

The Visualization of Korean Embassies to Japan and Their Impact in the Early Edo Period

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Abstract | This article focuses on the visualization of Korean embassies to Japan (*Chosŏn tongsinsa* in Korean, *Chōsen tsūshinshi* in Japanese) in the Edo period and seeks to understand the processes of such within a larger sociopolitical network. Images of Korean embassies to Japan, or Korean official diplomatic delegations sent to Japan in the late Chosŏn period, were produced in various forms in Edo Japan. Among them, this study focuses on artworks from the seventeenth century when the images began to emerge. In order to explore the general tendencies of the image's production and reception, this study pays particular attention to three types of paintings—panoramic cityscapes (*toshi-zu*), illustrated handscrolls of legends (*engi emaki*), and Korean embassy reception paintings (*tsūshinshi kantai-zu*). In the first half of the seventeenth century, Korean embassy processions were visualized in a diverse array of media to embody the will of the Tokugawa Shogunate and display the regime's great power and authority. While the elite members of the bureaucratic and military classes perceived and comprehended the images as the shogunate had intended, the majority of the general public, however, received them as representative of an “alien parade” or a “festivity.” In this regard, the study broadens its scope to temporary exhibition of Buddhist temple objects (*kaichō*) and community festivals (*matsuri*) in order to examine how the images transformed and proliferated through the two channels and considers the diverse context within which Korean embassies were visualized. To aid in its analysis this study refers to Alfred Gell's anthropological theory of “art and agency.” This is to move beyond the linear understanding of an artwork as the final product of a patron or an artist that encodes the producer's intent and shed light on how various agents interact with and influence one another throughout the entire process of production, circulation, and reception. Through this perspective, this study finds that in the visualization of Korean embassies, the agency of the resulting images—reflecting clear intentions and goals of their producers or patrons, or the first agents—went through secondary and tertiary transformations of interpretation that occurred in completely new ways in accordance with the recipients' class, background, and interests. The application of such methodology also allows a challenge to be made toward the previous approaches that qualified Korean embassy images solely as illustrated records,

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or understood the works only in terms of an artistic exchange between the two countries or their impact on the respective art communities. Instead, this study enables the possibility of broadening the research scope to include various forms of popular culture that have been overlooked in previous studies.

Keywords | Korean embassy to Japan (K. *t'ongsinsa*; J. *tsūshinshi*), procession of the Korean embassy, Edo period, Tokugawa shogunate, Tōfukumon'in, *kaichō*

The Agency of Korean Embassies to Japan: How Were They Received in Japan?

Korean embassies to Japan (*Chosŏn t'ongsinsa*) were royal diplomatic delegations dispatched by the King of the Chosŏn dynasty to the shogunate (*bakufu*), Japan's governmental authority of the highest level. Korean emissaries were sent throughout the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century, from the Muromachi to the Edo period.¹ Within the scope of this study are the twelve regular missions dispatched to Japan in the late Chosŏn period from 1607 to 1811, after the establishment of the Edo shogunate in 1603.² Comprised of around 500 members, this large-scale entourage travelled by land and sea through Korea and Japan over a long journey that began in Hanyang (Seoul), the capital of the Chosŏn dynasty. The group sailed overseas to Japan via Pusan, and travelled through a number of cities by land until they finally arrived in Edo. The journey was, in a way, an occasion through which the embassy was

1. The term communication embassy (K. *t'ongsinsa*, J. *tsūshinshi*) refers to the emissary through which the two countries, on equal terms, communicate (*tong*) their faith (*sin*). However, the actual reason and goal for the dispatch differed before and after Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion in 1592. Eighteen embassies in early Chosŏn dynasty were sent to Japan under different titles including *hoeryesa*, *hoeryegwan*, *pobingsa*, *kyōngch'agwan*, *t'ongsin'gwan*, and *t'ongsinsa*, with different purposes and compositions. It was only the eighth embassy that recognized the central power of the shogunate. For more details on Korea-Japan diplomacy and diplomatic delegations in Chosŏn dynasty, see Son Sŭng-chŏl (2006) and Yi Hun (2019). Iwakata Hisahiko (2016), on the other hand, critically analyzes current research trends on Korean embassies in Korea and Japan, providing a macroscopic survey of the research history on the topic.

2. The dispatch of embassies resumed after the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in the early seventeenth century, and the first three embassies (1607, 1617, and 1624) were called the "Reply and Prisoner Repatriation Embassy" (*Hoedap kyōm swaehwansa*), while those after them began to use the name "Communication Embassy" (*T'ongsinsa*). Korean embassies in the late Chosŏn dynasty were dispatched a total of twelve times—seven times in the seventeenth century, four times in the eighteenth century, and once in the nineteenth century,—while the final dispatch in 1811 differed in its characteristic and composition as the embassy only traveled to Tsushima (*yōkchi t'ongsin*).

displayed to the Japanese people. Especially to the general public the envoys were received as an exotic parade featuring a rare collective of individuals, as well as offering a spectacle in its own right. Not only this, but through and in relation to the event, a great number of official and unofficial cultural exchanges and productions were generated.

During this period of about 200 years, Japan received a total of twelve Korean embassies. The great variety and quantity of remaining artworks speaks to the enormous impact and influence, both direct and indirect, that these Korean embassies had on Japan.³ Not only a great amount of visual and material objects and images adopted Korean embassies as their main subject matter, but also the Korean embassies themselves mediated and/or inspired works in other separate art genres. Representative examples are the paintings in the form of handscrolls and folding screens that were produced as memorabilia celebrating the embassy's grand-scale procession. Traditional painting genres such as folding screens of cityscapes (*toshi-zu byōbu*) also often included and highlighted an image of the Korean embassy procession visiting the shogun. As the missions became regularized, an exchange of poetry, calligraphy, and painting took place on individual level between the envoys and Japanese elites in the various locations they passed through. Moreover, the strong impression left by the exotic parade of the embassy inspired populist public masquerades as Korean embassies were incorporated into various carnivals and performances in community festivals (*matsuri*) and narrative music (*jōruri*), which were again reproduced visually in various publications of *ukiyo-e* and guidebooks. It could thus be concluded that the Korean embassies to Japan served as a medium through which diverse forms of art and culture of the Edo period were interconnected and derived from one another in an expanded network of exchange.

Images of the Korean embassies to Japan, produced in diverse media and genre and received and consumed by patrons and admirers from within various classes, illustrate the immense impact the envoys had on Japan. At the same

3. There have been a number of research projects on the artistic and cultural exchanges that occurred with the twelve dispatches of the envoys. In Korea, studies on history, philology, and Chinese literature have focused on the topic to conduct an in-depth study of each embassy as well as the associated conversations through writing and travel literature, while those on art history, costume and fashion history, and music history have scrupulously analyzed the scale and feature of each embassy based on a critical examination of the roles of the accompanying painters and illustrations of the embassy processions. In particular, the 2017 register of documents on Korean embassies to Japan as UNESCO's Memory of the World allowed for the collection of, and accelerated research on, a great amount of historical records from Korea and Japan. This paper is based on the results of such, and each section refers to specific literature related to the discussion.

time, they conjure up some inquiries on the background that allowed for such a phenomenon as well as their complicated status and significance.⁴ How can we understand the simultaneous yet sporadic generation, distribution, reception, and transformation of these diverse images related to the Korean embassy that sometimes even appear somewhat antithetical to one another. This paper aims to unpack the visualization of Korean embassies in the Edo period relative to the larger sociopolitical network that informed their production and reception.

Moving beyond a linear and one-directional perspective that understands an artwork as the final product of a patron or an artist encoded with their taste, intent, and artistic capacity, and taking into consideration the complicated material and psychological relationship surrounding the production, circulation, and reception of art, it becomes a somewhat ambitious but significant task to understand the “agency” generated by the Korean embassies and the related human and material elements of great quantity, as well as the complex networks of their creation and consumption.⁵ As an initial study that marks the beginning

4. Numerous art historical studies have focused on the images that visualize Korean embassies to Japan, and the following are the most representative works: First is *Outline of Korean Embassy to Japan* (*Taikei Chōsen tsūshinshi*; Shin Gisu and Nakao 1993-96), a multi-volume publication that includes eight volumes of documents related to the topic. The work most synthetically includes images of various paintings and craftworks related to Korean embassy to Japan, accompanied by relevant essays in each volume that deepens one's understanding of the material. Representative researches from Korean art history are Hong Sŏn-p'yo (1998) and Ch'a Mi-ae (2006), and the latter explored Korean embassy related images from the Edo period by categories of Korean embassy procession paintings (*haengnyŏlto*), royal envoy fleet paintings (*sŏndando*), equestrian performance paintings (*masangjae*), paintings showing poetry exchnages between Korean envoys and Japanese people (*simunjŭngdaptŏ*), as well as paintings showing envoys in native dress (*poksikto*), based on previous studies by Japanese scholars. Studies by Pak Ŭn-sun (2016, 2019) are among the recent works that focus on court painters of Kanō School for more comprehensive perspective. There are also works such as Chŏng Ŭn-ju (2006) in fields of art history, costume and fashion history, and music history that pay attention to individual paintings of Korean embassy procession to examine their characteristics and details. For additional information on the previous literature on Korean embassy procession paintings, see Mun Tong-su (2019, 109n1).

5. The central purpose of this article does not lie in the application of Alfred Gell's theory of the agency of artworks (Gell 1998), but nevertheless, this theory undergirds the study's understanding of the simultaneous and sporadic formation of Korean embassy images. This theory of agency, suggested by a British anthropologist Alfred Gell, has long been a topic of controversy among anthropologists as well as scholars of literature, archeology, art history, and other related fields since its first publication. The theory's significance in the study of visual and material culture is that it considers not only people but also other inanimate objects as agents, and in this respect the idea has become influential especially in study of material culture. With regards to this study, the theory was most effective in its emphasis on an artwork's performative nature, in that it does not merely encode fixed symbolic meanings reflecting the producer's intent, but that it, within the social relationships it belongs to, constantly generates psychological and material influences. Gell discussed such social context in four “terms”—prototypes, index, artist, and recipient—to demonstrate how there is an endless interchange of agency between agent and patient, or those

of a project of vast scope, this article focuses on art objects from the first half of the seventeenth century, the earliest period from which such Korean embassy images can be found, in order to understand the context in which Korean embassies were visualized and utilized within a surrounding relational network. Moreover, it will look into how the images transformed and proliferated through temporary public display of objects from Buddhist temples (*kaichō*, lit. opening the curtain) and community festivals. By exploring various contexts that visualized the Korean embassy in Japan, this study seeks to understand the resulting images not only as realistic paintings of record, but as images with agency that bore certain status and impact in Edo Japan.

Staging of the Procession: Various Social Agents Surrounding the Embassy

The most essential visual element concerning the dispatch of the Korean embassy to Japan and its visualization is probably “the procession.” As most extant examples of the embassy image engage either a part of, or the whole procession, it is necessary to first consider the dynamic structure surrounding the composition of the ambassadors and their entourage.

Figure 1 is a conceptual diagram outlining the diplomatic process for dispatching envoys to Japan, from the stage of preparation to the actual dispatch, marked with organizations and persons responsible for each task.⁶ Each entourage differed in their size and composition, but the basic processes were similar. One can recognize from the diagram that the composition and dispatch of each mission constituted a highly devised event that resulted from a long period of intensive discussions and adjustments (Park Hwa-jin and Kim Pyōng-du 2010).⁷

acted upon.

6. This conceptual diagram has been created by the author with reference to the diagram from Pak Hwa-jin and Kim Pyōng-du (2010) that is based on the 1711 embassy. Individual embassies differed in their details such as the number of dispatched personnel and the content and quantity in the list of gifts (*pyōlpōk*), but they were similar with respect to the engaged organizations or the order and flow of the preparation process. What should be noted, however, is that as an open market of Pusan’s Japanese Quarter (Tongnae Waegwan) was in operation from 1678 to 1872, the name in relation to the embassies in the earlier half of the seventeenth century signified not a space but a person in charge.

7. The scope of Park Hwa-jin and Kim Pyōng-du (2010) is limited to the 1711 embassy, but it is valuable in its detailed investigation of the entire formalities and adjustments made with regard to the Korean embassy to Japan, from the Tokugawa shogunate’s sending of envoys (*chōwae*) to the

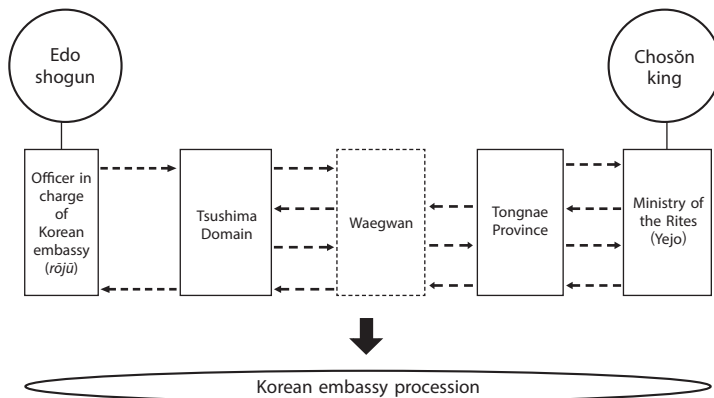


Figure 1. Conceptual diagram of the diplomatic process for dispatching envoys

First, when the Edo shogunate requested for a dispatch of the embassy, Tsushima Domain (Tsushima-han), as a mediator and actual unit in charge, sent its envoys (*chāwae*) five times to Korea in accordance with the shogunate's intentions.⁸ Based on these delegations, the Chosŏn court decided on whether it would acquiesce to the Japanese request through discussions within the Ministry of Rites (Yejo). When the dispatch was decided, central and local offices designated necessary personnel to procure necessary items such as gifts and ships to make the journey. On the Edo shogunate's side, it appointed a chief officer (*rōjū*) specifically in charge of receiving the Korean embassy for the smoother handling of the complicated and varied tasks related to the invitation of the delegates. The shogunate also prepared and resolved by stages the issues regarding the smooth management and reception of the ambassadors and the retinue, both from Korea and Japan, which was of a grand scale and comprised

actual dispatch of Korean envoys, to their entrance to the Edo Castle, and finally to their return. The study's focus on the spatial aspect of the embassy, in particular, effectively and vividly realizes in detail how the embassy appeared in Edo. In addition, a serial publication by the Korea National Maritime Museum also focuses on the 1711 embassy to analyze in detail the preparatory stages of the Chosŏn dynasty in terms of the sea route and sailing (Kungnip Haeyang Pangmulgwan 2017).

8. Five dispatches of envoys from Japan (*chāwae* in Korean) included the first group that announces events such as the shogunate's ascension or decease (*kwanbaek kobu chāwae*), the second called *kwanbaek süngsüp kogyōng chāwae*, the third requesting for the dispatch of the embassy (*tōngsinsa chōngnae chāwae*), the fourth escorting the Korean embassy from Pusan to Japan (*tōngsinsa hohaeng chāwae*), and finally the fifth that escorts the entourage returning to Tongnae (present day Pusan) from Tsushima (*tōngsinsa hohwan chāwae*). Sometimes, additional envoys were received in names of *tōngsinsa ūijōng chāwae* and *naesedang songsinsa chāwae*.

of over 2,000 men. Such issues included the managing of diplomatic protocol, the sharing of the enormous financial burden, the procurement of board and lodging for the embassy in each region, the maintenance of urban districts and public order, and preparation of the ceremony in the Edo Castle through which official diplomatic letters (*kuksŏ*) would be delivered. One can recognize how in each step, administrative units as large as the Chosŏn court, the Tokugawa shogunate, and Tsushima Domain as the mediator, and as small as the numerous branches and their officers at both central and a local level in both countries were engaged in this event.⁹

This large-scale of envoys and entourage were dispatched upon detailed discussions with an awareness of being “seen.” In other words, already during the process when the embassy was mounted, the various agencies of authorities from Korea and Japan were manifested or engaged. One of the reasons the Korean embassy was mounted in the form of an ordered procession of propriety was practical, in that this formation was most appropriate and effective for a group of such scale to move by land and sea. However, it can more fundamentally be described in terms of a “staged event” that served to manifest the power and dignity of authority. One of the authorities mentioned here is the Chosŏn dynasty who sent the embassy for ideological purpose of transmitting the country’s prestige and cultural superiority to the foreign land. They probably had fully acknowledged that the procession would be seen by the Japanese people, and prepared in accordance with such recognition in mind. The other is the Tokugawa shogunate who, by inviting the Korean embassy, wished to display that their authority reached even overseas to a foreign land. The scene of a grand procession of Korean envoys entering Edo Castle was watched by the people of the court, daimyos (feudal lords), other samurai families, and many others. And in addition to the two authorities of Korea and Japan, there were other governmental bodies who were engaged in the staging of this extravagant parade such as those of Tsushima Domain who, by completing the actual tasks assigned to them, displayed their significance to the regime, well as the daimyos

9. For instance, principal subjects who discussed the dispatch of 1711’s embassy in Korea could be categorized into five positions—the king, officials and ministries of the court, envoys (*tongsinsa*) and officers who received Japanese delegation (*chōbwigwan*) dispatched by the court, regional governors and officers of navy forces, and local officers. In terms of specific organizations and personnel, there were around twelve ministers and bureaus including Ministry of Rites (Yejo), Office of Border Defense (Pibyōnsa), Royal Secretariat (Sūngjōngwŏn), Military Training Command (Hullyōndogam), Bureau of Interpreters (Sayōgwŏn), Bureau of Carpentry and Public Works (Sōngonggam), Government Arsenal (Kun’gisi), Bureau of Royal Transportation (Saboksi), and Bureau of Diplomatic Correspondence (Sūngmunwŏn). Kungnip Haeyang Pangmulgwan (2017, 36-37).

from each region who had hosted the embassy enroute.¹⁰

In relation to the dispatch of the Korean embassy, the two parties of Korea and Japan officially worked on equal terms; however, in actuality, it seems that each body often considered itself to be more prestigious than the other, and even belittled the other, in accordance with their recognized positions and goals.¹¹ As the Tokugawa shogunate had the political intention of heightening its authority internally by promoting the Korean embassy as a tributary envoy to Japan, they made sure that the addendum list of gifts (*pyŏlp'ok*)¹² that accompanied the official diplomatic letter by the Chosŏn king was construed as a tribute from a king of a vassal state to the shogun. While obviously, the Korean side never had such intention for offering up tribute as described by Japan. The dispatch of envoys was done in accordance with the shogunate's request and was never something voluntary. Rather, here the Koreans sought to civilize Japan and bequeath prestige. As such, the two parties acted through conflicting intentions, but their goals met in the creation of an appropriate visual code, in order to stage a procession of great extravagance.¹³

10. In relation to how each region in Japan received and hosted the Korean embassy, see Takamasa (2001). The procession of fleets was also something that was to be seen by spectators, and thus the two countries discussed in detail the procession's scale, interior and exterior decorations, and the organization of vessels. There are many images of the procession of fleets from the Edo period which I plan to discuss further in another article.

11. The different purposes and recognitions of the two countries in regard to the Korean embassy have been amply discussed in previous literature (Toby 1991; 2008).

12. It is called an "addendum" list of gifts as the document was created separately from the diplomatic document that records the official purpose of the embassy. The type and quantity of gifts were listed at the end of the document or in separate paper.

13. To apply Alfred Gell's theory on art and agency in reviewing the dynamic structure formed in regard to the staging of the procession, the Chosŏn court, the Tokugawa shogunate, and Tsushima Domain would be "agents" with differing agency, the Korean embassy would be the "prototype" affected by various authorities, and the procession would be an important "index" of the embassy. In the art nexus, the "recipient" would be every onlooker of the embassy procession in Korea and Japan. What should be noted, however, is that there is a possibility that recipients could recognize and reinterpret the prototype (the embassy) in as many ways as possible according to their diverse backgrounds, of classes, interests, and others. For detailed description of the "terms" and "agencies" within social relationships of "art nexus," see Gell (1998, 12-50). I will more fully discuss the various layers that differently recognize the index (the procession) in the last section.

The Korean Embassy Procession as an “Inserted” Event: The Visualization of the Korean Embassy in the Early Edo Period and the Tokugawa Shogunate

Given their entanglement with multiple power structures, the Korean embassies first appeared in the form of a procession “inserted” as a part of a cityscape, in the folding screen format that was used to depict scenes and activities mainly within Kyoto and Edo in the first half of the seventeenth century. There are four remaining artworks from this period when Korean embassies were beginning to be visualized in pictures, and all depict the embassy as an “inserted” image in folding screens and in scroll paintings of cityscapes.¹⁴ The most representative work is a pair of six-panel folding screens, titled *View of Edo* (*Edo-zu byōbu*, ca. 1634-35) currently preserved in the National Museum of Japanese History.

1. Korean Embassy in *View of Edo* Screens

The panoramic depiction of Edo scenes in *View of Edo* could be explained as an extension of the pictorial tradition of “scenes in and around the capital” (*rakuchū rakugai*)—that depicted sixteenth century Kyoto through a bird’s-eye view—within the context of seventeenth century Edo, the new capital and national center.¹⁵ Among the pair of six-panel folding screens, the left screen depicts Mountain Fuji at distance in the sixth panel on the left, while the panels on the right side depict Edo Castle, the seat of the Tokugawa shogunate (figure 2). Around the Castle are the residences of the three most noble branches of the Tokugawa family (*gosanke*, lit. “the noble three houses”)¹⁶ and the neighborhood around Nihon-bashi Bridge, while the parade of Korean envoys entering the Edo Castle is depicted at the center of the Castle in the second panel. Looking at

14. The four works are as follows: 1) *Folding Screen of Scenes in and around the Capital* (*Rakuchū rakugai-zu byōbu*, ca. 1620), Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Minneapolis Institute of Art; 2) *Folding Screen of Scenes in and around the Capital* (*Rakuchū rakugai-zu byōbu*, ca. 1620), Hayashibara Museum of Art; 3) *View of Edo Screens* (*Edo-zu byōbu*, ca. 1634-35) (figure 2); 4) *Illustrated History of the Tōshō Shrine* (*Tōshōsha Daigongen engi emaki*, 1640) (figure 4). There are many number of folding screens or handscrolls that solely depict the Korean embassy procession, but they are excluded here as their assumed periods of production ranged from the late seventeenth century to the eighteenth century.

15. When Tokugawa Ieyasu unified Japan through the battle in Sekigahara in 1600 and became the shogun in 1603, the center of Japanese politics rapidly moved from Kyoto to Tokyo.

16. The term “*gosanke*” indicate the most noble three branches of the Tokugawa clan—Owari-Tokugawa, Kishu-Tokugawa, and Mito-Tokugawa—who descended from the clan founder Tokugawa Ieyasu’s three sons, respectively the ninth, tenth, and eleventh who served as first-rank counselors (*dainagon*).



Figure 2. View of Edo screens (*Edo-zu byōbu*), ink and gold pigment on paper, early seventeenth century, a pair of six-panel folding screens, each 162.5 × 366 cm, collection of National Museum of Japanese History



Figure 3. View of Edo screens (*Edo-zu byōbu*) (detail), the Korean embassy procession heading to Edo Castle and royal gifts displayed in front of the moat

the Korean procession (figure 3), the figures who already have entered the Castle through the Great Gate (*Ōtemon*) hold up the Royal Standard emblazoned with a fire-breathing dragon (*hyōngmyōng-gi*) and “clear the way” pennants (*chōngdo-gi*). In front of the moat is an array of gifts from the Chosŏn king to the shogun, such as tiger and leopard skins, bolts of silk damask and

brocade, along with ceramic and metal works of art.

The screen is a representative work that depicts the view of Edo in the first half of the seventeenth century, before the great Meireki fire of 1657. The period of production could be presumed also from architectural elements in the image such as the five-storied keep of Edo Castle (Tenshukaku) which was not reconstructed after its destruction in the fire, as well as the houses of the three Tokugawa families situated behind the Castle.¹⁷ Each screen panel depicts locations and events related to the third shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-51, r. 1623-51), and this points to how the screen was not made merely for appreciation and entertainment purposes but for celebrating his actual ascension after the death of *ōgoshō* (retired former shogun) Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632). This explains the folding screen's inclusion of events that were most significant to Iemitsu, and because of this, the work is presumed to have been produced around 1634-35.¹⁸ And this chronological frame allows us to identify the Korean envoys depicted here to be of the embassy that visited the Edo Castle in December 19, 1624 (lunar calendar), the first embassy dispatched by King Injo of Chosŏn and the first embassy sent during the Iemitsu regime.¹⁹

In addition to the identification of the Korean embassy depicted in the work, one should pay attention to how the image of the procession of envoys were selected and then inserted to the scenery of the Edo Castle, the most representative architectural feature of the capital, and at the city's center. This positioning of the procession at the center of the folding screen celebrating the political achievements of Iemitsu suggests the significance and value of the event to the Tokugawa shogunate and their regime. At the same time, the work usefully displays the effect the shogunate intended through inserting the image of the parade and rendering this exotic retinue be construed as a tributary

17. With regard to the period and background of *View of Edo* screens, see Suitō (1991) and Kuroda (1993, ch. 2).

18. Many scholars discussed the folding screen as a visual celebration of Tokugawa Iemitsu's regime and achievements, and the most representative of them is Kuroda Hideo. Kuroda (1994) suggested that the screen was offered to him by one of his close aids between 1634 and 1635, or that it was produced to be displayed on the occasion of Iemitsu's visit. In the earlier periods of Tokugawa shogunate, the shogunate operated in dual structure of authority led by *ōgoshō* and *goshō* (shogun), meaning that shoguns who retired from his position maintained his power under the title of *ōgoshō*. "*Godai hajime*" was a series of policies executed after the death of the previous shogun and in the earliest period of the new shogun's reign as a kind of transitional administration. With regard to the Iemitsu's *godai hajime* and production of the folding screen, the main figure who emerges in the discussion is Matsudaira Nobutsuna (1596-1662), whom Iemitsu appointed as the person in charge of state affairs.

19. Ronald Toby extended Kuroda Hideo's discussion in more concrete detail. See Toby (1996, 120-21, 2013, 40-51).

envoy.

Although the scene of Korean envoys entering the Castle is based on actual observations of the procession, it cannot be considered as a factual record. Here, it is necessary to look at choices and adjustments made by the painter (or the commissioner). First, the highest-ranking members of the embassy—the three ambassadors (*samsa*) of the ambassador (*chǒngsa*), vice-ambassador (*pusa*), and third-ambassador (*chongsa*)—are much abbreviated in depiction within the panel, so that only two figures in small open palanquins are portrayed. The palanquins are each borne by four Koreans, not the Japanese who actually carried them. The palanquin containing the Korean letter of state is not illustrated, while the Japanese members who formed the escort are also omitted for the most part. Thus, the panels focus on the fifty or so Koreans entering the Castle, so that there are ultimately around 200 people, including 137 Japanese spectators of the procession, depicted.²⁰ In comparison, other records such as travel journals by the envoys or painting scrolls of the Korean embassy procession known for its detailed depiction of the 1711 mission show that there were always greater number of Japanese than Koreans escorting the parade, and the palanquins were mostly carried by Japanese attendants.²¹ Moreover, the gifts from the Chosŏn royal court would not be displayed near the moat as depicted. This is because in reality, the ceremony through which the Korean state letter was delivered was the most significant ritual of the Korean embassy's visit to Edo, and thus took place inside the Edo Castle's inner-most complex of the Honmaru Palace in a grand hall called *ōhiroma*. Attendants from Korea and Japan in formal dresses that corresponded to their official positions were seated, accompanied by rows of gifts on the left and right sides, and the ceremony began as the shogun entered the space and sat in the upper-level section. The choices and abbreviations made in the folding screen panels therefore reflected the kind of visual codes adopted to depict large cityscapes in painting, and the brilliant and magnificent Edo Castle and the procession of alien dignitaries making a visit, or, in other words, these choices were made to clearly display how the shogun received tribute from foreign Korean envoys.

Such images rendered by the shogunate seemed to have a certain effect at the time among court nobles in Kyoto and military society. An example can be

20. For exact number of persons, see Toby (1996).

21. In case of the 1711 embassy, there were a total of 478 Koreans in the retinue, but when adding up the number of escorting Japanese members, there were around 2,000 persons comprising the grand procession. With regard to the detailed composition and images related to the 1711 embassy procession, see Chosŏn Tongsinsa Munhwa Saŏphoe and Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe (2005) and Chŏng Ŭn-ju (2006).

found in the diary of a courtier Kujō Michifusa (1609-47). With regard to the 1643 envoy, the mission sent by King Injo to celebrate the birth of Ietsuna (r. 1651-80), Michifusa noted in his diary after seeing the procession passing through the streets of Kyoto that “the shogun’s might [have] already extend[ed] to foreign countries! They seem to send an embassy whenever there’s a felicitous occasion” (Kujō n.d., vol.5 [1643/6/14]).²² Records in other texts also confirm that influential members of the official and warrior classes at the time construed that the authority of the Tokugawa shogunate reached even overseas, so much so that in every propitious occasions of the shogunate family, the foreign king sent his envoys for celebration.²³ In short, they saw and understood the embassy parade as staged for the shogunate, in accordance with its intention.

2. Embassy’s Visit to Nikko and *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*

What kind of significance did the Korean embassy have for the Tokugawa shogunate, especially to Tokugawa Iemitsu? In particular, what kind of role did the Korean embassy procession and its image serve in terms of the shogunate’s understanding and manifestation of its own authority? This aspect is more clearly revealed in 1640’s *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* (*Tōshō Daigongen engi*) added with images of the embassy’s visit to Nikko and illustrations by Kanō Tan’yū (1602-74).²⁴

Nikko’s Tōshōsha (the present-day Tōshōgū) is the mausoleum of the first

22. English translation of the passage was quoted from Toby (2019, 143).

23. *Review of Diplomatic Relations with Chosŏn* (*Chōsen tsūkō daiki*) written by Matsuura Masatada (1676-1728), a scholar from Tsushima includes several records of the visits of Korean envoys as that of tributary. A similar tone can be discovered in passages of other Japanese literature such as *Documents of the Tsushima So Family* and *Story of Chosŏn* (*Chōsen Monogatari*), including expressions such as “felicitating (*keiga*) the ascension of Iemitsu,” “make a visit to Iemitsu to offer congratulations,” “upon Hidetada’s abdication of the throne to Iemitsu, on the order of Tsushima, Chosŏn sent Chōng Nip, Kang Hong-jung, and Sin Kye-yōng as delegates to attend the court and deliver congratulatory messages.” The passages express the Korean embassy’s visit to Japan as a visit of vassals from a tributary state to the son of Heaven shogun. On literature of the kind, see Toby (2013, 68-74); H. Yamamoto (1995); Yi Wŏn-sik, Sin Ki-su, and Nakao (1992).

24. *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* is a set of five scrolls. Because of its inclusion of illustrations (*e*), some catalogues introduce the scrolls as *Illustrated Handscrolls on the Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* (*Tōshōsha engi emaki*), but the original name is *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*. To distinguish the work from other version previously produced, the scrolls are also called *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* (*Tōshōsha engi*) “*kana-bon*” (*kana* edition). Karen Gerhart (1999, 177-78) argues that although the exterior title slips bear the title of *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine*, *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* is the title written in the scroll proper preceding the open paragraph of text in volume 1, thus making it the appropriate title for the set. This paper follows Gerhart’s opinion and refers to the set as *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*.

shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) and place of worship for his deified spirit. It was originally constructed in 1617, but the shrine was dismantled and rebuilt in 1636 under the third shogun, Iemitsu, in celebration of the twenty-first anniversary of Ieyasu's death.²⁵ Iemitsu executed a project to worship and deify his grandfather as well as the first shogun Ieyasu, through which he wished to establish a firm position for the first shogun Ieyasu who unified Japan, and to further solidify the Tokugawa family's domination and regime in Japan.²⁶

The extravagant ceremony for the twenty-first anniversary of Ieyasu's death was extravagantly held in April 17, 1636 (lunar calendar), and Iemitsu persuaded the Korean envoys who were visiting Japan the same year to head to Nikko.²⁷ Korean ambassadors many times rejected the request as it was something unprecedented. However, especially after facing the Shogun Iemitsu in person when delivering the Korean state letters, they could not but acquiesce to the earnest request by the shogunate and eventually visited Nikko. It seems that the scene of the visit of a grand scale embassy comprised of more than 200 persons to Nikko in 1636 was imprinted in the minds of a number of influential figures in Japan. As the shogunate had intended, Japanese society at the time construed the embassy's visit to *Tōshōgū* to have resulted from the high dignity and authority of Tokugawa Ieyasu.²⁸

In Iemitsu's deification of Ieyasu, the production and dedication of the two

25. When the shrine was first built in 1617 after Ieyasu's death, the building was called *Tōshōsha*. However, it became *Tōshōgū* in 1645 with an approval of the court (*tennō*) during Iemitsu's regime. Since then, multiple *Tōshōgū* were constructed around Japan for the worship of Ieyasu's deified spirit. In regard to reconstruction of *Tōshōgū* and Iemitsu's establishment of authority through a series of architectural projects, see Coaldrake (1996, 163-92) and Yang Ik-mo (2016). Studies in art history especially focused on how Nikko's middle gate, the *Yōmeimon* to discuss on how its sculpted detail is closely associated with Tokugawa shogunate's emphasis of "an image as a Confucian ruler," as in Gerhart (1999, 73-105).

26. With regard to the process and meaning of Ieyasu's deification, see Yang Ik-mo (2017) and Yoshida (2015).

27. Travel records of Korean envoys tell about how the embassy's visit to Nikko was realized, after many times of Japanese persuading Korean embassy who were reluctant about such unprecedented event. The three ambassadors from the 1636 embassy—First Ambassador Im Kwang, Second Ambassador Kim Se-ryōm, Third Ambassador Hwang Ho—all left their record of the travel to Japan, respectively in *1636 Diary of Japan* (*Pyōngja Ilbon ilgi*; Im Kwang 1975), *Record of Sea Travel* (*Haesarok*; Kim Se-ryōm 1975), and *Record of Travel to the East* (*Tongsarok*; Hwang Ho 1975). Articles from December 10 to 23 in each records allow for comprehensive understanding of the specific discussion processes and itinerary, as well as the details of Nikko. Im Kwang (1975) is published in volume three, and Kim Se-ryōm (1975) and Hwang Ho (1975) are published in volume four of *Korean Collection of Embassy Diaries* (*Haehaeng chôngjae*).

28. Ronald Toby (2013) argues that in addition to the Korean embassy's visit to Nikko, their visit to Kyoto Hōkōji's Ear Mound (*Mimizuka*) was also an itinerary staged by the shogunate to be seen by the Japanese (78-84).

sets of illustrated legends handscrolls (*engi emaki*)—*Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* (*Tōshōsha engi*) and *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*—was particularly meaningful in that these works occurred at the zenith of the process.²⁹ The term “engi” most typically refers to a transmitted story of the origins and history of temples and shrines. In case of shrines dedicated to a certain deified person, *engi* can refer to a kind of an official and sacred biography of the person’s former life, including his birth and lifetime in the world up until his apotheosis as god to be worshipped in rites. In short, along with the extensive refurbishing of Tōshōgū, a set of scrolls that illustrate achievements of deified Ieyasu Tōshō Daigongen were produced and dedicated at the final stages of the entire project.³⁰

What interests us here is that in addition to *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* offered in the special memorial service in 1636 celebrating the twenty-first anniversary, Ietmitsu produced and dedicated another set of *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* to Nikko in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Ieyasu’s death in 1640.

To understand the context behind the production of *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*, carried immediately after the completion of *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine*, it is necessary to briefly look at the differences in their content and format. First, *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* written on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of Iemitsu’s death in 1636 was a set of three scrolls inscribed with Chinese characters. There were no illustrations, and the text only describes Ieyasu’s life and work, as well as the stories that established him as a god.³¹ The text of the scrolls was written by Tenkai (1536-1643), a *Tendai* (*Tiantai*) monk and the Daisōjō of Nikko shrine at the time, and the title was thought out by the retired emperor (*jōko*) Gomizunoo (1596-1680, r. 1611-29).³² On the other hand, the new set of five scrolls carried an altered title, *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*.

29. Both works are preserved in *Tōshōgū*. And among them, *Tōshōsha engi* is rarely displayed in open exhibitions. For detailed images of *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*, see Komatsu (1994).

30. For the production and specific content of *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*, see Gerhart (1999, 107-40).

31. For the photoprint edition of *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine*, refer to Nikkō Tōshōgū Sanbyaku Gojūnensai Hōsankai (1915) and Sonehara (1995, 1996).

32. Among the three scrolls of the set, only the first scroll was completed by the time of the twenty-first anniversary in 1636, and it was in 1640 that the other two were completed. The entire text of *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine* was in Chinese characters without any illustration, and in order to distinguish the two sets, Japanese scholars call in abbreviated forms the one in Chinese characters “*mana-hon*” (Chinese characters edition), and the set with illustrations by Kanō Tan’yū “*kana-hon*” (Japanese syllabary). In Korean embassy related documents registered as the UNESCO International Memory of the World in 2017, the two sets were included as “*Tōshōsha engi mana-hon*” and “*Tōshōsha engi kana-hon*.” With regard to the Korean embassy records, see Pusan Pangmulgwan (2018) and Han T’ae-mun (2018).

The chronicle was again written by Tenkai, then at the age of 105, but other than this, some substantial changes were made to the new scroll, and adjustments were made. For instance, the text of the new scrolls was written in Japanese *kana* letters mixed with Chinese characters, and included inscriptions by not only the retired emperor Gomizunoo but also by other influential figures such as high-ranking court nobles, government officials, and priests. In terms of the content, descriptions of Ieyasu's sacred birth and supernatural ascension as well as more mundane achievements including the Korean embassy's visit to Nikko were additionally drafted. The most prominent difference in the new set of scrolls is that it included illustrations by Kanō Tan'yū (1602-74), the premier painter of the shogunate at the time.³³

Unlike the text-based *Origins of the Tōshō Shrine*, *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* with Kanō Tan'yū's illustrations was probably more effective in visually delivering to its audience the sacred achievements of Tokugawa Ieyasu. One of the scenes newly added to the scrolls that stands out the most in terms of its content is that included in volume four depicting Korean embassy's procession marching into the Nikko shrine to honor Tōshō Daigongen. The image in figure 4 depicts a procession of fifty or so members led by a blue flag of rising dragon (*sūngnyonggi*) heading out through a Torii gate with a plaque that writes Tōshō Daigongen. This depiction of the 1636 Korean embassy "honoring and making a tribute" in the Nikko shrine by Kanō Tan'yū involved an appropriate adjustments and omissions in the embassy's scale and appearance. Through both the text and illustrations, the scroll emphasizes how the Korean embassy had made visit to Nikko out of their reverence for Daigongen Ieyasu. When considered in the wider context of the series of Tokugawa Iemitsu's projects for the deification of his heritage, the image of a foreign procession visiting Tōshōgū, dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu, could be understood as sufficient impetus for producing the 1640's set of scrolls, just four years after the 1636 set.³⁴ In other words, the production and dedication of this new set of scrolls reconfigured to feature the image of the Korean embassy's visit to Nikko, created and aggrandized a fictional content that the majesty of the first shogun (now a deified Daigongen) reached out even beyond Japan, and at the same time also honored Iemitsu's achievements that had allowed for all this to happen.

33. For Korean embassy-related activities and production of paintings by Kanō Tan'yū, a painter who worked closely with the shogunate, see Pak Ūn-sun (2016, 248-49, 2019, 238-40).

34. Karen Gerhart (1999, 139-40) examined various circumstances surrounding the production of 1640 set of scrolls, and in the end cautiously suggest a possibility that it was produced to insert a scenery of Korean embassy procession. I consider it very persuasive.



Figure 4. Kanō Tan'yū, *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen*, scroll 4, a depiction of Korean embassy's visit to the shrine (part), ink and gold pigment on paper, 26.0 × 153.0 cm, collection of Nikkō Tōshōgū Museum

After their first visit to Nikko in 1636, the Korean embassy made two additional visits to the shrine. At the time of their last visit, Tokugawa Iemitsu's mausoleum, Daiyūin, was also completed near Nikko, and thus the envoys also made visit to the temple along with Tōshōgū.³⁵ The Japanese strategy that sought to emphasize that the shogunate's great authority even reached to foreign lands was embodied in other celebratory formats as well, and can be seen in the bronze bell sent from Chosŏn at the request of the shogunate, placed aside a hanging lantern sent from the Dutch at the yard in front of Nikkō Tōshōgū's middle gate Yomeimon (*Injo sillok*, 1642, vol. 43 [Injo 20/2/18])—the items sent from the Netherlands and Korea, delivered by foreigners who had traveled from faraway for the purpose of “worshipping,” operated as a means to display the shogunate's great authority and dignity. And this illustrates how the embassy was appropriated in Japan as an “alien procession,” as well as the significant role it served in establishing the authority of the shogunate in the early years of its existence.

As can be assumed from the above, the *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* was not produced for aesthetic appreciation, and therefore was probably not exhibited in front of a general audience after its production and dedication to the shrine. What should not be overlooked, however, is that the production of the new set of scrolls involved Iemitsu's requesting of numerous individuals of importance at the time such as Tenkai, the imperial family, Buddhist temple priests, high-ranking court nobles and government officials, to inscribe various sections, as well as offer consultation. Such processes were significant as they show how, already during the production of the new set of scrolls, the authority and achievements of the Tokugawa shogunate that Iemitsu wished to emphasize

35. Daiyūin is a mausoleum of the third shogun Iemitsu, located about 500 meters away from Nikkō Tōshōgū, established in 1642. With regard to embassies dispatched by King Injo and Hyojong and rituals in Nikko, there are articles that include the shogunate's request of specific objects, including king's writings, inscriptions, and ritual objects, as well as related discussions.

were clearly delivered to the major elite social, cultural and governmental sectors of Edo and Kyoto. The newly constructed extravagant and monumental architecture as well as the distribution of the narrative of the foreign embassies' visit to the shrine prompted the further diffusion of images of the Korean embassy relative to the shogunate's intention to impress numerous first and secondary spectators in Japan.

This expansion of images continued into the late Edo period and was accelerated by the additional creation of further Tōshōgū around Japan. In particular, when further Tōshōgū were built around Japan in addition to Nikko, the image of the Korean embassy once again proliferated. Centering around three Tokugawa families, these new sets of scrolls were produced and dedicated with reference to *Origins of Tōshō Daigongen* and Kanō Tan'yū's illustrations. In the Edo period until nineteenth century, sets of scrolls honoring deified Ieyasu were produced and copied around Japan as an important relic of different families of daimyo. A representative example is the scroll of Kishū Tokugawa family, a set of five scrolls titled *Illustrated History of the Tōshō Shrine (Tōshōsha engi emaki)* produced in 1825 and currently preserved in the keep of Osaka Castle.³⁶

Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602-71), the head of the Kishū Tokugawa family and the tenth son of Ieyasu, constructed Kishū Tōshōgū in Wakayama Mountain and ordered Sumiyoshi Jokei (1599-1670), a painter of the shogunate, to paint an illustrated handscroll of these legends with reference to the original Nikkō Tōshōgū scrolls by Kanō Tan'yū. The scrolls were completed in 1646 and were dedicated to Kishū Tōshōgū. The version currently held in the Osaka Castle is a reproduction of the 1646 scrolls reproduced upon the order of Tokugawa Harutomi (1771-1853), the feudal lord (*hanshu*) of Kishū in the late Edo period, and had been passed down within the family. The set was completed in 1825, and the first to fourth volumes of it were painted by another painter of the shogunate Sumiyoshi Hironao (1781-1828), while the fifth volume was illustrated by his brother Hirosada with reference to Jokei's paintings.

As has been discussed, in the first half of the seventeenth century when the image of Korean embassy was beginning to be formalized, the visualization of Korean envoys strongly reflected the shogunate's intentions and will. This demonstrates the important role the Korean embassy served in the early

36. I could actually observe the scrolls and their details through a special exhibition held in Osaka Castle Museum in March 2016, titled *Shinkun (Deified Lord) Ieyasu Tokugawa: Retracing His Life through "Illustrated History of Tōshōgū Shrine" (Shinkun Ieyasu: "Tōshōgū engi emaki" de tadoru shōgai)*. In addition to the set of handscrolls, there are multiple copies of the set produced in the Edo period that could be found under different titles.

Tokugawa shogunate's establishment of their authority and regime. It is not possible to state for sure the number and variety of people the influence of the embassy images had reached, as the shogunate had intended. However, one can affirm that the shogunate's message embodied in the embassy images at least continued to reach and affect influential individuals within the aristocratic and samurai families of Japan until the late Edo period.

The Possession and Display of Images: Gifts Sent from the Tokugawa Shogunate to the Kyoto Imperial Court

1. Pictures from the Empress's Collection: Tōfukumon'in's *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception*

The Tokugawa shogunate's strategy to establish its authority through the Korean embassy and its procession is more clearly manifested in a pair of folding screens known as the relic of Tōfukumon'in (1607-78), consort of emperor Gomizunoo (1596-1680). In the collection of Sennyūji, Kyoto, a mausoleum and temple (*bodaiji*) of the imperial family, is a pair of screens of Korean envoys by Kanō Masunobu (1625-94).³⁷ This pair of folding screens, also known as *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception* (*Chōsen tsūshinshi kantai zu byōbu*, figure 5), is distinguished from the previously discussed cityscape folding screens or *Origins of the Tōshō Daigongen* scrolls in that, rather than inserting the image of the Korean embassy procession within a format determined by other traditional themes, it visualizes the Korean envoys as an independent subject matter.

The left screen of the pair depicts a scene at the official reception hall of Edo Castle (*ōhiroma*) where the envoys appointed the shogun, as well as the scene of a reception and feast for the three ambassadors hosted by the three Tokugawa families of *gosanke*. The right screen depicts the embassy's procession passing through the downtown of Edo and entering the Castle (figure 6). The *List of Eternal Buddhist Items* (*Jōjū dōgu yochō*) preserved in Sennyūji is worthy of attention as concrete evidence of Tōfukumon'in's possession of the folding screens. Among the inventory of various items in this record published in 1680, two years after the death of Tōfukumon'in, there is a folding screen listed under the title of "Tōfukumon'in - Koreans - A Pair" (*Tōfukumon'in-Chōsenjin-issō*). This indicates that the screens became a part of the Sennyūji collection from

37. The seal and signature in the left screen indicates that the paintings were done by Kanō Masunobu (1625-94).



Figure 5. Kanō Masunobu, *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception* (*Chōsen tsūshinshi kantai zu byōbu*), ink and gold pigment on paper, Edo period (early seventeenth century), pair of eight folding screens, each 166.5 × 505 cm, collection of Sennyūji, Kyoto



Figure 6. Kanō Masunobu, *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception* (*Chōsen tsūshinshi kantai zu byōbu*), detail, scene of reception and feast for Korean envoys

at least the seventeenth century (Ōmiwa 1992, 134; figure 7, red lines by the author).³⁸

38. Nishitani Asao, a conservateur at Sennyūji, provided much assistance in investigating the provenance of the folding screens. I would like to express my gratitude here for the photographs of the record (*Jōjū dōgu yochō*) that allowed me to continue my research despite the Covid situation that prevented me from examining the book first-hand, as well as all the additional information.

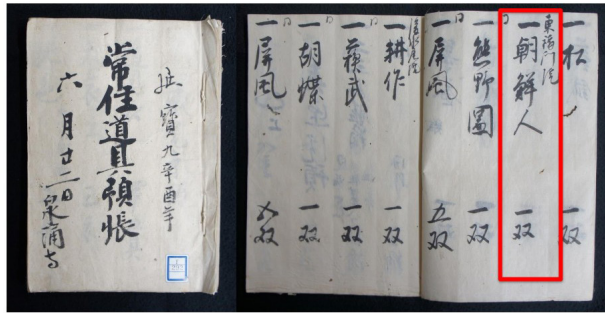


Figure 7. List of Eternal Buddhist Items (*Jōjū dōgu yochōi*), Edo period (seventeenth century), collection of Sennyūji, Kyoto

The *Folding Screens of Korean Embassy Reception* has been understood in terms of a genre painting, but recent studies have shed a new light on their political context. Among these, the research by Elizabeth Lillehoj stands out for its focus on establishing the folding screens' provenance to Tōfukumon'in to argue for the possibility that the screens were commissioned and produced as exchange gifts to be sent to the empress. Lillehoj argues that this intent corresponded to a plan devised by Hoshina Masayuki (1611-73), the supporter of the fourth shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641-80, r. 1651-80) during his regime, and the overall goal to reinstitute the power and authority of the shogunate through a visualization of the reception of visits from foreign envoys.³⁹

Tōfukumon'in, known earlier in life as Tokugawa Masako (or Kazuko), was the empress of Emperor Gomizunoo as well as the daughter of the second Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632). She held a significant position in the power structure of Japan at the time. The Tokugawa shogunate through marriage sought to enhance their kinship with the imperial family in Kyoto as well as acquire greater privileges and establish their position within the imperial family. And therefore, as soon as Masako was born, the shogunate pushed ahead with their plan for her marriage within the imperial family. The marriage was

With regard to the details and provenance of the folding screens, see Toby (2016).

39. It seems that the existence of the folding screens were known from quite an early period (Kobayashi 1985, 147). Ronald Toby (1996, 125-27) indicated that the paintings embody a scene of the 1655 Korean embassy. The images often appeared in various publications in Korea and abroad in relation to Korean embassy, but there has been no art historical study that solely focused on the work. Elizabeth Lillehoj's study (2007, 2011, 205-208) exclusively focused on the folding screens and their political context, and later, Ronald Toby (2016) built on Lillehoj's discussions by adding a visual analysis of the images.

something unprecedented as the imperial family had never previously received its empress from a military family, and therefore, until the marriage of the fourteen-year-old Masako and Emperor Gomizunoo was finally realized in 1620, there was period of long and slow discussion and negotiation between Kyoto and Edo that took about eleven years. The daughter that resulted from their union later became Emperor Meishō. Masako's marriage was to be grand even from its preparatory stage, and her entrance to Kyoto castle was devised as a magnificent event, followed by paintings that commemorated the occasion. Masako brought with her a huge sum of dowry and trousseau, and later became an important patron of the arts in seventeenth century Kyoto, and a significant mediator between the imperial family and the shogunate.⁴⁰

Considering the family background of Tōfukumon'in, the argument follows that *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception*, depicting the scenery of hospitality for the envoys dispatched by King Hyojong in 1655 to celebrate the succession of Ietsuna as the new shogun, was produced as a gift for Tōfukumon'in by Shogun Ietsuna. This is especially plausible considering how Ietsuna came to reign, at a young age without *ōgosho*, and thusly distinguished from that of the previous shoguns Ieyasu-Hidetada-Iemitsu. The painting's content also involved some sectioning and editing of major events so that various scenes such as that of the three ambassadors with an official state letter recognizing the shogun, or the scene where they, after the ceremony, enjoy the feast hosted by three Tokugawa families *gosanke*, were rearranged according to their significance to the shogunate and sometimes disregarding the actual time and space in which each of the events happened (Toby 2016). The presentation of the folding screens that visualize the Tokugawa shogunate and the Shogun Ietsuna receiving a foreign emissary from the Korean embassy to Tōfukumon'in was a gift that was understood as a reflection of the shogunate's authority. In this respect it was orientated not to the individual person of Tōfukumon'in but rather toward the entire imperial court and a wider audience within elite Kyoto society.

2. The Distribution of Images and Proliferation of the Fame: Sennyūji *Kaichō*

Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception that embodied the shogunate's authority to receive visits from foreign emissaries was later imbued with the provenance that it was transmitted to Sennyūji as a relic of Tōfukumon'in,

40. With regard to Tōfukumon'in's artistic patronage, see Lillehoj (2011, 121-47).

allowing its fame to continue through words. With regards to how this fame came to be proliferated amongst the general public transcending barriers such as time and region, it is necessary to consider the practice of public exhibition of religious objects from Buddhist temples called “*kaichō*.”

A *kaichō* is a type of a periodic display organized by Buddhist temples, and featuring their collections of art and objects, which were occasionally held around Japan in the Edo period.⁴¹ This practice originally began as a special religious event for temporally exhibiting secret Buddhas and other items that were usually enshrined away from public access, but in the Edo period and especially after the late eighteenth century, the event was more frequently held more for economic purposes such as fundraising for the temple's maintenance. There were two types of *kaichō* according to its location: those that remained at the home temple were called *igaichō*, while those that traveled elsewhere were called *degaichō*. Both practices were frequent in the Edo period.⁴²

A *degaichō* was held in 1784 at Dairyūji temple located near the Nagoya Castle which publicly exhibited the collection of the Sennyūji in Kyoto, and particularly the objects of the emperor and the empress. Kōriki Tanenobu (1756-1831, pseudonym Enkōan) vividly delivers the scene through his writings and pictures, and through *Inspection of Sacred Treasures from Sennyūji* (*Sennyūji reihō haiken-zu*), it is possible to know the details of the *kaichō* that was held for twenty days from October 5 to October 25, 1784 (lunar calendar; Nagoya-shi Hakubutsukan 2006).⁴³ Each page is dedicated to one specific exhibit with

41. It is also called *kaihi*. In Japan, *kaichō* is mentioned in literature from the thirteenth century, and were actively held in the Edo period. It was originally organized for religious purposes, to openly exhibit a secret Buddha (*hibutsu*) usually enshrined and kept away from regular public access, and to promulgate Buddhist ideas. In the late Edo period, however, various economic aspects such as maintenance of the temples were more emphasized as the purpose, and the exhibition came to establish itself as a kind of a festivity or a part of people's entertainment. For general tendencies of Edo period's *kaichō*, refer to following studies: Hiruma (1980), Kitamura (1989), Hasegawa (1974), and Yuasa (1991).

42. For instance, Yamamoto Yūko (2006, 7), through here analysis of articles from *Enkōan's Dairy* (*Enkōan nikki*) from the late Edo period, found out that just in Owari Domain (Owari-han) there were an average of eleven *kaichō* held in a year, and the thirty percent of those were *degaichō*. To bring in *kaichō* that Enkōan had not recorded, and those that took place in places other than Owari Domain to consideration, it is possible to conclude that there were at least hundreds of *kaichō* held around Japan every year.

43. The book currently preserved in Nagoya City Museum with the cover that writes “Enkōan's record of Sennyūji *kaichō* and Saga *kaichō*” (*Enkōan gōshū go-hen Sennyūji kaichō Saga kaichō*) includes records by Enkōan of two *kaichō*, and the content and the order were intactly republished into a photoprint. Kōriki Tanenobu's pseudonym was Enkōan, and he was a samurai who belong to Owari Domain, who did not acquire any special position and spent most of his life writing books. He wrote over 100 works, and they are characterized by their vivid depiction of community



Figure 8. Enkōan, from *Inspection of Sacred Treasures from Sennyūji* (*Sennyūji reihō haiken-zu*) a display of *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception* (*Chōsen tsūshinshi kantai zu byōbu*)

detailed illustrations of the interior space including those that explain the work and describe the people that were viewing the exhibition. Among the works exhibited, there is also *Folding Screen of a Korean Embassy Reception*. In figure 8, this screen is placed beside the person who explains to the viewers. Next to the work, it is written: “This folding screen was gratefully favored by Tōfukumon’in, [as it was] given as a present by the shogun. It depicts a scene of the Korean embassy visiting the shogunate, painted by Kanō Masunobu.”⁴⁴ (figure 8, red line by the author).

Most residents of Nagoya would have never had the chance to visit Sennyūji, a family mausoleum and temple of the imperial family. It was probably even more difficult and unimaginable to see in person the various items and accessories possessed by the imperial family. But through the *kaichō*, the value and fame of the folding screens—the shogun receiving visit of the Korean embassy, the Kanō School painting gifted to the empress by the shogun, and the

festivals, attractions (*misemono*), *kaichō* enjoyed by the Japanese people at the time. They are also distinct in their inclusion of lively illustrations and expository writings in great detail. Sixteen illustrated books are known to be related to *kaichō*, and this book among them is highly appreciated for its level of completion and illustrations. The book is currently preserved in Nagoya City Museum, and photographic edition and reprint copy were published in 2006.

44. “Kono go byōbu wa katajikenaku mo Tōfukumon’in-sama go yoshimi ni tsuke Kubō-sama yori go kenjō hi asobitaru Chōsenjin raichō no zu Kanō no Masunobu no fude de gozaru.”

folding screen favored by the empress and as her relic transmitted to Sennyūji—were revived and received by the wider public. In particular, in the eighteenth century, the folding screens were displayed not only in Kyoto but in other public venues within different regions, where they were viewed by a further number of people, accompanied with relevant descriptions to continuously transmit the special meaning embodied in the folding screens. From the latter half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century, a greater number of *kaichō* took place in various regions for financial purposes, and one can assume that the image of the Korean embassy, given the value and fame of the work in question, could be dispersed and distributed among many more members of the general public.

The Foreign Procession as a Festivity

The earliest extant works that depict the Korean embassy are from the first half of the seventeenth century, and in these works, the image of Korean envoys was inserted as a procession form that served to visualize the will and position of the Tokugawa shogunate. From the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, scroll paintings and folding screens depicting the embassy procession were produced in even greater quantity. They were produced less in a political context and more to commemorate and record the presence of the envoys. Although not within the scope of this paper, as has been discussed in preceding studies, from 1711 the visual code with regard to the embassy procession was systemized, and the equestrian performances (*masangjae*) undertaken by the entourage were performed as a popular spectacle, while some images became the motif for various craftworks.⁴⁵ Such changes were enabled by the fact that it was no longer necessary for the Tokugawa shogunate to establish their authority, and also that in actuality, the political character of the embassy was transformed to that of a cultural delegation.

In the process, especially in relation to the Korean embassy images from the late seventeenth century, there occurred another significant transformation, that

45. Particularly with regard to the 1711 embassy, there are a great number of existing works of literature and visual materials, as well as research papers that focus on costume, music, art, and literature. With regard to the 1711 scroll painting of the Korean embassy procession that illustrates the entire itinerary from the entrance to the castle, the events in the castle, and the embassy's return to Korea, refer to the following studies: Chōng Ūn-ju (2006, 205-240) and Ch'a Mi-ae (2006). On the exchange of calligraphy and paintings through painters that accompanied the envoys, there are Hong Sōn-p'yo (1995; 1998) and other pioneering works.

a procession replicating that of the Korean embassy began to be included in various community festivals. Following the popularity of the Korean embassy procession, a variety of carnivals and festivals around Japan came to include a masquerade procession that imitated the Korean embassy. It is not clear within which context and through whose impetus the imitation of the Korean embassy procession first emerged in festivals. However, various pictures from the period show that, as early as the late seventeenth century, major festivals in Edo such as the Sannō Festival (*Sannō matsuri*), and Kanda Festival (*Kanda matsuri*), also known as the Festival of the Realm (*Tenka matsuri*), began to include imitations of the Korean embassy procession (figure 9, figure 10).⁴⁶ Masquerades of Korean embassies could be identified as “Korean” through their imitations of the envoys’ formal hat, costume, and overall appearance. However, they were sometimes recreated in relation to the broader notion of “foreigners (*tōjin*)” without any distinction of the specific nationalities of Korean, Dutch, and Ryukyuan. This thus resulted in imitations of Korean envoys accompanying a gigantic elephant float, or their costumes consisting of a blend between Dutch embroidery and Korean millinery styles.

Here, it is necessary to remind oneself of the art nexus Alfred Gell suggested. The Korean embassy, the prototype, exists within influence of various agents—largely the three groups of the Tokugawa shogunate, Tsushima Domain, and the Chosŏn royal court—and was recognized and (re)construed by a great number of Japanese from various classes as an index of a splendid and extravagant procession. Unlike the elite members of the governmental and samurai classes, who perceived and comprehended the images as the shogunate had intended, the majority of the general public encountered the embassy only as a grand procession passing through street. These spectators received the visual material and performative recreation of the embassy not as something specific to “Chosŏn” but as an extravagant festivity and a popular spectacle, based on the idea of “alien” parade. What is more interesting is that it is highly probable that such a transformation of meaning took place from quite an earlier period, possibly as early as when the Korean embassy first set foot on Japan.⁴⁷

The Korean embassy masquerade that first appeared in Edo (present Tokyo)

46. The Kanda Festival is one of the representative festivals of the Edo (or Tokyo) that continues to this day. It started in the early seventeenth century as a celebration of Tokugawa Ieyasu’s victory at the battle of Sekigahara, and continued as a display of the prosperity of the Tokugawa shogunate during the Edo period.

47. Ronald Toby (2019, 146–49) had pointed out that already from the earlier half of the seventeenth century, the commoners may have considered the embassy procession as a ritual or a festival.



Figure 9. Nishimura Shigenaga (1697-1756), *Picture of a Procession of Foreigners in Matsuri* (*Go sairei tōjin gyōretsu e*), eighteenth century, collection of the Tokyo National Museum



Figure 10. Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764), *Picture of Korean envoys procession* (*Chōsenjin raichō gyōretsu zu*), eighteenth century, collection of Tokyo National Museum

soon spread to festivals in other regions of Japan, and images of such were further and continuously reproduced into various *ukiyo-e* and other types of publications as an alien procession with their costumes, hats, and appearance distinguished from that of the Japanese (figure 11; Toby 1986, 2019, 142-89; Yun Chi-hye 2005).

Here, the power of the prototype—the embassy—that embodied a political and diplomatic context disappeared, and its index—the procession—came to exist only as an exotic spectacle, while also being transformed again to be



Figure 11. Kondo Kiyonobu, *Picture of the Procession of the Continentals* (*Tōjin gyōretsu no ezu*), 1711, 32.5 × 55.5 cm, collection of the British Museum

adopted within various folklore narratives and literature to be consumed in various ways. As such, the Korean embassy, originally mounted as a diplomatic mission between Korea and Japan, had its meaning and value changed in correspondence to the needs of its spectatorship, and relative to the time, class, medium, and circumstance of such, and was therefore transformed and reproduced differentially in a diverse range of contexts. A number of embassy images in *ukiyo-e* and other printed materials produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Edo period could also be understood in this context, of having visualized this masquerade of the Korean embassy.

The *degaichō* discussed in the previous section also probably operated as a point where multiple layers of embassy-related images and ideas intersected in complicated and esoteric ways. For instance, if there were a commoner in the late eighteenth century who lived in a region where he could actually watch the Korean embassy procession, he could probably encounter the embassy in person at least once in his life, and at least once a year or two come across a masquerade imitating the embassy procession in a festival, and if lucky, also see the Tōfukumon'in's folding screens of the Korean embassy reception in Sennyūji exhibition (*degaichō*) or hear about the value of such. In short, in addition to the Korean embassy that existed as the prototype reflecting the agency of the shogunate's authority, and the index of the embassy as procession, another image of the embassy held by commoners who from an earlier moment recognized the

embassy as a festivity or an alien parade intersected in the one offered within physical exhibition space of the *kaichō*.

In understanding the image of Korean embassy in the Edo period and its creation, generation, circulation, and transformation within a larger network of social relations, the agency theory is effective as it allows for one to move beyond a linear understanding of an artwork as the final product of a patron or an artist that encodes the producer's intent, and shed light on how such are received by various admirers or recipients in the entire process of production, circulation, and reception. This is more so as the agency of the first subject—the clear goal and intention of the producer or the patron—can be transformed in completely new ways and cause secondary and tertiary transformations and proliferations to happen at the same time. This is partially due to the nature of the prototype—that the embassy is a grand procession comprised of living envoys that physically travelled between and across the two countries—but also due to the various ways that the index was transformed in relation to the diverse social backgrounds of the recipients.

Other than community festivals, there exists a variety of examples that feature in some way the Korean embassy in the material and visual culture of Edo commoners, including the popular attraction of *misemono*, the Korean embassy masquerade as performed within different regional festivals, and the imagery featured within *ukiyo-e* and other printed material.⁴⁸ Further research on the topic could explore how the embassy images were transformed, proliferated, and circulated in folk culture by looking into embassy motifs in folklore, various printed materials, and craftwork.⁴⁹ Moreover, although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it also seems apparent that the paintings of embassy fleets and other images where the naval vessels were visualized also went through a similar process of transformation and reconfiguration relative to the context of the audience. In the early Edo period, the fleet of embassy ships were commemorated and documented in illustrations, and reproduced in variety of formats; from prints based on the theme of a ship and the arrival of foreigners, to small wooden plaques of a “picture-horse” (*ema*) type written with prayers or wishes. It seems that the motif of a ship itself transformed was from an index of travelling from far abroad to an image with some form of representative

48. *Outline of Korean embassy to Japan* (Shin Gisu and Nakao 1995) includes a number of *uki-e* and *ukiyo-e* with similar compositions under the titles of “alien parade” (*tōjin gyōretsu*), “Koreans visiting Japan,” and “Korean envoys,” and assumes that there is a greater number of materials that have not yet been discovered.

49. With regard to appearance of Korean embassy images in theater and literature, see Pak Ryō-ok (2012) and An Su-hyōn (2016).

spiritual power, or a talisman. What this complicated and simultaneous generation and circulation of images tell us, then, is how the political and sociocultural implications of the embassy came to be understood and received in different ways, so that, especially among commoners, the visual code of foreign men from overseas came to hold a kind of a “magical power.”

Even in today’s festivals around Japan parades of “foreigners” with costumes are blended with those featuring the Korean embassy and other “aliens.” And, in the cities of Pusan, Korea and Shimonoseki, Japan, the procession of Korean embassy is reenacted as a representation of the friendly relationship between the two nations. These examples could be construed as another form of transformation that took place in the contemporary period, displaying how the agencies of the Korean embassy and its procession are still in operation.

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