

## THE 13TH CENTURY SOUTHERN CHINA IN “PING ZHOU KE TAN”

Song epoch left many diverse literary monuments for us, which at times contain unique materials of history, spiritual and material culture, and everyday life of Chinese society of that time. But the so-called collections of *biji* particularly stand out among such monuments, the rise of which falls on the 10th—13th centuries: these amazing and yet little-studied works of art are characterized by absolute author's liberty, both in form and in content — and their authors, not bound by government service (and many *biji* emerged in the afternoon and at the evening of author's lives) and living in peace, could allow themselves not to look back at official dogmas and not burden themselves with self-censorship, writing in the way they deemed necessary and about that, which they considered necessary. In this regard, *biji* is living testimony of the contemporaries, relating to us such de-

tails about the life of Song China, which are not contained in any other historical sources. And one of these sources is the collection of Zhu Yu (1075? — after 1119) titled “Pin zhou ke tan” (“From Conversations in Pingzhou”). The data recorded in the second *juan* of “Pin zhou ke tan” were of great significance for researchers. They speak of the south of the Song China, specifically of Guangzhou and the so-called “foreign quarter” located on its territory and mostly populated by Muslims. It also contains data on trade with overseas countries. The importance of such fragments is reinforced by the following circumstance — all these data are personal observation of the author or vivid impressions on account of his father's stories. This is the Song south through the eyes of the witness. Below is given translation of four of such excerpts with commentaries.

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From of old in the Guangzhou administration of Shibosi there was a position *tiju shiboshi*, which was subject to [local] governor-general. At the time of the founder of the dynasty this position was called *shiboshi*. Shibisi existed in the seaside regions — in Quanzhou, which is in Fujian Province, in Mingzhou and Hangzhou, which are in Liangzhu.

In the first years of Chonging the position of this type of officials — *tiju shibishi* — were established in

these three provinces. The most flourishing port was Guangzhou. When some official would begin to fleece [merchants], tradespeople would go to a different location, thus these three provinces new both — times of prosperity and times of decline. Then the Emperor's court joined Quanzhou and Guangzhou Shibisi and transferred both to Guangzhou. Not all tradespeople considered it comfortable.

**Annotations.** Shibosi — management of merchant shipping. It is known that an establishment with such a name existed back in the Tang Dynasty — it was in Guangzhou only and it controlled all seaside trade of the south of China. According to the history of the Song Dynasty, under this dynasty Shibosi was established in Guangzhou in 971, and then, following the development of maritime commerce, analogous Managements were established in other cities — in Hangzhou, Mingzhou (modern Ninbo in Zhejiang), Quanzhou, Mizhou (Shandong) and in many other locations. At the head of Shibosi was an official known as *tiju shiboshi* (also known as simply *shiboshi* or even simpler — *boshi*, governmental representative of the Management of merchant ships); this office at first was held either by one of the highest local officials or *zhuanyunshi* of the province; later other officials were appointed for this office, who had a staff of subordinates necessary for the implementation of work. Among main functions of Shibosi were: supervision of maritime commerce, examination of cargo and duty levying, only after the payment of which cargo-owners obtained authorization to trade; centralized storage and sale of goods obtained in the capacity of duty, for which Shibosi had governmental storehouses under his jurisdiction as well as forces and means necessary for delivering certain goods to the capital (certain goods, however, were sold right there, without sending those off anywhere); supervision of export — in particular of those categories of goods, which in the Song times was prohibited to be exported beyond Tianxia (copper coins, weapons, etc.), as well as issuing authorization for foreign commerce; obligation to receive and send off arriving and departing seagoing vessels observing all established orders and procedures; besides, another indispensable obligation of Shibosi was supervision of foreign settlements on the territory of Tianxia, maintenance of relationships with their elders and chiefs, settlement of economic and