

FUKIEN'S PRIVATE SEA TRADE IN THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES

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I. *Introduction*

The 16th and 17th centuries form a period of change in China's overseas trade, and also form a turning point in Fukienese foreign trade. Until then, trade had mainly constituted official overseas trade centered in Ch'üan-chou and Fu-chou; thereafter, upon the disintegration of the feudal society, the once flourishing official overseas trade began to decline. In the meantime, stimulated by the expansion of the commodity economy, a new type of private overseas trade, centered in Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang, rapidly emerged. It gradually took the traditional place of official maritime trade, to become the main form of Fukienese foreign trade. The writer has visited Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang and various coastal districts of Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou many times with the purpose of investigating the private maritime trade of this period and to carry out field research and collect on a large scale all kinds of materials such as genealogies, epigraphic materials and folklore. This article was written on the basis of this field research, combined with relevant written evidence.

II. *The Rise of Trade Ports for Private Overseas Trade*

1. *Social and economic background*

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Yüeh-kang in Chang-chou and An-p'ing-kang in Chin-chiang were the main Fukienese trade ports for foreign trade, as well as the centers of private maritime trade for the southeastern coast. Why did Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang rise so rapidly to become the principle trade ports of Fukien? These questions cannot be separated from the development of the commodity economy of Fukien at the time, in particular the prospering of the economic region of southern Fukien.

As early as the beginning of the Ming, the southern Fukienese were already making great efforts to open up new land, and

carried out water conservancy projects to enlarge the land surface under cultivation. On Chu-hou mountain in Nan-ching alone, they had already opened up "thousands of *ch'ing* of good land" by 1425. They did not just open up hilly areas, but also fully utilized the natural environment of the coastal area. By building dykes they turned large areas of tideland into arable land. According to incomplete statistics, in the coastal areas of Lung-ch'i and Chang-p'u alone they built dykes to reclaim land from the sea on 186 different places. For instance, in Lung-hsi "in the 6th and 8th *tu*, over 30,000 *mou* was reclaimed from the sea with dykes. The land remained salinous, but with hoes and manure the people struggled for power with the sea."¹ Wherever the land was suitable, the local people also carried out several kinds of water conservancy works.² In the second half of the 15th century, for instance, prefect Chiang Liang carried out several projects in Lung-hsi, such as Shih-tun-shang-ch'uan with over 60 *ch'ing* of irrigated land, Tsou-t'ang with over a hundred *mou* of irrigated land and Kuan-kang with more than two hundred *ch'ing* of irrigated land, ten *li* east of the district, over twenty *li* long up to Liu-ying-chiang and down to Shih-mei-kang.³ Around 1550, the *chin-shih* Lin Kui led the villagers of P'u-wei to repair Kuan-kang. At the beginning and the end they put sluice gates to let fresh water wash out the saline soil. In this manner they brought over 200 *ch'ing* of fertile land under irrigation.⁴ In Chin-chiang the Eastern lake was dredged, and "it was all connected with the flow of the creeks. If there was a drought they would open the gates of the sluices to let the flow of the creeks enter the pond(s) and irrigate the low-lying fields of Hu-hsin and Ch'ao-keng."⁵ In the mountain districts they also exerted themselves with various irrigation projects. In Nan-ching they "removed thousands of stones and made locks for canals, and made villagers cut canals through the farmland (. . .) in order to create several thousands of *ch'ing* of fertile land."⁶ In An-hsi district many small ponds were built, such as Ch'an-k'eng-p'o, Shang-t'ang, Ch'en-t'ang, Chou-t'ang and Su-t'ang.⁷ Water conservancy works created a continuous

1 *Chang-chou fu-chih* (*Kuang-hsu*), *chuan* 45, p. 17.

2 *Lung-hsi hsien-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 6, p. 1.

3 *Fu-chien t'ung-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 36, p. 2.

4 *Ch'ung-hsiu shui-h kung-te pei* from the *Chia-ching* period (located in modern P'u-wei village in Lung-hai district).

5 *Chin-chiang hsien-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 1, p. 32.

6 *Fu-chien t'ung-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 36, p. 8.

7 *An-hsi hsien-chih* (*Chia-ching*), *chuan* 1, p. 66.

increase of cultivable land. In his *Wu-tsa-tsu* Hsieh Chao-che points out: "In Fukien from the mountains to the plains the land is cut out in terraces. Just as the ancients said: no drop of water is left unused, even the steepest hills are brought under cultivation. It can be said that there is no land left unused."⁸

With the opening up of wasteland and the construction of irrigation works, commercial agriculture developed rapidly. Varieties as well as the volume of cash crops increased continuously. In Ch'üan-chou the gardens made profits on lichees and *longan* which were sold all over the world in dried form. Of those, "the ones which mature in the 6th month are called Early Red, Cassia, White Honey, Best Red and Golden Bell; all are top quality products."⁹ In Chang-chou, when the lichee "in the green hills and shaded wilderness is ripe, it looks like a fire."¹⁰ The cultivation of cotton was also fairly common. Once, Wang Shih-mou (the author of the *Min-pu-shu*) travelled southward from Ch'üan-chou to Lung-ch'i, passing through T'ung-an, when all along the road, rising and falling by the roadside, there were things looking like thorn-brushes. When he took a closer look, they proved to be cotton flowers."¹¹ The cultivation of indigo and safflower also developed rapidly. Wang Ying-shan, in his *Min-ta-chü* says: "Indigo is grown in the mountain valleys . . . it brings profit to everybody and is called Fukien-blue."¹² The safflowers from Hui-an "are planted in the winter and have matured towards the beginning of the summer; its flowers are beaten into cakes, and silk is dyed with these. It is used for everything which is dyed bright red or crimson."¹³ The growing of sugar cane was even more widespread, "those who grow sugar cane are all people from southern Chang-chou and it can be found in all mountain valleys."¹⁴ Because of the fact, that the growing of sugar cane renders large profits and there is little profit in the growing of rice, there often are people who turn land cultivated with rice into land cultivated with sugar cane. Where tea leaves are concerned, "those produced in Lung-shan in Chang-chou are considered the best." The cultivation of these commercial products provided a rich material basis for the export trade of Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang.

8 Hsieh Chao-che, *Wu-tsa-tsu* (Peking, 1959), *chuan* 4, p. 115.

9 Ho Ch'iao-yuan, *Min-shu* (*Ch'ung-chen*), *chuan* 150, p. 43

10 *Chang-chou fu-chih* (*Kuang-hsu*), *chuan* 25, p. 11.

11 Wang Shih-mou, *Min-pu-shu* (*Chieh-yueh shan-fang hui-ch'ao* ed.), p. 8.

12 Wang Ying-shan, *Min-ta-chü* (*Wan-li*), *chuan* 11, p. 5

13 *Hui-an hsiên-chü* (*Chia-ching*), *chuan* 5, p. 10.

14 Wang Ying-shan, *Min-ta-chü* (*Wan-li*), *chuan* 11, p. 9.

With the development of commercial agriculture, private handicraft industries began to flourish rapidly. The textile industry of Chang-chou was thriving, household handicraft industries had spread to all villages in the countryside. Among its products were swansdown flannel, home-spun silk, fine silk, satin, cotton cloth, plantain-linen, coarse cloth, etc. Gauze and satin from Chang-chou were bestselling products on the national and international markets. The textile industry of Hui-an was very famous, too: "In the Ch'ing-shan area, they produce salt, but also fine white cloth, which is transported and sold practically everywhere by the merchants."¹⁵ In An-hsi, coarse cloth, plantain-linen, grey linen etc. is also produced.¹⁶ The production techniques of sugar were further improved, now not only brown sugar was produced, in large quantities, but also white powdered sugar as well as crystal sugar made of white powdered sugar, sticky candy and other sugar products.

The private porcelain industry developed even more rapidly. Te-hua had already become a famous porcelain center, producing various kinds of pure white pottery with typical local characteristics,¹⁷ such as the porcelain Kuan-yin by the famous ceramist He Ch'ao-tsung, which has been recognized as an important work of art. During recent excavations, remnants of Ming-kilns have been discovered in Shuang-han, Shang-yung, Nan-ch'eng, Shih-luo and Kui-tou, all in Te-hua. The discovery of these large numbers of kilns demonstrates that Te-hua had already become a major center of Ming period export porcelain production. The Tung-hsi kiln in Chang-chou, too, suddenly appeared. According to the memories of the elders of the village, their ancestors began baking various kinds of porcelain objects from the middle of the Ming. They imitated classical forms and shapes. Their porcelain was green, brown, three colours on a white fond, pure white, pure red, pure yellow; the objects in pure white or in three colours were considered to be particularly valuable items.¹⁸ The pottery from the Tung-hsi kiln was exported to all Southeast Asian countries through Yueh-kang.

The flourishing of handicraft industry and agriculture stimulated the development of transport and trade. In the 15th and 16th centuries, numerous repairs were carried out on the large

15 *Hui-an hsien-chih* (*Chia-ching*), *chüan* 4, p. 2.

16 *An-hsi hsien-chih* (*Chia-ching*), *chüan* 1, p. 32.

17 *Te-hua hsien tz'u-ch'i tiao-ch'a ts'ai-liao* (mimeographed edition), p. 95.

18 *Chang-tz'u tiao-ch'a* (mimeographed edition), p. 84.

Chiang-tung bridge, of which it was said that "the Tiger Ford was foremost among the bridges of southern Chang-chou." "Every arch of this bridge was 80 feet long, 5 feet wide, and the water was divided into fifteen channels. Under the arch of each channel (the river) had been dredged to enlarge the channel, the seams had been filled up horizontally with slabs of stone, 20 feet wide and 2000 feet long, with railings appended for support." This was the great transport artery that linked Chang-chou to the outer world. The goods that passed this bridge "started off for southern Fukien by evening and arrived in Kuang-chou and Cochin-China by morning; how swiftly did they arrive!"¹⁹ In Chao-an, the Yang-wei bridge was repaired, "it was a hundred and more *chang* (= 100 feet) long, nine feet wide, water could flow through 99 channels." "It was in continuous use in the traffic from Fu-kien to Kuang-chou junction."²⁰ Famous bridges in Ch'üan-chou like the T'ung-chi bridge, the An-p'ing bridge and the Wan-an bridge were also rebuilt and repaired many times. They linked Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou together, but also strengthened communications with the rest of the country.

The development of transport also accelerated the circulation of commodities. In An-p'ing "many different goods were collected over land and over sea. Successful traders arrived from all directions. Local people bought up the cotton from T'ung-an that was brought in daily with tens of piculs and sold it all over the country. Those who aimed for a sharp profit even went to Honan, T'ai-ts'ang, Wen-chou and T'ai-chou—wherever there was cotton—and bought thousands of bales every year. Only then would it suffice for the necessary supply for one year. Towards the winter solstice, in the slack season, they would go and buy it in An-hsi, Yung-ch'un and Te-hua, in exchange for rice, cloth and silk gauze. Flax "was bought in Yung-ch'un and Te-hua and then woven into cloth. Rich households bought up thousands of rolls of cloth, and went northward to Lin-ch'ing (in Shan-tung) to sell it."²¹

The intensity of trade stimulated the rise of market cities. From the mid-Ming period onward, a large number of new market cities appeared in the Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou area. Take, for instance, Shih-ma *chen* in Lung-hsi, originally named Shih-hsi. It was formed out of over ten villages, called the Ten Old Local

19 *Lung-hsi hsien-chih* (Ch'ien-lung), chuan 24, p. 21.

20 *Fu-chien t'ung-chih* (Ch'ien-lung), chuan 29, p. 54.

21 *An-p'ing-chih* (Wan-h, hand-written copy), chuan 4, p. 78.

Societies. "In that place, sea tides were particularly violent and the dykes frequently collapsed. (In the Hung-chih period) therefore, the local people heaped stones along the river and built twelve dams. Because of this, (the place) was called Shih-ma (Stone Pier)."²² In 1526, they built a market place, because shops had begun to flourish.

Pai-shui *chen* had originally been an alluvial riverine flat. Later the entire Ch'en clan moved to this place from Ts'ai-she in Chang-p'u and all lived together in one small township. The market gradually began to flourish and became an important collecting and distributing center for local specialties from Lung-hsi, Chang-p'u and P'ing-ho.²³ Kang-wei *chen* was situated at the foot of the Nan-t'ai-wu mountains, to the east directly bordering on the sea, only separated from Hsia-men by water. It was the economic center of the Kang-wei region. According to local elders, when around 1600 Chiang Hao (1604 *chin-shih*) stimulated the founding of a city, T'u Yi-ch'in (a high-ranking official with the Ministry of Rites) came to offer his congratulations on its completion.²⁴ Hu-t'ou *shih* in An-hsi "was located in Kan-hua *li*; since it was a place where there was lively trading, it was called "Little Ch'üan-chou."²⁵

The continuous rise of small market towns and the flourishing of handicrafts and trade also caused an upsurge in local society and culture in general. Chang Hsieh, the author of the *Tung-hsi-yang-k'ao*, together with Cheng Huai-k'ui, Chiang Meng-yü, Lin Mao-kui, Kao K'e-cheng, Wang Yüan-chih and Ch'en I-fei "were called the seven sons of Chang-chou, their literary fame was enormous."²⁶ Every year when the examinations were held, many talents came forward, "those who took the path of the examinations earned great fame, almost as much as in the Su-chou region." They were praised as the Tsou and Lu (where Confucius and Mencius came from) of the coastal regions.

By the middle of the Ming, the economic region of southern Fukien had entered a period of full bloom. Agriculture, handicraft industries, transport and culture had all become fully developed. On both banks of the Chiu-lung river "there were houses everywhere, people occupied themselves with ploughing and studying,

22 *Shih-ma chen-chih* (Republic; hand-written copy), *chüan* 1, p. 8.

23 *Ch'en-shih tsu-p'u* (from Pai-shui) (handwritten copy), p. 32.

24 *Kang-wei hsiang-chih* (mimeographed edition).

25 *An-hsi hsien-chih* (*Chia-ching*), *chüan* 1, p. 70.

26 *Chang-chou fu-chih* (*Kuang-hsü*), *chüan* 29, p. 7.

pavilions and fortified villages were always in one's sight, the neighbouring houses along the river banks (. . .) stood in rows and formed small towns." Even the in origin fairly backward mountain regions flourished. For instance, in T'an-k'ou in Huan district "the river traders gathered here, it was the most hectic place North of the creek." In Sha-chien in the same district "chickens sang under the mulberry trees, flutes sounded in the fields, and there were indeed numerous villages."²⁷

The formation and flourishing of the economic region of southern Fukien created an urgent need for trading ports to improve the links with the international market. However, by this time the port of Ch'üan-chou, which had reached the pinnacle of its fame during the Sung and Yüan periods, had already fallen into decline. One reason for this was the serious destruction of the vegetation cover caused by continuous mining and felling of trees, on both banks of the Chin river, for a long period of time. Furthermore, during the chaos of war in Ch'üan-chou during the final years of the Yüan, the water works had not been kept in good repair. Because of this, the Chin river transported large quantities of mud downstream and caused the gradual silting-up of the Hou-chu harbour of Ch'üan-chou. Due to geographic changes and other (human) factors the once glorious harbour of Ch'üan-chou had gradually fallen into decline by mid-Ming. It could no longer shoulder the heavy responsibility of being the gateway to the southern Fukienese economic region.

2. *The rise of Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang*

Precisely at the moment when Ch'üan-chou had fallen into decline and when the economic region of southern Fukien desperately needed an im- and export harbour, Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang with their particularly favourable geographical conditions came up.

Yüeh-kang, also called Yueh-ch'üan-kang, was situated in present-day Hai-ch'eng *chen* in Lung-hai district. It consisted of a stretch of water from the southern harbour of Hai-ch'eng eastward, up to Hai-men island; because it was curved like a moon, it was called Yüeh-kang or Moon Harbour. The author has sailed along this old shipping route twice by boat, both in 1982 and in 1985. The ship sailed from Hai-ch'eng and followed the southern harbour up to Hai-men island. The river bed in the harbour was

27 *Lung-hsi hsien-chih* (Ch'ien-lung), *chüan* 24, p. 58.

very wide, the water surface flat and calm. On both banks there were numerous inlets, like natural small berths. It is possible, that the private overseas merchants at that time anchored their boats in these inlets.

The hinterland of the plain of Chang-chou, where Yüeh-kang is situated, is flat and wide. However, in the East it immediately borders on the sea, and in the Northwest it stretches up to the mountains of western Fukien. Over the northern branch of the Chiu-lung river, one can go from Hua-an straight up to Chang-p'ing, Lung-yen and Ning-yang in western Fukien. Then you can leave the boats behind and travel over land. One road leads from Lung-yen straight up to T'ing-chou; however, "North of Ning-yang there is the narrow road of Yüan-yüan that leaves for Yung-an", then one goes from Yung-an upstream through Ch'ing-liu to Ning-hua, then from Ning-hua again southward over land, and in this way one can also get to T'ing-chou. T'ing-chou is a crucial communication center between Fukien and Chiang-hsi, to the West one can reach Kan-chou, to the North Fu-chou (both in Chiang-hsi). In the Northeast, the Chang-chou plain borders on the Ch'üan-chou plain, and in the Southeast on the Ch'ao-chou and Shan-t'ou regions in Kuang-tung. The area is a vital knot in the traffic between Kuang-tung and Fukien, exactly as was pointed out by Ku Yen-wu in his *T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu*: "Southern Chang-chou is an area leaning on the mountains and resting in the sea, right between Fukien and Kuang-tung."²⁸ Its extensive transportation network and its open and wide hinterland provided excellent geographical conditions for the development of Yüeh-kang.

Yüeh-kang is situated directly opposite T'ai-wan and the Ryû-kyû islands. The nearby sea was the traditional trade route between China and the overseas countries. When trade ships set sail from Yüeh-kang they could attain *Chung-tso suo* (the Military Transport Station or modern Amoy) in the duration of one tide, and rest there awhile, waiting for the right winds to set sail. At Tan-men they would split up, to set sail for the countries in the North ("the eastern oceans") and in the South ("the western oceans").

Yüeh-kang had another natural advantage: in Nan-ching, Hua-an and Lung-yen on the upper reaches of the Chiu-lung river there were large surfaces of subtropical rainforests. Huge quantities of China firs and pines were felled and were floated down the

28 Ku Yen-wu, *T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu*, chüan 93, p. 24.

Chiu-lung river. This greatly facilitated the building of ships in the Yüeh-kang river.

The geographical conditions of An-p'ing-kang were just as good. It was situated on the inside of the Wei-t'ou bay near Chin-chiang. At the entrance of the harbour, there were the two recesses of Shih-ching and Pai-sha opposite each other. Within the harbour, the water surface was very large, the eastern shore of the harbour was undulating and well provided with inlets, making it a suitable harbour to take refuge in from storms. Whenever it was clear and one climbed a high place to watch, the flat water stretched on for miles, water and heaven touching (each other), the floating sun rays shone like gold (. . .) It was a magnificent sight.²⁹ Inside the harbour, the waterway stretched westward to Hsi-an, and one could see as far as Ta-ying; it stretched eastward to Nei-shih all the way to Kan-tang. The two branch-streams spiraled, one peninsula penetrated deep into the harbour bay, shaped like a semi-crescent moon. The land-routes carried one northward to Ch'üan-chou and Fu-chou, and southward up to the Chang-chou region. It was one of the vital knots in southern Fukien's transport network. The sea route, too, was far more convenient than that to the Hou-chu harbour in Ch'üan-chou. The ships from the South China Sea were not just able to save one day, but could also avoid the dangerous route North of Wei-t'ou, which was full of transverse and adverse currents and irregular submerged reefs.³⁰

Apart from the excellent geographic position of Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang, the most important factor was the circumstance that both of these harbours were situated on the periphery of the Chinese state, where central control was lacking and officials were afraid to visit. Before 1567, no district had been founded in Yüeh-kang. Despite repeated memorials to the throne by local officials to have a district set up in this region, the central government had never accepted their proposals. In 1548, for instance, K'e Ch'iao, the head of the Coastal Patrol Circuit, proposed to have a district set up in Yüeh-kang, but it did not materialize. Later, the Grand Coordinator Wang Tao-k'un and the Censor-in-Chief Chu Wan also proposed to have a district set up, but these proposals did not materialize either.

The Office of the Coastal Patrol Circuit itself—the chief institu-

29 *An-hai chih* (new edition), *chüan* 36, p. 42.

30 *Huang-shih tsu-p'u* (from Chin-tun), p. 48 contains a detailed description of the local geography.

tion to enforce the prohibitions on overseas trade—was also situated in the provincial capital, hundreds of miles away. In 1550, this office was moved to Chang-chou, but, after a short time, it was moved back again to the provincial capital. Under these circumstances, Yüeh-kang—far removed from the center of feudal control—was naturally favoured by private merchants. The inlets in the Yüeh-kang area and the countless islands outside the harbour also favoured secretive commercial activities. Take, for instance, Hai-men island, where “most inhabitants make their living from piracy.”³¹ Or the population of Wu-yü island, who “have had dealings with the barbarians for many years,” the island “was an old nest of sea merchants.” To the North of Yüeh-kang, there were also many islands.³² Such islands and inlets were a natural habitat for illegal private sea trade.

During the Southern Song there had been an Inspection Station in An-p'ing-kang, but this had already been abolished around 1350. In the early years of the Ming, there were no government representatives in An-p'ing-kang. The Police Office had also been moved to the naval camp on Wu-chou island; its defense tasks were held concurrently by the Police Office in Ch'en-yüan in T'ung-an. In 1607 some people proposed to found an An-p'ing county in the area where Chin-chiang, T'ung-an and Nan-an bordered on each other, but this plan was not realized. For this reason, government control was relatively weak. Just as the Ming author Huang K'an pointed out in his “Memorandum on maritime problems”, An-p'ing-kang is located “far from the seat of the county government. Cunning bullies can easily carry out their crafty schemes. The instructions of the government are not propagated, and the common people can easily resist civilization.”³³

Furthermore, the many coves inside An-p'ing-kang, full of isolated harbour inlets, were also well-suited to the hidden activities of private sea traders. Therefore, Chu Wan was of the opinion that people in “(An-p'ing-kang), in Ch'üan-chou, Yüeh-kang and Hai-ts'ang in Chang-chou and Mei-ling in Chao-an, all live alongside the sea and derive their strength from it. They gather in large numbers and rebel. They are vicious and arrogant people. If you are lenient towards them, they will stay at home. If you are harsh, they will take to the sea. We are totally unable to deal with these people.”³⁴

31 *Hsia-men-chih (Tao-guang)*, chuan 4, p. 8.

32 Ku Tsu-yu, *Tu-shih fang-yu chi-yao*, chuan 99.

33 *An-hai chih* (new edition), chuan 12, p. 9.

34 Chu Wan, *P'i-yu tsa-chi*, chuan 5, p. 8.

Hu Tsung-hsien also pointed out: "(An-p'ing-kang) in Ch'üan-chou, although it has had contacts with barbarians in the past, people still had some scruples. Recently foreign ships arrive one after another, load and unload nearby, and all goods are forwarded to someone."³⁵ The phrase "they load and unload nearby" refers to the advantageous conditions for private overseas trade. Before 1465 Ch'üan-chou was the official port designated to supervise the tribute trade with the Ryûkyû kingdom. A Maritime Trade Supervisorate had been established with the result that private merchants and foreign private traders could not freely trade here. In Fu-chou's harbour, the political centre of Fukien, smuggling was even more difficult. Under these circumstances, naturally, Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang, situated far away from the political centres, where the tentacles of the governing class could not reach out, became very much valued by private sea-merchants.

Due to all of these advantageous conditions and the decline of the harbour of Ch'üan-chou, Yüeh-kang and An-p'ing-kang naturally developed into the main harbours for overseas Fukienese private trade.

III. *Characteristics of Private Overseas Trade*

Circa 1560, private overseas trade in Yüeh-kang had become an accomplished fact. Coupled with the struggle of the overseas merchants against the ban on overseas trade, this forced the Ming government to relax the prohibition to a certain degree.³⁶ In 1567, the Grand Coordinator of Fukien, T'u Tse-min, proposed to abolish the prohibitions to allow overseas trade, transforming Yüeh-kang from a smuggling harbour into a legal port for private traders. After the opening-up of Yüeh-kang the links with An-p'ing-kang were further strengthened. In the Wan-li period, the officials of Hai-ch'eng (= Yüeh-kang) in Chang-chou established a harbour, Nei-tu-kang, especially practical for traffic with An-p'ing-kang. What particular characteristics did Fukienese private overseas trade have as compared with official overseas trade?

1. *The aim of overseas trade*

Official overseas trade was set up mainly to "conciliate people

35 Hu Tsung-hsien, *Ch'ou-hai t'u-pien (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu)*, chüan 4, p. 31.

36 Lin Jen-ch'üan (Lin Renchuan), "Ming-tai szu-jen hai-shang mao-i shang-jen yü 'wo-k'ou'", *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 1980: 4, p. 94.

from far away", i.e. to support China's suzerainty *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, and without any explicit purpose of economic gain (on the Chinese side). As it is said in *Huang-ming ming-ch'en ching-chi lu*: "Our ancestors are suzerain rulers of the entire world, all countries come to our court, but we only use this fact to restrain them and not to profit from what they possess."³⁷ Therefore trade was carried out in the form of mutual gifts and not through payments. The crews of the tribute ships that came to China for trade were all received with extreme courteousness and treated with the ritual respect due to official envoys. The Ming government had decreed: "All envoys who come to pay tribute have to be provided with food from the granaries on their way (to the capital) and on their return as well." To express the graciousness of the dynasty of heaven, they were also awarded the ceremony of a farewell banquet. "Once every five days, according to seniority and number of people, they were sent drink and food such as liquor, meat, tea and grain."³⁸ Each time the tribute envoys of countries such as Korea, the Ryûkyû, Annam, Java and Siam, per group of 5 or 10 people, received one sheep, one goose and one chicken, ten bottles of liquor, five *lou* of rice, and also vegetables, kitchen utensils, firewood etc. Sometimes they also received cakes and sweets. The day the tribute envoys returned home, an official escorted them to ensure that they would get food and drink along the road. The tribute gifts which had been bestowed on them and the goods they had bought were all transported for them. Finally, the Provincial Administration Commissioner in their harbour of arrival would organize a farewell banquet.

The costs for each reception of tribute envoys were, therefore, enormous. For instance, in 1439, the Maritime Trade Supervisorate of Fukien spent a stupendous amount of money on the reception of the tribute envoys of the Ryûkyû kingdom. According to the report by the Investigation Censor of Fukien, Ch'eng Kui: "The tribute envoys from the Ryûkyû isles all stop over in Fuchou. The costs of the reception of the guests are extravagant. Last time the interpreters Lin Hui and Cheng Chang took with them more than 200 sailors. Except for their daily ration of rice, other necessities, such as tea, salt, soy-sauce are provided through the *li-chia* system. There used to be fixed rules for this, but these people created all kinds of problems and it was forcibly converted into a cash payment. During this last half year more than 796,900

37 *Hung-ming ming-ch'en ching-chi lu, chüan* 13, p. 12.

38 *Ta-ming hui-tien* (Taipei, 1964-reprint), *chüan* 109, p. 1627.

pieces of copper coinage have already been used. People have had to pay the precise amount, if there was even the slightest relaxation, then they would be indiscriminately scolded and beaten." Ch'eng Kui proposed: "We should add a little to each man's daily rations, have them spend it according to their own insights. If Lin Hui and others can (still) not be restrained and keep on causing trouble, I request that they be arrested and disciplined to make the feelings of the barbarians more respectful." But central government did not undertake any steps because the purpose was to conciliate people from afar.³⁹ Apart from this, the task of providing carriers along the road also increased the burden of corvée for the people.

Therefore such official tribute trade not only offered no prospect of profit, but it also created an enormous burden for the national finances and for the common people. Private overseas trade was totally different: they did not trade for their own private consumption and even less to obtain some political advantage. On the contrary, they traded to obtain high commercial profits and big annual gains. As Fu Yüan-ch'u points out in his "Request to open up overseas trade": "The people along the sea-coast are only interested in profit, they tempt danger like hawks and often go to faraway places."⁴⁰ Take for instance the trade with Japan: official overseas trade ended up each time with big losses, because gifts were too many, banquets too frequent, and expenditures in general too large. In private overseas trade with Japan, however, in each case large profits were obtained, many times the starting capital. In Japan silk would be worth 500 to 600 *tael* in silver per 100 *chin*. One can get about ten times the original Chinese price. The price (of brocade) would be 200 *tael* per 100 *chin* because of a shortage of supplies. Large cast-iron cooking pots were particularly hard to get in Japan and each pot would cost one *tael* of silver.⁴¹

Because commercial profits were very high, the Fukienese merchants who went overseas to trade often became very rich and returned home with full cargoes. Take for instance the merchant Hung Ti-chen from Yüeh-kang: "He went to Fu-yi po nan-ao(?) in Japan and obtained profits. From then on, he went there once

39 *Ming Cheng-t'ung shih-lu* (Taiwan-reprint), *chüan* 58, pp. 5—6.

40 Ku Yen-wu, *T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu*, *chüan* 93, p. 25. Quoted in Hsien Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui ching-chi shih-hao hsüan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 2, p. 134.

41 Cheng Jo-tseng, *Cheng K'ai-yang tsa-chuo* (Taipei, 1971-reprint), *chüan* 4, pp. 32—33.

a year and obtained enormous riches".⁴² Li Tan, a merchant from Ch'üan-chou, who traded at Manila at first, then went to Japan and resided in Hirado. He became the leader of the local Chinese merchants, and was enormously rich.⁴³ Or take Cheng Chih-lung, a merchant from An-p'ing-kang, "whose yearly income was only countable in thousands and tens of thousands (of *tael* of silver) and equalled that of a country."⁴⁴

2. *Types of merchandise*

Official tribute trade mainly involved the import of rare treasures and luxury items, such as rhinoceros horn, antelope's horn and other high grade articles for pharmaceutical usage; bezoin, ambergris and other exquisite perfumes; pheasants, white deer, red monkeys and all kinds of other rare birds and animals. All these things were meant to satisfy the luxury desires of the imperial family, the nobility, high functionaries and large landlords. The commodities imported by the private sea trade, however, except for some luxury goods mostly consisted of raw materials for and products of handicraft industries, such as cloth, silk and other textile fabrics, bowls, jugs, jars and other pottery for daily usage, as well as umbrellas, straw mats and many other articles for everyday life. They imported grass cloth, white cotton, dark cotton, handkerchiefs with foreign patterns and other kinds of textile fabrics, as well as raw materials such as cotton. Furthermore, they imported hides, wood, lacquer etc. These articles were daily necessities for the common land-owners and the ordinary people, or raw materials intended for further processing in the private handicraft industry.

For a clearer understanding of this question, we will give some figures as a comparison of the tribute articles from the official trade with the imported articles from the private sea trade. According to the *Ta-ming hui-tien*, there were about 160 different tribute articles in the Ming tribute trade. Among these there were more than 30 kinds of golden finger rings, golden and silver trinkets, golden water jars and other golden and silver household utensils as well as agate, crystal, pearls, jewels etc., or about 18% of all articles. There were 57 kinds of raw materials for perfume, such as laka wood, sandalwood and kiara, as well as pharmaceu-

42 *Hai-ch'eng hsien-chih* (Ch'ien-lung), *chüan* 24, p. 3.

43 Shen Yün, *T'ai-wan Cheng-shi shih-mo*, p. 8.

44 Lien Huang, *T'ai-wan t'ung-shih* (Taipei, 1955), *chüan* 29, p. 560.

tical raw materials such as ginseng and rhinoceros horn, or about 36% of all articles. There were 17 kinds of rare birds and animals, such as pheasants, white monkeys and the Formosan love-bird, or about 11% of all articles. There were 50 kinds of textile fabrics, such as green handkerchiefs with red patterns, or about 31% of all articles. There were just five kinds of daily utensils: a stone to grind knives, paper fans, pencils with yellow hair, paper made of white cotton and knives, or about 3% of all articles.⁴⁵

In private overseas trade, according to the *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao*, there were 115 kinds of imported articles. Among these articles, gold and silver utensils, pearls and jewels, rare birds and animals, and other luxury consumption articles almost disappeared, while daily necessities such as foreign mirrors, straw mats, foreign paper, glass bottles etc. significantly increased from the previous five up to 25 kinds of articles, occupying about 21% of all imported articles. Textile fabrics also changed from the past high quality articles into coarse goods, such as foreign quilts and different kinds of crude cloth. Furthermore, agricultural non-staple products were added, such as safflower rice, dried small shrimps, mung beans, broomcorn, millet etc.⁴⁶ Due to changes in the types of imported articles, China's previously negative balance of trade became positive. This brought a halt to the large outflow of copper and silver which dated back to Sung and Yüan. The new situation of a large inflow of foreign silver into China, would have a far reaching influence on China's society and economy.

3. *The trade-network*

Official overseas trade throughout the centuries had mainly consisted of foreign merchants coming to China for trade, despite the fact that Chinese merchant ships had already sailed to the Persian Gulf as early as the T'ang dynasty and went to all places in Southeast Asia. At the time, among the foreign traders who arrived in Kuang-chou there were merchants from many different countries, such as Malaysia, Persia, India and Ceylon. This is testified to as follows by the monk Chien-chen when he went to Japan in 753 and traveled through Kuang-chou: "On the river were anchored many ships from India, Persia, Malaysia, etc. The ships carried incense, pharmaceutical materials, jewellery. The goods were piled mountain-high. Their ships were 6—7 *chang*

45 *Ta-ming hui-tien* (Taipei, 1964-reprint), *chuan* 105—106, pp. 1585—1601.

46 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chuan* 7, pp. 141—143.

deep. People from Ceylon, Arabia and many other countries come to live here.⁴⁷ Foreign merchants coming to Ch'üan-chou also increased rapidly, and many of them even stayed to live in Ch'üan-chou, which became a truly cosmopolitan city.⁴⁸

Many sources indicate that overseas trade during the Sung and Yüan periods still mainly consisted of foreign merchants coming to China for trade. According to a notice in the *Yün-lu man-ch'ao* by Chao Yen-wei, the foreign merchants trading on Ch'üan-chou came from more than 30 countries and regions, like Ta-shih (Saudi-Arabia), Chan-ch'eng (or Champa, Vietnam), P'u-t'ien (Thailand), San-fo-ch'i (Sumatra), She-p'o (Java), Po-ni (Borneo), Kao-li (Korea) and many others.⁴⁹ When Chao Ju-kua was in charge of the Maritime Trade Supervisorate in 1225 the number of countries had increased even further, including countries from modern India, Sri Lanka, Iran and the east coast of Africa.

In recent decades hundreds of Islamic and Brahman inscriptions have been discovered in the neighbourhood of Ch'üan-chou. The discovery of these inscriptions proves that during the Sung and Yüan periods there really had been many foreign merchants who had come to Ch'üan-chou for trade.⁵⁰ During the Ming as well, although Cheng Ho visited many places in the Western oceans, in general the number of foreign tribute merchants still surpassed the number of envoys sent out by the Ming court. For instance Japan: from the signing of a Japanese-Chinese trade-treaty in 1404 to the last envoy in 1547, up to 17 times ships were sent to China by Japan to trade with permits, while envoys from the Ming court were sent to Japan only 8 times.

A fundamental change took place from the middle of the Ming-period onwards, when large numbers of Fukienese merchants began to spread over all parts of the world and started to dominate overseas trade. According to the notice on Luzon (the Philippines) in the Ming Dynastic History, in the second half of the sixteenth century the number of (Fukienese) merchants that went to the Philippines alone had already reached several tens of thousands of people.⁵¹ On the basis of the limits that were set by the Spanish Governor in Manilla on the number of people on Fukienese ships, we can make an estimate of the number of

47 *T'ang ta he-shang tung-cheng chuan*, p. 21.

48 Wang Hsiang-chih, *Yü-ti chi-sheng (Tao-kuang)*, chüan 130, p. 15.

49 Chao Yen-wei, *Yün-lu man-ch'ao (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng)*, chüan 5, pp. 152—153.

50 Wu Wen-liang, *Ch'üan-chou tsung-chiao shih-k'o* (Peking, 1957), p. 34.

51 *Ming-shih* (Peking-edition), *Biography of Luzon*, chüan 323, p. 8370.

merchants that set out from Yüeh-kang. It was prescribed that "ships arriving in the Philippines are only allowed to carry 200 people. This quota should not be exceeded. The number of people carried back by the ships has to be doubled to 400. This number is the minimal limit."⁵² This shows that at that time each ship could carry 200 to 400 people. If we take an average of 300 people on each ship, coupled with the fact that each year some 110 permissions to set sail from Yüeh-kang were granted,⁵³ then the number of people who set to sea from Yüeh-kang to the Philippines must have amounted to 33,000 or more people per year. This would be merely the number of people that set sail legally from just one port, and would not include illegal smuggling or merchants sailing from An-p'ing-kang. All this goes to show that the Fukienese overseas merchants were extremely numerous.

The area in which Fukienese merchants were active was very large, starting from Japan and Korea in the east, through the Philippines southward to the Southeast Asian countries. They left their traces everywhere. Take for instance Korea, which is only separated from Japan by a narrow sea strait. Fukienese merchants on their way to Japan would always pass by Korea, in particular the isle of Cheju, right between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The *Yijo sillok* (*Li-ch'ao shih-lu*) notes: "The isle of Cheju is located in the middle of the ocean. Many Chinese trade ships on their way to overseas countries pass by Cheju. Often they meet with heavy storms and anchor here for several days."⁵⁴

For instance, in 1544 the Fukienese merchant Li Wang-ch'i anchored with one large ship in a place near Namp'ochi on Hwangjuk isle and was captured by Korean soldiers. With Li Wang-ch'i there were more than 150 merchants on the ship. Among them were ten headmen (*t'ou-jen*) who were mentioned by name. The ten headmen possibly were merchants with a lot of trade capital. Sixty guests (*k'o-kung*) were also mentioned. Apparently they were unorganized merchants with only a bit of trade capital, who sailed on other people's trading ships. Li Chang, who was one of the ten headmen, memorialized to the Royal Secretariat (*Chongwon*) of Korea: "I have come from a far away and isolated place. I live in T'ung-an, which is thickly populated and where even a little bit of land is extremely valuable. At home we

52 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chüan* 5, p. 95.

53 Hsü Fu-yüan, *Ching-ho-t'ang chi*, *chüan* 7, p. 16.

54 *Ch'ao-hsien li-ch'ao shih-lu chung te chung-kuo shih-liao* (Peking, 1980), vol. 9, p. 3857.

have nothing left; in our cooking-pot there are only dusty remains of food. Even worse is the fact that last year there has been a severe drought for ten months. During the spring and summer it has not rained and in the soil cracks have appeared; the wild grass started to burn spontaneously. Starving people were lying around in the ditches, roaming people begged by the roadside. Even fathers and sons did not look after each other; mothers and children got separated. How could we even have the joy of simple fare? We had no choice but to go into commerce, build a boat and start trading abroad, for a small profit. For some moments of happiness for my family, I boarded a small and fragile boat to cross the wide and unknown ocean. On the immense waves, scorched by the sun, one may easily die, without anyone taking notice. Enormous waves reach to the skies but we take these risks and have to go on".⁵⁵ Li Chang's report makes clear that these merchants came from T'ung-an in Ch'üan-chou.

In August 1647 the Korean Regional Military Commander (*T'ong jesa*) Kim Unghae caught 51 Fukienese merchants. One of them was called Hsü Sheng, who said: "Since the emperor has died, and the Prince of Fu (the Ming pretender) was also captured (by the Manchu's) in May 1645, Cheng Chih-lung, Cheng Chih-feng and others obey the Prince of T'ang who on the 11th August 1646 (Hsü Sheng mixes up two princes of T'ang) ascended the imperial throne, set up his capital in Fukien and changed the year-title into Lung-wu". He also said: "Because the income of Cheng Chih-lung was insufficient, he requested the emperor to have us take official money for trading to help with military expenditures. In March of this year we boarded our ship in Cambodia for Japan and on the 7th of August we drifted into your honourable country."⁵⁶ During the same month the An-hai merchant Lin Fa-jung, on his way to Japan for trade from the capital in Fukien, met with heavy storms and also drifted to Korea. He was able to anchor in the neighbourhood of Suyong yongdan in Kyongsang-do.

In 1667 Hong Uryang, the Magistrate (*Moksa*) of Cheju, made an official report that "one Chinese ship had drifted into the prefecture." They were 95 people, none of whom had their hair cut in the required Manchu-fashion. He let their leader Lin Yin-kuan come to him: "Through (Lin's) report on their place of origin and the reasons for drifting to this place, it became clear

55 *Ibidem*, vol. 4, p. 1369.

56 *Ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 3766.

that they were official merchants from the Ming dynasty in Fukien province on their way to Japan for trade. At sea they had met with heavy storms, which had brought them here."⁵⁷ This material shows that Fukienese overseas merchants very frequently came to Korea. Among them, some drifted into Korean territory on their way to Japan, others came to Korea explicitly for trade.

A far larger number of Fukienese merchants went directly to Japan for trade. "In 1544 a merchant from Chang-chou who traded with European ships was unexpectedly carried to that isle (i.e. Japan) by the wind. He was able to make an easy profit and when he returned he told his friends. The news was spread very quickly." After this, a large-scale trade with Japan developed. "In the past those who traded overseas were ruffians and no-goods who did not (want to) engage in productive occupations (like farming). Nowadays even the sons of rich families and law-abiding people hurry to go. In the past only people living along the seacoast in Chang-chou engaged in the smuggling-trade. Even though only two or three out of ten came back, they still hoped for some small profits. Nowadays even people living in the mountain areas have heard the rumours and arrive in haste. Even farmers stop ploughing. They come to the markets with money gained from pledging their land, and when they are able to calculate on the abacus, they can become very rich without exertion."⁵⁸

Apparently trade with Japan had already become very common. After 1567, although trade with Japan had still not been legalized, the Fukienese overseas merchants used all kinds of tricks to avoid investigation by the Ming government and to keep on sailing to Japan. "Devious fellows from T'ung-an, Hai-ch'eng, Lung-hsi, Chang-p'u, Chao-an, etc., every year in the 4th and 5th months they take sailing licenses and board oceangoing ships alleging to sail for Fu-ning, to transport fishermen from Pei-kang or traders on Chi-lung and Tan-shui; in reality they always clandestinely carry copper, saltpetre and other goods and secretly go off for Japan."⁵⁹ Some merchants, "claim to go and buy grain in Ch'ao-chou, Kui-chou, Kuang-chou or Kao-chou, but directly cross the ocean to Japan. Without any appearance of trading with foreigners, in reality they do trade with Japanese."⁶⁰ Again, other

57 *Ibidem*, vol. 9, p. 3944.

58 Hung Ch'ao-hsüan, *Hung Fang-chou hsien-sheng chai-kao*, chüan 4, p. 28.

59 Hsü Fu-yüan, *Ching-ho-t'ang chi*, chüan 7, p. 18.

60 *Ibidem*.

sea merchants "claim to bring provisions to ships and go to Japan in secret, or first go to Japan and end up in Southeast Asia, it is impossible to establish clearly."⁶¹

It should be noted that not just merchants from Chang-chou or Ch'üan-chou traded with Japan, but even people from Fu-chou also frequently went to Japan for trade. As Tung Ying-chü points out in his *Ch'ung-hsiang chi*: "Pirates have raided Fukien for 13 years now. In the beginning, the common people from Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou who usually traded with Japan formed gangs to rob ships and capture people for ransom. Since they obtained large profits, many imitated them. Entire villages fill the seas, and it has become one big arena of piracy, impossible to be stopped. (. . .) Nowadays even devious people from the coast and the cities of the entire Fu-chou prefecture go out to sea to pillage. Carrying gold they return and no one dares to question its origin. It is becoming more and more of a disaster."⁶²

The Japanese collected works of Hayashi Razan also state that: "though there has been no official agreement, merchant ships from Nan-ching and Fukien cross over to Nagasaki every year and from (the arrival of the sea-merchant Chou Hsing-ju in Japan in 1610) onwards, this has gradually increased." In 1613, on the 5th day of the sixth month, the Hôgyôsho of Nagasaki reported to the Bakafu in Edo that six merchant ships from Chang-chou had come to Nagasaki. In 1615 merchant ships from Chang-chou with a large cargo of sugar came to Uratsu in the domain of Kino.⁶³

With the development of trade between China and Japan, the number of Fukienese sea-merchants that settled in Japan also increased. The Grand Coordinator of Fukien Nan Chü-i points out: "I have heard that people from Fukien, eastern Chekiang and the Su-chou area who are living in Japan already amount to hundreds and thousands of households. They have married their eldest sons and grandsons to Japanese. These places are called T'ang-markets. Many people from their lineages, families-in-law and acquaintances of all these households are in secret contact with them. Their trading ships are called T'ang vessels. Most of them carry Chinese products to sell in Japan. They cooperate very closely and come and go in the creeks. The regular army is unable to get to them for questioning."⁶⁴

61 *Yun-hsiao t'ing-chih* (*Chia-ch'ing*), *chuan* 8, p. 16, quoting from the *Chang-p'u hsien-chih* (*Wan-l*).

62 Tung Ying-chü, *Ch'ung-hsiang-chi* (*Ch'ung-chen*), *t'iao-i* two, p. 138.

63 Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Nikka bunka kôryûshi* (Tokyo, 1955), pp. 636—637.

64 *Ming T'ien-ch'i shih-lu* (Tawan-reprint), *chuan* 53, p. 1.

Chu Kuo-chen in his *Yung-chuang hsiao-p'in* also points out: "A certain no-good called Lieh Feng-chi said that from 1557 on about 20 to 30 Ming merchants went to Nagasaki, but that now this has increased, in less than ten years' time, to 2,000 or even 3,000 people, and if you add all islands (to which merchants go, like the Ryûkyû) approximately 20,000 to 30,000 people."⁶⁵ At the end of the Ming and by the early Ch'ing trade with Japan became more intensive. The overseas merchants of the Cheng family especially opened a direct sealink from An-p'ing-kang to Nagasaki, to enable many Fukienese merchants to go to Japan for trade without interruptions.⁶⁶

The number of Fukienese merchants that went to the Philippines (Lü-sung or Luzon) increased greatly. The Ming Dynastic History records: "Luzon is situated in the southern seas not far from Chang-chou (. . .) In the past, thousands of Fukienese merchants lived there for a long period without returning home, because the land was nearby and rich. They even had children and grandchildren."⁶⁷ When the Ming government partly relaxed the prohibitions on overseas trade from 1567 onwards, even more overseas merchants went to the Philippines. Ho Ch'iao-yüan tells us: "It is close to Fukien. People from Chang-chou often go there. The place where they live regularly is called *Chuen-ner*. Thousands of them have traded there for a long period of time, and some of them have even cut off their relations with home and have their children and grandchildren there."⁶⁸

Chang Hsieh points out the same in his *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao*: "Many Chinese go to Lü-sung and often live there over a long period of time without returning; this is called *ya-tung* (hibernating). Those who live together in the *Chuen-ner* have increased to tens of thousands."⁶⁹ The so-called *Chuen-ner* refers to the residential area of the Chinese. It contained several hundreds of shops of Chinese merchants and several thousands of overseas Chinese. When Fukienese merchants came to the port of Manila they first transported their goods to the Chinese shops in the *Chuen-ner*, and then sold them to the Philipinos and Spanish. For this reason

65 Chu Kuo-chen, *Yung-chuang hsiao-p'in* (Peking, 1959), *chuan* 30, p. 716.

66 For example a member of the Huang-lineage (*Huang-shih tsu-p'u* (from Chin-tun), p. 56) and a member of a Ch'en-lineage (*Ch'en-shih tsu-p'u* (from Kuan-shan), p. 133).

67 *Ming-shih, Biography of Luzon*, *chuan* 323, p. 8370

68 Ho Ch'iao-yuan, *Ming-shan-tsang (Ch'ung-chen)*, *Wang-hsiang-chi*, *chuan* three, *Lu-sung*, p. 25.

69 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chuan* 5, p. 89.

many Manilan city-dwellers came here every day to buy all kinds of food and goods for daily usage. The *Chien-wei* had, practically speaking, already become Manila's trading centre. Concerning the trade activities of Fukienese merchants coming to Lü-sung, there are many remarks in genealogies (*tsu-p'u*) from Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou. For instance, from An-hai came Yen Chia-se and 16 of the members of the Yen-lineage,⁷⁰ Huang Chung-ho and 15 other members of the Huang-lineage,⁷¹ K'o Chan-min and 4 other members of the K'o-lineage,⁷² from Shih-t'ang in Hai-ts'ang came Hsieh Tai-ch'ien and more than 30 other members of the Hsieh lineage,⁷³ and finally Wu Lieh-k'eng from Hsia-men,⁷⁴ all of whom went to the Philippines for trade.

The Indonesian archipelago and the Southeast Asian peninsula were another important area of activities for the Fukienese merchants. In the early Ming the merchant Liang Tao-ming "traded with Java and became very familiar with it over the years. His entire family lived there for many years. People from military and civilian households from Fukien and Kuang-tung left their regions to become merchants, and those who followed him numbered several thousands of people."⁷⁵ In Tuban on eastern Java alone there lived several thousands of Chinese merchant-families led by two headmen. Ho Ch'iao-yüan notes in *Ming-shan-tsang*: "All regions of that country (i.e. Java) are rich and everything is in abundance. People from Fukien and Kuang-tung and the western barbarians have already been trading here for a long period of time and have settled here. The land is large and it is densely populated. It is the crown of all foreign countries in the eastern ocean." *Hsia-kang* (modern Bantam) on western Java also gradually became another gathering place for Fukienese merchants. Every year many ships from Chang-chou came here.

West of Java there was San-fo-ch'i, modern Palembang on Sumatra. It was located on the Malacca Strait, through which passes all east-west overseas traffic. During the 1560's the merchant Chang Lien had retired here with a group of people. Around 1600, "the merchants who came to the old harbour (in 1397 Java had destroyed the Kingdom of San-fo-ch'i and it had come to be called the old harbour) saw that Lien had founded

70 *Yen-shih tsu-p'u* (from Hsia-t'ing), p. 56.

71 *Huang-shih tsu-p'u* (from Chin-tun), p. 85.

72 *K'o-shih tsu-p'u* (from An-hai), p. 43.

73 *Hsieh-shih chia-ch'eng* (from Hai-ts'ang), p. 56.

74 *Wu-shih tsu-p'u* (from Hsün-chiang), p. 98.

75 Yen Ts'ung-chien, *Shu-yu chou-tzu lu* (Peking, 1930), *chuan* 8, p. 17.

shops and was in charge of the foreign ships. People from Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou often obeyed him as if he was an official of China's Maritime Trade Office.⁷⁶

The countries on the Southeast Asian peninsula were also a traditional area for commercial activities by Fukienese merchants. In Hui-an, the harbour of Annam, a Chinese street had developed where Fukienese merchants lived together. The monk Ta-shan, who visited the Hui-an of that time, says: "Hui-an is the quay for foreign goods from all countries. There is one straight road along the river about 3 to 4 Chinese *li* long, which is called the Big Chinese Road (*ta-t'ang-chieh*) and crammed with shops. People live close to each other and are all Fukienese."⁷⁷

Trade between Siam and Fukien was also very intensive. In the middle of the 16th century, "people in Yüeh-kang in Chang-chou built large ocean-going ships, to go to Siam and other countries to trade". Van Vliet has already pointed out: "At that time, the Chinese from southern Fukien each year transported fairly large quantities of different Chinese goods to the said country (Siam). After that they transported back mainly sampan wood, lead and other articles."⁷⁸ By the time of the rise of the overseas trade under control of the Cheng-family, these commercial relations were developed further. In January 1655, the Fukienese merchants Li Ch'u and Yang Kui "were commissioned by the *t'ai-fu-jen* and each had received one sailing document, by the false Duke of T'ung-an Cheng Chih-lung. In the sailing document everything was minutely specified: 'One merchant ship under our jurisdiction. We have had an official inspect it. Its cargo is summer-cloth, porcelain (. . .) etc. It will proceed to Siam to trade.'⁷⁹

In the clan-genealogies of southern Fukien we can also find relevant material, for instance of people who went to present-day Indonesia in the late Ming and early Ch'ing, such as Yen Chung-liang and 20 other people,⁸⁰ Huang Jung-kuan and 16 others,⁸¹ Ch'en Shih-hsün and 2 others,⁸² K'o Chung-p'an and 2 others,⁸³ all of them from An-hai, Hsü Liang-chi and one other person

76 *Ming-shih* (Peking-edition), *chüan* 324, p. 8408.

77 Ta-shan, *Hai-wai chi-shih*, p. 35.

78 Shih-chien-ya (W. Skinner), "Ku-tai te hsien-lo hua-ch'iao", in: *Nan-yang wen-t'i tzu-liao shih-ts'ung*, 1962: 2, p. 96.

79 *Ming-ch'ing shih-liao* (Taipei, 1957), part *ji*, vol. 5, p. 407.

80 *Yen-shih tsu-p'u* (From Hsia-t'ing), p. 71.

81 *Huang-shih tsu-p'u* (from Chin-tun), p. 92.

82 *Ch'en-shih tsu-p'u* (from Fei-ch'ien), p. 91.

83 *K'o-shih tsu-p'u* (from An-hai), p. 55.

from Lung-hai,⁸⁴ Hsieh Ju-ch'i and 27 others from Hai-ts'ang.⁸⁵ Many of them died in foreign countries like Siam, Annam, Singapore etc.

These genealogical records show that in the 16th—17th centuries the Fukienese merchants who went overseas were quite large in number and that they were active in a large geographical area. This was a fundamental change in the past trend of foreign merchants coming to China for trade. Chang Hsieh summarized it in his *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* as follows: "The State Maritime Office was founded in the T'ang and Sung and at that time barbarians generally came to China for trade on a large scale. The number of Chinese going abroad to the barbarians to trade has never been as large as nowadays."⁸⁶

IV. *Different Types of Organization Among Private Overseas Merchants*

Among Fukienese private overseas merchants in the 16th and 17th centuries a number of new types of organization appeared under the influence of the development of the national commodity economy. From a social-economic view-point we can divide them into four types: feudal subordination, a contract relationship (i.e. trade with borrowed capital), independent individuals and joint investment. We will discuss them in this sequence.

1. *The feudal type*

The rich and powerful families of the coastal region of Fukien had large seagoing vessels built illegally and provided venture capital, but sent their adopted sons (*i-nan* or *i-erh*) out to sea to carry out the dangerous actual trading. Therefore we call this the feudal type of management. This type of overseas trade was still very common in the 16th and 17th centuries. Ho Ch'iao-yüan says in his *Min-shu*: "In Hai-ch'eng there is a blossoming of foreign trade. Those who carry it on go to sea with their own capital: sometimes they obtain children abandoned by poor people and raise them as their own flesh and blood. When these children have grown up, they let them go overseas for trading and none needs to worry whether they remain alive or not."⁸⁷ The *Lung-hsi hsien-chih* also

84 *Hsü-shih tsu-p'u* (from Kui-hai), p. 78.

85 *Hsieh-shih chia-ch'eng* (from Hai-ts'ang), p. 64.

86 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chüan* 5, p. 154.

87 Ho Ch'iao-yüan, *Min-shu* (*Ch'ung-chen*), *chüan* 38.

notes: "Some (people) adopt others as their sons. They do not feel ashamed to let them enter their own clans. When they are in merchant families they are sent all over the world with commercial capital. They travel through many kinds of dangers, some will disappear in enormous storms or fight for one fleeting moment of life with the wind and waves. Their real sons, however, can enjoy its profits without physical danger."⁸⁸ Or as the *Hsia-men-chih* says: "Fukienese often adopt sons; even people who do have sons of their own still forcibly adopt several sons. When these have grown up they are sent to sea. Those who bring in profits are provided with wives and concubines to keep them under control."⁸⁹

The merchant group of the Cheng-family had many of this kind of commercial slaves. The official of the Board of Revenue Cheng T'ai, who was in charge of foreign trade for Cheng Ch'eng-kung, was originally an adopted son raised by Cheng Chin-lung. One source states: "The renegade Cheng T'ai, that unthankful bastard, once was graciously adopted by our former Grand Preceptor Duke P'ing-kuo. He had been entrusted with missions several times, and our former king even favoured him with (the position of) official of the Board of Revenue. He took care of all provisions and salaries of the army. He possessed all keys to the treasury. The commercial transactions in all ports and oceans were entrusted to his management, to enrich the income of our nation."⁹⁰ Cheng-Chih-lung's nephew Cheng Ts'ai also had many adopted sons who were engaged in overseas trade, like Chou Jui and Yüan Chin.⁹¹

The big families who used adopted sons for overseas trade, generally were local feudal landlords. Stimulated by the development of the commodity economy, they utilized their power to destroy the prohibition on overseas trade of the Ming and Ch'ing. Without a doubt they exercised a positive influence on the development of private overseas trade. Their way of management was backward, however, because they did not directly engage in overseas trade, but employed these adopted sons to go overseas.

The social position of adopted sons was very low and did not differ at all from that of household bondservants. According to the relevant Ming laws: "When people have bought adopted sons, raised them for many years and have even given them a wife,

88 *Lung-hsi hsien-chih (Ch'ien-lung)*, *chüan* 10, p. 3.

89 *Hsia-men-chih (Tao-guang)*, *chüan* 15, p. 13.

90 Kobayashi Shühatsu comp., *Ka'i hentai*, p. 63.

91 Wen Jui-lin, *Nan-chiang i-shih*, *chüan* 53, p. 32.

these adopted sons are to be treated like one's own kin. (On the contrary), when they have not yet been raised very long and not yet been given a wife, they are to be treated the same as hired labourers among the common people and as slaves among the gentry-families."⁹² This shows that the adopted sons that went out to sea for trade had the same status as slaves. Their lords did not only possess extra-economical physical control over them, but even wielded the right to kill them at mercy. Take for instance the following case: after the surrender to the Ch'ing of Cheng Chih-lung, his son Cheng Ch'eng-kung restarted the resistance at Kulang-yü. When he gathered people to resist the Ch'ing, he was in dire need of money, since people would not follow him otherwise. One merchant vessel of the Cheng-family just happened to return from Japan. "(Cheng Ch'eng-kung) had people make inquiries and there were two servants on it. He asked how much capital they had with them. They replied that they only had a hundred thousand. Cheng Ch'eng-kung ordered them to take it out to assist his military undertaking. The servants said: 'Without an order from our master, how could you be allowed to use it at will?' Ch'eng-kung became angry and said: 'You should consider me your master, who dares to resist me?' He beheaded them immediately. He then used this capital to recruit soldiers and to have weapons made, and his followers daily grew in number."⁹³

Thus, the slaves who traded overseas were treated with extreme cruelty. Master and adopted son were not bound by a contractual relationship out of free will, but by a strongly subservient relationship of personal dependence. Certainly, a small number of adopted sons might become free after dissolving their subservient relationship with the consent of their masters, such as Cheng T'ai who was promoted to official of the Board of Revenue by Cheng Ch'eng-kung to supervise overseas trade. Despite this, however, the family-relationship with their master still remained. This kind of pseudo blood-relationship was very unfavourable for the growing social differentiation and the rise of free merchants.

Why did this backward use of adopted sons survive in overseas trading? This seems to be closely linked to the remnants of feudal social structures like the village society-system and the slavery system. Slave society and feudal society came up in China early, but did not reach full maturity. The transition between two types of society is always very fluid. This was the case with the transi-

92 *Ming Wan-h shih-lu* (Taiwan-reprint), chuan 194, p. 9.

93 *T'ai-wan fu-chih* (Ch'ien-lung), chuan 19, p. 19.

tion from the clan-system to the slave-system, when remnants of the clan-system were preserved, and also later, when the slave-system evolved into a feudal system, the remnants of the original clan- and slave-systems were also preserved into the feudal society. Such remains permeated all aspects of society in many different and mutilated forms and had a certain function in the consolidation of the natural economy and the strengthening of feudal rule.

A good example is the wide-spread rearing of slaves still existent in the Ming period among the gentry from the Chiang-nan area. Yü Shen-hsing points out in his *Ku-shan pi-ch'en*: "In the Chiang-nan area (. . .) the rich houses and large families use thousands of small people (*hsiao-min*). Until today they sometimes have up to thousands of tenants (*tien-hu*) and slaves (*ts'ang-t'ou*)."⁹⁴ In the early Ch'ing this custom continued to persist. Nobility of all ranks, bureaucratic landlords, rich merchants and farmers all possessed and used slaves in large numbers. The custom of keeping slaves influenced the rich merchants along the coast of Fukien to rear adopted sons on a large scale for overseas trade. Thus, remnants of the slave-society were preserved, which caused the development of Chinese overseas merchant-capital to acquire many backward elements.

2. *Trade with borrowed capital*

The second type of overseas trade was with borrowed capital. This meant that merchants rented ships from rich and powerful families, hired sailors and also ferried other merchants. This type was fairly common at the time.

For instance, the merchant brothers Fang Min, Fang Hsiang and Fang Hung put 600 tael of silver together and bought 2800 and more items of blue and white patterned cups, small dishes, bowls and other porcelain articles. They rented one seagoing junk with two masts from the ship-owner Liang Ta-ying and went to sea for trade.⁹⁵ Here Liang Ta-ying, the owner of the ship, received the rent and Fang Min and his brothers provided money to rent the boat and go trading overseas. Between the two parties there was no physical subordination whatsoever.

By the beginning of the Ch'ing these relationships became even more sophisticated. Take the following case: the shipowner Li Mu-hsia rented one boat from Huang Sheng. One Coxinga-note,

94 Yü Shen-hsing, *Ku-shan pi-ch'en*, *chüan* 4, p. 20.

95 *Huang-ming t'iao-fa shih lei-ts'uan*, *chüan* 20, p. 8.

the rent of the boat and a boat-license cost 1200 tael of rent in total. Li Mu-hsia hired the helmsman Cho Sheng, the sailors Lin Ming, Kao Tzu-lung, Lin Erh and others and also ferried the Shensi merchant Tu Ch'ang-p'ing, the Shansi merchants Sun Fu, Sun Fang, Jen Fu and the Hang-chou merchant Hsü Jen and others. The boat was filled with medicines, raw silk, silk cloth and other articles.⁹⁶ This kind of shipowner is comparable to the owner of farmland who rents out his land. Both the form of management and the technique of exploitation are totally similar. Huang Sheng got money for renting out his boat. Li Mu-hsia got the surplus value through the exploitation of the helmsman and the sailors. Cho Sheng, Lin Ming, Kao Tzu-lung and the other hired labourers got wages in exchange for their labour. Already this shows in an embryonic form the pattern of landlords obtaining rents, capitalists obtaining profits and labourers obtaining wages.

Sea merchants also borrowed capital from the rich and powerful families, such as the Cheng-family. To promote overseas trade, Cheng Ch'eng-kung instituted an "Enrich the Nation-treasury" (*yü-kuo-k'u*) and a "Benefit the People-treasury" (*li-min-k'u*) under the Board of Revenue to provide capital to overseas merchants against a certain interest. For instance, on March 4th and 5th 1654 the overseas merchant Tseng Ting-lao drew out 250,000 tael of silver from the Board of Revenue official Cheng T'ai, to go to Su-chou and Hang-chou to purchase damask silk, silk fabric, Huchou silk and other articles to be sold overseas. On June 6th and 7th, 1655 he again drew out 50,000 tael of silver from the treasurer Wu Yü-she for trade in Japan. On December 8th and 9th he once more drew 100,000 tael of silver from Wu Yü-she. Each month he paid 1.3 percent as interest. After his entire cargo had been sold in 1656 he paid back the original capital with interest to a total of 60,000 tael and still kept 40,000 tael as further trade-capital.⁹⁷ Cheng Ch'eng-kung was very keen on the state of income and expenses of the "Enrich the Nation" and "Benefit the People"—treasuries, and often came to check for himself.⁹⁸

Another type of trading with borrowed capital was that of providing capital as well as men and ships. In his criticisms of local retired officials Chu Wan pointed this out: "(When they) have quit their post and live in retirement, they do not care for

96 *Ming-ch'ing shih-liao* (Taipei, 1957), part *ji*, vol. 4, p. 396.

97 *Ming-ch'ing shih-liao*, part *ting*, vol. 3, p. 215.

98 Yang Ying, *Hsien-wang shih-lu*, p. 150.

their reputation, but gather fugitives and rebels and develop a wide network of underlings. They terrorize the region and intimidate the magistrature. (The merchants) who go to sea and trade with foreign countries borrow their capital, men and ships: in everything they declare to represent a certain lord and they move about without inhibitions. When a cargo is brought back the original loan is subtracted first; interest is as high as the original loan and the remainder of the spoils is split evenly."⁹⁹ The interest rate on this type of loan is much higher than either the simple renting of a boat or the simple borrowing of capital. When Tseng Ting-lao, for instance, borrowed capital from Coxinga's treasurer Wu Yü-she and had to pay an interest of 1.3 percent on each tael on a monthly basis, this meant an annual interest of 15.6% (actually far more! Translator.). In the case of the above type of loan, however, after the local retired official who furnished the capital and borrowed the ship had first subtracted the original capital, the interest was just as much as the original loan and the rest of the "spoils" also had to be split evenly between him and the overseas merchants. Obviously the interest rate was extremely usurious.

Although the above type of trade with borrowed capital still kept an usurious character and the capital was not directly invested in handicraft industries, nevertheless the overseas merchants and sea captains did not merely obtain the loans to provide the basic necessities of life, but invested it in overseas transport and trade. This means that they brought it into circulation and made it into a kind of commodity which in itself functioned as capital. Through the investment of labour by hiring helmsmen and sailors this special kind of commodity money changed from something with a circumscribed and fixed value into something with a flexible value which automatically produced profit. The ships that were leased also functioned as fixed assets which were lent out. These kinds of loans, no matter what type they belonged to and in whatever way their return flow was influenced by their use value, practically already functioned as capital.

3. *The independent type*

The independent type of private overseas trade was even more advanced than private overseas trade with borrowed capital. Although it still preserved some feudal traits similar to the trade

99 Chu Wan, *P'i-yu tsa-chi, chuan 2*, p. 26.

with borrowed capital, in the end the independent merchants had shaken off the limitations of usurious loans to carry out overseas trade as pure merchants with their own capital.

The following case from 1609 concerning collective trade with Japan is very illustrative: "A large sea-going junk was built by Lin Ch'ing from Fu-ch'ing and captain Wang Hou from Ch'ang-lo, Cheng Sung and Wang I were recruited as helmsmen, Cheng Ch'i, Lin Ch'eng and others as sailors, Chin Shih-shan and Huang Ch'eng-hsien as silversmiths. Li Ming, who was well acquainted with the sea routes, would be their pilot, and Ch'en Hua, who knew Japanese, would act as their interpreter. They invited many merchants to board the ship with their full cargoes. Some sold thin gauze, silk or cotton cloth; others sold white sugar, porcelain or fruits; again others sold fans made of banana leaves, coarse and fine combs, rugs and kerchiefs and silver needles. The Japanese silver they earned was melted down on board, for which purpose an oven, a bellows and other tools were provided. They set sail on July 2nd, and went to Itsushima. They surrendered (their goods) to the Japanese intermediate merchants Gokkan and Rokkan (Wu-kuan and Liu-kuan) and had them sell it." After the articles had been sold, the captains Lin Ch'ing and Wang Hou received payments in silver as a transport fee (*shang-yin* or "trade-silver") from all the merchants on their ship and after subtracting the expenses for the crew they had "earned a total of over 297 taels of silver."¹⁰⁰ The way in which Wang Hou had the ship built to ferry merchants, hired helmsmen, sailors and silversmiths and exacted a transport fee already basically contains the embryonic form of modern transportation industry.

By the early Ch'ing detailed rules for paying this transport fee had been developed. In 1660, for instance, captain Wang Tzu-ch'eng ferried the merchants Lu Ts'o and Wang Wang from Chang-chou, Chou T'ai and Wu Yue from Ch'u-chou, Wei Chiu from Fu-chou, Li Mao from Hang-chou, Lu Hsiu from Kuang-chou and Wang Kui from Ssu-ch'uan with a full cargo of Ssu-ch'uan medicine, raw silk, light silk, silk rugs etc. from Su-chou and Hang-chou to be sold in Nagasaki in Japan. Captain Wang Tzu-ch'eng made very explicit that 20 tael would have to be paid on each 100 tael that was sold, i.e. a transport fee of 20% on the total traded amount.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Wang Tsai-chin, *Yueh-chuan*. Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-ch'en comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-hao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 2, pp. 138—9.

¹⁰¹ *Ming-ch'ing shih-hao*, part *tung*, vol. 3, p. 258.

By early Ch'ing not only had a rudimentary transportation industry coming into being in the coastal regions of Fukien, but also in North China, where overseas trade was still underdeveloped, professional sea captains appeared who specialized in transportation in exchange for a fee. In 1656 captain Kuo Tzu-li from Tientsin testified before court that "(he) had had one boat built, and had hired 19 sailors who were not in governmental service . . . (He) carried medicinal articles from Pei-chih-li of the private merchant Ch'en Ying-teng; they had agreed on a price and he transported them to Shan-tung to be sold." On May 9th, 1656, "there was another private captain Ch'en Ssu-chih (. . .) who had hired ten sailors (. . .) and carried a cargo of medicinal articles from Pei-chih-li of the private merchant Wang Hsiang to trade abroad."¹⁰²

Our material shows that the overseas transport industry had turned into an independent organizational specialty by the 16th and 17th centuries and a specific area for the investment of capital had been formed accordingly. Although the quantity of the products could never increase because of transportation, the production capital that was invested in the transport industry itself could be transferred to the transported articles, partly from the changes in the value of the means of transportation and partly from the added value of transport labour. Therefore, the building of ships with independent capital by sea captains appearing around 1650, the hiring of entire crews, the ferrying of merchants for overseas trade, all carried the seeds of modern transport industry.

4. *Joint-investment type*

Overseas trade was an enterprise which required large investments. Large sums of money were needed: over one thousand tael to build ships and then at least 5 to 600 tael for the necessary annual repairs.¹⁰³ Furthermore, all kinds of maritime equipment needed to be purchased and an entire crew consisting of sailors, helmsmen, clerks, interpreters, doctors, craftsmen etc. needed to be hired. Ordinary merchants found it extremely hard to find the necessary capital for these investments, and therefore most smaller merchants at that time pooled their money to build ships for overseas trade. For instance, "with regard to merchant vessels from Hai-ch'eng, money was collected among the people to dis-

102 *Ming-ch'ing shih-liao* (Taipei, 1957), part *ji*, vol. 4, p. 343.

103 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chüan* 9, p. 170.

patch boats to trade with the barbarians. By trading our gauze, white silk, porcelain and pastry for their ivory, tortoise shells, perfumes and pepper, they aimed at quick profits. This made people jump at this chance."¹⁰⁴

The following case of collective trading with Japan from the early 17th century is a typical example of these joint-venture undertakings. In this case Yen Ts'ui-wu and Fang Tzu-ting, originally from Fukien, together with Hsüeh San-yang and Li Mao-t'ing from Chekiang, "organized a group to build a ship and carry out overseas trade." "(Previously) Fang Tzu-ting had hired a ship of Ch'en Chu-wo together with T'ang T'ien-ching in 1609. He had traded with the Japanese from Yüeh-kang in Hai-ch'eng. They had robbed him of his cargo. Thereupon he had posited a formal complaint as captain. He had recognized the Japanese ruler as the real great king and had demanded compensation for his cargo: this had brought him a lot of profit. Yen Ts'ui-wu and Li Mao-t'ing were full of admiration when they heard this.

A certain Chu Ming-yang bought a sailing ship and enlarged it, after which he resold it to Li Mao-t'ing. (Li) went to Hang-chou ahead of time to get a cargo, and with his fellow merchant Lin I he reported to the customs that they would set out to sea. Yen Ts'ui-wu and Hsüeh San-yang called in the ship's carpenter Hu Shan to forcibly take a ship, they bribed the customs and slipped through to sea and waited. Then they bought rare commodities in Hang-chou and secretly hired three small boats with the captains Ma Ying-lung, Hung Ta-ch'ing and Lu Ye. Under the pretense of a pilgrimage they slipped through customs during the night. They went up to the pilgrimage center of Kuan-yin at P'u-t'o (near Ting-hai) when they were stopped by adverse tides. The patrol officials Ch'en Hsün and others surrounded them with their ships. Ma Ying-lung and others then fled with a boat. The patrol soldiers chased them and claimed (their share) of satin, thin silk, cloth and other goods. Then they released (Ma Ying-lung) and let him go. The cargo of the other boats had already been transferred to the big ship of Hsüeh San-yang who had already left for the endless ocean.

Fang Tzu-ting had first gone to Fukien to buy Chinese firs (and then to) Ting-hai to transfer them to another ship since he wanted

104 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chuan* 7, p. 152. Also cf. Ku Yen-wu, *T'ien-hsia chun-kuo li-ping shu*, *chuan* 93, p. 1, which is quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-hao hsuian-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 2, p. 132.

to follow San-yang c.s. He secretly anchored the ship loaded with Chinese firs in Ta-sung harbour. Earlier he had sent Yang Erh to Su-chou and Hang-chou to buy Hu-chou silk; he had also enticed Cheng Ch'iao and Lin Lu to buy rugs. When all of them came together to Ting-hai, they saw that San-yang's ships had already set sail. They entrusted the goods to the household of Fang Tzu-ting and looked for a ship to carry the cargo." This time there were three ships to carry out foreign trade: "Li Mao-t'ing was captain of one ship, but it sailed under the name of Tu Yüan; T'ang T'ien-ching was captain of another ship, but it sailed under the names of Hsüeh San-yang and Tung Shao. Fang Tzu-ting was the captain of the third ship and Yen Ts'ui-wu had jointly invested capital with him."¹⁰⁵ Evidently, these ships were managed according to the joint-investment type.

This kind of joint-venture is very similar to England's Muscovy Company, which was the first to use shares for carrying out trade. The Muscovy Company made a daring attempt to sail through the White Sea in 1553. Between 1556 and 1581 the company imported Asian luxury goods into England by the water routes of Persia, the Black Sea, over the Wolga, and over the White Sea. The Muscovy Company used shares to spread the enormous risks of such dangerous ventures over a large group of people. Because the financial risk is too big for just a few people, a larger group of people decides to split the risks by each investing one part only.¹⁰⁶ This form of joint investment was capable of solving the problem of insufficient venture capital during the early stage of overseas trade and could also help split up the risks and lessen the financial losses. Therefore, it was widely adopted over the entire world in overseas trade and has become the origin of the modern stock company.

Some scholars believe that this type of joint venture was still under the influence of the medieval guild system and thus was not yet the same as free commerce. Certainly on every ship "the captain was the boss, and all merchants obeyed him; like captains of an anthill they lead the ants to move their nest."¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the merchants were definitely not in a physically subordinate relationship to the captain. They had not agreed a system of regulations concerning the entrance into the group or

105 Wang Tsai-chin, *Yueh-chuan*. Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-hao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 2, pp. 136—7.

106 Yüeh-han K'o-la-p'an, *Chien-ming pu-tieh-tien chung-chi shih*, p. 364.

107 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chuan* 9, p. 170.

the management of trade, nor were there strict rules like the medieval European merchant guilds had governing the area of commercial activity, prices, types and numbers of articles. For these reasons we feel that this kind of union did not constitute a permanent association, but was a purely temporary affiliation. When one trade expedition has been completed, the joint-venture formed for the occasion was declared ended. In response to new circumstances and the wishes of the individual merchants new affiliations could be formed. In the case described above the merchant Fang Tzu-ting originally agreed to collaborate with T'ang T'ien-ching for overseas trade, and afterwards joined capital with Yen Ts'ui-wu, while T'ang T'ien-ching joined capital with Hsüeh San-yang. This shows that their mutual relationships were not very close and that they only formed a temporary alliance. They were not restrained by the medieval guild-merchant system.

The managers, innkeepers, brokers and other people dealing with overseas traders certainly belonged to the group of important coastal officials and powerful local families. Nevertheless they were not capable of complete control over the overseas merchants; they even became the protectors of the smuggling merchants and stimulated private overseas trade to a certain extent. Therefore, from any perspective these small and medium-large merchants were independent merchants who had freed themselves from their feudal ties.

V. *The Influence of Private Overseas Trade*

The development of private overseas trade in the 16th and 17th centuries had a wide-ranging influence on Fukienese society and economy. Since it supported the local finances, it also induced changes in the structure of the feudal economy.

1. *Support of local finances*

After 1572, the Ming government was forced to relax part of the prohibitions on overseas trade. It set up a tax-levying structure in Yüeh-kang to issue boat licenses and to levy taxes on the incoming and outgoing ships, such as license fees, "water provisions" (a ship-tax), "land-provisions" (a kind of import tax), and "added provisions" (a tax levied on ships returning from the Philippines). With the development of private overseas trade, the tax earnings from Yüeh-kang also increased continuously.

Table I
 "Approximate Tax-earnings (in silver tael)"

	several thousands
1572	
1576	10,000
1583	20,000
1594	29,000

From 1594 onwards, the yearly tax earnings in Yüeh-kang remained constant at about 30,000 taels.¹⁰⁸

At that time, the total expenditures for military provisions in Fukien were calculated to be about 289,600 tael every year. From all kinds of old and new taxes in silver, only 273,890 tael could be obtained. An amount of about 15,170 tael was still lacking. This gap was mainly supplemented with the income out of the commercial taxes from Yüeh-kang. Therefore, when the Japanese leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded Korea in 1592 and some people advocated prohibitions on overseas trade, the local official Hsü Fu-yüan opposed it vehemently, pointing out that these prohibitions would endanger the income of over 20,000 tael from commercial taxes and that the local government could not do without this income.¹⁰⁹

As far as the prefecture of Chang-chou is concerned, the role of commercial taxes in Yüeh-kang in support of local finances is particularly evident. "The monthly provisions for the official (local) naval and land forces, ship repairs, the purchase of arms, rewards and other expenditures each year surpass 60,000 tael." The total tax income from non-commercial taxes of the entire prefecture does not exceed 37,700 tael by much, even though it includes "taxes on iron ovens, on the cattle-guild and on coasters and fishermen, collected without leaving them any profit at all."¹¹⁰

The income from commercial taxes in Yüeh-kang provided half of the military expenditures of the entire prefecture. This shows its crucial place in local finances. Therefore, Chou Ch'i-yüan wrote full of pride and admiration in the preface to the *Tung-hsi yang k'ao*: "During the reign of the Lung-ch'ing emperor, the laws on trade with barbarians were abolished. From this moment onwards, merchants from all directions in the flourishing coastal regions scraped off the hulls and divided the markets into an eastern and

108 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chüan* 7, p. 133.

109 Hsü Fu-yüan, *Chung-ho-i'ang chi*, *chüan* 7, p. 18.

110 Yen Ju-chih, *Yang-fang chi-yao*, *chüan* 13, p. 962.

a western route; their cargoes were precious and rare, therefore the strange products cannot be fully enumerated. Their yearly earnings were about several 100,000 tael. Government and private merchant are mutually dependent; it comes close to being Our Emperor's Southern Treasury."¹¹¹

The increasing contribution of commercial taxes to Chang-chou prefecture's local finances caused the envy of Ch'üan-chou prefecture. In 1597 the Surveillance Commissioner of Ch'üan-chou proposed to divide overseas trade, since the people of Ch'üan-chou were short of tax income to pay for the military provisions. Chang-chou was to get the sole rights of trade with the eastern oceans and Ch'üan-chou the sole rights of trade with the western oceans. Ch'üan-chou wanted to appoint officials to collect provision taxes in the Chung-tso-so (modern Amoy) just as Chang-chou had been doing.¹¹² This proposal met with vehement opposition from Chang-chou. The prefect of Chang-chou denounced it in a memorial: "Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou are both coastal prefectures. Both of us are hard-pressed by the military provisions. If the provision taxes arrive in Chang-chou, profits are for Chang-chou. If they arrive in Ch'üan-chou, profits are for Ch'üan-chou. Our benefits will be divided equally. If Chang-chou's provision taxes are insufficient we will make further demands in Chang-chou itself; if Ch'üan-chou's provision taxes are insufficient, they make further demands in Ch'üan-chou. Our discomfort will also be equally divided. Now they wish to split the eastern and western oceans between Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou, to cut off a piece of Chang-chou's provision-tax income to support the army of Ch'üan-chou. This would not only make it impossible to finance the army provisions of Chang-chou, but also smugglers would exploit it to make crafty profits and not pay at all, either in Chang-chou (on the pretext of having paid in Ch'üan-chou) or in Ch'üan-chou (on the pretext of having paid in Chang-chou). They would deceive both sides and go. The problem of keeping track of them would also be ten or even a hundred times worse than in the past. Our prefecture has made full considerations and we do not see how it could function perfectly without abuses." Upon this the proposal by the Surveillance Commissioner of Ch'üan-chou was shelved.¹¹³ This struggle between Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou for the tax income from Yüeh-kang demonstrates the importance of commercial taxes for local finances.

111 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), p. 17.

112 Chang Hsieh, *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (Peking, 1981), *chuan* 7, p. 133.

113 Yen Ju-chih, *Yang-fang chi-yao*, *chuan* 13, p. 963.

The income from overseas trade was extremely important for the political power of the Cheng family sea merchants. Cheng Chih-lung took advantage of the fact that a series of droughts in Fukien caused starving people to roam the fields and he used sea merchant capital to assist them with money and rice. With this method of relieving starving people he very rapidly enlarged his army. According to Ch'ing officials: "Those Cheng-bandits are quite strong and unusually crafty. They are well-versed in sea battles. Their bands mainly consist of inland mobsters with a number of daring Japanese. They number over 30,000 people. Their boats and weapons are all built abroad. Their ships are very big and strong. They do not sink when they travel the deep oceans and are not destroyed (immediately) when they strike the reefs."¹¹⁴

After Cheng Chih-lung had accepted amnesty and was serving the Ming government he was able to feed his army for over ten years without ever using the slightest bit of public money. He was able to provide all military provisions himself out of his own income from overseas trade. This was particularly the case when he supported the Ming-pretender the King of Tang and he financed the military needs of the entire province of Fukien.

By the time his son Cheng Ch'eng-kung took over, the army had grown even more in size. The *T'ai-wan wai-chih* mentions a thousand war ships, several hundred officers, and over 20,000 brave soldiers.¹¹⁵ Hsia Lin remarks in his *Hai-chi chi-yao* that Cheng Ch'eng-kung led an army to the North of 170,000 soldiers and 8,000 armoured warriors.¹¹⁶ If we add the garrison of Hsiamen the total number of soldiers exceeded 200,000 armoured warriors. The military expenditure for such an enormous army must have been considerable. Furthermore, Cheng Ch'eng-kung's military activities were concentrated in the overpopulated coastal region of Fukien and Kuang-tung, where land was scarce and poor. Here it was extremely difficult to make a living and most people depended on fishing or overseas trade to find food. How could such people have had enough surplus strength to support an army like that?

Therefore, the military expenditures of Cheng Ch'eng-kung could only be funded from the profits of overseas trade. Just as Yü Yung-ho pointed out in his *Wei-cheng i-shih*: "(Cheng) Ch'eng-kung was able to feed an army of over 100,000 men from a small

114 *Cheng-shih shih-hao* (*T'ai-wan wen-hsien*), first part, *chuan* 1, p. 1.

115 Chiang Jih-sheng, *T'ai-wan wai-chih* (Shanghai, 1986), *chuan* 10, p. 164.

116 Hsia Lin, *Hai-chi chi-yao* (*T'ai-wan wen-hsien*), p. 22

overseas base (i.e. Taiwan). Armour and weapons were all strong and sharp. He had several thousands of warships. He was also in close touch with the inland regions and able to buy the sympathy of the people everywhere. Because they had the advantage of overseas trade, they had no lack of funds.¹¹⁷ Ch'en Yung-hua and others supervised the stimulation of agriculture. They carried out the policy of soldiers tilling their own land (*tun-t'ien*), they made people plow the land with oxen and they also developed several projects to stimulate Taiwanese handicrafts and agriculture in order to increase the revenues of their regime. Despite these activities, foreign trade still occupied a crucial place in the overall economy. Cheng Ching (the son of Cheng Ch'eng-kung) actively developed trade with Japan, Vietnam, Siam, England and other countries selling Taiwanese deerskin, camphor and cane sugar, as well as pottery and silk from the mainland in exchange for commodities such as lead, copper and many different articles for daily use. Not only was he able in this way to satisfy the daily necessities of the Taiwanese, but also to solve military needs, furthering the consolidation of the political power of the Cheng family sea merchants as well as the prosperity of the Taiwanese economy.

2. *Impulses to the commercialization of the economy*

The development of industry and agriculture in Fukien provided the material foundation for private overseas trade. On the other hand, however, the development of private overseas trade in its turn stimulated the prosperity of private crafts and commercial agriculture. Due to the development of overseas trade, Fukienese goods were sold in large quantities all over the world: "Silk from Fu-chou, gauze and thin silk from Chang-chou, indigo from Ch'üan-chou, iron from Fu-chou and Yen-p'ing, tangerines from Fu-chou and Chang-chou, lichees from Fu-chou and Hsing-hua, sugar from Ch'üan-chou and Chang-chou, paper from Shunch'ang (. . .) Immense quantities of these products are exported overseas."¹¹⁸ The opening-up of an overseas market strengthened the links between the Fukienese economy and the international market and stimulated the output of the handicraft industries.

For instance, relatively large-scale workshops appeared in the

117 Yü Yung-ho, *Wei-cheng i shih*, in: Yü Yung-ho, *Pi-hai chi-you (T'ai-wan wen-hsien)*, p. 48.

118 Wang Shih-mou, *Min-pu-shu (Chieh-yüeh shan-fang hui-ch'ao ed.)*, p. 17.

mining and melting industry. Ch'e Ming-shih, a magistrate of Cheng-ho county, said in his "Memorial on reforms in the (running of) furnaces": "According to reports by the furnace-households Ho P'u, Ch'eng Cheng-ta and others, recently (around 1600) two iron furnaces were started in Tung-p'ing and somewhere else (. . .) For each furnace several tens and hundreds of workers are needed. Some dig into the mines, some burn charcoal, others fan the furnace, the rest looks after the furnace, transports charcoal and ore or sells rice and alcoholic beverages. For every task several scores of people are needed and for this reason several hundreds of people normally run one furnace together." These workers are all people without fixed residence who live by the day.¹¹⁹ These types of production organizations with detailed divisions of labour and operating on a fairly large scale are not simple handicraft workshops consisting of a master-worker and his assistants, but factory-like handicraft industries based on hired labour.

The expansion of the overseas market also created a paper industry with machines driven by water power in North Fukien: "In Shun-ch'ang people who make paper all have water mills at home. They build something like a boat in the middle of a fast-running stream, attach two wheels to it and (it turns) as if it flies."¹²⁰ In his "Ode to the water mill", Ch'a Shen-hsing gives a lively description of the mechanized production of paper in North Fukien:

"(The wheels turn) with a *t'uan-t'uan* sound,
as if the mill is turned round by oxen.
(The wheels turn) with a *cha-cha* sound,
like crows fluttering hither and thither.
(. . .)
From the paper pulp 100,000 sheets can be made,
you need many, many stalks."¹²¹

The indigo industry, too, developed very rapidly, because large quantities of dyeing material were needed for the increasing export of textile products. In Ning-te in eastern Fukien migrants came to the district to plant indigo flowers. As the local gazetteer tells us: "There were at least one thousand indigo makers in the few *tu* of the western part (of the district)."¹²² In Yung-fu in

119 *Cheng-ho hsien-chih* (*Tao-kuang*), *chüan* 10, p. 9.

120 Wang Shih-mou, *Min-pu-shu* (*Chieh-yüeh shan-fang hui-ch'ao* ed.), p. 14.

121 Ch'a Shen-hsing, *Pin-yün-chi*, p. 56.

122 *Ning-te hsien-chih* (*Wan-li*), *wu-ch'an*-section p. 7.

western Fukien "where irrigation is impossible, people from Chang-chou, Ch'üan-chou, Yen-p'ing and T'ing-chou planted indigo flowers and sugar cane. Its profits were double those from the rice paddies. Over the years, migrants (*k'o-min*) have reached all distant mountain areas."¹²³ The Ming-writer Hsiung Jen-lin gives a good general description of the indigo industry in the border region of Fukien, Chekiang and Kan-chou: "The southeast range (of the big southern mountain range) stretches up to T'ing-chou in Fukien, and the northeast range up to K'ai-hua, Chiang-shan, Sung-ch'ang and Sui-ch'ang in Chekiang. This region consists only of rugged mountains, without the hardships of overseas travel. Furthermore, the mountain forests are deep and uninviting, so people only rarely set foot in them, except for the indigo people from T'ing-chou. They cultivate with simple hoes, clear the land by burning and grow indigo for a living. In all areas they build (simple) grass huts to live in."¹²⁴ This description shows that the border region of Fukien and Chekiang had already turned into an important production area for indigo.

Ramie cloth was another successful commodity on the foreign as well as the home markets of the Ming and Ch'ing. For this reason the ramie industry in the mountain regions also developed very rapidly. For instance, people in Shou-ning in northern Fukien "used to be active in the fundamental professions and occupied with farming, in the mountains no land was left fallow. Recently (\pm 1630) they have acquired the profits of cultivating ramie, and have gone off to Lung-ch'üan, Ch'ing-yüan and Yün-ho like hawks. Since then, many rice paddies have become neglected."¹²⁵

With the development of industrial and agricultural production, the commercial capital that served as an intermediary in the exchange of commodities also became more active. For instance, Shang-hang in western Fukien is "an area where money and commodities are abundant. Merchants come from all directions. Therefore, the markets became more and more refined (. . .) The uncouth people that go far away for trade all look out for good opportunities and make clever calculations; when they trade with others they are also very friendly and polite. Because of this they become rich very quickly."¹²⁶ In Chien-ning in northern Fukien

123 *Yung-fu hsien-chih* (Wan-lü), *feng-su*-section p. 5.

124 Hsiung Jen-lin, *Nan-jung-chi, chuan* 11, p. 29.

125 Feng Meng-lung, *Shou-ning tai-chih* (*Ch'ung-chen*), *chuan shang*, p. 47.

126 *Lun-t'ing chuang-k'ao*, *chuan* 3, p. 24.

"the land is fertile; it especially benefits from its fir trees, oil, lacquer, ramie and hemp to trade it with merchants. This has created a custom of sumptuous living in the outer districts of Chien-ning and Shun-ch'ang."¹²⁷ All mountain regions abounded with many famous specialized merchants, such as the tobacco merchants from Yung-ting and the paper merchants from Lien-ch'eng, who formed one group of mountain merchants.

Because of the development and prosperity of the commodity economy, the natural economy of the mountain areas gradually disintegrated and new production relationships sprang into being. For instance, in the above mentioned indigo industry production relationships already consisted of three types of people: the owners of the mountains, managers, and hired labourers. "The mountain-lord (*shan-chu*) is a local person who owns a mountain. He makes a hut-lord (*hiao-chu*) plant the mountain and collects a rent on it. The hut-lord is somebody from T'ing-chou who has been living in the mountains of these areas for a long time already and has a lot of capital. He builds huts and waits for the arrival of the indigo-people (*ching-min*). (The hut-lord) provides the seedlings he has cultivated, he lets the indigo-people further take care of their growth and collects a rent from them. The indigo-people, also known by the name of She-people (a Fukienese minority) are poor people from Shang-hang in T'ing-chou. Every year, several hundreds of them band together in groups and come with nothing but their bare hands to these areas. They are dependent on the hut-lord for a living and are paid by him. Some leave in spring and return in the winter, others remain there and pass the winter as long-term labourers."¹²⁸

The mountain-lord makes a living by collecting land rents. The hut-lords, although they are tenants, are often migrants with a lot of capital. They rent land from the mountain-lord and hire indigo-people to cultivate indigo. Thus they earn an interest on their investments. These hut-lords are a new type of tenant farmers; indigo-people only have their bare hands; they are poor people without any possessions at all. They depend for a living on selling their labour. At the same time they have already discarded the old feudal dependence relationships and now constitute a new kind of free hired farmhands without any human or financial possessions. Therefore, the relationship between the hut-lord and the indigo-people represents a new kind of contractual relationship.

127 Ho Ch'iao-yüan, *Min-shu (Ch'ung-chen)*, *chüan* 138, p. 18.

128 Hsiung Jen-lin, *Nan-jung-chü*, *chüan* 11, p. 36.

3. *The introduction of new food plants and their influence*

With the development of private overseas trade and the increase in international economic and cultural exchange, a whole lot of new cash crops and food crops were introduced during the middle of the 17th century. The introduction of new crops had a profound and far-reaching influence on Fukienese agriculture and on society as a whole.

Among the cash crops introduced by sea merchants were tobacco, peanuts, purslane and many new varieties of flowers and fruits. The small-leaf peanut was brought from abroad during the Sung-Yüan period;¹²⁹ the large-leaf peanut was only introduced from abroad during the middle of the Ming-dynasty. The section "local products" of the Hai-ch'eng local gazetteer says: "... peanuts have come from abroad and did not exist in the past. Nowadays people press oil from it."¹³⁰ This refers to the large-leaf peanut. Around 1600 it had apparently been transmitted from Fukien to Chekiang. Chang Lu from Ch'ang-chou (early Ch'ing) says in the item "Eternal Life Fruits" in his *Pen-ching p'ei-yüan*: "Another name for Eternal Life Fruits is peanut. They come from Fukien. The peanut is grown underground. They did not exist in the past and we only acquired them very recently." Wang Yün (early Ch'ing) also says in his *P'ao-yuan chi*: "As far as peanuts are concerned, flowers fall to the ground and grow seeds. They look like beans but their seeds are larger. Nowadays they are also cultivated in the Chiang-nan area."¹³¹

Another crop that was imported from abroad is the "vegetable in a jar" (purslane?). The "vegetable in a jar" is a creeping plant with white flowers; its stalk is hollow. If you pick its sprouts and cover them with earth, then they will grow. One name for it is "vegetable in a jar"(. . .) Originally it grew in the Ku-lun Kingdom among the eastern barbarians. The foreign ships loaded it in earthen jars, therefore it was called 'vegetable in a jar'. The people from Chang-chou bind reeds into rafts and make small holes in it. They let it float on the water, roots and leaves appear from the holes in the stems of the raft. It is a remarkable Southern vegetable."¹³²

129 T'an Ts'ui, *Tien-hai yu-heng chih*. Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-hao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol 1, p. 34

130 *Hai-ch'eng hsien-chih (Ch'ien-lung)*, chuan 15.

131 Quoted in Hsien Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-hao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 35—6.

132 Ho Ch'iao-yuan, *Min-shu (Ch'ung-chen)*, chuan 150, p. 34.

Many other crops were imported from abroad, such as a small type of yellow gourd from the southern barbarians and agar-agar, of which many types have been imported from Japan and which we got in Chang-chou for the first time several decennia ago."¹³³ The foreign pomegranate, (a fruit) coming from abroad "with white flowers and seeds just like pomegranates."¹³⁴ "The honourable envoy", "originally coming from Hai-nan and Cochin-China, is nowadays grown both in Shao-wu in Fukien and Mei-chou in Ssu-ch'uan: its stems creep up trees like a bean plant, its leaves are green like the leaves from the acanthopanax."¹³⁵

Among the different newly imported cash crops, the introduction of tobacco from the Philippines has had most far-reaching consequences. "It is called '*Tan-pa-ku*', another name is 'intoxicative'. You lit one end with fire and put the other end in your mouth; the smoke of the tobacco enters your throat through the pipe. It is capable of intoxicating people, but also of removing miasma."¹³⁶ Around 1620 merchants from Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou took it with them from the Philippines to Shih-ma in Chang-chou. It is stated by Fang I-chih in his *Wu-h hsiao-shih* that: "At around 1620 some took it with them to Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou. The Ma family processed it, they called it *Tan-jou-kuo*. It gradually spread northwards. Everyone carries long pipes, they light them with fire and swallow (the smoke). Some collapse completely intoxicated. By the Ch'ung-chen period it was severely prohibited on several occasions. Its roots look like *ch'un-pu-lao* (meaning unknown. Note of the translator). The leaves are larger than (normal) vegetables. First, it is dried quickly over a fire and then roasted with alcohol. This is called golden-thread tobacco."¹³⁷

After tobacco had been introduced through Yüeh-kang in Chang-chou, it spread quickly. Around 1625 it has spread to Southwestern China and soon afterwards it had also spread to the North. Yeh Meng-chu (early Ch'ing), from Shanghai, writes: "Tobacco originated in Fukien. When I was small, I overheard my grandfather say: 'In Fukien there is a kind of smoke which makes you drunk if you inhale it, it is called "Dry Alcohol"!' In our region it did not exist at all yet. By the Ch'ung-chen period

133 *Lung-hsi hsien-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 19, p. 4

134 *Hai-ch'eng hsien-chih* (*Ch'ien-lung*), *chuan* 15, p. 20.

135 Ho Ch'iao-yuan, *Min-shu* (*Ch'ung-chen*), *chuan* 150, p. 34.

136 Yao Lu, *Lu-shu* Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-liao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 1, p. 66.

137 Fang I-chih, *Wu-h hsiao-shih*. Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui chung-chi shih-liao hsuan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 1, p. 67.

someone called P'eng (from Shanghai) got the seeds from some unknown place and cultivated it on his own land. He picked its leaves and dried them. Thereupon some people worked for him and cut it up in fine threads. It was sold by long-distance merchants.(. . .) Towards 1650 everyone in the armies had started smoking. Suddenly crowds of people traded in it and people who cultivated it increased by the day. The profits which could be obtained from it also were double those of the early days. The price for each *chin* was one tael and two or three cash."¹³⁸ The introduction and spread of tobacco stimulated the development of a tobacco processing industry. For instance, in the border region between Fukien and Kan-chou "there were hundreds of places on the outskirts of cities and in villages in the countryside where people had opened tobacco-processing factories. In every factory 50 to 60 people worked, all of them from Fukien and Kuang-tung."¹³⁹

The most important new food plant was a new kind of high-yield crop, the sweet potato. Although the sweet potato has also been introduced by land into Yün-nan, the introduction by sea was far more important. In the late 16th century Ch'en Chen-lung, a sea merchant from Min-county in Fu-chou went to the Philippines for trade. He saw potatoes everywhere. Upon this, "he bribed the barbarians and returned home with several stalks; he also acquired knowledge of the methods of cutting, planting, storing and cultivating. He privately planted them on some wasteland near a cottage in Sha-mao-ch'ih (nowadays in the region of Nant'ai in Fu-chou)." When Fukien was hit in 1594 by a famine, Ch'en Ching-lung, the son of Ch'en Chen-lung, offered the seedlings and the methods of cultivation to the government. The Grand Coordinator Chin Hsüeh-tseng of Fukien considered the sweet potato to be of great importance and immediately "ordered his subordinates to learn to cultivate it in this manner". He re-wrote the method of cultivation in 'A new teaching from abroad'. He promoted the sweet potato on a large scale with immediate success. In the same year, "a great harvest was obtained in autumn and people had an abundance of food everywhere. The famine did not do any harm. His Lordship was valued enormously by the people and they nicknamed him Golden Potato!" (translator: this is a pun, since the Chinese characters for magistrate and potato are homophonous and almost the same)¹⁴⁰

138 Yeh Meng-chu, *Yüeh-shih-pien* (Shanghai, 1981), *chüan* 7, p. 167.

139 *Jui-chün hsien-chih (T'ung-chih)*, *chüan* 11, p. 12.

140 Ch'en Shih-yüan, *Chün-shu ch'uan-hsi lu* (hand-written copy), *chüan shang*, p. 64.

According to Ho Ch'iao-yuan's *Minshu*, sea merchants from Chang-chou and Ch'uan-chou also introduced the sweet potato to all districts of Southern Fukien

"People obtained the sweet potato from abroad in the Wan-li period. It can even be cultivated on poor or stony land. It can provide a livelihood for one year and is advantageous for the poor. I once wrote a *Hymn on the sweet potato*, (which goes as follows)

If you cross the seas of Fukien you have Luzon in the South
 If you cross the seas from that country you have the western ocean
 There they produce a lot of gold and silver
 They use silver like we use copper money
 The gold and silver from the Western countries is all carried to
 Luzon for trading purposes
 Therefore many people from Fukien trade with Luzon
 Over there is the sweet potato,
 which grows all over the place and does not need sowing or
 planting
 The barbarians habitually eat it
 Its stalks and leaves spread about

Some Chinese have cut off an inch or so of its shrubbery,
 put it in a small box and returned home
 Thus it has entered our Fukien more than 10 years ago
 Although its shrubbery may have withered, you can cut it off,
 replant it and still cultivate it
 After a few days under the ground it will grow again
 For this reason they were able to take it with them
 When it first entered our Fukien, there just happened to be a
 famine,
 but this sufficed the people for a whole year"¹⁴¹

Ch'en Hung in his *P'u-pien hsiao-ch'eng* confirms that the sweet potato was introduced about 1625 and that people from Ch'uan-chou studied how to cultivate it.¹⁴² T'an Ch'ien has a similar notice in his *Tsao-lin tsa-tsu*: "The sweet potato comes from Luzon, where it covers all fields and mountains and does not need any further cultivation. The barbarians eat it a lot. By the Wan-li period people from Fukien took the shrubbery back with them, planted it and it flourished already after a few days. It can even be grown in barren, salty, sandy or hilly soil. If you manure it, it will grow even more in size. The people of Ch'uan-chou

141 Ho Ch'iao-yuan, *Min-shu (Ch'ung-chen)*, chuan 150, p. 34

142 *Ch'ing-shih izu-hao*, vol. 1 (Peking, 1980), p. 75

value it to relieve famines."¹⁴³ These notes show that the sweet potato entered Fukien by many different ways, through Fu-chou, but also via Chang-chou and Ch'üan-chou. By whatever road it was introduced, sea merchants always played the role of intermediary.

The introduction of the sweet potato caused many changes in the structure of Fukienese crops and had a stimulating effect on the development of Fukienese cash crops. This was not just due to the fact that the output of the sweet potato is very large, but also because it stands up to droughts and disasters very well. It can be cultivated on mountainous terrain as well as on barren dunes along the sea. According to the summary by Hsü Kuang-ch'i the sweet potato has 13 advantages:

- (1) On one *mou* one can harvest 10 *shih*.
- (2) It is white and tastes sweet. It is always superior, no matter on what type of soil you cultivate it.
- (3) For satisfying people it is as effective as other types of yams.
- (4) It grows low down by the ground: you only need to cut off a stalk to get seedlings. If you have one stalk this year, you can cultivate one hundred *mou* next year.
- (5) Its stems and leaves are close by the ground and it makes roots from every joint (of the stem). Wind nor rain can drown or destroy it.
- (6) It can replace rice or grain; thus, a bad year cannot bring disaster.
- (7) It can be grown everywhere and fill up vacant spots of land.
- (8) One can distill alcohol from it.
- (9) When it is dried, it can be stored for a long period. In powdered form it can be made into cakes, which are sweeter than honey.
- (10) It can be eaten raw or cooked.
- (11) It only takes up little land and brings enormous profits. It is easy to irrigate.
- (12) If you plant it during spring or summer, you can harvest the next autumn or winter. It has abundant branches and leaves; it leaves no room for weeds. Between the plants you only need to make banks of earth. You do not need to weed or hoe; it does not hinder the other tasks of the peasant.
- (13) Its roots are deep in the earth, even if all tubes have been eaten, it can still grow again, therefore it is completely immune to insects and locusts."¹⁴⁴

143 T'an Ch'ien, *Tsao-lin tsa-tsu*. Quoted in Hsieh Kuo-chen comp., *Ming-tai she-hui ching-chi shih-liao hsüan-pien* (Fu-chou, 1980), vol. 1, p. 36.

144 Hsü Kuang-ch'i, *Nung-cheng ch'üan-shu* (Shanghai, 1979), p. 694.

Because the sweet potato is weather resistant and immune to insects, and can also be grown in poor soils, the cultivation of large numbers of sweet potatoes not only does not compete with the cultivation of cereals but is also capable of solving part of people's food problems. Thus, it enabled the use of more and more rice paddies for the cultivation of other cash crops and consequently contributed to the development of cotton and sugar cane. For this reason the introduction of the sweet potato had an extremely stimulating effect on the division of labour in Fukienese agriculture and the rise of cash crops.

Due to the enormous amount of Chinese names of persons and places in this article it was unfeasible to include a complete list of characters. The following list, therefore, is only a necessarily arbitrary selection of the most important names, excluding the names of districts (easily identifiable on any Chinese map of Fukien), and the names of persons and places that are only mentioned once. We included all foreign names, book-titles and names of authors (both of books, articles and quotes in the text).

An-hai chih 安海志

An-hsi hsien-chih 安溪縣志

An-p'ing-chih 安平志

An-p'ing-kang 安平港

Bakufu 幕府

Ch'a Shen-hsing 查慎行

Chan-ch'eng 占城

Note of the translator: we have tried to complete the original Chinese annotations according to Western standards. Due to the limited library resources at our disposal, as well as a lack of time, precise references could not be established in all cases. At this point we wish to apologize both for this fact and for the clumsy English of our translation. We wish to acknowledge the assistance of Lin Renchuan, E. Vermeer, P. Millington Ward-Goodbody and M. Hamaway-Todd.

- chang* 丈
Chang-chou fu-chih 漳州府志
 Chang Hsieh 張燮
 Chang Lu 張璐
Chang-p'u hsien-chih 漳浦縣志
Chang-tz'u tiao-ch'a 漳瓷調查
 Chao Ju-kua 趙汝适
 Chao Yen-wei 趙彥衛
Ch'ao-hsien li-ch'ao shih-lu chung te chung-kuo shih-liao 朝鮮李朝實錄中的中國史料
 Cheju 濟州
 Ch'e Ming-shih 車鳴時
Chen 鎮
 Ch'en Hung 陳鴻
Ch'en-shih tsu-p'u 陳氏族譜
 Ch'en Shih-yüan 陳世元
 Cheng Ch'eng-kung 鄭成功
 Cheng Chih-lung 鄭芝龍
 Cheng Ching 鄭經
Cheng-ho hsien-chih 政和縣志
 Cheng Jo-tseng 鄭若曾
Cheng K'ai-yang tsa-chuo 鄭開陽雜著
Cheng-shih shih-liao 鄭氏史料
 Cheng T'ai 鄭泰
 Ch'eng Kui 成規
Chia-ching 嘉靖
 Chiang Jih-sheng 江日昇
Chieh-yüeh shan-fang hui-ch'ao 借月山房彙鈔
Chien-ming pu-lieh-tien ching-chi shih 簡明不例顛經濟史
chien-nei 厝內
Ch'ien-lung 乾隆
chin 斤
Chin-chiang hsien-chih 晉江縣志
Chin-shu ch'uan-hsi lu 金薯傳習錄
Ching-ho-t'ang chi 敬和堂集
ching-min 菁民
ch'ing 頃
Ch'ing-shih tzu-liao 清史資料
 Chongwon 政院
 Chou Ch'i-yüan 周起元
Ch'ou-hai t'u-pien 籌海圖編
 Chu Kuo-chen 朱國禎
 Chu Wan 朱紈

- Ch'üan-chou tsung-chiao shih-k'o* 泉州宗教石刻
ch'un-pu-lao 春不老
Chung-kuo shi yen-chiu 中國史研究
chung-tso-so 中佐所
Ch'ung-chen 崇禎
Ch'ung-hsiu shui-li kung-te pei 重修水利功德碑
Ch'ung-hsiang-chi 崇相集
 Edo 江戸
 Fang I-chih 方以智
 Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍
feng-su 風俗
Fu-chien t'ung-chih 福建通志
 Fu-yi po nan-ao 富夷泊南澳
 Fu Yüan-ch'u 傅元初
gokkan (wu-kuan) 五官
Hai-ch'eng hsien-chih 海澄縣志
Hai-wai chi-shih 海外紀事
Hai-chi chi-yao 海紀輯要
 Ho Ch'iao-yüan 何喬遠
 Hôgyôsho 奉行所
 Hsia-kang 下港
 Hsia Lin 夏琳
Hsia-men-chih 廈門志
hsiao-min 小民
 Hsieh Chao-che 謝肇淛
Hsieh-shih chia-ch'eng 謝氏家乘
 Hsieh Kuo-chen 謝國禎
Hsien-wang shih-lu 先王實錄
 Hsiung Jen-lin 熊人霖
 Hsü Fu-yüan 許孚遠
 Hsü Kuang-chi 徐光啓
 Hsü Sheng 徐勝
Hsü-shih tsu-p'u 許氏族譜
 Hu Tsung-hsien 胡宗憲
 Huang K'an 黃堪
Huang-ming ming-ch'en ching-chi lu 皇明名臣經濟錄
Huang-ming t'iao-fa shih lei-ts'uan 皇明條法事類纂
Huang-shih tsu-p'u 黃氏族譜
 Hui-an (in Vietnam) 會安
Hui-an hsien-chih 惠安縣志
 Hung Ch'ao-hsüan 洪朝選
Hung Fang-chou hsien-sheng chai-kao, 洪芳洲先生摘稿
 Hung Uryang 洪宇亮

- Hwangjuk 黃竹
i-erh 義兒
i-nan 義男
 Itsushima 五島
ji 己
Jui-chin hsien-chih 瑞金縣志
Ka'i hentai 華夷變態
Kang-wei hsiang-chih 港尾鄉志
 Kao-li 高麗
 Kara-shi 唐市
 Kim Unghae 金應海
 Kimiya Yasuhiko 木宮泰彥
 Kino 紀伊
 Kobayashi Shûhatsu 小林叟發
K'o-kung 客公
k'o-min 客民
k'o-shih tsu-p'u 柯氏族譜
 Ku-lun 古倫
Ku-shan pi-ch'en 谷山筆塵
 Ku-tai te hsien-lo hua-ch'iao 古代的暹羅華僑
 Ku Tsu-yü 顧祖禹
 Ku Yen-wu 顧炎武
 Kuang-hsü 光緒
 Kyongsang-do 慶尙道
 Li Chang 李章
li-chia 里甲
liao-chu 寮主
 Lien Huang 連橫
 Lin Jen-ch'üan 林仁川
Lin-t'ing hui-k'ao 臨汀滙考
liu-kuan (rokkan) 六官
Lu-shu 露書
 Lü-sung (Luzon) 呂宋
Lung-hsi hsien-chih 龍溪縣志
Min-hai shih-i 閩海事宜
Min-pu-shu 閩部疏
Min-shu 閩書
Min-ta-chi 閩大記
Ming Cheng-t'ung shih-lu 明正統實錄
Ming-ch'ing shih-liao 明清史料
Mi-shan-ts'ang 名山藏
Ming-shih 明史
Ming-tai she-hui ching-chi shih-liao hsuan-pien 明代社會經濟史料選編

Ming-tai szu-jen hai-shang mao-i shang-jen yü 'wo-k'ou'

明代私人海上貿易商人與倭寇

Ming Tien-ch'i shih-lu 明天啓實錄

Ming Wan-li shih-lu 明萬曆實錄

Moksa 牧使

mou 畝

Nagasaki 長崎

Namp'ochi 藍浦地

Nan-chiang i-shih 南疆釋史

Nan Chü-yi 南居益

Nan-jung-chi 南榮集

Nan-yang wen-t'i tzu-liao shih-ts'ung 南洋問題資料釋叢

Nikka bunka kôryûshi 日華文化交流史

Ning-te hsien-chih 寧德縣志

Nung-cheng ch'üan-shu 農政全書

P'ao-yüan-chi 匏園集

Pen-ching p'ei-yüan 本經逢原

Pi-hai chi-you 裨海紀游

P'i-yü tsa-chi 髀餘雜集

Pin-yün-chi 賓雲集

Po-ni 渤泥

P'u-pien hsiao-ch'eng 莆變小乘

P'u-t'ien 浦甘

Rakuzan 羅山

rokkan (liu-kuan) 六官

San-fo-ch'i 三佛齊

shan-t'ou

She-min 畚民

Shen Yün 沈云

shih 石

Shih-chien-ya 施堅雅

Shih-ma chen-chih 石碼鎮志

Shou-ning tai-chih 壽寧待志

Shu-yü chou-tzu lu 殊域周咨錄

Suyong yongdang 水營龍堂

Ta-ming hui-tien 大明會典

Ta-shan 大汕

Ta-shih 大食

Ta-t'ang-chieh 大唐街

T'ai-wan Cheng-shih shih-mo 臺灣鄭氏始末

T'ai-wan fu-chih 臺灣府志

T'ai-wan t'ung-shih 臺灣通史

T'ai-wan wai-chi 臺灣外紀

- T'ai-wan wen-hsien* 臺灣文獻
T'an Ch'ien 談遷
Tan-jou-kuo 淡肉果
Tan-pa-ku 淡巴菰
T'an Ts'ui 檀萃
T'ang ta he-shang tung-cheng chuan 唐人和上東征傳
Tao-kuang 道光
Te-hua hsien tz'u-ch'i tiao-ch'a ts'ai-liao 德化縣瓷器調查材料
Tien-hai yü-heng chih 滇海虞衡志
tien-hu 佃戶
T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu 天下郡國利病書
ting 丁
T'ongjesa 統制使
Tôsen 唐船
t'ou-jen 頭人
ts'ang-tou 蒼頭
Tsao-lin tsa-tsu 棗林雜組
tsu-p'u 族譜
Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng 叢書集成
tu 都
Tu-pan 杜板
Tu-shih fang-yü chu-yao 讀史方輿紀要
t'un-t'ien 屯田
Tung-hsi yang-k'ao 東西洋考
Tung Ying-chü 董應舉
Uratsu 浦津
Wan-li 萬曆
Wang-hsiang-chi 王享記
Wang Hsiang-chih 王象之
Wang Shih-mou 王世懋
Wang Tsai-chin 王在晉
Wang Ying-shan 王應山
Wang Yün 王濡
Wei-cheng i-shih 偽鄭逸事
Wen Jui-lin 溫容臨
wu-ch'an 物產
wu-kuan (gokan) 五官
Wu-li hsiao-shih 物理小識
Wu-shih tsu-p'u 吳氏族譜
Wu-tsa-tsu 五雜組
Wu Wen-liang 吳文良
ya-tung 壓冬
Yang-fang chi-yao 洋防輯要

- Yang Ying 楊英
 Yao Lü 姚旅
 Yeh Meng-chu 葉夢珠
 Yen Ju-chih 嚴如煜
Yen-shih tsu-p'u 顏氏族譜
 Yen Ts'ung-chien 嚴從簡
Tijo sillok (Li-ch'ao shih-lu) 李朝實錄
Tung-fu hsien-chih 永福縣志
Tü-ti chi-sheng 輿地紀勝
 Yü Shen-hsing 于慎行
 Yü Yung-ho 郁永和
Yüeh-chüan 越鑄
 Yüeh-han K'o-la-p'an 約翰·克拉潘
 Yüeh-kang 月港
Yüeh-shih-pien 閱世編
Yün-hsiao t'ing-chih 雲霄廳志
Yün-lu man-ch'ao 雲麓漫鈔
Tung-chuang hsiao-p'in 湧幢小品