TWO MEDIÆVAL FUH-KIEN TRADING PORTS, CHÜAN-CHOW AND CHANG-CHOW

BY

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PART I. CHANG-CHOW.

The Prefectures of Chüanchow 泉州 and Changchow 潭州, midway between which is situated the present treaty port of Amoy, are, after the city of Canton, the oldest commercial centres in China.

Both these cities find frequent mention in the early external commerce of the Empire, as their inhabitants were well known for their spirit of enterprise and adventure and for their long perilous voyages to distant countries.

The foreign commerce of Fuh-kien appears in early times to have been pretty equally divided between the Chüanchow and Changchow districts, though I am inclined to think that the greater facility of reaching Changchow may at times have inclined the balance of trade in favour of the latter city.

It would appear it was not till the end of the ninth century, that the Province of Fuh-kien participated in the foreign commerce of the Empire. Previous to the end of the eleventh century, all Fuh-kien Junks going to and arriving from foreign countries were compelled to report themselves at Canton, under penalty of fine and confiscation.
This was considered a great hardship as the amount of shipping increased, and many, rather than go so far out of their way and report themselves to the Canton authorities, steered direct for Fuh-kien, where some were fortunate enough to escape capture while others had to pay the penalty of the law.

About 1073 a Prefect of Chüanchow named Chow-Chang, memorialized the Emperor to appoint a superintendent of Foreign Trade at Chüanchow which, after a little delay, was done, the first officer of that kind being appointed in 1088, and agents under him were also appointed to collect the customs at Changchow and other places.

The same system is carried on at the present day; at Foochow for example there is the Superintendent of Customs, who appoints subordinates to collect the duties at the other ports.

All the ports of Fuh-kien appear to have been open to Foreign commerce in Mongol times, but the only two ports in the Province in which traces of such trade are to be found are Chüanchow and Changchow.

If there was no regular collection of duties before the appointing of a Superintendent of customs in Fuh-kien, foreigners appear to have frequented Changchow at a very early date; for in 960 1), a century or more before the appointment of a superintendent of customs, a Foreign ship from San-fu-chai, the Sarbesa of the Arabs, the present Palembang, is mentioned as having visited that city. Again in 1014 2) Changchow appears to have had commercial

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1) 南唐保大十六年，南番三佛齊國、鎮國、李將軍以香貨詣本州，賣錢架造普賢院，親寫於法堂梁上。Vide 普賢院墨跡。

2) 既穫。有早晚二種，早稻春種夏收。晚稻則早稻既穫再插。至十月收者，米皆有赤白