

Parhae's Maritime Routes to Japan in the Eighth Century*

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Parhae was a coalition state comprised of the Koguryŏ and Malgal people. The bi-ethnic nature of the Parhae population played an important role in its relations with neighboring states, Japan in particular. Koguryŏ (traditional dates BC 37-668), after its subjugation of Okchŏ and Tongye located along the northeast coast of the Korean peninsula, had commanded maritime trade around the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan. The Malgal had also been deeply involved in this maritime trade since the Three Kingdoms Period when they were called Ŭmnu. After Koguryŏ collapsed, the Malgal tribes independently maintained relations with the Emishi and the Okhotsk region. As the Malgal tribes were incorporated into the new Parhae state, however, the trading environment of the regions surrounding the East Sea changed. It is against this historical context that the preference for the northern route by eighth-century Parhae missions to Japan should be understood: on their way to Japan, they frequently visited Dewa, the center of the Emishi people. In the course of their expansion to the northeastern region of Honshū, the Japanese wanted to prevent the possibility of a close relationship between Parhae and Emishi. Once Parhae began to interact with Japan on a more equal footing in 762, Japanese suspicion of Parhae's intentions to contact Emishi deepened. It was around this time that the Japanese authorities strongly suggested Parhae not to take the northern route on the pretext of the precedent of Koguryŏ missions to Japan and because of the national codes of Japan. Ideologically, this reflects a Japan-centric view of the world. Behind this urge to control travel routes, however, was the concern to control the balance of power between Parhae, Emishi, and Japan.

Keywords: Parhae, Japan, Emishi, Koguryŏ, trade, sea route

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Introduction

In terms of the importance of Parhae's 渤海 (698-926) foreign relations, Japan was second only to Tang China. Indeed, historical sites on the Japanese archipelago dating to the eighth and ninth centuries yield many Parhae-related artifacts such as pottery and wood slips. Historical accounts also provide some information about the sea route, called Nihondo 日本道, connecting Parhae 渤海 (698-926) on the one hand and Nara (710-794) and later Heian (794-1185) Japan (hereafter referred to simply as Japan) on the other. Separated from each other by the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, the only way for the Parhae missions to reach Japan (Honshū) was crossing the sea at the risk of their lives. They thus may have made efforts to find out the shortest and safest course in order to gain as much as possible from Japan.

This article aims to examine the purposes of Parhae missions to Japan from various angles, but mainly looking at the intentions behind Parhae's decision to interact not only with Japan but also with the Emishi 蝦夷. The destinations of the Parhae missions in the eighth century were distributed from Tsushima Island in the south to Dewa 出羽 in the north, strongly suggesting that the Parhae people maintained multiple sea routes from which they could select one depending on the purpose of the mission, the destination, and the target for contact.

There have been many studies on Parhae-Japan relations so far, including some general survey books,¹ which introduce primary sources and outline the general trends and development of relations. An in-depth research of sea routes from Parhae to Japan was initiated by Niizuma Toshihisa, who examined the sea routes with respect to the navigation skills of the time, the destinations, and the time of arrival at the their destination of the Parhae missions.² Yet his argument is problematic because his premise that Parhae's sailing routes to Japan were decided by the national codes of Japan lacks historical basis, as it implies that Parhae was then Japan's tributary state. Similar conclusions were reached by other Japanese scholars, such as Ishii Masatoshi, who emphasized

1. Wang Chengli, trans. Song Kiho, *Parhae ūi yōksa* [The history of Parhae] (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim taehakkyo Asea munje yŏn'guso, 1987); Pang Hakpong, *Parhae ūi chuyo kyot'ongno yŏn'gu* [A study of the main traffic routes of Parhae] (Yŏnbyŏn [Yanbian]: Yŏnbyŏn inmin ch'ulp'ansa, 2000); Ueda Takeshi, *Bokkaiishi no kenkyū: Nihonkai o watatta shisetsutachi no kiseki* [Studies in Parhae history: Traces of envoys who crossed the Sea of Japan] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2002).

2. Niizuma Toshihisa, *Bokkai kokushi oyobi Nihon to no kokkōshi no kenkyū* [Studies in Parhae history and its relations with Japan] (Tokyo: Tokyo denki daigaku shuppanyoku, 1969).

some cases where, when the Parhae missions arrived at Dewa, the Japanese authority issued an order to relocate them to another place.³

In this article, I will look at the diversity of Parhae's sea routes to Japan in the eighth century and its historical background in the broader context of East Asia, including the Emishi power as a political entity like Parhae and Japan. I will also approach the topic of Parhae-Japan relations from a historical perspective, hypothesizing that the Parhae-Japan relations must be understood as an extension of Japan's relations with Koguryō 高句麗 (traditional dates 37 BC-660 AD) and other political entities on the coast of the East Sea in earlier times. In this respect, recent studies on the cultures of Emishi and other peoples on the coast of Okhotsk and their relations with the powers of the East Asian continent⁴ are worth drawing attention to. I will also closely examine the multiple purposes of the Parhae missions to Japan in connection with the international relations among three entities: Parhae, Japan, and Emishi. This approach will provide a better understanding of the actual reasons for Japan's demand for the change of Parhae's sea routes and Parhae's rejection of the demand.

Sea Routes from Parhae to Japan

1. *Sa Tomong's Route to Japan*

In the second month of 777, a Parhae mission led by Sa Tomong 史都蒙 unexpectedly arrived at Echizen 越前, located on the north coast of central Honshū and thus facing the East Sea, because of a violent storm. When the Japanese authorities, then centered in Heijyōkyō 平城京 (modern Nara),

3. Ishii Masatoshi, "Dazaifu no gaiko kinō to gaiko bunsho" [Dazaifu's diplomatic functions and documents] and "Konin-Kanmu chō no Nihon to Bokkai" [Japan and Parhae in the Konin and Kanmu reigns], *Nihon Bokkai kankeishi no kenkyū* [A study on the history of Japan-Parhae relations] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2001).

4. Gojima Yoshitaka, "Emishi to Yurashia tairiku no kōryū" [Exchanges between Emishi and the Eurasian Continent], *Kōdai Emishi no sekai to kōryū* [The world of ancient Emishi and its exchanges] (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1996); Gojima Yoshitaka, "Nihonkai no shimajima to Matsukatsu-Bokkai no kōryū" [Islands in the of Sea Japan and exchanges between the Malgal and Parhae], *Kyōkai no Nihonshi* [Japanese history of border areas] (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1997); Sakayori Masashi, "Nihon to Bokkai-Matsukatsu to no kōryū—Nihonkai-Ohotsuku kai ikiken to sen" [Japan's exchanges with Parhae and the Malgal: The maritime region of the Sea of Japan and Okhotsk Sea and vessels], *Bokkai to Kōdai no Nihon* [Parhae and Ancient Japan] (Tokyo: Ajekura shoten, 2001).

protested the destination of the Parhae mission, Sa Tomong asked to be excused:

[The Japanese authority] dispatched a messenger to Sa Tomong, the head of the Parhae mission, and inquired, “In the fourth year of the Hoki 寶龜 reign [in 773] when O Subul 烏須弗 returned to Parhae [from Japan], the minister in charge stipulated that Parhae missions should no longer take the northern route but come to Dazaifu 大宰府 [on Kyūshū], following traditional practice. What made you violate it?” The Parhae emissary replied, “On returning, O Subul surely reported it. Thus, we departed westbound from T’ohop’o 吐号浦 of Namhaebu 南海府 [on the Northeast coast of the Korean peninsula, near modern Hamhŭng] in order to anchor at the ferry of Takemuro 竹室 in Tsushima. Due to a violent storm on the way, however, we came to land in this prohibited region.”⁵

So then, why did the sea route become an issue when O Subul and his suite arrived in Japan in 773?

Sent to O Subul, the head envoy from Parhae, the messenger declared, “The minister in charge had taken a measure before to have Il Manbok 壹萬福, a Parhae envoy, return to Parhae because the content of the letter from the Parhae king was arrogant. The magistrate of the Noto 能登 area has just reported that the letter of the Parhae king presented by O Subul is disrespectful and goes against formality. Thus, you will not be allowed to enter the capital city and should go back to your country. . . . Also, the route you took [this time] had already been prohibited before. Therefore, you should have followed the precedent and come to Tsukushido 筑紫道 [Kyūshū].”⁶

According to the account cited above, the Japanese authorities did not allow the Parhae mission to enter the capital city because the letter of the Parhae king disrespected Japan’s ritual propriety and reminded the Parhae envoy of a similar precedent. It also notified O Subul not to take the northern route, where the Noto region (slightly north of Echizen) was located, but take the southern route via Dazaifu in Kyūshū.

As seen from the sources cited above, Japan’s demand regarding Parhae’s sea route was based on precedents, which must have been established earlier than 773 when O Subul received the notice. But when exactly was this rule established? Parhae missions reached Japan seven times prior to 772. They usually arrived on the coast of northwestern Honshū, such as Dewa (modern

5. *Shoku Nihon’gi* 續日本紀 [Continuation of the Annals of Japan] 34, the first month in the eighth year of the Hoki 寶龜 reign.

6. *Shoku Nihongi* 32, boshin 戊辰 day, sixth month, fourth year of the Hoki reign.

Yamagata and Akita prefectures), Echigo 越後 (modern Niigata prefecture), and Echizen (northern part of modern Fukui prefecture). Out of seven, only one mission, headed by Ko Namsin 高南申 in 759, landed in Tsushima located on the southern route. Considering that Tsushima was the original destination of Sa Tomong's mission, Ko Namsin's mission might also have headed for Tsushima from the start. Yet a historical account testifies that Ko's arrival at Tsushima was the result of an unexpected violent storm,⁷ suggesting that Ko had not intended to take the southern route.

Then, which case does the so-called "precedent" refer to exactly, and when was the northern route first prohibited? The Japanese scholar Niizuma Toshihisa studied this issue in connection with the function of Dazaifu 大宰府 as the liaison office for foreign relations.⁸ Based on a provision of the legal code of Japan stating that Dazaifu is in charge of the contacts with tributary states,⁹ this study interpreted that the Japanese authorities directed Parhae missions to the office of Dazaifu in Kyūshū first because it then regarded Parhae as Japan's tributary state. Dazaifu was established prior to 727 when the first Parhae mission reached Japan, but none of the Parhae missions had headed for Dazaifu before O Subul's mission in 773.

For this reason, it would be more reasonable to conclude that the so-called "precedent" did not refer to the Parhae cases but to Koguryō ones in which Koguryō missions reached Japan via Kyūshū.¹⁰ More specifically, because Koguryō had collapsed in 668, it must have referred to Kūmmajō 金馬渚 Koguryō, established by An Sūng 安勝, a Koguryō prince, after the fall of Koguryō. Kūmmajō Koguryō maintained a relationship with Japan from 671 through 685; since 674, its missions to Japan would arrive under Silla escort in Kyūshū.¹¹ Installed by the king of Silla as the king of Podōkkuk 報德國, An

7. *Shoku Nihongi* 22, shingai 辛亥 day, tenth month, third year of the Tenpyohoji 天平宝字 reign. The original text reads, “迎藤原河清使判官内蔵忌寸全成 自渤海却廻 海中遭風 漂着对馬.”

8. Niizuma Toshihisa, *Bokkai kokushi oyobi Nihon*, 396.

9. *Ritsuryō* 律令 [The law codes] 2, Shokuin ryō 職員令 [Codes for officials] 2, Dazaifu 大宰府. The original text reads, “帥(一人): 掌 祠社 蕃客 歸化 饗饗事.”

10. Niizuma Toshihisa, *Bokkai kokushi oyobi Nihon*, 396.

11. *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 [Chronicles of Japan] 29, kibau 癸卯 day, eighth month, second year of the Tenmu 天武 reign. The original text reads, “高麗遣上位頭大兄部子 前部大兄碩干等朝貢 仍新羅遣韓奈末金利益 送高麗使人于筑紫.” No historical account provides the exact locations at which the missions sent independently by Kūmmajō Koguryō in 671 and 673 respectively arrived. But considering that Kūmmajō Koguryō was then located in the southwest of the Korean peninsula, possibly they would have headed for Kyūshū crossing the sea alongside the south coast of the peninsula. Envoys of the original Koguryō state of the Three Kingdom period, by contrast, would have crossed the East Sea to reach the Japanese archipelago. See Ueda Takeshi, *Bokkai koku* [The

Sŭng's Kŭmmajŏ Koguryŏ was a protectorate of Silla at that time, implying that An Sŭng's Koguryŏ would have taken a position inferior to that of Japan in their relations. This practice seems to have become the "precedent" that the Japanese authority applied without adjustment to Parhae, known as the successor of Koguryŏ.¹²

This Japanese view of Parhae was reflected in a provision of the law codes of Japan, on which the order issued by the Japanese authorities to O Subul to take the southern route via Kyūshū was based. Yet the Japanese actions vis-à-vis Parhae, such as regarding Parhae as a tributary state and pressing it to change the sea routes, were no more than a product of the Japanese-centric view of the world, which was not agreed upon by Parhae. There is good evidence to suggest that no Parhae missions had headed originally for Kyūshū before Sa Tomong's mission left in 776.

For this reason, Niizuma Toshihisa's interpretation, explaining that it was because of the provision regarding Dazaifu that the Japanese authority prohibited Parhae missions from taking the northern route, should be reconsidered. According to Niizuma, the Japanese state would overlook Parhae missions' taking the northern route even though they were required to anchor in Kyūshū first. When O Subul and his suite arrived to a northern area, for example, the Japanese were offended by the "rude" letter from the king of Parhae and thus applied the provision strictly to them. When Sa Tomong's mission came, however, the Japanese had a good feeling toward them and did not make their destination an issue.¹³ Needless to say, this kind of explanation derived from the Japanese belief that Parhae was one of the tributary states of Japan. But this understanding cannot reasonably explain why the Japanese authority did not make an issue of the route when Il Manbok's mission arrived in Japan following the northern route two years earlier, bringing a "rude" letter in which the king of Parhae proclaimed himself *ch'ōnson* 天孫, literally meaning the descendant of Heaven.

The issue of Parhae's maritime route to Japan cannot be explained from the Japanese perspective alone. For a better understanding of the issue, we should pay more attention to the standpoint of Parhae: why did the Parhae state hold

Parhae state] (Tokyo, Kandansha, 2004), 213-216.

12. Noh Tae-don [No T'aedon], "Tae Parhae Ilbon kuksŏ esŏ unwi han *Koryŏ kugi* 高麗舊記 e taehayŏ" [On the *Koryŏ kugi* mentioned in Japan's letters to Parhae], *Pyŏn T'aesŏp paksu hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong* [Collection of articles in commemoration of the sixtieth birthday of Dr. Pyŏn T'aesŏp] (Seoul: Samyŏngsa, 1985).

13. Niizuma Toshihisa, "Bokkai kokushi ni tai suru kairo hōki no kenkyū" [A study of the regulations on the sea route for the missions from Parhae], *Kokushi gaku* 56 (1951).

fast to the northern route despite Japan's complaints? For an answer to this question, we should first look at each mission and its destination in context so that we can understand the general trend.

2. *Parhae's Sea Routes to Japan and Their Destinations*

A total of thirty-five Parhae missions reached the Japanese archipelago between 727 and 919. Out of them, fourteen cases are found in the eighth century. The details of the fourteen cases are provided in Table 1.¹⁴

The Parhae missions usually arrived in Japan between the seventh month of the year and the second month of the following year. Out of thirteen arrivals whose dates are known, nine were concentrated between the tenth and twelfth months. Since no historical accounts state when they departed, it is unclear how many days the sea voyage from Parhae to Japan took. Fortunately, however, a report on the results of an experiment, conducted in 1997 and designed to explore the sea route from the Parhae region to the Japanese archipelago, provides a clue.¹⁵

According to the report of the mission, a recreated Parhae vessel, launched from the port of Vladivostok on December 21, 1997, was wrecked near Okishima 隠岐島 (an island off the north coast of Honshū), on January 23, 1998, after sailing the coastal waters of Ullūngdo and of Northern Kyōngsang Province. It was a relatively small-sized ship, measuring five meters in width and fifteen meters in length, and it did not launch from the port of Kraskino in the Posyet Bay, from which Parhae missions are believed to have started their journeys. Nonetheless, the experiment provides evidence for estimating the length of the journey of Parhae missions to Japan, because the ship did not deviate much from possible sea routes of the time: it is estimated at twenty to twenty-five days, suggesting that the Parhae missions would have departed between the ninth and eleventh months in order to reach the north coast of

14. This table was made referring to the list provided in Ueda Takeshi, "Bokkai shi no kiseki—Bokkai koku-Nihon koku kokō ryakushi" [Traces of the missions from Parhae: a short history of Japan-Parhae relations] *Bokkai shi no kenkyū* [A study on the history of Parhae, I] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2002) and Ishii Masatoshi, *Nihon Bokkai kankeishi no kenkyū* [A study on the history of Japan-Parhae relations] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2001). The dates of arrival and departure follow the Gregorian calendar as calculated by Ueda Takeshi.

15. Kim Yunbae, Kwōn Yongin, and Yi Sohūi, "Parhae kōng'guk 1300-chun'yōn kinyōm Parhae haesang hangno haksul ttenmok t'amsa rül t'onghan Parhae ūi Tonghae haesang hangno yōn'gu" [A study on the sea route of Parhae in East Sea by means of the academic rafting expedition in commemoration of the 1300th anniversary of the founding of the Parhae state], *Tongbuga yōksa nonch'ong* [Collection of articles on the history of Northeast Asia] 16 (2007).

Table 1. Parhae's Missions to Japan in the Eighth century

No.	Head	Arrival		Departure		Notes
		Date	Place	Date	Place	
1	Ko Inü 高仁義	727. 10	Dewa 出羽	728. 8	Unknown	Drifted to the border of Emishi, 16 men killed there, and 8 entered the Japanese capital; Conducted trade at the private residence of Nagaya ō 長屋王
2	Sō Yodök 胥嬰德	739. 8	Dewa	740. ?	Unknown	Wrecked in a storm, and 40 men lost; Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Tang China returning to Japan
3	Mo Simong 慕施蒙	752. 11	Echigo 越後, Sadojima 佐渡嶋	Unknown	Unknown	Arrived as planned; Japanese offended by the <i>rudeness</i> of the letter from Parhae
4	Yang Sünggyöng 楊承慶	758. 10	Echizen 越前	759. ?	Unknown	Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Parhae; Invited to the reception party held in the residence of Fujiwara Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂
5	Ko Namsin 高南申	759. 11	Tsushima 對馬	760. ?	Unknown	Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Parhae; Drifted to Tsushima
6	Wang Sinbok 王新福	762. 10	Echizen, Kagagun 加賀郡	763. ?	Unknown	Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Parhae; Invited to the reception party held in the residence of Fujiwara Nakamaro
7	Il Manbok 壹萬福	771. 8	Dewa, Noshiro- no-minato 野代湊	772. 10 773. ?	Unknown Noto 能登, Fukura 福良津	Large-scale mission with 325 men on 17 vessels; Arrived in enemy's land, and relocated to Hitachi 常陸; Japanese offended by the <i>rudeness</i> of the letter from Parhae; Caught in a violent storm on its way back to Parhae, drifted to Fukura, and departed again there

Table 1. (continued)

No.	Head	Arrival		Departure		Notes
		Date	Place	Date	Place	
8	O Subul 烏須弗	773. 7	Noto	773. ?	Noto	Japanese offended by the <i>rudeness</i> of the letter from Parhae; Japan demanded that Parhae not take the northern route but the southern one to Kyūshū
9	Sa Tomong 史都蒙	777. 2	Echizen, Enuma 江沼, Kagagun 加賀郡	777. 8	Unknown	Headed for Tsushima but drifted to a forbidden land; Japan demanded again that Parhae not take the northern route but the southern one to Kyūshū; Japan provided extra gold and mercury on Sa Tomong's request
10	Chang Sōnsu 張仙壽	778. 10	Echizen, Mikuni- no-minato 三國湊	779. ?	Unknown	Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Parhae
11	Ko Yangp'il 高洋粥	779. 10	Dewa	780. ?	Unknown	Large mission of 359 men; Japanese offended by the <i>rudeness</i> of the letter from Parhae; An official from Ch'ōlli 鐵利 and Ko Yōlch'ang 高說昌, an interpreter from Parhae, competed over higher rank in the Japanese court
12	Yi Wōnt'ae 李元泰	786. 10	Dewa	787. ?	Echigo	Drifted to Dewa; 12 men killed by the Emishi people, and 41 survived
13	Yō Jōngnim 呂定琳	795. 12	Dewa, Sirihamura 志理波村	796. 7	Unknown	Drifted to a barbarian land and plundered there; Japanese offended by the <i>rudeness</i> of the letter from Parhae
14	Tae Ch'angt'ae 大昌泰	798. ?	Oki 隱岐, Chiburigun 智夫郡	799. ?	Unknown	Accompanied by the Japanese mission to Parhae; Drifted on the way to Japan; Discussion on the interval of the Parhae missions to Japan

Honshū between the tenth and twelfth months. The ninth through eleventh months are autumn and early winter in Northeast Asia, including the Korean peninsula, in which the seasonal wind blows from the northwest,¹⁶ which the Parhae people must have known about. In many cases, for this reason, the Parhae missions to Japan would have started their journey between the ninth and eleventh months.

The Parhae people may have learned from the Koguryō skills and experiences in navigating the East Sea to reach Japan. Japanese historical accounts provide some information about when and where Koguryō missions arrived at Honshū in the sixth and seventh centuries.¹⁷ One of them provides the following account about the Koguryō mission that arrived in Japan in 668:

In the seventh month, in autumn, Koguryō sent a mission along the course of Etsu 越 and offered some goods. [The mission] could not return because of high seas.¹⁸

The mission was dispatched shortly before P'yōngyang, the capital city of Koguryō, fell to the Tang-Silla joint forces in the ninth month of the same year. Since the mission arrived in Japan in the seventh month in the lunar calendar of the time, it must have left Koguryō during mid-summer or early autumn. Because of the desperate situation, in which the enemies laid siege to the capital city, the Koguryō leadership would not have had much time to wait for the seasonal wind. More importantly, the Japanese authority would have understood the sea route the Koguryō mission took as the Etsu route. Etsu 越 was then a general term for Echizen, Etchū 越中, and Echigo, all of which were located on the so-called northern route. As the successor of Koguryō, the Parhae people must have fully known about the seasonal wind and taken advantage of the northern route to reach Japan.

As for the destinations, Dewa is noticeable because the Parhae missions anchored there six times out of fourteen, the highest frequency, as seen in Table 1. If we exclude the case of no. 9 in which the Parhae mission headed for Tsushima from the start, Dewa takes up 46% of the thirteen destinations. The *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀 simply states that the Parhae missions drifted to Dewa. Considering the high frequency of Dewa as a destination, however, is it

16. Kim Yōnok, *Han'guk ū kihu wa munhwa* [Korea's Climate and Culture] (Seoul: Ihwa yōja taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 1985), 171-200; Kwōn Wōn'ae, et al., *Han'guk ū kihu* [The climate of Korea] (Seoul: Kisangch'ōng kisang yōn'guso, 2004), 99-124.

17. *Nihon shoki* 17, boin 戊寅 day, ninth month, tenth year of the Geitai 繼体 reign. The original text reads, “百濟遣灼莫古將軍 日本斯那奴阿比多 副高麗使安定等 來朝結好”

18. *Nihon shoki* 27, seventh year of the Tenchi 天智 reign.

really truthful that the Parhae missions arrived to Dewa many times *accidentally* just because of unexpected high seas? Let us look at the account about the case of mission no. 7.

On the *jingo* 壬午 day, a Parhae mission with 325 men on seventeen vessels, headed by the Ch'öngsu taebu 靑綬大夫 Il Manbok 壹萬福, arrived at Noshiro-no-minato 野代湊 of the Dewa region, a barbarian land. [The authorities] relocated them to the Hitachi 常陸 area and provided them with some goods.¹⁹

Noshiro-no-minato was then in the northernmost area of Honshū Island. Regarding it as the land of enemy, the Japanese authority ordered the Parhae mission to a safer place. Also, the *Shoku Nihongi* does not imply in any way that the Parhae mission drifted to that location. Thus, it would be reasonable to understand that Dewa was the original destination of the Parhae mission, and it actually arrived there as planned.

In the cases of nos. 1, 2, 12, and 13, according to Table 1, the Parhae missions are recorded to have drifted to or wrecked at Dewa. But such records do not necessarily prove that the original destinations were not Dewa.²⁰ In the case of no. 2, the Parhae mission lost forty men on its way to Japan due to a violent storm, but it does not provide any clue that the original destination was not Dewa. Rather, as the Parhae missions must have well known about the seasonal conditions of the East Sea, even though they sometimes suffered from storms and high seas, they would not have deviated far away from their original destinations.²¹

In most cases, in short, the Parhae missions arrived on the coast of northern Honshū. It was not because the Parhae people were not familiar with navigating the East Sea and taking advantage of the seasonal wind, but because they usually took the northern route despite Japanese complaints. Excluding the case of no. 9, where the Parhae mission planned to arrive at Tsushima from

19. *Shoku Nihongi* 31, sixth month, second year of the Hoki reign.

20. A Japanese scholar opined that in order for their trade with the Emishi not to be disclosed, the Parhae missions would report falsely to the Japanese authorities that they were plundered in the Dewa region. See Sekiguchi Akira, "Watarinoshima Emishi to Shukushin-Bokkai" [Suksin, Parhae, and Watarinoshima Emishi], *Nihon Kōdai no denshō to Higashi Ajia* [Traditions of Ancient Japan and East Asia] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1995), 560. But it is no more than an assumption.

21. A Japanese scholar interpreted that it was Parhae's intention to visit northern Honshū because the Parhae missions just followed the traditional northern route connecting the maritime territory of Siberia (Yōnhaeju 沿海州 in Korean) and the Shakotan 積丹 peninsula in the seventh century. See Gojima Yoshitaka, "Emishi to Yurajia Tairiku," 425-426.

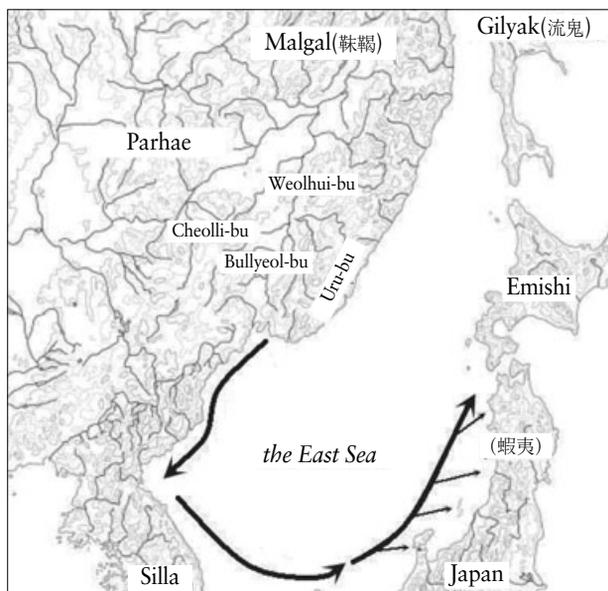
the start, the majority of the Parhae missions would have planned to arrive on the coast of northern Honshū. Even in the case of unexpected high seas, they would not have deviated far away from their original destinations.

Here, we need to consider one more factor that could have an impact on the maritime travel of the Parhae missions: the sea current. Four currents intersect with each other in the East Sea: the Liman and North Korean currents running from north to south and the East Korean and Tsushima currents from south to north. Those currents would have made it difficult to sail from Parhae to Japan because they would have had to sail from east to west against the currents. Even if they sailed northbound along the coastline of East Siberia, cross the northern East Sea, and then sail the coastal waters of Hokkaido 北海道 to the south, travelers would still go against currents.

Considering the low level of navigation skills in ancient times and the sea currents in the East Sea, it would have been best for Parhae missions to depart the Posyet Bay and sail the coastal waters of the Korean peninsula to the south. This would also be the shortest way to reach Kyūshū, where the Japanese authority had requested Parhae missions arrive. But it could be affected by a geopolitical factor: Parhae-Silla and Silla-Japan relations. There was only one case in which the Parhae mission's intended destination was Kyūshū, as seen in the case of no. 9 of Table 1, but it actually arrived at another place.

Then, would it not be possible to assume that Parhae missions sailed the coastal waters of the peninsula as long as possible and crossed the East Sea before the wind at some point? As seen in Map 1, the possible main route can be traced as follows: (1) setting sail from the Posyet Bay; (2) sailing the Liman and North Korean currents alongside the east coast of the northern peninsula southward down to the modern Wōnsan area, the border area between Parhae and Silla at that time; (3) crossing the East Sea southeastward before the northwest seasonal wind; (4) sailing the East Korean and Tsushima currents northeastward alongside the north coast of Honshū; (5) and anchoring at some point on the coast of northern Honshū. If the missions were headed originally for Dewa, in particular, they would have taken this route, the so-called northern route.²²

22. Japanese scholars infer that Parhae missions may have crossed the East Sea from the ports they left directly to Honshū. See Gojima Yoshitaka, "Kogohak esō pon Parhae wa Ilbon ū kyoryusa" [The history of Parhae-Japan relations examined from an archeological perspective], *Tong Asia sogūi Parhae wa Ilbon* [Parhae and Japan in the East Asian dimension] (Seoul: Kyōngin munhwasa, 2008), 143; Ueda Takeshi, *Bokkai koku* [The Parhae state] (Tokyo: Kandansha, 2004), 229. Considering the difficulty in crossing an ocean against currents, however, this direct route is not likely.



Map 1. Presumed sea route from Parhae to Japan in the eighth century.

Exchanges between Parhae and Emishi

1. Reasons for Parhae's Preference of the Northern Route

Why did the Parhae missions usually arrive at northern Honshū, even though it was far away from Heijōkyō (Nara), the capital city of Japan at the time? The case of no. 7 in Table 1 provides a clue to answer this question. The Parhae mission led by Il Manbok seems to have planned to arrive at Dewa, and it was an unprecedentedly large mission comprised of 325 men, about four times the size of earlier missions—probably eighty men as seen in the case of no. 2 and seventy-five in the case of no. 3, for example. Such a large group of men would not have been dispatched simply for the relations with Japan alone.

The region of Dewa, where Il Manbok and his suite arrived first, was the land of Emishi natives, not Japanese. As is well known, they were one of the native groups on the Japanese archipelago in ancient times, whose culture differed from the Japanese (Wa 倭) who inhabited the western and central archipelago.²³ They lived from hunting, fishing, and gathering, they are also known to have been good archers and are thought to have spoken a language

of the Ainu family. Unlike Wa Japanese society, Emishi society did not develop into a centralized political entity. Independent Emishi tribes formed a loose network, and would line up militarily for an emergency.²⁴

The Emishi inhabited northern Honshū, Hokkaido, and southern Sakhalin. The distribution of their early residences reached the line connecting modern Niigata 新潟 and Sendai 仙台 of southwestern Honshū.²⁵ In Honshū, therefore, the region northeast of Echigo, let alone Mutsu 陸奥 and Dewa, are included in the land of Emishi tribes. Japan (Wa) had expanded its power into the land of Emishi since the late seventh century and established commanderies as military and administrative bases, but the Emishi natives still lived there.²⁶ The Emishi natives, living outside the fortified city, would barter with the Wa Japanese immigrants living inside the city in the form of tribute trade, but such relations were so instable that they could be broken off anytime depending on the situation.²⁷

As the political intervention of the Wa Japanese was getting tougher, the Emishi natives also stood against Japan more frequently since the revolt of the Mutsu state, located on the Pacific coast of northern Honshū, in 720.²⁸ The Japanese and Emishi tribes were even engaged in the so-called Thirty-Eight-Year War from 774 through 811.²⁹ In short, the Emishi people who inhabited northeastern Honshū came under Japanese control starting from the late seventh century, but they still maintained enough power to wage war against the Japanese until the early ninth century.

The place in which the Parhae mission led by Il Manbok arrived in 771 was under the influence of Emishi natives: it is easily proven by the fact that the Japanese authorities then regarded the place as the “land of the enemy.” Thus,

23. There has been a debate on whether the Emishi natives were an ethnic group different from the Wa Japanese or whether they were ideologically discriminated against because they inhabited a remote region. For details, see Kudō Masaki, *Kōdai Emishi* [The Emishi in ancient times] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 2000), 262-328.

24. Kumagai Kimio, *Emishi no chi to kōdai koku* [The land of the Emishi and early states] (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2004), 44-46.

25. Kumagai Kimio, *Emishi no chi*, 18-21. According to this study, the Wa Japanese gradually expanded their power to the northeast, with the result that during the Heian 平安 period (794-1185), the Emishi people were pushed up to northern Honshū, north of modern Yamagata 山形 and Akita 秋田.

26. Kikuchi Isao, *Ezogashima to hoppō sekai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2003), 18-19.

27. Kumagai Kimio, *Emishi no chi*, 67-70.

28. Mutsu koku 陸奥國: here ‘koku,’ literally meaning ‘state,’ refers to a local administration center established by the Japanese government in the eighth century.

29. Kumagai Kimio, *Emishi no chi*, 75-82.

it is entirely plausible that the Parhae mission headed for northeastern Honshū intentionally, for the purpose of contacting the Emishi tribes. The large size of the mission, which comprised 325 men, provides further circumstantial evidence for the historical veracity of this. Out of these 325 men, forty went to the capital at Heijōkyō to offer congratulations on the new year, meaning that about 280 men did not have to follow the mission all the way to the capital; therefore, many of these men may have been dispatched for the purpose of maintaining amicable relations and conducting trade with Emishi.³⁰

The Parhae government seems to have dispatched its missions to the Japanese archipelago for two purposes: contacting the polity later known as Nara 奈良 Japan (710-794) centered in Heijōkyō in southwestern Honshū and the Emishi tribes in northeastern Honshū respectively. If the Parhae missions took the southern route as recommended by the Japanese, it would have been very difficult for them to reach the land of the Emishi. It is likely to have been for this reason that they usually took the northern route.

2. The Triangular Relationship between Parhae, the Emishi, and Japan

From when did the Parhae authorities send missions to Japan for these two purposes? In the case of no. 1, the Parhae mission of 727, consisting of twenty-four men, drifted to the Emishi area, with the result that sixteen out of twenty-four were slaughtered there. Considering the fact that it was the first Parhae mission to Japan, and that it ran adrift on its way to Japan, the Parhae mission seems to have not arrived at the intended destination. Nonetheless, the Parhae people may have obtained some detailed information about the Emishi.

The next mission, case no. 2, increased in size to about eighty men. On its way to Japan, however, it was caught in a violent storm again: the mission lost one vessel, and the survivors barely landed in Dewa, where an administrative post had been established by the Japanese state in order to control the Emishi natives living on the coast of northern Honshū, implying that the Parhae mission would not have been able to contact the Emishi people. If some contacts were possible, it would have been reported to the Japanese central authority because the Parhae mission was then accompanied by the Japanese mission to Tang China on its way back to Japan. The following Parhae

30. A Korean scholar pointed out the possibility of the Parhae approaches to the chieftains of the Emishi tribes in northeastern Honshū. See Ku Nanhüi, “8-segi huban Ilbon üi taeoe kwan'gye e kwanhan koch'al: Parhae wa üi kwan'gye-rül chungsim üro” [A study of Japan's foreign relations in the late eighth century with reference to the relations with Parhae], *Ilbon yöksa yön'gu* 10 (1999): 44.

missions, the cases of no. 3 in 752 through no. 6 in 762, continued to take the northern route but arrived at the Echizen and Echigo area, south of Dewa, suggesting that the Parhae missions may have been careful in order not to offend the Japanese who wanted to prevent the Emishi natives from being contacted by Parhae.³¹ Avoiding unnecessary tension with Japan, Parhae nonetheless continued to contact Emishi.

Parhae and Ch'ölli 鐵利 people numbering 1,000 men came in search of [our] enlightenment. [The authority] located them safely in Dewa first, and then returned them [to their countries] together with clothes and food provided.³²

According to the source above, over 1,000 men, including men from Ch'ölli, one of the Malgal 靺鞨 (Mohe in Chinese) tribes, went to the Japanese archipelago in 746. As for the identity of the Ch'ölli people, a Chinese scholar surmised that they may have been refugees who fled to Japan as Ch'ölli was incorporated into the Parhae state.³³ This interpretation is not plausible however, because the Ch'ölli people were accompanied by Parhae people. They seem to have been dispatched by the Parhae authority for the purpose of diplomatic relations and trade with the Emishi tribes. The large scale of the mission and the actual destination (Dewa) supports this new interpretation.

The Parhae mission of 779 (case no. 11), seems to have been dispatched for a similar purpose.

The imperial order reads, “The Parhae and Ch'ölli people, numbering 359 men, visited [our] court in search of enlightenment and now sojourn in Dewa. Provide them with goods, following precedent. Yet they are not qualified to be invited to an official reception because the head envoy is the holder of a low rank. Thus, send a messenger to hold a banquet [there for them] and have them return.
.....”³⁴

The Japanese authority did not recognize them as an official mission, but they must have been a mission sent by Parhae because they carried a royal letter and consisted of officials and interpreters. The inclusion of some Ch'ölli people in

31. This time period also witnessed the Tang-Silla alliance and the subsequent reinforcement of the Parhae-Japan relations in response to the alliance. For details, see Yi Söngsi, trans. Kim Ch'angsök, *Tonggasa ü wangkwön kwa kyoyök* [Royal authority and trade in East Asia] (Seoul: Ch'öngnyönsa, 1999), 146-150.

32. *Shoku Nihongi* 16, eighteenth year of the Tenpyo 天平 reign.

33. Wang Chengli, *Parhae ü yöksa*, 94.

34. *Shoku Nihongi* 35, kaushin 庚辰 day, ninth month, the tenth year of the Hoki reign.

the mission was designed to incorporate Malgal tribes, who had been engaged independently in foreign trade, into the new Parhae authority. It was a sort of a trading mission that consisted of some Malgal as well as Parhae people in order to appease them in the course of the incorporation of the Malgal tribes into Parhae. Thus, it was closely related to the process of annexation of the Malgal tribes by Parhae.³⁵ For this reason, the arrival of envoys at Dewa may be understood as a similar case in which they were sent to Dewa for the partial purpose of trade with the Emishi tribes, even though there is no historical account of it.

It is noteworthy here to look at an existing study on the maritime trade between the natives in the maritime territory of Siberia and the Emishi region in the proto-Three Kingdoms period and before.³⁶ Political entities located along the east coast of the Korean peninsula and the maritime territory of Siberia, such as the Tongye 東濊, Okchō 沃沮, and some Ūnnu 挹婁 tribes, were actively engaged in maritime trade with each other, including the Emishi tribes on the opposite coast of the East Sea, before they were conquered by Koguryō between the second and fifth centuries.³⁷ In the late seventh century, the Malgal tribes in the southern region of the maritime territory of Siberia conducted trade with the Emishi tribes by crossing the sea. The artifacts of Malgal origin excavated in the Emishi territory in northeastern Honshū, such as tin ornaments, jade rings, and bronze bells, provide evidence for this maritime trade.³⁸ Many other ethnic groups were engaged in barter trade in Hokkaido. The Malgal brought tin items for trade, the Gilyak-Okhotsk people carried fur, and the Japanese traded clothes and iron items. The Emishi natives traded directly with them and also acted as brokers.³⁹

The trading bloc of Tongye, Okchō, and the Malgal was under Koguryō control in the course of Koguryō expansion. After the fall of Koguryō in 668, it was handled mainly by the Malgal and the Gilyak-Okhotsk people. The rise of the new Parhae state in 698, however, which gradually incorporated most of the Malgal tribes, consequently changed the topography of trading in this region.

The Parhae conquest of the Malgal tribes was launched by King Ko 高王 (r.

35. Yi Sōngsi, *Tongashia ū wangkwōn*, 156-159.

36. Sekiguchi Akira, "Watarinoshima Emishi to Shukushin-Bokkai," 546-555.

37. Takeda Yukio, "Kyuryō iki no shihai keitai" [Ruling systems in early times] *Kōkuri shi to Higashi Ashia* [History of Koguryō and East Asia] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989), 78-81.

38. Gojima Yoshitaka, "Nihonkai no shimajima to Matsukatsu-Bokkai no kōryū," 21-34.

39. Gojima Yoshitaka, "Nihonkai no shimajima to Matsukatsu-Bokkai no kōryū," 34.

698-719) and completed in the early years of the reign of King Mun 文王 (737-794), in which the Ch'ŏlli tribe and many other tribes were annexed by Parhae. From 740 on, as a result, those Malgal tribes no longer sent their tribute missions to Tang China.⁴⁰ Likewise, the traditional maritime trade conducted by the Malgal, including the Ch'ŏlli tribe, with the Emishi tribes also underwent Parhae interference. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Ch'ŏlli men who visited Dewa in 746 and 779 were accompanied by Parhae people.

This change in maritime trade is also reflected in archeological remains. The iron pots found at the Akita 秋田 site, dated to the late eighth century, are a product of the influx of Parhae's iron-casting technology into the Japanese archipelago.⁴¹ Evidence of the Okhotsk culture of the time includes a variety of recovered artifacts, including ornaments such as beads and bells and iron items such as swords, spearheads, and axes. They are very similar to the artifacts found not only among Malgal sites in the Amur basin and modern Jilin Province but also in tombs in the vicinity of Sanggyŏng 上京, the capital city of Parhae.⁴² Such similarities suggest that the products and technologies of Parhae spread far and wide, to such areas as the east coast of the East Asian continent and the west coast of Hokkaido and northeastern Honshū.

It is not clear what Parhae gained from Emishi. Some historical sources suggest that in the ninth century, the fertile land of the Dewa area produced a variety of indigenous products. They also state that the children of the Japanese nobles would visit Emishi in order to obtain fine horses and hunting hawks.⁴³ The earlier situation of Emishi would have been very similar as well. From this we can infer that the area of the Emishi was an international trading center for various goods.

The Parhae authority thus thrust itself into this existing trading environment, yet also adjusted its relations with the Emishi depending on the international situation. In the 750s, Parhae was fully aware of the necessity of maintaining good relations with Japan, with the result that the Parhae missions in this period would not arrive at Dewa but the Etsu area, south of Emishi territory, as seen in cases no. 3 through 6. In 771, however, the Parhae mission headed by Il

40. No T'aedon, "Parhaeguk ũ chumin kusŏng kwa Parhaein ũ chogwŏn" [The peoples of the Parhae state and their ethnic origins] *Han'guk kodae ũ kukka wa sahoe* [The states and societies of Early Korea] (Seoul: Iljogak, 1985), 257-262; Song Kiho, *Parhae chŏngch'isa yŏn'gu* [Research on the political history of Parhae] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1995), 111-112.

41. Gojima Yoshitaka, "Nihonkai no shimajima to Matsukatsu-Bokkai no kōryu," 37-38.

42. Sakayori Masashi, "Nihon to Bokkai-Matsukatsu to no Kōryu," 245-246.

43. Kumagai Kimio, *Emishi no chi*, 101-106.

Manbok arrived on the coast of Emishi territory, as seen in the case of no. 7, implying that the mission planned to contact the Emishi tribes from the start. Why did Parhae change the destination of its mission in 771? A clue can be found from the royal letter sent to the Japanese.

The emperor of Japan sent a letter to the king of Parhae, saying “... not following the conventional form, the letter from Parhae did not write the personal name and rank [of the person who wrote the letter] below the date and arrogantly proclaimed the king of Parhae the descendant of Heaven at the end of the letter. Considering the form of the letters from earlier kings, it is unbelievable. Considering the situation of [Parhae], it seems to have been a mistake.”⁴⁴

The Japanese authority made it an issue and officially protested. The Parhae kings usually received investiture from the Tang but established an imperial system within the state, with the consequence that Parhae maintained the dual structure of royal and imperial systems.⁴⁵ In the early stages of building a new state, Parhae was not on good terms with Tang China, against which it waged a couple of wars. For this reason, Parhae needed to maintain close relations with Japan in its rear vis-à-vis Tang China, the main enemy.

In the late seventh century, the Japanese advanced into the land of the Emishi in northeastern Honshū and made Emishi tribes tributary states subordinate to the Imperial state. In the eighth century, the Japanese authority regarded Parhae as one of such tributary states based on its own assumption that the new Parhae state succeeded Kūmmajō Koguryō established by An Sŭng under the patronage of Unified Silla.

The international situation changed around 771, however. Relations between Parhae and Tang were normalized in 762 when the emperor of Tang China conferred the title of “King of the Parhae State” upon King Mun (r. 737-794). With this new favorable situation, Parhae attempted to adjust its relations with Japan: it did not need to restrain itself from actively contacting the Emishi tribes.

This shift seems to have caused the Japanese much alarm. The Japanese authority began to have serious doubts about the intentions of Parhae because the king of Parhae identified himself as a descendant of Heaven and the Parhae mission visited Dewa in an unusually open way, which could mean that Parhae was attempting to break away from its perceived status as a tributary state of Japan and make Dewa its own tributary state; however, unfortunately

44. *Shoku Nihongi* 32, kibo 己卯 day, second month, the third year of the Hoki reign.

45. Song Kiho, *Parhae chōngch'isa*, 177-194.

no historical account provides clear information about the Parhae view of Emishi at that time.

On the first day of the first month in spring, the Tennō 天皇 [emperor] received respect in the Hall of Daikyokuden 大極殿. All the officials and officers, the envoys from Parhae, and the Emishi men from Mutsu and Dewa offered congratulations of the new year respectively according to ritual propriety.⁴⁶

Il Manbok, the head envoy from Parhae, and some Emishi men were allowed to attend the imperial ceremony. It was the first time that both Parhae and Emishi men were invited to the imperial ceremony at the same time. Surely, this measure taken by the Japanese authority was designed to have the Parhae envoy realize that Parhae had to remain a tributary of Japan like the Emishi.

Regarding the intentions of the Japanese government, the relations between Japan and Emishi at the time should also be considered. In the course of their expansion, the Japanese faced a series of resistance movements from the Emishi tribes. Around 771, in particular, there was an increase of tension between the Japanese in southwestern Honshū and the Emishi tribes in northeastern Honshū. In this situation, the Japanese must have been offended by the possibility of direct relations between Parhae and Emishi. The Japanese attempt to prevent any direct trade between the two was closely related to this situation.

[The authority] ordered provinces, such as Mutsu and Dewa, to pay the men from Parhae and Ch'ōlli with clothes taxed from Hitachi 常陸, Sagami 相模, and Mutsu 陸奥.⁴⁷

When 259 men from Parhae and Ch'ōlli visited Dewa in 779, the Japanese authority granted them diplomatic presents (goods), appropriated from the taxes collected from northern Honshū. This action suggests that the Japanese authority wanted to intervene in the trade between Parhae and Emishi. In other words, the Japanese attempted to have all the trade go through one channel under their own authority.

With the Parhae mission to Japan in 773, in case no. 8, and thereafter, the Japanese demanded more frequently that Parhae missions come to Japan via Kyūshū. The increase of such demands should be understood in this historical context. Based on the precedents and its protocols, the Japanese prohibited

46. *Shoku Nihongi* 32, the third year of the Hoki reign.

47. *Shoku Nihongi* 35, kishi 癸巳 day, ninth month, the tenth year of the Hoki reign.

Parhae missions from taking the northern route. In one sense, however, it was no more than a product of the Japanese view of the world in which Japan was centered, which was not agreed upon by neighboring states. In another sense, in reality, the Japanese wanted to make the situation more favorable, by preventing any direct contact between Parhae and Emishi and interfering in the trading system handled by Parhae, Emishi, and Okhotsk.

Parhae employed the policy designed to maintain its relations with both Japan and Emishi simultaneously until 779. But the fact that the Parhae missions to Japan in 786 and 795 were plundered in Emishi and some men of the suites were slaughtered indicate the possible change in Parhae-Emishi relations in the 780s. Through the frequent visits to Japan, the Parhae people must have collected and accumulated detailed information about the political situation on the Japanese archipelago, and the foreign policy of Parhae seems to have shifted to place more importance on the relations with Japan than Emishi.⁴⁸

Conclusion

In the eighth century, the Parhae missions usually arrived on the coast of northern Honshū. It was not because they did not take advantage of the seasonal wind but because they intended to take the northern route, which was then prohibited by the Japanese authority. Dewa, located in the northernmost location of Honshū, was one of the destinations. The possible main route can be traced as follows: departing from the Posyet Bay, sailing southward down the east coast of the northern Korean peninsula, crossing the East Sea southeastward before the northeast seasonal wind, sailing back up the currents northeastward, and arriving at the coast of either central or northern Honshū.

Dewa was originally in Emishi lands. The Emishi tribes were distributed from southern Sakhalin down to northeastern Honshū. Those who inhabited northeastern Honshū underwent Japanese interference as the Japanese in southwestern Honshū expanded its power to the northeast in and after the late 700s. They nevertheless remained powerful enough until the early ninth

48. This change is also supported by a historical account in which a Japanese official stated in 797 in his report of the completion of *Shoku Nihongi* to the emperor, reading roughly, "The imperial wisdom spreading to the land north of the sea made the Parhae people change their mind [to serve Your Majesty], and the imperial dignity influencing the land east of the rivers made the Emishi people pacified." See *Nihon Koki* 日本後紀 [Postscript on Japan] 5, kishi 己巳 day, second month, the sixteenth year of the Enryaku 延暦 reign.

century to wage a war against the Japanese.

The Parhae missions would head for the coast of northern Honshū partly because they wanted to trade with Emishi. Parhae seems to have dispatched its missions to Japan for double purposes: contacting the Japanese court in Heijōkyō in southwestern Honshū and the Emishi tribes that still remained powerful in northeastern Honshū respectively.

Parhae joined the existing trading bloc in East Asia surrounding the East Sea. It also adjusted its relations with Emishi, depending on the international situation. With the normalization with Tang China in 762, in particular, it wanted closer relations with Emishi, which inevitably invited Japanese suspicion. The increase of Japanese demands in the late eighth century that Parhae missions come to Japan via Kyūshū should be understood in this historical context. Based on the precedents and its protocols, the Japanese authority prohibited Parhae missions from taking the northern route. Ideologically, on the one hand, it was merely a product of the Japanese self-esteem of the Tennō 天皇 state. In reality, on the other hand, the Japanese wanted to prevent direct contacts between Parhae and Emishi and interfere in the trading system handled by Parhae, Emishi, and Okhotsk.