

The Structure and Transformation of the Ming Tribute Trade System

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I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I attempt to investigate whether we can summarize the foreign trade system during the Ming era as a single concept of the ‘tribute trade system’ or ‘the mutual trade system’. Needless to say, the term ‘tribute system’ was commonly used for conceptualizing the traditional diplomacy and foreign trade system of the Ming-Qing Empire based on the ‘Chinese world order’, in contrast to the ‘treaty system’ introduced by the Western powers after the Opium War (Fairbank 1968). Further, Hamashita Takesi conceptualized a historical system of international trade network developed under the tribute system of the Ming-Qing Empire as the ‘tribute trade system’ (Hamashita 1990, 1997). Recently, scholars such as Iwai Shigeki 岩井茂樹 and Ueda Makoto 上田信 have proposed categorizing the foreign trade system from the late Ming onwards as a ‘mutual trade system’ (*bushi tizhi*; Jp. *goshi taisai* 互市體制) rather than a ‘tribute trade system’, because during this period, foreign trade was mainly conducted in the form of

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‘mutual trade’ (*hushi* 互市) between private Chinese merchants and foreign merchants, and tribute trade accounted for no more than a limited portion of foreign trade (Iwai 2004: 132–134, 2005: 121–124, 2009: 30–38, Ueda 2005: 249–262).

This concept of the ‘mutual trade system’ is essentially proposed as an antithesis to a prevailing discourse that summarizes foreign trade in the Ming-Qing period as the ‘tribute trade system’. On the other hand, Iwai and Ueda also have not given a clear definition of ‘mutual trade’ at the moment, and sufficient investigation of institutions and actual practices of the ‘mutual trade’ from the late Ming onwards remains to be done (Okamoto 2007). Can we really summarize the foreign trade system throughout the late Ming and the Qing period as a single concept of the ‘mutual trade system’?

In this chapter, I have investigated and will describe the various types of trade that occurred in both maritime and inner Asia, and will also sketch a series of historical events that had critical meanings for the formation of a new system at the end of this period. Looking at the various types of trade that actually took place between the 1360s and the 1570s, we can conclude that it would be more appropriate to talk about a ‘tribute and trade system’ rather than a ‘mutual trade system’, at least in relation to the late Ming and the early Qing period. The trade order in East Asia at the time can be said to have been in a fluid and transitional state, moving from the earlier unitary tribute trade system to a system in which various forms of trade, such as tribute trade, mutual trade and visiting trade, coexisted in accordance with the political and economic relations in existence between the Ming and its trading partners.

2 THE TEMPORAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE MING TRIBUTARY TRADE SYSTEM

Da Ming huitian 大明會典 (1587 edn) comprehensively enumerated all the tributaries of the Ming dynasty.¹ Here I provisionally categorize tributaries of the Ming listed in *Da Ming huitian* into six zones (Fairbank 1968: 1–4; Banno 1973: 83–85).² At first, I include Korea, Japan and Ryukyu in the ‘Eastern Zone’, and will then group the Southeast Asian tributaries into the ‘Southern Zone’, and tributaries in India and West Asia into the ‘Indian Ocean Zone’. On the other hand, I will group tributaries belonging to the Mongols and the Jurchens together as the ‘Northern Zone’, will call the tributaries in Central Asia the ‘Western

Zone' and will group tributaries belonging to Tibet and Southwest China into the 'Southwestern Zone'.³ Further, I will group the tributaries belonging to the Eastern, the Southeastern and the Indian Ocean Zone into the 'Maritime Asia', while the Northern, the Western, and the Southwestern Zone will comprise the 'Inner Asia' (Mancall 1968: 72–75).⁴ In Table 1, I have classified all tributaries listed in *Da Ming huitian* into the six zones mentioned above.⁵

The tribute trade system that was established in the late fourteenth century had expanded in the early fifteenth century, but it began to decline as early as the mid-fifteenth century and actually collapsed by the mid-sixteenth century. Here I will roughly survey the temporal transformation of the Ming tributary trade by dividing the 200 years between the 1360s and the 1560s into six major periods, while broadening our horizons to the inner, as well as maritime, Asia (Fairbank and Têng 1941:

Table 1 Tributaries of the Ming listed in *Ta-Ming huitian* 大明會典 (1587 edn)

Region		Names of the tributaries
East Asia (Eastern Zone)		朝鮮 (Korea) 琉球 (Ryukyuu) · 日本 (Japan)
South-east Asia (Southern Zone)	Mainland	安南 (Vietnam) 真臘 (Cambodia) · 暹羅 (Siam) · 占城 (Champa)
	Malay peninsula	彭亨 (Pahang) · 滿刺加 (Melaka) · 急蘭丹 (Kelantan) · 古里班卒 (Panchor?)
	Sumatra	三佛齊 (Palembang) · 須門達那 / 蘇門答刺 (Samudra) · 覽邦 (Lamong) · 阿魯 (Aru) · 碟里 (Deli) · 南巫里 / 喃渤里 (Lamuri) · 合貓里 (Komoring?)
	Java	爪哇 (Java) · 百花 (爪哇西部?) · 淡巴 (Demak?) · 日羅夏治 (Gresik?) · 千里達 (Cirebon?)
	Eastern islands	淳泥 (Burnei) · 娑羅 (Borneo) · 蘇祿 (Sulu) · 呂宋 (Luzon) · 古麻刺 (Kumalarang)
Indian Ocean (Indian Ocean Zone)	East India	瑣里 / 西洋瑣里 (Cola) · 榜葛刺 / 彭加那 (Bengal) · 招納樸兒 (Janapur)
	Malabar coast	古里 (Calicut) · 小葛蘭 (Quilon) · 柯枝 (Cochin) · 甘把里 / 坎巴夷替 (Coyampadi) · 加異勒 (Cail)
	Gujarat	窟察尼 (Kutch) · 烏涉刺踢 (Gujarat) · 奇刺尼 (Lar?) · 捨刺齊 (Surat?) · 夏刺比 (Valabhi?)
	Indian Ocean	錫蘭山 (Ceylon) · 溜山 (Maldives)
	West Asia	佛蒜 (Byzantium) · 忽魯謨斯 (Hormuz) · 魯密 (Rum) · 黑葛達 (Bagdad)
	Arabia peninsula	祖法兒 (Zufal) · 阿丹 (Aden) · 刺撒 La'sa) · 天方 (Mekka) · 默德那 (Medina)
	East Africa	麻林 (Malindi) · 不刺哇 Brawa) · 木骨都束 (Mogadishu)
	Unidentified	八可意 · 打回 · 阿哇 · 沙里灣泥

Table 1 (continued)

Region		Names of the tributaries
North Asia (Northern Zone)	Mongol	蒙古 (Mongol)·瓦剌 (Oirad)
	Uriyangkhad	兀良哈 (Uriyangkhad) 三衛 (朵顏衛·福餘衛·泰寧衛)
	Manchuria	海西女直 (Haixi Jurchen)·建州女直 (Jianzhou Jurchen)·野人女直 (Yeren Jurchen)
Central Asia (Western Zone)	Hami & Shazhou	哈密衛 (Hami guard)·安定衛 (Anding guard)·阿端衛 (Aduan guard)·罕東衛 (Handong guard)·罕東左衛 (Handong left guard)·赤斤蒙古衛 (Chijin Mongol guard)·曲先衛 (Quxian guard)
	Eastern Turkistan	亦力把力 (Ilibalik)·土魯番 (Turfan)·火州 Karakhodja)·柳陳城 (Lukchak)·于闐 (Khotan)·哈失哈兒 (Kashgar)·別失八里 (Bishbalik)·俺力麻 (Almalik)·察力失 Chalish)·苦先 (Kucha)·牙兒干 (Yarkand)·阿速 (Aksu)
	Western Turkistan & Afghanistan	哈烈 / 黑婁 (Herat)·撒馬兒罕 (Samarkand)·哈的蘭 (Khatran)·掃蘭 (Sairam)·把丹沙 / 八答黑商 (Badakshan)·把力黑 (Balkh)·脫忽麻 (Togmak)·卜哈刺 (Bokharaj)·克失迷兒 (Kashmir)·火壇 / 火占 Khodjend)·沙六海牙 (Sharokia)·俺都淮 (Andkhui)
	Iran & West Asia	失刺思 (Shiraz)·你沙兀兒 Nishapur)·帖必力思 (Tabriz)·亦思弗罕 (Isfahan)·魯迷 (Rum)·天方 (Arabia)
	Unidentified	哈三·哈烈兒沙的蠻·乜克力·幹失·怕刺·果撒思·牙思·戎·白·兀倫·耶思成·坤城·捨黑·擺音·克即亂·哈辛
Southwest Plateau (Southwestern Zone)	Tibetan sects	闡教王 (<i>Chanjiao wang</i>)·闡化王 (<i>Chanhua wang</i>)·輔教王 (<i>Fujiao wang</i>)·贊善王 (<i>Zanshan wang</i>)·護教王 (<i>Hujiao wang</i>)·大乘法王 (<i>Dachengfa wang</i>)·大寶法王 (<i>Dabaofa wang</i>)
	Amdo & Kham & Western Sichuan	長河西魚通寧遠宣慰司 (Zhanghexi-Yüdong-Ningyuan <i>xuanweishi</i>)·雜道長官司 (<i>Zadao zhangguansi</i>)·朵甘思宣慰司 (Duogansi <i>xuanweishi</i>)·直管招討司 (Zhiguan <i>zhaotaosi</i>)·董卜韓胡宣慰司 (Dongbuhantu <i>xuanweishi</i>)·別思寨按撫司 (Biesizhai <i>Anfusi</i>)·加渴瓦寺 (Jiahewa temple)·金川寺番僧 (Tibetan monks of Jinchuan temple)·雜谷按撫司 (<i>Zagu anfushi</i>)·打喇兒寨 (Dalaer stockade)·達思蠻長官司 (<i>dasiman zhangguansi</i>)·長寧按撫司 (Zhangning <i>anfusi</i>)·韓胡碉堡列寺 (Hanhudiaolqielie temple)·洮岷等處番僧 (Tibetan monks in Tao-Min area)·洮岷等處番族 (Tibetan tribes in Tao-Min area)
	Southwestern aboriginal offices	Aboriginal offices in Sichuan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Yunnan, and Huguang Provinces 土司 (military aboriginal office such as 軍民府 <i>junminfu</i>)·按撫司 <i>anfusi</i> ·長官司 <i>zhangguansi</i> ·宣慰司 <i>xuanweisi</i> ; 土官 (civil aboriginal office of prefectures and counties)

Source *Daming binitian* (1587 edn), Ch. 105–108, libu禮部 63–66, chaogong 朝貢 1–4

Main reference works: Fairbank and Têng (1941), 'Index of tributaries listed in six editions of the collected statutes'; Liu Jiafang 陸家榮, Xie Fang 謝方, and Liu Junling 陸峻嶺 eds. (1986); Zhong Xinglin 鍾興麟 ed. (2008); Geoff Wade, 'Some southeastern Asian polities mentioned in the MSL,' in *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu* (<http://eprint.nus.edu.sg/msl/>)

Table 2 The number of tributes by main tributary states in the Ming (1368–1566)

<i>Tributary states</i>		<i>I</i> 1368– 1402	<i>II</i> 1403– 1435	<i>III</i> 1436– 1464	<i>IV</i> 1465– 1509	<i>V</i> 1510– 1539	<i>VI</i> 1540– 1566	<i>Total</i>
East	Korea	60	158	87 + α	135 + α	90 + α	81 + α	611 + α
Asia	Ryukyu	54	105	63	37	20	16	295
	Japan	10	10	1	4	3	1	29
South-	Vietnam	25	6	27	23	4	4	89
east	Siam	39	26	11	10	1	4	91
Asia	Champa	23	31	22	10	3	1	90
	Cambodia	12	7	0	0	0	0	19
	Melaka	0	20	7	5	2	0	34
	Samudra	0	16	0	0	0	0	16
	Parenbang	6	4	0	0	0	0	10
	Java	11	34	18	3	0	0	66
	Burnei	1	9	0	0	0	0	10
Central	Hami	0	94	84	56	14	7	255
Asia	Turfan	0	25	5	40	14	8	92
	Bishbalik	1	10	1	0	0	0	12
	Ilibalik	0	15	18	1	0	0	30
	Samarkand	9	26	14	15	14	4	82
	Herat	0	14	5	1	0	0	20
	Arabia	1	1	0	2	11	4	18
	Rum	0	3	0	0	3	5	11

Sources Korea: Li Yunquan 李雲泉 (2004), pp. 75–76; Ryukyu: Noguchi Tetsurō 野口鐵郎 (1977), pp. 186–206. *日本:* Hashimoto Yū 橋本雄 (2002), pp. 10–11; Southeast Asia: Qiu Xuanyu 邱炫煜 (1995), pp. 128; 180–184; 294–295; Central Asia: Watanabe Hiroshi 渡邊宏 (1971), pp. 1–39

156–157; Ptak 2003: 157–191).⁶ In Table 2 below, I have provisionally collected statistics on the tributes made by the main tributary states of the Ming, after consulting some useful secondary literature.

3 THE FIRST PERIOD: 1368–1402

Immediately after his enthronement in 1368, the first Ming Emperor, Hongwu 洪武, positively dispatched embassies to the surrounding states to persuade them to send tributary missions to the Ming. In response to

them, more than a dozen polities of East and Southeast Asia send tributes to the Hongwu court. They were bestowed with the title of king and accepted the suzerainty of the Ming Empire (*cefeng* 冊封) and were allowed to engage in tribute trade with the Ming (Ōsumi 1982; Sakuma 1992: 3–24; Li 2004: 61–133).

On the other hand, the early Ming government strictly prohibited coastal populations from making private overseas voyages. In 1374, when the Ming government further abolished the Maritime Trade Supervisorates (*shibosi* 市舶司), both overseas voyages by Chinese merchants and visits to China by foreign merchants became impossible, and overseas trade was restricted only to interstate trade between the Ming and tribute states. Thus, during the early Ming, the tribute system and the maritime exclusion policy were indivisibly integrated, and the Ming government assumed monopolistic control not only over diplomatic relations but also over foreign trade with the surrounding states under the tribute trade/maritime exclusion system (Sakuma 1992: 25–39; Danjō 1997, 2004; Zheng 2004: 7–56; Chao 2005: 30–50; Li 2007: 29–54). In overland trade too, private foreign trade was severely restricted (Serruys 1975: 72–83).

The cornerstone of the tribute trade was of course the tribute goods presented by tributaries and the gifts awarded by the Ming emperor. But in practice, the greater part of the tribute trade consisted of transactions in the additional goods brought in by tribute envoys and the accompanying merchants. These additional goods were either taken without compensation or were purchased by the government, after which another cargo could be offered to the market for ‘mutual trade’ (*bushi* 互市), which was permitted at the entry point and the guesthouse for foreign envoys (*huidongguan* 會同館) in the capital (Serruys 1975: 47–83; Sakuma 1992: 3–24; Chao 2005: 50–58). In this way, the Ming Empire created a centripetal trade system managed by the central government, and the overriding principle of the Ming’s trade policy was the unity of tribute and trade (*gongshi yiti* 貢市一體), which meant that there could be no trade without tribute.

But as for overland trade, the early Ming state exceptionally provided for some official markets along the inland border, where foreigners were permitted to engage in ‘mutual trade’ with Chinese government agencies and private merchants to acquire military and courier horses. The ‘Horse Trade Offices’ (*chamasi* 茶馬司) were established along the peripheries of Shaanxi (陝西) and Sichuan (四川) provinces in the late

fourteenth century, where the Central Asians and the Tibetans were allowed to exchange their horses for Chinese tea (Tani 1972: 55–98; Rossabi 1998: 245–258).

In the Hongwu period, most of the tribute states were part of East and Southeast Asia. In particular, Korea (Koryŏ 高麗 and Chosŏn 朝鮮 Kingdom) and Ryukyu (Zhongshan 中山 and two other kingdoms) were two most important tribute states of the Ming from the beginning. On the other hand, the tribute relationship with Japan was unstable because of domestic disturbances and the intensified activities of *wokou* 倭寇 (Sakuma 1992: 43–96). Besides, Vietnam, Siam, Champa, Cambodia and Java also often sent tributary missions to the Ming. From the Indian Ocean, only two missions from the South India were recorded. In addition, tribute missions from Inner Asia were severely limited because of continuing political confrontations with the Mongol polities, except that missions of Tibet and Samarkand repeatedly arrived. Further, in 1394, the Hongwu Emperor issued an order to break off diplomatic and trade relations with overseas countries except for Ryukyu, Cambodia and Siam, so at the very end of the fourteenth century, tributaries of the Ming were almost limited to Korea, Ryukyu and some Southeast and Inner Asian states, and, combined with a maritime seclusion policy, foreign trade was reduced to a low level (Li 2004: 64–65; Zheng 2004: 47–51).

4 THE SECOND PERIOD: 1403–1435

Yongle 永樂, the emperor who ascended the throne in 1403, promoted an extremely positive foreign policy, actively dispatching large-scale fleets and envoys, represented by Zheng He's expedition, both to maritime and Inner Asia. As a result, the tributaries of the Ming rapidly expanded to a vast range in the Indian Ocean, in North and West Asia, as well as in East and Southeast Asia (Ōsumi 1984). To manage tribute trade with maritime Asian polities, the Ming court reopened the Maritime Trade Supervisorates in Guangzhou, Quanzhou and Ningbo in 1403, and repositioned them as agencies dealing with tribute trade rather than as agencies for controlling private trade, as had previously been the case.

In the Eastern Zone, Korea and Ryukyu send outstandingly numerous missions in all tributaries, and Japan also sent missions almost every year from 1401 to 1411 (Sakuma 1992: 97–140; Nakajima 2003). In the Southern Zone, except for the main tributary states such as Siam, Champa, Melaka and Java, many states and port cities sent tributes in

response to Zheng He's voyage. In addition, from the Indian Ocean Zone, many polities in India, West Asia, Arabia and East Africa sent missions along with the return voyages of Zheng He's fleets. It is especially noticeable that important ports along the main sailing routes that linked Eastern and Western Eurasia, such as Melaka, Sumatra, Lamuri, Ceylon, Cochin, Calicut, Hormuz and Aden, repeatedly sent tributes and engaged in tribute trade with the Ming court (Qiu 1995: 135–203).

Zheng He's fleets not only performed the role of diplomatic and military power display, but also achieved the aims of large-scale trading missions (Yajima 1993: 243–274). They positively conducted trade at every calling port, exported Chinese goods and imported tropical products such as pepper and sappanwood (Ptak 2003: 165–170; Wada 1967, 1981).⁷ Zheng He's expedition brought about the revival of long-distance trade in maritime Asia, which had once flourished under Mongol rule, but had declined during the 'fourteenth century general crisis'. On the other hand, under the strict maritime exclusion policy, no one was permitted to engage in private overseas trade, though illicit private trade did not cease, even in the heyday of the tribute trade in the early fifteenth century.

Tribute trade with Inner Asian states, which was operated only on a limited scale in the first period, also expanded considerably in the second period. In the Northern Zone, the Yongle emperor founded the Regional Military Commission (*dusi* 都司) in Manchuria and organized the Jurchen tribes belonging to Haixi 海西, Jianzhou 建州, and Yeren 野人 Nuzhen 女真 into the military guard (*wei* 衛) system, bestowing nominal titles of military offices on the chieftains of those tribes. These Jurchen chieftains, who were bestowed these titles, sent tribute missions in every year, along with the chieftains of the Mongolian tribes in Western Manchuria, who were organized into three guards units known as the three Uriyanghad guards (*Wuliangha sanwei* 兀良哈三衛).

The Jurchen and Uriyanghad tribes not only carried out tributary trade, but also engaged in 'mutual trade' in the 'horse markets' (*mashi* 馬市) founded in Guanning 廣寧 and Kaiyuan 開原 in Liaodong 遼東, where the Jurchens and the Uriyanghad (one of the Mongols mainly living in Manchuria) brought horses and other products such as ginseng, and bought various Chinese products (Serruys 1967: 3–7, 113–126, 1975: 92–103; Ejima 1999: 153–181, 217–244). On the other hand, in the Mongol plateau, the Yongle emperor bestowed seals and the title of Prince (*wang* 王) on the leaders of the Mongols and the Oirads. However, tribute relationships between the Ming with the Mongols

and the Oirads remained unstable, and so the Yongle emperor led five military expeditions to the Mongolian plateau. In spite of such military confrontations, Chinese goods were indispensable for the Mongols and the Oirads, so the Mongol leader Arughtai sent tribute missions as many as 44 times during the second period, and the Oirats leaders also sent missions almost every year after 1408 onwards (Serruys 1967: 5–9, 126–127).

In the Western Zone, the Yongle emperor organized the Mongol princes residing between the Hexi 河西 corridor and the Tarim basin into seven military guards, and let them send tributes. In particular, the Mongol prince of Hami, which was a gateway for the caravan trade along the Silk Road, was bestowed with the title of ‘*Zhongshun wang* 忠順王’. And Hami was positioned as the key point for controlling diplomatic and commercial relations with Central Asia (Nagamoto 1963; Rossabi 1998: 246–250). In addition, from Eastern Turkistan, which was under the influence of the Moghulistan Khanate, some locales such as Bishbalik, Ilibalik and Turfan sent tributes to the Ming. Further, from Western Turkistan and Iran, which were within the territory of the Timurid Empire, various missions from Samarkand, Herat and other cities along the Silk Road routes, in which many caravan merchants accompanied, were dispatched to the Ming court and engaged in tribute trade (Rossabi 1998: 246–250; Zhang 2006).

Besides, Yongle invited leaders of the main sects of Tibetan Buddhism to the capital, bestowed upon them the title of religious prince (*fawang* 法王, *jiaowang* 教王, etc.) and incorporated them into tribute relations, although the Tibetan monks perceived the Ming emperor as their religious patrons rather than their sovereign (Satō 1986: 173–320; Rossabi 1998: 241–245). In addition, the Tibetan tribes and temples in the Eastern Tibetan plateau (the Amdo and Kham regions) were incorporated into the military system of the Ming, were bestowed with nominal military titles and engaged in horse-tea trade at the Horse Trading office, as well as tribute trade (Tani 1972: 55–70; Yi 2000: 166–204, 247–255).

5 THE THIRD PERIOD: 1436–1464

In this period, the Ming court, which was severely pressed by excessively heavy financial burden accompanied with tributary trade, changed its extremely positive foreign policy in the early fifteenth century into a far

more passive one, and as a result, the number and scale of the tribute trade with the maritime Asian countries declined rapidly. Nevertheless, tribute trade with Inner Asia, especially with the Oirads, strikingly expanded beyond the control of the Ming court (Ōsumi 1986).

In maritime Asia, Korea and Ryukyu steadily continued tribute trade, and Vietnam (Lê 黎 Kingdom), which had recovered independence from the Ming in 1427, also often sent tribute missions (Yamamoto 1975: 253–269), although the frequency of the tributes from Japan was restricted to once every ten years from 1453 onwards (Hashimoto 2002: 3–9). On the other hand, tribute missions from the Southern Zone decreased rapidly. Many port states that had repeatedly sent tributes to the Ming in the second period ceased to send envoys, and only the four countries of Champa, Shiam, Meleka and Java continued to send tribute, although the Ming court restricted the frequency of tributes of these four countries to once every three years until the mid-fifteenth century. The decline in tribute missions from the Indian Ocean Zone was far more drastic and finally came to an end with a tribute mission from Ceylon in 1459 (Qiu 1995: 223–234). The decline of the tribute trade with the maritime Asian countries was partly compensated by intermediary trade by the Ryukyu kingdom and growth of the smuggling trade of Chinese merchants in the South China Sea (Ptak 2003: 171–177).

In contrast, in Inner Asia, Esen, the leader of the Oirads, markedly extended his tribute trade with the Ming. In the 1540s, he unified the Mongol plateau and extended his power over Uriyangkhad eastwards. Further, he brought the Hami and Hexi corridor under his control, and commanded the caravan trade with Central Asia. In order to obtain Chinese goods exported to Central Asia, he aggressively extended tribute trade with the Ming, and the number of men on each mission of the Oirads, which was only 267 in 1437, surged to over 2000 in the 1440s and reached over 2500 in 1448, of which 752 were occupied by Muslim merchants. Seeing this excessive expansion of the Oirads' tribute trade, the Ming court tried to curtail its scale, but conflicts between Esen and the Ming over this led to Esen's invasion of China and resulted in the Tumu 土木 incident in 1449 (Serruys 1967: 128–134; Hagiwara 1980: 47–98).

In the Western Zone, Hami, which was under the control of Esen, sent tributes as many as 84 times. In addition, Ilibalik and Turfan in Eastern Turkistan and Samarkand and Herat in Western Turkistan continuously sent missions. Further, in the Southwestern Zone, with the

Ming emperor's indulgence in Tibetan Buddhism as a background, the scale of the tributes missions of Tibet notably expanded (Yi 2000: 223–244).

6 THE FOURTH PERIOD: 1465–1509

During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, tribute trade with the Ming from maritime Asia continuously declined in the long term, while tribute trade with Inner Asia still remained relatively important. In the Eastern Zone, Korea steady sent tributes in this period too, but in Japan the Muromachi 室町 Shogunate lost its control over tribute trade, and the two powerful lords in Western Japan, the Hosokawa 細川 and the Ōuchi, 大内, struggled over the initiative of the tribute trade (Sakuma 1992: 141–157).

In the Southern Zone, tribute trade with the Ming continued to decline. Though Vietnam, Siam, Champa, Melaka and Java dispatched tribute missions, this was done with less frequency than the once every three years regulated by the Ming (Qiu 1995: 223–234). In addition, the intermediary trade by the Ryukyu kingdom that had compensated for the decline of tribute trade also rapidly decreased from the 1460s, and Ryukyuan official trade with Java and Sumatra was also disrupted by the 1460s. Furthermore, the Ming court restricted the frequency of Ryukyuan tribute trade, which had been every year, to once every two years in 1474 (Kobata 1942: 126–172; Okamoto 2010: 17–22, 34–41).

Despite the long-term declines in both tribute trade with Southeast Asian polities and intermediary trade of the Ryukyu kingdom, the total scale of Sino-Southeast Asian trade seems not to have decreased. It must be consistent growth of credential trade in the South China Sea, which seems to well exceed the decline of tributary trade. In this period, the maritime exclusion policy enforced in the early Ming period gradually slackened, allowing more and more Chinese smugglers to make trading voyages from Fujian and Guangdong to Southeast Asia (Sakuma 1992: 212–219; Ptak 2003: 177–179). In addition, foreign trading vessels that were not official tribute missions began to arrive at Guangzhou Bay and engaged in 'mutual trade' (*bushi* 互市) with the Chinese merchants there. The local authorities of Guangdong also overlooked such unofficial trade in Guangzhou Bay and collected customs from trading vessels arriving there (Pires 1944: 116–128).

In Inner Asia, the hegemony of the Oirads collapsed after the death of Esen in 1454, and various powers among the Mongols and the

Oirads continued to engage in internal conflicts, as a result of which their tribute trade dropped sharply. But in the 1480s, Toghon, the leader of the Mongols, expanded his power and resumed large-scale tribute trade with the Ming, with the cooperation of Muslim merchants (Serruys 1967: 134–139; Hagiwara 1980: 171–193). In the Western Zone, the Ming court intended to curtail the tribute trade with Central Asia and restricted the frequency of tributes of the Hami to once a year, and that of Ilibalik and Turfan to once three or five years in 1465 (Haneda 1974: 418).

In the late fifteenth century, the Moghulistan Khanate moved its base from the Ili region to the Tarim basin, and one of its princes, Ahmad, who ruled the Turfan basin, promoted tribute trade and repeatedly made inroads into the Hami and Hexi corridor. In 1493, Ahmad attacked Hami and captured its king, who had been enthroned by the Ming, but the Ming court stopped tribute trade with Turfan as a countermeasure, so Ahmad was obliged to retreat from Hami four years after (Rossabi 1972: 215–222). Besides that, the Ming court restricted the frequency of tributes by Tibetan sects and tribes to once every three years and restrained the number of missions to 150 men or fewer in 1470, but in fact these regulations seem not to have been necessarily adhered to (Yi 2000: 237–144).

As mentioned above, the mutual trade between foreign trading vessels and Chinese merchants gradually increased in Guangzhou Bay from the late fifteenth century; simultaneously in Inner Asia, up to the late fifteenth century, mutual trade between the Central Asian caravan traders and Chinese merchants had appeared at Suchou 肅州, which was a gateway to caravan routes on the western edge of Gansu 甘肅. In 1495, the Mekrid tribe that had immigrated to suburbs of Suchou asked the Ming court to participate in the ‘mutual trade’ that was held every season at Suzhou, and its request was approved by the Ming (Serruys 1975: 45). It is noticeable that until the late fifteenth century, gateways of mutual trade were opened both in coastal and inland border regions beyond the framework of the tribute trade system.

7 THE FIFTH PERIOD: 1510–1539

From the late fifteenth century, while tributary trade continuously declined, the smuggling trade of Chinese merchants and ‘mutual trade’ between foreign and Chinese merchants gradually expanded, both in

maritime and Inner Asia. Further, from the 1510s onwards, contradictions between the stiff principles of the tributary trade system and the actual extension of foreign trade out of the framework of the tribute system caused armed conflicts both in the coastal and inland peripheries of the Ming Empire.

In maritime Asia, the Portuguese occupied the Melaka kingdom, which was the largest centre of trade network in Southeast Asia, and forced their way into the trading sphere in the Asian seas. As a result, many Muslim, Chinese and Ryuykuan merchants who had arrived at Melaka hitherto changed their destination to other ports in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Java, then function of entrepôt in Southeast Asia was dispersed (Suzuki 1998: 198–200; Ptak 2003: 179–182). From the late 1510s onwards, the Portuguese fleets participated in ‘mutual trade’ at Guangzhou Bay and sent a further mission to the Ming court to establish official trade. But their negotiations ended in failure, and the Ming court issued an order strictly prohibiting the mutual trade at Guangzhou Bay that had hitherto been overlooked. The Portuguese fleets were then forcibly excluded from Guangzhou Bay until 1522 (Wan 2001: 77–113; Iwai 2004: 110–144; Li 2007: 220–231).

In this period, the tribute trade in maritime Asian all the more declined. In the Eastern Zone, while Korea and Ryukyu continued to regularly send tributes, in Japan confrontation over the initiative of tribute trade between the Hosokawa and the Ōuchi escalated into armed conflicts involving the two missions dispatched by both sides in Ningbo in 1523 (Sakuma 1992: 157–164). In the Southern Zone, in addition to the fall of the Melaka kingdom, tributes from Siam and Champa also decreased sharply (Qiu 1995: 291–295).

In Inner Asia, disturbances over the tribute trade was getting more and more obvious. In the Northern Zone, Dayan Khan, who had unified the Mongol plateau in 1511, frequently made raids into the Ming northern peripheries, and tribute trade was broken off from the 1510s (Serruys 1967: 8–9; Hagiwara 1980: 190–193). Furthermore, in the Western Zone, Sultan Mansūr, who now ruled Turfan as the successor to his father Ahmad, repeatedly made inroads into the Hami and Hexi corridor. The Ming court again prohibited his tribute trade as a countermeasure, but he only intensified his raids, and the Ming were obliged to approve his possession of Hami and in the end allowed him to resume trading. As a result, the Ming almost lost its initiative over the tribute trade with Central Asia, and so restricted the frequency of Hami and

Turfan's tribute trades to once every five years (Rossabi 1972: 222–225). The Ming court's loss of control over Hami indicates that traditional diplomatic measures controlling surrounding states by integrating the tribute system and foreign trade reached an impasse up to the early sixteenth century.

8 THE SIXTH PERIOD: 1540–1566

Armed conflicts over the tribute trade, which had escalated both in the coastal and inland peripheries of the Ming Empire, rapidly intensified from the 1540s and extended throughout the whole length of the southeast coast and northern border, as raids and plunder by *wokou* 倭寇 in the southeast and by the Mongols in the north, namely 'beilu nanwo 北虜南倭' or 'the Northern Mongols and the Southern Japanese'.

In the Eastern Zone, during 1540, a base of credential trade had grown at the Shuangyu 雙嶼 port in the Zhoushan 舟山 islands, where Chinese smugglers, Portuguese private merchants and Japanese seafarers gathered to engage in trade during the 1540s and exchanged Chinese goods for Japanese silver and tropical products. The destruction of the smuggling base of Shuangyu by the Ming navy in 1548 brought about a further proliferation of raids and plunderers along the southeast coast (Sakuma 1992: 258–294; Ptak 1998; Zheng 2004: 127–184).

Meanwhile, in the Southern Zone, mutual trade between foreign trading vessels and Chinese merchants gradually revived, and in the 1550s the local authority of Guangdong permitted foreign vessels to call on Guangzhou and engage in mutual trade with specific Chinese merchants as official brokers, through whom the foreign merchants paid customs. Thus, in the mid-sixteenth century, while smuggling, piracy and plunder were increasingly rampant in the East China Sea, in the South China Sea, credential trade and plunder were gradually absorbed into mutual trade in Guangzhou (Wan 2001: 77–113; Iwai 2004; Li 2007: 249–277).

When the activities of *wokou* spread along the southeastern border, the inroads and plunder by the Mongols led by Altan Khan intensified markedly in the northern border along the Great Wall. Altan, a grandson of Dayan Khan, repeatedly claimed the resumption of tribute trade and the opening of 'horse markets' to the Ming, but the Ming court rejected his claim, so he repeatedly made large-scale inroads into north China and surrounded Beijing in 1550. As a result, the Ming

court approved the revival of tribute trade and opening of the ‘horse market’ in 1551, but both of these were disrupted in the next year, so that Altan again repeated his raids and plunder into the Ming periphery up to the mid-1560s (Serruys 1975: 149–161; Matsumoto 2001: 177–217).

In Manchuria, the Ming court restricted the total number of men in tribute missions dispatched by the Jurchens to within 1500. This restriction brought about fierce competition over obtaining licences for engaging in this tribute trade and participation in the ‘horse market’ (Ejima 1999: 178–179, 185–200). In Central Asia, the Hami and Turfan relatively followed the regulation that restricted the frequency of tributes to once every five years (Rossabi 1990).⁸ However, besides the tribute missions that reached Beijing, it seems that more numerous caravan merchants arrived at the northwest border of the Ming to engage in mutual trade. For example, a Persian merchant, Haji Muhammad, participated in a caravan and arrived at Suzhou 肅州 about 1550, but because no one except for missions to Daiming Khan (the Ming emperor) were allowed to advance into the interior of China, he merely bought rhubarb at the market of Suzhou, and then transported this crude drug to Venice and sold it (Yule 1916: 291–293; Sawada 2008: 57–58). His testimony reveals that ‘mutual trade’ between the Chinese and foreign merchants in the border region was grown not only at Guangzhou Bay in the southeast, but also Suzhou in the northwest.

9 THE FORMATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ‘1570 SYSTEM’

As sketched out above, the Ming tribute trade system was transformed by following a mostly parallel trajectory and was eventually reconstructed by 1571 as the result of the relaxation of the strict ban on private foreign trade, both in the southeastern and northwestern peripheries. Some Japanese scholars called this reconstructed foreign trade system the ‘mutual trade system’ (Iwai 2004, 2005, 2009; Ueda 2005). But I feel some hesitation in summarizing the foreign trade system throughout the late Ming and Qing periods as a ‘mutual trade system’, because the structure of foreign trade in the late Ming had a more plural and fluid character than that of the mid-Qing period. Here I rather want to provisionally call it quite simply the ‘1570 system’.

In a following passage, I will sketch a series of historical events that had critical meanings for the formation of the ‘1570 system’:

- *The late 1560s*: a crucial step of the sublation of the tribute trade system was, of course, the relaxation of the embargo on overseas trade in the early Longqing 隆慶 reign (1567–1572), as a result of which the Chinese merchants were permitted to make trading voyages from the Haicheng 海澄 county of southern Fujian to Southeast Asia. They needed to obtain licences (*wenyin* 文引), the number of which was fixed by quota, and paid customs levied on their ships, cargos and licences (Sakuma 1992: 322–324; Li 2007: 312–345).⁹ In contemporary sources, maritime trade from Haicheng to Southeast Asia was sometimes called ‘visiting trade’ (*wangshi* 往市), as opposed to ‘mutual trade’.
- *1570*: the Ryukyu kingdom dispatched its last official trading ships to Siam. At this point, the Ryukyu kingdom’s intermediary trade between Southeast and East Asia, which flourished in the fifteenth century, finally came to an end as a result of the rapid expansion of the Chinese merchant’s trading voyages to Southeast Asia (Takara 1980: 224–235).
- *1571*: this was a year of multiple significance, in which the following critical historical events occurred that opened up a new phase of the international trade system in both maritime and inland East Asia:
 1. The founding of Manila: the Spaniards founded Manila as the capital of the Spanish Philippines in 1571. Thereafter, the Spanish galleons shipped an enormous amount of New World silver, the production of which in Potosí and other mines rapidly increased in the 1570s, from Acapulco to Manila across the Pacific in every year. The New World silver brought to Manila was exchanged with Chinese products such as silk, cotton cloth and porcelain, which was imported by the Fujian merchants and then flowed into the Chinese market (Schulz 1939; Sugaya 2001; Nakajima 2007a).
 2. The opening of Macao-Nagasaki trade: in 1571, the Portuguese ‘Great Ship’ entered the port of Nagasaki 長崎 for the first time and thereafter the intermediary trade between Macao and Nagasaki became a mainstay of the Portuguese local trade in the Asian seas. Through Macao-Nagasaki trade conducted by the Portuguese, enormous amounts of Japanese silver flowed into Chinese markets via Macao, in exchange for Chinese products, especially silk and silk yarn (Boxer 1959; Oka 2008).

Table 3 The structure of the 1570 system in the late sixteenth century

<i>I Maritime Asia</i>			
<i>Zones</i>	<i>States</i>	<i>Entry points of tribute trade</i>	<i>Mutual trade/Visiting trade</i>
The Eastern Zone	Korea	Liaodong: Fenghuangcheng,	Border trade in Liaodong.
	Japan	<Tribute trade was suspended in 1549>	Macao-Nagasaki trade< <Smuggling by the Chinese>
	Ryukyu	Fuzhou Maritime Supervisorate	<Smuggling by the Chinese>
The Southern Zone	Vietnam Siam	Guangxi: Pingxiang, Guangzhou Maritime Supervisorate	Visiting trade from Haicheng (the late 1560's-)
	The other states	<No official tribute trade was recorded after 1543>	Mutual trade in Guangzhou Bay
The Europeans	Portugal	<Negotiations for interstate	Mutual trade at Macao (1557-)
	Spain	trade ended in failure >	Visiting trade from Haicheng To Manila (1573-)
<i>II Inner Asia</i>			
<i>Zones</i>	<i>States</i>	<i>Entry points of tribute trade</i>	<i>Mutual trade/Visiting trade</i>
The Northern Zone	The Mongols	Shanxi: Datong	Horse markets along the Great Wall (1571-)
	The Uriya-ngkhad	Bei Zhili: Xifengkou	Horse/wood markets in Liaodong
	The Jurchens	Liaodong: Kaiyuan	Horse/wood/mutual trade markets in Liaodong
The Western Zone	Hexi corridor States in Central Asia	Gansu: Jiayuguan From Hami to Jiayuguan	Horse trade office in Shaanxi
The South-western Zone	Tibet, Amdo, Kham	Shaanxi and Sichuan	Horse trade office in Shaanxi and Sichuan <Trade with the Chinese merchants>
	Abboriciginal offices	Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guanxi, Huguang	

3. The Longqing peace agreement: as a result of a peace agreement between the Ming court and the Altan Khan, the Ming granted the Altan the title of king (*Shunyi wang* 順義王) and permitted him to send tribute missions annually. Altan was allowed to bring 500 horses as an annual tribute and could receive Chinese products in return. In addition, the Ming court allowed the opening of ‘mutual trade’ markets with the Mongols along the Great Wall. There the Mongols brought their horses in the main and obtained various Chinese products in return (Serruys 1967: 64–93; 1975: 162–254; Ono 1996: 61–106).
4. The growth of ‘mutual trade’ in Liaodong: in 1571, two ‘wood markets’ (*mushi* 木市) were opened in western Liaodong, then in 1576 three ‘mutual markets’ (*bushichang* 互市場) were opened in eastern Liaodong. The increase in these markets, where the Jurchens and the Uriyanghad were allowed to exchange their local products with Chinese commodities, brought about the further growth of ‘mutual trade’, together with existing ‘horse markets’ (Ejima 1999: 374–387, 399–404).

As shown above, the tribute trade system going back to the early Ming dynasty was reorganized as a result of changes in the East Asian trade order, and the way was open for the adaptation of the ossified tribute system to the actual trade order, both in the maritime and inland Asia. In the former, the reconstructed Ming international trade system consisted of the following three trade sectors: (1) the tribute trade sector: tribute trade conducted periodically by Korea and Ryukyu, and sporadically by Vietnam and Siam; (2) the visiting trade sector: Fujian (Haicheng)-Southeast Asia trade carried out by the Chinese private trading ships, through which New World silver shipped by the Spanish galleons flowed into China via Manila; (3) the mutual trade sector: Chinese merchants’ trade with the Portuguese at Macao, through which Japanese silver was imported, and that with the Southeast Asians at Guangzhou bay that had gradually developed from the late fifteenth century onwards; (4) the smuggling sector: Chinese merchants’ illegal voyages to foreign countries, especially these to Japan, through which Japanese silver was directly imported.

On the other hand, in the case of the northwestern crescent, the trade system consisted of the following three sectors: (1) the tribute trade sector: tribute trade conducted by the Mongols, the Jurchens, some states in Central Asia, the monasteries in Tibet and tribal chieftains in the

southwest periphery; (2) the mutual trade sector: private trade with the Mongols at markets along the Great Wall, with the Jurchens at markets in Liaodong, and with the Central Asians and the Tibetans at the Horse Trading Offices in Shaanxi; (3) the smuggling sector: illegal trade with the Mongols, the Jurchens and the others conducted by Chinese smugglers.

Table 3 gives a summarized structure of the 1571 system. It shows that the Ming's neighbours enjoyed trade relations with the Ming that involved one, two or, as in the case of Annam and Siam, all three possibilities, i.e., tribute trade, mutual trade and visiting trade. The sole exception was Japan, which was not granted access to any of these trade options, except for the smuggling sector and intermediary trade such as Macao-Nagasaki trade (Nakajima 2007b: 129–133).

10 CONCLUSION

When we summarize the structure of the foreign trade system as stated above, is it adequate to conceptualize it as the 'mutual trade system'? It seems that the term 'mutual trade system' is not necessarily appropriate to represent the whole structure of it, at least for the late Ming period. There is no doubt, of course, that 'mutual trade' with the Mongols and the Jurchens developed in the northern periphery, and trade with the Portuguese carried out at Macao increasingly came to account for a larger part of the whole Ming international trade. On the other hand, the trading voyage from Haicheng bound for Southeast Asia was often called 'visiting trade' (*wangshi* 往市) in contemporary sources, distinct from 'mutual trade'.

Further, the tribute trade sector still had a considerable importance in the late Ming foreign trade system. In the Southern Zone, tribute trade certainly came to have only a marginal role. On the other hand, as for the Eastern Zone, to states such as Korea, Ryukyu and Vietnam, tribute trade remained a mainstay of trade with China, even in the late Ming period. And in the Northern Zone, tribute trade continued to be an important form of the Ming-Mongol trade after the Longqing peace agreement (Serruys 1967: 64–93), and the Jurchen chieftains also struggled to obtain licences to engage in tribute trade as much as possible (Ejima 1999: 189–200). Some states in the Western Zone too periodically sent tribute trade missions, although many of them were private trading caravans that disguised themselves as official missions (Rossabi 1998: 253). Further, in the Southwestern Zone, the Ming court relaxed

the restrictions on the number of tribute envoys sent by Tibetan sects and tribes, which had been restrained to 150 men or fewer, and allowed up to 1000 men to join in any single mission from the 1570s onwards.¹⁰

In general, the tribute trade sector still accounted for no small portion of the entire foreign trade, even in the late Ming period. Generally speaking, the foreign trade system in the late Ming seems to be far more pluralized than that of the mid-Qing. Provisionally, I would like to call this East Asian trade system (namely, the ‘1570 system’) the ‘tribute and trade system’ (*gongshi tizhi* 貢市体制), encompassing tribute trade on the one hand, and mutual trade and visiting trade on the other. The trade order in East Asia at the time can be said to have been in a fluid and transitional state, moving from the earlier unitary tribute trade system to a system in which various forms of trade, such as tribute trade, mutual trade and visiting trade, coexisted in accordance with the political and economic relations in existence between the Ming and its trading partners.

The relaxation of the exclusive maritime policy, and the opening of the Macao-Nagasaki and Acapulco-Manila-Fujian trade in the southeast periphery and the Longqing peace agreement in the northern periphery, all of which comprised the mainstay of the ‘1570 system’, were a series of historical events generated in the causal relationship with the ‘birth of the global economy’ in the late sixteenth century (Atwell 1998; Flynn and Giráldez 2006), and the development of ‘the China’s silver century’ (Von glahn 1996). And the formation of the ‘1570 system’, which was characterized by a plural and fluid structure and showed a sharp contrast with the previous unified and rigid tribute trade/maritime exclusion system in the early Ming period, further promoted the expansion of the foreign trade boom in the peripheral regions. Up to the early seventeenth century, powerful leaders who combined commercial profits and military forces were growing up among the booming situation in the periphery of the Ming Empire (Iwai 1996), whose representatives were Nurhaci in the northwestern crescent and Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 in the southeastern crescent (Kishimoto 1998a: 39–48; 1998b: 18–31).

NOTES

1. Da Ming huitian (*Collected Statutes of the Great Ming*, 1587 edn), Chapter 105–108, libu 禮部 55–58, chaogong 朝貢 1–4.
2. K. Fairbank grouped the tributary states of the Qing dynasty listed in Da Qing huitian 大清會典 (*Collected Statutes of the Great Qing*, 1818 edn) into three main zones, namely the Sinic Zone, the Inner Asia Zone and the Outer Zone. Later, Banno Masataka 板野正高, by following

Fairbank's grouping, classified the tribute states of the Ming dynasty that are listed in the *Collected Statutes* into three zones, namely the Sinic Zone, the Inner Asia Zone and the Outer Zone.

3. Da Ming huitian grouped the tributaries in the Eastern Zone, the Southeastern Zone and the Indian Ocean Zone together as the 'Southeast barbarians' (dongnan yi 東南夷). In contrast, it called the tributaries belonging to the Mongols the 'Northern barbarians' (beidi 北狄), while the Jurchens in Manchuria were called the 'Northeast barbarians' (dongbeiyi 東北夷). Then it included the tributaries belonging to the Central Asia and Tibet into a category of 'Western barbarians' (xirong 西戎) and listed tribal chieftains in Southwest China under the category of the 'aboriginal offices' (tuguan 土官).
4. Mark Mancall divided the tributaries of the Qing into two categories, namely the 'northwestern crescent' and the 'southeastern crescent'. In this chapter, 'Maritime Asia' and 'Inner Asia' roughly correspond to Mancall's 'southeastern crescent' and 'northwestern crescent' respectively.
5. Since many tributaries sent tribute missions to the Ming only in the early fifteenth century, this table by and large shows the spatial structure of the Ming tribute trade system in the early fifteenth century, when the Ming tribute system maximally expanded.
6. Formerly, J.K. Fairbank and S.Y. Têng divided the temporal transition of the Ming tribute system into five major periods. Roderich Ptak also presents the six periods on the transition of the Ming maritime trade with Southeast Asia from the late fourteenth century to the 1360s to the late 1560s. In order to formulate my own periodization of the Ming tribute trade system, I consulted the periodization presented by them.
7. These trades were often operated by Muslim and Chinese (including Chinese Muslim) merchants who engaged in internal trade in maritime Asia. Especially in Archipelago Southeast Asia, immigrant Chinese formed some communities, cooperated with local polities, and engaged in internal and tribute trade. Some of them further acted as diplomatic and trade envoys to East Asian countries such as Ryukyu, Japan and Korea.
8. Besides, it is generally regarded that the Central Asian caravan trade declined in the sixteenth century because of the development of sailing routes that directly linked Western and Eastern Eurasia and political disturbances on the caravan route (Rossabi 1990); nevertheless, some tribute missions had arrived at the Ming court from Samarkand, Arabia and Rum.
9. In 1589, 44 licences were issued respectively for the 'eastern oceans' (dongyang 東洋; continental Southeast Asia, Sumatra and Java) and the 'western oceans' (dongyang 西洋; the Philippines and the Sulu zone), and later the total number was increased to 137 by 1597. Although a ban on trade with Japan was still restrained, smuggling by Chinese merchants into Japan had steadily increased (Nakajima 2007a: 75–83).
10. Da Ming huidian, Chap. 108, libu 66, chaogong 4, Xirong xia 西戎下.

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