuses on why Okinawa Prefecture conducted a survey of the islands in 1885.

Tashiro Antei, known as a pioneer of modern research on Okinawa's Yaeyama Islands, conducted an exhaustive survey of Yaeyama in the same year as the above survey.

Tashiro was born in Satsuma Domain, and developed a strong interest in the islands in the southern seas during his childhood when his great-uncle was shipwrecked on the Daito Islands, which lie in the Nansei Island arc.

On completing his botany studies, Tashiro entered the Ministry of Agriculture. Following an official trip to the Yaeyama Islands, he wrote a report in which he suggested that the islands need to be developed, but this proposal was rejected by the government at the time. When he returned from his posting to Russia, Tashiro again pressed the development of the islands, facing the threat that the Sino-French War might reach as far as Yaeyama. The prefectural governor of the time, Sutezo Nishimura, approved Tashiro's wish to conduct a survey of the islands. The Senkaku Islands and the Daito Islands were surveyed as uninhabited islands in the vicinity of Okinawa Prefecture. Tashiro's outline of the Daito survey noted that he wished to investigate the fate of his shipwrecked great-uncle, indicative of Tashiro's involvement also with the survey of uninhabited islands (namely, the Senkakus).

Keywords: Senkaku Islands, Tashiro Antei, Sino-French War

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Introduction

In 1879, Ryukyu Domain was abolished and Okinawa Prefecture was established, but the diplomatic status of the Ryukyus (Okinawa) remained ambiguous and even after a governor was appointed by the national government, the new prefectural offices still had insufficient knowledge about the various remote islands offshore. In 1885, the prefecture undertook a survey of uninhabited islands in the vicinity of Okinawa, including the Senkaku Islands. Over 1885-86, Antei Tashiro conducted a comprehensive survey of the Yaeyama Islands, and particularly Iriomote Island, in his capacity as an official at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. At the time, most of the Yaeyama Island group was uninhabited and covered with thick forest, with the prevalence of malaria putting them out of bounds to human settlement. In addition, a number of the surrounding islands were still not recognized as part of the Ryukyu Empire or the subsequent Satsuma Domain, remaining essentially ignored. To the extent of the author's knowledge, there has been no investigation to date of the connection between Antei Tashiro's Yaeyama survey and Okinawa Prefecture's survey of the Senkaku Islands, despite the congruence of their timing.

The Senkaku Islands

The Senkaku Islands are the generic name for a group of uninhabited islands on the edge of the East China Sea continental shelf between Okinawa and mainland China to the northwest of the Sakishima Islands and Ishigaki Island in Okinawa Prefecture. They have been also called *Igunkubashima* by the local people of Yaeyama.¹ The island group comprises Uotsuri Island, Kuba Island, Minamikojima Island, Kitakojima Island and Taisho Island, as well as other smaller islands named Okinokitaiwa, Okinominamiwa, and Tobise. They were long used as a landmark on voyages between the Ryukyus and China (Fukushu or Fuzhou). Incorporated as part of Japanese territory in 1895, they were placed under the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture in the following year, 1896, and developed by Tatsushiro Koga, a sojourner merchant from Fukuoka, but at the end of the Pacific War, the islands became uninhabited and remain so today. Administratively the Senkaku Islands belong to Aza-Tonoshiro in Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture. In the postwar era, the islands have attracted attention since China and Taiwan started to claim their territorial rights over the area.

It is widely known that soon after the possibility of offshore oil deposit was mentioned in a 1968 survey report by the United Nations ECAFE,² China and Taiwan declared territorial rights over the islands, and many experts started arguing on them in the early 1970s.³ Debate particularly

* This article was originally published as 國吉 まこも 「1885年田代安定の八重山調査と沖縄県の尖閣諸島調査」『地域研究』第10号、2012年、11-24頁。

¹ They were also known as Yokonkobashima, Yukunkubashima, Yukonkubajima, and "Koga's uninhabited islands."

² See *Geological Structure and Some Water Characteristics of the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea*, Emery et al (1969): CCOP Technical Bulletin Vol. 2 <http://www.gsj.jp/Pub/CCOP/2-01.pdf>.

³ Statement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China, June 11, 1971; Statement by People's Republic of

developed on the issues in relation to the description of the Senkaku Islands in the Record of Sakuho-shi, which took shape in a way that the views of Kiyoshi Inoue⁴ and others who argued that the Senkaku Islands belong to China were refuted by Toshio Okuhara,⁵ Sakae Midorima,⁶ Kazutaka Kishaba,⁷ Kiyoshi Makino⁸ and others. Later in recent years, Nobuo Harada, a renowned translator of the Record of Sakuho-shi, published a book on the Senkaku Islands that appears in the Record.⁹ I recommend it, written with plain expression, to anyone with an interest in this area. I am not part of this debate, or rather happy to keep myself away, depending on respectable scholars for the debate, and just observe its development through publications. To my impression, it would be commonly understood in the debate that the Senkaku Islands were long regarded as important seamount for voyage between the Ryukyus and Fuzhou, but had no use besides. In other words, they were only islands passing by from Chinese envoy ships¹⁰ to their left or right, without belonging to China or the Ryukyu Kingdom. In the end of the voyage lay the Ryukyus, wherethe king's heir¹¹ awaited the Chinese envoys¹² at the castle of Shuri, the royal capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom.

Speaking of in-between the Ryukyus and Fuzhou, the islands were of course not only seen en route but the Senkaku Islands appear on a series of nautical charts¹³ called *Goshuinsen Kokaizu* that were used by Japanese merchants around 1600, sometimes by temporary names.¹⁴ There are also materials suggesting that the Senkaku Islands were used as a landmark for sailing between Nagasaki and Luzon.¹⁵ The same may apply to the charts used by European ships that began venturing in the Southeast Asian waters from the early 16th century. In my summary it is safe to consider that the Senkaku Islands used to be an important landmark for sailors when crossing the East China Sea.

China, December 30, 1971. See *Kikan Okinawa* (Okinawa Quarterly) No. 63: Senkaku Islands Vol. 2.

⁴ Kiyoshi Inoue (1972), *Senkaku Retto: Chogyo Shoto no Shiteki Kaimei* (The "Senkaku" Islands: A Historical Clarification of the Diaoyu Islands), etc.

⁵ Toshio Okuhara (1971), "Senkaku Retto no Ryoyuken Mondai" (Territorial Issues of the Senkaku Islands), *Kikan Okinawa* No. 56, etc.

⁶ Sakae Midorima (1984), *Senkaku Retto* (Senkaku Islands), etc.

⁷ Kazutaka Kishaba (1973), "Senkaku Shoto no Enkaku to Kizoku Mondai" (The History of and Territorial Disputes over the Senkaku Islands), etc.

⁸ Kiyoshi Makino (1971), "Senkaku Retto Shoshi" (A Short History of the Senkaku Islands), *Kikan Okinawa* No. 56, etc.

⁹ Nobuo Harada (2006), *Senkaku shoto: Sakuho Ryukyu Shiroku wo Yomu* (The Senkaku Islands: Reading Records of Imperial Chinese Missions to the Ryukyu Kingdom).

¹⁰ The ships used by imperial Chinese envoys to travel to the Ryukyus on investiture missions. Because of the long voyage, the envoys selected for these missions had special ships built. In the Ryukyus, these ships were called *ukwanshin* (literally, "crown ships").

¹¹ The king's heir, was so called because he formally became the king when he received investiture by the Court of the Chinese Kingdom..

¹² Envoys sent by the Chinese Emperor.

¹³ Taku Nakamura (1979), *Goshuinsen Kokaizu* (Nautical Charts); Otsuka Hideaki (2000), "Yohishi ni Egakareta Kokaizu" (Nautical Charts Drawn on Parchment), *Nihon no Bijitsu* 438.

¹⁴ Two islands appear in the same location of the Senkaku Islands in various maps introduced in Taku Nakamura's *Goshuinsen Kokaizu*, including the Ikeda map, Itoya map, Tohaku map, Sueyoshi map, Kadoya map, Shokarota map, and the Ro Sosetsu map, of which the Kadoya, Shokarota, and Ro Sosetsu maps attach names such as Torishima, Mitsushima, and Reisu.

¹⁵ Seiichi Iwao (1985), *Shuinsen Boekishi no Kenkyu* (A History of the Vermilion Seal Trade), pp 191-192.

Why did Japan incorporate such useless islands into its territory after the Meiji Restoration? It was rather simple that ways of use emerged on them. Fishermen from Itoman, an area in Okinawa, and temporary residing merchants from the mainland Japan collaborated and began collecting marine products such as luminous shells and albatross feathers¹⁶ in the Senkaku Islands from around 1890.¹⁷

It was around 1890 when the islands came into some level of use, while several years before then in 1885, Okinawa Prefecture conducted a survey there. This was one of a number of surveys¹⁸ on the various uninhabited islands in Okinawa Prefecture, and the aim was to survey first Minamidaitojima and Kitadaitojima and then Kume Akajima, Uotsurijima, Kuba, and the other islands of the Senkakus. Reference was also made to the legendary islands of Ikima, Paipatiroma,¹⁹ and others, with reports to be made later. In this paper, I will focus on the reason that the time when the survey of the Senkaku Islands was conducted was in 1885.

A man named Antei Tashiro

What kind of person was Antei Tashiro, the main character in this paper? According to the *Okinawa Daihyakkajiten* (Encyclopedia of Okinawa), he was born in the town of Kajiya, Kagoshima Prefecture, and generally known as a trailblazer in research on the modern Yaeyama Islands, as well as a scholar of southern flora. He began studying languages in his childhood, developed a strong interest in botany while working in the Department of Museum of the Ministry of Interior, and devoted himself after his return to Kagoshima to research on the tropical fauna of the southern islands. Subsequently, he contributed a great deal of his energy to surveying the Yaeyama Islands of Okinawa Prefecture and petitioned the government to develop there, but was not accepted, and then quit the government service. Later he became a researcher at the Tokyo Imperial University, and produced numerous reports on the folk customs of the Southern Islands and Pacific Islands. Travelling to Taiwan in the end of the Sino-Japan War, he worked for the Governor-General of Taiwan, engaging in research on and cultivation of useful plants. In his last years, Tashiro taught at the Kagoshima College of Agricultural and Forestry on useful southern plants. He died at the age of 70 (1857-1928). His main works include *Yaeyama gunto kyumu iken mokuroku* (The Urgent Suggestion on Administration of the Yaeyama Islands, Okinawa), *Yaeyama gunto bussan hanshoku no mokuto* (Outlook for products and reproduction on the Yaeyama Islands), *Yaeyama gunto shoreidoku ki* (Record of endemic diseases in the Yaeyama Islands), *Yaeyama jumin no gengo oyobi shukyo* (The languages and religions of the Yaeyama People), and *Okinawa ketsujo ko* (Thoughts on Okinawan knotting ways of rope).

¹⁶ All these were for export. The luminous shells were collected in the Meiji era for pearl buttons and the albatross feathers for quilt stuffing, and exported primarily to America and Europe.

¹⁷ Tadao Hanawa (1890), in “Yaeyama Shima ni Kakawaru Shorui: Kuba Shima” (Materials relating to the Yaeyama Islands: Kuba Island), *Okinawa Seinenkai-shi* and “Nanyo no Kaisan Jigyo” (The Marine Products Industry in the Southern Seas), *Okinawa Seinenkai-shi* inaugural edition, noted that many fishermen went to the Senkaku Islands around 1890 to gather luminous shells and other marine products.

¹⁸ Hyogo Ishizawa (1885), *Daitojima Junshizumi no Gi nitsuki Joshin* (Report on the inspection of the Daito Islands) and *Uotsurijima hoka Nito Junshi Torishirabe Gairyaku* (Outline of the inspection and investigation of two islands off Uotsurijima).

¹⁹ In relation to Ikima, see Hyogo Ishizawa above and Kuroiwa Hisashi (1900), *Senkaku Retto Dan* (Account of the Senkaku Islands), and Antei Tashiro, “Paipatiroma Monogatari” in *Tokyo Jinruigaku Zasshi* No. 24:272 and Tadao Hanawa, *Paipatiroma no Koto: Yaeyama Shima in Kakaru Shorui* (About Paipatiroma: Documents related to the Yaeyama Islands), etc. in relation to Paipatiroma.

This is certainly Tashiro's life in a nutshell, but I would like to give this man and his endeavors a little further thought. It is not clearly known whether his name was pronounced Tashiro *Antei* or *Yasusada*. According to *Antei Tashiro-o shoden* (Biographical sketch of Antei Tashiro),²⁰ he was born on August 22, 1857, in Kajiya-cho, Kagoshima Prefecture, the birthplace of many elder statesmen of the Meiji Restoration, including Takamori Saigo, Toshimichi Okubo, Heihachiro Togo, Tsugumichi Saigo, and Iwao Oyama. His childhood name was Naoichiro. Exposed to many idealists from an early age, his character may well have been formed by the somewhat unique ethos epitomized by Takamori Saigo. There is a passage in *Chutai sanjunen jijoshi* (Autobiography of 30 years stationed in Taiwan)²¹ that touches on his childhood that I would like to foreground here:

I knew Oyama from my childhood. Before the Boshin campaign, when he was still called Yasuke Oyama, he was engaged in training the young ones at the Kagoshima military training ground, running around every day in bare feet with a wooden rifle in his hand. Kirino Toshiaki (Nakamura Hanjiro), Kunimoto Shinohara, and Shinpachi Murata were all friends of his at the time, and the children were always gathered around him. I remember that many children were attached to "Yasuke-don" because of his particularly warm heart."

Later, during the Satsuma Rebellion, the friends were split between government forces and the rebel army, where Kirino, Shinohara and Murata died, and Oyama would never return to Kagoshima. However, it is likely that Tashiro grew up in a congenial environment in which these local idealists all devoted themselves to their studies.

Tashiro entered the (Keizo) Shibata Juku under the same prefecture in 1869 at the age of 13 and studied French. In March 1872, when Shibata was appointed as French instructor at the Satsuma Domain's training academy Zoshikan, Tashiro also entered Zoshikan's Second Junior High School, pursuing his studies while serving as an assistant French teacher (aged 16). In 1872 he went to Tokyo, and in 1875 started working at the Department of Museum, the Ministry of Interior, where he began studying botany under Department Director Yoshio Tanaka. According to a note which Tashiro made to his writings, he was supposed to enter Tokyo Kaisei School (currently the University of Tokyo), but household circumstances led him to work as Tanaka's assistant while pursuing his botanical studies. His days at Zoshikan and the Department of Museum would suggest that he was not affluent enough to be a fulltime student.

In 1880, his family circumstances sent Tashiro back to Kagoshima, where he worked in the industrial promotion division of the prefectural government. In 1882, he went to Okinawa for an exam of cinchona tree cultivation. From this time on, he devoted the rest of his life to developing Yaeyama.

Tashiro's passion for Yaeyama

²⁰ Kikuo Nagayama (1930), *Tashiro Antei -o* (Biographical sketch of Antei Tashiro), pp 1-17.

²¹ *Chutai Sanjunen Jijoshi* (Autobiography of 30 years stationed in Taiwan). The first half addresses the background to Tashiro's Yaeyama survey, his push to have Yaeyama developed after the survey, and the disappointment he experienced. The second half discusses his time in the army during the Sino-Japan War and working for the Governor of Taiwan.

When did Tashiro's passion for Yaeyama first bud? According to *Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*, he already had an interest in the islands of the southern seas dating back to his early childhood. He notes:

I became interested in managing the southern islands when I was quite young. In the days of my research, I always tried to find a time for studying the topography of the islands. My interest was originally triggered by what befell my grandfather's older brother, Jihei Tashiro. Jihei was talented with clerical skills. When he was 25, he took a post of the island governor of the Amami Islands in the *han* (domain) of Shimadzu at the order of the lord. He served his full three-year term on the islands and was on his way home when he was caught in a storm, drifted to an uninhabited island, and lost contact to anyone. He appeared to have lived there alone for over 30 years until his death. This news reached my place when I was three or four years old. The Shimazu lord launched a search mission to the uninhabited islands. Toshimichi Okubo (former Minister of Home Affairs) dedicated himself to the search as an aid to the lord (when I was seven or eight). The repeated attempts found no trace of my great-uncle. Soon did the Meiji Restoration begin, Okubo was chosen along with Saigo to enter the Meiji government, relieved from his post in the local domain.

The elder brother of Tashiro's grandfather was caught in a shipwreck on his way home from the island of Amami Oshima after fulfilling his duty, and drifted to an uninhabited island. His family did their best to find him, but to no avail. Did the young Tashiro's imagination travel around the southern desert island where his great-uncle was living in solitude, and which he was yet to see?

From the time of the Keicho invasion in 1609,²² the relations between Kagoshima, Tashiro's hometown and Okinawa lasted for 270 years. It was only a few years ago when symposia were held in various places in Amami and Okinawa to mark the 400th anniversary of the Satsuma invasion.²³ People and goods have closely exchanged between Kagoshima and Okinawa for almost 400 years. This may be peculiar, as Okinawa has broader and deeper relations with Kagoshima than any other part of Japan.

Going back to our story, there might have been more than a few former feudatories (ex-samurai) in Tashiro's hometown who served in the Ryukyus before the Meiji Restoration and tripped to Yaeyama on official duty. Among them was Suemichi Ijichi,²⁴ who gave Tashiro homemade tea as a parting gift on the eve of Tashiro's departure for Yaeyama on survey in 1885.

²² The invasion of the Ryukyus by Satsuma Domain. The Satsuma annexed Amami Oshima from the Ryukyus, and ordered the Ryukyu Kingdom to pay tribute as a vassal state, but because of the convenience of trade with Qing China, Satsuma did not force the Ryukyus to cease paying tribute to the Qing.

²³ Key figures were invited to the Tokunoshima Culture Center on May 2, 2009, the Okinawa Prefectural Museum on May 9, and Oki-no-erabu Culture Hall on May 17, etc. for symposia on the 400th anniversary of the Satsuma invasion.

²⁴ Suemichi Ijichi (also known as Kojuro Ijichi) and his father Ijichi Sueyasu were both historians born under Satsuma Domain at the end of the Edo period. The father and son are famed as the editors of the *Sappan Kyuki Zatsuroku* (a collection of historical documents related to Satsuma province and Satsuma han) and addenda. In 1872, at the order of Satsuma Domain, Ijichi went on a coal survey to Iriomote Island in the Yaeyama Islands together with Tasuke Hayashi. Would he have told Tashiro about the topography of Ishigaki and Iriomote Islands? When Tashiro returned home in 1880, Ijichi had begun editing the *Sappan Kyuki Zatsuroku*. Eijun Kishaba (1977), *Yaeyama Minzokushi* (Yaeyama Folklore), pp. 349-353; Michiyuki Matsuda, *Ryukyu Shobun (jo)* (Annexation of the Ryukyus, Vol. 1); Kagoshima-ken Ishin Shiryo Henshujo (1971), *Kagoshima-Ken Shiryo Kyuki Zatsuroku Tsuiroku* (Kagoshima Prefecture Historical Materials: *Kyuki zatsuroku* addenda), pp 2-9; Kanryo Higaonna (1924), *Shotaikou Jitsuroku* (Annals of Sho Taio), *Higashionna Kanjun zenshu* pp. 323-326.

When Tashiro was leaving Kagoshima, he visited Suemichi Ijichi, who had once stayed in Yaeyama and supported Tashiro's plans for developing the islands. Suemichi was delighted and presented Tashiro homemade tea, asking him to distribute the tea to villagers in Yaeyama with the message that Suemichi Ijichi was still alive." (*Antei Tashiro-shi to Yaeyama*²⁵)

Tashiro, who in his childhood got accustomed to listening to tales of the southern islands where one of his relatives might well have lived, and came home from Tokyo where he studied botany, may have wandered around locals, asking about the topography and flora in those islands. Suemichi's stories about the natures in the Yaeyama Islands with full of possibilities must have inspired the ambition of Tashiro. Fortunately, they encountered in 1882, when Tashiro was about to leave for Yaeyama (although Tashiro only stayed three days on the Yaeyama Islands and only viewed Iriomote Island from the ship. More closely, the itinerary of the trip, according to Ozaki Saburo's *Ryukyuko nisshi* (Ryukyu trip journal),²⁶ began with setting sail from Naha on August 17, 1882 to Kume Island; departing there on the 18th, arriving in Miyako Island on the 19th, staying from the 20th to the 23rd, departing Miyako on the 24th, arriving in Ishigaki Island on the 25th, staying there on the 26th and 27th, and leaving Ishigaki for Miyako on the 28th, leaving Miyako on the 29th, and arriving back in Naha on the 30th).

After his survey trip, Tashiro wrote a report titled *Okinawaken-ka Sakishima kairan ikensho* (Report on a tour of Okinawa Prefecture's Sakishima islands).²⁷ The report begins with description criticizing the frustrated proposal of ceding islands, which would otherwise have been agreed²⁸ between Japan and the Qing Dynasty the previous year, which reads "Sakishima is to Okinawa what wings are to a bird. Okinawa is to Sakishima what a tail fin is to fish. They cannot be separated in the least." It should be noted that, though titled Sakishima, more than half of the report concerns Yaeyama. Although Tashiro portrays himself as just a botany student (as depicted in the above report that "he is not an agricultural scientist, a soil expert, or an economist, but merely a botany student"), he reports the topography and flora of Ishigaki Island, recommending to plant sugar cane and cotton to develop the island; moreover, points out the advantages of cattle-breeding and the need for salt pans, expatiates the topography and flora of Iriomote Island, on which he did not even land, discusses the harms and treatment of the endemic disease of malaria, comments on the utilization of coal in the deposit, and in the end, presents his views on fisheries that Yaeyama's fishermen should develop their capacity by inviting fishermen from Goto and Amakusa in Kyushu²⁹ for training.

²⁵ Youchi Ishigaki (1938), *Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama* (Antei Tashiro and Yaeyama), Yaeyama Shimpo

²⁶ Saburo Ozaki (1882), "Ryukyuko Nisshi" (Ryukyu Trip Journal), *Okinawa-ken Shiryo Kindai 3: Ozaki Saburo Iwamura/Michitoshi Okinawa Kankei Shiryo*, pp 53-62.

²⁷ Tashiro's exploration of Yaeyama began in 1882. He was working at the Kagoshima prefectural offices at the time but when he went to Okinawa at the direction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce to take a cinchona tree cultivation exam, he met with Saburo Ozaki, Deputy Director to the Counselor, who was on a tour of the region, who gave Tashiro permission to go along on the trip to Sakishima. Tashiro toured around Miyako and Yaeyama and wrote a suggestion report on the results.

²⁸ A draft agreement formed between Japan and China through the mediation of former US President Ulysses S. Grant to cede the islands closest to Taiwan, Yaeyama and Miyako, to the Qing government.

²⁹ While it is not clear why Tashiro mentioned these particular fishermen, in 1893, a team of fishermen led by the former samurai Tadashi Noda of Kumamoto Prefecture who had been on a fishing expedition to Yaeyama and the Senkaku Islands came from Amakusa to Kagoshima. See Kakuji Harada and Jiro Morifusa (1894), *Suisanchosajo*

Tashiro's first sight on the fields in Yaeyama coincided with his imaginary pictures he had drawn in mind from time to time.

Fulfilling his long desire for landing in Yaeyama, Tashiro affirmed his ambition, which took shape in the report as development plans and countermeasures to obstacles such as malaria. In contrast, the real condition in Okinawa was far from enticing large-scale development.

In the realm of Okinawa, the Ryukyu Kingdom started paying tribute to the Ming Dynasty in China in the Sanzan Period, more specifically in the reign of King Satto of Chuzan (around 1372), and was laid under the Ming Emperor's tribute in the reign of King Munei.³⁰ While coming under the rule of Japan's Satsuma Domain, the Ryukyu Kingdom remained under the Chinese tribute. This so-called double affiliation regime lasted until the Japanese government of Meiji terminated the Chinese tribute in 1875. In the wake of Japan's dispatch of military troops to Taiwan³¹ in 1874 and the subsequent negotiations between Japan and the Qing (for which Toshimichi Okubo served as Ambassador Plenipotentiary), the Qing conceded that Japan's expedition to Taiwan was a righteous act, which entailed its acknowledgment of the affiliation of the Ryukyus to Japan. In 1879, Michiyuki Matsuda, Government Official in charge of Ryukyu Annexation, abolished the feudal domain of the Ryukyus and established Okinawa Prefecture. The Qing dynasty was not pleased with these moves by the Meiji government, and in 1878, had its Minister to Japan He Ruzhang register a protest, while from the Ryukyu side, the *uekata* Kochi and his colleagues³² went to Qing and appealed to the Qing government to protest against Japan's suspending the Ryukyus' tribute to China.

With both the Ryukyus and the Qing protesting Japan's disposition of the Ryukyus, Qing politician Li Hongzhang asked former US president Ulysses S. Grant, who was then visiting Qing, to mediate between Japan and Qing. When Grant went to Japan in 1879, he suggested a solution to the Ryukyu issue, which, as result of consultations between Japan and Qing, once led to agreement in 1880 that Japan cedes the Sakishima Islands to Qing in exchange for the Qing's most-favored-nation status to Japan. However, on the occasion of signing, Qing balked, and the deal fell through. While

Jigyo Hokoku; Gisuke Sasamori (1894), *Nanto Tanken* (Exploration of the Southern Isles), and Hoseidaigaku Okinawa Bunka Kenkyujo (2007), *Ryukyu Yaeyama Shimane Chosa Furoku* (Ryukyu, Yaeyama, Shimane Survey Appendix). Yoichi Aihara (1954) also writes in his *Beisen Morison Go Torai no Kenkyu* (Research on the Trip by US Ship Morrison) that the crew from Goto, Nagasaki who were on the Morrison wrote in detail about circumstances on the Sakishima Islands (more specifically, Miyako).

³⁰ Nobuo Harada (1998), *Translation and Annotation by Yoju Shorin of Saitakuhon Chuzan Seifu*, pp 68-82.

³¹ In 1871 when a tribute ship was sailing back from Naha, it was shipwrecked by the Mudan community in Taiwan, the ship was looted and most of the crew members were killed. When the surviving crew members returned to the Ryukyus and told the authorities what had happened, the Meiji government dispatched troops to Taiwan for the Seitai Campaign. Before the troops left, at negotiations with the Qing government (Ambassador Soejima Taneomi), it received the commitment that "the land of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan were outside imperial influence," and while preparations continued, the Meiji government decided to abandon the dispatch because of opposition from the United Kingdom and the United States. However, as the person in charge, Tsugumichi Saigo went ahead regardless and dispatched the troops in May, subjugating the indigenous peoples in June. He took home the bones of those from the tribute ship who had been killed.

³² Kochi Uekata or Chojo (Chinese name Xiang Dehong): Leader of a group who fled from the Ryukyus to China. He fled to China in October 1876 together with Rin Seiko and Sai Taiken. Subsequently he based himself in the Ryukyu Hall in Fuzhou, from where he worked for Ryukyu independence, including petitioning the Qing government for assistance. (*Encyclopedia of Okinawa*, pp 70-71, article on Kochi Chojo.

the deal was not done, it was Japan that made the ceding Sakishima proposal. If Japan were to move to develop the Sakishima Islands (Yaeyama), such a move should inevitably result in irritating Qing.

At the time, between Japan and Qing lied concern over an issue more serious than the Ryukyus—namely, the Korean peninsula. There was frustration between the Qing government, which wanted to continue receiving tribute from the peninsula, and Japan, which wanted Korea to become independent and modernize. The situation developed more favorably for Qing with the 1882 Imo Incident³³ and the subsequent 1884 Gapsin Coup.³⁴ The Meiji authorities appeared to need cautiousness on how to deal with the Ryukyus.

According to *Tashiro Antei-o shoden*, when Tashiro returned to Tokyo after his duty in Kagoshima, he appealed the necessity to develop Yaeyama, but failed to draw attention and was eventually cautioned by his family.

When he returned to the capital, he attempted to convince high-ranking officials, stressing the need for development, and endeavored to realize this. However, no one showed interest, doubting worth taking seriously such a small and remote island. As he did not give up and kept appealing, his relatives eventually cautioned him that for such a greenhorn to appeal to high-ranking officials about Yaeyama was simply placing him in a bad position, and he should stop annoying people with a fantastic and nonessential scheme. (*Tashiro Antei-o shoden*)

In the circumstances at the time, it was difficult to realize Tashiro's ambition, and he was unable to find comrades who share thoughts on the need to develop Yaeyama.

Posting to St. Petersburg, Sino-French War

In Tokyo, Tashiro had to give up his ambition to develop Yaeyama, but things changed when he was told in 1884 to trip to Russia as a Japanese official to the World Horticultural Exposition. This is due to the recommendation by the then-Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Tsugumichi Saigo, who recognized Tashiro's linguistic ability and botanical knowledge. The whole itinerary of his trip can be found in *Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*. For here, I draw attention to a more or less outstanding event in the trip, which affected Tashiro's aspiration to Yaeyama. It occurred on Tashiro's journey back to Japan after completing his posting in St. Petersburg.

When I had left Paris and was on my way from the French coast to the Italian border, a

³³ On July 23, 1882, incited by Heungseon Daewongu, father of Korean Emperor Gojong, and others, soldiers staged a large-scale riot (the Imo Incident) in Seoul, killing senior government officials related to Queen Min (wife of the Emperor) who were in charge of the administration, as well as a Japanese military advisor, and members of the Japanese legation. The Japanese legation was also attacked. Saburo Ozaki's *Ryukyuko Nikki* notes that Tashiro and his group were on their way to Yaeyama when they heard news of this incident in Naha.

³⁴ The Gapsin Coup refers to a string of events from the coup d'état staged by the Enlightenment Party (which was pro-Japan) led by Kim Ok-kyun that occurred in Seoul in the midst of the Sino-French War to the suppression of the coup by Chinese troops led by General Yuan Shikai dispatched for that purpose by the Qing government. While initially appearing to have succeeded, the coup was put down by General Yuan and Japanese ambassador Shinichiro Takezoe, who was complicit in the coup, escaped to Incheon, while Kim and his supporters fled to Japan.

country gentleman on the same train spoke to me, “My country plans to occupy your country’s Majiko islands (the Yaeyama and Miyako islands).” “Why?” I replied indignantly. He took out his newspaper and showed me an article. “Look at this,” he said. It was in the time of the Sino-French War, and Admiral Courbet³⁵ had blockaded Taiwan. In the newspaper, it said that France planned to seize the Yaeyama Islands and build a navy hospital there. (*Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*)

It is hard to imagine how much Tashiro was astonished when he heard that French Navy’s Admiral Courbet, who was currently blockading Taiwan in the course of the Sino-French War, had a plan to occupy Yaeyama to build a naval hospital. Back in Japan in 1885, Tashiro resumed his Yaeyama development campaign by writing a formal proposal. This time he succeeded in gaining support from Okinawa Prefectural Governor Sutezo Nishimura. The Governor submitted a memorandum to the Minister of Home Affairs Aritomo Yamagata to appeal the need to research Yaeyama, which brought Tashiro the mission that he had longed for.

So I asked to give me the newspaper. Immediately after getting back in Japan, I submitted a proposal on the urgency of solidifying maritime defense around the islands. Then-Junior Assistant Minister of Industry Hiromoto Watanabe, familiar to my thoughts beforehand, was deeply impressed by the proposal, and accepted at once, leading to the appointment of Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs Sutezo Nishimura as prefectural governor of Okinawa. Nishimura submitted the proposal of an aged ambitious man to Minister of Home Affairs Aritomo Yamagata. I was sent to the Yaeyama Islands for a year and half, affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce and to Okinawa. In the period of my stay there, Minister Yamagata paid an inspection visit to Okinawan islands. When staying in the Yaeyama area in the visit, the Minister called me to his ship, where I reported on the actual state based on my field work with my diary entries” (*Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*).

Growing tension around East Asia

The Sino-French War, mentioned in the autobiography of Tashiro, was initially skirmishes between France, intending to act as protectorate, and An-Nam (current Vietnam) resisting this. As the event proceeded, Qing China started to intervene as long-time suzerain, which eventually turned the confrontation to all-out war in pursuit of the dominion over An-Nam. In July 1884, the Qing government declared war against France. France dispatched its armada, led by Admiral Courbet, to blockade Taiwan and inspect all the passing vessels, and in 1885, occupied the Pescadore Islands.

In reference to *Tonkin ni kan suru Sei-Futsu senso* (The Sino-French War over Tonkin)³⁶, a compilation of Japan’s official documents in the period, Foreign Minister Kaoru Inoue, leading the policy-making in diplomacy, appeared to stress more on keeping Japan from being involved in the

³⁵ Amédée Courbet (1827-1885): An admiral in the French navy in the 19th century. He served as governor of New Caledonia in 1880-82, and was given command of the Tonkin Coast naval division in 1883. His division shelled the Vietnamese court at Hué, which was in the midst of a succession crisis, making Vietnam a French protectorate, and then fought in the Sino-French War of 1884. That year, he defeated the Qing government’s Fuzhou fleet in the Battle of Fuzhou, invaded and blockaded Taiwan, and occupied the Pescadore Islands. He passed away on June 11, 1885, two days after the conclusion of the Sino-French Treaty of Tientsin which officially ended the war.

³⁶ Stored at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Reference code: B07090534500. Can be viewed on the National Archives of Japan site and at the Japan Center for Asian History Record.

war by appeasing Li Hongzhang. In fact, France encouraged Japan to join the war from time to time by taking a variety of diplomatic measures, such as inviting Japan to take Taiwan while suggesting that France would take Haimen Island, which made Li increasingly suspicious of Japan.

The issue here is whether France had a plan to occupy the Yaeyama Islands as Tashiro wrote. The above document indicates no clue to this question. With more frequent diplomatic communication among Japan, France and Qing China than I imagined, it seems unlikely that France attempted to take any move to deteriorate Japan's attitude to France, given that France was alluring Japan to join the war. For a referential sake, the description in the above document pertaining to the moves by the Courbet armada surrounding Taiwan reads as follows:

Fired on Keelung in August 1884. Occupied Keelung on October 4, 1884. Proclaimed on blockading waters surrounding Taiwan on October 23, 1884, with two ships deployed in Suao Harbor, six (Courbet flagship) in Keelung Harbor, three (Sébastien Lespès flagship) in Tamsui Harbor, two in the capital of Taiwan, two in Dagou (current Kaohsiung) and two in South Cape to patrol the coastline. The Dagou fleet took charge of the southernmost point and the Keelung fleet took on support to land operations and communications.

January 7, 1885: Proclaimed on the extension of the blockade line around Taiwan, and the strict enforcement of the blockade.

January 18, 1885: Qing army sent troops to Taiwan via the Pescadores.

January 18, 1885: Received report that seven Chinese ships were sunk by the French army on the 7th.

From January 24, 1885 until February, five Qing warships travelled through the waters off the south of Taiwan.

February 5, 1885: Admiral Courbet proclaimed on the contraband inspections in the blockaded waters.

February 6, 1885: Admiral Courbet, leading nine battle ships, anchored off the Matsu Islands. On February 3, encountered and fought with the Qing fleet.

March 29, 1885: Occupied the Pescadores with four battle ships.

April 15, 1885: Truce.

As it was assumed in late 1884 when Tashiro found the newspaper article on the plan of constructing a navy hospital in Yaeyama, it was before the blockade of Taiwan. I cannot determine whether such a plan was preliminary drafted in the French navy, or just a misinformation.

In the meantime, Japan's Foreign Minister Kaoru Inoue and his colleagues involved in diplomatic policy-making considered avoiding war firstly. Whereas there were some ministers and other diplomats who were concerned about the cession of Taiwan to France and argued that Japan ought to occupy Taiwan (Yoshitada Hanabusa, Ambassador to Russia), Inoue was looking for opportunities to mediate between the Qing and France, and after the blockade of Taiwan, he had the Meiji Emperor declare neutrality,³⁷ to keep Japan away from the influence of the war.

Movement in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Okinawa Prefectural Governor and Secretary

³⁷ *Shin-Futsu Kosen ni saishi Teikoku Seifu no Kofu seru Kyokugai Churitsu Chokushi oyobi Kisoku*, Reference Code B10070177600. Viewable on the National Archives of Japan site and at the Japan Center for Asian History Record.

to the Minister of Home Affairs Sutezo Nishimura and the survey of the uninhabited islands

Before coming back to Tashiro's restart of the Yaeyama campaign, let's bring our attention to Okinawa Prefectural Governor Sutezo Nishimura³⁸ who accepted Tashiro's proposal. Nishimura was from a samurai [knight] family in Hikone Domain (Shiga Prefecture), and at the time he was serving as both the Okinawa Prefectural Governor and Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs. What stands out among his achievements as prefectural governor is his initiative to mediate in favor of the temporary return of King Sho Tai and his son Sho Ten to Okinawa.³⁹

I would like to quote somewhat lengthy descriptions from which we can sense Nishimura's personal character and the lively atmosphere at the time of the King's return to Okinawa. Nishimura's *Omatsuri Zoshi* (Festival scroll) notes:

As Lord Sho Tai and his son had long been asking to return home [to the Ryukyus], I was supposed to go to the Ryukyus with Sho Tai's legitimate child Sho Ten at the time of my replacement of the gubernatorial office. ... In February 1884, we travelled there by ship, returning [to Tokyo] in May. When Sho Ten returned the Ryukyus, the people became calm. Although Sho Ten got back to Tokyo without trouble, the people of the Ryukyus continued to ask for the return of the former lord Sho Tai so much that I finally got letters of guarantee from local *aji* and *uekata* (traditional noble classes in the Ryukyus), when I left there for Tokyo."

When the feudal domain system was abolished and replaced with the prefectural system by the Meiji Government in 1879, Sho Tai and Sho Ten were ordered to live in Tokyo. For the old noble class families who were left behind in Okinawa without their lord, the return of their former lord, if temporary, must have been one of their strong wishes.

Most people in the Ryukyus stubbornly conceived as if Sho Tai were held captive in Tokyo, and did not at all recognize the special treatment that he received at the imperial court. I thought it would be good to take the plunge and allow him to go home, properly explain the true intention of the court, and persuade them to understand the court's will. Meanwhile, the concern was that the stubborn Ryukyu locals would take the return as an opportunity to rise up. Thus, arrangements with several articles were made specifically for the time of the lord's stay in the Ryukyus to have the police protect his Palace, the case that any move of unrest should be detected, and immediately transfer him to a steamboat moored to the Naha port, the case that unrest should arise. The state at the time in the Ryukyus was reported in detail by letter to the Emperor. Sho Tai then went back to Okinawa in August along with me."

The above excerpt suggests that the former lord was not in the circumstances that enabled him to

³⁸ A former samurai from Shiga Prefecture. Fourth Okinawa Prefectural Governor. Served for many years as Secretary to the Minister of the Interior, and also served as the Director of the Civil Engineering Division during his time as prefectural governor. He subsequently focused solely on his civil engineering duties, working to improve rivers and roads. Nishimura then became Governor of Osaka, where he directed his energies into developing Osaka Port. In 1891, he was appointed Under-Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce. His achievements outside the governorship dealt with in this paper include compiling Saion's forest conservation measures and publishing these as *Rinsei Hassho* (Eight Writings on Forest Administration), and building a public road between Naha and Shuri.

³⁹ Sutezo Nishimura (1908), *Omatsuri Soshi* (Festival Scroll).

return home without trouble. There were still *uekatas* in favor of Qing; and the attribution of the Ryukyus was yet to be confirmed. In such situation, did Sho Tai return.

... This person [Lord Sho Tai] was at the same age as me. He spoke Japanese well and was wise and agile by nature. He obeyed without delay when summoned to Tokyo in the occasion of the replacement of the feudal domains with the new prefectures, which showed a sign of his brightness to read times. He was a very considerate and interesting man, but had already passed away.”

As the last lord of the Ryukyus in the midst of the upheaval of the Meiji Restoration and the Disposition of the Ryukyus, Sho Tai is known as a man of tragedy, yet it is fascinating that his disposition was wise and agile, and ‘considerate and interesting,’ said Nishimura. A number of poems that Sho Tai composed on his journey home are recorded in Nakamura’s account, which I skip in this essay, as I am not literate enough to appreciate them rightly.

When we arrived in the Ryukyus, a huge crowd welcomed with joy. While we were in the Ryukyus, I took care to hold banquets almost every day without end. When I returned to Tokyo with Sho Ten last spring, I had the cobblestone walkway from Naha to Shuri, around one *ri* (approx. four kilometers) long, paved for carriage, and had a products gallery built at the scenic spot of Monomi Castle by Naha Harbor. I recommended Sho Tai to visit the area, and arranged for him to travel by rickshaw from Naha from Monomi Castle. I organized a banquet at the products gallery along with traditional Okinawan ensemble dance performances and fireworks, and prepared blocks of ice so that Ryukyu children who had no idea of the taste of ice could try it with surprise. One *koku* (180 litre) large keg of local *awamori* liquor were put at each of 36 spots three *ri* (approx. 12 kilometers) around Naha Harbor, marked with big bonfire, so that the local Ryukyuans who came to Naha for the celebration could help themselves to *awamori*. The massive earth-shaking banquet went on all through the night. While explaining the intentions of the court, the former lord socialized himself with the prefectural governor, by inviting the governor to a banquet at Nakagusuku Castle, the palace where the monarchial family had lived for generations. We were entertained with painting and calligraphy performances.

The above lively depicts locals gathering joyously to welcome their former lord. It also hints Nishimura’s intent to entertain them with such a large festival that they would have no time of pessimistic thoughts during the former lord’s return. How many people gathered along the newly paved road to take a glimpse of Sho Tai passing in the rickshaw? What were the titles of the ensemble dance performances? Those one-*koku* kegs, placed at 36 spots, amount to 3,600 one-*sho* (1.8 liter) bottles. The children must have been astonished at the blocks of ice. At night, under the sky lit by fireworks, people must have been drinking, singing and dancing to joyously celebrate the return of the former lord.

Time passed as parties like these went on and on, and it came close to go back to Tokyo in February next year. I came up with a plan of a farewell feast by government and private combined. There was a moat called Ryutan by the Shuri Castle, around a tenth the size of the moat by the Nishinomaru residence of the Edo Castle. In the moat, Carp, crucian carp, striped mullet, catfish, and eel among others were raised to treat guests such as visiting

envoys from China. Because Chinese envoys had no longer been coming to the Ryukyus since the enthronement of Sho Tai, the fish population in the moat burgeoned. I had the moat emptied so that people could catch the fish by hand. The fish were actually plenty and huge, so it was very easy to catch them. When a net was set deeper in the water, around fifty big fish of two *shaku* (approx. 70 cm) were caught in the net, but it became too heavy to be lifted. An eel about three *shaku* (approx. 90 cm) like a big serpent was writhing in the moat, keeping itself from being caught. A policeman drew his sword at last, struck it in half, and threw it away. It was a real hullabaloo.

I then held a grand feast at a junior high school, inviting all the local nobles and chieftains including *aji* and *uekata*, to drink in the presence of the former lord. The invitees got home with gifts of a variety of fish, which were loudly announced as vestige of the Ryukyu times, and what was to be appreciated together with all of them because envoys of the Dynasty would no more come. Late February, the former lord returned to Tokyo.”

It was a little sarcastic plan which Nishimura came up with for the last feast as the day of the return to Tokyo came closer, in a way to dedicate the fish originally raised for the Chinese envoys to the local nobles such as *aji* and *uekata*. It was really ironic but smart.

Back from a long detour to the story of Tashiro, who returned to Tokyo from his trip to Russia, it was Nishimura whom Tashiro found as a comrade for his Yaeyama campaign that he resolved to resume.

According to the above-mentioned *Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama*, besides Tashiro, a Kagoshima merchant Tasuke Hayashi,⁴⁰ who had discovered a coal mine in Iriomote, was also promoting the development of Yaeyama in the same period. With Tashiro and Hayashi both pushing in the same direction, supported by those around them, Tashiro (as noted above) achieved the task of surveying Yaeyama.

France-China relations finally improved, but, next, as the relations between Britain and Russia became tense over the Port Hamilton incident⁴¹ Japan had to intensify its security

⁴⁰ According to Tasuke Hayashi, *Yaeyama-shima Yakusho Jutozoku Kagoshima-ken Heimin* and Eijun Kishaba (1977), “Yaeyama Kogyokai no Onjin Ohama Kana to Iriomote-Shima Sekitan no Enkaku,” *Yaeyama Minzokushi* (Yaeyama Folklore) pp 349-353, Hayashi was born in downtown Kagoshima in 1848. As of 1869, he ran a cargo ship operation between Naha and Yaeyama, and in 1871, he apparently took various coal samples to Kuyama Ohama’s older brother Kana and asked him to conduct a coal survey on Yaeyama. Kana exerted himself to conduct that survey and ended up finding coal on Iriomote Island. When he reported this to Hayashi, Hayashi followed Kana’s directions and confirmed that there were coal reserves on Iriomote. He reported in turn to the Satsuma lord in his hometown, and in 1872, Satsuma ordered Suemichi Ijichi (also known as Kojuro Ijichi) to undertake a survey. As noted in this paper, Hayashi then went with Tashiro to conduct a further survey, but it is not clear whether Hayashi himself later engaged in the actual coal extraction. The person who originally discovered the coal, Kana Ohama, meanwhile, was banished to Haterumajima Island because at the time it was forbidden under state law to report the location of coal to someone from another country.

⁴¹ At the end of the 19th century, the United Kingdom became concerned about Russia’s expanding influence in the Far East and sought to contain it by building a naval base on one of the islands between the Korean Peninsula and Jeju Island, creating tension among the United Kingdom, Russia, Korea, Qing China and Japan. While the British Navy occupied the island in May 1885, the base built on this remote island was far from being able to serve the function of forestalling Russia. In February 1887, the British withdrew, but continued to occasionally visit the island.

operation on the surrounding waters. Tasuke Hayashi, who had discovered the Iriomote coal mine, also went to Tokyo to advocate the urgency of developing the Yaeyama Islands, while senior colleagues and high-ranking officials too were swayed by Tashiro's passion and sincerity and got interested more in his thought, which encouraged him further. His dream was finally fulfilled when he was instructed to undertake a survey of Yaeyama. Tashiro's joy must have been beyond imagination. His duty in Okinawa was primarily for the prefecture, while affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. His grade was set sixth-grade attaché. With the prefectural governor, Sutezo Nishimura, back in Tokyo at the time, the circumstances were perfect. (*Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama*)

In May 1885, Tashiro left Tokyo. The excerpt from *Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama* continues as follows:

In May 1885, Tashiro at last departed from Tokyo. ...In June, he started working in Okinawa as planned at the industrial promotion division of the prefectural government. The director of his division was also a sixth-grade attaché. Governor Nishimura was a modern thinker, and also larger-than-life. He later promoted to vice-minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. In relation to the Yaeyama issue, he trusted Tashiro and let Tashiro do as he saw fit. At the prefectural government, Tashiro stayed there for a while to look into the survey concept, plans and costs among others. The governor instructed him to conduct survey not just for development and settlement, but also for preparation to carry out the reformation of old practices in the near future. (*Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama*)

In Okinawa, Tashiro was first posted to the industrial promotion division, the director of which was Hyogo Ishizawa,⁴² who took directorship on the survey of the uninhabited islands that was undertaken together with Tashiro's survey of the Yaeyama Islands. In the records, Tashiro stayed at the prefectural office for a while. I suppose that he also consulted on the uninhabited island survey, petitioned Nishimura about the need for the survey and the arrangements, and also consulted with Director Ishizawa.

According to the *Minamidaito-son-shi* (Minamidaito Village Paper),⁴³ Prefectural Governor Sutezo Nishimura (actually Senior Secretary Nagayoshi Mori on the Governor's behalf) sent a requesting letter to The Minister of Home Affairs Aritomo Yamagata in 1885 to ask for instruction of the Ministry on a survey of the Daito Islands to be conducted in the near future, with a draft of survey guidelines comprising of seven items. Below is the third item of the drafted guideline, which proves that Tashiro was involved in the survey.

3 While these islands are recognized as uninhabited, Tashiro Gennojo, an officer of the Kagoshima Domain stationed in the Ryukyus several decades ago, is said to have been cast away there. Thus the islands should be examined for traces of human life, and if any person is found alive, he should be taken back or given appropriate treatment up to his will; if any human remains are found, they should be buried, marked with a grave-post.

⁴² A former samurai from Niigata Prefecture, Ishizawa was a fifth-rank official and assistant director of industrial promotion, known in addition to the Senkaku Islands survey as the author of *Ryukyu Shikki ko* (Thoughts on Ryukyu lacquer).

⁴³ Minamidaito-son-shi Henshu Inkai (1990), *Minamidaito-son-shi* (Minamidaito Village Paper), pp 67-75.

A similar description is found in the report by Aritomo Yamagata on his visit to Yaeyama in 1886, entitled *Nanko Nikki* (Diary of a southern voyage),⁴⁴ as follows:

Since last year, seventh-grade Antei Tashiro of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce was additionally posted to Okinawa Prefecture in order to undertake a survey of the Sakishima Islands. He made maps of the various villages. He was from Kagoshima, knowledgeable in herbalism, and once was sent to the Russian exposition. His great uncle named Gennojo was posted to the Ryukyus, but was shipwrecked on his way there in the Seven Islands Sea and flown to the Daito Islands. Twenty years later, when others from Kagoshima washed up on the islands, they stumbled across a creature in the shape of a man but covered entirely with hair. It said that his name was Gennojo and he had had no cooked food since being shipwrecked, which was why he looked as he was. He begged to be taken home with them. The sailors were too scared to disagree. Gennojo also said that he had previously found a shiny stone in the mountains and wished to take it home. When he went into the mountains to get the stone, the sailors hurriedly fled. Having learnt of this, Tashiro's family immediately sailed a boat to the Daito Islands to search thoroughly, but no one was found. These events had given Tashiro an abiding interest in the southern islands. He threw himself into his survey, daring to enter into areas where no one had gone before. While engaging himself in making maps, he braved malaria and poisonous snakes. He plans to complete his mission by May this year. (Underlined by the author.)

His grandfather's older brother who lived his life on a deserted island in the southern ocean had never left Tashiro's mind. His report on the survey, however, includes no reference to Gennojo Tashiro, which suggests that Gennojo might have already died. In my thought, Tashiro may possibly have been involved in other survey on uninhabited islands conducted in the same period in addition to the one on Yaeyama.

It may probably be at Tashiro's wish that the uninhabited island survey began with the Daito Islands. When that survey was completed in September 1885, Ishizawa and his team went straight on to the Senkaku Islands at the end of October without a break.

Below is a quote from a passage written by Ishizawa at the end of the report.

Including the Sothern and North Daito Islands, which I just surveyed on, there are five islands in the seas surrounding Okinawa that were known from ancient times for their existence, yet to be voyaged and thus put under consideration these days for the possibility of future settlement. The survey this time has brought the long-pending plan accomplished.

This suggests that the purpose of the survey was settlement and development, just as the Yaeyama survey advocated by Tashiro.

To summarize the story line I am depicting in this paper, in the background behind which Okinawa Prefecture undertook a survey of the Senkaku Islands in 1885, lie the activities from 1882 to 1885

⁴⁴ Aritomo Yamagata (1886), "Nanko Nikki" (Diary of a Southern Voyage), *Okinawa-Ken Shiryo Kindai 3: Ozaki Saburo/Iwamura Michitoshi Okinawa Kankei Shiryo*, pp 457-481.

by a Satsuma warrior Antei Tashiro, who devoted his life to starting business in Yaeyama, which had impact on his surroundings, in addition to the spur of an external tension of the Sino-French War. These brought then-prefectural governor Sutezo Nishimura and the Ministry of Home Affairs to decide to conduct an uninhabited island survey. Truly was Tashiro's main interest apparently in the Iriomote Island in the Yaeyamas and were the uninhabited islands secondary as the object of the survey, a thrust was necessary to bring the survey into practice. It was Tashiro's move that generated such power.

Nishimura assigned Kagoshima merchant Tasuke Hayashi as Tashiro's assistant on the survey for his detailed knowledge of Yaeyama (and particularly coal), along with Tetsuichi Yamada⁴⁵ as the officer in charge of measurements.

Preparations were finished now and Tetsuichi Yamada from the prefectural government was assigned as the officer in charge of measurements and accounting, while Tasuke Hayashi as a prefectural official to serve as an advisor to Tashiro. Accompanied by the two, Tashiro set out bravely on their mission of a survey of the Yaeyama islands. (*Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama*)

Tashiro Antei's survey of the Yaeyama Islands and subsequent setback

Though the argument I intend to develop in this paper has already been noted above, I would like to touch upon the outcome of the survey.

Tashiro was now assigned solely to the survey, which continued from July 1885 until May 1886. The fulfillment of the survey appears to have owed variously to the assistance of Tsunenori Nishi,⁴⁶ the head of the Yaeyama County Office. When accompanying the prefectural governor on his trip to Yaeyama in 1884, Nishi was given a mission of surveying Iriomote Island. In 1885 he was assigned as the head of the island county office and assumed that post until 1890. Like Tashiro, he was a man of practice and observation, and became quite close to the islanders during his posting. He also suffered from malaria, endemic in Yaeyama. Unfortunately, no materials have been found that describes in detail on Nishi's cooperation in the survey, though he was undoubtedly a great help.

The following is an overview of the survey team. The entire survey team comprised eight members, with Antei Tashiro, Tasuke Hayashi, and Tetsuichi Yamada, joined by Takamine Ando (a former samurai class from Yaeyama), Kizaemon Setoguchi, Kisuke Kawazu, Takichi Horiguchi, and Anshin Kyuna (a *kuramotoeshi*: painter employed by the local government for record purposes, like a photographer of today). Takamine was a locally-employed man with a big physique. He went with Tashiro to explore and measure the island's dense forests as well as served as a boatman when sailing to remote islands. Kyuna is considered to have served as the mission's artist, drawing

⁴⁵ A former samurai from Saga Prefecture and also assigned at the same time as a ninth-ranked official to the Naha office of the Commerce Division.

⁴⁶ A former samurai from Nagasaki Prefecture and a sixth-ranked official serving as head of the Yaeyama County Office within the Security Division. In addition to his prefectural duties, he also collected historical materials and scientific materials about Okinawa, engaging closely with academics who visited Okinawa and providing them with those materials. When he was the head of the Yaeyama County Office in 1890, there were still fishermen going out to the Senkaku Islands, he petitioned the prefectural governor to have the islands placed under Yaeyama jurisdiction.

pictures of villages, etc. The scope of the survey varied, from natural resources to topography, measurements, folk customs, and old customs and systems, etc. Completely unlike the ordinary patrols by officials, the members had ventured into untrodden wilderness and dense forests many times. Consequently they, except Yamada and Kawazu, came down with malaria. Here is a quote from Tashiro's *Yaeyama gunto shoreidoku ki* (Record of endemic diseases on the Yaeyama Islands).⁴⁷

Carrying our own cooking equipment, we slept and ate alongside the locals. We spent a fall and a spring camping in this way, ...exploring through trackless forests, ...crossing muddy streams, ...and sleeping in caves and seashores. ...When too tired to walk, we rested under trees and when thirsty, scooped water from streams and springs. ...We lived like monkeys in the wild, unable to take a real rest even for a single day.

Given these circumstances, there would have been no way of avoiding malaria. In October 1885, four months from the beginning of the survey, Tashiro fell ill of the disease, but managed to save his life thanks to the quinine⁴⁸ prescribed by the doctor⁴⁹ dispatched from the Yaeyama County Office and restarted his survey, completing his lifelong wish of the survey of Yaeyama at the end of April 1886. Except Yonaguni Island, which he could not land due to ship schedule, he ranged over all the Yaeyama Islands of the time. According to Tashiro:

This was an accomplishment for which I struggled at the stake of my whole life to win my own Battle of Sekigahara in pursuit of developing business. I finally finished the survey, overcoming all the hardship with very detailed mindfulness. (*Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*)

Completing his survey, Tashiro wrote 38 volumes of his report and went to Tokyo. He submitted his report to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and lobbied hard for the development of the Yaeyama Islands. In addition to the report, he made a document on the summary point on the development entitled *Yaeyama gunto kyumu iken sho* (The Urgent Suggestion on the Yaeyama Islands), and sent it to all the Cabinet members to appeal the need for developing Yaeyama and told them that he presented a proposal for Cabinet decision. He was so passionate as if he "had thrown his life away for the passage of his proposal" *Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*).

Tashiro's Urgent Suggestion begins with this passage:

It is apparent from historical monuments that the Yaeyama Islands have been in Japan's border since ancient times. However, because the islands were far from the mainland and the administrative control was less direct, more than a few people have regarded them as remoted place. This kind of view has left a treasure house in the southern seas unattended. I have deplored loudly this situation being a mistake in the current time. [the development of Yaeyama]

⁴⁷ Historical Materials Office, General Affairs Department, Ishigaki Island (1989), *Ishigaki-shi shi Kindai 3: Mararia Shiryo Shusei*, pp 73-84.

⁴⁸ Produced from the cinchona tree, quinine was the only treatment for malaria available at the time.

⁴⁹ Denzo Shigenobu, a former samurai from Kagoshima Prefecture, and a junior official assigned to the Yaeyama Island Clinic.

To outline⁵⁰ the rest of this suggestion report for reference, it comprised 13-point proposals on the development of Yaeyama, beginning with the intensification of security forces in the island, then, to modernize the islands mired in old practices, the placement under the direct administration of the central government, especially the Ministry of Home Affairs, the abolishment of old practices, the reform of tax systems, the promotion of the settlement of a large number of residents from the mainland⁵¹ and the facilitation of new businesses along with the circulation of currency (in Yaeyama at the time, barter trade was in common), the development of sanitation facilities, education, and roads for better human traffic. He noted in his autobiography that he envisaged Yaeyama's population of 30,000 people at that time growing to 300,000 in the future.

In the end, his suggestion turned completely futile. The Cabinet had no interest in his pleas. The ministers from the Satsuma faction, including Army Minister Iwao Oyama, Minister of Education Arinori Mori, and Minister of Agriculture and Commerce Takeaki Enomoto sympathized with Tashiro's suggestions, but the opposition from Prime Minister Hirobumi Ito as well as Foreign Minister Kaoru Inoue and Minister of Home Affairs Aritomo Yamagata from the Choshu faction stood against Tashiro as a major obstacle to the suggestion for developing the Yaeyama Islands extensively. (*Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*)

Yamagata considered a plan to establish a detention house on Iriomote Island, and interviewed Tashiro when he visited Yaeyama.⁵² Tashiro did his best to ask Yamagata to persuade Ito and Inoue:

Ministers from Choshu were my greatest obstacle, and if I couldn't exert myself to get past them, I would not be able to achieve my life's purpose, so I spent around six months lobbying them as hard as I could in a headlong charge. (*Chutai sanjunen jijoshi*)

However, his effort was not successful. In November 1886, Tashiro gave up his lifelong dream and left the government.⁵³

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to clarify why, in the history of the Senkaku Islands, Okinawa Prefecture chose to conduct a survey in 1885. I have summed up that reason in the sub-section above entitled "Movement in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Okinawa Prefectural Governor and Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs Sutezo Nishimura and the survey of the uninhabited islands."

We generally look at history through the materials which our predecessors have left us. Because the major area of my research is the Senkaku Islands, I look primarily at materials on the history of those islands. In 2011, I was given an opportunity to lecture on the Senkaku Islands on the Saturday Lecture Series at the Institute of Regional Study, Okinawa University. When I looked through the materials on surveys of the Senkaku Islands in preparation for that lecture (when

⁵⁰ Antei Tashiro (1886), "Yaeyama Gunto Kyumu Ikensho" (The Urgent Suggestion on Administration of Yaeyama Islands, Okinawa) in Seijo University (1971), *Densho Bunka* No. 7; *Tashiro Antei-shi to Yaeyama* (op.cit.).

⁵¹ Given Tashiro's background and those particular times, he probably had in mind the huge numbers of unattached samurai produced by the Meiji Restoration (particularly in Kyushu and Kagoshima).

⁵² Aritomo Yamagata (1886), *Nanko Nikki* (Diary of a Southern Voyage) (op.cit.).

⁵³ Kikuo Nagayama (1930), *Tashiro Antei-o* (op.cit.), p. 5.

checking whether or not there was a Senkaku Islands survey report by Anko Majikina, who was working for Okinawa Prefecture in 1908), in 1885, a Satsuma idealist called Antei Tashiro who had spent his life trying to develop Yaeyama suddenly appeared. While his great ambitions were not to be realized, that he was able to nurse such a scale of ambition in the first place seemed proof to me that the Meiji period really was good days—as could also be said of the Yaeyama of the time.

Not just about the Senkaku Islands, when studying historic materials, a variety of interesting figures emerge. It is natural to view history as following the traces of their actions. History is essentially the way people interact, while they respectively have their own histories.

An erudite person, Tashiro is known as a scholar of botany and other disciplines, but to me he is the idealist who devoted his passion to Yaeyama.