

larly valuable for understanding the reasons for the rapid surge of the rebellious situation.

Yang's collected works also contain records pertaining to diplomatic relations between the Ming and the Ch'ing. In fact more than half of Yang Ssü-ch'ang writings dating from Ch'ung-chên 10 to 12 (1637—39) concern diplomatic matters including descriptions of the details about the fall of Ka Island 椴島, the secret negotiations for peace with the Ch'ing, the southward advance of the Ch'ing army in great numbers, and the establishment of the *lien-hsiang*. Furthermore, the details of the controversy within the Ming government over the policies that Yang Ssü-ch'ang instituted are found mainly in the *cha-tui chi-shih* 召對紀事.

The *Yang Wên-jo hsien-shêng-chi* therefore provides researchers with many source materials with which to clarify various aspects of the institutional history of the Ch'ung-chên period which have hitherto remained shrouded in mystery.

The so-called "Unification of the Three Kingdoms"
in Ryukyu History
by Shigeru IKUTA

It is commonly believed that from the 1370s to 1420s there existed in the Ryukyu Islands three kingdoms, namely Chung-shan (Chuzan), Shan-pei (Sanhoku) and Shan-nan (Sannan), and that they were unified by king Sho Hashi, who became the king of the Chung-shan kingdom. However, this is based on the description of the *Ryukyukoku Chuzan Seikan* (History of the Chuzan Kingdom of Ryukyu), which was originally written in the early sixteenth century and completed in the present form in 1660 by Sho Shoken.

According to entries in the *Ming Shih-lu* (Veritable Records of the Ming Dynasty), these three kingdoms each submitted tribute to Ming China. But the Shan-pei kingdom ceased to pay tribute after 1413 and the Shan-nan kingdom after 1429. Only the Chung-shan kingdom paid tribute throughout the whole period. The *Ming Shih-lu* does not mention any reason, nor give any explanation why these two kingdoms ceased to submit tribute.

Also there is no mention of the "unification" or "annexation" of these kingdoms by the Chung-shan kingdom.

In analyzing entries in the *Ming Shih-lu* and other contemporary sources, especially Korean sources, it turned out that the so-called Shan-nan kingdom was in fact one of principalities of the Chung-shan kingdom, while it is not possible to identify the relationship of Shan-pei kingdom to others. It is supposed that around 1380 a number of Chinese vessels together with their crews and other Chinese immigrants moved from Fu-chien to Ryukyu and settled there. They were engaged in international trade covering the area from Southeast Asia to Japan and Korea. In order to maintain traffic between Fu-chien and Ryukyu, they had to use the name of the above-mentioned three kingdoms, in order to visit Fu-chien as their tribute-paying vessels, since the Ming Dynasty at that time prohibited Chinese merchants from engaging in the overseas trade. Trade was only granted to such foreign vessels as those sent by foreign kings for paying tributes. Therefore, it is supposed that as the number of Chinese immigrants and of Chinese vessels stationed in Ryukyu decreased year after year, it no longer was necessary to use the name of Shan-pei and Shan-nan kings to maintain traffic with Fu-chien. This may be the main reason why these two kingdoms disappeared from the *Ming Shih-lu*.

In comparing the description of the above-mentioned *Chuzan Seikan* with contemporary sources, it is clear that in the early sixteenth century there were several legends based on historical facts dating back to the period of three kingdoms, but no trace can be found of the "unification" of the three kingdoms. The earliest source which mentions the "unification" is the *Ta Ming I-t'ung-chih* (Imperial Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty), compiled in 1461. It is, however, not based on definite evidences. It is supposed that this story was transmitted to Ryukyu in some form sometime in the late fifteenth century and based on this story, various legends must have been integrated so as to form the legend of the "unification" of three kingdoms by the hero Sho Hashi.

The creation of this "unification" legend must have been necessary for the then king Sho Shin, under whose name the real centralization of the power was being carried out.