

Truth of Dokdo -8

-Illegality of Ulleungdo

Voyage License -

Dokdo Research Institute of Sejong University

1. Illegality of the Ulleungdo Voyage License

(1) There was no agreement over the Ulleungdo Voyage License

Japan alleges that Edo Shogunate issued an 'Ulleungdo Voyage License' in 1618, or alternatively, in 1625. The signatures of four chief elders assisting the general are affixed on the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License', however, after it had been revealed that two among the four chief elders were not actually chief elders in 1618, a dissertation was announced by a Japanese scholar that the Voyage License was in fact issued in 1625, which is when those that affixed their signatures all became chief elders.

However, in 1625, there were a total of eight chief elders. While the principle of processing complaints at the time was through unanimous consent by all chief elders, the Ulleungdo Voyage License itself was approved by only four out of the eight chief elders.

In conclusion, the Ulleungdo Voyage License was an illegal permit issued without the unanimous consent by all chief elders at the time.

(2) There were ships of Tottori that traveled to Ulleungdo under the “Hollyhock” pattern representing a general’s family

Japan alleges that the fact that the ships of Tottori-han which sailed to Ulleungdo did so by hanging a flag with a hollyhock pattern, the symbol of the general’s family, is evidence that voyages to Ulleungdo were made under the official approval of the Shogunate.

However, Tottori-han had already obtained permission to use the pattern by the Tokugawa family because the lord was a relative of the Tokugawa family through the marriage of the governor of Tottori-han with the general’s daughter. The reason the general’s family was able to use the pattern in the ship voyaging to Ulleungdo was because the lord of Tottori-han himself had a special relationship with the Shogunate, thus, it cannot become evidence that the Ulleungdo voyage was made under official approval by the Shogunate.

In order to monopolize voyages to Ulleungdo, the two families of Oya and Murakawa used the pattern of the general’s family in order to provide an impression that their ships belonged to the Shogunate and to show off to other domains. Japan is making a tactful distortion in such description.



The pattern of Tokugawa Shogunate that Tottori-han obtained permission based on its special relationship with the Shogunate

(3) The Ulleungdo Voyage License was issued only once

The Ulleungdo Voyage License was a license that had to be renewed every year. However, in reality, the permit was issued only once in 1618 (1625), nonetheless, the merchants of Tottori-han copied the Voyage License issued in the first year and used it continuously for approximately 70 years. The merchants of Tottori avoided raids by offering bribes, such as abalone produced in Ulleungdo, to the leaders of the Shogunate and the general's family every year.

In conclusion, the Ulleungdo Voyage License was an illegal license, which was difficult to request for re-issuance.

2. Matsushima, the Japanese name of Dokdo

Japanese people were not aware of Dokdo until the 17th century. It was only when Japanese people sailed to Ulleungdo that they learned of Dokdo.

When they discovered the existence of Dokdo, which was closer to Japan than Ulleungdo, they named the island as Matsushima in Japanese.

Comment: A Japanese person opted to name Dokdo as Matsushima (松島) under the concept of ShoChikuBai (松竹梅 : a word combining pine grove, bamboo grove, and apricot tree) because it was located next to Ulleungdo, which is Takeshima (竹島) in Japanese.

However, Japan alleges that the merchants of Tottori-han received the 'Matsushima Voyage License', thus, the 'Dokdo Voyage License', from Edo Shogunate at the time.

Using Japan's logic, the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License' was discontinued by the Shogunate in January 1696, however, they mention the issuance of the 'Dokdo Voyage License' to argue that Dokdo is a territory of Japan, since the 'Dokdo Voyage License' had never been abolished.

So, did a separate 'Dokdo Voyage License' exist apart from the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License'?

(1) 'Dokdo Voyage License' did not exist

There is evidence that Edo Shogunate issued the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License' and its form is recorded in several forms of literature.

However, the 'Dokdo Voyage License' itself does not remain in historical records, regarding the form of it and how it was recorded. Thus, the historical truth is that there is no person that ever saw the 'Dokdo Voyage License'.

(2) Records set forth as evidence by Japan

However, some Japanese researchers point out that the year in which the 'Dokdo Voyage License' was issued was 1660 or 1661. Below is a passage from 'Ikedaka Document', which is an ancient document of Tottori-han forming the basis of their allegations.

(ellipsis) You did well in discussing with Murakawa Ichibe of your first voyage to Matsushima (= Dokdo) when traveling to Takeshima (= Ulleungdo) next year. Kameyama Shozaemon, the deity, will contact you with the details, thus, I will not speak of the details. Yours to command.

To Oya Kuemon. September 4th. Abe Kenhachiro Masashige

(Original text: <ellipsis> 来年御手前舟竹嶋へ渡海松嶋へも初而舟可被指越之旨村川市兵衛と被致相談尤ニ候 委細者家来亀出庄左衛門方より可申達候間不能詳候 恐惶謹言 阿倍権八郎政重<花押>九月四日 大屋九右衛門様)

By pointing to this ancient document, Japan alleges that Japan issued not only the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License', but also the 'Dokdo Voyage License'.

However, this document does not speak of the issuance of the 'Dokdo Voyage License'. It only explains the efforts of Edo Shogunate to decide the order in which the Murakawa family and Oya family would travel to Dokdo.

When thinking from a sensible point of view, it can be sufficiently understood that voyage to Dokdo was allowed with only the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License' since Dokdo is located on the way to Ulleungdo. In addition, when looking at the contents of this document, it seems that the people of the Murakawa family had sailed to Dokdo in the past. Accordingly, the fact that the Murakawa family had sailed to Dokdo even without a 'Dokdo Voyage

License' shows that a 'Dokdo Voyage License' itself was not a separately required license.

Comment: A research study in Japan also shows that the Murakawa family first sailed to Dokdo around 1657 and there were adjustments made in the order of traveling to Dokdo between the two families of Murakawa and Oya in 1660. The historical truth is that, the two families sailed to Dokdo without a 'Dokdo Voyage License'.

3.The ancient documents of Tottori-han on voyages to Takeshima and Matsushima

(1) The Letter by the Oya family (1681)

There is a historical record in a letter submitted by Kyuemon Katsunobu, the grandson of Oya Jinkichi, who received the 'Ulleungdo Voyage License' from Edo Shogunate around 1620, sent to a patrol prosecutor of the Shogunate in 1681.

In this letter, Dokdo is documented as a 'small island', and although the name 'Matsushima' is not written, the record shows that the island is on the way to Ulleungdo and is merely a rock without vegetation. In addition, this document records that Ulleungdo and a small island (Matsushima = Dokdo) was granted by Edo Shogunate.

The matters spoken to Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the fifth general of Edo Shogunate, when he stayed over in 1681.

This letter was written because he asked of Takeshima.

1. During the era of Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third general of Edo Shogunate, which dates back 50 years from now, Takeshima(Ulleungdo) was granted by the Shogunate through Abe Shiro-goro, and we are thankful for entrusting us with this work for

future generations.

1. We engage in collecting abalone and sea lion oil by sailing to that island every year.

1. Because the distance from Dogo Fukuura Port of Oki Island to Takeshima (Ulleungdo) is roughly 100-ri by water (approximately 180km), the situations that may occur on the sea cannot be known with certainty.

1. The surroundings of Takeshima (Ulleungdo) is around 10-ri (approximately 40km).

1. A small island a land area of 20-tyo (町 : approximately 2.2km) was discovered on the way to Takeshima during the era of Tokugawa Ietsuna, the fourth general of the Shogunate. It is a rock island without any vegetation. We traveled after being granted with this island from the Shogunate through Abe Shiro-goro around 24-25 years ago. Because there are many sea lions on this small island, we engaged in the process of collecting their oil. The distance from Dogo Fukuura of Oki Island to this small island is around 60-ri (approximately 130km) by ship.

May 13th

The above letter is a document written in 1681, when the Oya family and Murakawa family took turns to sail to Ulleungdo.

In addition, the letter records that a 'small island' (Dokdo) was discovered and granted by the Shogunate during the era of Ietsuna, the fourth general of Edo Shogunate. This seems to indicate the story of when the order of traveling to Dokdo was decided in 1660 or 1661.

This document is used by Japan to justify the voyages to Ulleungdo and Dokdo, but the letter by the Oya family is merely a private document.

Thus, it is difficult to accept the contents as is. For example, the expression of 'being granted by the Shogunate' is only an interpretation by the Oya family. In conclusion, Edo Shogunate itself acknowledged Ulleungdo and

Dokdo as territories of Joseon.

(2) The letter by the Oya family (1740)

In April 1740, the 'letter pleading to the Shogunate' submitted in April 1740 by Kyuemon Katsuhusa, the fourth generation of the Oya family to the central administration managing temples and shrines of Edo Shogunate is written as follows.

1. There is a small island called Matsushima (Dokdo) when sailing 70-80-ri from Dogo Fukuura of Oki Island on the way traveling to Takeshima (Ulleungdo), and I delivered my desire to travel to this island as well during the era of Tokugawa Hidetada, the second general of the Shogunate. After he granted my wish, I traveled to the small island, just as I traveled to Takeshima (=Ulleungdo) every year.

This document records the name of Dokdo as Matsushima as well. However, this document states that the period of being granted with Matsushima (Dokdo) was the era of the second general of Edo Shogunate. However, because the above-mentioned letter by the Oya family (1681) states the period of being granted with the island as the era of the fourth general, there seems to be confusion in the period of being granted with Dokdo. In conclusion, this letter is only a private document, which only records the personal view of the Oya family.

(3) The verbal note by the Oya family (1741)

On June 10th, 1741, in an oral note submitted by Kyuemon Katsuhusa, the fourth generation of the Oya family, to the Nagasaki authorities, it is

recorded that the 'small island' was known as 'Matsushima (Dokdo)' at the time.

I spoke of the fact that an island called Matsushima (Dokdo) was discovered on the way to Takeshima (Ulleungdo) during the era of Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third general of Edo Shogunate, and because the control over the island was entrusted to us, just as Takeshima (Ulleungdo), I traveled to the two islands. I am extremely thankful and happy of this matter.

This document is also mentioned as evidence that Japanese people had traveled to Dokdo, under the name of Matsushima, from the 17th century. However, this document records the period of discovering and being granted with Matsushima (Dokdo) in the era of the third general of Edo Shogunate. Even Japanese researchers point out that there is a problem, since the period of the discovery and being granted with Dokdo differs in each document.

The Oya family was ruined after the Ulleungdo voyage was prohibited by the 'Ulleungdo Voyage Prohibition order' (1696). Thus, the Oya family appealed to Edo Shogunate to allow voyages to Ulleungdo and Dokdo again. However, Edo Shogunate did not permit voyage to these two islands again.