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# TRADE-BUDDHISM: MARITIME TRADE, IMMIGRATION, AND THE BUDDHIST LANDFALL IN EARLY JAPAN

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The conventional image of a state-driven Japanese conversion to Buddhism, from the top down, amidst a static Confucian empire inhabited by inert subsistence-level peasant villagers, obscures the extent to which Japan, prior to *circa* 700, was an immigrant society with pronounced maritime orientations. These oceanic interests connected Japan with the wider, still too little understood, world of trade and immigration that was actively bridging the distances between continental East Asia, the South Seas, and India. International trade spread both tangible and intangible commodities, including ideas, and served as the vehicle for the propagation of Buddhism. Japan, while occupying the far northeastern fringe of this old-world trading community, was swept up in the general Buddhist transformation.

THE EMERGING JAPANESE STATE, through the eighth century, was commercially underdeveloped even for its era. It was founded, moreover, upon an imported Chinese Imperial-Confucian vision of society, consisting largely of self-sufficient agricultural villages, coordinated and presided over by a small, ritual-bound, central governing elite.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars question, moreover, whether the Japanese economy was sufficiently developed even to support this simple agrarian imperial model.<sup>2</sup> Yet Buddhism came to Japanese shores at this time, propelled by vast, if not always very strong, economic currents that were flowing across maritime and continental Eurasia in the early centuries of the Christian era, from the Mediterranean world to India and China, and finally even brushing against Japan—for which the surviving evidence of Persian and other Western motifs on Japanese art objects from this period offers silent testimony.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wang Jinlin 王金陵, *Nara bunka to Tô bunka* (Nara Culture and Tang Culture) (Tokyo: Rokkô shuppan kabushiki kaisha, 1988), 300. On the Confucian-Legalist synthesis in early Japan, see Charles Holcombe, "Ritsuryō Confucianism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57.2 (1997).

<sup>2</sup> William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), 142–44.

<sup>3</sup> Shi Jiaming 施嘉銘, "Ribei gudai guojia de fazhan" (The Development of the Ancient Japanese State), *Zhongguo yu Ribei* 141 (1972): 40; Hugo Munsterberg, *The Arts of Japan: An Illustrated History* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1957), 53.

These larger commercial waves may have only just barely reached Japan at this time, but they exerted a decisive impact nonetheless. Their relative neglect in conventional histories of the period is attributable in part to their undeniably small scale, but also to the limited range of acceptable elite interests in traditional East Asian civilization. The world of merchants and tradesmen passed largely beneath the recorded notice of bureaucrats and literati, whose complacent view of the lives of commoners was confined largely to docile (or, sometimes, rebellious) peasant villagers. While this unitary Confucian high culture is itself a thing of no little beauty, there are too many unaccounted for strangers passing furtively between the lines of the official histories. Here, I wish to explore the degree to which the Buddhist transmission to Japan, and East Asia more generally, occurred beyond official notice or record, and was entangled with private and sometimes even illegal international commercial activity and population movements.

## THE COMMERCIAL VECTORS OF EARLY BUDDHISM

Buddhism traveled to East Asia along established trade routes, and swelled the pre-existing volume of trade by itself creating new religious incentives for travel, and a demand for imported religious articles. Buddhism legitimated private commercial wealth as a vehicle for serving sacred needs through generous donations, and Buddhism lubricated foreign exchange by overcoming narrow local prejudice with a radically more cosmopolitan, international, perspective. The developing cult of Avalokiteśvara (Ch., Guanyin; J., Kannon) as the patron bodhisattva of mariners also gave the faithful courage to confront the

inevitable perils of distant voyages.<sup>4</sup> Buddhism was thus in many ways conducive to the growth of trade—and trade to the spread of Buddhism.

In China Buddhism stimulated the practice of making pilgrimages—especially to Mañjuśrī's reputed abode in the Wutai 五台山 mountains—which in turn promoted the circulation of goods and ideas.<sup>5</sup> In 636, for example, the Sillan (Korean) monk Chajang 慈藏 had an (alleged) encounter with Mañjuśrī on Mt. Wutai, who bestowed upon Chajang a relic, valuable robe, and alms-bowl and recommended an equivalent pilgrimage site in Korea where “ten-thousand Mañjuśrīs constantly dwell.”<sup>6</sup> The south Indian brahmin Bodhisena 菩提僊那 was drawn to make the voyage to Tang China by the lure of Mt. Wutai, but being informed upon arrival that Mañjuśrī had been reborn in Japan, departed for Japan in 736.<sup>7</sup> Discounting the miraculous elements of these tales, it is clear that Buddhist faith occasionally acted as a spur to wide-ranging travel.

Religious practice also demanded certain ritual commodities that could only be obtained from (or through) India.<sup>8</sup> Along the ancient central-Asian Silk Roads, “among the Indian export items Buddhist paraphernalia . . . probably dominated in terms of value.”<sup>9</sup> In the South Seas the spread of Buddhism created a demand for “holy things” in the fifth and sixth centuries—incense, icons, and other religious materials—which exceeded the earlier secular traffic in elite luxury goods.<sup>10</sup> In China Bud-

dism stimulated private production and distribution of copies of the scriptures and sacred images, and encouraged the early development of print technology—a popular commercial market for printed religious texts and calendars having developed during the Tang dynasty unnoticed by officialdom, except in passing criticism.<sup>11</sup>

Although the following sequence of transactions concern official embassies—almost the only kind of international exchange that traditional East Asian historians deigned to record—rather than private trade, it nonetheless demonstrates how Buddhism could facilitate commodity exchanges linking Southeast Asia, through China, to Japan. In 503 King Kaundinya Jayavarman 燁陳如闍邪跋摩 of Funan 扶南 (in what is now Cambodia and southern Vietnam) offered a coral Buddha in tribute to the Southern-dynasty Liang emperor of China.<sup>12</sup> In 539 Liang sent a monk to Funan to receive a hair of the Buddha; in 540 Funan requested Buddhist images and texts from Liang; in 541 Paekche (Korea) requested Buddhist texts from Liang.<sup>13</sup> In 542, then, Paekche sent offerings of Funan goods, and two slaves, to Japan.<sup>14</sup> The gift of Funan goods was followed three years later by a Paekche present of southern Chinese goods to the Japanese outpost in Korea, coinciding with a royal Paekche Buddhist invocation calling for the spiritual release of all things living under heaven.<sup>15</sup>

Buddhism prospered in China “because it offered the Chinese unlimited means of turning material wealth into spiritual felicity”: even the rich—especially the rich—could earn salvation through generous sharing of their

<sup>4</sup> Himanshu P. Ray, *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 8, 153–54.

<sup>5</sup> Tonami Mamoru 磯波護 and Takeda Yukio 武田幸男, *Zui-Tō teikoku to kodai Chōsen* (The Sui-Tang Empire and Ancient Korea), *Sekai no rekishi* 6 (Tokyo: Chuokoron-sha, 1997), 232.

<sup>6</sup> *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia from the Three [Korean] Kingdoms), by Iryōn, *Da Zangjing* (photo-reprint of Taishō Tripitaka) (1280; Taipei: Zhonghua fojiao wenhuaguan, 1957), 3; T.49.998, 1005.

<sup>7</sup> *Genkō shakusho* 元亨釋書 (History of Buddhism [Compiled During] the Genkō Era), *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai*, 31 (ca. 1322; Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1930), 15.224.

<sup>8</sup> Liu Xinru, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1–600* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 100–101, 176.

<sup>9</sup> Maximilian Klimburg, “The Setting: The Western Trans-Himalayan Crossroads,” in *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes*, ed. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982), 32.

<sup>10</sup> Wang Gungwu, “The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea,” *Journal of*

*the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31.2 (1958): 53–55, 113.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, revised by L. Carrington Goodrich (1925; New York: The Ronald Press, 1955), 26–28, 38–41, 59–62; Paul Pelliot, *Œuvres posthumes*, IV: *Les débuts de l'imprimerie en chine* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1953), 33–34, 37–41, 50; Hu Shi 胡適, “Lun chu-Tang sheng-Tang hai meiyōu diaoban shu” (On the Continued Nonexistence of Block-Printed Books in Early and High Tang), *Zhongguo tushu shi ziliao ji*, ed. Liu Jiabi (Hong Kong: Longmen shudian, 1974), 432; *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (The Great Tortoise of Archives) (ca. 1012; Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 160.1932.

<sup>12</sup> *Liang shu* 梁書 (Dynastic History of the Liang), by Yao Silian (557–637) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 54.789–90.

<sup>13</sup> *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記 (Complete Records of the Buddha and Patriarchs), by Zhipan, *Da Zangjing* (1269), 37; T.49.351.

<sup>14</sup> *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan), *Shintei zōho kokushi taikai* (fukyūban) (720; Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 19.59.

<sup>15</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.71.

wealth with the Sangha.<sup>16</sup> The popularity in fourth and fifth century China of the Vimalakīrti figure, a comfortably wealthy layman who was nonetheless spiritually unsailable, undoubtedly reflects the aspirations of many in his audience.<sup>17</sup>

The Sangha was therefore liberally endowed by pious laymen, many of whom were no doubt landowners or officials, but at least some of whom were merchants. "South Sea traders all served with honor," for example, a certain central Indian monk (Guṇavṛddhi 求那毗地, d. 502) who arrived in the Southern-dynasty Chinese capital (modern Nanjing) circa 479, "and made offerings as they came and went" so that he became selflessly rich in the service of the Buddha.<sup>18</sup>

The financial resources of the Buddhist Sangha became so great that, in the fifth century, Wang Sengda 王僧達 (423–58) could use his official position to extort "several million" in cash from one monk.<sup>19</sup> In China the Sangha turned some of its vast resources to novel commercial purposes, lending out grain for a profit and experimenting with pawnbroking already in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>20</sup> D. D. Kosambi speculates that in India monasteries provisioned caravans and lent essential capital to merchants in the early centuries of the Buddhist era, although other scholars express skepticism that Indian Buddhists would have participated so directly in commercial activity.<sup>21</sup> It

remains plausible, however, that the early Sangha did fill something of the role performed by the modern secular commercial infrastructure, facilitating financial services and long-distance communication.<sup>22</sup>

Contact between peoples belonging to different cultures can generate ethnic friction, and even open hostility.<sup>23</sup> Buddhism's universalistic ethos helped to smooth over such parochial suspicions.<sup>24</sup> In East Asia Buddhist monks themselves initially presented a truly outlandish spectacle, with their uncovered right shoulders, saffron robes, shorn heads, and bare feet.<sup>25</sup> Individual Chinese, like the hermit Gu Huan 顧歡 (420–83) and Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou (r. 561–78), did object to these and other alien practices, but the Buddhist reply was that "in the extremity of the Dao there is no . . . near or far," and that all such differences are simultaneously both relative and irrelevant: at one level the Chinese empire itself had incorporated a number of what had once been foreign states and cultures, while at another level China and India were similarly just sub-regions in the vast realm of the great Buddhist Jambu Cakravartin king.<sup>26</sup> As the Chan (Zen) patriarch Huineng 慧能 (638–713) is alleged to have quipped: "For people there are north and south. For the Buddha-nature, how could there be?"<sup>27</sup>

In Japan, the quarrel over whether or not to accept Buddhism, as it is presented in the surviving written sources at least, was couched in terms of the same opposition between native parochial interests and internationalism, with the latter eventually winning, less for noble philosophical reasons than simple pragmatism: "All the

<sup>16</sup> Michel Strickmann, "India in the Chinese Looking Glass," in *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, 59.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Mather, "Vimalakīrti and Gentry Buddhism," *History of Religions* 8.1 (1968): 63.

<sup>18</sup> *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (Collected Records from the Tripitaka), by Seng You (435–518) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 14.552.

<sup>19</sup> *Song shu* 宋書 (Dynastic History of the [Liu-]Song), by Shen Yue (441–513) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 75.1954. On the economic history of the Church in China, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, tr. Franciscus Verellen (1956; New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> *Wei shu* 魏書 (Dynastic History of the [Northern] Wei), by Wei Shou (506–72) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 114.3041; Lien-sheng Yang, "Buddhist Monasteries and Four Money-Raising Institutions in Chinese History," in Yang, *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), 198–202; Qu Xiaoqiang 屈小強, *Bai ma dong lai: fojiao dongchuan jiemi* (The White Horse Comes East: Uncovering the Secret of Buddhism's Eastward Dissemination) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1995), 92–93.

<sup>21</sup> D. D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 182–87. Ray, 149, writes that Kosambi's interpretation "has not found general acceptance."

<sup>22</sup> Liu Xinru, 120–23, 175.

<sup>23</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 67–68.

<sup>24</sup> Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 83–84. On Buddhist universalism, see Tsukamoto Zenryū, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism: From its Introduction to the Death of Hui-yüan*, tr. Leon Hurvitz (1979; Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985), 15.

<sup>25</sup> Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀, *Chūgoku bukyō shakai-keizai shi no kenkyū* (Studies in the Socio-Economic History of Chinese Buddhism) (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1983), 291–92, 306–8.

<sup>26</sup> *Nan shi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasties) by Li Yanshou (Ca. 629; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 75.1875–77; *Hong ming ji* 弘明集 (Collection Expanding Illumination), by Seng You (435–518) (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 7.1b–2a, 5b–6a; *Guang hong ming ji* 廣弘明集 (Extended Collection Expanding Illumination), by Daoxuan (596–667) (Taibei: Zhonghua shuju, 1966), 10.2a/b; *Fozu tongji*, 38; T.49.358.

<sup>27</sup> *Fozu tongji*, 39; T.49.368.

states of the Western foreigners worship it—how could Japan alone turn its back?”<sup>28</sup> There is, of course, good reason for handling all such early Japanese accounts with caution. They are the purposeful literary creations of later generations, not pristine archival records. Still, the famous tale of Buddhist internationalism triumphing over nativist exclusion in Japan may reflect some faint echoes of the true story.<sup>29</sup>

The Buddhist spirit minimized regional differences. Prince Nagaya 長屋 of Japan (684–729) reportedly ordered a thousand monks’ robes to be embroidered with the following passage: “The mountains and streams of different lands share the wind and the moon of the same heaven. It is up to all the children of Buddha to bind their destinies together.”<sup>30</sup> When Saichō 最澄 (767–822) re-embarked for Japan in 805, following his brief initiation into Tiantai (Tendai) Buddhism in Tang China, the Chinese governor of Taizhou 台州 observed that, while “in appearance the priest Saichō is from a foreign land, his nature truly springs from the same origin.”<sup>31</sup> Much as Christianity in Europe at about this same time fostered a sense of shared Latin civilization amid the cloisters of what were sometimes truly multi-ethnic monasteries, Buddhism in East Asia carried an international flavor.<sup>32</sup> When the Chinese monk Ganjin 鑑真 (687–763) set sail on his sixth and final attempt to introduce the proper Vinaya to Japan in 753, in addition to his Chinese party he brought with him in his entourage a Malay, a Cham, and another person vaguely described as Hu 胡 (northwestern foreigner).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.76–78. For a discussion of this controversy, see Joseph M. Kitagawa, “The Shadow of the Sun: A Glimpse of the Fujiwara and the Imperial Families in Japan,” in *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (1982; Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 102–4.

<sup>29</sup> Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎, ed., *Nihon Bukkyōshi: Kodai hen* (History of Japanese Buddhism: Antiquity) (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1967), 52.

<sup>30</sup> “Tō dai oshō tōseiden” 唐大和上東征傳 (Record of the Great Tang Priest’s Eastward Expedition), by Ōmi no Mifune (722–85), *Nara ibun* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1967), 896.

<sup>31</sup> “Dengyō daishi shōrai mokuroku” 傳教大師將來目錄 (Catalog of [Books] Brought by Saichō), *Dengyō daishi zenshū*, 4 (805; Tokyo: Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai, 1989), 368.

<sup>32</sup> See the description of “Insular art” in the seventh-century British Isles, in Bernard Wailes and Amy L. Zoll, “Civilization, Barbarism, and Nationalism in European Archaeology,” in *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology*, ed. Philip L. Kohl and Clare Fawcett (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 31–33.

<sup>33</sup> Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, *Riben fojiao shi* (A History of Japanese Buddhism) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1995), 80. For Ganjin, see *Genkō shakusho*, 1.31–32.

#### THE ADVERSARIAL STATE, WANDERING MERCHANTS AND VAGABOND MONKS

It is known that by the Tang dynasty a significant volume of shipping was arriving in China from the South Seas. When Ganjin passed through the southern port of Guangzhou (Canton) on his circuitous route to Japan in the mid-eighth century, he found “unknown numbers of Indian, Persian, South Sea and other boats, laden with incense, drugs and precious things piled up like mountains,” and he reported that “an extremely great variety” of foreigners “come and go and reside there.”<sup>34</sup>

Chinese sources normally only record the arrival of official tribute-bearing embassies, and do not mention private vessels at all. In the absence of other data, the frequency of embassies is sometimes taken as an indication of the volume of maritime activity in general. Sometimes it is even assumed that the recorded tribute-embassies were the only foreign contacts that took place whatsoever. Prior to the fifth century there were few tribute missions, although their number swelled to a crescendo in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>35</sup> In fact, however, there is considerable reason to doubt the reliability of official embassies as any index for the volume of trade and a good likelihood that these statistics conceal a great deal of unrecorded private shipping.<sup>36</sup>

Official ideology in imperial China favored agriculture over trade, sometimes even advocating “restraining commerce with the law” to encourage farming instead.<sup>37</sup> “Craftsmen and merchant families eating off of jade [utensils] and clothed in brocade, [while] farmers eat coarse grains” was viewed as an unacceptable reversal of the proper social order, which put farming above all other non-governmental occupations.<sup>38</sup> Even when not actively hostile to trade, members of the elite were at least dismissive of it, and legal restrictions, such as the Tang ban of 667 on artisans and merchants riding horses, were not uncommon in an early imperial China famous for its

<sup>34</sup> “Tō dai oshō tōseiden,” 902.

<sup>35</sup> *Tong dian* 通典 (Comprehensive Canons), by Du You (735–812) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 188.1007; *Nan shi*, 78.1947; *Liang shu*, 54.783.

<sup>36</sup> See Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, “Liuchao nanhai maoyi de kaizhan” (The Development of South Sea Trade in the Six Dynasties), *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui* (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1992), 317. ≥

<sup>37</sup> Lu Ji 陸機 (261–303), in *Jin wen guī* 晉文歸 (Return to Jin Literature), ed. Zhong Xing (ca. 1600) (rpt.; Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1973), 4.13a.

<sup>38</sup> *Wei shu*, 60.1332–33.

"extreme physiocratic theories."<sup>39</sup> Just as commonly, ordinary people attempted to evade these regulations. In the early Han dynasty, for example, it was reported that citizens in the Ba-Shu 巴蜀 region of modern Sichuan province slipped out past the borders to trade illegally with Yunnan tribesmen for horses, servants, and cattle—causing the region of Sichuan to become "wealthy."<sup>40</sup>

Private trade therefore often took place outside the law, or at least beyond official cognizance. But it thrived, frequently, nonetheless. By the fourth century, the (extra-legal) economic exuberance of the Chinese Southern dynasties was making it "difficult to maintain the traditional administration and order of urban market areas."<sup>41</sup> The very weakness of the state during the era of the Southern dynasties may have even contributed to their undoubted commercial prosperity. In contrast to the usual Chinese assumption of a close correlation between dynastic splendor and general prosperity, a strong dynasty like the early Tang might actually succeed in imposing idealistic, but economically counter-productive, restrictions on trade, with the effect of stifling it somewhat. In the opinion of the Japanese scholar Kawakatsu Yoshio 川勝義雄, Sui-Tang military reunification of imperial China may have resulted in an overall setback to the previously burgeoning southern commercial economy.<sup>42</sup>

Tang, as an especially vigorous and powerful imperial dynasty, may have been relatively successful in its attempts to secure its borders and regulate trade.<sup>43</sup> An im-

perial command of 714, for example, enumerated various commodities that could not be allowed to pass into the hands of the foreigners living along the northwest frontier, while another edict of 743 ordered the complete termination of trade across the western border, for strategic reasons, and despite its acknowledged profitability.<sup>44</sup> Early Tang efforts to limit foreign entry to official tribute-bearing embassies were concentrated, however, on this militarily vital northwestern land frontier (and diluted by sometimes rather conveniently elastic definitions of both "embassies" and Chinese "citizenship"); maritime contact along the eastern coast seems to have been less of a concern, and possibly was interfered with less.<sup>45</sup>

Tang legal restrictions, moreover, proved ultimately to be an ineffectual bar to foreign trade, and famously disintegrated towards the end of the dynasty.<sup>46</sup> Yet even in late Tang the state still attempted to maintain a regulatory approach to commerce, in 851, for example, mandating the appointment of officials to supervise the markets of all districts with three thousand or more households.<sup>47</sup> Although members of the socio-political elite themselves were not always above competing with commoners for commercial profit, the Tang government remained resolutely indifferent to commercial interests.<sup>48</sup> In 863, for example, officials created considerable distress among the trading community when they arbitrarily confiscated private merchant vessels, and jettisoned their cargoes, so that they could be used to provision troops by sea from Fujian to Guangzhou.<sup>49</sup>

Despite this official disregard, indirect evidence of flourishing sea-borne commerce, unrelated to any tribute embassies, is provided by the notoriously continuous, uninterrupted opportunity for official corruption presented by trade in the southern ports, from the Han dynasty through the Tang. Guangzhou (Canton) and Jiaozhi 交趾 (a Chinese administrative city in the vicinity of

<sup>39</sup> *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (New Dynastic History of the Tang), by Ouyang Xiu (1007–72) and Song Qi (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 3.66; Denis Twitchett, "The Tang Market System," *Asia Major*, n.s., 12.2 (1966): 205–7, 213–14. For conditions at the start of the imperial period, see He Qinggu 何清谷, "Qin Shihuang shidai de siying gongshangye" (Private Handicrafts and Trade in the Age of the First Emperor of Qin), *Wenbo* 38 (1990.5).

<sup>40</sup> *Han shu* 漢書 (Dynastic History of the [Former] Han), by Ban Gu (32–92) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 95.3838.

<sup>41</sup> Liu Shufen, "San zhi liu shiji Zhe-dong diqu de jingji fazhan" (The Economic Development of the Eastern Zhejiang Region in the third–sixth Centuries), *Liuchao de chengshi yu shehui* (1987; Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1992), 205.

<sup>42</sup> Kawakatsu Yoshio, *Chûgoku no rekishi*, 3: *Gi-Shin nan-bokuchô* (Chinese History, 3: The Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties) (Tokyo: Kôdan-sha, 1981), 267–68; "Kahei keizai no shinten to Kô Kei no ran" (The Development of a Money Economy and Hou Jing's Rebellion), *Rikuchô kizokusei shakai no kenkyû* (1962; Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1982), 369.

<sup>43</sup> For the rigorous Tang border and pass control restrictions, see *Tang lü shuyi* 唐律疏議 (An Annotated Discussion of the Tang Penal Code), by Zhangsun Wuji (653; Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1990), 8.124–28.

<sup>44</sup> *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Institutes of Tang), by Wang Pu (922–82) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1968), 86.1581; 86.1579.

<sup>45</sup> See Arakawa Masaharu 荒川正晴, "Tô teikoku to Sogudo jin no kôeki katsudô" (The Tang Empire and Sogdian Commercial Activity), *Tôyôshi-kenkyû* 56.3 (1997): 171. See also *Tang lü shuyi*, 8.128.

<sup>46</sup> For the ineffectiveness of Tang currency export regulations, see, for example, Xie Haiping 謝海平, *Tang dai liu Hua wai-guoren shenghuo kaoshu* (A Study of the Lives of Foreigners who Lived in China during the Tang Dynasty) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1978), 353–54.

<sup>47</sup> *Tang huiyao*, 86.1583.

<sup>48</sup> *Tang huiyao*, 86.1582.

<sup>49</sup> *Dai viet su ky toan thu* 大越史記全書 (Complete Historical Records of Great Vietnam), by Ngo Si Lien (1479; Tokyo: Tôkyô daigaku tôyô bunka kenkyûsho fuzoku, 1986), ngoai ky 5.165.

modern Hanoi) were long known as places where merchants could become rich.<sup>50</sup> Complaints of official extortion become endemic in the region as early as the late Han.<sup>51</sup> In the early fourth century, at a time when tribute embassies were few, it is nonetheless reported that Chinese officials in what is now northern Vietnam made outrageous demands upon the foreign merchants who came by sea, bringing gifts of valuable goods as bribes.<sup>52</sup> One contemporary wit explained that in Guangzhou there was a “spring of avarice,” drinking from which caused officials to lose their incorruptibility.<sup>53</sup> Around the turn of the fifth century it was reported that the combination of economic opportunity and insalubrious climate insured that only corrupt and greedy officials were willing to risk appointment to far-off southern Guangzhou.<sup>54</sup>

Official exactions continued into the Tang. For the year 817 it was observed: “Foreign ships arriving at their moorings were taxed to drop anchor. When they first arrived, there was the entertaining of the inspectors of the cargo—horn and pearls in profusion, with bribes reaching even to their servants.”<sup>55</sup> In the late ninth-century, when the rebel Huang Chao 黃巢 (d. 884) offered to surrender in exchange for appointment as Protector General of Annam (Vietnam) and Military Commissioner of Guangzhou, he was rejected on the grounds that “The profits from South Sea trade are immeasurable. If a rebel obtains them he will increasingly prosper, while the state’s consumption will suffer.”<sup>56</sup> All of this is indirect, but conclusive, evidence of a fairly substantial private maritime trade throughout this period, including intervals when tribute-missions were rare.

Further evidence of continuous private trading activity, even as official embassies slowed to a trickle during the interim between the great unified Han and Tang dynasties, is provided by the number of Buddhist monks who

are known to have come to China by sea.<sup>57</sup> Kang Senghui 康僧會 (“the Kang—or Central Asian—Monk Hui”; d. 280) is a good example. His family was originally from Samarkand, but had lived for generations in India. Kang Senghui’s parents moved to Chinese Jiaozhi “on business,” where both parents soon died. The orphaned Kang Senghui then became a monk, after completing the prescribed mourning for his parents, and in 247 moved north to the capital of Three Kingdoms Wu (modern Nanjing), becoming allegedly the first *śramaṇa* to appear there. He was reported to the throne by an officer as “a Hu,” or Central Asian, “calling himself a *śramaṇa*, whose appearance and dress are not normal,” and he subsequently made a favorable impression on the ruler of Wu with his Buddhist miracles.<sup>58</sup>

The Kashmiri monk Guṇavarman 求那跋摩 (367–431) is another example. After being warmly welcomed in Java, he was “delighted” to receive an official invitation from the emperor of Southern-dynasty Song China, and, traveling by ship through the port of Guangzhou, arrived at the Song capital in 431.<sup>59</sup> A brahmin from central India named Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 reportedly “drifted with the shipping across the sea” to Guangzhou in 435.<sup>60</sup> Going the other way, the Chinese monk Yijing 義淨 (635–713) embarked upon a voyage to India aboard a merchantman departing from Guangzhou in 671.<sup>61</sup> Vajrabodhi 金剛智 (in China 719) and Amoghavajra 不空 (705–74) must be counted among the most influential western monks in Tang China; both “followed the South Sea” to Guangzhou.<sup>62</sup>

Three subjects that mainstream traditional Chinese historians seldom addressed were trade, Buddhism, and foreigners. In the sixth century the Buddhist author Huijiao

<sup>50</sup> *Han shu*, 28B.1670; *Sui-shu* 隋書 (Dynastic History of the Sui), by Wei Zheng (580–643) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 31.887–88.

<sup>51</sup> *Annam chi luoc* 安南志略 (A Brief Chronicle of Vietnam), by Le Tac (1340; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 7.167.

<sup>52</sup> *Jin shu* 晉書 (Dynastic History of the Jin), ed. Fang Xuanling (644; Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 97.2546; *Tong dian*, 188.1008.

<sup>53</sup> *Jin zhongxing shu* 晉中興書 (fifth century), quoted in *Chu xue ji* 初學記 (Record of Initial Learning), ed. Xu Jian (659–729) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 8.192.

<sup>54</sup> *Jin shu*, 90.2341.

<sup>55</sup> *Han Changli quanji* 韓昌黎全集 (Collected Works of Han Yu [768–824]) (Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1991), 33.416. See also *Xin Tang shu*, 163.5009.

<sup>56</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, 225C.6454.

<sup>57</sup> See Wu Tingqiu 吳廷璆 and Zheng Pengnian 鄭彭年, “Fojiao hai shang chuanru Zhongguo zhi yanjiu” (Studies in the Transmission of Buddhism to China by Sea), *Lishi yanjiu* 2 (1995): 25–26, 39; Feng Chengjun 馮承鈞, *Zhongguo Nanyang jiaotong shi* (A History of Chinese Communication with the South Seas) (1937; Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1993), 31–35.

<sup>58</sup> *Chu sanzang jiji*, 13.512–13; *Gao seng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks), by Huijiao (ca. 530; Taipei: Huiwentang, 1987), 1.10–12; *Fozu tongji*, 35; T.49.331. See Gao Guanru 高觀如, “Zhong wai fojiao guanxi shilüe” (Brief History of Sino-Foreign Buddhist Relations), *Zhongguo fojiao*, 1 (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanshe, 1980), 210.

<sup>59</sup> *Chu sanzang jiji*, 14.543; *Fozu tongji*, 36; T.49.344.

<sup>60</sup> *Chu sanzang jiji*, 14.547–48.

<sup>61</sup> Sun Changwu 孫昌武, *Zhongguo fojiao wenhua xushuo* (Introduction to Chinese Buddhist Culture) (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1990), 80.

<sup>62</sup> *Fozu tongji*, 40; T.49.373.

慧皎, for example, complained that despite the attainments of the Kushan lay Buddhist Zhi Qian 支謙 (flourished 222–ca. 253) at the court of Three Kingdoms Wu, and his contributions to the eastward dissemination of Buddhism, he was not reported in the chronicles of Wu because he was a foreigner—and this in spite of the fact that Zhi Qian's family had actually immigrated to China two generations earlier, in his grandfather's time, and he had studied Chinese before he learned to write any of the western languages.<sup>63</sup> Since we are concerned here with all three of these oft-neglected subjects, it is fortunate that there exists a large independent, unofficial, Buddhist literature, from which we may indirectly learn something about trade and immigration as well.

Political division in China, and the succession of Southern dynasties that were established beginning with Three Kingdoms Wu and Eastern Jin in the third and fourth centuries, promoted the development of maritime trade through the South Seas simply because these politically struggling but commercially prosperous Chinese states were cut off from the traditional Central Asian caravan routes to their north.<sup>64</sup> In the third century, already, Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) could write that “today those who cross the South Seas to arrive at Jiaozhi are without interruption.”<sup>65</sup> On the Malay peninsula a principality called (in Chinese) Dunxun 頓遜 communicated with China to the east, and India and Persia to the west. “In its markets over ten thousand persons from east and west converged each day. There was no treasure or precious commodity they did not have.”<sup>66</sup> Merchants from India and even more distant lands “frequently” traded with Funan (in modern Cambodia and southern Vietnam) and the Chinese administered regions of modern northern Vietnam during the period of the Chinese Southern dynasties.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Gao seng zhuan*, 1.10–11; *Chu sanzang jiji*, 13.516.

<sup>64</sup> *Song shu*, 97.2399. See Haneda Akira 羽田明, “Tô-zai kôtsû” (East-West Communication), *Kizoku shakai*, ed. Sotoyama Gunji et al. (Osaka: Sôgensha, 1981), 116; Liu Shufen, “Nanhai,” 341.

<sup>65</sup> *Bo wu zhi* 博物志 (An Extensive Account of Many Things), by Zhang Hua (232–300) (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 1.2a.

<sup>66</sup> *Liang shu*, 54.787; *Cefu yuangui*, 959.11289. For the location of Dunxun, see Willem Pieter Groeneveldt, *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca, Compiled from Chinese Sources* (Batavia: 1876), 119–21; Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1985), 64–67.

<sup>67</sup> *Liang shu*, 54.798. In the Tang dynasty it was reported that Funan “adjoined” eastern India, and was “only separated from it by a small sea.” *Tang huiyao*, 100.1786.

#### THE “INDIANIZATION” OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

This booming South Sea trade was encouraged by the formation of a “Sanskrit cosmopolis,” a vast Indic oikoumene extending throughout nearly all of South and Southeast Asia during the first millennium of the Christian era, and marked by the use of Sanskrit as the universal language of celebratory public inscriptions.<sup>68</sup> Although often described as a process of “Indianization,” no direct Indian political domination, conquest, or colonization of the region was contemplated, nor was there even a single preexisting “Indian” culture to expand across the region: “In fact, much of India itself was being Indianized at the very same period as Java or Khmer country—and in a hardly different way. . . .”<sup>69</sup>

Any suggestion of sweeping physical Indian colonization of the South Sea trading zone is decisively contradicted by the persistence there of quite unrelated Austronesian languages, among which Indian loanwords were restricted to Sanskrit terminology having narrowly elite religio-political applications. That the direction of population movement to some extent passed both ways is, moreover, evident from the apparent settlement of Madagascar sometime after 400 A.D. by Austronesian-speaking people coming from what is now southern Borneo. Yet a thin, perhaps, dispersion of actual persons from the Indian subcontinent must have been essential to the rise of “Indianized” communities in Southeast Asia, enabling the formation of an overarching Sanskrit cosmopolis which embraced such diverse native lands.<sup>70</sup>

China, too, was constructing its own “universal” Sinic world-order in East Asia at about this same time; one forged, in this case, chiefly by direct imperial conquest. But Chinese merchants rarely ventured beyond Chinese

<sup>68</sup> Sheldon Pollock, “The Cosmopolitan Vernacular,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 57.1 (1998): 6, 10–12. See also George Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, tr. Susan Brown Cowing (1944; Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), xvii, 10, 15; Li Donghua 李東華, “Han-Sui jian Zhongguo nanhai jiaotong zhi yanbian” (The Evolution of Chinese Communication with the South Seas from Han to Sui), (*Zhongguo lishixue hui*) *Shixue jikan* 11 (1979): 50.

<sup>69</sup> Pollock, 33. For a discussion of “Indianization,” see Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 24–26; Ray, 88–90. Kosambi, 166–76, provides an Indian perspective on this process.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Bellwood, *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago* (1985; Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1997), 137–38. For Madagascar, see 122–23, 136, 276.



ports, and China played a largely passive role in the South Sea trade of this era: Southeast Asians and Indians seem to have handled most of the shipping prior to the rise of Arab trade in the mid-eighth century.<sup>71</sup> In Funan, “South-east Asia’s first state” (ca. first–sixth centuries), an Indian brahmin named Kaundinya 憍陳如 became king in the late fourth century, and reportedly altered its institutions to conform to Indian usage.<sup>72</sup> Other Indians are supposed to have ruled in Funan even before that time, and Indian and even Roman artifacts and inscriptions have been uncovered there by archeologists dating from as early as the second century.<sup>73</sup> Following the demise of Funan in the early seventh century, the heavily Indianized Buddhist trading community of Śrīvijaya 尸利佛逝國, on the island of Sumatra, rose to dominate Southeast Asian trade for several centuries, beginning about 670.<sup>74</sup>

On the Chinese border, in what is now central Vietnam, Austronesian-speaking peoples established a heavily Indianized kingdom called Champa 林邑 towards the end of the second century.<sup>75</sup> The early Cham kings reportedly dressed after the fashion of Buddhist images, and went out in procession astride elephants in the Indian manner, shaded by parasols, to the sound of the blowing of conches and the beating of drums.<sup>76</sup> In 331 (or 337) the Cham throne was usurped by a certain King Wen 文王, who some accounts claim was born farther north in China proper, but who as a youth had become a household slave of a tribal leader in Chinese-administered Vietnam, and traveled widely in the capacity of a merchant. In Champa he impressed the native king with his extensive knowledge of the world, and eventually engi-

neered his own usurpation, after which time Champa became an increasingly serious military threat to the southern Chinese administrations.<sup>77</sup>

Coedès believed that the Indianized communities of Southeast Asia became progressively more Hinduized as well, but that commerce and Buddhist missionary zeal were the initial impulses driving this expansion of Indic culture.<sup>78</sup> During the early centuries of the Christian era wandering Indian Buddhists must have been a surprisingly frequent sight in Southeast and even East Asian waters. In the context of a Buddhist account, five large Indian merchant vessels were reported in the middle reaches of the Yangzi River, above Lake Dongting, in the early fifth century.<sup>79</sup> In 499 a foreign monk is recorded to have arrived in central China, claiming to have come from Fusō 扶桑 (Ch., Fusang), an obscurely legendary land located beyond Japanese Wa. The monk explained that in 458 five bhikṣus from Kashmir had introduced Buddhism to that island.<sup>80</sup> Although Fusō cannot now be located, and his story is unverifiable, there is no reason to doubt his reported arrival in China, or the scattering of other monks out across the South Seas. It may be questioned how many of these were from the actual Indian subcontinent, but their Indic orientation is beyond suspicion.

By the fifth century the fringe of this Indian diaspora may have reached modern Korea.<sup>81</sup> Of greater relevance, a few Indians seem to have even put ashore in Japan. The *Nihon shoki* records that in 654 four persons from Tokhara (Afghanistan) and a woman from Śrāvastī (northeast India) were blown by a storm to Hyuga, in southeast Kyūshū.<sup>82</sup> Writing in the nineteenth century, Aston dismissed this ancient Japanese record with the observation that “it is absurd to speak of natives of India being cast ashore” in Japan.<sup>83</sup> In the light of the archeological and other evidence for a universalized Indic community extending

<sup>71</sup> Wang Gungwu, 43–44, 103; Hall, 42.

<sup>72</sup> Hall, 48–77; *Liang shu*, 54.789; *Tong dian*, 188.1008; Coedès, 56. Ray, 159–60, suggests that unlike a modern “state” or “kingdom,” this Funan was more of a simple congeries of “chiefdoms.”

<sup>73</sup> Hall, 59; Coedès, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Coedès, 81; Wang Gungwu, 97; Hall, 78.

<sup>75</sup> Lü Shipeng 呂士朋, *Bei shu shiqi de Yuenan: Zhong-Yue guanxi shi zhi yi* (Vietnam in the Period of Subordination to the North: A History of Sino-Vietnamese Relations) (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, Southeast Asia Studies Section, 1964), 86–87. On the island origins of the Chams, see Charles Higham, *The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 304–8. The kingdom of Champa is said to have survived, in one form or another, until the early nineteenth century.

<sup>76</sup> *Cefu yuangui*, 959.11288; *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 ([Encyclopedia Assembled for] Imperial Inspection during the Taiping Era) (983; Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1980), 786.3611.

<sup>77</sup> *Shui jing zhu* 水經注 (Annotated Classic of Rivers), by Li Daoyuan (ca. 520; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), 36.685; *Jin shu*, 97.2545–46; *Liang shu*, 54.784; *Tong dian*, 188.1008.

<sup>78</sup> Coedès, 19–21, 23, 50–51, 63–64. See also Ray, 132–34, 136, 199–200; Bellwood, 137–38.

<sup>79</sup> *Gao seng zhuan*, 2.50. See Feng Chengjun, 35.

<sup>80</sup> *Liang shu*, 54.808.

<sup>81</sup> Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, *Bukkyō denrai* (The Introduction of Buddhism) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995), 11.

<sup>82</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 25.256.

<sup>83</sup> W. G. Aston, tr., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (1896; Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), 2:246 n. 8.

throughout Southeast Asia in this period, however, it is not at all unbelievable that isolated Indians or other Indianized persons might have voyaged as far as the coasts of Japan, although the recorded Indian place-names may well be garbled ("exaggerated," or embellished, perhaps), and their numbers must have been few. There is also, moreover, the well documented case of the south Indian brahmin Bodhisena, who famously officiated at the ceremony "opening" the eyes of the Great Buddha at Nara in 752, and who arrived in Japan in 736 in the company of a Cham monk he had met "at sea."<sup>84</sup>

#### EARLY JAPAN'S SOUTHWARD TILT

Buddhism, of course, came to China overland, via the caravan trade routes of Central Asia, as well as by sea. If anything, this continental land transmission of Buddhism is better known, and was more influential. By 509, for example, there were a reported three thousand monks from the western regions in the Northern Wei empire.<sup>85</sup> The construction of over a hundred and twenty Buddhist stone grottoes in China beginning in the fourth and fifth centuries is enduring proof of this silk-route connection. Interestingly, however, this northern silk-route-style of Buddhist architecture extended no further east than Silla, in Korea, and no further south than approximately the line of the Yangzi River in China.<sup>86</sup> Such grottoes are notably lacking in Japan and Southern-dynasty China.

Although Buddhism was introduced to northern Korea from the northern (semi-) Chinese conquest states, presumably by land, it was introduced into the southwestern Korean kingdom of Paekche by a Hu monk Mālānanda 摩羅難陀, coming from Southern-dynasty Jin in 384, presumably by sea.<sup>87</sup> Thereafter, Paekche, which was renowned among the Korean kingdoms of the period for its sophisticated Buddhist culture, maintained notably close ties with the Chinese southern dynasties, espe-

cially from the late fifth century.<sup>88</sup> And it was Paekche, in particular, which was responsible for the transmission of Buddhism and other aspects of continental culture to Japan.<sup>89</sup> A number of scholars claim to detect a direct connection between the Buddhist culture of Southern dynasty China, Paekche, and Japan.<sup>90</sup> And when the Japanese subsequently began communicating directly by sea with China in the seventh century, bypassing Korean middlemen, their immediate point of disembarkation was also in south China, especially at the port city now called Ningbo.<sup>91</sup> All of this suggests a special relevance for the southern maritime diffusion of Buddhism to Japan. And, of course, the final jump across the straits of Tsushima or the East China Sea had, perforce, to be made by boat.

#### AN IMMIGRANT SOCIETY

Most of those who sailed to Japan in these early centuries, however, came as permanent immigrants—sometimes unintentionally, like the ten Paekche monks who were blown off their course home from south China in 609 and petitioned to be allowed to remain in Japan<sup>92</sup>—

<sup>84</sup> Han Sheng 韓昇, "'Wei fa Baiji' yu Nanbeichao shiqi Dongya guoji guanxi" ([Northern] Wei's Chastisement of Paekche, and East Asian International Relations in the Northern and Southern Dynasties Period), *Lishi yanjiu* (1995.3): 40–41, 43; Kamata Shigeo, 110. On Paekche culture, see Sarah Milledge Nelson, *The Archeology of Korea* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 11, 220.

<sup>85</sup> See, for example, Saitō Tadashi 齋藤忠, *Chōsen kodai bunka no kenkyū* (Studies in Ancient Korean Culture) (Tokyo: Chijin shokan, 1943), 245; Kim Ch'ungnyō 金忠烈, *Gaoli xuxue sixiang shi* (A History of Koryō Confucian Thought) (Taipei: Dongda tushu gufen youxian gongsi, 1992), 35–38, 43.

<sup>90</sup> Yoshimura Rei 吉村怜, "Asuka yōshiki Nanchō kigen ron" (On the Southern Dynasty Origins of the Asuka-style), *Higashi Ajia to Nihon: kōko, bijutsu hen*, ed. Tamura Enchō sensei kokin-kinenkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1987); Sonoda Kōyū, "Early Buddha Worship," *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 1: *Ancient Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 366, 370.

<sup>91</sup> Ōba Osamu 大庭脩, "Nihon no kenkyūsha kara mita Nitchū bunka kōryūshi" (The History of Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange as Viewed by Japanese Scholars), *Nitchū bunka kōryūshi sōsho*, 1: *Rekishi*, ed. Ōba Osamu and Wang Xiaoqi (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1995), 8–9. See also Lin Shimin 林士民, "Tang dai dongfang haishi juodong yu Mingzhou gang" (Eastern Maritime Activity in the Tang Dynasty and Mingzhou [Ningbo] Harbor), *Zhedong wenhua luncong*, ed. Dong Yi'an (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 1995), 153, 160.

<sup>92</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 22.151–52; *Genkō shakusho*, 16.231.

<sup>84</sup> *Genkō shakusho*, 15.224; "Nan tenjiku baramon sōjō hi" 南天竺波羅門僧正碑 (Inscription for the Brahmin High Priest from Southern India), *Nara ibun* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1967), 887; Kamata Shigeo, 166, 277.

<sup>85</sup> *Fozu tongji*, 38; T.49.355.

<sup>86</sup> Sun Changwu, 199–201; Liu Xinru, 124, 144; Kamata Shigeo, 255; Luo Zongzhen 羅宗真, *Liu chao kaogu* (Six Dynasties Archaeology) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1994), 101, 241.

<sup>87</sup> *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Historical Record of the Three [Korean] Kingdoms), by Kim Pu-sik, annotated tr. by Ch'oe Ho (1145; Seoul: Hongsin munhwasa, 1994), 2:37 (Paekche basic annals 2); *Samguk yusa*, 3; T.49.986; Kamata Shigeo, 277.

rather than transient traders.<sup>93</sup> The numbers of such immigrants were clearly substantial. For the year 540 alone the *Nihon shoki* records the registration of 7,053 households of “Hata” 秦 people.<sup>94</sup> This surname, Hata, makes allusion to the name of the first imperial dynasty of China (Ch., Qin),<sup>95</sup> but in practice in early Japan it held little more specific significance than “immigrant.” Even in later centuries the Japanese did not always distinguish clearly between Chinese and Koreans, and such modern ethno-national labels should be applied only with caution, if at all, to this early period.<sup>96</sup> These numbers certainly suggest, however, that unrecorded, unofficial, crossings between the continent and Japan must have greatly outnumbered the handful of known official embassies.

It seems quite likely that some of these immigrants quietly slipped Buddhism into Japan as well, some years before the official public transmission.<sup>97</sup> There is a well-known story about a man from Southern-dynasty Liang named Shiba Totto 司馬達等, who supposedly built a thatched hall to worship Buddha in Yamato in 522.<sup>98</sup> Shiba is a controversial figure, however.<sup>99</sup> His name is clearly a misreading of the Chinese-style name “Sima Da

and others” (Ch., *deng* 等; J: -to or -ra); and, if such a person ever really existed, he is as likely to have arrived in Japan in 582 as in 522.<sup>100</sup> Even if we discount the Shiba Totto story entirely, however, it remains interesting that the region of southern Yamato where he supposedly built his thatched hall was in fact a major center of immigrant activity, and an immigrant clan of saddle-makers claiming descent from Shiba Totto did shortly thereafter play a prominent role in the promotion of Buddhism in Japan.<sup>101</sup>

Immigrants were essential to the early vitality of the Buddhist religion in Japan. In 584, when Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子 (d. 626) obtained a stone Buddhist image from Paekche, only a solitary lapsed priest from Koguryō (Korea) could reportedly be found in Japan to supervise its worship.<sup>102</sup> In 623 a priest from Paekche was made the first official head of the Japanese Buddhist church, and immigrants in general were quite prominent in early seventh-century Japanese Buddhism.<sup>103</sup>

Part of the conflict over whether or not to endorse Buddhism officially in sixth-century Japan in fact revolved around a struggle between the Soga, Mononobe 物部, and other leading clans for control over immigrant groups, who were associated not only with Buddhism, but other more tangibly valuable skills as well.<sup>104</sup> Soga family support for Buddhism was predicated upon a special Soga patronage relationship with immigrant communities, whose expertise in turn helped make possible the rise of the Soga to great power.<sup>105</sup> Among the skills imported by these immigrant groups must have been some familiarity with the already substantially commercialized economy of the continent.

Immigrants were made administrators of state finance in sixth-century Japan, possibly because of their reputation for success in accumulating private wealth.<sup>106</sup> The *Nihon shoki* records that, as a result of a dream, emperor

<sup>93</sup> William Wayne Farris, “Ancient Japan’s Korean Connection,” *Korean Studies* 20 (1996): 15–16.

<sup>94</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.51. For an example of large-scale naturalization of Koreans in the eighth century, see *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, vol. 3 (Continued Chronicles of Japan), by Sugano no Mamichi and Fujiwara no Tsugutada, *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 12 (797; Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992), 20.184–85, and note 14.

<sup>95</sup> More precisely, the written graph refers to Qin; the spoken pronunciation “Hata” is probably of Korean derivation. See William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1998), 100.

<sup>96</sup> Huang Yue-se 黃約瑟, “‘Da-Tang shang ren’ Li Yanxiao yu jiu shiji Zhong-Ri guanxi” (The ‘Great Tang Merchant’ Li Yanxiao and Sino-Japanese Relations in the Ninth-Century), *Lishi yanjiu* (1993.4): 51.

<sup>97</sup> Hayami Tasuku 速水侑, *Nihon bukkuyōshi: kodai* (History of Japanese Buddhism: Antiquity) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1986), 24–25.

<sup>98</sup> *Genkō shakusho*, 17.244–45; Gao Guanru, 185; Xia Yingyuan 夏應元, “Shin-Kan kara Zui-Tō jidai no Chū-Nichi bunka kōryū” (Sino-Japanese Cultural Exchange from the Qin-Han to the Sui-Tang Periods), *Nitchū bunka kōryūshi sōsho*, 1: *reikishi*, 102–3; J. H. Kamstra, *Encounter or Syncretism: The Initial Growth of Japanese Buddhism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 245–59.

<sup>99</sup> Bruno Lewin, *Aya und Hata: Bevölkerungsgruppen altjapans kontinentaler Herkunft* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), 148, and note 16.

<sup>100</sup> Yang Zengwen, p. 22; Naobayashi Futai 直林不退, “Torai kei shizoku bukkuyō no hitotsu kōsatsu” (An Inquiry into the Buddhism of Immigrant Families), *Indogaku bukkuyōgaku kenkyū* 43.1 (1994): 47; G. Renondéau, “La Date de l’introduction du bouddhisme au Japon,” *T’oung Pao* 47 (1959): 19.

<sup>101</sup> Ueda Masaaki 上田正昭, *Kikajin: kodai kokka no seiritsu o megutte* (Naturalized Persons: Concerning the Formation of the Ancient State) (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 1965), 120–21; Ienaga Saburō, 57.

<sup>102</sup> *Genkō shakusho*, 16.230–31, 17.244; *Nihon shoki*, 20.112–13. This story also involves Shiba Totto.

<sup>103</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 22.164–65; Xia Yingyuan, 117; Kamstra, 299–300.

<sup>104</sup> Ueda Masaaki, 126.

<sup>105</sup> Ueda Masaaki, 120; Ienaga Saburō, 60, 62.

<sup>106</sup> Ueda Masaaki, 137–39.

Kimmei (r. 539–71), while still a youth, adopted as a favorite an immigrant named (in Japanese) Hata no Ôtsuchi 秦大津父, who is quoted as saying he had previously “traveled to Ise on business.” Hata became very wealthy under the future emperor’s patronage, and when Kimmei assumed the throne, he appointed Hata to the treasury.<sup>107</sup>

For 553 there is a brief but tantalizing reference to a man, of evidently Korean extraction, who was sent under imperial command by Soga no Iname 蘇我稻目 (d. 570) “to count and record the shipping taxes.”<sup>108</sup> As usual, our information is most complete for official embassies, but there is reason to suppose that private vessels passing between Japan and the continent must have frequently outnumbered the official ones. Huang Yuese 黃約瑟, for example, counts two Tang embassies to Japan and fifteen Japanese embassies to Tang, but over thirty known private commercial ventures to Japan in late Tang alone.<sup>109</sup>

Nor is it correct to suppose that unofficial voyages to Japan only began in the late Tang dynasty. Clearly, they began in (Japanese) prehistory. A third-century Chinese account observed that residents of the islands in the straits between Korea and Japan “ride boats north and south to trade for grain.”<sup>110</sup> Contact between the continent and the northern Japanese seaboard, across the Sea of Japan, was achieved by private fishing communities long before the rise of centralized political authority under the Yamato state.<sup>111</sup> Toward the end of the fifth century immigrant groups still reportedly lived scattered throughout Japan, under no central supervision.<sup>112</sup> The *Nihon shoki* mentions a boatload of people from Manchuria who spent the spring and summer of 544 fishing on an island off the northwest coast of Japan, eating their fill and frightening the local inhabitants.<sup>113</sup> Less obtrusive landfalls must have often gone unrecorded, or even unobserved.

The Yamato court certainly did eventually embrace the Chinese imperial ideal of confining international exchange exclusively to official tribute missions. The emerging centralized state in Japan, from the late fifth through the early seventh centuries, in fact owed much of its supremacy to its success in mobilizing groups of

skilled immigrants, and supervising the distribution of foreign prestige goods.<sup>114</sup> This attempted monopolization of foreign intercourse by the centralizing core elite may have begun, as Hirano Kunio 平野邦雄 suggests, as early as the fourth century,<sup>115</sup> but it is unlikely that the incipient Japanese state was capable of patrolling the entire coastline with vigilance very much before the late 600s, and its effectiveness may be exaggerated by orthodox accounts even then. Hermetically sealed borders were, at best, a phenomenon of the late seventh and early eighth centuries, after which both the random immigration and petty trading of pre-“unification” Japan, and Nara period state-regulation, gave way to a new, more purposeful, form of private trade.

An official Japanese report, dated 842, observed that since the time of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–49), Sillans had been slipping privately into Japan as traders, without following the established procedure for tribute missions.<sup>116</sup> Lee Sungsi 李成市 takes the mid-eighth century as a turning point.<sup>117</sup> An indicator of the evolving orientation away from enforced official tribute embassies towards more private commercial exchange may be found in the court’s award to top officials in 768 of a half-million bolts of cloth for the purpose of individually purchasing Sillan trade goods.<sup>118</sup> Below the level of elite luxury items, we may presume an emerging local trade in humbler commodities that passed beneath official notice, but which was perhaps cumulatively even more significant.

By late-Tang times Sillans (from a now unified Korea) appear to have dominated shipping in northeast Asian waters, and enjoyed well-established business communities in China.<sup>119</sup> Regional trade must have been largely

<sup>107</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.49–50.

<sup>108</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.79.

<sup>109</sup> Huang Yuese, 47.

<sup>110</sup> *San guo zhi* 三國志 (Chronicles of the [Chinese] Three Kingdoms), by Chen Shou (233–97) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 30.854.

<sup>111</sup> See Ueda Masaaki, *Ronkyū: kodaishi to higashi Ajia* (Discussion: Ancient History and East Asia) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1998), 101–3.

<sup>112</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 14.385. Entry for 471 A.D.

<sup>113</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 19.70.

<sup>114</sup> Enomoto Junichi 榎本淳一, “‘Kokufū bunka’ to Chūgoku bunka: bunka inyū ni okeru chōkō to bōeki” (“National Culture” and Chinese Culture: Tribute and Trade in the Importation of Culture), *Kodai o kangaeru: Tō to Nihon*, ed. Ikeda On (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1992), 170, 172–73; Joan R. Pigot, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997), 56–57, 71, 100.

<sup>115</sup> Hirano Kunio, *Kikajin to kodai kokka* (Naturalized Persons and the Ancient State) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 160–61.

<sup>116</sup> *Ruijū sandai kyaku* 類聚三代格 (Topically Arranged Regulations from Three Reigns), *Shintei zōho kokushi taiki* (fukyūban) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), 18.570.

<sup>117</sup> Lee Sungsi, *Higashi Ajia no ōken to kōeki: Shōsōin no hōmotsu ga kita mō hitotsu no michi* (East Asian Sovereign Power and Trade: Another Route for the Arrival of the Treasures in the Shōsōin) (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1997), 160–66, 174–84.

<sup>118</sup> *Shoku Nihongi*, 4:29.220–21.

<sup>119</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer, tr., *Ennin’s Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald

contained within East Asian hands, and there is little evidence of direct traffic between Japan and the South Seas. In 642, however, there is one fascinating passing reference in the Japanese annals to a report from some attendants of the Paekche delegation that their ambassadors had thrown “Kunlun” 崑崙 diplomats into the ocean, presumably during their mutual approach to Japan.<sup>120</sup> Kunlun was a generic Chinese term for Southeast Asians in this period, and since, as we suspect, private unreported commercial traffic tends to exceed public official transactions in volume, the account does suggest some marginal level of direct maritime contact between Japan and the South Seas in the seventh century. Most South and Southeast Asian exchange with Japan, however, must have come indirectly through China and Korea.

#### THE BUDDHIST COMMUNITY OF EARLY JAPAN

Unlike the continent, in newly imperial Japan the economy remained essentially at the barter level. Coins were not introduced until 708, and not very successfully even then.<sup>121</sup> The Japanese court had repeatedly thereafter to issue edicts urging the people to make use of this new medium of exchange, and threaten the confiscation of fields that were priced for trade in objects other than money.<sup>122</sup> In 672, at the start of the civil war that would bring Emperor Temmu (r. 673–90) to the throne, an urgent démarche forced the future emperor to set out from Yoshino without adequate mounts, obliging his party to requisition a train of fifty packhorses they encountered carrying rice for the baths at Ise.<sup>123</sup> While this suggests an impressive enough premodern transfer of bulk goods, it is not clear that it represents what could exactly be called private trade. We are left with an overall image of a pre-monetized packhorse economy in the Japan of circa 700 A.D. that compares unfavorably with the “caravans of five hundred or more ox-wagons at a time” and “regular coinage” ascribed to India as early as the seventh century B.C., a millennium earlier.<sup>124</sup>

Despite the flourishing sea-borne trade between China and South and Southeast Asia, transportation from China to Japan remained difficult. In 631, perhaps making a

virtue out of necessity, the Tang emperor absolved the Japanese of their supposed obligation to offer annual tribute on the grounds of the distance involved.<sup>125</sup> A Tang envoy sent to Japan in 641 described a voyage of “several months” that took him through the “gates of Hell.”<sup>126</sup> In the eighth century, Ganjin’s disciples were unresponsive to his request for volunteers to hazard a crossing to Japan, one of them finally explaining: “That country is too far. It is difficult to preserve one’s life—not one in a hundred arrive across the vast waves and boundless waters.”<sup>127</sup>

Neither Chinese nor Japanese states were well disposed towards unregulated trade, and both were equally suspicious of unregulated religion—especially as propagated by foreigners—freely circulating among the common people. In 700 Di Renjie 狄仁傑 (607–700), in China, complained of “wandering monks who all use the doctrines of the Buddha to deceive living persons,” and of the presence of Buddhists in every village and marketplace.<sup>128</sup> Among many decrees of like nature that could be cited, in 656 the Tang banned Central Asians from practicing “magic,” and in 727 ordered the concentration of Buddhist monks into a relatively few large, closed, monasteries.<sup>129</sup> The eighth-century Japanese state was equally concerned to isolate the Buddhists in monasteries, where they could recite sūtras for the protection of the state without causing a popular disturbance. In Japan, where the unity of government and religion (*saisei-itchi* 祭政一致) has long been a special tradition, Buddhist activity outside the monasteries was forbidden by law.<sup>130</sup>

But private trade and popular Buddhism both flourished anyway, most spectacularly in China, and to a lesser extent in Japan. Surprisingly, Buddhism and trade often

<sup>125</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, 220.6208.

<sup>126</sup> *Tang huiyao*, 99.1769.

<sup>127</sup> “Tō dai oshō tōseiden,” 896.

<sup>128</sup> *Zizhi tongjian jinzhū* 資治通鑑今註 (New Commentary to the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance), by Sima Guang (1019–86) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1966), 207.542.

<sup>129</sup> *Xin Tang shu*, 3.57; *Fozu tongji*, 40; T.49.374.

<sup>130</sup> *Ryō no gige* 令義解 (Commentary to the [Yōrō] Administrative Code), by Kiyowara no Natsuno, *Shintei zōho kokushi taikēi* (fukyūban) (833; Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1972), 2.82; *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, 2.74. See Ienaga Saburō, 108, 129; Satō Hiroo 佐藤弘夫, “Bukkyō kyōdan to shūkyō seikatsu” (Buddhist Orders and the Religious Life), *Kōza: bukkyō no juyō to henyō*, 6; *Nihon hen*, ed. Yamaori Tetsuo (Tokyo: Kōsei shuppansha, 1991), 84. For *saisei-itchi*, see Joseph M. Kitagawa, “*Matsuri and Matsuri-goto*: Religion and State in Early Japan,” in *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 117.

Press, 1955), 286–87; Chen Shangsheng 陳尚勝, “Tang dai de Xinluo qiaomin shequ” (Communities of Korean Resident Aliens in the Tang Dynasty), *Lishi yanjiu* (1996.1): 161–62.

<sup>120</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 24.190.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Wheatley and Thomas See, *From Court to Capital: A Tentative Interpretation of the Origins of the Japanese Urban Tradition* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), 154.

<sup>122</sup> *Shoku Nihongi*, 1:5.172–73; 6.194–95.

<sup>123</sup> *Nihon shoki*, 28.311.

<sup>124</sup> Kosambi, 124–25.

flourished together, through a process of mutual stimulation. Since official sources were ideologically disinclined to report on either activity, still less any symbiotic positive interaction between them, we may turn to “the earliest collection of Buddhist legends in Japan,” the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記, “a key document for understanding how Buddhism was accepted by the Japanese in the first few centuries after its introduction,” to catch a relatively unguarded, unofficial, glimpse at the popular Buddhism of early Japan.<sup>131</sup>

Although caution needs to be taken against misinterpreting material that may well have been contaminated by Chinese and even Indian themes, the stories of miraculous reward and retribution contained in the *Nihon ryōiki* unfold amidst a remarkably mercantile, un-peasant-like, Japanese society. There is, for example, the story of a man who traveled with his older brother on business, and was murdered by his brother over a dispute concerning forty-odd catties of silver. His bones were left in a mountain pass near modern Kyoto, to be trampled upon by men and beasts for many years until a Koguryō monk rescued them in 646.<sup>132</sup> A reed merchant from Kawachi overloaded his packhorse, angrily thrashed it for not moving, and after selling the reeds killed it.<sup>133</sup> A self-ordained (unauthorized) Buddhist novice (*śrāmaṇera*), also from Kawachi, collected popular donations with the false claim that he was constructing a pagoda, and enjoyed the proceeds privately together with his wife.<sup>134</sup> The wife of a district official in Sanuki, known for her stinginess, waters down the wine she sells, forcibly extracts profit, and uses small measures when she makes loans but large measures when she collects repayment. The inevitable divine retribution shames her grief-stricken husband and children into atoning for her sins in 776 by donating all of the family's wealth to the church, and forgiving their debtors.<sup>135</sup>

These are miraculous tales, which cannot be accepted as literal fact. But perhaps they convey something of an authentic flavor that is missing from the official histories, bound as they are by elite ideological preconceptions. Such tales may serve as a useful corrective to our conventional understanding of both Buddhism and early Japanese society. In China Buddhism apparently took root among the common people before it found popularity with the elite.<sup>136</sup> In Japan, despite the leading role of the state and great families in promoting Buddhism, the popular dispersion of the religion may have been greater than we realize. And popular disregard for official regulation generally, even at the peak of the centralized *ritsuryō* 律令 state in eighth-century Japan, is evinced by the large numbers of Japanese commoners who routinely fled the government-imposed vision of them as registered, tax-paying and service-providing, farm households.<sup>137</sup>

Buddhism simultaneously censured the immoral excesses of, itself profited from, and circulated amidst a society in which small-scale, premodern trade was more widespread than is usually supposed. Nara Japan could hardly be described as a developed, urban, commercial state, but the “agricultural fundamentalism” of the Confucian-imperial bureaucratic ideal enshrined in official sources obscures the real diversity of occupations that did exist, and perhaps especially the “strong marine flavour” of early Japanese culture.<sup>138</sup> Ancient Japan was certainly less commercialized than contemporary China, but probably even more reliant upon seafaring.<sup>139</sup> And it was the open sea that finally brought Buddhism to Japan, together with an array of other international cultural, political, and economic influences that was rather richer than we often realize.

<sup>131</sup> Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, trans., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: the Nihon Ryoiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), vi, 3.

<sup>132</sup> *Nihon ryōiki* (Tales of the Miraculous in Japan), by Keikai (Kyōkai), *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, 30 (ca. 800; Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1996), 1.212–13, item 12. Nakamura tr., 123–24.

<sup>133</sup> *Nihon ryōiki*, 1.217, item 21. Nakamura tr., 132–33.

<sup>134</sup> *Nihon ryōiki*, 1.220, item 27. Nakamura tr., 139–40.

<sup>135</sup> *Nihon ryōiki*, 3.281–82, item 26. Nakamura tr., 257–59.

<sup>136</sup> Qu Xiaoqiang, 189–90.

<sup>137</sup> *Shoku Nihongi*, 1:4.154–57; 5.170–71; 6.224–25.

<sup>138</sup> Amino Yoshihiko, “Emperor, Rice, and Commoners,” *Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern*, ed. Donald Denoon et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 237–38.

<sup>139</sup> The earliest known description of Japan suggests a pronounced maritime orientation. See *San guo zhi*, 30.854–55. The *Samguk sagi* (1:20 [Silla Basic Annals 1]) dates a raid on the Korean coast by one hundred Japanese warships to as early as 14 A.D. For “maritime China as a minor tradition,” see John K. Fairbank, “Maritime and Continental in China's History,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12: *Republican China 1912–1949*, pt. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 12–13.