

The Curious Double-Life of Putuoshan as Monastic Centre and Commercial Emporium, 1684-1728*

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how the island of Putuoshan simultaneously acted as a Buddhist monastic centre and a maritime shipping hub from the Qing dynasty's legalisation of overseas trade in 1684 until the 1720s. It argues that because overseas trade during the Kangxi era was inconsistently regulated, a mutually beneficial relationship developed between Putuoshan's Buddhist monasteries, the merchants who sailed between China and Japan, and the regional naval commanders on Zhoushan. Instead of forcing merchant vessels to enter ports with customs offices, the naval commanders allowed merchants to use Putuoshan's harbour, which lay beyond the empire's trade administration system. The monasteries enjoyed the patronage of the merchants, and so rewarded the naval commanders by publicly honouring them. However, a reorganisation of the empire's customs system in the mid-1720s shifted the power over trade to Zhejiang's governor general, who brought an end to Putuoshan's special status outside the administration around 1728.

Key Words: maritime trade, Qing dynasty, Putuoshan, Buddhist history

*I would like to express my gratitude to Liu Shih-Feng, Wu Hsin-fang, Su Shu-Wei, and the two anonymous reviewers of my paper for taking the time to read it and for offering patient and helpful advice. Needless to say, however, all errors in this final version are my own.

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Received: March 16, 2020; Accepted: June 30, 2020

I. Introduction

Putuoshan 普陀山 is a small verdant island in the eastern part of the Zhoushan archipelago, lying about sixty kilometres from the port city of Ningbo on Zhejiang's mainland as the crow flies. It is only about fourteen square kilometres, and compared to its neighbours in the archipelago there is nothing remarkable about its geography or ecology. But it is easily the most famous island in the region because of its traditional identification with Mount Potalaka, the mythological seat of the Bodhisattva Guanyin. This identification seems to have emerged during the early Song dynasty, and consequently the island became a pilgrimage site. By the seventeenth century it boasted two monasteries dedicated to Guanyin, the Puji Monastery 普濟寺 and the Fayu Monastery 法雨寺. Then, as now, most of China's popular fascination with the island was focused on the religious activity and symbolism of these communities (Yü, 1992; Bingenheimer, 2016).

In the seventeenth century the island gained a second, less celebrated role as a trading *entrepôt* between China and its overseas neighbours, particularly Japan. This role originated in the turmoil of the early Qing dynasty, when most of the maritime commerce between China and the rest of East and Southeast Asia was controlled by the family of Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功. The island's location at the far edge of China's maritime periphery, but still conveniently near to the Bay of Hangzhou to the north and the waterways that led to Ningbo in the south, made it a useful centre for the Zheng's smuggling operations. Zheng trade ships met business partners of the family from mainland Zhejiang in Putuoshan's harbour, where they exchanged Japanese and American silver for Chinese silk and other types of goods in defiance of the Qing government's attempts to prohibit maritime activity.

Putuoshan's role as a commercial harbour should have ended in the mid-1680s, but strangely it did not. In the autumn of 1683, the Qing military defeated the Zheng family, and in the following year the Kangxi emperor lifted his empire's prohibition on maritime activity and began the construction of a customs system intended to regulate overseas trade. China's large coastal cities, including Ningbo in Zhejiang, quickly became international trading ports. In the meantime, the monasteries on Putuoshan were formally recognised by the Qing government. Wealthy Chinese pilgrims soon began to return to the island, burning incense to Guanyin and making donations to the monasteries (Ye and Sun, 2018). However, Putuoshan also continued to be an important port for commercial vessels sailing to and from Zhejiang. The Japanese customs records contained in the *Kai Hentai* 華夷變態 make it clear that merchant ships were using Putuoshan as a base well into the 1720s (Hayashi

and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959).

What did the little island offer to seaborne Chinese merchants after 1684? Only two researchers whom I am aware of have attempted direct answers to this question. In 2009 Liu Hengwu published an article examining the development of a shipping lane between Zhejiang and Nagasaki that ran through the northern part of the Bay of Hangzhou. Despite the eventual dominance of the northern route, there was an historical precedent set in the Ming era by raiders and Chinese smugglers who used a series of harbours on islands in the southern part of the archipelago, including Putuoshan. According to Liu, the tradition of using these southern harbours for ships sailing to or from Japan continued into the early Qing. It was only in the mid-eighteenth century that the importance of the southern route disappeared, and Zhapu 乍浦, on the northern coast of the Bay of Hangzhou, gradually eclipsed the southern ports as the central staging point for commercial voyages to Japan from the bay (Liu, 2009: 167–168). The other investigation into this question is a short article published in 2015 by Sun Feng of Zhejiang International Maritime College. In it he gives four different reasons for Putuoshan's rise to prominence in the early Qing. These are the establishment of Putuoshan as Zhejiang's most important smuggling centre prior to the empire's legalisation of maritime trade; the island's convenient geography for voyages to Japan; the island's fame as a Buddhist pilgrimage site; and lastly the island's close proximity to silk-producing areas on the mainland (Sun, 2015: 56).

This article will argue that though geography and religious fame certainly contributed to Putuoshan's success as a shipping hub, they did so indirectly and then only as a consequence of the Qing government's management of maritime trade. The traditional use of sailing routes through the southern Zhoushan archipelago may have encouraged merchant captains to continue transiting through that region, but there were other islands with longer histories as maritime centres than Putuoshan. Similarly, though Putuoshan lay conveniently between mainland Zhejiang and Kyushu, there were other harbours that were just as good and even more convenient for merchant ships. And as for its religious fame as a Buddhist pilgrimage centre, this did play an important role in Putuoshan's rise as a shipping hub, but not so much because it attracted trading vessels directly as because of the special status it gave the island.

The special status that Putuoshan enjoyed was a product of its monasteries' relationships first with the Qing court and emperor in Beijing, and then even more importantly with the *zong bing* 總兵 (high-ranked military commanders) of Dinghai 定海 on Zhoushan Island. The *zong bing* were responsible for policing the Zhoushan archipelago, and during the Kangxi emperor's reign (1661 to 1722) they were the

only officials who could systematically control the activities of merchant vessels there. However, between 1684 and the late 1720s the *zong bing* who were stationed in Dinghai almost never interfered with ships sailing to or from Putuoshan. This leniency allowed Chinese merchants to avoid the formal customs regime in Zhejiang and consequently to ignore legal restrictions on the types of ships, cargo, and passengers taken aboard. The monasteries in turn profited from commercial traffic in their harbour, and at the same time, as the stewards of a holy site revered throughout the province and empire, they were able to reward the *zong bing* for their leniency by lending them prestige through shrines and hagiographic mentions in the island's monastic gazetteers. The result was a three-way convergence of interests between the Dinghai *zong bing*, the monasteries, and the seaborne Chinese merchants. The arrangement that these three groups arrived at allowed Putuoshan to simultaneously act as a Buddhist holy site and a maritime trading hub for the duration of the Kangxi period.

However, this arrangement came to an end in the Yongzheng period (1722 to 1735). Concerns raised by the governor general (*zong du* 總督) of Zhejiang in the late 1720s about the export of strategically dangerous contraband to Japan led to a reformation of the Qing system for supervising and regulating maritime trade. The Dinghai *zong bing* lost some of their control of maritime traffic through the Zhoushan archipelago, and the carriage of prohibited goods and passengers to Japan became riskier for the merchants. A policing raid by the governor general's personal guard on Putuoshan itself in 1728 confirmed that the island no longer enjoyed the same level of *de facto* legal independence that the Qing state had previously allowed it. By the beginning of the Qianlong period (1735 to 1796) most commercial traffic had moved to Zhapu on the northern edge of the Bay of Hangzhou. Putuoshan may have remained the site of occasional smuggling operations, but there is little to no evidence that it was still an active trading port after the Yongzheng era.

II. Putuoshan's Role in Maritime Trade Prior to 1684

From the mid-sixteenth century to the 1570s, Putuoshan was an occasional jumping off point for smugglers and pirates on Zhejiang's coast. Liu Hengwu's research shows that Putuoshan was part of a chain of harbours that the Japanese-based raiders known as *wako* 倭寇 commonly used to invade Zhejiang in the mid-sixteenth century (Liu, 2009: 167–168). Other scholars similarly point to documents that suggest Putuoshan was used by *wako*, pirates, and smugglers up until the Wanli period (1573 to 1620) (Li, 1990: 93; Huang, 1999: 393; Hsü, 2010: 38–47). By the beginning of the Wanli emperor's reign though, the *wako* had been successfully

repelled, and the partial opening of legal maritime trade through the port of Yuegang 月港 in southern Fujian had reduced the importance of smuggling corridors, including the one that ran through Putuoshan and the Zhoushan archipelago. The island's monasteries were also restored at this time, and with patronage from the Wanli emperor, his mother, and some of their government's local officials in Zhejiang, Putuoshan's monastic communities flourished for the remainder of the Ming dynasty (Hsü, 2010: 47–64).

In the early Qing dynasty, Putuoshan's importance as a smuggling centre returned briefly between the early 1660s and the late 1670s. During these years, maritime trade between China and its overseas neighbours was dominated by the Ming-loyalist Zheng family, who possessed a secure base on Taiwan between 1662 and 1683. The Qing government, lacking an effective navy to counter the Zheng family's merchant marine, attempted to prevent the Zheng from accessing China's markets and products by forcing the populations of islands and coastal regions in the south-eastern provinces to move inland. In the case of the Zhoushan archipelago, the court debated whether it would be safer to garrison the larger islands after their populations had been removed or to abandon them entirely. It ultimately chose to abandon the islands, which allowed the Zheng family to reoccupy them and establish a new smuggling route that ran through the archipelago, just as the mid-sixteenth century route had (Cheng, 2013: 230–231; Xie, 2015: 88–89).

Putuoshan was a pivotal point within the Zheng's Zhoushan smuggling system until they lost access to China's mainland markets in the late 1670s. An employee of the English East India Company who visited Taiwan in 1670 described the Zheng's system in a letter to his superiors by explaining how the Zheng ships were taking pepper to Putuoshan with the intention of arranging for it to be secretly carried from there into other ports in Zhejiang (Chang et al. eds., 1995: 64). However, the outbreak of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories (San fan zhi luan 三藩之亂) late in 1673 brought with it economic and social disorder that had a corrosive effect on the Zheng's smuggling system. Within a few years from the start of the rebellion, warfare in Zhejiang had severely disrupted the flow of goods through the archipelago. Zheng ships in Nagasaki mournfully told the Chinese interpreters that by 1676 very few trade goods were making it out of Zhejiang compared to previous years (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 147). By 1679 the island's usefulness as a smuggling relay point seems to have ended; Zheng crews arriving in Nagasaki from Putuoshan that year declared that they were carrying more evacuees from the family's former bases in the archipelago than merchandise (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 283–284; An and Qu eds., 2004, Vol. 3: 355–367).

The Zheng family persisted as an independent force until 1683, when they

finally surrendered their base in Taiwan to the Qing empire's forces. The Zhoushan archipelago in the meantime remained under the Qing empire's control, but the court did not authorise resettlement on even the large island of Zhoushan until after the Zheng family's surrender. During this interval from the last stages of the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories until the official reopening of the islands under the Qing, Putuoshan appears to have remained desolate and once again irrelevant to Asia's maritime trading network.

III. The Dinghai *Zong Bing* and the Early Qing Administration of Trade in Zhejiang

Here the story of Putuoshan's career as a shipping hub should have come to an end. Its association with the Zheng family and with the sixteenth-century *wako* invasions could not have endeared it to the Qing government or have made them any more comfortable observing trade fleets passing through its harbour. And yet two years after the fall of the Zheng family and the establishment of legal private maritime trade, the *Kai Hentai*'s records show that Chinese merchant vessels were regularly sailing from Putuoshan to Nagasaki. Between 1684 and 1728, the crews of five hundred thirty ships that arrived in Nagasaki reported that they had been in Putuoshan's harbour before sailing to Japan. Of these, four hundred seventy-six claimed to have chosen to stop at Putuoshan, while the remainder were forced into the harbour by storms or other circumstances (see Table 1 below). To make sense of this puzzling restoration of Putuoshan's status as a trading port, it is necessary to first examine how the early Qing administration of maritime trade in Zhejiang functioned in practice.

After 1684, when maritime trade was legalised, the Qing court in Beijing attempted to design a system for managing it throughout the empire. However, during the Kangxi period the reality in the provinces often diverged from the court's vision because the officials who had nominal responsibility for trade frequently did not have the authority necessary to actually maintain control of it. In Zhejiang a provincial customs office was established in Ningbo in 1686, and a customs supervisor (*hai guan jian du* 海關監督) was appointed directly by Beijing to manage it. Officially, he was responsible for trade throughout the province, but in practice during the Kangxi period he appears to have had little power over the merchant vessels that sailed anywhere other than Ningbo. Control over trade in other ports instead seems to have rested in the hands of regional civil and military officials. In 1696 the Zhejiang customs supervisor, probably in an attempt to extend his office's effective control beyond Ningbo, requested the establishment of a branch customs

Table 1. Ships that passed through Putuoshan’s harbour in the *Kai Hentai* (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959)

Year	Identified as ‘Putuoshan’ Ships	Touched at Putuoshan	Forced into Putuoshan	Totals	<i>Kai Hentai</i> Page Reference
1685	4	6	3	13	449, 454, 465, 517, 519, 523, 525, 527, 528, 529, 530, 532, 534
1686	10	9	7	26	544, 554, 556, 557, 559, 560, 564, 569, 570, 574, 576, 577, 583, 584, 586, 598, 602, 605, 615, 620, 621, 623, 638, 647
1687	6	25	5	36	661, 664, 669, 673, 682, 685, 688, 689, 695, 697, 698, 699, 700, 702, 703, 704, 706, 707, 710, 712, 715, 721, 731, 770, 772, 789, 791, 794, 796, 805, 812, 817, 820, 823, 824, 826
1688	4	31	3	38	839, 842, 844, 849, 850, 851, 853, 856, 857, 858, 863, 867, 873, 874, 876, 882, 898, 900, 901, 904, 906, 907, 914, 946, 949, 950, 953, 960, 962, 969, 973, 987, 1015, 1016, 1019, 1025, 1031
1689	3	15		18	1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1081, 1083, 1085, 1087, 1092, 1094, 1098, 1099, 1131, 1161, 1164
1690	4	17	2	23	1174, 1176, 1178, 1180, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1190, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1202, 1203, 1205, 1207, 1208, 1211, 1213, 1215, 1216, 1221, 1224, 1240
1691	6	13		19	1302, 1307, 1309, 1312, 1314, 1315, 1325, 1326, 1334, 1335, 1337, 1345, 1347, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1374, 1385, 1390
1692		36	1	37	1406, 1411, 1414, 1415, 1416, 1422, 1423, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1427, 1428, 1430, 1431, 1437, 1438, 1441, 1444, 1446, 1449, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1458, 1459, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1480, 1487, 1490
1693	5	34	3	42	1502, 1503, 1505, 1506, 1508, 1511, 1513, 1516, 1517, 1520, 1521, 1527, 1530, 1537, 1540, 1542, 1548, 1549, 1551, 1552, 1553, 1554, 1556, 1558, 1562, 1564, 1565, 1567, 1568, 1570, 1574, 1579, 1581, 1583, 1585, 1587, 1593, 1595, 1598, 1600, 1608

Table 1 (continued)

Year	Identified as 'Putuoshan' Ships	Touched at Putuoshan	Forced into Putuoshan	Totals	<i>Kai Hentai</i> Page Reference
1694	3	18	1	22	1615, 1616, 1618, 1622, 1624, 1629, 1635, 1642, 1643, 1653, 1660, 1668, 1672, 1676, 1678, 1680, 1684, 1685, 1687, 1688, 1689, 1690
1695	3	21		24	1699, 1703, 1705, 1707, 1714, 1715, 1716, 1723, 1728, 1737, 1738, 1739, 1742, 1743, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1753, 1756, 1761, 1763, 1767, 1771, 3016
1696	4	18		22	1784, 1791, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1812, 1818, 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1824, 1825, 1827, 1831, 1833, 1837, 1838
1697	7	10	1	18	1851, 1858, 1869, 1872, 1873, 1882, 1890, 1899, 1900, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1907, 1912, 1915, 1922, 1941, 1946
1698	3	9	2	14	1958, 1971, 1976, 1977, 1991, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2022
1699	3	9	3	15	2035, 2036, 2037, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2052, 2058, 2073, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2089, 2090
1700	0	11	2	13	2107, 2108, 2109, 2114, 2133, 2135, 2137, 2139, 2140, 2142, 2149, 2164, 2165
1701	1	4	8	13	2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2198, 2212, 2213, 2225, 2226, 2230, 2239, 2243
1702		3		3	2278, 2279, 2285
1703		10	1	11	2301, 2310, 2312, 2315, 2316, 2330, 2331, 2339, 2340, 2342, 2345
1704		10	1	11	2352, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2385, 2386, 2392, 2401, 2407, 2412, 2413
1705		2		2	2434, 2435
1706		3		3	2438, 2452, 2453
1707		3		3	2462, 2470, 2483
1708		1	4	5	2552, 2556, 2560, 2581, 2582
1709	2	2		4	2608, 2614, 2629, 2631

Table 1 (continued)

Year	Identified as 'Putuoshan' Ships	Touched at Putuoshan	Forced into Putuoshan	Totals	<i>Kai Hentai</i> Page Reference
1710		4		4	2661, 2669, 2675, 2676
1711		11	2	13	2684, 2685, 2686, 2687, 2689, 3024, 3025, 3032, 3033, 3034, 3039, 3040
1712		1		1	2691
1716		2		2	2708, 2709
1717		8	1	9	2718, 2722, 2738, 2744, 2747, 2751, 2752, 2769, 2775
1718		8		8	2792, 2793, 2794, 2796, 2797, 2802, 2810, 2814
1719		1	2	3	2847, 2854, 2858
1720		6		6	2868, 2870, 2873, 2881, 2884, 2888
1722		10		10	2935, 2941, 2943, 2949, 2950, 2951, 2953, 2954, 2955
1723		6		6	2966, 2974, 2976, 2985, 2987, 2990
1724		1		1	4*
1725		8	1	9	5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17*
1726		6	1	7	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25*
1727		13		13	26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38*
1728		3		3	40, 43, 44*
Total	68	408	54	530	

* References for the years 1724 to 1728 are from the independently numbered '浦廉一博士略傳' addendum in the third volume of the published version of the *Kai Hentai*.

office in Dinghai, Zhoushan's main port, on the pretence that it was necessary to manage and collect taxes from European trade ships coming to the province. This proposal was accepted in 1698, but it does not appear to have made a great deal of difference (Huang, 2000: 22, 27). Despite the new office, the official who wielded the most power over private trade on Zhoushan during the Kangxi period was the Dinghai *zong bing*, the highest-ranked military official on the island.

Three men who together held the office of Dinghai *zong bing* for twenty-two years established the pattern by which maritime trade was managed in the Zhoushan archipelago through the course of the Kangxi emperor's reign. These were Huang

Dalai 黃大來 (in office 1686 to 1689), Lan Li 藍理 (in office 1689 to 1701), and Shi Shipiao 施世驃 (in office 1701 to 1708).¹ They shared a number of characteristics that help us understand how the *zong bing* were able to extend their influence over trade in ways that went beyond their official responsibilities for coastal defence. They were all men with a connection to Fujian who possessed large amounts of prestige and were known to the emperor personally. Huang, a former Funing *zong bing* 富寧總兵, and Lan, a navy soldier from Zhangpu 漳浦, were both war heroes, having fought in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories and the campaign against the Zheng family. Likewise, Shi was the son of Shi Lang 施琅, the admiral who secured the surrender of the Zheng family and thereafter became the emperor's top naval advisor. Especially in the cases of Lan and Shi, the *zong bing*'s backgrounds in naval warfare gave them outsized influence within the Qing government's officialdom because of the court's preoccupation with coastal security during the Kangxi period.

Huang Dalai, Lan Li, Shi Shipiao, and the other Dinghai *zong bing* of the Kangxi period commanded a fleet of warships intended to protect Zhejiang's coasts and islands from pirates and smugglers, and this meant that they had the means to police the traffic of merchant vessels within the Zhoushan archipelago (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958-1959: 528).² It was within their power to prevent ships from docking at Putuoshan and to force them to stop at Dinghai on Zhoushan instead. Yet during the Kangxi period the *zong bing* consistently and knowingly allowed Chinese merchants to dock in Putuoshan rather than Dinghai. In 1685, the crew of a ship from Putuoshan told the Chinese interpreter in Nagasaki that private vessels, presumably including their own, had relied on permission from the Dinghai *zong bing* Sun Weitong 孫惟統 (in office 1683 to 1685) to set out on overseas voyages (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958-1959: 465). Similarly, a report sent to the Yongzheng emperor in 1726 by the *zong bing* Zhang Pu 張溥 (in office 1724 to 1726) admitted that in addition to eight ships sailing from Dinghai, there were also seven sailing from Putuoshan that year.³ Both Sun and Zhang allowed Putuoshan to be used as a commercial port, and most if not all of the men who held the post of *zong bing* in the interval between them seem to have done the same. The only example of interference with trading vessels in Putuoshan's harbour before the late 1720s that

1 For a list of the Dinghai *zong bing*, see Shen et al. eds., 1736, [*Yongzheng*] *Zhejiang Comprehensive Gazetteer*, juan 122. For Huang Dalai's background, see Yang, 1683, *Ping Min Ji*, juan 1. For Lan Li's, see Qian ed., 1893, *Bei Zhuan Ji*, juan 160. And for Shi Shipiao's, see Fang and Zhu eds., 1765, [*Qianlong*] *Jinjiang County Gazetteer*, juan 7.

2 Shen et al. eds., 1736, [*Yongzheng*] *Zhejiang Comprehensive Gazetteer*, juan 97.

3 Gong zhong dang an, doc. 402001029. (National Palace Museum, 2008)

I have found occurred in 1704, a year when there was a particularly high incidence of pirate activity on China's south-eastern coasts (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 2363, 2379). That year Shi Shipiao, in compliance with the court's decree that thorough checks should be done on oceangoing vessels, ordered a ship that had just arrived in Putuoshan from what is now central Vietnam to come to Dinghai for an inspection. The ship's crew stated that they had no choice but to comply, demonstrating that the *zong bing* could force ships to dock at Dinghai rather than Putuoshan when he wanted them to (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 2413). But with this one incident excepted, the *zong bing* seem to have always been content to allow Chinese trade vessels to dock at Putuoshan and pass Dinghai by. Consequently, Dinghai saw very little commercial traffic despite having a good harbour and much larger population than Putuoshan; between 1684 and 1728 the *Kai Hentai*'s entries list only forty-three ships whose crews mention sailing from Zhoushan or touching there, compared to the aforementioned five hundred thirty for Putuoshan (see Table 1 above and Table 2 below).

Table 2. Ships that touched at 'Zhoushan' or 'Dinghai' in the *Kai Hentai* (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959)

Year	Number of Ships	<i>Kai Hentai</i> Page Reference
1686	8	546, 552, 568, 573, 577, 578, 579, 638
1687	1	737, 741
1689	1	1081
1690	1	1291
1694	1	1652
1695	2	1714, 1755
1696	1	1819
1697	6	1864, 1865, 1881, 1914, 1925, 1941
1699	3	2097, 2099, 2100
1700	1	2163
1701	3	2214, 2223, 2240
1703	1	2341
1704	2	2385, 2413
1705	2	2421, 2423
1706	4	2439, 2450, 2453, 2455
1709	1	2639
1717	1	2718
1718	1	2781
1720	2	2867, 2896
1722	1	2943
Total	43	

Why did the *zong bing* not force Chinese merchant vessels into the harbour at Dinghai where their offices were located? There were at least two reasons for this. One of them concerned the *zong bing*'s patronage of the monasteries on Putuoshan, and will be examined in the following section of this article. The other, more immediate reason was that allowing the merchant vessels to touch at Putuoshan rather than Zhoushan gave the *zong bing* more control over trade relative to other officials in Zhejiang. None of the other officials, not even the *zong bing*'s immediate superiors, appear to have challenged their decision to allow merchant ships to dock at Putuoshan. However, when ships docked at Dinghai, the *zong bing* did not have sufficient power to completely monopolise the management of their trade. Besides the hapless customs supervisors, there were other civil and military officials with some authority over Zhoushan who also had offices to staff and expenses to meet, and some of them were evidently able to compete with the *zong bing* for a share of the wealth being generated by any commercial activity occurring in their jurisdiction.⁴

The surviving Qing records related to the early management of maritime trade do not usually admit to any conflict between the customs supervisors, *zong bing*, or other officials, but fortunately we have access to a very detailed account left to us by English merchants who came to Zhoushan in 1699 (Morse, 1966, Vol. 1: Chap. 10; Wang, 2015).⁵ These English merchants were representatives of the 'new' English East India Company (founded as a rival to the 'old' company in 1697). Hoping to establish regular trade with China, they brought three ships to Dinghai in 1700. There, the English quickly discovered that although the management of trade was officially the responsibility of the Zhejiang customs supervisor, his authority was trumped by that of the Dinghai *zong bing* Lan Li. This was plainly demonstrated to the English employees in the autumn of 1700 when Lan forced the customs supervisor out of Dinghai and then isolated him from other officials when he briefly attempted to return at the end of the year.⁶

4 For local officials' chronic shortage of funding during the Kangxi period, and the importance of tapping the wealth being generated by commercial activity, see Zelin, 1984: 209–211.

5 The most detailed Chinese account of the Kangxi-era administration of trade in Zhejiang can be found in the section related to tax in the Yongzheng edition of the *Zhejiang Comprehensive Gazetteer*. It also contains a brief overview of the English attempt to trade in the province from 1699 to 1702. See Shen et al. eds., 1736, [*Yongzheng*] *Zhejiang Comprehensive Gazetteer*, juan 86.

6 "A Diary Kept by Henry Rouse," Chusan, October 11, 1700, British Library, London [hereafter 'BL'], IOR/E/3/58, doc. 7174 (India Office Records, 1700), entries for November 1, and December 15, 1700. The cited dates follow the original English documents, and therefore are in old style. However, January 1 is considered New Year's Day throughout.

However, despite Lan Li's obvious power relative to the customs supervisor, the English also realised that the *zong bing* was not the only authority on Zhoushan to whom they needed to answer. Lan's main strategy for profiting from the English was to use his power to restrict their access to independent merchants and trade with the English himself through his agent (an individual the English generally referred to as his 'secretary').⁷ But neither Lan nor Shi Shipiao, who succeeded him in 1701, were able to keep all of the business with the English to themselves in this manner because other officials in the province whom the *zong bing* could not overawe or chase away adopted similar tactics. Among these was the Zhejiang *ti du* 浙江提督, the senior military official in the province; the English never met him, but like the *zong bing* he attempted to profit by selling them some of his own merchandise.⁸ An even more persistent profiteer was an official whom the English referred to as the 'mandarin of justice' based in the city of Ningbo (probably the Ningbo *zhi fu* 寧波知府, or Ningbo prefectural magistrate).⁹ At one point in 1701, the pressure he was putting on the English to take his goods at unfavourable terms was so great that they recorded needing to repair 'on board the *Eaton* [one of their ships], to avoid receiving several Parcels of Goods, which the Mandarin of Justice is endeavouring to force us to take'.¹⁰

But probably most damaging for the English were the merchant representatives of two imperial princes who arrived in 1702, the last year before the new company gave up on Zhoushan. One of these merchants bore a letter from the emperor's second son, the then heir apparent Yinreng 胤礽, and the other a similar document from the emperor's fourth son, Yinzhen 胤禛, the future Yongzheng emperor. These documents declared that on the princes' authority, their bearers had the right to monopolise trade with the English and were entitled to assistance from the *zong bing* and other officials to do so. To make matters worse, the princes' merchants had

7 Allen Catchpoole, Solomon Loyd, Henry Rouse, John Ridges, and Robert Master, Chusan, January 31, 1701, BL, IOR/E/3/60, doc. 7408; "Diary and consultations of Alan Cathchpoole and Council for China at Chusan, and of their voyage to and stay at Batavia," BL, IOR/G/12/16, ff. 267–277; and Allen Catchpoole, Solomon Loyd, Henry Rouse, John Ridges, and Robert Master, Chusan, February 1, 1702, BL, IOR/E/3/63, doc. 7845. (India Office Records, 1701; 1614–1703; 1701–1702)

8 "Diary and consultations of Alan Cathchpoole and Council for China at Chusan, and of their voyage to and stay at Batavia," BL, IOR/G/12/16, f. 270v. (India Office Records, 1614–1703)

9 See "Diary and consultations of Alan Cathchpoole and Council for China at Chusan, and of their voyage to and stay at Batavia," BL, IOR/G/12/16, f. 267v. (India Office Records, 1614–1703)

10 Allen Catchpoole, Solomon Loyd, Henry Rouse, John Ridges, and Robert Master, Chusan, February 1, 1702, BL, IOR/E/3/63, doc. 7845. (India Office Records, 1701–1702)

‘brought little or no stock with them’, so their intention was to act as brokers by forcing the other merchants to trade through them, which most were unwilling to do.¹¹

The overall picture of the mid Kangxi-era trade administration in Zhejiang that emerges from the correspondence left to us by the new English company’s employees is one of disorganisation guided much more by the relative power of competing authorities than by the recently established customs administration system. The *zong bing*, with the troops and ships at their disposal on Zhoushan, were able to intimidate the customs supervisors, who had only a branch office and a handful of clerks on the island. But the *zong bing* could not brush aside the more powerful players who also had an interest in profiting from trade in Dinghai’s harbour. Lan and Shi had to share access to the English ships with other senior civil and military officials and the representatives of the imperial princes as well. The results were ultimately so discouraging for the English that they abandoned regular trade at Dinghai and only sent very occasional experimental voyages there for the remainder of the century.¹²

The failed English experiment in Zhoushan helps us understand why the Dinghai *zong bing* would have been willing to allow Chinese merchant ships to dock at Putuoshan and avoid Dinghai. The Chinese merchant ships that entered Dinghai’s harbour would have been exposed to the same host of predatory officials as the English had been. At Putuoshan, however, the only official who would have had systematic access to merchant vessels was the Dinghai *zong bing*, thanks to his fleet of warships patrolling the archipelago. The English account also shows that Lan Li and Shi Shipiao’s main means of profiting from maritime trade was to participate in the purchase and sale of goods through agents employed by them.¹³ There is no direct evidence that the *zong bing* had commercial relationships with the Chinese merchants who docked at Putuoshan, but upon the arrival of the first

11 Allen Catchpoole, September 4, 1702, BL, IOR/E/3/64, doc. 8011. (India Office Records, 1702–1704)

12 See “Materials for a history of a series of attempts, first by the English and afterwards by the United East India Company, to acquire & establish a trade at the port of Chusan in China from the year 1699 to 1759,” BL, IOR/G/12/14. (India Office Records, 1830) For the most detailed examination of how different officials profited from the English over the approximate three-year period the new company’s ships traded in Dinghai, see Morse, 1966, Vol. 1: Chap. 10.

13 In Shi Shipiao’s case, these agents included his brother. Allen Catchpoole, Solomon Loyd, Henry Rouse, John Ridges, and Robert Master, Chusan, February 1, 1702, BL, IOR/E/3/63, doc. 7845. (India Office Records, 1701–1702)

English ships in Zhoushan, Lan immediately sent his representatives to deal with them, which suggests that he was already an experienced participant in the region's commerce.¹⁴ If this was the case, it would also mean that allowing the Chinese merchants to operate out of Putuoshan rather than Zhoushan not only gave the *zong bing* exclusive access to them, it also likely helped preserve the vitality of trade in the region by shielding it from the sort of predations that had driven the English away.

IV. Putuoshan's Privileged Place on the Qing Empire's Coast

The second reason that the Dinghai *zong bing* were willing to allow merchant vessels to dock at Putuoshan was that the Qing government accorded the island's monasteries a privileged status, which encouraged local officials to develop their own cordial relationships with the monasteries. Marcus Bingenheimer has examined the relationship between the island's monastic communities and the Qing government through its idealised portrait preserved in Putuoshan's monastic gazetteers. These gazetteers, guidebooks and histories of the island, which were commissioned by the abbots of the two monasteries, concentrate on the devotion of the Kangxi emperor and his officials, and on the gifts, inscriptions, and sponsorship of renovation projects through which that devotion was expressed. The conclusion that emerges from Bingenheimer's careful analysis is that the monasteries benefited greatly from the relationship; from the state's patronage the monasteries received both material support and the prestige that came with being the recipients of imperial favour (Bingenheimer, 2016: Chap. 5).

The additional observation that this article will make is that the benefits accrued from the relationship between the monasteries and the state did not flow in only one direction. The relationship was based on a process similar to what Steven Sangren has called 'reciprocal authentication' when describing how Chinese governments and the cults of popular deities reinforced one another (Sangren, 1987: 215–216). Essentially, the Kangxi emperor was eager to strengthen the perception of his state's legitimacy among his Chinese subjects in the aftermath of the devastating anti-Manchu Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. He accomplished this in part by becoming the patron of many revered institutions that pre-dated the Qing, including Putuoshan's monasteries. The monasteries accepted the emperor's patronage, thus reinforcing their importance through recognition by the imperial government while at the same time allowing that government to bolster its own legitimacy through its

14 Allen Catchpoole, Chusan, December 21, 1700, BL, IOR/E/3/59, doc. 7287. (India Office Records, 1700–1701)

connection to their holy site created by his patronage. Consequently, acknowledging the sanctity of Putuoshan was not just a straightforward gift to the monasteries by an emperor who was personally devoted to Guanyin. It was also a gesture calculated to demonstrate that the Manchu emperor was committed to the same religious symbols as his subjects, especially those in the economically and strategically important province of Zhejiang.

And it was not the emperor alone who could increase his prestige and legitimacy by creating a personal link to a revered holy site, such as Putuoshan. Based on the records preserved in the island's monastic gazetteers, it was the emperor's regional officials in Zhejiang, and the Dinghai *zong bing* especially, who seem to have been the most reliable patrons of the monasteries aside from the Kangxi emperor himself. The gazetteers identify their greatest supporters as the trio of Huang Dalai, Lan Li, and Shi Shipiao, who were introduced above. The compilers of the monasteries' gazetteers included hagiographical references to the *zong bing*'s patronage, while the monks erected shrines on the island that commemorated the officials' good works. The gazetteers credit Huang with bringing the dilapidated condition of the monasteries' buildings to the Kangxi emperor's attention, and prompting the emperor's first donations to them (Wang ed., 1993: 217; Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958-1959: 1161). In the case of Lan, the gazetteers approvingly describe how he took an active role in the management of Putuoshan, using his position to arrange for the ascension of two abbots of the Puji Monastery (Wang ed., 1993: 356, 360). They also mention how he donated lumber for further reconstruction at his own expense, and made a final symbolic gesture before he was transferred, by leaving his coat in the Fayu Monastery. The dedication written for Shi's shrine similarly emphasises his Buddhist devotion, his frequent visits to the island, and the sympathetic reports about its monasteries that he sent to Beijing (Wang ed., 1993: 467-468).

There were three strong reasons why the *zong bing* were willing to become the patrons of Putuoshan's monasteries. First, it was simply good politics. Because the Kangxi emperor began to publicly patronise the monasteries very soon after the maritime ban was lifted, following his example was a move that was politically beyond reproach. As well, requesting state sponsorship of a renovation project for the monasteries, as Huang Dalai did, both brought the *zong bing* to the emperor's attention and won his approval. Second, it deepened the relationship of reciprocal authentication between the Qing state and the monasteries at the provincial and regional levels. Not only did the *zong bing*'s support for the monasteries make Qing rule more palatable for devotees of Guanyin throughout the empire, but it also burnished their personal reputations as just and generous officials worthy of their office. Finally, the reciprocal goodwill of the monasteries, expressed in the construc-

tion of shrines for the three *zong bing* and in the syrupy hagiographies included in the monasteries' gazetteers, created a valuable legacy for each of them. Thanks to these expressions of appreciation, they would be remembered as virtuous men for as long as the institutions of the monasteries endured.

V. The Mutually Beneficial Relationship between the Merchants and the Monasteries

The greatest act of patronage the Dinghai *zong bing* performed for Putuoshan's monasteries was not a donation of money or lumber. It was to allow Chinese merchant vessels to dock in the island's harbour without interference from the Qing customs administration. Both the monasteries' gazetteers and the Qing imperial records carefully avoid discussing commerce or its effects on Putuoshan with very few exceptions, but the Chinese crews arriving in Nagasaki whose testimonies are preserved in the *Kai Hentai* were not so scrupulous. Their reports make it clear that Putuoshan's special status as a port allowed to exist outside of the customs system was an asset to both its monasteries and the merchants who docked there.

The material wealth of Putuoshan's monasteries in the Kangxi period did not depend solely on donations from the Qing government or its officials. As with other monasteries throughout China during the early Qing period, Putuoshan's two monastic communities likely relied heavily on the return of wealthy pilgrims to their halls (Brook, 1993: 160–165; Yü, 1992: 224). The records in the *Kai Hentai* testify to the increasing frequency at which boatloads of them were delivered to the island after the emperor allowed travel and resettlement in the Zhoushan archipelago. Beginning in 1686, Chinese crews began to report to the interpreters in Nagasaki that many pilgrims were arriving at Putuoshan to worship Guanyin, and that the island was consequently becoming more prosperous by the day (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 544, 673). As well, the Chinese trade ships that arrived at the island also carried merchant-passengers who were devotees of Guanyin. Many crews reported that while stopping in Putuoshan on the way to Japan, they used the opportunity to enter the monasteries and burn incense for the bodhisattva. Some even claimed that this was their primary reason for touching at the island (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 805, 1312). No Chinese or Japanese sources directly address the financial importance of the donations made by these pilgrims, but according to James Cunningham, a physician and naturalist on the new English company's ships who visited Putuoshan, the upkeep of the monasteries was entirely supported by 'charitable devotions.' Cunningham adds that the Chinese ships sailing from Ningbo or Zhoushan on their way to Japan typically touched at Putuoshan, where they regularly

made ‘offerings for their good success’ (Cunningham, 1703: 1204).¹⁵

A lesser source of profit for the monasteries may have come from the revictualling of ships. The voyage from Putuoshan to Nagasaki was usually only about fifteen days in good weather, but it still seems to have been common practice for ships coming from southern China, Southeast Asia, and even Ningbo to stop for water, food, and firewood at the island before the final leg of their journey to Japan (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 874, 1190). By the mid-1690s, when it became usual for brokers in Ningbo to send silks and other trade goods to Putuoshan, the victualling of ships may have become part of their business as well. But at least in the early years after 1684, it was the monasteries and local fishermen who supplied the Nagasaki-bound crews. The crew of a ship in 1687 explained that the monks supplied trading vessels with dried bamboo shoots and laver, while fishing boats that docked there offered their catches. The crew does not mention payment for these supplies, but the merchants must have compensated the monasteries and fishermen in some way (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 655).

For the merchants, the *zong bing*’s tacit policy of non-interference with commerce in Putuoshan’s harbour during the Kangxi period gave them a number of advantages. As discussed above, at Putuoshan they did not need to suffer from the simultaneous predations of several different regional officials and the agents of imperial princes, as the English had in Dinghai. The *zong bing* also do not appear to have interfered with the traffic between Ningbo and Putuoshan, which allowed ships to access Zhejiang’s markets and products without ever having to deal with its maritime customs supervisors. Initially Putuoshan served merchants simply as a waystation on the sailing route to Japan rather than a port in which cargoes could be collected, but around 1693 ships from southern China and Southeast Asia began to report that they were ordering silks and other goods from brokers in Ningbo to be delivered ahead of their arrival. Smaller vessels would carry the Chinese cargoes to Putuoshan, where they could be picked up by the larger ocean-going ships on their way to Japan (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 1565, 1595, 1756).

Touching at Putuoshan and nowhere else in the province had the additional advantage of allowing merchants to circumvent Qing laws governing shipping. In the first decade or so after the legalisation of maritime trade, the Qing empire’s

15 There was a precedent for cooperation between monasteries and maritime merchants in Zhejiang. The *Dinghai County Gazetteer* includes a biography of a filial son named Liu Zhensheng 劉貞升 who managed the funds of a Fujianese merchant while living at a monastery where his mother was a nun. Chen and Ma eds., 1924, [*Minguo*] *Dinghai County Gazetteer*, ce 3, pt. 6. This story is discussed in Xie, 2015: 91.

regulations were uncomplicated, but beginning in the 1690s various concerns among officials prompted the formulation of new and more onerous rules that gradually made business more difficult for China's maritime merchants. Putuoshan appears to have remained untroubled by the enforcement of these rules throughout the Kangxi period, which could only have increased its harbour's attraction for trade ships. This benefit was most clearly demonstrated in 1694 after the implementation of new policies designed to strengthen the customs supervisors' control of Chinese ships and crews who traded in Southeast Asia. The concern, initially raised by Zhang Penghe 張鵬翮, the governor (*xun fu* 巡撫) of Fujian, was that although ships that sailed from Chinese ports for overseas destinations were technically required to be marked so that their departure and return could be documented by regional officials, this rule was increasingly unenforceable. Unmarked ships built in Southeast Asia had become common in Chinese ports, and this made tracking the activities of their crews impossible. Consequently, at Zhang's urging the court prohibited Chinese merchants from bringing foreign-built ships to Qing harbours (Chinese Academy of Sciences ed., 2008: 317–320; Chen, 1991: 115).¹⁶ This policy was detrimental to the business of ethnic Chinese merchants based in Southeast Asia because their ships were usually not Chinese-built. But fortunately for them, Putuoshan offered a port outside the enforcement of this prohibition. The crew of a ship from Banten that arrived in Nagasaki in 1694 reported that there were several Siamese ships whose crews had planned to enter Ningbo's harbour, but because of the regulation they had sailed to Putuoshan instead (Hayashi and Hayashi eds., 1958–1959: 1690).

VI. The Yongzheng Reforms and the End of Putuoshan's Golden Age

The comfortable arrangement between the *zong bing*, Putuoshan's monasteries, and China's maritime merchants began to come apart when the Qing government adjusted its system for supervising commerce in the empire. The first major change to the administration of overseas trade was undertaken in the final years of the Kangxi period. The government shifted formal control of the administration of trade away from the court-appointed customs supervisors to the governors and governors general of the coastal provinces. In the case of Zhejiang, in 1722 responsibility for the appointment of the customs supervisor was transferred to the provincial governor, and then after 1727 to the Zhejiang governor general (Huang, 2000: 48; Schottenhammer, 2010: 137–138).

16 Yingtai et al., 1732, [*Yongzheng*] *Da Qing Hui Dian*, juan 139.

This new responsibility was a double-edged sword for the governors and governors general. It gave them access to the formal revenue generated by the collection of duties from trade ships, but it also made them accountable for any problems foreign trade might create for the empire. Li Wei 李衛, the governor general of Zhejiang from 1727 to 1732, seems to have been especially alive to the possibility that trade could disrupt the governance of his province. Unlike earlier officials such as Zhang Penghe who had fretted over unmarked ships sailing to China from Southeast Asia, Li saw this threat coming from the merchants sailing to Japan. His concern stemmed from his discovery that the *bakufu* under Tokugawa Yoshimune 德川吉宗 (r. 1716 to 1745) was using a licencing system for Chinese merchants who wanted to trade in Nagasaki as a means of inducing them to assist in the recruitment of Chinese doctors, veterinarians, and military strategists, as well as the import of horses, weapons, and books. As a student of history, Li was aware of the destructive sixteenth-century *wako* raids that had been launched from Japan. He saw the potential for future raids if the Japanese were equipped with what he believed was superior Chinese equipment and expertise. Consequently, shortly after taking office he began a thorough investigation of trade between Zhejiang and Japan that led to the arrests of a number of Chinese merchants (Ōba, 2012: 231; Schottenhammer, 2008: 349–350).¹⁷

Most of Li's arrests were made after the offences had been committed, and in these cases he did not bother to record the exact details of the smuggling routes in his memorials to the emperor. But he had one major coup in which he stopped a people-smuggling operation in progress, and in the details of his report on this case we can see that Putuoshan was at the centre of the story. In the fall of 1728, Li learned from one of his sources that the Tokugawa shogunate's agents had asked a Chinese merchant to recruit the abbot of the Huangbo Monastery 黃檗寺 in Fujian to take charge of another monastery in Japan. The abbot had agreed, and planned a rendezvous with a merchant who would take him and a small group of followers to Nagasaki. Naturally, the rendezvous point for the monks from Huangbo and the merchant captain was Putuoshan. When Li learned of this plan, he sent a squad from his *fu biao* 撫標 (an army unit directly under the governor or governor general's command) to the island ahead of the rendezvous to lie in wait. When the monks arrived, they pretended to be normal pilgrims, but this ruse did not fool the governor general's men; the squad successfully arrested the Huangbo monks and the merchant captain on November 19, 1728 (Wu, 2015: 236–237).¹⁸

17 For Li Wei's reports, see Gong zhong dang an, doc. 402007685, 402007690, 402007694, 402007698, and 402007704. (National Palace Museum, 2008)

18 Gong zhong dang an, doc. 402007698. (National Palace Museum, 2008)

This episode both revealed the role Putuoshan played in clandestine exchanges between the Qing empire and Japan and signalled the close of Putuoshan's career as a trading centre. The *Kai Hentai's* last entries come from the summer of 1728 before the raid of Li's *fu biao* on Putuoshan, so there is no detailed record of the sailing routes Japan-bound ships took from that time onwards. However, we know from other sources that there were further changes to the administration of trade in the Qing empire that undermined the usefulness of Putuoshan. Following Li's recommendation, the empire strengthened its military power on the coast of Zhejiang, establishing a major naval garrison at Zhapu in 1729 with 1600 troops and twenty-two war ships. This decision shifted some of the responsibility for controlling maritime traffic in the Bay of Hangzhou away from the Dinghai *zong bing*, and meant that merchant ships in the Zhoushan archipelago were no longer as safe from official interference as they had previously been (Liu, 1993: 196).¹⁹

Also partly at the prompting of Li Wei, customs supervision became stricter in an effort to combat piracy and the exportation of horses, weapons, books, and expertise to Japan. The new regulations included a system of collective responsibility, which forced the merchants to police one another, meaning that a strategy of simply avoiding official inspections by going to peripheral ports such as Putuoshan was no longer always sufficient to avoid regulations. As well, authority over the management of trade was further concentrated in the hands of provincial governors and governors general rather than divided between them, other regional officials, and customs supervisors answerable to Beijing (Huang, 2000: 48; Po, 2018: 156–157; Liu, 2005; Ōba, 2012: 237). These changes at once curtailed the Dinghai *zong bing's* independent authority over trade in the Zhoushan archipelago and made smuggling more dangerous for Chinese merchants even when they succeeded in avoiding formal cargo inspections.

At the same time, the 1728 police raid by Li Wei's *fu biao* on Putuoshan is a clear indication that its monasteries no longer enjoyed as close a relationship with the state as they had during the Kangxi period. Although Li was careful in his memorials not to suggest that the monasteries bore responsibility for harbouring the nine monks waiting to be smuggled across to Japan, the mere act of arresting them in the holy site was unprecedented; it was the first example of the Qing state directly enforcing its laws on the island since the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in the 1670s. The content of the monasteries' gazetteers also reflects how the Qing government's enthusiasm for the island cooled after the Kangxi period. The 1924 edition of the gazetteer records fourteen instances when the Kangxi emperor sent

19 Shen et al. eds., 1736, [*Yongzheng*] *Zhejiang Comprehensive Gazetteer*, juan 97.

gifts or donations of money to the monasteries. During the Yongzheng emperor's shorter reign (1722 to 1735) only two instances are mentioned, and during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor's son, the Qianlong emperor (1735 to 1796), only two more are recorded. Even more tellingly, after the Kangxi period no Qing regional official in Zhejiang is credited with making a donation to the monasteries before the 1790s (Wang ed., 1993: 217-232).

The demonstration that Putuoshan was no longer an inviolable sanctuary for merchant ships protected by imperial and official favour likely prompted a shift away from that port towards the northern part of the Bay of Hangzhou. Liu Shiuh-Feng's investigation of the rise and fall of the harbour of Zhapu on the northern coast of the bay shows that it was in the Yongzheng and early Qianlong periods that that city joined Ningbo and Shanghai as one of the crucial ports for Sino-Japanese trade. Liu observes that it was closer to the silk producing regions around Lake Tai 太湖 than was the Zhoushan archipelago in the southern part of the bay, and had more convenient access to the canal routes connecting Hangzhou and Suzhou. Liu's analysis also gives credit for Zhapu's rise to the Qing state for reorganising the copper trade with Japan and successfully forcing China's maritime merchants to submit to stricter supervision, which became relatively easy in Zhapu thanks to the establishment of the new naval garrison there in 1729 (Liu, 1993).

In light of the circumstances surrounding the rise of Zhapu that Liu describes, it is easy to see how that harbour's gain would have been Putuoshan's loss. During the Yongzheng period, the Qing state began to supervise and regulate maritime trade on its coasts more strictly, especially in Zhejiang, and the loophole created by the special status of Putuoshan seems to have been closed. Consequently, there was no longer a strong reason for merchant captains to use Putuoshan's harbour. We may therefore conclude with reasonable certainty that the harbour's golden age as a trade port was at an end.²⁰

VII. Conclusions

The essential argument that this article makes is that from 1684 to the mid-Yongzheng period, a mutually beneficial relationship existed between the monasteries of Putuoshan, the Chinese maritime merchants sailing to and from Zhejiang,

20 Ships in distress do seem to have occasionally continued to call at Putuoshan to avoid storms. The one example of this I have found was a Zhapu-based ship returning from the Nguyen domain in central Vietnam in 1753 that was forced into Putuoshan when its hull sprung a leak. See Hayashi et al. eds., 1912-1913, Vol. 6: 52.

and the Dinghai *zong bing* who were responsible for enforcing the empire's laws in and around the Zhoushan archipelago. The monasteries benefitted from the presence of commercial fleets in Putuoshan's harbour because trade ships brought wealthy merchants, many of whom were devotees of Guanyin and almost certainly donors to the monasteries. The merchants in the meantime enjoyed relative freedom at Putuoshan. It was a location where trade ships coming from Southeast Asia could stop and purchase silk and other Chinese trade goods without submitting to the authority of a Qing customs supervisor. And for ships coming from other ports on China's coast, it was a place where contraband goods and illegal passengers could be loaded after a customs inspection had already been conducted. Even for the captains of Zhejiang ships who were not intending to break any of the empire's laws, it was a convenient harbour that allowed them to avoid most of the venal officials who preyed upon private business in Dinghai and other, more settled ports.

The Dinghai *zong bing*, who could have forced the trade ships away from Putuoshan had they chosen to, generally did not do so. One reason they allowed the merchants to dock in Putuoshan was that while the trade ships were in that island's harbour the *zong bing* were the only officials who had access to them. The probable second reason was that allowing the merchant vessels to dock in Putuoshan was a means of patronising the island's monasteries indirectly. The monasteries enjoyed patronage from the imperial family, so for a high-level regional official such as a *zong bing*, following Beijing's lead was good politics. As well, the monasteries were able to reward the *zong bing* by constructing shrines honouring them and adding hagiographic notes about their good works to the island's monastic gazetteers. These shrines and notes reinforced the legitimacy of both the *zong bing* and the state they represented in the eyes of the Qing empire's subjects, and created a personal legacy for the *zong bing*.

Within China's longer history of maritime engagement, the approximately forty-year period in the early Qing during which Putuoshan existed as an administrative anomaly is illustrative of the evolution of the relationship between state and commerce. After the Kangxi emperor lifted the ban on maritime activity in 1684, the administration of overseas trade remained patchy in its implementation and inconsistent in its effectiveness for decades. Though customs stations were established, and regulations drafted, local circumstances and local interests allowed for gross exceptions to the way the system was intended to have worked. Putuoshan's special religious status and its position along the sea lane between Zhejiang and Kyushu were all that was necessary to make it one such gross exception. It was only after the late 1720s, when Li Wei and the imperial court perceived a potential threat in the form of Tokugawa Japan, that concrete steps were taken to make the management of commerce more uniform and more effective within the Qing empire.

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普陀山之奇異雙重角色： 寺院中心與商業樞紐，1684-1728

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摘 要

本文探討自 1684 年海禁解除後至 1720 年代，身為佛教寺院中心之普陀山如何保持其為中國海洋貿易中心之樞紐地位。本文認為其中關鍵在於解禁初期，舟山群島一帶海關設管尚未成熟，所以普陀山佛教寺院、中國船商與定海總兵之間得以建立非官方之三邊互利關係。歷任定海總兵允許商船停靠普陀山，船商參訪寺廟、敬奉觀音，寺院則為定海總兵們建造生祠以感念其特許。然而在 1720 年代，清廷改組海關，將貿易管轄權移交給浙江省總督，導致互利關係終止，此舉也宣告了普陀山貿易樞紐時代之終結。

關鍵字：海洋貿易、清朝、普陀山、佛教歷史