

# A Study on the Symbolic Meaning of Territorial Names in Disputes Between China and Its Neighboring Countries — Taking the Diaoyu Islands as an Example

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## Abstract

The territory in disputes between two countries often has different names. China and Japan have different names for Diaoyu Islands. It is called Diaoyu Islands in China, and Senkaku Islands in Japan. From the perspective of meaning reference theory, this paper analyzes the meanings behind the different symbolic names of Diaoyu Islands in China and Japan, the reasons and the impact of their use. Based on meaning reference theory and from the perspective of linguistic philosophy, this paper aims at proving that Diaoyu Islands is China's inherent territory and further enriching relevant studies on meaning reference theory by applying it to political field.

**Keywords:** meaning reference theory, Diaoyu Islands, Senkaku Islands

## 1. Introduction

The name of the Diaoyu Islands is different in both countries. It is called Diaoyu Islands in China and Senkaku Islands in Japan. This paper mainly answers three questions: the first is what are the differences between the territorial names used by China and its neighboring countries and the symbolic meanings behind them. The second is what are the reasons for the differences in the symbolic meanings of territorial names in disputes between China and its neighboring countries. The third is how the choice of territorial name symbols in disputes between China and neighboring countries affect territorial cognition. This paper aims to argue that Diaoyu Islands is an inherent territory of China based on meaning reference theory and from the perspective of linguistic philosophy. Since the meaning behind the name can identify the signified, it is necessary to distinguish the names of territory, especially when it is in dispute. This paper can not only make a distinction between these two names, but also can enrich the study of the meaning reference theory by applying it into politics.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 A Review of the Implication Reference Theory

The meaning reference theory systematically discusses the relationship among symbol, meaning and signified. Frege believes that a specific symbol corresponds to a particular meaning, a specific meaning determines a specific signified, and the same signified may correspond to a different symbol. For the first time, his meaning reference theory strictly distinguishes between symbol, meaning and signified. The meaning reference theory can objectively analyze the meaning behind the symbol, and establish the relationship between the symbol and the signified through the meaning. It can also determine, judge and recognize the signified through the meaning. This paper holds that using the meaning reference theory can objectively analyze the different meanings that exist behind the different symbols used by China and Japan for the same signified Diaoyu Islands, and further explain the reasons for the difference in meaning and the effects the symbols may bring.

#### 2.1.1 The Same Signified with Different Meanings

One of the important characteristics of language is its directionality, that is, language refers directly to the corresponding thing, which is well known as a common sense view. But Gottlob Frege denied this statement, thinking that language does not direct to things, and he introduced the third level — meaning. In his famous essay *On meaning and reference*, he systematically discusses the relationship between language symbol, meaning and signified. He distinguished the meaning from the signified for the first time, and his views had a great influence in all fields, which made himself be regarded as the founder of the philosophy of language. About the relationship between the three, he described, “What corresponds to a particular symbol is a particular meaning and what correspond to a particular meaning is a particular signified. However, there may not be the only one symbol corresponding to one signified.”<sup>1</sup> Here, Frege thinks that language does not directly point to what it refers to, and only the meaning can determine the signified, which means that there is an objective existence between the linguistic symbol and its signified, that is the meaning.

At the same time, he also put forward an important point of view, that is, the signified and the symbol may not be a one-to-one relationship. About this important proposition, the argument was made at the beginning of the essay *On meaning and reference*. “ $a = a$  and  $a = b$  are clearly sentences with different cognitive values,” he said in the original text. If we only focus on the fact that  $a$  and  $b$  have the same signified, there is no difference between the two equations, and the meaning and cognition behind them are unknown to us. Therefore, Frege believes that the role of symbols is not only to refer to an object, but also to express meaning. Although  $a$  and  $b$  refer to the same object, their meanings are different, thus  $a = a$  and  $a = b$  are cognitively different. Up to now, it is clear to us that there are different meanings behind different symbols of the same signified. If we try to deny this meaning and replace  $a$  and  $b$  arbitrarily, it will lead to many fallacies and ambiguities, nor can we deal objectively with the cognition and attitude behind it.

### 2.1.2 The Definition, Characteristics and Influencing Factors of Meaning

The generation of symbols is not completely arbitrary, that is, arbitrary symbols refer to arbitrary things. Instead, it is supported by meaning. Meaning determines the signified, and the signified corresponds to the symbol, so it is very important for us to understand the relevant information about meaning. As for the meaning itself, Frege believes that “the meaning of a symbol is probably the common nature of many impressions, and therefore is not part of a person’s mind or a spiritual model of a person.”<sup>2</sup> The meaning is not determined by a person’s psychology or thinking activity. Here, Frege distinguishes the meaning from the psychology, from which we can see the objectivity of the meaning. If an individual’s mind is understood as a kind of meaning, the meaning loses its objectivity and can not be understood by everyone. Since the meanings behind the symbol are not the same, people cannot have normal communications by using it. So the meaning is objective and public.

However, we can not think that the meaning is correct and comprehensive because of its objectivity, and there is a one-sidedness in meaning. Frege has a famous metaphor. In *On meaning and reference*, he says, “Some people use telescopes to observe the moon. I compare the moon itself to what it means (that is signified). The moon is the object of observation, and observation is mediated by the real image shown in the telescope’s objective lens and the image on the observer’s retina. I compare the former to meaning and the latter to the intuition.” The image shown in the telescope is real and objective, but it is not necessarily comprehensive. If we can see the front of the moon, we may not see its back, and if we can see the left side of the moon, we may not see the right side. The observer is likely to get a one-sided meaning. What is the cause of this kind of one side? On the one hand, the observer may not have the ability to form a clear and comprehensive understanding of the object he wants to observe; But this deficiency can be overcome. Observers can observe the moon from different angles and at different times. On the other hand, the observer may realize that the moon he observes is one-sided, but for some reason he does not want to correct it. In this case, the objectivity of the moon he observes will be doubtful. We may even wonder whether the meaning he thinks is valuable, and whether the symbols used as a way of expressing the meaning are reasonable.

Through the above discussion, the meaning contains two factors: the human factor and the objective world factor. The factor of the objective world is the signified, which is a reason for the generation of the meaning. Without the signified, there is no corresponding symbol, and then there will be no meaning behind the symbol. Language user is another necessary condition for meaning. “Man is a necessary factor in language symbols, and symbols are necessary conditions for meaning, so people also become an important reason for meaning.”<sup>3</sup> In this paper, the analysis of the meaning will also be from these two aspects in order to explore the reasons behind the meaning of symbols.

### 2.1.3 The Influence of the Selection of Specific Language Symbols

Once a symbol is determined, it influences people and society in different ways. “Frege’s explanation of language function is a theory of meaning, because to know how a language expression works we need to know what it means. And the function of meaning is reflected through the use of language by specific people to deal make contact with the world.”<sup>4</sup> Frege believes that the meaning contains the presentation pattern of signified,

and the meaning of the symbol provides us with the basis for identifying and judging the signified. The naming activity will make the signified clearer and make it more convenient for people to communicate. When a specific person says or hears a proper name, accompanied by a semantic intuition, he or she will have a series of psychological activities. This series of psychological activities and semantic intuition is also an example of meaning.<sup>5</sup> When people hear a symbolic name, they produce a semantic association and form a conceptual classification, which is a process of thinking. At the same time, a kind of latent psychological implication is formed. When a symbol conforms to the user's language symbol system, people tend to form a sense of affinity and identity to the symbol. When the symbol is the place name of a country, people often have a sense of belonging and desire to protect the territory when talking about it. This sense of belonging and desire to protect is a sense of sovereignty, so the initial naming of geographical names often plays an important role in declaring sovereignty. Behind the symbol consistency is the consistency of meaning, and the meaning can identify and judge things. Therefore, the symbol consistency brings about the identification and judgment of the consistency of the signified. The meaning behind different symbols of the same signified is often different. If you replace them randomly without enough carefulness, many fallacies and ambiguities will appear, which sometimes leads to misleading effects. To sum up, the function of meaning can be reflected in two aspects. First, the positive function is to help form a clear understanding of territory, so as to further achieve the purpose of smooth communication between people and between countries, while the negative function is easy to be used to serve a specific purpose.

## 2.2 A Review of the Studies on the Name of Diaoyu Islands

Up to now, the earliest documentary records on Diaoyu Islands come from the transcript *Voyage with a Tail Wind* in Ming dynasty at the first year of Yong Le (1403). According to the *The Memoir of Ming Dynasty* and other relevant documents, the diplomatic ties between China and Ryukyu in the Ming dynasty was established in 1372. With the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Ryukyu, the exchanges between the two countries have become closer. Ryukyu kingdom is in southeast of China, near Fujian province. Due to the special location of Ryukyu kingdom, the intercourse between these two countries is bound to pass the Diaoyu Islands, so the importance of the Diaoyu Islands is gradually highlighted. Therefore, it is recorded in the literature, and the government officially named the Diaoyu Islands as Diaoyu Yu.

In Qing Dynasty, it was also called "Diaoyu Tai". It is generally believed that the symbol "Diaoyu Tai" derives its name from *ZhiNaGuangYi* written by Cheng Shunze in the 47th year of the emperor Kangxi, in which Diaoyu Tai was first used. Later it was called Diaoyu Mountain and Diaoyu Island. The word "Diaoyu" is fixed, and the addition of the words "Yu", "Dao", "Shan" and "Tai" does not cause confusion. Since ancient times, China has been in the habit of naming islands with "Yu", "Shan" and "Dao", so this paper does not make a distinction between these symbols. China's appellation of Diaoyu Islands comes from its main island Diaoyu Island. In addition, this paper studies the names of territory in disputes at the national level, and Ming Dynasty was the first dynasty to officially name Diaoyu Islands, which was called Diaoyu Yu at that time, which was proved by large amount of historical data. The analysis of Diaoyu Yu can strongly prove that China had objectively and effectively named Diaoyu Islands long before Japan discovered them. Therefore, the discussion on the names of Diaoyu Islands should start from the official naming of Diaoyu Yu in Ming dynasty.

## 2.3 A Review of Studies on the Name of Senkaku Islands

Japan uses the Senkaku Islands to refer to the Diaoyu Islands. It comes from the fact that the Japanese navy translated PINNACLE ISLANDS, which the British navy called in 1845, into the Jiange Qundao and Jiantou Zhuyu. Therefore, this paper believes that in order to explore the meaning of the Senkaku Islands, it is necessary to start from the Jiange Qundao, which are translated from the PINNACLE ISLANDS. Therefore, this paper will also briefly analyze the name of PINNACLE ISLANDS. Pinnacle originally means a small steeple on the roof of Christian church. The reef group, to the east of Diaoyu Island, resembles the spire of a church, so the British called it PINNACLE ISLANDS (Beixiao Dao and Nanxiao Dao in China)<sup>6</sup>. British people believe in Catholicism. When they see that the shape of the unknown island is similar to the small steeple on the top of the church, they name it PINNACLE ISLANDS, which can reflect the characteristics of the South and North ISLANDS as well as the religious and cultural characteristics of the British. However, it is worth noting that the name of other known main islands is still pronounced in hokkien dialect by the British, for example, Huanping Shan and Diaoyu Yu are pronounced as Hoa - pin - san and Tiau - su.

According to the research, in August, 1900, the Japanese first uses Senkaku Islands to refer to Diaoyu Islands. At that time, Hei Yan Heng in Japan published an investigation report named *Chronicle on Senkaku Islands* in the *Journal of Geography*. That article pointed that because of its location, although it has been known to Okinawa people since ancient times, there isn't a general term. A lot of inconvenience has been caused in geography, so the scholar called them Senkaku Islands privately. And then, the name of Senkaku Islands came into being. Japan tries to confuse these names with PINNACLE ISLANDS, which originally referred to the central reef group to

the east of Diaoyu Island, giving rise to the idea that the so-called Senkaku Islands had already appeared in 1845. This paper holds that although the Japanese name of Diaoyu Islands is confusing, it is valuable to analyze the symbol Senkaku Islands.

### 3. Analysis of the Meaning of Diaoyu Islands and Senkaku Islands

#### 3.1 The Official Name of Diaoyu Yu in China

##### 3.1.1 The Meaning Behind Diaoyu Yu

The meaning of a symbol is the common nature of impressions, not the mind of a person. And for that reason, the public can agree on the meaning of the symbol, thus the symbol can be used and communicated by all people. The symbol is the starting point of a journey, and the signified is the end of the journey. The meaning is the only path between the same symbol and the same signified. <sup>7</sup>Instead of changing its original name, Ming Dynasty still officially named the islands as Diaoyu Yu, that is, the symbol did not change, which reflected the identity of the meaning behind its symbol. This can agree with the public's recognition of the Diaoyu Yu and served better for communication. To understand the meaning of a specific symbol, Frege said: "The meaning of a proper name is understood by a person who has sufficient knowledge of the language or the markers he uses. We can tell immediately from each given meaning whether or not it belongs to a specific signified, which depends on our comprehensive understanding of the signified." <sup>8</sup>Therefore, this paper will also look at our understanding of Diaoyu Yu and judge whether the name of Diaoyu Yu is in accordance with the language system of the user from the perspective of the symbols themselves.

On the interpretation of the word Yu, *ShuoWenXinFu* mentions that Yu is also called island, which origins from the mountain and correspond to its pronunciation. The ancient people's opinions can be reflected in this word. This word can not only reflect its nature, but also conform to the expression of Chinese phonetic characters. The island is often mentioned in ancient Chinese poetry. In ancient Chinese literature maps, it is also customary to name islands after the word Yu. This can be traced back to song dynasty or even earlier, so it can be seen that China has a clear concept of the island since ancient times, and the naming of the island is very regular. When naming Diaoyu Islands, the Chinese has fully considered the nature of the islands or the way they are presented. First, it is an uninhabited island. According to various historical data, from the Ming dynasty to the 1970s, no country questioned China's sovereignty over Diaoyu Islands. The earliest discovery of Diaoyu Islands by Japan was after the annexation of Ryukyu, long after China discovered and named Diaoyu Islands. It can be inferred that when the ancestors of navigation named it, the island was uninhabited, which is not controversial. Secondly, the fishermen named it Yu, which shows that the fishermen at that time considered it as an island, and their cognition of Diaoyu Islands is reasonable even now. The use of the word Yu here is not only in line with the characteristics of Diaoyu Islands, but also in line with the Chinese expression habits.

As for the word Diaoyu, from the perspective of syntactic structure, the verb comes before the object, which conforms to the expression habits of ancient and modern Chinese. In Tang poetry, Song poetry and Han Fu, such grammatical structures can be found everywhere. In ancient times, there are some places called Diaoyu, like the place called the Diaoyu Mountain in the city of Chongqing, and Song Jie in Southern Song Dynasty has already mentioned it. If you look at the local chronicles of the Ming dynasty, according to incomplete statistics, there were more than half of the geographical names of Diaoyu Tai in China at that time, including Beijing, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Shandong, and even more in the Qing Dynasty.<sup>9</sup> It can be seen that China has a cultural tradition of naming place names with the word Diaoyu. In addition, the word Diaoyu also indicates the fishermen's understanding towards the rich fishing resources around Diaoyu Islands and their skillful fishing skills. As evidenced by the book *FangYuShengLan* written by Zhu Mu in the Northern Song Dynasty, after the song dynasty, the foreland of Fujian and Zhejiang province were rich in bonito fish around Gaohua Yu. Since fishing method was the most convenient, they used the popular name Diaoyu Yu. At the same time, the terrain of Diaoyu Island is relatively flat in the north, and the rocks on its southeast side are steep and harpoon-shaped,<sup>10</sup> which is the origin of the island's name associated with fish. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that Chinese fishermen's naming of Diaoyu Islands is both objective and public. It not only reflects the characteristics of it, but also conforms to the rules of Chinese language symbols. It can be used for communication not only at that time, but also today.

##### 3.1.2 The Influence of the Use of the Symbol Diaoyu Yu

"The explanation of the function of language is a theory of meaning, and the function of meaning is reflected by the concrete people's using language to interact with the world."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this paper will analyze the influence of the symbol Diaoyu Yu from the perspective of the function of meaning. First, meaning has the function of referring, identifying and judging things. People will judge and recognize the signified Diaoyu Yu when referring to the symbol Diaoyu Yu. The meaning behind Diaoyu Yu is objective and public, so the symbol Diaoyu Yu can be understood by everyone, which helps people communicate effectively in daily life. The word

“Diaoyu” is fixed, and the addition of the words “Yu”, “Dao”, “Shan” and “Tai” after the word does not cause confusion. The use of the symbol Diaoyu Yu has not changed since ancient times, so people’s understanding of the meaning of Diaoyu Yu has not changed, which means that China’s identification and judgment of Diaoyu Yu has never changed. The consistency of the names of Diaoyu Islands from ancient to modern times also provides indisputable evidence to prove that Diaoyu Islands is China’s inherent territory. When a specific person says or hears a specific name, he or she will have a series of psychological activities accompanied by a kind of semantic intuition.<sup>12</sup> When people hear the symbol name of Diaoyu Yu, they will have a semantic association. The word Diaoyu leads to the association of the shape of Diaoyu Islands, the judgment of fishery resources in the adjacent waters, and the understanding of fishing skill. People will form some conceptual classification, and the fishing island will be classified as one of the islands, which is a kind of thinking process. At the same time, some potential psychological hints will be formed. Diaoyu Yu conforms to the users’ Chinese symbol system and island naming rules. Therefore, people will feel familiar with Diaoyu Yu when talking about it, and thus form a sense of belonging and desire to protect it. This sense of belonging and desire for protection is a sense of sovereignty, so it also played a role in declaring sovereignty in the initial official naming of Diaoyu Yu. In conclusion, the use of the symbol Diaoyu Yu has three effects. First, it facilitates people’s communication. At the same time, the consistent use of symbol Diaoyu Yu also proves that fishing island is our inherent territory. It also gives people a sense of sovereignty.

### 3.2 The Name of “Senkaku Islands” in Japan

#### 3.2.1 The Meaning Behind the “Senkaku Islands”

There are differences between China and Japan in naming Diaoyu Islands. China calls them Diaoyu Islands and Japan calls them Senkaku Islands. Different symbols for the same signified have different meanings. Since both China and Japan use Chinese characters to refer to the Diaoyu Islands, the differences between these symbols and their meanings are more obvious. Japan has abandoned the Chinese name of Diaoyu Islands and renamed it as Senkaku Islands, which means that the language symbols have changed and the meaning behind them has also changed. The meaning is used to identify and judge the signified, which means that the identification and judgment of the signified have also been changed accordingly. When this changed symbol is also used to refer to the same signified, it will inevitably cause ambiguity and confusion. In terms of the understanding and analysis of the symbol meaning of Senkaku Islands, this paper will also start from the symbol itself to see whether the name “Senkaku Islands” has a comprehensive understanding of the Diaoyu Islands and whether the name conforms to the language system used by the symbol users.

Starting from the symbol Senkaku Islands itself, it can be seen that it has an understanding of the Diaoyu Islands. First of all, Japan boldly rewrites and renames Diaoyu Islands in disregard of the fact that China has consistently named Diaoyu Islands since ancient times, mainly on the basis that Diaoyu Islands are uninhabited. However, for 500 years from the beginning of the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese government continued to inspect and exercise jurisdiction over Diaoyu Islands and its adjacent waters, which can be confirmed by some official documents such as the *Annals of the Taiwan Government* in Qing Dynasty. There is no doubt that Diaoyu Islands were Chinese territory rather than terra nullius during Ming and Qing dynasty. And also in maps of Britain, America and other countries, the names of the Diaoyu Islands is marked in Chinese pronunciation, which shows the respect for China’s naming. Meanwhile, it also shows that the world has recognized Diaoyu Islands as China’s inherent territory. Therefore, Japan’s perception of the Diaoyu Islands as uninhabited islands is biased. Secondly, as can be seen from the name of Senkaku Islands, Japan believes that the reef group resembling steeple are the main characteristics of Diaoyu Islands. But according to geologists around the world, the Diaoyu Islands consist of five uninhabited islets and three unvegetated-covered reef groups, of which the Diaoyu Island is the largest. Therefore, reef resembling a minaret is not the main feature of the Diaoyu Islands. Therefore, Japan’s cognition of Diaoyu Islands is not comprehensive. Frege’s principle of “meaning determines the signified” holds that what a symbol actually represents depends on whether the signified has the characteristics described by the signified.<sup>13</sup> This paper believes that the symbol Senkaku Islands cannot objectively and comprehensively refer to the Diaoyu Islands, so it is doubtful to use the Senkaku Islands to refer to the Diaoyu Islands.

From the symbol Senkaku Islands itself, it can be seen that the name of the Senkaku Islands does not conform to the Japanese language symbol system. Throughout Japan’s naming of its islands, there are natural, cultural and historical elements. Its names are based on geographical conditions and location, natural resources and products, myths and legends, historical stories, historical folklore and celebrities, religion, politics and economy.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, this naming of the Senkaku Islands does not conform to the traditional rules of naming place names in Japan. Frege makes a distinction between meaning and psychology and holds that meaning is not determined by one’s psychological or thinking activities, which is also the main basis for the objectivity of meaning. However, the naming of Diaoyu Islands is only a private decision of a Japanese scholar. However, it is this

individual thinking that finally rises to the height of the country. The Japanese government justifies its name and makes it the official name for Diaoyu Islands. This paper holds that the meaning behind the Senkaku Islands cannot be understood by all people. The meanings behind the symbols and names are different, and it can not be used for normal communication. Thus, the name Senkaku Islands in Japan is neither objective nor public. There is no value in the meaning behind the Senkaku Islands, and the existence of symbols as a way of expressing meaning is not reasonable.

### 3.2.2 The Reasons for the Symbolic Meaning of Senkaku Islands

The generation of meaning includes two important factors: the signified and people. Since the signified is objective, so this paper will analyze it from the perspective of human. Using Frege's analogy, the Diaoyu Islands are the moon, and the real image shown in the objective lens of the telescope is the meaning behind the Senkaku Islands. Both the telescope and the moon are constant, but the results are biased. The only reason for that is the observers, the one who names the Senkaku Islands and the one who officially names it. Firstly, it may be that the Japanese scholar and the Japanese government are not competent enough to form a clear and comprehensive understanding of the signified "Senkaku Islands". This paper believes that the above situation is unlikely. Japan has the Defense Intelligence Headquarters. In addition to satellite reconnaissance, the Japanese defense agency also has a large number of other advanced intelligence reconnaissance equipment. It is impossible to say that Diaoyu Islands are not fully understood because of their insufficient strength. There is only one case left. The Japanese government may be aware of the one-sidedness of the Diaoyu Islands, but for some purposes, Japan does not want to make corrections. Naming the territory is a way of declaring ownership. Japan arbitrarily changed its name to deny China's original name for the Diaoyu Islands. The political purpose behind this is obvious. The use of different symbols for the same signified of the Diaoyu Islands will inevitably lead to confusion in the identification and judgment of the signified and generate fallacies and ambiguities. Since Japan also tampered with the name of Dokdo Island (Takeshima) and caused the naming confliction with South Korea, the Japanese side is deeply aware of this point. However, instead of deliberately avoiding it, Japan makes use of it to achieve its own purpose. The symbolic names of the Diaoyu Islands claimed by Japan have been changing since ancient times, which shows that Japan has never reached an agreement on the meaning of Diaoyu Islands. The inconsistency of the names of the Senkaku Islands from ancient times to the present proves that its declaration of sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands is highly subjective and purposeful. To sum up, Japan uses the Senkaku Islands to name Diaoyu Islands mainly for two reasons. First, Japan unilaterally declares its ownership of the Diaoyu Islands by renaming them. The second is to use different names to refer to the same thing to create ambiguity and confuse the public.

### 3.2.3 The Influence of the Use of the Symbol Senkaku Islands

First, people will judge and identify the Diaoyu Islands when referring to the symbol of Senkaku Islands. The meaning behind Senkaku Islands is subjective and one-sided, so the symbol Senkaku Islands cannot be understood and communicated by the public, thus bringing chaos to people's lives and causing disputes between countries. Secondly, the Senkaku Islands is written in Japanese, which is quite different from the symbol of China's Diaoyu Islands. It will make Japanese people have a sense of belonging to the Diaoyu Islands, a desire to protect them and a sense of sovereignty. Therefore, it will have the function of declaration of sovereignty by renaming the Diaoyu Islands as Senkaku Islands. At the same time, when China and the world first hear of Senkaku Islands, they could not immediately associate it with the Diaoyu Islands, so Japan will have more time and space to spread rumors about its ownership of the Diaoyu Islands. It can be said that the use of the symbol Senkaku Islands played a role to confuse people. To sum up, the use of the symbol of Senkaku Islands has three influences. First, it leads to communication chaos and national disputes. Secondly, it has confused the public. Thirdly, it gives Japanese people a so-called sense of sovereignty.

## 4. Conclusion

Diaoyu Islands is China's inherent territory, which is inviolable. From the perspective of the meaning reference theory, this paper explores the differences between the symbolic names of Diaoyu Islands in China and Japan and the meanings behind them, and further explains the reasons for the differences in the symbolic meanings and its influence. From the perspective of language philosophy, this paper tries to demonstrate that Diaoyu Islands is China's inherent territory. The meaning behind the symbol Diaoyu Islands is objective and public, both from the namers' understanding of the Diaoyu Islands and from the rules of language symbols in China. The name of Diaoyu Islands in China has not been changed since ancient times, so people's understanding of the meaning behind Diaoyu Islands has not changed, which means that China's identification and judgment of Diaoyu Islands has never been changed. The consistency of the name of Diaoyu Islands from ancient to modern times also provides indisputable evidence to prove that Diaoyu Islands is China's inherent territory. In contrast, Japan's naming of the Senkaku islands comes from the thought of a scholar. The meaning behind its name is subjective and one-sided, both in terms of its understanding of the Diaoyu Islands and in terms of its own naming rules of

geographical names. This paper holds that the meaning behind Senkaku Islands is of no value and the existence of this symbol is unreasonable. Moreover, there is no consistency in Japan's appellation of Diaoyu Islands. This inconsistency shows that Japan has never reached an agreement on the meaning of Diaoyu Islands, which means that Japan has never confirmed its identification and judgment of Diaoyu Islands. Therefore, this paper believes that the name alone can prove that Japan's renaming of Diaoyu Islands and its declaration of sovereignty is purposeful and subjective. This also proves from another perspective that the Diaoyu Islands is China's inherent territory.

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