**Korean Diplomatic Delegations to Japan (*Chōsen Tsūshin-shi*)**

On 12 occasions during the Edo period (1603–1867), delegations from the Korean Peninsula visited Japan on diplomatic missions (known in Japanese as *Chōsen tsūshin*). In 2017, documents concerning these missions were added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in recognition of their value as a record of the history of relationship-building and cultural exchange between Korea (*Chōsen*) and Japan. The 12 missions aided in reestablishing diplomacy and peaceful relations between the two countries after Japan’s invasion of Korea in the late sixteenth century. The word *tsūshin* can be translated as “expressing mutual goodwill,” and the missions, which were characterized by mutual respect, enabled the two countries to maintain peace throughout the Edo period. During Japan’s period of national isolation (*sakoku*), the visits were also a rare opportunity for cultural and scientific exchange. However, the costs of traveling to or from Japan and of lavishly accommodating the delegations imposed large financial burdens on both countries, and the missions were eventually stopped.

One of the documents registered with UNESCO is a picture scroll displayed at the Korean Diplomatic Delegation Exhibit of the Shōtō Park Museum on Shimokamagari Island. The *Picture Scroll of the Bizen Fleet Serving Chōsen Tsūshin-shi* (*Chōsenjin Raichō Oboe Bizen Gochisō Sen Gyōretsu-zu*) depicts the tenth Korean delegation navigating the shallow waters of the Seto Inland Sea with the help of hundreds of smaller boats from Okayama, which are shown towing the Korean ships. This scroll is especially significant because it shows the surprised facial expressions of the spectators and records some of their conversations upon seeing the foreign visitors.

Traveling from Hanseong (now Seoul) to Edo (now Tokyo), the delegation usually passed through the Seto Inland Sea. The port on Shimokamagari Island, long an important stopover on this sea route, was given the duty of welcoming and entertaining the Korean guests on behalf of Hiroshima domain (now part of Hiroshima Prefecture). Asked in Edo about their travels, the delegation declared that the feast on Shimokamagari Island was their favorite. In recognition of this, the building that contains the Korean Diplomatic Delegation Exhibit is called the “Best Hospitality Hall” (Gochisō Ichiban Kan), and it contains a faithful reproduction of the extravagant meals that were served to the Korean delegation.

The banquets consisted of two parts: the welcoming ceremony and the actual meal. The food offered at the welcoming ceremony was served in a style called “seven-five-three courses”(*shichi-go-san no zen*). A meal in this style normally consists of 15 dishes served in three courses of seven, five, and three dishes each, numbers that are all considered auspicious and lucky. In the case of the welcoming ceremony, the courses of seven and three dishes were doubled, for a total of 25 dishes served over five courses. Despite the elaborate presentation, the food was not meant to be eaten. Participants took the items that they wanted to “eat” and placed them on their plates, but they did not actually consume anything during the ceremony. It was only afterward that an actual meal was served. Like the doubling of the “seven-five-three courses,” the meal they ate was also an extravagant version of an established style. A typical one-course meal at the time, such as those eaten by the Tokugawa shoguns, generally consisted of “one soup and three side dishes” (*ichijū sansai*), but the meal served to the Korean delegates was called “three soups and fifteen side dishes” (*sanjū jūgo-sai*). These meals used seasonal ingredients and were prepared so that each ingredient was easy to identify. The specific ingredients and items used in the welcoming ceremony were mandated by the shogunate, and it often took months of preparation to gather them.

At the center of the exhibit is a lively model of the procession of delegates. There is also a detailed one-tenth-scale reproduction of the type of ship used by the missions traveling from Korea, as well as life-sized mannequins in Korean dress resembling the clothes the delegates would have worn.

The museum occupies a merchant’s residence built during the Meiji era (1868–1912). The residence originally stood in Toyama Prefecture before being moved to the Shōtō Park Museum.

The Shōtō Park Museum complex houses three more exhibits, each in its own building: an old townhouse from Miyajima Island (in Hiroshima Prefecture) contains an exhibit called “The Porcelain Hall,” a collection of *imari* porcelain from the Edo period. The Manor of Light, a family residence moved from Yamaguchi Prefecture contains a collection of lamps from around the world, and a former guardhouse from Shimokamagari Island that houses a display of various antique weapons, such as bows and firearms.