As we noted in the previous chapter of this work, the very beginning of the *Riben qishi ji* recounts how Zhou Cuizhi made contact with the King of Satsuma and requested assistance and how the Tokugawa shōgun promised to send troops to help. This name, Zhou Cuizhi, appears in other texts as Zhou Hezhi, such as the *Nan tian hen* (Traces of Heaven in the South) by Lingxue zuanxiu (Compiler Ling-xue) and the *Nanjiang yishi* (Forgotten History of the Southern Reaches) by Wen Ruilin. Inasmuch as the latter appears to be an expanded and revised version of the former, it should not be surprising that they contain the same material. The *Xiaotian jinian fukao* and *Xiaotian jizhuan*, both by Xu Zi, also have ‘Zhou Hezhi,’ but an ‘annotation’ in the latter carries the following note: ‘Upon investigation, it was learned that the character cui is an error for the character he, which is popularly abbreviated as cui. Despite this, the *Riben qishi ji* still has Cuizhi.

Let us look at a passage in the *Riben qishi ji* that concerns Cuizhi and the request for Japanese assistance:

Zhou Cuizhi, style Jiujing, came from Ronghua, Fujian. When he was young, he was unable to read. He left home and became a pirate on the seas. He was very able in speech and followed the orders of his fellows. He had been to Japan and was known for being an excellent shot. He forged a father-son bond with the King of Satsuma. In the spring of the yiyou year [1645], Emperor Siwen [Longwu] made him Naval Commissioner-in-Chief [he had previously become the company commander of Huanghuaguan], and as the assistant to Huang Binqing set sail for Zhoushan [Island].

The text then goes on to describe the matter of military assistance:

That winter Cuizhi sent another man to Satsuma to appeal about the sad chaos in China and to request the sending of a brigade of troops. Indignant, the shōgun promised to dispatch in the fourth month of the next year 30,000 troops; they would provide their own compliment of warships,
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military supplies, and weaponry; and would thus offer to the Chinese for several year’s use this large fighting force.

Whether or not this last passage is accurate, when we ponder generally when this man Cuizhi lived and when he went to Japan to request military assistance, we must first look to the mention of either fall or winter of the yiyou year, as recorded in the Riben qishi ji. According to the compiler and annotator of the Xiaotian jinianfukao (see the 1957 edition from Zhonghua shuju), yiyou is 1645, the second year of the Shöhō reign in Japan.

Two letters requesting military assistance which Cuizhi allegedly brought to Japan are now included in the Ka-i hentai. As pointed out long ago by Kondō Shigezō, one of them can also be found in the Zoku zenrin kokuhō ki (Valuable National Records of Our Good Neighbor, Continued) and the Zoku zenrin kokuhō gaiki (Valuable National Records of Our Good Neighbor, Further Accounts, Continued); it is also in the Shiseki shūran and Zoku gunsho ruiju (Collection of Writings Classified, Continued). For neither of these letters do we know the name of the addressee, but the date is written at the very end: ‘twelfth day, twelfth [lunar] month, Longwu 1.’ This corresponds to Shöhō 2 [1645] in Japan, the yiyou year, and thus is consistent with the date given in both the Riben qishi ji and the Nanjiang yishi. Furthermore, the letter that appears in the Ka-i hentai and these other texts carries the phrases: ‘The reign name was changed to Longwu.... [Cui] Zhi was ordered to serve under the Barbarian-Pacifying General, and Zhi was given the post of advance naval commander.’ This information also matches precisely with the Riben qishi ji and the Nanjiang yishi. The Barbarian-Pacifying General refers to Huang Binqing; Huang had been given investiture by the Longwu Emperor as the Barbarian-Pacifying Count.

According to the Ka-i hentai, at the very end of the letter, it states that the person who brought Cuizhi’s letter was ‘specially delegated Assistant Commander Lin Gao’ (the Zoku zenrin kokuhō ki and Zoku zenrin kokuhō gaiki both state: ‘specially delegated Assistant Commander Gao Qi’). In the Chinese texts, Riben qishi ji and Nanjiang yishi, however, the name of the bearer of the letter is not given. They do state: ‘In the fourth month of the next year, [the shōgun] promised to send 30,000 troops, ... and he awaited the arrival of an envoy from China. Cuizhi was elated.... Councilor Lin Yuewu was appointed as emissary to go east [i.e., to Japan] on the eleventh day of the fourth month. As Yuewu was about to set sail, [Huang] Binqing called it off.’ It remains unclear if Assistant Commander Lin Gao (or Gao Qi), who had allegedly carried the letter requesting help as Cuizhi’s envoy in the second year of the Shöhō reign, was the same person as Lin Yuewu, who had tried to go to Japan to request military help in the fourth month of the following year, or another person. The names are different, and it would seem they were different men.

Although the name ‘Lin Gao’ cannot be found in the Chinese sources, the name ‘Lin Yuewu’ can and in other works as well. In the biographies section of