

The Seventeenth-Century Tang Ship Trade in the Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”

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Abstract. Nishikawa Joken's The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” provides a detailed overview of trade in Nagasaki, Japan under the lock-up system in the 17th century. The document contains a large number of China-related records, from which a side view of Chinese overseas trade during this period can be obtained. Not only does the document clearly list the local products of China's inland provinces, but it also shows that Chinese merchants and merchant ships played an important role in Japan's trade with East and Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Sino-Japanese Maritime Trade; The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”; Tang Ships.

1. The Historical Value of the Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”

The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” is a valuable document for the study of Japanese maritime trade in the 17th century. In 1695, the Edo period astronomer and calendrical scholar Nishikawa Joken published a two-volume edition of the “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”. In 1708, he published The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”, which increased from the previous two volumes to five volumes.

The publication of The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” dates from the Edo period in Japan. In order to prohibit the spread of Christianity, the Tokugawa Shogunate issued five decrees of lockdown in 1633, 1634, 1635, 1636 and 1639[1]. After the Third Decree of Lock-up in 1635, the Shogunate restricted Chinese merchant ships to trade only in Nagasaki. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, China and Japan did not establish formal diplomatic relations, and Japan was outside of the China-centered tribute system, but the two countries were not completely cut off from each other. There are very few ancient Chinese documents about Japanese maritime trade in this period [2], while in Japan, the Tokugawa Shogunate paid much attention to the outside world, especially information about China, so many precious historical materials have survived in Japan. Nishikawa Joken, the author of The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”, was from Nagasaki, the only commercial port in Japan at that time, and his The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”, based on what he saw and heard in Nagasaki, is undoubtedly highly reliable and authentic.

The first two volumes contain an overview of the fifteen provinces of China, the third volume contains an overview of the countries that had trade with China, the fourth volume contains an overview of the countries that had trade with the Netherlands, and the fifth volume adds an overview of some of the European, American, and Asian inland countries that did not have trade with Japan at that time. The first three volumes contain records of China, which are valuable for the study of overseas trade in the early 17th century. In this paper, we will explore the records of China in the first three volumes of the "The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”.

2. China in the First Two Volumes of the Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”

The first two volumes provide a detailed overview of the population, latitude, climate, local products, languages, customs and customs of the fifteen Chinese provinces, as well as the distance to Japan by sea. First of all, it is worth noting that in the historical context of the Qing Dynasty's invasion of China in 1644, the author, Nishikawa Joken, did not follow the administrative divisions of the 18 provinces of the Qing Dynasty, but continued to follow the administrative divisions of the "15 Chinese provinces" of the Ming Dynasty. This is a reflection of the "Hua Yi perversion" of the Edo period, when the Japanese regarded the Ming Dynasty as "Hua" and the Qing Dynasty as "Yi".

From the records of each province, we can find that merchants from Nanjing, Beijing, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Henan and Zhejiang mostly took Nanjing ships to cross the sea to Nagasaki; merchants from Fujian took Fuzhou ships to Nagasaki; merchants from Huguang and Jiangxi some took Nanjing ships and some took Fuzhou ships; merchants from Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan took Guangdong ships to cross the sea to Nagasaki for trade. It can be seen that the main sea ports in Qing Dynasty China were Nanjing, Fuzhou and Guangzhou. Nishikawa Joken provides a detailed account of Nanjing ships, Fuzhou ships, and Guangzhou ships in Volume II.

Nanjing, Fuzhou ship are also small ships, than Japan sixteen, seven end sailboat small. From Zhangzhou, Guangdong to the ship has Japan twenty end sail big. In the Tang land, the size of the ship according to the number of pounds to count.[3]

This is the earliest historical material recording the type of Tang ships coming to Nagasaki in the Edo period [4]. Qing Dynasty sailing ships played an important role in the Nagasaki trade as a bridge of cultural exchange between China and Japan in the Qing Dynasty. In addition, the second volume of the Addendum to the Examination of Chinese and Japanese Trade is concluded with prints of Nanjing ships and Fuzhou ships, which are valuable images documenting the sailing ships of the Qing Dynasty.

In addition to the departure places and ship types of the merchant ships of each province, the records of the local products of each province are also of great research value. The year after Taiwan's Zheng surrendered to the Qing dynasty in 1683, the Qing dynasty issued the "Sea Development Decree", allowing people to trade overseas, and the number of ships going to Nagasaki for trade was three and a half times higher than before.[5] Although the inland provinces did not have their own merchant ships, many inland merchants brought local products on board coastal merchant ships to Nagasaki, and inland products were exported overseas. A detailed list of the local products of each province is given in The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”, which can be used as a reliable historical basis for determining the origin of Chinese export goods. First, on a national scale, the records in The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” can confirm that the main commodities exported overseas by China were high-class silk fabrics, sugar and traditional Chinese medicine[6]. Secondly, from the point of view of local specialties, "in the Tang land this country (Shaanxi Province) of the horse for the top quality, Huguang Province's local products include white snakes, green turtles, brocade chickens, swans and other animals, but "in recent years, animals such as no longer hold the ferry; There are minerals in the mountains all over Jiangxi Province, such as gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead, but there are few medicinal species; Fujian Province" has various kinds of confectionery or things made in Nagasaki by Tang people who came across; Sichuan Province's medicinal species are "the first in China, so the best medicinal species have the word 'Chuan' on them, such as Chuan Xiong, Chuan Lian Zi, Chuan Bai Zhu, etc.", moreover, most of the Chinese medicine from Sichuan was shipped to Nagasaki from Guangdong. This information about China's inland provinces was very valuable to the Japanese, who were in a state of lockdown at that time.

At the end of the second volume, Nishikawa Joken also lists the members of the Tang ship and their duties in the "Tang ship servant". It can be seen that the main members of a Tang ship were the ship's master, the treasurer (similar to a treasurer), the master (similar to a navigator), the chief steward, the helmsman, the sailors, and other miscellaneous servants. Therefore, The Revised Edition

of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” is also important for studying the operation mode of trade with Japan in the Qing Dynasty.

3. China in the Third Volume of The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”

The third volume of The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” lists sixteen countries, including Korea, Ryukyu, Taiwan, Tonkin (Vietnam), Kauti (Vietnam), five "foreign countries" belonging to Chinese vassal states and eleven other "foreign barbarians" with whom China had trade relations. All of the above belong to the East and Southeast Asia region. But in the third volume, there are still many records about "Tang land", "Tang ships" and "Tang people".

In terms of trade relations with Nagasaki, Korea, Ryukyu, and Taiwan, which belong to East Asia, and Kauti (Vietnam), Tonkin (Vietnam), and Siam (Thailand), which belong to Southeast Asia, have direct trade relations with Japan; and there are no direct merchant ships to Nagasaki from Southeast Asian countries such as Chanpa (southern Vietnam), Cambodia, Patani (Thailand), Rokkou (Malaysia), Moraka (Malacca), Jacatra (Jakarta), Java (Indonesia), and Pandan (Indonesia). Rather, it was "no ships came to Japan from this country, and Tang people came here to load various goods and came to Japan. It can be seen that Chinese merchants were active in East Asia, Southeast Asia and Japan on the trade route, through the Tang ship Southeast Asia's goods were able to circulate to Japan. In fact, these East and Southeast Asian countries are precisely the countries along the Maritime Silk Road, from The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” in the record, can be confirmed that China played an important role in the Maritime Silk Road. In the third volume, in addition to the Tang ship trade, there are also records of many Chinese immigrants and settlements in Southeast Asia and other countries, which also reflect the flow of Chinese overseas immigrants during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

4. Concluding Remarks

The Chinese records in The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians” are a valuable foreign historical source for the study of Chinese overseas trade in the seventeenth century, restoring the prosperous overseas trade scene between coastal China and Nagasaki, Japan in the seventeenth century. This paper analyzes the Chinese ports and ship types, as well as the special local products of China's inland provinces, which rarely appear in historical sources, through the texts on China in The Revised Edition of “An Investigation of Trade between China and the Barbarians”, and confirms that Chinese merchants and Chinese merchant ships played an important intermediary role in the Maritime Silk Road from the trade between Japan and East and Southeast Asia.

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