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Source: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 136, No. 2 (April—June 2016), pp. 343-369

Published by: American Oriental Society

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7817/jameroriesoci.136.2.343

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Poetry and Diplomacy in Early Heian Japan: The Embassy of Wang Hyory m from Parhae to the K nin Court

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This paper examines the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Parhae as it developed over the eighth and early ninth centuries, with particular attention paid to the literary activities surrounding the reception of an embassy dispatched from Parhae to Japan in the year 814. Led by the noted poet Wang Hyory m, the embassy was welcomed enthusiastically by Japan's Emperor Saga, a sovereign for whom achievements in the realm of statecraft were linked closely to achievements in the realm of poetry. Of the eight poems by Parhae literati that survive in Japanese collections, a full six come from Wang Hyory m's embassy and are included in the second of Saga's royal anthologies, Bunka sh reish . No other foreign embassy is better represented in sources of the era, and none speaks with greater clarity to the nexus between diplomacy, poetry, and court politics that obtained during Emperor Saga's reign. This study complements previous scholarship concerning the function of poetry in the diplomatic process by explicating the formal properties of poems composed and exchanged at diplomatic encounters, and it contributes to the growing body of work in the eld of Japanese kanshibun (poetry and prose in classical Chinese) by foregrounding the role of diplomacy in Emperor Saga's literary legacy building.

INTRODUCTION

Between the years 727 and 926, Japan maintained diplomatic relations with the northeast Asian state of Parhae. The relationship was a productive one, and it was reasonably bilateral: Japan sent thirteen o cial embassies to Parhae and Parhae sent thirty-four to Japan. These embassies were important vectors of high culture, as they invariably included skilled literati eager to display their erudition to foreign audiences. In this respect they contributed to the development and dissemination of an East Asian macroculture, membership in which was de ned by a shared familiarity with the Chinese literary and intellectual tradition. This essay traces the history of one embassy in particular, dispatched from Parhae to the court of Emperor Saga in the year 814, and tailored adroitly by Parhae's King Hui to suit conditions on the archipelago as he understood them. In Japan, this was a time of extraordinary e orescence in Chinese literary studies: in 814, the rst imperially commissioned anthology of poetry in Chinese (kanshi) was compiled, followed by another in 818, and a third in 827. Poetry in Chinese was not simply a gentlemanly accomplishment but an important literary medium, rising to such popularity that the age of Saga's salon has been seen in modern times as belonging to a veritable "dark age" of Japanese culture, a century-long period when vernacular literary media were overshadowed by Chinese forms such as the shi and the fu .[1] Though nearly all of the authors represented in Saga's imperial anthologies are

1. The phrase ankoku jidai (dark age) was used most famously in this context by Kojima Noriyuki in his multi-volume study Kokuf ankoku jidai no bungaku (Tokyo: Hanawa Shob , 1968).

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Japanese, ve poems by the leader of the 814 delegation, the renowned statesman and poet Wang Hyory m , are included in the second anthology, Bunka sh reish ; taken alongside compositions by several of his Japanese contemporaries, they allow an edifying glimpse into the ways in which poetry gured in the diplomatic process. In all, eight poems known to have been composed by Parhae literati survive in Japanese collections, and a full six come from Wang Hyory m's embassy. No other foreign embassy is better represented in classical Japanese sources, and none speaks with greater clarity to the particular nexus between diplomacy, Chinese poetry, and domestic politics that obtained in Japan during Emperor Saga's reign.

This essay has two primary goals, the rst and most basic of which is to suggest in broad terms the importance of relations with Parhae to Japanese culture and court politics during the Nara (710–94) and early Heian (794–1185) periods. Sustained diplomatic contact with Parhae was bene cial to Japan in multiple and overlapping ways. Though costly to host and fete, embassies brought goods for trade or sale that were not available domestically, and they conveyed valuable information to the Japanese court regarding recent developments on the continent. This last contribution was made all the more signi cant by Japan's increasing diplomatic estrangement from China over the course of the ninth century.[2] Moreover, missions from Parhae were a continual source of cultural enrichment for Japanese elites looking to sample recent trends in Chinese poetry. Wang Hyory m's embassy looms especially large in this regard, as one of the ambassador's verses appears to draw directly on the work of Bai Juyi (772–846), making it about as modern as a poem could be in 814. The second goal of the paper is to explicate the formal qualities of diplomatic verse through close readings of poems composed at various stages of the diplomatic encounter, beginning with the royal banquet held to welcome Ambassador Wang and his party to the capital city of Heian, and concluding with the delegation's return to Izumo, the coastal province from which they would make their eventual voyage home. While the phenomenon of poetic exchange between Parhae emissaries and their Japanese hosts has been widely noted,[3] this study seeks to augment existing scholarship by calling speci c attention to the linguistic and thematic properties of individual verses and examining what those properties reveal about diplomacy, Japanese court politics, and the reception of Chinese poetry by Emperor Saga and his literary circle.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH PARHAE DURING THE NARA PERIOD (710–94)

In the fall of 727, during the reign of Emperor Sh mu , the newly founded state of Parhae dispatched its rst diplomatic mission to Japan. The mission was small, consisting of a single ship of twenty-four delegates led by Ambassador Ko In i and Vice Ambassador D k Chu .[4] Though ultimately successful in establishing relations with the Nara

2. See Robert Borgen, Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 249–50.

3. See, for instance, Niizuma Toshihisa , Bokkaikokushi oyobi Nihon to no kokk shi no kenky (Tokyo: Gakujutsu shuppankai, 1969), 350–80; Borgen, Sugawara no Michizane, 228–53; Ueda Takeshi , Bokkaishi no kenky : Nihonkai o watatta shisetsutachi no kiseki (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2002), 789–904.

4. Functional terms such as "ambassador" ( ) and "vice ambassador" ( ) were used frequently in Japanese accounts of Parhae embassies, appearing for instance in the mid-Heian legal text Engi shiki , and they remain the appellations of choice in modern scholarship. The documents carried by Parhae delegates, however, typically used more formal titles speci c to positions within Parhae's civil or military leadership. Such titles for Ko In i and D k Chu may be seen below in the state letter they presented to Emperor Sh mu.

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court, the voyage was marked initially by tragedy, as sixteen members of the party, including the ambassador and vice ambassador, were reportedly killed by Emishi tribesmen when their vessel made landfall in northern Honshu.[5] Yet despite the staggering loss of two-thirds of its original complement, the delegation pressed on, nally reaching the Japanese province of Dewa on the twenty- rst day of the ninth month (October 10).[6]

At this point, leadership of the party had apparently fallen to a lower-ranking o cer named Ko Ched k . He bore the title of sury ng , which seems to have denoted a position of local municipal leadership in Parhae communities, though the precise meaning of the term remains the subject of much debate.[7] Three months later, Ko and his compatriots arrived in the capital city of Nara and were received at Sh mu's court.[8] There they presented a formal communiqué or "state letter" ( ) from the ruler of Parhae, Tae Muye (r. 719–37), an ambitious sovereign also known to history by his royal appellation, King Mu . This document marked the beginning of a diplomatic relationship that would last for the next two hundred years. It is gracious towards the Nara imperium but not obsequious, and it appeals deftly to Japanese sensibilities in its invocation of Kogury and Puy , terms redolent of geopolitical antiquity in the Japanese historical imagination:

> I, Muye, do respectfully address your majesty: Though mountains and rivers stand between our borders and our native lands are not the same, I have heard from afar of your virtuous polity and my admiration has grown ever stronger. It is my understanding that your majesty's Heavenly Court has received the mandate and laid the foundations of rule in the realm of Japan [ ].[9] Prospering generation after generation, the glory of your polity extends a hundred ages beyond the time of your forefathers.
>
> With due humility, I preside over a large state [ ], and I have in my charge various frontier territories [ ].[10] I have reclaimed lands once occupied by Kogury , and I have preserved

5. Shoku Nihongi , ed. Aoki Kazuo , Inaoka K ji , Sasayama Haruo , and Shirafuji Noriyuki , Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei (SNKBT), vols. 12–14 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990) (hereafter SN) Jinki 4.12.29 (February 13, 728). For more on In i's delegation see Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 241–47. Ueda has taken the unusual (but not unwelcome) step of providing exact dates in the Gregorian calendar wherever possible. However, because some events treated in this paper are not dated in Ueda, I have relied instead on Julian equivalents as given in Uchida Masao's Nihon rekijitsu genten (Tokyo: Y zankaku, 1975) in order to maintain consistency. These di er slightly from Ueda's proleptic Gregorian dates, but generally by just a few days.

6. SN Jinki 4.9.21 (October 10, 727).

7. See Kim Tong-Woo, "The System of Local Administration in Parhae," in A New History of Parhae, tr. John Duncan (Boston: Global Oriental, 2012), 49–52, and Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 123–25. Kim styles the sury ng "local strongmen." As members of diplomatic embassies, I will style them "sta supervisors," following Charles Hucker's rendition of the Chinese o cials known as shoulingguan .

8. SN Jinki 4.12.20 (February 4, 728).

9. The term , "mandate," in the phrase has been interpreted as referring to the royal mandate of the emperor of China. See SN 13: 188. If this is accurate, then King Mu's letter places the Japanese imperium squarely within a Sinocentric order in which recognition by the Chinese court constituted a key element in the establishment of legitimate, internationally recognizable sovereignty. I have left the translation ambiguous, however, as the text itself does not seem to compel such a reading, and the notion of a transcendent "mandate" received from Heaven was a longstanding trope in Chinese political thought. It is worth noting that although modern histories of early Japan are often at pains to highlight the incipient "nationalism" re ected in Japanese leaders' assertions of parity with the Chinese emperor, there is no evidence that Sh mu took particular umbrage at King Mu's characterization of his polity, or at the appellation , "great king," as opposed to the preferred , "heavenly sovereign," or, more conventionally, "emperor."

10. The usual sense of is "several states" or "multiple princedoms." The translation here follows Shoku Nihongi, ed. Aoki et al., 188. Alternatively, Nakano Takayuki understands the phrase to mean "serving as ruler of one of the many states enfeo ed by the Tang." See Suzuki Yasutami et al., eds., Yakuch Nihon kodai no gaik monjo (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2014), 38.

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the old ways of the Puy . Yet because you and I are separated by vast distances, with sea and rivers stretching endlessly between us, information has not owed smoothly, and we remain cut o from news of each other's fortunes and misfortunes. Seeking to draw nearer your virtue and establish ties of support so as to ful ll the promise of our history, I have sent envoys to pursue the commencement of relations from this day forth.

I have respectfully dispatched twenty-four men, including the Ny ngw n commandant Ko In i; the commander of mobile forces for the Intrepid Garrison Dok Chu; and the adjunct commander Sa Hang, to give my missive to you and to o er as gifts three hundred sable furs.[11] Though these products of my country are poor, I o er them as an expression of my deep sincerity. Furs are by no means precious, and I am ashamed to think of the laughter such a tri ing gift must provoke.[12] My resources are limited and there is no opportunity to meet face-to-face. But let us carry on communication periodically, cementing forever a relationship of trust and goodwill.[13]

It is generally accepted that King Mu's diplomatic overture was motivated principally by the desire to secure a strategic ally and trading partner.[14] Parhae's founder, Tae Choy ng (King Ko , r. 699–718), was a former Kogury general who rose to prominence as the leader of a multi-ethnic coalition based in what today are the Jilin and Liaoning regions of northeastern China.[15] For several years he resisted pressure from the Tang, nally declaring himself ruler of a new polity called Chinguk in 698. While the Tang leadership must have viewed these developments with apprehension, they also evidently perceived an opportunity to bring a peaceable end to friction on their eastern border. Opting for a strategy of political inclusion, they formally enfeo ed Choy ng in 713 as "king" ( ) of the Bohai (Parhae) Commandery ( ) and military commander ( ) of Huhan Prefecture ( ).[16] Much of this territory covered areas that had formerly been part of Kogury , and although the region was home to many di erent peoples, it was Kogury 's historical legacy that seems to have most strongly informed the sense of cultural identity shared by Parhae elites.[17] With Choy ng's enfeo ment, the short-lived state of Chinguk came to an end; in its place stood the kingdom of Parhae, a minor satellite that did not possess formal statehood in the eyes of the Tang empire, but one that was determined nonetheless to pursue an independent foreign policy.

Nominal incorporation into the Chinese world order, however, did little to ameliorate the dangers the edgling kingdom faced. Relations with Tang China and Malgal tribes to

11. Translations of Chinese-style military and civic titles are adapted from Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of O cial Titles in Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1985).

12. Furs were in fact quite precious and highly sought after in trade, a fact of which the king would have been well aware. Remarks such as these are conventional expressions of humility, common in documents of this sort.

13. SN Jinki 5.1.17 (March 3, 728).

14. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 65 and 750–51; Niizuma, Bokkaikokushi, 312.

15. See Lim Sang-sun (Im Sangs n), "The Founding and Naming of Parhae," in John Duncan, A New History of Parhae, 4–14, and Sakayori Masashi , Bokkai to kodai no Nihon (Tokyo: Azekura Shoin, 2001), 103.

16. See Xin Tang shu , biography no. 144, "Northern Barbarians" ( ). Chinese administrative units, along with civil and military titles, may be found in Hucker, A Dictionary of O cial Titles.

17. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 164–65.

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the north were di cult. Exacerbating the situation was the threat posed by the powerful kingdom of Silla, which bordered Parhae to the south. Choy ng's eldest son and successor, the aforementioned Tae Muye, was not satis ed with what he viewed as a precarious status quo. He responded by sending ambitious military expeditions in both directions, reclaiming more territory of old Kogury and gaining relative suzerainty over several Malgal tribes.[18] Like his father, Muye was a capable commander and strategist, but his program of territorial expansion engendered con icts with China, Silla, and the H ksu Malgals ( ), a strong conglomerate tribe that had successfully resisted Parhae dominion. Under Chinese leadership, they formed a tripartite alliance with the aim of isolating Parhae internationally; it was this that seems to have provided the most proximate incentive for Muye to actively seek political and economic ties with Japan.[19]

Between 727 and 926 (in which year Parhae fell to the Khitans), thirty-four o cial delegations were dispatched to Japan and the Japanese court sent thirteen to Parhae.[20] Outside of these o cial embassies, Japanese sources also record other instances of contact between the two countries. For example, early in the year 747, a large company of 1,100 people comprised of "denizens of Parhae" ( ) and Ch' l-li Malgals made landfall in Dewa; Japanese authorities apparently provided clothing and provisions but did not permit the group to remain in Japan.[21] Little is known about this remarkable episode, though some scholars believe it to have been an attempt at mass migration.[22] Whatever the case, it was certainly not an o cial state visit. Yet even delegations dispatched on o cial business by the government of Parhae were not always received at the Japanese court. Some were turned away because the Japanese deemed their state letter to be inappropriately worded or impertinent in tone, a problem about which more will be said below. Other times, factors such as logistics, expense, and disease played a part. Late in the year 823, for instance, a mission landed in Kaga Province only to be stymied rst by the winter weather, as heavy snows had rendered impassible the roads linking Kaga to the capital, then rebu ed two months later by order of Emperor Junna (r. 823–33), whose royal edict cited the excessive burden the visit would place upon a peasantry ( ) already su ering from poor harvests and a recent epidemic ( ).[23] In all, at least nine of the thirty-four o cial delegations were refused permission to enter the capital. Compounding the inherent risks posed by a voyage across open ocean was thus the possibility that a delegation might be denied the ability even to meet with Japanese leaders.

In light of the substantial cost of out tting a mission, not to mention the very real chance that the lives of well-educated, high-status state representatives might be lost along the way, one must pause to consider the factors that made such a risky venture attractive. Evidence suggests that these factors evolved over time in accordance with changes in Parhae's political status vis-à-vis Tang China, Silla, and various Malgal groups. During the relatively brief initial phase of diplomatic contact, which began in 727 and lasted about thirty- ve years,

18. Ibid., 63.
19. Ibid., 65.
20. Sakayori, Bokkai to kodai no Nihon, 239.
21. SN Tenpy 18.12.10 (January 25, 747).
22. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 264.
23. See Ruij kokushi , book 194, "shuzoku: Bokkai" , Tench 1.2.3 (March 7, 824). This particular document is written in a script known as senmy -gaki, which is not readily intelligible to a reader unfamiliar with vernacular Japanese, suggesting that it was meant for the provincial authorities in Kaga, not the leaders of the Parhae delegation. Evidently, a formal Japanese state letter was also provided (Tench 1.5.15), but it has not been preserved.

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Parhae's primary objective in cultivating ties with Japan was to form a strategic alliance that would enable her leaders to better manage the fraught security environment on the continent. The goal was a sensible one, though it required their pro-forma submission to diplomatic conventions that left little room for non-hierarchical interaction: to the Japanese court, Parhae's formal position could not but be that of a tribute-bearing vassal state. Yet if Japan's leaders were, as Robert Borgen observed, happy with such an arrangement for the support it provided to their own ideology of cultural centrality, some in the Nara government were also eager to explore the tactical possibilities o ered by an alliance with a mainland partner.[24] That such an alliance might even involve direct military cooperation is revealed by an audacious scheme apparently masterminded by the in uential Japanese courtier Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706–764). In the spring of 758, Nakamaro had the emissary Ono no Tamori dispatched to Parhae with the aim of eliciting support for a joint military strike against Silla.[25] Throughout the 750s, Parhae and Japan had drawn closer to one another as each country's relations with Silla deteriorated, and it is not di cult to imagine Nakamaro's plan nding a modicum of sympathy among many in Parhae's government. For its part, Silla was su ciently concerned with the threat posed by its northern neighbor to construct six fortresses along the P'ae (Taedong) River in 762.[26] Tamori returned to Japan in the autumn of 758 in the company of a Parhae delegation, and while it is not known what the Parhae king thought of Nakamaro's plan, the fact that Tamori's report is noticeably silent on the matter suggests that it failed to win support.[27]

Regardless, ensuing political developments in both Parhae and Japan ensured that it would never be put into action. In 762 the Tang government raised the formal status of Parhae's kings, o cially recognizing them as rulers of a state ( ) as opposed to a commandery ( ), thereby bringing their rank in Chinese terms up to the same level as that enjoyed by the kings of Silla.[28] The move evidently assuaged at least some of the frustrations of the Parhae leadership, and its timing indicates that the Chinese were well aware of recent tensions between Silla and Parhae and wanted to avoid the outbreak of war. In Japan, meanwhile, Nakamaro's political fortunes took a turn for the worse following the death of Empress Dowager K my in 760. Over the next four years, his relationship with the former empress K ken (r. 749–58), newly resurgent after K my 's death, would prove particularly problematic. Although K ken had formally abdicated the throne in 758 in favor of the pliant Prince i , she remained extremely in uential, famously declaring in 762 that she would handle punishments and other "important matters of state" while the titular emperor would handle "traditional ceremonies" and "minor matters."[29] Friction between K ken and Nakamaro continued to intensify, nally coming to a head in 764 when Nakamaro raised forces for a rebellion. It failed, and he was executed along with his wife, children, and thirty-four mem-

24. See Borgen, Sugawara no Michizane, 230.

25. Details may be found in Hayakawa Sh hachi , Nihon no Rekishi , vol. 4, "Ritsury Kokka" (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1974), 318–23, and Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 750–57.

26. See Lee Sungsi , Kodai higashi Ajia no minzoku to kokka (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1998), 412.

27. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 273–74.

28. Lee, Kodai higashi Ajia, 413; Sakayori, Bokkai to kodai no Nihon, 68. The term guo , as de ned by Hucker, indicated "any area in or outside China that had a de ned, reasonably autonomous political identity, even if it were only nominal; e.g. a Princedom (wang-kuo [ ]), a Marquisate (hou-kuo [ ])." "State" is therefore an appropriate translation for guo when applied to such an entity outside China. Moreover, because the term "kingdom" more accurately captures the way in which Parhae's rulers conceived of their own polity, it will be used instead of "princedom" throughout this essay.

29. SN Tenpy H ji 6.5.28 (June 24, 762).

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bers of his extended family.[30] With Nakamaro dead and Parhae enjoying newfound status vis-à-vis Tang China, whatever support that might have existed for prosecuting a preemptive war against Silla quickly evaporated. Still, Ono no Tamori's journey was not without consequence, for he is traditionally credited with bringing the Japanese court its rst news of the An-Shi Rebellion , a signal event in the history of the Tang Dynasty.[31] His mission testi es not only to the singular ambition of Fujiwara no Nakamaro, but also, and more signi cantly, to the broader potential for bilateral cooperation between Japan and Parhae in the pursuit of shared geopolitical goals.

According to Lee Sungsi, the diplomatic missions Parhae dispatched to Japan prior to 762 are best seen as state-building exercises undertaken at a time when Parhae was both militarily vulnerable and in competition with multiple Malgal tribes for Chinese recognition.[32] By the late eighth century, Parhae was more secure militarily and had seemingly eclipsed in political clout all Malgal groups save possibly the H ksu; from this time onward, economic rather than strategic interests became the primary impetus for missions to Japan.[33] This development did not go unnoticed at the Heian court, and it occasionally provoked consternation from prominent nobles. Emperor Junna's decision to rebu the aforementioned 823 embassy was likely the result of complaints from gures such as the scholar Fujiwara no Otsugu, who upon the arrival of the next embassy in 826 submitted a strongly worded memorial in which he criticized recent Parhae missions as being nothing more than "commercial trips" ( ) and decried the expense of their accommodation.[34] However, such concern for the sc or the prerogatives of the central government were far from universal. Edicts issued by the Japanese court banning private trade with foreign mariners suggest that foreign goods were persistently sought by Japanese aristocrats and provincial notables. It is thus conceivable that even when a mission from Parhae was not granted access to the capital, private transactions might have provided a means of turning a pro t, or at least of recouping the cost of the voyage. Trade of this sort was ongoing long before the establishment of formal relations between Parhae and Japan, as archaeological evidence attests to seventh-century contact between inhabitants of the archipelago and communities living on the northeast Asian coast and around the lower reaches of the Amur River.[35] Still, for eighth- and ninth-century Parhae delegations, the most lucrative commercial opportunities were not likely to be found in coastal trading or small-scale extralegal transactions alone, which would not have o ered maximum access to value-added luxury items or objects of cultural signi cance. Among the most sought after products were silk, silk oss, and pongee; woven textiles and brocades; camellia oil; varnish; and crystal prayer beads.[36] Access to such items could only be fully exploited through contact with Japanese elites in the capital, meaning that making formal

30. SN Tenpy H ji 8.9.18 (October 17, 764).

31. The An-Shi or An Lushan Rebellion lasted from 755 to 763. The turmoil it caused seriously diminished the ability of Tang leaders to intervene elsewhere militarily, making this time an ideal window of opportunity for action against Silla. Sakayori thus sensibly suggests that Nakamaro was already aware of the rebellion before Tamori was dispatched, but Ueda rejects this entirely. Yet even if Sakayori's hypothesis is incorrect, it is still possible that news of the An-Shi Rebellion helped accelerate developments that were already underway. Given that the rst overt reference to a plan to attack Silla dates from 759 (see SN Tenpy H ji 3.9.19), it is quite plausible that the news helped crystallize Nakamaro's ambition into a more speci c policy proposal.

32. Lee, Kodai higashi Ajia, 413–15 and 423–24.

33. Ibid., 414–15.

34. Ruij kokushi, book 194, "shuzoku: Bokkai," Tench 3.3.1 (April 11, 826).

35. Sakayori, Bokkai to kodai no Nihon, 120.

36. Common goods carried by the Parhae embassies included sable, tiger, bear, and seal pelts; ginseng; and honey. See Sakayori, Bokkai to kodai no Nihon, 122–23.

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diplomatic contact was always a top priority, irrespective of whether the ultimate aims of the mission were strategic, commercial, or a combination of both.

Central to the process of diplomacy was the presentation of the o cial state letter, together with a suitable cache of gifts. When brought by delegations from Parhae, these gifts were formally regarded by the Japanese court as tribute; again, this distinction speaks more to the conventions of premodern East Asian diplomacy than to Parhae's actual position vis-à-vis Japan.[37] Once a delegation had been received, it was usual for its members to participate in banquets and other social gatherings. These events generally featured the composition and exchange of poems in Chinese, an endeavor that served multiple purposes in the context of diplomatic interaction. As observed by Murai Sh suke, the status of written Chinese as an East Asian lingua franca enabled persons of di erent native tongues to cement personal ties and allowed governments to demonstrate the cultural achievements of their countries.[38] As both a vector of high culture and a social lubricant, poetic exchange lay at the heart of the entire diplomatic process, in uencing the prospects for gain on both the strategic and the economic fronts, and providing an organizing ritual by which the diplomatic encounter could be memorialized and remembered. Moreover, the relationship between diplomacy and poetics was a symbiotic one, as international contact provided an invaluable opportunity to share new aesthetic trends, including the developments in prosody distinguishing that most iconic of Tang literary forms, the regulated verse.

The poems written during the visits of Parhae delegations are not the earliest examples of Chinese poetry exchanged at diplomatic gatherings in Japan. Preserved in the mid eighth-century collection Kaif s , Japan's oldest extant kanshi anthology, are several poems composed at banquets held for a Sillan delegation at the residence of Prince Nagaya .[39] All of these poems, however, are of Japanese provenance; whatever compositions the Sillans themselves produced on this occasion were not included in the anthology. This makes the verses composed by Parhae delegates and preserved in later anthologies uniquely valuable to the study of Japan's diplomatic contacts in the eighth and ninth centuries. Over the course of the Nara Period, twelve o cial missions were dispatched from Parhae to Japan, but poems remain from just one of these: the embassy of 758, led by Yang S nggy ng , who was accompanying the aforementioned Ono no Tamori back to Japan.[40] In early March of 759, approximately one month after arriving in Nara, ambassador Yang and his coterie were entertained at the Tamuradai (or Tamura no Tei), Fujiwara no Nakamaro's private estate.[41] It is recorded that a troupe of dancing girls, along with a large quantity of silk oss, were presented to the ambassador as gifts; modern scholars surmise that Nakamaro used this occasion to discuss his proposal to attack Silla, which Tamori was supposed to have pitched

37. While it is not possible to accurately ascertain the strength of Parhae's position solely through Japanese documentary sources (which are all that remain), I am inclined to agree with Robert Borgen's supposition that Japanese emissaries to Parhae "perhaps followed the practice of their compatriots who in China discreetly adopted a more humble posture than they were willing to admit when they returned home" (Sugawara no Michizane, 230).

38. See Murai Sh suke , "Poetry as Diplomatic Art in Premodern East Asia," tr. Haruko Wakabayashi, in Tools of Culture: Japan's Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000s–1500s, ed. Andrew Edmund Goble, Kenneth R. Robinson, and Haruko Wakabayashi (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2009), 49–69. Murai's focus is on later diplomatic encounters, but his point holds for the period under consideration here.

39. These are nos. 52, 60, 62, 63, 65, 68, 71, 77, 79, and 86. For more on this episode, see H. Mack Horton, "Literary Diplomacy in Early Nara: Prince Nagaya and the Verses for Envoys from Silla in Kaif s ," China and Beyond in the Medieval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections, ed. Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt (New York: Cambria Press, 2014), 261–77.

40. Details of this mission may be found in Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 277–85.

41. SN Tenpy H ji 3.1.27 (February 28, 759).

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to the Parhae king the previous year.[42] The same entry also notes that the "literati of the age" composed parting poems for their foreign guests, and that Vice Ambassador Yang T'aesa composed harmonizing verses. This is the earliest record of a poetic exchange between Japanese nobles and members of a Parhae embassy.

Although two poems by T'aesa have been preserved, none by S nggy ng or any of the delegation's other members survive.[43] In general, the lack of extant poems and the relative paucity of background information militate against detailed reconstructions and analyses of the literary activities surrounding most Parhae embassies. An outstanding exception to this situation is provided by a ninth-century delegation, led by the noted literatus Wang Hyory m , which made landfall in the province of Izumo in November of 814.[44] This embassy occupies a prominent place in Japanese diplomatic history thanks in large part to the preservation of poems by both Parhae delegates and their Japanese hosts in Bunka sh reish , a royal anthology compiled at the behest of a sovereign who acted not simply as a patron of letters, but as the director of a carefully orchestrated literary enterprise that was integral to his overall vision of statecraft.[45] As argued below, the particular con uence of political power and poetic legacy building that characterized Emperor Saga's polity is of some importance to understanding the timing, motivations, and broader cultural signi cance of Wang Hyory m's mission.

THE HISTORY AND LITERARY LEGACY OF THE EMBASSY OF WANG HYORY M

During Saga's tenure as emperor, seven delegations were dispatched from Parhae, of which ve were received at the Heian court. While Hyory m's mission would ultimately be an extremely successful one—with Hyory m himself becoming one of the most widely remembered poet-ambassadors to visit the archipelago during the Heian era—his party actually arrived during a time of relative tension between Parhae and Japan. According to Japanese records, the previous ambassador, Ko Namyong , had come bearing a request from the seventh ruler of Parhae, King Ch ng , for the Japanese to provide transport for Namyong's return voyage.[46] This was not an insubstantial request, but the court obliged, ordering the construction of two new ships and dispatching a special envoy known as a s shi to escort Namyong's party back to Parhae. Yet upon their arrival, King Ch ng supposedly presented the Japanese envoy with a state letter that followed a non-traditional and inappropriate documentary format. Emperor Saga was direct in his criticism of the Parhae leadership, the stridency of his rebuke blunted only slightly by the elegant parallel prose in which it was delivered. Evidently, Saga questioned Hyory m personally about his government's breach of protocol, and Hyory m's graceful handling of the situation reveals much

42. Ibid. According to the Xin Tang shu, during the Dali era (766–79) a Parhae envoy presented eleven Japanese dancing girls to the Chinese court as tribute. It is plausible that these were the same girls given to Ambassador Yang in 759. See Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 935–38.

43. T'aesa's verses are included in the third imperial kanshi anthology, Keikokush , completed in 827 during the reign of Saga's successor, Emperor Junna. They are nos. 153 and 182.

44. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 423–25. Among delegations whose landing sites can be established with certainty, Hyory m's was the rst to arrive in Izumo. Most made landfall in northern Honshu. More southerly sea routes were also occasionally used, as evinced by the fth Parhae embassy, which set sail in 759 and made a lengthy voyage to Tsushima before entering Japan at Dazaifu and proceeding to sail up the Inland Sea to Naniwa.

45. A detailed analysis of Saga's views may be found in Jason P. Webb, "In Good Order: Poetry, Reception, and Authority in the Nara and Early Heian Courts" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005).

46. The reason given for the request was that Namyong's vessel, having sailed to Japan and back the previous year, was judged un t for a second round trip. This is explained in a communiqué from King Ch ng. See Nihon k ki , ed. Morita Tei (Tokyo: K dansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 2006) (hereafter NK), K nin 1.9.29 (October 30, 810) and Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 416–17.

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about his own diplomatic acumen. The gist of their exchange was recorded in the responsorial Japanese state letter, which would have been presented to ambassador Wang prior to his departure from Heian, with the intent that it be conveyed to the king of Parhae when the delegation returned home later that spring:

> The Emperor respectfully sends word to the king of Parhae. Hyory m and his party arrived and we examined your state letter, noting the sentiments expressed therein. Hearing for the rst time the sad news that the previous king had passed away suddenly, robbed of the chance to live out a full life, our grief was profound. But your majesty's noble line shall continue through the generations, as you have been blessed with a ourishing house. You have dispatched diplomatic envoys from afar, upholding faithfully the practices of old. Observing the winds in the Northern Sea and aiming for the Twisted Tree, the envoys make their way across the vast ocean to visit the southerly court of Japan.[47] They brave fearsome waves in order to cultivate good relations. We are perpetually conscious of your majesty's sincere goodwill, and the comfort it brings us is deep. But several years ago, the o cial communiqué brought with Ambassador Namyong contained a passage that read:
>
> "Once again, Namyong will be forced to make the roundtrip crossing over the open ocean on the same distressed vessel [that he used the rst time]; I therefore respectfully request that you send one of your envoys to escort him home."
>
> We felt sympathy for Namyong, having come so far, and acceded to the request. We deputed Rin T jin [Hayashi no Sukune Azumabito] to be the envoy, and we allotted two ships to escort the ambassador home. But when T jin returned, he did not bring back an o cial state letter [from the king of Parhae]. He explained that the king had violated precedent by changing the form of the document from one that uses the salutation qi to one that uses zhuang , and that he was therefore unwilling to accept it and discarded it on the day of their departure. Our relationship with Parhae is a long and amicable one, and there are established conventions regarding the exchange of documents. To suddenly take it upon oneself to contravene these would be an act of naked self-aggrandizement. Now, self-restraint and the maintenance of proper etiquette are the enlightened teachings of the Sage; as the classics make clear, those who lose these virtues perish.[48] If decorum is forsaken, is there any longer a need to value our diplomatic intercourse? When I asked Ambassador Wang about this, he replied:
>
> "Times have changed and there is a new sovereign, and I am not familiar with the events of the past. The state letter that I have submitted on this occasion is in no way out of keeping with custom. However, if [the one given to Rin T jin] did not follow established precedent, then the fault lies with my country, and we shall accept whatever judgment you deem appropriate for this o ense."
>
> Now, it is not our wish to hold a grudge over what is already done, and we shall be satis ed to let [the government of Parhae] reform their ways themselves. Our o cials have therefore been commanded to treat future embassies from Parhae with the customary respect. Please be clear about our feelings on this matter: Parhae and Japan are separated by sea and sky, and there is no way [for us sovereigns] to meet each other; cultivating positive impressions should thus be our primary goal.
>
> Spring is in its infancy and the cold lingers yet. May your majesty, along with your civic leaders and general populace, enjoy peace and prosperity.[49] I have sent along some tri ing tokens of goodwill, the details of which are as given in a separate document. With this I must conclude my reply, though a few things have surely been left unsaid.[50]

47. The Twisted Tree ( ) refers to a giant legendary tree on a mountain far o in the eastern sea, or, metonymically, to the mountain itself. Here, "aiming for the Twisted Tree" is a poetic gure for traveling to Japan.

48. The sentence is a reference to Analects 12.1: "The Master said 'to restrain oneself and return to the rites constitutes benevolence'" .

49. Here, Saga uses the term sury ng as a general reference to persons in positions of civic authority—Kim's "local strongmen"—in contradistinction to members of the general populace or "commoners" .

50. NK K nin 6.1.22 (March 12, 815).

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Emperor Saga was clearly keen to maintain the status quo in Japan's relationship with Parhae, and his insistence upon the inviolability of established documentary protocol was, by this time, standard practice for Japanese sovereigns accustomed to their position of nominal superiority. As will be seen, Ambassador Wang's apology was also in keeping with convention, though the overall tone of his response to Saga's inquiry might be seen to betray doubts as to whether events really unfolded as Rin T jin had claimed. In particular, his plea of ignorance with respect to "past matters" should probably be taken with suspicion. It is much more likely that someone of his stature was in fact quite familiar with previous embassies, and we might imagine that he was simply unwilling to give an unquali ed admission of guilt to a charge of questionable veracity. Since there are no corroborating documents from Parhae (or, for that matter, from Japan), we are left with a rather one-sided story that hinges on T jin's all-too-convenient claim to have discarded the most critical piece of evidence (why not keep it as proof?). On the other hand, if we accord T jin's story the presumption of truth, then the ambassador's remarks take on a di erent hue. One interpretation might be that by denying personal knowledge of past events and reminding the Japanese court that "times have changed and there is a new sovereign" (i.e., King Hui), he was distancing himself from a previous administration that he knew to have behaved inappropriately.

Records do indicate that improprieties of diction in messages from Parhae rulers could be a source of irritation to the Japanese court. In this particular case, the King of Parhae is alleged to have altered his state letter's opening salutation, employing the less respectful term zhuang (K. chang, J. j su) instead of the expected qi (K. kye, J. kei su) in addressing the Japanese emperor.[51] Such an alteration was only one of several ways state letters could be used to subvert or contest the diplomatic hierarchy. In 753, Empress K ken had rebuked Parhae's ruler Tae H mmu (King Mun , r. 737–93) for sending only a terse greeting in which he "failed to style himself a vassal" .[52] And in 772, an exceptionally large embassy arrived bearing a missive in which King Mun is alleged to have "omitted his personal name and Chinese-style rank and baselessly claimed the self-aggrandizing title 'Descendant of Heaven' at the end of the letter" .[53] Stating one's personal name and declaring oneself a vassal were basic elements of protocol in communiqués submitted by foreign rulers to the Chinese court;[54] these examples suggest that the Japanese court too desired such deference. Yet while perceived breaches of documentary protocol might provoke complaints, their disruptive e ects could be mitigated by appropriate action on the part of the ambassador. When the leader of the 772 embassy, Ambassador Il Manbok , was questioned about King Mun's unwelcome missive, he o ered to amend ( ) it himself and apologize on behalf of his king ( ).[55] The move was made only after Japanese o cials threatened to decline the cache of goods the delegation had brought, and it illustrates the considerable discretion with which ambassadors were empowered to act.[56] Manbok's actions seemingly rescued the mission: the goods, though not speci ed in Shoku Nihongi, were ultimately accepted, and Japan

51. These and related salutations would follow the name of the addressor at the very beginning of the document, e.g., "I, Muye, do respectfully address [your majesty]" .

52. SN Tenpy Sh h 5.6.8. (July 12, 753).

53. SN H ki 3.2.28 (March 9, 772).

54. Wang Zhenping, Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 143–44.

55. SN H ki 3.1.16; 3.1.25 (February 23, 772; March 4, 772).

56. SN H ki 3.1.19 (February 26, 772). It is worth noting that when circumstances required it, even Chinese ambassadors were known to play down the absolute hierarchical relationship that theoretically obtained between China and foreign polities, even indulging foreign rulers' pretensions to equality with the Chinese emperor. See Wang, Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals, 36–37.

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reciprocated with 30 bolts of Mino coarse silk ( ), 30 bolts of ordinary silk ( ), 200 ku of silk thread, and 300 moji of oss silk ( ).[57] On the surface, the episode suggests that Japanese authorities were willing to rebu an o cial embassy that promised bene ts to both Japan and Parhae solely for the sake of maintaining protocol. A more nuanced reading of this and other similar instances of friction might be that both sides routinely engaged in a mild sort of documentary brinksmanship, each seeking as much prestige as possible within the conventions of diplomatic communication while trying not to irreparably compromise the political and economic gains to be had in the actual diplomatic encounter. Parhae's rulers sought to express only as much pro-forma submission as was required to maintain pro table ties with Japan, while Japanese rulers sought to coax maximum recognition of their own imperial pretensions from the kings of Parhae; as Japanese records indicate, such recognition was not always forthcoming.

Four decades after Il Manbok, Wang Hyory m would face similar circumstances, and judging from the account in Nihon k ki, he would negotiate them with equal aplomb. Emperor Saga was apparently quite satis ed with Hyory m's apology, for the ambassador and his party were treated to multiple royal banquets during their time in Heian and no subsequent mention was made of King Ch ng's subversive salutation. The ostensible purpose of Hyory m's visit was to give formal notice to the Japanese that King Ch ng was now dead and had been succeeded by his younger brother, Tae n i (King Hui).[58] The true aims of the mission, however, were of considerably deeper cultural signi cance. Examination of the Wang delegation reveals that multiple members, including the vice-ambassador Ko Ky ngsu , the lieutenant commander Ko Y ngs n , and the scribe Monk Inj ng , all earned recognition by their Japanese hosts as accomplished men of letters.[59] The ambassador himself was a skilled poet and longtime personal acquaintance of the Japanese scholar and prelate K kai (774–835).[60] Emperor Saga, an avid supporter of K kai's spiritual and secular endeavors, was perfectly aware of all this, and it seems certain that his enthusiastic reception of the Wang delegation was due at least in part to the redoubt-

57. In Heian Japan, one ku was equal to sixteen "ounces" (ry) and one moji was equal to two "catties" (kin); see Ry no gige , "Fueki ry " . In both type and quantity, the items listed here are highly representative of Japanese gift caches provided to Parhae embassies. See, for instance, SN Jinki 5.4.16, SN Tenpy 12.1.7, SN Tenpy H ji 3.2.1, and NK Enryaku 18.9.20 for comparable lists. Additional examples of gift items may be found in Charlotte von Verschuer, Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries, tr. Kristen Lee Hunter (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. East Asia Program, 2006), 20–21. Unfortunately, detailed records of the items given to embassies after the turn of the ninth century are rare, and the goods provided to Hyory m's delegation are not recorded.

58. Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 425–26.

59. Ibid., 809. The o cer complement of a typical embassy of this time consisted of an ambassador , vice-ambassador , lieutenant commander , scribe , interpreter , recorder , and sta supervisor . The exact composition of most embassies is not known, but it is clear that the personnel makeup could vary somewhat from mission to mission. For instance, Wang Hyory m's delegation contained two lieutenant commanders and two scribes, but records do not attest to the presence of a recorder or a sta supervisor. With respect to oral interpretation, evidence indicates that interpreters from both Parhae and Japan employed spoken Chinese. On this see Sakayori, Bokkai to kodai no Nihon, 303–9.

60. Niizuma, Bokkaikokushi, 356–57; Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 815–16. It is believed that the two men met approximately ten years earlier in Chang'an, the capital city and cosmopolitan center of Tang China, when K kai was accompanying Fujiwara no Kadonomaro on a diplomatic mission to Tang. Evidence of their friendship is provided by several sources, one of which is a short message K kai wrote to Hyory m soon after the ambassador's arrival in Japan. In this message, K kai thanked the ambassador for sending him a letter and a poem and expressed regret at not being able to meet him face to face. See "K ya zappitsush " , in K b Daishi zensh , ed. Mikky bunka kenky jo (Kyoto: S hatsubaimoto D h sha, 1978), 4: 594.

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able literary reputation of its leader, ve of whose poems were ultimately selected for inclusion in Bunka sh reish .[61]

That this embassy arrived in Japan just as scholarship in Chinese letters was enjoying unrivalled ideological prominence at court was almost certainly not coincidental. Ambassador Namyong had led two previous embassies, both of which were in Japan during the early years of Saga's reign: the rst arrived in November of 809 and returned to Parhae in June of 810, while the second followed immediately thereafter, arriving in Japan in November of 810 and returning early the next summer. Given Namyong's consecutive tours of duty and Hyory m's relationship with K kai, the Parhae leadership would almost surely have been well apprised of contemporary political and cultural developments on the archipelago. Were the Wang delegation the only Parhae embassy to have visited Japan during Saga's reign, the inclusion of their poems in Bunka sh reish could easily be seen as serendipitous, little more than a fortuitous consequence of the anthologizing projects already underway. Yet the Wang delegation was one of six to arrive during the thirteen-year period that witnessed the compilation of Ry unsh , Bunka sh reish , and Keikokush , and it was the third of ve Parhae embassies to visit Japan during Saga's reign. Since Japanese records demonstrate that at least four of these delegations were received in Heian, one might expect at least some of their poetic output to have been anthologized alongside that of Hyory m's embassy, but such is not the case. It is worth noting in this connection that Japanese compilers were more than willing to include in contemporary anthologies poems composed several decades earlier if their artistic merit was judged to be particularly high: recall that two poems by Yang T'aesa, whose delegation visited Nara in 758, were ultimately anthologized in Keikokush , which was completed in 827. To be sure, while Keikokush was the largest of the three imperial kanshi collections, much of it is no longer extant, and it is conceivable that the missing sections did originally include poetry from other Parhae delegations. Still, inasmuch as Ry unsh was explicitly designed to cover poetry composed between 782 and 814, and Bunka sh reish was understood to include both new poetry composed between 814 and 818 and artistically praiseworthy poems left out of Ry unsh , the fact that no Parhae embassy save Hyory m's is represented in either collection suggests that the poetic caliber of Hyory m and his compatriots was indeed unusually high. The question then becomes whether this was due to sheer happenstance or whether King Hui speci cally tailored the embassy to suit the cultural climate of Saga's court. Again the latter appears most plausible, as it seems unlikely that a gure accomplished enough to have been o cially posted to Chang'an and held in such esteem by K kai would have been selected for a risky overseas mission if another less noteworthy gure could have done the job. Perhaps King Hui felt that sending Hyory m would aid in the ful llment of an immediate diplomatic objective, such as improving relations with Japan following the previous sovereign's faux pas. Alternatively, as a new king, he may have desired to make a stronger demonstration than his predecessors that Parhae too set store by literary accomplishment and boasted countrymen skilled in the art of Chinese poetry. King Hui may well have embraced an ideology of writing that was similar in kind to Saga's, one in which excellence in letters and excellence in statecraft were seen to be thoroughly imbricated. Yet even if he did not, he may still have surmised that the best way to build political ties with Saga's court was to appeal to the emperor's cultural sensibilities. Whatever the case, the episode provides strong circumstantial evidence that Saga's literary enterprise was known outside Japan and, at least in this instance, in uenced the manner in which one East Asian country structured its interaction with the Japanese imperium.

61. These are nos. 16, 18, 39, 40, and 41; translations are given below.

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Nearly three months after making landfall, Ambassador Wang's party nally reached the capital city of Heian. At least some of its members were on hand for the annual ch ga ceremony, wherein nobles convened on New Years' Day at the Daigokuden palace to formally pay their respects to the emperor.[62] Such attendance was not unusual for Parhae embassies: during the course of Saga's reign, four embassies, including Wang Hyory m's, attended ch ga ceremonies.[63] In general, the participation of foreign delegates in New Year's rites has a very long pedigree, appearing prominently during the reigns of Emperor Tenmu (r. 673–86) and Empress Jit (r. 690–97).[64] The actual journey to the capital from the Wang delegation's landing site in Izumo would likely have been easier than those of other delegations that landed in Dewa or Echizen, but logistical preparations (to say nothing of bureaucratic procedure) did tend to militate against rapid progress.[65] Once in Heian, the leading delegates were treated to royal banquets; these appear to have been lively a airs conducive to friendly social repartee between Japanese nobles and members of the foreign delegation, featuring music, dancing, and the receipt of gifts from the emperor. One such banquet, probably held on the seventh of the rst month (February 19), occasioned the following poems by Ambassador Wang and his scribe, Monk Inj ng:

A poem for an Inner Palace Banquet, composed at imperial request. One verse. Wang Hyory m.

To the country across the sea I have come to call at court, traveling from afar
'Tis the intoxication of a lifetime to appear before the Heavenly Robes
And what is to be seen around the throne of the Palace of the Sun?
Clouds of variegated hue soaring into eternal light!

BKSRS No. 16

A poem to accompany a banquet at the Imperial Palace held on the seventh day [of the rst month]. One verse. Monk Inj ng.

Entering court in your noble land, I stood ashamed as a lowly visitor
But on this seventh day I have received your grace and been made an honored guest
Looking closer, your regal tunes display no arti ce
But their elegance moves the Spring throughout the whole of your realm.

BKSRS No. 17

Hyory m's poem is rich in gurative language but presents no major interpretive di culties. While the rather striking expression "the intoxication of a lifetime" might be construed

62. NK K nin 6.1.1 (February 13, 815).
63. NK K nin 2.1.1, 11.1.1, and 13.1.1.
64. Joan Piggott, The Emergence of Japanese Kingship (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 143.
65. Borgen notes that when the 882 delegation led by Ambassador Pae Ch ng landed in Kaga, the government ordered that roads and bridges along the planned route to the capital be repaired and that corpses left by the roadside be properly buried. While Nihon k ki does contain an entry in which Ambassador Wang's arrival in Izumo is cited as one factor inducing the court to grant an exemption to the local rice eld tax (NK K nin 5.11.19), there seem to be no extant orders concerning infrastructure repair, sanitation, or the like. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that, in every case, the government reserved ample time to make whatever preparations were deemed necessary. See Sugawara no Michizane, 231–32.

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literally in a less formal poem, here a metaphorical interpretation in which the intoxication is understood to gure a state of rapture induced by the emperor's presence ts better with the poem's overall mission of praise for the sovereign. Inj ng's poem is more challenging, particularly in its second couplet. The term jitai , which seems literally to denote the appearance or posture of a singing girl, is problematic. Kojima Noriyuki takes it to suggest something gaudy or arti cially showy, and he thus understands the phrase wu jitai to mean something like "with not a trace of arti ce."[66] Given the rarity of the term, however, a compelling argument might also be made for taking ("not") as ("dance"), in which case wuji , a perfectly common compound, would simply denote the girls who sang and danced at the banquet, and the entire line would be a straightforward description of the day's festivities.[67] In either reading, Inj ng's poem plays deftly upon the banquet environment to a rm the power of the emperor to order the realm.

Both of these verses unambiguously assert the cultural preeminence of the Japanese court and the authority of the emperor, a fact that, perhaps as much as their artistic merit, accounts for their inclusion in the imperially commissioned Bunka sh reish . Even the seemingly innocuous term bin , usually rendered "guest" in English, carried powerful connotations of obeisance and vassalage.[68] Yet while the content of their message resonated nicely with court orthodoxy, their form too may have caught the attention of Japanese compilers, as it re ected up-to-date metric and prosodic trends in Tang poetry. The ambassador's poem in particular is a ne example of a heptasyllabic quatrain or jueju (J. zekku). Together with the eight-line lüshi (J. risshi), the jueju was one of two poetic types comprising the category of "recent-style" poetry or jinti shi (J. kintaishi), which was governed by tonal regulations stricter than those that had prevailed in earlier eras. In brief, recent-style poetry involves the careful alternation of level and oblique tones in accordance with four very precise tonal arrangements, each of which instantiates three basic prosodic rules. The rst two rules are designed to ensure tonal contrast within each line and tonal contrast between the two lines of a single couplet (so that the particular tonal arrangement of the rst line is matched antithetically by that of the second).[69] The third rule is designed to tie succeeding couplets together; it demands that the tones of the rst two characters of the second line of one couplet be the same as those of the rst two characters of the rst line of the very next couplet. By the standards of English poetry, Japanese waka, and non-regulated Chinese poetry, the rules governing recent-style verse are indeed daunting, though it is important to realize that a verse may still qualify as a recent-style poem even if it evinces one or two deviations from the ideal tonal pattern.[70] As is often the case in poetry, the judicious violation of formal conventions may attest more strongly to artistic mastery than persnickety adherence

66. See Kojima Noriyuki, ed., Kaif s , Bunka sh rei sh , Honch monzui , Nihon koten bungaku taikei (NKBT), vol. 69 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), 211, and Honch ichinin isshu , Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei (SNKBT), vol. 63 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 64.

67. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion. The character ji , which is given a pejorative cast in Kojima's reading, appears elsewhere in Bunka sh reish in a positive sense (see poems 69 and 82). A translation of the line based upon this alternative interpretation might be "Looking closer, I behold dancing beauties amidst your regal tunes."

68. This is the sense most relevant in terms such as bincong and binfu . See Wang, Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals, 121.

69. For instance, in a pentasyllabic recent-style couplet, if the tonal arrangement of the rst line is level-level-oblique-oblique-level, that of the second would be oblique-oblique-level-level-oblique. See Zong-qi Cai, "Recent Style Shi Poetry," in How to Read Chinese Poetry, ed. Zong-qi Cai (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2008), 169–72.

70. Ibid., 172.

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to them. Although the in uence of recent-style poetry on Japanese kanshi is apparent as far back as Kaif s , fewer than ten poems in that anthology fully meet recent-style prosodic criteria, and most are composed of pentasyllabic lines.[71] By Emperor Saga's time, Tang poetic developments had more thoroughly permeated the Japanese literary landscape, and while older, non-tonally regulated poetry (so-called "old-style poetry" or guti shi , J. kotaishi) was still popular, many of the poems preserved in Ry unsh , Bunka sh reish , and Keikokush evince delity to recent-style tonal regulations. Moreover, the majority of verses in these collections employ a heptasyllabic meter, which was used only sporadically before the Tang.[72]

Beyond their up-to-date formal structure, the verses presented by Hyory m and Inj ng also exhibit a high degree of phaticity. They were deployed within a ritually signi cant context to achieve a speci c end, namely the a rmation and further e ectuation of good relations with Japan. They carry illocutionary force (as behabitive acts), and may produce perlocutionary e ects of importance to the mission, most directly by in uencing Saga's opinions about both the value of relations with Parhae and the cultural caliber of her representatives. In theme and diction (if not in prosody), these verses closely resemble many others o ered on similar occasions in the past. Such poems ful ll their immediate phatic function by participating in a diachronically stable regime of tropes and conventions associated with diplomacy and courtly splendor; they appear as part of a carefully choreographed routine that, once nished, was remembered to history by the very poems it had occasioned.[73] In this case, the venue of presentation was an Inner Palace Banquet (naien), a formal gathering held in the emperor's presence and open only to elite aristocrats.[74] Royal banquets such as these fostered both lateral linkages among the participants and vertical linkages between the participants and the sovereign.[75] Yet while the emperor might be the addressee of poems composed by foreign delegates, he, as a matter of course, never initiated poetic exchange by o ering verses of his own, nor did he author responses to delegates' poems. This pattern appears to have held true even for Saga, who is otherwise noted for directly initiating poetic exchange with his vassals.[76] This marks an important di erence in poetic custom between banquets attended solely by Japanese nobles and banquets at which foreign delegates were present. According to Kuwahara Asako, Japanese sovereigns' refusal to engage delegates in direct poetic exchange may have re ected a conscious strategy to symbolically elevate Japanese courtiers, who were able to commune with the sovereign in verse, above their foreign counterparts in status.[77] An additional possibility, also raised by Kuwahara, is that a desire

71. See K zen Hiroshi , Kodai kanshi sen (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 2005), 13.

72. Cai, "Recent Style Shi Poetry," 161.

73. This description derives from Edward Kamens' analysis of mid-Heian courtly poetic practice. See Kamens, "Terrains of Text in Mid-Heian Court Culture," in Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries, ed. Mikael Adolphson et al. (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 140. Though international diplomacy is not the context for the poems treated in that study, the observations Kamens makes regarding versi cation in "speci c social settings governed by programmatic protocols" are highly relevant to the analysis of poetry composed at diplomatic banquets.

74. The headnote for Inj ng's poem does not use the term naien, but it does indicate that the gathering was held inside the palace compound. And although Ambassador Wang's poem is not dated, it is generally thought that both verses were presented on the seventh at the same banquet. Although banquets were a long established cultural institution at court, the Inner Palace Banquet (sometimes rendered in English as "private banquet," "privy banquet," or simply "palace banquet") emerged during Saga's reign as an important forum for kanshi composition. See Gustav Heldt, The Pursuit of Harmony: Poetry and Power in Early Heian Japan (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2008), 51–52.

75. Webb, "In Good Order," 181.

76. Ibid., 178–87.

77. Kuwahara Asako , Heiancho no kanshi to "h ": Bunjin kizoku no kizokusei k s no seiritsu to zasetsu : (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 2005), 117.

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to avoid the loss of face that would result from a poor poem or an embarrassing mistake in rhyme or diction was operative. Given the high stakes involved in diplomatic intercourse and the competitive overtones coloring poetic exchange, it would indeed have been risky for a sovereign to engage foreign representatives in extemporaneous composition. Yet the fear of making mistakes or being artistically outdone was probably not the only factor motivating the emperor's eschewal of direct poetic communion with foreign delegates. By exercising a detached dominion over poetic exchange, which in this instance meant reserving the right to command that verses be produced while refraining from personally producing any, the sovereign symbolically underscored his singular position as both the fountainhead of cultural authority at court and the ultimate arbiter of his country's diplomatic agenda. His very lack of direct participation was a discursive act designed to reinforce his paramountcy vis-à-vis representatives of a foreign government.

Although Emperor Saga appears never to have responded personally to the encomia o ered by Hyory m and Inj ng, it is almost certain that one or more of his attendant nobles did. Indirect evidence for this is provided by a response poem, o ered by Kuwahara no Haraaka , that was intended to harmonize with a poem that the vice ambassador Ko Ky ngsu had apparently presented to Saga at the same banquet. While Ky ngsu's poem is no longer extant, Haraaka's response has been included in Bunka sh reish :

Harmonizing with a poem on facing the imperial countenance that was presented by the vice-ambassador from Parhae. One verse. Kuwahara no Haraaka.

From Parhae you gaze into the limitless expanse,
And your course over blue-green waves covers untold distances
Divining patterns in the clouds, you race across the sea to remotest shores
Yearning for the Sun, you come from afar to pay homage at the Celestial Court.
His blessings descend from purple skies,
And his grace bespeaks vermillion sway.[78]
With ears attuned like Zha of Wu,[79]
It is meet that you listen with gladness to the royal pipes and strings![80]
BKSRS No. 38

As indicated in the headnote, the function of this poem was to harmonize ( ) with one composed previously. Its own rhetoric, directed unmistakably towards a rming imperial virtue and complementing the vice-ambassador on his coming to Japan, suggests that

78. The subject of this couplet is Emperor Saga. Kojima understands the term "vermillion sway" to refer to the emperor's bene cent and transformative in uence.

79. Ji Zha was a scion of King Shoumeng (r. 586–561 b.c.), a ruler of the state of Wu during the Zhou period. His reputation for musical acuity stems from judgments he made regarding the performance of various selections from Shijing (see Zuozhuan 19, "Xiang gong," pt. 6). The poet Zuo Si (250–305) invokes Ji Zha in his "Rhapsody on the Wei Capital" , a piece preserved in Wenxuan and probably well known to Haraaka. In Zuo Si's poem, Ji Zha listens to the Airs of Wei being sung and praises them for their elegance and rectitude ( ).

80. The tonal pattern of Haraaka's poem generally accords with recent-style regulations, the only exception of note being the fth character of the rst line, ji (LMC k), which is an entering tone character and thus in the oblique tonal class. Here and elsewhere, transcriptions for Tang-era pronunciations are taken from Edwin G. Pulleyblank, Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Late Middle Chinese, and Early Mandarin (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1991). Following Pulleyblank, Tang pronunciations are identi ed as belonging to Late Middle Chinese (LMC).

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Ky ngsu's original poem was likely an encomiastic piece similar to those o ered by his comrades. The practice of composing harmonizing poems was central to poetic exchange, helping to establish contiguity in themes and encourage interaction between those present at the banquet. The sentiments Haraaka expresses in the opening couplet mirror those seen in Emperor Saga's state letter: the delegate is envisioned as having undertaken a long and dangerous journey, a fact that speaks not only to his own courage and commitment but to the glory of the Japanese court as well. Yet while Saga framed the delegation's journey in terms of upholding diplomatic precedent and cultivating amicable relations, Haraaka focuses explicitly on the majesty of the court and the bene cence of the emperor as factors drawing the foreigners to archipelagan shores. He thus produces a poem that, while ostensibly addressed to the vice-ambassador, uses standard tropes of overseas travel and diplomacy to deliver his own message of fealty to the emperor. Haraaka is thus at once a spokesman for the court who bids welcome to foreign representatives and, alongside those same representatives, a bene ciary of royal largesse and a participant in the banquet ritual of praising the sovereign in verse.

While the actual presence of the emperor at an inner palace banquet was enough to ensure the production of lavish encomia, such banquets represented only the rst phase of diplomatic contact. Over the next several months, foreign delegates spent far more time in the company of select Japanese nobles assigned as o cial chaperons than they did in the presence of the emperor himself. Much of this time, moreover, was spent outside the capital in settings that were far less formal than those in which the o cial state banquets were held. Yet these too were sites of poetic exchange, and the substance of the poetry produced there was still geared to the success of the embassy's mission and still shaped by diplomatic convention. Praise for the sovereign, for instance, could still gure thematically in a poem not composed at imperial request, as the following example illustrates:

> Facing the rain on a spring day. The character qing was chosen (as the basis for rhyme).[81]
> One verse. Wang Hyory m.
>
> Our host commences the banquet out in his provincial o ce,
> And the guests are as drunk as can be, just as they were in the august capital.
> Perhaps the god of rain, aware of his majesty's sacred will,
> Has poured out this sweet nourishment, this fragrant shower, upon our travel-weary hearts![82]
>
> BKSRS No. 18

This piece is one of four written during the spring of 815, towards the end of Ambassador Wang's time in Japan. Since the gatherings that occasioned these poems are not, to my knowledge, recorded elsewhere, their exact dates remain unknown. The ambassador's party was completing preparations for their return voyage to Parhae, and although their location is not speci ed, it is most probable that they were in Izumo. The "host" here is likely Shigeno no Sadanushi , who served alongside Sakanoue no Imao and Sakanoue no Imatsugu as an o cial escort for the Wang delegation. All these men were

81. Qing (LMC ts iaj), which appears as the nal character in the fourth line, rhymes with the nal character in the second line, jing (LMC kiaj).

82. Although this poem upholds one prosodic convention of recent-style poetry, namely the requirement that the second and sixth characters within a line be of the same tonal class, its tonal pattern is otherwise divergent from recent-style norms.

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aristocrats and skilled poets, and each contributed poems to Bunka sh reish .[83] The second line is playful and rhetorically deft, confronting the reader rst with the startling image of utter drunkenness, then making a clever play on the character deng , which can mean both "to be equivalent to" or "to wait." In the translation above, is understood in the rst sense, and the compound term shangjing is interpreted as a single noun referring to Heian.[84] Yet the circumstances in which this poem were written also allow one to interpret as referring to Parhae's capital city of Yongch' nbu ( ), to which the delegation was "waiting" ( ) to return.[85] In the context of diplomatic interaction, the resulting double meaning takes on additional signi cance: inasmuch as an "august capital" was, by de nition, a seat of royal authority, by deliberately con ating one "august capital" with another, the poem might be read as implicitly placing Parhae's polity on an equal footing with Japan's.[86] Altogether, the ambiguities o ered by the couplet echo the delegation's actual state: no longer in Heian but not yet able to return to their own capital city.[87] The nal couplet o ers praise for the emperor, suggesting that it is his will that bids gods ( ) and men ( ) to treat the ambassador's delegation so well. Yet in comparison to the ambassador's rst encomium to Saga, the manner in which this praise is articulated is considerably subtler. Furthermore, the emperor is not the only object of approbation in this poem: the piece also pays tribute to Sadanushi, implying in the rst couplet that even in their rustic location he is feting the party so graciously that they are reminded of the comforts of Heian, and in the second couplet that the abundance of libation he provides is comparable to the abundant rains that nourish the earth.

Although the diplomatic imperative to o er praise to the emperor is still visible here, Hyory m's interactions with Sadanushi, Imao, and Imatsugu did occasion poetry in which this theme is entirely absent. The following two poems, also composed in the spring (or, by the lunar calendar, the early summer) of 815, betray little information regarding the broader diplomatic context of their composition:

> At our provincial pavilion, composing on the topic of mountain owers. Presented in jest to my two escorts and also to Jisan.[88] One verse. Wang Hyory m.

83. Sadanushi in particular is well represented, with a respectable six poems selected for inclusion. Along with Haraaka, he was also involved in the editing of the collection.

84. This interpretation follows Kabata Yoshiharu , " K ren, 'Shunjitsu ame ni tai su. Sagurite 'j ' no ji o etari. Isshu' " , Ajia y gaku 71 (2005.1): 162–68.

85. To be precise, Parhae maintained multiple capital cities, but the city suggested in this poem is likely Yongch' nbu .

86. All else equal, this interpretation would seem to make the poem an unlikely candidate for inclusion in a Japanese royal collection, suggesting either that such a reading was not entertained by Saga and his anthologizers, or that it was su ciently outweighed by the poem's strongly laudatory tone and thus caused no particular o ense.

87. Kojima Noriyuki understood the ambiguities in this poem somewhat di erently. When is taken to mean "like" or "equivalent to," Kojima construes to refer to Parhae's capital, and when is taken as "to wait," he supposes to refer to Heian. See Kojima, Kaif s , Bunka sh rei sh , Honch Monzui, 474 n. 18. Ueda, citing the headnote to the poem, argues that if means "to wait," then cannot refer to Heian because the delegation was certainly not "waiting" to enter Heian during the middle of spring. Ambassador Wang and his party had left Heian on the 22nd day of the rst month (see NK K nin 6.1.22), and Ueda sensibly surmises this poem to have been composed sometime after the middle of the second month. See Ueda, Bokkaishi no kenky , 818.

88. Jisan refers to Shigeno no Sadanushi. Sadanushi is the third born child, hence the friendly appellation "Shige number three." The escorts referenced here are Imao and Imatsugu. See Kojima, Kaif s , Bunka sh rei sh , Honch Monzui, 227.

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Fragrant trees display their spring colors, colors so resplendently vivid
When their blossoms rst open, they resemble someone smiling; but listening, I hear no voices
The master spends every day plucking them up until no more are left
When, then, might he send some leftover petals to assuage the lonely hearts of his guests?[89]

BKSRS No. 39

Harmonizing with a poem titled "looking at the moon and thinking of home" that was presented to me by Escort Han (Sakanoue no Imatsugu). Wang Hyory m.

So still, the summertime night
So round, the white orb of the moon
Into countless mountains its bright light streams
All creation from sea to sky is made new
The wife I left behind grows forlorn as she gazes at it
And as I face it, it stirs my travel-weary spirit[90]
Who says we are separated by a thousand li?
For it casts its light upon both of us, each in a di erent land!

BKSRS No. 40

The striking di erence in diction and style between these poems and the two encomia o ered to Saga may be seen to re ect the evolving nature of the diplomatic mission. During his time in Heian, the ambassador attended formal state functions and, in an e ort to promote good relations with the Japanese court, lauded the emperor in verse. Now in Izumo, the need for this sort of emperor-centered discursive performance is diminished, but poetic exchange between the ambassador and his o cial Japanese handlers remains a central activity. Generally speaking, poems exchanged between delegates and hosts in venues outside the capital tend not to call overt attention to the enterprise of international diplomacy. That they supported a diplomatic project at all is revealed principally by paratextual sources such as headnotes. To what extent the poems themselves, at the moment of their composition, were understood by those present to relate to diplomacy (as opposed to simply being poetry for the sake of poetry) is di cult to say, but it is almost surely the case that, for representatives of both sides,

89. This verse is a heptasyllabic jueju. It deviates from ideal recent-style tonal conventions in ve places, but all but one of these deviations occur in either the rst or the fth character of a line, which is permissible. In general, the poet enjoys greater tonal liberty with the rst, third, and fth characters, while the requirements governing the second, fourth, and sixth characters are more rigid. As noted earlier, the second and fourth characters should be of contrasting tones, while the second and sixth characters should be of the same tonal class. Hence, in this poem, the only deviation of signi cance arises from the oblique tone character in the fourth position of the rst line.

90. This couplet is challenging. Jiang Yiqiao notes that the term qiqi is not to be taken to denote an "abandoned" or "forsaken" wife, but rather a wife who has been left at home by her journeying husband. See Jiang, " K ren 'Hanry kaku ga tsuki mukaite kuni o omoi okurareshi saku ni wasu' " , Ajia y gaku 73 (2005.3): 160–64. Jiang cites two examples of this usage, one from the Southern Dynasties poet Bao Zhao (414–466) and one from the Tang poet Cui Hao (704–754), but notes that no examples by Japanese kanshi poets are known. Moreover, while Jiang interprets the character in its full verbal sense, Kojima takes it to be adverbial and equivalent in meaning to , "gradually." I have followed Jiang's interpretation, which allows for a stronger sense of parallelism between and . Grammatically speaking, both characters are taken as verbs that each have the moon (or the pronoun) as an elided object.

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a measure of pride was always at stake during any poetic exchange. Any verse exchanged between foreign envoys and Japanese literati had the potential to produce perlocutionary e ects of diplomatic consequence, even if the illocutionary force of its language remained comparatively mild. It is clear too that in casual versi cation, linguistic ambiguities could be exploited to convey diplomatic messages; the subtle insinuation of political parity between Parhae and Japan in Hyory m's "Facing the Rain on a Spring Day" is one such example. Hyory m's poems were clearly valued highly by Sadanushi and his compatriots, who carried them back to Heian after the ambassador's departure and helped ensure their preservation in a prestigious royal anthology.

"At Our Provincial Pavilion, Composing on the Topic of Mountain Flowers" is unabashedly witty and playful, though it resists easy interpretation even as the blossoms that animate three out of its four lines seem to invite a metaphorical reading. Flowers of one variety or another are an extremely common motif, appearing explicitly in over twenty percent of all Bunka sh reish poems.[91] In this poem, one possibility that springs readily to mind is that the blossoms might represent women who entertained the ambassador and his party. Read this way, it would seem that Ambassador Wang is playfully accusing the "master" or "host" of monopolizing the ladies' services, and suggesting that he share some of his bounty with his companions. Kojima Noriyuki and Okabe Asuka, however, posit that the term "master" is actually being used self-referentially by Hyory m, and that the so-called guests are in fact Sadanushi, Imao, and Imatsugu.[92] This rhetorical inversion is driven not by any speci c linguistic feature within the poem, but is suggested by the fact that the piece is speci ed as one that was "presented in jest" . It is in fact the only composition in Bunka sh reish to bear this quali cation, and it invites us to read the poem in a more playful light than we otherwise might. Such an inversion is e ective precisely because it is Hyory m himself who has spent the last several months as an honored diplomatic guest, occasionally attending banquets hosted by Sadanushi. It might be noted here that the lighthearted nature of a piece "presented in jest" hints at something obvious but nonetheless important, namely that by the time this poem was written, Hyory m and his Japanese companions were probably no longer simply associates brought together by the exigencies of diplomacy, but had in fact become friends as well. Based on the prominence the poem accords to natural imagery, it has also been suggested that Hyory m may have been playfully donning the mantle of a classical scholar-recluse ( ), guring himself as "master" of the rustic-sounding "provincial pavilion" .[93]

The next verse, "Harmonizing with a Poem Titled 'Looking at the Moon and Thinking of Home,'" introduces a very traditional East Asian poetic trope: the ability of the moon to symbolically link people separated by great distance. Like Kuwahara no Haraaka's poem, it is a pentasyllabic lüshi. Lüshi and jueju share similar tonal regulations, but the greater length of lüshi permits a complex regime of stylistic regulations not found in jueju.[94] Among the most immediately striking characteristics of the ambassador's verse is its syntactic parallelism: all but the last couplet are parallel in terms of the grammatical structure of each

91. The term "mountain owers" is also frequently encountered in Six Dynasties landscape poetry. It appears not to have denoted any speci c species of ower. See Okabe Asuka , " K ren 'Hentei ni arite, fushite sanka wo etari, tawamure ni ry ko no ry kakushi narabi ni Jisan ni yosu'" , Ajia y gaku 72 (2005.2): 138.

92. Ibid.; Kojima, ed., Kaif s , Bunka sh reish , Honch monzui, 227.

93. Okabe, " K ren,'" 138.

94. For an overview and analysis of lüshi, see Zong-qi Cai, "Pentasyllabic Regulated Verse," in How to Read Chinese Poetry, 161–79, and Robert Ashmore, "Heptasyllabic Regulated Verse," 181–97 in the same volume.

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line. In general, the second and third couplets of proper lüshi must be composed of parallel lines, while the fourth couplet must not be. Parallelism in the rst couplet is optional, and somewhat less common, but Hyory m employs it faithfully, even down to the use of reduplicative binomes in both of its lines. Deeper still are the conventions governing the way a lüshi should unfold thematically, strict adherence to which is not required but is frequently observed. Traditionally, the rst couplet establishes the setting and introduces a basic theme, which in this case is the moon on a still summer night.[95] The second couplet proceeds to expand on the rst; this is seen in the description of how the moonlight pierces or streams through "countless mountains," a phrase that provides an immediate sense of grandeur and distance, and also by the association of moonlight, which is both purifying and defamiliarizing, with the newness or rejuvenation of all things. The third couplet performs a conceptual turn, changing the direction of the poem and setting the stage for its conclusion. The turn in this poem is from natural imagery and a focus on the moon itself (or its light) to a ective imagery and a focus on one's reaction to the moon. Finally, the fourth couplet concludes the poem, often making a "point" in the expository sense: here, Hyory m asks rhetorically "who can say we're separated, when the moon embraces us both with its light?" The implied answer, of course, is no one.[96]

At a time when even high-Tang (712–65) poetics still had only a limited presence in the realm of Japanese kanshi, this couplet evinces the in uence of yet more recent mid-Tang (766–835) poetics. The phrases "separated by a thousand li" and "the two of us, each in a di erent land" both appear in the poetry of Bai Juyi, and the opening question of the nal couplet, "who says we are separated by a thousand li?" , is almost identical to a line of Bai's that reads "how can (one) say we are separated by a thousand li?" .[97] Moreover, while the binome tuantuan is not uncommon in earlier poetry, appearing for instance as a descriptor of the moon in a poem by Lady Ban (Ban Jieyu , ca. 48–ca. 6 b.c.e.), it is found paired with the exact phrase "separated by a thousand li" in the poem "Facing the Moon and Thinking of My Old Friend Song Yang" , a quatrain by the mid-Tang poet Shi Jianwu (d. 861).[98] Such stylistic clues suggest that Hyory m, who had spent time in Changan prior to visiting Japan, was here exercising his familiarity with the very latest trends in Tang poetry. As Jiang notes, nearly ve decades ago Kojima presciently raised the possibility that fragments of Bai Juyi's poetry had been brought to Japan during Emperor Saga's time, several years prior to the rst recorded transmission of complete volumes of the famous collectanea of his work, Bai shi wen ji .[99] Ambassador Wang's poem demonstrates that his delegation in particular, and perhaps routine contact with Parhae in general, was an important avenue through which such materials were rst transmitted.

By the time these poems were composed, Ambassador Wang had been in Japan for several months. As his party completed preparations for their departure, Hyory m turned his

95. The term zhuming refers to summer, and in particular to the period designated as "beginning summer" (approximately May 5~16 in the Gregorian calendar).

96. The four conceptual stages are traditionally known as arising , continuing , turning , and concluding .

97. See Jiang, " K ren," 164.

98. Ibid., 162.

99. See Kojima Noriyuki, "Ono no Takamura no shi o megutte" , in Kokuf ankoku jidai no bungaku, vol. 2, pt. 1, 609–56. Kojima focuses primarily on the poetry of the Japanese courtier Ono no Takamura (802–853), but he also nds evidence of in uence on compositions by other K nin-era poets, including Emperor Saga, from Bai and the poets in his circle, such as Yuan Zhen (779–831).

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thoughts to the impending voyage home in what seems to be the last of his extant compositions. Thoughts of returning home were a conventional topic in poems by and about foreign envoys, as the demands of a lengthy diplomatic mission understandably engendered homesickness and travel weariness, or at least made such tropes seem eminently apposite.[100] Yet while the poem betrays an unmistakable sense of longing, it also expresses in no uncertain terms Hyory m's deep gratitude to his Japanese hosts, making it a tting artistic coda to a successful diplomatic tour:

Recording my feelings in Izumo Province: A poem presented to my two imperially commissioned escorts. One poem. Wang Hyory m.

> A southerly wind sweeps over the seaway, quickening thoughts of returning home[101]
> Geese head north across the endless sky, tugging at my travel-weary heart
> To my great good fortune, I have a pair of lofty phoenixes here to keep me company!
> I thus have no laments over the many days spent in this provincial pavilion.[102]

BKSRS No. 41

Like the wild geese that winter in Japan and go north for the summer, Hyory m would soon be on his way back to Parhae. The poem follows the tonal pattern of a jueju, and the syntactic parallelism observed in the rst couplet generates a strong sense of imagistic duality, embodied most obviously in the antithetic pairs south/north and sea/sky.[103] The mood this couplet creates is one of anticipation, but its descriptive detachment also produces a sense of calmness and solemnity. The second couplet is altogether di erent, o ering overt praise to Hyory m's escorts for making the time he spent in Izumo bearable. By late May or early June of 815, the ambassador's ship nally left Izumo, but the journey would prove far more dangerous for him than for the migrating geese in his poem.

Shortly after setting sail, his ship encountered severe weather and was blown back toward Japan, eventually making landfall in the province of Echizen . The vessel reportedly su ered damage and was no longer seaworthy.[104] Upon learning of the situation, Japanese authorities initially recommended trying to nd a replacement vessel, though it appears none was found.[105] A new ship was eventually ordered built, which meant that the party would have to wait some time before being able to leave. Apparently, even after the ship was ready,

100. This thematic bent was shared in equal measure by Japanese waka, in which the conventional treatment of travel was rooted in a poetics quite similar to—and no doubt strongly in uenced by—that observed in Chinese poetry. In particular, gures such as the moon, migrating geese, and waiting loved ones feature prominently in travel waka from the era of Man'y sh (759) onward.

101. The character su is being used in its verbal sense of "invite" or "call forth."

102. An additional translation of this poem is given by Borgen (Sugawara no Michizane, 229): "A south wind over the sea stirs thoughts of returning home. / Geese from the north cross the broad skies evoking weariness. / Fortunately I am accompanied by the singing of mated phoenixes, / And feel no grief over waiting many days in a distant province."

103. Technically, the rst and third characters in the nal line deviate from the expected tonal pattern, but deviation in these positions was quite common and, as noted above, does not constitute a breach of the jueju form.

104. NK, K nin 6.5.18 (June 28, 815).

105. NK, K nin 6.5.23 (July 3, 815).

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weather patterns were not conducive to departure, forcing them to wait yet longer.[106] Their predicament, which had evidently become known in Heian, occasioned the following quatrain by Sakanoue no Imao:

> Hearing the geese on an autumn morning, presented to the lieutenant commander Ko (Y ngs n) and the scribe Monk (Inj ng). One verse. Sakanoue no Imao.
>
> The vast ocean is proving impossible to cross,
> And your lone vessel is yet unable to return.
> Quite unlike the geese of the distant northwest,
> Who depart in the spring and come again in the fall.[107]
>
> BKSRS No. 35

This verse is a pentasyllabic jueju, the shortest of all the major recent-style poetic forms. The brevity of this form encouraged suggestiveness and imagistic density, and the frequent use of deictic expressions often makes comprehension di cult absent the poem's speci c context.[108] Of course, features such as allusive language and deixis were not ubiquitous to all pentasyllabic jueju, and this particular piece causes no signi cant di culties. It was evidently presented to Ko Y ngs n and Monk Inj ng after their emergency landfall in Echizen. Presumably, Imao was dispatched once again from Heian when the court learned of the delegation's situation; it is unclear if he was accompanied by Imatsugu or Sadanushi. No other extant poems attest to contact with Japanese o cials during this time, and details regarding living arrangements, social gatherings, and other aspects of the delegation's unplanned stay in Echizen have not been preserved. What the record does make clear, however, is that disease took a heavy toll on the beleaguered party as they waited for their chance to sail home. Multiple members of the delegation, including Ambassador Wang, Inj ng, and Lieutenant Commander Wang S nggi , contracted smallpox and died. An entry in Nihon k ki dated K nin 6.6.14 (July 23, 815) records Emperor Saga's nal tribute to the ambassador, noting that Hyory m was granted a posthumous elevation in rank in recognition of his diplomatic contributions:

> There are examples from old for mourning the lost and bestowing honors upon them, and long established precedents for praising their righteousness and recording their deeds. The Parhae ambassador Wang Hyory m, junior third rank, was dispatched to our court to pursue good relations, but on his return voyage across the watchet abyss, he was forced to turn back, and though he had not yet delivered his nal report, Heaven was unwilling to grant him more time in this world. Although our fate lies in the hands of Heaven, and the evanescence of life is beyond our power to change, we nonetheless grieve when one who was dispatched under orders from his king is unable to return to his homeland. Moved by pity, we shall therefore grant the ambassador an honorary increase in rank, for although dead, his numinous essence lives on and shall surely shine brightly in the next world. It is therefore right and proper to raise him to senior third rank.

106. This is made clear in another Nihon k ki entry for the following year (K nin 7.5.2 [June 1, 816]), translated in full below.

107. Recent-style prosody is maintained throughout, save for the rst character in both the third and fourth lines. Frequently, one tonal deviation would be "corrected" by a second deviation, either in the same line or in a corresponding line. This practice was known as "deviation and remedy" . See Naiying Yuan , Haitao Tang , and James Geiss, Readings in Classical Chinese Poetry and Prose (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 119, and Ashmore, "Heptasyllabic Regulated Verse," 182.

108. See Charles Egan, "Quatrains," in Cai, How to Read Chinese Poetry, 199–223.

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> Once again, appropriate gifts shall be sent and emoluments granted to the envoys, since the items that were sent the rst time were damaged or destroyed.[109]

The surviving members of the delegation rode out the winter in Echizen, nally setting sail for Parhae in the summer of the following year (816). The state letter they bore was a revised version of the one given to Hyory m the year before. As might be expected, Emperor Saga reported the lamentable turn of events and expressed his sorrow over Hyory m's death. Signi cantly, while the bulk of the document was unchanged, Saga apparently decided to omit the portion criticizing the Parhae leadership for the previous king's alleged documentary ga e. Perhaps the emperor was satis ed having made his point to Hyory m the year before, or perhaps he felt that the tragic circumstances now made such a critique seem petty and insensitive. The additional information regarding the ambassador's death reads as follows:

> Last year, Hyory m and his party set out on their return voyage but were soon overtaken by erce gales that blew them back to shore. Their ship was severely damaged and rendered un t to cross the sea. We constructed a new ship, but they were denied a favorable wind. During this time Hyory m was stricken with smallpox and was suddenly lost to this world. Wang S nggi, Monk Inj ng, and others also died in quick succession. We were truly devastated at the loss.[110]

Hyory m's death was mourned not only by Emperor Saga but by K kai as well. In memoriam, K kai o ered the following verse, the second couplet of which has unfortunately been lost:

> Grieving for Parhae's royal Ambassador Hyory m, who died before his journey was complete.
>
> This piece of news, I could not bear to hear
> But [my grief] must pale in comparison to the feelings of those in his homeland.[111]

CONCLUSION: POETRY, DIPLOMACY, AND SAGA'S "IMPERISHABLE GLORY"

As the reception of Wang Hyory m and his party illustrates, diplomacy in the Nara and early Heian periods could be an unparalleled source of cultural enrichment for Japan. Yet as Bruce Batten has stressed, diplomacy was not simply an exercise in enlightened cosmopolitanism, and the cultural products and practices with which it was associated—most notably

109. NK K nin 6.6.14 (July 23, 815). The translation of cang (J. s) as watchet follows Schafer (1989). This entry is the rst mention of the ambassador's passing; the cause of death is not speci ed until later.

110. NK, K nin 7.5.2 (June 1, 816). Since the ambassador died in late July, and Imao's poem was, according to its headnote, presented to Inj ng and Ko Y ngs n sometime in autumn, one may assume that Inj ng did not contract smallpox (or at least did not succumb to it) at the same time the ambassador did. Autumn would have begun in mid August, so assuming the reference to an "autumn morning" in the poem's headnote is not simply an embellishment, Inj ng must have been alive several weeks after Ambassador Wang's death. This fact adds new poignancy to Imao's poem, which would have been composed after Hyory m's passing. It mournfully echoes the ambassador's nal poem, making reference to the very geese Hyory m himself had once invoked before embarking on his ill-fated voyage home.

111. See K b Daishi zensh , 4: 617.

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the composition and exchange of Chinese poetry—cannot be divorced from considerations of courtly power and prestige.[112] Chinese poetry introduced to Japan via diplomatic contacts not only facilitated broader Japanese participation in East Asian cultural networks, but also enhanced the authority of the Japanese court on the domestic front: by keeping abreast of new poetic trends on the continent, the court strengthened its position as the keeper of high culture on the archipelago. Diplomacy thus a orded Japanese leaders access to information of strategic value on the international stage while providing opportunities to acquire cultural capital with which to bolster their prestige at home. To be sure, not every Japanese sovereign or high-ranking courtier believed the frequent conduct of diplomacy to be such a worthwhile endeavor, a fact illustrated by Fujiwara no Otsugu's pointed counsel to Emperor Junna. Yet there can be little doubt that for Emperor Saga, the hosting of foreign delegations strongly buttressed his own ideal of sapient sovereignty. In the cultural realm, Saga's ideal was succinctly captured in Cao Pi's famous dictum that writing was "a grand enterprise for ordering the state—an imperishable glory" .[113] The statement itself occurs in the "Lunwen" chapter of Cao Pi's critical treatise Dianlun , but as Jason Webb has shown, it was marshaled by Saga to serve ends that were rather di erent from those originally envisioned by Cao Pi. First, the kind of "writing" that looms largest for Saga is quite clearly shi poetry, though not the venerable tetrasyllabic sort comprising Shijing , but the far more recent penta- and heptasyllabic varieties preferred by post-Han poets. While the pentasyllabic shi form is, at least implicitly, granted legitimacy in Lunwen, its status remains below that of other literary forms, such as memorials (zou) and eulogies (lei).[114] Second, where Cao Pi is deeply concerned with the idiosyncrasies of individual poets and the power of writing to transmit their unique legacies, Saga seems to have been more concerned with writing's power to transmit a corporate legacy: the "imperishable glory" is primarily that of the state, or at least of the royal salon, but not of the individual poet.[115] Quantitatively, the contributions made to this legacy by Wang Hyory m were small. Yet as both an illustrious foreign poet and a representative of an alien government, Hyory m's poems redound to the glory of Saga's polity in a qualitatively di erent way than do poems by Japanese literati, as they implicitly suggest to future readers of Bunka sh reish that the enlightened imperial order sponsoring their production was recognized even in distant lands.

As argued above, it is probable that King Hui, cognizant of the heightened ideological prominence accorded to Chinese poetry at Saga's court, judiciously selected an especially gifted coterie of poets for this particular mission, possibly in an e ort to repair a diplomatic row, and almost certainly with an eye towards displaying the high cultural attainments of his own country. It bears repeating that the poems by Hyory m and Inj ng selected for inclusion in Bunka sh reish are among the very few surviving examples of verse composed by foreign delegates during a stay in Japan. And one poem in particular, the pentasyllabic lüshi that Hyory m o ered to Sakanoue no Imatsugu, is strongly re ective of mid-Tang poetic trends and serves as a ne example of how diplomatic interaction facilitated the transmission

112. See Batten, Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500–1300 (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 50–80.

113. See Webb, "In Good Order," 172–246.

114. K zen Hiroshi, Ch goku bungaku no riron (Tokyo: Chikuma Shob , 1988), 22–25; Webb, "In Good Order," 220–22.

115. Webb, "In Good Order," 228–29. Webb's analysis focuses speci cally on the manifestation of monj keikoku ideology in Ry unsh , but the point holds for Bunka sh reish as well, which, although organized di erently, evinces a keen interest in group composition, poetic harmony, and the sociality of its poets. On this see Heldt, The Pursuit of Harmony, 48–49.

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of such trends to Japan. One of the mid-Tang gures drawn upon in this piece, the great Bai Juyi, was without doubt the single most in uential Chinese poet in premodern Japan, eclipsing even luminaries such as Li Bai, Du Fu, and Wang Wei, who have generally far outshone Bai Juyi in China. Incidentally, two other poems by Hyory m, "At Our Provincial Pavilion, Composing on the Topic of Mountain Flowers" and "Facing the Rain on a Spring Day," were once cited by the literary critic and historian Konishi Jin'ichi in support of his argument that Japanese aesthetic preferences, even in the early Heian period, remained rmly rooted in the "oblique" (yipang) style of Six-Dynasties poetry. According to Konishi,

> The Japanese, isolated in an intellectual and geographic backwater, had embraced Six Dynasties aesthetic principles with a commitment too rm to be easily shaken. That commitment was responsible for the evolution of the Kokinsh style, and for the use by Kokinsh poets of oblique techniques which were diametrically opposed to the characteristic directness and simplicity of Bai Juyi.[116]

Konishi's analysis in this classic essay is thoughtful and thorough, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the role that Bai Juyi's style did or did not play in Japanese waka of the Kokinsh era. Yet the Six-Dynasties obliquity Konishi detects in the two poems he cites must be considered alongside the apparent adaptation of Bai Juyi in Hyory m's lüshi, and also alongside developments in tonal prosody: "At Our Provincial Pavilion, Composing on the Topic of Mountain Flowers" is one of several poems treated in this paper that are recent-style verses. Such consideration suggests that during the reign of Emperor Saga at least, Japanese elites were by no means intellectually isolated. Both Saga and King Hui eagerly pursued diplomatic concourse and made deft use of a poetic tradition whose fountainhead was China but whose scope was pan-Asian. Yet both sovereigns, along with the many poets and diplomats in their employ, were more than simply peripheral heirs to the Chinese macroculture, they were co-creators of it, e ecting via bilateral diplomatic relations the further institutional entrenchment of Chinese high culture in Parhae and Japan. Among the forty-seven o cial visits exchanged between the two countries, Wang Hyory m's embassy stands as the richest example of this paradigm and provides an illustrative case study of diplomatic praxis during the age of Tang cultural preeminence.

116. Konishi Jin'ichi, "The Genesis of the Kokinsh Style," tr. Helen Craig McCullough, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 38 (1978): 61–170.

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