INTRODUCTION

When one surveys the history of the Chinese empire, which lasted for more than 2,100 years, from the perspective of long-term macro social change, it is possible to posit a series of two cycles, each preceded by conspicuous change, namely, the period from the mid-Tang 唐 to the late Song 宋 (8th to 13th centuries) and the period from the late Ming 明 to the early Qing 清 (16th to 18th centuries). The present volume considers changes in the Tang-Song period, which corresponded to the starting point of the first cycle, and it examines aspects of changes that occurred during this period with a focus on the Middle and Lower Yangzi basin. As issues that have hitherto not necessarily been clearly corroborated or explained, I have paid particular attention to the diverse manifestations of these changes and have concentrated on investigating their background and significance.

But why should the diversity of change be an issue? In order to answer this question, it may be appropriate to offer an outline of the factors that brought about the Tang-Song transition. General accounts usually cite two interrelated social phenomena. The first is that the power of the hereditary aristocratic families who passed down their social status and property from one generation to the next, and who had characterized society during the foregoing Wei 魏, Jin 晉, and Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝 (220–589), was swept away by the great upheavals caused by the warrior class, headed by military commissioners, which arose from the mid-Tang through to the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms 五代十國 (907–979). At the same time, there occurred mutually related changes in that efforts were made to switch to a meritocracy through the system of civil service examinations initiated during the Sui and Tang and appointment to government service was determined on the basis of an individual's scholastic attainments, and during the Song the principle of not allowing official posts to be passed down to descendants spread and became established. This shift ended up greatly stimulating social mobility both vertically and horizontally, loosening the shackles of social class, and widely implanting the notion of an "open class."[1]

[1] On whether to regard Chinese society as a nation of hierarchical order or a highly mobile "open-class" society, see Ch'u Tung-tsu, "Chinese class structure and its ideology," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. J. K. Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 234–250; Gilbert Rozman, "Stratification and occupational distribution," in *The modernization of China*, ed. G. Rozman (New York: Free Press, 1981), 148–153. Even today, no objections have been raised to the view that the civil service examinations acted as an enormous stimulant to the growth of social mobility. But in recent research it has been pointed out that, in addition to upward mobility via the route of the civil service examinations, during the Northern Song there was a pronounced trend for the power of the political élite to be reinforced by bonds of marriage, lineage groups and political factions extending over a wide area, while in the Southern Song these ties tended to be formed at a regional level. See Robert

The second of the two interrelated social phenomena was the rise and expansion of economic power. The scale of China's population reached during the Former Han 前漢 subsequently remained for a long time virtually unchanged or even contracted, but then between 742 and 1080 it grew by 1.7 times and had by 1102 doubled in size. This population growth, unprecedented in recorded history, would probably have been to a large extent due to the overall effects of agricultural growth, in particular factors such as the absolute expansion of farmland, the settlement of remote and uninhabited regions, and advances in agricultural techniques underpinned by improvements in water control and engineering works and by the introduction of plant varieties. The growth of agriculture spurred the development of private rights associated with the possession and usufruct of property, especially real estate, which had until then been slow in developing. At the same time, dramatic improvements occurred in transportation, especially in techniques for river transport and maritime transport, and these increased the efficiency of economic activities and, as a side-effect, brought about specialization in various industries. The same farmland was frequently used for growing a variety of crops, and this led to the growth of different industries. The expansion of the economy extended the sphere of activity of the merchant class, and this was accompanied by epochal growth in practices related to credit and business affairs and in market facilities. Society had clearly become wealthier in comparison with the previous period, and in urbanization, which grew as a reflection of this, two aspects emerged. First, the prosperity of almost all national, circuit and prefectural capitals and the majority of county (*xian* 縣) capitals was no longer based solely on consumption by officials and troops and on the collection and distribution of tax goods, and they grew also into collection and distribution centres for commerce and transportation. A manifestation of this was that some prefectural and county capitals came to be specially designated by the government as "troublesome and vexatious prefectures and counties." In addition, there appeared all at once small towns known as *zhen* 鎮, *shi* 市, *dian* 店, and so on throughout rural areas where there had hitherto been few commercial establishments. With the exception of genuine mountain villages, the distribution of settlements in the hinterlands surrounding national, circuit, prefectural and county capitals took on the characteristics not of a rural-urban dichotomy but of a rural-urban continuum. This new landscape continued to intensify during the Yuan 元, Ming and Qing periods and attained full maturity at the start of the Republican period.

What needs to be noted, however, is that the above generalized image is

Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations of China, 750–1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 (1982): 365–442; Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and John Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

nothing more than an inductive inference made primarily from analyses conducted at a macro level. Such analyses often tend to treat all of society monolithically, attach particular importance to the policies of central government or the apparatus of centralization, indiscriminately combine extremely dispersed micro data, and follow conventional dichotomous models either consciously or unconsciously. They take the form of, for example, unduly broad generalizations about historical phenomena using antipodal concepts such as centre and regions, ruling élite and petty farmers, cities and villages, and great tradition and little traditions. But if one turns one's attention to empirical data, it is a simple matter to realize that the Tang-Song transition did not by any means proceed in a monolithic and undifferentiated fashion and that in reality it was full of geographical and temporal variations and complexities that are far beyond our imagining. In the following I shall give some typical examples.

The first is population movements. The statistics for households and family members aggregated at a provincial level (Tang and early Song) or circuit level (Song) and then at a national level after having been initially recorded in each prefecture have survived for a number of years in the Tang and Song periods. If one utilizes those that are detailed in content and are assumed to be reliable — for example, the statistics for 742 and 1080 — it becomes possible to discuss in comparative terms the changes that occurred during this time across the three strata of the entire country, provinces and regions, and when this is done, a number of striking characteristics come to light. North China, which covers about one-third of the entire area of China, accounted for 55 percent of the population in 742. But by 1080, when the total population had grown by 1.7 times, North China's population had fallen to 35 percent of the total population. In particular, the population figures for the majority of prefectures in present-day Hebei 河北 province fell during this period of almost three and a half centuries when compared with 742. On the other hand, in Kaifeng 開封 and neighbouring Yingzhou 潁州 and Yunzhou 鄆州, as well as in the coastal areas of modern Shandong 山東 province and several localities along the Grand Canal, the population more than trebled in size. In addition, regions that achieved more than a double or triple growth rate in North China included parts of present-day Gansu 甘肅 and Shaanxi 陝西 provinces.[2]

Meanwhile, in the south, that is, in Central and South China, including Sichuan, the population grew at a spectacular rate, but here too there were large

[2] Katō Shigeshi, "Sōdai no kokō" [Population in the Song dynasty], in *Shina keizaishi kōshō* [Studies in Chinese economic history], vol. 2 (Tōyō Bunko, 1953), 313–337; id., "Sōdai no jinkō tōkei ni tsuite" [On the population totals of the Song dynasty], in *Shina keizaishi kōshō*, vol. 2, 371–403; Aoyama Sadao, "Zui-Tō-Sō sandai ni okeru kosū no chiikiteki kōsatsu" [Regional observations on the number of households during the Sui, Tang and Song periods], *Rekishigaku Kenkyū* 6.4 (1936): 59–94; 6.5 (1936): 49–74; Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformation of China, 750–1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 (1982): 365–442.

provincial and regional variations. Increases in the Middle Yangzi macroregion, Lower Yangzi macroregion and Southeast Coast macroregion typified the trend towards population growth in southern China, and the total population of these three regions accounted for half of China's population. The Southeast Coast macroregion in particular achieved rapid growth, and some areas in Fujian 福建 recorded a growth rate of between six times and more than thirteen times. Next, a number of prefectures in present-day Zhejiang 浙江, Jiangxi 江西 and Hunan 湖南 provinces stand out for their high growth rates, while the entire Lower Yangzi macroregion apart from Suzhou 蘇州, where the population quadrupled, was around the national average of 1.7 times. The Lingnan 嶺南 (or Guangnan 廣南) macroregion included areas of rapid growth such as Guangzhou 廣州 (3.3 times), Huizhou 惠州 (11.3), Chaozhou 潮州 (16.8), Hezhou 賀州 (8.9), Guizhou 桂州 (3.8) and Liuzhou 柳州 (3.9), but at the same time there were also prefectures with sluggish growth scattered throughout the region.[3]

The growth, stagnation and decline in population that occurred in individual regions may be regarded as surrogate indices of changes in economic conditions in each region. But what caused the variations noted above? Were, for instance, stagnation and decline in population due to social unrest, slackening production, epidemics, agricultural pests, natural disasters, climate change, or inferior transport conditions? Or had regions that showed a trend towards gradual population growth left scope for potential land development and settlement under their given level of productivity? And in regions of rapid population growth, to what extent was this growth related to the utilization of land and other resources, and to what degree did the stimulus provided by commerce drive this rapid growth? There can be no doubt that by answering these questions we will gain a more concrete understanding of the Tang-Song transition.

The second example I wish to mention is the regional diversity of pass rates in the civil service examinations. Under the civil service examination system, which held up the ideal of an "open class" centred on the appointment of government officials, systematic efforts were made to conduct tests that ensured uniform equality of opportunity, fairness and rigour. But it has already been shown by Ho Ping-ti and John Chaffee that, with regard to both the prefectural examinations and the departmental examinations (the latter of which qualified successful candidates for appointment to the civil service), certain circuits (Song) and provinces (Ming and Qing), or certain prefectures within these circuits (*lu* 路) or provinces (*sheng* 省), recorded exceptional pass rates.[4] The five circuits or provinces with the greatest number of

[3] See note 2.

[4] Ho Ping-ti, *The ladder of success in imperial China: Aspects of social mobility, 1368–1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China*.

successful candidates in the provincial examinations were during the Northern Song 北宋 Fujian circuit (Fujan *lu* 福建路), Zhexi circuit (Zhexi *lu* 浙西路) (southern Jiangsu 江蘇 and western Zhejiang provinces), Jiangxi circuit (Jiangxi *lu* 江西路) (greater part of Jiangxi province) and Jiangdong circuit (Jiangdong *lu* 江東路) (southern Anhui 安徽 province), during the Southern Song 南宋 Fujian circuit, Zhedong circuit (Zhedong *lu* 浙東路) (eastern Zhejiang province), Jiangxi circuit, Zhexi circuit and Jiangdong circuit, during the Ming Zhejiang province, Jiangsu province, Jiangxi province, Fujian province and Hebei province, and during the Qing Jiangsu province, Zhejiang province, Hebei province, Shandong province and Jiangxi province. Next, the five most successful prefectures were during the Northern Song Jianzhou 建州 (Fujian), Fuzhou 福州 (Fujian), Changzhou 常州 (Jiangsu), Xinghuajun 興化軍 (Fujian) and Quanzhou 泉州 (Fujian), during the Southern Song Fuzhou (Fujian), Wenzhou 溫州 (Zhejiang), Jizhou 吉州 (Jiangxi), Raozhou 饒州 (Jiangxi) and Meizhou 眉州 (Sichuan), during the Ming Ji'an 吉安 (Jiangxi), Shaoxing 紹興 (Zhejiang), Suzhou (Jiangsu), Nanchang 南昌 (Jiangxi) and Changzhou (Jiangsu), and during the Qing Hangzhou 杭州 (Zhejiang), Suzhou (Jiangsu), Fuzhou (Fujian), Changzhou (Jiangsu) and Guangzhou (Guangdong 廣東). The Southeast Coast macroregion had the overwhelmingly highest success rate in the civil service examinations during the Song, followed by the Lower Yangzi macroregion and modern Jiangxi province.

How should one explain this? According to one view, the regions that boasted a high pass rate generally enjoyed an abundance of natural resources, were experiencing advancing urbanization, and had a wealth of economic power, in addition to which examination candidates were able to take advantage of an environment conducive to examination success in the form of printing and publishing, libraries, academies, and lectures by renowned scholars and literati, and it was easy for candidates to secure the funds necessary to prepare for the examinations. In short, this line of reasoning argues that economic power was converted into scholastic success. But it would not seem at all possible to explain adequately by this means alone how Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangxi, which compared unfavourably with other regions in terms of the resources with which they were endowed, were nonetheless able to maintain a high success rate over a long period of time.

It is true that the civil service examinations acted as a powerful magnet on those who aspired to join the élite classes, and this magnetic force was, moreover, reinforced by the socially accepted idea of a "single career," which ranked service as a government official as the highest possible form of social success.[5] But the actual running of the examinations involved some complex problems. In the middle of the Northern Song, between twenty and thirty thousand students sat for the prefectural examinations, corresponding to a preliminary examination which conferred the

[5] Rozman, "Stratification and occupational distribution," 148–150.

degree of *juren* 擧人, and by the end of the Southern Song the number of candidates had risen to more than four hundred thousand. In the case of Fuzhou, three thousand people took the examination in 1090, with forty passing, while in 1207 eighteen thousand people sat for the examination and fifty-four passed. Next, the number of candidates who sat the departmental examination held in the capital for those who had gained the degree of *juren* was in the range of five to ten thousand throughout the Song, but the number of those who passed the exam and were conferred the degree of *jinshi* 進士 remained at about five to six hundred from the second half of the Northern Song onwards.[6] In other words, the civil service examinations always produced an overwhelming majority of unsuccessful candidates, and this was even more so in areas with a high success rate. Society naturally took into consideration employment in other second-best and third-best occupations, and young men among family members or from the same district were trained and supported in improving their skills. With regard to Song-dynasty Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi and Sichuan, which were known for zealous competition in the civil service examinations, there exists a concrete record relating to strategies concerning the exporting of human resources, which was widespread in the provinces.[7] While passing the civil service examinations was regarded as the highest form of success, the aim was to have young men from the same family or same district acquire skills that would enable each to demonstrate his aptitude in accordance with his abilities in a wide range of occupations, including agriculture, commerce, medicine, priesthood (Buddhist or Daoist), divination, manual industries, service industry and acting, and to thereby bring prestige and wealth to the family or district. In other words, both success by way of scholastic achievement and success by way of other occupations were considered to be identical insofar that they represented strategies for social mobility aimed at utilizing to the maximum the resources (human and natural) with which each region was endowed, exporting them to other regions, and then bringing back to the home district the wealth that had been created elsewhere. The social cohesion of people from the same district, which had already appeared during the Song and became increasingly pronounced during the Ming and Qing, as well as the bonds of mutual assistance based on blood relationships and occupational relationships, which reinforced this social cohesion, were further refined as the civil service examinations became ever more popular.

The diverse realities in population movements and élite mobility, illustrated above, can be discerned not at the national level, but only when one shifts one's

[6] Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China*, 30–34, 105–113, 192–195.

[7] Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* [Studies in the commercial history of the Song period] (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1968), 428–430, 495; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Family and property in Sung China: Yüan Ts'ai's precepts for social life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China*, 39–40.

focus to the provincial and prefectural level. This indicates that China's complex total society was composed of a hierarchy of unexpectedly multistratified subsystems. So long as one plays down the existence of these intermediate strata both theoretically and empirically, and so long as one neglects to probe the connections between the intermediate strata and the state, a realistic overall picture will fail to emerge. As one way of filling this gap in our knowledge, it would appear necessary to pursue some basic research that might be termed "macro-ethnography." The studies brought together in this volume focus primarily on the Yangzi basin during the Song and present in as detailed a manner as possible the empirical facts regarding the diverse realities that were manifested by socioeconomic changes.

Chapter I: "The lower Yangzi region" (originally published in Japanese under the title "Sōdai shakai to Chōkō karyūiki" in *Sōdai Kōnan keizaishi no kenkyū*, 1988). This chapter presents empirical data on various changes in land taxes, intensive and extensive agricultural production, surpluses of agricultural produce, and so on in the regions making up Jiangnan in a broad sense, as well as neighbouring Fujian and Guangdong, during the Southern Song.

Chapter II: "Song urbanism revisited" (originally published in Japanese under the title "Sōdai no toshika o kangaeru" in *Tōhōgaku* 102 [2001]). This chapter surveys the advancement of urbanization with reference to the statistics for the year 1077 for the tax quotas allocated to the 1,661 stations for commercial tax located throughout China (except Sichuan). These statistics are a valuable source, having been initially recorded in the *Zhongshu beidui* 中書備對 compiled by Bi Zhongyan 畢仲衍 and then included in the chapter on commercial tax in the "Shihuo pian" 食貨篇 of the *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿. In this chapter, I examine the statistics, having first summarized them, in the form of matrix tables showing the intersection of (1) a three-tier hierarchy of administrative centres (prefectures, counties and *zhen,* etc.) and (2) the size of the tax quotas divided into eight levels (300,000–500,000 *guan* 貫*,* 100,000–299,999 *guan,* 50,000–99,999 *guan,* 30,000–49,999 *guan,* 10,000–29,999 *guan,* 5,000–9,999 *guan,* 1–4,999 *guan,* and less than 1 *guan*). On the basis of these tables, the following facts came to light. (a) The reason that the tax quota for Kaifeng, which was more than 520,000 *guan,* is far higher than anywhere else is that it was the capital and was also situated in the special political and economic zone known as Jingji circuit (Jingji *lu* 京畿路). (b) Nine of the seventeen circuit capitals, which also had the status of prefectures, were the top-ranking cities within their respective circuits. (c) Among the 207 prefectural capitals, 95 (45%) fell within the 10,000–99,999 *guan* bracket, and they indicate the realities of medium-rank cities. (d) There were some county capitals for which there was no commercial tax quota, and 540 (81%) of the 661 county capitals allocated a quota fell within the low bracket of 1–4,999 *guan.* This pattern is very similar to that for *zhen,* etc., and the number of *zhen,* etc., in the 1–4,999 *guan* bracket and higher (756) far exceeded that of the number of county capitals falling within the same range (486). (e) A

comparison of the seventeen circuits apart from Jingji circuit reveals that the top five circuits in terms of their total commercial tax quota were Liangzhe 兩浙, Hebei East 河北東, Huainan East 淮南東, Jingxi North 京西北 and Shaanxi. These five circuits may be regarded as regions with a relatively high level of commercial activity. Next, if one considers the relative maturity of the hierarchical relationship between large, medium and small cities within each circuit as expressed in the size of their commercial tax quotas, one finds that Liangzhe shows the most mature pattern, followed by Hebei East and Hebei West, corresponding roughly to modern Hebei province.

Chapter III: "The business nucleus of the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou" (originally published in Japanese under the title "Sōto Kōshū no shōgyō kaku" in *Sōdai Kōnan keizaishi no kenkyū,* 1988). This chapter considers the urban commercial system in Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song. Having first examined Hangzhou's immediate hinterland, its secondary hinterland adjoining this immediate hinterland, and its remoter tertiary hinterland, I describe the inflow of consumption goods and the exporting of Hangzhou's products as mediated by the commercial infrastructure. I then examine the arrangement of commercial space inside and outside the city walls of Hangzhou, and it is shown that a district corresponding to the business nucleus, which was the hub for trading in and distributing luxury items, existed in the centre of the city and that, if the ecology of the city of Hangzhou is viewed as a whole, it took the form of two coexisting nuclei, namely, a gentry nucleus and a business nucleus.

Chapter IV: "Ningpo and its hinterland" (originally published in G. W. Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China,* 1977). This study is what might be described as a macro-ethnography, in which I analyze the urban and trading system of Ningbo, one of the foremost port cities in the Southeast Coast macroregion, during the Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing and Republican periods. In the mid-nineteenth century Shanghai grew into a modern trading port and assumed the role of the leading city in the Lower Yangzi region, and I clarify in particular the manner in which Ningbo's commercial organizations adapted to this and were placed under the umbrella of Shanghai.

Chapter V: "The urban and rural population of Ningbo in the 1930s" (originally published in Japanese under the title "1930 nendai Neiha no tohi jinkō" in Tomosugi Takashi, ed., *Ajia toshi no shosō*, 1999). This is a supplement to the discussion of Ningbo in the early twentieth century in the previous chapter. Using material and maps from the *Minguo Yinxian tongzhi* 民國鄞縣通志 published in 1935, I analyze details of the composition of the population of Ningbo city, occupational differentiation, and its commercial organizations.

Chapter VI: "Environment versus water control: The case of the southern Hangzhou Bay area from the mid-Tang through the Qing" (originally published in M. Elvin and Liu. Ts'ui-jung, eds., *Sediments of time: Environment and society in Chinese history,* 1998). This chapter examines questions relating to the opening up

of farmland and human settlement in the lower Yangzi region, especially the northern part of modern Zhejiang province. I first consider the conditions with which the ecological system characteristic of this region was endowed, and I then describe the changes that occurred from the Tang through to the Song, Ming and Qing in the methods of land use by humans as mediated by improvements in the technology of water control.

Chapter VII: "Song foreign trade: Its scope and organization" (originally published in Morris Rossabi, ed., *China among equals: The middle kingdom and its neighbors, 10th–14th centuries,* 1983). This chapter does not deal directly with the diversity of the socioeconomy during the Song, the main theme of the present volume. It is rather a background chapter that surveys aspects of foreign trade, changes in this trade, and its organization during the Song with reference to overland trade from the north and maritime trade from the south.