

The Kingdom of Red Earth (Chitu Guo) in Cambodia and Vietnam from the Sixth to the Eighth Centuries

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Abstract

In 607 Sui ambassadors were sent to the Kingdom of Red Earth. They departed from "Nan Hai Jun" and reached the capital of Red Earth after more than a month of travel over land and water. Earlier scholars have thought that the trip, which supposedly began at Canton and ended in Vietnam, was entirely made on the South China Sea and that the Sui envoys visited either old Siam or Malaya.

After completing a river journey in Laos and eastern Cambodia, I am convinced that the description of the lands in the seventh century Chinese record, *Chituguo Ji*, is a perfect match with the natural landscape on the Mekong River from Khammuan/Savannakhet in Laos southward as far as Kompong Cham province in Cambodia.

The capital of the Kingdom of Red Earth from the sixth century onward was most probably situated at the large Banteay Prei Nokor ruins in eastern Kompong Cham. The Khmer people seem to have been builders of this Hindu and Buddhist country.

Introduction

According to past research based on several Chinese contemporary documents, the location of Chitu Guo or Chitu has been variously placed on the Malay Peninsula, in Sumatra and even in India (Wheatley 1961). The Chinese sources include an abridged form of the original two-volume but now lost *Chituguo Ji*, *Record on the Kingdom of Red Earth*; in the dynastic annals *Sui Shu* and *Bei Shi*

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compiled in the early to mid seventh century; the notice on Chitu in the later annals of the Tang covering A.D. 618–907 (*Xin Tangshu*); and references in encyclopedias such as *Tai ping Yulan* and *Wenxian Tongkao*.¹ There are other contemporary Chinese references relating to this misplaced kingdom which I will take up and discuss later.

The weak point in current attempts to establish the location through interpretation of the literary sources is that they have not been associated with any archaeological site, particularly a possible site for the Chitu capital. Moreover, modern scholars dealing with Chinese writings on Nanman or southern non-Han peoples have also made a mistake in basic methodology. The compilers of the annals on the Nanman region must have had reliable maps and they customarily listed countries according to a geographical sequence. In their chapters on Nanman, both the *Sui Shu* and *Bei Shi* annals place Chitu after Lin-yi and before Zhenla and Poli. These four are the only states in Southeast Asia which are well-documented in the almost identical accounts. This order of appearance indicates that Lin-yi was closest to Chinese territory in northern Vietnam; Chitu most probably adjoined Lin-yi to the south; Zhenla lay to the west and southwest, on the Mekong or the Mun and its tributaries where Sanskrit inscriptions by Chitrasena/Mahendravarman have been found; and Poli can be located south of Zhenla and west of Chitu. The four notices in the *Sui Shu* or *Bei Shi* describe not only Lin-yi's similarities with Jiao Zhi (northern Vietnam) and China in local products and musical instruments, but also mention that the interior decorations at the royal palace of Chitu are identical with those at the Zhenla palace and that there is much similarity between Chitu and Zhenla furnishings.

These geographical accounts indicate Chitu was situated in the southeastern part of mainland Southeast Asia.

The Sui Era Historical Background

In 581 China entered a new era with Yang Jian installed as emperor. Although his Sui dynasty was short-lived, it reunited China which since the fourth century had been divided into the North and South dynasties and as many as sixteen kingdoms.

Yang Jian's army came to Canton in 589, thus ending the weak Chen dynasty of the South which had nominally governed Jiao Province or northern parts of Vietnam. Also in 589 Yang Jian abolished Nanhai (South Sea) *jun* (prefecture or commandery) at Canton which had been the capital of Guang Zhou (province). In 601 the official name of the province became Fan Zhou and remained so until 607 when the second and last Sui emperor, Yang Di, renamed it Nanhai prefecture again, this time under the jurisdiction of the large Yang Zhou province with its capital at Jiang Du or Yang Zhou on the Chang (Yangzi) Jiang River.

The Sui emperors commanded the construction of the large scale Grand Canal system connecting the Yangzi and Huang He (Yellow River) and planned its completion in 611. They were very keen on river navigation and wished to exploit rivers and canals as a network for transportation. Yang Di used his huge dragon boat with four decks for the opening cruise on the new canal employing 80,000 boatmen to tow a line of imperial boats a hundred kilometers long.²

When Yang Di succeeded his father in 604 (the first year of his sole reign period Da Ye lasting fourteen years), the name Nanhai Jun for the city of Canton had been in disuse since 589, and our sources say people called it either Fan Zhou or Guang Zhou. So it is reasonable to conjecture that any mention of Nanhai Jun or South Sea Prefecture in sources during the first few years of Yang Di's reign is not referring to Canton but to some other port.

The Peninsula Named South Sea

In four articles written since 1992 (Hoshino 1993, 1994, 1996, forthcoming) I have attempted to establish that all the polities appearing in the Nanman chapter (C) of the *Xin Tangshu* and its related Tang and Sui sources are locatable in continental Southeast Asia including the Malay peninsula. Here is a summary of my interpretations of some place names.

1. *Shili Foshi* could be a transcription of Sri Buddhasei/saya rather than of Sri Vijaya. Its location was in the western part of the Central Plain in Thailand. It shared what *Xin Tangshu* calls the western South Sea (the present-day Chao Phraya basin) with Dvaravati or Ravat to the east, L/Nou Qian Tuo Huan (Lopburi), She Ba Ruo (Suphan) and other states.
2. The southern South Sea contained the major city of Jia N/Luo She Fen (Chanashapura) in the Pasak valley, and the former metropolis Gan Zhi Funan (Sri Thep). The word "southern" in the Chinese expression can be reinterpreted as "central."
3. The South Sea is also termed Huanwang's South Sea in the Tang dynastic sources. The term often designates polities and places within the Mekong Basin including Zhenla, (I) Xiun/luofen (Ishanapura), Ganbi, Z/Chanbo/po, Wendan, Juloumi (Klom or Krom), Poli, and Chitu which is described as surrounded by a big lake on one side and by three countries on the other three sides.
4. In China and on the Indochinese Peninsula, the word *Hai* can mean both sea and lake. For example, the Tonle Sap lake is called *Da Hai* (Large Sea) in one Sui source, but is called *Xiao Hai* (Small Sea) when compared with *Da Hai* meaning the Gulf of Siam in a Tang reference. In the 1960s when I stayed

for a half a decade in Laos, Chinese people from Savannakhet told me that their area had been called Nan Hai according to old tradition.

Xin Tangshu says that Ganbi, one of the polities cited above, was on the "South Sea;" it was a moated city encircled by a wooden palisade; its king Chand(r)avarman possessed five thousand soldiers; and his kingdom was relatively near Huanwang or Champa in the east. However, *Cefu Yuangui*, a remarkable encyclopedic reference book for Tang times, explains that Ganbi was on Lake Dong Hai (East Sea). I conclude that two possibilities exist for the location of Ganbi. The lake on which Ganbi rested to the west of Champa/Huanwang (now central Vietnam) could be either Nong Hahn Luang in Sakhon Nakhon in northeastern Thailand which corresponds to the oral tradition from Savannakhet, or alternatively the Tonle Sap. Currently I am inclined to believe that the lake on which Chandravarman resided is Tonle Sap, because this king seems to have been a Khmer and the father of Jayavarman I.

The term "South Sea" clearly had more than one meaning. Sometimes it referred to a port city, sometimes to a lake or sea. Chinese travelers sometimes used the terms "South" or "East" to mean the Mekong basin. But Tang official circles presumably used "South Sea" to refer to the whole Indochinese Peninsula. Let us now examine the historical background for this Nanhai toponymy in Tang times.

The Conquest of Lin-yi by the Sui

A Sui army crushed the Chen dynasty and marched into Canton in 589. The following year saw a widespread rebellion in both Guangdong/Guangxi and Jiao Zhou. A Sui supreme general and powerful king-maker, Yang Su, subdued the rebels in the two Guang and consolidated Sui power in the South.

In 602 Ly Phat Tu, leader of the anti-Chinese forces in Jiao, rebelled against the Sui. Yang Su made strategic plans and sent Liu Fang to Jiao for a successful assault on Phat Tu's headquarters. Then the court ministers advised the emperor Yang Jian to let Liu Fang conquer Lin-yi. Its fabulous wealth had been known in China since a mid-fifth century expedition. Fang recruited an army of ten thousand cavalymen and several thousand convicts (*Sui Shu* 82, f. 2 verso). But Yang Jian never saw the result of the campaign fought mainly in early 605 because he died in the previous year.

His successor Yang Di is often called the most outrageous tyrant in Chinese history. The soldiers occupied Lin-yi, and the army plundered from its major temples eighteen gold statues representing the country's eighteen former reigns. One Buddhist source says that they also found books in *kunlun* script or language and a large amount of Buddhist sutras which were brought back to China (Wang 1958). Fan Zhi, king of Lin-yi, fled to a remote and inaccessible hideout where he built a new capital which might have been only a small village. The Chinese divided Lin-yi into three Zhou (provinces), namely Dang Zhou,

Nong Zhou and Chong Zhou. These were soon reduced to Bijing, Haiyin and Lin-yi jun (prefectures). Each province (or prefecture) was further divided into four prefectures (or districts/*xian*) (*Sui Shu* 26, f. 13 recto).

The location of the first of these zhou or jun is identifiable. In January–February 605, Liu Fang sent his naval troops to Dang/Bijing. The main army arrived in February at the Bay (Haikou). This place must have been Shouling, one of the four early jun in Dang Zhou and a port linked by sea to Funan in earlier centuries (*Taiqing jinye shendan jing* C, f. 7 recto).

During the third month of the first year of the Da Ye reign, Fang crossed the river named She/Duli in pursuit of Fan Zhi. In a decisive battle, Fang's Chinese army was victorious. It chased the enemy as far as the capital city and looted its treasures. Our source *Dayue Shiji Quanshu (Waiji)* tells us that Fang passed the Bronze Pillar built by Ma Yuan in Han times and went southward eight days before reaching the capital (*Dayue Shiji Quanshu Waiji* 5). A group of Chinese historical geographers indicate in an atlas that Shouling was near Quang Tri and that the Shouling River was modern Han Giang (Tan III: 57).

Dang Zhou/Bijing Jun of the Sui dynasty seems to have extended as far as Quang Tri across the territory which we now call south Hoan Son and which the French colonialists knew as Porte d'Annam. This territory must have adjoined Nong Zhou/Haiyin Jun on the coast at present-day Hué and its surrounding countryside. It may not have included Quang Nam with its Champa ruins at Mison and Tra Kieu. Modern scholars have identified the capital of Lin-yi with Tra Kieu (Cœdès 1964, 13).

The geography section of *Sui Shu* states that Lin-yi jun (or Chong Zhou of the post-occupation period) had four *xian*, each named after its geographical character: Xiangpu meaning Elephant's Riverside; Jinshan meaning Gold Mountain; Jiaojiang meaning Confluence; and Nanji meaning Southernmost. We are tempted to associate all four descriptions with important geographical localities in the Mekong valley in southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia.

The Shouling River's catchment area extends to the western mountain range, Saiphu Luang, which divides Laos from Vietnam and through which travelers have passed since prehistoric times. Apart from the Lao Bao Pass, there are several other passes to the north and south. One particular ridge lies only about fifty kilometers southwest of modern Hué. This place is the headwaters of the Se Kong River which joins the Mekong at Stung Treng. From this watershed you can cross to Saravane in Laos, famous for the taming of elephants, and then to the Boloven plateau where gold was mined. Placer or alluvial gold mining on the Se Kong at Attapu is also well known locally.

Mission to Chitu (Red Earth)

On his accession to the throne, Yang-ti called for men capable of opening up communications with far distant lands. In the third year of the Ta-yeh period [A.D. 607] Ch'ang-Chun/Chang Jun, the Custodian of Military

Property and Wang Chun–cheng/Wang Junzheng, a Controller of Natural Resources, were among those who requested to be sent on an embassy to Ch'ih–t'u. The emperor was extremely gratified ... (Wheatley 1961, 29)

Thus begins the second half of the abridged Chitu Guo record included in the Nanman chapter (*Sui Shu* vol. 82). This second half is a detailed record of Sui's relationship with Chitu. It mentions how the imperial representatives carrying Yang Ti's message and generous gifts traveled from "Nanhai Jun (South Sea prefecture)" to Chitu, mostly by navigation. Wheatley's translation of Chang Jun's title strikes me as incongruous and too vague. Chang Jun held the position of Tuntian zhushi and Wang that of Yubu zhushi. *Zhushi* means the top post in a department, affair or project, and *tuntian* means farming of rice by soldiers posted abroad. Therefore *Tuntian zhushi* means Supervisor of Farm Soldiers or Colonial Militia. To maintain the new authority of the Sui, some of Fang's army from two years before must have been camped at Lin–yi.

Liu Fang fell ill and died on his way home (*Dayue Shiji Quanshu Waiji* 5, 157). Yang Di appointed no replacement general on the tropical frontier because he was busy with expeditions against Korea until 614. But he did need to consolidate the land that had already been conquered in the south. He recruited men who were familiar with the region and were experienced in river communication. He probably planned to expand conquests in the South Sea in the future, but he was assassinated in 618.

My assumption is that Chang Jun and his colleagues cooperated with the military commanders sent to Lin–yi to prospect for rice farming lands as well as natural resources like precious metals and exotic products in the region.

In the tenth month of the third year of the Da Ye period (between 26 October and 24 November 607), Chang, Wang and others boarded a boat at Nanhai jun bound for Chitu. The type of the boat they used, *zhou*, seems to have been designed for river or canal transport and not as an ocean–going vessel. The extant texts say that they sailed smoothly with favorable winds day and night without a stop for two *xun* before reaching the Mountain of Scorched Rocks. One *xun* is ten days.

The conventional interpretation suggests that they were bold enough to sail from Canton in river boats nonstop across the South China Sea for twenty days, without needing fresh drinking water on the way. Such a deed would have been absurd for Sui–Tang Chinese sailors who normally secured water at least every five days.

The character for *xun* has the character for day (*ri*) in the center and it is possible for *ri* to resemble *xun* on old or blurred paper. A scribe might easily mistake "day" for "ten days." In my experience with ancient Chinese texts, the *ri* character has been mistaken for the character for month (*yue*) in a couple of cases causing serious problems in interpretation. But once we are aware of the copyist's error, the text makes sense.

We conclude that Chang Jun and his retinue sailed the river before a favorable wind for two days and two nights. They would have had no problem finding drinking water on the river. They arrived at the Mountain of Scorched Rocks (Jiaoshishan). The terminal *shan* means "mountain" or "hill" and often appears in the name of a small island. The whole name Jiaoshishan may indicate a black or blackish brown hillock on a river bank. Then they traveled to the southeast. It is not mentioned how many days they spent in this portion of the itinerary which has few details compared with other passages. Then they anchored at the west side of Lingjiabobaduo Zhou (or *zhou*) where they directly faced Lin-yi.

Compare my interpretation with the Wheatley translation which is typical of currently held views:

Passing southeastwards, they anchored at Ling-ch'ieh-po-pa-to Island, which faces Lin-yi on the west, and which has a temple on its summit.

The original Chinese text in *Sui Shu* reads as follows:

Er guo dongnan bo Lingjiabobaduo zhouxi yu Lin-yi xiangdui shang you shenci yan.

The same text can be interpreted quite differently depending on which locality one thinks it is talking about. Does it refer to Lingaparvata at Cape Varella on the Vietnam coast, or to Champasak in southern Laos? On the west bank of the Mekong a few kilometers east of the Wat Phu ruins there is an ancient moated city. The oldest remains in the city and at Wat Phu belonging to this historical period are Champa artifacts and architectural structures. An inscription discovered at the south moat of the city tells about an act of a devotion to Champa's royal ancestral god by a king named Devanika who came from a distant land (Coedès 1954, 209–20; cf. Archaimbault 1961, 520). The *stele* is not dated, but Coedès attributed it to the fifth century based on his own paleographical argument.

Sui Shu says in the Lin-yi notice of the Nanman chapter that after Fang's army returned, Fan Zhi was reappointed or allowed to govern Lin-yi. He sent an ambassador to apologize and never failed to pay tribute to the Sui. Fan Zhi must have made some commercial deal with the Chinese and accepted their supervision because his country was by then Sui prefectures. What Yang Di demanded in the letter of "proclamation" taken by Chang Jun seems to be the same kind of deal with Chitu, as we shall see below. As for the word *zhou*, it is complex. *Zhou* can be interpreted as province but it is exceptional for a Chinese province to employ a non-Chinese term in its official name. Yet for a "foreign" locality such a usage was possible. The word also means "island," and there is the large Don Daeng Island in front of (that is, east of) the city ruins. Could it be that Lingaparvata is the island rather than the Linga-shaped Phu Kao mountain behind Wat Phu hill?

Wheatley does not mention that the translated *Sui Shu* passage has a variant in *Bei Shi* which reads as follows:

Er guo dongnan yi Lingjiabobaduo zhouxi yu Lin-yi xiangdui shang
you shenci yan.

The difference is just one word: the term *bo* which means "to anchor" is changed to *yi* which means "to worship, visit, pay respect to." In Daic the term is *wai*. Chang Jun and his subordinates went to worship the Lingaparvata; on the west side of the town or bank they faced Lin-yi in the east and the temple was on a high (hill).

The *Bei Shi* text makes better sense than the *Sui Shu* text, especially while you are walking around the places in Champasak. Thus I think that the Lingaparvata is not a natural rock but a man-made sculpture in the Champa-style temple, the base and part of the wall of which are still observable in the inmost recesses of the Wat Phu ruins.

Going back to their point of embarkation, we find how fittingly their route matches the middle valley of the Mekong. There are three possible sites for the embarkation: the confluence with Se Bangfai opposite the pilgrimage point That Phanom; a little upstream where Tha Khaek and Lakhon/Nakhon Phanom face each other across the river; or another confluence at Pak Hinbun above the two towns. From one of these, they could have sailed southward in local rowboats, not coastal sailing junks. Old Lao manuscripts say that a large rowboat carrying one hundred and fifty people was used during the annual boat festival, a local version of the dragon boat race. A present-day normal sized rowboat on the Mekong carries twenty to thirty people at the maximum. We cannot determine which of the three embarkation sites was meant. But in the geographical notices and encyclopedias of the following dynasties, one province/prefecture and several districts are described on this section of the Mekong (Hoshino, forthcoming), and the most prominent jun was called Man/Ban/Wen Yang, which can be identified as That Phnom/Pak Se Bangfai from distances mentioned in the text.

For the Sui period no such details have been handed down to us, so we can only assume that Chang Jun boarded his boat at one of the three places in Khwaeng (province) Khammuan. We must remember that his trip ended at Jiao Zhi (now Hanoi) in the text, allowing us to extrapolate that it had started there too and that the travelers had crossed a pass to arrive on the banks of the Mekong.

With a northeast monsoon wind just starting to blow in the tenth month (which happens to be also the best time agriculturally back in Jiao Zhi) or late October to mid-November, they rowed the boats two full days to the Mountain of Scorched Rocks from where they traveled to the southeast. This was exactly what the traveler on the Mekong River in Laos had to do in the past. On the approach to the Khemarat canyon to the south of Khwaeng Savannakhet or Changwat Mukdahahn on the Thai side, the river became impassable. People normally disembarked there and rode on elephants or horses or walked

southeast to reach Se Don, a tributary which joins the Mekong at Pakse (Pak Se Don). Champasak is about twenty-five kilometers downstream.

After visiting the Lingaparvata temple and confirming that the mountains on the Boloven plateau which they could see from the hill slope on the opposite bank belonged to the Lin-yi recently-named Chong Zhou province, the imperial mission went south to Lion Rock/Shizhi Shi on the river. *Shi* means "stone" but can very well be "island."

This must be the large Khong Island which was often an independent chiefdom in history. If not, the other possibility is Don Sadet-Don Khon on the Lao-Cambodian boundary. Neither side of this pair of islands is navigable because of the Khonpaphen and Liphhi Falls. The northernmost Don Sadet means "Island of Royal Arrival," from where in old days rowboats were hauled to the southern tip of Don Khon for the onward journey into Cambodia. Most of the above interpretation has been mulling around in my head since the mid-1970s, when I mentioned a Chinese mandarin road along the Mekong in *Pour une histoire medievale du Moyen Mekong* in 1976. However, fighting prevented me from visiting the eastern parts of Cambodia (especially the Kratie region) until 1994 when I was finally able to sail the Mekong on a return trip.

The mission's account continues: "... they reached Lion Rock, whence there extended a chain of large and small islands" (Wheatley 1961, 29). This also fits. From the southernmost point in Laos through to south of Stung Treng, the Mekong has an uncountable number of islands. The region is often called in Lao the Four Thousand Islands (Si Phan Don).

Then after two days they saw in the west the mountains of the kingdom of Langyaxu. On the third day the mountains were still visible. If you sail southward from Stung Treng to Kompong Cham, the land all around you is so flat that the sole landmarks are distant mountains to the west. The last hill before arrival at Kratie is called Phnom Chi where villagers say gold was once mined. *Chi* is the unit for weighing gold.

Scholars often confuse Langyaxu with Langkasuka which was founded centuries later in the Malay peninsula. Langyaxu was a powerful kingdom in the western Chao Phraya valley before the seventh century. Chinese records include references to the country's far-flung political and economic activities. The sources indicate that its center was at U Thong in Suphanburi province (Hoshino 1994 and 1996).

Then going southwards they reached Chi-lung (Fowl Cage) Island/Jilong Dao, they reached the borders of Ch'ih-tu/Chitu, whose king sent the Brahman Chiu-mo-lo/Jiumaluo, with thirty ocean-going junks, to welcome them. Conches were blown and drums beaten to entertain the Sui envoys on their arrival.

Jilong Dao can be identified with the hill, now called Sampoia Kalay in Khmer, at the narrowest point of the Mekong in Cambodia. It is an ancient religious place visited in old times by boatmen and other people because of the

once dangerous rapids nearby. The shape of this dry season island resembles that of a portable or traveling cage for a fighting cock. This kind of cage is still used in north Laos and elsewhere by Hmong people who have been migrants from China for up to three hundred years. Between Sampoia Kalay and the large Kompong Cham port there is a cliff on the right bank whose earth is reddish in color. Junks could come upstream to Kompong Cham and near Sampoia Kalay with no navigational problem since the river was wide enough.

Jiumaluo is the Chinese rendering of *kumara* which means "wellborn son" or prince in Sanskrit. In this instance it probably refers to the reigning or retired King Li Fuduosai's son or grandson, His Highness Kumara Somebody, who must be a brother of Nayejia or Nayaka. The holder of this Pali title, found in a Lopburi inscription, went to the Sui court with Chang Jun in 610. The first paragraph of the Chitu notice says: "The king's family name is Ch'u-tan, his personal name is Li-fu-to-se" (Wheatley 1961, 27). What is explained as a family name by Chinese is often a title, appellation or part of it in Southeast Asian courts. Q/Jutan (Ch'u-tan) is phonetically close to Stan which was the Angkorian appellation for high-ranking male or female personalities (Pou 1992, 509), but which could well have been used for a king in former periods. Li Fuduosai seems to me the transcription of Sri Buddhasai/sei which is similar to the name of the country situated in the western part of Thailand's Central Plain from the seventh to the eighth centuries. The word must have been used for various dignified names in the Buddhist states (Hoshino, 1994).

Wheatley's (1961, 27) translation of the *Bei Shi/Sui Shu* continues:

... his personal name is Li-fu-to-se. He knows nothing of adjacent or distant countries ... his Buddhist father abdicated ... He has ruled for sixteen years and has three wives from among the daughters of neighbouring kings.

In Wheatley's interpretation, both the first and second "He" refer to the same person, Li-fu-to-se of Sri Buddhasai. But this is confusing and contradictory as the reigning king, whom Chang Jun met, must have been well-versed in international and regional events. According to my reconstruction, the first two sentences should be understood in the past tense. Sri Buddhasai, who knew nothing of distant countries and who abdicated to become a monk and proclaim the doctrine, was the father of the current king. Buddhism in the former eastern Funan-Dunxun confederation was out of favor because the neighboring vigorous Zhenla and Poli kings supported Hinduism, although *Sui Shu* reports that even in Zhenla there were many Buddhist followers. The reigning king had been on the throne for sixteen years (i.e. since about 592) and had taken three wives from neighboring ruling houses.

These Chitu kings must have ruled this seemingly-rich agricultural state in a quite different way from the authoritarian Sui sovereign. Although *Sui Shu* says Chitu's territory was extensive (a few to several thousand *li* in extent), their dealings with the Sui give us an impression of weakness rather than of military

prowess. In fact they were extremely hospitable to the Sui, particularly in comparison with Lin-yi which fought innumerable wars with China in the course of its history, and with the Zhenla kings who left stone inscriptions commemorating their victories (Bhavavarman, Mahendravarman).

The Sui envoys were led to the capital from the port. Both *Bei Shi* and *Sui Shu* say that their trip took more than one month from Jiao Zhi to the Chitu capital (for the time spent on land travel, consult the Nanman and geography chapters of *Sui Shu* and *Xin Tangshu*). The whole trip from the Sui capital to the Chitu capital took more than a hundred days, mostly by navigation, which must have been along the Yellow River, Grand Canal, Yangzi River, East and South China Sea coasts, Tonkin delta and Mekong River.

The envoys were guided with pomp to the palace where they met the king and delivered to him the Yang Di's proclamation which was read publicly a few moments later. Then at the banquet Chang was told emphatically that the hosts now belonged to the Empire (of Sui), no longer to the Red Earth. Thus Chitu became a complete Chinese dependency. It sent tribute to the Sui court in 608 and 609, and then, as mentioned before, in 610. Chang Jun and his retinue were entertained by the court and treated to plentiful dinners. Maybe they stayed as state guests for more than two years until 610. The other possibility is that Chang Jun waited for Nayaka in Jiao Zhi until 610.

Unfortunately the Chinese records do not mention what local products they brought for the first two tributes. Otherwise we should know what China wanted economically in addition to the gold brought by Nayaka in 610. But in another historical perspective a question arises: why did Chitu need this relationship with China?

The Sui seem to have had another name for this country whose real name is presently unknown to us. At the end of the *Sui Shu* Nanman chapter we read a sentence to the effect that at the end of our earth is Dan Jiao and at the end of our view is Ri Nan. *Dan Jiao* literally means "Red-colored Boundary." The term had been used for the southernmost region in the Chinese world since the third or fourth century (*Jinguzhu*, chapter on town and village).

Chitu was once a part of the Funan–Dunxun confederation (Hoshino, 1993) which fell within the region termed Dan Jiao because of its red earth so clearly visible to Chinese visitors. By the Sui era, Funan was in decline but still existed on a smaller scale around Lopburi. Funan may have attempted to reassert its influence over the rising Chitu–Luosha/Luoji region, and this may have prompted Chitu to seek Chinese intercession. In 608 between 22 March and 20 May, the Sui court received the first tribute mission from Chitu. It was also reported that during this period the emperor ordered Chang Jun to go from Chitu to Luoji (which the economy chapter of *Sui Shu* and Nanman chapter of *Xin Tangshu* write as Luosha). This place name sounds similar to present-day Rach Gia, a coastal province to the south of Oc Eo containing archaeological sites which probably should be associated with the former East Region of Dunxun (Dunxun zhi dongjie) mentioned in the annals of *Liang Shu* and *Nan Shi*, far away from Funan proper in Central Thailand.

Chitu's Capital and the Banteay Prei Nokor Site

The *Sui Shu* contains a valuable description of buildings at the Chitu capital. I quote the relevant parts of Wheatley's translation.

He [the king] resides in the city of Seng-chih^[3] which has triple gates more than a hundred paces apart ... All the buildings in the royal palace consist of multiple pavilions with the doors on the northern sides. The king sits on a three-tiered couch, facing north ... Several hundred Brahmans sit in rows facing each other on the eastern and western sides.

This orientation to the north is rare in pre-Angkorian ruins. With the exception of Asram Maha Rosei at Phnom Da, it is found only in the group of Prasat Preah Theat Toc(h) near the center of the ancient citadel of Banteay Prei Nokor, some thirty-five kilometers east of Kompong Cham port.

This city, said to be the second largest after Angkor Thom and the biggest in the pre-Angkorian period, is surrounded by a high earthen wall about 2.5 kilometers square. The extended ramparts are flanked by an outer moat of about one hundred paces (*bu*) and possibly also by an inner moat where rice is cultivated now. This matches the description of Chitu in the *Sui Shu*. A road enters from a western gate into the central area of the citadel where a village and its modern Buddhist monastery now stand.

At the west side of the modern temple mound were three brick towers all facing east, named Prasat Prah That Thom. Almost nothing is left of the north tower, but the redented central and plain south towers are mostly intact except for the upper stories and for the base of the south tower which has long cracks in the walls. The eastern entrances of both buildings are badly damaged.

About two hundred meters southeast of the towers and temple mound⁴ is the forlorn ruin of Prasat Preah Theat Toc(h). The original three little temple towers were almost destroyed by Polpot's soldiers. With its naked wall panels without pilasters and unimaginable top stories, only the west sanctuary now stands precariously beside a large pit and the remains of the east and central shrines—piles of brick rubble and a well-made somasutra of schist. The west temple has only one entrance in the north side. The other three sides are completely walled. The Prasat Preah Theat Toc(h) was described as aligned east-west and oriented to the north, first by Lunet de Lajonquiere in the 1900s and then by Henri Parmentier, whose pictures are very useful. This discovery is quoted by Briggs who is in turn quoted by Mahesh Kumar Sharan (1974, 292-4).

Called by Briggs quoting Parmentier as "the most complete group of ruins probably of the Funan period," it bears witness to the existence of an important polity in this region in the fifth to sixth centuries. The earthenworks, which might have been enlarged and restructured in the following centuries, confirm this impression. The fact that the three large towers at the center of the site belong to at least two different art periods suggest later changes of the city plan.

Traditional schemes of chronology for this site are as follows. The Prasat Preah Theat/That Toc(h) was probably built in the Funan period, i.e. between the early second and mid-sixth century. This was followed by a period of Zhenla expansion which may or may not have been contemporary with the indefinable pre-Angkorian period of art history and archaeology. In the 1930s Claudius Madrolle proposed that either Stung Treng or Banteay Prei Nokor might have been Bhavapura, the capital of the Zhenla king Bhavavarman I, contemporary with the Sui emperors. Briggs (1951) thought that during the second half of the seventh century Jayavarman I held the citadel which might have been his capital rather than Ba Phnom, Angkor Borei or Sambor Prei Kuk. This theory has been put in doubt by Claude Jacques (1990, 257). Cœdès considered that Banteay Prei Nokor was Indrapura, the first of Jayavarman II's capitals, and that the present walls and moats date back only to the end of the eighth century. In art history it is also speculated that Bhavavarman I built the south tower of the Prasat Preah Theat/That Thom while Jayavarman I built the central and north towers (Briggs 1951, 56).

The Chinese texts suggest a different history for this site. The north orientation of the early Hindu temples at the site matches the description which Wheatley translated from the *Sui Shu/Bei Shi*, and also matches other passages in the same text. Wheatley (1961, 28 n. 3) commented that "all this ritual is strictly Hindu." Even though we cannot determine in which century the three north-oriented Hindu temples in situ in the citadel were built, it seems they existed before the visit of the Sui mission.

Around Chitu

In the introductory paragraph of the Chitu notice in *Sui Shu*, as is customary with any chapter on foreign countries, Chitu's neighbors in the four cardinal points were recorded with Chinese names and transcription.

East of Chitu was the kingdom of Boluoci (my reading of both the Bainaben and Dianben editions) or Boluola (according to the newly printed Zhong hua Shuju edition) which can be rendered as Bahnar in its ancient vocable because Chinese often records both *n* and *r* with *l*. The Bahnar are an austroasiatic ethnic group in the southern Vietnamese highlands east of Cambodia.

To the west was the kingdom of Poluocha which in my attempt at reconstruction might have meant Pulau (Ka)sha of old times (now Phu Quoc Island). To the south was Heluodan or Ho-lo-tan which the previous generation of historians has mistakenly located in Indonesia. It was also written as Heluodandan or Dandan in Chinese Nanhai notices and references over several centuries. It was one of the ports on the Mekong delta which became independent after the disintegration of the Kanchipuram-centered trade network of the Funan-Dunxun confederation. I cannot pinpoint Heluodan's site for the time being, but it must be in the general area of the Mekong and Bassac below Phnom

Penh and east of Angkor Borei, which I think corresponds to the Poli or Pohlei (in Cantonese) of the Chinese dynastic annals.

Some distance (*ju*) to the north was Da Hai—in this case the Great Lake, not the Big Ocean.

The three neighboring countries mentioned above (Bahnar, Pulau (Ka)sha and Heluodan) may not have been the most prominent states in each direction, but may have been mentioned in the annals because the Chinese knew the special relationships between them.

Aspects of Chitu

Even though he located Chitu in Malaya following Wheatley's identification, Cœdès noted the correspondence between Chinese transcriptions of Chitu court official titles and Cambodian inscriptional sources (Cœdès 1964, 150).

A prime minister was called Satuo jialuo. This may mean Sadhukara, which Cœdès translates as "faisant le bien" and Wheatley as "benefactor," or Sardhakara which Cœdès translated as "collaborateur" and Wheatley as "assistant." The next two ministers were called Tuonada-yi/cha. This may mean Dhanada, which Cœdès interprets as "dispenseur des biens," a title which was inscribed on a seal at Oc Eo, and Wheatley as "dispenser of blessing." In my work presented in Paris in 1993, I discerned the vocable *dha na* (possession or wealth) in the *dun* part of Dunxun, Funan's former five coastal colonies.

Three junior ministers below them were called Jialimijia. This may mean Karmika which both Cœdès and Wheatley translate as "agent." Wheatley says these three were in charge of Chitu's politico-economic affairs, but I feel all six were meant.

The title Juluomodi (Kulapati) is translated as "chef de famille" or "head of the house." In Cambodian inscriptions, he was the chief of a religious institution. But in Chitu he was responsible for administering justice.

At the subregional level, each city or town was posted with a Naye (xie) jia (Nayaka) or "guide." This Pali word meaning "master" is an example of Mon vocabulary in use in the Funan heartland in Central Thailand. A Nayaka had ten subordinates called Bodi (Pati) or chef/chief, a form which occurs as a final component or suffix in some Indianized (Southeast Asian) titles but independently in Malay/Cham titles.

We seem finally to be learning how to read the Chinese references to ancient Cambodian polities. For example, Khmer inscriptions were carved on stones in Angkor Borei in 611, and again two years later at Vat Vihar Trang along with a shorter one in Sanskrit and maybe others in the vicinity. They all can be classified as belonging to King Ishanavarman of "Zhenla." In 617 and later his inscriptions appeared in several locations in the north but not in Kompong Cham. And in 617 the Sui emperor Yang Di received wholeheartedly the first mission from Zhenla and Poli (Angkor Borei), which were two different countries in the Chinese annals but were already united into one kingdom

under the same royal house in Cambodia. This occurred nine years after the first of successive tributes from Chitu was sent to the Sui court. These diplomatic actions must have played a defensive role for Chitu which seems to have controlled the trade route to Pulau (Ka)sha on the western coast before Ishanavarman came down from the north.

Meanwhile the Sui must have gathered reconnaissance about Zhenla, the most fast moving and aggressive state in the area, because *Sui Shu* has a different kind of detailed notice on Zhenla giving exact royal family names, palace interior furniture, botanical and zoological observations, and so on.

They could not have done this research after 617, for in the following year their dynasty was replaced by the Tang or Li lineage who had controlled militarily the Grand Canal since 616.

Ishanavarman might have known that a dynastic change was in store in China. The inland Zhenla sent tribute or traded products in 623, 625, 628 under some arrangement with Lin-yi royalty probably acting as intermediary.

A little before 630, Angkor Borei seems to have freed itself completely from Zhenla. In this year Poli traded with the Tang court by themselves. These details coincide with an epigraphist's view on the end of Ishanavarman's reign.⁵

Chitu in the Later Sources and Some Tentative Conclusions

After Chang Jun presented Nayaka to Yang Di and they were given gifts and titles by the emperor in 610, there is almost no direct Sino-Chitu relation on record.

The reference to Chitu in the *Jiu Tangshu* or Old Tang Annals is anachronistic. They state that to reach Poli from Lin-yi people went through Funan, not Zhenla which had emerged as an independent nation some eighty years before.

Similarly, the *Xin Tangshu* tells that Chang Jun in Sui times was commissioned by Yang Ti to go from Chitu to Luosha which only became known to China later. These must have been old stories repeated in the annals of the following dynasty. However, what *Jiu Tangshu* says about the route taken to arrive at Poli clarifies more about the position of Dandan by placing it on the Mekong at about an equal latitude with Takeo/Angkor Borei on the west bank of the Bassac. This has to be proved with other references on Heluodan.

Xin Tangshu mentions Chitu in another sentence following the above reference. It says that from Chitu the sea can be reached by going southwestward, and Poluo can be reached on the same route. Poluo or Poluosha sounds like Polou Jiasi or Pulau Kas which in the *Xin Tangshu's* notice on (South) He Ling appears as the new capital of He Ling after it gave up the former capital in the west, which I have located in Thailand east of Rayong.

Pulau Kas probably corresponds to the present Phu Quoc Island. This route from Chitu to Dandan and Poli (Angkor Borei) and then to Poluo (Ka)sha across the sea must have been one often used by Chinese and other foreign envoys, merchants and pilgrims.

The name of Chitu seems to have been remembered during the whole Tang period (618–907) and beyond. The *Taiping Huanyu Ji*, an encyclopedia completed in the Taiping reign of 976–984 and drawing from the previous dynastic sources, mentions the distance of 1,500 li between Chitu Guo and Jinlipishi Guo in the west. Pelliot (1904, 324–5) and Luce (1925, 176) thought that Jinlipishi meant Srivijaya although the final *ya* was not clearly transcribed in the Chinese vocable. The *shi* character at the end reads *sai* in Cantonese and *sei* in Sino-Japanese. I agree that the four-character form of Jinlipishi would render Srivijaya in the Chinese pronunciation of this region around Vietnam. Within 1,500 li (roughly 600–700 km) west of the old Chitu territory from Kompong Cham to the Saigon river basin and eastern parts of the Mekong delta, one could reach the Surat Thani–Nakhon Sri Thammarat region in southern Thailand, site of an inscription dated 775 mentioning a Srivijaya king and related Mahayana bronze figures.

Why did the Chinese mention this Chitu–Jinlipishi connection? This is noteworthy because there are indications that connect Chitu with Cham/Malay ethnicity. The lowest level administrators were called Pati, a Malay title, and Pulau Kas was mentioned three times in the Chitu notices and references. If on arrival in Chitu, Chang Jun's big boat (*chuan*) had been towed by a gold chain as far as the capital, this capital must have been on a river *kompong*. This would make a big difference to the location of the capital. However, I interpret this gold chain differently. I believe the meaning is that the big Chitu boat Chang Jun boarded was merely dragged on shore for a welcoming feast and subsequently left at the river port. As far as I know now there are no north-oriented buildings of this period in a large city on the Mekong and its tributaries.

The last point I would like to make goes back to Lingjiabobaduo/Lingaparvata at Champasak in South Laos. A similar place name, Ling Jiabopo shan, is mentioned in the *Sui Shu* notice on Zhenla, and historians have long identified this with the Linga-shaped Phu Kao at Champasak. But this theory has never convinced me. In 1976 I translated *Ling Jiabopo Shan* as the "Mausoleum Mound of Grandmother Java" and placed the mausoleum somewhere outside Champasak (Hoshino 1986, 23–4). Most Thai scholars think that the birthplace of Zhenla was in Ubon Ratchathani or Yasothon where an inscription was recently discovered mentioning the Sena royal house to which belonged Chitrasena/Mahendravarman and Ishanasena/varman. During Chang Jun's stay at Lingaparvata, Zhou Zhenla is not mentioned at all and instead Lin-yi is mentioned as close by on the opposite bank of the Mekong. The hill slope on which the Lingaparvata temple stood could have been a part of Lin-yi, leading us to conclude that the Chinese envoys were not in Zhenla territory. Maybe the place was Nanji (the southernmost) jun or xian of the Chinese Lin-yi under the Sui. In Tang times two missions came from Lin-yi Shizi in 668 and 698. Lin-yi Shizi differs from Shizi Guo which means Sri Lanka. Shizi means lion and I believe Lin-yi Shizi refers to the Lion Rock in Chang Jun's itinerary—none other than the large Khong Island in the Mekong.

The Farm Soldiers system developed considerably in Tang times. A new province of Chang Zhou was established in Sakon Nakhon behind the defensive Phu Phan mountain range with juns and xians on the Mekong. One important jun was at B/Man Yang from where Chang Jun might have departed for Chitu and which might have been the Sui Nanhai Jun for more than a decade.

Notes

1. Except for quoted phrases, Chinese transcriptions in this paper are in Pinyin.
2. *Lidaixiaoshi* of a Ming edition printed in 1584; *Gujinshouhai* printed in 1544. They include *Daye zaji* and other documents on the Yang Di reign.
3. Nanhai references to Seng-chih/sengzhi sometimes defy interpretation, but it basically means "immeasurable" or "immense" as it does here: immense city.
4. Briggs (1951, 56) is wrong in saying that the south temple of the P. P. T. Thom group was built "a few meters to the west of it [the T. T. P. Toc group] ..." His paraphrasing of French works is sometimes misleading.
5. Jacques (1990, 254) says that "Isanavarman was dead in 628." Coèdes (1964, 133) once said that the reign presumably ended in about 635.

Main Annals and Encyclopedia Mentioned in Text

Bei Shi.

Cefu Yuangui.

Chituguo Ji.

Dayue Shiji Quanshu, Waiji.

Jinguzhu.

Jiu Tangshu.

Liang Shu.

Nan Shi.

Sui Shu.

Taiping Huanyu Ji.

Taiping Yulan.

Taiqing jinye shendan jing.

Wenxian Tongkao.

Xin Tangshu.

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Check List for Chinese Characters

(In approximate order of appearance in the text)

Chitu Guo 赤土國	Z/Chanb/po 瞻博/婆
Chituguo Ji 赤土國記	Wendan 文單
Suishu 隋書	Juloumi 拘婁蜜
Beishi 北史	hai 海
Xin Tangshu 新唐書	Da Hai 大海
Taiping Yulan 太平御覽	Xiao Hai 小海
Wenxian Tongkao 文獻通考	Nan Hai 南海
Nanman 南蠻	Cefu Yuangui 册府元龜
Lin-yi 林邑	Dong Hai 東海
Zhenla 真臘	Jiao Zhou 交州
Poli 婆利	Yang Su 楊素
Jiao Zhi 交趾	Ly Phat Tu 李佛子
Sui 隋	Liu Fang 劉方
Yang Jian 楊堅	Fan Zhi 梵志
Nanghai jun 南海郡	Dang Zhou 蕩州
Guang Zhou 廣州	Nong Zhou 農州
Fan Zhou 番州	Chong Zhou 冲州
Yang Di 煬帝	Bijing 比景
Yang Zhou 揚州	Haiyin 海陰
Jiang Du 江都	xian 縣
Chang Jiang 長江	Haikou 海口
Yangzi Jiang 楊子江	Shouling 寿冷
Huang He 黃河	She/Duli 闍黎
Da Ye 大業	Dayue Shiji Quanshu(Waiji)
Tang 唐	大越史記全書(外紀)
Shili Foshi 室利佉誓/逝	Ma Yuan 馬援
L/Nou Qian Tuo Huan 耨乾陀桓	Han 漢
She Ba Ruo 舍跋若	Xiangpu 象浦
Jia N/Luo She Fen 迦邏舍弗	Jinshan 金山
Gan Zhi Fu/Fu Nan 干支弗/扶南	Jiaojiang 交江
Huanwang 環王	Nanji 南極
Xiu Luo Fen 修羅分	Chang Jun 常駿
Ganbi 甘畢	Wang Junzheng 王君政

Tuntian zhushi 屯田主事	Tuonada-yi/cha 陀拏達義/叉
Yubu zhushi 虞部主事	Jialimijia 迦利蜜迦
zhou 舟	Juluomodi 俱羅末帝
xun 旬	Bodi 鉢帝
ri 日	Boluo-ci/la 波羅刺/刺
yue 月	Bainaben 百納本
Jiaoshi Shan 焦石山	Dianben 殿本
Lingjiabobaduo 陵伽鉢拔多	Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局
Er guo dongnan 而過東南	Poluoshā 婆羅娑
bo 泊	Phu Quoc 富國
zhouxi 州西	Heluodan 訶羅旦
yu Lin-yi 與林邑	Dandan 旦旦
xiangdui 相對	ju 距
shang you shenci 上有神祠	Jiu Tangshu 旧唐書
yan 焉	Poluo 婆羅
yi 詣	Poluo Jiasi 婆露迦斯
Wen Yang 文陽	He Ling 訶陵
Shizhi Shi 獅子石	Taiping Huanyu Ji 太平寰宇記
Langyaxu 狼牙須國	Jinlipishi 金利毘逝
Jilong Dao 鷄籠島	chuan 船
Jiumaluo 鳩摩羅	Ling Jiabopo Shan 陵迦鉢婆山
Li Fuduosai 利富多塞	Lidaixiaoshi 歷代小史
Naye(xia)jia 那邪迦	Ming 明
Q/Jutan 瞿曇	Gujinshouhai 古今說海
Funan 扶南	Daye Zaji 大業雜記
Dunxun 頓遜	Taiqing jinye shendan jing
Dan Jiao 丹徼	太清金液神丹經
Ri Nan 日南	Chen Jinghe(Ching-ho) 陳荊和
Luosha 羅殺	Jinguzhu 今古註
Luoji 羅* 𑖀𑖂	sengzhi 僧祇
Dunxun zhi dongjie 頓遜之東界	
Liang Shu 梁書	
Nan Shi 南史	
bu 步	
Satuojialuo 薩陀迦羅	