YIWEN LI

NETWORKS OF FAITH & PROFIT

Monks, Merchants, and Exchanges between China and Japan, 839–1403 CE

Networks of Faith and Profit

Between 839 and 1403 CE, there was a six-century lapse in diplomatic relations between present-day China and Japan. This hiatus in what is known as the tribute system has led to an assumption that there was little contact between the two countries at this time. Yiwen Li debunks this assumption, arguing instead that a vibrant Sino-Japanese trade network flourished in this period as Buddhist monks and merchants fostered connections across maritime East Asia. Based on a close examination of sources in multiple languages, including poems and letters, transmitted images and objects, and archaeological discoveries, Li presents a vivid and dynamic picture of the East Asian maritime world. She shows how this Buddhist trade network operated outside of the framework of the tribute system and, through novel interpretations of Buddhist records, provides a new understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and commerce.

YIWEN LI teaches history and cultural heritage at City University of Hong Kong.

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Networks of Faith and Profit

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For my parents, Liu Ping and Li Yuguang

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It was at a graduate research seminar on the Tang-Song-Yuan histories in fall 2012 that I first connected many scattered dots I had encountered in various sources and proposed to write my dissertation on the networks of monks and merchants. I talked about it with my advisor, Valerie Hansen, and her eyes lit up after hearing my very nascent ideas. Then began a ten-year journey.

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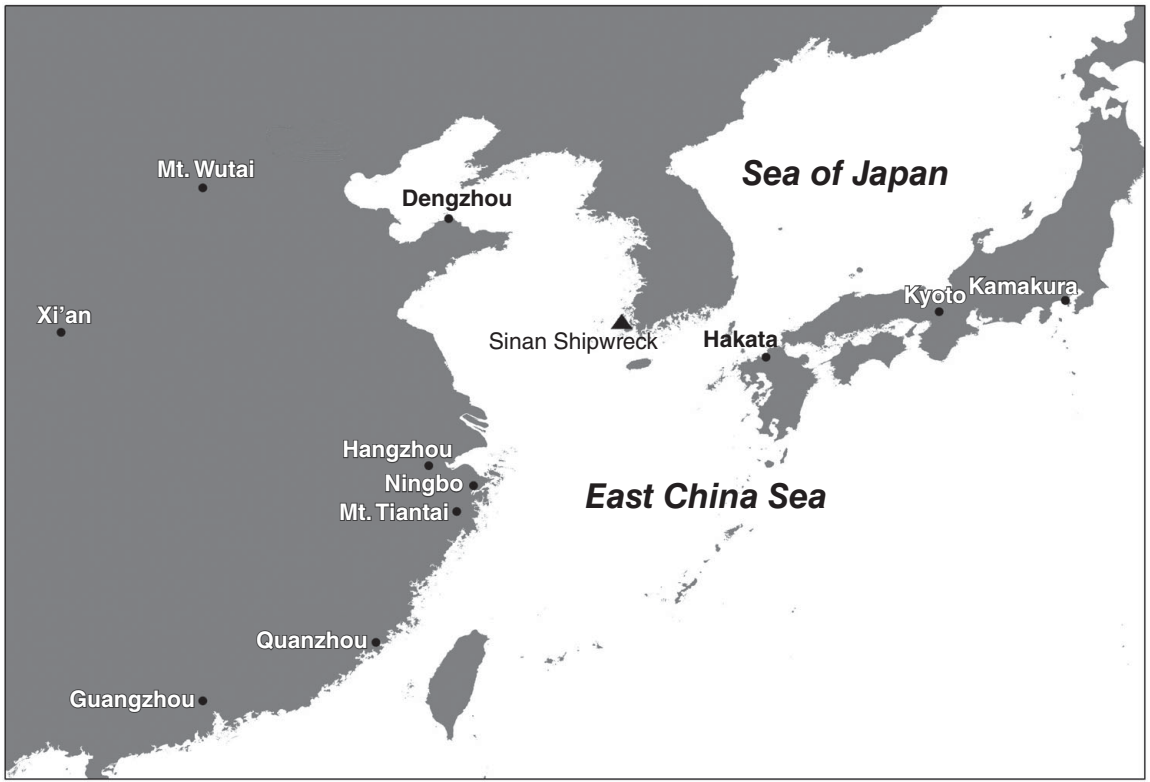
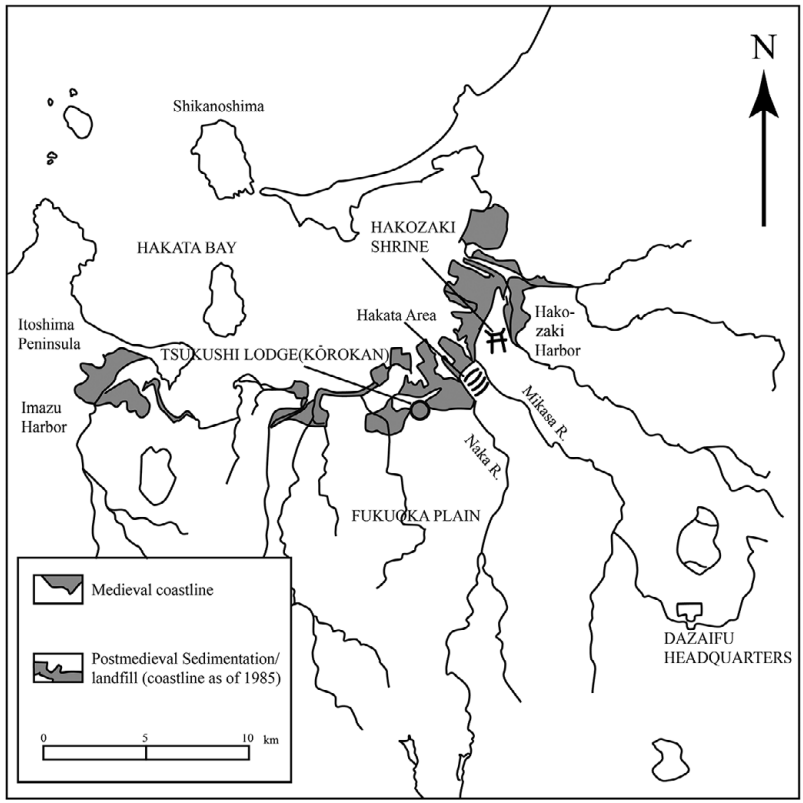
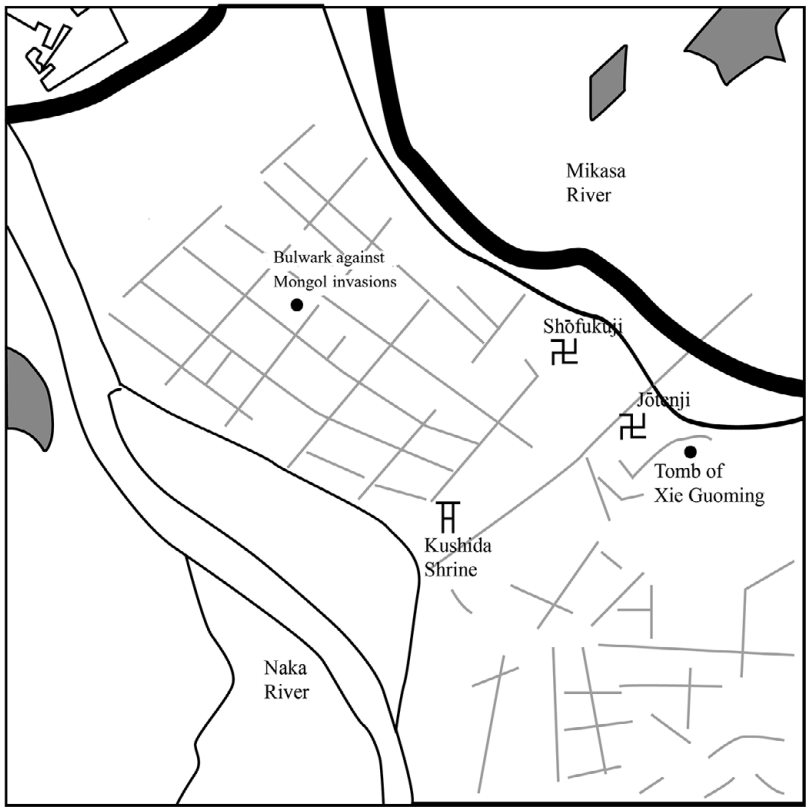


Map 1 Important places in Sino-Japanese relations, 9th–14th century.



Map 2 Dazaifu headquarters and Hakata. Modified from Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, Map 3, "Hakata and vicinity." Used with permission.



Map 3 Hakata area.

1 *Introduction*

Buddhist Trade Networks in East Asia

In 838 CE a fleet of four ships left a port near modern Fukuoka on the island of Kyushu and set sail for China. The vessels carried some 650 people, including members of Japanese diplomatic, scholarly, and religious circles. Their mission, as with fifteen similar missions in the preceding centuries, was to submit tribute to the emperor of the Tang dynasty (618–907). Members of the delegation carried treasure such as silver, various kinds of fabric, jewel beads, and lacquer; the Japanese hoped, for their part, to acquire the latest technologies by observing Chinese practices firsthand and purchasing books.[1] Among this delegation was a forty-five-year-old Japanese monk named Ennin 円仁 (793–864). Intent on learning more about Buddhist teachings, and acquiring sacred objects sought by his monastery, Ennin decided to remain in China after the Japanese delegation left for home in 839 and stayed there until 847.

Ennin's original plan was to return to Japan with the ambassador and the other members of the delegation once they had completed their mission. While Ennin and his companions did not know it at the time, theirs would be the last official tribute mission that the Japanese emperor would send to China; the next one occurred in 1403 after a six-century hiatus in official diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The exchanges between China and Japan during this 600-year period, and how and why they were able to continue, are the subject of this book. The lively set of commercial, cultural, and intellectual exchanges occurring outside the framework of the tribute trade between China and Japan suggest that similar exchanges with China's other trade partners took place alongside the tribute trade but that the primacy of the tribute trade in the sources has

[1] Wang Zhenping, *Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005); Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之, *Kentōshi* 遣唐使 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2007); Ezra F. Vogel, *China and Japan: Facing History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 1–28.

overshadowed their importance.[2] Although there are scant traces of the role of Buddhist monks in maritime trade in the official records, other sources shed light on the overlooked but vital contributions of the religio-commercial network. The informal network created by faith-inspired monks and profit-driven merchants first formed in the ninth century and facilitated the robust but unofficial trade between China and the Japanese archipelago until 1403.

Ancient Buddhist literature indicates that by the early centuries CE, monks and traders in South Asia had already established a close relationship. Not only did Buddhist texts praise the rich merchants who donated to Buddhist communities, but also in many stories the Buddha was said to provide protection to sea merchants.[3] During the Sino-Japanese tribute hiatus, the continued cooperation between monks and merchants attests to their growing common interests: While monks in both lands sought to spread Buddhist doctrine at home and abroad, merchants from the continent and the archipelago were also concerned with accumulating spiritual merit. While merchants pursued economic profits, monks also aspired to gain wealth for their monasteries. These shared goals served to promote collaboration at least as early as Ennin's time in the early ninth century.

Buddhism was first introduced to Japan in the sixth century via people from the Korean peninsula, who had learned about Buddhism from China. Thereafter, China, where Buddhism thrived, was the source of Buddhist teachings for Japanese monks for centuries. Ennin's network – comprised of connections to Chinese monks, local officials, and Chinese and Korean sea merchants – supported him for a nine-year-long sojourn that took him halfway across the Tang empire.

[2] For examples of the studies regarding the tribute-system framework, see John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Hamashita Takeshi 浜下武志, *Chōkō shisutemu to kindai Ajia* 朝貢システムと近代アジア (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1997); Iwai Shigeki 岩井茂樹, *Chōkō, kaikin, goshi: Kinsei Higashi Ajia no bōeki to chitsujo* 朝貢・海禁・互市：近世東アジアの貿易と秩序 (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2020).

The name "tribute system" has inspired many debates, and scholars have been trying to find other frameworks through which to analyze Chinese foreign relations, such as "asymmetric relationships" and "colonial structure." For more details, see John E. Wills, Jr., ed., *Past and Present in China's Foreign Policy: From "Tribute System" to "Peaceful Rise"* (Portland, ME: Merwin Asia, 2010).

[3] Xinru Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1–600* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 90, 115.

This network helped safeguard his valuable possessions during a large-scale persecution of Buddhism in China between 842 and 846, and eventually allowed Ennin and all of his belongings to return home safely to Japan.

During his years in China, Ennin also observed that other, more private forms of shipping and trade managed by monks and merchants had already begun to displace the tribute system. The decline of the Tang empire is believed to have been one of the reasons for this suspension of tributary relations.[4] However, the primary reason was that the rapid development of nontribute trade made tribute missions to China unnecessary.[5]

Over the ensuing centuries, collaboration between monks and merchants grew tighter. Merchants provided more than transportation to monks: they served as monks' messengers and envoys and took commissions to purchase sutras and other valuables; they donated money to monasteries; and some even took Buddhist vows, becoming lay Buddhists and helping to spread the teachings abroad.

Monks in both lands, for their part, provided spiritual guidance as the merchants weathered high-risk voyages, and more importantly, they opened up their networks to the merchants. The monks' networks not only connected monasteries across the sea, which is how Ennin received hospitality and much assistance in China, but also linked them to Buddhist patrons at home and abroad. Ennin and many of his successors received considerable patronage from imperial and aristocratic clans of Japan, while Chinese royal patrons also bestowed economic privileges on prominent Chinese monasteries. Merchants made efforts to embed themselves into this established religious network across the continent and the archipelago and to connect themselves to potential trade partners and patrons, which could earn them an advantageous position in overseas trade.

This religio-commercial network sustained and facilitated the exchanges between the continent and the archipelago during the six-century suspension of the official diplomatic relationship between China and Japan. Desirable commodities, Buddhist scriptures and

[4] Tōno, *Kentōshi*, 49–50.

[5] Similarly, Hamashita points out that the collapse of the China-centered tribute system in the Qing dynasty (1636–1911) was also to a large extent due to the growth of private trade, which made the tribute trade nonprofitable to both parties. See Hamashita, *Chōkō shisutemu to kindai Ajia*, 9.

teachings, and a sense of fellowship were all transmitted via the network. This book explores the interaction between monks and merchants who created a vivid and dynamic East Asian maritime world – a world where noninstitutional measures and nontraditional policymakers played a prominent role in overseas exchanges and foreign affairs.

Material Culture and the Buddhist Monastic Economy

When Ennin returned to Japan in 847, his experience in China and the valuable scriptures and sacred objects that he obtained instantly earned him an outstanding position in the Tendai 天台 Buddhist clergy, along with royal patronage. While in China, Ennin kept a detailed diary, which documented the avid desire of the monastic community for certain material objects.[6] Ennin meticulously recorded how he frequented markets to acquire ritual objects, especially those necessary for esoteric Buddhist ceremonies in Japan, such as the Buddhist cosmic painting of mandalas.[7]

Ennin's acquisition of paintings and ritual objects illustrates what tied monks and merchants together for centuries: material culture. Monastic regulations, rather than expressing no interest in material things, gave detailed descriptions of the objects that monks could possess or use. Buddhist images and devotional items were often decorated with precious gems or metals to display grandeur, and artists depicted the paradise of the Buddha Amitābha as filled with rare and expensive treasures.[8] As Xinru Liu has documented, by the early period of South Asian history, Buddhist monasteries had already

[6] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, trans. Edwin O. Reischauer (New York: Angelico Press reprint edition, 2020); Ennin 円仁, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu* 入唐求法巡禮行記校注, annot. Bai Huawen, Li Dingxia, and Xu Denan (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 1992). For research on the Buddhist arts in Ennin's diary, see Valerie Hansen, "The Devotional Use of Buddhist Art in Ennin's Diary," *Orientations* 45.3 (2014).

[7] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 296, 300; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 363, 373.

[8] John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 7–8. Also see Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), especially ch. 2, "The Buddhist System of Objects."

become important consumers of luxury goods such as silk and precious stones.[9]

During Ennin's time, when the court was so eager to adopt Buddhist teachings from the continent, material objects became even more important. Buddhist sutras, most of which were originally written in ancient Indian languages, were accessible to the learners in Japan only in translation, a process that required linguistic expertise and spiritual knowledge and occasionally caused concepts to be distorted. Buddhist ritual objects, on the other hand, could be put directly into use after they were imported to Japan, so they offered devotees direct access to the Buddha's power. Buddhist clerics and lay believers alike believed that they thus had contact with the originals.[10] Ennin's mentor Saichō 最澄 (767–822), the founder of the Tendai Buddhist sect in Japan, had traveled to China with the previous embassy in 804, but he did not bring back as many ritual objects as his rival Kūkai 空海 (774–835), who founded the Shingon 真言 (true words) sect of esoteric Buddhism.[11] Consequently, the Tendai sect was at a disadvantage for a long while in terms of holding ritual ceremonies for the Japanese court.[12] Thus Ennin took every opportunity in China to collect Buddhist scriptures and sacred objects, and his efforts paid off. Ennin performed several court-sponsored Buddhist ceremonies in the capital following his return, including two initiation ceremonies for new emperors over the next ten years.[13]

The Enryakuji 延暦寺 monastery, with which Ennin was affiliated, also benefited enormously from Ennin's trip. Founded by Ennin's mentor Saichō, the Enryakuji monastery, located on Mount Hiei 比叡山, northeast of the capital Kyoto, began as a cluster of several small

[9] Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China*, 84; Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion: An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People, AD 600–1200* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), ch. 2.

[10] Cynthea J. Bogel, "Situating Moving Objects: A Sino-Japanese Catalogue of Imported Items 800 CE to the Present," in *What's the Use of Art?: Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*, ed. Jan Mrazek and Morgan Pitelka (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 150.

[11] Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Robert Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801–806," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37 (1982).

[12] Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 31.

[13] Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 41.

huts. Ennin's successful return brought in royal patronage and significant economic resources for the monastery's expansion. In the premodern era, constructing and maintaining monastery buildings – which were frequently ruined by accidental fires – and supporting a large Buddhist community were all expensive. To help manage these costs and maintain incoming revenue, monasteries took part in various economic activities such as land cultivation, moneylending, and operating oil mills and hostels.[14]

Most of the economic resources needed to run monastery complexes and their related businesses, however, came from patronage. For example, most of the prominent monasteries in China and Japan relied on land bestowed by the imperial house or donated by courtiers and other wealthy patrons, since this provided stable and sustainable revenue.[15] Enryakuji itself, benefiting from royal patronage, was among the biggest landholders in Japan after the eleventh century. This land endowment, and attendant tax exemption, allowed Enryakuji to build a complex over an impressive area of 150 square kilometers, including about 100 buildings, and to house nearly 3,000 monks.[16]

Monasteries, therefore, strived to foster the patronage on which their financial base heavily relied. Gifts to the monasteries – whether money, land, houses, or hand-copied sutras – were given in exchange for something only Buddhist monasteries could provide: merit.[17] An authentic ceremony in Japan incorporating ritual objects from China would have prompted patrons to make donations in exchange for merit, which they hoped would bring them either earthly happiness

[14] Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, trans. Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Suzanne Gay, *The Moneylenders of Late Medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Michael J. Walsh, "The Buddhist Monastic Economy," in *Modern Chinese Religion I: Song–Liao–Jin–Yuan (960–1368 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Pierre Marsone (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[15] From time to time, authorities also tried to confiscate land from monasteries as a way to reduce their influence, although the attempts often encountered strong resistance. For details, see Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, especially ch. 7.

[16] Mikael S. Adolphson gives a detailed account of Enryakuji's early history in his book. See Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 25, 34.

[17] Walsh, "Buddhist Monastic Economy," 1292. For a similar point, also see Saskia Abrahms-Kavunenko and Matthew D. Milligan, "The Wheel-Turning King and the Lucky Lottery: Perspectives New and Old on Wealth and Merriment within Buddhism," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 36.2 (2021): 265–86.

or a better afterlife. In the early years of Enryakuji's existence, its monks' pilgrimage trips to China helped it to secure enough funding to construct more monastic buildings and halls and to elevate its religious reputation. In both China and Japan, prestigious monasteries gained the privilege through elite patronage to participate in long-distance trade, which further bolstered their ties to major donors.

By Ennin's time, merchants were already aiding monks to cross the sea and purchase sutras and ritual objects. Later, as this book shows, monasteries provided protection to the foreign merchants who did business for them, launched trade expeditions in the name of raising funds for reconstruction, and drew up contracts with merchants to divide the profits. Both monasteries and merchants obtained tangible material benefits from their cooperation, and the mechanism of exchange in the monastic economy also allowed merchants assisting the monks to accumulate merit (a less tangible but nonetheless valuable commodity). In order to know why and how these trade networks grew, it is important to understand the role of religion in commercial activities in the premodern era.

Trade via Religious Networks

While Muslim traders from the Arabic world and Jewish traders in the Mediterranean have enjoyed a long-established reputation for business acumen, Buddhist traders maintain a rather obscure position in histories of commerce.[18] This may be because ancient Indian Buddhist

[18] Compared to the role of Buddhism in Sino-Japanese trade, the role of Buddhism in Sino-Indian exchanges has received more scholarly attention. For the representative work, see Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China*, and Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: the Realignment of India–China Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

Enomoto Wataru has done important work clarifying several previously misunderstood points in Sino-Japanese trade, and he has emphasized the cooperation between merchants and monks. See Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, *Sōryo to kaishō tachi no Higashishinakai* 僧侶と海商たちの東シナ海 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2010) and Enomoto Wataru, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū: 9~14 seiki* 東アジア海域と日中交流：九〜十四世紀 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2007). Amino Yoshihiko has emphasized the importance of a maritime perspective to Japanese history. See Amino Yoshihiko, *Rethinking Japanese History*, trans. Alan S. Christy (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2012). Benefiting from their pioneering work, this book further explores the dynamic of the cooperation and the underlying mechanism of the interplay between religious and trade networks.

scriptures hold that trading constituted misconduct on the part of monks, and trading for profit was an even graver offense.[19] Monastic codes specified that Buddhist monks and nuns should not touch money, gold, or silver. Even if a gilded Buddhist statue were to fall to the floor, the monk was supposed to pick it up with a cloth so as not to touch the gold surface directly.[20] For these tasks, monasteries employed people known as *jingren* 淨人, literally meaning "pure persons." These were acolytes who did all the "unclean" services for monasteries – such as cultivating the land, washing the toilets, and handling silver or gold – to allow monks to remain "pure."[21]

But as Gregory Schopen insightfully points out, the monastic rules almost always began with a firm command or rigid prohibition but usually ended with a list of exceptions, and the wording of important codes was often deliberately vague. This ambiguity may have been intentional.[22] Despite formal monastic prohibitions against trading by monks, they actively participated and ran large-scale commercial enterprises. Ennin did not see the need to disguise that he personally touched gold: he recorded in his diary that he carried gold dust (the form of currency of the allowance provided by the Japanese court) to a market in China to exchange it for bronze coins, a more convenient currency for small-amount transactions.[23]

Despite the scriptural prohibition on handling money, commerce – as long as it was ethical – in general was considered acceptable in Buddhism. As this book recounts, prominent Japanese monasteries

[19] Ji Xianlin 季羡林, "Shangren yu fojiao" 商人與佛教, in *Chan yu wenhua* 禪與文化 (Beijing: Zhongguo yanshi chubanshe, 2006), 136–37.

[20] Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 155.

[21] Walsh, "Buddhist Monastic Economy," 1287.

[22] Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 13–14.

Gregory Schopen and Matthew D. Milligan have both discussed the aforementioned monastic code that forbids monks from handling money. Schopen notes that in the original Sanskrit text, the verb that modern scholars translate as "handle" has a wide range of possible meanings, and so does the object of the action. (Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters*, 13–14.) Milligan points out that the commentary in the text identified with the rule uses a word meaning "coined money," and "because of the reference to coins, the rule meant that a monastic could potentially avoid breaking it by accepting non-coined money or credit." (Abrahms-Kavunenko and Milligan, "Wheel-Turning King and the Lucky Lottery," 272.)

[23] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 44; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 53.

and eminent monks were directly involved in overseas transactions, and their role in the Sino-Japanese trade grew increasingly important between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. In Ennin's day, the monks joined up with merchant ventures that were already going to China and participated mainly by using their connections to the high authorities to gain special treatment for the merchants. Later, however, the monasteries launched their own trading expeditions. Monasteries offered maritime merchants the benefit of an affiliation – in this sense, the maritime merchants who affiliated with monasteries functioned as "pure persons" in overseas trade.

The direct participation of clerics in long-distance trade distinguishes the Buddhist trade network in East Asia from other well-studied religious trade networks. The prosperity of trade in East Asian waters during the premodern and early modern periods has inspired scholars in recent years to draw parallels between the seas of East Asia and the Mediterranean during the same period.[24] The religious trade networks that have attracted the most scholarly attention were the trade diasporas located in the Mediterranean, such as the famous Geniza merchants – the Jewish merchants who were based in Cairo and traded in the Islamic Mediterranean – and the Sephardic Jews in Italy.[25] Economic historians who have carefully examined the mechanisms by which those cross-cultural traders formed their business relationships want to know whether shared religious beliefs foster commercial efficiency, a question that this book will address, too.

The trust among business partners, the procedures for accomplishing long-distance transactions, and the external systems for managing trade incidents are all crucial criteria for analyzing the mechanisms cross-cultural traders used to build their business networks. One influential scholar of Mediterranean trade suggests that international traders preferred to do business with people in another land who

[24] Angela Schottenhammer, ed., *Trade and Transfer across the East Asian "Mediterranean"* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

[25] For the Geniza merchants, see Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Jessica L. Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Geniza Merchants and Their Business World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); for the Sephardic Jews, see Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

shared their religion or ethnicity and were more likely to trust them. The preference and exceptional trust resulted from a "reputation mechanism," which prompted the members inside a community to adhere to their agreements or contracts because the breach of contract would jeopardize their reputation and significantly reduce their future chances to build trade partnerships.[26]

A different point of view maintains that standardized business routines and a widely recognized legal system exerted greater influence than "natural" affiliations. Long-lasting business partnerships existed among traders from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and networks based on family and ethnicity did not ensure trust. Instead, consistent business routines, as documented by mercantile letters, created more efficient and more reliable trade partnerships.[27]

Premodern China and Japan both had relatively developed government structures, and both established offices and issued regulations to monitor foreign trade. This institutionalized external environment in East Asia, however, did not outweigh the importance of personal connections in building business relationships. As this book will argue, the direct participation of the monks and monasteries in the trade network between China and Japan demonstrates the great importance of religious ties in forming partnerships. When the official diplomatic relationship between the two countries was suspended, the Buddhist network across the sea that had already existed for centuries became the key connection linking the continent and the Japanese archipelago, which facilitated the flow of texts, objects, knowledge, and people.

Not all of the sea merchants from China and Japan started to take advantage of the Buddhist network immediately after the tribute delegations were suspended. The economic benefits offered by the religious

[26] Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy*, 58–90.

[27] For example, see Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, and Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean*.

Jessica L. Goldberg proposed a contrasting view – "legal centralism" instead of Greif's "reputation mechanism" – which argues that "the only necessary condition for forming business relationships was shared participation in the Islamic legal system . . . [which] allowed individuals in different Islamic polities, whatever their confession, to enter into business relationships with one another." Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 355. For a more detailed review of the "legal centralism" claim, see Avner Greif's review of *Trade and Institutions in the Medieval Mediterranean: The Geniza Merchants and Their Business World*, by Jessica L. Goldberg, *Journal of Economic History* 74.2 (2014).

network grew greater in the course of time and therefore attracted more and more maritime traders. From their experience of traveling with monks, sea merchants realized that Buddhist monks could bring them tangible financial gains in addition to spiritual guidance, and thus they made efforts to patronize Buddhism. Records show that sea merchants frequented monasteries and made donations, hand-copied sutras, and even, in some cases, founded monasteries.

With prestigious monasteries on both sides of the ocean participating in the overseas trade and offering protection to the maritime merchants, Buddhist and trade networks grew more deeply integrated. Geographically speaking, the crucial hubs in Sino-Japanese trade largely overlapped with important Buddhist centers. Ningbo 寧波 and Hangzhou 杭州 in the lower Yangzi delta in China were home to some of the most prominent Buddhist monasteries, close to manufacturing sites of desirable continental goods such as ceramics and silk, and also among the busiest ports in maritime trade. The Japanese cities of Hakata 博多, Kyoto 京都, and Kamakura 鎌倉 consumed the majority of imported continental goods and were also the pioneers in receiving Buddhist practices transmitted from the continent.

The Buddhist trade network grew increasingly significant because it served the interests of multiple parties – not only the merchants and the monks but also the secular authorities. The secular authorities in both China and Japan, although not direct participants in this unofficial network, were well aware of its existence and occasionally took advantage of it. Recognition from secular authorities contributed to the further growth of the religio-commercial network: as the following section illustrates, during the tribute hiatus, Chinese and Japanese authorities tacitly granted privileges to the participants in the network, which increased its commercial efficiency and prompted more people to join.

Monks, Merchants, and the Secular Authorities

The 838 embassy of which Ennin was a member was sent to present tribute to the Tang emperor, but like previous Japanese diplomatic missions, the 838 delegation also aimed to purchase certain goods during the trip to China and bring them back to Japan.[28] The desired

[28] The story of the 804 delegation shows just how much embassy participants treasured the opportunity to go to China and trade. Due to hostile weather, only

goods included staples of Japanese court life such as incense and medicines. The embassy members received allowances from the court to make purchases, but their attempts failed multiple times due to the strict supervision of the Tang government officials who did not permit members of embassies to buy anything.

Ennin's diary vividly describes how effectively Tang dynasty officials prevented delegation members from trading.[29] According to Ennin, embassy members were prohibited from making transactions in the capital, Chang'an. And on their way back to the lower Yangzi delta, whenever they stopped and tried to make purchases, the accompanying Chinese official would strike a drum and urge them to hurry on their way. Even when embassy members were far away from the capital, their economic activities were still under strict control. When four of Ennin's fellow embassy members ventured on their own to a market in southeastern China, local officials stopped and questioned them. To avoid interrogation, the Japanese envoys left the market in such a rush that they lost a large amount of money, and one embassy member was actually detained.[30]

Ennin and his fellow embassy members experienced the last years of the tribute relationship between Tang China and Japan, and when sea merchants took over the role of maintaining the flow of commodities between the continent and the archipelago, they faced new restrictions. Both Chinese and Japanese authorities imposed regulations on foreign trade after the ninth century: Japan required arriving merchants to reside in an appointed guesthouse and announced the court's preemptive right to purchase imported goods. Chinese merchants had to observe a "waiting-period" rule, which required a years-long interval between two successive visits to Japan.[31] On the continent, the

two of the embassy's four vessels left Japan. Even after the principal members of this delegation completed their tribute mission and returned to the archipelago, however, the two remaining vessels still sailed to China, because they were loaded with cargo, and both the court and members of the embassy were determined not to lose their chance to trade. Borgen, "Japanese Mission to China," 17.

[29] For the market system, merchants, and government regulations in the Tang, see Denis Twitchett, "The T'ang Market System," *Asia Major*, New Series, 12.2 (1966); Denis Twitchett, "Merchants, Trade and Government in Late Tang," *Asia Major*, New Series, 14.1 (1968).

[30] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 83–84; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 114–15.

[31] Watanabe Makoto 渡邊誠, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū* 平安時代貿易管理制度史の研究 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2012), 246–65; Charlotte von

government established multiple offices of the Maritime Trade Superintendency (*Shibosi* 市舶司) in different ports to inspect imported goods at several designated ports and to collect taxes on them.[32]

The seemingly strict governmental control on foreign trade, however, worked to the advantage of monks and merchants. Because of their proximity to the authorities and the religious resources they possessed, prestigious Buddhist monasteries in China and Japan often found ways to circumvent some restrictions, which they used to help their merchant associates. For example, several Chinese merchants boldly sailed to Japan fully aware that they were violating the "waiting-period" rule imposed by the Japanese government. They were confident that their landing would be permitted because they were carrying letters to Japanese authorities from Japanese pilgrim monks sojourning in China. At that time, Japanese court elites frequently made requests of pilgrim monks, including taking donations to Chinese Buddhist sites and purchasing desirable Chinese goods. The sea merchants thus served as important intermediaries, and the Japanese authorities indeed tolerated the merchants' breach of rules and allowed them to trade (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).

Similarly, when merchants from Japan encountered problems in China, they also tended to seek help from their Buddhist acquaintances there, who were more resourceful and more experienced in negotiating with authorities. On one occasion, monks from prominent monasteries in China were able to persuade local officials to release sea merchants' cargo from Japan that had been impounded for more than a year (see Chapter 5).

In both China and Japan, secular authorities and the powerful monasteries engaged in collaborative relationships. True, the court elites had the power to choose the leaders of large monasteries, but

Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, trans. Kristen Lee Hunter (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program of Cornell University, 2006), 36–37.

[32] Angela Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 5, Pt. 2: *Sung China, 960–1279*, ed. John W. Chaffee and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, *Songdai haiwai maoyi* 宋代海外貿易 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2003); Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 120–37.

courtiers still needed the abbots' support to enhance their legitimacy.[33] The monasteries' economic activities significantly benefited from the privileges granted by the courts, which included not only explicit privileges like tax exemption but also tacit ones such as the power to bargain with government officials.

Both the Chinese and the Japanese courts were fully aware of the cooperation between Buddhist monks and merchants. They saw the value in the network, which transmitted many desirable goods, including important ritual objects in court ceremonies, as well as information about the other country. Although not direct participants in the network, the secular authorities nonetheless took full advantage of it.

Eventually the authorities in both China and Japan gradually came to treat this religio-commercial network as an informal conduit that could allow them to express their requests to their counterparts on the other side of the sea. Pilgrim monks and itinerant monks sometimes assumed the task of envoys of the previous tributary period: they passed messages and gifts between the high authorities on both sides (the topic of Chapters 3 and 6).

Between the ninth and early fifteenth centuries, when the formal diplomatic relationship between China and Japan was suspended, merchants and monks not only sustained communication across the sea but also exerted influence on state-level foreign affairs. Even during the highest level of tension between China and Japan, in the late thirteenth century, the network continued to function even after two failed invasions of Japan by Mongol fleets. Trade ships were permitted to dock, and some itinerant monks became advisors to the leaders in the Japanese military government. When their official diplomatic relationship resumed in the early fifteenth century, Chinese and Japanese

[33] For representative works on the relationship between secular authorities and monks, see Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Thomas Donald Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth Century Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

In his work on Shingon Buddhism and Japanese court ritual in the fourteenth century, Thomas Donald Conlan forcibly demonstrates that "charismatic monks used ritual to determine the legitimacy of the state," and "ritual became the very essence of power as it alone created the seals of office and enthroned emperors." Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 15.

rulers both designated monks and merchants to important positions in the new embassies, evidence of the important role that monks and merchants had come to play in the ongoing relationship between the two countries.

Sources on Sino-Japanese Maritime Trade

Studying the Buddhist trade network between China and Japan in the premodern era poses several challenges. First, information about the merchants conducting trade between China and Japan is scattered across various genres of historical records, and very few were written by the merchants themselves. The accounts in the Chinese dynastic histories on Japan or overseas trade, for example, sometimes briefly mention merchants coming from Japan to China; Japanese aristocrats' diaries occasionally record the continental goods they acquired.[34] This book uses Buddhist records – monks' pilgrimage accounts, correspondences and biographies, as well as monastic histories – as an important source from which to glean information about the merchants with whom the monks collaborated. Pilgrimage accounts like Ennin's diary usually recorded the names of merchants who helped them with transportation, translation, or making purchases; monastic histories often give a relatively detailed account of how the construction of monastic complexes was financed, a process that often entailed merchants' participation to obtain raw materials or to lead fundraising expeditions.

Correspondence between monks and merchants brings us closest to the merchants' own voices. Although most of the surviving letters were written by monks – and have been preserved as calligraphic exemplars or precious decorations for Japanese tea ceremonies – some of these letters offer rare records of a private and close relationship between merchants and monks. Letters written by merchants, though fewer in number, have been preserved or copied in monastery records because they were addressed to monks there. These are particularly valuable

[34] Scholars have depicted the general situation of Sino-Japanese trade by using these kinds of records. For example, see von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*; Mori Katsumi 森克己, *Nissō bōeki no kenkyū* 日宋貿易の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), *Zoku Nissō bōeki no kenkyū* 続日宋貿易の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), *Zoku zoku Nissō bōeki no kenkyū* 続々日宋貿易の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975).

for the rare light they cast on the actual dynamics of the Buddhist trade network.

Buddhist records, however, pose a different challenge to the study of the Buddhist trade network. They often use obscure phrasing to describe the commercial activities of monks and monasteries – probably because the recorders preferred not to leave explicit written evidence of violations of the monastic regulations. One must read between the lines to extract the information. A repeatedly occurring example is the use of "gifts" in Buddhist records. In his diary, Ennin recorded that he "exchanged gifts" with people on multiple occasions. Once he "exchanged" two ounces of gold dust for ten pounds of high-quality tea. Given that tea was almost a daily necessity to Ennin, we can infer that it was a personal purchase, rather than an official gift exchange.[35]

On another occasion, Ennin gave two strings of crystal prayer beads, six silver-decorated knives, twenty pens, and three spiral shells to a Chinese official.[36] This seems to be a very generous set of gifts, but the more interesting part is that this official's colleague came back the next day and returned most of the gifts. They only kept one spiral shell, and they presented Ennin with five bolts of textiles as "return gifts."[37] Since textiles also served as a form of currency in China, the five bolts of textiles must have been payment for the spiral shell, which the Chinese officials decided to buy after selecting from the large variety of objects Ennin offered.

It is very likely that these "gift" exchanges were essentially trade. Similarly, other pilgrim monks recorded that they gave a set of "gifts" to merchants before they were allowed to board the merchants' ship.[38] As the following chapters will show, in some cases, a "gift" discussed in monks' correspondence was actually a commissioned purchase requiring payment.[39]

Archaeological discoveries, therefore, become an important source for investigating the unrecorded life of the merchants and for details of the trade expeditions omitted from the Buddhist records. Two major

[35] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 94–95; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 129–30.
[36] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 50; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 65.
[37] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 51; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 66.
[38] Jōjin 成尋, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji* 新校參天台五臺山記, coll. Wang Liping 王麗萍 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2009), 4.
[39] See Chapter 5 for details.

archaeological excavations provide crucial information about the Buddhist trade network. In the 1970s, subway construction in the area of the important premodern port of Hakata uncovered tens of thousands of Chinese ceramic fragments dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most of which were imported cargo damaged during the sea crossing and discarded there. Many ceramic pieces bore ink inscriptions with the surnames of the Chinese merchants who owned them.[40] The excavated ceramics, along with some daily utensils discovered nearby, point to the extent of Sino-Japanese trade and also to the presence of a Chinese merchant community that lived permanently in Hakata. The area where the Chinese merchants lived and unloaded their cargo was adjacent to several local religious establishments, one of which was founded by a wealthy Chinese merchant, further evidence of the network that bound them all together.

Another important archaeological discovery pertinent to this study is the famous Sinan shipwreck. The site of the Sinan shipwreck, which was discovered to the southwest of the Korean peninsula in 1976 and dates to 1323, yielded 20,000 Chinese ceramics and twenty-eight tons of Chinese bronze coins, among many other items. Like the ceramics from Hakata inscribed with the owners' names, the wooden crates recovered from the Sinan shipwreck had labels attached – some bore merchant names and others monastery names. The labels identify the prominent monastery Tōfukuji 東福寺 in Kyoto as a major owner of this cargo, and its branch monastery in Hakata also participated in this trade expedition.[41] Interestingly, although the Tōfukuji monastery preserved many records from the thirteenth century onward, and in the early twentieth century compiled a rather detailed history based on many original documents, this particular ship has left hardly any documentary traces. We know only that Tōfukuji suffered extensive damage from a fire in 1319, that its reconstruction was still underway in 1323, and that one likely goal of this voyage was to raise funds to help cover it.[42] By the fourteenth century, as the Sinan shipwreck

[40] Ōba Kōji 大庭康時 et al., eds., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu* 中世都市博多を掘る (Fukuoka: Kaichōsha, 2008), 98.

[41] National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, *Underwater Archaeology in Korea* (Seoul: Gongmyoung, 2016), 63, 72–77.

[42] Kawazoe Shōji 川添昭二, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata: Shin'an chinbotsusen mokkan, Tōfukuji, Jōtenji" 鎌倉末期の対外関係と博多：新安沈没船木簡、東福寺、承天寺, in *Kamakura jidai bunka denpa no kenkyū*

shows, monasteries were directly participating in Sino-Japanese trade, rather than relying on pilgrim monks or individual sea merchants to make purchases, which shows further integration of religious and trade networks.

The nonofficial records examined in this book have another advantage: they reveal how the regulations in official documents were implemented in practice. Monks' diaries and letters show that many regulations were indeed at work but there was also leeway to circumvent the regulations. For example, starting from the tenth century, according to *History of the Song* (*Songshi* 宋史) and *Important Documents of the Song* (*Song huiyao* 宋會要), the Song government designated several ports as licensed ports, and only at those ports could imported cargo be received and taxed. In the mid-thirteenth century, a ship from Japan loaded with lumber ordered by a major Chinese monastery was thrown off course by a storm and drifted to an unlicensed port, where it was detained for more than a year. The merchants of that ship could not solve the problem themselves, and it was only due to the intercession of the influential monastery – which bribed the customs officials – that the ship and the cargo were eventually released. Such records of how noninstitutional measures were employed to solve incidental problems depict a maritime world that is otherwise invisible in prescriptive government regulations. This book delves into this world to write a history of international trade that was driven, after all, not by governments but by individuals with intersecting interests in faith and profit.

The Book Plan

The following six chapters trace and demonstrate how the religious and commercial networks between the continent and the archipelago gradually became integrated and facilitated exchanges across the sea. They also show how religious connections evolved to shape the commercial activities. The book ends in 1403, when the official diplomatic relationship between China and Japan resumed, and the network connecting China and Japan brought in more new players. The religio-commercial network formed during the previous centuries,

鎌倉時代文化伝播の研究, ed. Ōsumi Kazuo 大隅和雄 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 311, 323.

however, still exerted influence after Japan resumed tribute missions to China, as monks and monasteries continued to play an important role in the resumed tribute trade.

Chapters 2 and 3 depict the early stage of the formation of the religio-commercial network, between 839 and 1100, when the cooperation between monks and merchants was not yet institutionalized. Chapter 2 discusses how the private network of monks and merchants benefited both parties and demonstrates how the newly forming network replaced the previous tribute relations. Chapter 3, by examining the interactions between Japanese pilgrim monks and Chinese emperors, shows that the authorities in China and Japan also tacitly recognized the existence of the unofficial network and started to make use of it.

The early twelfth century was a crucial point in the development of the religio-commercial network. When the Dazaifu 大宰府, the imperial headquarters in western Japan, began loosening controls in the 1100s, a "Chinese quarter" of mostly sea merchants took shape in Hakata. Chapter 4 in particular examines the ways in which the Chinese merchants and religious establishments grew closer to each other and how they developed long-term relationships. Chapter 5 provides a "thick description" of an unusually well-documented case that illuminates how monks used their resources and privileges to help merchants solve their accidental problems in long-distance trade, and demonstrates how the trust among monks and lay Buddhist merchants made the religio-commercial network function more efficiently than purely commercial networks.

The two failed Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281 launched a new phase in the history of Sino-Japanese trade, during which religious institutions played an even more important role by initiating trade voyages. Chapter 6 demonstrates how, despite the occasional conflicts between Chinese officials and merchants from Japan, Sino-Japanese trade continued on a large scale with the direct participation of prominent Japanese monasteries in both Kyoto and the newly developed political and religious center of Kamakura. In the mid-fourteenth century, increasing piracy and the changing political environment in both China and Japan prompted the monasteries to adopt precautionary procedures to secure their profits, including signing contract-like documents with the merchants they commissioned.

The book closes with a discussion of the restoration of tribute relations and trade – the result of the Ashikaga military government's

enormous interest in Sino-Japanese trade, and the founding of the new Ming dynasty in 1368 – and the impact of the networks of faith and profit during the prior centuries on the new trading regime. Chapter 7 explains Japan's economic motivation for the resumption of formal diplomatic relations – the Ashikaga bakufu ignored domestic critics and accepted an inferior position as a tributary to the Ming court in order to regain the opportunity to trade with China. And so formal tribute trade resumed for the first time since Ennin's day.

Nearly six centuries, however, had left their mark: religion, specifically Buddhism, maintained its important position in official trade. The Ashikaga bakufu named the monk Soa to the position of ambassador during efforts to reopen the tribute trade with the Ming. Unlike their Tang-era predecessors, who were not even allowed to visit the Chinese capital, Japanese monks on trade missions during the Ming were granted the position of ambassador or vice ambassador. The Ashikaga bakufu, for its part, craved the profit from China's trade that accompanied tributary missions. The Ashikaga bakufu was neither the only participant nor the only beneficiary in the resumed tribute trade: prestigious monasteries also dispatched their own ships as part of the tribute delegations.

Not long after China and Japan resumed their diplomatic relationship, Columbus arrived in the Americas, and a new global trade network began to take shape. Ming ships sailed to Southeast and South Asia, and even Africa. Later, Japanese silver circulated all over the world. The new global network, with more regions in direct contact with each other, owes much to previous systems. This study shows that official diplomatic relationships were not always necessary for two countries to maintain contacts with each other. Other forms of communication – such as religious and commercial exchanges – often influenced and modified official tribute relations. As this book seeks to help demonstrate, the real and enduring networks that connected different regions rarely formed because policymakers planned them; they took shape because people desired contact with each other – whether pilgrim monks or itinerant merchants, and whether they were traveling for faith or for profit.

We begin with the aftermath of Ennin's journey to examine how traveling monks and sea merchants built up reciprocal collaboration in the absence of formal diplomatic ties.

2 *Replacing Tributary Relations*

The Reciprocal Collaboration between Monks and Merchants, 839–900

After the Japanese delegation departed from China in 839, leaving Ennin behind, the tribute trade between China and Japan lapsed into a long period of dormancy. Traveling monks and sea merchants, however, were together building a new network, which sustained the circulation of objects and knowledge. Ennin and his Buddhist pilgrim successors left records showing how they waited for merchant ships to cross the sea, and how the merchants helped them transport or procure precious ritual objects. Japanese pilgrim monks and Chinese merchants formed close relationships during those long voyages. Many of the Chinese merchants in the circle were Buddhist believers, who willingly exchanged poems and gifts with the monks. The poems and letters written by the merchants, intriguingly, indicate that the merchants themselves also took advantage of their network with the monks: they hoped to use the monks' connections to gain access to the authorities in both countries and to circumvent regulations imposed on foreign trade.

This chapter covers the time from the last Japanese embassy's departure from China in 839 to the end of the ninth century, when the Tang empire was collapsing, and the Japanese government stipulated new regulations to manage the foreign merchants coming to their land. This period from 839 to 900 represents a transition era in which a new pattern to sustain Sino-Japanese exchanges took shape in the absence of formal diplomatic relations. Japan scheduled an embassy in 894 but eventually canceled it: the weakening of the Tang dynasty was one reason, but the more important reason was probably the increasing alternative opportunities for obtaining continental products.

An Unofficial Network for Obtaining Buddhist Sacred Objects: Ennin's Sojourn in the Tang Empire

After a nine-year sojourn in China, where he survived a four-year long persecution of Buddhism, Ennin returned to Japan with more than

800 fascicles of Buddhist texts and fifty ritual objects. As mentioned in Chapter 1, those scriptures and objects had been procured and protected via a private network made up of monks and merchants, and in Japan, they earned Ennin both reputation and patronage from the Japanese royal family.

Among all the scriptures and sacred objects that Ennin industriously collected, mandalas – cosmic paintings for esoteric Buddhist ceremonies – stood out. Ennin gave them much space in his diary: he recorded thoroughly how much he paid for each mandala and how they survived the persecution of Buddhism only via the protection provided by the monk-merchant network. More interestingly, the records in Ennin's diary regarding obtaining mandalas were probably often altered, sometimes by Ennin himself, sometimes by a later cleric, to enhance Ennin's fame and bring distinction to his monastery, Enryakuji. These doctored records again demonstrate the significance of certain Chinese objects to Japan at the time and therefore the value of a network that could help to secure them.

Ennin managed to obtain these important and very desirable mandalas in 840, after his pilgrimage to sacred Mount Wutai. By then, Ennin, along with three companions, had already been separated from his Japanese diplomatic mission for more than a year and very much depended on the Buddhist communities in China, who provided him accommodation and access to Buddhist scriptures, to continue his trip. For example, the Dahuayan monastery on Mount Wutai hosted Ennin for two months and allowed him to systematically make copies of the Tendai Buddhist sutras that Japan lacked.[1] In his diary, Ennin also meticulously described the Buddhist statues he saw at various monasteries in the Mount Wutai area.[2] It is likely that he intended to use this account as a reference for instruction on how to make Buddhist statues, which he valued as important ritual objects, after his return to Japan.[3]

Ennin, however, was not yet satisfied with his collection – he was apparently very eager to obtain more mandalas. Thus, when he arrived in the capital of Chang'an, he went to the Yongchang

[1] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 249; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 294.
[2] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 241–42; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 288. For the Buddhist arts at Mount Wutai and their significance, see Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).
[3] Hansen, "Devotional Use of Buddhist Art in Ennin's Diary," 77.

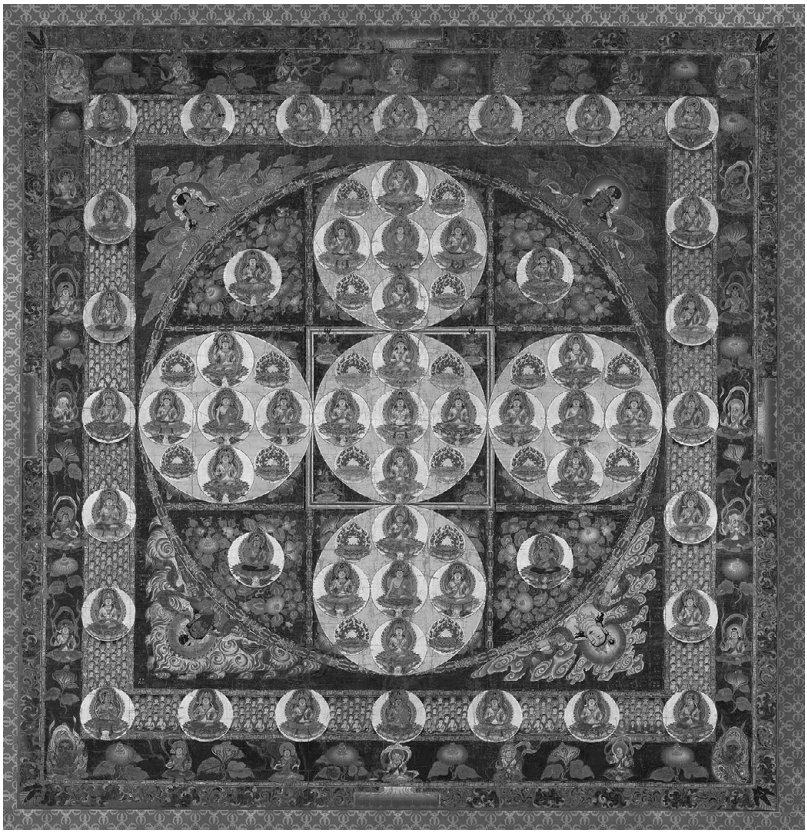


Figure 1 A Diamond Realm mandala directly copied from the mandalas Ennin brought from China to Japan. Thirteenth century, Japan. Hanging scroll; ink and color on silk. h: 216 cm; w: 209.8cm. Courtesy of Nezu Museum, Tokyo.

(Ever-Prospering) ward in the city and hired a craftsman, Wang Hui 王惠, to make four big Diamond Realm mandalas (Figure 1).[4] About fifty days later, the mandalas were finished.[5] Curiously, a diary entry nearly two months before Ennin's order of the mandalas mentions one of his dreams from ten months earlier. Ennin reportedly dreamed that when he brought Diamond Realm mandalas back to Japan, his mentor Saichō was thrilled. When Ennin was about to prostrate himself to Saichō, Saichō stopped

[4] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 296; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 363.
[5] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 300; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 373.

him, saying, "I don't dare to accept your obeisance now. I should pay obeisance to you."[6] It seems that Ennin's account of this dream was meant to justify his motivations in ordering mandalas, but Ono Katsutoshi, the top researcher on Ennin, believes that the dream was added later by someone else because Saichō was referred to as "Master" (*daishi* 大師) in this account, which is a title Saichō had not received until two years after the alleged date of the dream.[7]

The legends around mandalas illustrate their deep, spiritual significance to the Japanese. Tendai Buddhism, a branch of esoteric Buddhism ascending in Japan, emphasizes the secret transmission of its teachings by way of a teacher "pouring" knowledge into a disciple like pouring water into a vase. This required a "ritual technology," of which mandalas, along with other ritual implements and altars, were vital components.[8] Such was the popularity of esoteric Buddhism in Heian Japan, that the pair of mandalas brought back from China in 804 by the great master Kūkai – Saichō's rival and the founder of the Shingon Buddhist sect – already needed to be replaced with copies in 821 due to extensive wear from frequent ritual use. Hence the Buddhist community surrounding Ennin considered his success in bringing back mandalas a highly laudable achievement; in this context, it is plausible that subsequent monastery archivists added the dream to Ennin's diary to emphasize the significance of this achievement.

Two months after getting the completed Diamond Realm mandalas, Ennin claimed to have ordered another five Womb Realm mandalas and five Diamond Nine-World mandalas from the same craftsman, Wang Hui.[9] However, not long after that, driven by the desire to dwindle the power of Buddhist communities and to enlarge the tax rolls, the emperor Wuzong 武宗 (814–46, r. 840–46) initiated a large-scale and years-long persecution of Buddhism, and the capital suffered most. Ennin wrote diary entries less frequently, but he mentioned that the emperor ordered sutras and Buddhist sculptures burned and forced Buddhists to forsake their beliefs.[10] As noted in Chapter 1, Ennin could no longer collect

[6] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 294; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 358.
[7] Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 360, notes.
[8] Bogel, "Situating Moving Objects," 149.
[9] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 304, 306, 307; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 385, 388, 389.
[10] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 321, 333, 340, 361; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 408, 426, 440, 463.

Buddhist items and barely managed to keep the important ones he had already obtained. He tried every possible means to leave China and return to Japan: at one point he sought help from a Korean living in Chang'an, and even went so far as to file a petition claiming that he was willing to forsake his Buddhist beliefs and return to Japan.[11] When it was decreed that all foreign monks who did not hold a certificate issued from the Department of Sacrifice must return to lay life, Ennin hurried to put away all the Buddhist texts and items he had collected which, along with his clothes, took up four hampers. The next day, he took off his clerical robe, donned lay clothes, and began to let his hair grow.[12]

In 845, Ennin and his companions finally received permission to leave Chang'an and return to Japan. Upon their departure, a crowd of their Chinese acquaintances came to see them off, including monks from Chang'an monasteries, Chinese officials, and Ennin's local patrons. These were likely the very people who had supported Ennin during the years of persecution. Ennin received many farewell gifts from them, the most common of which were daily necessities such as textiles, cash, and tea.[13] An official in the censorate even gave Ennin a scroll in silver characters of the *Diamond Sutra* – one of the most influential Mahayana Buddhist sutras in East Asia – which Ennin specifically noted as a Tang palace possession.[14] It is likely that the sutra had been in the palace and was removed during the persecution.[15] One interesting effect of the persecution of Buddhism was that it made Buddhist objects, even those that had previously been most treasured, accessible to foreigners. As the following chapter demonstrates, thanks to dedicated collectors like Ennin, Japanese monasteries acquired some Buddhist texts that had been lost in China during the persecution.

After leaving Chang'an, Ennin and his companions were hard-pressed to find a ship to sail back to Japan. They were originally planning to depart from the Shandong peninsula, where they had left the

[11] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 335, 359; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 433, 459.
For details of the Koreans that Ennin encountered in China, see Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Company Press, 1955), 272–94.

[12] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 363; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 463.

[13] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 365–68; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 465–66.

[14] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 367; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 466.

[15] Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 469, notes.

embassy, but by then, most of the ships bound for Japan were sailing from the lower Yangzi delta. This shift in ports is a strong indication of the major change underway at that time in Sino-Japanese trade: the rise of the ports in the lower Yangzi delta. As this chapter further shows, the delta region, which was rich in commercial and religious resources, was rapidly growing to become the critical hub of the unofficial network connecting China and Japan.

In their pursuit of a ship, Ennin and his companions had to travel up and down along the eastern coast of China multiple times. Since it would have been impossible for them to carry all their luggage with them on the long trip, they entrusted the four hampers of holy teachings, pious pictures, and clerical clothing to the Silla translator Yu Sineon, to whom Ennin had given a generous set of gifts six years earlier.[16] When they finally were about to board a merchant ship and went to retrieve the four hampers from Yu, however, according to Ennin's record, they discovered that Yu had burned the highest-value item, the Double Great Womb and Diamond mandala, due to the severity of imperial orders on persecuting Buddhism in Yangzhou, but he managed to preserve the rest of the items.[17]

This is an interesting point that allows us to examine Ennin's records critically. It seems unlikely that among four full hampers of illicit Buddhist objects Yu specifically picked out the most valuable one and burned it, especially since by that time the persecution of Buddhism had already relaxed. It is possible that Ennin had never possessed such a precious mandala but simply added it to the list of his achievements and had it conveniently burned, because even having once obtained a great mandala would give him some leverage in the competition among Buddhist sects in Japan and earn more patronage for himself and his monastery.[18]

In the ninth month of 847, Ennin and his companions, after a voyage passing along the Korean peninsula – and carrying all the texts and

[16] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 372, 376; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 476, 482.

[17] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 389–90, 392; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 498, 502.

[18] I thank Eric Greene for his help on this point.

An anonymous reviewer of this book manuscript proposes another possibility: Yu Sineon may have sold that one item, because it would have fetched the largest price.

items collected during their long, adventurous journey on the continent – finally landed in their homeland.[19] It had taken Ennin two years to eventually board a ship. Waiting for a ship for two years might seem a tough experience to modern readers, but the typical interval between tribute missions had been fifteen years, and some Japanese sojourners had ended up dying of old age in China for lack of a ship to transport them home. The two-year wait suggests that ships traveled more frequently in the period after the tribute era than during it – Ennin's successors were taking advantage of this new change.

The Continued Search for Buddhist Teachings: Enchin's Trip to Tang China

Only six years after Ennin's return, Enchin 円珍 (814–91, in China 853–58), another monk from the same monastery, Enryakuji, outside of Kyoto, embarked on a voyage to China. Relying entirely on help from merchants and fellow monks in China, Enchin spent five years there and, following upon Ennin's productive sojourn, brought back as many valuable objects. Both Ennin's and Enchin's successful pilgrimages elevated Enryakuji's reputation, and more importantly, contributed to building the unofficial network of Japanese monks and Chinese merchants that would grow over the coming centuries. There were other Buddhist actors involved in creating the network around the same time, but this book chooses to focus on Ennin and Enchin for this foundational period because their journeys have the best surviving records for that era.

Enchin himself was closely related to other important Buddhist travelers to China: he was Kūkai's nephew; and his own teacher, Gishin 義真 (781–833), had not only accompanied Ennin's mentor Saichō to China in 804 as a translator but had also helped him establish the Enryakuji monastery on Mount Hiei after their return.[20] Unlike his predecessors, Enchin traveled as an individual, not as a member of an official Japanese embassy. He began his journey by waiting for incoming Chinese merchant ships in Dazaifu, where

[19] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 404; Ennin, *Rutang qiufa xunli xingji jiaozhu*, 520.
[20] Ono Katsutoshi 小野勝年, *Nittō guhō gyōreki no kenkyū: Chishō Daishi Enchin hen* 入唐求法行歷の研究：智證大師圓珍篇 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1982), 19–20.

Ennin had landed on his return four years earlier.[21] Dazaifu, as noted in Chapter 1, was the imperial headquarters for western Japan and home to several thousand bureaucrats, soldiers, and their families. Although not located directly on the seashore – it was approximately thirteen kilometers from the nearest port – Dazaifu directly supervised the foreign contacts in Kyushu.[22] (Map 2.) Enchin seemed quite confident that he would get on a ship there, and he was right. When he arrived at Dazaifu in the fifth month of 851, there were no ships that he could board, so he took temporary residence at a monastery nearby. A merchant ship arrived as soon as the following year, which suggests that Chinese merchant ships came on a fairly regular basis at the time, and Enchin was on board for its return journey to China in the seventh month of 853.[23]

Like Ennin, Enchin kept a diary while he was in China, but unfortunately, the complete version of the diary has been lost. Parts of the diary were collected from various sources and formed a one-volume record titled *Gyōrekishō* 行歷抄. Eleven years after Enchin died, his friend Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki 三善清行 wrote his biography using many records from the original diary. Although the extant version of Enchin's diary is not comparable to Ennin's in terms of length, we still know much more about Enchin's sojourn in China than about those of his contemporaries. More importantly, several other crucial sources regarding Enchin's journey in China have survived, among which the most remarkable is a collection of poems and letters Enchin received from his Chinese friends.[24] These poems and letters are particularly

[21] Enchin, *Gyōrekishō* 行歷抄, in *Xinglichao jiaozhu* 行歷抄校注, ed. Bai Huawen 白化文 and Li Dingxia 李鼎霞 (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2004), 1; Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki 三善清行, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den* 天台宗延暦寺座主円珍傳, in *Chishō daishi zenshū* 智證大師全集, ed. Onjōji 園城寺 (Ōtsu: Onjōji jimusho, 1918), 1366.

[22] Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500–1300* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 5, 36.

[23] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1366.

[24] Other important sources include a catalog of all the items Enchin brought back from the Tang to Japan and a set of official certificates and passports that Enchin received from Chinese local governments. These have been included in the collection of Enchin's complete works.

In 1767, the monk Keikō 敬光 (1741–95) from the Onjōji 園城寺 monastery collected those then extant poems and letters addressed to Enchin into a one-volume collection titled *Fūsō sengen shū* 風藻餞言集. This collection contains sixteen poems and seven letters, and the majority were written by Chinese merchants. *Fūsō sengen shū* has been included in *Chishō daishi zenshū*. *Onjōji*

helpful in reconstructing the network connecting Enchin and the Chinese sea merchants and shed light on the type of enduring cooperation in which Ennin likely also engaged.

Although not traveling as an embassy member, Enchin still received an allowance from the Japanese court during his journey, suggesting that pilgrimage trips to China during this time were encouraged by the court. Even while waiting at the monastery near Dazaifu, Enchin was receiving a monthly allowance.[25] With the support from the court and apparently his own strong will, Enchin followed Ennin's practice of collecting Buddhist texts and ritual objects. During his five-year stay in China, he spent almost three years at the Guoqing monastery on Mount Tiantai, where Ennin had always wished to but failed to go. Enchin also visited the capital Chang'an and the famous Buddhist grottos at Longmen in central China.[26] Among the surviving entries from Enchin's diary, we can see that he copied esoteric Buddhist ritual manuals at a monastery in Chang'an and received the copies of three texts related to the *Lotus Sutra* at the Kaiyuan monastery in Taizhou 台州.[27] But these were just a tiny fraction of what Enchin brought back to Japan. According to Enchin's catalog of the texts and objects he acquired in Tang China, in the sixth month of 858, he returned to Japan with a total of 1,000 fascicles of texts and sixteen ritual objects.[28]

Inspired by Ennin's success, Enchin also considered mandalas the most crucial sacred items to pursue. There are four mandalas in Enchin's catalog, two of which – one Womb Realm mandala and one Diamond Realm mandala – were labeled as "having been presented to

monjo 園城寺文書 published both the image of the original manuscripts and the standard texts, and also added two more poems from a merchant in this group. Japanese scholar Ono Katsutoshi and Chinese scholars Bai Huawen and Shi Xiaojun have worked on identifying obscured characters and the exact date (or year) each poem or letter was written. Shi Xiaojun has collected both Ono's and Bai's works in his article, see Shi Xiaojun 石曉軍, "Riben Yuanchengsi (Sanjingsi) cang Tang ren shiwen chidu jiaozheng" 日本園城寺（三井寺）藏唐人詩文尺牘校證, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 8 (2002).

[25] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1366. Enchin's diary also shows that he received gold dust from the court for the pilgrimage, see Enchin, *Gyōrekishō*, 20.

[26] Saeki Arikiyo 佐伯有清, *Enchin* 円珍 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1990), 43–72.

[27] Enchin, *Gyōrekishō*, 42, 52.

[28] Enchin, *Chishō daishi shōrai mokuroku* 智證大師請來目錄, in *Chishō daishi zenshū* 智證大師全集, ed. Onjōji 園城寺 (Ōtsu: Onjōji jimusho, 1918), 1266.

the [Japanese] court" 此進奉内裏了.[29] One entry in Enchin's diary happens to provide more information regarding these mandalas. On 859/1/16, only several months after he returned to Japan, Enchin received an audience with the Japanese emperor who, along with several other high-ranking officials, examined and appreciated two mandalas Enchin had brought back from the Tang.[30] Those two mandalas were deemed valuable and therefore kept by the court.[31] More interestingly, in the same entry, Enchin mentions that Ennin had examined those two mandalas before they were presented to the emperor. Obviously Ennin was by then already recognized as the expert on Chinese mandalas, so perhaps the court had him check the authenticity of the mandalas prior to their presentation to the emperor.

Enchin's successful trip to the continent earned rewards for both himself and the Enryakuji monastery. The monastery received yet more Buddhist scriptures and crucial sacred objects for ritual performance, which brought more royal patronage; and in 868, ten years after his return and four years after Ennin's death, Enchin himself became the fifth head abbot of Enryakuji.

Enchin and His Merchant Network

Besides obtaining Buddhist texts and ritual objects from China, Enchin's trip had a further and important impact: Enchin established solid connections with a group of sea merchants during his trip, and for decades, when Enchin remained in Japan, his merchant network helped him maintain his religious connections to China. The key figures in Enchin's merchant network included a shipmaster, Li Yanxiao 李延孝, from Bohai/Balhae 渤海, and two sea merchants, Zhan Jingquan 詹景全 and Li Da 李達, from the lower Yangzi delta, where maritime exchanges were burgeoning.[32]

[29] Enchin, *Chishō daishi shōrai mokuroku*, in *Chishō daishi zenshū*, 1271.
[30] This book uses the date system of year/month/date, and all the dates are in the lunar calendar.
[31] Enchin, *Gyōrekishō*, 56.
[32] Bohai/Balhae (698–926) was a state that received investiture from the Tang. It once covered northeastern China, the northeastern Korean peninsula, and the far eastern area of modern Russia. It was defeated by the Kitan in 926.

In 853, it was Li Yanxiao's ship that Enchin boarded en route to China, and that was probably how they first met.[33] Zhan Jingquan and Li Da were Li Yanxiao's regular trade partners and always traveled together with Li Yanxiao. It is likely that Enchin and Li Yanxiao reached an agreement that Enchin would take Li's ship back to Japan after his pilgrimage. So, in 856, when Enchin completed his trip to Chang'an and Luoyang, he went back to the Guoqing monastery at Mount Tiantai and waited there. The next year, Li Yanxiao and Zhan Jingquan also arrived at the monastery, and before they set off to Japan, the merchants made a donation of 40,000 coins to the Guoqing monastery to support the construction of three residential halls for the monks who would come to study in the future.[34] The merchants' donation would have left a very good impression on Enchin, who three months earlier had himself donated 30 ounces of gold to the Guoqing monastery for building a lecture hall.[35]

Enchin and this group of merchants arrived in Japan in the sixth month of 858. At this time, as noted in Chapter 1, a regulation required all Chinese merchants to reside at the official guesthouse, Kōrokan 鴻臚館, near Hakata Bay and under direct supervision of Dazaifu.[36] The merchants usually had to stay for months while the officials from the Dazaifu headquarters were inspecting their cargo.[37] Meanwhile, Enchin was staying at a nearby monastery waiting for permission to go to the capital, Kyoto. A letter soon arrived granting Enchin an audience with the emperor Montoku 文徳 (827–58).[38] Unfortunately, Emperor Montoku died within two weeks of giving the order, so Enchin had to

[33] Some records misreported that Enchin took another merchant's ship to China. For a detailed discussion and clarification, see Huang Yuese 黃約瑟, "'Da Tang shangren' Li Yanxiao yu jiu shiji Zhong–Ri guanxi" "大唐商人"李延孝與九世紀中日關係, *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 (1993): 51.

[34] Enchin, "Qi Taizhou gongyan zhuang" 乞台州公驗狀, in *Gyōrekishō* 行歷抄, in *Xinglichao jiaozhu* 行歷抄校注, ed. Bai Huawen 白化文 and Li Dingxia 李鼎霞 (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2004), 107.

[35] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1370.

[36] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 405; Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 3. Kōrokan was firstly named the "Tsukushi Lodge" and built by the Japanese court as a hostel for foreign visitors in the seventh century. It adopted the Chinese-style name Kōrokan in the ninth century and was abandoned around 1100.

[37] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 34; Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 113.

[38] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1370.

wait for another three months for a new letter, during which period he and the sojourning Chinese merchant group had frequent contact.

According to surviving poems written by those merchants, Enchin sometimes came to the guesthouse and spent leisure time with them. A merchant named Gao Feng 高奉 wrote a poem to Enchin entitled "Yesterday Strolling at the Gate Tower of the Northern Building of Kōrokan" and recalled their gathering: "The gate tower of [the guesthouse] Kōrokan stands by the sea, and when we look around, we feel we are living a reclusive life. [Fortunately] sometimes the Buddhist master comes to join our convivial gathering, and together we drink a cup of Blue Cloud tea, as if it were elixir."[39] Exchanging poems in Sino-centric culture sphere could serve as expressions of camaraderie, and it was customary to solidify relationships – be it business or friendship – with poetry. Apparently, Enchin and the literate ones among the Chinese merchants also adopted this practice.

Poems also show that Enchin sometimes shared the memories of his time at Mount Tiantai with the merchants, and Zhan Jingquan, Li Da, and other merchants at the guesthouse all wrote and warmly responded to Enchin.[40] Zhan Jingquan also left a letter inviting Enchin and his disciples for a meal at the guesthouse, which again testifies to Enchin's frequent gatherings with the merchants.[41]

After safely returning Enchin to Japan, this merchant group continued to trade between China and Japan and helped Enchin with many future issues, such as purchasing Buddhist sutras and ritual objects, and sending letters and gifts to monks in China. In 867, at the Chinese monk Deyuan's 德圓 request, Zhan Jingquan brought two very large Pure Land Buddhist embroidery arts to Enchin (one was about 7.2 m by 4.5 m, while the other was 4.5 m by 3 m). During his visit to Wenzhou, Enchin had mentioned to Deyuan that he wished to obtain embroidery Buddhist images, but he was also worried that he might not be able to carry so many heavy things back to Japan all at once. Deyuan then agreed to send the embroidery arts to Enchin later, and Zhan Jingquan assumed the duty of transporting the sacred

[39] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1353. The excavated archaeological site of Kōrokan is not near the sea shore today due to sediment and areas of land reclamation, but the poem proves that back in the days when Kōrokan was in use, it was standing by the sea.

[40] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1354.

[41] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1355.

images.[42] Zhan also commissioned two large Buddhist portraits and brought them to Japan as his own gifts to Enchin.[43] Fourteen years later, in 881, the other merchant, Li Da, at Enchin's request, arranged to transport more than 120 fascicles of sutras sought after by Japan.[44] The transported objects reveal information about the ships in use by Enchin's merchant associates. The large embroidery Buddhist images gifted by Deyuan, for example, measured at least 4.5 meters long even when wrapped up. The merchant ship had to have been large enough to store such a big item among its cargo. Records indicate that the Tang merchant ships to Japan in the late ninth century usually carried crews of thirty to sixty; after the fall of the Tang dynasty in the tenth century, giant trading junks sailed with crews of 100 and capacities of several hundred tons.[45] Apparently, the sea merchants were willing to spare a significant portion of the space for the monks.

The merchants also helped Ennin to send presents back to monks in China, which was important to maintaining religious ties with his Chinese colleagues. A Chinese monk, Changya 常雅, at the Kaiyuan monastery in Taizhou wrote a letter to Enchin, thanking him for sending four *jin* of mercury, a chemical used in gilding gold statues, via a "Zhan Silang" 詹四郎 (the fourth son of the Zhan family), who was very likely Zhan Jingquan.[46] Enchin's letter to Changya did not survive, but based on Changya's reply, Enchin did not seem to request anything from Changya. Enchin received three texts related to the *Lotus Sutra* from this Kaiyuan monastery during his pilgrimage, so the mercury was probably a reciprocal gift. Changya replied with a detailed receipt, explaining how the mercury was distributed among the monks that Enchin knew. Mercury was always on the list of popular commodities that China imported from Japan, and this letter indicates that monasteries were consuming a fair amount of it.

[42] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1373.
[43] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1376.
[44] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1375–76
[45] William Wayne Farris, "Shipbuilding and Nautical Technology in Japanese Maritime History: Origins to 1600," *Mariner's Mirror* 95.3 (2009): 267.
[46] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1356–57. The letter does not contain a year but only the month and day: "the nineteenth day of the fifth month." Changya was asking about Enchin's situation after his return to Japan and was recalling the moment of their parting, so perhaps the letter was written not too long after Enchin left China. Ono Katsutoshi thinks it probably was written from 863 to 867 when Zhan Jingquan was most active. I think his speculation is plausible.

Procuring mercury to send to a Chinese monastery was probably an easy task for the sea merchants, since they always carried much mercury from Japan to China.[47] Along with his letter, Changya also sent Enchin some tea harvested from Mount Tiantai as a return gift.

A letter written by Enchin to Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (?–876), a famous esoteric Buddhist master who Enchin had met in the capital of Chang'an in 855, tells more about how the merchant group served as intermediaries between Enchin and monks in China.[48] According to this letter written in 882, Zhihuilun had sent eight fascicles of Buddhist scriptures to Enchin in 861, likely via Zhan Jingquan.[49] After receiving the scriptures, in 863 Enchin entrusted Zhan Jingquan with a reply, but Zhan returned the following year with the news that he had failed to deliver the letter because of "transportation difficulties in northern China." Enchin recorded that in 865 when Zhan Jingquan left for China earlier than usual, Enchin did not get a chance to make a new request. And very unfortunately, Zhan Jingquan, along with the shipmaster Li Yanxiao and Ensai, a Japanese monk who had sojourned in China for nearly four decades, died in a shipwreck on the return trip to Japan in 877.

Li Da was actually also on that doomed ship in 877, but he was lucky enough to drift ashore and survived the shipwreck. Five years later, he assumed the role of Enchin's envoy, and took up Zhan Jingquan's unfinished task of passing a letter to Zhihuilun. In the new letter, besides recalling the past incidents, Enchin also asked for a copy of a Buddhist text that Zhihuilun once showed to him when they met. Enchin attached fifty ounces of gold to his letter to cover the expenses of copying the scripture.[50] The letter, however, could never have been read by Zhihuilun himself since he passed away six years before it was written.

The scattered extant records suggest that Zhan Jingquan, Li Da, and the shipmaster Li Yanxiao, as noted earlier, were likely to have been long-term trade partners, since they always traveled together between

[47] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 20, and app. 7.

[48] Zhihuilun was also known as Borezhuojia 般若斫迦 [Skt. Prajñācakra]. For more about Zhihuilun, see Chen Jinhua, "A Chinese Monk under a 'Barbarian' Mask? Zhihuilun (?–876) and Late Tang Esoteric Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 99-1-3 (2013).

[49] Enchin, "Jō Chierin sanzō sho" 上智慧輪三藏書, in *Gyōrekishō* 行歷抄, in *Xinglichao jiaozhu* 行歷抄校注, ed. Bai Huawen 白化文 and Li Dingxia 李鼎霞 (Shijiazhuang: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 2004), 88–94.

[50] Enchin, "Jō Chierin sanzō sho," in *Gyōrekishō*, 89.

China and Japan. Li Da and Zhan Jingquan were from the same area, Wuzhou 婺州 (modern Jinhua 金華), close to Mount Tiantai and many coastal ports.[51] Also, it is worth noting that they conducted these trade voyages rather frequently. Remember that Zhan Jingquan sailed from China to Japan in 861, 864, and 867. The stable composition of this merchant group and their predictable schedule allowed Enchin to form a long-term cooperative relationship with them and to depend on them as part of a network through which to connect with China.

The merchants' inclination toward Buddhism also strengthened Enchin's collaboration with them. In his letter to Zhihuilun, Enchin referred to Li Da as "disciple Li Da from the Yongkang County of Wuzhou" 務州永康門徒李達 and also praised Li Da for his "solid mind in pursuit of teachings" 道心堅固 which, as Enchin believed, helped Li Da survive the disastrous shipwreck.[52] And according to Enchin's biography, Zhan Jingquan took Buddhist vows no later than 867.[53] Thus, this group of merchants were both active traders and dedicated Buddhist believers. After meeting Enchin, this group of merchants were much involved in his Buddhist networks, and becoming Buddhist messengers also helped the merchants expand their ties to the monks in both lands, as this book further shows. Given the suspension of embassy missions at this time, merchant–monk networks like this became indispensable to sustaining the exchanges between China and Japan.

Buddhist Connections Serving Economic Interest: Cai Fu's Poems

The collaboration between Enchin and the merchant group of Zhan Jingquan and Li Da seems, at least from the surviving records, to have served mostly Enchin's interests. But in fact, merchants also tried to take advantage of their connections with the monks to generate economic profits.

[51] In the "Letter to Request the Official Certificate from Taizhou"("Qi Taizhou Gongyan Zhuang," see fn 34), Enchin referred to Zhan Jingquan as a "Yuezhou merchant," but in two places in Enchin's biography, Zhan was recorded as being from Wuzhou. Also, Yuezhou and Wuzhou were geographically adjacent to each other, so perhaps Zhan was trading in Yuezhou – a place famous for ceramic production – and when he first met Enchin, he mentioned only that to him.

[52] Enchin, "Jō Chierin sanzō sho," in *Gyōrekishō*, 89.

[53] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1376.

Among the merchants who Enchin encountered, one named Cai Fu 蔡輔 was clearly trying to use his acquaintance with Enchin to serve his own economic interests. Cai Fu arrived in Japan on the same ship with Enchin in 858 and also stayed at the same guesthouse. He likely attended all of Enchin's and the merchants' gatherings during their stay in Kyushu. Unlike Zhan Jingquan and Li Da, however, Cai Fu did not appear in any surviving records after 858, so he probably was not part of Zhan and Li's circle.

Cai Fu wrote at least nine poems to Enchin during that three-month sojourn.[54] He actively responded in poems to Enchin's memory of the years at Mount Tiantai. And when Enchin was finally about to leave for the capital of Kyoto, Cai Fu wrote a series of four farewell poems. Those poems were mostly generic and formulaic and did not contain many insightful lines, but Cai Fu did not spare any effort to display a seemingly profound relationship between himself and Enchin. The first poem in that series, for example, reads, "The [guesthouse] Kōrokan is three thousand *li* away from the capital [of Kyoto], / and the horse you are riding runs so fast that it is almost flying. / We hold hands, repeat and repeat the words to each other, so reluctant to separate. / I hope you arrive soon at the Dragon's Gate, but also long for your return."[55] The last sentence of the poem is clear evidence of its clichéd writing, because both the merchants and Enchin knew that it was highly unlikely that Enchin would return to Dazaifu again, given that he had already accomplished his pilgrimage.

There is no certain way to verify whether the friendship between Enchin and Cai Fu was as deep as depicted in the poems, but another poem written by Cai Fu is worth particular attention. The full title of the poem literally means "The Country of the Tang Presents the Belt of Immortals Assisting the Governance Along with Other Products" 唐國進仙人益國帶腰及貨物詩一首, and it reads, "The products of immortals from the great Tang are presented to the new Heaven. / The spring grass is newly grown while the leaves of the flowers are so fresh. / I expect that the present reign will last as long as the sun. / The house of the Tang wishes you longevity of 1,000 years."[56]

This poem does not explicitly indicate to whom it was addressed, but I believe it was intended for the new Japanese emperor who had just

[54] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1353–55. [55] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1353.
[56] Ono Katsutoshi, *Nittō guhō gyōreki no kenkyū*, 387; Bai and Li, *Xinglichao jiaozhu*, 270.

ascended the throne.[57] The content shows a strong sense of speaking directly to the emperor, and Cai Fu also signed this poem in a very formal way: "The trivial official in front of the government gate of the Rong–Guan Circuit of the Tang, Cai Fu, written at Kōrokan, humbly presents" 大唐容管道衙前散將蔡輔鴻臚館書進獻謹上. Although Cai Fu signed the poem with an ostensible official title, it is actually a title with no rank and no actual duty, most likely just indicating that Cai had served at a military official's house.[58] Cai Fu at that point was just a merchant like Zhan Jingquan or Li Da, but he used this title often, probably because this is the highest title he had ever achieved.

This poem was written on 858/10/21, when Enchin was preparing to leave for the audience with the new emperor, at which he would present the mandalas he had brought back from China. Cai Fu was most likely taking the opportunity to present some gifts to the new emperor via Enchin. The "spring grass" and "flower leaves" probably refer to herbal medicines, which were popular continental goods that previous Japanese embassy members sought to purchase in the Tang markets. Although the letter was written in late autumn, when the merchants and Enchin left China it was still summer, so the herbal medicines that Cai Fu collected in China were indeed "spring grass."

Sea merchants and emperors, in a normal sense, were almost at opposite ends of a hierarchical spectrum. But Cai Fu's case shows that, with monks as intermediaries, it was very possible for a Chinese sea merchant to make contact with the Japanese emperor, which happened again from time to time in the ensuing centuries. The network established by Enchin and his merchant acquaintances not only sustained the commercial and religious exchanges between China and Japan with more flexibility, but also allowed new forms of interactions.

Cultivating Buddhist Connections for Trade: The Xu Brothers' Letters

While Cai Fu was trying to gain access to high authorities in Japan via his connections to Enchin, other merchants made even greater efforts in their own interest: some intentionally cultivated their Buddhist connections and used them to maximize their trade profit. A set of

[57] This poem was categorized by Ono Katsutoshi as a "farewell poem" 送別詩, but I see it differently.

[58] For more information on this title, see Shi, "Riben Yuanchengsi (Sanjingsi) cang Tang ren shiwen chidu jiaozheng," 117–18.

eighteen letters to a Chinese monk, Yikong 義空, who stayed in Kyoto from 847 to at least 852 (possibly until 856), provide valuable information about the direct interaction between Yikong and a merchant family.[59] A Chan monk from Hangzhou in the lower Yangzi delta, Yikong came to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese royal family. He received a warm welcome upon his arrival – the royal family first hosted him in the prestigious Tōji 東寺 monastery in the capital, and later the Empress Dowager established the Danrinji monastery 檀林寺 in the Sagano area of Kyoto for him.[60]

Similar to Enchin, Yikong also frequently communicated with some Chinese merchants – among the eighteen surviving letters that Yikong received during his sojourn in Japan, nine were from two Xu brothers (Table 1). These Xu brothers – Xu Gongzhi 徐公直 and Xu Gongyou 徐公祐 – were also based in the prospering lower Yangzi delta and engaged in overseas trade. Xu Gongyou, the younger of the brothers, seemed to travel between China and Japan often.

According to the letters, Xu Gongyou arrived in Japan in both 849 and 852 and stayed at the guesthouse Kōrokan for several months. Each time, he wrote to Yikong soon after his arrival, attaching a large

[59] The set of letters were originally preserved in *Kōya zappitsushū* 高野雑筆集, which is a collection containing mostly essays by and letters to Kūkai. Kūkai, as mentioned earlier, was Enchin's uncle and went to Tang China with the 804 embassy. This set of letters, however, was later taken out of this collection when *Kōya zappitsushū* was republished, since people believed they were not related to Kūkai. See Kūkai 空海, *Kōhō dashi zenshū* 弘法大師全集 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1910), 609–10. Thus various published versions of *Kōya zappitsushū* do not include these letters. Otani University in Kyoto preserves one of the earliest manuscripts of *Kōya zappitsushū* and has published the digital version on its website, which contains all the letters.

For the digital version, see https://web.otani.ac.jp/museum/kurashina/01_koya/all_b25.html

Japanese scholars Takagi Shingen 高木訷元 and Tanaka Fumio 田中史生 have compared the Otani manuscript with other extant versions, identified the obscure characters, and discussed the time when each letter was written in their works. See Takagi Shingen, "Tōsō Gikū no raichō o meguru shomondai" 唐僧義空の来朝をめぐる諸問題, in *Kūkai shisō no shoshi teki kenkyū: Takagi Shingen chosakushū 4* 空海思想の書誌的研究：高木訷元著作集 4 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1990), 357–409; Tanaka Fumio, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon* 国際交易と古代日本 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2012), 153–88. All the scholarship on these letters uses the same numbering, which is consistent with the Otani manuscript. This book also adopts that numbering of the letters.

[60] Kokan Shiren 虎關師煉, *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釈書 (Tokyo: Keizai zasshisha, 1901), 6:729–30.

Table 1 ***Basic information on the letters to the monk Yikong***[61]

Letter No.	Year/M/D	Sender	Recipient	Location Where Written	Remarks
1	849/5/27	Xu Gongzhi	Yikong	China	Set with Letter no. 2
2	849/5/27	Xu Gongzhi	Yikong and monk Daofang	China	Set with Letter no. 1
4	849/6/7	Tang monk Yunxu	Yikong	China	
10	849	Tang monk Faman	Yikong	China	
3	849/9/11	Xu Gongyou	Yikong	Japan	
5	849/9/13	Japanese monk Shinjaku	Yikong	Japan	
11	849/10/14	Tang monk Wuwu	Yikong	Japan	
15	849/10/15	Xu Gongyou	Yikong	Japan	
14	849/c.11/24	Xu Gongyou	Yikong	Japan	
13	852/5/22	Xu Gongzhi	Yikong	China	
16	852/6/30	Xu Gongyou	Yikong	Japan	Set with Letter no. 17
17	852/6/30	Xu Gongyou	Hupo	Japan	Set with Letter no. 16
18	852/10/21	Xu Gongyou	Yikong	Japan	

set of gifts. The gifts in 849, for example, included ten *jin* of sugar, five liters of honey, and two pairs of shoes from Xu Gongzhi, all of which Gongzhi referred to as "local products of the prefecture" 當境所出土物; and Gongyou added one *jin* of tea and ten white porcelain tea bowls as his own gifts.[62] The term "local products of the prefecture" forcefully

[61] The table is based on Tanaka Fumio, *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*, 169.
[62] Letter no. 2, "From Xu Gongzhi to Yikong"; Letter no. 3, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."

points out the significance of the lower Yangzi delta in Sino-Japanese trade: it was an important supply source of the goods, which gave the local residents – such as the Xu brothers and Enchin's associates – an advantage for participating in the overseas trade.

The gifts indicate that many sorts of goods traded by the private merchants were tightly related to monks' lives. By the Tang dynasty, tea drinking had been a common practice in Chinese monasteries. The drink was used by the Buddhist monks to support them while they meditated and to ward off sleep. Japanese embassies to the Tang also facilitated the spread of tea to Japanese monasteries – the famous Saichō and Kūkai were recorded to have played a part in the process.[63] As we saw earlier, Ennin purchased tea while in China, and Enchin drank tea with the Chinese sea merchants during their stay at the guesthouse of Kōrokan, confirming that tea drinking was popular among Japanese monks, too. But because tea was not planted widely in Japan until the thirteenth century, imports from China were crucial to meet the demand. Sugar, too, was an indispensable staple of monastic life. The five medicines permitted to sick monks in traditional Buddhism included sugarcane, syrup, and sugar.[64] Important methods for making sugar were introduced into China from India in the mid-seventh century, and Chinese monks also made efforts to transmit the technologies to Japan. Compared with tea, it took even longer for Japan to become a self-sufficient producer of sugar – Japan relied on imported sugar from China until the seventeenth century.[65]

In addition to gifts, Gongyou also sometimes took letters from other Chinese monks to Yikong. We can see from the extant letters that in 849 Gongyou must have brought Yunxu's and Faman's letters (see Table 1) from China to Yikong. During his sojourn at the guesthouse, Gongyou would usually receive replies from Yikong, to which Gongyou would respond, attaching another set of gifts.[66]

The relationship between Yikong and the Xu brothers involved more than exchanging letters and gifts, and the Xu brothers intentionally

[63] Victor H. Mair and Erling Hoh, *The True History of Tea* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 41–44.

[64] Christian Daniels and Nicolas K. Menzies, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 6: *Biology and Biological Technology*, Pt. 3: *Agro-Industries and Forestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61–62.

[65] Daniels and Menzies, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 58, 62, 456.

[66] For example, Letters no. 14 and no. 15 are both Gongyou's replies to Yikong.

cultivated close ties with Yikong. In 849, in addition to the presents, Xu Gongyou actually brought his nephew, Gongzhi's son Hupo 胡婆, to Japan, hoping Yikong could take Hupo as his attendant. In his letter to Yikong dated 849/10/15, Xu Gongyou wrote, "I humbly rely on you master to teach him [Hupo] with mercy. This child is dumb about everything and understands nothing, so I humbly hope that you could instruct him day and night. I will thank you altogether one day."[67]

Xu Gongzhi explained the decision to send his own son to Japan in his later letter: "My son Hupo has admired the [Buddhist] way since he was little, but he encountered obstacles in the Tang and thus wishes to pursue the way in a country where Buddhism is flourishing. I only wish you do not mind his dumbness and would take him at your disposal. I do not know how to describe the salvation he would receive from you."[68]

The "obstacles" the letter refers to must have been the persecution of Buddhism in the Tang between 842 and 846, which Ennin and his companions experienced. By the time that the Xu brothers sent Hupo to Japan, however, it had been more than three years since the persecution had ended. Moreover, according to the Chinese monk Faman's letter, which Xu Gongyou brought to Japan in 849, Buddhism was already resurgent in China: "The Buddhist teachings in our country have already been revived by His Majesty. The projects of constructing Buddhist monasteries and increasing the number of monks are deemed of great importance."[69] Therefore, learning Buddhist teachings in China appeared to be entirely possible then, so the Xu brothers likely sent Hupo to Japan for reasons other than simply supporting his pursuit of the dharma.

Xu Gongyou's following visit to Japan in 852 revealed the brothers' real intention behind sending Hupo to Yikong. On 852/6/30, soon after his arrival at Dazaifu, Xu Gongyou made a direct request to Yikong, hoping that he could dispatch Hupo to Kyushu. Gongyou wrote, "My nephew Hupo must have been a great bother to you in the capital. I brought some clothes and gifts from home, but there are no good candidates that I could entrust these things with [to bring to you], so I humbly hope that you could send Hupo to me. He will continue, as usual, to be at your disposal later."[70]

[67] Letter no. 15, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."
[68] Letter no. 13, "From Xu Gongzhi to Yikong."
[69] Letter no. 10, "From Chinese monk Faman to Yikong."
[70] Letter no. 16, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."

Bringing back gifts to Yikong, however, was not the main reason to ask Hupo to Kyushu. Gongyou continued to explain in the same letter that his rice fields in Suzhou had yielded no harvests for more than two years, and since he had invested much, he was in a financially difficult position. And he confessed his true reason for asking for Hupo: "This time I also carried a small amount of cargo, and I wonder if Hupo has acquaintances in the capital who could take care of the cargo. I hope you could please dispatch Hupo to Kyushu to fetch the cargo. Five *jin* of fragrances [are attached] for your disposal. I beg that you will not blame me for my request. Given the long journey [from Kōrokan to Kyoto], please forgive me for having not paid a visit."[71]

The letter clearly shows that Gongyou was asking Yikong to assist in transporting and selling some cargo in the capital of Kyoto. Although Gongyou mentions wondering whether Hupo might have any connections to help with distributing the cargo in the capital, the chances that Yikong knew such people were much greater. More remarkably, what Gongyou requested from Yikong was against the regulations of the Japanese court, which prohibited unauthorized foreign imports, and essentially constituted smuggling.

The Kyoto court had been closely monitoring and controlling overseas trade in Japan since the tribute-trade era. When Japanese embassies – like that of Ennin and his colleagues – and foreign envoys were the reliable sources for foreign luxuries for the court and aristocrats, as noted in Chapter 1, everything brought back had to be sent to the court first, and only aristocrats and officials could receive the exotic luxuries from the court or apply to purchase them.[72] A document issued by the Department of State (*Dajōkan* 太政官) in 828 reads, "It has always been against the law for foreign visitors to import objects for private trade. Since our people are obsessed with the objects coming from faraway lands and they fight to trade for them, we must strictly prohibit [the illicit private trade with foreigners] and not allow the trade to develop further."[73]

In the mid-ninth century, although sea merchants started to assume an increasingly important role in importing foreign commodities to Japan, the court in Kyoto continued to control the sale of imported

[71] Letter no. 16.
[72] Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 110.
[73] *Ruijū sandaikyaku* 類聚三代格, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系, Vol. 25 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunsha, 1998), 18:571–72.

goods. In addition to the requirement to stay at Kōrokan, arriving foreign sea merchants like Gongyou were still subject to cargo inspection, just as Zhan Jingquan and Li Da had been.[74] And the court still held the right to the preemptive purchase of any imports.[75]

Gongyou's letter demonstrates that those regulations were indeed enforced. He mentions that while his brother Gongzhi had prepared gifts for Yikong, he was waiting for government officials to finish the inspection before he could retrieve the gifts and send them to Yikong.[76] The gifts that Gongzhi sent to Yikong included one bolt of damask silk made in Yue, a pair of shoes, and ten *jin* of sugar.[77] Very interestingly, the bolt of damask silk was in the end purchased by the officials during the inspection, another confirmation that the court continued to exercise the right of preemptive purchase at that time.[78]

For a sea merchant who could carry only a certain amount of cargo for every trip, Gongyou's goal was simple – to make as much profit as possible from his cargo. Japanese edicts specifically forbade aristocratic and bureaucratic families from competing with the court in purchasing foreign goods privately by offering high prices.[79] This suggests that if Gongyou were able to find a way to sell part of his cargo directly to aristocrats, he likely would get a much better offer than the court's preemptive purchase price. Therefore, Gongyou was hoping Yikong would help him with selling the cargo in the capital. As already suggested, the likely real reason the Xu brothers had sent Hupo to Japan in 849 was to strengthen their connections to Yikong and take

[74] A document issued by the Department of State in 831 stipulated that "after the merchants arrived, all the cargo and miscellaneous objects on board should be submitted." *Ruijū sandaikyaku*, 18:570. Also see Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 108–9.

[75] For example, in 903 the court repeated its previous regulation again and particularly pointed out that no one was allowed to make purchases before the court did so. *Ruijū sandaikyaku*, 19:612.

[76] Letter no. 16, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."

[77] Letter no. 13, "From Xu Gongzhi to Yikong."

[78] Letter no. 18, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."

[79] An edict in 885 reads: "Tang merchants arrived in Dazaifu. This day, an edict was passed down to the governors and offices, forbidding the messengers from aristocratic and bureaucratic families as well as the clerks and commoners under their surveillance to compete in purchasing foreign goods privately by offering high prices." Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平 (871–909) et al., *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系, Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1998), 48:Ninwa 1 (885)/10/20, 593.

advantage of his position and resources to extend their trade network to the capital.

We do not know whether or not Yikong dispatched Hupo in the end, but it is very likely that Yikong remained in the network of pilgrim monks and sea merchants and even introduced the Xu brothers to Enchin. In 855, when Enchin was on his way from Taizhou to Chang'an, he spent two months at Xu Gongzhi's house in Suzhou to recover from illness; and when he returned from the capital the next year, he stopped by Xu Gongzhi's place again.[80] A short letter from Xu Gongzhi to Enchin survived and looks like a note attached to a set of gifts that Xu Gongzhi sent to Enchin. The gifts included two bolts of damask silk and twenty small plates.[81] The letter was so brief that it even omitted regular greetings – Xu Gongzhi simply listed the gifts and mentioned that he only had one day's notice and so did not have time to prepare other gifts. This brief message indicates that Xu Gongzhi and Enchin were quite close and the absence of greetings in the letter would not have caused any offense.

Enchin left Kyoto for Dazaifu in 851, while Yikong arrived in 847, so their time in the capital had overlapped. Enchin had written about Yikong, too, mentioning that the Chinese monk was disappointed with Japanese monks' indifference to Zen Buddhism and had criticized them for often violating monastic regulations.[82] Thus, Yikong and Enchin probably knew one another, and when Enchin was going to south-eastern China for his pilgrimage, it would have been natural for Yikong to introduce the Xu brothers, who were based in that area, to Enchin for assistance. The network of monks and merchants also expanded in this way.

Conclusion

After the last Japanese embassy to Tang China returned to Dazaifu in 839, the lack of tribute vessels meant the de facto suspension of the official diplomatic relationship between the continent and the archipelago, which prompted cooperation between the persistent travelers – monks and merchants. In the period of the tribute trade, the Japanese court had paid for the ships – a delegation usually contained four ships, and they had sent

[80] Miyoshi, *Tendaishū Enryakuji zasu Enchin den*, 1368.
[81] Keikō, *Fūsō sengen shū*, 1357. [82] Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 257.

ambassadors along with as many as 600 crew to obtain goods. Although no concrete textual or archaeological evidence of the Japanese tributary ships have emerged, to accommodate 150 passengers with their provisions, the ships would have measured 24 meters long and 8.5 meters wide with a displacement of 300 tons. The ships were likely similar to the Chinese junks of that era – flat-bottomed with bulkheads that partitioned the ship into holds – and the designers and carpenters were probably immigrant Koreans, who were master craftsmen in shipbuilding.[83] The navigational skills and knowledge of winds and currents were still rudimentary in the ninth century, so the seven- to ten-day journey traversing the East China Sea could be perilous. In fact, out of a total of eight tribute delegations that crossed the East China Sea over 150 years, only one managed to complete a round trip safely.[84]

When the official missions were not frequent enough – the 838 delegation coming after a thirty-year interval – to satisfy the increasing demand for Chinese goods and knowledge, the monks and private merchants stepped in to fill the void.[85] Ennin pursued Buddhist scriptures and ritual objects in China determinedly, and the rewards after his successful return inspired more Japanese monks to follow his steps on pilgrimage to the continent. For those pilgrims in future

[83] Farris, "Shipbuilding and Nautical Technology in Japanese Maritime History," 265–66.

[84] Masashi Haneda and Mihoko Oka, eds., *A Maritime History of East Asia* (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2019), 40–41; Farris, "Shipbuilding and Nautical Technology in Japanese Maritime History," 263–66.

> Prior to 700, tribute missions from Japan to China took a northern route, after setting off from northern Kyushu, the fleet "island-hopped" across the Korea Strait, then sailed along the coastal line of the Korean peninsula, north to the Liaodong peninsula, and only needed to make a short trip across the Bohai to land in ports on the Shandong peninsula. The northern route was much easier to navigate since ships remained in sight of land for almost the entire journey, but as the relationship between Japanese and Korean courts worsened, the northern route was replaced by the southern route from the sixth Japanese embassy to the Tang in 701. Seasonal winds blow in a westerly direction from northern Kyushu during April to May and again in September to December, and the winds blow from the Yangzi delta eastward toward Kyushu in July. The historical records show, however, that the Japanese embassies many times failed to take advantage of the prevailing winds. (Farris, 263–66.)

[85] Feng Lijun also points out that "the ninth century can be seen as a turning point or transition period in the history of trade in East Asia." See Feng Lijun 馮立君, *Tangchao yu Dongya* 唐朝與東亞 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2019), 55.

decades, one key takeaway from Ennin's experience was the importance of the assistance provided by Chinese merchants.

Absorbing this lesson, Enchin made full use of the merchants' help. Enchin's trip was clearly encouraged by the Japanese court, which supported him with an allowance, but Enchin's five-year sojourn in China otherwise relied entirely on the Buddhist community and merchants there. The surviving materials not only allow us to reconstruct a substantial part of the unofficial network, but perhaps more remarkably also show us the mechanism of the network from the viewpoint of the merchants.

Enchin's case reveals that Chinese merchants in the mid-ninth century traveled on a regular and frequent basis. Between 853 and 865, based on surviving records, the shipmaster Li Yanxiao arrived in Japan from China seven times. There was a gap in record between 866 and the shipwreck in which he died in 877, but it is very possible that Li Yanxiao did not stop traveling during that decade and those simple trade routines did not leave a trace in the texts.[86] Kimiya Yasuhiko and Bruce Batten have both counted more than thirty merchant voyages to Japan from China during the mid-to-late ninth century, based on the records in Japanese sources.[87] Batten believes that the volume of foreign trade "was in fact extremely low."[88] While the statement may be true by modern standards, if we compare it with the previous tribute era, one merchant ship – roughly half the size of a tributary ship – every year on average was still a considerable improvement over four tributary ships every fifteen years. Furthermore, while the number of tributary ship voyages was well documented, the merchant voyages evolved opportunistically and the number of Chinese merchant ships to Japan is likely underestimated somewhat.[89]

[86] Huang Yuese, "'Da Tang shangren' Li Yanxiao yu jiu shiji Zhong–Ri guanxi," 50–55.

[87] Kimiya Yasuhiko 木宮泰彦, *Ri–Zhong wenhua jiaoliu shi* 日中文化交流史, trans. Hu Xinian 胡锡年 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1980), 255–58; Bruce Batten, "An Open and Shut Case? Thoughts on Late Heian Foreign Trade," in *Currents in Medieval Japanese History: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey P. Mass*, ed. Gordon M. Berger et al. (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 2009), 307.

[88] Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 305.

[89] Charles Holcombe also points out that there was "indirect but conclusive evidence of a fairly substantial private maritime trade" during the ninth century. Charles Holcombe, "Trade-Buddhism: Maritime Trade, Immigration, and the Buddhist Landfall in Early Japan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119.2 (1999): 285.

It was the sea merchants' dependable long-term partnerships with one another that allowed monks to form decades-long, cooperative relationships with them. This was key to the success and growth of the monk–merchant trading network. The monks were reassured by the regular, predictable shipping schedules, that their messages would be delivered and their orders of goods would be completed in a timely manner.

The network of monks and merchants continued to expand as more of them became connected when their paths crossed during these trips, as evidenced by Yikong's introduction of the Xu brothers to Enchin. Those two groups – Yikong and the Xu brothers, Enchin and his merchant friends – thus became connected. Furthermore, the mobility of the merchants also helped with maintaining and expanding the transregional network, demonstrated in the way that Zhan Jingquan and Li Da served as Enchin's envoys, passing gifts and messages to monks in China.

The dual religious and commercial feature of the network of monks and merchants was already evident in the ninth century. Many merchants in this network claimed faith in Buddhism. They seemed to visit and donate to monasteries often, and in their correspondence with monks, they frequently addressed themselves as "disciple" (*dizi* 弟子) or "lay disciple" (*sudizi* 俗弟子). The monks, correspondingly, usually referred to the merchants as disciples and praised them for their determination in pursuing the Buddhist way. The merchants, on the other hand, did not hesitate to use the network to make more economic profit. For these Buddhist traders, their belief in Buddhism and their pragmatic use of religious ties to conduct trade did not conflict and may have even enhanced each other: after all, the merit they accumulated by believing in Buddhism was said to generate material fortune.

This transition period from 839 to 900 saw another important change in Sino-Japanese trade: the rise of the ports in the lower Yangzi delta, especially the port of Mingzhou (modern Ningbo). As Xu Gongyou specifically mentioned in one of his letters, he set off from Ningbo and it took him fifteen days to arrive at the guesthouse Kōrokan.[90] This shift in ports, as Ennin first encountered during his search for a departing ship in 847, probably corresponded with the fall of Silla merchants and the rise of Chinese merchants. The presence of Silla merchants had been relatively strong during Ennin's sojourn in

[90] Letter no. 16, "From Xu Gongyou to Yikong."

the early ninth century but decreased significantly afterward due to the Japanese ban on their arrival; the Chinese merchants became the dominating group trading in East Asian waters.[91] The impact of this shift on Sino-Japanese unofficial trade can be seen in the fact that the majority of merchants discussed in this chapter were based in the lower Yangzi delta. As detailed earlier, a substantial portion of the cargo that these Chinese sea merchants transported to Japan – including local products such as tea, celadons, and textiles, and Southeast Asian imports like herbal medicine and aromatics – was from the lower Yangzi region, too.

Thus, at that time, the lower Yangzi delta, in addition to possessing many convenient ports from which to sail to Japan, was a region where many sea merchants were based and desirable goods congregated. More remarkably, monasteries were developing there, too, in addition to the famous Mount Tiantai. The religious and commercial ties and resources that coalesced in this region formed the foundation of a rich and diverse culture for Sino-Japanese trade that would become more prominent in the ensuing centuries.

Between 839 and 900, the merchants and monks were actively establishing a new network in the absence of official diplomatic ties, but the continuous presence of authorities meant that merchants felt compelled nonetheless to cultivate good relationships with powerful people. The government stipulations were strongly affecting Sino-Japanese exchanges; restrictions were necessitating ever-more creative partnerships. In the next century, the collapse of the Tang empire left an array of possibilities for redefining the relationship between the continent and the Japanese archipelago. The next chapter traces how this religio-commercial network continued to develop into the primary axis of Sino-Japanese maritime exchanges in the new era.

[91] Huang Yuese, "'Da Tang shangren' Li Yanxiao yu jiu shiji Zhong–Ri guanxi," 57–59.

3 *Not Only for the Dharma*

Pilgrim Monks as Intermediaries between China and Japan, 900–1100

In 983, the Japanese monk Chōnen 奝然 (938–1016) arrived by way of a Chinese merchant ship at Taizhou on the southeast coast of China. Chōnen, from the prestigious monastery Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara, was visiting the Song regime (960–1276) early in its establishment. Like Enchin, Chōnen took merchant ships for his round trip. During his three-year sojourn in China, Chōnen visited the sacred sites of both Mount Tiantai and Mount Wutai and managed to return to Japan with a full set – more than 5,000 fascicles – of the Buddhist canon, the Tripitaka. The Tripitaka canon, which was printed under the sponsorship of the Song court, was an invaluable treasure, and was much sought after by many other neighboring states of the Song.[1] The reason that Chōnen was able to successfully obtain a complete set was because of his direct contact with Emperor Taizong (939–97; r. 976–97), the second emperor and one of the two founders of the Song dynasty. In 984, Emperor Taizong summoned Chōnen to the capital of Kaifeng, asked him various questions about Japan, and bestowed upon him the whole set of the Buddhist Tripitaka.[2]

During the first half of the Song dynasty, several pilgrim monks from Japan made direct contact with high officials, even the emperors, in China. This chapter focuses on three pilgrim monks for whom we have the best record: Chōnen, Jakushō 寂照 (962–1034, in China 1003–34), and Jōjin 成尋 (1011–81, in China 1072–81). All three spent considerable time in China and established connections with secular authorities there. Jakushō and Jōjin both remained in China until their deaths, and like their predecessors, during their decades-long sojourns they relied

[1] Tansen Sen, "The Revival and Failure of Buddhist Translations during the Song dynasty," *T'oung Pao* 88.1 (2002): 40.

[2] Hao Xiangman 郝祥滿, *Diaoran yu Song chu de Zhong-Ri fofa jiaoliu* 奝然與宋初的中日佛法交流 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2012).

on traveling merchants to maintain communication with Japanese courtiers, who made requests for purchases or sent donations to sacred Buddhist sites in China via the unofficial network of monks and merchants. The Japanese authorities, meanwhile, granted special treatment to the sea merchants in this network, on occasion implicitly allowing them to breach regulations imposed on foreign trade.

The Chinese authorities during the Song, for their part, exercised control over trade via a new system of maritime trade offices (known as the Maritime Trade Superintendency, *Shibosi* 市舶司).[3] The new system, which inspected ships and cargo arriving at Chinese ports and collected taxes from them, gave the Song court a way to obtain overseas commodities that were in great demand and, moreover, provided an alternative way for the Song to engage with the outside world.

When the Song emperors summoned Japanese pilgrim monks for an audience, they were interested in learning about the latest developments in Japan, but did not try through these encounters to force Japan to return to the China-centered tribute network. Although vestiges from the earlier tributary relationship were still visible in the late tenth century, the unofficial network established by pilgrim monks and maritime merchants since the ninth century continued to function effectively and became the cornerstone for Japan's ability to remain independent from the China-centered tribute network. Recognized by high authorities on both sides as an efficient conduit for exchange, and a means of fulfilling the Song court's interest in maritime trade, the existing unofficial network was further consolidated during this period. The records of the sojourning Japanese monks examined in this chapter offer an interesting window into how unofficial Sino-Japanese exchanges were changing and flourishing through pilgrimages and trade, serving as proxy for official communications between the two realms, between the tenth and eleventh centuries.

[3] An official with the title of maritime trade superintendent (*shiboshi* 市舶使) existed in the Tang, but as far as we know there was not yet a formal system of collecting taxes from foreign merchants. Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*. For the maritime trade office, also see Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 120–37; Brian Thomas Vivier, "Chinese Foreign Trade, 960–1276" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2008), 111–18; Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power."

Transition to a New Era: Chōnen's Letter to Emperor Taizong

After the Tang dynasty collapsed in 907, the Chinese continent went through the rulership of five short dynasties in the north and a divided governance among ten kingdoms in the south. Among the kingdoms in the south, those in the coastal regions – Wuyue in the lower Yangzi delta, Min in modern Fujian, and Nanhan in modern Guangdong – developed their seaborne economy, and maritime trade became one important source for their revenue.[4] The Wuyue kingdom continued occasional exchanges with Japan.[5] In 960, the Song unified central and south China, and like the previous unified regimes, built up its tribute network.[6]

The Japanese were now confronted with the decision of whether to rejoin the China-centered tribute network. While official diplomatic delegations were suspended, pilgrim monks had become the primary actors sustaining communication among authorities across the sea, and the Japanese monks' reactions to Chinese authorities were a decisive factor in reflecting and even helping to redefine the Sino-Japanese relationship for the new era of Song rule.

In the surviving records, only about twenty Japanese monks are reported to have traveled to Northern Song China (960–1127).[7] Making pilgrimages to Mount Tiantai and Mount Wutai and acquiring Buddhist scriptures were their self-declared primary goals. After succeeding in accomplishing these goals, and returning to Japan in 986, Chōnen wrote a letter to Emperor Taizong, which reveals much

[4] Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 437–40; Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 226–28.

[5] Edmund H. Worthy, Jr., "Diplomacy for Survival: Domestic and Foreign Relations for Wu Yüeh, 907–78," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Hugh R. Clark, "The Southern Kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung, 907–979," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 5, Pt. 1: *The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul J. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[6] Huang Chunyan 黃純艷, *Songdai chaogong tixi yanjiu* 宋代朝貢體系研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2014); Robert M. Hartwell, "Foreign Trade, Monetary Policy and Chinese 'Mercantilism,'" in *Ryū Shiken hakushi shōju kinen sōshi kenkyū ronshū* 劉子健博士頌壽紀念宋史研究論集 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1989), 465–75.

[7] Kimiya, *Ri-Zhong wenhua jiaoliu shi*, 255–58.

information about his travels in China and how he viewed his relationship with China:

> I left the coast [of Japan] on a merchant's boat, with the hope that I could see your palace in my lifetime. . . . I, a lowly person, dared to come to magnificent China. Then, decrees arrived one by one, and this person from an uncivilized region was allowed to travel at will; with all the help, I was able to get a glimpse of the elegance of China. . . . The boat [that I took to get back to Japan] left Taizhou [in China] in the late summer and arrived in Japan in the early autumn. . . . I left the nest of the phoenix and returned to the home of ants. Whether I am here or there, I admire only your majesty's great merit; although we are separated by the seas and mountains, I dare not forget your profound concerns. Even if I were to sacrifice my life for you, I could not repay the favor that I received in one single day.[8]

Chōnen's letter, very interestingly, combined elements from the tribute period with changes for a new era. First, this letter's phrasing is striking: Chōnen honored the Chinese emperor and China in the extreme, even at the expense of disparaging his own country, describing China as "the nest of the phoenix" but referring to Japan as "the home of the ants," a metaphor used during the tribute era.[9] The strikingly humble and submissive tone of the language in Chōnen's letter, furthermore, is consistent with the accompanying gifts for Emperor Taizong. Chōnen presented more than ten bronze vessels, the *Code for Bureaucrats* 職官令, and the *Chronicle of Kings* 王年代記. In 988, he sent his disciple Ka'in 嘉因, who brought his letter to the Song court along with additional valuable objects, including five bolts of fine white hemp cloth and 700 pounds of sulfur, as well as many Japanese handicrafts, such as a gold-and-silver-lacquered fan box holding twenty fans with cypress-wood blades, and a

[8] *Songshi* 宋史, by Tuotuo 脫脫 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 491:14135–36.

[9] When one of the 804 Japanese embassy ships had been detained at Fuzhou 福州 because it did not carry a document with the official Japanese seal, the monk Kūkai made use of his refined Chinese language skills and wrote a letter to the regional commander to explain their situation and eventually secured release. In his letter, Kūkai wrote down such sentences as: "We have audiences before the emperor's dragon face and hear his phoenix words" and "Men drawn by the power of his virtue gladly assemble like spokes coming together at the hub of a wheel. Like ants attracted to pungent meat, they happily form lines to come." See "Kūkai's letter written for presentation by Kadonomaro to the Regional Commander of Fu-chou," in Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801–6," appendix.

pair of comb boxes inlaid with mother-of-pearl, one containing 270 red sandalwood combs and the other containing ten pieces of mammoth bone (*longgu* 龍骨).[10]

The gifts sent by Chōnen and delivered by Ka'in, in terms of both content and amount, were more than simply a set of private gifts from monk to emperor – Chōnen's gifts rather shared some characteristics with tribute goods. Submitting the official code and chronicles symbolized, to a degree, declaring allegiance. The large amount of sulfur follows the practice of submitting special local products, given that sulfur was among the important local products in east and northeast Japan from the eighth century.[11] As this chapter will describe further, a century later the Japanese monks' personal gifts to an emperor were very different.

The factors symbolizing a new era of nonofficial communications, however, were equally evident in the letter. Chōnen specifically mentions traveling to China on a merchant boat, setting himself apart from the official delegations from the very beginning. And throughout the letter, as humble as he was, Chōnen only spoke from his own standpoint and did not touch upon the diplomatic status between China and Japan in the slightest way.

Remarkably, neither did Emperor Taizong try to define the relationship between China and Japan. During the audience, Taizong did not say whether he viewed Japan as a tribute state; instead, he showed admiration for Japan's uninterrupted royal governance. When Taizong heard from Chōnen that in Japan the kings were all descended from the same line and all official positions were inheritable, he sighed and told his counselor,

"They are barbarians living on islands, but their inheritable benefits last so long, and their bureaucrats also inherit [their ancestors'] positions endlessly – this has been the way since ancient times. After the riots at the end of the Tang dynasty,[12] the territory was divided and the administration

[10] *Songshi*, 491:14137.

[11] Yamauchi Shinji 山内晋次, *Nissō bōeki to "iō no michi"* 日宋貿易と「硫黄の道」 (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 2009), 43.

[12] Emperor Taizong was referring to the riots led by Huang Chao 黃巢 from 875 to 884. For details of the Huang Chao rebellion and its impact, see Nicolas Tackett, *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), 187–234.

was separated; the Five Dynasties[13] such as Liang 梁 (907–23) and Zhou 周 (951–60) only existed briefly, thus the lineages of bureaucrats and aristocrats rarely last long. . .. My wish is: establishing an endless enterprise and becoming a durable model."[14]

Except for still calling Japanese people "barbarians," Emperor Taizong did not convey much cultural superiority but expressed his admiration instead.

The Song dynasty had defeated the Northern Han kingdom (951–79) and unified central China only four years before Chōnen's visit and then was constantly under threat from its northern nomadic rival – the Kitan.[15] At that point, no one knew whether the Song dynasty would last or would become another short dynasty following the previous five dynasties. Thus, by mentioning his wish to build a long-lasting regime such as that in Japan, Emperor Taizong appeared to be preoccupied with stability, rather than getting Japan's professed allegiance.[16] To impress the foreign visitor, as Chōnen acknowledged in his letter, Emperor Taizong treated him generously. Emperor Taizong not only approved Chōnen's request to make a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai but also ordered the posts along the way to provide food to him – a warm welcome that his predecessor Ennin would never have dreamed of.[17] Emperor Taizong also bestowed upon Chōnen a purple robe, which symbolized the highest rank of Buddhist monks, and provided accommodation for him in the Taiping Xingguo monastery – the royal house monastery.[18]

In addition to fulfilling Chōnen's strongest wish – the full set of the Tripitaka Buddhist canon – the emperor even arranged for the transportation of this huge collection of sutras to the port of Taizhou. This

[13] The Five Dynasties, from 907 to 960, includes five short dynasties – the Later Liang, the Later Tang 後唐 (923–936), the Later Jin 後晉 (936–947), the Later Han 後漢 (947–951), and the Later Zhou.

[14] *Songshi*, 491:14134.

[15] Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with Its Neighbors," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi; Nicolas Tackett, *The Origins of the Chinese Nation: Song China and the Forging of an East Asian World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[16] As Nicolas Tackett puts it: "Due to the relatively limited scale of direct political interaction or military confrontation, the southern and maritime frontiers were never the main focus of attention at the Song court." Tackett, *Origins of the Chinese Nation*, 16.

[17] *Songshi*, 491:14138.

[18] *Songshi*, 491:14138.

proved to be a great favor to Chōnen, who later encountered much difficulty in transporting the Tripitaka to the capital of Kyoto after his arrival in Japan.[19] The Song had begun making the woodblocks for printing the Tripitaka canon in 971 and finished them just before Chōnen's arrival. Accomplishing the goal of bringing back a full set of the sacred texts, produced with the latest printing technology, would, as with Ennin's and Enchin's quests for precious ritual objects, earn Chōnen and his monastery much fame and further patronage.

It is worth noting that the Song court probably had a special agenda when they started the large project of woodblock-printing the Tripitaka. This comprehensive sutra collection required the use of 130,000 woodblocks and took more than a decade to complete. By sponsoring this enormous Buddhist project, the newly founded Song court raised its cultural reputation among neighboring countries and attracted visitors who aimed to attain a full set.[20] After Chōnen's visit, the King of Goryeo (a ruling kingdom in the Korean peninsula, 918–1392) also sent envoys to the Song for the Tripitaka collection. Goryeo began to make its own Tripitaka woodblocks in 1011. This Song-printed Tripitaka collection also spread to the Kitan, the Tangut in the west, and to Vietnam. While Emperor Taizong did not use words to persuade Japan to continue sending tribute, perhaps Taizong believed that his gift of the Tripitaka – a clear display of the Song's cultural power to the Japanese visitors – would be an effective, if indirect, way to begin to regain the Japanese court's allegiance.

Emperor Taizong's generous gesture indeed earned esteem from Chōnen. In 1954, some documents were found by accident in the abdomen of the Śākyamuni sculpture that Chōnen brought back to Japan from Mount Wutai. Among the documents was a list of the people for whom Chōnen prayed.[21] On that list, Emperor Taizong was placed above the Japanese emperor and empress. Unlike diplomatic letters, the format and phrasing of which often caused rifts, Chōnen's prayer list, along with his letter to Taizong, were private enough not to

[19] Hao, *Diaoran yu Song chu de Zhong-Ri fofa jiaoliu*, 210–12.

[20] Sen, "Revival and Failure of Buddhist Translations during the Song dynasty," 39–40.

[21] Oku Takeo 奥健夫, "Seiryōji Shaka nyorai zō" 清涼寺釈迦如来像, *Nihon no bijutsu* 513 (2009); Ishii Masatoshi 石井正敏, "Nissō junrei sō" 入宋巡礼僧, in *Ajia no naka no Nihonshi V: Jiishiki to sōgorikai* アジアの中の日本史V: 自意識と相互理解 (Tokyo: Sanyōsha, 1993), 278.

lead to any diplomatic misunderstanding, but nonetheless expressed his reverence and gratitude with a formality befitting the Song emperor.[22]

Chōnen, meanwhile, revealed his genuine personal feelings in a prayer letter for his mother before his departure for China. He explained that although he was not supposed to travel far away while his aged mother was still living, he felt obliged to go to China to pursue Buddhist teachings and make pilgrimages to sacred sites. When expressing his reluctance to leave Japan, he said, "I will leave the home that is so difficult to leave, and I will put aside my affections that are so difficult to put aside. My mind has to go to the unknown territory, and my body has to stay with the people who belong to a different kind (*irui no hito* 異類之人). Isn't that sorrowful? Isn't that painful?"[23] Chōnen clearly viewed Japan as separate and independent from China, and the home he was so reluctant to leave was not inferior to China in his eyes, let alone the "home of ants." Chōnen's view toward the relationship between Japan and China probably represented that of most courtiers and high-ranking monks then: respecting China for its cultural and economic powers, but viewing Japan as an equal political entity to China.

The Song dynasty was also developing a new system to engage with the outside world, which had a profound impact on the Sino-Japanese relationship. When Chōnen arrived in China, Maritime Trade Superintendency offices were already established in three major ports of China – Guangzhou 廣州 in the south, and Hangzhou and Ningbo in the lower Yangzi delta. Along with the office in Quanzhou 泉州 and other branch offices to be built in the ensuing decades, the system of maritime trade offices covered the coastal region of China and controlled the entry and exit of both people and goods.[24] As noted earlier, the Maritime Trade Superintendency offices gave the Song court access to desirable goods and overseas information, and also increased state revenue via collecting customs duties. The profits the Song government gained from maritime trade were "far from negligible," accounting for 2 or 3 percent of total revenue.[25]

[22] For the rifts caused by diplomatic letters in the previous tribute era, see Z. Wang, *Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals*, 139–79.

[23] Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎, *Nittō shoka tenkō*入唐諸家傳考, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho*大日本仏教全書 (Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 1922), 116:514.

[24] Schottenhammer, "China's Emergence as a Maritime Power," 460–91.

[25] See Shiba Yoshinobu, "Sung Foreign Trade," in *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi

The Song government treated tribute and nontribute trade differently and did not feel the need to trade concrete economic profit for alleged political subordination. Since tribute gifts were exempted from customs duties, in several instances Chinese merchants tried to take advantage of the suspended Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations and claimed to be envoys sent by Japanese authorities to bring tribute gifts to the Song court. Attempts like this rarely succeeded, because Song officials always asked for diplomatic credentials and were very cautious about granting such visitors tribute-bearing status.[26] The burgeoning system of Maritime Trade Superintendency offices provided an alternative way for China and Japan to maintain communications and thus opened the gate to a new era in the Song.

Chōnen's interaction with Emperor Taizong reveals features of a transition period: the vestiges of the tributary period were still visible in Chōnen's humble phrasing and particular gifts, but the nonofficial way of communication and exchange – merchant ships as the primary means of transportation, printing Buddhist sutras as a cultural magnet – was playing an ascendant, important role as we can see in the stories that follow.

Connecting Authorities and Merchants: Jakushō

Jakushō arrived in China two decades after Chōnen. Unlike Chōnen, who sojourned in China for only three years, Jakushō stayed in China for more than three decades, from 1003 to 1034, when he died in Hangzhou. During his long sojourn in China, the Japanese monk formed close relationships with Chinese scholar-officials and maintained his connections with aristocrats in Japan by using Chinese sea merchants as his messengers. Jakushō's experience vividly demonstrates

(Berkeley: University of California Press), 106. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were scholars who believed that the revenue from Southern Song maritime trade reached 20 percent of state revenue, but Huang Chunyan persuasively refuted that possibility and demonstrated that although the revenue from maritime trade continued to increase throughout the early Northern Song to the Southern Song eras, it rarely reached 3 percent of the total state revenue. See Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 174–76.

[26] For example, in 1026, officials in Ningbo reported that they had received people who claimed to be sent from Dazaifu to present tribute but did not carry official letters with them; the court ordered officials to send them back. *Songshi*, 491:14136.

the mechanism and vitality of the unofficial network under the reign of the new Chinese dynasty, and shows how various groups – not only merchants but also higher authorities – were making use of and taking advantage of this network.

When Jakushō submitted his request to travel to China, his reason was simply to make a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, but after his arrival, his Buddhist identity and distinguished achievements in Chinese culture soon helped him establish close relationships with Chinese court elites, making him an important hub in the network connecting China and Japan. Like Chōnen, Jakushō received a purple robe along with the title "Master Yuantong" (*Yuantong dashi* 圓通大師) from Taizong's successor, Emperor Zhenzong (968–1022, r. 997–1022).[27] Furthermore, although Jakushō could not speak Chinese and therefore communicated by "brush talking," his excellence in calligraphy quickly won him a reputation among scholar-officials. A high and powerful official, Ding Wei 丁谓, who was probably also a devoted lay Buddhist, even supported Jakushō by using his own salary, and also gave the pilgrim his long-treasured water bottle – a necessary daily utensil for Buddhists.[28] A shared belief of Buddhism helped Jakushō expand his network among Chinese intellectuals, and in this way, the network built by monks and merchants connected with more groups.

From the time of his arrival in China, Jakushō used the unofficial network to maintain his ties with high authorities in Japan, especially Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, the grand minister and actual power-holder in Japan at the time. Records show that Jakushō sent letters to Michinaga via Chinese sea merchants in 1005, shortly after his arrival, and again in 1012 and 1013.[29] Those communications suggest that the network of monks and merchants was functioning effectively in transmitting messages and transporting material objects.

[27] *Songshi*, 491:14138. Unlike Chōnen, who was recorded at length in *Songshi* (*History of the Song*), Jakushō was only briefly mentioned with the comment that he came to China in a group of eight and he did not speak Chinese, so he communicated by "brush talking" (or through writing characters). There is no record of any direct interaction between Jakushō and the emperor, so it is not certain whether he had an audience, and neither did he bring any possible tributary gifts, such as the codes and chronicles that Chōnen had carried with him.

[28] Yang Yi 楊億, *Yang wengong tan yuan* 楊文公談苑 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 12.

[29] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 40–41.

For example, in the 1013 letter, Jakushō informed Michinaga about the reconstruction of a monastery on Mount Tiantai in China. At Jakushō's request, Michinaga sent along a large set of contributions, including six sets of rosaries, a mother-of-pearl-inlaid cabinet, a folding screen, 100 ounces of gold dust, five large pearls, and ten bolts of woven cloth.[30] Another minister, Fujiwara no Sanesuke 藤原実資 (957–1046), sent a lacquered wooden saddle inlaid with mother-of-pearl.[31] Although the formal relationship between China and Japan had been suspended, the channels for authorities to gain merit for donating to the powerful sacred sites and for monasteries to accumulate patronage appears even to have broadened. This unofficial network could connect Japanese authorities directly to Chinese monasteries, allowing the donations and prayers to move in an even more efficient manner than in the previous tribute network.

A key component of the unofficial network, the sea merchants tried to make the best use of their role in the network and prompt it to work to their advantage. Two Chinese sea merchants served as Jakushō's messengers, and they both exploited the opportunity. In 1005, when the Chinese sea merchant Zeng Lingwen 曾令文 arrived in Kyushu in Japan with Jakushō's letter to Minister Michinaga, he and his ship at first were not allowed to land, because he was violating the aforementioned ten-year waiting-period regulation (*nenkisei* 年紀制), enforced by the Japanese court since 911.[32] Zeng Lingwen was very aware of this restriction on foreign merchants, but despite the heavy cost and high risks of the long-distance voyage, he still set off to Japan with a full ship of merchandise. It is very likely that Zeng Lingwen was confident that his mission as Jakushō's messenger would, as it did turn out, earn him an exemption from the Japanese court. After holding a cabinet meeting, Minister Michinaga granted Zeng Lingwen special permission to land. The official reason for this special treatment was that not long before, many Chinese objects had been lost to a fire in the palace, so the court decided to allow Zeng Lingwen to trade at that time. But undoubtedly Zeng's connection to Jakushō played a larger role in this special

[30] Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長, *Midō kanpakuki* 御堂関白記 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1952), Chōwa 4 (1015) 7/15.
[31] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 41.
[32] Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 246–65.

treatment. Zeng afterward presented tea bowls, sappanwood, and Chinese books to Michinaga to express his gratitude.

Jakushō's other messenger, Zhou Wenyi 周文裔, received similar special treatment. Zhou Wenyi brought letters from Jakushō in 1012 and 1013, which allowed him to receive a warm welcome in Kyushu when he was clearly violating the waiting-period rule. In 1013, in addition to submitting Jakushō's letter to Michinaga, Zhou also offered peacocks to the court, which were intended for one of Michinaga's gardens.[33]

The special treatment that Zeng Lingwen and Zhou Wenyi received contrasted starkly with the generally strict enforcement of the waiting-period stipulation. For example, in 1028, after Zhou Wenyi's trade partner Zhang Chengfu 章承輔 died in Japan, his son Zhang Renchang 章仁昶 came to Japan to manage his father's affairs. Since Renchang, also a sea merchant, had just left the year before, he was also violating the waiting-period rule. Renchang had to submit a petition to the headquarters of Dazaifu, which passed it on to the court. Renchang's petition was granted, but only on the condition that Renchang "not carrying any belongings" to ensure that he had no intention to trade.[34]

The Japanese court aristocrats, besides granting special treatment to Jakushō's messengers, also took advantage of Jakushō's connections and his private network in China to make requests. One of them once wrote to Jakushō complaining that the people in Japan had difficulty getting information on Chinese culture because merchants paid too much attention to profits and only transported lightweight commodities but not heavy books.[35] During the tribute-trade era, Japanese envoys and monks had all brought back large numbers of books from China. In fact, though, the accusation against the merchants may have been unfair, since after the suspension of official diplomatic relations, books still were among the common trade commodities. For example,

[33] Fujiwara no Michinaga, *Midō kanpakuki*, Chōwa 1 (1012) 9/2, 1/9/21, 1/9/22; and Chōwa 2/2/2, 2/2/3, and 2/2/4.

[34] Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed., *Dazaifu·Dazaifu Tenmangū shiryō* 大宰府·太宰府天満宮史料 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1968), 5:51. Gregory Sattler also discusses the interactions between Chinese merchants and Japanese officials during this period in his research. See Gregory Sattler, "The Ideological Underpinnings of Private Trade in East Asia, ca. 800–1127," *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 6 (2021): 50–55.

[35] Yang Yi, *Yang Wengong tan yuan*, 11.

in 1004, the Heian court purchased the works of the famous Tang poets Bai Juyi 白居易 and Yuan Zhen 元稹, and the merchant Zeng Lingwen also presented books to Michinaga as gifts.[36]

This letter to Jakushō, however, indicates that after the nontribute trade had been blooming for nearly two centuries, the upper class in Japan saw Chinese merchants as their main channel for obtaining continental goods and were very much aware of their long-developed ties with the traveling monks. Thus, the Japanese aristocrats' requests to Jakushō were their way of notifying the merchants of their demands, in the hopes that the desired goods would be brought to Japan via this network.

The case of Jakushō clearly shows how the pilgrim monks acted as intermediaries connecting high authorities in Japan with maritime merchants, and connecting the continent and the Japanese archipelago. The network benefited various groups it brought together: monks achieved their goal of a pilgrimage, sea merchants received special treatment that could increase their trade profit, and Japanese courtiers secured reliable channels by which to acquire knowledge and goods from China without having to profess allegiance to the Chinese emperor. The smooth functioning of this network led to a mutual understanding between China and Japan, so that by the 1070s the unofficial network had become the primary channel connecting the continent and the archipelago.

Mutual Recognition of the Unofficial Network: Jōjin and Emperor Shenzong

Jōjin, another Buddhist pilgrim from Japan who arrived several decades later than Jakushō, received an audience with Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (1048–85, r. 1067–85) of the Song. Unlike Chōnen, whose interaction with Emperor Taizong still showed vestiges of the previous tributary relationship, Jōjin openly admitted to Emperor Shenzong that Japan was no longer paying tribute to China and, in addition, told the emperor what continental commodities were most needed in Japan. Jōjin's audience with Emperor Shenzong further confirmed that private forms of exchange – especially trade – had become the primary mode of communication between China and

[36] Fujiwara no Michinaga, *Midō kanpaku ki*, Kankō 1 (1004)/1/27.

Japan. Like his predecessors, Jōjin both benefited from and contributed to the network of monks and merchants.

Accompanied by seven disciples, Jōjin disembarked at Hangzhou in the fourth month of 1072 and stayed in China until his death in 1081. In 1073, he sent five of his disciples back to Japan, along with many texts he acquired in China and his informative diary, *The Record of a Pilgrimage to Mount Tiantai and Mount Wutai* (*San Tendai Godai san ki* 参天台五臺山記), in which he recorded sixteen months of travel in great detail, allowing us to closely examine Jōjin's interactions with merchants and Chinese authorities and the network in which he was a part.[37]

Jōjin's journey, like those of Enchin and Chōnen, started with his collaboration with sea merchants. Jōjin recorded that before setting out from Japan, he offered a huge set of "presents" (*kyūbutsu* 給物) to the Chinese merchants who would carry him. The "presents" included 50 bushels of rice, 100 bolts of stiff silk, 2 suits of clothes, 4 ounces of gold dust, 100 pieces of high-quality Japanese paper, 100 steel ingots, and 180 ounces of mercury. Since the "presents" – obviously his payment for this high-risk trip – were so numerous and Japanese paper and mercury were commodities popular in Chinese markets, it seems that Jōjin was helping the Chinese merchants assemble part of their cargo. Jōjin mentioned that when they were waiting ashore for a favorable wind, the Chinese merchants needed to hide him and his companions in the ship's hold. Whenever anyone came near the ship, they had to hole up in a small cabin, closing all the windows and keeping quiet, and it was very uncomfortable.[38]

The usual assumption is that they had to hide because they were traveling without permission – Jōjin applied for permission but left without obtaining it. However, Robert Borgen has pointed out that Jōjin and his companions' intentions were no secret at court, as they were carrying offerings from the Japanese imperial family to present at the famous Buddhist sites in China (similar to the way Minister Michinaga had sent donations to Mount Tiantai via Jakushō and the sea merchants). So these precautions were likely taken to avoid unwanted attention from local officials or brigands in Kyushu, who

[37] Robert Borgen, "*San Tendai Godai san ki* as a Source for the Study of Sung History," *Bulletin of Sung Yuan Studies* 19 (1987): 2.
[38] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 4.

might take away the valuable goods that the monks carried to pay their costs and for use as offerings in China.[39] The fact that the Japanese court did not provide any measures to Jōjin for safekeeping the imperial family's donations also suggests the hands-off nature of the court's interactions with the traveling monks. The Japanese court encouraged Jōjin's pilgrimage in a subtle but not official way, and as Jōjin's experience in China shows, the Chinese court reciprocated with similar tactics.

After arriving in China, Jōjin relied on the merchant Chen Yong 陳詠 as his guide and translator.[40] A local from the port of Ningbo, Chen Yong traded between China and Japan frequently and therefore became fluent in Japanese. According to an official document that Jōjin copied into his diary, Chen Yong claimed that he first met Jōjin in 1065, when he went to trade in Japan, and in 1069, Chen Yong returned to China with sulfur and other goods, which he sold in Hangzhou and Suzhou. And when Jōjin and his disciples arrived in Hangzhou in 1072, Chen Yong met them again in a guesthouse and thus became their translator – perhaps Chen Yong and Jōjin had already decided on the arrangement when they were in Japan, given that Jōjin applied to travel to China right after Chen Yong sailed back to China.[41] Jōjin kept a copy of almost every official Chinese document he received, and many of them were in fact issued to Chen Yong, suggesting how crucial the merchant's companionship was to his sojourns.

Following the steps of his pilgrim predecessors, Jōjin also took Mount Tiantai as one of his primary destinations and spent nearly three months there. But unlike Ennin and Enchin, who borrowed texts from the Chinese, Jōjin also lent texts he brought from Japan to his Chinese hosts so they could make copies. He was also very curious about whether Japanese monks' works – such as *The Essentials of*

[39] Robert Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center (with Some Periphery in between)," in *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*, ed. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 388–89.

[40] See Ou Reihei 王麗萍, *Sōdai no Chū-Nichi kōryūshi kenkyū: 'San Tendai Godai san ki' o shiryō to shite*宋代の中日交流史研究：「参天台五臺山記」を史料として (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2002), 169–80; Guo Wanping 郭萬平, "Lai Song Ri seng Chengxun yu Ningbo shangren Chen Yong" 來宋日僧成尋與寧波商人陳詠, in *Ningbo yu haishang sichouzhilu* 寧波與海上絲綢之路, ed. Ningbo wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2006).

[41] Guo, "Lai Song Ri seng Chengxun yu Ningbo shangren Chen Yong," 295.

Salvation (*Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集) by Genshin 源信 (942–1017) – circulated in China as well as the Chinese sea merchants claimed.[42] By Jōjin's day, pilgrims from Japan were not simply receiving Buddhist texts from China but had tried to discuss Buddhist teachings with Chinese monks on an equal footing, a tendency consistent with Japan's break from the China-centered tribute network.

During his stay at Mount Tiantai, Jōjin applied for permission to go to Mount Wutai, where Ennin and Chōnen had traveled, but the local officials informed him that he needed to send his request to the central government directly. Jōjin complied and soon received not only permission to go to Mount Wutai but also an invitation for a personal meeting with Emperor Shenzong.

Jōjin arrived in the capital of Kaifeng in the tenth month of 1072. Before he was allowed to enter the palace and receive an audience, court officials came several times to the monastery where he stayed to inspect his presents for the emperor and to ask him questions about Japan. One court military official who came to inspect the presents thought a silver incense burner and prayer beads inappropriate gifts for the emperor – perhaps because they were different from the diplomatic gifts that the officials usually inspected and were not significant in amount or value. Jōjin saw this as unreasonable, so he submitted a catalog of Buddhist sutras and attached a statement to justify the gifts he was going to present to the emperor. He wrote,

> "In former days, the learned monk of Tiantai (*Tiantai zhizhe* 天台智者 Zhiyi 智顗, whose portrait Ennin commissioned) presented lotus flowers, incense burners, and crystal prayer beads to Emperor Yangdi (569–618) of the Sui dynasty. Nowadays, myself, a lowly monk from the land of the sun, present a pure silver incense burner and five types of prayer beads to his majesty, both to express my wishes and extend my intention to pray for his longevity of tens of thousands of years."[43]

According to the *History of the Song*, the official history of the Song dynasty completed in 1345 during the Yuan dynasty, Jōjin presented a silver incense burner, prayer beads decorated with amber, and blue damask silk to Emperor Shenzong.[44] Given that the gifts recorded in

[42] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 340; Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center," 390.
[43] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 274.
[44] *Songshi*, 491:14138.

the *History of the Song* are precisely the same items listed in Jōjin's diary, it is clear that Jōjin was eventually allowed to submit those presents.

After the visit of the court military official, a palace attendant came to Jōjin's residential monastery to examine Jōjin's certificates and, again, the gifts for Emperor Shenzong. After the inspection, the official asked, "Why has Japan not contacted China and come to pay tribute for so long?" Jōjin replied, "[The distance between China and Japan] is ten thousand *li* of vast sea waves,[45] and everyone is determined to avoid getting involved in the mission [to come to China]. Thus [the relationship between China and Japan] has long been suspended."[46] The following day, Jōjin answered a list of seventeen questions from Emperor Shenzong, and the same palace attendant brought the answers back to Shenzong. On the list, Emperor Shenzong asked again, "Your home country is geographically very close to Ningbo, so for what reason did your people not contact China?" Jōjin's answer: "From my country to Ningbo, I am not sure how long the sea route is. Some say it is more than 7,000 *li*, while some say 5,000 *li*. The waves are high and there is no place to stop midway. Therefore, coming to China is difficult."[47]

It is worth noting that Jōjin did not use many humble words in his answers to Emperor Shenzong, nor did he try to disguise that Japan had already stopped paying tribute to China. Less than a century earlier, when the Japanese monk Chōnen received an audience with Emperor Taizong in 984, as discussed earlier, he still felt obliged to use extremely humble language in addressing the emperor, referring to China as "the nest of the phoenix" and to Japan as "the home of ants."[48] In comparison, both Jōjin's answers and gifts – a set of purely religious objects – suggest that he was free of the influence of previous tributary relations, and perhaps even further, cautiously avoided any

[45] The actual distance between Ningbo and Hakata is 935 km. One *li* equals approximately 0.56 km in the Song.

[46] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 282.

[47] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 293.

Robert Borgen points out that this answer was inconsistent with Jōjin's answer the previous day, and that on the day that his ship arrived in China, Jōjin recorded in his diary that the distance between China and Japan was 3,000 *li*. So when he answered the emperor's question, he might have been consciously prevaricating and exaggerating the distance between China and Japan. See Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center," 393.

[48] *Songshi*, 491:14136.

gestures or gifts that might cause misunderstanding. By the time of Jōjin's arrival, the Song had governed central and south China for more than a century, and the Japanese court – who possibly deliberately made Jōjin go without official permission – showed no intention of reestablishing formal diplomatic relations.

Meanwhile, the unofficial network was functioning effectively to sufficiently fulfill the demands of Jōjin and his aristocratic patrons. Among the questions that Emperor Shenzong asked was, "What objects and commodities does your country need from our Han territory (*handi* 漢地)?" Jōjin answered frankly: "My country needs incense and medicines, tea bowls, brocades, and sappanwood."[49] All the objects on Jōjin's list were already being brought to Japan on a regular basis by sea merchants, whose trade trips were replacing the tribute system. Furthermore, strategic gift exchanges with useful authorities were taking place without it, as evidenced by the cases provided here and in the previous chapter – the Xu brothers sending textiles and tea bowls to Yikong; Cai Fu's attempt to present medicines to the new Japanese emperor via Enchin; and Zeng Lingwen's gift of sappanwood to Minister Michinaga. Thus, thanks to the active sea merchants and the robust commercial network they were building, Jōjin could answer with confidence to Emperor Shenzong that Japan would not pay tribute in the near future.

The Song authorities, for their part, appeared to be aware that the sea merchants and pilgrim monks were playing a key role in sustaining the exchanges between China and Japan and planned to make use of that, too. In 1073, Jōjin petitioned the Song court for a permit to travel to the port of Ningbo, where five of his disciples would embark on their return journey to Japan with the books that Jōjin had accumulated. The court, intriguingly, not only granted the petition but also prepared a set of gifts for the Japanese emperor, which consisted of twenty bolts of elegant brocades and a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* in gold lettering.[50] Furthermore, the court swiftly issued an ordination certificate to Jōjin's interpreter, the merchant Chen Yong, who therefore officially became a monk. In this way, Chen Yong, as a novice monk, could accompany Jōjin's disciples back to Japan and pass a message

[49] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 294.
[50] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 516–18, 534–35.

from the Song court to the Japanese emperor.[51] This tactic, along with the court's deliberate choice of gifts, suggests that the Song court was seizing the opportunity to use religious ties to reestablish contact with the Japanese court. Remarkably, the Song did not push strongly toward the resumption of a tributary relationship, but rather relied on a newly ordained monk to be their envoy.

When the authorities used the unofficial network of monks and merchants to communicate, it created ambiguity: the nature of the exchanges became hard to define, which gave the authorities on each side more flexibility to tailor the exchanges to their needs. For example, in the *History of the Song*, the presentation of gifts from Japanese itinerant monks – including Chōnen – was usually described as "submitting tribute" (*gong* 貢). But, as Jōjin's case shows, both the monks and the Song emperor were very cautious in choosing the gifts and intentionally downplayed the diplomatic meaning of the gifts by selecting objects with profound religious meaning. There is a clear discrepancy between the real practice and the interpretation in official records such as the *History of the Song*, which were written centuries later.

The aftermath of Jōjin's pilgrimage indicates the extra caution with which authorities on both sides were dealing with their official relationship; it also indicates that with the Maritime Trade Superintendency offices established, the Song court did not easily trade economic profit for insincere allegiance. It took the Japanese court years to decide how to reply to Emperor Shenzong's message and gifts, and in 1077, it finally decided to reply with a message, not from the emperor but from the Council of State, along with gifts of 200 bolts of silk and 5,000 ounces of mercury.[52] The *History of the Song* recorded that the following year a Japanese monk and a Chinese merchant, Sun Zhong 孫忠, arrived in Ningbo with exactly the same gifts and a message from the Dazaifu headquarters saying, according to the *History of the Song*, that because the "envoy Sun Zhong" (*shiren Sun Zhong* 使人孫仲) was on his way back to China, Dazaifu sent the monk along to present some "tribute."[53] The officials of the Maritime Trade Superintendency in Ningbo did not see this as appropriate tribute, because "Sun Zhong is just a sea

[51] Jōjin, *Xinjiao can Tiantai Wutai shan ji*, 662, 670.
[52] Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center," 406.
[53] *Songshi*, 491:14136.

merchant, and the format of the tribute differs from that of other countries."

The emperors of the Song, too, appeared to have accepted the suspended tribute relationship between China and Japan, and did not express an urge to embellish the monks' nonofficial visits as tribute presentation. In 1083, Jōjin's disciple Kaishū 快宗 visited China for a second time, wearing the purple robe that he had received during Jōjin's audience with Emperor Shenzong. Upon noticing the purple robe, Shenzong asked his counselors when it was bestowed, and one replied, "In the Xining reign [1068–77], he [Kaishū] received it when he followed Jōjin, the monk from his country, to the audience. Now he comes to pay tribute again." But Shenzong immediately corrected the counselor: "That was not paying tribute. They came only because they were on a pilgrimage to Mount Tiantai."[54] The counselor's words reaffirmed the ambiguous nature of the monks' visits, and the possibility of taking advantage of it, but Emperor Shenzong's correction clarified it: the monks' visits were not tribute missions.

Jōjin's audience with Emperor Shenzong is an important moment in the history of Sino-Japanese relations. An official and mutual recognition of the suspension of the tribute relationship between China and Japan was crucial for the unofficial network connecting them to further develop. Remarkably, the secular authorities on both sides willingly accepted the network formed by sea merchants and pilgrim monks and intended to use that network to meet their own demands. Emperor Shenzong's question about the desirable Chinese goods for the Japanese, and his deliberate choice of adding a Buddhist sutra to his gifts to the Japanese emperor, suggests that the Song emperor was thereby condoning de facto the commercial and religious exchanges linking the continent and the archipelago, and accepted that the thriving network of monks and merchants was sufficient for that purpose.

Conclusion

The establishment of the Song dynasty became an opportunity for the Japanese archipelago to redefine its relationship with the Chinese continent. The Japanese court was satisfied with the stable material

[54] Li Tao 李燾, *Xu Zizhitongjian changbian* 續資治通鑒長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 8031.

supplies provided by the traveling monks and the sea merchants, so their motivation to rejoin the China-centered tribute network was low.

In the early stage of the exchanges between the Song and Heian Japan, vestiges from the previous tribute era were still visible, as in Chōnen's humble letter to Emperor Taizong. But the impact of former tributary ties faded when the Japanese court found the unofficial network to be sufficient in providing all the things that they needed from China. The Japanese authorities silently encouraged the collaboration between monks and merchants by providing special treatment to the merchants in the network. Thus, by the 1070s, Jōjin eliminated anything that might indicate a tribute relationship from his gift set and his meeting with Emperor Shenzong, and he openly spoke of the suspension of tribute.

The Song emperors, remarkably, were not too disappointed with the reality; on the contrary, Emperor Shenzong felt the need to point out the difference between pilgrim monks and authorized envoys. Meanwhile, by appointing the newly ordained monk Chen Yong as envoy and adding Buddhist scripture to the presents, Emperor Shenzong and his officials also adopted the tactic of using monks as intermediaries, indicating their acceptance of the burgeoning network of monks and merchants as a main channel connecting them to their counterparts in Japan.

The Song court's smooth adjustment to this mode of exchange with Japan resulted undoubtedly from the diversification of its trading regime with the establishment of the Maritime Trade Superintendency system. The system offered alternative means for acquiring desirable commodities, and, even better, a stable revenue source. The maritime trade officials' decisions often embodied a principle: if the visitors were not proper tribute envoys, then they preferred to collect customs duties rather than accept the trade goods as putative tribute.

When the high authorities in both China and Japan recognized the effectiveness of the network, they accepted that sea merchants and Buddhist monks worked together to facilitate their communication and they embraced the network as a convenient channel for both commercial and religious exchange. All three Japanese pilgrim monks that this chapter covers made offerings on behalf of Japanese courtiers at sacred Buddhist sites on the Chinese continent, suggesting that in addition to acquiring desirable goods, accumulating religious merit

was also a genuine demand of the authorities. With support from the authorities, the cooperation between merchants and monks grew even closer and generated more concrete benefits to the participants in the network: while in the previous era Cai Fu and the Xu brothers needed to be tactful to take advantage of their acquaintance with monks, in this period, we see that Zeng Lingwen and Zhou Wenyi received special treatment directly from high-ranking Japanese courtiers.

Chinese sea merchants appeared to travel fairly often during this period, continuing the practice of their predecessors in the previous century. Jōjin's interpreter Chen Yong was recorded as having made five round trips between China and Japan by the time he met Jōjin, and his proficient Japanese also attests to the frequent journeys. Jakushō's messenger, Zhou Wenyi, also traveled two years in a row, in 1012 and 1013. The waiting-period stipulation implemented by the Japanese court indicated that the Chinese merchants arriving in Japan reached a relatively high level that could largely fulfill the demand of the court and therefore required some regulation. It is also worth mentioning that there were other merchants trading between China and Japan at that time who had no contact with Buddhist figures and were thus not yet part of the religio-commercial network. This is clear, for example, from the general stereotype of merchants – that they care only for profits – repeated by the Japanese court aristocrat who had requested books from Jakushō. It is difficult even to speculate about the numbers of merchants inside and outside the religio-commercial network, especially given that those outside the network were less likely to leave traces in records. It is clear, however, that the religio-commercial network provided sufficiently dependable and appealing concrete benefits to draw increasing numbers of maritime traders into its circles.

In the following century, the monk-merchant collaboration developed more intricate and deeper connections. A large number of Chinese sea merchants began to lay down roots in Japan and took up permanent residence in Kyushu. As we see in the next chapter, new forms of cooperation between the Chinese merchant community in Japan and the monks and religious establishments there began to fuel Sino-Japanese exchanges in the next era.

4 *Building a Base for Trade*

The "Chinese Quarter" in Hakata, 1100–1200

The Tianyi Pavilion 天一閣 Museum in Ningbo preserves three stone bricks with inscriptions dated the fourth month of 1167. Each brick records that a Chinese merchant residing in Japan donated ten strings of bronze coins to pave a pilgrim road to a Buddhist monastery in Ningbo.[1] One inscription clearly identifies that brick's donor as living in the "port of Hakata in Dazaifu" (Figure 2), while another lived in Dazaifu, and the third simply in "Japan."

These three short inscriptions indicate that in the twelfth century a major change occurred in the circumstance of Chinese merchants trading in Japan. For the Chinese merchants who we encountered in the previous chapter, taking up long-term residence in Japan was unrealistic, since they were under the strict control of Dazaifu and needed to observe the stipulation of a waiting period between successive trips to Japan. Starting in the twelfth century, however, the Dazaifu headquarters loosened its control of foreign visitors, and Chinese merchants could travel back and forth between the continent and archipelago much more frequently. They could also build a base – a "Chinese quarter" (*Tōbō* 唐房) – in Hakata, where the donors in the Tianyi pavilion inscription likely lived.[2]

The Chinese quarter in Hakata did not leave many traces in official records, but archaeological discoveries from the 1970s tell much about the Chinese merchant community there, including their business organizations, daily lives, and even religious beliefs. The Chinese community

[1] Gu Wenbi 顧文璧 and Lin Shimin 林士民, "Ningbo xiancun Riben guo taizai fu huaqiao shike zhi yanjiu" 寧波現存日本國太宰府華僑石刻之研究, *Wenwu* 文物 350 (1985). Also see Richard von Glahn, "The Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network and the Reorientation of East Asian Maritime Trade, 1150–1350," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 74.2 (2014): 272–74.

[2] "Tōbō" was burned down in the Mongol invasion in 1274, and the Chinese merchants blended into the local community after that. See Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 21, 33–34, 143.

Figure 2 Rubbing of stone brick inscription dated to 1167. Courtesy of the Wenwu Press.

in Hakata in the twelfth century differed from that of earlier itinerant merchants. They laid down roots in Hakata, built families – sometimes intermarried with the Japanese – adopted a Japanese lifestyle and Japanese religious practices, and most importantly, sought to establish deep and dependable relationships with the local authorities.

Meanwhile, members of this Chinese community maintained close relationships with their places of origin on the continent, which often were in the coastal region. The three donors in the brick inscriptions, for example, came from Fujian on the southeast coast of China. As the inscriptions show, they still participated in local affairs of the coastal region, especially in the ports they frequented, and made donations to public projects there. Their ties to Buddhism were evident, too: besides donating money to pave the pilgrim road to the monastery, they addressed themselves as "disciples" in the inscriptions, just as their predecessors Li Da and Zhan Jingquan had done in their letters to Enchin.[3]

[3] Gu and Lin, "Ningbo xiancun Riben guo taizai fu huaqiao shike zhi yanjiu," 27.

More interestingly, this Chinese merchant community in Hakata gained a conspicuous position in Buddhist records in this period, which symbolizes a new, further step in the cooperation between merchants and monks. The twelfth century was an important period in the transmission of Zen (Chan) Buddhism from China to the Japanese archipelago, and Buddhist theses and Japanese Zen monks' biographies in this period attributed notable roles to Chinese merchants in this process. Investigating the image of Chinese merchants in Buddhist records, this chapter shows a narrative pattern in the records, in which the Chinese merchants played an indispensable role in presenting Zen Buddhism to the Japanese monks. The deliberately constructed image of Chinese merchants in Buddhist narratives suggests that the collaboration between sea merchants and monks reached an unprecedented level: the monks viewed the merchants not merely as providers of transportation but also as partners in spreading new Buddhist teachings.

The Retreat of Dazaifu and Rise of the "Chinese Quarter"

From the late ninth to the late eleventh centuries, the Japanese government's strict control over foreign visitors prevented Chinese merchants from building a solid foundation in Japan. The requirements to reside in the guesthouse Kōrokan upon their arrival on the island of Kyushu in Japan, and the need to observe an interval of more than ten years between successive visits impacted many merchants we encountered in previous chapters. When the regulations were relaxed, however, the Chinese merchants grasped the opportunity and a "Chinese quarter" appeared in the port of Hakata.

The Kōrokan guesthouse probably ceased functioning after 1047. Two Japanese historical sources recorded that the guesthouse burned down in 1047, and archaeological discoveries at the original site of Kōrokan confirmed the fire.[4] Early in the 1920s, based on the scenery

[4] See Takeuchi, *Dazaifu·Dazaifu Tenmangū shiryō*, 5:139.
Most scholars have agreed that the "guesthouse for the Song merchants" 大宋商客宿房 in the records refers to Kōrokan. See Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 347; Andrew Cobbing, *Kyushu: Gateway to Japan: A Concise History* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009), 95. Only Zhao Yingbo thinks that this "guesthouse" referred to a hotel-like guesthouse instead of the official guesthouse Kōrokan. See Zhao Yingbo, *Tang–Song–Yuan Dongya guanxi yanjiu* 唐宋元東亞關係研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2016), 7.

and topographical features depicted in the poems of Kōrokan, the Japanese archaeologist Nakayama Heijirō 中山平次郎 (1871–1956) concluded that Kōrokan was located near Fukuoka castle. More than half a century later, in 1987, the construction of the Heiwa baseball stadium confirmed his theory: the site of Kōrokan has been excavated right next to the remains of Fukuoka castle, on a highland facing Hakata Bay, just as Enchin's acquaintance – the merchant Gao Feng – had reported in his poem in the ninth century (Map 2).[5] The archaeological site of Kōrokan produced a large number of discarded tiles dated to the first half of the eleventh century, together with a layer of burned earth and charcoal suggesting that this building complex was never rebuilt after the mid-eleventh-century fire.[6]

Following the destruction of the Kōrokan, the Dazaifu headquarters gradually loosened its control on the foreign merchants, too. From the 1070s, Japanese court documents started to show evidence of the inadequate supervision provided by Dazaifu. In 1085, the courtiers attending a cabinet meeting criticized Dazaifu for having been "especially lenient to foreign guests, making decisions on the basis of personal feelings, even if they have seen a State Council order of deportation."[7] The latest evidence documenting Dazaifu's control of foreign visitors comes from the early 1100s. A set of formal complaints submitted by a Chinese merchant to the Dazaifu officials has survived in the twelfth-century Japanese encyclopedia *Chōya gunsai* 朝野群載, which was assembled to provide representative cases to officials as guidance for their duties.[8] In one case, the merchant Li Chong from Quanzhou in Fujian arrived in Japan in 1105 to collect debts from his Japanese buyers who, he reported, never paid for the goods they received from him. Officials from Dazaifu made a list of enquiries to Li Chong, including his reasons for coming and the tonnage of his vessel; Li Chong was also required to show his official sailing certificates issued by the Chinese government and to provide a list of his crew

[5] Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 3; Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 345.
[6] Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 347; Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 32–33.
[7] Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 318.
[8] For a detailed study on this point, see Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 319–22.

members' names. The whole interrogation was transcribed, and the transcript was signed by the officials present and Li Chong.[9]

Another case just a few years later, however, indicates the changes happening in the administration of Dazaifu headquarters. In 1110, a Chinese merchant was robbed during his sojourn in Japan, and he reported this case to Dazaifu to seek justice, but at that time, the head of Dazaifu did not move to Kyushu to take up residence after being appointed. The processing of lawsuits at Dazaifu was thus much delayed, so eventually the Chinese merchant had to turn for help to a Japanese official with whom he was acquainted.[10] Evidence of Dazaifu managing foreign merchants also diminished in historical records after the early twelfth century. Bruce L. Batten points out that the eclipse of the key facility Kōrokan symbolizes "the shift from a period in which central authorities maintained relatively effective control over cross-border traffic (through Dazaifu), to one in which such traffic began to have a life of its own, largely (or at least, partially) free from central controls."[11]

At the same time that Dazaifu was relinquishing its preeminence as the foreign-trade superintendent, the "Chinese quarter" first appeared in historical records. The Chinese quarter probably started to take shape in the mid-eleventh century, when merchants from Song China began to settle on the seafront of Hakata Bay between the Naka and Ishido rivers, a short distance east of the Kōrokan guesthouse. This area became known as Hakata (Map 2).[12] By the early twelfth century, a sizable diaspora had formed, which historical records refer to as "Tōbō" 唐房 (literally meaning "residential quarter for the Tang people").

The first mention of the Chinese quarter appeared in 1116. The postscript of a Buddhist text preserved at the Saikyōji 西教寺 monastery, about 20 km away from Kyoto, includes the name of a vessel captain (*chuantou* 船頭), Gong Sanlang 龔三郎, who lived in

[9] Miyoshi Tameyasu三善為康, ed., *Chōya gunsai* 朝野群載, in *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系, Vol. 29. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), 450.

[10] Watanabe, *Heian jidai bōeki kanri seido shi no kenkyū*, 359.

[11] Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 314.

[12] Andrew Cobbing, "The Hakata Merchant World: Cultural Networks in a Centre of Maritime Trade," in *Hakata: The Cultural Worlds of Northern Kyushu*, ed. Andrew Cobbing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 64; Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 120, 122, 124.

"Tōbō in the port of Hakata in Chikuzen" 筑前国博多津唐房.[13] Gong Sanlang, according to the postscript, was affiliated with the Daisenji monastery 大山寺, and he hand-copied this Buddhist text based on a Chinese edition preserved there. Daisenji, also known as Uchisenji 有智山寺, was located in the area of Dazaifu and was a branch temple of the prestigious Enryakuji near Kyoto – where Ennin and Enchin had both earlier served as abbots.

It is not a coincidence that the first appearance of "Chinese quarter" in written texts was related to a local monastery in Kyushu. The two legal cases discussed earlier, besides indicating the declining oversight of the Dazaifu headquarters at the turn of the twelfth century, also reveal another layer of the relationship between the Chinese merchants and the Dazaifu headquarters: the Chinese merchants needed protection from Dazaifu. When they could not obtain timely assistance from the Dazaifu headquarters due to its withdrawal from supervising foreign trade, they sought local patrons. Thus, we can see two processes occurring at the same time: Chinese merchants taking permanent residence in Hakata, and Chinese merchants building affiliations with local monasteries in that region.

Many religious establishments in Hakata, like the Daisenji monastery, were branches of powerful monasteries or shrines in Kyoto. Those capital-based religious establishments were influential beyond the religious realm. In the view of modern scholars, prominent monasteries like Enryakuji shared power with the court nobles and warrior aristocrats. Those powerful religious establishments provided rituals and spiritual support for the state and therefore earned economic and judicial privileges.[14] As mentioned earlier, they were important economic entities that owned enormous amounts of land. Meanwhile, they were keen to gain a share in the thriving overseas trade, which brought in both revenue and goods that they needed for religious ceremonies and the monastic life. Chinese merchants, for their part, secured patrons who could provide them with protection and even connect them with elites in the capital; the capital-based religious establishments and their branches in Kyushu, meanwhile, obtained a stable supply of foreign goods and an information channel linking them to the continent.

[13] Enomoto Wataru 榎本涉, "'Eisai nittō engi' kara mita Hakata" 『栄西入唐縁起』からみた博多, in *Chūsei toshi kenkyū* 中世都市研究, Vol. 11 (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōrai sha, 2005), 91.

[14] Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 11, 14–19.

Residents in the "Chinese Quarter": Their Trade Organizations and Religious Belief

The Chinese quarter only left scarce and scattered traces in textual records, but archaeological discoveries reveal many details about the residents there. As noted in Chapter 1, tens of thousands of Chinese ceramic fragments were discovered during subway construction in Hakata in the 1970s, which provided crucial information on the location of the Chinese quarter and the trade organizations of the Chinese merchants living there. The ceramic fragments, which have been dated to the twelfth century, were concentrated in the area to the east of the Kushida shrine 櫛田神社, where the Chinese quarter might have been located (Map 3).[15] Based on current archaeological discoveries, scholars have estimated that the Chinese quarter probably took up an area of 200,000 square meters.[16]

Most of the ceramic fragments, as noted earlier, were probably discarded there due to damage during long-distance transportation. Many of the excavated ceramic fragments bear ink marks, which were usually one or two characters from Chinese or Japanese names, or a combination of the name and the character *gang* 綱, an abbreviation of the title *gangshou* 綱首 (*kōshū* in Japanese, also called 綱使 *gangshi*/*kōshi*; 綱司 *gangsi*/*kōshi*) (Figure 3).

The Chinese merchants who settled permanently in Japan were mostly *gangshou*, which literally means the "cargo chief" or superintendents of cargoes.[17] *Gangshou* traveled between China and Japan as frequently as the waiting-period stipulation allowed. The merchants Zhou Wenyi and Zhang Chengfu, described in the previous chapter, for example, were both *gangshou* who married Japanese women. Wenyi's son and Chengfu's son both inherited the profession and followed their fathers in trading between China and Japan. In 1027, when Chinese merchants still were not allowed to stay for long in

[15] Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 33–34. Also see Saeki Hōji, "Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan," trans. and adapt. by Peter Shapinsky, in *Tools of Culture: Japan's Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000s–1500s*, ed. Andrew Edmund Goble, Kenneth R. Robinson, and Haruko Wakabayashi (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2009), 176.

[16] Ōba Kōji 大庭康時, *Hakata no kōkogaku: Chūsei no bōeki toshi o horu* 博多の考古学：中世の貿易都市を掘る (Tokyo: Koshi shoin, 2019), 66.

[17] Von Glahn, "Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network," 273.

Figure 3 Ceramic fragments with ink marks. Courtesy of Fukuoka City Archaeological Center.

Japan, Zhou Wenyi's son Liangshi petitioned for permanent residence in Japan. His reason was that having to be constantly apart from his mother made him feel sorrowful.[18] Zhou Liangshi's petition was granted, but it shows that the control of foreign visitors – even of visitors who were half-Japanese – was still strict in the first half of the eleventh century.

According to an inscription collected in the local gazetteers of Taizhou, Zhou Liangshi actually had a wife back in Taizhou when he petitioned to stay in Japan. After Liangshi was granted permanent residence in Japan, he never returned to his hometown. In the Chinese local sources, he was recorded as having died on his way to Japan in

[18] Takeuchi, *Dazaifu·Dazaifu Tenmangū shiryō*, 5:47. For more information on Zhou Wenyi and Zhou Liangshi, see Yamazaki Satoshi 山崎覚士, "Kaishō to sono tsuma: Jūisseiki 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 1 (2011); Xue Bao 薛豹 and You Biao 游彪, "Fu Ri Songchao haishang chutan: Yi Ninghai Zhou shi wei zhongxin" 赴日宋朝海商初探：以寧海周氏為中心, *Zhejiang xuekan* 浙江學刊 4 (2012).

1026 – although in reality Liangshi actually started a new life in Japan.[19] That Liangshi was compelled to abandon his family in China in order to stay in Japan further confirms the strict control of cross-border traffic in the early eleventh century. Therefore, when that control was loosening, frequent travelers grasped the opportunity and built their homes in Japan, and meanwhile, unlike Liangshi, they were able to sustain their connections to their origins.

On the ceramic fragments from Hakata, the ink marks were always found at the bottom of ceramics, where they were written probably after the ceramic wares – mostly plates and bowls – were piled, packed, and ready for shipping. The marks indicated the cargo's ownership. Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Chinese overseas trade was most commonly organized as group ventures. As Richard von Glahn notes, "a number of investors contracted to outfit a trading vessel, with each investor in effect purchasing a certain proportion of cargo space."[20] The twelfth-century Chinese miscellaneous notes, *Pingzhou ketan*, recorded that during trade voyages, traders divided cargo space and even slept on their own goods, most of which were ceramic wares.[21] Each investor was responsible for their own cargo. Because the investors usually entrusted their cargo to *gangshou* who sold it abroad, the investors, themselves, did not have to embark on the journey. Those ink marks precisely reflected how trading expeditions between China and Japan were organized.

The investigation of the ink-marked ceramics provides clues to the size of the merchant community. The ink marks display wide variety: they include at least eighty different single characters (likely surnames), sixty-two different names (combinations of two or three characters), and thirty-five different combinations of a surname and the cargo chief title.[22] Among the extant discoveries, more than half of the ink marks only appear once, while some specific ink marks appear more than ten times. For example, the common surname Wang 王 shows up eighty

[19] Xue and You, "Fu Ri Songchao haishang chutan," 31.
[20] Von Glahn, "Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network," 273.
[21] See Zhu Yu 朱彧, *Pingzhou ketan* 萍洲可談, in *Quan Song biji*, Vol. 2.6 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2006), j.2:149. For more information, see 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).
[22] Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 99.

times, less common surnames such as Ding 丁, Lin 林, and Zhuang 莊 also appear sixty, thirty, and twenty-two times, respectively. The large variety of the ink marks indicates that the Chinese quarter had probably grown into a sizeable settlement in the twelfth century, with many of the residents being *gangshou*. A record mentions that in 1151, 500 mounted troops conducted a raid of the Song immigrant households in Hakata and the neighboring Hakozaki area. And 1,600 households were affected. Although the number may be somewhat exaggerated and includes the Hakozaki region, it is still safe to assume that the Chinese quarter was home to hundreds of Chinese merchant households.[23] Moreover, from the eleventh century to the twelfth century, the number of archaeological sites yielding imported ceramics revealed a fourfold increase – from around 600 sites to 2,600 sites, marking the start of the peak of imports of Chinese ceramics.[24] The drastic increase in importation from the continent also indicates the large size of the settlement of Chinese merchants.

The ink marks, meanwhile, suggest cooperation among Chinese and Japanese merchants. Even though the majority of the ink marks seem to refer to Chinese merchants, several Japanese names emerge, such as Imahisamaru 今久丸, Ichimaru 市丸, and Chiyoshimaru千義丸, and two ink marks were even in the Japanese *hiragana* syllabary rather than in Chinese characters.[25] The Japanese character *maru* 丸 was commonly used not only in the names of people but also in the names of boats. Those Japanese names probably indicate the buyers who ordered the designated cargo, or the boats that would transship the cargo to domestic markets in Japan.

The Chinese merchant community in Hakata, although it had grown to a considerable size, was not an insular group: members not only cooperated with the local merchants in Japan but, as mentioned earlier, they also adopted aspects of the Japanese lifestyle. In the area speculated to be the Chinese quarter's location, archaeologists discovered the remains of buildings dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; these are Japanese in style, but many are constructed with Chinese-

[23] Ōba, *Hakata no kōkogaku*, 40; Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 324.
[24] Batten, "Open and Shut Case?," 311; Saeki Kōji, "Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan," 173–75.
[25] Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 99.

style tiles.[26] The daily utensils recovered from the remains were likewise a mixture of Chinese and Japanese: lamps, cups, kettles, plates, and incense burners were from China, while pots were in the Japanese style.[27]

Archaeological evidence also suggests that from the second half of the twelfth century, the boundary between the Chinese quarter and its surrounding areas in Hakata began to dissolve as the Chinese merchants mingled with local Japanese. Japanese moved to live in the Chinese quarter, while Chinese merchants also resided in other parts of Hakata.[28] Intermarriage between Chinese merchants and local Japanese women, which existed before the establishment of the Chinese quarter, also became more prevalent. As the next chapter demonstrates, some Chinese merchant families even made strategic arrangements for their descendants' marriages – for generations they deliberately chose to maintain intermarriage relationships with established Japanese lineages in Kyushu to raise their social status and accumulate material fortune.

Buddhism was a strong presence in the life of the Chinese community in Hakata, as it was in the rest of Japan at the time. Gong Sanlang, the merchant who appeared in the earliest mention of the Chinese quarter, was not only affiliated with the Daisenji monastery – which might have been for immediate economic benefits – but also hand-copied sutras, which was a devotional act for lay Buddhists. Archaeological evidence also shows that the Chinese merchants in Japan adopted some unique Japanese Buddhist ritual practices. Perhaps most significantly, they built sutra mounds (*kyōzuka*経塚). Building a sutra mound, an important Buddhist practice in the Japanese archipelago between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, was a devotional act to prepare for the Final Dharma (*mappō*末法).

Buddhist devotees believed that the Dharma, the Buddha's teaching, would pass through successive stages of degeneration: the True

[26] Ōba Kōji 大庭康時, "Hakata kōshu no jidai: Kōko shiryō kara mita jūban bōeki to Hakata" 博多綱首の時代：考古資料から見た住蕃貿易と博多, *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 歴史学研究 756 (2001): 6–7.

[27] Ōba, "Hakata kōshu no jidai," 8.

[28] Ōba, "Hakata kōshu no jidai," 8. Ōba Kōji also specifically points out that the situation of the Chinese quarter is different from the guesthouse of Kōrokan or the Dejima of Nagasaki between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The Chinese quarter was not closed to the local Japanese.

Dharma 正法, the Semblance Dharma 像法, and the Final Dharma. During the True Dharma, the Buddha's teachings and practices are available and enlightenment is achievable, while during the Semblance Dharma the teachings and practices are maintained, but humanity's spiritual capacity has seriously diminished. When the Final Dharma comes, proper practices will disappear; only the teachings will remain, but they are doomed to vanish soon. The world will then slip into the Dark Age, when the capacity for enlightenment becomes extremely low, and the world will continue to decline for some 10,000 years.[29]

Most Japanese believed that the Final Dharma would come in 1052 and the world would descend into the Dark Age, when it would become extremely difficult to preserve Buddhist teachings and to attain enlightenment.[30] To counter this outcome, Japanese Buddhists, as individual or groups of devotees, buried sutras underground to preserve the teachings until the arrival of the next Buddha, Maitreya (彌勒, Ch. Mile, J. Miroku), in the distant future.[31] The sutras, which were buried together with donated objects, were always placed in sutra containers made of bronze or ceramic, many of which had ceramic outer cases to protect them. At some sites, they sealed the pits with stones and charcoal, which succeeded in keeping some paper texts intact for a thousand years.[32]

So far, archaeologists have found evidence of the practice of building sutra mounds for the Final Dharma only in Japan. Sutra mounds were erected in all parts of the country, with the exception of Hokkaido.[33] The situation on the Chinese continent was completely different: no

[29] See D. Max Moerman, "The Archeology of Anxiety: An Underground History of Heian Religion," in *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, ed. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 246.

[30] Kōen 皇円, *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1965), 292. Also see Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, "Countdown to 1051: Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Periodization of the Buddhist Eschaton in Heian and Liao," in *Texts and Transformations: Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Victor H. Mair*, ed. Haun Saussy (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2018).

[31] Moerman, "Archeology of Anxiety," 245.

[32] Seki Hideo 関秀夫, *Kyōzuka no shosō to sono tenkai* 経塚の諸相とその展開 (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1990), 154; Kyūshū kokuritsu hakubutsukan 九州国立博物館, ed., *Mirai e no okurimono: Chūgoku Taizan sekkyō to jōdokyō bijutsu* 未来への贈り物：中国泰山石経と浄土教美術 (Tokyo: Yomiuri shinbun seibu honsha, 2007), 126–39.

[33] See Moerman, "Archeology of Anxiety," 254. Also see Seki, *Kyōzuka no shosō to sono tenkai*, 122.

sutra mounds have yet been found in China, nor are any recorded in any extant texts.[34]

The Chinese residents in Japan, however, followed this Japanese practice. The Buddhist devotees believed that when the Maitreya Buddha appeared, he would be above the top of a mountain, so the majority of sutra mounds were located on mountains. But in the area surrounding the Chinese quarter in Hakata, which is a plain with no mountains, several sutra mounds have been excavated.[35] Chinese-made ceramic sutra containers, along with donated objects such as bronze mirrors, knives, and bronze coins – typical contents for sutra mounds – were found inside. It is worth mentioning that Chinese products were from time to time excavated from other sutra mounds – not only from the area of the Chinese quarter. Bronze mirrors made in Huzhou in the lower Yangzi delta and small ceramic cosmetic boxes repurposed as relic containers appeared in quite a few excavations. The widespread use of Chinese objects in sutra burial also suggests the increasing volume of Chinese products important to the Japanese practice of Buddhism.[36]

Discovered inscriptions further confirmed the participation of the Chinese merchants in this religious practice in Japan. For example, in an 1136 inscription carved on a bronze sutra container excavated from Fukuoka city, a man named Li Taizi 李太子 buried sutras for the rebirth of his mother, who was a Buddhist.[37] Judging from the name, Li Taizi was probably Chinese, or had a Chinese father and a Japanese mother, given that he was offering prayers for his deceased mother in Japan. Furthermore, another sutra container bearing an inscription of 1125 mentioned a "Song native Feng Rong" 宋人馮榮, a "Cargo Chief Zhuang" 莊綱, and a "Wang Qifang" 王七房.[38] It is worth noting that

[34] Although the Buddhist devotees in Kitan Liao believed in the same start point of the Final Dharma (1052) as the believers in Japan, their counterparts in the Song believed in a much earlier date, as the Buddhist persecution in the sixth century prompted Chinese Buddhists in the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–906) dynasties to believe that they were already living in the stage of the Final Dharma. See Moerman, "Archeology of Anxiety," 247.

[35] Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 234.

[36] Yiwen Li, "Chinese Objects Recovered from Sutra Mounds in Japan, 1000–1300," in *Visual and Material Cultures in Middle Period China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Susan Shih-shan Huang (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

[37] Seki Hideo 関秀夫, ed., *Kyōzuka ibun* 経塚遺文 (Tokyo: Tokyodō, 1985), 65.

[38] Ōba et al., *Chūsei toshi Hakata o horu*, 236.

the sutra mounds related with Chinese participants sometimes display hybrid characteristics: some sutra mounds were excavated from an area once used as a graveyard for the Song Chinese and contained prayers for the deceased, such as that of Li Taizi; such mounds seem to have combined Japanese sutra burial practices and Chinese funerary rituals.

The ink marks on the imported ceramics products and the inscriptions recovered from sutra mounds both point to the notable presence of Chinese merchants in Hakata in the twelfth century. Taking residence in Japan did not weaken their contact with China in the least. The large number of excavated ceramic fragments suggest that the merchants conducted frequent trade on a considerable scale.

In addition to ceramics, Chinese bronze coins also testified to the solid link between the continent and the archipelago and the large-scale trade in the twelfth century. Chinese bronze coins have been widely excavated in Japan and even from the sutra mounds, too. Chinese coins circulated in the Japanese archipelago not as commodities but as the main form of currency.[39] Both Chinese and Japanese records show that, from the twelfth century, a tremendous volume of Chinese bronze coins was transported to Japan. Between 1133 and 1163, the Song government issued bans at least six times to prohibit bronze coins from leaving the country, and according to the ban in 1163, the Chinese people who took more than five strings of bronze coins (one string usually has 1,000 coins) abroad would face the death penalty.[40] But even the bans did not prevent bronze coins from going to Japan in large quantities. One official reported that after merchant ships left for Japan from Taizhou (the coastal city near the famous pilgrimage site of Mount Tiantai), there were suddenly no bronze coins circulating in the Taizhou market because merchants from Japan had purchased them all.[41] More than 900 kilograms of bronze coins were excavated from the site of a Song-dynasty monastery in front of the port of Denghai 澄海 in Guangdong

[39] For studies on Chinese coins circulated in Japan, see Ethan Isaac Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State: Economic Growth in Early Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); Richard von Glahn, "Monies of Account and Monetary Transition in China, Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53 (2010).

[40] Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 41.

[41] Bao Hui 包恢, "Jin tongqian shen sheng zhuang" 禁銅錢申省狀, in *Bizhou gaolue* 敝帚稿略, in *Song ji zhenben congkan* 宋集珍本叢刊, Vol. 78 (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2004), 1:18.

Province. Scholars think that sea merchants had collected those coins and planned to smuggle them to Japan from there. But the merchants' plan somehow failed, and they had to leave – or more probably hide – the coins at the monastery.[42] On the archipelago, Japanese were very aware of the Chinese origin of the coins, since in contemporary documents of the time they referred to them as "coins of the Song court" (*Sōchō no zeni* 宋朝の銭) and "coins that have come from the land of the Tang" (*Tōdo yori wataru no zeni* 唐土より渡るの銭).[43]

The three stones bricks mentioned at the start of this chapter also indicate that the merchants maintained a close relationship with China even after they settled in Hakata. They cared enough to donate to a local project in the port of Ningbo. The stone inscriptions were written in the fourth lunar month, when merchant ships from Japan usually arrived in Ningbo, suggesting that the three merchants traveled to Ningbo where they made the donations.[44] The merchants' trade routines tied the two ports, Hakata and Ningbo, closely together, and the Chinese merchants' base in Japan further anchored the nonofficial network connecting the archipelago and the continent.

The Chinese merchants' devotion to Buddhism was evident in the stone brick inscriptions, in their sutra burial practice, and in the sutras that they hand-copied. In this period, they were no longer merely lay devotees or donors to the monasteries. As the following section shows, the merchants began to earn their position in Buddhist records and took on a new role in their cooperation with monks.

Chinese Merchants in the Transmission of Zen Buddhism to Japan

In the twelfth century, besides the rise of the Chinese quarter, Hakata witnessed another important development in Sino-Japanese exchange: the arrival of Zen Buddhism. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Chinese merchants residing in Hakata played a significant role in introducing and promoting Zen Buddhism in Japan. Buddhist treatises and monks' biographies explicated the merchants' names and their contributions. The merchants' trade routes had become the path over

[42] Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 45.
[43] Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State*, 25.
[44] Gu and Lin, "Ningbo xiancun Riben guo taizai fu huaqiao shike zhi yanjiu," 29–30.

which to spread Buddhist teachings, and the merchants also conveyed valuable information pertaining to Buddhism and served as crucial witnesses to Buddhist miracles.

Chan (Zen) Buddhism had become influential in China early in the Tang dynasty.[45] Buddhist communities in Japan had exposure to Zen Buddhism prior to the twelfth century but had not seemed to develop much interest in it. Ennin came across Chinese Chan monks several times during his trip in Tang China but never made much effort to learn about their doctrines. Instead, on one occasion, Ennin complained about the Chan monks as "extremely unruly men at heart."[46] The Chinese monk Yikong, introduced in Chapter 2, who came to teach in Japan at the Japanese emperor and empress dowager's invitation, was also a Chan monk. Yikong, however, was dismayed by Japanese monks' indifference to his teachings and probably left Japan in 856, which further indicates that the openness to Zen teachings in Japan then was low.[47]

In the twelfth century, discouraged by the prevailing mood that Buddhist teaching was in decline amid the presumed start of the Final Dharma, some Japanese monks set up trips to China in the hope of acquiring new texts and practices to revive Buddhism in Japan.[48] This development offered an opportunity for the reintroduction of Zen Buddhism to Japan, and the Zen Buddhist records compiled during this period attribute a conspicuous position to the Chinese merchant community in Hakata in this transmission process.

The eminent Japanese monk Myōan Eisai 明庵栄西 (also read as Myōan Yōsai, 1141–1215), who is revered as the founder of the Japanese Rinzai 臨済 Zen school, actually rewrote his encounter and pursuit of Zen Buddhism by weaving Chinese merchants in Hakata

[45] "Chan/Zen" 禪 means "meditation," and meditation, particularly in the cross-legged yogic position, is one of the most fundamental practices in Buddhism. The word is pronounced as "Chan" in Chinese and "Zen" in Japanese, so this book uses "Chan" for the sect in China and "Zen" for Japan.

For the early history of Chan, see Eric M. Greene, *Chan before Chan: Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021); for a systematic study of the transmission of Zen from China to Japan, see Steven Heine, *From Chinese Chan to Japanese Zen: A Remarkable Century of Transmission and Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[46] Ennin, *Ennin's Diary*, 210; Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 32.

[47] Saeki Arikiyo, *Enchin*, 257.

[48] Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 31.

into his narratives. Eisai journeyed to Song China twice: the first time in 1168, when he made a short pilgrimage to the Wannian 萬年 monastery on Mount Tiantai and the Ashoka monastery in Ningbo and returned to Japan in the same year. According to Martin Collcutt, although Eisai was aware of the dominance of Chan Buddhism in China from that trip, he did not actively pursue the study of Chan then, and after his return to Japan, Eisai continued to practice and teach esoteric Buddhism for the next twenty years.[49]

Eisai's encounter with the Chinese quarter was recorded in a contemporaneous source, *The Origin of Eisai's Trip to China* (*Eisai nittō engi* 栄西入唐縁起; hereafter *The Origin*). *The Origin* reports that Eisai visited the Chinese quarter in Hakata on the eighth day of the second month of 1168, with no mention of any specific merchants nor of Eisai's interest in Zen Buddhism.[50] The likely reason for the visit was to reserve a space on a ship bound for China. This is the same port from which Enchin had traveled to Tang China three centuries earlier. At that time, however, before Chinese merchants were allowed to settle in Hakata, there was no ship at port, and Enchin had to wait for one to come. In Eisai's time, thanks to the size of the Chinese community, it was apparently much easier for the pilgrim monks to arrange their trips. Eisai secured a berth to China quickly, and then he visited the local monasteries and shrines in Hakata and the surrounding area, seeking omens for his coming voyage. The outcomes were all favorable, according to *The Origin*, and therefore Eisai boarded a ship and landed safely in Ningbo on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month, only two and a half months after his arrival in Hakata. The permanent base of Chinese merchants in Japan clearly had increased the efficiency of the network that had existed since the ninth century.

It was only after his second trip to China that Eisai began to promote Zen Buddhism in Japan. With an original plan to make a pilgrimage through China to Buddhist sites in India, Eisai set out for China again in 1187. Having realized that the trip to India would not be possible, he stayed at the Wannian monastery and studied under a Chan master for more than three years. After his return to Japan in 1191, Eisai proceeded to introduce Zen teachings and practices in Kyushu and the

[49] Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 36.
[50] Enomoto, "'Eisai nittō engi' kara mita Hakata," 93.

capital of Kyoto, and the older Buddhist schools, such as the Enryakuji monastery, opposed him.

In response to the attack from other Buddhist schools, and to win support from secular authorities, Eisai compiled the *Thesis on Promulgation of Zen as a Defense of the State* (*Kōzen gokoku ron* 興禅護国論). In his thesis, Eisai argued that it was to the advantage of secular authorities to promote Zen Buddhism, which was the purest and most vital expression of Buddhism. Moreover, doing so would prompt Buddhist deities to protect the state in return.[51] Also, it seems that Eisai rewrote the account of his first visit to the Chinese quarter to demonstrate that his interest in Zen Buddhism originated even earlier. In the *Thesis on Promulgation of Zen as a Defense of the State*, in looking back on his experience thirty years earlier, Eisai emphasized Chinese merchants as a determinant factor leading him to pursue Zen teachings, and he omitted all the other events prior to his voyage to China that were recorded in *The Origin*.

Eisai specifically mentioned that in the second month of 1168, just as he arrived in Hakata for his first voyage to China, he met a translator, Li Dezhao 李德昭, who told him that Chan Buddhism was prevalent in Song China.[52] For most translators, such as the monk Jōjin's translator Chen Yong, trading was their major livelihood. Because their frequent trips between China and Japan allowed them to keep their knowledge of the continent up to date, they were an important source of information.

Eisai attributed one more role to Li Dezhao in his thesis. When describing how Indian monks appeared and behaved in China to attract more believers to Buddhism, Eisai quoted Li Dezhao as his first example. Eisai wrote that about sixty years earlier, Li Dezhao, then in his twenties, once saw an Indian monk in the Northern Song capital of Kaifeng. This Indian monk wore only a single layer of clothes but possessed the power to not be affected by the freezing winter cold.[53] Remarkably, here Eisai used the words of Li Dezhao – a Chinese sea merchant – to vouch for Buddhist miracles and the merits of being a Buddhist believer.

At the end of Eisai's thesis, a short account titled "Notes on the Future" (*Miraiki* 未来記) reinforced the role of Chinese merchants in

[51] Eisai 栄西, *Kōzen gokoku ron* 興禅護国論, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大蔵経, No. 2543; Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 37–38.
[52] Eisai, *Kōzen gokoku ron*, 10. [53] Eisai, *Kōzen gokoku ron*, 15.

transmitting Zen Buddhism to Japan. According to the story, a Chinese merchant, Zhang Guoan 張國安, came to tell Eisai about his meeting with an eminent Chinese Chan master, Fohai 佛海. Zhang Guoan had attended Fohai's lecture at the Lingyin monastery 靈隱寺 in Hangzhou in 1173, and Fohai told Zhang that even though Chan Buddhism had not yet been transmitted to Japan, he could foresee that it would spread to the east twenty years after his death. Fohai specified that a Japanese monk would come to China and bring Chan Buddhism back to Japan, and he further urged Zhang Guoan to repeat his prophecy after he returned home (*guixiang* 歸鄉). To substantiate the credibility of his prophesy, Fohai also foretold that he would pass away on the thirteenth day of the first month of the next year. When Zhang Guoan revisited that monastery in the fourth month of the next year, people there told him that Master Fohai had indeed passed away on the exact day he had predicted.[54]

This account bears the clear goal of promoting Eisai as the legitimate propagator of Zen Buddhism, as the time when Eisai started to diligently spread Zen Buddhism in Japan was in the early 1190s, just twenty years after Fohai's death. Some details in the story, however, contradict historical facts. To begin with, Master Fohai died in 1176 instead of 1174. Also, several years before then, between 1171 and 1172, a Japanese monk, Kakua 覚阿, was already studying under Master Fohai, so it is unlikely that in 1173 Fohai would think his teachings had not reached Japan.[55] Apparently, this story and many other details in Eisai's thesis, including the roles given to Chinese merchants, are highly constructed narratives, in which every word was deliberately chosen by the author.

Chinese merchants also appeared in other contemporary Buddhist records as key players who facilitated the transmission of Zen Buddhism. For example, the biography of Kakua mentions in particular that, when he was 29, a Chinese merchant who returned to Japan from Hangzhou informed him of the prosperity of Chan in the Song, and that became the very reason why Kakua crossed the sea to study with Fohai.[56]

[54] Eisai, *Kōzen gokoku ron*, 17.
[55] Shi Zhengshou 釋正受, *Jiatai pudeng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 539–40.
[56] Shi Zhengshou, *Jiatai pudeng lu*, 539.

A pattern manifests in those narratives. The Chinese merchants based in Hakata, who according to these writings paid frequent visits to monks in both China and Japan, became a crucial source of information for Japanese monks and inspired them to learn and spread Zen Buddhism in Japan. Chinese merchants' appearance in Buddhist records resulted partly from their actual practice: some of the merchants indeed frequented Buddhist monasteries and were among the faithful. Because of their mobility and material fortune, merchants were given a prominent role in early Indian Buddhist texts as well.[57] But at this specific moment, with Japanese monks seeking support from Japanese rulers for their new school, and Chinese merchants having taken up permanent residence in Hakata, the appearance in Buddhist records of Chinese merchants – in particular those from Hakata – indicates a more coordinated form of cooperation between monks and merchants. Japanese monks purposefully presented Chinese merchants as their collaborators, probably because they knew that doing so would increase their chance to win support from the secular authorities, given that Chinese merchants were an important source of information and goods, not only for the monks but also for the secular rulers, as demonstrated in the previous chapter.

Chinese merchants' active role in promoting Zen Buddhism in Kyushu can be seen in the establishment of Shōfukuji 聖福寺 monastery. Located in the area of the Chinese quarter, Shōfukuji has been recognized as the first Zen monastery in Japan. The records pertaining to the founding of Shōfukuji also indicate the intertwined and complex relationship among Chinese merchants, Japanese promoters of Zen, and the Japanese secular authorities. Eisai's biography briefly mentioned that he founded the Shōfukuji monastery in Hakata in 1195.[58] A sixteenth-century source claimed that in 1195, Eisai proposed the building of a Zen monastery on a piece of empty land where the Song merchants used to build their houses, and Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–99), the first shogun of the Kamakura bakufu, supported Eisai's proposal.[59]

[57] Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China*, 89–102; Ji, "Shangren yu fojiao," 113–202; Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 169–73.

[58] Kokan Shiren, *Genkō shakusho*, j.2:26.

[59] Kawazoe Shōji 川添昭二, "Kamakura shoki no taigai kankei to Hakata" 鎌倉初期の対外関係と博多, in *Sakoku Nihon to kokusai kōryū* 鎖国日本と国際交流, ed. Yanai Kenji 箭内健次 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1988), 12–13.

This claim, like the other Eisai narratives discussed earlier, was also subject to deliberate modification. In Kawazoe Shōji's analysis, because Hakata was beyond the effective control of the Kamakura bakufu at that time, and Eisai did not begin to receive substantial support from the military government until after Yoritomo's death in 1199, Yoritomo's involvement in building Shōfukuji is a later alteration. The real force that helped to erect the first Zen monastery in Japan, given the location of Shōfukuji and all the narratives surrounding Chinese merchants, was most likely the Chinese merchants in Hakata.[60] The following chapters show that Japanese authorities, including the Kamakura bakufu, were indeed becoming significant patrons of Zen Buddhism after well into the thirteenth century. And, as noted earlier, the tight connection to the continent – provided by the Chinese merchants in Hakata and the Japanese pilgrim monks – was among the key factors in Zen Buddhism taking a firm root and developing in Japan. Zen monasteries also became centers for the spread of continental culture, including the Zen monks' lifestyle and Song intellectuals' aesthetic taste. It is worth mentioning that by writing the treatise *Drinking Tea for Nourishing Life* (*Kissa yōjōki* 喫茶養生記) and emphasizing the miraculous medicinal properties of tea, Eisai also played a critical role in promoting tea drinking – an indispensable component of Zen monastic life – in Japan, and tea drinking and tea ceremonies grew increasingly popular, not only among Japanese Zen communities but also in the aristocrat circles.[61] Zen monasteries in Japan emerged as major consumers of continental goods, and delicate ceramic incense burners, flower vases, and tea bowls are among the monasteries' collections, a topic explored further in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

Prior to the twelfth century, as the first three chapters of this book have established, the main role of the merchants in the network was

[60] Kawazoe, "Kamakura shoki no taigai kankei to Hakata," 19.

[61] James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 145–56; Frédéric Girard, "Yōsai, premier théoricien du thé au Japon, et son Traité pour nourrir le principe vital par la consommation du thé," in *Manabe Shunshō hakushi koki kinen ronshū* 真鍋俊照博士古稀記念論集 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2011), 1–41.

transporting goods and Buddhist texts and objects. It was during the twelfth century, when Chinese merchants began taking up permanent residence in Japan, as this chapter has delineated, that a major shift occurred in this exchange network. The relationship between the merchants and monks evolved to a new level as they began to collaborate on a bigger mission – to establish a new Buddhist school in Japan and meanwhile to win over more secular patrons.

Some scholars wonder whether the Chinese quarter in Hakata was unique between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A Chinese quarter may also have existed in southern Kyushu, given that some Chinese ceramics were also excavated there.[62] However, as Yamauchi Shinji points out, for foreign merchants to take up long residence at a port, the hinterland of the port was of paramount importance. The port needed to be connected with established transportation systems to distribute goods and also with a substantial number of buyers, conditions that only Hakata fulfilled in the early twelfth century.[63] Furthermore, the number of excavated ceramics from Hakata, especially the number of large ceramic pots that were used as containers for other cargo, vastly surpasses what has been found in any other place in Japan. And textual records show no concrete evidence of Chinese quarters outside Hakata, either. Thus, based on the extant evidence, the Chinese quarter in Hakata was probably the only residence of Chinese merchants in Japan between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while other locations, such as southern Kyushu, were likely transshipment points for Chinese goods.[64]

The religious establishments in Hakata, although they have not been recognized as a factor that contributed to the settlement of Chinese merchants, played no small part in the growth of the Chinese quarter. As mentioned earlier, the Chinese merchants needed protection from local Japanese threats to their business, such as robbery or nonpaying debtors. With the withdrawal of Dazaifu, powerful local monasteries

[62] Hattori Hideo 服部英雄, "Tanga to Tōbō" 旦過と唐房, in *Chūsei toshi kenkyū* 中世都市研究, Vol. 10 (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 2004); Yanagihara Toshiaki 柳原敏昭, *Chūsei Nihon no shūen to Higashi Ajia* 中世日本の周縁と東アジア (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2011), 125–59.

[63] Yamauchi Shinji 山内晋次, "Nissō bōeki to Tōbō o meguru oboegaki" 日宋貿易とトウボウをめぐる覚書, in *Ninpō to Hakata* 寧波と博多, ed. Nakajima Gakushō 中島楽章 and Itō Kōji 伊藤幸司 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2013).

[64] Yamauchi, "Nissō bōeki to Tōbō o meguru kakusho," 21–24.

in Kyushu, such as the Daisenji monastery with which Gong Sanlang was affiliated, emerged as the merchants' ideal patrons. As branches of prominent monasteries in the capital of Kyoto, those religious establishments in or near Hakata possessed access to powerful people, and the connections endowed them with the authority and resources to oversee disputes on the local level. In addition, the religious network to which those monasteries belonged could help in distributing imported goods. The religious establishments in the Hakata area in fact expanded the "hinterland" of the Hakata port, since they conveniently connected the port with the consumers in other hubs of the religious network, especially those in the capital. As shown from the new narrative pattern emerging from the Buddhist records of this period, Buddhist communities also embraced the arrival and settlement of the Chinese merchants.

The fact that Chinese merchants became embedded in Japan and in the Japanese culture, reflected just how ingrained and indispensable the link between the continent and the archipelago had become, and more so, how optimistic merchants were that this relationship would continue for the foreseeable future. Those merchants not only set off to trade in China on a regular basis but also were involved in the local affairs of the Chinese port where they landed, as the three stone bricks mentioned at the start of this chapter indicate. During this period, the Chinese port that Hakata merchants most frequently visited was Ningbo, where the three stone bricks were excavated. Richard von Glahn points out that the merchants from the Chinese quarter in Hakata formed a "Ningbo–Hakata merchant network," which tied Ningbo and Hakata closely to each other, helping Ningbo to rival Quanzhou as the most important port on China's southeastern coast.[65] Furthermore, the network linking Ningbo and Hakata was not only commercial but also religious, and the Buddhist establishments in and around Ningbo, like those in the vicinity of Hakata, were also a crucial factor in Ningbo's rise to become one of the most important ports in Sino-Japanese trade.

Entering the thirteenth century, Chinese merchants based in Hakata became more deeply involved in promoting Zen Buddhism in Japan. The following chapter shows how they provided concrete support to

[65] Von Glahn, "Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network," 250–51.

Japanese Zen monks and raised money to found a Zen monastery near the Chinese quarter, which served as a crucial node in the religio-commercial network between China and Japan. The economic privileges shared by members of the Zen Buddhist network – joined by prestigious monasteries and secular authorities on both sides – became a pivotal factor in Sino-Japanese exchange.

5 *Transporting Goods and Faith*

The Economic Privileges of the Religious Network, 1200–1270

In 1245, Wuzhun Shifan 無準師範 (1179–1249), the abbot of the Jingshan monastery 徑山寺 in the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou 杭州, sent a letter to Enni Ben'en 円爾弁円 (1202–80), the abbot of the newly established Jōtenji monastery 承天寺 in Hakata, Japan. The Jingshan monastery was among the most prestigious Chan monasteries in China, while the Jōtenji monastery in Hakata was a Zen monastery built next to the Shōfukuji monastery near the Chinese quarter. In the letter, the Chinese abbot Shifan expressed his gratitude to the monks of Jōtenji for their assistance in reconstructing the Jingshan monastery after a ruinous fire in 1242:

We would like to thank you for your concern from far away. You believe that the reconstruction of monasteries is important, and you managed to obtain 1,000 wooden planks to help us. We are very much moved by your high sense of obligation. The enormous ships were unexpectedly blown off course by winds and waves on their way here. Part of the cargo has been lost. However, one ship fortunately landed at Huating 華亭 [modern Shanghai]. But since Huating is not an authorized port for foreign trade, the court forbids unloading [overseas] goods [arriving by ship] there since there is no way to tax the goods. [Because of this regulation,] it took us a year to realize our wish. By now we have already made a visit to Huating and picked up 530 wooden planks. Another 330 planks, which we have not yet obtained, are still in Qingyuan 慶元 [modern Ningbo].[1] The remaining 140 pieces are on other ships, and they have not arrived.[2]

[1] Ningbo was called Mingzhou 明州 (738–1195, 1367–81) and Qingyuan (1195–1367), and has been called Ningbo since 1381.

[2] This letter is included in Tayama Hōnan 田山方南, ed. *Zenrin bokuseki* 禅林墨蹟 (Ichikawa: Zenrin bokuseki kankōkai, 1955), 9–10. See below for my transcription of the letter. I thank Iwai Shigeki and Lu Xiqi for their suggestions on this transcription.

"又荷遠念山門興復重大，特化千板為助，良感道義。不謂巨舟之來為風濤所鼓，其同宗者多有所失。此舟幸得泊華亭，又以朝廷以為内地不許抽解，維持

Besides reporting on the status of all the planks, Shifan also mentioned in this letter that he would write another letter to "Cargo Chief" Xie (Xie *gangshi* 謝綱使, a successful and powerful Chinese merchant in Hakata) to express his gratitude.

This letter, which modern scholars have titled "A Record of the Voyage of the Wooden Planks" (*Itawatashi no bokuseki* 板渡の墨蹟), is preserved in the National Museum of Tokyo (Figure 4). At least five letters from this set of correspondence survive, and together they provide detailed and valuable information about many unrevealed aspects of the religio-commercial network linking China with Japan.

The detailed sources pertaining to the voyage of the wooden planks take off from where we left matters in the previous chapter. The transmission of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan continued into the thirteenth century, when more Zen monasteries were established in Hakata. The Chinese merchant community in Hakata participated even more diligently in promoting Zen Buddhism in Japan.

As the letter quoted earlier indicates, the ship transporting wooden planks to the Jingshan monastery met with an accident. Besides monks and merchants, other parties – such as the Maritime Trade Superintendency and the local government of Huating – also were involved in this incident. This unusually well-documented voyage allows us to closely examine the mechanisms underlying the religio-commercial network, which remains unclear in other brief and scattered sources.

This chapter clarifies precisely how the network was simultaneously religious and commercial, and how it worked efficiently to benefit the course of both trade and Buddhism. As shown in the following, the monks discussed both the spread of Buddhist teachings and the whereabouts of the commodities they ordered within the same letters, and religious prestige and the trust developed from the Buddhist mentor–pupil relationship helped resolve unexpected problems in long-distance trade. The religious prestige possessed by these monasteries brought them political patronage and accompanying economic privileges, which attracted merchants trying to establish connections with them. Sometimes it was unclear whether the objects that moved via this

一年，方得遂意 。今到華亭，已領五百三十片 。其三百三十片尚在慶元，未得入手 。餘乙百四十片，別舡未到 。"

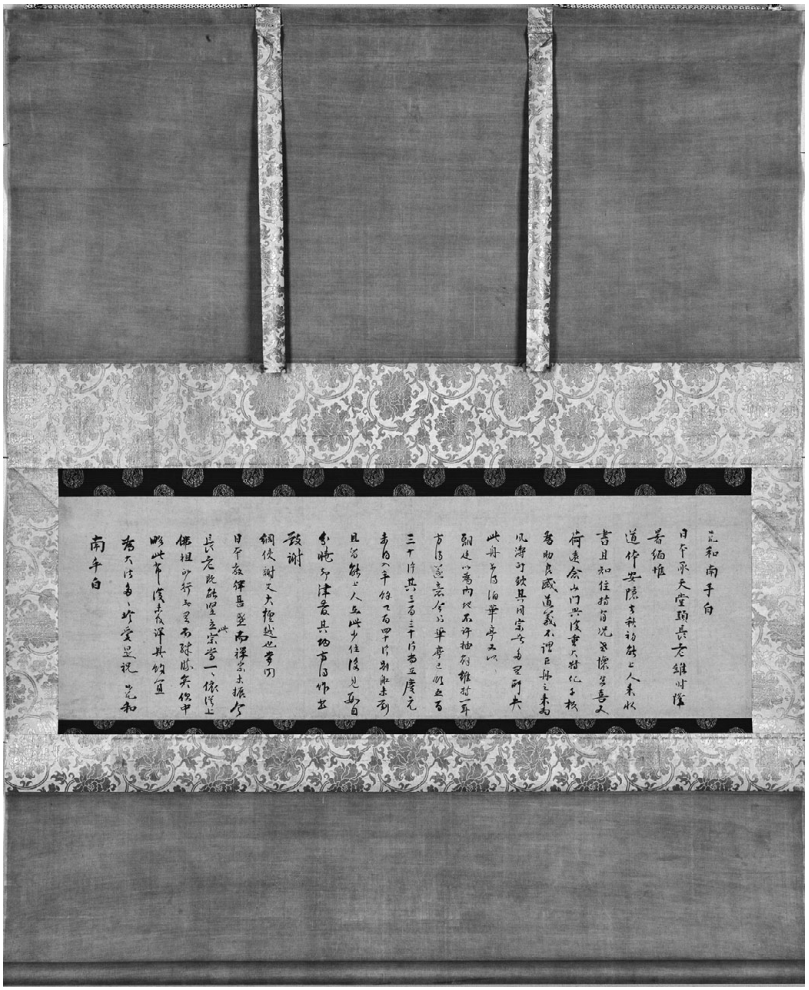


Figure 4 Wuzhun Shifan's Letter to Enni Ben'en, 1245. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 32.1×100.6 cm. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum. Collection no. TB-1174. Image accessed from Colbase (https://colbase.nich.go.jp/collection_items/tnm/TB-1174)

network were religious gifts or commercial goods. As with the wooden planks, they may look like a gift in a letter, but as this chapter explains, they were actually commodities, and as such they provide a good example with which to illustrate this complex but well-functioning trade network.

Lumber, Sino-Japanese Trade, and Song Society

The shipment of 1,000 wooden planks from Hakata in Japan to Hangzhou in China is probably the first aspect of the letter that draws our attention. It was doubtless an adventurous enterprise; the off-course ship detained in Huating and yet another ship missing altogether clearly demonstrate the high risks involved. The commodities discussed in the previous chapters – such as textiles, ceramics, mercury, aromatics, and Buddhist scriptures and ritual objects – were all relatively small and of high value. Lumber, a bulky cargo, thus departs from common assumptions about popular goods in Sino-Japanese trade. In fact, though, by the 1200s Japanese lumber was already imported into China in large volumes and played a significant role in Chinese society. Transporting lumber by water was the most convenient way, and it was common to make rafts of timber and use China's internal waterway system for circulation inside China.[3] For traversing the turbulent open sea, however, the wooden planks would have been placed inside the ship cabins, or at least tightly secured to the ship.[4] Therefore, in this case of "the voyage of the wooden planks," the capacity of each ship likely necessitated the apportionment of 1,000 wooden planks among three ships.

A scholar-official, Wu Qian 吳潛 (1195–1262), who served in Ningbo in 1258, said that among all the goods that China imported in large amounts from Japan, sulfur and lumber were the most useful to Song society.[5] This suggests the high demand and priority these items were given at the time. Ningbo local gazetteers written in the Song list various kinds of lumber under the heading of goods from Japan. In *Important Documents of the Song* (*Songhuiyao* 宋會要),

[3] Daniels and Menzies, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 640–43.

[4] William Wayne Farris proposes a possible way in which lumber could have been transported from Japan to China: "Probably carpenters made two traditional hollowed-out-log-and-strakes boats, inserted several large timbers (the cargo) between the crafts, and then connected all the pieces." Farris, "Shipbuilding and Nautical Technology in Japanese Maritime History," 271.

The red sandalwood recovered from a fourteenth-century shipwreck had been placed at the bottom of the hull. For details of the shipwreck, see Chapter 6.

[5] Mei Yingfa 梅應發 and Liu Xi 劉錫, *Kaiqing Siming xuzhi* 開慶四明續志, in *Songyuan siming liu zhi* 宋元四明六志, Vol. 4 (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2011), j.8:4.

besides various specific kinds of lumber, *woban* 倭板 (wooden planks from the *wo* Japanese) always appear on these lists.

Japanese lumber also entered the lives of ordinary Chinese people and, as indicated earlier, were an important source of construction material for Chinese monasteries. Lu You 陸遊 (1125–1210), the famous poet and scholar-official from Shaoxing 紹興 in the Yangzi delta, wrote down in his *Family Instructions* that "An extravagant burial does not provide any benefits to the dead or the living, which the ancient sages and the intelligent nowadays have already explained. My household is destitute, so I have never had the intention [of having a luxurious burial], and there is no need for me to explain it. I will choose a coffin on my ability to pay. In Ningbo and Hangzhou, when the Japanese *wo* ships arrive, one can buy a nice coffin with thirty strings of bronze coins. I always plan on doing it, but because I still need to buy clothing, I haven't yet had a chance to get one."[6] It seems that at least in Ningbo and Hangzhou, where the trade with Japan flourished and the Jingshan monastery was located, the availability of Japanese lumber lowered the cost of coffins. A Ningbo gazetteer compiled in the Southern Song recorded the existence of a lane called "coffin alley" (*guancai xiang* 棺材巷), which was probably a market also selling Japanese lumber as coffin material.[7]

Heavy taxes on the domestic transport of lumber and the cost of transportation itself significantly raised the price of the lumber produced in China, which made the imported Japanese lumber competitive in price. In 1173, the Southern Song literatus Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126–93) observed the heavy taxes on lumber during his journey from Hangzhou to Guilin 桂林:

> The hills of Xiuning 休寧 are well suited to the cryptomeria (a type of conifer in the cypress family), and as few of the local people cultivate fields, most of them make their living by growing cryptomeria trees. The cryptomeria also grows easily, and it is difficult, therefore, to exhaust the supplies of it. When it is brought out of the hills the price is extremely cheap. When it reaches the prefectural capital it has already been taxed without limit. By the time it arrives at Yanzhou 嚴州 (approximately 150 km east to Xiuning), the taxes on it could be as high as one hundred times [its original cost]. The officials in

[6] Lu You 陸遊, *Fangweng jiaxun* 放翁家訓, in *Quan Song biji* 全宋筆記, Vol. 5.2 (Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe, 2012), 151.

[7] Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* 宋代商業史研究 (Tokyo: Kazama shobō, 1968), 215.

Yanzhou say: "Our prefecture has no large source of earnings. Without the cryptomeria wood from She 歙 County there would be no prefecture." In view of this statement, will there ever come a time when the affliction of the merchants is eased? For, when a log comes from the hills, it is sometimes not worth a hundred cash; but when it reaches the [lower course of the] Jian 漸 River it is sold for two thousand cash. This is entirely the result of heavy taxes and expenses incurred by merchants because of the long time involved.[8]

Shiba Yoshinobu also mentions that the price of a log from Qinzhou 欽州 in Guangxi increased tenfold by the time it arrived in Guangzhou or Quanzhou for shipbuilding.[9]

In comparison, the import taxes on Japanese lumber during the Song dynasty were significantly lower, which gave the imported lumber an advantage in Chinese markets. The import taxes were collected by the Maritime Trade Superintendency. The ports with a *shibosi* office or branch had a Maritime Trade Pavilion (*shiboting* 市舶亭) or an Inviting-the-Faraway-Guests Pavilion (*laiyuanting* 來遠亭) near the coast. All the ships that came or returned from overseas were required to report at the pavilions so that officials could examine their cargo. After the inspection, the cargo would be stored in warehouses at the ports.[10]

After completing their inspection, officials first collected customs duties and then purchased commodities at the prices stipulated by the

[8] Fan Chengda范成大, *Canluan lu* 驂鸞錄, in *Fan Chengda biji liu zhong* 范成大筆記六種 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 45; translation with references to Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, *Commerce and Society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 96.

[9] Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, 213.

Ian M. Miller also discusses the taxes on wood shipment in his book *Fir and Empire: The Transformation of Forests in Early Modern China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020). Miller indicates that in the Southern Song dynasty, the state made efforts to regulate tariffs on domestic wood shipments and used occasional tax relief to encourage domestic wood imports to the new capital, but he also acknowledges that additional tariffs were sometimes collected by corrupt officials. See Miller, *Fir and Empire*, 101–5. Miller's study focuses on the ability of the state to acquire the timber, while the price paid by the ordinary people could be much higher. Moreover, using tax relief as an incentive to encourage domestic merchants to transport lumber to the capital precisely shows that taxation was at a considerable level.

[10] Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 27.

government.[11] If the merchants were caught secretly removing their cargo from the warehouses before paying taxes, no matter how small the amount, officials would confiscate all of their cargo.[12] The taxation rate and the portion purchased for the government varied a great deal over time and from commodity to commodity. In the early Song, government regulations stipulated that the merchants pay a customs duty of 20 percent of the value of the whole cargo. In addition, the *shibosi* officials selected the commodities of the best quality and purchased half of the whole cargo. In the mid-eleventh century, the customs duty was generally assessed at 10 percent of a cargo's value, while 30 percent of the whole cargo was subject to official purchase. By the end of the eleventh century, the cargo was divided into two categories: fine products (*xise* 細色) and coarse products (*cuse* 粗色). Fine products were precious and easily transported commodities, such as pearls – many of which were imported from Japan; coarse products were cheaper and bulkier, such as tortoise shell and sappanwood.[13] The specific categorization also changed over time, and in 1141, "wooden planks from *wo* Japanese," along with many other kinds of lumber, came under the category of coarse products.[14]

Taxation rates fluctuated even more dramatically after 1141. In the Southern Song, during the periods of heaviest taxation, Maritime Trade Superintendency officials collected as much as 70 percent of an entire cargo as customs duties. On the other hand, in some years the taxation fell to less than 5 percent.[15] The dramatic fluctuation reflected wrestling between the Song court and the merchants: the authorities aimed to tax more to increase the revenue, but overtaxation checked merchants' desire to transport commodities and increased smuggling. For example, in 1227, the Song court decided to lower customs duties for ships from Japan and Goryeo to only about 5 percent, because due to high taxes during the preceding several years, too few ships had arrived.[16]

[11] In overseas trade in the Song, the term for collecting customs duties was *choujie* 抽解, while *bomai* 博買 meant purchasing on behalf of the government.
[12] Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan*, 148.
[13] Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 140; Vivier, "Chinese Foreign Trade," 117–18.
[14] Xu Song 徐松, ed., *Songhuiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1976), zhiguan 職官, j.44:22.
[15] Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 140–41.
[16] Luo Jun 羅濬 and Fang Wanli 方萬里, *Baoqing Siming zhi* 寶慶四明志, in *Songyuan Siming liu zhi* 宋元四明六志, ed. Ningbo difangzhi bianzuan

The comparatively high cost of domestically transported local lumber products was not the only reason that Japanese lumber gained popularity in China. In the Southern Song dynasty, the move of the capital to Hangzhou and the accompanying large construction projects – including expanding and repairing monasteries – led to a serious shortage of lumber in that region.[17] Wei Xian 魏峴, a scholar-official from Ningbo, wrote a thesis on water conservancy in 1242 in which he pointed out that deforestation in the lower Yangzi delta was so severe that it was leading to an environmental crisis. According to Wei Xian, in earlier times, the mountains near Ningbo used to be covered by big, tall trees, and bamboo and bushes grew along the banks of streams. Thus, even when the waters ran fast, the sand and soil were locked up by the roots of the trees and little washed away. But by the thirteenth century, the price of lumber had skyrocketed, so people took to carrying axes into mountains. "There is no mountain that has not lost its forests, just as children have their hair shaved. And the bamboo and bushes on the flat ground are gone as well. When there is a flood, no trees are there to slow down the torrents and no roots to secure the sand and soil."[18] Given the shortage of lumber in the Yangzi delta and the well-established sea route connecting Hakata and Ningbo, transporting lumber from Japan to China became manageable and profitable.

Just as the Jingshan monastery was expecting 1,000 wooden planks from Japan, more than a few other Chinese monasteries – including the two most prestigious monasteries in Ningbo – the Tiantong monastery 天童寺 and the Ashoka monastery 阿育王寺 – also received lumber from Japan for their construction around the same time. Lou Yue 楼鑰 (1137–1213), a prominent scholar-official from Ningbo, wrote an essay

weiyuanhui 寧波地方志編纂委員會 (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2011), 2:j.6:3.

[17] Oka Motoshi 岡元司, *Sōdai enkai chiiki shakaishi kenkyū* 宋代沿海地域社会史研究 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2012), 453–60.

Science and Civilisation in China particularly mentions that because timber may have always been a scarce resource, domestic architecture in traditional China has somewhat refrained from using wood: once a wooden framework was erected, constructors would fill in with more readily available materials such as tamped earth. All restraints were set aside only for official structures such as palaces and temples, and therefore building a new capital involved huge quantities of timber and put a severe strain on the forests. Daniels and Menzies, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 658.

[18] Wei Xian 魏峴, *Siming tashan shuili beilan* 四明它山水利備覽, in *Congshu jicheng chuban* 叢書集成初編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), j.1.

on the building of the Pavilion of One Thousand Buddhas in the Tiantong monastery, which included information about the Japanese monk Eisai's shipment of lumber to the Tiantong monastery.[19] According to Lou Yue, in 1178 the Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (1127–94, r. 1162–89) bestowed his calligraphy on the Tiantong monastery, which attracted many literati to visit the monastery. In response to this special favor from the emperor, the abbot at Tiantong wanted to expand the monastery complex. Eisai, who was then studying at the Tiantong monastery during his second visit to China, told the abbot that he was close to the Japanese authorities, and he promised to send high-quality lumber to assist in the construction after he returned to Japan. Eisai did keep his word, and more than forty rooms were constructed with the lumber he sent back from Japan. The available information is not enough to determine whether the lumber given to Tiantong was part of a trade transaction or simply a gift, but it was evident Chinese monasteries valued the lumber they received from Japan and even invited Lou Yue to record it.

It is worth mentioning that building high-grade architecture required good-quality timber, and the fast-growing, domestic commercial wood was not ideal.[20] Japan at that time happened to be able to provide timber of high-quality. Suō 周防 Prefecture in western Japan was a repository of excellent timber. During reconstruction of the famous Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara in the late twelfth century, Chōgen 重源 (1121–1206), the monk who supervised the building project, specifically established a network of special sanctuaries (*bessho* 別所) in order to transport the timber from Suō to Nara.[21] The network also included important ports in western Japan, which conveniently facilitated transporting goods overseas.[22] Given that Chōgen and Eisai had a close relationship – they visited monasteries in Ningbo together in 1168 and

[19] Lou Yue 樓鑰, "Tiantong shan qianfoge ji" 天童山千佛閣記, in *Gongkui ji* 攻媿集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 57:501.

[20] Ian M. Miller's book also provides an example: in the fifteenth century, when the Ming dynasty was building a new capital in Beijing, the state hired loggers to go into the gorges of the upper Yangzi river, as the forests there had not been disturbed in the earlier period and were a repository of high-quality timber. Miller, *Fir and Empire*, 140–59.

[21] Janet R. Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 90–92; John M. Rosenfield, *Portraits of Chōgen: The Transformation of Buddhist Art in Early Medieval Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 35–38.

[22] Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds*, 95–96

Eisai later succeeded Chōgen as supervisor at Tōdaiji – the timber that Eisai sent to the Tiantong monastery was possibly from Suō, too.[23]

Returning to our main case study, the Jingshan monastery experienced many difficulties in pursuit of the lumber it needed for construction and repair. Decades before the incident mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in 1199, the Jingshan monastery was severely damaged by a fire. The Ningbo literatus Lou Yue recorded its reconstruction as well.[24] To gather enough resources to rebuild the monastery after the fire, the then-abbot Dahui 大慧, himself, led his pupils around to beg for donations. Even the imperial house bestowed money on them. Having heard of the incident and the imperial patronage, more and more patrons joined in, and the number of patrons reached the tens of thousands (although Lou Yue might have exaggerated the number here, as the literati usually did when they were applauding the extraordinary achievements of certain monasteries). Even with so much help, however, the funds were still inadequate, so abbot Dahui asked another pupil to go to raise money from a wider region, reaching as far as Fujian. Lou Yue summarized the whole process as "receiving imperial support from the top and collecting donations from the wide populace."[25] Actually obtaining the lumber was particularly difficult and required even more work. Lou Yue wrote, "[The Jingshan monastery] had skilled workers cutting trees in the mountains, and every day, more than 1,000 workers were doing this. The sound of axes [cutting trees] shook the mountain and the valley."[26] The many difficulties the Jingshan monastery encountered when it needed lumber for reconstruction in 1199 gives us a sense of how much the Buddhists there appreciated a timely shipment of lumber from Japan in the decades to follow.

Mentor and Pupil, Patron and Client

The network that managed, despite a host of obstacles, to transport lumber to help rebuild the Jingshan monastery after 1242, involved Buddhist mentor–pupil ties, patron–client relations, and trade

[23] Kokan Shiren, *Genkō shakusho*, j.2:23.
[24] Lou Yue, "Jingshan xingsheng wanshou chansi ji" 徑山興圣萬壽禪寺記, in *Gongkui ji*, 57:502–4.
[25] Lou, "Jingshan xingsheng wanshou chansi ji," in *Gongkui ji*, 57:503.
[26] Lou, "Jingshan xingsheng wanshou chansi ji," 57:503.

partnerships. The details in the surviving documents, as suggested in the introduction to this chapter, offer a rare picture of exactly how the ties took shape initially, how the network was maintained and extended, and most importantly, how it provided crucial assistance to the participants and gave them advantages in overseas trade.

Abbot Shifan's letter, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, indicates the three key players in the lumber transaction: Shifan himself, Enni, and "Cargo Chief" Xie. Among them, Enni was the one who connected Shifan and Xie. Before Enni became the abbot of Jōtenji monastery in Hakata, he had studied with Shifan at the Jingshan monastery from 1235 to 1241, and they had continued to correspond after Enni returned to Japan in 1241.[27] The relationship between Enni and Xie went back even further, and the main reason that Enni became the first abbot at Jōtenji was because of his close relationship with Xie, who was not only a sea merchant but also the founder and biggest patron of Jōtenji.

"Cargo Chief" Xie (Xie Guoming 謝國明), originally from Hangzhou (where the Jingshan monastery was located), probably took up permanent residence in Hakata long before the voyage of the wooden planks. Xie was married to a Japanese woman, owned a house near the Kushida shrine, and was a central and well-respected figured in the Chinese merchant community in Hakata.[28] Xie Guoming was an unusually well-documented figure: his friendship with and patronage of Enni earned him a prominent place in a biography of Enni, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu* 聖一国師年譜, written by Tetsugyū Enshin 鉄牛円心 (1254–1326). The surviving letters under discussion here add further information on Xie's interaction with Shifan, and two additional documents record a lawsuit in 1253 involving his widow's loss of control of an offshore island soon after his death.[29] The rich information on Xie Guoming allows a closer look at the Chinese merchant

[27] Tetsugyū Enshin 鉄牛円心, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu* 聖一国師年譜, in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書, Vol. 95 (Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 1915), 131–34.

[28] Xie Guoming 謝國明 was also known by his Japanese name "Sha Kokumei." Hirowatari Masatoshi 広渡正利, ed., *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi* 博多承天寺史補遺 (Tokyo: Bunken shuppan, 1990). Also see von Glahn, "Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network," 275; and Cobbing, "Hakata Merchant's World," 67.

[29] Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed., *Kamakura ibun* 鎌倉遺文 (Tokyo: Tokyodo, 1971), 10:323, 359.

group residing in Hakata, at exactly how they established and fortified their base in Hakata, and how they expanded their influence beyond.

Xie Guoming's status and influence in the merchant community helped establish his close relationship with Enni. In 1232, while Enni was waiting in Hakata for the opportunity to board a ship to China, a monk from the nearby Daisenji monastery – a branch of the prestigious Enryakuji monastery mentioned in the previous chapter – threatened to attack him. According to the biography of Enni, the conflict stemmed from the competition between the Tendai Buddhist sect, to which the Daisenji monastery belonged, and the growing Zen Buddhism that Enni practiced. The tension was long-standing; in the late twelfth century, as related in Chapter 4, Eisai had also encountered some resistance from the more established Buddhist schools when promoting Zen Buddhism in Kyushu and the capital, Kyoto. The stakes in this competition, however, were not limited to the competing understandings of Buddhist teachings; in Eisai's time, monks were also vying for the patronage of the authorities. And, as demonstrated further below, the profits from overseas trade were actually also at play. Enni safely weathered this incident only because Xie took him under protection in his own house near the Kushida shrine.[30] Before he finally left for China in 1235, Enni sojourned in Hakata for nearly three years, during which time he must have developed a close relationship with "Cargo Chief" Xie.

In 1241, after six years of study in China, Enni returned to Hakata as a monk with a solid knowledge of both Chinese and Japanese Buddhist teachings and with established connections with Chinese monks. A group of Chinese sea merchants welcomed him warmly at the port, inviting him to give lectures, and one sea merchant even painted a portrait of Enni to pay homage to the Buddhist master.[31] As described in Chapter 4, many Chinese merchants in Hakata felt strongly about Buddhism and they were actively involved in spreading Zen Buddhism in Japan from the very beginning. As in years past, sea merchants like Xie Guoming in Hakata showed genuine interest in Buddhism and were often, themselves, lay Buddhists. Enni's experience in China undoubtedly brought him even closer to this Chinese merchant community, as they undoubtedly saw him as an important tie

[30] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 131.
[31] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 134.

connecting Hakata and southeastern China, the two most significant nodes in their network.

The next year, when Xie Guoming established the Jōtenji monastery, he invited Enni to become the founding abbot. Upon accepting the position, Enni also endeavored to raise the reputation of Jōtenji by bringing in his mentor Shifan's support. In a letter written in 1242, Shifan said he was, at the request of Enni, sending his calligraphy works for plaques over the gates of various halls and buildings at Jōtenji. Shifan also wrote that he feared that the characters he wrote, which a workman would transfer to the plaques, would be too small for a monastery complex as big as Jōtenji, and that if that was the case, he would be happy to write a new set.[32]

Significantly, this was the very same letter in which Shifan mentioned the 1242 fire that had severely damaged the Jingshan monastery: "in the second month this year, our monastery [Jingshan] caught on fire again. Thanks to the gifts from his majesty and the court, along with donations from our other patrons, fortunately, everything is under control now. So there is no need to worry."[33] Enni, however, could read the implications between the lines and wanted to do something for his former mentor and the monastery, particularly in light of Shifan's generous gift of his calligraphy for Jōtenji. As described in the previous section, purchasing imported lumber from Japan was cheaper than buying domestic lumber in China, and obtaining a large amount of lumber in a short time for reconstruction could be a daunting mission. Therefore, Enni's help in sending wooden planks from Japan, whether a donation or not, was a great favor to Shifan.

Here we see how the fundamental relationships of the network active in the voyage of the wooden planks took shape. The years-long mentor–pupil relationship between Shifan and Enni and the patron–client relationship between Xie Guoming and Enni were both very solid. Furthermore, since all three men were figures with power and authority in their own circles, they could easily draw on their own religious and commercial connections, which thus bound China and Japan, monks and merchants. Considering that monks traveled frequently between China and Japan during this period with merchants'

[32] Tayama, *Zenrin bokuseki*, 11. Also see Hirowatari Masatoshi 広渡正利, ed., *Hakata Jōtenji shi* 博多承天寺史 (Tokyo: Bunken shuppan, 1977), 56.
[33] Tayama, *Zenrin bokuseki*, 11.

help, similar mentor–pupil and patron–client relationships must have existed among other monks and merchants as well. These connections formed the core of the maritime networks between China and Japan.

The Voyage of the Wooden Planks as a Trade Mission

While Shifan, Enni, and Xie were the central actors facilitating the shipment of lumber to the Jingshan monastery, the difficulties they encountered drew more parties into the transaction, illustrating the manifold network that the three had built. The accidents during the voyage significantly increased the complexity of the whole transaction, and therefore scholars have given different interpretations of the process. The following discussion aims to clarify several key points that have hitherto been misread.

In 1243, Enni wrote to his mentor Shifan that after thinking it through, he worried that the Jingshan monastery might still face difficulties financing the reconstruction on its own, so he had contacted his wealthy patron, "Cargo Chief" Xie, who then collected 100 large wooden planks to ship to the Jingshan monastery. Enni and Xie hoped that the lumber could be used to reconstruct the Buddha Hall and labeled the planks as "objects of moral merit" (*dōtoku ributsu* 道徳利物). They started preparing for the shipment in the eighth month of 1242, and by 1243, everything was ready.[34] Enni's letter reveals another interesting point: despite Shifan's assurance that "everything is under control," Enni somehow knew – perhaps via the messenger – that the Buddhist Hall had not yet been repaired. This information was confirmed in a later letter, and it further demonstrates the vital necessity of the lumber from Japan.

Although Enni reported that Xie collected 100 wooden planks, Shifan's letter in 1245 mentioned that they were expecting 1,000 planks. How can we explain this difference? Enomoto Wataru believes that 100 planks is a modest way of referring to 1,000 planks.[35] I think, however, there is another way to understand the difference: since Enni

[34] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi*, 58.

[35] Enomoto Wataru 榎本渉, "Itawatashi no bokuseki to Nissō bōeki" 板渡の墨蹟と日宋貿易, in *Mono kara mita kaiiki Ajiashi: Mongoru–Sō Gen jidai no Ajia to Nihon 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 shuppankai, 2008), 51.

specified the use of 100 large planks and called them "objects of moral merit" in his letter, the other 900 planks may have been designated in some other way. Or alternatively, only the original 100 planks were donations for "moral merit," while the rest were commodities ordered by Jingshan. Besides, since the letter quoted at the beginning of the chapter shows that Shifan was aware that Enni and Xie had shipped 1,000 planks, instead of the original 100, Enni must have informed Shifan of the total number of 1,000 in another letter, now lost.

We need to bear in mind that the whole set of correspondence has not been preserved. For example, from the extant letters, we cannot tell when and how the Jingshan monastery learned that the Jōtenji monastery had sent 1,000 wooden planks, or ascertain the amount of the agreed payment. Shifan's 1245 letter stated that "in the early autumn last year, the Buddhist monk Neng came to collect my letter to you (Enni)."[36] But we do not have a letter by Shifan dated 1244. It is likely that between the 1242 and 1245 letters, Shifan sent other letters to Enni that did not survive. It was not rare to see letters lost during transmission: Shifan mentioned in his 1242 letter that he had only learned from Enni's reply that his previous letter had not arrived. These details surrounding the voyage of the wooden planks are important, not only because they show the mechanism underlying this trade expedition, which has not been recorded anywhere else, but also because they represent aspects of the prevailing trade pattern that existed between other monasteries and merchants at the time.

As noted in Chapter 1, most of the surviving letters were preserved in Japan as calligraphic exemplars written by prominent Buddhist masters, which were highly treasured as precious decorations in the performance of the tea ceremony. Among the calligraphic works that Shifan wrote for the plaques in Jōtenji, for example, one entitled "Chaoyin Tang" 潮音堂 (Hall of Tide Sound) was once owned by the famous tea master Kobori Enshū 小堀遠州 (1579–1647). He displayed it at a tea ceremony with pride and proclaimed that even one of its characters was worth 1,000 *ryō* of gold.[37] Other letters sent from Japan to China, however, have mostly been lost.

[36] Tayama, *Zenrin bokuseki*, 9

[37] Chen Xiaofa 陳小法 and Jiang Jing 江靜, *Jingshan wenhua yu Zhong-Ri jiaoliu* 徑山文化與中日交流 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2009), 331.

Ryō 兩 was a gold currency unit in pre-Meiji Japan, and one *ryō* equals about 16.5 grams.

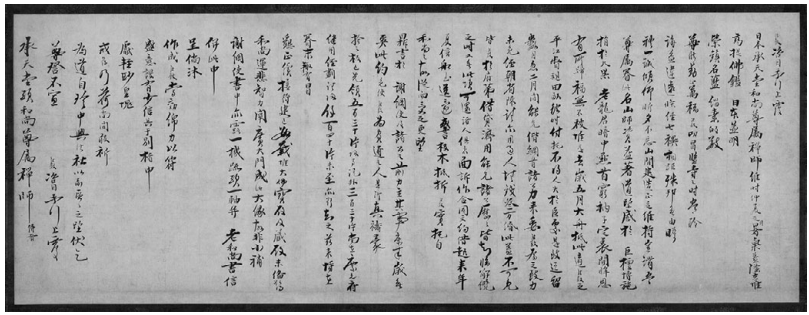


Figure 5 Defu's Letter to Enni Ben'en, 1245. Hanging scroll, ink on paper, 33.4×94.8 cm. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum; collection no. TB-1638. Image accessed from Colbase (https://colbase.nich.go.jp/collection_items/tnm/TB-1638)

The language in the letters is also noteworthy. In Shifan's letter at the beginning of this chapter, he used the word "help" (*zhu* 助) to refer to the Jōtenji monastery's shipment of 1,000 planks. And the phrase "objects of moral merit" in Enni's letter also appears to indicate that no financial transaction was involved. These words portray the voyage of the wooden planks as a gesture of generosity and simple gift-giving, but they are actually good examples of how Buddhist language obscured the commercial nature of the transaction.

A letter from Defu 德敷, the fiscal manager (*jiansi* 監寺) of the Jingshan monastery, a position second only to the abbot, reveals many intriguing and practical matters underlying the voyage of the wooden planks (Figure 5).[38] Without this letter, modern historians probably would have interpreted the lumber transaction between the Jingshan monastery and the Jōtenji monastery as simple gift-giving. Defu wrote this letter to Enni in 1245, around the same time that Shifan wrote the letter quoted at the start of the chapter. Defu mentions that his letter is accompanied by Shifan's letter, so the two must have arrived together.

After a brief and stylized opening to thank the Jōtenji monastery for its assistance, Defu wrote,

[38] Defu's Letter to Enni, 1245. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum, collection no. TB-1638. The letter is also collected in Hirowatari, *Jōtenji shi hoi*, 47–50.

In the fifth month of last year (1244), the big ship arrived [at Huating], when I happened to go to Pingjiang [modern Suzhou] to supervise the work in the fields there. At that time, the ship's crew did not assign the right people [to take care of the ship's cargo], and the cargo had not been handled properly, so [the ship as well as the crew] had to stay at Huating for months.

In the second month this year, suddenly the Buddhist monk Neng came with the sea merchants and asked me to solve this problem. Petitioning the officials was inevitable. I spent 30,000 strings of money in exchange for favors (*renqingqian* 人情錢). Since I borrowed all the money from local notable houses to [help us] get through the difficulties, under no condition can I forgive the debt for you. Brother Neng and his fellows know every detail of the entire matter.

However, when the ship was about to lift anchor, the merchants could not repay [the 30,000 strings to me]. So they all came to speak with me in person, and we drew up contracts, having reached the agreement that they would pay me back when their ship returns next summer. Someone suggested converting the wooden planks to money and using them as [temporary] payments [from the merchants to me]. Since I was delegated by you to handle this matter, I followed this suggestion. Furthermore, I hope that you could [mention] the agreement in front of Cargo Chief Xie and other fellows, to support finalizing this matter properly, [urging the fellow merchants] not to break the agreement next year, so that I will not become someone who broke his word. This is what I genuinely pray for.

Of the wooden planks that you sent us, we have already obtained 530 of them, which have already been transported to our monastery. The other 330 planks are still in Qingyuan, and we will continue to take measures to get them back. The remaining 140 planks have not arrived yet, and we also wonder where they are.[39]

[39] Hirowatari, *Jōtenji shi hoi*, 47–50. My punctuation and identification of characters are sometimes different from Hirowatari's. See below for my transcription of the letter. I thank Iwai Shigeki and Lu Xiqi for their suggestions on this transcription.

"惟是去歲五月，大舟抵此。適德敷之平江，督視田畝。彼時付托不得人，失於區處。是致逗留數月，忽二月間，能兄偕綱首諸公力來，委德敷為之致力。未免經朝省陳請，尔用通人情錢三萬緡，此蓋不可免。皆德敷於府第借貸濟用。能兄諸公歷歷皆知。臨解纜之時，又無此項可還。諸人具來面訴，作合同、文約、借起，來年夏信舡至送還。或言板木抵折[折?]。德敷實托自和尚之故，從而受之。更望誓言於謝綱使及諸公之前，力主其事，庶來歲無爽此約，免使德敷為負逋之人。是所真禱。蒙捨之板，已先領五百三十片，歸寺訖。外三百三十片，尚在慶元府，繼用經劃請歸。餘百四十片未至，亦欲知之。"

Defu's letter confirms Shifan's letter in many respects. The situation of the 1,000 wooden planks is exactly the same in the two letters. Both letters say that it has been a year since the planks arrived. The two letters provide more key pieces of the puzzle about what actually happened. Shifan's letter explains why the Jingshan monastery had to go through so much trouble to obtain those 530 planks – they had accidently arrived at the nonlicensed port of Huating, where cargo from overseas could not be unloaded and taxed – while Defu explained how he managed to solve the problem and the price he paid to do so.

Huating, the port where the ship carrying 530 wooden planks landed, had a branch of the Maritime Trade Superintendency from 1113 to 1166, when overseas ships could land and pay customs duties there.[40] The lower Yangzi delta was home to several branches of the Maritime Trade Superintendency, including those at Qinglong Town 青龍鎮, Wenzhou 溫州, Jiangyin 江陰, and Ganpu 澉浦, as well as Huating. But after 1200, Ningbo became the only port that could inspect and tax foreign goods in the lower Yangzi delta. For this reason, a ship with overseas cargo that landed at Huating would encounter difficulties.[41]

Ships often drifted off course and landed at unlicensed ports, so there were regulations on how to deal with such circumstances. In 1074, the regulations stated that when a ship drifted off course, the local officials were required to inspect the cargo. If the cargo did not consist of monopoly goods, they were to tax the cargo and return it to the owners; while if there were monopoly goods, the officials should send them to the nearest Maritime Trade Superintendency office, where the officials would collect customs duties and the government's designated share.[42] Although lumber was not among the monopoly commodities,

[40] A branch of *shibosi* was usually called *shibowu* 市舶務. For the years of establishment and cancellation of the branches, see Vivier, "Chinese Foreign Trade," 116.

[41] For more details, see Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 21.

[42] Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao*, zhiguan, j.44:5. The Song court designated certain imported products as monopoly goods; officials bought all of them at a fixed price after the merchants paid the customs duties. This list, as with the categorization of fine products and coarse products, changed from time to time, based on the court's demand. In the early Song, aromatic plants, medicines, ivory, rhinoceros horn, and frankincense were all on the list; most were imported from Southeast Asia, but commodities such as aromatic plants and medicines also made up a significant part of exports to Japan. By 1133, however, only frankincense and cowhide that could be used in making weapons and armor

it was possible that other cargo on the ship fell under that category. But, either way, the ship was supposed to be taxed and returned, or to be moved to Ningbo, instead of being detained in Huating for nearly a year. Thus, it is more likely that instead of simply following the regulations, the officials were manipulating the rules for their own benefit.

The 30,000 strings of money – which Defu borrowed on behalf of the sea merchants, who could not pay it back before they left China – is the key point in understanding the whole transaction, especially the relationship between Jōtenji and Jingshan and the nature of the voyage. Scholars have different opinions about what the money was for. Nishio Kenryū suggests that the 30,000 strings were the customs duties that officials collected from the overseas cargo and that all the wooden planks were simply gifts from Jōtenji to Jingshan.[43] Enomoto Wataru rules out this possibility by pointing out that the Song government only collected customs duties in the form of commodities, and since technically coins were banned from leaving Song territory at that time – although a large amount of them were smuggled abroad – Song officials would not have asked for bronze coins from overseas merchants as customs duties. Enomoto's own theory is that the 30,000 strings were essentially a payment for the wooden planks.[44]

However, I believe that how Defu, himself, described this payment of 30,000 strings is crucial to understanding its nature: in his letter, Defu calls this payment *renqingqian*, the literal meaning of which – "money in exchange for favors" – suggests that it was a noninstitutional payment, most likely a bribe, to officials to retrieve the cargo that had accidently landed at a nonlicensed port.

It was common for maritime trade officials to skim off proceeds from trade for their own benefit or for merchants to bribe officials for their own convenience.[45] In 1146, because an official in Guangzhou

were still under the state monopoly, suggesting that supplies of the other overseas commodities were abundant, so the Song court did not need to use a monopoly to meet its demand. See Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao*, zhiguan, j.44:2, 16. Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 137–38.

[43] See Nishio Kenryū 西尾賢隆, "Tokufu no bokuseki" 徳敷の墨蹟, *Nihon rekishi* 日本歴史 659 (2003): 84–92.

[44] See Enomoto, "Itawatashi no bokuseki," 62–63, 65–66.

[45] Hugh R. Clark records a Quanzhou trade superintendent in the first decade of the twelfth century who encountered endemic corruption among his staff and conducted a thorough housecleaning. And according to the funerary inscription

collected excessive fees from merchants from Srivijaya (modern Sumatra), the king of Srivijaya wrote to complain that his merchants lost much money in trading frankincense.[46] In 1164, one Chinese official wrote that, "recently, the officials [at the Maritime Trade Superintendency offices] collected various types of taxes on foreign goods on top of the regular customs duties. They forced the merchants to pay the taxes. To pay the taxes [on time], the merchants had to sell their goods at a lower price when the sales were delayed. In the end, the merchants made almost no profit. I am afraid that many merchants will not come back because of this."[47]

Meanwhile, foreign merchants were aware that bribing officials could be very helpful. An official in charge of the Maritime Trade Superintendency in Guangzhou reported that merchants from Srivijaya offered 270 *liang* (1 *liang* = 40 g) of borneol camphor and 13 bolts of cloth as a "gift," but he did not dare to take these for himself, so he asked to treat them as official trade commodities.[48]

Given that noninstitutional payments between officials in charge of maritime trade and sea merchants were not unusual, and that the "money in exchange for favors," as Defu described it, was the key to retrieving the detained wooden planks, the 30,000 strings of money in this case were very likely a form of bribe to the officials to help the merchants get their ship back and the Jingshan monastery to receive the 530 planks on that ship. Although 30,000 strings of money seems to be a very large payment,[49] we should note that it is unlikely to have been in bronze coins, as scholars have believed so far. If paid in bronze coins, the 30,000 strings of *renqingqian*, would have amounted to thirty million coins and weighed about ten tons. We know, furthermore, that in the 1240s, especially in the commercial and urban regions of southeastern China, paper money *huizi* 會子 and silver

of the trade superintendent, the trade revenue doubled. See Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 133. Angela Schottenhammer also discusses the misconduct of maritime trade officials in the Tang dynasty. See Angela Schottenhammer, "China's Gate to the Indian Ocean: Iranian and Arab Long-Distance Traders," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 76 (2016): 158–62.

[46] Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao,* zhiguan, j.44:24.

[47] Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao*, zhiguan, j.44:27.

[48] Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao*, zhiguan, j.44:6.

[49] Enomoto Wataru refuted the possibility of this money as a bribe because of this extraordinarily large payment. See Enomoto, "Itawatashi no bokuseki," 61–62.

dominated public finance and large-scale private trade.[50] So the payment was very likely made in *huizi* paper currency, which was denominated in coin units. In the early thirteenth century, the Song state issued *huizi* in enormous quantities, leading to a severe depreciation in this paper currency's value. In the 1240s, the market value of *huizi* notes was only 25 percent of their nominal value.[51] In this case, the 30,000 strings would actually have been worth 7,500 strings of bronze coins. Furthermore, if the favor payment was necessary for retrieving not just the lumber but the whole ship and its cargo, the sea merchants would probably have rather paid the bribe than lose a whole ship full of cargo worth more than ten times that.[52]

Defu's letter also provides another important clue to the nature of the voyage of the wooden planks. When the sea merchants could not, before returning to Japan, repay the 30,000 strings that Defu had borrowed on their behalf, someone suggested "*banmu dizhe*" 板木抵折, or exchanging the equivalent value of wooden planks for cash for a temporary payment. This suggestion indicates that at that point, the Jingshan monastery owed the sea merchants money for the wooden planks, which had already been transported to Jingshan, so that the sea merchants had the option of using the wooden planks to offset part of their debt to Defu, although the wooden planks probably would not have been worth 30,000 strings. Thus, despite all the phrases implying that the wooden planks were gifts or donations between monasteries – such as "you managed to obtain 1,000 wooden planks to help us" (*te hua qianban wei zhu* 特化千板為助) and "the planks granted by you" (*meng she zhi ban* 蒙捨之板) in Shifan's and Defu's letters – the wooden planks were not gifts at all. They were commodities, just like the various types of wooden planks listed as common imported products in Ningbo gazetteers.[53] The voyage of the wooden planks was essentially a

[50] Von Glahn, "Monies of Account and Monetary Transition in China," 466.
[51] Von Glahn, "Monies of Account and Monetary Transition in China," 466; von Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 264.
[52] During the Song, the value of the cargo in one voyage could be as high as hundreds of thousands of strings. For example, in 1131, the maritime trade superintendency in Guangzhou needed 50,000 strings to pay for the ivory that an Arab merchant had brought, which was only a part of the cargo that he carried. Another Arab merchant carried frankincense worth 300,000 strings to Quanzhou. See Huang Chunyan, *Songdai haiwai maoyi*, 55, 57–58; and Xu, *Songhuiyao jigao*, zhiguan, j.44:13–14.
[53] Luo and Fang, *Baoqing Siming zhi*, j.6:7–8.

trade mission, a voyage that the sea merchants with connections to Jōtenji undertook for profit. The connections between Jingshan and Jōtenji were not purely for Buddhist teachings but could serve business purposes, too.

The obscure and misleading wording in the monks' letters, as suggested in Chapter 1, probably arose from the Buddhist ideal of austerity and renunciation of wealth and the material world. The Buddhist scriptures frequently pronounce that unlike merchants and warriors who seek material wealth, monks seek after truth and want only to achieve nirvana.[54] Buddhist scriptures consider trading to be misconduct, and trading for profit a more serious wrongdoing.[55] It is not surprising, therefore, that eminent monks preferred to euphemize any commerce in which they engaged. In reality, starting from the early years of Buddhism, as demonstrated in the previous chapters both monasteries and individual monks amassed treasures and gained further profit from them.[56]

The series of accidents connected to the voyage of the wooden planks – the devastating monastery fire necessitating the lumber, the ship straying to the wrong port, the perplexing use of the 30,000 strings of *renqingqian*, even the chance survival of some letters but not others – reveal a dynamic and vivid East Asian maritime world. When the written regulations were not sufficient to give guidance in every scenario, we see that personal connections, private networks, and noninstitutional measures were crucial in solving unexpected problems. The following section demonstrates how the religious prestige and connections possessed by monasteries like Jingshan were important assets in the actual working of East Asian maritime networks.

Religious Prestige, Imperial Patronage, and Commercial Benefits

Of the 1,000 wooden planks ordered by the Jingshan monastery, only 330 arrived at the right destination, showing how long-distance trade in the premodern era was full of risks, of which unpredictable storms during the sea voyage and corrupt customs officials were only a part.

[54] Kieschnick, *Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, 2, 12.
[55] Ji, "Shangren yu fojiao," 136–37.
[56] Walsh, "Buddhist Monastic Economy," 1271–80; Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*; Gay, *Moneylenders of Late Medieval Kyoto*.

The Jingshan monastery, however, was able to mitigate the risks and solve related problems concertedly via a form of commercial capital generated from its religious sources.

The process of retrieving the ship detained at the nonlicensed port of Huating testifies to the very different abilities of the Jingshan monastery and of the sea merchants from Japan in solving this problem. According to Defu's letter, this ship landed at Huating in the fifth month of 1244, and since the sea merchants did not find the right person to manage this matter, they waited for nine months but still could not get their ship and cargo back. So in the second month of 1245, the sea merchants, along with the monk Neng, who was Enni's disciple and served as messenger between Jingshan and Jōtenji multiple times, asked Defu for help. It probably took Defu only one or two months to accomplish the multiple-step mission, including negotiating with the officials in Huating, borrowing money from local houses there, paying the bribes, retrieving the ship, and seeing to the domestic transportation of the 530 planks to Jingshan.[57]

As the fiscal manager of Jingshan, Defu's problem-solving abilities derived directly from the social and religious capital possessed by the Jingshan monastery. In the thirteenth century, the Jingshan monastery was not simply a prestigious religious establishment but also a recipient of extensive political patronage and economic privileges. When Emperor Ningzong announced the Five Mountains (*wushan* 五山) system during the Jiading 嘉定 reign (1208–24) he listed the monasteries Jingshan, Lingyin 靈隱, Jingci 淨慈, Tiantong, and Ashoka as the five most prestigious Chan monasteries. The first three were all located in Hangzhou, while the other two were in Ningbo. Michael J. Walsh points out that all five monasteries had imperial plaques and received significant land donations from the imperial family.[58]

Emperor Ningzong bestowed upon Jingshan the title of "Chan Monastery of Prospering the Sacred and Ten-Thousand Year Longevity" (*xingsheng wanshou chansi* 興聖萬壽禪寺), and made it the designated site for rituals to celebrate the emperor's birthday.[59] Since the words *sheng* 聖 (sacred) and *wanshou* 萬壽 (ten-thousand-year longevity) were both exclusively used by the imperial house, the

[57] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi*, 47–48.
[58] Walsh, "Buddhist Monastic Economy," 1289.
[59] Cao Xun 曹勛, "Jingshan xu hua luohan ji" 徑山續畫羅漢記, in *Songyin ji* 松隱集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), j.30:13.

title indicates the prominent connections between the Jingshan monastery and its imperial patrons.

Most important, imperial patronage brought substantial economic privileges. "[The emperor] exempted the Jingshan monastery from the trade tax at official markets in every prefecture. The land properties in Pingjiang Prefecture as well as the charitable estates that belong to the Jingshan monastery also enjoy exemption from all irregular taxation with the exception of the basic taxes. All of these privileges are special and rare."[60] Defu also mentioned in his letter that he traveled to supervise issues regarding fields in Pingjiang Prefecture. Although it is not clear whether Jingshan enjoyed any tax exemption in overseas trade, the "special and rare" domestic tax privileges already secured it an advantageous position in trade business.

At other prominent monasteries, too, religious prestige garnered economic privileges. Another of the Five Mountains, the Ashoka monastery in Ningbo, was also a popular destination for pilgrims from Japan. During his first trip to China in 1168, as noted earlier in this chapter, Eisai paid a pilgrim visit to the Ashoka monastery with Chōgen.[61] Emperors twice bestowed calligraphy upon the Ashoka monastery – once in the reign of Jiayou 嘉祐 (1056–63) and again in the reign of Shaoxing 紹興 (1131–62) – signaling special patronage from the royal clan.

Lu You, the famous poet and scholar-official from Shaoxing who planned to purchase Japanese lumber for making his coffin, wrote an essay for the Ashoka monastery in 1189, in which he implied that the imperial patronage generated advantages for the monastery's participation in overseas trade. He wrote that the emperors' calligraphy made the deities of the mountains and the sea serve the Ashoka monastery and tamed the dangerous marine creatures. With so much assistance, "ships from as far as 10,000 *li* away and merchants from five directions [all came to the Ashoka monastery]; at the market there piled up precious metals from the south and enormous seashells too numerous to count."[62] The essay clearly refers to the risks of voyages, as well as the economic benefits of a monastery's prestige and patronage. The essay indicates that the Ashoka monastery was likely an important

[60] Cao, "Jingshan xu hua luohan ji," in *Songyin ji*, j.30:13.
[61] Kokan Shiren, *Genkō shakusho*, j.2:23.
[62] Lu You 陸遊, "Mingzhou Yuwangshan maitian ji" 明州育王山買田記, in *Weinan wenji* 渭南文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 2148.

distribution center for overseas commodities, as ships, merchants, and cargo all congregated there. Economic privileges received by prominent monasteries, such as tax exemption in the domestic markets, were among the key factors that advantaged them in commercial networks. Located in economically prosperous areas and adjacent to ports, they also became hubs connecting overseas products and domestic markets.

The religious prestige and political patronage of monasteries like Jingshan and Ashoka also earned them another precious asset in commercial business: trust. One important reason why Defu could retrieve the detained ship efficiently was his ability to borrow the 30,000 strings of *renqingqian* from "noble houses" in Huating. Those creditors – possibly long-term patrons of Jingshan – must have trusted Defu and the Jingshan monastery to repay the debt. It would have been very difficult for monasteries in less privileged positions, let alone ordinary sea merchants, to achieve that level of reputation and trust.

When less prominent monasteries tried to participate in overseas trade, they likely had to go through a series of steps to secure the initial funds. The Miyin monastery 密印寺 in Jiaxing 嘉興 – also in the lower Yangzi delta region – wanted to rebuild its bell tower, and the monks there decided that conducting trade was a good way to raise funds. "They sold some monastery properties and used the money as [initial] funds, with which they took loans and traded rare and precious commodities. They crossed the sea to purchase incense and medicines, went forth and back for several decades, and encountered pirates seven times. [Miraculously] they did not lose anything at all, so in the end they saved enough money to cover the expenses of building the tower."[63] This account is succinct and probably exaggerated in some aspects – such as having encountered pirates seven times without losing anything – but it clearly shows that to make the trade voyage possible, the Miyin monastery had to take out loans. Unlike Defu, who could borrow money fast and easily on behalf of Jingshan, the Miyin monastery needed to provide a certain amount of initial funds to obtain the credit, for which the monastery sold part of its property.

[63] "Miyin si zhonglou ji" 密印寺鐘樓記, in *Zhiyuan Jiahe zhi* 至元嘉禾志, by Shan Qing 單慶 and Xu Shuo 徐碩, in *Songyuan Zhejiang fangzhi jicheng* 宋元浙江方志集成, Vol. 13 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chubanshe, 2009), j.26:6149.

The experience of one foreign merchant trying to borrow money in the same area of China also illustrates the difference. According to Lou Yue, the aforementioned Ningbo literatus, a Goryeo merchant once mortgaged a valuable painting to Lou Yue's neighbor in exchange for cash, and he came back shortly afterward with money to redeem it.[64] Lou Yue recorded this case in the colophon on his copy of that painting, one of the famous Tang artist Han Gan's 韓幹 depictions of horses – the theme for which Han was best known. Lou Yue described the original painting as delicately decorated with Goryeo objects, such as damask silk and refined paper. Upon hearing that "the foreign merchant was going to bring gold here soon to redeem this horse painting … [I] invited an artisan immediately to make a copy of this old painting."[65] Since Lou Yue lived in Ningbo, he and his neighbors must have had considerable exposure to overseas commodities and foreign merchants – Lou Yue was apparently familiar with fine handicrafts from Goryeo. We have no way of knowing why this Goryeo merchant encountered a temporary liquidity problem, but it seems that he had the knowledge and resources to respond to his sudden crisis. As an individual merchant in a foreign land, the Goryeo merchant knew to whom he should go to borrow money, and moreover, he was aware that he could not get credit without providing collateral, in this case, a famous Chinese painting, the value of which he and his potential creditor could easily agree upon.

We can assume this might be what the sea merchants working with the Jōtenji monastery would have gone through if not for Defu's help. Potential lenders' trust in people like Defu was evident. Defu could borrow a large sum of money in a short time with probably only an oral agreement with the creditors; as he mentioned in his letter, he would be seen as a man who broke his word if the merchants could not pay back on time. But for the sea merchants from Japan, even providing collateral and signing formal contracts might not be enough to gain credit. Meanwhile, the commercial benefits of the trust accorded to prestigious religious establishments motivated more parties to build connections with them, in the hope of sharing these advantages.

[64] Lou, "Ti Gaoli xingkanzi" 題高麗行看子, in *Gongkui ji*, j.3:62.
[65] Lou, "Ti Gaoli xingkanzi," in *Gongkui ji*, j.3:62.

Building Monasteries, Building Overseas Networks

Prior to the establishment of Jōtenji monastery in 1242, as the previous chapter has shown, Chinese merchants in Hakata were already seeking affiliations with local religious establishments. Before he founded the Jōtenji monastery, "Cargo Chief" Xie Guoming was also affiliated with other religious establishments, and the affiliations probably enhanced his influence.

The religious establishments with which Xie Guoming was associated also displayed considerable interest in overseas trade. Xie served as the steward for an offshore island, Oronoshima 小呂島, belonging to the Munakata shrine 宗像大社. The shrine, located about forty kilometers north of the Chinese quarter and right by the sea, had been an active player in maritime exchange. Since the early eleventh century, the Munakata clan, who were in charge of the shrine, frequently participated in the trade with China and presented precious continental goods such as brocades and aromatics to the Kyoto courtiers.[66] The sea merchant Zhou Wenyi, who appeared in Chapters 3 and 4, also once passed his personal gifts to the court in Kyoto via the Munakata clan.[67] In the mid-twelfth century, at least two generations of the Munakata clan married women from Chinese immigrant families.[68] After Xie Guoming died in 1252, the shrine retrieved the actual control of the island from Xie's widow via the lawsuit mentioned earlier, suggesting that the religious establishments were usually cooperating with multiple merchants and cared much about their partners' capabilities. Once their affiliated sea merchants lost those capabilities, the religious establishments would change partners.

Besides the Munakata shrine, Xie Guoming was also associated with the Hakozaki 筥崎 shrine in Hakata, from which he purchased land for building the Jōtenji monastery.[69] This Hakozaki shrine was a branch of the Iwashimizu Hachimangū 石清水八幡宮 shrine near

[66] Munakata jinja fukkō kiseikai 宗像神社復興期成会, ed., *Munakata jinja shi* 宗像神社史, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Seikōsha, 1961), 825–26, 828.
[67] Munakata jinja fukkō kiseikai, *Munakata jinja shi*, 826.
[68] The Munakata shrine preserves a stone carved with the Amitābha Sutra that was imported from Song China. The sutra stone was ordered by a Lady Zhang, to memorialize her deceased parents-in-law, Munakata Ujisane 宗像氏実 and a Lady Wang. See Munakata jinja fukkō kiseikai, *Munakata jinja shi*, 827.
[69] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi*, 22.

Kyoto, a rival to Enryakuji, and the fierce competition between Iwashimizu Hachimangū and Enryakuji extended to their branches in Kyushu. In 1218, a Chinese merchant attached to Enryakuji's branch Daisenji was allegedly murdered by the monk overseer of the Hakozaki shrine.[70] When Xie Guoming protected Enni from Daisenji monks' attack in 1232, it was probably an episode of the enduring conflict between Daisenji and the Hakozaki shrine. Daisenji had been collaborating with Chinese merchants and granted them affiliations for decades – as reflected in the story in Chapter 4 of Gong Sanlang, the Chinese ship captain attached to Daisenji, who first mentioned the "Chinese quarter" in his hand-copied sutra in 1116.

The Hakozaki shrine applied the same strategy of cooperating with Chinese sea merchants like Xie Guoming; allowing him to purchase a piece of their land to establish a new monastery was likely a move to attain a trustful ally and further consolidate the shrine's local power.

Therefore, right from its establishment, the Jōtenji monastery was involved in the competition. According to Tetsugyū Enshin's biography of Enni, after he became the founding abbot of Jōtenji, monks from Daisenji defamed him, aiming to destroy the newly established Jōtenji.[71] Although the biography portrayed the struggles as disputes over Buddhist teaching, their fundamental cause was that the two monasteries were competing for profits from the overseas trade and Daisenji was eager to eliminate a new opponent.[72]

Benefiting from Enni's reputation and perhaps more from his overseas connections, the Jōtenji monastery survived the hostile attack. In 1243, Jōtenji became an authorized official monastery, and in the same year, Enni was invited by the most powerful courtier at the time, Kujō Michiie 九条道家 (1193–1252), to give lectures in Kyoto.[73] Kujō Michiie was deeply impressed by Enni and bestowed on him the title "Master Shōichi" (*Shōichi kokushi* 聖一国師), claiming to follow the precedent of Emperor Daizong (726–79) of the Tang dynasty, who bestowed the title "Master Kokuichi" (*Guoyi chanshi* 國一禪師) on

[70] Von Glahn, "Ningbo–Hakata Merchant Network," 276–77; Cobbing, "Hakata Merchant's World," 67.
[71] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 135.
[72] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi*, 33.
[73] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 135–36.

the monk Faqin 法欽 from the Jingshan monastery.[74] The deliberate choice of this title shows that Michiie valued Enni's experience in China from the beginning. Notably, Michiie himself was hardly a devoted believer in Zen Buddhism and "displayed no more than a passive interest in Zen practice," according to Martin Collcutt.[75] Thus, Michiie was likely more attracted by Enni's connections with the court-designated Five Mountains monasteries than the novel meditative practice that Enni was trying to promote.

Kujō Michiie's generous patronage to Enni was likely meant to cultivate his own religious influence. Michiie, whose daughter gave birth to the emperor Shijō 四条 and whose third son Yoritsune 頼経 was shogun in the bakufu in Kamakura, dominated capital politics between the 1220s and 1240s.[76] Having arranged for his son Jigen 慈源 to head the Enryakuji monastery in 1240, he tried to exert influence in the religious sphere, too. But the Enryakuji clergy were never fully submissive to Jigen, who was even forced to resign temporarily in 1242.[77] During that time, a large Zen monastery, Tōfukuji 東福寺, sponsored by Michiie, was under construction in southern Kyoto. No evidence indicates that Michiie intended to build Tōfukuji as a Song-style Zen monastery when he started the project in 1235. The completed monastic complex, although it had a Song-style Zen ground plan, also included halls for the esoteric Shingon and Tendai Buddhist observances.[78] Possessing an eclectic religious posture, Enni was Michiie's ideal founding abbot for Tōfukuji. Although he sometimes taught esoteric rites and practices to his disciples, however, Enni undoubtedly considered Tōfukuji to be a Zen monastery that would substantially facilitate the transmission of his mentor, Shifan's, teaching.[79] And Jōtenji became a branch of the Tōfukuji monastery likely through the connection between Xie Guoming and Enni.[80]

Through Enni's intermediation, the ties linking the newly built Zen monasteries in Japan and the Five Mountains monasteries in China grew stronger. Enni put the Kujō clan in direct contact with Jingshan and the other Five Mountains monasteries. In 1255, after Michiie died, his fourth son, Ichijō Sanetsune 一条実経 (1223–84), donated luxuriously

[74] Shiraishi Hōrui 白石芳留, *Tōfukuji shi* 東福寺誌 (Kyoto: Daihonzan Tōfukuji, 1930), 46.
[75] Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 43, 56. [76] Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 189–93.
[77] Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 196–97. [78] Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 43
[79] Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 45. [80] Shiraishi, *Tōfukuji shi*, 57, 68.

decorated sutras to Jingshan. Xiyan Liaohui 西巖了惠, the abbot of the Tiantong monastery – the Five Mountains monastery that had received lumber from Eisai – wrote an essay on this donation, in which he specifically emphasized the relationship between Shifan, Enni, and the Kujō clan. According to the essay, Kujō Michiie venerated Enni as a teacher, and the whole family worshipped Buddhist teachings and hand-copied the sutras together; because Enni constantly felt indebted to Shifan, he arranged for the hand-copied sutras to be donated to the Jingshan monastery. The abbot, who wrote the essay at Enni's behest, had also been Shifan's student.[81]

Here we see how the network connecting Shifan, Enni, and Xie Guoming expanded extensively to encompass the most prestigious monasteries in China and the most eminent courtiers in Japan. Building the Jōtenji monastery was a crucial step allowing Xie Guoming to firmly embed himself in this circle, and because of its ties to China and to overseas trade, the Jōtenji monastery also became a much-favored cornerstone for Zen Buddhist advocates in Japan, who were facing hostile attacks and fierce competition from other merchant–monk coalitions.

The Jōtenji monastery retained its importance after Enni left for Kyoto. In 1248, after Jōtenji caught fire, Enni returned to Hakata to show his support for the monastery. Enni's biography mentions that Xie Guoming was so elated to see Enni, that he saw to it that eighteen rooms were completed overnight.[82] Although the completion of eighteen rooms in one day was likely an exaggeration, it demonstrates that the close relationship between Enni and Xie was enduring, and probably fortified Xie's influence in Hakata, allowing him to complete the postfire reconstruction of Jōtenji in a short time.

The Jōtenji monastery also maintained its connection with the Hakozaki shrine. A document from 1281 recorded how repair work on the Hakozaki shrine was divided among several parties, and two Hakata cargo chiefs, Zhang Xing and Zhang Ying, and the Jōtenji monastery were all on the list of supporters of the repair.[83]

It is worth mentioning that although Xie Guoming clearly aimed to earn an advantageous position in overseas trade by building the Jōtenji

[81] Itō Shō 伊藤松, ed., *Rinkō chōsho* 鄰交徵書 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), 23–26.
[82] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 137.
[83] "Hachiman Hakozakigu zōei zaimoku mokuroku" 八幡筥崎宮造営材木目録, in Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi*, 52–53.

monastery, the new Zen monastery exerted considerable influence in the religious sphere and won Xie recognition among the Buddhist community. In every single letter to Enni, Shifan urged him to spread Zen Buddhism in Japan, and Enni brought back many Buddhist texts and images illustrating the prescribed layout of a Chan monastery complex and ritual objects in China.[84] Shifan and Enni both undoubtedly saw the Jōtenji monastery as a vehicle for Zen teaching. Although a merchant, Xie Guoming joined in conversations on Buddhist teachings as well. Defu wrote in his 1245 letter to Enni that Xie Guoming had grasped a key teaching capturing the essence of Zen Buddhism, implying his recognition and admiration for Xie's diligent studies.[85]

In another aspect, it seems that after the reconstruction of the Jingshan monastery, Shifan and Xie developed a close friendship. In 1248, three years after the lumber transaction, when Shifan was seriously ill he sent a letter directly to Xie, and first thanked Xie again for the wooden planks: "I have served in this monastery for eighteen years, and during that time, disaster [fires] has struck twice. We received your help in the process [of reconstruction], which you supported by sending wooden planks. Now, fortunately, the reconstruction is completed, and I am extremely grateful."[86] Shifan continued by saying that he had suffered from illness since the previous winter, and he thought he did not have much time left; so they probably would not have a chance to see each other again.[87] With that letter, Shifan sent along two scroll paintings of tigers by the Song painters Bao Gui and Bao Ding. The gift suggests that Shifan and Xie had probably also exchanged opinions about art, a cultural activity in which Chinese Chan masters and their followers frequently engaged. By then, Shifan and Xie no longer relied on Enni as an intermediary, and Shifan's phrase that they "would not have a chance to see each other *again*" indicates that Shifan and Xie had met before. Perhaps Xie had visited Shifan during one of his trade trips back to China, as did many Chinese merchants we encounter in the Buddhist records.

By this time, the dual features of this private network had become further established and intertwined; both commodities and religious teachings were transmitted between China and Japan via the same routes and by the same group whose members were closely connected

[84] Chen and Jiang, *Jingshan wenhua*, 100–9. [85] Defu's Letter to Enni, 1245.
[86] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi*, 62. [87] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi*, 62.

by shared interests in trade profits and Buddhist teachings. Increased personal involvement of merchants in the monastic missions also became a driving factor in the further development of the relationships.

Conclusion

What is most interesting about the voyage of the wooden planks is just how much the transactions relied upon personal relationships – which were connections and obligations built over time through the exchanges of letters, gifts, and favors, and in this case, also shared faith in Buddhism. In the thirteenth century, Chinese merchants continued to seek patronage and religious affiliation to facilitate their business and to reduce risks in long-distance trade; religious institutions sought overseas partners to promote new Buddhist sects, to obtain objects for ritual ceremonies and building construction, and to increase their competitive advantage. The religio-commercial network functioned in response to the practical demands of each party, and further extended when merchants like Xie Guoming established monasteries with the intention of taking advantage of the network, and when courtiers like Kujō Michiie offered patronage to monks belonging to the network.

The subsequent response to the accident of the wooden planks landing at the wrong port actually further demonstrates the value of this religio-commercial network, which functioned more efficiently than purely commercial networks because of the trust its members had in each other. In her study of the long-distance trade in first- to third-century India, Xinru Liu has found that when foreign merchants arrived in India, they considered sacred places, such as Buddhist monasteries, ideal for making contacts and building trust. Sometimes those monasteries also functioned as banks, and it was their sanctity that allowed them to create trust among strangers.[88] Trust, in general, derived from the faith that one's agreements or contracts would be fulfilled, or at least, some enforcement would come into play if agreements were breached.

The voyage of the wooden planks, with all its marvelous details, further elaborated upon how the religious network could enhance trust among the business partners to facilitate transactions. Defu was willing

[88] Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China*, 116, 121.

to borrow money on behalf of the merchants mainly because of the relationship between Shifan and Enni, a solid mentor–disciple relationship between two eminent monks. Defu apparently did not trust the merchants as much, so he requested Enni's help in overseeing the merchants' repayment – Enni's influence over the maritime merchants based in Hakata perhaps worked as a type of enforcement here. Meanwhile, Defu's ability to retrieve the detained ship from the Huating local government also derived from the religious network that he was in – the privileges and reputation enjoyed by the Jingshan monastery.

The wooden planks incident also demonstrates how closely southeastern China and Hakata were tied together by the religio-commercial network. That monasteries in Hangzhou and Ningbo were able to acquire lumber more cheaply from Japan than buying locally, is just one sign that maritime trade was flourishing between these two places, and apparently at greater volumes than in the previous century. Hand-copied sutras, gifts of scroll paintings, and letters imbued with determination toward a common goal all drew everyone even closer. Japanese monasteries adopted the architectural style and ground plan of the monastic complex and monastic regulations of the Five Mountains monasteries in southeastern China. With the involvement of powerful courtiers in the process, the Zen monasteries in Japan came to enjoy economic and political favors like their counterparts on the continent.

The network connecting Jōtenji, Tōfukuji, and southeastern China had a long-lasting impact. In the early fourteenth century, Jōtenji, Tōfukuji, and the Hakozaki shrine together commissioned merchants to lead a trade expedition to Ningbo. Other newly built Zen monasteries in Japan launched similar trade expeditions, often in the name of raising funds for monastery reconstruction. The voyage of the wooden planks was a forerunner of monastery-sponsored trade expeditions in the ensuing centuries. Fully demonstrating the efficiency of the religio-commercial network, it encouraged more players to join and make full use of the economic privileges the religious network offered.

6 *Sending Ships to China to Finance Monastery Construction*

Trade between the Mongol Empire and the Japanese Archipelago, 1270–1368

After Genghis Khan (1167–1227) and his successors established an immense empire stretching from Hungary to Korea, they hoped to conquer Japan, too. In 1274 and 1281, Genghis Khan's grandson, Khubilai Khan (1215–94), launched two invasions of Japan. Both invasions failed, but surprisingly, while there were ongoing tensions between the Yuan and Japanese empires during this time period, they did not stop the exchanges altogether.

In 1323, more than four decades after the Kamakura bakufu (1192–1333) turned away the second Mongol invasion, a ship carrying more than 20,000 Chinese ceramics, 720 bronze artifacts, 1,000 pieces of red sandalwood, and 28 tons of Chinese bronze coins, among many other commodities, sailed from Ningbo to Japan. With Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans on board, this ship sank southwest of the Korean peninsula; when archaeologists discovered it in 1976, they named this shipwreck after the region, Sinan 新安, where it was found.[1]

The Sinan shipwreck provides valuable information about commodities and trade goods, the volume of trade, and the dimensions of ships during the fourteenth century. More importantly, it shows that the religio-commercial network between China and Japan that had been developing for centuries remained the vital channel linking the continent and the Japanese archipelago while the tribute trade was suspended. Many crates holding commodities had wooden slips attached to them, indicating the owners of the cargo. Among the more than 360 wooden

[1] National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, *Underwater Archaeology in Korea*, 63, 72–77; Jianan Fan and Haichao Li, "A Study on the Departure Port of the Sinan Shipwreck: A Perspective Based on the Chinese Ceramic Cargo," *Archaeological Research in Asia* 23 (2020): 100195; Shen Qionghua 沈瓊華, ed., *Da Yuan fanying: Hanguo Xin'an chenchuan chushui wenwu jinghua* 大元帆影: 韓國新安沉船出水文物精華 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2012), 20, 26.

slips discovered, 110 contained the term "cargo chief" (*kōshi* 綱司) and gave the managers' surnames – as had the ceramic fragments excavated in the area of the Chinese quarter in Hakata, discussed in Chapter 4. Moreover, 41 wooden slips were labeled Tōfukuji – the prominent Zen monastery founded by Kujō Michiie in the south of Kyoto. Other wooden slips bear the names of religious institutions in Hakata, such as the Hakozaki shrine and the Chōjaku'an 釣寂庵, which was a monastic shrine located inside the Jōtenji monastery in Hakata – the key player in "the voyage of the wooden planks" discussed in the previous chapter. And some wooden slips contained individual merchant's and monk's names, presumably the owners of the cargo so labeled.[2]

Interestingly, the key participants in the voyage of the Sinan ship were all connected with the Jōtenji monastery. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Jōtenji had become a branch monastery of the Tōfukuji, the land on which the Jōtenji monastery was built was once the Hakozaki shrine's property, and Jōtenji also assumed duties in repairing the shrine. The monastic shrine Chōjaku'an was also part of the Jōtenji monastery complex.[3] The Sinan shipwreck demonstrates that some eighty years after the wooden planks episode, and even after the Mongol conquest of China, Japanese monasteries continued to rely on the established connections to trade with China, and they collaborated with merchants and bought shares in trade voyages. Contemporary records on the Japanese side refer to trade ships using the names of the monasteries that sponsored them, such as "the ship to China for financing the construction of Kenchōji monastery" (*kenchōji zōeiryō tōsen* 建長寺造営料唐船).

Who were the main players behind these trade expeditions in the fourteenth century? Was the primary purpose of the voyages to raise enough funds to repair monastic complexes as they claimed? These

[2] Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, "Jisha zōeiryō tōsen o minaosu: Bōeki, bunka kōryū, chinshū," 寺社造営料唐船を見直す: 貿易、文化交流、沈舟, in *Minatomachi to kaiiki sekai* 港町と海域世界, ed. Murai Shōsuke (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 2005), 128; Kawazoe Shōji 川添昭二, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata: Shin'an chinbotsusen mokkan, Tōfukuji, Jōtenji" 鎌倉末期の対外関係と博多: 新安沈没船木簡、東福寺、承天寺, in *Kamakura jidai bunka denpa no kenkyū* 鎌倉時代文化伝播の研究, ed. Ōsumi Kazuo 大隅和雄 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 303.

[3] Kawazoe, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata," 304, 317; Shen, *Da Yuan fanying*, 28.

questions guide this chapter, which by integrating archaeological and textual evidence, demonstrates how the Mongol invasions in 1274 and 1281 affected trade between Yuan-dynasty China and Kamakura Japan, how both sides responded in the aftermath of the invasions, and which roles religious figures and institutions played in Sino-Japanese exchanges during this period.

In the thirteenth century, the Kamakura bakufu shared power with the emperor and the court in Kyoto and ruled from the garrison town of Kamakura outside of modern Tokyo. Headed by a shogun and his regents, the military government exerted significant influence over the commercial and religious exchanges between China and Japan. Starting from the late thirteenth century, a Five Mountains system based on the Song model began to take shape in Japan. Although details of the early stage of the Japanese Five Mountains network were not clear, surviving records show that Hōjō 北條 regents of the Kamakura bakufu took the initiative and large Zen monasteries closely connected to the bakufu or the imperial court were appointed to Five Mountains status.[4] The authorized Five Mountains system, linking Kyoto and Kamakura and adopting Song practices was, itself, a trans-regional and transnational network.

On the China side, the Yuan rulers embraced the opportunity to trade with foreign countries, including Japan, but meanwhile they remained vigilant against armed merchants and pirates from Japan. Yuan emperor Chengzong Temur (1265–1307, r. 1294–1307) tried to take advantage of religious ties by sending the monk Yishan Yining 一山一寧 (1247–1317) as an envoy to Kamakura in 1299 – similar to the strategy the Song emperors employed in the eleventh century. The Kamakura bakufu did not officially recognize Yishan Yining as the Mongol emperor's envoy but welcomed him as a Chinese Chan master. As eminent Chinese monks continued to stay and teach in Japan, the Zen Buddhism originally transmitted from China flourished in Japan. The ship named for the Kenchōji monastery in Kamakura, in addition to transporting commodities for trade, carried Japanese monks to study in China and even brought back a Chinese Chan master who later became the abbot of the Kenchōji monastery in Kamakura.

[4] Martin Collcutt, "Zen and the *gozan*," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 3: *Medieval Japan*, ed. John W. Hall, Marius B. Jansen, Madoka Kanai, and Denis Twitchett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 598.

Between the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the religious and commercial exchanges between China and Japan were largely carried on by the same group as earlier and spread via the same routes. Zen Buddhism and the accommodation of Chinese culture and objects expanded from Hakata to Kyoto, and further to Kamakura, where the bakufu leaders also avidly patronized Zen Buddhism. As the religious network and trade network became further integrated, political leaders became even more deeply involved. The maritime order in East Asia was also under the influence of the changing political situation, which eventually led to major transformations of the network in the following century.

Mongol Invasions and Their Impact on Sino-Japanese Trade

In 1259 Khubilai's armies conquered Korea, which provided intermediaries to negotiate with Japan, as well as an important base for Mongol warships to stop on their way to attack Japan.[5] Khubilai dispatched his first envoy to Japan in 1266, followed by another five messengers over the next seven years. These missions requested that Japan "engage in cordial relations" with the Mongols by recognizing Khubilai as the "master of the universe," but the Japanese refused to do so.[6] This compelled Khubilai to launch two invasions of Japan.

The Chinese and Japanese records both exaggerate the strength of the forces on both sides. For example, *The History of Yuan* (*Yuanshi* 元史) records that the 1281 Mongol armada consisted of over 100,000 men, while a Japanese record claims that 150,000 enemy soldiers arrived on 3,500 ships.[7] But, after careful investigation, Thomas D. Conlan has provided a more plausible estimate that probably 2,000–3,000 Japanese warriors fought against a similar number of Mongol troops in 1274.

[5] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 88–89.

[6] Song Lian 宋濂 et al.,*Yuanshi* 元史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 208:4626–28; Thomas D. Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention: Takazaki Suenaga's Scrolls of the Mongol Invasions of Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2001), 256; Gao Rongsheng 高榮盛, *Yuandai haiwai maoyi yanjiu* 元代海外貿易研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1998), 84.

[7] Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, 264. Other modern scholars also have given higher estimates. For example, von Verschuer mentioned that the 1274 fleet contained more than 30,000 Mongol and Korean warriors. See von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 89.

In 1281, several thousand Japanese repelled fewer than 10,000 Mongol and Korean invaders.[8] In the first invasion a large part of Hakata burned down, including the Chinese quarter neighborhood where many Chinese sea merchants lived, while the second invasion wreaked less damage because no Mongol ships landed at Hakata due to enhanced fortification of the walls along its coast.[9]

Some contemporaneous Japanese records claim that during both Mongol invasions the Mongol fleets were destroyed by timely typhoons, which represented the gods helping Japan to escape foreign occupation.[10] Conlan points out, however, that the "divine winds" (*kamikaze* 神風) had little effect on the outcomes of the battles. Surprisingly, neither the firsthand account of a samurai, Takezaki Suenaga 竹崎季長 (1246–1314), nor contemporary governmental documents pertaining to the Mongol invasions mention the typhoons. For the 1274 invasion, the wind was recorded only as a reverse wind blowing the ships backward, not a typhoon. Still, some Japanese courtiers lauded the "divine wind" in their diaries or memorials as showing that Japan was favored and protected by the gods.[11] Shipwrecks believed to be part of the second Mongol fleet have been discovered on the bed of Imari 伊万里 Bay, northwestern Kyushu. The wrecks suggest that the second fleet must have been assembled hastily, as many of the boats turned out to have flat-bottomed hulls, much like river boats, and thus were unsuitable for a sea crossing.[12] The inadequately equipped fleet probably was more accountable than the wind for the outcome of the sea battle.

The two failed Mongol invasions, meanwhile, as noted earlier, did not halt trade between China and Japan.[13] In 1277, three years after the first invasion, merchants from Japan arrived in China seeking to

[8] Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, 263–64. Conlan makes the estimation based on more reliable sources, including Japanese duty reports, relevant administrative documents, and Takezaki Suenaga's firsthand account.

[9] Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, 267–68.

[10] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 89.

[11] Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*, 259, 266–68.

[12] Cobbing, *Kyushu: Gateway to Japan*, 118; Ikeda Yoshifumi 池田榮史, *Kaitei ni nemuru mōko shūrai: Suichū kōkogaku no chōsen* 海底に眠る蒙古襲来: 水中考古学の挑戦 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2018), 1–4, 179–85.

[13] Scholars debate this issue. For example, Mori Katsumi believes that the invasions indeed impeded trade, while Murai Shōtsuke thinks the effects were minimal and the exchanges between the Yuan and Japan remained active. Enomoto Wataru agrees that the Yuan dynasty was positive toward overseas

exchange gold for bronze coins which, as discussed in Chapter 4, had been circulating in the Japanese archipelago since the twelfth century. The twenty-eight tons of bronze coins found at the site of the Sinan shipwreck also indicated a constant, enormous demand for Chinese bronze coins in Japan. The Yuan court granted the merchants' request for exchanging coins.[14] The next year, Khubilai gave permission to local government offices along the coast to trade with Japanese ships.[15] Thus, in the following year, when four merchant ships with more than 2,000 crew members on board arrived in Ningbo from Japan, the local officials, after making sure they were peaceful, allowed them to trade there.[16] At that time, the Yuan rulers tended to separate trade from making war; as long as the arriving people and ships were genuine traders, they were welcome.

After the second invasion in 1281, although Khubilai had been planning further attacks, he also took other measures to establish a positive relationship with Japan. In 1283, the abbot of the Putuo 普陀 monastery near Ningbo, Yuxi Ruzhi 愚溪如智, suggested to Khubilai that,

> if we again raise forces and attack Japan, it will bring suffering to many sentient beings. Japan has also been civilized by Buddhism and culture, so how can they not know the rationale that the large [overpowers] the small and the strong [overpowers] the weak? If your Majesty were to send me to bring an edict and persuade [them to surrender], then you would save many living beings. People in Japan will reconsider their position and earnestly submit to you.[17]

Khubilai accepted Abbot Ruzhi's suggestion and sent him, along with another official, to deliver his edict to Japan. But the ship Ruzhi took was blown back to Mount Putuo, near Ningbo, while sailing on the open sea, so this mission failed. The next year, Khubilai again appointed Abbot Ruzhi as his envoy to Japan because "Japan has the tradition of worshiping Buddhas." The second mission also failed, due to a conflict between the shipowner and another of Khubilai's

trade but also points out that the Yuan rulers were very cautious about ships from Japan. See Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 106–7.

[14] *Yuanshi*, 208:4628. [15] *Yuanshi*, 10:206. [16] *Yuanshi*, 132:3217.

[17] Zuikei Shūhō 瑞渓周鳳, *Zenrin kokuhōki* 善隣国宝記, in *Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編, Vol. 44 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1994), 367.

emissaries.[18] Note Khubilai's use of a Buddhist abbot as his envoy: even a foreign conqueror grasped the multifaceted role of Buddhists as trusted intermediaries in the relations between China and Japan. When Khubilai died in 1294, the Mongols gave up further attempts to invade Japan.

The Mongols did, however, continue imperial efforts to reach out to Japan via Buddhist connections. In 1299, Emperor Chengzong Temur bestowed the title "Master Miaoci Hongji" 妙慈弘濟大師 on the abbot of the Putuo monastery, Yishan Yining, and, as already noted, dispatched him to Japan on a merchant ship.[19] Yishan Yining and his companions landed at Hakata and traveled to Kamakura, where due to his role as an envoy from the Yuan, Yining was at first held in custody by the regent of the Kamakura bakufu, Hōjō Sadatoki 北條貞時 (1272–1311). Later, when Sadatoki learned that Yining was an eminent Chan master, as mentioned earlier, he invited Yining to be the abbot of the Kenchōji monastery in Kamakura. Although Yining did not accomplish his mission as a Yuan court messenger, he further strengthened the Zen Buddhist ties linking China and Japan.

The Hōjō clan in Kamakura – a clan that for generations produced the regents who governed the Kamakura bakufu in the child shoguns' stead – were among the most important patrons of Zen Buddhism. The Hōjō clan's support for Zen Buddhism grew notable after the 1240s, when the Zen network in Hakata and Kyoto extended to Kamakura and encouraged religious and material exchanges with the continent. As this chapter demonstrates, Kenchōji, along with several other Zen monasteries patronized by the Hōjō clan, played key intermediary roles in the subsequent trade between Yuan China and Japan.

A turning point toward frostier relations in Yuan–Kamakura trade occurred in 1309, nearly three decades after the second failed Mongol invasion and one decade after Temur had sent Yishan Yining to Kamakura. An inscription at a Daoist temple in Ningbo reports, "The barbarians from the islands (*daoyi* 島夷, that is the Japanese) trade with their local products every year. The prefectural clerks here took some of their possessions, and the barbarian traders could not bear this anymore, so they used the sulfur that they had brought from Japan to set fires in Ningbo. Almost all government offices, historic houses, and

[18] *Yuanshi*, 208:4629. [19] *Yuanshi*, 208:4630; 20:426.

residences were burned down."[20] The records in Ningbo local gazetteers show the large scale and severity of this incident: at least nine important government offices and fifteen Buddhist monasteries and Daoist temples were destroyed.[21]

Contemporary Chinese records, however, do not blame the Japanese traders for causing such severe damage. The inscription in the previous paragraph holds the misbehavior of Chinese officials responsible for the riots. As shown in Chapter 5, during the Song dynasty, Chinese officials in charge of the maritime trade often extorted or invited bribes from merchants, and it seems that Yuan officials and clerks did so as well. The biography of the prominent Japanese Zen monk Ryūzan Tokuken 龍山德見 (1284–1358) mentions that when Tokuken arrived in Ningbo from Japan on a merchant ship around the year 1305, Chinese officials forbade the merchants to land until they paid the increased customs duties on the imported cargo.[22] Even Tokuken himself, a monk rather than a merchant, was not allowed to enter the city. Anyone who dared to violate the regulations would be accused of spying for Japan.[23]

From as early as the tenth century, sulfur had been among the most popular commodities that China imported from Japan, mainly for the purpose of making gunpowder. It was sulfur (roughly 700 pounds) that the monk Ka'in brought as a gift to Emperor Taizong in 988, as recounted in Chapter 3.[24] So it is not surprising that in 1309, when the friction between Chinese officials in Ningbo and merchants from Japan continued to escalate, it proved a handy incendiary device for the Japanese traders who were angry about the confiscation of their goods.

[20] Wang Yuangong 王元恭 et al., *Zhizheng Siming xuzhi* 至正四明續志, in *Songyuan Siming liu zhi*, Vol. 7 (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2011), j.10:532.

[21] See Yuan Jue 袁桷 et al., *Yanyou Siming zhi* 延祐四明志, in *Songyuan Siming liu zhi*, Vol. 6 (Ningbo: Ningbo chubanshe, 2011), j.16:1041–60; *Zhizheng Siming xuzhi*, 3:112; 9:482; 10:510–20. Also see Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 122–23.

[22] The biography records that Ryūzan arrived in Ningbo when he was twenty-two, but the age and year in monks' biographies are not necessarily accurate and a one- or two-year discrepancy is common; so we can only know that this happened around 1305. Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 117.

[23] Ryūzan Tokuken 龍山德見, *Kōryū jussei roku* 黃龍十世録, in *Gozan bungaku shinshū* 五山文学新集, Vol. 3 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1967–81), 287.

[24] *Songshi*, 491:14137.

The Japanese merchants' anger may also have stemmed from the differences between the tax rates of the Song and the Yuan. While taxes on overseas trade were generally lower during the Yuan than the Song, the Yuan trading regime happened to follow a period of unusually favorable taxes for Japanese ships in the late Song – when customs duties were lowered to 5 percent in 1227 – as a strategy to encourage more ships to come.[25] This contrasted greatly with earlier periods of the Song, when the taxes and the portion purchased at government-set prices could reach more than 50 percent. The Yuan, by contrast, collected only 10–20 percent of the entire cargo as taxes and suspended the practice of purchasing part of the cargo at a fixed price for the government.[26] Extant records do not reveal how long this special treatment lasted during the Song, but it is likely that the merchants arriving during the Yuan dynasty knew about this much lighter taxation, viewed the Yuan rates as an increase, and thought the Yuan officials were treating them unfairly.[27]

The 1309 riots in Ningbo prompted the Yuan court to fortify its defenses there. Several months after the riots, in light of the army's failure to stop the looting and destruction in Ningbo, the provincial officials pleaded to transfer more troops to Ningbo. The court decided to send one-third of newly recruited soldiers from the coastal defense system to Ningbo.[28]

After the riots, the Yuan court still allowed ships from Japan to trade in Ningbo, yet it became even more cautious in selecting officials to serve in posts relevant to trade with Japan. Neither the reinforcement nor the appointment of different officials, however, prevented similar riots from occurring.[29] The following years, however, witnessed new ways of conducting trade.

[25] Luo and Fang, *Baoqing Siming zhi*, j.6:3. Also see Chapter 5.

[26] *Yuan dianzhang* 元典章, annot. Chen Haohua 陳高華, Zhang Fan 張帆, Liu Xiao 劉曉, and Dang Baohai 黨寶海 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 875–76. Also see Gao, *Yuandai haiwai maoyi yanjiu*, 5, 29.

[27] Gao, *Yuandai haiwai maoyi yanjiu*, 101.

[28] *Yuanshi*, 99:2548.

[29] In the first half of the Yuan dynasty, the Yuan state occasionally imposed a ban on overseas trade for several years and then lifted the ban. The ban on overseas trade was effective during 1303–7, 1311–14, and 1320–22. After 1322 until the end of the dynasty, private merchants were free to trade. See Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 219–20.

Monasteries in a Trade Expedition: Evidence from the Sinan Shipwreck

A new category "ship to China for financing construction of a given monastery" (*zōeiryō tōsen* 造営料唐船) appears in the early fourteenth century. In 1325, as mentioned earlier, a Japanese document mentions a "ship to China for financing the construction of the Kenchōji monastery," the large, bakufu-sponsored monastery in Kamakura. This type of ship was likely a response to the new circumstances on the East Asian seas, including the tense situation between the Yuan and Japan after the riots in Ningbo in 1309; the growing patronage that Zen Buddhist monasteries received in Japan; and the appearance of armed merchants.

Although no written records pertaining to the Sinan ship have yet surfaced, the archaeological evidence from the Sinan shipwreck helps illuminate the role of monasteries in organizing trade. The history of the Tōfukuji monastery in Kyoto also suggests that the Sinan ship likely belonged to the category of "ship to China for financing monastery construction." The Tōfukuji monastery caught fire in 1319, and its reconstruction was still ongoing in 1323, when the Sinan ship was sailing back to Japan. Nanzan Shiun 南山士雲 (1254–1335), one of Enni's disciples, was in charge of the reconstruction. To collect enough money for the project, in 1321 Shiun urged another of Enni's disciples to sail to China. In 1323 Shiun himself went to the Jōtenji monastery in Hakata to wait for the return of the Sinan ship so he could collect related money or cargo for the Tōfukuji monastery.[30] So it is likely that the Tōfukuji monastery directly participated in the Sinan ship's trade voyage to raise funds for its postfire reconstruction.

According to the archaeological evidence, the Sinan ship itself was built in China, probably in the region of Fujian. The surviving hull is thirty-four meters long and eleven meters wide (see Figure 6). Its structure shares features, such as a V-shaped bottom and watertight compartments, with the ships that Fujian factories manufactured.[31] Also found on the joint of the keel of this ship was a mark resembling

[30] Kawazoe, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata," 311, 323.

[31] National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, *Underwater Archaeology in Korea*, 64; Xi Longfei 席龍飛, "Dui Hanguo Xin'an haidi chenchuan de yanjiu" 對韓國新安海底沉船的研究, *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 海交史研究 26 (1994).

Figure 6 Remains of the Sinan shipwreck on display at the National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, Mokpo, South Korea. Courtesy of the National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage.

the Big Dipper, symbolizing a prayer for the safe voyages of newly constructed ships, which reflected a practice unique to southeastern China.[32] When the Sinan shipwreck sank on its return journey from Ningbo to Japan, the merchants had already traded in Ningbo, so the shipwreck contains large numbers of continental products. In addition to the cargo, daily wares such as Chinese-style cooking utensils, Korean-style spoons, and Japanese sandals indicate that Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people were on board – just as Chinese and Japanese residents cohabited in the Chinese quarter in Hakata.[33] Given that most of the merchant names on the wood slips were Japanese-style names, such as Makosaburō まこ三郎 and Tōjirō とう二郎, the majority of the people on the Sinan ship were probably Japanese.[34]

William Wayne Farris has convincingly explained why the Sinan ship could not have been built in Japan, and pointed out that before 1350, the Japanese usually chartered or booked passage on highly advanced Chinese junks or Korean vessels, for trips to the continent. See Farris, "Shipbuilding and Nautical Technology in Japanese Maritime History," 271–72, 278.

[32] Yiwen Li, "Navigating Voyages in Real and Religious Life: The Big-Dipper Belief and Shipbuilding in Premodern China," *Religions* 11 (2020): 398; Yamagata Kinya 山形欣哉, *Rekishi no umi o hashiru: Chūgoku zōsen gijutsu no kōseki* 歴史の海を走る：中国造船技術の航跡 (Tokyo: Nōsangyoson bunka kyōkai, 2004), 182–86.

[33] Murai, "Jisha zōeiryō tōsen o minaosu," 128.

[34] Kawazoe, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata," 307.

The Sinan shipwreck has prompted scholars to rethink the nature of the trade ships financing monastery construction. The ships named for monasteries always directly link that ship with a single monastery or shrine and, without much detailed information, suggest that the religious institutions were the biggest, if not the only, patrons of those ships. But the evidence from the Sinan shipwreck shows that although the Tōfukuji monastery owned a large portion of the cargo, a significant number of goods still belonged to individual sea merchants. Moreover, the Tōfukuji monastery was not the only religious institution participating in this voyage – the Jōtenji monastery and the Hakozaki shrine in Hakata also took part and perhaps arranged more logistical and practical details given their nearness to the port and proximity to the merchants.[35] As the previous chapter has shown, by at least the mid-thirteenth century the Jōtenji monastery and the Hakozaki shrine were granting affiliations to Chinese merchants and proactively establishing overseas connections; Tōfukuji monastery was eager to join the network by including Jōtenji as its branch monastery.

Meanwhile, the Sinan shipwreck provides crucial evidence that indicates the specific mechanism for cooperation among the merchants and the religious institutions. The wooden slips recovered from the Sinan shipwreck indicate a dichotomy between the merchants and the religious establishments. When a wooden slip attached to cargo bears the mark of "cargo chief" (*kōshi*), it is often followed by the character 私 (J. *shi*, Ch. *si*, "private"), meaning that the goods belonged to the cargo chief. The slips labeled with the Tōfukuji monastery sometimes have the character 公 (J. *kō*, Ch. *gong*, "public" or "communal") or the two-character phrase 公用 (J. *kōyō*, Ch. *gongyong*, "for public use," see Figure 7) following the name of the Tōfukuji monastery.[36] The marks of "private" or "public" draw a clear line between the cargo belonging to merchants and that belonging to the Tōfukuji monastery. The marks suggest that the Tōfukuji monastery and the individual merchants each held their own shares of the trade voyage, which they likely agreed on before the trip. In this arrangement, the Tōfukuji monastery would collect the cargo belonging to them once the ship arrived in Japan, and the profits gained from selling the goods should go to the monastery and not belong to any individual. How much of

[35] Hirowatari, *Hakata Jōtenji shi hoi*, 56–57.
[36] Kawazoe, "Kamakura makki no taigai kankei to Hakata," 323.

Figure 7 Wooden slips inscribed with "Tōfukuji kōbutsu" 東福寺公物 (communal possession of the Tōfukuji monastery) recovered from the Sinan shipwreck. Collection of National Museum of Korea. Accession no. Sinan 23584. Korea Open Government License Type 1 material.

the profits would actually be invested in the reconstruction project remains unknown. In addition to the profits from selling the cargo, Tōfukuji also needed some specific commodities for monastic life, and as discussed further below, like the other Japanese Buddhist sects discussed earlier, the Zen monasteries in Japan always cherished Chinese artifacts.

Wooden slips attached to cargo were also excavated from a shipwreck discovered in the bay of Quanzhou in 1974, dated to the late thirteenth century.[37] The Quanzhou Bay ship, which measured twenty-four by nine meters, was likely returning from a trip to Southeast Asia, and those wooden slips show that a large part of the cargo on the ship belonged to the Song-dynasty imperial clan members of the Southern

[37] Fujian sheng Quanzhou haiwai jiaotongshi bowuguan 福建省泉州海外交通史博物館, ed., *Quanzhou wan Songdai haichuan fajue yu yanjiu* 泉州灣宋代海船發掘與研究, rev. ed. (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 2017), 34.

Outer Office of Clan Affairs in Quanzhou.[38] Among the ninety-six wooden slips, eighteen were labeled "Southern Family" (Nanjia 南家, see Figure 8) and another "Southern Family registry" (Nanjia jihao 南家記號). Moreover, another thirty wooden slips referred to clan princely houses and individual clan officials. The rest of the cargo owners were individual merchants, individual ship crew members, and stores selling Southeast Asian products, and no label gives the name of a monastery.[39]

The Sinan shipwreck and the Quanzhou Bay shipwreck are two rare examples that allow us to investigate the maritime trade organizations between the thirteenth and fourteenth century, and although the recovered wooden slips may not include the full list of cargo owners, several points are still worth noting. Both ships had powerful patrons – the Southern Family for the Quanzhou Bay ship and Tōfukuji for the Sinan ship, and the sea merchants nonetheless owned a significant portion of the cargo. The Sinan shipwreck clearly demonstrates that cooperation among merchants and religious institutions during trade voyages had developed much further than the era of the voyage of the wooden planks.

Murai Shōsuke suggests that the Sinan shipwreck was probably not much different from an ordinary merchant ship, and other ships named after religious institutions were probably similar; the prestigious religious institutions were simply shareholders among many others.[40] When the monasteries collaborated with sea merchants and set out trade expeditions under the name of raising funds for construction, the trade expeditions undoubtedly had additional purposes beyond simply gaining money to erect Buddha halls or meditation rooms. Raising funds to repair or expand a monastic complex was possibly a

[38] John W. Chaffee, "The Impact of the Song Imperial Clan on the Overseas Trade of Quanzhou," in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 34; Fu Zongwen 傅宗文, "Houzhu guchuan: Song ji nanwai zongshi haiwai jingshang de wuzheng," 後渚古船：宋季南外宗室海外經商的物證, *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 2 (1980).

[39] Fu, "Houzhu guchuan," 80; Zhuang Weiji 莊為玑 and Zhuang Jinghui 莊景輝, "Quanzhou Song chuan mupai muqian kaoshi" 泉州宋船木牌木簽考釋, in *Quanzhouwan Songdai haichuan fajue yu yanjiu*, ed. Fujian sheng Quanzhou haiwai jiaotongshi bowuguan 福建省泉州海外交通史博物館 (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 2017), 211–16.

[40] Murai, "Jisha zōeiryō tōsen o minaosu," 130.

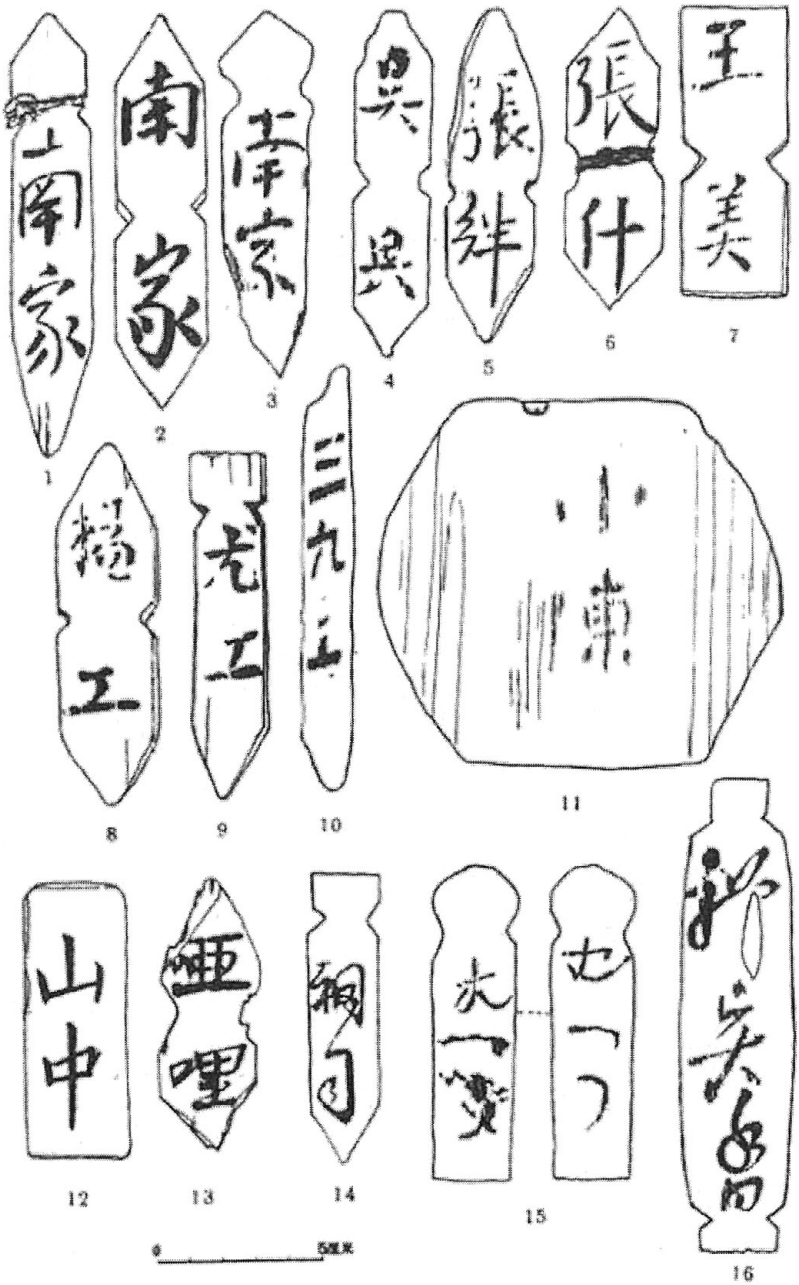


Figure 8 Wooden slips recovered from the Quanzhou Bay shipwreck. The three wooden slips on the upper-left corner were all labeled "Nanjia" 南家 (Southern Family). Courtesy of the Maritime History Museum Quanzhou.

cover – not too different from other obscure Buddhist language to disguise the nature of the commercial business in which the monks were engaged. The participating monasteries in the trade expeditions also suggest the multiple missions inherent in the journeys. Of the many religious institutions in Japan, the monasteries participating in the trade were mostly prestigious ones closely connected with the bakufu or eminent courtiers, and the merchants thus obtained protection from their powerful trade partners. The "ships to China for financing monastery construction" served commercial, religious, and even political purposes, as the following section demonstrates.

For Commercial Profit and Buddhist Transmission: The Kenchōji Monastery Ship

While the Sinan shipwreck has left behind only archaeological evidence, a different ship going from Japan to China and back to Japan again – the Kenchōji ship – has left documentary evidence in both Chinese and Japanese. As such, it allows us to closely examine the players involved, to observe how the Yuan received ships of this kind, and to discern the purpose of the voyage.[41]

In the seventh month of 1325, two years after the Sinan ship sank, a local governor of Kyushu ordered, on behalf of the Kamakura bakufu, that housemen (*gokenin* 御家人), vassals whose duty was to protect the imperial court and the bakufu – should guard the Kenchōji ship from the twenty-first day of that month to the fifth day of the following month.[42] This ship was probably at the port of Hakata and needed to wait for favorable winds to sail for China. According to the document, the housemen were also supposed to guard the sea route in Hakata Bay when the ship set sail.[43]

This request from the Kamakura bakufu indicates the special position of the Kenchōji ship, which derived directly from the privileged position of the Kenchōji monastery which, as noted earlier, was among

[41] Enomoto Wataru has carefully researched the Kenchōji ship and located the key sources pertaining to it. See Enomoto Wataru, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika" 建長寺船の派遣とその成果, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji* 東アジアのなかの建長寺, ed. Murai Shōsuke (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2014).

[42] Takeuchi Rizō, ed., *Kamakura ibun* 鎌倉遺文 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1971–91), no. 29155, 37:354.

[43] Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 202.

the most prestigious monasteries in Kamakura Japan. Founded in 1253 by Hōjō Tokiyori 北條時頼 (1227–63), the fifth Kamakura bakufu regent, the monastery had deep connections with China: the first abbot, Lanxi Daolong 蘭溪道隆 (1213–78) – like Enni, was also a disciple of Jingshan monastery abbot Wuzhun Shifan. He had arrived in Japan from China in 1246 and died at the Kenchōji monastery in 1278.[44] And the monastery hosted many eminent monks from China, including Yishan Yining, the Yuan emperor Temur's envoy.[45]

The Hōjō clan's patronage of Zen Buddhism in Kamakura significantly increased after the political struggles within the bakufu in 1246 and 1247, when the former shogun Kujō Yoritsune (Kujō Michiie's son, as mentioned in the previous chapter) and Hōjō Tokiyori fought for control of the bakufu.[46] In the early thirteenth century, the *kenmitsu* (exoteric and esoteric) monks followed Kujō Yoritsune from Kyoto to Kamakura and formed the core of the religious system of the Kamakura bakufu. With the fall of Yoritsune, many of the *kenmitsu* monks were exiled, and Hōjō Tokiyori needed new forces to reconstruct the religious system in Kamakura.[47] Zen monks happened to be the most suitable candidates at the time.

[44] Martin Collcutt, "Lanxi Daolong (1213–1278) at Kenchōji: Chinese Contributions to the Making of Medieval Japanese Rinzai Zen," in *Tools of Culture: Japan's Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000s–1500s*, ed. Andrew Edmund Goble, Kenneth R. Robinson, and Haruko Wakabayashi (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2009).

[45] "Kenchōji ryaku nenhyao," 建長寺略年表, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji* 東アジアなかの建長寺, ed. Murai Shōsuke 村井章介 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2014), 435–36.

[46] In 1244, Hōjō Tsunetoki 北条経時 (1224–46), Hōjō Tokiyori's brother, forced the bakufu shogun Kujō Yoritsune to abdicate to his six-year-old son Kujō Yoritsugu 九条頼嗣 (1239–56). Later Kujō Yoritsune was exiled from Kamakura to Kyoto. See Jeffrey P. Mass, "The Kamakura bakufu," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 3: *Medieval Japan*, ed. John W. Hall, Marius B. Jansen, Madoka Kanai, and Denis Twitchett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87.

[47] Nakamura Tsubasa 中村翼, "Kamakura bakufu to Zenshū" 鎌倉幕府と禅宗, in *Higashi Ajia naka no Kenchōji* 東アジアなかの建長寺, ed. Murai Shōsuke 村井章介 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2014); Itō Kōji 伊藤幸司, "Hakata to Kamakura: Kamakura jidai no Nihon zenshū kai" 博多と鎌倉: 鎌倉時代の日本禅宗界, in *Higashi Ajia no naka no Kenchōji*, 46.

For a detailed analysis of the *kenmitsu* system, see Kuroda Toshio, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," trans. James C. Dobbins, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23.3 (1996); Taira

Chinese migrant Chan monks like Lanxi Daolong played a key role in promoting Zen Buddhism in Kamakura.[48] It is worth noting that apparently timing was of the utmost importance in the development of Zen. Although an eminent monk, Lanxi Daolong did not come to Japan under any invitation from authorities – he left China to escape Mongol rule and chose to go to Kamakura likely to avoid the unsettling situation in Kyoto following the political struggles.[49] But after Lanxi Daolong served as the founding abbot of the Kenchōji monastery, Chinese Chan masters became essential for the Zen monasteries in Kamakura.

The Hōjō regents were committed to inviting prominent Chinese Chan masters to Kamakura, many of whom became abbots at monasteries there. After Lanxi Daolong died in 1278, Hōjō Tokimune 北条時宗 (1251–84), Tokiyori's successor as regent, sent an invitation letter to China, hoping to find another Chinese Chan master to succeed Daolong. In his letter, Tokimune mentioned that he had been supporting Buddhism for years and had built up monastery complexes to host monks, but he always thought that "the trees have their roots and the springs have their fountainhead," so he wanted to invite masters from China to help him promote Zen Buddhism.[50] Wuxue Zuyuan 無學祖元 (1226–86), also one of Wuzhun Shifan's disciples, accepted the invitation and arrived in Japan in 1279.[51] Hōjō Tokimune venerated Zuyuan and developed a close relationship with him; when Tokimune founded the Engakuji 円覚寺 monastery in Kamakura in 1282, Zuyuan also became the first abbot there.[52]

Zen Buddhism emphasizes lineage relations between teachers and disciples, as suggested by Hōjō Tokimune's invitation. For one thing, it was important for disciples to receive certificates from their masters showing that they obtained legitimate transmission of Zen enlightenment. Enni Ben'en received his certificate from Wuzhun Shifan, and being Shifan's disciple significantly raised his reputation and led to his

Masayuki, "Kuroda Toshio and the *Kenmitsu Taisei* Theory," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23.3 (1996).

48 Collcutt, "Lanxi Daolong (1213–1278) at Kenchōji," 147–58.

49 Nakamura, "Kamakura bakufu to Zenshū," 239–41; Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 66.

50 Jiang Jing 江靜, *Fu Ri Songseng Wuxue Zuyuan yanjiu* 赴日宋僧無學祖元研究 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2011), 106.

51 Jiang, *Fu Ri Songseng Wuxue Zuyuan yanjiu*, 108.

52 Jiang, *Fu Ri Songseng Wuxue Zuyuan yanjiu*, 143–57.

success in Japan.[53] As we have seen, Shifan's other disciples – Lanxi Daolong and Wuxue Zuyuan – continued to obtain crucial leadership positions in the Zen monasteries in Kamakura. The importance of lineage in Zen Buddhism and the Hōjō regents' enthusiasm for bringing Chinese Chan monks to Kamakura were fundamental to the initial voyage of the Kenchōji ship, from 1325 to 1326.

When the Kenchōji ship returned from China in 1326, the housemen in Kyushu again received orders. A different Kyushu governor requested that the housemen prepare to transport to Kyoto the cargo carried by the "ship[s] to China to finance the construction of Shōchōjuyin and Kenchōji monasteries."[54] Once the Kyushu housemen transported the cargo as far as Kyoto, another group would take over for the rest of the journey to Kamakura.[55] The other monastery mentioned in the same document, the Shōchōjuyin monastery, was also closely related to the Kamakura bakufu. It is most likely that both monasteries had cargo on one ship, just as the Sinan shipwreck was carrying goods from different religious institutions. The Kenchōji monastery was the more important of the two, so the 1325 document ordering the housemen in Kyushu to guard the ship only mentioned the Kenchōji monastery.[56]

It seems that the Kenchōji monastery indeed gained considerable profit from this voyage and invested at least part of the money in expanding the monastery complex. At the end of 1327, one year after the return of the Kenchōji ship, the Kenchōji monastery completed rebuilding the Buddha hall and Dharma hall, as well as ten residential buildings for monks.[57]

Apart from earning trade profits, the bakufu and the Kenchōji monastery also sent the ship to China with the goal of promoting Zen Buddhism in Japan. The Kenchōji ship to China carried at least two Zen monks who were affiliated with the Kenchōji monastery. They were Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月 (1300–75) and Fumon Kaimon 不聞契聞 (1301–68), who both studied under Dongming Huiri 東明慧日

[53] The certificate Enni received from Shifan is included in *Zenrin Bokuseki*, 12.
[54] Takeuchi, *Kamakura ibun*, no. 29599, 38:154.
[55] Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 202.
[56] It may also be possible that these were two different ships in the same fleet, but the extant evidence is not enough to confirm either possibility at this point. Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 203.
[57] Takagi Sōkan 高木宗監, *Kenchōji shi: Kaisan Daikaku zenshi den* 建長寺史：開山大覚禪師伝 (Kamakura: Daihonzan Kenchōji, 1989), 179–87; Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 210.

(1272–1340), the abbot of Kenchōji when the ship was being prepared. Dongming, who was originally from Ningbo, had been invited to Japan in 1309 by Hōjō Sadatoki (the regent who had invited Yishan Yining to become abbot of Kenchōji) and had taught at several monasteries in Kamakura before heading the monastery.[58] In addition to sending these two disciples to Yuan-dynasty China, the Kenchōji ship also brought Chinese Chan monks back to Kamakura. More than twenty Chinese monks boarded the Kenchōji ship traveling to Japan in 1326, the most prominent of whom was Qingzhuo Zhengcheng 清拙正澄 (1274–1339), the future abbot of Kenchōji, who took office in 1327 only several months after his arrival.[59] Zhengcheng did not likely board the Kenchōji ship by chance; the Kenchōji monastery would have invited Zhengcheng and arranged the trip in advance.[60] Since bringing monks from the Kenchōji monastery to China and carrying eminent Chan masters back to Kenchōji was a crucial goal of the Kenchōji ship, the sea merchants probably accommodated the Kenchōji schedule so that Zhengcheng could arrive on time for the abbot position.

The Chinese side recorded that a ship from Japan arrived at Changguo 昌國 County of Ningbo, in the ninth month of 1325 and was allowed to land at Dinghai 定海 County of Ningbo, the month after. Although no Chinese evidence specifically mentions anything about the Kenchōji monastery, given the arrival and departure dates of this ship, the unnamed vessel must have been the Kenchōji ship.[61]

When the Kenchōji ship arrived at the bay near Ningbo, Ma Zhu 馬鑄, the governor of Zhedong Circuit 浙東道, was assigned to supervise the trade. According to a later essay applauding his accomplishments, Governor Ma had consolidated the official troops and sent out patrol boats to show the extent of measures to protect the port. Governor Ma also had dismissed the corrupt clerks who took advantage

[58] Chūgan Engetsu 中巖円月, "Jirekifu" 自暦譜, in *Tōkai ichiō shū* 東海一漚集, in *Gozan bungaku zenshū* 五山文学全集, Vol. 2 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1992), 149–51; "Fumon kashō gyōjyō" 不聞和尚行状, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1929), 236:594; Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 203–4.

[59] Dongling Yongyu 東陵永璵, "Qingzhuo Dajian chanshi taming" 清拙大鑑禪師塔銘, in *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 続群書類従, ed. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1929), 230:420.

[60] Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 210.

[61] Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 126–27; Enomoto, "Kenchōji sen no haken to sono seika," 206.

of overseas merchants and instructed the local commoners not to have contact with people from Japan.[62] After the riots of 1309, the Yuan court required that officials prevent the people on ships from entering Ningbo city but that trade continue. Governor Ma did everything strictly according to the regulations about overseas trade. He established a separate area for conducting foreign trade apart from local markets and residential areas. The process of inspecting the goods from and trading with the Kenchōji ship took 137 days.[63]

At that time, it seems that the identity of a trade ship's sponsors did not affect how the ship was treated in Yuan China. Governor Ma treated the Kenchōji ship just like an ordinary trade ship from Japan, and he probably did not even know that a Japanese monastery had invested in the ship. The record on the Chinese side further confirms that Japanese ships identified as those raising funds for monastery construction were essentially trade ships operated by ordinary merchants. No special treatment was granted after the ship arrived in China. However, considering the bakufu's protection of the Kenchōji ship and assistance with transporting cargo while it was in Japanese territory, the Kenchōji monastery's role as a major trade partner in the expedition was a great benefit to the merchants.[64] The rigid restrictions imposed by the government in Ningbo and the extended process of inspection also increased the risks in the trade expedition, and having a bakufu-sponsored, prestigious monastery as a major participant would help in coping with unexpected incidents, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Kamakura: Consuming Continental Goods and Joining the Network

The Kenchōji ship brought back to Kamakura not only the money for construction at the monastery complex but also continental objects

[62] Yuan Jue 袁桷, "Ma yuanshuai fang wo ji" 馬元帥防倭記, in *Qingrong jushi ji* 清容居士集 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936), 19:1.

[63] Yuan Jue, "Ma yuanshuai fang wo ji," in *Qingrong jushi ji*, 19:1–2.

[64] Mori Katsumi sees the Kenchōji ship and others like it as ships licensed by the bakufu (*kōkyosen* 公許船). Murai Shōsuke, as mentioned earlier, believes that those ships were not much different from ordinary trade ships, and he points out that although we see ships under the protection of the bakufu or the court, no ship was sent directly by the court. Enomoto Wataru did not go deeply into discussing the nature of the Kenchōji ship, but he points out that "*kōkyosen*" was a term in the fifteenth century but not a term for that period, and using "*bakufu sen*" or "*shogun sen*" to describe those ships is better.

desired by the bakufu authorities. After all, the bakufu requested that housemen transport some cargo all the way from Hakata to Kamakura.[65] If the Kenchōji monastery only wanted its share of the profits from this voyage, the merchants would have been allowed to sell the commodities they brought back and present the cash profits to the Kenchōji monastery. This request confirms that the Kenchōji monastery and its patron bakufu wanted not only cash but also specific objects from China.

The cargo packaging on the Sinan shipwreck also attests to the monasteries' demand for continental goods. According to Jianan Fan and Haichao Li's archaeological analysis, the cargo recovered from the Sinan shipwreck had been packed in two distinctive ways by the sea merchants.[66] A large portion of the cargo had been loaded and packed according to its kind and origin: inside the wreck, red sandalwood had been placed at the bottom of each compartment of the hull, with bronze coins and metal ingots on top of the red sandalwood. Among the intact thirty-six wooden containers, some contained a single type of item, such as one case of pepper only, and one case of sixteen white glazed flower vases produced by the same kiln in Zhejiang. The cargo loaded in this pattern was likely for general sale. Meanwhile, some wooden cases held items of different materials and from various places of origin. Although of similar size and volume, those wooden cases varied considerably in the quantity and types of items that they contained. For example, one case held only fifteen artifacts and several coins, while another contained 366 items. The wooden cases with peculiar sets of contents were most likely commissioned by prominent Japanese customers and should have been delivered to them directly upon the ship's arrival, just as the records of the Kenchōji ship suggested.[67]

After Chinese Chan masters introduced the Chinese monastic lifestyle to the Japanese Zen monasteries, Japanese Zen monks and their aristocratic patrons enthusiastically pursued continental goods to use in formal rituals or individual home worship. High-quality ceramics – especially the celadon produced in the Southern Song official kiln of Longquan 龍泉 (in modern Zhejiang Province), not far from the port

[65] Takeuchi, *Kamakura ibun*, no. 29599.

[66] Jianan Fan and Haichao Li, "On-Demand Maritime Trade: A Case Study on the Loading of Cargo and the Packaged Goods of the Sinan Shipwreck," *Journal of Maritime Archaeology* 16 (2021): 166–74.

[67] Fan and Li, "On-Demand Maritime Trade," 182.

of Ningbo – were particularly popular. More than 10,000 Longquan celadon vessels were recovered from the Sinan shipwreck.[68] Longquan celadon was probably especially prized in Japan during the Kamakura period because, as Meili Yang has written, it "not only possessed the Southern Song imperial ware's corona, but also became the best endorsement of Southern Song art and culture."[69]

A contemporary collection – the Kanesawa Collection (Kanazawa/Kanesawa bunko 金沢文庫) – was formed around the same time as the voyages of the Kenchōji and Sinan ships and offers a further glimpse of the types of Chinese goods valued by Japanese collectors. The collection – which at its core was a library with a large number of rare Chinese books – was founded in 1275 near Kamakura by Hōjō Sanetoki 北條実時 (1224–76, also called Kanesawa Sanetoki 金沢実時). The Kanesawa Hōjō family patronized multiple Buddhist monasteries and continuously built up the collection. Sanetoki's grandson, Kanesawa Sadaaki 金沢貞顕 (1278–1333), sent a ship to Yuan-dynasty China with the stated purpose of financing the construction of the Kantō Great Buddha in 1329.[70] On its return, this ship was loaded with artifacts and many aromatics and spices – desirable commodities among the Japanese aristocracy since Ennin's day.

The Kanesawa Hōjō family collection contains delicate Chinese ceramics.[71] Figure 9 is a Chinese Longquan celadon from the Kanesawa collection. Figure 10 shows a celadon vessel recovered from the Sinan shipwreck that is similar in shape to the one in the Kanesawa Hōjō family collection.[72] Unlike the Heian aristocrats in the tenth and eleventh centuries, who preferred lacquerware to Chinese ceramics, the Hōjō owners even customized a stand just to display this celadon, indicating their high appreciation for this Chinese artifact.

[68] Fan and Li, "Study on the Departure Port of the Sinan Shipwreck," 8–10; Meili Yang, *The Circulation of Elite Longquan Celadon Ceramic from China to Japan: An Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Study* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2018), 87.

[69] Yang, *Circulation of Elite Longquan Celadon Ceramic from China to Japan*, 98.

[70] Murai, "Jisha zōeiryō tōsen o minaosu," 121–23.

[71] Kanagawa kenritsu Kanazawa bunko 神奈川県立金沢文庫, ed., *Yomigaeru chūsei: Kamakura Hōjō-shi no ihō : Kanagawa kenritsu Kanazawa bunko shinchiku kaikan kinenten* よみがえる中世：鎌倉北条氏の遺宝：神奈川県立金沢文庫・新築開館記念展 (Kyoto: Benridō, 1990), 32.

[72] Shen, *Da Yuan fanying*, 137.

Figure 9 A celadon vase on a customized stand. Property of the Shōmyōji monastery (preserved by Kanagawa Prefectural Kanazawa-Bunko Museum). Courtesy of the Shōmyōji monastery and Kanagawa Prefectural Kanazawa-Bunko Museum.

Figure 10 A celadon vase recovered from the Sinan shipwreck. Collection of the National Museum of Korea. Accession no. Sinan 1014. Korea Open Government License Type 1 material.

Furthermore, because most Zen monasteries discourage the use of precious metals as worshipping utensils, ceramics were the best substitutes.[73] Ceramic incense burners, flower vases, and tea bowls were all in great demand. One wooden case recovered from the Sinan shipwreck contained grinding stones (for grinding tea leaves into tea powder), Longquan celadon bowls, black-glazed bowls from the Jian 建 kilns in Fujian, a brown-glazed four-handled jar, and bronze incense burners – a full set of tea ware used by Japanese Zen monasteries for their tea ceremonies.[74] About forty black-glazed tea bowls made at the Jian kilns were recovered from the Sinan shipwreck. This kind of tea bowl was

[73] Yang, *Circulation of Elite Longquan Celadon Ceramic from China to Japan*, 98.
[74] Fan and Li, "On-Demand Maritime Trade," 178–79.

called a "Jian cup" (建盞 C. *Jianzhan*; J. *Kensan*), named for the place where these were manufactured. They were popular in the Song, and many were reserved only for imperial use, but they were rarely produced in the Yuan. The Jian cups from the Sinan shipwreck are actually all Song antiques.[75] In the fourteenth century, despite having lost popularity on the continent, they were highly appreciated by the upper classes in Japan, where tea drinking had become more prevalent.

Sending ships to trade with China indeed helped raise funds for monastery construction. The ships carried Japanese products to China – most likely gold, mercury, sulfur, and handicraft articles like lacquerware – and sold the cargo under Chinese officials' supervision in Ningbo. The ships also brought back from the continent books, fragrances, ceramics, and artifacts desired by the bakufu and the monasteries. Importantly, they helped to promote Zen Buddhism by facilitating the exchange of Buddhist personnel among Chinese and Japanese monasteries. In Nakamura Tsubasa's analysis, the Kamakura bakufu was not keen to participate in overseas trade until the second half of the thirteenth century, when the consumption of ceramics in Kamakura had increased. The bakufu's rising interest in overseas trade was initially driven by its desire to promote Zen Buddhism in Kamakura and to develop Kamakura – which was originally no more than a garrison town – into an urban center; both goals required Chinese objects and a share of the profit from trade.[76]

The network the monks and merchants had been building and expanding over the previous centuries greatly contributed to the successful participation, of both the monasteries and bakufu leaders in Kamakura, in the religious and commercial exchanges between China and Japan. Kamakura joined the preexisting network linking southeastern China, Hakata, and Kyoto via the intermediary of key Buddhist figures, such as Enni Ben'en. Enni, as Chapter 5 has demonstrated, maintained profound connections to China, Hakata, and Kyoto. After Enni left the Jōtenji monastery, the abbot position there

[75] Saeki, "Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan," 168, 178–79; Shen, *Da Yuan fanying*, 23.

[76] Nakamura Tsubasa 中村翼, "Kamakura chūki niokeru Nissō bōeki no tenkai to bakufu" 鎌倉中期における日宋貿易の展開と幕府, *Shigaku zasshi* 史学雑誌 119.10 (2010).

was continuously occupied by his disciples.[77] Thus, when Enni was invited by Hōjō Tokiyori to assume the position of abbot at the Jūfukuji 寿福寺 monastery in Kamakura in 1257, this extended Zen Buddhist connections from Hakata and Kyoto to Kamakura.[78] Even when Enni was away from Hakata or Kamakura, he still managed to consolidate his ties to those places. In 1279, when Wuxue Zuyuan (who had studied with Enni at the Jingshan monastery in China) had just arrived in Hakata, Enni, from his post in Kyoto, learned the news and sent a warm welcoming message to him. The two monks frequently wrote to each other after Zuyuan became the abbot of the Kenchōji monastery.[79] The close relationship between important Zen masters such as Enni and Zuyuan bound Zen communities in Hakata, Kamakura, Kyoto, and even southeastern China closely together. The Kamakura monasteries' Buddhist connections were both favorable assets in conducting trade and the driving force for them to go to China, since they demanded instruction from the Chinese Chan masters as well as Chinese objects.

When compared with trade in the early thirteenth century, a new pattern emerged in Yuan–Kamakura trade, namely that the Japanese monasteries played a larger role than did their Chinese counterparts. When the Jōtenji monastery traded with the Jingshan monastery in the 1240s, the monasteries on both sides actively participated. Between the mid-thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the Japanese Zen monasteries received more support directly from the bakufu, but they do not seem to have had powerful trade partners in China. The defensive measures toward trade ships that had been strictly imposed at Chinese ports probably limited what the Chinese monasteries could do for their Japanese counterparts. The merchants and monks on the monastery ships from Japan had to deal with the Yuan officials on their own.

The Kamakura bakufu collapsed in 1333, and its successor, the Ashikaga bakufu (1336–1573, also called the Muromachi 室町 bakufu), which was based in Kyoto, was also headed by a shogun, and it ruled in the name of the emperor. The Ashikaga bakufu continued to support Zen monasteries and played an even more direct role in sending trade ships to China.

[77] Itō, "Hakata to Kamakura," 55. [78] Tetsugyū, *Shōichi kokushi nenpu*, 140.
[79] Jiang, *Fu Ri Songseng Wuxue Zuyuan yanjiu*, 162–66.

Reopening Trade with China: The Tenryūji Monastery Ship

Around 1342, Chūgan Engetsu, the monk who had visited China in 1325 on the Kenchōji ship, wrote a poem to thank a friend for his gift of a celadon incense burner:

> *My country Japan is suffering from turbulence, and many people have left home.*
> *It has been ten years since people have seen continental goods for sale.*
> *The prices of objects from the lower Yangzi delta have all skyrocketed, let alone ceramics which are the most difficult to transport.*[80]

This poem described how the ten-year suspension of Sino-Japanese trade from the early 1330s to the early 1340s led directly to an increase in the price of continental goods in Japan. The suspension of trade between the 1330s and 1340s can also be confirmed by other documents. Riots at Chinese ports caused by pirates around the mid-1330s and the changing political atmosphere on both sides contributed to the suspension.[81] The biography of one Ningbo governor named Elezhetu 諤勒哲图 – who was probably a Mongol – recorded one such riot. In the middle of the night, more than forty armed "*wonu*" 倭奴 (Japanese barbarians) entered the Ningbo harbor by taking advantage of the tide. It seems that this group of *wonu* had inside collaborators in Ningbo, since Elezhetu "collected the gold that the *wonu* used to bribe the officials and returned it to the *wonu*," hoping to make the *wonu* leave peacefully. The *wonu* left Ningbo but soon went to Changguo, a nearby county, and raided fourteen trade ships and 130 houses there.[82] In the end, Elezhetu boarded a large ship, captured the *wonu* leader, and persuaded the *wonu* to return all of their plunder.[83]

Since biographies always tend to exaggerate the feats of the people they depict, it is more likely that the problem of raiders from Japan persisted and that Ningbo remained under the threat of plunder. We have seen that the 1309 riots in Ningbo caused the Yuan court to fortify its defenses there, but while the new procedures enhanced the

[80] Chūgan Engetsu, *Tōkai ichiō shū*, 1.
[81] Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 154–55.
[82] Cheng Duanli 程端禮, "Gu Elezhetu gong xingzhuang" 故諤勒哲圖公行狀, in *Weizhai ji* 畏斎集 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1975), 6:13.
[83] Cheng, "Gu Elezhetu gong xingzhuang," in *Weizhai ji*, 6:14.

inspection of trade ships and increased the difficulties of regular trade, they also drove people to find other ways to gain profit. In the 1330s, as Engetsu's poem depicts, the civil wars in Japan caused considerable unrest, which actually also exported the military conflicts to Korea and China.[84] As Andrew Cobbing puts it, "Japan's civil wars at home and pirate raids abroad thus did not develop independently of each other. They were part of the same struggle."[85] The Matsura-tō 松浦党, a loose confederation of coastal communities in northwest Kyushu, gained a reputation for their naval power and ability to move on the seas. They once cooperated with the Kamakura bakufu's representatives in Kyushu and were involved in the defensive activities during the Mongol invasions. But at the time of the civil wars, the Matsura-tō also devoted themselves to overseas raiding.[86]

Accordingly, the Yuan court stopped welcoming people and ships coming from Japan. Soon after the last emperor of the Yuan, Emperor Shundi Toghon Temür (1320–70, r. 1333–68), assumed the throne, the grand counselor Boyan 伯顔 gained control over almost all the important matters of the country and, according to *The History of Yuan*, "made disturbing changes to the existing practices set by previous emperors."[87] Perhaps under Boyan's guidance, court officials suggested banning all contact with Japan. For example, one official said

[84] Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 (1288–1339) tried to restore monarchical powers, and with the support of Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–58) and some other vassals, overthrew the Kamakura bakufu in 1333. Ashikaga Takauji established his new headquarters in Kyoto, but Emperor Go-Daigo planned to create a government centered on the throne, so in 1336 Ashikaga Takauji enthroned another emperor, Kōmyō 光明. Takauji was appointed as bakufu shogun in 1338. Emperor Go-Daigo fled Kyoto and founded a rival court in Yoshino, south of Nara. Only in 1392 did the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu, succeed in reunifying the two dynastic lines and ending the civil wars. For more details, see John Whitney Hall, "The Muromachi Bakufu," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 3: Medieval Japan, ed. John W. Hall, Marius B. Jansen, Madoka Kanai, and Denis Twitchett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 183–93.

[85] Cobbing, *Kyushu: Gateway to Japan*, 134.

[86] Cobbing, *Kyushu: Gateway to Japan*, 123–24, 133–34.
For a systematic study of Japanese pirates, see Peter D. Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2014).

[87] *Yuanshi*, 138:3335.

that since the Japanese had not submitted to the Yuan, the Yuan court should not allow them to come to China.[88]

Between 1332 and 1342, the limited written evidence records no trade voyages between China and Japan. In 1342, however, a ship that sailed for the "financing of the construction of Tenryūji monastery" in Kyoto effectively ended the suspension of Sino-Japanese trade. *Tenryūji zōei ki* (天龍寺造営記 "The record of constructing the Tenryūji monastery"), an account written around 1342 by Shun'oku Myōha 春屋妙葩 (1312–88), who later became the tenth abbot of the monastery, preserves three documents relevant to this voyage. In the twelfth month of 1341, Ashikaga Tadayoshi 足利直義 (1306–52), brother of the Ashikaga bakufu founder Ashikaga Takauji, wrote a letter to Musō Soseki 梦窓疎石 (1275–1351), the first abbot of Tenryūji monastery.[89] In the letter, Ashikaga Tadayoshi mentioned that the ships to China had stopped going since the Genkō 元弘 reign (1331–34). Even so, the Ashikaga bakufu approved the Tenryūji monastery's request to send two ships to China to finance the construction of its monastic complex. Tadayoshi urged Soseki to start the preparations as soon as possible, so that the ships could leave the following autumn.[90]

The Tenryūji monastery had been established at Musō Soseki's suggestion. Shortly before Emperor Go-Daigo's death in the summer of 1339, Soseki had a dream about his close friend and patron Emperor Go-Daigo, who had helped him become one of the most influential monks in Kyoto.[91] In his dream, Soseki saw Go-Daigo, dressed in a monk robe entering the Kameyama palace in the west of Kyoto on a phoenix cart.[92] Emperor Go-Daigo had been the rival of Ashikaga Takauji and Tadayoshi during the civil war and had been exiled to Mount Yoshino after the Ashikaga brothers secured power.

[88] Huang Jin 黃溍, "Zishan dafu hexi longbei dao suzheng lianfang shi kailiegong shendaobei" 資善大夫河西隴北道肅政廉訪使凱烈公神道碑, in *Jinhua huangxiansheng wenji* 金華黃先生文集 (Beijing: Beijing Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin, 2009), 25:342.

[89] Shun'oku Myōha 春屋妙葩, "Tenryūji zoei ki" 天龍寺造営記, in *Tenryūji* 天龍寺, ed. Daihonzan Tenryūji 大本山天龍寺 (Kyoto: Toyo bunkasha, 1978), 258.

[90] Shun'oku Myōha, "Tenryūji zoei ki," 258.

[91] Martin Collcutt, "Musō Soseki," in *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 276–82; Daihonzan Tenryūji, ed., *Tenryūji* (Kyoto: Toyo bunkasha, 1978), 59.

[92] Collcutt, "Musō Soseki," 284.

Soseki persuaded Takauji and Tadayoshi to build a memorial to pacify Emperor Go-Daigo and to prevent him from becoming a vengeful spirit. The Ashikaga brothers welcomed the proposal and agreed that the Kameyama palace would be converted into a Zen monastery.[93]

Building the Tenryūji monastery served manifold purposes. In addition to pacifying Go-Daigo's troubled spirit, it was also meant to show the Ashikaga brothers' benevolence and to atone for the loss of life they had caused in the war. Meanwhile, perhaps more importantly, Takauji and Tadayoshi also took this as an opportunity to gain more control of religious affairs; soon after the construction of the Tenryūji monastery officially started, the Ashikaga bakufu announced changes to the Five Mountains system and ranked Tenryūji monastery second, below only Nanzenji 南禅寺 monastery in Kyoto.[94] Moreover, as Tadayoshi's letter suggests, the Ashikaga leaders noticed the long suspension of trade with China and hoped that this construction could be a convenient occasion to resume trade.

Construction at the Tenryūji monastery began in the fourth month of 1340 and took six years to finish. In the early stages, money came from donations by bakufu-controlled estates. Ashikaga Takauji himself made donations from at least four estates in 1340.[95] However, the monastic history compiled by Tenryūji suggests that the money from the estates was still not enough to cover expenditures, which led to the dispatch of the Tenryūji ship.[96] It is noteworthy that Ashikaga Tadayoshi appeared to be very enthusiastic – even more so than the Tenryūji clergy – regarding the trade expedition.

Even though Tadayoshi approved sending two ships, Tenryūji prepared only one ship at this time, a further indication that the move to resume trade was probably more important than the total amount of profit that the monastery could gain from the journey. Tadayoshi allowed the Tenryūji monastery to select the ship manager, and the monastery soon reported to Tadayoshi that it had chosen a Hakata merchant named Shihon 至本, who was also a monk, to lead the trip.[97] Shihon wrote a note, effectively a guarantee, stating that, "no matter whether the trade goes well or not, when the ship returns, I will present

[93] Collcutt, "Musō Soseki," 284.
[94] Daihonzan Tenryūji, ed., *Tenryūji*, 61. For the chart of changes in the rankings of the Five Mountains monasteries, see Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 110.
[95] Daihonzan Tenryūji, *Tenryūji*, 63.
[96] Daihonzan Tenryūji, *Tenryūji*, 63.
[97] Shun'oku Myōha, "Tenryūji zoei ki," 258; Daihonzan Tenryūji, *Tenryūji*, 63.

5,000 strings of cash to the Tenryūji monastery."[98] Shihon's note demonstrates the uncertain nature of trading with the Yuan at this point. Due to the suspension of trade in the preceding decade, neither the bakufu nor the Tenryūji monastery knew whether Yuan officials would receive this trade ship, so it was important to have Shihon's promise beforehand.[99]

Japanese and Chinese materials both describe the Tenryūji ship's arrival in Ningbo, and as the Japanese patrons had feared, the ship did encounter some trouble. The biography of a Japanese monk, Guchū Shūkyū 愚中周及 (1323–1404), who was on board, recorded that after they arrived in Ningbo, the Chinese governor Zhong thought the Tenryūji ship was a pirate ship, so he led thousands of boats to form defenses against it on the sea. The person who oversaw this trade ship – likely the previously mentioned Buddhist merchant Shihon – sent a letter to Governor Zhong to explain its purpose, but Zhong remained suspicious of them and did not allow the Japanese ship to land.[100]

For one year, the Japanese ship waited in the harbor for approval to land. After some time, the people on board ran out of water, so Shūkyū and other monks performed ritual ceremonies to bring rain. Suddenly thick clouds gathered, and a heavy rain poured down. The several hundred people on the ship all survived thanks to the timely rain, Shūkyū's hagiography explains. Even Governor Zhong was amazed by the miraculous scene, this Japanese language source concludes, and allowed the merchants from the Tenryūji ship to land and trade.[101]

Records on the Chinese side do not mention the miraculous rain, but they do confirm the arrival and trade activity of a Japanese ship at this

[98] Shun'oku Myōha, "Tenryūji zoei ki," 258.

[99] Scholars hold different opinions of Shihon's note. Enomoto Wataru thinks that the 5,000 strings of cash were the value of the cargo that the Tenryūji monastery or the Ashikaga bakufu entrusted to Shihon; Hashimoto Yū 橋本雄 thinks the money was unrelated to the value of the cargo and was just a present for the bakufu in exchange for its permission; while Nakamura Tsubasa argues that the money was actually the tolls that were supposed to be collected by the Ashikaga bakufu. See Nakamura Tsubasa 中村翼, "Nichigen bōekiki no kaishō to Kamakura Muromachi bakufu: Jisha zōeiryō tōsen no rekishi teki ichi" 日元貿易期の海商と鎌倉室町幕府：寺社造営料唐船の歴史的位置, *Hisutoria* ヒストリア 241 (2013).

[100] Isshō Zenkei 一笑禅慶, *Guchū Shūkyū nenpushō* 愚中周及年譜抄 (manuscript preserved in the Historiographical Institute, University of Tokyo), cited in Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 150.

[101] Isshō, *Guchū Shūkyū nenpushō*.

time. In an essay celebrating the completion of his term, an official named Zhu Zizhong 朱子中 in East Zhejiang (the region containing Ningbo) mentions that "for a long time, the Japanese *wo* merchants have not come, but the previous year, their ship again arrived at Dinghai (a county of Ningbo)."[102] This was the Tenryūji ship.[103] Despite the disparities in detail, both Chinese and Japanese records concur that when the Tenryūji ship arrived, the officials in Ningbo did not allow it to land, but that in the end the merchants were able to conduct trade as they wished.

The monks on board this ship, however, were not as fortunate. According to Shūkyū's biography, although Governor Zhong was impressed by the monks' practice, only the merchants received permission to land and trade. To fulfill his wish of pursuing Buddhist teachings, Shūkyū secretly sought help from a Chinese merchant, who generously agreed to assist him. At night, the merchant came to the Tenryūji ship on a small boat and took Shūkyū and his companions to Ningbo.[104]

The Tenryūji ship carried more than sixty monks in total, but only Shūkyū's group managed to land at Ningbo.[105] Seventeen of Qingzhuo Zhengcheng's disciples also sailed from Japan on the ship, very likely in the hope of inviting Chinese monks to write eulogies for their deceased teacher, who had died in Japan in 1339. Since no ships left for China during those years, the disciples' first opportunity to go to China did not arrive until 1342 with the voyage of the Tenryūji ship.[106] They took another small boat and tried to secretly land at Ningbo, just as Shūkyū had done, but they were caught by guards near the shore. Shūkyū's biography records that Governor Zhong was so outraged that he ordered the execution of all seventeen monks. When the other monks still on the Tenryūji ship heard that the monks had been killed, they decided to return to Japan.[107]

No extant records show how much Shihon, the captain designate of the Tenryūji ship, profited from this trip and whether or not he paid the

[102] Cheng Duanli, "Song Zhu Zizhong kaoman xu" 送朱子中考滿序, in *Weizhai ji* 畏斎集 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1975), 4:12.
[103] For more detailed analysis on identifying the ship in Chinese sources, see Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 143–44, 152.
[104] Isshō, *Guchū Shūkyū nenpushō*.
[105] Isshō, *Guchū Shūkyū nenpushō*.
[106] Enomoto, *Higashi Ajia kaiiki to Nicchū kōryū*, 152–53.
[107] Isshō, *Guchū Shūkyū nenpushō*.

Tenryūji monastery the 5,000 strings of cash as he had promised. The construction of Tenryūji monastery, however, was virtually completed by 1344, and Tenryūji planned to hold in 1345 a celebration ceremony that would mourn the seventh anniversary of the death of Emperor Go-Daigo.[108] Before then the Enryakuji monks, who had long been trying to obstruct the development of Zen monasteries, demanded that Tenryūji be demolished and Soseki be banished from the capital. Enryakuji's armed appeal to make their demand to the shogun, however, provided an opportunity for the Ashikaga bakufu to assert its control: the bakufu leaders threatened to confiscate all the resources of Enryakuji if the monks continued their protests. The memorial ceremonies at Tenryūji proceeded as scheduled, and the new shogun's strength was duly displayed.[109]

The Zen monastery's purpose in sending the Tenryūji ship becomes even clearer when viewed in the broader context of the ritual system in fourteenth-century Japan. A conventional argument proposes that Ashikaga's patronage of Zen and the building of the Five Mountains system in Kyoto indicates that Zen institutions displaced the *kenmitsu* system and the "new" Buddhism displaced the "old" Buddhism.[110] But as Conlan forcefully demonstrates, the Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism was actually the dominant power block among religious institutions in Japan then, and Shingon monks could sometimes perform important rituals at Zen monasteries. For example, in 1346 the powerful Shingon monk Kenshun 賢俊 (1299–1357) performed rituals at the newly built Tenryūji, which he also repeatedly visited in the company of Ashikaga Takauji.[111] Both Ashikaga Takauji and Tadayoshi showed profound interest in Shingon Buddhism – they believed that their military victories were assisted by the Shingon rituals and incantations, which further legitimated the Ashikaga shoguns' power in their competition with the court.[112]

Given that few of the Ashikaga shoguns actually practiced Zen, it is puzzling that they chose to patronize Zen Buddhism. The Ashikaga bakufu leaders valued Zen monks for the same reason that the Kamakura bakufu had. Zen Buddhism served as a crucial and

[108] Daihonzan Tenryūji, *Tenryūji*, 64. [109] Collcutt, "Musō Soseki," 286.
[110] For a summary of the old arguments and their representatives, see Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 28–29.
[111] Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 29, 110.
[112] Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 93–116.

convenient link to the Chinese continent, which had been a constant source of desirable goods and cultural practices for Japan, as traced in this book, over multiple centuries. The Kamakura bakufu relied on the Chinese immigrant Zen monks and the monastery ships to enhance their capital of Kamakura. The Ashikaga bakufu inherited the strategy. The Ashikaga leaders specifically chose to build a Zen monastery – but not temples of other Buddhist sects – to pacify Emperor Go-Daigo's spirit and utilized the opportunity to dispatch the trade expedition, as described earlier. They also assigned many diplomacy-related tasks to Zen monks because of their acquaintance with the Chinese language and culture and long exposure to cultural exchanges.[113]

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that with the rise of Musō Soseki and Musō's lineage, Zen Buddhism in Japan also entered a new stage. Soseki himself had never been to China and showed little interest in going there. While Soseki had studied under Yishan Yining (the Chan master who came to Japan originally as the Mongol emperor's envoy), he did not obtain recognition of his enlightenment from Yining, who deemed his approach to Zen as too bookish. Soseki nonetheless promoted the Japanese elements in Zen: he wrote many of his dharma lectures and Zen poetry, which was typically written in classical Chinese, in Japanese instead. Also, compared with the Chinese Chan masters invited by the Kamakura bakufu, Soseki's Zen was more open and tolerant toward esoteric and devotional elements.[114]

The shift away from Chinese-style Chan facilitated new changes in the religio-commercial network. Having never traveled to China himself, Soseki declared that since Zen Buddhism was already well rooted and flourishing in Japan, Japanese Zen monks no longer needed to view China as a source of transmission.[115] Soseki's view suggests that after more than seven centuries, the intense religious exchanges between China and Japan had begun to wane, and Japanese monks no longer felt the urge to study on the continent. However, the

[113] For example, Shun'oku Myōha, the author of *The Record of Constructing the Tenryūji Monastery*, was vigorously engaged in many diplomatic decision-making processes in the early years of the Ashikaga bakufu. See Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, "Shun'oku Myōha to gaikō: Muromachi bakufu shoki no gaikō niokeru zensō no yakuwari" 春屋妙葩と外交：室町幕府初期の外交における禅僧の役割, in *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon* アジアのなかの中世日本 (Tokyo: Azekura shobō, 1988).

[114] Collcutt, "Musō Soseki," 293.

[115] Collcutt, "Zen and the *gozan*," 595.

Japanese desire for continental goods and trade profits remained strong. This was why the Ashikaga brothers sent the Tenryūji ship to China. As discussed earlier, although their ostensible purpose was to build the monastery, their actual goal was to reopen trade with the continent. With the Ashikaga bakufu's heavy endorsement and strong desire to reestablish commercial connections, the Tenryūji ship served as an important transition from the earlier unofficial trade to the resumption of the formal tribute trade in the early fifteenth century.

When, starting from the 1330s, domestic riots and rebellions spread in China, eventually causing the collapse of the Yuan dynasty, the Ashikaga bakufu grasped the opportunity to establish relations with a new dynasty and embedded itself solidly in Sino-Japanese trade in the subsequent decades.

Conclusion

Over the course of the Yuan dynasty, while the Kamakura bakufu never submitted to the Mongol emperors, the religious and commercial exchanges between the continent and the archipelago remained active. The Yuan rulers encouraged overseas trade in general but were cautious of ships from Japan and fortified the defenses in Ningbo, the most important Sino-Japanese trade port in this period.

Between the 1270s and early 1330s, except for the years of the two Mongol invasions, merchant ships from Japan arrived in China almost every year, and sometimes in a fleet of multiple ships.[116] After the constant and stable unofficial exchanges of the previous centuries, China and Japan were already closely connected. Japan was in great demand of Chinese bronze coins for the monetary circulation in its domestic markets, so we see Japanese merchants arriving during the interval of the two invasions asking to exchange gold for bronze coins, and we see the evidence in the twenty-eight tons of coins in the Sinan shipwreck. Japanese monastic rituals needed many Chinese artifacts, as noted throughout the book, and the bakufu rulers also needed continental goods to facilitate the transformation of Kamakura into a thriving center of religion, commerce, and culture.

Many Chinese Chan masters arrived in Japan, either by invitation or fleeing from Mongol rule, strengthening further the religious ties

[116] Gao, *Yuandai haiwai maoyi yanjiu*, 84–95.

between China and Japan. Well into the fourteenth century, the sporadic riots of armed merchants and growing piracy increasingly became obstacles to Sino-Japanese trade. The intertwined religious and commercial networks that had formed earlier grew more prominent, probably because more than ever the traders needed strong connections to the authorities for protection against uncertainties during the voyages. The Zen monasteries became the foremost participants in trade expeditions during this unsettling period. Although under the Mongols' tight control, their counterparts in China could not provide much assistance, the seeds planted in the pre-Yuan era nonetheless continued to grow. As outlined in this chapter, monasteries with connections to the continent – like Tōfukuji and Kenchōji – were the most active participants. Trade was supported by the Kamakura bakufu, which provided protection to the sailing ships, and the bakufu regents collected many Chinese books in their libraries and displayed Chinese celadon vessels on customized stands.

Buddhist connections still performed multiple functions. The Yuan Chengzong emperor dispatched Yishan Yining as his envoy to China because of his Buddhist ties. And, of course, when Sino-Japanese trade was suspended for a decade, the newly founded Ashikaga bakufu also chose to use a ship named to rebuild the Tenryūji monastery to reopen the trade. The authorities on both sides recognized Buddhism as a common ground that could reduce friction and provide a space for them to negotiate.

Thus, as the next chapter illustrates, when China and Japan decided to resume their diplomatic relationship and to restart the tribute trade after a suspension of more than half a millennium, their shared belief in Buddhism again played a crucial role.

7 *Resuming Tribute Relations and the Aftermath of the Religio-commercial Network, 1368–1403*

In 1403, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358–1408), the third shogun of the Ashikaga bakufu, dispatched to China a delegation of more than 300 people, led by the abbot of the Tenryūji monastery, Kenchū Keimitsu 堅中圭密. He and two other Japanese monks, as messengers to the Ming court, were also accompanying the Ming emperor's monk envoys back to China. More importantly, they carried a letter in which Yoshimitsu called himself the "King of Japan" 日本国王, a title placing himself below the Chinese emperor. This letter helped to officially reestablish the tribute relationship between China and Japan. This delegation also carried many tribute products, as detailed in the following section, including popular Japanese goods such as sulfur, but also items that had barely been traded before, such as horses, spears, swords, and armor.[1]

In the eleventh month of 1403, Emperor Yongle 永樂 of the Ming (1360–1424, r. 1402–24) sent a delegation of eighty Chinese persons to accompany Yoshimitsu's messengers back to Japan, along with gifts of a court robe, fine fabric, and a golden seal for "the King of Japan."[2] The Yongle emperor's ambassador also delivered about 100 tallies (勘合, Ch. *kanhe*; J. *kangō*) bearing the inscription "Japan" to Yoshimitsu, which verified the authenticity of the tribute ships.[3] Thereafter, the tribute relationship between China and Japan – suspended after the embassy in 838 – officially resumed.[4] The protocol

[1] Zuikei Shūhō, *Zenrin kokuhōki*, 369; Tanaka Takeo with Robert Sakai, "Japan's Relations with Overseas Countries," in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Ithaca, NY: East Asian Program, Cornell University, 2001), 163–65.

[2] Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 323:8345.

[3] The tallies were cut into halves, and one half was retained by the Chinese authorities. Each tribute boat had to possess a tally, and the Chinese officials in charge would use the half that China kept to verify the authenticity of the tally.

[4] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 113–16.

and proscriptions surrounding tribute trade in the Ming, described throughout this chapter, highlight just how remarkable were the private Sino-Japanese exchanges – facilitated by monasteries and conducted through merchants – over the centuries of the hiatus.

Sino-Japanese Relations under the Ming Founder, 1368–1398

It had taken the Ming court and the Ashikaga bakufu more than three decades to establish formal relations, and the resumption of the tribute relationship resulted directly from the Ming dynasty's policies on overseas trade. In 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–98; r. 1368–98), a low-born Han Chinese, overthrew Mongol rule and became the founding Hongwu 洪武 emperor of the Ming dynasty. The Ming court took a very different position on overseas trade than that of the Song and Yuan dynasties: it banned private foreign trade shortly after the dynasty's establishment. In 1368 and 1371, Zhu Yuanzhang issued edicts forbidding his subjects to leave the country, and he fortified the coast. In 1374, the Maritime Trade Superintendency, which had overseen private trade between China and foreign countries since the tenth century, was abolished.[5]

The first two measures were taken primarily to solve the problem of piracy – which had been continuously escalating, as the previous chapter described. Abolishing the Maritime Trade Superintendency, however, signaled a fundamental turn in China's foreign policy, because private foreign trade, the metier of the monk–merchant network, henceforth became illegal. Tribute trade – which was controlled by the government and so was not private in nature – became the only

[5] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 111; *Ming huiyao* 明會要, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō* 日明勘合貿易史料, ed. Yutani Minoru 湯谷稔 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1983), 30.

For Zhu Yuanzhang's maritime policy and its aftermath, see Gang Zhao, "Reconstructing the Authority of the Ancestor: Zhu Yuanzhang's Role in the Evolution of Ming Maritime Policy, 1400–1600," in *Long Live the Emperor! Uses of the Ming Founder across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, ed. Sarah Schneewind (Minneapolis, MN: Society for Ming Studies, 2008). For the discussion on the transition of maritime policy from Yuan to Ming, also see Ma Guang 馬光, *Rupture, Evolution, and Continuity: The Shandong Peninsula in East Asian Maritime History during the Yuan–Ming Transition* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021).

option for foreign countries wanting to trade legally with China.[6] After centuries of sustaining commercial exchanges, from the last Japanese embassy to Tang-dynasty China in 838 up to the new Ming era, the Japanese had to find another way to trade with China.[7]

At the same time that it banned private foreign trade, the Ming court also actively sought to establish tribute-trade relationships with other countries, including Japan. In 1369, one year after he founded the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched envoys to Southeast Asia and Japan to announce his enthronement and invite tribute, with the purpose of legitimizing his sovereignty.[8] The Ming envoy to Japan, however, did not reach the Ashikaga bakufu in Kyoto. At that time, two courts still coexisted on the archipelago as they had since 1336.[9] The Ashikaga bakufu supported the Northern Court in Kyoto, whose emperor, Kōmyō 光明 (1322–80, r. 1336–48), had been enthroned by the first Ashikaga shogun, Ashikaga Takauji, thus providing legitimacy to the bakufu; while the Southern Court in Yoshino retained control of Kyushu Island – the gateway to China. Thus, after he landed in Kyushu, the Ming envoy was taken to Prince Kaneyoshi 懐良親王 (1329–83, also known as Prince Kanenaga), son of Emperor Go-Daigo.

After receiving no response from the first mission, Zhu Yuanzhang dispatched another envoy to Japan in 1370. Criticizing piracy, Zhu Yuanzhang threatened to attack Japan if it did not submit to China. The following year, Prince Kaneyoshi sent a delegation of ten monks to China, where they presented a letter, along with horses and local products, and returned more than seventy Chinese who had been taken prisoner by pirates. The Ming founder bestowed Buddhist robes and fine fabric on the Japanese monks and dispatched eight Chinese monks

[6] Danjō Hiroshi 檀上寛, *Eirakutei: Chūka "sekai shisutemu" e no yume* 永楽帝: 中華「世界システム」への夢 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997), 56.

[7] Iwai Shigeki has discussed the ban on private foreign trade and the tributary trade in the Ming in great detail. See Iwai, *Chōkō, kaikin, goshi*, chs. 1 and 2.

[8] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 16; Brook, *Troubled Empire*, 220.

[9] See Chapter 6. Because Emperor Go-Daigo's court in exile in Yoshino, Nara Prefecture, was located south of Kyoto, it was called the Southern Court, while the court that remained in Kyoto was called the Northern Court. The Northern Court in Kyoto appointed Ashikaga Takauji as the first shogun in 1338. See Hall, "Muromachi Bakufu," 183–88.

to accompany their delegation back to Japan with his gifts to Prince Kaneyoshi, which included fine fabric and a Chinese calendar.[10]

The exchanges between the Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang and Prince Kaneyoshi differed from the tribute and return gifts exchanged by the Tang and Japan. Prince Kaneyoshi's gifts were much simpler than the tribute Japanese embassies brought to the Tang court, which usually included over 500 ounces of silver and 3,000 bolts of fabric, among many other things. Compared to the gifts bestowed by the Tang emperors, such as fine brocades and silver plates weighing over 100 ounces, the Ming founder's return gifts were much simpler too.[11] The Chinese calendar, however, was more significant and indicated the Ming founder's intention to reestablish tribute relations; adopting the Chinese calendar and using the Chinese reign titles in official documents would symbolize Japan's acceptance of the role of tributary to the Ming. Despite the intent of this gesture, Prince Kaneyoshi, however, seems never to have used Chinese reign years in any documents or letters to the Ming emperor.[12]

Both Prince Kaneyoshi and the Ming founder dispatched monks as envoys, just as the Mongol emperor Chengzong had done when sending Yishan Yining as his envoy in 1299 after the Mongol invasions of Japan. Yishan Yining was at first imprisoned in Japan, as discussed in Chapter 6, but by the early Ming, Chinese and Japanese authorities both accepted the norm of utilizing religious clergy to establish their tribute relationship. It is worth noting that the Ming founder did not initially dispatch monks as envoys; it was Prince Kaneyoshi who started sending monks, and the Ming founder responded in the same manner. In the previous centuries, as this book has shown, Buddhist figures and institutions had more than a few times played a crucial role in facilitating the advance of Sino-Japanese relations, and the Japanese authorities were increasingly dependent on the monks in diplomatic matters. Although the Ming founder did not normally use monks to

[10] *Mingshi*, 322:8342; *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 17–18.

[11] For the tribute presented by Japan and the Tang emperors' return gifts, see Fujiwara no Tokihira 藤原時平 et al., ed., *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunsha, 2000), 30:738, and Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之, *Kentōshi sen: Higashi Ajia no naka de* 遣唐使船：東アジアのなかで (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1999), 132–38.

[12] Murai Shōsuke 村井章介, ed., *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon: Ajia no naka no kenminsen* 日明関係史研究入門：アジアのなかの遣明船 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2015), 30–34.

establish relations with other countries, when reminded of their importance to the Japanese, he changed his practice.

The exchanges between Prince Kaneyoshi and the Ming founder in 1370 did not lead directly to the reestablishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and Japan. Other players in Japan were trying to take advantage of the recent foundation of the Ming to build up a relationship with the new dynasty, or simply to make profit from sending "tribute." In 1374, the Northern Court in Kyoto – Prince Kaneyoshi's rival – also dispatched monks to bring horses and local products to the Ming court. However, their gifts were turned down by the Ming founder, who maintained that Prince Kaneyoshi was the legitimate ruler of Japan.[13] Around the same time, a governor of northeast Japan also sent monks to present horses, tea, textiles, swords, and fans, but the Ming court also rejected these presents because the governor was not entitled to present tribute. Two years later, a Japanese merchant who traveled to the Ming capital and presented bows, swords, armor, horses, and sulfur, was refused for a similar reason.[14] Apparently, the Ming court wanted to build up a tribute relationship only with the ruler it recognized in Japan and chose to deny other players a chance to conduct tribute trade.

Prince Kaneyoshi, however, as the only legitimate tribute presenter from Japan recognized by the Ming during the 1370s, was unable to fulfill the Ming court's expectations. In 1376 and 1379, Prince Kaneyoshi presented horses, swords, armor, and sulfur to the Ming founder, while the emperor reciprocated with fine fabric. But in 1380, the Ming founder turned down Prince Kaneyoshi's presents because Kaneyoshi's monk envoys did not carry an authorized letter. In the following year, Prince Kaneyoshi's Buddhist envoys were rejected again, and this time the Ming founder even sent back a letter accusing Kaneyoshi of arrogance and insincerity. From then on, the Ming court never again accepted presents from Prince Kaneyoshi.[15]

We can see that Prince Kaneyoshi's envoys traveled to the Ming court very frequently and that the delegations were always headed by monks. But the delegations do not seem to have been large, since the records only mention a few monks' names, and the gifts they carried were likely

[13] *Mingshi*, 322:8342; *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 19.
[14] *Mingshi*, 322:8343; *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 20.
[15] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 20–23; Murai, ed., *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon*, 30–34.

small in number too. Notably, the "tribute" goods presented by Prince Kaneyoshi's envoys were not much different from those brought by the local governors or the merchants mentioned earlier.

One difference in the new era of trade with the Ming was the regular addition of horses, which had not been common among the tribute gifts or exchanged commodities before. On many occasions, the Ming only recorded the presents as "horses and local products" (*ma ji fangwu* 馬及方物). Given that the Ming was still under threat from Mongol tribes in the north, horses were precisely the kind of presents they needed.[16] The "local products" from Japan in the late fourteenth century included weapons such as swords and spears, artifacts like fans, and sulfur. The weapons were new on the list of Japanese exports. The growing warrior class and warrior culture in the archipelago must have led to increasing production of weapons, which allowed for exports. As we see further below, Japanese delegations bringing swords and spears even triggered opposition in the Ming court.

Just at the time when Prince Kaneyoshi had begun to lose the favor of the Ming, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu dispatched a delegation to the Ming founder in 1380.[17] That same year, the Ming founder charged his prime minister, Hu Weiyong 胡惟庸, with conspiring with hostile foreign forces – the Japanese, and perhaps also the Vietnamese and Mongols – to assassinate him and overthrow the Ming dynasty. Hu Weiyong was executed, which led to years of succeeding purges and the further execution of tens of thousands of officials at all levels.[18] In 1386, a former Ningbo governor, Lin Xian 林賢, was reported to be involved in an attempted conspiracy to rebel against the Ming founder.[19] Although the whole conspiracy charge was likely a pretext to allow the Ming founder to eliminate potential rivals, the rumor that Hu Weiyong had sent Lin Xian to request help from Japan to

[16] The Ming court later was keen to import horses via trade with Southeast Asia and South Asia, too. The horses were brought to South Asia from West Asia. See Tansen Sen, "Diplomacy, Trade and the Quest for the Buddha's Tooth: The Yongle Emperor and Ming China's South Asian Frontier," in *Ming China: Court and Contacts, 1400–1450*, ed. Craig Clunas, Luk Yu-Ping, and Jessica Harrison-Hall (London, British Museum, 2016), 32–33.

[17] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 21.

[18] Brook, *Troubled Empire*, 89–90.

[19] *Mingshi*, 322:8344; Danjō Hiroshi 檀上寬, *Mindai kaikin = Chōkō shisutemu to Kai chitsujo* 明代海禁 = 朝貢システムと華夷秩序 (Kyoto: Kyōto daigaku gakujutsu shuppankai, 2013), 241–76.

overthrow the Ming dynasty caused even harsher restrictions on private trade.[20]

Likely with Japan as the main target, the Ming founder reinforced the ban on private foreign trade in 1390. He strictly prohibited communication with foreign countries, saying:

> Since the earlier eras, gold, silver, bronze coins, fine fabric, and weapons were not allowed to leave China for overseas trade, but the people who live in Guangdong, Guangxi, Zhejiang, and Fujian are ignorant. They always collude with foreigners and make transactions with them in private. Thus, it is necessary to strictly prohibit these. The soldiers, residents, and officials in the coast region, whoever engages in private trade or allow others to trade, will be punished.[21]

Recall the records of smuggling bronze coins out of China in the Song dynasty and the twenty-eight tons of coins recovered from the Sinan shipwreck. The Ming founder was clearly aware that a large number of these forbidden commodities had been smuggled out of China despite bans in previous dynasties.

The Ming court, however, rigorously enforced the ban, since it was meant to secure the safety of the sovereign, which took priority over the economic interests of the country. As a result, the Ashikaga bakufu could not sponsor and send trade ships to China as it had done for the voyage of the Tenryūji ship in 1342 (see Chapter 6). To obtain continental goods and trade profits, the bakufu had no choice but to reestablish the tribute trade with the Ming.

Reestablishing Tribute Relations: The Yongle Emperor and Ashikaga Yoshimitsu

After he finally unified the two courts under the regime in Kyoto in 1392, the shogun Yoshimitsu began to present himself as the de facto ruler of Japan.[22] In 1399, he dispatched his first official envoy to

[20] Jinping Wang, "The Great Ming and East Asia: The World Order of a Han-Centric Chinese Empire, 1368–1644," in *Empires in Asia: A New Global History*, Vol. 1: *From Chinggisid to Qing*, ed. Jack Fairey and Brian P. Farrell (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 64.

[21] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 23.

[22] Hall, "Muromachi Bakufu," 192; Imatani Akira and Kozo Yamamura, "Not for Lack of Will or Wile: Yoshimitsu's Failure to Supplant the Imperial Lineage," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 18.1 (1992).

Korea. In 1401, he sent a letter to the Jianwen emperor 建文帝 (r. 1398–1402), who had succeeded the Ming founder to the throne. The Jianwen emperor responded immediately by sending two Chinese monks to escort Yoshimitsu's envoy home, along with a letter, and gifts of a calendar and twenty bolts of silk.[23] Unlike his grandfather Zhu Yuanzhang, the Jianwen emperor offered a welcoming gesture to Yoshimitsu, primarily because Jianwen was facing a challenge for the throne from his uncle, the future Yongle emperor, and receiving tribute from Japan would help increase his authority.[24] By sending the Chinese calendar to Yoshimitsu, the Jianwen emperor was indicating a request for Yoshimitsu's allegiance.

In responding to the Jianwen emperor's delegation, Yoshimitsu dispatched the mission mentioned at the beginning of this chapter – the one headed by the Tenryūji abbot carrying the letter in which Yoshimitsu referred to himself as "King of Japan." Yoshimitsu was aware that the Jianwen emperor was in the middle of a struggle with the future Yongle emperor, so the delegation shrewdly prepared two letters, one for Jianwen and one for the future Yongle emperor.[25] When the delegation landed in China in 1403, the Yongle emperor had just ascended the throne. To adjust to this new situation, the Tenryūji abbot, Kenchū Keimitsu, suggested that the Japanese delegation switch their mission from one of gratitude for Jianwen's message and gifts, to one celebrating the Yongle emperor's enthronement.[26]

The Yongle emperor harbored great ambitions for expanding the influence of the Ming and building an empire, and as a usurper, he was also in great need of recognition and tribute from foreign countries to establish his legitimacy.[27] Yoshimitsu's timely submission perfectly fit his agenda. To further development of the network between China and Japan, when the Ashikaga bakufu's delegation showed an obvious desire to trade for profit, the Yongle emperor granted their wishes.

[23] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 113; Murai, *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon,* 34.
[24] Danjō, *Eirakutei*, 94–121.
[25] Murai, *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon*, 6.
[26] Zuikei Shūhō, *Zenrin kokuhōki*, 369.
[27] Danjō, *Eirakutei*, 199; Valerie Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1800*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 352–53. For the Yongle emperor consolidating his power, see David M. Robinson, *Ming China and Its Allies: Imperial Rule in Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Significantly, of the more than 300 members in Yoshimitsu's 1403 delegation, many were actually merchants. They brought many more tribute gifts than those presented by Prince Kaneyoshi and the other unauthorized tribute presenters of the 1370s and 1380s. Moreover, unlike the records that described the previous gifts simply as "horses and local products," the Ming governmental documents meticulously recorded the tribute gifts of 1403, which included 20 horses, 10,000 pounds of sulfur, 32 agates weighing over 200 pounds in total, 3 folding-screens with gold backgrounds, 1,000 spears, 100 swords, 1 suit of armor, 1 ink stone with a box, and 100 fans.[28] The large quantity of sulfur and the numerous weapons indicate that a major part of the tribute gifts were essentially commodities that the delegation members intended to sell to the Ming.

The large number of spears and swords brought by Yoshimitsu's delegation provoked discontent in the Ming court.[29] The Minister of Rites pointed out that foreign envoys carrying weapons to sell for profit was against the law. But the Yongle emperor said:

> In admiration of the Middle Kingdom, barbarians come to bring us tribute. They cross the perilous sea and trudge a path over thousands of miles. The route is distant and the expenses of their voyage are considerable. So it is understandable that they bring things for sale to cover their costs. How can we restrict everything according to the bans? . . . Since the weapons cannot be sold in the public market, the government will purchase them at the usual price in China. We shall not let the laws and prohibitions restrict them. To do so would be contrary to the generous intentions of the imperial court and would discourage the desire of distant peoples to pledge their allegiance. This is the most important point.[30]

The Yongle emperor was clearly aware that the Japanese delegation intended to profit from their tribute mission, and he allowed that. This contrasts greatly with Ennin's day, when his fellow envoys in the 838 delegation encountered many difficulties in even making purchases in the Tang markets. The Ming emperor, who seemed to take a more lenient

[28] Zuikei Shūhō, *Zenrin kokuhōki*, 369.
[29] Von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, 114.
[30] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 83. A similar passage is in *Mingshi*, 322:8344–45.

view on foreign trade, understood that economic returns were crucial motivations for the "distant peoples to pledge their allegiance."[31]

The Ming records did not provide a full list of the exact amount of the return gifts from the Yongle emperor in 1403. But in 1405, when Yoshimitsu again sent envoys to present horses, local products, and captives seized by Japanese forces, the Yongle emperor presented the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu with 500 strings of bronze coins, 5,000 monetary notes worth another 750–1,000 strings of bronze coins in total, 378 bolts of fine fabric, and another court robe.[32] In 1394, the Ming founder had tried unsuccessfully to replace bronze coins with paper money, but these efforts eventually failed, due to the severe depreciation of the monetary notes. Yongle resumed coinage between 1408 and 1410, and bronze coins continued to serve as a medium of diplomatic exchange.[33] The following year, in 1406, the Yongle emperor dispatched envoys to bring more gifts for Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (see Table 2).[34] Yongle's return gifts seemed to be of great value, and Yoshimitsu must have been satisfied with the profit from the tribute trade, because he sent tribute delegations to the Ming court very frequently – every year until he died in 1408.[35]

Some charged Ashikaga Yoshimitsu with sacrificing the dignity of the country in exchange for economic profit – because he was willing to use the submissive designation "King of Japan." However, as Hashimoto Yū argues, in addition to the financial gain from the trade, the shogun also utilized this tributary relationship – which was established directly between him and the Ming emperor – as a symbol to demonstrate to the Japanese domestic audience that his power was greater than that of the emperor.[36] Also, the Ashikaga rulers, like the leaders of the Kamakura bakufu, showed a strong interest in Chinese

[31] A similar situation occurred in the tribute trade between the Ming and Southeast Asian states. When the Ming court officials proposed to levy a tax on the commodities – peppers – brought by the tribute presenters from Southeast Asia (Lani 剌泥), the Yongle emperor objected. See Sen, "Diplomacy, Trade and the Quest for the Buddha Tooth," 32.

[32] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 84.

[33] Richard von Glahn, "Chinese Coin and Changes in Monetary Preferences in Maritime East Asia in the Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 57 (2014): 633–34.

[34] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 84.

[35] *Ming shilu*, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, 84–86.

[36] Hashimoto Yū 橋本雄, *Chūka gensō: Karamono to gaikō no Muromachi jidai shi* 中華幻想：唐物と外交の室町時代史 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2011), 6.

Table 2 ***Japanese tribute gifts and Ming return gifts***

1403 Japanese Tribute Gifts	1405 Ming Return Gifts
20 horses	500 strings of bronze coins
10,000 pounds of sulfur	5,000 monetary notes (worth another 750 to 1,000 strings)
32 agates	378 bolts of the fine fabric
1,000 spears	1 court robe
100 swords	
1 suit of armor	**1406 Ming Return Gifts**
100 fans	1,000 ounces of silver
3 folding screens	200 bolts of fine fabric
1 ink stone with a box	60 embroidered robes
	3 silver teapots
	4 silver plates
	other artifacts such as cushions, mattresses, and tableware
	2 ships

artifacts. The tribute delegations to the Ming became a source for the Ashikaga leaders to acquire the Chinese artifacts, which they enthusiastically used to decorate their residences, aiming to create luxurious dwellings worthy of a sovereign.[37]

The resumption of the tribute trade between China and Japan was doubtless a significant change in the East Asian regional order, but the newly established tribute network reflected the legacy of the earlier religio-commercial network. Monks and merchants were still among the main actors in the tributary exchanges: Japanese monks – especially the masters from prominent Zen monasteries – assumed the duties of handling diplomatic matters with China and appraising the value of Chinese artifacts; the Ashikaga bakufu, as discussed earlier, was already actively involved in the trade expedition of the Tenryūji ship. In the tribute-trade era, the Zen masters, such as the abbot of the Tenryūji monastery, remained among the leaders of the expeditions. Later, prestigious monasteries, such as Tenryūji and Shōkokuji 相国寺, frequently participated in the tribute trade by sending ships with the tribute delegations, as did powerful

[37] Hashimoto, *Chūka gensō*, 35, 117.

warlords (*daimyō* 大名, or vassals of a shogun) such as Ōuchi 大内 and Hosokawa 細川.[38] A contemporary diary recorded that the 1403 delegation conducted trade by the order of warlords.[39] Many warlords and religious institutions actively participated in the tribute trade and took considerable shares of the profit. The bakufu, warlords, and monasteries even designed a set of measures for calculating and dividing the responsibilities and benefits of the tribute trade with the Ming.

The later development of the tribute trade is beyond the scope of this study, but the prominent role played by Buddhist figures and institutions in the resumed tribute trade was the product of the previous six centuries when there had been no official tribute trade. Furthermore, the prosperous private trade during the hiatus legitimized the desire to exchange objects and gain profit – as reflected in the Yongle emperor's words supporting the Japanese delegation's sale of weapons. The candid expression of economic motives in the tributary relations marked the tribute trade in the Ming as different from that of the Tang dynasty.

The Materiality of the Religio-commercial Network, 839–1403

We have seen that over the preceding six centuries, despite the suspension of diplomatic relations and multiple changes of dynasty in both places, people never stopped traveling between the continent and the Japanese archipelago and commodities never stopped circulating. A fundamental reason for the constant growth of the religio-commercial network was that in the absence of the tribute trade, it alone moved the concrete objects that were continuously in high demand on the other side of the sea.

Although for the six centuries we only have scattered records about the volume of trade, they nonetheless demonstrate the strong desire for commercial exchanges on both sides. We can, for example, take as evidence of the degree of Japanese aristocrats' enthusiasm for Chinese goods, the fact that in Ennin's day – despite the high risks of sea voyages and the strict control imposed by the Tang government on private trade – the Japanese court dispatched four ships to China with

[38] Murai, *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon*, 32.
[39] *Yoshida-ke hinamiki* 吉田家日次記, in *Nichi-Min kangō bōeki shiryō*, ed. Yutani Minoru 湯谷稔 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1983), 47.

about 650 people on board. From the mid-ninth to the eleventh centuries, extant records do not give direct evidence of the volume of the trade, but we know that private merchants traveled frequently enough between China and Japan that the monks could rely on them not only for sea passage but also to convey messages and pass gifts on in a timely manner. Given that the merchant ships traveled much more often than the tribute delegations – about one ship every year compared to one delegation every fifteen years – the volume of the unofficial trade between the late ninth and eleventh centuries probably already surpassed the scale of tributary exchanges in the previous era. And it likely kept going up in the ensuing centuries. In the twelfth century, the Chinese quarter in Hakata (the subject of extensive discussion in Chapter 4), was home to at least hundreds of sea merchant households, and the thousands of ceramic fragments excavated from that area indicate that the trade conducted there was of significant volume. When the Jōtenji monastery sent 1,000 wooden planks to the Jingshan monastery in 1244, we know that at least three ships were in that merchant fleet. Even though the unsettled situation between the Mongol Yuan and Japan and the rise of piracy increased the unpredictability of the trade expeditions, merchant ships from Japan arrived in China almost every year between the 1290s and early 1330s, while the Sinan shipwreck and the cargo recovered underwater attests to the enormous volume of the trade.

After the tribute trade resumed between the Ming dynasty and the Ashikaga bakufu, the volume of trade was massive. The tribute lists contain only a fraction of the goods for exchange, since many more goods were traded by the merchants who accompanied the delegations. The 1403 tribute delegation to the Ming was made up of more than 300 people, while the tribute delegations after the 1430s sometimes included as many as ten ships.[40] Those records suggest that throughout the six centuries the demand for commercial exchanges between China and Japan had been constant and continued at that high level after the tribute trade resumed.

As noted across this book, some commodities were continuously on the list of the most popular goods.[41] The need for those goods was the

[40] Murai, *Nichi-Min kankeishi kenkyū nyūmon*, 32–33.

[41] For a comprehensive list of trade goods among China, Japan, and Korea in different periods, see von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*, app. 7; for the imported and exported goods in the trade between Japan and Song China, see

constant across the centuries that kept China and Japan coming back to trade with each other. For the goods that China imported from Japan, take sulfur for example. In the late tenth century, the Japanese monk Chōnen asked one of his disciples to bring 700 pounds of sulfur to Emperor Taizong of the Song. In 1309, merchants from Japan lit the sulfur they had brought to Ningbo for sale and burned down a large part of the city, while in the early Ming, the 1403 delegation brought 10,000 pounds of sulfur as part of the tribute gifts from Ashikaga Yoshimitsu.[42]

Among the goods that Japan constantly imported from China, aromatics and medicines were at the top of the list. In the ninth century, Ennin's fellow embassy members spared no effort to purchase aromatics and medicines in the markets in the lower Yangzi region of the Tang, and the merchant Gao Feng tried to use his connection to Enchin to present medicinal herbs to the newly enthroned Japanese emperor. Four centuries later, the ships named for monasteries still carried aromatics and spices from Mongol-ruled China to Kamakura – more than 1,000 pieces of red sandalwood sank with the Sinan shipwreck to the southwest of the Korean peninsula.[43]

Ceramics were another prominent example. In the ninth century, the Xu brothers always brought ceramic bowls and plates from China to Yikong as their gifts, and in the eleventh century, when Jōjin answered Emperor Shenzong's question about what Chinese products Japan desired most, he specifically mentioned tea bowls. Ceramics also leave a clear footprint in archaeological excavations as in the dump site for damaged ceramics near the Chinese quarter in Hakata and the 20,000 pieces recovered from the Sinan shipwreck. Exquisite and precious pieces also appeared on customized shelves in the bakufu leaders' residences and were applauded in Japanese poems.

The sulfur, aromatics, and ceramics became highly demanded commodities because they were scarce in the places that imported them.

Mori Katsumi 森克己, *Shintei Nissō bōeki no kenkyū* 新訂日宋貿易の研究 (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2008), 143–57, 197–208.

[42] Yamauchi Shinji has done thorough research on the trade of sulfur between China and Japan. See Yamauchi, *Nissō bōeki to "iō no michi."*

[43] For the Japanese consumption of aromatics and the aromatics trade conducted by Chinese merchants, also see Valerie Hansen, *The Year 1000: When Explorers Connected the World and Globalization Began* (New York: Scribner, 2020), 199–203, 214–15.

Some other goods, however, were popular, not because they were rare or hard to acquire but because importing them was economically efficient. The best examples are China's importation of Japanese lumber, and Japan's acquisition of Chinese coins. As Chapter 5 explains, because of the heavy taxation on domestic lumber in China, importing lumber from Japan was actually cheaper than using Chinese lumber. Japanese lumber, although a type of bulky good, turned out to be among the most popular commodities from Japan, and Chinese commoners would purchase Japanese lumber to make coffins, while many prestigious Chinese monasteries used Japanese lumber for construction.

The twenty-eight tons of bronze coins excavated from the Sinan shipwreck are clear evidence of the enormous demand for Chinese coins in the Japanese archipelago, where they circulated as the main form of currency. Importing bronze coins from China was cheaper than money the Japanese government minted themselves. The use of Chinese bronze coins lasted into the fifteenth century, and because many large construction projects supported by the bakufu demanded money, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu also aimed to acquire Chinese coins via the tribute trade with the Ming.[44] The tribute ships to the Ming indeed transported a massive quantity of coins back to Japan, and bronze coins were also among the return gifts that the Yongle emperor bestowed on the tribute delegations. The massive trade in lumber and coins demonstrates that economic life in China and Japan had become entangled with the trade affecting the daily lives of commoners.

The objects moved via the religio-commercial network were not simply commercial goods – as we saw particularly in the first three chapters, some were of profound religious or cultural value, too. Many Buddhist objects were transported via the network, as when Ennin and Enchin assiduously collected Buddhist sutras and sacred objects during their sojourn in China. Starting from Jōjin's time, Japan was even able to export Buddhist texts to China, showing that the Buddhist exchanges between China and Japan were bilateral. It is worth noting, too, that the Buddhist objects were not limited to sutras or ritual items – they also included Wuzhun Shifan's calligraphic works for making the plaques for buildings in Jōtenji, and the eulogy that Qingzhuo Zhengcheng's disciples requested for their deceased mentor from the continent.

[44] Hashimoto, *Chūka gensō*, 192.

Although it seems that it was always Japan in need of things Chinese, and not vice versa, the Chinese people actually also demonstrated strong admiration for Japanese products – not just raw materials but also handicrafts. A good example is folding fans, which were Japanese inventions. In the late tenth century, when Chōnen asked his disciple to present a set of gifts to Emperor Taizong of the Song, two types of folding fans were on the list. During the centuries that the tribute trade was suspended, Chinese scholar-officials continually praise the delicacy of Japanese handicrafts and the superb craftsmanship they embodied. A Chinese scholar-official openly lamented missing the chance to purchase a Japanese folding fan at a temple market.[45] After the tribute trade resumed in the fifteenth century, as this chapter shows, folding fans were among the regular tribute that the Japanese delegations transported to China. And because Chinese consumers' desire for Japanese folding fans grew only stronger, private merchants accompanying the Japanese delegations also carried a large number of the fans and sold them in Chinese markets.[46]

Through centuries of intensive commercial, religious, and cultural exchanges with China, Japanese attitudes toward Chinese objects also evolved.[47] Buddhist monks were actively involved in this process: from Ennin's time to the fifteenth century, prominent monks frequently served as counselors to Japanese authorities and offered their advice on Chinese objects. Gradually, Japan developed its own system for appraising things Chinese. Remember that among the ceramics recovered from the Sinan shipwreck, many – such as the Jian cups – had already become obsolete on the continent but were sought-after treasures among aristocrats in Japan.[48] Chinese paintings also hung in Japanese aristocrats' mansions and were collected by monasteries.

[45] Jiang Shaoyu 江少虞, *Xindiao Huangchao leiyuan* 新雕皇朝類苑 (Chongqing: Xi'nan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2011), j.60:11a–b. For a detailed study on the circulation of Japanese folding fans in China during the premodern period, see Yiwen Li, "Useless Tribute, Desirable Exotics: Japanese Folding Fans in China, 1000–1450," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 21.1 (2021).

[46] Yan Congjian 嚴從簡, *Shuyu zhouzi lu* 殊域周咨錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 2.

[47] H. Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture: A Short History*, 4th ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 91–139.

[48] The use of Chinese ceramics in Japanese tea ceremonies has drawn much scholarly attention. Besides the Jian cups, four-tie jars (*sixi guan*) that were used as tea jars have also been carefully researched. For representative works, see Mikami Jinan 三上次男, *Tōji bōekishi kenkyū* 陶磁貿易史研究, Vol. 1

Interestingly, Japanese collectors did not fully adopt Chinese standards in appraising paintings but instead created a new ranking according to their own preference. For example, the painter Muxi 牧溪 (also known as Muqi or Fachang 法常), a Chinese Chan Buddhist painter who lived in the thirteenth century, was barely recognized as a good painter by his contemporaries or the Chinese art critics in the following Yuan dynasty. Muxi's works, however, were highly esteemed in Japan – Muxi's identity and the Zen style of his work probably contributed to his high status in Japan.[49] Muxi was Wuzhun Shifan's disciple, and the essence of Zen he conveyed in his paintings fits impeccably in the place that Japanese authorities held for Chinese arts then. As the Japanese art historian Izumi Mari points out, for Chinese objects bound for Japan, once they left the Chinese ports, they would be evaluated according to a new framework, a framework shaped by the needs and tastes of the Japanese.[50]

After six centuries of intensive exchanges via the religio-commercial network, many imported goods were deeply embedded in the local economic lives of people on the continent and the Japanese archipelago. Those tangible objects, besides accomplishing their duties in ritual ceremonies, aristocrats' residences, and commoners' daily lives, also facilitated mutual understanding between China and Japan and materialized their perception of their trading partner. The network therefore survived critical moments such as the Mongol invasions – recall that merchants from Japan were permitted to conduct trade in China soon after the first failed Mongol invasion – and continuously exerted influence, even after Sino-Japanese relations had entered a new stage.

(Tokyo: Chūōkōron bijutsu shuppan, 1987), 184–99; Andrew Watsky, "Locating 'China' in the Arts of Sixteenth-Century Japan," *Art History* 29.4 (2006): 600–624; Morgan Pitelka, ed., *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003).

[49] Hashimoto, *Chūka gensō*, 36; H. Paul Varley, "Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and the World of Kitayama: Social Change and Shogunal Patronage in Early Muromachi Japan," in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Ithaca, NY: East Asian Program, Cornell University, 2001), 191–92.

[50] Izumi Mari 泉万里, "Soto e no shisen: Shirushi no yama, nanbanjin, karamano" 外への視線：標の山·南蛮人·唐物, in *Kōza Nihon bijutsu shi 5 "Kazari" to "Tsukuri" no ryōbun* 講座日本美術史５『かざり』と『つくり』の領分, ed. Tamamushi Satoko 玉蟲敏子 (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2005), 256.

Conclusion: The Religio-commercial Network and Its Lasting Impact

When Ennin and the more than 600 of the tribute delegation members boarded the ships to Tang China in 838, the demand for exchanges – whether commercial or religious – was enormous, and the tribute channel could not entirely fulfill it. As a result, the Japanese embassy members dared to venture out to make purchases in Chinese markets, and Ennin, as related in Chapter 1, separated from the tribute delegation to stay longer in China and visit more sacred Buddhist sites. The unofficial channels for commercial and religious exchanges – via private merchants and pilgrim monks – were already taking shape. Thus, when the official diplomatic relationship was suspended, it was only natural that the monks boarded merchant ships to cross the sea in pursuit of Buddhist teachings and meanwhile helped merchants build up commercial connections.

It is important to note that unlike the tribute system, this unofficial network between China and Japan did not form according to a prescriptive design. The main players – monks and merchants – frequently traveled not under the authorities' orders but to pursue their own interests. This cooperation among monks and merchants, traced throughout this book, grew deep and widespread; the religio-commercial network that emerged in the process further developed and expanded when opportunities arose. These chapters have highlighted key moments in the growth of the religio-commercial network. In the early twelfth century, Chinese merchants took permanent residence in Hakata and held affiliations with the local religious establishments. Between the mid-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, newly founded Japanese Zen monasteries strove for opportunities to trade with China, and they were supported by the Japanese authorities, who were eager to accumulate their cultural and economic capital via communication with the continent. The participants in the network vigorously responded to the changing circumstances, such as the Dazaifu's diminishing eminence, the flourishing of Chan Buddhism in China, and the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. The network had thus been developing through dynamic interactions among religious, commercial, and political forces in China and Japan.

The religio-commercial network, in its formative phase, unsurprisingly did not encompass all the private exchanges between the continent

and the Japanese archipelago. Merchants without any religious affiliations or connections conducted trade all the same, and they were less likely to leave many traces if they were not involved in any legal disputes or did not appear in Buddhist monks' writings. For example, before the sea merchant Chen Yong became Jōjin's translator and guide, Chen Yong already accomplished multiple round trips between China and Japan, but we only came to know of him after his association with Jōjin. But in the course of nearly six centuries and the continuous adjustments to new situations, as this study has demonstrated, the unofficial network played an increasingly important role in the communication and exchanges between the continent and the archipelago. This religio-commercial network offered pronounced advantages to the participants and therefore attracted more people to join.

The primary reason is that the network itself was multifaceted and thus served several purposes simultaneously. The players also assumed multiple roles: they could be sea merchants and meanwhile devout lay Buddhists, or they could be esteemed Zen masters, advisors to secular authorities, and at the same time superintendents for trade expeditions. The multifaceted network facilitated conversion among different types of resources. Through this network, the resources that the prominent monasteries possessed – such as tax exemptions and negotiating power with various levels of administrators – could easily be transformed into assets in overseas trade. The exceptional trust embedded in the religious network – such as that between Shifan and Enni – could facilitate the commercial exchanges. The maritime merchants who joined in the network secured powerful partners who could help solve unexpected problems during the long-distance transactions and allowed them to circumvent certain restrictions imposed on trade. Thus, the religio-commercial network not only expanded geographically – from Hakata to Kyoto and to Kamakura – and included more ports and more people, but also altered how the relevant parties approached the opportunities of maritime exchanges. Establishing Buddhist monasteries became an effective way to participate in maritime trade, and by the fourteenth century, when almost all the trade expeditions were supported by religious institutions, the religio-commercial network clearly predominated the Sino-Japanese exchanges. And after the tribute trade resumed in the early fifteenth century, as noted previously, participants from the earlier religio-commercial network remained legitimate traders into the new era.

The secular authorities on both sides, although not direct participants in this religio-commercial network, were fully aware of its existence from the early stage of the network and on many occasions consciously took advantage of it. On the China side, the emperors of the Song treated Chōnen and Jōjin with respect and sought to gain more information about Japan via the two monks; the Mongol emperors dispatched Chan masters as their envoys to Japan because they knew that Japan was also a land revering the Buddha. On the Japan side, the Hōjō regents of the Kamakura bakufu assisted Zen monasteries in sending ships to China for both commercial and religious exchanges and used those opportunities to garnish the cultural facade of the former garrison town of Kamakura. The Ashikaga bakufu granted an even more prominent position in Sino-Japanese relations to Zen monks and Zen monasteries. The Tenryūji monastery ship, which was dispatched by the Ashikaga leaders to reopen trade with China, is clear evidence of how the secular authorities made use of the fully fledged religio-commercial network.

The religio-commercial network allowed many nontraditional policymakers to exert profound influence on diplomatic affairs, and authorities' wide recognition of the network prompted several features of this unofficial network to be carried forward into the next era. The commercial and religious ties between China and Japan actually grew stronger during the period between 839 and 1403, despite their suspended diplomatic relationship. The resumption of tribute trade between China and Japan in 1403 put an end to the previous pattern of Sino-Japanese trade, which had been open to various groups of participants – private merchants, monks and monasteries, and even local officials – and launched the start of a new era. The newly resumed tribute trade, however, inherited features that had taken form and grew prominent from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. After 1403, monks were still traveling between China and Japan, sending messages, drafting diplomatic documents, and even negotiating trade terms; monasteries continued to enjoy many resources and privileges in Sino-Japanese trade and became an even more crucial participant in the tribute trade. The Ashikaga bakufu assigned the Tenryūji abbot Kenchū Keimitsu to lead delegations to the Ming as many as four times and shared with prestigious monasteries both responsibilities and benefits of the reestablished tribute trade. The Yongle emperor not only recognized the significance of economic motivations and the role

played by Buddhist figures in the Sino-Japanese tribute trade but also applied similar strategies to his enterprise of expanding influence to other parts of Asia.[51] The developed religio-commercial network and the increasing importance of the Buddhist trade set the base for Sino-Japanese relations in the fifteenth century, which was to be altered a century later only when new players – the Europeans – appeared in East Asian waters and pulled China and Japan into the new global trade network.

[51] Sen, "Diplomacy, Trade and the Quest for the Buddha Tooth," 33–36.

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