The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China

In this major new history of Muslim merchants and their trade links with China, John W. Chaffee uncovers 700 years of history, from the eighth century, when Persian and Arab communities first established themselves in southeastern China, through the fourteenth century, when trade all but ceased. These were extraordinary and tumultuous times. Under the Song and the Mongols, the Muslim diaspora in China flourished as legal and economic ties were formalized. At other times the Muslim community suffered hostility and persecution. Chaffee shows how the policies of successive dynastic regimes in China combined with geopolitical developments across maritime Asia to affect the fortunes of Muslim communities. He explores social and cultural exchanges, and how connections were maintained through faith and a common acceptance of Muslim law. This groundbreaking contribution to the history of Asia, the early Islamic world and maritime history explores the networks that helped to shape the premodern world.

John W. Chaffee is Distinguished Service Professor in the Departments of History and Asian and Asian American Studies at Binghamton University. He also directs the Institute for Asia and Asian Diasporas. He co-edited with Professor Denis Twitchett Volume 5, Part 2 of The Cambridge History of China: Sung China, 960–1279.
New Approaches to Asian History

This dynamic new series publishes books on the milestones in Asian history, those that have come to define particular periods or to mark turning points in the political, cultural and social evolution of the region. The books in this series are intended as introductions for students, to be used in the classroom. They are written by scholars whose credentials are well established in their particular fields and who have, in many cases, taught the subject across a number of years.

Books in the Series

1. Judith M. Brown, *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*
2. Diana Lary, *China’s Republic*
3. Peter A. Lorge, *The Asian Military Revolution: From Gunpowder to the Bomb*
4. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India*
5. Stephen F. Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*
7. Sunil S. Amrith, *Migration and Diaspora in Modern Asia*
8. Thomas David DuBois, *Religion and the Making of Modern East Asia*
9. Susan L. Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*
10. Tirthankar Roy, *India in the World Economy: From Antiquity to the Present*
12. Li Feng, *Early China: A Social and Cultural History*
15. Robert Peckham, *Epidemics in Modern Asia*
17. John W. Chaffee, *The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China: The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750–1400*
The Muslim Merchants of Premodern China

*The History of a Maritime Asian Trade Diaspora, 750–1400*

John W. Chaffee

*Binghamton University*
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Merchants of an Imperial Trade</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The Reorientation of Trade</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The Maturation of Merchant Communities</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The Mongols and Merchant Power</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Endings and Continuities</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

1.1 Arab merchants sailing to India (from Hariri’s Maqamat. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris Ms. Arabe 5847) \hspace{1cm} page 14
1.2 Tang merchant figures (Macao Museum) \hspace{1cm} 16
1.3 Graffiti-caricature of a west Asian merchant on a brick, early eighth century (courtesy of Fine Arts Department and John Guy) \hspace{1cm} 25
1.4 West Asian merchant head, eighth century (courtesy of Fine Arts Department and John Guy) \hspace{1cm} 26
1.5 Tang Muslim tombstone from Hainan (Guangzhou Museum) \hspace{1cm} 46
3.1 Houzhu ship, Quanzhou – photo of the wreck (courtesy of John Meckley, 2006) and ship model (Shanghai Maritime Museum, 2015) \hspace{1cm} 84
3.2 The Guangta at the Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou \hspace{1cm} 106
3.3 Ashab Mosque, Quanzhou, and mosque façade \hspace{1cm} 108
3.4 Quanzhou Muslim cemetery \hspace{1cm} 111
5.1 Su ancestral temple, Quanzhou \hspace{1cm} 179
Maps

Map 1 Maritime Asia during the Tang  page x
Map 2 China and southeast Asia in the ninth to tenth centuries  xi
Map 3 Maritime Asia during the Song  xii
Map 4 Quanzhou city  xiii
Map 5 Maritime Asia during the Yuan  xiv
Acknowledgments

In many ways the origins of this book can be dated to 1997, when Angela Schottenhammer invited me to attend an international conference at Leiden University on maritime trade and the economic and social development of the Quanzhou region during the Song and Yuan dynasties. I was just finishing work on my history of the Song imperial clan, who during the Southern Song were concentrated in Quanzhou and, I had discovered, had been much involved in maritime trade. My findings with regard to that involvement were presented both in the conference volume, *The Emporium of the World*, and in my book on the imperial clan, but this exposure to maritime trade whet my appetite. I was particularly fascinated by the Muslim communities of the Song and Yuan periods, whose physical legacy is much in evidence in the mosques of Guangzhou and Quanzhou and in the cemetery and huge collection of tombstones in Quanzhou. Just who they were and how they evolved through the centuries are questions with which I have been engaged for many years. This volume represents an attempt to provide my answers to them. That these merchants were, with few exceptions, without names or individual identities – in the sources we have about them – has been a constant frustration. However, that has not dimmed my admiration for their fortitude or accomplishments in establishing themselves so far from their homelands.

The list is long of those who have aided me in my work, whether through their own writings, their responses to my writings and presentations, or through conversations and email exchanges. My greatest debt of gratitude is to Angela Schottenhammer, who through her friendship as well as the many conferences and publications she has organized and edited has provided me with opportunities to share my ideas and my research. In a similar vein I am thankful to Elizabeth Lambourn, Kenneth Hall, Tansen Sen, and Robert Antony for their work and for the conferences that they have organized. I am grateful to John Guy, not only for his stimulating work on the material culture of this era but also for permission to use two of his photographs in the book. My work would not have been possible without the many important scholars in this field who
Acknowledgments

ix

have been kind enough to share ideas with me: Oded Abt, Michael Brose, Hugh Clark, the late Fu Zongwen, Derek Heng, Ralph Kauz, Hermann Kulke, Li Yukun, Liu Yingsheng, Ma Juan, Pierre Manguin, Mukai Masaki, Nakamura Tsubasa, Oka Motoshi, Hyunhee Park, Roderich Ptak, Morris Rossabi, Billy So, Nancy Steinhardt, Geoff Wade, Jon Whitmore, Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, and Wang Gungwu. In a more general vein, I have benefited from conversations and exchanges with Karen Barzman, Bettine Birge, Leonard Blussé, Patricia Ebrey, Valerie Hansen, Stephen Haw, Huang K’uan-chung, Liu Guanglin, Ma Guang, Gerald Kadish, David McMullen, Manel Ollé, Paul Smith, Barbara Seycock, Mathieu Torck, Nancy Um, and Zhang Qifan, and also from my students Hu Yongguang, Lee Changwook, Zhao Siyin, Travis Schutz, Eric Lee and Zou Jiajun. I would like to thank Bradley Hutchison for his assistance in standardizing my spellings of Arabic and Persian names and terms. And I am grateful to the editors at Cambridge University Press who aided me greatly throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful sons Tim, Philip and Conrad, and Conrad’s wife Luba, for the steadfast love and support that they have given me since the death of my wife, Barbara, five years ago. She would have been delighted to see this volume finally appear.
Map 1 Maritime Asia during the Tang
Map 2  China and southeast Asia in the ninth to tenth centuries
Map 3 Maritime Asia during the Song
Map 4 Quanzhou city

Legend
- Tang city wall
- Sung city wall
- Outer mound built in 1230 (connected and standardized with the city wall in 1352)
- Small hills
- Possible gardens, farmlands, uninhabited spaces
- Bridges
- Commercial district

1. Superintendency of Maritime Trade
2. Ashab Mosque (Shengyousi)
3. Qingjing Mosque
4. Yehmen Mosque
5. Pu Shougeng residence
6. Muslim cemetery
7. Southern Outer Office of Imperial Clan Affairs (S.Song)
8. Prefectural Yamen
9. Jinjiang County Yamen
10. Prefectural school
Map 5 Maritime Asia during the Yuan