

An Introduction to *Siyi guangji* 四夷廣記

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Introduction

During the Ming 明 Dynasty (1368–1644), many geographical works describing foreign countries were written. One of them was *Siyi guangji* (Extensive Records of All Barbarians) by Shen Maoshang 慎懋賞. It only survived in one handwritten version, currently in the possession of the Central Library in Taipei 國家圖書館. The text is not divided into *juan* 卷 and the manuscript has no preface or colophon providing additional information on the circumstances of its creation. The only information on the author is that found at the beginning of some subdivisions:

明吳人慎懋賞輯。

Written by Shen Maoshang, a person of Wu from the Ming Dynasty.

The present manuscript describes 94 countries in about 900 Chinese double-pages.¹

In the first chapter on Korea, there are several short notes, attributed to Qingchang Daoren 清常道人. This was a style (*hao* 號) of Zhao Qimei 趙琦美 (1563–1624), a scholar and book collector living in Changshu 常熟, a place near present-day Shanghai 上海. Zhao Qimei apparently wrote these notes after receiving the manuscript from Shen Maoshang.² The latest date found in the manuscript is 1609, a date given by Zhao Qimei in his notes. The latest date referred to by Shen Maoshang himself by contrast, is found at the end of the chapter on the Northern barbarians, namely the 22nd day in the 8th month of the 31st year of the Wanli 萬曆 reign (1573–1619), i. e. Sept. 26, 1603,³ show-

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- 1 In Xuanlantang congshu xuji 玄覽堂叢書續集, a collectaneum of facsimile editions first published 1947 in Nanjing, the facsimile of *Siyi guangji* is divided into 16 fascicles (*ce* 冊, no. 87–102). Because the original manuscript does not include any continuous page numbering, and the editors of the *congshu* only added them for some pages, in this article primarily the *ce* number of the facsimile edition is given, sometimes added by the page number.
 - 2 In one of his notes dated 5th day in the 7th month of Wanli 37 (August 4th, 1609), Zhao Qimei states that Shen Maoshang gave him “extensive records” (*guangzhi* 廣志), a term which probably refers to *Siyi guangji* (Cf. *Siyi guangji*, *ce* 90, p. 204).
 - 3 *Siyi guangji*, *ce* 97.

ing that the text was originally written in the first years of the seventeenth century by Shen Maoshang, even if added to later by Zhao Qimei.

Until now, little research has been done on *Siyi guangji*. The chapter on the Vietnamese language was analysed by Jeremy H. C. S. Davidson⁴, the chapter on the Bengals was translated into English by Narayan Chandra Sen⁵ and some research on navigational routes in the text has been done, especially by Chen Jiarong 陳佳榮.⁶

In the present study I will provide an overview of *Siyi guangji* beginning with a short biography of Shen Maoshang and then describing the contents of the text. In conclusion, I will present some preliminary thoughts on the special characteristics of *Siyi guangji* as compared with other, similar texts.

The Author

Little information is available on Shen Maoshang. However, from prefaces and colophons found in another work by him, *Shenzi neiwaipian* 慎子內外篇 (Inner and Outer Chapters of the Philosopher Shen, first printed 1579), and from local gazetteers, some conclusions can be drawn. Accordingly, Shen Maoshang originally came from Gui'an 歸安 in Zhejiang province. His courtesy name (*zi* 字) was Yushu 宇勳 and his *hao* Yuntai 雲臺.⁷ In 1579 he printed his collection and commentary on the work of the philosopher Shen Dao 慎到 (c. 350–275 BCE). Thompson, who has analysed Shen Dao's work, states that Shen Maoshang did not work very carefully and made many mistakes.⁸

According to the local gazetteer of Baoding 保定 in present-day Hebei province, Shen Maoshang was a student at the National University (*Guozijian* 國子監) and was assigned a post as a low ranking official (*limu* 吏目, clerk)⁹ in Anzhou 安州. He was later promoted to *zhubu* 主簿 (recorder), another low ranking post.¹⁰ This was a very common career path during the Ming Dynasty.¹¹

4 Davidson 1975a; Davidson 1975b.

5 Sen 2005.

6 See for example his website, where he transcribed and punctuated these route descriptions, or the dictionary on place names by Chen Jiarong, Xie Fang and Lu Junlin, which includes references to place names found in *Siyi guangji*. Cf. Chen Jiarong 2010; Chen Jiarong, Xie Fang, and Lu Junling 1986.

7 *Shenzi neiwaipian*, 155.

8 Thompson 1979, 9, 105.

9 Hucker 1985, 306.

10 Hucker 1985, 182. This promotion is only mentioned in the later version of the gazetteer of 1886 and not in the one of 1607. It, thus, seems likely that the promotion took place sometime after 1607. Cf. *Baoding fuzhi* (*Wanli*) 8.65a; *Baoding fuzhi* (*Guangxu*) 4.54b–55a.

Two other men from Gui'an with the surname Shen are known to have written on similar topics to that of Shen Maoshang: Shen Meng 慎蒙 (1508–1581) and his son Shen Maoguan 慎懋官. Shen Meng's book is entitled *Tianxia mingshan zhusheng yilan* 天下名山諸勝一覽 (An Overview of the Various Qualities of the Famous Mountains of the World, completed 1576) and describes mountains both in China and in foreign countries. Shen Maoguan's *Huayi huamu niaoshou zhenwan kao* 華夷花木鳥獸珍玩考 (Investigation of Plants, Animals and Rare Things of China and the Barbarians, 1581) deals with exotic things from China and the rest of the world.

Because of the similar names of Shen Maoshang and Shen Maoguan and their same place of origin, it is highly likely that they were related. The syllable Mao, appearing in both names, suggests that they were brothers or first cousins.

Siyi guangji

Contents of *Siyi guangji*

Siyi guangji in its present form describes 96 countries. Some of them are fictional countries or countries that no longer existed in the late Ming. The countries are dealt with in the manuscript in varying lengths; some descriptions are only a few lines long, others several pages and divided into subchapters. For the countries that extend over several subchapters, Shen Maoshang prepends the term *guangji* 廣記, “extensive records”, as a title, sometimes exchanged by a name for the respective region: “Chaoxian *guangji*” 朝鮮廣記 (Extensive Records of Korea), “Beidi *guangji*” 北狄廣記 (Extensive Records of the Northern Barbarians) and “Haiguo *guangji*” 海國廣記 (Extensive Records of the Countries of the Ocean). There is no title for the Western Regions; and the heading for Korea curiously is also used for other countries.¹²

The countries that are dealt with in more detail usually have subchapters focusing on such things as the position of the country in the world, with the title “Jiangli” 疆里 (Borders), “Shanchuan” 山川 (Mountains and Rivers, i. e. Geography), “Guotong” 國統 (Lineage of the State, i. e. History), “Zhidu” 制度 (Political System), “Fengsu” 風俗 (Local Customs), “Wuchan” 物產 (Products) and “Gongwu” 貢物 (Products Brought to China as Tribute). In addition, for many

11 Hucker 1998, 34.

12 These countries include Japan and Ryūkyū, which at least are close to Korea, but also Turfan and Kalikut. The text gives no explanation for this labelling.

countries route descriptions – both by sea and by land – from China to these countries are included, sometimes also between two different countries without involving China. Some of the descriptions remind us of rutters like *Shunfeng xiangsong* 順風相送 (May Favorable Winds Escort You). Also letters, mostly from the rulers of the country to China, and information on language and writing are found several times.

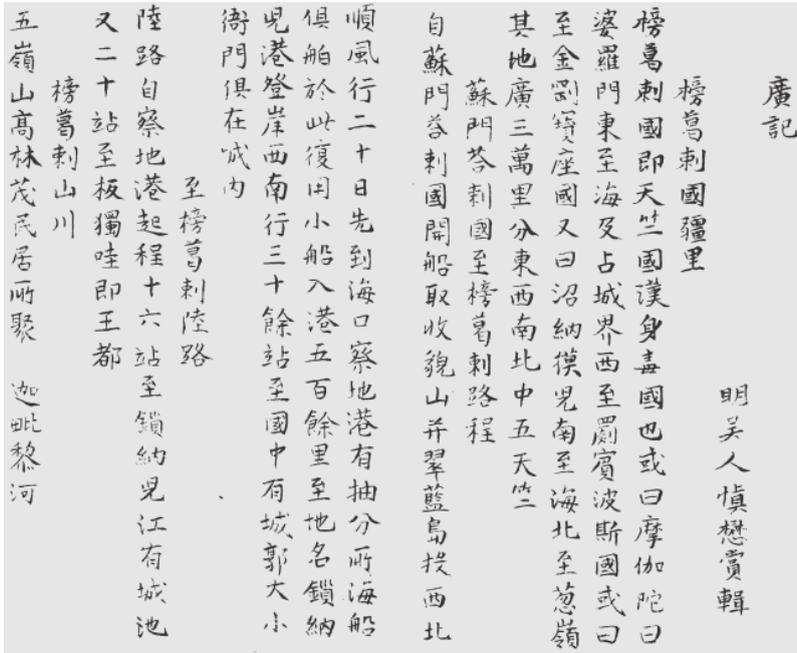


Fig. 1 Facsimile of the first double page of the twelfth fascicle (vol. 98) of *Siyi guangji*

Part of the manuscript seems to be missing today, as there is a table of contents entry for the Southwestern barbarians, but only the description of the second half of the countries mentioned in this table are included in *Siyi guangji* as we know it today. Book catalogues of collectors, who possessed the manuscript in the late Ming and the Qing dynasties support the thesis of a now missing part. They state that *Siyi guangji* had nine volumes, one more than it has today.¹³

13 *Maiwanguan shumu*, hong 26a; *Qianqingtang shumu* 8.209a.

Sequence of the Countries

The title of the work seems to suggest a division of the countries involved into four groups, but looking more closely at the manuscript, one can find five different groups instead: “Dongyi” 東夷 (Eastern Barbarians), “Beidi” 北狄 (Northern Barbarians), “Xiyi” 西夷 (Western Barbarians), “Xinanyi” 西南夷 (Southwestern Barbarians), and “Haiguo” 海國 (Countries of the Ocean). The structure of *Siyi guangji* is as follows:

1. Eastern barbarians (14 countries)
2. Northern barbarians (5 countries)
3. Western barbarians part 1 (3 countries)
4. Both Western barbarians as well as ocean countries (9 countries)
5. Western barbarians part 2 (4 countries)
6. Various listing of countries (17 countries)
7. Ocean countries part 1 (17 countries)
8. Southwestern barbarians (10 countries mentioned only with one sentence, 42 not extant and 13 extant countries)
9. Ocean countries part 2 (2 countries)

Judging from both the number of countries as well as the number of pages, it is evident that Shen Maoshang’s focus lay on the maritime world. The North and West only play a minor role in his writing. This is in contrast to Yan Congjian’s 嚴從簡 (16th cent., *jinsi* 進士 degree 1559) *Shuyu zhouzi lu* 殊域周咨錄 (Record of the Dispatches Concerning Various Regions, completed 1574), one of the main sources of Shen Maoshang. In it, the countries described in most detail are from the northern frontiers.

Surprisingly, Portugal is the only European country in *Siyi guangji*.¹⁴ This is in spite of the fact that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century the Spanish, the Jesuits and to some extent also the Dutch were active in East and Southeast Asia.

14 Actually, one other mention of Europe can be found: Mulanpiguo 木蘭皮國, the name for Southern Spain in older sources like *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 (Records on Various Foreigners) by Zhao Rukua 趙汝适 (1170–1231) or *Yiyu zhi* 異域志 (Records on Foreign Regions) by Zhou Zhizhong 周致中 from the Yuan Dynasty. However, the information in *Siyi guangji* is copied from an earlier text and can hardly count as information on Europe that would be relevant in the late Ming Dynasty.

Dates Mentioned for Each Country and Length of the Chapters

The contents of *Siyi guangji* are extremely outdated. Only in the descriptions of five countries is the Wanli era mentioned. These are Korea (Wanli 29, 1601), Japan (Wanli 23, 1595), the Ryūkyū Islands (Wanli 7, 1579), Annam (Wanli 4, 1576) and Thailand (Wanli 20, 1591). The latest date for Tartary is Longqing 5 (1571), but the Northern barbarians in general, have an appendix that mentions Wanli 32 (1603).

These countries are also the ones with the longest descriptions in the text. The country dealt with the most extensively is Korea (91 Chinese double-pages, short: dp),¹⁵ followed by Japan (62 dp), Tartary (53 dp), Annam (40 dp), the Ryūkyūs (35 dp) and Thailand (15 dp). For the other countries, there is no correlation between the length of the chapter and the dates mentioned.

This suggests that these six countries are either the ones Shen Maoshang was the most interested in, or the countries Shen Maoshang was able to find the most information on.

Sources Used by Shen Maoshang

Shen Maoshang used a wide variety of sources for compiling his *Siyi guangji*. Probably every single sentence in this work has been copied from somewhere else and nothing has been written by Shen Maoshang. A comparison with other texts yielded the following results regarding the works used by Shen Maoshang:

The most important source was the *Shuyu zhouzi lu*. The chapters titled “Guotong” are mostly shortened extracts from Yan Congjian’s text. Sometimes parts of *Shuyu zhouzi lu* have been moved to other chapters. As *Shuyu zhouzi lu* mostly contains information from the Ming Dynasty, Shen Maoshang supplements its accounts with older and sometimes newer information from other sources. I was not able to identify the sources of this new information. Through arranging the contents of *Shuyu zhouzi lu* into individual chapters, it seems as if Shen Maoshang wanted to make its contents more accessible.

15 The chapter on Korea as it is bound together today actually has 133 Chinese double-pages. However, several pages were not written by Shen Maoshang and were added to this chapter. Judging from the comments by Zhao Qimei, it was he who put these additional pages into *Siyi guangji*.

Another important source is *Xingcha shenglan* 星槎勝覽 (Overall Survey of the Star Raft, completed 1436) by Fei Xin 費信 (1388–1436?).¹⁶ Shen Maoshang used this text for short descriptions of countries not found in other sources, but did not include information from *Xingcha shenglan* for countries like Thailand, that are also mentioned in more detail in other sources. By contrast, *Yingya shenglan* 瀛涯勝覽 (Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores, completed c. 1433) by Ma Huan 馬歡 was used to supplement data for countries like Thailand, especially the chapters on local customs and the political system.

The chapters on tribute products and the gifts that the tribute missions received in return for their tribute are taken from *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty, first printed 1587).

Which other sources Shen Maoshang used in addition to these, I have not been able to identify. Shen Maoshang's sources are unknown for countries not mentioned in other Ming Dynasty sources.

Siyi guangji and Other Works of the Late Ming Dynasty

Most of the countries mentioned in *Siyi guangji* are also described in other works of the late Ming Dynasty, for example in *Fangyu shenglüe* 方輿勝略 (Complete Survey of the World, first printed 1610) or the *Shuyi zhouzi lu*. However, in contrast to these works, *Siyi guangji* also includes countries like Changrenguo 長人國 (Land of the Giants), or Mulanpiguo 木蘭皮國 (Murābits – the Almoravids, an eleventh and twelfth century Berber dynasty from Africa, an old name for Spain). These are mentioned in older sources of the Song and Yuan periods such as *Daoyi zhilüe* 島夷誌略 (Brief Record of the Island Barbarians, completed c. 1349), or *Yiyu zhi*.¹⁷ These countries do not appear in other texts of the Ming Dynasty, in which the main focus lies on describing the geography of foreign countries rather than more mythological elements.¹⁸ This makes the inclusion of countries such as “the Land of the Giants” or the defunct Murābits in *Siyi guangji* a unique feature of the text. Shen

16 For a discussion of the different editions of *Xingcha shenglan* see Mills and Ptak 1996, 10.

17 See above note 14.

18 They do appear, however, in encyclopedias like *Tushu bian* 圖書編 (Compilation of Illustrations and Texts, first printed 1613) or in the chapters on different people in *Sancai tubui* 三才圖會 (Assembled Illustrations of the Three Realms, first printed 1607), whose term *sancai* 三才, “the Three Realms”, is summarizing *tian* 天, “Heaven”, *di* 地, “Earth”, and *ren* 人, “Man”. Different from *Siyi guangji*, these old countries are labelled as such in *Tushu bian*. The choice of countries between the three works is completely different. Cf. *Tushu bian*, *juan* 50-52; *Sancai tubui*, *renwu juan* 12-14.

Maoshang mentions these old countries without considering that they do not exist anymore or never existed in the first place. At least most of the really curious countries like the one comprised of the people with a hole in their body (Chuanxiongguo 穿胸國) are missing. These are, by contrast, mentioned in various other Chinese texts, like in *Sancai tuihui*.¹⁹

Also a strange country mentioned in *Siyi guangji* is Beigouguo 北狗國, the “Land of the Northern Dogs”, a variation of the European land of the Cynoccephali. The people of this country are described to have a human body, but the head of a dog. With the addition of these countries it seems as if Shen Maoshang wanted to gather everything he found on foreign countries into one place, without reflecting on its reality or if his information was still applicable to his own time, the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries.

Another special characteristic of *Siyi guangji* is the inclusion of the detailed navigational routes. This kind of information can be found in very few other texts of the time describing foreign countries.

One work containing navigational routes is *Dongxi yangkao* 東西洋考 (Investigation of the Eastern and Western Oceans) by Zhang Xie 張燮. However in other aspects, *Dongxi yangkao* and *Siyi guangji* are very different. Zhang Xie’s text, written around ten years after *Siyi guangji*, in 1617, includes newer information, gathered by Zhang Xie himself and also describes trade and information relating to merchants, something that is completely lacking in *Siyi guangji*. When comparing *Dongxi yangkao* and *Siyi guangji*, not only are differences in the content evident, but also the naming of countries varies. Cambodia for example is labelled Zhenla 真臘, an old term, in *Siyi guangji*, but Zhang Xie uses a newer term, Jianpuzhai 柬埔寨.

Conclusion

Siyi guangji was composed by a low ranking official, who did not have a very successful career, but in spite of this wrote a major work. Shen Maoshang might have been inspired to write *Siyi guangji* by family members, who have written about similar topics, although it is not absolutely certain that Shen Maoguan and Shen Meng were related to Shen Maoshang.

Siyi guangji describes a wide range of countries, but focuses on countries that were connected to China via maritime routes, but only for a few countries does Shen Maoshang provide recent information. The lack of new information

19 *Sancai tuihui*, *renwu* 14.15a. Cf. note 18.

might be explained by the sources Shen Maoshang used. It appears that there is not a single sentence found in *Siyi guangji* that has not been copied out from some other text. The most important sources identified so far are *Shuyu zhouzhi lu*, *Xingcha shenglan*, *Yingya shenglan* and *Da Ming huidian*. However these are by no means all the sources used by Shen Maoshang.

Siyi guangji has many similarities with other texts of the late Ming with several exceptions. Shen Maoshang also included fictional countries that appeared in works of the Song and Yuan periods, but no longer could be found in contemporary Ming sources. Still, he did not include most of the very strange countries. In regard to this, it would be interesting to know if the sources he used included these countries, and Shen Maoshang consciously left them out, or if the source he used did not mention them in the first place. Unfortunately, as his source for the older countries is unknown, this question cannot be answered. Another difference is the inclusion of the detailed navigational routes found only in a few other works like *Dongxi yangkao*, a work that is more focused on trade and newer developments than *Siyi guangji* is. These special characteristics of *Siyi guangji* make it an interesting work that certainly needs to be evaluated in more detail.

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