

Simple Natives and Cunning Merchants: Song Representations of Frontier Trade in Guangxi

This article examines three important Southern Song geographies: Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126–1193) *Guihai yuheng zhi* 桂海虞橫志 (*Treatises of the Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea*), Zhou Qufei's 周去非 (1134–1189) *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (*Replies from Beyond the Passes*), and Zhao Rugua's 趙汝适 (1170–1228) *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 (*Treatise on the Many Foreigners*).¹ More specifically, it will interpret them in some sense as representations of trading patterns in the southern frontier region of Lingnan 嶺南 and as expressions of the state's expansion and its centralized control. Lingnan had long been renowned as a rich source of rare and exotic luxury items, both those produced on the frontier itself and those acquired from the South Sea maritime trade that passed through southern ports.² In particular, the three geographies focus on Guangnan West circuit 廣南西路 (hereafter, Guangxi), the Song administrative territory that governed the western half of Lingnan, bordered the recently independent state of Dai Viet 大越 to the south and the state of Dali 大理 to the west, and extended south beyond the sea to the island of Hainan.

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¹ The edition used for Fan's work (hereafter cited as *Guihai*) is *Fan Chengda biji liucong* 范成大筆記六叢, ed. Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008); Zhou's is *Lingwai daida jiaozhu*, ed. Yang Wuquan 楊武泉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999; hereafter *Lingwai*), and that of Zhao is *Zhufan zhi jiaoshi* 諸蕃志校釋, ed. Yang Bowen 楊博文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000; hereafter *Zhufan zhi*).

² I use "South Sea" or "South Seas" to stand for a maritime space that may be seen as linked to the port cities of south China by monsoon trade-networks and was often indicated in that time-period by the term "*nanhai* 南海." "South Sea" thus is not limited to the modern South China Sea, but extends into the Gulf of Tonkin, the Java Sea, and the Indian Ocean.

While most of the trade goods recorded in these sources were produced beyond the direct administrative reach of local government, the revenue and products that trade brought were important to both local administration and imperial tax coffers. Accordingly, the three texts contain significant discussion of how trade routes connected the southern frontier and the South Sea littoral; they describe the various peoples who carried out the trade, and recorded which products were bought and sold at each locale. In their accounts, the authors also reflect ambivalent attitudes towards trade as both an important source of revenue but also a potentially exploitative force at odds with their Confucian social ethics, and rhetorically contrast “simple, pure” indigenous peoples with unscrupulous Chinese merchants. Read against the grain, however, these passages also reveal indigenous customs that helped to manage the effects of trade and to protect against exploitation.

The twelfth century was a watershed moment in the history of the southern frontier. During the first millennia of Chinese involvement in Lingnan, from the Han through the Tang dynasties, governance in the region was predominantly focused on the port cities of Guangzhou and Jiaozhou 交州 (present-day Hanoi), and rebellions in the hinterland frequently erupted whenever the central state appeared weak, or attempted to extend direct administration beyond a few urban strongholds.³ Most of the region’s inhabitants were indigenous groups managing their own affairs in “loose rein” prefectures (*jimi zhou* 羈縻州), and paying little, if any, taxes to support local administration. Following the Northern Song’s suppression of the Nong Zhigao 侬智高 Rebellion of 1054, and the resolution of the Song-Viet border war in 1077, however, the tide began to turn. Wang Anshi’s New Policies under the Shenzong 神宗 emperor (r. 1067–1085) and Cai Jing’s 蔡京 Opening the Frontier and Acquiring Land policy (*kaibian natu* 開邊納土) under the Huizong 徽宗 emperor (r. 1100–1125) expanded the Song state’s administrative presence on the frontier and encouraged exploitation of frontier resources, while attempting to convert “loose rein” prefectures into tax-paying counties and prefectures (although this was often accomplished more in name than substance).⁴ Guangxi avoided the war and disruption that

³ Michael Churchman, “The People In Between’: The Li and Lao from the Han to the Sui,” in Nola Cooke, Li Tana and James A. Anderson, eds., *The Tongking Gulf through History* (Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania P., 2011), pp. 67–83; Charles Holcombe, “Early Imperial China’s Deep South: The Viet Regions through Tang Times,” *Tang Studies* 15–16 (1997–98), pp. 144–51.

⁴ James Anderson, *The Rebel Den of Nùng Trí Cao: Loyalty and Identity along the Sino-Vietnamese Frontier* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2007), 138–39, 149; Richard von Glahn, *The Country of Streams and Grottos: Expansion, Settlement, and the Civilizing of the Sichuan Frontier in*

plagued the rest of the country during the early Southern Song, and benefitted from the Xiaozong 孝宗 emperor's (r. 1162–1189) promotion of agriculture and economic growth, and the expansion of foreign trade, in the second half of the twelfth century.⁵ As a result, Guangxi's registered population swelled from 242,109 households in 1081 to 488,655 households in 1163, to 528,220 households in 1224, as demobilized soldiers, war refugees from the north, and land-poor migrants from Guangdong and Fujian flooded into the south, and as the state developed an increasing capacity to register the indigenous population.⁶ All of these changes created a demand for detailed information in order to map and govern the frontier directly. This being said, these were all relative, not absolute shifts; the population of Guangxi continued to be predominantly indigenous for some time, and even several centuries later, much of the southern frontier continued to be administered in an indirect manner. It is out of this historical context that the geographies featured here were composed.

Frontier geography, like all geography at some level, is an inherently colonial enterprise. The Chinese imperial state had valued geographic knowledge going back to its earliest antiquity, for reasons of both cosmology and local administration, but the genre of local geographies or gazetteers (*difangzhi* 地方志) first took shape during the Song dynasty. Influenced in part by the organizational structure of the tenth-century imperially-sponsored comprehensive geography *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記,⁷ as well as by early-Song encyclopedias (*leishu* 類書), Song-era local geographies evolved from the Tang-era administrative map guides called *tujing* 圖經 into a literary genre in their own right. Unlike the Tang *tujing* and the *Taiping huanyu ji*, however, Southern Song geographies were increasingly compiled as private projects.⁸ While there had been frontier accounts of the south in the Tang dynasty and earlier, the three Southern Song texts examined in this article are

Song Times (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1987), pp. 198–202; Ruth Mostern, “Dividing the Realm in Order to Govern”: *The Spatial Organization of the Song State (960–1276 CE)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2011), pp. 195–96, 198–201, 210–15.

⁵ Gong Wei Ai, “The Reign of Hsiao-tsung (1162–1189),” in Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith, eds., *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907–1275* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 2009), pp. 710–11, 729; Mostern, *Dividing the Realm*, pp. 249, 254.

⁶ Mostern, *Dividing the Realm*, p. 249.

⁷ Yue Shi 樂史 (930–1007), *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記, ed. Wang Wenchu 王文楚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007).

⁸ James M. Hargett, “Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers and Their Place in The History of Difangzhi Writing,” *HJAS* 56.2 (Dec., 1996), pp. 405–42.

some of the earliest geographies of the southern frontier and the South Seas. As with other local geographies compiled during Song, they described the southern frontier's key features, which were grouped by the same sorts of categories found in the widely-accepted literary model of historiography, namely, the dynastic histories – *shu* 書 and *shi* 史. The compilers of the three geographies intended, in this way, to have their categorized information studied like histories for insight into administration, local customs, and the human condition.⁹ At the same time, these authors also took pains to situate the objects of their description spatially on the frontier, relative to administrative units of territory, ethnic groups, geography, and trade routes. Instead of being scattered, amorphous observations about life on an exotic frontier, the organizational process of contextualizing and mapping those observations made the information embedded in them far more useful to Chinese administrators on the frontier, by making the southern frontier more “legible” to the state.¹⁰ While hoary tropes of the exotic, foreboding, barbaric south might serve as intriguing curiosities for readers far away in the imperial metropole, accurate, spatially organized information was needed in order to effectively administer the frontier at the local level. This demand for detailed, organized, useful information, and for increasingly fine distinctions between different categories of people and goods on the frontier, was part of what gave rise to the composition of these texts, and may help to explain why these frontier geographies were collected and often reproduced in the centuries following their initial publication. Over time, the same administrative demand for information helped give rise to a growing body of frontier literature – geographies, gazetteers, ethnographies, tribute albums, travel diaries – in the late-imperial period, a frontier literature that emphasized direct observation over classical tropes, as the colonizing edge of the southern frontier moved uphill into Yunnan, Guizhou, and the uplands of Guangxi and Hainan, as well as overseas to Taiwan.¹¹

⁹ Hargett, “Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers,” pp. 425–26, 431.

¹⁰ For more on the concept of legibility vis-a-vis the state, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 2009), pp. 73–97.

¹¹ For more on how late-imperial geographic and ethnographic knowledge was organized, and how that in turn influenced the shape of late-imperial frontier society, see C. Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2006), pp. 64–82; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 2001), pp. 127–79, 205–11; Leo Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2006); Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2004).

In the process of producing any local geography, the act of mapping and ordering local information transformed local space into a microcosm of the imperial, in a manner analogous to how the act of compiling a genealogy connected a given family to the Yellow Emperor and ultimately to the Chinese nation, as Wang Ming-ke has argued.¹² When situated on the liminal space of the frontier, however, geographies took on an added significance, helping to transform the exotic, peripheral zone of the frontier into an inextricable part of the imperial whole, both symbolically and substantively. This process of mapping the frontier and rendering its flora, fauna, trade goods and inhabitants visible and legible to the state reflects Guangxi's shift in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from a thinly garrisoned frontier towards a more directly administered province, and helped to enable the long-term imperial project of colonizing the expanding southern frontier. In mapping out the countries, port cities and trade routes of the South Seas, thus going beyond the Song's littoral boundary, these texts also foreshadow the economic maritime expansion into Southeast Asia and Taiwan that occurred in the late-imperial period and beyond.

SOURCES

This study is drawn primarily from three sources, as introduced above. The two twelfth-century works on the southern frontier were written by Southern Song officials – Fan Chengda and Zhou Qufei – who served together in Jingjiang fu 靜江府 (present-day Guilin). The thirteenth-century geography of the South Seas and Hainan was written by another Southern Song official, Zhao Rugua. In addition to quoting several passages from classical accounts of the south – in particular from *Shiji* 史記 and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 – these three texts build upon one another's descriptions, adding to or revising prior accounts with their own observations. Taken together, they provide a rich historical source for investigating life on the southern frontier at a pivotal moment in its long arc of colonization, and had a significant influence on representations of the southern frontier that were written in subsequent late-imperial geographies, gazetteers, and official histories.

Fan Chengda, an accomplished poet, travel writer, diplomat and official, wrote *Guihai yuheng zhi* about his experiences serving as the military commissioner of Guangnan west circuit between 1173 and

¹² Wang Ming-ke 王明珂, *Yingxiong zuxian yu xiongdì minzu: genji lishi de wenben yu qingjing* 英雄祖先與兄弟民族, 根基歷史的文本與情境 (Taipei: Yuchen wenhua, 2006), pp. 87–111.

1175. Although *Guihai yuheng zhi* is less known than Fan's many famous travel diaries, and organized topically instead of chronologically, it shares with those works Fan's keen eye for observational detail. Fan was no stranger to frontier life; along with Su Shi, he was one of the most well-traveled men of his day, and had been sent to the Jin 金 capital of Zhongdu 中都 (present-day Beijing) as an emissary just three years prior to receiving his post in Guilin.¹³ As military commissioner of the southwestern frontier, Fan coordinated military and civil affairs across Guangxi, giving him a detailed understanding of frontier administration and its challenges. At the same time, his travels to the various prefectures within the circuit under his supervision also afforded him opportunities for personal observation. While *Guihai yuheng zhi* is based upon an administrative unit, as are local geographies, its topically organized chapters are by comparison more focused on southern flora, fauna, local products and ethnography, and the work shares similarities with the jottings and miscellanea genres as well.¹⁴

Zhou Qufei, by contrast, was a relatively minor official; his first post was as a prefectural instructor in the border prefecture and South Sea port city of Qinzhou 欽州 from 1172 to 1173. After a brief trip back to his home prefecture of Wenzhou 温州 to mourn his deceased father, Zhou returned south to Guangxi from 1173 to 1175, serving as a district defender organizing local militias against Yao 瑤 raiding incursions in the upland counties of Lingchuan 靈川 and Guxian 古縣 outside of Guilin.¹⁵ It was during this period that Zhou came to know Fan Chengda – Fan was his supervisor during this period – and Zhou is mentioned in a couple of poems Fan wrote in parting.¹⁶ After Fan

¹³ In fact, Fan managed to travel to Song China's extremities in all four cardinal directions – north to the Jin capitol, east to Suzhou, south to Guilin, and west to Chengdu – in less than a decade; Kong Fanli's prefatory "Dianjiao shuoming" 點校說明 to *Lanpei lu* 攬轡錄 (*A Record of Grasping the Carriage Reins*), p. 3, which is printed as part of *Fan Chengda biji liucong*.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the difficulty in classifying *Guihai yuheng zhi*, see James Hargett's translator's introduction in James M. Hargett, *Treatises of the Supervisor and Guardian of the Cinnamon Sea: The Natural World and Material Culture of 12th Century South China* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2010), esp. pp. xxxi-xxxv. For a discussion of Song *biji* see Cong Ellen Zhang, "To Be Erudite in Miscellaneous Knowledge: A Study of Song (960-1270) *Biji* Writing," *AM* 3d ser. 25.2 (2012), pp. 43-77.

¹⁵ The character for Yao appears with the jade radical in *Lingwai* as 瑤, but is written with the person radical in *Guihai* as 僬. In later sources, it is often written with the dog radical as 獠.

¹⁶ Fan Chengda, "Song Zhou Zhifu jiaoshou gui Yongjia" 送周直夫教授歸永嘉 ("Seeing Off Prefectural Instructor Zhou Zhifu [Qufei] on His Return to Yongjia"), in *Lingwai*, p. 456; idem, "Chen Zhongsi, Chen Xizhen, Li Jingweng, Zhou Zhifu, Zheng Mengshou zhuliu guo datong xiangshou zhi Luojiang fenmei liushi wei bie" 陳仲思、陳席珍、李靜翁、周直夫、鄭夢授追路過大通相送至羅江分袂留詩爲別 ("To Chen Zhongsi, Chen Xizhen, Li Jingweng, Zhou Zhifu [Qufei], Zheng Mengshou, Who Followed Past the Main Road to the Luo River to See Me Off, I Leave This Poem in Parting"), in *Lingwai*, p. 457.

left Guilin for a new position in Chengdu in 1175, Zhou returned to Qinzhou, where he served again as a prefectural instructor until 1178. During this last term in office, Zhou began to study under the prominent twelfth-century *daoxue* 道學 figure Zhang Shi 張栻 (1133–1180), who had replaced Fan Chengda as military commissioner of Guangxi in 1175.¹⁷ After Zhou's term of office ended in 1178, he returned home to Wenzhou, where he compiled his geographic work *Lingwai daida* as a way to answer questions from family and friends about the southern frontier.¹⁸ Zhou borrowed many passages from Fan's *Guihai yuheng zhi* in writing *Lingwai daida*, but he often fleshed them out with his own personal observations, and added or expanded sections on foreign countries, trade goods, markets and frontier administration. In his time as a prefectural instructor in Qinzhou and a district defender in Guilin, Zhou regularly came into close contact with the indigenous peoples of the frontier (in many cases he describes speaking with them via translators), and observed the local patterns and practices of trade first-hand. While very few details of Zhou's life or career have survived beyond scattered mentions in poems by Fan Chengda and Yang Wanli 楊萬里, and a eulogy by his friend Lou Yue 樓鑰,¹⁹ *Lingwai daida* was reproduced in several Southern Song libraries and collections, and its passages turn up in many later texts.²⁰ The work itself is ordered topi-

¹⁷ *Daoxue*, often translated as Neo-Confucianism, was a philosophical and political movement that emerged during the Southern Song dynasty out of Confucian writings and debates in the late Tang and Northern Song, and became state orthodoxy during the Yuan dynasty. Zhang Shi was a rival of Zhu Xi within the *daoxue* movement during the late twelfth century. He subscribed strongly to the Mencian principle of the fundamental goodness of human nature, and was a proponent of “investigating things” (*gewu* 格物) externally, especially through public service and office holding (in contrast to Zhu Xi and the Fujian school's emphasis on quiet meditation). See Hoyt Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: U. of Hawai'i P., 1992), pp. 39–82; Quan Zuwang 全祖望, *Song-Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案, quoted in *Lingwai*, pp. 457–58; Yang Wuquan 楊武泉, “Jiaozhu qianyan” 校注前言 (editor's preface), in *Lingwai*, p. 6; Zhang Shi 張栻, *Qinzhou xueji* 欽州學記 (*A Record of Study in Qinzhou*), quoted in *Lingwai*, p. 455.

¹⁸ Zhou Qufei, “Xu 序,” *Lingwai*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Lou Yue 樓鑰, “Ji Zhou tongpan Qufei” 祭周通判去非 (“In Memory of Controller-general Zhou Qufei”), *Lingwai*, p. 455; Yang Wanli 楊萬里, “Yixuexuan ji” 宜雪軒記 (“An Account of the Suitable Snow Studio”), *Lingwai*, pp. 455–56; Yang Wanli, “Yizhai ji” 怡齋記 (“An Account of the Joyful Studio”), *Lingwai*, p. 456.

²⁰ The first mention of the title of the book is recorded in You Mao's 尤袤 (1127–1193) *Suichutang shumu* 遂初堂書目. The book's next mention is in Zhao Xibian's 趙希弁 (fl. 1250) compilation and expansion of Chao Gongwu's 晁公武 (d. 1171) *Junzhai dushuzhi shiyi* 郡齋讀書志拾遺, which recorded the author as well as title of *Lingwai*. *Lingwai* was also recorded in Chen Zhensun's 陳振孫 *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題, which was compiled after 1249. Both of these catalogues were then used in Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 (1254–1325) *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (1339), an important encyclopedia of the early Yuan. Yang, “Jiaozhu qianyan,” pp. 12–14; Etienne Balazs, *A Sung Bibliography (Bibliographie des Sung)*, ed. Yves Hervouet (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 1978), pp. 174–75, 196–98.

cally in a manner similar to that of *Guihai yuheng zhi*, but adds several new chapters on physical geography, frontier administration, and foreign countries.

The third work – Zhao Rugua’s *Zhufan zhi* – is a thirteenth-century geography of the South Seas that has a richly detailed section on trade goods as well as an extended passage on Hainan. *Zhufan zhi* was written when Zhao was serving concurrently as the prefect, superintendent of maritime trade, and administrator for the Southern Office of Imperial Clan Affairs in Quanzhou 泉州, the only Song official ever to hold all three offices concurrently.²¹ Although an imperial kinsman, Zhao Rugua – much like Zhou Qufei – only left a trace in the historical record, mainly because of his geography.²² Just as Zhou borrowed passages from Fan’s account to describe the southern frontier, Zhao quoted liberally from Zhou’s geography, especially its chapter on foreign countries. Knowledge in Song China, as in previous eras, was understood to be an accumulative process, and while each author added observations and analysis to what had come before, the author also understood and acknowledged the debts owed to earlier authors.

MAPPING TRADE

While the subject matter of the three geographies is diverse, many of their entries are either directly or indirectly related to frontier trade; they catalogue a broad range of trade goods – animal, vegetable, mineral, and manufactured goods – and describe different aspects of how they were traded: which regions and peoples of the frontier or South Seas produced them, and which trade goods were sought in exchange for their products. Furthermore, we learn about the mediums of exchange – both barter and currency – and about what other peoples, countries or regions constituted trade partners, and which trade routes one followed to get from one node of trade to another, both through the myriad mountain ranges and river valleys of the upland south and across the maritime space of the South Seas.

And yet the manner in which these authors chose to organize all this information varied. Fan Chengda generally embedded geographic

²¹ John W. Chaffee, *Branches of Heaven: A History of the Imperial Clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1999), p. 239.

²² Zhao’s funeral eulogy was uncovered by a farmer while ploughing a field in Taizhou in 1983, providing more biographical details about Zhao’s life and career. Xu Sanjian 徐三見, “Zhejiang Linhai shi faxian Songdai Zhao Rugua muzhi” 浙江臨海市發現宋代趙如适墓誌, *KG* 10 (1987), p. 956.

information in each topical entry. For example, Fan's passage on cinnabar explains that there were multiple grades of the ore, that the best cinnabar was found in Yizhou 宜州, but that the vein of ore continued across the Hunan-Guangxi border into Chenzhou 辰州, and could also be found in Yongzhou 邕州 and Rongzhou 融州, and that the autochthonic people of the streams and valleys upriver from Yongzhou knew how to smelt it into mercury.²³ By contrast, in addition to this sort of embedded information, Zhou Qufei wrote several passages specifically dedicated to describing the geography and trade routes of both the upland southwest and the maritime frontier of the South Seas. While these passages were not accompanied by illustrations or maps, the process of explaining the spatial relationships among mountains, rivers, ocean currents, roads, and the trade networks of the southern frontier created a sort of textual map of the region. The latter may be analogous to the medieval West's use of rutters – written guides for sailing port-to-port, often listing distances and compass points. For example, in his section on physical geography, Zhou described the five mountain passes into Lingnan,²⁴ the river systems draining Guangxi,²⁵ the mountain ranges of the southwest,²⁶ and several sea currents in the Gulf of Tonkin and around Hainan Island.²⁷ In his section on foreign countries, Zhou describes which prefectures or stockades the Song state uses to manage access to the territories of the great clans of the frontier uplands,²⁸ and lists the trade routes of the upland southwest and describes each stop along the way and how long each route takes to travel.²⁹ He also lists the maritime trade routes of the South Seas and shows where those routes converge and diverge,³⁰ and identifies the major emporia (*duhui* 都會) of the South Seas, stating which other countries' merchants traded at each one, which had the greatest prominence, and the compass headings to follow along the way.³¹ In his section on managing trade, Zhou also explains which frontier markets were associated with which upland peoples or states, and describes the network of routes by which

²³ *Guihai*, pp. 89–90.

²⁴ *Lingwai*, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 26, 29.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 35, 36.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

southwestern horses were brought to the Yizhou and Hengshan 橫山 horse markets.³²

While many of the passages on South Seas countries given in *Zhufan zhi* are drawn from the section on foreign countries in *Lingwai daida*, and thus organize information by country instead of regionally, Zhao Rugua expands upon Zhou Qufei's description of major South Sea emporia by stating not just which port cities played a central role in the flow of maritime trade, but also which countries had overlordship over others and functioned as tribute centers in their own right, a political detail conspicuously absent from late-imperial geographies of the South Seas, such as the fourteenth-century *Daoyi zhilüe* 島夷志略.³³

It is not surprising that these texts pay so much attention to trade, given the importance that the goods of the far south and South Seas had to the Song state and especially to frontier prefectures. Compared with other dynasties, the Song state was unusually dependent upon tax revenue from commerce, and uncommonly active about promoting maritime trade in particular. According to these geographies, the *binlang* 檳榔 (commonly referred to in English as betel nut) trade, stretching from Hainan, Dai Viet, and Mayi 麻逸 to south China alone,³⁴ provided tax revenue for the governments of Guangzhou and Quanzhou in the amount of several tens of thousands of strings of cash, and reportedly covered half of Qiongzhou's 瓊州 annual expenditures. The southwestern horse trade from Dali provided a key strategic resource for the Southern Song state, which had lost access to several of its Central Asian and Tibetan suppliers of horses following the fall of the Northern Song.³⁵ Additionally, the Song state and imperial family derived a significant amount of income from taxes on the southern frontier's luxury goods.³⁶ But since the vast majority of these goods were harvested, produced or imported by people in areas beyond the Song state's direct control, both overseas and in upland areas within the southern frontier, the primary vehicle for acquiring these commodities contin-

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 189, 191.

³³ Wang Dayuan 汪大淵 (fl. 1349), *Daoyi zhilüe jiaoshi* 島夷志略校釋 (*An Account of the Island Barbarians, Annotated*), ed. Su Jiqing 蘇繼頤 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).

³⁴ The *binlang* nut actually comes from the Areca palm, and is wrapped with the leaf of the betel vine before being chewed; *Guihai*, p. 126–27; *Lingwai*, p. 293; *Zhufan zhi*, p. 186. Mayi is identified in Yang Bowen's notes to *Zhufan zhi* as referring to either Luzon or Mindoro Island in the present day Philippines; *Zhufan zhi*, p. 142, n. 1.

³⁵ *Guihai*, pp. 106, 108; *Lingwai*, pp. 187, 191, 193–94.

³⁶ John W. Chaffee, "The Impact of the Song Imperial Clan on the Overseas Trade of Quanzhou," in *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 13–46.

ued to be private trade. By delineating the contours and details of this trade, frontier officials in effect compiled a guide for future merchants and officials to exploit it.

SIMPLE NATIVES

As they mapped out networks of trade on the frontier, however, these Confucian scholar-officials' description of the local peoples with whom that trade took place often betrayed an uneasiness with the social effects of trade. As imperial officials, these men had a responsibility to facilitate the extraction of resources and revenue necessary to fill the coffers of local government and encourage a flourishing trade for the markets of the imperial metropole. As literati educated in the moral philosophy of Confucianism, however, they were ambivalent about the merchant community's fixation on profit – and the unequal relationships that frontier commerce was sometimes predicated upon – but at times surprisingly sympathetic towards the frontier's indigenous inhabitants. This can be seen in the rhetorical contrast that the three geographies repeatedly set up between simple, honest natives and unscrupulous Chinese interlopers, both merchants and settlers.³⁷ This contrast reflects the Song dynasty's own conflicted nature of being both a moment of exceptional economic expansion and commercialization, as well as a period of great philosophical and political criticism of these economic forces and their human cost.

In particular, we see two different peoples depicted by the texts as simple and honest: the various peoples of the bordering state of Dai Viet and the Li 黎 people of Hainan Island.³⁸ Zhou Qufei, in his account of the thriving trade in Qinzhou that occurred among Viet merchants, petty traders from Qinzhou, wealthy cloth merchants from Sichuan, and the local fishermen he called “Jiaozhi Dan” 交趾蠻 (that is, the Dan boat-people of Jiaozhi) singled out the Viet people as being fundamentally simple and honest (*chunpu* 淳朴).³⁹ Zhou also described

³⁷ Intriguingly, this trope appears to be a variant on an old concern about corrupt officials on the southern frontier abusing the power of their office (and the freedom from imperial oversight that the distant frontier presented) to cheat the native population and enrich themselves through graft. Holcombe, “Early Imperial China's Deep South,” pp. 142–43.

³⁸ Song sources use a number of different names to refer to the country of Dai Viet and its inhabitants. In addition to calling it *Annan guo* 安南國, the “Country of the Pacified South,” the same authors also often use the Tang name of Jiaozhou 交州 or the Han name of Jiaozhi 交趾 to refer to the country, and *Jiaoren* 交人 to refer to its inhabitants. For reasons of convenience, I will use the term Viet in this paper to refer to the country and people located south of the Song border.

³⁹ *Lingwai*, p. 197.

the upland Viet who traded at Yongping stockade 永平寨 along the Song-Viet border as simple and honest.⁴⁰ Zhou contrasts both groups' honesty with unscrupulous Chinese merchants, as well as with Viet merchants from the border prefecture of Yong'an 永安州, whom Zhou claims had learned to be dishonest in recent years through their interaction with the Chinese.⁴¹

For Hainan, both Fan Chengda and Zhou Qufei draw a distinction between the people they called the Raw Li 生黎, who controlled the inaccessible highlands in the center of the island that produced most of Hainan's trade goods, and the people they called the Cooked Li 熟黎, who lived in the lowlands along the coast and near Hainan's few cities. While the Raw Li "did not submit to kingly transformation (*bufu wanghua* 不服王化)" and did not pay corvée or taxes, both authors describe them as "upright and tough (*zhizhi guanghan* 質直犷悍),"⁴² and Fan adds that they are "very trustworthy (*shen youxin* 甚有信)."⁴³ By contrast, both authors describe the Cooked Li – who by the implicit teleology of the ethnographic categories of raw and cooked ought to have been considered more civilized than the Raw Li – as untrustworthy and corrupt, which they ascribe in part to the presence of Chinese emigrants in their midst.⁴⁴ Fan first describes Fujianese merchants settling in Li territory:

Fujianese merchants happen upon the wind and water, and lose their goods. Many enter Li territory, farm the land and never return.⁴⁵ 閩商值風水，蕩去其貲，多入黎地耕種不歸。

In a subsequent passage in the same section, Fan connects these migrants to the ethnographic category of the Cooked Li, and portrays their crossing of both spatial and ethnic boundaries as a source of trouble on the frontier:

⁴⁰ Zhou refers to them as Viet, but also emphasizes their upland origins: "All of those who come to Yongping [market] are Viet from upland valleys 凡來永平者，皆峒落交人"; *Lingwai*, p. 195.

⁴¹ *Lingwai*, p. 197.

⁴² *Guihai*, p. 159; *Lingwai*, p. 70. Zhou's passage is reproduced verbatim from Fan.

⁴³ *Guihai*, p. 158.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the ethnographic rhetoric of raw and cooked and its implications, see Magnus Fiskj , "On the Raw and Cooked Barbarians of Imperial China," *Inner Asia* 1 (1999): pp. 139–68; Stevan Harrell, "Introduction: Civilizing Projects and the Reaction to Them," in Harrell, ed., *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 1995), pp. 18–20; idem, *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (Seattle: U. Washington P., 2001), pp. 36–37; Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, pp. 122–48.

⁴⁵ *Guihai*, p. 159.

The Cooked Li are corrupt and crafty, and traitorous exiles from Hu[nan], Guang[dong] and Fujian live amongst them. They invade and retreat across the imperial border, and are always causing trouble for the four commanderies.⁴⁶ 熟黎貪狡，湖、廣、福建之奸民亡命雜焉。侵軼省界，常為四郡患。

Zhou also stresses the connection between Cooked Li and Chinese settlers, and emphasizes their role as agents who instigate trouble across the boundary between imperial territory (*shengdi* 省地) where the Song state administered and collected taxes, and the territory of the Raw Li, who were autonomous and did not pay taxes:

Many of the Cooked Li are traitorous commoners from Hu[nan], Guang[dong] and Fujian, they are crafty and fierce, and terrible bandits. On the surface they pay taxes to officials, but secretly collude with Raw Li to encroach on imperial territory, and waylay travelers and residents.⁴⁷ 熟黎多湖廣、福建之姦民也，狡悍禍賊，外雖供賦于官，而陰結生黎以侵省地，邀掠行旅、居民。

From the administrative perspective of the frontier official, ethnically mixed and ambiguous border-crossers such as this, with their knowledge of both worlds, were more troublesome than the more distant and less ethnically ambiguous “raw” upland people that the Song state generally left on “loose reins” to manage their own affairs.⁴⁸

By the thirteenth century, however, things appear to have changed somewhat on the Hainan lowlands. Zhao Rugua describes the Hainanese in positive terms, praising their simplicity and frugality, and making note of the absence of hunger in their midst. In a sense, Zhao uses the frontier trope of the noble savage, which had been reserved for the Raw Li in Fan and Zhou’s accounts, in place of the earlier image of the conniving Cooked Li. In his passage on Hainan’s main administrative city of Qiongzhou, Zhao writes:

While there are no wealthy households, by custom they are frugal and temperate. Thus, there are none that are helpless and lonely, and even in famine years one does not see beggars.⁴⁹ 雖無富民，而俗尚儉約，故無惻獨，凶年不見匄者。

⁴⁶ *Guihai*, p. 159.

⁴⁷ *Lingwai*, p. 70.

⁴⁸ Leo Shin describes Ming frontier officials in Guangxi as having similar concerns over distinguishing between Chinese and non-Chinese peoples, and argues that their increasing efforts to police that boundary were in part a response to growing state interest in the region. Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State*, pp. 5, 138–83.

⁴⁹ *Zhufan zhi*, p. 217.

Zhao uses similar terms to describe the people of Changhua military prefecture 昌化軍 on the western side of Hainan:

They value honest simplicity and frugal temperance, and their women don't dress decadently or wear powder or eyebrow pigment. In weddings or funerals they all follow classic ritual, and there are no hungry or homeless households.⁵⁰ 俗尚淳朴儉約，婦人不曳羅綺，不施粉黛，婚姻喪祭皆循典禮，無饑寒之民。

Marginality still mattered, however. Zhao emphasized the wildness and ethnic ambiguity of the residents of Wan'an military commandery 萬安軍 on the farthest edge of the empire in southeastern Hainan, but even then he was struck by their honesty and respect for the law:

The common people live intermixed with Li and Dan. By custom their nature is wild and they fear the law. They do not delight in brigandry, and cattle and sheep are let out into the wild, for they would not dare to claim them under false pretenses.⁵¹ 民與黎蠻雜居。其俗質野而畏法，不喜爲盜，牛羊被野，無敢冒認。

At the root of these passages' emphasis on honesty, simplicity, frugality and the absence of hunger and poverty is a longstanding ethnographic trope – going back at least to Tao Qian's 陶潛 *Taohuayuan ji* 桃花源記 (“Record of the Peach Blossom Spring”) – of portraying peripheral peoples as idealized Daoist noble savages or primitive living fossils, living outside of time in agrarian utopias, which are then implicitly used to critique the corrupt government or cruel realities of the present.⁵² Su Shi evokes this trope in a poem written during his exile in Hainan from 1097 to 1100, portraying Li children in his neighborhood in Danzhou 儋州 as embodying the very spirit of antiquity:

總角黎家三小童	Three small children from Li families, their hair twisted into horns,
口吹蔥葉送迎翁	Blow onion leaves with their mouths to welcome the old man home.
莫作天涯萬里意	It does not give me the sense of ends-of-the-earth, ten thousand- <i>li</i> ,
溪邊自有舞雩風	On the riverbank it has the feel of dancing for rain in the Yu ceremony. ⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 218.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 219.

⁵² For more on the trope of the noble savage in Qing ethnographic writings about the colonization of Taiwan, see Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography*, pp. 61–80; also Fiskesjö, “Raw and Cooked,” pp. 143–44.

⁵³ Su Shi 蘇軾, “Beijiu duxing bianzhi zi yun wei wei xian jue si Li zhi she san shou” 倍

In another passage, Su also ascribes the paradoxical longevity of Li men in the debilitating tropical environment of Hainan to their being in tune with the universe, and practicing vital breathing in a manner that Su describes as being akin to that described in the *Zhuangzi*.⁵⁴ It is precisely out on the ends-of-the-earth margins of Hainan that Su claims that the spirit of the ancients is preserved, with the subtext that said spirit is absent from the corrupt metropole that has banished him there. In so doing, Su also makes a subtle claim for the frontier being a part of China, linked at some deep level with the ancient civilization of the heartland.

CUNNING MERCHANTS

In contrast to these honest, simple natives of the frontier, Zhou Qufei discusses several cases of unscrupulous Chinese merchants cheating locals through dishonest trade. The first case comes out of a conversation Zhou had with a Dan pearl diver in the coastal city of Hepu 合浦, located just east of Qinzhou. After quoting his native informant recounting a long litany of physical dangers that Dan pearl divers brave underwater, Zhou goes on to describe an economic one: the perverse way that “ripe pearl years” of high production drove the commodity price down and disadvantaged the pearl divers:

However, a “ripe pearl year” comes barely once or twice in a hundred years, and they are all wasted years. In a “ripe pearl year,” the Dan cannot set the price well. They risk death to harvest them, but they trade everything with cunning commoners for a litre of wine or a peck of millet, [selling] several ounces of [pearls] with every exchange. Once [the pearls] enter their hands, they divide them by grade and sell them in the city. They then change many hands until they reach the capitol, the price increasing fivefold with every exchange, to the point of being incalculable.⁵⁵

然珠生熟年，百不一二，耗年皆是也。珠熟之年，蟹家不善爲價，冒死得之，盡爲黠民以升酒斗粟，一易數兩。既入其手，即分爲品等銖兩而賣之城中。又經數手乃至都下，其價遞相倍蓰，至於不貲。

酒獨行遍至子云威微先覺四黎之舍三首, in *Su Shi Hainan shiwen xuanzhu* 蘇軾海南詩文選注, ed. Fan Huijun 范會俊 and Zhu Yihui 朱逸輝 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1990), p. 98.

⁵⁴ James Hargett, “Clearing the Apertures and Getting in Tune: The Hainan Exile of Su Shi (1037–1101),” *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 146–47.

⁵⁵ *Lingwai*, p. 259. Fan discusses the ripe pearl years, but not the effects on the commodity price, in *Guitai*, p. 110.

This passage is a familiar indictment of merchants on Confucian grounds going back to the Debate on Salt and Iron in the Han dynasty; it contrasts hard-working, immiserated producers risking their lives with cunning merchants skimming unearned profit by manipulating fluctuations in price.⁵⁶ In the context of the frontier, however, the trope takes on an added ethnic dimension, as Zhou casts the lowly and marginal Dan as the exploited party and his fellow countrymen as their exploiters. The anecdote also stresses the ethnic disparity in the degree of access Dan pearl divers and Chinese merchants would have had to regional and metropolitan markets, and to information about pricing in those distant markets.⁵⁷ Without a way to even out commodity price fluctuations in boom years, the Dan were left at the mercy of the market, and the “cunning commoners” who could take advantage of it.

Manipulating the weights and measures of exchange was another way some merchants sought to make a dishonest profit. In his passage on the border market in Qinzhou, Zhou accuses Chinese merchants of putting their thumbs on the scales, writing that “our people cheat [the Viet] by manipulating the rise and fall of the scales and measures” 吾人詐之於權衡低昂之間.⁵⁸ As the market was in Song territory and its weights and measures regulated by the state, Zhou also implicates local administrators in the dishonesty. There appears to have been some diplomatic pressure by the Viet state to ameliorate the situation, as “after the three embassies [from Viet] came, the market scales were standardized somewhat” 其後至三遣使，較定博易秤。⁵⁹

Zhou also describes Chinese merchants seducing southern women away with them to the north, using a local frontier term *juanban* 捲伴 (literally, “carrying off a companion”):

Deep in Guang[xi], the custom is to have many daughters, and many marriages are not done according to ritual. When merchants go to the south, they secretly seduce women into returning north,

⁵⁶ By comparison, note the similarities in this passage to the *ru* 儒 side of the Debate on Salt and Iron: “The government officers busy themselves with gaining control of the market and cornering commodities. With the commodities cornered, prices soar and merchants make private deals and speculate. The officers connive with the cunning merchants who are hoarding commodities against future need. Quick traders and unscrupulous officials buy when goods are cheap in order to make high profits. Where is the balance in this standard?” “The Debate on Salt and Iron,” trans. Patricia Ebrey, in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2d rev. edn., ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey (New York: The Free Press, 1993), p. 63.

⁵⁷ For a similar situation on the Qing dynasty Yunnan frontier, see Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, p. 165; For Qing dynasty concerns about Han merchants cheating aborigines in Taiwan, see Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography*, p. 78.

⁵⁸ *Lingwai*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

this is called “carrying off a companion.” The local people also have their own manner of “carrying off a companion.” As they cannot abscond straightaway like merchants, this matter thus has some differences.⁶⁰ 深廣俗多女，嫁娶多不以禮。商人之至南州，竊誘北歸，謂之捲伴。其土人亦自捲伴，不能如商人之徑去，則其事乃有異。

Zhou goes on to describe the local southern practice as being more akin to eloping than abduction, with ritual parental opposition but no serious use of force. By comparison, Fan Chengda’s passage on the same term emphasizes force, and describes it more as bride abduction:

Powerful violent men in villages will steal other men’s wives and run away, and then move to another location, and live calm and peacefully. They call this “carrying off a companion”; it means carrying someone off to become their mate.⁶¹ 村落強暴，竊人妻女以逃，轉移他所，安居自若，謂之捲伴，言捲以爲伴侶也。

Given the way that Fan presents the practice as barbarous and violent, Zhou’s choice, above, to use the loaded term *juanban* rhetorically, to describe the actions of Chinese merchants who seduce southern women, highlights the disparity in power between them, and draws attention to the longstanding northern trade in southern women as slaves, concubines and entertainers.⁶² This being said, something else was likely also going on here. While Zhou makes repeated reference elsewhere to southern women’s involvement in trade and their presence in the marketplace, he does not connect it to the relationships that he labels above as seduction.⁶³ As on other frontiers historically, both formal and informal relationships between sojourning male merchants and local women often facilitated trade, by joining local to long-distance personal and trade networks.⁶⁴

Curiously enough, given the negative depiction of Chinese merchants, none of these sources portrays foreign merchants (*fanshang* 蕃商) on the southern or maritime frontiers as being similarly dishon-

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 430.

⁶¹ *Guihai*, p. 130.

⁶² Mark S. Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China* (Philadelphia: U. Pennsylvania P., 2008), pp. 20, 99, 105.

⁶³ *Lingwai*, pp. 146, 429.

⁶⁴ For a similar situation involving French fur traders and Native American women on the American frontier, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge U.P., 1991), pp. 93–141. For the connection between trade and intermarriage between Chinese migrants and aboriginal women in Qing Taiwan, see John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier 1600–1800* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1993), p. 386.

est or exploitative.⁶⁵ These texts' accounts of foreign merchants often make note of their fine clothing and jewelry, but do not tend to describe them as being greedy, dishonest or corrupt in the way that one sees in Tang stereotypes of fat, rich, greedy Central Asian merchants.⁶⁶ Rather, foreign merchants were portrayed as literate and mannered, overly concerned with cleanliness,⁶⁷ and were occasionally held up as local exemplars of public mindedness.⁶⁸ This is remarkable, given the huge volume of trade and sizeable foreign merchant presence in southern port cities, and in light of the massacre of the foreign trading community in Guangzhou in 879 during the Huang Chao Rebellion. One would assume that this wealth and flourishing trade would have led to rivalries or resentments, but if they did, they do not show up in our three sources. In Zhao Rugua's case, his position as maritime trade commissioner would have brought him into close contact with Quanzhou's resident foreign community, and his own preface mentions his reliance upon foreign maps and foreign merchants for much of the information, which would likely have led him to portray them in a positive light.⁶⁹

More broadly, it may be that our authors took the wealthy, literate, long-distance traders to be exotic analogues of their own elite class, and not of the same social category of the commoner Chinese merchants on the frontier who vexed them. Cheng Wing-sheung has argued that the foreign merchant community during the Song was becoming increasingly acculturated, and included in their numbers a growing number of bicultural and bilingual "foreign guests" (*fanke* 蕃客) who had been born, raised and educated in Song port cities such as Quanzhou and Guangzhou.⁷⁰ This acculturation can also be seen in

⁶⁵ *Guihai*, p. 148.

⁶⁶ Zhu Yu 朱彧, "Pingzhou ketan" 萍洲可談 ("Chats from Duckweed Islet"), *Houshan tancong Pingzhou ketan* 後山談叢萍洲可談, ed. Li Weiguo 李偉國 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), pp. 134–35. For Tang stereotypes of foreign merchants, see Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, pp. 20, 22, 44–45, 92.

⁶⁷ *Guihai*, p. 149.

⁶⁸ Lin Zhiqi 林之齊 (1112–1276) commemorated the foreign merchant Shi'nuowei's 施那幃 building of a Muslim graveyard in Quanzhou in Lin Zhiqi, "Quanzhou dongban zang fanshang ji" 泉州東坂葬蕃商記 ("An Account of the Foreign Merchant of the Quanzhou East Slope Graveyard"), in *Zhuozhai wenji* 拙齋文集 15, pp. 12a–12b (SKQS edn.). Zhao Rugua also mentions this in *Zhufan zhi*, p. 91.

⁶⁹ Zhao Rugua, "Zhao Rugua xu" 趙如适序, in *Zhufan zhi*, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Cheng Wing-sheung 鄭永常, "Cong fanke dao Tangren: Zhongguo yuanyang waishang (618–1433) shenfen zhi zhuanhua" 從蕃客到唐人中國遠洋外商 (618–1433) 身份之轉化, in Tang Shi-yeoung 湯熙勇, ed., *Zhongguo haiyang fazhan shi lunwen ji* 中國海洋發展史論文集 (Taipei: Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Academia Sinica, 2008), vol. 10, pp. 155–65.

one early-twelfth-century report of an inheritance dispute involving a man from the foreign quarter surnamed Liu who had managed to marry a Song imperial clanswoman.⁷¹ This form of acculturation was along the lines of what Marc Abramson has called gentrification, a mode of acculturation defined by adopting the dress, ethics, and literacy of the official elite and their metropolitan culture.⁷² This may have predisposed the authors to see foreign merchants in a more positive light, as analogous social elites. While the ongoing mutual assimilation between Chinese migrants and Cooked Li in lowlands Hainan caused problems for frontier officials trying to govern a populace by ordering them into clear and unambiguous ethnic boundaries, the gentrification of foreign merchants would have been taken as proof of Confucian moral transformation, or *jiaohua* 教化. Boundaries blurred at all levels of society on the frontier, but some transformations were seen as more positive than others.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

While the rhetorical contrast set up by these frontier officials is stark, the reality of the southern frontier in the twelfth century was that in trade as in political and military matters, while Chinese merchants might have had advantages, many native peoples still controlled access to key goods and resources, so the process involved a great deal of negotiation, and terms of trade were not generally imposed unilaterally.⁷³ It is here where we must shift from moral rhetoric to brief glimpses of the messier, more equivocal underlying realities of trade on the frontier. Both Fan and Zhou describe several different methods that frontier peoples employed to extract their own profits from this burgeoning trade, and defend themselves from dishonest merchants. One approach can be seen in Zhou Qufei's passage concerning the Qinzhou border market. Having been cheated by Chinese merchants using rigged scales and measures, Viet merchants from the border town of Yong'an evened out the playing field by embracing corruption:

⁷¹ Zhu, "Pingzhou ketan," p. 138.

⁷² Abramson contrasts gentrification with two other often overlooked non-elite modes of acculturation during the Tang: militarization (acculturation to military culture), and what he terms local hanification (acculturation to local commoner culture). Abramson, *Ethnic Identity in Tang China*, pp. 167–69.

⁷³ In this regard, much of Southern Song Guangxi resembles the concept of the "middle ground" in Richard White's study of the Great Lakes frontier region in seventeenth-century North America, which C. Patterson Giersch has adapted to discuss the Yunnan frontier during the Qing dynasty; White, *Middle Ground*, pp. 50–142; Giersch, *Asian Borderlands*, p. 3.

In recent years, Yong'an people have become extremely crafty, and have become the cheating counterpart to our merchants. Thus they fake raw medicine, they adulterate gold and silver with copper to the point where it cannot be told apart. As for incense, they soak it in brine to make it sink in water, or cast lead and put it into cavities in the incense in order to sink it, and the merchants fall prey to these methods.⁷⁴ 邇年永安州人狡特甚，吾商之詐彼也，率以生藥之偽，彼則以金銀雜以銅，至不可辨，香則漬以鹽，使之能沉水，或鑄鉛于香窮以沉之，商人墮其術中矣。

In contrast to the civilizing mission to morally transform the people of Song China's periphery along Confucian lines, which Zhou was employed to do twice as a prefectural instructor in Qinzhou, Zhou portrays Chinese merchants as an opposite transformative force, corrupting the pure and simple people of the periphery through their unscrupulous and dishonest trading practices. Read against the grain, however, the actions of the cunning Yong'an merchants could also reveal a willingness to adapt to an unfair situation and turn it to their advantage. That being said, given that Jiaozhou had been an important port for China's maritime trade from the Han through the Tang dynasties, it seems quite unlikely that Viet merchants would have been innocent to the tricks of the trade.

Across the Gulf of Tonkin in Hainan, Fan Chengda mentions two different methods that the Raw Li – elsewhere described as people “who will not be cheated” – used to dissuade sojourning merchants from absconding without paying their debts. The first passage describes how the Raw Li dealt with merchants who left their territory with unpaid debts:

[Merchants] come once a year. If they do not come then [Li] count the years and remember them. If [the merchants] go back on a promise and do not come, and if there is [a debt] of more than a single coin – even though it might be tens of years later – a person from the same prefecture will be seized to serve as collateral. [The Raw Li] put a cangue on his neck, shut it on a horizontal bar of wood, wait for the original debtor to come and pay, and only then is he released. Even if the debtor is far away or dead, or an innocent man is caught and bound, [the Li] will wait for months and years until the point of death. Then they will wait for the bound person's

⁷⁴ *Lingwai*, p. 197. The reason for rigging the incense to sink with these methods was to make it appear to be aloewood (*chenxiang* 沉香, lit. “sinking incense”), a prized incense and lucrative import from Hainan and the South Seas.

compatriots to come, to put them in cangues and bind them as well. The families of the bound people who have incurred debt are encouraged to pay because of the bitter shame, or else their fellow villagers will gather and pay, and then they are released.⁷⁵ 歲望其一來，不來則數數念之。或負約不至，自一錢以上，雖數十年後，其同郡人擒之以爲質，枷其項，關以橫木，俟前負者來償，乃釋。負者或遠或死，無辜被繫，累歲月至死乃已。復伺其同郡人來，亦枷繫之。被繫家人往負債之家痛詆責償，或鄉黨率斂爲償，始解。

This passage resembles a Li custom of taking hostages that Fan described elsewhere, which he calls “grabbing and twisting” (*zhuo’ao* 捉拗). If a Li person’s kinsfolk were murdered, they would seize members of the murderer’s family (or those living in the same mountain valley) in response, and then put them in cangues made of lychee wood. Those seized would be held for ransom, until they were redeemed by payment of meat, wine and silver to the injured party.⁷⁶ Essentially, seizing and ransoming people appear to have been a local form of rough justice, which was then adapted in the first passage to deal with outsider merchants with unpaid debts. To these physical punishments, the Raw Li also added a form of compound interest on the debt:

All of those debts of a single string of cash will the next year be doubled to two strings, and this increase will happen for ten years. While the original debt was a single string, after ten years it will become a thousand strings. Therefore, people do not dare to incur a debt of even a single coin.⁷⁷ 凡負錢一緡，次年倍責兩緡，倍至十年乃止。本負一緡，十年爲千緡，以故人不敢負其一錢。

From these passages it is clear that the Raw Li, unlike the hard luck Dan pearl diver Zhou interviewed earlier, were aware of both the value of their products and the mechanics of the South Sea trade beyond their territory. Not only were they shown using coins and strings of cash to denominate debts instead of barter or commodities like bolts of cloth, they were also calculating interest on debt denominated in strings of cash. Fan also describes the Raw Li using a related system to calculate interest on damages caused by guests, measured in the life cycle of chickens and eggs:

If a guest accidentally kills a chicken, then [the Li] sound the drums and gather a crowd to force them to pay the debt, saying: “guest so-and-so killed a chicken of mine, and must repay me a

⁷⁵ *Guihai*, pp. 158–59.

⁷⁶ *Guihai*, p. 158; *Lingwai*, p. 71.

⁷⁷ *Guihai*, p. 159.

dou 鬪。” A *dou* is a hen and a rooster. A rooster can cost 30 cash, a hen fifty cash. A *dou* will give birth to ten chicks – five roosters, five hens – so in one year they will lay ten chicks four times. This altogether would make about six *dou*, and six *dou* could give birth to sixty chicks. They use this method of reckoning increase, cycling through for ten years before stopping. If one mistakenly kills a single chicken, even wealthy merchants will not be able to pay the debt. Thus, when guests come to someone’s home, they do not dare to move a single hair.⁷⁸ 客或誤殺其一雞，則鳴鼓告眾責償，曰：「某客殺我一雞，當償一鬪。」一鬪者，雌雄各一也。一雄為錢三十，一雌五十。一鬪每生十子，五為雄，五為雌，一年四產十雞，并種當為六鬪，六鬪當生六十雞，以此倍計，展轉十年乃已。誤殺其一雞，雖富商亦償不足。客其家，不敢損動其一毫。

One wonders if the natural rate of increase of chickens and eggs in the above passage might have served as the inspiration for the Li system of compounding punitive interest. The exponential pattern of penalties in both cases would certainly dissuade long-term debts within the community, or by outsiders to members of the community. If a merchant decided to abscond without paying, their outstanding debts could put their kin or other members of the sojourning merchant community at risk. Since the Raw Li controlled territory that produced many highly valuable products – most notably aloewood incense, but also sappanwood, kingfisher feathers, wax, cotton and *binlang* – being denied access to Li products could make it difficult for outside merchants to trade. In a sense, this could be seen as a Li analogue to the longstanding Chinese frontier administration tactic of using border markets and the threat of denial of trading rights as a way to discipline frontier peoples beyond direct control, “using merchants to control merchants” as it were. This method, however, only lasted as long as the Raw Li were able to control access to their territory (and thus trade goods). When Chinese settlers began to aggressively colonize and directly exploit the Hainanese highlands in the eighteenth century, it led to a series of violent Li reprisals. While these raids destroyed many Chinese villages in the short term, they were not successful in forestalling the collapse of their livelihood, and many Li fell into poverty, and ultimately into debt to Chinese moneylenders.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *Guihai*, p. 159.

⁷⁹ Anne Csete, “Ethnicity, Conflict and the State in the Early to Mid-Qing: The Hainan Highlands, 1644–1800,” in Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen Siu and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 2006), pp. 229–54.

I suspect that these systems of compounding debt and damages are what lie behind Zhou and Fan's description of the Raw Li as honest, tough people who "will not be cheated." The presence of the concept of compounding interest on debt is striking given that the Raw Li are otherwise coded in these sources as being very primitive, in Chinese ethnographic terms. Yet when one considers the sheer volume of trade in *binlang*, incense and other luxury goods (and in the opposite direction, in oxen, rice and salt) that passed through Hainan and Li territory, it is not surprising that the Li developed a complex understanding of money and trade. While the overarching rhetorical framework that the authors put forth is of simple, honest natives being cheated by cunning Chinese merchants, by reading between the lines in these accounts we can occasionally catch glimpses of submerged aspects of frontier trade, and see that frontier peoples were sometimes quite capable of adapting to changing situations, and at times imposing their own rules onto the trade, where they had the opportunity or the ability to do so.

CONCLUSION

The historical moment when these works emerged was in many ways a turning point for the southern frontier, in which the state's need for organized, accurate information began to become apparent to frontier officials, but before the military and demographic balance of the frontier had shifted in favor of the colonization of the highlands. While Guangxi's registered population and the reach of state administration did increase dramatically in the arable lowlands during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the upland parts of the frontier that produced most of the trade goods continued to be largely outside of the Song state's grasp, and neither frontier officials nor Chinese merchants were usually in a position to dictate the terms of trade or seize resources directly. While control of the highlands would not happen until after the Mongol invasion of the southwest,⁸⁰ the mapping of those resources found in the geographies, and the increasingly detailed studies of the peoples who produced them, served as guides for colonial expansion and frontier administration, deepening and expanding the Song state's ability to see and know the population, natural resources and trade networks on its most distant frontier.

⁸⁰ John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200-1700* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 2007), pp. 232-33.

As frontier officials, the three authors were active agents in furthering the long-term process of colonizing the southern frontier, but at the same time they were also observers and critics of the social consequences of this process. As literati trained in the moral philosophy of the Confucian classics, they expressed their observations through the language and worldview of Confucianism, posing the complexities of southern trade as a binary conflict between simple, honest natives and corrupt, unscrupulous Chinese merchants. This stark contrast also reflects two things: first, the frontier officials' other role as state agents in a vast civilizing mission, and second, their frustration borne of the hopelessness of being charged with effecting moral transformation on the frontier while being outnumbered by merchants whose very trade corrupted not only the natives, but also the functioning of local government.

The explosion of printed scholarship during the Song dynasty, of which these three geographies are examples, was a catalyst in expanding the colonization of the southern frontier, and eventually the expansion of Chinese trade with and knowledge of the maritime world of the South Seas as well. While the texts here were private projects of frontier officials, the body of knowledge about the southern frontier that they collectively produced and refined eventually had a profound impact on the trajectory of Chinese history. Ultimately, studying the ways that these texts mapped the southern frontier, and rendered its population, geography, natural resources and trade networks legible to the state, helps to reveal one facet of the process by which a marginal frontier circuit came to be transformed into an inextricable part of the late-imperial and modern Chinese geo-body.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Guihai</i>	Fan Chengda 范成大, <i>Guihai yuheng zhi</i> 桂海虞横志
<i>Lingwai</i>	Zhou Qufei 周去非, <i>Lingwai daida jiaozhu</i> 嶺外代答校注
<i>Zhufan zhi</i>	Zhao Rugua 趙汝适, <i>Zhufan zhi jiaoshi</i> 諸蕃志校釋