

Open letter to Members of the Parliament of the Republic of Korea
landed on Takeshima

We express our respect for your continuous efforts towards the prosperity of the Republic of Korea.

On October 22nd this year, Members of the ROK Parliament landed on Takeshima. We strongly regret the action and protest absolutely as it damages the fundamental confidence between Japan and the ROK. Year 2018 celebrates the 20th anniversary of the “Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration” which was concluded by great leadership, then Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi and the ROK President Kim Dae-jung, in 1998. Taking the opportunity, not only both governments, including Prime Minister Abe and President Moon Jay-in, but also both peoples have been promoting establishment of future oriented bilateral relationship. In October, notably, many commemorate events were held to celebrate the same month the Declaration was announced. It was exactly during such celebrative atmosphere when the action was taken by the ROK parliamentarians. We believe it hurt the sentiments of many Japanese and ROK peoples who cherish the great achievement of Prime Minister Obuchi and President Kim Dae-jung as well as the cordial bilateral relations.

The unhappy days between Japan and the ROK in the post Second World War times began on January 18th 1952 when the ROK Government set “Rhee Syngman Line” on high seas in 1952, followed by the enactment of the “Fishery Protection Law” in December 1954. Under the law, the ROK Government seized Japanese fishing vessels and forced fishermen in detained lives disregarding their human rights.

At the time, Takeshima, indisputably an inherent part of the territory of Japan both from historical facts and international agreements, was illegally occupied by the ROK.

Moreover, since August 2012 when the ROK President landed on Takeshima for the first time, the ROK has been intensifying its movements to create a fait accompli that Takeshima is the ROK territory. These movements include construction of new installments on the island, landing of parliamentarians' and persons' related to national policy on Takeshima as well as defense drills on the Takeshima ocean area. We cannot tolerate these movements at all.

This open letter aims at asking you, who actually decided to land on Takeshima, on what historical grounds or interpretation of the international agreements the landing was carried out.

Up to now, the ROK insists that Takeshima is "clearly our inherent territory historically, geographically and from the viewpoint of international law," it has never, however, proved its claim. An evidence-based claim is a common standard in the international community.

Our view is that inflaming national sentiments by unnecessarily and continuously landing on Takeshima while claiming it as the ROK territory without any historical evidence is a subterfuge to the international community. It would also damage both Japanese and ROK sentiments and harm ROK's glorious growth.

From these viewpoints, we raise you the following questions and would like

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to ask you to specify and explain the historical grounds and basis of international agreements which show that Takeshima is the part of the ROK territory. Sincere reply to our questions is awaited.

- 1) ROK side insists that “Takeshima has been recognized as a part of Utsuryo Island geographically.” Please specify the historical evidence and documents that indicate it.
- 2) ROK side insists that “historical facts that Korea has recognized and governed Takeshima as the part of Korean territory are recorded in the official documents of Korea.” Please specify the “official documents of Korea” that prove it.
- 3) ROK side insists that “until the attempt to include Takeshima by the notice of Shimane Prefecture in 1905, Japanese Government recognized that Takeshima was not the part of its territory. This can be confirmed by formal documents of Japanese Government such as ‘Order of Dajokan’ in 1877.” Please explain your understanding on historical background and facts how the islands described as “Takeshima and another island” in the Order had come to be recognized in Japan.
- 4) ROK side insists that “after the WWII, Takeshima returned to Korean territory and the Government of Republic of Korea is exercising solid territorial sovereignty.” Please explain the ground and documents based on international law for this claim.
- 5) Finally, in order to solve differences of opinion between the two countries, we propose to hold dialogues between Japanese and ROK parliamentarians to discuss the issue. Would you agree with this idea?

Japan and the ROK, facing each other across the Chosen Strait, have long history of exchanges as the most important neighboring countries sharing common strategic interest. We have deepened relations in people-to-people exchanges as well as in cultural and economic fields. In order to construct future-oriented relationship between Japan and the ROK, leaving the past

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unhappy era behind, both governments has been making earnest efforts. We will also continue our best efforts in order to maintain good neighboring relations.

For such relations between Japan and the ROK, territorial issue over Takeshima is the fundamental and important issue that must be solved determinedly. Rational and peaceful diplomatic effort is needed.

We, living in the present age, should pursue prosperity and coexistence of both countries, looking squarely to the historical facts. We ask you, the leaders of the ROK peoples, once again to answer to our questions.

This open letter is not intended to raise conflict and promote confrontation. We consider that it is necessary to hold calm and constructive talks between not only between governments but also between the peoples. We should carefully discuss and solve the issue based on historical facts and international agreements. We sincerely hope that this open letter will create opportunity to begin talks towards the creation of real and steady friendship between Japan and the ROK.

October 29th, 2018

League of Member of Parliament Acting for Protection of Japanese Territory