

# Takeshima

Seeking a Solution based on Law and Dialogue

## What do you know about Takeshima?

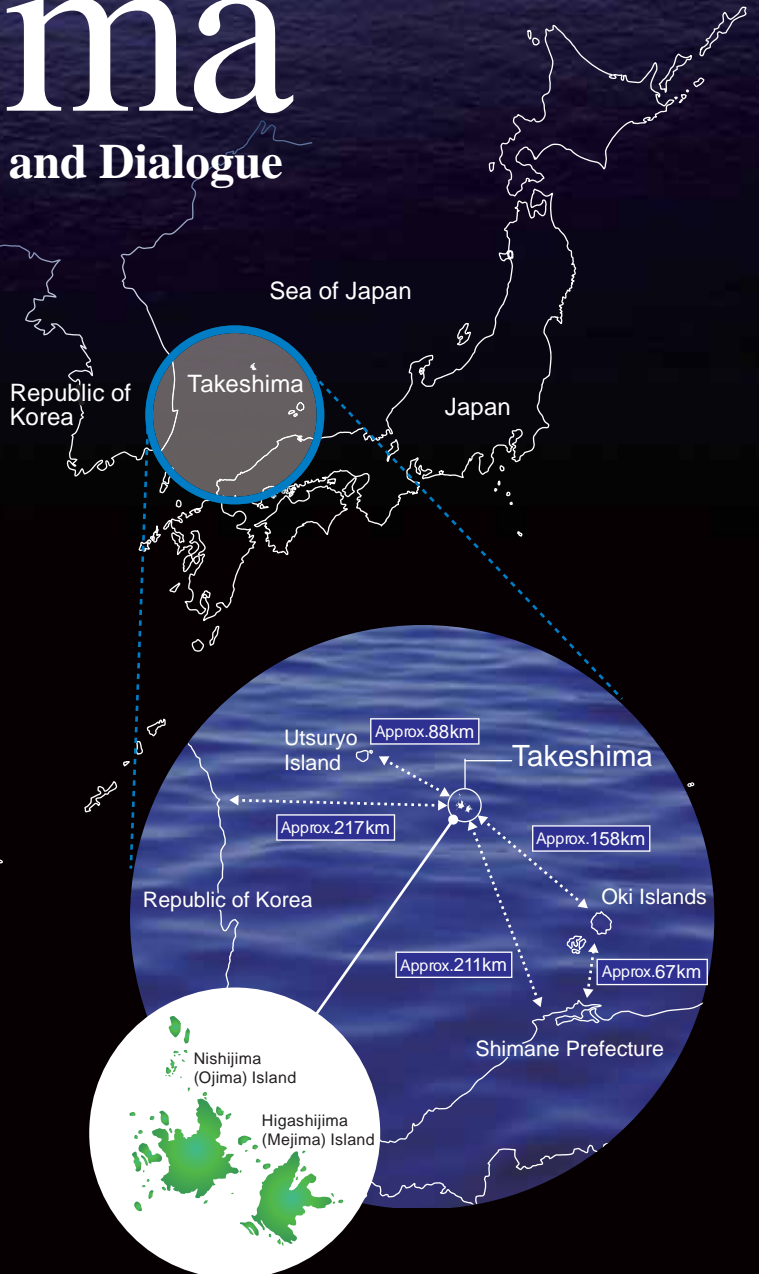
Takeshima is indisputably an inherent part of the territory of Japan, in light of historical facts and based upon international law.

The Republic of Korea (ROK) unilaterally took over Takeshima and has been illegally occupying it ever since.

Continuing a peaceful existence since the end of World War II, Japan will continue to seek a peaceful settlement of the dispute.

### Background to Takeshima

Takeshima is located in the Sea of Japan and is part of Okinoshima Town of Shimane Prefecture. Its total land mass is 0.21 km<sup>2</sup> and it is primarily comprised of two islands, Higashijima (Mejima) Island and Nishijima (Ojima) Island. They are rugged islands made of volcanic rock with little vegetation or drinking water.



## Japan's Territorial Sovereignty over Takeshima

Numerous maps and documents clearly demonstrate that Japan has recognized the existence of Takeshima for centuries. In the early 17th century, Japanese merchants were given permission for passage to Utsuryo Island by the Japanese government, and they used Takeshima as a navigational port for ships on their way to Utsuryo Island as well as a ground to catch sea lions and other marine resources. Japan established sovereignty over Takeshima by the mid 17th century.

In the early 1900s, residents of the islands of Shimane Prefecture called for a stable situation to conduct their sea lion hunting business. The Japanese government incorporated Takeshima into Shimane Prefecture in January 1905, following by a Cabinet decision. By doing so, the Japanese government reaffirmed its sovereignty over Takeshima.

## Recognition of Japan's Territorial Sovereignty by the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the International Community

Signed in September 1951, the San Francisco Peace Treaty states that Japan recognizes the independence of Korea and renounces "Korea, including the islands of Quelpart, Port Hamilton and Dagelet." A request made by the Republic of Korea to include Takeshima was explicitly rejected by the United States on the grounds that Takeshima had never been treated as Korean territory and that Korea had at no point claimed sovereignty over Takeshima.

## Illegal Occupation of Takeshima by the ROK

In January 1952, the then President of the Republic of Korea, Syngman Rhee, unilaterally drew the so-called "Syngman Rhee Line," incorporating Takeshima into the ROK side of the line. This act clearly went against international law. As a result of this decision, numerous Japanese fishing boats crossing the line were captured by the Korean authorities, resulting in several Japanese casualties. In July 1953, the Korean authorities fired at a patrol vessel of the Japan Coast Guard that was sailing near Takeshima. Since that time, the Republic of Korea has continued its illegal occupation of Takeshima, stationing security personnel and taking further unilateral actions, such as constructing lodgings, a monitoring facility, a lighthouse, a port and docking facilities on the islands.

## Japan's Response to Takeshima

Japan has repeatedly lodged protests in the strongest terms against the Republic of Korea's illegal occupation of Takeshima. In order to resolve this dispute in a peaceful manner, Japan has proposed to refer this case to the International Court of Justice on three occasions since 1954. However, the Republic of Korea has rejected all of these proposals.

Japan and the Republic of Korea have built a relationship of trust through activities such as jointly hosting the 2002 FIFA World Cup. In order to establish genuine, friendly relations between the two nations, Japan will continue to seek the settlement of its dispute on the basis of international law in a calm and peaceful manner.



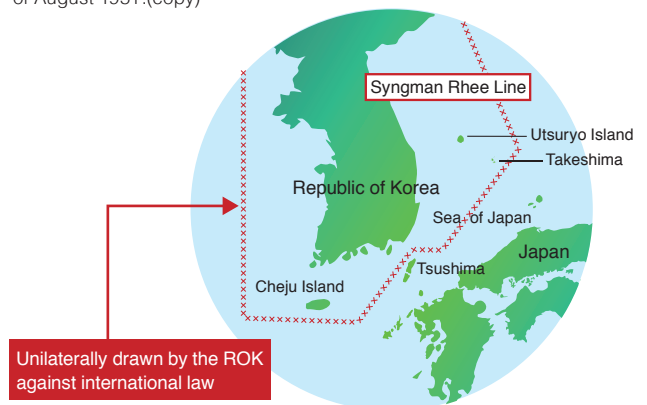
▲Takeshima Fishery Company around 1909. (Photo: From "A Historical-Geographical Study of Takeshima" by Kenzo Kawakami; Kokon Shoin)

▶Japanese fishermen actively involved in fishing on and around Takeshima. (1930s) (Photo: Private collection, provided by the "Takeshima Archives Room" of the Shimane Prefectural Government)



in the Declaration. As regards the island of Bokdo, otherwise known as Takeshima or Liancourt Rocks, this normally uninhabited rock formation was according to our information never treated as part of Korea and, since about 1905, has been under the jurisdiction of the Oki Islands Branch Office of Shimane Prefecture of Japan. The island does not appear ever before to have been claimed by Korea. It is understood that

▲Rejection of the Republic of Korea's claims: In the Letter from the then United States Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Dean Rusk, of August 1951.(copy)



Unilaterally drawn by the ROK against international law



▶Japan Coast Guard patrol vessel fired at near Takeshima by the Republic of Korea in July 1953. (Photo: The Yomiuri Shimbun)