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## The Circumstances Surrounding the “Letter of Appreciation,” as Seen from the Documentary Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs\*

Ayano Shimabukuro

### Introduction

Among the documents belonging to Yaeyama Museum, Ishigaki City, there is the “Letter of Appreciation for the Aid Provided to Shipwreck Survivors in the Waters off Senkaku Islands” (subsequently, “the letter of appreciation”) (Note 1) that became an Ishigaki City designated cultural property in 2011. The letter, which is addressed to “Ishigaki Village employee Sonpan Tamayose” (Note 2),” was donated to Ishigaki City in 1996.

It was known that this letter of appreciation from the Republic of China had been sent to several addresses, but for a long time it was thought that only one of these letters remained within Ishigaki City. However, on November 12, 2010, the existence of another letter of appreciation, to “Ishigaki Village Mayor Zensa Toyokawa” (Note 3), was newly confirmed and was donated to the museum. This means that there are two letters of appreciation existing within Ishigaki City.

Also, the letter addressed to Mr. Tamayose had been altered to fit into a frame, so its original form was not known. A photograph of it from an investigation by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands in 1970 has survived. However, the letter of appreciation at that time had already been put into a picture frame, and therefore, its upper and lower parts seemed to have been shortened (Photograph 1). On the other hand, since the letter to Mr. Toyokawa had not been altered, it was possible to confirm its original form at the time it was sent.

In addition to describing the appearance of the letters of appreciation, this article introduces the series of events by which these letters came to be sent. This report is an amended and longer version of a short report that the author prepared for a press release (Note 4) and as a reference document. So please be aware that parts of it are previously reported duplicated information.



Photograph 1: the photo of the letter of appreciation, taken by the Government of the Ryukyu Islands in 1970 (property of Okinawa Prefectural Archives: photograph number 036969)

\* This article was originally published as 島袋綾野「【資料紹介】外務省記録文書に見る『感謝状』のいきさつ」『石垣市立八重山博物館紀要』第22号、2013年、63-76頁

## 1. Details of the incident leading to the sending of the letter of appreciation

The original incident that led to the sending of the letter of appreciation was a shipwreck of a Chinese vessel in 1919 in the waters off the Senkaku Islands (at that time, China was the Republic of China, which was its country name between the Qing Empire and the People's Republic of China, lasting from January 1912 to the end of September 1949), and the vessels crew were given aid by people on the Senkaku Islands. At that time, there were people engaged in a business run by the Koga family based on Uotsuri Island (one of the Senkaku Islands).

The letters of appreciation read as follows.

Letter of appreciation (to Mr. Toyokawa) (Note 5)

感謝狀（豐川氏宛）

中華民國八年冬福建省惠安縣漁民郭合順等三十一人遭風遇難飄泊至日本帝國沖繩縣八重山郡尖閣列島內和洋島承

日本帝國沖繩縣八重山郡石垣村長豐川善佐君熱心救護使得生還故國洵屬救災恤鄰當仁不讓深堪感佩特贈斯狀以表謝忱

中華民國駐長崎領事馮冕（印）（駐長崎領事）

中華民國九年五月二十日 公印（中華民國駐長崎領事印）

Letter of appreciation (to Mr. Tamayose)

感謝狀（玉代勢氏宛）

中華民國八年冬福建省惠安縣漁民郭合順等三十一人遭風遇難飄泊至日本帝國沖繩縣八重山郡尖閣列島內和洋島承

日本帝國八重山郡石垣村雇玉代勢孫伴君熱心救護使得生還故國洵屬救災恤鄰當仁不讓深堪感佩特贈斯狀以表謝忱

中華民國駐長崎領事馮冕（印）（駐長崎領事）

中華民國九年五月二十日 公印（中華民國駐長崎領事印）

Upon comparing both letters, we see that there are slight differences in the underlined parts, such as the names, but their content can be said to be the same. The detail of the shipwreck cannot be ascertained from the contents of the letter, but among the three volumes of the “Assorted Matters Regarding the Aid Provided to Vessels in Difficulties and Shipwreck Survivors from the Qing Dynasty” stored in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there is the “Matter Regarding the Rescue of Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals in January 1920,” (subsequently, Ministry of Foreign Affairs documentary records), from which we can find out more details about what occurred.

There is a letter dated January 21, 1920, from Okinawa Prefectural Governor Sosuke Kawagoe (subsequently, Governor Kawagoe) to Home Minister Takejiro Tokonami (subsequently, Home Minister Tokonami) that reports on the “Matter Regarding the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals. In “2. Situations Regarding the Shipwrecks and Aid” (Note 6), it is recorded that the vessel in question encountered a storm on December 26, and on the evening of the 30th, the Guo party used a small boat to embark and land on Wahejima Island in the Senkaku Islands (Note 5).

At that time on the island, there was a factory owned by Zenji Koga (its operations included producing dried bonito and stuffing-related manufacturing, and collecting feathers from various seabirds) and there were approximately 30 people, including fishermen, living on it. They gave the shipwreck survivors food and when the weather improved on January 10, transported them in a boat belonging to Koga to the Ishigaki village office. This was because the boat of the Guo party (about 15.6 m in length and 5.4 m

in width) (Note 6) had been destroyed in the storm.

After this, negotiations took place with the Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki (subsequently, China's Consul in Nagasaki) for the repatriation of the Guo party and on January 21, they left for Keelung, Taiwan, on the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (O.S.K.) (present Mitsui O.S.K. Lines) vessel called the Yaeyama Maru. On the 25th, they travelled from Keelung to Amoy and then returned to Fuzhou on the vessel the Amakusa Maru. The speediness of this response seems deserving of praise.

However, this incident did not end with the repatriation of the Guo party, as it was necessary to deal with the repayment of the costs for providing them with aid.

Governor Kawagoe requested instructions on how to request repayment of the costs of providing the aid in a letter entitled "Matter of the Aid Provided to the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals" dated February 17 to Tokichi Tanaka, Chief of the Bureau of Commercial Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (subsequently, Bureau Chief Tanaka). Bureau Chief Tanaka forwarded a copy of the request to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and after that, there was communication between the Ministry of Home Affairs and Okinawa Prefecture (dated March 20, 1920, the "Matter of the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals" from Governor Kawagoe to Home Minister Tokonami).

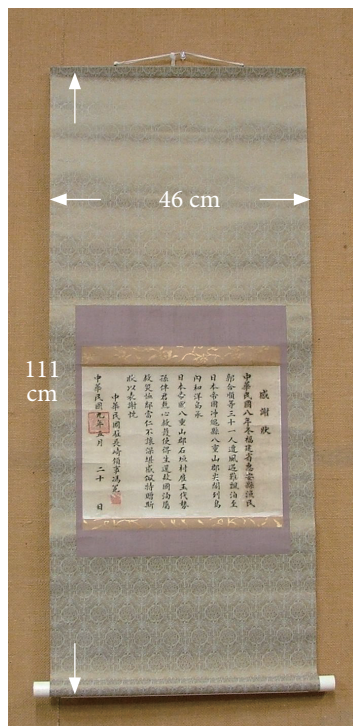
Then Ishigaki Village Mayor Zensa Toyokawa requested in a letter dated February 26, 1920, repayment for the aid of a total of 627 yen 67 sen. This was reported by Governor Kawagoe to Home Minister Tokonami, and the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to request this amount from China's central government. Following this, instructions from the Ministry of Home Affairs were sent to Envoy to China Obata to request the repayment of the costs of the aid from the Chinese government.

However, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in China Yukichi Obata (subsequently, Envoy Obata) expressed his strong reluctance toward requesting repayment from the Chinese government due to the social conditions at that time (letter dated June 10, 1920, to Minister of Foreign Affairs Kosai Uchida on "The Request for Repayment for the Costs of Aiding the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals, Guo Heshun and 30 others"). The main reasons he gave for his reluctance in making the request were that, "If we request repayment, the favorable impression that this aid was provided for purely humanitarian reasons will be lessened," and also that "There are serious concerns that a backlash against Japan might become stronger because the rescued Guo party are from the Fujian Province, where anti-Japanese sentiment is strong." Additionally, Envoy Obata noted that China's Consul in Nagasaki, who had dealt with the repatriation, should also deal with the repayment (Note 7).

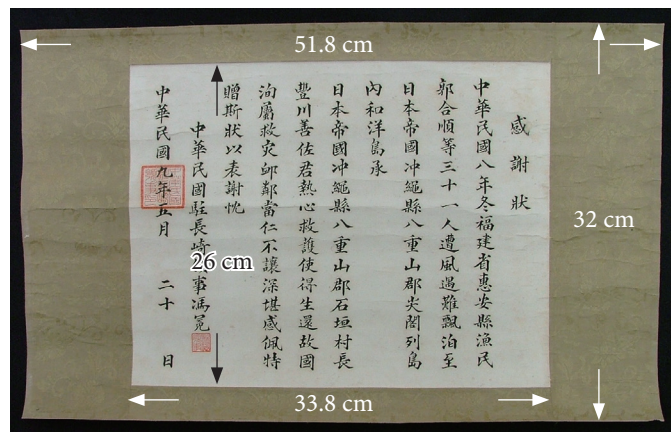
Based on this, it appears that the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to once again return the matter back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On June 24, 1920, Bureau Chief Tanaka sent Nagasaki Prefectural Governor a letter on the "Matter Regarding the Request for the Repayment of the Costs for the Aid Provided for Shipwrecked Chinese nationals." Within it, with regards to the request for repayment of costs, he notes that while "it is acceptable to request the repayment from the Government of China," it should be taken into consideration that "These survivors are from the Fujian region, where an anti-Japanese sentiment is usually strong," and wrote that he wanted that the request be made via China's Consul in Nagasaki.

Based on the above-described letter, Nagasaki Prefectural Governor Katsusaburo Watanabe (subsequently, Nagasaki Prefectural Governor), requested repayment from the China's Consul in Nagasaki. On December 27, 1920, "the request for repayment by bank transfer to the Nagasaki Branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank of 427 yen 67 sen" had been made and it was reported to Bureau Chief Tanaka that the procedure to receive the money had been completed. At that time, the amount transferred was 200 yen less than the amount requested, at 427 yen 67 sen. Apparently, this mistake happened because

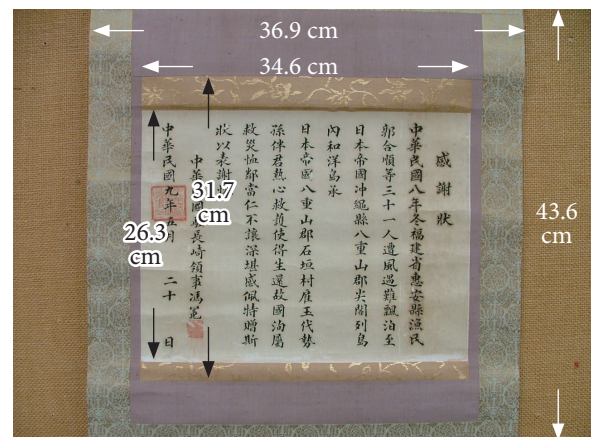




Photograph 2: (upper right) Letter of appreciation to Mr. Toyokawa



Photograph 3: (lower right) Part of the letter of appreciation to Mr. Tamayose



Photograph 4: The entire letter of appreciation to Mr. Tamayose

Nagasaki Prefectural Governor mixed up the repayment with the amount of 200 yen, which was previously transferred by China's Consul in Nagasaki on May 22, 1920 as the Ishigaki Village fund for philanthropic works.

Governor Kawagoe submitted copies of documents to Home Minister Tokonami, which showed in what way the 200 yen had been received as the fund for philanthropic works and requested Tokonami's instructions (letter dated February 4, 1921, from Governor Kawagoe to Minister Tokonami on "The Matter of the Repayment of the Costs of Aiding the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals"). One of the copies was of a letter from China's Consul in Nagasaki Feng Mian to His Excellency the Governor of Okinawa, the Empire of Japan (letter dated May 22, Republic of China Year 9). This letter describes that the details of the names of the employees who had provided the aid had already been made known to China's Consul in Nagasaki Feng Mian and based on this, "seven letters of appreciation" had been sent out, and the 200 yen was presented by China's Embassy in Tokyo for the "Ishigaki Village Hall Fund for Philanthropic Works."

Based on this information, it can be said that the letters of appreciation were not sent out based solely on a judgment by China's Consul in Nagasaki.

## 2. Observation of the museum's "Letter of appreciation"

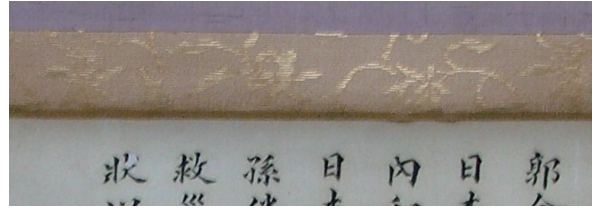
The results of the measurements of both documents are shown in photographs 2 to 4.

### 1. Size

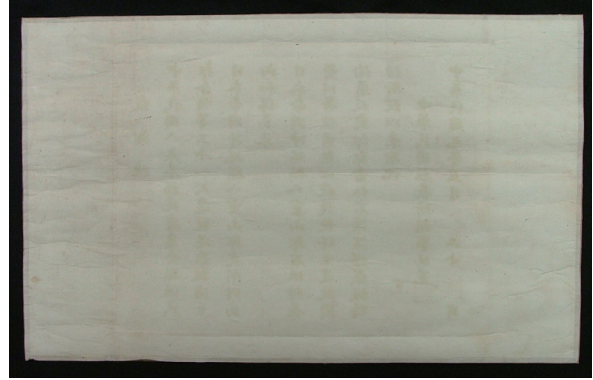
As was stated above, the letter addressed to Mr. Tamayose has been altered and its original form is unknown. Therefore, the letter sent to Mr. Tomigawa has become of reference.



Photograph 5: The state of the silk thread



Photograph 7: The upper edge in Mr. Tamayose's letter of appreciation



Photograph 8: The reverse side of Mr. Toyokawa's letter of appreciation



Photograph 6: Patterns



Photograph 9:  
Impression of the seal



Photography 10: Impression  
of the seal

Its maximum width is 51.8 cm, and the maximum length is 32 cm. For the actual letter part, the width is 33.8 cm and the length is 26 cm. Comparing these values to those of the letter addressed to Mr. Tamayose, it is apparent that the width has been significantly curtailed.

## 2. Materials, etc.

The actual letter part on which the characters have been written is made of silk. Quite a delicate silk thread was used for the weaving (Photograph 5). On first glance, it seems like paper, but the silk thread can be observed from the part that has deteriorated. The *rinzu* silk (figured silk woven with geographical features using a satin fabric) seen in the surroundings (the upper and the lower edge as well as the column area in a hanging scroll) have been designed with a light green backdrop and a flower arabesque pattern (Photograph 6). Initially, it was thought that the only difference with the letter addressed to Mr. Tamayose seems to be the colors due to fading, and therefore that the original tear was used for the upper and bottom edge. But on closer inspection, the flower arabesque design seems different. From this, it is considered that probably a tear of material with a flower arabesque design was chosen and used in order



to try to replicate the condition of the original letter.

The reverse side is supported using Chinese paper, from which it can be observed as to how the characters were projected (photograph 8).

### 3. Characters and the impressions of seals

The characters in the silk letter part were written in ink using the block style of writing Chinese characters. Also, there are two impressions of seals on the letter, which read the “Seal of the Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki” (Photograph 9) and “the Consul in Nagasaki” (Photograph 10) respectively.

The “Seal of the Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki” was placed in a way that it was overlapping the upper part of “9” in the words “May 20, the 9th year of the People’s Republic of China,” while the “Consul in Nagasaki” seal was not placed below the name of “Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki Feng Mian” without making any overlap with the characters.



Photograph 11: Condition seen from the stitching

### 4. The conditions of the documents

The documents were in different conditions. On comparing the two, it can be said that the letter sent to Mr. Toyokawa is in better condition.

#### (1) The letter of appreciation to Mr. Toyokawa

As the letter had been stored in a rolled-up form together with hanging scrolls (Note 4), it was not easy to flatten it out immediately after it was received. Time was taken for the task of flattening it while gradually changing the weight applied. However, because the document had been kept in a rolled-up form over a long period of time, it had acquired some large creases in its transverse presentation (see photographs 8 and 12).

Moreover, the stitching has become loose on the border between the edge and the column (photograph 11), and it has partly come off. The paper itself as well as part of the edge area and column has faded due to aging, while there are also some stains on the document as a whole.

#### (2) The letter of appreciated addressed to Mr. Tamayose

As can be seen from photograph 1, the letter of appreciated addressed to Mr. Tamayose was eventually altered to be a hanging scroll, while having its form changed a number of times. When it was received by Ishigaki City in 1996 (Table 1), it had already been framed.

Compared to the letter sent to Mr. Toyokawa, it is in poor condition. Insect damage can be seen in parts and in places the silk has become unraveled (Photograph 5).

Moreover, in the part of the first two lines (the right side of the letter) there is a large stain and the characters have run to a significant extent (Photograph 13).

Date	Matter	Action taken	Others
1/23/1996	Donated to the major of Ishigaki City by Mr. Sonshu Tomita	Received at the City Hall and sent to the City Office for Compiling Historical Documents.	Received in accordance with Article 14 of Ishigaki City Public Property Regulations.
1/24/1996	Article published in the Yaeyama Mainichi Shimbun and Yaeyama Nippo		* reported that the letter was stored at the City Office for Compiling Historical Documents
2/2/1996	Proposal made at the City Office for Compiling Historical Documents to change the storage location.	Transferred from the City Office for Compiling Historical Documents → the museum	
3/12/1996	A notification of the acceptance of the donation was prepared.	From Ishigaki City Major → Mr. Sonshu Tomita	The notification described that the letter was to be stored in the museum
3/12/1996	Acceptance report is submitted	Museum → City Office for Compiling Historical Documents	Ishigaki City Board of Education Museum No. 211

Table 1. Details of the receipt of the letter of appreciation sent to Mr. Sonpan Tamayose

## Conclusion

In this article, the details of the incident leading to the sending of the letters of appreciation were introduced mainly in terms of the developments within the respective administrations. If we review these developments as a time series, we can see that the letter of appreciation and fund for philanthropic works were sent as the Republic of China's response to the incident while the Government of Japan was searching for a method of requesting repayment. It is possible that the China's Consul in Nagasaki Feng Mian did not think that the Japanese side would request the repayment of the repatriation costs, and therefore, he might have thought that he had made a payment to express gratitude.

However, Ishigaki Village and Okinawa Prefecture separately sent a request for costs in February 1920, and they were probably not aware that their requests were being passed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Envoy to China, the Nagasaki Prefectural Governor, and China's Consul in Nagasaki. The 200 yen sent prior to the request was received with thanks as a fund for philanthropic works. China's Consul in Nagasaki, who had been informed of the request for an additional 627 yen after this payment, subtracted the 200 yen, for which the procedures had already been completed, and once again paid the remaining 427 yen 67 sen to the Nagasaki Prefectural Governor. Following this, it seems that Okinawa Prefecture protested against this action, as it was not aware of these circumstances.

While Okinawa Prefecture requested again the 200 yen, it is not known from the documents available whether or not this additional amount was sent. Whatever the case, the two letters of appreciation in the museum are historical documents, which have the background that has been described here, and at the very least, we can conclude that the two letters expressed China's feelings of sincere appreciation.

With regards to the condition of the documents, as was stated in "2. Observations of the letter of appreciation in the museum," in addition to some loose threads in the main letter part, other deterioration, such as fading and creases, can be seen in other parts of the letters. Therefore, it was judged that they

would not withstand the condition in which they would be taken in and out excessively and a long-term display. For this reason, they are not among the items the museum displays to the public. While the museum is aware that many people are interested in seeing them, it asks for the public's understanding as this is necessary to conserve these important historical documents.

I would like to take this opportunity at the end of this article to express my gratitude for the assistance I received from the Reading Room of the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Okinawa Prefectural Archives, Senkaku Islands Document Materials Compilation Association, Curator Ichiko Yonamine of the Okinawa Prefectural Museum & Art Museum, and Team Leader Keiko Kanna of the Team of Historiography, Cultural Assets Division, Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education.

### [Explanatory notes]

- Note 1. The photographs showing the condition of the letters of appreciation and the translation are included together at the end of the article due to space and editing reasons. When translating the document, I received the assistance of Team Leader Keiko Kanna from the Team of Historiography, Cultural Assets Division, Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education.
- Note 2. Sonpan Tamayose = Sonpan Tomita. At that time, he was an employee of the Ishigaki Village Office, but subsequently he was the Secretary of Ishigaki Village, Interim Major of Major of Ishigaki Village Ohama, Treasurer of Ishigaki Town, and Deputy Major of Ishigaki Town.
- Note 3. Zensa Toyokawa. At that time he was Ishigaki Village Mayor. After working as a government official responsible for the taking in and out of warehouse materials, and after the abolition of the agency responsible for warehouses, he became the village chief in Miyara, Haimi and other villages. Following the inauguration of Yaeyama Village, he became a village council member and was also appointed Taketomi Village Mayor and Ishigaki Village Mayor.
- Note 4. The press release (part of its contents such as individual names, had been edited before it was included in this paper)

As far as we know at the present time, seven letters of appreciation were sent. The evidence for this is that it is written in the documents in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that seven letters of appreciation were sent. Mr. Kiyoshi Makino noted that four of these were to "Zensa Toyokawa, Zenji Koga, Sonpan Tamayose, and Matsuba Robunasto" ("New History of Yaeyama," published in 1972). Subsequently, in a report by the Sankei Shimbun (dated September 12, 1996), it was established that a letter was also sent to Liao De Cong, who worked in the Iriomote Coal Mine. From these findings, Mr. Kunitaka Tanaka, a researcher of the Senkaku Islands issue, estimated that the remaining two people receiving letters were the Koga store manager in Ishigaki and a village leader in Koga Village on Uotsuri Island at that time (management site, "the Senkaku Islands Problem," information as of March 2013).

When this information had been brought together to a certain degree, the museum began the task of inquiring to each relevant institution at the beginning of January 2010. The results were as follows. (1) Regarding Mr. Matsuba Robunasto, even with the assistance of the office of the editor of the history of Yonaguni Town, none of his descendants have been found in the area around Yona. (2) As we can suppose from the content of the Sankei Shimbun article, a descendant of Liao De Cong is living in Taiwan, and it was judged that the letter of appreciation is not within Japan. (3) Mr. Zenji Koga did not have any children, and although his possession of the letter was confirmed through a previous interview (Modern Age, June 1972), an investigation to trace who is in possession of it cannot be done at the present time. (4) Regarding the



remaining two letters, even the recipients of them are unknown. Based on these results, it was judged that if there was a letter still remaining within Ishigaki City, it would have to be the one sent to Mr. Yoshisuke Tomigawa.

Mr. Zensa Toyokawa was skilled at dealing with and storing historical materials. But as previously mentioned, when the relevant party was requested to conduct reinvestigation, the response received was, "I have never seen it, and I think it no longer exists." The basis of this response is that it was not found more than 20 years ago when the late Mr. Kiyoshi Makino requested that the Toyokawa family search for it. Also, subsequently, the Ishigaki City Office for Compiling Historical Documents (at that time) investigated its whereabouts and created a document catalogue for the purpose of editing "Toyokawa Family Documents," but its existence was not confirmed.

Due to this situation, the museum was almost ready to give up the search for the letter. However the owner was contacted by the museum and requested that he check a box with hanging scrolls stored separately from the other old documents. As a result, the letter of appreciation was discovered rolled up in Japanese paper with other documents. This was November 12.

When this report was received and the museum staff went to confirm the document, the owner and other people involved who found the letter expressed their surprise at having found it, saying, "We could not find it in the past when we searched absolutely everywhere."

Note 5. In "2. The Situation of the Accident and the Aid" within "The Matter of the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals" dated January 21, 1920, it is written, "Shipwreck on an isolated island named Waheijima Island in the Senkaku Islands, Ishigaki Village, Yaeyama County in the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture." However, in letters later sent to Bureau Chief Tanaka and Home Minister Tokonami, it is written, "Shipwreck on an isolated island named Wayojima Island in the Senkaku Islands, Ishigaki Village, Yaeyama County in the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture."

It was written as "Wayojima" because it was highly likely that a clerical error was made at that time. Based on the reports signed by Governor Kawagoe, it is considered that the name of the island in the letters of appreciation became "Wayojima Island in the Senkaku Islands, Yaeyama County, Okinawa Prefecture, the Empire of Japan." Additionally, with regards to the time when the Guo party left Fujian Province, it was described as "the end of February last year (1919)" in a previous document, while it was described as "September 7, 1919" in a later letter. It is unknown as to which date is correct.

Note 6. 2. Situation surrounding the accident and the aid

The crew of 31 described previously got aboard a sailing ship called Kongomaru (approximately 15.6 m in length and 5.4 m in width) in late November of last year and departed from Fujian Province. On December 26 last year, while these migrant workers who were fishing moved towards the Zhejiang area, they encountered a storm. Due to stormy wind and storm-tossed waters, the ship shook violently. Since there was a concern that the ship might capsize, it was decided that they would cut off the mast to prevent the ship from being overturned. However, this caused the ship to lose navigation power, leaving it to follow the current as well as being tossed up and down by big waves, and to go adrift. In the evening on the 30th of the same month, they became shipwrecked on an isolated island named Waheijima Island in the Senkaku Islands, Ishigaki Village, Yaeyama County in the jurisdiction of Okinawa Prefecture. They used three different boats to which all of them got on separately and managed to land on the island. However, they were out of food and were already facing starvation. Fortunately, on

this island, there was a fishery office owned by a person called Zenji Koga and nearly 30 people including fishermen were living there. The shipwrecked Chinese nationals were given food that the islanders had stored, and they all received aid. Due to the bad weather, they were rescued by the people of Koga's office and were offered the opportunity to stay there. On the 10th of this month, as the weather finally improved, all the Chinese survivors were transported to the Ishigaki Village Office using a fishing boat owned by Koga. Since then, they are staying in and protected at an accommodation for travelers in the village. Their boats seemed to have been destroyed by the wind and waves after they had landed on Waheijima Island, and all the ship fittings and the boats themselves have been washed away to the sea.

Note 7. "The Request for Repayment for the Costs of Aiding the Shipwrecked Chinese Nationals, Guo Heshun and 30 others"

Regarding this matter, based on the report by the governor of Okinawa Prefecture, we have received a notification from the Ministry of Home Affairs. In accordance with the notification, and also due to your official correspondence No. 64 sent on the 2nd of this month, the repayment of 627 yen and 67 sen for the cost of providing aid was requested. I would like to put aside for a while whether it is right to request a repayment for the cost of providing aid from a purely logical perspective. Basically, rescuing shipwrecked victims like this case is an incident that could happen in terms of humanitarian reasons or international traffic conditions between any countries in the world, while it should often happen particularly between Japan and China, which are separated only by a narrow stretch of water. Therefore, I am very reluctant to request the repayment for the costs of providing aid to the central government in China. If we request repayment, the favorable impression that this aid was provided for purely humanitarian reasons will be lessened. Besides, it might cause an anti-Japanese feeling or a mocking of the act as part of Japan's calculating nature. Thus, I think it is rather important to let the world know that Japan is happy not to request any repayment for the aid in order to promote the impressions of Japan as a virtuous country. In particular, considering the fact that the shipwrecked victims are from the Fujian Province, where anti-Japanese sentiment is strong, I really feel the need for the appropriateness of Japan's action. Alternatively, looking at this matter from another aspect, the shipwrecked victims of this case were sent back through Keelung as a result of the negotiation with China's Consul in Nagasaki, those who were sent back in this case should have been handed over to the Consul involved. Depending on the circumstances and if a request was made by the Consul, then it would have been reasonable to temporarily pay the travel fees and other necessary fees for them after they were handed over in order to repatriate them. Therefore, at least the cost required until the shipwrecked victims were handed over to the China's Consul and the temporary payment required after this point should be dealt with separately. In any case, I would like to avoid making requests regarding this matter to the central government from me here in China. However, it is also not realistic that the public organizations involved bear the total amount in question. I would like to ask your generous consideration to the above-mentioned humanitarian and international traffic relevance to this matter and to deal with it appropriately.

\*Hand writing

*Following this, relevant documents enclosed in the letter from the Minister of Home Affairs will all be attached as a bulk and returned.*

(Yaeyama Museum, Ishigaki City)

## Related to note 1. Translation of the letters of appreciation (letter addressed to Zensa Toyokawa)

### Letter of appreciation

In the winter of Year 8 of the Republic of China (1919), the fishing vessel, Shun Guo, from Huian Prefecture, Fujian Province, with a crew of 31 encountered difficulties due to wind (a storm) and drifted and were shipwrecked on Wayojima Island in the Senkaku Islands of Yaeyama County, Okinawa Prefecture, the Empire of Japan.

Mayor Zensa Toyokawa of Ishigaki Village, Yaeyama County, Okinawa Prefecture, the Empire of Japan, enthusiastically aided the Guo party and returned them safely to their homeland. As this is truly an act of aiding those in need and helping their neighbors, and it is indeed a humanitarian action worthy of deep admiration, and this letter is intended to express our feelings of sincere gratitude.

The Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki Feng Mian

May 20, 9th year of the Republic of China (1920)

(Letter addressed to Sonpan Tamayose)

### Letter of appreciation

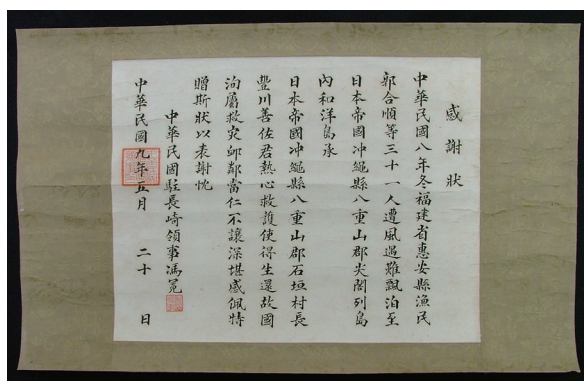
At the end of Year 8 of the Republic of China (1919), the fishing vessel, Shun Guo, from Huian Prefecture, Fujian Province, with a crew of 31 encountered difficulties due to wind (a storm) and drifted and were shipwrecked on Wayojima Island in the Senkaku Islands of Yaeyama County, Okinawa Prefecture, the Empire of Japan.

Sonpan Tamayose, employee of Ishigaki Village, Yaeyama County, the Empire of Japan enthusiastically aided the Guo party and returned them safely to their homeland. As this is truly an act of aiding those in need and helping their neighbors, and it is indeed a humanitarian action worthy of deep admiration, and this letter is intended to express our feelings of sincere gratitude.

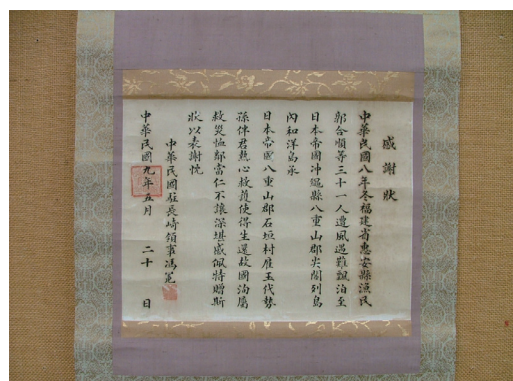
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Note 1-related. Image of the document



Photograph 12: Letter of appreciation to Zensa Toyokawa for the aid he provided following the shipwreck on Senkaku Islands



Photograph 13: Letter of appreciation to Sonpan Tamayose for the aid he provided following the shipwreck on Senkaku Islands