

A Republic of Letters in East Asia

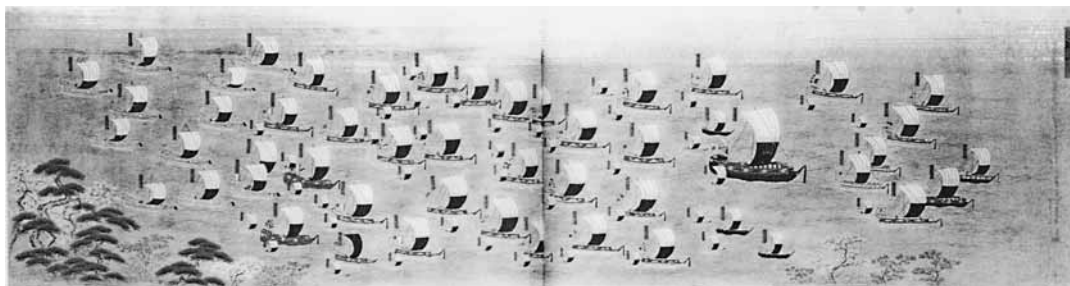
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In the 18th century the Tokugawa Bakufu continued to follow foreign policies of severe control over international contact from the last century, but Japan was not isolated from the world. For evidence of these relations, we see that the fictional Gulliver visited Japan in 1709 (Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726)

This provides some proof that Japan was vague and fantastic like Laputa and Luggnagg to Europeans. Fact is stranger than fiction. Oddly enough, Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1668-1714), an Italian priest, came to Japan in 1708 in Japanese costume as a disguise. Those days Japan was under prohibition toward Christianity. Sidotti was just an uninvited guest. He was arrested and interrogated by Arai Hakuseki (新井白石, 1657-1725) several times. Hakuseki was a not only a Confucian statesman of Bakufu but also an outstanding scholar. As a result Hakuseki fraternized with Sidotti and wrote *Seiyo Kibun* (西洋紀聞) and *Sairan Igen* (采覧異言) that served as a beginning for Dutch or Western Learning in Japan.

Hakuseki also held an interview with the delegations of both the Kingdom of Korea and Ryukyu. Each delegation was accompanied by eminent literati. Hakuseki received the Korean Envoys and chatted away like old friends in 1711. Chong-pyong (青坪) said to Hakuseki that he thought Japan had been a military state, but after he came to Japan he realized Japan is cultural and the Japanese people are excellent in the literary arts. Hakuseki replied that to promote goodwill between Korea and Japan required nothing more than decency and confidence. Then Hakuseki asked them whether Sung Chui-ho (成翠虛) was alive and well. Sung Chui-ho had come to Japan in 1682 and met Hakuseki then. Unfortunately Chui-ho died that summer. Hakuseki asked them to transmit his regards to Chui-ho's two sons. All in attendance talked pleasantly and smiled at this meeting (*Koukan Hitsudan* 江関筆談).

In 1714 Hakuseki met Tei Junsoku (程順則, 1663-1734), who came from Ryukyu, and as a result Hakuseki wrote the record, *Nantoshi* (南島志). Junsoku went to China five



(plate 1)

times, at first as a student, next time as an interpreter, and last as a diplomat. He was a compiler of *Chuzan Shibunshyu* (中山詩文集, 1725). Before that, *Koushin Shisen* (皇清詩選, 1705) included about 70 selections of the Ryukyu poets chosen by Junsoku. Ryukyu sent students overseas to China constantly in order to learn Chinese civilization. Because Ryukyu is small island they tried to come and go abroad by ship. They considered their ships as bridges to all countries. (plate 1) This is in contrast to the Japanese isolation. Anyway these activities were the early fruits of a Republic of Letters in East Asia. East Asian people communicated with one another in classical Chinese. The classical Chinese was a common language as like Latin had been in medieval and Renaissance Europe.

This Republic of Letters in East Asia blossomed in the second half of the 18th century. At first I'd like to introduce the case of Kimura Kenkado (木村兼葭堂, 1736-1802, plate 2) and his friends. They conducted literary and cultural activity in the commercial metropolis of Osaka. Kimura Kenkado was a merchant producing and selling the brewed beverage, sake. At the same time he was a painter, poet, collector of a numerous books and also collector of specimens of rocks and ores. He was a Japanese encyclopedist.



(plate 2)



(plate 3)

He had many distinguished friends and enjoyed literary company once a month according to custom. The salon's leader was Daiten (大典, 1719-1801, plate 3), a Buddhist monk and eminent man of letters in his days. Daiten wrote that Kenkado maintained good rapport with his fellows. He at the same time observed decencies of etiquette. The rapport and decencies were central to Kenkado's way of life. These principles were based on *The Analects* of Confucius. 'Yu Tzu said, "Of the things brought about by the rite, harmony is the most valuable" (Book 1, 12). This is the essence of East Asian civilization. Kenkado's cultural characteristic was based on the tradition of Confucian, with



(plate 4)



(plate 5)

the later addition of western learning.

In May 1764 Sung De-jung (成大中, 1732-1809, plate 4), the secretary of the ambassador and a grandson of Sung Chui-ho, paid attention the Kenkado's activities, for Sung De-jung himself was a man of taste of classical literature. A man, we are aware, is known by the company he keeps. But Sung De-jung was prohibited from visiting Kenkado's house. So he asked Kenkado to represent their enjoyment of company together. This painting was called "An Elegant Party at Kenkado's Home" (兼葭雅集圖). Sung De-jun took the painting back to his country as a souvenir.

After going back Sung De-jung talked about Kenkado's activity to his friends. His friends had almost had an experience to visit to China as a member of delegation. They formed the school of practical science named North Learning (北学派). For example Hong Dae-yong (洪大容, 1731-83, plate 5) went to China in 1765 and looked for talented men. When he met such people, they got on well right away. Whether gentle or simple, it seemed as though they had been friends with him for a long time. He made friends with three persons at Hangchow (杭州) in China.

They promised to maintain a lasting friendship beyond the border. They shared their experience that they had good friends with each other. Hong Dae-yong mentioned that Hosoai Hansai (細合半齋, 1727-1803)'s talent, Daiten's fluent pen, and Kenkado's painting were splendid, and he could not find a Chinese literati comparable to Japanese literati in his 'Afterword to Japanese Poetry and Prose' (日東藻雅跋).

The next example is Lee Duk-moo (李德懋, 1741-93)'s documents. His Seihiroku (清脾錄) reads that poets make poems influenced by pure ether in the universe. Only one or two poets of thousand or myriad people can get this inspiration. It is very rare case. Lee Duk-moo took Kenkado as a close friend and wrote that Japanese literati were superior to theirs. He continued that they themselves would need to learn to

read Japanese writing. Lee Duk-moo also compiled *Tengai Chiki no Sho* (天涯知己書) from Hong Dae-yong's writing and communication in writing. In this book Lee Duk-moo referred to Kenkado's tastes for classical literature and elegance. He wrote that there was no comparison between Kenkado's lifestyle and theirs.

The third example is Park Je-ga (朴齐家, 1750-1839). He visited China in 1778 with Lee Duk-moo and wrote *Hokugakugi* (北学議). This writing is remarkably important to enlighten Korean people in those days. He wrote an introduction of his poem that he had no ability, but a companionship with intellectuals was his amusement. He listed his friend's names, including Lee Duk-moo, Park Chi-won (朴趾源, 1737-1805), Yu Deuk-gong (柳得恭, 1748-1807), and Hong Dae-yong, as well as Taki Kakudai (滝鶴台, 1709-73), Daiten, and Kimura Kenkado whom he hadn't seen. I show you his poem concerning Kenkado and Hosoi Hansai.

学半社中開講席	Hansai has a class at the Green school
蒹葭堂裏盛文儒	Many poets join in Kenkado's activity
風流何限成書記	Person of taste is not only Sung De-jun
万里携来雅集図	How splendid "An Elegant Party at the Kenkado's Home" is!

Thus Kenkado's topics always came up as an example in the North School. Kenkado probably could not imagine that Korean intellectuals mentioned him as a close friend. But I believe that they held communion with Kenkado and his fellows. It is just the Republic of Letters in East Asia.

The explanations show a commonality that Korean intellectuals had experience of traveling abroad. On the one hand the experience of travel made them open-minded people. On the other hand Kenkado collected much information from China to Europe. Korean thinkers identified themselves with Kenkado. It seems to me really miraculous communion.

They were contemporaries of Voltaire (1694-1778), Diderot (1713-84), Hume (1711-76) and Herder (1744-1803), etc. While Voltaire and Diderot were flourishing at their salons in Paris, Kimura Kenkado and his friends promoted cultural exchanges between Japan and Korea. Even though Korea and Japan were lacking in the existence of the mistress of the house or prompt modernization, besides seven centuries before Madame Pompadour (1721-64) we had the literary genius Lady Murasaki (973?-1014?) and Seisyonagon (965?-?), I have no doubt that East Asian polite society was polished and elegantly mature.

〔後記〕小論は2007年7月10日、南仏モンペリエ市で開かれた第12回国際18世紀学会 (XIIe Congrès international des Lumières) のラウンドテーブル「東アジアと啓蒙」で発表した原稿をそのまま印刷に付したものである。私の拙い英作文では言いたいことの半分も伝えられていないが、さりとていま日本語で書き改める時間も見出せず、また日本語を解しない外国の

方に対しては、不十分ながらもよいよりはましと考へて公表することにした。拙文が最小限、見苦しい間違いを免れているとすれば、英文チェックにオークランド大学のローレンス・マルソー氏を煩わしたお陰である。当日はパワーポイントで若干の図版を紹介したが、その一部は小論にも収録した。会場ではドイツのウルリケ・ツォイヒ氏 (Dr. Ulrike Zeuch) から文人活動の規模について質問が寄せられ、それがきっかけで面識を得た南ア・ステルボッシュ大学のシーグフリート・ハイヘン氏 (Prof. Siegfried Huigen) とは、オランダ東インド会社の活動が話題となって、日本側の情報を伝えるよう依頼されたりした。ところで小論の内容はご覧のとおり、朝鮮通信使を介して日韓双方の文人の営為を扱っているが、これは近年、韓国18世紀学会と共同研究を進めてきた成果の一部であり、また相前後して日韓美学研究会でも発表の機会を得て、通信使から始まって、やがて韓国文人の研究にまで領域が広がってきた結果でもある。私はこれまで辛うじて和漢比較の視点しか持ち合わせず、お隣の韓国には格別の関心を持つことなく馬齢を重ねて、遅蒔きながら六十の手習いで韓国儒学や文人研究に乗り出したところである。一旦始めてみると、新しい発見の連続に一人で興奮しているが、識者から見れば笑止の沙汰かもしれず、忌憚のないご批評を切にお願いする次第である。なおこの関心に連なるものとして、昨年「文人たちの宴『以德醉人，勝於以酒』—1763～4年の通信使行」(『前近代における東アジア三国の文化交流と表象—朝鮮通信使と燕行使を中心に—』国際日本文化研究センター第29回国際研究集会予稿論文集，2006年)を執筆し、今年5月4日には釜山広域市庁舎で開かれた朝鮮通信使国際学術シンポジウムで「別れの朝 1764年5月6日—朝鮮通信使と兼葭堂グループ」と題して発表した。それをもとに執筆した拙稿「通信使・北学派・兼葭堂」(『朝鮮通信使研究』第4号，朝鮮通信使学会，2007年)をも御参照いただければ幸いである。これら一連の研究と同じく、小論も平成18年度より継続して行っている科学研究費基盤研究(B)「啓蒙と東アジア：相互性のプリズムを通じた18世紀学の構築」(課題番号：18320025)によるものであることを付記し、この18世紀科学研究会の皆さんはじめ、日頃様々な研究協力を賜っているすべての方々に深甚の謝意を表す。なお、金城学院大学より海外における学会発表のための出張旅費の補助を受けたことを付記する。

[引用図版]

- (1) 『琉球使節展』図鑑 (豊川市二川宿本陣資料館，2001年)
- (2) 『木村兼葭堂 なにわ知の巨人』(思文閣出版，2003年)
- (3) 『日本の美術386 画家・文人たちの肖像』(至文堂，1998年)
- (4) 宮瀬竜門『東槎余談』(東北大学附属図書館蔵自筆本)
- (5) 『완당 평전 1』(학고재，2002年)