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Frontier Management and Tribute Relations along the Empire's Southern Border:  
China and Vietnam in the 10th and 11th Centuries

by

James Adams Anderson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

1999

Program Authorized to Offer Degree: History

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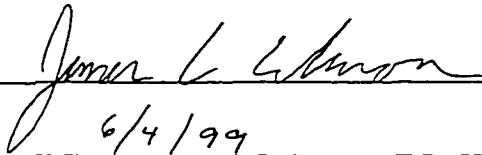
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Doctoral Dissertation

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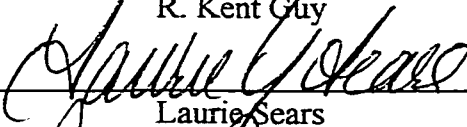
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Abstract

Frontier Management and Tribute Relations along the Empire's Southern Border:  
China and Vietnam in the 10th and 11th Centuries

by James Adams Anderson

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Patricia Ebrey  
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From the founding of the Song dynasty (960-1279), the Chinese court at Kaifeng treated the Việt people of the Hồng River Delta differently from other neighboring societies that supported or competed with the new Chinese leadership. Sino-Việt relations were necessarily a complicated affair, because the northern Việt region had been an integral part of the Chinese political and cultural empire for nearly one thousand years. The system of Sino-Việt relations prior to the Song had been one of a central government directly linked to a web of subordinate local governments. However, the influences of local politics and regional trade during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries led to a transformation of Sino-Việt relations, establishing points of contact beyond the control of a central Chinese authority. Eventually, the Song court itself would draw on the precedent of Zhou Dynasty (1122-221 BCE) feudalism or Five Dynasties Period (907-960) frontier management, and not Tang Dynasty (618-905) hegemony, to produce the new terms of interaction. This study demonstrates that

Sino-Việt relations of the Song period should be distinguished from the relationships of the northern kingdoms within the "multi-state" Chinese empire and from the Sino-centric tribute relations that other Southeast Asian kingdoms would establish with the Song court.

Meanwhile, Việt rulers used the evolving relationship with China to set the foundations for their own base of power. Local leaders from the Sino-Việt border region at first appeared to follow the wishes of the Chinese by sending tribute missions to China and by accepting official titles granted by the Song court. However, formal acceptance of pronouncements from the Chinese court did not imply that Việt leaders had abandoned their local political concerns. Soon after the Song's founding, a Việt military commander declared locally his region's independence and adopted for himself the title "Ever Victorious King." The emerging Việt political order was shaped by an interplay between Chinese signs of authority expressed through the tribute system and local Việt responses to and adaptations of these signs. Attempts by both the Song and Đại Cồ Việt (968-1054) courts to push conflicts between minority ethnic groups across the Sino-Việt frontier accented this reconfiguring of the Sino-Việt relationship.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	ii
CHAPTER 1: Historical, Philosophical and Institutional Contexts for the Song Tribute System .....	18
CHAPTER 2: A Survey of Pre-Song Sino-Việt Official Relations .....	70
CHAPTER 3: Early Developments in Song-Việt Official Relations .....	128
CHAPTER 4: Tribute Relations, Border Tensions and Military Conflict .....	188
CONCLUSIONS: .....	275
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	282
LIST OF MAPS: .....	295
LIST OF FIGURES: .....	299
APPENDIX: .....	304
GLOSSARY .....	366

## PREFACE

Why should we in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century pay particular attention to the historical relationship between the regions now ruled as the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam? I once asked myself this question while standing in a valley near the commune of Hà Quảng on the Sino-Vietnamese frontier, through which Chinese tanks had rolled as recently as 1979, retracing the well-trodden paths of cavalry and foot soldiers from centuries earlier. One important reason is the modern re-emergence of China as a regional power. Southeast Asian countries, once under the thumb of colonial masters, have gained their independence in time to face the effects of China's growing influence. Southeast Asia, Vietnam included, shows great potential for vigorous growth and innovation, supporting the development of an integrated global economy. However, widespread confidence in the economic autonomy of this region, in the midst of a financial crisis at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, may have been overstated.

In this weakened economic environment, China has become more involved in Southeast Asian affairs, and the large northern neighbor's influence on the region could surpass U.S. sway in the near future. However, examining the historical record would reveal that the Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian peoples have resisted northern pressures for ages, even as they borrowed institutions and practices to create and perpetuate their own regimes of local control. To understand this complex North-South relationship, one must develop a stronger sense of its genealogy.

This study involves an examination of Sino-Việt tribute relations, in which I follow the emergence of an independent Vietnamese state in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. Understanding the Chinese court's response to an autonomous polity on its southern frontier elaborates further on the image of East Asia as a "multi-state system" from the tenth through the thirteenth century. I began my study by examining documentary and archaeological evidence describing tribute missions, court ceremonies, and other state rituals associated with the relationship between Song China and Đại Việt Vietnam. By reconstructing the mechanism of Sino-Việt tribute relations, I reveal a network of symbols that supported and legitimized the Chinese claim to regional control. I also discuss how the Viêts and other indigenous leaders along the frontier employed these symbols to perform within the Chinese tribute system in such ways as to establish regional independence while containing Chinese territorial expansion.

The first chapter of my dissertation project involves a broad overview of the prevailing Chinese court notion of world order through the first years of the Song dynasty. For this section I have examined the different institutions used by the Song court in official interaction with foreign kingdoms. The early Song rulers imagined a world order shaped by a latticework of ritual practices (*li*) that joined all polities, large and small. Through these rituals there soon developed a system of titles and practices, centered on the emperor's person, which produced a hierarchical ordering of foreign courts and outlying chieftains. However, this new order retained its legitimacy only as long as its existence contributed to regional peace and tranquillity. The Song ruler

was himself constrained by this framework, because his status as emperor relied as much on the active participation of tributary “vassals” as China’s smaller neighbors did on the Song court’s sanction of authority. I continue to elaborate on this point as I analyze materials pertaining to the institutional developments in the early Song’s policy of external relations.

In chapter two I examine the development of Sino-Việt relations before the founding of the Song dynasty. Following the account given in the official Chinese histories, one gets the sense that the northern Việt region was ultimately absorbed into the Chinese imperial order during the early Han period, and that the region remained more or less subordinate to northern rulers until the collapse of the Tang dynasty in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. This overly Sino-centric picture of the relationship masks many important indigenous changes in the regions; however, in some sense, the Việts in their political development owe a debt to Chinese emperors and subjects. The political ideals and institutions employed by the Chinese court became known to local figures that engaged with imperial representatives at different levels of exchange. Furthermore, displaced northerners who entered the south as appointed officials, displaced settlers or military personnel, brought ideas and practices that adapted to local conditions, became part of the developing political culture. Keith Taylor in his study of pre-modern Vietnam has already explored this topic quite thoroughly.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I have only taken up the task of seeking out the most prominent elements in

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<sup>1</sup> See Keith W. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

the Sino- Việt relationship of this period that set the stage for the emergence of an autonomous Việt polity in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Here I will also note that I have provided this chapter primarily for the benefit of China historians with no prior knowledge of Vietnamese history. Other readers may wish to proceed directly to chapter three.

In chapter three I look at aspects of Sino-Việt tributary relations during the early Song dynasty. I have divided the relationship's development into the intervals between Việt envoys' visits to Kaifeng, because it now appears that court-to-court relations changed with the outcome of each tribute mission. For this reason, I take into account the protocol observed during these audiences, including the type and quantity of tribute articles presented to Song court, as well as presents bestowed upon the visiting envoys by the Song emperor. An important point in this section that I explore is the distinction between ritual and trade in Song- Việt tribute relations. The tribute missions themselves were most importantly opportunities to negotiate the balance of status and authority existing between the Song and Việt rulers. The missions were not thinly veiled attempts to promote trade.

Beginning with chapter two, I also examine patterns present in the bestowal of Song titles on Việt officials. I have recorded the titles granted by the Song court to each prominent member of the Việt missions, as well as the positions and honorific titles the Chinese emperor awarded to the Việt ruler. The Chinese court would often dispatch an envoy to return to the Việt region with the mission to bestow these titles

personally. The Chinese envoys' entry into the Việt court would complete the ritual cycle of activity necessary to further the tributary relationship. Another important issue is the significance of fiefs granted by the Song court to Việt rulers and officials. These gifts were largely nominal, and the Việt ruler wielded only limited authority over the offered regions. However, such gifts of land followed practices originating in Zhou period state-to-state relations. My preliminary study has also revealed that the status granted to Việt rulers by the Song court was enhanced when the regional influence of the Chinese empire diminished. I link these changes to court attempts to reconfigure the hierarchy of tributary relations, as well as to offset concessions of territory and prestige granted to the Song's more aggressive northern neighbors. For example, Việt rulers' titular status reached its highest point in the last years of the Southern Song, a matter that is beyond the scope of this present study. However, the Việt court's continued adherence to the terms of the tributary relationship even in this period of dynastic decline did not go unrecorded.

In the preceding chapters, I consider ritual patterns and ritual practice separately in constructing the developmental dynamic of Sino- Việt tribute relations during the Song dynasty. On one hand, by reconstructing the mechanism of relations, I attempt to map a network of symbols that supported and legitimized the Chinese claim to regional control. Song rulers unquestionably placed their relationship with Việt leaders within a strictly hierarchical framework. On the other hand, the relationship between the Song empire and the Việt kingdom changed with nearly every

tributary encounter. Moreover, local Việt leaders negotiated their status within the Chinese tribute system in such a way as to establish regional independence while containing Chinese aggression. Therefore, I am examining not only the structure of Song-Việt relations, but also the practice, maintenance and development of relations through the words and deeds that accompanied each tribute mission.

In chapter four I look at official histories, court documents and personal writings and take up the matter of frontier management, examining how Sino-Việt tributary relations shaped frontier administration. My approach to these texts is hermeneutic, based in part on the techniques of close reading that O.W. Wolters introduced in his studies of Vietnamese historical texts.<sup>2</sup> Following Wolters's approach, I treat texts and contexts as interdependent forces in the process of historical interpretation. In this chapter I investigate both Chinese and Vietnamese accounts of specific conflicts that led to military action. These episodes involved disputes over the policing of local banditry, frontier revolts, and border disagreements. This study demonstrates how conflict between the Song and Đại Việt courts shifted from a context defined by the ideological aspects of the tributary relationship to one more focused more on the spatial relations between two neighboring states. I take a closer look at the indigenous communities that inhabited the frontier between the Song and the Đại Việt, paying special attention to the rebellion of the *Zhuang* minority leader

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<sup>2</sup> The reader will find a description of Wolters's "structuralist" approach to the reading of Sino-Vietnamese texts in his article "Possibilities for a Reading of the 1293-1357 Period in the Vietnamese

Nùng Trí Cao. Finally, I examine shifts in the physical border between the Song empire and the Đại Việt kingdom through the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The Chinese and Vietnamese sources translated and examined for this study are by no means biases-free, context-less accounts of relations between the two courts. While Song records of tributary activity are still available today, the earliest extant Vietnamese accounts of 10<sup>th</sup> century history events date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These accounts, compiled and edited under Trần dynastic (1225-1400) patronage, reflect intellectual concerns that were quite different from the concerns of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>-century Việt leaders. Therefore, I will interject at this point with a brief discussion of sources to indicate the historiographical emphases and orientations modern Chinese and Vietnamese historians inherited from their scholarly predecessors.

The twenty-four imperial Standard Histories (*zhengshi* 正史) make up the core of pre-modern Chinese historical learning, and these works form the foundation upon which subsequent generations of scholars formed their understanding of peoples along the frontiers. The Standard History's organization owes its origins to Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (154-86 BCE) *Records of the Historian*, a project started by the author's father Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 BCE) and completed around 87 BCE. The Annals-Biography (*jizhuanti* 紀傳體) arrangement of materials, in which a court-centered chronological history is first presented, followed by biographical sketches and short

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Annals" in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, ed. David Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 369-410.

monographs to illustrate previous points, became the standard for all subsequent projects deemed Standard Histories.<sup>3</sup>

However, the methods for compiling these histories did not remain constant. Prior to 630, works later designated Standard Histories were efforts of a single individual or, at most, two or three scholars. Following the early Tang reorganization of the Historiography Bureau 史館, standard histories gradually became court-sanctioned group projects that reflected the aims and aspirations of the subsequent dynasty under which they were compiled. Often assembled quite rapidly by teams of scholars at the outset of a new dynastic order, these histories relied on documents collected by the Historiography Bureau of the previous dynasty for the bulk of its sources. Materials that did not support and illustrate court-centered annals section were often eliminated or de-emphasized. While Standard Histories by the compilation of the *History of the Song* 宋史 had become ponderously detailed records of court institutions and practices, they reflected the interest of the central court in clarifying its actions to others, and did not attempt to elucidate the perspectives of these officials on the periphery.

While efforts at fairness and editorial objectivity had been notable elements of Chinese historiography since Sima Qian's precedent-setting enterprise, so too were the practices of moral commentary and "teaching by example." The most influential of such histories after the early Song was Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019-1086) *The*

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<sup>3</sup> Endymion Porter Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), p. 491.

*Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* 資治通鑒 (ZTJ). This project was completed between the years 1067 and 1084, and arguably began with an order from the Song emperor Yingzong 英宗 (r. 1064-67).<sup>4</sup> Sima Guang has often been labeled a political conservative, due to his opposition to the implementation of Wang Anshi's New Policies 新法, and the professed purpose for this history's compilation certainly supports a political conservative outlook. Sima Guang and his assistants produced their history to serve as a guide for central court policy and the moral training of its leadership. Sima Guang's historical narrative has been described as "a history book of practical lessons," using recorded examples of statecraft from China's history to guide the behavior of contemporary rulers and officials. Sima Guang as an early proponent of the ideology later termed Neo-Confucianism sought to read into past court events moral portents for the fortunes of the empire.

Another important Song source for this project was Li Tao's 李燾 (1115-1184) *Xū zizhi tongjian changbian* (*Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*) 續資治通鑒長編 (XZZTJCB). An admirer of Sima Guang's work, Li Tao sought to continue the project of the ZTJ into the Northern Song. However, Li Tao was as concerned about presenting a complete and unprejudiced picture of the historical records as he was interested in extracting moral lessons from these events. Therefore, Li Tao and his staff often included full drafts of memorials and court edicts, rather than the short excerpts more common of histories

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<sup>4</sup> See Günter Lewin's notice in Etienne Balazs and Yves Hervouet (ed.), *A Sung Bibliography* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), p. 69. Lewin's notes appear to be at least partially a

compiled in his day. Li Tao's efforts insured that a greater amount of primary sources would be available for future study. Although commentary by this Song historian often ended with moralistic judgments, his method of study had provided subsequent generations with a greater array of materials from which to begin similar studies.

Pre-modern Vietnamese annalist histories did not appear until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and compilers of these court-based histories largely followed the examples of their Chinese counterparts. The most prominent Vietnamese text describing Sino-Việt relations in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries is the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* 大越史記全書 (*DVSKTT*), compiled by Ngô Sĩ Liên 吳士連 in 1479. This history was commissioned by the Trần emperor to express the independent nature of the Việt kingdom, in the shadow of its looming northern neighbor. This Vietnamese history was written a century after one of its main sources the now missing *Đại Việt sử ký* of Lê Văn Hưu 黎文休, which was completed in 1272. Lê Văn Hưu's account recorded the history of the Việt kingdom through the end of the Lý Dynasty in 1224. For this reason, and the fact that Ngô Sĩ Liên used as his historiographical model the work of another Song scholar, Sima Guang, the Vietnamese text contains many of the same stylistic characteristics as the earlier Chinese works. Differences between these texts reflect differing perspectives more than alternative sources.

To examine differences between these two texts, we can turn to the work of O.W. Wolters for some guidance. Wolters contends that the modern researcher should

approach an historical document as a contemporary reader might have, writing that "in the Vietnamese text, local happenings require their own linguistic usage, albeit within the Chinese lexicon."<sup>5</sup> The pre-modern Vietnamese scholar, while writing history, could be part of a cultural tradition that permitted him to handle Chinese literary forms without being influenced by Chinese perceptions of the past.<sup>6</sup> Wolters's approach is limited to what he terms a structuralist method. There is great potential in this structural methodology for extracting new meaning from the text. However, I see no reason for abandoning the more conventional styles of interpretation this study of Chinese and Vietnamese texts will also employ. "Reading between the lines" may be a risk, but it is one that the enterprising student of history must necessarily take. As Wolters writes, "the test of such an enterprise should always be whether anything arises worthy of the historian's consideration."<sup>7</sup> The historian should take whatever is available to achieve whatever is possible.

As Wolters mentions, much of the terminology from the *DVSKTT* was borrowed the older Song text *ZZTJ*.<sup>8</sup> However, Ngô Sĩ Liên wrote with a somewhat different purpose, and searched for more concrete examples to illustrate his points. The political elite generally read this history with a practical interest in learning from the day-to-day statecraft of the past. The "moralizing vocabulary of the Confucian

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<sup>5</sup> O.W. Wolters, "Possibilities," p. 375.

<sup>6</sup> O.W. Wolters, "Historians and Emperors in Vietnam and China: Comments arising out of Le Van Huu's history, Presented to the Tran Court in 1272," in ed. Anthony Reid and David Marr, *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1979), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Wolters, "Possibilities," p. 379.

<sup>8</sup> Wolters, "Possibilities," p. 370.

cannon," a prominent feature of most Chinese historical writing after the rise of Neo-Confucianism was not so highly visible in Vietnamese writing.<sup>9</sup> In the traditional Chinese political system, theories of legitimization were voiced in rituals and couched in justifying maxims at the Chinese court while actual power depended on the bureaucracy. However, through the Lý Dynasty, legitimization of the Việt state was personal; the public images of the leaders themselves "was the substance of state power."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the figures mentioned in the Vietnamese text were, for the most part, leaders and those officials directed affiliated with the top leadership.

Moreover, Wolters writes that "the texts (of Vietnamese history) were not read in order to study a 'Confucianist' ideology. Instead, they would have been seen as resembling an encyclopedia of recorded wisdom that the Vietnamese could consult in ways that seemed relevant in reorganizing specific situations, such as an imperial succession, and the specific measures that those situations seemed to require."<sup>11</sup> The use of Chinese institutional titles can be seen as a first step toward independence, a way of organizing the unknown with what one knows, regardless of its origins.

I would also like to add a note regarding some of the terms I employ in this study. Although I have attempted for remain as historically specific as possible when naming kingdoms and periods through various time periods and political shifts, some of the language I have used may not satisfy every reader. I have chosen Việt as the term to describe persons and place associated with political power situated in the

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<sup>9</sup> Wolters, "Possibilities," p. 372.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, "Authority," p. 170.

vicinity of the Hồng River Delta. "Vietnamese" and "the Vietnamese" are terms to describe a modern, multi-ethnic political identity. This study focuses on activities of courts and frontier chiefdoms. The communities of people affected by these political bodies would not have identified themselves as one nationality or another. Such notions of identity arrive in a much later period of history than the one examined here. Moreover, I have used the term "Chinese" to describe people associated with courts and political centers north of the Hồng River Delta. I do not mean for this term necessarily to indicate ethnicity. Wherever possible, I have used dynastic terms to indicate a person's political affiliation.

As David Kertzer notes in his book *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, "creating a symbol or, more commonly, identifying oneself with a popular symbol can be a potent means of gaining and keeping power, for the hallmark of power is the construction of reality."<sup>12</sup> Given the brutal environment of military struggle in which most early 10<sup>th</sup> century Việt leaders found themselves, a political reality constructed around the Chinese imperial order encountered locally through tributary practices, certainly must have appeared to be an appealing option. The story I wish to tell is how the local leadership of the Hồng River Valley could assume the symbols of imperial submission as an act of reclaiming regional independence.

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<sup>11</sup> Wolters, "Historians," p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988), p. 5.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of a dissertation may be a solitary endeavor. However, the researching and refining of a dissertation is more of a communal act. Although I take full responsibility for all conclusions set forth in these pages, I wish to thank the many teachers, colleagues, and friends who so generously contributed to this project.

Every project has a beginning, and mine started with a suggestion by my former thesis advisor Hok-lam Chan that I explore a foreign relations topic from the Song period. Professor Chan provided invaluable guidance in steering me in the right direction during the early stages of my research.

I wish to thank my dissertation reading committee, Professor R. Kent Guy, Professor Laurie Sears and Professor Alan Wood for all their advice and help with the many matters I've brought before them during my years at the UW. My graduate experience would not have been as rewarding without the fine tutelage they gave me. I also wish to thank the chair of my committee Professor Patricia Ebrey for her numerous helpful suggestions during the later stages of the project, and for keeping me on schedule for its completion.

Many friends in the department, both past and present class-mates, have provided me with excellent comments and suggestions. Dr. Yi Li deserves special thanks for his careful proofreading of the appendix included with this dissertation.

I would like to thank the various organizations that provided me with the funding necessary to complete this project, including Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship, Ford Small Research Grant in Southeast Asian Studies, and ACLS/Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Fellowship. I also would like to make special mention of the Pacific Cultural Foundation Research Grant for funding support during my overseas research.

I am grateful to Professor Keith Taylor of Cornell University for his comments on early chapters in this project. I only hope that evidence of Professor Taylor's good advice may be found in these pages.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my wife Yueh-miao, without whom I could not have begun, let alone have completed, this project.

## DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my parents Anita and Frederic and parents-in-law Pi-yun and Hai-t'ang.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL  
CONTEXTS FOR THE SONG TRIBUTE SYSTEM

From the founding of the Song dynasty (960-1279), the court at Kaifeng treated the Việt people of the Hồng River Delta differently from other neighboring societies that supported or competed with the new Chinese leadership. Sino-Vietnamese relations were necessarily a complicated affair. For the historically minded Chinese officialdom, An Nam, the "Pacified South" that constitutes northern Vietnam, had been an integral part of the Chinese political and cultural empire for nearly one thousand years. The traditional notion of Sino-centric world order best known to modern Western readers reflects this assumption of Vietnamese incorporation into a Chinese dominion.<sup>13</sup> The system of Sino- Việt relations prior to the Song had been one of a central government directly linked to a web of subordinate local governments. However, the influences of local politics and regional trade during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries led to a transformation of Sino- Việt relations, establishing points of contact beyond the control of a central Chinese authority. Eventually, the Song court itself would draw on the precedent of Zhou Dynasty (1122-221 BCE) feudalism or Five Dynasties Period (907-960) frontier management, and not Tang

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<sup>13</sup> For a conventional account of China's tribute system, the reader may refer to John K. Fairbank, (ed.) *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 2.

Dynasty (618-905) hegemony, to produce the new terms of interaction.<sup>14</sup> Sino-Việt relations of the Song period should be distinguished from the relationships of the northern kingdoms within the "multi-state" Chinese empire and from the Sino-centric tribute relations that other Southeast Asian kingdoms would establish with the Song court.

Meanwhile, Việt rulers used the evolving relationship with China to set the foundations for their own base of power. Local leaders from the Sino-Việt border region at first appeared to follow the wishes of the Chinese by sending tribute missions to China and by accepting official titles granted by the Song court. Official records of these visits to Kaifeng were kept, because "as good Confucians, the Chinese sought, through their own example of creating an orderly society, to encourage foreigners to come and be transformed (*lai hua*)."<sup>15</sup> However, formal acceptance of pronouncements from the Chinese court did not imply that Việt leaders had abandoned their local political concerns. Soon after the Song's founding, a military commander Đinh Bộ Lĩnh<sup>16</sup> declared to his own people the region's independence and adopted for

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the Zhou model of diplomatic interaction, please refer to Liu Boji, *Chunqiu hui meng zhengzhi (The Politics of the "Peace Covenant" During the Spring and Autumn Period)*, (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, 1962). A specific reference to the Zhou model may be found in *Songshi* 119: 2795.

<sup>15</sup> Morris Rossabi, (ed.) *China Among Equals: the Middle Kingdom and Its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Đinh Bộ Lĩnh's position as the leader of Việt independence has been preserved in modern Vietnamese historiography. However, recent scholarship suggests that Đinh's role was somewhat exaggerated, and that Ly Nhat Ton's (1054-72) establishment of the Đại Việt kingdom, replacing Đinh's Sino-Vietnamese title Đại Cổ Việt, was the first claim of political equality with China. See Keith Taylor's article "Looking Behind the Vietnamese Annals: Ly Phat Ma (1028-54) and Ly Nhat Ton (1054-72) in the *Viet Su Luoc* and the *Toan Thu*" in *The Vietnam Forum* Vol. 7 Winter-Spring 1986, pp. 47-68.

himself the title "Ever Victorious King." As Keith Taylor notes, "the Viets emerged as custodians of the political and strategic wisdom accumulated during the previous centuries of participation in China's imperial system."<sup>17</sup> The emerging Việt political order was shaped by an interplay between Chinese signs of authority expressed through the tribute system and local Việt responses to and adaptations of these signs. Attempts by both the Song and Đại Cồ Việt (968-1054) courts to push conflicts between minority ethnic groups across the Sino-Việt frontier accented this reconfiguring of the Sino- Việt relationship (see Chapter Four).<sup>18</sup>

The tribute system as an institution serves as a focal point around which my study of political, economic and cultural exchange revolves. Tribute, or gift giving, plays an extremely important role in managing many aspects of society throughout Asia, even today. Therefore, I will devote some time here to a short discussion of the tribute system's origins and development. The size and nature of offerings had special significance in the tribute relationship, as did the proper observance of protocol. The acts of offering and receiving tribute, the performances of roles assigned to both guests and hosts, and the processions of tribute embassies were all part of the tribute

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<sup>17</sup> Keith Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms" in Nicholas Tarling, (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume One: From Early Times to c. 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> For an account of court responses to conflicts on the Sino-Việt border, the reader may refer to Kawahara Masahiro, "Nong Zhigao de panluan he Jiaozhi de guanxi" (Chinese translation by Li Rongcun) in *Guoli pian ce guan guan kan* Vol. 1 No. 4 December 1972, pp. 83-100. Koji Okada also discusses the issue of minority relations in *Studies on the Ethnic and Social History of South China (Chukoku Kanan minzoku shakaishi kenkyu)* (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1993).

institution.<sup>19</sup> Even the activities that existed in the shadows of the tribute system, opportunities for unofficial trade and official information gathering, should be factored into the evaluation of particular tribute missions.

The pre-modern Chinese tribute system was based on an early Han (roughly 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE) understanding of legendary ties fostered between the Zhou ruling house and its vassal states during the Spring and Autumn Period (771-480 BCE). For subsequent Chinese dynasties, as well as in other areas of East Asia, this relationship had come to represent a perfected state of balance between inner 内 and outer 外 courts.<sup>20</sup> According to this ideal version of imperial administration presented in the ancient text *Rites of Zhou* 周禮, the ruler viewed his empire through the setting of the Nine Domains, emanating out from his personal residence (see fig. 1).<sup>21</sup> To maintain

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<sup>19</sup> For a wealth of detail regarding the Chinese tribute system, please refer to Herbert Franke, "Diplomatic Missions of the Song State: 960-1276." (From a public lecture of the Australian National University on March 25, 1981) and James L. Hevia, "A Multitude of Lords: Qing Court Ritual and the MacCartney Embassy of 1793" in *Late Imperial China* Vol. 10 No. 2. (December 1989), pp. 72-105.

<sup>20</sup> The greater duties of the ruler (Son of Heaven 天子) are introduced in the following manner in the *Rites of Zhou*; "(The early Zhou ruler) controlled the arrangement of All Under Heaven so that he could control the lands of All Under Heaven. He studied and differentiated between the peoples of his vassal states, cities and remote towns, including the four *I* 夷 (eastern tribes), eight *Man* 蠻 (southwestern tribes), seven *Min* 閩 (southeastern tribes), nine *Mo* 貊 (northern tribes), five *Rong* 戎 (western tribes), and six *Di* 狄 (northern tribes). Along with their riches, (the ruler) made use of their great quantities of the Nine Grains (millet, panicled millet, glutinous millet, paddy rice, hemp, lentils, and wheat) and the Six Domesticated Beasts (horses, oxen, goats, pigs, dogs, and poultry). The Zhou ruler knew the benefits and dangers of each region. He understood well the states and leading clans within the Nine Provinces 九州, and his subordinates united the resources and services of the peoples in this region (under the Zhou ruler's control)." Cited in Lin Yin (trans./ed.) *Modern Commentary and Translation of the Rites of Zhou* 周禮今註今譯 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1972), p. 344.

<sup>21</sup> The *Rites of Zhou* account of this systems of domainal relations is described in the following passage; "(The ruler) distinguished between the nine domains or areas of service (*fu* 服) among the vassal states. The area covering one thousand *li* (from the emperor) is called the Royal Capital Domain (*wangji* 王畿). The area five hundred *li* beyond the Royal Capital Domain is the area called the Marquis Area of Service (*houfu* 侯服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the Marquis Area of Service is the area called the Master of the Hinterland Area of Service (*dianfu* 甸服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the Master of the Hinterland Area of Service is the area called the Baron Area of Service (*nanfu* 男服). The area

his realm of authority, the ruler awarded fiefs of land to all of his subordinates, according to their hierarchical rankings. In return, the ruler expected regular presentations of tribute from all quarters. Local resources from each region called native tribute 土貢 dictated the quality and quantity of these gifts. Several works in the Confucian canon, specifically *The Rites of Zhou* and *The Tribute of Yu* 禹貢, described the spatial arrangement of tributary states beyond the Zhou royal house, as well as positioning of these states' emissaries in ceremonies involving the Zhou rulers.<sup>22</sup>

The successful reign of a Son of Heaven, as envisioned by the *Rites of Zhou* authors, required political unity under the legitimate leadership of the royal house. This was a ruler whose every action would have a direct effect on his subjects.

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five hundred *li* beyond the Baron Area of Service is the area called the Pledged Official Area of Service (*caifu* 采服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the Pledged Official Area of Service is the area called the Guard Area of Service (*weifu* 衛服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the Guard Area of Service is the area called the *Man* Barbarian Official Area of Service (*manfu* 蠻服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the *Man* Barbarian Official Area of Service is the area called the *I* Barbarian Official Area of Service (*yifu* 夷服). The area five hundred *li* beyond the *I* Barbarian Official Area of Service is the area called Defense Commander Area of Service (*zhenfu* 鎮服). Lastly, the area five hundred *li* beyond the Defense Commander Area of Service is the Barbarian Border Official Area of Service (*fanfu* 藩服).”

When granting vassal states as fiefs, each will be one thousand sq. *li* in size. If the ruler grants fiefs of five hundred sq. *li* to his Dukes, the ruler may reward four Dukes. If the ruler grants fiefs of four hundred sq. *li* to his Marquis, the ruler may award six Marquis. If the ruler grants fiefs of three hundred sq. *li* to his Earls, the ruler may award seven Earls. If the ruler grants fiefs of two hundred sq. *li* to his Viscounts, the ruler may award twenty-five Viscounts. Lastly, if the ruler grants fiefs of one hundred sq. *li* to his Barons, the ruler may award one hundred Barons. So that the Zhou ruler might control “All Under Heaven,” officials of all vassal states, small and large, must complement one another and be united. The ruler establishes his governance and orders his administration, employing each official according to his ability. The ruler regulates his officials' presentations of tribute, asking from each official according to his (local) resources. Cited in Lin Yin, *Rites of Zhou*, p. 345.

<sup>22</sup> For a short study of the significance of spatial arrangement in Ancient Chinese political thought, the reader may refer to the article by Véra Dorofeeva-Lichtmann “Political concept behind an interplay of spatial ‘positions’” in *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 18 (1996), pp. 9-33.

However, only when all peoples had recognized the legitimacy of the Son of Heaven would this designated ruler have the power to bring harmony to the forces governing Heaven and Earth. Early political treatises such as the *Tribute of Yu*, the *Record of the States* 國語, the *Rites of Zhou*, and the *Xunzi*, all detailed how the Son of Heaven and his subjects, including non-Chinese subjects beyond the nine central provinces, ought to behave in encounters with one another.<sup>23</sup> This pivotal role of the Chinese emperor was certainly not unique to the early Chinese imperial system. Considering early state development worldwide, Henri Claessen and Jarich Oosten have noted that in many societies "the central position of the ruler is usually based upon a mythical charter and a genealogy which connects him to gods, ancestors, or spirits."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, these researchers contend that the legitimacy of these early states were often "based upon a notion of reciprocity," by which subjects provided the sovereign with gifts and services and the ruler responded with promises of an orderly society and "the bestowal of benevolence."<sup>25</sup> In the Chinese imperial practice, gift-giving in increasingly elaborate ceremonies became an integral part of these encounters. Although these early descriptions of the tribute-giving were highly idealized, the implied relationship between an absolute ruler from the Central Plains region of North China and his non-Chinese subjects continued to appeal to subsequent generations of Chinese emperors.

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<sup>23</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Henri J. M. Claessen and Jarich G. Oosten, *Ideology and the Formation of Early States* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Claessen and Oosten, *Ideology and the Formation of Early States*, p. 3.

The issue of tributary activity may be viewed largely as an issue of ritual performance. Any meaning attached to the tribute relationship between the Chinese empire and another polity was expressed definitively with each performance of the rituals associated with the tribute mission. David Kertzer had defined ritual as "action wrapped in a web of symbolism," a definition that works fairly well for our purposes.<sup>26</sup> My understanding of an operative use for the term *ritual* comes from my reading of Catherine Bell's work, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. In her book, Bell describes and compares the body of scholarship concerning ritual studies that has been amassed following the pioneering work of Marcel Mauss at the beginning of this century. Her conclusions drawn from this comparison stress the relative success of analysis employing the "performance approach" to ritual studies. In light of this approach, I argue that there was a *ritualization* of tribute protocol at each occasion that these activities were performed between Chinese and non-Chinese officials. Victor Turner's work on this topic suggests that there are two important elements of the performance aspect of ritual studies to consider; first, that ritual is a social drama and, secondly, that ritual exaggerates real conflicts to assuage tensions and to provide a type of "social catharsis."<sup>27</sup> In the case of Sino-Viêt relations, the stage is set time and again by border conflicts demanding redress, and that the settlement of these conflicts frequently culminated in a Viêt mission to the Song court.

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<sup>26</sup> Kertzer, *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 41, 71.

Under this ideal Zhou system, the position of each domain, relative to the center (the emperor) was extremely important. The *Rites of Zhou* describes the stern warnings the Zhou ruler issued to his vassals, should anyone show him disrespect while he was conducting an inspection tour of his realm, moving through the various domains under his guardianship. For example, the inability of a ruler to pass through a neighboring domain could require the assembly of all domainal leaders to perform the *Yin* 殷 Ritual and restore the focus of power and political order under the central ruler.<sup>28</sup> The rituals associated with the treatment of guests visiting the central court followed a pattern organized by the annual seasons.<sup>29</sup> Each court audience was carefully regulated.<sup>30</sup> Not only did the vassal lords have various yearly duties to perform for their common sovereign, but also the Zhou ruler was always aware of his own responsibility to maintain harmony throughout the realm.

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<sup>28</sup> When the ruler is preparing to lead an inspection tour of the countryside, he sends out a warning in the four directions, saying to each official that “you yourselves must regulate your official responsibilities, and examine and consider your service to your ruling house. One dare not show disrespect to your ruler. The sovereign’s state maintains harsh punishments (of execution) for such behavior.” When the ruler is conducting his inspection tour, leaders of the mission move out ahead to inspect whether or not his vassals have obeyed the ruler’s warnings. Should the ruler feel the necessity to call for the *Yin* Ritual (assembling all his vassal officials because he was unable to complete his tour), the same behavior would be expected of his officials. ” Cited in Lin Yin *Rites of Zhou*, p. 345.

<sup>29</sup> As the *Rites of Zhou* states, “In the spring (the ruler) gathers the vassal lords at his court, and thereby arranges the matters of ‘All Under Heaven.’ In the autumn (the ruler) grants an audience with his vassal lords to judge the successes of each vassal state. In the summer the vassal lords meet (*zongjian*) to display and arrange the plans made for ‘All Under Heaven’ (to decide on their efficacy). In the winter (the ruler) conducts personal meetings with his vassal lords to allay their specific concerns. ” Cited in Lin Yin *Rites of Zhou*, p. 400.

<sup>30</sup> According to the *Rites of Zhou*; “At times (the ruler) conducts these meetings to promulgate orders for certain prohibitions for the four directions, properly uniting the region under one code of law (*yin tong*) to implement the proper management and control of ‘All Under Heaven.’ At times (the ruler) employs (聘 *pin*) (or gives a daughter in marriage 聘 *ping*) his vassal lords to join in good relations with them, properly (*jiao*) to purge the vices of the vassal states.

Ideally, at the center of relationships between the emperor in pre-modern China and the rulers of foreign kingdoms lay the imperial practices of the Guest Ritual 賓禮. James Hevia has described these practices in detail in his study of the Qing period Macartney mission, the famous incident involving the British envoy's refusal to kowtow before the Qianlong emperor. Although my study examines events some eight hundred years prior to Macartney's audience with the Chinese emperor, some general observations by Hevia hold true for the early Song performance of the Guest Ritual as well.

As Hevia notes, the court perpetuated an imperial cult that placed the Chinese emperor at the center of an ordering of Heaven, Earth, and humanity. The emperor employed the exemplary power 德 of his heightened position to perform this task, and he maintained this position through the execution of the appropriate ritual cycle.<sup>31</sup> Following the protocol dictated by the Guest Ritual, a lesser lord, drawn to the center, was required to request permission to enter the domain of the supreme lord, the Chinese emperor. The audience which would bring the lesser lord to the center of the imperial order, the emperor's own residence, followed certain procedural steps and modes of behavior. The process set in motion by the exemplary acts of the emperor was completed with the conclusion of each visit of a lesser lord, and each encounter between the emperor and his vassal constituted one more full expression of the emperor's successful execution of his role in orienting world order. While the details

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<sup>31</sup> James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 126.

of the Guest Ritual by no means remained the same through the centuries, Chinese rulers as far back as the early Han were influenced by this ideal in the conduct of their foreign relations.

As a subject of historical research, the issue of China's tribute relations already occupies a prominent place in western scholarship, having received the attention of the eminent historian John King Fairbank. However, earlier works focused primarily on diplomatic institutions and on the late imperial Sino-centric "Middle Kingdom" model of foreign relations. Few studies ventured back before the Ming-Qing period to the time when the institutions and conventions of late imperial Chinese diplomacy were initially formed. The pre-Ming period is particularly important in understanding better the dynamic network of economic, strategic, and ideological factors that caused the Chinese state to pursue multi-state exchanges within the tribute system.

Recent scholarship has noted that the Song rulers adopted a system of multi-state diplomacy to deal more effectively with their northern neighbors, the Khitan and Jurchen kingdoms.<sup>32</sup> However, there does not yet exist an equally comprehensive study of Song China's southern region.<sup>33</sup> Economic trade shaped the Chinese empire's relations with the emerging kingdoms of Southeast Asia at the same time that border security directed the court's policy toward its northern neighbors. For a balanced understanding of this formative stage in late imperial Chinese foreign policy, a

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<sup>32</sup> Morris Rossabi, (ed.) *China Among Equals*, p. 55

<sup>33</sup> In the introduction to the only existing study of the Song multi-state system, Morris Rossabi noted that the authors in this collection had focused on China's northern border, and that Song relations with Southeast Asia "ought to be the focus of another volume." Cited in *China Among Equals*, p. 12.

thorough and detailed examination of China's complex relationship with the Việt kingdom is a necessary supplement to the existing scholarship.

### **Mapping the Physical World**

The world order the tribute system reflected first found its form in the linear representation of map-making. The ideological underpinnings of the Chinese system of tributary relations began with an inherited vision of world order, and this world order grew out of practices of representing physical and cosmological space in graphic and/or textual form. From earliest times, maps of China and outlying regions followed two styles, including a map-making practice based on observable phenomena and a practice based on cosmological conditions.<sup>34</sup> Both styles continued to develop through the Late Imperial Period.

All graphic representations of *All Under Heaven* (*tianxia* 天下) may be traced back to the depictions of the Central Plain Region (*zhongyuan* 中原) in North China and *Jiuzhou* 九州, the nine classical provinces of China. The earliest known description of these nine provinces may be found in the ca. sixth-century BCE treatise *Tribute of Yu* 禹貢, sixth chapter of *The Book of History* 尚書 and a work that would often stand alone as an independent text.<sup>35</sup> The authors of the *Tribute of Yu* described the natural features, native products, and the indigenous human inhabitants of each

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<sup>34</sup> For a brief but fascinating study of this topic, the reader may refer to Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps: Images of All Under Heaven* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1996). The notes regarding geography and geomancy are mine.

province. These representative features later entered the Chinese literary tradition along with the diagram itself. Many observations of the Chinese frontier recorded in later times were highly colored by these ancient accounts.

The *Tribute of Yu* also described a series of five geographical zones emanating out from the center in the following order: Royal Domain 甸,<sup>36</sup> the Noble Domain 侯, the Pacified and Comforted Domain 綏, the Pivotal Domain 要, the Remote Domain 荒.<sup>37</sup> The *Tribute of Yu* zones were ordinarily depicted as rectangular, following a popular contention that the earth was flat and box-like, and the zones could be divided internally into grids (see fig. 1).<sup>38</sup> Internal sub-divisions later increased the number of zones to nine. Each of the Nine Domains (*jiufu* 九服) received specific political distinctions, as evidenced in the *Rites of Zhou* and the *Record of Rites* 禮紀. The grid-pattern itself had its roots in the ancient well field (*jingtian* 井田) system of administration, best known from its description in the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子). In this idealized system of administration, laborers tending outlying fields also maintained a central field for the community and community leaders. Early imperial rulers certainly had knowledge of this model of administration. Its centralizing hierarchical features, as applied to an empire-wide

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<sup>35</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> The meaning of this graph given in the *Shouwen* referred a five hundred *li* sq. zone, likely including the residence of the ruler and lands under his cultivation. For various early references to this graph, see the *Great Han Character Dictionary* 漢語大字典 Vol. 4 (Chengdu: Sichuan Cishu, 1988), p. 2528.

<sup>37</sup> Hu Wei, *A Quick Study of the Tribute of Yu* 禹貢錐指 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji, 1996), p. 116.

<sup>38</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 24.

system of tributary relations, likely added to its appeal at court. Early maps would sometimes contain inscriptions, which referred specifically to the tributary patterns of particular foreign missions.<sup>39</sup>

Han Period (206 BCE- 221) cartographers sought to expand the grid-pattern format by indicating specific distances between geographical features found in each original zone. The Han *Rites of Zhou* commentator Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) played a significant role in laying the Nine Domains of the *Rites of Zhou* over the Nine Provinces, thus beginning a practice of rendering geometrized maps as ideal vision of administrative geography.<sup>40</sup> Han cartographers gave maps of the original Nine Provinces distinct administrative boundaries, specifying lands inside and outside this cradle of Han civilization. The political incentive for these changes was the increased movement of Han armies toward the fringes of the empire, particularly under the leadership of Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BCE). With new territories and peoples being brought under Han administration, rulers sought to understand their position in the world that they controlled. During this same period the Chinese court was demanding a greater number of regular tribute missions from peoples further beyond its frontier. The Han cartographic tradition developed in accordance with this period of territorial expansion. Returning civilian and military officials received imperial

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<sup>39</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> John B. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1984), p. 66.

requests for geographically detailed maps and ethnographic sketches of distant peoples that they encountered.

After the decline of Han power, this cartographic tradition continued to advance. The grid-pattern style of map-making reached a new level of sophistication under the supervision of the Western Jin (265-317) official Pei Xin, and continued through the Sui and Tang dynasties to incorporate more detail and spatial elaboration. By the time that the Song period stele containing the *Map of the Tracks of Yu* (*Yuji tu* 禹跡圖) was engraved in 1136, Chinese maps of the physical world had incorporated surprisingly modern techniques of scaling maps to grids of very precise dimensions.<sup>41</sup> Mapmakers could by this time produce accurate depictions of land formations with texts supplying information on regions throughout the Chinese empire and the border states.

One element of the Chinese cartographic tradition that remained constant was the dependence on written texts to supplement information that could not be satisfactorily depicted graphically.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, the details of these descriptions often carried over from much earlier accounts, and there was little effort to up-date the sources. Among the details included in these textual accounts were lists of native products (*tugong* 土貢) from foreign regions. These lists indicated the quality and quantity of tribute items the Chinese court would expect from its neighbors. Chinese rulers paid attention to these lists, not only because emperors desired certain rare items

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<sup>41</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 26.

for their own sake, but also because material differences in the gifts suggested that many distinct regions had submitted to guidance of Chinese Central Plain culture. The wide range in gifts appeared to reinforce the universal appeal of the imperial tributary system.

Chinese court cartographers of the pre-modern period were highly adept in describing the physical world in which they lived. However, mapping material data was not the only goal of Chinese map-making. The non-physical, supernatural realm was also a chief concern, because this world had its own impact on the fortunes of human society. We will now explore briefly how cosmological considerations entered into the shaping of traditional Chinese notions of world order, and how these notions influenced the performance in tribute system protocol.

### **Metaphysical Centers and Imperial Courts**

Mary Helms writes in *Craft and the Kingly Ideal: Art, Trade, and Power* that "every society... recognizes two centers or focal points associated with the inclusive sense of distinctive cultural identity and transformative creativity that marks its members as uniquely human."<sup>43</sup> In the Chinese imperial order, the person of the emperor became the temporal center and a corresponding otherworldly, as Helms terms it, "outside center" could only be contacted through rituals that brought elements of the outer world inward. Court cartographers also created maps for purposes of

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<sup>43</sup> Mary W. Helms, *Craft and the Kingly Ideal: Art, Trade, and Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), p. 173.

describing a cosmic order, to which the tribute system also made reference. Chinese cartographers, following the tradition of maps as cosmograms, identified earthly features that corresponded to powerful heavenly features. Religiously inspired maps often fit into this category; however, cosmological maps based on metaphysical correlations drawn from the *Book of Changes* 易經 were much more common.<sup>44</sup> As Richard Smith notes, according to adherents to this Chinese cartographic tradition, “each major geographical area of China had a corresponding celestial ‘field’ in which astronomical events served as portents for earthly administrators.”<sup>45</sup> The association of celestial events with political omens became important to the imperial order during the Han dynasty, and this belief remained an element of Chinese political thinking long after that period. The division of the night sky into twenty-eight lunar lodges, one of several *fenye* 分野 (“divided fields”) systems, linked specific celestial coordinates with terrestrial points (see figs.2, 3). Regarding this system, the Southern Song scholar Zhu Mu 祝 穆 (? -after 1246), quoting the *Commentary on the Chu Elegies*, stated the following:

As for the nine heavenly regions, the East corresponds to the Bright Heavens, the Southeast corresponds to the *Yang* Heavens, the South corresponds to the Hot Red Heavens, the Southwest corresponds to the Vermilion Heavens, the West corresponds to the Perfected Heavens, the Northwest corresponds to the Dark Heavens, the North corresponds to the Black Heavens, the Northeast corresponds to the Changeable Heavens, while the Central Region corresponds to the Harmonizing Heavens.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> Zhu Mu, *A Classified Collection of Facts and Texts from Antiquity to the Present* 古今事文類聚. Vol. 1 (Shanghai: Guji, 1992), p. 18.

According to Zhu Mu, the celestial realm divided along the five cardinal directions, and Five Sage Emperors ruled it. The Yellow Emperor maintained harmony and balance from the center.<sup>47</sup> Such correlative thinking imagined political power as the product of cosmological breath-energy (*qi* 氣) flowing along a north-south axis and passing into the material world through the emperor and infusing this world through the instruments of the imperial rule. These imperial instruments included court institutions such as the tribute system. Cosmological information, provided by the Board of Astronomy, became one more influence in court decision-making.

The *wuxing* 五行 ("five elements") theory presented another set of correlates, in which certain material elements and their effective interrelationship are associated with both natural and human phenomena.<sup>48</sup> Although the Song scholar Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162) criticized the practice of applying the *wuxing* system to non-physical change, he categorized works concerned with *fenye* as belonging to the *wuxing* literary genre.<sup>49</sup> Given this classification of texts, a possible connection between the five zones of the *Tribute of Yu* diagram and the five elements of the *wuxing* philosophical school certainly deserves closer examination. One should note, however, that the *fenye*

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<sup>47</sup> Zhu Mu, *Classified Collection*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> See the discussion of correlative cosmology in Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1985), p. 357.

<sup>49</sup> Zheng Qiao, *Tongzhi (Comprehensive Treaty) 通志* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995), p. 1698. See also Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 109.

system was itself in a process of realignment before the Song dynasty. John Henderson notes that the Tang cosmographer Li Chunfeng 李淳風 (602-670) had advocated changing the boundaries of the earthly regions to accommodate post-Han border disputes. However, the *fenye* system was by no means a forgotten topic during the early Song. Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1070) himself commented in writing on the *fenye* system, citing historical necessity as a reason for changing celestial correlations.<sup>50</sup>

The mapping of terrestrial and celestial information on grid-patterned schematics, the correlation of coordinates between heavenly and earthly realms, and the connections drawn between the dialectical association of heavenly and earthly elements, are all parts of, as Schwartz, states it, a holistic concept of order, “prepared to subsume and classify the manifold phenomena of the experienced world.”<sup>51</sup> The cosmo-terrestrial grid, oriented along a geomantic north-south axis, was the template upon which the Chinese bureaucrats marked the rituals of the tribute system. Although daily administration of court affairs involved a multitude of concerns, these officials advising Chinese emperors after the early Han were mindful of this cosmological context for imperial rule.

Moreover, the political behavior of powerful and successful rulers was required to harmonize this natural order. As the Han political philosopher Dong

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<sup>50</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 359-60. Schwartz precedes this point with the contention that pre-Han theorists originally conceived of all classes of phenomena as existing within a larger non-reductionist order.

Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179- 104 BCE) stated, “the *gong* or *shang* note when struck upon one lute will be answered by the *gong* and *shang* note struck upon other string instruments.” Dong argued that human emotions and even parts of the body were linked to certain cosmological coordinates, and that seasons of the year expressed this relationship between heavenly and earthly phenomena. According to Dong, “the alternating opening and closing of the eyes corresponds to day and night, the alternating of strength and weakness corresponds with winter and summer, the alternating of grief and joy corresponds to *yin* and *yang*. The mind has calculations and deliberations corresponding with degrees and measures [of space and time]. [Human] conduct has ethical standards corresponding to heaven and earth.”<sup>52</sup> The body of the emperor was at the center of this order, and his personal conduct was thought to have had a considerable impact on the fortunes of the human community as a whole. The timely performance of official duties (particularly ritual duties) and the observance of proper administrative regulations would ensure that forces of Heaven would not upset the “geomantic harmony of the spatial world.”<sup>53</sup> This perfected state frequently failed to emerge, as Dong himself conceded; however, he and his successors repeated this theme to remind wayward emperors that their errant behavior could have far-reaching implications.

Correlative cosmology, as interpreted by Dong, entered into the Chinese concept of tributary relations through such beliefs as the notion that the ruler could be

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<sup>52</sup> This quotation of Dong Zhongshu may be found in Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, p. 372.

held to a standard of moral guidance that precluded unconditionally hegemonic behavior. An emperor may have wished to expand his control by coercive means, and there were rulers who acted on this impulse; however, the legitimacy of the court necessarily took into account cosmological phenomena that might be interpreted as signs of heavenly disfavor. Imperial mandate had its limits, and the participants in the tribute system acted within these limits.

The elaboration of Chinese correlative cosmology by Dong Zhongshu represented a high-water mark of such thinking at the imperial court. Later Han cosmologists drew on the ideas of Dong Zhongshu and developed other correspondences, addressing issues of moral cultivation, the organization of society, and the establishment of intellectual categories. In this period, another system of correlative thought, the “state analogy” in the words of Joseph Needham, sought out stronger connections between cosmic and bureaucratic orders. Authors now considered part of this school include the compilers of the philosophical treatise *Huainanzi*, in which offices of the Han bureaucracy were matched with the five cardinal directions.<sup>54</sup> Sima Qian, author of the *Records of the Historian* (*Shiji*) made such connections in his essay “Treatise on the Celestial Offices (*Tianguan shu*)” in which he identified heavenly constellations with the names of offices from the imperial bureaucracy.<sup>55</sup> The effect of these cosmological correlations in Han political life was to give the state a “supernal aura,” as Henderson terms it, giving stability to

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<sup>54</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Sima Qian *Records of the Historian* 史記 27: 1289.

Chinese rulership when the new institutions of the growing empire had few precedents on which to pattern themselves. Han scholars found propitious and inauspicious elements in the Confucian canon, and theorized that a web of breath-energy (*qi*) passed through all these elements, connecting all material and immaterial entities. Pre-Qin scholars likely never made such connections.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, cosmologists serving the Han imperial court “rationalized and systemized the idea of cosmic resonance ... to explain particular instances in which a condition in one domain of experience affected those in another by reference to standard cosmological categories, such as *yin yang* and the five phases.”<sup>57</sup> Such signs produced by Han era “systemizers” enhanced the authority of the ruler, while they guaranteed that the arbitrators of good and bad deeds in that system would be those official advisors qualified to read the heavenly signs to determine the rightness of the behavior of the sovereign.

Correlative thought continued to exercise an influence on Chinese political thinking after the Han.<sup>58</sup> According to Henderson, geometrical cosmography played an important role in structuring notions of world order. The last Shang capital at Anyang had been roughly square in shape and located along a north-south axis. Tang

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<sup>56</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> Chinese religious life after the Han continued the correlative tradition. Chinese Buddhists of the Period of Disunion (316-589 CE) devised systems of correspondence that integrated Chinese and Indian correlative cosmologies, pairing the *wuxing* system with the Buddhist *mahabhutas* (four elements) and the Confucian “five constant virtues (*wuchang*)” with the five precepts for the behavior of Buddhists worshippers (Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 42.). The early Song rulers were themselves devout

imperial city planners took into consideration the rectangular form of the city and the orientation along a vertical cardinal axis in their scheme for the capital at Luoyang.<sup>59</sup> The Song capitals approximated this same shape. This particular shape for the imperial capital suggested a world order in its most harmonious state. The emperor stood at the center of his court, which itself lay at the center the most powerful forces shaping the world.

During the Song, correlative cosmology had some high-ranking critics. However, these critics had little impact on the prevailing views of their times.<sup>60</sup> Ouyang Xiu and Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009-1066), brother of the literary luminary Su Shi, both voiced criticisms of Han period correlative thinking. Ouyang Xiu criticized cosmology as a pursuit unworthy of scholarly attention, citing Confucius's own reticence in examining otherworldly phenomena. In his essay, "Discussion in Three Parts of the Orthodox Transmission (*Zhengtong lun san shou* 正統論三首)," Ouyang Xiu criticized the belief in a dynastic cycle based on the correlative *wuxing* system. According to the Northern Song statesman, the issues of moral leadership and politics, and not cosmological cycles, explained the rise and fall of ruling houses.<sup>61</sup> Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) was skeptical of the validity of geomantic calculations, although he himself explored numerological connections to correlative

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practitioners of Buddhism. Such influences of correlative thinking in their private lives no doubt had an impact on their public convictions.

<sup>59</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 73.

<sup>60</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 89.

cosmology. The Song empiricist Shen Gua 沈括 (1031-1095) remained suspicious of certain Han era correlative systems; however, he referred to the ten heavenly branches and the twelve earthly stems in a study of the mechanism of cosmic change.<sup>62</sup> Song period skeptics were largely critical of particular details of correlative cosmology, while they still accepted the general notion.

Early Song criticisms of correlative cosmology were, in fact, fairly unpopular. Concurrent interest in the philosophical discourse promoted by scholars such as Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073) and Shao Yong 邵雍 (1011-1077), eventually known to the West as Neo-Confucianism, actually increased support for correlative cosmology's basic tenets. Critical dissent such as that presented by Ouyang Xiu, and even the milder critique offered by Sima Guang, never spread beyond a limited audience. The principles cosmological interchange first put forth by Han era Confucian officials continued to influence early Song political thinking. Nevertheless, disagreement among high-ranking Song officials concerning the efficacy of correlative principles could not have escaped the attention of the emperor. Therefore, Song court adherence to the basic tenets of correlative cosmology did not likely continue unquestioned.

### **The Emergence and Development of a Chinese Imperial Notion of World Order**

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<sup>61</sup> Cited in Shen Gua 沈括 (1031-1095), *A Complete Colloquial Translation of Notes Taken at Mengqi* Li Wenzhe (trans. and ed.) (Chengdu: Pa Shu, 1996), pp. 391-92.

<sup>62</sup> Henderson, *Chinese Cosmology*, p. 109.

The world order the Song ruling house had inherited had long been guided by two principles for regional political interaction, relying on expressions of harmony and hegemony, respectively. The imperial institutions of universal leadership, embodied by the emperor, espoused both principles in equal measure. Expressions of harmony supported ancient political theories that described a network of subordinate states around a central court. Expressions of hegemony took the form of military action by the central court to re-impose balance in relations between the subordinate states. Such action often also fit into a ritual context. Chinese rulers in the Early Imperial Period were bound by the axioms of imperial institutional archetype to address issues of harmony and hegemony to complete their duties as Sons of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子). Although ambitious leaders may have been piqued by limitations placed on their rule, their high moral position curtailed much variation from historically sanctioned behavior.

In fact, Chinese imperial courts considered both ideological and non-ideological factors in their foreign policy decision-making. Pan Yihong describes the interaction of these factors as one between “ideological purity and practicality.”<sup>63</sup> The court would adhere to a perception of the emperor as the Son of Heaven, maintaining a universal political authority, when such a view could be effectively articulated to willing foreign or domestic audiences. The ritual order of the tribute system was determined by this assumption that the emperor wielded universal authority. As Pan

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<sup>63</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan: Sui-Tang China and its Neighbors* (Bellingham, WA: WWU Center for East Asia Studies, 1997), p. 5.

notes, “Such an ideology imposed political pressures on the Chinese rulers not only to maintain security on the frontiers but also to exert their influence over the areas beyond the frontiers.”<sup>64</sup> In this ideological setting, the emperor was, due to his position at the apex of this world order, justified in nearly every edict he issued. As Geoff Wade states, “the emperor as representative of Heaven obviously provided a pretext for any action by a Chinese emperor, as all actions were, by definition, divinely sanctioned.”<sup>65</sup> Following ideology alone, the Chinese ruler could demand total submission from his neighbors. However, militarily powerful or physically distant kingdoms seldom heeded such demands, and the Chinese court required a different approach in such cases.

The Chinese imperial leadership could at times ignore the particulars of ideological purity to adopt a more flexible approach in specific foreign policy decisions. This adaptable method of foreign relations runs counter to traditional notions of a rigid, Sino-centric world order best known to Western readers until recent years.<sup>66</sup> Some scholars now suggest that Song rulers and their officials were required to overlook the tangled state of *Realpolitik* to allow room for the ideal Chinese world order implied in the tribute system.<sup>67</sup> I would add that, beyond the greatest military threats faced along the northern frontier, Chinese adherence to a universalistic notion

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<sup>64</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Geoff Wade, “Some Topoi in Southern Border Historiography” in Dabringhaus, Sabine and Roderich Ptak (eds.) *China and Her Neighbors: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy, 10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), p. 150.

<sup>66</sup> John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order*, p. 2.

of rulership actually required hegemonic expression, even during the early Song period. Peace in the region could last only if the potential for forceful and effective intervention backed it up. Harmony could justify military conquest and subjugation for the sake of border defense, as well as territorial expansion for the sake of regional pacification.<sup>68</sup> Coercion and hegemony could be considered tools of harmony and order, and in the intersection of purposes, a Chinese emperor found the means to project both political power and moral authority. In this case, virtue and coercion were both essential components of the authority of a Chinese emperor.<sup>69</sup> However, when the situation dictated a withdrawal from a position of universal superiority and even the acceptance of bi-lateral equality, the Chinese court could make these accommodations in policy without permanently subverting adherence to the conventional world order.

### **Ritual Harmony and Frontier Politics: the Tribute System and Sino-Foreign Relations**

One of the most powerful ritual activities to sustain contact between the physical and cosmological centers was the tribute system. Because the rare products brought to the court by tributary envoys were often imbued with special powers, these items were capable of bringing elements of the cosmological "outside center" to the

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<sup>67</sup> Wang Gungwu makes a similar point in his article "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung's Relations With its Neighbors" in Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals*, p. 62.

<sup>68</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 22.

<sup>69</sup> Regarding this issue, one might look at the US notion of universal human rights and its expression in US foreign policy as a modern corollary.

worldly imperial center. As Helms notes, the skilled artisans that produced these "power-filled artifacts" could themselves be considered at times to be representatives of the powerful "outside center."<sup>70</sup> For all these reasons, a Chinese ruler regarded the regular arrival of tribute missions at his court to be a certain enhancement of his personal authority.

However, the court paid equal attention to the maintenance of peace and stability at its periphery, and the tribute relations played a large role in this matter as well. The tribute system, which reached its recognizable form during the Han period, continued to address the problems of regulating (or seeming to regulate) disparate groups both within and beyond the frontier region. Pan Yihong lists the common features of the tribute system that had emerged by the early Han: 1. Non-Chinese rulers or their ambassadors entered the Han court to pay their respects. 2. Tribute was a symbolic gift, consisted of local products (*tu gong* 土貢). 3. The Han emperor responded by presenting gifts to his guests. 4. The Chinese emperor would grant titles to the foreign rulers and to their envoy representatives. 5. Foreign leaders would send their own sons as hostages to the Han court as a goodwill measure should they require Chinese assistance in repelling invaders. 6. Foreign leaders would offer military help to the Han court in exchange for trade opportunities with Chinese merchants.<sup>71</sup> The hierarchy of relations between the Chinese court and foreign kingdoms mirrored the

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<sup>70</sup> Helms, *ibid.*, p. 175

<sup>71</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 25. Points 1-4 applied to Sino-Viet tribute missions throughout the Song period, while points 5 and 6 depended on the relative strength of the two courts.

official hierarchy within the Chinese empire. However, the emperor did not exercise the same controls over the subjects of tributary states, as he did over his own subjects. While non-compliance in the presentation of annual tribute from Chinese subjects of the emperor was a punishable act of disobedience, a single lapse in the offering of tribute was not itself grounds for chastisement.<sup>72</sup>

Within the Chinese empire, although the overall mechanism by which different peoples interacted with the Chinese court remained constant, their treatment by the court varied from region to region. According to Yu Ying-shih, Han period foreign relations presented a clear picture of this situation. Yu writes that “the so-called *acceptance of imperial rule* involved not only different levels of *acceptance*, but also different categories of *rule*, varying generally from one group of people to another. It was from this point of view that the Chinese were distinguished from the barbarians and the inner barbarians from the outer ones.”<sup>73</sup> Chinese subjects of the imperial court were governed by one system, while non-Han inhabitants of the frontier region, and non-Chinese living beyond the frontier were governed by yet another system of norms. The ultimate goal of the tributary system was political stability through an imperial order flexible enough to maintain proper relations between the court and the people.

Non-Chinese rulers of northern kingdoms during the Period of Disunion (316-589 CE) promoted themselves as leaders of multi-ethnic empires, claiming both the

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<sup>72</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 26.

<sup>73</sup> Yu, Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1967), p. 189

Chinese imperial tradition and nomadic tribal traditions as sources of political legitimacy. Their policies of foreign relations drew on both traditions, and they remained largely concerned with the maintenance of stable frontiers. During the Western Wei Dynasty (535-556), the court under Yuwen Tai (宇文泰: 507-556) claimed the *Rites of Zhou* as a blueprint for proper administration. At the same time, frontier reforms included establishing the *fubing* 府兵 military system, the local leaders of which came from hereditary military families exempt from most taxation and corvee labor requirements.<sup>74</sup> Flexibility in border relations was not exclusively a Chinese response. Thomas Barfield notes that nomadic peoples beyond the border region relied on an *outer frontier* policy of force in dealings with the Chinese imperial court, demanding greater access to Chinese goods, for example, when the nomads were militarily strong. When the nomadic leaders were weak, they adopted an *inner frontier* strategy of submission to the imperial court.<sup>75</sup> Leaders on both sides of the border weighed the advantages of pushing for greater control in the relationship against the disadvantages of upsetting the status quo and then inviting retaliation or the possibility of leaving themselves open to attack from a third party.

During the brief Sui (589-618) dynasty, two emperors approached the issue of foreign policy with very different plans in mind. Emperor Wen (Yang Jian 楊堅, r. 581-604) aimed to reunite Chinese territory in the aftermath of the struggles between

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<sup>74</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 41.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 91.

generations of northern dynasties. His goals included restoring economic health to the region and securing peace at the borders.<sup>76</sup> To this end, he invigorated the *fubing* system inherited from the Western Wei and Northern Zhou courts, and continued the Northern Zhou practice of setting up military area commands (*zongguan fu* 總管府) along the frontier in regions of strategic importance.<sup>77</sup> The practice of establishing hereditary military commands that were largely independent in their administration but ultimately beholden to the central court, remained a model for Tang frontier administration. These semi-autonomous military commands preceded the more powerful military commissioners (*jiedushi* 節度使) that influenced border politics during the late Tang, the Five Dynasties Period and the early Song.

Although the Sui Emperor Wen had stabilized and secured peace for the territory under his control, his son Emperor Yang (Yang Guang 楊廣, r. 604-18) exploited this stable region to fulfill his aspirations to restore China to the size and glory the empire had once commanded during the Han dynasty. In matters of tributary relations, Emperor Wen had received three missions from the Eastern Turks, whose military leaders the Sui ruler had managed to set against each other. After he first took the throne in 581, the Sui emperor received numerous missions from King Pyongwon of the Koguryo kingdom, although Sino-Korean relations declined after 584. Emperor Yang, however, followed a strategy of aggressive territorial expansion. For all his efforts, the second Sui emperor only succeeded in ruining the young and fragile

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<sup>76</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 128.

economy of his empire and fraying the alliances his father had managed to forge along the frontier. Tributary relations with the Eastern Turks lasted only from 584 until 614, when the Chinese court demanded that they submit to direct rule. A successful Sui attack under the personal leadership of Emperor Yang on the Xianbei Murong tribal leaders of the Tuyuhun 吐谷渾 kingdom in 609 was followed by three campaigns against the Korean kingdom of Koguryo, all of which ended in failure. This military adventurism proved too costly for the dynasty; the Sui eventually fell, replaced in 618 by the Tang (618-907) dynasty under the leadership of a former provincial governor Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635) and his son Li Shimin 李世民 (600-49).

The early Tang dynasty has long retained a reputation for self-assured rule and cosmopolitan culture. Following the dynastic consolidation during the reign of Li Yuan (Tang Gaozu 唐高祖), a larger region was brought under Chinese control. The imperial court by 625 again ruled much of what had been the Han empire. In that year, the egalitarian practice of referring to diplomatic correspondence with the powerful Turkish leaders as letters (*shu* 書) was dropped in favor references to missives from the Tang court as orders (*zhao* 詔 and *chi* 敕).<sup>78</sup> However, Gaozu sought cooperation from his neighbors more often than he attempted to impose his will on them. Military Area Commands were maintained along the northern and western frontiers, although the official title for Area Command changed from *zongguanfu* to *dudufu* 都督府 after 624. The frontier of the new Tang empire were first governed

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<sup>78</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 98.

effectively in multi-ethnic alliances, and early Song leaders would look back on this period of cooperation for inspiration.

Soon after the founding of the Tang dynasty, however, the prince Li Shiman killed two of his brothers, one the heir apparent. Li Shimin forced his father Tang Gaozu to abdicate in his favor in 626. As Tang Taizong 唐太宗, the young man displayed the quintessential character of a second emperor with his great personal ambition. However, the new emperor initially acted cautiously in his foreign policy. When advisors called for demonstrations of imperial power directed at China's neighbors, Taizong contended that a peaceful China would ultimately attract the submission of more barbarians.<sup>79</sup> In 630 court advisors suggested a punitive expedition be launched against the Cham region of Linyi 林邑 as punishment for the disrespectful tone of a memorial sent to the Tang court. The emperor rejected the proposal, contending that this transgression was too inconsequential to risk the waste of men and resources. Taizong cited the Sui emperor Yang's own military attack on "little kingdoms" of this region, and how such expeditions finally led to domestic unrest and his own death.<sup>80</sup> Pan Yihong argues that Taizong's image of himself combined both Han and non-Han characteristics of a supreme leader, a Son of Heaven to his Chinese subordinates and a Heavenly Qaghan to distant subjects raised in

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<sup>78</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 137.

<sup>79</sup> *The Old History of the Tang* 舊唐書 71: 558.

<sup>80</sup> Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* (*The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*) 資治通鑑 (cited hereafter as *ZZTJ*) (Taipei: Shijie, 1969), 193: 6078-79.

nomadic communities.<sup>81</sup> With this self-image, Taizong was more flexible in how he expected others to behave, and he did not emphasize a particular model of protocol in tribute relations. Taizong continued to appoint non-Chinese military personnel to patrol and rule the fringes of his empire. This court practice would be questioned only after his reign in the aftermath of the foreign-led An Lushan rebellion (755-63). Although Tang rulers also claimed the non-Chinese universalist status of Heavenly Qaghan 天可汗, the Luoyang court had never fully imposed its will on the peoples beyond its northern border. Control of the South depended on a relatively satisfied, or at least undisturbed, local population. The ideals of the tributary system had remained cherished goals of successive Chinese ruling houses. However, the implementation of these ideals required much negotiation and compromise.

One of the most influential policy changes introduced during Taizong's reign was the establishment of *loose rein* Subordinated Area Commands and Prefectures (*jimi zhou* 羈糜府州) along the frontier. Taizong's Chief Minister Wen Yanbo 溫彥博 (573-636) proposed the system as a means of gradually acculturating the nomadic northern peoples to Chinese customs and ways of life. Wen advocated Chinese control throughout the region, but he believed that direct military intervention was too risky. Speaking specifically of the Turks on the Tang frontier, Wen argued that the most stable and effective way to sinicize the barbarians was to allow them to settle within China. The court would allow these peoples to retain their own customs

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<sup>81</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 140.

and local leadership.<sup>82</sup> Later the court could use these sinicized communities to defend the Tang empire from threats even further from the border. Wen Yanbo contended that the Chinese emperor as the Son of Heaven should show pity on Turks who approached the court in submission, and that he should employ these foreigners who have submitted to his rule, so that they would not rebel.<sup>83</sup>

The *loose rein* system would also play an important role in shaping regional political developments on the Sino-Viet frontier. Local leaders who were granted special authority by the court would pass the mantle to their decedents. Leaders of the second or third generations often sought to consolidate and expand their powers. Moreover, Tang rulers progressively lost centralized control over its frontier to court-appointed Military Commissioners (*jiedushi*), who appropriated for themselves both civil and military powers within their domains before preceding to challenge the authority of the central government. In the aftermath of the Huang Chao Rebellion (875-884), the strained allegiances of these regional leaders shattered into hundreds of contesting factions.

Following the collapse of the Tang dynastic order, the subsequent Five Dynasties 五代 period was marked by the struggle between a number of regimes, not only for regional dominance but also for the legitimacy to re-establish authority to command control the Tang rulers once held. The leaders of these competing kingdoms understood world order as a system that contained at its political and

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<sup>82</sup> *JTS* 194: 5162.

cultural center a regime located, or in control of the Central Plains region, the wellspring of Han civilization. Leaders of states closer to the imperial court would ally themselves as “inner vassals (*nei chen* 內臣)” of the new central authority, while states further away would revive the practice of presenting tribute as the expression of their recognition.

However, as the Five Dynasties period progressed, and hopes for a rapid reunification of the region faded, rulers focused on their own military and political experiences as they searched for solutions to the establishment of a strong central authority and loyal administration at the borders. In this search, the position of Military Commissioner received much of the attention. Historian Wang Gungwu wrote that “the (Five Dynasties period) led to a central government which succeeded not because it rejected the *jiedushi* system and returned to Tang institutions, but because it had incorporated the basic features of the *jiedushi* system itself.”<sup>84</sup> When Song Taizu finally established a fully unified regime, the emperor incorporated elements of the Military Commission frontier system into the larger network of tributary relations. For example, the early military strongmen of the northern Việt region approached the court as tribute bearers, but they were awarded honorific imperial titles related to a regional association with past Military Commissioners. When Việt leaders brought greater legitimacy and power to their own rule through

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<sup>83</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 186.

<sup>84</sup> Wang, Gungwu, *The Structure of Power in North China During the Five Dynasties* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaysia Press, 1963), p.3

these titles, the Chinese court needed only to recall recent history to find the reasons for this trend.

With a tumultuous history of frontier relations as its legacy, the early Song court attempted to employ the tribute system to maintain regional harmony in the most stable and efficient manner possible.<sup>85</sup> The imperial court had revived the notion that political order should once again be modeled on the ideals once expressed by the Tang ruling house, ideals that were to be applied universally. However, the new rulers of China saw both limits on and new extensions to their authority that had not existed at the founding of the Tang. We will now examine the institutions employed by the Song court to apply their understanding of world order to relations with China's neighbors.

### **Institutions of Song Foreign Relations**

Tribute missions during the Song dynasty were the responsibility of the Ministry of Rites (*libu* 禮部) in the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng* 尚書省) at the central court. Within this larger body, a bureau called the Court of State Ceremonial (*honglu si* 鴻臚司) took direct responsibility for accompanying foreign visitors to China and monitoring their activities while they traveled within the

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<sup>85</sup> In this sense, the goal of late imperial China's foreign relations, the focus of the majority of Western scholarship on the Chinese tribute system to date, differed considerably. The architects of the late Ming-Qing tribute system were motivated by a pressing need for effective border defense, concentrating on the non-Han challenges to the North. Song officials sought harmony and cooperation, both within and beyond China's borders, to counteract the disabling instability of peripheral powers that emerged from the late Tang political order.

empire. The position of Chamberlain for State Ceremonial (*da donglu* 大鴻臚) had been awarded during the Han dynasty to one of nine leading chamberlains at the central government, who was then responsible for receiving princes and marquises visiting the imperial capital, keeping the genealogical records of nobility outside of royal lineage, and maintaining diplomatic ties with non-Han political leaders. This office changed its title to the Court for State Ceremonial during the Period of Disunion, following institutional reforms at the Liang and Northern Wei courts.<sup>86</sup> With the exception of one additional name change during the Yuan dynasty, this office in the imperial bureaucracy would remain the same until the Qing period, when changes in the involvement of Western imperialist powers in China required institutional innovations.<sup>87</sup>

The Court of State Ceremonial arranged for the reception of tribute missions at the court. By the Sui dynasty, these responsibilities were divided between three offices within the bureau; the Office of Receptions (*dianke shu* 點客暑 or *dianfan shu* 點蕃暑), the Ceremonial Office (*siyi shu* 四夷暑) and the Office of Taoist Worship (*chongxuan shu* 崇玄暑).<sup>88</sup> During the Sui, an office called the Hostel for Tributary

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<sup>86</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 466. Following Pan Yihong's criticism of Hucker's confusing name change from Court for Dependencies to Court of State Ceremonial after the Tang, I have elected to use the latter title for all periods. The same reasoning holds true for Chamberlain of State Ceremonial.

<sup>87</sup> During the Yuan dynasty, the new bureau Palace Ceremonial Office (*shiyi si* 侍儀司) took over tributary matters. However, by 1397, these duties were once again turned over to the Office for State Ceremonial, which would retain control many tributary duties through the late Qing. In 1861 the powerful Foreign Office (*zongli yamen* 總理衙門) was created to take control of foreign policy affairs handled by the Ministry of Rites, of which the Court of State Ceremonial was a part, and the Court of Colonial Affairs (*lifan yuan* 理藩院).

<sup>88</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 76.

Envoys (*sifang guan* 四方館) was also opened on occasion under the aegis of the Court for State Ceremonial. The responsibilities of officials attached to this office included greeting the delegates of foreign missions and receiving their tribute gifts.<sup>89</sup> By the Tang dynasty the Court for State Ceremonial had narrowed to two branches; the Office of Receptions and the Ceremonial Office. The office heads of the Office of Receptions (*dianke shu* at this time) and the Ceremonial Office beholden to a Chief Minister.<sup>90</sup>

Beginning in the Tang, the Chief Minister (*qing* 卿) (rank 4b) and his assistants were responsible for guests and for arranging state funerals for foreign rulers who had been granted official titles by the emperor.<sup>91</sup> Bureau personnel included the Chief Minister, two Assistants to the Chief Minister (*cheng* 丞), and a Recorder (*zhubu* 主簿) who handled all official correspondence passing through the bureau. The Office of Receptions was responsible for arranging imperial audiences for foreign visitors, ordering official banquets, greeting and sending off foreign guests, and accompanying foreigners while they traveled within the empire. The Ceremonial Office was primarily involved with making arrangements for foreign participants in state funerals.

By the Song period, the Office of State Ceremonial cooperated with a number of different agencies. Within the bureau, there was the Foreign Relations Office (*libin*

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<sup>89</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 76.

<sup>90</sup> Zheng Qiao, *Comprehensive Treaty*, p. 1094-95.

<sup>91</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 76. Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 264.

*yuan* 禮賓院), chartered to take charge in frontier matters involving the Uighurs and other nomadic peoples of Eastern Turkestan. Two rank 8b military officials led this agency. Associated with the Office were also three Taoist temples (*guan* 觀) and the Western Quadrant Imperial Clan temple (*xi taiyigong* 西太一宮) within the palace complex.<sup>92</sup> The Hostel for Tributary Envoys (*sifang guan* 四方館), now headed by one or two Commissioners (*shih* 使) (rank 6a) continued to work with the Office of State Ceremonial, but this office was not alone. The Bureau of Receptions (*zhukesi* 主客司), one of four top-level agencies within the Ministry of Rites, with its Director (*langzhong* 郎中) (rank 6b) and Vice Director (*yuanwai lang* 員外郎) (rank 7a) also worked with the Office of State Ceremonial. This bureau was responsible for receiving foreign visitors at court, and in fact ranked above the Court of State Ceremonial in the imperial bureaucracy.<sup>93</sup>

An imperial audience by a foreign delegation was also attended by an official assigned to the Office for Audience Ceremonies (*gemen si* 閤門司), including ten Audience Guides (*gemen she* 閤門舍) and ten Secretarial Receptionists (*gemen tongshi sheren* 閤門通事舍人 or *gemen xuanzan sheren* 閤門宣贊舍人 after 1116) (rank 7b), who were charged with tutoring foreign visitors on proper behavior during

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<sup>92</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 306. *Songshi* 189: 4692. See also Zhou Cheng (18<sup>th</sup> cent.), *A Study of the Song Period Imperial Capital (Song Dongjing kao 宋東京考)* (Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1990), p. 214.

<sup>93</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 79.

court audiences.<sup>94</sup> Audience Ushers (*gemen zhihou* 閣門祇候) (rank 8b) also participated in these activities.

Other functions of tributary relations and border policy were performed by different palace agencies. The Treasury Bureau (*jinbu* 金部), one of five bureaus within the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu* 戶部), was involved with the tribute trade (*hushi* 互市) conducted during missions and at the border, as well as rewards granted to foreign guests.<sup>95</sup> The Treasury Bureau personnel included a Director (*zhonglang*) (rank 6b) and a Vice-Director (*yuanwailang*), and personnel in charge of six subordinate sections, employing between fifty-six to sixty other persons.<sup>96</sup> This agency was also involved with the collection of overseas trade; however, it is unclear whether or not it had ties to the Maritime Customs Office. From Northern Wei and through the Song, the Bureau of Operations (*zhifang* 職方) operated under the Ministry of War (*bingbu* 兵部), under the supervision of a Director (*langzhong*) (rank 6b) by the Song dynasty.<sup>97</sup> This bureau was responsible for overseeing border issues, as well as preserving maps of foreign kingdoms and materials describing foreign

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<sup>94</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 279. Hucker notes that the office of the Secretarial Receptionist was renamed the Audience Attendant in 1116. The official rank remained the same.

<sup>95</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 79. Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 167. *Songshi* 163: 3850. Final arrangements during the Song were in place only after the elimination of the State Finance Commission (*san si* 三司) around 1080, under the influences of the New Policies of Wang Anshi (1021-1086).

<sup>96</sup> Hucker contends that two Directors led the Treasury Bureau, while the *Songshi* chapter lists a Director and a Vice-Director.

<sup>97</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 157-58.

peoples, produced by either this bureau or the Office of State Ceremonial.<sup>98</sup> The Transit Authorization Bureau (*simen* 司門) within the Ministry of Justice (*xingbu* 刑部) was responsible for inspecting the luggage of foreign visitors.<sup>99</sup>

The above four bureaus were all attached to the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng* 尚書省); however other branches of the palace government also oversaw matters related to tributary relations. By the Song Period, the Department for State Affairs shared executive power with two other branches, the Department of Chancellery (*menxia sheng* 門下省) and the Department of the Secretariat (*zhongshu sheng* 中書省), which together were known as the Three Departments (*san sheng* 三省).<sup>100</sup> In this arrangement, the Department of Chancellery, the agency responsible for advising the emperor on proposals from the Department of the Secretariat and for debating the practicality and morality of policy decisions, passed along imperial greetings to foreign visitors at court.<sup>101</sup> The Vice-Directors (*zhongshu shilang* 中書侍郎) of the Department of the Secretariat, directing a staff of nearly one hundred persons, would also receive official correspondence from foreign envoys and report the contents of this official communication, including memorials, to the emperor. Copies of correspondence from foreign kingdoms would be sent to the Bureau of Historiography (*guoshi guan* 國史館).

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<sup>98</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 80. *Songshi* 168: 4002.

<sup>99</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 80.

<sup>100</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 329.

Under the aegis of the Department of the Secretariat was the Visitors Bureau (*kesheng* 客省), itself led by a Commissioner (*shi* 使) (rank 5b) and Vice-Commissioner. This bureau was responsible for welcoming envoys from foreign states and organizing imperial audiences according to the principles of the Guest Ritual, and providing food and lodging during the visit. These efforts may have been coordinated with the Palace Visitors Bureau (*nei kesheng* 內客省). This bureau also supervised the activities of the Hostel for Tributary Envoys, although, as mentioned above, this agency was run by the Office for State Ceremonial under the Department for State Affairs.<sup>102</sup> Ranked similarly to the Visitors Bureau was the Office of Presentations (*yingjin si* 弓[進司]), which arranged for the presentation of the gifts of foreign missions to the throne, and the Office for Audience Ceremonies, also mentioned above.<sup>103</sup>

The emperor's personal aides also played a role in the administration of tribute missions. The Department for Palace Administration (*dianzhong sheng* 殿中省) from 976 managed a Special Gifts Storehouse (*nei yiwu ku* 內衣物庫), which, among other duties, provided silks, brocade and other precious items as presents to foreign rulers on occasions of personal significance to the ruler (for example, the emperor's

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<sup>101</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 329. Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 80. Pan uses the title Department of the Secretariat for *zhongshu sheng*, and I have adopted this usage.

<sup>102</sup> *Songshi* 166: 3935. Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 280. Hucker supposes this coordination between the two visitor bureaus.

<sup>103</sup> *Songshi* 166: 3935. Hucker, *Official Titles*, pp. 279, 581.

birthday).<sup>104</sup> After 1008 this agency was headed by two personnel, one civil service and one eunuch Supervisor (*jianguan* 監官).

Trade fostered during tribute missions is an issue we will discuss later in this study; however, institutions for supervising this trade deserve mention here. As Professor Yu Ying-shih noted for Han period tribute relations, “trade and expansion... fell under the general purview of this all-embracing system.”<sup>105</sup> During the Han period, border trade was a local matter. However, by the Sui and Tang dynasties, the Directorate of Tributary Trade (*hushi jian* 互市監) under the Directorate for Imperial Manufactories (*shaofu jian* 少府監) managed trade pursued during tribute missions.<sup>106</sup> During the Tang, officials from the Directorate observed the cross-border trade in horses and other animals with largely military considerations in mind. By the Song, the Directorate for Imperial Manufactories had become part of the Ministry of Public Works (*gongbu* 工部), and the agency continued to manage the eunuch-led workshops producing silks, cloth embroidery, and jewelry for the imperial household. Border trade, of course, continued to take place. The Song court again made local officials responsible for its regulation.

Sea-borne trade during the Song was a different matter, largely due to its high volume. Trade regulation remained a local matter, but Maritime Customs Offices (*shibo si* 市舶司) along the South China coast, particularly in Quanzhou and

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<sup>104</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, pp. 346.

<sup>105</sup> Yu, Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China*, p. 189

<sup>106</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 81. Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 259.

Guangzhou (*Nanhai* 南海), provided powerful positions for supervising officials. Beginning during the Tang in 763, the position of Maritime Customs Commissioner (*shibo shi* 市舶使) was granted to the official presiding over trade through Guangzhou, and this official was often the Guangzhou Prefect as well.<sup>107</sup> Such trade was also found to be an excellent source of tax revenue, and for that reason the Song court eventually placed the major trading ports under the supervision of an imperially-appointed Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuaryun shi* 轉運使), who could collect taxes on behalf of the throne.

These customs officials, acting as purchasing agents for the imperial court, obtained quantities of goods such as aromatic woods, pearls, animal products, and medicinal herbs, which would be brought to the imperial capital. In this manner, items that often came to China as the local products presented during tribute missions could be purchased through trade channels when quantities at court ran low. Very early in the Song period, certain products gained popularity throughout official circles, and the Maritime Customs Offices became hosts to an increasing number of foreign sea-going vessels. While this trade was not necessarily part of the tribute system, the desire to obtain these items affected tributary relations with certain foreign states. We will explore this issue later in this study.

### **Tribute Mission Protocol**

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<sup>107</sup> Pan, Yihong, *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan*, p. 81. Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 428. The name of this position was changed to Maritime Trade Supervisorate (*shibo tiju si* 市舶提舉司) during the early Song.

Although Song protocol of each court visit by foreign envoys was by no means uniform, “typical” tribute missions would proceed in the following manner. The foreign delegation would be greeted at a particular frontier entrance. Local officials would guide and care for the foreign mission from this point until the delegation reached the capital city.<sup>108</sup> At that point, the representatives of the Office for State Ceremonial, sometimes assisted by other palace agencies, would take responsibility. The tribute mission entourage would enter the Song palace grounds, where the delegation would meet personally with ranking officials assigned to the Marquis Pavilion (*houguan*).<sup>109</sup> The foreign envoys from the Liao kingdom, for example, would at this point perform a court ceremony titled “Respectfully Receiving the Rules for Serving the Sovereign (*fengzhilao mouzhu* 奉制勞某主).”<sup>110</sup> This first step initiated the connect with the inner domain of the Chinese empire.

The Chief Minister of the Office of State Ceremonial then brought the delegation to court for their audience, clearly distinguishing between each foreign

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<sup>108</sup> The agencies at the capital that received these foreign missions targeted specific foreign kingdoms. Until 1074 the Song Diplomatic Section (*guoxin fang*) managed diplomatic exchanges along the northern frontier, particularly with the Khitan, Jurchen and Mongol peoples. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, pp. 297-98. State Courier (*guoxin*) delegates accompanied envoys from the Liao court during their visits. Missions from frontier communities west of the Yellow River were handled by the Capital Translator for Western Languages (*duting xiyi*), under the supervision of the Court of State Ceremonial and its administrative clerks (*guangan*). The Foreign Relations Office (*libin yuan*) was responsible for accompanying foreign delegations from Uighur 回鶻, Tibetan 吐蕃, nomadic Tangut 黨項, and Jurchen 女真 peoples, among others. The Foreign Relations Office managed both tribute missions and tribute trade with these peoples. The Station for Cherishing Guests From Afar (*huaiyuan yi*) was in charge of receiving and housing missions arriving from Gao Chi, the *Guici* Kingdom of the Western Regions 西蕃龜茲, Arabia 大食, Khotan (an oasis state in the Tarim Basin) 于闐, the Arab *Ganmei* Kingdom 甘, and Shatuo Turks 沙, among others. See *Songshi* 165: 3903.

<sup>109</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2803.

<sup>110</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2803.

envoy's personal rank.<sup>111</sup> The Chief Minister had carefully orchestrated the entire court visit according to both Guest Ritual precepts and records kept of past tribute missions. Office of State Ceremonial offered the visiting officials lodging on the palace grounds, and regulated the performance of court entrances and exits, gift giving, and banquets. Meals at this point were all served at various pavilions in the palace halls (*neidian* 內殿).<sup>112</sup> State banquets for Việt envoys, for example, were held in the Station for Embracing Visitor from Afar (*huaiyuanyi* 懷遠驛).<sup>113</sup> If there were tributary items, the Hostel for Tributary Envoys was responsible at this point for reporting to the court of the quantity of items.<sup>114</sup> As for the officials presiding over the presenting of memorials from envoys and the audience itself, Audience Attendants had the responsibility to be sure that imperial proclamations were announced to all guests. The vassal kowtowed upon entering the court as well.

The ritual protocol was divided into two main parts; the Imperial Audience (*jian* 見) and the Withdrawal from the Court (*ci* 辭). When the foreign delegation prepared to enter the court, the actual participants from the larger mission were formally chosen, and they were given instructions on how to behave during the audience. If a foreign ruler was to receive a hereditary title, then the Chief Minister would distinguish the ruler's first wife from his concubines, and their names would be

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<sup>111</sup> *Songshi* 165: 3903.

<sup>112</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2803.

<sup>113</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2814.

<sup>114</sup> *Songshi* 165: 3903.

recorded with the Department of State Affairs.<sup>115</sup> The foreign delegates were then accompanied to the Zhou Song 周嵩, Qing 慶 and Yinling 懿陵 imperial temples 陵廟 to worship and present offerings. The chief envoys and all accompanying officials would then enter the courtyard and ascend a staircase to the main hall.<sup>116</sup>

Imperial audiences were commonly held in the Heavenly Origins Pavilion (*Qianyuan dian* 乾元殿). The location, however, could be changed.<sup>117</sup> At the beginning of the audience, the vassal envoy carried a wrapped gift of silk or other valuables called a *shubo* 束帛.<sup>118</sup> When receiving his rank the vassal ruler (or the envoy representing him) faced north and kowtowed before receiving his imperial gifts. The envoy would kowtow again before extending to the court his local products (*tuwu* 土物) as tribute offerings.<sup>119</sup> The foreign delegates extended the greetings of their own ruler, to which the emperor made his own reply. Finally, the attending envoys kow-towed one last time. The next day, the foreign mission would excuse itself from the court.

Court protocol also changed to accord with the event being commemorated. If there was a state funeral, the court officials would also distinguish between the roles in mourning of the Imperial Clan (*zongshi* 宗室) and ranking officials present, while calculating the relative amounts each group would contribute toward funeral

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<sup>115</sup> *Songshi* 165: 3903.

<sup>116</sup> *Songshi* 165: 3903.

<sup>117</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2804.

<sup>118</sup> The reader might note that *shubo* also refers to a betrothal gift offered by a groom.

expenses.<sup>120</sup> The clothing worn was necessarily linked to specific ceremonies, and the Chief Minister managed this aspect of the court protocol, even enforcing prohibitions on the use of insignia and ceremonial garments used by the emperor himself.

The Song emperor still desired to serve as the Supreme Lord before his subjects, and the court protocol guided by the Guest Ritual orchestrated events in such a manner as to project an image of absolute control to all visitors. However, the early Song rulers faced a new arrangement among the powers of the region. Liao rulers demanded, and finally received, equal status in their relations with the Song court. The Tanguts and other peoples among the northern frontier were not easily subdued, nor were the Korean rulers of the Koryo kingdom and the Tai successors to the southwestern Nanzhao kingdom who founded the Dali State. The imperial effort to understand these shifts in world order, and to restore the tribute system under these new conditions, would preoccupy the court during the early years of the Song dynasty.

### **Comments on the Nature of the Early Song Tribute System**

To use of the term *system* when discussing the Chinese traditional assemblage of tribute relations is somewhat misleading. Tribute relations were established on a state-by-state basis; these patterns of relations were by no means static arrangements. Political and economic circumstances would direct the development of a particular

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<sup>119</sup> *Songshi* 119: 2804.

<sup>120</sup> *Songshi* 165: 3903.

tribute state's relationship with the Chinese court.<sup>121</sup> As noted above, recent studies of Song period diplomacy have suggested that the Song dynasty existed within a multi-state system, in which concessions and compromise were necessitated by the balance of military might. The northern states of the Liao and, at times, the Xi Xia posed a much greater threat to the security of the Song than did the militarily less powerful and less aggressive Viet court. Therefore, in the eyes of central court officials in Kaifeng, influenced by the military brinkmanship being played out along the northern border, relations with Viet leaders were predicated on the assumption that the Chinese could dictate the terms. Yet Song officials posted along the Sino-Viet border were much more aware of the fragile loyalties that existed between local Han, Viet, and indigenous frontier leaders since the fall of the Tang. The observations of these Song officials focused on changes in these local conditions, as well as the history of China's

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<sup>121</sup> The varied nature of early Song dealings with neighboring kingdoms is clearly reflected types of material gathered together for the Outer Vassal (*waichen* 外臣) section of the 1000-volume encyclopedia *Cefu yuangui* (*The Magic Mirror in the Palace of Books*) 冊府元龜, begun in 1005 and completed in early 11<sup>th</sup> century. This material was presumably compiled from past historical annuals to instruct the Song court on precedents for policy decision-making. In the Table of Contents, we find *Types of Barbarian Peoples* (*zhongzu* 種族), *Hereditary Ranks 2* (*jixi* 繼襲), *Tribute Relations 1-5* (*chaogong* 朝貢), *Aiding Kingdoms in Military Attacks* (*zhuguo taofa* 助國討伐), *Rewarding Foreign Officials 1-3* (*baoyi* 褒異), *Returning to Allegiance to the Central Court* (*jiangfu* 降附), *Making Peace through Marriage Alliances 1-2* (*heqing* 和親), *Joining in Friendship* (*tonghao* 通好), *Swearing Oaths Together* (*mengshi* 盟誓), *Punitive Expeditions 1-6* (*zhengtao* 征討), *Preparing Border Defenses 1-7* (*beiyu* 備禦), *Border Invasions* (*jiaogin* 交侵), *Frontier Interpreter* (*diyi* 鞮譯), *Exchanging Hostages* (*nazhi* 納質), *Reprimands* (*zerang* 責讓), *Manners* (*zhuangmao* 狀貌), *Talent* (*jishu* 技術), *Military Courage* (*yongjin* 勇鷄), *The Rebellious and the Contemptuous Foreigners* (*beiman* 悖慢), *Resentment and Hatred Among Foreigners* (*yuandui* 怨懟), *Foreign Acts of Barbarity* (*xienu* 殘忍), *Foreign Acts of Deceit* (*jianzha* 姦詐), *Foreign Missions Entering Imperial Audiences* (*rujin* 入覲), *Foreign Petitions* (*qingqiu* 請求), *Tribute Border Trade* (*hushi* 互市), *Powerful and Flourishing Kingdoms* (*qingsheng* 強盛), *The Mutual Loathing of Rivals* (*weiyuan* 讎怨), and *National Annihilation* (*wangmie* 亡滅). From this assortment of topics, a complicated picture of early Song international intercourse emerges. See Wang Qinru et al. *Cefu yuangui* (*The Magic Mirror in the Palace of Books*) 冊府元龜 Vol. 4 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), pp. 6-7.

presence in this region, without much consideration for the Song court's struggle for status to the north.

However, we have observed that the Chinese emperor and his advisors at court viewed themselves as the guardians of an ideal system of state-to-state relations inherited from the Zhou Central Plains 中原 court culture, which was preserved in the ritual elements of Confucianism's imperial cult. This ancient court culture contained within it a hierarchical element. For the term *hierarchical*, I turn to Louis Dumont's work *Homo Hierarchicus*, in which Dumont defines the term as a "principle by which the elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole."<sup>122</sup> Dumont notes that most societies professing this view of the whole are religious in nature. Because the role of a Chinese emperor as the Son of Heaven was quasi-religious, this distinction still satisfies the conditions of the traditional Chinese notion of world order. As the guardian of presumably ancient practices thought to have universal appeal, the Chinese court placed itself at the forefront of a system of states and lesser polities extant at any particular time beside and beyond its borders.

Moreover, there is the issue of the temporal order established when the Chinese emperor followed his calendar to schedule the regular submission of tribute by the various vassal states. As Alexander Woodside notes in a more modern context, "the command of time, and the definition of time, can be as significant a part of the

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<sup>122</sup> Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 66.

development of power as the command of space or money."<sup>123</sup> The emperor ordered time with the regular performance of his duties just as he ordered space with the positioning of his person. Therefore, the adoption of reign periods and localized calendars by supposedly subordinated neighboring states was a gesture of impertinence, perhaps even a negation of the emperor's own position. Việt rulers who took this course of action did so at their own peril.

In this context, tribute was the organizational focus of court-to-court relations that functioned through centuries of evolution and development as a method of ordering and harmonizing interchange between political bodies. However, as the defender of this system, the Chinese court itself was under the constraints of the ideal order it espoused. The hierarchical whole of the tribute system, of which each participating tributary state was a part, also encircled the Chinese court. Because the ultimate authority of the Chinese emperor expressed itself in the achievement of regional peace and harmony, the emperor needed the regular performance of tribute missions from each participating state to promulgate his own legitimacy.

For the reasons above, a researcher attempting to draw any general conclusions from the performance of tribute relations during the Song dynasty must tread lightly and deliberately. Theoretical models and approaches must be qualified by the very same events they wish to decipher. As Catherine Bell admonishes, "by abstracting the act from its temporal situation and reducing its convoluted strategies to a set of

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<sup>123</sup> Alexander Woodside, "Territorial Order and Collective-Identity Tensions in Confucian Asia: China, Vietnam, Korea" in *Daedalus* Vol. 127, issue 3 (Summer 1998) (Boston: American Academy of Arts

reversible strategies, theoretical analysis misses the real dynamics of practice.”<sup>124</sup> Court-to-court relations consisted of many divisions; tribute exchange must be considered in the larger context of the granting of titles, domestic political changes in either court, military relations including outright hostilities, and even trade requests.

The Sino-Việt relationship was both an element of the larger Chinese tribute system and also a separate and self-contained relationship following its own logic of development. In a study of this relationship, the researcher is obliged to consider two dimensions of analysis: the temporally specific court-directed acts construed as *tributary* behavior in a ritual context, and localized frontier-situated competitions for political and economic control. Moreover, the historical documents that recorded these events were passed to us with their own interpretative problems. Citing the work of Pierre Bourdieu Bell notes that the context of practice rarely comes to us as a clear picture, but instead is presented to us “full of indeterminacy, ambiguities, and equivocations.”<sup>125</sup> In both the Chinese and Vietnamese historical records, the Sino-Việt relationship of the Song period plays an important role in shaping the cultural identities of these two societies even through the modern age. However, the dynamic nature of this relationship is found well below the surface of its existing record.

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and Sciences, 1998), p, 191.

<sup>124</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 83.

<sup>125</sup> Regarding this point Catherine Bell refers to Bourdieu's work *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 5-6, 14-15. See Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 83.

## CHAPTER 2: A SURVEY OF PRE-SONG SINO-VIỆ T OFFICIAL RELATIONS

The account below does not provide an comprehensive restatement of the course Sino-Việt relations took before the Song period. Instead, I wish to look closely at several significant events that established precedents for attempts by southern rulers to negotiate positions of authority apart from powerful northern courts. These negotiations were often protracted and inconclusive. However, all participants in Sino-Việt exchanges worked from a repertoire of past encounters. We will examine the most influential of these encounters below.

Important episodes in the development of Sino-Việt court relations before the Song period may be divided into four related categories. The earliest episode involved the rise and decline of the Nam Việt kingdom along the southern frontier of the Qin and early Han empires. The strength of this kingdom, although short-lived in comparison to Chinese dynastic power, provided an example for subsequent generations of local Việt leaders who sought confirmation for their own political legitimacy. The first ruler of the Nam Việt kingdom Triệu Đà (Zhao Tuo 趙佗: r. 207-137 BCE) had been a delegate of the Qin court; however, he is said to have soon gained local support for his administration. When Triệu Đà first named himself the "Martial King of Nam Việt 南越武王," and later emperor of the territory, he did so without the approval of the

northern court.<sup>126</sup> Triệu Đà's autonomous state could not survive the transfer of power to his son, particularly in the face of the concerted effort by the subsequent Han dynasty to bring the region under central control. However, the short-lived existence of an autonomous polity stretching from the Hong River along the South China coast to the Pearl River remained an element in the political imagination of anyone either involved in or subsequently describing contests for political control in the region. Chapter four's study of the territorial objectives involved in the 11<sup>th</sup> century revolt of local leader Nùng Trí Cao 儂智高 and his followers further illustrate how frontier communities without imperial sanction could still find inspiration in the Nam Việt legacy.

A second series of episodes involved local leaders' largely unsuccessful attempts to establish local political order without seeking accommodation within the framework of China's developing tribute system. During periods of strong northern administrations, southern leaders who relied only on indigenous support challenge imperial representatives were eventually defeated by overwhelming military might from the north. During periods of imperial decline, local leaders could briefly carve out independent polities, but these spheres of power would only last as long as the vacuum of military strength from the north remained unfilled. Local leaders from the Hồng River region before the 10<sup>th</sup> century sought accommodation with neighboring

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<sup>126</sup> ZZTJ 12: 394, DVSKTT (1984) NK 2: 107-08.

northern courts because they did not control the resources or organized military force to resist the immediate influences of these centers of power.

A third set of episodes involved encounters between leaders from the southwestern frontier and representatives of northern imperial courts that were structured by the principles and practices of tributary relations. By following the well-defined compact of tributary protocol, the two centers of political power could negotiate relations without constantly resorting to military means to resolve their differences. During the Six Dynasties period and at times during the Tang, local leaders in the south successfully alleviated tensions in relations with northern courts by engaging emperors through tributary conventions. Often once the proper balance in relations had been established, southern leaders was given more leeway to exert local control as they saw fit.

A fourth series of episodes involved the Tang period emergence of the frontier institution of the Military Commissioner, along with the set of titles and accompanying responsibilities that the Tang court assigned to its representatives in the south. The enhanced authority of local administration under this new system gave rise to a new type of local leader, one who could serve a court properly while consolidating the military means to pursue his own ambitions. Moreover, the fracturing of the Tang imperial order produced the need for quick-witted leaders who functioned on two levels as agile military strategists and astute court-oriented political figures. Only leaders who could successfully navigate the shoals in both of these realms could emerge in a secure and strong enough position to maintain local control.

An important factor in the development of Sino-Việt relations was the cultural geography of the region in which this relationship was fostered. The Sino-Việt frontier had long been inhabited by different communities, and these communities had developed ties with each other and with the world beyond this immediate region. As early as 2000 BCE communities throughout South China and Mainland Southeast Asia were exchanging goods and ideas.<sup>127</sup> The development of agricultural communities in place of foraging communities in Southeast Asia made way for the spread of bronze technology. Moreover, the spread likely started in South China and extended to Mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>128</sup> Shoreline communities had also developed maritime skills very early, and sea trade extended throughout the region. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century and founding of the Song dynasty, this region had long been a crossroads for global merchants and Buddhist pilgrims.

The ethnicity of some frontier inhabitants would today have been characterized as Han Chinese and Kinh Vietnamese; however, these ethnic groups were certainly not the only ones present. Although there has been considerable inter-regional migration over the ages, we may look at the modern ethnic diversity of the Sino-Việt frontier to get a sense of complicated social composition described even in the earliest historical sources. On the Vietnamese side of the modern border one can find Tai-speaking communities of Tày, Thái, and Nùng people. The Tày is the largest of these groups

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<sup>127</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 4.

with a population of nearly 1.2 million and the Nung is the smallest with 705,000.<sup>129</sup> These ethnic groups are very similar in customs and dress to the Zhuang 壯 of southern China and of communities in the highlands of Laos and Thailand and Burma. In addition, there are uplands communities of Hmông, Dao, and Sán Chay, among others. These communities have traditionally lived apart from the lowlands Kinh villages, and have maintained a separate system of local administration as well.

In the Southwestern China there are many non-Han peoples, including the Miao, Dong, Yi, Yao, Mulao, Maonan, Hui, Jing (Kinh Vietnamese), Gelao, Shui, Zhuang, and Dai, among other minority nationalities. The Zhuang number around 14.5 million in Guangxi province alone, making them the largest non-Han population of this region.<sup>130</sup> Han and Kinh communities may be found on either side of the modern political boundary. There are reportedly several thousand Vietnamese living in Guangxi province. Periodic Han settlement in the Hồng River delta once brought a large Overseas Chinese population to northern Vietnam. However modern events, particularly the border fighting of the early 1980's, resulted in the permanent displacement of most of this ethnic group.

We will now examine the above-mentioned episodes and the specific lessons that 10<sup>th</sup> century leaders from the Hồng River valley could have gleaned from them

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<sup>128</sup> Peter Bellwood, "Southeast Asia Before History" in Nicholas Tarling, (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Volume One: From Early Times to c. 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 91.

<sup>129</sup> Đặng Nghiệm Vạn, *Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam* (Hanoi: Thế Giới, 1993), p. 232.

when they sought to establish their own regimes. However, this manner of categorizing historical events certainly has its shortcomings. The context of each event from the vantage point of Chinese and Việt courts and the contingent nature of conditions from one period to the next are lost when we try to draw definitive lessons from an array of similar occurrences. However, I will still continue with this approach, if only because the texts describing these events capture history in a way that allow for categorizing and pigeonholing events and persons. The advisors to early Song and Đại Cồ Việt rulers had available to them the sets of titles and used in the past to describe their relationship. Moreover, they could read about and compare the outstanding figures from the past that shaped and developed relations between the two regions. An examination of the sources in this manner is partially an attempt to look at 10<sup>th</sup> century Sino-Việt relations in its historical context. However, it is also an attempt to create a textual context from which both sides began to negotiate and reconfigure their association.

### **The Legacy of the Nam Việt Kingdom**

The earliest Sino-Việt court-to-court relationship indicated in Chinese sources evidently dates from the rule of the Âu Lạc 甌駝 kingdom in the 3rd century BCE. This historical association had been used by both pre-modern Vietnamese and Chinese officialdom to underscore the necessity for maintaining the relationship in their own

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<sup>130</sup> Li Xiangping, *An Outline of Zhuang History and Culture* (Nanning: Guangxi minzu, 1995), p. 1.

times. Modern scholars in China and Vietnam both accept the origins of this relationship as historically accurate, although they may differ on the interpretation of its significance. According to these sources, the kingdom's founder Thục Phán 蜀泮 adopted the title An Dương Vương 安陽王 (257-207 BCE?). Vietnamese and Chinese historians point to a commentary attributed to Ban Gu's 班固 (32-92 CE) *History of the Han Dynasty* 漢書, in which there is a description of a prince of the Latter Shu 後蜀 royal house, who led troops in an attack on the Lạc Lords 駱侯.<sup>131</sup> Given this passage, many scholars have contended that Thục Phán came from the old ruling family of today's Sichuan province, and had been driven out of power when the Qin armies entered the region.<sup>132</sup> In any case, Thục Phán established his rule, and managed to co-opt space among the local power brokers, without pursuing tributary ties with the Qin kingdom.<sup>133</sup> When the Qin leaders gathered regions under their control into a unified empire, relations with the south began to change even further.

In 222 BCE, the first Qin emperor, motivated by reports of southern riches, sent a campaign directly into Việt territory.<sup>134</sup> Sima Qian's account of this campaign states in clear terms the Chinese court's viewpoint,

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<sup>131</sup> Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-ca. 86 BCE), *Records of the Historian* 史記 (cited hereafter as *SJ*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 113: 2969-70. *VSL* 1: 1.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 19.

<sup>133</sup> A account in *Records of the Historian* regarding a presentation of tribute at the Qin court by "countries from the directions of the four seas" to honor the deceased emperor in 209 BCE makes no specific reference to a mission from An Dương Vương's court. See *SJ* 6: 266.

<sup>134</sup> Yu, Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 192.

When the Qin ruler came to the throne, he moved south to seize the lands of the One Hundred Yue, taking the region around Guilin and Xiangjun 象郡. The lords of the One Hundred Yue bowed their heads and bared their necks in submission. The Qin court commissioned officers and sent them down south to serve.”<sup>135</sup>

During 215 BCE, the Qin empire had thwarted attacks by the Rong and Xiongnu nomadic peoples of the northern territories, consolidating the empire’s northern frontier. The sighting of the Morning Star 明星 in the west was a popularly accepted confirmation on the new dynasty’s success.<sup>136</sup> By 214 BCE the first Qin emperor (d. 210 BCE), in the words of Sima Qian, “as a prison warden would, ruled over all territory stretching from the Great Wall he constructed to the lands of the Nam Việt.”<sup>137</sup> Although the Grand Historian prematurely attributed the name Nam Việt to the southern region, he accurately indicated the point at which Chinese imperial interests became directly involved in Việt affairs.

Fighting at the founding of the Qin empire between northern troops and southern opposition forces was inconclusive. Nevertheless, the conflict devastated the region’s old political order. In the tumult, An Dương Vương is said to have set up his own kingdom, without seeking ties with the collapsing Zhou royal house.<sup>138</sup> His achievements were primarily military, as evidenced by the huge Cổ Loa citadel built in the Hồng River Delta region. The 10<sup>th</sup>-century local leader Ngô Quyền 吳權 (r. 939-

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<sup>135</sup> *SJ* 6: 280.

<sup>136</sup> *SJ* 6: 253.

<sup>137</sup> *SJ* 6: 253.

65) also adopted Cổ Loa as the seat of government for his own independent kingdom, capitalizing on the region's ancient associations with indigenous power. Moreover, pre-modern Vietnamese historians credited An Dương Vương with the monumental feat of unifying Âu Việt and Âu Lạc regions.<sup>139</sup>

However, An Dương Vương was in turn defeated by a Qin military commander Triệu Đà (Zhao Tuo) in 207 BCE. Sima Qian notes that bands of banished northern convicts formed much of the Qin invasion force, lending a renegade air of lawlessness to the political order that would emerge from the grafting of Qin military authority on the local elite.<sup>140</sup> After the first Qin emperor died, his court-appointed military forces were stranded in the frontier region. The last Qin governor of the empire's southernmost military commandary supposedly appointed Triệu Đà to a greater

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<sup>138</sup> Việt Sử Lược (*A Survey of the History of Việt*) 越史略. Annotated by Qian Xizuo 錢熙祚. (cited hereafter as *VSL*) Taipei: Guangwen, 1968, 1: 1.

<sup>139</sup> Ngô Sĩ Liên 吳士連. Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư (*The Complete History of the Great Viet*) 大越史記全書 (cited hereafter as *DVSKTT* (1993)) 1697 Woodblock edition. (Hà Nội: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1993), 2: 78.

<sup>140</sup> *SJ* 113: 2967. A Vietnamese myth describing An Dương Vương's loss of political authority demonstrates the level of tension that existed in earliest times between northern and southern powers. The legend tells of a golden turtle that offered its services to An Dương Vương to fight off the 1000 year-old chicken that prevented the ruler from building his fortress. The white chicken was an indigenous Việt symbol of antiquity. The color white became associated with indigenous political power. The turtle was a Chinese symbol of war. See Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 22. The turtle helped build the citadel, and before he left, he gave one of his claws to the ruler to be used in a crossbow. An Dương Vương had a craftsman build him a crossbow that could defeat all enemies. When Qin forces later arrived, the commanding general, Triệu Đà, sent his son Shi Zhuang to marry the local ruler's daughter My Châu 眉珠. Triệu Đà's son stole the claw, and his father drove An Dương Vương out of power. The turtle guided them to safety, but he told the ruler that his daughter has betrayed him. In some accounts, An Dương Vương promptly beheaded his own daughter. See Ngô Sĩ Liên, Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư (*The Complete History of the Great Viet*) 大越史記全書. Japanese edition by Chen Jinghe 陳荆和 *Daietsu shiki zensho: kogobon*. (cited hereafter as *DVSKTT* (1984)) Tokyo: Tokyo

position of power; however, Triệu Đà may have claimed this appointment to bolster his local authority. According to Sima Qian's account, Triệu Đà's immediate military superior was the Commander 尉 of the Nanhai 南海 Region, Ren Xiao 任囂. Ren on his deathbed reportedly advised Triệu Đà to establish an independent kingdom stretching from modern-day Canton to the Hồng River Valley while various rebellions were steadily encroaching on the Qin court.<sup>141</sup> In any case, Triệu Đà soon proclaimed the establishment of the Nam Việt (207-111 BCE) kingdom, and built his capital at Canton.

Triệu Đà established his rule as the king of Nam Việt, building on the legend of the Hundred Yue that described the supposed origins and movement of various peoples along the South China coast. However, the Nam Việt kingdom shared a border with several other smaller states, including the Minyue 閩越 kingdom within the eastern portion of Nam Việt, the Changsha 長沙 kingdom along the northern border, and the Yelang 夜郎 kingdom to the southwest. While these kingdoms engaged in court-to-court relations with the more powerful Han court and they all received titles from the Han emperor, the nearness and greater military strength of the Nam Việt kingdom was often enough for Triệu Đà to demand recognition and even

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Daigaku Toyo Bunko Kenkyujo Fuzoku Toyogaku Bunken Senta, 1984, 1986, *NK* 1: 102-03. See also *VSL* 1: 1.

<sup>141</sup> *SJ* 113: 2967.

submission from these kingdoms.<sup>142</sup> However, the balance in relations between these southern kingdoms depended in part on the strength of the northern court.

In 196 BCE, the newly established Han empire acknowledged Triệu Đà's local authority. The first Han ruler Gaozu sent an envoy Lu Jia 陸賈 to present Triệu Đà with an imperial seal acknowledging his position as Prince of Nam Việt 南越王. The practice of conferring certain symbols of the central court's authority on delegates placed in control of the southern frontier would remain a crucial first step in establishing tributary relations throughout the rest of China's imperial period. Chinese court histories always describe this conferral of imperial grace as a dramatic heightening of the peripheral ruler's personal status. Yet Sima Qian describes the imperial act in this case as somewhat preemptive. Insinuating that Han authorities saw Triệu Đà already turning away from the northern court's political interests, Sima Qian depicts a situation in which the Han emperor had more of a need for this relationship than did the Nam Việt ruler. The entire *Records of the Grand Historian* account of Lu and Triệu Đà's initial encounter bears re-telling in this study, because their exchange sets the foundation for further interaction between southwest China/ northern Việt region and northern Chinese courts. The terms described here were certainly in the mind of Song Taizu and his advisors, when they set about re-establishing ties with the

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<sup>142</sup> Zhang Rongfang 張榮芳 *History of the Nam Viet Kingdom* 南越國史 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin, 1995), pp. 130-31.

10th-century Đại Cồ Việt leadership. Burton Watson translates the *Records of the Historian* account of the exchange as follows:

When Gaozu became emperor, and peace was first restored to China, the military commander Zhao Tuo proceeded to make himself its ruler. Gaozu dispatched Lu Jia to present Zhao Tuo (Triệu Đà) with the imperial seal making him the king of Southern Yue. When Master Lu arrived Zhao Tuo received him in audience with his hair done up in the mallet-shaped fashion of the natives of Southern Yue, and sprawled on his mat. Master Lu advanced and addressed Zhao Tuo. "You are a Chinese, and your forefathers and kin lie buried in Zhending and in the land of Zhao. Yet now you turn against that nature which Heaven has given you at birth, cast aside the dress of your native land and, with the tiny, far-off land of Yue, think to set yourself up as a rival of the Son of Heaven and an enemy state. Disaster will surely fall upon you!"<sup>143</sup>

Sima Qian then inserts a lesson here in regional politics, offering an explanation why the hegemonic desires of local rulers will never triumph over the divine authority of the centralizing ruler who has received the Mandate of Heaven. In offering this explanation, the court historian refers to the forces of cosmic sanction that most appealed to prospective rulers of imperial China.

When Qin lost control of the empire the nobles and heroes rose on all sides, yet it was the kin of Han alone who entered the Pass ahead of the others and took possession of Xianyang. Xiang Yu broke the promise, which he had made to the nobles who became subject to his command, for his strength was the greatest. Yet the king of Han rose up from Ba and Shu, chastised the world as with a great whip, drove the nobles before him, and in the end punished and destroyed Xiang Yu until, in the space of five years, he had brought all within the four seas to peace and unity. Such deeds were not done by human strength, but were ordained by Heaven!<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty I*. Translated by Burton Watson. Revised edition. (New York: Columbia University, 1993), pp. 224-25.

<sup>144</sup> Sima Qian (Watson trans.), *ibid.*, p. 225.

Lu Jia then turns to the matter of Triệu Đà's lack of acknowledgment for Han Gaozu's overlordship. Beginning with a threat of military retaliation, he subsequently mentions the benevolence of the first Han ruler. Lu warns Triệu Đà that, as a court-appointed representative of imperial authority, his special treatment and honorary titles depended on his good behavior. Here Lu mentions all the elements of behavior expected of a loyal vassal, followed by a description of the imperial wrath and disloyal servant could expect.

Now it has come to the ears of the Son of Heaven that, although you lent no aid in punishing the traitors who plagued the world, you have made yourself ruler of Southern Yue. The generals and high ministers wish to send out an army to punish you. But because the Son of Heaven is unwilling in his compassion to inflict new suffering and hardship upon the common people, he has set aside their proposals and set me instead to confer upon you the seals of a king, splitting the tallies of enfeoffment and opening diplomatic intercourse. It is proper under such circumstances that you should advance as far as the suburbs to greet me and bow to the north and refer to yourself as a 'subject.' Yet with this newly created state of Yue, which is not even firmly established, you behave with such effrontery! If the Han emperor should actually hear of this, he would dig up and desecrate the graves of your ancestors, wipe out your family, and dispatch one of his subordinate generals with a force of 100,000 men to march to the borders of Yue. At that point the people of Yue would murder you and surrender to the Han forces faster than I can turn my head!

With this, Zhao Tuo scrambled up off his mat in the greatest alarm and apologized to Master Lu saying, "I have lived among these barbarians for so long I have lost all sense of manners and propriety!"<sup>145</sup>

In this ideal rendering of events, the Han court officialdom is depicted as quickly seeking hegemonic solutions to its problems, while the emperor himself is described as supporting universal harmony among all his subjects as a more important

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<sup>145</sup> Sima Qian (Watson trans.), *ibid.*, p. 225.

outcome. However, the *SJ* account also depicts Triệu Đà as one who reveals his own impropriety by expounding upon personal political ambitions that threaten his entire clan's survival. In the following exchange with the imperial emissary Lu Jia, Triệu Đà is described as brazen enough to argue that his realm could be a worthy rival to the Han.

In the course of their conversations Zhao Tuo asked Master Lu, "Who is worthier, I or the great ministers Xiao He, Cao Can, and Han Xin?" "You would appear to be the worthier man," replied Master Lu. "And of the emperor and myself, which is worthier?" he asked again. "The emperor rose up from the city of Fen in Pei, overthrew the violent Qin, and punished the powerful leaders of Chu, driving out harm and bringing benefit to the whole world. He succeeded to the labors of the Five Emperors and the Three Dynasties of the past, uniting all China under a single rule. The population of China numbers in the millions, while its land area measures thousands of miles. It occupies the richest and the most fertile region of the world, with an abundance of people, carriages, and every other thing imaginable. And yet government proceeds from a single family. Since the creation of heaven and earth there has never before been such a thing!"<sup>146</sup>

The Nam Việt ruler's questions certainly do not seem to be the humble utterances of a loyal vassal. As if to put the vassal "in his place" Lu Jia then turns the discussion to Triệu Đà's realm to remind the local ruler of the Nam Việt region's relative insignificance.

Now Your Majesty's people do not (*sic*) number over a few thousand, and all of them barbarians, crowded awkwardly between the mountains and the sea. Such a kingdom would amount to no more than a single province of the Han empire! How can you compare yourself with the emperor of Han?<sup>147</sup>

The most remarkable element in this dialogue is Triệu Đà's reply.

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<sup>146</sup> Sima Qian (Watson trans.), *ibid.*, p. 225-26.

<sup>147</sup> Sima Qian (Watson trans.), *ibid.*, p. 226.

It is only because I did not begin my uprising in China that I have become king of this region. If I had been in China, would I not have done just as well as the Han emperor?<sup>148</sup>

Triệu Đà's resistance to Han sovereignty did not make him friends at the Chinese court. Word of Nam Việt's pressure on its neighbors eventually reached the Han court, and the official response was to pressure Nam Việt into accepting a more subservient position in the region. In 185 BCE the Han Empress Lū forbade trade in iron implements with the Nam Việt court, for fear that the southern kingdom would develop its weaponry.<sup>149</sup> Triệu Đà reportedly accused the Changsha ruler of colluding with the court at Changan to bring about this ban, and he dispatched troops in a punitive attack on his northern neighbor in the spring of 183 BCE.<sup>150</sup> Triệu Đà at this time also claimed the title of Martial Emperor 武帝 for his own, as both Sima Guang and later Ngô Sĩ Liên noted, which was an act that certainly ended his recognition of the vassal status he had initially maintained with the Han court.<sup>151</sup> The distance between these two courts was a factor in support of Triệu Đà's claim of tacit autonomy. Although Han forces were immediately sent to the south when Triệu Đà attacked his neighbor, these troops were recalled when court-sanctioned guidance

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<sup>148</sup> Sima Qian (Watson trans.), *ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>149</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) NK 2:109.

<sup>150</sup> *ZZTJ* 13: 424. *DVSKTT* (1984), NK 2:109.

<sup>151</sup> Ngô Sĩ Liên's account refers only to the title of "emperor 帝."

ended with the death of the Empress Lü about one year later.<sup>152</sup> In 181 BCE, Triệu Đà sent troops into the Hồng River delta area, thereby expanding Nam Việt territorial authority into this region.<sup>153</sup> Given this description of events, the Nam Việt kingdom appears to be on the verge of seeking greater political autonomy in its strained relations with the Han.

However, tensions eventually subsided and Nam Việt reportedly soon again engaged in tribute relations with Changan. In 179 BCE, Triệu Đà sent a mission north bearing the following tribute items, a pair of white jade *bi* 璧, 1000 kingfisher feathers, ten catties of rhinoceros horn, 500 purple cowries, a container of cassia grubs 桂蠹, 40 live kingfishers, and two peacocks. At this time both Min Yue (modern Fujian) and Nam Việt were on good terms with the Han court. In this period of peace, Triệu Đà, according to first century historian Ban Gu, had given up his imperial ambitions.<sup>154</sup> However, this period likely marked the beginning of Triệu Đà's campaign to dominate the Âu Lạc region both militarily and politically.<sup>155</sup> The Nam Việt ruler died in 136 BCE, after ruling his kingdom for more than 70 years. His great grandson Anh Tề 嬰齊 (or Triệu Minh Vương 趙明王, r. 125-133 BCE), a ten-year veteran of the Han court and the last clan member to rule Nam Việt, sent a tribute

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<sup>152</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984), NK 2: 109.

<sup>153</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984), NK 2:109.

<sup>154</sup> Ban Gu 班固 (CE 32-92), *History of the Han* 漢書 (cited hereafter as *HS*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1962) 95: 3851.

<sup>155</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 24.

mission in the summer of 121 BCE to the court of Han Wudi, bringing as tribute tamed elephants and parrots 能言鳥.<sup>156</sup> Anh Tê died in 113 BCE. Two years later this region was under direct Han administration. In 111 BCE anti-Han courtiers at the Nam Việt court killed the pro-Han ruler. Sima Guang prominently included comments by the Nam Việt dowager that merging with the northern empire would actually benefit the southern kingdom.<sup>157</sup> The Han emperor set five armies in response, effectively putting an end to Nam Việt's independence.<sup>158</sup>

Looking back on the period of Triệu Đà's rule, different images emerge depending on whether one viewed events from the north or from the Việt region. Local memory of the strength of this southern kingdom and its leader's defiant attitude toward the Han envoy remained strong well into the Việt region's period of independence from northern courts. Ngô Quyền would initially call his 10<sup>th</sup>-century kingdom Nam Việt, and while the 10<sup>th</sup>-century Việt ruler Đinh Bộ Lĩnh would change the name of his kingdom to Đại Cồ Việt, he would grant his own son Đinh Liễn the title "King of Nam Việt." Describing the rise of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century court historian Lê Văn Hưu 黎文休 wrote, "Does it not appear that it was Heaven's intention that a ruler with the wisdom of the sages was again born to our Việt region to

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<sup>156</sup> *HS* 6:176.

<sup>157</sup> *ZZTJ* 20: 666.

<sup>158</sup> In modern Vietnamese nationalist historiography, the period from 111 BCE to AD 931 is often designated the Period of Northern Subjugation (*bắc thuộc thời đại*). For an example see Trần Trọng

uphold the tradition of King Triệu?"<sup>159</sup> The lesson learned by generations of ambitious local leaders was that the southern region indeed held the potential for political self-reliance.

The emergence of the Nam Việt kingdom is also the trope at the Chinese court that informed the narrative of Sino-Việt relations through the early Song. One source of continuing anxiety for Chinese emperors is the unresolved nature of Nam Việt independence, forsworn when the region professed loyalty to a northern Chinese court, but always in the foreground of the decisions of local leaders in times of regional turmoil. A second source is the shifting boundaries of the region that could be justifiably called Nam Việt, anywhere from the middle highlands just west of the Hồng River Delta to the Pearl River Basin. Within that region was a multitude of peoples and cultural communities, but all including the Han decedents of early settlers from the north, recognize the righteousness of any call for an independent state in this region. The Tang poet Yuan Zhen 元稹 (779-831) even wrote of the local deification of the first Nam Việt ruler in his line of verse "In shamans at the shrines is the spirit of Triệu Đà."<sup>160</sup>

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Kim. *Việt Nam Sử Lược* (*A Record of Vietnamese History*) Volume One. (Saigon: Trung Tâm Học Liệu Xuất Bản, 1971), p. 79.

<sup>159</sup> Ngô Sĩ Liên (15th cent.) *The Complete History of the Great Viet* (Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư 大越史記全書) Japanese edition by Chen Jinghe 陳荆和 *Daietsu shiki zensho: kogobon* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Toyo Bunka Kenkyujo Fuzoku Toyogaku Bunken Senta, 1984, 1986), Bản Kỳ 1:180.

<sup>160</sup> Cited in Edward H. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird; Tang Images of the South* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967), p. 27.

Most early Song awareness of earliest Sino-Việt relations closely followed the accounts of Sima Qian and the *History of the Han* 漢書 author Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 CE). The most influential early Song accounts of the Nam Việt kingdom include Wang Qinru's *The Magic Mirror in the Palace of Books* 宋本冊府元龜 and Sima Guang's *A Comprehensive Mirror of Government* 資治通鑒. Wang Qinru's work referred the Triệu Đà's reign under the following encyclopedic categories: "Extending the Kingdom's Sovereignty 宣國威," "Receiving the Ruler's Order 達王命," "Responsive to Imperial Command 稱旨," "Rewards of Mercy 恩榮," "Clever Debate 敏辯," "Maintaining Delegated Authority 守節," and "Petitioning for Reception 請行." This cataloguing of events may only reflect conventional roles expected of rulers and their vassals engaged in tributary relations. However, Wang and his assistants also highlighted accounts of the heated verbal exchanges between the Han envoy and Lu Jia, indicating that agreement between the participants required vigorous negotiation. Sima Guang's account describes the opportunities for local rule created by the collapse of Qin power to the north and the presence of military forces in the south.<sup>161</sup> Sima Guang's comments on the Nam Việt kingdom were likely suggestions to his own court that modern emperors not allow a similarly powerful polity exist along the southern frontier without requiring its close affiliation with the central court.

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<sup>161</sup> ZZTJ 12: 395.

Northern rulers would regard the region of South China as a region of anxiety. Sima Qian referred to the "troubles of the southern frontier 南邊患," and later historians would echo this theme in their own writings.<sup>162</sup> By the beginning of the Song dynasty, a persistent problem lay in the fact that this area was both part of a Chinese empire and also heir to its own political identity. Resolving this tension required state coercion and a configuration of local identity to dependence on empire-wide, not local, stipulations. While the South China coast became more integrated into the northern political order, the southwestern tip of the Nam Việt region defined itself as a separate polity, retaining enough cultural/ethnic continuity to borrow from the north (China) without being subsumed by it. However, the ambition to join these regions into one great southern power will emerge in the mind of local leaders for years to come.

### **Indigenous Political Power Outside the Tribute System**

The point at which Triệu Đà's Nam Việt court re-established relations with Han court coincided with the early development of the tribute system as an organizing feature of the Chinese imperial order. Han expansion, particularly during the reign of Emperor Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BCE), enhanced the court's belief in China's universal centrality. Han armies resumed attacks on the nomadic Xiongnu communities in the northwest, accompanied by expeditions into the Korean peninsula

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<sup>162</sup> *SJ* 113: 2967.

and the Southwest. Han Wudi personally took charge of a series of campaigns aimed at imperial expansion.<sup>163</sup> These expeditions beyond traditional Chinese frontier regions deepened the court's knowledge of the non-Han world. However, the absence of a formidable non-Han foe allowed the court to adhere to the principles of the tributary relations as strongest system of foreign relations. As Pan Yihong writes, "this broadening of horizons did not later the belief that China was the center to which other peoples should come, and that Chinese civilization was superior to all others."<sup>164</sup>

The proper observance of tributary practices slowly became organized for each visiting kingdom. All visitors observed certain practices. Foreign products, widely regarded as that region's greatest treasures, were presented to the emperor in exchange for titles and promises of imperial grace. While the responsibilities of each tribute mission varied from state to state, each gift-bearing visitor to the Han court from non-Han region was recorded as the representative of a specific tributary vassal kingdom. However, in the period following Han intervention in Nam Việt internal affairs, the relationship between the two regions was one of a central authority extending its administrative reach to the periphery. Tribute contributions were compulsory, and so

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<sup>163</sup> The Han emperor Wudi sent several waves of armies (up to 150,000 men) against the semi-nomadic Xiongnu 匈奴 people, destroying their power base south of the Gobi Desert. He also set up commandaries in today's Tibet and Mongolia and sent 700,000 Chinese colonists to inhabit this region. Han Wudi turned to the northeast as well. In 108 BCE, he captured the semi-Sinicized state of Choson (Northern Korea, southern Manchuria) and set up a capital at P'yongyang. This region remained an outpost of the Chinese empire until 313 AD. Han armies were also sent to attack the Tien kingdom (located near modern Kunming). The Chinese in 109 BCE crushed the kingdom. The crown prince was allowed to keep his title until even that was taken away following a rebellion twenty years later.

<sup>164</sup> Pan, p. 25.

paradoxically, tributary protocol was not a transactional part of the Sino-Việt relationship at this time.

The Han court developed a policy of non-interference in the affairs of the Xiongnu, which the court eventually applied to all non-Chinese tributary states.<sup>165</sup> This policy was adopted because the court maintained that these peoples could not be expected to act according to the superior patterns of behavior that regulated subjects of the empire. However, court attitudes toward the Việt region after the decline of Nam Việt power followed a policy of tight control, modeled its policy toward all Han subjects. The Han court assigned new administrative regions to the south; Giao Chỉ 交趾 in the Hồng River Delta, Cửu Chân 九真 to the south of the delta region, and Nhật Nam 日南 to the south of that region. Chinese sources report that the Han emperor Wudi appointed a northern official as Regional Inspector 刺使 to head the local administration of Giao Chỉ. The Han court supposedly planned to introduce administrative regions that were modeled on northern region. In fact, the Chinese leaders likely recognized the local authority of the Lạc lords as prefectural and district officials.<sup>166</sup> Their control was recorded in Chinese history as resembling the empire as a whole. Local leaders in turn accepted titles from the Han court to enhance their prestige. By submitting tribute from their region, they built up an institutional relationship with the central court. The initial Han expansion into the south echoed

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<sup>165</sup> Pan, pp. 26-27.

<sup>166</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 29.

Qin interests in the expansion of long distance trade. Writing about the Han court's policy toward tribute relations, Ying-shih Yu wrote "trade and expansion in Han China were so closely interwoven that they were hardly separable in reality, though distinguishable in conception. Throughout the period they developed side by side through mutual stimulation."<sup>167</sup> As Yu contended, "sometimes it was trade that paved the way for expansion and sometimes it was expansion that opened opportunities for trade."<sup>168</sup> The court was motivated by opportunities for trade, particularly anticipated trade links with India overland through modern Sichuan.<sup>169</sup> Sea links would necessarily pass through Việt territory.

In 62 BCE, a tribute mission from Cũ Chãn arrived at the court of Han emperor Xuandi 宣帝 with the gift of a "strange beast," likely a white elephant according to later commentary.<sup>170</sup> In 20 BCE a mission from Giao Chi's Việt Tuyền 越雋 district brought tribute including a "crying hen 長鳴雞" and a *zichen* 伺晨 bird to the court.<sup>171</sup> These missions do not seem to suggest a pattern of tributary activity originating from a single political center. Instead these missions likely represent the variety of political players who were jockeying for position in the region at this time. Transplanted Han officials competed with local Lạc elite for leadership roles.

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<sup>167</sup> Yu, Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China: A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 1-2.

<sup>168</sup> Yu, Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China*, p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> Pan, p. 57.

<sup>170</sup> *HS* 8: 259.

Moreover, an increasing number of elite families of officials and scholars) arrived in the south during the interim reign of Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9-23).<sup>172</sup> These immigrants, bearers of Central Plains (*zhongyuan*) culture, upset the laissez-faire policy established between Chinese settlers and the indigenous aristocracy, the Lạc Lords. The Lạc Lords had always raised their own resources from the production the Han court wished to tax. Their local control also was challenged by the social changes through the adoption of Chinese marriage practices. Eventually, they opposed the changes with force, resulting in the Trưng Sisters rebellion of AD 39/40.

During the early period of the Latter Han, there was little connection between local politics and the authority of the central court. There is a record of one tribute mission to the Han court of emperor Guangwudi 光武帝 in 37, bringing gifts of a white ringed pheasant and a white rabbit.<sup>173</sup> However, the envoys from this mission were not dispatched from the center of local administration, but instead came from an area outside of the Hồng River region. This action may indicate an attempt on the part of Lạc elite to legitimate their political standing in the eyes of the Chinese court, but there is not enough evidence of regular submissions of tribute to substantiate this claim. More likely is the notion that these tribute missions came from Mainland

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<sup>171</sup> Liu Xin 劉歆 (d. 23), *Xijing zaji* (*Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*) 西京雜記 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1979) 3: 19a.

<sup>172</sup> Jennifer Holmgren, *Chinese Colonisation of Northern Vietnam: Administrative Geography and Political Development in the Tongking Delta, First to Sixth Centuries A.D.* (Canberra: Australian National University, Faculty of Asian Studies, 1980), p. 8.

<sup>173</sup> Fan Ye 范曄 (398-446), *New Collated Edition of the History of the Latter Han* 新校本後漢書 (cited hereafter as *HHS*) (Taipei: Dingwen, 1994), 1: 62.

Southeast Asian traders representing political centers outside the area of the northern Việt region. Another such mission bringing gifts of a live rhinoceros and a white pheasant was recorded in CE 84.<sup>174</sup>

Even as the strongest bid for local autonomy since the era of the Nam Việt kingdom, the Trung Sisters Rebellion (CE 40-43) was not a major watershed in Sino-Việt relations. However, it did reveal the tensions between the local political order and the expressions of authority emanating from the central Chinese court. In fact, the failure of the Trung sisters' rebellion points to a lack of cohesion among the local aristocracy.<sup>175</sup> This political cohesion didn't develop locally until centuries of developing institutions, based on the Chinese model, had passed. The Trung sisters, Trung Trắc 徵側 and Trung Nhi 徵貳, were said to have been daughters of a Lạc Lord from in the delta region to the northwest of Hanoi. Trung Trắc had married a landed aristocrat from Chu Diên 朱鳶, Thi Sách 詩索. In AD 39, Thi Sách complained to the local Han prefect, Su Ding 蘇定, about excessive taxation. For this impertinence, he was executed. Chinese sources maintained that he participated in the revolt.<sup>176</sup> He may also have been the common husband of the two Trung sisters.

In revenge, Trung Trắc and her sister allegedly launched a revolt. During the fighting the rebels captured garrisons, and forced Su Ding to flee back to the Nan Hai

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<sup>174</sup> *HHS* 3: 145.

<sup>175</sup> Holmgren, p.16.

<sup>176</sup> Holmgren, p. 21.

南海 district (modern-day Guangzhou). Trưng Trắc was declared queen, and she set up her government at Mê Linh 麋泠, the ancient Âu Lạc seat of power. The Han court, however, sent one of its finest generals, Ma Yuan 馬援 (14 BCE- AD 49), to pacify the region. He entered the region with troops conscripted in southern China. In AD 41 or 42, Ma and his forces confronted the Trưng sisters in Southwestern Mê Linh 麋泠. Both Trưng Tắc and Trưng Nhị were executed by Han authorities, although popular mythology maintains that they refused to surrender in a battle during the summer of AD 43 at Cam Khê (Ba Vì near modern Hà Nội), and instead committed suicide by leaping into the Hát Giang River.

The example of the Trưng sisters was not lost on subsequent generations of scholars. The 13th century court historian and author of *Historical Record of the Great Viet* (Đại Việt Sử Ký 大越史記) Lê Văn Hưu 黎文休 noted “They create a nation and took for themselves the title of Queen, as easily as turning their hands.... But alas, for more than a thousand years... the men of our country merely bowed their heads and kowtowed as slaves and servants of the men from the North (The Chinese). It can be said that their lack of shame in the face of the Trưng women was their self-destruction.”<sup>177</sup> A wide avenue in Hà Nội still bears the name of the Trưng sisters to commemorate their deeds. One Song historian also fixated on the gender of these defiant local leaders, remarking that a great amount of manpower and time had been

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<sup>177</sup> Holmgren, p. 15.

expended "only" in pursuit of "a girl."<sup>178</sup> Although the greatest impact of this rebellion would be the effect of the Han imperial response on local administration, the fact that its leaders were women left an indelible mark on the historiography of later accounts.

Following Ma Yuan's campaign, the Việt region's commandaries were divided into even smaller areas, and placed under direct Han control with no more reliance on the Lạc Lords as intermediaries. New prefectures were often drawn up on sites once controlled by indigenous authorities, such as the ancient citadel of Cổ Loa.<sup>179</sup> Local Việt customs and laws were compared with the Han code and variants were noted. In 44 Ma Yuan was said to have ordered that the ceremonial bronze drums be melted down and recast in the form of a horse, which was presented to the Han court as tribute, making an obvious reference to the arrival of a military power from the north.<sup>180</sup> Sima Guang mentioned this tale of the bronze drums prominently in his account.<sup>181</sup> Han settlements of decommissioned Han soldiers in Guangdong and in the northern Việt region extended Chinese influence further into the southern frontier. Inhabitants of the region were likely participants in the literate culture of the Han imperial bureaucracy, as evidence by the scholarly accomplishments of officials

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<sup>178</sup> Fan Zuyu, *Tangjian*, p. 596.

<sup>179</sup> Holmgren, pp. 21-22.

<sup>180</sup> *HHS*, 24: 840.

<sup>181</sup> *ZZTJ* 43: 1394.

assigned to administer the region.<sup>182</sup> Moreover, natives of the Việt region were allowed to enter the Han bureaucracy and some persons even held high positions within the government, posted throughout China.

During this period trade from the South China Sea became increasingly important. In Ban Gu's *History of the Han* we can find a list of maritime routes through the South Seas up to the Indian Ocean used in the 1st century BCE.<sup>183</sup> Indo-Iranian mariners of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century greatly expanded shipping entering ports along the South China coast. Pearls, a highly prized luxury of the imperial household and wealthy subjects, were associated with the peoples of the South Sea region.<sup>184</sup> Increased maritime traffic brought ideas as well as goods. The spread from India of Hinduism and Buddhism into Mainland SEA came by this route. As mentioned earlier, the presentation of tribute indicated the submission of the presenters to the authority of the central court. With this notion in mind, one may argue that the greater the variety of non-native products a specific imperial household received through tributary exchange, the greater prestige and authority this imperial regime was considered to exercise universally. During the Han, increased contact with non-Han

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<sup>182</sup> The Han official Liu Xi 劉熙 is noted in the *History of the Sui* 隋書, as having edited the study of Confucian rites *Dadai Liji* 大戴禮記 while he was serving as Governor 太守 of Giao Chi. Cited in Wei Zheng 魏征 (580-643), *New Collated Edition of the History of the Sui* 新校本隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1973), 32: 921. Keith Taylor notes, however, that Liu Xi couldn't wait to leave the area after he completed his term of service, tempering claims regarding the vibrancy of the scholarly community as this time (Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 77).

<sup>183</sup> *HS juan* 28B. Cited in Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.127.

<sup>184</sup> Yu, p.199,

regions of the world led could be interpreted at court as the greater success of the tribute system itself.<sup>185</sup>

### **Experimenting with Political Autonomy within the Tribute System**

When the Han empire collapsed and its immense territory was divided into a series of feuding powers, the southern courts in the ensuing Period of Disunion looked again to the South Seas for economic gain.<sup>186</sup> With this greater southern orientation, South China and the Hồng River Delta region became more entangled politically. There also emerged among the descendants of Chinese settlers and Sinicized indigenous leaders an increasingly localized identification with the region.<sup>187</sup> The local leader Shi Xie (Sĩ Nhiếp 士爰: 187-226) was an especially successful member of the new Sino-Việt elite. Shi Xie was a sixth generation official from a family that had fled their home in modern-day Shandong during Wang Mang's reign. Shi himself was born in Cangwu 蒼梧, now located in China's Guangxi province. When the governor of Giao Chỉ, Han general Zhu Juan's son Zhu Fu 朱符, was murdered in 196, Shi Xie took advantage of the turmoil in the North to take control of Giao Chỉ, Cru Chân and Nan Hai.

The weakened Han court sent an official delegate to take command, but Shi Xie continued to hold real control. The Han court attempted to boost their delegate's

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<sup>185</sup> Yu, p. 194.

<sup>186</sup> Pan, p. 2.

<sup>187</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 85.

power by promoting the status of Giao Chỉ to that of a province under the name Giao Châu 交州 in 203. The court also granted their official the appellation Regional Chief 刺史, a title that would subsequently be often used by northern courts to cement alliances with local leaders from the Việt region. However, the Han central court was much too weak by this point to affect the local balance of power at this time. One of the Han official's own men soon brought about his assassination, and the central court turned to Shi Xie for support.

Shi Xie's local career also represents how a local official could use tributary relations with a larger political power to his own advantage. Shi Xie had allied with Sun Quan, the powerful general controlling the Sichuan region. When the Wu 吳 Dynasty (222-80) was announced at Nanjing, the southern leader sent a great volume of tribute to the north. In 210 Shi Xie sent to the Wu court a delegation bearing the tribute items such as various types of incense and rare medicinal herbs, bright pearls, large cowries, coral, amber, various fruits, longan, banana-leaf linen, kingfishers, peacocks, rhinoceroses, and elephants.<sup>188</sup> This pattern of tribute giving continued unabated for years. At one point, Shi Xie's brother Shi Yi 士壹 himself presented several hundred horses to the Wu court, presumably obtained in trades with Central Asian or Tibetan merchants. In response to the tribute mission, Sun Quan presented the southern leader with the position Left-Hand General and the honoric title

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<sup>188</sup> Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), *New Collated Edition of the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms* 新校本三國志 (cited hereafter as SGZ) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959), 49: 1192.

"Imperial Frontier Marquis 龍編侯,"<sup>189</sup> and Shi Xie sent his son to Nanjing as a court hostage to prove his loyalty. With his skillful performance as a wealthy tributary participant, Shi Xie spared Giao Chi more attacks, and gave the region time to develop independently for a while longer.

The Wu kingdom initially fostered good relations with the Giao Chi Commandary. Sun Quan and his court issued numerous titles to Shi Xie and his brothers. The Wu court accepted tribute that included incense, bird feathers, and ivory from the Shi Xie's court, and exchanged many of these items with neighboring kingdoms for other useful commodities such as horses. In court circles, tribute from the region around Giao Chi was clearly regarded to be superior to the revenue that could be extracted as tribute. Xue Zong 薛綜, an official who had served Shi Xie's administration, once remarked in a memorial to the Wu court, "It is not necessary to rely on tax revenue out of this region to enrich our central kingdom 不必仰其賦入，以益中國也."<sup>190</sup> Later Chinese courts kept track of the variety of products coming from the south, and they in turn would demand that the most prized items be given as tribute. When local officials in Giao Chi in later periods were unable to locate quantities of tribute deemed by the northern Chinese court to be the region's "local products," they would turn to their neighbors to supplement their supply. This traffic in "secondary trade" would remain an important part of tribute

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<sup>189</sup> While there does not exist sufficient evidence to prove that *bian* 邊 may be substituted for *bian* 編 in Shi's title, I would like to propose that this is a transcription error.

<sup>190</sup>SGZ 53:1252. Cited as well in Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p.78.

relations in the future. Future dynasties would read of Việt riches, and expect the same assortment of products in their tribute offerings.

Eventually, northern Chinese authorities challenged the effective independence of the northern Việt region under Shi Xie. Interestingly, during this period the rulers of Linyi (Lâm Ấp 林邑), later to become Champa, went from being “rebels” in the eyes of Chinese scholars to being dynasts in 192. Refugees were pushed northward by the Linyi expansion. This kingdom only drew attention to itself later when Cham forces attacked Cưu Chân and Giao Chỉ. Both Indian and Chinese influences were present at Shi Xie’s court. In 226, Shi Xie himself died at the age of 90. His son, Shi Hui 士徽, also received Wu patronage. Sun Quan then acted on a memorial from his envoy Lũ Dai 呂岱, and divided Giao Châu into two territories, Guangzhou (centered on Canton and southern China) and Giao Châu (centered on southwestern China and northern Vietnam). Lũ Dai became the governor of Guangzhou, and another Chinese official was appointed governor of Giao Châu. Shi Hui attempted a revolt, but was put down by Wu troops.<sup>191</sup> The entire membership of the Shi family was systemically wiped out.<sup>192</sup> The northern court once again attempted to organize relations with the Viet region as an extension of its own central administration.

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<sup>191</sup> SGZ 60:1385.

<sup>192</sup> The Chinese military action provided the setting for another rebellion in 248, led by Triệu Ẩu 趙姬, later to be known in history as “Lady Triệu (Bà Triệu).” Bà Triệu’s actual role in the rebellion may have been idealized by later Vietnamese historians to fit the pattern established by the Trưng sisters of strong female leadership standing up to northern intervention. See Holmgren, p. 79.

However, the title “Governor of Giao Chỉ” for quite some time after the fall of the Shi clan remained only a nominal title, with no power attached to it. In place of remotely controlled political administration, a new local class of elite soon emerged. Sino-Việt elite dominated at the village level. In other social changes, a class of landless “floating” peasants emerged in Giao Châu, mirroring similar changes in the north. Many of these migrant laborers served two social groups. Some worked for manors established by northern elite. These estates mirrored similar northern institutions, even to the point of exercising the same tax-exempt status.

A period of regional integration marked this point, although this development could be considered an accelerated period in a long, continuous trend. In Việt agriculture, the northern ox-drawn iron plow and iron tools replaced bamboo and wood. Meanwhile rice from the southern region became well known in South China region, and as “Champa Rice” it became preferable to local strains. Pottery and porcelain, as well as glassware, evolved as a local industry. The local production of brick and tiles opened new possibilities for the construction of palaces, pagodas, temples and tombs by the Chinese and Sino-Việt elite.<sup>193</sup> Until the expansion of Canton in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the ports of Nhật Nam (near modern-day province of Nghệ An) provided the first steps for traders from Java, Indian kingdoms, Persia and Egypt.

During this period there also emerged a new type of local leader, who was well versed in the symbols of authority utilized by northern courts. By the early 6th

century, growing contradictions appeared between administrators dispatched from the north and the Sino-Việt elite. The flash point was the Southern Liang Dynasty (502-557) with the imposition of tighter local network of control and greater tax burden. Lý Bí 襄贛 (Lý Bôn) was the son of settler aristocracy, which had arrived in the northern Việt region at the break-up of the Han dynasty. He suddenly resigned from official service in 542 when a local administrator frustrated his chances for advancement. Sima Guang notes that another local official whose talents had also gone unappreciated joined Lý Bí.<sup>194</sup> Together, they returned to their home village and rallied support for a rebellion. In the spring of 542, Lý Bí overthrew the local government and forced the governor Xiao Zi 蕭諮, nephew of the emperor, to flee. Following this initial success, Lý Bí drew on both the region's political past and the imperial cult of his own day to build up his local rule.

In the winter of 544 Lý Bí announced the founding of the Vạn Xuân 萬春 (Eternal Spring) kingdom, and brought attention to the legacy of the Nam Việt kingdom. He proclaimed himself Nam Việt Đế (Nam Việt Emperor), and taking the title Lý Nam Đế. He also adopted the reign title, “Thiên Đức 天德 (heavenly virtue).”<sup>195</sup> He established a new calendar and ordered the construction of a pagoda

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<sup>193</sup> Hodgkin, p. 23.

<sup>194</sup> *ZZTJ* 158: 4908.

<sup>195</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) *NK* 4: 148. Sima Guang's account of Lý Bí's actions is somewhat different. In the *ZZTJ* account, Lý Bí takes the title Yuedi 越帝 and adopts the reign title "Great Virtue 大德." This is likely a transcription error. Cited in *ZZTJ* 158: 4920.

named “Khai Quốc 開國 (setting up the state).” Lý Bí’s kingdom was unified for a short period, stretching from the Cham frontier to the white Thai communities in the northern highlands. However, the Liang in time counter-attacked with 30,000 men, and in 545 Lý Bí fled his kingdom. He died during fighting at the Khuất Liêu 屈獠 aboriginal community in the Hung Hoa Mountains in 548. The period of resistance continued when Lý clan members and associates fought off further the Southern Liang advances. In 583 the Lý clan under Lý Hữu Vinh 李幼榮 dispatched a tribute mission to the ailing Chen court bearing as tribute tamed elephants.<sup>196</sup> At this time, the Lý and another clan, the Triệu, had partitioned the kingdom, and perhaps the mission was a bid for support for Lý interests. In any case, the court from which the southern leaders sought patronage was in no position to grant it. In 587, the Sui founders re-unified China. However, it was until 602 that a Lý descendent Lý Phật Tử 李佛子 finally submitted to the new Chinese emperor. He eventually died in a Sui prison. Although Lý Bí’s southern base of power could not be sustained, a political order with imperial adornment had emerged to revive the notion of an independent Nam Việt kingdom. That northern forces did not handily subjugate this kingdom demonstrated the increasing effectiveness of such images when local leaders to call them up to rally support for their political ambitions.

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<sup>196</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 150.

### **Sino-Viet Tribute Relations during the Tang**

The Tang Dynasty culminated the centuries of institution building lasting from the Period of Disunion to the Sui dynasty. The families forming the ruling houses of both the Tang and Sui brought a new dimension to the nature of imperial power through their non-Han family affiliations. As Pan Yihong writes, "with their mixed Chinese and nomadic ancestry, and as direct heirs of the once alien rulers of North China as well as the unifiers of North and South, the Sui and early Tang rulers inherited the rich tradition of Chinese literate culture as well as a vigorous non-Chinese, nomadic spirit."<sup>197</sup> The second emperor Tang Taizong himself was the product of both Han and non-Han traditions of rule.<sup>198</sup> Assuming in the role of the Heavenly Qaghan 天可汗, as well as the Son of Heaven 天子, indicted that the ruler sought to extend his authority over non-Han as well as Han populations equally.<sup>199</sup>

As a result of institutional changes early in the dynasty, there was no intermediary layer between the local administration and central administration. Early Tang rulers sent commissioners into outlying regions to bring back reports to him. However, this system would prove to be inefficient. From the 670's onward, the Tang gradually overextended its reach, and the court at Luoyang became increasingly concerned about unstable borders. Court policy gradually sifted from direct

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<sup>197</sup> Pan, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Pan, p. 140.

<sup>199</sup> Pan, p. 180.

administration dictated by the imperial bureaucracy to more limited military administration, represented by a system of frontier garrisons.

For later Chinese historians, the Tang dynasty was second in glory only to the Han in China's political history, and its administrative accomplishments were sources of inspiration. The Tang's relationship with the Việt region also became a model for future courts. In 679, the name of Giao Chi was changed to An Nam, initiating a major change in the position the region occupied within the Chinese empire. An Nam, or the "Pacified South 安南," was one of four protectorates along the empire's borders, the "Pacified West 安西" in modern-day Xinjiang, the "Pacified North 安北" in Mongolia, and the "Pacified East 安東" near modern-day Korea.<sup>200</sup> This division of the empire was part of a bolder, universalistic image of a ruler who brought order and accord to all peoples from his place at the center. However, even with these administrative changes, An Nam occupied a more autonomous, privileged position in the Tang system of frontier dependencies. While court-appointed official ruled over the large units, these regions were sub-divided into smaller provinces that were left for local people to administer. When this type of administration quickly appeared awkward, the Tang court assigned Area Commanders to the two administrations, and in about 679 established the An Nam Protectorate as the overarching frontier administration.

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<sup>200</sup> *JTS* 38: 1393. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 171. The Tang administrative system was ordered as follows; Circuits 道 or "provinces" (re-imposed on existing regions), Districts 縣, and Protectorates

In 714, a Customs Office for Maritime Trade was established for An Nam, indicating that the Tang court wished to regulate the flow of valuable goods that passed through this region.<sup>201</sup> The Việt lowlands region came under direct Tang control. The highlands remained under native leadership with the *loose rein* system. The most pressing problem with this system was that officials appointed to these permanent administrative positions, particularly military governors, established their own administrations. Frontier administration became quite complex, with powerful military officials appointed to the border region adopting concurrent civilian titles, or adopting civilian authority when these military figures were out of reach of the central court. For example, early Tang prefects 刺史 from around the empire could be appointed to the position of the An Nam Protectorate Area Commander 督護. By the middle of the dynasty (ca. 770's), officials originally assigned to bandit suppression or other military duties were taking this position.<sup>202</sup> The period following the Nanzhao War (862-66) exacerbated this situation.

At the time that the Tang court first divided up the region, a former Sui official Qiu He dispatched a tribute mission led by his trusted advisor Gao Shilian 高士廉 to the central court in Luoyang to acknowledge their submission to Tang authority, as had most other regions of the empire. According to the *XTS* account, the Cru Chàn

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(*duhu fu*). This latter form of local administration was gradually established for the Việt territory. A region by this name denoted a “barbarian” region under Tang authority.

<sup>201</sup> Liu, Xu 劉昫 (887-946), *New Collated Edition of the Old History of the Tang* 新校本舊唐書 (Cited hereafter as *JTS*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 8: 174.

<sup>202</sup> *JTS*, 11: 287, 11:312, 13: 367, 13: 372, 13: 399, 14: 431, 15: 446, 15: 470

Commandary in 622 sent rough silk and peacock feathers as tribute and the An Nam Protectorate<sup>203</sup> presented shark hide 鮫革, a quantity of python gallbladder 蟒蛇膽, and betel-nuts, while the port garrison of Nanhai (modern-day Guangzhou) sent gharuwood incense 沉香, python gallbladder 蟒蛇膽, lychees, and tortoise shells 鱉甲.<sup>204</sup> From this list of tribute items we can surmise that Nanhai's position as a center for trade from the South China Sea was already quite strong. Gharuwood incense, already a highly prized item at court and among high-ranking officials, came from tropical region to the south of the South China coast. By the Song dynasty, this tribute would become the most important in the imperial treasury. However, its identification with Nahai early in the Tang period already indicated that tribute missions originating in this region were relying on trade items to stand in as "local products." This practice would also occur at times in Việt tribute mission, for which organizers of Việt missions would turn to southern neighbors for the most highly prized items.

The ruler of Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 712-56) marked a new phase in frontier administration with the rise of regional Area Commands led by Military Commissioners. Xuanzong was reportedly more adventurous in his rule, and he often agreed with expansionist proposals brought to his attention by certain military

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<sup>203</sup> Properly speaking, this title ought to have been Giao Châu Area Command before 679.

<sup>204</sup> Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) *New History of the Tang* 新唐書 (Cited hereafter as *XTS*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975), 43: 1095.

advisors.<sup>205</sup> His court launched a greater number of expeditions along the Tang empire's border region, and there was great non-Han involvement in these expeditions. Problems with Xuanzong's more aggressive policies became starkly evident with the outbreak of border disturbance that culminated in the An Lushan 安祿山 Rebellion (755-63). The rebellion was finally suppressed, but Tang never as strong again.

The An Lushan Rebellion further widened the gap between the central government at Luoyang and its southwestern frontier. In the post-An Lushan period, the Tang court was most concerned with balancing the four powers of Central China, Tibet and the Western Region, the Uighurs and the Northern Region, and the southwestern Nanzhao kingdom.<sup>206</sup> The response along the southern frontier was measured. The region's name An Nam was changed to Trân Nam 鎮南, or the "Guarded South," in 758. Communications between the north and the south had broken off for several years during the rebellion. Ten years later the name was changed back again. Local leaders began to exercise their power, sensing a drain on Tang resolve to control the region. The central court began to expect less and less from its frontier administrations. The tax burden for An Nam had always been exceedingly light; however, by the early 9<sup>th</sup> century the household numbers for the region were frequently not included on the imperial tax revenue rolls.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Pan, pp. 150-56.

<sup>206</sup> Pan, p. 157.

<sup>207</sup> *JTS* 16: 484.

Regarding Sino-Việt tributary activity, the high Tang period was not particularly eventful. The region was an integrated part of the empire, and so the tributary practices required of foreign kingdoms in their relations with the Tang court were not expected of An Nam. Moreover, revenue was extracted from the region according to the needs of the military commissioners that governed it. However, the rebellion of Phùng Hưng 馮興 (d.789) still provided a powerful precedent for Song period local leaders. Hưng was a native of Sơn Tây 山西 province and commander of a local garrison on edge of *loose rein* region. He allegedly stepped into the local political vacuum caused the death of the Tang governor Gao Zhengping 高正平.<sup>208</sup> He took title “Great Father and Mother King 布蓋大王,” demonstrating Hưng’s desire to attract a local following without portraying himself as a vassal of the northern central court. In early 780’s Phùng Hưng seized the capital La Thanh (near modern-day Hà Nội), which he ruled until his death in 789. This period was remembered for the strengthening of contacts with neighboring kingdoms. His son Phùng An 馮安 finally surrendered to the Tang.

The Nanzhao War (862-66) had an even more dramatic impact on the frontier. The early Tang had initially established the Nanzhao kingdom in southwest China as a *loose rein* frontier administration. Tang rulers were seeking allies to fend off powerful leaders coming from the region of Tibet. In 738 Tang emperor

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<sup>208</sup> Trần Trọng Kim. *Việt Nam Sử Lược* (A Record of Vietnamese History) Volume One. (Saigon: Trung Tâm Học Liệu Xuất Bản, 1971), p. 60.

Xuanzong granted the Nanzhao ruler the title King of Yunnan. As court gained power through regional alliances, it began to challenge Tang insistence on tributary ties. Eventually the Nanzhao court became a vassal of the Tibetans. At this point, Nanzhao armies began to threaten Tang allies in the region.

After the An Lushan Rebellion had taken its toll on Tang power, the southwestern kingdom repeatedly launched raids on An Nam. The Nanzhao Kingdom had steadily expanded its influence into the Lingnan region. Many mountain chieftains, and the anti-Tang element among the Việt region's population, had expressed loyalties to the Nanzhao leadership. Fighting broke out between the Tang and Nanzhao courts when Nanzhao armies advanced on the capital of the An Nam Protectorate. The Tang court, already weakened by internal strife and border disputes to the northwest, took two and a half years to locate a capable military commander and a force large enough to drive out the Nanzhao occupying armies.

In 862 the court finally launched a full-scale invasion, initially conquering the region. The Tang General Gao Pian 高駢, famous for fighting the rebellious Turks, was sent by the Tang to stop the fighting. In the spring of 864 the Tang general set up a camp at the Sea Gate Command,<sup>209</sup> gathering and training troops for his expedition over a period of many months. Gao's expedition was successful, and he consequently became a hero both in the Chinese and the Vietnamese people's eyes. Most

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<sup>209</sup> Sea Gate 海門 was located on the South China coast to the southwest of Guangdong's Chaoyang 潮陽 Country. During the Song period, the region was renamed the Sea Gate Garrison. Keith Taylor originally introduced this translation. See Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 246.

importantly, Gao's later rule of the region marked the first stage in the process leading to Việt independence in 939.

An important administrative change during Gao Pian's rule was the abolition of the An Nam Protectorate in late 866.<sup>210</sup> On December 21, 866, the Tang emperor announced a general amnesty, and called on the armies stationed in An Nam, Yongzhou and Xihou to secure their borders. At the same time, the An Nam Protectorate administration region was replaced with a new Defense Command 節鎮 called the Peaceful Sea Army 靜海軍, led by Gao Pian, then appointed as a military commissioner (*jiedushi*).<sup>211</sup> Gao Pian himself received the honorific title "King of the Southern Pacified Region 南平王." The Tang emperor was careful to insist that no further attacks be launched on Nanzhao forces, wishing instead to revive harmonious relations among the involved parties. The Tang court could hardly have desired anything else, given their weakened position in the region. Standing as a proposed bulwark of regional stability, the "Peaceful Sea Army" would remain the administrative title for the region through the early Song period.<sup>212</sup> Its designator, the Tang, was several decades from its own demise.

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<sup>210</sup> Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 (1041-98) *Mirror for Aid in Government of the Tang* 唐鑒, Vol. 2 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1977), p. 595.

<sup>211</sup> *ZZTJ* 250: 8117. Fan had assisted Sima Guang in the compilation of the *ZZTJ*, and one may also find a reference in Fan Zuyu, *Tangjian*, p. 595. Sima Guang used the term "defense command" in an explanatory note following this passage.

<sup>212</sup> Here we need to take a closer look at the official titles granted by the Tang court. First, the title "Army of the Peaceful Sea 靜海軍" Military Commissioner (*jiedushi*) referred through the mid-Tang dynasty to a specific area of command, located between today's Shandong, Hebei and Liaoning Provinces. After 880, this title had become an honorific designation for military commissioners in South China. Between 880 and 901, it appears that no one was granted this title. Between 901 and 905,

The early Song leadership could certainly compare events from one hundred years earlier with their own situation and see similarities. The local political order of the Hông River Valley was still fluid, and the strongest local leadership to emerge, the Đinh clan, faced challengers. To the west lay the successor to the Nanzhao kingdom, Dali 大理. There were no guarantees that this kingdom would not also try to exercise control over the lands once ruled by the Nanzhao. The *Old History of the Tang* account suggests that in the fifth month of 865, soon after the Chinese counter-attack on Nanzhao, Gao Pian had attacked and defeated the Linyi (Champa) “barbarians” from his position in the Yong Garrison, and then had memorialized the Tang court.<sup>213</sup> Should the Nanzhao court seize the Hông River Valley region, this action would complicate trade and contacts between the Chinese court and Cham merchants residing to the south of An Nam, who traded in products Northern Chinese increasingly desired. The Song court, therefore, was under some pressure to find a loyal local ally and discourage Nanzhao-Việt contact.

### **The Five Dynasties Period: Opportunities for True Autonomy**

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three men were granted to this title, only one of whom, Zhu Quanzheng’s older brother Zhu Quanyu, allegedly took his post in West Lingnan on the border with An Nam, and evidence for this point is not clear.<sup>212</sup> Secondly, although the position translated as “Protectorate” is 都護府, Hucker notes that the position “Protector-General” is 督護. This distinction may indicate an error in the *Songshi* text. Secondly, the positions of “military commissioner” and “protector-general” refer to two separate spheres of authority; military and civilian spheres, respectively.

<sup>213</sup> Liu Xu (887-946), *Old History of the Tang* (cited hereafter as *JTS*) 舊唐書, 19: 659.

To set the stage for an autonomous Việt regime along the Chinese southern frontier, we will first examine the rise and fall of several local leaders. Following the fall of the Tang, the former empire's southwestern frontier passed through the hands of many local leaders, all of whom depended on military might and short-term alliances to achieve control. However, none of these local leaders controlled more than a small portion of the territory once under Tang domination, and the authority of these leaders remained subordinate to larger, more powerful neighbors who would reconfigure administration of the region accord to their own wishes.

Five Dynasties Period introduced changes to the frontier's political landscape. The Five Dynasties at 60 years was a significantly shorter period of disorder than Six Dynasties had been at 350 years, and the consolidation of power proceeded at a more rapid pace. Nevertheless, these were hard times in the South China region. Local taxes were collected years in advance. Political pragmatism had become the way of the world. However, there also existed new opportunities for local Việt leaders. Power struggles broke out between powerful local chiefs. Local power had devolved to the manor owners, Chinese settler families, and local military strongmen.

The Khúc clan is first mentioned in the Chinese historical record in 906, but the family had likely been in control of Giao Chỉ since 880.<sup>214</sup> Khúc Thừa Dụ 曲承裕 (r. 906-07) on February 7, 906 received an appointment from emperor Tang Zhaoxuan 唐昭宗 (r. 889-904) as “Army of the Peaceful Sea” An Nam Military

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<sup>214</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 260.

Commissioner 靜海軍安南節度使 and Joint Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery 同平章事. However, Song historian Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) noted that Thừ Dụ had stirred up rebellion and had seized An Nam.<sup>215</sup>

When Thừ Dụ died his son Khúc Hạo 曲顥 (r. 907-917) took over his appointment, taking the additional title An Nam Protector-General 安南督護.<sup>216</sup> Khúc Hạo was an early victor in the fight for local dominance. As Tang authority was rapidly dissolved in South China, local leaders turned to the Luoyang's likely successor, the Later Liang Dynasty (907-921). The clan leaders chose to transfer their loyalty from the now defunct Tang court to the Liang to counteract the influence of another Later Liang subject Liu Yin 劉陰, who ruled from Xingwangfu 興王府 (modern-day Canton). When Khúc Hạo died, his son Khúc Thừ Mỹ 曲承美 (r. 917-23) managed to gain favor with the Later Liang emperor Modi 末帝 (Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞: r. 913-923), sending a merchant-envoy from Fujian with tribute.<sup>217</sup> The Liang emperor's envoy carried with him a ceremonial axe, which he presented to Thừ Mỹ as a sign of that local leader's court-sanctioned authority.

However, when Later Liang authority was in turn challenged by powerful rivals, the Khúc clan realized the dangers that existed in holding their own power base. Thừ Mỹ's rule remained fragile, and he faced rivals seeking to reunite the region from

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<sup>215</sup> ZZTJ 265: 8656.

<sup>216</sup> ZZTJ, 266: 8683.

<sup>217</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14057. Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 262.

the Hồng River Valley to the Pearl River Delta as a single political entity. The Liu clan, founders of the Southern Han dynasty, would become Thừa Mỹ's greatest challengers. When the Song founders sought historical precedent for the titles granted to Việt leaders, they would look back on the series of titles the Southern Han rulers adopted for themselves.

When Zhu Youzhen took the throne as the Latter Liang emperor in 907, the local leadership at Guangzhou under Liu Yin sent a series of tribute missions; in 6/907 carrying "strange treasures 奇寶 and popular medicinal products, in 10/907 carrying 20,000 cash "to bolster the court's military resources," baroos camphor 龍腦, a waist pouch 腰帶, a pearl-sewn cushion 珍珠枕, tortoise shell 玳瑁, and medicinal herbs and in 11/907 presenting more than one hundred intricate items including a dragon-shaped container 龍形通箆, a rhinoceros hide girdle, a thorny-wood-lined box 柘裏合, instruments shaped from tortoise shell, as well as many different herbs.<sup>218</sup> The South had been known for these items, but the Guangzhou leadership set a regional precedent by making them tribute items. In 911, Guangzhou sent another tribute mission and on this occasion Thừa Mỹ followed Liu Yin's lead by sending envoys to present containers containing 500 bolts of plantain fiber linen, five vats each of baroos camphor and the fragrant incense *curcuma* 鬱金, as well as other sea products.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Wang, Qinruo 王欽若, (962-1025) et al. *The Song Edition of the Magic Mirror in the Palace of Books* 宋本冊府元龜 (1005) (hereafter cited as *SBCFYG*) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 197: 563.

<sup>219</sup> *SBCFYG* 197: 563.

At this time, a precedent was also established for the granting of court titles in the region. Liu Yin had received from the Later Liang court the titles Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Clear Sea 清海軍,” referring to the Guangzhou and “Army of the Peaceful Sea 靜海軍,” referring to Giao Chỉ, concurrent Secretariat Director 中書令 and the honorific title “Assistant Prince of the Southern Pacified Region 南平襄王.”<sup>220</sup> After Liu Yin’s death in 911, his brother was only named Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Clear Sea,” while the position Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Peaceful Sea” was later offered to “Khúc Mỹ,” referring most certainly to Khúc Thừa Mỹ.<sup>221</sup> From this point, the region remained connected to the late Tang institution of Military Commissions through the title “Army of the Peaceful Sea 靜海軍,” and leaders of this region would often also receive the title “Prince of the Southern Pacified Region 南平王,” with its likely allusions to Liu Yin’s rule. In this matter, the northern Việt region was given an effective role, with its responsibilities to the central court, in the imperial order.

This division of the region into two administrative zones may have been an attempt by the Liang court to prevent the revival of a Nam Việt-sized challenger to the south. However Liu Gong had great ambitions and eventually seized the opportunity to establish himself as the first emperor of the Southern Han (947-51), once turmoil had again engulfed North China. Having established his rule, Liu Gong turned his

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<sup>220</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8740.

<sup>221</sup> *ZZTJ* 268: 8749.

sights on regaining the Việt lands. According to *ZZTJ*, in late 930, the Southern Han court sent troops under the leadership of Liang Kezhen 梁克貞 and Li Shouyong 李守鄴 to attack Đại La, the stronghold of Khúc Thừa Mỹ. The Chinese captured Thừa Mỹ and brought him back to the capital at Xingwangfu, leaving behind Li Jin 李進 to hold the conquered territory.<sup>222</sup>

The next local leader to emerge in the power struggle thought less of mending tributary ties with northern courts than of driving northern influences out of the region. Dương Đình Nghệ 楊廷藝 (?-937)<sup>223</sup> was a general in the service of Khúc Thừa Mỹ. A native of Ái 愛, the Việt region located far to the south of the Sino-Việt border, Dương Đình Nghệ is considered to have been less beholden to the Chinese culture norms practiced by the Sino-Việt elite who resided along the border. In late 931, with a force of three thousand men, Dương Đình Nghệ drove out the Chinese occupying army and forced the Southern Han court at Guangzhou to recognize him as the legitimate military commissioner of Giao Chỉ. He ruled from Đại La for six years, carefully hunting down and purging Southern Han collaborators from positions of power. A pro-Chinese Garrison Commander (*jiang*) Kiều Công Tiễn 矯公羨 assassinated him in the spring of 937.<sup>224</sup> Keith Taylor writes that Dương Đình Nghệ

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<sup>222</sup> *ZZTJ* 277: 9047.

<sup>223</sup> The character 廷 (Đinh: *ting*) in Dương Đình Nghệ's name should actually be 延 (Diên: *yan*) (*Songshi* 488: 14074). Furthermore, Sima Guang uses the character 皎 in place of 矯 in Kiều Công Tiễn's name.

<sup>224</sup> *ZZTJ* 281: 9172.

was instrumental “in building up an indigenous power base to resist Southern Han” and that “he opened the way for rapid evolution of Vietnamese national feeling that gained momentum through three wars against the Chinese during the next half century.”<sup>225</sup> Unfortunately for Đinh Nghệ’s supporters, his choice maintain political power without seeking tributary ties with his larger northern neighbor, as the Southern Han leadership had done with the Later Liang court, left this southern régime vulnerable to a variety of local challengers.<sup>226</sup>

The first post-Tang Việt leader to claim an independent identity for the region was Ngô Quyền 吳權 (899-44). He also did so without cultivating tributary ties; however, he had been able to achieve enough political unity and military force to repel opposition to his autonomous control. Ngô Quyền was a native of Sơn Tây Prefecture, and had married into the ruling Dương clan. With local patronage, he had become chief administrator of Thanh Hao Prefecture. Known as a loyal follower of Dương Đinh Nghệ, Ngô Quyền had put Kiều Công Tiễn 矯公羨 to death to avenge the assassination of Dương Đinh Nghệ. However, soon thereafter he had also taken control of the entire Giao Province.

Meanwhile, the Southern Han leadership showed renewed interest in controlling the Việt region directly. At the capital in Xingwangfu, Liu Kung’s son, the

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<sup>225</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 265-66.

Myriad King 萬王 Liu Hongcao 劉烘操, had taken the positions of Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Peaceful Sea” and King of Giao 交王.<sup>227</sup> In the autumn of 938, Liu Hongcao led the unsuccessful Southern Han expedition against Ngô Quyền's forces. Ngô Quyền defeated the Southern Han troops at the now famous Battle of Bạch Đằng 白藤 River, drowning half of the Chinese soldiers, including Liu Hongcao himself.<sup>228</sup> This famous battle, and the military strategy of sinking stakes into to the river at low tide to impale the Southern Han vessels, brought Ngô Quyền into the pantheon of Vietnamese national heroes. Following his victory against the South Han forces, Ngô Quyền dropped references to the title Military Commissioner, and instead gave himself the title King 王,<sup>229</sup> and established his court at the ancient Âu Lạc capital of Cổ Loa 古螺. This choice of a court location reinforced the notion that he was a Việt leader who was independent from northern control.<sup>230</sup> Ngô Quyền reigned for five years from Cổ Loa. He established a court with specific

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<sup>226</sup> Chinese sources refer to a certain Thiệu Hồng 紹洪 next taking control of the Guangnan region, and serving as the military commissioner in Giao Chỉ. In the Vietnamese historical record, there is no mention of a local leader named Thiệu Hồng. See *Songshi*, 488: 14057.

<sup>227</sup> *ĐVSKTT* (1984) NK 5:71

<sup>228</sup> *ZZTJ* 281: 9193.

<sup>229</sup> Translation of the political title *wang* 王 can be a complicated matter. Granted within the context of the tribute system to a subordinate by a superior ruler, *wang* clearly refers to a dependent "prince," whether or not the recipient shared actual kinship ties with the central court. However, an individual's adoption of the title *wang* without reference to a higher court could also refer to the politically autonomous position of "king." The position implied by this title depends largely on the circumstances surrounding its appropriation.

<sup>230</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 270.

administrative functions. The Ngô clan continued to maintain their control of the region from 939 to 965, although the final years were tumultuous.

Ngô Quyền was constantly at ends with other competing local leaders. Following his death in 944 at the age of 47, the clans affiliated with the court struggled among themselves for power. Moreover, a succession of Ngô clan leaders made unsuccessful bids for power. Ngô Xương Ngập 吳昌岌 (d. 954) was eldest of Ngô Quyền's four sons. Following their father's death, the son of Dương Đình Nghệ, Dương Tam Kha 楊三哥 drove the Ngô brothers from the court. The second-oldest brother Ngô Xương Văn 吳昌文 (d. 965) eventually drove out Tam Kha only to lose control to his older brother.<sup>231</sup> In 954, Ngô Xương Ngập died and Ngô Xương Văn once again took power. Xương Văn declared himself to be a vassal of the Southern Han, sending tribute to the court at Guangzhou and receiving the titles Military Commissioner of the "Army of the Peaceful Sea" and provisional An Nam Protector-general.<sup>232</sup> However, Ngô Xương Văn eventually gave up his desire to ally with the Southern Han dynasty. When the Southern Han envoy, Li Xu 李巽 arrived in Cổ Loa, Ngô Xương Văn had him turned back with the excuse that pirates had made the region unsafe.<sup>233</sup> Taylor contends that the initial desire to gain recognition from

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<sup>231</sup> *Songshi* authors note that when Thiệu Hồng died, Ngô Xương Ngập unilaterally took unauthorized control of the area. See *Songshi* 488: 14057.

<sup>232</sup> *ĐVSKTT* (1984) NK 5:174; *ZZTJ* 291: 9501.

<sup>233</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 274.

the Southern Han court came from the opinion that local Việt leaders would respect someone with the support of a northern imperial power. However, the desire among local leaders to sustain independent control had already grown quite strong, given the example of Ngô Quyền.

After Ngô Xương Văn died in 965, a struggle for power broke out between local leaders such as Ngô Xứ Bình, the Phong Châu Regional Chief Kiều Tri Hộ, the Vũ Ninh Châu Regional Chief Dương Huy, and Đỗ Cảnh Thạc 杜景碩.<sup>234</sup> So began the anarchic period from the 950's through early 960's known in modern Vietnamese historiography as the "Period of the Twelve Lords (sử quân)," during which time the Ngô dynasty's regional authority soon faded. Even the *Songshi* authors recognized the collapse of local authority at this time, noting that "within Giao Châu, the twelve prefectures were in chaos. Many people responded to the clamor of these strongmen, themselves turning to banditry and attacking Giao Châu's settlements."<sup>235</sup>

The effort to fortify rising regional power with inter-regional tributary contact began with the rule of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領 (923-979) and his son Đinh Liễn 丁璉 (d. 979). Some sources contend that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh was the son of Đinh Công Trứ 丁公著, a military advisor to the former regional commander Dương Đình

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<sup>234</sup> This period of turmoil lasted from 945 to 967. The prefect of Phong Châu (today's Bạch Hạc County) is recorded in most sources as Kiều Công Hãn 矯公罕.

<sup>235</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

Nghệ.<sup>236</sup> When Đinh Công Trứ died, Bộ Lĩnh then inherited his father's position. Most Song chroniclers followed this account, probably because it implied an inherited succession of power that was compatible with the ideal imperial image of frontier management. Other sources noted that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh served under Trần Minh Công 陳明公 of Thai Bình, and that Bộ Lĩnh later moved to Hoa Lư, where he would later establish his kingdom.<sup>237</sup> During the period of the Twelve Lords, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and his son led troops to defeat Ngô Xứ Bình and the strongmen, bringing peace to the border region. Both Chinese and Vietnamese sources contend that the local people admired the Đinh clan's behavior, and that they supported Đinh Bộ Lĩnh as the leader of Giao Châu. Đinh Bộ Lĩnh adopted for himself the title of “Đại Thắng Vương 大勝王,”<sup>238</sup> and he installed Đinh Liễn as Military Commissioner. According *VSL* account, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh actually took the title “Great Victorious and Bright Emperor 大勝明皇帝.”<sup>239</sup> The claim to the status of emperor has important implications for Sino-Viet relations of this time, and also explains why Bộ Lĩnh might wish to give the Chinese court the impression that he had abdicated his leadership to his son, who bore the title of Military Commissioner, a position dependent on the Chinese administrative

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<sup>236</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14059.

<sup>237</sup> *VSL* 1: 18.

<sup>238</sup> According to Li Tao 李燾 (1115-1184) in his annotated history *Draft for a Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* 續資治通鑒長編 (1183) (hereafter cited as *XZZTJCB*), the title that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh chose was “Vạn Thắng Vương 萬勝王.”

<sup>239</sup> Anonymous (14<sup>th</sup> century) *Việt Sử Lược* 越史略 Annotated by Qian Xizuo 錢熙祚 (Taipei: Guangwen, 1968), 1: 8.

order. In 967 Đinh Bộ Lĩnh gave his son the title “King of Nam Việt,” a title held by the fiercely pro-southern Triệu Đà.<sup>240</sup> The implications of adopting such a potent symbol of local autonomy would have been apparent to all followers who retained a sense of regional history. After three years, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh allegedly abdicated his office in favor of his son. In fact, Bộ Lĩnh's local consolidation of power had just begun.

### Conclusions

By 1086, when Fan Zuyu contemplated in *Mirror on Tang History* 唐鑒 the pre-Song Chinese role in the Việt region, the Song and Đại Việt courts were in the process of negotiating physical borders and resolving political differences after an outbreak of armed struggle ten years earlier. Fan's historical commentary certainly included the Chinese official's concerns of his own day;

The *Rong* and *Di* barbarians since ancient times have repeatedly caused great sorrow for the Central States. Since the rule of the Qin, the central court has not once been able to achieve its goal (of civilizing) the Southern *Man* barbarians. Due largely to malaria and pestilence and natural obstacles, Chinese armies have not capitalized on good timing or favorable terrain, but have only had popular support on which to depend.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 274. The *DVSKTT* (1984) account contends that Đinh Liễn received his title in 969. Cited in *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 1: 181.

<sup>241</sup> In a note included with this edition of *Tangjian*, Meng Gong warns that in ruling a region, timing is not as useful as good conditions, while good conditions are not as useful as a popular administration. See Fan Zuyu, *Tangjian*, p. 596.

Fan paid close attention to the military troubles early Han rulers faced in attempting to subdue Viet defenses, citing the elements of rugged terrain and inhospitable climate that were routinely mentioned in all northern accounts of the Viet region. However, Fan also noted the spirit of independence that had motivated local leader since Triệu Đà's reign when he wrote that "he (Triệu Đà) was just not able to accept the interference of China's military in his territory." Fan also took notice of the tenacity of the Viet rebels, describing the Trưng Sisters Revolt with the words " it took three years and the deaths of fifteen or sixteen men to obtain the head of a girl." Characterizing Tang policy toward An Nam as a cautious response to this Viet determination, the Song official commented favorably on how the northern court had adopted a " pacifist policy of pardoning and embracing the local population," rather than intervening militarily.

Fan Zuyu blamed the tumultuous Nanzhao War on lax border administration and on ineffective frontier officials who, in his words, "were greedy and sought only to take credit for the work of others."<sup>242</sup> Such criticisms reflect the similar statements by Fan's close associate Sima Guang, who considered competent border administration along the southern frontier to be as important as the proper observance of tributary protocol.<sup>243</sup> Fan ends his survey of Sino-Viet border relations with a comment on the Tang court's swift military resolution of the Nanzhao War. However,

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<sup>242</sup> Fan Zuyu, *Tangjian*, p. 596.

<sup>243</sup> See Sima Guang's comments on the Nùng Trí Cao Rebellion in chapter four.

his statement that the campaign took "only" ten years suggests that the monumental nature of this task has made a decade's struggle appear to be relatively brief. In any case, Fan Zuyu did not look lightly on the history of resistance southern leaders could muster when provoked, nor did the Song official dismiss the need to locate and support strong, competent allies from the region. Both of these aspects of early Sino-Viet relations would be on the minds of Song court officials who formulated border policy during the first years of the dynasty.

When the Song leadership first imagined the political shape of their own dynasty, Zhao Kuangyin and his son were guided by the grand, expansive spirit that had inspired Sima Qian through the rising Han fortunes of his own times. The Song founders sought the "Han glory" that emboldened Lu Jia in his encounter with the Nam Việt ruler Triệu Đà. However, Song historians were careful to record and discuss the turmoil caused by militarily aggressive imperial border policies in the past. While the dynastic founders were still seeking secure political footing, the Song court exchanged glory for restraint. Rather than dispatching imperial messengers to demand subordination, the court at Kaifeng would choose to wait for signs from the Việt leadership that they would exchange titles of authority in exchange for submission.<sup>244</sup> The struggle for local dominance among southern leaders didn't reach the attention of the northern court; however, the victors of this struggle were able to use the history of

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<sup>244</sup> By the time that Yuan period Han and Mongol officials met to compile the *Songshi*, the world had changed, and so had the world outlook of China's officialdom. Greater attention was paid to the differences between the periphery (barbarism) and center (civilization/learning/ritual) that seemingly

past relations and the Song's longing for peace to produce the foundations for lasting political autonomy in the Việt region.

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structured 14th century China. These vastly different outlook colors the history of the early Song in ways the early Song leadership itself never would have imagined.

## Chapter 3: EARLY DEVELOPMENTS IN SONG-VIỆ T TRIBUTE RELATIONS

**Introduction: Setting the Ground Rules for Việt Local Autonomy**

The Sino-Việt tributary relationship provided the framework in which there emerged by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century a strong, self-aware political order situated in the Hồng River Delta. Three successive Việt ruling families, the Đinh 丁, the Lê 黎 and the Lý 李 clans expanded their regional control within this tributary framework while leaders of these clans competed with others, even their own kinsmen, for local dominance. Introductory comments by Timothy Earle in a recent conference volume describe the variety of strategies employed by local leaders to seize or expand their power.<sup>245</sup>

Among those strategies relevant to our study are tactics such as (1) local leaders providing feasts and public presentation, (2) leaders using outright force, (3) leaders forging external ties, (4) leaders expanding number households under their direct control, (5) leaders obtaining "existing principles of legitimacy, (6) leaders creating new principles of legitimacy, and (7) leaders taking control of external sources of wealth. The local Việt leaders we will examine here employed a combination of all these strategies to reach their goals, and they did so largely through participation in tributary relations with the Song court.

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<sup>245</sup> Timothy Earle (ed.), *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 5.

The Đinh, Lê and Lý clans all entered into tribute relations with the Chinese court, but each clan approached this relationship somewhat differently. The Đinh clan used their tributary relationship to structure the local court's bifurcated authority, setting forth the loyal son Đinh Liễn as the vassal ruler in the Song court's eyes, while the father Đinh Bộ Lĩnh ruled as an autonomous king at home. The Lê clan, beginning with Lê Hoàn 黎桓 (r. 980-1005), used the rituals of tributary protocol to seek legitimacy for his usurpation of Đinh authority when that clan failed to produce an effective political heir apparent. Finally, the Lý clan, beginning with Lý Công Uẩn 李公蘊 (r. 1010-1028), employed the titles and political associations of the tribute system to establish local institutions of political control.

Đinh Bộ Lĩnh's position as the leader of Việt independence has been preserved in modern Vietnamese historiography. However, recent scholarship suggests that Đinh's role was somewhat exaggerated, and that Lý Phật Mã 's 李佛瑪 (1054-72) establishment of the Đại Việt 大越 kingdom in 1054, replacing Bộ Lĩnh's Sino-Việt title Đại Cổ Việt 大瞿越, was the first claim of political equality with China.<sup>246</sup> While Đinh Bộ Lĩnh took the role of frontier military commissioner inherited from the late Tang period, the Lý emperor would proclaim himself emperor of the "Great Việt,"

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<sup>246</sup> Keith Taylor, "Looking Behind the Vietnamese Annals: Ly Phat Ma (1028-54) and Ly Nhat Ton (1054-72) in the *Viet Su Luoc* and the *Toan Thu*" in *The Vietnam Forum* Vol. 7 Winter-Spring 1986, pp. 47-68.

thus reaching far beyond the limitation on autonomous power suggested by the tributary relationship with China.

The relationship between the areas now known as China and Vietnam went through great changes during the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. Following more than fifty years of turmoil, much of this region of China was reassembled by a new central power, the Song dynasty, under the strong leadership of Zhao Guangyin 趙匡胤 (r. 960-976). Gradually, the states on the periphery of the area controlled from the new capital, Kaifeng, were re-incorporated into the growing state, and within a few years of Zhao's rise to power, the process of reunification was complete. Meanwhile, the Song court contacted non-Chinese states on the outer fringes of the empire, inviting a formal response from these non-Han neighbors. This was an attempt to spread Chinese cultural influence and secure allegiances to the new dynasty. Official records were kept of these visits, and Song scholars took an interest in states that entered into a tributary relationship with the court in Kaifeng. Among the regions that responded was the former Tang prefect of Giao Chi.

However, after a closer examination, the course of events does not appear to be so clear-cut. South China passed through the hands of many leaders throughout the Five Dynasties Period. During these political maneuvers, the various lords fighting for territory in the Việt region had chosen a political course that would leave the orbit of the Song empire. When Đinh Bộ Lĩnh defeated his opponents and declared himself the "King of Ten Thousand Victories," he intended to establish himself as the sole

ruler of the Việt region. Although both he and his son sent tribute missions to the Song court, he also set about establishing his kingdom's self-government. At the time, it would appear that the Chinese leadership did not fully realize the importance of this change, as the emperor continued to grant to Việt officials the titles that had once gone to Tang military commissioners.

In fact, the early Song empire was weak enough to recognize its own limitations. However, as discussed in chapter one, its rulers found a purpose in continuing to support the tribute system, even after a time when neighboring kingdoms had recognized the Chinese court's inability to reassert its power as the Tang court once had. After the second Song emperor, Taizong's failed attack on An Nam in 980-81, this weakness undermined China's demands. Although the Đại Cồ Việt court continued to send tribute missions to China for some time after this event, the stage had been set for Việt independence.

Historians who hold a more conventional view of this period accept without criticism the assumption that the thousand-year Chinese domination through the end of the Tang had such an impact on the Việt region that all aspects of Việt society must be seen through a Chinese cultural lens. C.P. FitzGerald has noted that "probably the (Song) emperor and his advisors saw no material difference between the former province of An Nam ... and the other kingdoms that had arisen in the southern

provinces."<sup>247</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, when the Tang dynasty fell Việt leaders initially served as military commissioners, "their authority and legitimacy theoretically derived from their obedience to a northern empire."<sup>248</sup> John Whitmore notes that "the elite which ruled the Vietnamese state carried titles of the Tang aristocracy."<sup>249</sup> However, these titles did not reflect the actual political conditions of this region.

In fact, as we have already seen, the areas at the outer boundaries of Chinese control had always retained some autonomous power. By the early Song, these regions were using their positions within the traditional Chinese political order to strengthen their local standing. As Wang Gungwu described the situation facing the Chinese leadership along the northern frontier, the "de facto situation around (Song) China soon after 1005 was one of several states that did not 'submit' to (Song) authority but allowed the rhetoric of tribute to be used until they were ready to reject it."<sup>250</sup> The conditions along the southern frontier did not include kingdoms posing the types of the military threats Song leaders encountered in the nomadic north. However, local Việt leaders were able to muster a strong enough militia to defend themselves

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<sup>247</sup> FitzGerald, Charles P., *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People* (New York: Praeger Books, 1972), p. 25.

<sup>248</sup> Keith Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11<sup>th</sup> Century Vietnam," in David G. Marr & A.C. Milner (eds.) *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Canberra, Australia: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1986), p. 141.

<sup>249</sup> John Whitmore, "Elephants Can Actually Swim': Contemporary Chinese Views of Late Ly Dai Viet" in David G. Marr & A.C. Milner (eds.) *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Canberra, Australia: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1986), p. 128.

<sup>250</sup> Wang, Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung Relations with its Neighbors" in Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals*, p. 62.

from Song expeditions whenever the northern court chose coercion over tributary protocol.

When the Tang Dynasty fell in 907, an opportunity emerged for Việt independence, and this move toward independent rule was completed by the time the Song had consolidated its own rule and turned once again to the south. However, the Song court was functioning in a system, which had grown out of the experiences of the Tang court and later court of the Five Dynasties Period. The first Song leaders actually sought to project an image of sweeping territorial dominance before actually achieving it. This was attempted, for example, by including rhetorically the Việt kingdom in the category designated for tributary kingdoms while granting official titles that suggested a great amount of political independence. When the opportunity came in 980 to move against the Đại Cồ Việt militarily, Kaifeng allegedly did so as a necessary condition of preserving the integrity of a newly revived tributary relationship. The court further justified the invasion by insisting that a legitimate vassal king must be protected.

From the Vietnamese side of the story, we see a very different scenario. A struggle for power in the region produced one strong leader, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, who sought protection from China by establishing diplomatic relations, all the while setting up his own kingdom. When a succession struggle broke out, the Chinese army tried to take advantage of the chaos, but is eventually repelled. The new leader, Lê Hoàn, calmed the Song court with a wise diplomatic maneuver, and set the stage for the Lý

Dynasty, the Việt region's first independent dynasty in over one thousand years. However, this version of events would not have been expressed beyond the confines of the Việt court or outside the community of its supporters. In most communication with Song representatives from the north, southern leaders presented themselves as compliant participants in Kaifeng's effort to create a web of tributary relations beyond its frontier. As the recipients of a long, varied history of political interaction with northern powers, leaders from the northern Việt region understood the variety of roles available to satisfy the expectations of distant emperors. Moreover, when all options within the tributary relationship were exhausted, 10<sup>th</sup> century Việt leaders would eventually amass forces for adequate military responses.

However, southern leaders had found equally willing partners to the north in their effort to pursue peaceful tributary ties directly. According to Wang Gungwu, "until 979 the Song emperors were out to equate rhetoric and reality."<sup>251</sup> Afterward, it was more a matter of finding comfort in describing one's actions in terms of traditional institutions while searching for usable policies in a changing world. Ultimately, the rhetoric would overtake the reality, producing the stereotypical image of the "Middle Kingdom," one that has had such a lasting effect on Western studies of China.

### **Patterns in Early Song Imperial Titles Available to Việt Leaders**

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<sup>251</sup> Wang Gungwu, "The Rhetoric of a Lesser Empire: Early Sung's Relations With its Neighbors" in Rossabi (ed.), *China Among Equals*, p. 62.

With the changing status of the southern region came the change in the granting patterns of titles. In these changes, an array of titles was available to the early Song emperors. Both Song Taizu and his brother Taizong 太宗 (Zhao Gui 趙昀: r. 976-997) attempted to configure relations with the newly independent Việt kingdom in a manner that would simultaneously resonate with historical precedent while following the ambitions of Taizu, a former military commissioner who had become the Song empire's absolute ruler.

Local leaders ambitious to secure a place within the Song empire could hope to receive the title of "Prince of the State 國王." Frontier commanders needed only look at the record of such titles granted by Taizong to the former ruler of the Wu Yue 吳越 Kingdom, Qian Chu (929-988), following that kingdom's peaceful submission to Song dominance. In early 978 Qian turned over the Lower Yangzi Valley territories still under his control to the Song court. In return, Song Taizong granted Qian the title "Prince of the Huai Hai State 淮海國王."<sup>252</sup> Qian Chu also received a luxurious residence and court titles for his own offspring. Although this change necessarily required the forfeit of his lands, Qian Chu traded the uncertainty of opposition to the growing Song dominion for the security of a place within that empire. Moreover, as the Song expanded its border, drew captured territories into the orbit of the central court, and assigned vanquished opponents titular points within the political constellation Song rulers had borrowed from Tang predecessors, political

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<sup>252</sup> *Songshi* 4: 58.

titles played an increasingly important role in naming and shaping the nature of the political mandate to which the Song now considered itself the heir.

These titles also contributed to the Song court's attempts to thread its authority through the various communities populating the southern half of its new empire. The titles largely fit into a hierarchical structure, which rested on a foundation of regional stability and harmony. The Song emperor very clearly occupied the apex of this order; however, the stature of all its adherents was enhanced by the order's existence. Specifically, those communities that accepted the Song's system of titles could expect court protection from territorial infringements, provided that these groups played the roles dictated by the titles they adopted. The steady consolidation of the Song dynasty in its early years confirmed that the Tang universalistic legacy still held political pertinence in the region. However, this titular net of Tang legitimization contained holes, and from these openings sprang forth the northern nomadic kingdoms, the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom of the Hồng River Delta region, and southwestern Tai Dali 大理 kingdom. Moreover, the formation of these political bodies could have escaped the notice of other ambitious border leaders, who could have seen in the newly cast Song net holes through which they also could escape with their local autonomy intact.

### **The Đinh Clan's Consolidation of Local Authority**

The early Song court had formed a rather low opinion of the communities that inhabited the empire's southern frontier. Referring to a memorial from the Guangzhou Prefecture that requesting greater attention be paid to smugglers and thieves plying the southern coast, Song Taizu replied "The customs of those inhabiting seaboard corner of the Empire are by nature greedy. Slipping through holes in the wall of our frontier to pillage would be commonplace behavior for them."<sup>253</sup> Song Taizu required an ally along the southern border with whom the court could revive old tributary ties, but the Chinese ruler began with general misgivings about the loyalty of any power in the region. However, the court was encouraged by the possibility of increased trade with the South China region. By the end of the same year, Song Taizu has issued an edict that exempted merchants trading in fresh medicinal herbs at southern ports from having to pay any commerce taxes.<sup>254</sup>

Đinh Liễn and his father consolidated their control of the region around Hoa Lư for a period of seven years, during which time the Việt court made tentative moves toward establishing relations with the Chinese court at Kaifeng. There is a record of an embassy sent to Kaifeng in 970, and there are references to a mission led by Đinh Liễn himself in 972.<sup>255</sup> The *Songshi* reports that when Đinh Liễn heard in 973

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<sup>253</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 16: 338.

<sup>254</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 16: 340.

<sup>255</sup> *ĐVSKTT* (Bunko edition), BK 1:181. Robert Hartwell argues that this trip was an advance mission and not a tribute mission. Moreover, Hartwell suggests it would seem more likely that Đinh Liễn ordered the trip, but that he didn't actually participate himself. I would have to agree with both of this points. Cited in Robert M. Hartwell, *Tribute Missions to China, 960-1126* (Philadelphia: R.M. Hartwell, 1983), p. 120.

that the Ling Piao region had been pacified, he sent envoys to China to present tribute, requesting “interior dependency (*neifu*)” status from the Song emperor.<sup>256</sup> The *DVSKTT* states that in the spring of 970, Bộ Lĩnh “sent envoys to the Song to foster good relations. At that time the Song had ordered General-in-chief (*dajiang*) Pan Mei 潘美 (925-991) to pacify Lingnan... For this reason, the order by Bộ Lĩnh was given.”<sup>257</sup> From the *DVSKTT* account, it appears that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, and not Đinh Liễn, was responsible for the order to present tribute, and that the order was clearly a response to the arrival of Pan Mei’s army in South China.

In any case, the Song court was willing to receive Việt messengers as the first step in securing tributary ties with that kingdom. During the 973 mission to Kaifeng the emperor decreed that the attending envoys Trịnh Tú 鄭琇 and Vương Thiệu Tộ 王紹祚 be given the concurrent titles of acting Left-hand Chancellery Policy Advisor and Censor-in chief. Song Taizu also ordered that Đinh Liễn, then serving as the self-appointed Military Commissioner of Giao Châu, be given the titles of acting “Grand Preceptor 太師,” “Army of the Peaceful Sea” Military Commissioner, and An Nam Protector-General.<sup>258</sup> With the granting of these title, the Song emperor was

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<sup>256</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

<sup>257</sup> *DVSKTT*, (Bunko edition) BK 1:180.

<sup>258</sup> Several explanations and clarifications are required to explain this assortment of titles. First, the title “Army of the Peaceful Sea 靜海軍” Military Commissioner referred through the mid-Tang dynasty to a specific area of command, located between today’s Shandong, Hebei and Liaoning Provinces. After 880, this title had become an honorific designation for military commissioners in South China. Between 880 and 901, it appears that no one was granted this title. Between 901 and 905, three men were granted to this title, only one of whom, Zhu Quanzhong’s 朱全忠 older brother Zhu Quanyu

connecting his rule with the Tang legacy concerned with southern frontier management, as well as furthering the relationship on his terms by including additional titles for his southern visitors.

At some point later in 973, Đinh Liễn's mission returned to Hoa Lư, accompanied by a Song delegation. This delegation was under orders from Song Taizu to enfeoff Đinh Liễn's father Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, and by doing so make the necessary connections between the two courts to complete this first round of tributary protocol. In fact, the Chinese likely believed that they had made an equally important connection with the Việt leadership when the emperor entrusted Đinh Liễn with the job of military commissioner. The revival of Giao Chỉ as a subordinate frontier region was most certainly the Song's ultimate plan. Later Vietnamese historians would read this initial period of configuring the relationship very differently. The *DVSKTT* makes the interesting observation that “the Song court sent envoys to grant to *the emperor* the title “Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ.”<sup>259</sup> The differing understandings of the two spheres of authority involved in Sino-Việt relations in the early Song are nowhere else more clearly articulated as they are in this passage.

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朱全昱, allegedly took his post in West Lingnan on the border with An Nam, and evidence for this point is not clear. See Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, pp. 258-59. Secondly, although the position translated as “protectorate” is 都護府, Hucker notes that the position “protector-general” is 督護. This distinction may indicate an error in the *Songshi* text. Thirdly, the positions of “military commissioner” and “protector-general” refer to two separate spheres of authority; military and civilian spheres, respectively.

<sup>259</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 1:92.

In 975 the Việt court initiated another cycle of tributary protocol by sending envoys to the Chinese court to present as tribute articles a number of rhinoceros and elephants, and a quantity of medicinal herbs. The *ZZTJCB* records that during the summer of 975, the “Army of the Peaceful Sea” Military Commissioner Đinh Liễn dispatched a tribute mission to the court, although there is no mention of the tribute articles. Meanwhile, the *ĐVSKTT* notes that in the spring of 975, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh decided on the caps and gowns to be worn by civil and military officials at his court, elaborating on his own imperial institutions. Later that spring he sent Trịnh Tú 鄭琇 with gold, silk, rhinoceros, and elephants to the Song court.<sup>260</sup> Obviously, the differences between the Chinese and Vietnamese accounts indicates some confusion on the part of Kaifeng as to the true nature of authority at the Đinh court. In the autumn, the Song sent as the high official bearing the court message the high dignitary and leader Wang Yanfu 王彥符 to present the letter describing the titles for the Việt rulers. The *ĐVSKTT* also remarks that “after this exchange, when the court sent envoys to the Song, the Chinese regarded Đinh Liễn to be the master of the Việt region.”<sup>261</sup>

The *Songshi* notes that the Song court wished to glorify the elder Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and to co-opt his realm. On September 14, 975 the court drafted the following edict to the Việt ruler, which was presented at the court in Hoa Lư in early 976.

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<sup>260</sup> *ĐVSKTT* (Bunko Edition) BK 1:181.

<sup>261</sup> *ĐVSKTT* (Bunko Edition), BK 1:181.

Because you have led your local people to our leadership, we will respond with benevolence. To appreciate your entire lineage and assimilate (you into the tribute system), it is fitting (for us) to grant honorific titles to our subordinates. Officials at large 外臣<sup>262</sup> who bow deeply (before the throne) with hands reverently clasped bring honor to their forebears with this superb performance of ceremony. Your clan, Bộ Lĩnh, has for generations been a prominent local family. You have the strength to protect your distant lands, while you also display an appreciation for Chinese customs by not forgetting to request “interior dependency” status from our court. As a result, the Nine Regions<sup>263</sup> have been unified and the Five Peaks<sup>264</sup> are at peace. This area is limitless and huge, and its people wish to offer their treasures as gifts.<sup>265</sup> I complimented your son and awarded him the rank of my *fan*<sup>266</sup> border officer. Doing this, I reward his individual talents and upright behavior, and single him out as a role model for the common people to know of his loyalty. Moreover, you, as the senior family member, may at this time wear on your clothing a special insignia. You may accept the titles of ‘Commander Unequaled in Honor’ and acting Grand Preceptor. You may also take the name ‘Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ 交趾郡王’.<sup>267</sup>

The Song emperor Taizu recognized that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh exercised a certain amount of authority along the southern frontier. Within the framework of tributary relations, the Chinese ruler made efforts to acknowledge this local authority.

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<sup>262</sup> According to the Confucian classic *The Book of Rites* 儀禮, among the feudal lords, there was the convention by which a visiting official from one kingdom would use the title *waichen* 外臣 when speaking his hosts from another kingdom. This title supported a distinction between the officials of the Warring States, while maintaining the collective identity of the officialdom in the region.

<sup>263</sup> The Nine Regions 九州 refer to the location of Central Plain societies identified with Chinese culture through the end of the Warring States period.

<sup>264</sup> The Five Peaks 五嶺 refer to the range of mountains that made up China’s southern border after the consolidation of the Qin empire in 221 BCE.

<sup>265</sup> During the summer of 975, the prefect at Guangzhou made the following report; “Persons involved in theft or bribes that exceed the amount of five thousand cash should be put to death. To gain an announcement of this regulation, I am sending this memorial for the court’s decision. Lingbiao is a distant region. Therefore, as for plans to look into obstacles in the region, I request that you do not wait for further reports before making your decision (*XZZTJCB*, 16: 338).”

<sup>266</sup> The authority of a *fan* official or agency was broadly defined, but it ultimately emanated from the central authority of the Chinese court (Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 207).

<sup>267</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

However, Bộ Lĩnh's son had advanced himself as the "point man" for the region by accepting the title of military commissioner. According to the Song's developing system of frontier administration, Đinh Liễn was the recognized link between the central court and its peripheral representative.

### The "Troublesome" Reign of Lê Hoàn

Đinh Liễn and Đinh Bộ Lĩnh continued to pursue tributary ties with the Song court for the next couple of years, dispatching a mission to Kaifeng in 976, led by Trần Nguyên Thái 陳元泰, and one mission in 977. Both missions were in response to the accession to the throne by the second Song emperor, Taizu's younger brother Zhao Kuangyi 趙匡義 or Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-97). With a world outlook similar to that of the second Tang emperor, Taizong was a more assertive ruler, willing to carry on his brother's policies of imperial consolidation. In 978 the Wuyue 吳越 kingdom finally collapsed and surrendered to Song forces without a military confrontation. Việt leaders certainly knew of this turn of events, and their mission to Kaifeng was likely also an effort to reassess their position vis-à-vis the Chinese leadership. However, Taizong was more accomplished in literary pursuits than he was in military matters. In early 979 Taizong personally led a successful campaign against the last remaining dynastic power the Northern Han.<sup>268</sup> The military commander, Pan Mei, whose campaigns against the South Han reportedly forced the Đinh court to seek tributary

status, was Taizong's chief military aide in the attack on the Northern Han. Although Khitan resistance in the north was fierce and the Song was unable to regain the 16 prefectures of Yan 燕 and Yun 雲 that had been lost in 936, Taizong's court had greatly expanded the empire's territory during his first years of rule.

Unfortunately for the Đinh clan, local political alliances in the northern Việt region were fraught with conflicting loyalties. In a struggle over matters of succession, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and Đinh Liễn were both assassinated in early 979, while Liễn's younger brother Đinh Tuệ 丁璿 (974-1001) was still young. According to Vietnamese sources, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and his son Liễn were both slain by an official Đỗ Thích 杜釋 as they slept off a drunken binge following a palace banquet.<sup>269</sup> Taylor notes that a court power struggle may have been launched in the wake of the death of Bộ Lĩnh's heir apparent, his youngest son Đinh Hạng Lang 丁項郎, at the hands of Liễn's followers. The mother of remaining son Đinh Tuệ came from the Dương clan, who had reason to encourage such an assassination attempt.<sup>270</sup>

According to the *VSL* account, following the Đinh leaders' assassinations, the court advisors Nguyễn Bắc 阮匐 and the military leader Lê Hoàn 黎桓 (r. 980-1005) both urged Đinh Tuệ to take the throne. However, the empress dowager decided that the kingdom would be better served if Lê Hoàn would agree to take effective control.

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<sup>268</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 20: 443.

<sup>269</sup> *VSL* 1: 19. *DVSKTT* (1984) *BK* 1: 183.

<sup>270</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 274.

Allegedly with reluctance, the military leader accepted the mantle of power. The young boy Đinh Tuệ took the titles of acting Military Commissioner Adjutant 節度行軍司馬 and Prefectural Commandant 領軍府事.<sup>271</sup> However, the *Việt Sử Lược* chroniclers argued, during the autumn of the second year of the boy's reign, local unrest in the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom had increased. At this point, "the people came to regard Đinh Tuệ as immature and weak. Together they promoted Lê Hoàn as their emperor. Lê Hoàn took the imperial title Emperor Lê Đại Hành 黎大行, and he called for the beginning of a new reign period Thiên Phúc 天福 (980-88). Đinh Tuệ abdicated the throne and took the title of 'Guardian Prince 衛王.'"<sup>272</sup> His father had given Đinh Tuệ this same title in 978, at the time when his third brother Đinh Hồng Lang was appointed as imperial heir apparent.<sup>273</sup> Later Chinese court historians were of another opinion. According to the *Songshi*, the powerful general Lê Hoàn assumed dictatorial powers in the wake of the Đinh leaders' deaths, forming a faction in the Đại Cồ Việt court that spread through the official ranks uncontrollably. Lê Hoàn ultimately removed Đinh Tuệ from the throne, placing all Đinh family members under house arrest.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

<sup>272</sup> Cited in *VSL* 1: 19.

<sup>273</sup> See *ĐVSKTT* 1: 182. The last emperor of the Southern Han Dynasty, Liu Chang, was granted this same title before he succeeded his father as emperor in 958.

<sup>274</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

Meanwhile, a report of these disturbances in the Việt region arrived at the court in Kaifeng. The Song emperor Taizong was reportedly very pleased, and he ordered that mounted couriers be summoned to court. Having received advance word that the Song prefect of Yongzhou<sup>275</sup> Hou Renbao 侯仁寶(?-981) would call for military intervention, the court official Lu Duoxun 盧多遜 delivered this memorial:

Giao Chi's internal state is chaotic, at the very end of the dynastic cycle. The court has acted on their misfortune by using troops in a surprise raid on Giao Chi. When an emergency arises, there is no time to make plans.<sup>276</sup> Now if we first summon Hou Renbao, then the details of his plan will certainly leak out, and the *Man* rabble will catch wind of these plans. The obstacles of mountains and seas will hinder our plans, and then we will not be ready to take over. As we have not yet received Hou Renbao's emergency dispatch, I therefore suggest that you take command of this matter by choosing military leaders to assemble 120,000 troops and offices from the Jinghu 荆湖 Circuit. When the vanguard advances, military power must be shown in full force. Then our aims will be easily accomplished.<sup>277</sup>

The Song historian Li Tao provided supporting evidence for this position in his own account. Li Tao's account contains a great amount of useful information regarding Song domestic influences on the formation of this military expedition. According to the *XZZTJCB*, the Erudite of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*taichang boshi*) and Prefect of Yongzhou Hou Renbao was not particularly happy with his assignment to local service along the southern frontier, due to the facts that his father

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<sup>275</sup> The prefectural seat of Yongzhou was located on the site of Nanning 南寧, the modern-day provincial capital of Guangxi. Please see map 1.

<sup>276</sup> This sentence may be translated literally as "When a thunderclap comes, there is no time to cover one's ears." See also Mathews', p. 64)

<sup>277</sup> Literally, "We will break down a decayed stump." See Mathews', p. 1011. Cited in *XZZTJCB*, 21: 476.

Hou Yi 侯益 (886-965) still lived in Luoyang, his family maintained rich farmland in the north, and the fact that travel to the south was not secure.<sup>278</sup> Hou's wife was the sister of the Grand Councilor Zhao Pu 趙普 (921-991), and when Zhao took office, Hou was given a "branch office 分司" in Luoyang. Due to a quarrel between Zhao Pu and the fore-mentioned Lu Duoxun, Hou was transferred to the position of prefect of Yongzhou. However, for nine years Hou did not serve in this position, because he believed to do so would lead to his dying beyond Lingnan.

Whatever the circumstances were that led to his service in Yongzhou, Hou Rebao was at the time the leading administrator in the region. It now appears likely that he desired to make a name for himself by capitalizing on this frontier disturbance. Hou sent the following memorial to the Song throne:

The top leadership of Giao Chi has been decimated and the state is in disarray. I am now able to decoy the remaining forces and seize the territory. I am willing to send a party to the court to discuss the conditions that exist down there, as much as we are able to know about it.<sup>279</sup>

The emperor chose to follow this course of action.<sup>280</sup> He quickly marshaled an imperial army for a punitive expedition against the Việt leader. During the autumn of 980, Taizong ordered Lanzhou Prefecture's Military Training Commissioner Sun Quanxing 孫全興, the Armory Officer Zhang Xuan 張璿, and the Left Palace Gate Guard General Cui Liang 催亮, to lead a land-based force of soldiers and cavalry into

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<sup>278</sup> XZZTJCB, 21: 476.

<sup>279</sup> XZZTJCB, 21: 476.

<sup>280</sup> XZZTJCB, 21: 476.

the border region via the Yongzhou route. The emperor ordered the Ningzhou prefect Liu Cheng 劉澄, the Adjutant Commissioner of the Armory Jia Shi 賈澍, and the Audience Usher for Court Service Wang Zun 王僎 to lead a sea-based forces of soldiers and cavalry into the border region by the Canton route. Hou Renhou was appointed to the position of Giao Chi Route Land and Sea Transport Commissioner. The other participants in the Chinese military expedition included the Armory Officer He Shouzhun 郝守浚<sup>281</sup> and the Commissioner of the Saddlery Storehouse Chen Qinzuo 陳欽作.

Meanwhile, during that same autumn, Lê Hoàn sent his lieutenant Giang Cú Hoàng 江巨滄 and Vương Triệu Tộ 王紹祚 as envoys to present articles of tribute at the Chinese court. The envoys presented the following statement in Đinh Tuệ's name;

My clan was originally a barbarian and uncultured people, offspring of remote coastal dwellers. We formed tributary ties with your officials, and acted as an official government structure in our frontier region. My father and brother represented the Chinese court by serving as *kunqi* military officers (i.e. Military Commissioners), without losing the resolve to follow our plans to nurture feudal ties. When all of this was finally lost (with the assassination of my father and brother), the ruling house was going to collapse. Some of my advisors were aged and infirm. Therefore, all matters fell upon me. I temporarily acted to command the military to pacify the populace in the tribal regions. Their customs were crude and fierce, and they demonstrated a great insistence. If I refused to continue to act, I feared that they would have caused disturbances. I am already acting as the interim Military Commissioner Adjutant and concurrent Prefectural Commandant, but I would like to receive an official posting and designation as a fan border official. I entreat the glorious (Song) imperial household, and prostrate myself before you in fear of overstepping my charge.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> The *Songshi* account names Zhang Xuan at this position.

<sup>282</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14059.

Song Taizong received this statement, but he believed that Lê Hoàn merely wished to prevent the deployment of Chinese forces. The Việt envoy was sent home and his message was not answered.

Unfortunately for the Song court, the military expedition ended in abysmal failure. During the spring of 981, Chinese forces initially defeated the Lê Hoàn's troops at the mouth of the Bạch Đằng 白藤 River, taking the heads of more than a thousand enemy soldiers, and capturing two hundred warships along with thousands of pieces of armor.<sup>283</sup> Hou Renbao then led a vanguard regiment into battle first, while Sun Chuanxing and other Song military leaders halted their troops at Hoa Bộ for seventeen days to wait for Liu Cheng's sea-based forces. According to the *Songshi* account, Hou Renbao again and again urged the others to advance, but they did not enter the Việt border region. When Liu Cheng finally arrived, the land forces and the sea-based group entered Đa La 多羅 Village at the same time, where they encountered the bandit forces. The Song army was forced to regroup, and they returned against Hou's orders to Hoa Bộ 花步. Lê Hoàn then allegedly faked a surrender to entice Hou Renbao to come to him, at which point Lê Hoàn used the opportunity to assassinate Hou and massacre his troops. The remaining Song armies were eventually forced into a disgraceful retreat, for which their leaders were punished with summary execution in Kaifeng. The Tax Transport Bureau official Xu Zhongxuan 許仲宣 quickly reported

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<sup>283</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14059.

to the emperor the news of these events. Taizong responded by acknowledging defeat and recalling the troops.

The Song emperor also dispatched an official to the front line to interrogate Liu Cheng, Wang Zun, and Jia Shi. Liu Cheng died shortly from illness, while Jia Shi and the others were executed at Yongzhou. When Sun Quanxing reached the capital, he was summarily imprisoned and executed. The remaining officials' punishments were allotted individually, according to each official's responsibility in the defeat, as their faults were considered to be less serious. To secure an image of his martyrdom in the service of the court, Hou Renbao was given the posthumous title of Vice Director of the Ministry of Works. The harsh punishments meted out to Song officials were not uncommon as an imperial response to military failure. However, for a Song emperor who had been responsible for the loss of an earlier opportunity to retrieve border territory to the Khitans, this inability to militarily dominate land that had once been an extension of the Tang empire must have caused Taizong to feel particularly bitter.

By the spring of 982, Lê Hoàn had reportedly become concerned that the Song court would eventually continue to pursue its military expedition, so the Việt ruler again used Đinh Tuệ's name when he sent envoys to the Chinese court to present tribute, as well as to "beg forgiveness for his crimes." In 983, Lê Hoàn appointed himself Acting Deputy Commissioner 三使留後 of Giao Châu, and sent envoys to present tribute at the Chinese court. At the same time, Lê Hoàn announced that he

would allow Đinh Tuệ to return to the throne. The Song emperor issued the following edict to Lê Hoàn;

The succession of Đinh rulers has lasted for three generations, protecting the whole region. Since you have already received their care and patronage, and (in turn) have acted as the backbone of their administration, should you follow the wishes of your countrymen, do not fall short of the true aims of the Đinh clan. I therefore command that Đinh Tuệ take the title of ‘generalissimo 統帥’ and you be posted at a position secondary to his. You are entirely responsible for the administration of the court. Until Đinh Tuệ is crowned and is able to establish himself, your assistance and authority of leadership will be enhanced. As long as you demonstrate respect for and loyalty toward the Đinh clan, there is nothing for which I will blame you. Although Đinh Tuệ shows no talent for leadership, his nature remains child-like. However, his offspring will lose their inherited rank and his shortcomings will be detailed in the annals of imperial rulers. If Đinh Tuệ loses his ruling authority, and he is demoted to the rank equal to a foot soldier, the principle governing Song-Việt relations will not followed in this way, and your life will not be in peace. When my orders arrived at your court, you should permit Đinh Tuệ’s mother, his sons, and his relatives and his servants all to come to my court. When they have all arrived at court, it will then be the proper time for me to set a date for granting them titles. I will then give you a ceremonial tail-banner.<sup>284</sup> These are the two options. You should carefully consider and choose one of them. When Đinh Tuệ arrives at the capital, he will necessarily receive the highest level of ceremony. I will now send the Palace Servitor Zhang Zongquan 張宗權 to pass along my orders, so that you may understand my concerns.<sup>285</sup>

At the same time the emperor gave a copy of the same order to Đinh Tuệ.<sup>286</sup>

The emperor had his own reasons for reacting the way he did regarding Lê Hoàn’s

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<sup>284</sup> No mention of specific rank comes with the awarding of this banner. According a reference from the *Old History of the Tang Dynasty* 舊唐書, “as for exceptionally good officials, they will receive a *jiemao*.” Cited in *Ci Yuan*, p. 1280.

<sup>285</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14059-60.

<sup>286</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14058.

behavior in the face of a weak local leader. Only two years earlier in 979, the emperor had fled in a less than heroic fashion from a confrontation with Khitan forces. Court officials were so shocked by the ruler's actions, that some advisors advocated putting his nephew Zhao Dezhaio 趙德昭(951-79) on the throne in Taizong's place. Taizong reacted to the news by forcing his nephew to commit suicide. For this act, his own name has been somewhat tainted in the historical record. However, Taizong must have conceded that young Đinh Tuệ still lacked the support to overcome the type of debacle that Taizong himself had faced. In any case, according to Chinese records, Lê Hoàn had by that time already taken full possession of the territory, and he had no intention of obeying the Chinese ruler's order.

During May of the same year, word came to the Chinese court that Cham elephant and equine cavalry troops, following both sea and land routes, had entered and plundered Giao Chi. Lê Hoàn led his troops to defeat and drive the Cham forces back, with approximately one thousand of the enemy captured or killed.<sup>287</sup> The *XZZTJCB* provides some context for these events. In late 982, the Việt court reportedly wished to present 93 Cham war captives to the Song court. In making this offer, Lê Hoàn likely wished to provide further evidence of his military successes to the Song leadership at the same time that he made overtures to repair the tributary relationship. The Chinese emperor ordered officials at Guangzhou to stop the transport of these captives across the border. The local officials then provided

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<sup>287</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14060.

clothing and other provisions to the Cham prisoners and ordered that the group be returned to Champa, and passed along an imperial greeting to their ruling prince (*wang*). Thereupon, the Cham court sent envoys mounted on elephants to bear tribute up to the Song court. However, the emperor ordered that the elephants be left in South China (*nanhai*).<sup>288</sup> The *XZZTJCB* also reported that on October 23, 983 Lê Hoàn sent a tribute mission to the Song court.<sup>289</sup> Fostering tribute relations with Cham leaders to the south of the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom was another option open to Kaifeng in their effort to limit Lê Hoàn's ambitions to expand his own power. The Chams, unfortunately for Kaifeng, were not a unified political force on par with the Việt leadership. Renewing Sino-Việt tributary ties would prove to be the best solution to the frontier conflict.

During early 985 Lê Hoàn sent his lieutenants Trương Thiệu Phùng 張紹馮 and Nguyễn Bá Trâm 阮伯簪 and other envoys to present tribute at the Chinese court. The Việt mission made a formal request for official sanction to administer the Giao Chỉ region as a frontier region Defense Command 節鎮. During the autumn of 986, Lê Hoàn again sent a tribute mission to the Song court. Meanwhile, the Song prefect of Danzhou reported that Pu Luo-e, a subject of Champa, was leading a group of more than one hundred followers. The group requested the

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<sup>288</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 23: 531.

<sup>289</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 24: 553.

protection of “interior dependency” status from China, citing harassment by Giao Châu.

In late 986, Song Taizong made the following statement:

Being a ruler involves establishing the supremacy of the emperor while showering favor on the barbarian border officials. Rulers set up residence in the capital, as a means of carrying out the rituals of unity. The rich soil of our empire is used to reward displays of heroism from vassals. Now from still more corners (of the palace) are streamers flying, indicating our capacity for arranging and regulating the tribute assistants, and serving as a model for leading our troops with ease. Therefore, there is an advantage in setting up a system of feudal lords, without forgetting the respect shown by requesting orders and setting up the ceremony for treating guests. The temporary *sanshi* Capital Liaison Representative<sup>290</sup> Lê Hoàn has taken both property and troops as a special endowment for his loyalty and sincerity. He is able to gain the hearts of his subjects, and carefully follow the protocol befitting a border official. Earlier, Đinh Tuệ was at a young age, and he was ignorant of the ways of policy-making. Lê Hoàn as the closest relative, monopolized control over the military. He called out orders and came forth himself, practicing threats and clemency together. Đinh Tuệ still wields the authority of a *sanshi* official, following the wishes of the common people. Because Lê Hoàn sends tribute from afar and sincerely submitting to our leadership, I wish to grant him the ceremonial banner.<sup>291</sup>

The emperor then provided an historical context for his actions in writing the following statement in his edict:

When the Shi Xie’s frontier service was sensible, we transformed the local ways (*su*) of the Yue people, and reduced them in importance as well. Commandant Tuo (Triệu Đà) was submissive, and he was rewarded by Han imperial order for not rebelling. It is fitting that Lê Hoàn be recognized as a

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<sup>290</sup> Hucker describes this position as belonging to an official who maintains communication between the central government and the local leader of a regional base, such as a military commissioner (Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 317). It is unclear how the preceding title *sanshi* functions here, although it may serve as an honorific “leading.”

<sup>291</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14060.

"Rectified in Leadership 正元" barbarian chief, and that he should be counted among the ranks of the associated feudal lords.<sup>292</sup>

Given this historical precedent, Song Taizong felt secure in his decision to engage Việt ruler who had previously been deemed illegitimate. The Chinese emperor ended his edict with specific instructions to his vassal on the frontier.

As a result of receiving these titles, Lê Hoàn will be expected to control and soothe the unrefined barbarians, and spread the grace of Heaven. I grant them the titles Acting Grand Guardian, Messenger With Imperial Insignia, Commander-in-chief of Giao Châu's military forces, Commander-in-chief of An Nam, Acting Pacified Sea Army Military Commissioner, and Surveillance And Supervisory Commissioner of Giao Châu under Imperial Aegis. I also grant the honorific titles 'Feudal Lord of Jingzhao Commandary.' I will also offer a land grant of three thousand households. Moreover, I will present Lê Hoàn with the titular designation 'Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience.'<sup>293</sup>

Taizong then sent the envoys Li Ruozhuo 李若拙 (944-1001) and Li Jue 李覺 to present this edict and to confer new titles on the Đại Cồ Việt ruler Lê Hoàn and his leading officials. Perhaps the great distance between the courts at Kaifeng and Hoa Lư allowed the Chinese emperor to set aside the matter of political illegitimacy, and to envision this latest Việt tribute mission as a sign that harmony had been finally restored to the Sino-Việt relationship. In any case, the encounters we will now examine between the Song envoy and the Đại Cồ Việt court monks are depicted as personal exchanges within the larger framework of proper tributary protocol.

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<sup>292</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14060.

<sup>293</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14060.

Whatever local political arrangements actually existed, the Chinese court had dispatched its representatives to re-enforce relations with Lê Hoàn's court along hierarchical lines. Li Jue, a figure known in his day for scholarly achievement, served an apt agent for expressing the Song court's desires.<sup>294</sup>

Let us examine for a moment the meeting at the Hoa Lư court between the Song envoy Li, representing the Chinese imperial presence in the South, and the Buddhist monk advisors to Lê Hoàn.<sup>295</sup> We should note that details of the meeting between the Song and Việt envoys are found almost exclusively in Vietnamese historical sources. Chinese sources that contain references to Li Jue's journey to Hoa Lư do so largely as a vehicle to explain the Song official's subsequent promotion to the honorific position of Erudite of the National University 國子博士.<sup>296</sup> However, the

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<sup>294</sup> In 976, in the year of Song Taizong's rise to the throne, Li Jue was recommended to the court for his excellent training in the Confucian classics, and he was then appointed Assistant Director for the Palace Buildings 將作監丞. He soon transferred to the supervisory position of Controller-General for Jianzhou prefecture (in modern Fujian), and from there became prefect himself of Sizhou (in modern Subei) with the merit rank of Vice Director of the Palace Library 秘書丞. Li from that point onward remained a favorite of Taizong. As a reward for joining other high-ranking scholars in the compilation and annotation of the Five Classics, the bookish official received his appointment as envoy to Lê Hoàn's court. Cited in Wang, Zheng (12th cent), *Dong du shi lue* 東都事略 Vol. 4 . *Juan* 113. (Taipei: Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, 1991), p. 1742.

<sup>295</sup> Cited in *Outstanding Figures of the Zen Community* (Thiền Uyển Tập Anh 禪苑集英), Microfilm Text #1267, Hanoi: Vien Han Nom Collection, 49a in Cuong Tu Nguyen's *Zen in Medieval Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), p. 170.

<sup>296</sup> An example of such a reference may be found in Wang, Zheng (died ca. 1200), *Record of Events in the Eastern Capital* 東都事略 Vol. 4 (Taipei: Zhongyang tushuguan shanben congkan, 1991) p. 1743. This account describes how Li Jue was dispatched as an envoy to Giao Châu 交州. During the court audience, "their leader (i.e. Lê Hoàn)" commented, "The mountains and rivers of this land are treacherous (i.e., easy to defend). Do travelers from the Central Plains not find them tiresome to traverse?" Li Jue reportedly replied, "Our Empire exercises authority over a territory of ten thousand *li* and has appointed officials for four hundred commandaries. If this world is at peace, it is naturally easy for our court to provide an effective defense. Why would this not also pertain to this piece of land!" No Việt intermediaries, i.e. the Buddhist monks, are mentioned in this account.

Thiên Uyển Tập Anh tells how the Song court dispatched its envoy Li Jue in 987 to the Đại Cồ Việt court at Hoa Lư to bestow imperial titles on the Việt ruler Lê Đại Hành (Lê Hoàn) and to resolve lingering matters resulting from the Song military defeat in 981.<sup>297</sup> The *TUTA* reports that Lê Hoàn had ordered the Buddhist monk Đỗ Pháp Thuận 杜法順 to join the Việt delegation welcoming Li Jue to the Đại Cồ Việt court.<sup>298</sup> According to the *DVSKTT*, the Đại Cồ Việt ruler also asked Pháp Thuận to dress up as a boatman to keep an eye on the Chinese official. When the monk met Li by the river, there was a pair of geese swimming downstream. Li Jue offered this verse.

Geese, geese. A pair of geese, Looking up toward the horizon.	鵝鵝，兩鵝鵝。 仰面尚天涯。 <sup>299</sup>
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Pháp Thuận quickly responded with this couplet.

<sup>297</sup> According to the *TUTA* biography for Khuông Việt Thái Sư, Lê Đại Hành ordered Khuông Việt to leave his monastery to take the role of a court minister in the delegation welcoming the Song mission. According to this account, Envoy Li had already heard of Khuông Việt's poetic prowess and, the Chinese official offered the monk his poem, containing the following couplet, "Beyond the sky there is another sky, which we must reflect back on 天外有天，應返照之." Khuông Việt reportedly then told his ruler Lê Đại Hành that these lines from Li's poem meant that the Chinese official intended to honor the Việt ruler as he did his own emperor. On the eve of Li Jue's return to Kaifeng, Khuông Việt presented the envoy with his own parting verse. Cited in *Outstanding Figures*, 9a in Nguyen, Zen, p. 112.

<sup>298</sup> Đỗ Pháp Thuận 杜法順 (915-990) is depicted in the *TUTA* as being a clever political figure and gifted poet as well as a Zen patriarch. While serving as a temple master in the southern Æi Prefecture, Pháp Thuận caught the attention of Lê Hoàn, who is said to have consulted with the Buddhist monk often on both political and literary matters. *Outstanding Figures*, 49a in Nguyen, Zen, p. 170. Pháp Thuận's greatest contribution to Vietnamese Buddhism was the now lost single-volume treatise *A Bodhisattva's Words of Repentance* (*Bồ Tát Hiệu Sám Hối Văn* 菩薩號懺悔). Cited in *Outstanding Figures*, 49b. Nguyen, Zen, p. 171.

White feathers spread over emerald waters, Red oars cutting through green waves.	白毛鋪綠水。 紅棹擺青波
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According to this account, Li Jue was so impressed with the literary skills of Pháp Thuận that when he returned to the Việt court, he composed this poem, the full text of which is reproduced in the *DVSKTT*. The monk Pháp Thuận, according to the *DVSKTT*, passed this poem to Lê Hoàn, who asked that his advisor Khuông Việt also read it.<sup>300</sup> This account says that after Khuông Việt is said to have read the Chinese envoy's poem, and then to have produced his own poem to present to Li Jue at the formal ceremony marking the Chinese official's departure for Kaifeng. Khuông Việt's poem was emotive while remaining in accordance with the conventions of poetry produced for such occasions. Adopting the voice of a loyal official addressing his cherished superior, Khuông Việt describes Li Jue's impending journey as follows:

<sup>299</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 99. See also Cuong Tu Nguyen's translation of Li Jue's poem in *Zen in Medieval Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), p. 370.

<sup>300</sup> The Việt monk Khuông Việt Thái Sư 匡越太師 (born Ngô Chân Lưu 吳真流: 933-1011) was said to have studied Confucianism before devoting himself to Buddhism. According to the early 14<sup>th</sup>-century Vietnamese Buddhist text *Outstanding Figures of the Zen Community* (Thiền Uyển Tập Anh 禪苑集英) (cited hereafter as *TUTA*), by middle age Chân Lưu had become regionally well known. The first ruler of the Đại Cồ Việt 大瞿越 kingdom (968-980), Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領 appointed Chân Lưu to the position of General Supervisor of Monks (Tăng Thống 僧統). In 971 the Việt ruler granted the monk the honorific title Khuông Việt Thái Sư 匡越太師 or "Great Master Who Brings Order to the Việt." *Outstanding Figures*, 8a in Nguyen, *Zen*, p. 111. The Việt of the monk's honorific title would have extended from modern-day Ninh Bình to the northern edge of the Hồng River Delta.

<p>THE ROYAL EMISSARY RETURNS HOME</p> <p>Bright sunlight and fair winds For raised sails of brocade, The enchanted spirits will return to the Emperor's hearth. Over countless miles, you'll navigate the vast ocean. The road home to the Ninth Heaven (of the Daoist Immortals) is long. With great emotion and grieving, we fill a farewell cup of wine, Even as we hold back your carriage wheel, distinguished Sire.</p> <p><i>Please recall our deep-seated intentions regarding this southern borderland, and make them explicit to our Emperor.</i></p>	<p>王郎歸</p> <p>祥光風好錦帆張。 神僊復帝鄉。 千重萬里涉滄浪。  九天歸路長。 人情慘切。 對離觴。 攀戀星星郎。 願將深意爲南疆/疆? 分明報我皇。<sup>301</sup></p>
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<sup>301</sup> *Outstanding Figures of the Zen Community*, Microfilm Text #1267, Hanoi: Vien Han Nom Collection, 9a. The poem appears somewhat differently in *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 98. The English translation is based on Huynh Sanh Thong's translation in *The Heritage of Vietnamese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 3.

<p>(NO TITLE GIVEN IN <i>DVSKTT</i> VERSION)</p> <p>Bright sunlight and fair winds For raised sails of brocade, We'll watch our guest return to the Emperor's hearth. For countless miles, you'll cross mountains and rivers, and you'll navigate the vast ocean. The road home to the Ninth Heavens (of the Daoist Immortals?) is long. With grieving, we fill a farewell cup of wine, even as we hold back the envoy's carriage wheel, distinguished Sire. Please recall our deep-seated intentions regarding this borderland and make them explicit in a memorial to our Emperor.</p>	<p>祥光風好錦帆張。 遙望神僊復帝鄉。 萬重山水涉滄浪。 九天歸路長。 情慘切。 對離觴。 攀戀使星郎。 願將深意爲邊疆。 分明奏我皇。</p>
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### Was there actually a meeting?

In a recent article historian Hoàng Văn Lâu at the Han-Nôm Institute in Hà Nội notes that by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Vietnamese scholars had already pointed out the discrepancies between the version of Khuông Việt's poem that appears in the *TUTA* and the version in the *DVSKTT*. As Professor Lâu notes, the *TUTA* version more closely follows the song lyric (*ci* 詞) form, while the *DVSKTT* version is in the meter of *qu* 曲 lyrical verse. The *qu* form is now closely associated with lyrical poetry of the Yuan and early Ming, and that may cast more doubt on the *DVSKTT* version. The choice of the *ci* lyric form would have added a new dimension to Khuông Việt's offering. The *ci*, written to the tune and cadence of a particular song melody, had only become a popular poetic form among Chinese literati by the late Tang. Professor Lâu also notes that the title ascribed to Khuông Việt's poem "The Royal Emissary Returns Home" likely refers to the title of a melody from the Tang-Song period. According to Professor Lâu, a number of well-known Song officials, including Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang, based *ci* compositions based on this melody.<sup>302</sup> However, the *ci* had originally been performed by palace courtesans as a form of entertainment. As Grace Fong notes, "obvious masks and desired truths thus became strangely mixed together

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<sup>302</sup> Hoàng Văn Lâu, "Về bài từ ở thế kỷ X" in *Một số văn để bạn học Hán Nôm* (Hà Nội, 1983), p. 197. See also Nguyen, *Zen*, p. 371.

in *ci*.<sup>303</sup> Was Khuông Việt sincere in his praise of the Chinese emperor, or was he hiding behind a mask when he presented the Song envoy with his poem?

In many ways, a poem composed in the lyric *ci*-form to commemorate the departure of an official is quite inappropriate, particularly for a poem supposedly written during the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, when earlier Tang connections to courtesan word-play still held a greater relevance. Fong notes that it wasn't until the Southern Song period that the persona commonly adopted in *ci* poetry shifted from feminine to masculine, to address directly the subjects of "serious" poetry as the *shi*-style regulated form had. Khuông Việt describes himself as the loyal vassal in his parting poem, but a reader who understand the subtleties of 10<sup>th</sup>-century *ci* would have realized that the monk's loyalty could be masking the "deep-seated intentions" he alludes to in the last lines of his poem.

Cuong Tu Nguyen makes one important note in his book *Zen in Medieval Vietnam*, regarding the poetic exchange between Li Jue and Đỗ Pháp Thuận. He writes that their exchange was based on a poem by the Tang period poet Luo Binwang 駱賓王 (640? -684?) entitled "Ode to the Goose." The content of Luo's poem, composed when the poet was just a boy, seems very similar to the couplets shared by Li and Pháp Thuận.<sup>304</sup> Was Luo Binwang a popular literary figure in the South during the

<sup>303</sup> Grace Fong, "Persona and Mask in the Song Lyric (*Ci*)" *Harvard Journal Asian Studies* 50 (1990) 2, p. 459.

<sup>304</sup> Luo's poem, said to have been written by the poet at the age of seven *sui*, is the following;

詠鵝	Ode to the Goose
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early Song? Stephen Owen notes that Luo's ornate poetic styling had lost favor by the end of late Tang.<sup>305</sup> In the ten anthologies of poetry produced in the Tang, there is only one poem by Luo Binwang in the anthology *A Short Collection of Sought-after Jade* 搜玉小集, and that poem is not "Ode to a Goose." Moreover, the poem is not contained in Li Fang's (925-996) *Beauty of Literature* 文苑英華 (987), which likely indicates that this poem was not in common circulation during the early Song, although anecdotes describing Luo's precocious behavior were widely mentioned by the end of the Song and particularly in the Ming period.<sup>306</sup> Other evidence points to the fact that Pháp Thuận's couplet, with its rhyming reference Luo's poetry, could not have occurred until the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, given certain changes in Sino-Vietnamese phonetic patterns at that time, although the rhyming conventions contained in the Chen Pengnian's 陳彭年 (961-1017) *Expansion of Rhymes* 廣韻 (1011) provides evidence that officials at the two court

鵝鵝 曲項尚人(天)歌 白毛浮綠水 紅掌撥青波	Goose, goose, Raises its head toward us (the sky) singing. White feathers float upon emerald water. Red feet stir up blue-green waves.
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Cited in Luo Binwang, *Luo Binwang wenji* 駱賓王文集 *juan 5* from the collection Wu Xing (ed.) *Wu Xing shu shang ren ji* “吳興書上人集 *Sibu congkan chu bian jibu*; 119. (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shuguan, 1919), 10b.

<sup>305</sup> Stephen Owen, *The poetry of the Early Tang* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 139.

<sup>306</sup> Examples of references to Luo's childhood poetic skill and his first poem include Zhang Ding 章定 (fl. early 13<sup>th</sup> cent.) *A Collection of the Words and Actions of the Celebrities and Their Clans* 名賢氏族言行類稿, *juan 51*. By the Ming, anthologies of Tang poetry such as Gao Bing's 高棅 *A Selective Collection of Tang Poems* 唐詩品彙 (in the section titled "Details of the Clan Nobility 姓氏爵里詳節" 5b) and Yan Wen's 顏文 annotated edition of Luo Binwang's collected works *Luo Cheng Ji* 駱丞集 ("Miscellaneous Odes 詠雜言" *juan 2*, 58b) both contain Luo's poem "Ode to the Goose."

could have shared a common phonology system.<sup>307</sup> Perhaps we can view the exchange between Li Jue and Đỗ Pháp Thuận instead as an elaboration of the closeness later Vietnamese historians wished to find between the political elite of the Chinese and Việt courts.

Whether or not the exchange of poems between the Chinese envoy and Đỗ Pháp Thuận actually occurred has in any case come into serious question. Khuông Việt's meeting with Li Jue is more easily confirmed in the historical record, and therefore appears more likely to have happened. However, the record of these events and their importance in Vietnamese historiography possess an intrinsic value apart from the establishment of its historical accuracy. According to Huynh Sanh Thong, Khuông Việt's poem has the distinction of being the first recorded example of indigenous literature of Vietnamese authorship.<sup>308</sup> Later compilers of literary anthologies, such as the lost court lyrical anthology *Jade Tablets of the Imperial Court* (Hoàng Triều Ngọc Điệp 皇朝玉牒) (1026), Bui Huy Bich's 裴輝璧 (1744-1818) *A Selection of Imperial Việt Poetry* (Hoàng Việt thi tuyển 皇越詩選) (1788), and *The Complete Record of Việt Poetry* (Toàn Việt thi lục 全越詩錄) (1800) could have connected this poem and the circumstances surrounding its creation with a Vietnamese mastery of the Chinese literary tradition, a mastery that is of great significance for two reasons.

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<sup>307</sup> Nguyễn Tài Cẩn, *Một vài ý kiến về phương hướng đào tạo cán bộ ngành Hán Nôm* in (Hà Nội, 1979), p. 108.

<sup>308</sup> Huynh Sanh Thong, *An Anthology of Vietnamese Poems: From the Eleventh through the Twentieth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) p. 3.

First, Li Jue's journey to Đại Cồ Việt court at Hoa Lư would indicate that there existed Chinese acquiescence to the rise of an indigenous Việt leader who consolidated his political authority without the blessings of, indeed, in opposition to, Chinese imperial decree. Lê Hoàn came to power under the thin pretense of guarding the hereditary line of Đinh leadership; however, neither party really believed that the powerful general sought to serve anyone but himself in this shift of authority. Later Vietnamese historians accept this change by highlighting the former Empress Dowager's alleged relationship with Lê Hoàn and her acceptance of his "tutelage." Chinese historians describe the political transition as more of a palace coup; however, they duly hint at the Song emperor's reluctant acceptance of this otherwise illicit shift in power at the time the Chinese leader accepts tribute missions from the court at Hoa Lư, subsequently issuing titles and words of instruction.

Secondly, the exchange of poetry was recorded for the benefit of two audiences; on one hand, the audience of scholar elite who admired literary ability as an indication of social affinity. The common literary themes and conventions bound together poetry's practitioners both by aesthetic and social associations. The textual authority that lay beneath the custom of exchanging poetry upon meeting and parting, as well as their talented imitation of an early Tang poet in such an exchange, indicated that the participants held each other in mutual regard and felt an affinity that crossed the lines drawn by the tribute system between representatives of lord and vassal.

On the other hand, the Việt court monk Khuông Việt Thái Sư as the "Great Master Who Restores Order to the Việt" is also credited in various Vietnamese sources as having rallied the supernatural power of the Dharma-Protector Vaisravana 菴沙門天 to the side of Lê Hoàn's troops as they battled and ultimately defeated the invading Song army.<sup>309</sup> The monk's status at the Lê court was based largely on his religious authority. Lê Hoàn was a strong patron of court-supported temple construction and maintenance. Moreover, his local leadership rested solidly on a foundation of Buddhist patronage, as did many of his Southeast Asian neighbors.

The fact that the Buddhist patriarch credited with driving off the northern invaders could win the admiration of that invader with his scholarly prowess would have certainly increased the later Vietnamese reader's appreciation for the ingenuity of his actions. The generations of leaders owe a great deal to the style of leadership provided by these Buddhist patriarchs. Keith Taylor notes that "the Lý Dynasty was initially the handiwork of the Buddhist monkhood, which from the time of the Hao-Lu monarchy in the tenth-century was responsible for sustaining diplomatic contact with China."<sup>310</sup> Although the language of Sino-Việt diplomacy was tempered by the Confucian classics and Tang aesthetics, the literate Buddhist clergy at court in Hao Lr were the indispensable superintendents of this relationship.

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<sup>309</sup> This tale of Khuông Việt's meeting with Vaisravana may be found in the *TUTA*, the *Việt Điện U Linh Tục Tập*, the *Việt Điện U Linh Tập Lục Toàn Biên*, the *Lĩnh Nam Chích Quái Liệt Truyện*, and the *Thiên Nam Văn Lục*. See Nguyen, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam*, p. 75.

<sup>310</sup> Taylor, "Authority," p. 142.

The Song court, however, would understand this shared literary skill as an indication that the Chinese envoy was interacting with proxies of a frontier vassal, who comprehended the true nature of harmony and obedience. Buddhist monks who had mastered these literary conventions, therefore, could not be all that different from the officials serving the Song empire in their interpretation of imperial pronouncements. A shared cultural heritage made the job of informing proper political relations that much easier.

Yet, a subversive element enters the picture of Sino-Việt ties at this same moment. The Chinese emperor sees cultural interconnection at the same time that he contends with a "rogue" power asserting control of territory once ceded to a loyal vassal, the Đinh clan. Khuông Việt concludes his carefully worded poem with a strong request that the Chinese ruler address "our deep-seated intentions," as if a servant of Song imperial authority had concerns independent from the central authority charged with the maintenance of universal harmony. The Buddhist monk is also credited elsewhere for drafting the letter Lê Hoàn had sent in the name of the young and deposed Đinh Tuệ. Through many levels of interaction with local and court audiences there emerges a complicated dual nature to Khuông Việt's role at court, an image openly hinted at in the poetry he exchanged with Li Jue.

Lê Hoàn had weathered Song dissatisfaction by accepting the "guardian aspect" of Chinese titular largess, without abandoning any of his territorial or political gains. In early 988, the Chinese emperor added to the list of Lê Hoàn's honorific

positions the title “Acting Grand Guardian.” The emperor also presented a fief to Lê Hoàn of one thousand households, along with a “substantive fief” of five hundred households.<sup>311</sup> The Song court sent as envoys the Director of the Ministry of Revenue Wei Xiang and the Vice-Director of the Bureau of Forestry and Crafts and Director of the Historiography Institute Li Du to the Đại Cồ Việt court to make this presentation. Lê Hoàn admittedly had his own military prowess partially to thank for his success. However, he also owed a debt to his advisors who, through their Confucian training and textual expertise, presented a compliant and integrated image of the Việt ruler to the distant Chinese court.

In 993, the emperor granted Lê Hoàn the title “Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ.” The next year Lê Hoàn sent the military aide Phí Sùng Đức 費崇德 to the Chinese court to perform official tribute relations. However, according to the *Songshi*, Lê Hoàn was deceitful by nature, and that he took advantage of the fact that the surrounding mountains and seas insured that his kingdom was not easily accessible to the Song court to repeatedly plunder the border region. The *Songshi* compilers, with their historical hindsight, contended that it was during this period that Lê Hoàn gradually he lost his adherence to the ideal behavior of a *fan* border official.<sup>312</sup> However, not much evidence of this local loss of power can be found in frontier

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<sup>311</sup>The Chinese court gave the gift of a “substantive fief (*shifeng*) to favored officials and titled personages. While some fiefs include only titles, without taxable lands, *shifeng* grants offered a specified number of households and the tax revenue accrued for the official’s benefit.

<sup>312</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14063.

events of this period. During the spring of 995, the Guangnan Western Circuit Fiscal Commissioner Chang Kuan 張觀 and the Qinzhou Prefecture Ruhong 如洪 Defense Command Township's Supervisor of Militia Wei Zhaomei 衛昭美 jointly presented a report to the Song emperor. In Yongzhou, more than one hundred warships from Giao Châu attacked the Ruhong Defense Command Township, assaulting the local people and stealing produce from the granaries before leaving. The *DVSKTT* account reads differently. This account notes that Lê Hoàn sent an envoy Đỗ Hanh 杜亨 to lead an embassy to the Song court. At that time the Song was afraid that this embassy was an invading army. Song officials Zhang Guan and Wei Zhaomei presented their memorial reporting on this Việt region attack, and they are quoted as placing the blame squarely on the Đại Cồ Việt (or in the eyes of Kaifeng, Giao Chỉ) authorities.<sup>313</sup>

During the summer of 995, Lê Hoàn's officials from Tô Mậu 蘇茂 Prefecture led a village force of five thousand men to plunder Luzhou, a prefecture under Yongzhou's jurisdiction. The Song Chief Military Inspector Yang Wenjie 楊文傑 defeated the attackers and drove them away. According to the *Songshi* account, Emperor Taizong was determined to relieve tensions among these people of this distant land that served the Song empire, so he did not wish to ask who was at fault.<sup>314</sup> The *DVSKTT* account notes that the Song emperor had intended to

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<sup>313</sup> *DVSKTT* 1:194.

<sup>314</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14062.

bring peace to the region, and that he didn't wish to deploy troops again to the south. Therefore, he dismissed this event, and did not make an inquiry.

Zhang Guan also announced a rumor that Lê Hoàn had been driven by the Đinh clan into exile, and that Lê Hoàn now only led a peripheral group who resided between the mountains and the sea. According to Zhang, having lost their lands, members of Lê Hoàn's group were forced to supply themselves by plundering, and that Lê Hoàn himself has already died. Zhang Guan and the others handed this report to the emperor, with their recommendations.<sup>315</sup> Song officials posted on the frontier or in the southern harbor garrison of Guangzhou had plenty of reasons to attract Kaifeng's attention by reporting disturbance in the Việt region. These Song appointees to the south felt a need not to be overlooked regarding resources and assistance from the central court, particularly at a time when the Song imperial leadership was seeking relief from the pressure it felt from nomadic powers along the northern frontier region.

After hearing this surprising news, Taizong decided to seek a second opinion. He ordered the Aide to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials Chen Shilong 陳士隆 and the Eunuch of High Rank Wu Yuanji 吳元吉 to travel to Lingnan to spy on the Đại Cồ Việt court's activities. Chen Shilong and his aides submitted reports, confirming the statements of Zhang Guan. In fact, however, Lê Hoàn was still alive and well. Zhang Guan and the others had never tried to confirm the rumor they had passed to the Song court. Soon, a group of big traders returning to Kaifeng from the south

announced that Lê Hoàn was still very much in command. The Chinese emperor ordered that charges be brought against Zhang Guan and the others, but when it was found that Zhang Guan had died from illness, Wei Zhaomei, Chen Shilong, and Wu Yuanji were punished in his place. As the *DVSKTT* account notes; “The Song ruler then sent the Aide to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichangcheng*) Chen Shilong to secretly verify the particulars of this situation.. The Song ruler later discovered that the emperor (Lê Hoàn) was in no trouble at all.”<sup>316</sup> There is no mention that Chen Shilong had initially confirmed Zhang Guan’s erroneous report.

Although troubles with Lê Hoàn proved to be false, there were troubles brewing in South China that involved the frontier. Earlier, there was an incident involving three garrison townships in Qinzhou prefecture, Ruhong, Duobu 咄步, and Ruxi 如昔, all of which bordered on the seashore (see map 3). When Bộ Văn Dũng 卜文勇 and his followers from Giao Châu’s Triều Dương 潮陽 Township committed a murder, they all fled to Ruxi, where the local garrison commander Huang Lingde 黃令德 gave them shelter. Lê Hoàn ordered Triều Dương’s Defense Commander Hoàng Thành Nhã to carry an official dispatch for the Chinese authorities to China requesting the apprehension of the fugitives. Huang Lingde, however, declined to turn over them over.

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<sup>315</sup> *DVSKTT*, 1:194.

<sup>316</sup> *DVSKTT*, 1:194.

In 996, after determining that the Việt leadership was still firmly in control, Song Taizong, sought to resolve this matter. The emperor appointed Vice Director of the Ministry of Works Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟 to the position of Fiscal Commissioner and sent him with an imperial edict to Lê Hoàn's court. When Chen arrived in South China, he sent a local militia leader from Leizhou's 雷州 Haikang 海康 Garrison Li Jianzhong 李建中 to question Lê Hoàn about the situation, and to present the Chinese court's message. If Chen himself had entered the Đại Cồ Việt court with this message, he would have contravened tributary protocol. Sending an underling on such an *ad hoc* task, however, did not interrupt normal relations.

Chen instead traveled to the Ruxi Garrison, where he found Bộ Văn Dũng still in hiding. Chen captured Bộ Văn Dũng and one hundred and thirty of Văn Dũng's followers, including women and children. Kaifeng delegate then requested that the Việt officials from Triều Dương take custody of the captives, but he warned them not to inflict any cruel punishments.<sup>317</sup> Hoàng Thành Nhã 黃成雅 took custody, and formally thanked Chen Yaosou for his help. Subsequently, Lê Hoàn sent a message of gratitude to the Song emperor. At the same time, the *Songshi* account reports, Lê Hoàn had twenty-five pirates captured and presented to Chen Yaosou. Moreover, Lê Hoàn reported to Chen that Việt officials had already met with native leaders, who had

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<sup>317</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14063.

given reassurances that they would not cause disturbances.<sup>318</sup> This "meeting" could very well refer to Lê Hoàn's 996 springtime attack on four aboriginal settlements in the Ma Hoàng 麻黃, Đại Phát 大發, and Đan Ba 丹波 regions. The *ĐVSKTT* account suggests that only after learning of this attack did the Song ruler wish to punish Chang Kuan and others for spreading their erroneous rumors.<sup>319</sup> The fact that Lê Hoàn felt secure enough to expand his control into the frontier region only added to the irritation the Song emperor must have felt regarding the misinformation he was receiving from his southern representatives.

During July of that year, Song Taizong sent the Director of the Ministry of Receptions Li Ruozhuo, Li Jue's companion during that official's 985 trip to the Viet court, to present an edict to the Việt court. Acting as an interim State Courier-envoy, Li planned to present a beautiful jade belt as a gift for Lê Hoàn. The exchange of dialogue between the Viet ruler and the Song envoy, as it was recorded in Chinese sources, is remarkable similar in tone to the much earlier exchange between the Han envoy Li Jia and the defiant southern ruler Triệu Đà. When Li Ruozhuo arrived at the Đại Cồ Việt court, Lê Hoàn came out to the outskirts of the city to welcome the envoy. The *Songshi* account notes that Lê Hoàn's manner was particularly rude and overbearing, and he said to Li:

Those who plundered Ruhong garrison were, in fact, *Man* barbarian bandits from beyond our borders. Does the emperor know that these were not

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<sup>318</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14063.

<sup>319</sup> *ĐVSKTT* 1: 194.

troops from Giao Châu, or not? If I truly gave Giao Châu the order to rebel, I would first attack Fanyu, and then attack Min (Fujian region) and Yue (Jiangnan?). Why would I only stop at Ruhong!

To Lê Hoàn's heated outburst Li Ruozhuo calmly replied to:

When the emperor first heard about the attack on Ruhong Defense Command, he didn't know where the attackers came from. However, you, sir, were promoted to the position of Giao Châu's Military Commander, and are bound to the obligations of the appointment. Therefore, you should be loyal and honest as repayment. With your handling of the search for those pirates, the outcome was very clear. Yet, Chinese high officials have made recommendations that the Chinese court build up its military forces to calm the sea-lanes in the southern region. Today, there is the issue involving the pillaging of the *Man* barbarian bandits. This matter is due to the fact that Giao Châu is not capable of controlling the situation by itself. So, leading officials have proposed that the Chinese court send several tens of thousands of crack troops to join Giao Châu soldiers in destroying the bandit forces, to spare both Giao Châu and the Guangnan regions this disastrous situation. However, the Song emperor said to me 'Do not put this plan into practice without thinking carefully about it. I worry that Giao Châu's leader cannot understand our court's edicts, and that such an action will frighten them. Why not just authorize Lê Hoàn to send an expedition to attack the pirates. Their force should be sufficient to calm down the region gradually.' Therefore, we are not going to send troops at this time.<sup>320</sup>

When Lê Hoàn heard this news he reportedly was stunned by the message, standing upright and exclaiming:

The pirates attacked our border, the fault lay with the acting official (Lê Hoàn himself). August Lord, you are lenient and merciful, and your compassion is greater than that of my own parents, as you will not execute me as a result of my liability. From today on, I will carefully follow the contract of my acting official duties, to protect the region of Trương Hải 漲海 forever.

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<sup>320</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14063.

The Việt ruler allegedly faced north and kow-towed in thanks to the Song emperor. With this act, the trope of unbroken Nam Việt ambitions quickly subdued and tempered by the signs of imperial compassion is played out once again in this description of Song events. Appeals to observe tributary obligations are coupled with military threats. The rude, uncultivated manner of the Viet leader is contrasted with the clam and cultured responses of the court envoy. Although Le Hoan certainly held the upper hand in his own region, and Li Ruo Zhuo likely recognized that fact in his day, later historians re-constructed the exchange in such a way as to introduce the dynamics of past exchanges, and thereby suggest that lasting value of imposing tributary norms on the relationship between the northern court and the Việt region.

When Song Zhenzong 宋真宗 (Zhao Dechang 趙德昌, r. 997-1022) came to the throne, he granted Lê Hoàn the titles “Prince of the Southern Pacification” and probationary “Princely Attendant.” Lê Hoàn sent the Supreme Commander Nguyễn Thiệu Cung 阮紹恭 and the Vice Commander Triệu Hoài Đức 趙懷德 to present as tribute to the Chinese court; one gold, silver, and “seven-jewel”-encrusted chair, ten silver bowls, ten rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks, as well as fifty bolts of fine cloth. The emperor ordered that these articles be displayed in the “Imperial Pavilion” at Taizong's shrine, and allowed Nguyễn Thiệu Cung and the other Việt envoys to approach the shrine in worship to pay their respects to the deceased emperor. When they returned to court, the emperor gave the envoys an armored horse for Lê Hoàn, along with an edict comforting and praising the Việt ruler.

In 1001, Lê Hoàn sent the Adjutant Lê Thiệu 黎紹 and the Vice Adjutant Hà Khánh Thường 何慶常 to the Song court to offer as tribute; one tamed rhinoceros, two elephants, two elephant *peng*, and one “seven-jewel”-encrusted vase. During the same year the Qinzhou administration reported that a group of people from Giao Châu's Hiệu Thành Tràng 効誠場 market town, including the leader of “the eight prefectures” Hoàng Khánh Tập 黃慶集 and several hundred others, arrived at the border to submit themselves to Song authority. Such movement of people across the frontier region would become more and more common, as both the Song and Đại Cồ Việt court reached further into this region. Zhenzong did not wish to upset the balance of power at that time. He sent word that he sympathized with their desires, but he also ordered that they be sent back to their home region. The administrator of Guangnan's Western Circuit sent an intelligence report to Kaifeng, noting that Lê Hoàn had received a briefing of local conditions from the envoy Hoàng Thành Nhã, and had in turn dispatched a memorial to the Song court. The Guangnan administrator also reported that in the past when envoys reached Giao Châu, Lê Hoàn used the excuse of having to care for these guests to impose harsh taxes on his people.<sup>321</sup> However, the emperor declined on that occasion to make any further inquiry.

In 1004, Lê Hoàn sent his son Lê Minh Đề 黎明提, who was serving as Regional Chief of Hoan 攏 Prefect, to lead a tribute mission to the Song court.

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<sup>321</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14063.

Through his envoys, Lê Hoàn entreated the Chinese court to increase its benevolence by sending envoys directly to Giao Châu as a sign of favor to distant kinsmen. The Song emperor allowed this, and thereafter acknowledged Lê Minh Đè in his position as Hoan Prefect's Regional Chief. In 1005, the emperor held a large banquet during the Lantern Festival, and presented Lê Minh Đè with a gift of money. The emperor ordered that Lê Minh Đè, together with the envoys of Champa and Arabia, be given a great feast.<sup>322</sup> This sign of imperial favor also enhanced the young emperor's own standing.

In early 1006, Lê Hoàn died, and his position was passed to his middle son, Lê Long Việt 黎龍戍 (983-1005).<sup>323</sup> The court did not experience a smooth succession of power. Lê Long Việt's older brother Lê Long Toàn 黎龍全 proceeded to plunder the royal reserve, and he soon disappeared from the capital. Long Việt only managed to rule for only three days before he was assassinated by his younger brother the Lê Long Đình 黎龍廷 (985-1009).<sup>324</sup> Lê Long Toàn

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<sup>322</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14064.

<sup>323</sup> Although the *Songshi* account reported that Lê Hoàn died in 1006, and passed the throne to his son Long Việt at this time, Vietnamese sources claim that Lê Hoàn died one year earlier.

<sup>324</sup> Although Chinese sources describe Lê Long Việt quite dispassionately, Vietnamese historians seemed to have developed a very low opinion of the young ruler. Following the assassination of Lê Long Việt, the account continued as follows:

During the first year, Lê Long Đình took the imperial title "the Great Victorious and Enlightened Emperor Who Created and Transmitted the Sage Cultural Patterns, Divine and Martial Precepts, and the Heavenly Venerated Path." (In fact,) the prince by nature enjoyed killing people. During executions he used straw to bind his captives in order to set them on fire and roast them. He also ordered his retainer Liêu Thư Tâm 廖守心 to brandish a blunt knife to mutilate a prisoner, in order

launched an unsuccessful counter-attack. Long Toàn finally fled to Champa, where he was killed. The *VSL* account reports that the “Reclining Court Prince 卧朝王” Lê Long Đĩnh was Lê Hoàn’s fifth son and that he had the same mother as Long Việt. In 992 he was enfeoffed as the Enlightened Prince (*kaiming wang*).<sup>325</sup>

Lê Long Đĩnh's older brother Lê Minh Hộ 黎明護 led the troops stationed at Phù Lan Trại 扶蘭砦 Stockade into the ensuing military struggle. Lê Minh Đê, due to the chaos in the region, was unable to return home, so the Song emperor sent out special orders, instructing the local government at Guangzhou offer the Việt envoy unprecedented assistance. The Guangzhou’s prefect Ling Ce 凌策 and other local officials made the following report:

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to prolong his death. This process continued for several days. This person cried out from the pain of his wounds, and Thur Tâm taunted him by saying, “You have not become used to dying yet.” The prince laughed loudly, taking great pleasure in this event. For all of the prisoners-of-war taken during the prince’s campaigns, he drove them down to the river bank. After the tide went out, he ordered that the prisoners build pens in the water and ten be placed in these pens. When the tide came back in, these people were then drowned. He also ordered prisoners to climb tall trees, and then he had the tree chopped down. He also enjoyed using the Ninh 寧 江 River. This river was filled with snakes. The prince would tie prisoners to the gunnel of a boat. Then he would float back and forth in the middle of the river, letting the snakes harm his captives. The sacrificial beasts were all gathered in the kitchen. The prince ordered that servants first herd the animals into the kitchen, and he would then slaughter the animals by hand. He then handed the animals over to the kitchen aides. He once shaved a section of sugar cane on the head of the monk Thống Quách Mão. Then he pretended to go crazy, and he struck Quách Mão's head, causing blood to flow. The prince then laughed loudly. On another occasion he killed a cat at midnight, and offered it to his lords to eat. When the meal was finished, he took out the cat’s head and showed it to his dinner guests. All of the lords vomited at the sight. Every time the prince came to inspect his court, he caused his retainers to gossip, throwing the daily operation of government into chaos. The prince used palace eunuchs as “minced meat.” He also pushed his officials into competing with each other for foodstuffs. All of the princes finally rebelled, but Lê Long Đĩnh led a punitive expedition against the rebels and defeated them. He attacked the leaders of the resisting local communities and conquered their people.

See *VSL* 1: 22.

<sup>325</sup> *VSL* 1: 22-23.

All of Lê Hoàn's sons are competing to take over as ruler, and the general populace will most certainly rebel. The local leaders Hoàng Khánh Táp and Hoàng Tú Man 黃秀蠻 are among several thousands of people who disobeyed the Việt court's troops, and the Hoàng leaders were massacred by court troops for challenging Lê authority. Survivors have arrived at the border to surrender and pay allegiance to the prefectural government of Lianzhou 廉州. The Hoàng leaders petitioned the Lianzhou prefectural authorities to dispatch two thousand men to the Giao Châu to assuage the upheaval, while Hoàng Khánh Táp and others showed their desire to be assigned to the vanguard of this force.<sup>326</sup>

Song Zhenzong believed Lê Hoàn had in the past been loyal and obedient to the Chinese court, relying largely on past evidence of the Việt leader's observance of tribute protocol. Therefore, the emperor did not desire to allow his troops to take advantage of the chaos. He consequently changed the title of the State Courier-envoy assigned to carry messages to the southern frontier Shao Hua 邵嘩 to the "Destiny Sea Pacification Commissioner," to reflect the court's intentions in the Việt region. Shao Hua presented a letter to the Giao Chỉ court, instructing them to take heed of the Song's "awesome power" (*weide*). He noted that if the quarreling parties continued to stall in choosing a leader for the Việt throne, the Chinese court would send a small force of troops to take the wrongdoers to task. Lê Minh Hộ was frightened by this news, and he made Lê Long Đĩnh one of his leading military leaders. Lê Long Đĩnh himself took the title of Military Commissioner and then revealed his intention to present tribute to the Chinese court. The *Songhuiyao* account mentions that Lê Minh Hộ chose the following titles for himself; "Army of the Peaceful Sea" Military

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<sup>326</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14065.

Commissioner and Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner.<sup>327</sup> Hucker notes that late Tang military commissioners, in efforts to strengthen their regional powers in the aftermath of the Huang Chao Rebellion, took these titles concurrently.<sup>328</sup> Lê Minh Hô also gave himself the honorific titles of “Acting Defender-in-chief,” a title offered to the senior military officer in a Princedom, and “Enlightened Prince.”<sup>329</sup> When Shao Hua heard about these developments, he remarked “the far-away and unrefined foreigners have different ways 俗, and they don’t understand the practice of ritual 禮. How could this fact not be strange?”<sup>330</sup>

This event marked a shift in court policy regarding frontier management. The emperor ordered that these “fraudulent” titles be removed from his frontier officials. Shao Hua noted to the court that the local leader Hoàng Khánh Táp had avoided participation in the rebellion, but instead had “come to China to be transformed by Chinese culture 歸化.” Shao contended that Hoàng Khánh Táp’s number of followers was still quite large, and if these people were to be sent back to their home region, then they might face being massacred. The emperor then ordered that Hoàng Khánh Táp be given the petty official position of “Grade Three Lictor,” and that he be given a post at Chenzhou. The emperor then permitted Hoàng Khánh Táp to enter the court to

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<sup>327</sup> Zhang Dexiang 章得象 (978-1048) et al., *Draft of Documents Pertaining to Matters of State in the Song Dynasty* 宋會要輯彙 (Taipei: Shijie, 1977) 197: 27. The character *deng* 等 in the title Military Commissioner and Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner (*guan cha chuzhi dengshi*) likely means “ranking.”

<sup>328</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 283.

<sup>329</sup> Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 485.

present tribute. Later frontier leaders beyond the Việt court would attempt to foster similar tributary relationship with the northern court as a buffer against aggression they faced from Việt leaders. As the example of the Nùng Trì Cao rebellion in chapter four suggests, these relationships outside of the court-to-court tributary arrangement between Song and Việt rulers could be explosive.

In 1007, Lê Long Đĩnh named himself as the interim An Nam “Army of the Peaceful Sea” Deputy Commander. He sent his younger brother the Phong Châu Regional Chief Lê Minh Sưởng 黎明昶 and the Aide to the Assistant An Nam Chief Secretary and Palace Administrator Hoàng Thành Nhã and others to present tribute at the Chinese court. Song Zhenzong organized a large banquet in the Pavilion of Cherishing Brightness. The emperor knew that Hoàng Thành Nhã would be seated at the far end of the banquet table, among other low-ranking visitors, and the Chinese ruler wished to heighten the Việt envoy's official position at court. Song Zhenzong consulted with his Grand Councilor Wang Dan 王旦 about this matter. After considered this problem, Wang Dan remarked;

In ancient times, Zi Chan visited the court of the Zhou ruling house. The Zhou ruler gave his party a large feast, following the highest level of ritual. Zi Chan, however, firmly declined this observance of high ritual. Thereafter, he was treated to a lesser observance of ritual before returning home. The emperor and his court's spirit of harmony 惠綏 has reached the far-off lands, and we treat our guests with special care, so that there will be no grounds for uneasiness.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14064.

<sup>331</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14065.

Upon hearing Wang's speech, the emperor raised Hoàng Thành Nhã's rank to that of Grade Five in the Department of State Affairs.

The emperor ordered that Lê Long Đĩnh be honored with the prestige title "Lord Specially Advanced," and the titles of Acting Defender-in-chief, Acting "Army of the Peaceful Sea" Military Commissioner and Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner, An Nam Protector-General and Concurrent Censor-in-chief, and the honorific designation of Supreme Pillar of State. The emperor then gave him the title of Giao Chỉ Commandary Prince, granting Lê Long Đĩnh a fief of three thousand households, and a "substantive fief" of one thousand households. The Chinese ruler also awarded Lê Long Đĩnh the honorific title "Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience," and awarded the Việt ruler the appellation "Most Loyal (*zhizhong*)." The emperor finally granted Lê Hoàn the posthumous rank of Secretariat Director and the posthumous title of Prince of Nam Việt. The Song emperor certainly must have recognized this last title's importance for the region, but he undermined its independent authority by drawing it into tributary protocol.

In 1008, the "Heavenly Order 天書" was sent down. This event refers to a reported communication from the Taoist deity, the Primal Celestial Excellency 元始天尊. This order was reported by Song emperor Zhenzong himself. Allegedly, on January 8, 1008 (or December 28, 1007 in some sources), Zhenzong witnessed a deity appear before him, addressing the emperor with these words,

“During the first month of the year, you must build a Golden Seal “Purgatory” Altar 黃錄道場 at the Pavilion of Orthodoxy 正殿. There will be sent down a Heavenly Order 天書, the Great Axial and Auspicious Charm 大中祥符, which consists of three parts. However, you must not reveal these divine truths.”<sup>332</sup> By most accounts, the Director of the Bureau of Military Affairs Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025), director of the *CFYG* encyclopaedia project, is the reputed author of the actual “Heavenly Order.”

The Song emperor embarked on a flurry of court activity as a result of reporting this heavenly vision. This event also had an impact of the Sino-Việt tributary relationship. When conducting the “Eastern Fiefs” ritual, the emperor requested that all tribute kingdoms dispatch envoys to the court for special awards. The emperor gave Lê Long Đĩnh the title of “Most Loyal” Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery, as well as a fief of one thousand households and a “substantive fief” of four hundred households.<sup>333</sup> Relations throughout the Song empire had to be recalibrated during this period, and the Việt ruler must have regarded his regional status to have risen as a result. In 1009 Guangnan Western Circuit’s administrator reported that the *Man* barbarians of Qinzhou had robbed the Tanka boat people in the harbor. The Ruhong Citadel’s leader Li Wenzhu 李文著 led a squad of seasoned troops to attack and pursue the bandits. However, while

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<sup>332</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 27: 1518.

<sup>333</sup> The “Eastern Fiefs” refers to the ancestral rites Zhenzong practiced to honor Song Taizu and Song Taizong at Fen Yuan on September 3, 1008. See *Songshi* 7: 137.

crossing the seas, Li Wenzhu was shot dead by a stray arrow. The emperor ordered that the court of An Nam capture these bandits. The next year (1010), Việt forces caught thirteen members of the Địch Lão 狄獠 ethnic group, and presented the captives to the Chinese court.

Lê Long Đĩnh soon sent Administrative Assistant Nguyễn Thủ Cương 阮守疆 to present following tribute; rhinoceros horn, elephant tusks, gold and silver, a striped bridal veil. At this time, Thủ Cương also presented one tamed rhinoceros. Emperor Zhenzong regarded the rhinoceros to be by nature a creature from a alien land, and so it would not be possible to feed and care for the animal. Therefore, the emperor did not wish to receive this gift. However, he also did not want to offend the Viet ruler, with his good intentions. When the Việt envoys had departed, Chinese sources report that the Chinese emperor had the animal released by the seaside.<sup>334</sup>

In 1010 the Việt ruler again sent envoys to the Song court. The envoy made a request for a full suit of armor for the Việt ruler, and the Song emperor approved his request. The Việt envoy also asked that trade between the Song and Giao Chỉ be permitted at Yongzhou. When Yongzhou's Fiscal Commissioner official made this request known to the emperor, Song Zhenzong replied:

“Many of the people who live by the seaside have suffered from the plundering and raiding of Giao Châu. Therefore, I had earlier allowed only trade

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<sup>334</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14065.

between Lianzhou and the Ruhong Citadel, so that it would be possible to control this section of the border. The region now in question involves territory right beside the Song interior. This change in trade would certainly not benefit us.”

The emperor ordered that the old precedents should remain in place. While strong tributary ties were important to the Song court, expanded economic activity in this period was not a priority. The regional instability caused by greater traffic through the region must have been a concern of the central court.

Political fortunes in the Viet region were about to change once again. A long-time Lê military officer Lý Công Uẩn 李公蘊 had been acting as Long Đinh's close advisor. Long Đinh, in fact, had made Công Uẩn an honorary member of the Lê clan in an effort to secure his loyalty. In that year 1010, however, Lý Công Uẩn plotted against Lê Long Đinh, and rose up against him. When the Lê clan retaliated, Lý Công Uẩn killed Lê Minh Đê, Lê Minh Sưởng, and others, declaring himself to be their successor (to be known posthumously as emperor Lý Thái Tổ 李太祖) and sending envoys to the Chinese court to present tribute.

From Kaifeng's perspective, this was a frustrating sign that imperial sanction often had little effect on local events. The Song emperor reportedly commented, “Lê Hoàn was not righteous, but he was able to receive imperial sanction. Lý Công Uẩn has imitated Lê Hoàn in his wrongdoings. This is really to be detested!”<sup>335</sup> However,

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<sup>335</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14066.

the emperor chose to follow the earlier precedent set when the Song court ultimately chose to recognize Lê Hoàn.

The Song ruler ordered that Lý Công Uẩn should receive the prestige title “Lord Specially Advanced,” and the titles of Acting Defender-in-chief, Acting “Army of the Peaceful Sea” Military Commissioner and Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner, An Nam Protector-General and Concurrent Censor-in-chief, and the honorific designation “Supreme Pillar of State.” The emperor then gave him the title of Giao Chỉ Commandary Prince, as well as a fief of three thousand households and a “substantive fief” of one thousand households. The Chinese emperor gave the new Việt ruler the honorific title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience.” Lý Công Uẩn also asked for imperial writings in the hand of Song Taizong, and the Song emperor ordered that one hundred scrolls be delivered to the Việt court.<sup>336</sup>

So began the longest lasting Việt dynastic power of the pre-modern period.

## **Conclusions**

An issue that greatly concerned the Chinese leadership in the early Song regarding the maintenance of proper relations with its tributary neighbors was the issue of succession. The transfer of power from one generation of hereditary leadership to the next lay at the heart of the tribute system. The Đinh clan had come to

power in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century to the south of the Hồng River Valley of northern Việt region, and thus apart from the traditional Sino-Việt elite. However, the Đinh clan's style of rule appeared from afar to fit the picture the Song central court had envisioned for its southern frontier. When Song Taizong (976-998) ascended to the throne, Đinh Liễn fittingly sent envoys to the Chinese court at Kaifeng to present tribute and to congratulate the new Chinese ruler.

Li Jue's journey to the Lê court was actually the final chapter in a long and bloody disagreement over local sovereignty and legitimate succession. However, the Chinese emperor, after a series of edicts attempting to justify his decision, accepted the new Việt ruler's offerings of tribute by overlooking that same local leader's presumed blatant transgression of tributary protocol. In fact, local Việt leaders looked differently at the role, if any, that the Chinese court ought to play in the power succession in the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom. In Mainland Southeast Asia politics of this time, the ruler at the apex of the tributary hierarchy seldom interfered in the succession of his subordinate kingdoms, whether or not the succession was hereditary or expropriated.<sup>337</sup> Đại Cồ Việt leaders, given the history of Sino-Việt interaction, could have anticipated that the Song court would react to political instability south of the frontier; however, local acceptance of such power struggle did not depend sanction from any other power other than the Đại Cồ Việt leadership.

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<sup>336</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14066.

The military defeat of Song troops by Lê Hoàn's further moderated Chinese resistance to this local political tradition, to the point at which Song leaders had to reconsider support for the "proper" leadership of the Đinh clan and instead created a "guardian" position for Lê Hoàn as a means of finding a place for the actual powerholder within the tributary framework. Later accounts of the early encounters between Chinese and Việt delegates portray the two parties functioning adeptly within the literate culture of contemporary Chinese officialdom. Such a picture of court harmony is somewhat sullied by the less than flattering description of Lê Hoàn offered by Chinese envoys. Nevertheless, Kaifeng continued to cultivate the same tributary relationship with Lê rulers as it had done with the Đinh leadership. Under these conditions, Chinese recognition for an independent Việt territory allowed local leaders to develop its own political identity.

When the Song court was eventually faced with another usurper in the south, the Chinese acceded to the regional precedent they have established, and instead welcome the new leadership. This new leader and founder of the Lý dynasty, would initiate a very different style of rule. Lý rulers actively modeled their court on the Chinese imperial example, but they would eventually name their kingdom without seeking Chinese approval. The Lý dynasts, in fact, would depend very heavily on local sources of power and authority. Recent scholarship argues that the state

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<sup>337</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, p. 83.

established in the Hồng River Delta by the founders of the Lý Dynasty, was "eclectic, elitist and non-bureaucratic in a pattern similar to those of the other great Southeast Asian states of the classical age."<sup>338</sup> Local deities and Buddhist cults provided a rich source of support for the cultivation of Lý power. Moreover, this was the dynasty that produced an ambitious leadership desires to expand and deepen personal power well into the frontier region. Lý advisors, many of whom were the Buddhist clergy who had advised Lê Hoàn in his dealings with the Song, would instruct their rulers on tenets of imperial behavior. As we will see in chapter four, expanding dominion in the northern Việt region entailed coming into closer contact with the people already residing, and ruling, in the frontier areas. These encounters would finally bring Song and Việt interests together in greatest period of conflict by the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>338</sup> Whitmore, "Elephants," p. 127.

CHAPTER 4: TRIBUTE RELATIONS, BORDER TENSIONS AND MILITARY CONFLICT

In 1034, a local non-Han border leader Trần Công Vinh 陳公尤, together with more than six hundred followers, crossed the frontier into Song territory. Công Vinh had earlier announced that his home region should become an interior dependency 內附 of the Song court.<sup>339</sup> When the Việt ruler Lý Phật Mã (r. 1028-1054)<sup>340</sup> assembled more than one thousand soldiers on the Sino-Việt border, the Song emperor Renzong ordered Công Vinh's group to return to home. The Chinese emperor then sent an official warning to Phật Mã, instructing the ruler not to act rashly when dealing with the insurgents.<sup>341</sup> It appears that, although the Chinese emperor could not condone the rebellious behavior of Công Vinh's followers, he did not hide his pleasure upon hearing of their willingness to become his direct subjects. However, the Song ruler's order for leniency was the extent of direct Chinese influence in this matter. Since the founding of the dynasty, the Song court seldom directly addressed the affairs of the indigenous communities located along the southern border. Such communities

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<sup>339</sup> Interior dependency (*neifu* 內附) status placed a region under the direct protection of the Chinese court. After doing so, any disturbance in that region would be viewed by the Chinese ruler as an intervention into his domain. Border communities that gained this standing were treated administratively as "loose rein" districts. With reference to the tribute system, acquiring *neifu* status also inferred that the region had accepted China's cultural supremacy, and that they would be held responsible for the presentation of tribute to the central court.

<sup>340</sup> This Việt ruler was known as Li Dezheng 李德政 in Chinese records. These events were cited in Li Tao 李焯, *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985) (hereafter known as *XZZTJCB*), 115 *juan*.

<sup>341</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14067.

were expected to police themselves, while larger problems were normally for the Song vassal Đại Cồ Việt court at Thăng Long alone to handle.

Many Chinese court officials, however, looked favorably on these requests from the border region, believing that the “defections” resulted from China's positive influence on the region. After hearing of Trần Công Vinh's request for an alliance with the Song court, the military affairs commissioner 樞密使 Cai Qi 蔡齊 wrote in a court memorial that, “the *Man* barbarians turned away from their cruel ways and returned to virtue when they requested that Song state annex them and that they be given Qinghu Circuit's Yuetian region to settle in and to manage by themselves.”<sup>342</sup> The image of a southern frontier community attracted by the superior culture of the North China plain brought with it reminders of Tang glory. The request for resettlement within the Song empire is also a clear reference to the *loose rein* system in full working order. However, Cai also warned, “if we now allow them to leave, they must not return to their old home. If these people spread out into the mountains and ravines, will not there be trouble?”

Cai Qi described the chieftain's request for Song dependency as a sign of the Song's civilizing attraction. However, Cai's hesitation in accepting the emperor's rejection of this request reveals this official's familiarity with fragile nature of power sharing in this region. Given experience gained during late Tang and the Five Dynasties period, the Song court could certainly argue that locally strong border leaders should be managed with strong ties to the central court, easing their need to

increase military might for their own protection on the frontier. Therefore, the central court's desire to support a balanced, hierarchical order in the Sino-Việt hinterland did not adequately address the regional instability, which continued to increase as border Communities faced formidable conflict from the Đại Việt Kingdom, intend on expanding its own power in the region. The outcome of the court's decision was further rebellion in the following year.<sup>343</sup>

Greater disturbances along the Sino-Việt border would soon bring the region to the immediate attention of both Việt and Chinese authorities. Previously, the Thăng Long court had gradually spread its influence in the region, while the Kaifeng court had made very few attempts to exercise its own authority in more than the most populous areas of the Guangnan Western Circuit. However, this seeming indifference on the part of the Chinese court would soon change. By the 1050's, in the aftermath of the Nùng Trí Cao Rebellion, Chinese officials from as far off as today's Shandong province would relocate to prefectures at the edges of the Sino-Việt border. The community of transplanted Han settlers soon began to challenge in size the numbers of locally born inhabitants. A change in Chinese administrative policy, along with the demographic shift, would raise tensions between the Song and the Việt authorities. Moreover, these changes eventually contributed to the border war of 1075-77, an

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<sup>342</sup> *XZZTJCB* 114: 2677-78.

<sup>343</sup> *XZZTJCB* 114: 2678.

event that would result in a fixed border between the two territories and bring the Việt court a heightened status in its relationship with the Song empire.

During the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, Song emperors required only that native leaders submit token tribute. The court based levels of tribute on each region's agricultural output. As the state developed costly economic interests, the region's tax burden grew heavier. By the 1070's, the court, following the spirit of Wang Anshi's 王安石 New Policies 新法 reforms, pushed for direct control of its border regions, including the military suppression of local dissent. Following this trend, the Chinese court moved from a policy of allowing a tributary state, Giao Chi,<sup>344</sup> manage affairs along the southern border to a policy requiring more active Chinese intervention. The court ended its campaigns against the Nùng rebels under the influence of an increasingly expansionist frontier policy, and soon disregarded the traditional bounds of authority accorded to the Việt rulers in an effort to monopolize the resources found in the border region. This trend toward direct control in frontier management had a dramatic impact on Sino-Việt relations, and it is this trend that we will now explore.

### **A Short History of Indigenous Communities along the Sino-Việt frontier**

The frontier region inhabited by indigenous peoples extended from Bảo Lạc 保樂 Prefecture to An Vinh 永安 Prefecture in the northern Việt region and the

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<sup>344</sup> The pre-Tang title by which the Song court insisted on referring to the Việt region, even after the Việt rulers had adopted the name Đại Cồ Việt for their kingdom.

Qinzhou 欽州 Prefecture on the South Chinese coast. Although both Việt and Chinese authorities labeled all of the local inhabitants as *Man* 蠻 (*Barbarians of the South*), there were, and are, many distinct communities throughout this region. And while modern ethnographers contend that the majority of these communities belong to a single ethnicity, the Chinese *Zhuang* 壯 minority or the Vietnamese Nùng 儂 and Đại 岱 groups, specific regions were dominated by a single clan, the surname of which would provide a name for the community as a whole.

During the pre-modern period, most of the Sino-Việt border region was controlled by a small number of surname-groups. In the easternmost area of the frontier, the Hoàng/Huang 黃 surname group was predominant. Although this group was relatively small, Việt rulers often assigned its members leadership positions in An Vinh.<sup>345</sup> By the early Song period, the Vi/Wei 韋 surname group had settled in the Tô Mậu Prefecture in the northern Việt region and in Siling, Luzhou, and Xiping regions on the Song side of the border. These two groups, along with the Nùng/Nong 儂 and Chu/Zhou 周 surname groups, were the principal occupants of a region between the Việt and Han Chinese settlements. Leaders among these surname groups maintained strong personal, quasi-familial ties, through which they maintained their authority. Describing the indigenous border communities of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Guangxi, one historian

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<sup>345</sup> This information comes from the recent serial Chinese translation of Hoàng Xuân Hãn's notable work *Lý Thường Kiệt*, cited in *South and Southeast Asian Resources* 南亞與東南亞資料, Vol. 79 (1988), No. 2 (Beijing: CASS South and Southeast Asian Research institute), p. 185.

writes that “while chieftains who shared the same family name did not necessarily share the same ancestry... they often invoked the real or imagined ties to form alliances or to assert their influence.”<sup>346</sup> The practice of fashioning a network of kinship-like relations, joined by particular surnames, precedes even this study. This custom accounts for the fact that following the Nùng rebellion, the number of local inhabitants bearing the surname Nùng declined considerably, while an increased number of people from the same region used the surname Triệu 趙 (the surname of the Song ruling family).

It is likely that few officials, either Song or Đại Cồ Việt, were surprised when border tensions erupted in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Sino-Việt frontier had long suffered from poverty and banditry, and the region was known to be unstable as the result of mass migrations, natural disasters, or local administrative weakness. During the latter Han dynasty (AD 162-178), several rebellions spread throughout the mountain valleys of Guangxi and Guizhou, effectively cutting off Giao Chi’s administrative center, Thương Ngô 蒼梧, from the southern portion of the Han-Việt territory. The Han court, weakened by internal dissent, was finally forced to send a new governor Jia Zong 賈琮, who was said to display uncommon sympathy for the local people.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Leo K. Shin made this point in his paper “Contracting Chieftaincy: Political Tribalization of the Southwest in Ming China” at the 1995 symposium “Empire, Nation, and Region: The Chinese World Order Reconsidered” at Berkeley, CA, p.16.

<sup>347</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 68.

Local rebellions during the Tang dynasty led to permanent geopolitical and cultural changes. When an ill-prepared Tang army failed to pacify a local revolt by the "Yellow Grotto barbarians," other acts of rebellion destabilized the border region.<sup>348</sup> Chinese efforts to regain local control were incomplete, and the regional unrest fed into wider conflicts among local chiefs. These tensions eventually played a part in igniting the war with the Nanzhao kingdom in 854.<sup>349</sup> Moreover, the conflicts widened the gap between the Han-Việt officials and residents living around the Hồng River delta and the local chieftains from the mountainous border region, who had rallied behind the anti-Tang banner. This regional split had important ramifications for the subsequent development of Sino-Việt relations.

The Tang dynasty also brought the establishment of the Chinese *loose rein* (*jimi* 羈縻) system of frontier prefectures and districts.<sup>350</sup> As mentioned in chapter one, this system of employing local chieftains both to maintain regional stability and to supply a steady stream of "local products" to the Chinese court was by nature a

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<sup>348</sup> Xu claims that the "Yellow Grotto Barbarians," as well as Nùng Trí Cao and his followers, all belonged to the modern-day *zhuang* ethnic group. Cited in Xu Zongshi, *Song jiang liu yu renmin shi*, (Hong Kong: Shijie, 1963), p. 72.

<sup>349</sup> Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 70.

<sup>350</sup> Under this system during the Tang, the Chinese court appointed leaders of local ethnic groups to exercise local authority at the military prefecture (*fu*), civil prefecture (*zhou*), county (*xian*), and "mountain grotto" (*dong*) levels. The *jimi* system fit into the traditional Chinese frontier policy of "using barbarians to control barbarians (*yi man zhi man*)," although the general stability of the southwest frontier during the Tang certainly played a role in implementing such a lenient policy. The official rank of these local leaders varied; some were granted the title Area Commander-in-Chief (*dudu fu*), a military designation, while leaders at the *zhou* and *xian* levels would often receive irregular hereditary titles such as regional chief (*cishi*), commandery prince (*junwang*), principedom administrator (*zhangshi*), and "equestrian sentinel" (*sima*). The Tang court charged these local leaders with the collection of local tribute (*tu gong*), the organization of corvee labor, and the pacification of local banditry. This system collapsed with the fall of the Tang. However, the founders of the Song dynasty

delicate arrangement. The Chinese rulers encouraged strong leadership from their local representatives. However, they were well aware of instances in the past when powerful chieftains had chosen to establish independent kingdoms, challenging the Tang court's regional control and eluding Chinese sovereign might, as was the case with the founding of the Nanzhao kingdom in 750. The Tang court's recourse was to maintain a centralized military force strong enough to quell such frontier disturbances quickly and decisively. By the late 8th century, in the aftermath of the An Lushan Rebellion, the Chinese court was seldom able to muster such a force.

The Tang *loose rein* system in place along the southern frontier was not without its strong critics. Fan Zuyu, the close associate of Sima Guang, made this comment; "From the founding the Tang, in activities requiring leadership in the south, (Chinese) rulers all turned to border officials who grabbed up positions with an eye toward personal gain. They began by gathering together local *Man* people, and then came to our country to pillage and rob. This situation became a great concern of the country."<sup>351</sup> By the time that Fan served at court, many Song officials held great reservations regarding the efficacy of this traditional system of border control. In many instances, Song officials would equate this supposedly flawed arrangement with the existing border relationship between the Chinese empire and the Việt kingdom. The revolts along the border indicated that the Việt leadership was not strong enough

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immediately restored the institutions as a part of their own border policy, even granting titles to surname groups that could provide evidence of their service to Tang rulers.

<sup>351</sup> Fan Zuyu, *Tangjian*, (Shanghai: Guji, 1984), p. 312. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Chinese and Vietnamese materials are my own.

to control matters properly. In these officials' comments, there was implied the need for more direct Chinese involvement.

The Việt court's method of controlling the peoples along its northern border differed considerably from the Chinese model. First of all, the Đại Cồ Việt ruler maintained personal bonds of loyalty with his border officials, all of whom were allied to the central court through yearly oaths of loyalty.<sup>352</sup> Secondly, the Việt Lý court leadership, after quelling the civil warfare that followed the collapse of the short-lived Former Lê Dynasty (980-1009), faced very little domestic unrest. The early Lý emperors could turn their attention to the direct control of Giao Chi's southern and northern frontiers.<sup>353</sup> In the example of Lý Phật Mã (Lý Thái Tông, r.1028-54), the ruler married his daughter the princess Bình Dương 平陽 to a powerful border official to support good relations. Marriage alliances between emperors and foreign rulers were practiced in the past in China as well. However, the Việt court was not firming up ties with neighboring kingdoms. Rather, it was strengthening domestic stability by

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<sup>352</sup> Nguyễn Ngọc Huy, "Limits on State Power in Traditional China and Vietnam" in *Vietnam Form 6* (Summer-Fall 1985), p. 26. Hodgkin, Thomas, *Vietnam: The Revolutionary Path* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), p. 35.

<sup>353</sup> Differences between the two borders must also be noted. Hoàng Xuân Hãn contends that the southern border between Giao Chi and Champa remained relatively calm for several reasons. First, the Việt and Cham people were the same ethnically, and both societies were primarily agricultural. Secondly, the border was clearly defined and was located on a broad plain. Thirdly, the intensive amount of trade between the two kingdoms mitigated tensions that might have led to greater border conflict. On the other hand, the northern frontier involved relations with many independent ethnic groups and these groups lived in the rugged mountain region that separated the flatlands on which the Việt and Song communities, on their respective sides of the imprecise borderline, were located. Cited in Hoàng Xuân Hãn, *Lý Thường Kiệt*, (Hà Nội, 1949) trans. by Li Guo 利國 in the periodical *South Asian and Southeast Asian materials (Nanya yu Dongnanya ziliao)* Vol. 79 (1988) No. 2, p. 183.

personalizing ties between the central court and its appointed border representatives. While the Chinese court granted titles and extended institutions as a way of laying claim to frontier authority, the Đại Cồ Việt court at the beginning of the Lý dynasty was elaborating on a more personal, more engaged policy of border relations.

To understand the local balance of power in the southwest border region, we must picture a model of power relations that predates the imposition of Chinese imperial institutions. For example, Nùng Trí Cao's "home," the region along the Bằng River, consisted of nine semi-autonomous regions of various sizes, called *po* or *bu* 布.<sup>354</sup> Historians of Tai-speaking societies on the pre-modern Southeast Asian Mainland refer to these communities as *muang*.<sup>355</sup> When one of these *po* lost its leader, the other regions would gather together in a "competition," from which a new strongman displaying leadership qualities would emerge.<sup>356</sup> While this position could be considered hereditary, the leading family had to maintain their stature as powerful and effective leaders, or they would face further challenges from their neighbors. Another historian studying the southwest border Chieftaincy system in place during the later Ming period has compared the network of relations between these regions to

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<sup>354</sup> During the early 11th century, the names given these regions were Słóc, Ngàn, Dái, Lài, Nướng, Má, Héc, Ngá, and Sảng. this information was cited in a conference paper by Vương Hùng, "The Grand Guardian Nùng Trí Cao: Historical Texts, Public Opinion, Physical Evidence, and Thoughts (*Thái Bảo Nông Trí Cao: sử sách, bia miệng, chứng tích và suy nghĩ*)" presented in *Nùng Trí Cao: the Annals of a Meeting for Scientific Study (Nùng Trí Cao: kỷ yếu hội thảo khoa học)*, (Cao Bằng: Sở Văn hóa thông tin, 1995), pp. 12-13.

<sup>355</sup> Please see David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: a Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 7-9

<sup>356</sup> Vương Hùng, *Thái bảo Nông Trí Cao*, p. 13.

the feudal system of the Warring States period. The scholar made this conclusion after examining the autonomous nature of the smaller political units and the harsh manner in which larger chiefdoms preyed on their smaller neighbors.<sup>357</sup> This competition between chiefdoms was recorded as early as the Tang dynasty, when the Wei, Huang, Zhou, and Nùng clans would often invade each other's territory. Even before the Song period, when Nùng leaders perceived that the opportunity for affirming their local preeminence had arrived, they acted in a manner consistent with the prevailing system of indicators of political power. The Chinese system of titles and appointments wielded authority beyond the immediate region in which the Nùng lived, but the clan required local symbols of power to protect themselves at home.

According to Chinese and Việt court historians, these border groups had a penchant for rebellion, even after the central courts had established more direct control. The source of continuing conflict may actually be found in the frontier's own political order. Writing about the pre-modern *tusi* 土司 system of China's northwest border, Owen Lattimore notes: "The new character of authority (of border chiefdoms) seems to be directly related to the function of the chief as representative of his tribe, recognized by the Chinese in order to provide institutions and conventions for the coexistence of the Chinese community and the tribal communities... In this way the hereditary principle is strengthened and a family of chiefs may come to have a vested interest in perpetuating the subordination of the people as a whole, in order to sustain

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<sup>357</sup> Leo Shin, "Contracting Chieftaincy," p.16.

its own authority. A status of this kind is quite compatible with occasional leadership of tribal insurrections against the dominant people."<sup>358</sup> These local hereditary positions were created to fit within a framework of Chinese institutional order, but these positions also produced opportunities for expanding and exploiting power by the same individuals charged with their administration.

The Nùng people of Quảng Nguyên Prefecture traditionally owed their loyalty to the Sino-Việt elite who had governed the An Nam Protectorate during the Tang dynasty. By the early Song dynasty, Nùng leaders were in charge of four administrative units (*dao*) once part of the Tang's *jimi* system; Anping, Wuke (or Vũ Lạc), Zhongliang, and Qiyuan (or Quảng Nguyên) Prefectures.<sup>359</sup> By the early 11th century, the Bằng River Valley, southeast of the modern city of Cao Bằng, had been divided into the above-mentioned nine administrative po, each of which was led by locally appointed officials.<sup>360</sup> The region of steep mountains and valleys in which the Nùng clan lived was known for its gold and cinnabar, although the people lived primarily from agricultural production. Settlements were in villages along the Bằng River, in connected valleys, and at higher altitudes along mountain slopes. Although

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<sup>358</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Studies in frontier History: Collected Papers 1928-1958*, (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1962), p. 476.

<sup>359</sup> Kawahara, Masahiro, "Nong Zhigao de panluan he Jiaozhi de guanxi" in *Guoli piance kuan kan* Vol. 1 No. 4 December 1972, p. 136.

<sup>360</sup> Mr. Hùng, the former assistant Director of the Cao Bằng provincial Bureau of Culture and information (Sở Văn hóa thông tin), makes many interesting comments regarding discrepancies between the historical record and local folklore surrounding the lives of Nùng Trí Cao and his family Nùng Tôn Phúc. However, many of his most exciting points are supported by very little accompanying evidence.

the village settlements were secluded from one another, interaction with other native groups, and later with Han settlers, was common. Moreover, even with the decline of the Tang and the resulting dissolution of direct northern court control in the region, the Nùng continued to accept the patronage of absent rulers, both from the north and from the Việt region, who claimed nominal control of border region.

However, there has long been a wide range of opinions on both sides of the Sino-Việt border regarding sovereignty and court responsibility in this region.<sup>361</sup> Song period reports depict the Nùng clan as living in a region under the administrative control of Giao Chỉ, although many accounts also mention that the tributary kingdom was in turn obligated to follow the leadership of the Chinese court. The Song statesman, Sima Guang, wrote that "(the rebel leader) Nùng Trí Cao followed generations of local leaders in Quảng Nguyên Prefecture, a region that later belonged to Giao Chỉ." Another Song official, Yu Qing, who had extensive personal involvement in border disputes, noted that "the rebel's (Nùng Trí Cao) 'lair' was called Quảng Nguyên, a petty dependent state (*fu yong*) of Giao Chỉ."<sup>362</sup> Finally, Chen

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<sup>361</sup> A notion of sovereignty most familiar to Western readers is one that describes supreme and independent political authority. However, this definition does not fully describe the patterns of relations that existed between the pre-modern mainland Southeast Asian societies on China's southwestern frontier. A more accurate term might be "shared sovereignty" with which a less powerful kingdom might establish tributary relations with two overlords, without undermining the regional authority of either of these larger kingdoms. For an interesting discussion of these alternative forms of inter-kingdom relations in Southeast Asia, the reader may refer to Thongchai Winichakul's *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1994), pp. 81-94.

<sup>362</sup> The term used by Yu Qing, *fu yong*, refers any petty state in ancient China, which did not warrant the privilege of gaining official audience with the leader of the ruling house. This ancient system had some influence on the Song court's response to the Nong's various requests for the sanctioned status of

Zhun's early 13th-century text *Huangchao piannian gangmu beiyao* contains this comment from 9/1049; "In the southwestern corner of Yongzhou there is Guangyuanzhou (Quảng Nguyên Prefecture). In name, it was said to be a *loose rein* region under Yongzhou (therefore, Song) administration, when actually its inhabitants were in the service of Giao Chỉ."<sup>363</sup> The early Song court placed the Nùng clan's home region under Việt joint sovereignty, which was likely another way of imposing indirect control through a tributary neighbor without the need to make a direct investment military personnel or resources in the region.

Conventional Vietnamese accounts describe the Nùng clan as residing under Việt authority. The description given by the exiled official Lê Tác in his history of pre-modern Vietnam *An Nam Chí Lược* 安南志略 (1278) is very clear on this matter; "Nùng Trí Cao was from Quảng Nguyên Prefecture. Before him there was Toàn Phúc 全福 who administered Thảng Do 黨猶 Prefecture and his younger brother Toàn Lộc 全祿 who administered Vạn Nhai 萬崖 Prefecture. Their service and labor were all performed for the benefit of Giao Chỉ."<sup>364</sup> Thongchai Winichakul writes that the sovereignty of premodern Southeast Asian states were "multiple and capable of being

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*neifu*, "interior dependency." Above quotations cited in Kawahara, Masahiro, "Nong Zhigao de panluan he Jiaozhi de guanxi" in *Guoli piance kuan kan* Vol. 1 No. 4 December 1972, p. 83.

<sup>363</sup> Chen, Jun, *Huangchao piannian gangmu beiyao*, *juan* 14. Cited in Kawahara, Masahiro, "Nong Zhigao de panluan he Jiaozhi de guanxi," p. 84.

<sup>364</sup> Lê, Tác, *An Nam Chí Lược*, (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995), p. 359. Another useful edition of this text was edited and translated into modern Vietnamese by "The committee for the translation of Vietnamese Historical Sources" at the university of Hue (1961). Both editions refer to Nùng Trí Cao's father as Nùng Toàn Phúc, whereas nearly all other sources use the name Nùng Tôn Phúc 依存福. Moreover,

shared- one for its own ruler, another for its overlord- not in terms of a divided sovereignty but rather a sovereignty of hierarchical layers."<sup>365</sup> Such a model of relations could be applied to the kind of ties maintained by the Nùng and other frontier communities with the Đại Cồ Việt court at Thăng Long. However, this model doesn't appear to extend north of the frontier region. When Nùng Trí Cao and his mother would later lead a revolt to establish the *Great Succession* 大歷 Kingdom, Vietnamese records told how Trí Cao was captured, pardoned by the emperor, and eventually placed in charge of Quảng Nguyên Prefecture.<sup>366</sup> There was no mention of the Song presence in the region, nor was there any suggestion that the Chinese had any influence over this appointment. The Northern Song historian Sima Guang describes how Trí Cao came from a family that had for generations served the Giao Chỉ rulers as the military commissioner (*jiedushi*) of Quảng Nguyên Prefecture.<sup>367</sup> During the early Song period, there seems to be a general agreement on both sides of the border that this territory fell entirely within the Việt domain. However, the purposes for establishing Việt authority stem from very different conceptions of local responsibility.

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other sources reveal, as conclusively as is possible with such ancient texts, that the leader of Vạn Nhai Prefecture was Nùng Tôn Lộc, Tôn Phúc's cousin.

<sup>365</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, p. 88.

<sup>366</sup> Lê, Tác, *An Nam Chí Lược*, p. 359.

<sup>367</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén*, 13: 256.

### The Wild Frontier

The incident involving Trần Công Vinh's group fit a pattern of unrest in the Sino-Việt border region, resulting from the growing local influence of the Thăng Long court. In early 1029, Phật Mã had attempted to pacify the border region with an arranged marriage between his daughter the princess Bình Dương 平陽 and the local head of frontier Lạng Châu 諒州 Prefecture and the Trần 申 clan, Trần Thiệu Thái 申紹泰.<sup>368</sup> Shortly after the marriage alliance was announced, Giáp Đăn Nãi 但乃甲, leader of nearby Aì Châu 愛州 prefecture, revolted. Phật Mã personally led the expedition to put down the revolt and capture of its leader. When the frontier prefecture of Hoan Châu 驩州 rebelled in early 1030, and Đinh Nguyên 定源 and Trê Nguyên 源 rose up in rebellion in 1033, Phật Mã launched punitive campaigns to suppress these revolts. Trần Công Vinh 's rebellion seems to have been a continuation of these border struggles, and may be distinguished only by the fact that Công Vinh sought Chinese support of his challenge to Lý authority. Moreover, as an active rival of Trần Công Vinh 's clan, Trần Thiệu Thái's alliance with Thăng Long likely also contributed to Công Vinh's revolt and that border leader's overture to the Song court.

By 1034, the Đại Cồ Việt ruler appears to have decided to make a stronger display as regional leader with an imperial image. In the spring of 1034, Phật Mã

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<sup>368</sup> Anonymous, Việt sử lược 越史略 (hereafter known as *VSL*) (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936), *juan* 2: 29.

adopted a new reign title *Thông thủy* 通瑞 to acknowledge his military victories, as well as the appearance of various auspicious signs around the palace compound. He then issued the edict that all officials should present memorials formally before his throne, and that they should convene in a hall he designated “the imperial court 朝庭.”<sup>369</sup> The Việt ruler further tested his authority at court a year later by promoting a favorite concubine to imperial status as Empress *Thiên Cảm* 天感. When dissent over this change in the imperial household erupted in as another rebellion in *Ài Châu* prefecture, *Phật Mã* swiftly crushed his opposition. Keith Taylor has written that “[p]owerful regional clans were loyal to the Lý not because Lý officials could enforce compliance but because they believed in the Lý kings.”<sup>370</sup> This statement is certainly true of the relationship of rulers to their subjects in the dynastic histories later constructed by Vietnamese chroniclers, who included the supernatural reactions to each major achievement by the early Lý rulers. However, numerous hegemonic displays of power by the ruling house are evidence that Lý were required to deal harshly at times with challengers beyond the capital city.

During the same year that *Phật Mã* attempt to spread his imperial presence regionally, he pursued his obligations as a tributary vassal of the Chinese court. In the seventh month of 1034, the local leader from *Hoan Châu* brought “an exotic beast” to

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<sup>369</sup> *VSL* 2: 29.

the Việt court at Thăng Long. During the same month Phật Mã dispatched envoys Trần Ứng Kỳ 陳應機 and Vương Duy Khánh 王文慶 to the Song court.<sup>371</sup> That autumn, another Việt mission arrived in Kaifeng bringing tamed elephants as tribute items. The Song court responded by presenting the delegation with a copy of the Buddhist *Tripitika* 大藏經. The acceptance of this text came at a time when Phật Mã was increasing his own patronage of local Buddhist sects. Tribute relations between the Chinese and Việt courts preceded unchanged during this period of local expansion, and stable tributary relationships, both from Kaifeng to Thăng Long and Thăng Long to its frontier allies, played important parts in the laying of a strong foundation for Phật Mã's supreme authority.

By late 1036, however, unrest in the vicinity of the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom came to the attention of the Chinese court when violence spilled over the border. In the fall of 1036 inhabitants of Giáp Đông 甲洞, Lượng Châu 諒州, Tô Mậu 蘇茂, Quảng Nguyên 廣源, Đan Ba 丹波, Bình Nguyên 平原, Đô Kim 都金, and Thường Tân 常新, all within the Lâm Tây 臨西 administrative circuit, revolted. The insurrection eventually crossed into Song territory at Siling 思陵, Xiping 西平, and Shixi 石西, all sub-prefectures within Yongzhou 邕州 Prefecture. Rebels reportedly robbed both indigenous inhabitants and Chinese settlers of horses and cattle, and burned their

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<sup>370</sup> Keith Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11<sup>th</sup> Century Vietnam" in David Marr and A.C. Milner (eds.) *Southeast Asia in the 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 169-70.

homes before returning to the Việt side of the border. Upon hearing of these attacks, the Chinese court held the Việt court responsible for a lack of regional supervision; the Song emperor officially admonished Lý Phật Mã, demanding that the perpetrators be attacked and captured.<sup>372</sup>

The Việt leader did not require much encouragement to reach his direct control into this border region. On February 17, 1037, Lý Phật Mã and his son the Phụng Kiên 奉乾 prince, personally led a military expedition to Lâm Tây. Phật Mã had left his other son and heir-apparent Lý Nhật Tôn, the Khai Hoàng 開皇 prince, in charge of affairs at court. The court military quickly subdued the rebel force, and by the third month the troops had returned to the capital. The Đại Cồ Việt ruler then ordered the imperial garrison at Nghệ An 義安 prefecture to take control of fifty local storehouses, including Tư Thành 資成, Lợi Nhân 利人, and Vĩnh Phong 永豐.<sup>373</sup> In the process of responding to the Song edict, the Lý court did not hesitate to extend their direct control of the area's resources. This quest for power consolidation would directly influence the development of events in the next large-scale disturbance.

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<sup>371</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 225.

<sup>372</sup> Cited in Ngô Thì Sĩ 吳時仕, *A Preliminary Compilation of the History of Đại Việt* (Đại Việt sử ký tiền biên 大越史記前編) (cited hereafter as *DVSKTB*), Cảnh Thịnh 8 (1800) from the Viện Hán Nôm holdings #A. 2/1-7, pp. 30A-30B. Interestingly, the *DVSKTT* (1993) account, based on the earliest available edition of the Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư, makes no comments on the Song emperor's response to the rebellion or the Việt acceptance of responsibility. This account moves directly from an account of the unrest to an account of the Việt emperor's expedition.

<sup>373</sup> Ngô Thì Sĩ, *DVSKTB*, p. 30B. Also in *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 121.

The Việt court's early attempts to spread its authority into the border region were largely uncontested by the Chinese court. In fact, they were likely appreciated; the Chinese emperor had other interests in the region. For example, on 1/8/1039, Emperor Renzong granted Phật Mã the title *King of Southern Pacified Region* 南平王, among three other titles that the Chinese emperor granted that day.<sup>374</sup> The emperor did this to reward loyal frontier officials, but his actions were not motivated by specific events. One month earlier, he had ordered that the inhabitants of Yi 宜 and Rong 融 Prefectures be permitted to pay only half of their summer tax 夏稅, and that the indigenous 溪洞 inhabitants be wholly exempted.<sup>375</sup> The region had been plundered by a neighboring *Man* settlement, and the emperor was concerned about the economic stability of the affected communities. Emperor Renzong did not, however, send military aid on this occasion. The court likely regarded the title granted to Phật Mã as a reminder of the Việt ruler's position within the network of tributary relations and also as a request that the Việt leader keep a watchful eye on this weakened region and curtail the activities of any group who might wish to stir up trouble. Without a strong military presence along the southern frontier, the early Song court continued to turn defense and policing over to its local representative, presumed to be the vassal ruler in Thăng Long.

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<sup>374</sup> XZZTJCB 122: 2887.

<sup>375</sup> XZZTJCB 122: 2886.

### The Rise of Local Clans and the "Reign" of Nùng Dân Phú and Nùng Tồn Phúc

The Chinese court during the early Song focused on the consolidation of civil authority, building on practices successfully implemented at the height of Tang dynastic power. To this end, the Song court followed the subjugation of its leading southern rival, the Nan Han 南漢 court, in 971 by recognizing and seeking the loyalty of local leaders along the Southwest frontier. Leaders who approached the court with requests for “Interior Dependency” 內附 status were awarded with a variety of honorific titles from antiquity. The early Song court at this time offered specific titles to demonstrably loyal members of the Zhuang border community. On July 10th, 974, the Grotto Militia Leader 溪洞酋帥 of Nandan 南丹 Aboriginal Prefecture, Mo Hongyan 莫洪燕, sought “Interior Dependency” status from the Song court.<sup>376</sup> The *XZZTJCB* suggests that Mo first proclaimed himself Military Governor 節度使 of his region, and then sent his lieutenant 牙校 Chen Shaogui 陳紹規 to establish tribute relations with the Chinese court.<sup>377</sup> The first Song emperor Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 reportedly granted Mo the title Regional Inspector 刺史.<sup>378</sup> The Mo clan continued to receive this title for several generations, maintaining their position of leadership in the region. Leaders of the border region saw security and stability in the establishment of tributary ties with the Chinese court, placating a powerful potential adversary while

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<sup>376</sup> *Songshi* 3: 41. Nandan is located at the site of the modern-day city of Nandan in northern Guangxi.

<sup>377</sup> *XZZTJCB* 15: 321.

<sup>378</sup> Li Ganfen notes this fact in the *Zhuang Encyclopedic Dictionary* 壯族百科辭典 (Nanning: Nanning Renmin, 1993), p. 650.

securing support for their own local expansion. Meanwhile, Song officials measured the depth and breadth of the empire's influence by the number of tributary titles granted and number of tribute missions received at court.

In 976, at a time when the Southern Tang had just fallen to Song forces and the newly enthroned Taizong emperor had announced that the border policy would continue to follow ancient precedents,<sup>379</sup> Mo sent another envoy with tribute and a request for an imperial seal to confirm Mo's appointment. The emperor ordered that this seal be carved and given to the tribute mission.<sup>380</sup> Mo's position was thus made hereditary, marking the beginning of the Mo clan's administration of Nandan Prefecture for future generations. Moreover, with court patronage, the Mo clan expanded their territorial reach and economic control as cattle herdsman in their region, and even commanded a local militia of sixty men. While Mo gained stature and power through his appointment, he also was beholden to the Song court. Mo's indebtedness was clearly marked by his offering of one hundred *liang* of silver in 980, probably as a part of a group of 734 local leaders from the southwest brought tribute and prized horses to the Chinese on the eve of an attempted invasion of the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom. Ample textual evidence provides a clear picture of the Mo clan's rise

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<sup>379</sup> In a court debate in his first days of rule, Taizong addressed his Grand Councilor 宰相 Bi Juzheng 薛居正, saying, "Border defense is important, and many issues have become increasingly grave. We ought to understand the matters according to the precept of former emperors, as these methods cannot be easily changes." *XZZTJCB* 17: 382.

<sup>380</sup> *Songshi* 494: 14199.

to local prominence through Song court patronage in Guangxi; however, their case was not exceptional. The Nùng clan took a similar path to power.

Song Taizong also bestowed favor on the Nùng leadership, when this clan had succeeded the Hoàng clan as the dominant political presence in the Left and Right River 左右江 Region. Given the strategic location of this region amid the mountains bordering on territory claimed by the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom, the Chinese emperor was wise to gain its leaders' loyalty. In early 977, a memorial from the Yongzhou 邕州 Garrison reported that the aboriginal chieftain 蠻酋 of Quảng Nguyên 廣源 Prefecture,<sup>381</sup> the “Peaceful and Generous” 坦綽 leader Nùng Dân Phú 農民富 (Nùng Trí Cao's grandfather) had already established himself as the leader of a po of ten neighboring villages, after gaining the support of the Southern Han (907-971) court.<sup>382</sup> Authorities at the Yongzhou 邕州 Garrison recommended that the Song court ask for Dân Phú's lands by imperial decree, and grant the local leader “Interior Dependency” status in return for the payment of tribute and taxes. The emperor decreed that Dân Phú receive the title of acting Minister of Works 司空 and “Grand Master of Splendid Happiness Bearing the Golden Pocket with Purple Trimming” 金紫光錄大夫.<sup>383</sup> The court assigned Xu Dao 徐道, Transport

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<sup>381</sup> Quảng Nguyên 廣源 Prefecture refers to the “loose rein” 羈縻 aboriginal prefecture, which occupied an area near the modern border between southern Guangxi and Vietnam's Cao Bằng province.

<sup>382</sup> XZZTJCB 18: 395.

<sup>383</sup> The *Songshi* account also includes the titles Censor-in-Chief 御史大夫 and “Supreme Pillar of the State” 上柱國. See *Songshi* 4: 55. The *Songhuiyao* account adds the honorific title “Grand Master of

Commissioner of Guangzhou, the task of traveling to Dân Phú's home region to confer the title. These titles were much too grand to hold any specific meaning for this local leader. However, the Chinese court wished to make its mark in this far-flung territory. As mentioned earlier, the Song leadership granted nominal ranking to local leaders who joined Chinese forces in the ultimately unsuccessful assault on Lê Hoàn's forces in 980. Granting lofty titles to this local leader may well have been an effort to instill allegiance to the Song throne in those persons who actually wielded authority in this distant region.

The next references in the historical record to the Nùng clan describe Trí Cao's father Nùng Tôn Phúc 儂存福.<sup>384</sup> The earliest Vietnamese source notes that Tôn Phúc was given the authority to rule Thảng Do 黨猶 Prefecture, while his younger brother Toàn Lộc was in charge of Vạn Nhai 萬涯 Prefecture and his wife's brother was put in charge of Vũ Lặc 武勒 Prefecture.<sup>385</sup> Tôn Phúc reportedly became extremely wealthy through local trade.<sup>386</sup> His citadel's location on the banks of the Bằng River suggests that he had managed to capitalize on a placement of his power base along the region's main trading artery. The control of river traffic was likely Tôn

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Splendid Happiness Bearing the Golden Pocket with Purple Trimming." Cited in Huang Xianfan, *Nong Zhigao*, p. 7.

<sup>384</sup> There are references to both Nùng Tôn Phúc 儂存福 and Toàn Phúc 全福. A comparison of relevant passages from a variety of sources leads me to conclude that these two names refer to the same individual, and that Nùng Tôn Phúc is the correct name.

<sup>385</sup> *VSL* 1: 30.

<sup>386</sup> Vương Hùng, *Thái bảo Nùng Trí Cao*, p. 13.

Phúc's method for extracting the greatest material benefit from his political command. Sima Guang also notes that Quảng Nguyên Prefecture was a great source of gold, and that this natural wealth had made Nùng Tồn Phúc a rich man. However, according to Sima Guang, Tồn Phúc owed his prosperity to China's benevolent rule, as did all the local people under him. Moreover, it was China's leadership and Nùng Tồn Phúc's prosperity that Giao Chỉ detested, and the reason why the Việt ruler sent troops to invade Tồn Phúc's territory and capture the chieftain. Sima Guang continues with his sharp criticism for the Việt leadership. He writes that "Giao Chỉ extracted taxes without satiation, and the people of the local prefectures (*zhou*) suffered for it."<sup>387</sup>

In the 12th month of 1038, Tồn Phúc made his bid to give the title *Kingdom of Longevity* 長生國<sup>388</sup> to the prefectures under his control and to name himself the "Luminous and Sage Emperor 昭圣皇帝. Tồn Phúc gave his son Nùng Trí Thông 儂智聰 the military title *King of the Southern Command* 南衙王. According to one Vietnamese source, Nùng Tồn Phúc also named his wife as the *Enlightened and Virtuous Empress Dowager* 明德皇后.<sup>389</sup> He then broke off official ties with the Việt Lý court. The suggestion that his family's regional position could be elevated to that of an imperial household brought it into direct conflict with the authority of both

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<sup>387</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén* 13: 256-57.

<sup>388</sup> Some Chinese sources record that Nùng Tồn Phúc gave his new state the Title "Kingdom of the Long Ones 長其國," and not "Kingdom of Longevity 長生國." This appears to be a transcription error.

the Song and Lý courts, and constituted a direct challenge to their rule. At this time he was the region's most powerful man. However, political authority coupled with military might, and not the accumulation of material wealth, was the measure for individual success in Tôn Phúc's day.

If we accept that Tôn Phúc really made these claims to imperial power, we must look at the titles that he produced to define his rule. Contained within Tôn Phúc's own chosen title was the character *zhao* 昭. *Zhao* was a term in common usage among the Tai-speaking peoples of South and Central Mainland Southeast Asia to denote "chief," "king," or "prince" in the local political order.<sup>390</sup> This title was referred to the territory claimed by the local ruler, as well as the populations under his control. There are a number of variants in the Chinese historical record for this title *zhao* 昭, including *zhao* 招, *zhao* 召 and *zhao* 詔 incorporated into the name of the Nan Zhao kingdom. Moreover the character for "king/prince 王" and "august one/emperor 皇" are homophones (*huǒng*) in the modern Tai "Nùng" dialect spoken in Tôn Phúc's home region. Here we see the possibility for multiple meanings in the titles that the Nùng leader adopted. Because these claims followed a bloody regional struggle, in which Tôn Phúc's rivals were murdered, he could quite easily have

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<sup>389</sup> Ngô Sĩ Liên, *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư*, 1697 wood block edition, Vol. 4, 25b (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản khoa học xã hội, 1993), p. 121.

<sup>390</sup> Cited in Shen Jingfang, "Term Zhao and the Theories in Relation to It" in *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Thai Studies* Vol. II (Kunming: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 211-13. For another very useful discussion of the kingly title, see Shih-chung Hsieh, "On the

claimed regional control with these titles, and then turned to the Song court for protection from his closest rivals, including the Lý ruler in Thăng Long. However, most sources record that Tôn Phúc's actions angered the Đại Cồ Việt leadership enough to warrant his capture and execution. Therefore, we have no way of uncovering concrete evidence of his original intent. We can only surmise that his actions had a lasting influence on his son's own behavior.

Nùng Tôn Phúc's actions were not without historical precedent. On one hand, there were the examples of past kingdoms that had sprung up in South China during two major periods of dynastic disunion, the period of Northern and Southern Courts 南北朝 (222-589) and the Five Dynasties Period 五代 (907-979). On the other hand, perhaps more importantly, there was the example of the southwestern Tai-speaking Nanchao 南詔 Kingdom, founded by a local chieftain in the 7th century. This kingdom had managed to repel initial attacks by the Tang court, and it thrived in its position along the southwestern frontier of the Tang empire. The kingdom continued to maintain its tributary status as the Dali kingdom in the Nùng leader's own day. The successes of Nanchao and Dali could certainly have encouraged the Nùng clan to assert their own claim to regional independence.

The Chinese official version of events surrounding Tôn Phúc's revolt is quite different. Sima Guang notes that Nùng Tôn Phúc gained his position by killing Quảng

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Dynamics of Tai/Dai-Lue Ethnicity: an Ethnohistorical Analysis" in Stevan Harrell (ed.), *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), pp. 303-07.

Nguyễn's leading strongman and taking his territory. When the Chinese Tianzhou prefect requested assistance, the serving Chinese administrator of Yongzhou was afraid to become involved in the situation and declined to offer assistance.<sup>391</sup> This indictment of local officials stems from Sima Guang's own conviction that frontier matters ought to be managed by a dependable military elite with the Chinese empire's best interests in mind.<sup>392</sup>

The immediate response of the Việt court to Nùng Tôn Phúc's actions was swift and unwavering. Chinese court scholars once argued that, in the process of imposing this order, the Đại Cồ Việt court's severe treatment of the border communities led to further unrest, and that the local situation only worsened.<sup>393</sup> More likely, it was Lý Phật Mã's initial unwillingness to eliminate the Nùng clan completely, hoping that the court could retain their loyalty that contributed to the crisis. In any case, this episode was followed by a series of rebellions that left a lasting imprint on Sino-Việt relations for years to come.

This balancing of roles and responsibilities between acting as a tributary king in the Chinese context and ruling with imperial authority in the Việt context is echoed in a Vietnamese account of Lý Phật Mã's capture and execution of Nùng Tôn Phúc.

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<sup>391</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwen*, 3: 270.

<sup>392</sup> This understanding of Sima Guang's position comes from my reading of Anthony Sariti's short article "A Note on Foreign Policy Decision-making in the Northern Sung in *Bulletin of Sung-Yuan Studies* 8 (Oct. 1973), p.6.

<sup>393</sup> See Sima Guang's account of the rebellions in his personal collection *Sushui jiwen (Notes from Su River)*, *juan* 13.

Following Tôn Phúc 's capture and subsequent execution in 1039, Phật Mã issued his edict *Imperial Mandate to Pacify the Nùng* 平儂詔, in which the ruler declared:

Once I had come to possess all under Heaven 天下, all of my generals, ministers, and officials led a great celebration. From all foreign lands and special regions there was no one who did not attend. Furthermore, according to precedent, the Nùng clan for generations has protected our frontier, and they have frequently come to court bearing tribute. Today Tôn Phúc is displaying a great arrogance by illicitly adopting a reign title and by issuing edicts. His followers are gathering like swarms of gadflies, and he has spread poisonous ideas among the border people. With Heaven's authority, I will strike out and punish him. I have made five members of that group, Tôn Phúc among them, outlaws, and I will have them beheaded at the capital.<sup>394</sup>

This claim of heavenly right to resort to hegemonic action for greater good sounds much like the type of world order promoted by Chinese rulers. Since the founding of an independent Việt state, the Lý rulers were the first local leaders to project this vision on their realm. Claiming universal authority and Heaven's sanction for his actions places Lý Phật Mã at the same level of power as a Chinese emperor. To appeal to his own subjects, the Việt ruler is prepared to reach beyond the Song's conferred tributary vassal status to claim imperial omnipotence.

In the eyes of Lý Phật Mã, Nùng Tôn Phúc's claims to regional control over the Sino-Việt frontier violated the bond of personal loyalty that connected him with the Lý ruling house. Moreover, Tôn Phúc 's claim to the status of *guo wang* and his use of a separate reign title echoed similar claims that had been made by the Đại Cồ Việt 大瞿越 kingdom's founder, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領 (r. 968-980). Đinh Bộ Lĩnh had

himself risen politically from the status of a local chieftain under the Southern Han at the end of the Five dynasties period. He eventually broke free from this arrangement with the establishment of the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom, which the Chinese refused to recognize, and the announcement of a new reign period titled "Great Peace (thái bình 太平)." Such similarities certainly must have seemed disquieting to the current leadership in Thăng Long.

In the *DVSKTT* account, the execution of the rebels is followed by several events seeming to confirm the correctness of Phật Mã's actions. First, a Cham prince and four envoys approached the throne with the request to be annexed (*fi*). Such action mirrors the attempt made by Trần Công Vinh to join the Song, and demonstrates the awe and high esteem Phật Mã's neighbors held for the Việt ruler. Then there are accounts of tribute presented to Phật Mã as further evidence of the Đại Cồ Việt's heightened authority. It is noted that "in 5/1039, in Quảng Nguyên Prefecture's Vũ Kiến 武建 "aboriginal region" there had been discovered a chunk of raw gold that weighed 112 *liang*. Meanwhile, officials from Lộng Thạch 弄石 and Định Biên 定邊 Districts in Liên 連 County memorialized the Việt throne, reporting that each of these areas had mined a surplus of silver."<sup>395</sup>

With this account describing the discovery of gold in the aftermath of Tôn Phúc's rebellion, the *DVSKTT* account has consciously addressed the same issues of

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<sup>394</sup> Cited in *Tho Van Ly-Tran* Volume One (Hà Nội: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1977), p. 245.

proper rulership that Lý Phật Mã himself had expressed in his edict to the court. When the realm is in order, the ruler will set the stage for prosperity throughout the land. The direct link between political stability and material abundance has its origin in the Chinese political tradition. The *DVSKTT* account suggests that if the Việt emperor considers the welfare of his people, just as China's rulers were exhorted to do, he will also gain the legitimacy of the sage kings. Pacifying the border regions is among these responsibilities to the people.

To reinforce this point, the text describes how in the 6<sup>th</sup> month Việt court officials petitioned the throne, requesting that the reign period's title be changed to "càn phù hữu đạo 乾符有道," which may be translated as "the sovereign's evidence that he retains the Way." The officials also made the request to present Lý Phật Mã with the eight-character honorific title "he who caused the gold to pour forth, silver to be produced, the Nùng people to be pacified, and the barbarians (*fan*) to be humbled."<sup>396</sup> The Việt officials' response is to extol the successes for their ruler, whose proper rule has brought peace and prosperity to his realm.

This praise makes no reference to any regional responsibility to a higher Chinese authority. These achievements are entirely the work of the Việt sovereign himself. At this point in the *DVSKTT* text, Lý Phật Mã's 1039 edict *An Appeal to All Officers for Action* 答群臣請進位號 is quoted:

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<sup>395</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 122.

<sup>396</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 228.

In the age of the ancient emperors, "the portrait of a perfect world was painted" and people did not rebel. They did not pillage and assemble their own militias. The people would only fold their arms in submission before the ruler, and thus he would order "all under Heaven." Under these conditions the stars and planets were not in disarray, thunder and rain were not out of control, birds and beasts could be tamed, the phoenix made an appearance, barbarians from the four directions were all treated as guests of the empire, and all *Man* came to be transformed. I (the emperor) do not know how to achieve these conditions! I have ignored my personal affairs, but instead have put the people's needs before my own. I rise early and retire late in the evening; it's as though I am crossing a great abyss. I do not yet know which *dao* patterns heaven and earth, nor do I know which *de* belonged to Yao and Shun.

Phật Mã may express frustration with his own performance of duties, but the context in which he describes these responsibilities is patterned on the legacy of ancient China's sage rulers. The Lý emperor continues:

Formerly, the Nùng rebels were pacified, Champa came to our court and asked to be annexed, the caves produced gold, and silver poured out from the ground. How do those who desire these conditions reach this level of achievement? We may find ourselves in a great crisis. I am extremely worried about this. Am I worthy enough to gain this fame and great respect? You officials must agree to stop (honoring me with these titles).<sup>397</sup>

Phật Mã associated the vanquishing of the rebels with the increased regional stature and wealth of his kingdom, which is linked to the proper ritual veneration of past sage kings. The Việt ruler alludes to the benefits to his own domain without referring to obligations to the Chinese court.

The *DVSKTT* account notes that, at this point, Lý Phật Mã's officials assured him that they would consent to follow his wishes. This passage is followed by

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<sup>397</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 228.

commentary from the 13<sup>th</sup> century historian Lê Văn Hưu, author of the now lost

*History of the Đại Việt* (Đại Việt sử ký 大越史記). As Văn Hưu noted:

The emperor Yao, the emperor Shun, Wen Wang, and Wu Wang all used one character to designate their reign periods. Moreover, they did not set forth their honorific titles. Later generations of emperors and kings were frequently boastful, and consequently there were those with titles of more than ten characters, describing their successes and virtue. However, until now there has not been a ruler who combined material resources and barbarian matters in his title. Thái Tông (Lý Phật Mã) received from his officials the eight-character title reading 'he who caused the gold to pour forth, silver to be produced, the Nùng clan to be pacified, and the barbarians (*fan*) to be humbled.' If one exaggerates one's stature, then one will certainly succumb to vulgar behavior. Thái Tông was not a learned man, and he did not know this. However, there were Confucian officials who promoted this idea by flattering his lordship, and so they cannot be said to be without blame.<sup>398</sup>

Lê Văn Hưu's commentary has much to say about his own ruling Trần emperors. By Văn Hưu's age, the Confucian legacy had its drawbacks, whether it led to boastful rulers or sycophantic officials. Nevertheless, Lê Văn Hưu links his comments to Lý Phật Mã's later difficulties with the Nùng rebels to illustrate this point of criticism.

Later Vietnamese histories became more vague on the question of sovereignty, perhaps because the purpose for these historians of settling the issue of regional responsibility was to delineate the outermost boundary of the Việt court's effective authority. By the 15th century, the events surrounding Nùng Tôn Phúc's rebellion found a place in the larger context of Sino-Việt relations. In the *DVSKTT*, the events

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<sup>398</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 229.

are set in the context of the Việt emperor's greater responsibility to his realm. The entry for 1039 begins with a description of Lý Phật Mã's 2<sup>nd</sup> month performance of agricultural rites. The *DVSKTT* notes that "Thái Tông (Lý Phật Mã) restored the ancient rites by performing the ritual plowing of the imperial fields in person. In this manner, he ruled 'All under Heaven,' addressing (Heaven) above him by worshipping at the ancestral temple, and addressing (Man) below him by leading the myriad common people. Ruling In this manner led to riches and prosperity (for the realm). This was beneficial indeed!"<sup>399</sup> This reference to the practice of this ancient imperial ritual of Chinese origin is followed by a reference to the rebellion, dated 12/1039: "In Quảng Nguyên, Nùng Tôn Phúc rebelled, and the Song granted (the Việt) emperor the title *King of Southern Pacified Region* 南平王." The next entry reads "in that same year the *Eastern Expedition King* 東征王 used his power and authority to wipe out (the rebels)."<sup>400</sup> By linking the events of the ritual plowing of his own lands and the suppression of banditry at the command of the Song court, the *DVSKTT* account reveals the interesting overlapping of spheres of authority that the Lý ruler had established to insure the survival of his kingdom.

Moreover, the significance of the joining of these two events would not be lost on a contemporary reader. The Việt emperor is first shown performing the universalistic role of linking the realm above (Heaven) to the realm below (Man). This is the very same position of authority claimed by the Chinese emperor, and any

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<sup>399</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 227

attempt to attribute this responsibility to both Chinese and Việt ruler anticipates the inherent tension in Sino-Việt relations. However, in a separate but related context, the Việt ruler is a *King of the Southern Pacified Region* within the Song political sphere, and he performs this duty with "kingly authority (*wang li*)." The Việt emperor, in the eyes of his people, is the universal ruler whose realm, "all under Heaven," is all that the Chinese notion also suggests. However, in contemporary Song political terms, the Việt ruler is a king among other kings, albeit one whose authority, granted by the Chinese court, extends to the pacification of regional conflict.

Regarding the Chinese court's willingness to leave Việt authorities in charge of the border region, this position was likely one of relative indifference to this frontier area. During the early Song, disturbances along China's northern border, generated by frayed relations with both the Liao and Xi Xia nomadic kingdoms, had occupied most of the court's attention. When Trần Công Vinh and Nùng Tôn Phúc led their local uprisings, the Song emperor Renzong showed little interest in taking direct action to quell the unrest. Instead, he relied on the historical precedent of delegating a frontier representative, in this case the ruler of Giao Chỉ, to perform such tasks. While threats to Song territory along the northern border involved militarily formidable foes and had a direct effect on Kaifeng's security, disturbances on the southern frontier were contained enough to be handled indirectly through the delegation of authority.

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<sup>400</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 2: 227.

This decision was further conditioned by the hierarchical order at the heart of the tributary relationship that the Song court had fostered with the Việt rulers. As a practice underlining the Song court's claim to be the region's central authority, Chinese rulers retained the privilege to grant special titles to subordinates for their services. The Song emperor Renzong ordered the Việt ruler Lý Phật Mã to call off his attack on Trần Công Vinh when such action appeared to supersede his imperial sanction. However, the Song's granting of the title *King of Southern Pacified Region* to Phật Mã signaled support for a defensive move against the Nùng clan rebels. The early Song court saw frontier stability as its prerogative, but saw the active policing of the Southwest as the responsibility of its tributary neighbor, the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom.

An important feature of political relations among the communities among the southwestern frontier was a nascent client-patron system of social intercourse. As Thongchai Winichakul writes, "in the indigenous Southeast Asian tradition, a subject was bound first and foremost to his lord rather than to a state."<sup>401</sup> This system has been described in the context of the early Thai kings, but it has applications to relations between leading clans in the Left and Right River Region and the Song and Đại Cồ Việt courts. This patron-client system involved the presentation of gifts as the central feature of a request for protection and patronage.<sup>402</sup> As a Thai historian notes,

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<sup>401</sup> Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, p. 164.

<sup>402</sup> Piyanart Bunnag, "Kinship and Patron-Client Systems in Thai Politics During the Early Ratanakosin Period" in *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Thai Studies* Vol. IV (Kunming: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990). p. 309.

“when a ‘Phu Noi (the Inferior)’ gave gifts (to) or performed services (for) a ‘Phu Yai (the Superior)’ and the (latter) gave favor, protection or assistance to him in return, then the ‘Phu Noi’ kept on doing so. (However), if the ‘Phu Yai’ didn’t do anything in return, the ‘Phu Noi’ could stop giving... services.”<sup>403</sup> This system of reciprocity differed from the Chinese system of tribute relations in that it was based on actions taken by each party, and not relationship that existed between them. Song Taizu, by accepting the tribute of the Nùng leader Nùng Dân Phú, saw the established relationship as hereditary and unconditional. This relationship was regulated with each presentation of tribute to the Chinese court; however, its position within the overall tributary hierarchy was left unchanged. From the Nùng leadership’s perspective, however, the presentation of tribute set up obligations for both parties. When the Nùng found themselves squeezed by an expanding Việt dominion to its south, and without the direct support of their Song “patron” to the north, they felt no obligation to temper their own bids for power.

### **Nùng Trí Cao’s Insurrection**

The series of rebellions led by Tôn Phúc's son Nùng Trí Cao (1025 -1055) forced the Song and Đại Cồ Việt courts to pay even greater attention to the effective regulation of the Sino-Việt frontier. In 1041, two years after his father and uncle's execution by Đại Cồ Việt troops, Nùng Trí Cao and his mother led forces to regain Thăng Do Prefecture. Thus began a series of attempts by Trí Cao and his mother to

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<sup>403</sup> Bunnag, “Kinship and Patron-Client Systems,” p. 309.

carve out another semi-autonomous polity in the frontier region. In 1042, at the age of 17, Trí Cao established his first kingdom with the title *Kingdom of the Great Age* (or *Great Succession*, following in his father's footsteps?) 大歷國.<sup>404</sup> For his efforts, Trí Cao was captured by Việt troops and held at Thăng Long for a period of several years. He was finally pardoned as a display of the devout Buddhist Lý Phật Mã's benevolence.

Sources remain silent until seven years later when in 1048 a militia under Nùng Trí Cao's command took control of the mountainous Andezhou Prefecture 安德州. A victorious Trí Cao proclaimed himself ruler of the *Kingdom of the Southern Heaven* 南天國 and adopted a new reign title *Auspicious Circumstances* 景瑞.<sup>405</sup> Following this announcement, the Việt court launched an attack on Trí Cao's stronghold, and succeeded only in relocating the Zhuang leader and his closest followers further north into Song territory. In his third attempt to gain regional recognition in 1052, Trí Cao not only proclaimed the establishment of a new polity *Kingdom of the Great South* 大南國, with the reign period *Inaugural Age* 啓歷, he also granted himself the title *Benevolent and Kind Emperor* 仁惠皇帝. In the spring

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<sup>404</sup> Jeffrey Barlow has suggested that Nung Trí Cao may have been declaring fealty to the Dali rulers with this choice of homophonous titles for his dominion. Please see Jeffrey Barlow, "The Zhuang Minority Peoples of the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier in the Song Period" in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18, No. 2 (September 1987), 256. In the modern Tai dialect spoken by the northern Vietnamese Nung community, 理 *lì* and 歷 *lìk* are not homophones; see F.M. Savina, *Dictionnaire Étymologique Français-Nùng-Chinois* (Hong Kong: La Société des missions étrangères, 1924), p. 470-71. However, this connection may exist through the Chinese characters themselves, and it deserves further examination.

<sup>405</sup> *Songshi* 495: 14215.

of 1052, Trí Cao ordered the burning of the villages under his control, and led 5000 of his subjects in a revolt that soon gained momentum and swept across the South China coast to Guangzhou.<sup>406</sup>

Within the year, Song imperial troops had routed the rebels, and Trí Cao had fled to the nearest independent kingdom founded by another highland society, the neighboring Dali大理 Kingdom. In official Chinese accounts, a wary Dali ruler executed Nùng Trí Cao. By popular local accounts, the rebel was offered escort into the northern Thai region, where his descendants continue to thrive today. Although the insurrection of Nùng Trí Cao ended in personal failure for the border leader, these acts of rebellion tested the Chinese and Việt courts, forcing the issue of local sovereignty to the forefront of the two courts' tributary relationship. Moreover, Trí Cao's attempts at state building drew from the same assortment of titles and symbols of authority available to the founders and early rulers of the independent Việt state. For these reasons, we have much to learn frontier management, local political identity, and tributary obligations from a close examination of the Nùng Trí Cao rebellion.

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<sup>406</sup> One possible reason for the Nùng clan's desire to continue his revolt is presented as dialogue actually attributed to Nùng Trí Cao, found in Sima Guang's writings. When Nùng Trí Cao, who had escaped with his mother, requested *neifu* status from the Song court, Chinese authorities rejected this request. Sima Guang contended that this is because the Chinese court feared losing the "heart" of the Việt court. Hearing of the court's decision, Nùng Trí Cao replied, "today I face the criminal acts of Giao Chi, and China once again will not annex my region. I have no way to endure this situation by myself, and so there is nothing to do but to rebel against it." Cited in Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén*, 13: 270. Here, Trí Cao appears to be completely aware of his difficult position in not being able to secure a patron for his tiny domain, leaving only the possibility of expanding his own territory to create greater security. However, the local chieftain's harsh condemnation of the Việt court may better reflect Sima Guang's own biases. One should read this passage of dialogue with that possibility in mind.

Regarding Trí Cao's adopted reign periods, the Sino-Việt border communities early on had adopted the Han calendar of "Heavenly Branches and Earthly Stems" 天干地支. However, these communities relied on their own separate calendars to measure periods between agricultural phases of the year. The Han practice measure political periods, while the local calendar measure the lives of the common people. The establishment of separate reign periods, of course, was an even greater political statement than merely claiming one's authority in a spatial sense. However, this claim resounded most loudly at the Chinese and Việt courts. Trí Cao was signaling this audience that great changes had been marked in his region.

Sima Guang held the Đại Cồ Việt court responsible for turning Nùng Trí Cao into a rebel. Sima Guang's version is as follows: "Trí Cao was crafty and difficult to control, and Giao Chỉ hated him. The Việt ruler sent troops to capture his father and to take him back to Giao Chỉ as a hostage. Trí Cao was powerless to do anything, and in that year his loss of gold and possessions was very great."<sup>407</sup> This account does not recognize material gifts to the Việt court as tributary obligations. Instead, from the vantagepoint of the Song central court, demands for such gifts verge on acts of thievery. As Sima Guang continues; "A long while passed, and his father died. Trí Cao was angry at the Giao Chỉ authorities. Moreover, he was afraid that their actions would finally lead to his ruin. So he rebelled against Giao Chỉ, crossed the river

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<sup>407</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén*, 13: 257.

(between China and Việt Nam), and took up residence in Andezhou 安德州 Prefecture. He then sent an envoy to the Yongzhou Garrison City to request that the Chinese court make him a minor official (*cishi* 刺史) by decree.<sup>408</sup> Because the court had heard that Trí Cao had rebelled against Giao Chỉ before arriving, they were afraid that the border would be disturbed, and so they did not allow this. Trí Cao became angry about this, and he thereafter often entered (our land) as a bandit."<sup>409</sup>

The Japanese scholar Araki Toshikazu makes the very interesting claim that Nùng Trí Cao's greatest motivation for carrying out his rebellion was his failure to gain court recognition as a successful *keju* 科舉 examination candidate.<sup>410</sup> Araki contends that Trí Cao had the opportunity (and the family resources) to take the *jieshi* 解試 prefectural exams at the Yongzhou prefectural seat several times during the 1041-1048 period.<sup>411</sup> However, Trí Cao's name was not forwarded to the *shengshi* 省試 metropolitan-level exams, due to his family history, Nùng Trí Cao's association with the Việt court, and his own reputation for rebellious behavior. These circumstances would explain Trí Cao's ability to attract the services of the Chinese *jinshi* 進士 scholars, Huang Wei 黃瑋 and Huang Shifu 黃师宓, from Guangzhou. Moreover, Nùng Trí Cao's reliance on the symbols and institutions of Chinese imperial

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<sup>408</sup> The Chinese court often granted this Title to local leaders within the *jimi* system.

<sup>409</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén* 13: 257.

<sup>410</sup> Araki Toshikazu, "Nung Chih-kao and the K'o-chu examinations" In *Acta Asiatica* (Tokyo) No. 50 (1986), pp. 73-94.

<sup>411</sup> Araki Toshikazu, "Nung Chih-kao," pp. 89-90.

rule demonstrated his acquired knowledge of this political tradition, knowledge that would be expected of any examination aspirant.

The evidence supporting Araki's claims points to an important new cultural influence the changing Song policy brought to the border region. Successive Song rulers extended access to the civil service examination system further and further into the empire's hinterland. By the Southern Song period, "the quota for candidates to be forwarded 解額" from the tiny Xidong 溪洞 district to the metropolitan exams offered spots for two exam-takers.<sup>412</sup> It is difficult to verify if similar conditions existed in Trí Cao's day, but the trend toward incorporating outlying districts in the empire-wide exam system started as early as the second Song ruler, the Taizong emperor's reign. Moreover, the same source describes the trade in books and writing materials at the open-air market established by the Hengshan 橫山 Garrison, a locale accessible to traders from the indigenous border communities as well as merchants coming up from the Đại Việt kingdom. There are accounts of Chinese paper and brushes being sold in the coastal market at Qinzhou to Việt region customers, "in quantities about which enough cannot be said."<sup>413</sup> There is even an account that the ink produced from the great pines of Guangxi's Rongzhou 容州 region was a local specialty, prized by buyers in the Việt region.<sup>414</sup> If such an active trade was evident

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<sup>412</sup> Zhou Qufei 周去非, *A Categorical Description of the Lingwai region 岭外代答 Siku juanshu* edition from the pre-modern collection *Nanfang caomu zhuang* (Shanghai: Guji, 1993), 4: 426.

<sup>413</sup> Zhou Qufei, *juan* 5: 433.

<sup>414</sup> Zhou Qufei, *juan* 6: 435.

during the Southern Song period, the reader could expect that there existed access to these materials during the earlier Song period as well. With reference to the exams, all of these materials must be present if candidate were to prepare effectively for the tests themselves.

The *DVSKTT* first mentions the initial stages of Nùng Trí Cao's rebellion in the context of Trí Cao's capture and subsequent pardoning by Lý Phật Mã.<sup>415</sup> This account then mentions how Phật Mã restored Quảng Nguyên Prefecture to its former position as dependency of Thăng Long. At this point in the text the episode is dropped. Trí Cao's "crime" was excused and he was allowed to return home. There is a sense in this account that the Việt court had established a Chinese-style political order by granting the Nùng clan the right to administer Quảng Nguyên in the name of the Lý ruler. The most important sign of authority Nùng Trí Cao received from the Lý court was the imperial seal offered to him following his capture and subsequent release by the court at Thăng Long. In an entry dated 9/1043, following the Việt ruler's comments on a possible expansion into Champa, it is recorded that "during the new moon of the 9<sup>th</sup> month, Lý Thái Tông (Lý Phật Mã) sent Ngụy Trung 魏徵 to Quảng Nguyên Prefecture to grant Nùng Trí Cao the seal of the capital, and to confer to him

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<sup>415</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 124.

the title of *Grand Guardian* (*taibao* 太保)<sup>416</sup>." The title of *Grand Guardian* indicated the highest level of court distinction.<sup>417</sup> Phật Mã likely conferred this title as an honorific position without specific official duties, considering the lack of regular communications between the central court and Nùng Trí Cao's home region. However, the Việt leader was actually following a practice established locally during the beginning of his reign when Phật Mã rewarded loyal officials who put down rebellions by three of his brothers when they contested Phật Mã's ascension to the throne. To his three leading supporters, Phật Mã granted the titles of the legendary Three Dukes 三公. Rather than cultivating institutional bonds with local leaders, the Lý ruler demanded personal loyalty from his subordinates, requiring annual visits to the court at Thăng Long to swear oaths of allegiance. In this light, the act of granting the title *Grand Guardian* through the gift of a court seal was likely an expression of the closer personal bond the Việt ruler wished to foster with this frontier commander, Nùng Trí

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<sup>416</sup> This title designated a very high ranking official in ancient China, ranked as a Feudal Lord (*zhuhou*) during the Zhou Dynasty and later given 1a status in the nine-rank system. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 480.

<sup>417</sup> The Title of "Grand Guardian (*tai bao* 太保)" has been used since the earliest period of Chinese history to designate a member of a distinguished group of court officials, known variously as the Three Preceptors 三師 or as the Three Dukes 三公. During the Zhou dynasty, the ruling house granted this position to members of the Feudal Lords 諸侯. During the late imperial period, the Title indicated an official ranking of 1a, the pinnacle of the official bureaucracy. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 401. The Title was significant as an honorific position, implying that its recipients must "guard and protect one's lord and to lead by relying on virtue (*de*) and propriety (*yi*)." The Title, as such, carried no inherent authority nor did it allude to any particular official responsibilities. This information was found in Xu Lianda, *Dictionary of Chinese Historical Official Titles* 中國歷代管制詞典 (Anhui: Anhui Jiaoyu, 1991), p. 140.

Cao. Relations between Trí Cao and the Lý court had been improving, following the Nùng leader's capture by imperial troops and his pardon and release by Phật Mã.<sup>418</sup>

At the end of the *DVSKTT* account, the historian Lê Văn Hưu has this commentary:

Years ago, Nùng Tôn Phúc revolted, adopted a reign title, founded a kingdom and established official posts. For this, Thái Tông punished Tôn Phúc, and banished his son Trí Cao. At this point in history Trí Cao again followed his father's misconduct, and his crimes were great indeed. Killing him could have been permitted. To strip Trí Cao of his rank and lower him to the level of a commoner could also have been permitted. (However,) Lý Thái Tông forgave Trí Cao of his crimes. To take possession of the region as a prefecture (*zhou*), Thái Tông granted Trí Cao the imperial seal and invested him as a *taibao*. By rewarding and punishing his subjects without following protocol, Thái Tông's behavior became the source of Quảng Nguyên's troubles. Nùng Trí Cao subsequently sent out troops, using the excuse of helping his neighbors. How can one allow tigers and rhinoceroses from strange regions to bite people, and then take one's time in saving those same people? The Buddhists show benevolence for the small people, while they neglect to observe the greater propriety required in managing the kingdom.<sup>419</sup>

His critical reference to "the Buddhists" reveals the fact that Văn Hưu's concerns stem from his own adherence to Confucian values, which had begun to wield a greater influence in Văn Hưu's day than they did during the reign of Lý Phật Mã.

Nùng Trí Cao's efforts may have inspired other disturbances in the region, adding to the worries of the distant Chinese court. Another member of the Zhuang

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<sup>418</sup> Araki Toshikaza is not as convincing in his argument that the Song court faulted Nùng Trí Cao for serving the Việt rulers. As we have noted earlier, the Chinese initially assumed that the Nùng clan owed their service to the Lý court. They could not have been surprised when Nùng Trí Cao was granted the *Grand Guardian* title by Lý Phật Mã. The Song court maintained its distance from Trí Cao, and ignored his gifts of tribute and requests for dependency status, because such requests circumvented the established boundaries of sovereign authority.

community, Qu Xifan 區希范, led his own rebellion against the local authorities in 1044. Qu, a resident of Fushui Prefecture, gathered his followers for an attack on the prefecture Garrison. During his rebellion, Qu also announced the establishment of a new kingdom and a new reign date.<sup>420</sup> During the summer of 1044, the Song ruler Renzong dispatched the Guangnan's Fiscal and Military commissioner 轉運使兼安撫使 Du Ji 杜杞 to the region.<sup>421</sup> Du had Qu Xifan captured and executed by disembowelment. Nùng Trí Cao's second attempt to form a kingdom occurred in 1041, and so we might suppose that Qu's own attempt to set up a separate kingdom was modeled on Trí Cao's effort.

At the Song court, official debate regarding the Nùng Trí Cao's first rebellion also extended to larger issues of political policy on a national scale. In 1046, the Song court's Vice Censor-in-Chief, Zhang Fangping 張方平(1007-1091) had these comments concerning the rebellion:

When we consider (our empire's) past ambitions, in matters of territory the primary issue is *Ying*. And *Ying* refers to the proper duties of an official, care for the people, and care for the *Man Yi* barbarians. When we consider today's events, we must acknowledge the importance of matters between the interior and exterior of our empire. Therefore, we should not allocate authority to the border officials. If today's events cause us to worry, we should outwardly prepare to defend ourselves from enemies, and inwardly we should comfort the people. In the Northwest there are two enemies (the Khitans and the Tanguts). Because the court has been very worried about them, a policy for keeping these enemies outside our borders has been a central policy.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 1133.

<sup>420</sup> *Zhuang Encyclopedia* 壯族百科辭典 (Nanning: Guangxi Remin, 1993), p.650.

<sup>421</sup> *XZZTJCB* 148: 3578.

<sup>422</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 157: 3848.

Zhang then explains how official vigilance toward the Khitans and Tanguts has resulted in less attention toward China's southern border, leading, for example, to seven years of neglect for a widespread rebellion led by the Yao ethnic group. Zhang writes:

'The lands to the south of the seas (Southeast Asian trading kingdoms) and Giao Chi are expanding their influence dramatically. Moreover, the routes from the Yong and Jung prefectures are closely connected to the *Xidong* 溪洞 region, the area inhabited by the Nùng clan. The matters of the South require a strategy for its management... during the reign of the Tang Yizong 唐懿宗 (860-873) An Nam's Protector-general Li Cho 李琢 failed to pacify and control the region. The *Man* pillaged the region and caused turmoil. He subsequently was forced to rely on his troops, and with these expenditures he found it difficult to provide his tribute to the court... Therefore, there occurred the military mutiny in Xuzhou at Longxun. Regarding the affairs of 'all under Heaven,' this event was recorded as a great crisis. If similar events arise, misfortune will often manifest itself in chaos.'<sup>423</sup>

Setting current events in a larger historical context, Zhang refers to the precedent of Tang failings in this region as a justification for a more active intervention into matters along the southern frontier.

Sima Guang's greatest criticisms regarding the Nùng rebellion were reserved for the Song officialdom. Peter Bol cites Sima Guang as declaring, "the first concern of policy is the effective administration of government."<sup>424</sup> In his recounting of the rebellion, Sima Guang describes the behavior of several local Chinese officials in their responses to Nùng Trí Cao's actions. He alternates between heaping praise and blame on the Song defenders who attempted to slow the rebels' advance toward Guangzhou.

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<sup>423</sup> *XZZTJCB* 157: 3848-49.

<sup>424</sup> Peter Bol in Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Eds.) *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Song Dynasty China*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), p. 154.

At one point, he remarks "Jiang Jie from the West Circuit Command made light of the situation. He put his forces into operation as a crazy person would. When the army reached Taiping plateau, the troops were from the very start unprepared for fighting."<sup>425</sup> Sima Guang closely followed the events surrounding the Nùng rebellion; however, his focus was on the Chinese bureaucracy in action and what lessons could be drawn from its successes and failures. The Song empire's relations with its neighbors were of secondary importance, primarily because Sima Guang believed that both Giao Chỉ and the Nùng clan's aboriginal region were brash, uncivilized neighbors that merely served to test the ability of Chinese bureaucrats.

From pragmatic Song officials with personal experience in the border region came other suggestions of how the court might benefit politically from the turmoil. Some viewed Nùng Trí Cao's rebellion as a rare opportunity for strengthening China's hand in the region. Xiao Gu, as the Guangxi West Circuit's fiscal commissioner (*zhuan yun shi*) memorialized the throne in 2/1051, stating that the Quảng Nguyên *Man* barbarian Nùng Trí Cao had requested *neifu* status. First, Xiao Gu asked if it was not enough for the Việt court to muster a punitive expedition against Nùng Trí Cao. He also added that after Yongzhou's military commander (*zhi huishi*) had acted without authority by mounting an attack on Nùng Trí Cao in an attempt to capture the rebel leader himself. As a result of this local attack, Trí Cao had turned to the central court at Kaifeng for assistance. However, as Xiao comments, because the Song court

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<sup>425</sup> Sima Guang, *Sushui jiwén*, *juan* 13, p. 259.

considered that Nùng Trí Cao's service was the right of the Đại Cồ Việt court, the emperor ignored the offer.<sup>426</sup>

Xiao Gu pressed the court with this suggestion; "Trí Cao will necessarily cause trouble for the southern region. I would rather grant him an official title in order to control him, and then allow him to oppose Giao Chỉ."<sup>427</sup> Emperor Renzong responded to Xiao Gu, stating that "If we had protected Giao Chỉ and had not antagonized Trí Cao, then he would not finally have begun his plundering. Therefore, you must question the reasons for this." Xiao Gu's reply was the following:

*Man* people seek self-interested opportunity before acting, and they invariably protect their own living quarters. These are not the qualities that are becoming of an official. I contend that, as of the present, our state's influence does not extend into the *Man* region. Regarding individuals such as Nùng Trí Cao, we must control him and that's all. As Trí Cao's military power increases, Giao Chỉ will not be able to continue to fend him off or restrain him. At that point, the Nùng will be able to fight back. After this, the *Man* people will fight each other, and we will be able to sit back and not have to become involved.<sup>428</sup>

Although the Chinese court did not adopt Xiao Gu's pragmatic approach to regional power brokering, his position takes into account the actual lack of Chinese influence on the southern frontier, while pointing a practical, if somewhat opportunistic, remedy to this problem.

The Chinese emperor Renzong's stubborn resistance to Trí Cao's request for dependency status revolved around the ruler's desire to see matters through the ancient

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<sup>426</sup> Lu Shipeng, "*Zhong Yue guanxi*," p. 102.

<sup>427</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 170: 4078.

<sup>428</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 170: 4078.

relationship between China and An Nam.<sup>429</sup> Xiao Gu's suggestion, took into consideration the pros and cons of *Realpolitik*, using Nùng Trí Cao as a threat to the Đại Cồ Việt kingdom, in order for Guangxi and Guangdong to stand by themselves as a barrier between the two states.<sup>430</sup> The Song court could have then changed direction and manipulated developments between Nùng Trí Cao and the Việt leaders. Because Renzong chose not to follow the dictates of the balance of power at the frontier, but instead desired to adhere to historical precedent, this policy was not followed.

As his personal power increased, Trí Cao very clearly manipulated both the institutions of tribute relations, as well as the symbols of imperial power. In 3/1051, Nùng Trí Cao offered tamed elephants and lumps of gold and silver to the Chinese court. The Chinese initially refused these gifts. However, the Song emperor Renzong later concluded that, because the Quảng Nguyên Prefecture originally belonged to Giao Chỉ, if the two delegations approached the court simultaneously, then he would allow this offer to be submitted.<sup>431</sup> After that, Nùng Trí Cao again sent an offering of gold with a petition letter (requesting *neifu* status) to be passed to the emperor by the administrator of Yongzhou, Chen Gong. The Chinese court, likely on grounds of impropriety, did not grant this request, but Trí Cao's attempt shows an awareness of the channels that had to be pursued to gain legitimacy. To find an independent

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<sup>429</sup> Lu Shipeng, “*Zhong Yue guanxi*,” p. 102.

<sup>430</sup> Lu Shipeng, “*Zhong Yue guanxi*,” p. 102.

<sup>431</sup> *XZZTJCB* 170: 4084.

position within the Chinese tributary system provided certain political stability and economic gain.

Nùng Trí Cao's appeals for local support were described in the *XZZTJCB* and other Chinese sources as being supported by brutal coercion. Addressing the crowd before the revolt of 4/1052 Nùng Trí Cao is recorded as having proclaimed:

As for all the belongings that you amassed during your lives, they were destroyed today by heaven's fire. You have nothing to live on, and you are considered poor. Indeed! You must grab Yongzhou and capture Guangzhou where I will establish myself a ruler. If you don't do this, you will necessarily die.<sup>432</sup>

This goal of portraying Trí Cao's behavior as such by the *XZZTJCB* chroniclers is clear. Trí Cao is described as having committed acts of desperation, destroying his people's possessions so that there is nothing to lose in joining the rebels. Nùng Trí Cao's initial success is attributed to the cruelty involved in his methods, even if this had not actually been the case. By attributing these characteristics to the rebel leader, the Chinese scholars created a cunning, but barbaric, adversary for the defenders of China's frontier.

When his forces successfully captured the Garrison City of Yongzhou, a regional center of trade, Nùng Trí Cao expressed stronger political ambitions. With his third attempt to establish his local authority in 1052, Trí Cao not only proclaimed a new polity, the Kingdom of the Great South 大南國, with the reign period *Inaugural*

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<sup>432</sup> *XZZTJCB*, 172: 4142.

Age 啓歷. He also granted himself the title, the *Benevolent and Kind Emperor* 仁惠皇帝.

According to the 13th-century exiled Vietnamese author Lê Tác 黎勣 in the *An Nam Chí Lược* (*A Survey of the Annals of An Nam*) 安南志略, Trí Cao took the title *King of the Southern Heavens* 南天王 during the founding of his second kingdom. In this case, there was no third attempt to found a kingdom. Instead, in 1052, Lê Tác writes that Trí Cao “without sanction” announced the founding of the *Great Kingdom of the Southern Heavens* 大南天國 and proclaimed himself emperor.<sup>433</sup> While unlikely, this alternative account of Trí Cao’s claims may illustrate the local leader’s own efforts to raise the political stakes of his independence call. A “prince,” or even a “king,” may exist within a system of tribute relations centered on the Chinese emperor. However, a new “emperor” at the periphery of the Chinese empire, particularly one without the military might to support his claim, could never be left undisturbed.

Once his forces had swept across nine Chinese prefectures in South China, Nùng Trí Cao turned again to the Chinese institutional model to develop his base of power. During the fighting, Nùng Trí Cao sent a letter out from his military camp, seeking persons for the position of Guiqi Prefecture's military commissioner. Trí Cao's actions severely irritated the court at Kaifeng. When he heard of Nùng Trí Cao's

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<sup>433</sup> Lê, Tác (14th cent.). *An Nam Chí Lược* (*A Survey of the Annals of Annam*) 安南志略. Hue: Vien Dai-Hoc Hue, 1961), p. 149.

intentions, the assistant Palace Secretary Liang Shilian remarked "What is this? There is no court located in the two Guangs!"<sup>434</sup> Trí Cao 's active recruitment of official staff, along with Araki's assertion that he had received strong classical training, portray a political leader who, even in light of local myths of defiance of imperial authority, regarded the Chinese model as the preferred medium for the expression of political power in the region.

The *DVSKTT* describes rebels' rampage through nine prefectures across the South China coast to Guangzhou, along with their failed five-day siege of that frontier port city. The Chinese forces are said to have lost 3000 troops and to have had approximately 10,000 others captured alive. The destruction caused by fire was said to have left nothing behind. The *DVSKTT* account describes how the Song leader (*jun*) and his officials considered this situation to be disastrous, and so turned over the responsibility of counter-attack to Di Qing 狄青 (1008-1057), who had already voiced opposition to the earlier court policy of inaction. The next entry, the fifth day of 1/1053, reads "there occurred an earthquake of the third degree of intensity."<sup>435</sup> This invocation of natural disaster could perhaps be read as commentary on the Việt reaction to this Song military action so close to their shared border.

The course of these events looks different when seen from the perspective of the local Song administrator, rather than the standpoint of a court-level official. Disruption in the regular procession of tribute missions had an impact the local

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<sup>434</sup> *XZZIJCB* 173: 4174.

<sup>435</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) *BK* 2: 237.

economy, enough of an impact so that local officials chose to support Việt intervention on purely practical grounds. In 12/1052, one of the commanders of the forces sent to suppress the rebels, Yu Jing 余靖(1000-1064), memorialized the Chinese throne:

Giao Chỉ ought to bring tribute this year, but due to Nùng Trí Cao's activities, the route (between Giao Chỉ and China) has been cut off. I have long entreated the court to assemble troops to launch a punitive expedition against these bandits, but even after this period of time the court has yet to make the announcement. Observe that this request is utterly sincere. Granted that I am not yet able to attack and exterminate this gang of bandits, please allow me to disassociate myself from this situation to avoid duplicity. Trí Cao has been classified by Giao Chỉ as a rebel, and appropriately the ruler should be allowed to send out troops. Do not obstruct his good intentions. If you do not let him act today, he will certainly become stronger and subsequently lend support to Trí Cao's revolt. For this reason, it is most beneficial to permit him to act..<sup>436</sup>

Renzong followed Yu's request, and commanded that 20,000 strings of cash be offered to cover military expenses, along with 30,000 strings of cash as a reward (bribe?) for those border officials who would assist in returning peace to the region.

An episode involving Việt offers of assistance to the Song is presented differently in Vietnamese and Chinese sources. The *DVSKTT* version tells how Yu Qing was appointed by the Chinese court to end the pillaging. The Vietnamese account then notes that the Việt emperor 帝 offered to send out troops to assist with the punitive expedition, adding that "the Song ruler appropriately allowed for this; however, when Di Qing was made the leading commander, he subsequently memorialized the court, saying 'I have no use for false "outsider" troops in this matter of "insider" rebel activity. As for Nùng Trí Cao, the forces of Guangnan East and

West Circuits combined were not enough to control him. Moreover, among those false troops from the outer frontier are some that have caused this turmoil to break out. How will they stop it?' In that same year the Song issued the order to prevent our military assistance. Then Nùng Trí Cao requested troops from us, and the Việt court permitted his request." This line is followed by the statement, "the Song Military Director-in-chief (*dujian*) Xiao Zhu, passing through the Temuo Circuit, captured Trí Cao's mother, A Nùng, and killed her."<sup>437</sup> Although more than a year lapsed between Di Qing's memorializing of the Chinese court and the capture and execution of A Nùng, the linking of these events in the *DVSKTT* account seemingly exposes the merciless nature of the Chinese authorities involved, resorting to cruel and *un-Confucian* behavior to achieve their ends.

Chinese accounts describe more dispassionately how high-level officials presented reasons for opposing Việt assistance in the punitive attack on Nùng Trí Cao's forces. Di Qing demonstrated his own opposition to this policy by memorializing that "Li Dezheng (Phật Mã) has claimed that he commands an infantry of 50,000 men, with one thousand riders for assistance, but in fact this is not the case. Moreover, the use of these counterfeit troops from outside (China) to wipe out a domestic rebellion is of no benefit to us. When Trí Cao and his forces once trampled the two Guangnan circuits from west to east, we did not have the force to oppose this. We then made use

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<sup>436</sup> *XZZTJCB* 173: 4182-83.

<sup>437</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) *BK* 2: 238.

of the *Man* barbarians as soldiers, but the *Man* desired control while forgetting righteousness. For this reason, they began their rebellion, so how will we stop it? I wish then to stop Giao Chỉ from using their troops, and also to call to arms any troops who can bring peace to the region and can stop obstructing the passage of envoys from Giao Chỉ." Renzong finally put Di Qing's plan into effect, while Chinese contemporaries considered that Di Qing had come up with a far-sighted strategy.<sup>438</sup> However, In 3/1053 the Song emperor dispatched the special envoy Chen Qingming to present Lý Phật Mã with rare objects and coins, with the request that Phật Mã not send troops to assist with the expedition.

By the time Chinese forces led by Di Qing had begun to drive back the rebel army, Nùng Trí Cao looked south of the border for support. Vietnamese sources record that in 10/1053 Trí Cao sent his envoy Lương Châu 梁珠 to the Việt court to "beg (*qi*)" for troop support. The Việt emperor then commanded that the tribal military commander (*zhihui shi*) Wu Er 武珥, lead a force to assist the rebels.<sup>439</sup> This account does not quite match the Chinese version, in which the Song emperor essentially bribes the Việt ruler to prevent him from becoming involved. However, it is noteworthy that the forces described as being sent are from another border ethnic group, and not from the Việt imperial guard. In this manner, the Việt court adopts a position similar to the one taken by the Song at the rebellion's outbreak when the

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<sup>438</sup> *XZZTJCB* 173: 19.

<sup>439</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 3: 127.

Renzong emperor called on his border guards, the Việt leadership, to take care of the problem. In any case, Nùng Trí Cao's fortunes had already turned. When Di Qing's army defeated his forces for a second time, Trí Cao himself fled to the neighboring Dali kingdom.

### **New Tensions in the Aftermath of the Nùng Trí Cao Rebellion**

Di Qing's successful expedition against the rebels and the Lý court's refusal to intervene on either side brought a tentative peace to the frontier region. For nearly twenty years after Nùng Trí Cao's defeat, border disturbances were minimal, and all were contained swiftly by Chinese and Việt military resources. In this period, moreover, Han homesteaders and discharged soldiers moved to the area, and settled in existing Chinese communities and on the outskirts of *loose rein* regions. At the same time that new local leaders took control of the decimated but still remaining border communities. However, the regional peace would not last. With the changing ethnic balance along the frontier, new political challenges emerged, and these challenges could no longer be alleviated by the existing order of frontier administration. In this environment of a growing Song imperial presence on the edges of a frontier that the Lý leadership also desired to control directly pushed to two courts closer to a violent confrontation. When many Nùng leaders immediately sided with the Việt court in the ensuing conflict, Kaifeng realized that an entirely new arrangement for border relations had to be established.

Frontier unrest began with a new generation of Nùng leadership. In 10/1060, the Danzhou administrator Wang Han memorialized the throne, stating that Nùng Trí Cao's kin, Nùng Tông Đán 農宗旦, had assembled a mob and was threatening to plunder the region. Wang feared that this could spell the end to peace on the border, and he requested that a new policy be enacted. The Song court ordered the Guangnan West Circuit to reform the local *jimi* policy, requesting that the Nùng communities, along with other ethnic groups, be made interior dependencies of the Song empire. In this manner, the troubles between the Song and its frontier temporarily subsided. Nùng Trí Cao's followers had achieved the elevated "Interior Dependency" status Trí Cao and his father had initially been seeking, although at the cost of many lives. However, Nùng Trí Cao had later fought for no less than his own kingdom stretching across southern China. Such an independent polity within China's borders would not emerge until the "Warlord Period" of the early 20th-century.

The Song emperor Yingzong ordered on July 9, 1055 that the local leaders of Leihuo grotto settlement and De-an Circuit, areas inhabited almost exclusively by members of the Nùng clan, be presented with oxen for plowing, rations of salt and sashes denoting official service, in exchange for these officials' loyalty to the Song throne. The Chinese ruler also extended a new set of titles and nominal positions to leading members of border communities, at a level of authority below the titles granted to the Việt court and its officials. The *Song huiyao jigao* records that the "Loyal Warrior (*wu zong jiangzhun*)" General Nùng Tông Đán of Leihuo (renamed the

Pacified Prefecture 順安州) was granted the title *Right-hand Guardian General Leading One Thousand Head of Cattle* 右千牛衛將軍.<sup>440</sup> Nùng Trí Cao's younger brother Nùng Trí Hôi 儂智會 received the title *Left-Hand Guardian*, and he was later given the position of Assistant to the Xunzhou Prefect (*zhi xunzhou guan yuanfushi*). Other members of the Nùng clan, and former followers of Trí Cao, also received official recognition. Nùng Binh, Nùng Lượng 儂亮, Nùng Hạ Khanh 儂夏卿, leaders from the Temo 特磨 District, swore their loyalty to the Song court.<sup>441</sup> Trí Cao's followers Lu Mao 盧貌, Li Shun 黎順, and Huang Zhongqing 黃仲卿 were granted official titles denoting service at the local level to the Song court. In all of these titles, there is an element of re-orienting local authority to a position much more dependent on the centralized authority of the Song court. These titles were granted with the condition that they might be withdrawn at any point that their holders do not live up to the official obligations that these titles imply.

The *jimi* prefectures had lost their largely autonomous status in the eyes of the Song leadership, and the change was not limited to new titles alone. Even in the short period of court restructuring that preceded the introduction of Wang Anshi's 王安石(1021-86) more radical New Policies新法, local militia along the southwestern frontier was re-organized and trained to comply with new court

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<sup>440</sup> Xu, Song 徐松 (1781-1848) (1809 edition). *Songhuiyao jiben* (*Draft of Documents Pertaining to Song Official Matters*) 宋會要輯本 (Taipei: Shijie, 1964), 198: 7799.

<sup>441</sup> *Songhuiyao jiben*, 198: 7799. An interesting ambiguity is whether or not these Nùng leaders were expressing personal loyalty to the Yingzong Emperor. The *Songhuiyao* account does not provide us with a clear answer to this question.

standards for frontier defense. In 1065 the Guangnan West Circuit's local Military Commission 安撫司 took charge of the organization of communities along the southwestern frontier.<sup>442</sup> The 45 grotto settlements in the Left and Right River Region were all appointed a grotto militia leader 洞將. The militia leader in turn determined his region's population of able-bodied men, from which he chose groups to be led by a Guard Commander 校長 from the area's prominent households. Each Guard Commander then received a specific signal banner 旗號 for his group's distinction. Groups of thirty men were organized into self-regulating units of local governance known as Tithings 甲.<sup>443</sup> Tithings received different leaders when they were organized in groups of five (Troop Commandant 都頭), ten (Aboriginal Commander 指揮使), and fifty (Commander-in-Chief 都指揮使). The *Songshi* contends that 44,500 local men along the southwestern frontier were regulated in this fashion. At least on paper, these efforts to organize border militia went far beyond any previous attempts under the existing *loose rein* frontier system of management. However, this tightening of border defenses on the Song side did not bode well with the Việt court, which saw its own flexible and personally-orientated systems of local control being gradually undermined.

Greater numbers of people, in general, were moving into the region during this period. Scholars have noted a sharp increase in population numbers along China's

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<sup>442</sup> *Songshi* 191: 4746.

<sup>443</sup> See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 137. Hucker contends that the leaders of Tithings were known as Tithing Chiefs 甲長 or Tithing Heads 甲頭, while the *Songshi* account uses an older Han period title Guard Commander.

southwest border by the end of the 11th century. While the *taiping xingguo* period (976-984) population of the prefectures of Yongzhou, Pingzhou, Xiangzhou, Rongzhou, Hengzhou, Liuzhou and Yizhou were together estimated to be in the area of 17,760 households, the *yuanfeng* period (1078-1085) population for the same area had increased to 56,596 households.<sup>444</sup> Moreover, figures for the entire Guangnan Western Circuit for 1080 (*yuanfeng* 3) place the region's population at 287,723 households, an 133% increase from an earlier Tang census in 742.<sup>445</sup> One should note that these figures included both indigenous communities and the more recent Han settlements. Moreover, improved methods of recording household registration may indeed accord for some of the increase. However, the trend toward increased Han settlement remains clear through these changes; an increase accounted for by both the community of soldiers who had followed Di Qing in his campaign against Nùng Trí Cao's forces, and the merchants who provided support for the Song military.

The 20th-century gazetteer *A Record of Fengshan County (Fengshan xianzhi)* makes this point; "Before the Tang, this county was settled by the Miao barbarian people. There were no traces of Han settlers. In 1053, The 'Great martial Leader' Di (Qing) put down the rebellion of the Quang Ngyên barbarian Nùng Trí Cao, the

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<sup>444</sup> The *taiping xingguo* period figures may be found in Le Shi's 樂史 *Taiping huan yu ji (A Record of the Empire's Borders and Dimensions during the Taiping period)* 太平寰宇記. The *yuanfeng* period figures may be found in Wang Cun's 王存 *Yuanfeng jiu yu ji (Gazetteer of the Nine regions during the Yuanfeng period)* 元豐九域志. This information is cited in Huang, Xianfan, *Nong Zhigao*, p. 91.

<sup>445</sup> These regional figures were cited in Huang Xianfan, *A Survey of Zhuang History* 狀族通史 (Nanning: Guangxi minzu, 1988), p.52. The Song number was found in the *Gazetteer of the Nine regions during the Yuanfeng period* 元豐九域志, while the Tang figure was found in the

troops following the general's expedition remained in the region to open up and settle the wasteland. Their settlements extended throughout this county."<sup>446</sup> Li Wenxiong 李文雄 in his gazetteer *A Record of Longjin County (Longjin xianzhi)* extends this population shift right down to the border in his observations; "Longjin County before the Tang was a part of Giao Chi territory. Its inhabitants were subjects of Giao Chi. In 1052 Zhao Ding 趙鼎,<sup>447</sup> following the success of the Di (Wuxiang) Qing in his campaign against the barbarians, was appointed to the hereditary position of local administrator. A division of General Di's soldiers from the Shandong region entered the area to settle down. Because of this event, many settlers from north of the Yangtze River moved into the area to live. After the barbarian wastelands had started to be controlled (by the Song court), settlers from Fujian 閩, Jiangxi 贛, Hunan 湘, Yue 粵 daily flocked to the region. Some came to take positions as local officials, and they married into the local community. Some came as merchants, marrying into the region as well. Most of these Han homesteaders settled in the larger towns or the marketplaces. However, there were certainly those gathered in the rural villages to conduct their business."<sup>448</sup> Throughout the Song empire, the word had spread that

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"geography 地理" section of Ouyang Xiu's *New History of the Tang 新唐書*. A graph in Huang's book (p. 53) gives the Song population figure was 387,723 households, which appears to be a mistake.

<sup>446</sup> Fengshan County In this gazetteer entry was comprised of today's Donglan 東蘭 and Fengshan 風山 counties, located in northwestern Guangxi province. This information is cited in Huang, Xianfan, *Nong Zhigao*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>447</sup> Li Wenxiong may have been mistaken about Zhao Ding's participation. Zhao was a Song official, but his dates were 1085 to 1147.

<sup>448</sup> Li Wenxiong, *A Record of Longjin County (Longjin xian zhi)* Minguo 35 (1946), (Nanning: Guangxi #2 Provincial Library, 1960 hand-etched reprint), p. 39. Longjin County was located in the region of today's Longzhou County.

new opportunities could now be found in this southernmost outpost of imperial control, and many now were more than willing to try their luck in its settlement.

A cultural shift had also begun to take place in the region, with an increased emphasis on *zhongyuan* (Northern Chinese) practices. The earliest signs of change are described in Yue Shi's 樂史 (930-1007) *Taiping huanyu ji* (*Chronicle of the World during the Taiping period*) 太平寰宇記. This trend accelerated during the period after the fall of northern China to Jurchen armies, as noted in Wang Xiangzhi's 王象之 (d. after 1221) *Yudi jisheng* (*A Record of this Region's Merits*) 輿地紀勝; "following the Song's "Southern Push 南度," when many northerners moved south to escape their homelands, clothing styles, ceremonial caps, rituals and music then became the same as those practices in the North China."<sup>449</sup> However, these social practices were actually brought into the region by Di Qing's troops and the accompanying cadre of local officials. If the Guangnan region had not had strong ties with court culture during the early Song period, these ties were laid in place and strengthen with each wave of northern settlers that poured into the frontier.

What had changed in the interim between Nùng Trí Cao's rebellion and these events was that the Song court had been forced to re-evaluate its traditional frontier policy, and the choice was made for more direct administration of the area. Military officials were dispatched from Kaifeng to the prefectures of southeastern Guangxi to take up positions as local administrators. Imperial troops were transferred to the

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<sup>449</sup> Cited in Huang Xianfan, *A Survey of Zhuang History* (Nanning: Guangxi Minzu, 1988), p. 50.

region, and the number of war-horses was increased considerably.<sup>450</sup> Meanwhile, the Việt court pursued a policy of expansion, with military expeditions to the south against neighboring Champa, along with pacification campaigns to assert direct court control over indigenous communities located along the northern frontier. Lý Phật Mã died late in 1054, and the Khai Hoàng 開皇 prince Lý Nhật Tôn ascended the throne to preside over a Việt kingdom that had become increasingly "united and self-assured."<sup>451</sup>

Lý Phật Mã had already started a court-organized movement toward border settlement and control, and this trend continued unabated throughout the period of unrest involving Nùng Trí Cao. As early as the winter of 1042, the emperor had ordered the then Khai Hoàng Prince Lý Nhật Tôn to lead a punitive expedition against Văn Châu 文州 Prefecture, the inhabitants of which had recently rebelled against court control.<sup>452</sup> The prince was granted the title "Great Principal Commander Presenting Court Dominion 都統大元帥 following his successful capture of the rebel leaders. In the spring (third month) of 1043, the emperor once again ordered Nhật Tôn to attack Ái Châu 愛州. He then accepted a petition from his second son the "enduring prince

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<sup>450</sup>Huang, Xianfan, *Nong Zhigao*, p. 101.

<sup>451</sup> Keith Taylor in Kenneth Hall and John Whitmore, *explorations In Early Southeast Asian History: The origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, (Ann Arbor: Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia, 11, 1976), p. 179.

<sup>452</sup> Phan Thanh Giản 潘清簡. *Khâm Định Việt sử thông giám cương mục (Outline by Imperial Decree of the Mirror for the History of the Great Viet) 欽定越史通鑿綱目* (1881). Viện Hán Nôm Manuscript # A.1/1-9, 3: 4B.

乾王” Lý Nhật Trung 李日中 to lead another expedition against the inhabitants of Văn Châu. The emperor praised both of his sons for their military successes, presenting the Titles “Great Principal Commander Presenting Court Dominion 都統大元帥” and “Great Commander presenting Court dominion 都統元帥” to his first and second sons, respectively. Lý Nhật Trung offered his father a gift of captured men and horses from Văn Châu, and the emperor reciprocated with the gift of the title “Anointed by Heaven and Granted Widespread Victories with Official Power Growing Daily 戴天廣勝道岡日.” As the Việt court borrowed more heavily from the Chinese tributary model to develop its border strategy, the court's sense of self-identity grew with the maintenance of frontier stability.

During the early 1060's, the Sino-Việt frontier experienced numerous local disturbances among the indigenous communities, in response perhaps to the influx of settlers from the north. Moreover, there were clashes between troops serving both the Chinese and Việt courts. In the spring of 1060, the elderly leader of the frontier prefecture Lạng Châu and hitherto-mentioned imperial in-law Trần Thiệu Thái crossed into Song territory to raid border settlements for cattle and new militia recruits.<sup>453</sup> In the attack Thiệu Thái also captured the local Song military leader Yang Baocai 楊保材. That autumn, Song troops crossed the frontier, and that they were unsuccessful in their attempt to bring Yang back. Chinese sources report that the

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<sup>453</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 3: 242.

Kaifeng dispatched newly appointed Pacification Commissioner Yu Jing to return to the Guangnan region to quell unrest stirred up by Giap Đông 甲峒 natives (led by Thiệu Thái) and Việt troops. Fighting there had already claimed the lives of five Military Inspectors 巡檢.<sup>454</sup> Once he reached the south, Yu Jing also sent court representative secretly to Champa to enlist Cham support for a possible allied attack on Việt communities in Guangnan.<sup>455</sup> This increased activity along the frontier naturally caught the attention of the Việt court, which reportedly had also caught wind of the Cham plot. As the Song court took a greater interest in the frontier region, a new court policy emerged of courting local leaders directly, rather than relying on the assistance their tributary representative the Việt court. Such a shift in behavior undercut the local authority that official tributary relations with the Chinese had once granted Thăng Long. As the Song court began to seek local leaders to implement its interests, even in opposition to Việt interests, the Đại Cồ Việt court sought ways to make their own presence felt along the border.

A delegation from Thăng Long led by Bi Gia Dụ 費嘉祐 one year later traveled to Yongzhou to negotiate terms for peace with Yu Qing himself.<sup>456</sup> Lý Nhật Tồn instructed his court "send an envoy into China to convey thanks (for quelling the

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<sup>454</sup> Cited in Yi Xingguang. *Yu Jing pu zhuan zhilue (A Biographical Chronology of Yu Jing)* 余靖譜傳誌略 (Guangzhou: Jinan daxue, 1993), p. 78. Military officers of the Military Inspector rank were often used to patrol border regions, and these officials (including Yang) may have been in the area to train the local militia.

<sup>455</sup> *Songshi* 288: 14068.

<sup>456</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 3: 242.

earlier disturbances), but continue to collect more intelligence on Cham troops, Yu Qing's forces, and other troops stationed in the Guangnan Western Circuit."<sup>457</sup> The Chinese delegation again requested the return of Yang Baocai, but this requested was denied.<sup>458</sup> Given the recent unrest, however, Renzong hesitated to raise tensions further along the southern border, and he ordered his delegated military leaders of his local Military Commissions 經略司 to refrain from assembling troops in the region. The Song ruler then allowed a tribute mission from the Việt court to travel to Kaifeng for an imperial audience. On February 8, 1063 a delegation including the Crafts Institute 文思使 Commissioner Mai Cảnh Tiên 梅景先<sup>459</sup> and his assistant (and negotiator with the Dali court) Lý Kế Tiên arrived at the capital. The two Việt envoys offered tribute to the Song emperor that included nine tamed elephants, a gift that the Việt leaders then considered their most precious offering.<sup>460</sup> Sino-Việt relations appeared at this stage to have reached a new equilibrium.

However, within months, the relationship between the two courts had changed once again. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1063 the Song emperor Renzong passed away, and the heir apparent Zhao Shu 趙晷 (Yingzong 英宗, r. 1063-67) came to power. Việt

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<sup>457</sup> *SHY* 197: 7730.

<sup>458</sup> *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 3: 242.

<sup>459</sup> Given the title that Mai Cảnh Tiên offered or was labeled with by the Chinese court, Song chroniclers likely thought that he was a eunuch, although the staffing eunuch officials at court was not a Việt practice in this period. The Song court placed the Crafts Institute under the administration of the Directorate for Imperial Manufactories (*shaofu jian*). The Institute, staffed by eunuchs, was responsible for producing jewelry and fine brocade for the imperial household. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 568.

<sup>460</sup> *SHY* 197: 7730.

envoys soon arrived in Kaifeng to congratulate the ascension of the new emperor. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1063 Yingzong made an important imperial gesture by sending gifts, such as calligraphic compositions in the hand of the late ruler Renzong, to the Việt court. Such gift was likely an acknowledgement that the Việt ruler and his advisors were learned enough to appreciate the literary refinement of these works and that they fell within the wider circle of *zhongyuan* culture. Yingzong also granted the ruler Lý Nhật Tôn the title Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery 同中書門下平章事.<sup>461</sup> The Song emperor's purpose for granting this title was likely to reinforce from the outset of his reign the image of the Việt court as an extension of the Chinese central court and to preserve the position of Lý Nhật Tôn as both a frontier official and a participant in the formulation of central court policy. However, this gesture on the part of the Song court did not completely ameliorate tensions on the border.

On the same day that Lý Nhật Tôn received his title from the Song court and the envoy Lý Kế Tiên prepared to depart from Kaifeng, news arrived from the south that a border militia under the leadership of Trần Thiệu Thái had engaged in yet another attack on settlements within Guangnan Western Circuit.<sup>462</sup> A Guangnan

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<sup>461</sup> During the Tang and Song dynasties, The Chinese court granted this title to high officials at court who, along with their official duties, would also participate in decision-making as Grand Councilors. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 554.

<sup>462</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14068. Hucker notes that the title *Administrative Aide* was granted in the Song to palace eunuchs assigned to special tasks outside of the imperial household. Lý Kế Tiên had earlier traveled to Kaifeng with Mai Cảnh Tiên who had also been labeled with a title commonly granted to

official sent an urgent plea to Kaifeng for an immediate punitive attack on the Việt intruders. However, Chinese sources record that the Song court had come to the conclusion that Thàn Thiệu Thái was “reckless and mad,” perhaps as a conscious effort to divorce his actions from those of the Việt court. In any case, an envoy from Thăng Long had already been dispatched to Kaifeng to ask forgiveness for the attack. Yingzong, therefore, did not raise an army to deal with this problem. Local Song officials may have wanted a stronger response from Kaifeng, but the Song ruler maintained that his vassals were still capable of self-regulation.

More than a year passed before any further troubles arose. On November 18, 1064 the Guizhou Prefect Lu Shen 陸誥 (1022-1070) memorialized the throne during a court visit by Việt envoys. Lu reported a military delegation from Giao Châu had allegedly come across the border in search of Nùng Tông Dán's son Nung Nhật Tân 農日新 and his followers, but this same delegation show an interest in taking control of a section of Song territory, including the Wenmen Grotto 溫悶洞 district.<sup>463</sup> When the emperor was asked whether or not Giao Châu intended to set up an autonomous kingdom (following the example of Dali?), an advisor at court replied “From the end of the Tang until the present day the region changed its status as the An Nam Protectorate. Between 915 and 921, the local strongman Khúc Thừa Mỹ had

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eunuchs at the Song court. The Việt court in this period was not known to have employed eunuchs at court, and so this title reflects perhaps a Song scholarly inclination to label as eunuchs any rogue officials misappropriating court authority.

<sup>463</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14068.

taken control of the territory.” Adding his own comments concerning this memorial, the elderly Chief Councilor Han Qi 韓琦 (1008-1075) reminded the Chinese ruler of a more recent historical example. “Because Lê Hoàn rebelled against Song orders,” Han noted, “Song Taizong sent troops to punish and attack him. Lê Hoàn did not yield, so the emperor later sent officials to beckon and beguile the Việt ruler, and Lê Hoàn then began to act obediently. Giao Châu’s mountain passes are steep and not easily accessible, and in that region there is a climate of pestilential mists. Although we may take possession of the region, I’m afraid that we cannot defend it.”<sup>464</sup> For the more historically minded members of the court, the embarrassing outcome of a mighty Chinese army humbled by the smaller force of a tributary vassal was not a risk worth taking in this situation. Such matters could better be handled through channels established by the tribute system.

Lu Shen, however, appeared determined to expand the Song's military presence in the South. After delivering his memorial, Lu set out along the frontier toward the Yongzhou Garrison. Moving through the Guangnan, he commissioned 45 local aboriginal leaders from the Left and River region as military officers in his growing militia. When he had assembled 50,000 seasoned troops, he ordered his force to repair and fortify military installations in the region. He also requested that local Song administrator cast special seals for his militia leaders. Lu also petitioned the Song court with a request that the Left and Right River region be exempted from the

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<sup>464</sup> XZZTJCB 203: 4922.

payment of all back taxes.<sup>465</sup> Lu took all these measures to gain the loyalties of those communities that one generation previously had joined Nùng Trí Cao in his rebellion against the throne. The effort to provide military training for the leaders of this frontier militia was a variation the existing court policy, but Lu's methods built on Kaifeng's growing interest in the eventual more direct incorporation of these frontier areas.

After witnessing these events along the border, Việt officials became quite concerned. Thăng Long immediately sent a tribute-bearing envoy to Kaifeng to "send their greetings" as well as to remind the Chinese court of the precedent of relying on Việt authorities to settle border matters. Meanwhile, Lu had again memorialized the throne, requesting that the court offer special training and indoctrination to one local chieftain 土丁 each year. Following this training regime, after three years this chieftain would be made a member of the official bureaucracy.<sup>466</sup> The *Songhuiyao jigao* contains the report that on March 17, 1066 Lý Nhật Tôn had intended to send a tribute mission to Kaifeng, but he lacked the willing personnel to do so.<sup>467</sup>

On January 8, 1067 Song Yingzong passed away and his son Zhao Xu 趙頊, posthumously known as Song emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1067-1085), ascended to the throne. Shenzong followed his father by rewarding all well-wishers generously during the first days of his reign; however, he appeared to pay special attention to the

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<sup>465</sup> XZZTJCB 203: 4923.

<sup>466</sup> XZZTJCB 203: 4923.

Việt delegation. When Thāng Long dispatched a mission to greet the new emperor, Shenzong presented the envoys with a lavish array of gifts: set of official robes for the Lý household, a golden belt, 200 *liang* of silver ingots, 300 bolts of silk, two horses, and a saddle inlaid with gold and silver plating.<sup>468</sup> On February 9, 1067, Shenzong decreed that Lý Nhật Tôn should be granted the title *King of the Southern Pacified Region* 南平王. Re-establishing the tributary relationship between the two courts according to terms set at the beginning of the dynasty appears to have been the initial aim of the young emperor. However, Chinese border officials in the emperor's service at the same time were training for military action along the southern edge of the empire.

By late 1067, there was more movement on the Song side of the frontier region. The Guizhou prefect Zhang Tian 張田 reported that “through interviews I have heard that the Quảng Nguyên Châu official Lư Kỷ 劉紀 maintains ties with Lư Báo 廬豹, despite the fact that Lư Kỷ is an official in the service of Lý Nhật Tôn. Lư Báo is a member of Nùng Trí Cao's treacherous faction, still located in Quảng Nguyên Châu. Lư Kỷ is currently planning to cause mischief of some sort, and Lư Báo now intends to seek personal glory by crossing over into Chinese territory. I want to halt Lư Báo and crush his followers.”<sup>469</sup> The Song court's Bureau of Military Affairs

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<sup>467</sup> SHY 197: 7730.

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<sup>469</sup> SHY 197:7730.

樞密院 replied to this report with the following; “Lư Báo is certainly a member of Nùng Trí Cao’s treacherous faction. However, any action against Lư Kỳ cannot be allowed. If commoners chose to cross the border (into Song territory), they will be targeted and executed. However, it is not necessary to send military officials to pursue their leaders and the Việt army. The court does not treat prisoners according to the ritual protocol expected of Outer Barbarians 外夷. If this Lư Kỳ chooses to transfer the administration of his prefecture back to China, such action ought to be accepted. Therefore, it is not necessary to attract these people, but instead officials should record the fact that Lư Kỳ is approaching, and that Quảng Nguyên has no other leader. It is not necessary to launch a defense of our territory until Lư Kỳ has advanced into Han-controlled territory. If he doesn’t, then let the situation settle and the problem will fade.” The Song court chose to follow this policy, suddenly abandoning the balance of power along the frontier that the court had always advocated in its tribute relations with the Việt leadership.

However, some of the most important changes in the Sino-Việt relationship during the Song period were now just beyond the horizon. These changes were influenced by two main factors; the increasing self-confidence of the Lý court in the projection of its autonomous regional authority, and the elements of Song court-sponsored programs of economic activism and military enhancement, at the urging of reform-minded official Wang Anshi, that touched on the frontier region. Wang’s vision of a single centrally-directed state enterprise for the management of the

empire's resources eventually came into conflict with the Việt court's notion that it should manage the frontier as its rulers saw fit. When the Song leadership was no longer content to administer frontier matters from a distance through its vassal representative, conflicts along the border quickly escalated into open armed hostilities.

By the 1060's, Lý rulers had become more comfortable viewing themselves as a dynastic power with the imperial authority and apparatus of power needed to maintain a long-term command over their expanding territory. The second ruler of the dynasty Lý Phật Mã had set an important precedent for his followers with his ambitious efforts in territorial expansion and the court's establishment of regional dominance over the leaders of local communities, and his son sought to follow and improve upon his father's reign. An important of regional dominance was the maintenance of free passage through the frontier region. On November 26, 1068 Lý Nhật Tôn made this declaration at court; “Regarding the main route by which one carries memorials to the Song court, the military commanders of Guangnan and Jiangnan prefectures always make their presence known. Persons travelling this route face difficult obstacles along the way. The high official Nguy Trọng Hòa 魏仲和 reports that people taking this route face disruption in many counties and prefectures, including all kinds of fees that they must pay. I have ordered the commander of the Sea-based Second Circuit Prefectural Army to act according to ancient rules of protocol when receiving persons along this major thoroughfare. However, in the event that this route is disrupted or cut off, we must not show fear, but

instead launch a vigorous defense of the Việt kingdom."<sup>470</sup> In that year, Lý Nhật Tôn established new offices for his own government to strengthen the institutional control of his family. Lý dynastic power would remain strong through the end of his reign.

However, with Lý Nhật Tôn's death on February 2, 1072, a succession crisis in the imperial household nearly broke down the imperial authority that the earlier generations had managed to build up. The crown prince Lý Can Đức 李乾德 (r. 1072-1127), son of a commoner consort Ý Lan 倚蘭 was only 6 years old when he took the throne.<sup>471</sup> Due to the ruler's young age, the Grand Preceptor 太師 Lý Đạo Thành 李道成 (d. 1081) and the Empress Dowager Thượng Dương 上陽, who maintained ties to the Dương 楊 clan, held power in the imperial household.<sup>472</sup> Đạo Thành was a senior official at court, having served for 18 years as Grand Preceptor, and he gained a reputation for being both a staunch Confucian and a devout Buddhist, as well as a moderate in policy matters.

Lý Đạo Thành backed the Empress Dowager in her efforts to retain power when Lý Can Đức came to the throne. For this reason, conflicts arose between this faction, the young emperor and his mother Ý Lan. The Great Consort had another ally at court the well-known military hero Defender-in-chief 太尉 Lý Thường Kiệt

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<sup>470</sup> SHY 197: 7731.

<sup>471</sup> Lý Can Đức would be known posthumously as Lý Nhân Tông 李仁宗.

<sup>472</sup> Cited in Hoàng Xuân Hãn, *Lý Thường Kiệt*, (Hà Nội, 1949) trans. by Li Guo 利國 in the periodical *South Asian and Southeast Asian materials (Nanya yu Dongnanya ziliao)* Vol. 36 (1989), p. 155.

李常傑 (1030-1105). While Đạo Thành represented the power of civilian authority, Thường Kiệt appealed to military means to gain political ground at court. The two high official nevertheless became involved in a power struggle at court. The 13<sup>th</sup>-century text *Chronicle of Việt History* (Việt sử lược 越史略, hereafter known as *VSL*) notes that on April 27<sup>th</sup> 1072, “after bathing and performing Buddhist rites,” the Việt emperor convened his officials in the Heavenly Peace Pavilion 天安殿, at which time the young ruler re-arranged his court.<sup>473</sup> He significantly shifted the balance of power between court factions by granting Đạo Thành the title Director of the Ministry of War 兵部侍郎 (imperial rank 5b) and granting Thường Kiệt the title acting Defender-in-chief 檢校太尉 (rank 1a). Four months after the new emperor took power, the faction headed by Lý Thường Kiệt had emerged victorious. The power of this group would greatly influence court decisions when relations with the Song began to sour again shortly.

The young Việt ruler, and his advisors, were busy consolidating his authority in the face of court opposition. Lý Can Đức announced a general amnesty for all prisoners in the “protected prefectures. The *VSL* records that, in gratitude, the magistrate of Lạng Châu 諒州 Dương Cảnh Thông 楊景通 presented a white deer to the court as tribute followed by numerous officials paying their respects. The emperor ordered that Cảnh Thông be granted the title Grand Guardian, following the precedent

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<sup>473</sup> *VSL* 1: 38.

by Lý Phất Mã of cementing ties with frontier officials with this ancient Chinese honorific title. During this same period a Khmer delegation also arrived at court bearing tribute. When the sighting of a Yellow Dragon over the Longevity Pavilion 永壽殿 was reported in the late summer of 1072, Can Đức appears to have felt that his mandate to rule was clear, and he embarked on numerous imperial activities, all of which culminated his the construction of five additional to the imperial palace complex.

During the second year of his reign Can Đức established a new reign period (thái ninh 太寧), and granted his own mother the title Empress Dowager Linh Nhân 靈仁 (d. 1117). This change in status enhanced the standing of the new Empress Dowager's clan; however, the fortunes of the former Empress Dowager and her clan fell considerably. Within the year, Empress Dowager was forced by imperial decree to commit suicide. Empress Dowager Linh Nhân became best known for her patronage of the Zen master Thông Biện (? -1134) and promulgation of Buddhist teachings during the rest of her life. Lý Đạo Thành, having backed the losing court faction, retired (out of fear?) with the high-ranking title of Left-Hand Grand Manster of Remonstrance 左諫議大夫 to the outlying southern prefecture of Nghệ An 義安, where the isolated official devoted himself to the preservation of relics held by a local shrine to his former lord the deceased emperor Lý Nhật Tôn.<sup>474</sup> The Đại Việt court was

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<sup>474</sup> *DVSKTT* (1993) 4: 132.

now in the control of the young emperor, his mother's clan, and the allies of the military strongman Lý Thường Kiệt. This shift in power represented a greater development in Lý political institutions than could have been known at the time. A pattern of court control by maternal clan members and their associates emerged with the reign of Lý Can Đức. When the ruler died without a male heir in 1127, a nephew took the throne but remained under the control of his mother's clan members.<sup>475</sup> This pattern of rule dominated Việt politics through the founding of the Trần 陳 dynasty (1225-1400).

Song officials keep abreast of the changes in political power below their southern border. Sources collected for Shen Gua's *Notes from Mengqi* 夢溪筆談, Zhou Qufei's *Comments on Conditions Beyond the Southwestern Passes* 領外代答, and Li Tao's *XZZTJCB* all make reference to the political alliance between Lý Thường Kiệt and the Empress Dowager Ý Lan, although they all refer to the military leader as "Li Shangji 李尚吉."<sup>476</sup> This type of court alliance between imperial consort clans and militarily powerful officials had, of course, occurred in China; however, it never received approval from the Confucian-minded chroniclers of imperial history. Such developments in a vassal state would certainly have raised eyebrows in Kaifeng, and

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<sup>475</sup> Keith Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms" in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 147

<sup>476</sup> Hoàng Xuân Hãn refers to these Song sources in his *Lý Thường Kiệt*, (Hà Nội, 1949), p. 76. The reader may refer to Shen Gua, *Notes from Mengqi* 夢溪筆談 (*juan* 25, "Troubles Along the Southern Border 南方邊患"); Zhou Qufei, *Comments on Conditions Beyond the Southwestern Passes* 領外代答 (*juan* 2, 2b), and Li Dao's *XZZTJCB* (*juan* 279, Zhonghua edition p. 6830) for specific

would have caused some persons at court to question the legitimacy of such a reign. Chinese officials also heard the Việt military leader argued publicly that the reformer official Wang Anshi, in his plan to expand the training of militias into the frontier region, had already demonstrated that the Song court desired to take control of the border, and ignore the precedent of tributary responsibilities. Lý Thường Kiệt announced that Wang had recently sent a memorial to the Song emperor Shenzong, calling for action from Song imperial troops. For these reasons, Chinese officials announced that the Việt court was once again in danger of losing legitimacy.

By the autumn of 1076 tensions between Song and Việt authorities had become unbearable. Lý Thường Kiệt anticipated an attack from the north, and he chose what later Vietnamese historians would call an "attacking in self-defense." The Đại Việt general blockaded the major roads along the border region, and then launched his widespread attack on Song frontier garrisons. He attacked on two fronts, sending troops into China by both land and sea routes. Shortly before launching the attack of the Song, Lý Thường Kiệt had also led a successful campaign against the Cham kingdom to the south of the Đại Việt State. However, the Song court still called on Cham forces to join the Chinese in retaliating against Việt aggression. In late 1076, the combined forces launched a counter-attack, which Lý Thường Kiệt was just barely to resist from his encampment north of Thăng Long. When the dust had settled, the

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citations. The "Four Treasuries" edition of Zhou Qufei's work refers to Lý Thường Kiệt as Li Shangji

Việt armies had managed to dislodge Song forces from several prefectures along the border. This initial peace marked the end of the last major attempt by a Song court to impose its will militarily on its Việt vassal.

Even as the fighting raged between the two courts, the Lý ruling house sought to strengthen their local base of power. In February 1076, the Việt emperor ordered that his court should seek out particularly gifted subjects for tutelage. The candidates attended special examinations in the Confucian classics, and from this group the examiners chose students who would attend classes in the presence of the emperor. As Keith Taylor notes, this emphasis on Confucian-style palace examinations may have been an emergency measure designed to fill vacant positions during the period of renewed armed conflict with China. After the 1080's, there is a long gap in references to such court examinations.<sup>477</sup>

After a long period of strained silence between the two courts, Thāng Long agreed in 1082 to return the captured prefectures of Yong, Qin and Lian, along with their inhabitants and prisoners-of-war, to Kaifeng. In return, Chinese authorities returned four prefectures and one county seized from the Việt court, including Nùng Trí Cao's birthplace Quảng Nguyên. In the aftermath of this trade, a poem circulated throughout the Song empire, one line of which read "Because we had a hankering for Giao Chỉ elephants, we gave up Quảng Nguyên gold 貧交趾象, 却失廣源金."

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李上吉.

<sup>477</sup> Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms," p. 147.

In 1084 the Việt court sent the Director of Military Personnel 兵部侍郎 Lê Văn Thành 黎文盛 to negotiate border issue with the Chinese. In the vicinity of the Left River, patrols from both courts inspected the area separately and then convened at the Song garrison Yongping 永平 in Guangnan. Negotiations proceeded from July 6 to August 8. The Việt delegation spoke of designating Shunnan and Guihua prefectures as a fixed border region between the two states 順安歸化強界. Lê Văn Thành as the representative of the Việt court proved to be a tough negotiator, and according to Vietnamese sources “Chinese officials there did not dare challenge his points 有位臣不敢爭抗之言. When the Song emperor heard of this proposal by the Việt court, he ordered his officials to look into Lê Văn Thành’s reasons for wanting to retain control of Shunnan. He then offered Lê Văn Thành the lavish gift of an ornamental belt. By the end of the negotiations, Lê Văn Thành had retained control for the Việt court of six counties, as well as Susang 宿桑 District’s six *loose rein* aboriginal settlements, in addition to acquiring the gift of his belt.

Lê Văn Hưu’s *History of the Great Viet* (Đại Việt Sử Ký) contains these comments about the Việt negotiator: “Lê Văn Thành should be regarded as a good official. He was someone who got along with others. He did not seek to vex (his Chinese counterparts) or cause trouble, and so he was able to change the attitude of the Song emperor. As for the six counties that Đại Việt troops had invaded, the resources of this territory had not yet been utilized by anyone. The leader of the Việt delegation

chose a negotiation strategy that avoided the ill-will which might have emerged from China's defeat at the hands of Việt troops."<sup>478</sup> According to the anonymous authors of this text, Lê Văn Thành was able to secure the useful lands from a contract in terms most favorable to the Việt court. Moreover, he accomplished this feat in an atmosphere free of rancor and hard feelings between the two courts. A Việt tribute mission to Kaifeng, led by Lê Chung 黎鐘 and his assistant Đô Anh Bội, 杜英輩 arrived in mid-autumn of 1086, and concluded with a Chinese imperial edict acknowledging the receipt of tribute items and bestowing Chinese imperial favor on the Việt ruler Lý Can Đức.

In the period of time between the cessation of military hostilities between the Chinese and Việt courts and the retreat of Song court to Hangzhou, the earlier border controversy played a minimal role. In 1098 the Song court responded to a Đại Việt request for a new *Tripitika* by ordering the Imperial Printing Bureau 印經院 to produce a copy to order.<sup>479</sup> On October 25, 1107, Song Huizong 徽宗 (Zhao Ji 趙佶: r. 1100-26) received a Việt mission with a request for a number of texts. The Song emperor responded a month later with an edict in which he dismissed the existing rules of trade and ordered that the envoys' request be respected, making exceptions for works such as divination texts, Taoist primers, calendar guides,

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<sup>478</sup> *History of the Great Viet* (Đại Việt Sử Ký 大越史記) (hereafter known as *DVSK*) (Hanoi: Han Nom Institute), A. 1272/1, p. 140a.

<sup>479</sup> *SHY* 197: 7734.

numerological texts, military treatises, officer manuals, current Song administrative manuals, books on border installations, and geographical texts.<sup>480</sup> However, the emperor would remain equally adamant about retaining central court control of tributary protocol, as well as the tribute articles brought by the Việt delegations.<sup>481</sup>

In late 1118, following a Việt tributary visit, Huizong announced that because the people of Giao Chỉ, from the *xining* 熙寧 period onward, had all not caused any disturbances, he would permit a specified relaxation on prohibitions against border trade.<sup>482</sup> He then dispatched Yan Ying 燕瑛 from Kaifeng and the Guangnan Western Circuit Assistant Tax Transport Bureau official (*zhuanyun fushi*) Wang Fan 王蕃 to meet with local Việt officials to understand their concerns regarding local trade. During *xuanhe* 宣和/1 (1119), following the Winter Sacrifices, the emperor gave Lý Càn Đức the title Acting Minister of Works 守司空, adding another honorific title from antiquity to the long list of epithets already granted to the Việt leader. Càn Đức now held the Song-sanctioned titles of Acting Minister of Works, Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery 同中書門下平章事 (first granted to Lý

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<sup>480</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14070.

<sup>481</sup> On April 11, 1115 Huizong issued an edict in response to reports that local officials in Yongzhou had implemented a "new ritual protocol 新禮" when receiving a tributary delegation from Thăng Long (*SHY*, 197: 7734.). The Việt envoy Đào Tín Hậu 陶信厚 had petitioned Kaifeng when the delegation was not permitted by local Song officials to followed the accepted practice of making an initial stop in Yongzhou and then proceeding directly to Nanjing. The emperor must have sensed that some party along the route had attempted to preempt imperial authority, and perhaps draw off a portion of the tributary stock as well. Huizong ordered that all Việt missions should henceforth proceed through southern prefectures and commandaries unhindered by local officials, according to ritual precedent.

<sup>482</sup> *SHY* 197: 7734.

Đức Chính in 1032), An Nam Protectorate-General (8<sup>th</sup>-century Tang position), Concurrent Military Commissioner of the “Peaceful Sea Army” (*jinghaijun jiedushi*), Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner, (*guan cha chushu dengshi*) (a new title for Càn Đức), and King of the Pacified South 南平王.

However, by the end of the Northern Song, rulers in Kaifeng understood that the Việt region occupied a place one step further away from the influence of the Chinese central court. According to the map *An Illustration of Prefectures and Commandaries Beyond the Influence of Our Dynasty* 本朝化外州郡圖, the region labeled An Nam on this map is clearly left within the Song empire, the prefectures making up the Việt territory are placed outside of China, retaining the same status the well-known Sixteen Prefectures that had once been lost to the Liao (See Figure #6).<sup>483</sup>

## Conclusions

The Nùng Trí Cao rebellion may be viewed as the outburst at the center of several sets of regional tensions. The rebellion meant different things to the contestants for authority in the region, the local inhabitants as well as the Song and Việt courts. The rebellion emerged from the unstable political topology of Song

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<sup>483</sup> According to the legend on the Ming edition of this map the “lost” southwestern prefectures include Giao 交, Phong 峯, Nhung 濃, Nghiêm 嚴, Điền 田, Ái 愛, Hoan 驩, Lục 陸, Phúc Lộc 福祿, Trường 長, Việt 越, Ôn 溫, Diễn 演, Lâm 林, Cảnh 景, Hoàn 环, Bình 平, Cầm 琴, Sơn 山, and Vũ An 武安. The home region of Nùng Trí Cao Quảng Nguyên 廣源 has been placed back within Song territory. For a useful source on Vietnamese historical geography, please see Nguyễn Văn Siêu (1799-1872), *The Complete Atlas of the Dai Viet Kingdom (Đại Việt địa dư toàn biên)* (Hà Nội: Viện sử học: Văn hóa, 1997).

China's southwestern frontier. However, the Chinese court's response to the regional tensions also reflected the increased interest of Kaifeng in the resources of the Guangnan region. The Song court, facing border opposition both in the northern and southern regions of the young empire, implemented new policies that emphasized the stricter definition and regulation of its internal territory.<sup>484</sup> Even changes in the content of *jinshi* examination questions reflected this shift toward a more aggressive border policy.<sup>485</sup> The Việt court, on the other hand, viewed Nùng Trí Cao's insurgence as an interruption in the orderly conduct of tribute relations. Drawing specifically on the Chinese model of tribute as signifier of political submission, the Việt emperor saw Nùng Trí Cao and his followers as disloyal subjects of his domain, worthy of punishment for this reason.

As for the local concerns of the Zhuang themselves, there exists a difference of opinion among modern scholars. The Vietnamese historian Hoàng Xuân Hãn contends that “disdain” for the Lý court compelled some local leaders to refuse to grant tribute, to form their own kingdoms, and to ally themselves with the Song state.<sup>486</sup> As Nùng Trí Cao took each one of these actions, it would appear that he was highly dissatisfied with the Việt rulers' behavior. However, personal dislike for the Lý emperor satisfies only a part of the motivations for establishing a separate kingdom

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<sup>484</sup> Okada Koji, *Chukoku kaman minzoku shakaishi kenkyu* (Studies of the Ethnic and Social History of South China), (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1993), p.246.

<sup>485</sup> Okada Koji, *Chukoku kaman*, p. 249.

<sup>486</sup> Hoàng Xuân Hãn, *Lý Thường Kiệt*, (Hà Nội, 1949). Translated by Li Kuo in the periodical *South Asian and Southeast Asian materials (Nanya yu Dongnanya ciliao)* Vol. 79 (1988) No. 2, p. 194.

between the Đại Việt and Song states. Even after setting aside the difficulty of hearing the voices of the rebels themselves, this array of opinions concerning the origins of and responsibilities for the Nùng rebellion remain unresolved, forming what Michael Taussig has termed "an epistemic murk, from which fixed and ready truth cannot be extracted."<sup>487</sup> To judge one version of these events to be more valid than another would surely be an impossible task. Taken together, however, these stories present a broader picture of the tensions that existed at the border between 11th-century China and Việt Nam. Even though there existed the shared language of the tribute system, these policies had very different perspectives on each other's relative status.

As the Song empire moved southward, increasing its direct presence on the frontier, these differences would continue to force frequent negotiations through phases of cooperation and confrontation. Chinese imperial might no longer served as a strong deterrent in the face of the Việt court's expansion of regional power. Moreover, the Song could hardly control the re-invention of Lý in the image of the Chinese imperial model. However, the Chinese remained the stronger of the two parties, and Việt leaders carefully maintained its tributary ties with the Song court out of the conviction that this system was, in the final analysis, the best option available. Once clear boundaries had been drawn, major military tensions quickly subsided. Trade issues, and not border conflict, would define the Sino-Việt exchanges by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. The bonds of the tribute system would remain strong, but both sides

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<sup>487</sup> Ann Stoler refers to Taussig's phrase in her article "In Cold Blood," p. 153.

now regarded the material benefits of close ties to be more important than the political ramifications. Việt leaders, for their part, turned inward for the expansion and elaboration of their own empire. Chinese leaders had more to occupy their attention along the northern border.

## CONCLUSIONS

Song period Sino-Việt tribute relations had reached their lowest point shortly before the eruption of frontier conflicts in 1075. However, the course the relationship took after the fighting subsided diverged from the path tribute relations had followed after the founding of the Song dynasty. Once Chinese and Việt negotiators had divided the frontier region into two administrative domains, court-to-court relations depended less on the Việt obligations to perform certain duties or to adhere to a prescribed code of behavior in the name of the Song court. Instead, Sino-Việt tributary exchanges during the Southern Song (1127-1279) period increasingly became occasions for the Chinese court to inflate the rank of Việt rulers, most likely to heighten the Song's own regional standing.

In 1151, Song Gaozong would present the Lý ruler Lý Thiên Tộ 李天祚 with the extraordinary title "Successful Official Who Fostered Propriety, Cherished Loyalty, Observed Sincerity, Leaned Toward Virtue, Kept the Far-off Lands at Peace, and Cultivated Harmony (*chungyi huai-hong baoxin xiangde anyuan chenghe gongchen*)."<sup>488</sup> By 1173, Fan Chengda would note that "of all the *Man* peoples within this regions Military Command, the An Nam people are among those who have been controlled and pacified. Indeed, their tributary officials are able to disregard etiquette

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<sup>488</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14070.

to be treated as equals by Chinese nobles and officials."<sup>489</sup> The emperor would acquiesce to Fan's request that the court not stray too far from tributary precedent in dealing with the Việt leadership, but the real change in the balance of relations could not be stopped.<sup>490</sup> Chinese expectations of Việt rulers to behave as proper tributary vassals became less important as Song leaders became even more concerned about troubles among the northern frontier.

This study first presented a general description of the ideology and institutions of Chinese tribute relations, as well as the prevailing Chinese court notion of world order inherited by the early Song court. A system of titles and ritual practices, drawn from presumed ancient sources such as the *Rites of Zhou*, centered on the emperor's person and constructed a hierarchical arrangement of courts and chieftains beyond the borders of the Chinese empire. Correlative cosmology compelled Chinese rulers to view harmony in relations between all domains within the empire as a sign of proper government. Therefore, political order and its administrative institutions were closely linked to regional accord, including the empire's frontier. The Chinese ruler was

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<sup>489</sup> *Songshi* 488: 14071. In the *Songshi* account, the Southern Song's renewed adoption of the old Tang term An Nam to describe the region and its people actually appears to mark the period in which Việt tributary status begins its sharp rise. In 1174, Gaozong granted Lý Thiên Tộ the title Prince of the An Nam Kingdom, awarding the Việt ruler with both a seal and a calendar to commemorate this change. In 1177, Thiên Tộ's son received the same title, as did the remaining rulers of the Lý dynasty. By 1262, the Song court granted the first ruler of the Trần 陳 dynasty (1225-1400) Trần Thủ Độ 陳守度 (1194-1264) changed the position of "Great Prince of the Kingdom of An Nam 安南大王." This title would remain in effect until the fall of the Song.

<sup>490</sup> A close examination of changes in the tributary relationship during the Southern Song is beyond the scope of this study. However, any study of this period would also involve a closer look at trade relations between the Southeast Asian kingdoms involved in the Chinese tributary system, as well as the growing domestic Chinese market for certain Southern Asian commodities.

himself constrained by these controlling factors. The active participation of neighboring kingdoms in the tribute system was as important a sign of his legitimacy as was his other ritual responsibilities.

There exist many recent studies in China alluding to the importance of ritual activity in the traditional Chinese notion of world order. The modern Chinese scholar Huang Zhilian presents an interesting argument in his book *The Sinic Order in Asia* (*Yazhou de huaxia zhixu*). Huang argues in several studies of Sino-Japanese, Sino-Korean and Sino-Ryukyu tributary relations that there existed a “Ritual Order of the Heavenly King” world order in pre-modern East Asia. The rituals central to the Sino-centric Confucian order conditioned diplomatic interaction between these political bodies.<sup>491</sup> Huang was primarily concerned with uncovering the nature of a macro-system of inter-state relations in East Asia prior to the arrival of “Western hegemony.” Huang carries his study up through to the present day, ending with the now common call for recognition of an approaching Pacific Century ascendance of China.<sup>492</sup> Connections between a Sino-centric world order shaped by tributary ties and a future East Asia revolving around the pronouncements of Beijing demonstrates the amazing resiliency of these ideas.

Second, this study argued that the Song tributary relationship with the Việt kingdom underwent long-term development, gathering its elements from various

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<sup>491</sup> Huang Zhilian, *Yazhou de hua xia zhixu: Zhongguo yu Yazhou guojia guanxi xingtai lun* (*Asia's Sinic Order: A Discussion of the Nature of Sino-Asian Relations*) (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue, 1992).

<sup>492</sup> Huang Zhilian, *Yazhou de hua xia zhixu*, p. 404.

stages in relations between the two regions. Local Việt leaders were more successful in their efforts to establish independent polities when they chose to interact with their northern neighbors by means of tributary protocol. Participation in Chinese tributary system brought stability to the region, but this relationship with militarily more powerful northern regimes left Việt leaders more or less subject to those regimes through the end of the Tang. At this point, after a period of local conflict, leaders who emerged victorious had the military force to fend off advances from northern armies while appeasing northern rulers, and discouraging long-term hostilities, by accepting the role of frontier vassals within a tributary context.

Third, this study demonstrated that many aspects of Sino-Việt tributary relations during the early Song changed with the outcome of each tribute mission sent north to Kaifeng by Việt envoys. With few exceptions, the tribute missions themselves were important opportunities to negotiate the balance of status and authority existing between the Song and Việt rulers. The missions conducted during the early Song were not thinly veiled attempts to promote trade. The titles granted Việt rulers by Chinese emperors were cumulative, indicating the varying degrees of association the two courts had shared throughout their histories. The titles and fiefs offered with each visit by Việt envoys affected the local standing of southern rulers among their southern neighbors. Moreover, these gifts influenced the degree to which Chinese courts attempted to interfere in the affairs of Việt courts.

Participants in any system of tribute relations along the Song's southern border negotiated their alliance through the giving and receiving of valuable assets. In the Sino-Việt relationship, these valuable assets included both material commodities, such as rare plants and exotic animals and precious manufactured goods, and nonmaterial commodities the authority convey with honorific titles, imperial seals and honorific land fiefs. The fact that these titles and fiefs often included long local pedigrees contributed to the legitimacy of local rulers. Moreover, many other frontier communities accepted the power of such titles. As with the example of the Nùng clan's attempted rise to power, one of the first steps taken by ambitious leaders was to adopt or create a set of titles to support their own local political objectives.

Fourth, this study examined how Sino-Việt tributary relations shaped frontier administration, demonstrating how conflict between the Song and Đại Việt courts shifted from a concerns of royal succession and political legitimacy to a relationship more focused more on strict reckoning of territorial administration along the frontier between two neighboring states. Song rulers unquestionably placed the Việt kingdom at the top of a hierarchical system of relationships with leaders along the southern frontier. However, if relations between the Song and the Đại Việt changed with nearly every tributary encounter, the same could be said of other local leaders in their exchanges with Chinese and Việt centers of power. Local Việt leaders negotiated their status within the Chinese tribute system in such a way as to establish regional independence while maintaining a check on Chinese incursions. Other frontier leaders

also negotiated their positions between the Chinese and Việt courts through tributary ties, and thereby occasionally found support for their efforts to expand and challenge their neighbors.

With reference to the system of relationship maintained by Song and Đại Việt leaders, one may look at Song-Koryo and Việt-Cham relations as points of comparison. Both the Liao (Khitan) and the Jin (Jurchen) kingdoms commanded the military force sufficient to demand equal status in their exchanges with the Song emperors. In this northern setting, Song-Koryo relations resembled the Song-Việt model with both courts observing the ruler-vassal distinctions in all aspects of their associations. However, important differences between the Korean and Việt kingdoms exist. The Koryo court at times found itself in a diplomatic “squeeze play” between the Song and its northern neighbors, while the Việt court seldom faced a significant military threat from its immediate neighbors, other than China. Once the early Lý rulers established a stable polity, they made many efforts to bring the Cham court into a dependent relationship with Thăng Long, modeled on the Song tributary system.

China and Vietnam have had a special relationship since the Việt people of the Hồng River Valley first constituted the Chinese as "other" in their emerging conceptions of an imagined Việt community and state separate from the Chinese state. However, Sino-Việt relations were not finalized during the Song dynasty. Although the change in relations eventually found expression in Chinese court policy, events

such as the Ming invasion of the northern Việt region in 1406 reveal post-Song periods of Chinese uneasiness with these changes. Moreover, a study of how a Chinese empire and an independent Việt polity sought to come to terms with each other between the 10th and the 13th centuries has certain implications for the global community today. The great historiographical gulf between the official histories of these two nations provides striking evidence of continued differences. Of course, the modern world does not turn on 10th-century realities, and modern diplomacy lies squarely in the domain of political science. However, China and Vietnam, the remaining Communist powers of the Pacific Rim, continue to build on their special relationship. The origins of this relationship might indeed tell us something of its future course.

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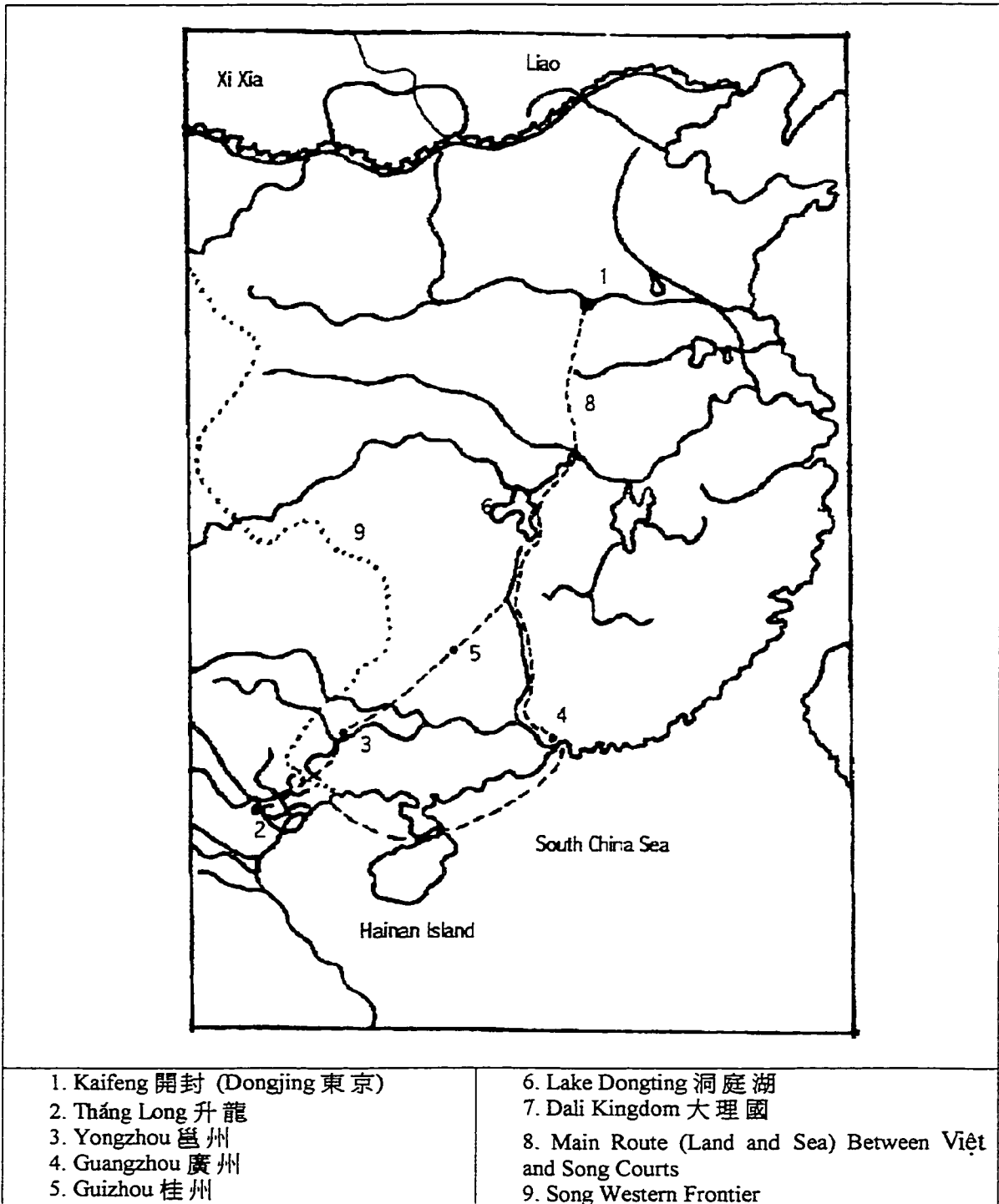
Zhou Cheng (18<sup>th</sup> cent.), *Song Dongjing kao (A Study of the Song Period Imperial Capital)* 宋東京考. Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1990.

LIST OF MAPS

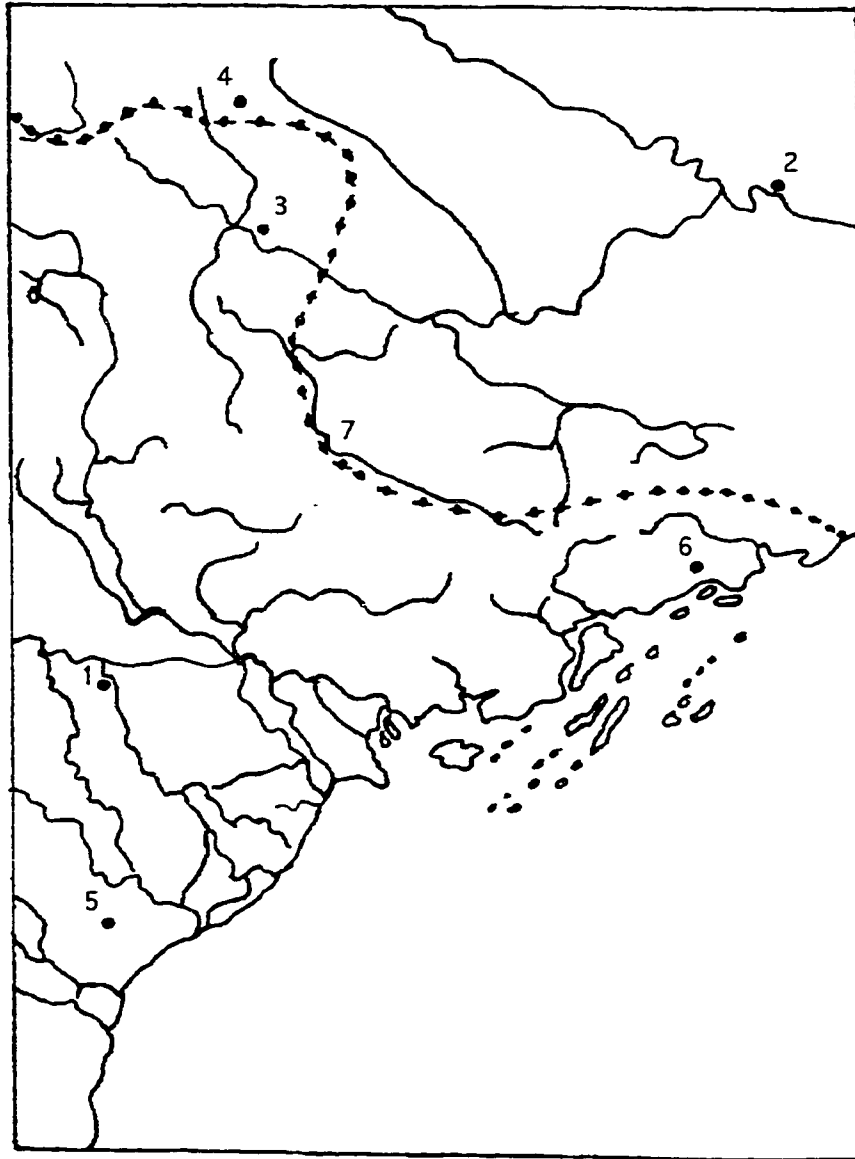
MAP 1. CHINA AND THE VIỆ T REGION DURING THE NORTHERN SONG PERIOD

MAP 2. FRONTIER REGION BETWEEN SOUTHWESTERN CHINA AND THE NORTHERN VIỆ T REGION

MAP 3. REGION AFFECTED BY THE NÙNG TRÍ CAO REBELLION

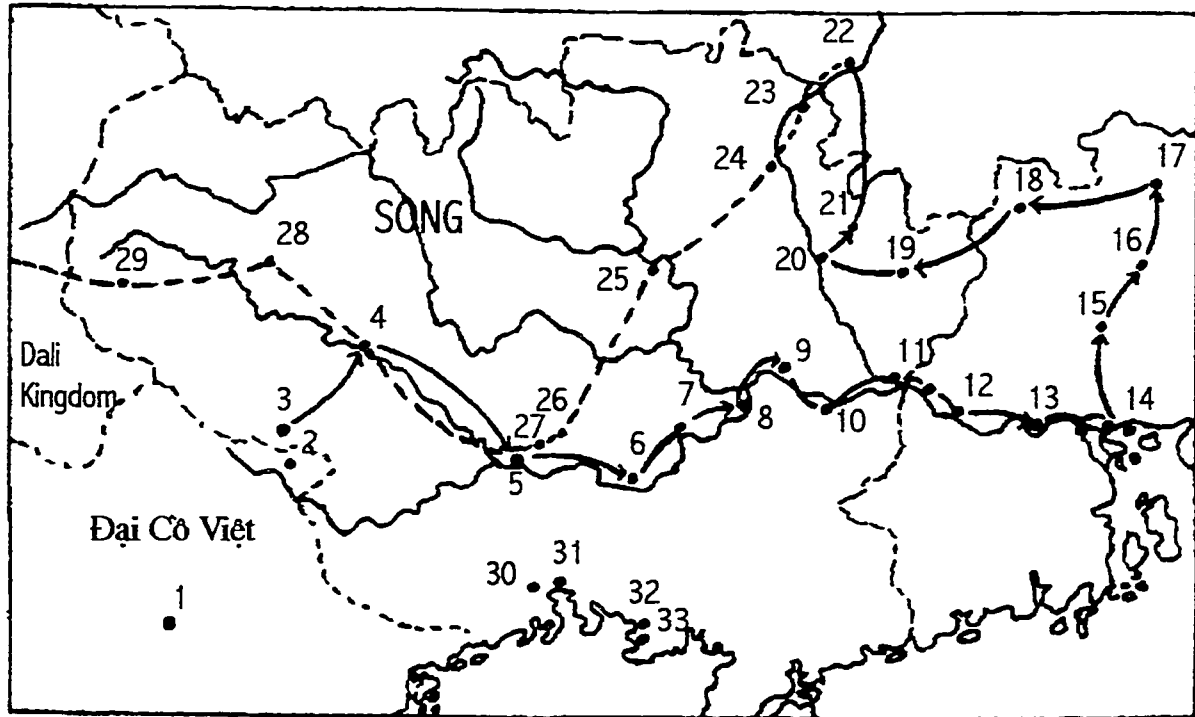


**Map 1.** Adapted from Hoàng Xuân Hãn. *Lý Thương Kiệt: Lịch sử ngoại giao và Tổng giáo triều Lý (Lý Thương Kiệt: A History of Song-Lý Foreign Relations)*. (Hà Nội, Sông Nhị, 1949), Map 2a.



1. Thăng Long 升龍
2. Yongzhou 邕州
3. Quảng Nguyên 廣源 Aboriginal Settlement
4. Anđezhou 安德州 Aboriginal Settlement, Site of Nùng Trí Cao's "Southern Heaven" Kingdom
5. Hoa Lư 花閭, site of Đinh and Lê courts.
6. Tô Mậu Prefecture 蘇茂州
7. Approximate Border between Song and Đại Việt by 1075

**Map 2.** Adapted from Hoàng Xuân Hãn. *Lý Thương Kiệt*. (1949), Map 3a.



- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Thăng Long 升龍                         | 18. Lianzhou 連州                |
| 2. Quảng Nguyên 廣源 Aboriginal Settlement | 19. Hezhou 賀州                  |
| 3. Anđezhou 安德州 Aboriginal Settlement    | 20. Zhaozhou 昭州                |
| 4. Hengshan Garrison 橫山寨                 | 21. Gongcheng 恭城               |
| 5. Yongzhou 邕州                           | 22. Quanzhou 全州                |
| 6. Hengzhou 橫州                           | 23. Xingan 興安                  |
| 7. Guizhou 貴州                            | 24. Guizhou 桂州                 |
| 8. Xunzhou 浔州                            | 25. Liuzhou 柳州                 |
| 9. Pingnan 平南                            | 26. Binzhou 賓州                 |
| 10. Tengzhou 藤州                          | 27. Kunlun 昆侖 Pass             |
| 11. Wuzhou 梧州                            | 28. Tianlin 田林                 |
| 12. Kangzhou 康州                          | 29. Temo 特磨 Aboriginal Circuit |
| 13. Duanzhou 端州                          | 30. Ruhong Garrison 如洪寨        |
| 14. Guangzhou 廣州                         | 31. Qinzhou 欽州                 |
| 15. Qingyuan 清遠                          | 32. Lianzhou 廉州                |
| 16. Yingzhou 英州                          | 33. Hepu 合浦 Seaside Garrison   |
| 17. Shaozhou 韶州                          |                                |

**Map 3.** Adapted from cartographic information in Hoàng Xuân Hãn, *Lý Thương Kiệt: Lịch sử ngoại giao và Tông giáo triều Lý* (*Lý Thương Kiệt: A History of Song- Lý Foreign Relations*). (Hà Nội, Sông Nhị 1949), Huang Xianfan, *Nong Zhigao*. 農智高 (Nanning: Guangxi Renmin, 1983), p. 29 and Jeffrey Barlow, "The Zhuang Minority Peoples of the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier in the Song Period" in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (Singapore) 18, no.2 (Sep 1987): 250-269.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. MAP OF THE NINE DOMAINS FROM THE *rites of Zhou* 周禮

FIGURE 2. SONG PERIOD 28 DIVIDED FIELDS 分野 MAP

FIGURE 3. SONG PERIOD DIVIDED FIELDS MAP WITH EARTHLY CORRELATES

FIGURE 4. SONG PERIOD MAP AN ILLUSTRATION OF PREFECTURES AND COMMANDARIES BEYOND THE INFLUENCE OF OUR DYNASTY  
本朝化外州郡圖



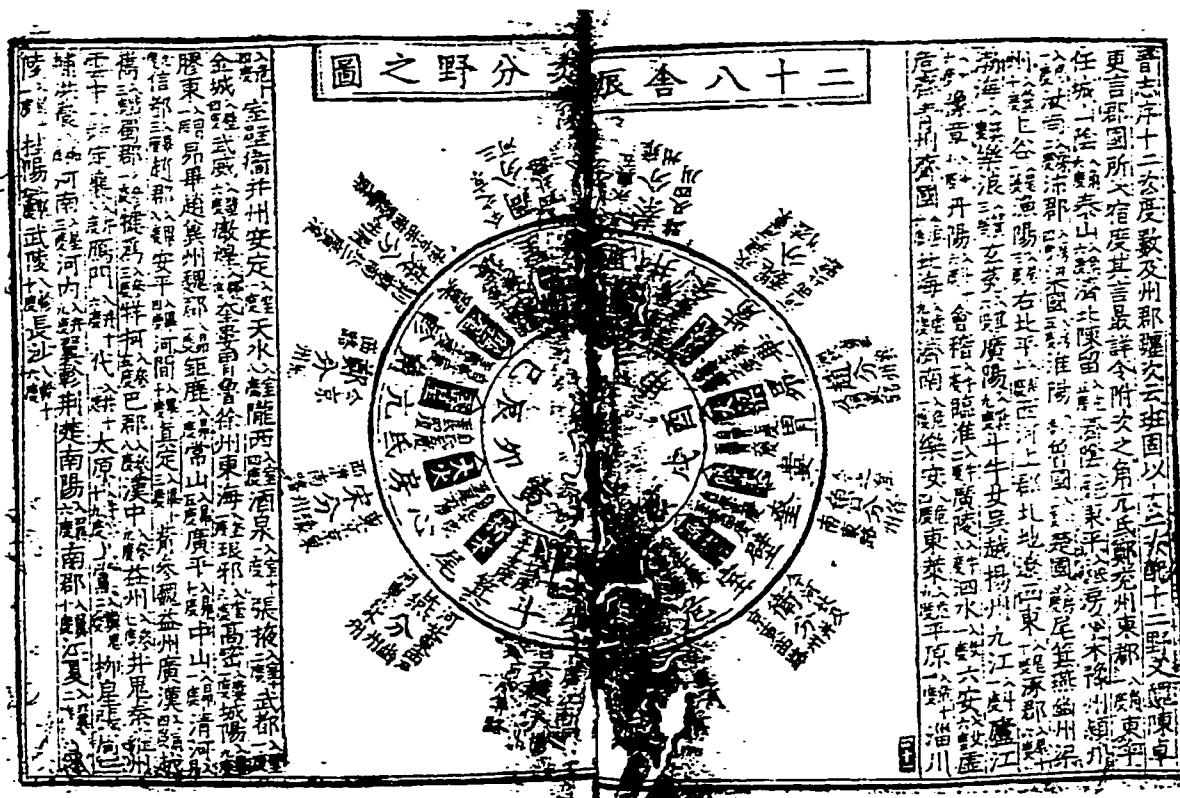


Figure 2. Song Period Edition Historical Atlas 宋本歷代地理指掌圖 (Toyo Bunko Edition) (Shanghai: Guji, 1989), pp. 82-83.

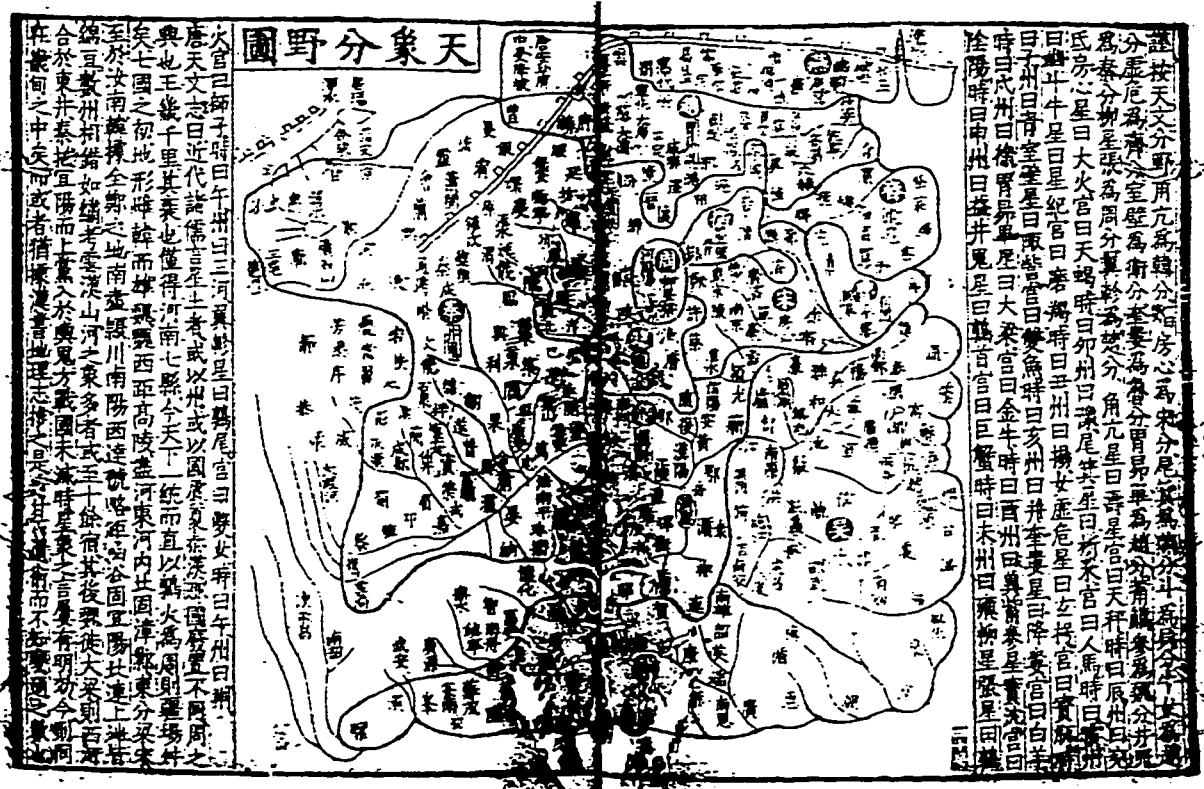


Figure 3. Song Period Edition Historical Atlas 宋本歷代地理指掌圖 (Toyo Bunko Edition) (Shanghai: Guji, 1989), pp. 80-81.

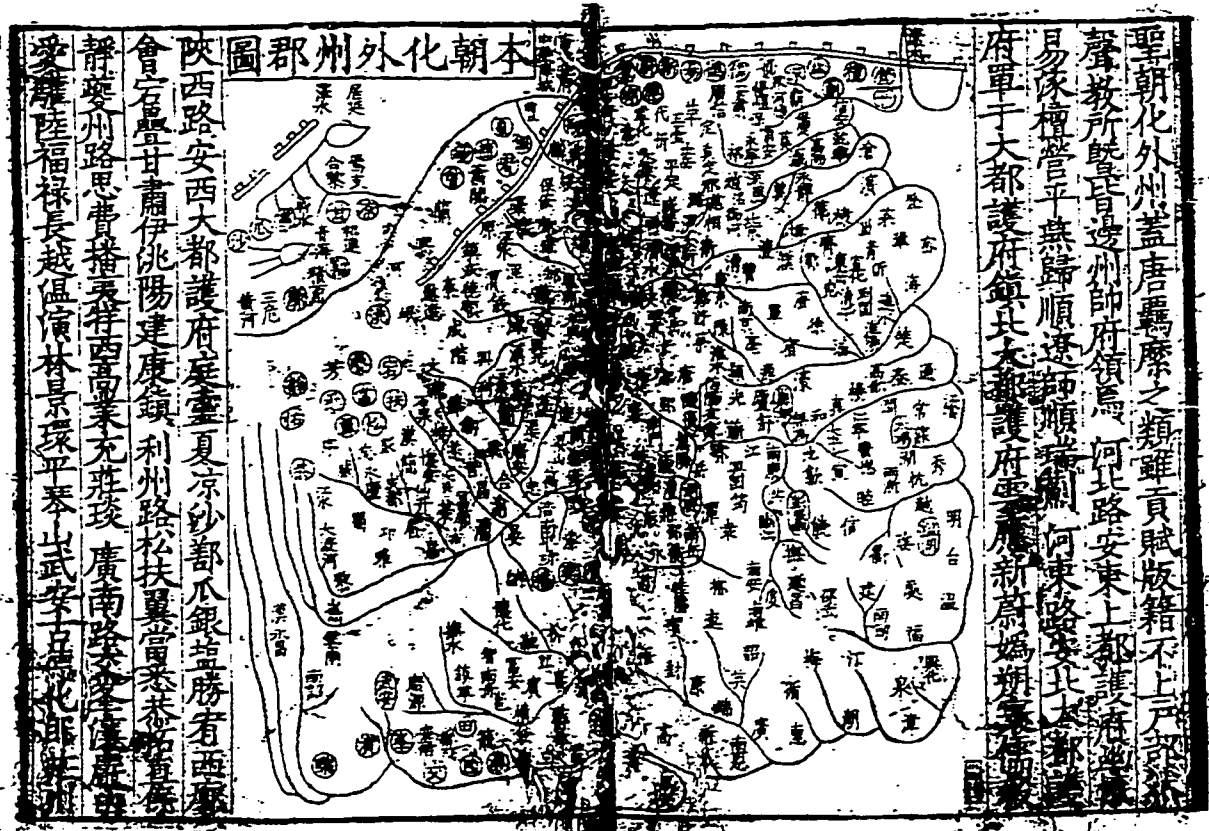


Figure 4. Song Period Edition Historical Atlas 宋本歷代地理指掌圖 (Toyo Bunko Edition) (Shanghai: Guji, 1989), pp. 80-81.

## APPENDIX

## A Chronological Account of Song Period Sino-Viet Relations

**Text:** *History of the Song Dynasty* 宋史, 488: 14057-72 (Biographies 列傳 Section #247, subtitled “Foreign Kingdoms 外國,” Section #4; The Giao Chỉ Kingdom)

**Author:** (Yuan) Toghto et al.

**Preface:**

The account of Sino-Viet relations found in *The Official History of the Song Dynasty* 宋史 (*Songshi*) is a composite work, compiled and edited largely for its own post-Song purposes, as official histories prior to the *Songshi* had also been approached. The collection as a whole has been described as a composite “annal-biography,” as opposed to chronicle style (*bianmian*) style familiar to many reader of pre-modern Chinese history, a prime example being *The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government* 資治通鑒 by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086).<sup>493</sup> The work was commissioned in 1343 under the last Yuan emperor Toghon Temur (r. 1333-1370), who kept largely removed from political activity, and was supervised by the Mongol chancellor Toghto 脫脫 (1314-1355), a leading advocate of Chinese learning at court. Toghto had taken his official position through coup d’etat in 1340; his

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<sup>493</sup> Lien-sheng Yang, “The Organization of Chinese Historiography: Principles and Methods of the Standard Histories from the Tang Through the Ming Dynasty,” in W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank, *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 45.

activist philosophy of governance, of testing Confucian values against traditional Mongolian practices,<sup>494</sup> was evident in his approach to this scholarly project.

However, the conditions under which the *Songshi* was compiled suggest that its overall tone remained largely faithful to Confucian-inspired world-view of the fallen Song court. Together with the Official Histories of the Liao and Jin dynasties, the *Songshi* was completed after two and a half years in 1345. To compile and edit court materials in a relatively short period of time, Toghto employed more than twenty scholars for the task, including Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄 (1283-1357), who was appointed Director of this project. Ouyang Xuan himself took the task of all final edits to the drafts of other historiographers, whenever interpretative disagreements arose. Ouyang Xuan, a highly regarded Hanlin scholar and a native of Liuyang 瀏陽 Prefecture in modern-day Hunan Province, presumably mollified any attempts to deviate from historiographical practices popularized by Tao Learning 道學 circles in southern China during the Southern Song period.

Moreover, scholars have argued that Mongol oversight of many private historiographical projects was modest, barring only direct attacks on Yuan legitimacy. As it has been suggested by one historian, “perhaps there was so little possibility of a revival of Song that the Mongols could afford to disregard purely literary expressions

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<sup>494</sup> Edward L. Dreyer, “Military Origins of Ming China” in Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (eds.) *The Cambridge of China: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1* Vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 59.

of Song loyalism.”<sup>495</sup> Due to the rapid compilation in a relatively lenient environment, the *Songshi* presumably still reflects the perspective held by the successive generations of Song emperors and high court officials.

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<sup>495</sup> Herbert Frank, “Some Aspects of Chinese Private Historiography in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” in W.G. Beasley and E.G. Pulleyblank, *Historians of China and Japan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 118.

## A Chronological Account of Song Period Sino-Việt Relations

### **Five Dynasties/ Twelve Lords Period:**

During the early Han dynasty, Giao Chỉ was originally part of the territory of Nam Việt. When the emperor Han Wudi pacified Nam Việt, he divided the territory into the nine commandaries of Đạm Nhĩ, Châu Nhai, Nam Hải, Thương Ngô, Uất Lâm, Hợp Phố, Giao Chỉ, Cự Chân, and Nhật Nam. The Han emperor appointed a Regional Inspector (*zishi*) to govern Giao Chỉ. Later, Han rulers gave the name Giao Châu to the territory, the Qin, Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen dynasties followed the foregoing practice of referring to it as the Giao Chỉ Commandary. When the Sui defeated the Chen ruling house, it eliminated the commandaries and established prefectures in their place. However, during the beginning of the Sui emperor Yangdi's reign (605-617), the court abolished prefectures and once again set up commandaries. During the middle of the Tang wude 武德 reign period (618-626), the court changed Giao Châu to an Area Command (*cengguanfu*). During the *zhide* 至德 reign period (756-758), the court renamed the territory “the An Nam Protectorate (*annan duhufu*).”

During the *zhenming* 貞明 period (915-921) of the Later Liang Dynasty, a local bravo Khúc Thừa Mỹ (fl. 908-30) took control of the territory, sending envoys to declare his submission to the Latter Liang's emperor Modi (Zhu Youzhen: r. 913-923). In response, the Later Liang emperor gave Khúc Thừa Mỹ a battle-ax as a token of his authority.

When Liu Zhi took the throne, he ruled Lingbiao (South China) and sent his commander Li Zhixu to attack Khúc Thừa Mỹ. Li captured the Việt ruler, and so took the land from Khúc Thừa Mỹ. Later, Dương Đình Nghệ (?-937) and Thiệu Hồng each took control of the Guangnan region, and they succeeded as the Military Commissioners (*jiedushi*) of Giao Chỉ. When Thiệu Hồng died, a prefectural commander Ngô Xương Ngập (?-954) unilaterally took unauthorized control of the area.<sup>496</sup> When Ngô Xương Ngập died, his younger brother Ngô Xương Vãn (?-965) inherited the region.

During the early *qiande* 乾德 period (963-968) Ngô Xương Vãn died. Following his death, a struggle for power broke out between local leaders, such as the military aide (*canmou*) Ngô Xứ Bình, the Phong Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Kiều Tri Hộ, the Vũ Ninh Châu Regional Chief Dương Huy, and the general (*yajiang*) Đỗ Cảnh Thạc.<sup>497</sup> Within Giao Châu, the twelve prefectures were in chaos. The frontier peoples responded to the clamor of these strongmen, themselves turning to banditry and attacking Giao Châu's settlements.

Before these events, Dương Đình Nghệ had appointed the general Đinh Công Trứ (?-?) to serve both as Hoan Châu's chieftain and as the "Area Commander

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<sup>496</sup> Ngô Xương Ngập was eldest of Ngô Quyền's four sons. Following their father's death, the son of Dương Đình Nghệ, Dương Tam Kha 楊三哥 drove the Ngô brothers from the court. The second-oldest brother Ngô Xương Vãn 吳昌文 drove out Tam Kha only to lose control to his older brother.

<sup>497</sup> This period of turmoil lasted from 945 to 967. The prefect of Phong Châu (today's Bạch Hạc County) is recorded in most sources as Kiều Công Hãn 矯公罕.

on Guard Against Foreigners (*yufan dudu*).” Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (923-979) was his son. When Đinh Công Trứ died, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh continued his command. During the period of the Twelve Lords, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and his son Đinh Liễn (?-979) led troops to attack and defeat Ngô Xứ Bình and the strongmen, subsequently dispersing the bandits and bringing peace to the border region. The Giao people were grateful for the Đinh clan’s deeds, and they made Đinh Bộ Lĩnh the leader of Giao Châu. Bộ Lĩnh adopted for himself the title of “Đại Thắng Vương 大勝王,”<sup>498</sup> and he installed his son Đinh Liễn as Military Commissioner. After three years, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh abdicated his office in favor of his son, Liễn.

#### **Northern Song/ Đinh Period:**

Đinh Liễn served for seven years. When he heard that the Lingbiao region had been pacified, he sent envoys to China to present tribute and a memorial acknowledging that his kingdom was an “interior dependency (*neifu*)” from the Song emperor.<sup>499</sup> The Song emperor ordered that Đinh Liễn, then serving as the self-appointed Military Commissioner of Giao Châu, be given the titles of acting “Grand Preceptor (*taishi*),” “Army of the Peaceful Sea (*jinghaijun*)” Military Commissioner,

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<sup>498</sup> According to Li Tao 李燾 in his annotated history *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 (*XZZTJCB*), the title that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh chose was “Vạn Thắng Vương 萬勝王.”

<sup>499</sup> The *DVSKTT* states that in the spring of 970, Bộ Lĩnh “sent envoys to the Song to foster good relations. At that time the Song had ordered General-in-chief (*dajiang*) Pan Mei 潘美 (925-991) to pacify Lingnan... For this reason, the order by Bộ Lĩnh was given.” See *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 1: 180). In this account, it appears that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, and not Đinh Liễn, was responsible for the order to present tribute, and that the order was clearly a response to the arrival of Pan Mei’s army in South China.

and An Nam Protector-general (*duhu*). The emperor also decreed that the attending envoys, Trịnh Tú and Vương Thiệu Tộ, be given the concurrent titles of acting Left-hand Chancellery Policy Advisor (*zuo sanqi changshi*) and Censor-in chief (*shidaifu*).

During *kaibao* 開寶/8 (975), the Việt court sent envoys to the Chinese court to present as tribute articles a number of rhinoceros and elephants, and a quantity of medicinal herbs. Intending to glorify and co-opt Bộ Lĩnh, the court sent down this edict.

Because you have led your local people to our leadership, we will respond with benevolence. To appreciate your entire lineage and assimilate (you into the tribute system), it is fitting (for us) to grant honorific titles to our subordinates. Officials at large who bow deeply (before the throne) with hands reverently clasped bring honor to their forebears with this superb performance of ceremony. Your clan, Bộ Lĩnh, has for generations been a prominent local family (*youzi*). You have the strength to protect your distant lands, while you also display an appreciation for Chinese customs (*huafeng*) by not forgetting to request “inner vassal” status from our court. As a result, the Nine Regions (*jiuzhou*) have been unified and the Five Peaks (*wuling*) are at peace. This area is limitless and huge, and its people wish to offer their treasures as gifts. I complimented your son and awarded him the rank of my *fan* border officer. Doing this, I reward his individual talents and upright behavior, and single him out as a role model for the common people to know of his loyalty. Moreover, you, as the senior family member, may at this time wear on your clothing a special insignia. You may accept the titles of ‘Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi*)’ and acting Grand Preceptor (*taishi*). You may also take the title ‘Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ (*Jiaozhi junwang*)’.

When Song Taizong (976-998) ascended to the throne, Đinh Liễn sent envoys to the Chinese court to present tribute and to congratulate him. When Đinh Bộ Lĩnh and Đinh Liễn died a short while later, Liễn’s younger brother Đinh Tuệ (974-1001) was still young. He therefore took the throne at a premature age. Đinh Tuệ took the

titles of acting Military Commissioner Adjutant (*jiedu xingjun sima*), serving concurrently as the temporary “Prefectural Commandant” (*lingjun fushi*). However, the powerful general Lê Hoàn assumed dictatorial powers, forming a faction in the Việt court that spread through the official ranks uncontrollably. Lê Hoàn abducted Đinh Tuệ, placed the Đinh clan under house arrest and replaced Đinh Tuệ as the local leader. When Song Taizong heard about these actions, he became angry and made the order to marshal troops. During the autumn of *taiping xingguo* 太平興國/5 (980), Taizong ordered Lanzhou Prefecture’s Military Training Commissioner (*tuanlianshi*) Sun Quanxing, the Armory Officer (*bazuoshi*) Zhang Xuan, and the Left Palace Gate Guard General (*zuojianmen weijiangjun*) Cui Liang, to lead a land-based force of soldiers and cavalry into the border region via the Yongzhou route. The emperor ordered Ningzhou’s regional chief Liu Cheng, the Adjutant Commissioner of the Armory (*junqiku fushi*) Jia Shi, and the Audience Usher for Court Service (*gongfeng guange menzhihou*)<sup>500</sup> Wang Zun to lead a sea-based forces of soldiers and cavalry into the border region by the Canton route.

#### **Northern Song/Former Lê Period:**

That winter, Lê Hoàn sent the Lieutenant (*yajiao*) Giang Củ Hoàng as an envoy to present articles of tribute at the Chinese court. The envoy presented the following statement in Đinh Tuệ’s name:

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<sup>500</sup> The character *ge* 合 in this title, as described in the *Songshi* text, is most likely an error. The proper *ge* character in this title is 關.

My clan was originally a barbarian and uncultured people, offspring of remote coastal dwellers. We formed tributary ties with your officials, and acted as an official government structure in our frontier region. My father and brother represented the Chinese court by serving as *kunqi* military officers (i.e. Military Commissioners), without losing the resolve to follow our plans to nurture feudal ties. When all of this was finally lost (with the assassination of my father and brother), the ruling house was going to collapse. Some of my advisors were aged and infirm. Therefore, all matters fell upon me. I temporarily acted to command the military to pacify the populace in the tribal regions. Their customs were crude and fierce, and they demonstrated a great insistence. If I refused to continue to act, I feared that they would have caused disturbances. I am already acting as the interim Military Commissioner Adjutant and concurrent Prefectural Commandant, but I would like to receive an official posting and designation as a fan border official. I entreat the glorious (Song) imperial household, and prostrate myself before you in fear of overstepping my charge.

Song Taizong received this statement, but he believed that Lê Hoàn just wished to prevent the deployment of Chinese forces. Therefore, the Việt envoy was sent home and his message was not answered. The imperial troops continued their attack, defeating a bandit force in excess of ten thousand men, and taking the heads of two thousand of the enemy. During the spring of the sixth year (981), the Chinese forces again defeated the bandits at the mouth of the Bạch Đằng River, taking the heads of more than a thousand enemy soldiers, and capturing two hundred warships along with thousands of pieces of armor. The Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) Hou Renbao (?-981) led the vanguard regiment into battle first, while Sun Quanxing and others halted their troops at Hoa Bộ for seventeen days to wait for Liu Cheng's sea-based forces. Hou Renbao again and again urged the others to advance, but they did not enter the Việt border region. When Liu Cheng arrived, the land forces and the

sea-based group entered Đa La Village at the same time, where they encountered the bandit forces. The Song army was forced to regroup, and they returned against orders to Hoa Bộ. Lê Hoàn craftily faked a surrender to entice Hou Renbao to come to him, at which point Lê Hoàn used the opportunity to assassinate Hou himself. The Tax Transport Bureau official Xu Zhongxuan quickly reported to the emperor the news of these events and the emperor recalled the troops. The emperor dispatched an official to the front line to interrogate Liu Cheng, Wang Cuan, and Jia Shi. Liu Cheng died shortly from illness, while Jia Shi and the others were executed at Yongzhou. When Sun Quanxing reached the capital, he was summarily imprisoned and executed. The remaining officials' punishments were allotted individually, according to each official's responsibility in the defeat, as their faults were considered to be less serious. Hou Renbao was given the posthumous title of Vice Director of the Ministry of Works (*gongbu shilang*).

During the spring of the seventh year (982), Lê Hoàn was afraid that the Song court would eventually pursue its military expedition and destroy him, so he again used Đinh Tuệ's name when he sent envoys to the Chinese court to present tribute, as well as to "beg forgiveness for his crimes." During the eighth year (983), Lê Hoàn appointed himself as the acting Deputy Commissioner of Chiao-chou (*sanshi liuhou*), and sent envoys to present tribute at the Chinese court. At the same time, Lê Hoàn announced that he would allow Đinh Tuệ to return to the throne. The Song emperor made the following reply to Lê Hoàn:

The succession of Đinh rulers has lasted for three generations, protecting the whole region. Since you have already received their care and patronage, and (in turn) have acted as the backbone of their administration, should you follow the wishes of your countrymen, do not fall short of the true aims of the Đinh clan. I therefore command that Đinh Tuệ take the title of ‘generalissimo 統帥’ and you be posted at a position secondary to his. You are entirely responsible for the administration of the court. Until Đinh Tuệ is crowned and is able to establish himself, your assistance and authority of leadership will be enhanced. As long as you demonstrate respect for and loyalty toward the Đinh clan, there is nothing for which I will blame you. Although Đinh Tuệ shows no talent for leadership, his nature remains child-like. However, his offspring will lose their inherited rank and his shortcomings will be detailed in the annals of imperial rulers. If Đinh Tuệ loses his ruling authority, and he is demoted to the rank equal to a foot soldier, the principle governing Song-Việt relations will not followed in this way, and your life will not be in peace. When my orders arrived at your court, you should permit Đinh Tuệ’s mother, his sons, and his relatives and his servants all to come to my court. When they have all arrived at court, it will then be the proper time for me to set a date for granting them titles. I will then give you a ceremonial ‘tail-banner’ (*jiemao*). These are the two options. You should carefully consider and choose one of them. When Đinh Tuệ arrives at the capital, he will necessarily receive the highest level of ceremony. I will now send the Palace Servitor (*gongfengguan*) Zhang Zongquan to pass along my orders, so that you may understand my concerns.

At this time the emperor gave a copy of the same order to Đinh Tuệ. However, Lê Hoàn had already taken possession of the territory, and he did not obey the Chinese ruler’s order. During May of the same year, word came to the court that Cham elephant and equine cavalry troops, following both sea and land routes, had entered and plundered Giao Chi. Lê Hoàn led his troops to defeat and drive the Cham forces back, with approximately one thousand of the enemy captured or killed.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> The *XZZTJCB* provides some context for these events. In late 982, the Việt court reportedly wished to present 93 Cham war captives to the Song court. The Chinese emperor ordered officials at Guangzhou to stop the transport of these captives across the border. The local officials then provided clothing and other provisions to the Cham prisoners and ordered that the group be returned to Champa,

During *yongxi* 雍熙/2 (985), Lê Hoàn sent the lieutenants Trường Thiệu Phùng, Nguyễn Bá Trâm and other envoys to present tribute at the Chinese court. The Việt mission made a formal request for official sanction to administer the Giao Chỉ region as a frontier region Defense Command (*jiezhen*). During the autumn of the third year (986), Lê Hoàn again sent a tribute mission to the Song. The Song prefect of Danzhou reported that Pu Luo-e, a subject of Champa, was leading a group of more than one hundred followers. The group requested the protection of “interior dependency” status from China, citing harassment by Giao Châu. During October of the same year (986), Song Taizong made the following statement.

Being a ruler involves establishing the supremacy of the emperor while showering favor on the barbarian border officials. Rulers set up residence in the capital, as a means of carrying out the rituals of unity. The rich soil of our empire is used to reward displays of heroism from vassals. Now from still more corners (of the palace) are streamers flying, indicating our capacity for arranging and regulating the tribute assistants, and serving as a model for leading our troops with ease. Therefore, there is an advantage in setting up a system of feudal lords, without forgetting the respect shown by requesting orders and setting up the ceremony for treating guests. The temporary *sanshi* Capital Liaison Representative<sup>502</sup> Lê Hoàn has taken both property and troops as a special endowment for his loyalty and sincerity. He is able to gain the hearts of his subjects, and carefully follow the protocol befitting a border official. Earlier, Đinh Tuệ was at a young age, and he was ignorant of the ways of policy-making. Lê Hoàn as the closest relative, monopolized control over the military. He called out orders and came forth himself, practicing

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and passed along an imperial greeting to their ruling prince (*wang*). Thereupon, the Cham court sent envoys mounted on elephants to bear tribute up to the Song court. However, the emperor ordered that the elephants be left in South China (*XZZTJCB* 23: 531). The *XZZTJCB* also reported that on October 23, 983 Lê Hoàn sent a tribute mission to the Song court (*XZZTJCB* 24: 553).

<sup>502</sup> Hucker describes this position as belonging to an official who maintains communication between the central government and the local leader of a regional base, such as a military commissioner. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 317. It is unclear how the preceding title *sanshi* functions here, although it may serve as an honorific “leading.”

threats and clemency together. Đinh Tuệ still wields the authority of a *sanshi* official, following the wishes of the common people. Because Lê Hoàn sends tribute from afar and sincerely submitting to our leadership, I wish to grant him the ceremonial banner. When the Shi Xie's frontier service was sensible, we transformed the local ways (*su*) of the Yue people, and reduced them in importance as well.<sup>503</sup> Commandant Tuo (Triệu Đà) was submissive, and he was rewarded by Han imperial order for not rebelling. It is fitting that Lê Hoàn be recognized as a "Rectified in Leadership" barbarian chief (*zhengyuan rong*), and that he should be counted among the ranks of the associated feudal lords. As a result of receiving these titles, Lê Hoàn will be expected to control and soothe the unrefined barbarians, and spread the grace of Heaven. I grant them the titles 'Acting Grand Guardian (*jianjiao taibao*), Messenger With Imperial Insignia (*shichijie*), Commander-in-chief of Giao Châu's military forces (*dudu Jiaozhou zhujunshi*), Commander-in-chief of An Nam (*Annan dudu*), Acting Pacified Sea Army Military Commissioner (*chung jinghai jun jiedu*), and Surveillance And Supervisory Commissioner of Giao Châu under Imperial Aegis (*Jiaozhou guannei guanacha chuzhi dengshi*).' I also grant the honorific titles 'Feudal Lord of Jing-chao Commandary (*jingzhao junhou*).' I will also offer a land grant (*shiyi*) of three thousand households. Moreover, I will present Lê Hoàn with the titular designation 'Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng zunhua gongchen*).'

The Song emperor sent as envoys the Left Rectifier of Omissions (*zuobuque*) Li Ruozhuo and the Erudite of the National University (*guozhi boshi*) Li Jue to present this news.

During *duangong* 端拱/ 1 (988), the Chinese emperor added to the list of Lê Hoàn's positions the title "Acting Grand Guardian" (*jianjiao taiwei*). The emperor presented a fief to Lê Hoàn of one thousand households, along with a "substantive fief

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<sup>503</sup> Shi Xie served as prefect of Nhật Nam 日南 region under the Han emperor Huan 漢桓帝 (r. 147-67). During his rule local Han-Việt families maintained private armies for control and protection. As the historian Keith Taylor notes "from the Chinese side, Shi Xie stood as a frontier guardian; from the Vietnamese side, he was the head of a regional ruling-class society (Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, p. 71)."

(*shifeng*)<sup>504</sup> of five hundred households. The Song court sent as envoys the Director of the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu liangzhong*) Wei Xiang and the Vice Director of the Bureau of Forestry and Crafts and Director of the Historiography Institute (*yubu wailangzhi shiguan*) Li Du to the Việt court to make this presentation.

During the summer of *chunhua* 淳化/1 (990), the Chinese emperor added to Lê Hoàn's titles the prestige epithet "Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*)," a fief of one thousand households, and a "substantive fief" of four hundred households. The Chinese emperor sent as envoys the Left Exhorter (in the Remonstrance Bureau) and Auxiliary in the Historiography Office (*zuozheng yanzhi shiguan*) Song Gao and the Right Exhorter and Auxiliary in the Historiography Office (*youzheng yanzhi shiguan*) Wang Shice to make the presentation to the Việt court. During June of the next year, when the envoys returned to the Chinese court, the emperor ordered that a record of Giao Chi's geographical features and an account of Lê Hoàn's activities be written down for all to hear about. Song Gao and other officials made the following report.

In late autumn last year we reached the border with Giao Châu. Lê Hoàn sent the Vice Palace Commander (*ya neidu zhihui shi*) Đinh Thừa Chánh and others on nine war-vessels, leading three hundred men comprising the "Army of Great Peace (*taipingjun*)" to greet us. By way of a harbor we entered the high seas, which we crossed through high winds and billowing waves. This was a perilous undergoing. In half a month we reached the Bạch Đằng River. Taking a short cut through the tidal creeks, we rode the tide waters and moved forward. Our quarters consisted of three humble cottages and barracks, repaired to appear to be new, which were used as mess halls and

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<sup>504</sup> The Chinese court gave the gift of a "substantive fief (*shifeng*) to favored officials and titled personages. While some fiefs include only titles, without taxable lands, *shifeng* grants offered a specified number of households and the tax revenue accrued for the official's benefit.

horse courier stations. When we arrived at Trường Châu, we had reached the Việt native land. Lê Hoàn displayed an array of troops as a show of his vanity, a show that must be seen as bragging on his part. The ships and troops that streamed forth endlessly were fear inspiring, and Lê Hoàn called the force the 'Glorious Army (*yaojun*).'<sup>505</sup>

From that evening we marched to the seashore, and finally to Giao Châu, which was almost fifteen *li* away. There we found five reed pavilions, given the title 'The Reed Byway Courier Station (*maojingyi*).' We arrived at the city after traveling one hundred *li*. Lê Hoàn's staff drove his countrymen's cattle, but they were called 'Official Cattle (*guan niu*).' The cattle numbered no more than a thousand; however, it was announced that there were one hundred thousand animals.

Lê Hoàn also led a group of people thrown together in military ranks, wearing uniforms made of multi-colored cloth, traveling in ships, and beating on drums. The mountains near the city were arrayed with white banners to project the appearance that there were troops deployed there. The crowd rushed Lê Hoàn forward, and they set up the welcome ceremony on the outskirts of the city. Lê Hoàn drew the horses to our side and bowed, and after he finished inquiring about the emperor's present condition, he took up his reins and moved forward with the group. From time to time, he offered us betel, which was consumed on horseback. This custom is a genuine honor when treating guests.

Inside the city there are no residents, but instead there are several hundred bamboo and reed buildings, which are used as military barracks. Government offices are also small and confined, but they are given the title 'Gate of Enlightened Authority (*mingde men*).'

Lê Hoàn's disposition is ugly and his eyes are small. He himself said that recently, while fighting with local bandits, he had fallen from his horse and had injured his foot. Therefore, when he received the Song imperial orders, he did not prostrate himself in respect. After staying over at the ceremony site for two nights, the Việts then set out a banquet feast. We again went down to the tidal creeks, which was regarded to be a trip for the amusement of their guests. Lê Hoàn walked in his bare feet, and had carried a bamboo staff into the water to spear fish. Every time he caught a fish, his followers would all cheer with great commotion. At each of the banquets, those people preparing to take their seats were all ordered to remove their belts together and to don hats. Lê Hoàn wore a red robe covered with silk knots tied in floral designs, and his hat was adorned real pearls as ornaments. Sometimes

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<sup>505</sup>As noted by the modern editors of the *Songshi*, in the annotated accounts of this Việt force included in the *XZZTJCB* (*chuan* 31) and *Tong Kao* (*chuan* 330: *siyikao*), the character 耀 in 耀軍 was omitted.

he sang a song, making a toast with his cup of wine, but we were unable to understand the words of his tune.

Lê Hoàn commanded a large group of men to carry in on their shoulders large snakes, several *zhang*<sup>506</sup> in length, and offered these as food to our officials. Lê Hoàn remarked, ‘If you are able to eat these, then you ought to accept these offering as delicacies.’ He also bound and sent two tigers, which were prepared for viewing by the gathering. These presents were all rejected by our delegation, and not received.

The Việt officers and soldiers number only three thousand men, and they are all branded on the forehead with the slogan ‘The Heavenly Army (*tianzi jun*).’ Grain rations consist of a measure of grain given daily.<sup>507</sup> They are ordered to grind their own grain to make their meals. Military weaponry consist of only long-bows and cross-bows, wooden shields, “shuttle spears,” bamboo spears; these items are weak and not of use.

Lê Hoàn is ill mannered and cruel, and he remains intimate with vulgar individuals. Of his closest eunuchs, five to seven of them are alternately by his side. He likes to eat and drink, and to play drinking games for fun. Those officials who were good at drinking games were promoted. For those who make small mistakes, he will have them killed, or will have them struck across the back one hundred to two hundred times. As for visiting officials and aides who show disapproval for Lê Hoàn, he would whip them 30 to 50 times and have them demoted with the lowly designation of ‘doorkeeper lackey (*hun li*).’ After his anger subsided, he would restore these officials to their former posts.

There exists a wooden tower, which was constructed in a simple and crude fashion. One day Lê Hoàn requested to accompany others to the top to take a look around. This place never experiences chilly weather. Although it was already late autumn, persons wearing lined garments needed to fan themselves.

During the fourth year (993), the emperor granted Lê Hoàn the title “Commandary Prince of Giao Chi (*Jiaozhi junwang*).” During the fifth year (994), Lê Hoàn sent the military aide (*yajiao*) Phí Sùng Đức to the Chinese court to perform official tribute relations. However, Lê Hoàn was deceitful by nature. He took

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<sup>506</sup> One *zhang* is approximately 11.75 feet (Mathews, p. 21).

advantage of the fact that the surrounding mountains and seas insured that his kingdom was not easily accessible to the Song court, and he repeatedly plundered the border region. Gradually he lost his adherence to the ideal behavior of a *fan* border official.

During the spring of *zhidao* 至道/1 (995), the Guangnan Western Circuit Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) Zhang Guan and the Qinzhou Prefecture Ruhong Defense Command Township's Supervisor of Militia (*bingma jianya*) Wei Zhaomei jointly presented a report to the Song emperor, stating that in Yongzhou more than one hundred warships from Giao Châu had attacked the Ruhong Defense Command Township, assaulting the local people and stealing produce from the granaries before leaving.<sup>508</sup> In the report Zhang noted that during that summer Lê Hoàn's officials from Tô Mậu Châu Prefecture led a village force of five thousand men to plunder Luzhou, which was a prefecture under Yongzhou's jurisdiction. The Song Chief Military Inspector (*duxunjian*) Yang Wenjie defeated the attackers and drove them away. Emperor Taizong was determined to relieve tensions among these people of this distant land that served the Song empire, so he did not wish to ask who was at

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<sup>507</sup> As noted by the modern editors of the *Songshi*, the *XZZTJCB* account cites that 日給 should be 月給.

<sup>508</sup> The *DVSKTT* account reads differently. This account notes that Lê Hoàn sent an envoy Đỗ Hành 杜亨 to lead an embassy to the Song court. At that time the Song was afraid that this embassy was an invading army. Meanwhile, Lê Hoàn was shut off by the sea and mountains, and he neglected to follow his border people, who subsequently launched an attack on the Song border region. The Song officials Zhang Guan and Wei Zhaomei presented their memorial reporting on this Việt attack, and they are quoted as placing the blame squarely on the Giao Chi authorities. See *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 1: 194.

fault.<sup>509</sup> Moreover, Zhang Guan announced that rumor had it that Lê Hoàn had been driven by the Đinh clan into exile, and that Lê Hoàn now only led a peripheral group who resided between the mountains and the sea. Having lost their lands, members of Lê Hoàn's group were forced to provide for themselves by plundering. Zhang then announced that Lê Hoàn himself had now already died. He then extended his congratulations to the Song emperor.

Emperor Taizong then ordered the Aide to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichangcheng*) Chen Shilong and the Eunuch of High Rank (*gaopin*)<sup>510</sup> Wu Yuanji to travel to Lingnan to spy on the Việt court's activities. Chen Shilong and the others made their reports, confirming the statements of Zhang Guan. In fact, however, Lê Hoàn was still alive. Zhang Guan and the others were not able to investigate the original rumor. Soon afterwards, there was a group of big merchants who traveled to Giao Chỉ and returned to the Song, all saying that Lê Hoàn was in command as had originally been the case. The Chinese emperor ordered that charges be brought against Zhang Guan and the others; however, when it was discovered that Zhang Guan

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<sup>509</sup> As the *DVSKTT* account notes; "The Song emperor intended to bring peace to the region, and he didn't desire to deploy his troops. Therefore, he dismissed this event, and did not make an inquiry. He heard the false news that the emperor (i.e. Lê Hoàn) has been driven out by the Đinh clan, who pushed out the last of his followers to live between the mountains and the sea (along the northern coast?). The report maintained that this group had turned to robbery to supply themselves, but they now had been dissolved. Zhang Guan and the others had this report to the emperor, with their congratulations." See *DVSKTT* (1984) BK 1: 194.

<sup>510</sup> Hucker notes that the full title for this position is *neishi gaopin* 内侍高品.

had died from illness, Wei Zhaomei, Chen Shilong, and Wu Yuanji were punished in his place.

Earlier, there was an incident involving three Defense Command townships in Qinzhou prefecture, Ruhong, Duobu, and Ruxi, all of which bordered on the seashore. When Bộ Văn Dũng and his followers from Giao Châu's Triều Dương Township committed a murder, they all fled to Ruxi, where the Defense Commander (*zhenjiang*) Huang Lingde and others gave them shelter. Lê Hoàn ordered Triều Dương's Defense Commander Hoàng Thành Nhã to carry an official dispatch (for the Chinese authorities) to China to apprehend the fugitives. Huang Lingde, however, did not turn over the criminals; therefore, for many years, these pirates robbed and plundered the region.

During the second year (996), Song Taizong appointed the Vice Director of the Ministry of Works (*gongbu yuanwailang*) and Auxiliary in the Historiography Institute (*shiguan*) Chen Yaosou to the temporary post of Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) to send him with an imperial edict to Lê Hoàn's court. When Chen arrived in South China, he sent Leizhou's Haikang Acting District Defender (*wei*) Li Jianzhong to question Lê Hoàn and to present the Chinese court's message. Chen traveled to the Ruxi Defense Command, where he found out about the case of Bộ Văn Dũng, then in hiding. Chen captured Bộ Văn Dũng and one hundred and thirty of Văn Dũng's followers, including both men and women, young and old. Chen requested that the Triều Dương Việt officials take custody of the captives, but warned them not

to inflict cruel punishments on them. Hoàng Thành Nhã took custody, and formally thanked Chen Yaosou for his help. Subsequently, Lê Hoàn sent a message of fervent gratitude to the Song emperor. At the same time Lê Hoàn had twenty-five pirates captured and presented to Chen Yaosou. Moreover, Lê Hoàn reported to Chen that Việt officials had already met with the Khê Đổng aboriginal leaders, who had given reassurances that they would not cause disturbances.

During July of that year, Song Taizong sent the Director of the Ministry of Receptions (*zhuke liangzhong*) and Auxiliary in the Institute for the Glorification of Literature (*zhaowenguan*) Li Ruozhuo to present an edict to the Việt court. Acting as an interim State Courier-envoy (*guoxinshi*), Li planned to present a beautiful jade belt as a gift for Lê Hoàn. When Li Ruozhuo arrived at the Việt court, Lê Hoàn came out to the outskirts of the city to welcome the envoy. However, Lê Hoàn's manner was particularly rude and overbearing, and he said to Li, "Those who plundered Ruhong Defense Command were, in fact, *Man* barbarian bandits from beyond our borders. Does the emperor know that these were not troops from Giao Châu, or not? If I truly gave Giao Châu the order to rebel, I would first attack Fanyu, and then attack Min (i.e. the region of Fujian) and Yue (Jiangnan?). Why would I only stop at Ruhong!"

Li Ruozhuo calmly replied to Lê Hoàn;

When the emperor first heard about the attack on Ruhong Defense Command, he didn't know where the attackers came from. However, you, sir, were promoted to the position of Giao Châu's Military Commander, and are bound to the obligations of the appointment. Therefore, you should be loyal

and honest as repayment. With your handling of the search for those pirates, the outcome was very clear. Yet, Chinese high officials have made recommendations that the Chinese court build up its military forces to calm the sea lanes in the southern region. Today, there is the issue involving the pillaging of the *Man* barbarian bandits. This matter is due to the fact that Giao Châu is not capable of controlling the situation by itself. So, leading officials have proposed that the Chinese court send several tens of thousands of crack troops to join Giao Châu soldiers in destroying the bandit forces, to spare both Giao Châu and the Guangnan regions this disastrous situation. However, the Song emperor said to me ‘Do not put this plan into practice without thinking carefully about it. I worry that Giao Châu’s leader cannot understand our court’s edicts, and that such an action will frighten them. Why not just authorize Lê Hoàn to send an expedition to attack the pirates. Their force should be sufficient to calm down the region gradually.’ Therefore, we are not going to send troops at this time.

When Lê Hoàn heard this news he was stunned by the message, and he stood upright, saying,

The pirates attacked our border, the fault lay with the acting official (Lê Hoàn himself). August Lord, you are lenient and merciful, and your compassion is greater than that of my own parents, as you will not execute me as a result of my liability. From today on, I will carefully follow the contract of my acting official duties, to protect the region of Trường Hải forever.

Lê Hoàn then faced north and kow-towed in thanks to the Song emperor.

When Song Zhenzong came to the throne, he granted Lê Hoàn the titles “Prince of the Southern Pacification (*nanpingwang*)” and probationary “Princely Attendant (*shizhong*).” Lê Hoàn sent the Supreme Commander (*duzhi bingma shi*) Nguyễn Thiệu Cung and the Vice Commander (*fushi*) Triệu Hoài Đức to present as tribute to the Chinese court; one gold, silver, and “seven-jewel”-encrusted chair, ten silver bowls, ten rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks, as well as fifty bolts of fine

cloth. The emperor ordered that these articles be displayed in the “Imperial Pavilion (*wansuidian*)” at the shrine to Song Taizong, and allowed Nguyễn Thiệu Cung and the other Việt envoys to approach the shrine in worship and pay their respects to the deceased emperor. When they returned to court, the emperor gave the envoys an armored horse for Lê Hoàn, along with an edict comforting and praising the Việt ruler.

In *xianping* 咸平/4 (1001), Lê Hoàn sent the Adjutant (*xingjun sima*) Lê Thiệu and the Vice Adjutant (*fushi*) Hà Khánh Thường to the Song court to offer as tribute; one tamed rhinoceros, two elephants, two elephant *peng*, and one “seven-jewel”-encrusted vase. During the same year the Qinzhou administration reported that a group of people from Giao Châu’s Hiệu Thành Tràng market town, including the leader of “the eight prefectures” Hoàng Khánh Táp and several hundred others, arrived at the border to submit themselves to Song authority. The Song emperor sent word that he sympathized with their desires, but he also ordered that they be sent back to their home region.

The administrator of Guangnan’s Western Circuit reported that Lê Hoàn had received a report of local conditions from the re-appointed envoy (*guan gaoshi*) Hoàng Thành Nhã, and had then dispatched a memorial to the Song court. The Guangnan administrator noted that because the Song court had now bestowed its grace on the Việts, he wished to send envoys directly to the Việt territory to show favor for the “seaside peoples.” In the past, when envoys reached Giao Châu, Lê Hoàn

used the excuse of having to care for these guests to impose harsh taxes on his people. When the emperor heard this news, he only instructed Song border officials to call upon local Viêts to approach the throne for imperial orders, and did not continue to send envoys.

In *jingde* 景德/1 (1004), Lê Hoàn sent his son Lê Minh Đê, who was serving as the interim Regional Chief (*zishi*) of Hoan Prefect, to lead a tribute mission to the Song court. Through his envoys, Lê Hoàn entreated the Chinese court to increase its benevolence by sending envoys directly to Giao Châu as a sign of favor to distant kinsmen. The Song emperor allowed this, and thereafter acknowledged Lê Minh Đê in his position as Hoan Châu's Regional Chief. During *jingde* 景德/2 (1005), the emperor held a large banquet during the Lantern Festival, and presented Lê Minh Đê with a gift of money. The emperor ordered that Lê Minh Đê, together with the envoys of Champa and Arabia, be given a great feast. For this event, the emperor sent the Vice-Director of the Ministry of Works (*gongbuyuan wailiang*) Shao Hua to act as the interim State Courier-envoy (*guoxingshi*).

In *jingde* 景德/3 (1006), Lê Hoàn died, and his position was passed to his middle son, Lê Long Việt (983-1005). Lê Long Việt's older brother Lê Long Toàn proceeded to plunder the royal reserve and disappeared from the capital. Thereafter, his younger brother Lê Long Đĩnh (985-1009) killed Lê Long Việt and established himself as the ruler. Lê Long Đĩnh's older brother Lê Minh Hộ led the troops stationed

at Phu Lan Trại Stockade into the ensuing military struggle. Lê Minh Đê, due to the chaos in the country, was unable to return home, so the Song emperor sent out special orders, instructing the local government at Guangzhou offer the Việt envoy unprecedented assistance. The Guangzhou's prefect Ling Ce and other local officials made the following report:

All of Lê Hoàn's sons are competing to take over as ruler, and the general populace will most certainly rebel. The local leaders Hoàng Khánh Tạp and Hoàng Tú Man are among several thousands of people who disobeyed the Việt court's troops, and the Hoàng was massacred by court troops for challenging Lê authority. Survivors have arrived at the border to surrender and pay allegiance to the prefectural government of Lianzhou. The Hoàng leaders petitioned the Lianzhou prefectural authorities to dispatch two thousand men to the Giao Châu to assuage the upheaval, while Hoàng Khánh Tạp and others showed their desire to assigned to the vanguard of this force.

Song Zhenzong believed Lê Hoàn had in the past been loyal and obedient to the Chinese court, frequently practicing official tribute protocol. Therefore, the emperor did not desire to allow his troops to take advantage of the chaos and attack those in mourning. He consequently changed the title of the State Courier-envoy (*guoxingshi*) Shao Hua to the "Destiny Sea Pacification Commissioner (*yuanhai anfushi*).” He ordered that his views be made explicit to everyone.

Hoàng Khánh Tạp and the others then counted the population under their jurisdiction, and distributing land and food to these people. Chao Hua presented a letter to the Giao Chỉ court, instructing them to take heed of the Song's "awesome power" (*wei de*). He noted that if the quarreling parties continued with their corrupt ways by continuing to stall in choosing a leader for the Việt throne, the Chinese court

would send a small force of troops to take the wrong-doers to task, and the Lê clan would be utterly wiped out. Lê Minh Hô was frightened by this news, and he made Lê Long Đĩnh one of his leading military leaders. Lê Long Đĩnh himself took the title of Military Commissioner (*jiedu*), adopted the name “Enlightened Prince (*kaimingwang*),” and then revealed his intention to present tribute to the Chinese court. When Zhao Hua heard about these developments, he remarked “the far-away and unrefined foreigners have different ways 俗, and they don’t understand the practice of ritual 禮. How could this fact not be strange?”

The emperor ordered that these fraudulent officials be removed. Chao Hua then noted that the local leader Hoàng Khánh Táp had from the start avoided participating in the rebellion, but instead had “come to China to be transformed by Chinese culture 歸化.” Chao contended that Hoàng Khánh Táp's number of followers was still quite large, and if these people were to be sent back to their home region, then they might face being massacred. The emperor then ordered that Hoàng Khánh Táp be given the petty official position of “Grade Three Lictor (*lisanban*),” and that he be given a post at Chenzhou. The emperor then permitted Hoàng Khánh Táp to enter the court to present tribute.

During *jingde* 景德/4 (1007), Lê Long Đĩnh named himself as the interim An Nam “Army of the Peaceful Sea” Deputy Commander (*Annan jinghaijun liuhou*). He sent his younger brother the Fengzhou Regional Chief (*zishi*) Lê Minh Sưởng and

the Aide to the Assistant An Nam Chief Secretary and Palace Administrator (*fushi Annan changshu jitian zhongcheng*) Hoàng Thành Nhã and others to present tribute at the Chinese court. The Song emperor organized a large banquet in the Pavilion of Cherishing Brightness (*hanguangdian*). The emperor knew that Hoàng Thành Nhã would be seated at the far end of the banquet table, and the Chinese ruler wished to heighten the Việt envoy's official position at court. The emperor consulted with his Grand Councilor (*zaixiang*) Wang Dan about this matter. After considered this problem, Wang Dan remarked,

In ancient times, Zi Chan visited the court of the Zhou ruling house. The Chou ruler gave his party a large feast, following the highest level of ritual. Zi Chan, however, firmly declined this observance of high ritual. Thereafter, he was treated to a lesser observance of ritual before returning home. The emperor and his court's spirit of harmony has reached the far-off lands, and we treat our guests with special care, so that there will be no grounds for uneasiness.

At that point, the emperor raised Hoàng Thành Nhã's rank to that of Grade Five in the Department of State Affairs (*shangshusheng*).

The emperor ordered that Lê Long Đĩnh be honored with the prestige title "Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*)," and the titles of Acting Defender-in-chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Acting "Army of the Peaceful Sea" (*jinghaijun*) Military Commissioner (*jiedu*) and Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner (*guan cha chuzhi dengshi*), An Nam Protector-general (*Annan duhu*) and Concurrent Censor-in-chief (*yushi dafu*), and the honorific designation of Supreme Pillar of State (*shangzhuguo*). The emperor then gave him the title of Giao Chỉ Commandary Prince (*Jiaozhi junwang*), granting

Lê Long Đình a fief of three thousand households, and a “substantive fief” of one thousand households. The Chinese ruler also awarded Lê Long Đình the honorific title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng shunhua gongchen*),” awarded the Việt ruler the appellation “most loyal” (*zhizhong*), titles represented by the bestowal of a emblem-staff (*jingjie*). The emperor also granted Lê Hoàn the posthumous rank of Secretariat Director (*zhongshuling*) and the posthumous title of Prince of Nam Việt (*Nanyuewang*). The emperor had the names of the envoys Lê Minh Sưởng and the others entered into the rolls of official rank.

During *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/1 (1008), the “Heavenly Order” was sent down. The emperor granted Lê Long Đình the title “Venerated and Successful Official (*yidai gongchen*),” along with a fief of seven hundred households and a “substantive fief” of three hundred households. When the granting of “Eastern Fiefs (*dongfeng*)” was finished, the emperor gave Lê Long Đình the title of “Most Loyal” Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*zhizhong tongping zhangshi*), as well as a fief of one thousand households and a “substantive fief” of four hundred households.

During *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/2 (1009), Guangnan Western Circuit’s administrator reported that the *Man* barbarians of Qinzhou<sup>511</sup> had robbed the Tanka boat people (*danhu*) in the harbor. The Ruhong Citadel’s leader Lý Vạn Trứ led

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<sup>511</sup> In the accounts of this episode found in *SHY* 4: 28 and *XZZTJCB* (*juan* 71), the place name Qinzhou was not included.

a squad of seasoned troops to attack and pursue the bandits. However, while crossing the seas, Lý Vạn Trú was shot dead by a stray arrow. The emperor ordered that the court of An Nam capture these bandits. The next year (1010), Việt forces caught thirteen members of the Địch Lão ethnic group, and presented the captives to the Chinese court.

Lê “Most Loyal” Long Đình then sent Administrative Assistant (*tuiguan*) Nguyễn Thủ Công to present following tribute; rhinoceros horn, elephant tusks,<sup>512</sup> gold and silver, a striped bridal veil. At this time, Nguyễn Thủ Công also presented one tamed rhinoceros. Emperor Zhenzong regarded the rhinoceros to be by nature a creature from a alien land, and so it would not be possible to feed and care for the animal. Therefore, the emperor did not wish to receive this gift. However, he also did not want to offend the Viet ruler, with his good intentions. When the Việt envoys had departed, the Chinese emperor had the animal released by the seaside.

During *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/3 (1010), the Việt ruler sent envoys to the Song court. The envoy made a request for a full suit of armor for the Việt ruler, and the Song emperor approved his request. The Việt envoy also asked that trade between the Song and Giao Chỉ be permitted at Yongzhou. When Yongzhou’s Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) official made this request known to the emperor, Song Zhenzong replied: “Many of the people who live by the seaside have suffered from the

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<sup>512</sup> At this point the *Songshi* compilers used the character *chi* 齒. While this term could well refer to “teeth,” I have chosen to translate it as “tusk,” as I have done for the character *ya* 牙.

plundering and raiding of Giao Châu. Therefore, I had earlier allowed only trade between Lianzhou and the Ruhong Citadel, so that it would be possible to control this section of the border. The region now in question involves territory right beside the Song interior. This change in trade would certainly not benefit us.” The emperor ordered that the old precedents should remain in place.

Lê “Most Loyal” Long Đình was at that time twenty-six years old. Due to his cruel and lawless style of rule, the kingdom people did not pay allegiance to him. The senior officer (*dajiao*) Lý Công Uẩn acted as Long Đình’s close advisor. Long Đình made Công Uẩn an honorary member of the Lê clan. In that year (1010?), Lý Công Uẩn plotted against Lê “Most Loyal” Long Đình, and rose up against him. Lý Công Uẩn killed Lê Minh Đê , Lê Minh Sưởng, and others, declaring himself to be their successor (as emperor Lý Thái Tổ) and sending envoys to the Chinese court to present tribute. The Song emperor commented, “Lê Hoàn was not righteous, but he was able to receive imperial sanction. Lý Công Uẩn has imitated Lê Hoàn in his wrong-doings. This is really to be detested!” However, the emperor believed that that the Việt’s barbarian customs were not worth complaining about, so he followed the earlier example set by recognizing Lê Hoàn. The Song ruler ordered that Lý Công Uẩn should receive the prestige title “Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*),” and the titles of Acting Defender-in-chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Acting “Army of the Peaceful Sea” (*jinghaijun*) Military Commissioner (*jiedu*) and Surveillance and Supervisory

Commissioner (*guan cha chuzhi dengshi*), An Nam Protector-general (*Annan duhu*) and Concurrent Censor-in-chief (*qian youshihdifu*), and the honorific designation “Supreme Pillar of State (*shangzhuguo*).” The emperor then gave him the title of Giao Chỉ Commandary Prince (*Jiaozhi junwang*), as well as a fief of three thousand households and a “substantive fief” of one thousand households. The Chinese emperor gave the new Việt ruler the honorific title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng shunhua gongchen*).” Lý Công Uẩn also asked for imperial writings in the hand of Song Taizong, and the Song emperor that one hundred scrolls be delivered to the Việt court.

#### **Lý Period:**

During *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/4 (1011), the Song emperor worshipped at the *Fenyin* Earth Altar (*houtu*) grounds. Lý Công Uẩn sent the Administrative Assistant to the Military Commissioner (*jiedu panguan*)<sup>513</sup> Lương Nhâm Văn and a Surveillance Commission’s Inspector (*guan cha xunguan*) Lê Tái Nghiêm to bring tribute articles to the Song court. Once the rituals had concluded, Song Zhenzong gave Lý Công Uẩn the title Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*tongping zhangshi*), as well as a fief of one thousand households and a “substantive fief” of four hundred households. Lương Nhâm Văn and the others were entered in the rolls of official rank.

During the summer of *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/5 (1012), Song Zhenzong appointed Giao Chi's Memorial Transmitter-envoy (*jinzoushi*) Lý Nhân Mỹ to the position of Thành Châu's Regional Chief (*zishi*), and he appointed Đáo Khánh Văn to the position of Aide to the Chamberlain for Ceremonials (*taichangcheng*). However, several followers of these officials died of illness en route to their posts, and the gifts bestowed on them by the court were returned to their families. That winter, the orders of the "August Ancestor" were sent down. Song Zhenzong gave Lý Công Uẩn the additional title "Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi*)," along with a fief of seven hundred households and a "substantive fief" of three hundred households. The Chinese emperor awarded Lý Công Uẩn the honorific title "Venerated and Successful Official (*yidai gongchen*)."

During the spring of *dazhong xiangfu* 大中祥符/7 (1014), the Chinese emperor gave Lý Công Uẩn the additional honorific title "Preserver of Temperance, Guardian of Rectitude, and Successful Official (*baojie shouzheng gongchen*)," along with a fief of one thousand households and a "substantive fief" of four hundred households. The emperor then commanded that Giao Chi and all of tributary states come forward to present tribute, with all lodging and food for the envoys being taken care of by the Song court. That year Lý Công Uẩn sent the Đường Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Đáo Thạc and others to present tribute. The Chinese emperor

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<sup>513</sup> According to Hucker, this position was an ad hoc official assignment for officials appointed to another position. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 144.

commanded that Đáo Thạc be appointed Thuận Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*), serving concurrently as Adjutant (*xingjun sima*) of An Nam's "Army of the Peaceful Sea (*Annan jinghaijun*).” Đáo Thạc's assistant (*fushi*) Ngô Hoài Tự was appointed Trùng Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*), serving concurrently as Aide to the Military Commissioner (*jiedufushi*).

Before this, Giao Châu's Địch Lão member Trường Bà Khán, avoiding criminal punishment, fled to China. The prefect of Qinzhou, Mu Zhongying, first summoned the Việt fugitive to his post. However, en route to the prefectural seat he once again changed his mind and declined the summons. The Chief Military Inspector (*duxunjian*) Cangsi then ordered that the Ruhong Citadel be offered a bounty reward of cattle and wine. Giao Châu officials had been secretly monitoring the situation, and to capture the Địch Lão fugitive, they bribed the officials at the Ruhong Citadel, who then seized both people and animals in great numbers.

The Chinese emperor ordered Lý Công Uẩn, in his capacity as the interim Supervisor of the Tax Transport Bureau (*zhuanyun sidu*), to investigate this matter. The Song court then ordered that the Chinese border agents from that point on could not bait *Man* barbarian Địch Lão people into rekindling the disturbance. Lý Công Uẩn continued from time to time to bring tribute to the Chinese court.

During *tianxi* 天禧 /1 (1017), the Chinese emperor granted Lý Công Uẩn the title "Prince of the Southern Pacified Region (*nanpingwang*)," adding a fief of one

thousand households and a “substantive fief” of four hundred households. During *tianxi* 天禧/2 (1018), the Chinese emperor gave Lý Công Uẩn the added post of Acting Defender-in-chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), accompanied by a fief of one thousand households and a “substantive fief” of four hundred. With each offering of new titles, both sides sent envoys to their respective sides of the border, where the emperor gave Lý Công Uẩn sacrificial vessels and currency, imperial robes, a gold belt and an armored horse.

When Song Renzong ascended to the throne, he granted Lý Công Uẩn the title Acting Grand Preceptor (*taishi*). Lý Công Uẩn sent the Trưng Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Lý Khoan Thái and the Aide to the Protector-general (*duhu fushi*) Nguyễn Thủ Cương to present tribute to the Song court. During *tiansheng* 天聖/6 (1028), Lý Công Uẩn sent the Hoan Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Lý Công Hiến to present tribute. Renzong had Lý Công Hiến appointed to the position of Tỵ Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*). Lý Công Hiến then sent some younger members of this clan, including his son-in-law Trần Thừa Quý, to lead people into China to plunder the border territory. The emperor ordered that the Tax Transport Bureau head (*zhuanyunsi*) of Guangnan Western Circuit assemble a militia of able men from the region’s aboriginal settlements to attack and capture the offenders.

Lý Công Uẩn soon passed away. He was forty-four years old.

His son Lý Đức Chính (Lý Phật Mã, Lý Thái Tông) (1000-1054) named himself as the interim Capital Liaison Representative (*quanzhi liuhoushi*) to his father, sending envoys to China to announce his father's death. The Chinese emperor granted Lý Công Uẩn the posthumous appellation “most loyal (*zhizhong*)” and the title “Prince of Nam Việt (*Nanyuewang*).” The Song ruler then ordered the Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) of Guangnan Western Circuit Wang Weizheng to act as the Envoy for Sacrifices and Libations (*jidiانشi*). Wang was also given the position of Envoy for Appointment Verification (*guangaoshi*). The emperor gave Lý Đức Chính the titles Acting Defender-in-Chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Military Commissioner of the “Peaceful Sea Army” (*jinghaijun jiedushi*), Protector-general of An Nam (*Annan duhu*), and Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ (*Jiaozhi junwang*). During *tiansheng* 天聖/9 (1031), Lý Đức Chính sent the Phong Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Lý Ac Thuyên and the Ái Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Xuất Nhật Tân, among others, to go to the Chinese court to express the Viet ruler's thanks. The Chinese emperor granted Lý Ac Thuyên the title of Hoan Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*), and granted Xuất Nhật Tân the title of Trân Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*).

During *mingdao* 明道/1 (1032), Lý Đức Chính dispatched a mission to Kaifeng to express his “humble thanks” to the Chinese court. The emperor granted Lý Đức Chính the title Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*tongzhongshu menxia pingzhangshi*). During the middle of *jingyou* 景祐 (1034-

1038), a Commandary leader (*jun*) Trần Công Vinh, along with six hundred followers, requested “interior dependency” status from the Song court. Lý Đức Chính sent a military force of more than one thousand men to the border region to capture and pursue Trần Công Vinh’s followers. The Song emperor ordered that Trần Công Vinh and his followers return to their home region, but he then warned Lý Đức Chính, in this case, not to kill any of Trần Công Vinh’s men. Lý Đức Chính sought to send tribute to the Song, sending the Army of the Peaceful Sea (*jinghaijun*) Administrative Assistant to the Military Commissioner (*jiedu panguan*) Trần Ứng Ky and the Chief Secretary (*zhangshuji*) Vương Duy Khánh. The Chinese emperor granted Trần Ứng Ky the title Companion to the Heir Apparent (*taizi zhongyun*), and he granted the title Assistant Minister to the Court of Judicial Review (*dali sicheng*) to Vương Duy Khánh. Lý Đức Chính received the title Acting Grand Preceptor (*taishi*).

During *jingyou* 景祐/3 (1036), the Việt *Man* inhabitants of Giáp Đông, Lương Châu, Môn Châu, Tô Mậu Châu, Quảng Nguyên Châu, Đại Phát Đông, and Đan Ba Huyền attacked and plundered the Yongzhou prefectures of Silingzhou, Xipingzhou, Shixizhou, including all of the aboriginal settlements. The intruders robbed the inhabitants of their horses and cattle, and set fire to their dwellings before leaving. The Chinese emperor ordered that those persons responsible be interrogated. Moreover, he ordered that the leaders of the attack be captured and that the punishment of their wrong-doing be made known by all.

During *baoyuan* 寶元/1 (1038), the emperor Renzong granted Lý Đức Chính the title Prince of the Southern Pacified Region (*nanpingwang*). During *kangding* 康定/1 (1040), Lý Đức Chính sent the Phong Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*) Xuất Dụng Hòa and the Prefectural Assistant (*jiedufushi*) Đỗ Đo Hưng to present tribute at the Chinese court. During *qingli* 慶曆\*/3 (1041), Lý Đức Chính sent the Prefectural Assistant (*jiedufushi*) Đỗ Khánh An and the Attendant of the Three Ranks (*sanban fengshi*) Lương Tài to the Chinese court. The Chinese emperor gave Đỗ Khánh An the title of Thuận Châu Regional Chief (*zishi*), and he gave Lương Tài the title Left Gate Guard Commandant to the Heir Apparent (*taizi zuojian menshuai fushuai*).

During *qingli* 慶曆/6 (1046), the Việt ruler sent the Vice Director of the Bureau of Military Appointments (*bingbu yuanwailang*) Tô Nhân Tộ and the Palace Servitor to the Express Courier Office (*dongtou gongfengguan*) Đào Duy Cổ to the Song court.<sup>514</sup> The emperor gave Tô Nhân Tộ the title of Director of the Headquarters Bureau in the Ministry of Works (*gongbu langzhong*), and he gave Đào Duy Cổ the title of Palace Nobleman (*neidian chungban*). The next year (1047), Lý Đức Chính sent the Assistant Director of the Palace Library (*bishu cheng*) Đỗ Văn Phủ and the Left Palace Attendant (*zuoshijin*) Vạn Xương to the Chinese court. The emperor gave

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<sup>514</sup> The *Songshi* account records Duy Cổ's name as Đào Duy Hoàn 陶惟權. Cited in *XZZTJCB* 164: 3949.

Đỗ Văn Phủ the title Vice Director of the State Farms Bureau (*tuntian yuanwailang*), and he gave Vạn Xương the title Palace Noble (*neidian chungban*).

Earlier, Lý Đức Chính had sent troops to conquer Champa . The Song court suspected that the Việts had a hidden plan in their campaign. The court ordered that local officials check on all sixteen routes established between China and the Việts region since the Tang. Furthermore, the Chinese emperor ordered the Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) Du Qi to cross into this strategic region and erect defenses. However, the Việts regiment did not try to attack the border area. At around this same time, a Việts mission offered a tamed elephant as tribute to the Chinese court.

During *huangyu* 皇祐/2, (1050), local officials in Yongzhou enticed Bộ Thiệu Tư, Bộ Thiệu Kham, and over three thousand people from Tô Mậu Châu to enter and reside in the region under Song supervision. Lý Đức Chính appealed to the Chinese court, regarding the allurement of his people. The Song emperor then halted their movement and had the people returned to Giao Chỉ. However, he also ordered Lý Đức Chính to suspend the border trade, in order to prevent plunder and intrusions on both sides of the border.

After these events, a local inhabitant of Quảng Nguyên Châu, Nông Trí Cao, led a revolt. Lý Đức Chính sent twenty thousand troops along the sea route into China to assist the Song imperial forces. The Chinese court showed its appreciation for the

Viet leader's offer, but it refused to accept the help of Viet troops. During *zhihe* 至和/2 (1055), Lý Đức Chính died.

His son Lý Nhật Tôn (Lý Thánh Tông: 1054-1072) sent envoys to announce the news of his father's death to the Song court. The Chinese emperor sent the Kungnan Western Circuit's Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*), "Minister (*shangshu*)," and Vice Director of the State Farms Bureau (*tuntian yuanwailang*) Su Anshi to act as the "Envoy Bearing Posthumous Honors (*diaozengshi*)." The emperor conferred on Lý Đức Chính the titles "Most Loyal (*shizhong*)" and Prince of Nam Việt (*Nanyuewang*), as well as contributing a great deal of wealth for the expenses of the former Việt leader's funeral. Moreover, the Chinese emperor gave Lý Nhật Tôn the prestige title "Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*)," and the titles Acting Defender-in-Chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Military Commissioner of the "Peaceful Sea Army" (*jinghaijun jiedushi*), Protector-general of An Nam (*Annan duhu*), and Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ (*Jiaozhi junwang*).

During *jiayou* 嘉祐/3 (1058), the Việt court sent the tribute of two unusual beasts. During *jiayou* 嘉祐/4 (1059), Việt troops plundered Qinzhou's Sibingguan command. During *jiayou* 嘉祐/5 (1060), Việt forces, together with Giáp Đông village residents, plundered Yongzhou. The emperor commanded the Guizhou prefect Xiao Gu to assemble a division of troops, and, with the Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyunshi*) Song Xian and the Judicial Commissioner (*tidian xingyu*) Li Shizhong to mount an

overwhelming attack. The Chinese emperor also ordered the Military Commissioner (*anfushi*) Yu Jing and others assemble troops for the purpose of surprising and punitively attacking the Viet intruders. Yu Jing sent spies to Champa to persuade (Cham forces) to join Guangnan Western Circuit's troops in invading Giao Chỉ. Lý Nhật Tôn became apprehensive, and he sent word to the Song emperor that he was "awaiting punishment" for his actions. The emperor ordered the demobilization of his assembled army, and allowed Lý Nhật Tôn's tribute offering to reach the capital.

During *jiayou* 嘉祐/8 (1063), Lý Nhật Tôn sent the Crafts Institute Commissioner<sup>515</sup> (*wensishi*) Mai Cảnh Tiên and the Assistant Secretary of the Court of Judicial Review (*fushi dali pingshi*) Lý Kế Tiên to present nine trained elephants to the Song court. During the *wuyin* 戊寅 day of the fourth month<sup>516</sup> of *jiayou* 嘉祐/8 (May 7, 1063), the Chinese emperor bestowed on Lý Nhật Tôn edicts by the hand of the late Song emperor, as well as bequeathed personal effects. The emperor then conferred on the Việt ruler the additional title Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*tongzhongshu menxia pingzhangshi*). On that same day, the Việt envoy departed the Song court. The emperor ordered the Notary of the Palace Domestic Service (*neishisheng yaban*) Li Jihe<sup>517</sup> to notify the Việt envoy that Thàn Thiệu Thái had entered and plundered Chinese territory. Officials in Guangxi Western Circuit

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<sup>515</sup> Hucker notes that this institute was commonly staffed by eunuchs. See Hucker, *Official Titles*, p. 568.

<sup>516</sup> The *Songhuiyao* notes that "fourth month" had originally been "fifth month" (*fan-i* 4: 34))

repeatedly asked for permission to send a military expedition to strike back. However, the Chinese court considered *Thần Thiệu Thái* to be a reckless and crazy individual. As the Việt court had already sent envoys to beg forgiveness for its transgressions, the emperor did not wish to call up his troops.

During the beginning of *zhiping* (治平: 1064-1068), the Guizhou Prefect Lu Shen reported that *Giao Châu* representatives had come to China seeking *Nùng Tông Dán*'s son *Nùng Nhật Tân*, and that these officials had wanted to take possession of the *Wenmendong* Aboriginal Region and other areas. The Chinese emperor asked for evidence specifying which year *Giao Chủ* had separated from the Chinese empire. A leading official replied, "from the middle of the *zhide* (至德: 756-758) period of the Tang, the emperor changed the status *An Nam* to a protectorate. During the middle of *zhenming* (貞明: 915-921) period of the Liang, the local strongman *Khúc Thừa Mỹ* controlled this land." Han Qi said, "Because *Lê Hoàn* rebelled against Song orders, Song Taizong sent troops to punish and attack him. *Lê Hoàn* did not yield, so the emperor later sent officials to beckon and beguile the Việt ruler, and *Lê Hoàn* then began to act obediently. *Giao Châu*'s mountain passes are steep and not easily accessible, and in that region there is a climate of pestilential mists. Although we may take possession of the region, I'm afraid that we cannot defend it."

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<sup>517</sup> This name could be a corruption of the name of the Việt envoy *Lý Kế Tiên*.

When Song Shenzong came to the throne, he granted Lý Nhật Tôn the title Prince of the Southern Pacified region (*nanpingwang*). During *xining* 熙寧/1(1068), the Chinese emperor awarded the Việt ruler with the honorific title of “Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi*).” During *xining* 熙寧/2 (1069), Lý Nhật Tôn reported to the Song, stating; “Champa has long been remiss in presenting tribute to the Chinese court. I wish to assemble troops to launch a punitive attack on them and to capture their king.” The Chinese emperor commanded that the Việt envoy Quách Sĩ An be given the title “Vice Commissioner of the Six Residences (*liuzhai fushi*)” and the official Đào Tông Nguyên be given the title Palace Noble (*neidian chongban*). Lý Nhật Tôn gave himself the position of emperor (*di*) of his kingdom, and overstepped his authority by adopting the titles “Patterned on Heaven (*fatian*),” “Man of the Hour (*yingyun*),” “Lofty, Compassionate, and Most Virtuous (*chungren zhida*),” “Blessed and Accomplished Dragon (*qingchenglong*),” “Blessed with an Heroic Martial Spirit and Erudition (*xiangying wuruiwen*),” “Respected, Virtuous, and Sage Emperor (*zunde shengshen huangdi*).” Lý Nhật Tôn honored Lý Công Uẩn with the title “August Ancestor and Glorified Martial Emperor (*taizu shenwu huangdi*).” He adopted the name “The Great Việt (*Da Yue*)” for his kingdom, changed the reign period to *baoxiang* 寶象 and then changed it again to *shenwu* 神武 (thereby dropping the practice of referring to the Song’s current reign period).

During April of *xining* 熙寧/5 (1072), Lý Nhật Tôn died. The Chinese emperor ordered that the Guangxi Fiscal Commissioner (*-huanyunshi*) Kang Wei to act as the “Envoy Bearing Posthumous Honors (*diao-zenzshi*).” Concerning the prefectures and counties seized by Song troops but returned to the Viêts...,<sup>518</sup> the emperor issued the following command,

You, my nobleman, as the administrator of Cochi (*Nanjiao*), have for generations maintained a hegemony over this region. However, you have now lapsed in virtue by disobeying my orders and by robbing the border towns. You have cast aside the notions of paying heed to your ancestors and to assumptions of loyalty and obedience. And you have added annoyance for this court by launching your attack. Your troops have advanced deep into Song territory, and they are on the verge of heading home only after becoming exhausted. The signs of their crimes are many, and there is no need to list more of your transgressions. Now you are sending envoys to re-establish tribute relations. I have examined your messages, and opinions. Clearly, you have repented. I am in charge of a myriad of kingdoms, and I do not distinguish between those kingdoms close at hand and those far away. However, I see the people of Yongzhou and Qinzhou, displaced by fire and theft, long ago lost their native lands. I will wait until I have sent these people back to their border region before I give Quảng Nguyên and the other lands back to Giao Châu.

Lý Càn Đức (Lý Nhân Tông: 1066-1128)<sup>519</sup> first agreed to return three prefectures, along with one thousand officials. It was a while later when he sent a group of 221 persons to the Song. Men over the age of fifteen all bore the tattoo saying “Heavenly Army (*tianzi bing*)” and men over twenty bore the mark “conscripts of the Southern Court (*tounanchao*).” Women bore the tattoo “official guests

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<sup>518</sup> According to the modern compilers of the *Songshi*, this section is a sentence fragment referring to the lands lost by the Viêt court during their border war with the Song in 1077. At this point there appears to be a gap in the original *Songshi* text.

(*guanke*)” on their left hands. They used boats to carry their belonging, sealing the doors and windows with mud. In the middle these vessels they placed bright lanterns. By day they traveled ten to twenty *li* before stopping, but they pretended to report to one another with drum signals. It was several months before they arrived in China, perhaps due to the long distance of the sea route.

Xunzhou is located in the extreme southern region, under the protection of Wu Garrison (*chen*). Due to the dense fog and pestilent conditions, and many inhabitants of the garrison died of illness. Tao Bi actually died while posted in that region. The court knew that this area was of no use, so the Chinese negotiator returned a total of four prefectures and one county. However, Quảng Nguyên was formerly attached to the Yongzhou administration region as a *loose rein* aboriginal district. It originally did not belong to Giao Chi.

During *yuanfeng* 元豐/5 (1082), Việt envoys presented two tamed elephants and one hundred pieces of rhinoceros horn and elephant tusk as tribute to the Chinese court. During *yuanfeng* 元豐/6 (1083), under the pretense of pursuing Nùng Trí Hội, Việt troops attacked Guihuazhou. The Việt ruler sent his official Lê Vạn Thịnh to the Guangxi Western Circuit to dispute sovereignty over the border regions of Xunan and Guihua. The Military Commissioner (*jinglueshi*) Xiong Ben sent the Left River (*Zuojiang*) Region’s Military Inspector (*shunjian*) Cheng Zhuo to debate

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<sup>519</sup> The *XZZTJCB* mentions that in Lý Càn Đức’s name, Đức 德 had originally been Thuận 順 (*juan* 349).

with Lê Vạn Thịnh. Lê Vạn Thịnh was designated as an official from a tributary state (*peichen*), and he did not dare contest Song control. The emperor considered that Lê Vạn Thịnh be able to abide by the Lý Càn Đức's intention to express respect and loyalty, offering the Việt envoy a robe and belt, along with five hundred bolts of thick *chuan* silk. The emperor then decided that the area beyond the Eight Passes (*ba ai*), the six counties of Baole, and the two aboriginal settlements of Susang be given to Lý Càn Đức.

When Zhezong came to the throne (1086), he gave Lý Càn Đức the additional title Jointly Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery (*tong-hongshu menxia ping-hangshi*). During the middle of *yuanyu* (元祐: 1086-1094), the Việt court again showed its intention to request the Wu-e and Wuyang aboriginal settlements from the Chinese court. The emperor ordered that he would not allow this. During *yuanyu* 元祐/ 2 (1087), the Việt court sent envoys with tribute, and the emperor gave the Việt ruler the title Prince of the Southern Pacified Region (*nanping wang*).

During the reign of Song Huizong, the emperor added the titles “Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi*)” and Acting Grand Preceptor (*taishi*). During the beginning of *daguan* (大觀: 1107-1110), Việt tribute officials came to the capital asking to be allowed to trade for book materials; however, there were Chinese officials who said that the law would not permit this. The emperor ordered that their request be

respected, and that, with the exceptions of banned books, divination texts, Taoist texts, calendar guides, numerological texts, military treatises, officer manuals, current administrative manuals, books on border installations, and geographical texts, all other books be allowed to be purchased.

During the end of *zhenghe* (政和: 1111-1118), the Chinese emperor announced that because the people of Giao Chi, from the *xining* 熙寧 period onward, had all not caused any disturbances, he would permit a specified relaxation on prohibitions against border trade. During *xuanhe* 宣和/1 (1119), the emperor gave Lý Càn Đức the title Acting Minister of Works (*shousikong*).

#### **Southern Song Lý Period:**

During *jianyan* 建炎/1 (1127), following the wishes of the Việt ruler Lý Càn Đức, the emperor (now Song Gaozong) ordered the Guangxi Western Circuit Military Commission (*jinglue anfusi*) to prohibit border people from harboring fugitives from An Nam. During *jianyan* 建炎/4 (1130), officials from An Nam entered the Song court with tribute. The emperor ordered that the court should refuse to accept the most extravagant of the Việt mission's tribute articles. The Chinese ruler then issued an imperial decree that the envoys be treated well to win their loyalty.

During *shaoxing* 紹興/2 (1132), Lý Càn Đức died. The Chinese emperor gave Lý Càn Đức the honorary position of Director of the Chancellery (*shizhong*), as well as the posthumous title Prince of Nam Việt (*nanyuewang*). His son Lý Dương

Hoán took the throne at a young age, and the Chinese emperor gave him the title Military Commissioner of the “Peaceful Sea Army” (*jinghaijun jiedushi*), the prestige title “Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*),” the title Acting Defender-in-Chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), the title Commandary Prince of Giao Chỉ (*Jiaozhi junwang*), and the prestige title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng shunhua gongchen*).” During *shaoxing* 紹興/8 (1138), Lý Dương Hoán died. The emperor sent the Vice Fiscal Commissioner (*zhuanyun fushi*) Zhu Mi as the mourning ceremony official (*diaojishi*). The emperor gave the Việt ruler the posthumous titles of “Commander Unequaled in Honor (*kaifu yitong sansi*)” and Prince of the Southern Pacified Region (*nanping wang*). His son Lý Thiên Tộ took the throne at a pre-mature age, and he received all the official titles first given to his father.

During *shaoxing* 紹興/9 (1139), the emperor commanded the Guangxi Western Circuit Military Commission not to receive Triệu Trí Chi’s attempt to present tribute. Previously, Lý Càn Đức had had a son by one of his concubines who had fled to Dali. This person changed his name to Triệu Trí Chi, and took for himself the title “Prince of Peace (*pingwang*).”<sup>520</sup> When Triệu Trí Chi heard that Lý Dương Hoán had died, the Dali court sent him back to Giao Chỉ, and he competed with Lý Thiên Tộ for the throne. Triệu Trí Chi sought to bring tribute to the Song court, and he wished to

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<sup>520</sup> The editors of the *Songshi* note that this title may well be a partial recording of the title Prince of the Pacified Southern Region (*nanping wang*).

turn over his troops to the Song as a tribute gift. However, the emperor did not allow this to happen.

During *shaoxing* 紹興/17 (1147), the emperor ordered the Crafts Institute (*wensi yuan*) to produce a saddle and saddle bag to be given as a gift to Lý Thiên Tộ. During *shaoxing* 紹興/21 (1151), the emperor added to Lý Thiên Tộ's honors the prestige title "Successful Official Who Fostered Propriety, Cherished Loyalty, Observed Sincerity, Leaned Toward Virtue, Kept the Far-off Lands at Peace, and Cultivated Harmony (*chungyi huaizhong baoxin xiangde anyuan chenghe gongchen*). During *shaoxing* 紹興/25 (1155), the emperor decreed that envoys from An Nam be lodged at the "Embracing Those From Afar" Courier Station (*huaiyuanyi*). There they should be given a banquet to make known to everyone their special status. The emperor gave Lý Thiên Tộ the title "Prince of the Southern Pacified Region (*nanping wang*)." The emperor also gave Lý Thiên Tộ an imperial robe, a golden belt, and an armored horse.

During *shaoxing* 紹興/26 (1156), the emperor ordered the Right Office Bureau Chief (*you silangzhong*) Jiang Yingchen to give a feast to the Annamese envoys at the "Jade Ferry" Garden (*yujinyuan*). During August of that year, Lý Thiên Tộ sent Lý Quốc and others with gold and pearls, gharu-wood incense, kingfisher feathers, some fine horses, and some tamed elephants as tribute to the Chinese court.

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□<sup>521</sup> In the *Songshi* account there is an error in the name of Lý Hạo Sam's daughter. Her name should correctly be Lý Chiêu Hoàng 李昭隍.

The emperor commanded that Lý Thiên Tộ be given the additional title Acting Grand Preceptor (*jianjiao taishi*), and that his “substantive fief” be increased.

During *longxing* 隆興/2 (1164), Lý Thiên Tộ sent Duãn Từ Tư, Đặng Thạc Nghiễm, and others, to present tribute of gold and silver, elephant tusks, and incense to the Song court. During *qiandao* 乾道/6 (1170), the Song emperor gave Lý Thiên Tộ the prestige title “Successful Official Who Has Returned To Compassion And Harmony, And Values, Observes, Admires, And Respects The Conduct Of Promoting And Manifesting Goodness (*gui renxie gongji meicun dulu zhenghangshan gongchen*).”

From the time the emperor ascended to the throne, he repeatedly refused to receive tribute envoys from An Nam. During *qiandao* 乾道/9 (1173), Lý Thiên Tộ again sent Duãn Từ Tư and Lý Bang Chánh to the Song court, seeking to present tribute. The emperor praised the envoys for their integrity, and permitted this activity. He ordered that the envoys be lodged at the “Embracing Those From Afar” Courier Station. The Guangnan Western Circuit Military Commissioner (*jinglue anfushi*) Fan Chengda stated that “of all of the *man* barbarian peoples within this region’s Military Commission (*jinglue*) region, the An Nam people are among those who have been controlled and pacified. Indeed, their tributary officials are able to disregard etiquette to be treat as equals by Chinese nobles and officials. During the *zhenghe* period (正和: 1111-1118), when tribute envoys crossed the border, all officials at court participated in the event, and there were no further requests for an audience with the

emperor. It is fitting that we observe the old system, as this is the way to attain proper ritual behavior.” The court followed Fan’s request.

During the second month of *qunxi* 淳熙 /1 (1174), the emperor gave Lý Thiên Tộ the title Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guowang*) and added to the Việt ruler’s honors the designation “Successful Official Who Preserves Humility (*shouqian gongchen*).” During *qunxi* 淳熙/2 (1175), the Chinese official gave the Việt ruler the Annamese State Seal. During *qunxi* 淳熙 /3 (1176), the Chinese emperor gave Lý Thiên Tộ the Annamese State Calendar. During this year, Lý Thiên Tộ died.

During the next year (1177), his son Lý Long Cán came to the throne at a young age. He received from the Chinese emperor the titles Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner and Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Peaceful Sea” (*jinghaijun jiedushi guan cha chushu dengshi*), the prestige title “Lord Specially Advanced (*tejin*),” the titles of Acting Defender-in-Chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Concurrent Censor-in-chief (*qian youshihdafu*), “Supreme Pillar of State (*shang-huguo*),” and Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guowang*). He also received a “substantive fief” and the honorific title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng shunhua gongchen*).”

The Chinese emperor spoke to the Việt envoys, saying, “I express my pleasure with your kingdom by grant these inaugural titles. Since titles have been inherited for generations, and that you are indeed the proper ruler and have been granted the

authority, why do you wait for a second promotion?” The emperor then demonstrated this statement by showing the Việt envoys special ritual treatment. During *chunxi* 淳熙/5 (1178), Việt envoys brought tribute to express thanks to the Song court. During *chunxi* 淳熙/9 (1182), the emperor ordered that the court should stop receiving tribute elephants from An Nam, claiming that they were of no use, but were instead a nuisance to people. As for other items, the Chinese court would only take one item out of ten.

During *chunxi* 淳熙/16 (1189), the emperor awarded Lý Long Cân the designation “Successful Official Who Preserves Propriety, Serves Our State, And Regularly Follows and Embraces Virtue (*shouyi fengguo fuchang huaide gongchen*).” When Song Guangzong came to the throne, the Việt court sent tribute to express their congratulations. Under Song Ningzong’s court, the Chinese emperor gave the Việt ruler a robe and belt, utensils and coins, as well as the title “Successful Official Who Respectfully Contemplates Loyalty, Does Good, Willingly Performs Rites, Guarding the Symbols of Authority, Returns to Compassion, And Reveres Humility, Harmony, And Respect (*jindu sizhong jimei qinli baojhie guiren chongqian xiegong gongchen*)” and a “substantive fief” accordingly.

During *jiading* 嘉定/5 (1212), Lý Long Cân died. The emperor ordered the Guangxi Transport Assistant (*yunpan*) Chen Kongqin to act temporarily as the mourning ceremony official (*diaojishi*). The emperor gave Lý Long Cân the posthumous title of Director of the Chancellery (*shizhong*). Following the precedent

of former Princes of the State of An Nam, the emperor regarded Lý Long Cán's son Lý Hạo Sam to have legitimately taken his noble rank, and so the emperor gave Lý Hạo Sam the titles that had earlier been given to Lý Long Cán, as well as giving him the honorific title “Successful Official Promoted for his Sincerity and Obedience (*tuicheng shunhua gongchen*).” When, later, thanks from the Viet court did not come to the Song, the emperor halted the extension of these honors.

#### **Southern Song/ Trần Period:**

Lý Hạo Sam died and left no son, and so his daughter Lý Chiêu Thánh<sup>521</sup> took charge of state affairs. Consequently, acting through his son-in-law<sup>522</sup>, Trần Nhật Hiều (Trần Thủ Độ: 1194-1264) took control. The Lý clan had controlled their kingdom, from Lý Công Uẩn to Lý Hạo Sam, altogether with eight changes in power and more than 280 years in control before declining.

During *chunyou* 淳祐/2 (1242), the Chinese emperor sent an order to the Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guowang*) Trần Nhật Hiều, stating that the originally appointed title of “Successful Official Who Follows the Example Of Loyalty and Obedience And Guards The Symbols Of Authority (*xiaozhong shunhua baojie gongchen*)” should have the two characters “Preserves Propriety (*shouyi*)” added to it. During *baoyou* 寶祐/6 (1258), the emperor sent out an edit declaring that the situation in An Nam was unfathomable and that the border with that kingdom

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<sup>522</sup> In the *Songshi* account, Trần Canh (1218-77) is described as Trần Nhật Hiều's son-in-law 婿. In other accounts, Trần Canh is more accurately described as his nephew.

should be readied (militarily). During *jingding* 景定/2 (1261), Việt envoys brought tribute including two elephants. During *jingding* 景定/3 (1262), the Việt court requested hereditary rank. The emperor ordered that Trần Nhật Hiều be given the titles Acting Grand Preceptor (*jianjiao taishi*), Grand Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guodawang*), and that he be given a “substantive fief.” His son Trần Uy Hoàng (Trần Canh: 1218-1277) received the titles Surveillance and Supervisory Commissioner and Military Commissioner of the “Army of the Peaceful Sea” (*jinghaijun jiedushi guancha chushushi*), Acting Defender-in-Chief (*jianjiao taiwei*), Concurrent Censor-in-chief (*qian youshihdafu*), “Supreme Pillar of State (*shangzhuguo*),” and Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guowang*), and the honorific title “Successful Official Who Follows the Examples of Loyalty and Obedience (*xiaozhong shunhua gongchen*).” The emperor gave Trần Uy Hoàng gifts of a golden belt, utensils, coins, and an armored horse.

During *xianchun* 咸淳/5 (1269), the emperor ordered that the father of the Prince of the State of An Nam (*Annan guowang*), Trần Nhật Hiều and the Prince of the State (*guowang*) himself, Trần Uy Hoàng, be given a “substantive fief.” During *xianchun* 咸淳/8 (1272), the rituals regarding the construction of the Brightness Pavilion (*mingtang*) were completed. Trần Nhật Hiều and Trần Uy Hoàng were each given additional “substantive fiefs,” They were also awarded saddled horses, among other items.

**Place Names***Chinese**ba ai* 八隘

Baole 保樂

Chenzhou 郴州

Dali 大理

Duobu 咄步

Fengzhou 峰州

Haikang 海康

Huaiyuanyi 懷遠驛

Huanzhou 獯州\*

Guangnan 廣南

Guizhou 桂州

Guihuazhou 歸化州

Leizhou 雷州

Lianzhou 廉州

Ling Biao 岭表

Luzhou 綠州

Qinzhou 欽州

Ruxi 如昔

Ruhong 如洪

Shixizhou 石西州

Shun-an 順安

Shunzhou 順州

Silingzhou 思陵州

Sibingguan 思稟管

Susang 宿桑

Zhanzhou 儋州

Zuojiang 左江

Wu-e 勿惡

Wuyang 勿陽

Xipingzhou 西平州

Yujinyuan 玉津園

Yongzhou 邕州

*Vietnamese*

Ai Châu 爰州

An Nam 安南

Bạch Đằng 白藤

Châu Nhai 珠崖

Chiêm Thành 占城

Cửu Chân 九真

Đa La 多羅

Đại Phát Đông 大發峒

Đạm Nhĩ 儋耳	Thuận Châu 順州
Đan Ba Huyền 丹波縣	Thương Ngô 蒼梧
Giao Châu 交州	Tô Mậu Châu 蘇茂州
Giao Chỉ 交趾	Trân Châu 珍州
Giáp Đông 甲峒	Triều Dương 潮陽
Hiệu Thành Tràng 效*誠場	Trương Châu 長州
Hoa Bộ 花步	Trương Hải 漲海
Hoan Châu 瓊州*	Tự Châu 叙州
Hợp Phò 合浦	Uất Lâm 郁林
Khê Đông 奚洞*	Vũ Ninh Châu 武寧州
Lương Châu 涼州	<b>Titles</b>
Mon Châu 門州	<i>Chinese</i>
Nam Hải 南海	<i>anfushi</i> 安撫使
Nam Việt 南越	<i>Annanguo dawang</i> 安南國大王
Nhật Nam 日南	<i>Annanguo wang</i> 安南國王
Phong Châu 峰州	<i>bazuoshi</i> 八作使
Phu Lan Trại 扶闌砦	<i>bishucheng</i> 秘書丞
Quảng Nguyên Châu 廣源州	<i>bingbu yuanwailang</i> 兵部員外郎
Thành Châu 誠州	<i>canmou</i> 參謀
	<i>da jiao</i> 大校

*dali sicheng* 大理寺丞

*di* 帝

*dianzhong* 殿中

*dongtou gongfengguan*

東頭供奉官

*dudu* 都督

*duhu* 都護

*duzhipin* 都知品

*duzhi pingmashi* 都知兵馬使

*duxunjian* 都巡檢

*fushi dali pingshi* 副使大理評事

*gaopin* 高品

*gongbu langzhong* 工部郎中

*gongbu shilang* 工部侍郎

*gongbu yuanwailang* 工部員外郎

*gongfengguan* 供奉官

*gongfeng guange menzhihou*

供奉官閣門祗候

*guancha chuzhi dengshi*

觀察處置等使

*guancha xunguan* 觀察巡官

*guangaoshi* 官高使

*guannei guancha chuzhi dengshi*

管內觀察處置等使

*guozi boshi* 國子博士

*jidianshi* 祭奠使

*jie zhen* 節鎮

*jiedufushi* 節度副使

*jiedu panguan* 節度判官

*jingzhao junhou* 京兆郡候

*jinglue* 經略

*jinglue anfushi* 經略安撫使

*jinglue shi* 經略使

*jinzou shi* 進奏使

*jun* 郡

*junqiku fushi* 軍器庫副使

*junwang* 君王

*kaifu yitong sansi* 開府儀同三司

*kunqi* 閩寄

*lisanban* 隸三班

*lingjun fushi* 領軍府事

*liuzhai fushi* 六宅副使

*liu hou* 留後

*neishisheng yaban* 內侍省押班

*neidian chongban* 內殿崇班

*peichen* 陪臣

*sanban fengzhi* 三班奉職

*sanshi liuhou* 三使留後

*shangshu* 尚書

*shangshusheng* 尚書省

*shichijie* 使持節

*shidaifu* 史大夫

*shiguan* 史館

*shizhong* 侍中

*shousikong* 守司空

*taibao* 太保

*taichangcheng* 太常丞

*taishi* 太師

*taizi zhongyun* 太子中允

*taizi zuojianmenshuai fushuai*

太子左監門率府率

*tidian xingyu* 提點刑獄

*tongzhongshu menxia pingzhangshi*

同中書門下平章事

*tuanlianshi* 團練使

*tuiguan* 推官

*tuntian yuanwailang* 屯田員外郎

*wei* 尉

*wensishi* 文思使

*wensi yuan* 文思院

*xingjun sima* 行軍司馬

*xunjian* 巡檢

*yajiang* 牙將

*yajiao* 牙校

*ya neidu zhihui shi* 牙內都指揮使

*you silangzhong* 右司郎中

*youzheng yan zhi shiguan*

右正言直史館

*yufan dudu* 御蕃都督

*yunpan* 運判

*zaixiang* 宰相

*zhangshuji* 掌書記

*zhaowenguan* 昭文館

*zhen* 鎮

*zhenjiang* 鎮將

*zhongshuling* 中書令

*zhuke langzhong* 主客郎中

*zhuanyunshi* 轉運使

*zishi* 刺史

*zuozheng yanzhi shiguan*

左正言直史館

*zuojianmen weijiangjun*

左監門衛將軍

*zuobuque* 左補闕

*zuo sanqi changshi* 左散騎常侍

*zuoshijin* 左侍禁

*zongguanfu* 總管府

*Vietnamese*

### Personal Names

*Chinese*

Cangsi 臧嗣

Chen Kongqin 陳孔碩

Chen Shilong 陳士隆

Chen Yaosou 陳堯叟

Cheng Zhuo 成卓

Cui Liang 崔亮

Du Qi 杜杞

Fan Chengda 范成大

Han Qi 韓琦

Han Wudi 漢武帝

Hou Renbao 候仁寶

Huang Lingde 黃令德

Jia Shi 賈湜

Jiang Yingchen 江應辰

Kang Wei 康衛

Li Jihe 李繼和

Li Jianzhong 李建中

Li Zhixu 李知須

Li Jue 李覺

Li Ruozhuo 李若拙

Li Shizhong 李師中

Li Wenzhu 李文著

Liang Modi 梁末帝

Ling Ce 凌策

Liu Cheng 劉澄

Liu Zhi 劉陟

Lu Shen 陸誥

Mu Zhongying 穆重穎

Shao Hua 邵擘

Shi Xie 士燮

Su Anshi 蘇安世

Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝

Sun Quanxing 孫全興	Yu Jing 余靖
Song Xian 宋咸	Zhang Xuan 張璿
Song Huizong 宋徽宗	Zhang Guan 張觀
Song Gao 宋鎬	Zhenzong 眞宗
Song Gaozong 宋高宗	Zhu Youzhen 朱友貞
Song Guangzong 宋光宗	Zi Chan 子產
Song Ningzong 宋寧宗	<i>Vietnamese</i>
Song Renzong 宋仁宗	Bộ Thiệu Kham 韋紹欽
Song Shenzong 宋神宗	Bộ Thiệu Tự 韋紹嗣
Song Taizong 宋太宗	Bộ Vạn Dũng 卜文勇
Tao Bi 陶弼	Đặng Thạc Nghiễm 鄧碩儼
Wang Shice 王世則	Đào Duy Hoàn 陶惟權
Wang Dan 王旦	Đào Khánh Văn 陶慶文
Wang Zun 王儼	Đào Tông Nguyên 陶宗元
Wang Weizheng 王惟正	Địch Lão 狄獠
Wei Zhaomei 衛昭美	Đinh Bộ Lĩnh 丁部領
Wei Tuo 尉佗	Đinh Công Trứ 丁公著
Wu Yuan-chi 吳元吉	Đinh Liễn 丁璉
Xiao Gu 蕭固	Đinh Thừa Chánh 丁承正
Xiong Ben 熊本	Đinh Tuệ 丁璇
Xu Zhongxuan 許仲宣	
Yang Wenjie 楊文傑	

Đỗ Cảnh Thạc 杜景碩	Lê Minh Hộ 黎明護
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Nùng Trí Cao 儂智高	Vạn Xương 文昌

Vương Duy Khánh 王惟慶

*guanniu* 官牛

Vương Thiệu Tộ 王紹祚

*guiren xiegong jimeicun dulu*

Xuất Nhất Tân 帥日新

*zhenghangshan gongchen*

Xuất Dụng Hòa 帥用和

歸仁協恭繼美遵度履正彰善

*Cham*

*gui* 歸

Pu Luo-e 蒲羅邊

*Hanguangdian* 含光殿

### Key Terms and Phrases

*houtu* 後土

*Chinese*

*huafeng* 華風

*Annan duhufu* 安南都護府

*jiemao* 節旄

*baojie shouzheng gongchen*

Jin 晉

保節守正功臣

*jindu sizhong jimei qinli baojie*

Chen 陳

*guiren chongqian xiegong gongchen*

*chongyihuaizhongbaoxinxiangdeanyu*

謹度思忠濟美勤禮保節歸仁

*anchenghegongchen*

崇葺協恭功臣

崇義懷忠保信鄉德安遠承和功

*jinghaijun* 靜海軍

*da sheng wang* 大勝王

*jiuzhou* 九州

*dan hu* 蛋戶

*kaifu yitong sansi* 開府儀同三司

*fan* 藩

*kaimingwang* 開明王

*Fenyin* 汾陰

Liang 梁

*guanke* 官客

*maojingyi* 茅徑驛

*ming tang* 明堂

*nanpingwang* 南平王

<i>nanyuewang</i> 南越王	<i>xiayi</i> 遐裔
<i>neifu</i> 內附	<i>xiaozhong shunhua gongchen</i>
Qi 齊	効忠順化功臣
<i>shangzhuguo</i> 上柱國	<i>xiaozhong shunhua baojie gongchen</i>
<i>shifeng</i> 實封	効忠順化保節功臣
<i>shiyi</i> 食邑	<i>yaojun</i> 耀軍
<i>shouqian gongchen</i> 守謙功臣	<i>yidai gongchen</i> 翊戴功臣
<i>shouyi</i> 守義	<i>youzu</i> 右族
<i>shouyi fengguo fuchang huaide</i>	<i>yuanhai anfushi</i> 緣海安撫使
<i>gongchen</i> 守義奉國履常懷德功臣	<i>zhang</i> 丈
<i>su</i> 俗	<i>zhengyuan rong</i> 正元戎
Song 宋	<i>zhenming</i> 貞明
<i>taiping jun</i> 太平軍	<i>zhizhong</i> 至忠
<i>te jin</i> 特進	<i>zhide</i> 至德
<i>tianzi bing</i> 天子兵	<i>Vietnamese</i>
<i>tongshuai</i> 統帥	Vạn Thắng Vương 萬勝王
<i>tounanchao</i> 投南朝	
<i>tuichengshunhuagongchen</i>	
推誠順化功臣	
<i>wai chen</i> 外臣	
<i>wansuidian</i> 萬歲殿	
<i>wude</i> 武德	

## VITA

*JAMES ADAMS ANDERSON*  
University of Washington

1999

**EDUCATION**

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA. September 1992- June 1999.  
Received a Ph.D. degree from the Department of History. My fields of study included: Late Imperial China, Modern China, Pre-modern Southeast Asia, and High and Late Medieval Europe.

NATIONAL TAIWAN UNIVERSITY, Taipei, Taiwan. September 1991- August 1992.

Attended classes in the graduate history program of NTU as a recipient of the UW-Taida exchange fellowship. Collected materials for thesis research and consulted with Song specialists at the National Central Library and the Academia Sinica.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA. September 1989- August 1991.  
Received MA degree from the Department of History in the fields of Modern China and Late Imperial China.

JOHNS HOPKINS-NANJING UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR CHINESE AND AMERICAN STUDIES, Nanjing, China, PRC. September 1988- June 1989.  
Studied Chinese history, political thought, and economic reform.

HARVARD COLLEGE, Cambridge, MA. Graduated in June 1987, BA cum laude.  
Studied in the department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. My undergraduate curriculum included Chinese language classes and yearlong tutorials on various aspects of Chinese history and culture.

**DISSERTATION TOPIC**

Frontier Management and Tribute Relations along the Empire's Southern Border:  
China and Vietnam in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries

My project involves a documentary and archaeological study of tribute missions, court ceremonies, and other state rituals associated with the mechanism of Sino-Vietnamese tribute relations. I have examined a network of symbols and ritual acts that supported and legitimized the Chinese claim to regional control. Local Vietnamese leaders employed these symbols to perform within the Chinese tribute system in such a way as to establish regional independence while containing Chinese aggression. I completed the dissertation in the spring of 1999.

**LANGUAGES**

Excellent Chinese language skills, Modern and Classical.

Fluency in Swedish, reading, writing and speaking.

Strong reading ability in French.

Good reading and speaking abilities in Modern Vietnamese.

Two years of Modern Japanese language training. Strong reading ability.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

INSTRUCTOR, University of Washington. July-August 1998.

Taught HSTAS 221, an intensive one-month survey of Southeast Asian history.

INSTRUCTOR, Seattle Pacific University. March-June 1998.

Taught HIS 3785, a modern history of China and Japan.

INSTRUCTOR, University of Washington- Bothell Campus. September-December 1997.

Taught BLS 493A: an advanced level course on the history of Sino-Vietnamese relations and BLS 334: a survey course on Chinese history through 1840.

INSTRUCTOR, Tacoma Community College. June-August 1994, June-August 1996.

Taught HST 211: a survey course on the history of Chinese civilization.

TEACHING ASSISTANT, University of Washington. September 1993-June 1994.

Organized and conducted weekly discussion sections in courses on Chinese and European history.

## FELLOWSHIPS AND ACADEMIC HONORS

Title VI Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship, 1998-99.  
Dissertation research, making use of Chinese, Sino-Vietnamese, and Japanese language materials.

ACLS/Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation Fellowship, January-March 1998.  
Dissertation research at the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan.

Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship, December 1996-June 1997.

Dissertation research at the Sino-Nom Sinological Institute in Hanoi, Vietnam, at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Nanning, China (Guangxi Autonomous Region), in the Rare Book collection of the Beijing Library, and at Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Hsiao Fellowship of the Jackson School of International Studies, 1996-97.  
Dissertation research at the University of Washington.

Hsiao Fellowship of the Jackson School of International Studies, March-May 1996.  
Dissertation research at the Institute of History in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, China.

Fritz Scholarship for International Exchange to China, 1995-96.  
Dissertation research in the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan.

Ford Small Research Grant in Southeast Asian Studies, October-December 1995.  
Dissertation research at the Sino-Nom Sinological Institute in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Pacific Cultural Foundation Research Grant, 1995-96.  
Dissertation research at the Center for Chinese Studies in the National Central Library in Taipei, Taiwan.

Rondeau Evans Travel Scholarship, 1995-96.  
Travel between research sites visited during the 1995-96 academic year.

Title VI Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship, 1994-95.  
Dissertation research, making use of Chinese, Sino-Vietnamese, and Japanese language materials.

Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellowship, Summer 1993.  
Intensive Second Year Japanese at the University of Washington.

Schwartz Fellowship for the Study of Non-Western History, 1992-93 academic year.  
Covered tuition costs for one year of study at the University of Washington.

UW-Taida Exchange Fellowship, 1991-92 academic year.  
Covered tuition and living costs for graduate study at National Taiwan University.

Schwartz Fellowship for the 1990-91 academic year. (I also received the 1991-92 Schwartz Fellowship, but declined this funding to accept the UW-Taida Fellowship.)

### **CONFERENCE PAPERS**

“The Poetry of Diplomacy: Việt Assertions of Autonomy in a Yue Cultural Discourse,” delivered at the AAS Annual Meeting, March 1999.

“Titles of Authority and Legitimacy in the Kingdoms of Nung Tri Cao (1025-1055): Language in the Creation of Political Space and Ethnic Community,” delivered at the AHA Annual Meeting, January 9, 1998.

“Example of Our Ancestors: Historical Impressions of the Northern Sung Official, Wang An-shih, and Concepts of Political Reform During the Ch'ing Dynasty,” delivered at the UW Student Colloquium on Asian Studies, April 24, 1993.

### **PERSONAL HOME PAGE & E-MAIL ADDRESS**

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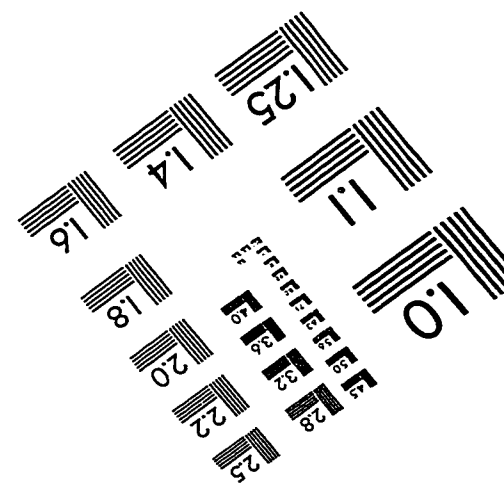
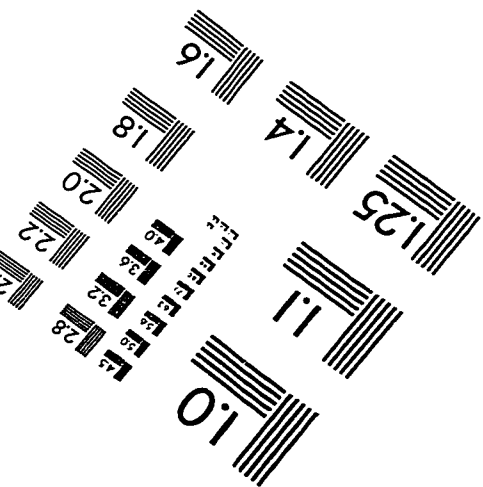
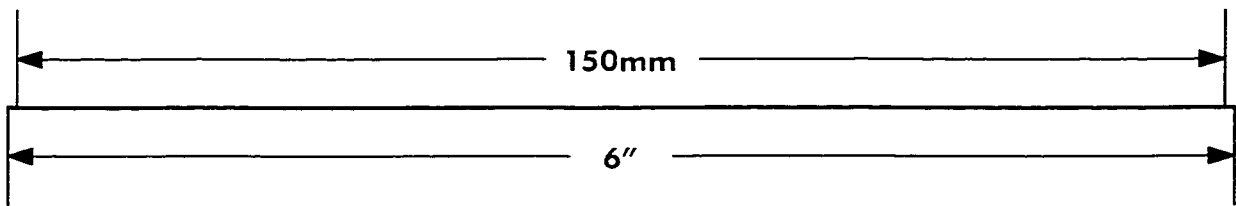
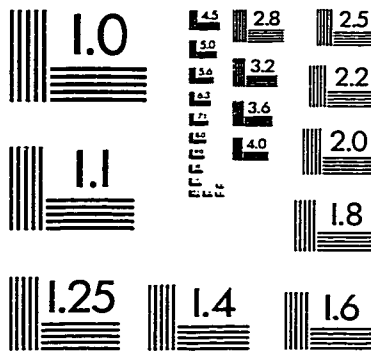
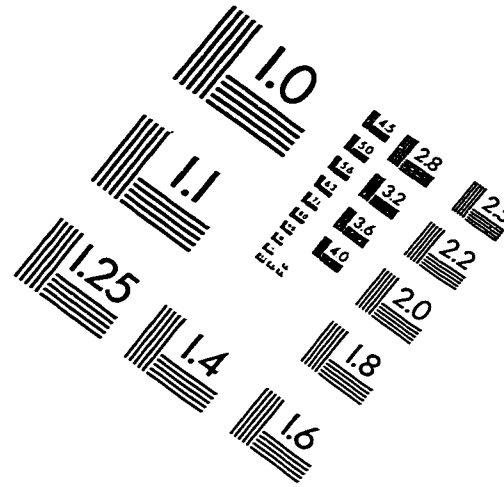
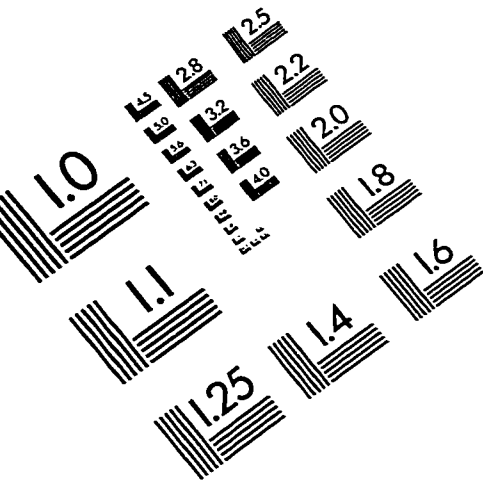
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2. Professor Laurie Sears, Dept. of History, Box 353560, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195. Tel: (206) 543-5745.

3. Professor R. Kent Guy, Dept. of History, Box 353560, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195. Tel: (206) 616-5279.
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