

The Rise of Tambralinga and the Southeast Asian Commercial Boom in the Thirteenth Century

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1. Prologue: On the Nature of “Sanfoqi”

My present research focus is on the reconstruction of the history of the Strait of Malacca region prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of Melaka (Malacca) in approximately the year 1400. Contemporary Chinese texts are the most useful tools for this task. Since this paper was originally prepared for a conference session on Asian Seaborne Trade in the 10th to 13th Centuries, it focuses primarily on the region known in Chinese as “Sanfoqi”.¹⁾

References to a country named “Sanfoqi” appear regularly in Chinese texts from the early Song period down to the early Ming (although the first mention of the name is in a late Tang period text of 904). This Sanfoqi has traditionally been equated with Srivijaya. According to the accepted wisdom, from the time of the emergence of Srivijaya (Shilifoshi in Chinese texts) in the 7th century until the 14th century when, according to the *Mingshi*, Sanfoqi declined and disappeared, the history of the Strait of Malacca region has been portrayed as the

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history of Srivijaya (see, for example, Coedes 1968 and Wada 1970). This image of Srivijaya as a trading nation that flourished for no less than 700 years was derived from the equation of the Srivijaya that appears in 7th~8th century local inscriptions (the Shilifoshi of Tang-period Chinese records) with Sanfoqi.

My approach to Sanfoqi takes exception to this orthodoxy. Rather than seeing it as a single united polity like Srivijaya, I am convinced that its real nature was more of a regional grouping akin to that of another such grouping in Western Asia known in Chinese as “Dashi”: Sanfoqi, that is, like Dashi, was a collective appellation for a number of separate member states. In geographical scope, Sanfoqi (I rely mainly on the 1225 *Zhusanzhi* for this description) stretched from the central and southern parts of the Malay Peninsula as far as the Strait of Malacca side of Sumatra and West Java, and probably also included West Kalimantan. I further part company with other scholars in identifying Sanfoqi with the Arabic Zabaj, not with Sribuza (the Arabic term for Srivijaya) which, along with other countries, was subsumed within Zabaj. Consequently, Sanfoqi may also be equated to the Javaka (in Pali texts) and Savaka (in Tamil texts) that appear in Indian sources, which most scholars agree in equating with Zabaj. (For details, see Fukami 1987, 1999)

The principal basis for my understanding of the nature of Sanfoqi is my reading of the place-names found in Chinese texts, “Sanfoqi zhanbeiguo” and “Sanfoqi zhunianguo”. The similarity with place-names mentioned in conjunction with Dashi—“Dashi wuxunguo”, “Dashi tuopoliciguo”, “Dashi yuluhediguo”, “Dashi cengtangguo”, and “Dashi maluobaguo”—is striking. Accordingly, on the basis of the Dashi precedent, I interpret the Sanfoqi-related place-names as meaning, respectively, “Zhanbeiguo of Sanfoqi” and “Zhunianguo of Sanfoqi”.²⁾

If we accept this image of Sanfoqi as a collective term for a number of member states, the image of Srivijaya as a unified trading empire that flourished for some 700 years becomes harder to accept. Likewise, the argument over whether the capital city of Srivijaya was Palembang or Jambi, Chaiya or Kedah, together with the debate over whether or not its capital was moved some time around the year 1080 from Palembang to Jambi, are all barking up the wrong tree since there was no single dominant polity in the area.

How, then, should we depict the history of the Strait of Malacca region if we are forced to jettison the image of a single trading empire, Srivijaya, dominating the area for 700 years? Here, I have to confess, I too am at a loss. The reason is that, while tribute was made by “Sanfoqi” to China on more than 30 occasions during the Song period (it is difficult to ascertain precisely how many), there is no clear indication of which of the Strait of Malacca region countries the term referred to. While Sanfoqi zhanbeiguo and Sanfoqi zhunianguo may be confidently identified as, respectively, Jambi and (the forces of) Cola centred probably on Kedah,³⁾ for the remaining Sanfoqi member states the evidence that would enable us to identify them is sparse.

Since there were almost 30 instances of tribute being paid to the Northern Song, a detailed reading of the Chinese sources should in principle provide hints as to how these various states should be identified. Unfortunately, the present author’s insufficient ability in Chinese and understanding of Chinese history have meant that positive identification has so far eluded me. The task is even more difficult for the Southern Song period, when there are less than half a dozen records of tribute being made.

The results of my research into Sanfoqi during the Yuan period have been published in my Japanese-language article, “Passage or Emporium: the

Malacca Straits during the Yuan Period” (Fukami: 2004a). Apart from a single mention in the *Yuanshi*, Sanfoqi appears only in the *Dadenanhaizhi* and the *Daoyizhilue*. It seems likely that during the Yuan period Sanfoqi ceased to be regarded as a regional appellation, and that former member-states had come to be seen as independent political entities. Furthermore, the *Yuanshi*’s description lists Mabaer, which corresponded to Ma’bar on the Coromandel Coast of South India, following its reference to Zhancheng (Campa), effectively ignoring the Strait of Malacca region altogether. This would suggest that by Yuan times the Strait of Malacca had ceased to be either the “important spot on the foreigners’ sea lanes” (*Lingwaidaida*, 1178), or a “strategic place where ships were forced to congregate” (*Zhufanzhi*) that it had been in earlier times.

2. The 13th Century Expansion of Tambralinga

Fortunately, we are able to trace the rise and fall between the 12th and 14th centuries of one of the member-states of Sanfoqi, Danmaling or Tambralinga, later known as Nakhon Si Thammarat, for which there is a relatively rich written record. These names, in one or another version, appear not only in Chinese texts but also in local inscriptions and Thai documents, in Sri Lankan records and Tamil inscriptions, and also in Javanese documents. I have expounded upon the history of Tambralinga in a recent article, (see Fukami 2004b) so I will give only a brief description here.

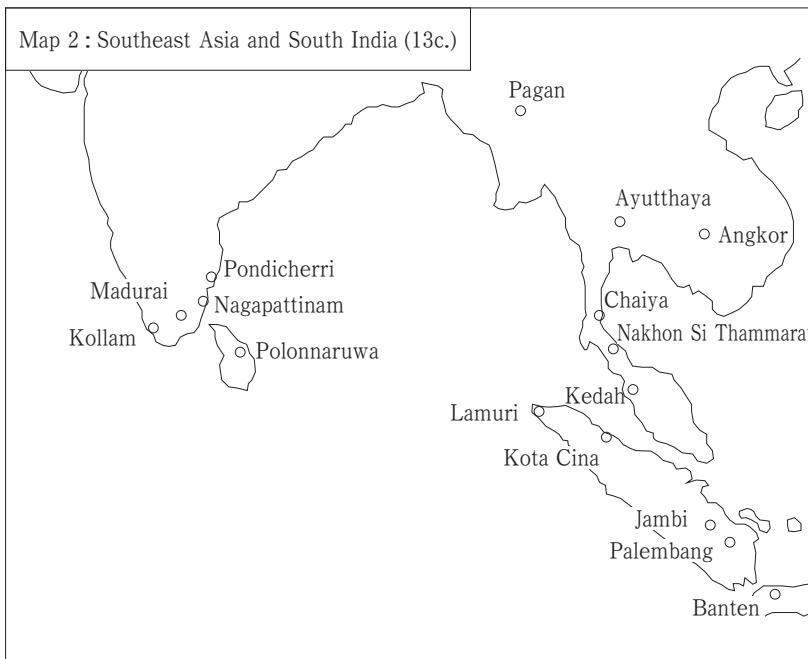
Transcribed as “Danmaling”, Tambralinga appears in four Chinese texts: *Zhufanzhi* (1225), *Daoyizazhi* (1270s), *Dadenanhaizhi* (1304), and *Daoyizhilue* (1351). In the *Zhufanzhi* Danmaling is described as being subordinate to Sanfoqi (or, more precisely, to whichever state formed the central state of the political grouping known as Sanfoqi), while occupying the central part of the

Malay Peninsula. Lingyasijja (Langkasuka=present-day Pattani), which occupied the southern section, and Foluoan (present-day Phatthalung) in the central section were also directly subordinate to Sanfoqi. The last instance of tribute from Sanfoqi to Song China was recorded in 1178, but in 1196, according to the *Daoyizazhi*, Danmaling sent tribute. This would suggest that by the end of the 12th century, Danmaling had become independent of Sanfoqi. In the *Dadenanhaizhi*, Danmaling is described as occupying the entire Malay Peninsula, and has become one of the dominant Southeast Asian states. This appears to have been the zenith of Tambralinga's power, for by the time of the *Daoyizhilue* there is no longer any suggestion that Danmaling played a central role in Southeast Asian politics. On the contrary, it would seem from the description there and in the *Yuanshi* that Danmaling had been submerged amid the growing struggle between the Sumatran kingdom of Malayu which, with the backing of Java, was advancing rapidly from the south, and the newly dominant Xian (Maritime Siam, primarily Ayutthaya), whose forces were moving down the peninsula from the north. Finally, in 1365 we find the Majapahit kingdom of Java recognizing Nakhon Si Thammarat as Siam. (*Desawarnana*, 1365) Despite its rapid rise to prominence in the 13th century, that is, by the following century Danmaling had become a part of Siam.

According to the 1230 Chaiya Inscription (actually found not in Chaiya but in Nakhon Si Thammarat), the ruler of Tambralinga when it reached the pinnacle of its power in the mid-13th century was a king named Candrabhanu. In Sri Lankan materials, which describe this Candrabhanu as a Javakan king from Tambralinga, his armies launched an assault on the southern part of the island in 1247. Though defeated by the Sri Lankan king, Candrabhanu, by means that are unclear, was able to establish an independent regime in the north of the is-



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land, but in 1258 he was attacked and subjugated by Pandya. In 1262 Candrabhanu launched another attack on the south of the island, his army strengthened this time by the addition of Tamil and Sinhalese forces, only to be defeated when Pandya sided with the Sri Lankan side; Candrabhanu himself was killed in the fighting. Candrabhanu's son retained control over the northern kingdom, though subservient to Pandya, but this regime too had disappeared by the end of the 14th century. As for Candrabhanu's motives for attacking Sri Lanka, the *Culavamsa* notes only that it was carried out "under the treacherous pretext that they [i. e. the Javaka] were also followers of the Buddha". (Sirisena 1978: 36–57)

In at least two senses, the rapid expansion of Tambralinga is exceptional in the history of Southeast Asia. In the first place, Candrabhanu's invasion of Sri Lanka and occupation of the north of the island marked the only time that a Southeast Asian power had launched an overseas military expedition beyond the immediate Southeast Asian region. In the second place, in the historiography of Southeast Asia the Malay Peninsula has generally played a secondary role to that of places like Java, the Malacca Strait region (Srivijaya in the 7th~8th century, Melaka in the 15th century), Cambodia, Campa, Vietnam, and Burma. Tambralinga's sudden appearance on centre-stage in the 13th century was thus highly unusual. Part of the responsibility for this second point has to be laid at the feet of traditional historiography, which has tended to focus more on unified nation-states—Siam, Burma etc. —than on so-called “periphery-areas” like the Malay Peninsula.

What were the factors that made Tambralinga's dramatic rise possible? In the above-mentioned article (Fukami 2004b) I was unable to dwell as much as I would have liked on this point, so I would like to think a little more about it here.

A major development in the past few years has been the publication of Jacq-Hergoualc'h's *The Malay Peninsula, Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road* (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002) an ambitious work that seeks to recreate more than a thousand years of the history of the Malay Peninsula (principally its central section) down to the 13th century. Drawing upon virtually every related source, including not only documentary sources but also the findings of archaeological excavations and research in art history, the book is extremely important.

As far as Tambralinga is concerned, however, the present author finds it

impossible to go along with Jacq-Hergoualc'h's findings. My principal objections are, first, that he ignores the *Daoyizazhi* and the *Dadenanhaizhi*, and second, that the book's cut-off point is the 13th century. In addition, the author's exclusive focus on the Malay Peninsula causes him to overlook its links with the Strait of Malacca region. Despite these reservations, Jacq-Hergoualc'h's linkage of the rise of Tambralinga to a "commercial boom in the Malay Peninsula in the 12th and 13th centuries" (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 399) is extremely thought-provoking.

3. Some Issues Arising from the "Commercial Boom"

(i) Evidence for a "Commercial Boom"

Jacq-Hergoualc'h's case for a commercial boom on the 12th~13th century Malay Peninsula is based on the discovery of ceramic bowls and other items originating in China. While few of these have been found for the 10th~11th centuries compared to the preceding 9th century, the number of finds suddenly increases dramatically for the 12th~13th centuries. Major archaeological sites for the 12th~13th centuries include, in north-south order, the Nakhon Si Thammarat region, Satingpra, and the Kedah (Lumbah Bujang) region. In support of his thesis, Jacq-Hergoualc'h notes that these ceramic items are not only numerous but also uniform in type, and include many that are intact and/or of high quality. Furthermore, pottery, glass items and beads, all originating in the Middle East, have also been discovered at each of the sites. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 391)

One point that is missing from Jacq-Hergoualc'h's hypothesis is an explanation of why this commercial boom of the 12th~13th centuries should have worked so much in Tambralinga's favour. To understand this point better, we

need to be aware that the boom was not limited to the Malay Peninsula. It is clear from works by Japanese scholars, for instance, not only that it affected an area stretching from the South China Sea region as far north as Japan, but also that it spanned two centuries from the mid 12th century to the late 14th century. As examples of Japanese scholarship, we may cite Sasaki's wide-ranging work on the ceramic trade in the Indian Ocean area (Sasaki 1993), Morimoto's comparative study of Southeast Asian and Japanese sites (Morimoto 1991), and Aoyagi's research into ceramic trade items unearthed at Southeast Asian sites. (Aoyagi 1995) We may draw a similar conclusion from the fact that the distribution of unearthed items at sites in the Strait of Malacca region, such as Muara Jambi in Central Sumatra and Banten in Western Java, also shows a preponderance of items dating to the 12th~13th and 12th~14th centuries, respectively (Abu Ridho 1992; Guillot 1996). (It should be noted that the findings of these Japanese ceramics scholars suggest that the commercial boom's beginning should be dated to the mid 12th century.)

Aoyagi further suggests that the number of unearthed items dating back to the 13th~14th centuries, and the number of sites where they have been found, both exceed those of the 12th~13th centuries. Pointing out that the number of states and regions in the South China Sea area given in the *Daoyizhilue* as destinations for Chinese ceramics is double that given in the *Zhufanzhi*, Aoyagi sees this as evidence that the commercial network had become far denser compared to previous years. (Aoyagi 1995: 103)

Since he has evidently not read the 1304 *Dadenanhaizhi*, Aoyagi's hypothesis is limited to a comparison between the *Zhufanzhi* and the 1351 *Daoyizhilue*. A comparison of the *Zhufanzhi* and the *Dadenanhaizhi* reveals that the process

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of densification was already well advanced at the beginning of the 14th century when the latter work was written: compared to the less than twenty place-names from the Sanfoqi region identified in the *Zhusanzhi*, the *Dadenanhaizhi* lists more than thirty. The most striking increase is to be found in the area encompassing Kalimantan, Java and Eastern Indonesia.

Jacq-Hergoualc'h's hypothesis that the increased number of unearthed ceramic items reflects a commercial boom covering the 12th~13th centuries is thus supported both by the increase in the number of sites where they were found, and an increase in the number of places designated in Chinese texts as destinations for these items. However, it is not adequate merely to suggest an overall increase in the 12th~13th centuries relative to the preceding two centuries; a more accurate assessment is required. Additionally, the expansion of the commercial boom as far as the South Sea region is not sufficient in itself to explain the extraordinary rise of Tambralinga.

(ii) Tambralinga Amid the Commercial Boom

As noted, Jacq-Hergoualc'h locates the origins of 12th~13th-century Southeast Asia's commercial boom in China. At the same time, from the fact that the ceramic items unearthed from the various Tambralingan sites included so many complete specimens of a very high quality, he deduces that Tambralinga was not only a point of re-export for these goods from China but also a point of consumption. (Jacq-Hergoualc'h 2002: 415-16)

Though items of Khmer pottery have also been discovered, Jacq-Hergoualc'h's conclusion is that these were not trade items but daily items in use by local Khmers. (Ibid.: 407-8) On the other hand, the discovery in

Tambralingan sites of imitations of Song celadons made in Than-hoa, also dating back to the 12th~13th centuries, (Ibid.: 417) is notable for its suggestion of an intra-Southeast Asian commercial network. Even more worthy of note is the fact that high-quality *kendi* manufactured at the Kok Moh kilns of Songkhla from the late 11th century up to the early 12th century have been unearthed not only locally but as far away as Sumatra (Muara Jambi and Kota Cina), Sri Lanka (Mantai), Java (Gresik and Trowulan), and the Southern Philippines (Butuan) (lower-quality items made as late as the end of the 13th century have also been found). It may be hypothesized from the sudden appearance of all these high-quality items that they were made by seasoned artisans brought in from elsewhere. (Ibid.: 418-20)

Jacq-Hergoualc'h's conclusion that Tambralinga was not only an emporium for the trade in high-quality ceramics but also a final destination for such goods may thus be upheld. But since it was also a production point for the ceramics trade, at least in high-quality *kendi*, it thus seems logical to conclude that the origins of the Southeast Asian commercial boom should be sought not merely in China but also in the region's own expanding economic might.

One point still remains to be cleared up, however: the fact that neither intact items of ceramic ware nor items of superior quality seem to have been discovered in the Strait of Malacca area, either at Muara Jambi or at Banten. Even items recovered from wrecked ships at Muara Jambi have turned out to be of inferior quality. (Abu Ridho 1992) Can we make a general conclusion that superior items were brought to the Malay Peninsula while inferior items were taken to the Strait of Malacca region? For the time being I prefer to avoid making such a hasty conclusion. I hope that in the future more light will be thrown on the history of the ceramics trade between the South China Sea

and the Bay of Bengal in the 12th~14th centuries, including the riddle of superior versus inferior items and the presence or absence of intact items.

(iii) An Ocean of Chinese

Any attempt to relate Southeast Asia's commercial boom to the trade in Chinese ceramics must pay equal attention to the role of the Chinese people involved in the trade. The Japanese scholar Wada Hisanori has researched the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia during the Song period ; alongside his focus on the communities of Zhancheng (Campa), Zhenla (Cambodia) and Vietnam, Wada also stresses the importance of the community established at Foluoan on the Malay Peninsula. (Wada 1959) Foluoan may be identified as Phatthalung, and there is an important archaeological site at nearby Satingpra.

Although the point is not made by Wada, it seems that some time between the 12th and the 13th century (most likely in the early 13th century), Chinese expansion into the southern seas underwent a crucial development. According to the *Lingwaidaida*, the ocean route between China and Dashi in Western Asia required a minimum of two years for a round trip. (Fukami 2004a) The ships would leave China with the winter monsoon winds, making landfall at Lamuri on the northwestern tip of Sumatra some 40 days later. Once there, however, they would have to wait for the next winter monsoon to blow before they could make the onward trip across the Bay of Bengal and beyond. For the return trip, they would leave the Persian Gulf (or Southern India, depending on where they were) in the spring, cross the South China Sea with the summer monsoon winds, and be back in China not long after the summer solstice. The *Zhufanzhi* also confirms that, while it was possible to make a round-trip between China and Southeast Asia using the winter monsoon and the ensuing

summer monsoon, the onward trip across the Bay of Bengal required them to await the arrival of the next winter monsoon. The *Lingwaidaida* further states that while Chinese ships voyaged as far as Gulin (Kollam) on the Malabar Coast of southwestern India, they did not visit the Coromandel Coast, and the existence of a route from Pugan or Pagan to Zhunian (i. e. Cola) was no more than hearsay.

However, according to the *Yuanshi*, not long after it had managed to gain control of the Southern Song's maritime capability the victorious Yuan dynasty sent an envoy named Yang Tingbi on a mission to Julian (the same Kollam previously transcribed as Gulin) on the Malabar Coast to invite it to pay tribute. Existing records allow us to trace the fortunes of this expedition. (Fukami 2004a)

1. On his first trip, Yang left China with the winter monsoon of 1279–80 and sailed as far as Julian.
2. On his next trip, in 1280–81, Yang again set sail with the winter monsoon but this time was able to get only as far as Mabaerguo Xincun (Pondicherri) on the Coromandel Coast.
3. Yang's third trip in 1281–82 saw him yet again leave with the winter monsoon, and he returned from Julian as before with the next summer monsoon.

In three successive years, that is, Yang Tingbi was able to make return trips between China and South India using the winds of the winter monsoon and the summer monsoon that followed it, sailing through the Strait of Malacca without stopping. Although the Malacca Strait area is noted in both the *Lingwaidaida* and the *Zhufanzhi* as a nest of pirates (Fukami 2004a), in records of Yang's passage they are nowhere to be seen.

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Clearly, between the time of the *Lingwaidaida* and *Zhusanzhi* and the final years of the Southern Song, there had been important improvements in Chinese sailing techniques that allowed ships to sail all the way to South India and back in the space of a year, without stopping off at the Strait of Malacca en route.

The same impression may be drawn from the section on the Coromandel Coast city of Tuta (Nagapattinam) in the *Daoyizhilue*, where, it is stated, there was a brick pagoda several metres tall, inscribed in Chinese with the words “Completed in the 8th month of Xianchun 3 [1267]”. Although the *Daoyizhilue* does not state so specifically, it is safe to conclude that there was already a Chinese community at Nagapattinam at that time. In other words, not only had the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia expanded across the Bay of Bengal as far as India, they had established themselves even on the Coromandel Coast, which in the days of the *Lingwaidaida* had been beyond the reach of Chinese ships. The creation of this far-reaching Chinese Diaspora must have been related to the developments in sailing techniques just mentioned.

By the 13th century, that is, Chinese had already become one of the lingua francas of the southern ocean region stretching from the South China Sea as far as the Bay of Bengal.⁴⁾

4. Conclusions

By Yuan times, the Strait of Malacca, previously a spot where ships were forced to idle awaiting a favourable wind, had become no more than a passage to the ocean beyond. Correspondingly, the kind of state that Sanfoqi is described as in the *Lingwaidaida* and *Zhusanzhi*—one which relies on piracy against passing ships to avail itself of valuable items, which it then re-exports

for profit—had already become non-viable. The Tambralinga that emerged in its place was clearly a different kind of state, and this, rather than the expansion of commerce amid the commercial boom of the 12th~13th century, may well have been the key to its rapid development. As we have seen, Tambralinga was not merely a distribution point for high-quality Chinese ceramics but also a consumer of such items, as well as being a point of production for other high-quality *kendi* that circulated over a wide geographical area. The emergence of Tambralinga reestablished the importance of the Sanfoqi area, transforming it from a mere entrepot for inter-regional commerce and source of natural products to a producer and consumer of manufactured goods.

Developments in Theravada Buddhism also played their part: Theravada developed rapidly in Pagan because of the kingdom's contacts with Sri Lanka, while the early-14th century King Srindrabajayavarman of Angkor (r. 1307–22), himself a Theravada Buddhist, left the first Khmer Pali inscription of 1309. (Ishizawa 2001: 61) We may assume that in the 13th century both the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Thailand were regions where Pali was another lingua franca. Regarding the mystery as to why Candrabhanu of Tambralinga, situated in the centre of this region, decided to launch his invasion of Sri Lanka in the name of the Buddha, it may well have been that he was merely seeking economic advantages through promoting himself as a propagator of Theravada Buddhism.

The conclusion of this paper may be summed up as follows. In the era preceding the 15th-century emergence of Melaka as the dominant maritime power in Southeast Asia, Tambralinga had also enjoyed a period of prominence during the 12th and 13th centuries. Behind its rise was not only the expanding influence of China but also an increase in Southeast Asia's own economic

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importance, together with growing ties with Sri Lanka by way of Theravada Buddhism and the Pali language, setting the stage for a very different kind of state from the piracy-based Sanfoqi described in the *Lingwaidaida* and *Zhufanzhi*.

Notes

- 1) Session 114 of the XIVth International Economic History Congress held at Helsinki, Finland, from 21 to 25 August 2006, titled: “A Maritime Girdle of Commerce: Asian Seaborne Trade in the 10th to 13th Centuries”.
- 2) There are a number of points on which I would like to request enlightenment from scholars of Chinese history. Firstly, why is it that, for a limited period in the late 11th century, Chinese texts begin using phrases like, “XX, belonging to Dashi” (DashiXXguo]) or “YY, belonging to Sanfoqi” (SanfoqiYYguo)? With regard to Dashi, as far as I have been able to ascertain, this usage is found only between the years 1072 and 1089 (See the *Songshi*, History of Dashi, and the *Songhuiyao Jigao*, History of Dashi and Records of Tribute. As for Sanfoqi, the usage is limited roughly to the same period: Sanfoqi zhanbeiguo appears in 1079 and 1082, while Sanfoqi zhunianguo appears in 1082. (Fukami 1987) In the same light, why are there no references of this sort to the third of the three principal tribute-bearers of the southern ocean region, Zhancheng?

With regard to tribute paid to Song China, there is one more point on which I would like to enlist those scholars' help, namely: why is it that, for the approximately 150 years of the Southern Song dynasty, there are comparatively more records of tribute being paid during the first 50 years than there are during the last 100 years? In particular, I am curious as to why tribute from the three great southern powers, Dashi, Sanfoqi and Zhancheng, appears to have ceased in the 1170's. (The last record for Dashi is 1168, for Zhancheng 1176, and for Sanfoqi 1178.) Is it a problem of record-keeping, or was there in fact no tribute paid after those years?

Even after records of tribute from these three powers ceased, in 1196

Danmaling (listed in the *Zhufanzhi* as a subsidiary of Sanfoqi), and in 1200, 1201 and 1205 Zhenlifu (listed in the *Zhufanzhi* as a subsidiary of Zhenla) are recorded as having brought tribute to China. These newly-emerged powers may have been seeking through the payment of tribute to legalize their position in the Chinese market, and to strengthen their position by gaining official recognition from China, but why did China record their tribute independently rather than as from Sanfoqi or Zhenla?

- 3) Karashima Noboru, from his reading of Cola inscriptions, has concluded that there is no basis for asserting Cola's sustained dominance over the Strait of Malacca area. (Karashima 1992) While his thesis constitutes a criticism of my own position on this point, his criticisms do not run to my interpretation of the terms Sanfoqi zhanbeiguo and Sanfoqi zhunianguo in Chinese texts.
- 4) Apart from the pagoda at Tuta, it seems that until the beginning of the 19th century there existed in Zhenla gravestones inscribed with year names from the Later Liang Dynasty (907–22) and the Xianchun (1265–74) period of the Song dynasty. (Wada 1959: 89–90) In addition, a bronze gong inscribed with 31 characters and dated Shaoding 4 (1231) has been unearthed in Muara Jambi.

The appearance of the 12 horary signs in Southeast Asia, dating back to the 13th century, may also be assumed to be a result of Chinese influence. The earliest recorded instances are as follows:

- 1) In the *Tamnan* (*History of*) Nakhon Si Thammarat, whose fourth story likens the kingdom's twelve tributary states to the twelve horary signs (The date of this story is unclear, but it must have predated Chandrabhanu's reign.) (Wyatt 1975: 84–5)
- 2) In the First Inscription of Sukhothai (the Rama Khamhaeng Inscription, 1292)
- 3) In the *Zhenla Fengtiji* (1296), in a description of the customs of Cambodia
- 4) In the Grahi Buddha Inscription (dated variously to 1183, 1279, and 1291; the present author feels that the inscription is more likely to date to a Rabbit year in the early 14th century, either 1303, 1315, or 1327) (Fukami 2004b: 65–8)

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The Rise of Tambralinga and the Southeast Asian Commercial Boom in the Thirteenth Century

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The state of Tambralinga (Danmaling), located around Nakhon Sithammarat in the central Malay Peninsula, grew enormously during the 13th century. It is first mentioned in the *Daoyizazhi* (1270s) as having brought tribute to the Southern Song in 1196. During the reign of Candrabanu (Chaiya inscription of 1230) it advanced into Sri Lanka (1247–62), placing the northern part of the island under its rule, and also fought with the king of Pandya in southern India. According to the *Dadenanhaizhi* (1304), Danmaling was one of the leading powers of Southeast Asia along with Zhancheng (Champa), Zhenla (Khmer) and Shepo (Java), and the entire Malay Peninsula fell within its sphere of influence. But Tambralinga's growth did not continue for long, and as Malaya, backed by Java, advanced from the south and the newly emerging state of Xian (or maritime Siam) advanced from the north, it fell into oblivion in the course of the ensuing conflict. By the second half of the 14th century, Java (Majapahit) too had recognized Nakhon Sithammarat as belonging to Siam.

In accounts of Southeast Asian history, Java, Cambodia, Burma and the Straits of Malacca (especially Srivijaya in the 7th to 8th centuries and Melaka in the 15th century) often play the leading roles, whereas the central Malay Peninsula occupies only a secondary position. But in the 13th century Tambralinga was one of the leading players, and its military advance into Sri Lanka was a rare example of an advance across the sea to another region by a Southeast Asian power.

What brought about this enormous growth experienced by Tambralinga? M. Jacq-Hergoualc'h, in his recent opus on the ancient and medieval history of

the Malay Peninsula (2002: 391-441), attributes it to the commercial boom of the 12th and 13th centuries. It is necessary to examine this commercial boom in greater detail, for judging from the discoveries of trade ceramics it was a phenomenon not confined to the central Malay Peninsula, but also to be observed widely throughout insular Southeast Asia. This raises the question of why this commercial boom should have benefited the central Malay Peninsula in particular.

Behind the rise of Tambralinga, beside the expanding influence of China, was an increase in Southeast Asia's own economic importance, accompanied by growing ties with Sri Lanka by way of Theravada Buddhism and the Pali language. Another factor may have been changes in the role of the Straits of Malacca. Whereas their former function as a centre of trade and maritime traffic had allowed the old piracy-based Sanfoqi to thrive, as described in the *Lingwaidaida* and *Zhusanzhi*, since the decline of Sanfoqi the Straits had become no more than a maritime passageway, opening the way for the rise of a different kind of state on the Malay Peninsula.