Koguryŏ Diplomacy Towards the Wa

Foreign Policy Strategy and the Situation in East Asia

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This book addresses the lack of material dealing with the strategic plans of Koguryŏ's diplomacy and it sheds light on how Koguryŏ shaped diplomacy towards the Wa in the dynamics unique to East Asia during the 6th and 7th centuries A.D.

In fact, during the period from 600 - 614 A.D., the Wa itself sought an active diplomacy in relation to the Sui Dynasty. An epistle sent from the Wa to the Wen emperor of Sui provides clues to the diplomacy of Koguryŏ toward the Wa. Content analysis of the epistle reveals that Koguryŏ sought to maintain an alliance with the Wa in its struggle against the northern thrust of Silla and the potential threat from the Sui Dynasty in the West.

After the downfall of Latter Han Dynasty, China fragmented into three warring states, sixteen rival states and two south-northern states, which led to the chaos of sustained warfare between forces seeking hegemonic control. Taking advantage of the turmoil in China, Koguryŏ developed into a powerful state which dominated the southern part of the Korean peninsula.

The unification of China by the Sui Dynasty and the emergence of Silla as a new power in the south posed a new threat. The diplomacy of Koguryŏ towards the Wa started from 570 A.D. took shape against this evolving backdrop. The fact that King Youngyang dispatched Hyeja to the Wa from 595 to 615 A.D. and let him serve for Pirnce Shotoku, who held the substantial power, supports the view that the king desired a strategic alliance with the Wa.

Koguryŏ's broad influence on the politics, social system and culture of the Wa at that time resulted from the close relation between Koguryŏ and the Wa through Hyeja. The *Nihon shoki* tells that during the reign of Prince Shotoku, emissaries and monks from Koguryŏ repeatedly visited him. In fact, the discovery in 1992 of a black-ink painting depicting a Koguryŏ emissary at the base of the Amitabha statue in the Horyuji Temple supports the *Nihon shoki* because the statue's base probably came from the remains of Shotoku's palace (Ikaruga no miya).

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Introduction

According to the Gwanggaeto (Kwanggaet'o) stele erected in 414 CE, Koguryŏ considered the Wa (K. Wae) to be outside their world order but the Wa had supported Baekje (Paekche), which had now surrendered to the Koguryŏ king, and thus represented a threat to the Koguryŏ political order. Such relations continued throughout the reign of King Gwanggaeto, from the late fourth century through the beginning of the fifth century.[1] The so-called "Five Kings of Wa Japan" sent ten tribute missions over a span of about sixty years to the Southern Song dynasty. The titles of investiture that the Wa requested from the Song Emperor clearly illustrated their confrontational attitude toward Koguryŏ. It has been pointed out that Baekje's hostile intentions towards Koguryŏ may

1 Lee Sungshi, "Hyōshō to shite no Kōkaido ō hibun," *Shisō* 842 (August, 1994).

have been behind this Wa diplomacy.[2] Since the fourth century, the Wa had been directly participating in the intense rivalry on the Korean peninsula between Koguryŏ and Baekje and through Baekje the Wa had been conveying their antagonism to Koguryŏ.

At the end of the sixth century, the relationship between Koguryŏ and the Wa suddenly changed as Koguryŏ opened relations with the Wa and began a period of quite active diplomacy. This paper argues that the development of diplomatic activities toward the Wa by Koguryŏ was part of a strategy that reflected the circumstances in East Asia during that period.

1. The Opening of Koguryŏ Diplomacy with the Wa: When and Why

Previous scholarship has indicated when and in what context Koguryŏ began its foreign policy efforts to the Wa. The time period is generally considered to be from the last year of the reign of Emperor Kinmei to the ascension of Emperor Bidatsu. The *Nihon shoki* records that negotiations with Koguryŏ began with the dispatch of an envoy in 570, which is a view shared by many scholars.[3] The historical trends in ancient East Asia at that time also support this assertion. This can be understood from an anecdote in the *Nihon shoki* telling that when the Koguryŏ envoy brought a diplomatic document that could not be deciphered, an official of Baekje origins named Ōinji could read it.

According to the anecdote, the communication was a "message on a bird feather" and Ōinji detected the minute message on the bird feather

2 Takeda Yukio, "Chōjuō no higashi ajia ninshiki," *Kōkuri shi to higashi ajia* (Iwanami shoten, 1989), p. 234.

3 Yamao Yukihisa, "Taika zengo no higashi ajia no jōsei to Nihon no seikyoku," *Nihon rekishi* 229 (1967), 29; Kurihara Tomonobu, "Jōdai no taigai kankei," *Taigai kankei shi* (Yamakawa shuppansha, 1978), p. 27.

and copied it onto a piece of paper. The indecipherable communication was the first evidence of formal diplomatic contact from Koguryŏ to Wa. The existence of the communication confirms that Koguryŏ's diplomatic efforts were not the result of an accidental arrival of an envoy. The fact that the communication was indecipherable does not indicate that the Wa were given a specially created message in the form of a "message on a bird feather," but rather it was a unique message in the Koguryŏ style similar to the Jungwon (Chungwŏn) Koguryŏ stele (located in North Chungcheong [Ch'ungch'ŏng] Province in Korea).[4] In other words, Koguryŏ and the Wa did not previously have diplomatic relations and Wa were not able to understand fully the intent of the message.

The dispatch of an envoy to Wa by Koguryŏ in 570 was the first act of official diplomacy. The most important reason behind Koguryŏ's approaching the Wa was the fundamental change that had occurred in East Asian international relations. From the start of bitter relations between Koguryŏ and Baekje in the mid-fourth century, East Asia had been divided into two northern and southern axes: the Chinese Northern Dynasties, Koguryŏ, and Silla on one side and the Chinese Southern Dynasties, Baekje, and Wa on the other. This confrontational alignment lasted until the early sixth century,[5] when Silla abandoned its alliance with Koguryŏ and the Northern Dynasties and switched to the Southern Dynasties and Baekje. The antagonistic relationship between Koguryŏ and Baekje had been the foundation of this long-lasting international framework. Therefore, Koguryŏ's approach to the Wa completely upset the East Asian order which had revolved around the Koguryŏ-Baekje conflict. Consequently, Koguryŏ's overture to the king of Wa in 570 is an issue that cannot be ignored from the perspective of East Asian history. From that standpoint, why did Koguryŏ suddenly take action to open

4 Mabuchi Kazuo, *Jōdai no kotoba* (Shibundo, 1968), p. 48.

5 See Takeda Yukio, "Go roku seki higashi ajia shi no ichi siten" in Inoue Mitsusada, et al. eds., *Higashi ajia ni okeru Nihon kodaishi kōza* 4 (Gakuseisha, 1980).

relations with the Wa at this time? What was the historical background against which it took this action? Consideration of these issues endows the opening of Koguryŏ – Wa relations with new significance.

Previously, this issue has not been thoroughly investigated because Koguryŏ's foreign policy activities were only considered in relation to developments in China. That is to say, academic opinion held that Koguryŏ's foreign diplomacy to the Wa was a reaction to events in China such as the change from division between the Northern and Southern Dynasties to unification under the Sui.[6] However, connecting Koguryŏ's Wa diplomacy to the unification process under the Sui lacks persuasive power because it began before the Sui was founded. Consequently, I would like to reexamine Koguryŏ history for a moment.

First, I would like to ask the question, what was the most important issue in government administration faced by Koguryŏ in the 570's?

Moving back in time, various sixth century records in Korea, China, and Japan complement each other to the extent that the trends of competition between the Three Kingdoms can be arranged according to decade. Looking at the sixth century from the perspective of Koguryŏ, it is not an exaggeration to say that Silla was eroding away Koguryŏ territory. The process of Silla's territorial expansion in the sixth century can be seen in its capture of the eastern coastline (505), the downstream portion of the Han River (552), Gaya (Kaya, 562), and the region of modern South Hamgyeong (Hamgyŏng) Province region (568). In the process of expansion, Silla took over Gaya and other regions thus creating an urgent situation for Koguryŏ. After the mid-sixth century, Koguryŏ's main enemy was not Baekje but Silla. Koguryŏ's territory on the Korean Peninsula directly adjoined Silla's territory creating a military standoff between the two. To clarify, the issue of Koguryŏ's overtures to the Wa is inseparable from the situation on the Korean Peninsula where it

6 Kurihara Tomonobu, p. 27.

was engaged in a face-to-face military confrontation with Silla.

Let us consider the situation from another perspective. Even before addressing Koguryŏ's diplomacy toward the Wa, it is necessary to consider how the military confrontation with Silla affected the situation within the Koguryŏ state.

If Koguryŏ's actions were a response to the sudden territorial expansion of Silla, then what should not be overlooked is the fact that Koguryŏ was constructing a new city, Jangan (Changan) Fortress, in the Pyeongyang (P'yŏngyang) area to which it was planning to relocate its capital. In recent scholarship, much work has been done on Jangan Fortress, which was the capital in the late Koguryŏ period, particularly in regards to the construction of and the relocation to Jangan Fortress.[7] It is almost certain that there is a close relationship between the rise of Silla and the construction of the Jangan Fortress.

It has been commonly accepted that after moving its capital to the Pyeongyang area in 427, Koguryŏ consistently maintained its capital in its Daeseong (Taesŏng) mountain fortress,[8] and not in Jangan Fortress (present-day Pyeongyang). However, Tanaka Toshiaki has proven that the decision to move the capital from Daeseong to Jangan, which was under construction from 552 to 592, was made in 586, before the completion of construction. This investigation into the significance and historical background of the capital relocation of Jangan Fortress has revealed such important implications as, "the movement of the capital to Jangan Fortress was part of a plan to change the political situation and the start of construction of the new capital was related to the loss of territory in the middle peninsula and was part of the plan to deal with Silla."[9] Jangan Fortress possessed some interesting structural characteristics. Traditionally,

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7 Tanaka Toshiaki, ōheki sekkoku no kisoteki kenkyū," *Shirin* 68-4 (1985).

8 Mishina Shōei, "Kōkuri ōto kō," *Chōsen gakuho* 1 (1951).

9 Takeda Yukio, "Chōsen sankoku no dōran," *Shūkan Asahi hyakka*: *Nihon no rekishi* 45 (1987).

capitals had been structured with the two separate elements of a fortress on a plain and a mountain fortress, but Jangan combined both. Jangan merged the royal residential district with the commoners' residential district and the entire city was surrounded by a solid outer wall.[10] The reasons for building a walled capital city with this configuration were a response to the times as well as to meet the functional demands of a strong defensive structure. As the new capital, Jangan must be seen as a fortress that was built for a kingdom on the brink of a defense crisis. Koguryŏ, locked in a military confrontation with Silla, strengthened its internal defensive capabilities by constructing a new fortress city.

As already stated above, the beginning of Koguryŏ's diplomacy toward the Wa was in 570. This foreign policy initiative that suddenly transformed an international relations structure that had lasted for over two years cannot be explained without consideration of the particular circumstances confronting Koguryŏ. Undoubtedly, Koguryŏ's military confrontation with Silla is part of the explanation. Koguryŏ's diplomatic initiative occurred immediately after Silla's northern advance (568) and it was the time period when Koguryŏ was pursuing the strengthening of its defense system in response to Silla's offensive.

The rise of Silla unquestionably had a tremendous impact on the domestic and foreign policies of Koguryŏ. However, there is an additional factor that must be considered when examining Koguryŏ's Wa diplomacy: Silla's diplomatic overtures to the Northern and Southern Dynasties that began in the 560's.

Until this time, Koguryŏ had been able to utilize the northern and southern axis system to achieve stability in its foreign relations. However, Silla acquired the downstream region of the Han River in 552 and in order to maintain control over its expanded territory, Silla moved

10 For more on the structural characteristics of Jangan Fortress, see Sekino Tadashi, "Kōkuri no Heijō oyobi Chōanjō ni tsuite," *Chōsen no kenchiku to geijutsu* (Iwanami shoten, 1941); Choe Huirim, *Koguryŏ Pyeongyangseong* (Gwahak baekgwasajeon chulpansa, 1978).

away from its long-standing foreign policy which had been previously dependent on Koguryŏ and Baekje and undertook its own autonomous diplomacy. Silla thus dispatched envoys to both the Northern Qi Dynasty (564) and the Southern Chen Dynasty (566). Seen in conjunction with the military pressure Silla was exerting on Koguryŏ, this new diplomatic offensive made Silla a serious threat.[11] Thus it was the rise of Silla that forced Koguryŏ to adopt the above-mentioned emergency counter-measures in its domestic and foreign policies.

2. Koguryŏ's International Situation and Diplomatic Strategy

Koguryŏ's diplomatic overtures to the Wa that began in the 570's were, as demonstrated above, intended to address Silla's military and diplomatic offensive. Another issue arises from the fact that Koguryŏ dispatched three diplomatic envoys to the Wa in the 570's (570, 573, and 574), but then waited about twenty years to restart full diplomatic contact with Wa. In order to understand the circumstances of that period, we must examine the historical background of Koguryŏ's diplomatic relations with the Wa during the reign of Empress Suiko.

To state the conclusion first, the background against which Koguryŏ was continually contacting Wa was directly related to the situation in China. In particular, careful attention must be paid to the complex trends in the Northern Dynasties. First, there was a series of events such as the destruction of the Northern Qi from whom Koguryŏ had received its investiture, the fall of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and the establishment of the Sui Dynasty. After the establishment of the Sui Dynasty, Koguryŏ had dispatched envoys annually. But the unification of

11 Lee Sungshi, "Shiragi no kokka keisei to Gaya" in Suzuki Yasutami, ed., *Nihon no jidaishi* 2 (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2002).

China under the Sui after the fall of the Chen marked the birth of a new threat to Koguryŏ which developed its foreign policy strategy to take advantage of the polarized North-South system. Koguryŏ feared a Sui invasion and prepared for hostilities by kidnapping Sui artisans, preparing weapons, storing grain, and steadily arming itself (*Suishu* Gaogouli zhuan). Once Sui became aware of Koguryŏ's activities, the Wen Emperor censured Koguryŏ.

Therefore, Koguryŏ's diplomatic strategy from this continuous series of events after the establishment of the Sui Dynasty has to be understood as a reaction to two threats: Silla's offensive from the southeast and the antagonism of the Sui from the west. The temporary cessation of Koguryŏ's diplomatic entreaties to Wa was a response to the situation in China and was essential to Koguryŏ's new strategic framework of "fighting with Silla, preparing for the Sui," which continued to take on greater importance.

It should be stated that Koguryŏ's strategy of reaching out to the Wa also affected Baekje and Silla as well. The change in China from north-south division to unification elevated the strategic importance of the Wa to the Three Kingdoms. The unification of China under one dynasty reduced the number of potential diplomatic partners and also brought new limits on the open diplomacy that had characterized the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. As a result, the Wa became more important strategically to the Three Kingdoms.[12]

The Empress Suiko chapter of the *Nihon shoki* indicates that Koguryŏ launched its diplomatic initiative toward Wa as it found itself in an explosive crisis situation with the Sui and undertook remarkable exchanges of people and goods during the reign of King Yeongyang

12 For example, the office that oversaw foreign negotiations in the Unified Silla period was in the *Yeonggaekpu*, but its predecessor was the *Waten* (K. *Wajeon*) established in 591. The establishment of the *Waten* and the work of the negotiation office were closely connected to the situation in this time period.

(Yŏngyang) of Koguryŏ (590-617). The representative figure of those exchanges was Hyeja. Hyeja was dispatched to Wa from Koguryŏ in the third year of Empress Suiko's reign (595) and stayed in Wa for twenty years where he served as the Buddhist teacher to Prince Shōtoku, regent for Empress Suiko.

Hyeja's historical role can be surmised from the fact that Hyeja's stay with the Wa coincided with the period when Sui launched four expeditions against Koguryŏ. That period also overlaps with the period when the Wa also sent an envoy to the Sui.

The period of Hyeja's stay in the Wa	595 ~ 615
Sui's expeditions against Koguryŏ	598 ~ 614
The dispatch of Wa missions to the Sui	600 ~ 614

Wa diplomacy to the Sui was based on "diplomacy between equals" with the Chinese, which is often emphasized in tracing the path of Japanese diplomatic history, with the credit for the diplomacy going to Prince Shōtoku. The six missions that the Wa sent to the Sui coincided with the period of Hyeja's stay in the Wa. Furthermore, Hyeja may have been behind Prince Shōtoku. It has been pointed out that the intentions of King Yeongyang of Koguryŏ, who sent Hyeja to Wa, may have been a factor behind the strong stance the Wa took towards the Sui.[13]

Concerning Hyeja, the *Nihon shoki* states,

> (Suiko first year) "Summer, 4th month, 10th day. The Imperial Prince Mŭmayado no Toyotomimi was appointed Prince Imperial. He had general control of the Government, and was entrusted with all the details of administration…He was able to speak as soon as he was born, and was so wise when he grew up that he could attend to the suits of ten men

13 Sakamoto Yoshitane, "Suiko chō no gaikō," *Rekishi to jinbutsu* 100 (1979), pp. 49-50.

> at once and decide them all without error. He knew beforehand what was going to happen. Moreover he learnt the Inner Doctrine from a Goryeo (Koguryŏ) Priest named Hyé-cha (Hyeja), and studied the Outer Classics with a doctor called Hak-ka. In both of these branches of study he became thoroughly proficient."
>
> (Suiko third year) "5th month, 10th day. A priest of Goryeo, named Hyé-cha (Hyeja), emigrated to Japan, and was taken as teacher by the Prince Imperial. In the same year a Baekje priest, named Hyechong (Hyé-chong), arrived. These two priests preached the Buddhist religion widely, and were together the mainstay of the Three Precious Things." [from Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697, translated by W. G. Aston (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972)]

It was recorded that Hyeja was the Buddhist teacher to Prince Shōtoku, but many scholars feel that his role did not end there. The *Nihon shoki* records an anecdote that illustrates the particularly intertwined nature of their two fates. In the second month of spring during the twenty-ninth year of Empress Suiko, news of Prince Shōtoku's death on the fifth of the month reached Hyeja in Koguryŏ. Hyeja died the following year on the exact same day, swearing to see Prince Shōtoku in the Pure Land. The *Nihon shoki* records that both achieved sagehood.

While the sagely impression of Prince Shōtoku is indelibly reflected for future generations in this anecdote, we should pay attention to the unusual relationship between the two men that developed during the twenty years that Hyeja stayed with the Wa and continued after their separation across the East sea (the sea of Japan). It should be noted that Koguryŏ had a very difficult time during those twenty years because of foreign pressure. Consequently, there was a deep connection between Koguryŏ's strategic use of foreign diplomacy and Hyeja's residence among the Wa.

In regards to the strategic foreign policy of Koguryŏ, its independent diplomatic activity has not been completely recorded in various historical

materials, including the *Samguk sagi*. Therefore, the connection between Koguryŏ's diplomacy toward the Wa, beginning with the dispatch of Hyeja, and Koguryŏ's strategic diplomacy does not go beyond the level of speculation. However, a portion of Koguryŏ's strategic diplomacy can be glimpsed in extant Chinese historical materials from this period.

In the eighth month of 607 [Taiye third year], an emissary from Koguryŏ met the Yang Emperor at the tent of the Qimin Khan of the Eastern Turks. That is to say, the Sui Yang Emperor visited the tent of the Qimin Khan which was located in Yulin, (present-day Tuoke County of Inner Mongolia) about six hundred kilometers to the north of Luoyang to ascertain the subordination and tributary visits of the northern barbarians after the transition to Sui rule.[14] At that time, the Qimin Khan did not conceal the Koguryŏ emissary who was staying with the Qimin and introduced him to Yang. This event is recorded in the *Suishu* [The History of the Sui Dynasty, Pei Ju zhuan] as,

> "At the tent of Qimin Khan, there happened to be an envoy from Koguryŏ who attempted to conspire with the Turks. The Qimin Khan did not dare hide him and brought the Koguryŏ envoy to [the] Yang Emperor of the Sui Dynasty."

The *Suishu* [History of the Sui Dynasty, Tujue zhuan] also states that

> "The Koguryŏ envoy secretly came to Qimin Khan's location. Qimin Khan is loyal and honest and did not dare to conceal the diplomatic relationship. The day that Qimin Khan handed over the Koguryŏ envoy, the Emperor of the Sui commanded Niu Hong to issue an edict. It said, 'I came to Qimin Khan's place because Qimin was honest and loyal……"

14 Hori Toshikazu, "Suidai higashi ajia no kokusai kankei," in Todaishi kenkyukai, ed., *Sui-To teikoku to higashi ajia sekai* (Kyuko shoin, 1979), p. 123.

Even within that brief narration, the tension between the three in thought and speech was recorded. The record states that "Koguryŏ sent an emissary in secret to the Qimin Khan but Qimin did not hide that they were engaged in borderland diplomacy with Koguryŏ" and Yang Emperor's feelings and unease can be easily ascertained from his threatening words to the Koguryŏ emissary. It was a natural reaction also for the envoy from Koguryŏ because Koguryŏ had fought them in a war ten years before and Yang Emperor himself had come to the tent of the Qimin Khan to accept the oath of fealty. The location where the three met was over 1,200 kilometers from Koguryŏ and from Yang Emperor's reaction, it was not a simple journey that he was making to the area. Koguryŏ's strategic plan to reach out diplomatically to the Turks can be easily surmised. Before Yang Emperor arrived, Chang Sunsheng had applied coercive pressure on the Qimin Khan.[15] In order to show his obedience to the Yang Emperor, the Khan presented the Koguryŏ emissary essentially as a sacrifice so that the meeting was uncovered. From this instance, it is possible to see that Koguryŏ had a strategic diplomacy policy of containment of the Sui.[16]

In thinking about the meaning behind the diplomatic activity between Koguryŏ and the Turks, the power relationship between the Sui

15 According to the *Suishu* Chang Sunsheng zhuan, at the time when general Chang Sunsheng conveyed Yang Emperor's intentions to Qimin Khan in a spot where grass grew luxuriantly, Chang made the Khan cut grass before various northern tribal chieftains as a demonstration of Sui superiority over the Turks.

16 In what is believed to be late 7th century wall painting found at the site of a walled city on the outskirts of the modern Uzbekistan city of Samarkand, there are two figures with feathered hats, yellow upper garments, and round handle swords whose hands are held together. (Kim Won Lyong, "Samareukandeu Apurashiyabu (Afra-shiyab) gungjeon byeokhwa ui sajeol do," *Kogomisul* 129-130 [1976]). Based on investigation of various sources, these figures are believed to have been Koguryŏ emissaries. (Anazawa Wako & Umame Shunichi, " Afurashiyabu tojoshi shutto no hekiga ni mieru Chosenjin shisetsu ni tsuite," *Chosen gakuho* 80 [1976]). The Afra-shiyab wall painting can be seen as showing part of Koguryŏ's diplomatic activities near the end of the Koguryŏ at the time when the kingdom was in a fierce standoff with the Tang. This is evidence of consistent pursuit of diplomatic activities with various countries to the west required by Koguryŏ in the midst of its strong resistance to the Sui and the Tang.

and the Eastern Turks should be carefully considered. The Turks of this period no longer had the power to coerce the Chinese dynasties as they once did. The submission of the Turks to the Sui began with the marriage of Princess Anyi in 597 and continued apace until the Turks themselves sought to enter into the service of the Sui.[17]

In short, the Eastern Turks were in an inferior position to the Sui and the Turks offered the Koguryŏ emissary to the Sui to prove their loyalty. However, it is also important to understand that Koguryŏ and the Turks had a close relationship before the reversal of the power relationship between the Turks and the Sui.[18]

As stated above, there is no doubt that within this thorny international situation, Koguryŏ was pursuing a strategic diplomatic plan in order to protect itself. Around the same period, Koguryŏ was pursuing similar diplomatic advances toward the Wa and it is necessary to understand that this activity was another part of Koguryŏ's diplomatic strategy.

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17 Sekio Shiro, "*Guandai zhi guo* shuyu – Tujue no ikansei donyu o chushin toshite," *Kan Nihonkai kenkyu nenpo* 2 (1995).

18 That such close diplomatic relations existed between Koguryŏ and the Turks and that they persisted for a long time is supported by the Turkic Khosho-Tsaidam stele. The stele states that a land called Bokli located where the sun rises in the east send an envoy to the funeral for Bilge Khan, the founder of the Tujue khanate. In the 1930s, Iwasa Seiichiro argued that Bokli was not a corrupt form of Koguryŏ, but many later scholars indicated that there was a relationship between Bokli and Koguryŏ. Eventually Mori Masao demonstrated that the term written at Bokli was actually bok eli, meaning the country of Bok, and that Bok=Maek=Koguryŏ. In short, that Koguryŏ appeared among the countries that sent emissaries to the funeral of Bilge Khakan indicates that relations between Koguryŏ and the Turks did not first happen accidentally during the time of Qimin Khan – to the contrary, it suggests that the exchange of envoys between the two had occurred since early times. (Mori Masao, "Iwayuru Bokli nit suite – minsokugaku to rekishigaku no aida," Egami Namio kyojukoki kinen jigyokai ed., *Egami Namio kyoju koki kinenronshu* [Yamakawa shuppansha, 1977]).

3. An Analysis of the Diplomatic Document Sent by the Wa to the Sui

1) The Wa Diplomatic Document and Diplomacy Between Equals

To this point, I have focused on Koguryŏ's international environment and while discussing Koguryŏ's domestic and foreign policies of the late sixth and early seventh centuries I suggested the possibility that Koguryŏ's diplomacy towards the Wa was part of the kingdom's strategic diplomacy. With that point of departure and with the idea of affirming that Koguryŏ opened diplomatic relations with the Wa as part of its strategic vision, I wish to focus on the diplomatic document sent by the Wa to the Sui in 607.

The *Suishu* Wo zhuan states,

> [The envoy brought] an official message which read: "The Child of Heaven in the land where the sun rises addresses a letter to the Child of Heaven in the land where the sun sets. We hope you are in good health." When the Emperor saw this letter, he was displeased and told the official in charge of foreign affairs that this letter from the barbarians was discourteous, and that such a letter should not again be brought to his attention. [Wm. Theodore de Bary, et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press), 11]

Part of the beginning is what is extant today. In regard to this document, the greatest interest has been reserved for ascertaining which location Yang Emperor referred to when he said he was "displeased". According to general opinion, Wa diplomacy toward the Sui was "diplomacy between equals". This influential theory is based on the fact that this document refers to both the Sui emperor and the Wa king as Son of Heaven and that

Yang was concerned about this fact.[19] Consequently, it became a major issue that the lord of the eastern barbarians called himself the Son of Heaven.

On the other hand, there is the theory that this diplomatic document indicates that the Wa dealt with the Sui from an attitude above that of equals. According to Kurihara Tomonobu, the expressions of "where the sun rises" and "where the sun sets" are terms that indicate the respective value accorded to each party. If the subjective consciousness of the Wa led them to look down upon the Sui then the Wa and Sui were in an unequal relationship. Therefore, if Yang Emperor was displeased, this theory may apply.[20] Regarding the pros and cons of each theory,[21] I will discuss my own position later. At this point, rather than analyzing this document from the perspective of "equal" versus "unequal", I would like to take a new perspective.

First, before entering into an examination of the text, we should consider the response of the Sui to this document. Assuming a realistic power relationship and disregarding the generally accepted opinion, let us assume that Yang Emperor was displeased with the arrogant attitude of the Wa. However, the mystery is that Yang Emperor was resentful and said regarding the envoy, "if there is something offensive like this barbarian diplomatic document, then do not bring it before me". At the same time, he sent the Wa emissary, Ono Imoko, back to Wa and dispatched a Sui official, Pei Shiqing, to accompany him.

If the Wa dispatch of an envoy was out of bounds, then there was the possibility that Yang Emperor would ignore the envoy or order his

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19 Nishijima Sadao, *Nihon rekishi no kokusai kankyo* (Todai shuppankai, 1985).

20 Kurihara Tomonobu, "Nihon kara Sui ni okutta kokusho," *Nihon rekishi* 203 (1965); "Ni-Sui gaiko no ichi sokumen" in *Jodai Nihon taigai kankei no kenkyu* (Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1978).

21 Regarding this debate, see Masumura Hiroshi, *Kentoshi no kenkyu* (Dofusha, 1988); Xu Xianyao, "Sui-Wa kokko no taitosei ni suite," *Bunka* 29-2 (1965); Shi Xiaozhun, "*Nisshsussho tensi* to *nichibossho tensi* ni gwansuru ichi kosatsu," *Nihonshi kenkyu* 327 (1989).

punishment. However, Yang Emperor sent the emissary back to Wa even after he had dared to bring the offending diplomatic document.

While there are various interpretations regarding this point, there is no agreement.[22] In regards to this event, there is one passage in the *Suishu* Wo zhuan that merits attention, which is,

> "Both Silla and Baekje consider Wa to be a great country, replete with precious things, and they pay her homage. Envoys go back and forth from time to time." [Wm. Theodore de Bary, et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press), 11]

Namely, both Silla and Baekje looked up to Wa with respect and there was continuous traffic in envoys between them. This contention was either presented orally by the Wa envoy to the Sui or perhaps contained within the diplomatic document. To address this point, we can examine the oral messages and the diplomatic documents that the Wa envoy brought to the Sui. At any rate, since it was written in the *Suishu*, we can surmise that the Sui confirmed the position of Wa as a "great country." More important is the fact that, even though it is likely that the Wa made up these statements in order to support their arrogant attitude, the Sui accepted their claims.[23]

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22 According to Sakamoto Yoshitane's simple explanation, (1) Pei Xiqing's visit to Japan means that Japan's diplomacy of equality succeeded, (2) Yang Emperor judged that a sudden opening of Japan would be advantageous before his expedition against Koguryŏ, (3) that it was part and parcel of Chinese dynasties' traditional policy of assuaging outer realms, (4) that Pei's trip was a reciprocal exchange of envoys, and (5) that Pei was designated an "exhortation emissary," a title that comprehended all these functions. See Sakamoto, "Suiko chō no gaikō," *Rekishi to jinbutsu* 100 (1979), p. 53.

23 Conventionally, this historical source has attracted attention in the belief that it was a objective description of the power relations between the Wa and the various states on the Korean Peninsula. The so-called "small empire of the eastern barbarians theory" of Ishimoda Sho is an important basis for this. However, it is necessary for us to consider the fact that Koguryŏ was not included when we think about the background of this assertion.

If this is the case, then there must be some close relationship between that and the reason for sending Pei Shiqing to the Wa. The explanation is that the Sui had an ongoing tense relationship with Koguryŏ and was militarily preparing itself, which is why the Sui had to accept the Wa position. That is to say, the Wa presented themselves as the great country to Baekje and Silla and engaged in frequent communication with them. In order to maintain control of the east, the Sui could not overlook the Wa as the big power behind Baekje and Silla, both of which adjoined Koguryŏ. As previously mentioned, Yang Emperor encountered the Koguryŏ emissary in the camp of the Qimin Khan in the eighth month of this year and the Sui could only harshly blame Koguryŏ for this. The Wa envoy entered the Sui capital Chang'an (Daxing) at the end of that same year and it is no surprise that the Sui were apprehensive about cooperation between Koguryŏ and Wa. Such a circumstance made the Sui willing to put up with the diplomatic attitude of the Wa.

If we examine the Sui reaction to the diplomatic activity of the Wa, we can see how the power relationship between the two countries was changing. Even if we set aside the issue of whether or not the Wa's diplomatic attitude toward the Sui reflected the will of Koguryŏ, Wa's high-handed diplomacy shook up the Sui and was a welcome development to Koguryŏ. On the other hand, Sui found itself at the receiving end of Wa's unreasonable diplomatic attitude but had no choice but to close its eyes and ignore the irreverent diplomatic document. If this is the case, then the dispatch of Pei Shiqing to the Wa must have been intended to survey the situation in the Wa. The reactions of the Sui must also be understood in the context of its tense relationship with Koguryŏ.

Is it possible to say that the Wa diplomacy toward the Sui was carried out in anticipation of such a reaction from the Sui? Moreover, is it possible to say that Koguryŏ's strategy was behind Wa's diplomacy toward the Sui?

2) Geographical Perspectives on "Where the Sun Rises" and "Where the Sun Sets"

At this point, I would like to consider some expressions written in the diplomatic documents. In those documents the sovereigns of Wa and Sui are called "the emperor where the sun rises" and "the emperor where the sun sets." Regarding "where the sun rises" and "where the sun sets," I would like to examine the issue of where those locales might be and from whose geographical perspective those statements are made.

According to generally accepted opinion, the location of "where the sun rises," as written in the diplomatic document, refers to the Japanese archipelago in the east and "where the sun sets" indicates the Chinese mainland in the west. Although there appears to be no room for doubt, on closer examination there is ambiguity in the expressions of the diplomatic document as written by Prince Shōtoku. Is it possible that the people living on the Japanese islands were self-conscious that their own location was "where the sun rises"? For example, the dialogue of the king of Niaochang in the west and the envoy Song Yun from the Northern Wei as recorded in the *Laoyang qielan ji* is as follows,

> The king sent a person who understood the Wei language and asked Song Yun, "Are you from the land where the sun rises?" Song Yun answered, "There is a large ocean to the east of my country from which the sun rises."

As this dialogue shows, for someone living in the west, the sun rises from northern China while to someone in northern China, the sun rises from the sea to the east. Therefore, someone who lived in the Japanese archipelago would likely have said that "where the sun rises" is in the seas east of the Japanese islands or the Pacific Ocean.

As for "where the sun rises" and "where the sun sets", the Chinese who receive this diplomatic document will consider the positional

relationship between the two countries. However, if there is subjective awareness in the Chinese capital, then the Chinese will accept that "where the sun rises" is the Wa but there is no possibility for the Chinese that China is "where the sun sets". To the Chinese, "where the sun sets" is the various countries in the West and Chinese intellectuals in the second and third centuries clearly recognized that "where the sun sets" or "where the sun goes in" was far away in the Roman Empire.[24]

Was the writer of this diplomatic document separated from the reality of the Lifeworld [Lebenswelt] or was he thinking of the rhetoric that encompassed the globe? In fact, this expression has been interpreted as simply a matter of east and west.[25] In the well-known example of using "sunrise" or "sunset" to indicate the directional relationship between peoples and states, it is difficult to find an example that reflects the positional reality of the people saying these words.[26]

If we look at an example that offers that possibility, then there is a passage from *Hou Hanshu* Nanman xinanyi liezhuan that contains a song, "Yuanyi mode geshi," offered to Ming Emperor by a King Bailiang that says,

> The place of the Manyi is where the sun sets. Admiring righteousness, we have submitted to the ruler of where the sun rises.

King Bailang said that his own location is "where the sun sets" and the Chinese emperor is the "ruler of where the sun rises". Certainly, east and west are indicated for "sunrise" and "sunset" and this text seems to resemble the diplomatic document from Wa. The "southwest barbarians"

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24 Masomura Hiroshi, "Nisshsussho tensi to nichibossho tensi: Wakokuo no kokusho nit suite," *Kentoshi no kenkyu*, p. 16.

25 Masomura Hiroshi, ibid., p. 70.

26 For an examination of examples of such usage, see Masomura Hiroshi, ibid.

said of themselves that "the place of the Manyi is where the sun sets",[27] which is similar to the Wa statement that they are "where the sun rises".

It is also necessary to consider the limitations of the source. King Bailiang was from an ethnic group to the west who crossed the mountains and submitted to the governor of Yizhou, Zhu Bao, during the Yingping era (C.E. 58-75). The song was originally composed in the barbarian tongue, translated into Chinese by the Yizhou official Tien Kong, after which Zhu Bao presented it to Ming Emperor.

In other words, the song was written and translated in the Yizhou region, which meant that the starting point understanding it is in the land of its translation (Yizhou). At that time Bailiang's residence was the midpoint between the place "where the sun sets" and the location of Emperor Wen, which was "where the sun rises." Bailiang sang that "the barbarian place is where the sun sets" and his own location was "where the sun sets", which is related to the fact that the song was made in the Yizhou area where it was translated. Taking all these factors into consideration, even if the location of was "where the sun sets," it is still different from previous examples.

As for the diplomatic document from the Wa, what is the best way to break it down? A good reference is the example of this song. In the same way as the song, Wa is "where the sun rises" and China is "where the sun sets" and those are areas that can be accepted realistically, but some thought must be given to the origins of this document. If such a place exists, we should examine how this place affected the production of the document. In order to particularize the area of the Japanese archipelago as "where the sun rises," it is necessary to examine historical materials like the following text from the preface of *Sanguozhi* Dongyi zhuan.

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27 Bailiang, who had submitted to the Han at that time, was of Qiang ethnicity and is believed to have lived in what is now the southeastern region of the Garze Tibetian Autonomous Prefecture.

> During the Jinghu era (Northern Wei, 237-239), forces from the capital beheaded Gongsun Yan, then crossed Bohai and took Lelang and Daifang. Subsequently, like calming seas, the dongyi submitted. Later, however, Koguryŏ rebelled so again forces were sent to quell them, chasing them extremely far to Niaohuan and Gudu, passing Woju and the home of the Sushen, where they reached a large sea. An elder said, "there are men with tattooed faces, so the place where the sun rises is near."

The expression "men with tattooed faces" is clearly referring to the Wa who are the only people among those in the Dongyi zhuan of the *Sanguzhi* who tattooed their faces. That is to say, facing the ocean from the Maritime Provinces, points to the location of the Wa as being close to the placed where the sun rises. The knowledge underlying the reality of the Lifeworld of those who live there was expressed naturally as the elder said naturally that the Wa is "where the sun rises." Needless to say, from this point China is the direction of "where the sun sets" and satisfies the geographical condition written into the diplomatic document.

To summarize, this land was in the northeast region of Koguryŏ. At the same time, this geographical perspective influenced the entire territory of Koguryŏ but did not cause any inconsistencies. Moreover, the phrase "where the sun rises," which was confirmed in documents and in the beginning of the diplomatic document was a natural expression of the geographical perspective of the Koguryŏ people.

4. The Form of the Diplomatic Document

In regards to the expressions of "where the sun rises" and "where the sun sets," they have no relation to the reality of the Lifeworld [Lebenswelt] in which these expressions are used, but they are expressions employed

for literary knowledge.[28] That is to say, they appear in the book of India's Nāgārjuna and the Buddhist scripture Daichi doron translated by Kumārajīra.

> "As stated in the doctrine, the place where the sun rises is in the east, the place where the sun sets is in the west, the place where the sun goes is in the south and the place where the sun does not go is in the north."

In this text, notions of direction in Buddhism appear within questions that are asked and the directions in which the sun moves are differentiated so that east is "where the sun rises," west is "where the sun sets," south is "where the sun goes," and north is "where the sun does not go." In the continuation of the answer, this assertion of directions denies that there is anything other than relative views. In other words, the differentiation of east, west, south, and north is found within the Buddhist scriptures and the authenticity of the expressions in the diplomatic document of the Wa is found within this literature. There are indirect references within Prince Shōtoku's Yuima keigisho[29] [Commentary on the Vimalakīrti text] and one part of the Daichi doron quotes it. Prince Shōtoku undoubtedly knew it and asserted it in the diplomatic document.

However, the essential part of the document brought to Sui by Wa was not in this place. More importantly, there is the written form in the beginning of the diplomatic document within the previous quotation: "The Child of Heaven in the land where the sun rises addresses a *zhishu* (congratulatory letter : J. chisho) to the Child of Heaven in the land where the sun sets. We hope you are in good health." The *zhishu* is a writing style that was used between equal parties. It was hardly used

28 Tono Haruyuki, *Kentoshi to Shoshoin* (Iwanami shoten, 1992), pp. 186-187.

29 Tono Haruyuki, ibid., p. 100.

during the Tang dynasty and was used more between the Song and the Liao and the Song and the Jin. Interestingly, this writing style was used when the khan of the Turks sent a diplomatic document to Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty (Suishu, Chapter of the Turks). The beginning said,

> "In the tenth day of the ninth month of 584, the wise and sacred Son of Heaven of the Great Turks who was born from heaven, the Yili julu shemo heshi polo khan sends a zhishu to the Great Sui Emperor"

Before the Sui, the use of *zhishu* between Chinese dynasties and surrounding peoples in diplomatic documents was limited to the two cases of the Turks and the Wa. Due to its exceptional nature as a documentary form, it has gained much attention from East Asian historians in Japan.[30]

The Turks were preserving their strength to compete with Sui and only used this literary form once. It is necessary to problematize how the Wa thought about this issue. Needless to say, the Wa of that period had close to no information about the Sui and the Turks. On the other hand, Koguryŏ and the Turks had a long history of interaction as demonstrated in the previous section. However, Koguryŏ was pursuing its strategic foreign diplomacy in the midst of a difficult international situation where it was continuing to fight with Silla and engaged in a standoff with the Sui. If that is the case, it is reasonable to assume that the *zhishu* form in the Wa diplomatic document was given to Koguryŏ by the Turks because of the diplomatic relationship between the two.

If we look at evidence for this assumption, then we must understand that linguistically Koguryŏ and the Turks shared equivalent syntax. As can be seen in the Khosho-Tsaidam monument, the word

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30 Nakamura Yuichi, *Todai seichoku kenkyu* (Kyuko shoin, 1991); Kaneko Shuichi, *Sui-To no kokusai chitsujo to higashi ajia* (Meicho shuppankai, 2001).

order of the ancient Turkish language is the same as the word order of ancient Korean or Japanese. It is impossible to ignore their capacity for the transmission of writing culture.

Next, Turkish diplomatic documents written in Chinese characters that still exist in China are quite similar to the expressions of ancient Turkish language seen on the Khosho-Tsaidam monument. Mori Masao has already shown that there are words and phrases that were directly translated from ancient Turkish.[31] This evidence illustrates that there is a deep connection among peoples who did not originally use Chinese characters in the way they actually used Chinese characters and literary Chinese.

Obviously, Chinese writing was a foreign language to the Turks and to Koguryŏ and learning it required tremendous effort. In recent years, case studies of Chinese writing capability on the Korean Peninsula and in the Japanese islands have demonstrated that rather than direct contact with China, it was the experience of surrounding countries that played the important role in enabling non-Chinese peoples to learn written Chinese.[32]

In the diplomatic documents brought to Sui by the Turks, the Turkish has been translated very accurately, which hints at the translation abilities of the Turks in Chinese writing. Furthermore, the similar syntax between the Turks and Koguryŏ is a very natural point that should be remembered.

In regards to the phrase "where the sun rises," the Khosho-Tsaidam monument describes the Koguryŏ people who were envoys to the funeral of Bilga Khaghan, the ancestor of the Turkish khanate, as "Bokli" who were dispatched from "where the sun is born in the east." As for the Koguryŏ people, within their interaction with the Turks, they were used

31 Mori Masao, "Tujue no Qimin khakan no johyobun no bunsho," *KodaiToruku minzokushi kenkyu* I (Yamakawa shuppansha, 1967), p. 466.

32 Lee Sungshi, *Higashi ajia bunkaken no keisei* (Yamakawa shuppansha, 2000).

to hearing the expression "where the sun rises" from the Turks.

As stated above, it is impossible to deny that the expressions in the diplomatic documents from the Wa to the Sui represent information that was easily grasped by the ruling class of Koguryŏ. It is also impossible to ignore the importance of Hyeja who served Prince Shōtoku for a long time. In addition to these indicators, the foreign relations activities of priests in Silla were conspicuous and Hyeja was in the center of power as he was serving Prince Shōtoku.[33] There is much to suggest that Hyeja participated in the production of the diplomatic documents that the Wa sent to the Sui as part of their foreign policy. The expressions in the beginning of the diplomatic documents have been passed down today. The diplomatic documents of the Wa could have come from the brush of Hyeja and the terminology written in the documents could have reflected the strategic plans of Koguryŏ to hinder the Sui in cooperation with the Wa.

5. Koguryŏ and Wa Diplomacy towards the Sui

If we posit that international solidarity between Koguryŏ and the Wa was a background factor of the Wa diplomacy towards the Sui, we can begin to resolve a number of issues, including the controversies over the diplomatic document, problems with conventional unreasonable interpretations, and problems about which we have had on a vague understanding. Here I wish to lay out general prospects for dealing with several problems.

As already mentioned, one of the controversies surrounding the diplomatic document is whether the Wa and the Sui had equal or unequal diplomatic relations. However, considering the standpoint from which

33 Lee Sungshi, "Shiragi so Hyeja no seiji-gaikojo no yakuwai," *Kodai higashi ajia no minzoku to kokka* (Iwanami shoten, 1998).

that issue has been treated thus far, once we clarify the nature of Wa-Sui relations within the larger context of East Asia it seems that this is not necessarily an appropriate issue. Once we realize that the diplomacy between the Wa and the Sui was not a relationship consummated on the basis of the power dynamics between just those two countries,[34] this issue no longer has any fundamental significance. Not inquiring into the situation in which a diplomatic posture is assumed and simply asking whether the relations between two states are equal or unequal is not the proper standpoint for an historical investigation of international relations. Relations between the Wa and the Sui were the historical and political product of the tense relations between Koguryŏ and the Sui.

Next, I wish to confirm that Koguryŏ had maintained a close relationship of solidarity with the Wa sometime prior to the opening of relations between the Wa and the Sui and sometime thereafter, mostly through the activities of the Koguryŏ monk Hyeja, and to note that for the Wa their relations with Koguryŏ were those of cultural influence.

Generally it has been noted that the political forms and political thought of Empress Suiko's reign were heavily influenced by the various states in the Korean Peninsula. The term Ametarashi which means Son of Heaven (Child of Heaven) appears in the state document from the first Wa embassy to the Sui (600), as well as in the words the Wa emissary spoke in response to the Wen Emperor.

As already noted, the thought can be found in Koguryŏ[35] that forms the background for the statement: "The Wa King has Heaven as his elder brother and the Sun as his younger brother; at the end of the day when the light is bright, he emerges to hear affairs of governance, sitting with legs folded; when the sun rises, he stops work and says I entrust affairs to

34 Inoue Mitsusada, "Suikocho gaiko seishaku no tenkai," *Shotoku taishi ronshu* (Heirakji shoten, 1971), p. 42.

35 Yamao Yukihisa, "Kodai tennosei no seiritsu," *Tennosei to minshu* (Todai shuppankai, 1976), p. 12.

my younger brother." Royal authority mediated by Heaven and the Sun has been confirmed as far back as the early fifth century in Koguryŏ;[36] it seems natural to believe that such concepts were transmitted to Wa by Hyeja.

Furthermore, it has been noted that analysis of the twelve-rank system of marking individual status in the Wa recorded in the *Suishu* indicates that it was related to that of Koguryŏ.[37] In addition, there is the *daijin* system[38] and there still remains the task of clarifying Koguryŏ-mediated influence in the political forms and political thought of Empress Tsuiko's reign.

For example, regarding the role of Koguryŏ in Asuka Buddhism, although there has been a comparative examination of the location of major temple buildings, even such things as an active study of the exchange of people remain as tasks that need to be done. One thing that is receiving attention as concrete evidence in this area is a black ink painting showing a man in the prime of life discovered in 1992 on the base of the Amitabha statue in the main hall of Horyuji. The painting is 25.6 centimeters high and 10.4 centimeters wide. The man is depicted with a vivid expression; he is wearing a hat with bird feathers, his forehead has three lines, his eyebrows are big, his nose is high and his eyes are large and flashing spirit. The distinguishing features are an upper garment with tight sleeves, a lower garment like trousers reaching to the top of his feet, and large pointed footgear.

If we compare this painting with the two paintings of Koguryŏ emissaries in the *Liang zhigong tu*, we can easily see that the features are identical. There is no doubt that the Horyuji painting depicts a Koguryŏ

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36 Takeda Yukio, "Modoru ichizoku to Kokuri oken," *Kokurishi to higashi ajia*, op.cit., pp 341-43.

37 Miyazaki Ichisada, "Sankan jidai no ikaisei nit suite," *Chosen gakuho* 14 (1959).

38 Lee Sungshi, "Higashi ajia kara mita Kokuri no bunmeishi teki iso" in Waseda daigaku ajiajiiki bunka enhansingu kenkyu senta ed., *Ajia jiiki bunkagaku no hatten* (Oyamakaku, 2006).

emissary.[39] Regarding the dating of the construction of the base of the statue, judging from the base itself and evidence not directly tied to the base, it is clear that some materials were diverted for use in the base. Furthermore, when the same facility was repaired, black ink paintings were discovered in four places on the bases of the Shakyamuni Three Venerables statues, one of which was dated 621. Judging from those bases themselves and evidence of work remaining on sixteen other places, it seems likely that these were materials diverted from palaces and other structures. Based on this, it seems highly likely that these were materials that were reused after the construction of Shotoku's palace (Ikaruga no miya).[40]

Simply put, there is a painting depicting a man of Koguryŏ in a structure from the time when Prince Shotoku lived (574-622). The *Nihon shoki* tells that during the time of Prince Shotoku's rule emissaries and monks from Koguryŏ repeatedly visited; it is noteworthy that that fact is backed up by the painting on the base of the Amida jorai statue.

Finally, based on my view outlined above, I wish to examine the conventional views of the goals of the Wa's diplomacy with the Sui. One conventional view regarding the question of why the Wa sent six embassies to the Sui starting from the year 600 is as follows. The Wa needed to deal with the "Korean problem." The "Korea problem" was that the Wa's immediate goal was to recover its interests in "Mimana" (the various Gaya states) which had been seized by Silla in 562. In connection with this goal, the Wa was responding to the situation in East Asia following the unification of China by the Sui dynasty.[41]

Responding to the East Asian situation meant that once the Sui had

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39 Lee Sungshi, "Horyuji kondo amida jorai zasodaiza kara hakkensareta jinbutsu gajo no shusshi o megutte" in *Ajia ni okeru kokusaikoryu to jiiki bunka* (Heisei 4-5 nendo Monbusho kagakukenkyuhi hojokin sogokenkyu (A), kenkyu seika hokokusho,1994).

40 Takada Ryoshin, *Horyuji kenritsu no mei* (Shunshusha, 1993).

41 Nishijima Sadao, *Nihon rekishi no kokusai kankyo*.

unified China, such countries as Koguryŏ, Baekje and Silla would send tribute to and receive investiture from the Sui and their kings would be incorporated into the Sui's unitary system as its foreign subjects. For the Wa, who had been intervening in the Korean Peninsula since the fourth century, this meant that they, who had traditionally maintained a position of superiority to the state in Korea, would be in the same position of tributary state as Koguryŏ, Baekje and Silla. That would mean that the recovery of the lands of Mimana that had been taken by Silla would be impossible. Thus, it is said, the Wa adopted an attitude different from that of Koguryŏ, Baekje and Silla, an attitude of equal diplomacy with the Sui.[42]

The foundations of this conventional view espoused by Japanese researchers are not simple. One is the treatment of "Mimana tribute" in the *Nihon shoki*. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Silla sent "Mimana tribute" on four occasions (575, 600, 611, 622), thus showing a deferential posture towards the Wa.

However, following the argument laid out in this paper, this becomes an unreasonable interpretation if we keep in mind Koguryŏ's diplomatic strategy. What Koguryŏ was expecting from its international solidarity with the Wa was containment of the Sui and Silla. If we look at the period when the Wa were adopting a strong posture towards Silla, including demands for "Mimana tribute" (an explanation of what this really was requires a separate investigation), we would expect it to correspond with the period when Koguryŏ and Wa diplomatic relations were close, as is suggested by all four of the *Nihon shoki* entries about "Mimana tribute".

In reality, as has already been pointed out, the military alliance among Koguryŏ, Baekje, and Wa against Silla can be fixed at the beginning of the seventh century, when Otomo no Muraji was sent to

42 Nishijima Sadao, ibid.

Koguryŏ and Sakamoto no Omi was sent to Baekje; it has been determined that this was done in relation to the 602 attack by Koguryŏ and Baekje against Silla.[43]

In the past, these mutual relations have been consistently depicted as having come about through the initiative of the Wa. However, we must now recognize that the hard policy that the Was took towards Silla in the late sixth and seventh centuries was not related to the restoration of Wa interests in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, but rather to the efforts of Koguryŏ and Baekje to conclude a military alliance with the Wa in a situation where Silla had become dominant and the relatively weaker Koguryŏ and Baekje were planning to attack Silla. According to recent research on the history of Gaya, the historical origins of these records in the *Nihon shoki* make it difficult even to talk about "Mimana tribute."[44] We can surmise that behind the hard line taken towards Silla by the Wa during the time from the reign of Emperor Bitatsu (572-585) through the reign to Empress Tsuiko (593-628) lay requests and pressure from Koguryŏ, which had succeeded in making an alliance with the Wa.[45]

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the main issues of Koguryŏ's diplomacy towards the Wa from the end of the sixth century to the seventh century

43 Ikeuchi Hiroshi, *Kudarashi kenkyu* (Kokusho kankokai, 1972), pp. 214-216; Yamao Yukihisa, "Taika kaishin go no higashi ajia no josei to Nihon seikyoku," *Tennosei to minshu*, pp. 28-29; Inoue Mitsusada, "Suikocho gaiko seishaku no tenkai," *Shotoku taishi ronshu*, pp. 36-37.

44 Tanaka Shunmei, *Dai Gaya renmei no kobo to* "*Mimana*" (Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1992).

45 At any rate, "Mimana tribute", which is thought to be the price Silla paid to ensure security in the region of the former Gaya states over which it had long struggled with Baekje, appears to have actually existed as part of Silla's cooperative response to the Wa's hard line diplomatic posture, but – as I have already indicated regarding the establishment of Silla's *Waejeon* – this is thought to be a reflection of Silla's urgent need for diplomatic negotiations with the Wa.

within the context of circumstances in East Asia, namely foreign relations between Wa and the Sui Dynasty. First, I have noted that Koguryŏ pursued diplomacy with the Wa as part of its foreign relations strategy. Furthermore, relations between the Wa and the Sui was a foundation of Koguryŏ's strategic design of "continuing the fight with Silla, and preparing for Sui" while Koguryŏ deepened its alignment with Wa.

In the confusion following the fall of the Later Han Dynasty, the Three Kingdoms Period, the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the political situation on the Chinese mainland was unstable and Koguryŏ saw an opportunity to strengthen itself as it continued to exert political pressure on the southern Korean Peninsula. However, Koguryŏ began to feel threatened when circumstances in East Asia changed with the unification of China under Sui and the rise of Silla in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula. Koguryŏ had to react to the dangerous situation in which it now found itself.

Koguryŏ initiated its diplomatic advances toward Wa in 570 as part of its foreign policy strategy. Hyeja, who served Prince Shōtoku for twenty years from 595 to 615, was dispatched to Wa by King Yeongyang as part of Koguryŏ's East Asian strategy and he served an important role in that strategy.