

A Research on the Maritime Communications Between Silla and Tang from the 8th Century A.D to the 9th Century A.D.

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The history of maritime communications between China and the Korean Peninsula is very long. Between the 8th and 9th centuries, this friendly sea traffic between the Tang Dynasty and Silla reached a new peak.

After researching into historic records, documents and writings of China, Korea and Japan, this paper examines Silla people's seafaring activities to Tang and its evidence, as well as the main sea routes between Tang and Silla.

Key words: Silla, Tang, sea traffic

1.Zhang Baogao and his traces along the Chinese Coasts

China and Korea are close neighbours. The sea traffic between the two countries was very active in ancient times. It reached a new peak in 675 AD after Silla unified the Korean Peninsula.

According to The History of the Three Countries, Silla sent 89 various official delegations to Tang between 703 and 897 AD. Tang also sent 18 official delegations to Silla. At the same time, there were also other interchanges between the two countries by way of sea. Many seafarers, merchants, students and monks came to Tang from Silla; a proportion of them stayed in Tang for a long time, setting up Silla businesses, organizations and schools. Of all these people, Zhang Baogao is the most famous. He can be regarded as representative of a well-known period of Silla's seafaring, ie, the Age of Zhang Baogao.

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1.1 Personal history of Zhang Baogao

According to history, Zhang Baogao lived in Shangdong Peninsula, China when he was young and was a junior officer under the Xuzhou military commander. Therefore, he was very familiar with the areas in Shangdong Peninsula and Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces, as well as with the trade and sea routes between Tang and Silla. He realized the importance of Qinghaizhen in Wan Island in the sea traffic between the two countries. When he went to Silla and met the king, he said: "There are Silla slaves all over China. I would like to protect Zhenhai to prevent Silla people being shanghaied to the West by gangsters." The Silla king let him command an army of 10000 soldiers. He took severe measures against the slave trade, and after the Daho Age (827--835 AD), the slave trade by sea was stopped. At the same time, he promoted trade with China and Japan, employing fleets of merchant ships, and accumulated huge wealth and became a well-known businessman engaged in foreign trade.

1.2 Evidence of Silla people seafaring, represented by Zhang Baogao along Chinese coast

From the geographic point of view, the location of Wan Island, where Qinghaizhen was situated, is very advantageous. It faces China's Shangdong and Jiangsu Provinces, separated by the Yellow Sea. Cheju Do Island, a very important place in East Asian sea traffic, is to the south. The coastal areas of Fukuoka and Kitakyushu in Japan can be reached passing Tsushima and other islands. The documents, historical records unearthed in Qinghaizhen clearly show that Qinghaizheng was one of the sea traffic centers between Korea, China and Japan during the 8th--9th centuries. Therefore, we think Silla people, of whom Zhang Baogao is representative, made frequent presence in the coastal areas of Shandong Peninsula and Jiangsu Province in China and a considerable proportions of which were directly related with Zhang Baogao.

Since Zhang Baogao had lived in or had been to the coastal areas of Shangdong Peninsula and Jiangsu Province, there are evidences of that left, and Ennin's Daily provides us with valuable information in that respect. Zhang Baogao's overseas activities as well as his activities in China are mentioned at least five times in the book. The time are:

April 2nd, 20th; June 7th, 26th, 28th; all in the fourth year of Kaicheng (893 AD). Three of them took place in the Wendong County and Fanhuayuan of Chishan. The Sishanchun in Qingninxiang of the Wendong County is in the east of the Shandong

Peninsula on the sea and was an important port for the sea traffic between Tang and Silla. It also was Zhang Boagao's beach head and stepping stone for his trade between China and Silla. Most of the ships on the China--Silla routes belonged to Zhang Boagao or under the administration of Qinghaizhen, which was in his charge. This dual merchant-government official capacity was similar to well known sea trading celebrities in China's history, such as he Pu Shougeng, Zhu Qing, Zhang Xuan of the Yuan Dynasty and Zheng Zhilong of the Qing Dynasty.

According to Ennin's account, there were about 40 monks from Silla in Fahuayan established by Zhang Boagao. The annual rice yield of the farm was 15000 kilograms. About 200 Silla men and women went there to listen to sermons given by the monks every day. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Cishangchun of Qingingxiang in the Wendong County had the largest Silla population in China. In addition, there were also Silla populations in the coastal areas of Muping and Chuzhou (the present Huanan of Jiangsu Province) of Dengzhou, the Lianshui County of Sizhou(the present Lianshui County of Jiangsu Province), Suchengchun of Haizhou (the present Lianyungang of Jiangsu Province), Mizhou (the present Zhucheng of Shangdong Province), Qingzhou (the Yidu County of Shandong Province). Silla people could be found all over the coastal and river areas of Shandong and Jiangsu Provinces.

Because Ennin didn't travel extensively in China, he was unable to give a full account of the wide spread of Silla population in China. For example, Mingzhou (the present Ningbo), one of the four largest ports of the Tang Dynasty, was also one of the important ports for sea traffic between China and Silla. According to A New Study on Zhang Boagao published by Wandao Korean Culture Institute, the large quantities of unearthed Gaoli china were Chinese porcelain, ie, the famous Yuezhou blue china. Zhang Baogao's ships brought back porcelain workers from Mingzhou, giving rise to the Silla china ware with Chinese styles. According to Ennin, Silla people in China were engaged in the following trades:

Seafaring. In addition to sailing between China, Silla and Japan, they also engaged in coastal and river transport. The ships Ennin travelled on were mostly Silla ships, and the crew members were mostly Silla people as well.

Some of Silla people were in charge of the unofficial exchange between China, Silla and Japan, as well as working in organisation of the Tang government for the administration of Silla people in China, as interpreters, officials and administrators,

undertaking affairs such as entrance into and departure from China of Silla people and Japanese.

2.The Sea Routes Between Silla and Tang

The marine communications between Korea Peninsula and China enjoyed such a long history that a relatively close marine relationship had been established early in the Qin&Han Dynasties which was around the Christian Era. During the 8th cent.A.D. and the 9th cent.A.D., the marine communications between Silla and Tang had flourished to such a great extent that an all-round setup of marine communications had been formed, namely, the simultaneous development of the North, the Middle and the South Routes with the Middle Route in the leading position. (see the Chart attached)

2.1 The North Route: from Liaoning to Silla

The feature of the North Route, from the coastal areas in Liaoning to the western coast of Korea Peninsula, was that the whole voyage was along the coast passing one island after another within the line-of-sight coverage. Since not very high demands were put on the performance of ships and navigation skills, this route had come into being ever since the Spring&Autumn period at which time it was the main sea route for the communications between Korea Peninsula and China and also between Japanese Islands and China. The north route was just the route that the great fleet with 300 boys and girls on board led by Xufu took to Japan in Qin Dynasty. According to HanShu DongYiZhuan, "Wo (ancient Japan) people first came to China from the east of Liaoning." This also referred to this North Route by way of Korea Peninsula.

More details on the exact route of this North Route can be found from the part on the Sea Route from Dengzhou to Gaoli and Bohai on the well-known geographic book Huang Hua Si Di Ji written by the prime minister Jiadan (730 A. D. to 805 A. D.) during the Zhenyuan period in Tang dynasty:

"Set out from Dengzhou (now Yantai, Shandong) to the northeast on the sea, covering 300 li from Daxie Island (now Changshan Island), to Guiqin Island (now Tuoji Island), Mo Island (now Big and Small Qin Island), and then to Wuhu Island (now Huangcheng Island); sail 200 li across Wuhu Sea (now the Laotie Shan Water Course in the north of Bohai Channel) to Duli Town (now near the Lushunkou District, Dalian) to the east to Mashi Shan (now Laotie Shan in Lushunkou District, Dalian), and reach the coast in the east: travel 800 li through Qingnipu (now near Dalian Bay), Taohuapu

(now the sea area between the north of Dalian Bay and the mouth of Biliu River), Shirenwang (now the channel to the north of Shicheng Island), Nietuo Bay (now the mouth of Dayang River to the north of Lu Island), Wugu River (now the mouth of Yalujiang River in the northwest of Dandong City), and reach the seashore in the south; pass by Wumu Island (now the Shenmi Island near the northwest seashore of Korea peninsula), the mouth of Bejiang (now the mouth of Datong River), Jiao Island, and reach Changkou Town in the northwest of Silla (now Changming Town of Changyuan county); travel for another 1000 li from Qingwangshi Bridge (now one of the islands outside Wongjin Peninsula), Matian Island (now Qiaotong Island on the sea to the southwest of Kaicheng) , Gusi Island (now Jianhua Island), Dewu Island (now Dapu Island), to the mouth of Tangenpu in the Yalujiang (should be “travel 1000 li from Yalujiang River to the mouth of Tangenpu ” , now Hekou near Ya Shan); then travel by land to the southeast for another 700 li and arrive at Xinluowang City (now Qingzhou in the southeast part of Korea Peninsula).

2.2 The Middle Route: from Shandong to Silla

Although the North Route recorded by Jiadan was safe and reliable, the long voyage can hardly meet the need for fast communications. It was for this reason that the marine communications were mostly carried out through the Middle Route during the flourishing period in marine trade between Silla and Tang. This route ran roughly from the coastal areas in Shandong Peninsula in China (mainly the coastal areas in Dengzhou, Laizhou and Mizhou) to the western coast in Korea Peninsula.

According to navigation history, this Middle Route was set up roughly before the North&South Dynasties (400 A.D. to 500 A. D.). Listed below is some information on the main starting ports based on some relevant Chinese literature and the Ennin's Daily by Ennin:

2.2.1 From the Coastal Area in Dengzhou to the Western Coast in Silla

The coastal area in Dengzhou was the legal port for the marine communications between China and Silla. As was stated in Ennin's Daily by Ennin, his application for “going back home by sea here ” or “arranging ships back to home by myself ” to the local Chinese authorities in Cuzhou, Lianshui County, Haizhou and many other places was denied when he intended to return home after study in China. The reason for this denial was stated clearly by the officer in Shangyang county, Cuzhou: “This county is not near the sea. Since you are allowed passage officially, we wouldn't delay

your journey. please send this application to Dengzhou, where your journey back will be arranged immediately.”

“Dengzhou, established along the coastal line of Beihai (now Bohai), was located in the northeast of Great Tang. ” There were many areas in it, covering the north, the east, and the south in the east of Shangdong Peninsula, that can be used as starting ports to the western coast of Silla.

2.2.1.1 From Wendeng County Port to Chishanpu, Danshanpu in Qingning County

This referred to the Shidao Town and its neighboring areas on Rongcheng City, Shandong Province now. It was located in Shidao Bay in the southern part of the eastern end of Shandong Peninsula, which is now one of the main local ports in Shandong Province. This port was only 108 nautical miles away from Yincuan Port in the western coast of Korea Peninsula. The voyage will be rather smooth in fine weather, which was the reason why it was the main transfer station for Silla's marine businessmen like Zhang Baogao and also the gathering place for many Silla's people. The Silla' ship of Jinzhen which Ennin took set out from here at noon on the 2nd, Sept., 847 A.D. in Tang Dynasty. It “Sailed out of Chishan Moxie Kou” , then “sailed to the east for one day and night ” , and “saw the mountains in the west of Silla on the third day.”

2.2.1.2 From Muping County Port to Rushang pu, Western Rushang pu, Tao Village, Lu shan, Rushan, Changhuai pu, Saochun pu, Saochun pu, Wanghai Village etc.

This referred to Rushan mouth and its neighboring bay in Rushang City, Shangdong Province, Which was located in the southwest of Shangdong Peninsula. Ennin had recorded in his Travel Daily of 839 A.D. and the 26th, April., the 3rd, May., the 4th, May., the 10th., Leap Mar., and the 20th. June, 847 A.D. the above ports and bays to Silla in the southern boundary of Muping County. For example, about Tao Village, it had in it “in the south of Tangyangtao Village of Muping County of Dengzhou, 160 li away from the county and 300 li away from Dengzhou, one can reach Silla within two or three days in fine weather to the east.” ; Lushan was mentioned in the following sentence, “one of 30 Silla visitors to Tang said, ” we came from Lushan yesterday and saw Silla ships presenting tribute arrived at Lu shan with everything on board safe and intact…; about Rushan pu, one can find it recorded as follows, “I once returned

Silla for a funeral...took ship at Rushan pu in the southern boundary of Muping County of Dangzhou (Dengzhou)” ; and Rushan Changhuuai pu was the place where Ennin took Jinzheng ship back to Silla by way of Chipu in Wendeng county on the 20th, June, 847 A.D.

2.2.2 From the Coastal Area of Laizhou to the Western Coast of Silla

The coastal area of Laizhou in Tang Dynasty, bordering on Rushan Bay of Dengzhou in the northeast and neighbouring with Mizhou from its southwest to the east of Jiaozhou Bay, was another port to Silla. As was stated by Ennin, Laoshan, one of the ports located in the east of Jiaozhou Bay, was the port from where he set out and the port was mentioned in his Travel Daily of June, 847 A.D. as follows: “on the 10th, June, I went to Laoshan by ship to send messages to Jinzhen, after which, I had planned to sail to Laoshan...” , “on the 26th, reached Jiaojiazhong in the south of Laoshan and visited Jinzhen Ship there...”

2.2.3 From the Coast of Mizhou to the Western coast of Silla

The coastal area of Mizhou in Tang Dynasty was located in the southwest of Shandong Peninsula. It bordered on Haizhou Bay in Haizhou, Jiangsu Province in the south, and included many places suitable for the gathering of fleet like Jiaozhou Bay and Lingshan Bay etc. This area had been one of the main port areas for overseas transportation in the south of Shandong Province for a long time. The main ports for the communications between Mizhou and Silla were as follows:

2.2.3.1 Dazhu shan Zhuma pu in Zhucheng County

It was located near the ancient Langxie Port which is now the Dazhu shan at the southeastern coast in Jiaonan County, Shandong Province. As was stated by Ennin, he ran into a ship there owned by a Silla's man called Chenzhong on the 17th, March, 847 A.D. As I have stated above, he also mentioned in his Travel Daily of the 2nd, April, 839. A.D. that “Dazhu shan may be right in the west of Silla because ships will be driven into a dangerous area (referred to the southwestern and southern areas of Korea Island) by west wind.” Although the fleet of Japanese ambassadors to Tang didn't venture to sail from Dazhu shan, the Silla seamen on the fleet spoke favorably of it, “sail to the north from here (the seashore of Donghai shan of Donghai County of Haizhou) ” for one day, we can reach Dazhu shan in the eastern coast of Mizhou. Since we were to repair our ships there, we might just as well sail from there and will

have a safe and smooth journey by today's south wind. "We may thus conclude that the Dazhu shan at that time was indeed an important port between Tang and Silla."

2.2.3.2 The Northwestern Coast of Jiaozhou Bay

It was the place where the main port of ancient Mizhou was located and was called Banqiao County belonging to Gaomi County in Tang Dynasty and now is Jiao County in Shandong Province. In Ennin's Travel Daily, it was mentioned many times that the Japanese ambassador to Tang left China from Mizhou. For example, in his Travel Daily of the 5th, April, 839 A.D, he wrote as follows: "we had intended to go to Mizhou to repair ships and sail from there" ; "we invited Ennin and other monks to discuss with Jinzhengnan at Chuzhou, then they stayed in Mizhou. After the tribute ship left, they dwelled in the mountains in seclusion and later went to Tiantai and Changan."

2.3 The South Route: from Jiangshu, Zhejiang to Silla

While the Middle Route being the main route for the marine communications between Tang and Silla, there existed, in non-governmental navigation, a South Route from the coastal areas of Jiangshu and Zhejiang directly to the southwestern coast of Korea Peninsula. Of course, it did not flourish mainly until Song Dynasty (after the 10th. cent. A.D.) following Tang Dynasty. For example, in the fifth year of Xuanhe in the North Song Dynasty (1123 A.D.), Xujing and some other people paid their visit to Korea Peninsula by this South Route, i.e. starting from Mingzhou (now Ningbo in Zhejiang Province), sailing east from near the mouth of Huai river in Jiangshu Province, entering into the South Route in the Big Heishan and Small Heishan Island within the southwestern as areas of Korea Peninsula.

2.3.1 From the Coastal Areas in Mingzhou to the Southwestern or Southern Coast of Silla

According to the Korea History, there were two routes between Silla and Tang: one was from Xuekou Town (Haijiang kou) in the western coast, Tangchengpu (Nanyangwan) etc. to Shandong Peninsula in China, which was the Middle Route; the other was from near Lingyuan to Henshan Island and to Dinghai County (near Shanghai), which was the South Route from Mingzhou to Silla because Dinghai County was the place where the ancient port in Mingzhou was located.

On the existence of this South Route, we can find much evidence from the book *New Research from Zhang Baogao* compiled by the Korea Cultural Research Institute and the celadon wares made in Mingzhou and Yuezhou (now Shaoxing) in Tang Dynasty dug out from the ruins of Qinghai Town. Besides, the direct sea route from Mingzhou to north Jiuzhou starting from Tang Dynasty also established that it was not very difficult for the marine communications between Tang Dynasty and Silla by way of the South Route and was possible in terms of navigation skills.

We can also find records on the voyage from Mingzhou to Silla from Ennin's *Travel Daily* of the 2nd, April, 839 A.D., "it was recorded that ships sailing from Mingzhou could reach Silla with the aid of favorable wind." According to the *Bibliography of Huiyun in Anxiang Monastery*, Ennin's contemporary, Chinese seaman Zhangzhixing started from Wanghai Town on the 22nd, June, 847 A.D., crossed the East Sea and reached Naliu pi in Zhijia Island due to 3 days and nights' southwestern wind. From this, we can see the direct route from Mingzhou to Silla by way of Jizhou Island was also possible. However, from the actual navigational situations in Tang and Song Dynasties, most ships from Mingzhou to Korea peninsula usually started along the coast to the sea areas in Haizhou and Jiangzhou, and then sailed east to Silla because this was relatively a safer route. So the direct voyage from Mingzhou didn't seem to be common at that time. I think, even if there were such voyage, it may be forced by strong wind, which may explain Ennin's record as mentioned above.

3.2.2 From the Coastal Areas of Haizhou to the Western or Southwestern Coast of Silla

The Haizhou in Tang Dynasty is now the mouth of Ancient Haihe near Lianyungang in Jiangsu Province. Most of the ships to Silla sailed for the east from here. On the 29th, March, 839 A.D., the fleet of Japanese ambassadors to the Tang, which Ennin took to the north to study, started their voyage from the mouth of Huaihe River and anchored at the east of Donghai County of Haizhou. On the 2nd, April, the captain of the 2nd ship, Chensuni proposed starting here in order to avoid passing the Dazhu shan, which was favorably responded by the 2nd, the 3rd, the 5th, the 7th, and the 9th ships. As a result, Jinzhennan (translator of Silla) had to inform Ennin that the fleet should keep sailing north. Besides, after finishing his study, Ennin had intended to take Japanese ships anchoring at Haizhou back home. Although his application was denied, this provided enough evidence for the fact that the direct voyage from Haizhou to Silla did exist. Because Haizhou and Mupu at the southwestern end of Korea Peninsula were almost at the same latitude, it was obvious that the Silla monks and Japanese

ambassadors to Tang intended to reach the southwestern coast of Silla by way of the Gig & the Small Heishan Island or Shuangzi Islands, then go to Beijiuzhou in Japan by way of Jizhou Island.

From the above, we can conclude that the route from Haizhou to Quanluonandao regions in Silla was a safe and convenient sea route.

2.3. 3From Cuzhou or Lianshui to the Western of Southweterm Coast of Silla

Cuhou in Tang Dynasty is now Haizhou City in Jiangshu Province; and Lianshui is now Lianshui City in Jiangshu Province. They were all vital communication lines on Huaihe River. They were near the mouth of Huaihe River in the east, and one can reach the famous ancient port Yangzhou at the mouth of Changjiang River by sailing south through the Huainan Canal. Cui Zhiyuan, a Silla student in Tang Dynasty, returned Korea Peninsula by this way, i.e., starting from Yangzhou, arriving at Cuzhou in the north through Huainan Canal, and then reaching the sea through Huaishui.

It was also recorded in Ennin's Travel Daily that he started in 844 A. D. from Cuzhou and Lianshui, returned Japan by way of Silla. According to his Travel Daily of the 3rd, July, 845 A. D., Ennin arrived at Cuzhou, stopped at Xinluofang and then went to Shanyang County (now Huaian City, Jianshu Province), where he applied to the local authority for passage. According to his Travel Daily of the 9th, July, Ennin met Cuiyun (the military envoy in Qinghai Town under Zhang Baogao) and they two together "tried very hard to apply for stopping at Xinluofang and waiting for ship back home. " Although these applications were all denied, they did prove that many Japanese and Silla's travelers started from Cuzhou and returned home. As to the routes to Silla after Huai river, there were two alternatives: one was the Middle Route by way of Mizhou or Denghou; the other was the south Route by which one can sail east and reach Silla's Coast directly.

In summary, we can come to the following conclusions:

The marine communications between Tang and Silla from the 8th. cent. to the 9th. cent. is a brilliant part in the history of Marine communications between China and Korea, and the whole Korea Peninsula;

The three Routes between Tang and Silla resulted from the long-term friendly communication and close cooperation between the mariners of both countries;

For people today, navigation history is a precious cultural treasure in the light of which, we can encourage ourselves to work harder for a more prosperous future.

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