

2023 Spring Special Exhibition
The Azure Route - A History of Trade Across the Sea of Japan



• Introduction

Ishikawa Prefecture, located in the middle of the Sea of Japan's southern coast, has been a gateway for the influx of continental cultures since ancient times. During the Yayoi period, bronze and iron tools were brought across the sea from China and the Korean Peninsula, and the Hokuriku region became the hub of a distribution network that spread eastwards. At this time, jewels made from jade and jasper were actively produced and traded throughout western Japan.

Furthermore, in 570, around the end of the Kofun period, envoys from Goguryeo on the Korean peninsula arrived in Kaga. Through the diplomatic route opened at the time, representatives from Balhae, located on the opposite side of the Sea of Japan, came and went between Kaga and Noto during the Nara and Heian periods. In addition to Fukuura (Shika Town, Hakui), a famous stopping-place for Balhae ships, research has discovered the existence of another ancient port in the area around present-day Kanazawa Port.

This exhibition, through numerous documents, traces the history of the magnificent exchanges that took place on the Sea of Japan with China and the Korean Peninsula.

• Exhibition structure and main exhibits

Chapter 1: Trade Beyond the Sea

Bronze culture was introduced to the Hokuriku region through vessels brought from mainland China and the Korean peninsula during the Yayoi period. Elaborately made wooden vessels are also commonly found along the coast. This exhibition presents artifacts from the Kyushu and San'in regions as well as the Hokuriku region, while looking at the exchanges on the Sea of Japan during the Yayoi period.



1-1 : 国宝 銅鐸 島根県加茂岩倉遺跡
国 (文化庁保管)
島根県立古代出雲歴史博物館写真提供



1-2 : 重要文化財 脚付桶 鳥取県青谷上寺地遺跡
鳥取県蔵

Chapter 2: The Iron and Jade Trade

From those discovered at the Yokaichi site in Komatsu City, it has been revealed that iron tools began to be used in the Hokuriku region in the mid-Yayoi period. In contrast to ironware, which was traded from the west, beads were actively produced in the Hokuriku region and distributed as far away as the San'in and Kyushu regions.



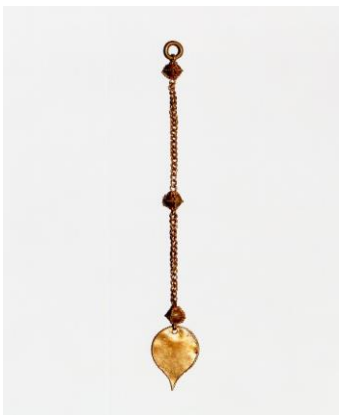
2-1：柄付き鉄製鉋(やりがんな) 小松市八日市地方遺跡
石川県埋蔵文化財センター蔵



2-2：翡翠勾玉 佐賀県宇木汲田遺跡
佐賀県立博物館蔵

Chapter 3: Foreign Cultures and Nation Building

The Kofun period marked a time when the Japanese nation was beginning to take shape. Diplomacy with China and the Korean peninsula, along with knowledge and technology introduced through the arrival of foreign peoples from the continent, provided the opportunity for Japan to become a civilized state. This section introduces cultural relics from the continent and the Korean peninsula that were brought to the Hokuriku region via the Sea of Japan.



3-1：金製垂飾付耳飾 福井県向山1号墳
若狭町歴史文化館蔵



3-2：銀製帯金具 加賀市狐山古墳
東京国立博物館蔵 Image：TNM Image Archives

Chapter 4: The Crossing of Men and Gods

In ancient times, the Sea of Japan was known as the 'Hokkai' and the Hokuriku region as 'Koshi'. This chapter explores the points of contact between Koshi and Izumo, based on religious archaeological findings and historical documents such as the Izumo no Kuni Fudoki and Kojiki.



4-1：男神坐像 島根県青木遺跡
島根県立古代出雲歴史博物館蔵



4-2：奈良三彩小壺 羽咋市寺家遺跡
石川県埋蔵文化財センター蔵

Chapter 5: Exchanges with Balhae Envoys

During the Nara and Heian periods, envoys were sent to Japan from Balhae, which was located on the opposite shore of the Sea of Japan. The envoys often travelled via the Hokuriku region, with accommodation facilities being established in Kaga and Noto. This exhibition features artifacts from the royal city of Balhae and documents related to the ports in Kaga and Noto.



5-1 : 金銅菩薩立像 渤海上京城
東京大学総合研究博物館蔵



5-2 : 花文腰帶具 金沢市畝田ナベタ遺跡
石川県埋蔵文化財センター蔵

Exhibition period: April 29 (Sat) - June 11 (Sun), 2023
Hours: 9:00-17:00 (entry to exhibition rooms until 16:30)
Holidays: Open daily during the exhibition period
General admission: ¥1,000 (¥800)
University and vocational school students: ¥800 (¥640)
High school students and below: Free

- Group rates for visitors aged 65 and over shown in brackets
- The permanent collection can also be viewed in conjunction with the exhibition
- A separate admission fee is required for the Kaga-Honda Museum
- E-tickets are also available

- E-ticket information

Sales period: Monday 10 April - Sunday 11 June (until 15:30)

General admission: ¥1,000

University/vocational school students: ¥800

- Please note

E-tickets are not available to those aged 65 and over, and others eligible for other discount rates. Please purchase tickets at the office on the day of your visit.

Tickets are not date and time-specific, so it is not possible to guarantee an entry slot.

Organizer: Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of History
Co-organizer: Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo History
Special collaborator: Hokkoku Shimbun