

Maritime Activities of the Arab Gulf People and the Indian Ocean World in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*

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The purpose of this paper is to clarify the following problems:

- I. The Indian Ocean world and the meaning of "world"
- II. Maritime activities of the Arab Gulf people after the 11th century
 - 1: The Chinese geographical knowledge on the Gulf countries
 - 2: Sīrāf, Kīsh and Hurmuz, and their maritime activities in the Indian Ocean world

I

It is commonly believed that the Indian Ocean littorals are divided by natural, ethnic and linguistic barriers or frontiers because of the particularly dangerous conditions of crossing the vast expanse of the sea, typhoons, reefs and currents. But historically speaking, we should accept the idea of the Indian Ocean as a united socio-economic area, that is "the Indian Ocean world", which fulfils cultural as well as economic functions within its world.¹⁾

Recently, some comprehensive works on the same subject have appeared in which the Indian Ocean is treated as a whole.²⁾ And also several recent international conferences have been held for the purpose of illuminating the character

* This article is based substantially upon a paper read in March 1977 at a conference on "Historical Studies on Eastern Arabia" sponsored by the Qatar History Committee, Doha, State of Qatar, and the Union of Arab Historians, Baghdad, Iraq. The references have been added subsequently.

- 1) I already emphasized this study point of view in my several articles and books. For example see *The Arab Dhow Trade in the Indian Ocean*, published by my institute (Tokyo, 1976); "Yemen and the Indian Ocean Trade—On the Sīrāfi Migrants in South Arabia—", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 119–144; "Some Aspects of the Indian Ocean Trade in the Fifteenth Century", *JAAS*, Vol. 8 (1974), pp. 137–155; "On the Stetched Arab Dhow 'Sanbūk Ḥafāri' of the Ḥafāri District in Oman", *JAAS*, Vol. 13 (1977), pp. 181–204.
- 2) The books relating to this problem are among J. Auber, *Histoire de l'Océan Indien*, Tananarive, 1954; A. Toussaint, *Histoire de l'Océan Indien*, Paris, 1961 and his recent book *l'Océan Indien au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1974.

of the Indian Ocean world, past and present. But some of these studies have laid emphasis on the Ocean as an area of global political and strategic importance in view of contemporary world situation.³⁾ Other scholars have only concentrated on the commercial relationships between the Ocean and the external world, and have shown no interest in the intraregional trade and communication within the Indian Ocean world by which the daily life and social relations among its littoral peoples have been maintained through history.⁴⁾

The important point to be understood is that if we pay more attention to this world as a stage for the purpose of finding the common elements connecting the complicated currents of Afro-Asian histories, it is necessary for us to clarify the historical roles that the Indian Ocean world itself has played, and at the same time to study the historical process with reference to the structures and organizations of the Indian Ocean world.

What then is the meaning of "world", if we consider the Indian Ocean to be a world? And also what are the basic elements for considering the Indian Ocean to be a world?

Many scholars use the term "world" with the same meaning as "a united area" or "a region", but no one has tried to explain its meaning or basic elements. We, generally say for example, "the Mediterranean world", "the Islamic world", "the South-East Asian world" and so on. Greek and Roman scholars usually limit the use of "the Mediterranean world" to the area in which the influence of Greek and Roman policies was most directly felt. Dr. S. Nishijima, Professor of the Tokyo University who specializes in the history of the ancient and medieval China, clarified his opinion about the basic elements of the East-Asian world. According to his opinion, the East-Asian world—which consists of China and its neighboring countries, such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam and other littorals around the East-China Sea—has functioned historically as a united cultural area under the following influences of Chinese civilization: (1) use of the Chinese writing system, (2) the Chinese law and tribute system, (3) Confucianism and (4) Chinese Buddhism. But he did not consider the unifying factors of the natural and ecological environments in and around the

3) The theme of the conference held in Washington on March 18 and 19, 1971 under the auspices of the "Center for Strategic and Internal Studies of Georgetown University" was the Indian Ocean. The proceeding of this conference was published in the title *The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic and Military Importance*, edited by A. J. C. Cottrell, New York, 1972; *The Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean—International Politics*, Ed. by A. Amirie, Tehran, 1975.

4) The "International Historical Association of the Indian Ocean" made several attempts to hold an international conference on the Indian Ocean field, past and present. As to its proceedings, see *Studia*, Vol. 1 (Lisbon, 1963), and *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien, Actes du huitième colloque international d'histoire maritime*, Paris, 1970; *East Africa and the Orient*, Ed. by N. Chittick, London, 1976.

East-China Sea.⁵⁾

I propose that we should use the term "world" only to designate a united socio-economic area which was historically formed by the following three basic elements: (1) natural, geographical and ecological environments such as monsoon, sea, island and natural productions, (2) leading civilization and its influence, (3) relationship of co-existence and balance resulting from the above two elements. As to the Indian Ocean and its littorals, we observe that trade and communication were made possible not only by the favorable conditions of special wind patterns which are marked by the seasonal phenomenon of monsoon, currents and tides, all very favorable to navigation, but also by the advanced techniques for navigation and ship-building possessed by the peoples such as the Arab, Persian, Indian and Malayan peoples living around the Indian Ocean.⁶⁾ Also the relationship of the co-exchange and traffic was historically stimulated by differences of the natural products between the north-west corner and the south-east corner of the Indian Ocean basin through time. There is also no doubt that the Islamic civilization and its influence have played fundamental roles in creating the unity of the Indian Ocean world since the seventh century.

By the continuous influences of the above elements on the natural, ecological and social elements, the relationships of co-existence and balance seem to have become established in the Indian Ocean basin. We should, therefore, accept the concept of the Indian Ocean world which has always possessed some unifying structures and organizations.

About two years ago, I conducted field research in the countries bordering the Arab Gulf, South Arabian coast and the Red Sea.⁷⁾ I thought that the possibility of comparative studies on the social and economic history of the Indian Ocean world would be revealed by field research on the small wooden lateen ships "Arabs dhows" still in frequent use for trade and communication from the Gulf countries to East Africa, India and Pakistan. I concluded from this research that one of the main reasons for the traditional Arab dhow and its trade crossing the Indian Ocean is the firm continuity of the traditional structure and organization of the Indian Ocean world.⁸⁾

II

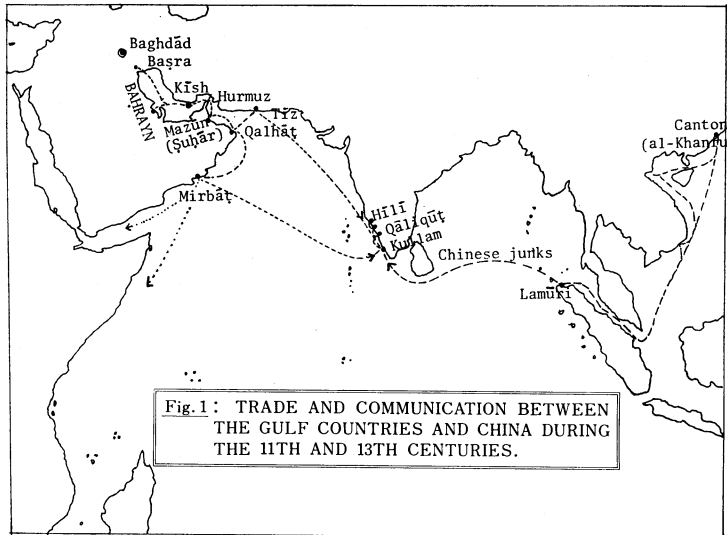
Some scholars assert that with the decline of the 'Abbasid supremacy and the

5) S. Nishijima, "Higashi-ajia-sekai-no-tenkai (The Development of the East Asian World)", in *Iwanami-Sekai-Rekishi-Koza*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 1-10.

6) See my *The Arab Dhow*, p. 6, fig. 1.

7) As to the main objectives of my research on the actual conditions of the Arab dhow trade around the South Arabian coasts, see *The Arab Dhow*, pp. 18-19.

8) *ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 50-51.



rise of the Fatimids in Egypt in the latter part of the tenth century, the centre of Muslim maritime activities in the Indian Ocean shifted from the Arab Gulf to the Red Sea.⁹⁾ But as mentioned above, we should not neglect the importance of the continuation of trade and communication among the Arab Gulf, East Africa and India even after some changes of political and economic conditions in the lands of the eastern Caliphate.

In the 11th and the 12th centuries, Chinese geographical knowledge on the Gulf countries suddenly increased. Chinese people for the first time became acquainted with such place names as al-Qaṭīf, Mirbāṭ (Zafār), 'Umān, al-Baḥrayn, al-Baṣra, Kīsh and Hurmuz through the exchange of trade and envoys between the Arab Gulf and the South China. This fact plainly shows that some ports on the shore of the Arab Gulf continued to play considerable roles as centres of maritime activities in the Indian Ocean world even after the 11th century.

I will now discuss some relationships between the Gulf countries and China in the 11th and 12th centuries, as recorded in Chinese historical sources.

1: The Chinese geographical knowledge on the Gulf countries

The numerous rebellions and military disturbances during the last years of the Chinese T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-907) and the period of the short-lived power of five successive dynasties (second half of the 9th and the 10th centuries), rendered difficult for the foreign merchants, especially Muslim merchants, the

9) For example, see B. Lewis, "The Fatimids and the Routes to India", *Revue FSÉI*, Vol. 11 (Istanbul, 1949), pp. 50-54; A. Hamdani, "The Fatimid-Abbasid Conflict in India", *IC.*, Vol. 41 (Hyderabad, 1967), pp. 185-191.

continuation of their trading activities at the ports of South China.

The Sung dynasty (A.D. 960–1127, 1127–1206) finally restored authority which was more completely consolidated in South China. However, the fact that they did not hold powerful control over the North China and the Central Asiatic routes, forced them from the very beginning to orientate their commercial activities towards South Asia and the Indian Ocean world. Trade and contact, therefore, increased enormously in this dynasty, and for the first time in Chinese history revenues from trade and customs exceeded the land revenues. We are told that in A.D. 999, Inspectorate Offices of Maritime Trade were established at Khānfū (Canton), Min-cho and Kao-chu for the purpose of developing foreign trade and exchange, and also of resolving all problems of foreign merchants and their colonies in China.¹⁰⁾

At the same time, Chinese mariners and merchants by using their big junks and newly developed navigational techniques expanded their trade throughout South-East Asia. During the Sung dynasty, Chinese junks regularly visited ports in Vietnam, Java and Sumatra, and consequently their colonies and migrants increased in the South Asian countries.¹¹⁾

Some authorities suggested that prior to the 9th century, Chinese ships and mariners had already reached Hīra, al-Ubulla, Sirāf and Jār (port of al-Madīna), because the Arabic word “sufun šīniya” or “markab šīnī” is found in some early Arabic geographical sources. This view, however, is difficult to accept. “Sufun šīniya” or “markab šīnī” simply referred to Arab trading ships for East Asia and China.¹²⁾

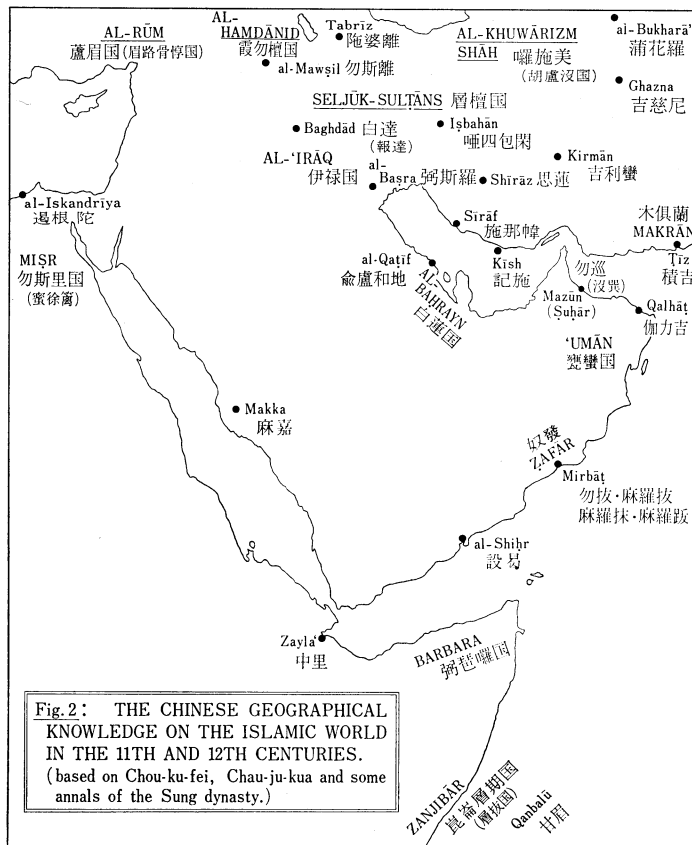
It is undeniable that until the middle of the 12th century, Chinese junks called frequently at some ports of South India, such as Kullam, and thereafter in the 13th century Qālīqūṭ, Jirfattan and Hīlī.¹³⁾ Chou-ku-fei wrote in A.D. 1178

10) See T. Fujita, “On Khānfū of Ibn Khurdādhbeh”, “Kao-shu, A Chinese Seaport in the Sung and Yeng times”, “On the Country of So-Tan in the Sung Dynasty”, “Inspectorate Offices and its Customary Practices in the Sung Dynasty”, in *Tozai-Kosho-Shi-no-Kenkyu (Studies on the History of East-West Intercourses)*, Vol. of Naihāi, pp. 179–398, Tokyo, 1943; J. Kuwabara, “On P’u Shou-Keng”, *Memoires of the Research Department of Tōyō Bunko*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo, 1928), pp. 71–72, Vol. 7 (1935), pp. 1–104 and his book *China Trades of the Arabs in the T’ung and Sung Dynasties and a Muslim Inspectorate Officer of Maritime Trade ‘Pu Shou-Keng’*, Tokyo, 1935, pp. 24–25.

11) J. Kuwabara, *China Trades*, pp. 88–97; C. P. Fitzgerald, *The Southern Expansion of the Chinese People*, pp. 13–18.

12) G. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean*, Princeton, 1951, pp. 75–76; Yajima, “Yemen and the Indian Ocean Trade”, p. 124.

13) See Yajima, “Indian Ocean Trade at the Time of the Mongol Empire”, *The Toyogaku-ho (Journal of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko)*, Vol. 57, Nos. 3–4 (Tokyo, 1976), p. 18; Ibn Baṭṭūta, *Voyages d’Ibn Battūta*, ed. C. Defrémery, Vol. 4, pp. 81, 86, 88; Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, ed. H. Yule and H. Cordier, Vol. 2, pp. 376, 386, 390.



many interesting accounts of the foreign countries of “the Southern Sea (Nan-hai)”; he says about Kullam:¹⁴⁾

“Kullam is adjacent to the Arab countries (the Tāzi). The Chinese junks from Canton (the Cantonese junks) take forty days to reach Lamrī (in Sumatra), and stay there during the winter season, and the following year a farther voyage of about one month will take it to this country (Kullam) Great numbers of the Arab settlers live together in this country The Arabs take horses to trade in this country.¹⁶⁾ The king of the country worships Heaven. He who kills an ox forfeits his life. The Chinese junk traders who wish to visit the Arab countries must transship at Kullam to smaller boats (Muslim ships) before proceeding farther. Although they may reach there in one month by using the

14) 胡臨 (or 吉林)

15) 大食國

16) On the horse trade of the Muslim merchants, see my article, “Indian Ocean Trade in the Time of the Mongol Empire”, pp. 22–24.

southern monsoon, it may be two years before they can get back (to Canton)."¹⁷⁾

From this account we know that in the Sung dynasty Chinese junks went as far as Kullam on the Malabar coast in India, and had business contacts with the Muslim merchants and mariners who came from the Arab countries. It seems to be quite natural that a considerable number of Muslim merchants and envoys visited the ports of South China on board the Chinese junks and also on their own ships. And it must be pointed out that in the 11th and 12th centuries, most of Muslim merchants and envoys who had close contacts with the Sung dynasty were from the countries of the Arab Gulf, according to the two famous geographical works written in the Sung dynasty: (1) Chou-ku-fei, *Ling-wai-tai-ta*, (2) Chau-ju-kua, *Chu-fan-shi*,¹⁸⁾ and also in some Sung imperial annals.

Chou-ku-fei gathered the first accurate information on Mekka, Baghdad and Ghazna. Also Chao-ju-kua, the inspector of foreign trade in Fu-kien, tells us what the Chinese in the 11th and 12th centuries knew about the foreign countries, peoples and products of Eastern and Southern Asia, East Africa and even the Arab countries. We can deduce from his descriptions that he obtained various informations on the Arab countries from the Muslim mariners and merchants who frequented Canton and other ports of South China. The following countries and cities of the Arabs are mentioned in his geographical work: Mirbāt, al-Shihr, Zafār, al-Mahra, Makrān, Qalhāt, 'Umān, al-Baḥrayn, al-Irāq, Baghdād, al-Baṣra, Kīsh, al-Mawṣil, Iṣbahān, al-Khuwārizm, Makka, Barbar (Somaliya), Zanġibār, Qanbalū, Miṣr, al-Bijāya (near Algeria), Sicily, al-Iskandarīya, al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā and al-Andalus. (See fig. 2)

It is clear from these geographical names that the information on the Arab countries reported by Chou-ku-fei and Chao-ju-kua deals primarily with the Gulf countries and their neighbours, and little was reported about Aden and ports along the Red Sea crossing Egypt and the Mediterranean world.

If we examine the names of merchants, envoys and travellers who came from the Arab countries according to the descriptions of Sung annals, we gain more understanding of the continuation of frequent diplomatic and commercial relationships which had been established between the Gulf countries and the Sung dynasty.

The Sung chronicle, *Sung-Shih (the Sung History)* contains a general description of the Arab countries (the Tāzī):¹⁹⁾

"The Arab countries are divided by their tribes, and have their own special

17) Chou-ku-fei, *Ling-wai-tai-ta*, Chi-pu-tsu-chai collection, Changhai, 1936.

18) Chau-ju-kua, *Chu-fan-shi*, ed. Fu-sho-kin, Peking, 1940; *Chau-ju-kua; His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries*, entitled *Chu-fan-chi*, Trans. by F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, St. Petersburg, 1911.

19) T'o-t'o, *Sung Shih*. Vol. 490.

names, and so some of them are of Ma-jun (Mazūn),²⁰⁾ Da-ba-ri (or Da-ba-ri-ji = Tabrīz),²¹⁾ Ye-ro-ha-chi (al-Qaṭīf)²²⁾ and Ma-ra-batsu (Mirbāt)²³⁾ and so on, but they all are known as Tā-zī (the Arab countries). Among the tribute items sent by Mazūn to China were ambergris and kara-cotton.”

It is clear that “Mazūn” is Ṣuḥār in Oman, because some Arabic writers as early as the third A.H./ninth century (for example Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Mas‘ūdī, al-Muqaddasī, al-Mubarrad, al-Bakrī and Yāqūt) state that “Mazūn” was the old name for the area of Oman which had been under the Sasanian control, and that its center was known to the Arabs as Ṣuḥār.²⁴⁾ The Chinese already knew the name “Mazūn” for Ṣuḥār by the end of the 8th century. This name is used in an important itinerary book dealing with the sea-route from Canton to the Arab Gulf compiled by Kia-tan between A.D. 785 and 805. From Kullam-Malay, according to his itinerary, a route proceeded straight as far as Aden (Samrān) across the Indian Ocean, and then, along the South Arabian coast, reaching such ports as al-Shiḥr, Musqaṭ and Mazūn. Then, turning around Ra’s Masandam, it entered the Arab Gulf.²⁵⁾

The Sung annals indicate that this city “Mazūn” sent embassies to the Sung dynasty twice, in A.D. 1011 and 1072.

“In the fourth year of Dai-tsu-syo-fu (A.D. 1011), Feb. 17, a shipowner Ho-ka-shin (Abu’l-Qāsim)²⁶⁾ of the country of Mazūn visited Gyo-zai (Kinsai = capital of the Sung dynasty),²⁷⁾ and paid a tribute.”²⁸⁾

“In the fifth year of the Ki-nei (A.D. 1072) in the reign of the Sung emperor Shin-so (A.D. 1068–1077), the country of Mazūn in the Arabs sent their embassy Hashin-da-ra (Hāshim ‘Abd Allāh)²⁹⁾ to China, and gave pearls, rhinoceros, camphor, frankincense, coral, glass, ambergris, cut-glass, rose-water, dates, five taste thing (?), greek-oil, white-peacock, palm-date, e-tsuda-cloth and returning

20) 勿巡

21) 施婆離 (or 施婆離慈)

22) 俞盧和地

23) 麻囉跋

24) See Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (BGA, Vol. 5), pp. 35–36; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm* (BGA, Vol. 4), pp. 92; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab.*, ed., B. de Meynard (Paris, 1861–77), Vol. 1, p. 331; al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil*, Cairo, 1956, Vol. 3, p. 961; al-Bakrī, *Mu’jam Ma’sa’jam*, Cairo, Vol. 4, p. 1222; Yāqūt, *Mu’jam al-Buldān*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Vol. 4, p. 4; Yajima, “Ports of the Oriental Trade in South Arabia”, *Toho-Gaku (Eastern Studies)*, ed. by the Institute of Eastern Culture, Vol. 31 (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 11–12; J. C. Wilkinson, “The Origins of the Omani State”, *The Arabian Peninsula: Society and Politics*, ed. by D. Hopwood, pp. 73–74, London, 1972.

25) See my article, “Ports of the Oriental Trade”, pp. 1–16.

26) 舶主蒲加心

27) 行在

28) *Sung-hai-yao-kao*, Ban-i, 7.

29) 大食勿巡國進奉使辛押施羅

to his country, he especially was awarded a white horse and a set of saddle and bags.”³⁰⁾

As to the country of al-Qaṭīf, we have an interesting report written in the Sung official report *Sung-hai-yao*:

“In the Ki-wei sixth year (A.D. 1073), December 16, an Arab country Yu-ro-ha-chi (al-Qaṭīf)³¹⁾ sent an embassy Bo-ra-sen (Abu'l-Rāzī)³²⁾ with tribute consisting of frankincense and other things. And so he was granted 29,000 kans of copper-coins and also received two thousand ryos of silver.”³³⁾

We can find several descriptions on the country called “So-tan” a country of the Arabs. At first, Dr. F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill identified this name with al-Zanj,³⁴⁾ but Dr. T. Fujita, a Japanese chinologist correctly identified this country with “Sulṭān” of the Seljuk dynasty.³⁵⁾ My own research supports the latter identification. A Chinese work called *Wen-chhang-tsa-lu*³⁶⁾ contains a short description of the geographical situation of this country “So-tan”:

“East of the country So-tan is limited by sea (probably the Arab Gulf), west of it is Ko-ro-mo (al-Khuwārizm-Shāh dynasty),³⁷⁾ south of it is Ka-mo-dan (evidently the Ḥamdānid dynasty),³⁸⁾ and its north is limited by Li-ki-ban (Li-ki-ban should probably be Ki-li-ban = Kirmān).”³⁹⁾

There is another interesting description of “So-tan”, the country of the Seljuk sultan. The Sung chronicle *Sung-shih* says:⁴⁰⁾

“So-tan is on the Southern Sea. The city is twenty li from the sea coast. In the fourth year of Ki-wei (A.D. 1071), they sent presents to our court (the court of the Sung dynasty) for the first time. Traveling by sea, and with a favorable monsoon wind, the envoy took a hundred and sixty days. On the way, he passed Mazūn, Kullam and Saribuza (Palembang), and came to Canton. The ruler of this country was named A-mi-ro-a-bi-ran (Amīr al-Umarā').⁴¹⁾ They had ruled the country for five hundred years (since the rise of Muḥammad) of ten generations. Their language sounds just like that of the Arabs. The climate is warm all year. The wealthy people wear turbans of yu-e stuff and clothes of

30) *Sung-hai-yao-kao*, Ban-i, 7. For a detailed study on the Chinese knowledges of Mazūn, see Fujita, “On the Country of So-tan”, pp. 260–263.

31) 大食俞盧和地國

32) 蒲囉詵

33) *Sung-hai-yao-kao*, Ban-i, 4.

34) F. Hirth, *Chao-ju-kua*, p. 127, n. 4.

35) T. Fujita, “On the Country of So-tan”, pp. 264–265.

36) Phang-yuan-lu, *Wen-chhang-tsa-lu*.

37) 胡盧沒國. T. Fujita identified this country with “al-Rūm (Asia Minor)”. See J. Fujita, “On the Country of So-tan”, p. 264.

38) 震勿檀國. T. Fujita identified this country with Hamadān of the Jibāl district.

39) 利吉蠻國

40) *Sung-shih*, Vol. 490 and Chou-hui, *Chhing-po-tsa-chih*, Vol. 2.

41) 亞美羅亞眉蘭

flowered brocade. . . . Of cereals, they have rice, millet and wheat. For food, they eat fish. Of animals, they have sheeps, goats, buffalos, water-buffalos, camels, horses, rhinoceros and elephants. . . . Of products, pearls, glass and three kinds of drinks called mi (mei = wine), sha (sharāb) and hua (?). In commercial transactions they use only coins made by the government; three kinds are of gold and copper in equal proportion, the fourth of silver. The people are forbidden to coin money themselves.”

In A.H. 429/A.D. 1038, the Seljukid Toghril proclaimed himself “sultān” at Nishapur. Toghril began deliberately to associate his authority with the cause of Sunnī orthodoxy and the freeing of the ‘Abbasid caliphs from the Shī‘ī Buwaihīd. And in A.H. 447/A.D. 1055 Toghril entered Baghdad and had his title of sultan confirmed by the caliph. The probability is that the Seljuk sultans who sent envoys to the Sung dynasty of China in A.D. 1071, 1081 and 1083 were Sultān ‘Adud al-Dawla Alp-Arslān (A.H. 455–65/A.D. 1063–73) and Sultān Jalāl al-Dawla Malik Shāh I (A.H. 465–85/A.D. 1072–92). The Sung chronicle gives the following account of the arrival of the envoy from the Seljukids:

“In the sixth year of Yuan-fou (A.D. 1083), the envoy Fo-jun-ro-sho-ka-ni (probably nā‘ib Zakariyā)⁴²⁾ came again to the Chinese court. The Emperor Shin-so (A.D. 1068–85), considering the very great distance he had come, besides giving him the same presents which had been formerly bestowed on him, added thereto 2,000 ryos of silver.”⁴³⁾

Chou-ku-fei mentions Mirbāt, an important medieval trading port of the Zafār district in Oman. He says:

“There is the country of Ma-pi-ra (Mirkāt).⁴⁴⁾ Ships leaving Canton after the mid-winter and with a northern wind, can reach the country called Lan-li (Lamrī in Sumatra)⁴⁵⁾ in forty days, where they trade, buying brazil-wood, white tin and long white rattans. The following year, in winter, they set to sea again and with a north-east monsoon, they take some sixty days to make the journey and arrive at Mirbāt. The products (of Mirbāt) are frankincense, ambergris, pearls, opaque glass, rhinoceros-horns, ivory, coral, putamen, myrrh, dragon’s blood, asafoetida, liquid storax, oak-galls and rose-water, to trade in all of which the countries of the Arabs resort to this place.”⁴⁶⁾

It is interesting for us to note that some Sung annals and Chau-ju-kuo record the coming of trade missions from Mirbāt in A.D. 1088, 1089 and 1094.⁴⁷⁾ Mirbāt was the main trade port of the Zafār district, and an important center

42) 大食層檀國保順郎將層伽尼

43) *Sung-shih*, Vol. 490; *Sung-hai-yao-kao*, Ban-i, 14.

44) 大食麻囉拔國

45) 藍里國, Lamori of Marco Polo, Vol. 2, pp. 281, 283.

46) Chou chchu-fei, *Ling-wai-tai-ta*, Vol. 3, pp. 25–26.

47) *Sung-hai-yao-kao*, Ban-i, 4 and 7; Chao-ju-kua, *Chu-fan-shi*, pp. 115–119.

for contact with the Gulf countries, India and East Africa, because of its good geographical position for monsoon navigation. After Ibn Ziyād became master of Ḥaḍramawt, al-Shiḥr, Mirbāt, Laḥj, Aden and the maritime provinces of the Red Sea, some migrants who came from the Gulf countries seem to have established their commercial colonies in the Zafār district.⁴⁸⁾ We know from some descriptions of Ibn Ḥawqal, Ibn al-Mujāwir, Ibn al-Athīr and Abu'l-Makhrama that in the early twelfth century, a family of migrants from Sirāf known by the name of al-Manjū or al-Manjāwīyūn established a settlement in Mirbāt, and they had held their authority over that district until a rich merchant and nākhoda called Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥimyarī founded a new dynasty, "the Ḥabūdī dynasty", in the early thirteenth century. We can, therefore, suppose that some merchants and trade missions of Mirbāt who had diplomatic and commercial contacts with China during the Sung dynasty were Sirāf migrants of al-Manjū origin.⁴⁹⁾

The principal exports that the Arabs during the Sung dynasty bought in China were, according to the Chinese annals, Chinese porcelain, silver, copper-coin and silk-cloth. It is still impossible to date accurate early medieval Chinese wares. The best evidence comes from Sāmarrā' on the Tigris, occupied only between A.D. 836-892. Several kinds of Chinese porcelains and stonewares found there.⁵⁰⁾ Many of the same types, as well as Sung porcelains have also been found at Fuṣṭāt, 'Aydhāb, Aden, the Gulf countries and even the coasts of East Africa.⁵¹⁾ It is clear that from the 9th century A.D. onwards the Chinese regularly exported porcelains and stonewares to the Near East and the Indian Ocean world. Some certainly came overland through Persia, but the literary evidence indicates that much came by sea round India, and was conveyed onwards up to the Gulf countries and finally to Egypt and East Africa. I supposed that the greater part of the cargo carried by Chinese junks consisted of porcelains during the Sung dynasty. It must also be indicated that after the latter tenth century, silver-coins and coppers became extremely scarce in the Eastern Arab countries, and therefore, the silver and copper trade with Central Asia and China became much more important to the economic stability of the Arab countries. I suppose that merchants and mariners of the Gulf countries in the 11th century visited ports of South China for the purpose of importing a considerable number of Chinese coins.

48) 'Umāra, *Ta'riḫ al-Yaman*, ed. & trans. by H. C. Kay: *Yaman, its Early Medieval History by Najm ad-Dīn 'Omārah al-Ḥakamī*, London, 1892, pp. 5, 182.

49) See my article, "The Indian Ocean Trade and Yemen", *JAAS*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 142-143 and n. 109.

50) See F. Sarre, *Die Keramik von Samarra*, Berlin, 1925, plate xxiii, 9, 13-15.

51) A. Lane and R. B. Serjeant, "Pottery and Glass Fragments from the Aden Littoral, with Historical Notes", *J. of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Oct., 1948, pp. 108-133.

The matters discussed above lead to the conclusion that commercial and diplomatic relations between ports of the South China under the Sung dynasty and the Gulf countries continued closely even after the political and economic changes of the Eastern Caliphate in the course of the 10th and 11th centuries. The Gulf peoples seem to have maintained their commercial networks and their trade settlements on the shores of the Indian Ocean world by which they established themselves at the golden ages of the 'Abbasid supremacy from Baghdad to all parts of the Indian Ocean world leading to China.

2: **Sīrāf, Kīsh and Hurmuz, and their maritime activities in the Indian Ocean world**

As I emphasized in my article "Yemen and the Indian Ocean trade" (*JAAS*, V, 1972), after the decline of the 'Abbasid supremacy in the latter part of the 10th century, the rising Fāṭimid-Ayyubid power in Egypt apparently desired to cut off the eastern trade route to India and East Africa through the Arab Gulf which was at the time in hands of the 'Abbasids. Therefore, the Arabs and Persian merchants especially those originating from the Gulf countries, established many colonies and settlements on the shores of the Red Sea, South Arabia, East Africa and India for the purpose of obtaining better trading facilities and reviving their commercial networks.

Sīrāf, a port of the Arab Gulf, continued to be a flourishing trade emporium of the Indian Ocean for more than one hundred years from the middle of the 9th to the middle of the 10th centuries, and Sīrāfī merchants and ship-owners played very important roles in nautical and commercial activities in the Indian Ocean world. However, as reported by al-Muqaddasī, Ibn al-Balkhī and Yāqūt, Sīrāf lost its position as a result of the earthquake which occurred about the year A.D. 977, and the fall of the Buwayhid supremacy in Iraq. Thereafter the Sīrāfī merchants are said to have migrated to other places on the coasts of the Indian Ocean world.⁵²⁾ And by the early thirteenth century, Sīrāf seems to have been complete ruined; Yāqūt states:

"I have visited it (Sīrāf) and seen the remains of remarkable edifices as well as of a fine mosque adorned with columns of teak wood. . . . But since Ibn 'Umayra colonized the island of Qays (Kīsh) and it became the entrepôt of Indian trade, Sīrāf for instance lost its ancient splendor."⁵³⁾

It is worthy to note that in the Sung annals, there are some descriptions of the arrival of Sīrāfī migrants and merchants. And it is therefore supposed that Sīrāfī merchants and mariners who frequented ports of South China under the Sung dynasty were migrants who had established colonies on the shores of the

52) For a detail study on the rise, development and decline of Sīrāf, see my article "The Indian Ocean Trade and Yemen", pp. 122-143.

53) Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, Vol. 3, pp. 211-212.

Indian Ocean world after the decline of their native city, Sīrāf. Chau-ju-kua discussed their migrants who settled in Ts'uang-shou (Zaytūn):

“A foreign trader by the name of Shi-na-wei (Sīrāfi),⁵⁴⁾ an Arab in birth, established himself in the southern suburb of Ts'uan-shou (Zaytūn). Distaining wealth, but charitable and filled with the spirit of his western home, he built a charnel house in the south-western corner of the suburb as a last resting place for the abandoned bodies of foreign traders.”

Tei-shi, a historical source of the Sung dynasty, also contains a short description of great numbers of Sīrāfi migrants in the port of Zaytūn in South China.

“Some ship-merchants (nākhodas) named Shi-ra-wei (Sīrāfi) live also in Zaytūn, and their numbers of population rank next to the name ‘ho’ (Abū or Ibn).”⁵⁵⁾

According to Ibn Ḥawqal, Ibn al-Mujāwir, Abū Makhrama and other Yemenite historical sources, a considerable number of Sīrāfi migrants established their commercial colonies in Kīsh, Mirbāt, Aden, Gharāfiqa, al-Mukhā, al-Ahwāb, Farasān, Kamarān, Judda and Suqtrā islands.⁵⁶⁾ As Ibn al-Mujāwir and Waṣṣāf say, sons of nākhoda Qayṣar of Sīrāf migrated to Kīsh island, an offshore island some 110km. farther south. I confirmed that the names of some kings who ruled Aden, as recorded by Ibn al-Mujāwir, identify with those who took possession of Kīsh island, about whom Waṣṣāf gives information. If this hypothesis is correct, we conclude that Malik Jamshīd, the son of As'ad b. Qayṣar was the first Sīrāfi ruler of Kīsh who conquered pirate enemies, and a son of Jamshīd called Sulṭān Shāh also occupied a part of Aden. It is worth special mention in the history of Indian Ocean trade that in the middle of the 12th century, the Sīrāfi rulers of Kīsh island took possession of Aden, the entrepôt of the international trade port at that time. I also conclude that they continued to rule over these two important ports for the purpose of the maintenance of their commercial networks and trade activities up to the rise of the Rasūlid supremacy in Yemen (c. 1226).⁵⁷⁾

Kīsh supplanted Sīrāf as the chief center of trade activities in the Arab Gulf after the 11th century. And as stated above, one of the main reasons why Kīsh suddenly became established as an entrepôt of the Indian Ocean world was due to the activities of the Sīrāfi migrants, especially Sīrāfi seafaring traders. The rulers of Kīsh also owned trading settlements at Sumnāt, Kanbāya, Kullam, Kāyal and other ports of Southwest India, and were appointed supervisors (wazīr, marzubān) of trade affairs and foreign residents by the princes of the Hindu

54) 施那緯，戶羅國，撒郵威。 See J. Kuwabara, *China Trades.*, pp.141-143.

55) *Tei-shih*, Vol. 11.

56) See my article, “Yemen and the Indian Ocean Trade”, pp.132-137, 140-143.

57) *ibid.*, pp.133-137.

Pandya dynasty.⁵⁸⁾

Benjamin of Tudela (A.D. 1164–73) visited Kīsh island on his way to India and Ceylon, and gives a flourishing account of trade of this place:

“Kīsh is a considerable market, being the point, to which the Indian merchants and those of the islands bring their commodities; while the traders of Iraq, Yemen and Fars import all kinds of silk and purple cloths, flax, cotton, hemp, mash, wheat, barley, millet, rye and all other kinds of eatables and pulses, which articles form objects of exchange; those from India import great quantities of spices, and the inhabitants of this island live by what they gain in their capacity of brokers of both parties.”⁵⁹⁾

Chao-ju-kua also says about this island:

“The country of Ki-shi (Kīsh) is on a small island in the sea, within sight of the Arabian [coast], which is a half day’s journey distant from it. There are very few towns This country produces pearls and fine horses.”⁶⁰⁾

As Chao-ju-kua indicates, the commercial prosperity of Kīsh, as well as that of Hurmuz, was based on the vast profit gained from the trade of pearls and the Arab-Persian horses exported to the Hindu dynasties of the Southern India.⁶¹⁾

From the facts mentioned above, we come to the conclusion that during the latter middle ages, the development of some ports of the Arab Gulf, such as Kīsh, Qalhāt, al-Qaṭīf, al-Baḥrayn and Hurmuz was achieved largely by keeping an elaborate system of sea-intercourse within the Indian Ocean world which had been historically formed through frequent movements of men, exchanges between cultures and their contacts and mixtures. Even after the ‘Abbasid power declined in the latter part of the 10th century, therefore, the Arab Gulf route as well as the Red Sea route continued to play a considerable role on the traffic and trade over the Indian Ocean world.

Finally we conclude that the Arab Gulf and its littorals have historically functioned as an important part of the Indian Ocean world in keeping with the relationships of co-existence and balance through history.

58) See my article, “Indian Ocean Trade at the Time of the Mongol Empire”, pp. 4–26.

59) A. T. Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, London, 1928, pp. 98–99.

60) *Chao-ju-kua*, pp. 133–134.

61) See my article, “Indian Ocean Trade at the Time of the Mongol Empire”, pp. 22–24.