New Historical Cartographic Records Supporting Chinese Sovereignty over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands

FEI Jie*  LAI Zhongping**

Abstract: This article reports the discovery of new historical cartographic records concerning Diaoyu/Senkaku Island and its affiliated islands (hereinafter referred to as “the Diaoyu Islands”) by European and American cartographers. In total, 14 maps from the 18-19th centuries (prior to 1895) that recorded the Diaoyu Islands in English and French were discovered. Each of these maps refers to the Diaoyu Islands by using transliterations of their Chinese place names. This newly discovered, third party historical cartographic and toponymic evidence supports the claim that the Diaoyu Islands were discovered and named by the Chinese prior to the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, and that this was widely known in Europe and America. Thus, this article lends support to the claim that these islands are, in historical terms, within Chinese territory.

Key Words: Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands; Historical cartographic record; Transliteration of place name; Treaty of Shimonoseki

I. Introduction

The Diaoyu Island and its affiliated islands, also known as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, hereinafter referred to as “the Diaoyu Islands”, consist of Diaoyu Island,
Huangwei-yu Island, Chiwei-yu Island, and their affiliated islands and reefs. The Diaoyu Islands are located to the northeast of Taiwan, in the waters between 123°20'–124°40' E and 25°40'–26°00' N on the continental shelf of the East China Sea. The Chinese government claims that the Diaoyu Islands are an inseparable part of the Chinese territory, however, territorial disputes over the islands between the Chinese and Japanese governments have persisted. Previous studies have discussed issues of sovereignty concerning the Diaoyu Islands in terms of history, politics.


After their defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Chinese were forced to sign the unequal Treaty of Shimonoseki. As a result, the Diaoyu Islands were occupied by the Japanese and ceded to Japan. After World War II (1939-1945), the Diaoyu Islands were to be returned to China in accordance with the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Proclamation and the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, however, the United States illegally administered the islands and illegally transferred the administration rights over the islands to Japan.

History is an important dimension in the study of the Diaoyu Islands, and it may have implications for today’s Sino-Japanese sovereignty claims in this regard. The Japanese government claims that Diaoyu Islands were *terra nullius*

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prior to 1895, however, Chinese and Japanese historical documents demonstrate that, at that time, the Chinese had already discovered, named, developed, and had jurisdiction over the Diaoyu Islands.

During the 14th-19th centuries, Ryukyu (currently known as Okinawa) regularly paid tribute to the imperial court of China. In return, the Chinese imperial court routinely sent imperial envoys to Ryukyu. The Diaoyu Islands were located on the route between China and Ryukyu, and were utilized for navigation aids and relay stations. The earliest record of the Diaoyu Islands can be found in the book titled *Voyage with a Tail Wind (Shun Feng Xiang Song)* published circa 1403. Records of the Diaoyu Islands can be found in official reports and other relevant literature written by Chinese imperial envoys, which indicated that the boundary between China and Ryukyu was the Black Water Trough (also known as the Okinawa Trough), and that the Diaoyu Islands were a part of Chinese territory. As of the 16th Century, China placed the Diaoyu Islands under its coastal defense system, and under the jurisdiction of the local government of Taiwan during the

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Qing Dynasty (1644-1912).\(^9\)

Historical maps are often more informative than textual records. Many Chinese and Japanese historical maps indicate that the Diaoyu Islands were first named and administered by the Chinese.\(^9\) In addition, third party maps in European languages are objective and informative, and can be used to confirm this. Within previous studies, approximately 16 such maps have been identified (Annex 1).\(^10\) All in all, the Diaoyu Islands should not be considered \textit{terra nullius} prior to 1895.

This study reports the discovery of 14 historical maps that recorded the Diaoyu Islands. Each of these maps, written in English or French, was charted by European and American cartographers prior to the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki. The earliest map was charted in 1797, and the latest was charted in 1872.

**II. Historical Cartographic Records**

In this section we will briefly introduce the newly discovered maps (Annex 1), and further discuss the names and references of the Diaoyu Islands found within.

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1) Jean-Francois de Galaup La Perouse, Carte des Decouvertes, Faites en 1787 dans les Mers de Chine et de Tartarie, 1797 12

This map, written in French, recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “I. Houpinsu”, “I. Tiaoyu-su”, and “I. Tche-oey sou” respectively (Fig. 1). Here, “su” and “sou” are transliterations of “yu”, meaning islet. The use of “I. Houpinsu” is actually a misnomer, since Houpinsu should be used to refer to the Huaping-yu Island, which lies to the southwest of Diaoyu Islands. “I. Tiaoyu-su”, which is a transliteration of Diaoyu-yu (Diaoyu Island), is also a misnomer. Therefore the author of the map mistook the Diaoyu Island for Huaping-yu Island, and further mistook the Huangwei-yu Island for the Diaoyu Island. “I. Tche-oey sou” is a transliteration of the Chinese place name “Chiwei-yu”.

2) John Cary, A New Map of China, from the Latest Authorities, 1801 13

This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Hao-yu-su”, “Hoan-oey-su”, and “Tshe-oey-su” respectively (Fig. 2). Each of these names are transliterations of the Chinese place names. Previous studies reported John’s map of China (1806), however the 1801 and 1806 versions differ significantly in terms of recording the Diaoyu Islands. The latter recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Houpin su”, “Tiaoyu su”, and “Tsheoey su”. 14

3) Mathew Carey, China, Divided into Its Great Provinces, 1811 and 1814 15

These maps are written in English. A previous study reported Carey’s 1796 version 16 which is similar to the 1811 version. The 1814 version is also similar to the 1811 version. These maps recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Haoyusu”, “Hoanoeysu”, and “Tsheoeysu” respectively (Fig. 3).

4) John Thomson, Tartary, 1814

This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Houpin su”, “Tiaou su”, and “Tche oey sou” respectively (Fig. 4).

5) Adrien Hubert Brue, L’Asie 4, 1814

This map, written in French, recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “I. Hou-pin-su”, “I. Tiaoyu-su”, and “I. Tsheouyesou” respectively. In addition, this map incorrectly recorded the Northern Three Islands of Taiwan (Bei Fang San Yu) as “I. Hao-yu-su” (Fig. 5). “Hao-yu-su” and “Tiaoyu-su” are both transliterations of the Chinese place name “Diaoyu-yu”, meaning Diaoyu Island. The Northern Three Islands of Taiwan are composed of the Pengchia-yu, Mianhua-yu, and Huaping-yu Islands from north to south, which lie between the Diaoyu Islands and Taiwan Island.

6) Fielding Lucas Jr., China, 1823

This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Hooyusu” and “Tscheeyou” respectively, but omitted the Huangwei-yu Island (Fig. 6).

7) Sidney Hall, China, 1828

This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu and Huangwei-yu Islands as “Houpin su”, “Tyaoisu”, but omitted the Chiwei-yu Island (Fig. 7).

8) John Arrowsmith, China, 1844

This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu, and Chiwei-yu Islands as “Hoapin-su”, “Tiaoyu-su”, and “Rock” respectively (Fig. 8).

9) J. Andriveau-Goujon, Carte de l’Empire Chinois et du Japon, 1847

This map, written in French, recorded the entire Diaoyu Islands as “I. Tiaoyusu”, but omitted the Huangwei-yu and Chiwei-yu Islands. In addition, it recorded the Pengchia-yu Island as “Haoyusu”, which is actually a transliteration of Diaoyu-

yu (Diaoyu Island) (Fig. 9). Pengchia-yu Island is one of the Northern Three Islands of Taiwan.

10) George Frederick Cruchley, China, 1850 23
This map, written in English, recorded the entire Diaoyu Islands (including the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu and Chiwei-yu Islands) as “Tia-yu-su” (Fig. 10).

11) Alvin Jewett Johnson, Johnson’s China East Indies Australia and Oceanica, 1860 24
This map, written in English, recorded the entire Diaoyu Islands (including the Diaoyu, Huangwei-yu and Chiwei-yu Islands) as the “Tiaoyu su” (Fig. 11).

12) Alexander Keith Johnston, China and Japan, 1861 25
This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu and Huangwei-yu Islands as “Hoa-pin-sin” and “Tia-yu-su” respectively, but omitted the Chiwei-yu Island (Fig. 12).

13) Alvin Jewett Johnson, Johnson’s China, 1864 26
This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu and Huangwei-yu Islands as “Hawaping san” and “Tiayu su” respectively, but omitted Chiwei-yu Island (Fig. 13).

14) G.H. Swanston and J. Bartholomew, China, 1872 27
This map, written in English, recorded the Diaoyu and Huangwei-yu Islands as “Hawaping san” and “Tiayu su” respectively, but omitted Chiwei-yu Island (Fig. 14).

III. Discussion on the Toponymy of the Diaoyu Islands

In this section we conduct a preliminary toponymic analysis of the Diaoyu Islands based on these newly discovered maps and previously discovered third

party maps. Each of these maps were in European languages and were charted by European and American cartographers.

The names of the Diaoyu Islands in third party maps may be categorized into three types (Annex 1) based on the names used within.

Type 1 maps use “Tiaoyusu”, “Hoangoueysu” and “Tchehoeyou”, which refer to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-yu Island respectively (Annex 1). These are transliterations of Chinese place names, and were widely adopted by many maps in the 18th and 19th century. The spelling of the island names in some maps changed slightly, in particular, some maps spelled “Tiaoyusu” as “Haoyusu”.

This type of island names originated from Antoine Gaubil’s French map Carte Des Isles de Lieou-Kieou (1751), which is the earliest record of the Diaoyu Islands in European maps. Gaubil’s map recorded the Diaoyu Islands as “Tiaoyusu”, “Hoangoueysu” and “Tchehoeyou”, referring to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-yu Island, respectively. This map is actually a translation of the relevant map by Xu Baoguang, a Chinese official.

The island names of Type 2 include “Houpinsu”, “Tiaoyu-su”, and “Tche-oey sou” originated from the transliterations of Chinese place names (Annex 1). The island names first appeared in Carte des Decouvertes, Faites en 1787 dans les Mers de Chine et de Tartarie.

The island names of Type 2 are more influential than those of Type 1 in the late 19th century. An interesting example is Cary’s A New Map of China. In Cary’s 1801 version, the island names of Type 1 were adopted, whereas his 1806 version used those of Type 2. During the 1840s, the British navy surveyed and mapped the Diaoyu Islands, and also adopted the island names of Type 2.

30 Xu Baoguang, Records of Messages from Chong-shan (Zhong Shan Chuan Xin Lu), in Series of Index to SI-KU-QUAN-SHU – Histories, Vol. 256, Jinan: Qilu Press, 1996. Xu, a deputy title-conferring envoy, was sent to Ryukyu by the Qing Dynasty in 1718. The historical background is that, the Ryukyu Kingdom was a tributary State of the Chinese Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911 AD).
The island names of Type 2, however, contain two misnomers. The Huangwei-yu Island was incorrectly labeled as “Tiaoyu-su”, and the Diaoyu Island misnamed as “Houpinsu”. “Tiaoyu-su” is the transliteration of Diaoyu-yu, where the latter “yu” means islet. “Diaoyu-yu” is another name of Diaoyu Island, whereas “Houpinsu” is actually a transliteration of Huaping-yu Island. Huaping-yu Island lies to the northeast of Taiwan Island, and to the southwest of Diaoyu Island. Diaoyu Island lies to the southwest of Huangwei-yu Island. In addition, the Chiwei-yu Island was recorded as “Tche-oey sou” in earlier maps, but was later labeled as “Rock” and “Raleigh Rock” in later maps.

Type 3 simply records the Diaoyu Islands as “I. Tiaoyu-su” or “Tiaoyu su”.

The Japanese government claims that the Diaoyu Islands were terra nullius, and were acquired by virtue of “discovery-occupation”. As was stated above, previous studies suggested that the claim was not supported by historical documents. Our discovery of cartographic and toponymic evidence further indicates that the Diaoyu Islands had already been discovered and named by the Chinese centuries before they were occupied by the Japanese, and that this fact was widely known in Europe and America. These historical records support that these islands were not terra nullius prior to the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895).

IV. Discussions on the Use of “Pinnacle Islands”, “Pinnacle Group” and “Pinnacle Island”

“Pinnacle Islands”, “Pinnacle group” and “Pinnacle Island” are another group of important place names. The book *The China Pilot 1861* recorded the two place names in the section “Hoa-pin-su, Pinnacle, and Ti-a-usu Islands”.

*This group forms a triangle, of which the hypotenuse, or distance between Hoa-pin-su and Ti-a-usu, extends about 15 miles, and that between Hoa-pin-su and the southern Pinnacle Island about 2 miles ... The extreme height of Hoa-pin-su is 1,181 feet ... the north face of the island is in lat. 25º47´7˝ N., long. 123º30½´ E. ... The Pinnacle group, which is connected by a reef and bank of soundings with Hoa-pin-su ... Ti-a-usu, bearing N.E. northerly 15 miles from Hoa-pin-su, appears to be composed of huge boulders of a greenish porphyritic stone. The capping of this island, from about 60 feet, to its summit, which is about 600 feet from the level of the sea, is covered with a loose*
brushwood, but no trees of any size.\textsuperscript{32}

This record is an updated version of an earlier record,\textsuperscript{33} whereas similar records are also available in some later sources (Annex 1). “Pinnacle Islands” and “Pinnacle group” referred to the Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao Islets in mid-19th century literature. It is noteworthy that the Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao Islands are two islets of the Diaoyu Islands, and lie to the southeast of the Diaoyu Island. The Japanese name of the Diaoyu Islands “Senkaku Islands” is a translation of the “Pinnacle Islands” or “Pinnacle group”, however, the Japanese use this word to name the entire group of Diaoyu Islands, not the islets of Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao. Thus, the Japanese name of the Diaoyu Islands, “Senkaku Islands”, is a misnomer. It is a translation of “Pinnacle Islands”, however, the latter is the European name of the Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao Islets, not the entire set of Diaoyu Islands.

The meaning of the term “Pinnacle Island” is different, and it does not correspond to any part of the Diaoyu Islands. It may have first appeared in Johnston’s \textit{China and Japan} (1861) and the \textit{China Sea Pilot}, and was used in G.H. Swanston and J. Bartholomew’s \textit{China} (1872) (Annex 1). According to its location shown in the above mentioned maps and the coordinates described in the \textit{China Sea Pilot}, we can know that it refers to the Huaping-yu Island, an island lying between Taiwan and the Diaoyu Islands.

\textbf{V. Conclusions}

We report the discovery of 14 maps that recorded the Diaoyu Islands. Each of these maps were charted by European and American cartographers during the 18th and 19th centuries. The names of the Diaoyu Islands in these maps may be categorized into three types: Type 1, which uses “Tiaoyusu”, “Hoangoueysu” and “Tchehoeyou” to refer to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-
yu Island, respectively; Type 2, which uses “Houpinsu”, “Tiaoyu-su”, and “Tche-oey sou” to refer to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-yu Island, respectively; and, Type 3, where “Tiaoyu su” refers to the entire Diaoyu Islands. All the names of the islands are transliterations of the pronunciation of Chinese place names. As a whole, our study supports the idea that the Diaoyu Islands are, in historical terms, Chinese territory, and should not be considered as terra nullius prior to the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895).

**Annex 1 Three Types of Historical Names for the Diaoyu Islands as Recorded in Maps in European Languages**

*Type 1: Usage of “Tiaoyusu”, “Hoangoueysu” and “Tchehoeyou” to Respectively Refer to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-yu Island*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diaoyu Island</th>
<th>Huangwei-yu Island</th>
<th>Chiwei-yu Island</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Hao-yu-su</td>
<td>Hoan-oey-su</td>
<td>Tshe-oey-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Haoysu</td>
<td>Hoanoeysu</td>
<td>Tcheoeysu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Haoysu</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tsheceyou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-1*</td>
<td>Tiaoyusu</td>
<td>Hoangoueysu</td>
<td>Tchehoeyou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-2</td>
<td>Hao-yu-su</td>
<td>Hoan-oey-su</td>
<td>Tche-oey-su</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R1-3</th>
<th>Hao-yu-su</th>
<th>Hoan-oey-su</th>
<th>Tche-oey-su</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1-4</td>
<td>Hao-yu-su</td>
<td>Hoan-oey-su</td>
<td>Tshe-oey-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-5</td>
<td>Hao-yu-su</td>
<td>Hoanoey-su</td>
<td>Tshe-oey-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-6</td>
<td>Haoyusu?</td>
<td>Hoan-oey-su</td>
<td>Tche-oey-su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-7</td>
<td>Haoyusu</td>
<td>Hoanoeysu</td>
<td>Tcheoeysu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1-8</td>
<td>Hao-yu-su</td>
<td>Hoan-oey-su</td>
<td>Tche-oey-su</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“R” refers to previously discovered maps.


41 Aaron Arrowsmith, Arrowsmith’s Map of the World on a Globular Projection, Exhibiting Particularly the Nautical Researches of Captain James Cook, with All the Recent Discoveries to the Present Time, 1794; Ju Deyuan, Rectification of the Name of the Diaoyu Islands – Historical Sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands and the Sources of International Law, Beijing: Kunlun Press, 2006, pp. 1–455 (in Chinese).


Type 2: Usage of “Houpinsu”, “Tiaoyu-su”, and “Tche-oey sou”, to Respectively Refer to Diaoyu Island, Huangwei-yu Island, and Chiwei-yu Island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diaoyu Island</th>
<th>Huangwei-yu Island</th>
<th>Chiwei-yu Island</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>I. Houpinsu</td>
<td>I. Tiaoyu-su</td>
<td>I. Tche-oey sou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>Houpin su</td>
<td>Tiaou su</td>
<td>Tche oey su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>I. Hao-pin-su</td>
<td>I. Tiaoyu-su</td>
<td>I. Tsheouyesou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Hoapinsu</td>
<td>Tyaoisu</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Hoapin-su</td>
<td>Tiaoyu-su</td>
<td>Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>Hoa-pin-sin</td>
<td>Tia-yu-su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>Hawapin-san</td>
<td>Taiyusu</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>Hoa-pin-sin</td>
<td>Tia-yu-su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2-1</td>
<td>Houpin su</td>
<td>Tiaoyu su</td>
<td>Tcheoey su</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: R2-3, R2-4, R2-5, and R2-6 recorded the Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao Islands as “Pinnacle Islands” or “Pinnacle Group”. The Nanxiao Dao and Beixiao Dao Islands, lying to the southeast of the Diaoyu Island, are two islets of the Diaoyu Islands.


### Type 3: Usage of “Tiaoyu su” Refers to the Entire Diaoyu Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diaoyu Island</th>
<th>Huangwei-yu Island</th>
<th>Chiwei-yu Island</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>I. Tiaoyu-su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>Tia-ju-su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Tiao-yu su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3-1</td>
<td>Tiayu-Su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3-2</td>
<td>Tia-ju-su</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annex 2  Records of the Diaoyu Islands in Newly Discovered Historic Maps

**Fig. 1**  Jean-Francois de Galaup La Perouse, Carte des Decouvertes, Faites en 1787 dans les Mers de Chine et de Tartarie, 1797

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Fig. 2 John Cary, A New Map of China, from the Latest Authorities, 1801

Fig. 3 Mathew Carey, China, Divided into Its Great Provinces, 1811

Fig. 4 John Thomson, Tartary, 1814
Fig. 5 Adrien Hubert Brue, L’Asie 4, 1814

Fig. 6 Fielding Lucas Jr., China, 1823

Fig. 7 Sidney Hall, China, 1828
Fig. 8 John Arrowsmith, China, 1844

Fig. 9 J. Andriveau-Goujon, Carte de l’Empire Chinois et du Japon, 1847

Fig. 10 G.F. Cruchley, China, 1850
Fig. 11 Alvin Jewett, Johnson’s China East Indies Australia and Oceanica, 1860

Fig. 12 Alexander Keith Johnston, China and Japan, 1861

Fig. 13 Alvin Jewett Johnson, Johnson’s China, 1864
Fig. 14 G.H. Swanston and J. Bartholomew, China, 1872

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