

## **The History of Trade and Exchange in the East Sea (Japan Sea) Region**

This is a report on the history of trade and exchange between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan across the East Sea (Japan Sea), which were carried out in the period from the 8th to the 10th centuries. I hope you will understand the outline of the history of trade and exchange across the East Sea (Japan Sea) before the modern age.

Bo-hai/Pal-hae was a dynastic state that ruled the northeastern district of China (Manchuria), the northern district of North Korea and Primorsky in Russia during the 229 years from 698 to 926. Bo-hai/Pal-hae was a multi-ethnic state consisting of people who lived in Gaogouli/Koguryo, which was ruined in 668, and people of Mo-he groups who lived in the north of Gaogouli/Koguryo. When their state was defeated by Qidan, some escaped to the Korean Peninsula governed by the Koryo Dynasty, some were abducted by Qidan, and others stayed there and then became Nuzhen (Jushen), present-day Man-zu. Because of this historical background, there has been a dispute about whether Bo-hai/Pal-hae was a state of China or Korea. In an international conference, a dispute occurred on the matter of whether the name should be in Chinese or Korean. I used both names for this conference.

I think that divestitures of nations in the past by nation states are due to political reasons and they are wrong from an academic viewpoint. The present nation states were established in the process of modernization through the process of integration and disintegration of ethnic groups and states. Accordingly, past states and their lands did not necessarily belong to one country in the modern age. Bo-hai/Pal-hae is a typical example of this, and it may well appear in the history of China, Korea and Russia. A nation that claims possession of a past nation that split and incorporated into other nations should be regarded as a threat to the peace of international society, because such an attitude is like trying to invade a neighboring country based on a one-sided interpretation of history.

Bo-hai/Pal-hae sent envoys to Japan 34 times during about 200 years from 727 to its ruin. They were called Bokkai-shi (Bo-hai's/Pal-hae's envoys to Japan). Meanwhile, Japan sent Ken-bokkai-shi (Japanese envoys to the Bo-hai/Pal-hae Dynasty) 13 times during the 84 years from 728 to 811. Japan sent Ken-to-shi (Japanese envoys to the Tang Dynasty) to China only 13 times during the 209 years from 630 to 838. Japan thus had a more active relationship with Bo-hai/Pal-hae than with the Tang Dynasty. (Fig 1: History of Bokkai-shi, Fig 2: History of Ken-bokkai-shi)

The reason why Bo-hai/Pal-hae sent envoys to Japan was tension between Bo-hai/Pal-hae

and the surrounding states. The first lord of Bo-hai/Pal-hae, Da Zuo-rong / Tae Cho-yong established a state named Zhen/Chin after he left the Tang Dynasty, and belonged to the side of Tujue (Turuk), a nomadic tribe who opposed the Tang Dynasty. However, after Da Zuo-rong / Tae Cho-yong was given the title of King of Bo-hai County from the Tang Dynasty in 713, he changed the name of the state to Bo-hai/Pal-hae and joined the Tang Dynasty side. However, as Bo-hai/Pal-hae continued to expand its territory, it came into conflict with Heishui Mohe to the north and Silla to the south. Heishui Mohe and Silla sent envoys to the Tang Dynasty to improve diplomatic relations. The Tang Dynasty had a friendly relationship with the Silla and the Heishui Mohe, and it nominally owned the land of Heishui Mohe with the name of Heishui Zhou to prevent Bo-hai/Pal-hae from expanding its territory to the north. After that, the relationship between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and the Tang Dynasty worsened. When Qidan belonged to the Tujue (Turuk) side, conflicting with the Tang Dynasty in 730, Bo-hai/Pal-hae made an alliance with Qidan and Tujue (Turuk), and attacked Deng Zhou (present-day Yan-tai) of the Tang Dynasty from the sea. Subsequently, Qidan was defeated by the Tang Dynasty and Tujue (Turuk) was weakened because of Khan's death. Then, Bo-hai/Pal-hae belonged to the Tang Dynasty side and continued a friendly relationship with it, while it was in conflict with Silla, until Bo-hai/Pal-hae was ruined.

It was in the late 720s that Bo-hai/Pal-hae had enemies in the south and north and had a bad relationship with the Tang Dynasty. This prompted Bo-hai/ Pal-hae to send envoys to Japan. Bo-hai/Pal-hae intended to put pressure on Silla by building an alliance with Japan, which was located beyond Silla. As relations between Japan and Silla were worsening, Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan had the same interests. The friendly relationship between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan continued, and around 760, Japan planned to attack Silla with Bo-hai/Pal-hae as an ally.

The mission of the envoys changed with the sixth Bokkai-shi, who came to Japan in 762, and the seventh Bokkai-shi, who came in 771. The envoys consisted of military officers until the fifth envoys, but the sixth envoys were civilians. Almost all subsequent envoys except two consisted of civilians. This shows that the mission of Bokkai-shi of forming a military alliance changed. The sixth Bokkai-shi had a mission to propose the cancellation of an attack of Silla. This mission shows a change in Bo-hai/Pal-hae's policy.

Three hundred and twenty-five people came to Japan in the seventh Bokkai-shi, which was the first delegation to consist of such a large number of people. Japan regarded Bo-hai/Pal-hae as a tributary of Japan, so the Bokkai-shi were regarded as tributary envoys for Japanese emperors. In this relationship, the suzerain had to give envoys more

gifts than the number it received from them. Individual members of the delegation received gifts from the Japanese emperor according to their official ranks. Accordingly, the more numerous the envoys, the more gifts they received. The envoys who were allowed to come to Kyoto were authorized to trade under the control of the Japanese imperial court. Envoys who did not go to Kyoto and stayed in specified places also conducted trading. Under such circumstances, Fujiwara Otsugu, an executive Japanese officer in those days, called the envoys traders. In addition, Bokkai-shi came to Japan in 823, which was earlier than the interval of 12 years specified by the agreement between the two states. This earlier visit shows that the purpose was trading. The seventh envoy was the first envoy to come to Japan for trading purposes. The mission of Bokkai-shi was changed from the formation of a military alliance to trading in the 760s and 770s.

There were two reasons for this change in this period. The rebellion by An Lushan which arose in 755 led the Tang Empire into a mess, deprived people in the surrounding states of their dignity, and made the international situation in East and North Asia unstable. However, in the 760s, the Tang Dynasty recovered its power and Uyghur established its status as a conqueror of North Asia, a move that stabilized the situation in East Asia. The reason why Japan planned to attack Silla was that the circumstances in Eastern Asia were unstable due to the rebellion by An Lushan, and the reason why Bo-hai/Pal-hae proposed to postpone the plan was international stability in the surrounding area. The relationship between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and the Silla was maintained as it was and the significance of Japanese military and diplomatic force decreased.

Meanwhile, Bo-hai/Pal-hae succeeded in expanding their territory into the north and conquered Mo-he groups other than Heishui Mohe. Bo-hai/Pal-hae formally applied the Zhou-Xian system, a centralized administrative framework, but called the chiefs of the tribes “shuouzhang” to allow them to control their tribes, and included them in the envoys for trading so that they could have opportunities to receive precious goods from foreign states. This system guaranteed their trading business, which they had carried out independently. Since this “Shuou-zhang system” enabled shuouzhangs to keep their power in their areas, they accepted it. This explains the reason why more than half the members of Bokai-shi were shuouzhangs. The fact that chiefs or their representatives joined the delegations explains why the number of envoys increased drastically. The reason that Bo-hai/Pal-hae changed the mission of the envoys to trading was that they wanted to maintain the stable situation in the northern area to ensure their dominance.

Bo-hai/Pal-hae brought Japan special products from Bo-hai/Pal-hae such as fur and leather from animals such as martens, sables, tigers, bears, seals, etc., and gingseng and

honey. The gifts recorded in the literature include almanacs, sutras, books such as collections of poems and compositions from China, musk produced in the southwest of China, cups made of hawksbill turtle which were brought from southern Asia via China. It is known that letters and funds were exchanged between people who visited China as Kento-shi envoys via Bo-hai/Pal-hae, people returned from China via Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japanese bonzes studied in Tang and Bo-hai/Pal-hae and the Japanese imperial government. These facts indicate that Bo-hai/Pal-hae played an important role in the distribution of people, goods and information between China and Japan. The reason why the interval between Kento-shi envoys was long at the end of 8th century and in the early 9th century was that Japan could receive Chinese goods, culture and information from Bokai-shi without sending envoys on the risky voyage to China. In the 830s, since the number of Silla and Tang Dynasty merchant ships sailing across the East China Sea increased, the Kento-shi system was no longer needed, so it was abolished.

As for the return gifts from Japan, most of them were silk goods such as floss silk and silk fabrics, mineral resources such as gold and mercury, camellia oil and Japanese lacquerware. The main goods traded between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan were fur and silk goods. As the trade between the Tang Dynasty and Uyghur was called “silk horse trade”, the trade between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan can be called “silk fur trade”.

It was not after the establishment of Bo-hai/Pal-hae that ocean trade and exchange across the East Sea (Japan Sea) started. According to ancient literature and archeological investigation in China and Japan, trade and exchange across the East Sea (Japan Sea) had been carried out before the 8th century. Trade and exchange between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan started under such circumstances.

Since a lot of historical literature has been preserved in Japan, we can confirm some of the ocean routes that were used in those days, such as a route from the south of the Korean Peninsula to Hokuriku via North Kyushu and San'in (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-7th century (5)) and a route from Hokuriku to Hokkaido via Dewa (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-7th century (4)). There were many lagoons in the coastal area along the Japan Sea. The sand banks made good ports, which became centers of ocean trade. The fact that there were many ancient ruins near lagoons in the coastal area of the Japan Sea shows that ocean trade using lagoons promoted the collection of property and promoted the growth of local ruling families. In addition, natural conditions in which the Tsushima Current came up along the Japanese archipelago and south winds blew from spring to summer helped envoys' ships sail to the northeast along the coast. While the warm Tsushima current is not quick-flowing, ships could sail against the current following the

northeast wind. It was possible to travel to Japan and back in one year because there were advantageous conditions in the coastal area of the Japan Sea along the Japanese archipelago, which promoted ocean trade.

On the other hand, since there were lagoons and similar geography on the continent, it was not difficult to secure bases for ocean trading as well. Pos'et Port from which Bokai-shi departed, had a narrow inlet that functioned the same way as a lagoon. Although the Liman Current flows to the south along the coastal area of the Japan Sea, it is not difficult to sail against this current as long as there is a leading wind, since it is a weak current. I am not sure about further details because there is no literature about it.

There was a sailing route between Japan and the continent across the Japan Sea in the 6th century. (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-7th century (3)). This route was used by the delegation from Goguryeo. It is said that the delegation arrived at present-day Kanazawa, in the Hokuriku district, and returned from there to their state. Although the route between the northern area of the Korean Peninsula and Hokuriku is the longest of all the routes across the Japan Sea, the positional relationship between them is northwest to southeast, which is the same direction as the seasonal wind in winter. Since this wind is very strong and the sea tends to be rough, sturdy ships were required to sail at that time of year. However, it was possible to sail the sea as long as there was the technology to build sturdy ships. It is thought that Goguryeo had adequate technology to build sturdy ships, because they conducted exchange with the Southern Dynasty in South China. In summer, it was also possible to return from Hokuriku to the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, because there was a south or southeast wind.

Tinworks excavated from 7th- or 8th-century ruins on the Ishikari Plain of the Shakotan Peninsula show that they were brought from tin mines in the Russian coastal area across the ocean because there were no tin mines near the ruins in Japan. This northern route across the East Sea (Japan Sea) was called the "tin road". (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-7th century (2)) The distance between the two places connected by the route is very short and seasonal winds were not necessary for sailing. It is thought that traders used this route because it did not necessitate the building of a large ship.

In the 8th century, Bokkai-shi envoys arrived at the northern area above the Hokuriku district, in particular at Dewa from summer to fall. In this season, the envoys' ships sailed down from Hokkaido blown by the northeast wind along the Japanese archipelago. They seemed to have used the "tin road". (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-8th century (2)) Bokkai-shi envoys seem to have sailed along the northern route, which was safer than

other routes, because they used small ships. Furthermore, since Mo-he groups in the coastal area were under the dominance of Bo-hai/Pal-hae, they supported the sailing of the envoys' ships. This support enabled Bokkai-shi envoys' ships to sail along the route safely.

In the 9th century, Bokkai-shi envoys did not arrive at Dewa, but at the southern area under the Hokuriku district, in late fall and winter when northwest winds blew. This is because the ships of the 12th and 13th Bokkai-shi envoys were attacked by the Emishi ethnic tribe who lived in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, and many people were killed by them. The Emishi are the ancestors of the Ainu people. Since the Japanese imperial court and the Emishi were in conflict in those days, Bokkai-shi envoys who were sailing to bring goods to the Japanese imperial court were attacked by them. Bokkai/Pal-hae built a large ship with the capacity to carry 100 passengers to protect it from an Emishi attack, and sailed with the winter wind. In the 9th century, an increasing number of envoys' ships arrived at San'in. This can be explained by the fact that Ullung-do in the eastern part of the Korean Peninsula was released from the dominance of Silla, and could sail along this route safely. This route was the shortest route between the two states. (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-9th century (8)).

When Bokkai/Pal-hae was defeated by Qidan in 926 and the Bokkai-shi system ended, trade and exchange between Bo-hai/Pal-hae and Japan across the East Sea (Japan Sea) changed drastically. The distinctive route connecting the continent and the Japanese archipelago from north to south across the East Sea (Japan Sea) disappeared and Chinese merchants came from the East China Sea to Hokuriku through the Tsushima Strait. Consequently, the Japanese western coastal area along the East Sea (Japan Sea) was integrated into the East China Sea Trade Sphere. (Fig.: Shipping route in the mid-10th century (9)). Since no states were established in Bo-hai/Pal-hae for a while, the route connecting the continent and the Japanese archipelago was shut down. Accordingly, the ruin of Bo-hai/Pal-hae led to the end of the history and tradition of East Sea (Japan Sea) trade and the end of the ancient period of the East Sea (Japan Sea) region.

In the 14th century Mongolia ruled the northeastern area of China and the Russian coastal area, and dominated Ainu tribes in Sakhalin. That was when the distinctive route connecting the continent and the Japanese archipelago regained its role. However, it was a route along the north rim of the East Sea (Japan Sea). It was not until the modern age that people, goods and information were once again exchanged like they had been in the age of Bo-hai/Pal-hae.