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The Beginning of Chinese Overseas Travel and Settlement: Merchants, Officials, and Trade
Communities in Maritime Asia (9th–12th c. CE)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Gregory Sattler

2026

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The Beginning of Chinese Overseas Travel and Settlement: Merchants, Officials, and Trade
Communities in Maritime Asia (9th–12th c. CE)

by

Gregory Sattler

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2026

Professor Richard von Glahn, Chair

This dissertation examines the early history of Chinese people traveling and migrating overseas (c. 800–1127 CE). Despite the political, cultural, and economic significance of ethnic Chinese communities across much of the world today, as well as international interest in China’s involvement in the greater domain of maritime Asia, very few attempts have been made to understand the origins of Chinese people living and traveling beyond Chinese borders. Through the examination of primary sources written in Classical Chinese, Kanbun, Arabic, Old Malay, and Old Javanese, as well as the material record of shipwrecks and former port cities, this dissertation explores the earliest records of Chinese people living and trading outside of China, the regions where they were active, the communities they formed or joined, their reasons for traveling long distances, and how their migration was viewed both within and beyond China. Such an analysis reveals that Chinese people were active across a wide region that spanned from

Kyoto to Baghdad, that they cooperated closely with native inhabitants and rulers in the areas they traveled to, and that they frequently intermarried with the local populace. Even during such early times, it is evident that they formed cohesive region-based networks, that much of their success depended on informal connections with political leaders within and beyond China, and that settlement overseas was determined by their own interests and initiatives. Such a study demonstrates how Chinese migrants and their descendants became a vital component of the cosmopolitan entrepôts that characterize the history of exchange across maritime Asia over the last millennium.

This dissertation of Gregory Sattler is approved.

Andrea S. Goldman

Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Robert Borgen

Richard von Glahn, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2026

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CIRRICULUM VITAE

Gregory Sattler

Education

Ph.D., History	University of California, Los Angeles	2026
M.A., History	University of California, Los Angeles	2023
M.A., Japanese Studies	Kyushu University	2019
B.A., History	National Taiwan University	2011

Selected Publications

- (with Wahyu Rizky Andhifani, Hedwi Prihatmoko, Andrea Acri, Arlo Griffiths, and Mathilde Mechling) “Maritime Links between China, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Buddhist Monasteries in India (c. 11th–12th Centuries) in the Light of Two Fragmentary Inscribed Strips of Copper from Muara Jambi,” *Religions* 16 (2025): pp. 1–35.
- “Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas, c. 800–1100,” *T’oung Pao* 111:1 (2025): 78–128.
- “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese during the Reign of Song Emperor Zhenzong (997–1022),” *Religions* 15 (2024): 1–27.
- “Zhedong Sea Merchants and the China-Japan Trade, ca. 800–1000 CE,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 53 (2024): 59–92.
- “The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia, ca. 800–1127,” *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 6 (2021): 41–60.

Lectures

- “The Prevalence of Writing Implements in Early Maritime Asian Shipwrecks, and What They Tell Us of Society, Migration, and Cross-Ethnic Cooperation,” Fowler Museum at UCLA, March 17, 2026.
- “Heritage Then and Now: Tracing the Early Maritime Roots of Singapore’s Chinese Communities,” National Library, Singapore, June 25, 2025.
- “Consideration of New Evidence Demonstrating Diplomatic Relations between Japan and China (Wu-Yue) in the Tenth Century,” Kyushu University, October 21, 2024.

Selected Conference Presentations

- “Chinese Travelers and Communities in the Indian Ocean Region during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” The 4th Middle Period China Humanities Conference, City University of Hong Kong, May 28–31, 2026.

- “Literati Defectors to Koryŏ and its Chinese Diaspora in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” Association for Asian Studies 2026 Annual Conference: Vancouver, Canada, March 15, 2026 (panel organizer and presenter).
- “The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same: Assessing Cultural Continuity in Overseas Chinese Communities over the Last Millennium,” 12th International Conference of International Society for the Study of Chinese Overseas (ISSCO), University of Malaya, November 4, 2025.
- “New Interpretations on the Global Distribution and Decline of Yue Ware Ceramics,” Association for Asian Studies 2024 Annual Conference: Seattle, WA, March 14-17, 2024.
- “Assessing the Earliest Indications of Chinese Diaspora Communities in Southeast Asia,” 3rd Biennial Indian Ocean Studies Conference ‘Pathways and Passages: Faith and Migration in the Indian Ocean Region,’ Sheridan Institute of Higher Education, November 17-18, 2023.
- “Rethinking Tenth-Century Diplomacy in East Asia: New Perspectives on Relations between Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and a Politically Fragmented China,” Beyond the Spice Route Symposium: Knowledge Transmission and Material Culture in Pre-Modern Maritime Asia (700–1400CE), King’s College, University of Cambridge, November 6-7, 2023.
- “Zhedong Sea Merchants and the China-Japan Trade, ca. 800–1000,” Conference on Tang-Song Transitions, Princeton University, June 16–18, 2022.
- “Poets Without Borders: Literate Merchants and a Shared Culture of Writing in East Asia, ca. 800–1200 CE,” Medieval Cultural Heritage Around the Globe: Monuments, Literature, and the Arts, Then and Now, Binghamton University, October 22-23, 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last century, the study of Chinese people overseas (commonly referred to as “Overseas Chinese”) has become a significant interdisciplinary research field. Top universities in the United States, China, Singapore, and many other countries around the world have taken an active role in understanding the histories, cultures, identities, and socioeconomic experiences of these people, in part because of the outsized influence that they have exercised over the last millennium. Such influence has extended into the present day and includes major contributions in the realms of culture, economics, and politics in countries and communities throughout the world. Those who identify as ethnic Han Chinese are generally thought to form the largest ethnic minority group outside of its place of origin.¹ Moreover, Han Chinese are also one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the world outside of its place of origin, as the population of Chinese migrants in both the United States and Europe more than doubled between 2000 and 2020.² In academia as well, the significance of Chinese people residing outside of China can hardly be ignored. Chinese and Indian students form the two largest international student groups around the world, and Chinese

¹ Ethan Teekah, “Han Chinese,” *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2026): <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Han-Chinese#ref411098>. For more on this topic, see Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese Among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). Many Overseas Chinese people today have chosen not to use the term “diaspora,” as it implies intent to maintain ongoing connections to a homeland. Those who hold such views have no such intent and consider their place of residence to be their homeland due to longstanding ancestral connections to that region. On the other hand, many other Overseas Chinese maintain strong connections with China through business or private interests, or even through ideology. From its very inception, the People’s Republic of China has dedicated much in the way of resources and attention toward fostering links with Chinese communities overseas, though such initiatives were susceptible to ebbs and flows based on the political conditions of the day. See for instance Zhuang Guotu, “The Policies of the Chinese Government towards Overseas Chinese (1949–1966),” in *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, volume 1, eds. Wang Ling-chi and Wang Gungwu (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998), 14–28.

² Raquel Rosenbloom and Jeanne Batalova, “Chinese Immigrants in the United States,” *Migration Policy Institute* (2023): <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states-2021>; and Joaquín Beltrán Antolín, “How Many Chinese are Living in Europe? A Demographic (De)Construction,” in *Handbook of Chinese Migration to Europe*, eds. Mette Thunø and Simeng Wang (Leiden: Brill, 2025), 40–41.

scholars constitute the largest foreign-born group among tenure-track STEM faculty in the United States.³

Yet despite the significance of the topic for both past and present, surprisingly little academic work seeks to understand the early origins of Chinese people traveling and residing overseas.⁴ This is somewhat unfortunate, as there remains a common misunderstanding among the public and even in certain segments of academia that the migration of Chinese people overseas is a recent phenomenon or a feature of the colonial period. Rather, a more detailed assessment, as provided in this dissertation, reveals that systematic Chinese migration existed beyond the past millennium. Similarities and differences between early and recent migration can certainly be observed throughout this assessment, though of equal importance is that the story of Chinese migration overseas cannot be told without a beginning.

³ Eric Joseph van Holm, Yonghong Wu, and Eric W. Welch, “Comparing the Collaboration Networks and Productivity of China-born and US-born Academic Scientists,” *Science and Public Policy* (2018): 1–11; and OECD, *International Students in Higher Education: A Comparative Analysis of Trends, Challenges and Policy Responses in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom* (Paris: OECD Publishing: 2026), 19.

⁴ The first scholar to address this topic was Wang Gungwu, in a monograph published in 1958 which was later republished as Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade: The Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998). Other scholars have more recently provided valuable research which sheds additional light on the development of Chinese people traveling overseas in earlier times, though the main goals of their research tend to differ from that topic itself or are more narrow in scope. See for instance, Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Billy K. L. So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China: The South Fukien Pattern, 946–1368* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000); Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006); Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series, 2006); Robert Borgen, “Jōjin’s Travels from Center to Center (with Some Periphery in between),” in *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*, ed. Mikael S. Adolphson et al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 384–413; Geoff Wade, “An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE,” *Journal of South East Asian Studies* 40.2 (2009): 221–65; James K. Chin, “Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities,” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6, no. 2 (2011): 157–215; Richard von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network and the Reorientation of East Asian Maritime Trade, 1150–1350,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 74, no. 2 (2014): 249–79; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit: Monks, Merchants, and Exchanges between China and Japan, 839-1403 CE* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

The story of Chinese people traveling and living abroad is deeper than most people interested in the subject tend to realize. When considering the history of Chinese people taking to the seas, attention is often directed toward the fifteenth-century admiral Zheng He 鄭和 (1371–1435) and his voyages across maritime Asia and coastal East Africa. This was indeed a pivotal moment in China’s maritime history, though much contextualization for it can be derived from the study of previous centuries. For instance, although the grand scale of the voyages and their broad geographic range were likely unmatched, we will see in this dissertation that such a form of sea-based diplomatic outreach was not unprecedented.⁵ Nor was the way Ming officials later objected to this outreach and sought to erase it from history. In the end, Zheng He’s story was ultimately preserved in Chinese records and in the traditions of Chinese people overseas. However, one unintended result of his fame and deification overseas, particularly in Southeast Asia, is that his story came to eclipse the stories of those who came before him. Over the span of centuries, historical memory shifted to place Zheng He’s arrival as a vague starting point of Chinese settlement overseas. For the sake of present-day overseas Chinese communities, a focus on early maritime history highlights that Chinese communities existed in the region long before Zheng He’s arrival.

In the realm of academic research, the study of Chinese people in maritime Asia has also been fraught with obstacles and challenges. As the historian O.W. Wolters pointed out, from the time when knowledge of Chinese history was spreading in Europe in the eighteenth century, there were those who deplored what they perceived as the circulation of misleadingly favorable

⁵ Angela Schottenhammer first suggested this point in Angela Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao’s Mission of 785 to the Caliph of Baghdād: Evidence of an Early Sino-Arabic Power Alliance?,” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 101 (2015): 214. As we shall see in this dissertation, in addition to her example for 785, the Sui, early Tang, and early Song dynasties also dispatched seaborne embassies for diplomatic outreach. We will also see what appears to be one semi-mythical account of such an embassy in Arabic-language sources. The Yuan dynasty also dispatched such an embassy, but analysis of that event goes beyond the temporal scope of this dissertation.

statements about Chinese civilization. Such sentiment inspired one scholar to publish the earliest translations of Arabic-language travelogues dating to the ninth and tenth centuries.⁶ Indeed, over time, scholars of Islamic civilization proved to be some of the greatest skeptics of records of Chinese seafaring dating from the ninth to fourteenth centuries. Such views were most prominently shared in George Hourani's *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, an account that brought much attention to the history of exchange across maritime Asia.⁷ Understandably, considering the time that has passed since it was first published in 1951, there is room for revision and reinterpretation of Hourani's pivotal work, and more recent scholarship has contributed important knowledge and a more balanced view of China's exchange with the Persian Gulf region.⁸ Yet there is still much work to be done in assessing the early maritime travel of Chinese people in the greater Indian Ocean region, which forms the main topic of Chapter One of this dissertation.

There is also the matter that politics at certain times rendered China's exchange with the world a somewhat sensitive topic. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Korean War and the forceful annexation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China brought about concerns of Chinese expansionism. In such an environment, accounts of China's history of cross-cultural exchange could be seen as supporting broader territorial claims. Yet despite these concerns, there were still scholars within the United States who sought to emphasize China's early global exchanges, such as Edwin Reischauer, who wrote of the travels of the Japanese monk Ennin 円

⁶ O.W. Wolters, "Studying Śrīvijaya," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 52.2 (1979): 1.

⁷ George Faldo Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁸ Alain George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China: from the Exchange of Goods to the Transmission of Ideas," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25 (2015): 579–624.

仁 (793–864).⁹ In more recent decades, academic interest has strongly shifted toward understanding the history of cross-cultural exchanges around the world, though concerns about China's influence on a global stage are still prevalent among political analysts and academics. More specifically, these concerns relate to China's Belt and Road Initiative, which exerts economic influence on foreign countries, often in cooperation with Chinese investors, engineers, laborers, and other specialists residing overseas. Such concerns also extend to China's expansion into the South China Sea, and its competing territorial claims with its neighbors. As we shall see, a detailed study of Chinese people taking to the seas does not justify any particular political position or initiative, especially those espoused by large states in the present day. Rather, it adds much nuance to our understanding of human exchange, and how such exchange developed in earlier periods of time for which our knowledge is relatively less extensive.

Objectives and Overview

The goal of this dissertation is to understand the early origins of Chinese people traveling and residing overseas. This work will examine every maritime region across Asia that Chinese people were recorded as traveling to, as it will be evident that there were distinct similarities and commonalities shared between those who were active across disparate regions. The time frame of this analysis is from the ninth to the early twelfth centuries. Whenever possible, I will consider in detail the backgrounds of these people, how they organized themselves, where they were from, and where they traveled to. We will see that Chinese sojourners traveled much greater lengths

⁹ See Ennin, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, trans. Edwin O. Reischauer (New York: Ronald Press, 1955); and Edwin Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955).

than previously recognized, that they often worked in cooperation with other ethnic groups on both ships and on land, that they were highly organized into kinship and regionally based networks from within certain areas of China, and that much of their success was determined by their relationships with political leaders at home and abroad.

In addition to challenging long-held narratives about when Chinese people first took to the seas, the research in this dissertation will also greatly support the work of scholars who have illustrated the significance of particular turning points in Chinese history, such as the An Lushan rebellion (755–763) and the transition between the Tang and Song dynasties (commonly referred to as the Tang-Song transition, approximately 750–1127). For the latter paradigm, there is much to suggest that the several decades that followed the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960 witnessed a significant period of change in China’s maritime history. Though as we shall see, changes instituted by the early Song government were not indications of a grand beginning, but rather, they marked a culmination point in which new political leadership sought to exert greater influence on trade systems that had already existed for centuries.

A detailed survey of Chinese seafarers at this time also provides insight on the history of states and societies throughout much of coastal Asia. For China, we gain a greater understanding of how merchants and officials functioned in local society, how networks were organized, which producers benefitted most from overseas trade, and how the wealth from sea trade came to play an important role in Chinese politics as a whole. For Japan, we learn more about the nature of the archipelago’s connections to its continental neighbors and how and where its foreign merchant communities were first established. And for Korea and Vietnam, we see that Chinese migrants played key roles in both commerce and in various levels of government. For Chinese people serving in governments in those two areas, this can in part be explained by the preexisting

traditions of Chinese-style statecraft and the broad usage of Sinitic writing among officials, though it is not immediately clear why such a trend did not also extend to Japan. Understanding Chinese migration for those two regions thus allows us greater insight into how governments there developed over time. Although Southeast Asia provides much less in the way of documentary evidence, it does have the richest archaeological record of Chinese migrants and travelers overseas. As such, studying such individuals in that region provides a greater sense of how their commodities circulated throughout the region on a large scale. For India and the Persian Gulf, relatively fragmented accounts of Chinese seafarers and visitors provide further details about the cosmopolitan nature of those regions.

We should not assume that the discussions within this dissertation simply pertain to one group influencing others. Influence never passes in a singular direction, so we will see in detail how Chinese people were influenced by their travels abroad just as they were able to influence others along their journeys. This is most evident in the transmission of Buddhism, which was both a land and sea-based process, though it is also discernible in diplomatic practices, the dynamics of which could vary greatly as different sides postured for status and wealth. And of course, we cannot underestimate the extent to which commerce transformed the lives of merchants and diplomats, as well as the degree of change it imparted on the trade enclaves that such figures passed through.

Throughout East Asia, diplomatic exchange persisted beyond the Tang empire's permanent loss of power from the An Lushan rebellion, though it did so on a much-diminished scale. Without the authority to control the movement of goods and people across the empire's southern coastlines, sea merchants were able to usurp prerogatives of state-to-state interaction, such as the trade of commodities and luxuries, the transportation of Buddhist monks, and the

exchange of books and information. This particularly suited the Heian court in Japan, though on the Korean peninsula it empowered a merchant network that eventually challenged entrenched interests in the Silla court. Meanwhile, kingdoms to China's south and west sought even more trade in the wake of the rebellion, much of which was prompted by the demand for Chinese goods in the wealthy cities and ports of the Abbasid caliphate. By the tenth century, both China and Korea became politically fragmented, and the power of the Heian court in Japan became privatized in the hands of an aristocratic family that controlled the imperial lineage. This climate proved advantageous to the interests of Chinese sea merchants, though unfortunately, the lack of political and social stability across much of East Asia during that period ensured a more limited written record compared to other periods. That being the case, we do have more details of tenth-century maritime exchange from the archaeological record of shipwrecks (most of them recovered in Southeast Asia) and from Arabic-language writings than we do for the ninth and the eleventh centuries. This is one indication that a China-Persian Gulf route had reached a high point at that time. However, by the eleventh century, the Abbasid caliphate declined while China's Song empire rose to prominence. In the wake of such changes, China's main destination for trade shifted to Southeast Asia, though Chinese merchants also continued to trade extensively in Japan and Korea. This began a period of relative stability and sustained growth in maritime trade that persisted into the fourteenth century.

Though Chinese people likely traded and resided overseas prior to the ninth century, there are no sources which indicate that this was a common occurrence prior to that time.¹⁰ Before the

¹⁰ Nevertheless, there are important works that provide context for the historical conditions that existed prior to when Chinese people first started taking to the seas in sizable numbers. See for instance Andrew Chittick, *The Jiankang Empire in Chinese and World History* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2020); and John W. Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750–1400* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 19–102 (digital edition).

ninth century, Chinese monks were known to travel abroad on both land and ship, and there were instances in which Chinese states dispatched individual representatives overseas. Scholarship over the last century has already extensively covered these examples, though they were not precursors to any major change which resulted in other Chinese people traveling overseas. Scholars are currently of the position that the loss of central authority from the An Lushan rebellion in the late eighth century was the main factor which allowed Chinese merchants to trade overseas in breach of laws that prohibited them from doing so. I agree with such a view, as all of the research that I have come across for this dissertation demonstrates that Chinese people began regularly sailing overseas in the early ninth century. Japanese sources are of greatest benefit in understanding this early traffic, and Chapter Two makes extensive use of such information to analyze the most detailed accounts of Chinese seafarers and the networks that they formed. I end my research in around the time that the Northern Song government collapsed in 1127, which caused a major rupture in China's political order. Time currently prohibits a more comprehensive study of how such a rupture affected the trade and migration of Chinese people, as well as their activities in the centuries that followed, though these remain promising topics for future research.

As will be discussed in each chapter, there were likely Chinese people of many occupations who traveled abroad from the ninth to twelfth centuries, though since most of the traffic was conducted for commercial purposes, merchant leaders are by far the most well-represented in textual sources. The dispatch of Chinese envoys by sea was relatively rare for much of the period of this dissertation, though apparently less rare in the early and middle tenth century. We will also see in Chapter Three connections and overlap between merchants and officials of southern China, many who appear to have belonged to the same kinship networks. As

such, officials likewise form an important part of this study. Finally, as already mentioned, Chinese communities have exercised much influence in world history. Chapter Four of this dissertation is dedicated toward understanding the earliest overseas Chinese communities that are evident in extant sources, and the increasing movement of Chinese people abroad in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Since the types of sources I utilize vary in each of these four chapters, I will provide a detailed discussion of those sources in each individual chapter.

Chapter One: The Indian Ocean Region and the South Seas Trade, c. 800–1000 CE

A detailed examination of textual and material sources reveals that, contrary to current assumptions, Chinese people were not simply passive recipients of foreign exchange in the ninth and tenth centuries. To date, a common narrative maintains that Chinese people very gradually established a tradition for seafaring and maritime commerce over the span of centuries, and that this only occurred as a reaction to centuries of foreign traders arriving on their shores.¹ Such accounts tend to rely on generalized assumptions of cultural predispositions, while overestimating the ability of Chinese courts to control traffic on their southernmost borders.² This chapter will demonstrate that Chinese people were among many groups across Asia that actively engaged in long-distance oceanic voyages prior to the eleventh century. The research within will push back the chronology of Chinese activity in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia—especially that of Chinese merchants—to an earlier period than previously recognized, by providing analysis of the presence of Chinese people in those regions prior to 1000 CE. This chapter will also shed light on how Chinese and other merchant groups worked together in the entrepôts of those regions and on trade ships, while considering many additional nuances to interethnic relations throughout the entirety of maritime Asia.

The extant primary sources and archaeological record for this period indicate that the most active ethnic groups in long-distance sea trade across maritime Asia were primarily Persians, Malay-Javanese, Indians, and Sinhalese, followed by Chinese and Arabs.³ Also

¹ See for instance Chang Pin-tsun, “The Formation of a Maritime Convention in Minnan (Southern Fujian), c. 900–1200,” in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea*, eds. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and Roderich Ptak, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 143–55.

² The rapid pace in which technological and practical knowledge of seafaring often passed from region to region has also been underestimated, though such an issue will not be the focus of this chapter.

³ This is presumably under the designation of “Muslims” in Arabic-language texts or its Chinese equivalent “Dashì” 大食. Much scholarship to date has misidentified Persian Muslims as Arabs, though this is because the distinction

involved, though to a lesser extent, were Jews, Sogdians, Chams, and Syrians. Record keepers and writers of this time were highly conscious of ethnicity, and this has influenced much scholarship on the topic, which often portrays ethnic groups as operating independently from or in competition with one another. Pierre-Yves Manguin has rightfully challenged this narrative by calling on scholars not to conceive of maritime Asia as divided on squarely ethnic grounds.⁴ As this dissertation will show, a broader and more detailed survey of textual and material sources supports Manguin's point about ethnic division by revealing two additional factors that are seldom taken into account for scholarship of this period. The first is that ships engaged in long distance trade frequently had crews of varied ethnicities. The second is that some crew members born in or near maritime entrepôts were of mixed ethnic background. This becomes increasingly clear with the larger availability of primary sources in the centuries following the time frame of this chapter, though we do see evidence of intermixing in this period as well.⁵

Robert Hartwell was the first scholar to call for a reassessment of the narrative of China's passive role in international trade, as he identified that the flow of commodities to and from China was primarily determined by those who profited most from the circulation of such goods within its borders—be they state or private interests.⁶ Prior to Hartwell's observations, Wang Gungwu put forth the initial proposal that Chinese people were active in Southeast Asia much

becomes increasingly vague after the rise of Islam in the seventh century. When outside of their native lands, Muslims often chose to prioritize religious identity over ethnic identity.

⁴ Pierre-Yves Manguin, "Ceramics from Indonesian Underwater Sites," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 106 (2020): 441.

⁵ Such instances discussed in this chapter come in addition to the many examples that scholars have highlighted in the port city of Guangzhou. See Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade*, 99, citation no. 5; George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China," 602; and Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 66 (digital edition).

⁶ Robert M. Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" in *Ryū Shiken hakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū* 劉子健博士頌壽記念宋史研究論集, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi 衣川強 (Kyoto: Dōbunsha, 1989), 457.

earlier than was commonly recognized.⁷ We will see in this and the following chapter strong indications of a turning point marked by flows of export ceramics and the movement of Chinese merchants overseas beginning at around the end of the eighth or early ninth centuries. Although Chinese exports circulated overseas prior to this time, and it seems probable that Chinese merchants were active earlier as well, the textual and archaeological records are limited for the former and practically silent for the latter. Such a change aligns with what Joseph McDermott characterized as a retreat of the Chinese state from direct control over the economy due to civil wars and foreign invasions that began in the middle of the eighth century.⁸ This also aligns with what Richard von Glahn has identified as a major economic shift southward as a result of the turmoil.⁹

State laws prohibited Chinese people from going abroad during the Tang dynasty (618–907). As Victor Fong has pointed out, state security was a major concern, but so too was the empire’s ability to retain its tax base and labor supply.¹⁰ Yet after the empire lost much of its authority in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion (755–763), it is questionable how strictly laws on border crossings were enforced, especially when local officials stood to gain from increased commercial traffic. The ideological imperative for rulers to attract new subjects from other countries and to limit the movement of their own people can be witnessed as far back as in the treatises of China’s Warring States period (475–221 BCE). These imperatives likewise arose from economic considerations, though for historians and intellectuals in later periods, they

⁷ Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade*.

⁸ Joseph P. McDermott, “Merchants and Commercial Networks,” in *The Cambridge Economic History of China, Volume I: To 1800*, eds. Debin Ma and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 630.

⁹ Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 361–73 (digital edition).

¹⁰ Victor Kam-Ping Fong, “Law, Subjecthood, and State Control in Early Tang (618-755),” Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 2021, 83.

formed moral standards for which emperors with a mandate for rulership were expected to uphold. The ways in which the movement of subjects abroad affected the compilation of official records become evident in this period, and even more so in the eleventh century, when an increasing amount of extant sources allows us to identify lacuna and omissions in court-sponsored texts.¹¹ Indeed, we will see in this chapter some instances in which the Tang court or historians of the subsequent Song dynasty (960–1279) felt compelled to conceal the presence of Chinese subjects overseas, even when those subjects were dispatched as court representatives.

There are, in fact, quite a few issues in working with Chinese sources for the ninth and tenth centuries. Most likely as a result of the destruction caused by the civil wars and rebellions that began in the mid-eighth century, the compilers of the Tang standard histories were only able to work with major historical texts that dated to before the year 840. As a result, the final 100 years of the Tang dynasty are represented in less detail than the first 200 years.¹² Tenth-century sources are likewise sparse; all the more so for discussion about southern states and virtually any topic that does not relate to political or military history. Although the kingdoms of southern China did have their own historians and chroniclers, Song leaders compelled them to burn their works after their states were conquered by the new empire.¹³ When the Song dynasty was established, its palace libraries were almost barren due to the havoc of the preceding century, and it took approximately two decades to assemble a collection through confiscation, market

¹¹ Gregory Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese During the Reign of Song Emperor Zhenzong (997–1022),” *Religions* 15 (2024): 1–27.

¹² Geoffrey Goble, “Maritime Southeast Asia: The View from Tang-Song China,” *Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series* 16 (2014): 2, citation no. 5.

¹³ Edward H. Schafer, *The Empire of Min: A South Kingdom of the Tenth Century* (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2006), x–xi. Johannes Kurz has noted that with the notable exception of the Southern Tang, there is very little material from other kingdoms such as Chu, Wu-Yue, and Later Shu, and no original historical works on Wu, Former Shu, Later Shu, and Min. All extant works on Southern Han were written at the beginning of the nineteenth century. See Johannes L. Kurz, “A Survey of the Historical Sources for the Five Dynasties and Ten States in Song Times,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 33 (2003): 193.

purchases, and reallocating the remains of libraries of conquered kingdoms.¹⁴ Even by 987, historiography was not yet a priority for Emperor Taizong 宋太宗 (939–997, r. 976–997), who stalled efforts by his officials to implement a functional system for producing historical works.¹⁵ In the 990s, when Taizong did take a more proactive approach, much of it was directed toward revising previous dynastic histories to accord with his own preferred narratives, which resulted in the permanent loss of much information. The reestablishment of court historiography was sanctioned only on the basis that early Song emperors could control the content and production of historical works, including the court diaries that recorded their own actions.¹⁶ Taizong’s successor Zhenzong 真宗 (968–1022, r. 997–1022) also took a hands-on approach to the production of histories, and often told officials their works were “wrong” and needed to be corrected.¹⁷ One prominent scholar of the fourteenth century argued that the state histories and records of the Song were often not reliable because political pressures forced Song historians to cover up sensitive events and evade unpleasant realities. Omissions and evasions were common issues in such works.¹⁸ To make matters worse, the burning of the imperial library in 1015 largely destroyed books dated to the Tang and Five Dynasties (907–979) periods.¹⁹ It was only during the regency of Empress Liu (Liu Huanghou 劉皇后, 969–1033, r. 1022–1033) and the

¹⁴ Johannes L. Kurz, “The Consolidation of Official Historiography during the Early Northern Song Dynasty,” *Journal of Asian History* 46.1 (2012): 13–14; and Sung Chia-fu, “The Official Historiographical Operation of the Song Dynasty,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 45 (2015): 180–81.

¹⁵ Johannes L. Kurz, “Song Taizong, the ‘Record of Jiangnan’ (‘Jiangnan lu’), and an Alternate Ending to the Tang,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 46 (2016): 46–47.

¹⁶ Kurz, “Song Taizong, the ‘Record of Jiangnan,’” 30; and Charles Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History: Sources and Narratives, 960–1279 CE* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 8. As Hartman notes for this particular time, “history for the monarchy was a vehicle to exert its legitimacy and strengthen political control.”

¹⁷ Kurz, “The Consolidation of Official Historiography,” 32, 34. On the topic of foreign exchange in Song historiography until the end of Zhenzong’s reign, see also Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

¹⁸ Hartman, *The Making of Song Dynasty History*, 178.

¹⁹ Kurz, “A Survey of the Historical Sources for the Five Dynasties and Ten States,” 194.

reign of her son Renzong 仁宗, (1010–1063, r. 1033–1063) that officials established a rigorous system of record keeping in which Song emperors were only nominally in charge.²⁰ Although Chinese sources provide essential knowledge for the ninth and tenth centuries, it is important to recognize their limitations, as well as the necessity to examine non-Chinese sources whenever the opportunity avails itself. Thus, in addition gathering knowledge from Chinese texts, this chapter will make extensive use of textual sources from Arabic-language texts, with additional consideration of Old Javanese inscriptions, Vietnamese histories, and even Japanese records.

In regard to the material record, the major developments of this period are largely positive. As already noted, a sudden and persistent influx of Chinese ceramics to locations across maritime Asia began in the late eighth century. Ceramics were the most durable trade commodity, and their prevalence in archaeological sites allows us to understand the locations where many Chinese goods circulated. Land-based discoveries of Chinese items are unfortunately mainly limited to ceramics, though shipwrecks provide a much more extensive range of goods and items, many of which are ethnographic in nature. A higher frequency of shipwrecks also begins at the end of the eighth century, and their surveys will provide much valuable insight for this chapter.

This chapter will analyze the extant evidence of Chinese people traveling through and residing in the Indian Ocean area and Southeast Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries, with the goal of understanding the beginning of a trend in which Chinese people took on outsized roles in the economies, politics, and cultures throughout much of the region over the following millennium. For the reason that so many events occurred at approximately the same time across

²⁰ Kurz, “The Consolidation of Official Historiography,” 35.

the span of maritime Asia, this chapter will be organized on the basis of geography, and chronology will be applied within each geographic section. In following the primary maritime sea route across Asia at this time, this chapter begins with the Persian Gulf region and ends with southern China. The chapter will progress from west to east along the route connecting both regions and analyze major locations along the way. The locations I will analyze are as follows: Baghdad and the Persian Gulf, southwest India, Kedah (northwest Malay peninsula), Java, Champa (central and southern Vietnam), Giao (northern Vietnam), Guangnan (Guangdong and Guangxi), Fujian, and Wu-Yue (Zhejiang). For locations outside of the Tang empire and its successor states, analysis will primarily seek to chart the presence of Chinese people and identify their backgrounds and activities whenever possible. Thus, we begin with examination of the Persian Gulf—the farthest known region reached by Chinese voyagers—before moving steadily eastward along the period’s most important maritime route.

Figure 1 Locations of Interest in the Indian Ocean Region and Southeast Asia during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries



The Persian Gulf

Scholars to date have made significant contributions highlighting the extensive activities of West Asian merchants sailing to Chinese ports and residing in Chinese cities from the eighth century onward.²¹ Indeed, the Abbasid caliphate (750–1258) and the Tang dynasty were the two wealthiest and most culturally influential states in the world during the eighth and ninth centuries, and their commercial and political connections are very much worthy of our attention. However, on the topic of exchange between both civilizations, attention has largely centered on eastbound traffic, with relatively little focus on that which traveled in the other direction.²²

Analysis of traffic to the Persian Gulf in Arabic-language records allows for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of this relationship. Among the textual sources from outside of China, the earliest description of “Chinese ships” taking to the seas south of the coasts of Vietnam are from such Arabic-language texts. A wide range of descriptions of “Chinese ships” from as early as the seventh century and continuing through to the eleventh century and later raise questions about the nature of early Chinese seafarers and long-distance exchange in that period. However, this topic has received little detailed consideration since George Hourani published his highly influential book *Arab Seafaring* in 1951, in which he argued that the “Chinese ships” of those accounts were merely ships “in the China trade.”²³ To further

²¹ See for instance Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963); Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*; George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China, 579–624; and Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*. Foreign diasporas in China existed prior to this time, though the details of their communities become increasingly scarce in tandem with the decreased availability of primary sources the further one looks to the past.

²² A notable exception would be George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China.”

²³ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 46–60, 75–76. Hourani preferred to translate “sufun al-Šīn” as “ships of China,” though “Chinese ships” would be the natural translation into English. Other designations in Arabic texts include *sufun min al-Šīn* (“ships from China”), *marākib al-Šīn* (“Chinese vessels” or “vessels of China”), *markab Šīnī* (“Chinese ships” or “ships of China”), and *al-sufun al-šīnīyah* (“the Chinese ships”). For these terms, see also Moira Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West: An Archaeological Study of the Ceramics from Siraf (Persian Gulf), 8th to 15th Centuries A.D.* (Oxford, U.K.: B.A.R., 1988), 120.

complicate the question, Hourani's own analysis assumed that ship crews were of a single ethnicity or religion. Since Hourani's work was first published, scholars have generally accepted Hourani's argument, though little evidence has been put forth to either support or refute his case. In fact, more attention has been paid toward highlighting the point that these ships were not actually "Chinese" than toward considering what they actually were, or the significance of their frequent appearance in Arabic texts. Here, I will show that the view that the "Chinese ships" in Arabic sources referred to ships crewed exclusively by Muslims is incorrect. I do not wish to assert that the ships were instead crewed solely by Chinese, as the available textual and archaeological evidence of the ninth and tenth century Indian Ocean region clearly demonstrates multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious ship crews. None of the extant evidence demonstrates that Chinese people were the predominant group in ship crews of that region, though it does show that Chinese people formed a part of such crews.

The true nature of the "Chinese ships" might never be adequately clarified because of their vague descriptions, yet Hourani's popular and influential book effectively closed off Western scholarly discussion of pre-twelfth-century Chinese seafaring for many years.²⁴ Although more recent scholarship, including the findings of this dissertation, shows conclusively that Chinese people were active overseas at an earlier time, Hourani's argument retains considerable influence among scholars in many regions and disciplines—albeit with notably less

²⁴ *Arab Seafaring* was republished multiple times since 1951, most recently in 2020 as a digital e-book reissue of the 1995 edition, which is the edition referred to in this dissertation. Hourani's statement is "From all this I conclude that there is nothing to prove direct Chinese sailings to Mesopotamia before Islam. Nor, I believe, do we find them for many centuries after Islam (see Ch. II, p. 75). Chinese sources on the subject support this conclusion; F. Hirth and W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua* (St. Petersburg, 1911), Introduction, p. 18, assert that Quilon [Kollam] in Southwest India, visited by Cantonese junks in the twelfth century, was the furthest point west ever reached by Chinese ships till the Ming dynasty." See 48–50. On 76 he further specifies that he is referring to the period "before at least the end of the twelfth century."

traction in China and Japan.²⁵ Thus, any English-language analysis of the history of Chinese people taking to the seas during the time frame of this chapter must consider Hourani's arguments and their validity.

Upon close examination, Hourani's argument is problematic for several reasons. To begin, it is primarily based on one example from a tenth-century story of a certain Captain Abhara. Hourani argued that this man's status as a Persian captain of what was described as a "Chinese ship" indicated that such a description "sometimes certainly means Moslem ships on the China run."²⁶ Hourani believed that this late tenth-century story could apply to the seventh and eighth century descriptions of "Chinese ships" because Abhara was described in the story as "the first to make regular voyages to China."²⁷ Later in this chapter I will discuss how these tales reflect the circumstances of the time in which they were written.²⁸ Of greater concern is that Hourani's attribution of Abhara as a captain of a "Chinese ship" is inaccurate. Hourani's rendering of the account of this man is as follows:

"He was originally from Kirmān, a shepherd in one of its districts, then he became a fisherman, then one of the sailors [*al-bānāniyah*] on a ship trading with India. He then

²⁵ For the more recent English-language scholarship which discusses Chinese people overseas prior to the twelfth century, see Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century*; So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China: The South Fukien Pattern*; Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE"; Chin, "Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities"; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*. Japanese scholarship was the first to spearhead research on early Chinese sea merchants due to the very rich collections of primary sources on those figures extant in Japan. That scholarship is discussed in detail and cited in Chapter Two. Some of the notable Chinese-language works include Li Donghua 李東華, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong* 泉州與我國中古的海上交通 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju youxian gongsi, 1986); Guan Luquan 關履權, *Songdai Guangzhou de haiwai maoyi* 宋代广州的海外贸易 (Shaoguan: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1994); and Liao Dake 廖大珂, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi* 福建海外交通史 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2002).

²⁶ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 47.

²⁷ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 66.

²⁸ Analysis of the historical context of these stories is also available in Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

changed to a China ship [markab Sīni], of which he afterwards became captain. He was well versed in the ways of the sea..."²⁹

However, Hourani's translation derives from an Arabic to French translation from L. M. Devic, and Hourani's translation to English from Devic's French translation does not correctly reproduce the details most relevant to his argument. Devic's translation is as follows:

“Il était originaire de Kerman. Il fut d’abord berger et garda les brebis dans quelque village de cette contrée. Puis il se fit pêcheur, ensuite matelot sur les navires qui fréquentaient les mers de l’Inde. Plus tard, il s’embarqua sur un navire chinois. Enfin il devint capitaine, traversa la mer en tout sens...” [He was from Kerman. He was first a shepherd and looked after the sheep in some village of this region. Then he became a fisherman, then a sailor on the ships that frequented the seas of India. Later, he embarked on a Chinese ship. Finally, he became a captain, (and) crossed the sea in all directions...].³⁰

This translation does not indicate that Abhara's time spent on a Chinese ship was concurrent with his time as a captain. An Arabic to English translation by G.S.P Freeman-Grenville likewise makes no such distinction, nor does a reading of the original Arabic text itself.³¹ Thus, there is no

²⁹ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 114.

³⁰ Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar, *Livre des Merveilles de L'inde*, trans. Marcel L. Devic (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1883-1886), 85. It might be that Hourani opted to provide his own translation of the Arabic text that Devic included alongside the French translation, though if so, Hourani does not indicate such was the case or that his interpretation is different from Devic's.

³¹ Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar, *The Book of the Wonders of India, Mainland, Sea and Islands*, trans. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville (London and The Hague: East-West Publications, 1981), 49–50. I am grateful to Nile Green for confirming the meaning of the original Arabic text.

such passage which describes a Persian captain of a “Chinese ship” that was ostensibly piloted by an entirely Persian or Muslim crew.³²

The next problem is that Hourani’s claim that “Chinese ships” referred to Muslim ships is undermined by the very book which he used to make his point. The *Aja’ib al-Hind* also tells a story of a ship piloted by a Persian shipmaster (in this case a Zoroastrian), which sailed from Siraf (southern Iran) to China with “a crowd of merchants with him from every country.” It goes on to narrate that

“In a night that was so long, without hope of rescue, a prey to the violence of the gale, in a sea that boiled, beaten about by frightening waves, on a ship that leapt and plunged, shuddered and trembled, the passengers said farewell to one another, and each of them prayed according to his religion, for there were men from China, India, Persia, and the islands.”³³

Although the accounts of this book were stories passed along to the author by sailors in the tenth century, we shall see in the following sections that this is a more accurate portrayal of long-distance sea crews at that time than Hourani’s depiction of sea crews characterized by a single ethnicity, nationality, or religion.³⁴

Since it is now evident that the prevailing view regarding the “Chinese ships” is based on a misreading of a single textual passage and is not substantiated by facts, we should begin to

³² Suhanna Shafiq points out that Abhara’s title of *rubbān* does not even directly translate to “captain,” but instead often means “navigator.” See Suhanna Shafiq, *Seafarers of the Seven Seas: The Maritime Culture in the Kitāb ‘Ajā’ib al-Hind (The Book of the Marvels of India) by Buzurg Ibn Shahriyār (d. 399 / 1009)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2013), 55.

³³ Buzurg, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 13–14. Other tales in this book also talk of ethnically diverse crews, though without providing details about where they were from. For additional evidence of Persian-Indian cooperation in sea trade at this time, see Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism, Commerce and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 113.

³⁴ See for instance Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 36–61.

consider the actual nature of those ships. The earliest attribution of Chinese ships in Arabic-language texts concerns voyages to Ubulla (southeast Iraq). As early as 636, during the Muslim conquests, Ubulla was already recognized as a place of major strategic value, being described as “the port of Bahrain, Oman, India, and China.”³⁵ The Arab historian and traveler Mas'udi (896–956) also discusses Chinese and Indian ships arriving to the area in around 636, though Hourani dismissed this account because it contains fantastical elements in its narrative.³⁶ It is indeed the case that Mas'udi's account contains fantastical elements (such as a wise man who was 350 years old). Mas'udi was also prone to exaggeration, apparently for the purpose of entertaining and captivating his audience. For instance, he exaggerated Abu Zayd's (850–934) death toll of foreign merchants killed in southern China during the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion (874–884) by listing 200,000 dead instead of Abu Zayd's 120,000.³⁷ That being said, in his discussions of China, we see that Mas'udi's information was based on the accounts of more credible writers rather than being outright fabrications. It might be best to consider that his accounts contain truths, though at times the details have been exaggerated.

Hourani was quick to dismiss Mas'udi's discussion of Chinese ships on the premise of those exaggerations. However, in doing so, Hourani omitted some very important details, namely, that elsewhere in Mas'udi's account we see that these ships belonged to a diplomatic

³⁵ Aḥmad ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State: Being a Translation from the Arabic Accompanied with Annotations, Geographic and Historic Notes of the Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, trans. Francis Clark Murgotten (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924), 53; Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 47.

³⁶ Mas'udi, *El-Mas'udi's Historical Encyclopedia, entitled "Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems:" Translated from the Arabic*, trans. Aloys Sprenger (London: The Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1841), 246; Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 47.

³⁷ Mas'udi, 324–25; Abu Zayd al-Sīrāfi, *Accounts of China and India*, trans. Tim Mackintosh-Smith (New York and London: New York University Press, 2014), 67–69.

embassy dispatched by a mythical Chinese emperor. Mas'udi's description of this embassy is, in fact, very much worth our attention:

“He [the Chinese emperor] ordered, first, ships to be built, manned them, loaded them with the produce of China, and sent them to India, es-Sind, Babylonia, and other kingdoms near and far. He made to the kings the most rare presents, and sent them costly gifts; and he gave orders to his sailors to bring him from every country what is beautiful and exquisite for the table, or for dress and furniture, not found in his own kingdom. He ordered them to make themselves acquainted with the forms of government of every empire, and with the religious tenets, laws, and moral state of every nation; and that they should ask the people for precious stones, perfumes, and instruments. The vessels went out, and separated to visit various countries, following the orders of their king. Wherever they landed the inhabitants were surprised at them, and admired what they brought. Kings, whose dominions were on the sea coast, built vessels, and ordered them to sail to China, in order to import into China such products as were wanting there. They wrote to the king, acknowledging the presents of his country and sending others in return. So China advanced in her civilization and prosperity.”³⁸

What is surprising to those familiar with Chinese diplomatic history is how closely this description mirrors the diplomatic practices and attitudes of the Tang and later Chinese courts. Particularly noteworthy are the types of information that Chinese leaders valued, the strong demand for aromatics in Chinese capitals, the instructions for foreigners to visit China, and the reception of written missives from foreign leaders. Subsequent Chinese dynasties also dispatched

³⁸ Mas'udi, 315.

seaborne embassies to elicit tribute after consolidating their rule (the most famous being Zheng He's voyages), though this would be the earliest known example of such a practice.

Unfortunately, no such account exists in Chinese records. In fact, one is hard pressed to find any evidence at all of Chinese seaborne embassies in official Tang records, though as we shall see, this appears to be more a result of sovereigns and officials pruning the histories for political purposes rather than a reflection of actual circumstances. One final point that should be noted here is that a tenth-century writer believed that in earlier centuries, Chinese states were building their own ships to sail to the Persian Gulf.

Mas'udi's account, which discusses a Chinese dynasty that extended its borders "to the country of the Turks," refers to either the Sui (581–618) or Tang dynasties.³⁹ It is possible that his description was an amalgamation of information describing one or more embassies sent by those dynasties that was recorded in earlier documents and retained a place in the imaginations of Mas'udi's contemporaries. The *Sui shu* does have an account of the Sui emperor Yang 煬 (569–618) sending an envoy to Persia, though it does not clarify if this was done by land or by sea.⁴⁰ However, it is known that Sui leaders took an active interest in sea-based exchange with the outside world, and they did send an embassy by sea to the kingdom of Chitu 赤土 (Malay peninsula), in addition to conducting a seaborne invasion of the kingdom of Linyi 林邑 (central Vietnam) and an excursion to the Ryukyu islands (Taiwan or Okinawa).⁴¹ Clearly, Sui leaders were in command of relatively sophisticated naval technologies. It is also worth noting that even

³⁹ Mas'udi, 314.

⁴⁰ Yan Shigu 顏師古 et al., *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 卷 83, *Xicheng zhuan* 西域傳; Guan, *Songdai Guangzhou de haiwai maoyi*, 37; Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 353.

⁴¹ Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade*, 60–61.

those state embassies brought people of different ethnic backgrounds on their ships, as knowledge of the conditions and languages of the places the embassy visited was invaluable.

The sophisticated navel technologies of seventh-century China are further attested to in the Battle of Paekchon River off the southwest coast of Korea. In 663, a Tang navy of 170 ships was able to outmaneuver and decimate a Japanese naval force of 400 ships. The defeat was so resounding that it prompted some of the most impactful systematic governmental reforms in Japan's history and it led to the establishment of the first polity to span most of the Korean peninsula.⁴²

As for sea-based Tang embassies, efforts to look beyond state histories yield the most details. For instance, we know of an embassy headed by a Tang official named Daxi Hongtong 達奚弘通 that was dispatched to the Middle East during the Shangyuan 上元 period (674–676).⁴³ The details are limited, but they state that the Tang court appointed him an envoy and that he sailed to Chitu and then on to a location called Qianna 虔那. Angela Schottenhammer believes this to be a reference to Qanā⁴⁴—which was an important overseas trade port in southern Arabia during the seventh century and later a significant importer of Chinese wares—and Zhao Liren quotes a third-century text to locate the port in the northwestern part of the Indian Ocean.⁴⁵ Daxi Hongtong's embassy stopped at “36 states” along the journey from Chitu to Qianna. Song

⁴² On this event, see Nadia Kanagawa, “East Asia's First World War, 643–668,” in *East Asia in the World: Twelve Events That Shaped the Modern International Order*, ed. Stephan Haggard and David C. Kang (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 77–98.

⁴³ Zhao Liren 赵立人, “Daxi Hongtong chushi haiwai kao” 达奚弘通出使海外考, *Haijiao shi yanjiu* 海交史研究 2 (1990): 24.; and Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao's Mission of 785 to the Caliph of Baghdād,” 179–80. The Shangyuan period could also refer to the years 760–761, though considering that the Tang empire was in the midst of a severe civil war at that time, that period seems less plausible. The Daxi surname originated among Xianbei people during the Northern Wei and Northern Zhou periods, and was associated with the ruling Tuoba clans of northern China. Daxi Hongtong likely descended from these groups and was a part of the early Tang ruling class.

⁴⁴ Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao's Mission of 785,” 180, citation no. 10.

⁴⁵ Zhao, “Daxi Hongtong chushi haiwai kao,” 24.

gazetteers further highlight that he was present in Guangzhou during this journey, which was likely his port of departure.⁴⁶ Daxi Hongtong's mission was omitted from the official Tang histories, though they do list the title of his travel account (no longer extant), *Hainan zhu fan xing ji* 海南諸蕃行記. Fortunately, his renown in Guangzhou persisted into the Song dynasty, and records of his activities survived long enough for information on his embassy to be included into the late Song encyclopedia *Yu hai* 玉海.⁴⁷

Relatively more information is available for the Tang eunuch Yang Liangyao 楊良瑤 (736–806). As with Daxi Hongtong, details about this man were not preserved in official histories or biographies, though his existence and activities became known to scholars when his epitaph was excavated in Shaanxi province in 1984.⁴⁸ The Tang court dispatched Yang Liangyao by sea as an envoy to the Abbasid caliphate in 785, presumably for the purpose of securing a military alliance against the Tibetan empire.⁴⁹ He was recorded as having successfully completed his mission and the embassy safely returned in 788, though at times the oceanic journey was so perilous that sacrifices to deities had to be made to ensure safe passage. Yang Liangyao travelled with a retinue of diplomats and servants whose precise size is left unstated yet was evidently large, for the epitaph makes it clear that

“The imperial tradition was made known to all according to the alien custom; the manner of the embassy conveyed its prestige to all.”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Zhao, “Daxi Hongtong chushi haiwai kao,” 24.

⁴⁷ Wang Yinglin 王應麟, *Yu hai* (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 16.

⁴⁸ Rong Xinjiang, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations: A Study of Yang Liangyao's Embassy to the Abbasid Caliphate,” in *Imperial China and Its Southern Neighbors*, ed. Victor H. Mair and Liam C. Kelley (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015), 240.

⁴⁹ Rong, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations,” 244–49; and Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao's Mission of 785,” 192–96.

⁵⁰ Rong, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations,” 243.

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Such a statement aligns with Mas'udi's description of an embassy that was intended to impress the leaders of far-away states. Although written three centuries later, a sense of how maritime embassies sought to impress their hosts can be gained from the Chinese diplomat Xu Jing's 徐兢 (1091–1155) description of Song embassy ships sent to Koryŏ (Korea) in 1123:

“Imposing like mountains, they flowed and moved across the waves with embroidered sails and a figurehead of a sea hawk subduing the sea dragons, bringing glory to the august Chinese empire and making the barbarians tremble. They are a supreme, crowning achievement, not only for the present but also for the past. It is therefore fitting that on the day the Koryŏ people received the edict, the whole country came out to watch [the ships] and shouted for joy and sighed in admiration.”⁵¹

Angela Schottenhammer has considered why Yang Liangyao's mission was not recorded in Tang histories despite its significance. She makes the important point that the traditional expectation was that foreign states and tribes would send embassies to China, and that Chinese empires only dispatched embassies under exceptional circumstances. This represented the hierarchical differentiation between a sovereign and a vassal. She also states that:

“[D]iplomatic missions, at least those recorded in the official historiography, were not characterized by equal bilateral relations. And where China was the petitioner seeking

⁵¹ Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea: Xu Jing's Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Koryŏ*, trans. Sem Vermeersch (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 209.

help [such as a military alliance], this would have been a most sensitive matter that needed to be kept secret, above all in a politically unstable situation.”⁵²

A similar sentiment would appear to have been shared by Muslim leaders, as Chinese histories record the arrival of dozens of embassies claiming to represent the Rashidun (632–661), Umayyad (661–750), and Abbasid (750–1258) caliphates between 651 and 798, though only one such embassy to China appears to be recorded in Arabic-language sources.⁵³ Instances when Chinese empires sent embassies to elicit tribute from foreign states were also quite sensitive. An ideal existed in Chinese courts in which foreign leaders were expected to know of a Chinese emperor’s virtue as a result of his good reputation extending out to the rest of the world. Upon learning this, the leaders were to send embassies to pay tribute to the Chinese sovereign.⁵⁴ Even the *Song shi*, with its uncharacteristically transparent depictions of foreign exchange, only makes a brief mention of the Song eunuchs who were sent in 987 to elicit tribute from kingdoms in the South Seas (Nanhai 南海, broadly referring to Southeast Asia).⁵⁵ It is also well known that Ming (1368–1644) leaders attempted to erase Zheng He’s voyages from the historical record.

Thus, the most plausible explanation regarding the Chinese ships in Arabic-language sources is that at least some of them were embassy ships sent from the Tang empire and possibly

⁵² Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao’s Mission of 785,” 195. See also Angela Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part Two: Sung China, 960–1279*, ed. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 449. Subsequent dynasties did regularize the exchange of embassies with partners along their borders, mainly due to strategic military concerns.

⁵³ Schottenhammer, “Yang Liangyao’s Mission of 785,” 190, citation no.58, 192; and Jeffrey Kotyk, *Sino-Iranian and Sino-Arabian Relations in Late Antiquity: China and the Parthians, Sasanians, and Arabs in the First Millennium* (Leiden: Brill, 2024), 260.

⁵⁴ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

⁵⁵ Tuo Tuo 脫脫, *Song shi* 宋史 (henceforth SS; Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 186. “During the Yongxi period (984–987), eight palace attendants were dispatched to give imperial missives, (as well as) gold and silks. (These groups) were allotted four routes, (with the purpose of) eliciting (tribute) from the various foreigners of the Southern Seas.” 雍熙中，遣內侍八人齎敕書金帛，分四路招致海南諸蕃。

also the earlier Sui empire. This holds true at least until the An Lushan rebellion, after which there was a significant decrease in the Tang state's authority and resources. Yang Liangyao's embassy in 785 marked a period in which the Tang state began to recuperate, though this period was short lived, and subsequent rebellions rendered the empire unable to exert much influence beyond the provinces surrounding the capital of Chang'an.⁵⁶ The decline of state authority at that time paralleled a significant and sustained uptick in private sea trade toward the end of the eighth century, which can be traced in the archaeological record by the sudden outflow of Chinese export ceramics across the vast expanse of maritime Asia. From this time onward, mentions of "Chinese ships" in Arabic records likely refer to trade ships with at least some Chinese crew members carrying these and other wares into port cities along the Persian Gulf. Yet interestingly enough, those mariners were not the first recorded Chinese inhabitants of that region.

Just prior to the An Lushan rebellion, the Tang empire suffered a military defeat by the Abbasid caliphate in Central Asia, a loss that carried great repercussions there and throughout the Middle East. The newly instituted and expanding caliphate came to a confrontation with the Tang empire in the Battle of Talas (southern Kazakhstan) in 751, and following the battle, thousands of Chinese captives were brought back to the Islamic empire. Among the captives were scores of Chinese craftsmen who transmitted technologies from the Tang empire to the Abbasid caliphate and took on essential economic roles as producers there. The most famous outcome of these technological transfers was knowledge of papermaking. As the Persian scholar Biruni (973–1050) stated:

⁵⁶ Michael T. Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part One*, ed. Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 561–681.

“It was in China that paper was first manufactured. Chinese prisoners introduced the fabrication of paper into Samarkand [southeast Uzbekistan, located near Talas], and thereupon it was made in various places, so as to meet the existing want.”⁵⁷

These are not the first accounts of large Chinese populations inhabiting regions beyond imperial borders. In 629, the Tang empire claimed to have repatriated over one million Chinese war refugees after conquering the Eastern Türk khaghanate.⁵⁸ The concern for those people living beyond Tang borders is evident from Emperor Taizong’s payments of gold to repatriate 80,000 of them several years before initiating his conquests. There is also an instance of 180,000 Tang troops being stranded in Tibet after an unsuccessful military campaign there in 678. It is not known what became of them after that time. However, what is significant about the captives of the Battle of Talas is that they would appear to be the earliest recorded Chinese inhabitants of the Middle East.

The Abbasid caliphate was established in 750, only one year prior to the Battle of Talas, yet it took over the large empire of its predecessor, the Umayyad caliphate. Its early leaders were from Khurasan, on the frontiers of the Sinitic ecumene, and they were quick to take advantage of the former administrative infrastructure of the Umayyads to accelerate economic integration throughout the region. This process resulted in the relocation of the political and economic center from Syria to the Persian Gulf area.⁵⁹ As such, the arrival of Chinese craftsmen into their lands

⁵⁷ Biruni, *Albiruni’s India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India About A.D. 1030, Volume 1*, trans. Edward C. Sachau (London: Routledge, 2000), 81.

⁵⁸ This and the following example are from Fong, “Law, Subjecthood, and State Control in Early Tang,” 101–02.

⁵⁹ On the Abbasid economy, see Amira K. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs: The Golden Age of the ‘Abbasid Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 137–57.

precisely at the beginning of these initiatives was felicitous in allowing for their participation in that process.

Knowledge of these craftsmen and other Chinese captives comes to us mainly from the *Tong dian* 通典, a court-sponsored encyclopedia presented to the Tang throne in 801 by the courtier Du You 杜佑 (735–812). Du You included excerpts within this work of a journal from his nephew Du Huan 杜環, who was one of the men taken captive at Talas.⁶⁰ This journal recounts Du Huan’s eleven years spent in the Abbasid domains, and in one particularly insightful section, it discusses the contributions of Chinese craftsmen to the Abbasid caliphate:

“The silk weavers, gold and silver smiths, and painters by trade came about [in the Abbasid caliphate] from the Chinese craftsmen. Of the painters, there are Fan Shu and Liu Ci from the [Tang] capital region. Of the silk weavers, there are Yue Huan and Lü Li from Hedong [Shanxi].”⁶¹

綾絹機杼、金銀匠、畫匠，漢匠起。作畫者，京兆人樊淑、劉泚，織絡者，河東人樂瓊、呂禮。

It would seem that of the large number of captives taken after the Battle of Talas, many of them were craftsmen such as those described above. This direct connection is never made in the primary sources, and indeed it is possible that the craftsmen Du Huan described made their way to the Middle East prior to the Battle of Talas.⁶² If such was the case, the northern origins of these men render it all but certain that they would have arrived via the Inner Asian Silk Road.

⁶⁰ Alexander Akin, “The Jing Xing Ji of Du Huan: Notes on the West by a Chinese Prisoner of War,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 5 (1999–2000): 78.

⁶¹ Du You 杜佑, *Tongdian* 通典 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 1987), juan 193 Bianfang 邊防 9, 1044.

⁶² Akin recognizes this possibility as well. See “The Jing Xing Ji of Du Huan,” p.93.

The free movement of these people, however, is difficult to conceive of for two reasons. First, the Tang state maintained firm control over its western borders prior to the An Lushan rebellion, and its leaders would have been extremely reluctant to let subjects, especially those who were highly skilled, leave on their own accord. Second, the skills of those craftsmen were valued in and around the Tang capital, so there was no economic incentive for them to leave. Moreover, it seems that Du Huan's purpose of naming these individuals and their home regions was to help the Tang court account for missing prominent figures that were listed in their records. Thus, the most plausible explanation is that these men were taken from nearby settlements formerly administered by the Tang empire when Muslim forces conquered those lands.

That these men—and possibly women—formed communities in Abbasid cities seems quite likely, though precisely where they ended up is not clear. Du Huan's mention of Kufa, the caliphate's first capital, suggests they were initially brought to political centers.⁶³ If such was the case, then they would have moved to the new capital of Baghdad in around 760. Indeed, we will see that in determining the location for a new capital, trade connections with the Tang empire were a primary consideration of Abbasid leaders. Such a decision might have derived not only from consideration of the valuable commodities brought from China (as well as from India and closer polities), but also by the immediate effect on local economies that the Chinese craftsmen exerted. Certainly, Chinese craftsmen were held in high esteem, as noted by Abu Zayd (early tenth century):

⁶³ George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China," 611.

“The Chinese are the most skillful of God’s entire creation in designing, crafting and every type of work. They are not surpassed in this by any other nation. A Chinese man can craft with his hand what others would seem incapable of.”⁶⁴

Material evidence also indicates that Chinese production techniques were imported to the Abbasid caliphate at this time. Scholars have long debated influences from artistic styles and production techniques passing between the Persian Gulf and China during the eighth and ninth centuries, and quite often it seems uncertain as to where a particular trait or style originated. It is more certain that both locations influenced each other to a great extent, though we do not have any conclusive evidence for which groups of people were transmitting the influences. It would seem that ceramics glazing was passed to commercial centers in the Persian Gulf region from China, as glazed ceramics only emerged in the Islamic world in the mid-eighth century.⁶⁵ This might be the result of potters being among those craftsmen brought to the region after the Battle of Talas. In turn, the use of certain coloring pigments passed in both directions, and motifs native to the Middle East became popular within the Tang empire. Experimentation in the Middle East to produce local equivalents of Chinese ceramics can be traced to the early ninth century, with particular effort made toward reproducing the white stonewares made at the Gongxian kilns of northern China. This included precise emulation of the dimensions of those Chinese wares.⁶⁶ Although original Gongxian wares were shipped by sea, they only formed a tiny portion of the

⁶⁴ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 590.

⁶⁵ Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 91–92.

⁶⁶ Jessica Hallet, “Pearl Cups Like the Moon: The Abbasid Reception of Chinese Ceramics,” in *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, eds. Regina Krahl, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby (Washington D.C. and Singapore: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The National Heritage Board, Singapore, and The Singapore Tourism Board, 2010), 76–77.

Chinese trade ceramics discovered in shipwrecks thus far and appear only limited to the ninth century.⁶⁷ It has also been pointed out that

“Basran [southeast Iraq] potters also knew a surprising amount about Chinese methods of shaping ceramics in the early ninth century. Although Iraqi clay was softer and more pliable, technical analyses of the Basran copies (of Chinese ceramics) reveal they were made in precisely the same way as the Chinese models, illustrating the intensity of contact between Basra and China at this time.”⁶⁸

The techniques that were passed from China to the Abbasid caliphate were indeed quite complex, and involved the use of specific mold types, shaping methods, templates, cutting tools, and sequences.⁶⁹ If those techniques were passed along by Chinese residing in the caliphate, it is not clear whether the current evidence of that transmission can be attributed to the captives of Talas, their descendants, or those who arrived on trade ships via coastal ports (as this time was concurrent with a precipitous increase in sea trade). Among the many locations in the region where Chinese trade ceramics circulated, Samarra (central Iraq), which was the Abbasid capital from 836 to 892, was also home to local potters who produced imitations of Chinese wares soon after those goods first arrived.⁷⁰

Baghdad, which became the Abbasid capital in 762, stands out among the many cosmopolitan cities of the caliphate. Being a new city in the late eighth century, its population drew inhabitants from regions near and far, and its neighborhoods were home to those of various

⁶⁷ John Guy, “Rare and Strange Goods: International Trade in Ninth-Century Asia,” in *Shipwrecked*, 20.

⁶⁸ Hallet, “Pearl Cups Like the Moon,” 79.

⁶⁹ Hallet, “Pearl Cups Like the Moon,” 79.

⁷⁰ Tatsuo Sasaki, “Trade Patterns of Zhejiang Wares Found in West Asia,” in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares: Archaeological Ceramics Found in Eastern and Southern Asia, A.D. 800-1400*, ed. Chuimei Ho (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Centre of Asian Studies, 1994), 323.

backgrounds, including Arabs, Persians, Turks, Jews, Syrians, Africans, and Slavs, among other groups. In addition to quickly becoming a major center of Muslim worship, the Church of the East relocated there from the old Sassanian capital of Ctesiphon in around 780, and the city also housed the two great Babylonian Yeshivot (Talmudic academies) that were of great significance to Jewish intellectual and religious life.⁷¹

As previously stated, commercial concerns were a major factor in deciding the location of the new Abbasid capital. It is recorded that when the second Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (714–775) chose Baghdad as the location, he remarked:

“Here's the Tigris, with nothing between us and China, and on it arrives all that the sea can bring, as well as provisions from the Jazirah, Armenia and surrounding areas. Further, there is the Euphrates on which can arrive everything from Syria, al-Raqqah, and surrounding areas.”⁷²

Another narrative of this account is that al-Mansur asked his advisors about a suitable location, and one of them recommended Baghdad, stating:

“[Y]ou would be on the Sarat Canal, permitting provisions to come to you along the Euphrates in ships from the west, as well as the choice products of Egypt and Syria. Supplies would also come to you along the Tigris in ships from China, India, al-Basrah and Wasit. Finally, stores would reach you from Armenia and those adjacent areas via the

⁷¹ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 589–90. On the founding of Baghdad, see also Bennison, *The Great Caliphs*, 69–72.

⁷² Tabari, *The History of al-Tabarī, volume XXVIII: ‘Abbāsid Authority Affirmed*, trans. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 238.

Tamarra Canal connecting to the Zab [river], as well as from Byzantium, Amid, the Jazirah, and al-Mawgil down the Tigris.”⁷³

What is interesting about this account is that rather than encouraging or prompting his subjects to trade with China (which they certainly did do), al-Mansur’s consideration is about receiving ships from outside of his domain. Indeed, most mentions of Chinese ships in Arabic sources generally deal with those ships coming to the Persian Gulf rather than going to China. Again, one wonders whether Muslim leaders, like their Chinese contemporaries, viewed receiving foreign exchange more positively than initiating it. Perhaps more simply, West Asian writers were more interested in the affairs of foreigners than of people they were already familiar with.

By the ninth century, Baghdad was regarded by al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 897) as “the treasure-trove of Chinese rarities,” and Chinese export ceramics were commonly purchased and esteemed by those who could afford them.⁷⁴ In fact, it is interesting to note that one of Baghdad’s landmarks was a bridge crossing the Sarat canal called the “Chinese Bridge.”⁷⁵ This might have been in reference to a quarter for selling Chinese goods, to a Chinese community, or both.

Although most Chinese exports, such as silks and metal wares, perished several centuries after production, ceramics are extremely resilient and thus allow us to trace the flow of trade goods in the archaeological record. Indeed, we do see that Chinese export ceramics in this period circulated across much of the Abbasid caliphate. Chinese export wares have been discovered in Siraf, Hormuz (southern Iran), Sohar (Oman), Samarra, and Fustat (Egypt), with the most common types being true Yue ware (Zhejiang province), Xing and Ding wares (Hebei), and

⁷³ Tabari, *vol. XXVIII*, 243.

⁷⁴ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 590.

⁷⁵ See Guy Le Strange, “Description of Mesopotamia and Baghdād, Written About the Year 900 A.D. by Ibn Serapion (Part 2),” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1895): 274–75.

Changsha ware (Hunan).⁷⁶ Yangzhou has been proposed as the main port for exporting these wares, though its involvement in overseas trade was limited mainly to the ninth century, and Guangzhou was the foremost port for overseas trade throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. As destructive as Huang Chao's 878 massacre of Guangzhou was, the region's southernmost position provided a strategic advantage when Tang authority collapsed soon after. By the tenth century, sea traffic with Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean continued to pass primarily through Guangzhou and increasingly through Fuzhou and Quanzhou as well.

Under the Umayyad caliphate, the port city of Uballa, which connected to major inland cities via the Euphrates river, held the distinction of the Persian Gulf's foremost trade port. The Chinese general and geographer Jia Dan 賈耽 (730–805), wrote about a major sea route passing from Guangzhou to Uballa and the Euphrates,⁷⁷ and we have already noted that Arabic-language texts highlighted the significance of that city as a hub for trade with China, India, and other regions during the seventh and eighth centuries. However, as Persians gained greater influence throughout the Middle East with the establishment of the Abbasid caliphate, economic activity shifted more toward Persian cities as well, and Siraf became the primary port for international trade in the ninth and tenth centuries. As was previously the case with Uballa, it functioned as the Western counterpart to Guangzhou along what scholars now refer to as the “Maritime Silk Road.” Its deep water access, good anchorage, and protection from storms made it an ideal

⁷⁶ Hsueh-man Shen, “The China–Abbasid Ceramics Trade during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries: Chinese Ceramics Circulating in the Middle East,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (2017: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 197–217. See also Bo Gyllensvärd, “Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fostat I,” *The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 45 (1973): 91–119.

⁷⁷ For a translation of this description, see Rong, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations,” 257–58.

location for sea ships to dock, and its position on the land route to Shiraz (southwestern Iran) also made it a nexus for caravans traversing Inner Asia.⁷⁸

It thus comes as no surprise that Siraf is one of the foremost locations for the recovery of Chinese export ceramics in the region.⁷⁹ Such material evidence supports textual descriptions of the entrepôt as a hub for Persian and Jewish merchants traveling to India and China,⁸⁰ though it was also the location where Arabic texts noted that Chinese ships made port. As the writer of Abu Zayd's first book recorded:

“Regarding the ports where the merchants regularly go ashore, they have said that most of the China ships take their cargoes on board at Sīrāf. Goods are carried from Basra, Oman, and elsewhere to Sīrāf and loaded there onto the China ships. The reason for this is that, at the other ports on this sea, the water is often too rough and too shallow for the bigger vessels to put in.”⁸¹

This writer likewise noted that Chinese copper coins were to be found in Siraf, and provided an accurate description of their appearance and characteristics.⁸²

One of the statements that George Hourani made to defend his assertion regarding Chinese ships was “[i]t is unlikely that Chinese ships were visiting western ports at this time.

⁷⁸ Edward A. Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 48. See also Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, 156.

⁷⁹ Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 101; Chuimei Ho, “Yue-Type and Longquan-Type Green Glazed Wares Made Outside Zhejiang Province,” in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 109; and Shen, “The China–Abbasid Ceramics Trade during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” 197.

⁸⁰ Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 102.

⁸¹ Abu Zayd, 31. Note that the translator of this book attributes his use of the term “China ships” to Hourani’s argument in Arab Seafaring. See p. 136, citation no. 28. Translations that do not consider Hourani’s arguments generally use the terms “Chinese ships” or “Chinese boats.” See for instance Sulaymān Al-Tājir (the proposed author of the first book of Abu Zayd’s two-book compilation), *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China, Book Two: Akhbār Al-Šīn Wa’l-Hind, An Account of China and India*, trans. S. Maqbul Ahmad (Calcutta: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1989), 38.

⁸² Abu Zayd, 73–75.

Had they done so, it is probable that they would have received some description from Arab writers.”⁸³ Since Hourani was aware that there is ample mention of “Chinese ships” in Arabic language sources, it is unclear what criteria he used to define a ship as “Chinese.” If in this instance he was referring to descriptions of Chinese people arriving on such ships, writers of Arabic texts did, in fact, discuss Chinese individuals residing in the Abbasid caliphate.

One particularly interesting example of this would be an account of a Chinese man who studied under the renowned Persian scholar and teacher al-Rāzī (c. 854–925 or 935 CE). Under his tutelage, this man was able to learn to speak and write Arabic within five months’ time, and within a year he was able to transcribe sixteen books of the Greek scholar Galen into an abbreviated Chinese text, which appears to have been the goal of his visit. The writer al-Nadīm provides al-Rāzī’s account of the affair:

“A man from China came to stay with me for about a year. During that time he learned spoken and written Arabic in five months, until he became well versed, skilled, and fast at writing. A month before leaving for his country, he told me: ‘I have decided to leave, and I wish to receive the sixteen books of Galen in dictation so I can write them down.’ I said: ‘Time is running short, and you will not be able to copy [even] a small portion of these during the period that remains.’ The man said: ‘I ask you to grant me your presence during the remainder of my stay; dictate to me as fast as you can, and I will outpace you in writing.’ I invited some of my students to join us in this task. We dictated to him as fast as we could, and he outpaced us. We did not believe it until the collation (*mu‘āraḍa*), when he collated all that he had written [correctly]. I asked him about this, so he said:

⁸³ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 75–76. It should be noted that many or most of the writers that Hourani refers to were actually Persians.

‘We have a [type of] writing called *majmū*’, which is what you have seen. When we wish to write something lengthy in a short time, we use this calligraphy. Then if we want, we can transcribe it into the usual detailed script.’ He asserted that a sharp, intelligent person cannot learn this in less than twenty years.”⁸⁴

Alain George points out that al-Rāzī was active in Rayy (northern Iran) and Baghdad, so this event likely transpired in one of those two cities. Considering Baghdad was a leading marketplace for Chinese goods and connected to the trade route with China, it would seem the more likely location. George also makes the important point that since the Chinese cursive technique of abbreviating and connecting strokes had no known equivalent in the Islamic world, the central element of the story is authentic.⁸⁵ However, George was unsure of what to make of the term “*majmū*” in this context and its meaning of “assembled.” In fact, this would appear to be the Chinese man’s direct translation into Arabic of the name of the writing method *jizi* 集字 (literally “assembled characters”), which was common in ninth and tenth-century China. The method imitates the various techniques of calligraphic masters and requires years of study and practice. Here, the man was describing the use of cursive and abbreviated characters encountered through *jizi* to form his own individualized shorthand writing system. All of this transpired in the middle of what scholars call the “Abbasid translation movement,” in which knowledge from older Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Indian cultures was being translated into Arabic on a grand scale.⁸⁶ It was likely that the Chinese man, certainly a scholar in his own right, was aware of such happenings, and recognized the value of bringing certain aspects of this knowledge to

⁸⁴ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 612–14. See also the translation in Ibn al-Nadīm, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 31.

⁸⁵ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 613.

⁸⁶ Bennison, *The Great Caliphs*, 175–94.

China. As we will see in Chapter Three, such importation of knowledge to China from foreign lands could be very rewarding.

Al-Nadīm also briefly mentioned his own encounter with a Chinese person several decades later. While contemplating the topic of Chinese government, he wrote in passing “[t]he meaning of *baghbūr* in the language of China is the ‘Son of Heaven,’ that is, ‘descended from heaven.’ Jiki the Chinese told me this in the year three hundred and fifty-six [967 CE].”⁸⁷ In this account we once more see a Chinese person in what was likely Baghdad (al-Nadīm lived there for most of his life) who was able to speak Arabic. Moreover, there is no indication that his presence there was unique or special in any way. In fact, the only reason we know of Jiki is because of Ibn al-Nadīm’s interest in Chinese government, just as we only know of al-Rāzī’s Chinese student due to Ibn al-Nadīm’s interest in Chinese writing.

It is also interesting to consider that the unnamed scholar in al-Rāzī’s account demonstrated an attainment of formal education, as he possessed knowledge that by his own ascription (and by a modern understanding of the study of *jizi*) required decades of study and practice to master. It is less clear if the same held true for Jiki, though his knowledge of Chinese imperial ideology and his association with a renowned Muslim scholar suggests that he had the ability to read Chinese texts. If this man was not raised in the Abbasid caliphate, then another testament to his scholarly abilities—much like the unnamed scholar—is that he was able to successfully learn the Arabic language as an adult. Indeed, al-Nadīm’s first-hand observations of Chinese ink slabs, Chinese writing brushes, and “a number of” Chinese books certainly suggests that literate Chinese people were not uncommon in tenth-century Baghdad.⁸⁸ I have previously

⁸⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, 839.

⁸⁸ George, “Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China,” 611–12; Ibn al-Nadīm, 31–32, 39.

written about how one of the most common distinguishing features of the Chinese sea merchants who traded in other countries in this period was that so many of them received a formal education at an early stage of their lives. This was an outcome of social mobility strategies in southern China to utilize wealth from commerce to educate one's family and kin in the hope that they would staff local or state bureaucracies or partake in civil service examinations.⁸⁹ Those who were unable to succeed in such goals often took up jobs as merchants instead.

In sum, Baghdad is a likely location for a Chinese community in the eighth century, and the presence of Chinese people in the city in the tenth century raises the possibility that it was home to a Chinese community then as well. The Abbasid caliphate hosted Chinese residents, and some of them were educated and learned the local languages as a means of integrating with their environment. This was true not only for both al-Rāzī's unnamed student and al-Nadīm's friend Jiki (for language learning, and probably also for education) but also for the eighth century captive Du Huan, who wrote a travel journal that provided transliterations of Arabic and Persian words.⁹⁰ It is widely understood that West Asians had established large diaspora communities in Guangzhou and Yangzhou during the Tang dynasty. That Chinese people maintained a contemporaneous presence in the Persian Gulf should perhaps not come as a surprise. Such a consideration is further reinforced by al-Nadīm's knowledge of the regulations that applied to Chinese preparing to leave their country in the tenth century (though the precise Chinese kingdom from where they originated is not stated),⁹¹ which indicates frequent travel across borders. Indeed, we will see in the following section and throughout the remainder of this

⁸⁹ Gregory Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas, c. 800–1100," *T'oung Pao* 111 (2025), 78–128.

⁹⁰ Akin, "The Jing Xing Ji of Du Huan," 81.

⁹¹ Ibn al-Nadim, 841.

dissertation not only evidence of Chinese taking to the seas during this period, but also of establishing communities abroad.

Kollam (Southwest India)

The west coast of India has long hosted entrepôts and hubs for long-distance sea merchants. Expansion into Egypt and Syria allowed subjects of the Roman empire to trade with India beginning in 20 BCE and their presence there peaked from the late first to the third century CE. There are also accounts of sixth century Christian monks trading in the area.⁹² In the seventh century, the Chinese monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) described ports along western India as very wealthy, and stated that inhabitants made their livelihoods from the profits of sea trade.⁹³ For much of the first millennium, people from across the Indian subcontinent likewise famously traded across a large geographic range that spanned from the Persian Gulf to Chinese cities, and they transmitted much cultural and religious influence to continental and insular Southeast Asia. Their activities along Inner Asian routes are likewise widely known, and monks from in and around the Indian subcontinent are credited with bringing Buddhism to East Asia.

Perhaps the largest diaspora along the west coasts of India was that of Persians and Persian speakers. They were active all along the subcontinent's western ports and in Sri Lanka to the south as well. Their ranks included Zoroastrians, Christians, and, after the seventh century, Muslims. The Christian churches of Persians and Syrians were located near Mumbai, on the Malabar coast (southwest, where the important port of Kollam was located), and in Sri Lanka.⁹⁴

⁹² Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1988), 18–19.

⁹³ Xuanzang, *Datang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 11.

⁹⁴ Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, 153.

Both Arabic and Chinese sources indicate that the port city of Kollam was the foremost trade hub along these coasts. It was also home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups, not only during the first millennium, but in the second millennium as well. A series of ninth-century copper plate inscriptions recovered from that area provide much insight on the various groups that resided in the city. One of the inscriptions is a legal agreement which details the local ruler permitting a Syrian merchant community to build a church and establish an enclave there. The witnesses for the agreement provided signatures in Arabic Kufic script, Middle Persian Pahlavi script, and Judeo-Persian Hebrew script. The language of the inscriptions themselves is Tamil, and they moreover reveal that the Manigramam guild of Hindu traders was highly active in the region.⁹⁵ Such an agreement lends insight into the inter-ethnic and cross-cultural cooperation that was occurring in long-distance seaports at this time. Tamil copper plate inscriptions dating to the year 1000 CE likewise denote the presence of a Syrian church in the area, as well as Jewish merchants and a synagogue.⁹⁶

Chinese in the late eighth and ninth centuries were familiar with the Malabar coast and discussed it in records describing foreign states, such as in the *Xin Tang shu*.⁹⁷ As will be discussed in Chapter Four, Chinese merchants were known to stop in Malabar ports on the way to the Middle East in the twelfth century, though the area is hardly mentioned in tenth and eleventh-century Chinese sources. As for Arabic texts, we are informed in Abu Zayd's account

⁹⁵ Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, 20–22. See also John Guy, “The Phanom Surin Shipwreck, a Pahlavi Inscription, and their Significance for the History of Early Lower Central Thailand,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 105 (2017): 190; and Noboru Karashima, “Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean as Revealed from Chinese Ceramic-sherds and South Indian and Sri Lankan Inscriptions,” in *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, eds. Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and Vijay Sakhuja (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 54.

⁹⁶ Y. Subbarayalu, “Anjuvannam: A Maritime Trade Guild of Medieval Times,” in *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa*, 160. For Jewish merchants active in India during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see S.D. Goitein and Mordechai A. Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza “India Book”* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

⁹⁷ Rong, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations,” 258.

(likely from Sulaymān the Merchant) that Chinese ships stopped at Kollam during the mid-ninth century. It states:

“At Kūlam Malī [“Splendid Kollam”] there is a guard post belonging to that country that exacts customs duty from the China ships, and there is also fresh water to be had from wells. The sum taken from the China ships is a thousand dirhams, and from other ships it ranges from ten dinars down to one dinar.”⁹⁸

Another group that sailed along India’s western coasts was Sogdians. Sogdians had inhabited northwest India since the third century CE, as this was an important location for Silk Road trade.⁹⁹ While they are commonly known in the present day as the embodiments of Central Asia’s Silk Road culture, in addition to conducting caravan trade Sogdians were also active in long-distance sea trade. This can likewise be traced back to as early as the third century, and by the eighth century, they had established communities in the southern periphery of the Tang empire.¹⁰⁰ Further to the south in what is now central Thailand (Kua Bua and Nakhon Pathom), there are depictions on eighth-century Buddhist stupas of foreigners who have the physical features of Sogdians and who wear Sogdian attire.¹⁰¹ For the tenth century, Mas’udi provides an account of a Sogdian merchant sailing to Guangzhou. The Sogdian historian Narshakhi (c. 899–959) also stated that

⁹⁸ Abu Zayd, 31.

⁹⁹ Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, trans. James Ward (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 71–91. Abu Dulaf has a tenth-century account of people in that region who he claimed were the descendants of Chinese people and what would seem to be Sogdians, though specialists in Islamic literature have dismissed the idea that Abu Dulaf actually traveled there. See G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia* (Leiden and London: E.J. Brill, 1979), 40–41.

¹⁰⁰ Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003), 162.

¹⁰¹ John Guy, “Shipwrecks in Late First Millennium Southeast Asia: Southern China’s Maritime Trade and the Emerging Role of Arab Merchants in Indian Ocean Exchange,” in *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World, Volume I*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 158.

“The people of Baikand [Paykent, a Sogdian-majority city in what is now southern Uzbekistan] were all merchants. They traded with China and the sea and became very wealthy.”¹⁰²

Additional evidence of Sogdians trading in China includes a Chinese storage jar discovered at the Borobudur complex in Central Java which contains an Old Turkic inscription in a Manichaean script, which appears to read “oil.”¹⁰³ This green-glazed jar, a type produced in Guangdong, dates to between the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁰⁴ That the inscription was “incised under the glaze when the jars were made, not added later” indicates that Sogdians were present when it was produced. As we shall see further on in this chapter, Java at that time was host to an overseas Chinese community. An Arabic account of the tenth century further highlights the connections between India, Java, and China, by stating that oppressive Indian rulers caused Chinese residents to relocate from India to Java.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Translation from de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 281.

¹⁰³ Roderick Orlina and Eva Stroeber, “New Perspectives on late Tang Maritime Trade,” *The Newsletter: Institute for Asian Studies* 73 (2016): <https://www.ias.asia/the-newsletter/article/late-tang-maritime-trade>; and Eva Ströber *The Collection of Chinese and Southeast Asian Jars (martaban, martavanen) at the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands* (Eva Ströber, 2016), 43–45.

¹⁰⁴ For Chinese storage jars in overseas trade, see Sharon Wai-Yee Wong, “Rethinking Storage Jars Found in the 9th to 20th Centuries Archaeological Sites in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macau,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 103 (2017): 333–58; and Qin Dashu, Chang Jung Jung, and Yu Shan, “Early Results of an Investigation into Ancient Kiln Sites Producing Ceramic Storage Jars and Some Related Issues,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 103, 359–84.

¹⁰⁵ Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques Arabes, Persans et Turks, Relatifs à L'extrême-Orient du VIIIe au XVIIIe Siècles: Traduits, Revus et Annotés*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1913), 175. This account and the Old Javanese inscriptions which provide details of Java's Chinese community will be discussed in greater length in the section below on Java.

Kedah (Malay Peninsula)

Kedah, located in the northwest of the Malay peninsula, was an important hub for ships crossing the Andaman Sea to and from India, and for ships frequenting ports along the Bay of Bengal. Merchant ships stopped there to await seasonal monsoon winds and to engage in entrepôt trade.¹⁰⁶ It was also the location of tin mines, which produced tin ingots that were valued commodities in maritime trade. Sources describe Kedah as the symbolic middle point along the route between southern China and the Persian Gulf. Indeed, the ninth century account in Abu Zayd's first book states that there was a one-month travel time from Kollam to Kedah, which indicates that these two ports were linked in the broader long-distance trade between southern China and the Persian Gulf.¹⁰⁷ Settlement in Kedah, particularly in the Bujang Valley area, began in around the third century CE and continued into the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁸ One distinguishing feature of this location is its rich archaeological record, and the variety of items discovered that provide valuable early insight on the area's inhabitants. For instance, one stele dating to the fifth or sixth centuries was dedicated by an Indian Buddhist captain to give thanks for safe passage.¹⁰⁹ Extensive temple remains and the record of religious artifacts recovered in the region suggest that Buddhism was the most active religion there from the fifth to tenth centuries. After that time, Brahmanism, particularly Saivism, became more prominent, though it likely coexisted with Buddhism.¹¹⁰ By the seventh or eighth century, Indian sources describe Kedah as an important

¹⁰⁶ Liao Bowen, "Heritage Politics of Bujang Valley in Contemporary Malaysia: History, Archaeology and National Identity," Ph.D. dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2021, 37.

¹⁰⁷ Abu Zayd, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen A. Murphy, "Revisiting the Bujang Valley: A Southeast Asian Entrepôt Complex on the Maritime Trade Route," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Series 3, 28.2 (2018): 355–89.

¹⁰⁹ Murphy, "Revisiting the Bujang Valley," 355, 382.

¹¹⁰ Murphy, "Revisiting the Bujang Valley."

trade center, and the material record indicates much commercial activity occurred in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹¹¹

The Buddhist monk Yijing 義淨 (635–713) was the most prominent Chinese person known to pass through Kedah, though a range of records indicates that many people from distant locations visited and lived there. To begin, in several instances Kedah is described as having an Indian ruler.¹¹² A ninth century inscription also indicates that the Manigramam guild of Indian traders (previously discussed as being active in the Indian port of Kollam) maintained a base in Takua Pa (southwestern Thailand) to the north Kedah.¹¹³ That area was located along the rivers and canals used to transport trade goods across the isthmus of Kra to and from the Gulf of Thailand, and such a network possibly connected with Kedah as well. The tenth-century Egyptian writer Muhallabi described the demographics of Kedah in both religious and ethnic terms, stating that it was “a prosperous town inhabited by Muslims, Indians, and Persians.”¹¹⁴ As valuable as such a description is, it only partially describes the people who resided in the entrepôt and their beliefs. As Paul Wheatley pointed out, Muhallabi was likely just describing the groups that he was interested in (and familiar with), as indigenous peoples would have comprised a significant portion of the population.¹¹⁵ That people native to Southeast Asia inhabited the Kedah area is attested to by the political dynamics of the region, namely that it was often described as being controlled by island kingdoms to its southeast or as being their vassal.

¹¹¹ S. Jane Allen, "History, Archaeology, and the Question of Foreign Control in Early Historic-Period Peninsular Malaysia," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 2.4 (1998): 266; and Murphy, "Revisiting the Bujang Valley," 377.

¹¹² Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961), 219; Alexander David Robert Wain, "Chinese Muslims and the Conversion of the Nusantara to Islam," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2015, 64.

¹¹³ Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, 29–32.

¹¹⁴ Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, 220.

¹¹⁵ Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, 220–22.

We should also consider that Muhallabi's description does not account for the prevalence of Buddhist temples there.

Kedah was also described as a destination for Chinese ships. In an account of a Sogdian merchant traveling to Guangzhou (c. early tenth century) that has caught the attention of many scholars, Mas'udi wrote of Kedah ("Kalah" in Arabic):

From there he went with his goods to Basrah, where he embarked for the country of Oman; then he went by sea to Kalāh, which is about half way to China. Today this city is the general meeting-point for the Muslim ships from Sīrāf and Oman, which encounter there ships from China. This was not so in the past, when Chinese ships reached Oman, Sīrāf, the coast of Fars (Persia), Bahrain, 'Ubullah and Basrah, and from these countries in turn [people] sailed directly to China. Because we can no longer rely on the justice of the [Chinese] rulers and the rectitude of their intentions, and because China's state has become as we described it, that [merchants] meet at this middle point. The merchant [from Samarkand] therefore embarked on a Chinese ship to go from Kalāh to the port of Khanfu [Guangzhou].¹¹⁶

This account refers to a major incident in 878, in which thousands of "Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians" were slaughtered in Guangzhou during the Huang Chao

¹¹⁶ Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 106–07 (digital edition). Chaffee translates this to English from the 1861 translation of Barbier de Meynard, which is also the version that Hourani examined. A slightly older translation provided by Aloys Sprenger, describes "merchants of China" without such terminology present in de Meynard's translation. See Mas'udi, 328–29. Yokkaichi Yasuhiro's translation includes the sentence "They [Muslim ships] joined together with people sailing from China." See Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, "Chinese and Muslim Diasporas and the Indian Ocean Trade Network under Mongol Hegemony," in *The East Asian Mediterranean: Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 83. Alain George translated the term "Chinese ship" in the last sentence as "ship of the Chinese." See George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China," 585.

rebellion.¹¹⁷ As a result, sailors from ports in the Middle East were reluctant to travel long distances and settled instead for using Kedah's port as a middle ground for trade with Chinese merchants. The reason why this account has attracted so much attention is that it contrasts from the narrative to date that Chinese people were not among the crews of "Chinese ships." Since Mas'udi's account indicates that the slaughter of minority groups in China's ports caused a great exodus and a general reluctance for West Asians to return for decades, Hourani concedes that "[w]hen the direct voyages to Canton [Guangzhou] ceased, Arabs and Chinese used to meet at Kalah on the west coast of the Malaccan peninsula, at that time part of an Indonesian empire."¹¹⁸ In addition to Hourani's position, the consensus among scholars is that this text is describing Chinese people sailing to the Malay peninsula.¹¹⁹

Mataram (Central and East Java) and the Java Sea Shipwrecks

Scholarship to date has yet to recognize the significant roles that Java's inhabitants held in international trade, particularly by those who resided in the domain of the Mataram kingdom (732–1016). To present-day observers, the Borobudur and Prambanan temple complexes stand as a testament to the kingdom's considerable engagement with spirituality. In addition to its many

¹¹⁷ Abu Zayd, 69. Huang Chao's followers also slaughtered rich foreign merchants in Fuzhou. See Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 443.

¹¹⁸ Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, 75–76, 78. Some caution is warranted regarding Hourani's assertion that Arabs were present in Kedah. With the exception of Abu Zayd's first book, Arabs are rarely mentioned for being involved in long-distance sea trade in this period. Hourani's attributions of such peoples usually derive from the activities of Persians, and since the most active Muslims in sea trade at this time were Persians, Muhallabi's description of "Muslims, Indians, and Persians" does not seem to use "Muslims" as an ethnonym for "Arabs." Rather, I interpret this to mean "Muslims" (broadly speaking), "Indians," and (non-Muslim) "Persians." This agrees with Wheatley's interpretation. See Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, 221. Nevertheless, it seems likely that at least some Arabs were sailing with Persians along this route (and described in the category of "Muslims") in the tenth century.

¹¹⁹ See also Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 111 (digital edition); Yokkaichi, "Chinese and Muslim Diasporas and the Indian Ocean Trade Network under Mongol Hegemony," 83; George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China," 585.

religious monuments and temples, the island had a large population, was highly agrarianized, and was governed under complex bureaucratic systems. Though perhaps most important for those sailing to and from the island was that it was also very wealthy. The *Xin Tang shu*'s (*New Book of Tang*) section on Java (Heling 訶陵) states that "the kingdom is most prosperous."¹²⁰ The Persian geographer Ibn Rosteh's account of the king of Java (Zābaj) at the beginning of the tenth century states "[t]here is no greater king among the kings of India, for he lives on islands. There is no king who is richer, stronger, and has more income."¹²¹ Such a reputation continued into later centuries as well, as the late twelfth-century *Lingwai daida* states:

"(Among) the various foreign countries that are rich, prosperous, and abound in precious treasures and goods, none equal that of the Muslims. Next is the kingdom of Java, and after that is the kingdom of Srivijaya (a polity centered in Sumatra). After these come the other countries."¹²²

諸蕃國之富盛多寶貨者，莫如大食國，其次闍婆國，其次三佛齊國，其次乃諸國耳。

Buzurg also recounts information passed to him by a Persian merchant:

"In the city where the Maharaja, the king of Zabaj resides, I have seen innumerable streets of merchants. In that of moneychangers alone, I have counted up to eight hundred merchants, without taking into account those who live in other streets.

¹²⁰ Goble, "Maritime Southeast Asia," 15. This seems to be an account of Mataram as well as of kingdoms that predated it.

¹²¹ Manguin, "Ceramics from Indonesian Underwater Sites," 440.

¹²² Zhou Qufei 周去非, *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 3. See also O.W. Wolters, "A Few and Miscellaneous Pi-Chi Jottings on Early Indonesia," *Indonesia* 36 (1983): 56.

Buzurg goes on to say that his informant “mentioned many other things about this island of Zabaj, its cultivated fields, the multitudes of its towns and villages, which pass all description.”¹²³

Lying off the direct China–Persian Gulf route, Java drew foreign merchants precisely because of the island’s tremendous commercial opportunities.¹²⁴ The abundance of rice on the island allowed for an impressive range of occupations among locals, as is evident in Old Javanese inscriptions. This in turn allowed for local merchants to specialize in the transshipment of a range of highly valued commodities from remote islands throughout the Indonesian archipelago, most notably camphor, sandalwood, and spices. Once acquired by foreign merchants in Javanese ports or sold by Javanese merchants overseas, such commodities made their way to locations as far as Japan, China, India, the Persian Gulf, and Europe. Thus, like other locations involved in long-distance sea trade, Java was a home to communities of diverse backgrounds.

Much scholarship has already assessed the great extent that Indian culture and beliefs influenced the island and its surrounding region,¹²⁵ and indeed, various groups from the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka continued to maintain an extensive presence in Java throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. Yet by all indications, Java was also the most important location in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia for Chinese merchants during this time. Knowledge of this

¹²³ Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, 46; Buzurg, *The Book of the Wonders of India*, 80.

¹²⁴ On the Javanese economy, see Jan Wisseman, “Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java,” in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia: Perspectives from Prehistory, History, and Ethnography*, ed. Karl L. Hutterer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978), 197–212; and Jan Wisseman Christie, “Javanese Markets and the Asian Sea Trade Boom of the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries A.D.,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41.3 (1998): 344–81.

¹²⁵ The most significant contribution being George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1975).

does not come to us via Chinese records, as they essentially ignore the presence of Chinese overseas (especially merchants) until the Song dynasty. Rather, we know of Chinese visiting and inhabiting the island from Arabic-language sources, ethnographic relics, and even some Old Javanese inscriptions.

Of the Old Javanese inscriptions, the most intriguing for this study is the Kencana inscription, which was originally produced in 860. Since extant inscriptions in Java mainly deal with tax collection, this inscription is one of many that list various tax collectors. However, on this particular inscription there is listed a *Juru Cina*, or “Head of the Chinese”—a title for the head of a Chinese community.¹²⁶ Next to this term is also listed a *Juru Barata*, or “Head of the Westerners,” which likely describes the head of a West Asian community. Like other Old Javanese inscriptions describing foreign people, the Kencana inscription originated in the Brantas delta area of East Java, which strongly suggests that the island’s main trade port was located there. Other inscriptions from that region also reveal greater concern for commerce, economic matters, trade ships, and foreign captains than those of Central Java, which was the original political center of Mataram. The location of a major trade hub on the northeast coast, possibly near present-day Surabaya, is understandable as it allowed for convenient access to the spice islands to the east, and it was relatively close to Bali as well. Moreover, it connected to Central Java by the Solo river.¹²⁷ Antoinette Barrett-Jones has persuasively argued that the

¹²⁶ Antoinette M. Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions: A Study of Economic, Social and Administrative Conditions in the First Quarter of the Century* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1984), 8, 25, 147–48, 151. See also Wisseman, “Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java,” 207–08; Wisseman Christie, “Javanese Markets and the Asian Sea Trade Boom,” 365–66; and Tom G. Hoogervorst, *Language Ungoverned: Indonesia’s Chinese Print Entrepreneurs, 1911–1949* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 29. This inscription is also transcribed in H. Kern, “Over Eene Oudjavaansche Oorkonde van Çaka 782,” *Verslagen en mededelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen* 2.10 (1881): 79–115. Mention of “Juru China” is on 98. I am grateful to Tom Hoogervorst for originally bringing this to my attention.

¹²⁷ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 29–30. She proposes more precisely that the port may have been located in Gresik or Sidoarjo. See also 40–41.

Mataram capital was moved from Central Java (Yogyakarta) to this region in the early tenth century precisely due to the region's active role in overseas trade.¹²⁸

The cosmopolitanism of East Java is further attested to in other inscriptions as well. For instance, the 840 Kuti inscription mentions Chams, Singhalese, Bengalese, Mons, Khmers, and people from south India such as Kalinga, Colika, Mayalaya, and Karnataka. The 909 Kaladi inscription lists Kaling, Arya, and Singhala, Drawida (Dravidians, likely Tamils), Pandikira (Karnataka, southern India), Cempa (Champa), Kmir (Khmer), and Remmen (Romans).¹²⁹ This last term would seem to describe the network of Syrian Christians that maintained an enclave in Kollam, though an alternative interpretation is that it refers to an ethnic group from southern Myanmar.¹³⁰ Other inscriptions also describe various foreign groups. The more frequent mention of some of these groups in contrast to the singular mentions of a "Head of the Chinese" and "Head of the Westerners" suggests that they were more numerous. For instance, a *Juru Kling*, or "Head of the Indians" is mentioned on four occasions.¹³¹ However, part of the reason might also be that Indian and Southeast Asian groups were more active in roles as tax collectors and were more dispersed across inland East Java (where many such inscriptions were located), whereas Chinese and West Asians were more concentrated in a single port city and its vicinity.

Also of great interest is the use of the term *paranakan* in these inscriptions. The term in recent history and in the present day carries much cultural significance in Southeast Asia, as it commonly denotes people with mixed Chinese and Malay-Javanese ancestry. Nevertheless, its fundamental meaning denotes a person with both foreign and indigenous ancestry. In Barrett-

¹²⁸ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 6.

¹²⁹ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 23–25.

¹³⁰ Wisseman, "Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java," 207.

¹³¹ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 25.

Jones' accounting of ninth and tenth-century inscriptions, this term appears in eighteen instances.¹³² Clearly, interethnic marriage was quite common in Java at the time, and such a status frequently allowed one to enjoy the economic opportunities of tax collection on behalf of the government.

Other inscriptions provide relatively more indirect evidence of a Chinese presence in Java. For instance, the Watakura inscription of 902 mentions tofu being served at a large feast.¹³³ The term used, *tahu*, which likewise means “tofu” in present-day Indonesian, is derived from either a southern Min or a Fuzhounese pronunciation of the Chinese term. This allows us to understand that those who brought knowledge of this food to Java were likely from China's Fujian province. Other inscriptions mention gifts of iron coins (used by China's southern kingdoms in the tenth century), and the use of the term *kinca* to denote a sweet syrup, which might derive from a southern Min or northern Min pronunciation for the Chinese term *ganzhe* 甘蔗 (sugarcane).¹³⁴

As previously mentioned, Arabic-language sources also describe Java in some detail. The Arab geographer Idrisi (1100–1165) wrote:

“This island (Java) is very densely populated; there are many villages and livestock. Rice is cultivated there. A great deal of trade is carried on, and various products and goods destined for commerce and consumption are brought there annually. It was said that when the state of affairs in China was troubled by rebellions, and tyranny and confusion became excessive in India, the inhabitants of China carried their trade to Zabaj (Java) and

¹³² Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 25, 154.

¹³³ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 36, 44, citation no. 10.

¹³⁴ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 36, 37, 44, citation no. 9.

to the islands which belonged to it; and entered into relations with the inhabitants because of their honesty, their extreme friendliness, their courtesy and the flexibility of their commerce. It is for these things that the island [of Zabaj] is so populous and so frequented by foreigners.”¹³⁵

Here, Idrisi is talking about the Five Dynasties period of Chinese history. When the Tang court lost the remainder of its authority in the late ninth century as a result of the Huang Chao rebellion, warlordism and famine broke out over the following decades, which caused China to fragment into smaller kingdoms and empires. This is typically regarded as one of the most chaotic periods of Chinese history. It is quite interesting that Idrisi also points out that political circumstances in India caused greater numbers of Chinese to trade in Java as well. It seems likely that Idrisi’s mention of “tyranny and confusion” causing Chinese merchants to relocate to Java refers to a community in Kollam, as Chinese sources do not appear to touch on trade in that area again until the twelfth century.

In addition to trade, the sources reveal that the tenth century was also something of an age of piracy for Chinese mariners. This appears, at least initially, to have been prompted by the widespread famines that broke out across the former Tang domains as a result of the frequent battles of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The *Mukhtasar al-Aja’ib* (c. 1000, disputed authorship) states that:

“(Java) is a large archipelago, very populous, rich in crops and various products. They say that when the inhabitants of China are ruined by invasions or civil wars, they come to

¹³⁵ Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, 52. Note that Idrisi used much information from earlier scholars. See 53. The first three sentences of this translation are from Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques*, 175. See also Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 108 (digital edition).

pillage one of the islands of Zabaj (Java), and thus was the fate of all the isles of the archipelago and all their towns.”¹³⁶

Some scholars have interpreted this and other descriptions of “al-Zābaj” in Arabic texts as mistakes for “Srivijaya” based on the assumption that Srivijaya’s influence over the area was largely uninterrupted from the seventh to eleventh centuries.¹³⁷ However, that position is problematic not only due to the limited information about Srivijaya in the ninth and tenth centuries, but also because Abu Zayd’s description in his second book (early tenth century) clearly differentiates Srivijaya from Java. Abu Zayd states that the kingdom of the ruler of “al-Zābaj” (Java) extended to “an island known as Sarbuzah” (Srivijaya). The writer also states that “al-Zābaj” is “fertile in the extreme and is settled and cultivated in a most orderly manner.”¹³⁸ Such a description is an accurate portrayal of Java in the ninth and tenth centuries, and it could hardly apply to the swamplands and dispersed settlements of southeast Sumatra.¹³⁹ Idrisi also writes about “Java and to the islands which belonged to it,” indicating those islands were vassals of Mataram rulership.

I am not aware of Javanese inscriptions discussing pirate raids, though one inscription of 896 discussing the taxation of sea merchants in Bali frequently mentions army commanders there, suggesting the importance of defending the area.¹⁴⁰ Inscriptions recovered in Bali more

¹³⁶ Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, 49. See also the translation in Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques*, 156.

¹³⁷ Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, 106.

¹³⁸ Abu Zayd, 89. Other writers during this period also distinguished between Java (“Zābaj”) and Srivijaya (“Sribuza” or “Sarbuzah”), though Srivijaya is mentioned less often and in less detail.

¹³⁹ Sumatra was historically an importer of rice. The earliest record to touch on this was an entry in the *Zhu fan zhi* 諸蕃志 (1225) which stated that the island imported its rice from Java. See John Norman Miksic, “Archaeology, Trade and Society in Northeast Sumatra,” Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1979, 111.

¹⁴⁰ Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 167. She indicates the inscription suggests the importance of either defending or attacking Bali, though if Java was at the peak of its power at this time (as the sources suggest), the nearby island was likely already one of its vassals.

directly speak of coastal attacks. One 922 inscription talks of attacks by pirates, and the inhabitants of the fortified port city of Julah fleeing to other villages. This port, which was a hub for foreign merchants and surrounded by rice fields, was frequently plundered in the early tenth century. These inscriptions also mention that many people were taken in the raids and talk of stranded ships and their cargoes left in the wake.¹⁴¹

Some of the earliest foundation myths for societies across insular Southeast Asia pertain to the arrivals of foreign merchants. Pierre-Yves Manguin has pointed out that such myths highlight the prominent role of commerce in the formative stages of coastal, harbor-centered political systems.¹⁴² Most of such stories originate from the areas of port cities along the Javanese, Balinese, Sumatran, and Kalimantan coasts, and they often contain key similarities. For instance, one prevailing theme is the establishment of kingdoms or entrepôts after the arrival of wealth from foreign merchants. Other stories talk of a local hero marrying a Chinese princess and the couple having many children together.¹⁴³ In regard to piracy in the region, one tale particularly resonates with the historical record. This story from the Sunda region (west Java) speaks of how Dampo Awang (a recurrent character who is usually Chinese) came from a country suffering from famine to purchase rice from a mythical Sundanese king. When the king refused, Dampo Awang became angry and spread plagues to destroy rice and other plants. It was

¹⁴¹ Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin, “Sembiran and Julah – Sketches of History,” in *Burials, Texts and Rituals: Ethnoarchaeological Investigations in North Bali, Indonesia*, eds. Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and I Wayan Ardika (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2008), 16–18; I Wayan Ardika, “Archaeological Traces of the Early Harbour Town,” in *Burials, Texts and Rituals*, 149–50; and I Ketut Setiawan, “Socio-Political Aspects of Ancient Julah,” in *Burials, Texts and Rituals*, 216–17, 224. See also John N. Miksic and Geok Yian Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia* (London: Routledge, 2017), 425.

¹⁴² Pierre-Yves Manguin, “The Amorphous Nature of Coastal Polities in Insular Southeast Asia: Restricted Centres, Extended Peripheries,” *Moussons* 5 (2002): 89.

¹⁴³ Pierre-Yves Manguin, “The Merchant and the King: Political Myths of Southeast Asian Coastal Polities,” *Indonesia* 52 (1991): 43.

only through divine intervention that he was ultimately defeated.¹⁴⁴ Later some of these stories morphed to place the Muslim admiral Zheng He 鄭和 (1371–1433) in the role of Dampo Awang, though Manguin argues that the stories originated in the late first millennium and were later on appropriated by Chinese communities who venerated Zheng He.¹⁴⁵

Whether the pirates themselves were initially prompted by desperation or opportunism (skyrocketing grain prices) remains unclear, though the Dampo Awang stories do provide a sense of the dire situation in China. In times of peace, rice was not a highly desired commodity, and Chinese sea merchants would either refuse to trade for it or do so begrudgingly when better alternatives were not available. However, it seems that while such raids started from the impetus to bring grain to areas of famine, they soon evolved into a more systematic and organized enterprise.

Tenth-century Chinese sources also discuss Chinese people engaged in piracy at this time, which supports the statement in the *Mukhtasar al-Aja'ib*. Some of the worst instances of piracy were initiated by the state of Southern Han. As will be discussed toward the end of this chapter, the first emperor of this dynasty, Liu Yan, was recorded as coming from a sea merchant family. Whether or not such was the case, his ability to exercise influence over ship captains in the region was an essential factor for possessing naval forces and fostering sea trade, both of which sustained his rule. In contrast, his successor, Liu Bin 劉玢 (920–943, r. 942–943) is recorded as having spent much of his brief rule drinking and cavorting with prostitutes and

¹⁴⁴ Manguin, “The Merchant and the King,” 43, citation no. 6. For a story of Dampo Awang trying to trade gold, gems, and spices for rice, see 42–43.

¹⁴⁵ Manguin, “The Merchant and the King,” 49–50.

servants, so that “[i]n consequence, bandits from the mountains to the seas vied to rise up” 由是山海間盜賊競起。¹⁴⁶ Yet most revealing is an entry for the year 951, which states:

“Events seemed increasingly favorable to [Southern Han Emperor Liu] Sheng (920–958, r. 943–958)], who deployed to the high seas a force led by Ji Yanyun, director of “sea-hulk” warships. They commandeered the gold and silk of merchants to erect palace retreats for (the royal family) and (to pay for) hunting expeditions.”¹⁴⁷

晟益得志，遣巨艦指揮使暨彥贇以兵入海，掠商人金帛作離宮遊獵。

Much information about the seafarers in and around Java can be derived from analysis of shipwrecks. When considering Java’s reputation as a wealthy country and as a prime destination for foreign merchants, it makes sense that the most richly laden shipwrecks across maritime Asia during this period were found near its coasts. Here I will examine four such shipwrecks (Belitung, Intan, Karawang, and Cirebon) with the goal of gaining insight into the backgrounds of those who sailed on them. Although the vast majority of goods recovered from such wrecks tend to be Chinese export ceramics, which could number in the hundreds of thousands on a single ship, it is usually the case that a range of ethnographic items can be found at the wreck sites as well.

¹⁴⁶ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, trans. Richard L. Davis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 541; Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 65.

¹⁴⁷ *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 543; and *Xin Wudai shi*, juan 65. I modified this translation to include mention of the hunting trips, which were not in Davis’ translation. See also Guan, *Songdai Guangzhou de haiwai maoyi*, 49. A similar entry to this is recorded in Wu Renchen 吳任臣, *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 59.856–57.

Beginning with one of the most famous shipwrecks in Southeast Asia, the Belitung wreck may be dated to around the 830s.¹⁴⁸ It most likely departed from the port of Yangzhou and stopped at Guangzhou along the way before sinking in the Java Sea. Nearly 60,000 Chinese ceramic vessels were recovered from the wreck site, the majority being Changsha ware produced in Hunan, as well as much smaller quantities of other commodities. Although scholars are largely in agreement that the ship itself was constructed in the Middle East and was traveling to that region from China, one curious observation is that among the trade goods, utilitarian objects, and ethnographic relics, nearly every single item recovered from the wreck was made in China.¹⁴⁹ Export commodities aside, this includes bronze spoons, an ink stone, a sword, a needle, cymbals, tweezers, a lacquer dish, a grater, a tea grinder, two kettles (from the Xinui kilns, Guangdong),¹⁵⁰ several hundred coins, a lantern, a whistle, and a vat. Some of these items would have been used almost exclusively by Chinese people or people who had adopted Chinese customs. For instance, only Chinese people are known to drink tea at this time, as the beverage only became popular in other parts of the world in later centuries.¹⁵¹ The ink stone, used to produce and contain ink in the Chinese style of brush writing, also indicates that at least one member of the ship was literate and again calls attention to educated Chinese sea merchants.¹⁵² At least several water droppers were also recovered from the wreck, which are small vessels used to contain and pour water over the

¹⁴⁸ On the Belitung wreck, see *Shipwrecked*; and Alan Chong and Stephen A. Murphy, eds., *The Tang Shipwreck: Art and Exchange in the 9th Century* (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2017).

¹⁴⁹ J. Keith Wilson and Michael Flecker, "Dating the Belitung Shipwreck," in *Shipwrecked*, 36.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen A. Murphy, "Ports of Call in Ninth-Century Southeast Asia: The Route of the Tang Shipwreck," in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 250.

¹⁵¹ The Muslim writer of Abu Zayd's first book provides an interesting description of tea as a "bitter" herb drank in hot water and sold throughout China. He states "[t]he Chinese use it for everything." See George, "Direct Sea Trade Between Early Islamic Iraq and Tang China," 600.

¹⁵² Murphy, "Ports of Call in Ninth-Century Southeast Asia," 256. For a more detailed analysis of Chinese writing implements recovered in maritime Asia, see Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas," 116–17.

ink stone after ink powder is ground onto the stone's surface.¹⁵³ As for the cymbals, these were commonly used in Chinese religious ceremonies within China and overseas (and still are today).¹⁵⁴ Java's scarcity of metal deposits meant that such items had to be imported rather than produced locally. Some trade items, such as bronze mirrors and wok-like cooking vessels might have been intended for overseas Chinese customers, non-Chinese customers, or both.¹⁵⁵

Inscriptions on many items on board the ship likewise indicate Chinese ownership. For instance, a variety of storage jars have Chinese inscriptions on them, with some of them being Chinese surnames.¹⁵⁶ One very large basin for kitchen duty or washing bears the inscription for someone named Wu Sanshilang 吳三十郎.¹⁵⁷ Also of interest are two ceramic children's toys that were recovered from the wreck. These are a bird whistle and what would appear to be a lion or a dog.¹⁵⁸ Such toys were among the most commonly produced items in the Changsha kilns, though their uniqueness on the Belitung wreck suggests that they were intended as gifts or they belonged to a child passenger.

The items produced in Southeast Asia, and possibly used by Javanese crew members or merchants, include a small gold coin, copper-alloy weights and a scale bar, a grindstone and

¹⁵³ Liu Yang, "Tang Dynasty Changsha Ceramics," in *Shipwrecked*, 150; and *The Tang Shipwreck*, 70–71, 76–77. We should also consider that the several hundred coins that were previously strunged together demonstrate that some aboard the ship intended to return to China.

¹⁵⁴ On Chinese cymbals overseas, see Arsenio Nicolas, "Gongs, Bells, and Cymbals: The Archaeological Record in Maritime Asia from the Ninth to the Seventeenth Centuries," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 41 (2009): 62–93.

¹⁵⁵ On these items, see Michael Flecker, "A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia: The First Archaeological Evidence of Direct Trade with China," in *Shipwrecked*, 111.

¹⁵⁶ Regina Krah, "Green Wares of Southern China," in *Shipwrecked*, 195, 199.

¹⁵⁷ Regina Krah, "Green, White, and Blue-and-White Stonewares: The Precious Part of the Ceramic Cargo," in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 97, 102–03. This essentially means the thirtieth son of a generation in a lineage group surnamed Wu. Beside the name is the character *shi* 食 (eat, food). I am not sure what to make of this other than that it might simply denote that the purpose of the basin was for kitchen use.

¹⁵⁸ Liu, "Tang Dynasty Changsha Ceramics," 150; and Kan Shuyi, "Ceramics from Changsha: A World Commodity," in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 55–56.

roller, and a mirror.¹⁵⁹ Only a small glass bottle and three earthenware jars appear to be items made in the Middle East.¹⁶⁰

As for the ship itself, timber samples of its structure indicate that the wood used for its construction originated in Africa.¹⁶¹ Although scholars have termed the ship an “Arab dhow,” its sewn-plank design was a type common among ships constructed in Siraf and Sohar in the mid-ninth century. Hsieh Ming-liang has proposed that this was actually a ship constructed in the Persian port of Siraf, and I am inclined to agree.¹⁶² Considering the active presence of Persians along the East African coast during the ninth century and earlier, the ship was likely constructed by Persians.¹⁶³ Siraf was in fact the most important port in the Middle East during this period, and it was a major center for shipbuilding. Moreover, the wood that was used to construct ships in Siraf is known to have come from East Africa, and it was likewise used in the construction of houses in the port city.¹⁶⁴ This information does not preclude the possibility that the ship was constructed in other regions with Persian diasporas such as Sohar or Basra, though given the available information thus far, Siraf is the most likely location. The term “Arab dhow” should therefore be considered a misnomer, as one is hard-pressed to find anything at all related to the ship that is decisively “Arab,” besides a proposed place of construction on the Arab peninsula. The few West Asian items on board, as with other shipwrecks of this time, appear to have been made in Iran or Basra—where Persians held the predominant role in commerce and the economy.

¹⁵⁹ *Shipwrecked*, 40; and Michael Flecker, “The Origin of the Tang Shipwreck: A Look at its Archaeology and History,” in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 37.

¹⁶⁰ *Shipwrecked*, 40; and Flecker, “A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia,” 111.

¹⁶¹ Flecker, “A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia,” 114, 117.

¹⁶² Hsieh Ming-liang, “The Navigational Route of the Belitung Wreck and the Late Tang Ceramic Trade,” in *Shipwrecked*, 139. Alan Chong has also cautioned against labeling the ship an “Arab dhow.” See Alan Chong, “Introduction: Unraveling the Mysteries of a Shipwreck,” in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 10.

¹⁶³ See Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, 163–65, which has many examples for the ninth century and earlier.

¹⁶⁴ Alpers, *The Indian Ocean in World History*, 48.

It is also worth noting Michael Flecker's observation that part of the ship's anchor was composed of cast iron, which was only produced in China at this time.¹⁶⁵ This indicates that the anchor was made in China, though Chinese anchors typically had stone stocks, so it does not exhibit what scholars envision as a common Chinese design. Considering the cosmopolitan demographics of China's major ports, it is entirely plausible that different groups were involved in the anchor's production and design.

Since Java did send at least two tributary missions to the Tang empire in the 830s, some scholars have proposed that the Belitung ship belonged to one of those embassies.¹⁶⁶ If such was the case, it would not be out of place for Chinese passengers to be on board, as was fairly common for Southeast Asian embassies in the following two centuries. However, two points argue against the idea that this was an embassy ship. The first is that regular trade was far more common than tributary trade (and tributary trade was often intended to pave the way for non-tributary trade). The second is that of the many items on board the ship, there is nothing to suggest that a large portion of its passengers spent time in the Chinese capital in northern China. This would seem to have been a trade ship with the primary purpose exporting goods from Yangzhou to Java, and then on to the Persian Gulf. It should be noted that Yangzhou at this time was the headquarters of the very powerful Salt and Iron Commission, so we may consider that the institution was involved at least to some extent with the ship's venture.¹⁶⁷ As for the ship's crew, the ethnographic evidence indicates that it was primarily Chinese and Malay-Javanese. It is quite possible that one or several Persians were on board, especially since the ship was

¹⁶⁵ Flecker, "A Ninth-Century Arab Shipwreck in Indonesia," 107, 117.

¹⁶⁶ See for instance François Louis, "Metal Objects on the Belitung Shipwreck," in *Shipwrecked*, 91. For Chinese-Javanese diplomacy of this period, see Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 65.

¹⁶⁷ For the Salt and Iron Commission, see Denis Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 52–56.

constructed in the Persian Gulf and much of its cargo was intended for that location. However, their material footprint is faint, and scholars should be cautious in assuming that a ship constructed in a certain location must have been captained or piloted by people from that same location.

The Intan wreck, which dates to between the early and mid-tenth century, was located in the Java Sea between southern Sumatra and West Java. It is believed to have been of the lashed-lug ship type common in Southeast Asia, and the woods used for its construction were native to Southeast Asia as well. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that iron artifacts indicate the use of wooden bulkheads, reflecting a certain degree of Chinese influence in the ship's construction.¹⁶⁸ In contrast to the Belitung ship, the Intan ship carried a more diverse cargo which included an estimated 20,000 Chinese ceramic items. Over seven thousand ceramic items and just over six thousand non-ceramic items were recovered from its wreck site. The origins of the ship's goods can be traced to a variety of locations, including China, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Middle East, though most were produced in China. In addition to ceramics, the ship carried a cargo of thousands of metal ingots, including tin (two tons), bronze (two tons), lead, and silver, in addition to scrap metal, which suggests that it was destined for metal-deficient Java.¹⁶⁹

The ship's diverse range of goods has led Michael Flecker to believe that the Intan ship was transshipping goods from a Southeast Asian port (possibly Palembang in southeast Sumatra) to Java and did not stop in China. Part of his reasoning is that the ship's tin ingots were stacked below the Chinese ceramics, which would preclude China as the location of the ship's port of

¹⁶⁸ Michael Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck* (Oxford, UK: BAR Publishing, 2002), iv, 123–24. For the discussion of bulkheads, see Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 426.

¹⁶⁹ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, iv–3, 80.

origin.¹⁷⁰ It does seem unlikely that the ship began its journey in China, though perhaps it took on the metal ingots locally in the Palembang region to use as ballast at the beginning of a trip to China, with the intent to sell those metals in Java on the return trip. As Kenneth Hall has pointed out, tin was readily available on Bangka island, which is located in close proximity to Palembang, and also happens to be near where the ship sank.¹⁷¹ Denis Twitchett and Janice Stargardt proposed that the ship was returning to Sumatra from a voyage to the Southern Han port of Guangzhou and that it had previously sailed to Java, as it contained several hundred Javanese mirrors.¹⁷² That the ship stopped in Southern Han is plausible, particularly since it carried 97 silver ingots that were collected as tax revenue by the Southern Han state and were stored in its treasury.¹⁷³ 145 lead coins minted by the Southern Han state were also discovered at the wreck site.¹⁷⁴ However, it is difficult to consider the mere presence of Javanese mirrors as compelling evidence that the ship had already sailed to Java, especially since much of the other cargo appears intended for Javanese markets.

Of the ship's Chinese ceramics, more than half are brown-glazed storage jars produced in Guangdong.¹⁷⁵ Among the other ceramics, many are true Yue and Yue-type ceramics produced in the Shanglinhu (Mingzhou/Ningbo) and Wenzhou areas of Zhejiang. Also identified are Yue-type

¹⁷⁰ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, iv, 122–24, 140–41.

¹⁷¹ Kenneth R. Hall, "Indonesia's Evolving International Relationships in the Ninth to Early Eleventh Centuries: Evidence from Contemporary Shipwrecks and Epigraphy," *Indonesia* 90 (2010): 19.

¹⁷² Denis Twitchett and Janice Stargardt, "Chinese Silver Bullion in a Tenth-Century Indonesian Wreck," *Asia Major*, Third Series 15.1 (2002): 60, 63.

¹⁷³ Twitchett and Stargardt, "Chinese Silver Bullion in a Tenth-Century Indonesian Wreck," 41–45.

¹⁷⁴ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 72; and Twitchett and Stargardt, "Chinese Silver Bullion in a Tenth-Century Indonesian Wreck," 24.

¹⁷⁵ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 101; and John Guy, "Intan: An Early Song Cargo in Southeast Asian Waters" in *Song Ceramics: Art History, Archaeology and Technology*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2004), 177.

wares, white wares, Qingbai, and brown wares from the Chaozhou, Meixian, and Xicun (Guangzhou) areas of Guangdong.¹⁷⁶

Several turquoise-glazed storage jars of a type produced in the Persian Gulf were also on the ship, and 285 fragments of glass bottles from that region were recovered as well.¹⁷⁷ Like the Belitung wreck, there is little else to indicate a West Asian presence on board the ship. Rather, the ethnographic evidence indicates primarily a crew influenced by Indian culture and beliefs, most likely comprised of Indians, Malays, and Javanese. Many objects on board were for Buddhist and possibly Brahmin rituals, suggesting that religious pilgrims were on board. It would also seem that some ritual items were to be traded or donated to a temple, as the ship contained several dozen vajra, statues of Buddhist deities and mythical beasts, elephant figurines, molds for making miniature stupas, dozens of small bells, and rings for the walking staffs used by monks.¹⁷⁸ 63 gold artifacts were also recovered, most of which are non-Chinese jewelry, and some of which have Kawi (Old Javanese) script on them. Some rings also have decorations of the Hindu goddess Sri. One unique item is a gold *caping*, which was an article worn by children in parts of Southeast Asia to cover their groins.¹⁷⁹ It was common for Malay-Javanese captains to be of royal blood, so it might be that one of the higher-ranking members of the crew brought his daughter or son on board. The cooking stove fragments found at the wreck site are of a type used throughout Southeast Asia, and a copper plate with writing in the Old Javanese or Old Malay language was also discovered.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 103, 116; and Guy, "Intan," 176–77, 180–81.

¹⁷⁷ Guy, "Intan," 176–77; and Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 427.

¹⁷⁸ Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 427.

¹⁷⁹ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 71, 74.

¹⁸⁰ For the stove, see Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 118. For the copper plate, see 89–90.

Although Chinese ceramics were the main commodities found at the wreck site, many of the metals and metal items also originated from China. This includes iron bars, iron swords, and 95 Chinese mirrors.¹⁸¹ There are indications of the presence of Chinese crew or passengers on board the ship as well. Several iron cooking pots produced in China were discovered at the wreck site, as was a ceramic toy bird whistle.¹⁸² Of more exclusive utility are two ceramic Chinese pillows of elaborate design that likely belonged to wealthy individuals.¹⁸³ One of these is true Yue ware that was produced in Zhejiang, while the other was produced in Guangdong. A water dropper was also discovered, which suggests at least one passenger was proficient in Chinese brush writing.¹⁸⁴ One rather unique and interesting relic discovered is what appears to be a large ceramic compass bowl produced in the Yuyao (Yue) kilns of Zhejiang.¹⁸⁵ If the bowl was used as a compass for sea navigation, then it predates the earliest known use of such an item by around a century. Flecker describes it as such:

“It is a one-off piece. It is eminently suited to the job, with the rounded 'inner bowl' holding the water and floating needle [not extant], and the wide flat base of the 'outer bowl' providing great stability. The interior decoration is strongly suggestive of ocean waves. No other practical use for such a design [beyond that of a compass] comes to mind.”¹⁸⁶

The ceramics cargo of the Intan ship was produced in both Guangdong and Zhejiang, and the ship's Chinese ethnographic items are from those two areas as well. For instance, the 137

¹⁸¹ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 60, 86; and Guy, “Intan,” 183.

¹⁸² Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 112.

¹⁸³ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 103, 111–12; and Guy, “Intan,” 182.

¹⁸⁴ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 112.

¹⁸⁵ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 91, 105.

¹⁸⁶ Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 91.

coins are from the state of Southern Han (Guangdong), and the navigational compass is from Zhejiang. We may also consider that of the two ceramic pillows, one was from each of those locations. It seems likely that at least one person on board the ship was from Guangdong and at least one was from Zhejiang. Considering that merchants often traveled with cargos of goods mainly from one specific region (as we will see in Chapter Three), the simplest explanation would be that one such merchant brought cargo from Zhejiang, and another from Guangdong, though the navigational compass suggests that a Zhejiang merchant took on navigational duties as well.

Relatively little information has been published about the Karawang wreck, which sank off Java's northwestern coast in around the mid-tenth century. This can be attributed to a variety of reasons such as a purported lack of high-value items discovered at the site, no identification of the ship's hull, and an only semi-transparent process of recovery.¹⁸⁷ The main information that can be ascertained thus far is that it carried approximately 70,000-100,000 ceramic items, and about 95% of those wares were Yue and Yue-type ceramics.¹⁸⁸ Lead coins with characters for the state of Min 閩 and for Fu 福 dating to between 916 and 946 were also recovered, indicating that some or most of the crew was from Fujian.¹⁸⁹ The relationship between Fujian merchants and Zhejiang ceramics producers will be analyzed later in this chapter. To my knowledge, no stylistic analysis of the ceramics cargo has been published, though the items are described as being very similar to the ceramics of the Cirebon wreck (discussed below), which indicates that they are true Yue and Yue-type ceramics produced in Zhejiang rather than Yue-type ceramics produced in

¹⁸⁷ Horst Liebner, "Cargoes for Java: Interpreting Two 10th Century Shipwrecks," Berlin: *13th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists*, 1–50; and Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 428.

¹⁸⁸ Liebner, "Cargoes for Java," 36.

¹⁸⁹ Liebner, "Cargoes for Java," 35.

Fujian. I am not aware of the latter being produced in such high quantities and reaching a comparable (middle) level of quality at this time.

Of the four wrecks discussed here, the Cirebon wreck is notable for having by far the largest cargo, with an estimated 500,000-600,000 ceramic items. Approximately 200 tons of these ceramics were recovered, as well as 40 tons of metal and ingots.¹⁹⁰ The ship sank in around 970, and although the precise location in China from where it departed has not been identified with certainty, the fact that 97% of its ceramics appear to be true Yue wares is a strong indication that it traveled to at least one port in Wu-Yue (Zhejiang).¹⁹¹ Of the remaining ceramics registered in the archaeological report, 2.5% are white wares from the Xicun kilns of Guangzhou, and the ship carried numerous storage jars from Guangdong as well.¹⁹² The presence of 2550 utilitarian earthenwares from southern Thailand indicates the ship made port there before reaching the Java Sea.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Horst H. Liebner, "The Siren of Cirebon: A Tenth-Century Trading Vessel Lost in the Java Sea," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Leeds, 2014, 291.

¹⁹¹ Liebner believes that the ship began its journey in Southern Han and sailed southward without reaching other Chinese ports, in part because most of several hundred identifiable coins recovered from the wreck were from that state. That such a large quantity of Yue ceramics would have been purchased outside of Zhejiang is difficult to conceive, and the sequence in which cargo was loaded might not be the most reliable indicator of where a ship sailed from, as merchants could load Southern Han goods either before or after reaching Zhejiang. Liebner considers the distance from Southern Han to Wu-Yue a deterrent, but another factor that should be considered is that buying the wares in their region of production eliminated the added premium for transshipment costs. Such a large quantity of goods were probably only available by placing a forward order, that is, if they were not simply being shipped by Zhejiang merchants who had planned their export in advance. This aligns with Liebner's assessment that over 90% of the ceramics were produced at a single kiln complex or at closely related kilns. Liebner provides much expert analysis in his work, but for this matter I believe that the ship reached ports in both Wu-Yue and Southern Han, most likely Mingzhou (Zhejiang) and Guangzhou respectively. See Liebner, "The Siren of Cirebon," 148, 164, 196–97, 294–99.

¹⁹² Liebner, "The Siren of Cirebon," 124, 150–51.

¹⁹³ Liebner, "The Siren of Cirebon," 158.

Figure 2 Yue Ware Bowl Dated to Five Dynasties or Northern Song



Like the previous wrecks, the material record of the Cirebon wreck suggests a crew with diverse backgrounds. Objects on board the ship can be traced to the Middle East, the mountain ranges of Central Asia, India, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and China.¹⁹⁴ Liebner writes that one sword hilt bears an Arabic inscription that appears to include the word “Allah,” though there is no consensus on how to interpret the remaining words.¹⁹⁵ That the hilt’s workmanship and ornamentation exhibit more influence from Southeast Asia than the Middle East should perhaps not lead us to consider that a coincidental arrangement of Kawi script formed a likeness to the word and other Arabic words, since extensive interaction between Muslims and Malays was almost certainly occurring in the entrepôt of Barus (northwest Sumatra) at this time.¹⁹⁶ Arabic

¹⁹⁴ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 166.

¹⁹⁵ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 189.

¹⁹⁶ For the study of Barus, see Claude Guillot, ed., *Histoire de Barus: Sumatra, Le Site de Lobu Tua I, Études et Documents* (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1998).

writing is also found on more than forty Muslim prayer beads, as well as on a small amulet mold.¹⁹⁷ One piece of gold foil contains a Sanskrit mantra in homage to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.¹⁹⁸ This was a deity worshipped by many in the Buddhist world, though particularly admired by sea merchants. Other Buddhist paraphernalia recovered from the wreck include a statuette in a style of Java, Sumatra and southern Thailand, a ghanta bell, a vajra, a vajra-scepter, a bell, and numerous figurines.¹⁹⁹

Five seals with Persian and Zoroastrian motifs were also recovered, as were more than three dozen intact glass vessels with Persian provenance.²⁰⁰ It is believed that these vessels contained rose water, a highly valued commodity produced in Persia and exported to regions as far as China and Christian Europe. These vessels are considered typologically identical to those found in the Intan wreck.²⁰¹ Items which indicate an insular Southeast Asian origin include a grinding stone, stove, and weight set.²⁰² Eight ivory dice and some acorn-shaped gaming pieces (also found on the Belitung ship) could be of Indian origin.²⁰³ Finally, certain “polylobed boat-shaped vessels” might be of Sogdian make.²⁰⁴

As for Chinese items, in addition to the many export ceramics on board the ship were stacks of wok-shaped pans and cauldrons, and twelve Chinese mirrors. What appears to be a Chinese key was also recovered, as was a bronze spoon.²⁰⁵ Due to the nature of Horst Liebner’s survey, he was quite limited in time and in his access to the large range of items recovered from

¹⁹⁷ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 189–91.

¹⁹⁸ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 191–92.

¹⁹⁹ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 193.

²⁰⁰ For the seals, see Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 176–78. For the glass vessels, see Carolyn Swan Needell, “Cirebon: Islamic Glass from a 10th-Century Shipwreck in the Java Sea,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 60 (2018): 91.

²⁰¹ Needell, “Cirebon,” 91.

²⁰² Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 207, 211.

²⁰³ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 208–09.

²⁰⁴ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 187.

²⁰⁵ Liebner, “The Siren of Cirebon,” 194, 201–02, 206, 211.

the Cirebon wreck. As such, some Chinese ethnographic items were not included in his dissertation. Fortunately, I was able to observe several such items on display at the Maritime Heritage Gallery in Jakarta. Of particular interest was an ink stone and a pillow. Reading through the gallery's picture book, I was also able to observe an additional ink stone and pillow different from those on display. It remains unclear exactly how many similar Chinese ethnographic items were on board the ship, though I intend to explore this topic in greater detail in future research.

Liebner proposed that the high quantity of ceramics on board the Cirebon ship meant that much of the cargo was intended to be sold in ports beyond Java.²⁰⁶ Considering that the port of Siraf was at its peak of prosperity at the time of the wreck (it was leveled by an earthquake in 977), and also considering that the ships' West Asian wares and ethnographic items were of Persian origin, I believe that port was the intended destination. The items on board the ship indicate that it carried Malay-Javanese, Muslims (Persians, and possibly Arabs), Chinese, and Indians. Some on board were clearly devout adherents of Islam, Buddhism, and possibly Zoroastrianism. It is interesting that such a profile so closely matches Buzurg's description, written at around the time of the wreck, of a long-distance ship crew "from China, India, Persia, and the islands" who followed a variety of religions.

Land-based archaeology also provides insights on Javanese trade. For instance, Chinese ceramics are commonly discovered at temple sites in Central Java, including Changsha bowls and covered boxes discovered at the Prambanan complex (built c. 850), and Guangdong green glazed storage jars at the nearby Candi Sojiwan (ninth century).²⁰⁷ In addition, green glazed storage jars were also recovered during the restoration of eighth-century temples on the Dieng

²⁰⁶ Liebner, "The Siren of Cirebon," 306.

²⁰⁷ *Shipwrecked*, 35; and Guy, "Rare and Strange Goods: International Trade in Ninth-Century Asia," in *Shipwrecked*, 25.

plateau (Central Java), and Changsha wares and large storage jars of this period were discovered at Borobudur.²⁰⁸ Among the ceramics discovered around the Buddhist temple of Candi Sewu (c. 792, Central Java) are a Yue-type bowl produced in Guangdong. A similar item was also discovered in Gresik (East Java), which was a proposed site for a major trade port, and further inland in Trowulan.²⁰⁹ Of additional interest is that during the tenth century, Javanese pottery came to take on Chinese styles and manufacturing techniques. Shapes changed to become similar to those of Chinese imports, and the use of paddle-and-anvil potting techniques decreased in favor of Chinese wheel-throwing techniques.²¹⁰

The temples themselves likewise contain evidence of commercial exchange with China. For instance, the walls of Candi Sewu have depictions of Chinese silk fabrics.²¹¹ In dimension and structure they are quite close to Sogdian silks, though the sequences of transmission between those areas are not quite clear.²¹² In fact, the Chinese motifs and artistic styles of these silks can be seen in ornamental carvings on numerous Javanese temple walls, including those of Sewu.²¹³ Sewu is also one of at least three temples that contained a rather peculiar image.²¹⁴ Stone images identified on three lintels located at separate locations depict two figures on each side of what

²⁰⁸ For the Dieng plateau, see Guy, “Rare and Strange Goods,” 25. For Borobudur, see Stephen A. Murphy, “Asia in the Ninth Century: The Context of the Tang Shipwreck,” in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 19.

²⁰⁹ Marie-France Dupoizat, “Chronology of Various Types of Ceramics Based on Some Recent Excavations in the Malay World,” in *Interpreting Southeast Asia’s Past: Monument, Image and Text*, eds. Elisabeth A. Bacus, Ian C. Glover, and Peter D. Sharrock (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 323–25.

²¹⁰ Wade, “An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia,” 249.

²¹¹ Hiram W. Woodward, “A Chinese Silk Depicted at Caṇḍi Sèwu,” in *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia*, 233–43. As Woodward points out, silks do not preserve for a long time, and thus a depiction in stone is of great value to scholars.

²¹² Woodward, “A Chinese Silk Depicted at Caṇḍi Sèwu,” 233–37.

²¹³ Marijke J. Klokke, “The Buddhist temples of the Śailendra dynasty in Central Java,” *Arts Asiatiques* 63 (2008): 165–66.

²¹⁴ Klokke discusses two of these images in “The Buddhist temples of the Śailendra dynasty in Central Java,” 159–60. Jeffrey Roger Sundberg discusses an additional image in “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra and the Origins of Sino-Javanese Esoteric Buddhism,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 160.1 (2004): 114–16.

appears to be a lion's face (Figure 3). With long flowing beards and mustaches, the figures are riding on clouds with items of tribute in their hands. Jeffrey Sundberg remarked that these figures are unlike Indian or Southeast Asian figures that appear in other temple depictions, and proposed that they are depictions of Chinese sages.²¹⁵ I agree with this assessment, though I would say more specifically that these are depictions of Daoist immortals. In Chinese legend, the clouds are the domain of immortals, and being among the clouds symbolizes transcendence and living in harmony with the Way. We may see that the inspiration for these carvings derives from the description of one such figure in the *Zhuangzi*:

“Far away on Mount Guye there dwells a divine man whose flesh and skin are like ice and snow, supple and graceful like a maiden. He does not eat the five grains, but inhales the wind and drinks the dew. He rides upon clouds and mist, drives flying dragons, and wanders beyond the four seas.”²¹⁶

藐姑射之山，有神人居焉，肌膚若冰雪，淖約若處子。不食五穀，吸風飲露。乘雲氣，御飛龍，而遊乎四海之外。

An assessment of the attire of the two men also reveals that they possess Daoist headwear and clothing of a South Asian style.²¹⁷ Such characteristics further highlight the hybridized nature of the depictions.

²¹⁵ Sundberg, “The Wilderness Monks of the Abhayagirivihāra,” 114.

²¹⁶ Zhuangzi 莊子, *Zhuangzi quanshu* 莊子全書 (Taipei: Bulage wen chuang she, 2023), 1.12.

²¹⁷ I am grateful for the feedback of Henrik Sørensen, who formed this observation about the clothing style and identified that the beast in the middle is likely a lion.

Figure 3 Two Stone Lintels in Central Java Depicting a Lion with Daoist Immortals on Each Side²¹⁸



In addition to bearing Chinese imagery, another unique aspect of these depictions is that they were reproduced in at least several instances. As Marijke J. Klokke pointed out, “Such close copying of ornaments is rarely found in Central Javanese art, and it is quite unique for this early period of Buddhist temple building to find two temples with very similar ornaments.”²¹⁹ All of these qualities are strong indicators that Chinese craftsmen were involved in the creation of some temple imagery in Central Java. That Daoist images appear in a Buddhist temple would not be

²¹⁸ Figure reproduced from Klokke, “The Buddhist temples of the Śailendra dynasty in Central Java,” 160. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

²¹⁹ Klokke, “The Buddhist temples of the Śailendra dynasty in Central Java,” 159.

uncommon in China at this time, though their presence in Java is rather interesting. Such images provide material evidence consistent with the already numerous textual examples of cross-cultural religious exchange that occurred in this period.

Due to the dearth of textual sources and information during China's Five Dynasties period, information about Chinese people in Java must be obtained from sources outside of China. However, with the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960, records of that dynasty do discuss Chinese merchants trading in Java in the late tenth century. One of these individuals, who brought a Javanese embassy to China in 992 and was described as frequently trading in Java before that, will be discussed in the following two chapters. The other man, a certain Pu Luxie 蒲盧歇, also led an embassy to China, which might have provided the inspiration for the 992 embassy. The *Song shi* records the arrival of this embassy from Borneo in 977, as well as a translation of the embassy's missive into Chinese from an undisclosed foreign language.²²⁰ The missive talks of how the merchant Pu Luxie arrived in Borneo after his ship was blown off course in an attempt to sail to Java. When the people there learned that he was from China, they were elated because the kingdom of Champa had blocked their ships from reaching China and Pu Luxie's presence finally provided an opportunity to present tribute and begin trade relations.

Pu Luxie is described in two instances in this entry as coming from China, though the wording is somewhat overelaborate and avoids calling him "Chinese."²²¹ Nor is his name a Chinese name. The last two characters of his name, Lu 盧 and xie 歇 are a Chinese surname and

²²⁰ SS, juan 489. See also Robert M. Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China, 960–1126* (Philadelphia: Robert M. Hartwell, 1983), 184–85; and James K. Chin, "Merchants, Envoys, Brokers and Pirates: Hokkien Connections in Pre-modern Maritime Asia," in *Offshore Asia: Maritime Interactions in Eastern Asia before Steamships*, eds. Fujita Kayoko, Momoki Shiro, and Anthony Reid (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2013), 54.

²²¹ The exact wording is "came from China" 自中國來 and 自中朝來.

a character that is not used in Chinese names (meaning “to sleep”), respectively. In this case, it would seem that the name derived from a Chinese courtier phonetically transcribing each syllable from the embassy’s missive into a foreign name, though I have previously pointed out instances in which compilers of the *Song shi* altered the names of overseas Chinese to make them appear to be foreign.²²² As for the surname, Pu 蒲 is often given to West and Southeast Asians in Chinese records, and scholars have astutely recognized that it is generally used to substitute the Arabic honorific “Abu.” However, while I am in agreement that “Pu” is a suitable transcription for “Abu” when considering West Asians in Chinese records, I think such an attribution for Southeast Asians is problematic. A very substantial number of individuals recorded as coming from Southeast Asia have the surname Pu 蒲 in Chinese records, with most of them being envoys representing states from that region. The prevailing theory is that Muslim merchants took on the role of ambassadors for Southeast Asian countries, and therefore the Chinese surname Pu 蒲 is frequently given to such envoys. It is true that Muslims were commonly sailing with Southeast Asians in the late tenth century, that many of them were merchants, and that embassies would arrive in China claiming to have delegates from both a caliphate and a Southeast Asian country.²²³ However, the idea that so many Southeast Asian countries sent Muslim merchants as their representatives does not align with the incipient state of Islam in Southeast Asia at this time or the extensive record of Southeast Asian seafarers trading and engaging in diplomacy with China. Rather, Javanese inscriptions reveal that in Old Javanese, the word “Pu” or “Mpu” was a very common title used by officials and high-status individuals in the ninth and tenth centuries,

²²² Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 15–16.

²²³ Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 103–33 (digital edition); and Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

which signified a distinguished or authoritative position in society.²²⁴ Among those in high society, it was possibly even more common than “Abu” was in the Arabic-speaking world. Unfortunately, the fact that the Chinese surname Pu 蒲 so closely resembles common honorific titles in Arabic and Southeast Asian languages complicates our attempts to understand the backgrounds of foreign peoples in Chinese records. Nevertheless, I think that in instances when Chinese records are using that character to represent the names of Javanese people, the transcription originates from the Old Javese title.

In the case of Pu Luxie, we are observing a merchant who had a status that was more ambiguous than other merchants in Song records. Considering that he was sailing to Java and held a Javanese title (and possibly name), he clearly held connections to that region. However, the sources do not detail such a background, and instead describe him as a merchant “coming from China.” It is moreover doubtful that a Javanese would have had the status required to bypass Champa’s navy to allow a ship from a separate foreign country to reach China, or would even have the intent to do so. I would propose that the ambiguity behind Pu Luxie’s status is because he was one of the many *peranakan* discussed in Javanese inscriptions at this time, and, more specifically, someone of mixed Chinese-Javanese ancestry.

The abundance of textual and archaeological evidence of Chinese people traveling to and residing in Java indicates that there were Chinese communities there during the ninth and tenth centuries. Yet, with so much discussion of Java, one is left to wonder how the country of Srivijaya to the west fit into the overall history of long-distance trade at this time. The answer is

²²⁴ There is much evidence for this in Barrett Jones, *Early Tenth Century Java from the Inscriptions*, 112. Several other scholars have also put forth this point, and a summary of their work is made in Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 114, citation no. 36 (digital edition).

less apparent, though it does seem that Srivijaya's role in the ninth and tenth century trade has been somewhat overstated. Java was clearly recognized as a wealthy area by observers from throughout Asia, and that was reason enough to capture the attention of writers in Arabic and Chinese who were interested in distant lands. Though another reason we know so much about this island (and Bali) is because writing was extensively practiced there, and therefore a broad range of inscriptions provide us with the opportunity to observe certain aspects of its society. By comparison, the kingdoms in Sumatra during the ninth and tenth centuries offer a more limited textual record.²²⁵

Although the Palembang area does have an extensive archaeological record of Chinese ceramics for this period, ceramics alone cannot be used as evidence of a Chinese presence. Moreover the ceramics record of the ninth century indicates relatively less involvement in long-distance trade compared to other major port cities, though such is not the case in the tenth century.²²⁶ Mention of Persians in the Jambi area and the reception of Jambi envoys to the Tang court in the ninth century suggests that it might have maintained more involvement in long-distance trade at that time, though this is as yet not supported by the archaeological record.²²⁷ By

²²⁵ Arlo Griffiths, "Inscriptions of Sumatra: Further Data on the Epigraphy of the Musi and Batang Hari Rivers Basins," *Archipel* 81 (2011): 139.

²²⁶ Most of the ceramics that reached Palembang in the ninth century were in the form of storage jars rather than bowls or plates, and there is a greater proportion of low-quality Guangdong bowls than in other ports. This indicates that food, beverages, and other imported commodities catered to local tastes rather than the tastes of customers in the Persian Gulf (though recent research does highlight the presence of some Changsha and true Yue wares). By the tenth century, Yue wares and other ceramics with broader appeal circulated in southeast Sumatra. See Pierre-Yves Manguin, "Études Sumatranaises: I. Palembang et Sriwijaya: Anciennes Hypothèses, Recherches Nouvelles (Palembang Ouest)," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 76 (1987): 337–402; Pierre-Yves Manguin, "Palembang and Srivijaya: An Early Malay Harbour-City Rediscovered," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 66 (1993): 23–46; and Manguin, "Ceramics from Indonesian Underwater Sites."

²²⁷ O. W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the origins of Srivijaya* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 144. For tenth-century trade ceramics in Muara Jambi, see E. Edwards McKinnon, "Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares: Archaeological Ceramics Found in Eastern and Southern Asia, A.D. 800–1400*, ed. Chuimei Ho (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1994), 286–87.

the beginning of the eleventh century, we do see indications of a Chinese community in Palembang (discussed in Chapter Four), and its origins could date to the tenth or even ninth centuries, though there is no textual evidence to support this theory. Scholars have more recently highlighted the presence of Muslims and West Asians in Barus (northwest Sumatra), and there is some circumstantial evidence of a foreign presence in Palembang in the form of caliphal *dīnārs* being used there from the ninth to the eleventh century.²²⁸ Moreover, there is nothing to suggest that the presence of Indian travelers to the region was interrupted in any way. Nevertheless, I will refrain from discussing this area in detail for this period unless I am able to find stronger indications of a Chinese presence in the future.

Giao (Northern Vietnam) and Champa (Central and Southern Vietnam)

From the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) until the early tenth century CE, northern Vietnam functioned much like a colony for Chinese empires. It served as a remote administrative center which attracted precious goods from the Southern Seas, and Chinese courts would dispatch governors (often those out of favor in court politics) to administer the region from Giao (Jiaozhou 交州, Hanoi). While Giao was located near the coast and maintained a prominent position in long-distance sea trade, Chinese influence did not extend far from the area, and the outlying region was home to various ethnic groups. When imperial authority waned in the late ninth century, governors representing the Tang dynasty were able to retain some control, though the destruction of the dynasty paved the way for a long history of politically independent states in the area. Prior to the ninth century, Giao was often a vibrant location for trade, and in some

²²⁸ Wain, “Chinese Muslims and the Conversion of the Nusantara to Islam,” 67–70.

periods even eclipsed Guangzhou in significance. Writers in the Middle East called the location “el-Wakin” and described it as a great entrepôt in the ninth century,²²⁹ though its reputation at that time might have been earned from the previous century.

In the eighth century, Han Chinese soldiers and merchants were known to settle in the area and to take local wives. Political exiles also took positions in the local government, and sometimes brought their families with them.²³⁰ The eastern part of Giao, located closer to the coast, is where Chinese communities appear to have been most prevalent.²³¹ Although the details regarding the backgrounds of Chinese migrants are sparse, some of the more prominent families are described as originating from Fujian and Guangdong, much like the background of most Chinese in other parts of Southeast Asia in the following periods.²³² In times of crisis, grain was also shipped into Giao from those areas, and in the eleventh century they were used as a launch point for a failed invasion of northern Vietnam.²³³ Ancestral and kinship links to southern China become increasingly evident when political upheavals in the tenth century ushered in a period of warlordism and factionalism. For instance, four of northern Vietnam’s infamous Twelve Warlords of the tenth century were descended from Chinese merchant families.²³⁴ Three of these men were brothers, who quite interestingly adopted the family name of their native mother rather than that of their Chinese father. This was most likely intended to gain support among other locals by highlighting their connections to the region. As in many other parts of Southeast Asia,

²²⁹ Angela Schottenhammer, “China's Gate to the Indian Ocean: Iranian and Arab Long-Distance Traders,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 76.1 (2016): 170.

²³⁰ Keith Weller Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 178.

²³¹ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 217.

²³² See for instance Wu Hun and his family, who were from Fujian, in Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 238.

²³³ For the shipping of grain, see Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 246. For a political alliance with the state of Min to keep Southern Han in check, see 261–62.

²³⁴ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 217.

women in Vietnam often held prominent roles in society, so such a strategy was likely not considered a taboo to the extent that it would have been in China proper. The other Chinese warlord, and one of the most influential of the twelve, was a Cantonese man named Tran Lam 陳覽 (?–967) who was in charge of what appears to have been an international entrepôt that was Giao’s main seaport.²³⁵ One of the first significant moves of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, the warlord who eventually reunified northern Vietnam, was to form an alliance with Tran Lam in which the latter financed the armies of the former in return for the protection of commercial routes and markets. The alliance was deemed so significant that one warlord (possibly also of a Chinese merchant background) surrendered soon after hearing of it.²³⁶ One record in the *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* 大越史記全書 for 976 states that after Đinh Bộ Lĩnh unified northern Vietnam, “merchant boats from different nations beyond the sea arrived and presented the goods of their countries.”²³⁷

Subsequent rulers of northern Vietnam (soon termed “Đại Việt” 大越) were of Chinese descent and continued to rely on Chinese communities as a major pillar of support. Lê Hoàn’s (941–1005, r. 980–1005) background suggests that he was Chinese or of Chinese descent, as his main political backers were a faction from the Giao area.²³⁸ Regardless of whether such was the case, he appointed a Chinese chancellor at his court whom he “loved and trusted” and who was “well versed in the classics and histories.”²³⁹ Lý Công Uẩn 李公蘊 (974–1028, r. 1010–1028), the captain of the palace guards under Lê Hoàn’s successor and the founder of the Lý dynasty (1010–1225), is also described in records as a “Fujianese person” (*Min ren* 閩人). He is recorded

²³⁵ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 275, 277; and Ben Kiernan, *Viet Nam: A History from Earliest Times to the Present* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 141.

²³⁶ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 278.

²³⁷ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 287.

²³⁸ Keith W. Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 52–54.

²³⁹ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 146.

as having received both a Buddhist and a secular education, and as staffing his government with sojourners from Fujian with knowledge of statecraft (most likely sea merchants and unsuccessful civil service examinees). In describing his rise to rulership, the record states “fellow countrymen set up the Min (Fujian) person Lý Công Uân as sovereign” 國人共立閩人李公蘊為主.²⁴⁰

Champa, located to the south of Đại Việt, is another location which appears to have hosted Chinese communities in this period, though textual information for this is not as detailed in comparison. One indication would be that one of the three half-Chinese warlords maintained a support base in Champa.²⁴¹ Another is that when Song records begin to provide some clarity on diplomacy in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, we see the names of Chinese people in two deputy roles and one ambassador role in several of Champa’s embassies to China. These would appear to be some of the “special envoys” that the Champa king relied on to “visit every nearby foreign state” for the sake of accumulating trade goods.²⁴² Tenth-century inscriptions from Champa also describe visits from foreign envoys for the purpose of trade and diplomacy, and of the presence of foreign merchant communities there. As in Java, some of the foreign inhabitants likewise took on the role of tax farmers.²⁴³ Such inscriptions likewise support John Chaffee’s convincing argument for Muslim and West Asian communities in Champa during the tenth century.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 11. See also Sattler, “Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas,” 121.

²⁴¹ Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 275, 279.

²⁴² Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 15–16.

²⁴³ Đỗ Trường Giang, “Diplomacy, Trade and Networks: Champa in the Asian Commercial Context (7th–10th Centuries),” *Moussons* 27 (2016): 78; Do Truong Giang, Tran Van Quyen, and Nguyen Phuoc Bao Dan, “Champa Buddhist Heritage in Northern Champa during the Tang Period (Seventh to Tenth Century CE),” in *History, Economy and Religion: Mainland Southeast Asia c. First Century CE–Fourteenth Century CE*, ed. Birendra Nath Prasad (Singapore: ISEAS, 2024), 321. Unfortunately, most or all of the inscriptions do not provide details regarding the backgrounds of the foreigners (Đỗ Trường Giang, private correspondence).

²⁴⁴ Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 112–15 (digital edition).

There is much archaeological evidence to highlight a pivotal role that Champa's ports played as entrepôts and stopovers for long-distance trade. This is most evident in an assessment of the Chau Tan wreck, which dates to between the late eighth and early ninth century and was discovered on the coast of Quảng Ngãi province in central Vietnam. Unfortunately, recovery of the wreck's cargo was not handled by academics (some describe it as having been "looted" by the locals), though many of the items were assembled by an antiques dealer. Despite the uncontrolled recovery process, Japanese scholars deemed the collection too important to overlook, and published several articles on the ship and its cargo.²⁴⁵ The ship was of a Southeast Asian lashed-lug type, with a cargo of approximately 100,000 ceramic pieces mainly from Yue, Changsha, and Ding kilns, and smaller proportions from Xing and Xicun kilns. There were also many storage jars from Guangdong, as well as a small quantity of turquoise-glazed storage jars from the Persian Gulf. Ink and incised inscriptions have been identified on nearly 600 shards, 150 of which contained Indic characters belonging to a group of Southern Brahmi script written in a brush and ink in a calligraphic style. This style is rather unusual, as Brahmi script was usually written on a palm leaf with a stylus, and it is believed that this collection constitutes some of the oldest extant items with ink inscriptions in Arabic and Indic scripts.²⁴⁶ Such inscriptions are usually only one or two words, with 23 of those being the word "Ambārak," which is the name of a location in Iran.²⁴⁷ Chinese inscriptions include *he cha keng* 河茶坑 and

²⁴⁵ Noriko Nishino, Toru Aoyama, Jun Kimura, et al., "Nishimura Project: The Oldest Shipwreck Found in Vietnam: Testimony to the Maritime Ceramic Route," Quảng Ngãi: *Underwater Archaeology in Vietnam and Southeast Asia: Co-operation for Development*, 2014, 143–53. See also Đỗ, "Diplomacy, Trade and Networks," 74; John Guy, "Hollow and Useless Luxuries: The Tang Shipwreck and the emerging role of Arab traders in the late first millennium Indian Ocean," in *The Tang Shipwreck*, 167–70; and Đỗ Trường Giang, "A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Ceramics in Champa Archaeological Sites," *SEAMEO SPAFA International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology and Fine Arts* (virtual conference), 2021, 151–52.

²⁴⁶ Noriko Nishino, Toru Aoyama, Jun Kimura, et al., "Nishimura Masanari's Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam," *Asian Review of World Histories* 5 (2017): 117–18.

²⁴⁷ Nishino et al., "Nishimura Project," 150; and Nishino et al., "Nishimura Masanari's Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam," 119.

ban 班.²⁴⁸ There are also pseudo-Arabic and Arabic inscriptions, with Muslim religious formulas with the name of the prophet.²⁴⁹ As for items which suggest use by Chinese owners or customers, human figurines of the *sancal* (three color) type were also recovered from the wreck. These items were typically used as burial goods, and were perhaps intended for an overseas Chinese clientele (if not purchased as curios). Metal objects included a small hand mirror, a bowl, and several dozen Tang coins minted in the mid eighth century.²⁵⁰ Like several other wrecks of this period, two Chinese ink stones were also recovered, which indicates at least several passengers or crew were literate in written Chinese.²⁵¹

Land-based archaeology in the former domains of Champa likewise yields many Chinese ceramic shards, with the Thu Bồn River estuary near Hội An considered to be the most likely location of a main port.²⁵² Chinese ceramics, shards from Persian jars, glassware, an Abbasid coin, and other assorted items have been discovered in the area. Chinese ceramics dating from the ninth to eleventh centuries have also been discovered in burial sites, residential sites, and religious sites, though the port sites understandably have the highest concentration of such items.²⁵³ Many of these items are Yue, Guangdong, and Changsha wares, though descriptions from local archaeologists tend to be vague. 55 shards from Persian jars have also been discovered.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Nishino et al., “Nishimura Masanari’s Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam,” 116.

²⁴⁹ Nishino et al., “Nishimura Masanari’s Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam,” 117–18.

²⁵⁰ Nishino et al., “Nishimura Masanari’s Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam,” 116.

²⁵¹ Nishino et al., “Nishimura Project,” 149; and Nishino et al., “Nishimura Masanari’s Study of the Earliest Known Shipwreck Found in Vietnam,” 116.

²⁵² Murphy, “Ports of Call in Ninth-Century Southeast Asia,” 235.

²⁵³ Đỗ, “Diplomacy, Trade and Networks,” 70; and Đỗ, “A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Ceramics in Champa Archaeological Sites.”

²⁵⁴ Đỗ, “Diplomacy, Trade and Networks,” 72.

Guangnan (Guangdong and Guangxi)

Tang records almost entirely avoid mention of Chinese people going abroad, in contrast to contemporary sources from Japan, Java, and the Abbasid caliphate. It remains unclear if this is because of the destruction of records after the dynasty collapsed or if the lacuna was a result of record keepers avoiding or omitting the topic. Another factor to consider is that local authorities and courtiers benefiting from sea trade might have concealed much commercial activity to avoid attracting the interest of the central government. One suspects that all of these factors influenced the historical record to various degrees, though Chinese records for the tenth century provide some important details.

The involvement of the tenth-century kingdom of Southern Han in overseas trade can be traced to the family of the kingdom's founder, Liu Yin 劉隱 874–911.²⁵⁵ His father was a Company Commander in Guangzhou during the Huang Chao rebellion, and at the peak of his career controlled ten thousand troops and one hundred war ships. Liu Yin succeeded his father to the position, and one wonders if these ships were piloted by some of the Chinese pirates described in Arabic-language texts. As for Liu Yin's grandfather, this man was described as a “merchant in the South Seas” (*shanggu Nanhai* 商賈南海), which could mean that he was a merchant in Southeast Asia or a merchant in Guangzhou, but probably implies both. Certainly,

²⁵⁵ The information that follows is from an examination of *Xin Wudai shi*, juan 65; and *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 535. See also Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 34; Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 25; Steven B. Miles, “Rewriting the Southern Han (917-971): The Production of Local Culture in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62.1 (2002): 45–46; and Hugh Clark, “Scoundrels, Rogues, and Refugees: The Founders of the Ten Kingdoms in the Late Ninth Century,” in *Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms*, ed. Peter Lorge (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2011), 63. Clark disputes the northern background attributed to the family's founder and believes he was from a non-Han tribe located in Guangdong.

Liu Yin had maritime connections to draw upon when he established his state; a necessity for anyone who wished to wield power in that region.

Hugh Clark has proposed that Southern Han was the first court in Chinese history to realize greater tax revenues from trade than any other source.²⁵⁶ The relatively little information available in the histories of Southern Han, Min, and Wu-Yue does reveal that they relied on the wealth of sea trade to influence northern states and to finance their governments. For instance, Liu Yin's brother and successor Liu Yan "had a proclivity for material indulgence as well, amassing all of the precious gems of the South Seas region to decorate his pavilions with jade and palaces with pearls... He had a proclivity for grand ostentation as well, luring many merchants from the north and from the South Seas, inviting them to visit his palaces and halls to show off their abundance of pearls and jade."²⁵⁷ It would seem that Liu Yan kept the seas around his domain relatively secure at the same time that Chinese pirates were ravaging Southeast Asia. It has also been noted that the Southern Han emperor Liu Chang 劉鋹 (942–980, r. 958–971) kept Persian women in his harem, though it is not clear if they were seized in a raid or betrothed as a part of a commercial arrangement.²⁵⁸

The histories record that when Song armies were on the verge of taking Guangzhou, Southern Han leaders decided to burn down the city's treasuries and palaces before fleeing to the high seas. Liu Chang had prepared more than ten sea ships loaded with treasure and concubines

²⁵⁶ Hugh R. Clark, "Review of *China's Southern Tang Dynasty, 937-976* by Johannes L. Kurz, and: *Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China: The Former Shu Regime* by Hongjie Wang," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 42 (2012): 455–56.

²⁵⁷ *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 538–39. I amended this translation to indicate that the merchants came from the north rather than from the north of Ling, and changed "Nanhai" to 'South Seas.' See also Guan, *Songdai Guangzhou de haiwai maoyi*, 49.

²⁵⁸ *Xin Wudai shi*, juan 65; and *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 544. See also Miles, "Rewriting the Southern Han," 47–48.

for the escape, but one of his eunuchs commandeered the ships for surrender to the Song forces.²⁵⁹ Where exactly Liu Chang intended to bring the ships is an interesting matter of speculation, and it is worth noting that one of the Champa envoys to the early Song empire who had a Chinese name bore the surname of Southern Han's imperial family.²⁶⁰ When the dust settled and the Song court initiated a protracted and often ineffective effort to assert control over trade administration over the next several decades (see Chapter Two), one of its issues was that officials in Guangzhou continued to engage in overseas trade. This is evident in an edict addressed to the Guangzhou Maritime Trade Superintendency in 995, which prohibited officials from sending their servants abroad.²⁶¹

Fujian

Compared to Guangdong further south, Fujian maintained relatively lower involvement in overseas trade prior to the tenth century. Fuzhou was the region's main port, and it is believed that it was one of four major Chinese ports known to writers in the Middle East (along with Jiaozhou/Giao, Guangzhou, and Yangzhou).²⁶² Tang poems also provide some indications of overseas exchange with the region, such as one late eighth century poem which talks of distant islanders (probably Javanese or Malays) in Quanzhou markets.²⁶³ Other poems describe foreigners in Fuzhou and the profits accumulated from sea trade there.²⁶⁴ An 813 stone

²⁵⁹ *Xin Wudai shi*, juan 65; and *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 547.

²⁶⁰ The envoy, who arrived in 1015, was named Liu Gongzuo 劉公佐. See Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese," 15.

²⁶¹ Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia," 225.

²⁶² So Kee Long, "Developments in Southern Fukien under the T'ang and the Min," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115:3 (1995), 450–51; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 28.

²⁶³ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 32–33.

²⁶⁴ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 25–26.

inscription unearthed in Fuzhou also talks of foreign residents.²⁶⁵ Other examples include an early ninth-century text which describes Chinese people transshipping Persian wares via Fujian, an 829 edict talking of foreigners in Lingnan (Guangnan), Fujian, and Yangzhou, an 862 text which talks of Chinese people sailing from Leizhou (the southern tip of Guangdong) to Fujian on ocean-going vessels, and an 896 memorial which notes that “foreign islanders” were residing in Fujian and Zhejiang.²⁶⁶ We may also recall that a grandfather of Liu Yin, the founder of Southern Han, was described as a “merchant in the South Seas.” The sources state that he had moved to Fujian from northern China, though this might simply refer to a claim to northern ancestry by someone who was native to Fujian (a common practice at the time). Hugh Clark doubts the veracity of the account, but states that it demonstrates that people at the time of writing (late tenth century) believed that Fujianese were involved in the South Seas trade during the Tang dynasty.²⁶⁷

When warlords across China began to consolidate their control and establish kingdoms in the early tenth century, they used any advantage at their disposal to increase their power and strengthen their domains. As was the case with Southern Han, the founder of the state of Min, Wang Shenzhi 王審知 (862–925, r. 904–909) understood that much wealth could be obtained from long-distance sea trade routes. He is known to have promoted sea trade during his rule, with one of his initiatives being the establishment of a new trade port in Fuzhou.²⁶⁸ Further to the south, his nephew Wang Yanbin 王延彬 (886–930), who was governor of Quanzhou, is recorded

²⁶⁵ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 27.

²⁶⁶ The first three of these examples are from Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 33; the last is from Derek Heng, *Sino-Malay Trade and Diplomacy from the Tenth through the Fourteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 32.

²⁶⁷ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 54, and citations no. 56 and 57. See also Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, 84; and Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 46.

²⁶⁸ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 42; and Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 455.

as having dispatched ships abroad. The *Wuguo gushi* states “[e]ach time [Wang Yanbin] dispatched Man (an ethnonym for southern peoples) ships, none were lost or sank (at sea). And so the people called him ‘the Treasure-Bringing Vice Director’” 每發蠻舶，無失墜者，人因謂之招寶侍郎。²⁶⁹ Here, the term “Man ships” is vague. It could either refer to ships piloted by Malays or Javanese, or the types of ships that they used. Considering all of the issues we have encountered with Chinese chroniclers writing about (or omitting) instances of Chinese sailing abroad thus far, I believe the ambiguity is intentional. Nevertheless, some analysis might allow for more clarity. If the intended meaning was Man people, then we are left with a somewhat unusual situation in which Wang Yanbin saw fit to command foreign subjects to sail abroad, without asking his native subjects to do so. Certainly there were Southeast Asians who resided in or passed through Quanzhou, and the sources talk of Min leaders attracting foreign merchants to their domain, though it is questionable that most of those merchants became Min subjects or that enough of them were under Wang Yanbin’s influence to bring about a major change in the prefecture’s economy.²⁷⁰ Moreover, rejoicing about the lack of casualties at sea only makes sense in the case that the seafarers were residents of Quanzhou. That Wang Yanbin’s subjects were piloting lashed-lug type ships to Southeast Asia is a more reasonable conclusion, though it still begs the question of why they were doing so. It is true that certain ship types were more suited to particular maritime environments, so that might be a possibility, though again, we might simply be dealing with taboos prevalent in Tang and early Song historical writing, or to a type of ship

²⁶⁹ *Wuguo gushi* 五國故事 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 2 (xia 下); Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, 77–78; Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 46, 58; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 41.

²⁷⁰ For attracting foreign merchants, see Hugh R. Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier: The Development of Ch’üan-chou, 699–1126,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1981, 148–49; Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 57; Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 41; and *Shiguo chunqiu*, 95.1377.

rather than ship crews.

There are, in fact, more scattered (and vague) references to Min subjects traveling through the South Seas at this time. For instance, in 910, Wang Shenzhi dispatched an envoy with the Chinese surname Cui 崔 to “exchange inquiries in the South Seas” 聘於南海, which is a euphemism for summoning foreign embassies or merchants for trade.²⁷¹ Once again, the details for such an initiative are sparse, and the event was not even recorded in official histories. There is also an anecdote in the *Wuguo gushi* about an anonymous “envoy” *shi* 使 who returned from “the south” *nanfang* 南方 and gave the gift of a glass bottle to Wang Shenzhi.²⁷² One Ming dynasty (1368–1644) book also talks of Min sending an embassy to Champa to obtain a crystal screen for its sovereign.²⁷³ Official histories do record Min embassies sent to northern dynasties, and the *Xin wudai shi* does mention Korean embassies traveling to Min, but it is quite clear that much of Min’s diplomatic history (and that of other southern kingdoms) has not survived to the present day.

When political infighting and an invasion by the kingdom of Southern Tang toppled the Min state, its territory fragmented into several pieces. Southern Tang annexed most of the land, save for its three major trade ports and their vicinity. Fuzhou was absorbed into the kingdom of Wu-Yue to the north, and Quanzhou and Zhangzhou became enclaves controlled by warlords. From this point onward, information about the ports is sparse, even in comparison to that of the southern kingdoms, though there is much reason to believe that their roles in maritime trade

²⁷¹ *Shiguo chungiu*, 90.1310; and Liang Tingnan 梁廷柵, *Nan Han shu* 南漢書 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), kao yi 考異, juan 1. Both records indicate that a given name was originally recorded for the envoy, but it was either removed from the record or was illegible. See also Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 64; and a similar record in the *Shiguo chungiu* quoted in Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 54, which talks of “inviting” foreign merchants.

²⁷² *Wuguo gushi*, juan 2; and Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 57.

²⁷³ Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, 78.

continued to grow in importance. For the Quanzhou and Zhangzhou enclaves, their very survival depended on sea trade, and their first leader Liu Congxiao 留從效 (906–962) made the development of infrastructure and the production of trade goods a top priority. Ceramics and metal wares were made for export, while gold and South Seas goods were targeted as imports.²⁷⁴ With little land in their domains, the proceeds from trade formed the enclaves’ main sources of revenue.²⁷⁵

Although Chinese sources do not explicitly state that the inhabitants of these enclaves engaged in sea trade, such can be inferred from a range of textual sources. For instance, Liu Congxiao’s biography states “pottery and metal works were exported to foreign lands; there they were exchanged for precious goods and [the traders] returned,” which denotes that those exporting such goods were residents of the enclaves.²⁷⁶ In 982, several years before annexing the enclaves, Song leaders issued regulations on the trade of Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian goods brought to other ports on ocean-going ships of “Guangnan, Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, and other prefectures.”²⁷⁷ As we will see in Chapter Three, there are also strong indications that when Liu Congxiao’s successor Chen Hongjin 陳洪進 (914–985) negotiated the surrender of this domain to the Song court, one of the conditions was that his kin would maintain privileged positions in overseas trade. Finally, Japanese and Korean records reveal that by the end of the tenth century, Fujianese sea merchants were in a position to supplant, compete with, or cooperate with merchants across East Asia, which may indicate that their position of strength developed

²⁷⁴ Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 146, 244–45; Ye Wencheng 叶文程 et al., “Jinjiang Cizao yao de fazhan ji qi waixiao” 晋江磁灶窑的发展及其外销 in *Zhongguo gudai taoci de waixiao* 中国古代陶瓷的外销 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1988), 61–65; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 41.

²⁷⁵ Clark, “Review of *China’s Southern Tang Dynasty and Power and Politics in Tenth-Century China*,” 456.

²⁷⁶ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 68.

²⁷⁷ Xu Song 徐松, *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (henceforth *SHY*; Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), *Zhi Guan* 職官 44. See also Oliver W. Wolters, “Restudying Some Chinese Writings on Sriwijaya,” *Indonesia* 42 (1986), 36.

prior to that in overseas markets in Southeast Asia and further west.

Fuzhou and Wu-Yue

As for Wu-Yue's conquest of Fuzhou, this appears to have been motivated by economic considerations.²⁷⁸ Yet rather than merely eliminating competition, as has been proposed, residents of both Fuzhou and the kingdom of Wu-Yue had much to gain by such a merger. Fuzhou had a longer history of integration with the long-distance routes that linked China with Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf, and its inhabitants most likely maintained extensive trade connections with foreign merchants in its ports and with customers in overseas entrepôts. However, its manufacturing industry was relatively undeveloped, and most of its ceramics and silks were of much lower quality than those produced in Zhejiang.²⁷⁹ The collapse of the Min state might have facilitated the upsurge of Yue ceramics across maritime Asia, though Fuzhou merchants most likely played a role as well. The tenth century was precisely the time when true Yue ceramics produced in Wu-Yue became far and away the most circulated export ceramics in maritime Asia. We may also note the presence of Huai'an (Fuzhou) ceramics in northern Kyushu (Japan) at this time, which was a market in which Zhedong (eastern Zhejiang) merchants maintained a dominant presence.²⁸⁰ Indeed, we will see instances of Zhejiang and northern Fujian merchants cooperating in sea trade during the early Song dynasty in Chapter Three,

²⁷⁸ For the battle between Southern Tang and Wu-Yue over Fuzhou, which resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, see Johannes L. Kurz, *China's Southern Tang Dynasty, 937–976* (London: Routledge, 2011), 52–58.

²⁷⁹ For Fujian ceramics and silks in this period, see So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 38. For Wu-Yue silk and ceramics production, see Hugh Clark, "The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 176–77.

²⁸⁰ Fukuoka shi Hakubutsukan 福岡市博物館, ed. *Yomigaere! Kōrokan: Yukikau hitobito to karamono* よみがえれ! 鴻臚館: 行き交う人々と唐物 ('Kōrokan ato hakkutsu 30 shūnen kinen tokubetsu-ten' jikkō iinkai, 2017), 224. See also 226–27. A few Min coins, two Southern Tang coins, and a Shu coin were also discovered there. See 101, 130–34, 221.

suggesting that such networks developed in the tenth century. Moreover, when a northern Fujian merchant guided a Javanese embassy to China in 992, he brought it to the Zhedong port of Mingzhou rather than to Guangzhou further south. Thus, the merger of these areas likely offered a significant advantage to northern Fujian merchant networks, Zhedong producers, and perhaps even Zhedong merchants in the South Seas trade. The Karawang wreck, which carried a ceramics cargo of 95% Yue and Yue-type ceramics and in which Fujian coins were discovered, also highlights such a connection, as does the Fenliuwei 分流尾屿 wreck, which carried a cargo of true Yue wares, and sank off the coast of Fuzhou in the mid tenth century.²⁸¹ However, the other two major tenth century wrecks (Intan and Cirebon) suggest Wu-Yue and Southern Han connections. It might be that the collapse of the Min state allowed for closer commercial ties between those states as well, or, that impediments to cooperation across the borders of China's southern kingdoms were never as strong as previously believed. The weakening of Wu-Yue's neighbors to the south certainly played to its advantage, but prior to the fall of Min, the three southern coastal kingdoms had generally maintained congenial relations solidified through marriage alliances.²⁸²

When the *Xin Wudai shi* talks of the Southern Han emperor Liu Yan attracting merchants from the north, this almost certainly refers to those from Fujian and Zhejiang.²⁸³ We will see in

²⁸¹ Yang Zelin 羊泽林, Feng Lei 冯雷, Song Pengbo 宋蓬勃, et al., “Fujian Pingtan Fenliuwei 五代沉船遗址调查, 中国国家博物馆馆刊 11 (2011): 18–25.

²⁸² Clark, “The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung,” 196–97; and Yamazaki Satoshi 山崎覚士, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron* 中国五代国家論 (Kyoto: Bukkyō Daigaku, 2010), 243.

²⁸³ We know for instance that Southern Han ships traded in Wu-Yue ports, so it would stand to reason that Wu-Yue ships could also trade in Southern Han ports. One record states that Wu-Yue “also pilfered the precious commodities of merchants from the seas of Ling(nan),” 又多掠得嶺海商賈寶貨. Although the wording suggests the use of violence, this statement appears in the context of a discussion on taxation, and the rhetoric is reflective of the early Song dynasty when state taxation of sea trade was not yet an established convention. I believe this is just a reference to taxing ships arriving from Guangdong. For the entry, see *Historical Records of the Five Dynasties*, 571; and *Wudai shi jizhu* 五代史記注 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 74.

the next chapter that Zhejiang merchants, specifically those from the Zhedong area, played a leading role in East Asian trade beginning in the mid ninth century. It is not unreasonable to expect that their activities extended further southward as well. Records of the northern dynasties make it clear that Wu-Yue used South Seas goods in their tributary payments to the north, and to finally sue for a peaceful surrender to the Song which resulted in the ruling Qian family becoming Song nobility. This would certainly help to explain the connections between Wu-Yue and Southern Han in the Intan and Cirebon wrecks.

Conclusion

The description of the route to Baghdad that Jia Dan provided to the Tang court in 801 highlights the most important regions that seafarers passed through on their way to and from the Abbasid caliphate. Among the locations were Champa, Java, Kedah, the Malabar coast (where Kollam was located), southwest Iran, and Ubulu.²⁸⁴ Chinese records state that once the Song established a Maritime Trade Superintendency in Guangzhou in 971 (immediately after conquering Southern Han), trade was established with the countries of “the Middle East, Kedah, Java, Champa, Borneo, Mayi (Philippines), and Srivijaya,” 大食、古邏、闍婆、占城、勃泥、麻逸、三佛齋, which shows us the main locations that were trading with Guangzhou up to that time.²⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that Kollam is not mentioned here, though this might relate to the observation in Arabic texts that Chinese merchants relocated from India to Java due to problems with Indian rulers. Nevertheless, the eleventh-century *Lingwai daida* discusses ships arriving from the

²⁸⁴ Rong, “New Evidence on the History of Sino–Arabic Relations,” 257–58.

²⁸⁵ *SHY ZG* 44; *SS* 186; Derek Heng, “Shipping, Customs Procedures, and the Foreign Community: The ‘Pingzhou ketan’ on Aspects of Guangzhou’s Maritime Economy in the Late Eleventh Century,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 38 (2008): 27; and Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 121 (digital edition).

Middle East passing through Kollam along the way to China and Chinese ships passing through Kollam on their way to the Middle East. It also discusses the routes of ships from Srivijaya (via north Vietnam), Java, and Champa.²⁸⁶

It is no coincidence that all of the textual sources discussing Chinese people trading and residing in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean during the ninth and tenth centuries place them in port cities and entrepôts along what was the most important trade route in this period of world history. As the Abbasid caliphate shifted the center of the Muslim world to the Persian Gulf and the loss of centralized control in the Tang empire loosened restraints on commercial activity, a variety of groups emerged to take advantage of the newfound commercial opportunities. Certain states located along this route were able to integrate into the trade by dispatching sea merchants, controlling strategic locations, or providing valuable commodities, and they became very wealthy and influential as a result. These locations also took on the role of major stopping points that hosted people of various backgrounds engaged in long-distance trade. That Chinese people would seek to be participants in this trade is entirely understandable considering the opportunities that it offered. However, the information that is passed to us today is only a sparsely detailed and incomplete outline of the greater picture. Other locations where Chinese people might have traveled to in this period include Mantai (Sri Lanka), Barus, Palembang, and Laem Pho (in the ninth century). All of these were entrepôts where Chinese wares frequently circulated, though unfortunately, there do not appear to be extant descriptions of Chinese inhabitants at those locations. As for details regarding the Chinese who sailed abroad, state representatives did occasionally travel overseas, though by the ninth century, merchants and sailors were clearly the main group to travel abroad, along with smaller numbers of monks,

²⁸⁶ *Lingwai daida*, juans 2 and 3.

craftsmen, and those of other occupations. As far as can be discerned, nearly all of those who traveled abroad were from Guangnan, Fujian, and Zhejiang. This has been discussed in detail, though to further highlight the point, we may look to an edict in 977 which prohibited the import of Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean goods by people from “Guangnan, Champa, Srivijaya, the Middle East, Jiaozhou, Quanzhou, Liangzhe (Zhejiang), and other foreign countries.”²⁸⁷

One final argument that has been used to support the idea that Chinese did not sail overseas in this period is that Chinese people were somehow unable to build seaworthy ships of their own. This inability was presumed to have allowed foreign merchants the means to monopolize the trade of goods to and from China. More recent support for that argument has derived from the lack of evidence in the archaeological record of ships of this period with features unique to ships built in China dating to later centuries.²⁸⁸ We have already observed that Chinese empires were able to construct seaworthy warships and embassy ships prior to this period, so it should not come as a surprise that seaworthy merchant ships were also constructed in China. Several Japanese records make it clear that the construction of seaworthy merchant ships was a relatively common procedure among Chinese merchants in the ninth century, and that some such merchants were even able to do so while residing outside of China. One of those instances relates to the merchant Zhang Youxin 張友信, who built a ship to bring a prominent

²⁸⁷ SHY Shi-Huo 食貨 36. See also Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 66; and Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 118 (digital edition). Here, the mention of “other countries” indicates other foreign countries in addition to those listed in this mix of Chinese and non-Chinese merchants. The 982 regulations on the sale of such goods from ships of “Guangnan, Zhangzhou, Quanzhou, and other prefectures” appear to have been an effort to keep the prohibition in place on those “ships” while allowing foreign merchants and envoys to trade the goods.

²⁸⁸ Although Michael Flecker is skeptical that oceanic ships constructed in China were prevalent in maritime Asia at this time, his position is based on the lack of English-language scholarship highlighting the existence of Chinese seafarers until the thirteenth century. I think his alternate theory, based on Manguin’s studies, that southern Chinese shipwrights began adapting shipmaking techniques from other parts of the world in the eighth century is a more plausible explanation for why we do not see evidence of distinctly “Chinese” merchant ships in the archaeological record. See Flecker, *The Archaeological Excavation of the 10th Century Intan Shipwreck*, 130–33.

Japanese monk and his entourage to China in 862. Prior to this, Zhang Youxin was residing in northern Kyushu, though when provided with the opportunity to conduct a trade mission in conjunction with transporting the monks, he not only managed the construction of a ship that would cross the open seas from Kyushu to Mingzhou, but the ship itself proved to be extremely durable. This is evident in the account of the ship surviving a fierce storm in the middle of its seven-day journey across the East China Sea:

“On the third day of the ninth month, a northeastern wind blew into our sails like an arrow in flight. We sped across the sea for four days and three nights. In the early afternoon of the sixth day of that month, our favorable wind came to a sudden stop. Opposing waves crashed against the ship’s stern, and we promptly lowered the ship’s sails and anchor. The anchor, however, did not reach the sea bed. It was only by attaching an extension net over fifty *jō* (about 150 meters) in length to the anchor, that it was able to reach the bottom. At this point the waves grew very large, almost as tall as mountains. It was like this throughout the night, and everyone on the ship was ready to faint from fear. With a single voice, we all prayed to Buddhas and spirits alike.”²⁸⁹

九月三日。從東北風飛帆。其疾如矢。四日三夜馳渡之間。此月六日未時。順風忽止。逆浪打艫。卽收帆投沈石。而沈石不著海底。仍更讀儲新網下之。網長五十餘丈。纔及海底。此時波濤甚高如山。終夜不息。舶上之人皆惶失度。異口同音。祈願佛神。

²⁸⁹ Ise no Okifusa 伊勢興房, *Zuda shinnō nittō ryakki* 頭陀親王入唐略記, in *Nittō goke den* 入唐五家傳, included in *Yūhōden sōsho* 遊方傳叢書, vol. 1, in *Dai nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書 (Tokyo: Daiichi shobō, 1979), vol. 113, 163–65. An English translation of this passage is also available in Isamu Shimizu, “Takaoka, Priest Imperial Prince Shinnyo, with a Translation of the Zuda Shinnō Nittō Ryakki,” *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 3.5 (1957): 15–16.

In fact, Angela Schottenhammer has noted that in the Tang dynasty there were more than twenty major shipyards located along China's coasts and in the Yangzi river.²⁹⁰

George Hourani's research on maritime exchange was a major contribution for its time, and it brought much attention to the topic of seafarers in the history of maritime Asia. However, his views regarding Chinese seafarers taking a passive role in sea trade from the ninth to twelfth centuries are no longer tenable. In fact, the idea of "Arab seafarers" becoming the predominant group of mariners after the rise of Islam is also difficult to conceive, as a very substantial amount of evidence from throughout Asia shows that Persians maintained far and away the largest involvement in trade coming from and going to the Persian Gulf at that time and in the following centuries.²⁹¹ Likewise, it is hard to conceive of crews that were entirely ethnically distinct, considering that interpreters of various backgrounds would be required for long-distance journeys, as would navigators familiar with local waters. As discussed above, some ships would also have merchants from various regions aboard. Moreover, it was common practice to recruit sailors from nearby ports to take the place of deceased or incapacitated crew members. It would certainly make sense for the backgrounds of a ship's crew to largely reflect the ethnic demographics of the port where it began its journey, and often that would entail the predominance of one particular ethnic group. Nevertheless, both the textual and archaeological records demonstrate that ships undertaking long journeys with many ports of call commonly had passengers and crew members of diverse backgrounds.

It is increasingly clear that Chinese envoys and merchants sailed across much of Asia prior to the eleventh century, leaving behind a legacy attested to in a variety of texts including

²⁹⁰ Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 451.

²⁹¹ It would go beyond the purview of this dissertation to discuss such a topic in more detail, though many examples for this are highlighted in Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*.

those produced in the Middle East, Vietnam, and Japan. Additional evidence is provided in Javanese inscriptions and in the material record. For world history, this knowledge allows for a more comprehensive understanding of long-distance exchange and for recognition that there were more participants in that exchange than previously recognized. Indeed, rather than simply being passive receivers of knowledge, commodities, culture, and visitors from distant regions to the west, Chinese people during this period passed along technologies and production techniques that transformed societies in both Central Asia and maritime Asia. They also brought with them commodities that stimulated local economies and ideas that stirred the imaginations of esteemed scholars on the other side of the Asian continent. As we delve into the large corpus of Japanese records and texts, we will examine these people on an individual level, as well as their activities, and how they formed partnerships with those from within and beyond their close networks.

Chapter Two: Zhedong Sea Merchants and the China-Japan Trade, c. 800–1000 CE¹

Merchants from China's Zhedong 浙東 region (the eastern half of present-day Zhejiang province) were among the first private sea traders to reach Japan in the early ninth century. They were close partners with merchants in the trade network of Silla 新羅 (Unified Silla 668–935) magnate Chang Pogo 張保臯 (790–841), and in fact, gradually inherited parts of this network after his assassination.² From approximately 850 to 1000, these merchants dominated the China-Japan trade like no other merchant group. Not only were they instrumental in transporting ceramics, fabrics, and medicine to Japan in exchange for rare metals and minerals, they were also key players in the development of Buddhism in Japan.³ These merchants escorted some of the most recognized monks in Japanese history, who brought to the archipelago important texts and knowledge that spurred the development of esoteric, Pure Land, and Zen Buddhist practices. Nevertheless, there seems to be little awareness in academic circles of the existence of a distinct group of Zhedong merchants.⁴ This chapter aims to highlight the achievements of Zhedong

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was published as Gregory Sattler, “Zhedong Sea Merchants and the China-Japan Trade, ca. 800–1000,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 53 (2024), 59–92.

² For more on this network, see *Ennin's Diary*, 100–4, 131; Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 287–94; Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 84–86, 112–13; Tanaka Fumio 田中史生, “Kōnan no Shiragi jin kōekisha to Nihon” 江南の新羅人交易者と日本, in *Zenkindai no Nihon rettō to Chōsen hantō* 前近代の日本列島と朝鮮半島, ed. Satō Makoto 佐藤信 and Fujita Satoru 藤田覚 (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2007), 5–28; Tanaka Fumio, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon* 国際交易と古代日本 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2012), 27–152; Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, “Shiragi kaishō to Tō kaishō” 新羅海商と唐海商, in *Zenkindai no Nihon rettō to Chōsen hantō*, 81–94; Enomoto Wataru, *Sōryō to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai* 僧侶と海商たちの東シナ海 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010), 41–59; and Sujung Kim, *Shinra Myōjin and Buddhist Networks of the East Asian 'Mediterranean'* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 37–41.

³ For the goods traded between China and Japan, see von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 50–76. For recent scholarship on interconnections between Buddhism and maritime commerce, see Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*.

⁴ For some of the major Japanese-language works that discuss the history of sea merchants in East Asia during this period, see Mori Katsumi 森克己, *Nissō bōeki no kenkyū* 日宋貿易の研究 (Tokyo: Shinteban, 1975); Yamauchi Shinji 山内晋次, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia* 奈良平安期の日本とアジア (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2003); Enomoto Wataru, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū: Kyū-jūyon seiki* 東アジア海域と日中交流: 九～一四世紀 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007); Enomoto, *Sōryō to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*; Yamazaki,

merchants from the early ninth century to the beginning of the eleventh century. I will demonstrate that these merchants formed cohesive trade networks during the time frame of this chapter, and that this group was eventually eclipsed—if not effectively shut out—by merchant groups from coastal regions further to the south following the establishment of Maritime Trade Superintendency (henceforth referred to as *shibosi* 市舶司) offices in Zhejiang at the end of the tenth century. Finally, I will discuss the political implications of such a major change, and how they might factor into our understanding of the Tang-Song transition.

The Economic Development of the Zhedong Region

To understand Zhedong sea merchants in their historical context, we will first briefly examine the economic background of the Zhedong region prior to and during the ninth century. During the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), economic activity was centered in the Central Plain region of northern China, where the majority of the empire's population was located. A sizable fraction of this population migrated southward into more sparsely populated lands during the upheavals of the Six Dynasties (220–589) period. As a result, great stretches of farmland were opened south of the Yangzi River, and transportation networks were established to move grain and other commodities across long distances. During these centuries of political disunion, the area also became a major center for the production of goods such as bronze ware, ceramics, textiles, and paper. Moreover, four of the five most important seaports along the Chinese coast were located in the southern vicinity of Hangzhou Bay, in what is now Zhejiang province. These were:

Chūgoku godai kokka ron; Watanabe Makoto 渡邊誠, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū* 平安時代貿易管理制度史の研究 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku shuppan, 2012); and Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*.

Yongjia 永嘉 (in present-day Wenzhou), Linhai 臨海 (Taizhou), Yinxian 鄞縣 (Ningbo), and Maoxian 鄞縣 (east of Ningbo). All of these ports had foreign ships anchor in their harbors.⁵

After China was consolidated once more under the Sui dynasty (581–618), construction of the Grand Canal connected major inland trade routes to the east coast and linked the highly productive farm regions of the Yangzi delta to Luoyang in the north. Mingzhou 明州 (Ningbo) in effect became the southern terminus of the Grand Canal.⁶ The main force behind the rapid pace of commercial and urban growth in this region from the Tang dynasty (618–907) until the end of the Song dynasty (960–1279) was the maturation of the rice economy. Chaos and civil war from the An Lushan rebellion (755–763) once again caused a mass exodus of people further south into areas which had greater agricultural potential, resulting in a gradual shift of China's economic center from northern China to the southeast.⁷ By the ninth century, many goods were being produced in the Zhedong area on a large scale, including silks, ceramics, and most of the paper used by the Chinese court.⁸ It was also during this time that we begin to witness the economic maturation of four prefectures that feature prominently in this chapter. Mingzhou, Wuzhou 婺州 (Jinhua), Yuezhou 越州 (Shaoxing), and Taizhou 台州, all located south of Hangzhou Bay, were the hometowns and marketplaces of Zhedong sea merchants from the ninth to tenth centuries, and Mingzhou and Taizhou also hosted ports for interstate trade.

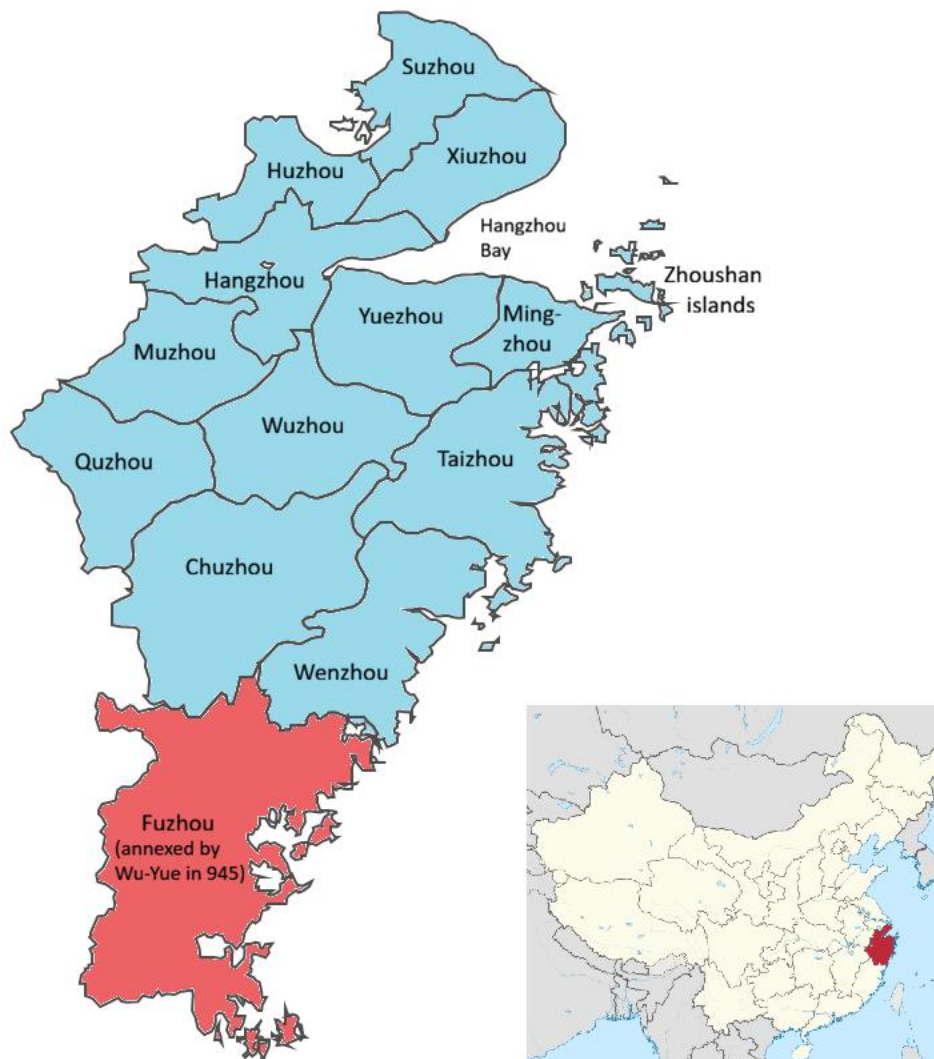
⁵ Liu Shufen 刘淑芬, *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui* 六朝的城市与社会 (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 2021), 264–80; and Liu Shufen, “The Southern Economy,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 2: The Six Dynasties, 220–589*, eds. Albert E. Dien and Keith N. Knapp (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 349–50. The fifth important port was the city of Guangzhou. Located in the far south of present-day China, much of the maritime trade between China and the known world occurred there.

⁶ Shiba Yoshinobu, “Ningpo and its Hinterland,” in *The City in Late Imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Taipei, SMC Publishing: 1977), 392.

⁷ von Glahn, *The Economic History of China*, 210–26.

⁸ For paper production, see Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 270, citation no. 3.

Figure 4 Prefectures in the Liangzhe (Zhejiang) Region c. 940



The Silla Network and the Zhedong Region

Historians have accredited Silla merchants with pioneering private maritime trade across East Asia.⁹ Although the precise length of time in which their network was active remains unclear, we do know that these Korean merchants played vital roles in facilitating the exchange of goods,

⁹ See, for instance, the secondary works listed in citation no. 1 above.

people, ideas, and religious practices between states and societies across East Asia during the first half of the ninth century. Emerging sometime after the collapse of central authority in China in the middle of the eighth century, this network spanned the coastal areas of China, the Korean Peninsula, southeastern Siberia, and the Japanese archipelago. Their original headquarters was on the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula, though in China they formed a series of diaspora communities and monasteries that connected bases on the Shandong peninsula to the Zhedong area via both inland and coastal routes.¹⁰ The Korean tycoon and military officer Chang Pogo oversaw operations of this network at the peak of its influence, until he was assassinated by his rivals in the Silla court in 841. After this time, Chang Pogo's former trade network faced a precipitous decline and was unable to recover without the support of a leader who had exercised significant political influence in both Silla and the Tang empire.

Although it is commonly asserted that Chang Pogo's network of Korean merchants was overtaken by a competing network of Chinese merchants following Pogo's assassination, a wide range of evidence suggests a more nuanced transitional process. In fact, we can see from very early on a close relationship between Silla and Zhedong sea merchants. One of the early connections between these two regions is attested to in an entry in the *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (History of the Three Kingdoms, compiled in 1145), which states that inhabitants of Silla fled Korea for Mingzhou in 816 due to the outbreak of famine on the peninsula.¹¹ Shortly thereafter, there occurs the earliest extant record of private Chinese merchants reaching Japan, which speaks

¹⁰ A map for this network is provided in Tsubasa Nakamura, "The Maritime East Asian Network in the Song-Yuan Period," paper presented at the "International Interdisciplinary Conference on Middle Period China, 800–1400," Harvard University, 5–7 June, 2014, 4–5. These communities were self-governed in a way that was very similar to the Muslim communities that concurrently existed in China's southern and eastern ports. See Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 284–85.

¹¹ Kim Busik 金富軾, *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Tokyo: Rokkō shuppan, 1980), 1:10.240.

of two Yuezhou merchants arriving in the archipelago in 819 on a Silla merchant ship. Within one year, another Silla ship arrived in Japan, and according to the description of one crew member, there were both Chinese and Koreans aboard.¹² What is notable here is that the earliest known instances of private Chinese merchants operating in Japan shows them doing so in cooperation with Silla merchants, who started to arrive in Japan earlier in the decade. Also in 819, the Zhedong surveillance commissioner reported to the Tang court that Mingzhou was functioning as a connection point to “foreigners from Silla and Japan.”¹³ It is possible that the voyages discussed here alerted him to the strategic significance of the area.

Chang Pogo’s death caused a fracture in the Silla trade network, which resulted in some merchants siding with Pogo’s opponents in the Silla court, while others fled to China and continued to trade with Japan from diaspora communities within the Tang empire. From this point onward, the Japanese government ceased trade relations with the merchants who remained on the Korean peninsula, and began to record the Silla merchants who arrived from China as “Chinese” (Tang) merchants.¹⁴ Thus, it is understandable why textual records would suggest that Chinese merchants took control of the sea trade across East Asia, as it becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain the ethnicity of merchants in China from extant sources beyond this point in time. Nevertheless, the voyages of ethnically mixed crews persisted after the death of Chang Pogo, which is apparent in the monk Ennin’s 円仁 (793–864) description of the crew that

¹² See the discussion between the monk Ennin and the Korean merchant Hwang Chǒng 王請 in Ennin 円仁, *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1970), 1:76. Hwang gives the date of 819 for the arrival of this ship, though the *Nihon kiryaku* records the ship as arriving in 820. See *Nihon kiryaku* 日本紀略 (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1897), 14:435.

¹³ Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū*, 44; and Wang Pu 王溥, *Tang hui yao* 唐會要 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1991), 2:1705–6.

¹⁴ Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 16–37.

brought him back to Japan in 847,¹⁵ as well as in the monk Enchin's 円珍 (814–891) trip to and from China in the years 853 and 858 respectively.¹⁶ We also know that at least two of the merchants on the latter journey were from the Zhedong prefectures of Wuzhou and Yuezhou.

These are the last known instances of Silla merchants participating in the China-Japan trade. However, even as descriptions of “Silla” merchants in Japanese sources cease in the mid-ninth century, recent scholarship has noted that there are other indications that Silla sea merchants remained active.¹⁷ One indication is from the journal of a Silla monk visiting China, who wrote of a sea route between Silla and Mingzhou that was in use at the end of the ninth century. This sea route, with a stopover on the Shandong peninsula, is also indicated in a 901 inscription which states that the restoration of a temple in Dengzhou (Penglai) by a Korean official was funded by profits from trade in Mingzhou. Chinese sources also indicate that there were Silla diaspora communities along coastal Zhedong that existed into the Five Dynasties period (907–979), with a particular concentration in the Taizhou area. Even a decade after the last known instance of Silla merchants arriving in Japan (in 853), we have a record of Silla monks reaching the archipelago aboard a Chinese ship.¹⁸ It would seem that the involvement of

¹⁵ *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki*, 2:305.

¹⁶ The Parhae merchant Yi Yōnhyo 李延孝 (?–877) was accompanied by two Silla merchants from Chang Pogo's trade network on Enchin's trip to China in 853. In 858, Yi Yōnhyo was in charge of the ship that brought Enchin back to Japan with another mixed crew, though on this occasion the crew appears to have been predominantly Chinese. Many sea merchants were multilingual and could act as interpreters who spoke non-native languages with a high level of proficiency. There is nothing to suggest that one's ethnicity determined one's hierarchical position on a crew. For the 853 trip, see Saeki Arikiyo 佐伯有清, *Enchin 円珍* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1990), 51–58; and Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, *Heian ibun 平安遺文* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1964), 1:91. Concerning the 858 trip, see *Tōjin sōbetsushi narabini sekitoku 唐人送別詩并尺牘* (Senshu Daigaku kodai higashi Ajia sekaishi nenpyō), <http://www.senshu-u.ac.jp/~off1024/nenpyoushiryō/tojinsoubetu/tojinsoubetu.htm>.

¹⁷ The following information is from Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū*, 45; Tanaka, “Kōnan no Shiragi jin kōeki sha to Nihon,” 6–7; and Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 244.

¹⁸ Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平, *Nihon sandai jitsuroku 日本三代実録* (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1914), 7.145. As is evident in *Ennin's Diary*, Silla monks were active in the same diaspora communities in China as Silla merchants.

Silla merchants in interstate trade persisted for longer than previously believed, and that these merchants continued to operate in partnerships with merchants of the Zhedong area.

Zhedong Merchants

Scholars to date have produced a large body of research on the topic of Chang Pogo and his maritime trade network. However, much less attention has been directed toward the backgrounds and native places of Chinese sea merchants who were active at the same time. The activities and identities of Chinese sea merchants become increasingly clear when Japanese textual sources start to document the journeys of these individuals at the beginning of the ninth century. Sea merchants receive frequent mention in these sources, and quite often this information includes their names, hometowns, and ports of departure. Of particular interest is that analysis of their hometowns from the ninth to eleventh centuries indicates networks that were predominant in one particular geographic location. A detailed examination reveals that these merchants were from the Zhedong area, and that they controlled the China-Japan trade in the century and a half following Chang Pogo's death. It was at this time that they transformed a seldom-used sea route for diplomatic envoys into one of the most significant commercial networks in East Asian history: the Ningbo-Hakata network.¹⁹ All four of the prefectures (Wuzhou, Yuezhou, Mingzhou, and Taizhou) that comprised the main hubs for the China-Japan trade from approximately 850 to 1000 formed a connected body of land south of Hangzhou Bay. These prefectures were all

¹⁹ On the later efflorescence of this network, see von Glahn, "The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network and the Reorientation of East Asian Maritime Trade," 249–79; and Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū*. Rather than directly crossing the East China Sea, the most common route linking Japan to continental Asia until this time passed along the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, the island of Tsushima, and the island of Kyushu. A less common alternative was to sail along the Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan, which also functioned as a prehistoric crossing point.

integrated into the economy of the largest city in the region, Hangzhou, which was the capital of the kingdom of Wu-Yue (907–978), and later of the Southern Song (1127–1279) dynasty. Here, I will discuss these four prefectures’ economic significance and the merchants that were born or resided within their territory.

We begin with an examination of Mingzhou, a major port city and transshipment center that connected Hangzhou with other port cities across China.²⁰ In addition to its markets, Mingzhou was a center for the production of alcohol, fabric, ceramics, metallic goods, wood products, and boats.²¹ It was also the location of a Kaiyuan temple (*Kaiyuan si* 開元寺) that was a popular pilgrimage site for Buddhist monks from Japan.²² After a diplomatic rupture between Japan and Silla in the latter half of the eighth century prevented Japanese embassies from using the sea route to China that passed along the Korean peninsula, Mingzhou became a main port for tributary missions sent across the open sea from Japan. Later, Mingzhou functioned as the primary port for sea merchants sailing to Japan, as well as to states on the Korean peninsula—an arrangement that lasted for many centuries.

To modern historians of East Asia, Mingzhou is easily the most recognizable of the four prefectures discussed here due to its status as a major port throughout a long period of Chinese

²⁰ Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1970), 9; and Clark, “The Southern Kingdoms between the T’ang and the Sung,” 184. For more on Mingzhou, see Shiba, “Ningpo and its Hinterland.” On Mingzhou’s local elites during and after the Song dynasty, see Linda Walton, “Kinship, Marriage, and Status in Song China: A Study of the Lou Lineage of Ningbo, c. 1050–1250,” *Journal of Asian History* 18:1 (1984): 35–77; Richard L. Davis, *Court and Family in Sung China, 960–1279: Bureaucratic Success and Kinship Fortunes for the Shih of Ming-chou* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986); Richard L. Davis, “Political Success and the Growth of Descent Groups: The Shih of Ming-chou during the Sung,” in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000–1940*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 62–94; Richard L. Davis, “The Shi Tombs of Dongqian Lake,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 26 (1996): 201–16; and Sukhee Lee, *Negotiated Power: The State, Elites, and Local Governance in Twelfth- to Fourteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014).

²¹ Enomoto Higashi *Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū*, 40.

²² Saeki Arikiyo, *Takaoka shinnō nittōki* 高丘親王入唐記 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2002), 164, 174.

history. It might then come as a surprise that Mingzhou does not appear to have been a location where, in the early centuries of trade between China and Japan, merchants came from or resided. Perhaps the only merchant from Mingzhou in the time frame of this chapter is a man who figures prominently in Japanese records named Zhang Youxin 張友信; however, the attribution for this origin is made only somewhat vaguely in Ennin's diary.²³ Nevertheless, Zhang Youxin is recorded as having sailed to and from Mingzhou on several occasions, so the attribution is plausible. Zhang, who also resided in northern Kyushu for some time (in what is now Karatsu 唐津), was something of a polymath; he is recorded in a variety of sources as a shipbuilder, interpreter, captain, and merchant. While in Japan, Zhang constructed and piloted a ship for Imperial Prince Takaoka's 高丘親王 (799–865?, also known by his Buddhist name Shinnyo 真如) pilgrimage to China in 862 (discussed in the previous Chapter).²⁴

All indications are that Yuezhou was a major base for Zhedong merchants and craftsmen in the region during the ninth century, while Mingzhou was the port that these merchants sailed to and from (Yuezhou does not appear to have had a major port). As previously noted, the earliest extant record of private Chinese merchants reaching Japan concerns two Chinese merchants from Yuezhou, Zhou Guanghan 周光翰 and Yan Shengze 言升則, who arrived in the archipelago on a Silla trade ship in 819. Perhaps as a means of ingratiating themselves with the government in Heian, they informed the Japanese authorities of a massive uprising in China led by the renegade general Li Shidao 李師道 (?–819), which the Tang government was having trouble

²³ *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 2:305. Rather than stating that Zhang is a “Mingzhou person,” a common way of identifying the birthplace of merchants in Japanese records, Ennin describes him as 明州張支(友)信, something akin to “Zhang Youxin of Mingzhou.” This could likewise describe the port that Zhang sailed from.

²⁴ *Zuda shinnō nittō ryakki*.

suppressing.²⁵ The merchants Liu Shixian 劉仕獻 and Zhan Jingquan 詹景全 (?–877) are described in the same document as Yuezhou people who sailed to Japan in 856, though elsewhere Zhan Jingquan is recorded as coming from Wuzhou—which is an attribution that I am more inclined to support.²⁶ Considering that Wuzhou and Yuezhou were connected by a series of riverways, it is not unrealistic to think that Wuzhou merchants would reside or do business in the more active commercial hub.²⁷

Yuezhou was known first and foremost as the administrative center of Zhedong, though another point of distinction was that the area was a renowned production center over a long period of time. After the An Lushan rebellion shattered the centralized control structure of the Tang empire, Sichuan and the Lower Yangzi region became China's main locations for silk production. Yuezhou was among several prefectures in the region that sent the greatest quantities of silk to the Tang capital.²⁸ Some of these silks were of the finest quality, as evinced by Emperor Jingzong's 唐敬宗 (809–827, r. 824–827) commissioning of one thousand bolts of twill damasks from workshops in Yuezhou. These fabrics were considered so exorbitant in price that a local official implored the emperor to abandon his mandate.²⁹ Perhaps most important for the topic of this chapter are ceramics. Yuezhou kilns were producing extremely high quantities of export

²⁵ *Nihon kiryaku* 14.432. Note that until 821, Mingzhou was administered by the Yuezhou prefectural government. For this reason, these two merchants could have been from either Mingzhou or Yuezhou. On this point, see Enomoto *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nihon kōryū*, 29. Also note that the character Yan (言) seems incorrectly recorded, as it does not appear to be a Chinese surname. Chinese merchant names were often erroneously written in Japanese sources (though quite often the correct character is discernible).

²⁶ *Heian ibun*, 1:105. On Zhan Jingquan's native place, I follow Yamazaki Satoshi who points out that Wuzhou was most likely his hometown, though Yuezhou was the location where he prepared for his departure to Japan. See *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 191, 246–47; and *Tōjin sōbetsushi narabini sekitoku*. Yuezhou was also likely the location where Zhan purchased much of the cargo that he brought to Japan.

²⁷ On these river connections, see Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 189–90.

²⁸ Buyun Chen, *Empire of Style: Silk and Fashion in Tang China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 130–32.

²⁹ Chen, *Empire of Style*, 75–76.

ceramics from the middle of the eighth century until they encountered a period of sudden decline in the eleventh century.³⁰ Not only were high quantities of Yuezhou celadons shipped to Japan—where they were the most common type of imported ceramics—they were also exported to Western Asia and throughout much of Southeast Asia.³¹ The prefecture was also one of the main production centers for paper in the Tang empire,³² which was likewise a minor export commodity. Yuezhou was moreover a location for coin minting after 845, as well as both a sea salt production center and the location of a salt directorate office for the powerful Salt and Iron Commission.³³ As for its religious importance, Yuezhou was the location of two major Buddhist temples, the Longxing 龍興 temple and the Fahua 法華 temple. The renowned Japanese monks Saichō 最澄 (767–822) and Kūkai 空海 (774–835) both visited these sites on their trip to China, as did Imperial Prince Takaoka.³⁴ Due to the central role it played both in the production of export goods and as an important religious site, Yuezhou was one of the more significant locations in the history of trade between Japan and China.

Wuzhou is known mainly to scholars of Chinese history as the home region of important Chinese intellectuals and prominent government officials, particularly from the Southern Song period onward.³⁵ Looking further back in time, we may see that this region was extensively

³⁰ Kamei Akinori 亀井明徳, “Tōdai tōji bōeki no tenkai to shōnin” 唐代陶磁貿易の展開と商人, in *Ajia no naka no Nihon shi 3: Kaijō no michi* アジアのなかの日本史3: 海上の道, ed. Arano Yasunori 荒野泰典, Ishii Masatoshi 石井正敏, and Murai Shōsuke 村井章介 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku shuppankai, 1992), 126–28.

³¹ Kamei, “Tōdai tōji bōeki no tenkai to shōnin,” 120–26; and Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 249.

³² Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 104.

³³ On coin minting, see Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, 181. For salt production and administration, see Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, 175.

³⁴ Saeki Arikiyo, *Takaoka shinnō nittōki*, 163–66.

³⁵ On this topic, see Beverly Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, & the State in Sung China (960–1279)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1998); Peter K. Bol, “Neo-Confucianism and Local Society, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century: A Case Study,” in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 241–83; and Peter K. Bol, *Localizing Learning: The Literati Enterprise in Wuzhou, 1100–1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2022).

developed by settlers during the Six Dynasties period. Wuzhou became a significant commercial center at this time due to its proximity to Hangzhou Bay and the burgeoning city of Jiankang 建康 (Nanjing).³⁶ Ceramics were produced here, as were silks and other fabrics. Wuzhou textiles dating to the early Tang were even discovered in the far-off region of present-day Xinjiang.³⁷ In terms of industry, Wuzhou also had fifteen hearths for coin minting by the late Tang.³⁸

Due to its position as the only landlocked prefecture of the four areas discussed here, the significant role that Wuzhou played in trade between China and Japan has not yet attracted the notice of scholars of East Asia.³⁹ Yet, from the ninth to eleventh centuries we can trace the origins of more sea merchants to this location than to any other area in China. Starting in the ninth century, we know of three Wuzhou merchants who traded in Japan; the earliest among them being Xu Gongyou 徐公祐. Gongyou traveled to Japan in 847, 849, and 852, and his elder brother Xu Gongzhi 徐公直 hosted the monk Enchin during his pilgrimage in China in 853.⁴⁰ At this time, Gongzhi took care of Enchin while he was ill, and in turn, the monk prayed with him and offered religious services during his stay.

³⁶ Liu, “The Southern Economy,” 335.

³⁷ For ceramics production in Wuzhou, see Liu, “The Southern Economy,” 349. For textiles, see Valerie Hansen and Helen Wang, “Introduction,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 23, no. 2 (2013): 155–63; and Chen, *Empire of Style*, 28. For silk weaving during the Song dynasty, see Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu, “Economic Change in China, 960–1279,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part Two: Sung China, 960–1279*, ed. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 398.

³⁸ Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, 180.

³⁹ Though one exception would be Yamazaki Satoshi, who discussed the connections to this region of three Wuzhou merchants: Zhan Jingquan, Li Da 李達, and Xu Gongyou. See Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 189–94; and Gregory Sattler, “The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia, ca. 800–1127,” *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 6 (2021), 41–60. Most references to the origins of these merchants appear in Japanese primary sources, which is likely why the importance of this region in interstate trade has yet to be noticed by historians of China.

⁴⁰ Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 171–87; Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 142–44; and Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin* 円珍 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1990), 185–86.

Another important Wuzhou merchant was Zhan Jingquan, who, together with the Yuezhou merchant Liu Shixian and two Parhae 渤海 (698–926)⁴¹ merchants, sailed to Japan in 856 and then met with Enchin upon their return to China. There, Enchin entrusted these merchants with a large donation to construct a Buddhist hall at the Guoqing 國清 temple on Mount Tiantai 天台.⁴² The Guoqing temple complex, it should be noted, was the center of Tiantai Buddhism in China, and Enchin was a key figure in the transmission of Tiantai (Jp. Tendai) Buddhism to Japan. In 858, Zhan and a large group of merchants accompanied Enchin on his return trip to the archipelago. While waiting for favorable winds for their trip back to China, Zhan Jingquan was among several of the merchants who composed poems as they bade farewell to the monk.⁴³ Zhan remained in contact with Enchin for many years, and carried letters exchanged between Enchin and China-based monks in 864.⁴⁴ He returned to Japan in 865, and again in 867. On the latter trip he carried Buddhist paraphernalia to Japan at the request of Enchin, and also made a donation to a Japanese temple with his associate Li Da 李達,⁴⁵ who was from Yongkang 永康 county in Wuzhou. In addition to joining Zhan in composing poetry in 858 and making donations to a temple in 867, he brought over one hundred books for Enchin on a trip to Japan in 881.⁴⁶

⁴¹ This country was comprised of territory corresponding to modern North Korea, Manchuria, and the Russian Far East.

⁴² Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 116; *Heian ibun*, 1:105.

⁴³ *Tōjin sōbetsushi narabini sekitoku*.

⁴⁴ Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 174.

⁴⁵ Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 266; Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 174; Miyoshi Kiyoyuki 三善清行, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den* 天台宗延暦寺座主円珍伝 (Senshu Daigaku kodai higashi Ajia sekaishi nenpyō), <http://www.senshu-u.ac.jp/~off1024/nenpyoushiryō/enchinden/enchinden-850~859.htm>; Shikō 志晃, *Jimon denki horoku* 寺門傳記補録 (Senshu Daigaku kodai higashi Ajia sekaishi nenpyō), <http://www.senshu-u.ac.jp/~off1024/nenpyoushiryō/jimondenkihoroku/jimondenki8-858~882.htm>; and Sontsū 尊通, *Chishō daishi nenpu* 智証大師年譜 (Kashihara Keiyō, 1880), 18.

⁴⁶ Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 177; and *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*.

Considering that Xu Gongyou, Xu Gongzhi, Zhan Jingquan, and Li Da all came from Wuzhou and fostered close links with Enchin over a long period of time, they most likely belonged to a common network of wealthy merchants and local elites. Unfortunately, as Japanese records often only record one or two names of sea merchants on any given voyage (usually among crews of between thirty and seventy men), it is not always possible to plot in detail the networks of associates that the traders maintained. From the final decades of the Tang dynasty and through to the first decades of the Five Dynasties period, the task of tracking the flow of Chinese merchants to and from Japan becomes all the more challenging as rebellions and wars led to prolonged periods without any recorded contact between Japanese officials and continental sea merchants.

Despite these upheavals, Zhedong merchants strengthened their hold on trade with Japan in the Five Dynasties period. This may be attributed almost entirely to the stability and support provided by the commercially oriented state of Wu-Yue. Encompassing much of modern Zhejiang province as well as the southern portion of Jiangsu and, after 945, Fuzhou, the state of Wu-Yue was the wealthiest and longest-lived of the many polities of the Five Dynasties period.⁴⁷ Although it was relatively small in size and population, the government of Wu-Yue was able to punch well above its weight in the geopolitical maneuvering between various states in the former Tang domain due to its geographic and economic advantages as well as the efficacy of its diplomatic initiatives. Key to the kingdom's survival was the fostering of relations with the militarily dominant dynasties of northern China; Wu-Yue diplomats were able to use the country's wealth to influence the highest levels of these northern governments. In fact, the arrival of Wu-Yue traders in those states was so frequent that the merchants were permitted to set up

⁴⁷ Clark, "The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung," 133, 143.

trade agencies in port cities to conduct business directly with the local populace. Wu-Yue merchants were even allowed to build their own jails on this non-sovereign soil to enforce debt repayments on the loans they issued.⁴⁸ Aside from leveraging wealth for influence, the ruling Qian 錢 family was able to maintain amicable relations with northern states by making no claims to imperial rulership and paying tribute to the emperors of the northern dynasties. As for relations outside of China, Wu-Yue conducted diplomacy with Liao 遼 (916–1125), Later Paekche 後百濟 (892–936, located in the southwestern region of the Korean peninsula), Silla, Koryŏ 高麗 (918–1392), Parhae, and Japan, though only in the case of Japan do scholars maintain that merchants, rather than diplomatic envoys, were dispatched to the archipelago (ostensibly, they were acting as messengers between both governments). We have also considered in Chapter One that the kingdom was very likely involved in direct trade with Southeast Asian states.

Of the states that emerged after the collapse of the Tang dynasty, the traders who sailed to Japan were only ever described as coming from Wu-Yue. Unfortunately, along with the lacuna in the historical record regarding those who arrived in the early tenth century, there was a general indifference to recording the local affiliations of sea merchants and envoys even when their presence became more conspicuous in later decades. Although we are as yet unable to ascertain which particular areas of Wu-Yue most of these individuals came from (if indeed they all came from Wu-Yue), one exception would be the case of Jiang Xun 蔣勳. As the most active visitor cited in Japanese records during the Five Dynasties period, Jiang Xun appears in Japanese sources on several occasions as a representative of the Wu-Yue court.⁴⁹ Not only was he engaged

⁴⁸ Naomi Standen, “The Five Dynasties,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 5, Part One: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 78.

⁴⁹ The following is from Sattler, “The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia.” For these sources, which record Jiang’s name as Jiang Chengxun 蔣承勳, see *Nihon kiryaku* 22.820–21; Shinzei 信西, *Honchō seiki* 本

in trade between Wu-Yue and Japan from 935 to 953, he also carried correspondence between the King of Wu-Yue and leading ministers of the Japanese court in Heian. As I have discussed in my previous work, additional details about Jiang Xun's background can be ascertained from a Chinese funerary inscription which states that he was from Dongyang 東陽 county in Wuzhou, and that he attained one of the highest positions in the Wu-Yue government, that of Censor-in-Chief (*yushi daifu* 御史大夫).⁵⁰ Recently, I have uncovered several additional sources that might provide a broader understanding of this figure.

The first among these is another funerary inscription from one of Jiang Xun's descendants that likewise identifies Jiang as an acting Minister of Works and a Censor-in-Chief at the Wu-Yue court.⁵¹ There are some additional details in this funerary inscription that did not appear in the first. Here, it is asserted that the Jiang lineage established itself in Yixing 義興 county (modern Yixing 宜興, located just to the west of Suzhou) after the fall of the Han dynasty, which is commensurate with a claim to descent from the great clan known as the Jinling Jiang 晉陵蔣氏.⁵² Following this, the funerary inscription states that after seventeen generations

朝世紀 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1898), 8.13; *Heian ibun*, 9:3564; and Fujiwara no Akihira 藤原明衡, *Honchō monzui* 本朝文粹, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikō* 新訂増補国史大系, vol. 29 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), 7.170.

⁵⁰ Sattler, "The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia," 50–52. Translations of offices and ranks are from Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1985).

⁵¹ Li Xiusheng 李修生, *Quan Yuan wen* 全元文 (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2004), 55:1692.646–48. This biography is for Jiang Jigao 蔣季高 (1329–1357), the grandson of the Yuan dynasty literatus Jiang Jixiang 蔣吉相 (1274–1321) whose life was the subject of the first biography. Although these two funerary inscriptions were written approximately four centuries after the death of Jiang Xun, based on the discussion that follows, I am inclined to view the author Huang Jin's 黃潛 (1277–1357) account of the man as accurate and likely based on family and locally-available records maintained over a long period of time. On the production of genealogies in Wuzhou during the period when these inscriptions were written, including Huang Jin's views on the process, see Bol, *Localizing Learning*, 204–28.

⁵² For the Jinling Jiang's inclusion in Tang dynasty lists of great families, see David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), 226. For discussion on such claims, known to scholars of China as 'choronyms,' see 29, 63.

of living in the coastal county of Linhai (in Taizhou), Jiang Xun was the first of his kin to reside in Dongyang county (in Wuzhou). In addition to noting Jiang Xun's relocation to Wuzhou, here we may also consider that, by no later than the Five Dynasties period, Linhai was the location of a Silla diaspora community and most likely a hub for interstate trade.⁵³ Thus, we may trace Jiang Xun's lineage to a port city that was connected to interstate sea trade networks since the Six Dynasties period.

The next source to examine is a short biography of Jiang Xun in the Wu-Yue biographies section of the *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋.⁵⁴ Although this account presents unique information about Jiang Xun, it is clearly discussing the same individual as the two aforementioned funerary inscriptions, and it in fact corroborates several points. For instance, Jiang Xun's position as an acting minister and Censor-in-Chief is noted, as is his ancestral link to the Wu commandery and his residence in Dongyang county. Of interest here is that Jiang Xun is described as having fled to Dongyang at the end of the Tang dynasty, and identified as having received the prestigious title of 'Grand Master of the Palace with Golden Seal and Purple Ribbon' (*jinzi guanglu dafu* 金光祿大夫, given to officials of the second or third rank).

Jiang Xun's name also appears in an entry in the *Xin Tang shu* dated to the year 898; a time when warlords were carving out domains throughout much of China.⁵⁵ Here, Jiang Xun is mentioned as one of two officers sent by the Kingdom of Wu founder Yang Xingmi 楊行密 (852–905) to engage the navy and land forces of the Wu-Yue founder Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932),

⁵³ Tanaka, "Kōnan no Shiragi jin kōeki sha to Nihon," 6. Beverly Bossler points out that a large portion of prominent Wuzhou families in the Song dynasty moved to Wuzhou during the Five Dynasties period. See *Powerful Relations*, 124.

⁵⁴ *Shiguo chunqiu*, 85.1241–1242.

⁵⁵ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 34.188.

who was at this time a warlord laying siege to Suzhou.⁵⁶ Having failed to relieve the siege and in desperate need of provisions, Wu forces surrendered soon afterward. It is possible that a young Jiang Xun defected to the state of Wu-Yue when this occurred, and gradually worked his way into Qian Liu's inner circle. Although this is a matter of speculation, we do know that Qian Liu aggressively recruited young and talented individuals at this time, and military commanders with a civil education (commonly referred to in contemporary sources as *rujiang* 儒將) were of particular value.⁵⁷ This battle was followed later in the same year with a push by Qian Liu's forces to retake Wuzhou, where Dongyang county was located.⁵⁸ If the *Xin Tang shu* was indeed discussing the same Jiang Xun that would later rise to prominence in the Wu-Yue court, this would seem to corroborate the *Shiguo chunqiu*'s claim that he moved to Wuzhou at the end of the Tang dynasty. As for Jiang Xun's presence in Suzhou, we might note that the city had long held close commercial links with seaports in the Zhedong region, and that it was previously in the possession of Qian Liu prior to its conquest by Yang Xingmi.⁵⁹

There is one final item that might shed light on Jiang Xun's role in civil government. The Fukuoka City Museum in Japan has in its possession an ink stone from China with a provenance dating from the tenth to eleventh century, which was found in the vicinity of the Kōrokan 鴻臚館 (a lodging quarters in northern Kyushu for diplomats, Buddhist monks, and private merchants).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ This section of the *Xin Tang shu* states: "[Qian] Liu sent [his] navy. [Because Yang Xingmi's commander Tai] Meng's supplies were depleted, Xingmi sent Li Jian and Jiang Xun to engage [them], and the troops of [Qian's officer Gu] Quanwu were defeated." Since this was a naval and land blockade, and Li Jian's biography makes it clear that he commanded land-based troops, the inference is that Jiang Xun was the naval commander. For Li Jian's biography, see Lu Zhen 路振, *Jiuguo zhi* 九國志 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2000), 1.13.

⁵⁷ Clark, "The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung," 162.

⁵⁸ Sima Guang 司馬光, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), 9:261.8519.

⁵⁹ On the links between Zhedong ports and Suzhou, see Tanaka, "Kōnan no Shiragi jin kōeki sha to Nihon;" and Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 184–89. Also of interest is the biography of a Suzhou monk which states that, at some time between the years 885 and 888, the monk fled fighting around the city of Suzhou for Mingzhou on a ship piloted by Yuezhou merchants. See Yamazaki, 199.

⁶⁰ The Kōrokan is discussed in detail throughout Batten, *Gateway to Japan*.

On the ink stone is an inscription which states “Hu Chenglian engraves: Xiao Jiang purchased this ink stone” 胡承璉鑄 小蔣置此硯瓦.⁶¹ From the tenth to eleventh centuries, there were only two representatives of Wu-Yue surnamed Jiang 蔣 who were recorded as arriving in Japan. One was Jiang Xun, and another was named Jiang Gun 蔣袞 (the latter was recorded as arriving in Japan in 945 and 947, which corresponds to the period of time that Jiang Xun was active).⁶² A search through a database of hundreds of thousands of Chinese biographies reveals only one result for the characters “胡承” from the beginning of the ninth century to the eleventh century.⁶³ This is for a record of a Wu-Yue official from Wuzhou named Hu Chengshi 胡承師, who was an adult at precisely the time that Jiang Xun and Jiang Gun arrived in Japan. We can see then that Hu Chengshi’s lifetime corresponds to the lifetime of Hu Chenglian, which suggests they might have been brothers or relatives that shared the same generational signifier of ‘Cheng’ 承. Although we are unable to know whether this ink stone belonged to either Jiang Xun, Jiang Gun, or one of their relatives, it does attest to the civil skillset that representatives from China held at this time, and possibly serves as an additional link to Wuzhou.

There is something to be said for why a minister of the Wu-Yue court would appear in Japan at the apex of his career. To begin with, we must address assumptions that were made in

⁶¹ *Yomigaere! Kōrokan*, 141, 229. I am indebted to the contributor Morimoto Mikihiro 森本幹彦 for suggesting that this item may have belonged to Jiang Chengxun.

⁶² *Honchō seiki* 8.124; and Fujiwara no Akihira, *Honchō monzui* 7.169. Bruce Batten provides an insightful narration of Jiang Gun’s 945 journey to Japan in Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 105–11. Mori Kimiyuki believes that both names were of the same person, and that ‘Gun’ 袞 was an erroneous recording of ‘Xun’ 勳. See Mori Kimiyuki 森公章, *Kodai Nitchū kankei no tenkai* 古代日中関係の展開 (Tokyo: Keibunsha, 2018), 112. Although I do think this is a possibility, 袞 was used as a Chinese given name in this period of time, so it is also possible that the person recorded as Jiang Gun was a relative of Jiang Xun. The latter graph for Xun’s given name was also written in Japanese texts as 勳, 勵, and 勳.

⁶³ This information comes from the entry for Hu Chengshi’s son, Hu Ze 胡則 in the *China Biographical Database* (henceforth CBDB) (Harvard University, Academia Sinica, and Peking University, April 2, 2022), <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb>. Hu Ze is of interest because in 989 he became the first resident of Wuzhou to receive a *jinshi* degree. On this, see Bol, *Localizing Learning*, 30.

past historiography and how those assumptions might affect our understanding of tenth-century diplomacy and trade. Most of what we know of the commercially driven diplomatic network of Wu-Yue comes from the records of other Chinese and non-Chinese states rather than from records of the Wu-Yue court. The reason for this imbalance of information might pertain to the difficulty of preserving documents in times of great change and turmoil, though the unflattering inclination of Wu-Yue representatives to subordinate themselves in tributary hierarchies and to bestow honorary titles to gain favorable trade terms is another factor that historians should consider.⁶⁴ Early Song officials took offense to this and sought to paint the kingdom and its rulers as illegitimate, in addition to pressuring the historians of annexed kingdoms to burn their histories.⁶⁵ Whatever the case, what we know of exchange between Wu-Yue and Japan comes to us mainly from Japanese documents that are unfortunately light on details. The assumption of historians to date has been that Jiang Xun and those who followed in his footsteps were merchants entrusted by Wu-Yue kings to send missives and gifts to the Japanese court. In the most basic sense, there is no reason to challenge the notion that these individuals were indeed merchants, but simply addressing them as such is problematic for several reasons. First, it does not appear that these men were actually called “merchants” in the Japanese sources.⁶⁶ Although as a matter of respect record-keepers were at times reluctant to use this term, we must still acknowledge that the idea that these individuals were all primarily regarded as merchants has

⁶⁴ On Wu-Yue diplomacy, see Edmund H. Worthy, “Diplomacy for Survival: Domestic and Foreign Relations of Wu Yüeh, 907–978” in *China Among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 17–44; and Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 230–67.

⁶⁵ Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 235–36; and Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, xi.

⁶⁶ There is one account in the *Honchō seiki* that mentions a “Tang merchant” giving a tribute of two goats in 938, and in the following month the same text talks of the Japanese court providing goods owed from a previous voyage of Jiang Xun. Some scholars have proposed that Jiang Xun was the “Tang merchant,” though this is a point of speculation. It is not clear if Jiang Xun joined this mission, and there were commonly multiple traders on each ship that reached Japan. Moreover, when Jiang Xun’s name is mentioned in regard to the goods owed, he is referred to as a “Tang person” rather than a “Tang merchant.” See *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei*, 9.7, 10–11.

come to us from modern historians. Second, the Wu-Yue representatives who arrived in the years following Jiang Xun's final mission to Japan were, in fact, recorded as "envoys" (*shi* 使).⁶⁷ This accords with the official sources of various other non-Chinese and Chinese states which likewise describe Wu-Yue representatives in their domains as "envoys." Taking this into consideration, the view of recent scholars that Japan had a unique arrangement with the Wu-Yue court, which entailed only private merchants arriving as representatives of their state, does not align with what we know about Wu-Yue diplomacy and is not supported by evidence. Finally, the act of sending a ranking minister of the Wu-Yue court abroad to engage in diplomatic affairs was not unprecedented. In 927, a Wu-Yue minister traveled to the Korean peninsula—also with a missive from the king of Wu-Yue—in an attempt to broker a peace agreement between its trade partner Later Paekche and the ascending kingdom of Koryō.⁶⁸ The reason for dispatching a minister to Japan is perhaps best interpreted in relation to how this move would result in favorable trade relations for Wu-Yue. Sending a high-ranking official demonstrated that the Wu-Yue court regarded its relationship with the Japanese court as a matter of considerable importance. This is evident on close examination of Jiang Xun's final trip to Japan in 953. In this year, the Wu-Yue king Qian Chu 錢俶 (929–988, r. 947–978), a fervent Buddhist, formally asked the Japanese court to provide copies of hundreds of Mahayana Buddhist texts that were lost during the collapse of the Tang dynasty.⁶⁹ An interesting detail of Qian Chu's request is provided in the thirteenth-century Chinese Buddhist history work *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀. It states

⁶⁷ See *Nihon kiryaku* 23.869 and 23.875, for arrivals in the years 957 and 959, respectively. The precise term used was Chilishi (C.) or Jireishi (Jp.) 持禮使, which literally translates to "Envoy for Observing Propriety." This appears to have been a title bestowed by the Wu-Yue court.

⁶⁸ Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 234–35; *Samguk sagi* 2:50.856.

⁶⁹ This event is discussed in extensive detail in Benjamin Brose, "Crossing Thousands of Li of Waves: The Return of China's Lost Tiantai Texts," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 1 (2008): 21–62. See also Enomoto Wataru, "Nyūtō sō, nyūsō sō no jidai" 入唐僧・入宋僧の時代, in *Nihon kodai kōryūshi nyūmon*

“Since the chaos and disorder of the late Tang, sutras were lost or destroyed. Therefore, many texts were overseas. As a result of this, the Wu-Yue king [Qian Chu] sent ten envoys (*shi* 使) to Japan to request [copies of] those texts. They returned, and the king had a temple built at Luoxi.”⁷⁰

自唐末喪亂教籍散毀。故此諸文多在海外。於是吳越王遣使十人。往日本國求取教典。既回。王為建寺螺溪。

As Japanese records indicate that Jiang Xun was the leader of the group from Wu-Yue that arrived in 953, we can infer that he was the leader of the embassy discussed in the *Fozu tongji*.

Thus, the Wu-Yue representatives were not simply merchants, but rather, official envoys. It is certainly plausible that some who traveled to Japan from Wu-Yue were private merchants deputized for their role (most likely the subordinates of the envoys, though perhaps even some of the envoys themselves). As was common for Chinese officials in this period, some envoys likely had humble origins as merchants or military commanders before taking on more important positions in their government. Nevertheless, the case of Jiang Xun indicates that the leaders of these missions were men who held a certain degree of stature within a Wu-Yue government that had evolved from a loose system of warlord rule into a complex civil bureaucracy. The attainment of their positions through various channels based on merit typifies the pragmatic approach to governance, trade, and diplomacy that prevailed in the competitive economic and political environment of tenth-century China.

日本古代交流史入門, ed. Suzuki Yasutami 鈴木靖民, Kaneko Shūichi 金子修一, Tanaka Fumio 田中史生, and Ri Sonshi 李成市 (Bensei shuppan, 2017), 213; and Mori Kimiyuki, *Kodai Nicchū kankei no tenkai*, 107–108, which both also date this mission to the year 953.

⁷⁰ Zhipan 志磐, *Fozu tongji* (CBETA, digital edition, 2002), 4.107.

As we move on to the Song dynasty, we see in more detail the intricacies of a Zhedong merchant network persisting after the Song conquest of China in the late tenth century. This group, comprised of merchants from Wuzhou and Taizhou, appears connected by their dealings with the Japanese monks Chōnen 齋然 (938–1016) and Genshin 源信 (942–1017). Chōnen, later to become the abbot of Tōdaiji 東大寺, began his journey to China in the year 983.⁷¹ The two merchants who brought Chōnen to Japan, Chen Renshuang 陳仁爽 and Xu Renman 徐仁滿 are described in a Japanese source as “Wu-Yue merchants.”⁷² Thus although we do not know the precise location of their hometowns, we do know that they were from the Zhejiang region. These two merchants brought Chōnen to Taizhou; though not long after their arrival, Chōnen was summoned to the capital city of Kaifeng for an audience with Song Emperor Taizong 宋太宗 (939–997, r. 976–997). After this, he traveled back to Taizhou, where he embarked on a return trip to Japan with a local sea merchant named Zheng Rende 鄭仁德 in 986.⁷³

In 987, a merchant by the name of Zhu Rencong 朱仁聰 arrived in Japan with a Chinese monk from the Shuixin 水心 temple in Hangzhou, named Qiyin 齊隱.⁷⁴ One year later, both of these individuals met Genshin in Kyushu, whereupon Genshin presented the Chinese monk with a collection of Buddhist texts that he had written, and requested that Qiyin distribute them upon his return to China.⁷⁵ Less than one month later, and with Genshin’s books in hand, Qiyin joined

⁷¹ SS, juan 491. For Chōnen’s life and his journey to Japan, see Wang Zhenping, “Chōnen’s Pilgrimage to China, 983–986,” *Asia Major* 7, no. 2 (1994): 63–97; and Yiwen Li, “Networks of Profit and Faith: Spanning the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, 838–1403,” Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2017, 59–66.

⁷² Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 142. Although this was recorded four years after the capitulation of Wu-Yue to the Song empire, the identity of this particular region clearly persisted.

⁷³ Wang, “Chōnen’s Pilgrimage to China,” 85.

⁷⁴ Taigai Kankeishi Sōgō Nenpyō Henshū Iinkai, ed. 対外関係史総合年表編集委員会, *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō* 対外関係史総合年表 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), 115. On Genshin’s life, see Robert F. Rhodes, *Genshin’s Ōjōyōshū and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2017), 107–80.

⁷⁵ Enomoto, *Sōryō to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 104; and *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 115.

several of Chōnen's disciples, the Taizhou merchant Zheng Rende, what would seem to be another Taizhou merchant named Zhou Wende 周文德, and a Wuzhou merchant named Yang Renshao 楊仁紹 on a journey back to China.⁷⁶

At this point, we once again see a clear web of connections between Japanese monks, Zhedong merchants, and Chinese Buddhist institutions.⁷⁷ One particularly strong connection was formed between Genshin and the Buddhist community in Wuzhou—even though the monk never traveled to China. In 989, the Shuanglin 雙林 temple in Wuzhou was recorded as having received Genshin's books via the aforementioned Wuzhou merchant Yang Renshao.⁷⁸ Yang sailed to Japan once more the following year—again with Zheng Rende, Zhou Wende, and Chōnen's disciples—and brought with him correspondence for Genshin from a Yunhuangshan 雲黃山 monk in Wuzhou named Xingchan 行迪. Letters and texts were sent between these two monks over the next two years, with Zhou Wende and Yang Renshao continuing to act as intermediaries.⁷⁹

There is one more Zhedong prefecture that needs to be discussed in detail here, and its significance in the history of exchange between China and Japan cannot be overstated. Along with Mingzhou, Taizhou was one of the two Zhedong prefectures with ports that were integrated into overseas trade routes. From the ninth to tenth centuries, ports there were frequented by ships

⁷⁶ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 114–15. Zhou Wende's origin is never stated, though he shares the same surname and generational modifier of another Taizhou merchant, Zhou Wenyi 周文裔.

⁷⁷ As Yiwen Li has pointed out in private correspondence, one additional pattern worth noting is that the merchants 陳仁爽, 徐仁滿, 鄭仁德, 楊仁紹 and 朱仁聰 all have the character '仁' in their given names. This is a rather interesting and unique circumstance that would seem to go beyond coincidence, though I am as yet unable to explain why the merchants for this period held shared generational signifiers but had different surnames. See *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 114–15.

⁷⁸ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 115; Enomoto, *Sōryō to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 104. Enomoto points out that this temple was later designated as one of China's "Five Mountain" temples on 183.

⁷⁹ Enomoto, *Sōryō to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 108; *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 114–15.

sailing to and from Japan,⁸⁰ and influential Japanese monks such as Saichō, Enchin, and Chōnen passed through its harbors. The reason for much of this traffic was that Taizhou was the spiritual center of the Tiantai Buddhist sect, which had a profound influence on Buddhist learning in Japan. Japanese monks required merchants who could bring them to pilgrimage sites, and merchants in turn were able to use the pretext of escorting monks to gain permission to trade in Japan. Historians have successfully documented many instances of financial dealings between sea merchants and religious institutions in both Japan and China.⁸¹ For these reasons, Taizhou was an important area for both religious exchange and trade; two activities that were often not mutually exclusive.

We have already examined the activities of the Taizhou merchants Zheng Rende and Zhou Wende. Zheng Rende, who made three trips to Japan between 986 and 990, was from Ninghai 寧海 county in Taizhou. Zhou Wende, also active at this time, can be connected to the family of another merchant Zhou Wenyi 周文裔 (962–?) through their shared generational modifier *wen* 文. Like Zheng Rende, the Zhou family, of which three merchants are known to have traveled to Japan, were also from Ninghai county in Taizhou.⁸² This family was exceptional in many ways, as they were later able to form connections with Japan’s imperial family, as well as the Fujiwara regency. Furthermore, in 1112 a matriarch of the family received posthumous recognition from Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗 (1082–1135, r. 1100–1126).⁸³ We might also note

⁸⁰ Nakamura, “The Maritime East Asian Network in the Song-Yuan Period,” 7–8.

⁸¹ For one particularly well documented instance, see Enomoto Wataru, “Itawatashi no bokuseki’ to Nissō bōeki” 「板渡の墨跡」と日宋貿易 in *Mono kara mita kaiiki Ajia shi: Mongoru-Sōgen jidai no Ajia to Nippon no kōryū* モノから見た海域アジア史—モンゴル-宋元時代のアジアと日本の交流, ed. Yokkaichi Yasuhiro 四日市康博 (Fukuoka: Kyūshū Daigaku shuppan kai, 2008), 39–69.

⁸² Yamazaki Satoshi, “Kaishō to sono tsuma: Jūichi seiki Chūgoku no enkai chiiki to Higashi Ajia kaiiki kōeki” 海商とその妻: 十一世紀中国の沿海地域と東アジア海域交易, *Rekishi gakubu ronshū* 歴史学部論集 (2011), 87–99.

⁸³ Yamazaki “Kaishō to sono tsuma”; Sattler, “The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia.”

that the members of the Zhou family were exceptional in that they were the only Zhedong merchants to continue to travel to Japan after the establishment of *shibosi* offices in the region at the end of the tenth century. Finally, there is evidence to indicate that Zhu Rencong was also a native of Taizhou. His first known arrival in Japan in 987 was the same year that Chōnen returned to the archipelago. In 1954, a text and some items were found inside a Buddhist sculpture that the monk had brought to Japan. One of the items was a belt with an ink inscription that reads “Zhu Erniang (“Second Lady”) of Taizhou donates [this] belt” 台州朱二娘拾帶子一條.⁸⁴ Considering that Zhu Rencong and this sculpture arrived in Japan in the same year and very likely on the same ship, it is possible that Zhu Erniang was a relative of Zhu Rencong.

The End of an Era

All signs point to the 990s as the major period of change for Chinese sea merchants during the Tang-Song transition. This becomes evident when *shibosi* offices, tasked with the oversight and taxation of sea trade, began to appear in the region. In 989, a *shibosi* office for the Hangzhou Bay area was first established in Hangzhou; however, due to complications that remain unclear, the office was moved to Mingzhou in 992, and then back to Hangzhou in 993. Finally, in 999, *shibosi* offices were established in both cities. Despite a 985 entry in the *Song shi* complaining that people in the Zhejiang area were not paying taxes followed by a terse statement that “sea trade was prohibited,”⁸⁵ it was only after the office was moved back to Mingzhou in 992 that the vigorous activity of Zhedong merchants in Japan came to a sudden stop. For three years,

⁸⁴ Chang, 7–14 *shiji Zhongri wenhua jiaoliu de kaoguxue yanjiu*, 156–57.

⁸⁵ SS 5.76; So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 44–45.

Japanese sources make no mention of the arrival of foreign merchants, until finally in 995 the first of two events transpired that might explain the unannounced end of Zhedong merchant dominance in Japan. In the first event, Zhu Rencong, who had previously traded in Japan without any apparent issues, was accused of a criminal offense in Wakasa 若狭 province. He remained in Japan for many years, apparently to resolve payment disputes with the government.⁸⁶ Although Zhu Rencong's place of origin is not stated in extant sources, his role in escorting the Hangzhou monk Qiyin in 987, as well as the inscription on the belt donated by Zhu Erniang together suggest that he was a Zhedong merchant. The second significant event, which occurred in 996, highlights the first known instance in which a private merchant from Fujian province reached Japan. Zhou Shichang (recorded as 周世昌 in Chinese sources, and as Jiang Shichang 姜世昌 in Japanese sources) is described as having come from Jianzhou 建州 (present-day Jian'ou, in northern Fujian province).⁸⁷ His arrival marks the beginning of a near-constant flow of Fujianese merchants sailing to Japan that would last for centuries.

Scholars have previously assumed that the cause of Zhu Rencong's predicament was related to his breaching regulations that limited the frequency of sea merchant arrivals in Japan.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, his last recorded arrival prior to this time was eight years earlier, which was a much longer pause between voyages than those of his peers.⁸⁹ Another issue with this assumption is that Zhu seems to have been punished more strongly than any other merchant of

⁸⁶ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 114–15. See also Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 206–30.

⁸⁷ *SS* 491.14136. It is possible that merchants from Fujian arrived in Japan on at least one occasion during the Five Dynasties period. This is suggested by the monk Kanken 寬建 traveling on a merchant ship to Fuzhou in 927. Unfortunately, there is no extant information about the ship's crew. See Enomoto, *Sōryo to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 95–96.

⁸⁸ Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 206–30.

⁸⁹ Watanabe believes in a lengthier duration of a mandatory waiting period between visits which amounted to ten years. If such was the case, Zhu Rencong's claim to have been shipwrecked might have been an attempt to evade that rule.

the time; there are very few examples of merchants being stranded in Japan without compensation for as long as Zhu Rencong was. It is true that gold shortages at this time likely hindered the ability of the Japanese court to properly compensate Zhu Rencong, though another possible explanation for the merchant's predicament is that he lacked the paperwork issued by Chinese authorities that would allow him to trade in Japan. As this paperwork was also inspected by Japanese authorities, not possessing it would have placed Zhu in a position in which he would be vulnerable to extortion. Indeed, Zhu Rencong's voyage did not adhere to the procedures for foreign merchants promoted by the Heian court, as he bypassed Dazaifu in northern Kyushu—home to the traditional government body for inspecting and receiving merchant arrivals—in favor of landing his ship in Wakasa province.

The Fujian merchant Zhou Shichang also appears to have stayed in Japan for an extended period of time. We can only speculate on whether or not he had documentation that legitimized his involvement in the sea trade, though he was recorded as having “washed ashore” on the archipelago, a term that in previous times was applied to new arrivals who the Japanese court was not yet familiar with. During the six years that Zhou Shichang spent in Japan, another Fujianese merchant named Shangguan Yongxian 上官用銛 was allowed to trade, though Zhou Shichang did not join him on his journey back to China.⁹⁰ Also during his time in Japan, Zhou Shichang composed poetry with Fujiwara no Tametoki 藤原為時, the father of the *Tale of Genji* author Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, and when Zhou finally returned to China, he is recorded as bringing with him a member of the Fujiwara family.⁹¹ Zhou Shichang's reception in Japan was clearly more amicable than that given to Zhu Rencong. One can only speculate as to why this

⁹⁰ Fujiwara no Yukinari 藤原行成, *Gonki* 権記 (Tokyo: Zoku gun sho ruijū kanseikai, 1988), 1:3.50

⁹¹ SS 491.14136; *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 117.

was the case, but it might be that Zhou Shichang informed Japanese counterparts of the issues that Zhedong merchants were facing with Chinese authorities, and let it be known that other merchant groups were able to take their place.

There is one final event concurrent with the back and forth relocation of Zhedong *shibosi* offices that is well worth noting. In 992, the same year that the Zhedong *shibosi* office was moved to Mingzhou, a wealthy Fujianese merchant arrived in the port city with an embassy from the Javanese kingdom of Shepo 闍婆.⁹² This merchant, named Mao Xu 毛旭, escorted the embassy all the way from Java to China. The *Song shi* states that Mao Xu was able to do this because he had already traded in Shepo on numerous occasions, thus implying familiarity with its leaders. The timing of this event coincides with the cessation of Zhedong merchants trading in Japan; however, even more interesting is the *Song shi* statement that Mao Xu was from the Jianxi 建溪 region of Fujian, which was located within the prefecture of Jianzhou (the birthplace of Zhou Shichang, who arrived in Japan several years later). This means that one of the earliest known Chinese merchants to trade in Southeast Asia was from the same remote inland area as the first Fujianese merchant to trade in Japan—and we know that their commercial activities coincided with significant changes in maritime policy taking place in the 990s. Considering these facts, a picture begins to emerge of distinct sea merchant networks from different regions in southeast China, each affected differently by the new system of trade administration established by Song officials.

⁹² For Mao Xu and the Shepo embassy, see Claudine Salmon, “Srivijaya, la Chine et les Marchands Chinois (Xe-XIIe s.) Quelques Réflexions sur la Société de l’empire Sumatranais,” *Archipel* 63 (2002): 75; Chin, “Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities,” 159; and SS 489.14092.

The timing of all of these events suggests that after 992, the new administrators in the Zhedong *shibosi* offices had preferences for certain groups of merchants. Fujian merchants enjoyed a prominent—though not exclusive—position in the trade with Japan for many centuries to come.⁹³ Yet as previously mentioned, one Zhedong family did manage to prosper under these new circumstances. At a time when new networks of merchants were establishing a rapport with Japanese courtiers—as well as establishing permanent trade settlements in northern Kyushu—the Zhou family of Taizhou was able to maintain its favorable position in the Japan trade. We know of at least six instances of Zhou Wenyi trading in Japan between 1012 and 1031. In addition, his son, Zhou Liangshi 周良史 (986–?), arrived in the archipelago at least five times between 1016 and 1034.⁹⁴

How did the Zhou family distinguish itself from other Zhedong merchants? For one thing, they sailed with the same crews as Fujianese merchants, with whom they likely cooperated closely.⁹⁵ Another strategy that played to their advantage was the arrangement of marriage alliances with individuals who were in a position to influence trade activity. This is evinced by Zhou Wenyi's marriage to the daughter of a Japanese courtier, and their son Zhou Liangshi's marriage into a Mingzhou literati family.⁹⁶ Another crucial factor in their success was their continued presence in Japan. Zhou Liangshi eventually left Taizhou to move to Japan

⁹³ In considering an argument that Fujian merchants could previously not reach Japan solely due to not having access to Wu-Yue ports, we may recall that while the Song unification of the southeast was achieved in 979, we only see the first instance of a Fujian merchant (Zhou Shichang) arriving in Japan in 996. This delay of seventeen years indicates that other major obstacles prevented Fujian merchants from accessing Japanese markets after the boundaries between Wu-Yue and coastal Fujian dissolved. We should also consider that Fuzhou was conquered by Wu-Yue in 945, though the earliest known Fuzhou merchant to reach Japan was Shangguan Yongxian in 997, one year after Zhou Shichang arrived.

⁹⁴ Both of their lives are discussed in great detail in Yamazaki "Kaishō to sono tsuma."

⁹⁵ Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資, *Shōyūki* 小右記 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967) 8, entry dated Manju 万寿 4 (1027).8.30.

⁹⁶ Yamazaki "Kaishō to sono tsuma."

approximately two decades before scholars have proposed the existence of a Chinese community in Hakata.⁹⁷ Indeed, the very establishment of such communities in Hakata, Koryō, and throughout Southeast Asia at around this time demonstrates a major shift in the methods that sea merchants employed in their business operations.⁹⁸

After *shibosi* offices were established in Zhedong, all sea traffic to Korea and Japan was to pass through the inspection of port authorities in Mingzhou or Hangzhou prior to crossing the sea.⁹⁹ This essentially ended the role of Taizhou as an international port city, as we only know of one ship that passed from there to Japan in the following two centuries—and even that ship sailed to Mingzhou prior to its departure.¹⁰⁰ Also noteworthy is that these changes temporally coincided with the steep decline of Yuezhou kilns as well as other kilns in the Hangzhou Bay area.¹⁰¹ Billy So has noted that Yuezhou's export ceramics faced the steepest decline in production at this time, while the production for domestic markets and the imperial family remained consistent. Concurrent with these trends, kilns in Fujian and Guangdong greatly increased their production of export ceramics.¹⁰² Although scholars have recognized the significance of *shibosi* offices being established in the Zhedong region, it would seem that the impact of these changes was even greater than previously believed.

⁹⁷ Yamazaki “Kaishō to sono tsuma.”

⁹⁸ Nakamura, “The Maritime East Asian Network in the Song-Yuan Period,” 6.

⁹⁹ For discussion on the *shibosi*, see Nakamura, “The Maritime East Asian Network in the Song-Yuan Period;” So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 42–49; Schottenhammer, “China's Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 460–79; and von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network.”

¹⁰⁰ Nakamura, “The Maritime East Asian Network in the Song-Yuan Period,” 7.

¹⁰¹ Schottenhammer, “China's Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 500.

¹⁰² So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 201.

Conclusion

Zhedong merchants were among the earliest private traders to arrive in Japan. Their activities were supported by the Wu-Yue state in the tenth century, and they remained an influential group until the Song government's initiatives to exercise greater control over trade administration disrupted their activities in the late tenth century. Although the available evidence suggests that they formed cohesive networks for much, if not all of the time that they were active in Japan, these merchants also worked with other close-knit groups, such as the Korean merchants in Chang Pogo's trade network. Rather than initiating a takeover of the operations of Korean diaspora communities, it would seem that there was a transitional process in which Korean and Chinese merchants continued to operate in the prefectures south of Hangzhou Bay even after descriptions of Korean merchants are no longer apparent in Japanese records. The descendants of Korean merchants would have had every incentive to maintain involvement in the Zhedong merchant networks until the late tenth century when those networks were superseded by merchant groups further south. Indeed, an examination of the Zhou family of Taizhou reveals that marriage across ethnic lines was viewed as a means of establishing close business relationships, so a more apt inference would be that many in China's Silla diaspora communities simply assimilated over time.¹⁰³ What is more curious is that although Zhedong merchants were willing to work alongside merchants from Silla and Parhae, they did not noticeably cooperate with merchants from elsewhere in China. Descriptions of Chinese merchants from the provinces where Silla merchants were most active are conspicuously absent from Japanese records. One must conclude that cooperation among merchant groups was determined by certain advantages

¹⁰³ Enomoto Wataru arrives at a similar conclusion in "Shiragi kaishō to Tō kaishō."

that each group brought to the table; namely, access to foreign markets, local production centers, and possibly patronage from local governments.

In the years after the Tang empire disintegrated into chaos, Zhedong merchants became essential players in the geopolitical designs of the Wu-Yue state. Their activities appear to have integrated with interstate diplomacy, including that between Wu-Yue and Japan. This more nuanced understanding of interstate exchange at this time challenges the commonly held view among present-day scholars that Japan was in the midst of a centuries-long period of diplomatic isolation.¹⁰⁴ The vague descriptions of Wu-Yue representatives in Japanese records appear to have less to do with record-keepers attempting to frame Japan as diplomatically closed-off as with an uncertainty about how to address and conduct relations with the states that emerged from the ashes of the Tang empire. After all, powerful men continued to claim succession to the Tang dynastic line throughout most of the Five Dynasties period, and there was no precedent for diplomatic engagement with warlords who were attempting to become sovereigns of new dynasties.¹⁰⁵ This sentiment is perhaps best reflected in Japanese records that speak of “Tang” merchants arriving long after the collapse of that empire, and of “Wu-Yue” merchants arriving after the kingdom was annexed by the Song. Indeed, Wu-Yue was at times recorded in Japanese sources as a prefecture or as a region of the Tang empire, though as relations between Wu-Yue and Japan matured, it came to be referred to as a state (*guo* 國, yet still described as a part of

¹⁰⁴ Here, we must note Robert Borgen’s argument that the Japanese court was not motivated to maintain a position of isolationism. He points out that the court-sponsored *Engi shiki* 延喜式, compiled in 927, “included detailed provisions for the dispatch of missions to China,” which suggests the court had not yet precluded the possibility of sending embassies there. See Robert Borgen, “Monkish Diplomacy: A Case Study in Eleventh-Century Sino-Japanese Relations,” in *Contacts Between Cultures, Eastern Asia: History and Social Sciences, Volume 4*, ed. Bernard Hung-Kay Luk (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 1–6; and Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), 248.

¹⁰⁵ One example of this discomfort was when the overture of a warlord in Wenzhou was rebuffed by the Japanese court in 894. See Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真, *Kanke bunsō* 菅家文草 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1967), 10.586; and Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 241.

“Great Tang”).¹⁰⁶ As is evident in the contemporary usage of ethnonyms, toponyms, and markers of identity, the symbolic significance of these states persisted long after their demise.

As for the symbolic value that modern historians once placed on the year 894 (when Japanese officials cancelled what would have been the last embassy to the Tang empire), the significance of this event is perhaps somewhat overstated when we consider that Japanese diplomacy with a long-standing ally clearly continued after that year. Parhae embassies, likewise motivated by commercial exchange, traveled to Japan on numerous occasions from the early eighth century until the year 930, when the Japanese court emphatically ended relations between both states. This occurred when a Chinese merchant informed Japanese officials that visiting envoys, who had previously represented the Parhae court, had misrepresented their status and were actually disgruntled subjects of a new puppet state set up by Khitan conquerors.¹⁰⁷ The turn of events in which Japan ended relations with a long-standing ally and trade partner closely aligns with the earliest-known instance of a Wu-Yue representative arriving in Japan only five years later, which suggests that Wu-Yue took on a role in Japan’s relationship with the outside world that was previously held by Parhae.

Although archaeological evidence of huge quantities of Yue ceramics in tenth-century Japan demonstrates that the rule of Wu-Yue sovereigns coincided with a high point of success for Zhedong merchants operating in Japan, the historical documents are muted for much of the activity that transpired there at this time; instead, we see more textual evidence of a high

¹⁰⁶ *Nihon kiryaku* 23.869.

¹⁰⁷ Despite the initial warm reception that the 930 embassy received, the “Tang guest” informed the Japanese court that Parhae was recently conquered by the Khitan and that this embassy was misrepresenting itself. See *Shintei zōho kokushi taiki*, 12 (*Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記). 204. For an overview of the history of diplomatic relations between Parhae and Japan, see Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 227–40. On early diplomacy between Parhae and Japan, see Wang Zhenping, *Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia: A History of Diplomacy and War* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013), 93.

frequency of trade toward the end of the tenth century. This trade was cut off suddenly when regulatory bodies were established in the Zhedong region in the early Song dynasty, which indicates that Zhedong merchants suffered from a loss of favor among the authorities there.

This leads us to an important observation: every instance of a Chinese sea merchant disclosing his hometown from the beginning of the ninth century until the final decade of the tenth century has his place of origin in the Zhedong area. By my count, this would be eleven merchants; six from Wuzhou, three from Yuezhou, one from Taizhou (if we consider Jiang Xun a person of Wuzhou), and one from Mingzhou. If we include those merchants described as coming from “Wu-Yue,” both before and after the kingdom was annexed by the Song empire, this number increases to sixteen. The additional merchants who are described as sailing to Japan from Zhedong ports, associating with monks, officials, and merchants from that area, and in one instance, sharing the same surname and generational modifier as a Zhedong merchant, suggests that this number should be even higher. There is not a single clear-cut case to my knowledge in the documentary record of a Chinese sea merchant who was originally from elsewhere in China at this time.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Although Xu Gongzhi is described at different times with both the petty official title 婺州衙前散將 and 蘇州衙前散將 (“Honorary Commander in the Prefectural Office” of Wuzhou and Suzhou respectively), Yamazaki Satoshi puts forth the argument that this merchant was from Wuzhou and later invested his profits from the sea trade into land ownership in the Suzhou area. Tanaka Fumio suggests instead that Xu Gongzhi was from Suzhou, though this position is based heavily on contingencies. Since the evidence presented thus far links Xu Gongzhi to Wuzhou three years before he was residing in a newly-purchased Suzhou estate, I am inclined to support Yamazaki’s position. As for other possible examples of merchants located outside of the Zhedong area, we can consider one man who had the same administrative title as Xu Gongzhi. In the *Tōjin sōbetsushi narabini sekitoku*, a merchant named Cai Fu 蔡輔 includes the location of Rongzhou 容州 (in eastern Guangxi province) in his title, though scholars are not in agreement as to how this attribution should be interpreted. From my observation of the text, in one instance it is clearly recorded as 大唐容管道衙前散將, but in two other instances when the same title is recorded, the third character is written in a way in which it could be interpreted as either 客 or 容 (in the fourth instance, the text is too damaged to form an assessment). When we consider that two other merchants in this text wrote ‘唐客’ in their titles, the use of the character 客 in Cai Fu’s title would seem apt. However, I am more inclined to accept Yamazaki’s interpretation that the title describes a position in Rongzhou because this part of the text appears to be written by Cai Fu himself (as opposed to being a transcription error), and also because the term *guandao* 管道 would seem out of

Table 1 Localities Attributed to Chinese Merchants in the Japan Trade, c. 800–1000

Merchant name(s)	Place(s) of origin	Year(s) arrived in Japan
Zhou Guanghan and Yan Shengze	Yuezhou	819
Zhang Youxin	Mingzhou	847, 851, 861, 863(?)
Xu Gongyou and Xu Gongzhi*	Wuzhou, Suzhou	847, 849, and 852
Liu Shixian	Yuezhou	856
Zhan Jingquan	Wuzhou, Yuezhou	856, 858, 863, 865, 867
Li Da	Yongkang county (Wuzhou)	858, 867, 881
Cai Fu	Rongzhou	858
Jiang Xun	Linhai county (Taizhou), Dongyang county (Wuzhou)	935, 936, 938(?), 953
Zheng Rende	Ninghai county (Taizhou)	986, 988, 990
Yang Renshao	Wuzhou	988, 990
Zhou Shichang	Jianzhou	996
Shangguan Yongxian	Fuzhou	997, 1002, 1003(?)

*Xu Gongzhi is never recorded as having arrived in Japan, and the sources only show him handling business while in China.

All of this is not to say that Chinese sea merchants were exclusively from the Zhedong area until the end of the tenth century, but rather that Zhedong merchants formed a cohesive network and dominated the Japan trade for an extended period of time. In fact, much of the

place, whereas *Rong guan* 容管 would not. That said, as there are no other attributions of Chinese sea merchants from this area for centuries, we should also consider the possibility that Cai Fu received the title for an office in that area but was not originally from there. I am obliged to Nicolas Tackett for suggesting this final point. For Xu Gongzhi's titles, see Yamazaki, *Chūgoku godai kokka ron*, 171–87. For Cai Fu's title, see 247. For Tanaka Fumio's counterargument, see Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 144–46. Finally, the *Fusō ryakki* talks of an unnamed “Yangzhou person” (*Yangzhou ren* 揚州人) who was entrusted to procure sutras in China for the monk Enchin. This could possibly be a faulty rendering of *Wuzhou* 務州 (sic), as it is known that the Wuzhou merchant Li Da was procuring sutras for Enchin in around 882. See Kōen 皇門, *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記 (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1906), 22.640–41.

available evidence indicates that these merchants were able to weather the most chaotic periods of political disturbance throughout the Tang-Song transition. For instance, Zhan Jingquan wrote that civil disturbance within the Tang empire prevented him from traveling to Chang'an on the monk Enchin's behalf in 863, though it did not prevent him from traveling to Japan the following year.¹⁰⁹ Even when rebels had captured various port cities in the Zhedong area in the midst of the Wang Ying 王郢 rebellion (875–877), four voyages are recorded as having set out for Japan in the years of 876 and 877.¹¹⁰ And while the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion (874–884) devastated the seaports of Fuzhou and Guangzhou, the Zhedong region was spared much of the damage—largely due to the protection afforded by the future Wu-Yue king Qian Liu's militia. Indeed, the merchant Bai Zhizhen 柏志貞 arrived in Japan at the peak of the rebellion in 883.¹¹¹ Although his home region is not stated, Bai Zhizhen brought with him letters for Enchin by various Guoqing temple monks, including one from the disciple of a Yuezhou monk, so we know that he was active in the Zhedong region. If there was a major shakeup in the composition of merchants traveling to Japan, it would have likely occurred in the first three decades of the tenth century, as records of merchant arrivals at this time are few and the details of these individuals are vague. Nevertheless, this vagueness might be either in part or entirely attributed to changes in the

¹⁰⁹ *Heian ibun*, 9:3458.

¹¹⁰ In addition to the shipwreck in 877 that claimed the life of the monk Ensai 円載 and Zhan Jingquan, as well as the ship that brought the survivors back to Japan afterward, a merchant by the name of Yang Qing 楊清 arrived in Japan in 876, and the merchant Cui Duo 崔鐸 reached Japan from Taizhou in 877. For the last two instances, see *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 29:493–94; and 32:535 respectively. For the Wang Ying rebellion, see Robert M. Somers, “The End of the T'ang,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 3, 752–54.

¹¹¹ Ono, *Nittō guhō junrei kōki no kenkyū*, 481–82. For the Huang Chao rebellion, see Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy*, 187–234; Somers, “The End of the T'ang,” 736–45; Schottenhammer, “China's Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 443–44; and Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 47–49. Abu Zayd's early tenth century account asserts that 120,000 foreign merchants were killed in Guangzhou, though he goes on to say that “[t]he only reason the number of victims from these four communities happens to be known is that the Chinese had kept records of their numbers.” Since this data was derived from tax registers, the large number likely indicates a mass exodus of non-Han peoples in addition to those who died during the massacre. See Abu Zayd al-Sīrāfi, *Accounts of China and India*, 69.

practices of record keeping that were occurring in the Heian court at this time. When the documentary record enables us to verify the background of merchants sailing to Japan, they are described as coming from the state of Wu-Yue.

Zhedong merchant dominance over much of the Tang-Song transition raises questions of whether monopolies on maritime trade were enforced at particular times in this period or if certain groups benefitted substantially from the informal support of either local or state authorities. In the late Tang dynasty, state-supported monopolies on salt and tea were administered from the headquarters of the Salt and Iron Commission in the nearby prefectures of Runzhou 潤州 and Yangzhou, so such forms of wealth accrual were quite familiar to local Zhedong officials.¹¹² We may note that this was a time in which provincial governors amassed greater power over subordinate prefectures and counties, and in Denis Twitchett's view, southern governors were also able to leverage a certain degree of economic power in their dealings with the Tang court.¹¹³ It is certainly possible that political patronage on a provincial level allowed for the formation of a sea merchant network in Zhedong province in the late Tang dynasty. Additional research may provide more definitive answers to the above questions, however, until then, we should consider the conclusions that can be drawn from our current observations. In particular, the prolonged dominance of Zhedong merchants highlights the significance of the change that occurred when they disappeared from the documentary record. Of the major events that took place during the Tang-Song transition, the consolidation of power by the Song rulers brought about the greatest change to the composition of sea merchant networks. It is not quite

¹¹² On these monopolies, see Twitchett, *Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty*, 49–65, 110–20. The Salt and Iron Commission, which oversaw the salt and tea monopolies, had its headquarters in Yangzhou and in Huzhou (in northern Zhedong).

¹¹³ Twitchett, "Varied Patterns of Provincial Autonomy," in *Essays on T'ang Society: The Interplay of Social, Political and Economic Forces*, ed. John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 97–101.

clear why this occurred nearly two decades after the empire reached the peak of its territorial integrity, though a possible explanation might be that a series of military defeats at the hands of the Khitan armies brought about a change in focus of Song Taizong and his advisors toward consolidating power in the southeastern part of the empire.¹¹⁴ The revenue collected by *shibosi* offices on the taxation of the sea trade would have likely helped to offset some of the expenses incurred from wars in the north. An alternative or complementary hypothesis would be that these changes were more reflective of the increasing influence that people from other regions of southeast China exercised on local and state government, and that such influence resulted from the influx of wealth tied to overseas trade. I will consider this theory in more detail in the chapter that follows, and I will also examine the sea merchant networks of other locations, as well as *shibosi* officials, to consider the possibility that merchants and officials of particular regions achieved concurrent success through mutual support.

¹¹⁴ This point was raised by Paul Jakov Smith at the 2022 Conference on Tang-Song Transitions.

Chapter Three: Chinese Merchant Networks, Ceramics Production Centers, and Administrators in Maritime Trade, c. 1000–1127

The Song government's consolidation of control over southern and southeastern China between the late-tenth and early-eleventh century held major implications for overseas trade. New merchant groups rose to prominence at this time, while others vanished from the historical record. Guangzhou remained China's preeminent trade port and Mingzhou maintained its strategic position as the leading hub for East Asian trade, though the Fujian ports of Fuzhou and Quanzhou quickly took on greater roles as well. A dramatic shift in the production of ceramics, the most widely traded Chinese export product in terms of volume and geographic scope, is also evident at this time, as some of the most successful kilns of the tenth century ended or curtailed production, whereas new kilns rapidly emerged in other regions to produce high quantities of export wares.¹

Many of these changes were brought about either directly or indirectly following the establishment of the Song empire in 960 and its conquest and annexation of many of the former territories of the Tang empire by the late 970s. Maritime trade continued to grow in importance—initially despite failed attempts by the early Song government to curtail it, and then with the support of the Song court when it established *shibosi* offices in the Hangzhou Bay area in the 990s (in addition to the *shibosi* office in Guangzhou established in 971). Sea trade grew over time into an important revenue source, and the large-scale production of major exports such as ceramics, silks, and metalwares continued to stimulate economies in areas on or near China's southern and southeastern coasts at ever increasing levels. The export of significant sums of

¹ Although this chapter mainly highlights significant changes within China that began in around the year 1000, Valerie Hansen underscores that this was a pivotal time for changes worldwide. See Valerie Hansen, *The Year 1000: When Explorers Connected the World – and Globalization Began* (London: Viking, 2020).

copper coins also began in this period, which not only affected the Song economy, but the economies of Japan and various Southeast Asian states as well. It is fortunate that this is also a time in which a relative abundance of historical evidence allows one to map out some of the major merchant and official networks, and archaeological evidence can be utilized to pinpoint the major production centers of ceramics producers. As such, this study will constitute one of the first broad attempts to map merchant networks in China at such an early period, and to understand how those networks interacted and connected with political networks and production centers.

This section begins in around 1000, when the Song court was able to begin exercising some degree of control over sea trade administration, and it ends in 1127, when the collapse of the Northern Song court led to fundamental changes in government and in the southern economies. Here, we will observe the points in time when the regional origins of merchants and export ceramics producers are most visible in textual and material sources. The results will be compared with the origins of trade administrators to form a sense of when exactly certain regions of China were most involved in maritime trade, and to consider why those regions were prominent at particular times. Since the Song government provided much of the impetus for major changes at this time, an examination of the bodies which administered sea trade (the *shibosi*) and their leadership is necessary to consider whether or not such changes were greatly affected by the relationships between trade administrators and merchants and producers.

One of the interesting trends that will be noted from such an examination is that there was a shift over time in which the prominence of merchant networks and ceramics producers moved southward region by region before Quanzhou, in southern Fujian, became the Song empire's most important hub for overseas trade. Although the fortunes of the port city of Quanzhou itself

fluctuated over time, people from southern Fujian consistently remained the most active regional group in overseas trade, and natives of the region formed the greatest number of Chinese people abroad until recent times. The continuous involvement of other groups in sea trade, such as those from Fuzhou and Guangdong, is also evident, though the success of merchant groups in southern Zhejiang faced a period of sudden decline in the mid-eleventh century, much like those of Wuzhou and Yuezhou at the end of the tenth century (discussed in the previous chapter). Foreign merchants were likewise important participants in China's maritime trade at this time, though as a wide body of research already exists on such a topic, they will only be discussed here in regard to their connections with Chinese networks.

This chapter will assess individual regions, each divided into subsections, to determine when particular merchant groups and ceramics producers were most active. This assessment will proceed region by region from north to south, which follows the general chronological trend of the increased involvement of those regions in overseas trade. As was evident in Chapter Two, merchants from the prefectures of Wuzhou and Yuezhou in the Zhedong (Zhejiang) area formed the earliest group of Chinese sea merchants to leave a clear trace of their activities in historical records, and merchants further to the south in Taizhou later joined their ranks. This section will begin by providing additional consideration of Taizhou merchants, before moving southward once again to consider the involvement of Wenzhou merchants and producers in overseas trade. After this, I will analyze merchant networks and ceramics production in northern Fujian, particularly in Jianzhou and Fuzhou, followed by the region of southern Fujian, and then finally Guangdong. This section will end by considering some of the areas with a lesser degree of involvement in overseas trade, and come full circle toward considering the reemergence of merchants from the Zhedong port of Mingzhou and its vicinity. It should be noted that such transitions in the involvement of

specific regions in overseas trade did not result in clear breaks, as a certain degree of overlap in the prosperity of neighboring regions is often evident. For instance, we have already examined instances of Wuzhou and Taizhou merchants working together, as well as cooperation between Taizhou and Fuzhou merchants. The final section of this chapter will analyze the administrators and managers of *shibosi* offices, with particular consideration of their geographic origins, social connections, and relationships with local merchants.

Figure 5 Locations Involved in Maritime Trade in Southern China



As was the case in Chapter Two, we must caution against thinking that the lists of sea merchants and trade administrators provided in this chapter are comprehensive. In the case of sea merchants, the Japanese and Korean sources which help us identify their origins do not account for all arrivals into their domains. More often than not, there were more arrivals not recorded than recorded in extant records, especially in the case of Japan, which less frequently provided details

on the origins of sea merchants compared to Koryŏ chronicles. On the other hand, Korean sources typically provide basic details such as the location where a merchant leader was from, the name of the merchant leader, the size of the crew, but little else. It should be noted that beginning in the 1030s, merchants were usually recorded in Korean sources as being from prefectures with major port cities (including those without *shibosi* offices), and this might be more an indication of the ports they sailed out of or based their operations in rather than of their actual home regions. Nevertheless, considering that by that time most arrivals were sailing from Quanzhou and evading the *shibosi* in Zhedong and Guangzhou, it is very likely that those merchants were from southern Fujian or its immediate vicinity.

In addition to the lack of documentation and details for many arrivals, there are also many records which discuss sea merchants but provide no information about their origins. As for the merchant names, usually only one or several are provided in a given record, and these refer to the leaders of a merchant ship or trade mission. Ship crews in this period were usually between thirty to one hundred people, and were organized according to a hierarchical structure based on roles and leadership positions.² As for the list of *shibosi* superintendents provided later in this chapter, this is also not comprehensive, though it is not always clear if this is due to a lack of extant information about certain administrators (especially during the early Northern Song) or if a superintendent did not hold office at a particular time because *shibosi* leadership was held by a prefect, financial commissioner, or other official.

It should also be noted that although various Chinese commentators describe the South Seas region as the most lucrative and active destination for overseas trade at this time, written records in Southeast Asia dating to this period are unfortunately extremely sparse, and the few

² On this structure and the positions within, see Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 15–18.

examples we have of Chinese merchants trading there come from Chinese sources. Even in this period, when printing technology was allowing for the increased production of written materials, there are still fewer accounts of Chinese sea merchants in Chinese records than in the records of Korea and Japan. Thus, despite Japanese and Korean records providing much more information of Chinese merchants arriving in their respective countries, there was likely even greater traffic reaching Southeast Asia.

Before beginning discussion on the various regions of China that were involved in overseas trade, it is first necessary to explain how a comparison of merchant activity and ceramics production allows for a greater understanding of the commercial history of this time. As already noted in the case of the Zhedong region, we see at certain times distinct parallels between the prosperity of sea merchant networks of a specific region and the prosperity of export ceramics producers of the same region. Matching the circulation of trade goods with merchant networks is an imperfect methodology, as goods can be traded, re-traded, and transshipped by any number of different merchant groups (both domestic and foreign), and as such, identifying the circulation of export wares alone does not provide an accurate understanding of the activities of a particular merchant network. Nevertheless, when comparing information from historical records with archaeological findings of ceramics, we often see a significant degree of commonality between the movement patterns of merchant networks from a certain region and the circulation of Chinese ceramics from that same region. Such cases allow us to further understand the extent that those regions were involved in maritime trade, and they also indicate that merchants from a particular region often preferred to sell ceramics from that same region or from a nearby location.

In addition to the example of close links between Zhedong merchants and Yue ware ceramics discussed in Chapter Two, we see additional connections between the merchant groups that replaced Zhedong merchants in Japan at the beginning of the eleventh century and the ceramics that arrived there during and after the decline of Yue ceramics. For instance, an entry in a Japanese book of literary Chinese poems dated to the year 1003 states: “Recently, people from Wenzhou, Hongzhou 洪州 (Nanchang, Jiangxi), and other regions of the Song empire have frequently come to reside (in Japan). This is interesting.”³ Beyond noting the author’s interest in the arrival of Chinese people from locations that were not previously known as home regions of merchants in the China-Japan trade, we may also consider that both Hongzhou and Wenzhou were located very close to areas that produced vast quantities of export ceramics. Hongzhou was located on the opposite side of Poyang 鄱陽 lake from where Jingdezhen ceramics were produced, and Ou 甌 ceramics were produced a short distance outside of the port city of Wenzhou. It should be noted that both Jingdezhen and Ou kilns also initially produced imitations of Yue ware ceramics, which were the dominant ceramic type across maritime Asia up until that time.

At the same time that Hongzhou and Wenzhou people were observed arriving in Japan, Jingdezhen porcelain was becoming one of the most common ceramic types brought to the archipelago. Although Ou ceramics never achieved a similarly prominent position in Japan’s archaeological record, Ou ware ceramics were discovered in the Nara and Hakata Bay areas by archaeologists who dated the finds to around the year 990.⁴ Japanese records indicate that the

³ Takashina no Moriyoshi 高階積善, *Honchō reisō* 本朝麗藻 in *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2014), 127.606.

⁴ Mary Tregear, *Song Ceramics* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), 213.

Fuzhou merchant Shangguan Yongxian arrived on the archipelago one year prior to the 1003 excerpt translated above, so that text likely refers to people who arrived on the same ship.⁵ Fujian was not yet a major producer of export ceramics at this time, so we may see that Fuzhou merchants were transporting ceramics from regions outside of their province, and bringing with them merchants from regions that produced those ceramics. Nevertheless, Yue-type (Yue imitation) green wares produced in Fuzhou have also been found at a site in northern Kyushu which dates to the year 1008.⁶ Shortly after this time, Fujian-produced wares became increasingly prominent in both Japan and the greater Indian Ocean region, which parallels the development of Fujian merchants traveling to those areas in greater numbers. Thus, in the midst of the decline of Zhedong merchants and true Yue ceramics, and we do see an identifiable connection between the place of origin of a new wave of merchants and the regions where export ceramics were produced: Jiangxi, Wenzhou, and Fuzhou people were traveling to northern Kyushu in around 1003, and ceramics from Jiangxi, Wenzhou, and Fuzhou have been found in northern Kyushu with estimated dates that are very close to 1003. The reason for such a connection might in part be explained by the ability to acquire goods at low prices through kinship relations or long-held business relations with producers residing in nearby areas, though a more practical factor was that purchasing locally made goods was an effective way to avoid paying premiums for transshipped goods or from having to travel to out-of-the-way ports to purchase additional cargo. Such a view is supported by a survey of shipwrecks in East and Southeast Asia between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. During that time, it was much more

⁵ *Gonki* 1:3.50

⁶ Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 213.

common for ships to carry one clearly predominant ceramic type rather than an assemblage of various types with comparable quantities.

Merchant Networks and Ceramics Production Centers

The Song government's crackdown on Zhedong sea merchants through the establishment of *shibosi* offices, ostensibly for engaging in tax evasion in the 980s, appears to have been directed solely at a network of merchants from Wuzhou and Yuezhou rather than those active in the southern areas of Zhedong. By the early eleventh century, kilns that produced true Yue ware were primarily limited to those which made lesser quantities of high-quality wares, mainly for domestic use, while those that produced extremely high quantities of mid-level and export wares essentially disappeared or were greatly reduced. This was a permanent decline in ceramics production from the once-predominant Yue kilns, while kilns in southern Zhejiang such as those in Wenzhou and Longquan grew in prominence. It is not quite clear if Yue ware produced in Wuzhou was also affected by these changes, though considering that the export of Yue-type ceramics from that area peaked at around the early eleventh century, it does seem that this was the case.⁷ The areas that benefitted most from these changes were southern Zhejiang, northern Fujian, and southern Fujian. This section will discuss all three of those areas, before discussing other areas that were involved in maritime trade during the northern Song, such as Guangdong and Jiangnan.

⁷ On Wuzhou export ceramics, see Feng Xianming 冯先铭, "Xin Zhongguo taoci kaogu de zhuyao shouhuo" 新中国陶瓷考古的主要收获, *Wenwu* 文物 (1965), 37; and Wilfredo P. Ronquillo and Rita C. Tan, "Yue, Yue-Type Wares and Other Archeological Finds in Butuan, Philippines," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 256, 261–62.

Southern Zhejiang: Taizhou

In comparison to all the other regions discussed in this chapter, Taizhou is unique in that it was the only region with significant involvement in maritime trade that was not a major producer of export ceramics. Rather, merchants from that area appear to have enjoyed far more success than producers, despite the relatively short duration in which they were active. Taizhou merchants first enter the historical record in the late-tenth century, with the merchants Zhou Wende and Zheng Rende each traveling to Japan on several occasions between 986 and 990. Zhou Wenyi and his son Zhou Liangshi traded in Japan between 1012 and 1034, and three additional Taizhou merchants are recorded as having traded in Koryō. These are Chen Weizhong 陳惟忠 (also recorded as Chen Weizhi 陳惟志), who sailed to Koryō in 1031;⁸ Chen Weiji 陳維績 (also recorded as Weiji 惟績), who arrived in Koryō in 1038 and 1039;⁹ and Xu Zan 徐贊, who arrived in Koryō in 1049.¹⁰ After this time, Taizhou sea merchants cease to appear in the historical record, and I have not found mention of any until the Southern Song period.¹¹ From such information, we can see that Taizhou merchants were involved in trading in both Japan and Koryō, and that the apex of their involvement in overseas trade was reached in the 1030s, with four such merchants active in that decade.

⁸ Chōng Inji 鄭麟趾, *Koryō sa* 高麗史 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 5. Charts of Chinese merchants arriving in Koryō are provided in Mori Katsumi 森克己, “Nihon Kōrai raikō no Sō shōnin” 日本・高麗来航の宋商人, *Chōsen gakuhō* 朝鮮学報 9 (1956): 224–25; and Matsuura Akira 松浦章, “Chūgoku hansei ni yoru Higashi Ajia kaiiki kōryū” 中国帆船による東アジア海域交流, *Shūen no bunka kōshō gaku shiriizu* 周縁の文化交渉学シリーズ 5 (2012), 7–9.

⁹ *Koryō sa* 6 records both arrivals.

¹⁰ *Koryō sa* 7.

¹¹ See for example a story of a Taizhou sea merchant named Zheng Sike 鄭四客, which was said to take place in 1175, in Hong Mai 洪邁, *Yijian zhi zhi* 夷堅支志 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 5; and Huang Chunyan 黃春艷, *Songdai haiwai maoyi* 宋代海外貿易 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003), 100.

Taizhou was regarded first and foremost as the center of Tiantai Buddhism, but by the Song dynasty it already enjoyed a long history as an overseas trade hub. An examination of sea merchants from this area reveals that their enterprises were often family affairs, as seen with the Zhou, Chen, and possibly the Zheng families. Another characteristic that stands out is their willingness to work with merchants from other regions, as there are examples of Taizhou merchants conducting trade missions with merchants of Wuzhou (Zheng Rende and Zhou Wende sailed with the Wuzhou merchant Yang Renshao in 988, and Zhou Wende sailed with Yang Renshao again in 990), Mingzhou (Chen Weiji sailed with the Mingzhou merchant Chen Liang 陳亮 to Koryō in 1038), and Fuzhou (Zhou Liangshi organized a trade mission with a merchant of unknown origins who had also worked with the Fuzhou merchant Chen Wenyou 陳文祐 in the 1020s).¹² That such examples exist for the relatively few accounts we have of Taizhou sea merchants suggests that they were more flexible toward working with merchants from other regions than those of other merchant networks. Considering that the Taizhou region was not a major producer of export ceramics and was not located near any trade administration offices, we can moreover assume that access to manufactured goods and political connections were major incentives for Taizhou merchants to work with merchants of other regions. In the case of Japan, merchants from other regions could likewise benefit from the close relationships that Taizhou merchants fostered with Japanese political leaders. As for why Taizhou sea merchants disappear from the historical record shortly after reaching the peak of their activity, an explanation will be proposed in the following subsection on Wenzhou.

¹² For the final example, see Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi” 朱仁聰と周文裔・周良史, *Tōyō Daigaku bungakubu kiyō, shigakuka hen* 東洋大学文学部紀要. 史学科篇 40 (2014): 28.

Table 2 Taizhou Sea Merchants and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Merchant name	Place of arrival
986–990	Zhou Wende	Japan
986–990	Zheng Rende	Japan
1012–1031	Zhou Wenyi	Japan
1016–1034	Zhou Liangshi	Japan
1031	Chen Weizhong/zhi	Koryō
1038–1039	Chen Weiji ¹³	Koryō
1049	Xu Zan	Koryō

Southern Zhejiang: Wenzhou

Very little textual evidence provides insight on Wenzhou merchants taking to the seas during the Northern Song period, though we do see a fairly robust archaeological record of Wenzhou ceramics distributed to certain regions of maritime Asia. A connection between the prefectures of Wenzhou and Taizhou is suggested by the fact that the rise and sudden decline of both areas in maritime trade occurred at the same time.

The best example of Wenzhou people taking to the seas is the aforementioned description of Wenzhou and Hongzhou people arriving in Japan dated to the year 1003. Just two years later, an entry in the *Koryō sa* speaks of a Wenzhou scholar named Zhou Zhu 周佇 defecting to Koryō to become an official there.¹⁴ In the Korean sources, the term commonly used for the change of

¹³ The 1038 arrival was with Mingzhou merchant Chen Liang.

¹⁴ *Koryō sa* 3.

political status was *touxiang* (cn.) or *t'u-hang* (k.) 投降, which is best translated as “to defect,” as it conveys a change of allegiance within the Koryŏ state’s formalized system of immigration. Other examples of such defections are common in Korean sources, as Chinese scholars were known to sail on merchant ships to seek work in Koryŏ, while maintaining close relations with the merchants who brought them there. As is the case with Taizhou, there is a long period of time in which we hear nothing of Wenzhou people taking to the seas before mention is given of a Wenzhou sea merchant in one of Hong Mai’s stories. This story was said to take place in 1137.¹⁵

Table 3 Wenzhou People, and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Description	Place of arrival
1003	Wenzhou and Hongzhou people	Japan
1005	Zhou Zhu (scholar)	Koryŏ
1137	Wenzhou sea merchant	Unnamed country

Wenzhou Ceramics

Many of the most famous kiln production areas in Chinese history date their beginnings to the Five Dynasties period, as shifting political centers and mercantile pressures among competing states during the tenth century provided new opportunities for local producers. However, it is only during the Song dynasty that we see many of these kilns rise to prominence. During the early Song, kilns continued to expand across China while they produced ever greater quantities

¹⁵ *Yijian zhi zhi* 3.

and varieties of ceramic wares.¹⁶ This was likewise the case for the Ou kilns of Wenzhou, which mainly produced and exported green glazed Yue-type celadons.

In addition to discoveries of Ou ware ceramics at various locations in Japan dating to around the end of the tenth century, these goods were also brought to the Satingpra region of what is now Southern Thailand.¹⁷ Ou ware was in fact the earliest Chinese ceramic type to arrive in the area, along with smaller quantities of Jingdezhen and Dehua (central Fujian) wares. Janice Stargardt has estimated that the high-quality Ou ware discovered in the region dates to between the tenth century and the middle of the Northern Song period. If it is indeed correct that Ou ware was the earliest Chinese ceramic type to arrive in the region, this would mean that two centuries of the Chinese ceramics trade had bypassed the area (likely in favor of a canal linking the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman sea further north of the Malay peninsula) and that it had become a new market for Chinese ceramics at precisely the same time that Ou ware was being shipped abroad. One consideration would be that tributary trade with China could account for the arrival of these goods, though I have not found records to indicate that a polity in the region had dispatched such a mission during the early Song dynasty. Rather, since we know that natives of southern Zhejiang were first arriving in Japan and Koryŏ at the same time, a more reasonable assumption would be that merchants from that region were also establishing new markets for their goods on the Malay peninsula.

¹⁶ Rose Kerr and Nigel Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China, vol. 5: Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part XII: Ceramic Technology* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.

¹⁷ Janice Stargardt, "Behind the Shadows: Archaeological Data on Two-Way Sea-Trade between Quanzhou and Satingpra, South Thailand, 10th-14th Century" in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 309-93. This is a very important and enlightening account, though the author's position that Longquan and Jingdezhen ceramics were not exported to Japan during the Northern Song, which appears to be based on older research from Kamei Meitoku, is now understood not to be the case. On that point see 367-68.

In addition to Japan and Southern Thailand, a piece of a Yue-type celadon bottle was also found in the Settur area of southern India in 1992. It is believed that this is a piece of Ou ware datable to between the latter half of the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh century.¹⁸ More such examples in other regions are likely to exist, though due to the close similarity in appearance of different Yue-type wares, many scholars across maritime Asia have had difficulty identifying where Yue-type ceramics were produced, and thus the origins of these wares are often unattributed or misstated. Hopefully future research will provide more insight on the scale of distribution of Ou ceramics.

The Decline of Southern Zhejiang Networks

The concurrent rise and fall of southern Zhejiang merchants and Ou ceramics would appear not to be a mere coincidence. The region's rise in fortunes can be explained by its ability to partly fill the vacancy left behind after the crackdown on merchants in and around the Yuezhou area. The sudden decline of the region occurs in tandem with a similarly dramatic turn of events. In 1040, a group of disgruntled Zhedong militiamen killed their commanding officer and took to the seas to raid coastal ports.¹⁹ Lead by a soldier named E Lin 鄂鄰, they plundered settlements along the coast of Zhedong, Fujian, and Guangdong before escaping to Champa. Since the murdered

¹⁸ Noboru Karashima, *In Search of Chinese Ceramic-Sherds in South India and Sri Lanka* (Tokyo: Taisho University Press, 2004), 27.

¹⁹ For this event, see Li Tao 李焯, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (hereafter *XCB*, Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 129, 132, 133, 137; Sima Guang 司馬光, *Sushui ji wen* 涑水記聞 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 12; *SHY Bing* 兵 11; and *SS* 489. This event is also discussed in Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, “Sōdai ni okeru Fukken shōnin no katsudō to sono shakai keizaiteki haikai” 宋代における福建商人の活動とその社会経済的背景, in *Tōyōshi ronsō: Wada hakase koki kinen* 東洋史論叢: 和田博士古稀記念, ed. Hensan iinkai 編纂委員会 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1961), 496; Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 86; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124, 225–226, citation no. 14.

commanding officer was in charge of the militias of Taizhou and Wenzhou, and since southern Zhejiang was the first area affected by the raids, we can surmise that the revolt began in one of those two prefectures.

E Lin and his followers were able to reestablish themselves in Champa, though the following year a Chinese merchant trading for spices and aromatics encountered the rebel there, and reported the pirate's presence to the Song court upon returning to China. This man, a Quanzhou native named Shao Bao 邵保, did much to ingratiate himself with the Song court during the ordeal. The sources differ in attributing credit to the capture of E Lin. One account states that Shao Bao brought two Chinese envoys to Champa, who persuaded its leader to capture E Lin and his core followers and execute the remaining members of his group.²⁰ Another account states that Shao Bao used his own resources to raise a force that was able to overcome E Lin's group.²¹ I find the former account more likely, as the Champa leader almost certainly had more soldiers at his disposal and was generously rewarded for his assistance by the envoys and during a tributary mission to China in the following year. Nevertheless, Shao Bao did bring the envoys to Champa, probably on his own ship, and he was rewarded with a lower military official's rank and title as a result.

This instance demonstrates another shift in the axis of maritime trade from Zhedong toward Fujian—a shift that appears more systematic than symbolic. Considering that E Lin was able to make use of ships, sailors, and those familiar with southern port cities and the sea route to Champa, all indications are that he was aided in his revolt by traders from southern Zhejiang. The peak of southern Zhejiang involvement in overseas trade occurred in the 1030s, though with

²⁰ *SHY B* 11.

²¹ *Sushui ji wen* 12.

the exception of the record of Taizhou merchant Xu Zan arriving in Koryō in 1049, all merchant activity and the circulation of Ou ware ceramics came to an abrupt end following E Lin's revolt in 1040. It is possible that E Lin and his group caused so much damage in the ports of Taizhou and Wenzhou that merchant networks in those prefectures were never able to recover, though the records state that E Lin only had around one hundred followers with him after they reached Champa. We may also recall that Zhedong merchant networks proved remarkably resilient throughout the collapse of the Tang dynasty and the wars of the early Five Dynasties periods, all of which caused immense destruction. Rather, much in the same way that the beginning of trade between Wu-Yue and Japan was preceded by a Chinese merchant informing the Japanese court of the duplicity of former Parhae envoys, we see again merchant groups using all means at their disposal to improve their circumstances when given the opportunity to do so. In this instance it was a Quanzhou merchant who benefitted most from an ordeal in southeastern China, and the government position granted to him was in northern Fujian, which was experiencing unprecedented success in maritime trade at this time.

Northern Fujian

There are several reasons why merchants from Fuzhou and Jianzhou should be regarded as belonging to a single group. To begin, both Jianzhou and Fuzhou were connected by the Min river, which was a major route for travel, communication, and transportation. In addition, the inhabitants of northwestern and northeastern Fujian—or more specifically those who resided north of the Min river—share closely related linguistic backgrounds. Finally, Jianzhou and Fuzhou merchants maintained similar patterns in overseas trade. Merchants from both prefectures are described as trading overseas in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries,

though after that time, mainly Fuzhou merchants are mentioned in historical records. This might be because merchants from inland regions gradually centered their operations in Fuzhou, or because records often tend to ascribe a place of origin to one's port of departure. This last point is particularly common for Japanese and Korean records, for which chroniclers from those areas would have been less familiar with locations further inland from major port cities. Regardless, we have seen in Chapter Two that Fuzhou and Jianzhou merchants immediately benefited from the Song empire's increased oversight of trade administration in the late tenth century, as merchants from northern Fujian are first recorded as sailing to Japan, Koryō, and Southeast Asia after the establishment of *shibosi* offices. Many recent scholars and early writers have also written about Fujian merchants as if they were a single cultural entity. In fact, written records indicate merchants from southern and northern Fujian were operating in distinct networks, even if they did cooperate from time to time. Such a split is most evident during the first half of the eleventh century, when Fuzhou merchants were the predominant merchant group in Japan and Quanzhou merchants were the predominant group in Koryō.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Jianzhou merchants were operating in both Southeast Asia and in Japan in the 990s, though in the case of Southeast Asia, we are told that they were active there even before that time. These merchants were Mao Xu, who frequently traded in Java and escorted their embassy to the Mingzhou *shibosi* in 992, and Zhou Shichang, who was active in Japan from 996 to 1002. Mao Xu's case is particularly interesting because he appears to be the earliest Chinese merchant active in Southeast Asia whose name and place of origin are provided in extant textual sources. We know that he was from Jianxi 建溪, in northwestern Fujian, which was the riverway that connected the prefectural city of Jianzhou to the Min river further south. In the case of Zhou Shichang, we are only told that he was from the prefecture of Jianzhou in

northwestern Fujian. The next northern Fujian merchant known to trade overseas was Shangguan Yongxian, who was active in Japan between 997 and 1003. Japanese sources state only that he was from Fuzhou, though the rarity of his surname provides an opportunity to dig deeper into his family origins. A search through the hundreds of thousands of profiles available on the China Biographical Database reveals that the majority of Shangguan 上官 surnames during the Song dynasty were located in the Shaowu 邵武 area of northwestern Fujian.²² The early prosperity of this lineage group is evident earlier in the tenth century, when one of the Min emperors took a Shangguan woman to be his consort.²³ A surprisingly large number of Shaowu Shangguan were also in fact holders of *jinshi* degrees during the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, which highlights another link between wealth from sea trade and entry into civil officialdom.

Thus, the first three lineages of known northern Fujian sea merchants were all based in the inland part of northwestern Fujian along the Min river and its tributaries. A comparison can be made with Wuzhou merchants, whose hometowns were located in an inland area of Zhedong that connected to Yuezhou and Hangzhou Bay by riverways.

As was already noted, members of this network were concurrently active in both Southeast Asia and in Japan. There is, in fact, additional evidence showing a three-way link between China, Japan, and Southeast Asia at this time. The writings of the Jianzhou official Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020) recall his interactions with a Japanese monk named Jakushō 寂照 (962–1034), who visited the Song court in 1004. Yang Yi stated that soon after, “a South Seas merchant’s ship” (*Nanhai shangren chuan* 南海商人船) had traveled to Japan before arriving in

²² CBDB.

²³ Schafer, *The Empire of Min*, 108.

China with correspondence from a Japanese prince to Jakushō.²⁴ This was precisely a period of time in which Chinese merchants were known to work closely with and sail on the same ships as merchants from other parts of the world,²⁵ and Chinese merchants were the only group recorded as being active in China, Japan, and Southeast Asia at the same time. Moreover, it is doubtful that Japanese courtiers would entrust correspondence to be sent with a ship's crew that was unfamiliar with the route from Japan to China, so the "South Seas merchant's ship" likely set sail with an ethnically mixed crew that included northern Fujian merchants among their ranks. Northern Fujian merchants at this time clearly operated across a large geographic expanse. Further attestation to this scope is attested to in Cai Xiang's 蔡襄 (1012–1067) *Treatise on Lychees* (1059), in which he discusses Fuzhou merchants selling lychee fruit in Korea, Japan, Ryukyu, and the Middle East.²⁶

After the arrival of Shangguan Yongxian to Japan, nearly all northern Fujian merchants are recorded as coming from Fuzhou. In 1019, the Fuzhou merchant Lin Zhen 林振 was caught smuggling pearls to China from "southern foreign countries" (*nan fan* 南蕃), likely a reference to Southeast Asia.²⁷ He too was traveling with a crew that included non-Chinese merchants. In that same year the Fuzhou merchant Yu Xuan 虞瑄 is recorded as arriving in Koryō, the first northern Fujian merchant known to arrive there.²⁸ Of interest is that most entries in Korean

²⁴ Yang Yi, *Yang Wengong tan yuan* 楊文公談苑, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&res=317148>; and Charlotte von Verschuer, "Japan's Foreign Relations, 600 to 1200 A.D.: A Translation from *Zenrin Kokuhoki*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54:1 (1999), 33. Yang Yi writes that Jakushō visited the court in 1006, but von Verschuer points out this actually occurred in 1004.

²⁵ Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese," 1–27.

²⁶ Cai Xiang, *Lizhi pu* 荔枝譜 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009). See also Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 159–60; and So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 71–73, 96.

²⁷ *SHY SH* 38. See also Shiba, "Sōdai ni okeru Fukken shōnin no katsudō," 496; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124.

²⁸ *Koryō sa* 4.

records only describe Chinese merchants as bringing “local” or “tributary” goods as cargo, though in this instance Yu Xuan is recorded as bringing spices and aromatics—the main exports of Southeast Asian states. It would seem to be the case that such goods had become so abundant and affordable in Fuzhou markets that their high value elsewhere in East Asia made them a more desired item for export than local Chinese manufactures. This is attested to in an observation made in 1025 that ships frequently came to Fuzhou two or three at a time with cargoes of South Seas goods such as pearls, rhinoceros horn, spices, and aromatics. Clerks and common folk alike purchased these goods with coins, gold, and silver, despite prohibitions against such transactions.²⁹ Three years after Yu Xuan’s journey, a Fuzhou merchant named Chen Xiangzhong 陳象中 is recorded as arriving in Koryō,³⁰ though there are no records of Fuzhou merchants arriving there again until around the end of the century. Fuzhou merchants continued to arrive in Japan, as was the case with Chen Wenyou in 1027. He was connected with Taizhou merchants and was recorded as having sailed to Taizhou prior to his arrival in Japan.³¹

Although there does not appear to be any specific mention of northern Fujian merchants in the South Seas during the late eleventh and early twelfth century, there is no reason to think that their activities in the region came to an end. Indeed, large numbers of Fuzhou merchant ships were requisitioned for the Song empire’s war with Vietnam in 1075.³² Nevertheless, the remaining examples of northern Fujian merchants trading abroad have them doing so in Japan and Koryō. Fuzhou merchant Pan Huaiqing 潘懷清 sailed to Japan on at least two occasions, once in 1068 and once in 1070,³³ and the Fuzhou merchant Wu Zhu 吳鑄 came to Japan in 1072

²⁹ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 91.

³⁰ *Koryō sa* 4.

³¹ *Shōyūki* 8, entry dated Manju 4 (1027).8.30

³² Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 91.

³³ Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 181–85; and Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 113, 118–19.

in the company of the Guangnan merchant Zeng Ju 曾聚 and Quanzhou merchant Zheng Qing 鄭慶.³⁴ It is still not clear how the establishment of a *shibosi* office in Quanzhou in 1087 might have affected commercial networks in the region, though it did not stop Fuzhou merchants from trading overseas. Lin Tong 林通, a merchant I have elsewhere identified as a philanthropist and unsuccessful *jinsi* candidate from Changle 長樂 county in Fuzhou, was active in Japan in 1093.³⁵ In that same year, a Fujian merchant (prefectural origin unspecified) named Xu Ji 徐積 arrived in Koryō.³⁶ The following year, a merchant named Liu Ji 劉及 arrived in Koryō with two other merchant leaders and a crew of 64.³⁷ The Chinese Biographical Database has only one match for this name, and it is for a man from Minxian 閩縣 county of Fuzhou who was born in 1055.³⁸ There is also an account of a Chinese resident of the Japanese port of Tsuruga copying Buddhist sutras in 1100.³⁹ This man, named Huang Zhao 黃昭 was an adult at the same time as a Huang Zhao in Shaowu prefecture of northwestern Fujian,⁴⁰ where we can also trace the merchant Shangguan Yongxian's lineage. The latter profile states that Huang Zhao's son Huang Zhang 黃璋 received a *jinsi* degree. Finally, a Fuzhou scholar named Hu Zongdan 胡宗旦 is recorded as having defected to Koryō in the early twelfth century.⁴¹

³⁴ Hayashi Fuminori 林文理, "'Hakata kōshū' kankei shiryō" 「博多綱首」 関係史料, *Fukuokashi hakubutsukan kenkyū kiyō* 福岡市博物館研究紀要 4 (1994), 97.

³⁵ Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas," 123.

³⁶ Su Shi 蘇軾, *Dongpo qi ji* 東坡七集 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), *Zouyi* 奏議 13. See also Hara Miwako 原美和子, "Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru" 宋代海商の活動に関する, in *Chūsei no taigai kōryū* 中世の対外交流, ed. Ono Masatoshi 小野正敏 et al. (Tokyo: Kōshi shoin 高志書院, 2006), 131, 136–38.

³⁷ *Koryō sa* 10.

³⁸ I will discuss this man in more detail in an article in preparation about Chinese merchants and scholars in Koryō.

³⁹ Saeki Kōji, "Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu," *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies* 48 (2003): 41.

⁴⁰ CBDB; and *Shaoxing shiba nian tongnian xiao lu* 紹興十八年同年小錄, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=278667#p8>.

⁴¹ *Koryō sa* 97.

Many examples of Fuzhou merchants trading overseas continue into the Southern Song period.⁴² We may also note that one of the sea merchants discussed in three 1167 stone inscriptions preserved in Mingzhou, Zhang Gongxi 張公憲, was from Pucheng 浦城 county of Jianzhou,⁴³ which was located near Longquan and the Zhejiang border. This demonstrates that merchants from inland areas of northern Fujian remained active in overseas trade for some time. As we may see from this study, northern Fujian merchants were consistently trading overseas from the late tenth century onward. Although their numbers may not have reached those of merchants from southern Fujian, it does not appear that there were any significant disruptions to their activities either. After merchants from southern Fujian, this was the second most prevalent merchant group during the first half of the Song dynasty.

Table 4 Northern Fujian Sea Merchants and Scholars, and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Description	Place of arrival
992	Mao Xu (Jianxi merchant)	Shepo (Java)
996–1002	Zhou Shichang (Jianzhou merchant)	Japan
997–1003	Shangguan Yongxian (Fuzhou merchant)	Japan
1013	Dai Yi 戴翼 (Min scholar) ⁴⁴	Koryō
1019	Lin Zhen (Fuzhou merchant)	South Seas
1019	Yu Xuan (Fuzhou merchant)	Koryō
1022	Chen Xiangzhong (Fuzhou merchant)	Koryō
1026–1027	Chen Wenyong (Fuzhou merchant)	Japan
1068–1070	Pan Huaiqing (Fuzhou merchant)	Japan

⁴² Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 92–94.

⁴³ Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 44–45.

⁴⁴ *Koryō sa* 4.

1072	Wu Zhu (Fuzhou merchant) ⁴⁵	Japan
1093	Lin Tong (Changle, Fuzhou)	Japan
1093	Xu Ji (Fujian merchant)	Koryō
1094	Liu Ji (Minxian, Fuzhou merchant)	Koryō
1105–1122 (Within this period)	Hu Zongdan (Fuzhou scholar)	Koryō

Northern Fujian Ceramics

Although a variety of export ceramic types were produced in northern Fujian, they were not shipped in numbers comparable to those of Yue kilns, Jingdezhen kilns, or Longquan kilns later on. It would seem these ceramics mainly supplemented cargos of ceramics from other regions, such as white wares produced in Jingdezhen. As we have already seen, in the first half of the eleventh century spices and aromatics were also at times the main goods that northern Fujian merchants sold in East Asian markets, and the archaeological record reveals that metal ingots, metal vessels, and precious metals were important exports for South Seas markets at this time.

Notable northern Fujian ceramic types include the low-quality and crude imitations of Yue celadon pieces produced in the tenth century in the Huai'an 懷安 kilns near Fuzhou. At approximately the same time, higher quality Yue-type wares were produced in Nantai 南台, also in the vicinity of Fuzhou city.⁴⁶ Jian 建 ware was another product of northern Fujian that was

⁴⁵ Wu Zhu sailed with the Quanzhou merchant Zheng Qing and the Guangnan merchant Zeng Ju on this voyage.

⁴⁶ Chuimei Ho, "Yue-Type and Longquan-Type Green Glazed Wares Made Outside Zhejiang Province," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 107.

exported abroad. Produced in Jianzhou from the late Tang until the end of the Yuan dynasty,⁴⁷ the unique thick black glaze and oily-brown streak designs of Jian tea bowls proved to be popular in Japan during the twelfth century, though Japanese producers were able to form close imitations by the following century, resulting in the creation of Tenmoku ceramics. A black-glazed Jian bowl dating to the latter half of the twelfth century was recovered in Sri Lanka and is on display in a museum there.⁴⁸

There is no reason to believe that merchants from any one region monopolized the export of certain ceramic types, nor would it make sense for them to attempt to do so. Nevertheless, we have already seen a common association between regional merchant groups and nearby ceramics producers, as merchants were incentivized to carry goods purchased in or near their home regions at favorable prices. The Longquan kilns, although located in the Zhexi 浙西 region (western Zhejiang), were clustered near the border with northern Fujian. These ceramics were shipped from the Longquan river down through the Ou river to the port of Wenzhou,⁴⁹ where merchants from Fujian and Guangdong could purchase them en route to ports in East Asia. It should also be noted that the Longquan river runs very close to the Song river, which connects to the Min river and the port of Fuzhou, and passes through the sea merchant hub of Jianzhou.⁵⁰ In fact, some of the Longquan kilns connected to the Song river rather than the Longquan river,⁵¹ which is a strong indication that Longquan wares were shipped downriver to both Wenzhou and Fuzhou. Longquan-type wares were also produced in Pucheng, which is located northern Fujian

⁴⁷ Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 267, 269.

⁴⁸ Karashima, *In Search of Chinese Ceramic-Sherds in South India and Sri Lanka*, 63.

⁴⁹ Stargardt, "Behind the Shadows," 347; Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 204.

⁵⁰ Billy K. L. So notes that the communication route linking Fujian with Zhejiang via the Min River basin, over the inland mountain ranges, and through Jianzhou, was already well developed by the middle of the Tang dynasty. See So, "Developments in Southern Fukien under the T'ang and the Min," 444.

⁵¹ Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 166.

directly across the border from Longquan, and situated on the riverway that connects to Fuzhou. It was also the hometown of the merchant Zhang Gongxi, who traded in Japan. Ceramics from those kilns, which have some decorative features distinctive from typical Longquan ware, have also been recovered in the Philippines and in Indonesia.⁵²

Although recognized today as one of the most iconic types of Chinese ceramics, Longquan wares went through various stages of development before taking the appearance of the pale-green porcelain that is now known so well to ceramics aficionados today. Such stages parallel the changes that occurred in southeastern China between the tenth and twelfth centuries. Like many other popular ceramic types, production of Longquan ceramics began in the late tenth century. From that time and during the Northern Song, Longquan ceramics remained paler versions of Yue ware and were still made from natural stoneware clays. Their peak of production was from the Southern Song to the Yuan (1271–1368) periods, which was when they transitioned to become porcelains of higher quality.⁵³

Early production and export of Longquan ceramics was quite limited, though Longquan ceramics and their Tong'an 同安 imitators from southern Fujian do appear in Japan beginning in the late-tenth and mid-eleventh centuries.⁵⁴ It would seem that the styles and techniques for producing Longquan ceramics were gradually transmitted from the Ou kilns near Wenzhou during the Northern Song, as transitional styles are apparent in the Lishui 麗水 kilns, which were situated along the Ou river between the Ou and Longquan kiln complexes.⁵⁵ Increased

⁵² Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 65.

⁵³ Feng, “Xin Zhongguo taoci kaogu de zhuyao shouhuo,” 37; and Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 254, 257–58.

⁵⁴ Nabuo Yamamoto, “Shifts in the Use of Zhejiang Green Glazed Wares at Dazaifu between the Late Eighth and Fourteenth Centuries,” in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 173–75.

⁵⁵ Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 170; and Basil Gray, *Sung Porcelain and Stoneware* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 28.

production and export began in around the mid-eleventh century, when Longquan ceramics were shipped across much of the world to places such as Japan, Satingpra (Southern Thailand), Siraf (Iran), south India, Sri Lanka, east Africa, and Sumatra.⁵⁶ The case of Satingpra in particular offers some interesting insights. It was noted above that this region was a major importer of Ou ceramics when it began trade with China, most likely as a result of southern Zhejiang merchants reaching new markets. The export of those wares to Satingpra stopped in the middle of the eleventh century at the same time that southern Zhejiang merchants stopped appearing in the records of Koryō and Japan. Longquan ceramics immediately took the prominent position of Ou ceramics in Satingpra with little or no overlap in the time that both ceramic types were imported.⁵⁷ One possible explanation for this is that merchants sailing from Fuzhou and ports further south took over trade in that region and preferred to deal with Longquan ceramics. Stargardt has argued that the Satingpra market was more selective in its tastes for ceramics than other markets across maritime Asia, and I am inclined to accept that point. However, the sudden decline of Ou ceramics cannot be attributed to the change of tastes in a single market, especially since Longquan ceramic styles initially emulated Ou ware.

Southern Fujian

No other region in the Northern Song has attracted more attention for its involvement in overseas trade than southern Fujian, and this is for good reason.⁵⁸ Records for this period point to southern

⁵⁶ Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 64; E. Edwards McKinnon, “Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra,” in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 288–89; Stargardt, “Behind the Shadows”; and *Yomigaere! Kōrokan*, 233.

⁵⁷ Stargardt, “Behind the Shadows.”

⁵⁸ See Shiba, “Sōdai ni okeru Fukken shōnin no katsudō”; Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier”; Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*; Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*; So, *Prosperity*,

Fujianese as China's foremost participants in overseas trade, with Quanzhou forming the epicenter for such commercial endeavors. Not only did the greatest number of sea merchants come from this region, southern Fujian also developed into a considerable producer of export ceramics at this time. This subsection considers the Chinese merchant groups and producers that were active in southern Fujian.⁵⁹

Like most other merchant groups discussed in this chapter, the activities of southern Fujian merchants predate the establishment of the Song empire, though the Song period is the time when historical records most clearly shed light on their activities. There is no better place to begin a study of southern Fujian merchants than by examining their activity in the state of Koryō. Quanzhou merchants were initially only one of several regional groups of merchants active in that country, though they quickly became the predominant group of merchants there, and for an extended period of time they were the only group of merchants known to trade there.⁶⁰ This is likely due to the influence that Quanzhou scholars who defected to the Koryō government exercised in matters pertaining to trade (the historical background of these defections is discussed in Chapter Four).

As already discussed, a Fujian person of otherwise undisclosed origins defected to Koryō in 1013. Just two years later, a man from Quanzhou named Ouyang Zheng 歐陽徵 also defected, and this was followed by a Quanzhou person named Chen Yi 陳億, who defected in 1023.⁶¹ It is

Region, and Institutions in Maritime China; Angela Schottenhammer, ed. *The Emporium of the World*; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*.

⁵⁹ Like other scholars, I consider Xinghuajun 興化軍 (encompassing Putian and Xianyou, and located in between Quanzhou and Fuzhou), to be more aligned with southern Fujian due to its close linguistic ties and because that region was originally administered as a part of Quanzhou.

⁶⁰ In “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” Hara Miwako also makes the argument for a cohesive Fujian merchant network operating in Koryō in the mid to late eleventh century. I think it would be more accurate to describe this as a southern Fujian network, as a clear majority of merchants arriving in Koryō at that time were from this region.

⁶¹ *Koryō sa* 4 and 5, respectively.

likely that others from southern Fujian also defected at around this time as there are many more names of Chinese defectors in Koryŏ sources, though the origins of most of them are not stated. The first record of a southern Fujian merchant sailing to Koryŏ occurred in 1017, just two years after Ouyang Zheng's defection. Lin Renfu 林仁福 is described as arriving with a crew of 40 to give "tribute," which, as in Japanese sources, was a euphemism for conducting trade with the government.⁶² Little else is known of this man or many of the merchants who proceeded his arrival, though, though more information can be ascertained regarding the next southern Fujian merchant to visit Koryŏ.

In 1019, the Quanzhou merchant Chen Wengui 陳文軌 also traded in Koryŏ.⁶³ We have already discussed the Fuzhou merchant Chen Wenyou's arrival to Japan in 1027, and we may note that a merchant named Chen Wensui 陳文遂 arrived in Koryŏ in 1022.⁶⁴ This means that there were three sea merchants with the surname Chen 陳 and a given name with the Wen 文 character who were actively trading in East Asia within ten years of each other. These commonalities would seem to go beyond coincidence, though it is interesting to note that while Chen Wenyou was recorded as coming from Fuzhou, Korean records state that Chen Wengui was from Quanzhou and Chen Wensui was from Guangnan (Guangdong). There might be an explanation for such discrepancies.

When Chen Hongjin 陳洪進 (914–985), the leader of the tenth-century sea trade enclaves of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou, ceded control of his territory to the Song empire in 978, he was rewarded a military governorship in northern Jiangxi, and his sons were given appointments as

⁶² *Koryŏ sa* 4.

⁶³ *Koryŏ sa* 4.

⁶⁴ *Koryŏ sa* 4.

prefects of Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, and other regions throughout China. These sons all had the generational signifier “Wen” 文 in their given names.⁶⁵ Hugh Clark has proposed that Chen Wensui and Chen Wengui were related to Chen Hongjin, and I am inclined to believe that was the case (and to include Chen Wenyou into the mix).⁶⁶ There are two points that further substantiate such a proposal. The first is that in addition to the three merchants sharing the generational signifier 文 with the sons of Chen Hongjin, one of the leader’s nephews, Chen Wenlian 陳文璉 not only possessed the “Wen” signifier in his name, but also the “che” 車 radical of the other part of his given name—which is also evident in the name of the Quanzhou merchant Chen Wengui 陳文軌.⁶⁷ Indeed, despite biographical attributions that Chen Wenlian shared his father’s hometown of Xianyou 仙遊 (Putian), the *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 states that he was from Quanzhou and that he retired there due to old age in the Kangding 康定 period (1040–1041).⁶⁸ All of this information suggests that the three “Chen Wen” merchants were nephews of Chen Hongjin.

The other point is that there is evidence of what appears to be a Fujian merchant of a later generation claiming descent from Chen Hongjin, which further supports the idea that the Chen lineage remained involved in overseas trade after Quanzhou and Zhangzhou were annexed by the Song empire. The activities of this man, Chen Deyi 陳得一, are discussed in a variety of records, which allow for a glimpse into details of a sea merchant’s life that are very rarely found anywhere else. Chen Deyi educated himself on the study of astronomy and calendar making to an extent that his knowledge eventually surpassed even that of the astronomers of the Song court.

⁶⁵ Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 192, 261, citation no. 3.

⁶⁶ Clark, “Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou” in *The Emporium of the World*, 72.

⁶⁷ CBDB.

⁶⁸ Shen Kuo 沈括, *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 25.

When Song astronomers miscalculated the time of a solar eclipse in 1135 and Chen's own calculations proved to be correct, Chen advised the astronomers on how to improve their calculations.⁶⁹ The attendant censor Zhang Zhiyuan 張致遠 (1090–1147) recommended that Chen Deyi be made an official to help make a new calendar for the dynasty, and indeed Chen co-wrote several astronomical books with Song officials. However, it does not seem that Chen was granted the status of an official, but rather one of his sons was granted that status and he was instead granted the honorary title "Reclusive Scholar of Mastering the Profound" (*tongwei chushi* 通微處士). The term *tongwei* referred to an anecdote of Chen earlier placing a label over his astronomy books which read "Master the profound" (*tongwei*). Elsewhere, I have demonstrated that the term *chushi* was a respectful title commonly given to educated merchants throughout much of Chinese history.⁷⁰ There are several additional reasons to infer that Chen Deyi was indeed a merchant. The first is that historical records refer to him as a commoner (*buyi* 布衣), without actually stating his occupation. When merchants were depicted respectfully in written sources, their occupations were generally left unstated for ideological reasons. That Chen Deyi earned so much respect from the Song court without being awarded a more honored status or position strongly suggests that his previous occupation as a merchant disqualified him from those honors. However, most telling is that Chen Deyi's gazetteer biography states that he obtained some of his astronomy books during his travels to Japan in the Chongning 崇寧 period (1102–1106). These were likely texts that were transmitted to Japan from the Tang empire and were subsequently lost in China after the empire collapsed. This biography also states that he was a descendant of the Quanzhou-Zhangzhou leader Chen Hongjin, and thus we may infer that the

⁶⁹ What follows comes from SS 81.

⁷⁰ Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas."

Chen lineage maintained its involvement in overseas trade for at least several generations.⁷¹ With the available information gathered from the accounts of Chen Deyi and the three “Chen Wen” merchants of the early eleventh century, we can see that Chen Hongjin’s lineage group was establishing both political and commercial networks across China after his domains were incorporated into the Song empire.

The steady flow of southern Fujian merchants to Koryŏ continued for some time. In 1020, one year after Chen Wengui’s arrival, a certain Quanzhou merchant named Huai Zhi 懷贇 is recorded as trading there,⁷² followed by Quanzhou merchants Li Zhan 李顗 in 1028,⁷³ Lu Zun 盧遵 in 1030,⁷⁴ and Lin Ai 林藹 in 1033.⁷⁵

In 1042 we see the first clear example of a southern Fujian trader in Southeast Asia, when the Quanzhou merchant Shao Bao assisted in the capture of the rebel E Lin in Champa. However, there is little reason to suspect that these merchants first began trading in South Seas markets at this time. As early as 982, a prohibition was issued against sea merchants from Guangnan, Quanzhou, and Zhangzhou from selling South Seas goods to prefectural officials.⁷⁶ This was likely an attempt to curb practices that were common in the Five Dynasties period.⁷⁷ The background of Vietnamese king Lý Công Uẩn (Ch. Li Gongyun) 李公蘊 (974–1028), whom

⁷¹ Shi Nengzhi 史能之, *Chongxiu Piling zhi* 重修毗陵志 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 30. This biography states that either Chen Deyi or his family (it is unclear) moved to the Changzhou 常州 region, located just west of Suzhou in southern Jiangsu.

⁷² *Koryŏ sa* 4.

⁷³ *Koryŏ sa* 5.

⁷⁴ *Koryŏ sa* 5.

⁷⁵ *Koryŏ sa* 5.

⁷⁶ Wolters, “Restudying Some Chinese Writings on Sriwijaya,” 36; *SHY ZG* 44.

⁷⁷ For the involvement of southern Fujian in overseas trade at that time see Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 130–90; Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 55–65; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 38–70.

various Chinese sources state was of Fujianese ancestry,⁷⁸ should also be taken into account.

Scholars from the PRC have maintained that a regional gazetteer for the town of Anhai 安海 in the Quanzhou area states that Ly was born there and that his father took him to Vietnam at an early age.⁷⁹ While I do think that is plausible, I have not been able to verify the source that this information is said to be based on. Finally, the establishment of a mosque in Quanzhou in 1010—a time when Chinese and Muslim merchants were often cooperating in ventures in Southeast Asia—indicates that the port city was by then a hub for their activities.⁸⁰

After the E Lin incident, southern Fujian merchants are only recorded as arriving in Koryō over the next three decades, with Quanzhou merchants Lin Xi 林禧 (also recorded as Lin Dao 林濤) arriving there in 1045,⁸¹ Wang Yicong 王易從 arriving there in 1049,⁸² Xiao Zongming 蕭宗明 arriving on several occasions between 1052 and 1061,⁸³ Huang Jingwen 黄景文 arriving on at least two occasions between 1058 and 1063,⁸⁴ Huang Shen 黄慎 (also recorded as Huang Zhen 黄真) arriving on several occasions between 1068 and 1071,⁸⁵ and Fu Shi 傅施 arriving on several occasions between 1069 and 1075.⁸⁶

In 1072 we see the first known instance of a southern Fujian merchant arriving in Japan, when the Quanzhou merchant Zheng Qing joined the Fuzhou merchant Wu Zhu and Guangnan

⁷⁸ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 11.

⁷⁹ Wang Qiang 王强, *Citong fenghua lu: Quanzhou yu haishang sichou zhi lu* 刺桐风华录：泉州与海上丝绸之路 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaotong daxue chubanshe, 2020), 125.

⁸⁰ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.” For the mosque, see also Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 216–17; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 122–23, 139.

⁸¹ *Koryō sa* 6.

⁸² *Koryō sa* 7.

⁸³ *Koryō sa* 7 and 8.

⁸⁴ *Koryō sa* 8.

⁸⁵ *Koryō sa* 8.

⁸⁶ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 97; Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 208; and Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 131.

merchant Zeng Ju in sailing to Matsuura. Eight years later a report on Hainan Island stated that Fuzhou and Quanzhou merchants were trading there,⁸⁷ so this appears to be period of close links between merchants from those regions. The war with Vietnam in 1075, in which many Fujianese merchant ships and their crews were enlisted, probably served to forge new connections among those networks.⁸⁸

In 1084, the Quanzhou merchant Guo Di 郭敵 was secretly entrusted by Song officials to sail to Koryō to try to persuade a group of Jurchens there to bring tribute to the Song court.⁸⁹ The following year, the merchant Liu Cong 柳忞 is recorded as arriving in Japan.⁹⁰ This appears to be the same person or a relative of a Quanzhou merchant named Liu Yue 柳悅, who was sent by the Song government, along with another Quanzhou merchant named Huang Shishun 黃師舜, to spy on Koryō and the Khitan state of Liao sometime before 1103.⁹¹ Another Quanzhou merchant who traded in Japan was Li Chong 李充 (also recorded as Li Yun 李允), who arrived there several times between 1091 and 1105 and is noted for butting heads with Japanese authorities on several occasions.⁹² He had sailed with another Quanzhou merchant named Zhuang Yan 莊嚴, who was active in Japan at approximately the same time.⁹³ We may also note that this was the time in which Chen Hongjin's descendant Chen Deyi had sailed to Japan and obtained astronomy books.

⁸⁷ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124.

⁸⁸ Jung-Pang Lo, "Maritime Commerce and its Relation to the Sung Navy," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 12 (1969), 78.

⁸⁹ XCB 350. See also Hara, "Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru," 131.

⁹⁰ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 134–35.

⁹¹ Huang Huai 黃淮 and Yang Shiqi 楊士奇, *Lidai mingchen zou yi* 歷代名臣奏議 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 348.

⁹² *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 136–39.

⁹³ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 138–39.

Southern Fujian merchants continued to travel to Koryŏ for the duration of the Northern Song, and it just so happens that much of the extant commentary on their activities comes from none other than the renowned literatus Su Shi (1037–1101). As prefect of Hangzhou (the location of a *shibosi* and major stopover for East Asian trade) he was provided with many opportunities to learn of their activities. Indeed, while serving there he remarked that many throughout the circuit of Fujian made their living on sea trade.⁹⁴ He was particularly aware of their activities in Koryŏ, and noted that many Quanzhou merchants went there for trade.⁹⁵ He also remarked on their adventurous spirit, and stated only merchants from Fujian, such as the Quanzhou merchant Xu Jian 徐戢, dared sail to Koryŏ to turn a profit.⁹⁶ In one instance, Su Shi recalled a conversation with a Korean monk in Mingzhou in 1089, who was waiting in vain for a merchant ship to take him back to his country. Su Shi remarked that there were many merchants trading in Koryŏ from Quanzhou, and recommended that the monk board a ship there instead.⁹⁷ The literatus also discussed a monk from the Jinjiang 晉江 area of Quanzhou named Jingyuan 淨源, who was a close associate of the Korean prince and monk Ŭich'ŏn 義天 (1055–1101). Su Shi wrote that Jingyuan was originally nobody of significance, though because he traveled far with so many Fujian merchants, he was able to establish a relationship with Ŭich'ŏn, and his temple was able to receive much in the way of financial support.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ XCB 435.

⁹⁵ Hugh R. Clark, “Settlement, Trade, and Economy in Fu-chien to the Thirteenth Century,” in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E.B. Vermeer (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 48.

⁹⁶ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 83.

⁹⁷ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 84–85.

⁹⁸ XCB 435; and Hara Miwako, “Sōdai Higashi Ajia ni okeru kaishō no nakama kankei to jōhōmō” 宋代東アジアにおける海商の仲間関係と情報網, *Rekishī hyōron* 歴史評論 592 (1999): 2–15. For more on the interconnections of merchant and Buddhist networks, see Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*.

Clearly, southern Fujian merchants maintained an overwhelming presence in the Koryŏ trade. Not only were the majority of scholars who defected to Koryŏ from Quanzhou, but from 1050 until 1094, only southern Fujian merchants were recorded as arriving in the country. There is only one other merchant from outside of southern Fujian known to arrive in Koryŏ for the remainder of the Northern Song, which was the Fuzhou merchant Liu Ji, who arrived in 1094.

Although northern Fujian people appear to have maintained some presence in Koryŏ, all indications are that southern Fujian people formed the vast majority of Chinese living and trading there. For instance, Xu Jian, the Quanzhou merchant whose daring nature was remarked upon by Su Shi, traded in Koryŏ on several occasions between 1086 and 1089.⁹⁹ The Quanzhou merchant Xu Cheng 徐成 also traded there on at least two occasions between 1088 and 1090, and is notable for informing the Song court that another Chinese merchant of unstated origin was illegally trading in the Liao empire.¹⁰⁰ At around the same time, a Quanzhou scholar named Liu Zai 劉載 defected to the Koryŏ government.¹⁰¹ In 1087 a *shibosi* was established in Quanzhou, which surely had major repercussions for sea merchants operating from that region. However, the records of Japan and Korea do not provide indications of a major change in trade patterns. Southern Fujian merchants continued to trade in both areas, and the gradual decline of instances in which they are mentioned pertains more to the governments of both locations gradually recording less information on sea merchants in general (even as trade appears to have increased).

Hugh Clark has posited that the merchant Fu Gao 傅高, who was recorded in Korean records as arriving in the kingdom in 1087, was the same Fu Gao from a lineage in Xianyou

⁹⁹ Hara, “Sōdai Higashi Ajia ni okeru kaishō no nakama kankei to jōhōmō”; and *Dongpo qi ji*, *Zouyi* 6 and 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Koryŏ sa* 10; *Dongpo qi ji*, *Zouyi* 8.

¹⁰¹ *Koryŏ sa* 97.

county (Putian) that produced many *jinshi* degree holders.¹⁰² Xianyou county, we may recall, was also the base of Chen Hongjin's lineage, and they too had a strategy of producing both officials and sea merchants. It is quite likely that other merchants who were recorded as coming from Quanzhou in Korean and Japanese sources were from there as well. Two more examples of the role of Putian locals in overseas trade would be the merchant Hong Botong 洪伯通, who was said to have survived a major storm due to the mercy of Mazu while trading in the South Seas in 1122, and a Putian man named Li Zhen 李振, who appears to have been a merchant deputized to take part in a Song embassy to Koryŏ in 1123.¹⁰³ Finally, in 1138 a Quanzhou merchant named Zhu Fang 朱紡 financed the repairs of a temple in the Putian area to give thanks for his success in trading in Srivijaya.¹⁰⁴

Table 5 Southern Fujian Sea Merchants and Scholars, and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Description	Place of arrival
1013	Dai Yi (Min scholar)	Koryŏ
1015	Ouyang Zheng (Quanzhou scholar)	Koryŏ
1017	Lin Renfu (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryŏ
1019	Chen Wengui (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryŏ
1020	Huai Zhi (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryŏ
1023	Chen Yi (Quanzhou scholar)	Koryŏ
1028	Li Zhan (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryŏ
1030	Lu Zun (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryŏ

¹⁰² Clark, "Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou," 67–70.

¹⁰³ Hugh R. Clark, "The Origins of the cult to Mazu, the 'Divine Woman,' and the Hybridization of Chinese Culture" (unpublished essay).

¹⁰⁴ Clark, "Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou," 77–78; and Salmon, "Srivijaya, la Chine et les Marchands Chinois," 75.

1033	Lin Ai (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1042	Shao Bao (Quanzhou merchant)	Champa
1045	Lin Xi (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1049	Wang Yicong (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1052–1061	Xiao Zongming (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1058–1063	Huang Jingwen (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1068–1071	Huang Shen (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1069–1075	Fu Shi (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1072	Zheng Qing (Quanzhou merchant) ¹⁰⁵	Japan
1083–1094 (Within this period)	Liu Zai (Quanzhou scholar)	Koryō
1084	Guo Di (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1085	Liu Cong (Quanzhou merchant)	Japan
1086–1088	Xu Jian (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1087	Fu Gao (Putian merchant)	Koryō
1088–1091	Xu Cheng (Quanzhou merchant)	Koryō
1091–1105	Li Chong (Quanzhou merchant)	Japan
1093	Xu Ji (Fujian merchant)	Koryō
1102–1105	Zhuang Yan (Quanzhou merchant)	Japan
1102–1106 (Within this period)	Chen Deyi ¹⁰⁶ (Likely a merchant)	Japan
1122	Hong Botong (Putian merchant)	South Seas
1123	Li Zhen (From Putian, likely a merchant)	Koryō

¹⁰⁵ Zheng Qing sailed with the Fuzhou merchant Wu Zhu and the Guangnan merchant Zeng Ju on this voyage.

¹⁰⁶ Changzhou resident of Quanzhou lineage.

Before 1138	Zhu Fang (Quanzhou merchant)	Srivijaya
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Southern Fujian and Chaozhou Ceramics

As ports in Fujian became ever more active during the Song dynasty, nearby kilns and kilns connected to ports by riverways benefited tremendously as a result. Billy K. L. So has demonstrated that the rapid development of ceramics production in southern Fujian in the eleventh and twelfth centuries coincided with the rise of maritime trade in that region.¹⁰⁷ The Jinjiang region in what is now Quanzhou city was perhaps the first major production center, as kilns there rose to prominence in the tenth century and continued to expand in the Song and Yuan periods.¹⁰⁸ These kilns produced imitations of both Longquan and Jian wares, and as such provided Quanzhou merchants with a cheaper alternative from production areas closer at hand. Export ceramics produced at Jinjiang's Cizao 磁灶 kilns were shipped to Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other locations.¹⁰⁹ Other major ceramics production centers near the Quanzhou area included Nan'an 南安 and Dehua 德化—though it appears they rose to prominence at a later point in the Song dynasty—as well as Anxi 安溪 and Putian. With the exception of perhaps Dehua, all of those kiln areas at some point produced imitations of

¹⁰⁷ So Kee Long, “The Trade Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien During the Sung,” *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 24 (1994), 1–19.

¹⁰⁸ So, “The Trade Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien During the Sung,” 7–10.

¹⁰⁹ Ye et al., “Jinjiang Cizao yao de fazhan ji qi waixiao,” 61–65.

Longquan ware,¹¹⁰ though Dehua kilns, as well as those of Fuzhou and Guangzhou, can be noted for imitating the styles of Wenzhou Yue-type ceramics.¹¹¹

Much attention from scholars has also been paid to the region of Tong'an, which was located between Quanzhou and Zhangzhou. Tong'an wares were sold in Japan and Southeast Asia from the tenth to twelfth centuries, and the region also produced imitations of Longquan ceramics.¹¹² In fact, scholars have noted a greater association of Longquan ceramics with kilns in Fujian than with Yue kilns. A transmission of techniques between Longquan and Tong'an kilns appears to have occurred sometime between the Five Dynasties and Northern Song periods,¹¹³ and some scholars even classify the Tong'an kilns as a part of the Longquan kiln group in their early inception.¹¹⁴ A more gradual transfer of techniques from northern Fujian to the kilns of Tong'an has also been proposed.¹¹⁵ Much as we see a trend of prosperity among merchant groups shifting from north to south along China's southeastern regions, so too is a similar pattern emerging of the transmission of certain pottery making techniques. This transmission can be characterized as:

Hangzhou Bay → southern Zhejiang → northern Fujian → southern Fujian

Moreover, we have also noted the frequent presence of sea merchants where export ceramics were produced. This can be said for Tong'an as well. One early Northern Song official observed

¹¹⁰ So, "The Trade Ceramics Industry in Southern Fukien During the Sung," 7–10; and Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 497–98. For Dehua ceramics, see Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, p. 240–49.

¹¹¹ Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 111–14.

¹¹² Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 65; Richard Pearson, Li Min, and Li Guo, "Port, City, and Hinterlands: Archaeological Perspectives on Quanzhou and its Overseas Trade" in *The Emporium of the World*, 194; and Yomigaere! *Kōrokan*, 233.

¹¹³ Feng, "Xin Zhongguo taoci kaogu de zhuyao shouhuo," 37.

¹¹⁴ Yomigaere! *Kōrokan*, 233.

¹¹⁵ Chuimei Ho, "The Ceramic Boom in Minnan during Song and Yuan Times," in *The Emporium of the World*, 244–45, 263

of Tong'an county that: "There are people [from there] who sail ships across the sea to trade in foreign countries. They begin their return the following year" 有人泛海舟交易外國，經歲始還去。¹¹⁶

Another region that was a major exporter of ceramics was Chaozhou 潮州. From the mid-eleventh to mid-twelfth century, white wares from Chaozhou kilns were shipped in large quantities to Japan and Southeast Asia, reaching markets as far as South Asia.¹¹⁷ Although located in Guangdong and administered for much of Chinese history by provincial governments in Guangzhou, Chaozhou is situated near the border with Fujian and its local language is much more closely related to southern Fujianese languages than it is to Cantonese. In the century that these wares were shipped to Japan, Fujian and Chaozhou wares formed the clear majority of export ceramics brought to the archipelago, with Chaozhou ceramics accounting for nearly half of such exports.¹¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that some of these items have ink inscriptions, which might allow future research to provide additional details about their production.¹¹⁹

Different from the circumstances in Japan, ceramics from Xicun 西村 (Guangzhou) and Chaozhou appear to form the largest quantities of export wares recovered from Barus (on the western tip of Sumatra) at this time.¹²⁰ That these wares were not shipped to that region with

¹¹⁶ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 94; and Peng Cheng 彭乘, *Xu moke huixi 續墨客揮犀* (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 5. This would seem to imply monsoonal journeys, hence a destination in Southeast Asia. The passage goes on to describe island peoples who were inhabitants of an unspecified location in Southeast Asia.

¹¹⁷ Tianzhong Kezi 田中克子 (Tanaka Katsuko), "Ribei chutu de Songdai Chaozhou yao chanpin yu xiangguan wenti: yi Fugangshi Boduo yizhi qun chutu wei zhu" 日本出土の宋代潮州窑产品与相关问题——以福岡市博多遗址群出土为主, *Haiyang shi yanjiu 海洋史研究* 11 (2017), 21.

¹¹⁸ Tianzhong, "Ribei chutu de Songdai Chaozhou yao chanpin yu xiangguan wenti," 21–24. For the export of Chaozhou ware to Japan via Quanzhou, see von Glahn, "The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network," 271.

¹¹⁹ *Yomigaere! Kōrokan*, 233, items no. 210–212.

¹²⁰ John N. Miksic, "Research on Ceramic Trade, within Southeast Asia and between Southeast Asia and China," in *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery*, ed. John N. Miksic (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2009), 73.

large numbers of Fujian and Longquan ceramics suggests two possibilities that are not necessarily mutually exclusive: that merchants from West Asia, India, and west Sumatra preferred to purchase affordable and somewhat lower quality ceramics from the port of Guangzhou, and that merchants from Guangdong and Chaozhou were more actively trading in those parts of the world.¹²¹ Similar proportions of Chinese ceramics were also recovered in Egypt.¹²²

It is interesting to note that the sudden decline of Chaozhou ceramics in Japan after the mid-twelfth century occurred at the same time as a decline of those wares in the Java Sea area and elsewhere.¹²³ I am as yet unaware of a possible explanation for such a decline. It is equally intriguing that Chaozhou sea merchants do not appear in historical records of this time, though some potential reasons come to mind. Since there are no extant Southeast Asian records that discuss Chinese merchants in any detail, their presence in the South Seas trade comes almost entirely from Chinese accounts, and such accounts usually just make broad references to Fujian or Guangdong merchants. Chaozhou merchants could have been identified as belonging to either of those groups. In Japan, it may be that Chaozhou merchants held a lesser position on trade ships, so they were never recorded as merchant leaders. Alternatively, some of the names of merchant leaders who do appear in Japanese sources without any origin provided might have been Chaozhou merchants. In the case of Koryō, merchants of both Zhangzhou and Chaozhou would have been recorded as “Quanzhou merchants” simply for having sailed out of that port. All of this is not to say that these are the most likely outcomes; only that they are outcomes that

¹²¹ Other scholars have noted the export of Chaozhou ware from Guangzhou. See Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 159; So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 198; and Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 499.

¹²² Miksic, “Research on Ceramic Trade, within Southeast Asia and between Southeast Asia and China,” 73.

¹²³ Tianzhong, “Ribei chutu de Songdai Chaozhou yao chanpin yu xiangguan wenti,” 26.

should be considered. As the matter currently stands, the lack of evidence of Chaozhou merchants in textual records indicates that Chaozhou was only a producer of ceramics in this period, and not a significant home region of sea merchants.

Guangnan

Sea merchants from Guangnan (Guangdong and Guangxi) are mentioned in various Chinese sources for this time, usually as accompanying Fujian merchants to trade in the South Seas. After southern and northern Fujianese merchants, merchants from this area were most likely the next most active group overseas at this time, though since they were principally involved in South Seas markets rather than in East Asia, there are few details we have to work with to pinpoint the locations of their networks. We have already mentioned that Koryŏ records state the merchant Chen Wensui was from Guangnan. However, it seems that he was a relative of Chen Hongjin, so his hometown would have either been Quanzhou or Xianyou. Liao Dake has assembled a collection of sources for this period which discuss Fujian people moving to Guangdong and establishing communities there. Such examples include a statement that Fujianese were said to comprise ninety percent of the households of certain locales, that the households of all of the southern part of Guangzhou belonged to Fujianese, that they often arrived in Guangdong empty-handed and left rich, and that Fujian merchants would open farmland in areas inhabited by the Li ethnic group and never return to their ancestral land.¹²⁴ It would seem Chen Wensui was simply one of the many Fujianese sojourners there. Two other instances of Koryŏ records stating the arrival of Guangnan merchants in the 1020s would be that of Li Wentong 李文通, who arrived in

¹²⁴ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 54–55.

1026 and again in 1027,¹²⁵ and Zhuang Wenbao 莊文寶 who arrived in 1029.¹²⁶ In Japan, the Guangnan merchant Mo Yancheng 莫晏誠 arrived in 1037 and 1040,¹²⁷ and the Nanxiongzhou 南雄州 (located on the current provincial border between Guangdong and Jiangxi) merchant Zeng Ju 曾聚 arrived there in 1072.¹²⁸ There are also two instances in which the *Lingwai daida* discusses ships from Guangzhou sailing to Sumatra and passing the winter there before sailing to southwest India.¹²⁹

Table 6 Guangnan Sea Merchants, and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Description	Place of arrival
1022	Chen Wensui (Guangnan merchant)	Koryō
1026–1027	Li Wentong (Guangnan merchant, but recorded on his second arrival as a Jiangnan merchant)	Koryō
1029	Zhuang Wenbao (Guangnan merchant)	Koryō
1037–1040	Mo Yancheng (Guangnan merchant)	Japan
1072	Zeng Ju (Described as a Guangzhou and as a Nanxiongzhou merchant) ¹³⁰	Japan

¹²⁵ *Koryō sa* 5 for both instances.

¹²⁶ *Koryō sa* 5.

¹²⁷ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 126–27.

¹²⁸ Hayashi, “‘Hakata kōshū’ kankei shiryō,” 97.

¹²⁹ *Lingwai daida*, juans 2 and 3.

¹³⁰ Zeng Ju sailed with the Quanzhou merchant Zheng Qing and the Fuzhou merchant Wu Zhu on this voyage.

Guangdong Ceramics

The export of ceramics from Fujian and Guangdong across maritime Asia increased considerably in the beginning of the Song dynasty. In the Guangzhou area, the predominant kiln group was the Xicun kilns, which were located only several kilometers outside of the city. Ceramics from these kilns were shipped across much of Southeast Asia and were the main exports from Guangzhou.¹³¹ Like so many other kilns, Xicun producers first achieved success by producing Yue-type ceramics in the tenth century, and such wares have been found in large numbers in ports in Sumatra. The export of Xicun wares to the island continued into the Northern Song period.¹³² Thousands of Xicun white ware shards dating to the Northern Song have also been recovered in Sri Lanka, which likely reflects a load of cargo from a single shipwreck mainly carrying those goods.¹³³ Xicun kilns also produced large celadon dishes with brown painted motifs, and it has been proposed that they did so specifically for Southeast Asian markets.¹³⁴ These items have been found in Borneo, the Philippines, and much of Indonesia. The true extent to which Xicun wares were distributed is probably much broader than discussed here, though unfortunately, as with the case of “Fujian ceramics,” scholars often identify these wares by the province in which they were produced rather than by their kiln groups or the counties and prefectures where they were made.

¹³¹ Grace Wong, “A Comment on the Tributary Trade between China and Southeast Asia, and the Place of Porcelain in this Trade, During the Period of the Song Dynasty in China,” in *Chinese Celadons and Other Related Wares in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Arts Orientalis, 1979), 87.

¹³² McKinnon, “Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra,” 286–87.

¹³³ Martha Prickett-Fernando, “Middlemen and End-Users: The Finds of Yue and Longquan Celadons in Sri Lanka” in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 305.

¹³⁴ Peining Li, “Targeted production and altered functions: Chinese ceramics exported to Southeast Asia during the Five Dynasties and Northern Song period (AD 907–1127),” *Asian Archaeology* 6 (2022), 104.

Mingzhou and Zhedong

As we have seen in Chapter Two, Mingzhou was a very important port for overseas trade in the ninth and tenth centuries. Its significance only continued to grow throughout the Song dynasty. In addition to its strategic location, which allowed ships to sail directly to Japan or Korea, the establishment of *shibosi* offices there and in nearby Hangzhou meant that ships bound for East Asian markets beyond China had to stop there prior to departure. However, this initially did not portend well for local merchants, as increased oversight meant that their activities were suddenly susceptible to increased intervention. Wuzhou and Yuezhou merchants disappear from the record altogether, and it is unclear if local Mingzhou merchants ever held a prominent role in sea trade up to that point. Mori Katsumi's list of merchants who arrived in Koryō details five instances of Mingzhou merchants sailing there. However, upon close examination of the primary sources, only one example (that of Chen Liang in 1038) actually discusses a Mingzhou merchant. The rest simply describe Mingzhou as the port of departure, and in no way indicate that merchants or ships came from there as the point of origin.¹³⁵

That being said, the example of Chen Liang is valuable as it does indicate the presence of Mingzhou-based merchants in sea trade, limited as it might have been. Since the *Koryō sa* describes Chen as a “Mingzhou merchant” (*Mingzhou shang* 明州商) sailing with a Taizhou merchant, we know that Mingzhou was not simply the port of departure for their ship. Another example of a Mingzhou merchant in this period is of Chen Yong 陳詠, who actively traded in Japan between 1065 and 1073, and is notable for his work as a middle man between the Japanese

¹³⁵ See Mori Katsumi, “Nihon Kōrai raikō no Sō shōnin,” 225; *Koryō sa* 6 for Chen Liang example; *Koryō sa* 12 for Yang Zhao 楊炤 and “Mingzhou ship” examples; and *Koryō sa* 16 for Chen Shu 陳舒 and Wu Di 吳迪 examples.

monk Jōjin 成尋 (1011–1081) and the Song court.¹³⁶ Although there are no other examples of named Mingzhou merchants in this period, some sources do discuss Yue 越 merchants, which are references to Yuezhou as the former political center of Zhedong rather than the Yue peoples of Guangdong. For instance, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) recorded an ancient-style poem in admiration of Japanese people, which mentioned Japanese swords being imported from “Yue merchants” (*Yue gu* 越賈).¹³⁷ There is also a book, written by a scholar exiled to Fujian in 1104, which states that Fujianese merchants purchased spices and aromatics on Hainan island, and what is left over was purchased by “Hangzhou ships” (*Hang chuan* 杭船).¹³⁸ In 1130, shortly after the Jurchen conquest of northern China, Song records indicate that Fujian, Guangnan, Huainan, and Zhejiang merchants were actively trading in Shandong (which was by then no longer a part of the Song empire) and an edict was issued for coastal prefectures to put a stop to it.¹³⁹ From this point onward, references to Mingzhou and Zhejiang merchants become increasingly common, and we begin to see what appears to be the halcyon days of a merchant group that became a driving force of East Asian trade.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ See Hara Miwako, “Jōjin no nissō to Sō shōnin: nissō fune Son Chū setsu ni tsuite” 成尋の入宋と宋商人—入宋船孫忠説について—, *Kodai bunka* 古代文化 44 (1992), 36–47; Guo Wanping 郭万平, “Lai Song Riseng Chengxun yu Ningbo shangren Chen Yong” 来宋日僧成寻与宁波商人陈咏, in *Ningbo yu haishang sichou zhi lu* 宁波与海上丝绸之路 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2006), 292–97; Borgen, “Jōjin’s Travels from Center to Center (with Some Periphery in between),” 384–413; and Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 61–70.

¹³⁷ Ouyang Xiu, *Ouyang Wenzhong gong ji* 歐陽文忠公集 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) *Wai ji* 外集 4.

¹³⁸ Hong Chu 洪芻, *Xiang pu* 香譜 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 2 (*Juan xia* 卷下).

¹³⁹ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 136; SS 26. Li Xinchuan 李心傳, *Jiannan yilai xianian yaolu* 建炎以來繫年要錄 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 35 only records that the edict was directed at 閩越 merchants, and it is not clear if this refers to *Minyue* (Fujian) merchants or *Min-Yue* (Fujian and Zhedong) merchants. I am inclined to think the term refers only to Fujian merchants, as I have seen it used in such a way in other instances.

¹⁴⁰ On this topic, see von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network.”

Just who were these enigmatic traders who emerge on only several occasions in Northern Song sources, but go on to form such an influential group in the following centuries? As was the case in Guangdong, we have reason to believe that many of them were from Fujian or had Fujianese ancestry. A variety of Song sources discuss the activities of Fujian people in Zhejiang. Certainly, many were stopping by merely to gain access to the *shibosi* and perhaps nearby markets, though some also established deeper roots. Their role in the domestic transshipment trade of Hangzhou and elsewhere in Zhejiang has been noted,¹⁴¹ and their deities were worshipped in Hangzhou and Mingzhou by the twelfth century.¹⁴² We may also note that Jingyuan, the Quanzhou monk who was closely involved with southern Fujian merchants and the Koryō trade, established his temple in Hangzhou.¹⁴³ My own supposition is that mention of Mingzhou and Zhejiang merchants in Song and Yuan-period sources were of Fujian people living in Mingzhou and Hangzhou, local people from those cities and outlying areas, and the descendants of Fujian people who married into local official and merchant families. As for the ceramics commonly traded by such merchants in East Asia following the rapid decline of Yue ware production, we may see that although white wares from Dehua and Chaozhou were predominant in Japan in the late-eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Longquan exports overtook these wares in the thirteenth century. This signifies another major shift among merchant networks.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Clark, "Consolidation on the South China Frontier," 252; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 135.

¹⁴² Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 174–75, 193.

¹⁴³ Hara, "Sōdai Higashi Ajia ni okeru kaishō no nakama kankei to jōhōmō," 3.

¹⁴⁴ von Glahn, "The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network," 264, 271. For Mingzhou as a transshipment location of Longquan ceramics, see Lin Shimin 林市民, "Shilun Mingzhougang de lidai qingci wai xiao" 试论明州港的历代青瓷外销, *Haijiao shi yanjiu* 海交史研究 (1983), 103.

Table 7 Mingzhou Sea Merchants, and their Time Active Overseas

Years traveling overseas	Name	Place of Arrival
1038	Chen Liang ¹⁴⁵	Koryō
1065–1073	Chen Yong	Japan

Other Regions

In theory, merchants from any location in the Song empire could trade overseas. In practice, however, this was far from the case. Large financial overhead, connections with local officials, and connections with agents and officials overseas were the significant barriers to entry that prevented networks from outside of south and southeastern China from establishing an identifiable role in sea trade. This is not to say that there were no attempts to do so, or that there were brief moments in which such networks attained some degree of success. One area that played a peripheral role in overseas trade at certain times was Suzhou and the greater Jiangnan region. A Jiangnan merchant named Wang Suzi 王肅子 was recorded as arriving in Koryō in 1018.¹⁴⁶ We have already noted that the Guangnan merchant Li Wentong arrived in Koryō in 1026, though on his second arrival there in the following year, he was recorded as a Jiangnan merchant.¹⁴⁷ This discrepancy might be due to one of the two ports simply being his port of departure, or that one of the ports was mistakenly written by Korean record keepers. It should also be noted that Chen Deyi of the Xianyou Chen lineage group was recorded as residing in

¹⁴⁵ Sailed with the Taizhou merchant Chen Weiji.

¹⁴⁶ *Koryō sa* 4.

¹⁴⁷ *Koryō sa* 5 for both instances.

Jinling 晉陵, which was a choronym for Wujin 武進, in Changzhou 常州, just west of Suzhou in southern Jiangsu.¹⁴⁸ This was likely one of the many efforts that his lineage made to establish a presence beyond their home region.

Examples of other networks become even more sparse the further north one looks. Mizhou 密州 (located near present-day Qingdao) was the most important port in northern China, and beginning in 1088 it was also the location of a *shibosi*.¹⁴⁹ Some merchants were noted as coming from there. One such merchant was a certain Pingjian 平簡, who delivered missives between Song and Koryŏ courts in 1084.¹⁵⁰ However, examination in the China Biographical Database reveals that this was actually a Korean name rather than a Chinese name. Most likely, Korean merchant networks were involved in sea trade in that region, as was the case in previous centuries. In the journal of his journey to Koryŏ in 1123, the Song diplomat Xu Jing stated that Koreans relied on agricultural imports from merchants from Shandong, Zhejiang, and Fujian, which suggests that Mizhou traders were mainly shipping necessities rather than prestige goods.¹⁵¹

References made to sea merchants in the north of China were generally of those who came from the south. In the Five Dynasties period, trade and diplomatic ships from the south plied those waters, and when the Later Zhou emperor Shizong 世宗 (921–959) ordered the construction of hundreds of warships in 957, he employed southern Chinese to train his men in naval warfare.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ *Chongxiu Piling zhi* 30.

¹⁴⁹ Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 477–478.

¹⁵⁰ See Zhu Ruixi 朱瑞熙, “Song dai shangren de shehui diwei ji qi lishi zuoyong” 宋代商人的社会地位及其历史作用, *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究 2 (1986), 140; Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 207; and Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 129.

¹⁵¹ Xu Jing, 162.

¹⁵² Jung, “Maritime Commerce and its Relation to the Sung Navy,” 77.

It was a similar situation two centuries later, when Fujianese were employed to help build the Jin fleet.¹⁵³ By the twelfth century, Fujianese had a reputation as the best shipbuilders, followed by those from Guangnan, and finally those from Wenzhou and Mingzhou.¹⁵⁴ Northern ships were thought incapable of lasting long at sea or resisting storms, and such issues were blamed on the high salinity of the water there.¹⁵⁵

Jingdezhen Ceramics

There is one final ceramic group that remains to be discussed here, and it happened to be one of the greatest producers of export ceramics during the Northern Song and thereafter. Jingdezhen, in northern Jiangxi, produced white wares that circulated throughout much of maritime Asia, especially from the mid-eleventh to mid-twelfth centuries. This was a period in which northern and southern Fujianese merchants, as well as those from Guangnan, were the most common Chinese sea traders, so it would seem likely that they were the ones who transported such wares. Kilns in the area expanded in the tenth century, initially by imitating Yue wares, though they also produced white wares at that time.¹⁵⁶ The export of these goods to Japan began sometime between the last half of the tenth century and the early eleventh century,¹⁵⁷ and it would seem that Jingdezhen ceramics proved to be the first viable mainstream alternative to Yue ceramics there, as the success of the former corresponded directly with the decline of the latter.¹⁵⁸ As for the support of the Song court toward these producers, Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (968–1022, r. 997–1022) personally took a liking to Jingdezhen wares, and declared that porcelains of its kilns be provided

¹⁵³ “Maritime Commerce and its Relation to the Sung Navy,” 85; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 59.

¹⁵⁴ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 57.

¹⁵⁵ Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 6.

¹⁵⁶ Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 201. See also 442, 550; Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 143.

¹⁵⁷ Yomigaere! *Kōrokan*, 224. See also 256.

¹⁵⁸ Yomigaere! *Kōrokan*, 226.

to the court.¹⁵⁹ The name of the region itself originated when the kilns began supplying wares to the Song court in the year 1004, during the Jingde 景德 reign period (1004–1007).¹⁶⁰

Figure 6 Eleventh-Century Jingdezhen Qingbai Porcelain Bowl¹⁶¹



It is interesting to note that only one year before Jingdezhen received honorable recognition by the Song court, people (likely merchants) from Hongzhou, which was located close to Jingdezhen, were recorded as arriving in Japan. It is also intriguing that Chen Hongjin, who established a commercial and political network throughout much of the Song empire, was rewarded with a military governorship in northern Jiangxi upon ceding his domains to the Song. Beyond these circumstances, there does not appear to be much textual information to connect links

¹⁵⁹ Anne Garritsen, *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, U.K.: University of Cambridge Press, 2020), 5.

¹⁶⁰ Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 185–86. On Zhenzong’s outsized influence on maritime trade, see Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

¹⁶¹ This item belongs to The Met’s Edward C. Moore Collection, bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891.

between the Jingdezhen region and overseas trade networks. However, ink inscriptions of surnames and the Chinese character *gang* 綱 (likely an abbreviation for the term *gangshou* 綱首, a title given to merchant leaders) commonly appear on Jingdezhen ceramics recovered in Japan, so perhaps future research on these items will yield more results. On a final note, Wang Dayuan 汪大淵 (1311–1350), the Chinese seafarer responsible for writing the *Daoyi zhi lue* 島夷誌略, was also a native of Hongzhou, and John Miksic has likewise considered a connection between his origins and ceramics production in Jingdezhen.¹⁶²

Officials Involved in Overseas Trade

In his groundbreaking article “Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese ‘Mercantilism,’” Robert Hartwell provided a very important observation: “The merchants and gentry of the coastal prefectures of Zhejiang and Fujian probably came from the same lineages and intermarried with the same families. These lineages, in turn, were the chief source of the Superintendents of the Maritime Trade (*Tiju shibosi* 提舉市舶司).”¹⁶³ Hartwell went on to provide evidence that certain lineages during the Southern Song maintained positions for their members as superintendents over the span of generations, though considering the chronological limitation of this project, his point that many of them came from Zhejiang and Fujian is most relevant. Although Hartwell accomplished much of the heavy lifting of finding and identifying such officials and their home regions in Chinese sources, his work unfortunately never resulted in a monograph. Instead, his datasets for these and other officials went on to form the basis of the

¹⁶² Miksic, “Research on Ceramic Trade, within Southeast Asia and between Southeast Asia and China,” 79.

¹⁶³ Hartwell, “Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese ‘Mercantilism,’” 456.

China Biographical Database (henceforth, CBDB), which one might argue was an even greater contribution.

A search through the profiles of trade superintendents on the CBDB reveals that indeed a significant majority of those officials with known origins were from either Fujian or Zhejiang.¹⁶⁴ Consideration of their home regions and the times that they were active allows for additional insights (a timeline is provided further below). To begin, the first two trade superintendents were northerners, which parallels the general composition of the early Song government. In the realm of trade administration, the trend of northerners serving as superintendents seems to have persisted from approximately 971 to 1080. In this time, six of the eight superintendents with known native regions were northerners: two (Yin Chongke 尹崇珂 and Pan Mei 潘美) were from Yuancheng 元城 (Hebei),¹⁶⁵ one (Xiang Minzhong 向敏中) was from Kaifeng (Henan), one (Shi Zhiyong 石知顥) was from Zhending 真定 (Hebei), one (Ren Zhongshi 任中師) was from Jiyin 濟陰 (Shandong), and one (Zhou Zhiru 周直孺) was from Puyang 濮陽 (Henan). The

¹⁶⁴ Unless stated otherwise, the research that follows comes from the *China Biographical Database* (CBDB). I was able to find forty-nine trade superintendents in that database and elsewhere who served in their roles from the establishment of the first *shibosi* in 971 until the year 1140 (a cut-off point which extends beyond 1127 in order to highlight the fact that the trend toward Fujian and Zhejiang administrators persisted beyond the fall of the Northern Song government). It remains unclear if those listed in the CBDB were all of the superintendents that Hartwell examined for that period. In addition to listing primary sources, his citations list a book co-authored with his wife Marianne C. Hartwell, titled *Executive Finance and State Council*, for which this information was to appear in, though the book was never published. See Hartwell, “Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese ‘Mercantilism,’” 482, citations no. 28 and 29. Hartwell’s former student Tansen Sen indicates that he had access to this work in “Administration of Maritime Trade during Tang and Song Dynasties,” *China Report* 32:2 (1996), 251–65, which is also a valuable contribution on the topic of trade administration. Peter K. Bol played a leading role in digitizing these datasets and creating the CBDB. For more discussion of the *shibosi*, see also Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 460–79, which is one of the most informative takes on the topic in English-language scholarship. I also omit several names categorized as superintendents in the CBDB, as Wang Zijing 王子京 and Lin Xiaoyuan 林孝淵 never appear to have held that position (even if the former held many of the same roles and responsibilities in his position as a finance commissioner), and a profile for a Huang Tianzhen 黃田鎮 was made based on the erroneous rendering of the name Huang Guozhen 黃國鎮.

¹⁶⁵ On these two, see Sen, “Administration of Maritime Trade during Tang and Song Dynasties,” 260; and Angela Schottenhammer, “China’s Increasing Integration into the Indian Ocean World Until Song 宋 Times: Sea Routes, Connections, Trades,” in *Early Global Interconnectivity across the Indian Ocean World*, 38.

other two (Gao Shen 高紳 and Sun Jiong 孫迥) were from Jiangnan and Yixian 黟縣 (Anhui, though his choronym is for Hangzhou) respectively. It should be noted that this is only a small sampling of those who actually served as superintendents, especially for the first century, when northern superintendents appear to have been in the majority.¹⁶⁶ Future research will hopefully provide more insight on this area. The second observation is that beginning no later than 1102, we see a permanent shift toward southerners serving in the position. From that time until 1140, of the thirty-three superintendents with known origins, only two came from the north: Sun Duan 孫端, who served in the Guangnan *shibosi* from 1118 to 1120, was from Gaoyou 高郵 (Yangzhou), which is about as far south of the north that one may go. The other northerner, She Yanzhe 折彥質, was from Guoxian 崞縣 (northern Shanxi) and served in the Guangnan *shibosi* in around 1124. Chao Benzhi 晁賁之, who served at the Liangzhe (Zhejiang) *shibosi* from 1138 to 1140, does not actually appear to have been from the north despite being recorded as such. His home region is listed as Juye 鉅野 (Shandong), but this was likely just a choronym. Chao Gongmai 晁公邁, who served in the Guangnan *shibosi* from 1138 to 1139, was almost certainly a relative of Chao Benzhi, as both Chao began serving as superintendents only one year after two brothers (Wang Guan and Wang Xun) concurrently served as superintendents. Chao Gongmai's choronym was Juye, though his native place was Linchuan 臨川 (Jiangxi). Furthermore, Chao Benzhi's father had the generational signifier Duan 端 in his name, as did Chao Gongmai's grandfather. Most likely, Chao Benzhi was from Linchuan as well.

¹⁶⁶ Part of the issue might be that some of the leaders of the *shibosi* in this period did not hold the position of superintendent. For instance, the leader of the Mingzhou *shibosi* in 992 held the position of investigating censor (*jiancha yushi* 監察御史). See Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, *Yudi ji sheng* 輿地紀勝 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 2.

There is a gap between 1081 and 1102 in which information about superintendents is limited or unavailable. This was the period when the appointment of *shibosi* shifted from prefects who concurrently held the office to circuit fiscal commissioners (*zhuanyun shi* 轉運使). We should assume that the major shift toward southern superintendents occurred at some point in that stretch of nineteen years. It is not clear what specifically caused such a change, though there was certainly enough political wrangling at this time from which we can draw some clues. Wang Anshi's promotion to vice councilor in 1069 marked a prolonged period of intense factionalism in the Song court, and these politics extended to the realm of trade administration. However, regulation of maritime trade was not always an issue that perfectly aligned with the ideology of one particular faction. Those who supported Wang's New Policies espoused extracting as much wealth as possible from merchants, and some records show that those advocates were eager to deprive traders of their goods when they were caught breaking rules.¹⁶⁷ Wang Anshi's adherents were also the first to call for the establishment of a *shibosi* in Quanzhou,¹⁶⁸ though it was only in 1087, after the opposing Yuanyou faction took control, that this occurred. The establishment of the Quanzhou *shibosi* during Yuanyou government came despite calls for the merger or abolition of *shibosi* offices by Wang's opponents after the two instances in which he was demoted in the previous decade.¹⁶⁹ Hugh Clark has argued that New Policies officials such as the Wang Zijing 王子京 (from Penglai 蓬萊, Shandong) favored forcing southern Fujian merchants to pass through the Guangnan *shibosi*, which greatly increased their travel times and financial burdens.¹⁷⁰ Many attempted to evade the Guangzhou authorities but were caught doing so, which

¹⁶⁷ Su Zhe 蘇轍, *Longchuan lüezhi* 龍川略志 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 5.

¹⁶⁸ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 122.

¹⁶⁹ Sen, "Administration of Maritime Trade during Tang and Song Dynasties," 263–64.

¹⁷⁰ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 126–27.

provided a pretext for the full confiscation of a trade ship's goods. The main proponent for the establishment of the Quanzhou *shibosi* in the Yuanyou faction was the Shaxian 沙縣 (central Fujian) official Chen Cheng 陳偁 (1015–1086), though he died one year prior to its construction. Although this meant that southern Fujian merchants would be increasingly registered and taxed, the higher risks for smuggling their goods were mitigated, and they no longer had to spend time and money dealing with administrators in Guangzhou. Initially, at least, it would seem that New Policies administrators held competing interests with southern Fujian merchant networks.

As far back as 1080, the Song court issued a prohibition on officials personally engaging in maritime trade, which indicates that the government was concerned with issues of corruption or collusion with merchants.¹⁷¹ This was also a year that ships traveling to Japan and Koryō were not permitted to stop at the Mingzhou *shibosi*, possibly for the purpose of redirecting them to the Hangzhou *shibosi*.¹⁷² As for the reason we do not see records of superintendents from this time until 1102, this was likely due to an edict that mandated their responsibilities be taken over by the fiscal commissioners serving in the respective areas where each *shibosi* was located.¹⁷³ However, in 1085, when Yuanyou officials became the most influential faction at the Song court, an edict was issued that eased restrictions on sea trade with Koryō and allowed foreign envoys to travel on merchant ships.¹⁷⁴ Considering that southern Fujian merchants all but monopolized sea trade to Koryō and were deeply involved in the process of reestablishing Song-Koryō diplomatic relations (which involved Koryō envoys traveling on their ships), we may see that in contrast to the New Policies officials, the Yuanyou officials put forth policies that were very much to the

¹⁷¹ Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China*, 162 (digital version).

¹⁷² Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 127.

¹⁷³ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 70; Schottenhammer, “China’s Emergence as a Maritime Power,” 475; SS 186.

¹⁷⁴ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 70.

benefit of southern Fujian merchants. Though restrictions on trade with Koryŏ were, hitherto, largely unenforced, the edict provided legitimacy for the activities of those merchants and their diplomatic roles.

Yuanyou administrators continued to further ease regulations on sea trade in 1090,¹⁷⁵ though in 1094, just one year after New Policies officials took back control of the government, merchants who wished to trade in Koryŏ were required to possess thirty million strings of coins and two ships to do so.¹⁷⁶ Such an exorbitant requirement seems intended to exclude all but a select few merchants chosen by officials from participating in trade. The next major changes occurred when Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047–1126) took control over the Song court. Although he supported both New Policies and Yuanyou factions at varying times, he was also a native of Xianyou, which was the location in Fujian where Chen Hongjin established a large and enduring network of officials and merchants. Beginning in 1102, Cai Jing's government revived the *shibosi* offices to a central role in trade administration, though from this time onward, nearly every single superintendent was from the south, and the majority were from either Fujian or Zhejiang.¹⁷⁷ It would appear that at this time, the *shibosi* were also re-established as independent offices separate from the fiscal commissioners.

Of the thirty-five superintendents with known origins who served between 1102 and 1140, twenty-two were from either Zhejiang or Fujian. Three were from Putian (Xu Que 徐確,

¹⁷⁵ Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 474.

¹⁷⁶ Chin, "Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities," 160.

¹⁷⁷ For the renewed authorities of *shibosi* offices under Cai Jing, see Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 124. Schottenhammer has also recognized the significance of Cai Jing's background, and proposed that his influence played a role in the establishment of the Quanzhou *shibosi*. See Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 477. Robert Hartwell has argued that factional politics continued to affect the selection of trade superintendents into the Southern Song. See Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 456–57.

Chen Cui 陳粹, and Huang Guozhen 黃國鎮). Each of those three served during Cai Jing's lifetime which is almost certainly a result of Cai Jing and his allies putting those from near his home region into positions of power (we can confirm this was the case for Xu Que). Cai Bo 蔡柏, who served as Quanzhou superintendent from 1118 to 1121 was from the Jiangle 將樂 region of northwestern Fujian, and one suspects he was related to Cai Jing. Cai Su, who served as Quanzhou superintendent from 1116 to 1118 was from Cai Jing's native place of Xianyou, and thus was almost certainly a relative.

Also of interest is Chen Ruxi 陳汝錫, who served as Quanzhou superintendent from 1102 to 1104. He was from the Qingtian 青田 area of southern Zhejiang, which was located on the Ou river in between Wenzhou and Longquan, and his tenure coincided with a time when Longquan ceramics were increasingly shipped across maritime Asia in large quantities. His wives were from Lishui, which was located even closer to Longquan and was also a major ceramics production area.

Early in this period, the only Fuzhou-area superintendent was Zhang Ting 張挺, who served as the Guangnan superintendent in 1118. However, in the 1130s we see three Fuzhou-area superintendents: Lin Zhongkan 林仲堪, Huang Daming 黃大名, and Wang Shi 王時. With the exception of Wang Shi, who served as Liangzhe superintendent, the three other Fuzhou-area officials served as superintendents of the Guangnan *shibosi*.

Also well-represented were officials from the region that is now northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu. If we may consider this a “Jiangnan” bloc, then we may see that ten such officials came from that region, making it the most well-represented in trade administration for this period. One of these officials, Gao Shen, served in the early eleventh century, though the

remaining nine served in between 1105 and 1140. This is an interesting contrast to the relatively low involvement of merchants and ceramics producers from that region in maritime trade, and it likely reflects the influence of court officials from that region, including chief councilor Qin Gui 秦檜 (1091–1155), who was from Jiangning 江寧 (Nanjing).

Other notable areas were Mingzhou, which was the native place of three superintendents (Wang Guan 王瓘, who served from 1136 to 1137, Wang Xun 王勳, who served in 1137, and Lin Bao 林保, who also served in 1137); Jinjiang in Quanzhou, which was the native place of two superintendents (Zhang You 張佑, who served from 1123 to 1125, and Li Ze 李則 who served from 1126 to 1128); the Hangzhou area, which was the native place of two superintendents (Li Tao 李鞏, who served from 1126 to 1128, and Wu Yue 吳說, who served from 1127 to 1129); Panyu 番禺 (Guangzhou), which provided one superintendent (Zhang Shuyan 張書言, who served two terms between 1118 and 1132); and Yiwu 義烏 (Wuzhou) which also provided one superintendent (Zong Ying 宗穎, who served between 1133 and 1136).

We see from these statistics that the Zhedong area south of Hangzhou Bay gained much representation in the form of three superintendents from Mingzhou, two from Hangzhou, and one from Wuzhou. These six superintendents all took office between 1126 and 1137, which coincides with the time that we begin to see the reemergence of Zhedong merchants in primary sources. However, unlike the earlier Zhedong merchant networks in the ninth and tenth centuries, these administrators were primarily from Mingzhou and Hangzhou, with Wuzhou only providing one such official, and Yuezhou-Shaoxing accounting for none. Considering the time that these six officials took office, it is likely that the collapse of the Northern Song government and the subsequent relocation of the capital to Hangzhou played to their advantage, and might have been

the main contributing factor for the emergence of new networks in maritime trade at this time.

A new trend also begins at this time in which family members concurrently served as superintendents. Wang Xun and Wang Guan were both from Yinxian in Mingzhou, and both served as trade superintendents in 1137 (in the Guangnan and Quanzhou offices, respectively). Their concurrent postings, and the posting of Lin Bao, who was likewise from Yinxian and served as Guangnan superintendent in 1137, indicate that there was no need to hide that superintendency postings were by that time being determined by special interests. A certain Wang Shi was also serving as the Liangzhe superintendent in 1137, though he is recorded as coming from Minxian (Fuzhou) and it is unclear if he was related to the two Wang brothers. This set a precedent for Chao Benzhi and Chao Gongmai to serve as superintendents of the Guangnan and Liangzhe offices in the following year.

There are some additional observations about superintendents that are worth considering. The first is that superintendents did not always serve at postings away from their native places, which was a rule for higher-level officials. Zhang Shuyan, who was from the Guangzhou area, served two terms as the Guangnan superintendent; Zhang You, who was from the Quanzhou area, served as Quanzhou superintendent; and Wu Yue, from the Hangzhou area, served as Liangzhe superintendent. Also evident is that it was common practice for superintendents to serve as officials at other coastal ports or native regions of merchant networks before and after they became superintendents. In addition, we see quite a few instances in which there were two superintendents of a particular *shibosi* at the same time, though I do not know the reason for this and can only speculate that one superintendent might have handled practical managerial duties while another ensured that affairs were handled in accordance with the designs of a more powerful official in the Song capital.

Finally, when these postings are compared with Hugh Clark's lists of prefects of Quanzhou during the Northern Song period, we do find some overlap, as well as some modest differences.¹⁷⁸ In terms of differences, we see that officials from Fujian and Zhejiang began to frequently serve as Quanzhou prefects beginning in 1010, during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong. This is nearly a century earlier than when southern prefects exclusively held superintendent positions beginning in 1102, even though our understanding of early superintends is limited by the relatively sparse record. However, from 1075 until the last year of the Northern Song in 1125, all but one of the thirty-two Quanzhou prefects was from either Jiangnan, Zhejiang, or Fujian. This was precisely the same trend among superintendents when they reemerge in records beginning in 1102.

Table 8 Maritime Trade Superintendents and their Time in Office

Known tenure	Name	Home region	<i>Shibosi</i> office(s)
971–971	Yin Chongke (尹崇珂) ¹⁷⁹	Yuancheng 元城 (Hebei)	Guangnan
c. 971	Pan Mei (潘美) ¹⁸⁰	Yuancheng 元城 (Hebei)	Guangnan
976–997 (Within this period) ¹⁸¹	Xiang Minzhong (向敏中)	Kaifeng	Guangnan
977 ¹⁸²	Li Pengju (李鵬舉)	Unknown	Guangnan
984 ¹⁸³	Lu Tan (陸坦)	Unknown	Guangnan
990–994 ¹⁸⁴	Shi Zhiyong (石知顥)	Zhending 真定 (Hebei)	Liangzhe (Mingzhou)

¹⁷⁸ Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 287–90.

¹⁷⁹ Served concurrently with Pan Mei.

¹⁸⁰ Served concurrently with Yin Chongke.

¹⁸¹ Dohi Yūko, 土肥祐子, *Sōdai nankai bōeki shi no kenkyū* 宋代南海貿易史の研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2017), 9.

¹⁸² Dohi, *Sōdai nankai bōeki shi no kenkyū*, 9.

¹⁸³ Dohi, *Sōdai nankai bōeki shi no kenkyū*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Dohi, *Sōdai nankai bōeki shi no kenkyū*, 9.

1007–1008	Gao Shen (高紳)	Jiangnan East circuit 江南東路	Unknown
1038–1040	Ren Zhongshi (任中師)	Jiyin 濟陰 (west Shandong)	Guangnan
1080–1081	Zhou Zhiru (周直孺)	Puyang 濮陽 (Henan)	Liangzhe
1080–1083	Sun Jiong (孫迥)	Yixian 黟縣, Anhui (his choronym was Fuchun 富春, Hangzhou)	Guangnan
1102–1104	Xu Que (徐確)	Putian (southern Fujian)	Quanzhou
1102–1104	Chen Ruxi (陳汝錫)	Qingtian 青田 (southern Zhejiang)	Quanzhou
1103, 1104–1105	Zhao Pang (趙滂)	Unknown	Liangzhe, Guangnan
Unknown ¹⁸⁵	Shangguan Hou (上官厚)	Unknown	Quanzhou
Unknown ¹⁸⁶	Qian Jingmiao (錢景邈)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1105–1107	Zhou Xu (周需)	Changxing 長興 (Huzhou, northern Zhejiang)	Quanzhou
Unknown ¹⁸⁷	Yue Zhaoyan (樂昭衍)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1105–1107	Zhang Huanwen (章煥文)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1106–1108	Chen Cui (陳粹)	Putian	Guangnan
1111–1115	Shi Shu (施述)	Wuxian 吳縣 (Suzhou)	Quanzhou
1114–1117	Xu Ti (徐惕)	Unknown	Guangnan
1116–1118	Cai Su (蔡橐, ¹⁸⁸ also recorded in CBDB as Xiao	Xianyou (southern Fujian)	Quanzhou

¹⁸⁵ This information comes from a list of Quanzhou trade superintendents in Huang Zhongzhao 黃仲昭, *Ba Min tongzhi* 八閩通志 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 30. The list does not provide the dates for when they served, but it does provide names not included in the CBDB. Moreover, a comparison with the Quanzhou superintendents profiled in the CBDB reveals that the names listed in the *Bamin tongzhi* are recorded in the chronological order of the years that they served, so we do have a reasonable understanding of when those listed in the *Bamin tongzhi* served and can place them in a sequential order.

¹⁸⁶ *Ba Min tongzhi* 30.

¹⁸⁷ *Ba Min tongzhi* 30.

¹⁸⁸ *Ba Min tongzhi* 30.

	Su 蕭櫟)		
1118	Zhang Ting (張挺)	Minxian (Fuzhou)	Guangnan
1118–1120	Cai Bo (蔡柏)	Jiangle 將樂 (northwestern Fujian)	Quanzhou
1118–1120, 1127–1132	Zhang Shuyan (張書言)	Panyu 番禺 (Guangzhou)	Guangnan
1119–1120	Sun Duan (孫端)	Gaoyou 高郵 (Yangzhou)	Guangnan
1119–1121	Xu Danian (許大年)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1123, 1125 (non- consecutive)	Huang Guozhen (黃國鎮)	Putian	Guangnan
c. 1119– 1125 ¹⁸⁹	Zhang You (張佑)	Jinjiang (Quanzhou)	Quanzhou
1124	She Yanzhe (折彥質)	Guoxian 崞縣 (northern Shanxi)	Guangnan
1126 ¹⁹⁰	Lu Zhan (魯詹)	Haiyan 海鹽 (northeast Zhejiang)	Quanzhou
1126–1128	Li Tao (李鞏)	Fuyang 富陽 (Hangzhou)	Guangnan
1126–1128	Li Ze (李則)	Jinjiang (Quanzhou)	Guangnan
1127–1128	Shen Yuqiu (沈與求)	Deqing 德清 (Huzhou, northern Zhejiang)	Liangzhe
1127–1129	Wu Yue (吳說)	Qiantang 錢塘 (Hangzhou)	Liangzhe
1127–1130	Shao Bangda (邵邦達)	Wujin, (Changzhou, southern Jiangsu)	Quanzhou
1129–1130	Liu Wuji (劉無極)	Dantu 丹徒 (southern Jiangsu)	Liangzhe
1130	Yuwen Shiyuan (宇文師瑗)	Huayang 華陽 (Changle, Fuzhou)	Quanzhou
1130–1132	Bao Zi (鮑仔)	Unknown	Liangzhe

¹⁸⁹ *Ba Min tongzhi* 30 gives Xuanhe 宣和 period (1119–1125) and Du Zhen 杜臻, *Yue-Min xunshi jilüe* 粵閩巡視紀略 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) *Min juan shang* 閩卷上 states he actively served in Xuanhe 2 (1120), which contrasts with the date 1123–1125 provided in CBDB.

¹⁹⁰ Appointed this year according to *Ba Min tongzhi* 30.

1131–1132	Chen Ding (陳鼎)	Dantu (southern Jiangsu)	Quanzhou
1131–1133	Xu Yuke (徐與可)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1132	Lin Zhongkan (林仲堪)	Fuqing 福清 (Fuzhou)	Guangnan
1133–1135	Yao Zhuo (姚焯)	Huating 華亭 (Shanghai)	Guangnan
1133–1136	Zong Ying (宗穎)	Yiwu 義烏 (Wuzhou, in Zhejiang)	Guangnan
Unknown ¹⁹¹	Li Chengyu (李承遇)	Unknown	Quanzhou
1134–1136, 1137–1140	Zhang Lin (章藺)	Wuxian (Suzhou)	Liangzhe, Guangnan
1136	Huang Daming (黃大名)	Yongfu 永福 (Fuzhou)	Guangnan
1136–1137	Wang Quan (王權) ¹⁹²	Yinxian (Mingzhou)	Quanzhou
1137	Wang Xun (王勳)	Yinxian (Mingzhou)	Guangnan
1137 ¹⁹³	Lin Bao (林保)	Yinxian (Mingzhou)	Guangnan ¹⁹⁴
1137	Wang Shi (王時)	Minxian (Fuzhou)	Liangzhe
1138–1140	Chao Gongmai (晁公邁)	Linchuan 臨川 (Fuzhou 撫州, Jiangxi)	Guangnan
1138–1140	Chao Benzhi (晁賁之)	Juye 鉅野 (Shandong, but more likely from Linchuan, Jiangxi)	Liangzhe

¹⁹¹ *Ba Min tongzhi* 30.

¹⁹² *Ba Min tongzhi* 30. CBDB records him as Wang Guan 王瓘.

¹⁹³ *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 109.

¹⁹⁴ *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 109.

Relations between Song Officials and Sea Merchants

Despite taking on many roles related to maritime trade administration, the fundamental purpose of the *shibosi* offices was to tax sea trade and regulate the activities of those who engaged in it. Some scholars have described this as a highly functional and mutually beneficial relationship, and at certain times, that was the case. For instance, southern Fujian merchants benefitted more from registering and associating with administrators in their own region than dealing with predatory officials who stood to gain much from catching them operating outside of the law. In theory, *shibosi* officials were incentivized to fulfill their duties of redirecting all taxable wealth to the capital by promotions determined by the amount of tax revenue that they raised.¹⁹⁵ Not only would such a system curtail corruption, it would also promote trade for the sake of increasing tax revenues, and discourage preferential treatment to some merchant groups over others. However, considering the turbulent nature of the *shibosi* offices during their inception, the Song government likely understood from an early time that the offices would not live up to such an ideal. Nor can we realistically think that merchants were satisfied with relinquishing a large portion of their wealth with little to gain but assurances against exploitation and guaranteed (mandatory) government purchases at lower-than-market rates. This was a pragmatic system that usually functioned well enough to justify its existence, but was always open to abuse. As such, there is much information in the records about the various types of relationships that existed between officials and merchants as they conformed to or circumvented the system. Such relationships varied from cooperative to collusive, corrupt, or adversarial.

¹⁹⁵ Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 142.

The best examples of trade administrators and sea merchants cooperating lie in the realm of diplomacy. This is evident when the Jianzhou merchant Mao Xu guided a Javanese embassy to the Mingzhou *shibosi* in 992. More detailed examples can be found in the efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations between the Song empire and Koryŏ between 1069 and 1071, and in the early twelfth century after those relations were renewed. In these cases, sea merchants facilitated the movement of correspondence and envoys between both states, and most likely played significant roles as *de facto* envoys as well.¹⁹⁶ During Emperor Zhenzong's reign, Chinese merchants could also be found as members of foreign embassies who advised visiting envoys on how to best deal with the Song court.¹⁹⁷ Close cooperation is also evident during the failed invasion of Vietnam, with one example being of a Guangnan finance official of local origin and a Guangxi official recruiting thirty-five sea merchants in 1075 to participate in the attack.¹⁹⁸

There are also many examples of collusion between sea merchants and bureaucrats during the Northern Song period. This is most evident in Quanzhou.¹⁹⁹ Until the establishment of a Quanzhou *shibosi* in 1087, most ships sailed directly to Koryŏ from Quanzhou without registering at any *shibosi*. By not paying tax revenues to the central government, sea merchants and local officials were able to keep a larger share of trade profits for themselves, which in part accounts for the predominance of southern Fujian merchants in Koryŏ and their success in

¹⁹⁶ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124–25; Clark, “Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou” 72; Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 207–08; and Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 129, 131.

¹⁹⁷ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

¹⁹⁸ *XCB* 271 and 272.

¹⁹⁹ Li, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong* 73–74, 85; Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 125; So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 40; and Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 129.

expanding trade networks across maritime Asia at this time. We may note that foreign ships were likewise more inclined to bring their business to Quanzhou under such circumstances.²⁰⁰

Another facet which provides insight into the collusion between government officials and sea merchants is the smuggling of coins beyond China's borders. This is perhaps best exemplified in the following 1070s quote:

[S]hip captains today go anywhere in Guangnan, Fujian, Liangzhe, and Shandong where local officials publicly give them protection and privately trade in the prohibited goods. There are none [among the captains] who do not take cash away with them. Cash was once a treasured commodity in China; today it is commonly used among the barbarians.²⁰¹

There was also an incident in which 100,000 strings of coins were loaded onto a small boat and shipped out of Quanzhou one night in 1143, but it capsized due to their weight. Local officials were said to have been aware of such activity beforehand.²⁰²

One of the Quanzhou superintendents was also a successful merchant before he headed the *shibosi*. Zhang You was from the Jinjiang area of Quanzhou, and no doubt formed close relationships with local officials before taking his post. He was also singled out for being an extremely corrupt administrator.²⁰³ There are also other examples of Southern Song or Yuan period trade administrators becoming merchants at some point in their lives, though the lives of such individuals go beyond the scope of this project. Coincidental as it may be, a late eleventh to twelfth century Chinese ceramic shard found in Hakata, Japan with the inscribed name "Danian"

²⁰⁰ On foreign ships in Quanzhou and their collusion with local officials, see Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 123. See also Clark, "Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou," 51.

²⁰¹ This translation is from Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 125.

²⁰² Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 490.

²⁰³ Li Guang 李光, *Zhuang jian ji* 莊簡集 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 8. See also Shiba, "Sōdai ni okeru Fukken shōnin no katsudō," 498.

大年 does match the name of the Quanzhou superintendent Xu Danian (許大年), who served in the position concurrently with Zhang You.²⁰⁴

Most superintendents stood to gain much personal wealth from their positions, for which a simple promotion would likely not compare. Superintendents seldom advanced much higher beyond this position in the bureaucracy, despite many of them holding *jinshi* degrees. It was a position for lower-middle rank officials, and beyond its relative lack of prestige, it likely carried a stigma in official circles as well. Though history shows us many examples of power being valued over wealth, wealth was often a necessary tool for attaining power. It is likely that the private wealth and informal influence gained from the position were often used to benefit others within one's kin group or political network, and this was motivation enough for some to take the post. Less qualified officials understood that the post was the highest that they could aspire to in the Song bureaucracy and simply sought to profit from it to the greatest extent possible.

Corruption was indeed a major issue among trade superintendents, and Zhang You was certainly not the only official singled out for abusing the post. Liangzhe superintendent Bao Zi and Quanzhou superintendent Chen Ding were both dismissed in 1132 due to excessive corruption.²⁰⁵ Interestingly enough, they were impeached by the vice censor-in-chief (*Yushi zhongcheng* 御史中丞) Shen Yuqiu, who was previously superintendent of the Liangzhe *shibosi*. In the following year, the Guangnan superintendent Lin Zhongkan was also impeached for corruption.²⁰⁶ The removal of superintendents from all three *shibosi* within two years suggests

²⁰⁴ A list of ink inscriptions on Chinese ceramics recovered in the Hakata area is provided in Ōba Kōji 大庭康時, “Bokusho tōjiki” 墨書陶磁器, in *Chūsei toshi: Hakata wo horu* 中世都市・博多を掘る (Fukuoka: Kaichōsha, 2008), 99. More inscriptions were recovered since this list was published.

²⁰⁵ *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 51.

²⁰⁶ *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu* 71.

factional politics was a factor in their dismissal, though the fact that these positions were targeted highlights their importance in controlling and directing wealth in such struggles.

The Guangnan *shibosi* was a particular hot spot for government corruption. As early as 995, an edict was directed at the office which prohibited their officials from dispatching servants overseas to engage in private trade, which indicates that officials were using their posts to enrich themselves at that time.²⁰⁷ Several years later, the Guangzhou prefect Zhang Jian 張鑑 was demoted after two subordinates accused him of making payments to sea merchants.²⁰⁸ Zhang Jian claimed that it was his subordinates who were corrupt, and that they wished to slander him. In his defense, he stated that he was simply arranging for sea merchants to ship rice to his exiled relatives in Hainan. Zhang Jian was also an enthusiastic participant in Zhenzong's statewide propaganda campaigns—in which officials throughout the realm reported auspicious signs in return for the emperor's favor—so one might reasonably assume that he was not the man of integrity that he claimed to be.²⁰⁹

The Guangnan superintendent Sun Jiong was also accused of being notoriously corrupt. In 1082 he notified the Song court that the daughter of the Srivijaya domain of Jambi had attempted to gift him goods via sea merchants who were acting as intermediaries. He stated the sea merchants were responsible for the breach of rules, and that instead of accepting the goods he ordered the *shibosi* to purchase them.²¹⁰ It is not clear if Sun Jiong was trying to maintain a clean record or if he wanted to preempt news of the attempted bribe before it made its way to the court, though in the following year a slew of allegations of his corrupt and heavy-handed behavior did

²⁰⁷ So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 46; and *SHY ZG* 44.

²⁰⁸ *SS* 277.

²⁰⁹ On Zhenzong's extensive efforts to assert his legitimacy at home and abroad, see Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

²¹⁰ *XCB* 330.

indeed reach the court. After an investigation by the Guangzhou prefect, he was removed from his position.²¹¹

In 1140, the Guangnan superintendent Chao Gongmai and the Guangdong governor-general were also removed from their positions after accusations were brought against them by a foreign merchant.²¹² We may recall that Chao was serving at the same time that one of his relatives was a superintendent, so it is unlikely that he earned his position through merit to begin with.²¹³ There are in fact more examples of trade administrators abusing their positions at this time and later on, though the cases provided here adequately highlight how such officials were often motivated by interests that conflicted with the expected duties of their position. Knowledge of such conditions helps us to understand how merchant and official networks in south and southeastern regions were complementary, connected, or competitive, rather than strictly divided based on class, status, and ideology.

The scholars John Chaffee and Hugh Clark have noted a strong correlation during the Song dynasty between locations that were involved in sea trade and the high numbers of *jinshi* degree recipients from those areas.²¹⁴ As we develop a greater understanding of sea merchants, export producers, and trade administrators at this time, it becomes evident that this correlation was even closer than previously believed. During the Northern Song, such correlations are most evident in the province of Fujian. Until the Song dynasty, southern regions were minimally

²¹¹ XCB 334.

²¹² Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 457.

²¹³ Dohi Yūko shows that before Chao was appointed superintendent, he served as a state fiscal intendant in Guangdong before serving as a supervisor in the Tea and Salt Monopoly offices in Jiangnan. He thus held a career path in fiscal administration, which was one of the two main career patterns of *shibosi* superintendents that Dohi identifies (with many *shiboshi* serving in the Tea and Salt Monopoly administrations during their careers). See Dohi, *Sōdai nankai bōeki shi no kenkyū*, 42.

²¹⁴ John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152; and Clark, "Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou," 67–69, 73.

represented in *jinshi* examinations.²¹⁵ This changed dramatically during the Song dynasty, when natives of Fujian—in part benefiting from a larger population and changes to the standards of civil service examinations—outnumbered all other provinces in receiving *jinshi* degrees.

Although the statistical peak in which Fujian scholars earned *jinshi* degrees occurred during the Southern Song, the increasing trend of their success was already under way by the end of the tenth century. Little attention has been paid to the role of the inland regions of northern Fujian in overseas trade to date. However, we have seen that northern Fujian merchants from regions such as Jianzhou and Shaowu were among the first to benefit from the Song court's tighter control of sea trade in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. A parallel can be drawn with the emergence of successful *jinshi* degree recipients in the area soon after. In the first century of the Song dynasty, Jianzhou, in fact, produced the highest number of *jinshi* degree recipients of any prefecture in China, a trend that likewise began in the late tenth century.²¹⁶ This was also precisely the time that the Shaowu merchant Shangguan Yongxian was actively trading in Japan, and the Shangguan lineage not only went on to produce many *jinshi* recipients during the Northern Song, but a superintendent of the Quanzhou *shibosi* as well. The merchant Huang Zhao, who arrived in Japan in 1100, was likely the same person as another Shaowu native described in Chinese records whose son earned a *jinshi* degree.

After Jianzhou, Quanzhou was the next prefecture that produced the most *jinshi* during the first century of the Song, and Quanzhou, as we have seen, was also far and away the most active area in overseas trade. After Quanzhou came Xinghuajun, which encompassed Xianyou

²¹⁵ Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 149; and Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas."

²¹⁶ For the prefectures that produced the greatest number of *jinshi* holders in the early Northern Song, see Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 149. For the tremendous success of Fujian scholars in the Song civil service examinations, see pp. 142–56; and Clark, "Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou," 55–60.

and Putian. We have noted that Xianyou was the center of an extensive political and commercial network established by Chen Hongjin, while sea merchants and superintendents also came from nearby Putian. The next Chinese prefecture with the highest number of *jinshi* recipients was Fuzhou, which also produced a significant number of sea merchants and trade superintendents. In comparison to these four areas, the relatively low numbers of *jinshi* recipients from Zhangzhou and more remote parts of Fujian correspond with those locations seldom or never being discussed in relation to maritime trade during the eleventh century.

By the end of the Northern Song, residents of Quanzhou earned more *jinshi* degrees than almost any other prefecture in the empire, and they occupied some of the most important positions in the Song court.²¹⁷ This too parallels their ascendancy as the foremost merchant group in sea trade. Fuzhou happened to be the leading producer of *jinshi* recipients during the Southern Song,²¹⁸ and by the beginning of the twelfth century, merchants from that area appear to be the second most active group in sea trade after those of Quanzhou.

Beginning in the Southern Song, there is a remarkable increase of *jinshi* recipients from the coastal areas of Zhedong, where their number quickly tripled, before continuing to grow at a more gradual rate. This too corresponds to a high point of foreign trade for that area, which is a trend also observed by Chaffee.²¹⁹ Prior to this point, we only see minimal success from scholars from the region and those involved in sea trade. Such a dramatic change highlights how significant the relocation of the capital to Hangzhou was for the fortunes of its outlying areas.

What sets wealthy merchant families of southeast China apart from other regions was the

²¹⁷ Clark, "Consolidation on the South China Frontier," 2.

²¹⁸ Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 35.

²¹⁹ Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China*, 149.

highly lucrative nature of overseas trade. Considering that southeast and southern coastal areas were among the wealthiest of the Song empire, sea trade was quite possibly the most profitable industry in China at this time. Such wealth offered opportunities for social mobility and provided advantages entering officialdom via civil service examinations.²²⁰ Scholars have already noted how *jinshi* recipients during the Song dynasty often came from merchant families, or in some cases were even merchants themselves.²²¹ For additional details of how this process played out, we may look to the Zhou family of Ninghai (Taizhou).²²² There were three known sea merchants to come from this family, and they prospered at the time when southern Zhejiang was most integrated into overseas trade. As the region declined in the middle of the eleventh century following E Lin's revolt, the family invested its resources into the education of Zhou Bian 周弁, who was the son of the sea merchant Zhou Liangshi. Zhou Bian went on to earn a *jinshi* degree and he became a government official in 1061. His children and grandchildren went on to earn *jinshi* degrees and government posts as well.

A similar story is provided by Hugh Clark, who in his research on the White Pond Li (*Baitang Li* 白塘李) family of Ninghai 寧海 (Putian) observes a lineage that used wealth from sea trade in the early twelfth century to attain representation in local and central government. Members of the family had not held office prior to that time, though after investing a great deal of wealth into local philanthropy and the education of their kin, its scions went on to earn *jinshi*

²²⁰ Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas."

²²¹ Song Xi 宋晞, *Song shi yanjiu luncong* 宋史研究論叢 (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1962), 18–21; Harriet T. Zurndorfer, "The 'Hsin-an ta-tsu chih' and the Development of Chinese Gentry Society 800-1600," *T'oung Pao* 67 (1981), 186–88; Zhu, "Song dai shangren de shehui diwei ji qi lishi zuoyong," 132; and Sattler, "The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia," 45–46.

²²² For detailed analysis of the family, see Yamazaki "Kaishō to sono tsuma"; and Sattler, "The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia," 52–53.

degrees and employment in the Song government.²²³

Shiba Yoshinobu has noted that another factor in the success of officials from Fujian was their propensity to recommend each other for governmental posts.²²⁴ Even compared to kinship groups from other parts of China, Fujianese maintained especially close ties with those of their native places or nearby regions, which is evident not only in the realm of politics, but in the Koryō trade as well. Indeed, the mutual support between Fujianese literati and merchants living and trading in the Koryō capital demonstrates that such bonds transcended occupation. Another example can be seen in the life of Chen Deyi, the man descended from Chen Hongjin who helped the Song government advance its understanding of astronomy based on knowledge from Japanese texts. For his efforts, he was recommended for officialdom by the Shaxian 沙縣 (central Fujian) literatus Zhang Zhiyuan, though Chen did not receive the honor, most likely because the court knew that he was a merchant. During his career, Zhang Zhiyuan had served as prefect of coastal trade ports such as Taizhou, Fuzhou, and Guangzhou, and was a finance official in the Liangzhe circuit. As for Chen Hongjin's network, his sons had held roles as prefects of Quanzhou and Zhangzhou, and his nephew Chen Wenlian had served as military inspector (*xunjian shi* 巡檢使) in Guangzhou,²²⁵ which was the port where Hongjin's other (likely) nephew Chen Wensui set sail from to reach Koryō.

On a final note, although it took time before high numbers of *jinshi* degree holders from Fujian translated into high numbers of Fujian officials serving in influential court positions, some of the earliest officials from the region to gain prominent roles in central government were from

²²³ Clark, "The Origins of the cult to Mazu, the 'Divine Woman,' and the Hybridization of Chinese Culture."

²²⁴ Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 181–82.

²²⁵ *Mengxi bitan* 25.

northern Fujian. This should come as no surprise, as Jianzhou scholars were initially the most successful of those who partook in the Song civil service examinations. One of the most successful and respected of such scholars was Yang Yi, who was a native of Pucheng county in Jianzhou. As discussed above, this was an area that was home to sea merchants as well as a producer of Longquan-type export ceramics. Yang Yi himself was an interested observer of matters pertaining to overseas exchange, and he wrote extensively about Japan and its inhabitants. It was, in fact, Yang Yi's notes which told us of "a South Seas merchant's ship" bringing correspondence from a Japanese prince to the monk Jakushō in 1004. The scholar-official also formed a relationship with Jakushō which involved the exchange of gifts and poetry, and he maintained written correspondence with Jakushō after the monk's departure from the Song capital.²²⁶ Although we cannot say for certain that Yang Yi was motivated beyond mere interest to acquaint himself with such an individual, the diaries of monks in the late Tang describe instances of high-ranking officials fostering relations with them to connect them with certain trade networks, as monks were able to decide which merchants would take them and their disciples to and from Japan.²²⁷ Such voyages allowed sea merchants access to Japanese markets.

Regardless of Yang Yi's motivations, his writings provide valuable insight into overseas exchange at this time and allow for an interesting point to be made: much of what we know from Chinese sources about overseas exchange at this time comes from prominent officials who were from Fujian. For instance, one of the most insightful contributors to our knowledge of sea merchant activity was the renowned scholar-official Cai Xiang. As a native of Xianyou, he would have been privy to much knowledge about commercial activity, and indeed he did discuss

²²⁶ von Verschuer, "Japan's Foreign Relations 600 to 1200 A.D.," 32–33.

²²⁷ Sattler, "Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas," 96–97.

Fuzhou merchant networks and exporters, as well as officials investing in the activities of sea and land-based merchants.²²⁸ Cai Xiang's great-grandson Cai Su also went on to become the Quanzhou trade superintendent from 1116 to 1118, and by all indications, he was also a relative and appointee of Cai Jing. The literatus Zheng Xia 鄭俠 (1041–1119) of Fuqing (Fuzhou) also discusses sea merchants in his literary anthology *Xitang ji* 西塘集.²²⁹ He was friends with a certain Fuqing native named Lin Zhongjia 林仲嘉,²³⁰ who in turn was almost certainly related to Lin Zhongkan (also from Fuqing). Lin Zhongkan, we may recall, was the Guangnan superintendent impeached for corruption in 1132. There was also the diplomat Xu Jing, who recorded the activities of Chinese sea merchants on several instances in his account of the Song embassy to Koryŏ in 1123. Although born in Hunan, his ancestry was of Jianzhou. One final example of an account of sea trade being transmitted by a Fujian scholar (though there are likely many more in existence) would be of the Daoxue scholar Hu Hong 胡宏 (1105–1161) from Chong'an 崇安 county (Jianzhou). His anthology *Wufeng ji* 五峰集 discusses Fujian merchants in the South Seas trade taking to piracy in his lifetime.²³¹ That so many Fujian natives were receiving an education, gaining fame and recognition, and having their written works preserved for posterity is one of the reasons that we know as much as we do about the involvement of Chinese people in commerce at this time.²³²

²²⁸ *Lizhi pu*; and Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 70.

²²⁹ Zheng Xia, *Xitang ji* (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 8.

²³⁰ CBDB.

²³¹ Hu Hong, *Wufeng ji* (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009) 3.

²³² This point came to my attention in a discussion between Zhiwu Chen and Billy K. L. So at a lecture given by Zhiwu Chen on March 6, 2025, hosted by Hong Kong University Business School and the Centre for Quantitative History, titled “Rise of the South: How Arab-Led Maritime Trade Transformed China, 671–1371 CE.”

Conclusion

As is becoming increasingly clear, status and occupation were often not barriers in the formation of social networks in the southern regions of the Song empire. Merchants, producers, and officials in many regions of south and southeastern China worked closely together to ensure economic and social success. In no other region is this more evident than in Fujian, though we may hardly think that such integration was limited only to that area. The binding force between occupations was wealth from sea trade, which financed both the operations of export producers and the educations of local literati. It is becoming increasingly clear, in fact, that a large portion of those who staffed the Song government owed much of their early success to the financial support derived from overseas trade. The importance of this wealth is evident from the maneuvering and cronyism among trade administrators and their patrons who sought to control it, though the prosperity that resulted from it was widespread, and its legacy persisted for some time.

Chapter Four: Chinese People and Communities Overseas, c. 1000–1127 CE

It is clear that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Chinese communities overseas continued to grow and spread at the same time that sea trade across maritime Asia increased in scope and magnitude. Less evident is the extent to which the policies and edicts of the Song court affected the movement of Chinese people overseas. Policies shifted with different rulers, but no particular policy or edict clearly affected the frequency of Chinese mercantile activity abroad—at least as far as what can be discerned from records of the regions they visited. For instance, laws were changed in around the late eleventh century to allow Chinese merchants to trade in Koryŏ, Japan, and the Middle East (they were already permitted to trade in Srivijaya),¹ though Korean and Japanese sources show that Chinese merchants had long since sailed to those two states and that there was no noticeable uptick in commercial traffic after the laws were revised. Rather, government intervention appears to have had a greater negative impact on the fortunes of merchants and producers of specific regions within China than on the direction or magnitude of overseas trade as a whole. Thus, when rules became overly strict or officials overly extortionate, many Chinese merchants turned to smuggling or working with local officials to evade restrictions—to the consternation of Chinese administrators who were aware of such practices. The kinship networks discussed in the previous chapter were instrumental in this process. With this in mind, the Song court sought to incentivize the cooperation of sea merchants so that more levies from the highly lucrative sector of sea trade could be raised. By 1074, the Song government was rewarding Chinese merchants operating through its three *shibosi* offices (in Hangzhou, Mingzhou, and Guangzhou) with the renewal of trading licenses, and, in

¹ Shao-yun Yang, “Unauthorized Exchanges: Restrictions on Foreign Trade and Inter-marriage in the Tang and Northern Song Empires,” *T’oung Pao* 108 (2022): 626–27.

exceptional instances, with official rank.²

Officials serving in these southern ports were also aware that many of the Chinese people who sailed abroad intended to remain overseas for prolonged periods of time. The *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可談, which was written in 1119 but contains information from previous decades, highlights this point and states:

When Northerners (Chinese) go overseas and do not return that year, this is called “residing abroad.” When people of other countries come to Guangzhou and do not return that year, this is called “residing in Tang.” People of Guangzhou borrow money at a sum that doubles with repayment upon (their) ship's return (to China). Even if residing abroad for ten years without returning, the interest does not increase... The Guangzhou authorities accept and handle legal cases pertaining to profit and debt obligations. This is also under the special jurisdiction of the *shibosi* commissioner, who wishes to promote the circulation of goods.³

北人過海外，是歲不還者，謂之「住蕃」。諸國人至廣州，是歲不歸者，謂之「住唐」。廣人舉債總一倍，約舶過迴償。住蕃雖十年不歸，息亦不增... 廣州官司受理，有利債負，亦市舶使專敕，欲其流通也。

Yet as Derek Heng has pointed out, by 1159 the Song court was still unable to keep track of the number of Chinese people abroad, where they resided, how long they stayed abroad, and the reasons for their travel.⁴ As we shall see throughout this chapter, not only did the Song court refrain from attempting to control or influence Chinese populations abroad, but their position—

² Paul Wheatley, “Geographical Notes on some Commodities involved in Sung Maritime Trade,” *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32 (1959): 25.

³ Zhu Yu 朱彧, *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可談 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu Zhongxin, 2009), juan 2. See also Heng, “Shipping, Customs Procedures, and the Foreign Community,” 15.

⁴ Heng, “Shipping, Customs Procedures, and the Foreign Community,” 15.

as far as official records show us—was to not even acknowledge that permanent Chinese communities existed overseas.

As for the Chinese people who traveled and lived abroad, the vast majority of descriptions in textual records are of merchant leaders. These men were typically referred to by their names and their status as merchants, though one particular term was used inside and outside of China to designate those in the highest position of leadership. The term *gangshou* 綱首 (sometimes rendered as *dugang* 都綱 or *gangsi* 綱司), which literally translates to “head of the network,” began to gain usage in the early eleventh century, and it denoted a person recognized by government officials and commoners as the leader of a particular merchant group.⁵ The position entailed operating as a representative of commercial networks in dealings with domestic and foreign government officials. It was held by a merchant ship’s captain, though it also quickly came to designate leaders of Chinese communities overseas. This latter usage becomes evident in Japanese sources beginning in the period of this chapter, though similar terms also denoted leaders of overseas Chinese communities throughout Southeast Asia in more recent centuries. In addition to appearing in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese primary sources, ink inscriptions bearing this title have also been identified on excavated export ceramics, apparently to indicate ownership of the wares.⁶

Descriptions of Chinese people abroad who were not merchants are rare by comparison, though they do appear in textual sources on occasion. Such figures included monks, scholars in search of employment, craftsmen, slaves, musicians, and doctors. The rarity of these descriptions should not suggest that such individuals were far fewer than merchants, but rather that record

⁵ For discussion of this term, see Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 27–28, 31; and von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network,” 273–74, 278.

⁶ So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China*, 237–38; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 77.

keepers only deemed it worthwhile to mention the individuals they believed to be important or noteworthy. It was usually the case that merchant leaders were regarded as the most noteworthy figures. Reading against the grain, we may also consider that in some rare instances Chinese people of additional backgrounds and occupations also traveled overseas. One of the late eleventh century Song laws stipulated that ships were prohibited from carrying women, spies, and army deserters.⁷ Merchants and monks were employed as spies from time to time, though there is hardly any mention of Chinese women going abroad except in Tang period edicts against foreigners in Guangzhou leaving China with their Chinese wives.⁸ The same can be said for military deserters, with the exception of the E Lin incident discussed in the previous chapter. We must accept that the stories of less prominent Chinese individuals abroad (especially sailors, petty merchants, and laborers) cannot be told until more recent centuries—for which we have a greater abundance of detailed records to draw upon.⁹

As for Chinese perceptions of life overseas, these too are limited for this period, though there are some interesting windows of insight. One mid-eleventh century poem by the Quanzhou literatus Xie Lü 謝履 provides such a glimpse:

The people of Ch'üan-chou (Quanzhou) are many, but the mountains and valleys are empty;

One can follow one's own wishes and tend fields without dispute;

South of the prefecture is the sea, across which life is grand and there is no poverty;

Every year ships are built to sail to these miraculous places.¹⁰

⁷ Yang, "Unauthorized Exchanges," 626–27, citation no. 144.

⁸ Yang, "Unauthorized Exchanges," 607.

⁹ See, for instance, in Melissa Macauley, *Distant Shores: Colonial Encounters on China's Maritime Frontier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

¹⁰ Clark, "Consolidation on the South China Frontier," 218.

This shows us that an idealized view of life overseas existed in the areas that benefitted most from overseas trade, most likely because the vast wealth brought from abroad was clear for all to see.

From the eleventh to twelfth centuries, the two main regions of interest for overseas trade at this time were East Asia and Southeast Asia. East Asia is of greatest importance to scholars because a large range of textual sources from Japan and Korea provide much insight on Chinese people sailing to and living in those regions during this period. In the case of Korea, this is a particularly significant turning point because early Korean sources are relatively sparse compared to those of Japan and China, and the *Samguk sagi*, which covers earlier periods, contains very little information about overseas exchange. Yet the *Koryŏ sa* provides a wealth of information on Chinese merchants beginning in the early eleventh century, much more, in fact, than any single Japanese source. On the other hand, Japanese sources provide the most information about Chinese merchants beyond the basic details of their names, dates of arrival, and places of origin. As such, Japanese sources provide much knowledge about the activities of Chinese people residing overseas.

While Chinese sources indicate Southeast Asia was the most lucrative region for sea trade, textual sources from that region remain sparse for this period. For the areas that traded with China, the major change at this time was the renaissance of Srivijaya. This process began in the tenth century, and is attested to in the frequent dispatch of Srivijayan embassies to China after the establishment of the Song court. Historians have previously posited a decline of the Srivijaya state in the midst of prolonged warfare with Java at the turn of the eleventh century and extensive raids by Chola in 1025, yet all indications are that a Srivijayan confederation resumed control of shipping through the Malacca strait soon after the Chola raids and maintained that

control over the span of approximately two centuries. O.W. Wolters argued that a change of the Srivijaya capital from Palembang to Jambi was a result of Srivijaya's decline,¹¹ though there is no substantial evidence to show that this was the case, or even that Srivijaya had one "capital." Rather, as will be discussed in greater detail, I think it just as likely that Jambi's closer proximity to the strategic choke point of the Malacca strait allowed for the city's greater prosperity. As for Javanese kingdoms, they retained much wealth and influence, and continued to trade with China, though their influence westward was clearly curtailed at this time. Shipping between China and the Middle East also continued, though the decline of the Abbasid caliphate and the port of Siraf clearly impacted that trade, as did the death of Emperor Zhenzong, who was the last of the Chinese emperors to lavish gifts and favors on Muslim merchants who presented themselves as diplomats.¹²

In the following subsections, I discuss all of the regions around the world for which textual and material records indicate the presence of Chinese people in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. These findings allow us to understand in greater detail the early formation and spread of Chinese communities overseas, which in later centuries came to exercise considerable influence on the states, societies, and economies of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world.

Koryō

The Korean peninsula has had a long history of exchange with Chinese states and people, which can be traced as far back as early foundation myths and the establishment of complex societies

¹¹ Oliver W. Wolters, "A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century," *Artibus Asiae* Supplementum 23 (1966): 225–39.

¹² Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

approximately two thousand years ago. As we have seen in Chapter Two, by the ninth century much of the exchange between both regions was occurring through a large sea trade network headed by Chang Pogo, which coincided with the greater trend of the privatization of sea trade across East Asia. Scholars have marveled at Chang Pogo's feats and his near-successful bid for a stake in Silla rulership via the marriage of his daughter to the Silla king—immediately prior to his assassination in 841. However, it is less widely known that the power base of Wang Kǒn 王建 (877–943, r. 918–943), the founder of the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392), was comprised largely of wealthy families from overseas trade ports, and that one of his queens descended from an immigrant Chinese sea merchant.¹³ One of the cities where Wang Kǒn drew his advisors, Hyesŏng 榑城, also hosted a lodging place for foreign embassies—apparently similar to the Kōrokan, located near the city of Dazaifu in western Japan. It was at Hyesŏng that a Chinese “scholar” organized local residents in a campaign to rid the area of pirates, and this man's son later became a prominent supporter of Wang Kǒn.¹⁴ The Koryŏ capital of Kaesŏng was likewise a major hub for maritime commerce, and it was there that Wang Kǒn's ancestors built their own power base from the profits of sea trade.¹⁵

Despite the murky nature of tenth-century primary sources and the unconventional forms of exchange in East Asia at that time, we are left with other indications of permanent migration from China to the Korean peninsula. One example is of a literatus from Wu-Yue who defected to Koryŏ after traveling to Silla in 923.¹⁶ He was immediately appointed to the position of Vice

¹³ H. W. Kang, “The First Succession Struggle of Koryo, in 945: A Reinterpretation,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 36.3 (1977), 411–28.

¹⁴ Kang, “The First Succession Struggle of Koryo,” 418.

¹⁵ Remco E. Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918–1170: History, Ideology and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 156.

¹⁶ *Shiguo chunqiu*, 78.1096; Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai shi*, juan 74; Tao Gu 陶穀, *Qing yi lu* 清異錄 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009).

Minister of the Spring Ministry there and made a Vice Envoy for an embassy to the Later Tang empire (923–937, northern China). Of interest is that this man, Pu Yan (cn.) / Pak Ŏm (k.) 朴巖, had a surname that was common in Korea but very rare in China, which suggests that he belonged to the Korean diaspora in Wu-Yue mentioned in Chapter Two. Another example is of a member of the kingdom of Min's ruling family defecting to Silla.¹⁷ This man and his son served in the Silla government, though his grandson later studied in the Song Imperial University on the foreign student quota and eventually became a successful Song official. Finally, there is an entry in the *Koryŏ sa* which discusses preferential treatment given to Chinese defectors to Koryŏ in the mid to late tenth century. This entry will be translated and discussed further on in this section.

Beginning in the eleventh century, most mentions of Chinese visitors and inhabitants in Korean sources are of Chinese sea merchants. We have already considered the great numbers of these merchants and their geographic origins in southern China in the previous chapter, though here we may pay attention to additional information that can be gleaned about them in Korean and Chinese sources. To begin, the more than one hundred references to Chinese merchants in Korean sources do not appear to be comprehensive, though a more detailed list of their comings and goings can be formed than the sources of any other country. Particular attention was paid toward their arrivals from the early eleventh to early twelfth centuries. In addition to transporting expensive products from China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and regions further west, Chinese merchants also took on important roles in diplomacy at particular times. This was evident during the reign of Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (1048–1085, r. 1067–1085), when the Song and Koryŏ courts wished to revive tributary relations that had broken down under pressure from the Liao

¹⁷ Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459; Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 65; and Zhu Weigan 朱维幹, *Fujian shigao* 福建史稿, vol. 1, (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1984), 162.

empire. Throughout the process Chinese merchants played an important role in shipping missives and envoys between the Song and Koryŏ courts.¹⁸ At other times, their roles in diplomacy were somewhat more ambiguous. Koryŏ leaders often called upon Chinese merchants to participate in major ceremonies such as the Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions, in which the merchants took a place alongside foreign envoys in proceedings that impressed upon them the splendor of the Koryŏ state and the cosmological centrality of its sovereign. The insinuation was that the Chinese merchants were representatives of the Song empire in such events, though it is not clear to what extent (if any) this role was explicitly claimed.¹⁹ Similar to Japan, visiting Chinese merchants also stayed in specialized lodging complexes. In Kaesŏng there were four such complexes, and since multiple ship crews were known to visit the Koryŏ capital at a particular time, it appears that each complex hosted a single ship's crew. However, unlike in Japan, it appears that the lodges for foreign envoys were not the same as those for merchants. In recording his visit to Koryŏ in 1123, the Chinese envoy Xu Jing 徐兢 (1091–1155) wrote disdainfully that the merchant lodges “are all vulgar and roughly constructed and cannot be compared” to the lodge for official Chinese envoys.²⁰

The next most common group of Chinese people to migrate to Koryŏ was that of scholars in search of employment or a second chance outside of Song politics.²¹ Such men formed an

¹⁸ Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 83; Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124–25; Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 207; Miwako, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru,” 128, 132; Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 17–23.

¹⁹ Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 183, 236; and Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 17. For the ceremonies themselves, see Sem Vermeersch, “Buddhism at the Center: The Temples of Kaesŏng and Their Socio-political Role,” *Acta Koreana* 7.2 (2004), 7–34. These rituals appear in some ways to have imitated Song Zhenzong's sacrifices to Heaven, which required the participation of foreign dignitaries. See Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.”

²⁰ Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 186. See also Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 199–201.

²¹ Some analysis of these figures is available in Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 187; Hartwell, “Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese ‘Mercantilism,’” 459; Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 239–41; and Eunmi Go, “Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents and the Background

important block in the lower, middle, and upper ranks of Koryŏ's state bureaucracy and were generally accorded much in the way of respect and privileges. Such men continued to staff the Koryŏ bureaucracy for centuries, and the state's immigration laws facilitated their mobility into the country. For instance, in a legal dispute in 1081, one reference to a precedent stated "[a]ccording to the old regulations, it is forbidden for persons to [enter the country] with the exception of persons belonging to the frontier population who have been kidnapped by the frontier barbarians and wish to return home or Song persons of high ability."²² Most of those who applied to become Koryŏ subjects were successful, in part because they were able to convince Koryŏ officials that they possessed valuable skills.²³ Indeed, more than a few possessed highly coveted *jinshi* civil service degrees, and some retained valuable experience from past employment in the Song bureaucracy.²⁴ There are also multiple examples of defectors rising as high as ministerial positions. Of such examples, at least one instance was not recorded in the official histories, which indicates that those histories only offer a partial account of the most influential Chinese officials to serve in the Koryŏ court.²⁵

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that the Chinese merchants and scholars who traveled to Koryŏ were all from the same cities in southern China. Both groups belonged to the

behind the Formation of their Settlements in the Song Period," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 20 (2023): 462–63.

²² Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 222.

²³ Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 239–41.

²⁴ Two examples of *jinshi* recipients are Zhang Ting 張廷 in *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 卷 7, and Zhang Chen 章忱 in kwŏn 11 and 73. For former Song officials, some of whom appear to have been deposed due to political factionalism, see discussion of Hu Zongdan 胡宗旦 in Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459, and 484, citation no. 53; and Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 251, and of Liu Zai 劉載 in Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459. I intend to examine these topics in greater depth in a separate publication.

²⁵ See the epitaph inscription for Liu Zhicheng 劉志誠 in Liu Chenggan 劉承幹 (ed.), *Haidong jinshi yuan buyi* 海東金石苑補遺 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1982), juan 2. See also Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459.

same networks that were organized according to kinship, locality, and dialect, and those networks offered mutual support regardless of one's occupational background. This is most evident in the case of Chinese networks from southern Fujian, which essentially monopolized Koryŏ's sea trade and government recruitment from 1049 to 1094. In addition to Su Shi's several comments on Fujian merchants in Koryŏ, another such distinction by Song observers is recorded in the *Song shi*:

There are several hundred Chinese in the (Korean) capital, most of them Fukienese [Fujianese] who have come by junk for the purposes of trade. (The Koreans) secretly try out their abilities and entice them with salaries and official positions.²⁶

Thus, we can recognize that the Chinese communities that existed in Koryŏ's capital and trade ports were comprised primarily of men from southern Fujian. Even after 1094, those who still traveled to Koryŏ were primarily people from Fujian, it merely appears that sojourners from further north of the province became active there once more as well.

The capital city Kaesŏng itself was a very large city, with walls that spanned 21 kilometers and a population that numbered between 500,000 and one million.²⁷ Other ethnic groups, mainly from northern Asia, frequently immigrated to Koryŏ, so it is likely that some such peoples formed enclaves within Kaesŏng as well. The *Song shi*'s description of a population of several hundred Chinese would seem rather conservative unless it was targeted specifically at the Chinese who served in government. Envoys like Xu Jing appear to be the main sources of information about Koryŏ in the official Chinese histories, and while those men provided much

²⁶ This translation is from Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 187. See also Shiba, "Sōdai ni okeru Fukken shōnin no katsudō," 496.

²⁷ Vermeersch, "Buddhism at the Center: The Temples of Kaesŏng and Their Socio-political Role," 8.

useful information, their knowledge of and interest in Chinese merchants was relatively limited. Kaesŏng's close proximity to Korea's western coast positioned it close to ports frequented by sea merchants, and we may consider that such individuals formed a sizable portion of the Chinese residing there on a permanent or semi-permanent basis.

Yet it was not solely merchants and scholars who traveled on trade ships. Of the Chinese who are recorded as defecting or seeking naturalization (cn. *guihua* / k. *kwi-hwa* 歸化, essentially synonymous with formal immigration), there were those who possessed skills which were not typically regarded as essential to civil administration. For instance, a certain Chen Yang 陳養 was asked to defect due to his martial abilities, and he later took on a role as a military officer.²⁸ Some men were skilled brush writers and calligraphers.²⁹ One was known to have specialized knowledge of divination, which earned him a government post.³⁰ Another was an interpreter.³¹

There were also times when the Koryŏ court sought Chinese specialists through the channels of formal diplomacy. In particular, it was not uncommon for doctors to be dispatched there by the Song court.³² As soon as Song-Koryŏ relations resumed in 1072, King Munjong 文宗 (1019–1083, r. 1046–1083) successfully requested that Chinese doctors assist with his ailing health. Altogether they were dispatched on at least four instances during his reign (in 1072, 1073,

²⁸ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 10 and 12. In the first entry his surname is erroneously recorded as “東.”

²⁹ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 10 for Tian Sheng 田盛.

³⁰ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 8 for Zhang Wan 張琬.

³¹ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 12 for Chen Gao 陳高.

³² Lina Nie, “Going Offshore: Studies of the Maritime Zone in East Asia from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Centuries,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 2024, 18–54.

1079, and 1080).³³ This practice continued in later reigns as well.³⁴ Yet these were temporary initiatives, as the sources make it clear that the Song court expected the doctors it sent to Koryŏ to return to China after they had fulfilled their service.³⁵

In this period, Shenzong maintained unconventional approaches to diplomacy and foreign exchange that were paralleled only by the earlier reign of Emperor Zhenzong. However, even Zhenzong's advisors made it clear that the settlement of Chinese people abroad was unorthodox and could not be sanctioned by the state,³⁶ and there is no indication that Shenzong diverged from that approach either. Insight on this matter can also be gained from an assessment of the Koryŏ mission that was dispatched to Song in 1073 and remained there until the early part of 1074. While at court, Koryŏ envoys submitted a letter from King Munjong that requested different specialists in addition to doctors. The *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* records:

On the day Guiwei, the acting ruler of Koryŏ submitted a memorial requesting specialists in four fields—medicine, pharmaceuticals, painting, and pottery—to instruct his people. An edict ordered Luo Zheng to recruit willing individuals from among those skilled in these four arts, selecting two or three from each category to first proceed to the court.³⁷

³³ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 9; and Kim Chongsŏ 金宗瑞, *Koryŏ sa chŏryo* 高麗史節要

<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&res=730924>, kwŏn 5. See also Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459; and Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 232–33.

³⁴ For instance, doctors were sent again in 1103. See *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 12.

³⁵ The *Koryŏ sa* states that the doctors sent in 1072 returned to China in the following year. Although there is no record stating that the doctor sent in 1074 returned to China, it is clear such was the case, as he was dispatched to Korea once more in 1080. See *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 9 for both instances. For the doctors sent in 1103 returning the following year, see *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 12. The *Song shi* also talks of doctors sent by the Song court returning in 1123. See Peter I. Yun, "Rethinking the Tribute System: Korean States and Northeast Asian Interstate Relations, 600–1600," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1998, 96.

³⁶ Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

³⁷ *XCB*, juan 250. See also *SS*, juan 487; Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China*, 12; and Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 459.

癸未，權知高麗王徽表求醫、藥、畫、塑四工以教國人。詔羅拯於四色人內募願行者，各擇三兩人先令赴闕。

Here we see that Shenzong was initially receptive to the request to send a group of specialists to Koryŏ. However, in the following year (1095), we see that the potters and painters were still not dispatched by the time that the Koryŏ embassy had departed. At this time, the Koryŏ sovereign also made an additional request for musicians. The *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* records:

Luo Zheng, of the Jiang-Huai Fiscal Transport Commission, reported that the Quanzhou merchant Fu Xuan, possessed a document from the Koryŏ Foreign Relations Department which requested the loan of musicians and other specialists. The Emperor commented in the margin: “I have already ordered the Music Office to audition and select ten disciples; they may be lent. Summon the Fourth Bureau to provide them with colored robes and travel funds, and, in accordance with Luo Zheng’s position, dispatch them under imperial decree. Once they have completed the transmission of the teachings, promptly order their return to the court. As for the painters and potters, wait until the (Koryŏ) envoys arrive at court and then dispatch them.” The Bureau of Military Affairs submitted the matter again for consideration, whereupon it was cancelled and they were not sent.

The *Vermilion History* deemed (this matter) unworthy of recording and removed it from the record; the *New History* followed suit. We now follow the *Old History*.³⁸

江、淮發運司羅拯言，泉州商人傅旋持高麗禮賓省帖，乞借樂藝等人。上批：「已令教坊按試子弟十人，可借。呼第四部給色衣、裝錢，作拯意奉詔遣往。傳習畢，

³⁸ *XCB*, juan 261.

早令還朝。畫塑工俟使人入朝遣往。」樞密院再進呈，乃罷不遣。朱史以為無足書，刪去，新史從之。今從舊史。

Unfortunately, it is not clear if only the musicians were not sent or if the painters and potters were also not sent. It is also interesting, as the editors of the *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* pointed out, that this affair was removed from later drafts of Song histories and only recorded in an earlier draft. Although redactions were often made to shorten the length of official histories, I have previously discussed how Song court historians were especially committed to omitting information about Chinese subjects residing abroad.³⁹

While the Koryŏ court attempted to receive Chinese specialists through diplomatic channels on a limited basis, most specialists arrived without the involvement of the Song court. Among many such specialists were a Chinese doctor brought to Koryŏ on a merchant ship who immigrated to that country in 1059, and a Chinese musician who defected to Koryŏ in 1132 to become the head of the country's music bureau.⁴⁰ There are also strong indications that Chinese potters resided in Korea and transmitted their techniques to the peninsula. It was precisely in this period that Korean ceramics became famous for their high quality, and over the next several centuries they remained unrivaled by any kilns outside of China proper. Ceramics production on the peninsula witnessed a major leap in progress from producing unglazed grey-bodied wares to producing green-glazed wares very similar to the Yue ware of Zhejiang. Contemporary observers were also aware of the strong similarity, as is attested to by the envoy Xu Jing, who wrote that Korean celadons “are very similar to the old “secret color” [ware] of Yuezhou or the new ceramic

³⁹ See Chapter One of this dissertation; and Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.” It would seem that the Yuan-period compilers of the *Song shi* were less consistent (or adamant) in this regard, though they ultimately depended on the records that were transmitted to them from the previous dynasty.

⁴⁰ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 8 for Jiang Chaodong 江朝東; and *Koryŏ sa chŏryo* kwŏn 10 for Kui Zhongli 夔中立.

wares from Ruzhou.”⁴¹ It was previously proposed that the large community of Liao craftsmen in Koryŏ was responsible for much of this transmission, though scholars now accept that most of the transmission occurred via Yue producers beginning in the late tenth century, as Korean celadons share greater similarities with Yue kilns, including the presence of tiny spur marks on the base of vessels, the use of transparent green glaze, and a particular style of incised decoration which employed floral sprays.⁴² Some art historians believe that Chinese potters residing in Koryŏ were responsible for initiating these major changes.⁴³ When considering that so many southern Chinese specialists were welcomed and employed in Koryŏ in this period, I agree that such was likely the case.

As for other Chinese who were not formally affiliated with a state government, Buddhist monks traveled throughout East Asia on trade ships at this time for pilgrimages, proselytization, and tutelage. While most of the traffic between Korea and China consisted of Korean monks traveling to China or India, we also know that Chinese monks traveled to Korea, such as in the case of a Tiantai Buddhist monk who traveled from Wu-Yue to Koryŏ in 936.⁴⁴ Like elsewhere across maritime Asia, Buddhist temples in Korea often functioned as centers of trade and finance,⁴⁵ so the intertwined nature of Buddhism and sea trade—which is more evident in Japanese and Vietnamese sources—most likely applied to Koryŏ as well. There is also the question of Daoism, which was very popular in Korea at this time. Xu Jing talks of Daoist

⁴¹ Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 200. Secret ware was the highest quality Yue ware, typically given as tribute to Chinese courts, whereas Ru or Ruzhou 汝州 (central Henan) ware was briefly popular following the decline of Yue ware in the eleventh century, and was characterized by a more lustrous and opaque glaze.

⁴² Tregear, *Song Ceramics*, 205. Northern Chinese influences also existed, though they were more limited by comparison.

⁴³ G. St. G. M. Gompertz, *Korean Celadon* (New York, NY: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), 41–42.

⁴⁴ Brose, “Crossing Thousands of Li of Waves,” 33–34.

⁴⁵ Vermeersch, “Buddhism at the Center,” 24.

temples in Kaesŏng in many instances in his diary,⁴⁶ which begs the question of whether or not Chinese Daoists participated in transmitting the religion and its teachings to the region. It is also interesting to note that Xu Jing recorded the presence of Daoist officials in his embassy to Koryŏ in 1123.⁴⁷

In rare instances, we also see that some of the most prominent Chinese who traveled to Koryŏ brought family members with them. This is evident when the Chinese merchant captain Huang Xin 黃忻 successfully petitioned to have one of his two sons residing with him in Koryŏ return to China to take care of his elderly mother.⁴⁸ The scholar Shen Xiu 慎脩 also had his son defect in the early twelfth century, and both concurrently served in the Koryŏ court.⁴⁹ However, since the transportation of women on sea ships is very rarely evident in primary sources, and since the practice appears to have been both a legal and a social taboo, the Chinese men who traveled to Koryŏ usually took on native wives, as they did in other locations. This is attested to in an account in the *Koryŏ sa* dated to the tenth century, which appears to be one of the earliest descriptions of Chinese defectors in Korean records.

At that time, (King) Kwangjong 光宗 (925–975, r. 949–975) treated the Han Chinese who had submitted and naturalized very generously, selecting and bestowing upon them the mansions and daughters of his officials (to marry).⁵⁰

時光宗厚待投化漢人，擇取臣僚第宅及女與之。

⁴⁶ Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 43, 76, 113, 134, 139, and 141.

⁴⁷ Xu Jing, *A Chinese Traveler in Medieval Korea*, 167.

⁴⁸ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 7; Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 78; and Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, 236.

⁴⁹ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 97; and Go, “Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents and the Background behind the Formation of their Settlements in the Song Period,” 463.

⁵⁰ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 93.

Finally, there is also an instance in which the Korean wife of a Chinese merchant married a Korean courtier, apparently after the merchant passed away or they separated.⁵¹

Although Song court records were generally reluctant to address the presence of Chinese people residing abroad, there is one entry in the Laws and Punishments section of the *Song huiyao jigao* which confirms much of what is recorded in Korean sources, while also including some additional information that is not available in those works. Dated to the year 1112, it states:

On the twenty-second day of the sixth month, (a memorial from) the officials stated: “We have heard that among the maritime merchants traveling to foreign lands: since the Yuanyou era [1086–1094], those in charge of transporting sea vessels have at times privately taken along scholars who had participated in the (civil service) examinations as well as clerks who had been dismissed or reassigned due to offenses, allowing them to cross the sea and enter foreign countries. Some call this ‘passing the winter,’ (but they) remain in that country for several years without returning—some even for as long as twenty years. They take wives there, raise children, and move on to nearby northern barbarian states, going wherever they please. During the Yuanfeng era [1078–1085], there were already established prohibitions barring those who had been dismissed or reassigned (due to punishment) from crossing the sea. Yet now many years have passed, the regulations remain in the relevant offices but have not been enforced or reviewed. Moreover, there are also poor scholars from remote and outlying areas who frequently register themselves as merchants in order to pursue profit by crossing the sea, and no specific prohibition has yet been established for them. We respectfully request Your

⁵¹ *Koryŏ sa chŏryŏ*, kwŏn 10.

Majesty's sage decision and command that the Yuanfeng regulations prohibiting those who have been dismissed or reassigned from crossing the sea be reviewed and re-enforced, and that new provisions be added explicitly prohibiting, from today onward, any scholar who has ever participated in the prefectural or provincial examinations or who is currently registered in a prefectural or county school from crossing the sea, along with appropriate rewards and punishments. (These instructions) should be clearly promulgated to all coastal and near-coastal prefectures and circuits." The edict was approved. For those matters already covered by existing regulations, the relevant articles were to be restated and strictly enforced. The section prohibiting scholars who had participated in the examinations or who were registered in schools from crossing the sea was to be added into the original regulations.⁵²

六月二十二日，臣僚言：「訪聞入蕃海商，自元祐後來押販海船人，時有附帶曾經赴試士人及過犯停替胥吏過海入蕃。或名為住冬，留在彼國，數年不回，有二十年者，取妻養子，轉於近北蕃國，無所不至。元豐年中，停替編配人自有條禁，不許過海。及今歲久，法在有司，未常檢舉。又有遠僻白屋士人，多是占戶為商，趨利過海，未有法禁。欲乞睿斷指揮，檢會元豐編配人不許過海條，重別增修，及創立今日已後曾預貢解及州縣有學籍士人不得過海條賞，明示諸路沿海、次海州軍。」詔依。有條令者坐條申明行下，其曾預貢解及學籍士人不得過海一節，於元條內添入。

⁵² SHY, *Xing Fa* 刑法 2. See also Chin, "Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities," 161.

Although the writer of this text was unwilling to refer to Koryŏ by name, the mention of “northern countries” beyond that kingdom makes it clear that Koryŏ was the place under discussion. There are some points from this entry that are worthy of our attention. First, the writers seem unaware or unwilling to recognize that these people were mainly permanently residing there, and they do not use the term “defect” that is so commonly recorded in the Koryŏ histories. This relates to the sensitive topic of Chinese subjects traveling abroad, which as we know, record keepers often avoided as it reflected poorly on emperors who were supposed to attract subjects rather than push them away. The writer of this entry was also not aware of how long Chinese scholars had previously been immigrating to Korea, and appears to believe that it was a relatively recent phenomenon.

This entry also confirms much of what is recorded or alluded to in the Korean histories: that the defectors were all from prefectures on or near China’s coasts, that many of them had participated in the civil service examinations, that some scholars in those areas became sea merchants, and that these men took wives and raised children in their new domain. The entry also confirms that some were removed from office. The reference to “passing the winter” is actually sea merchant jargon from this period which was employed by Chinese residing in Sumatra as well. References in this entry to scholars moving to lands further north align with scholarship which discusses Chinese serving in the Liao empire, and with records of southern Chinese people illicitly trading there.⁵³

Overall, the Chinese who resided in Koryŏ during this period exercised much influence on the commerce, production, and politics of the region. Other influences such as those

⁵³ For the former point, see Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 18–19. For the latter point, see *Dongpo qi ji*, Zouyi 8.

pertaining to religion and culture were likely notable as well, though the sources discussing those forms of transmission are more limited. One intriguing aspect in which we may also likely trace the influence of Chinese merchants and courtiers is in the realm of place names. It is interesting to note that many of the names of locations in southern China which were the home regions of the merchants and scholars who traveled to Korea were also used as place names in Korea as well. Some of those place names include: Kimhwa 金華 (cn. Jinhua, in Wuzhou, central Zhejiang),⁵⁴ Myōngju 明州 (cn. Mingzhou, eastern Zhejiang),⁵⁵ Yōngga 永嘉 (cn. Yongjia, a county in Wenzhou, southern Zhejiang),⁵⁶ Kōnju 建州 (cn. Jianzhou, northwestern Fujian),⁵⁷ Pokju 福州 (cn. Fuzhou, northeastern Fujian),⁵⁸ Hūnghwa 興化 (cn. Xinghua, eastern Fujian),⁵⁹ Ch'ōnju 泉州 (cn. Quanzhou, southern Fujian),⁶⁰ and Kwangju 廣州 (cn. Guangzhou, central-coastal Guangdong).⁶¹ As for linguistic influences, among the many Chinese languages and dialects, the Korean language today appears most closely related to Hokkien—the language group of southern Fujian. Perhaps future research will provide more details, though it would seem that during this period, the presence of Chinese merchants and scholars from that region played a major role in how Chinese vocabulary came to be pronounced and integrated into the Korean language.

⁵⁴ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 17 and 101 discussing the Mongol invasions of the mid thirteenth century.

⁵⁵ *Samguk sagi*, kwŏn 37.

⁵⁶ Used in numerous instances in *Koryŏ sa* as a place of enfeoffment in titles.

⁵⁷ *Koryŏ sa*, kwŏn 137 mentions it as a location in the thirteenth century.

⁵⁸ Recorded in various instances in the *Koryŏ sa*, but kwŏn 83 states it was originally a northern fortress built in 1106 with 7000 households from the south relocated to live there.

⁵⁹ Recorded in numerous instances in the *Koryŏ sa*. Kwŏn 82 states that it was originally a northern garrison built in 995.

⁶⁰ *Samguk sagi*, kwŏn 34 and 37.

⁶¹ *Samguk sagi* kwŏn 35 states this place existed at the time of its writing (early twelfth century) but in the mid-eighth century it was called Hanju 漢州. Kwŏn 50 indicates the name Kwangju was in use in 900 CE. There are numerous mentions of this location in the *Koryŏ sa*.

Japan

Migration of Chinese people to Japan predates the extant records of the archipelago, and it continued throughout the Heian period (794–1185). Yet, as systems of government evolved in the ninth century and the Japanese state came to rely less on foreign immigrants and their descendants to staff its bureaucracies, the topic of non-native inhabitants became of less interest. Even with a resurgence of Chinese migration in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, descriptions of the immigration process and the formation of Chinese communities are fragmented, sporadic, and usually presented in relation to a separate topic of interest. It is still possible to establish an account of Chinese migration and the formation of Chinese communities in this period, though it must be constructed from these random details, as well as from contextual inferences and the material record.

Northern Kyushu before the Mid-Eleventh Century

Most scholarship on Japan's early Chinese residents has focused on the northern coastline of Kyushu, where the port city of Hakata came to be established. The prevailing narrative is that although Chinese merchants had been sailing to Japan since the early ninth century, their movement on land was restricted to the lodging facilities of the Kōrokan—located on coast of Hakata Bay. With the decline of centralized authority and the destruction of the Kōrokan in the mid-eleventh century, Chinese visitors established the nearby settlement of Hakata to handle commerce and to host incoming ships and their crews.⁶² Such a narrative accurately describes

⁶² For the destruction of the Kōrokan, see Ōba Kōji. “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku” 博多の都市空間と中国人居住区, in *Minatomachi no topogurafi* 港町のトポグラフィ, ed. Fukasawa Katsumi 深沢克己, (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2006), 58.

most exchanges with Chinese merchants until the mid-eleventh century, though more nuance can be added to demonstrate that Chinese merchants were not always temporary visitors prior to the establishment of Hakata, nor were they always confined to a single location that was intended to segregate them from the Japanese populace. For instance, the merchant Zhang Youxin was residing in a village on the northern Kyushu island of Kashiwajima 柏島 (present-day Karatsu 唐津) in 861 when he was recruited to build a ship for Imperial Prince Takaoka's 高丘親王 (799–865?) pilgrimage to the continent.⁶³ Authorities in Heian were aware of his presence there and showed no objection to it, but rather considered him a man who could be recruited as an interpreter when needed. Over the next two centuries, Chinese merchant ships were known to stop at this island and regions further west, as these were the first locations such ships passed through on their way to Hakata Bay after crossing the East China Sea from Mingzhou. For instance, 15 years after Zhang Youxin built his ship, Japanese officials were informed that Chinese merchants were trading incense to locals in settlements of that area in return for silver, jade, and precious stones.⁶⁴ Officials in Dazaifu (the administrative center of Kyushu) strongly objected to such trade as it infringed on their monopoly rights of first access to foreign imports. Yet, throughout much of Japanese history, the islands west of Hakata were infamous for unregulated trade and piracy, especially when they later became a center for the Chinese-Japanese pirate confederations known as *Wokou* 倭寇.

We also occasionally see in records instances when Chinese merchants were allowed to “naturalize” (*kika* 帰化) in Japan, which, like in the case of Koryō, appears to denote a process of formal immigration. One example of this process pertains to a Chinese man named Cui Sheng

⁶³ Saeki Arikiyo, *Takaoka shinnō nittōki*, 154–55; and *Zuda shinnō nittō ryakki*.

⁶⁴ Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 194–95.

崔勝 who naturalized in 849.⁶⁵ In 871, he was permitted to reside on an estate in the western section of Kyoto previously owned by a Japanese commoner. In 877, he formally petitioned the Heian court for permission to own the land in perpetuity under the reasoning that he was concerned about not being able to provide for his wife and children after passing away. This request was granted by the court, and, in 883, he was granted an additional request to acquire land. There is no clarification as to how transactions for the property were handled, though it is noteworthy that Cui Duo 崔鐸, a Chinese merchant with the same surname, sailed from Taizhou to Japan in precisely the same month that Cui Sheng submitted his first request for the ownership of land. Although not conclusive, this information suggests that proceeds from sea trade were used to purchase the land, and that Cui Sheng maintained a representative role in the capital on behalf of merchants in his kinship network. This does not appear to be an isolated case of ethnic Chinese owning land in Japan at around this time, as a tax record for the year 914 lists “Chinese people’s fields” (*tōjin den* 唐人田) in Shinano 信濃 province (Nagano prefecture, central Honshu).⁶⁶ We may also note that place names denoting Chinese settlements can be traced to Kyushu in the tenth century.⁶⁷

By the late tenth century, northern Kyushu remained an important location for Chinese merchants, including those who naturalized and established families with Japanese wives. This was the case for Zhou Wenyi, who frequently captained ships between Hakata Bay and Song ports, and dealt directly with officials in Dazaifu. He married the daughter of a Japanese courtier,

⁶⁵ The information presented here is from *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, entries dated Gangyō 元慶 1 (877).6.9; 8.22; and Gangyō 7 (883).10.27.

⁶⁶ *Besshū fusenshō* 別聚符宣抄, volume 27 of *Shintei zōho kokushi taikēi*, 45, 48.

⁶⁷ Yamauchi Shinji, “Nissō bōeki to ‘Tōbō’ wo meguru oboegaki” 日宋貿易と「トウボウ」をめぐる覚書 in *Ninpo to Hakata* 寧波と博多, eds. Nakajima Gakushō 中島楽章 and Itō Kōji 伊藤幸司 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2013), 8.

and in 986 their son Zhou Liangshi—who later became an important merchant in his own right—was born. Zhou Liangshi was eventually raised in his home prefecture of Taizhou, though he moved back to Japan when he was old enough to take a prominent role in trade missions.⁶⁸ Like his father, he was also active in northern Kyushu.

Other Chinese people were also moving to Japan and “naturalizing” at around this time as well. Here, it is worth considering once more the 1003 entry in a poetry book which stated that “[r]ecently, people from Wenzhou, Hongzhou, and other regions of the Song empire have frequently come to reside (in Japan).”⁶⁹ A more direct translation would be that they had frequently “naturalized” in Japan. Yet acceptance of those seeking this status was not guaranteed. In that same year, the Fujian merchant Shangguan Yongxian also applied for this status but was rejected and ordered to return to China.⁷⁰

Current scholarship holds that upon the destruction of the Kōrokan in 1047, a Chinese community in what became Hakata was quickly established to take up the role of housing ship crews and engaging in trade. The destruction of the Kōrokan was likely an outcome that favored the development of communities in the area, and the archaeological record does show an uptick in trade ceramics discovered in Hakata beginning at that time. However, archaeological sites in the Hakata Bay area beyond the confines of the Kōrokan have also yielded Chinese trade

⁶⁸ On the Zhou family, see Yamazaki “Kaishō to sono tsuma,” 87–99.

⁶⁹ *Honchō reisō*, 606. It is interesting to note that Satsuma mandarins in Japanese are actually called “Wenzhou mandarins” (*Onshū mikan* 温州蜜柑) and are commonly grown on the island of Kyushu. Satsuma will be discussed in greater detail below.

⁷⁰ *Gonki*, entry dated Chōhō 長保 5 (1003).7.20. Sometimes merchants were rejected because they traveled to Japan on too frequent a basis. The system in place to enforce such arrivals was called *nenki* 年記. See Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 206–44. Scholars have debated how long merchants had to wait before being allowed to trade once more after arriving in Japan, with estimations ranging from two to twelve years. While at certain times the system was strictly enforced, at other times (such as during Fujiwara no Michinaga’s 藤原道長 [966–1028] influential tenure at court) it was less stringently followed, with exceptions granted based on loose pretexts.

ceramics prior to the mid-eleventh century, such as the Wenzhou green wares, Fuzhou green wares, and Tong'an wares from southern Fujian discussed in the previous chapter. It should also be considered that the Kōrokan was long since in decline by 1047, just as traffic from China was steadily increasing up until that point. When considering that urban and community development were usually very gradual processes, it would seem likely that northern Kyushu, including perhaps even Hakata, was host to one or several Chinese communities prior to the mid-eleventh century. Chinese sources provide additional indications that such was the case.

In 1012, an embassy traveled from Japan to China, to the great surprise of the Song court.⁷¹ Up until that time, Japanese leaders had shown no interest in conducting formal diplomacy with the Song empire, so a reestablishment of tributary relations was regarded as a major political accomplishment for the court of Emperor Zhenzong. The envoys spoke of auspicious omens in Japan which they claimed meant that a sage emperor (Zhenzong) had emerged to rule over China. The omens themselves appear to have originated from imagery in late Tang poems about the distance between Fuzhou and Japan,⁷² though this did not concern the emperor. To the contrary, Zhenzong used the embassy's arrival as an opportunity to enhance his political stature at home. As a reward to the embassy, he decreed that a temple be built in Japan, and that it would be named Shen'guang 神光 (Divine Light) —the same name as a Fuzhou temple mentioned in the late Tang poems. This event was erased from official Chinese histories, and records of it only exist in private accounts that used such histories as source material. I have argued that the reason for this is because the embassy was clearly not dispatched from the Heian

⁷¹ Jiang Shaoyu 江少虞, *Shishi lei yuan* 事實類苑 (Beijing: Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), juan 63; and *Fozu Tongji*, juan 44. The information that follows is from Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese," 13–14.

⁷² See the poems of Han Wo 韓偓 and Zhou Pu 周朴 in juans 680 and 673 respectively of Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹, *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Yangzhou: Yangzhou shiju, 1707).

government, but rather by Chinese merchants based in Japan. More specifically, it seems that Zhou Wenyi played a role in organizing the embassy, as well as another embassy in 1026. In the latter case, Zhou Wenyi's son Zhou Liangshi claimed the role of ambassador, though the overtures of this embassy were rejected by the Song court, and the visitors were instead directed to conduct trade in Mingzhou. By this time, a new Chinese emperor had taken the throne, and his regent was much less concerned about earning the admiration of envoys in exchange for favorable trade terms.

Yet what is most intriguing about these events is that Zhenzong supported—and possibly financed—the construction of a temple for Chinese merchants living in Japan. Over the longue durée of the history of Chinese people overseas, temples always formed the nucleus of Chinese communities. This was also the case for Chinese settlers forming new communities in the frontier regions of southern China.⁷³ As was the case when Zhenzong supported the construction of a Buddhist temple in Srivijaya eight years prior (discussed below), he provided the pseudo-embassy of 1012 with a temple signboard designed by one of his court's top calligraphers. When considering that Zhou Liangshi was coordinating his 1026 embassy with officials in Dazaifu and that both he and his father were highly active in northern Kyushu, this region would seem to be the most likely location for the Shen'guang temple. Due to the scattered and sparse nature of information about Chinese communities in Japan, Japanese textual sources do not appear to describe the establishment of such a temple. However, there is a temple with this name (Jinkōji 神光寺) located along an estuary on the coast of Usa, in northern Kyushu. Usa is known most prominently as the location of the original Hachiman shrine, which has strong historical connections with overseas trade and exchange. Jinkōji's founding tradition does place its

⁷³ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 38.

construction in the eleventh century, though the monk attributed with its establishment was active more toward the middle of the century.⁷⁴ This would be the best case to make for the current location of the Shen'guang temple, as I am not aware of other temples with this name in Kyushu. It is also worth noting that two years after the 1012 "embassy" returned to Japan, the court in Heian was aware of the presence of a Chinese monk residing in Kyushu and requested that he provide treatments for a childhood illness.⁷⁵ Later records provide details of how Chinese merchants in Hakata constructed temples as the Chinese community grew in size and importance. These were used as places of worship, community organization, finance, and trade.⁷⁶

That the Zhou family sought to foster close ties with religious institutions in northern Kyushu is further attested to by the fact that one member of the 1026 embassy was a shrine manager of the Shiga shrine,⁷⁷ which, like the Usa shrine, also has a long history of involvement in overseas exchange. The shrine was (and still is) located on Shikanoshima island, which is in the center of Hakata Bay. It is quite rare for Japanese records of this period to detail Japanese people (aside from Buddhist monks) traveling abroad, and this peculiarity was likewise noted by the Heian court. It would seem that the manager was present not just for the sake of trade but also to lend credence to the claim that the embassy was "Japanese." This may also explain why another merchant in the embassy was, like Zhou Liangshi, the son of a Chinese father and Japanese mother. On the ship's return to Japan, its crew sought to represent themselves to the court in Heian as a Chinese merchant ship, though they still had to deal with regulations against overly frequent visitation. Part of the appeal they made to do this was that the merchant Zhang

⁷⁴ <https://usanochibao.jimdofree.com/長洲の歴史>

⁷⁵ *Shōyūki*, entry dated Chōwa 長和 3 (1014).6.25.

⁷⁶ Kawazoe Shōji, "Japan and East Asia," in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 3: Medieval Japan*, ed. Kozo Yamamura (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 402–04; Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 128–30; von Glahn, "The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network," 276–79; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 121–26.

⁷⁷ Mori Kimiyuki, "Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi," 21.

Renchang 章仁昶 wished to attend upon his ailing elderly parents—a father who was a Chinese merchant and a mother who was a Japanese woman.⁷⁸ Such a plea was regarded favorably by the Heian court and proved beneficial to their case. Zhang Renchang was allowed to visit his parents, though the ship itself was only allowed to make port temporarily. On a return trip to Japan in 1028, Zhou Wenyi once again demonstrated close links with a Japanese shrine, this time with the Munakata shrine located to the north of Hakata Bay, which delivered gifts from him to a Japanese courtier in the capital.⁷⁹

It is clear that prior to the destruction of the Kōrokan in 1047, Chinese merchants were active or residing in several locations in northern Kyushu. The settlement of Hakata likely began as a focal point for commercial activities which attracted merchants in the outlying areas of northern Kyushu in addition to the traders who arrived directly from the continent. Prior to this time, more plausible locations for relatively smaller Chinese communities would be Hakozaki, Dazaifu, Munakata, Usa, Karatsu, and the islands of Hirado 平戸 (northwest Nagasaki prefecture)—in addition to the location of the Hakata settlement. Hakozaki is a particularly plausible precursor to Hakata, not just because of its close proximity to the Hakata settlement (today they are both districts in Fukuoka city), but because it was founded over a century before the Kōrokan was destroyed. The Hakozaki shrine, with its long history of involvement in overseas trade, was constructed in 923, after which a small village was built around it.⁸⁰ Several additional factors support the idea that Hakozaki was the main precursor to Hakata. To begin,

⁷⁸ *Shōyūki*, entries dated Manju 4 (1027).8.25; Manju 4.8.30; and Manju 4.9.14. See also Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi,” 26; Sattler, “The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia,” 55; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 77.

⁷⁹ von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 42; and Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 121.

⁸⁰ Nakao Yūta 中尾祐太, “Kōkogaku kara mita Hakozaki to Hakatawan” 考古学からみた箱崎と博多湾, *Kyūshū shigaku* 九州史学 180 (2018): 8.

Yue ware, and even Islamic ceramics, have been discovered in that area.⁸¹ The shrine was also established as a branch of the Usa Hachiman shrine, which, as we have noted, had its own extensive overseas connections. Moreover, there appears to be at least one documented instance of a Chinese merchant trading with the Hakozaki estate prior to 1047,⁸² and as we shall see further on, it was a place of residence for Chinese people as Hakata grew. Finally, Hakozaki was one of the main targets of Jurchen pirates (known as the Toi 刀伊) as they raided Japanese coastal settlements in 1019.⁸³ The resistance the pirates faced there was enough to prevent the shrine from being destroyed and to force the invaders to begin their journey back to the continent. As for Dazaifu, a sea merchant with a Chinese name was recorded as living there in 1080,⁸⁴ though its location as a center of government provided reasons for merchants to live there as well as to live far away. By the mid twelfth century, Chinese people were recorded as residing in the Hirado islands and marrying local women, and in one case a local militia leader of what later turned into a pirate band adopted a son from such a union. The Chinese from this area were also known to maintain relations with the Munakata and Hakozaki shrines,⁸⁵ and, in fact, Chinese-Japanese marriage alliances were also evident in Munakata. The Munakata clan is known to have married with at least two generations of women from Chinese immigrant families by the mid-twelfth century.⁸⁶ In addition to the instances of intermarriage between Japanese and Chinese people discussed thus far, it is interesting to note that the mid-eleventh century was also a time when fictional stories of romantic unions between Chinese and Japanese people begin to

⁸¹ Nakao, “Kōkogaku kara mita Hakozaki to Hakatawan,” 11.

⁸² von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 43.

⁸³ Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 97–98.

⁸⁴ Hayashi, “‘Hakata kōshū’ kankei shiryō,” 97–98.

⁸⁵ Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 42; von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 45.

⁸⁶ Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 121.

appear in Japanese literature.⁸⁷ It is possible that the increasing prevalence of interethnic marriages influenced the imaginations of Japanese writers.

The Early Settlement of Hakata

From a business perspective, it would make sense that most merchants would want to reside at or near the very places where goods were unloaded, stored, and most importantly, purchased. The port facilities in the Hakata Bay area long predated large settlements there, and the area was widely known among locals and foreign merchants as a place for trade. Although we do not know precisely when merchants began to reside there in large numbers, we do know that it provided a sensible location for merchants to congregate when centralized authority in the Heian state (and the authority of its offices in Dazaifu) was gradually diminishing.⁸⁸ The settlement of Hakata eventually became the main hub for overseas trade in Japan and held that distinction over the span of centuries, even after overseas commerce began to spread to other ports on the archipelago. Yet details of the city throughout that time are sparse, despite its development into an urbanized trade center by the twelfth century.

The archaeological record provides a good starting point for analysis. As merchants arrived in Hakata Bay in ever greater numbers in the eleventh century, they set up their own places of residence and trade not far from the ruins of the Kōrokan, and this became the eventual site of Hakata. Approximate dates for settlement there can also be derived from the analysis of

⁸⁷ Joshua S. Mostow, “Early Heian Court Tales,” in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature*, eds. Haruo Shirane, Tomi Suzuki, and David Lurie (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 145–47, 151–52.

⁸⁸ On Hakata, see Batten, *Gateway to Japan*.

ceramic shards, many of which were produced in the mid-eleventh century.⁸⁹ There was also an increase in the construction of buildings at that time, one of which is thought to have been a government office built slightly before the mid-eleventh century.⁹⁰ The variety of excavated items found in Hakata for this period and the following century far exceeds those found in the vicinity of the Kōrokan. Many roof tiles produced in southern China have been excavated there, and a portion of these date to the eleventh century.⁹¹ Chinese roof tiles dating from between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have also been discovered in Hakata, as well as in Hakozaki, Dazaifu, and other locations near Fukuoka.⁹² It was previously believed that these tiles were produced in Mingzhou (later called Ningbo), though this argument has been refuted, and other proposed locations for the production of these tiles include Quanzhou, elsewhere in Zhejiang, and the China quarter of Hakata itself. As for the buildings, the offices, inns, and storehouses of Chinese merchants are thought to have been located side by side, while the *gangshou* (merchant leaders) are thought to have operated many of those facilities.⁹³ The discovery of ceramic kiln equipment in Hakata also suggests that ceramics production occurred there, much like in other locations where Chinese resided overseas.⁹⁴ Some sense of the inhabitants can also be gleaned from the recovery of Chinese ceramic toy animals, some of which are on display in the Fukuoka

⁸⁹ Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 40–41; Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 60–61; and Saeki Kōji, “Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan,” in *Tools of Culture: Japan’s Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000–1500s*, eds. Andrew Edmund Goble, Kenneth R. Robinson, and Haruko Wakabayashi (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2009), 176.

⁹⁰ Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 60–61. This topic is somewhat politicized, as Japanese scholars frequently emphasize government involvement, or the lack thereof, in their works.

⁹¹ Fukuoka shi Hakubutsukan 福岡市博物館, ed. *Chainataun ten: mō hitotsu no Nihon shi: Hakata, Naha, Nagasaki, Yokohama, Kōbe: zuroku* チャイナタウン展: もうひとつの日本史: 博多・那覇・長崎・横浜・神戸: 図録 (Fukuoka: Chainataunten mō hitotsu no Nihonshi jikkō iinkai, 2003), 8–12.

⁹² Obata Hiroki 小畑弘己, “Ninpo Hakata kōryū no busshō toshite no Ninpo kei kawara no kagaku bunseki” 寧波・博多交流の物証としての寧波系瓦の化学分析 in *Ninpo to Hakata*, 38–67.

⁹³ *Chainataun ten*, 12; and von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network,” 273–74.

⁹⁴ Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 360–61.

City Museum. Small numbers of these items dating from the ninth to twelfth centuries have also been found in shipwrecks and at the former locations of Chinese communities, such as Palembang, Indonesia. Such items likely belonged to the children of ethnically mixed and *peranakan* families. Chinese coins are another item commonly recovered in overseas Chinese communities. They circulated in Hakata beginning in the eleventh century, though we lack details about how they were used at that time.⁹⁵ Some of the earliest Chinese burials in the vicinity of Hakata are thought to date to around the mid-eleventh century.⁹⁶ Also discovered in northern Kyushu are large numbers of burial mounds for Buddhist sutras.⁹⁷ The process for creating these mounds for merit was Japanese, though at least several Chinese names have been written on these sutras recovered near Hakata which date to the early-twelfth century. Many of these sutras were also placed in Chinese ceramic containers along with items produced in China such as mirrors and cosmetic boxes. Yiwen Li has proposed that men of ethnically mixed families were burying sutras on behalf of their Japanese mothers. As with other locations overseas, it does not appear that the Chinese community in Hakata was simply comprised of one predominant ethnic group and their native spouses and children of mixed decent. Rather, Chinese and Japanese items were both discovered in large numbers on the location. For Japanese influences, we see many cooking utensils, wells, and building structures made in a Japanese style.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network,” 258. See also Ethan Isaac Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State: Economic Growth in Early Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); and Enomoto, *Sōryo to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 140.

⁹⁶ Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 65.

⁹⁷ Information on this topic is from Yiwen Li, *Networks of Faith and Profit*, 81–84. See also Max D. Moerman, “The Archaeology of Anxiety: An Underground History of Heian Religion” in *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*, eds. Mikael S. Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 245–74.

⁹⁸ Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 66.

As for where the early Chinese inhabitants of Hakata came from, it is most likely that they arrived from a variety of locations in southern China. Consideration of the data presented in Chapter Three indicates that most of the Chinese who traveled to Japan came from locations near the coast of southern China, though some were likely from regions further inland such as northwest Fujian and present-day Jiangxi province. The available textual evidence allows us to ascertain which regional networks were most involved in the Japan trade at this time. From the mid-eleventh century until 1127, five merchants from Quanzhou are recorded as sailing to Japan, as well as three from Fuzhou, one from Mingzhou, and one from Guangdong. These, of course, were simply leaders of merchant ships which held crews of between 30 to 100 men, though these details do provide a strong indication of the demographics of this time. Clearly, much like in Koryō, Fujian people formed a majority in the Chinese community. This observation is also supported in the archaeological record. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated that Chinese merchants of a given location usually shipped export ceramics predominantly from the same location or nearby. This tendency holds true for Hakata at this time as well. From the mid-eleventh century until the mid-twelfth century the vast majority of ceramics shipped to Hakata were white wares produced in Fujian and Chaozhou.⁹⁹ Although Chaozhou is located in Guangdong, it was (and continues to be) linguistically, culturally, and geographically much closer to southern Fujian than to the Cantonese heartland of Guangzhou. Such wares are believed to have been exported from Quanzhou.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Tianzhong, “Ribei chutu de Songdai Chaozhou yao chanpin yu xiangguan wenti,” 23–30. See also, Saeki Kōji, “Hakata” 博多, in vol. 10 of *Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi* 岩波講座日本通史, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), 283–300.

¹⁰⁰ von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network,” 271.

The first mention of Hakata in textual sources comes from a poetry book, and it states that following the death of the Acting Governor General of Dazaifu, Minamoto no Tsunenobu 源経信 (1016–1097), many Chinese people living in Hakata came to mourn at his funeral.¹⁰¹ We also see in this book that Tsunenobu's son, who was its writer, exchanged poetry with a Chinese merchant.¹⁰² The next mention occurs in a Buddhist text with an entry dated to the year 1116, which talks of a ship captain named Gong Sanlang 龔三郎 from “the Chinese quarter of the port of Hakata” 博多津唐房.¹⁰³ He is recorded as having piloted a ship on behalf of the Daisenji 大山寺 temple in Dazaifu. This marks the beginning of usage of the word for “Chinese quarter” or *Tōbō* 唐坊 in Hakata, though the term was often used in other locations and written with many variations of characters. By the mid-twelfth century, we know that there were thousands of households in Hakozaki and Hakata. We also know that the Hakozaki shrine maintained extensive involvement in sea trade, to the extent that its interests directly challenged those of Dazaifu. The shrine was one of three religious institutions which sent retainers to burn several dozen buildings in Dazaifu in 1140, though after that, Dazaifu was able to assume direct control over the shrine.¹⁰⁴ Enmity between residents of Hakata and Dazaifu came to a boiling point in 1151, when the latter sent 500 cavalry to pillage the Hakozaki shrine as well as 1600 households

¹⁰¹ Minamoto no Toshiyori 源俊頼, *Sanboku kakashū* 散木奇歌集 (Tokyo: Yagi shoten, 2014), vol. 254. For discussion on this entry, see Hayashi Fuminori, “Hakata kōshū no rekishiteki ichi” 博多綱首の歴史的位罫, in *Kodai chūsei no shakai to kokka* 古代中世の社会と国家 (Osaka: Seibundō Shuppan Kabushiki Kaisha, 1998), 576–77; Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 43; and Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 53–54.

¹⁰² Mori Kimiyuki, “Kōryū no michi” 交流の道 in *Nihon kodai kōryūshi nyūmon*, 375.

¹⁰³ Hayashi, “Hakata kōshū” kankei shiryō,” 76; Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 42–43.

¹⁰⁴ von Glahn, “The Ningbo-Hakata Merchant Network,” 268.

in Hakozaki and Hakata—beginning with the residence of the widow of a Chinese man named Wang Sheng 王昇.¹⁰⁵

To date, scholars of Hakata have focused on its Chinese population due to their significant roles in developing the area and in conducting long-distance trade. Yet it might also be apt to consider whether other ethnic groups arrived in Hakata as well—either as visitors or as residents. Despite prohibitions against Koreans arriving in Japan, it is difficult to imagine that some did not stay in Hakata at various times, either under the guise of being Chinese people or when government oversight of the port was loose or nonexistent. We should also consider that various groups in Southeast Asia were involved in long-distance sea trade at this time. Chapter Three examined an instance of a “South Seas merchant’s ship” traveling to Japan and China in around 1004 that appears to have had a mixed crew of Malay-Javanese and Chinese people. There is also an interesting entry in the *Gōdanshō* 江談抄 (compiled c. 1104–1108) which is comprised of the notes and observations of Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房 (1041–1111), a prominent scholar and tutor of Japanese emperors. In one section of the book, he provides a phonetic transcription of fifteen numbers which he states are from the “Persian language” (*Hashi kokugo* 波斯国語).¹⁰⁶ With perhaps one exception (the number “two” recorded as 止 *ae* or *toa*), none of the numbers resemble Early New Persian. However, on close examination it is evident that most of the numbers resemble or closely resemble Old Malay. It is clear, in fact, that this is a record of the Old Malay number system with some corruption and possibly some dialectal influence. When considering that Ōe no Masafusa was an administrator of two locations which were hubs

¹⁰⁵ Hayashi, “‘Hakata kōshū’ kankei shiryō,” 77–78.

¹⁰⁶ Ōe no Masafusa, *Gōdanshō* 江談抄, in volume 11 of the *Kokushi sōsho* 国史叢書 series (Tokyo: Kokushi kenkyūkai, 1914), 363. For more on this individual, see Robert Borgen, “Ōe no Masafusa and the Spirit of Michizane,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 50.3 (1995): 357–84.

for foreign trade—he was made Supernumerary Provisional Governor of Echizen province (Fukui prefecture) in 1092 and Supernumerary Vice-Governor of Dazaifu in 1097—this information indicates that he interacted with merchants or sailors from Srivijaya or Champa during his career.

Chinese People Outside of Northern Kyushu

Chinese merchants and travelers were also active in locations outside of northern Kyushu. The term to designate Chinese communities, *Tōbō* (with its various renderings in kanji) begins to be used as a place name in this period, shortly before such designations can be found across much of Japan.¹⁰⁷ Some such locations with this name were located in northern Kyushu, in places such as Karatsu, Munakata, and Hakata Bay, though others were located further away, such as in Yamaguchi.¹⁰⁸ Scholars have debated whether the term indicates that Chinese communities were located in such locations, many of which were also locations where Chinese export ceramics were discovered. The scholars reluctant to accept such an assessment argue that more details should be provided from textual records beyond a name which translates to “Chinese quarters,” that it is difficult to date the place names with precision, or that such locations were not significant places for cross-cultural exchange. Considering that even textual records for large Chinese communities like Hakata are sparse, this presents a challenge, as many locations in Japan with the name *Tōbō* do not have historical records which provide insights on their

¹⁰⁷ For discussion on this term, see Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 42–43; Ōba, “Hakata no toshi kūkan to Chūgokujin kyojūku,” 72–73; Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 298, 317–325; and Yamauchi, “Nissō bōeki to ‘Tōbō,’” 7–28.

¹⁰⁸ Yamauchi, “Nissō bōeki to ‘Tōbō,’” 9, 17–19.

demographics. Nevertheless, there is much evidence to show that Chinese people were quite active outside of northern Kyushu in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In fact, Japanese records indicate that from the mid-eleventh to the early-twelfth centuries, there was just as much or more traffic from Chinese merchants to the west coast of Honshu than there was to and from northern Kyushu.¹⁰⁹ Much of this traffic was centered on the port of Tsuruga 敦賀 in Echizen province, though it also reached outlying coastal provinces. One reason for this shift can be attributed to Tsuruga's closer proximity to the capital city, Kyoto, and its distance away from authorities in Dazaifu. As courtiers increasingly encroached on the jurisdictions of state institutions, the wealth from sea trade became a prime target for powerful individuals. Likewise, the close proximity of these locations to the capital meant that a greater number of educated individuals were aware of and documented such activity, and the records of socially prominent writers also had a greater likelihood of being preserved over time.

Tsuruga had previously functioned as the main port for traffic to and from Parhae, and its role as a hub for continental exchange continued after the kingdom was annexed by the Liao empire in the early tenth century. The Chinese merchant Zhu Rencong is recorded as having sailed there in 995, and in 1060 the Heian court gave a group of Chinese merchants permission to settle there based on the precedent set by Zhu Rencong.¹¹⁰ Following this, Chinese merchants are recorded as sailing to or residing in Echizen in 1080, 1082, 1086, 1091 (at Tsuruga port), 1100 (at Tsuruga port), 1106, and 1112.¹¹¹ Several scholars believe that the port of Tsuruga came to function as a hub for Chinese merchants at this time, much like Hakata.¹¹² I agree with this

¹⁰⁹ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 128–42; and Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi,” 10.

¹¹⁰ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 128; and Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi.”

¹¹¹ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 132–39; and Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi,” 10.

¹¹² Saeki Kōji, “Trade Between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Gōshu,” 41–42; and Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi,” 11.

position, however the prominence of the Chinese community in Tsuruga appears to have only lasted for half a century. By 1110, a Chinese merchant residing in nearby Wakasa province complained to the Heian court about the corrupt behavior of the Echizen governor, and by 1119, one journal entry states regarding “the Chinese people of Tsuruga” (*Tsuruga Tōjin* 敦賀唐人) that Chinese merchants had not arrived in the past couple of years due to the harsh laws of the governor.¹¹³ From this time onward there are no further mentions of Chinese people in the area, so it would seem that the heavy-handed practices of the local government caused many of the Chinese residing in Tsuruga and its outlying area to relocate to Hakata or other settlements. Hakata’s closer proximity to the continent, and a stronger alignment of the ports of Hakata and Mingzhou after the fall of the Northern Song might have been additional factors.

By 1096 we see that Chinese people continued their activities further to the northeast. Chinese people are recorded as arriving in Noto 能登 province (Ishikawa prefecture) at that time, which was located on a peninsula between Echizen and the northern part of Honshu.¹¹⁴ By 1100, Hiraizumi 平泉 (Iwate prefecture) in northern Honshu was established as the power base of the Northern Fujiwara clan, and it quickly developed into an unlikely hub for the trade of overseas commodities. Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan has discussed how the commercial district of Hiraizumi had “several tens of blocks” of stores, storehouses, and residences, and that ten tons of ceramic shards were recovered from the area—the greatest portion of which (aside from disposable clay wares) were Fujianese ceramics dating to the twelfth century. As for the domestic wares, these were produced in Noto,¹¹⁵ which we have just seen was a location traversed by

¹¹³ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 140–41; Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 134–35; and Mori Kimiyuki, “Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi,” 10–11.

¹¹⁴ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 137.

¹¹⁵ Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 98–99.

Chinese seafarers. It may be that Chinese merchants were transshipping such wares further north. Yiengpruksawan believes that Chinese merchants traveled directly to northern Japan, and that they were attracted to the region due to its position as a major center of gold production.¹¹⁶ If such was the case, it may be that Chinese merchants previously residing in Echizen and the surrounding area found Hiraizumi a more welcoming location to do business.

As for Chinese people traveling to and residing in the areas near Echizen, Zhu Rencong and his crew of 70 traveled to Wakasa province in 995, which was located to the immediate west of Tsuruga. However, he ran afoul with the governor there, and brought his ship to port in Echizen instead, where he was given official permission to trade. In 1089, the governor of Wakasa was informed that a Chinese merchant was injured in an incident there.¹¹⁷ Chinese merchants are also recorded as residing there in 1110 and traveling there in 1111. The former case pertains to the complaint about the aggressive overreach of the Echizen governor, while the latter pertains to an incident in which merchants were rejected in their request to settle in the province. Although there is much to indicate that Chinese people were active in Wakasa, all of the records detail rather negative experiences there. Moreover, since mention of Chinese people in that area and nearby ends at same time as Tsuruga, we should consider that the region as a whole was no longer a desirable location for Chinese traders.

Slightly further to the west, we see that Chinese people were also active in Tajima 但馬 province (Hyōgo prefecture). For instance, the Chinese merchant Zhang Shoulong 張守隆 is recorded as having “washed ashore” there in 1044. Although he complained about a local official confiscating his goods in the following year, he returned to Japan in 1050 and successfully

¹¹⁶ Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 99–100.

¹¹⁷ This information and the information that follows is from *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 136–39.

applied to become a naturalized resident.¹¹⁸ Ten years after that, the merchant Lin Yang 林養 also settled in Tajima after arriving in Echizen on a trade ship.¹¹⁹ His son Lin Gao 林皋 later sailed with the Japanese monk Jōjin.¹²⁰ Much further west, a Chinese person is recorded as residing in Hōki 伯耆 province (Tottori prefecture) in 1085 and traveling to Dazaifu via land routes with a group of six others.¹²¹

There is one final area which appears to have served as a hub for Chinese seafarers. Satsuma 薩摩 province (Kagoshima prefecture), located on Heian Japan's far southern periphery on the southwestern portion of Kyushu, was of considerable distance from Kyoto, and also some distance away from Dazaifu. However, this distance, and the province's close proximity to an island chain that connected to Okinawa, Taiwan, and China's Fujian province, allowed it to function as a node referred to in textual sources as the "Southern Islands route" (*Nantōro* 南島路) to the continent. Compared with the routes which connected to the Korean peninsula or to Mingzhou, this was the more dangerous passage as sailors risked drifting into the Pacific Ocean or being attacked by cannibals purported to have lived on some of the islands. However, it also served as a functional route between China and Japan that largely bypassed the attentive eyes of administrators on the coasts of northern Kyushu and southern China.

That Chinese people traveled to and settled in Satsuma is indicated by the fact that there were at least several locations in the province with the name *Tōbō*.¹²² Despite its remote location,

¹¹⁸ *Hyakurenshō* 百練抄, in vol. 14 of Kokushi Taikō 國史大系 (Tokyo: Keizai Zasshisha, 1906), entry dated Kōhei 康平 3 (1060).8.7; *Fusō ryakki*, entry dated Kōhei 3.7.5; and Mori Kimiyuki, "Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi," 54–55.

¹¹⁹ Mori Kimiyuki, "Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi," 10.

¹²⁰ Douglas S. Fuqua, "The Japanese Missions to Tang China and Maritime Exchange in East Asia, 7th–9th Centuries," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawai'i, 2004, 188.

¹²¹ Mori Kimiyuki, "Shu Jinsō to Shū Bunei, Shū Ryōshi," 11.

¹²² Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 7–8; and Yamauchi, "Nissō bōeki to 'Tōbō,'" 9.

other textual sources also highlight or indicate the presence of Chinese people there. For instance, in 1028, goods imported from China were sent from Satsuma province to a courtier in Kyoto. Charlotte von Verschuer believes that these goods were imported by the Taizhou merchant Zhou Wenyi via Hakata because they arrived in Kyoto on the same day that Zhou Wenyi's gifts arrived via the Munakata shrine.¹²³ However, goods traveling to Honshu from southwest and western Kyushu usually passed through northern Kyushu first, so it is likewise possible that the Satsuma goods were sent to the capital with the Munakata goods in the same shipment. In fact, we may see that such exchanges were occurring prior to this time as well, as the governors of Ōsumi 大隅 (Kagoshima prefecture) and Satsuma also sent gifts to Heian courtiers (including goods from the islands southwest of Kyushu) in 1025 as well.¹²⁴ A Chinese presence functioning beyond centralized authority is further alluded to in a 1058 record of a Chinese person having “washed ashore” in Ōsumi, which was immediately to the east of Satsuma, where he was subsequently murdered.¹²⁵ There was also an incident in 1093 in which Koryō officials seized a ship crewed by Japanese and Chinese people.¹²⁶ That this was a smuggling ship can be understood by the fact that Japanese sailors—who were prohibited from traveling overseas—formed a majority of the ship's crew, and also because the ship carried weapons, which were prohibited from export from Japan. Closer examination of the ship's cargo, which included sulfur and marine shells, suggests that the ship was sailing from southern Kyushu and carrying goods from the smaller islands further southwest along the “Southern Islands” route. The coordination of Japanese and Chinese sailors must have been handled in a location far

¹²³ von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 42.

¹²⁴ Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 247.

¹²⁵ *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 129.

¹²⁶ For this event, see Yamauchi, *Nara Heian ki no Nihon to Ajia*, 236; Hara, “Sōdai kaishō no katsudō ni kan suru”; and Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 246.

from the prying eyes of Dazaifu officials, and southern Kyushu would have provided a suitable location for this.

The archaeological record of southern Kyushu likewise indicates that trade connections with China existed in this period. A particularly important location is the estuary of the Manose 万之瀬 river in Satsuma, which provided an ideal location for anchoring ships. Large numbers of Chinese export ceramics have been discovered there, and there is also evidence of large post-built structures and Chinese roof tiles.¹²⁷ The Chinese ceramics date from the latter half of the eleventh century to the fourteenth century, with a peak in quantities from 1150 to 1200. From 1050 to 1150, most of these ceramics were white wares, though Cizhou wares, yellow glazed basins from Quanzhou, and Yue-type wares were also shipped there. Twelfth-century ceramics were discovered at the nearby location of the Ichijōin 一乗院 temple in Bōnotsu 坊津. This settlement is believed to have hosted an administrative center, temples and shrines, a Chinese quarter, and a market.¹²⁸ We may also note that there was a distribution of *Tōbō* place names in the vicinity.¹²⁹ Scholars are in agreement that this was a hub for foreign trade—albeit not as large as that of Hakata.¹³⁰

Ryukyu

When examining the “Southern Islands” route, we see more evidence of Chinese merchants and seafarers sailing between China and southern Kyushu. The broad toponym “Ryukyu” 琉球

¹²⁷ Obata, “Ninpo Hakata kōryū no busshō toshite no Ninpo kei kawara no kagaku bunseki,” 38, 67.

¹²⁸ Richard Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu: An Archaeological Study of Island Communities* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013), 200.

¹²⁹ Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 7–8.

¹³⁰ Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seidoshi no kenkyū*, 7–8; and Yamauchi, “Nissō bōeki to ‘Tōbō,’” 17–19.

(known as “Liuqiu” in Chinese) was used to denote the long chain of islands in between both locations, and the term could generally encompass the Amami 奄美 islands, Okinawa, Taiwan, or smaller nearby islands. Merchants who wished to avoid paying levies to the *shibosi* and to Dazaifu were incentivized to travel along this route, though as they did so, they had to stop at various islands to gather provisions and to trade for resources that were highly valued elsewhere in East Asia—such as mother of pearl and turtle shells. This interaction in some instances is mentioned in textual sources, though the illicit nature of such activities requires a greater focus on the archaeological record.

Although the politics of the Cold War and more recent times have brought much attention to the history of Chinese involvement in this region, most of that attention has focused on recent centuries. The sparsity of historical texts prior to the sixteenth century has meant that outside of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan, few scholars have sought to understand exchange in this region in earlier times. In the early seventh century, the Sui dynasty dispatched an expedition to an unspecified part of Ryukyu, and it was met with hostility by native inhabitants. After a short period of fighting, thousands of captives were captured and brought to China. Beyond this incident, there is little in the way of textual evidence that scholars have examined to understand the region’s early history.

Of the texts which may yield some newfound insights, one interesting early account comes from an Arabic language source, though the relative lack of knowledge of Middle Eastern seafarers about the regions surrounding China means that its contents require careful analysis. The *Hudud al-'Alam* was written in 982, and it is comprised of information compiled from various contemporary and earlier geographical texts. From this mishmash of accounts, the author provides a description of a region known to Middle Eastern seafarers as Wāqwāq:

The first of the islands of this Great Sea is called gold-island (dhahabiya); its periphery is of 300 farsangs [a measurement of approximately three miles] and it possesses gold mines and many cultivated lands (ābādhāni), and its inhabitants are called Wāqwāqian Zangī (Zangiyān-i Wāqwāqi). All are naked and (all are) man-eaters (mardum-khwār). Chinese merchants go there in great numbers, carrying iron and food, (which) they sell to the inhabitants for gold, using signs and without saying a word to each other.¹³¹

I believe the first step toward analyzing this text is to understand that it is a conflation of information about Champa and the broader region of Ryukyu. Although there were major gold deposits in northern Taiwan (Jiufen 九份) and Okinawa (Kumejima 久米島), the great reputation for the production and use of gold belonged to the kingdom of Champa. This conflation did not originate with the *Hudud al-'Alam*, but with earlier accounts of Wāqwāq, which described the area as both a location east of China and a place for the export of ebony (native to forests in central Vietnam). Legends of gold-rich locations figure prominently in the tales of South and West Asian sailors, especially those in locations far from the Middle East. Yet if we look beyond this emphasis, we see a description that largely aligns with the Ryukyu region. These were islands located to the east of China which were also known by Japanese writers as places where cannibalism was practiced. Wāqwāq itself is believed to be the Cantonese pronunciation of “Japan,” *Wogwok* 倭國, which is understandable in the context that Middle Easterners in China mainly traveled to and lived in Guangzhou until the eleventh century, and Japan was known to be

¹³¹ *Hudūd al- 'Ālam*, "The Regions of the World": A Persian Geography 372 A.H. – 982 A.D., trans. V. Minorsky (London: Luzac & Co., 1937), 56–57.

to the east of China.

Such a description is useful mainly for providing an understanding of one perspective of the region in this period, though we can look elsewhere for more reliable accounts. For instance, we may recall that Cai Xiang's *Treatise on Lychees* (1059, discussed in Chapter Three) talked about Fuzhou merchants selling lychee fruit in a variety of locations which included Ryukyu and Japan, so we know that Chinese merchants were indeed trading food to native islanders in Ryukyu. This observation is likewise supported shortly after by the Japanese monk Jōjin's observation of Fuzhou merchants shipping lychee while he was lodging in the Zhoushan 舟山 islands.¹³² These islands were a part of the sea route that connected Mingzhou with northern Kyushu.

A slightly earlier record provides more details. The Song chancellor Zhang Shixun 張士遜 (964–1049) wrote a brief record of “the country of Liuqiu” (*Liuqiu guo* 流求國) that was quoted in the writings of Li Fu 李復 (1052–?) in the literary collection *Jueshui ji* 澗水集. His description is as follows:

That country (Ryukyu/Liuqiu) has separately established a lodge by the sea to receive Chinese guests (merchants)... The Sui History records the country of Liuqiu but not in detail. What has recently been passed down by word of mouth is as stated here. It is not very far from Quanzhou, so there must be sea merchants who travel back and forth. One can seek them out for inquiries, and ask about the affairs of that country—its customs, rituals and music, mountains and rivers, plants and trees, birds and beasts, farming and weaving, utensils and tools, and so on. The countries beside it can also be investigated in

¹³² Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 200.

detail. If anything is obtained, I hope it will be recorded and shown (to me).¹³³

其國別置館於海隅，以待中華之客... 流求國，隋史書之不詳。今近相傳所說如此。去泉州不甚遠，必有海商往來，可尋之，訪其國事與其風俗禮樂、山川草木禽獸耕織器用等事，并其旁之國，亦可詳究之。或得之，望錄示。

The term “Chinese guest” is very often synonymous with “Chinese merchant,” and it is used as such in this context as well. Lodges for Chinese visitors continued to be used into the fourteenth century and well after (by then, more under the premise of diplomacy), such as the Tenshikan 天使館 in Kumemura 久米村 (Naha), on Okinawa’s main island.¹³⁴ This was also the location of a Chinese community.¹³⁵ The establishment of formal diplomacy between Ryukyu and Ming China in the fourteenth century allowed for more detailed records of exchange between both areas, and it would seem that on the Chinese side, the exchange continued to center on Fuzhou, where a quarters for overseas Okinawans was established.¹³⁶

Accounts during the Song dynasty from as early as the 990s also provide instructions and distances for sailing from Quanzhou to “the country of Liuqiu,” and such a route might have been known to Fujianese as early as the Tang dynasty.¹³⁷ These accounts state that the travel time was six days on a clear day, and I am in agreement with Hugh Clark that such a reference could not apply to Taiwan, which could be reached much more quickly. The sea crossing from the

¹³³ Li Fu, *Jueshui ji*, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&res=143196>, juan 5. This lodge is also discussed in Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 55; and Enomoto, *Sōryo to kaishō tachi no Higashi Shina kai*, 51.

¹³⁴ Naha shi rekishi hakubutsukan 那覇市歴史博物館, <https://www.rekishi-archive.city.naha.okinawa.jp/spot/158>

¹³⁵ *Chainataun ten*, 29–46; Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 214; and Peter F. Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts in East Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 98, 268;

¹³⁶ Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts*, 98, 141, 268.

¹³⁷ Clark, “Consolidation on the South China Frontier,” 64, 121, citation no. 81; and Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 223–24.

Zhoushan islands to Hirado, Kyushu typically required five to seven days of travel with clear weather, and that distance (approximately 500 miles) is almost the same as the distance from Quanzhou to Okinawa island. It stands to reason that the Liuqiu of Chinese accounts usually referred to Okinawa.

Yang Yi's description (c. 1004) of a "South Seas" merchant ship sailing to Japan, and then on to China, raises some interesting questions. For instance, did the ship travel along a route that passed from the Philippines to Kyushu, or did it sail to Kyushu along the entirety of the "Southern Islands" route via Taiwan, Okinawa, and the Amami islands? It would also be interesting to know if this was a fairly exceptional occurrence or if other such ships traveled according to a similar itinerary. Extant records suggest this type of route was not common, yet it might not have been entirely rare either. Additional details may be lacking, though one poem does provide a sense of Chinese-Southeast Asian trade from a Ryukyuan perspective. This poem, from the *Omoro sōshi*, is as follows:

The ship Suzunari sailing under the south wind

When we hear the true southern wind

Load goods from China and the South Seas

And deliver them to the king¹³⁸

This poem belonged to a collection of literary works compiled between 1532 and 1623 as an

¹³⁸ This translation is from Gregory Smits, *Maritime Ryukyu, 1050–1650* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 18. I follow the translation in Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson, "Introduction," in *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, eds. Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 14 in using the term "South Seas" rather than "Southeast Asia."

anthology of ancient Okinawan songs and poetry.¹³⁹ Its earliest works date to the twelfth century, and possibly earlier.

The merchants who sailed along the “Southern Islands” route between China and Japan were largely bypassing state authorities in both countries, though it appears that some of them engaged in more egregious acts of lawlessness. In the late 990s, just as Song authorities grew more assertive in regulating sea trade, we see that piracy became a particularly pressing concern along the coasts of western Japan.¹⁴⁰ At first the raiders were thought to be Korean, but later Japanese officials believed they came from the Amami islands. The raiders pillaged the southern and western coasts of Kyushu—including Ōsumi, Satsuma, Higo 肥後 province (Kumamoto prefecture), and Hizen 肥前 province (Nagasaki and Saga prefectures), as well as northern Kyushu, Tsushima 対馬 island, and Iki 壱岐 island. In their wake they took valuable commodities and hundreds of captives. The raids subsided after Dazaifu organized an attack on one of the Amami islands, though they continued sporadically until 1020. Some Japanese scholars believe that the raids were a joint effort between Amami and Chinese pirates.¹⁴¹ They point out that the ships and weapons used in such a great undertaking were most likely not produced on the Amami islands, as the pirates would have required extensive quantities of iron for weapons, highly mobile ships, and detailed knowledge of western Japan’s coastlines, islands,

¹³⁹ *Southern Exposure*, 14.

¹⁴⁰ On these raids, see *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 116–17; Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 242–44; and Smits, *Maritime Ryukyu*, 18–19.

¹⁴¹ Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 242–44. Gregory Smits also believes these pirates belonged to ethnically mixed crews, though he emphasizes the involvement of Koreans. While I agree that it is possible that ethnic Koreans were among the pirate crews, the evidence for Koreans involved in the region in this period is limited to the presence of Korean ceramics on islands to the immediate south of Kyushu as well as the possible transfer of Korean pottery technologies. However, since Koreans were receiving pottery technologies and techniques from China at the same time that a transfer of such techniques and technologies is thought to have passed from Korea to Ryukyu, an assertion of the latter circumstance appears problematic. See Gregory Smits, *Early Ryukyuan History: A New Model* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2024), 83–85.

and sea routes. At the time that the raids were occurring, peculiar events were also recorded, though they unfortunately lack greater context. These include a fear at the Heian court of an impending Chinese invasion, and a report of a murder of a Chinese person.¹⁴² If we recall that Chinese piracy was also an issue in Southeast Asia during the tenth century (see Chapter One), the theory that at least some Chinese seafarers were involved in these raids is not unreasonable.

As for the archaeology of Okinawa, Amami, and their outlying islands, the earliest Chinese export ceramics (ninth century) have been found in some locations, though not in large quantities. This includes two Changsha ware bowls recovered from a tomb at Iriomote 西表 island (about 125 miles east of Taiwan), and various Yue ware shards dating to the ninth and tenth centuries have been found on Amami island and Kikai 喜界 island (16 miles east of Amami island).¹⁴³ Ninth and tenth-century Chinese ceramics were also recovered in Tanegashima 種子島 (27 miles south of the Ōsumi peninsula).¹⁴⁴ Tang dynasty coins have been located at various sites on the Ryukyu islands as well, the largest find being a cache of 27 Tang coins discovered on Ishigaki 石垣 island (approximately 150 miles east of Taiwan).¹⁴⁵ This early circulation of Chinese goods can be attributed to occasional small-scale trade and possibly the rare diplomatic embassy that passed through this route. Some scholars believe that Chinese goods circulated to the region in a rather circumspect fashion, in which they first crossed the East China Sea to northern Kyushu before they were transshipped along the western and southern coasts of the island and then were finally shipped southwest into the Ryukyu islands. Goods were certainly

¹⁴² *Taigaikankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, 117; and Yamazaki Masatoshi 山崎雅稔, “Kobaekje, Koryo to Nihon wo meguru kōryū” 後百濟・高麗と日本をめぐりる交流, in *Nihon kodai kōryūshi nyūmon*, 252.

¹⁴³ Pearson, Li Min, and Li Guo, “Port, City, and Hinterlands,” 199; Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 238–39; Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 159, 164; and Kan, “Ceramics from Changsha,” 53. Some Japanese scholars do not accept the findings of the Changsha ware bowls because they were not recovered through controlled excavation.

¹⁴⁴ Pearson, Li Min, and Li Guo, “Port, City, and Hinterlands,” 199.

¹⁴⁵ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 140.

shipped to the region from Japan at that time, though Richard Pearson considers the possibility that direct trade between Fujian traders and Ryukyu islanders occurred during the Tang dynasty, in which turbo shell, which was used to make mother-of-pearl inlay, was imported into China.¹⁴⁶ Turbo shell was, in fact, valued in both China and Japan, and the archaeological record shows that it was traded for iron brought from abroad.¹⁴⁷ Such an exchange calls to mind Arabic language accounts of Chinese merchants trading food and iron to native islanders. Considering that goods from both Japan and China circulated in Ryukyu, I likewise find it difficult to believe that early outside influence only entered the region from the direction of Japan. I see no compelling reason why traffic would not arrive to the Ryukyu islands from a western direction as well.

An uptick in foreign trade throughout the Ryukyu islands occurred in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which is evident from observation of the circulation of Chinese ceramics. Kikai island continued to function as a trade hub, with imports from Japan, China, and other Ryukyu islands. The Chinese ceramics recovered there were mainly white wares.¹⁴⁸ Excavation of the Gusuku site group on the island has identified around 150 raised buildings, many burial pits, and thirty ironworking hearths, with 70 percent of the goods at the site being imports from abroad.¹⁴⁹ The island also became a center for ceramics production at this time. Although there does not appear to be a consensus yet as to where the technology for these ceramics originated, stone pots that were produced in Ryukyu and shipped to various islands in the region are of designs which appear to have originated in China.¹⁵⁰ Three different types of burials practiced

¹⁴⁶ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 139–40, 213–14.

¹⁴⁷ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 231.

¹⁴⁸ Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 239–42.

¹⁴⁹ Smits, *Maritime Ryukyu*, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Tanaka, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 248–52.

there indicate a multiethnic and multicultural society.¹⁵¹ One of those three types, cremation, was uncommon in the Ryukyu islands and it indicates Buddhist practitioners from Japan and possibly China resided there as well.

Major social change was also occurring in the Okinawan islands during the eleventh century. Construction of Gusuku fortresses began in around 1050, building construction techniques rapidly diversified, Chinese ceramics circulated in much greater quantities, and major advancements were made in the local production of ceramics.¹⁵² Dry field cultivation was spreading at this time, and analysis of soil samples yielded the remains of rice, wheat, barley, and millet.¹⁵³ We also see a greater magnitude of exchange between islands in the southern Ryukyus and those of the central and northern Ryukyus.¹⁵⁴ Many of these developments were a result of Chinese and Japanese people traveling to the region. At this time, Chinese white wares were also circulating in the southern Ryukyu islands, such as Sakishima 先島 and the Miyako 宮古 islands.¹⁵⁵ Specific points of origin are not usually provided in analysis of the white wares that circulated throughout many of the Ryukyu islands, though it seems that they were the Fujian and Chaozhou wares that were concurrently circulating throughout much of maritime Asia.¹⁵⁶ As for how these items circulated, the available evidence indicates they arrived via ships originating from China, as twelfth-century underwater sites at Kurakisaki 倉木崎, Amami island, and Kumejima consist solely of Chinese ceramic wares, and stone weights of Chinese anchors believed to date to around this time have been found at several locations.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Smits, *Maritime Ryukyu*, 21.

¹⁵² Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 146, 153–54.

¹⁵³ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 162.

¹⁵⁴ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 167.

¹⁵⁵ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 167–68.

¹⁵⁶ Tianzhong, “Ribei chutu de Songdai Chaozhou yao chanpin yu xiangguan wenti,” 30.

¹⁵⁷ Pearson, *Ancient Ryukyu*, 190, 222.

Moving westward to Taiwan and its surrounding islands, we likewise see traffic from China to this region beginning in around the ninth century. Both textual and archaeological sources demonstrate that the Penghu 澎湖 islands, located approximately ninety miles east of China and thirty miles west of Taiwan, were inhabited by Chinese farmers and fishers at that time and came to be administered by Jinjiang county in Fujian.¹⁵⁸ Ceramics of the Five Dynasties and Song periods can be found at the settlements there, and it is also believed that the islands operated as trading posts and temporary ports of landing. Later in the Song dynasty, the islands earned a reputation for being pirate enclaves, and it was said that legitimate merchants would not travel there.¹⁵⁹ Many artifacts have been recovered in this area, including ceramics from the Tang to Song periods, as well as Northern Song coins. One particularly interesting finding is a celadon shard with an ink inscription reading “the mark of Captain Chen” (*Chen Gangsi hao* 陳綱司號),¹⁶⁰ which indicates that the item belonged to that individual and his trade firm. Overall, over ten thousand specimens of Song-Yuan ceramics have been recovered in the Penghu islands. Of these, 2500 were from Quanzhou, and hundreds of others were celadons.¹⁶¹ Later in the twelfth century, the islands became a target for raiders from Taiwan (Liuqiu 流求) who came on bamboo rafts seeking iron objects. It was said that when night came, fires were extinguished for fear that the Chinese inhabitants would be seen from that island.¹⁶²

Taiwan itself remains the largest mystery of the islands in the region. It was and

¹⁵⁸ Yi-chang Liu and Su-chin Wang, “Encountering the Wider World before the Transition to History: Chinese Ceramics in Proto-historic Taiwan (Tenth through Sixteenth Centuries),” in eds. Tsang, Cheng-hwa and Maria Cruz Berrocal, *Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Colonialism in Asia-Pacific: The Southwest Pacific and Oceanian Regions* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2017), 271, 276–77.

¹⁵⁹ Yi and Su, “Encountering the Wider World before the Transition to History,” 271.

¹⁶⁰ Yi and Su, “Encountering the Wider World before the Transition to History,” 277.

¹⁶¹ Ye et al., “Jinjiang Cizao yao de fazhan ji qi waixiao,” 64.

¹⁶² Roderich Ptak, “Die Penghu-Inseln während der Song-Epoche. Notizen zum „Song zhi“-Fragment im Min shu und zu anderen Quellen,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 166.1 (2016): 198–202.

continues to be home to many native tribes, and researchers have dedicated much effort toward understanding the origins of these tribes and their cultures. Unfortunately, textual sources describing the island in this period are sparse, so there are significant limitations about what can be understood regarding Taiwan's early inhabitants. Chinese merchants traveled along Taiwan's coasts and traded with its inhabitants, as the island's proximity to Fujian and its location along the Southern Islands route and on the way to Luzon (the northernmost main island of the Philippines) placed it along two seaways. Yet there does not appear to be evidence of organized Chinese settlement there during this period. Rather, we do see evidence of exchange between native inhabitants and Chinese merchants, though this evidence is not as pronounced as it is on other islands along the Southern Islands route. The locations where these merchants made contact were on the western and northern coasts of the island, and thus far the earliest evidence for that exchange dates to around the tenth century. It is believed that by the mid-eleventh century, Taiwan was a part of a Fujian-Ryukyu route that became increasingly active in later centuries.¹⁶³ Findings prior to 1100 are scarce.¹⁶⁴ They include what would seem to be tenth-century Wenzhou Yue-type bowls found at four sites on the western coast of central Taiwan. Chinese ceramics were also discovered near northern Taiwan's Tamsui river, including a stand decorated with a carved lotus from either the Xicun (Guangzhou) or Chaozhou kilns, a shard of a Guangdong storage jar, and a shard of a Yue-type ewer dating to the Northern Song which was possibly from the Cizao kilns (Quanzhou). Items dated from the late eleventh to twelfth centuries that were found there include Longquan-type celadon bowls with incised designs, and "Fujian-

¹⁶³ Yi and Su, "Encountering the Wider World before the Transition to History," 273–74.

¹⁶⁴ The examples that follow are from Yi and Su, "Encountering the Wider World before the Transition to History," 278–95. See also María Cruz Berrocal, Elena Serrano Herrero, Marc Gener Moret, et al., "A Comprised Archaeological History of Taiwan through the Long-Term Record of Heping Dao, Keelung," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 22.4 (2018): 905–40.

type” white ware bowls and bottles with a long neck and round belly. Items discovered there also have production dates that extend into the mid-thirteenth century, which indicates that the location was used over a long period of time as a transit point. Yue-type wares found in the northeast have been dated to the late-ninth or tenth century, and were found in the vicinity of locally-produced earthenwares. Finally, approximately forty miles to the southeast of Taiwan on Lanyu 蘭嶼 island, white ware shards of three distinct items have been assigned dates from the mid-tenth to early eleventh century, and these may be the same type of white wares found throughout the Ryukyu islands. Overall, the relatively sparse archaeological record of Taiwan suggests that the island was not a major location for sea trade at this time. The island and its smaller outlying islands served as a stopover point on the way to Okinawa and Luzon at certain times, but the area was also likely bypassed altogether for long periods due to the fear of hostilities with local inhabitants. Nevertheless, we cannot preclude the possibility that later discoveries will change these assumptions.

Đại Việt

In Chapter One, I discussed some of northern Vietnam’s Chinese inhabitants when the region became an independent polity in the tenth century. Beginning in the early eleventh century, northern Vietnam was ruled by a monarch with Chinese ancestry. Lý Công Uẩn assumed the throne in 1010 by seizing power from an unstable regime that was weakened from civil war and succession disputes. Although later Buddhist-influenced hagiographies depicted him as a native of Vietnam who was conceived in a divine union, earlier accounts describe him as a Fujian

person (*Min ren* 閩人).¹⁶⁵ Credit for his rise to power is specifically attributed to support provided by northern Vietnam's (by then called Đại Cồ Việt) Chinese communities, some of which were clustered in the eastern part of the Giao area (c. Jiaozhou 交州). The *Mengxi bitan* states that “fellow countrymen set up the Min (Fujian) person Lý Công Uẩn as sovereign” 國人共立閩人李公蘊為主.¹⁶⁶ The accounts of Lý Công Uẩn's Buddhist upbringing might be exaggerated or fabricated, though they do state that he received both a Buddhist and secular Chinese education.¹⁶⁷ His preference for Chinese modes of administration largely characterized his reign, and it also influenced the rulership of the remainder of the Lý dynasty (1010–1225) and the dynasties that followed. Robert Hartwell has provided a detailed summary of these policies:

After Ly Cong-van [Lý Công Uẩn] assumed the throne of Dai Co Viet in 1010 as the first emperor of the Ly dynasty, he launched a program of sinification that continued throughout the century and may have been even more complete than that of Koryo. It included movement of the Vietnamese government to the former capital of the [Tang and earlier] Chinese governors near Hanoi, adoption of the Song legal code, methods used in organizing famine relief, the relay post system, state offices, ceremonial garb,

¹⁶⁵ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 11–12. See also Chin, “Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities,” 162, citation no. 10. For early descriptions of Lý Công Uẩn as a Fujianese person, see *Mengxi bitan*, juan 25; *XCB*, juan 273; and Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Beijing: Wuying dian, 1747), juan 330. For the later assertion that he was from Vietnam, see Lê Tắc 黎則, *An Nam chí lược* 安南志畧 (Hankou: Leshan tang, 1884), quyển 卷 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Mengxi bitan*, juan 25.

¹⁶⁷ Keith W. Taylor, “The Early Kingdoms,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, vol. 1: From Early Times to c. 1800*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 139–40; and Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese*, 59–60. See additional discourse on Lý's life in Keith W. Taylor, “Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam,” in eds. David G. Marr and A. C. Milner, *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 139–76.

the Imperial Seminar, and Chinese rules of imperial succession. And Chinese techniques for managing fiscal monopolies also spread to Vietnam...¹⁶⁸

Several decades after Lý Công Uẩn's rule, the name of the kingdom itself was Sinicized and changed from Đại Cồ Việt to Đại Việt 大越. By 1059, all palace officers were ordered to wear Chinese-style headgear and footwear at court, and in 1070 a Temple of Confucius was rebuilt.¹⁶⁹ Civil service examinations were used for some time, and a Hanlin Academy was established in 1086.¹⁷⁰

Ben Keinan notes that Lý Công Uẩn constructed an administrative palace in 1020 that was separate from the ceremonial palace, and this might have been the starting point for initiating a sustained period of recruitment of Confucian scholar-officials.¹⁷¹ These early Lý dynasty reforms required a greatly expanded bureaucracy of officials and clerks, which necessitated the recruitment of men who had received Chinese educations or maintained at least some level of literacy of Sinitic writing. Law officers and scribes took on roles at the court, apparently sometimes recruited from the ranks of monks due to their literary qualifications.¹⁷² Men with Chinese educations were in great demand, not simply to strengthen state institutions, but also to expand an army capable of ensuring survival and conquest. Beyond just tapping into local Chinese families, newly arrived Chinese immigrants formed an important source of talent for Đại Việt governments in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As such, under Lý dynastic rule,

¹⁶⁸ Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" 460–61.

¹⁶⁹ Kiernan, *Việt Nam*, 156.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam"; Kiernan, *Việt Nam*, 160.

¹⁷¹ Kiernan, *Việt Nam*, 155–56.

¹⁷² Kiernan, *Việt Nam*, 155–56.

Chinese merchants and scholars were welcomed into the country and offered positions in government—much like they were in Koryŏ during this same period.

The *Wenxian tongkao*'s section on Vietnam states:

Very few of its people are versed in writing. Fujianese who arrive on seagoing ships are invariably treated with great generosity so that they may be appointed to official positions and consulted for resolving (state) affairs. Many of the convoluted or deceptive documents brought (to the Chinese court) originate from these wandering visitors.¹⁷³

其人少通文墨。閩人附海舶往者，必厚遇之。因命之官，咨以決事。凡文移詭亂，多自遊客出。

Beyond providing some details for the process of migration, this description indicates that the Song court was not impressed with the literary abilities of most Đại Việt officials, and that some of them were men of lesser talent (by the standards of Song courtiers). One may also detect some disdain directed at those who rejected Song sovereignty, particularly at a time when both states were at war. Although this information derived from a twelfth-century text, descriptions of Chinese traveling to Vietnam to take positions in government are mainly found in the latter part of the eleventh century, which is when many records of the region were produced. Another condescending yet revealing description comes from a 1073 account in the *Xu zi zhi tongjian changbian*, which details a debate at the Song court about whether or not Jiaozhi (Đại Việt) posed a viable military threat:

¹⁷³ *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 330.

Feng Jing said: “How could Jiaozhi be of one mind? Yet I fear their people are tightly bound to one another, unlike the Qiang (Tanguts).” (Wang) Anshi replied: “Those whom Jiaozhi employs are mostly men from Fujian. This must be because their own local people are not reliable enough to depend upon.”¹⁷⁴

馮京曰：「交趾安能一心？但恐其人相與之固，不如羌人爾。」安石曰：「交趾所任，乃多是閩人，必其土人無足倚仗故也。」

A more commonly cited edict from the *Xu zi zhi tongjian changbian* dates to the year 1076, which states:

People from Fujian and Guangnan (Guangdong and Guangxi) who traveled to Jiaozhi for trade, or of whom it is heard have remained there and taken up (government) service, shall from now on be permitted to have their relatives report the matter (to their local authorities). The Bandit Suppression Commission shall then be ordered to summon and persuade them to return (to China). Those who are able to return on their own accord shall be granted official rank.¹⁷⁵

福建、廣南人因商賈至交趾，或聞有留於彼用事者，自今許其親戚於所在自陳。令招討司招諭。如能自歸者與班行。

Unfortunately, a misinterpretation of this edict is that the Song court was finally recognizing that Chinese merchants were residing in Vietnam, and that such a practice was officially condoned. In fact, it was the opposite circumstance. The edict was issued at the height of the Song-Đại Việt

¹⁷⁴ XCB, juan 247.

¹⁷⁵ XCB, juan 273. See also Shiba, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, 188; Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 85; Hartwell, “Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy, and Chinese ‘Mercantilism,’” 459; and Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 124.

war when Chinese merchants were prohibited from trading in northern Vietnam. It reads as an offer of amnesty and of official rank, most likely with the intent to have returning merchants provide valuable intelligence and to help transport Song soldiers by sea for a planned naval attack. Many Chinese sea merchants ultimately assisted with the invasion of Đại Việt, though it did not succeed.¹⁷⁶

We may also consider an account by Sima Guang of one of the events in the lead up to the war. As both sides were preparing their forces, a failed examination candidate from Lingnan (Guangdong) sent a letter to the Đại Việt court requesting a government position in return for becoming a spy for them in China. In making his offer, the man wrote:

Your Majesty's ancestors were originally men of Min (Fujian). (I) have heard that many of the current high ministers and nobles of Jiaozhi are also men of Min. (My own) talent and strategic abilities are second to none, yet (I) am not employed in China. I wish to serve under Your Majesty's command.¹⁷⁷

大王先世本閩人。聞今交趾公卿貴人多閩人也。百祥才略不在人後，而不用於中國。願得佐大王下風。

The letter was kept by the Đại Việt court, and when a peace agreement was negotiated after the war, they presented it to the Song government to blame their incursion into Song territory on the man's call for a preemptive strike. This is another record written in relation to the Song-Đại Việt

¹⁷⁶ For the failed invasion of 1077 and the naval force of 10,000 which shipped out of Fujian on merchant ships, see Lo, "Maritime Commerce and its Relation to the Sung Navy," 78.

¹⁷⁷ *Sushui ji wen*, juan 13. See also *XCB*, juan 273; Liao, *Fujian haiwai jiaotong shi*, 101–02; Chin, "Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities," 163; and Go, "Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents," 463.

war which provides details of the Đại Việt government, and once more, the matter of Chinese people serving in that government was part of a concerning issue for the Song state.

It is no coincidence that the most detailed accounts of Chinese people serving in government positions and trading in Đại Việt were written in the 1070s at around the time of the war. Officials in the Song court were not concerned with Chinese people living in Đại Việt prior to that time, though attitudes changed when they began to plan an invasion of the kingdom and sought to understand their adversary, the Đại Việt court. The extent and context in which the Song court prioritized such information should be recognized by scholars seeking to understand the history of Chinese communities overseas, as much of the information preserved about the topic is merely a result of the Song government taking a temporary interest in their existence. This means that we should not judge the significance of overseas Chinese communities solely based upon whether such information is preserved in extant government documents. It should also be recognized that Đại Việt's recruitment of many Chinese officials was not regarded in a positive light by Song officials. Throughout the Song dynasty there were always influential officials who felt that the former territory of past Chinese dynasties belonged to the Song empire by right, and the presence of Chinese people serving in foreign governments was a sign of the Song court and the emperor's inability to retake those lands and bring those who should be their subjects back into the fold. This was a sensitive issue, and indeed, following the war, details about Chinese residents in Đại Việt once again become sparse in Chinese sources.

The most insight regarding Chinese people residing in Đại Việt comes Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126–1193) *Guihai yuheng zhi* 桂海虞衡志, which was written in 1175.¹⁷⁸ Much of the

¹⁷⁸ For an English translation of this text, see Fan Chengda, *Treatises of The Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea*, trans. James M. Hargett (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010). Much of the text's section

generalized information from its chapter on Jiaozhi lacks specific dating, though a large portion of it clearly derives from records produced during the Song-Đại Việt war of the 1070s, and Fan Chengda also talks of using records from that period and the following two decades as primary sources for his account.¹⁷⁹

Of the account's information about Chinese inhabitants, one part states "[t]here are also many talented scholars, monks, Daoists, artisans, and convicts who flee there (from China)" 又有秀才、僧道、伎術及配隸亡命逃奔之者甚多.¹⁸⁰ Although information about Chinese people in some of these occupational categories is hard to come by (and may not even exist in other extant sources), discussion of Chinese Buddhist monks does not appear to have been a taboo in the Buddhist histories produced in Vietnam's later periods. Unlike in the realms of politics and society, the chroniclers of such accounts appear more willing to allow multi-ethnic descriptions of Lý period religion which included Chinese, Cham, and Indian practitioners.¹⁸¹ On occasion we are provided with details of the backgrounds of Chinese monks. For instance, the founder of the Thảo Đường 草堂 sect of Zen Buddhism in Đại Việt was a monk of the same name from Zhejiang, who was captured by Đại Việt forces in a raid on Champa in 1069. Over time, he gained much respect for his erudition and took the position of National Teacher (*Quốc sư* 國師) in the Đại Việt court.¹⁸² Another was a monk from Guangzhou who arrived sometime between 1054 and 1072. He wrote a treatise on the request of the king and also came to hold the position of National Teacher.¹⁸³ By the latter half of the twelfth century, Chinese monks

on Vietnam and southern tribes was copied into the Yuan-period text *Wenxian tongkao*. See *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 330.

¹⁷⁹ Fan Chengda, *Treatises of The Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea*, 197.

¹⁸⁰ *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 330.

¹⁸¹ Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam," 149.

¹⁸² Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam," 146, 151.

¹⁸³ Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam," 148, 151.

continued to retain prominent positions, including those born in Vietnam and in Fujian.¹⁸⁴ One assessment by Li Tana of 51 names of prominent monks between 933 and 1226 found that 21 had Chinese family names that were not typically Vietnamese.¹⁸⁵ It can be noted that the three locations in China mentioned here were the regions that were most actively involved in sea trade.

It is somewhat surprising that one of the most detailed accounts in Fan Chengda's chapter on Jiaozhi is of Chinese slaves.¹⁸⁶ The text states:

Merchants from the southern provinces (of China) lure people to become maidservants and porters. Once they reach the grottos (on the Chinese side of the Song-Đại Việt border), they are bound and sold. One person fetches two taels of gold; (those in) the grottos then resell them for entry into Jiaozhi, where they fetch three taels of gold. Every year no fewer than several hundred or a thousand people are sold (in this way). Those with skills command double the price. Those with writing skills command double again. They are bound with hands behind their backs and driven along, their heads pulled upward by ropes so they cannot recognize the road by which they came. Once out of the country, each is assigned to a buyer and remains a slave for life. All are tattooed on the forehead with four or five characters. Women are branded from the breasts down to the ribs. The restraints and punishments are extremely harsh; anyone who attempts to flee is killed.

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam," 148.

¹⁸⁵ Li Tana, *A Maritime Vietnam: From Earliest Times to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 123–24.

¹⁸⁶ This topic is also discussed in Momoki Shiro, "Dai Viet and the South China Sea Trade: From the 10th to the 15th Century," *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 12.1 (1998): 13, citation no. 21; and Go, "Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents," 471, citation no. 67.

南州客旅誘人作婢僕擔夫。至州洞則縛而賣之。一人取黃金二兩，州洞轉賣入交趾，取黃金三兩。歲不下數百千人。有藝能者，金倍之。知文書者，又倍。面縛驅行，仰繫其首，俾不省來路。既出其國，各認買主，為奴終身。皆刺額上為四五字。婦人刺焜乳至肋。拘繫嚴酷，逃亡必殺。

Slaves were clearly an important part of the early Đại Việt economy. This significance is also highlighted during the Song-Đại Việt war. When the Đại Việt forces invaded the Song empire's southernmost prefectures in 1075, they took thousands of captives back into their country.¹⁸⁷ We can be certain that those of multiple ethnic backgrounds were taken captive, including Chinese and Dai peoples. Chinese records state that in one counterattack, around 700 captives were freed,¹⁸⁸ however, many more remained unaccounted for. Several years after the war, the Song court sought the return of one thousand “captured” officials and clerks (such a high number likely reflects both captives and defectors) as a part of negotiations to return land conquered by both sides. The Đại Việt court only returned 221 regular civilians; all men and women branded with tattoos, though the Song court accepted the arrangement nonetheless.¹⁸⁹

Fan Chengda attributes the problems of human trafficking, the outward migration of literati, and the outflow of currency (he notes that coins in the country were all brought in by Chinese merchants) to corrupt officials on its border regions. He states that although prohibitions against such practices existed, many officials were underpaid or unsuited for their positions. One final description of interest in his account states “[m]oreover, the natives of the country (Đại Việt) are extremely few; half (the population) are people from the (Chinese) provinces” 又其國

¹⁸⁷ XCB, juan 273. See also James Anderson, *The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao: Loyalty and Identity Along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 142–46.

¹⁸⁸ XCB, juan 273.

¹⁸⁹ *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 330.

土人極少，半是省民. Fan's account of Đại Việt contains little in the way of exaggeration, though while Đại Việt's Chinese population was likely quite large, I assume that this assessment likely pertains only to the registered populations of several cities or large settlements, and does not account for the various tribes and ethnic groups in the outlying areas. It seems more likely that Chinese, Chinese-Viets, and assimilated Chinese people formed a large minority in Đại Việt, and perhaps when grouped together, formed one of the largest demographics in its capital.

As for the material record, we are fortunate to have one first-hand account from a family in Đại Việt which traced its ancestry to China. A 1107 stele inscription commemorating the establishment of a Buddhist temple near the Song border sheds light on the prominent family of a scholar-official who traced his ancestry to Yongzhou 邕州 (Nanning, Guangxi). The account states that his ancestors resided in Đại Việt for twelve generations, formed marriage alliances with the Lý dynasty, and played a major role in supporting Đại Việt during the Song-Đại Việt war.¹⁹⁰ Song period bronze mirrors found in northern Vietnam are also presumed to be the possessions of Chinese inhabitants.¹⁹¹ As for the ceramics record, the production of distinctive glazed ceramics began in the Hanoi area at the beginning of the eleventh century. This included the production of white stonewares with petal motifs that were based on similar wares produced in China. Local copies of wares produced in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong are abundant during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and it is likely that Chinese craftsmen played a role in these new developments.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Claudine Salmon, "Chinese Epigraphic Studies in Southeast Asia: An Overview," in ed. D. Perret, *Writing for Eternity: A Survey of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: South Seas Society, 2018), 298–99.

¹⁹¹ Claudine Salmon, "The Chinese Origin of the Muara Jambi Gong as Evidenced by a New Archaeological Find," *Archipel* 76 (2008): 14, citation no. 20.

¹⁹² Kerr and Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 725. John Guy believes that these styles were possibly transmitted through tributary relations, but I am not persuaded by this theory. See John S. Guy, "Vietnamese

Champa and Khmer

The *An Nam chí lược* 安南志略 (compiled c. 1335) contains a comment on the country of

Champa which states:

Merchants established the state along the seacoast. Chinese ships would cross the sea to come and go, and foreigners gathered there to take on materials and water. It became the foremost port in the south.¹⁹³

商立國於海濱。中國舟楫泛海往來，番者皆聚於此，以積薪水，為南方第一馬頭

In fact, Champa was established many centuries before Chinese merchants were first recorded as taking to the seas, so this observation would only hold true if describing early Indian merchants arriving to the area. Yet considering the context, it would seem that this is rather a description of the government that was established in Vijaya (An Nhơn, Vietnam) in the tenth century. We have already analyzed indications of Chinese traveling to the kingdom at that time, and by the fourteenth century, the beginning of the region's history was associated with prosperity brought about by traffic from foreign merchants. Considering what we know about sea trade in the region in the tenth and eleventh centuries, this description of "foreigners" would include Indians, Persians, Malay-Javanese, and other groups. Here, "Chinese" are considered separate from that category because the *An Nam chí lược* appears to have been written in China for a Chinese audience.

Ceramics and Cultural Identity: Evidence from the Ly and Tran Dynasties," in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, 258–59.

¹⁹³ *An Nam chí lược*, quyển 1

The late tenth century was indeed a major period of political change in Champa. The capital was destroyed in 982 by an invasion from Đại Cồ Việt, and shortly thereafter an official from that state named Lưu Kế Tông 劉繼宗 seized power and eventually established his own short-lived kingdom.¹⁹⁴ One of his only recorded actions was sending an embassy to the Song court in 986.¹⁹⁵ This man is described by scholars as “Vietnamese” because he was previously a subject of Đại Cồ Việt, though an examination of historical databases reveals that his given name was very common in China at this time as well.¹⁹⁶ Regardless of his background, we do know that there was much disruption across maritime Asia at this time and that Champa rulers worked closely with sea merchants from various locations. Following the brief period of foreign rule in Champa, we no longer see that its envoys possess the title of “Brahman” in Chinese records, though envoys with what appear to be native and Muslim names continued to be recorded.¹⁹⁷ Beginning in 999, we also start to see Chinese names among the diplomats sent to China.¹⁹⁸ The first among these was a certain Chen Yao 陳堯.¹⁹⁹ The next was an administrative assistant (*panguan* 判官) named Chen Yi 陳義 who arrived as a member of the 1011 embassy.²⁰⁰ Following that, a vice ambassador named Liu Gongzuo 劉公佐 arrived as a part of the 1015 embassy.²⁰¹ Several other names, such as that of Zhu Boli 朱渤禮, who arrived in 1010, may also

¹⁹⁴ Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, 125.

¹⁹⁵ Geoff Wade, “The ‘Account of Champa’ in the *Song Huiyao Jigao*,” in *The Cham of Vietnam: History, Society and Art*, eds. Trần Kỳ Phương & Bruce M. Lockhart (Singapore: NUS Press, 2011), 147.

¹⁹⁶ Li Tana proposed that he was an “Arab” based on the point that the family name Liu 劉 was common among Muslim Chinese writers in later periods. In fact, the name Liu was common among Chinese people throughout southern China during the tenth century. Moreover, it would be out of place to see Muslims with common Chinese given names in diplomatic records of this period. See Li Tana, *A Maritime Vietnam*, 155–58.

¹⁹⁷ Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China*, 151–67.

¹⁹⁸ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 15–16.

¹⁹⁹ *SHY Fan Yi* 蕃夷 7. *Song shi* records him as Zhu Chenyao 朱陳堯, but as I state in my article on this topic, it is quite unusual under any circumstance to see two surnames followed by a given name, and I am more inclined to accept the earlier records preserved in the *Song huiyao jigao*. See *SS*, juan 489.

²⁰⁰ *SHY FY* 4.

²⁰¹ *SS*, juan 490; and *SHY FY* 7.

be Chinese,²⁰² though this is less clear as their surnames were also used with foreign names and their given names were not common in China. After this time, we no longer see Chinese names recorded among diplomats sent to China, which might be a result of changes to diplomatic policies in China following the death of Emperor Zhenzong in 1022.²⁰³ We do, however, see that Champa submitted missives written in Chinese in 1050, which indicates that Chinese people in the country continued to advise its rulers on diplomatic exchange with China.²⁰⁴

It also seems that Champa was considered a safe haven of sorts for Chinese outcasts. For instance, one of the half-Chinese warlords of Đại Cồ Việt took refuge there when his fortunes turned in the late tenth century (see Chapter One). Even more telling is that E Lin and his supporters fled to Champa in 1040 after plundering the coasts of southern Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong (see Chapter Three). One local inscription dating to 1050 discusses King Jaya Paramesvaravarman I (?–1060, r. 1044–1060) having a temple restored and donating to the temple slaves who were Khmers, Chinese, Burmese, and Siamese.²⁰⁵ The illicit trade of Chinese slaves was likely handled by Chinese sea merchants skirting Song laws, though as we shall see, nearby pirates might have sold Chinese slaves in the region as well.

We may also recall the learned monk captured by Đại Việt invaders in 1069 who was from Zhejiang. Considering the southern Zhejiang connections of E Lin's pirate band and the flow of Wenzhou ceramics to the Malay peninsula at around the same time (see Chapter Three), it would seem that Champa was a part of a route frequented by Zhejiang merchants until around

²⁰² Wade, "The 'Account of Champa' in the *Song Huiyao Jigao*," 155.

²⁰³ Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

²⁰⁴ Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China*, 158; and Go, "Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents," 464.

²⁰⁵ Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, 140.

the mid-eleventh century. Though since we know that E Lin's captor Shao Bao was a Quanzhou merchant, it is clear that Chinese merchants from other locations traveled to Champa as well.

Relatively less information exists about Chinese people in the Khmer empire, which was located to the south and west of Champa. This might be because its ports were located some distance away from the main route that connected China with Srivijaya, India, and the Persian Gulf. Another reason is that the Gulf of Thailand appears to have been a hot spot for piracy in this period. The *Pingzhou ketan* states:

The merchants say that only if the ship is large and carries a great many people do they dare to make the voyage. There are many pirates at sea, who plunder anyone not heading to their own country. For instance, if a ship is bound for Champa but loses its way and mistakenly enters Khmer, they will seize all the goods aboard the vessel, bind the northerners (Chinese), and sell them, declaring: "You did not intend to come here in the first place."²⁰⁶

商人言船大人眾則敢往，海外多盜賊，且掠非詣其國者，如詣占城，或失路誤入真臘，則盡沒其舶貨，縛北人賣之，云：「爾本不來此間。」

If such a system resembles the form piracy historically practiced in and around the Malacca strait area, it would mean that the pirates acted on behalf of the Khmer ruler to enforce levies on sea trade under the threat of violence. When sailors sought to avoid those levies and not do business at nearby ports, the pirates—semi-nomadic fishers living along the coast—considered themselves justified in killing, enslaving, or robbing all those who attempted to pass. The rationale that seafarers could be enslaved for unintentionally sailing through Khmer waters

²⁰⁶ *Pingzhou ketan*, juan 2.

would be that the sailors wished to do business with outlying states but not with the Khmer sovereign, so they were thus fair game. Such a case is mere speculation, though the cultural connections between the region and Srivijaya warrant some degree of comparative analysis.

Extensive finds of Chinese ceramics from this period can be found at many Khmer sites and sites further south along the east coast of the Malay peninsula, though it may be reiterated that the presence of trade ceramics alone is not sufficient proof of the presence of Chinese people.

Java

Java was far and away the most popular destination for foreign trade in Southeast Asia during the ninth and tenth centuries, though its dominance dissipated by the beginning of the eleventh century. The reasons for this are not clear, though it would seem Chinese piracy in the tenth century and Srivijaya's renaissance and reclamation of the Malacca strait were two major factors.²⁰⁷ War between Srivijaya and Java persisted from the late tenth to the early eleventh century, and a major turning point occurred when the kingdom of Mataram was destroyed in 1016.²⁰⁸ From this point onward, the archaeological record and Chinese sources indicate that Srivijaya became China's major commercial partner in the region. Yet it does not appear that Java's involvement in foreign trade was significantly curtailed for an extended period of time. In the midst of the Srivijaya-Java war, Chinese merchants continued to sail to Java, such as the Jianxi (northwest Fujian) merchant Mao Xu, who escorted a Javanese embassy to Mingzhou in

²⁰⁷ Other scholars also believe that the strait was of great importance to local powers at this time. See for instance Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia," 254. Arabic texts confirm this and demonstrate that passage was vigilantly enforced on behalf of local rulers.

²⁰⁸ Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 417–18.

992. Copper inscriptions decrease in frequency after this time, though they continue to talk of the presence of foreign merchants. For instance, an inscription from 1036 talks of redirecting a river in order to help local farmers and “seafaring merchants from other lands.”²⁰⁹ It is also interesting to note that during the eleventh century, foreign merchants operating in east Java included both local male and female merchants in their business networks.²¹⁰

Despite the disruption of the early eleventh century wars, Java’s extensive agriculture and close proximity to the spice-producing islands further east allowed for the opportunity to rebuild and to reestablish a wealthy kingdom. By the late twelfth century the island was once again regarded as even wealthier than Srivijaya.²¹¹ Chinese merchants certainly did not turn a blind eye to the opportunities there. The *Wenxian tongkao* states “When Chinese merchants arrive, they are received in guest lodges and provided with abundant, clean food” 中國賈人至者，待以賓館，食豐潔.²¹² Likewise, foreign merchants continued to take on the role of tax collectors in the island’s port areas, and scholars have observed that this system functioned much like the tax collection system of Chinese merchants on the island in the sixteenth century and later.²¹³ From the middle of the eleventh century until the end of the thirteenth century, written inscriptions become quite rare, though an inscription of 1305 lists Chinese tax collectors, as well as Indians,

²⁰⁹ Wisseman Christie, “Javanese Markets and the Asian Sea Trade Boom,” 360.

²¹⁰ Wisseman Christie, “Javanese Markets and the Asian Sea Trade Boom,” 365. Christie points out that the female merchants were probably not mere appendages of their male counterparts, which seems a sound argument, though considering the importance of marriages in forming trade partnerships, I think it likely that at least some female merchants married with foreign merchants.

²¹¹ *Lingwai daida*, juan 3.

²¹² *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 332. See also Chin, “Junk Trade, Business Networks, and Sojourning Communities,” 162.

²¹³ Wisseman, “Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java,” 208.

Sinhalese, Chams, Khmer, and others, and Chinese tax collectors are also listed on an inscription dating to 1365.²¹⁴

In regard to the material record, it was already noted in Chapter One that by the late tenth and eleventh century, Javanese pottery was highly influenced by Chinese styles and manufacturing techniques. The production centers for this new form of pottery were located in Rembang, on Java's northeast coast.²¹⁵ After this time, potters in Java were able to produce exact copies of Chinese ceramics, though large quantities of true Chinese wares continued to be imported.²¹⁶ Large-scale imports of Chinese coins also began in the eleventh century.²¹⁷

Srivijaya

In the eleventh century, Srivijaya was the most culturally, economically, and politically influential entity throughout Southeast Asia. Srivijaya's rise in prominence began in the late-tenth century as it sent frequent embassies to the Song empire and imported large quantities of Chinese goods. This coincided with the cessation of Javanese hegemony in the Malacca straits region at the same time that the Mataram kingdom suffered a string of military defeats. Beyond records of diplomatic activity, we also begin to see many mentions of Srivijaya, its commodities, its merchants, and its desirability as a location for trade in Chinese sources. Indian inscriptions also begin to discuss the polity at this time in accounts detailing diplomacy and the establishment

²¹⁴ Jan Wisseman Christie, "The Medieval Tamil-Language Inscriptions in Southeast Asia and China," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29.2 (1998): 246–47.

²¹⁵ Jan Wisseman Christie, "Negara, Mandala, and Despotic State: Images of Early Java," in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, 82.

²¹⁶ Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia," 250; Abu Ridho, "Zhejiang Green Glazed Wares Found in Indonesia," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 268–69; and Naniek Harkantiningih, "Yue and Longquan Green Glazed Wares from Archaeological Sites in Java and East Indonesia," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 274.

²¹⁷ Wade, "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia," 250.

of temples. However, in 1025, Chola seafarers raided nearly all of the major ports aligned with Srivijaya, most likely as a reaction to Srivijaya's monopolization of trade with China and its issuance of levies on ships passing through the Malacca strait. The Indian inscription detailing this raid paints it as a major undertaking, and it probably was. However, only one source discusses the event, and there are no indications of long-term consequences. Srivijaya continued to be the dominant power of the Malacca straits region until the late thirteenth century, when invading Javanese forces reduced the polity's influence and initiated a period of political decline.

From the Chinese perspective, Srivijaya was its foremost trade partner. By 1125, in the final years of the Northern Song government, the Guangzhou and Quanzhou *shibosi* each received nearly double the fiscal resources from the Song court for purchasing foreign goods than the *shibosi* in the Hangzhou bay area.²¹⁸ This is one indication of the magnitude of South Seas trade in comparison to that of East Asia. By around 1160, it was observed that Quanzhou was foremost among the prefectures which traded with the South Seas region, and that of all the locations that ships from Quanzhou traveled to, Srivijaya was the most significant.²¹⁹ This, of course, meant that both Chinese and Srivijayans were involved in the trade, and the limited details indicate that they commonly sailed together on the same ships. We have already observed that Malay speakers sailed to as far as northern Kyushu, and it is widely accepted that Srivijayans were active across much of Southeast Asia and southern India.

Although Chinese trade with Srivijaya was disproportionately larger than with East Asian countries, it is unfortunate that the extant textual evidence from Srivijaya at this time is also disproportionately smaller than that from East Asian countries by a significant margin. Despite

²¹⁸ Li Donghua, *Quanzhou yu woguo zhonggu de haishang jiaotong*, 128–29.

²¹⁹ Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 127; and Hugh R. Clark, “Muslims and Hindus in the Culture and Morphology of Quanzhou from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century,” *Journal of World History* 6.1 (1995): 62.

their limitations, we must depend almost entirely on Chinese records to understand Srivijaya's relationship with China. Yet, while official Chinese records were reluctant to discuss Chinese people living overseas, we do see some accounts which allude to the presence of Chinese people residing in Srivijaya. For instance, the *Song shi* states that "Sanskrit is used for writing in the state [of Srivijaya], and [Sanskrit] is on the ring that the king uses to imprint his seal. They also have Chinese writing, which they use for presenting missives to (the Chinese emperor)." ²²⁰ This information aligns with Chinese merchants accompanying Javanese and Champa embassies to early Song courts at this time, as their ability to advise foreign leaders on China's tributary trade protocols allowed them to benefit from that trade to some degree. Indeed, one Srivijaya embassy so impressed Emperor Zhenzong, that other foreign embassies imitated its actions soon after in hopes of receiving preferential treatment in tributary trade. ²²¹ This embassy, which arrived in 1003, was given the honor of celebrating Zhenzong's birthday in his presence three months after presenting tribute. Zhenzong's birthday festival, called the *Chengtian jie* 承天節, involved a banquet in which gifts were generously bestowed on the Srivijaya envoys. In the following month, the envoys were invited to celebrate the Lantern Festival with Zhenzong. Once again, a banquet was held, and the envoys were all provided with gifts of money. During their stay in the capital, the envoys informed Zhenzong that their king, Cudamanivarman, had built a Buddhist temple in Srivijaya dedicated to praying for the emperor's longevity. They requested that the emperor provide both a signboard with a temple name and a temple bell. Zhenzong praised the idea and declared that the temple would be named after his birthday celebration: *Chengtian wanshou* 承天萬壽 ("Heaven- Bestowed Longevity"). We may recall that at this time temples

²²⁰ *SS*, juan 489. See also Salmon, "Srivijaya, la Chine et les Marchands Chinois," 73; and Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese," 5.

²²¹ Discussion of this matter and the following information comes from Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese."

were not only places of worship, but they were also places of trade and community organization. When we consider that Zhenzong also promoted the construction of a temple for Chinese merchants in Japan in 1012, it seems likely that the temple in Srivijaya was meant to host a Chinese community.²²² Just three years after the embassy returned to Srivijaya, a Chengtian temple (*Chengtian si* 承天寺) was also established in Quanzhou.²²³ The significance of this temple name and its relation to overseas trade continued into 1242, when Chinese merchants financed the establishment of a temple in Japan's largest Chinese enclave, Hakata, with the same name (called *Jōtenji* 承天寺 in Japanese).²²⁴

Although Srivijaya was an important destination in its own right, it was also a major location for ships to trade and take on provisions before continuing to other locations. To the southeast, ships would travel to Java and Bali to partake in the highly lucrative spice trade. Ships would also pass through the Malacca strait and travel further west to India and the Persian Gulf. The early twelfth-century account *Pingzhou ketan* states “([W]hen) Chinese people go to the Middle East, (they first) arrive at Srivijaya to repair their ships and trade goods. Merchants from afar congregate there, and for that reason it is most prosperous” 華人詣大食，至三佛齊修船，轉易貨物。遠賈輻湊，故號最盛。²²⁵ As we have already seen from several indications, many of these merchants were from Quanzhou or elsewhere in southern Fujian. One such merchant, a man named Zhu Fang 朱紡, made a fortune trading in Srivijaya, and attributed his success there to the protection afforded by the deity Mazu. To return the favor, he repaired a Mazu temple in

²²² Claudine Salmon and Hans Bielenstein also posited that the temple was built for a Chinese community. See Salmon, “Srivijaya, la Chine et les Marchands Chinois,” 62–63; and Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World*, 75.

²²³ *Ba Min Tongzhi*, juan 77.

²²⁴ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 20.

²²⁵ *Pingzhou ketan*, juan 2.

Xinghua in 1138.²²⁶ It has also been noted that a Chinese map produced in 1099 locates Srivijaya close to the Fujianese coast and opposite from Xinghua and Quanzhou.²²⁷ Another Quanzhou merchant involved in the South Seas spice trade was Cai Jingfang 蔡景芳, who was actively trading in the region in 1127 and 1136.²²⁸ He provided so much revenue for the trade administration offices that he was given an official title.

To date, scholars have made many attempts to understand the political structure of the Srivijaya polity despite working with a highly fragmented textual record that yields very few details.²²⁹ The earliest assumptions were that it was an empire that conquered and controlled many lands in Southeast Asia. Yet as it became increasingly clear that there was much political autonomy throughout the region at various times, Srivijaya came to be described as a “mandala” entity in which a ruler and not his territory was at the center, and other polities were bound to him while maintaining various degrees of autonomy as vassals.²³⁰ I am more inclined to think that Srivijaya was something of a confederacy, though it is worth considering the lack of evidence to indicate that Srivijaya was a polity centered on a single city. Scholars have spent much time debating the location of a Srivijaya capital, even though we do not even know for certain if a conventional capital city existed. It does seem likely that Srivijaya had a political center, though given the historical tendency for Malay courts to move and relocate with relative ease, it is difficult to pinpoint its precise location for a given period of time.

²²⁶ Clark, “Overseas Trade and Social Change in Quanzhou,” 77–78; Salmon, “Srivijaya, la Chine et les Marchands Chinois,” 75; and Clark, “The Origins of the cult to Mazu, the ‘Divine Woman,’ and the Hybridization of Chinese Culture,” 22.

²²⁷ Schottenhammer, “China’s Increasing Integration into the Indian Ocean World Until Song 宋 Times,” 30.

²²⁸ SS, juan 185; and *Jianyan yilai xinian yaolu*, juan 107.

²²⁹ See for instance Wolters, “A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century”; O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); and Manguin, “Etudes Sumatranaises: I. Palembang et Sriwijaya.”

²³⁰ O. W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region, in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1999), 126–54.

On the other hand, the flow of commerce is easier to trace through the archaeological record. Scholars agree that the earliest major settlement of Srivijaya—and the most likely location of its court—was Palembang (southeast Sumatra). Much commercial activity, which supported Srivijayan rule, was concentrated in this area fifty-five miles up the Musi river. According to the archaeological record thus far, Chinese ceramics for the ninth century are mostly storage jars rather than export ceramics favored in the Persian Gulf (see Chapter One), which indicates that foreign trade was more oriented toward the local consumption of perishable goods than the transshipment of items valued elsewhere. However, beginning in the tenth century, we start to see many more Chinese export ceramics, and they are often found in the vicinity of Hindu and Buddhist brick temples.²³¹ It would seem that nearby sources of gold allowed the purchase of these exports, and the trade was managed by temple administrators. Local inscriptions also talk of shipmasters and merchants.²³² As for the quantity of ceramics, the largest site alone (that of Museum Badaruddin) yielded 55,000 artifacts weighing over 800 kilograms, of which forty percent date to between the seventh to eleventh centuries.²³³ Eighteen percent of the ceramics are imports. The Chinese ceramics date from the ninth to fourteenth centuries, which shows that trade with China occurred from the late Tang to Ming dynasties.²³⁴

Palembang is a primary candidate for a Chinese community in Srivijaya beginning in around the late tenth century. This was likely the location where the Chengtian wanshou temple was built, and if such was the case, it would have been among many temples in the area that worked with local, Indian, and Chinese traders. Unfortunately, the only additional information

²³¹ Manguin, “Palembang and Srivijaya,” 31; and McKinnon, “Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra,” 285–86.

²³² Manguin, “Palembang and Srivijaya,” 33.

²³³ John N. Miksic, “Chinese Ceramics on the Maritime Silk Road: The Importance of Context,” in *The Maritime Silk Road: Global Connectivities, Regional Nodes, Localities*, eds. Franck Billé, Sanjyot Mehendale, and James W. Lankton (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 191.

²³⁴ Manguin, “Etudes Sumatranaises: I. Palembang et Sriwijaya,” 361.

we have about this temple comes from a seventeenth-century history text, which states simply that “[t]he (temple’s) signboard was bestowed during the Song. Today (the temple) is in ruins” 宋時賜額。今廢。²³⁵ A temple known as the Negeri Pangkalan Cina, which can be loosely translated as the “Chinese Outpost” was previously known to exist.²³⁶ However, upon inquiring with local scholars, I was told that there are no longer any traces of the temple. Considering the extensive destruction of historic buildings and ruins by Dutch authorities and the customary reuse of bricks found at ancient sites by local peoples, this is an understandable outcome.

Some scholars believe that Muara Jambi, located approximately one hundred miles northwest of Palembang, became the capital of Srivijaya in around the 1070s.²³⁷ This is a plausible theory, but it is supposition nonetheless. It is more precisely understood, based on archaeological evidence, that Jambi’s involvement in trade gradually increased in the eleventh century as Palembang’s involvement gradually decreased. This might be because Jambi’s closer proximity to the Malacca strait made it a more suitable location to enforce sea passage through the strait and to attract foreign ships. Chinese sources do indicate some activity from this region in the late-eleventh century. These are accounts of “the Srivijayan country of Jambi” (*Sanfoqi-Zhanbeiguo* 三佛齊詹卑國) sending embassies in 1079 and 1082, though close examination shows that Chinese officials regarded the leader of Jambi as possessing a lower-status designation as “sovereign” compared to the title of “king,” which was typically assigned to a leader of Srivijaya.²³⁸ Of particular interest is that the 1082 embassy brought with them a letter

²³⁵ Zhang Xie 張燮, *Dong Xiyang kao* 東西洋考 (Wang Qizong, 1618), juan 3. See also Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 20.

²³⁶ E. Edwards McKinnon, “Early Politics in Southern Sumatra: Some Preliminary Observations Based on Archaeological Evidence,” in *Indonesia* 40 (1985), 21.

²³⁷ See for instance Wolters, “A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century.”

²³⁸ Wahyu Rizky Andhifani, Hedwi Prihatmoko, Andrea Acri et al., “Maritime Links Between China, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Buddhist Monasteries in India (c. 11th–12th Centuries) in the Light of Two Fragmentary Inscribed Strips of Copper from Muara Jambi,” *Religions* 16 (2025): 22.

written in Chinese on behalf of the Jambi ruler's daughter, who was in charge of state affairs.²³⁹ To my knowledge, these are the last references to Jambi in Song records, and all subsequent references to the region are made with the broader designation of "Srivijaya." Nevertheless, the ceramics record shows that Chinese imports continued to flow through Jambi over the next several centuries.

Jambi's rise to prominence paralleled that of greater Srivijaya. Chinese export ceramics began to circulate there in large numbers in the tenth century, which included high quality Xicun (Guangdong) Yue-type wares and true Yue ware.²⁴⁰ Even during that period, Jambi's imports of such ceramics were greater than Palembang's, which suggests that Jambi functioned more as an economic center whereas Palembang functioned more as a political center. Like Palembang, Jambi imported Chinese wares into the fourteenth century, though findings thus far indicate that it continued to do so in greater quantities. Longquan ceramics are among the imports of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁴¹ Earthenwares used for utilitarian purposes are said to "display both Indian as well as south Chinese and Southeast Asian earthenware traditions."²⁴² The remains of at least 39 brick temples and numerous monuments dating to the late first and early second millennium have been identified, with many yet to be excavated, as have water management facilities.²⁴³

²³⁹ *Wenxian tongkao*, juan 330. See also Wolters, "A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century," 233; and Go, "Characteristics of Overseas Chinese Residents," 465.

²⁴⁰ Ridho, "Zhejiang Green Glazed Wares Found in Indonesia," 265–69; and McKinnon, "Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra," 286.

²⁴¹ McKinnon, "Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra," 288–89.

²⁴² McKinnon, "Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra," 291.

²⁴³ McKinnon, "Early Politics in Southern Sumatra," 28; and Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 408. My views differ slightly from Miksic and Goh here as I do not conceive a spatial separation between religious and commercial activity at these sites.

Additional information about Muara Jambi can be yielded from the remains of ships that traveled in nearby waters. For instance, two Old Malay copper plate inscriptions recovered from the Batanghari river near the Muara Jambi temple complex are believed to have belonged to a ship which made port in that area.²⁴⁴ Recent research from a team of scholars identified that these inscriptions detail a shipment intended for two temples in India, one of which was in Chola (south India) and was named after Cuḍamanivarman—the Srivijayan monarch who built a temple in Srivijaya dedicated to Song Emperor Zhenzong in 1003. One interesting aspect about these inscriptions is that the word for the commodity shipped, “*damcu*,” does not correspond with any known commodities in Malay or Sanskrit. Rather, we believe this is a Hokkien (southern Fujian) pronunciation for the word for “cinnabar” (Mandarin *danzhu*, Hokkien *tanchu* 丹朱), which was a common commodity in sea trade at this time. That the inscriptions mention a metal cauldron (commonly produced in China and used in ships exporting Chinese wares) and were found in the presence of many Chinese coins strongly suggests that this ship originated in China. These inscriptions are believed to date to the eleventh or twelfth century.

There is also the Pulau Buaya wreck, which was a Southeast Asian lashed-lug type ship that sank in the Riau archipelago (between Singapore and Sumatra) in the early twelfth century. The ship’s cargo included over 32,000 Chinese ceramic items, mainly from Guangdong with smaller quantities from Fujian and Jingdezhen (Jiangxi), as well as many metal ingots, woks, cauldrons, and other metal items produced in China.²⁴⁵ Eight bronze gongs were also found on board the ship, and it should be noted that these were (and still are) important items in overseas

²⁴⁴ Wahyu, Hedwi, Acri et al., “Maritime Links Between China, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Buddhist Monasteries in India.”

²⁴⁵ Kwa Chong Guan, “Locating Singapore on the Maritime Silk Road: Evidence from Maritime Archaeology, Ninth to Early Nineteenth Centuries,” *Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre Working Paper Series* 10 (2012): 7.

Chinese communities.²⁴⁶ Smaller quantities of fine paste ware from southern Thai kilns and Southeast Asian earthenware cooking pots and stoves for shipboard use were also discovered.²⁴⁷ The ship is believed to have been sailing to Muara Jambi.

The Lingga wreck, dated to around 1111, also sank in the Riau archipelago and is likewise believed to have been traveling to Muara Jambi. It too was a lashed-lug ship with a Chinese cargo of metalware and mainly Guangdong ceramics (Xicun kilns). Bronze gongs were also found on board. The only Southeast Asian artefacts discovered at the wreck site were resin, grindstones and candlenuts.²⁴⁸

Chinese export ceramics for this period can be located throughout much of Sumatra though there is one final location on the island in which Chinese sources detail the presence of Chinese people. The *Lingwai daida* (1178) discusses Guangdong ships stopping in Lanli 蘭里 (Lamri, northwest Sumatra) on their way to Kollam, India, and “passing the winter” there.²⁴⁹ The term “ship” was often a metaphor for merchants in Chinese records of this time, and indeed the *Lingwai daida* does clarify that Chinese merchants were traveling to Kollam on these ships. Scholars today do not know the precise location of an area called “Lamri” prior to the thirteenth century, as references prior to that time appear to be for a broad region rather than for a specific settlement.²⁵⁰ Although located further southeast of where the later kingdom of Lamri was

²⁴⁶ Nicolas, “Gongs, Bells, and Cymbals.”

²⁴⁷ Michael Flecker, “Sister Ships: Three Early 12th Century CE Shipwrecks in Southeast Asia,” *Current Science* 117.10 (2019): 1654.

²⁴⁸ Flecker, “Sister Ships,” 1655.

²⁴⁹ *Lingwai daida*, juan 2. See also Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, 178–79. Kollam was an important trade port in southwest India during previous centuries. For more information, see Chapter One.

²⁵⁰ Patrick Daly, Edmund Edwards McKinnon, R. Michael Feener, et al., “The Historic Trading Port of Lamri on the North Sumatran Coast,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 105 (2019). On the relocation of Sumatran harbor settlements over time, see E. Edwards McKinnon, “Continuity and Change in South Indian Involvement in Northern Sumatra: The Inferences of Archaeological Evidence from Kota Cina and Lamreh,” in *Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Exchange*, eds. Pierre Yves Manguin, A. Mani, and Geoff Wade (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), 140.

located, there is one area in northwestern Sumatra which has yielded a very rich archaeological record of exchange with China in this period.

Kota Cina was one of the largest trade hubs in all of Sumatra, and it has left behind an extensive and diverse range of ceramics, ruins, and ethnographic items. Although the earliest studies of Kota Cina proposed that settlement and foreign trade began there in the twelfth century, more recent studies have moved this date to the eleventh century.²⁵¹ The name “Kota Cina” (literally “Chinese stronghold”), was given by local inhabitants sometime after the settlement was abandoned. Their oral traditions state that the settlement was originally an Indian village on the edge of the sea (scholars have confirmed the coastline was previously closer to the site), though at some point Chinese people arrived, fought the Indians, and took the settlement as their own. This angered the gods, and they sent a plague of shellfish to invade the area as retribution. After that the Chinese fled, with some returning to China and others relocating to elsewhere in Sumatra.²⁵² Although ethnic Chinese have lived in the area in more recent times, they are considered newcomers whose families arrived in the last century.

Like Palembang and Jambi, Kota Cina was a location frequented mainly by Indians, Chinese, and natives. Its role as a trade hub likewise lasted until the fourteenth century, when Ming dynasty prohibitions on sea trade and attacks from Java brought an end to Sumatra’s position of prominence in world trade. Items from the ninth and tenth centuries have been located in the area, though they are rare. They include Chinese Yue or Yue-type celadons of the

²⁵¹ For more recent dates, see McKinnon, “Continuity and Change in South Indian Involvement in Northern Sumatra,” 139, 141; Miksic, “Chinese Ceramics on the Maritime Silk Road,” 192–93; and Miksic and Goh, *Ancient Southeast Asia*, 360.

²⁵² Edmund Edwards McKinnon, “Kota Cina: Its Context and Meaning in the Trade of Southeast Asia in the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries,” Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1984, 7.

ninth century, and one tenth-century bowl produced in Wenzhou.²⁵³ After this, we see Fujian white wares, Jingdezhen wares, and Fujian Yue-type celadons appear in large numbers.²⁵⁴ Longquan wares of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were also among the Chinese ceramics traded there in this period.²⁵⁵ As with other locations where Chinese ceramics were exported, some items have ink inscriptions of Chinese names. Over three-quarters of a ton of shards were excavated at one site between 1975 and 1976, of which 35% were high-fired stonewares produced in southern China.²⁵⁶ Other Chinese ceramic items recovered in the area are utilitarian wares not typically exported abroad, and they are thought to have been the possessions of Chinese people living in the area. These include a jug from Guangdong, a basin from the Xicun kilns of Guangdong (used for preparing foodstuffs, also found in Muara Jambi), an unglazed ceramic mortar from Guangdong, and a kettle from Jiangxi.²⁵⁷ The locally-produced earthenwares exhibit styles, designs, and production techniques of southern China.²⁵⁸

Despite the dramatic story of Chinese people seizing the port from Indians (which would align with Chinese piracy in the region in the tenth century), the archaeological record indicates that Indians and Chinese coinhabited the settlement. South Indian merchants have left much in the way of material evidence to show that they were active not only on the coasts of northern Sumatra, but also deep inland. Folk stories among the local people also talk of Indian merchants with numerous well-armed guards establishing settlements throughout the region.²⁵⁹ The incentive for this level of organization was likely to obtain forest resins and gold to sell in India.

²⁵³ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 157, 240.

²⁵⁴ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 261.

²⁵⁵ McKinnon, "Yue and Longquan Wares in Sumatra," 288–89.

²⁵⁶ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 130.

²⁵⁷ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 300–05.

²⁵⁸ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 162–63, 169.

²⁵⁹ McKinnon, "Continuity and Change in South Indian Involvement in Northern Sumatra," 139.

At least three brick religious buildings have been identified in Kota Cina, with one thought to be a Siva shrine, another a Visnu temple, and another a Buddhist temple.²⁶⁰ Other Indian items discovered at the location include stone images of a Chola style, a linga, a bell with an unidentified Indian script, an Indic bronze pendent, Indian and Sinhalese coins, and beads from the Malabar coast.

One particularly interesting feature of the area is that Chinese folk beliefs and Daoist worship also appear to have been prevalent. A white ware box with the inscription *Huang Dao* 黃道 (Yellow Way) was discovered there, as was a Guangdong stoneware jar with the inscription *Yu Tang* 玉堂 (Jade Hall) together with an impressed image of a dragon.²⁶¹ In traditional Chinese astrology, Yu Tang was one of the six Huang Dao, or daily deities, which were considered auspicious. Another inscription found on the base of a bowl is the blessing *jin yu man tang* 金玉滿堂 ("a hall filled with gold and jade"),²⁶² which originates in Lao Zi's *Daodejing*. The characters in the inscription are corrupted forms, indicating that whoever wrote it was barely literate. This contrasts with most inscriptions on export wares of names or titles properly written in Chinese, and it suggests that the owner made the inscription. Finally, a stoneware figurine wearing a Chinese robe tied with a tasseled belt and seated with the left foot resting on the right knee is thought to be an image of a Daoist priest.²⁶³

There are also indications that Kota Cina was a production center for Chinese goldsmiths who acquired gold from deposits in the hinterlands.²⁶⁴ Two fragments of gold leaf were found in

²⁶⁰ McKinnon, "Continuity and Change in South Indian Involvement in Northern Sumatra," 141–42.

²⁶¹ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 221, and 293, respectively.

²⁶² McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 235.

²⁶³ McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 286.

²⁶⁴ The discussion that follows is from Miksic, "Archaeology, Trade and Society in Northeast Sumatra," 207–08; McKinnon, "Kota Cina," 56–57; and E. Edwards McKinnon and F. E. Treloar, "Analysis of Gold Artifacts from the

the base of a pedestal, each with impressed Chinese inscriptions. One reads *fen jin* 分金 (“parted gold”), and the other *shi fen* 十分 (“ten parts” or “pure”). These marks attest that the gold was pure and not alloyed with silver or copper, which was confirmed by laboratory analysis. The pedestal itself was discovered in a Hindu temple, which further highlights the Indian-Chinese exchange that was occurring in the area. Other evidence of goldsmithing include discoveries of fragments of scrap jewelry, specialized furnace components, a touchstone, a shale mould, and what would seem to be earthenware crucibles. Chinese goldsmiths in nearby Medan confirmed that some of the equipment and methodologies identified at Kota Cina were used in traditional Chinese goldsmithing, and in some cases, were used until recent times. Other important equipment included a large number of brittle-ware jars which are believed to have been used for containing mercury.²⁶⁵ Mercury was used not only to separate gold from quartz, but it was also a substance of symbolic meaning in esoteric Buddhist and Hindu rituals. This recalls the shipment of cinnabar to Indian temples via Muara Jambi, as cinnabar was the ore from which mercury was usually extracted. Aside from gold, other metals worked at Kota Cina on what appears to be an industrial scale include bronze and iron.²⁶⁶

As for other items of interest, one half of an oval soapstone pendant bearing inscribed Chinese characters was recovered, though due to its fragmented state, the only legible character is *ping* 平 (peace). This object is thought to have been a talisman or charm.²⁶⁷ Over one thousand Chinese coins located on the surface of the Kota Cina site were also catalogued, but this is only a

Kota Cina Site, near Medan, Sumatra,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 53.2 (1980): 106–07.

²⁶⁵ McKinnon and Treloar, “Analysis of Gold Artifacts from the Kota Cina Site,” 106.

²⁶⁶ McKinnon, “Kota Cina,” 54.

²⁶⁷ McKinnon, “Kota Cina,” 46, 105, 127.

fraction of the total number of coins recovered from the surface.²⁶⁸ Some have also been discovered fused together in a sausage-like form, indicating that they were bound together on a string. As noted already, the use of copper coins as a common means of exchange is observable in several other overseas Chinese settlements at this time.

Considering the importance of Kota Cina as a trade hub, it would be somewhat unusual for the settlement not to be mentioned in Chinese or Arabic language texts. However, both sets of records do discuss the port of Lamri in northwestern Sumatra, so it might be apt to consider that the site known as Kota Cina is what foreign travelers referred to as Lamri until the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

The Kota Cina settlement was a significant commercial, religious, and industrial center that was home to Chinese, Indians, Malays, and most likely other peoples as well. We see this cosmopolitanism reflected not only in the types of goods traded and used by the inhabitants, but also in the religions they practiced—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism. In the case of Chinese inhabitants, both textual and material evidence would indicate (if Kota Cina and Lamri were the same location) that Guangdong people were the main Chinese group to inhabit the area at an early time, though later textual accounts talk of Quanzhou ships sailing to Lamri instead. However, if Kota Cina was not Lamri, it was nevertheless an important port that connected northern Sumatra with China, India, and most likely lands further west.

²⁶⁸ McKinnon, “Kota Cina,” 106, 109, 127.

India

Arabic texts indicate that Chinese people were active along India's western coasts in the ninth and tenth centuries, and that some of them relocated to Java when "tyranny and confusion became excessive" (see Chapter One). This appears to be an allusion to excessive taxation and demands from local leaders. Indeed, there is a gap in which Chinese sources do not discuss Kollam again until the late twelfth century, when they state Chinese merchants sailed there on their way to the Middle East. However, we know that Chinese envoys and monks were traveling to the Nālandā (Bihar) area of East India in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as it was an important Buddhist pilgrimage site and a major center of Mahayana Buddhism. Five "Chinese temples" (*Han si* 漢寺) were recorded as existing in there as of 964.²⁶⁹ One of these was called the "China West temple" (*Zhina xi si* 支那西寺), which was described at the time as "ancient" (*gu* 古). The Song emperor Taizu also commissioned a large pilgrimage to the area in 966.²⁷⁰ Five Chinese inscriptions discovered there demonstrate that Chinese people continued to travel to the region in the early eleventh century.²⁷¹ We may also surmise that in addition to Chinese monks and envoys, Chinese artisans traveled to the area to produce the inscriptions, some of which were made as stone carvings of high craftsmanship.²⁷² Two pagodas were also constructed

²⁶⁹ Jiye 繼業, *Jiye Xiyu xingcheng* 繼業西域行程 https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T51n2089_p0981c14 See also Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade*, 106–07; and Sattler, "Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese," 8.

²⁷⁰ Sam van Schaik and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-Century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 36–37. See also Jinah Kim, "China in Medieval Indian Imagination: "China"-Inspired Images in Medieval South Asia," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 19 (2022): 203. This took place over land, as the Song government did not yet control southern ports.

²⁷¹ Salmon, "Chinese Epigraphic Studies in Southeast Asia," 288; and Kim, "China in Medieval Indian Imagination."

²⁷² Jinah Kim believes that one stele inscription was produced by a craftsman native to the area based on some irregularities of Chinese characters in a rather extensive body of text. I believe this might instead be attributed to a craftsman proficient in Chinese writing but without an expert level of literacy. It is somewhat difficult to conceive of the patrons allowing the work to be produced by someone without knowledge of Chinese writing.

in the area at the behest of Song rulers—one under Emperor Zhenzong, and one under the regent Empress Liu.²⁷³ It should be noted that all of the information we have about Chinese visitors and temples in the area comes from Buddhist texts produced in China as well as Chinese inscriptions discovered in the Bihar region, and not from Song government records.

An additional reason for Kollam's temporary decline in prominence is that another state nearby quickly assumed a large role in long distance sea trade beginning in the early-eleventh century. South India and its merchants had long since been major players in sea trade, though at this time the Chola state was taking a more active role in sponsoring such activities. After conquering outlying lands in southern India and in Sri Lanka, Chola established close diplomatic ties with the Srivijaya and Song courts.²⁷⁴ Song sources record that relations were established in 1015 when a merchant—whose name and place of origin are conspicuously absent—informed Chola's King Rājārāja that the realm under Heaven belonged to the Great Song, and a sagely emperor (Zhenzong) had received the Mandate of Heaven by bringing peace and prosperity to his lands.²⁷⁵ This prompted Rājārāja to send an embassy to China with a missive written in expert Chinese prose, both of which were warmly received by Zhenzong. It is recorded that “gifts were generously bestowed” upon the embassy's visit to the Song court. Only one decade later, Chola seafarers raided many of the most prominent ports in Southeast Asia, which must have impacted Srivijayan influence in the region for at least some period of time. Chola envoys

²⁷³ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 19.

²⁷⁴ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese.” See also *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa*. For Chola's four embassies to China in 1015, 1020, 1033, and 1077, see Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China*, 189–90.

²⁷⁵ Sattler, “Temple Diplomacy, Sacred Rites, and Overseas Chinese,” 12; and Sattler, “Literate Merchants in Southeast China and Overseas,” 119–20.

also submitted a missive in literary Chinese during the country's last recorded diplomatic mission to China in 1077.²⁷⁶

As for the archaeological record, Chinese ceramics found in the excavation of the Chola capital of Gangaikonda Cholapuram date from the late tenth century.²⁷⁷ Jingdezhen porcelain is among the types recovered dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.²⁷⁸ After the capital was changed to Polonnaruwa in 1070, Chinese ceramics can be found in that location as well, which date to between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.²⁷⁹ Chinese coins have also been discovered along the Chola's coastlines.²⁸⁰

The Middle East

Chinese people continued to travel to the Middle East in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, though it does not seem that the region retained the prominence that it had in the previous two centuries. Political changes resulted in a decline of the Abbasid caliphate, and Siraf never recovered from a devastating earthquake in 977. Aden (Yemen) and the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt became important markets for Chinese wares, though their locations in southern Arabia and northern Africa, respectively, added even greater distance to the previous route that connected China to the Persian Gulf. Chinese merchants must have understood that transporting their wares over such a great distance was a highly risky endeavor, which would explain why

²⁷⁶ Wolters, "A Note on the Capital of Śrīvijaya during the Eleventh Century," 231.

²⁷⁷ Karashima, *In Search of Chinese Ceramics*, 44; and Karashima, "Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean," 40–47.

²⁷⁸ Karashima, *In Search of Chinese Ceramics*, 36–37, 44. See also John Guy, "The Lost Temples of Nagapattinam and Quanzhou: A Study in Sino-Indian Relations," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 3 (1993-1994): 294.

²⁷⁹ Karashima, *In Search of Chinese Ceramics*, 59.

²⁸⁰ Guy, "The Lost Temples of Nagapattinam and Quanzhou," 294.

most in this period preferred to sail only as far as Sumatra or Java. Nevertheless, we do know that Fuzhou merchants shipped local goods to the Middle East in the early eleventh century.²⁸¹ We may also recall the statement in the *Pingzhou ketan* (1119) that Chinese merchants stopped in Srivijaya on their way to the Middle East.

Chinese ceramics reached Fustat, the economic and political center of the Fatimid caliphate, as early as the ninth century, but such imports grew in quantity during the tenth century. These were mainly Yue and Yue-type celadons, and they were followed by white wares in the eleventh century.²⁸² With ports on the Red Sea taking a greater share of Chinese and Southeast Asian trade, we see ninth and tenth century Yue and white wares circulate in East Africa as well.²⁸³ Little archaeological work has been conducted in Yemen despite the historical importance of Aden, though excavations in Athar (southwestern Saudi Arabia) revealed a variety of Chinese ceramics. These included Yue ware and other northern Song celadons, Jingdezhen and Fujian white wares, all dating from the late ninth to the late twelfth centuries.²⁸⁴

Conclusion

Although major disruptions existed in the history of Chinese people traveling, trading, and residing abroad, such activities gradually increased from the ninth to twelfth centuries. The catastrophic An Lushan rebellion of the mid-eighth century allowed for decreased central authority over China's coastal prefectures, though it was likely never very strong in those

²⁸¹ *Lizhi pu*.

²⁸² Gyllensvärd, "Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fostat I,"; Lin Shimin, "Zhejiang Export Green Glazed Wares: Ningbo Data," in *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares*, 148; and Sasaki, "Trade Patterns of Zhejiang Wares Found in West Asia," 326.

²⁸³ Gray, *Sung Porcelain and Stoneware*, 193.

²⁸⁴ Tampoe, *Maritime Trade between China and the West*, 110.

locations to begin with. As the southern economies continued to grow in the ninth century, there was greater incentive for local officials and clerks to work with Chinese and foreign merchants. These groups tapped into the demand for foreign goods, the increased capabilities and quality of local producers, and the wealth of foreign markets. Such a trend continued despite the chaos of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, and was accelerated in the mid-tenth century by leaders of small Chinese states seeking every advantage at their disposal to survive and prosper in their competitive geopolitical environments. By the time the Song empire conquered Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, Chinese people were already living in other countries and bringing much wealth into the coastal regions of southern China. Rather than reacting fearfully and attempting to extinguish this trade as early Ming leaders did, Song leaders sought to regulate the trade and redirect a portion of its profits into state coffers. This too was a gradual process that took decades, if not centuries, to fully play out. Although the Song court was ultimately successful in raising large revenues from trade levies, it was not able to concurrently prevent its subjects from living abroad. Song courtiers and record keepers were aware of the state's limitations in this regard, but rather than acknowledge the issue, ignoring and avoiding it became the status quo. Earlier research took the position that if Chinese people were actively living and trading overseas at this time, Chinese records would have provided extensive details. It is now evident that we cannot rely on such records to provide an understanding of the extent to which Chinese people were active overseas, but must rather rely on private accounts, later histories, the archaeological record, and above all, non-Chinese records. When we take such an approach, we see that Chinese people in the eleventh and early twelfth century were very active throughout East Asia, Southeast Asia, and even regions further west.

These people played fundamental roles in developing port cities and urban centers. As with the preceding centuries, marriage alliances with native peoples were key to setting up settlements abroad. In more recent centuries, Chinese women likewise hardly ever traveled on trade ships, and Chinese men took local wives. Their sons took local wives or the wives of people with mixed Chinese-native ethnicity, while their daughters were encouraged to marry recent Chinese arrivals or men of mixed heritage. Yet we know that half-Chinese daughters also married into locally influential families overseas as well, and we can expect that marriage with native men on the whole was not unusual. In considering these dynamics, I see no indication that they did not exist in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as well. Such a process perpetuated selective cultural continuity, though it was obviously vulnerable in times of disruption and could relatively quickly succumb to processes of assimilation. Such is believed to be the fate of many Chinese communities when the Ming government prohibited private trade in the fourteenth century.

Of the relationships Chinese people forged with other groups overseas, those with political leaders were the most desired, though close connections with religious institutions were important as well. Chinese sea merchants tended to be deeply religious, and we must be cautious not to cynically view their relationships with religious institutions as mere schemes. Yet we must also recognize that temples and shrines were places of commerce as well as places to shelter one's wealth. One of the most common themes in Chinese history is the struggle between the taxing government and the ever vigilant and ingenious taxable populace. If we wish to explain why the early eleventh century witnessed a sudden and widespread growth of Chinese communities overseas in addition to Chinese people working closely with religious institutions,

one answer may lie in understanding the strategies used to avoid paying taxes.²⁸⁵ These trends were occurring at the same time that the early Song government was establishing greater involvement in trade administration, and while one may assume this would result in greater control, it seems that an unintended consequence was for Chinese merchants and communities to retain much influence on trade from outside of the Song government's jurisdiction. Indeed, just as the Northern Song government increased its control over the economy in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Chinese communities overseas continued to grow and spread to an unprecedented extent. This is not to say that the interests of government and merchants were in fundamental opposition, as we see in Chapter Three that both groups were often very closely connected. It is also evident that Emperor Zhenzong took advantage of the greater presence of Chinese people overseas to have them orchestrate foreign diplomatic practices in a way that promoted his carefully cultivated image of a sagely ruler. Rather, what we see is an intentional divide between the Chinese state and Chinese people overseas. The Song government did not wish to formally acknowledge the existence of Chinese communities overseas in order to avoid the moral and political implications that the issue presented. And that suited those who belonged to such communities just fine.

²⁸⁵ One wonders if this also corresponds to one instance of a sea merchant faking his death and moving to Japan, and another instance of a sea merchant leveraging political connections to become a monk despite a Japanese monk's passive skepticism of his sincerity. For the former, see Yamazaki "Kaishō to sono tsuma." For the latter, see Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center (with Some Periphery in between)," 402–03. For discussion on Song merchants investing in religious institutions to evade taxes, see McDermott and Shiba, "Economic Change in China, 960–1279," 404–05.

Closing Remarks

The early history of Chinese people traveling and living overseas is a history of bold and enterprising individuals who were quick to seize on opportunities and who relied on ingenuity and cooperation for their success. Their initiatives were coordinated through kinship networks, and while state representatives were recognized as the most important players in overseas trade both within China and overseas, government itself usually played a peripheral role in their activities. It was also sometimes absent altogether. For Chinese merchants in particular, the main roles of states were to tax their trade, to regulate it to an extent that would not push them to primarily operate in other countries or outside of the law, and to guide them toward importing goods that were valued or useful. Outside of these parameters, Chinese merchants operated on their own initiative. Although officials gave them informal patronage (and in rare instances official rank), they were not official state representatives, and when leaving a country, there is little to show they gave much credence to its laws. The one likely exception would be during the tenth century, when it appears that southern Chinese states incorporated sea merchants into their diplomatic apparatus, though there is not enough evidence to decisively determine that such was the case. From the ninth to twelfth centuries, Chinese people often traveled and lived overseas without permission from Chinese authorities to do so, and in the rare instances when official Chinese records recognize their movement abroad, it was only to recognize their role as traders. I am hard-pressed to find official Chinese records of Chinese people permanently residing overseas during the time frame of this dissertation. Such a practice was simply not acknowledged by Chinese courts, and it most certainly was not condoned.

To gain insight on the Chinese people who were living overseas, we must instead turn to the records of Japan and Korea, to the personal notes of Chinese officials, and to writings from

countries located in the greater Indian Ocean region. It is from this diverse range of records that we see that Chinese people did not simply take on important roles as traders of commodities, but they also served in governments outside of China, and took on other skilled jobs such as doctors and craftsmen. We can also consider that as was the case during the colonial period, most Chinese people abroad were laborers, sailors, or men engaged in petty trades, though beyond the topic of Chinese slaves in and around the area of present-day Vietnam, the stories of such individuals were never recorded. The material record of shipwrecks and port cities likewise supports textual accounts of Chinese traveling and living overseas in the form of findings of unique items commonly used by Chinese people, such as brush writing implements, toys, tea grinders, spoons, Daoist paraphernalia, pillows, and so forth.

Of additional interest is that much like during recent times, the early story of Overseas Chinese was not simply a story of Chinese people living abroad—it was a story of *southern* Chinese people living abroad. The earliest textual sources show that these people were almost all from the areas of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, though by the late eleventh century they were mainly from Fujian. It would seem that after the collapse of the Northern Song government, merchants from the Zhejiang region once again rose to prominence, though additional research should be carried out to confirm this point. By the beginning of the twelfth century, the story of southern Chinese traders also came to include southern Chinese officials exclusively administering sea trade, with officials from Fujian and Zhejiang consistently taking positions as trade superintendents into the Southern Song period. We see at this time that the wealth of sea trade buttressed the formation of a large segment of Song officialdom comprised of men from southern China who earned *jinshi* degrees and frequently rose to prominent positions at court. It is also becoming evident that this wealth played an important role in the factional politics of that

period. All of these factors were made possible by the continuous southward shift of China's economic center of gravity, which gained full momentum after the An Lushan rebellion.

How might we assess the legacy of the Chinese people who traveled overseas during this period? For one, we may look at the cities that they helped to build. Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Fuzhou, Wenzhou, Ningbo, Hangzhou, Fukuoka, and Hanoi all became significant centers of commerce during this period, in a large part due to the trade that was conducted by Chinese seafarers. Most of these cities were not established by the merchant leaders of their networks, though the commerce, knowledge, manpower, and organizational skills that such individuals brought with them allowed these locations to grow and thrive. Going beyond this period, we may observe the legacy that Chinese sea merchants imparted on locations such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taipei, Honolulu, San Francisco, Surabaya, Manila, Yokohama, Naha, Bangkok, Penang, Malacca, and Xiamen.

In many ways, we can conceive of the Chinese people who traded, traveled, and lived overseas as builders not only of cities, but of links as well. They were among the many diverse peoples who transported Buddhist texts and monks by sea, and constructed Buddhist temples in port cities across Asia. Their knowledge of statecraft helped kingdoms beyond Chinese borders grow and prosper, sometimes even to the consternation of officials within China. Wherever they traveled, they brought with them commodities that stimulated local economies, and they were also known to bring technological knowledge that established local industries. All of this is not to paint a rosy picture of the contributions of Chinese migrants, only to show that their early contributions are worthy of recognition. Activities they sometimes engaged in that are less worthy of appraisal include piracy, smuggling, and the odd coup d'état.

The accomplishments of Chinese migrants were not achieved singlehandedly or to the exclusion of non-Chinese peoples. To the contrary, one of the most visible strategies for success was their ability to work with those whose backgrounds were very different from their own. We see this in both textual and material records of trade ship crews, of extensive records of Chinese merchants forming connections with officials and leaders abroad, and in the many known instances in which Han Chinese married those of different ethnicities. In the latter case, this indicates a strategy of forming close and enduring relationships with people outside of their kinship networks. Such networks were highly cohesive, but they were not entirely closed off to outsiders. They served the important purposes of keeping wealth and opportunities within a designated organizational structure, of exercising influence on local and state levels, and of ensuring trust and compliance in exchanges that were often of significant value. These kinship networks were highly effective and highly functional forms of organization, as many still are in the present day.

As commerce steadily expanded in the eleventh century, so too did more Chinese people travel overseas, and after the collapse of the Northern Song government, sea trade played an even greater role in the Song economy and in supporting its ruling elites. This continued under the Mongolians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whose main concern regarding sea trade was often directing its proceeds to their treasuries. By the time that Zheng He set sail with his embassies in the early fifteenth century, he encountered Chinese communities throughout much of Southeast Asia, with the largest among them numbering in the thousands of people. These were not simply communities that were established overnight, but rather, they followed a tradition and legacy of exchange in the region that had existed for centuries. We might consider that one of the more symbolic aspects of these missions was that they ushered in a new era in

which states in China could no longer avoid acknowledging the existence of Chinese communities overseas.

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