

Networks of Faith and Profit

Between 839 and 1403 CE, there was a six-century lapse in diplomatic relations between present-day China and Japan. This hiatus in what is known as the tribute system has led to an assumption that there was little contact between the two countries at this time. Yiwen Li debunks this assumption, arguing instead that a vibrant Sino-Japanese trade network flourished in this period as Buddhist monks and merchants fostered connections across maritime East Asia. Based on a close examination of sources in multiple languages, including poems and letters, transmitted images and objects, and archaeological discoveries, Li presents a vivid and dynamic picture of the East Asian maritime world. She shows how this Buddhist trade network operated outside of the framework of the tribute system and, through novel interpretations of Buddhist records, provides a new understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and commerce.

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Networks of Faith and Profit

Monks, Merchants, and Exchanges
between China and Japan, 839–1403 CE

YIWEN LI
City University of Hong Kong



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For my parents, Liu Ping and Li Yuguang

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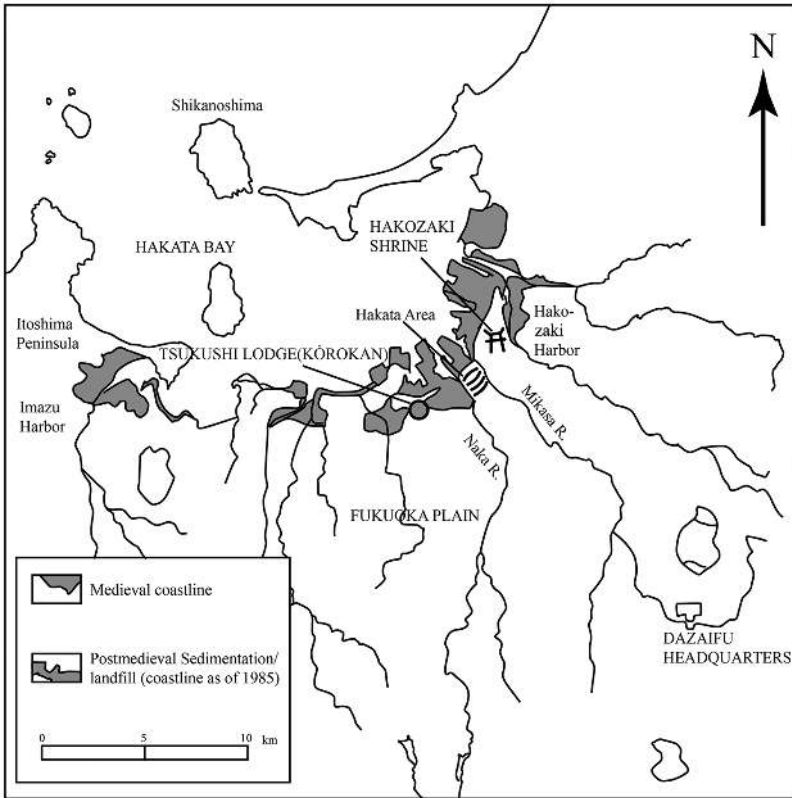
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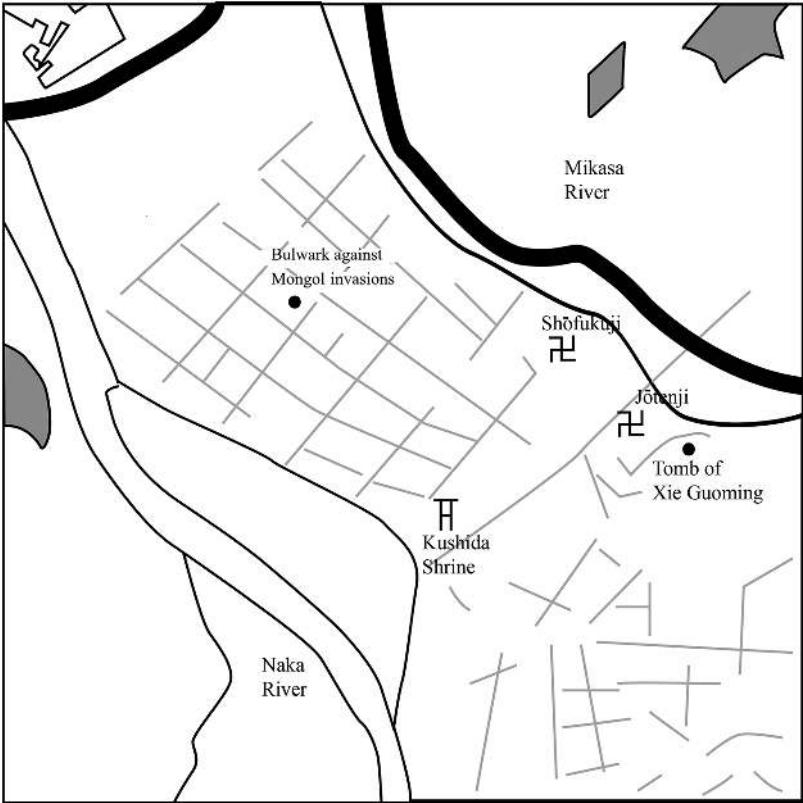
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Map 1 Important places in Sino-Japanese relations, 9th–14th century.



Map 2 Dazaifu headquarters and Hakata. Modified from Bruce L. Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, Map 3, “Hakata and vicinity.” Used with permission.



Map 3 Hakata area.