

Takeshima in the 17th century

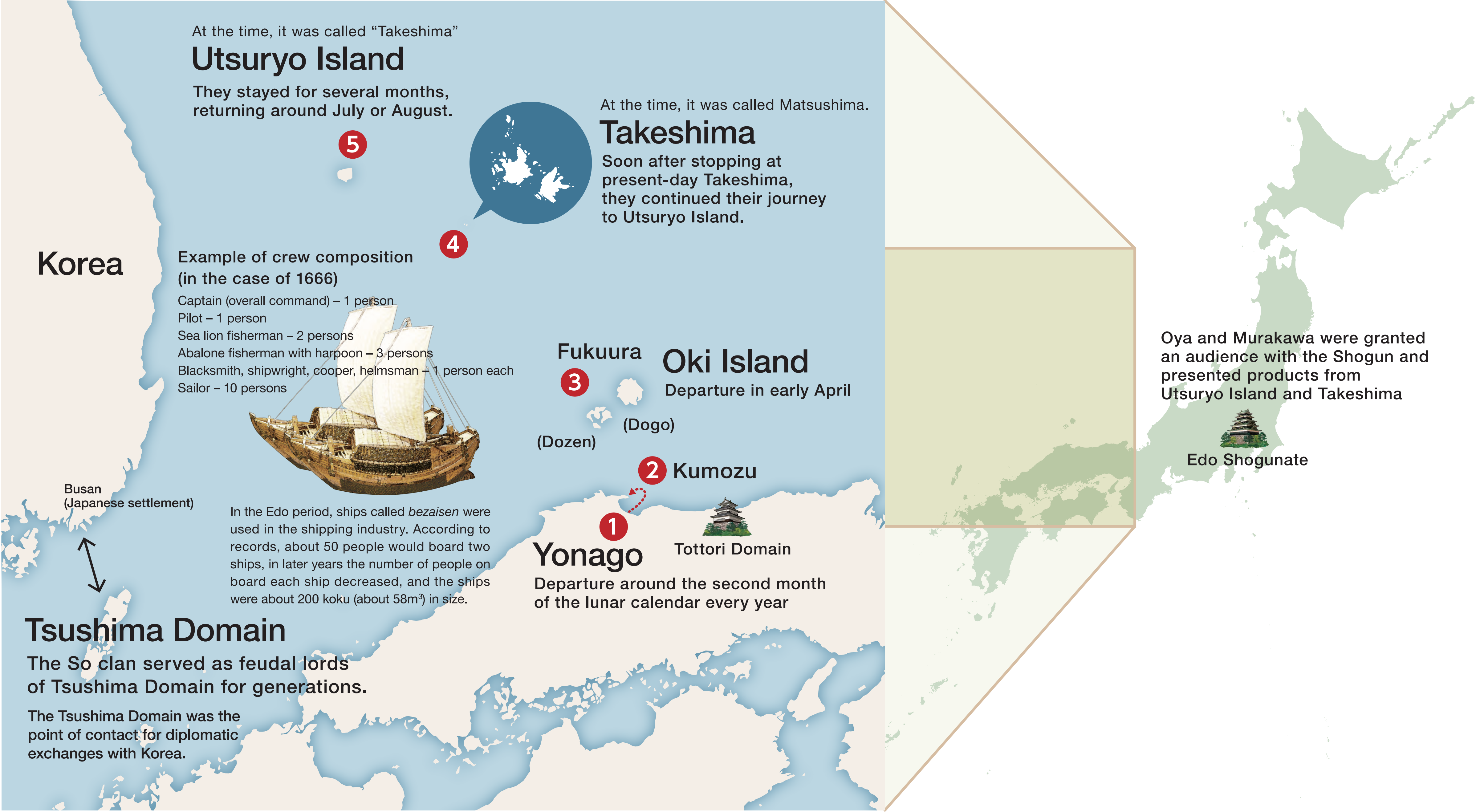
17th century: The Oya and Murakawa Families' Passage to Utsuryo Island and Takeshima

In 1617, the Oya family, merchants from Yonago who ran a shipping business, drifted ashore on Utsuryo Island (Ulleungdo in Korean). They discovered that the island was uninhabited and rich in timber and marine products. They invited the Murakawa family to join them and requested and received permission from the Edo Shogunate to travel to Utsuryo Island. The two families took turns traveling to Utsuryo Island every year to conduct business. Takeshima, located on the route from Oki to Utsuryo Island, was used as a navigation marker and as a place to

moor their ships. With the permission of the Shogunate, it was also used as a good place to catch sea lions and abalone. In 1692 and 1693, the Oya and Murakawa families encountered Korean fishermen on Utsuryo Island, and negotiations on the island were held between Japan and Korea. The Shogunate prohibited the families to travel to Utsuryo Island, but passage to Takeshima was not prohibited.

Passage to Takeshima and Utsuryo Island

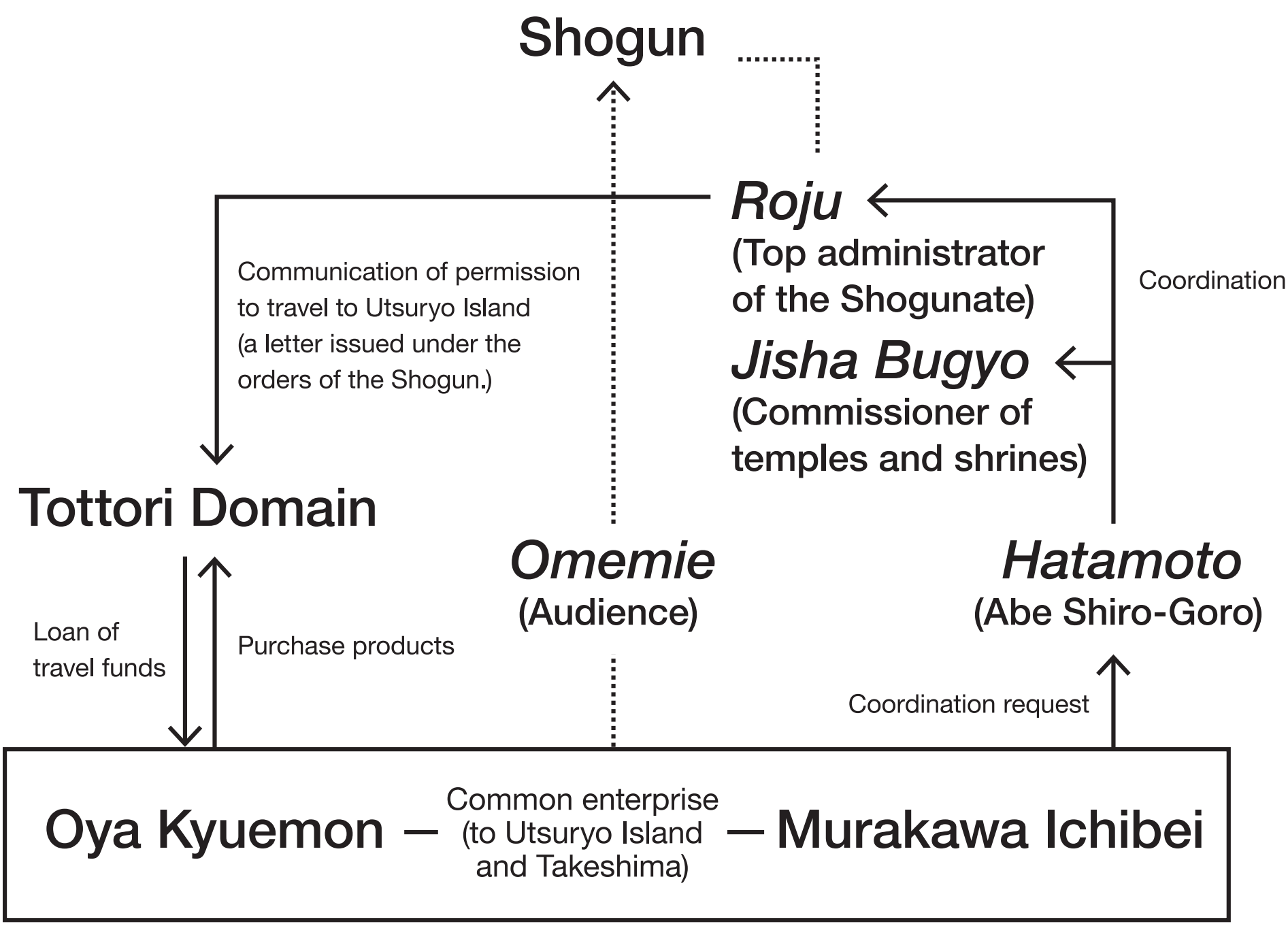
- 1
- The ships would depart Yonago around the second lunar month each year.
- 2
- They would stop at Kumozu and take on more passengers.
- 3
- After leaving the mainland, the boats would first stop at Oki to prepare for the crossing. More passengers would join them here.
- 4
- They would use Takeshima as a navigational marker and a place to moor, and would catch sea lions and abalone. From 1661, it was decided that the Oya and Murakawa families would take turns travelling to Utsuryo Island each year and carry out their business.
- 5
- They stayed on Utsuryo Island for several months. They went to Utsuryo Island with two ships, built a third ship there to load their cargo, and returned with three ships, but during the passage in 1666, two ships brought from the mainland were shipwrecked, and only the newly built ship remained.



*The map above was made using Inban Ya Shi (Anecdotal History of Tottori Domain) and Takeshima Ko (Thoughts on Takeshima) as a reference.

Passage with permission from the Edo Shogunate

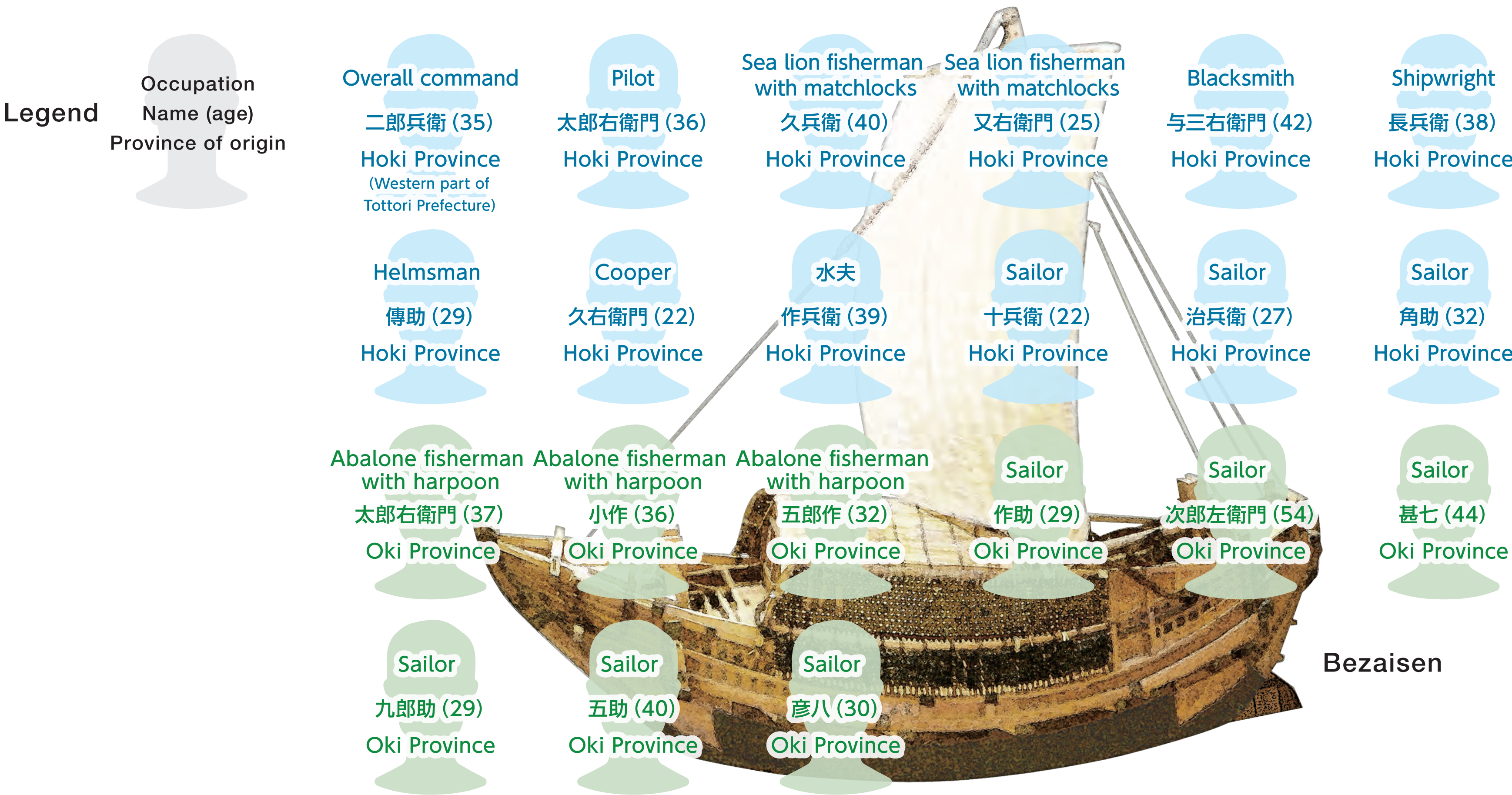
The Oya and Murakawa families' passage to Utsuryo was made possible by the work of a *Hatamoto* (a high-ranking samurai in the direct service of the Shogun) named Abe Shiro-Goro*, who approached the *Roju* (Council of Elders) and obtained permission from the *Roju* in a joint letter to the lord of the Tottori domain. From then on, Abe Shiro-Goro acted as intermediary for the Oya and Murakawa families and arranged audiences with the Shogun and the presentation of products to high-ranking samurais in the Shogunate.



*First names of the heads of the Abe were "Shirogoro" for generations.

Composition of the Crew of the Shipwrecked Oya Family Ship (1666)

During the passage of the Oya and Murakawa families to Utsuryo Island, there were cases in which people were rescued from shipwrecks in Korea and handed over to the Japanese side. Looking at the relevant records, we can see details of both families' journeys.

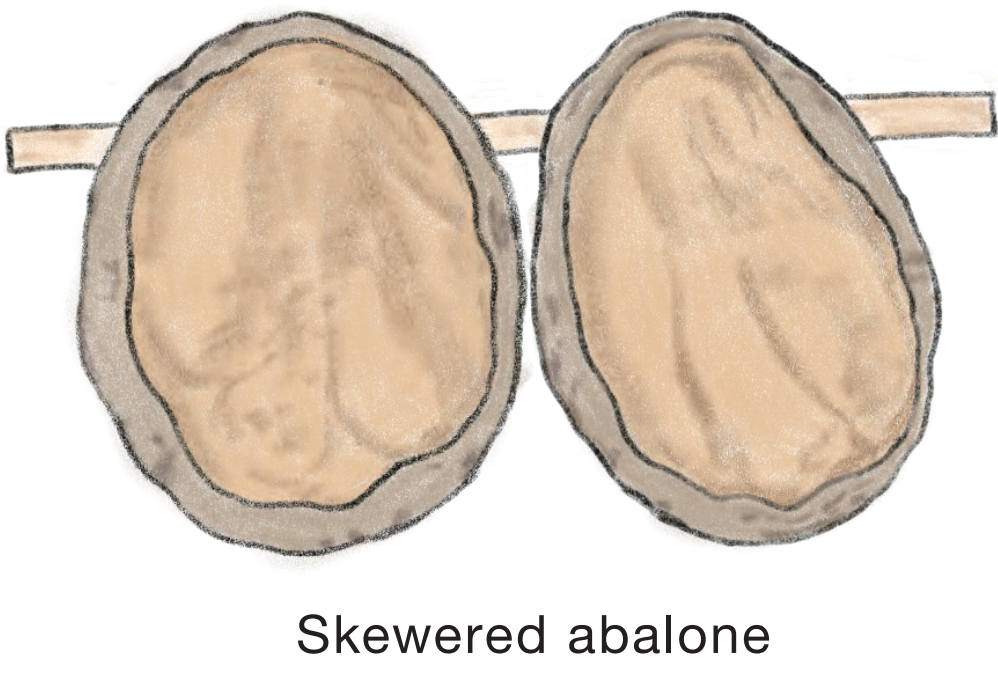


Source: Oya ke Kyuki (Old Records of Oya Family)

The cargo of the Oya and Murakawa family's shipwrecked ship

The cargo of the Murakawa family's shipwrecked ship (1637)	The cargo of the Oya family's shipwrecked ship (1666)
Sea lion oil – 314 barrels	60 strings of skewered abalone
Dried abalone – 406 strings	350 sea lion skins
Dried whole abalone – 4 and half bales	70 barrels of sea lion oil
Salted abalone – 2 barrels	9 logs of wood
Sea lion skins – 253 pieces	Source: Masayoshi Okajima, Takushima Ko (Thoughts on Takeshima)
Jelly ear fungus – 8 half-tons	
Sea lion meat – 60 half-tons	

Source: Fukami Dan'emom Kocho no Utsushi (1637) "Bunrui Kiji Taikou"



Japanese people caught sea lions and abalone on Utsuryo Island and Takeshima in the 17th century! They had permission from the Edo Shogunate to do so! Considering the friendly relations between Japan and Korea, the Edo Shogunate prohibited the Oya and Murakawa families from traveling to Utsuryo Island at the end of the 17th century. But travel to Takeshima was not banned.

