

The Japanese Communist Party¹ and the June 4th Incident of 1989

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Despite its length, I would like to cite a recent statement regarding the Diaoyu/Senkaku² Islands dispute:

Japan's territorial right over the Senkaku Islands is legitimate under international law, and Japan's legal possession of it has continued for over a century. The Senkaku Islands were integrated into Japan in January 1895 (the 28th year of Meiji). Since then they have become part of Japan. No historical documents showed, in the period before their integration into Japan, that they were under the possession of China or any other country.

In more than 70 years from 1895 to the early 1970s, no objection rose from abroad to Japan's title over the Senkaku Islands. Japan has ruled these islands effectively until today. The 1895 integration of the Senkaku Islands by the Japanese government into Japan's territory was the first international accord of territorial possession over these islands. Japan took them legally based on the international law of occupying-by-first-coming.

It was from the beginning of the 1970s that China and Taiwan suddenly began to claim territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands. The background to their claims was a report published by the UN ECAFE (United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) on sea bed mineral resources in 1969, and pointed out the potential oil deposits under the Senkaku Islands.

The Senkaku Islands issue had nothing to do with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 at all.

Based on our own study of the historical development of these islands from various aspects of relevant international law, we have concluded that Japan has territorial rights over the Senkaku Islands. In March 1972 we published our view on the Senkaku Islands, making it clear that the Senkaku Islands are a part of Japan. From then on, until today, no subsequent historical material has been found to necessitate revising our view.

Now, what is required for Japan's diplomacy is to consolidate Japan's territorial right over the Senkaku Islands through persistent negotiations to solve this issue peacefully. Meanwhile, we should not overlook invasions of China which has frequently sent "oceanic research vessels" into Japan's territorial waters around the

¹ Until the early 1970s, the English name of the JCP was CPJ (Communist Party of Japan). This change of name, emphasizing Japan, marked a further nationalistic characteristic of the JCP.

² I have chosen to use the Chinese names here for these islands, because they were first named in Chinese sources. Some islands' Japanese names, for example, Uotsuri 魚釣, came directly from their Chinese names.

Senkaku Islands. The Japanese government should take a resolute attitude on this issue towards the Chinese government.

This is not a declaration of the right-wing Japanese Youth Association which established lighthouses in the Diaoyu Islands. Nor is it a “public accord” for national elections of the ruling LDP or the more militaristic (former) New Frontier Party, or Liberal Party under Ozawa Ichirô 小沢一郎. Entitled “Senkaku shotô o meguru mondai to kaiketsu no tenbô” 尖閣諸島をめぐる問題と解決の展望 (Problems regarding the Senkaku Islands and a perspective of resolution), this article was published on September 22, 1996, in *Akahata* 赤旗 (Red Flag), the official organ of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). It represents the JCP’s formal policy regarding the Diaoyu Islands disputes until today, as well as a resolute attitude towards China until 1998.

I have no intention of arguing with the contents of the statement. Inoue Kiyoshi 井上清, a famous professor of Japanese history at Kyoto University, among others, has thoroughly rebutted the JCP stance. For readers who are not familiar to this issue, let me cite a few historical descriptions from the Chinese translation of his book, *Diaoyu dao shi Zhongguo de lingtu* 釣魚島是中國的領土 (The Diaoyu Islands Are China’s Territory).³

An imperial envoy was first sent to Ryûkyû by the Chinese emperor in 1372.... From the absence of any explanatory note on Diaoyu and other islands, it can be concluded that the locations of these islands had long before been known, and that they had not only been given Chinese names, but also had been actually used as marks on navigation routes.

Guo Rulin 郭汝霖, the imperial envoy accompanying Chen Kan 陳侃, set sail from Fuzhou on the 29th of the 5th lunar month of 1561. In the *Chongbian shi Liuqiu lu* 重編使琉球錄 (Record of the Imperial Mission to Ryûkyû, Revised), he wrote: “We passed by Diaoyu 釣魚 and arrived at Chiyu on the 3rd. Chiyu 赤嶼 is an island bordering on Ryûkyû territory.”

It is clear from the above two documents that Ryûkyû territory began from the Kume 久米 Island, whereas the Chiyu Island and the area west were China’s territory.

The *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* 中山傳信錄 (Record of the Mission to Chusan) also dealt in detail with the territory of Ryûkyû, which comprised 36 islands of Ryûkyû including Okinawa Island. Chiyu and the area west of it were not included. Furthermore, at the end of the explanatory notes concerning Ishigaki 石垣 and eight neighboring islands of the Yaeyama 八重山 archipelago, it was written that the eight islands were the southwestern most boundary of Ryûkyû.

Noteworthy is a description from the *Shi Liuqiu zalu* 使琉球雜錄 (Record of the Imperial Mission to Ryûkyû) written in 1683.... It said that when the ship passed

³ (Hong Kong: Mingbao chubanshe, 1972). It first appeared in the February 1972 Japanese monthly *Nit-Chû bunka kôryû* 日中文化交流. It was cited in *Peking Review*, Vol.15, Part 19 (May 12, 1972). For more detailed and specific historical research, refer to his article published in the June 1972 *Rekishî kenkyû gekkan* 歴史研究月刊 and his 278-page book *Senkaku shotô* 尖閣諸島 (The Senkaku Islands) (Tokyo: Daisan Press, 1972). Although Inoue also issued a statement with the Institute of Mao Zedong Thought protesting against the CCP during the Tian’anmen Incident in 1989, he quickly restored his friendship with the CCP and received an “Honorary Professorship” from Beijing University in 1996 when the Diaoyu dispute became tense again.

beyond Chiyu, a sacrificial ceremony was held to pray for safety at sea. That area was referred to as the outskirts or trough and was clearly defined as the “boundary between China and a foreign land.”

There are no records or documents whatsoever on the Ryūkyū side or the Japanese side expressing disagreement or doubt. Moreover, there are not even legends, to say nothing of documents, about contacts of the Ryūkyū people with Diaoyu Island and Huangweiyu 黃尾嶼 in ancient times.... The map and explanations about the Ryūkyū Kingdom, in the work *Sankoku tsūran zusetsu* 三國通覽圖說 (General Discussion of the Three Lands with Illustrations) by Hayashi Shihei 林子平, were completely based on the *Zhongshan chuanxin lu*.

Even after the Meiji Restoration, until the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan had not even thought of claiming title to the Diaoyu and other islands to challenge the Qing's title to the islands.

Despite the allegation that the Diaoyu Islands had become Japanese territory by virtue of the 1896 (Meiji 29) Imperial Decree No. 13, the fact is that this imperial decree was issued on March 5th with regard to the formation of various districts of Okinawa prefecture and said nothing about incorporating the Diaoyu Islands into Okinawa prefecture.... The Diaoyu Islands were regarded as Japanese territory only after Japan had seized Taiwan and other places from the Qing dynasty by virtue of the Sino-Japanese War.... The Japanese name Senkaku 尖閣 was given by Kuroiwa Tsune 黒岩亘 in 1900.

As some Japanese socialists observed: “The JCP stance is the same as ‘The Basic View on the Sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands’ of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Japan of 1972.... It was agitating the Japanese working class into a bourgeois nationalist conflict.”⁴ Although nationalist characteristics can be traced throughout the JCP's history,⁵ they became a firm trait several years after the end of the Cold War, especially through its policy transformation with respect to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Before the June Fourth Incident of 1989, as a rival of the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) to pursue close relations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the CCP,⁶ the JCP's international image of anti-U.S. imperialism surpassed its nationalism. However, according to the JCP, it had to refuse the CCP's request to

⁴ “The nationalist wave around East China Sea - The JCP is pushing the Japanese government by appealing for Japan's territory right,” *Petrel Weekly* 604 (November 3, 1996), a publication of the Socialist Workers Party of Japan. “The historical facts on the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands - The JCP lie is clarified by Inoue Kiyoshi,” *Petrel Weekly* 605 (November 10, 1996).

⁵ Many writers who underwent *tenkō* 転向 (political/spiritual transformation), such as the famous Todai Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu 藤岡信勝, received a firm nationalistic training when they were JCP members. The most frequently used JCP slogan during elections is “The people (*kokumin* 国民) are the master.” However, the word *kokumin*, widely used during the war, excluded non-Japanese citizens as well as those Japanese who refused to bend to the Emperor system. The JCP Charter also denied membership to those without Japanese citizenship (Article 5: “Any Japanese national, who is eighteen years of age and over, is eligible to become a party member.”)

⁶ It strongly requested the CCP and the CPSU to cut off relations with the JSP. Mikhail Gorbachev recalled that the JCP Presidium Chairperson Fuwa Tetsuzō 不破哲三 claimed that the JSP had become “a faction within Japanese capitalism and an agency for U.S. Imperialism.”

mobilize itself for an armed struggle and cut off relations with the CCP in the 1960s.⁷ The pro-Mao members split off and formed the Communist Party of Japan (Left) and several other groups, but they failed to unite and their membership rolls declined. Their spiritual leader Tokuda Kyūichi 徳田球一 had died in Beijing in 1953. Listed as one of the CCP's four enemies, the JCP could not play even a minor role in the Sino-Japanese normalization process in 1972. After Mao's death in 1976, the CCP tried to restore its comradeship with the JCP in 1985. The JCP requested that the CCP should first apologize for its (the CCP's) previous interventions in JCP internal affairs, but the request was rejected. In fact, the CCP did not have to do so, because it had a much stronger ally (the JSP) and other friendly parties (such as the Kōmeitō 公明党) in Japan.

The June Fourth Incident was, in various respects, a turning point for the JCP, as well as for all other Japanese political forces. The Incident and the events that followed in socialist countries forced the JCP to revise its policy towards the CCP (and China) as well as toward other socialist countries. In the JCP Central Committee statement issued on June 4, 1989, it blamed the CCP's executive bureau for the brutal crackdown on "socialist democracy."⁸

Compared with the JSP and other countries' communist and socialist parties, it was easy for the JCP to do so because it had disconnected itself from the CCP 22 years earlier. Meanwhile, however, such criticism was a kind of "open dialogue" in the socialist world because the JCP still considered China a "country [moving] toward socialism" and the CCP a socialist party. The JCP still hoped that the CCP might "return to the right course of socialist democracy." This was a typical policy during the Cold War period of a socialist opposition party: because it could not attain state power, it had to utilize comradeship with other ruling socialist parties.⁹ The JCP was sensitive not to "intervene in China's internal affairs," and it refused to meet directly with Chinese people in Japan on any political matters. Toward the Chinese democratic movement and especially toward Chinese activists in Japan, it emphasized that the JCP could only show a "humane sympathy," in effect nothing more than lip service.¹⁰

The end of the Cold War brought about the collapse of the JSP, undermined the governing political paradigm in Japan, and initiated a complex domestic political realignment. In the years following the Incident, the JCP had a hard time demonstrating its differences from other communist or socialist parties, especially because of its close relations with the Rumanian dictator Nicolai Ceaucescu. After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the JCP began to revise its whole policy toward foreign communist

⁷ The CCP never admitted as much. Waseda University's Chen Maonan 陳茂男 believes that this argument originated with the Miyamoto leadership's effort to break with the CCP. Even the CP of New Zealand, Mao's loyal follower, did not launch any kind of armed struggle.

⁸ Akahata, June 5, 1989.

⁹ The ruling LDP and the Japanese government did need the opposition to play such a role, and it was perfectly filled by the JSP and the Kōmeitō. This was their *raison d'être* in Japan during the Cold War period.

¹⁰ The JCP still opposes local-level political exchanges with foreign peoples, although it now encourages people in Japan with rights of permanent residency (most of whom are Koreans) to participate in local politics. As a democracy activist, I visited various JCP local offices and its Yoyogi 代々木 headquarters. In my estimation, all JCP ordinary members with whom I spoke are kind Japanese who have sympathy for the Chinese people.

and socialist parties. It explained that Ceaucescu took an independent line from the Soviet Union, and it could not intervene in Rumanian internal affairs. The JCP also emphasized its history of struggle against the CPSU and the CCP: "When we heard that the CPSU was dissolved, we welcomed it as the bankruptcy of the colossal evil of great-power chauvinism and hegemony. This was our really frank feeling because we had a live-or-die struggle against the CPSU, which forcibly intervened to overthrow the leadership of our party and even mobilized their state organs for its purpose."¹¹ The (former) JCP Central Committee Chairman Miyamoto Kenji 宮本 顕 治 took over the status heretofore reserved for Marx and Lenin.¹²

This was a "bubble" time for the Japanese economy as well as Japanese politics, and Japan's Prime Minister came from an apparently bubble party. Rather than catching the easily shifting voters in urban areas, the JCP appeared as the representative for the rural areas which carried a much higher weight in elections due to its decreasing population.¹³ Actually, the rural areas were under the influence of only the LDP and the JCP. To appeal to farmers for their support, nationalism became the only effective slogan to fight back against the LDP, and the latter began gradually to open Japan's agricultural markets under international pressures after the 1985 Plaza Accord.

The central issue was that exquisite Japanese rice. Japan's "emergency measure" of rice imports coincided with multilateral negotiations aimed at the opening of Japanese markets under GATT. The JCP utilized this "crisis" consciousness to issue an appeal for Japanese agricultural protectionism.¹⁴ *Akahata* even falsely reported that dead mice were found in imported Thai rice. The JCP also sent two Diet members to the world food conference in 1996 to oppose free trade in food.

¹¹ "Toward a Scientific Socialist Future," a speech given by Nishiguchi Hikaru 西口 光 at the International Theoretical Political Congress organized by the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, May 11-12, 1996. Niishiguchi is an alternate member of the JCP Central Committee and head of its International Department.

¹² Another JCP paramount leader, Nosaka Sanzô 野坂 参 三, who worked directly under the CPSU and the CCP for sixteen years until Japan's surrender, was dismissed from the JCP in 1992 after his record of betrayal was discovered among documents in the KGB archives. Tachibana Takashi 立花 隆, an enormously popular writer, received a strong protest from the JCP after he published *Nihon kyôsan-tô no kenkyû* 日本共産党の研究 (A Study of the JCP), mainly because of his comments on Miyamoto's dictatorship.

¹³ Especially in the election to the House of Councilors, members from the most populous urban district represent 6.59 times the population in the most sparsely populated rural district. Until as late as September 1996, the Japanese Supreme Court still judged this situation to be legal.

¹⁴ "Five emergent proposals to protect Japanese rice," JCP Secretary-general Shii Kazuo 志位 和夫, July 11, 1995. Klaus Vollmer also emphasized the rice "crisis" as a crisis of identity: "While rice is often seen as the staple food of the people for more than two thousand years, it was in fact only as recently as the 20th century that it actually became the true daily staple for all Japanese... It is thus crucial to note—at times surprising—that the reactions towards the rice shortage in 1993/94 were not created primarily by a temporary lack of a beloved cereal but by the fear that something considered essentially Japanese was at stake... While rice has continually lost its role as a predominant staple food since the 1960s, its symbolic and ideological value in representing something uniquely Japanese is still firmly rooted in the mind of most Japanese." "Rice crisis in the early 1990s," *Bulletin of the European Association for Japanese Studies* 44 (January 1997).

The year 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, saw rising nationalism in Japan. Along with the decline and "policy transformation" of the largest opposition party, the JSP, the conservative forces in the Diet easily passed the so-called "Denouncement of War Resolution," denying Japan's history of invasion.¹⁵ Although under a "socialist" Prime Minister—and the JSP had long been the CCP's ally—the Japanese government first affirmed a tough "No!" toward China. It froze 90% of the 1995 nonprofit assistance (700 billion yen) to protest China's nuclear tests.

The image of the CCP in Japan has become so ugly that any ambiguous relationship with the CCP would bring damage to any of Japan's political parties. As a public show, the JCP also sent letters to the "President of the People's Republic of China" on June 8 and July 29, 1996, strongly protesting China's nuclear tests. The JCP was the only Japanese party to respond so severely. It had to do so. Meanwhile, as an opposition party, requesting that the Japanese government take a tough stand against the Chinese government put the ruling LDP in a difficult position.

Nonetheless, this nationalistic policy proved to be a correct choice. After a difficult time, the JCP began to enjoy a continuing increase in popularity in Japanese politics, mainly because many former JSP supporters turned their support to the JCP, the only opposition for them to choose, and the JCP continuously broke its previous records in subsequent elections. For example, the JCP candidates almost defeated the candidates supported by all other parties in the April 1996 Kyoto mayoral election and the April 1998 Kyoto prefectural gubernatorial election. With its solid organization, near 400,000 members and two million *Akahata* subscribers,¹⁶ the JCP gained many nonpartisan voters by appealing to nationalism. In June 1996, there were 58 local government heads who were solely supported by the JCP. In July 1996, its number of local assembly members increased to nearly 4,000 which surpassed all other parties.¹⁷ In spite of the newly implemented electoral system whose main purpose was to remove the JCP from the House of Representative completely, the JCP achieved a "great jump" in the elections on October 20, 1996.¹⁸ The JCP now (September 1999) has 4,431 assembly members, effectively ranking No. 1 in Japanese local politics.

As shown through the Diaoyu Islands statement, the JCP has begun to participate in and influence Japanese politics in many fields, especially with regard to Japan's foreign policy, by pushing a more nationalistic policy than the LDP.¹⁹ With the aim of protecting Japanese teachers, the JCP also strongly opposes introducing any form of

¹⁵ For a review in English, See Ryuji Mukae, "Japan's Diet Resolution on World War Two: Keeping History at Bay," *Asian Survey* XXXVI.10 (October 1996), University of California Press, pp.1011-30.

¹⁶ *Akahata* was the only weekly to which I subscribed when I was in Japan. It provides some significant political information that can scarcely be found in other media. For example, it first reported Premier Hosokawa's false check receipt dated on "September 31." This report directly led Hosokawa's resignation.

¹⁷ Many conservative assembly members do not belong to any party, although they are affiliated to a certain LDP (or Liberal Party) Diet member from their local area.

¹⁸ Although the JCP gained 7.26 million votes—about 40% of the LDP—it could only gain 26 seats, only about 10% of the LDP's seats. In the House of Councilors, it now (1999) has 23 seats.

¹⁹ The other examples include the "Northern Territory" dispute with Russia and the "Takeshima" 竹島 dispute with Korea. For a thorough review, see Jing Zhao, "The So-called Northern Territory Issue," *October Review* 4 (1998), Hong Kong.

temporary employment at universities, because that would allow Japanese universities to hire more international scholars without Japanese citizenship.²⁰ The JCP also revised its former anti-U.S. policy and began to emphasize the necessity of “learning from the U.S.”: “Our urgent task is not socialism but a complete democratic change within the current framework of capitalism.... Concerning the relationship with the U.S., we are not looking for confrontation, but for a truly friendly relationship on the basis of equality.”²¹ Although the JCP elite met strong protest from old members when they decided to remove the reference to U.S. imperialism during the last JCP Conference, they no longer use the term “imperialism.”

During the Peruvian hostage crisis at the Japanese Ambassador’s residence, the JCP strongly denounced the “terrorist group” but did not mention the Fujimori regime’s repression and Japan’s Peru policy. It demonstrated to Japanese voters a determination, even stronger than that of the LDP and the Japanese government, to protect Japanese national interests: “Such an outrageous act is absolutely impermissible, no matter for what reasons.... As a political party fighting to protect democracy and human rights and opposing all forms of terrorism, the JCP once again denounces this barbarous attack and hostage-taking by the Peruvian terrorist group.”²²

Let us look at a “big dialogue” between the JCP Secretary-general Shii Kazuo 志位 和夫 and the LDP counterpart Katô 加藤.²³ Shii claimed: “Certainly, we will not remain only as the opposition. In our *Proposal for a New Japanese Economy*, we suggested revising the Japan’s rule-less capitalism and creating democratic rules for economic activities, as in Europe and the U.S.” Shii even surprised Katô: “There are people who consider the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) necessary while they oppose Anpô [the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty]. We advocate maintaining the SDF for awhile after denouncing Anpô. We will forward directions to denounce the SDF gradually according to the national general will.” This was an actual admission of the legitimacy of the SDF which had been formally denied by the JCP until that moment and by the JSP until the summer of 1994. The crafty Katô concluded: “This statement should be widely noted. The JCP has admitted that there is opinion within the JCP to agree to keep moderate military forces after denouncing Anpô. This is the most dangerous independent-defense policy. The next step is militarism.”

Hidaka Rokurô 日高六郎 once warned of the danger of Japanese neo-nationalism only within the LDP.²⁴ The so-called independent-defense view, along with

²⁰ “On the University Council’s report of the temporary employment system of university teachers,” Ishii Ikuko 石井郁子, head of the JCP Culture and Education Committee, *Akahata*, October 29, 1996. From my personal observations, Japan’s life-long employment system has caused an virtually unbelievable low level of education and scholarship, especially in the social sciences.

²¹ Shii’s speech at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Tokyo on September 6, 1996. As for Japan’s “democratic reform in the economy,” Shii explained: “This does not mean to dismantle big companies. We do not have a nationalization plan in our program for a democratic transformation.”

²² “Denounce terrorist attack and hostage-taking in Peru,” *Akahata*, December 20, 1996.

²³ *Asahi shinbun*, January 10 and 11, 1997. Now, the contents of the dialogue has been deleted from JCP’s web site.

²⁴ “A January 1982 LDP article said that the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, the sole legal wartime political organization, worked well.... If that [Japan’s self-reform toward democracy]

the revision of the Constitution and the expansion of armaments, have been the demands by the right-wing within the LDP. Today, even the JCP stands close to the LDP right-wing. It is now easy to imagine how the entire spectrum of Japanese politics has sharply been transformed. The JCP continues to criticize the SDF, but only for the reason that the SDF is "a subordinate tool of the U.S." and because it does not defend an "independent Japanese sovereignty." However, especially under current international antagonisms in East Asia as well as in the world, the JCP certainly knows that a Japanese "national general will" to denounce the SDF is impossible, unless there is a denunciation of armaments in North Korea, Russia, China, and, last of all, the U.S.

In June 1998, just nine years after the Tiananmen Incident, the JCP "normalized" its relations with the CCP in Beijing.²⁵ For Beijing, the JCP has become the greatest (and the only) Japanese political force against the strengthening U.S.-Japanese military alliance, which Beijing sees apparently targeted at itself. Beijing this time "honestly" accepted the JCP requirement of apology. For the JCP, establishing relations with the CCP (and hence the Chinese government) means that it formally obtained the position previously enjoyed only by the JSP, thus greatly strengthening its bargaining power in Japanese politics.²⁶

As a result of the recent changes in international and domestic environments, directly following the Tian'anmen Incident and strengthened by a rising militarism in contemporary Japan, the JCP nationalistic policy is helping to stimulate Japan further in a militaristic direction, which may eventually conflict, first and foremost, with China's rising nationalism.

proves impossible, a second defeat, probably in a political and economic form, will be likely imposed upon Japan from the outside." Hidaka Rokurô, "Personal Retrospective," *Democracy In Contemporary Japan*, ed. Gavan McCormack and Yoshio Sugimoto (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1986), pp.228-246.

²⁵ *Akahata*, June 12, 1998.

²⁶ This time, *Akahata* (June 3, 1998) kindly "introduced" how the "new" CCP leaders, Jiang Zeming and Zhu Rongji, acted differently from the old CCP leaders. The JCP did not mention Li Peng, the number two man in the CCP, at all. The JCP delegation, led by Fuwa and Shii, made a special point of visiting the Japanese ambassador on July 22, 1998 during their visit to China.