

## New Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Darwin

On 10 December, an official ceremony was held to appoint the new Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Darwin, Mr James Paspaley.

Dr Masahiro Kohara, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, hosted a reception in Darwin to celebrate the appointment of the new Honorary Consul-General of Japan in Darwin, Mr James Paspaley.

More than 110 people attended the event. Among the attendees were Chief Minister of the Northern Territory Terry Mills and former Chief Minister Paul Henderson.



Dr Kohara and Mr James Paspaley

Mr Paspaley is Executive Director of the Paspaley group, the famous pearling company.

Consul-General Kohara embraced the youth of the new office holder, who has close ties with Japan, saying that he believed the “young and energetic” Mr Paspaley was an excellent choice to assume the position in Darwin, which is “a young and energetic city with limitless potential”. Dr Kohara also praised Mr Paspaley’s deep understanding of Japan.

### Letters to the Editor

The Editor of *Japan Reports* welcomes any comments and suggestions you may have.

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## China hasn't a legal leg to stand on in its tussle with Japan\*

The islands were claimed in 1895

Masahiro Kohara, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney

Recently, there has been extensive coverage of Japan-China ties and various opinions published in *The Australian*. In this article, I would like to present certain facts and the basic position of the Japanese Government regarding the Senkaku Islands. In particular, I would like to reiterate that the Senkaku Islands are an inherent part of the territory of Japan, in light of historical facts and based upon international law.

From 1885, the government of Japan undertook thorough surveys of the Senkaku Islands and confirmed that they were uninhabited and that there was no trace of them having been under the control of China. The government of Japan formally incorporated the Senkaku Islands into Japan on 14 January, 1895. These measures were carried out in accordance with the accepted means of duly acquiring territorial sovereignty under international law (*terra nullius*). Therefore, there are no territorial issues to be resolved between Japan and China.

There is clear evidence that China considered the Senkaku Islands to be an inherent part of Japanese territory. In 1920, the then Consul of the Republic of China in Nagasaki, Japan, wrote a letter of appreciation for the rescue of 31 Chinese fishermen who, as the letter reads, were washed ashore the “Senkaku Islands, Yaeyama District, Okinawa Prefecture, Empire of Japan”. The Republic of China’s *New Atlas* published in China in 1933 treats the islands as part of Japan. In 1953, an article in the *People’s Daily* newspaper refers to the Senkaku Islands as being one of seven groups of islands that make up the Ryukyu Islands, part of Japan. The *World Atlas* published in the People’s Republic of China in 1958 and reprinted in 1960 also treats the islands as part of Japan. In 1970, maps in official school textbooks in China showed the Senkaku Islands belonging to Japan.

In 1968, a United Nations body (ECAFE) reported research which indicated possible petroleum reserves in the East China Sea. Then, for the first time in 1971, Chinese authorities began to assert their own claims regarding the Senkaku Islands. In 1971, the maps in official Chinese textbooks changed to show the Senkaku Islands as part of China’s territory. China is now claiming that the Senkaku Islands were returned to it after World War II under the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Declaration. However, while

Japan renounced Formosa (Taiwan) and the Pescadores Islands in accordance with Article 2(b) of the San Francisco Peace Treaty signed in 1951, the Senkaku Islands were not included in these renounced territories. At the same time, in accordance with Article 3 of the Treaty, the Senkaku Islands were placed under the administrative control of the US along with Okinawa and other islands. These administrative rights formally reverted to Japan in 1972.

China raised no objections at all when the US took administrative control of the Senkaku Islands, including when the US military forces used them as a bombing range.

The explanation above shows that China is challenging the recognised post-World War II legal order. The turbulent situation caused by China’s unfounded assertions is not just a bilateral issue between Japan and China, but also a matter of concern for the international community.

Of course, the Japan-China relationship is important and Japan will strive to develop a stable relationship between the two countries. However, Japan must not yield to unjustifiable demands. If we do so, not only would the standing of Japan in the eyes of the international community suffer, but also the rules and norms of the international community would be damaged.

The violent anti-Japanese protests which occurred recently in numerous regions of China cannot be condoned. They are also detrimental to China’s interests which exist in the outstanding economic growth that can be realised as China opens itself up to the world.

It is critically important that China should become a responsible power within the international community so that it can contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region and the world.

Japan has the longest history as a democratic country in Asia and it is a country which respects universal values such as the rule of law and respect for human rights. Japan, as a peace-loving nation, has consistently made great contributions to peace and prosperity of Asia after World War II. This is indeed a hallmark of Japan supported by its people, and will never change.

As such, Japan will continue to collaborate with Australia as strategic partners in order to build a free, fair and transparent regional order.

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