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## **Letters by Men and Women:**

### **A Comparison Based on Tsushima Souke Bunko Hangul Letters**

#### **Abstract**

About Hangul letters exchanged between Japan and Korea during the Edo period, previously only 8 letters which was introduced by the OSA Masanori (1978) were known. But the publication of the list of ancient documents in Tsushima Souke Bunko in 2009 and 2012 revealed the existence of more than 100 new ones. Most of the Hangul letters found this time are related to negotiations on the so-called Joseon Tongsinsa's Yeokjihaingbing(易地行聘). The last Joseon Tongsinsa in 1811 was changed to hold a ceremony for exchanging national diplomatic documents in Tsushima instead of Edo-jo Castle, but negotiations were extremely difficult and took 24 years. These Hangul letters were exchanged between ODA Ikugoro, a Korean-language translator of Tsushima Domain, and Japanese-language translators of Korea. They clearly tell us the reality behind the scenes of diplomatic negotiations, which was one of the biggest pending issues between Japan and Korea in the 19th century.

What is unique about these Hangul letters is that both the sender and the recipient are male. Most general Hangul letters found in Korea are either sent or received by women. This peculiarity is reflected in the linguistic characteristics of the Hangul letters in Tsushima Souke Bunko, such as its heavy use of Chinese words and Chinese characters.