History 170E
The Maritime Trading World of East Asia
Belitung Shipwreck

- Arab vessel sunk off coast of Sumatra c. 825-50 enroute from Guangzhou to Persia
- Cargo included 60,000 pieces of Chinese ceramics, mostly Changsha wares (right)
- Also carried lead ingots, Chinese coins, and gold and silver tablewares such as the gold goblet (decorated with Central Asian musicians) below
Over time, leading port shifted northward, from Guangzhou 廣州 (up to 1100) to Quanzhou 泉州 (12th century) and then to Mingzhou (Ningbo 寧波) in the 13th century.
Quanzhou 泉州 in the Song Dynasty

- Old city wall built in 8th century
- New outer wall built in 10th century
- Commercial district (shaded area) located along river outside the wall
- Mosques located along waterfront
Bilingual Tamil Chinese Inscription

Dated 1281, this inscription was commissioned for a temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva raised in Quanzhou (Fujian province)
Ocean-Going “Fuzhou Ship”

- High prow and deep keel gave these ships stability in open ocean
Sources of Exotic Imports from Southeast Asia

Based on treatise published in 1349 by Chinese merchant who had spent 20 years in overseas trade
Spread of Song Coin in Japan

- *Hyakurensō 百錬抄*, entry for 1179:
  “Recently throughout the realm everyone, high and low, has been afflicted by an ailment known as the ‘coin disease’”
  近日天下上下病惱，號之錢病

- *Gyokuyō 玉葉*, entry for 1179:
  “In recent times coin imported from the land of Tang has been freely used in buying and selling in this country”
  近代渡唐土之錢，於此朝恣賣買云々
This ceramic urn buried on the site of a Buddhist temple in Ichijōdani (modern Fukui) contained over 116,000 coins (1,145 strings of 98-100 coins plus some loose coins), all but 332 of which are Chinese coins. An inscribed wooden tag records that the hoard was buried in 1500.
The Kamakura Great Buddha

- Cast in 1252 at what was then Japan’s capital, this bronze statue is 13.35 meters high and weighs 93 tons.

- The statue has the exact same alloy content as Song bronze currency—which undoubtedly provided the raw material for it.
“Fire Lances” and “Fire Balls”

Illustrations from a Song military manual show a variety of incendiary devices—lances and bombs—using gunpowder.
Mongol Cannon

Inscription on this bronze cannon is dated 1351
Hakata 博多 (modern Fukuoka), c. 1300

- “Chinese Quarter” (唐房) located in center of city
- First Zen Buddhist temples were founded by Chinese merchants: Shōfukuji 聖福寺 (in 1195) and Jōtenji 承天寺 (in 1242)
Shofukuji 聖福寺 Monastery
at Hakata

First Zen temple in Japan, founded in 1195 by Japanese monk Yosai 栄西 after his return from study in Ningbo

Financial support from Chinese merchant community
Sinan 新安 Shipwreck, 1323

- Commissioned by Tōfukuji 東福寺 Monastery in Kyoto after devastating fire in 1319
- Carried 28 tons of Chinese coins as well as porcelains and other cargoes
Zheng He’s Voyages

§ Commissioned by Emperor Yongle (r. 1402-24); entrusted to his personal aide, Zheng He

§ Zheng, a Muslim of Mongol descent, was conscripted into palace eunuch corps after Ming defeat of Mongols
Chinese Export Porcelain

Persian painting (ca. 1480) of a wedding procession, showing the bride’s dowry of Chinese blue & white porcelains
Ryukyu in Maritime East Asia

- Ryukyu 琉球 sent more missions (171) to Ming China than any other tributary subject
- The reemergence of Fujian trading networks (supplanting the Ningbo network) also figured importantly in the rise of Ryukyu as a commercial intermediary between China and Japan
Map of the Ryukyu Kingdom
琉球国図

§ Drawn in the mid-15th century by a Hakata merchant

§ The map notes that Chinese (江南人) and Japanese (日本人) lived at opposite ends of the island in Naha harbor
Iwami Silver Mines

Iwami silver mines identified on this Portuguese map of Japan from 1595 at upper left (argentifondine)
“Japanese Pirates”  
(Wokou 倭寇)

§ “Pirates” actually Chinese smugglers; turned to violence after Ming launched campaign of suppression in 1548
§ Painting of Ming city under Wokou attack shows soldiers atop city wall with matchlock muskets of Portuguese design
Global Production & Trade of Silver
16th-18th Centuries

*Values expressed in thousands of tons.

*Nordic Projection
“Selden Map” (1620s?)

Chinese map of East Asian trade routes, centered on port of Quanzhou (bottom)
The Nguyen lords established an independent regime at Quinam (also known as Cochin China) on the central coast of Vietnam in 1558.

Hoi An served as the official port of the Nguyen regime.
Borri’s Description of Hoi An

“…there are two towns, the one of the Chinese, and the other of the Japanese; Each of them having his own Quarter apart, and their several governors, and living after their own manner; That is, the Chinese according to their own particular laws and customs of China, and the Japanese according to theirs.”

From Cristoforo Borri, *Cochin-China* (1633)

Borri, a Jesuit missionary, lived in Cochin China (the Nguyen territories) during 1617-22
Arrival of Japanese “Red-Seal” Ship at Hoi An

- Handscroll painting of Chaya Shinroku’s voyage from Nagasaki to Kōchi 交趾 (Hoi An) in the early 17th century
- “Japanese Town” 日本町 identified at upper left; “Chinatown” 唐人町 at lower left