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**Ryukyu in the Ming Reign Annals 1380s-1580s**

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## Ryukyu in the Ming Reign Annals 1380s-1580s

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### INTRODUCTION

The emergence of influential regional trading polities in the Ryukyu island chain during the 14<sup>th</sup> century was one of the manifestations of the diverse changes which took place throughout northeast Asia between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. An examination of the Ryukyuan polities (and subsequently unified polity) and how they engaged with a range of other regimes and economies in East (both northeast and southeast) Asia over the period from the 1360s to the 1560s, may go some way to contributing to a wider debate on the phenomena affecting the region through these key centuries.

One of the key external texts for examining Ryukyu over this period is the *Ming Shi-lu*, the reign annals of the Chinese Ming dynasty. It provides us with a useful range of chronological references to Ryukyu's interactions with the Ming court and, additionally, with some of the other polities in East Asia. The references in the *Ming Shi-lu* are of course couched in the language of the Chinese court, with all of the Sinocentric *topoi* which have marked Chinese writing for millennia. However, they were contemporary accounts, and through careful analysis, they provide a useful tool for us in looking at the emergence, efflorescence and decline of Ryukyu as a major player in the Northeast Asian Age of Commerce.

### RYUKYU PRIOR TO THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Early Chinese and Japanese texts do indicate some knowledge of the island groups extending from the modern Taiwan to the Kyūshū coast. The 7<sup>th</sup> century Chinese text *Sui shu* (History of the Sui dynasty) records the toponym Ryukyu, and this has been the name by which Chinese have known the islands since.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese *Shoku-Nihongi* (続日本紀) mentions missions from Tane, Yaku, Amami and Tokuno to the Japanese court in 699 C.E., while Kibi

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes prefixed by Greater (大) and Lesser (小) to distinguish, respectively, the northern polity of Ryukyu and Taiwan.

no Makibi, the Japanese ambassador to the Tang, visited Okinawa in 753 CE.<sup>2</sup> It thus appears that the main island of Okinawa was a major stopping place for maritime intercourse between what are today the Japanese islands and China from at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

The coral and volcanic islands of the archipelago are unsuitable for extensive rice agriculture, and fishing and other maritime activities were from the earliest days likely the main bases of the economy. Rival polities were a feature of the main island from at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century, with competing *aji*<sup>3</sup> defending themselves in their fortified castles (*gusuku*), of which today we have the remains of 135.<sup>4</sup>

Oral tradition suggests the unifying of the main island of Ryukyu in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century under King Shunten, who, these accounts tell us reigned from the equivalent of 1187 C.E. to 1237 C.E., and was linked with Japanese hero Minamoto no Tametomo. No one knows when these traditions emerged, or the degree to which they reflect any reality.<sup>5</sup>

By the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, we do have some sources and they inform us that the main island of Ryukyu was divided between three polities:

1. The northern polity of Hokuzan, with its seat at Nakijin
2. The middle kingdom of Chūzan, with its castle at Urasoe
3. The southern empire of Nanzan, with its castle at Ōsato.

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<sup>2</sup> Josef Kreiner, “Ryūkyūan History in Comparative Perspective” in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Ryūkyū in World History*, Bonn, Bier’sche Verlagsanstalt (JapanArchiv Band 2), 2001. See pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Kreiner (2001; 2) suggests that the term *aji* is an element in the name Okinawa/Ajinawa, to which he ascribes the meaning of “the lord’s fishing ground”.

<sup>4</sup> For the background to and development of these *gusuku*, see Richard Pearson, ‘The Chuzan Kingdom of Okinawa as a City-State,’ in Nichols, Deborah L., and Charlton, Thomas H., ed. *The Archaeology of City-States: Cross-Cultural Approaches* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 119-134.

<sup>5</sup> For a further study in English of the early history of Okinawa, see John Michael Purves, “Managing a Wild Horse with a Rotten Rope: A Contemporary History of Okinawa” at the electronic website with URL <http://www.niraikanai.wvma.net/pages/wildhorse/chap1-1.html>. Chapters 1-4 are most relevant here.

Purves also provides the following sources for the early history of the islands: Higa Shuncho, *Okinawa no rekishi* (Naha: Okinawa Taimusu Sha, 1959), 1-40, Majikina Anko and Shimakura Ryuji, *Okinawa Issennenshi* (Naha: Ryukyu Shiryo Kenkyukai, 1966), 1-72, Miyagi Eisho, *Okinawa no rekishi* (Tokyo: NHK Books, 1968), 15-39, Nakahara Zenchu, *Ryukyu no rekishi* (1978), 1-35. In English, George Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (2000), pp. 23-59 are relevant.

This period is known within Ryukyuan historiography as the “Three Kingdoms (Sanzan) period”.<sup>6</sup> Over the ensuing centuries, a process of political centralisation occurred. King Satto and his successor Shō Hashi are reputed to have unified the main island and created the First Shō Dynasty (1407-69), according to some “as a direct result of their connection with China.”<sup>7</sup> It has been suggested that the 15<sup>th</sup> century links between Ryukyu and the polities of Southeast Asia meant that there was a need for a safe shipping route near Okinawa, which resulted in the expansion of control from the island of Okinawa south to Kume, on the route to Fujian, followed by the islands of Miyako and Yaeyama in about 1500, with the implicit strengthening of the polity.<sup>8</sup> The movement northward toward Japan was slower, with Kikai being incorporated in 1465 and the main island of Amami-Ōshima occupied only in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **THE MING SHI-LU**

It was during Ryukyu’s Three Kingdoms period that Zhu Yuan-zhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty in China, established his court in what is today Nan-jing. That occurred in 1368 and the Ming were to govern China for 270 years. It was this dynasty which created the materials which are the subject of the present paper –the *Ming shi-lu*.

What then is this *Ming shi-lu*? It is actually a collective or generic name for the reign annals of the successive emperors of the Chinese Ming dynasty. At the death of each emperor, the records of his reign were collected and an office was established to write the history of that reign. That history is referred to as the *shi-lu* (or “Veritable Record”) of the reign. Together the reign annals of the dynasty are referred to as the *Ming shi-lu*. As they were written just after the end of a reign on the basis of contemporary documents, they are the most primary materials available to us from the period.

During an emperor's lifetime, every action and word in his court life and much of his private life was noted by official recorders. In addition, the bureaucracy maintained a wide archive of the memorials submitted and orders issued under that emperor. Thus, when it came to writing

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<sup>6</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History* p. 3

<sup>7</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History* p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History*, p. 4.

the *shi-lu* following the death of an emperor, there was a vast range of materials upon which to draw, and editors had to make the decisions about what to include. As many of the officials involved in the compilation were ministers during the reign of the deceased emperor, their prejudices often informed the *shi-lu* compilation. The compilers were of course most interested in the court and the capital, and in general, the further events occurred from the court, the less likely they are to appear in the reign annals. The references to other polities found within the *shi-lu* are contained in accounts of embassies arriving from those polities and of Chinese envoys being despatched abroad, memorials submitted to the court by officials in Chinese provinces bordering “external” polities, and in memorials submitted by officials referring to frontier/foreign policies.

Within the various *shi-lu* are found several hundred references to Ryukyu, and as most of these are from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, they provide one of the few contemporary sources for Ryukyu during this period.

How useful are these materials as sources for places beyond the Ming state? The various *Ming shi-lu* (MSL) were written in Chinese societies by members of the Chinese elite for the purpose of recording the reign of a Chinese emperor. A number of general characteristics perhaps need to be noted before examining the references of relevance to us:

1. The imperial Chinese “world-view”, with the explicit representation of recognition and enfeoffment of foreign rulers by the Chinese emperor, who was considered to be the son of Heaven, while trite and oft-repeated, did find expression in this official Ming historiography. As such, one needs to read the texts particularly critically.
2. As noted above, the personal and clique prejudices and preferences of the compilers and editors were often reflected in the *shi-lu*. However, these prejudices more frequently affected writing on domestic, rather than foreign, affairs.
3. A very important characteristic of the *MSL* is its chronological precision. The *shi-lu* are divided into monthly chapters and within each chapter the entries are dated by day. The dates provided can in many cases be checked against those provided in other official texts and documents. Thus they provide us with a reasonably accurate external chronology against which other Ryukyuan histories can be compared and contrasted.

However, rather than further concerning ourselves with the nature of the *MSL*, let us proceed to examine what we can learn of Ryukyu from these texts.

## **RYUKYU IN THE *MING SHI-LU***

### **Ryūkyūan Polities**

Following the establishment of the Ming dynasty in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a number of polities began to have links with the new Chinese capital centred at what is today Nan-jing. Among these were the regimes of Ryūkyū. When we first hear of the “country of Ryukyu” in the *Ming shi-lu*, there exist three polities within it--Shan-nan (山南-- San-zan), Zhong-shan (中山-- Chūzan) and Shan-bei (山北--Sanhoku), each of which was controlled by a political leader which the Ming referred to as “king” (王).<sup>9</sup> It appears that the rise of the Ming provided a sought-for opportunity by the leaders of these polities, as they appear to have contended against each other, at least on some occasions, in trying to exploit the links with the Ming.

The popular histories of Ryukyu suggest that the emergence of Zhong-shan as the predominant polity of the three during the early 15<sup>th</sup> century was predicated on its military defeat of the Shan-bei kingdom in 1416 and military defeat of the Shan-nan kingdom in 1429. This appears to be an extrapolation of the fact that these are the two last dates when missions from these polities to the Ming are recorded.

But regardless of the process, the polity of Zhong-shan/ Chūzan appears to have emerged, by the 1430s, as the main political power on the Ryukyuan islands and the sole Ryukyuan polity mentioned in the Ming texts from that time on.

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<sup>9</sup> The similarity with Sulu, where three rulers – the Eastern king, the Western king and the *dong* (perhaps “native”) king -- were also recognised by the Ming in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century under one generic toponym of Sulu should not go unmentioned.

## Ryukyuan Rulers

The Chinese historiographical tradition places much emphasis on recording details of political leaders and it is thus that we have within the *MSL* quite a useful range of materials relating to political leaders beyond China. In the case of Ryukyu, it records political leaders from the three polities noted above. Below are noted the rulers mentioned, together with their assigned reign dates, various of which derive from the *MSL* material. Only the names of rulers up to the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are given.

<b>Zhong-shan (Chūzan) Rulers</b>	<b>Shan-nan (Sanzan) Rulers</b>	<b>Shan-bei (Sanhoku) Rulers</b>
Cha-du (察度) [Satto] Ruled 1350-1395	Cheng-cha-du (承察度) (Mentioned in <i>MSL</i> 1380-1404)	Pa-ni-zhi (帕尼芝) (Mentioned in <i>MSL</i> 1383-1415)
Wu Ning (武寧) [Bunei] Ruled 1396-1406	Wang-ying-zi-shi (汪英紫氏), the uncle of the Shan-nan king (Mentioned in <i>MSL</i> 1388-1397)	
Si-shao (思紹) [Shō Shishō] Ruled 1406/1421	Wang-ying-zu (汪應祖). Killed by Da-bo-qi (達勃期) (mentioned in <i>MSL</i> 1405-1415)	
Shang Ba-zhi (尚巴志) [Sho Hashi] Ruled 1422-1439	Ta-lu-mei (他魯每), son of Wang-ying-zu, king. (Mentioned in <i>MSL</i> 1415-1429)	
Shang Zhong (尚忠) [Shō Chū] Ruled 1440-1444		
Shang Si-da (尚思達) [Shō Shitatsu] Ruled 1445-49		
Shang Jin-fu (尚金福) [Shō Kinpuku] Ruled 1450-53		
Shang Tai-jiu (尚泰久) [Shō Taikyū] Ruled 1454-1460		
Shang De (尚德) [Shō Toku] Ruled 1461-69		

The process of political consolidation by the Zhong-shan polity during the early 15<sup>th</sup> century is very obvious from the above table.

### **Political Events within Ryukyu**

The *MSL* provides us with some, albeit not many, insights into the domestic political events which affected the Ryukyuan polities during the period from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Obviously, the succession of rulers is recorded in the Chinese text, through not necessarily at the same time as the succession occurred.

Other political events recorded included warfare. In a reference from 1383, the *MSL* informs us that “at that time, in the country of Ryukyu, three kings were battling for supremacy and were engaged in attacks on each other.”<sup>10</sup>

Internecine struggles within individual polities were also considered worthy of record by the Ming historians. A struggle for power within the Shan-nan polity is recorded in 1415, where it is noted: “Previously, [Wang]-ying-zu had been killed by his elder brother Da-bo-qi. The various stockade heads then joined forces, eliminated Da-bo-qi and promoted Ta-lu-mei to handle the affairs of the country.”<sup>11</sup> Again in 1454, Shang Tai-jiu is reported to have advised that his eldest brother the king Shang Jin-fu had died and that the next brother after the king had contended with a nephew for the throne, but they had both died. He claimed that he had been chosen by the people to succeed.<sup>12</sup>

### **Ryūkyūan Society**

We can glean a few insights about Ryūkyūan political structures and society from the *MSL* references. At the pinnacle of the political structure was a ruler, named king (“wang” -- 王) by the Chinese. It appears that some male family members were often also a part of the ruling structure, as there are frequent references to the sons, nephews and cousins of the king holding senior positions. The king was assisted in his administration by a chief minister (相),

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<sup>10</sup> *Tai-zu shi-lu* entry for 5 Feb 1383.

<sup>11</sup> *Tai-zong shi-lu* entry for 28 April 1415.

<sup>12</sup> *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 16 Mar 1454.

who appears to have been the head of the administrative structure. Another senior minister frequently mentioned was the Administrator (長史) and, as all of the Administrators except one of the Zhong-shan polity over the first 70 years of the records have Chinese names, it appears that this position was also intimately linked with external trade.

Below the level of central administrators, there were villages, or stockades, whose heads were known as *zhai guan* (寨官). These appear to have been the local leaders through which administration was carried out and military forces raised. They were certainly not without power, and it is suggested in a 1415 reference to Shan-nan (cited in 4.3 above) that these local leaders had been responsible for bringing a new ruler to power. It was also often the children of these local leaders who were selected to study in the Ming school known as School for Sons of the State in Nan-jing (subsequently moving to Bei-jing with the capital in 1421). These progeny of local leaders thereby gained the skills to participate in the activities of the main political regime in Ryukyu, which promoted a centralisation of power and influence and likely the growth of the major urban centres in terms of political and commercial influence.

That the role of women in Ryukyu was somewhat different from that under the Ming regime, in Korea or in Japan in the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries is suggested by the fact that a female student from Ryukyu was sent to the Ming capital to study, a very unusual phenomenon. Gu-lu-mei (Kurumi) was sent to the Ming capital some time prior to 1398,<sup>13</sup> but there is no record of her return or her activities after she returned to Ryukyu. The major political and religious roles of women in Ryūkyūan society has been underlined by Miyagi Eishō,<sup>14</sup> as well as Monika Wacker in her recent doctoral dissertation.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See *Tai-zu shi-lu* reference of 19 March 1398.

<sup>14</sup> Miyagi Eishō, *Okinawa josei-shi* [A History of Okinawan Women], Naha, Okinawa Taimushu-sha, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> Published under the title “Onarigami: Die Heilige Frau in Okinawa,” Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2000. An English summary of the thesis is provided in “Onarigami – Holy Woman in the Kingdom of Ryūkyū: A Pacific Culture with Chinese Influences” in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Ryūkyū in World History*, Bonn, Bier’sche Verlagsanstalt (JapanArchiv Band 2), 2001. See pp. 41-67.

## Ryukyu's External Relations

One of the most prominent aspects of Ryukyu as detailed in the *MSL* is its external relations.<sup>16</sup> Obviously it was through such relations that the Ming had their links with the island polity and it is also thus that such links feature so prominently in the Ming imperial record.

### *Relations with China*

The external links recorded in greatest detail in the *MSL* were those with China, including both envoys sent to the Ming by Ryukyu and those sent by the Ming to Ryukyu. The latter commenced in 1372 with the Ming sending Yang Zai (楊載) with a “proclamation with which to instruct the country of Ryukyu,” which was actually a notice of the establishment of the new dynasty in China. As noted above, the three polities which existed in the Ryukyu islands during the 14<sup>th</sup> century all sent envoys to and received envoys from the Ming. Prior to 1429, a date to when Japanese historians assign the emergence of the unified state, Zhong-shan sent 42 delegations to the Ming, Nan-shan sent 24 and Shan-bei 11. By the early 1430s, it was the Zhong-shan polity which had assumed political pre-eminence and became the sole polity to interact with the Ming from these islands for the next several centuries.

Ryukyu polities appear to have enthusiastically participated in the new external links with the Ming court to the west. It was a new age with similar links being created all over East Asia. We see a prominent example to the north, where in Japan, Shimazu of Satsuma, one of the more powerful *daimyo*, began developing trade with Korea's Li Dynasty in 1395, and sent 120 missions between then and 1504.

The nature of the relationship between Ryukyu and the Ming is subject to diverse interpretations. Josef Kreiner speaks of the sending of an embassy to the Ming by Satto, the regent of Zhong-shan/Chūzan in 1372, as signifying that “the sovereignty of China was

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<sup>16</sup> For an overview of the Ryukyu overseas links, see Hamashita Takeshi, “Ryukyu Networks in Maritime Asia” in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Issue 3 (March 2003), <http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue2/index.html>

See also Roderich Ptak, “The Ryukyu Network in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth centuries” in *Review of Culture/Revista de Cultura* 2003/6, pp. 7-23, which also includes a useful bibliography of Chinese, Japanese and western works—primary and secondary—on this period in Ryukyu history.

officially accepted,”<sup>17</sup> and that “the authority of China guaranteed Ryūkyū’s security in international affairs.”<sup>18</sup> Such uncritical acceptance of the Ming rhetoric needs perhaps to be balanced with an awareness that many of the maritime polities of Asia used their links with the Ming to pursue their own economic gains, and issues of sovereignty were not an integral part of these relationships.

The Ryukyuan missions certainly tried to obtain the greatest advantages on the basis of their “special position” in the eyes of the Ming.<sup>19</sup> In the 1430s, there were complaints from Chinese officials that the ship’s crew and attendants of the Ryukyu mission, comprising over 200 persons, were all being fed and boarded at the expense of the community in the Fu-zhou hostel.<sup>20</sup> By 1472, the Fu-jian provincial offices were jointly complaining that “Previously, the *yi* persons of the country of Ryukyu had come to offer tribute, but surreptitiously stayed in the inner territory.<sup>21</sup> Gradually, they established families and started enterprises, and long did not return to their home country. It is requested that they all be sent back.”<sup>22</sup>

The means by which the Ryukyuan envoys sought sea-going ships from the Ming court were also diverse and usually successful.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the Ming provided the Ryukyuan with these vessels says something about the importance of this polity for the Ming. At the same time, the trading benefits were also of obvious value to the Ryukyu polity, as underlined by a debate in the 1470s when the Ming fixed a “tribute” frequency of once every two years and the Ryukyu ruler repeatedly pushed for an annual mission.<sup>24</sup>

Ryukyuan ships apparently sailed to Fu-jian, Ning-bo or Wen-zhou in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>25</sup> The last-mentioned was not equipped with hostels for merchants or

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<sup>17</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History*, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History*, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> For further on this, see Takara Kurayoshi, “An Outline of Ryukyu’s Relation to China” in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Ryūkyū in World History*, Bonn, Bier’sche Verlagsanstalt (JapanArchiv Band 2), 2001. See pp. 143-165.

<sup>20</sup> See *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 22 Sep 1439.

<sup>21</sup> Here referring to China.

<sup>22</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 28 May 1472.

<sup>23</sup> For examples, see *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 20 May 1426 and *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 3 May 1473.

<sup>24</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* references of 19 May 1478 and 20 May 1480.

<sup>25</sup> See *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 25 May 1432.

storehouses, and was more likely a port for loading or unloading illicit cargoes. The *MSL* records various examples of non-official trade or attempts to circumvent official restraints by the Ryukyuan envoys to the Ming. In one example from 1470, we see Cheng Peng,<sup>26</sup> a Ryukyuan envoy of Chinese descent, being arrested for bribing and engaging in smuggling with a military official in Fu-zhou.<sup>27</sup> The military officer was punished, while Cheng Peng was pardoned. An imperial order was issued in 1488, requiring all the Ryukyuan envoys to travel via Fu-jian and that the route via Zhe-jiang was to be closed.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, there were continual efforts by persons in the various Chinese administrations to get their share of the trading goods passing through their domains. This reached such a level in 1501 that imperial orders were issued to preclude the military officials and eunuchs based in Fu-jian from taking excessive cuts from the trade goods being taken into China by the Ryukyuan envoys.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the Ming, the number of Ryukyu missions to China exceeded 170, the greatest number of any polity beyond China. The frequency of the missions meant that the island polity was not subject to the same restrictions which were imposed on other polities in their relations with the Ming. It has generally been accepted that Ryukyu received “privileged treatment” from the Ming.<sup>30</sup> Okamoto Hiromichi has suggested that this derived from the importance of Ryukyu as a major friendly polity on the northern trade route out of China, much like Malacca and Hami were “privileged” because of their positions on trade routes.<sup>31</sup> I have written elsewhere<sup>32</sup> that the Zheng He voyages in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century were aimed at controlling maritime trade across the Indian Ocean, and on this basis would tend to agree with Okamoto’s proposal.

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<sup>26</sup> Possibly a descendant of Cheng Fu who had served the Zhong-shan ruler Satto for 40 years from the 1370s.

<sup>27</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 24 Mar 1470.

<sup>28</sup> See *Xiao-zong shi-lu* reference of 11 Feb 1488.

<sup>29</sup> See *Xiao-zong shi-lu* reference of 11 August 1501.

<sup>30</sup> For useful studies in this regard, see Takara Kurayoshi, “An Outline of Ryukyu’s Relation to China” and Okamoto Hiromichi, “Foreign Policy and Maritime Trade in the early Ming period: Focusing on the Ryukyu Kingdom”, paper presented at the “Southeast Asia in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century: the Ming Factor” conference, ARI, National University of Singapore, July 2003.

<sup>31</sup> This suggestion has been made by Okamoto Hiromichi at the end of his paper mentioned in the footnote above.

<sup>32</sup> Geoff Wade, “The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment”, Asia Research Institute Electronic Working Paper No. 31 (October 2004). [http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04\\_031.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps04_031.pdf)

One other thing which can be asserted is that Ryukyu played some major role in mediating the Ming-Japan relationships. We see in 1432 for example, that the Ming rather than employing their own envoy, used Ryukyu to pass on Ming “orders” to Japan.<sup>33</sup> This reflected a similar situation in Southeast Asia during the Yong-le reign, when Siam was required to transmit Ming “orders” to Java, a place where at that time it would have been less than safe for a Ming envoy to go.

But the Ryukyu-Ming relationship was not always without problems. The Arab author Ibn Majid in his *Fawa'id* of c.1488, after discussing Sumatra and Java, notes: “The fifth island is that of al\_Ghur, the country of the al-Ghur iron and the sharp swords made from this iron. Its name in Jawi is Likiwu and its sultan is an infidel at war with the sultans of China in spite of their strength and their ability. Its people have great might and no race has more courage and other men cannot prevail against them except by combined effort.”<sup>34</sup> This suggests some political dissonance between Ryukyu and the Ming in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, or may just refer to the *wako* who operated from various ports in East Asia.

### ***Ryukyu Envoys to the Ming***

The *MSL* gives much space to recording the missions sent to the Ming by Ryukyu, and also records the names of the envoys who headed these missions.<sup>35</sup> This is an important resource and Appendix I to this paper provides a chronological listing of the named envoys to the Ming for each Ryukyuan mission up until the 1430s, by which time it is obvious that a unified polity had emerged.

This listing is useful in understanding a number of areas:

- It provides an indication of the relative importance over time of the respective Ryukyuan polities, at least in terms of their links with the Ming. We can observe how the number of envoys from Shan-nan and Shan-bei declined over the early 15<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 27 Feb 1432.

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Marschall, “Notes on Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean and Beyond” in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Ryūkyū in World History*, Bonn, Bier’sche Verlagsanstalt (JapanArchiv Band 2), 2001. See pp. 69-83.

<sup>35</sup> See Okamoto, “Foreign Policy and Maritime Trade in the early Ming period: Focusing on the Ryukyu Kingdom”

century, while Zhong-shan thrived in terms of its external links. It is obvious that some members of the bureaucracies of the other polities were attracted to and transferred their loyalties to the growing Zhong-shan. The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制 –the Utchi of Ufuma) who had been sent to the Ming by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king in 1429,<sup>36</sup> was by 1434 part of a mission sent to the Ming by the ruler of the Zhong-shan polity.<sup>37</sup> The Chinese envoy Zheng Yi-cai (鄭義才) was likewise part of a mission from Shan-nan in 1416,<sup>38</sup> but from 1424 onwards, he was a regular member of Zhong-shan missions to the Ming.<sup>39</sup>

- It is one of the few extant contemporary corpora of Ryukyuan names from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, albeit represented in Chinese characters. Reconstructions of these names have been suggested by Shunzo Sakamaki.<sup>40</sup> Many of the envoy names given in the *MSL* include the suffix “jie-zhi” (結制) or “Utchi”, which Kobata and Matsuda gloss as “a title given to government officials”.<sup>41</sup> This is a title attached to the place names which which Sakamaki has identified. Eg. Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) would likely mean “the Utchi of Bu-ma”.
- The Ming chroniclers who recorded the names of the Ryukyuan envoys obviously based their transcription on an oral phonology, with the result that the same name is represented by different Chinese characters in the Ming record. For example, the envoy Shen-ma-zhi-li (甚麻之里), noted in a 1413 record,<sup>42</sup> was the same person as the Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里) in a 1420 reference.<sup>43</sup> The An-dan-jie-zhi (安丹結制)<sup>44</sup> of 1427 is the same person as the An-dan-ni-jie-zhi (安丹尼結制) of a 1424

<sup>36</sup> See *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 16 Nov 1429.

<sup>37</sup> See *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 16 Apr 1434.

<sup>38</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 6 May 1416.

<sup>39</sup> See *Ren-zong shi-lu* reference of 31 Aug 1424.

<sup>40</sup> Shunzo Sakamaki “On Early Ryukyuan Names” in Shunzo Sakamaki (ed.) *Ryukyuan Names: Monograph on and Lists of Personal and Place Names in the Ryukyus*, Honolulu, East-West Center Press, 1964., pp. 1-30.

<sup>41</sup> Kobata and Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries*, p. 199.

<sup>42</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 16 Feb 1413.

<sup>43</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 8 Jan 1420.

<sup>44</sup> See *Xuan-zong shi-lu* reference of 14 May 1427.

reference.<sup>45</sup> The fact that these names had no standard form of representation in Chinese characters suggests that in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Ryukyu islanders were still essentially illiterate. Names are one of the first elements to be represented in Chinese characters when they are introduced to a non-Chinese society and the fact that this had not happened in Ryukyu in the first quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century suggests a later adoption of literacy in the islands.

- What is also evident from the repeated appearance of the same persons in the envoy lists is that a cohort of external trade (and perhaps specifically Ming trade) experts had emerged in the islands by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- The increasing number of Chinese names in the envoy lists suggests a growing role by Chinese persons in managing the Ryukyu-Ming trade relationship, but more of this below.

### ***Ryukyuan Students in China***

One other continuing element in Ryukyuan interaction with the Ming and reflected in the MSL was the sending of students to the Ming capital to study at the School for Sons of the State. As noted above, at least one female student was sent by Ryukyu to study in Nan-jing. Otherwise, it appears that all persons sent were male. The following table provides details of some of the students sent:

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<sup>45</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 7 Nov 1424.

Date	Name of Students	Sent by	Comments
24 May 1392	Ri-mu-mei (日牧每) Kuo-ba-ma(闊八馬) Ren-yue-ci (仁悅慈) [Niushi]	Zhong-shan	Sons of the Zhong-shan king Cha-du Son of a stockade chief
27 Dec 1392	San-wu-lang-mei (三五郎尾) Shi-ta-lu-mei (實他盧尾) [Shutarumi] He-duan-zhi (賀段志) [Kanishi]	Shan-nan	Nephew of Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-du. Stayed 3 years. Sons of stockade chiefs
27 May 1393	Duan-zhi-mei (段志每) [Nishimi]?	Zhong-shan	Son of a stockade chief
24 Dec 1396	Ma-she-li (麻奢理) [Masari] Cheng-zhi-lu (誠志魯) [Shujiru]?	Shan-bei	Sons of stockade chiefs
19 Mar 1398	Gu-lu-mei (姑魯妹) [Kurumi]	Zhong-shan	A woman
7 Jun 1405	Li Jie (李傑)	Shan-nan	Son of a stockade chief. Apparently Chinese
21 Mar 1406	Shi-da-lu (石達魯) [Shutaru]? and others, totalling 6 persons	Zhong-shan	Son of a stockade chief
6 Jul 1410	Mo-du-gu (模都古) and one other [Matuku]	Ryukyu	
24 Feb 1411	Huai-de (懷得) Zu-lu-gu (祖魯古) [Tsiruku]	Zhong-shan	Son of the chief minister Son of a stockade chief
3 Mar 1413	Wu-tong-zhi-jiu (鄔同志久) [Ufugusiku] Zhou-lu-mei (周魯每) [Tsirumi] Qia-na-sheng (恰那晟)	Zhong-shan	Sons of stockade chiefs
3 Jul 1414	Yi-zhi-mei (益智每) [Ichimei]	Ryukyu	Already studying in Nan-jing at this time
20 Jan 1415	Wu-tong-zhi-jiu (鄔同志久) [Ufugusiku]		Already studying in Nan-jing at this time
23 Apr 1482	Cai Bin (蔡賓)	Zhong-shan king	Son of king's attendant minister

The periods for which these persons studied in China varied, but three years seems to have been most common. The predominance of students sent by Zhong-shan was likely both an effect and a consolidator of its premier political position in the islands.

The influence of these returning students on Ryukyuan society would likely have been immense. These were members of the elite and after studying at one of the major metropolises of Asia for three years, learning to read and write Chinese and becoming familiar with worlds well beyond their own, it is likely that they would have induced into the Ryukyu islands new ways of thinking and acting. Some became regular visitors to China as interpreters for later Ryukyuan missions to the Ming.

### ***Ryukyuan Links with Other Polities***

But it was not only with Ming China that the Ryukyuan developed relations. Links with Japan had existed since at least 1400 and with Korea from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Also, with the consolidation of power over the main island in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and the presence of the Chinese traders and interpreters, Ryukyu was linked into the Hokkien network overseas, creating further connections with various Southeast Asian polities. There are a few *MSL* references to such links— one of 1404 which notes that the Fu-jian Provincial Administration Commission had taken control over a stricken ship and that “it was found to contain envoys from the country of Siam who were going on a friendship mission to Ryukyu, but who had been blown here by the wind.”<sup>46</sup> Ryukyuan heading to Siam to buy sapan wood in 1450 suffered a similar fate.<sup>47</sup> Another *MSL* reference of 1441 notes that a ship from Ryukyu which was carrying porcelain to Java in order to return with a shipload of pepper and sapan wood when it met difficulties and was detained by Ming forces.<sup>48</sup> In 1473, a Ryukyuan ship returning from a purchasing trip to Malacca was damaged by winds and blown to Guangdong,<sup>49</sup> while in 1503 another Ryukyuan ship was shipwrecked near Hai-nan on the way to Malacca.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 7 Oct 1404.

<sup>47</sup> See *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 3 July 1450.

<sup>48</sup> See *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 8 Jan 1441.

<sup>49</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 3 May 1473.

<sup>50</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 27 Oct 1503.

From the *Li-dai Bao-an (Rekidai Hōan)*,<sup>51</sup> Kobata and Matsuda have provided us with translations of references showing diplomatic/trade links between Ryukyu and the following polities over the dates indicated: Siam (1425-1570), Palembang (1428-1440); Java (1430-1442), Malacca (1463-1511), Samudera (1463-68), Patani (1516-1543), Annam (1509) and Sunda (1513-18), and Korea (1431-1468).

These relations fall into several major groups. In the early years, from the 1420s, Ryukyu pursued relations with Siam, Palembang and Java. Yet, the relations with Malacca and Samudera, major trading polities close by the other polities the Ryukyuan maintained links with, appear to have commenced only in the 1460s. Could this have been due to the Ming maintaining some sort of presence in these two ports subsequent to the Zheng He voyages, ending in the 1460s, deterring official trade by the Ryukyuan?

Ryukyuan intercourse with Old Port/Palembang is of particular interest. Such correspondence was addressed to the prime minister (王相) and likewise Palembang correspondence with Ryukyu was also addressed to the Ryukyuan prime minister. This was different from the majority of Ryukyuan correspondence with other polities which was addressed to the king.

The reason for this was that for much of the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Palembang/Old Port was a Chinese colony, controlled by a pacification superintendent (宣慰使). As such, there was no polity “king” and the correspondence was carried on between senior ministers.

While the correspondence we have today between Ryukyu and Palembang as contained in the *Li-dai bao-an*, dates only from 1428, it is possible that the links extended back perhaps to the beginnings of the 1420s as Kobata and Matsuda detail links between Palembang, Japan and Ryukyu in 1420/21.<sup>52</sup> The “Na-fu-ta Teng Tzu-ch’ang” (那弗答鄧子昌) of the Ryukyuan text was certainly a Chinese person titled “Nakhoda”, suggesting further links between Palembang and the Arab or Persian worlds at this time.

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<sup>51</sup> For some background to this text, see Hamashita Takeshi, “The Rekidai Hoan: Documents of the Ryukyu Kingdom”, in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Issue 3 (March 2003), <http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue2/index.html>

<sup>52</sup> Kobata and Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries*, p. 134-35.

*Maritime Trade and Trade Goods*

At least one of the major elements in its foreign relations was the need for Ryukyu to obtain trade goods. It is clear that Ryukyu served as an entrepôt, directing trade goods from Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia to China, and Chinese goods to other economies. Obviously maritime trade was one of the major wealth generators for the polity. Ryukyu built its own ships carrying 150 men, but also later obtained ships from China. Arano suggests that the functioning of the “tribute-trade” system with the Ming suppressed the trade of the local lords (*aji*) and changed the system to a larger scale system of distribution on a state-to-state basis.<sup>53</sup>

What sort of goods were included this trade. The *MSL* records very little, often obscuring the individual items by the generic term “local products” (方物). Horses<sup>54</sup> and sulphur<sup>55</sup> were certainly shipped from Okinawa to China,<sup>56</sup> as were sapan wood, pepper and tin, while from China came ceramics, copper, textiles and iron, and Japan, swords, lacquer and gold to be traded onward to Southeast Asia. Also, from Southeast Asia, the ships returned with the subsequent monsoon carrying aromatic woods and pepper.

The importance of the horse trade from Ryukyu to the Ming, as an element of Ming military supplies procurement,<sup>57</sup> is very obvious from the *MSL* references, as is the degree to which sulphur, a key ingredient of the gunpowder being increasingly used by the Ming, featured in the exports to the Ming. Sun Laichen has examined the importance of this product for the Ming in the expansion of firearms use.<sup>58</sup> The *Rekidai Hōan* suggests that the major products

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<sup>53</sup> Arano, “The Kingdom of Ryūkyū” p. 126.

<sup>54</sup> For the Ryukyu trade in horses, see Roderich Ptak, “Pferde auf See. Chinas Pferdeimporte von den Riukiu-Inseln und den Ländern Südostasiens und des Indischen Ozeans (1368-1435)”, *Kleine beiträge zur europäischen Überseegeschichte* 8, Bamberg, 1991.

<sup>55</sup> Takara Kurayoshi, in his “An Outline of Ryukyu’s Relation to China” (p. 153) suggests that the sulphur was obtained from Iwōtorijima, west of Tokunoshima.

<sup>56</sup> Okamoto Hiromichi in his paper “Foreign Policy and Maritime Trade in the early Ming period: Focusing on the Ryukyu Kingdom”, details the quantities of horses and sulphur as well as sapan wood, pepper and tin sent by Ryukyu to China per decade from the 1420s to 1600.

<sup>57</sup> For a more general account of the role of horses in East Asian maritime trade, see “Pferde auf See: Ein vergessener Aspekt des maritimen chinesischen Handels im frühen 15. Jahrhundert”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 34 (1990), pp. 199-233.

<sup>58</sup> Sun Laichen, “Ming China and Korea, c. 1368-1600: With Special Reference to Gunpowder Technology, ”, paper presented at the “Southeast Asia in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century: the Ming Factor” conference, ARI, National University of Singapore, July 2003; and Sun Laichen, “Military Technology Transfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (c. 1390–1527)”, in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 34: 03 October 2003.

being exported to Southeast Asian polities were various types of Chinese silks and satins, as well as items of porcelain.<sup>59</sup>

The *MSL* reference of 13 Sep 1390 mentions “local swords” (方刀) and these may well be the swords noted by Tome Pires in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, when he wrote about their trade to Malacca: “The *Lequjos* bring swords worth thirty *cruzados* each, and many of these.”<sup>60</sup> These may also of course have derived from Japan.

The peak period of Ryukyu’s overseas trade appears to have been reached during the reign of King Shō Shin (1477-1526), but this trade was to be affected by the arrival of the Portuguese in Melaka in 1511. At the same time, there was a reduction of Chinese engagement with the polities of Southeast Asia and the rise of the *wakō* pirates throughout East Asia. Kreiner suggests that it was actually “the battles for the unification of Japan that put an end to the flourishing trade of the Ryūkyū Kingdom.”<sup>61</sup>

### The Chinese in Okinawa

A community which was to play a major role in Ryukyu’s external links from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly in relations with the Ming, was the Chinese community in Ryukyu. The Chinese maritime bans of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries theoretically prohibited Chinese from leaving China and also prohibited them from returning to China. Despite such bans there was, as the work of James Chin and others informs us, much movement of Chinese people across the seas between the Chinese coast and other parts of East Asia.<sup>62</sup>

In the *MSL*, the first appearance of a Chinese name associated with Ryukyu appears in 1390, with the arrival at the Ming capital of the envoy Li Zhong (李仲) and others who had been

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<sup>59</sup> See Kobata and Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries*, passim.

<sup>60</sup> Armando Cortesão (translator and annotator), *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An Account of the East, From the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca, and India in 1512-15*, London, Hakluyt Society, 1944, Vol. I, p. 131.

<sup>61</sup> Kreiner, *Ryūkyūan History*, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> See James Chin Kong, “Merchants and other sojourners : the Hokkiens overseas, 1570-1760”, PhD Dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 1998. In his introductory chapter entitled “The Hokkiens Overseas Prior to 1570”, Dr Chin provides details of Hokkien merchants trading to Korea in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in Vietnam in 12<sup>th</sup> century and in Java in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.

sent by the Shan-bei king Pa-ni-zhi.<sup>63</sup> However, the existence of Chinese persons working with the political elite of Ryukyu obviously has a longer history. In 1411, the Zhong-shan ruler submitted a request to the Ming emperor noting of Cheng Fu (程復) who had come with that mission to the Ming court: “Fu is a person from Rao-zhou,<sup>64</sup> who served my grandfather Cha-du for over 40 years, and has been extremely and unremittingly loyal. This year he is 81 years old. It is requested that he be ordered to retire and return to his village.” We see here that the Jiang-xi native Cheng Fu had been operating as an aide to the ruler of Ryukyu from at least the 1370s.<sup>65</sup> James Chin’s table showing hundreds of Chinese merchants trading to Korea during the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>66</sup> suggests the possibility that Chinese sojourners had been stopping at or residing in the Ryukyu islands for perhaps hundreds of years by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of Chinese persons who had become aides or major elements in administrations beyond China during the Ming are numerous and have been discussed by Chan Hok-lam.<sup>67</sup>

The Administrator Wang Mao (王茂)<sup>68</sup> was also a senior aide in Ryukyu at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and it is clear that many of the Chinese persons mentioned in the *MSL* references to Ryukyu were to some degree involved in the external trade of the polity. Wu Yi (吳宜) was a senior member in a mission from the Shan-nan ruler in 1396,<sup>69</sup> and Cai Qi (蔡奇) participated in a mission from the Zhong-shan ruler in the same year.<sup>70</sup> Lin You (李佑) was part of a mission from Zhong-shan in 1410,<sup>71</sup> while in 1416, Han Wan-yi (韓完義) arrived in China as the representative of the Zhong-shan ruler, while Zheng Yi-cai (鄭義才) came on behalf of the Shan-nan ruler.<sup>72</sup> These Chinese compradors were also likely engaged

<sup>63</sup> See *Tai-zu shi-lu* reference dated 1 Feb 1390.

<sup>64</sup> A subprefecture located in the modern Chinese province of Jiang-xi.

<sup>65</sup> Jiang-xi persons are not usually counted among those Chinese who ventured overseas. However, scattered texts do seem to suggest that there was a strong Jian-xi element among some of the Chinese overseas communities in East Asia.

<sup>66</sup> James Chin Kong, “Merchants and other sojourners” pp 1-12

<sup>67</sup> Chan Hok-lam, “The ‘Chinese Barbarian Officials’ in the Foreign Tributary Missions to China During the Ming Dynasty” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 88 (1968), pp. 411-18.

<sup>68</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 5 April 1403.

<sup>69</sup> See *Tai-zu shi-lu* reference of 27 May 1396.

<sup>70</sup> See *Tai-zu shi-lu* reference of 24 December 1396.

<sup>71</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 31 July 1410.

<sup>72</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 6 May 1416.

in their own trade, as in a 1428 reference, we see the Chinese envoys from Ryukyu themselves receiving “rewards” of paper money, silks, headwear, robes and so on.<sup>73</sup> Other Chinese descendants who were engaged in Ryukyuan external trade during the 15<sup>th</sup> century are detailed in the *Li-dai Bao-an* references translated by Kobata and Matsuda.<sup>74</sup>

An *MSL* reference from the late 1460s provides us with a useful, although not necessarily typical, account of how Chinese persons became involved with Ryukyu: “Cai Jing (蔡璟 or Chua Khin in Hokkien), the Administrator of the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu is the grandson of a person from Nan-an County in Fu-jian. At the beginning of the Hong-wu reign (1368-98), the grandfather was Imperially commissioned to proceed to the country of Ryukyu and guided those of Ryukyu in coming to offer tribute, assisting them as an interpreter. Cai Jing’s father inherited the position of interpreter and the position passed on to Jing, who was appointed as Administrator. At this time, he requested that, in accordance with the precedents he have conferred upon him a title patent and that a posthumous title be conferred upon his father and mother. The matter was sent to the Ministry of Personnel, which shelved the issue as there were no precedents for this.”<sup>75</sup>

The “36 families from Fujian” (*binjin-san-jū-rokusei*) who are reputed to have come to Kume-mura in Naha in 1393 and played such an important role in Ryukyuan links with China, are not mentioned specifically in the *MSL*. However, it appears that by 1405 some local administrations were controlled by persons of Chinese descent, as Li Jie (李傑), who had been sent by the Shan-nan ruler to the Ming capital to study, was noted as being the son of a stockade chief (寨官).<sup>76</sup>

Some surnames are particularly prominent. The Liang (梁)(Leong in Hokkien) surname group appears quite frequently in the *MSL* references from the 1420s. Liang Hui (梁回) was an envoy for the Zhong-shan king, Liang Mi-zu (梁密祖) was an interpreter, while Liang Qiu-bao (梁求保) was an Administrator (長史). In the 1470s, Liang Ying (梁應) served as an

<sup>73</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 3 Nov 1428. Similarities might be drawn with Chinese-descent envoys to the Ming from Java in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, who had titles assigned by both the Javanese and Ming states.

<sup>74</sup> See Kobata and Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries*, *passim* and the “Chinese-style names” on pp. 200-01.

<sup>75</sup> See *Xian-zong shi-lu* reference of 19 April 1469.

<sup>76</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 7 June 1405

envoy to the Ming. The Liang (Ryō in Ryukyuan) clan members also feature prominently in the references to Ryukyuan trade with Southeast Asia in the *Li-dai bao-an*.<sup>77</sup> Similar claims could be made of the Cai (蔡) (Chua in Hokkien), Cheng (程) and Zheng (鄭) (Tay in Hokkien) families in Ryukyu.

## OVERVIEW

In brief, the *MSL* references to Ryukyu suggest the existence of three contending polities in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, all engaged to varying degrees with the maritime trade which linked the islands to other parts of East Asia. Private traders were obviously a major part of this trading world. Arano Yasunori (among others) considers that the *wakō* phenomenon had existed since the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and that it had as an integral element the overseas Chinese networks.<sup>78</sup>

After the emergence of the Ming in China, the dynasty's founder Zhu Yuan-zhang imposed maritime bans which precluded private operators from going to sea. This played a role in separating *wakō* from people living along the Chinese coast, and thus guaranteed the Ming tribute-trade system.<sup>79</sup> When the state-based tribute-trade system began to function in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, *wakō* activity declined.

The political consolidation in Ryukyu and the growing power of the Ming saw this new state-based system strengthened, with the regularization of trade using Chinese compradors and the fostering of a new generation of Ryukyuan elite who had studied in China and were conversant with the world of the Ming. The 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the Ryūkyū Kingdom enjoy economic prosperity through entrepôt trade in the China Sea, connecting the Chinese market with Korea, Southeast Asian countries and Japan

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the state trade-tribute system began to slacken, the private and civil networks came to the fore again. This was in part a result of a commercial boom in East Asia

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<sup>77</sup> Kobata and Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries*, p. 201.

<sup>78</sup> Arano Yasunori, "The Kingdom of Ryūkyū and the East Asian World Order in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Ryūkyū in World History*, Bonn, Bier'sche Verlagsanstalt (JapanArchiv Band 2), 2001, pp. 117-142. See p. 122.

<sup>79</sup> Arano, "The Kingdom of Ryūkyū". See p. 119.

and, in addition, both Europe and Japan began engaging in expansion in East Asia. The end of Ryukyu's age of greatness was a result of the Ming formally licensing trading ships to trade directly between China and Southeast Asian ports,<sup>80</sup> and the invasion of the islands by troops of the *daimyō* Shimazu in 1609, both of which made Ryukyu less of an independent actor than it had been in the past.<sup>81</sup> It was no coincidence that the last *Li-dai bao-an/Rekidai Hōan* reference to official Ryukyuan trade with Southeast Asia appears in 1570,<sup>82</sup> just three years after the Ming began licensing Chinese traders to trade directly with the ports of the Western Ocean and the Eastern Ocean.

### RYUKYU IN AN AGE OF COMMERCE?

Did the changes in Ryukyu over the period from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century derive from or constitute part of a Northeast Asian “Age of Commerce”? The term, of course, derives from Anthony Reid's “Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce”<sup>83</sup>, a two-volume work which examines the changes occurring in Southeast Asia over the period from about 1400 to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and observes a range of phenomena which he sees as being causes and effects of a Southeast Asian “Age of Commerce”.

He sees it as part of the “long 16<sup>th</sup> century” which affected China, Japan, Europe, the Mediterranean and perhaps India. In this period of commercial boom, Southeast Asia was, it is suggested by Braudel, essential to the system because it was the provider of the pepper, cloves and nutmeg which were the most important products in long-distance trade.

As a result, various of the port cities of Southeast Asia emerged as hubs of commerce, becoming regional centres of “economic life, political power, and cultural creativity,”<sup>84</sup> and spurring the political, social and economic changes which marked the Age of Commerce in

<sup>80</sup> For the decline in Ryukyu-Ming trade, see Okamoto Hiromichi, “Foreign Policy and Maritime Trade in the early Ming period: Focusing on the Ryukyu Kingdom”, Table 2 and Table 3.

<sup>81</sup> See also Roderich Ptak, “The Ryukyu Network in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth centuries” in *Review of Culture/Revista de Cultura* 2003/6, pp. 7-23, which also includes a useful bibliography of Chinese, Japanese and western works—primary and secondary—on this period in Ryukyu history.

<sup>82</sup> See Hamashita Takeshi, “Ryukyu Networks in Maritime Asia” in *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*, Issue 3 (March 2003), <http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue2/index.html>

<sup>83</sup> Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450-1680*, (Two volumes) New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1988 and 1993.

<sup>84</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 2.

the region. In Ryukyu, we do see that during the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, Naha also emerged as a commercial hub -- as an entrepôt port – serving the booming commerce of the period. How many other elements of Reid’s Age of Commerce can we detect as occurring in Ryukyu over this period?

### Commerce and Spices

In the area of the spice trade, Reid suggests that there was a shift, around 1400 from a direct Chinese buying of cloves in Maluku to a Chinese demand mediated through Malay and Javanese traders.<sup>85</sup> There is little evidence of clove trade with China being conducted through Ryukyu, and there is no reference to Ryukyu and cloves in at least the period from 1370s-1440s in the *MSL*.

Pepper was a much more widely-grown and traded commodity in Asia at this time, grown in Malabar, Java, and northern Sumatra by the early 1400s. At least for a short time, some of this reached the Ming state through Ryukyu, with 1,000 *jin* (about 600 kilograms) of pepper being delivered to the Ming in early 1390,<sup>86</sup> and more in 1394 and 1398. After the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it appears not to have been a major commodity, although much may be hidden behind the “local products” which the Ming records tell us were brought to China by those of Ryukyu.

Aromatic woods, long a mainstay of trade between Southeast Asian polities and Chinese polities, also formed part of the cargoes of Ryukyuan missions to China in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These included sapan wood.<sup>87</sup> It is recognised that these products derived from what is today called Southeast Asia, and Ryukyuan connections through Southeast Asia to more distant places were evident in the frankincense which Ryukyu also traded to China.<sup>88</sup> The trading connections between Ryukyu and Southeast Asian polities over the 15th century is well attested in the work by Kobata and Matsuda.<sup>89</sup> Thus, like the Javanese and Malays, during

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<sup>85</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ming shi-lu* reference of 11 Feb 1390.

<sup>87</sup> *Ming Shi-lu* references of 11 Feb 1390, 25 Feb 1394, 27 May 1396

<sup>88</sup> *Ming Shi-lu* reference of 11 Feb 1390.

<sup>89</sup> Kobata Atsushi and Matsuda Mitsugo, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries: An Annotated Translation of Documents in the Rekidai Hoan*, Kyoto: Atsushi Kobata, 1969.

this period the Ryukyans were playing a mediating role in the trade between Southeast Asia and the Ming

### **A Trade Take-off around 1400**

A major element in the Reid thesis is the idea that a trade boom occurred some time around 1400, with Ming China playing a prominent role in changing the “distinct lull in seaborne trade” which had existed for about a century before 1370.<sup>90</sup> He sees the expansion in wealth and population in Ming China as having stimulated Southeast Asian production of crops which fed new demand in both Asian markets and Europe.

What we do observe in Ryukyu is an expanded **recorded** external trade from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There appears to have been little contact between Yuan China and the polities of Ryukyu, but a marked surge in commercial interaction with the Asian mainland following the emergence of the Ming regime. Was this however, just the formalising, as state-based commerce, of the trade which had previously been carried out by non-state actors and which was therefore unrecorded in the historical record? The broader East Asian context suggests that, rather, during this period these were indeed changes greater than a switch from non-state to state carriers of commerce.

### **The Boom Years 1570-1630**

The 60 years after 1570 are seen by Reid as a commercial boom period when Europe and Japan joined China and India as great catalysts for increased Southeast Asian exports, while others have seen this period as heralding the beginnings of Japan’s modernity.<sup>91</sup> The silver flowing out of Japan in this period certainly changed patterns of trade and growth in the region, as did the Tokugawa licensing of ships to sail between Japan and Southeast Asia.

But it was the lifting of the maritime trade bans in China in 1567, and the issuing of licenses<sup>92</sup> for formal trade with the Eastern and Western Oceans that was to provide a major blow to

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<sup>90</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 11-12.

<sup>91</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 16.

<sup>92</sup> First 50 in 1567, then 88 in 1589 and another increase to 117 by 1597.

Ryukyu and its role as a major entrepôt between Southeast Asia and China. The freedom to trade directly with southern Chinese ports affected. It is thus that this study ends with the 1560s, as that decade opened a new period in Ryukyuan history and likely laid the foundations for the invasion of Satsuma troops in 1609, with Ryukyu thereby becoming much more closely linked to Japan (through the fief of the *daimyō* Shimazu). While Southeast Asia boomed, Ryukyu appears to have gone into decline, precisely because it was reliant on maritime trade.

### **Cash-cropping**

An integral part of the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce was the commercialisation of various types of agriculture –pepper, sugar cane, and benzoin to name just some.<sup>93</sup> The coral and volcanic islands of the Ryukyu archipelago are unsuitable for such agriculture and thus local cash-cropping was certainly not an important element in Ryukyu in any period.

### **The Heyday of the Southeast Asian Junk**

The emergence of the Southeast Asian junk as an essential tool on the Nusantara trade routes is also suggested as a feature of the Age of Commerce.<sup>94</sup> As an island chain, the Ryukyu islanders needed ships for their increased commercial function, but it appears that little ship-building was done on the islands. Ships were obtained from China by a range of means, as described above. However, given the links between Ryukyu and Southeast Asian ports, it is also likely that the hybrid South China Sea tradition junks were also utilised by the Ryukyu traders.<sup>95</sup> Tome Pires in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century notes of Ryukyu that “they have ships of their own type; they have three or four junks which are continuously buying in China, and they have no more.”<sup>96</sup> This claim he makes despite his other assertion that the Ryukyuan trade to Malacca “sometimes in company with the Chinese, sometimes on their own.”

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<sup>93</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 32-36.

<sup>94</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 36-43.

<sup>95</sup> See Pierre-Yves Manguin, “Trading ships of the South China Sea: shipbuilding techniques and their role in the development of Asian trade networks” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 36 (1993), pp. 253-280.

<sup>96</sup> Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, p. 129.

## Navigation

Intimately related to the hardware of ships was the software of navigation. Given their environment, the Ryukyuan islanders must have possessed various well-developed maritime skills for centuries. However, whether this included the technologies and skills necessary for long-distance trade is a moot point. Albuquerque noted that in 1511 he obtained a map of a Javanese pilot that depicted “the navigations of the Chinese and the *Gores*”.<sup>97</sup> Here the *Gores* very likely refers to the people of Ryukyu. It is apparent that Ryukyu was engaged in long-distance trade during this period and possessed all thenavigational skills necessary for this.

## The City and its Commerce

Whether the sustained urban growth which Reid sees as marking the Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia,<sup>98</sup> occurred in Ryukyu is not something which can be assessed solely from the *MSL* references. It appears likely, however, from diverse evidence, that the port of Naha expanded during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in the same ways as the port cities of Southeast Asia, with major markets emerging and increased handicraft production.<sup>99</sup>

## Coinage and Commercialization

Premised on the need for more money to feed a growth economy, Reid sees the Age of Commerce as having “produced a constant demand for usable coinage”.<sup>100</sup> He suggests that “Chinese copper cash, and local coins modelled on them, were the basic lubricant for the increasing commercialization of the region after 1400,”<sup>101</sup> citing as examples the predominance of *picis* (Chinese copper cash) after about 1300 in Java, the use of such coins in the Philippines, and the minting of coins in Vietnam.

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<sup>97</sup> Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, p. lxxviii.

<sup>98</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 62-131.

<sup>99</sup> As suggested by Tome Pires when he notes that “they make gilt coffers, very rich and well made fans, swords, many arms of all kinds after their fashion. Just as we, in our kingdoms, speak of Milan, so do the Chinese and all other races speak of the *Lequjos*.” See Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, p. 130.

<sup>100</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 95.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

The MSL does provide some useful references to show both the pre-coinage economy of the Ryukyus and the introduction of coinage into the islands from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards. A reference to Ryukyuan envoys in Fu-jian in 1436 notes that they were carrying 90 conch shells and 58,000 cowries, the latter obviously as some sort of currency.<sup>102</sup> In 1437, other Ryukyuan envoys were also found to be carrying cowries and conches. The imperial response to a ministerial proposal that be taken under Chinese government control was reportedly: “Cowries and conch shells are what the *yi* people depend upon as wealth enhancers (貨殖). If we took them what would we do with them? All are to be returned to them and an order noting this should be issued.”<sup>103</sup>

We thus have, in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, cowries and conches being brought into China from Ryukyu.<sup>104</sup> Whether they were to be used for trade on the East Chinese coast or sold for transportation into, for example, Yun-nan where they were also used as currency remains unknown.<sup>105</sup>

However, that Chinese coinage was an acceptable medium of exchange in Ryukyu in the 14<sup>th</sup> century is attested by an *MSL* reference from the 1380s, which reads: “The eunuch Liang Min, who had been sent with coinage to Ryukyu in order to purchase horses, returned. He obtained 983 horses.”<sup>106</sup> The amount of copper coinage necessary to purchase nearly 1,000 horses would not have been insignificant. Coins were also part of the rewards/payments the Ryukyuan envoys received in China in exchange for their trade goods.<sup>107</sup> By the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there was obviously a great need for such currency in the islands. This is attested by the fact that in 1459, the Ryukyuan ruler Shang Tai-jiu [Shō Taikyū] advised the Ming court that due to a fire, the treasury had burned down and requested that, as payment for their aromatic woods, they be provided with copper cash as was the practice during the

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<sup>102</sup> *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 8 March 1436.

<sup>103</sup> *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 18 March 1437.

<sup>104</sup> Reid notes the use of cowries as currency in Southeast Asia (Siam, Arakan, Martaban, and Kedah) up to at least 1500. See Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 97.

<sup>105</sup> For an excellent account of the use of cowries as currency in East and South Asia, see Hans Ulrich Vogel, with the research assistance of Sabine Hieronymus: “Cowry Trade and Its Role in the Economy of Yünnan: From the Ninth to the Mid-Seventeenth Century”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 36.3 (1993), pp. 211-252 and 36.4 (1993), pp. 309-353.

<sup>106</sup> See *Tai-zu shi-lu* reference of 15 Oct 1383.

<sup>107</sup> See *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 27 Apr 1404.

Yong-le (1403-24) and Xuan-de (1426-1435) reigns. The Ministry of Rites opposed this, noting “copper cash is for China to use” and urged that paper money be provided.<sup>108</sup> The frequent provision of paper money to the Ryukyuan envoys by the Ming court (from the Yong-le reign on)<sup>109</sup> suggests that this too may have been an acceptable medium of exchange at least within China, but it was generally converted to goods prior to departure from China.

### **Financial Organization**

Reid notes the obvious dearth of capital in Southeast Asia during the Age of Commerce, and the lack of formal corporate financial bodies.<sup>110</sup> The Chettiar and Gujarati communities did however play a major role in money-lending and thereby facilitating regional commerce.<sup>111</sup> One important financing channel which Reid does not examine is that of the Chinese, and it was obviously the Hokkien who were major funders of some of the commerce. James Chin has examined various of the Hokkien commercial practices during the Age of Commerce in his thesis, including the financing of commerce.<sup>112</sup> It might be suggested that the Hokkiens in Ryukyu either provided directly or provided links to trading credit and other capital.

### **Mercantile Elite**

With the financing system and growing trade which characterised major Southeast Asian ports during the Age of Commerce, we see the emergence of a mercantile elite.<sup>113</sup> The various types of “*orangkaya*” are examined by Reid, who divides them into three types: 1) Foreign merchants, attracted to a port by commercial opportunities: 2) foreign or foreign-descended and partly assimilated merchant officials, mediating between court and traders: 3) The indigenous aristocracy drawn into the trade by their position or wealth.

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<sup>108</sup> See *Ying-zong shi-lu* reference of 4 Apr 1459.

<sup>109</sup> The first reference to the “conferral” of paper money on envoys from Ryukyu is seen in the *Tai-zong shi-lu* reference of 23 May 1404.

<sup>110</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 107-111.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* pp 111-13.

<sup>112</sup> James Chin Kong, “Merchants and other sojourners: the Hokkiens overseas, 1570-1760”, PhD Dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 1998. See particularly Chapter VII -- The Hokkiens Overseas: Observations and Appraisal.

<sup>113</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, pp. 114-123.

The commercial elite in Ryukyu during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries appears to have included mainly elements of the second and third categories, with the foreign or foreign descended Chinese becoming the compradors, mediating between the indigenous court members and the traders, or perhaps directly with agents in China. At the same time, the Ryukyuan elite also used their positions to engage in trade with Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Southeast Asian ports.

### **Religious Revolution**

“More than half the population of Southeast Asia adopted Islam or Christianity in some sense during the age of commerce.”<sup>114</sup> So begins a chapter entitled “A Religious Revolution” within Reid’s exposition on the effects and manifestations of the age of commerce in Southeast Asia.

The *Ming Shi-lu* references to Ryukyu offer no suggestion of religious transformation *per se* in the islands during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, we do see evidence of increased influence of Confucian texts and ritual during this period. As cultural affiliation to a belief system whose centre lies elsewhere, as was the case with religious adoption in Southeast Asia, we can perhaps draw some parallels between the Confucianisation of Ryukyu and the Islamisation/Christianisation of parts of Southeast Asia.

### **Changes in States and Politics**

In looking at the history of Southeast Asian polities during the Age of Commerce, and the emergence of new centres of international trade, Reid notes that “Between 1400 and 1600 this new form of port-state, directly involved in the expanding international trade, came to dominate Southeast Asia both politically and culturally.” These new “port-centred states” included Pegu, Arakan, Patani, Aceh, Banten, Makassar, which flourished between the fall of Malacca and the rise of Dutch Batavia.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 132.

<sup>115</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 202.

It appears that Ryukyu was also subject to some of these phenomena during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. While the Ryukyuan polities were, by their nature, already coastal, the tripartite Ryukyu we see in the earliest *MSL* references to the islands in the 1370s – with polities known to the Chinese as Zhong-shan, Nan-shan, and Shan-bei -- had, by the 1430s, been transformed into a singular polity under the Zhong-shan ruler. How this “merger” was accomplished is not wholly clear from the texts available to us, but there is evidence that warfare did play some part, while the commercial success of the Zhong-shan polity seems to have also been a factor in increasing its political influence. We thus see political centralisation as a result of the interaction of Ryukyu with a broader world during this period.

The centralisation/unification of the main island occurred during the reign of Yong-le, who was heavily involved in other parts of Asia (Palembang, Brunei, Yunnan) in ensuring that persons sympathetic to the Ming were placed or supported in power. Was it a coincidence that this process occurred during the reign of Yong-le? How important was Ming power in support of Zhong-shan and its eventual emergence as the sole polity of the islands?

### **The Military Revolution**

It appears that certain parts of Southeast Asia underwent a military revolution during the Age of Commerce, with the introduction and widespread adoption of firearms as aids in regime and authority strengthening.<sup>116</sup> Sun Laichen has also written widely on the gunpowder age and how it affected East Asia.<sup>117</sup> There is, however, no evidence from the *MSL* that any of the Ryukyu polities was a major user of firearms at this time, despite being one of the major suppliers of a major gunpowder component -- sulphur -- throughout the period being examined. It would certainly not, however, be surprising if other evidence does show that the Hokkien network or other trade links saw firearms being traded into Ryukyu from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, or that they were used in the consolidation of political power by the Zhong-shan state.

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<sup>116</sup> Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. Two, p. 219-233.

<sup>117</sup> See for instance his “Military Technology Transfers from Ming China and the Emergence of Northern Mainland Southeast Asia (c. 1390–1527)” in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume 34:3 (October 2003), and “Chinese Military Technology and Dai Viet: c. 1390-1497”, Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 11, [http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps03\\_011.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps03_011.pdf)

**APPENDIX I – RYUKYUAN ENVOYS TO THE MING: 1370S-1440S**

The following listing of the Ryukyuan envoys to the Ming from the 1370s to the 1440s is arranged chronologically. The listing is subdivided horizontally by the polities which sent the envoys to the Ming.

<b>Date of MSL entry</b>	<b>Zhong-shan (Chūzan)</b>	<b>Shan-nan (Sanzan)</b>	<b>Shan-bei (Sanhoku)</b>
23 Jan 1373	Tai-qi (泰期) [Tachi] younger brother of Cha-du, the king		
2 Dec 1374	Tai-qi (泰期) [Tachi] Su-re (蘇惹) Pa-yan-zhi (爬燕之)		
19 Apr 1376	Tai-qi (泰期) [Tachi]		
Feb/Mar 1377	Tai-qi (泰期) [Tachi]		
31 May 1378	Unnamed		
24 Apr 1380	Unnamed		
17 Nov 1380		Shi-re (師惹) [Chinā]	
28 Feb 1382	Tai-qi (泰期) [Tachi] Ya-lan-pao (亞蘭匏)		
3 Feb 1383	Ya-lan-pao (亞蘭匏)		

3 Feb 1383		Shi-re (師惹) [Chinā]	
8 Jan 1384			Mo-jie-xi (模結習) [Maushi]
23 Jan 1384	unnamed	unnamed	
19 Jun 1384	A-bu-ye (阿不耶) [Ufuya]		
14 Feb 1385	unnamed	unnamed	unnamed
3 Feb 1386	Ya-lan-pao		
28 Feb 1387	Ya-lan-pao		
10 Jan 1388		Ye-shi-gu (耶師姑) [Yamagusiku]	
8 Feb 1388		Wang-ying-zi-shi (汪英紫氏), the uncle, and Han-ning-shou (函寧壽), the younger brother, of the king	
20 Feb 1388			unnamed
4 Mar 1388	Ya-lan-pao		
16 Oct 1388	unnamed		Shen-mo-jie-zhi (甚模結致) [Utchi of Shimu]
11 Feb 1390	Ya-lan-pao; interpreter Wu-zhi-jie (屋之結)		Li Zhong (李仲)
27 Mar 1391	Ya-lan-pao; Wei-gu-zhi (鬼谷致) [Kwiku]		
29 Sep 1391		Ye-shi-gu (耶師姑) [Yamagusiku] and Shou-li-ji-zhi (壽禮給智) Utchi of Shuri	

24 May 1392	Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結致) Utchi of Wijo		
31 May 1392	Interpreters Cheng Yu (程優) <sup>118</sup> and Ye-xi-yin (葉希尹)		
1 Dec 1392	Cha-du (察都) [Satu]		
27 Dec 1392		Nan-du-mei (南都妹) [Natumi]	
1 Mar 1393	Ma-zhou (麻州) [Mashu]		
27 May 1393	Shou-li-jie-zhi (壽禮結致) [tchi of Shuri]		
5 July 1393		Bu-li-jie-zhi (不里結致) [chi of Buri]	
25 Feb 1394	Ya-lan-pao		
Jan/Feb 1395	Ya-lan-pao	Ye-shi-gu [Yamagusiku]	
26 Apr 1395	Ya-sa-du (亞撒都) [Asatu]		
19 Feb 1396	Dian-bu-cheng-fu (典簿程復)		Shan-jia-gu-ye (善佳古耶) [Jinkaguya]
27 May 1396	Kui-gu-jie-zhi (隗谷結致) [Utchi of Kwiku]	Envoy sent by king unnamed, but those sent by uncle Wang- ying-zi-shi named as Wu Yi (吳宜) and Kan-mi-jie-zhi (堪彌結致) [Utchi of Kami]?	

<sup>118</sup> This may be an error for Cheng Fu (程復). See 『明実録』の琉球史料(一), p. 78, note 138.

24 Dec 1396			Shan-jia-gu-ye (善佳古耶) [Jinkaguya]
2 Mar 1397	You-zan-jie-zhi (友贊結致) [Utchi of Yuza]	Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結致) [Utchi of Wijo]	Qia-yi-si-ye (恰宜斯耶)
3 Jan 1398	You-zan-jie-zhi [Utchi of Yuza]		Qia-yi-si-ye
19 Mar 1398	Ya-lan-pao, Ya-sa-du-jie-zhi (押撒都結致) [Utchi of Asatu] Mei-bu-jie-zhi (每步結致) Sa-du-nu-shi (撒都奴侍)		
17 Apr 1398	Ya-le-jia-ji (鴉勒佳稽) [Arakachi] and Cheng Fu (程復)		
29 Apr 1398	A-bu-ye (阿不耶) [Ufuya]		
14 Mar 1403	San-wu-liang-die (三吾良疊), nephew of Cha-du		
31 Mar 1403			Shan-zhu-gu-ye (善住古耶) [Jinkaguya]
5 Apr 1403	Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結制), and Administrator Wang Mao (王茂)	Unnamed envoy, sent by Wang-ying-zu (汪應祖), younger brother of the Shan- nan king	
31 Mar 1404	San-wu-liang-men (三吾良疊)		
27 Apr 1404			Ya-du-jie-zhi (亞都結制) [Utchi of Akatu]

20 May 1404		Kui-gu-jie-zhi (隗谷結致) [Utchi of Kwikgu]	
23 May 1404	Unnamed, sent by Wu-ning, heir to the throne		
29 Nov 1404	Unnamed	Unnamed	
7 Apr 1405	San-wu-liang-men		
29 Apr 1405			Chi-jia-jie-zhi (赤佳結制) [Utchi of Jinka]?
4 May 1405	Yang-bu-jie-zhi (養埠結制) [Utchi of Yabu]		
16 May 1405		Tai-lai-jie-zhi (泰賴結制) [Utchi of Tarā]	
15 Dec 1405	Wan-ning-si-jie (完寧斯結), heir to the throne.		
16 Jan 1406	unnamed	Unnamed	unnamed
21 Mar 1406	San-wu-liang-men	Unnamed	
8 Apr 1407		Tai-lai-jie-zhi [Utchi of Tarā]	
18 May 1407	San-wu-liang-men		
22 Apr 1408	A-bo-wu-si (阿勃吾斯) [Ufugusiku]	Tian-da-gu-ye (? 達姑耶)	
21 Nov 1408	Unnamed		
10 Jul 1409		A-bo-wu-si-gu (阿勃吾斯古) [Ufugusiku]	
8 Apr 1410	San-wu-liang-men		
16 May 1410		Nai-jia-wu-si-gu (乃佳吾斯古) [Nakagusiku]	
31 Jul 1410		A-nai-jia-jie-zhi (阿乃佳結制) [Utchi of Araka] Lin You (李佑)	

18 Jan 1411	San-wu-liang-men		
25 Apr 1411	Kun-yi-kan-mi (坤宜堪彌) [Kunigami] Cheng Fu (程復)		
16 Jul 1411	Mo-du-pu (模都莆) [Matubu] ?		
30 Jan 1412	Tai-bo-qi (泰勃奇) [Tafuchi]? Guo-bo-gu-lai-ye (郭伯姑賴耶) [Kufangwaya]		
1 Apr 1412		A-bo-wu-si-gu	
26 May 1412	Kun-yi-kan-mi [Kunigami]		
16 Feb 1413	Shen-ma-zhi-li (甚麻之里) [Shimajiri]		
3 Mar 1413	Gong-bo-qi (Likely Tai-bo-qi) (恭勃奇) [Tafuchi]?		
20 May 1413	San-wu-liang-men	Wu-shi-jia-jie-zhi (吾是佳結制) [Utchi of Gushika]	
1 Sep 1413		Wu-la-shui-jie-zhi (鄔刺誰結) [Utchi of Urasī]	
20 Jan 1414	Wei-ba-lu (威巴魯) [Wibaru]		
18 Oct 1414	San-wu-liang-men		
28 Apr 1415		Wu-shi-jia-jie-zhi (鄔是佳結制) [Utchi of Gushika]?	
27 May 1415	Unnamed		unnamed
27 Sep 1415	Yi-shi-jie-zhi (宜是結制) [Utchi of Jisshi]		

16 Dec 1415	Zhi-jia-lu (直佳魯) [Jakaru] ? A-bo-ma-jie-zhi (阿勃馬結制) [Utchi of Ufuma]		
25 Feb 1416	San-wu-liang-men		
6 May 1416	Han Wan-yi (韓完義)	Zheng Yi-cai (鄭義才)	
14 May 1417	Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里) [Shimajiri]		
16 Sep 1417	Ya-bo-jie-zhi (亞勃結制) [Utchi of Afusu]		
23 Oct 1417	Wu-mei-zhu-ni-jiu (鄔梅住尼九) [Umigani]?		
21 Mar 1418	Huai-ji (懷機)		
18 Jun 1418	A-nai-zhu (阿乃住) [Araka]		
17 Feb 1419	Wu-mei-zhu-ni (鄔梅住尼) [Umigani]		
17 May 1419	Nong-ba-lu-ni (農巴魯尼) [Nunbaruni]?		
31 Jul 1419	unnamed		
8 Jan 1420	Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里) [Shimajiri]		
24 Oct 1422	Mo-du-gu (模都古) [Matuku]		
14 Sep 1423	A-bu-cha-du (阿不察都) [Ufuzatu]		
31 Dec 1423	A-bu-cha-du (阿不察都) [Ufuzatu]		

6 Jul 1424		A-bo-ma-jie-zhi (阿勃馬結制) [Utchi of Ufuma]	
31 Aug 1424	Zheng Yi-cai		
7 Nov 1424	An-dan-ni-jie-zhi (安丹尼結制) [Utchi of Adaniya]		
12 Jan 1425		A-bo-ma-jie-zhi [Utchi of Ufuma]	
10 Mar 1425	Li Jie (李傑)		
14 May 1425	Wu-mei-zhi (鄔梅支)		
14 Aug 1425	Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那) [Kachinuhana]		
13 Sep 1425	Fu-na-gu-shi (浮那姑是) [Funakushi] Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) [Utchi of Nanzatu]		
13 Jan 1426	Song-bi-jie-zhi (宋比結制) [Utchi of Subi]		
28 Apr 1426	Shi-da-lu (實達魯) [Shutarū]		
17 May 1426	Zheng Yi-cai		
28 Sep 1426	Mo-du-gu [Matuku]		
24 Oct 1426	Guo-bo-zu-mei (郭伯祖每)		
20 Nov 1426	Jia-qi-ba-na [Kachinuhana]		
9 May 1427		Wei-ci-bei-ye (謂慈悖也) [Ajibuya]?	
14 May 1427		An-dan-jie-zhi (安丹結制) [Utchi of Adaniya]	

4 Aug 1427	Fu-na-gu-shi (浮那姑是) [Funakushi]		
9 Nov 1427	A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) Ufuzatu]		
15 Dec 1427	Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) [Utchi of Gwiku]		
29 Sep 1428	Zheng Yi-cai, Liang Hui (梁回)		
1 Dec 1428	Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) [Utchi of Nanzatu]		
21 Feb 1429	Wei-ci-bei-ye [Ajifu]		
28 May 1429	Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每) [Kufatsimi]	LiangMi-zu (梁密祖)	
9 Aug 1429	Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (謾泰來結制) [Utchi of Matara]?		
16 Nov 1429		Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) [Utchi of Ufuma]	
24 Jun 1430	A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) [Ufuzatu]		
2 Oct 1430	Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那) [Kachinuhana]		
22 Oct 1430	Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) Utchi of Gwiku		
21 Nov 1430	Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每) [Kufatsimi]		
23 Nov 1430	Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) Utchi of Gwiku		

1 Dec 1430	Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每) [Kufatsimi]		
25 Sep 1431	You-nan-jie-zhi (由南結制) [Utchi of Yuna]		
19 Oct 1431	Wei-ci-bo-ye (謂慈勃也) [Ajibuya]		
8 Nov 1431	Guo Zu-mei (郭祖每) [Kufatsimi]		
10 Apr 1432	Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (漫泰來結制) [Utchi of Matara]?		
4 Jul 1432	Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) [Utchi of Nanza]		
11 Jul 1432	Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) [Utchi of Ufuma]		
27 Dec 1432	A-pu-ni-shi (阿普尼是) [Ufunishi]		
7 Mar 1433	Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) [Utchi of Gwiku] A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) [Ufuzatu]		
21 May 1433	Wu-zhi-ma-jie-zhi (物志麻結制) [Utchi of Uchima]		
16 Apr 1434	Zheng Zhang (鄭長) Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) [Utchi of Ufuma]		
7 May 1434	Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) [Utchi of Jiru]		

12 Aug 1434	Yang-bu-bo-ye (楊布勃也) [Yabu-ufuya]		
15 Feb 1435	Li Jing (李敬)		
25 Mar 1435	Nan-mi-jie-zhi (南米結制) [Utchi of Nabi]		
19 Jan 1436	Wu-shi-jian (伍是堅) [Gushijin]		
8 Mar 1436	Cheng An (程安)		
18 Mar 1436	Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (謾泰來結制) [Utchi of Matara]?		
14 May 1436	Unnamed		
8 Sep 1436	Liang Qiu-bao (梁求保)		
11 Jun 1437	Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) [Utchi of Jiru]		
20 Mar 1438	Liang Qiu-bao (梁求保)		
23 Apr 1439	Liang Qiu-bao		
25 Aug 1439	A-pu-li-shi (阿普禮是) [Ufunishi]		

Jie-zhi (結制 or 結致) = “Utchi” a Ryukyuan title.

**APPENDIX: RYUKYU REFERENCES IN THE *MING SHI-LU*****Tai-zu shi-lu (太祖實錄)****(1) Hong-wu 4年9月22日 (30 Oct 1371) <sup>119</sup>**

The Emperor held an audience at Feng-tian Gate and issued instructions to the officials of the Secretariat, Military Commission and Censorate, saying: “Of the *man* and *yi* countries abroad, there are some which are dangerous to China. These must be subject to suppression. However, we must not rashly raise troops against those which are not dangerous to China. The ancients had a saying: ‘Expanding territory is not the way to lasting peace. Troubling the people is the road to disorder.’ For example, Emperor Yang of the Sui dynasty raised troops and proceeded on expedition to subjugate Ryukyu, killing the *yi* people, burning their palaces and houses and taking several thousand prisoners, men and women. He obtained the territory, but it was insufficient to provide even its own needs. He obtained their people, but they could not be employed. He merely longed for fame, and thereby, he brought disorder to the Central Territory. This was recorded in the histories and he was derided by later generations. I feel that as the various small *man* and *yi* countries are isolated from us by mountains or seas, or are secluded in some corner, they do not pose a threat to China, and thus I will certainly not attack them. It is only the *hu* and the *rong* of the north-west which have for generations posed a danger to China. We must carefully guard against them. Ministers, you must bear my words in mind, so that you will know my will.”

**(2) Hong-wu 5年1月16日 (20 Feb 1372)**

Yang Zai (楊載) was sent with a proclamation with which to instruct the country of Ryukyu.<sup>120</sup> The proclamation read: “The ancient emperors ruled all under Heaven, extending to wherever the sun shone and the moon beamed. There was no distinction between those near and those far away and all were looked upon with equal benevolence. It was thus that

<sup>119</sup> The numbers contained within parentheses are those provided for the reference in the volumes 『明實錄』の琉球史料 (一) and (二). Those which do not directly relate to Ryukyu are omitted from the translations.

<sup>120</sup> More formally “the country of Liu-qiu”. Throughout these translations, however, the widely-accepted name Ryukyu is adopted.

China was at peace, the *yi* in the four directions had their place, and none tried to subjugate the others. Since the Yuan failed to administer based on the principles, there have been 17 years during which warfare has affected all under Heaven. I arose from among the common people and established myself to the east of the river. I then ordered my generals on four campaigns. In the West, I pacified the Han Lord Chen You-liang (陳友諒), and in the East I restrained the Wu Prince Zhang Shi-cheng (張士誠), to the south, I pacified Wu and Yue and subdued Ba and Shu, and in the north, I sorted out You and Yan. I pacified the Chinese realm (華夏) and restored the old territory of China (中國). I was pushed forward by the people, and I assumed the Imperial throne, fixed a new dynastic title for all under Heaven—the Great Ming – and assumed a new reign title – Hong-wu. I thus sent envoys to the external *yi*, to promulgate this news and advise of my Will. In all of the places where these envoys reached, the *man* and *yi* chieftains and leaders have declared themselves vassals and offered tribute. However, you Ryukyu, located far across the seas to the south-east of China, have not yet heard of this. I am thus especially sending an envoy to proceed to instruct you, so that you are apprised of the situation.”

**(3) Hong-wu 5年12月29日 (23 Jan 1373)**

Yang Zai had been sent as an envoy to the country of Ryukyu,<sup>121</sup> and Tai-qi (泰期) and others who had been sent by his elder brother Cha-du (察度), the Zhong-shan king (中山王) presented a memorial; and offered tribute of local products. It was commanded that a copy of the Ming calendar (大統曆) be conferred upon Tai-qi, together with five bolts each of patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, all embroidered with gold thread, and that Tai-qi and the others have conferred upon them patterned fine silks, silk gauzes, thin silk gauzes and suits of clothing as appropriate.

<sup>121</sup> It is possible that the character “huan” (還) is omitted. This would indicate that the envoy returned to the Ming court in Nan-jing on this date.

**(4) Hong-wu 6年1月6日 (29 Jan 1373)**

The Office of Imperial Sacrifices<sup>122</sup> advised: “The external *yi*, including Ryukyu and other such countries, have already come to the Court to offer tribute. We should thus set down the rites by which sacrifices are offered collectively (通祀) to the spirits of the mountains and rivers of these countries.” The Emperor approved this.

**(5) Hong-wu 7年10月28日 (2 Dec 1374)**

Tai-qi (泰期) and others who had been sent by his elder brother Cha-du (察度), the Zhongshan king (中山王) of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products. They also presented to the Heir Apparent an official letter and equivalent local products. It was commanded that Cha-du have conferred upon him a copy of the Ming calendar as well as 24 bolts of fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, all embroidered with gold thread, and that Tai-qi have conferred upon him four bolts of fine patterned silks, two bolts of silk gauzes, six bolts of thin silks, suits of clothing, boots and socks; that the two deputy envoys Su-re (蘇惹) and Pa-yan-zhi (爬燕之) have conferred upon them three bolts each of fine patterned silks and thin silk gauzes, and one suit of clothing, and that the interpreters and the attendants have conferred upon them paper money and boots and socks as appropriate.

**(6) Hong-wu 7年12月24日 (26 Jan 1375)**

It was ordered that Li Hao (李浩), a vice minister within the Ministry of Justice, and the interpreter Liang Zi-ming (梁子名) proceed as envoys to the country of Ryukyu and confer upon their king Cha-du 24 bolts of fine patterned silks, 1,000 pieces of porcelain, and 10 iron cauldrons. It was also ordered that Hao take 100 bolts of fine patterned silks, 50 bolts each of silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, and 69,500 pieces of porcelain and 990 iron cauldrons to trade for horses in that country.

<sup>122</sup> One of the foremost offices in the Ming central government, responsible for the conduct of major state sacrificial ceremonies, as prescribed by the Ministry of Rites.

**(7) Hong-wu 8年2月3日 (5 Mar 1375)**

The sacrifices to the mountains and rivers of external *yi* lands were appended to those for the mountains and rivers in the various provinces. Previously, the Minister of Rites Niu Liang (牛諒) had advised: “In as much as the sacrifices at the capital to the mountains and rivers of all under Heaven have now been stopped, it is no longer appropriate for the Son of Heaven to personally carry out sacrifices for the mountains and rivers of the *yi* in the four directions.” Thus, it was ordered that another form of ritual be deliberated upon and advised. At this time, the Secretariat and the Ministry of Rites memorialised: “The sacrifices to the mountains and rivers of the external *yi* should be appended to those in the various provinces. It is appropriate that the sacrifices for the mountains and rivers of Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam and Suo-li be carried out together with those in Guang-xi; the sacrifices for the mountains and rivers of San-fo-qi and Java should be appended to those in Guang-dong, the sacrifices for the mountains and rivers of Japan, Ryukyu and Bo-ni should be offered with those in Fu-jian; those for the mountains and rivers of Korea should be offered with those in Liao-dong; and those for the mountains and rivers of Gan-su, Duo-gan and Wu-si-zang should be offered with those in Shaan-xi. The capital will thus no longer have to carry out the sacrifices.” They also said: “The altars for the mountains and rivers and those for the winds, clouds, lightning and in the various provinces rain are located in the centre and face to the south. The spirit-plaques for the mountains and rivers of the external *yi* should be divided into those of the east and the west, and their sacrifices can then be carried out concurrently at the same altars.” The Emperor approved their memorial and ordered the Secretariat to promulgate it, requiring that when a sacrifice was coming due, an official be sent to supervise the rites.

**(8) Hong-wu 9年4月1日 (19 Apr 1376)**

Li Hao (李浩), a vice minister within the Ministry of Justice, returned from Ryukyu. There he had obtained through trade 40 horses and 5,000 *jin*<sup>123</sup> of sulphur. Tai-qi, who had been sent by his elder brother Cha-du, the king of the country, accompanied Hao in coming to Court, presented a memorial in gratitude for Imperial grace and offered tribute of local products. It was ordered that Cha-du, Tai-qi and the others have conferred upon them thin silk gauzes, silk gauzes, thin silks, suits of clothing, boots and socks, as appropriate. Hao advised that the

<sup>123</sup> A *jin* is usually accorded an equivalence of one and one-third pounds in weight.

custom of their country was not to highly regard silks or fine silks, and that they only esteemed porcelain and iron cauldrons. From this time on, that which was conferred upon them and that which was sent for trading for horses were mainly porcelain and iron cauldrons.

**(9) Hong-wu 10年1月 (Feb/Mar 1377)**

During this month, Tai-qi and others who had been sent by his elder brother Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial in felicitation on the New Year and offered tribute of 16 horses and 1,000 *jin* of sulphur. Tai-qi and the others had conferred upon them paper money as appropriate.

**(10) Hong-wu 11年5月5日 (31 May 1378)**

The envoy who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to offer tribute of local products. Cha-du and his envoy had conferred upon them patterned fine silks and thin silks as appropriate.

**(11) Hong-wu 13年3月19日 (24 Apr 1380)**

The envoy who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu came to offer tribute of horses and local products. When the envoy was departing on his return journey, it was commanded that Cha-du have conferred upon him patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silks, all embroidered with gold thread.

**(12) Hong-wu 13年10月20日 (17 Nov 1380)**

The official Shi-re (師惹) and others who had been sent by Cheng-cha-du (承察度), the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products. It was ordered that Cheng-cha-du have conferred upon him a copy of the Ming calendar and patterned fine silks embroidered with gold thread, and that Shi-re and the others have conferred upon them patterned fine silks and paper money as appropriate.

**(13) Hong-wu 15年2月15日 (28 Feb 1382)**

Tai-qi, who had been sent together with the minister Ya-lan-pao (亞蘭匏) and others by his elder brother Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of 20 horses and 2,000 *jin* of sulphur. Cha-du had conferred upon him 20 bolts of patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes all embroidered with gold thread, and a similar number of bolts of thin silks. Tai-qi, Ya-lan-pao and the others had conferred upon them fine silks, and thin silks as appropriate. Also, Lu Qian (路謙), Chief Steward of the Directorate of Imperial Adornment (尚佩監), was sent to escort the envoy on his return to his country.

**(14) Hong-wu 16年1月1日 (3 Feb 1383)**

On this day, the minister Ya-lan-pao who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and the minister Shi-re and others who had been sent by Cheng-cha-du, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu presented memorials and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(15) Hong-wu 16年1月3日 (5 Feb 1383)**

It was commanded that Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu have conferred upon him a silver seal plated in gold as well as 72 bolts of patterned fine silks, thin silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes all embroidered with gold thread; and that Cheng-cha-du, the Shan-nan king also have similar rewards conferred upon him. Ya-lan-pao and the others also had conferred upon them patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, as appropriate. At that time, in the country of Ryukyu, three kings were battling for supremacy and were engaged in attacks on each other. When the envoy returned, he spoke of the reasons for this. At this time, Ya-lan-pao and the others were sent back to their country and an envoy was sent with them, carrying Imperial orders for the Zhong-shan king Cha-du. The orders read: “You, king, reside in the ocean and have raised the surrounding islands in the ocean as a country. If you do not carry out the rites of serving the superior, what harm will come to you? However, you, king, have been able to manifest Heaven’s will in nourishing the people and have fulfilled the rites in serving the superior. It has been 16 years since I ascended the throne

and you have annually sent persons to the Court to offer tribute. I was pleased with your great sincerity and thus ordered Lu Qian (路謙), Chief Steward of the Directorate of Imperial Adornment, to reward you for your sincerity and propriety. How could we expect that you would again send an envoy to express gratitude! Thus, I ordered Liang Min (梁民), an assistant director in the Directorate of Palace Attendants, to proceed with the former Chief Steward Lu Qian together with a tally, and to confer upon you, king, a silver seal plated in gold. Now the envoys have returned and advised that the three kings of Ryukyu are engaged in a struggle for supremacy, thereby laying waste the fields and bringing harm to the people. I am greatly saddened by this. *The Book of Odes* contains the lines: “Fearing the majesty of Heaven is for the purpose of protection.” You, king, must still your troops and rest the people. You must cultivate your virtue, as thereby the country will long be at peace.” Also, instructions were sent to the Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-de and the Shan-bei king (山北王) Pa-ni-zhi (帕尼芝), saying: “The Emperor loves all living things, and throughout the world, there are many living souls. Heaven is angered when people fight against and harm each other, and thus has specially provided wise and perspicuous persons to rule them. Recently, Cha-du, the king of the country of Ryukyu, has been firm in his sincerity to serve the superior and has sent envoys to come and report. In addition, Cheng-cha-du, the Shan-nan king, has also sent persons, who accompanied the envoy in coming to Court. In observing their sincerity, I was deeply pleased to receive them. Most recently, my envoy has returned from the seas and advised that the three kings of Ryukyu have been engaged in warfare against each other, laying waste the fields and bringing harm to the people. On hearing this, I was saddened in the extreme. Now, I am sending an envoy to instruct you two kings so that you know of this. If you two kings are able to manifest my Will, rest your troops and succour the people, in order to extend the country’s blessings, then Heaven will certainly assist you. If not, then you will find that it is too late for regret.”

**(16) Hong-wu 16年9月19日 (15 Oct 1383)**

The eunuch Liang Min, who had been sent with coinage to Ryukyu in order to purchase horses, returned. He obtained 983 horses.

**(17) Hong-wu 16年12月15日 (8 Jan 1384)**

The minister Mo-jie-xi (模結習), who had been sent by Pa-ni-zhi (帕尼芝), the Shan-bei king (山北王) of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. A suit of clothing was conferred upon him.

**(18) Hong-wu 17年1月1日 (23 Jan 1384)**

The envoys sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du, the Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-du, and the Shan-bei king Pa-ni-zhi, all of the country of Ryukyu, by Can-lie Bao-bi-ya si-li duo-luo-lu,<sup>124</sup> the king of the country of Siam/Luo-hu, as well as by the various *man* chieftains from Yun-nan, Si-chuan and Hu-guang, presented memorials and offered tribute of local products. Patterned fine silks and clothing were conferred upon them as appropriate.

**(19) Hong-wu 17年6月1日 (19 Jun 1384)**

The minister A-bu-ye (阿不耶) and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products. A-bu-ye and the others had conferred upon them patterned fine silks and paper money as appropriate.

**(20) Hong-wu 18年1月1日 (10 Feb 1385)**

The envoys who had been sent by the countries of Gao-li,<sup>125</sup> Siam and Ryukyu offered tribute of local products and presented memorials in felicitation.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>124</sup> This name can be tentatively reconstructed as Samdech Pu Phraya Srisrindra.

<sup>125</sup> This was the Ming name for Koryo (고려), the Korean polity under the Goryeo or Koryŏ dynasty which extended from 935 until 1394, and from which the English word “Korea” derives. Marco Polo’s “Cauli”.

<sup>126</sup> On the first day of the new year.

**(21) Hong-wu 18年1月5日 (14 Feb 1385)**

Patterned fine silks and paper money were conferred upon the tribute envoys from the country of Ryukyu. In addition, two silver camel-knob seals plated in gold and were conferred upon the Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-du, and the Shan-bei king Pa-ni-zhi. Further, one ocean-going ship each was conferred upon the Zhong-shan king Cha-du and the Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-du.

**(22) Hong-wu 19年1月4日 (3 Feb 1386)**

The minister Ya-lan-pao and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of 124 horses and 11,000 *jin* of sulphur. Ya-lan-pao and the others had conferred upon them a banquet and paper money as appropriate.

**(23) Hong-wu 20年2月10日 (28 Feb 1387)**

The envoy Ya-lan-pao who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du, of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products and 37 horses.

**(24) Hong-wu 20年12月10日 (10 Jan 1388)**

The envoy Ye-shi-gu (耶師姑) who had been sent by the Shan-nan king Cha-du of the country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and offered tribute of 30 horses, in felicitation of the impending New Year's Day. Ye-shi-gu and the others had conferred upon them a banquet and paper money as appropriate.

**(25) Hong-wu 21年1月1日 (8 Feb 1388)**

Wang-ying-zi-shi (汪英紫氏), an uncle, and Han-ning-shou (函寧壽), a younger brother, of the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to submit their felicitations and offered tribute of local products.

**(26) Hong-wu 21年1月9日 (16 Feb 1388)**

Wang-ying-zi-shi (汪英紫氏), the uncle, and Han-ning-shou (函寧壽), the younger brother, of the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as their attendants, had conferred upon them patterned fine silks embroidered with gold thread and paper money, each in differing amounts as appropriate.

**(27) Hong-wu 21年1月13日 (20 Feb 1388)**

The minister sent by Pa-ni-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products.

**(28) Hong-wu 21年1月26日 (4 Mar 1388)**

The minister Ya-lan-pao, who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products. He also offered an official missive and horses to the Heir Apparent.

**(29) Hong-wu 21年1月26日 (4 Mar 1388)**

The persons who had been sent by Senior General and Yong-chang Marquis Lan Yu (藍玉)<sup>127</sup> to send under escort Di-bao-nu (地保奴)<sup>128</sup>, the second son of the *lu* lord, and his consort and princesses, arrived at the capital..... Thus, an envoy was sent to escort [Di-bao-nu] to proceed to reside in Ryukyu. Also rich presents were sent to accompany him.

<sup>127</sup> A Ming general who flourished in the latter part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and was executed by the Hong-wu emperor for alleged treason in 1393. See his biography by Edward L Dreyer and Chan Hok-lam in L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1976, Vol. 1 pp. 788-791.

<sup>128</sup> A Mongol noble, son of the Mongol emperor Togh Temür. Details of his capture are given in 明史列传 第二百十五 外国八鞞鞞

**(30) Hong-wu 21年9月16日 (16 Oct 1388)**

The Minister Shen-mo-jie-zhi (甚模結致) and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du and the Shan-bei king Pa-ni-zhi, both of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial in congratulations on the Emperor's birthday, and offered tribute of horses. The envoys who had been sent had conferred upon them paper money, in differing amounts, as appropriate.

**(31) Hong-wu 23年1月26日 (11 Feb 1390)**

The envoy Ya-lan-pao and others, who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial in felicitation on the New Year and offered tribute of 26 horses, 4,000 *jin* of sulphur, 500 *jin* of pepper and 300 *jin* of sapan wood. The king's son Wu-ning (武寧) offered tribute of 5 horses, 2,000 *jin* of sulphur, 200 *jin* of pepper and 300 *jin* of sapan-wood. The envoy Li Zhong (李仲) and others who had been sent by the Shan-bei king Pa-ni-zhi, offered tribute of 14 horses, and 2,000 *jin* of sulphur. Further, the interpreter Wu-zhi-jie (屋之結) who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king had also brought over 300 *jin* of pepper and 10 *jin* of frankincense. However, the gate inspectors had found this while examining them, and advised that it was appropriate that his goods be confiscated. It was Imperially ordered that this all be returned to him. It was further commanded that Wu-zhi-jie and the others, a total of 60 persons, have conferred upon them 10 *ding* of paper money each.

**(32) Hong-wu 23年8月5日 (13 Sep 1390)**

The Hang-hai Marquis Zhang He (張赫) died. [Zhang] He was from Shi-ting Village in Lin-zhun, Feng-yang....In the first year of the Hong-wu reign (1368/69), he was appointed as Commander of the Fu-zhou Guard. In the second year (1369/70), he led troops to defend against the Japanese pirates (倭寇) on the seas. In the third year (1370/71), he was promoted to Vice Military Commissioner of the Fu-jian Regional Military Commission. In the sixth year (1373/74), he led his naval force in patrolling the seas. There, he came upon Japanese

pirates and he pursued them to the Great Ryukyu Ocean (琉球大洋), where he killed many of them. He seized their local swords (方刀) and returned.....

**(33) Hong-wu 24年2月22日 (27 Mar 1391)**

The ministers Ya-lan-pao and Wei-gu-zhi (鬼谷致) who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and his son Wu-ning presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(34) Hong-wu 24年9月1日 (29 Sep 1391)**

...and the envoys Ye-shi-gu (耶師姑) and Shou-li-ji-zhi (壽禮給智), who had been sent by Wang-ying-zi-shi (汪英紫氏), the uncle of the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, all presented memorials and offered tribute of horses and local products, in felicitation on the Emperor's birthday.

**(35) Hong-wu 25年5月3日 (24 May 1392)**

The envoy Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結致) and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and his son Wu-ning, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses. Cha-du also sent his younger sons Ri-mu-mei (日牧每), and Kuo-ba-ma (闊八馬), as well as Ren-yue-ci (仁悅慈), a son of a stockade chief (寨官), to study at the School for Sons of the State.<sup>129</sup> The Emperor ordered that each have conferred upon him clothing and towels, boots and socks, and a set of summer clothing, together with five *ding* of paper money.

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<sup>129</sup> “Guo-zi-xue” (國子學) -- A school at the Ming capital, charged with educating the sons of the most eminent officials. Closely associated with the Court of Imperial Sacrifices and the Ministry of Rites.

**(36) Hong-wu 25年5月9日 (30 May 1392)**

Cai-gu-na (才孤那) and others, a total of 28 civilians from the country of Ryukyu, were sent back to their country, and each had conferred upon him five *ding* of paper money. Originally, Cai-gu-na and the others had sailed in a ship to He-lan port (河蘭埠) in order to obtain sulphur. While at sea, they were caught by huge winds and they were blown to the territory of Lesser Ryukyu (小琉球). There they took on water. Eight of their company were killed, while the remainder were able to escape. They were again hit by the winds, and they were blown to Hai-feng in Hui-zhou,<sup>130</sup> where they were captured by patrolling troops. Their language could not be understood and it was thought that they were Japanese, and thus they were sent to the capital. It so happened that at this time, the envoys who had been sent by that country were offering tribute and they were able to explain the situation. Thus, they were all sent home.

**(37) Hong-wu 25年5月10日 (31 May 1392)**

Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, submitted a memorial advising: “Our two interpreters Cheng Yu (程優)<sup>131</sup> and Ye-xi-yin (葉希尹) as well as a stockade chief cum interpreter have been travelling backwards and forwards to offer tribute, and have toiled arduously in service. It is requested that official posts be conferred upon them and that they be issued with headwear and belts. This will ensure that the officials and people of our country have brightness to look up to, and thereby this will bring about change to their *fan*<sup>132</sup> ways.” This was approved.

**(38) Hong-wu 25年8月18日 (5 Sep 1392)**

The students, Ri-mu-mei, Kuo-ba-ma and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them a set each of thin silk gauze clothing, as well as boots, socks, quilts and bedding.

<sup>130</sup> In modern Guang-dong, China.

<sup>131</sup> This may be an error for Cheng Fu (程復). See 『明実録』の琉球史料(一), p. 78, note 138. See also references to Cheng Fu below.

<sup>132</sup> A generic term for non-Chinese. Here, by inference, meaning uncultivated.

**(39) Hong-wu 25年11月17日 (1 Dec 1392)**

The envoy Cha-du (察都) and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial of felicitations on the winter equinox, and offered tribute of local products.

**(40) Hong-wu 25年12月14日 (27 Dec 1392)**

The envoy Nan-du-mei (南都妹) and others who had been sent by Cheng-cha-du, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. He also sent his nephew San-wu-lang-mei (三五郎尾), as well as Shi-ta-lu-mei (實他盧尾) and He-duan-zhi (賀段志), who were sons of a stockade chief, to proceed to the School for Sons of the State to study. It was commanded that San-wu-lang-mei and the others have conferred upon them five *ding* of paper money each, an official gown, dark towels, a black length of cloth, boots and socks, and three sets of clothing each made from patterned fine silks, thin silks and ordinary silks.

**(41) Hong-wu 26年1月18日 (1 Mar 1393)**

The envoy Ma-zhou (麻州) and others, who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and sulphur. It was commanded that Ma-zhou and the others have conferred upon them embroidered fine silks and paper money in appropriate amounts.

**(42) Hong-wu 26年4月17日 (27 May 1393)**

The envoy Shou-li-jie-zhi (壽禮結致),<sup>133</sup> and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. Also, Duan-zhi-mei (段志每), son of a stockade chief, had been sent in order to study in the School for Sons of the State.

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<sup>133</sup> Quite possibly the same person as Shou-li-ji-zhi (壽禮給智), noted in the reference dated 29 September 1391. Given the similar phonetics and different characters, this suggests that the characters used for names were assigned by the Ming scribes. Is the Shou-li associated with the “Shuri”.

**(43) Hong-wu 26年4月24日 (3 Jun 1393)**

The Ryukyu students and the Yun-nan students in the School for Sons of the State had conferred upon them summer clothing, boots and socks. Their attendants also had similar items conferred upon them.

**(44) Hong-wu 26年5月26日 (5 Jul 1393)**

The envoy Bu-li-jie-zhi (不里結致), who had been sent by Wang-ying-zi-shi, the uncle of the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products.

**(45) Hong-wu 26年8月27日 (3 Oct 1393)**

The Ryukyu students Ren-yu-ci and others had conferred upon them a set of clothing in thin silk gauze and one in thin silk. Their attendants also had clothing made of cotton cloth conferred upon them.

**(46) Hong-wu 26年11月1日 (4 Dec 1393)**

Suits of clothing as well as paper money were conferred upon He-duan-zhi and other students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu and Yun-nan

**(47) Hong-wu 27年1月14日 (14 Feb 1394)**

The use of *fan* aromatics and *fan* goods among the people was prohibited. Previously, because the various overseas *yi* had been greatly deceitful, the Emperor had ordered that they be stopped from having intercourse with China. Only Ryukyu, Cambodia and Siam were permitted to come and offer tribute. However, the coastal people often privately went to these *fan* places and traded for aromatics and other goods. Thereby, they induced the *man* and the *yi* to become pirates. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to strictly prohibit and cut off such trading. Anyone who dared to privately go to trade with the various *fan* would be subject to the heaviest penalty of the law. It was also forbidden to trade in any *fan* aromatics or *fan*

goods. Those who had these goods were given three months to sell them. In their prayers and sacrifices, the people were only allowed to use pine, cedar, maple and peach aromatic woods, with offenders being subject to punishment. As to the aromatic woods produced in Guangdong/Guang-xi, the local people were permitted to use them, but these woods were not permitted to be sold beyond the ranges (越嶺).<sup>134</sup> There were concerns that in the markets, these aromatic woods might be mixed with *fan* aromatics, and that was the reason their sale was also prohibited.

**(48) Hong-wu 27年1月25日 (25 Feb 1394)**

The minister Ya-lan-pao and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king and Cheng-cha-du, the Shan-nan king, both of the country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and offered tribute of over 90 horses, as well as sulphur, sapan-wood and pepper.

**(49) Hong-wu 27年3月6日 (6 Apr 1394)**

A banquet was conferred upon Ya-lan-pao, Shen-mo-jie-zhi and others, the minister envoys from the country of Ryukyu, at the Interpreters Institute.

**(50) Hong-wu 27年3月10日 (10 Apr 1394)**

It was ordered that Ya-lan-pao, the chief minister (相) of the king of the country of Ryukyu, be appointed as an official of the fifth rank, first class. At this time, Ya-lan-pao had come to offer tribute and had arrived at the capital. The Zhong-shan king Cha-du of this country had submitted the request to the Court. Noting that Ya-lan-pao handled major state affairs, the king requested that he be assigned an official rank and have headwear and a belt conferred upon him. He also requested that the two interpreters, including Ye-xi-yin be promoted to battalion commanders. It was commanded that these matters be handled in accordance with the request, and that the king's chief minister be given a rank equivalent to the Administrator of a Princely Establishment in China, and that he be termed the "King's Chief Minister", as before. In addition, Ya-lan-pao had conferred upon him a set of Duke's robes, while the

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<sup>134</sup> This refers to areas north of the five ranges in China which create the boundary with Ling-nan (嶺南).

deputy envoy and the attendants had conferred upon them paper money in differing amounts as appropriate.

**(51) Hong-wu 27年4月11日 (11 May 1394)**

The rituals for the feudatory countries when coming to Court to offer tribute were revised. At this time, of the *yi* in the four directions who came to Court to offer tribute, in the East there were Korea and Japan, and in the south there were Siam, Ryukyu, Champa, Cambodia, Annam, Java, Xi-yang, Suo-li, San-fo-qi, Bo-ni, Bai-hua, Lan-bang, Pahang, Dan-ba and Xu-wen-da-na, a total of 17 countries.... The Emperor felt that the former ceremonies were troublesome and thus ordered that they be revised. Whenever the kings of the feudatory countries came to Court, they were firstly to be entertained in the Interpreter's Institute by an official of the Ministry of Rites. The following day, they were to wear their country's costume as before or, if Court clothing had been conferred upon them, they were to wear Court clothing and have an audience in the Feng-tian Hall. After bowing eight times, they would go to the Wen-hua Hall to have an audience with the Heir Apparent. There they would bow four times and, on meeting the Imperial princes, would repeat this. The Imperial princes would stand to receive them and would bow twice in response. The attendant officials of the feudatory kings would carry out these rituals after the king had completed them. At all banquets the feudatory kings would be treated as being next in precedence to Marquis and Earls. Envoys of the kings of these feudatory countries and native officials, when coming to Court to offer tribute, would follow the usual ceremonies for audiences.

**(52) Hong-wu 27年4月27日 (27 May 1394)**

Summer clothing was conferred upon the students from Ryukyu studying at the School for Sons of the State.

**(53) Hong-wu 27年10月5日 (29 Oct 1394)**

Winter clothing was conferred upon the students from Ryukyu studying at the School for Sons of the State.

**(54) Hong-wu 28年1月1日 (22 Jan 1395)**

On this day, Li Dan (李旦) king of the country of Korea; Min, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu; An-de (安的), pacification superintendent from Gui-zhou; and local officials from Jin-zhu (金筑) and other places, all offered local products and horses.

**(55) Hong-wu 28年1月 (Jan/Feb 1395)**

In this month, the minister Ye-shi-gu and others who had been sent by Wang-ying-zi-shi, the uncle of the San-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as Ya-lan-pao and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king Cha-du, both offered tribute of 36 horses and 4,000 *jin* of sulphur. It was Imperially commanded that Ye-shi-gu and the others have conferred upon them paper money in differing amounts as appropriate.

**(56) Hong-wu 28年4月7日 (26 Apr 1395)**

The envoy Ya-sa-du (亞撒都) and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of sulphur, horses and local products.

**(57) Hong-wu 28年9月17日 (1 Oct 1395)**

Autumn and winter clothing was conferred upon the students from Ryukyu studying at the School for Sons of the State. In addition, their attendants had clothing conferred upon them, as appropriate.

**(58) Hong-wu 29年1月10日 (19 Feb 1396)**

The minister Shan-jia-gu-ye (善佳古耶) who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi (攀安知), the Shan-bei king of the country of country of Ryukyu; and the minister Dian-bu-cheng-fu (典簿程復) and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king, both presented memorials and offered tribute of horses and local products. It was Imperially commanded that

the 37 persons who had come with the mission have conferred upon them 247 *ding* of paper money.

**(59) Hong-wu 29年2月10日 (19 Mar 1396)**

It was Imperially commanded that San-wu-lang-men (三五郎璽) and the other Ryukyu students in the School for Sons of the State be sent back home. San-wu-lang-men had conferred upon him 70 *liang* of silver, 6 *biao-li* of variegated silks and 50 *ding* of paper money. Shi-na-lu-men (實那盧璽)<sup>135</sup>, son of a stockade chief, and others had conferred upon them 20 *ding* of paper money, and one *biao-li* of variegated silks.

**(60) Hong-wu 29年4月20日 (27 May 1396)**

The envoy Kui-gu-jie-zhi (隗谷結致) and others who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhongshan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute 27 horses and local products. The envoy sent by the Shan-nan king Cheng-cha-du presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products and 21 horses. The envoys Wu Yi (吳宜) and Kan-mi-jie-zhi (堪彌結致) who had been sent by Wang-ying-zi-shi, the uncle [of the Shan-nan king], offered tribute of 52 horses, 7,000 *jin* of sulphur and 1,300 *jin* of sapan wood.

**(61) Hong-wu 29年5月8日 (13 Jun 1396)**

Summer clothing was conferred upon the Yun-nan and Ryukyu students studying in the School for Sons of the State.

**(62) Hong-wu 29年5月9日 (14 Jun 1396)**

The envoys including Wu Yi and Kan-mi-jie-zhi from the country of Ryukyu had clothing and paper money conferred upon them, and they were sent home.

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<sup>135</sup> Shi-na-lu-men is obviously the same person as that named as Shi-ta-lu-mei (實他盧尾) in the 27 December 1392 reference above, just as San-wu-lang-men is the same person as San-wu-lang-mei in the 27 December 1392 reference. This underlines the claim made above that those in the Ryukyu were not using Chinese characters for their names in this period and the Chinese rendered their names phonetically, and not always with the same characters.

**(63) Hong-wu 29年9月20日 (22 Oct 1396)**

Autumn and winter clothing was conferred upon the students from Ryukyu studying at the School for Sons of the State.

**(64) Hong-wu 29年11月24日 (24 Dec 1396)**

The minister Shan-jia-gu-ye and others who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu; and the ministers Cai Qi (蔡奇) and A-bo-ye (阿勃耶) who had been sent by Wu-ning, the heir Apparent of the Zhong-shan king, offered tribute of 37 horses as well as sulphur and other products. Also sent were Ma-she-li (麻奢理) and Cheng-zhi-lu (誠志魯), sons of stockade chiefs to enter the School for the Sons of the State. Previously, the Shan-nan king had sent his nephew San-wu-lang-men to study at the School for the Sons of the State. After three years study, he returned home. At this time, Ma-she-li and so on came with the envoys and it was requested that they be allowed to enter the School. It was Imperially commanded that this be allowed. They also had conferred upon them clothing, towels, boots and socks.

**(65) Hong-wu 30年2月3日 (2 Mar 1397)**

The minister You-zan-jie-zhi (友贊結致) who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu; Qia-yi-si-ye (恰宜斯耶), who had been sent by the Shan-bei king Pan-an-zhi; and Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結致), who had been sent by Wang-ying-zi-zhi, the uncle of the Shan-nan king, all offered tribute of horses and sulphur.

**(66) Hong-wu 30年8月1日 (23 Aug 1397)**

Ren-yue-ci and other Ryukyu students in the School for Sons of the State, had conferred upon them clothing made of silk gauze, one set each.

**(67) Hong-wu 30年8月27日 (18 Sep 1397)**

The Ministry of Rites memorialised that the envoys and traders from the various *fan* countries were no longer coming [to China]. The Emperor said: “At the beginning of the Hong-wu reign, the various overseas *fan* countries had intercourse with China. The envoys came continually and the merchants took advantage of this situation. In recent times, such countries have totalled 30, including Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam Greater Ryukyu, San-fo-qi, Bo-ni, Pahang, Bai-hua, Samudera, Xi-yang and Bengal. Making use of Hu Wei-yong’s (胡惟庸) planned rebellion, San-fo-qi created discord and deceived our envoys into going there. The king of Java, on hearing of the matter, admonished San-fo-qi and required it to courteously escort the envoys back to China. After this, the envoys and merchants were stopped from coming and the thoughts of the kings of the various countries have not been reaching me. Only Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam and Greater Ryukyu have continued to come to Court since they first offered tribute. The king and the chief minister of Greater Ryukyu have even sent their sons and nephews to China to receive education....” At this time, the Ministry of Rites sent a despatch to the king of the country of Siam, saying: “... But who does not know that the king and the chief minister of Greater Ryukyu have both sent their sons and nephews to China to receive education, that the Emperor provided them with winter and summer clothing, that when they were ill he sent doctors to treat them, and that the Emperor’s heart is infinitely imbued with benevolence and righteousness... The Emperor has said: ‘Annam, Champa, Cambodia, Siam and Greater Ryukyu all fulfil their tributary functions....’”

**(68) Hong-wu 30年10月6日 (26 Oct 1397)**

The Ryukyu students studying in the School for Sons of the State had winter clothing conferred upon them.

**(69) Hong-wu 30年12月15日 (3 Jan 1398)**

The envoy Qia-yi-si-ye who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu, and You-zan-jie-zhi, who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king, both presented memorials and offered tribute of horses and sulphur.

**(70) Hong-wu 31年1月8日 (26 Jan 1398)**

The minister sent by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses.

**(71) Hong-wu 31年3月1日 (19 Mar 1398)**

The ministers Ya-lan-pao, Ya-sa-du-jie-zhi (押撒都結致),<sup>136</sup> Mei-bu-jie-zhi (每步結致), and Sa-du-nu-shi (撒都奴侍), who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses as well as sulphur, pepper and other products. His heir Wu-ning also offered tribute similar to this. Previously, this country had sent a female official student Gu-lu-mei (姑魯妹) to study in the capital. At this time, they came to offer tribute in gratitude for Imperial grace.

**(72) Hong-wu 31年3月7日 (25 Mar 1398)**

The minister Ya-lan-pao and others who had been sent by the country of Ryukyu, had paper money conferred upon them in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(73) Hong-wu 31年3月16日 (3 Apr 1398)**

Headwear and a belt were conferred upon Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu. Previously, Cha-du had sent an envoy to come to the Court to request Chinese headwear and a belt. The Emperor had noted: “They are external *yi* and yet they are able to emulate Chinese rites and right conduct. Their sincerity is truly commendable. The Ministry of Rites are to illustrate the headwear and belt system and proceed there to show him.” At this time, the minister Ya-lan-pao and others who had been sent, came to offer tribute in gratitude for Imperial grace, and again submitted a request for headwear and a belt. It was ordered that these be conferred in accordance with the systems and that his ministers also have headwear and clothing conferred upon them.

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<sup>136</sup> Possibly the same person as Ya-sa-du (亞撒都) mentioned in the reference above dated 26 Apr 1395.

**(74) Hong-wu 31年4月1日 (17 Apr 1398)**

The ministers Ya-le-jia-ji (鴉勒佳稽) and Cheng Fu (程復), who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and sulphur.

**(75) Hong-wu 31年4月9日 (25 Apr 1398)**

Summer clothing was conferred upon the Ryukyu and Yun-nan students studying in the School for Sons of the State.

**(76) Hong-wu 31年4月13日 (29 Apr 1398)**

The minister A-bu-ye who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and sulphur.

**Tai-zong shi-lu (太宗實錄)****(1) Hong-wu 35年9月7日 (3 Oct 1402)**

Envoys with proclamations noting the Imperial accession and with instructions were sent to the countries of Annam, Siam, Java, Ryukyu, Japan, Xi-yang, Samudera and Champa. The Emperor had previously issued instructions to the officials in the Ministry of Rites, saying: “During the reign of the Gao Emperor Tai-zu, all the *fan* countries sent envoys to the Court and they were all treated with sincerity. Those who came with local goods were allowed to trade and had things made convenient for them. When there were persons who did not know how to control their envy or offended against legal regulations, all were forgiven as a way of cherishing those from distant lands. Now, all within the four seas are one family. It is proper that we widely proclaim that there are no outsiders. All countries which wish to express sincerity by coming to offer tribute are to be allowed to do so. You should send instructions to these countries so that they are clearly aware of my Will.”

**(2) Yong-le 1年2月22日 (14 Mar 1403)**

San-wu-liang-die (三吾良疊<sup>137</sup>) and others, who had been sent by his uncle Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial in felicitation and offered tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of patterned fine silks, as well a set of clothing each in both silk and thin silk.

**(3) Yong-le 1年3月9日 (31 Mar 1403)**

A banquet was conferred upon San-wu-liang-men (三吾良曼), the nephew of the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and others in the Interpreters Institute. The envoy Shan-zhu-gu-ye (善住古耶)<sup>138</sup> and others who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi (攀安知), the Shan-bei king of the country of country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and came to Court to offer felicitations and tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them paper money, suits

<sup>137</sup> The final character is likely “men” (曼). See following reference.

<sup>138</sup> Likely the same person as the Shan-jia-gu-ye (善佳古耶) noted in the reference dated 19 Feb 1396.

of clothing and patterned fine silks. Shan-zhu-gu-ye and the others transmitted the words of Pan-an-zhi requesting that he have conferred upon him headwear, a belt and robes, so that he could change the ways of the country. The Emperor was pleased and ordered the Ministry of Rites to confer headwear and clothing upon the king of the country and his attendant ministers.

**(4) Yong-le 1年3月14日 (5 Apr 1403)**

The envoy Wo-zhou-jie-zhi (渥周結制), the Administrator Wang Mao (王茂) and others, a total of 65 persons who had been sent by Cha-du, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu and by Wang-ying-zu (汪應祖), the younger brother of the Shan-nan king, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money, suits of clothing and patterned fine silks in differing amounts as appropriate.

**(5) Yong-le 1年8月8日 (25 Aug 1403)**

Officials were sent to confer patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, all embroidered with gold thread, upon the kings of the various countries of Korea, Annam, Champa, Siam, Ryukyu, Cambodia, Java, Xi-yang, and Samudera. The Messengers Lu Rang and Qiu Zhi went as envoys to Annam, the Surveillance Vice Commissioner Wen Liang-fu and the Messenger Ning Shan went as envoys to Java, Xi-yang and Samudera. The Supervising Secretary Wang Zhe and the Messenger Cheng Wu went as envoys to Siam, the Messengers Jiang Bin-xing and Wang Shu went envoys to Champa and Cambodia, the Messengers Bian Xin (邊信) and Liu Yuan (劉元)<sup>139</sup> went as envoys to Ryukyu, while the Han-lin Academy Editorial Assistant Wang Yan-ling and the messenger Cui Bin went as envoys to Korea. A set of ramie-silk clothing and 25 *ding* of paper money were conferred upon each of these officials. In addition, the envoys to Korea were given another set of clothing as well as furs and fox-skin hats.

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<sup>139</sup> Another manuscript gives the name as Liu Kang (劉亢).

**(6) Yong-le 2年2月21日 (31 Mar 1404)**

San-wu-liang-men who had been sent with others by Wu-ning, the heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to announce that their king Cha-du had died. It was ordered that the Ministry of Rites send an envoy to offer sacrifices for him, to provide funeral gifts of cloth and silks, and to subsequently to issue a proclamation that Wu-ning inherit the title. The proclamation read: “The sage king in his rule exists in harmony with the myriad states, inherits and carries forward the Way, and abides by the statutes. The late Zhong-shan king of Ryukyu, Cha-du, was appointed by Tai-zu, the Gao Emperor, to act as a screen among the Eastern *fan*, and he was capable in fulfilling his duties as a minister. When I came to the throne, he continued to demonstrate his sincerity. Now, he has died, and it is appropriate that there be a successor. You, Wu-ning, are his appointed heir. Now, I am especially enfeoffing you as the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, in order to carry forward the line. You must be careful in regulating yourself, respectfully develop your virtue, be loyal in serving the superior, benevolent in and cherishing the people below. If you are capable in following this Way, in serving as pacifier of the maritime states, you will long enjoy prosperity and blessings. This is Imperially commanded!”

**(7) Yong-le 2年3月18日 (27 Apr 1404)**

The envoy Ya-du-jie-zhi (亞都結制) and others who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them copper coins, paper money, patterned fine silks and variegated silks.

**(8) Yong-le 2年4月12日 (20 May 1404)**

It was imperially commanded that Wang-ying-zu be enfeoffed as the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu. Ying-zu was the younger cousin (從弟) of the late Cheng-cha-du, Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu. Cheng-cha-du did not have any sons, and when he was near death, he ordered that Ying-zu take over control of the affairs of state. He was capable in terms of soothing the people of the country and in annually offering tribute. At this time, the

envoy Kui-gu-jie-zhi (隗谷結致)<sup>140</sup> and others whom he had sent came to Court to offer tribute of local products. He also memorialised, requesting, in accordance with the precedent by which they had been conferred upon the Shan-bei king, the conferral of headwear, a belt and clothing. The Emperor sent instructions to the Minister of Personnel Jian Yi (蹇義), noting: “The state must have a ruler and the people must have someone to give allegiance to. What was required of the kings of old was that above they were able to serve the superior, while below they were able to soothe the people. We should grant his request in order to soothe those in the distance.” Consequently, an envoy was sent carrying a proclamation of enfeoffment for him, as well as headwear, a belt and other goods, and he accompanied their envoy on his return journey.

**(9) Yong-le 2年4月15日 (23 May 1404)**

The envoys sent by Li Fang-yuan,<sup>141</sup> the king of the country of Korea; Wu-ning, the heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ruyukyu; and various *fan* chieftains presented memorials and offered tribute of local products. The envoys had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing amounts as appropriate. Previously, it had been Imperially commanded that Wu-ning inherit the title of king. That he was here referred to as the heir was due to the fact that the orders of Imperial command had not reached there [at the time he had sent his embassy].

**(10) Yong-le 2年5月4日 (11 Jun 1404)**

The Minister of Rites Li Zhi-gang (李至剛) and others memorialised: “The envoys sent by the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu offered tribute of local products, and it was ordered that they have silver bestowed upon them. However, they took it and went to Chuzhou (處州) to purchase ceramics. According to the law, they should be arrested and investigated.” The Emperor said: “The people of distant places know only the pursuit of profit. How would they know of the prohibitions! The Court should cherish people from the distance. This is not deserving of punishment.”

<sup>140</sup> Who had earlier arrived in China as an envoy of the Zhong-shan king Cha-du. See the entry of 27 May 1396.

<sup>141</sup> King Taejong (태종; 太宗), ruled 1400-1418.

**(11) Yong-le 2年9月4日 (7 Oct 1404)**

The Fu-jian Provincial Administration Commission memorialised: “A *fan* ship has drifted to the coast. On enquiry, it was found to contain envoys from the country of Siam who were going on a friendship mission to Ryukyu, but who had been blown here by the wind. We have registered the cargo on board. Orders are requested.” The Emperor spoke to the Minister of Rites Li Zhi-gang, saying: “It is a fine thing to happen between the *fan* countries that Siam and Ryukyu should develop friendly relations. By ill-chance, their ship was blown here by the wind. We should show them sympathy. How can we profit out of their gods by registering them! Good people in a village will assist those in trouble and help those carrying out good deeds. How much more appropriate such actions are for the Court in governing all under Heaven. You should order the provincial administration commission to repair their ship if necessary and provide them with grain if required. When the winds are suitable, regardless of whether these people wish to return home or to go on to Ryukyu, they are to be provided with guidance.”

**(12) Yong-le 2年10月27日 (29 Nov 1404)**

The king’s uncle and chief minister who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king and the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu came to Court and offered tribute of local products. They had paper money, suits of clothing and patterned fine silks conferred upon them. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to banquet them.

**(13) Yong-le 3年3月9日 (7 Apr 1405)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent with others by his uncle Wu-ning, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products, in gratitude for the Imperial grace in enfeoffing him as ruler. They had conferred upon them patterned fine silks and suits of clothing.

**(14) Yong-le 3年3月28日 (26 Apr 1405)**

...as well as San-wu-liang-men and other envoys from Ryukyu, Xi-yang and Siam were banqueted in the Interpreters Institute.

**(15) Yong-le 3年4月1日 (29 Apr 1405)**

The envoy Chi-jia-jie-zhi (赤佳結制) and others who had been sent by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money, suits of clothing and *biao-li* of variegated silks.

**(16) Yong-le 3年4月6日 (4 May 1405)**

A banquet was conferred upon the envoys from Ryukyu, Korea, Lu-chuan and Da-da in the Ministry of Rites.

**(17) Yong-le 3年4月6日 (4 May 1405)**

The envoy Yang-bu-jie-zhi (養埠結制) and others who had been sent by Wu-ning, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products, in felicitation on the Emperor's birthday. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(18) Yong-le 3年4月18日 (16 May 1405)**

The envoy Tai-lai-jie-zhi (泰賴結制) and others who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses, in gratitude for Imperial grace in enfeoffing him. They had conferred upon them paper money and patterned fine silks.

**(19) Yong-le 3年5月11日 (7 Jun 1405)**

Li Jie (李傑), son of a stockade chief, who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, proceeded to the School for Sons of the State in order to receive education. He had conferred upon him a suit of summer clothing.

**(20) Yong-le 3年10月3日 (25 Oct 1405)**

Li Jie and other students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu, Si-chuan, and Yun-nan, as well as their attendants totalling 63 persons, had conferred upon them clothing and quilts.

**(21) Yong-le 3年10月29日 (20 Nov 1405)**

Shi Zhong (時中), the former Si-chuan Assistant Administration Commissioner of the Right, was restored to his post. Zhong had originally committed an offence and it was appropriate that he be exiled to a border region, but he submitted a memorial explaining the case and advising his willingness to repent. Consequently, it was ordered that he serve as a Messenger. At this time, he had returned after travelling as an envoy to Ryukyu, and it was thus that he was restored to his post.

**(22) Yong-le 3年11月24日 (15 Dec 1405)**

A banquet was conferred upon Wan-ning-si-jie (完寧斯結), the heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as...

**(23) Yong-le 3年12月26日 (16 Jan 1406)**

The envoys sent by Wu-ning, the Zhong-shan king; Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king; and Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king, all of the country of Ryukyu, and...all presented tribute of local products and offered felicitations on the coming New Year's Day.

**(24) Yong-le 4年1月3日 (22 Jan 1406)**

The envoys sent by the countries of Korea and Ryukyu and the various native officials offered felicitations on the New Year. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing quantities as appropriate, and were sent home.

**(25) Yong-le 4年1月11日 (30 Jan 1406)**

The country of Ryukyu presented several eunuchs. The Emperor said: “They are sons of ordinary people. To have castrated them when they have committed no offence—how can this be endured!” It was ordered that the Ministry of Rites send them back. The officials of the Ministry of Rites advised: “If we return them, we are concerned that this will obstruct the willingness of the distant people to move towards culture. It is requested that we just send Imperial orders, prohibiting them from again submitting eunuchs.” The Emperor said: “Instructing them with empty words is not as effective as demonstrating with concrete deeds. If we do not send them back now, they will want to fawn on me and indeed send more in future. Heaven and Earth consider protecting the lives of all living things as virtue. Can the Emperor fail to feel the same for mankind!” Subsequently, they were sent back.

**(26) Yong-le 4年3月2日 (21 Mar 1406)**

.... and San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent with others by his uncle the Zhong-shan king Wu-ning and by Shan-nan king Wang-ying-zu, of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. All had paper money and silks conferred upon them. Wu-ning had also sent Shi-da-lu (石達魯), son of a stockade chief, and others, a total of six persons, to enter the School for Sons of the State to study. Each had conferred upon him 30 *ding* of paper money, a suit of clothing and a set of summer clothing.

**(27) Yong-le 4年5月2日 (19 May 1406)**

A banquet was conferred upon....the envoys of the country of Java and the country of Ryukyu, and....

**(28) Yong-le 4年8月18日 (29 Sep 1406)**

Shi-da-lu and other students of the School for Sons of the State from the country of Ryukyu and from Yun-nan, as well as their attendants had conferred upon them silks, thin silks, embroidered cloth and winter clothing, a total of 220 items.

**(29) Yong-le 5年3月1日 (8 Apr 1407)**

The envoy Tai-lai-jie-zhi and others, who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing amounts as appropriate.

**(30) Yong-le 5年4月11日 (18 May 1407)**

The envoy San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent by Si-shao (思紹), the heir of the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. He also sent another envoy to advise that his father, the Zhong-shan king Wu-ning, had died. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to send an envoy to offer sacrifices and present funeral presents, and to send a further envoy to take an Imperial proclamation enfeoffing Si-shao as the successor to the position of Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu.

**(31) Yong-le 5年5月6日 (11 Jun 1407)**

Shi-da-lu and other students of the School for Sons of the State from the country of Ryukyu and from Yun-nan, as well as their attendants, had summer clothing conferred upon them.

**(32) Yong-le 6年3月26日 (22 Apr 1408)**

The envoy A-bo-wu-si (阿勃吾斯), who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products, as an expression of gratitude for Imperial grace in conferring the enfeoffment. The envoy Tian-da-gu-ye (? 達姑耶) and others who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king, offered

tribute of horses. All had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(33) Yong-le 6年11月4日 (21 Nov 1408)**

Wang Da (王達) and other students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu, Yun-nan and Si-chuan, as well as their attendants, had winter clothing, boots and socks conferred upon them.

**(34) Yong-le 6年11月4日 (21 Nov 1408)**

The envoys sent by Li Fang-yuan, the king of the country of Korea; Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu; and the local officials and chieftain of Yun-nan, Si-chuan, Hu-guang, Guang-xi, and Gui-zhou, offered tribute of local products and offered felicitations on the Emperor's birthday. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(35) Yong-le 7年5月28日 (10 Jul 1409)**

The envoy A-bo-wu-si-gu (阿勃吾斯古)<sup>142</sup> and others who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses. They had conferred upon them paper money, clothing and silks.

**(36) Yong-le 7年11月11日 (17 Dec 1409)**

Li Jie and other students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu, si-chuan and Yun-nan, as well as their attendants, had winter clothing, boots and socks conferred upon them.

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<sup>142</sup> Possibly the same person as the A-bo-wu-si (阿勃吾斯) in the 22 April 1408 references above.

**(37) Yong-le 8年3月5日 (8 Apr 1410)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent with others by his uncle Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of 110 horses. The Heir Apparent conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(38) Yong-le 8年4月13日 (16 May 1410)**

The envoy Nai-jia-wu-si-gu (乃佳吾斯古), who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses, in felicitation on the Emperor's birthday. The Heir Apparent conferred paper money and silks upon them.

**(39) Yong-le 8年6月5日 (6 Jul 1410)**

On this day, Mo-du-gu (模都古) and another, a total of two official students from the country of Ryukyu, entered the School for Sons of the State to receive education. The Heir Apparent ordered that they should both have conferred upon them clothing and towels, boots, quilts, mattresses and curtains.

**(40) Yong-le 8年6月30日 (31 Jul 1410)**

On this day, the envoys A-nai-jia-jie-zhi (阿乃佳結制) and Lin You (李佑), who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and...offered tribute of horses and local products. Lin You was originally a person of China (中國人), but had become an interpreter for Ryukyu, and he submitted a request that he have headwear and a belt conferred upon him. The Heir Apparent approved this.

**(41) Yong-le 8年8月9日 (7 Sep 1410)**

The Heir Apparent ordered that, in accordance with the precedents, Yang Lin and others, a total of 92 students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu, Si-chuan, and Yun-nan, have conferred upon them clothing, quilts and mattresses, towels, boots and socks.

**(42) Yong-le 8 年 11 月 21 日 (16 Dec 1410)**

Li Jie and other students of the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu and other places, as well as their attendants, had conferred upon them winter clothing, boots and socks.....

**(43) Yong-le 8 年 12 月 24 日 (18 Jan 1411)**

The attendant minister Li Zheng, who had been sent by Li Fang-yuan, the king of the country of Korea, and San-wu-liang-men who had been sent by his uncle Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu offered tribute of local products in felicitation on the coming New Year's Day. It was ordered that the Ministry of Rites banquet and reward them.

**(44) Yong-le 9 年 2 月 2 日 (24 Feb 1411)**

A banquet was conferred upon.... and San-wu-liang-men, the nephew of the king of the country of Ryukyu.

Huai-de (懷得), the son of the chief minister and Zu-lu-gu (祖魯古), son of a stockade chief, who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, entered the School of the Sons of the State in order to receive education.

**(45) Yong-le 9 年 4 月 3 日 (25 Apr 1411)**

The envoy Kun-yi-kan-mi (坤宜堪彌) and others, who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. In addition, the Administrator Cheng Fu (程復) also came and presented a memorial which noted: "The Administrator Wang Mao (王茂) has provided assistance for many years. It is requested that he be promoted to Chief Minister of the state, while concurrently carrying out the duties of Administrator." It also noted: "Fu is a person from Rao-zhou,<sup>143</sup> who served my grandfather Cha-du for over 40 years, and has been extremely and unremittingly loyal. This year he is 81

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<sup>143</sup> A subprefecture located in the modern Chinese province of Jiang-xi.

years old. It is requested that he be ordered to retire and return to his village.” This was approved. Fu was promoted to Chief Minister of the country of Ryukyu while concurrently acting as Administrator of the Left, and permitted to retire and return to Rao-zhou, while Mao was promoted to Chief Minister of the country of Ryukyu while concurrently serving as Administrator of the Right. In addition, Kun-yi-kan-mi and the others had paper money and silks conferred upon them and they were sent back.

**(46) Yong-le 9年6月26日 (16 Jul 1411)**

The envoy Mo-du-pu (模都莆) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial expressing gratitude for Imperial grace. Previously, the envoy who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king had secreted some of the local products and not submitted the entirety in tribute. An investigating censor had investigated, found the truth and advised. As this had not been the king’s intent, the Emperor had forgiven him as well as the envoy. At this time, persons who had been sent by Si-shao came to express gratitude and to offer tribute of local products. It was ordered that paper money and variegated silks be conferred upon the king.

**(47) Yong-le 9年11月24日 (9 Dec 1411)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent with others by his uncle Si-shao, the king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of local products. It was ordered that the Ministry of Rites banquet and reward them.

**(48) Yong-le 9年12月20日 (3 Jan 1412)**

A banquet was conferred upon ...and the envoys of the countries of Ryukyu and Siam....

**(49) Yong-le 9年 Intercalary 12月17日 (30 Jan 1412)**

The envoy Tai-bo-qi, Guo-bo-gu-lai-ye (泰勃奇郭伯姑賴耶) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses in felicitation on the coming New Year’s Day.

**(50) Yong-le 9年 Intercalary 12月22日 (4 Feb 1412)**

A banquet was conferred upon the envoys from the country of Ryukyu and.....

**(51) Yong-le 9年 Intercalary 12月25日 (7 Feb 1412)**

A banquet was conferred upon the envoys of Korea and Ryukyu and the Nu-zhi chieftains.

**(52) Yong-le 10年2月20日 (1 Apr 1412)**

The envoy A-bo-wu-si-gu who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. Paper money and silks were conferred upon him.

**(53) Yong-le 10年2月24日 (5 Apr 1412)**

A banquet was conferred upon the envoy A-bo-wu-si-gu, who had been sent by the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu.

**(54) Yong-le 10年4月16日 (26 May 1412)**

The attendant minister Min Hai-yi who had been sent by Li Fang-yuan, the king of the country of Korea, and the envoy Kun-yi-kan-mi and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products in felicitation on the Emperor's birthday. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of fine patterned silks, in different quantities, as appropriate.

**(55) Yong-le 10 年 4 月 16 日 (26 May 1412)**

Huai-de (懷德)<sup>144</sup> and others, a total of 136 official students in the School for Sons of the State from the country of Ryukyu, as well as Yun-nan and Si-chuan, had conferred upon them summer cloth, formal shirts (襴衫) and sandals.

**(56) Yong-le 11 年 1 月 16 日 (16 Feb 1413)**

The envoy Shen-ma-zhi-li (甚麻之里) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses. They had conferred upon them paper money and patterned fine silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(57) Yong-le 11 年 1 月 28 日 (28 Feb 1413)**

A banquet was conferred upon Shen-ma-zhi-li, an envoy from the country Ryukyu, and...

**(58) Yong-le 11 年 2 月 2 日 (3 Mar 1413)**

The envoy Gong-bo-qi (恭勃奇) who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu offered tribute of horses. In addition three sons of stockade heads—Wu-tong-zhi-jiu (鄔同志久), Zhou-lu-mei (周魯每) and Qia-na-sheng (恰那晟)—were sent to proceed to the School for Sons of the State to receive education.

**(59) Yong-le 11 年 4 月 21 日 (20 May 1413)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent by his uncle Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and the envoy Wu-shi-jia-jie-zhi (吾是佳結制) and others who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king, offered tribute of horses. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to confer upon them paper money and copper cash inscribed with the Yong-le reign.

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<sup>144</sup> Presumably the same person as the Huai-de (懷得) mentioned in reference above dated 24 February 1411.

**(60) Yong-le 11年5月12日 (10 Jun 1413)**

Mo-du-gu and others, a total of three Ryukyu students from the School for Sons of the State, memorialised requesting permission to return home. The Emperor spoke to the officials of the Ministry of Rites, noting: “That people from the distance come to study is truly a wonderful thing, but it is also human for them to think of their families and want to return home. We should richly confer rewards in order to honour them.” Subsequently, they had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks, suits of clothing and paper money in order to pay for the costs of their travel home. It was also ordered that the Ministry of War arrange for their transfer along the post route.

**(61) Yong-le 11年5月28日 (26 Jun 1413)**

Huai-de and others, a total of sixty persons from Ryukyu, Yun-nan and Si-chuan who were students in the School for Sons of the State had conferred upon them summer clothing and other goods.

**(62) Yong-le 11年8月17日 (1 Sep 1413)**

The envoy Wu-la-shui-jie-zhi (鄔刺誰結制) and others, who had been sent by Wang-ying-zu, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of fine patterned silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(63) Yong-le 11年12月12日 (3 Jan 1414)**

Huai-de and others, a total of 46 students from the School for Sons of the State from Ryukyu, Yun-nan and Si-chuan had conferred upon them winter clothing, boots and socks.

**(64) Yong-le 11年12月29日 (20 Jan 1414)**

... and the envoy Wei-ba-lu (威巴魯) who had been sent with others by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses, gold and silver utensils and other goods in felicitation on the coming New Year's Day.

**(65) Yong-le 12年6月17日 (3 Jul 1414)**

On this day, the Heir Apparent conferred upon Yi-zhi-mei (益智每) and one other, students from the School for Sons of the State, a set of thin silk gauze clothing and a set of cotton clothing, as well as formal shirts, boots and socks, quilts and mattresses, curtains and other goods. Their attendants also had goods conferred upon them in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(66) Yong-le 12年 Intercalary 9月5日 (18 Oct 1414)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent with others by his uncle Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(67) Yong-le 12年12月10日 (20 Jan 1415)**

Wu-tong-zhi-jiu and others, a total of three Ryukyu students in the School for Sons of the State, had conferred upon them paper money and clothing.

**(68) Yong-le 13年3月19日 (28 Apr 1415)**

The envoy Wu-shi-jia-jie-zhi (鄔是佳結制) and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei (他魯每), heir to Wang-ying-zu, the late Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. Previously, [Wang]-ying-zu had been killed by his elder brother Da-bo-qi (達勃期). The various stockade heads then joined forces, eliminated Da-bo-qi and promoted Ta-lu-mei to handle the affairs of the country. At this time, he submitted a memorial requesting

permission to inherit the title. Wu-shi-jia-jie-zhi and the others had conferred upon them paper money in differing quantities as appropriate

**(69) Yong-le 13年4月19日 (27 May 1415)**

The envoys sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king and by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king, both of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(70) Yong-le 13年5月13日 (19 Jun 1415)**

The Messenger Chen Xiu-fang (陳秀芳) and others were sent to take a proclamation and proceed to the country of Ryukyu to enfeoff Ta-lu-mei, the due heir to Wang-ying-zu, the late king of the Shan-nan king, as the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu. He also had conferred upon him a title patent, headwear, robes and 15,000 *ding* of paper money.

**(71) Yong-le 13年5月25日 (1 Jul 1415)**

Yi-zhi-mei and others, a total of 92 students of the School for Sons of the State, from Ryukyu and Yun-nan, had summer clothing conferred upon them.

**(72) Yong-le 13年6月6日 (11 Jul 1415)**

The envoys who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king and by Pan-an-zhi, the Shan-bei king, both of the country of Ryukyu, departed on their return journey. All had conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(73) Yong-le 13年8月25日 (27 Sep 1415)**

The envoy Yi-shi-jie-zhi (宜是結制) and others who had been sent by Shang-ba-zhi (尚巴志), the due heir to Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(74) Yong-le 13年9月18日 (20 Oct 1415)**

The envoy Yi-shi-jie-zhi (宜是結制) and others who had been sent by Shang-ba-zhi (尚巴志), the due heir to Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, departed on their return journey. They had conferred upon them 30 *biao-li* of patterned fine silks.

**(75) Yong-le 13年11月16日 (16 Dec 1415)**

The minister Zhi-jia-lu (直佳魯), who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of the country of Ryukyu, committed a crime and was executed. An envoy was sent with Imperial orders for the instruction of Si-shao, noting: “You, king sent Zhi-jia-lu and others to the capital. I treated them very well. However, on their return, when they reached Fu-jian, they acted in a reckless and violent manner. They seized a maritime ship, killed members of the government forces, and injured a court eunuch, carrying off clothing and property. Zhi-jia-lu was the prime offender, and it was appropriate that he be subject to capital punishment. The judicial offices have already been ordered to punish him in accordance with the law. As to A-bo-ma-jie-zhi (阿勃馬結制) and the others, totalling 67 persons, they were as evil as him, and they also deserve death for their crimes. However, in the light of your loyalty and sincerity, I am especially sending them back, so that you, king, can punish them yourself. In future, the envoys who are sent must be restrained, and must not violate the Court’s laws.

**(76) Yong-le 14年1月27日 (25 Feb 1416)**

San-wu-liang-men, who had been sent by his uncle Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products in gratitude for the sending of the Imperial envoy to advise of the crime of irreverence. Paper money and silks were conferred upon him and he was sent home.

**(77) Yong-le 14年4月9日 (6 May 1416)**

The envoy Han Wan-yi (韓完義) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses. The envoy Zheng Yi-cai (鄭義才) and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products in gratitude for Imperial grace in allowing inheritance of the fief.

**(78) Yong-le 14年6月1日 (25 Jun 1416)**

The envoy Han Wan-yi (韓完義) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king, and the envoy Zheng Yi-cai (鄭義才) and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king, both of the country of Ryukyu, departed on their return journey. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(79) Yong-le 14年6月5日 (29 Jun 1416)**

The Ryukyu and Yun-nan students in the School for Sons of the State, a total of 119 persons, had summer clothing conferred upon them.

**(80) Yong-le 15年4月28日 (14 May 1417)**

The envoys Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king and by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king, both of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products.

**(81) Yong-le 15年 Intercalary 5月3日 (17 Jun 1417)**

The envoys Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king and by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king, both of the country of Ryukyu, departed on their return journey. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of patterned fine silks, as well as clothing made from silk gauze embroidered with gold thread.

In addition, there was conferred upon their kings paper money, velvet brocades, and patterned fine silks, silk gauzes and thin silk gauzes, all embroidered with gold thread.

**(82) Yong-le 15年8月6日 (16 Sep 1417)**

The envoy Ya-bo-jie-zhi (亞勃結制) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of patterned fine silks, and were sent home.

**(83) Yong-le 15年9月14日 (23 Oct 1417)**

The envoy Wu-mei-zhu-ni-jiu (鄔梅住尼九) and others, who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks and were sent back.

**(84) Yong-le 16年2月14日 (21 Mar 1418)**

The Administrator Huai-ji (懷機) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of patterned fine silks.

**(85) Yong-le 16年3月2日 (7 Apr 1418)**

A banquet was conferred upon Huai-ji, the Administrator of the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu and.....

**(86) Yong-le 16年5月2日 (5 Jun 1418)**

The envoys sent by the various countries of Samudera, Gan-da-li, Siam and Ryukyu offered tribute of local products. The envoys had conferred upon them headwear and belts, paper money, ramie-silk, silk gauzes, thin silk gauzes, and variegated thin silks, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(87) Yong-le 16年5月15日 (18 Jun 1418)**

A banquet was conferred upon the envoys from the various countries of Samudera, Gan-da-li, Siam, Ryukyu and Java.

**(88) Yong-le 16年5月15日 (18 Jun 1418)**

The envoy A-nai-zhu (阿乃住) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(89) Yong-le 17年1月23日 (17 Feb 1419)**

The envoy Wu-mei-zhu-ni (鄔梅住尼)<sup>145</sup> and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(90) Yong-le 17年4月23日 (17 May 1419)**

The envoy Nong-ba-lu-ni (農巴魯尼) and others who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local product. They had conferred upon them paper money and silks.

**(91) Yong-le 17年7月9日 (31 Jul 1419)**

The envoy who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. He had conferred upon him paper money and silks.

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<sup>145</sup> Presumably the same person as Wu-mei-zhu-ni-jiu (鄔梅住尼九), noted in the 23 October 1417 reference above.

**(92) Yong-le 17年12月23日 (8 Jan 1420)**

The envoy Shen-man-zhi-li (甚謾志里)<sup>146</sup> who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products, in felicitation on the coming New Year's Day.

**(93) Yong-le 20年10月9日 (24 Oct 1422)**

The envoy Mo-du-gu (模都古)<sup>147</sup> and others, who had been sent by Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them 20 *din* of paper money and one *biao-li* of variegated silks.

**(94) Yong-le 21年8月10日 (14 Sep 1423)**

The envoy A-bu-cha-du (阿不察都), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products. The Imperial Heir Apparent ordered the Ministry of Rites to banquet and rewards them.

**(95) Yong-le 21年11月29日 (31 Dec 1423)**

.... the envoy A-bu-cha-du (阿不察都), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and... departed on their return journey. All had conferred upon them paper money and silks in different quantities, as appropriate.

**(96) Yong-le 22年2月12日 (12 Mar 1424)**

The death was advised of Si-shao, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu. The Ministry of Rites was ordered to send officials [to Ryukyu] to confer sacrifices and funeral gifts of cotton cloth and silks.

<sup>146</sup> Presumably the same person as Shen-ma-zhi-li (甚麻之里), noted in the 16 Feb 1413 reference above.

<sup>147</sup> Formerly a Ryukyuan student in the Chinese capital. See reference dated 6 July 1410 above.

(97) Yong-le 22年6月11日 (6 Jul 1424)

The envoy A-bo-ma-jie-zhi (阿勃馬結制)<sup>148</sup> and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses. The Imperial Heir Apparent ordered the Ministry of Rites to confer rewards on them in accordance with the precedents.

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<sup>148</sup> In the reference dated 16 December 1415 above, A-bo-ma-jie-zhi (阿勃馬結制), who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king of Ryukyu, had been sent back to Ryukyu in disgrace for having been involved in violent attacks against Chinese personnel.

**Ren-zong shi-lu (仁宗實錄)****(1) Yong-le 22年8月8日 (31 Aug 1424)**

The Administrator Zheng Yi-cai, who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them clothing, as well as paper money and silks, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(2) Yong-le 22年9月7日 (29 Sep 1424)**

The Messenger Zhou Yi (周彝) was sent as an envoy to the country of Ryukyu, carrying Imperial orders.

**(3) Yong-le 22年10月17日 (7 Nov 1424)**

The envoy An-dan-ni-jie-zhi (安丹尼結制) who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses....They had conferred upon them paper money and silks in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(4) Yong-le 22年12月23日 (12 Jan 1425)**

The envoy A-bo-ma-jie-zhi and others who had been sent by the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products..... They had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(5) Hong-xi 1年2月1日 (18 Feb 1425)**

The Court Eunuch Chai Shan (柴山) was sent with Imperial orders to proceed to the country of Ryukyu, to order that Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to Si-shao, the late Zhong-shan king, inherit the title of Zhong-shan king. The Imperial orders read: “In the past, our Imperial ancestor Tai-zong, the Wen Emperor, responded to Heaven’s orders, took on rule of the 10,000 places. Spreading his grace equally, the near and the distant all came to allegiance.

Your father Si-shao, Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, was intelligent and worthy, sedulously cultivated loyalty and sincerity, and in respecting Heaven and serving the Superior, he had long been unremitting. My Imperial ancestors were skilled in employing people and rewarded those they were pleased with. Now I have inherited rule over the Empire. In consideration of the fact that your father had been dead for quite some time, and that you are his eldest son of the first wife (嫡子), it is appropriate that you inherit the post. I am thus especially sending the Court eunuch Chai Shan with Imperial orders, requiring that you inherit the position of Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu. You, Shang, are extremely filial and loyal, have reverently fulfilled your feudatory duties, have cultivated virtue and been earnest in good works, in order to bring prosperity to the country and the people. The glory of this rank and emolument will extend without end. You are to respectfully inherit and carry it forward. You are not to be remiss or neglect the duties.” In addition, there were conferred upon Shang Ba-zhi headwear and a belt, suits of clothing and patterned fine silks.

**(6) Hong-xi 1年2月21日 (10Mar 1425)**

The Interpreter Li Jie (李傑),<sup>149</sup> who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir of Si-shao, the late Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of local products. He had conferred upon him paper money and *biao-li* of silks.

**(7) Hong-xi 1年4月27日 (14 May 1425)**

The Administrator Wu-mei-zhi (鄔梅支) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the due heir to the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products in felicitation on the birthday of the Tai-zong Emperor.<sup>150</sup> The reason for this was that the envoy was despatched before the Imperial proclamation had arrived in Ryukyu. Mei-zhi and the others had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

<sup>149</sup> In reference dated 7 June 1405, Li Jie was sent as a student to China by the Shan-nan king.

<sup>150</sup> Already deceased.

**Xuan-zong shi-lu (宣宗實錄)****(1) Hong-xi 1年 Intercalary 7月1日 (14 Aug 1425)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute.

**(2) Hong-xi 1年 Intercalary 7月11日 (24 Aug 1425)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那) and others of the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks and suits of clothing in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(3) Hong-xi 1年 8月2日 (13 Sep 1425)**

The envoys Fu-na-gu-shi (浮那姑是), Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had come with the previous envoy who had arrived -- Jia-qi-ba-na – but had been driven off course by the wind and thus been late arriving.

**(4) Hong-xi 1年 8月13日 (24 Sep 1425)**

The envoys Fu-na-gu-shi (浮那姑是), Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) and others of the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, patterned fine silks embroidered with gold thread, ailk gauzes, thin silk gauzes and thin silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(5) Hong-xi 1年 12月5日 (13 Jan 1426)**

The envoy Song-bi-jie-zhi (宋比結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(6) Hong-xi 1 年 12 月 14 日 (22 Jan 1426)**

The envoy Song-bi-jie-zhi and others of the country of Ryukyu and... had conferred upon them paper money, and biao-li of variegated silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(7) Xuan-de 1 年 3 月 21 日 (28 Apr 1426)**

The envoy Shi-da-lu (實達魯) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products, in gratitude for the Imperial grace in granting orders of title inheritance.

**(8) Xuan-de 1 年 3 月 22 日 (29 Apr 1426)**

The envoy who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, memorialised: “My grandfather and father long enjoyed the great grace of the Court, were enfeoffed as kings and had conferred upon them headwear and robes. During the first year of the Hong-xi reign (1425/26), I received the Imperial command that I inherit the title. However, I have not as yet been blessed with the headwear and robes.” The Emperor ordered the Auxiliary Ministry of Rites<sup>151</sup> to establish the appropriate styles, and to manufacture and confer them.

**(9) Xuan-de 1 年 4 月 6 日 (12 May 1426)**

The envoy Shi-da-lu (實達魯) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and biao-li of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(10) Xuan-de 1 年 4 月 11 日 (17 May 1426)**

The envoy Zheng Yi-cai who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented incense for Chang-ling.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Located at Bei-jing.

<sup>152</sup> The grave of the Yong-le emperor outside Bei-jing.

**(11) Xuan-de 1 年 4 月 14 日 (20 May 1426)**

The Auxiliary Ministry of Rites memorialised, noting: “The envoy Zheng Yi-cai sent by the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, has advised that when he was coming to the Court, he was subject to great winds and waves which destroyed his ship and he had thus arrived by attaching himself to the ship of the Court Eunuch Chai Shan. Now that he is returning home, he requests that a ship be conferred upon him, so that he can sail home, and so that future tribute missions to the Court will be facilitated.” The Emperor ordered the Auxiliary Ministry of Works to provide [a ship] to him.

**(12) Xuan-de 1 年 6 月 1 日 (5 Jul 1426)**

An envoy was sent to confer a ceremonial cap, other headwear and robes upon Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu. The Emperor spoke to the Minister of Rites Hu Ying, saying: “It is indeed a fine thing when distant *yi* demonstrate their sincerity. I am especially conferring headwear and robes in order to demonstrate extraordinary grace. The ancients noted: ‘Use ritual to calm the disaffected and use virtue to cherish those from afar.’ I, like you ministers, should always bear this in mind.”

**(13) Xuan-de 1 年 8 月 27 日 (28 Sep 1426)**

The envoy Mo-du-gu and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, to offer tribute of local products, arrived in the capital.

**(14) Xuan-de 1 年 9 月 24 日 (24 Oct 1426)**

The envoy Guo-bo-zu-meì (郭伯祖每) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court to offer tribute of local products.

**(15) Xuan-de 1 年 10 月 3 日 (2 Nov 1426)**

The envoy Mo-du-gu and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks, suits of clothing, and boots and socks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(16) Xuan-de 1 年 10 月 18 日 (17 Nov 1426)**

The envoy Guo-bo-zu-me<sub>い</sub> (郭伯祖每) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(17) Xuan-de 1 年 10 月 21 日 (20 Nov 1426)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented horses and sulphur. Jia-qi-ba-na and the others had initially travelled together with Mo-du-gu and so on, but had been separated after they met high winds along the maritime route. It was thus that they arrived later.

**(18) Xuan-de 1 年 11 月 3 日 (1 Dec 1426)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks, suits of clothing, and boots and socks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(19) Xuan-de 2 年 4 月 13 日 (9 May 1427)**

The envoy Wei-ci-bei-ye (謂慈悖也) and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-me<sub>い</sub>, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(20) Xuan-de 2年4月18日 (14 May 1427)**

The envoy An-dan-jie-zhi (安丹結制)<sup>153</sup> and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu presented incense for Chang-ling.<sup>154</sup>

**(21) Xuan-de 2年4月18日 (14 May 1427)**

The envoy Wei-ci-bei-ye and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks, and suits of clothing, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(22) Xuan-de 2年7月12日 (4 Aug 1427)**

The envoy Fu-na-gu-shi (浮那姑是) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(23) Xuan-de 2年7月28日 (20 Aug 1427)**

The envoy Fu-na-gu-shi and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(24) Xuan-de 2年10月21日 (9 Nov 1427)**

The envoy A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and offered tribute of local products. Initially, A-bu-cha-du had come together with but on different ships with Fu-na-gu-shi, but after being hit by winds, they had lost contact with each other. It was thus that he only arrived at this time.

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<sup>153</sup> Is this the same person as the An-dan-ni-jie-zhi (安丹尼結制) mentioned leading a missions sent by the Zhong-shan king in the reference of 7 November 1424 above?

<sup>154</sup> The grave of the Yong-le emperor outside Bei-jing.

**(25) Xuan-de 2年11月2日 (20 Nov 1427)**

The envoy A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) and others of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(26) Xuan-de 2年11月27日 (15 Dec 1427)**

The envoy Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(27) Xuan-de 2年12月9日 (26 Dec 1427)**

The envoy Wei-gu-wo-zhi and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks, and boots and socks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(28) Xuan-de 3年8月21日 (29 Sep 1428)**

The envoys Zheng Yi-cai, Liang Hui (梁回) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products, in gratitude for the conferral of leather headwear, robes and an ocean-going ship.

**(29) Xuan-de 3年9月26日 (3 Nov 1428)**

The envoys Zheng Yi-cai, Liang Hui and the others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate. In addition, Yi-cai and Hui had conferred upon them headwear, belts and suits of clothing made from ramie-silk interwoven with gold thread, while the remainder received suits of clothing made from plain ramie-silk.

**(30) Xuan-de 3年10月13日 (19 Nov 1428)**

As Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, had been extremely respectful in sending envoys to the Court, the Emperor sent an envoy carrying Imperial orders to go and reward him, and to confer upon the king bolts of ramie silk, silk gauzes, thin silk gauzes and brocades.

**(31) Xuan-de 3年10月25日 (1 Dec 1428)**

The envoy Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) and others and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(32) Xuan-de 3年10月25日 (1 Dec 1428)**

The envoy Nan-zhe-jie-zhi and the others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(33) Xuan-de 3年12月13日 (17 Jan 1429)**

The Court eunuch Chai Shan and others were sent to carry Imperial orders and proceed to the country of Ryukyu, and to confer upon the king ramie-silk interwoven with gold thread, silk gauzes, tin silk gauzes and brocades.

**(34) Xuan-de 4年1月18日 (21 Feb 1429)**

...and the envoy Wei-ci-bei-ye and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products., in felicitation on the Emperor's birthday.

**(35) Xuan-de 4年2月20日 (24 Mar 1429)**

... and the envoy Wei-ci-bei-ye and others, a total of 13 persons from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks and suits of clothing made from ramie-silk, in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(36) Xuan-de 4年4月26日 (28 May 1429)**

The envoy Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每)<sup>155</sup> and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and the interpreter LiangMi-zu (梁密祖) and others who had been sent by the Shan-nan king Ta-lu-mei, came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products.

**(37) Xuan-de 4年5月12日 (13 Jun 1429)**

The envoy Guo-bo-ci-mei and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and the interpreter LiangMi-zu (梁密祖) and others who had been sent by the Shan-nan king Ta-lu-mei, had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of variegated silks, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(38) Xuan-de 4年7月10日 (9 Aug 1429)**

The envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (謾泰來結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(39) Xuan-de 4年7月19日 (18 Aug 1429)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys, including Li Zhong-zhi from the countries of Korea, Java and Ryukyu.

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<sup>155</sup> Very likely the same person as the Guo-bo-zu-mei (郭伯祖每) mentioned in the references dated 24 October and 17 November 1426.

**(40) Xuan-de 4年7月20日 (19 Aug 1429)**

....and the envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (謾泰來結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(41) Xuan-de 4年10月15日 (11 Nov 1429)**

A banquet was conferred upon ....and the tribute envoys from the two countries of Ryukyu and Java.

**(42) Xuan-de 4年10月20日 (16 Nov 1429)**

The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) and others who had been sent by Ta-lu-mei, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(43) Xuan-de 4年11月5日 (30 Nov 1429)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the three countries of Korea, Java and Ryukyu.

**(44) Xuan-de 4年11月5日 (30 Nov 1429)**

The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money, and *biao-li* of variegated silks in differing quantities, as appropriate. Bu-ma-jie-zhi and the others were also ordered to take Imperial orders as well as paper money to confer upon their king on their return home.

**(45) Xuan-de 5年6月4日 (24 Jun 1430)**

The envoy A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(46) Xuan-de 5年6月8日 (24 Jun 1430)**

A banquet was conferred upon A-pu-cha-du and other tribute envoys from the country of Ryukyu and other places.

**(47) Xuan-de 5年6月21日 (11 Jul 1430)**

The tribute envoy A-pu-cha-du and others, a total of 14 persons from the country of Ryukyu, as well as...had conferred upon them paper money, silks and suits of clothing made of silks interwoven with gold thread, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(48) Xuan-de 5年8月25日 (12 Sep 1430)**

Fang Duan (方端), the Fu-jian Regional Inspector and Investigating Censor, memorialised: “Pirates landed at Long-xi County in Zhang-zhou Prefecture, killing people and looting property. The Coastal Patrol Commander Yang Quan (楊全) led forces against the pirates but was unable to save the situation. Quan also accepted bribes from the people of that county, to allow them to go to Ryukyu to trade. It is requested that Quan’s crimes be punished.” The Emperor instructed Gu Zuo (顧佐), the Censor-in-Chief of the Right and others, saying: “The government forces, in patrolling the seas, are intended to prevent incursions from abroad, and also prevent the ordinary people from leaving the borders to wander abroad. This person, not only does not guard against pirates, but actually gives rein to pirates. Order a censor to punish him in accordance with the law.”

**(49) Xuan-de 5年9月15日 (2 Oct 1430)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and... came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(50) Xuan-de 5年10月2日 (18 Oct 1430)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the two countries of Korea and Ryukyu.

**(51) Xuan-de 5年10月6日 (22 Oct 1430)**

The envoy Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and... came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(52) Xuan-de 5年10月7日 (23 Oct 1430)**

The envoy Jia-qi-ba-na (佳期巴那) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks in differing quantities as appropriate. He was also given Imperial orders and 21,760 *ding* of paper money to confer upon his king when he returned home.

**(53) Xuan-de 5年11月6日 (21 Nov 1430)**

The envoy Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products.

**(54) Xuan-de 5年11月8日 (23 Nov 1430)**

The envoy Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制) and others from the country of Ryukyu had conferred upon them paper money and *biao-li* of variegated silks in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(55) Xuan-de 5年11月16日 (1 Dec 1430)**

The envoy Guo-bo-ci-mei (郭伯慈每) and others from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them paper money, *biao-li* of variegated silks, and cotton cloth in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(56) Xuan-de 6年8月19日 (25 Sep 1431)**

The envoy You-nan-jie-zhi (由南結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(57) Xuan-de 6年8月24日 (30 Sep 1431)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the two countries of Ryukyu and Samudera and...

**(58) Xuan-de 6年9月6日 (11 Oct 1431)**

The envoy You-nan-jie-zhi (由南結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them paper money, variegated silks, think silks, cotton cloth and suits of clothing in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(59) Xuan-de 6年9月9日 (14 Oct 1431)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the country of Ryukyu and...

**(60) Xuan-de 6年9月14日 (19 Oct 1431)**

The envoy Wei-ci-bo-ye (謂慈勃也)<sup>156</sup> and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses and local products. This was in gratitude for the Imperial grace manifested in the conferring of headwear and a belt and an ocean-going ship.

**(61) Xuan-de 6年9月20日 (25 Oct 1431)**

The envoy Wei-ci-bo-ye (謂慈勃也) and others from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them paper money, variegated silks, thin silks, cotton cloth and suits of clothing in differing quantities as appropriate.

**(62) Xuan-de 6年10月4日 (8 Nov 1431)**

The envoy and Administrator Guo Zu-meì (郭祖每)<sup>157</sup> and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, offered tribute of horses as well as gold and silver utensils, in gratitude for the Imperial grace in conferring patterned brocades and variegated silks.

**(63) Xuan-de 6年10月26日 (30 Nov 1431)**

The envoy Guo Zu-meì (郭祖每) and others from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them variegated silks, thin silks, cotton cloth, and suits of clothing made from ramie-silk interwoven with gold thread, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

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<sup>156</sup> Likely the same person as Wei-ci-bei-ye (謂慈悖也), noted in the 9 May 1427 reference above as having been sent by Ta-lu-meì, the Shan-nan king of the country of Ryukyu.

<sup>157</sup> Possibly the same person as Guo-bo-zu-meì (郭伯祖每) mentioned in the reference dated 24 October 1426 above.

**(64) Xuan-de 7年1月26日 (27 Feb 1432)**

The Emperor was concerned about the fact that since he had ascended the throne, all of the *fan* countries in the four directions had brought tribute to the Court, with the sole exception of Japan. Consequently he ordered the Court eunuch Chai Shan to take Imperial orders and proceed to the country of Ryukyu, and there to order Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king, to send people to take the orders to Japan, for their instruction. The orders read: “In the past, when my Imperial ancestor Tai-zong, the Wen Emperor, ascended the throne, your former king of Japan, named Yuan-dao-yi (源道義) was able to respectfully follow the Way of Heaven and respectfully serve the Heavenly Court. It was thus that the Heavenly Court treated you with such liberality. I am now carrying forward the Will of my Imperial ancestors, extending the virtue of looking on all equally, and sending you special orders of instruction. You, king, should increasingly accord with the wishes of Heaven, respect the will of your earlier king and send envoys to come to the Court. I will treat you in the same way as my Imperial ancestors treated your former kings. Not only will your individual family and your single country endlessly benefit from this, but all the people of the coastal regions will thereby long enjoy the prosperity of Great Peace. You are to respect these Imperial orders.”

**(65) Xuan-de 7年3月10日 (10 Apr 1432)**

The envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (漫泰來結制)<sup>158</sup> and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(66) Xuan-de 7年3月17日 (17 Apr 1432)**

The envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (漫泰來結制) of Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu memorialised: “On my journey here, the ship on which we were travelling was badly damaged in the shallows of Fu-jian. It is requested that the relevant offices be Imperially ordered to provide a ship on which we can return home.” The Emperor ordered the Auxiliary Ministry of Works to provide a ship to them.

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<sup>158</sup> Presumably the same as the Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (漫泰來結制) mentioned in the 9 August 1429 reference.

**(67) Xuan-de 7年3月17日 (17 Apr 1432)**

The envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (漫泰來結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks as well as cotton cloth.

**(68) Xuan-de 7年4月26日 (25 May 1432)**

He Wen-yuan (何文淵), the prefect of Wen-zhou Prefecture (溫州府) in Zhe-jiang, memorialised: “An old man from Rui-an County (瑞安縣) has advised that, during the Hong-wu and Yong-le reigns, the ships on which Ryukyu came to offer tribute, anchored at Ning-bo (寧波). It is thus that Ning-bo had a Maritime Trade, the An-yuan Station in which to store their goods, and a hostel in which to look after the envoys. In recent times, the *fan* ships have been anchoring at Rui-an (瑞安). How can we facilitate things for them as there is no hostel or post station, which means that they stay at houses of the ordinary people. Also, there is nowhere to store the local products they bring in tribute, and when they transport them to the capital, the road passes through the Feng-gong (馮公嶺) and other ranges, where the peaks rise one after the other producing difficult and dangers. It is requested that from now on, when *fan* ships come, they be instructed to anchor at Ning-bo in order to facilitate things.” The Auxiliary Ministry of Rites advised: “During the Yong-le reign, when the ships from Ryukyu arrived they anchored at Fu-jian, or Ning-po or Rui-an. On this occasion, there were three ships carrying the tribute envoys from this country. Two anchored at Fu-jian and one anchored at Rui-an. On enquiry, it was found that this was a result of the winds and there was no other intent. As to the claim that Rui-an has no hostel or post station, the Ministry of Works should be instructed to send a despatch to the Zhe-jiang Provincial Administration Commission, requiring it to construct a government hostel at Rui-an as well as a store in which to keep the tribute products.” The Emperor said: “This is not an urgent matter. We should wait for a lull in the farming seasons to carry it out.”

**(69) Xuan-de 7年6月7日 (4 Jul 1432)**

The envoy Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses.

**(70) Xuan-de 7年6月13日 (10 Jul 1432)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from Champa, Ryukyu as well as...

**(71) Xuan-de 7年6月14日 (11 Jul 1432)**

The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and...came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(72) Xuan-de 7年6月18日 (15 Jul 1432)**

The envoy Nan-zhe-jie-zhi (南者結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, as well as...had conferred upon them silver, paper money, ramie-silk, silk gauzes, thin silk gauzes, thin silks, cotton cloth and suits of clothing made of silk interwoven with gold thread, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(73) Xuan-de 7年6月27日 (24 Jul 1432)**

The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, as well as...had conferred upon them paper money, variegated silks, thin silks and cotton cloth, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(74) Xuan-de 7年12月5日 (27 Dec 1432)**

The envoy A-pu-ni-shi (阿普尼是) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as... came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products.

(75) Xuan-de 7年12月16日 (7 Jan 1433)

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from Korea, Ryukyu and....

(76) Xuan-de 7年12月16日 (7 Jan 1433)

The envoy A-pu-ni-shi (阿普尼是) and others from the country of Ryukyu, as well as... had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks, thin silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

(77) Xuan-de 8年2月16日 (7 Mar 1433)

The envoys Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制), A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

(78) Xuan-de 8年2月21日 (12 Mar 1433)

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the country of Ryukyu and other places.

(79) Xuan-de 8年3月4日 (24 Mar 1433)

The envoys A-pu-cha-du (阿蒲察都), Wei-gu-wo-zhi (魏古渥制), and others who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as ... had conferred upon them paper money, variegated silks, thin silks, cotton cloth and suits of clothing made of ramie-silk interwoven with gold thread or of thin silk, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(80) Xuan-de 8年5月3日 (21 May 1433)**

The envoy Wu-zhi-ma-jie-zhi (物志麻結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(81) Xuan-de 8年5月8日 (26 May 1433)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the countries of Japan and Ryukyu, as well as....

**(82) Xuan-de 8年5月9日 (27 May 1433)**

The envoy Wu-zhi-ma-jie-zhi (物志麻結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, as well as...had conferred upon them variegated silks, thin silks, and cotton cloth, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(83) Xuan-de 9年3月8日 (16 Apr 1434)**

The interpreter Zheng Zhang (鄭長), the envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products.

**(84) Xuan-de 9年3月11日 (19 Apr 1434)**

A banquet was conferred upon the tribute envoys from the two countries of Korea and Ryukyu.

**(85) Xuan-de 9年3月18日 (26 Apr 1434)**

The envoy Bu-ma-jie-zhi (步馬結制), and the interpreter Zheng Zhang from the country of Ryukyu, as well as... a total of 13 persons, had conferred upon them *biao-li* of variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(86) Xuan-de 9年3月29日 (7 May 1434)**

The envoy Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had sailed together with Bu-ma-jie-zhi and the others, but had been separated from them by the winds and thus arrived later.

**(87) Xuan-de 9年4月10日 (18 May 1434)**

The envoy Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, as well as, a total of four persons, had conferred upon them variegated silks, thin silks and cotton cloth, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(88) Xuan-de 9年7月8日 (12 Aug 1434)**

The envoy Yang-bu-bo-ye (楊布勃也) and others, who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, in consequence of him having been blessed with the conferral of clothing and an ocean-going ship, presented a memorial and offered tribute of horses and local products, in gratitude for Imperial grace.

**(89) Xuan-de 9年7月23日 (27 Aug 1434)**

The envoy Yang-bu-bo-ye (楊布勃也) and others, who had been sent by the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, had conferred upon them variegated silks, thin silks and cotton cloth, in differing quantities, as appropriate. They were also ordered to take Imperial orders

as well as *biao-li* of variegated silks to confer, on their return home, on the king of the country.

**Ying-zong shi-lu (英宗實錄)****(1) Xuan-de 10年1月18日 (15 Feb 1435)**

The interpreter Li Jing (李敬), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as... all came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as variegated silks and other goods.

**(2) Xuan-de 10年2月26日 (25 Mar 1435)**

The envoy Nan-mi-jie-zhi (南米結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, presented a memorial expressing gratitude for Imperial grace and offering tribute of local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as variegated silks and other goods.

**(3) Zheng-tong 1年1月2日 (19 Jan 1436)**

The envoy Wu-shi-jian (伍是堅) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(4) Zheng-tong 1年1月10日 (27 Jan 1436)**

The Da-tong-li (大通曆)<sup>159</sup> was conferred upon Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu. It was given to his envoy Wu-shi-jian to take back with him.

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<sup>159</sup> The official calendar for the respective reigns.

**(5) Zheng-tong 1年2月2日 (18 Feb 1436)**

Imperial orders of instruction were issued to Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and to Yuan-yi-jiao (源義教), the king of the country of Japan. The instructions read: “Our country has unified all under Heaven and, within and without the seas, there is none who does not submit. In carrying on the sagely traditions of the successive emperor, I do not distinguish between those near and those far away, and instead look on all with equal benevolence.. You are feudatories to the east of the state and, in fulfilling your tributary duties, you have become increasingly reverent. The envoys whom you kings have sent to the Court have presented horses and local products, and your sentiments of respect have been diligently expressed. I have inherited the Great Treasure<sup>160</sup> from my ancestors and hope that all living things within the four seas will jointly enjoy harmony and peace. Further, you, kings, have attached importance to serving the superior, and this is especially pleasing and admirable. Now that your envoys are returning home, I am especially conferring on you, kings, and your consorts silver, and variegated silks in response to your expression of your sentiments across distance. You, kings, must revere and respect the Way of Heaven, show benevolence and sympathy to your people and long protect your feudatory state, in order to accord with my expectations.”

**(6) Zheng-tong 1年2月21日 (8 Mar 1436)**

The envoy Cheng An (程安) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, as well as... all came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. A banquet was conferred upon them. They also had conferred upon them variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate

**(7) Zheng-tong 1年3月1日 (18 Mar 1436)**

The envoy Man-tai-lai-jie-zhi (謾泰來結制) and others from the country of Ryukyu, advised: “Initially, when we reached Fu-jian, we only had the local products offered in tribute by the king of the country, and these were advised. Then some persons brought along with them 90

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<sup>160</sup> The imperial throne.

conch shells and 58,000 cowries, and momentarily failed to advise this. The officials thought that we had failed to report the correct amounts and all were taken under government control. Thus, we lack products to deliver. It is humbly requested that we be provided with their value.” The Emperor ordered the Auxiliary Ministry of Rites to provide them with their value in accordance with the precedents.

**(8) Zheng-tong 1年4月28日 (14 May 1436)**

The envoys who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(9) Zheng-tong 1年7月28日 (8 Sep 1436)**

The Administrator Liang Qiu-bao (梁求保) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and... all came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(10) Zheng-tong 2年2月12日 (18 Mar 1437)**

Wang Cong (王聰), the Supervisor of the Zhe-jiang Maritime Trade Supervisorate memorialised: “The envoys sent by the Zhong-shan king of Ryukyu have come to offer tribute to the Court. The cowries and conch shells they carry should also be counted and taken under government control.” The Emperor responded to the Ministry of Rites, saying: “Cowries and conch shells are what the *yi* people depend upon as wealth enhancers (貨殖). If we took them what would we do with them? All are to be returned to them and an order noting this should be issued.”

**(11) Zheng-tong 2年5月8日 (11 Jun 1437)**

The attendant minister Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, came to offer tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as *biao-li* of variegated silks and other goods.

**(12) Zheng-tong 2年6月5日 (7 Jul 1437)**

Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu memorialised: “The headwear and robes of the various officials of our country were all conferred at the beginning of the dynasty, and over the years have become damaged and worn. It is requested that new ones be conferred.” He also memorialised: “Our country has respectfully accepted the Court’s calendar. However, the maritime routes are difficult and dangerous and the envoys who receive the calendars sometimes take half a year or a year to return with them.” The matter was passed down to the Auxiliary Ministry of Rites, which responded to the memorial. The Emperor considered that, in respect of the headwear and belts, the country be instructed to manufacture new ones in the pattern of those originally conferred and, as regards the calendar, that the Fu-jian Provincial Administration Commission be required to provide them with it.

**(13) Zheng-tong 2年6月6日 (8 Jul 1437)**

The Auxiliary Ministry of Rites memorialised: “The horses which the country of Ryukyu submitted in tribute are short and small. A despatch should be sent to that country requiring them to select tall and large horses and submit them as supplementary tribute.” The Emperor felt that the distant people offer tribute because they are inclining towards righteousness and that there was no need to be calculative about the quality of the goods submitted, and that they should be allowed to submit what they wish in tribute.

**(14) Zheng-tong 3年2月25日 (20 Mar 1438)**

The Administrator Liang Qiu-bao (梁求保), who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, and... all presented memorials and came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as as suits of clothing, variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(15) Zheng-tong 3年8月22日 (11 Sep 1438)**

...as well as the envoy Yi-lu-jie-zhi (義魯結制) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, all presented memorials and came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well as *biao-li* of variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(16) Zheng-tong 3年10月1日 (19 Oct 1438)**

The Fu-jian Assistant Regional Surveillance Commissioner Yang Xun investigated a case where people of Long-xi County privately travelled to the country of Ryukyu to trade. The statutes required that they be sent to the capital in fetters. However, Xun took it upon himself to banish them without authorization. The Censorate submitted an impeachment against him, and Xun was arrested and imprisoned. However, he purchased redemption from his crime and returned to his post. The Emperor said: “Xun is not versed in the substance of the law. He is to be sent to the Minister of Personnel for reassignment.”

**(17) Zheng-tong 4年3月10日 (23 Apr 1439)**

.... the envoy Liang Qiu-bao who had been sent by the country of Ryukyu and... all came to Court and offered tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet and variegated silks and other goods, in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(18) Zheng-tong 4年7月16日 (25 Aug 1439)**

.....the envoy A-pu-li-shi (阿普禮是) and others who had been sent by Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, brought memorials and came to Court to offer tribute of horses and local products. They had conferred upon them a banquet as well suits of clothing made of silks interwoven with gold thread, variegated silks and other goods in differing quantities, as appropriate.

**(19) Zheng-tong 4年7月28日 (6 Sep 1439)**

Shang Ba-zhi, the Zhong-shan king of the country of Ryukyu, memorialised: “Since the Hong-wu reign until now, our country has respectfully served the Court, and on several occasions have through Imperial sympathy and concern, been provided with ocean-going ships in which to transport our goods. Recently, the envoy Ba-lu (巴魯) and others were sending local products in tribute to the capital, but their ship was badly damaged by the winds and waves on the journey. Given that our small country is very limited in terms of materials and skilled labour and we are unable to complete a ship, we request that you confer upon us an ocean-going ship and provide it to Ba-lu and the others to bring back, in order to facilitate our tribute missions to and from the court.” The matter was sent down to the Auxiliary Ministry of Rites, which responded to the memorial, noting: “At this time, we are reducing expenditure in order to relieve the people. If we do make another ship for them, it will certainly impose demands on both the military and civilians.” The Emperor sent orders to the three provincial offices in Fu-jian, requiring them to select one of the existing ocean-going ships and confer it upon them. If there were none available, they were required to carry out repairs to the ship which was damaged and return it to them.

**(20) Zheng-tong 4年8月15日 (22 Sep 1439)**

The Fu-jian regional inspector and inspecting censor Cheng Gui (成規) advised: “The envoys who come from and return to the country of Ryukyu all stop in Fu-zhou. The demands of their hostelling and provisioning are too expensive to meet. Recently, the interpreter Lin Hui (林惠) and Zheng Zhang (鄭長) brought with them over 200 *fan* ship’s crew and attendants. Apart from providing them with their daily rice, their tea, salt, pickles and sauces are all

provided by the community (里甲) and over time this has become the standard practice. They have persisted with their unscrupulous behaviour and even extorted copper cash. Up till now, it is still less than half a year, but more than 796,900 copper cash have been expended.