

# A Buddhist Woodblock-printed Map and Geographic Knowledge in 13th Century China

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## Introduction

One of the earliest extant woodblock-printed maps in China is the “Dong zhendan dili tu” 東震旦地理圖 (Geographic Map of the Land of China to the East).<sup>1</sup> Being included, along with other maps about regions beyond China, in the Buddhist chronicle *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (General Records of the Founders of Buddhism), dated 1265–1270, the map shows the blending of different cultures and geographic knowledge behind its production.<sup>2</sup> The map (as a part of the book) was made by woodblock-printing, a technology that had been in a wide use at that time (see Fig. 1). The map’s Buddhist author adopted a circulating geographic representation of China but shifted its worldview (especially *axis mundi*, i.e., center of the world) to present China at the eastern periphery of the Buddhist world. During the Song Dynasty, government-sponsored mapmakers placed China at the center and foreign countries at the margins of the world, which is typical of most extant Chinese maps. However, some contemporary Buddhist scholars drew maps from a different perspective, even though they used the same geographic knowledge to create them. Maps like the “Dong zhendan dili tu” illustrate this well. The map also portrays many place names of foreign countries, including some places in West Asia that are shown for the first time. Although few original maps created during the period survive, some maps are preserved thanks to the massive volume of book printing in China, including the “Dong zhendan dili tu”.

This paper will compare “Dong zhendan dili tu” with earlier maps (both woodblock-prints and stone steles) and written contemporary geographic accounts in order to examine the geographic information and to trace the sources of place names. Through this analysis, this paper will explore patterns of complex cultural transmission, focusing on the following four points; first, Buddhism’s challenge to the traditional Chinese

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1 Cao Wanru (1990), fig. 152 (Original in the National Library of China).

2 For a partial English translation of *Fozu tongji*, see Jan Yün-hua (1996).

worldview; second, the extent of Chinese geographic knowledge about China and the world beyond; third, the contribution of Chinese wood-block-printing to the map's wide circulation; and fourth, the transmission of the map and its geographical knowledge to broader East Asia.



Fig. 1: “Dong zhendan dili tu” (in *Fozu tongji*)

## 1 The Challenge from Buddhism in Worldview

National self-perceptions often reflect their sense of cultural superiority. This was true of Han Chinese, who shared the belief that China was the center of the world and the source of all civilization and learning.<sup>3</sup> Yet the very title of the Buddhist map, “Dong zhendan dili tu”, challenges this tradition by positing a different worldview drawn from Buddhism, a religion introduced from India, a foreign country located to the west of China. The term “zhendan” 震旦 was mainly used in Buddhist texts as a

3 The description of the nine domains of the Zhou dynasty (with the royal capital at the center) in the oldest Chinese geographical document, *Yugong* 禹貢 (Tribute of Yu), included in the canonical *Shujing* 書經 (Book of documents, dating from at least the fourth century BCE), clearly shows this traditional conception. See Needham (1959), 502-503, and Yee (1995), 207.

name for China.<sup>4</sup> In order to understand this alternative cosmology that locates China to the east of the ultimate center of the Buddhist world – the lake of Anavatapta 阿耨達池 – it is useful to look for clues in texts like the *Fozu tongji* and the maps that are contained in this volume.

The *Fozu tongji* chronicles the history of Buddhism from 581 to 960 CE, and follows the format of Chinese official histories, including Imperial annals (*benji* 本紀), genealogies (*shijia* 世家), biographies (*lieshuan* 列傳), tables (*biao* 表), and monographs/treatises (*zhi* 志).<sup>5</sup> It was written by the Song Buddhist monk and scholar Zhipan 志磐, and published in wood-block form between 1265 and 1270. Thirty-six of the original fifty-four sewn chapters (*juan* 卷) survive; these chapters cover general Buddhist knowledge as well as the doctrines of the Tiantai school (*Tiantai zong* 天台宗), one of the most important schools of Buddhism in China and East Asia at large. Zhipan compiled the text seeking to justify the authenticity of Tiantai against the Chan school (*chanzong* 禪宗), a growing rival.<sup>6</sup> Chapters 31 and 32 of the *Fozu tongji*, entitled “Shijie mingti zhi” 世界名體志 (An Account of Places and Shape of the World), includes eleven maps as a supplement to the text. Chapter 31 discusses the total image and structure of the Buddhist universe, starting with a description of the greater universe and ultimately focusing on the imaginary Mount Meru (chin. Xumi shan 須彌山), the place where Jambudvīpa<sup>7</sup> (chin. Zhanbu zhou 瞻部洲), the world of human beings, lies.<sup>8</sup> The set includes five pictorial maps that illustrate narrative descriptions of Buddhist cosmology, among which “Sanqian daqian shijie tu” 三千大千世界圖 (Map of the Entire Universe) depicts Mount Meru and Jambudvīpa to the south (See Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup>

Chapter 32 discusses the sensory world and a brief history of China and foreign countries, and includes six maps. Three of the maps, among them “Dong zhendan dili tu”, are geographic maps of the world of the living (which we will discuss below), presented as Jambudvīpa.<sup>10</sup>

4 *Zhendan* is the Chinese transcription of *Cina-sthāna*, meaning “the land of China” in Sanskrit. In other Buddhist texts, this term means China. Zheng Xihuang (1990), 83. Also see Ohji Toshiaki (1996), 122. The term also occasionally influenced other types of literature. For example, the Japanese collection *Konjaku Monogatari* 今昔物語集 (Tales of Times Now Past), compiled between 1130 and 1140, uses this word to mean China.

5 Jan Yün-hua (1996), 8-9. See also Zheng Xihuang (1990), 81-84.

6 Nakamura Gen (1989), 702b-703a.

7 Cf. footnote 15.

8 For Buddhist maps of the cosmos in medieval China, see Dorothy C. Wong (2008), 51-79.

9 *Fozu tongji* (a), 31.16b-17a. Because Zhanbu zhou 瞻部洲 is located south of Mt. Meru, it is also called “Nan Zhanbu zhou” 南瞻部洲. “Nanzhou” 南洲 encircled in the diagram is an abbreviation of “Nan Zhanbu zhou”. Nakamura Gen (1989), 81a.

10 Zheng Xihuang (1990), 81-84.

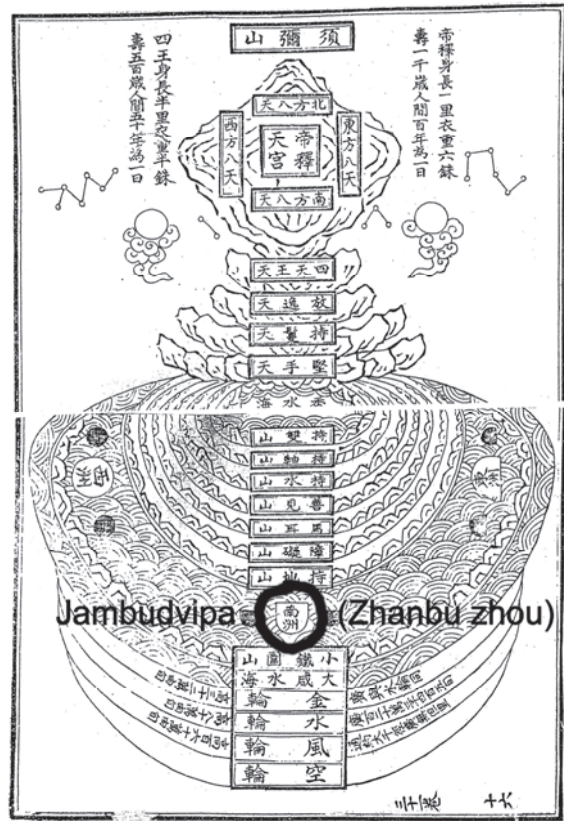


Fig. 2: “Sanqian daqian shijie tu” (in *Fozu tongji*)

Two geographical maps emphasize parts of Jambudvīpa outside China, demonstrating that Buddhist authors held more interest in envisioning territories beyond China than did contemporary Chinese authors. “Han xiyu zhuguo tu” 漢西域諸國圖 (Map of the States in the Western Regions during the Han Dynasty) charts the western regions known to the Chinese during the Han period (see Fig. 3),<sup>11</sup> while “Xitu wuyin zhi tu” 西土五印之圖 (Map of the Five Indian States in the West) plots the sites in Central Asia and India visited by the famous Tang-dynasty Buddhist monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (c. 602/603–664) during his nineteen-year pilgrimage to India in the mid-seventh century (see Fig. 4).<sup>12</sup>

11 Cao Wanru (1990), fig. 153 (Original in the National Library of China).

12 *Ibid.*, fig. 154 (Original in the National Library of China).

Zhipan (or the real cartographer of the map) drew the above-mentioned maps based on earlier texts, like “Han xiyu zhuguo tu” and *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions), for each map.<sup>13</sup> The locations of countries are relatively accurate compared to the written sources. “Xitu wuyin zhi tu” shows the Buddhist author’s direct interest in the original land of his religion, India (chin. Tianzhu 天竺).<sup>14</sup> Although it clearly bears realistic information about places names and their location in India and surrounding countries, the map is nonetheless drawn from a Buddhist perspective. At an approximate center of the map lies the lake called Anavatapta, which is located at the center of Jambudvīpa (chin. Zhanbu zhou 瞻部洲), the world where human beings live according to Buddhist tradition.<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 3: “Han Xiyu zhuguo tu” (in *Fozu tongji*)

13 For the sections about Han-era western regions, see *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) by Sima Qian 史馬遷 (ca. 145–86 BCE), *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Former Han) by Ban Gu 班固 (32–92 CE), and *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han) by Fan Ye 范曄 (398–445 CE). On the *Da Tang Xiyu ji*, see Ji Xianlin (1985).

14 Tianzhu means “Sindhu” in Sanskrit, which is an old name for the Indus River. Nakamura Gen (1989), 592b.

15 *Jam-bu-dvīpa* had originally been translated as *Yanfu ti* 閼浮提 in Chinese. Nakamura Gen (1989), 81b–82a.





Fig. 4: “Xitu wuyin zhi tu” (in *Fozu tongji*)

In contrast to these two maps, “Dong zhendan dili tu” focuses largely on China. Yet the map, which follows the Buddhist tradition that situates China to the west of the center of the world, clearly differs from contemporaneous Chinese maps with their orientation of China at the world’s center. This suggests that Buddhism, a foreign religion introduced to China several centuries earlier, challenged the conventional sinocentric worldview.<sup>16</sup> A text in “Dong zhendan dili tu” explains all of these challenges:<sup>17</sup>

談天地之極際者，無若佛經。（…）

When we talk about the structure and the size of (or the end of) the entire universe, we can refer to nothing other than Buddhism. (…)

After explaining the geography of China from this Buddhist perspective, Zhipan criticizes the Confucian (*rujia* 儒家) worldview.

16 For a discussion on Buddhist worldview and its conflicts with the Chinese-centered worldview during the Tang period, see Sen Tansen (2003), 8-12. For a detailed discussion about the Buddhist worldview and its gradual acceptance by Chinese, see Unno Kazutaka (2004), 18-30. To see maps with India at their center, see Unno Kazutaka (1996), 19-21.

17 *Fozu tongji* (a), 32.8.

世儒謂之中國。且據此地。自論四方之中耳。儒家談地止及萬里。則不知五竺之殷盛西海之有截也。（...）

Confucians always regard this land [the land that Zhipan just described] as China. They only discuss the inside landscapes of China, depending heavily upon what they regard as the land of China. When such Confucians talk about the land [or the earth or the world], however, their knowledge cannot go miles and miles further away [from what they call China]. In other words, they know neither the prosperity of five [regions] of India nor what the West Sea is like. (...)

Zhipan also criticizes the Daoists' discussion about the world<sup>18</sup> which, he argues, is only bound to the worlds of heaven, earth, and humans (*Sanjing* 三境) and cannot understand the true structure of this world (illustrated in Fig. 1). He concludes his discussion with the following remark:<sup>19</sup>

是則談天地之極際者。非憑佛經。不足以盡其致也。

Accordingly, if those who talk about the structure and the size of (or the end of) the entire universe do not depend upon Buddhism, their knowledge is not enough to describe the world.

In this light, “Dong zhendan dili tu” shows only a small part of Jambudvīpa in the east and a smaller part of a much larger universe.

In fact, “Dong zhendan dili tu” shares a rich geographic knowledge about China with a fairly accurate sketch of the contour of the whole of China and foreign places seen in earlier and contemporary Chinese maps made by earlier Confucian scholar-officials who were mostly sponsored by the Chinese government. Although the map is drawn from a Buddhist perspective, its author drew on China based geographic knowledge that had accumulated for centuries. Comparing this map with both earlier and contemporaneous extant maps, therefore, will demonstrate what kind of foundational geographic knowledge had been circulating among Chinese scholars by the time of the map's production, and how Buddhist scholars adopted and modified popular geographical knowledge. It also provides an opportunity to contrast Confucian and Buddhist worldviews through maps like the *Fozu tongji*.

## 2 Reflections of Contemporary Chinese Geographic Knowledge about China and the World Beyond

“Dong zhendan dili tu” largely depicts the political divisions and administrative districts that existed during the Northern Song dynasty. The foundation-

18 For a discussion about Daoist cosmology, see Huang Shih-shan (2010), 57-90.

19 *Fozu tongji* (a), 32.8b-9a.

al maps that provided the basis for “Dong zhendan dili tu” were probably maps that reflected these features.<sup>20</sup> Yet no such possible direct foundational maps survive, so we have to compare the map with earlier extant maps.

In fact, “Dong zhendan dili tu” looks quite similar to several Song-period maps that circulated decades earlier. The earliest surviving woodblock-printed maps of China can be found in an atlas entitled *Lidai dili zhibizhang tu* 歷代地理指掌圖 (Handy Geographical Maps throughout the Ages), the earliest surviving maps of entire China proper, which dates somewhere between 1098 and 1100.<sup>21</sup> Forty-four maps constitute the atlas. Except for two star charts, each map shows the clear contours of China proper, and focuses on a range of topics that include the administrative systems of different dynasties and basic topography, and provides narrative explanations at the right and left boundaries of the map. The map in question, “Dong zhendan dili tu”, systematically describes the administrative districts that existed within China at the time, including the names of circuits (路) in black and white, and the names of larger prefectures (府) within circles. One map in the atlas, entitled “Shengchao Yuanfeng jiuyu tu” 聖朝元豐九域圖 (Geographic Map of the Reign of Yuan Feng), similarly plots the administrative districts that existed during the Yuanfeng 元豐 reign (1078–1085), without the embellishments of “Dong zhendan dili tu” like foreign places and illustrations of sea waves. Another map in this collection that contains similar features is the first map, entitled “Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu” 古今華夷區域總要圖 (General Survey Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories from the Past through the Present) (see Fig. 5).

As the title reveals, “Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu” shows the geographic, historical, and administrative sites that were important to its time. We can assume that the map represents the sum of geographic knowledge accumulated by the time of the map’s production. It might not have been easy for readers to identify which geographic information belongs to which period in history without the help of narrative explanations set on the accompanying text in the left side that gives us information from earlier periods. For example, the note in the upper left-hand side of the map cites place names of the western regions, some of which, it explains, were conquered by Tang

20 For a detailed analysis of the map’s geographic information, see Zheng Xihuang (1990), 81–83.

21 Hilde de Weerdts examines these maps, along with other contemporary surviving maps, to argue that the genre of empire-wide maps in China reached a broad readership of literate elites during the Song period and came to be used by politicians to discuss political strategies in their relations with northern dynasties. In this paper I use de Weerdts’s English translation of the original Chinese map titles in this atlas. See De Weerdts (2009), 145–167. For a reprint of the original, see Tan/Cao (1989); see also Cao Wanru (1990), 31–34, and Unno Kazutaka (2004), 59–64.



Taizong and Gaozong (r. 649–683); these include Kucha 龜茲, Wusun 烏孫, Loulan 樓蘭, Kashgar 疏勒, Shache 莎車, and Khotan 于闐 in Central Asia. Therefore, these particular place names obviously date back to the Tang dynasty or even earlier. The map also portrays other foreign countries in East, South, and Southeast Asia that had some commercial (and for some, even close diplomatic) relations with China; these include Jurchen 女真, Bohai 渤海, the three kingdoms of Korea (Silla 新羅, Baekje 百濟, Go[gu]ryeo 高[句]麗), Japan 日本, Ryūkyū 流求 (modern 琉球), Ezo 蝦夷 (modern 蝦夷; an old name for the northern part of Japan), Sumatra, Java, Champa 占城, and India (Tianzhu 天竺). A separate set of annotations attached to the map provides further geographic information that served as a foundation for this map; among the hundreds of foreign place names it lists are Bosi 波斯 (Persia) and Dashi 大食 (Arabia)<sup>22</sup> in West Asia.<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 5: “Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu” (in *Lidai dili zhiqiang tu*)

When did the Chinese acquire such rich geographic knowledge as reflected in “Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu”? Although no map of all China proper from the first millennium survives (not to mention foreign regions), the

22 Use of the term “Dashi” in Chinese documents to refer to Arabs or Arabia began in the Tang period. Literally “big eat”, the term “Dashi” is a transcription of the Persian word “Tajik” or “Tazi”. This originally referred to an Iranian tribe, but came to mean the country of the Arabs later. According to Ulving (1997), the pronunciation of Dashi around the eighth century is d’āi-dzjak, which was similar to “Tajik” or “Tazi”.

23 Cao Wanru (1990), 42–44.

written geographic accounts of official histories show that the Chinese accumulated geographic knowledge of China and some territories beyond it through continuous contacts that facilitated during the first millennium (or even earlier).<sup>24</sup> This comprehensive geographic knowledge advanced enormously during the Tang dynasty (618–907), which helped to solidify the reunification of China and promote the cosmopolitan culture it gained by its political expansion and cultural influence in neighboring countries. The most representative geographic works produced in this historical context are treatises and maps written by Jia Dan 賈耽 (729–805), the most prominent figure in the history of early Chinese geography. Jia Dan was a prime minister and renowned geographer at a time when the Tang dynasty was at its prime. According to his biography in the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang Dynasty), he himself never traveled to foreign countries, although he was interested in geography from childhood.<sup>25</sup> Yet, while he was serving as a minister of the Honglu si 鴻臚寺 (Court of State Ceremonial), which received visitors from foreign countries under the tribute system, he collected information in order to write geographic works about various regions. Only pieces of his geographic accounts survive by being included in the geography section (*dili* 地理) of the *Xin Tangshu*. His thorough accounts of the routes that existed between China and foreign lands at the time show how knowledgeable and familiar he was with the geography of foreign lands.<sup>26</sup> In addition to his geographic treatises, Jia Dan also drew maps like the “Hainei huayi tu” 海內華夷圖 (Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories in the World).<sup>27</sup> A written description in *Xin Tangshu* states that the map measured approximately nine meters in width and ten meters in length.<sup>28</sup> While this map does not survive, we have clear evidence that Jia Dan’s map greatly influenced the creator of the “Hainei huayi tu”. For example, an annotation states that the map only shows the most important foreign places out of hundreds of these names that were listed by Jia Dan.<sup>29</sup>

24 For the earliest Chinese extant maps that show regional areas, see Steinhardt (1997), 10 (also footnote 2).

25 *Xin Tangshu* 166.5083–5085.

26 It is one of the six routes connecting China with foreign regions originally introduced in his lost work *Huanghua sida ji* 皇華四達記 (Record of the Imperial Glory Reaching Four Directions); *Xin Tangshu* 48.1506. See also Park Hyunhee (2008), 51–58.

27 The term *hainei* 海內 should be translated as “in the world” or “under the Heaven”. See Ogawa Tamaki (2001), 571.

28 Three *zhang* 丈 in width and three *zhang* three *chi* 尺 in length; *Xin Tangshu* 166.5083–5085. Another source for Jia Dan’s map can also be found in poems of the Tang dynasty. See De Weerd (2009), 155–157. Also see Unno Kazutaka (2004), 113.

29 *Lidai dili zhibizhang tu*, 8–9. See also Cao Wanru (1990), 32.

Two other maps drawn a little later in time were probably also based on Jia Dan's map. These are two distinct maps engraved on the two sides of a stone tablet in 1136, called "Yuji tu" 禹跡圖 (The Tracks of Yu) and "Huayi tu" 華夷圖 (Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories) (see Fig. 6).<sup>30</sup>

Along with the maps in *Lidai dili zhi zhang tu*, the "Yuji tu" and "Huayi tu" are among the earliest surviving maps that portray all of China. In particular, "Yuji tu", which was engraved on the front side of the tablet, is the earliest extant map to use a grid. The text of the map clearly states that the grid served as a general measure of distance, saying that "[a side of] each square converts to one hundred *li* 里".<sup>31</sup> The map proves that the Chinese cartographers employed a surprisingly high level of map-making skill and mapped their own territory quite accurately. The development of the grid system is credited to Pei Xiu 裴秀 (224–271), considered "the father of geography" because his systematic principles for drawing precise maps were adopted by later geographers. There have been scholarly debates on the question whether his six standards for map-making included the use of a grid system, yet available evidence suggests that the use of a grid as a general measure of distance developed perhaps even before Pei Xiu lived. In any case, the method was continuously adopted by Chinese cartographers in later periods.<sup>32</sup>

The next prominent geographer to follow Pei Xiu's principles was Jia Dan, who probably used a grid system for his map-making. We can, therefore, trace back the origins of geographical information: Jia Dan's cartographic information and techniques influenced later mid-Song-

30 Cao Wanru (1990), Maps 56 and 62. Another engraved copy of "Yuji tu", which used a different Chinese character with the same pronunciation and meaning for the word "tracks", was carved and set by Yu Chi 俞樾, a governmental official and also master of the school under Zhenjiang Prefecture 鎮江府府學 in Jiangsu province in 1142 during the Song dynasty, based on the original Chang'an copy of 1136. The two maps are almost identical except that the later one depicted waves in the area of the sea. This map was probably attached to a wall of a school hall, thus did not have the other side carved. For a detailed discussion on this map, see Unno Kazutaka (2004), 178–191.

31 Cao Wanru (1990), fig. 57–59: 每方折地百里。 Cf. Yee D.K. (1995), 124. See the entire article for what mensurational techniques the Chinese cartographers developed to draw precise maps.

32 Pei Xiu's six principles of cartography are described in *Jin shu* 4.1039. Pei Xiu set the foundation for Chinese cartographic techniques in the third century CE. For more on debates whether Pei Xiu first developed the square grid in Chinese mapmaking, see Wang Yong (1958), 18–24, Needham (1959), 538–543; Yee D.K. (1995), 110–113; and Steinhardt (1997), 10–11.

period maps like the *Lidai dili zhihang tu*, the stele maps, and late Song-period maps like “Dong zhendan dili tu” in *Fozu tongji*.

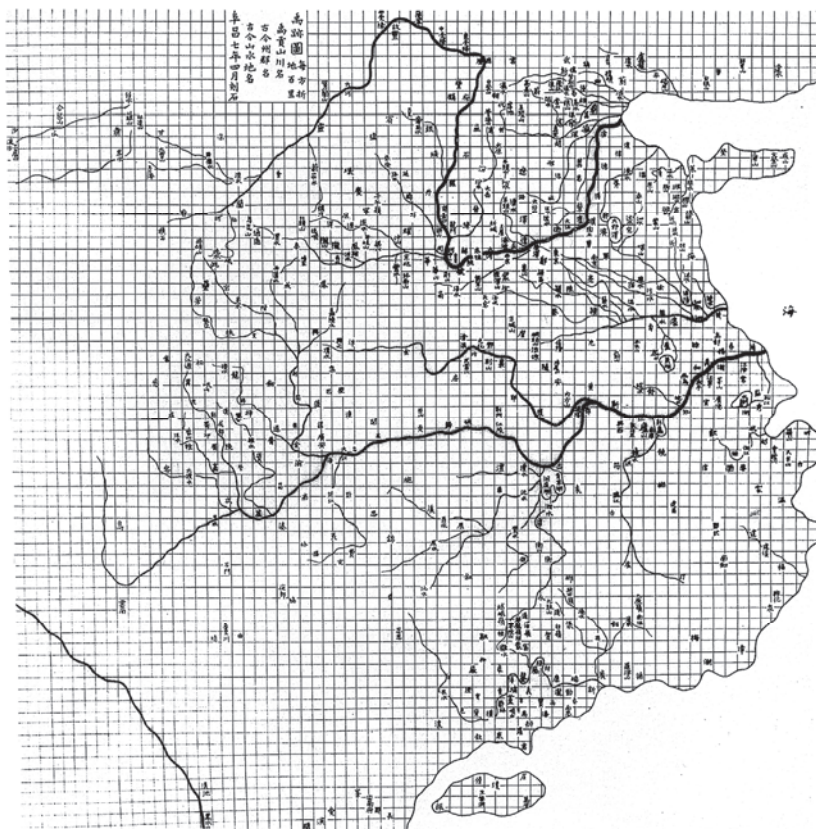
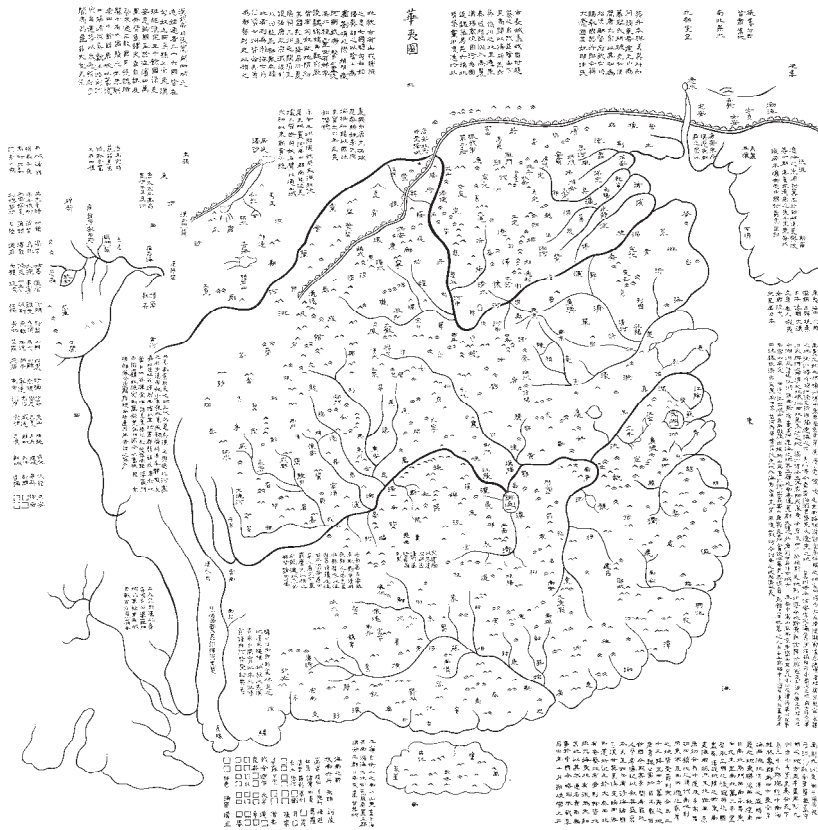


Fig. 6: Ink-line sketch of “Yuji tu” (left) and “Huayi tu” (right), stone tablet engraved in 1136. 79 cm long and 78 cm wide.

Although “Yuji tu” provides a fairly precise sketch of coastline all the way to Indochina and the outlines of river systems,<sup>33</sup> it does not contain specific geographic information about foreign places. In contrast, “Huayi tu”, the map engraved on the backside of the 1136 tablet, lists foreign place names on its margins.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, a note at the bottom-right corner of the Song-period “Huayi tu” mentions clearly that the mapmaker took the place names for well-known foreign sites from Jia Dan’s “Hainei huayi tu”.

33 On a detailed discussion about the stone tablets of “Huayi tu” and “Yuji tu” engraved in the Song dynasty, see Aoyama Sadao (1963), 569-593.

34 Cao Wanru (1990), 41-45.



By comparison, a note on “Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu” mentions that the map lists only the most important foreign places out of the hundreds of names listed by Jia Dan. These two notes from two different maps serve as two independent pieces of evidence that Jia Dan’s “Hainei huayi tu” was indeed big and comprehensive, and served as the foundation for all later Chinese maps of China and foreign countries. We can find similarities between these two surviving maps as well. For example, the upper left-hand note about foreign places supplementing the map is similar to that found in “Huayi tu”, an indication that they used the same foundational map.<sup>35</sup> The coastline of China and depictions of rivers in the two maps are also similar to each other, as they are to the later “Dong zhendan dili tu”.

35 Cao Wanru (1990), 32.

“Dong zhendan dili tu” was not simply a copy of maps from the 1130s: it incorporated updates from the early thirteenth century as well. The twenty-eight circuits (*lu* 路) shown in the map were established only in 1225, which provides the earliest date for the map’s composition. This map was drawn between 1225 and 1270.

The map’s foreign place names are also up to date. Among a total of 430 place names, about 20 are the names of foreign countries. Except for the Korean Peninsula, the foreign countries are all drawn as islands in the surrounding western sea. These foreign place names include those found in “Huayi tu” and *Lidai dili zhi zhang tu*, such as Fusang 扶桑, Japan 日本 (Japan), Ezo 蝦夷 (modern 蝦夷), Ryūkyū 琉求 (today written 琉球), Sanfoqi 三佛齊 (the base of the Straits of Melaka centered Srivijaya realm at Palembang), Champa 占城 (mid-southern Vietnam), Jiaozhi 交趾 (Northern Vietnam), Zhenla 真臘 (Cambodia), Dashi 大食 (Arabia), and Shepo 閩婆 (Java). These also include Baida 白達 (Baghdad)<sup>36</sup> and Lumei 盧眉 (Rūm: The Roman [Byzantine] Empire) that do not appear in the previous maps, yet they are described in contemporary written sources as important foreign countries in the west with which China enjoyed trade relations. For example, the two most important Song-period sources about China’s maritime relations, Zhou Qufei’s 周去非 *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (Notes from the Land beyond the Passes) [1178] and Zhao Rugua’s 趙汝适 *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 (Description of the Foreign Lands) [1225], both have sections that describe countries in the Western Indian Ocean, including Baghdad and Rūm.<sup>37</sup> These accounts, which provide rich information about trading countries, trade goods, sailing navigation, and the geography of sea routes, show that the scale of Chinese participation in foreign trade rose high during the period. Clearly, the Buddhist author of “Dong zhendan dili tu” incorporated recently acquired Chinese knowledge about foreign countries that he found in contemporary geographic works and used to update this map. It also suggests that books containing this kind of geographic information circulated widely. The “Dong zhendan dili tu” and its contemporary sources may be taken as a hint that the extensive circulation of geographical books arose from the development of Chinese woodblock-printing publication.

36 According to Ulving (1997), Baida 白達 is pronounced b’wāng-d’āt.

37 For Baida 白達 (Baghdad), see Yang Wuquan (1999), 100, and Yang Bowen (1996), 109-110; for Lumei 盧眉, see the section about Lumei 盧眉 in Yang Bowen (1996), 116, and the section about Meilugudun [mji-luo-kuat-tuən] 眉路骨惇 Yang Wuquan (1999), 110-111 (Yang Bowen says Lumei 盧眉 is Meilugudun 眉路骨惇); There are debates about which place Rūm denotes precisely, but according to the descriptions in the texts it probably indicates Asia Minor, especially Constantinople. The people in the Byzantine Empire called their empire the Roman Empire. Rūm also appears in Arabic geographic accounts.



### 3 The Contribution of Chinese Woodblock Printing to the Wide Circulation of Zhipan's Map

"Dong zhendan dili tu" was published in the *Fozu tongji*, a Buddhist compendium that was not printed under the sponsorship of the Chinese government or any influential scholar-official. However, the map received a genuine opportunity to circulate widely thanks to the large distribution of *Fozu tongji*. In the postscript (刊板後記) of the great Buddhist record, the mapmaker Zhipan explains how the editor compiled and printed the book. He explains that the number of printed copies of *Fozu tongji* numbered more than 200,000, a clear indication of its wide circulation among literati.<sup>38</sup> The earliest surviving version preserved by the National Library of China is one made between 1265 and 1270 during the Southern Song period. It is not surprising to see the map circulate through printing because book-publishing using woodblock-printing technology had been developed for centuries by the time *Fozu tongji* was produced.

What do we know about other types of maps that used different methods of dissemination? An abbreviated version of Jia Dan's map examined above was engraved on a stone tablet in 1136. Stone tablets can definitely endure much longer than silk or paper maps, of course. People could have looked at the original stone maps in their location, but reproductions could also be made easily by making rubbings. The important Song-period encyclopedia *Yuhai* 玉海 (Sea of Jade), compiled by Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296), mentions an interesting episode about a copy of "Huayi tu" that the Song-dynasty Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (r. 1162–1189) tried to make on a folding screen at his palace.<sup>39</sup> Although we do not know if this map was a printed copy of the engraved map of the same title, we can assume that similar maps with the same title and similar contents were widely circulated by reproduction and that they were connected with each other. We have another copy of "Yuji tu" (which was engraved on the front side of the same tablet that contains "Huayi tu" in another surviving stone tablet that was set elsewhere in 1152, and is almost identical to the earlier tablet of 1136. The two copies of "Yuji tu" both contain the territories of the sixteen prefectures near Beijing taken by the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234), which probably reflects the strong desire of the Song literati to take back these Jurchen-ruled northern territories.<sup>40</sup>

38 Zheng Xihuang (1990), 81.

39 *Yuhai* 91.16b. The emperor also ordered the ministers to place another copy in the Shangshu sheng 尚書省 (Secretariat for State Affairs). See Fan Sheng (2008), 117, and Unno Kazutaka (2004), 113–114.

40 Unno Kazutaka (2004), 67.

With regard to the quantity of printed maps produced, printing by rubbing could not have matched woodblock printing. Most of the earliest surviving maps in China from the Song period are woodblock prints, and they were often included in books that circulated widely through numerous reprints. The earliest surviving woodblock printed maps are those found in the *Lidai dili zhizhang tu*, which dates back to ca. 1098–1100. A Song author named Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (c. 1183–1262) mentioned in his *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題 (Zhizhai's Bibliographical Introduction of Books) that Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (1085–1100) ordered Shui Anli 稅安禮 to compile the atlas. Chen Zhensun continues saying that Shui Anli died before he was able to formally submit the compilation to the emperor, and the publisher printed it without mentioning Shui's name and without his preface, making thus the authorship unclear.<sup>41</sup> This episode shows how this government-sponsored atlas was published and distributed for a broader readership. We are not sure how many different versions of the atlas existed, but according to Song-dynasty references, several different sets of blocks were created. The earliest Song-dynasty block-print version of the text, dated 1265–1270, is currently preserved in Japan. The earliest surviving block-printed version preserved in China was printed during the Ming Dynasty, and differs from the Song version with regard to both content and spelling.<sup>42</sup> Because this type of cartographic work was carved in a small woodblock, each map is simplified and less detailed than that of the larger stone tablet maps. However, these wood-block printed maps and paper-prints of various versions of the map collection could lead to its larger distribution and ultimately contribute to wider circulation of geographic knowledge. This atlas, along with other geographic works, was among the list of books that people had to read in preparation for the civil service examinations from the Song dynasty on.<sup>43</sup> We can assume that the

41 There have been many debates about the author of the map. Some contemporary authors assumed that the author was the famous Song-period scholar Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036–1101), an assumption which made the book more popular. But Japanese scholars, as e.g., Ogawa Takuji 小川琢治, Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, and Miya Noriko 宮紀子 all argue that accounts in contemporary sources – such as that in *Zhuqi yulei* 朱子語類 138.3278 – suggest that the author was Shui Anli, rather than Su Shi. The map clearly contains information about the period after Su Shi's death, and the Chinese writing style is not as excellent as that in most of Su Shi's works. Yet one thing that cannot be denied is that most of the maps (except for the last one) were all drawn by an author dating from the Northern Song. For discussions on the authorship, editions and contents of the atlas, see Unno Kazutaka (2004), 53, 59–60, 64; Miya Noriko (2007), 143–144; Cao Wanru (1990), 31. For Chen Zhensun's original text, see *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 8.233.

42 For more discussions about the two different versions, see Cao Wanru (1990), 31.

43 Miya Noriko (2007), 143.

Song literati used the maps not only to learn geography about the Chinese Empire but also to discuss political issues such as the northern territories lost to the Jurchens.<sup>44</sup> All of the evidence hints that the maps were printed massively many times over and circulated widely among literati, leading to the wide dissemination of geographic knowledge about China.

All the extant maps from the later Song dynasty show that, while map productions were led mainly by government during the Tang and early Song dynasty, this trend changed by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and map production became largely the domain of local elites, a trend that ultimately led to a gradual increase in geographic knowledge about wider regions at broader class levels.<sup>45</sup> While most of these maps apparently helped Confucian scholars to perceive China's geography from a sinocentric perspective, maps of other types created by some specific religious groups distributed less biased knowledge about China and beyond by incorporating elements from other cultures. "Dong zhendan dili tu" serves as a representative case of the effects of Buddhist influence. Other cases, such as maps produced from Daoist perspectives, another dominant philosophical and religious tradition in East Asia that originated in China, will have to be left for future studies.

Thanks to the woodblock printing of all these maps which favoured their larger distribution, substantial geographic knowledge circulated widely throughout China at the beginning of the second millennium. Chinese literati were not the only ones who benefitted from this chance to read the work and enlarged their geographic knowledge of China and other countries. *Fozu tongji* was among many works that were exported to other countries in East Asia, especially Japan.

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44 Drawing on contemporary references to maps among the literate elite, De Weerd (2009, 157-164) argues that the maps produced during the Song dynasty had gained a broad readership of literate elites and came to be used by politicians to discuss the pros and cons of negotiated peace with the Khitans and the Jurchens in the north. Ohji Toshiaki (2007, 143-144) also remarks that, although Kaifeng was already taken by the Jurchens when "Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu" was produced, Kaifeng is still named as the eastern capital (Dongjing 東京) and placed approximately at the center of the map, and the actual capital Hangzhou 杭州 was only shown as Hang 杭. It shows the map makers' desire of recovering the lost territories in the north.

45 Fan Sheng (2008). From this, we can naturally assume that these kinds of maps had been circulating in local-elite levels by the mid-Song period. This process of localization may go along with the general transformations from the Northern Song and the Southern Song in political and social spheres. See Hartwell (1982), 365-442, and Hymes (1986).

#### 4 The Transmission of the Map to East Asia at Large

Contemporary Japanese sources testify to the import of geographic works to Japan. According to an entry in a diary written by Fujiwara Yōrinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–1156), in 1150 a merchant from the Song dynasty, Liu Wenchong 劉文冲, delivered two sets of *Lidai dili zhibizhang tu* to the government.<sup>46</sup> The earliest extant copy of the Song-Dynasty *Lidai dili zhibizhang tu* can be found in Japan's Oriental Library (Tōyō Bunko 東洋文庫). Other significant maps survived into the present only by virtue of their preservation in Japan; one example includes “Yudi tu” 輿地圖 (General Map of China), which was preserved in Kuritoge Abbey 栗棘庵 in the Tōfuku Temple 東福寺 in Kyōto, Japan.<sup>47</sup>

All the above cases serve as clear examples of the transmission of culture and knowledge between the countries that had extensive contacts. The *Fozu tongji* was no exception. The Japanese monks in Namzen Temple 南禪寺 in Kyōto reprinted an entire copy of *Fozu tongji*.<sup>48</sup> There is no doubt that “Dong zhendan dili tu” was circulating in Japan at the same time, to some degree. An interesting demonstration of the influence of Buddhist cosmological and geographical knowledge on the Japanese worldview can be witnessed in a work entitled *Jin'nō Shōtō kei* 神皇正統 (Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns), published in 1339 and 1343 by Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1293–1354).<sup>49</sup> In it, Kitabatake Chikafusa writes:

Even though Shintan 震旦 [He uses the Sanskrit name Zhendan, pronounced Shintan in Japanese] is a huge land, it must be a tiny land compared to Tenjiku 天竺.

He describes that

[...] at the center of Senbushū 瞻部洲 is Mount Anutachi 阿耨達山 [probably Lake Anavatapta 阿耨達池], and [...] at its top is Lake Munetsu 無熱池.

All of his information draws on *Fozu tongji*.

Another means by which a more widely circulation of the *Fozu tongji* was being brought about when it was inserted into the Chinese Tripitaka

46 It is *Ukai Nikki* 宇槐記抄 (Dairy of Ukai). It is cited in Unno Kazutaka (2004), 63.

47 Aoyama Sadao (1963), 595–617; Huang Shengzhang (1990), 56–60.

48 Miya Noriko (2007), 178. Some Chinese woodblock technicians traveled to Japan and reprint of various kinds of books to develop Japanese literary culture, which is called the Japanese Literature of the Five Mountains (*Gozan Bunka* 五山文化, 1287–1387). Ōba Osamu (1996), 336.

49 *Jin'nō Shōtō kei* is devoted to explaining the principles of legitimacy in the imperial succession. For more details on this episode, see Unno Kazutaka (2004), 24–25.

(chin.: Da Zang Jing 大藏經), a large collection of Buddhist texts, that has been reprinted several times since the Song period. Different versions of the Chinese Tripiṭaka were transmitted to Korea and Japan from the thirteenth century on. One of the most widely used standardized versions of this text is the Taishō Tripiṭaka (Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經), published in Tōkyō between 1924 and 1934, which is based on earlier Chinese, Korean and Japanese versions. It contains the *Fozu tongji* and – as part of it – the “Dong zhendan dili tu” (see Fig. 7).



Fig. 7: “Dong zhendan dili tu” (in the Taishō Tripiṭaka version of *Fozu tongji*).<sup>50</sup>

In the course of being integrated into a large-scale printing of the Buddhist canon, some parts of the map in the Chinese Tripiṭaka version stated above were blurred and some place names were written with mistaken characters. Nonetheless, due to its insertion into the Buddhist Canon the map was provided with a significant opportunity to be circulated more widely.

We can assume that those who read the *Fozu tongji* also learned from this map: where they live, what their world is like, who their neighbors are and where their societies were located. They also learned that they did not live at the center of the world. The geographic and cosmological

50 *Fozu tongji* (b), 32.312.

information to be gained from the *Fozu tongji* provided the Chinese with a non-sinocentric geographical perspective of the world. The concrete example found in one of the earliest surviving maps of China demonstrates that Chinese geographers possessed broad geographic knowledge about China and lands beyond, knowledge that had been accumulated for centuries, and they thus received an opportunity to gain a new cosmological interpretation from a different perspective and to circulate it widely – all thanks to the development of woodblock book printing. Knowledge became a commodity to be shared and stored.

### Conclusion

In this paper, we have briefly explored one of the means by which the Chinese during the premodern period accumulated geographic knowledge through contacts with other societies, and how that knowledge further spread, modified, and settled into receiving societies. Both early and contemporary geographic treatises and maps, as well as woodblock-printed books and stone tablets, reflect a general geographic knowledge about China that cartographers shared during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Tang-dynasty geographer Jia Dan first systemized this knowledge in the early ninth century. The development of the woodblock-printing technology allowed the production of multiple copies, which further expanded the potential. Not only did Song authors draw upon earlier maps in order to construct their maps, they but also modified them, based on geographic knowledge about other cultures and on contemporary influences. All of these complex dynamics are accurately reflected in one map, “Dong zhendan dili tu”. This particular woodblock-printed map suggests that Chinese cartographers had access to maps that showed the basic administrative divisions of Chinese territory and that they drew another type of map from the perspective of Buddhism. In the Buddhist worldview, China was no longer situated at the center of the world but to the east of the center of the world, as the title of the map indicates.

Evidence for many copies and versions of printed maps suggests that geographic knowledge, once systemized by cartographers, actually spread and circulated among a certain group of literati who were readers of various kinds of texts. The number of surviving copies of the earliest woodblock printed maps is small, yet they wielded great influence through their wide distribution, which helped to spread geographic knowledge throughout China and East Asia. The Chinese continued to produce woodblock-printed maps of



various types, including regional maps. Maps were also inserted into local gazetteers to assist readers in understanding texts about geography easily.<sup>51</sup> In conclusion, the Song period woodblock printed maps only mark the very beginning of the flourishing printing culture of maps and the wide distribution of geographic knowledge in Chinese history. “Dong zhendan dili tu” especially shows the creativity and dynamism that some Chinese cartographers under the influence of Buddhism incorporated in producing a new type of map, a map that did not show China at the center.

### Glossary of the Maps Discussed in this Article

“Dong zhendan dili tu” 東震旦地理圖 (Geographic Map of the Land of China to the East)

“Gujin huayi quyu zongyao tu” 古今華夷區域總要圖 (General Survey Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories from the Past through the Present)

“Hainci huayi tu” 海內華夷圖 (Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories in the World)

“Han xiyu zhuguo tu” 漢西域諸國圖 (Map of the States in the Western Regions during the Han Dynasty)

“Huayi tu” 華夷圖 (Map of Chinese and Non-Chinese Territories)

“Sanqian daqian shijie tu” 三千大千世界圖 (Map of the Entire Universe)

“Shengchao Yuanfeng jiuyu tu” 聖朝元豐九域圖 (Geographic Map of the Reign of Yuan Feng)

“Shijie mingti zhi” 世界名體志 (An Account of Places and Shape of the World)

“Xitu wuyin zhi tu” 西土五印之圖 (Map of the Five Indian States in the West)

“Yudi tu” 輿地圖 (General Map of China)

“Yuji tu” 禹跡圖 (The Tracks of Yu)

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51 For the reprints of numerous woodblock printed maps produced during the Song-Yuan period, see Sheng Bo (2008).

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