

SLIDE ONE

Good afternoon, everyone. It's an absolute pleasure to be back here, at UH. My thanks to Tokiko-san, John, and everyone else involved for this wonderful opportunity, both to help organize an exhibition of works on Ryukyu, and to take part in this symposium, getting to hear all the wonderful talks we have heard today.

In this presentation, I will be sharing research I undertook as part of my MA thesis in Art History, examining a handscroll painting, one of a pair now in the Sakamaki-Hawley Collection here at the UH Library, which depicts a procession associated with the 1710 Ryukyuan embassy to Edo. I will present an iconographic analysis of this procession scroll, focusing on the individuals depicted and their respective roles within the embassy, and touching upon the symbolic or discursive significance of several aspects of these processions as display.

As Yokoyama-sensei has already touched upon, the 18 Ryukyuan missions sent to the shogunal capital of Edo during the Tokugawa period served primarily a ritual function, offering on behalf of the King of Ryukyu his congratulations to a new shogun, or his gratitude for the shogun's recognition of a new king taking the throne in Ryukyu. The missions usually consisted of roughly 75-100 people, all members of the Ryukyuan scholar-bureaucrat aristocracy, though on several occasions missions were double this size, on occasions when there was both a new shogun and a new king around the same time. The 1710 mission which I will be discussing today was one such mission, consisting of 168 individuals, along with an escort of 4,147 samurai from Satsuma. This was one of the largest missions, second only to that in 1714.

## SLIDE TWO

Along with similar missions from Korea, which we see here in a Japanese painting circa 1748, and missions from the Dutch East India Company, who would travel up to Edo from Nagasaki, these Ryukyuan missions played an important discursive role in supporting the image of the shogunate's legitimacy and power, by demonstrating exotic, foreign peoples paying homage and tribute to the shogun; these missions also provided a rare opportunity for people of the Japanese archipelago, commoners, peasants, and samurai alike – particularly those who lived along the mission's travel route, or in Edo – an opportunity for them to see foreigners in the flesh. The Ryukyuan embassies typically spent roughly one month in Edo, being housed at one of the Satsuma *han* mansions, and visiting Edo castle two or three times; each time they traveled to or from the palace, the members of the embassy, accompanied by an entourage of samurai from Satsuma, formed a grand procession and paraded through the streets of Edo wearing colorful Chinese and Ryukyuan clothing, waving banners, and playing music. The spectacle was recorded in woodblock prints, books, and paintings by both commercial artists and painters in the service to the shogunate.

## SLIDE THREE

Roughly 100 handscroll paintings like this one, depicting the Ryukyuan processions, are extant and known today, while another hundred extant scrolls depict the corresponding Korean processions. In terms of woodblock printed books, which were quite inexpensive, and widely available, more than 90 distinct titles were produced over the course of the Edo period, each of which would have been published in print runs in the hundreds or even thousands.

A considerable amount of scholarship has been done in Japanese on these Ryukyuan processions, and on the various popular and official visual depictions of them, but while a few scholars have written in English about the political, symbolic, or discursive impacts of the processions, there remains extremely

little scholarship in English providing the details of, for example, the individual roles and titles of members of the Ryukyuan embassies. It is hoped that this paper, which I will draw upon in my PhD research, can serve as a first step towards remedying that.

The 1710 processions depicted in this Sakamaki-Hawley Collection scroll are of particular significance, as the 1710 mission set numerous precedents for all later missions, chiefly in terms of the organization of the processions, the style of garments worn by officials of certain ranks or posts, the style and number of banners carried, and other such symbolic and ceremonial elements. This may seem superficial, but in addition to providing a standard stylistic form by which we can describe and interpret the later processions, these stylistic visual elements were of profound discursive and symbolic importance, reflecting a performance of cultural identity, and signifying the level of prestige or power of the Ryukyuan ambassador – and by extension that of the entire kingdom.

#### SLIDE FOUR

This scroll from the Sakamaki-Hawley collection is one of a pair, each around 60 feet long, and both in ink and mineral colors on paper; while the first scroll, which will be the focus of my talk today, depicts the Ryukyuan members of the embassy, in procession, the second scroll depicts a procession of samurai – presumably the Satsuma escort accompanying the Ryukyuan procession – as well as, towards the end, larger, more detailed illustrations of Ryukyuan musical instruments and banners. This combination of a depiction of the procession, and then illustrations of Ryukyuan objects, is a very typical format seen in commercially distributed woodblock-printed books, and painted handscrolls.

#### SLIDE FIVE

Unfortunately, the Hawaii scrolls bear no signature or artist's seals, and nothing of their provenance is known prior to the pair coming into the possession of British book collector Frank Hawley, whose

collection was then acquired by the University following Hawley's death in 1961. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, therefore, to determine who painted this scroll, for whom, and for what purpose, or how often or in what contexts the scroll would have been unrolled.

One thing we can do, however, is examine the subjects depicted in the scroll, and through iconographic analysis, and the aid of previous research, gain some more detailed understandings of the form and content of these processions.

#### SLIDE SIX

The scroll opens, as you can see here, with an inscription, which can be translated, roughly, as

“7<sup>th</sup> year of Hôei [that is, 1710], 11<sup>th</sup> month, 18<sup>th</sup> day. Procession of both ambassadors of the King of Chûzan Ryûkyû up to the castle.”

#### SLIDE SEVEN

The majority of the procession as depicted in the scroll consists of individuals of importance mounted on horseback, or riding in a palanquin, each surrounded by a group of low-ranking samurai, porters, and Ryukyuan on foot; these figures of importance are interspersed with sections of solely samurai and porters, often marching single- or double-file. The procession is depicted in a single continuous stream of figures from the beginning of the scroll to the end. In describing and examining the painting, however, it is convenient to divide up the depiction by discussing each mounted (or palanquin-riding) figure, and the figures immediately accompanying them, as an individual group.

The first three mounted figures in the procession are clearly marked as samurai by the pair of swords at their waists, and the *kariginu* hunting jacket they each wear. Each of these first three figures is identified by an inscription above their head indicating their rank or title, and their name, as are all of the mounted or palanquin-riding figures throughout the remainder of the scroll. These three samurai are the only mounted figures in Japanese garb in the first of the two scrolls; the remainder of the mounted and palanquin-riding figures, in either Ryukyuan or Chinese court costume, are Ryukyuan officials, as indicated both by their dress, and by their distinctively Ryukyuan titles.

## SLIDE EIGHT

The first Ryukyuan figure we see is identified by an inscription above his head as the *gieisei*, the head of the procession's musicians and entertainers. He is mounted on horseback, and accompanied by a number of samurai in black and brown *haori*, porters in blue, and three other Ryukyuan.

The Ryukyuan figures can be easily distinguished by their long robes, which extend down to the ground, and by their long hair, worn up in buns, in contrast to the Japanese samurai custom of shaving much of the head.

Two of the samurai accompanying the *gieisei*, along with many more in later groups in the procession, are labeled here as *hokōshi* or *kachi-shi*, specifically designating these men as accompanying on foot. Throughout the scroll, the Ryukyuan figures are distinguished from the Japanese ones primarily by their clothing, hairstyle, and, though it may be a bit too small to see here, their facial hair.

Returning to the *gieisei*, the inscription tells us not only his role within the procession, that is, that he is serving as the *gieisei*; it also gives his aristocratic title, Sakumoto peechin. This is not a name, like the samurai names we saw in the previous slide, for example, Wakamatsu, or Hikobee; none of the Ryukyuan figures in the scroll are given by name – all are identified only by their titles. Sakumoto peechin might be loosely translated as “lord of Sakumoto,” with Sakumoto being a placename. Peechin, the Okinawan pronunciation of this term we see here written with the characters oya – kumo – ue, was a sort of middling rank within the Ryukyuan aristocracy. As we go through the scroll, we will see figures with different titles, including both figures of higher rank, and of lower rank.

This first image allows us opportunity to talk about quite a few elements which will appear time and again later in the scroll. First of all, in addition to his title, Sakumoto peechin, being clearly a Ryukyuan title, and not a Japanese one, we can *further* confirm this figure's identity as a Ryukyuan official, and not a samurai, because he is clearly not wearing samurai robes.

This particular style of hat, with the wings sticking out to the sides, is a standard form for a Chinese court cap from the Ming Dynasty. His robes, likewise, are in the style of a Ming Dynasty court official,

with an emblem, called a *buzi*, on his chest. Normally, the creature depicted on a Chinese official's emblem, and the color, were indications of the official's rank within the Ming court. As a Ryukyuan official, Sakumoto peechin does not hold a rank in the Chinese court, so it is unclear what design his emblem would bear. We will return later to this subject of Chinese court clothing.

#### SLIDE NINE

The *gieisei*, head of the street musicians, is followed, unsurprisingly, by a group of street musicians, who are preceded by a pair of flagbearers carrying banners that read "golden drum," and followed by a pair of banners bearing images of tigers. These two elements are quite standard in depictions of Ryukyuan processions – we always see tiger banners, and only rarely dragons or other creatures, and we always see the phrase "golden drum," never any other phrase on the banners, though I have yet to find an explanation of the meaning or symbolism of these particular elements.

#### SLIDE TEN

In the next section, we see a riderless horse identified as *kenjôba*, a horse to be presented, as a gift, or as tribute. Several of the smaller Ryukyuan islands, including Miyako and Yonaguni, have had their own horse breeds for centuries, and horses were a very common tribute item given by the Ryukyu Kingdom to both Japan and to China. Next in the procession is Makiya peechin, the *gyoshi*, meaning head groom or horse steward. He was the embassy's chief official in charge of overseeing all the horses.

#### SLIDE ELEVEN

The last major figure we come to before the Lead Ambassador is the *shokanshi*, or secretary, responsible for handling and managing all the diplomatic documents and other formal documents to be given and received by the ambassadors.

## SLIDE TWELVE

Now, finally, towards the very middle of the scroll, we come to Prince Misato, or Misato ôji, one of two lead ambassadors on this mission. He wears Ming court robes, and rides in a lavish, vermillion-painted Chinese-style sedan chair. He is preceded by a large red umbrella, and by the various other banners, musicians, and spears and halberds that we saw on previous slides, and is followed immediately by two more spears or halberds, and a folded-up umbrella.

Constantine Vaporis, in his recent book on the alternate attendance, or sankin kôtai, missions, noted that in the case of those processions, the number of spears or halberds, as well as of traveling chests and various other accoutrements, fit into a complex symbolic scheme indicating the rank, or level of prestige or power, of the daimyo. In these sankin kôtai processions, a member of the Tokugawa branch families would be immediately preceded and followed by a total of four spears – two in front, and two behind – while a very powerful or prominent *tozama*, or “outside” daimyo such as the Shimazu lord would be preceded by two spears, and followed by one spear, for a total of three. It is unclear exactly how this would apply in the case of the Ryukyuan processions, but I think it a safe bet that the number and arrangement of spears, halberds, and umbrellas here plays a similar function in symbolizing the power or prestige of Prince Misato, the Ryukyuan ambassador.

Now, the title of Prince, or *ôji* in Japanese, can be a bit misleading. In the Ryukyuan court hierarchy, there were two types of Princes. There were those directly related to the royal family, who placed somewhere in the line of succession, as in our typical usage of the word “prince.” But then a Ryukyuan “prince” could also be a high-ranking aristocrat who had been granted the title of prince, the highest title a court noble could hold, simply as a reward for meritorious service or the like.

#### SLIDE THIRTEEN

Following Prince Misato in the procession is Miyagusuku *peechin*, another *shokanshi*, or secretary.

#### SLIDE FOURTEEN

You'll remember that I noted that the 1710 mission was a double-mission. Thus, we have two lead envoys, two vice-envoys, or deputy ambassadors, and roughly twice as many members of the procession in total.

Prince Misato, who we saw a moment ago, was the lead ambassador for the mission congratulating Tokugawa Ienobu on becoming shogun; just behind him in the procession, we now have Prince Tomigusuku, the Lead Ambassador for the mission thanking the shogun for his recognition of Shō Eki as the new king of Ryukyu.

Let us talk for a moment about the style of court costume we see each of these figures wearing. All of the Ryukyuan officials we have seen so far on horseback or in a palanquin are wearing Chinese-style court costume, while all of those on foot (we can see a few gathered around the ambassador's sedan chair here) are wearing Ryukyuan court costume – a long flowing robe that extends down to the ground, and is simply wrapped around one's body and secured with a belt, not unlike a Japanese yukata. Some of these men on foot are wearing a turban-like Ryukyuan court cap called a hachimaki in Japanese. Like in the classical Japanese court, in the Ryukyuan court, the color of one's hachimaki was an indication of one's rank.

#### SLIDE FIFTEEN

Here we have some further depictions of Ryukyuan, and Ming Chinese, court garb, so you can get a sense of the differences in style. The figures on the left are wearing Ryukyuan court robes, and



*hachimaki* court caps, just like the figures on foot in the scroll. The figures on the right here are wearing Ming court costume, like the named, mounted, figures in the scroll.

The Chinese and Ryukyuan court costume, Ryukyuan music, banners, spears & halberds in a Ryukyuan or Chinese style, as well as the hairstyles, facial hair, and otherwise somewhat foreign appearance of the Ryukyuan people themselves, all combined to create an impression of foreignness, an impression of the exotic, for Japanese onlookers. The terms most often used in contemporary documents are 『唐の様』 (tou no you), or 唐の風 (kara no fuu), which can either mean “Chinese style,” or “exotic” in a broader sense; the more exotic Ryukyu appeared, the greater the prestige of both Satsuma, as the only daimyo domain to claim a foreign kingdom as a vassal, and of the shogunate, to which this foreign kingdom is paying tribute and homage.

Up until very recently, the scholarship, both in Japanese and in English, has indicated that this foreignness or exoticness of the processions was very deliberately and artificially constructed by the Satsuma authorities, via an edict declared in 1709. The edict is cited as specifying particular types or styles of garments, weapons, and other accoutrements to carry, and that, in the words of one historian, quote, “their equipment, above all, must be of the sort used in a foreign court, so that they cannot be mistaken for Japanese.” In a recent essay, however, Tomiyama Kazuyuki pointed out that this phrasing does not actually appear in the 1709 edict, which in the conventional scholarly narrative had a profound impact on the 1710 mission, and by extension, all later missions, resulting in these missions being more a fiction created to serve Satsuma’s interests than an authentic representation of Ryukyuan style or cultural identity. He traces the misinterpretation of the document to an item of pre-war scholarship which all of these later works cite or draw upon, whether directly or indirectly.

As the standard interpretation colors our understanding of the Ryukyuan missions as being chiefly a product of the domineering, oppressive thumb of Satsuma control, I think this point of revision a rather important one, recovering a degree of Ryukyuan agency in their self-representation in these processions.

We are now roughly halfway through the scroll; let us continue to think about these greater, broader discursive issues, as we return to the iconographic description of the figures depicted in this scroll.

#### SLIDE SIXTEEN

We saw the two Lead Envoys, or *seishi*, riding in lavish, vermillion-red Chinese-style sedan chairs in which they are elevated above the surrounding figures on foot. Now we see Yoza ueekata, the second of two Vice-Envoys, or Deputy Ambassadors, *fukushi* in Japanese, riding in a Japanese-style palanquin, a *kago*, which hangs below the carrying poles, and which is much plainer in color. This makes a certain degree of sense – as an *ueekata*, he holds a lower court rank than the Lead Envoys, Princes Misato and Tomigusuku, and, of course, he is also Vice-Envoy, not Lead Envoy. This arrangement, that Lead Envoys were always Princes, and that Vice Envoys were always ueekata –was standard for all subsequent missions as well.

It is curious, however, given the preponderance of Chinese and Ryukyuan-style elements in these processions – banners, costume, etc. – that the two *fukushi* should be seen riding in very clearly Japanese-style palanquins.

#### SLIDE SEVENTEEN

Daimyo, in their sankin kotai journeys to and from Edo, most often rode a horse, retreating to a palanquin only when it rained, or in certain other circumstances, and even then, Constantine Vaporis tells us, quote “not all lords were anxious to use one even in inclement weather.” This would seem to

suggest that riding on horseback was, at least in the sankin kotai context, a position of prestige, more so than the *kago*, or at least, a more comfortable or more enjoyable ride.

The reverse would appear to be true in the case of the Ryukyuan processions, given that these higher-ranking *ueekata* are riding in *kago*, while the lower-ranking *peechin* we saw earlier, such as the *gieisei* master musician, and the *shokanshi* secretaries, were on horseback. I hope to look into these questions of symbolism of rank or prestige in the course of my PhD research.

#### SLIDE EIGHTEEN

Moving forward, we encounter the two *sangikan*, Aragusuku *peechin* and Shikenbaru *peechin*, both wearing Ming-style court costume, and mounted on horseback. The *sangikan* were aides to the Vice-Envoys, the *fukushi*, and played a role in overseeing all ceremonial activities of the missions. And, since these missions were, primarily, ceremonial endeavors, this was of particular importance. While in Edo, the ambassadors usually had two or three audiences with the shogun, during which they presented gifts, and offered formal greetings. All of the exchanges and interactions between the envoys and the shogun were highly formalized, and served a ritual purpose of representing, if not the Ryukyu Kingdom's "submission" per se, then the relationship between the kingdom and the shogunate, or between the king and the shogun, however we may wish to term, or characterize, that relationship. All of this was not merely for show, or, rather, it was, but the show, the ritual performance itself, was of great importance in Tokugawa political discourse.

#### SLIDE NINETEEN

Towards the end of the procession, we see the *gakusei*, the head of the embassy's chamber musicians and performers. You'll remember that towards the very beginning of the procession, we saw a similar figure, the *gieisei*, who was the head of the street musicians. On a number of occasions while in Edo,

musicians and dancers overseen by the *gakusei* performed indoors for the shogun at Edo castle, and for other prominent figures at either their homes, or at the Satsuma domain mansion.

#### SLIDE TWENTY

The *gakusei* is followed by eight *gakudôji*, young men roughly 15-18 years of age, who were musicians and dancers. All eight *gakudôji* are of *satunushi* rank, which was a rank below *peechin*, and close to the lowest of the aristocratic ranks. These young men, when they are a bit older, however, have the potential to be promoted to *peechin*.

Note that unlike all the previous mounted, named, officials we have seen, who were wearing Ming court costume, the *gakudôji* wear Ryukyuan-style robes, have their very long hair tied up in buns on top of their heads, and wear golden hairpins, in the Ryukyuan fashion.

#### SLIDE TWENTY ONE

The final group of figures are fourteen officials called *shisan*, who were responsible for taking care of a variety of errands or tasks for the Lead and Deputy Envoys. Unlike the officials in Ming costume we've seen previously, the *shisan* are wearing Ryukyuan robes and *hachimaki* court caps.

One of the *shisan* on this 1710 mission is of particular note. Tamagusuku Chôkun, identified as Tamagusuku *peechin* on the scroll, was the founder of the Okinawan dance-drama form known as *kumi odori*, or *kumi udui* in Okinawan, and as such, he is today one of the most prominent and celebrated figures in the history of Okinawan performing arts.

## SLIDE TWENTY TWO

And with that, we finally come to the end of the scroll, the first of two, if you'll remember. The seal we see here at the end of the scroll is the Hôrei Bunko seal of collector Frank Hawley, which brings us back around to the beginning of my presentation.

## SLIDE TWENTY THREE

My initial intention in tackling this topic, in examining this scroll, was to connect it into an argument, resting on theories of media discourse, about how the people of early modern Japan depicted Ryukyu, how they viewed Ryukyu, and how they understood or misunderstood Ryukyu. For popularly published materials, such as single-sheet ukiyo-e woodblock prints, and printed books, this was a bit easier.

However, the lack of information on the artist or the provenance of this piece, whether it was created as an official record of the event, in visual form, for the shogunate, whether as a commissioned work for a particularly interested private party, or whether as a more popular, commercial work, albeit assuredly an expensive one, has made it difficult to attempt to tackle how this object would have functioned discursively. Indeed, though existing scholarship indicates that many scrolls such as these were created for such official, and non-official, purposes, of all the scrolls I have read about, or seen reproductions of, for example in exhibition catalogs, none have been explicitly described as being known to have been created in a particular context, or for a particular purpose.

I hope that through further research, I might be able to happen upon some great discovery that sheds light on these matters. In the meantime, however, I am afraid I have little to offer by way of analytical or interpretive conclusions. Any suggestions you may have would be most appreciated.

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