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European Luxury Consumption in China: Government Action, State Capacity and Consumer Behavior (1680-1840)

Lei Jin

(PhD Researcher at GECEM Project, Pablo de Olavide University, Seville, Spain)¹

PhD Supervisor: Manuel Pérez-García

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Abstract

Commercial intercourse and cultural exchanges between China and Europe have been taking place for centuries. Without a global perspective, studies might be unilateral. The purpose of this thesis is to examine foreign trade and European import consumption in a specific period of early modern China, covering the period from the gradual opening but restricted maritime trade since the late 17th century to the outbreak of the Opium Wars in the mid-19th century. This thesis focuses on European luxury goods that entered China, especially clocks, wine and other handicrafts during this period. Being an important part of world trade, European luxury goods is closely related to the fields of global history, economic history and consumer studies.

This study aims to give a detailed description and analysis of real consumption situation of that period by cross-referencing various sources - official edicts, memorials, imperial household records, local chronicles, etc. Also to have the situation of China's foreign trade concretely and comprehensively displayed with researches on operation of China's four major customs and the volume of import and export trade. Based on the Qing Emperors' preference, the thesis also analyzes typical luxury consumption of the upper class in the Qing Dynasty, including the royal family, nobles, officials, merchants and intellectuals, in order to conduct comprehensive research on how these luxury consumption habits affected the formation of the imported goods market, the imitation industry and other local corresponding industries.

The study of import and consumption of European luxury goods in China is not to enumerate historical statistics, but to reveal more factors and features of that time. The thesis focuses on finding more relevance in the issue of consumption, rather than production under the political situation of the time, and gives a comparative study from a global historical perspective. Supported by the existing researches in both Eurocentric and Sinocentric approaches, this study aims to reveal new perspectives on the theme of Euro-China trade in the early modern period. It is hoped that this study could serve as a complement to studies of the early modern China in a global historical context and examines the role of China as a consumer market in the global economy.

Resumen

China y Europa han mantenido las relaciones comerciales y los intercambios culturales durante siglos. Los estudios al respecto resultarán unilaterales si no se llevan a cabo desde una perspectiva global. Esta tesis tiene como objetivo examinar el comercio exterior y el consumo de las importaciones europeas en un periodo concreto de China en época moderna, que abarca desde la apertura gradual pero restringida del comercio marítimo desde finales del siglo XVII hasta el estallido de las Guerras del Opio a mediados del siglo XIX. Esta tesis se centra en el estudio los productos de lujo europeos que entraron en China durante este periodo, especialmente relojes, vino y otras artesanías. Como una parte importante del comercio mundial, los artículos de lujo europeos están estrechamente relacionados con la historia global, económica, así como los estudios de consumo.

Este estudio pretende ofrecer una descripción y un análisis detallados de la situación real del consumo de ese periodo mediante el cruce de varias fuentes: edictos oficiales, memoriales, registros de la familia imperial, crónicas locales, etc. También se pretende mostrar de forma concreta y exhaustiva la situación del comercio exterior de China de aquel periodo con investigaciones sobre el funcionamiento de las cuatro principales aduanas de China y el volumen del comercio de importación y exportación. Basándose en las preferencias de los emperadores Qing, la tesis también analiza el consumo de lujo típico de la clase alta de la dinastía Qing. A esa clase pertenecen la familia real, los nobles, los funcionarios, los comerciantes y los intelectuales. El análisis al respecto se desarrolla con el fin de llevar a cabo una investigación exhaustiva sobre cómo estos hábitos de consumo de lujo afectaron a la formación del mercado de bienes importados, la de la industria de la imitación y la de otras industrias locales correspondientes.

En el estudio de la importación y del consumo de bienes de lujo europeos en China no se va a enumerar las estadísticas históricas, sino se revelarán más factores y características de aquella época. La tesis pretende poner de manifiesto, bajo el contexto político de aquella época, la pertinencia en el tema del consumo, en lugar del de la producción, y ofrece un estudio comparativo desde una perspectiva histórica global. Apoyándose en las investigaciones en que se aplican la

metodología tanto eurocéntrica o la sinocéntrica, este estudio pretende adoptar nuevas perspectivas sobre el tema del comercio euro-chino en época moderna. Se espera que este estudio pueda servir de complemento a los estudios sobre la China moderna temprana en un contexto histórico global y que examine el papel de China como mercado de consumo en la economía global.

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Introduction

Since the sixteenth century, the international exchanges of commerce and influences of art were significant on productions and consumer behavior in both Old World and New World. The trade between China and Europe was also developing fast during centuries of time. Marco Polo has done a trip between Italy to China in late 13th century, as well as the Emperor Yongle of Ming China sent Zheng He as an ambassador on a voyage to Southeast Asia, Western Asia and East Africa from 1371 to 1433.² There are many reasons that the continents are more interconnected not only due to the discovery of the America in 1492, but also the results of earlier voyages and communications that made Europe and China more connected.

A new vision on the theme of European-Chinese trade during early modern period can be discovered from the global history perspective and comparison researches between Eurocentric and Sinocentric methods. There are numbers of researches on the consumer society of Western Europe around the 18th century studying goods from Eastern world such as tea, silk, and porcelain, etc. Compared with that, the researches on European commodities in Eastern countries are few. Especially, the studies on consumption of European luxury in China market during the 17th and 18th centuries is completely void. Many Chinese scholars have conducted in-depth research on luxury goods consumption during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, but few of them focus on “foreign goods”.

In order to conduct an in-depth study of the void above, I have read numbers of studies and documents by Chinese modern history scholars and found certain features. According to the common perception of Chinese historians, the idea of “early modern period” that Western scholars use is not comfortable for them. Chinese historians usually recognize the beginning of “modern history” of China to be the outbreak of First Opium War in 1840, and the Chinese history before the early mid-nineteenth century belongs to the category of “ancient history”.

² Denis C. Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds. *Cambridge History of China, Vol. 7, The Ming Dynasty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978-88), 232.

This classification is given by the arguments of Marxist scholars during the 1930s.³ Li Dingsheng, for example, claimed that the Opium War was the beginning of China's assault by international capitalism since it caused a major critical internal change in Chinese society. From then, China has exhibited tremendous historical transformations in national economy, class structures, ideology and culture.⁴ Of course, the precise classification such as the exact time point has always been a problem for historians of mainland China, but their research has a common feature, studies of China history is independent from the world and should be analyzed as a single local case. With consideration of the growth of China's commodity economy and labor market in the 16th to 19th centuries, a more general and old-fashioned statement originated in the 1950s that China was in the "sprouts of capitalism". Therefore, this study attempts to find more relevance on the questions of consumption, rather than production.⁵

Hence the focus of this research is on the European luxury commodities, especially wine, clocks and other artifacts in China during the 1680 to 1840 based on a global perspective. As one of the European commodities in world trade, luxury studies has a close relationship with relative fields of research such as global history, economic history and consumption studies. I want to make this research a supplement for studies about early and middle Qing Dynasty in China from 1680 to 1840 under the context of global history, and also to examine China's role as a consumer market in the global economy.

As mentioned earlier, this study is going to explore a precise special period in China that Chinese scholars usually regard as "ancient", while in economy study, the period already entered "early modern" China since it involved market-based economy. Under a global historical perspective, with reference to the social and economic characteristics of European countries in the same period, we can see the characteristics of China's economic development

³ Zhang Haipeng. *Zhongguo Jindai Tongshi, vol. 1: Jindai Zhongguo Lishi Jincheng Gaishuo* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 2009), 9.

⁴ Li Dingsheng, *Zhongguo Jindaishi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guangming Shuju, 1933), 1-2.

⁵ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 4.

in a more comprehensive and objective way.

In addition, considering the political situation, the middle and early Qing Dynasty was a relatively special period. In terms of political management, the Qing rulers inherited most managing systems from the Ming Dynasty, but they increased the power of imperial court in terms of management concepts. During this time, China's border relations and diplomatic situation also changed. Some of the changes came from the Qing rulers' own cognition and needs, and others were due to international trading environment variation.

From 1680 to 1840, China experienced five emperors, Kangxi (1662 - 1722), Yongzheng (1722-1735), Qianlong (1735-1795), Jiaqing (1795-1820) and Daoguang (1820-1850). Compared to the emperors of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and even the early Qing emperors, these emperors from 1680 to 1840 had reached the highest control of sovereign power. In other words, these emperors have the supreme power in their own time. Their personal thoughts and abilities had a great impact on national policies. Successive Qing governments are owned by "foreign minority rulers", because Qing rulers were the Manchu ethnic group from the Northeast Manchuria region, not Han people, the majority of Chinese nation. For many years the Qing government had resisted the anti-Qing activities of the Han. To prevent coastal Han people helping anti-Qing forces, the early Qing government implemented policies to ban maritime trade. The policies were even stringent than those of Ming Dynasty. Since 1655, Emperor Shunzhi did not allow any vessel to enter the sea, residents along the coastal areas were also forced to move inland for thirty to fifty miles in Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Shandong and other provinces. Such actions were done especially to confront the maritime anti-Qing forces represented by the Zheng family.⁶

In 1680, the Qing government was reigning by Emperor Kangxi, on that year Zheng Jing was even dominating Taiwan. Emperor Kangxi has settled civil strife and retook the control of all the coastal areas of mainland China. Then the sea trade started to recover, but with very limited

⁶ Xiao Yishan, *Qingdai Tongshi, Vol. 1* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 386-390. Tong Longfu, *Zhejiang Hangyunshi* (Beijing: China Communications Press Co., Ltd., 1993), 166.

ports allowed for trade. On 1683, Emperor Kangxi conquered Taiwan, four customs were set for maritime trade, which are Yue 粤 (Canton/Guangzhou), Min 闽 (Fujian), Zhe 浙 (Zhejiang) and Jiang 江 (Jiangsu).⁷ The four ports maintained operation until 1757, Emperor Qianlong ordered the closure of Jiang Customs, Zhe Customs and Min Customs, and designated foreign merchant ships only to do business in Yue/Canton customs – Guangzhou. Such so-called closure is controversial, this issue will be elaborated later.

Kangxi's policies on trade with westerners are relative more open than his grandson Qianlong. From the time of Qianlong, the exports of silk, tea and other traditional goods were strictly controlled. There were also shipping trade bans issued for the Chinese merchants. Such situation continued until 1840, the Opium War broke out. China's sea gates were forced to open. From 1757 to 1842, the official restrictions diverted sea trades to Canton by the Qing government is known as "the Canton System". The way of divide different historical periods by policies at that time, was criticized by Paul Van Dyke. He points out that researchers' focus on day-to-day practices of the historical periods would weakening the significance of historical makers.⁸ In his point of view, after 1757, daily routines of trade and administrative networks within customs remains the same, the structure of business did not change, as well as the controlled foreign sea trade. "The new policy did not change the fact that Canton had already established itself as the most favored port in China, nor that the foreigners had decided that themselves...The structure of the trade and its dependence on the geographical and hydrographical qualities of the delta and proximity of Macao were unique to Canton. Because its system could not be duplicate in any other port, it is more appropriate to refer to the entire period as the Canton System."⁹ I agree with Van Dyke's statements and chose Canton and also Macau as the entry points of this research, i.e., the trade between Europe and China.

Due to the importance of Canton (Guangzhou) in maritime trade for centuries, Macau, as the

⁷ "Nei Ge Qi Ju Zhu" of Kangxi 23rd Year, Month 7, Day 11, recorded in *Qinggong Guangzhou Shisanhang Dang'an Jingxuan*, eds. The First Historical Archives of China (FHAC) and Guangzhou Liwan District People's Government (Guangzhou: Guangdong Economic Press, 2002), 39.

⁸ Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 163.

⁹ *ibid.*

outer port of Canton and an important channel to connect Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang and other coastal provinces of China, were leased by the Portuguese for a long time. Western traders and cargo ships were allowed to stopover. It is worth mentioning that in the Qing Dynasty, Macau is under the jurisdiction of Guangdong. There is a map about the administrative division in the time of Emperor Yongzheng listed in Chapter I.

In this thesis, Chapter I will review relative fields of debates and researches under the perspective of both global history and consumption history in West Europe and China. This chapter is going to demonstrate the sources and methodology of the study and the research design from the entry point of European luxury commodities in China during Early and middle Qing. From existing researches and archive, this thesis will thoroughly illustrate the literature sources and the reason of choosing them. In terms of methodology, we will elaborate on a global perspective based on the available information. Though there are few studies about luxury consumption at that time, but the research value is still significant. By cross-referencing diverse sources, the memorials of the official documents, the Imperial Household Department records, etc., the thesis aims at giving a detailed description of the real consumption situation.

Chapter II is mainly about the operation of China's four major customs and the study of import and export trade volume. The purpose of studying these issues is to show a more concrete and comprehensive situation of China's foreign trade during that time. The study includes but not limited to: Qing government's attitude and policies towards overseas trade; research on the Canton System; and Guangdong Customs' taxation under comparison of the other three customs, etc. It will frame the peculiar situation of China's foreign trade during that period. This chapter will also mention how the merchants group functioned in the history.

Based on the research in the previous chapter, Chapter III will give specific contents about the categories and prices of imported goods, includes commodities that the Qing government encouraged to import and commodities that were prohibited or restricted to import or export. This chapter analyzes reasons of formulation of these policies and the specific implementation of them. I am going to explain the difference between the Qing government's "ideal" and

commercial reality, and analyze the economic and social reasons behind under the perspective of global history.

The content of Chapter IV focuses on consumption, the main topic of this thesis. The chapter is going to take the emperor's preferences as a starting point, and analyze the consumption of several typical luxury goods in the upper class of Qing. This chapter focuses on a wider range of luxury consumers not only members of Qing court, but also other aristocracies, officials, merchants and intellectual groups. The chapter also looks for clues in mass consumption of luxury goods to find out whether the consumption includes European luxury goods. In addition, this chapter derives more research on the formation of these luxury consumption habits in the market, such as the impact of these imported goods on imitation industries and similar local industries, etc.

The end of thesis is the summary of all chapters, with further discussion and outlook. The purpose of studying import and consumption of European luxury goods in China is not to enumerate historical data, but to uncover more factors and historical features of the times through it. I am going to narrate points of view under China and global perspective. Through the analysis of what was happening in China at that time, the results reflect how the economy and consumer behavior was going on globally. China is being taken as a part of the whole world. By studying the development of this place, the trend of world trade at that time will be showed.

Chapter I

European Luxury Commodities in Early and Middle Qing: State of the Art, Hypothesis, Methodology and Sources:

In the past time, scholars who study the trade between Europe and China among the early modern period usually stand in a Eurocentric point of view. Recently, under global history perspective, comparison research between Eurocentric and Sinocentric on economic history gives us a new perspective on the topic of European-Chinese trade among the 17th to 19th centuries.

Talking about the trade between Europe and China, many researches were carried around the consumer society in Western Europe focusing on goods from Eastern world like tea, silk, porcelain, etc. However, studies about European commodities in Eastern countries are less. In relevant study field, researches about European luxury commodities in China during 17th to 19th centuries, or the consumerist tendencies are not that much comparing to other historical topics. Based on relative theories from economy and history studies, this thesis aims to fill the voids in historiography through analysis of European luxury consumption in early modern China, mainly in the upper class (by class), and in the south, southeast of China and Beijing (by region). This chapter is going to review the connections of existing research achievements on European luxury consumption in China and raise hypothesis and research questions. Design of the hypothesis and sources of the further analysis will be explicated in detail. The methodology of this study will also be introduced in the following content, with specific questions this study is going to solve and how they are related to the topic.

1.1: Literature review: global history and consumption history in early modern Europe and China

Although the history of the world itself existed long before the emergence of human civilization, it was not until modern times that scholars really use this concept to study and describe history. The concept of “global history” often been used in recent historical researches, especially topics refer to the international, inter-cultural, inter-regional, and which across the long period of time. Considering the global trend of commodity circulation, it is necessary to regard European luxury commodities consumption in China as a specific part in the “global” frame. It cannot be considered just as a flow of commodity issue or been viewed only in Sino-version in the consumption situation. What is global history? How to carry out a study in a global perspective? Sebastian Conrad tried to put his definition and opinions on “global history” that differs from earlier forms of history in his guidebook names *What is Global History?*. In his point of view, global history emerges from the challenges that globalization brings to social sciences, to overcome the two “birth defects” of modern social sciences and humanities stand, which refer to the “methodological nationalism” and Eurocentric. It is going to change the organization and institutional order of knowledge, while to describe a form of historical analysis in which phenomena, events, or processes are placed in global contexts.¹⁰ Conrad raised three varieties camps of global history: global history as the history of everything; as the history of connections; and as history based on the concept of integration. First way of approaching global history is to equate it with history of everything in the world. It leads to different strategies in practice, the most outstanding version is the work of large-scale synthesis that trying to capture the global reality at specific period. For example, a global panorama of a particular year, refer the idea of “global” into planetary comprehensiveness. Similarly, historians trace a particular idea or historical construction through the ages around the world, such as the history of tea, cotton or sugar, with all-in version. Similarly, this study of European luxury commodities in China applies the scale above. Take clock and watch as an example, how it circulates as a commodity in the world, and how it enters the Chinese imperial palace with its special identity, the analysis

¹⁰ Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016): 3-6.

should take its global characteristics into account. The second paradigm in the field mainly focuses on exchange and connections. As there is no isolated society, nation or civilization in general insight due to the mobility and interactions. Under that premise, the interconnectedness of the world can be dated back over centuries in trade and religious activities. The third approach, also the widest accepted one by the global historians, presumes some form of global integration. It refers to patterns of exchange that were regular, sustained and thus able to shape societies in profound ways. The operations and influences depended more on the degree of systemic integration on a global scale.¹¹

In this version, historians have situated the particular cases in their global contexts. Take Christopher Hill's history work as an example, which among France, US and Japan in late nineteenth century, places these three nations in domestic change and global transformations.¹² Hill practiced the challenges of historical research on these three countries since 1870s, when social upheaval and crisis happened: the Meiji Restoration in Japan, the Civil War in US and the fall of Second Empire and the Paris commune in France. Although the three states share different domestic condition and occupied different position in the world, but all of them share a similarity situation as well: the development of interstate relations, growing international trade, capital accumulation and revolution in communication.¹³ In his argument, a national history could be explicated in a global structure, rather than emphasize a history of imperialist suppression, or base on a nation's roots. Hill argued the "national-historical space" of modern nation was constructed with a developing modern world system of nations.¹⁴ It also gives me inspiration of my topic designing. To what extent the southern and eastern Chinese residents during 17th and 18th centuries identified themselves as "Chinese"? If the residents preferred more regional identities for example Chaozhou or Teochew people (潮汕人) rather than Chinese or Qing subjects? Furthermore, as China have already involved into the world trade, should we also consider of the economic and consumption history of China into a bigger

¹¹ *ibid.*, 9-10.

¹² Christopher L. Hill, *National History and the World of Nations: Capital Stage, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France and the United States*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

background of the world? How do the Chinese historians analyze Chinese history in a “global history” version?

Moreover, the key word “world history” was always related to “global history”. Douki and Minard presented the timeline of the rising of global history study since the first pioneering book published in 1963 written by William McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community*, which explored human history draw on the effect of different world civilizations on one another.¹⁵ After that, since 1980s and 90s the subject developed not only in US, but also in the countries of Europe such as Britain and Germany. In the review of the subject of history, the concept of global history and world history are not clearly distinguished and defined. They are similar in a certain extent, but global means a broader and more comprehensive level. It is not like world history that is more inclined to a geographical level of application, but a perspective and methodological innovation. Douki and Minard explained that both world history and global history share “two common goals”, first, to account all the phenomena that occur across the state borders and overcome national lines in historical research, while, the second, to write a history of world that not only dominated by a Western of view.¹⁶ However, “global” comes from the concept of “globalization”, which refers to a historical process of economic and cultural integration on a global scale. Maxine Berg claimed that “‘global history’ encompasses a new approach to historical writing which has emerged during the past fifteen years” in her edited book *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*.¹⁷ This book brings together the outcomes of those who have written books and articles of the historical discipline in the direction of global history in fields of empire, area studies, the arts, and technology. “It engaged them in reflection and debate over what ‘global’ approaches to history mean, how it has changed the questions they ask, and the ways they do history. It raises the limitations and problems of this approach to history, but also opens

¹⁵ William Hardy McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963).

¹⁶ Caroline Douki and Philippe Minard, “Histoire globale, histoires connectées: un changement d'échelle historiographique?” *Revue d'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, No 54-4bis (2007): 7-21.

¹⁷ Maxine Berg, ed. *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 1.

out new perspectives.”¹⁸ In this book, I find a variety of useful developments in global history on ideas, methods, arguments, normative suggestions, etc.

Globalization is first of all economic globalization, including the globalization of production, trade, capital, technology, information and services. This is also an area that can be realistically discussed today. In understanding of global history, it is necessary to stand in a methodological viewpoint. The methodological viewpoint gives emphasizes on the rise of interdependency and processes of integration on a global scale. Global history is more like a methodology tool around social science that can enlarge the research into a planetary scale instead of the individually or divided historical watch. In contrast, “world” can only be explained as an international or transnational concept, in which world history research might not regard the process of integration necessary. Sachsenmaier showed similar opinion in his definition of “global”, not Hegelianism or Westerncentrism. Compared with “world”, “global” symbolizes dynamic structures such as the flow, exchanges and mutual reactions between different world regions. In addition, compared with “international” or “transnational”, “global” does not focus on the scholarly inquiry on the nation state. “Culturally constructed boundaries are far more important than political borders.”¹⁹ Haneda also reviewed the idea of “world history” and “global history” based on his understanding of Olstein’s book, *Thinking History Globally*. The book was published in 2015 and agreed that to think history globally is the result of globalization.²⁰ The world history is more expansive in size and timescale but it does not presume the preconditions of current globalized situation of the world.²¹ Conrad raised his opinion that global history is “both an object of study and a particular way of looking at history: it is both a process and a perspective, a subject matter and a methodology.”²² Usually it is the perspective of historians, the perspective of historical actors, and the scale of the historical process itself.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Global History, Global Debates,” *Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists*, (03 March 2005), www.connections.clio-online.net/debate/id/diskussionen-582.

²⁰ Haneda Masashi, “Japanese Perspectives on Global History”, *Asian Review of World Histories*, 3:2 (2015): 221.

²¹ Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

²² Conrad, *What is Global History*, 11.

Before raising the idea “global” in this research, there is a pre-study of the book *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, written by Kenneth Pomeranz. The book demonstrates an experimental and advanced practice of global historical approach. For the question why Industrial Revolution occurred in Europe not in China, his analysis reoriented this question in a comparative global framework. He explained that his book combined comparative analysis, some purely local contingency, and integrative or global approach. With the valuable data analyzing and comparisons between parts of Europe and parts of China, India, etc., he proved that Europe had not accumulated a vital advantage in material capital prior to 1800 and was not freer of Malthusian pressures than many other large economies. Pomeranz disagreed with the five categories of arguments for European uniqueness, referring to demography, markets, luxury consumption, labor and ecology. Pomeranz emphasized not only the Europeans, but how similar those processes to other regions of the world, until 1800. Pomeranz used the evidence to prove that Industrial Revolution did not grow out of European superiority, but the luck of England. With the comprehension between England and lower Yangzi delta of China since 16th to 18th century, it is the geological advantages on coal supplies, along with the unexpected windfalls like silver, timber, sugar and cotton from new world made England a “fortunate freak”.²³ Intercontinental comparisons was carried throughout the whole book. The contents of his book used are mostly second-hand information, and there is no specific case study. However, Pomeranz’s fully understanding on Western Europe, China and Japan makes his argument credible. The view of is book is not limited to Eurocentric, factors that Pomeranz took into consideration were comprehensive when analyzing the problem. In addition, he also paid more attention to regional characteristics, such as China’s Jiangnan region rather than the whole of China. Regarding Pomeranz’s “lucky theory”, the discussion has not stopped, one of which is Peer Vries’s debate. His book *Escaping poverty: The origins of modern economic growth*, published in 2013, along with *State, Economy and the Great Divergence: Great Britain and China, 1680s-1850s*, published in 2015, critically engages with the huge volume of literature published on the topic. Incorporating recent insights, he offers an

²³ Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 207.

alternative to the claims to East-West equivalence, or Asian superiority. He believed that Qing-dynasty China was not so highly developed. The crucial differences were to be found in Europe's (more specifically, Britain's) advantages in technological and institutional innovation, human capital, and labor productivity.²⁴ Vries has published a series of monographs and articles to supplement and expand his arguments. These discussions have also attracted the attention and participation of scholars in the field of global history from all over the world. This is also why I will describe a lot in explaining China's foreign trade in from eighteen to mid-nineteenth centuries in the second chapter, especially the Qing government's policy attitude and national capacity. The particularity of Chinese society needs to be perceived in terms of politics and culture through a more comprehensive understanding, or in other words, the difference with Europe, in order to understand why such "great divergence" arise. In a word, the emerging global trade shows important characteristics: increasing transnational trade in goods and services, and the increase in the scale and form of international capital flows. In addition, the wide and rapid spread of foreign commodities made the economies of all countries in the world closely linked and in an increasingly fierce competition.

In the study of historical research, many studies labeled as global history cannot actually practice such global perspective and method as mentioned earlier. The research habits along with the educational and cultural background of the historians often determine the perspective of what they use to look at the concept of "global". Considering Japan and China has more cultural similarities than with Europe, Japanese scholars' research methods on world history are worth learning. For example, Haneda Masashi examined the Japanese way of perspective on global history, which is called *gurobaru hisutori* from the Japanese pronunciation. He explained that *gurobaru hisutori* in Japan is not equivalent to Olstein's global history he reviewed.²⁵ It has the characters that summarized by Mizushima Tsukasa: "a long time scale, an expansive spatial scale, a goal of relativizing the interpretation of European and modern histories, emphasis on the interconnectedness of countries and regions, and the introduction of

²⁴ Peer Vries, *Escaping poverty: The origins of modern economic growth*, (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013). *State, Economy and the Great Divergence: Great Britain and China, 1680s-1850s*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015).

²⁵ Olstein, *Thinking History Globally*.

new topics and themes including environmental history and big history.”²⁶ Often the world is divided geographically into several civilizations or regions. Each of them has its own independent tube-like history, from ancient time to the present.²⁷ This kind of situation derived from the longstanding Japanese historiography culture in world history research. If only from the previous definition and description, the global history in Japan is surely “worldwide and with large scale”, but whether it is “globalized enough” remains uncertain. *Gurobaru hisutori* is attempts to review and reexamine the existing framework explain the world history (*sekaishi*). *Gurobaru hisutori* here is similar to *atarashii sekaishi* (new world history).

Currently, the Global history studies in Japan, as well as in Russia and China, are more national narrative, it is more like a national history than a global one. Manuel Perez Garcia have reviewed the current problems which global historians from different background now facing. Although global history is very popular in Anglo-Saxon historiographies, the latter focuses more on Great Britain for its national history and colonies due to the attention more on the studies of European core economic areas.²⁸ And the southern European historiographies from Spain, France, Italy or Portugal also pay less emphasis on global history due to the ideological conquests of May 1968 and the Annales School, along with the Anglo-American modernization theories, which made it has a mindset inherited from Anglo-Saxon historiography.²⁹ In other words, the historiography in Europe is more Eurocentric. Compared with it, the Chinese historiography in global history has just been recently introduced. Because any research centre in Chinese universities much follow the “One Belt, One Road” policy whose goal is to present a new national history of China, which make the world history to be like a history of nations and the history of the territories outside China.³⁰ In addition, there is no clear distinction between global history and world history to Chinese historiography. Liu Xincheng from China Normal University tried to outline the current debates in Chinese historian circle about whether

²⁶ Mizushima Tsukasa, ed. *Gurobaru Hisutori-no Chousen*, (Yamakawa Shuppansha Ltd., 2008), cited in Haneda Masashi, “Japanese Perspectives on Global History”, *Asian Review of World Histories*, 3:2, 2015: 222.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Manuel Perez Garcia and Lucio De Sousa, eds. *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches: Europe, Asia and the Americas in World Network System*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 3.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*, 4.

they should accept the global history, and how to build a Chinese way of world history. Global history is an imported approach to Chinese, “like world history, which found its way into China at the beginning of the 20th century, global history also comes from the West, a civilization that was once strongly scornful of the Chinese civilization. The Chinese antagonism to Western importation - including historiography concepts - is almost instinctive.”³¹ In terms of the current research results of Chinese historians on global history, the areas designed have been very broad, including but not limited to: the interaction of Chinese and foreign civilizations, religious transmission and trade exchanges, teaching environmental history, the interaction and symbiosis of multiple civilizations in the course of world history, grand history and global history, local and global in a multidimensional perspective, historiography in the era of weakened nation-states, Mediterranean history, new imperial history, Eurasian connections and exchanges, the early modern world in a global perspective, etc. which indicates that Chinese scholars have been gradually refining their research in global history.³² For many historians think it is unnecessary to follow all what the approaches from West and Chinese should create and follow its own method and theory. Some argued since the first half of the twentieth century, many Chinese historians have taken particular care to use western resources to study the formative process of the Chinese culture and nation, to answer from multiple perspectives the question of “how China became the China”.³³ Based on that, the Chinese historians may have already practiced the historical approach “globally”. Such debates continue, but currently the global history in China is not that widely accepted, and the historical researches are Sinocentric, and also in patriotic narrative.³⁴ Chinese scholars have also recognized this and have therefore always remained deeply reflective. As Ma Keyao says: “We are the ones who do not have a theory to counteract the West, so we cannot build our own view of global history, so we cannot write our own non-Eurocentric history. On the road to industrialization and modernization, we

³¹ Liu Xincheng, “The Global View of History in China,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2012): 50.

³² Dong Xinjie. “Zhongguo Quanchishi Yanjiu de Lilun yu Fangfa,” *Guizhou Social Sciences*, vol.344, no.8 (August 2018): 67.

³³ Liu Xincheng, “The Global View,” 506.

³⁴ Manuel Perez-Garcia, *Global History with Chinese Characteristics: Autocratic States along the Silk Road in the Decline of the Spanish and Qing Empires 1680-1796* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan (2021).

are not able to show what is our distinctive industrialization road from the West before learning from the West.... It also lies in the fact that the historical study of non-European countries has been very inadequate up to now.”³⁵ It has been argued that global history has its roots in imperial history in Britain, in the United States in the curriculum of Western civilization, and in Germany in its deep tradition of world history and Marxist research methods.³⁶ Therefore, Chinese scholars have also been committed to establishing a Chinese global history research system, starting from their own profound historical experience and general history compilation practice, effectively adhering to the guidance of Marx’s world history theory on the basis of China’s realistic development, and actively absorbing the beneficial achievements of Western global history.³⁷

Sachsenmaier suggested the most worldwide debate on global history is conditioned by local factors so it can be understood as a “glocal” phenomenon. “This global neglect of global approaches is rooted in the local bias of historiography as a distinct disciplinary culture.”³⁸ Therefore, working as an global historian is not easy. Multi-polar and global perspective on history research is necessary, while the historians should also remain sensitive for the local. Debates on methodology are based on how to balance the gains of global perspective with potential losses in local sensitivity. Douki and Minard also claimed to be more “sensitive” on many different forms of contacts, interconnection and regions varieties are necessary.³⁹ Sometimes we should pay more attention to the ways of living, working, consuming, as well as gender, cultural and religious practices, rather than always focus on the economic determinism perspective.

In the beginning of study European luxury consumption in China, it is necessary to have the knowledge of global perspective, but also necessary to know more about the local. The basic concepts and cognition of Chinese economic history is essential. What is economic history?

³⁵ Ma Keyao. “Kunjing yu Fansi: Ouzhou Zhongxinlun de Pochu yu Shijieshi de Chuangli.” *Historical Research*, vol.3 (2006): 22.

³⁶ James Belich et al. eds. *The Prospect of Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 23.

³⁷ Dong Xinjie, “Zhongguo Quanqiushi,” 69.

³⁸ Sachsenmaier, “Global History, Global Debates.”

³⁹ Douki and Minard, “Histoire globale,” 7-21.

Robert C. Allen explained the subject of economy history directly using the title of Adam Smith's great book *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Compared with the economists who are seeking the "causes" in a timeless theory of economic development, the economic historians find them in a dynamic process of historical change. "Why are some countries rich and others poor?" is the question that often be asked.⁴⁰ As the economic historical research becomes more globalized in recent years, a big challenge is faced by the historians on how to explain the huge differences in wealth between rich and poor countries that emerged after Western world's industrialization. Many questions were raised such as "Why did China fail to sustain its technological lead over Europe after 1400" or "Why did it fail to cultivate an endogenous industrial capitalism despite its own premodern economic success?" These questions are often defined as "Eurocentrism" or "Eurocentric" that look for those "unique" traits set Europe apart from China and rest of the world, which means, with one existing assumption that, Europe already had some internally generated advantage over Asia. This kind of debates questions has dominated historical comparative research on Europe and China for long times.⁴¹ However, a group of world historians led by Jim Blaut, Jack Goldstone, Kenneth Pomeranz, Bing Wong, Andre Gunder Frank, James Lee and Li Bozhong, most of whom are defined as "California school" has showed their differed argument about this Eurocentric model. In the case of Chinese economic history, it is more specifically described by Pomeranz in his book *The Great Divergence*, that there was little difference in economic structure or per capita income between Europe and the most commercialized regions of China (more typically the Lower Yangtzi regions or China, or so called Jiangnan regions) before the British industrial revolution, "Britain's head start in industrialization to cheap coal and superior access through its colonies to land-intensive goods rather to any advantage linked to political, legal, or other institutional factor."⁴² The Jiangnan region and its economic condition would

⁴⁰ Robert C. Allen, *Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

⁴¹ Ricardo Duchesne, "Between Sinocentrism and Eurocentrism: Debating Andre Gunder Frank's Re-Orient: Global Economy in the Asian Age." *Science and Society*, vol. 65, no. 4 (2001/2002): 428.

⁴² Loren Brandt, Debin Ma, and Thomas G. Rawski, "From Divergence to Convergence: Re-evaluating the History Behind China's Economic Boom." *London School of Economics: Working Papers*, no. 158/12, (2012): 5.

also be one of my research objects. This view of global economic history research inspired a wide range of controversy, and also made the historians paid more attention to China's economic history no more in a narrowly specialized field but to a concern of global historical studies.

Therefore, how to use the perspective of global history to study Chinese history is still a question worth exploring. The field of study on Chinese economic history has been led and dominated by the Western scholars. Kent G. Deng explained two approaches to work on Chinese economic history, one is "Sinological approach" which refers to China only - it tried to find out China's achievements and when or how it made them; another is "comparative approach" which seek to understand why premodern China was not industrialized.⁴³ The purpose of global history research is to discuss contacts, exchanges and interactions with people from afar. In terms of historical data collection, knowledge preparation and theoretical thinking, it is necessary to jump out the main stream perspective and region with knowledge accumulation and careful consideration. The "Sinological approach" could be categorized under five headings: 1) China was superiority in premodern Eurasia in science and technology, agriculture productivities and military power; 2) China achieved a high degree of commercialization and urbanization; 3) China protected and nurtured producers' incentives with reasonably well-defined property rights; 4) some long-term patterns of China's premodern growth have been established during the Song period (960-1279) that after which no significant progress took place; 5) although China's population experienced a rapid rise after the seventeenth century, some studies have suggested that average standards of living in the advanced south-eastern region such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hunan and Guangdong provinces matched standards in western Europe during the eighteenth century, which is well supported by evidence from travelogues and commentaries of Europeans. Levels of education and popular literacy also remained high.⁴⁴

Loren Brandt, Debin Ma and Thomas G. Rawski review these achievements that China's

⁴³ Kent G. Deng, "A Critical Survey of Recent Research in Chinese Economic History." *The Economic History Review, New Series*, vol. 53, no.1 (2000): 1-2.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 2-6.

advanced regions reached before the Opium War. Based on the expansion of markets and commerce under the Song Dynasty (960-1279), some of which declined during the Yuan (1279-1368), the Ming and Qing era (1368-1912) witnessed renewed expansion of commerce and growing commercialization of agriculture. Local and inter-regional trade expanded. There were studies showed that the Qing trend toward deepening domestic commercial networks, for example G. W. Skinner (1964) showed to consist of nested hierarchies of marketplaces, differentiated according to the periodicity of market sessions the scale of activity and array of products and services transacted, that extend from large cities to distant and humble villages.⁴⁵ Numbers of towns and markets were surrounding the Lower Yangtze River regions and near Guangzhou port. Even most of the demand and sales are mainly domestic transactions. China is always involved into the international trade before 1800s. China's international trade during were mainly intra-Asia, with China shipping commodities like porcelain, silk and tea by sea and overland to Southeast and Central Asia while importing timber, spices, and monetary metals by sea and horses.⁴⁶ Since the arrival of European traders in the early 16th century it emerged the new European and Asian trade network. China's luxury exports expanding new market in Europe. Europe also export its own luxury products such as window glass, clock and coral to China. China's continued merchandise trade surplus has also brought a lot of imported silver from the New World. Furthermore, In the long history of local and long-distance commerce, many informal networks and institutions played an important role. Market network supported increasingly population settlement in trade-oriented regions like Jiangnan area, where raised large numbers of cities and towns. Moreover, the commercial activities in Ming and Qing China drew support from both formal and informal finance. For example the "native" banks (*qian zhuang* 钱庄), from which the most famous one is the "Shanxi banks" that name with their roots in Shanxi province. It is specialized in managing official funding and transferring funds over long distances. These privately-owned institutions also face to unlimited liability, accepted deposits, issued loans, arranged interregional remittances and originated bank

⁴⁵ G. William Skinner, *Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China*. (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 1964), cited in Brandt, Ma, and Rawski, "From Divergence," 12-13.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 13.

notes.⁴⁷ Moreover, the financial supporting organizations are various, for instance, the “money shops” which is specialized in currency exchange between copper and silver, notes and hard currency, local and trade-specific bookkeeping currencies; some shopkeepers, tradesmen and individuals served as regular sources of personal loans; the relatives and friends provided funds; etc. “This system, especially its informal components, contributed substantially to the prosperity and expansion of China’s economy during the Ming-Qing era, providing sufficient funds to support gradual expansion of monetization and agricultural commercialization as well as substantial and growing volumes of local and long distance trade.”⁴⁸ Nevertheless, China’s Qing farm economy is a “dual system combining farming and handicrafts for household consumption and for commercial sale”⁴⁹ Villagers were deeply involved in marketing: individual villagers could easily adapt to the trade, they would start to have commerce with no prior accumulation of wealth, only with the help of brokers or other reliable individuals, native-place and kinship tied them together.

Here goes back to another approach that used in Chinese economic history studies that listed by Kent Deng. Compared with the Sinological approach mentioned above, the “comparative approach” is more complicated and controversial. The main debate is why China failed to advance further from its outstanding achievement since Song. Very similar to what the famous “Needham Question” asked: “Why did modern science, the mathematization of hypotheses about Nature, with all its implications for advanced technology, take its meteoric rise only in the West at the time of Galileo (but) had not developed in Chinese civilization or Indian civilization?”⁵⁰ There are debates existed, which reviewed by R. Bin Wong, that the studies of Chinese economic practice between 1500 and 1900 usually proceed in one or two ways: a Chinese difference from Europe and label is the key differentiating factor, for China has its unique economic condition in rural industry; or the similarities to European-style success but did not deliver to China, for the reasons of the Chinese state obstructed process to protect its

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 15-16.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

power, the imperialism wraps Chinese economic changes to serve Westerners interests, and the “feudal” powerholders’ anxious to defend their elite positions against change.⁵¹ The “Darwinian species” can be used to explain it in some extent, for philosophically the growth in west Europe was “Darwinian positive”, and it also used to measure China’s condition. While Wong argued Darwinian was survival in itself not growth and development.⁵² Many of these theories, as well as Marxism, are used to explain and measure the factors in China as well.

In the historical research of comparing Europe and China, Deng partially agreed that the convertibility of Chinese economic performance index could be compared with west Europe performance in per capita outputs and incomes, man-to-land ratios, crop yields, population densities, degrees of commercialization or urbanization, and standards of living. To measure by ranks in technical, economic and military pecking order is easy and justifiable to use Western Europe as a benchmark in some extent.⁵³ With the regional studies are strong growth, long-term and empire-wide studies are becoming an endangered species so Deng claimed that “these two approaches are largely complementary and Chinese economic history needs both”.⁵⁴ China as a case, “had a nationwide market, a single government (which was active in maintaining food supply, famine relief, and price control), a standardized written language, a uniform calendar and system of weights and measures, a dominant Confucian code of conduct”.⁵⁵

On the contrary, the Maddison Project is a typical “long-term and empire-wide” research database. Maddison’s interpretation of the historical conjuncture is based on comparisons between China and Europe of his estimates for GDP per capital. Base on a statistical basis since year one to the common era of our current time. As Deng and O’Brien summarized, Maddison advocates that data suggest that it is around the 1600 that the average standards of living in China and in the West diverged and that the gap widened continuously down, until very recent decades the Chinese economy began to deliver increasing standards of living for its population

⁵¹ R. Bin Wong, *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997): 14.

⁵² Deng, “A Critical Survey,” 8-9.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

at levels that continue rapidly be close towards those afforded by Western economies.⁵⁶ Maddison recognized that complementary historical statistics that could also serve to represent the economic performance of the Chinese Empire under the Ming and Qing period were needed to carry conviction. He found support for his speculations from Dwight Perkins of Harvard and Gilbert Rozman of Princeton from their historical research and analysis that from Tang to Qing Dynasties, and he thinks there had been little change in the proportion of the population living in towns.⁵⁷ However, I consider his large data has very limited reference value, in addition to China's different regional economic characteristics, it is difficult to make sure if his data sources are reliable, and the currency he used in calculation - dollar - might not explain the specific historical conditions of price standard in China. I do not agree with his method of horizontal comparison since some specific examples, detailed household income and expenditure plans are more sufficient to show the Chinese residents' consumption level and economic environment.

It is precise because there have been so many controversies and researches among the historians who study luxury consumption, especially the imported European luxury commodities in China. The object study might mainly focus on the Chinese market, but the consumption environment and history of both European and Chinese society must be concerned. Frank Trentmann in his book names *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* explained that "Consumption is a mirror of the human condition. Our understanding of how people consume has always reflected our views about how they ought to live."⁵⁸ Trentmann claimed that the study of consumption is "usually interface with anthropology, sociology and geography, directly stimulated new directions in cultural, global and material history, while historians have been prompted to think about the production, presentation and circulation of things, and about the production, representation and circulation of things, as well as the nature of symbolic

⁵⁶ Kent Deng and Patrick O'Brien, "China's GDP Per Capita from the Han Dynasty to Communist Times." *World Economics*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2016): 83.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ Frank Trentmann, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1.

communication, material practices and identity formation.”⁵⁹

How consumption is transformed into mass consumption, and how people and goods are connected through consumption? According to the chronological preoccupations there were two period of the history of consumption, one is the “consumer society” after the Second World War, the other is original birth in the 17th and 18th centuries. Consumer society refers to the America’s main export to Western Europe in the era of the cold war, in which the affluence had moved the United States onto a new historical route where consumption was stimulated growth, defined identities and shaped public and private life.⁶⁰ Later it was widely accepted that a large and rapid increase in the consumption of consumer goods such as tableware, curtains, pictures, and cutlery, which happened before the Industrial Revolution, both in England and elsewhere in northern Europe, during 1600-1750 was regarded as the Consumer Revolution. As a result of the industrial revolution, the human resources occupied by agriculture were liberated by machines and absorbed by factories and offices, and various new products emerged in endlessly. This requires people to buy and use. Thus, a new ethical concept, consumerism, came into being. The research on it was led by the British historian Neil McKendrick, for the birth of this social formation. He found it in middle of 18th century of England the frame image of an affluent America set in 1950s and 1960s. The decisive ingredients were choice, markets, fashion and the rise in discretionary income. ⁶¹ “For the consumer revolution was the necessary analogue to the industrial revolution, the necessary convulsion on the demand side of the equation to match the convulsion on the supply side.... The consumer revolution was a turning point in the history of human experience.”⁶² In his research not only showed how porcelain, tea, cotton and other commodities were consumed by the 1760s, but also the role of fashion magazines and the marketing strategies pioneered by Josiah Wedgwood as early instances of how advertising created.⁶³ There is an opposing strand of historiographical research that does not accept the

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 3.

⁶¹ Neil McKendrick, “The Consumer Revolution of England of Eighteenth-Century England”, in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb, eds. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 9-33.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ Trentmann, *The Oxford Handbook*, 3-4.

application of consumption revolution concept, for it does not properly explain the economic transformations that occurred on the demand side. Traditional research based on consumer revolution usually not take into account consumer decisions, the buying power and wealth suffer alterations, the transformation of their demands, the new strategies of marketing, etc.⁶⁴ Trentmann did not quite agree with the traditional historical studies of a fragmentation way. There are studies of individual nations, cities, streets, shops and good while comparative efforts are rare. Historians are usually work on the particular concerns of a nation or region, in a particular time period, for example, seeking for the origin of European consumer societies, primarily consider the case in England when examining economic transformations. “Fragmentation also, however, reveals a genuine analytical difficulty in moving between the concrete level of empirical research and a more general level of interpretation and abstraction.”⁶⁵ What counts as consumption depends on the observer.

Scholars have done numbers of research about the Consumer Revolution in early modern period of Europe. Consumerism is to encourage all people to treat themselves well and consume more products and services as much as possible. Frugality is an outdated concept. Consumerism constantly persuades the public that “only indulgence and enjoyment can justify themselves, and frugality is the suppression of self-desire”. Scholars tried to connect the world by a comprehensive and wilder perspective to see the problem, such as the origin and nature of technological, socio-economic, political and cultural transformation. Later research challenged to formulate questions and hypothesis within a global context. In 1980s, many historians associated the idea of consumption with shopping, then border into the act of purchase, the creation of desire through the use of things, waste, recycling, etc. As during the 17th and 18th centuries consumption revolution and the material culture formed in Western Europe, the idea not only making the English mass consumers by definition but also making them into a nation of shoppers. The need to purchase frequently small quantities of tea, sugar, and tobacco spurred

⁶⁴ Manuel Perez-Garcia, *Vicarious Consumers: Trans-National Meeting between the West and East in the Mediterranean World (1730-1808)* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 9.

⁶⁵ John Brewer and Frank Trentmann, eds. *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006), cited in *The Oxford Handbook*, ed. Trentmann, 2.

the proliferation of shops which marked eighteenth-century England.⁶⁶ Oriental luxury commodities' consumption in the European community is widely documented and discussed. Since 1890s, the scholars such as Thorstein Veblen, Georg Simmel, and Werner Sombart paid great attention to the consumption of luxury goods.⁶⁷ Veblen raised an idea of "conspicuous consumption", which is the spending of money on and the acquiring of luxury goods and services to publicly display economic power - of the income or of the accumulated wealth of the buyer. To the conspicuous consumer, such a public display of discretionary economic power is a means of either attaining or maintaining a given social status.⁶⁸ "Consumption is evidence of wealth...the utility of both (conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption) alike for the purpose of reputability lies in the waste that is common to both. In the one case it is a waste of time and effort, in the other it is a waste of goods. Both are methods of demonstrating the possession of wealth, and the two are conventionally accepted as equivalent."⁶⁹ There is a "demonstration effect" between the households that they care not only about their own consumption level, but also about their consumption level relative to those of other households in their "reference group".⁷⁰ They would suffer felicity loss when other's consumption levels rise because it means their relative consumption now declines.⁷¹ Veblen claimed that "the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal. On pain of forfeiting their good name and their self-respect in case of failure, they must conform to the accepted code, at least in appearance... no class of society, not even the most abjectly poor, foregoes all customary conspicuous consumption".⁷² Individual incomes are unobserved and admission to a group is based on the inference of an individual's capacity to

⁶⁶ Cissie Fairchilds, "Consumption in Early Modern Europe. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Oct. 1993): 854.

⁶⁷ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, originally published in 1899, (reprinted London: George Allen and Unwin, 1925); Georg Simmel, *Philosophie der Mode* (Berlin:Pan-Verlag, 1905); Werner Sombart, *Luxus und Kapitalismus*, originally published in Munich: Duncker& Humblot, 1913, (English trans. *Luxury and Capitalism*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967).

⁶⁸ Veblen, *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 49-60.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Kenneth J. Arrow and Partha S. Dasgupta, "Conspicuous Consumption, Inconspicuous Leisure," *The Economic Journal*, vol. 119, no. 541 (Nov. 2009): 497.

⁷² Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 59.

contribute to the public good. By entering in a group, individual also gains a certain social status. This inference in turn is based on the signal emitted by spending on a conspicuous good.⁷³

McKendrick's research on "consumer society" laid the foundation for the Western consumption history, and many subsequent historical studies are usually based on this foundation for further verification or refutation of some of the claims. These studies can be mainly divided into two types of direction. One takes the empirical route and reconstructs the phenomenon of the European consumer society at that time through social historical materials that record people's possession and expenditure in centuries, such as the probate inventories. The another pays attention to the cultural aspects of consumer goods and the cultural significance of consumer goods. For example, the rise of modern consumer society in Britain contributes to the formation of new consumption fashion and consumption habits. Since the 18th century, the whole British society has been influenced by a new social fashion, and profound social changes have taken place in daily life fields such as clothing, food, housing and transportation. In particular, the consumption of overseas products has continued unabated, and the impact of consumption on economy and society has become increasingly prominent. Many historians draw on interdisciplinary techniques such as economics, sociology, philosophy, and anthropology in their research, in order to analyze the historical formation of Western consumer societies from various angles. The first research started with the consumption phenomenon in the United Kingdom, followed by other countries such as Germany, France, Spain, and other countries also successively published related works. These studies proved that the so-called consumer society phenomenon similar to the England has appeared in many countries in Western Europe. These studies not only discussed the needs of families, but also noticed the huge expansion of the "commodity world" experienced and experienced in Europe in the eighteenth century: due to geographical discoveries and colonial plunder, many new commodities have continuously flowed into Western European society, making the people's consumption scale expand, and changing their consumption content and consumption habits. These scholars include but are not

⁷³ Fernando Jaramillo, Hubert Kempf and Fabien Moizeau, "Conspicuous Consumption, Social Status and Clubs," *Social Interactions and Economic Behavior* (Jul. - Dec. 2001): 321.

limited to Joan Thirsk, Maxine Berg, Elizabeth Eger, Christopher Berry, Jean Castarède, Philippe Perrot, Jan de Vries, Evelyn Welch, etc.⁷⁴ All of these historians, philosophers, and sociologists have conducted research on consumption related topics, especially luxury consumption in different regions and time periods in their respective fields.

Discussions about “sprouts of capitalism” are popular among historians in mainland China since the 1950s. Although their arguments are various, the Chinese scholars are essentially more focused on the discussion on relations of production. Until the 1980s, Chinese scholars began to pay attention to the study of productive forces, emphasizing the large-scale commercialization of the Ming and Qing economies.⁷⁵ The sprout of capitalism in China is not much different from that in Europe, but its development is extremely slow. It took two centuries from the emergence of capitalism in the late Ming Dynasty to the early Qing Dynasty, but the capitalist relations of production are still in the embryonic stage. However, most researches above focus on the supply side and ignore the demand research. It is worth mentioning that in these studies, several scholars still noticed the importance of the consumption. For example, two historians Fu Yiling in mainland China and Yang Lien-sheng in America both paid attention to the literature of Ming scholar Lu Ji 陆楫 (1515—1552), since he believed the practice of luxury consumption is an important factor in the economic development of Jiangnan region.⁷⁶ Fu Yiling noted that Lu Ji’s views have the characteristics of enlightenment, and were compatible with the historical conditions of the sprouting capitalist production at that time.⁷⁷ While Yang Liensheng believed that Lu Ji’s ideas have many similarities with economic

⁷⁴ Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christopher Berry, *Idea of Luxury*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jean Castarède, *Histoire du luxe en France* (Paris: Eyrolles, 2007); Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Jan de Vries, “Luxury in the Dutch Golden Age in Theory & Practice,” in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), 41–56; Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400–1600*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Manuel Perez-Garcia, “Testing the ‘trickle-down’ theory through GECOM database: consumer behaviour, Chinese goods, and trade networks in the Western Mediterranean, 1730–1808”, *Cliometrica*, 2022.

⁷⁵ Zhong Weiming, “Ziben Zhuyi Mengya Wenti Yanjiu de Xueshushi Huigu yu Fansi,” *Xue Shu Jie*, vol.4 (2003): 223-240.

⁷⁶ Lu Ji, *Jian Jia Tang Zazhu Zhaichao* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985).

⁷⁷ Fu Yiling, *Mingdai Jiangnan Shimin Jingji Shitan* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Publisher, 1957).

analysis.⁷⁸

In the beginning 1980s, scholars of Ming and Qing historians in Mainland China and Taiwan began to pay attention to the content of consumer culture, especially the economic life and consumption in Jiangnan region. Researches of Fan Jinmin, Li Bozhong, Huang Jingbin, etc.⁷⁹ proved that in early modern China, Jiangnan region, as the economically developed area, its residents already had a commodity economic base and consumption level similar to those in Western Europe during the same period. Compared with Europe, although there is no large number of imported goods, some areas of China also formed a consumer society, with local and regional exchange of goods. However, the theory of consumer revolution does not seem to be widely adopted in Chinese historians. At present we have no evidence shows that the during 17th century to mid-19th century in the China that the imported luxury is exact the commodity for conspicuous needs or daily needs, or if there was a “race of consumer” among the higher class, in next parts of this thesis will take into account this factor. It is popularly accepted by Chinese historians that the consumption culture in early modern China is different from those in Europe. The major change of consumption mode in modern times undoubtedly stems from the promotion of the emergence and development of the new economy, that is, the capitalist economy. In particular, the invasion of western capital and the emergence and rapid development of China’s new commerce have caused a great impact on the traditional mode of consumption, which has led to the transformation of consumption. In reviews of theories of consumption, Jiang Jianguo claims that the consumer research must be combined with social and cultural studies together, learn each other from a number of specific research, and grasp the historical details or specific historical environment.⁸⁰ Some Chinese scholar believe that in Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty, there was not a consumption revolution which as apparent as what happened in Europe in 17th and 18th centuries but the traditional consumer culture was

⁷⁸ Lien-sheng Yang, “Economic Justification for Spending-An Uncommon Idea in Traditional China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol.20, no.1/2 (1957): 36-57.

⁷⁹ Fan Jinmin, *Ming Qing Jiangnan Jingji de Fazhan* (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1998); Li Bozhong, *Duoshijiao Kan Jiangnan Jingjishi, 1250-1850*, (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2003); Huang Jingbin, *Minsheng yu Jiaji: Qingchu zhi Minguo Shiqi Jiangnan Jumin de Xiaofei*, (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2009).

⁸⁰ Jiang Jianguo, “Xifang Xiaofei Wenhua Lilun Yanjiu de Fazhan Yanbian yu Fansi,” *Consumer Economics*, vol. 6, (2005): 85.

gradually changing among late Ming and early Qing Dynasties. In the early of capitalism in China, the prosperity of business and industry in some areas such as Jiangnan Region, along with the emergence of mercantilism that made the traditional consumer culture challenged.⁸¹

Conservatism is the mainstream concept of consumption in ancient China, based on the peasant economy and the symbiotic relationship of man and nature, and the Confucianism ideology, which determined the mainstream view of consumption in China, reflected in make plans for the long term. However, this traditional concept of frugality has prevailed only among the lower or civilian class in certain extent, while the extravagant spending habits have always existed for the aristocracy. The significance of consumer transition in late Ming and early Qing appeared in new consumer group – the merchants. For thousands of years in China, merchants were the lower social class, which means even they might have treasures, but wealthy is not equal to advantaged status in the society. According to the consumer habit determined by class, the merchants in ancient China could not consume as the aristocracy did.⁸² In addition, some scholars pointed out that the prevalence of luxury consumption in the Ming Dynasty did not only exist in cities, nor was it limited to wealthy merchants or landlord families. Residents in suburban towns and ordinary people in the city, and even servants, prostitutes and other practitioners also developed the habit of luxury consumption. This consumption concept changed and collapsed since late Ming, while the groups of businessmen and handicraftsmen increased quickly not only in their wealth but also the scale, which has had an impact on social stability and the existing hierarchical system.⁸³ In addition, some scholars believe that luxury consumption is mainly concentrated in cities and towns in the south of the Yangtze River and coastal areas where commerce is prosperous and consumer population is concentrated. In rural areas, people still followed traditional consumption methods Even in these cities, the lower-class people still live on the lowest level, and they use heavy labor in exchange for consumer

⁸¹ Zhao Jilin, *Study of Consumer Culture Change in China*, PhD Thesis, (Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, 2009), 74.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Xu Hong, “Mingdai Fujian Shehui Fengqi de Bianqian,” *Zhejiang Academic Journal*, vol.5 (2007): 34-44; Chen Maoshan, “Shilun Mingdai Zhonghouqi de Shehui Fengqi,” *Collected Papers of History Studies*, vol.4 (1989): 31-40.

goods that are only enough to survive.⁸⁴ Wang Jiafan pointed out in the Ming and Qing Dynasty, luxury consumption still has the nature of traditional aristocratic luxury consumption, for under the traditional social structure of political integration, politics strongly ruled the economy. All the extravagant high consumption depends on the support of political power, which encourages the rich to seize political power, thereby stabilizing the traditional political structure and making it difficult for the economy to achieve relatively independent development. Therefore, luxury consumption only led to the false prosperity of the commodity economy and is not conducive to the healthy development of the social economy.⁸⁵

Researches on consumption history and consumption culture of early modern China by European and American scholars were relatively late compared with Chinese scholars, and they started their research in this area probably in the 1990s. Their views and positions are very different from those of Chinese scholars, and they have substituted many interdisciplinary research methods and theories, such as sociology and anthropology. Craig Clunas's *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* which published in 1991 is a very typical and pioneering work. He pointed out that in the late Ming Dynasty, with the development of the commodity economy, the land wealth that originally represented status was transformed into a collection of luxury goods. The special consumption habits originally unique to the scholar class, such as collecting antiquities, were gradually imitated by the merchant class, which caused the scholar class to have a great sense of identity anxiety. He observed that taste appreciation manuals similar to *Chang Wu Zhi* (长物志) that appeared in the Ming Dynasty actually reflected some characteristics of conspicuous consumption.⁸⁶ The trend of fashion and imitation it created gradually shifted from the elite aristocratic class to the merchant class. In addition, he also pointed out that this phenomenon of cultural consumption did not only appear in the field of cultural relics and antiquities, but also some clues can be seen in general daily consumption.⁸⁷ Besides, in Timothy Brook's book *The Confusions of Pleasure:*

⁸⁴ Liu Zhiqin, "Wanming Shishang yu Shehui Biange de Shuguang," *Chinese Literature and History*, vol.1 (1987): 50-55.

⁸⁵ Wang Jiafan, "Ming Qing Jiangnan Xiaofei Xingzhi yu Xiaofei Xiaoguo Jiexi," *Quarterly Journal of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, vol.2 (1988): 157-167.

⁸⁶ Wen Zhenheng, *Chang Wu Zhi*, (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1936).

⁸⁷ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*

Commerce and Culture in Ming China, he discussed some topics about consumption and trade. He pointed out that due to the stability of the grain market in the late Ming Dynasty, the production of other goods became possible, the most typical of which is the production of textiles. In addition, he paid special attention to the problem of silver circulation and believed that silver was a lubricant for any commodity and production in China at that time. Another important contribution of this book is that it puts forward the fashion phenomenon of the late Ming. He emphasized that the changeable fashion in the late Ming Dynasty was caused by the pursuit of social class and competition for status. Fashion is ruled by the upper class of society, in order to prevent and exclude the followers of the upper class, so there has always been an endless conflict between classes.⁸⁸

What is more, some Western scholars' research focuses on comparing China with Western Europe, and putting the history of consumption in China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties into the history of the world. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there were not only trade links but also cultural exchanges between China and Europe. The attitude of Chinese society towards European goods in the Ming and Qing Dynasties was influenced by Chinese traditional culture. European views on China in the Ming and Qing Dynasties were influenced by Eurocentrism. Both Chinese traditional culture and Eurocentrism have the tendency of cultural centrism when they look at foreign affairs. Cultural centrism emphasizes self and belittles others, which also promotes the popularity of the view that "the Ming and Qing Dynasties were not interested in European goods". Although western researches still cannot escape "Eurocentrism", they have tried not to use Western civilization as the only driving force for world development from the perspective of global history. One of the works is the "Great Difference" mentioned above. He specifically compared the consumption situation in China and Western Europe from three perspectives. First of all, from the perspective of the popularization of luxury goods, taking tea and sugar as an example, the consumption and popularity of tea and sugar in Europe in the 15-18th century were far less than in China.

(Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

⁸⁸ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Secondly, Western Europe is similar to China in the aspect that collection of luxury goods gradually became a status symbol. Thirdly, he believes that China has little demand for imported goods, and is mainly interested in silver and rare luxury goods, while Europe has exchanged colonial silver for a lot of Asian goods, creating a fast-moving and obsolete fashion system.⁸⁹ Adshead also tried a comparative approach to analyze the choices made by Western European and Chinese consumers in from 1400 to 1800 from 6 fields, food, dress, shelter, utilities, information and symbolism, then he explained how the consumers expressed different values in their various choices. He emphasized that “consumerism” is not only an economic behavior, but also a mentality facing the material world.⁹⁰ The research perspectives of these Western scholars have provided many new ideas for Chinese scholars. Therefore, in the past two decades, some Chinese scholars have also tried to look at consumption issues in modern China from a more comprehensive perspective.

1.2: Questions, hypotheses and the methodology

Through the above academic studies, it is obvious that in global history, economic history and consumption history of modern China, scholars explored from different entry points. I was inspired by the multiple approaches and therefore designed the research with the follows.

Firstly, research approaches of global history and the relevant theories of Western scholars are informative for this study. This study is not going to compare the consumption situation of modern Chinese society with Western Europe in the same period. Setting aside the level of economic development, Chinese and European societies have quite different cultural backgrounds and consumption habits, especially in luxury consumption. In order to explore a logical way of comparison, this research is based on theories such as the consumer revolution which is not only applicable in the West, but is also similar to the Chinese situation. And this study focuses more on Chinese particularities.

⁸⁹ Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 114-165.

⁹⁰ S. A. M. Adshead, *Material Culture in Europe and China, 1400–1800 The Rise of Consumerism* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1997).

At present, studies on luxury consumption in China between the 18th and 19th centuries are relatively few. As mentioned above, most of them are still oriented towards the end of the Ming Dynasty (early 17th century). The social consumption habits of the Qing Dynasty were significantly different from those of the Ming Dynasty. In this research, I focus more on finding changes, i.e., changes in consumption with changes in trade volume and commodity structure since the Qianlong Dynasty, the role of imported goods, etc. Meanwhile, instead of focusing on comparisons, I look for the extent that Chinese market was involved in global trade such as how deep China was affected by global trade as a consumer market. The question could be answered from reflections from consumer perceptions, etc. In the study of Chinese consumption history, these issues need to be analyzed from a more comprehensive perspective, from different regions, classes, culture backgrounds, geography, regional policies, special events, etc., as well as the comparison with those of Europe. “Economic and cultural regulations restrict the consumer culture, while consumer culture clearly reflects into the economic and cultural.”⁹¹ Since the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, famous craftsmen, the creators of luxury goods, have stopped paying respectful visits to customers. Instead, customers will go to their studios to visit the latest samples and creations. In this process, artisans have been leading the aesthetic appreciation of consumers. When approaching the historical consumer problem, it cannot be avoid that “fragmented” and “localized” methods are still good entry points.

Therefore, it is necessary to indicate the main focus of this thesis: to analyze the consumption of luxury in China that imported from Europe. The analysis includes its main commodity categories, consumption volume, the consumer class, consumption channels, consumption habits. In order to give a comprehensive analysis, I also studied regular imported goods that should not be called “luxuries”. Due to the inflow of these commodities, the Chinese consumer market for imported goods has formed and consumers gradually developed their own consumption tendencies.

Hypothesis of this study mainly based on the population, policy, property system, transportation

⁹¹ Zhao Jilin, *Study of Consumer Culture*, 24.

and culture, more factors should be considered such as market, positivity, local resources, natural environment, war and militarization, the degree of bureaucratic and corruption. All factors above are relate to the economy and might have significant causal effects on the specific time and regional history. Therefore, the following questions are important when building the hypothesis:

The first is the research object: What kind of goods can be called European imports? Were they made in Europe or were they brought to China by European merchants? What kind of products can be defined as European luxury goods? Do these goods have special characteristics compared to other products, in terms of production, value, use, consumption channels, etc.? Have they formed a certain market size and mainstream consumer group in China? Based on the existing literature, this study classifies three categories of commodities as the main research objects: 1) wine, 2) clocks and watches, 3) other expensive handicrafts except clocks. In subsequent chapters, I am going to explain the reason to classify. This chapter is mainly about the research questions and assumptions. Take wine as an example, how to identify the origin and type of the wine is always a problem. Where did the wine come from? What were they? Were they Port wine that as same as those Portuguese exported to England? Or they were French wine or Spanish Wine? The priority is to identify what were these commodities. I also conduct research in the linguistic pattern of translation of the 17th and 18th centuries between in China, since the Chinese translation of products in Qing Dynasty are quite different of the translation nowadays. Similarly, there is a large number of 18th century European clocks in the Palace Museum. Where these clocks were produced and who made them are questions this study wants to figure out.

Secondly, who were the merchants that import and distribute the luxury commodities into China? Were they Portuguese, Spanish, British, Netherlander or French? As foreigners were only allowed to do the business in Macau at that time, with few days in Guangzhou per year. What was the role of Chinese merchants in the formation of European luxury market? Both European and Chinese merchant groups should be concerned, especially those famous Chinese business groups (*shang bang* 商帮). China is an ancient civilization based on agriculture, but commerce

also has a long history in China. However, as the rulers gradually paid more attention to agriculture, the commerce that was not conducive to the development of agriculture and the consolidation of feudal rule was suppressed, that is, the so-called “emphasizing agriculture and suppressing commerce” (重农抑商). Under this background, although the group of businessmen has a lot of wealth, they are often suppressed and excluded, and their social status is low. For this reason, businessmen from the same region often unite together, and the Chinese business groups (*shang bang* 商帮) was born. As a very special business group in ancient China, as the name implies, it refers to an organization similar to a faction composed of businessmen. Since Ming Dynasty, ten merchant groups had formed based on the kinships and geographic factors: 1) Shanxi merchants from Shanxi Province; 2) Huizhou merchants from Anhui Province; 3) Shaanxi merchants from Shaanxi Province; 4) Ningbo merchants from Zhejiang Province; 5) Shandong merchants from Shandong Province; 6) Guangdong merchants from Guangdong Province; 7) Fujian merchants from Fujian Province; 8) Dongting merchants from Jiangsu Province; 9) Jiangyou merchants from Jiangxi Province; and 10) Longyou merchants from Zhejiang Province.⁹² Among them, Shanxi merchants were the most influential businessmen within China. The Lianghuai salt merchants that mentioned in literature part of this study were mostly from Shanxi, they held lots of capital; operated numbers of projects such as salt, silk, grain, cotton; invested the lands, contacted closely to the officials; and funded banks (钱庄 *qian zhuang*) that provide financial services, etc.⁹³ These merchants also transported wine across the country and set up wine shops and restaurants in Beijing during Ming and Qing.⁹⁴ The researches about their wine distribution activities are mainly the local rice wine, is there a possibility that they also sell the foreign wine? Beside Shanxi merchants, is it important to pay attention on the Guangdong merchants who were active on the maritime trade since Ming? There are two groups of Guangdong merchants, one is Guangzhou merchants and another is Chaozhou merchants.⁹⁵ These merchants were maritime traders, local brokers

⁹² Cao Tiansheng, “Jiu Zhongguo de Shida Shangbang,” *Min Jian Wen Hua*, vol. 03, (1999): 45-48.

⁹³ *ibid.*, 45.

⁹⁴ Fan Jinmin, “Qingdai Shanxi Shangren he Jiuye Jingying,” *Historical Research in Anhui*, vol. 01, (2008): 26-27.

⁹⁵ Cao Tiansheng, “Jiu Zhongguo,” 45-48.

in Guangzhou who provided long distance transport wholesale across China.⁹⁶ Compared with Shanxi merchants who mainly used land transport, Guangdong merchants, especially the Chaozhou merchants relied much on “sea business” and had more opportunities to contact with Western traders.⁹⁷ Were these Canton merchants the market maker of European commodities? What did they do in creating the luxury market? What is the structure of their trade network? How did the network run? Similar attentions should pay on also Fujian merchants and Ningbo merchant for they also engaged in maritime business.

Thirdly, it is also important to figure out the role of European missionaries in early European luxury and handicrafts market formation during the period. Take wine as example, there are always religious purposes both in Europe and in China. According to Chen Weiming, until 18th century there already numbers of Christians lived in Macau, majority of them were local Chinese. What was the missionaries’ intension for introducing wine? What was the amount of wine they consumed every year? There were many Jesuits serving in the imperial court. Did they also introduce these European pop culture products to Beijing? In addition, the study also pays attention on Western painters in court and watchmakers.

Fourthly, I want to analyze the extent of European consumer culture and habit that impact Chinese locals. Or in other words, how the locals westernized their consumer behaviors? In Macau, it is accepted that there was a clash of civilizations, between the Christian West and the Confucian Chinese.⁹⁸ Zhidong Hao examined the Chinese attitude towards Europeans since Ming Dynasty was “somewhat ambivalent”. They felt the Westerner were unfathomable, killed the Chinese and therefore could not be trusted. However, they admired the latter’s cultural materials like clocks, ships and weapon.⁹⁹ The different between political, ideological and culture existed, but many Chinese tried to negotiate those differences. It was possible in Macau, the negotiation and integration showed on food culture and the Chinese residents did showed the fond of European commodities. If they were accepted and consumed by mass, or only

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Chen Yunni, “Chaoshang Yanbian de Wenhua Genyuan,” *Chaoshan Businessman*, vol. 03, (2010): 55.

⁹⁸ Zhidong Hao, *Macau History and Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 92.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

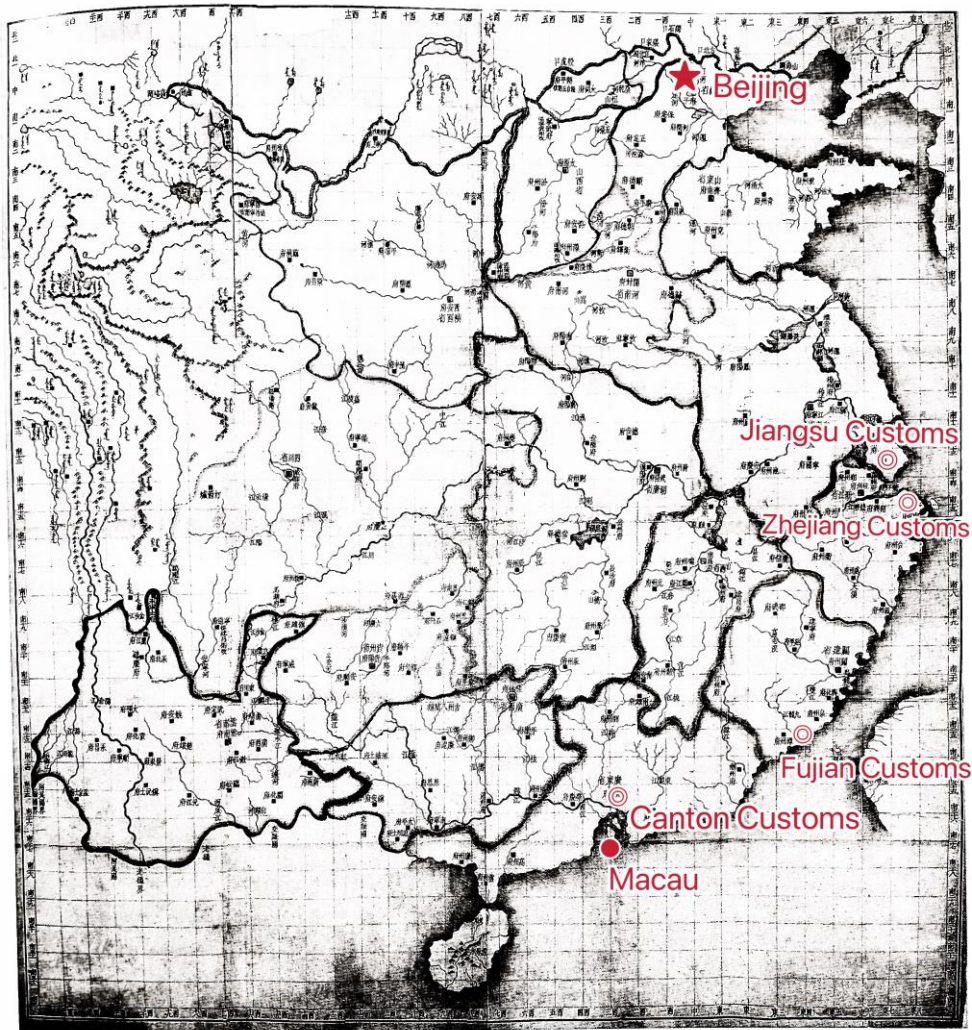
consumed by the higher class of Chinese?

Based on the situation above, this research first takes imperial consumption as the main research object. As the ruler of China, the emperor possesses great power and wealth. He and his family are the most able to consume luxury goods. The historical data preserved by the royal family is also sufficient to prove my conjecture, which will be described in detail in the next section of this chapter. Besides, assume Macau, Guangzhou and several other regions do have consumption of European luxury goods, it is unable to determine the consumption and specific consumer groups and behaviors. Therefore, I divided the consumers by region and social class for better observation.

According to the degree of economic development of coastal provinces, there are reasons to suspect that there is a circulation of European luxury goods in these areas. In reviewing relevant literature and archives, I find an historical map from Yongzheng 7th Year (1729).¹⁰⁰ I have highlighted the map in black and white and marked the four customs of Canton, Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu with the red mark “◎”, and Macau with “●”, in this map, Macao is located within Guangdong Province. I marked Beijing with the red “★” as the capital of the Qing Dynasty. The provincial boundaries are divided by thick black lines in the map. The following regions (Map 1-1) shows a certain degree of consumption of imported goods, especially luxury goods, in the early and middle Qing Dynasty. In order to make the analysis clearer, the research focuses on the following regions: 1) Macau, 2) Guangdong Province, especially Guangzhou city and 3) The Jiangnan Region, includes but not limited to provinces in south and east China like Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Anhui. 4) Beijing, located in the north. Further questions and hypotheses will also be raised geographically. Besides, the classification of hypothesis is not only based on the social economic condition, but also the political policy environment during Qing era before the Opium War.

¹⁰⁰ The map is completed in 1729 while author of it is untraceable. The names of places in the center, south, east and southeastern provinces of the map are marked in Chinese, while the northern and northwestern areas are written in Manchu. The map is collected in the The First Historical Archives of China (FHAC) and One Country Two Systems Research Center of Macau, eds. *Aomen Lishi Ditu Jingxuan* (Beijing: Sino-Culture Press, 2000), 47.

Map 1-1: The Middle, South and East Provinces of China – Zhili, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu, Huguang, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangxi, Guangdong (includes Guangzhou/Canton and Macau), Sichuan, Guizhou, etc. and the four Customs of China - Yue 粵 (Canton), Min 闽 (Fujian), Zhe 浙 (Zhejiang), Jiang 江 (Jiangsu)



The reasons for classification are as follows: Firstly, Macao enjoys unique geographical advantages. Its internal and external waterway transportation conditions are convenient, and it belongs to a shallow water port. In the age of sailing, it is very convenient for sailing ships to berth. Macau, as a port that been rented by the Portuguese form the 16th century, was completely open to westerners. The population structure of it is complex while the social economic condition differed much from in mainland China. In Ming and early Qing, the ban

on maritime trade or intercourse with foreign countries did influenced the development of Macau. However, the research topic begins from 1684, when Qing government cancelled the maritime ban. Since 1757 the “Single port commerce system” was implemented so that trade work in China could only take place at south port of Canton, the Guangzhou port. Macau’s unique advantages not appeared in its natural geographical feathers - the port berth condition and monsoon sail effects, more of its was the long-time stable trade supply that offered from South China though Guangzhou port which made it no doubt flourishing in commerce. The prosperity of commodity economy, the increasing of the population and the division of the labor, along with the improvement of the social material conditions had stimulated the further expansion of the living needs of Macau society.¹⁰¹ When considering the consumption of luxury commodities in Macau, both the economic and population structure should be analyzed.

Secondly, I assume that the luxury consumption situation in Guangzhou is different from other regions of Guangdong Province. Guangzhou is the place where Canton Customs located, in hundreds of years it was an open trade city of China, especially since the 1757 it became the only opened port. The frequently trade and open atmosphere would make Guangzhou more like a city or market area than other traditional agricultural regions. Will the Guangzhou residents more gradually accept the Western culture and to have Western consumption habit? Compared with Macau, Guangzhou did not allow foreigners to stay in non-trade seasons so its main residents are the Chinese locals instead of the foreigners. However, as a port-trade city its residents structure is different from most of mainland Chinese regions which often with a predominantly agricultural population. My question is where and how much these Guangzhou local citizen consumed European commodities? What is the population occupational or class structure? The *Hongs* 行, known as *lan tou* 揽头 which means the brokers and contractors since Ming dynasty, will be my main study object. The Qing government required the Western traders must work through Chinese merchants who could guarantee their good behavior and tax obligations. These merchants were after known as the *Thirteen-Hong* 广东十三行 in Guangzhou.¹⁰² Their identity is multiple - the traders between Macau and Mainland China, the

¹⁰¹ Chen Weiming, *Qingdai Aomen*, 1.

¹⁰² Zhao Liren, “Zailun Ming Qing Zhiji de Shisanhang yu Aomen Maoyi,” *Maritime History Studies*,

brokers trading with foreigners, the guarantor of foreign goods, tax and behavior, as well as the bridge between foreign businessmen and local officials. Some of them are also landlords and owners of warehouses. They are a group of people with a lot of wealth and directly contact foreigners. Whether they were fond of Western culture or just politely respecting foreign partners, they were more susceptible to Western influences and more possibility to be the luxury consumers. In addition, there were possibilities that luxury buyers and consumers are not the same group of people. Chinese has a tradition and culture of presenting gift, will the European handicrafts a kind of luxury gift? Who are the actual consumers? Besides, there have another question is whether the imported luxury was kind of mass consumption during the period?

Thirdly, hypothesis of this study is designed to determine whether the residents of other regions of Southern and Eastern China consumed imported luxury commodities. This study assume the behavior of European commodities consumption in other places of Guangdong, Fujian, Anhui, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. But exists. The basis of such hypothesis is the Hongs merchants, their ancestral home are most in Chaozhou region of Guangdong province, Huizhou of Anhui province and Quanzhou of Fujian province.¹⁰³ The consumption habits might be introduced by the merchants to their hometown. Besides, from 1684 to 1757, Jiang Custom in Shanghai, Zhe (Ningpo) Custom in Zhejiang, Min Custom in Fujian and Yue (Canton) Custom in Guangdong are opened for foreign trade. China's South-East coastal areas were all involved in the maritime trade cycle. It is possible that imported goods had become popular during this area, especially in the group of merchants who have the opportunities to contact the Western commodities. The last factor I consider most is the economic condition in these areas, especially in Jiangnan region (lower Yangtze River), had developed a mature commodity economic environment, or in other words, already in early capitalistic period. These regions located at the south of the Yangtze River, currently Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai, including eight prefecture centers: Suzhou, Songjiang (Shanghai), Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Jiangning (Nanjing), Hangzhou, Jiaxing and Huzhou. Li Bozhong did numbers of research on its economic condition. Li indicates that in early and middle Qing (1644-1850) the economic environment in Jiangnan is

vol. 2, (2005): 62-64.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 63.

similar to Europe and China was in “Early Modern”. Jiangnan’s overall economic level was improving, in the rural areas labor productivity had stagnated or declined and the agricultural and household handicraft production was low. However, labor productivity in cities and towns was increasing rapidly. Jiangnan economy was already a “dual economy” and the urban economy was in dominant position.¹⁰⁴ With the commodity production developing, the circulation of goods was spectacular and the merchants were active. Highly developed economies also bring cultural prosperity. In spite of the cultural goods and arts, the businessmen from all around China keened to build the chambers of commerce and to make friends with the celebrities and bigwigs.¹⁰⁵ For example the Lianghuai Salt Merchants who lived in Yangzhou built their luxury diet and food culture. Their diet consumption had several characteristics: grand scale, nice environment, music to entertain, with gorgeous tableware and newfangled food.¹⁰⁶ Whether European wine was new and attractive enough for them? If the merchants’ diet habits influenced the ordinary residents in consume the food? Furthermore, Jiangnan region has a better educational environment, in the elite education some Western science and technology and culture while in the mass education was business related, which makes Jiangnan people had a more open mind to new things.

Fourthly, Beijing, as the location of the imperial city and residence of the emperor and the imperial clan, was bounded to amass a great amount of wealth all over the country. There were also many European missionaries serving the court as painters, watchmakers, etc., who were also most likely promoters of luxury European goods. Therefore, in this part of the study, rather than focuses on Beijing city, I pay more attention on the consumption habits of the emperor and the imperial family. This part of the research accounts certain proportion since royal archives are much more abundant than private archives at present. This will be further explained in the next part of this chapter.

¹⁰⁴ Li Bozhong, *Duoshijiao Kan*, 315-317.

¹⁰⁵ Fan Jinming, “Ming Qing Diyu Shangren yu Jiangnan Wenhua” in *Jiangnan de Chengshi Gongye yu Difang Wenhua 960-1850*, eds. Li Bozhong and Zhou Shengchun (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2004): 95-116.

¹⁰⁶ Huang Weiwei, “Qingdai Lianghuai Yanshang yu Yangzhou Yinshi,” *Journal of Sichuan University of Science and Engineering (Social Sciences Edition)*, vol. 06, (2006): 17-18.

To sum up, China was under a grim moment of historical change at that time, it is hard to attributed the change to any one simple reason. To study in a global history perspective, there are many factors need to be took into consideration such as culture, people, world situation, etc. While the topic of this study is based on trade, therefore, questions and hypotheses of this study were raised base on the economic conditions of southern and eastern China, also the geographical, political and cultural aspects of certain areas.

1.3: Research materials and sources

Since the arrival of European traders in the early 16th century, the new European and Asian trade network emerges. The demand for new luxury goods sometimes has a hidden meaning, it has caused new capital accumulation among successful businessmen and handicraftsmen, and brought about new advantages for relatively large operators. There are numbers of researches on consumer society and material culture in England and northern Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. The European consumers need to purchase frequently small quantities of tea, sugar, and tobacco spurred the proliferation of shops which marked eighteenth-century England.¹⁰⁷ During this period, China's commodities exports expanding new market in Europe. Compared with the studies on European consumer society of the commodities from Eastern world, very few researches have been done about the European commodities in Eastern countries, for example, China. Chinese historians are generally not interested in research in this field and they seem to care more about the impact of silver in the Chinese market than on consumer goods. In order to fill this void, this study focuses on China's import and consumption of foreign imports in Qing Dynasty, based on the large number of historical sources from China. When studying this topic, I realized that this is indeed a difficult topic, because the Chinese sources currently we have are difficult to support the discussion on these "foreign goods". And when analyzing the studies from Western views, the mass of western-language data preserved in the archives of the former East India companies and those of the Spanish and Portuguese

¹⁰⁷ Cissie Fairchilds, "Consumption in Early Modern Europe. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Oct. 1993): 854.

empires in Asia are often have an undeniably Europe-centered character and bias.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, I insist that in order to understand China better, the entry point should from Chinese sources with the base of local situation and cultural background.

Through the analysis of historical archives, gazetteers and databases, the study of European commodities consumption in China from 1684 to 1840 is able to understand the consumption volume, classes and habits in different regions of China. I clarify the research by the specific object of the imperial family, along with the classification of regions: Macau, Guangdong (especially Guangzhou), Jiangnan Region (mainly Jiangsu and Zhejiang, Shanghai was included in Jiangsu during Qing), by collecting the primary sources. At the beginning of the study, I gathered the following materials, and subsequently adjusts the selection and focus of the materials as the study progressed, in order to give a better illustration.

1.3.1 Planned of cross-referencing the data and the materials

- Local taxation

The regional or local taxation of the province listed below will be important references to concerning the regional economic condition and commercial activities. In fiscal administration of Qing, the highest department was the Board of Revenue (Hu Bu 户部) and with various of departments under its jurisdiction, forming a centralized structure which extended into the provinces and localities. However, the flow of financial resources was decentralized and provinces had considerable fiscal autonomy.¹⁰⁹ The local governments first took out enough to cover their own expenditures then pay Board of Revenue. The financial commissioner (Buzhengshi 布政使) was officially responsible for financial administration in each province and only report to the provinces governors (Zongdu 总督 and Xunfu 巡抚) not the central Board of Revenue. Although every year the record of both national and local revenues and expenditures were carefully recorded, it provided little information about actual financial flows,

¹⁰⁸ Leonard Blusse, in Yong Liu, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China: 1757 – 1781*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), vii.

¹⁰⁹ Takeshi Hamashita, Linda Grove and Mark Selden, eds. *China, East Asia and the Global Economy*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 27-28.

concentrating instead on officially balancing the accounts.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it is better to focus more on local than the center, for different provinces might have different methods on taxation.

There are five taxes in early and middle Qing that collected by the Qing government: land tax, tribute grain, salt tax, customs duties and miscellaneous taxes including a fish tax, tea tax, mineral taxes, etc.¹¹¹ There are two types of taxes charged on handicrafts and wine: commodity tax and the custom duties.¹¹² Commodity tax, which is a type of miscellaneous tax, for wine is named *you jiu shui* 油酒税 (oil and alcohol tax). Compared with salt and tea, Qing government did not impose much consumption or commodity taxes on miscellaneous tax. Early Qing's management of alcohol mainly reflected in ban or prohibits the wine industry and the taxes issued on the registered wine producers.¹¹³ The tax policy of wine modified several times, mainly in late Qing since 1853, because of Qing government's financial crisis after the Opium War. In early and middle Qing the count on commodity tax of wine is very low, especially since Qianlong Period, viewing by appearance, because making wine is forbidden, the central government did not required for it. In some region far away from Beijing, for example, in Sichuan Province, to charge the alcohol wine became a way for local official to "earn money and to put in their own pockets".¹¹⁴

For example, Li Bozhong calculated that on 1850 the consumption quantity of rice wine in Jiangnan region is 7.2 million *dan* 石, approximately equal to 201.6 million kilograms. This data is estimated base on the number of consumers of rice in making wine in Suzhou, with no direct evidence of rice wine consumption.¹¹⁵ It is an "estimated value". There might be errors, but allowable. However, European wines are not made in China, the local government might possibly not charge the commodity taxes on it. And I did not find any information about the Qing government charging commodity tax on imported crafts. Therefore, for information about

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹¹ Ni Yuping, *Customs duties in the Qing Dynasty, ca.1644-1911* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 19.

¹¹² Xiao Junsheng, "Wanqing Jiushui Zhengce de Yanbian Lunxi," *Social Science Journal*, vol. 03 (2008): 150-155.

¹¹³ Guo Xu, *The Research of Alcohol Industry Development and Social Cultural Changes in Modern China*, PhD Thesis, (Jiangnan University, 2015), 191.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Li Bozhong, *Agricultural Development in Jiangnan, 1620-1850* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 22.

imported goods in terms of taxation, we can only get the relevant data from the custom duties, not the miscellaneous tax. While, to focus on local taxation will also help me understand better the regional economic developing condition and residents' daily consumption. It will be an important reference source for me.

- The custom duties data

Compared with miscellaneous taxes, which the wine tax that probably not recorded, the data of custom duties would be closer to my topic and it will show useful data. Qing China had a custom system of *Changguan* 常关 (ports and gates serving domestic trade) and *Yangguan* 洋关 (ports serving foreign trade).¹¹⁶ In Qing China the domestic commodities had formed a regular network, mostly transport by waterway shipping, usually will pass the Changguan customs.¹¹⁷ Compared to the Changguan, which are not sure whether miscellaneous taxes are levied on imported goods, Yuanguan definitely charges the import duties. These data will be necessary and important for me. The number of imported goods and tax rates will be documented. As the officers reported to the central government usually the taxes amount rather than specific goods, these data could only be collected from the local archives where the custom located.

The four customs of Yue 粤, Min 闽, Zhe 浙 and Jiang 江 recorded the data of the imported commodities. This study pays more attention on the Yue Customs in Canton. On 1685 Emperor Kangxi established this customs and it with 7 general ports including: Daguean, Macau, Huizhou, Chaozhou, Gaozhou, Qiongzhou and Leijian ports, and with more than 40 subordinate, with which recorded all the import and export goods and ships go through Guangdong.¹¹⁸ The Yue custom charged three kinds of taxes: 1) shipping tax, count according to the size of ships; 2) commodity tax, count upon the weight of commodities; and 3) additional tax.¹¹⁹ The object of study on European luxury was counted in commodity tax. However, in the actual research, as I

¹¹⁶ Ni Yuping, *Customs duties*, 19.

¹¹⁷ Xu Jianqing, "Qingdai Qianqi de Niangjiuye," *Studies in Qing History*, vol. 03 (1994): 48.

¹¹⁸ Li Jinming, "Qingdai Yuehaiguan de Shezhi yu Guanshui Zhengshou," *The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, vol. 04, (1995): 28.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, 31-34.

was not able to find detailed records of the relevant data from the Qing Dynasty Customs, I could only present the growth of imported goods from the approximate trend of tax increase. The related discussion will be conducted in the next chapter.

- The merchants' documents

In addition, the imported data might be easier collect from the Hong merchants' documents. According to the Qing policy, Hong were the brokers were responsible for all the foreign trader's activities in Guangzhou. The custom duties and the following sales work would be done in China only by the Chinese merchants, not the foreigners. Therefore, these Chinese merchants might calculate and record the data of the trade, including contracts, good lists, tax receipt, as well as the letters communicated with Macau traders. It is also possible that the Chinese merchants themselves were the importer of the foreign wine. I tried to find as much as these historical records in the archives of China. In fact, there are little data retention that makes it unable to find much information.

- The gazetteers of each county

Zhong Guo Di Fang Zhi 中国地方志 is the integration of various local gazetteers and chronicle and it will be an important source. It was classified by provinces, has collected the data from Han Dynasty (202 B.E.C - 220 B.E.C.) to the end of the Republic of China (1949). It contains each county's environment, land, population, taxes, education, military, officers, elections and other information. Due to the slow government intervention in commodity trading, accurate business consumption figures of European commodity consuming could not be acquired directly, but the local behavior and cultural affairs was recorded. From local records, it can be known that if there were squires, local nobles and officials consumed European goods in ceremonies or mentioned in some civil disputes, as well as the mass. The custom of the region was also studied in this research.

1.3.2 The practical application of Chinese sources: the Qing imperial documents and files from FHAC, the Macao documents from Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT),

Di Fang Zhi, and others.

Although in the actual research, it is very difficult to find information such as merchant manifests and detailed tax data, other sources such as emperors' edicts, official memorials, annual tariff revenue, etc. can also reflect in some extent the situation of China's trade with Europe, along with the consumption of European good in imperial family. And they can also help me better understand the operating logic of the Qing government in foreign trade. The sources this study adopts are as follows:

- Imperial files from the First Historical Archives of China (FHAC) which located in Beijing, inside the Forbidden City.

Although the coastal ports are the main places for overseas trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is difficult for me to find sources before the 1840 Opium War in southern China such as Fujian, perhaps because of political changes and war, or similar to other tropical coastal regions all around the world, the hot and humid climate is also unkind to the preservation of manuscripts. Fortunately, FHAC preserves many precious Qing Dynasty sources, especially those since middle 18th century. As a centralized and relatively closed country, the emperor had the supreme power. The Qing government was a feudal government composed mainly of Manchu nobilities and collaborating with Han landlords. Its political system has undergone some reforms and creations on the basis of the Ming Dynasty, making the central monarchy system to its peak.¹²⁰ This dictatorship is also closely integrated with ethnic rule, so the central government of the Qing Dynasty have the characteristics of: in central, the emperor divided the work among several departments to manage at the same time to limit officials' excessive power; while in local, the governor (Zong Du 总督) and grand coordinator (Xun Fu 巡抚) will be set up in some important areas at the same time, to prevent the power of the governor from being too large and causing local secession. At the same time, the Qing government adopted measures that were both united and preventive against Han people in terms of ethnic management. In various official positions, there are fixed ratios for different ethnics.

¹²⁰ Qin Guojing, *Ming Qing Danganxue* (Beijing: Xue Yuan Publisher, 2016), 6.

The Qing government also established an institution specialized, named Li Fan Yuan 理藩院 to manage the affairs of Mongolian, Hui Muslim, Tibetan and other ethnic minority. In addition, the Qing Dynasty started with the Eight Banners army since their origin for Northern of China, and adopted military-political integration measures in military management. The head of Eight Banners were all under the direct command of the emperor. The Eight Banners, especially the Manchurian Eight Banners, were the most credible armed forces of the Qing Dynasty and were stationed in Beijing as well as in the all places of strategic importance of the country.¹²¹

Based on the understanding of administrative structure in Qing Dynasty, the study gives a better insight into historical events through these FHAC imperial files. Imperial documents such as the memorials in somewhat sufficient to reflect local conditions. Local officials and customs officials were obliged to report to the emperor on important matters that have occurred in the local area, including but not limited to foreign ships visits and customs revenues, etc. The emperor's decree, national laws and regulations and other materials are also important historical research references. All valuable information are currently stored in FHAC.

Founded in 1925, FHAC is a national archive that specializes in the archives and imperial archives of the central government of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and mainly Qing. It contains 10 million of imperial historical documents, which includes more than 3,000 files of the Ming Dynasty while all the rest are files of the Qing Dynasty. Among these files, Chinese (Han Language) files account for about 80%, Manchu files account for about 20%, Mongolian files for more than 50,000 items, and a small number of other ethnic scripts and foreign languages files in English, French, German, Russian, Japanese, etc. FHAC is the largest historical archives in China and has collected almost all the imperial Qing archives that can be seen now.¹²² It also cooperated with local archives then compiled and published some of the archives. Currently the Qing Dynasty materials which open to the public and what I will use are mainly:

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 7-11.

¹²² "The First Historical Archives of China", Introduction of FHAC, last modified 29 March 2021, <https://www.fhac.com.cn/consult.html#check1>

- Ti Ben (题本 Reports to Emperors)

It is the official documents of the central and local senior officials who present their official duties to the emperor and submit them to the cabinet. According to the subject department, Ti Ben can be divided through six departments or Ministries: Personnel, Revenue, Ritual, War, Punishment and Works. These Ti Ben are written in both Manchu and Chinese (Han) languages, and generally written very long. But after reading the contents of it, you will find that many of them are semantic repetitions. The amount of information does not depend on the length of the Ti Ben. Writing in this format is based on the normative requirements of its own style.

- Zhu Pi Zou Zhe (朱批奏折 The Memorials with Emperor's comments)

The memorials (Zou Zhe) were the document that the officials reported the incident directly to the emperor. They can be roughly divided into four categories: to pay respects to the emperor, to express gratitude, to pend approval and to report events. The first type of document generally has no substantive content, and it is mainly for a ritual need. The second category is also due to etiquette requirements, but most of the officials wrote it because there are pre-events, such as the emperor gave a reward of gift to the official. The third category is also based on pre-events, where officials made requests or appeals to the emperor and wait for the consent of the emperor. The forth ones, the event report memorials are various and complicated. These are the main sources this research adopts. The official reports events include internal affairs, military affairs, diplomatic affairs, self-government affairs, and trivial matters from the people. Most of them are not stamped and directly reported to the emperor. Therefore, the degree of confidentiality of them are very high. "Zhu Pi" means the comments that written by the emperor, as the feedback to officials' reports. These kinds of files are usually neatly written.

- Lu Fu Zou Zhe (录副奏折 Extra Copy of Memorials to the Emperor)

They are the extra copies of Zhu Pi Zou Zhe, kept in the Grand Council as a backup file. It is a lot of repetition with the Zhu Pi Zou Zhe, but without emperor's comments. Reading this kind of information is mainly for the purpose of matching the Zhu Pi Zou Zhe to avoid missing and mistakes.

- Jun Ji Chu Shang Yu Dang (军机处上谕档 Edict Records)

Shang Yu Dang is a summary transcript of the emperors' decree held in the Grand Council (Jun Ji Chu 军机处), which is divided into two types: "Public" and "Send". The former one is a publicly issued emperor's decrees, which announced over around the whole country. The "Send" ones are individual decrees that specifically sent to a few officials, with a certain level of confidentiality. They are often drafted by the military minister in central government and then issued by the emperor.

- Nei Wu Fu Cheng Wen (内务府呈文 Documents of Imperial Household Department)

Nei Wu Fu also names Imperial Household Department is an institution to manage the internal affairs of the Qing imperial family and the activities of the inner palace. These documents records all daily records such as detailed expenditures, repairs, and purchases in the court. Most of these documents that have been preserved are from the Jiaqing era after 1800. More early Nei Wu Fu documents are included in various collections already published by FHAC in the early years.

- Da Qing Li Chao Shi Lu/ Qing Shi Lu (大清历朝实录/清实录 The Veritable Records of the Qing)

It is a compilation of official chronicle historical records, mainly recording activities of edicts and memorials, as well as the emperors' daily life, weddings, funerals, sacrifices, etc. Now in FHAC it is already digitalized.

- Qin Ding Da Qing Hui Dian/ Qing Hui Dian (钦定大清会典/清会典 record of laws and systems of Qing Dynasty)

Qing Hui detailed recorded the establishment, powers, officials' grade, reporting relationship and the administrative system of the central government of the Qing Dynasty. It was the legal basis for handling official business at the time. Now in FHAC it is already digitalized.

- Several published files such as Zou Zhe (奏折 Memorials) in Chinese and Manchu script, Za Dang (杂档 Miscellaneous Files), Qing Dan (清单 Detailed list), etc.

FHAC has published a number of scanned of these archives over the past decades, including some memorials that are no longer available for review, as well as some miscellaneous files, detailed lists, etc. Due to the protection of these precious manuscripts, FHAC has closed the access to the original documents and is slowly digitizing them. There are some very valuable reference materials that have been scanned and published. They would also become the very important primary sources I would use in the research.

These sources of FHAC are imperial, so they are official documents and records. They can express the official attitude during different period of Qing. However, considering the state capacity of Qing court, administrative management methods, the effectiveness of information exchange before 18th century, the habitual expression of the Chinese, etc., these documents also have some possibilities of uncertainty and falsity. For example, first of all, when local officials reported some content, they were likely to exaggerate or conceal the facts. Officials in the Qing Dynasty only worked in one place for a few years and then transferred to other areas. So what they written may be discrepancies with the actual situation, just to give the emperor a good impression. Secondly, with these sources I have not find any very detailed list of foreign trade, especially those about import and export commodities. The locals did not report these details to the emperor. Obviously, before the Opium War, the four major customs offices were still managed in a not standardized or scientific manner, when local officials reported to the emperor, they seem did not want to explain too much detail, if the emperor not required for it. In addition, because of the different habits of different officials, they express various ways when reporting similar data, which is easy to make confuse. Thirdly, there are very few archives remain about Kangxi period, while Emperor Kangxi was quite interested in Western culture and reined the country for 61 years (1661-1722), which makes it difficult to compare its era with the later Yongzheng, Qianlong, Jiaqing and Daoguang era. The specific questions and analysis will be mentioned later.

- Collection of the Forbidden City Museum

Although both the FHAC and the Palace Museum are located within the Forbidden City, they are part of two different administrative units; the FHAC primarily contains and consolidates

the written archives, while all of the material collections are under the management and restoration of the museum. The museum has well preserved a large number of Qing court furnishings, including hundreds of imported clocks from the Qianlong period, along with several originals portrait and maps. It has included these Qing Dynasty collections in separate halls and has gradually computerized and visualized them over the Internet over the last decade. Many of the collections that cannot be seen in the offline halls for heritage conservation reasons have also been opened to the public through online access. The Palace Museum has also published many books and journals, which are of considerable reference value to me.

- The Macao documents from Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo

In this research, Macao, as the only port of China allowed foreigners to live at that time, was undoubtedly a very important research object. During the period from 1553 to 1842, the Chinese government of the Ming and Qing Dynasties exercised sovereignty over Macao, while allowing the Portuguese to live there.¹²³ Macao had a special status and role in the world at the time. It linked Britain, France, Russia, United States, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Brunei, the Philippines and other countries through shipping and other contacts. It became the gathering place of foreign ships, the center of the intersection of eastern and western cultures. As China's foreign trade and communication port, its rise and fall was also linked to the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people along the coast of Guangdong and Fujian.¹²⁴ Searching for relevant Macau related files, I also find *Collection of Macao Chinese Archives in Qing Dynasty*, the collection of the Chinese archives copied from Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon, Portugal.¹²⁵ This collection of files includes more than 1,500 Chinese documents, including correspondence between the Qing government and Portuguese administrators, the local administration situation, finance and taxation, judicial trials, land, population, customs taxation, Catholic related content, etc. They are important

¹²³ Huang Qichen, "Aomen Zhuquan Wenti de Lishi Shenshi," *Journal of Sun Yatsen University (Social Science Edition)*, vol.3 (1999): 16.

¹²⁴ Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, eds. *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an Huibian* (Macao: Macao Foundation, 1999), 1.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

sources to study Macao trade.

- Di Fang Zhi (地方志 Gazetteers, Chorography or Chronicles)

Information on foreign trade and merchandise imports in the early and mid-Qing dynasties can also be found in local chronicles. *Yue Hai Guan Zhi* (粤海关志 *Chronicles of Canton Customs*), *Xia Men Zhi* (厦门志 *Chronicles of Xiamen*) and *Ao Men Ji Lue* (澳门纪略 *Macao Chronicle*) recorded the information of Guangdong, Xiamen, and Macau around the 18th century. They are sources most relevant to my research and will also become my main reference materials.

- Various Chinese Literary Works: folk biographies, novels, poems, etc.

In the course of this research, unfortunately there are rare valuable records of the trade in imported goods, but some literary works such as novels and poems reflect that these goods were indeed consumed by certain wealthy classes. The Ming and Qing dynasties were very popular periods for fiction literature, which reflected the social customs and the taste of the intellectual class at that time. In addition, many folk scholars also wrote literature in genres such as classical books and travelogues, which are also important sources for this research on consumption.

- Other Chinese and English Archives and Materials

In addition to the material from China, there are many valuable archives deposited with Europe. For example, there is a set of files numbered FO 1048 stored in the British National Archives. It was the which is *East India Company: Select Committee of Supercargoes, Chinese Secretary's Office: Chinese-language Correspondence and Papers, 1793-1834*. This series contains Chinese-language correspondence and papers of the Office of the Chinese secretary to the Select Committee of Supercargoes of the East India Company in Canton and Macao, most of them relates to trade and associated matters. Although the correspondence between some of these merchants is not directly related to the subject of my research (foreign goods sold to China), it can also help to understand how East India Company traded with Hong merchants at that time.

Although the materials in Chinese are not as detailed as those in European languages, wit can

be seen that the Chinese government and Chinese merchants' methods and methods in foreign trade, it will be different from the views under the Eurocentric examination. Due to the monitoring on the economic and financial aspects of the Qing regime and the strict management of the migration and ethics, we can in some extent understand the foreign trade situation in the middle and early Qing by summarizing and analyzing these first-hand materials. I will try to consider some questions, such as the What was the attitude of the Qing government's attitude towards tributary trade and private trade? why the Qing government chose Canton/Yue Customs as the main path for foreign trade? What is the operation of the other three customs? What are the functions of Jiang, Zhe, Min customs in foreign trade? I believe the files from FHAC and Macao, as well as the chronicles can answer my questions in some extent. And by restoring specific historical events, we can better understand the logic of the Qing government in foreign relations – why the emperors are more willing to regard it as a political diplomacy than simply business trade.

1.3.3 Application of SNA and GECM database

Though the sources and data collection methods were listed above, the following steps of how to integrate and analysis the data is also important. This study will be done with the support of GECM database, which records all the related historical comprehensive sources from Europe, America and China that could be analyzed. This database built based on social network analysis (SNA) logic, which is not only means the digital and online networks but also such networks like face-to-face relationship, political associations and connections, economic transactions among business enterprises, and geopolitical relations among nation states and international agencies, which is advanced and with strong practicability.¹²⁶ SNA is a set of methodological techniques that aim to describe and explore the patterns apparent in social relationship that individuals and groups from with each other.¹²⁷ The social network analysis seeks to beyond the visualization of social relations to an examination of their structural properties and their

¹²⁶ John Scott, *Social Network Analysis: 4th Edition* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2017), 2.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

implications for social action.

Historians also use many of these social network analysis approach and methodology to solve the problem and display the historical phenomenon. “Databases have been built by Historians in order to gather a large number of data sources and therefore allowing this information to be analyzed with new computational tools. Most of these tools have been developed for digitization and geo-referencing of historical maps; reconstruction of past boundaries; and geo-referencing of historical microdata (such as census or parish records).”¹²⁸ Many software and application were chosen, for example, the Geographically-Integrated History (GIS) Application. Pinto, Nogueira, Wachowicz and Polónia, for example, presented their 16th century trade design for a network analysis of historical data sources based on the GIS application. They revealed the mechanisms of cooperation among merchants that tied together the self-organizing commercial networks of the First Global Age (1400-1800), particularly about the network of Simón Ruiz, an important Iberian merchant in the 16th century. The GIS application developed for supporting the spatial visualization and subsequent exploration of the nodes of such a network, their orientation, extension and intensity is explained. Their result is a good practicing of GIS development in support. Many other types of software are also used in solving historical problems.

The GECEM database is also a practice of SNA and all the data collected by the team members will be record into it, not only the European commodity data from China, but also the porcelain, tea, silk, etc. all involved in. The traders’ name, their geographical trade area and routes, kinship and networks, the structure, commodity distribution, along with the information about manufacturers, brokers, agents, consumers, etc. will be recorded in this huge database.¹²⁹ Based on an open access software solution developed and designed under MariaDB, the data could not only be recorded, but also make my analysis visualized.¹³⁰ A new multi-relational

¹²⁸ Sara Pinto, et al., “Mapping 16th Century Trade Networks: a GIS Application for Historical Data Sources,” *13th AGILE International Conference on Geographic Information Science*, (2010).

¹²⁹ Manuel Perez-Garcia, et al., “Big Data and ‘New’ Global History: Global Goods and Trade Networks in Early Modern China and Europe.” *Itinerario*, vol. 46, issue 1 (2022): 14-39.

¹³⁰ Manuel Perez-Garcia and Manuel Diaz-Ordoñez, “GECEM Project Database: A digital humanities solution to analyse complex historical realities in early modern China and Europe,” *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* (2022): fqac046.

database to test the “industrious revolution” hypothesis and present the “vicarious consumption” theory as an alternative model for analyzing the eighteenth-century circulation of Chinese goods in the Western Mediterranean region was made.¹³¹ This database would be a practice of integration for the cross-referencing sources, help us to search later, and with software to find the inner link between different commercial groups or merchants.¹³²

Besides, it is also a good practicing of global historical research of teamwork in the GECEM project, similar to Sachsenmaier’s advices of “work in team”. Experts from different background develop a shared set of questions, in which the methodological multi perspectives can produce multiplex framework in global historical analysis. People’s educational background and environmental experience will make him or her has cognitive limitations, so I consider a more interdisciplinary and cross-cultural cooperation. Researchers with different knowledge systems and ways of thinking rely on a certain technical means, with which a number of historical data could be used for horizontal comparison and contacting. The GECEM research team is based on this logic with team mates of Spanish, Mexican and Chinese. They speak English, Spanish, Chinese, French and German and come from different education background of history, international relations, economics, mathematics, management and marketing. They are been educated and have research experiences in China, Spain, Italy, Mexico and Britain. Knowledge in different field and our diversified background and thinking mode makes the research result have a height that in individual work definitely cannot reach. Therefore, the research result of European luxury consumption in China also will not focus on those expensive European goods only, it aims to reflect more on the consumption and economic history, and maybe can have new findings.

In spite of the design of the ideal methodology, there are also predictable difficulties. In the study of European goods consumption, I found some problems from questions design:

¹³¹ Manuel Perez-Garcia, “Consumption of Chinese goods in southwestern Europe: a multi-relational database and the vicarious consumption theory as alternative model to the industrious revolution (eighteenth century).” *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, vol.52 (2019): 15-36.

¹³² Manuel Perez-Garcia and Manuel Diaz-Ordoñez, “GECEM Project Database version 2021,” GECEM Project Database, last modified May 2022, www.gecemdatabase.eu

First of all, the period of the study spans three centuries, from 1680 to 1840, covering 160 years, and the study area covers many provinces and cities in the Jiangnan region of China, as well as Guangdong and Macau, making the study very large in both time and geographic scope. How to select the most useful data and how to design the sampling method is very important. In fact, at the beginning I tended to obtain customs data and merchant transaction records for all the relevant provinces and cities, but in fact this information was very scarce. Therefore, I abandoned the use of mathematical and statistical calculations to assess the social consumption situation at that time. Instead, I choose to focus more on the well-documented imperial consumption situation and to approach and think about this issue, which should be in the realm of economics, from a more humanistic perspective.

Secondly, as the Chinese do not like to record the value accurately, after going through archives, I confirmed that the data will be recorded as accurate value, or just a very general description. There are many reasons why Chinese did not document the information in detail. For example, there is a serious corruption in Yue Custom. The officers did not follow the uniform tax collection standards. They are free to increase taxes, arranging their families to work in the Custom department, and collecting tax repeatedly. It was even a cause of Opium War between China and Britain.¹³³ In this atmosphere, officials are likely to choose not to record, or record less tax revenue, which will produce data bias. Besides, some Chinese businessmen are accustomed to using the argot or code to record commercial information to prevent the leakage of their commercial secrets. And some businessmen even have many different names when they doing the trade, in order to avoid the Qing government's personal control.

Thirdly, similar to reasons mentioned above, I need to be particularly careful in finding some "false official data". The officials' focus on performance and fear of punishment, and the fact that the emperor was far away in Beijing and always emphasized his great power and authority, inevitably led to deception. During the course of this research, I also find that the facts of a same thing expressed by different people can be contradictory, this part will be elaborate later

¹³³ Li Jinming, *Qingdai Yuehaiguan*, 36.

in this thesis.

Fourthly, there might be a possibility that some documents are lost. China had experienced many wars, even after the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949, there were still many revolutions and movements happened. The traditional commercial system was broken and restructuring. All of these will result in that the historical sources of consumption and business will be damaged. When consulted the materials at FHAC, I found that there are far fewer archives from the Kangxi and Yongzheng eras (late 17th to early 18th century) compared to those from the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods (after the mid-18th century). I have consulted the staff of the archives and received the information that it may had something to do with a fire in history, or maybe there was a custom in the palace to destroy old files. I also found that many of the archives cited in historiographical works published before the 1990s are currently no longer open to the public at FHAC. This limited me to secondary citations of research data from many earlier published historians at times during the writing of the dissertation. In this study, I have tried best to restore the historical truth with the limited historical information she could find.

In conclusion, few studies were done on Early and Middle Qing foreign luxury consumption in China, but that does not mean there is no research value for this topic. The main reason is the selecting and analyzing process of data is quite difficult. That is also the reason why this research is meaningful. I have done all I could to make estimations by cross-referencing diverse sources such as the memorials of the official documents, the Imperial Household Department records, the taxes records and the gazetteers. This study also adopts data that selected by other GECEM team members from the Archives in Europe. Through analysis of comparison and connection of the data and sources, this study views the topic in a more global perspective and pays attention to Eurocentric and Sinocentric both. This study aims to obtain specific data and analyze the "early European luxury market in China". It is significant to comprehend the consumption societies of early modern China and its economic and historical meaning. Meanwhile, I also want to improve relevant theories and research methods, as well as to make more innovations.

CHAPTER II

Operation of the Four Major Customs and the Increase of Foreign Trade Volume

In the research of Chinese economic history, how to examine it from a global perspective has always been an issue worth discussion. In recent studies of global history, Western scholars usually lead the mainstream, which makes the trend inevitably lean towards Eurocentrism when analyzing China. Therefore, Chinese global historians suggest when considering the role China played in global economic history, both “Comparative” and “Sinological” approaches need to be concerned. China usually was under comparison with Europe to find out why it was not industrialized, and the comparison also examined China’s achievements and when and how the achievements were made.¹³⁴ Before putting China into a perspective of global frame, it is necessary to understand specific particularities of Chinese society. To use Chinese historical sources as an entry point will be a good way to understand Chinese economic history. Therefore, in this chapter, I mainly use Chinese historical sources, to discover the global history of China beyond Eurocentric perspective. This chapter first explains the perceptions and attitudes of Chinese rulers on foreign trade, then analyzes the Chinese customs system around the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, in order to find out China’s role in world trade. At the same time, the study also explains the operation and taxation of four major customs in the early and middle Qing Dynasty of China, provoking thoughts about how European goods enter the Chinese market.

¹³⁴ Kent G. Deng, “A Critical Survey,” 1-2.

2.1: The Qing court's attitude towards foreign trade: the official tributary system and private maritime trade

China was highly involved in world trade since Europeans explored the new world in late 15th century. Later the Portuguese started to settle down in Macau since the 16th century. During centuries before the Opium War, trade between China and South Asian and Europe was always active. However, since the 14th century, from Ming and Qing Dynasty, the Chinese rulers did not attach importance to or encourage the foreign trade for such a long time because they trust the sea trade could bring to the country fewer benefits than it spent.¹³⁵ Ming Dynasty rulers held the opinion that it was not worthy to open up to the outside world since China was ahead of the rest of the world that superior in farming techniques, as well as with a larger and more unified market.¹³⁶ The value for the government to encourage foreign trade was not as much as it costed to against Japanese pirates and control over maritime commerce.¹³⁷ In addition, the ruler observed that “pirate would turn into merchants if the market is open and merchants would become pirates if the market is banned”. Because they believed the merchants on the sea are not easy to control as the farmers on land.¹³⁸ Maritime trade was never a simple trade behavior. What is hidden behind it is not only the consistent external logic of the Ming and Qing Rulers, but also the concern of diplomatic relations. Long coastline makes the rulers did not take into account the energy and financial resources everywhere, so did not encourage maritime trade since the Ming Dynasty at the same time made the process of naval construction also into a passive. By late 16th century and early 17th century, Chinese mercantile activities and settlement were ubiquitous, but “no maritime foreign policy had developed to stiffen her presence, convert her settlements into colonies and her trade into the control of the source of production, and to defend the new frontier. Instead, trade and settlement abroad remained purely the work of private enterprise and policy on China coast had been abandoned to the devices of local officials

¹³⁵ Zhiguo Kong, *The Making of a Maritime Power: China's Challenges and Policy Responses* (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 6.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 7.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 8.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, 88-89.

and powerful merchants in the late Ming.”¹³⁹

Government intentions and civil behaviors on the maritime showed great desynchronization. It was difficult for Ming, as well as the following Qing rulers to reverse the attitude toward overseas trade from the traditional tributary system cognition. Even from 1684 until 1757, the Qing maintained the policy that open door for the Chinese, European and other Asian trade, they are treated as private commerce, as distinct from official trade granted to states which submitted to the Chinese “calendar”.¹⁴⁰ However, the tributary system is always in the “calendar”. Qing is a continental power from northern with limited experiences of maritime trade and relationship managements, so Qing government adopted Ming precedents that recorded and reported by the officials.¹⁴¹ Therefore, Qing also inherits a set of tributary logic for overseas relations of the Ming Dynasty. This tributary system of Ming is for the people of surrounding states to voluntarily submit themselves to Ming over lordship so they could gain cultural advantage, political prestige, military protection, as well as economic benefits.¹⁴² The tributary state would send “tributary missions” to the Ming capital and present “tribute” (gong 贡) of local goods to the emperor. It also explained why the ruler of Ming call himself “emperor” (Di 帝) but the foreign rulers are “kings” (wang 王) or other lower ranks.¹⁴³ The Ming emperors granted gifts, while the tributaries present tribute. These gifts should be present in an official calendar based on Ming reign dates, official seals, and robes. “Ming rulers were anxious to establish and maintain tributary relations with foreign states, both for security purposes and to bolster their position and prestige as regional hegemon, even though these relations were often financially expensive for the Ming.”¹⁴⁴

Similar tributary rhetoric, regulation and policies are evident in many official Qing documents, such as *The Veritable Records of the Qing* (*Qing Shi Lu* 清实录) and *Record of Law and System*

¹³⁹ Weng Eang Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade, 1684-1798* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 320.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 324.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, 320.

¹⁴² Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 120.

¹⁴³ Kathlene Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam: Negotiating Borders in Early Modern Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 52-53.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 53.

of Qing (*Da Qing Hui Dian* 大清会典). Visual records such as ranges of maps, encyclopedias, and almanacs to the imperial imperially commissioned ten-volume compendium titled *Huangqing Zhigong Tu* (Illustrations of the tribute-bearing people of the imperial Qing, 1761), along with the painting like *Wan Guo Lai Chao Tu* (Illustration of the myriad countries coming to pay tribute at court), produced by two of the Emperor Qianlong's painters Yao Wenhan (dates unknown) and Zhang Tingyan (1735-1794).¹⁴⁵ The tributary system is not the sole mechanism for the conduct of Chinese foreign relations, but it remained an extremely important frame of reference for policymakers throughout the Qing period.¹⁴⁶ "It is the Chinese version of imperialism, not by territorial conquest or economic exploitation, but the control of ideas and cultural domination."¹⁴⁷ The Chinese tradition diplomacy that based on Confucian concept is differed from European counterpart which stressed legal equality of nation and the sanctity of sovereignty.¹⁴⁸ Upon this concept, China was not equal to her peripheral states for it was the superior "middle kingdom". China produced the dominate civilization that states around it were civilized only to the extent that they concept Chinese ideas, customs, and institutions. "China was a world in itself, not a nation among nations and that no other human authority was equal to the Son of Heaven in China".¹⁴⁹

Therefore, Qing's foreign trade logic is as follows: The first is the foreign relations under the tributary system. China needs to occupy an absolutely dominant position and makes all other states dependent, and goods these states brought to China are not "commodities", but "tributes", gifts for the emperor. Secondly, the tributary system and private trade are two completely independent systems in rulers' opinions. The private trade was not cared much by the rulers. The central court will only pay attention to these overseas trades and costal activities while maintaining the safety of coastal defense and increasing customs revenue.

When referring to the tributary system, economic and financial issues were not considered by

¹⁴⁵ Richard J. Smith, *The Qing Dynasty and Traditional Chinese Culture* (USA: Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, 2015), 217-218.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 218.

¹⁴⁷ Tsai, *The Eunuchs*, 120.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

the Qing emperors. They paid more attention to whether the tributary countries respected the emperor and whether they were loyal. A typical example is the attitude of emperors to the Jesuits. Emperor Kangxi (reigned from 1661 to 1722) reused the Jesuits Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huairen 南怀仁) as the Astronomical Bureau Officer (Qin Tian Jian Jian Zheng 钦天监监正) to revise the astronomical calendar, and in 1674 he ordered the *Great Universal Geographic Map* (*Kun Yu Quan Tu* 坤輿全图).¹⁵⁰ When there were foreign scientists came to Guangdong and reported by the local government officials, he also eagerly stated: “Let them come to Beijing as soon as possible.”¹⁵¹ Although these Jesuits came to Beijing with missionary missions, Emperor Kangxi paid more attention to their scientific abilities and was gratified by their loyalty and service to the court. However, the Chinese Rites controversy and its consequences in Europe apparently conflicted with China’s tributary logic. Kangxi was furious when he saw the memorial that Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon brought to Beijing in 1705, not only because China’s internal affairs were interfered by outside forces, but also because the foreign forces ignored the edicts he had issued about the secularity of Chinese etiquette.¹⁵² In 1706, Kangxi issued an edict decreeing that all missionaries who wished to stay in the empire had to have a permit – an imperial ticket (piao 票). The ticket would be issued only after official examined the missionary and were assured that he would follow the way of Matteo Ricci.¹⁵³ In the following decades, the situation of European missionaries in China has gone from bad to worse.¹⁵⁴ This history has a lot of discussion among Western historians.

In this study, when looking from the perspective of the tributary system, there are connections with other similar issue such as the Macartney Mission to China in 1793. As a famous historical event, the causes or consequences will not be discussed in this thesis. From the tributary system

¹⁵⁰ Yan Xiongfei and Lei Yuming, “Xifang Chuanjiaoshi Nan Huairen Zaihua Huodong Shulue,” *Journal of Shandong Agricultural University*, vol.05, no.4, (2003): 79-82.

¹⁵¹ Zhu Pi Zou Zhe (ZPZZ), in *Kangxi Chao Hanwen Zhu Pi Zou Zhe Huibian, Vol.6*, The First Historical Archives of China (FHAC), ed. (Beijing: Archives Publisher, 1985), 439.

¹⁵² Thomaz de Bossiere, and Yves de Mme, Auth., Xin Yan, Trans. *Jean-François Gerbillon, S. J. (1654-1707): mathématicien de Louis XIV, premier Supérieur général de la Mission française de Chine* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang Publisher, 2009), 9.

¹⁵³ Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742* (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 195; George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy: From Its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 54.

¹⁵⁴ Bossiere, *Jean-François Gerbillon*, 9.

concept, it is clear in the eyes of the Emperor Qianlong, the Britain proposed trade and diplomatic requirements broke the rules that a tributary country must not offend the imperial court. Macartney believed he could remain outside the Chinese order, while the Chinese thought they should be like other countries, for they had become part of the system of tributary states.¹⁵⁵ Obviously, the rulers of the Qing Dynasty and the Europeans had made great differences in their understanding of the world and international trade. They cannot understand each other. “The proposal by Macartney was tied the global market built by the West... for reason pertaining to their own geopolitical need, the Chinese had abandoned their policy of expansion precisely at the time when the global market was being shaped. The system of tributary state, by which they were related to the global market, had been effective for centuries. At the time when Macartney was on his mission, an era was drawing to an end. However, the Chinese system was still very efficient, and Macartney bore the brunt of it.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, the emperor was unable to feel the changes in the world due to relatively closed maritime policies in China. Qianlong still adhered to the system of his grandfather Kangxi’s one century ago, and it is also the Ming Dynasty system that began in the 14th century. The Catholic Pope was called Jiaohua Wang (教化王 the king of education/enlightenment) in Chinese literature, and a “king” is not offensive to the “emperor”. Emperor Kangxi generously accepted the Jesuits scientists who are willing to be loyal to him, but the Holy See is far from qualified to influence and interfere in Chinese affairs. Similarly, George III sent Macartney to the Emperor Qianlong to ask for a series of requirements like opening of new ports for British trade in China, the establishment of a permanent embassy in Beijing, etc. While Emperor Qianlong believed that he was already open Canton to the British and that was sufficiently tolerant and kind. The British should not and could not obtain more privileges. The Chinese letter written by George III to the Emperor Qianlong is still kept in the British National Archives.¹⁵⁷ Obviously, it was translated and written by someone who knows about China. Comparing the Chinese letters of

¹⁵⁵ Vittorio Cotesta, *Kings into Gods: How Prostration Shaped Eurasian Civilizations* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 70.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *East India Company: Select Committee of Supercargoes, Chinese Secretary's Office: Chinese-language Correspondence and Papers, 1793, FO 1048/1, British National Archives, London.*

other numbers of letters between British businessmen and Hong merchants in the archives, we can see that they are very similar in wording. George III affectionately calls himself the brother of the Emperor Qianlong, just as the merchants pull in the relationship with each other. However, whether the arrogant Qianlong would accept this “brother” is still doubtful. Qianlong’s son, Jiaqing, inherited his father’s ideas and practices. When he heard that the British envoy was not willing to kneel, he refused to accept and angrily let the envoy leave China.¹⁵⁸ China’s tributary order lasted until 1840s then gradually broken since the Opium War.

There are some clues in the cognition differences about what is “tributary trade” from the attitudes of European and Chinese historians on this issue. In Eurocentrism research, there seems to be no objection to the concept of tributary trade is a trade or not—commodities are circulated and exchanged, it is definitely a trade. But most Chinese historians, although some of them partly follow the Marxist historical view, they still prefer to understand the issue of “tribute” as a political diplomatic idea. The emergence of this concept is based on China’s political and economic environment that has long been ahead of neighboring countries in history, as well as the Chinese centralism and grand unification theory derived from Confucianism deeply imprinted in the culture. Of course, in the research and development of global history, Chinese scholars are gradually breaking out of the limitations of this kind of thinking, but they still cannot get rid of China-centrism. Li Yunquan believes that the tributary system should be divided into a classic and substantial tributary relationship, a ceremonial tributary relationship, and a nominal tributary relationship.¹⁵⁹ Chinese scholars classify historical tributary behavior into these three types. The so-called “classical and substantive tributary relationship” is exactly what the emperors in history pursued and believe it is the tributary relationship they are facing. This is especially true for the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties. They did not realize the changes in international patterns, the rise of international trade, the development of European countries, and the colonization of various territories near China, but they still insisted on these already traded tribute relations have no

¹⁵⁸ *Jun Ji Chu Shang Yu Dang (JJCSYD)*, 1816 (Jiaqing 21st Year, Month 7, Day 8), FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁵⁹ Li Yunquan, *Wan Bang Lai Chao: Chaogong Zhidu Shilun* (Beijing: Xinhua Publishing House, 2014), 2.

difference in the original “salute to the Son of Heaven and surrender”. The reasons behind this are not necessarily economic, but more cultural. Or it may be because the emperors far away in Beijing did not understand the coastal situation, and the information efficiency was low, which caused them to respond too slowly to the environment.

2.2: Formation of Canton System: why Canton was chosen?

In contrast to conservative Qing ruler, coastal residents and officials on the attitude of foreign trade has been very positive. Local officials prefer the existing practices than the ritualistic treatment of foreign trade and relations prescribed by the official record. Such preference was to raise revenue and satisfy the cupidity of local officials, the profit of merchants and livelihood of the coastal residents.¹⁶⁰ For example, in 1647, the officials local in Canton supported Portuguese to restore the privileges at Canton, for “commerce is a way to enrich our nation and to open foreign trade is a special means of raising income (from taxation) in Kwangtung was well as China.”¹⁶¹ Because the political situation has not yet stabilized, the Qing government at this time still continues the sea ban from the Ming Dynasty, until 1683, when Emperor Kangxi conquered Taiwan then allowed to resumes maritime trade, Jiang/Jiangsu Customs 江海关, Zhe/Zhejiang/Ningpo Customs 浙海关, Min/Fujian Customs 闽海关 and Yue/Canton/Guangdong Customs 粤海关 were started to open one by one.¹⁶² Kangxi’s attitude was that maritime trade could bring wealth to the local people, and the policy level finally reached agreement with local needs. All these four customs have the function of managing the foreign trade, but the geopolitical factors and policy biases have shown some gaps in specific functions and daily operations between these customs.

When studying China’s early modern foreign trade, most historians tend it regard Canton/Guangdong as an entry point, separate it from other three customs. The common

¹⁶⁰ Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton*, 231.

¹⁶¹ Fu, Lo-shu, ed. *A documentary chronicle of Sino-Western relations, 1644-1820* (UK: Association for Asian Studies, 1966), 6-7.

¹⁶² Nei Ge Qi Ju Zhu (NGQJZ), 1684 (Kangxi 23rd Year, Month 7, Day 11), in FHAC and Guangzhou Liwan District People’s Government, eds. *Qingong Guangzhou Shisanhang Dang’an Jingxuan* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Economic Press, 2002), 39.

cognition is that Canton is the only place for China's foreign trade before the First Opium War, known as Canton System, which the Qing administration led to the enactment of a series of laws establishing the rigid system of control European commerce and residence.¹⁶³ With Macao as an outer port, Canton has always been a major port for foreign merchant ships. From 1684 to 1757, Qing Dynasty maintained an open-door policy for the private trade. Guangdong, or called Canton, has a long history of foreign trade, based on its own geographical advantages – its location is close to the Nanyang countries and close to Macao. According to Qing's law, foreigners were not allowed to live in Guangdong, so most of them lived in Macao and traded in Canton in specific season, which making Macao an important foreign trade port. In addition, the Qing government's regulations and the privileges also granted to Guangdong are the main reasons for its formation. Management was left to the local officials. They would only report the decisions and legislation to the central Qing court when needed. From 1684 to 1699, the local was reducing port charges and duties at Macao and Huangpu, which made it attractive to foreign traders.¹⁶⁴ The Hong merchants played an important role in among the trade. As these commercial activities are private behavior, the government and officials would not directly contact with the foreign traders. All the communication between them were finally be down by the Hongs, who served as buffers by keeping the foreigners in line and from any direct contact with the Chinese officials, collected customs duties and taxes for the government, and acted as security merchants or guarantors for the foreign merchants, etc.¹⁶⁵ As Paul A. Van Dyke summarized, "The strength of the Canton System was its flexibility in addressing the concerns of the Beijing court, both in controlling foreigners and trade while at the same time serving their needs. Many mechanisms were built into the ports administrative structure that allowed Customs Superintendents (more commonly known as "Hoppos") and governors-general simultaneously to control and foster trade. These checks and balances kept prices competitive, gave preferential treatment to large ships and large volumes of goods, and allowed the entire

¹⁶³ Victor H. Li, *Law and Politics in China's Foreign Trade* (Hong Kong: University of Washington Press, 1977), 364; John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (USA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 39-53.

¹⁶⁴ Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton*, 324, 338.

¹⁶⁵ Yen-p'ing Hao, *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-century China: the Rise of Sion-Western Mercantile Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 14-20.

system to operate on credit.”¹⁶⁶ With the acquiescence of the central government and the support of local officials, the trade with Hong as a middleman between Chinese and foreign merchants, has gradually become the Canton system, until 1757, Emperor Qianlong’s edict to the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces (Liang Guang Zong Du 两广总督): “To tell foreign traders that in the future only could trade in Guangdong (Canton) and not are allowed to go to Ningbo. If there is any violation, they must escort the ship to return to Guangdong.”¹⁶⁷ Emperor Qianlong pointed out keeping the foreign ships not go to Zhejiang could eliminate the hidden dangers of coastal defense and was benefit for the Canton people’s livelihood. The promulgation of this edict is obviously that the Emperor Qianlong wants to maintain the rules and privileges that Guangdong already had in foreign trade. It is not the reason for the formation of Canton System, but a forced policy approached to intensify the existence of it and eliminated the possibility of foreign ships trading to other ports outside Canton until 1840s.

All the emperors preferred Guangdong, especially Emperor Qianlong. There are reasons to believe that the emperors, the central government, the Canton local officers, as well as the staffs of Canton Customs have formed a large interest group. Because of the geographical proximity to Macao, Guangdong officials and merchants have gradually become the first ones to purchase overseas treasures and recruit “foreign scientists” for the emperor, as well as through the import and export trade, collected a large amount of tax revenue for the national treasury. The position of Canton Customs Supervision (Yue Hai Guan Jian Du 粤海关监督) and governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces were known to be very important positions. These officials are not only responsible for managing customs-related matters and local issues, but also need to help the imperial family to purchase overseas goods. Only officials who are particularly favored and trusted by the emperor could take these positions, and they also took profit from it. The treasures collected in Canton eventually fell into the pockets of local officials and emperors.

¹⁶⁶ Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁷ *JJCSYD*, 1756 (Qianlong 21st Year, Month 11, Day 10), FHAC, Beijing. Original text in classical Chinese: “晓谕番商将来只许在广东收泊交易不得再抚宁波如或再来必押令原船返棹至广不准入浙江海口如此办理则来浙番船永远禁绝不特浙省海防得以肃清且与粤民生计并无贻韶等关均有裨益。”

Any staff or soldier who worked in the Canton Customs may find opportunities for corruption in foreign trade and profiteering. According to a memorial of the emperor in 1742, written by Canton Customs supervision Yi La Qi 伊拉齐, there are altogether 47 customs ports at the inspections under the jurisdiction of Canton Customs, from Guangzhou to Macao, Qiongzhou, Chaozhou, Huizhou, Gaozhou, etc. He and over 30 subordinates spent two months even cannot visit all of these ports in person.¹⁶⁸ The Canton Customs is a very large bureaucracy, as well as the rugged terrain in Guangdong region. it is very difficult to manage such a heavy customs system in detail under the communication conditions of the 18th and 19th centuries, governors could not supervise every port and post. Similarly, the central government in Beijing could not supervise the distant Guangdong area, neither. “Funds and power were siphoned away from the central administration in the effort to accommodate local administrative substructure. This reconciliation led to inefficient management, increased corruption and rampant smuggling.”¹⁶⁹

In spite of it, the merchants were closely associated with these officials. The merchants involved in foreign trade can be divided into three basic groups: Hong Merchants, outside merchants and inland merchants.¹⁷⁰ All of them were under the direct supervision of customs superintendent (Hoppo), and/or Governor of Guangxi and Guangdong province (Du Fu 督抚, same as Liang Guang Zong Du 两广总督).¹⁷¹ Hong Merchants were the only officially designated brokers that can trade with foreign merchants. When foreign merchants did business in Guangzhou, whether they were selling their own goods or buying Chinese goods, or even paying taxes, they need to do all these through Hong Merchants. The Hongs extensively benefited and were extremely wealthy. They were also closely tied to local officials and responsible in finding overseas treasures. More information about Hong merchants will be discussed in detail in the follow-up chapters through the topic of formation of the foreign commodity market in China. Currently when we concern the trade chain of Guangdong, there are also other traders involved. For example, outside merchants traded overseas, exchanged goods between Southeast Asia

¹⁶⁸ ZPZZ, 1742 (Qianlong 7th Year, Month 10, Day 29), 04-01-35-0314-007, FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁶⁹ Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 7-9.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

regions and bought back what might be needed in Chinese market. As well as the inland merchants, they were responsible for purchasing goods from the Southeast and inland then brought them to Guangdong, and sold foreign goods to the various regions of China. Too many people were involved in this business and naturally establish its rules. We can see scattered records about them in a large number of official archives, which would also be discussed in later chapters. Though the reign from Kangxi to Daoguang, the five emperors within nearly 200 years, a complete commercial ecosystem based on the Canton Customs has been formed in the entire Guangdong region, and influenced on also Jiangnan and other region. The destruction of such balance will damage the interests of employment and livelihood of not only the staffs of Canton Customs, but also the related practitioners – merchants, craftsmen, deliverymen, farmers, etc. The maintenance of the Canton System might because of the emperor wanted to maintain the original balance. In addition, as a reward for Guangdong's taxation of the central government and the search for rare treasures, the emperor had partiality and gave adequate protection to Guangdong.

Moreover, the most important issue that the Qing government concerned was the stability of its governing. The Qing emperors preferred not to change. They wanted to maintain the absolute imperial power that has always been, any reform and change will always touch their fragile nerves. "Political consideration reinforced economic in urging that the door be closed... but within the bounds of the elaborately regulated Canton 'security' system".¹⁷² The Canton system has never been a purely commercial trade management method. It also included defense and military functions. "Let European merchants go to only Canton" will undoubtedly allow the court to better manage the long costal defense line and keep the threats from sea as far as possible to Beijing. The Qing has rejected many opportunities for foreign trade and made no changes, in order to avoid uncontrollable issues. As a Manchu government, the Qing emperors and the nobles of the Eight Banners came from the Changbai Mountain region which located in north, close to Korea. They conquered the Central Plains of China and became rulers, where the main residents are Han people. They had always been afraid that overseas Han opponents

¹⁷² Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and The Opening of China 1800-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 46.

would collude with foreigners and undermine Qing regime. In order to establish their own authority and rule, they had violently suppressed the resistance of the Han people and made some Hans exiled overseas. Among the series of measures to control and conquer the Han people, the most typical event is the promulgation of the “shaving hair order” in 1644: “Keep your hair or keep your head.”¹⁷³ The Manchu males shave most of their in front and left only a small bundle of pigtail. As the nomad, to shave the forehead hair could help them that in the process of riding the line of sight been not blocked; and the pigtail at the back can be used in the sleeping wild as the pillow.¹⁷⁴ However, in Han tradition, it is not allowed to cut any of the hair. The Han were deeply influenced by Confucianism and thought that “the body, skin and hair are given by parents, they cannot be harmed, for it is the beginning of filial piety”.¹⁷⁵ In Confucius culture, shaving hair is a form of punishment.¹⁷⁶ When the “shaving hair order” just implemented, the Qing rulers faced strong resistance from the Han people and then they were eventually suppressed. In the next few hundred years, small-scale uprisings and riots took place from time to time.

China’s national identity movement is from late Qing and early Republican period.¹⁷⁷ Eighteenth century was not the age of nationalism of nationalism in China, but “it set the framework within which the late-nineteenth-century definitions of the Chinese nation had to operate. This framework included the definition of boundaries; the fixed racial and genealogical identities of Han, Manchus, Muslims, and Tibetans’ and the imperial project of establish control over multiple people, incorporating the non-Han people as subordinate others.”¹⁷⁸ It was a complicated matter for the Han people, who account for the majority of the population, to submit to the Manchu rule, and the Han people need to be intelligent and cautious to live and survive in this environment. Hairstyles are a way for Han people to show obedience and

¹⁷³ Han Tan. *Jiangyin Cheng Shouji* (Taipei: Bank of Taiwan Economic Research Office, 1968).

¹⁷⁴ Cao Yansheng, “Beifang Youmu Minzu De Fashi Chuancheng,” *Heilongjiang National Series*, vol. 01 (1995): 69.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 66.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, eds. *China’s Quest for National Identity*, (USA: Cornell University Press, 1993), 62.

¹⁷⁸ Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (USA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 517.

obedience, and it is also one of the criteria for the Manchu regime to consider this sensitive issue. The oriental faces that with no pigtailed would definitely made Emperor Qianlong feel nervous. The British merchant ship that sailed to Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in 1755 gave Emperor Qianlong the reason for having suspicion and dissatisfaction, especially when he knew that there were several boatmen on the merchant ship were local Macao, administrative belong to Xiangshan County, but did not shave their front hair nor wearing pigtailed. It was confirmed afterwards by the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, Yang Yingju (杨应璩), that these boatmen were the foreigners living in Macao, Emperor Qianlong might have been grudge of this matter.¹⁷⁹ The Qing rulers always paid special attention to the “hair identity”.¹⁸⁰

This “presumptuous” British ship to Ningbo and the subsequent series of events made the famous “Flint case”. British merchant James Flint (Chinese name Hong Renhui 洪仁辉) left Guangdong and selected to trade in Ningbo in 1755, as well as subsequent northward trip to Tianjin, possibly made Qianlong believed that he might have “the ulterior motives”. Flint was a representative of British East India Company, spoke fluent Chinese. From 1755 to 1759, Flint struggled to obtain opportunities to trade in Ningbo, and local officials in Zhejiang were also trying to facilitate this to get more taxes. Flint abandoned Guangdong and chose Ningbo because of a series of “bad rules” and corruption incidents. The court then dealt with the Guangdong Customs Supervision Li Yongbiao 李永标 and abolished the bad rules and miscellaneous fees. But Flint did not win the opportunity to trade in Zhejiang and even suffered punishment. He was imprisoned in Macao and expelled back to home after the expiration of his imprisonment period. Liu Yabian 刘亚匾, a Sichuan businessman who wrote an indictment and presented an indictment, was executed for guilty of seducing the principal and making money for foreign businessmen. Those who helped the Flint in this incident were punished to varying degrees.¹⁸¹ The Manchu rulers had at least a faint idea of the fact that trade could undermine their political and socio-economic underpinnings.¹⁸² “Chinese emperors did not give more and

¹⁷⁹ *Lu Fu Zou Zhe (LFZZ)*, 1755 (Qianlong 10th Year, Month 10, Day 21), 03-1101-051, FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁸⁰ Zhu Zheng, “Bianzi de Laili,” *Democracy*, vol.08, (1998): 33-34.

¹⁸¹ FHAC, Macao Foundation, and Jinan University Ancient Books Research Institute, eds. *Ming Qing Shiqi Aomen Wenti Dang'an Wenxian Huibian* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1999), 335.

¹⁸² Angela Schottenhammer, *The East Asian Maritime World 1400-1800: Its Fabrics of Power and*

more leeway to trade, commerce and merchants, not did they come to regard the success of merchants' interests as the basis of their national wealth... they were statesmen with completely different politico-economic concepts to many of their counterparts in Europe. This is also the decisive reason why the Qing rulers considered foreign trade, which profoundly altered China's domestic economy, principally in political terms."¹⁸³

Although Zhejiang customs officials also had the desire to increase foreign trade and to increase their taxation, driven by this basic idea of the emperor, more ports and more trade are obviously too risky. At the same time, Guangdong officials would be more inclined to retain their original tax advantages and gain the emperor's preference through this advantage. When consulting dozens of files related to this case, we noticed that Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Province Li Shiyao (李侍尧) played a very important role. He not only participated in the subsequent customs inspections, but also participated in the trial of the Flint case, and had an important impact on the Emperor Qianlong's decision to make a "single port trade" decision. Flint's attempt, originally intended for trade, was ultimately interpreted as a serious violation of law. After Flint was imprisoned in Macau at the end of 1759, Li Shiyao later also submitted to Qianlong the rules for preventing foreigners in Guangdong and standardized the Cohong system.¹⁸⁴

Obviously, Li Shiyao was a member of the "Guangdong Interest Group". He has his own advantages to maintain. At the same time, he also knew Qianlong very well and understood his consideration of ensuring the safety of the Central Plains region, especially Beijing. This issue can be explained by the fact that the Qing government's attention to the influence of White Lotus Society is much higher than that of the South Pacific pirates, for the latter does not affect its lifeline.¹⁸⁵ The port of Ningbo, that under the supervision of Zhe Customs was special. It was not only a trading port, but also took responsibilities of coastal defense. Opening it to Europeans for trade obviously cannot reassure Qianlong. Flint's arrival in Tianjin makes him

Dynamics of Exchanges (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Publisher, 2007), 34.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ FHAC, et al. *Ming Qing Shiqi Aomen Wenti*, 336-340.

¹⁸⁵ Dian H. Murray, Auth., and Liu Ping, Trans. *Pirates of the South China Coast 1790-1810*, (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1997), 44.

even more nervous because Tianjin is right next to Beijing. Emperor Qianlong believed that compared to Ningbo which is the ports easily accessible for long-distance driving into the hinterland of the Central Plains, it is obviously that the Canton is safer for its complex terrain land and long distance to Beijing. He attempted to isolate foreigners to the far south, while on the surface he has a lot of pride and high-sounding reasons. According to an edict that Emperor Qianlong written to King of England: “Tianchao (天朝, the country of sky, means China or Qing) is rich in products and has everything, while the tea, porcelain and silk are your necessities. We stand in your points so opened the Hongs for you. You have travelled here from a distant place, do not understand our rules and systems... You have always been trading in Macao and Canton. It is very inconvenient for the locals to be able to understand your language if your ships arrives elsewhere.”¹⁸⁶ Officials in Zhejiang also clearly understood the emperor's meaning. In the decades after 1759, Zhejiang officials reported to the court every year that “no foreign ship arrived in this year.”

This also explains why the Qing government always had very strict control of the residents, for they need to prevent the emergence of the uncontrollable forces from abroad. Immigration and other acts, even if only Chinese merchants bring their foreigner wife back home, all need to have registration and verification, otherwise they will face heavy penalties.¹⁸⁷ Foreigners could only stay in Macao, while they were permitted to live in Canton during the trading season of October to March. “There women were banned altogether. Western merchants were required to deposit all weapons from their ships with Chinese authorities until their departure. They had to conduct their trade exclusively through specially licensed merchants known as the Hong merchants....”¹⁸⁸ Similarly, a British record on 1832 summarized that “... the foreign ships came to Canton and anchored, during the fifth and sixth moons; during the ninth or tenth they returned to their respective countries; they were not allowed to remain in Canton city, to find out the price of goods, to make purchase and acquire profit, and to go back words and forwards,

¹⁸⁶ Liang, Tingnan. *Yue Hai Guan Zhi* (Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2002), vol.8.

¹⁸⁷ ZPZZ, 1751 (Qianlong 16th Year, Month 5, Day 27), 04-01-01-0204-003, FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁸⁸ Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), 99.

having intercourse with native Chinese, which originated traitorous connexions. If the goods in their hong were not all sold, and they wished, for the time being, to live at Macao, they were permitted to suit their convenience.”¹⁸⁹

On the one hand, the Qing government’s strict control over foreign merchants is apparently to divide the tribute trade and private trade, also to allow members of interest groups includes Hong merchants and Hu Bu to obtain more profits. On the other hand, it was due to their fear of foreign merchants’ forces and influences. A large amount of customs revenue every year, the treasure gathered by Guangdong officials for emperors, money tributes from local merchants, along with the seeming peaceful and prosperous in southern region gave the emperors an illusory sense of security. They did not realize the rise of Europe and the global impact from the industrial revolution. However, the changes are always happened, just as the Canton System was established in the Kangxi period, and the scale was formed in the middle of Qianlong era, by the time of Qianlong’s son Jiaqing, about the early 19th century, the central government’s inability to control the local area became apparently attenuated. Problems of state capacity then emerged. The fiscal system of the Qing was mainly inherited from the Ming Dynasty, reflecting the nature of a highly centralized and hierarchical political system. The basis of this financial system is a well-designed accounting and reporting system that runs through the administrative levels of the central, provincial and county levels of government. In principle, it is necessary to report on the use and allocation of all budget items and match the detailed budget.¹⁹⁰ In reality, as the emperor was informally constrained by his weak capacity to monitor local taxation by the bureaucrats, the imperial policy of taxation evolved towards an openly declared prefixed annual tax quota at the central level with imperial recognition of some informal local taxation.¹⁹¹ These informal local taxation have gradually raised many issues beyond the control of the central government, such as corruption. When reached the budget, local governments regarded as have completed their work tasks, and in other aspects gradually deviate from the

¹⁸⁹ *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia*, Vol. VII.-New Series, January-April 1832 (London: Parbury, Allen and Co., 1832), 99.

¹⁹⁰ Debin Ma, “State Capacity and Great Divergence, the Case of Qing China (1644-1911),” *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 54:5-6, (2013): 487.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, 486.

central government's control.

This situation was particularly prominent from the Jiaqing era on Canton issues since early 19th century. Some typical examples are, first of all, Emperor Jiaqing's reliance on Guangdong merchants' silver donation has increased, all of these edicts were recorded in Jun Ji Chu Shang Yu Dang (军机处上谕档).¹⁹² These nominally voluntary silver donations have gradually become mandatory items. Obviously, this act of financially satisfying the central government gives local officials and businessmen the confidence to act freely. Merchants in Canton were apparently colluded with local officials, established close relationships with foreign merchants, and granted these foreigners the right to move freely in Guangzhou, which obviously does not meet the requirements of the central government for strict precautions and management of foreigners. William C. Hunter in his two books *The "Fan Kwae" at Canton before Treaty Days 1825-1844* and *Bit of Old China* detailed and interestingly documents his and his life in Guangdong, especially in Guangzhou city.¹⁹³ This is the description of his life in Guangzhou: "It was assumed that life there was a heap of restrictions, a long conflict with the authorities, of trials, of threats, of personal danger, and of a general uncertainty as to what the morrow might bring forth. Certainly, we were told to 'listen and obey', to 'tremble', and not 'by obstinacy and irregularity to court the wrath of the 'Imperial will'.... In whatever direction we looked, it might have been thought that our lives and liberties were not worth a ha'porth! Except on fixed days, three times a month, we were 'forbidden to wander about, and never without a linguist;' but we walked when we pleased, and remained as long as we pleased, while on each occasion a linguist was the last person we ever saw.... Life and business at Canton before Treaty days was in fact a conundrum as insoluble as the Sphinx. At the same time no one seemed over anxious."¹⁹⁴ His book not only records his experiences in Guangzhou, but also vividly describes his relatively free life. It is worth mentioning that he repeatedly mentioned that local officials and others always "verbally remind them to obey the rules" and symbolically "punish" the locals who

¹⁹² JJCSYD, FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁹³ William C. Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days 1825-1844*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co., 1882). William C. Hunter, *Bit of Old China*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co., 1885).

¹⁹⁴ Hunter, *Bit of Old China*, 1-3.

helped them, but in fact they do not restrict these foreigners' daily behavior.

When local taxation met the needs of the central financial requirement, the court can ignore to the local fraud and maintain a superficial "peace". However, when the crisis occurred, the negative attitude of the local government to the emperors' orders further reflected the decline of the state's ability. After Macartney's diplomatic failure, since 1802 and 1808 the British attempted to militarily occupy the territory under the pretext of defending it from the French threat.¹⁹⁵ The British's activities in Macau were not noticed by the central government until 1808, after which Emperor Jiaqing issued a number of orders for Canton officials to warn the British and send soldiers to expel them. A large number of FHAC documents recorded the process of this matter. Wu Xiongguang 吴熊光, the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Province, was very passive in sending troops, until the Emperor Jiaqing repeatedly pressured to deal with the matter. After this, Wu Xiongguang was dismissed, the central government assigned Yong Bao 永保 to replace him. Yong Bao did not stay in this position for too long. In 1809, Bai Ling 百龄 became the new Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces. The reason why Yong Bao was replaced was mostly because he could not handle the piracy problem.¹⁹⁶ Murray's research on pirates of South China also reflects the complexity of the situation in Guangdong at that time. The Qing government was unable to maintain its huge bureaucratic operation system, nor was it able to maintain its ideal "Canton security system", and the outbreak of the Opium War of 1840 finally broke this apparent harmony. China was finally be forced to open up more ports and much involved into global trade.

2.3: Operation and taxation of Canton Customs, compared with Min, Zhe and Jiang Customs

The four major customs, Yue, Zhe, Min, Jiang, were foreign trade points in the early and mid-Qing Dynasty. They carried the functions of supervision, taxation, suppression smuggling,

¹⁹⁵ Rogério Miguel Puga, *The British Presence in Macau, 1635-1793* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 127-128.

¹⁹⁶ Murray, *Pirates of the South China Coast*.

recording and reporting to the court. The Customs in the Qing Dynasty were taxation agency under the Ministry of Revenue (Hu Bu 户部) in the administrative system. The ministry was not only responsible for the management of Canton System Trade, but also for the management of Canton's coastal waterway trade, as well as the customs duties on foreign trade and commercial taxes on domestic trade. In fact, the customs not only report to the Hoppo in operation, but also assumes more responsibilities because it is a gateway directly connected to foreign merchants and commodities. The court and local officials will also entrust customs to purchase tributes, for they are the first point of contact with foreign merchants and goods. In the tributary system, it is not only the tributary states that need to present tribute to the emperor to show reverence and loyalty, and local governments need to do the same. The advantage of coastal officials is that they could not only pay local specialties to the emperor, but also purchase high-quality goods from overseas. The emperor's recognition and affection would result in preferential policy from the central government in the future. The Imperial House Hold Department would also entrust customs help to buy overseas goods for daily use for the imperial family. In theory, each department under the bureaucracy of Qing court has its own role. The Imperial Household Department managed the daily routine of the imperial family. The Ministry of Rites (Li Bu 礼部) among the six major ministries managed and recorded the tribute-related matters, and the Ministry of Revenue (known as Hu Bu 户部) is responsible for taxation. But when the mission came to the local coastal, the customs undertook all these responsibilities under the supervision of the local governor.

I researched lots of imperial materials from the FHAC, as well as the local chronicles. She tried to sort out the standards of the tax rates, taxation methods and other information of the four major customs, and finally find it was depending between different customs. The four customs had their own taxation standards and rates base on the local trade characters. The court required each customs to collect a prescribed amount of "specified silver" (Zheng E Yin 正额银, or E Zheng Shui Yin 额征税银) and some other taxes each year. The specified silver required for Canton Custom is 43,564 tael of silver per year, in contrast, 66,549.5467 tael for Fujian Customs, 35,908.23 taels for Zhejiang Customs and 21,480.33 tael for Jiangsu Customs. Since

the information of Kangxi Dynasty is not sufficient, it is not sure that whether these customs had implement the standard since the 1864, when Emperor Kangxi officially opened the four customs. But from the Yongzheng period (1730s) to the Daoguang period before Opium War (1840), all four customs were required to collect this amount of tax as a minimum standard.

The amount is based on the tax situation of each customs, Fujian > Canton > Zhejiang > Jiangsu. It can be inferred that at the time when the specified silver standard was first formulated, Fujian Customs' tax revenue was more than Canton, which means that Fujian's maritime trade is more active than Guangdong in late 17th century. Over the next hundred years, Canton's trade gradually surpassed Fujian and became the most important foreign trade port. Guangdong has become a hub for Sino-foreign trade. The status of Guangdong Customs is also becoming increasingly important. I have consulted the memorials (Zou Zhe) to sort out the tariff data of each custom, there is an interesting feature that the customs records of Canton were reported to the emperor by the Canton Customs Supervision, while the data of Fujian Customs, Zhejiang Customs, and Jianghai Customs were reported through the province governors. The imperial court also ordered Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces to supervise customs affairs, especially the inspection of taxes. However, in reality the Canton Customs has overwhelming power over taxation issues. It can also be seen that the status of Canton Customs is higher than the other three customs. In next part of this chapter, I will explain this through the introduction of each custom and analysis of their tax data.

- **Canton/Guangdong/Yue Customs 粤海关**

Canton Customs is in charge of the management of Canton/Guangdong's coastal waterway trade. It is a very large administrative agency. In addition to the provincial customs gates in Guangzhou, Canton Customs also has a number of ports in various places along the coast of the province. These ports are divided into three categories: regular tax ports (Zheng Shui Kou 正税口), inspection ports (Ji Cha Kou 稽查口), and registration port (Gua Hao Kou 挂号口).¹⁹⁷ The regular tax ports and the registration ports are responsible for customs declaration

¹⁹⁷ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, Vol. 5.

registration, filling in tax bills, and the tax collection, while the inspection port is responsible for inspecting import and export vessels and goods without the tax collection section. According to the memorial written by Canton Customs Supervision Yi La Qi to the Emperor Qianlong on 1742, there are altogether 47 customs ports at the inspections under the jurisdiction of Canton Customs, belongs to 7 central ports, from Guangzhou to Macao, Qiongzhou, Chaozhou, Huizhou, Gaozhou, etc.¹⁹⁸ Around the Daoguang period between about 1820 to 1840, the number of ports increased to be 75. They were 31 regular tax ports in total, 10 of them located in Qiongzhou, 9 in Chaozhou, 4 in Huizhou, 2 in Guangzhou and 2 in Leizhou, 1 in Zhaoqing and 1 in Gaozhou; and 22 inspection ports, 8 in Leizhou, 5 in Guangzhou, 5 in Gaozhou, 3 in Huizhou, 1 in Lianzhou; and 22 registration port, 10 in Chaozhou, 9 in Guangzhou, and 3 in Huizhou.¹⁹⁹

These ports have the responsibility of regional trade exchanges and customs management. For dome domestic ships and foreign ships, it often has different taxation standards. Relatively more taxes will be imposed on foreign ships, included:

- Regular Tax/Zheng Shui 正税:
 1. Goods tax/huo shui 货税
 2. Ship tax/chuan liao 船料
- Miscellaneous Tax /Za Shui 杂税:
 1. Hao Yin 耗银
 2. Hang Jia Jiao Song Yin 行家缴送银
 3. Fen Tou Yin 分头银
 4. Yang Chuan Gui Li Yin 洋船规礼银
 5. Shu Yi Dan Gui Yin 书役担规银

¹⁹⁸ ZPZZ, 1742 (Qianlong 7th Year, Month 10, Day 29), 04-01-35-0314-007, FHAC, Beijing.

¹⁹⁹ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, Vol. 7.

6. Shu Yi Jia Ren Jie Sheng Yin 书役家人节省银

7. Jia Ren Dan Gui Yin 家人担规银

The regular tax is divided into two types: Goods tax and Ship tax. Goods tax is a specific tax levied on goods. It sets a tax rate based on the price of the goods and does not distinguish between import duties and export taxes. In the next chapter of commodities, the tax rates will also be listed and analyzed. Ship tax is levied based on the size of the merchant ships. Take the rule of taxation on Japan, North Korea, and Ryukyu ships as examples:²⁰⁰

- Ships with size of 18 square zhang (Ping Fang Zhang 平方丈) are 1st class ships, charged 1400 taels of silver each.
- Ships with size of 15.4 square zhang (Ping Fang Zhang 平方丈) are 2nd class ships, charged 1100 taels of silver each.
- Ships with size of 12 square zhang (Ping Fang Zhang 平方丈) are 3rd class ships, charged 600 taels of silver each.
- Ships with size of 8 square zhang (Ping Fang Zhang 平方丈) are 4th class ships, charged 400 taels of silver each.

This tax rate was later reduced by 20% by Emperor Kangxi.²⁰¹ European ships as “Western ships”, are different from those “Eastern ships”, they are likely to be charged higher taxes. But I did not find archives information to prove this.

In addition to regular tax, Canton Customs also levies miscellaneous taxes on foreign ships. The 7 miscellaneous taxes I listed in the table above are data from the ZPZZ of Yongzheng 8th Year to Yongzheng 10th Year (1730-1732). Hao yin 耗银 referred to the attrition costs that may be incurred when casting small pieces of silver into silver ingots. Fen Tou Yin 分头银 was a tax imposed on exported goods. Other five types of taxes Hang Jia Jiao Song Yin 行家缴送银, Yang Chuan Gui Li Yin 洋船规礼银, Shu Yi Dan Gui Yin 书役担规银, Shu Yi Jia Ren Jie

²⁰⁰ Da Qing Li Chao Shi Lu (or Qing Shi Lu / QSL), vol. 235, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

Sheng Yin 书役家人节省银 and Jia Ren Dan Gui Yin 家人担规银 are the fees collected from foreign merchants with various kind of excuses to be paid to the employees and officials.

Table 2-1: The Amount of Taxation Collection in Canton Customs, 1730, 1731, 1732.²⁰²

Year	1730	1731	1732
Total tax revenue 总 税收(43,564 taels of the specified silver included)	198,062.09	228,659.7	309,107.916
Regular Tax 正税	94,965.57	116,187.262	142,641.549
Hao yin 耗银	18,240.19	22080.953	27635.145
Hang Jia Jiao Song Yin 行家缴送银	25,035	32,010.306	50,840
Fen Tou Yin 分头银	7,975.4	11,117.491	19,274.981
Yang Chuan Gui Li Yin 洋船规礼银	5,716.213	8,266.522	10,948.989
Shu Yi Dan Gui Yin 书役担规银	13,919.14	20,921.209	25,373.232
Shu Yi Jia Ren Jie Sheng Yin 书役家 人节省银	13,752.459	18,075.957	32,394.02
Jia Ren Dan Gui Yin 家人担规银	18,428.123		

²⁰² Date selected from ZPZZ, 04-01-35-0307-022, 04-01-35-0307-026, 04-01-35-0307-030, FHAC, Beijing.

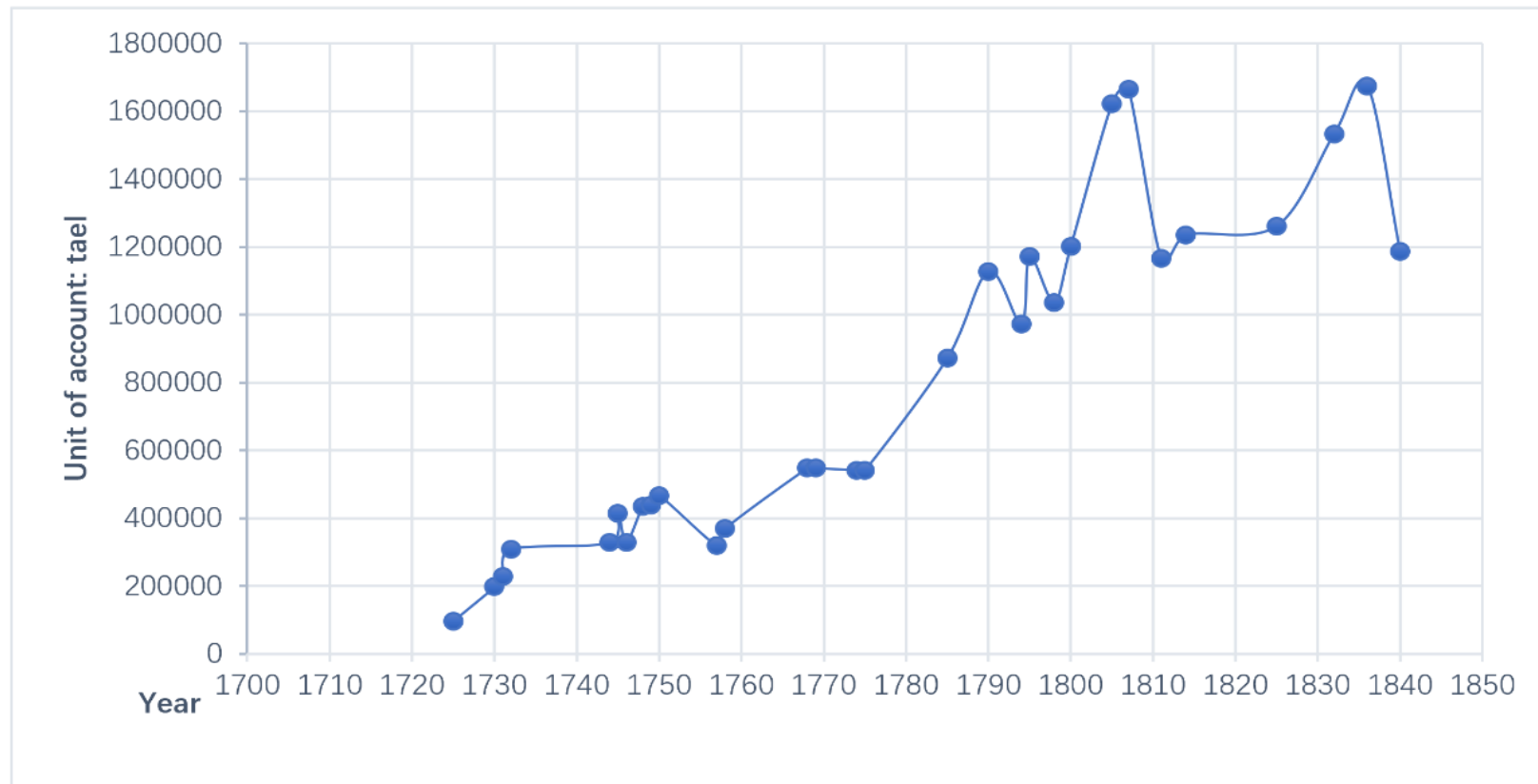
These were the tax collection methods during the Yongzheng period. It is well known that Yongzheng is a very careful and strict emperor, so his officials reported more detailed than those of other emperors. Since 1736 Yongzheng's son Qianlong becomes the emperor, local officials no longer report specific taxable items in the memorial to emperor, but only report a total tax amount. This given local officials many opportunities to operate flexibly in taxation work, and also makes the problem of "bad rules" (lou gui 陋规) more serious. The cause of the Flint case was also that he felt that the Guangdong Customs had levied too many additional taxes and he need to search for other customs to trade with. At the beginning of 1760, when Li Shiyao, the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, and You Bashi, the Canton Customs Supervisor, were investigating the corruption case of ex-governor Li Yongbiao, they found that there were 30 more tax items, along with another 38 items on the export ships. These items were miscellaneous and had never appeared in other customs. With the consent of the emperor, then they ruled out and consolidated these rules.²⁰³

The weakness of central supervision and the heavy bureaucratic operation caused corruption and chaos in China's largest foreign customs. Despite that, the world trade pattern changed rapidly since 18th century, and the customs revenue of Canton Customs also increased year by year and reached a very high amount. In Yongzheng 10th Year (1732) Canton Customs collected 309,107 taels of silver of total tariff, in Qianlong 40th Year (1775) the amount increased to 541,863 taels and in Qianlong 60th Year (1795) it was double to 1,171,911 taels.²⁰⁴ It is not possible to estimate the import and export situation of Canton Customs and the relevant details of the goods in this short period of time with limited sources, but a general trend of the changes in tariffs could be presented in understanding the importance of Canton Customs.

²⁰³ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, Vol. 8.

²⁰⁴ ZPZZ, 04-01-35-0307-030, 04-01-35-0346-028, 04-01-35-0358-040, FHAC, Beijing.

Chart 2-1: Annual Tax Revenue of Canton Customs 1725-1840.²⁰⁵



²⁰⁵ Data selected from 30 ZPZZ of FHAC. Due to the loss of documents, tariff data before 1725 and some years between 1725-1840 could not be found.

In the chart, there is an obvious tax growth trend from the mid-18th century. This chart was made based on the one-year tariff income data collected by memorials (ZPZZ) that Guangdong officials written to the emperor. Due to the lack of data in Kangxi period, I only found data after 1725. From the graph, it can clearly be seen that by the end of the 18th century, the customs revenue of Canton showed a rapid upward trend. After 1780s, regardless of the weather was suitable for sea-going sailing or not, the annual customs revenue was more than 1000 thousands taels of silver. Hosea Ballou Morse in his series of books named *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China 1635-1834* recorded in great detail the trade situation between Britain and China, and the increase basically matched the increase in Canton Customs taxation.²⁰⁶ It fits perfectly with Britain's rise on the sea and its active period on China's south coast. Canton is the only officially designated place for foreign ship trading. In fact, although the British merchants were the most active ones in Canton at that time, merchant ships from other European countries, including those from South and East Asia, also had active trading activities in Canton. The increase in tariffs can better reflect China's further involvement in global trade. In the documents open for inspection by FHAC, we can see that in some years, Guangdong officials will report the number of foreign ships arriving at the port, and several related information.

Table 2-2: Annually number of Foreign Ships Arriving at Canton Customs²⁰⁷

Year	Number of arrivals of foreign ships	Details
1715	7	4 Macao ships loaded with crude goods, herbs, spices, shark fins, etc. 1 French ship loaded with silver

²⁰⁶ Hosea Ballou Morse. *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China 1635-1834* (London: Oxford Press, 1926).

²⁰⁷ Data selected and sorted from 35 ZPZZ and *Ti Ben* from FHAC. Due to the loss of files, the number of foreign ships arriving at the port in each year is likely to be more than the data I have calculated.

		<p>1 British ship loaded with serge, droguet and black lead</p> <p>1 Sulu ship wish herbs and spices</p>
1716	33	<p>22 Macao ships</p> <p>6 French ships loaded with silver</p> <p>3 British ships and 2 Sulu ships with Black lead, rosewood, cotton, sand rattan, droguet, feather cloth, sandalwood, benzoin, frankincense, myrrh, sago rice, clocks, small glassware, glass mirror, cloves, medicine, silver, etc.</p>
1718	4	<p>6 Macao ships loaded with crude goods such as pepper, trepang, ebony, logwood, etc.</p> <p>3 French ships loaded with silver</p> <p>2 Portuguese ships, one is loaded with crude goods such as wine, ebony, and sea vegetables, another one is with recruit soldiers</p> <p>6 British ships loaded with serge, droguet, black lead and silver</p>
1719	0	0
1721	2	2 French ships
1722	2	<p>1 French ship with silver</p> <p>1 Sulu ship with crude medicines</p>
1723	31	<p>17 Macao ships</p> <p>14 foreign ships, 5 of them are British ships and 2 Siamese ships</p>

1729	8	
1731	11	
1737	12	
1739	38	15 foreign ships 23 Macao ships
1758	21	
1760	36	
1769	46	
1775	34	15 country ships (Gang Jiao Chuan 港脚船/Country ships) loaded with cotton, pepper, sand rattan, tin, etc.
1776	39	
1777	33	
1785	35	
1786	53	7 Fujian ships comes to Canton because of the wind
1790	83	

In sorting out the memorials Guangdong officials wrote to the emperor, there are some characteristics. First of all, during the Kangxi period (before 1722), local officials not only frequently reported to the emperor about numbers of foreign ships came to Canton by month, but also briefly explained what commodities these ships brought. Even when talents of astronomy, mathematics, medicine and other arrived in Guangdong, the officials would actively recommend them to the emperor. During the following periods of Yongzheng and Qianlong, local officials no longer reported merchant ships. With the increasing in trade volume, more detailed responsibilities were assigned to the customs supervision. The central government turned the focus to tax revenue of customs.

Secondly, Macao ships, also called *ao men Hui Zhao Yang Chuan* 澳门回棹洋船, were mentioned in several files, it means foreign ship come back to Macao. These ships are not Chinese ships, but were registered in Macau. I believe they are the “amount ships” mentioned in the archives of Macao. They might be the “E Chuan 额船” mentioned in the archives from Macao, referred to 25 ships with Portuguese flag and are authorized by the Chinese government to engage in trade activities in Macao. This ordinance was founded in Yongzheng 3rd year (1725), and has since maintained this stable number of ships in the following hundred years.²⁰⁸ The 25 ships are prohibited from entrapping prohibited items and are forbidden to carry Chinese people out of the country. They were allowed to be repaired if broken, but the number of 25 cannot be increased. If the ship was damaged and difficult to repair, it can be replaced, but local officials in Macao must carefully register and verify. Every year when each ship goes out of or back to the port, it is necessary to find out who is on board and register carefully.²⁰⁹ In the memorial that Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces Yang Yingju 杨应琚 wrote to Emperor Qianlong in 1755 to explain why the mariners on the foreign ship to Ningbo did wear Qing pigtail hairstyle, he also indicated that this ship is the registered Macao ship No.23. The ship owner whose Chinese name is Hua Mao Shu 华猫殊 is just the Portuguese merchant in Macao named Manuel Favacho.²¹⁰ He was hired by the British merchant to trade in Ningbo. It is clear that Canton Customs has a registration system for all the local ships, no matter local Chinese or Portuguese residents in Macao. Similarly, the table above also mentions 7 Fujian ships that were forced to come to Guangdong due to strong winds in 1786. Guangdong officials counted these Fujian ships to the imperial court when reported the number of foreign ships, since these ships were “not registered locally”.

Thirdly, a new word appeared in these memorials since 1770s. *Gang jiao chuan* 港脚船, which was called “Country” ships in English, referred to the “Country trade”. Because East India companies were royal monopolies that were exclusive rights to trade with Asia, private individuals were not allowed to partaken the Eurasian commerce, they could only trade within

²⁰⁸ Yin Guangren and Zhang Rulin, *Ao Men Ji Lue*, (Taipei: Chengwen Publisher, 1969).

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

²¹⁰ LFZZ, 03-1101-051. Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an*, 191.

Asia, hence the country trade. However, the term “country” could not separate the company and private, some time they would be consigned to carry goods from Asia to Europe so they temporarily become the company ship.²¹¹ The definition of gang jiao chuan in Chinese literature is relatively broad. All these private ships that trade between India to China, or just from South Asia, whether cooptated with East India Company can be defined as gang jiao chuan. So here in the sources gang jiao chuan are more refer to the private ships. Of the 34 foreign ships that arrived in 1775, 15 were gang jiao chuan, showing that private trade is also an important part of Guangdong trade.

The increasing tariffs reflects the prosperity of the trade in Canton. At the same time, the other three customs also carried important duties of trade management.

- **Fujian/Min Customs 闽海关**

The imperial court required each customs to collect a prescribed amount of “specified silver” (Zheng E Yin 正额银) and some other taxes each year. As mentioned above, the Zheng E Yin of Canton Customs was 43,564 taels while for Fujian Customs was 66,549.5467 taels. Does it means in the early days of establishment of the four customs, trade volume of Fujian Customs was higher than Canton Customs? The structure of Fujian Customs is similar to that of Guangdong Customs, and it also establishes multiple ports under a general custom, included the most famous Xiamen. After Qing conquered Taiwan and established this customs since 1683, Xiamen or Amoy became an important emporia.²¹² The Xiamen trade between 1683 to 1842 also partnered with Taiwan, and made its own traditional trading system.²¹³ Since 1727, Xiamen’s trade with Cochinchina entered a booming period. Hokkien-speaking junk traders from Xiamen visited all the main ports of Southeast Asia and East Asia, including Nagasaki, Batavia, Semarang, Singapore, Banjarmasin, Saigon, Siam, Johor, Ligor, Songkhla, Terengganu, Cebu, Annam, Manila, and Maluku. Of these ports in the Philippine Islands,

²¹¹ Paul A. Van Dyke and Susan E. Schopp, *The Private Side of the Canton Trade, 1700–1840: Beyond the Companies* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2018), x.

²¹² Nola Cooke, Nana Li, and Choi Byung-wook, *Water Frontier: Commerce and the Chinese in the Lower Mekong Region, 1750-1880* (Singapore: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers 2004), 54-55.

²¹³ Yen Ching-hwang, *Ethnic Chinese Business in Asia: History, Culture and Business Enterprise* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2014), 460.

Batavia and other palaces on the Malay Peninsula were the major destinations for Xiamen Junks.²¹⁴ Compared with Canton that was frequently visited by foreign ship, Xiamen was basically a port used by private Chinese maritime shipping. “In the period before 1830s, there were more Chinese junks sailing from Xiamen than from Canton.”²¹⁵ According to the data selected by Japanese scholars, there were 73 Chinese junks sailing to Japan in 1683 when the Qing lifted the maritime ban, mainly of them sailed from Fujian.²¹⁶ In 1688, 70 junks allowed to trade at Nagasaki, 25 came from the lower Yangzi area, 26 from southern China, and 19 from Southeast Asia.²¹⁷ In 1714, 3 of the 30 junks trade to Nagasaki were from Southeast Asia, 6 from southern China, and 21 from Nanjing, Fuzhou and Ningbo.²¹⁸ In spite of the junks to Japan, the number of local Chinese ships departed from Fuzhou and Xiamen to Djakarta also increased from about 10 (Kangxi 24th Year/1685) to more than 50 (Kangxi 42nd Year/1703).²¹⁹ On 1820, there were 295 ships sailing from China to East and Southeast Asia.²²⁰ According to a file with from Archivo General de Indias in Spain, between 7th January 1765 to 7th January 1766 in one year, there is a record of 18 ships arrived in Manila and be charged with the tax of almojarifazgo. 15 of them ships are from China, within 1 from Macao, 2 from Canton, and other 12 from Emuy (Xiamen).²²¹ Compared with the activeness of Chinese junks in East and South Asia, there are less records that foreign ships trade in Fujian. A memorial of the Emperor Qianlong in 1737 written by Hao Yulin 郝玉麟, the governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces, might be an evidence to prove that Fujian Customs was lack of experiences when dealing with the foreign merchant rarely have direct access to foreign ships.²²² In August, 1737, a Luzon ship was sailing to trade in Xiamen, Fujian Province. The local officials have never accepted a

²¹⁴ Cooke, et al., 55.

²¹⁵ *ibid.*

²¹⁶ Tamura Hiroyuki, *Higashi Ajia bōeki shiron : Nitchū Nitchō bōeki no shiteki tenkai* (Hiroshima: saganoshoin, 1973), 115, cited in *Maritime China in Transition 1750-1850*, Wang Gungwu and Ng Chin-Keong, eds. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), 89.

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, 117.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, 120.

²¹⁹ Huang Qichen, “Qingdai Qianqi Haiwai Maoyi de Fazhan,” *Historical Research*, vol. 04 (1986): 157.

²²⁰ Yao Xiangao (ed.), *Zhongguo Jindai Duiwai Maoyishi Ziliao, Vol.1* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962), 63, cited in Huang Qichen, Qingdai Qianqi, 157.

²²¹ *Filipinas 859, 1766, Derechos Reales de Almojarifazgo of the Philipines*, Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Seville.

²²² ZPZZ, 1738 (Qianlong 3rd Year, Month 12, Day 15), 04-01-35-0310-011, FHAC, Beijing.

foreign ship before and did not know how to collect taxes. So they searched the previous record and found there was an English ship once came to Fujian Customs two years ago in 1735. At that time, they consulted Canton Customs and noticed that they should charge not only regular tax, but also *Fen Tou Yin* 分头银, *Jiao Song Yin* 缴送银 and other 90 types of fee collection. Two years ago, Fujian Customs did not complete the taxation for the British ship quickly sailed back to Canton. But in 1737, they charged as what they consulted about two years ago on this Luzon ship, then noticed by Canton that they made a mistake. Zhun Tai 准泰, the former governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces told them for foreign merchant ships from neighboring countries like Luzon, there is need to collect the Fen Tou Yin. The custom only charged ships from distant countries such as those from Europe. Finally, the Fujian Customs refunded the Fen Tou Yin to the Luzon ship.

Emperor Qianlong's decree in 1757 formally defined this customary convention and blocked the possibility of foreign merchant ships going to Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. But that does not mean all foreign ships followed the decree and went to Guangzhou as the emperor required. There are sources indicate that the ports of these three customs have always had foreign ships coming to trade with. For example, in 1781, 1783, 1786, 1807 and 1809, there were Spanish merchants transported goods from Luzon, the Philippines to Xiamen, and then brought Chinese commodities to Luzon.²²³ After foreign ships were forced to return to Guangdong trade, another order was issued in 1758: "If it is a foreign ship that was always trade in Xiamen, they are allowed to continue trade as usual."²²⁴ In fact, China has always been a crucial part of the Manilla galleon trade. "China is especially in a central role, both for its capacity to satisfy the global market's demand for inexpensive manufactured products and for its determining power on global finances. Until the nineteenth century the global economy's monetary regime was dependent upon China's demand for American silver. The Spanish Empire would be impossible to operate without China. In such modern trade network, the only place businessmen could

²²³ Zhou Kai, *Xia Men Zhi*, Vol.5. cited in Huang Qichen, "Qingdai Qianqi," 153.

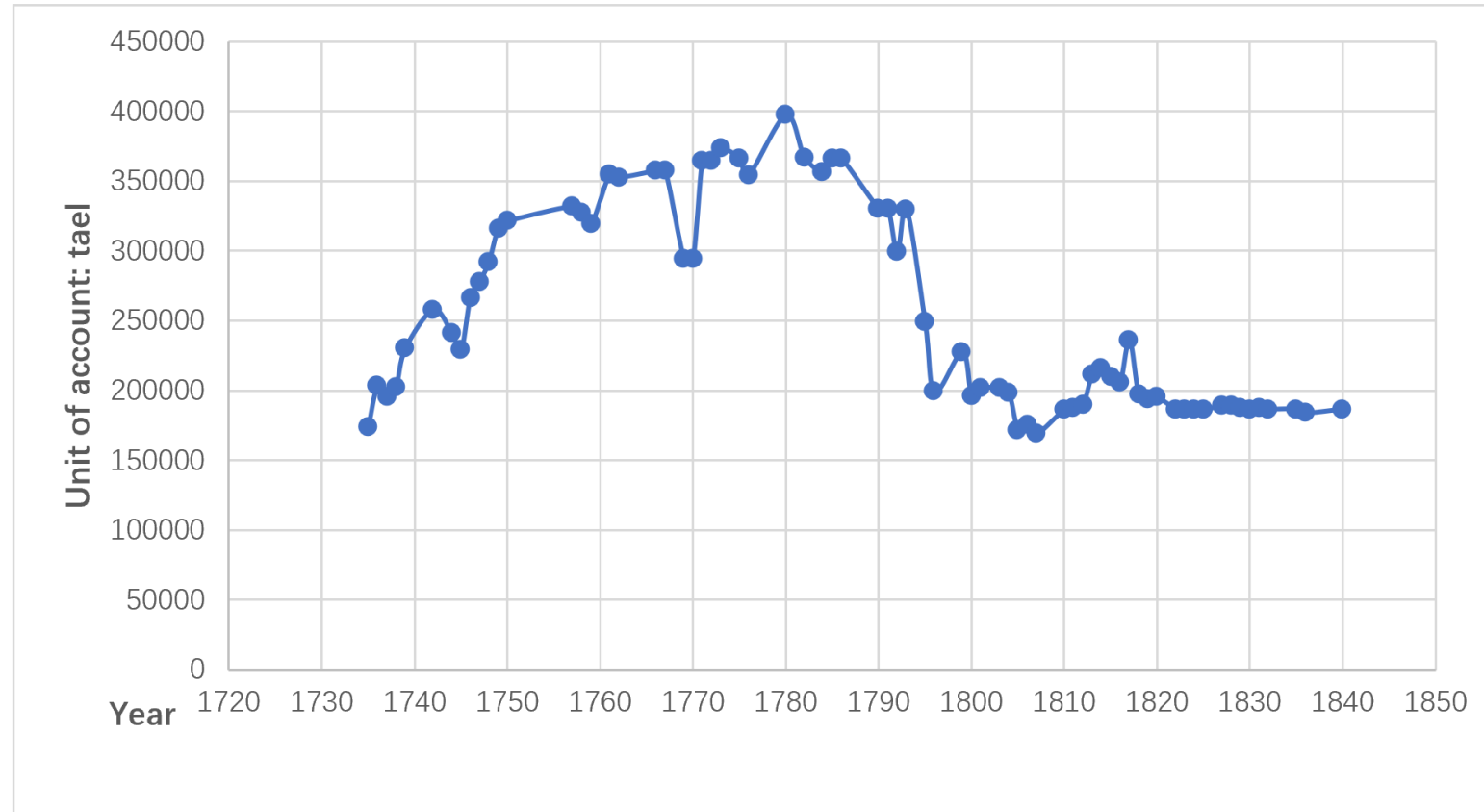
²²⁴ *QSL*, Vol.553, FHAC, Beijing. Original text in classical Chinese: "如系向来到厦番船, 自可照例准其贸易".

have direct access to Asian markets was the route connecting Acapulco and Manila.”²²⁵

The Emperor Qianlong’s decree in 1757 that asked foreign ships only to trade in Canton had no reflection in the taxation data of Fujian Province. I conclude two reasons: First, Canton System might be issued only to trap those “new foreigners” such as the British, but not the earlier Spanish, Siamese and Luzon merchants. In other words, these three ports have always accepted foreign ships. Second, the main body of Fujian’s maritime trade was Chinese merchants. The chart shows slow increase in tariffs before 1790s, and a downward trend around 1800 and then kept a steady trend.

²²⁵ Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (USA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 3.

Chart 2-2: Annual Tax Revenue of Fujian Customs 1735-1840.²²⁶



²²⁶ Data selected from 70 ZPZZ and LFZZ of FHAC. Due to the loss of documents, tariff data before 1735 and some years between 1735-1840 could not be found.

● **Zhejiang/Zhe Customs 浙海关 and Jiangsu/Jiang Customs 江海关**

Through review of the imperial files from FHAC, I found that there are very few records of foreign trade in Zhejiang Customs and Jiangsu Customs, especially Jiangsu, which is rarely mentioned in relative study field. As mentioned earlier, the four customs offices not only deal with foreign trade affairs, they also manage domestic trade at sea. Therefore, compared to Guangdong and Fujian, I think Zhejiang and Jiangsu accounts for a relatively smaller proportion of foreign trade. But that does not mean that Zhejiang and Jiangsu were not important in overseas trade. These two provinces are important producing areas of silk and tea, and merchants from Zhejiang and Jiangsu have left activity traces in the Asian ports. For example, as mentions earlier in this chapter, in 1714, 3 of the 30 junks trade to Nagasaki were from Southeast Asia, 6 from southern China, and 21 from Nanjing, Fuzhou and Ningbo.²²⁷ Nanjing is in Jiangsu and Ningbo is in Zhejiang. In a file from Archivo General de Indias about Status of Spanish and foreign ships that entered and left the port of Manila has also recorded several Chinese Junks. It mentioned that from 1st June 1798 to 31st May 1799 one year, there were 10 Junks from Lanquin (Nanjing) trade in Manila and been taxed.²²⁸ This file also mentions that during this time, there were records of Spanish merchants trade to Xiamen and Ningbo. This situation is consistent with the operation of Fujian's trade mentioned above, but contradicts in Zhejiang recorded in the imperial files from FHAC.

In Zhejiang Customs there is a Hong Mao Guan (红毛馆 Red hair department/Foreign office) charged for the foreign merchants trade to in China. There is a record of Charging taxation from a British ship in 1755. In the decades after that, even foreigners were required to trade in Guangdong, the Hong Mao Guan tax in Zhejiang remained legal. However, available tariff reports claim that no such revenue was received. In the cabinet records, there is a separate record each year to declare that no foreign ship arrived in ports this year.²²⁹

It is worth mentioning that except Zhejiang customs, Fujian and Jiangsu customs did not report

²²⁷ Tamura Hiroyuki, *Higashi Ajia bōeki shiron*, 115.

²²⁸ *Filipinas 856*, AGI, Seville.

²²⁹ The records details can be found in various *Ti Ben* from FHAC, Beijing.

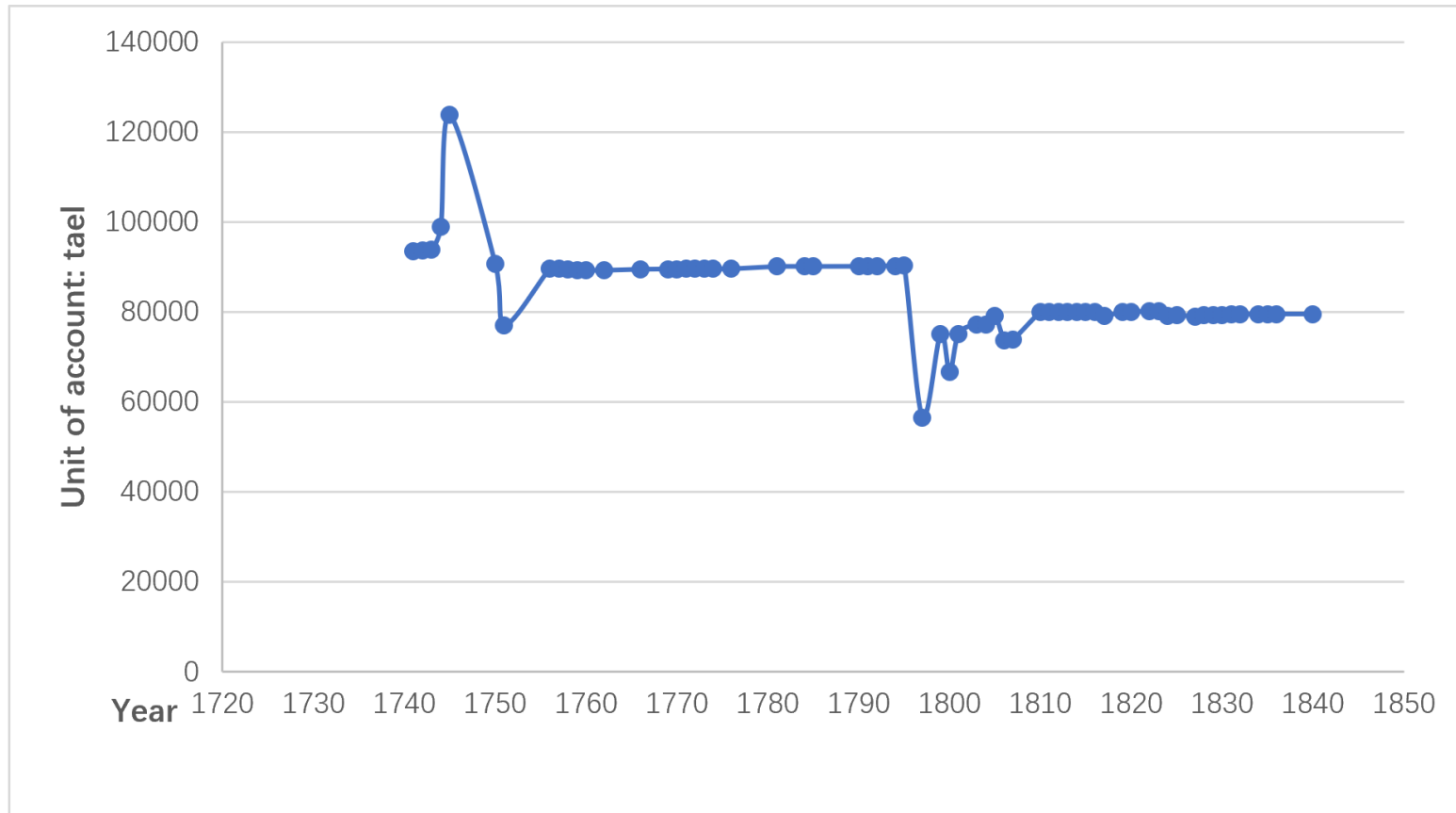
to the emperor that no foreign ships arrived at the port every year. It is inconsistent with the Spanish record. According to the file that mentioned above, there is at least one Spanish merchant ship from Manila went to Ningbo to trade between 1798 and 1799. There is a great possibility that the Philippine trade with Ningbo at that time was already included in the conventional trade, which means the Spanish merchants were not the “red hairs”. However, this study is unable to find more archival materials to support this hypothesis.

The administrative structures and taxation methods of Zhejiang and Jiangsu customs were similar to those of Fujian customs. Zhejiang Customs’ “specified silver” (Zheng E Yin 正额银) is 35,908.23 taels of silver, in includes 32,030.629 taels of E Zheng Shui Yin (额征税银 rated tax), 127.60108 taels of Pu Kou Chang Jiang Shui Yin (浦口长江税银 Pu Kou Port Yangtze River tax), 75.78 taels of Si Shui Yin (丝税银 silver tax), and 3,750 taels. Tong Jin Shui Jiao Yin (铜斤水脚银).²³⁰ In addition, Zhejiang custom had a stipulated Hong Mao Guan tax of 10,030.42 per year, but in fact as the officials reported “no foreign ships arrived” year by year, this tax usually not accounted in the annual revenue.²³¹ For Jiangsu Customs, the “specified silver” (Zheng E Yin) is 21,480.33 taels.

²³⁰ *Ti Ben*, 1753 (Qianlong 18th Year, Month 12, Day 18), 02-01-04-14681-016, FHAC, Beijing.

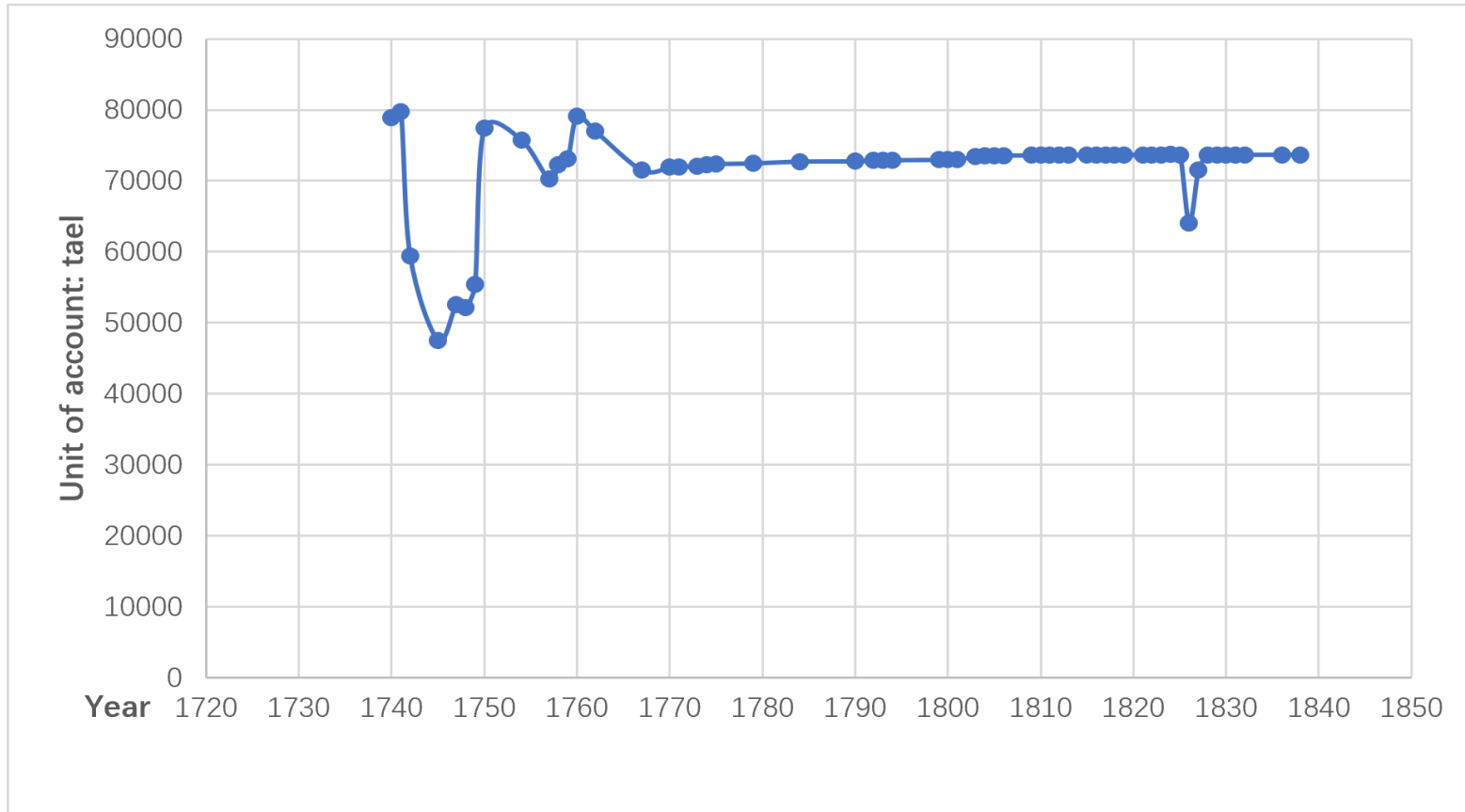
²³¹ *Ti Ben*, 1762 (Qianlong 27th Year, Month 10, Day 3), 02-01-04-15446-014, FHAC, Beijing.

Chart 2-3: Annual Tax Revenue of Zhejiang Customs 1741-1840.²³²



²³² Data selected from 63 ZPZZ of FHAC. Due to the loss of documents, tariff data before 1741 and some years between 1741-1840 could not be found.

Chart 2-4: Annual Tax Revenue of Jiangsu Customs 1740-1838.²³³



²³³ Data selected from 57 ZPZZ of FHAC. Due to the loss of documents, tariff data before 1740 and some years between 1740-1838 could not be found.

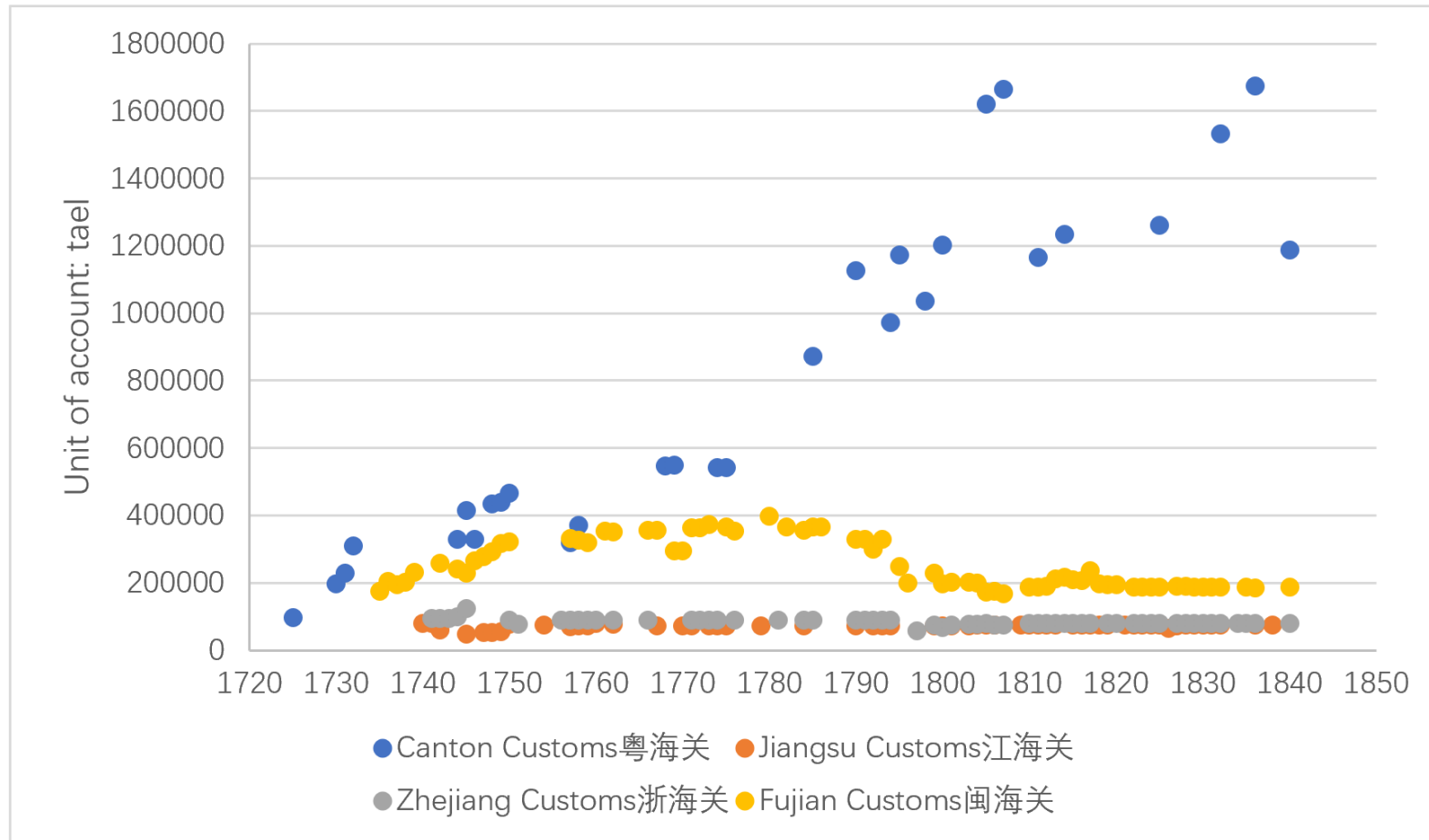
The customs data of Jiangsu Customs and Zhejiang Customs show a strange feature that the fluctuation of the figures is too small. From 1756 to 1795, Zhejiang Customs maintained tariff data consistently between 89,230.709 and 90,230.229, with data differences between two consecutive years not exceeding 1,000 taels. Only in 1797 the revenue reduced into 56,543.16 taels, officials local explain it to the emperor is because of the damage from the wind and the merchants trade did not recover.²³⁴ Since 1799, the customs duty of Zhejiang Customs maintained a relative stable value, but lower than those before 1790s.

The change of data in Jiangsu is even smaller than in Zhejiang, especially from 1770, the annual revenue distinction between two consecutive years did not exceed 200 taels. Only in 1826 and 1827 the number of taxes were lower, and it was stated in the ZPZZ that the soybean and wheat tax was waived in those two years because of emperor's order. Such small revenue difference is unreasonable, especially the tax depends on maritime trade, weather, production of goods, and foreign political changes will all be factors that affect trade frequency.

Therefore, there are reasons to believe that most of the taxes collected from Zhejiang and Jiangsu customs were from domestic ships. In fact, during the hundred years since 1720s until the Opium War in 1840s, no matter Emperor Qianlong banned foreign ships to trade out of Canton or not, the rest three customs also maintained a steady taxation. However, the small numerical fluctuation shows that the proportion of foreign trade taxes in the total tax revenue did not account much. Most taxes were more dependent on domestic trade through the transport ports between the north, such as Dalian or Tianjin, to the south ports such as Ningbo.

²³⁴ *LFZZ*, 1797 (Jiaqing 2nd Year, Month 9, Day 15), 03-1766-066, FHAC, Beijing.

Chart 2-5: Annual Tax Revenue of the Four Major Customs: Cantong, Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu 1725-1840.



When integrating these data into one graph, the total amount of four customs duties and change are more intuitive. After the mid-eighteenth century, the growth of Guangdong's trade has gradually increased its total tax revenue to several times or even ten times that of other customs.

Some Chinese historians believe that European merchants were no longer travel to Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu, and the three places still engaged in overseas trade were on account of Chinese merchants, such as the Chinese local outbound ships to trade in other Asian countries. It calls an emphasis on the importance of the identification of Chinese. Foreign ships were under the control of the Canton system, while Chinese ships - both residents and migrants - were unaffected by the new regulations and continued to operate out of ports other than Canton.²³⁵ According to the research of Huang Qichen, the three major customs importers from Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Fujian are mostly purchased in East Asia and Southeast Asia, such as Japanese coppers and silver, the spices, herbs and raw metal materials from Siam, Vietnam, Philippines, Myanmar, etc.²³⁶

There are reasons to believe that the rapid increase in China's foreign trade tariffs in the mid and late 18th century is closely related to the rise of the British economy after industrial revolution and the expansion of British maritime trade. But at the same time, trade between China and other European and Asian countries has never been interrupted. More silver and goods were brought to China, and goods purchased from China were sold worldwide. Chinese scholars believe that China's foreign trade has entered a state of passive trade since the 17th century, which means; it was mainly foreign ships brought foreign goods into China.²³⁷ The establishment of the British hegemony in the sea might gradually encroached on the share of the Portuguese and the Spanish, even if the Portuguese have always been accustomed to trade through Canton because of the convenience of Macao. This explains why many studies of Chinese foreign trade history in the 18th century placed the entry point in Canton, while Canton also recorded more trade information with Europe than the other three customs.

In the eyes of the emperor, these maritime trade activities also met the needs of the Qing court in the form of tariff revenue. Even, compared with Europe's enthusiasm for commodity trade, the Qing rulers did not pay much attention to capital accumulation and commodity exports. On 17th and 18th centuries, the state's fiscal revenue mainly came from land tax. Most regions

²³⁵ Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing*, 99.

²³⁶ Huang Qichen, "*Qingdai Qianqi*," 153.

²³⁷ Chen Shangsheng, "Yelun Qingqianqi de Haiwai Maoyi, Yu Huang Qichen Xiansheng Shangque," *Researches in Chinese Economic History*, vol. 04 (1993): 101.

of China were still rely on the agricultural economy. The sprout of capitalism only occurred in the southeast coastal regions. The entire social economy of Qing was in an independent ecological environment that independent from the international trading system.

However, as China's foreign trade activities became more frequent, the country would inevitably be involved into the international economy, which reflected in the prices of commodities, livelihood standard, consumption habits, and even social production structure of the entire Qing. The Qing rulers' increasing emphasis on silver from Canton, both Customs duties and Hong merchants' donations, illustrated this problem, and the weaknesses of the state capacity are becoming more apparent. The Qing government's inherent idea of separating the Chinese market from world trade was no longer in line with the characteristics of the times. Trade affected Guangdong, as well as Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, then eventually China as a whole. The outbreak of the Opium War and the opening of the Chinese ports are inevitable.

Chapter III

Management of Exported and Imported Goods of Qing China in 1680-1840

According to memorial records of Canton local official' reports to the emperors, European merchant ships mainly brought silver to China, other goods they brought were usually woolen fabrics, spices, black lead, medicinal herbs, etc. During the Yongzheng and Qianlong period, Canton Customs collected several hundred thousand silver taels of tax revenues each year. They were charged on commodity commercial tax (shang shui 商税) from outbound ships, and foreign tax (yang shui 洋税) from the overseas merchants marines. A memorial submitted to Emperor Qianlong in 1743 suggested that "in each foreign merchant ship we can collect the income of about ten thousands taels of silver, every year there will be around 10 to 15 foreign ships come."²³⁸ According to data from the East India Company, in the time of Qianlong, the foreign vessels which came to Canton was about 30 or 40, but in 1832 the amount is around 70 or 80, and sometimes more than 100.²³⁹ In the 17th and 18th centuries, China's exported volume is greater than imported volume. Therefore, Chinese economic historians pay more attention to the inflow of silver in China when studying the history before the 1840s. But that is not the focus of this study. At that time, there were various goods flowing into China from overseas. What was the demand for imported goods in 17th and 18th centuries Qing China? Were there large quantities of European goods flowing into the Chinese market? What was their value? And what was the quantity? This chapter focuses on these questions and looks for clues of foreign goods, especially European goods, entering China from the Chinese sources.

²³⁸ ZPZZ, 1744 (Qianlong 9th Year, Month 5, Day 29), 04-01-35-0316-04, FHAC, Beijing.

²³⁹ *The Asiatic Journal*, 99.

3.1: National policy regulation: prohibited export and import commodities

Canton local officials occasionally reported to the emperor about numbers of foreign ships arriving in current-year, but there is no uniform format of record and reporting standard, it is unable to obtain accurate data of the arrival of foreign ships each year from existing sources. In the early and mid-18th century, it is normal to have ten ships or more coming per year. In addition, due to lack of uniform standards, different officials have different translation habit of foreign countries' name. According to the Chinese pronunciation regulations, most of these foreign ships might from France, England, Sumatra, Luzon, Siam, Portugal, etc. There are also local Macao foreign ships (本澳洋船/回澳夷船) that usually bring foreign goods to China. Those are foreign ships based in Macao but held by non-Qing citizens.²⁴⁰

Emperor Qianlong had written to the King of England George III that: “Tianchao (天朝, the country of sky, means China or Qing) is rich in products and has everything, while the tea, porcelain and silk are your necessities...”²⁴¹ Although this sentence of Emperor Qianlong was very arrogant in terms of wording, but as discussed in the previous chapter, the logic behind it was that Qianlong wanted to keep the original system to separate the tributary trade from the private trade. The tributary trade met the national politics, emperor's demand and palace consumption, while private trade needs to be controlled within a certain amount, and must not affect the original national economic operation model. When the emperor determined that importing or exporting a commodity would pose a risk to the regime, he explicitly banned it from the beginning. With the change of the international trade environment, the goods that the Qing rulers banned from exporting and importing will also change depends on the specific market situation, but there are also some goods that have always been under control. According to the sources from FHAC, Macao and the *Di Fang Zhi*, the raw materials and commodities strictly controlled include but are not limited to:

- Niter, sulphur, ironware and weapons

According to *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*: “In Kangxi 23rd Year (1684), the sea ban had finished and maritime trade resumed, but niter, sulphur, and weapons were still banned from going abroad.”²⁴² After that, there is an edict announced by Qianlong in 1769: “The sulphur is

²⁴⁰ ZPZZ, 04-01-30-0413-019, 04-01-30-0282-040, 04-01-30-0283-037, 04-01-30-0144-031, etc. FHAC, Beijing.

²⁴¹ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, Vol. 8, original text in classical Chinese: “天朝物产丰盈，无所不有，原不借外夷货物以通有无。特因天朝所产茶叶、瓷器、丝斤为西洋各国必需之物……”

²⁴² *ibid.*, vol. 17, original text in classical Chinese: “康熙二十三年十三谕，诏开海禁。其硝磺、军器等物，仍不准出洋……若有围巾将硝磺、军器等物私载出洋贸易者，仍照处分其罪。”

usually prohibited to go overseas, because it is a material to make gunpowder. If there were unscrupulous merchants shipping niter and sulphur overseas, they must be questioned and punished. If there were foreign ships carrying sulfur saltpeter that press the bottom of the ship, there is no need to check and blame as before. Those could be bought, and it is also useful to the country.”²⁴³ In other words, when the sea ban finished since 1864, Emperor Kangxi believed that niter and saltpeter should be strictly controlled by the state. Emperor Qianlong (in 1769) deemed that as long as these items did not flow out of China, they would not threaten the national military security. Qianlong believed that since the goods brought by foreign ships can only be purchased and processed by the Hongs, so there is no risk. That also shows Emperor Qianlong’s confidence in the strength of the country.

Since 1797, in the Jiaqing era, the policy became stricter. Export of these materials were still banned, and the quantity of niter imports from the foreign ships needs to be counted, and brought only by the specified merchants, not only in Canton, but also in Macao. In 1797, a Luzon ship sold the niter to a foreign merchant who lived in Macao with a higher price, which aroused the dissatisfaction of officials in Xiangshan County, then they wrote a decree to the Portuguese administrator: “Goods that arrive in Macao can be bought and sold for profit, but niter is required by the national arms. Only prescribed merchants can buy it... Seal the two thousand *dan* of niter and wait for businessmen to come over from Guangdong to buy it.”²⁴⁴ A related document also recorded that in 1806, the No.3 Macau ship brought 1307 bags, No.16 ship brought 4000 bags and No.17 ship brought 291 bags of niter to Macao, every bag counts to 30~60 jin weight, they were sealed until the Guangdong merchants came to buy them.²⁴⁵ The administration of the Qing government further expanded from Guangdong to Macau, apparently feeling armed threats of other countries from the sea and pirate intrusion during the same period.

- Silk

Around the 1760s, Emperor Qianlong even restricted the export of silk products for he thought

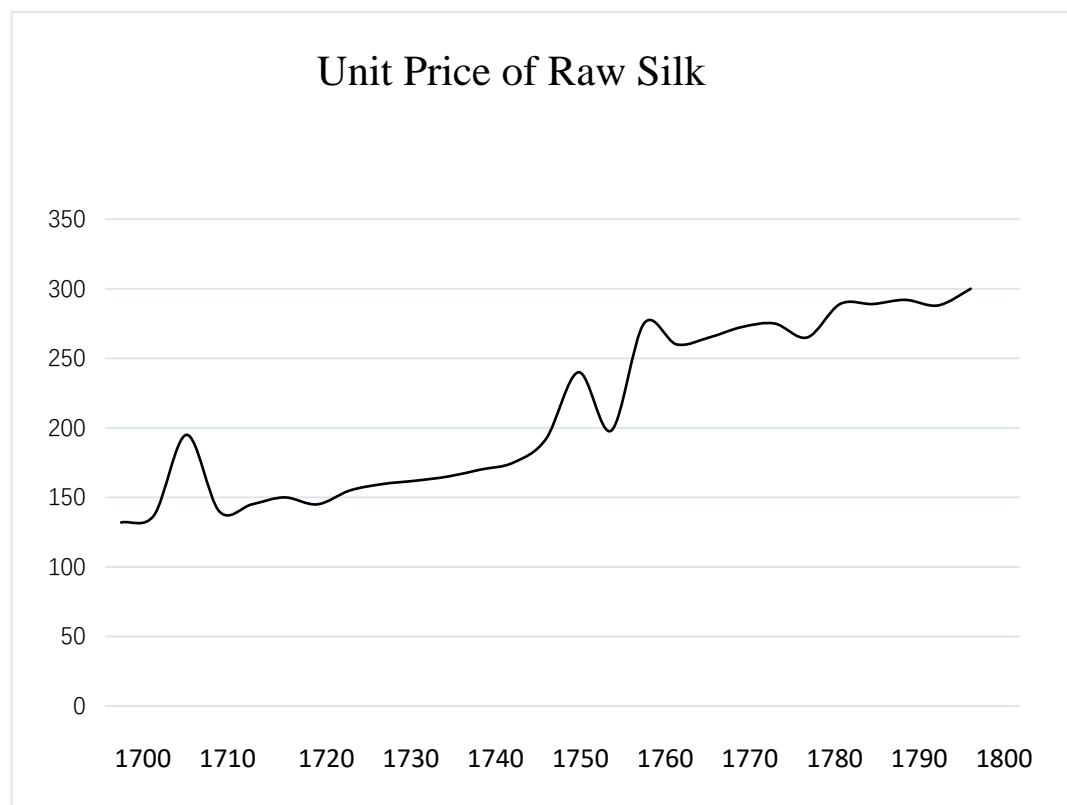
²⁴³ *ibid*, original text in classical Chinese: “向来硫磺入海口，俱系例禁。原因磺斤系火药所需，自不便令其私贩。若奸商以內地硝磺偷运出洋，或外来洋船私买內地硫磺载归者，必当实力盘诘治罪。乃定例于洋船进口时亦不许其私带，殊属无谓。海外硫磺至內地，并无干碍。遇有压舱所带，自可随时收买备用，于军资亦属有益，何必于洋船初来，多次一番诘问禁乎？嗣后惟于海船出口时切实稽查，不许仍带磺斤，以防偷漏之弊，违者照定例究治。其各省呀昂穿入口，禁止压带硫磺之例概行停止，著为例。”

²⁴⁴ 0806/C0607-015/Cx.02, R.05/0602, 1791, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an Huibian*, 162.

²⁴⁵ *ibid*, 166-167.

the foreigners brought too much and would affect the demand of the domestic market.²⁴⁶ It was first in 1759 that Emperor Qianlong announced not to allow silk and silk production export and sell to the foreigners, in order to reduce the silk prices in China. During the next five years of the prohibition, many problems arose. The first is that the price of silk has not decreased, and silk farmers have difficulty in selling. Secondly, because foreign merchant ships came to China but not allowed to buy silk, the amount of goods brought in gradually decreased, which also affected the price of foreign goods in China.²⁴⁷ In 1764, the officials from Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang all petitioned Qianlong to relax restrictions, and allow foreign merchants to mix a portion of silk abroad at least.²⁴⁸

Chart 3-1: Purchase Price of Raw Silk by the British East India Company²⁴⁹



In *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China* written by Morse, there are records of the unit price of raw silk that purchased by the East India Company in different years, to make it clearer, I use the diagram of curves to show the growing trend of raw silk. In reviewing Morse's records, I find it interesting that there are slightly differences on the raw

²⁴⁶ *JJCSYD*, 1762 (Qianlong 27th Year, Month 5, Day 11); *LFZZ*, 03-0629-041. *ZPZZ*, 04-01-01-0255-025, 04-01-01-0249-012, 04-01-01-0249-010, etc., FHAC, Beijing.

²⁴⁷ Fang Yujin, "Qianong Ershijiunian de Sijin Chukou," *Historical Archives*, no. 04, (1983), 29.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Data collected from Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China 1635-1834*, vol.1, vol.2, and vol.5. Charge Unit: tael/Dan (picul).

silk purchasing price of different ships from East India Company in the same year. In the diagram above, I take the lowest purchasing price as the raw silk price at that time. Also, the price of the silk that East India Company purchased in Guangdong, was different from advanced Jiangnan silk. However, it still shows the increase trend in silk prices. Emperor Qianlong noticed the increase in silk prices during 1750s and proposed a solution to restrict exports. But apparently his method did not work. Since 1764 Qianlong's restrictions gradually relaxed, and the price of silk has maintained an inherently stable growth rate. Kishimoto believes that the increase in silk prices is not caused by supply and demand, but by inflation caused by the influx of silver into China.²⁵⁰ It is worth mentioning here that the Governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Province in his memorial to Qianlong that "foreign goods required in the mainland have also increased in price due to fewer merchant ships".²⁵¹ If the rise in prices is a common situation, then it is clear that the rise in prices of foreign goods is not just due to imbalances in supply and demand.

The decree of Qianlong not only failed to achieve the goal of controlling the price of silk, but also caused other price problems, precisely because the emperor did not have a correct understanding of China's role in world trade at that time. The government's "not in calendar" private trade is far more influential than he thought.

- Grain

The grain from overseas is what the Qing government desired most, the government also has a strict control over food exports. The local Hong merchants and brokers were not allowed to sell large amounts of grain to the foreign traders. Ships also need to check whether they brought too much food when they left the port. Local officials need to report regularly to the emperor that they have been strictly enforced the ban of grain outflow.²⁵² This prohibition started in 1708 and the punishment for selling grain overseas is severe: "If someone takes rice to aid traitors overseas, he will be hanged; if he sells rice overseas for a profit, the amount of rice that is more than 100 dan (石 picul) or the valley that is more than 200 dan will be transported to a distant place for penal servitude; if the rice is less than 100 dan, or with less than 200 dan of cereal will be flogged 100 times and put into prison for 3 years; those who sell less than 10 dan of rice or 20 dan with cereal will be flogged 100 times and wear a shackle

²⁵⁰ Kishimoto Mio, auth., and Liu Dirui, trans. *Qingdai Zhongguo de Wujia yu Jingji Bodong* (Beijing: Social Science Academic Press, 2009), 135-141.

²⁵¹ Memorial form Yang Tingzhang 杨廷璋, 1764 (Qianlong 29th Year, Month 2, Day 28), cited in Fang Yujin, "Qianong Ershijiunian," 29.

²⁵² ZPZZ, 04-01-01-0088-002, 04-01-35-1234-02, FHAC, Beijing.

for one month.”²⁵³ This prohibition is equally strict in Macau where foreigners live and allows relative free trade. In 1795, Macao applied Xiangshan County for rice, and Xiangshan County emphasized in the reply that the rice was used for relief, and put request that it must never be sold in high price or resold overseas.²⁵⁴

There strict policy is closely related to the situation of a large number of food requirement in the Qing dynasty. During the Qianlong period, there was a significant population increase. According to Ping-ti Ho, China’s population has exceeded 140 million in 1741. After that, the annual data has continued to grow. By 1800, the population has reached 300 million. In 1840, the number was 400 million.²⁵⁵ In Zhou Yuanhe’s data, China already had 400 million of population in the end of 18th century.²⁵⁶ The food shortage problem was particularly serious in the southeastern coastal areas, where with a large population and few cultivated lands.²⁵⁷ The farming economy relies heavily on nature. If disasters occurred, how to feed so many people became more serious problem. Food shortages were also very likely to cause public uprisings and threaten the Qing government’s rule. The Qing government had thought of many ways to fend off the famine. In my research on wine, “prohibition” was one of the methods, because traditional Chinese wine was made by grain. Limited cereals should be used as food, not as a beverage. Limited land should be used as cultivated land for grain, not for viticulture.²⁵⁸ Besides, the Qing government also encouraged merchants go abroad to buy food home. A memorial to emperor written by Li Shiyao 李侍尧, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Province on 1761 mentioned that “Referring to the previous case of Fujian Province, merchants who brought more than 2,000 dan of grain from foreign countries could award the official rank. Last year, a businessman names Wang Chao from Chenghai County, brought his own capital and took the vessel of Chen Fushun, bought 2,646 dan of rice from Annam. In accordance with the regulations of ‘2000 dan or more’, he should be awarded with the ninth rank of official for encouragement.”²⁵⁹ Ninth is the lowest official rank, these merchants who have obtained official titles do not have specific powers, but while they are wealthy merchants, officer ranks can make them feel honorable and gain reputation. In some

²⁵³ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, vol. 18.

²⁵⁴ 0986/C0606-050/Cx.01, R.04/0584, 1795, ANTT, recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang’an Huibian*, 151.

²⁵⁵ Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 281-282.

²⁵⁶ Zhou Yuanhe, “Qingdai Renkou Yanjiu,” *Social Sciences in China*, vol. 02 (1982): 1-28.

²⁵⁷ Pu Xia, “Shilun Qingdai Jiangzhe Diqu Liangshi Duanque Wenti,” *Journal of Fu Zhou University (Philosophy And Social Sciences)*, vol.55, no.1 (2002): 25-29.

²⁵⁸ Fan Jinmin, “Qingdai Jinjiu Jinqu de Kaocha,” *Research In Chinese Economic History*, vol. 3 (1992): 92-97.

²⁵⁹ ZPZZ, 1761 (Qianlong 26th Year, Month 4, Day 8), 04-01-01-0249-011, FHAC, Beijing.

extent it also helped them to have closer relationships with local officials.

At the same time, the Qing government also encouraged foreign ships to bring rice to China through tax exemption. However, this tax exemption method requires that ships carrying rice cannot carry other goods, whether it is entering or leaving the port. A decree of 1806 required all cargo ships applied for tax exemption should not only be checked for the time when entering Huangpu port, they also needed to go to Macau without bringing other goods, and the port of Macao needs to be checked in advance. Ships loaded with grains only enter the port and ships leaving the port with empty ships can get full tax exemption. Ships loaded with grains only entering the port but loaded with cargo leaving can be partially exempted, that is, ship tax is exempted and only charged the goods tax.²⁶⁰ Obviously for foreign merchants, the trade in grains is not the most profitable. They are used to bringing other goods together, and the Qing government only wants to attract grains to the country to the greatest extent through tax exemption.

- Cotton

Behind the food shortage is the problem that brought by the country's population growth, and it also affected the trade of another commodity to China: cotton. In 1777, Qianlong ordered a ban on cotton imports, as recently reported by Guangdong that almost all State-owned ships carried cotton as the commodities, while cotton production in areas like Myanmar was large and cheap, which directly affected domestic cotton trade.²⁶¹ Qianlong's ban on imported cotton apparently did not last long, decade of years later, addition to Myanmar cotton, Indian cotton entered the Chinese market. In 1787 the Bombay merchants gave a higher price to Hong merchants, but it still cheaper than the Chinese own, and on trial it is found to be of a quality fit for their every purpose.²⁶² Price and acceptable quality increased Chinese interest in supplies of raw materials from western India and as Macartney observed a few years after the mission to Beijing, cotton from Bombay quickly became one of the necessities of China, for it being preferable to silk for common use, as a cheaper and pleasant wear.²⁶³ The price of domestic cotton had risen sharply in 1780s, for the food shortages caused more agricultural acreage to be converted to grain production, and dislocation occurred within traditional

²⁶⁰ 0412/C0611-046/Cx.02, R.09/1098, 1806, ANTT, recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an Huibian*, 156.

²⁶¹ *Da Qing Li Chao Shi Lu (DQLCSL)*, Qing Gao Zong Shi Lu, vol. 1031, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁶² H.V. Bowen, "British Exports of Raw Cotton from India to China during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," in *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850*, eds. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 124-125.

²⁶³ *ibid.*

domestic supply routes, especially in north of China.²⁶⁴ In 1793-1794, the price of domestic cotton is about 10 to 12 taels per dan (picul), while the Indian cotton was 3 to 5 taels per dan cheaper than the Chinese ones.²⁶⁵ During 1760s, only a few thousand bales of Indian cotton had shipped into Canton in any one year, but in 1785 the number rose to 40,000. Then in late 1780s and early 1790s, it was over 60,000.²⁶⁶

Although the Emperor Qianlong believed that “China has everything”, cheaper Indian cotton began to occupy the Chinese market led by global trade. In restricting the import of cotton, Qianlong’s approach and logic are obviously the same as restricting the export of silk. He deemed that the purchase of Chinese silk by foreigners is the reason for the rise in silk prices, just as foreign cotton entering China will cause Chinese domestic cotton is unmarketable. But in fact, the reason why Bombay cotton is cheaper than Chinese cotton is not only because of the low cost of Bombay cotton, but also because of rising prices of Chinese cotton. The price rise of Chinese cotton is still the problem between land, population and food.

3.2: Encouraging imports: Qing rulers’ personal needs

- Grain

According to the Qing Dynasty archives and chronicles, the most frequent mentioned goods government encouraged to import were always grains, which is consistent with the reasons for banning food exports that mentioned above, to feed the growing population, stabilize grain prices and maintain social stability.

- Copper

In spite of buying grain, there are a lot of records of other purchase. For example in 1745, the Qing government tried to buy copper from foreign merchants to make coins.²⁶⁷ In fact, the demand for copper in the Qing and Ming dynasties was always high. In early modern China, the role of copper is special and unique. There are two reasons why copper market in China increased critically during the centuries. First is the government’s need to control the supply of mint metal, and second is the expansion of private manufacturing and commerce brought a growing and strong demand of metal.²⁶⁸ In other words, it was not only an essential raw

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶⁶ IOR, P/414/47, p.67, 11 May 1787, Bombay merchants to the Bombay Council, British Library, cited in Bowen, *ibid.*

²⁶⁷ ZPZZ, 04-01-35-1234-027, 04-01-35-1236-020, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁶⁸ Yang Yuda, “The Copper Market of Hankou and the Illegal Trade of Yunnan Copper during the

material used for a high number of processing tools and objects in everyday use, but also widely used for production and in daily life. Later it was fixed by law as a main component of copper cash.²⁶⁹

In money circulation of Qing China, both silver and copper were used. Silver was primarily used for reference, for calculating the real market value of copper currency.²⁷⁰ In theory, 1 silver tael was equivalent to 1,000 copper cash. But in times when copper currency was in short supply, its value would appreciate against the silver taels, which means 1 silver tael would be worth less than 1,000 copper cash. The first 100 years of Qing Dynasty were the main time of copper shortage because there was not enough official standard copper cash in circulation. “The minting of money and the securing of necessary raw materials were problems continually plagued the Qing Dynasty.”²⁷¹ In the early years of Qing, domestic production of copper was inadequate, besides using the old coins from the preceding dynasties and copper objects, Qing mainly relied on imported copper from Japan, for which the Japanese copper coins were vital in stabilizing society and the economy in the early Qing. These Japanese copper coins in China were called “foreign copper” (Yang Tong 洋铜). In 1716, total 4,130,000 jin of “foreign copper” were provided to China, while the domestic copper produced in Yunnan was 2,770,000 jin. In which the imported copper covered 62.5% while the domestic of 37.5%.²⁷² However, in the later 18th century, Japan began to limit its exports of copper due to the decline of copper production and to their own needs. It impacted much on the Qing court. The Yongzheng Emperor (1723-1735) had no choice but to seek alternative sources of copper, for example the exploitation of Yunnan. During Qianlong reign (1735-1795), the demand for copper currency rose considerably.²⁷³ Copper administration was reformed in the early years of Qianlong era, the metropolitan mint began to source its copper from Yunnan rather than Japan, but it does not mean the imports of copper are stopped. The court’s demand for imported copper is still reflected in many events. For example, In 1749, there have been the cases of foreign coins being popular in the market in the Zhejiang area. Zhejiang governor Fang Guancheng 方观承 proposed to destroy these illegal coins. He believed that these non-

Mid-Qing Period,” in *South West China in a Regional and Global Perspective (c.1600-1911): Metals, Transport, Trade and Society*, eds. Ulrich Theobald and Jin Gao, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 147.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 146.

²⁷⁰ Liu Sihuh-Feng, “Copper Administration Reform and Copper Imports from Japan in the Qianlong Reign of the Qing Dynasty,” in *Copper in Early Modern Sino-Japanese Trade*, ed. Keiko Nagase-Reimer, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 72.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² Shangyu Tiaoli, “bantong tiaoli” 上谕条例 户部、办铜条例, 1736, cited by Akira Matsuura, “The Trade in Dried Marine Products from Nagasaki to China during the Edo Period,” in ed. Keiko Nagase-Reimer, *Copper in Early Modern Sino-Japanese Trade*, 120.

²⁷³ Liu, Sihuh-Feng, “Copper Administration Reform,” 72.

standard currencies that are not minted by Qing are likely to cause market confusion. And he also proposed that other coastal provinces should have the same problem and better to do the same as what he did. However, Emperor Qianlong felt that these coins should be recycled to see if could recoin them.²⁷⁴

The continuous growth of population in the Qing Dynasty caused insufficient circulation of copper coins. The coin is one of the important reason for the shortage of copper. At the same time, I also believe that for reasons of currency conversion, the inflow of large quantities of American silver has also led to a greater demand for copper. In addition, copper was not only a metal to make coins, but was also necessary to support the lifestyle of the high-ranking classes. The imperial household department used large quantities of copper to produce decorative objects. In a large number of Nei Wu Fu Cheng Wen of FHAC from the copper production (Tong Zuo 铜作) and foundry offices (Zhu Lu Chu 铸炉处) repeatedly requested the purchase of “Yang Tiao Hong Tong” 洋条红铜, which refer to the foreign copper as well.

As a ruler, the Qing government preferred to import food and some raw materials from foreign countries then the European products such as wool, glass, and handicrafts. However, in fact the emperors, aristocrats and Guangdong officials always had a strong affinity for Western goods, especially the imperial family, who were always the main consumers of Western handcrafted goods. In the next part of 3.2 lists the goods that the imperial family required Guangdong to purchase.

- Fabrics and Woolen

Emperor Yongzheng asked Guangdong officials to help purchase overseas textiles with some specific decorative design for daily supply of the Imperial Household Department.²⁷⁵

According to the various files currently publicized by the FHAC about Imperial Household Department, there are many records of buying Western textiles and Western woolen products in early 19th century. The most procured products by the imperial family are mainly wool felts, which are used to make clothes, warm materials for sedan chairs and saddles.²⁷⁶

- Clocks and High-end Crafts

Yongzheng’s son, Emperor Qianlong, was very interested in exotic treasures, and he often asked local officials to help him find high-end crafts. According to a memorial to Qianlong written by Li Shiyao, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces in 1758, the

²⁷⁴ ZPZZ, 1749 (Qianlong 14th Year, Month 7, Day 4), 04-01-35-1240-012, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁷⁵ ZPZZ, 1725 (Yongzheng 3rd Year, Month 4, Day 7), 04-01-30-0144-003, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁷⁶ NWFCW, the series of files starts with the code number of 05-08-30, FHAC, Beijing.

emperor had asked the Guangdong official to “purchase me the clocks, Western gold beads, exotic furnishings, gold thread, new style objects, etc. don’t worry about the fees”. Later, Li Shiyao collected several gold-plated decorations, striking clocks, musical clocks, wall clocks, snuff bottles, glassware, drawing tools and pearls for him and noticed that “We have purchased 6,612.6 taels of silver for these, minus the 15,558.4 spent last year for Duanyang festival, all the 30,000 taels now there are 7,828.9 taels left. Should I give the money to the Ministry of Revenue or the Canton Customs vault?” Qianlong replied: “Keep it and use in the future.”²⁷⁷ In the next year Li Shiyao presented another memorial saying that he purchased 2,503.1 taels to search the agate products.²⁷⁸ Qianlong did not care about these expenditures. He preferred more on the rare overseas treasures.

- Snuff

In the archives from Macau, the same item was repeatedly mentioned, snuff. Snuff has always been an important overseas tribute, and Guangdong officials had the responsibility to purchase it for the imperial family. For example in Qianlong 41st Year (1766), the Xiangshan County of Canton wrote to the Macao Administrator to purchase the high quality snuff for tribute use: “The Macao ship No. 17 returned to Macau from Portuguese trade. As snuff is a Portuguese specialty, if there is top-quality snuff brought by the ship, it must be sealed and waiting for us to buy it first. It is forbidden to sell it to others.”²⁷⁹

3.3: Major imported European Commodities: the royal demand and popular demand

After the sea ban was abolished in 1683 and the 4 customs started to open for the trade, a large number of goods flowed out of China each year, and other foreign goods flowed into China as well. Compared with the opium and silver that many scholars focused on, and the widespread recognition of copper and cotton that have flowed into China in larger quantities, this study tends to explore other commodities that also formed a certain market size in China. The previous content enumerates the emperor’s thirst for overseas goods, not only as a state ruler, but also a consumer of goods.

In the Qing Dynasty before the Opium War, in addition to the grain and copper that the government publicly sought from overseas merchants, the imperial family would also consume some Western scientific instruments, textiles, high-end crafts, snuff, medicines, etc.

²⁷⁷ ZPZZ, 1758 (Qianlong 23rd Year, Month 2, Day 18), 04-01-01-0227-019, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁷⁸ ZPZZ, 1759 (Qianlong 24th Year, Month 1, Day 9), 04-01-14-0029-001, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁷⁹ 1064/C0605-007/Cx.01, R.03/0314, 1766, ANTT, recorded Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang’an Huibian*, 182.

In fact, the court consumed far more Western items than listed above. According to a large number of FHAC's Imperial Household Department archives, the Qing court set up a "Xi Yang Tang" (西洋堂 Foreign Hall) in Beijing to hire foreigners to work for the imperial family, their duties included but not limited to painting, medical treatment, astronomical calendar calculation and other content. To perform these tasks, it is also necessary to purchase raw materials and commodities overseas. In addition, Western items purchased by the Household Department included foreign glassware, foreign enamel, foreign swings, foreign lacquers, foreign keys and locks, western paintings, etc.²⁸⁰ In addition to the upper class, ordinary people in Beijing and Guangzhou, which are big trading cities, are also "extravagant and extravagant in using foreign goods". During the Jiaqing period, Beijing people liked to wear "Western felt", which was more fashionable than domestic mink. In the early 19th century, people in Guangzhou were popular to wear pocket watches. Condensed milk, foreign wine, imported sweets and so on were also very popular.

The table below are information of cargoes that entered China with foreign ships that recorded in Chinese sources. The statistics consistent with the needs of the emperor, but there are many other commodities that were also popular in China.

Table 3-2: The Ships with commodities to China through Canton and Macao, selected from imperial files and Macao files

Year	Origins of the foreign ship	Goods carried in a ship	References
1715	Fance	Silver	ZPZZ, recorded in FHAC, ed. <i>Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang'an</i> (Beijing: China Archives Publisher, 2010), 141.
1715	Britain	Serge, droguet, black lead	ditto
1715	Macao	Rude goods, herbs, spices, shark fins, etc.	ditto
1716	France	Silver	ZPZZ, 04-01-30-0413-019, FHAC.
1716	Macao	Ordinary rude goods	ditto

²⁸⁰ *NWFCW*, the series of files starts with the code number of 05-08-30, FHAC, Beijing.

1716	Britain & Sulu (Original document mentioned in unity)	Black lead, rosewood, cotton, sand rattan, droguet, feather cloth, sandalwood, storax, frankincense, myrrh, sago rice, clocks, small glassware, glass mirror, cloves, medicine, silver, etc.	ZPZZ, recorded in FHAC, ed. <i>Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang'an</i> , 155.
1717	Macao	Crude goods such as pepper, trepang, ebony, logwood, etc.	ZPZZ, 04-01-30-0283-037, FHAC.
1718	Fance	Silver	ditto
1718	Portugal	Crude goods such as wine, ebony, and sea vegetables	ZPZZ, recorded in FHAC, ed. <i>Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang'an</i> , 172.
1718	Macao	Crude goods such as pepper, trepang, ebony, logwood, etc.	ditto
1718	Britain	Serge, droguet, black lead and silver	ditto
1722	Sulu	Crude medicines	ZPZZ, 04-01-30-0270-016, FHAC.
1722	France	Silver	ditto
1775	India (Country ships)	Cotton, pepper, sand rattan, tin, etc.	ZPZZ, 04-01-35-0346-028, FHAC.
1795	Luzon	Grain 4000 dan, sulphur 30 dan, silver 3 boxes	1148/C0605-091/Cx.01, R.05/0331, ANTT, recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, <i>Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an Huibian</i> , 210-211.
1795	Luzon	Grain 5850 dan, cow leather 4220 pieces, logwood 323 dan, ebony 146 dan, suo zong 130 bags, cubilose 3 boxes, Sato	ditto

		1940 bales, cotton 6 bags, suger 190 dan	
1795	Luzon	Grain 1080 dan, cow leather 340 pieces, cubilose 9 boxes, deer's sinew 8 bags, trepang 5 dan	ditto
1823	Portugal	Wine 10 barrels, hats 3 boxes, beef intestine 10 buckets, ropes 12 bags, milk cookies 10 buckets	0102/C0614-021/Cx.03, R.12/1424, ANTT, recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, <i>Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang'an Huibian</i> , 231.

In the Chinese records of the customs, there are not many records about the cargo carried by foreign merchant ships. I only collect some of them. Among them, in the early 18th century there was information about French ships, most of which came to China with silver. British ships also brought some goods, not only the raw materials and silver, but also commodities like serge and drogue (broad cloth), which were all textiles and wool products. The British ships also brought cotton to China, with the East India Company involved in the trade. Portuguese ships, including local Macau ships, were similar to Luzon ships except that they bring Portuguese wine, food, clothes, etc. Most of them carried food, herbs, spices, leathers and other raw materials into China. In the memorials that local governors wrote to the emperor they called these “crude goods”, for which not usually with high price. When British ships came to China with woolen products produced in its own country, they also carried some of these “crude goods”.

Did foreign merchants only brought the goods that mentioned above into China? The Canton Customs files could not answer this question accurately, but fortunately, I found some clues in a file from Zhejiang Customs, which is the tax rule drafted by Ka Er Ji Shan 喀尔吉善.²⁸¹ He was the Governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces from 1746-1757. After James Flint's first trade in Ningbo, the Zhejiang though it would be beneficial for the local trade and custom avenues to open trade with the British. Incumbent governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces

²⁸¹ The First Historical Archives of China (FHAC), ed. *Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang'an*, vol.2 (Beijing: China Archives Publisher, 2010), 989-1032.

Ka Er Ji Shan at that time immediately reported it to Emperor Qianlong and the next year a new tax rules was drafted to fill the gap in the previous administrative reference materials.²⁸² Emperor Qianlong did not encourage foreign ships to go to Zhejiang at first, so Zhejiang officials drafted this tax form and submitted it to the emperor in early of 1757, which proposed a tax rate twice that of Guangdong. Although later that year, the Qianlong Emperor issued a decree to let all the ships return to Guangzhou to trade so the draft invalid, this file records in detail what China's major imports and exports in the 18th century. It records the main goods imported and exported by Canton Customs and the tax collected. Since there was no distinction between import tax and export tax at the time, whether the goods belong to imported or exported kind could be guessed by the names, as shown in the table below. Upon these sources, we can infer the main traded commodities, as well as that in the past hundred years. Although the other three customs also undertook the responsibility for the management of foreign trade, since the largest trade volume occurs in Guangdong, this document created with reference to Guangdong could reflect the true situation of imported and exported goods better.

Table 3-3: Ka Er Ji Shan's reported draft on Qianlong 21st Year (1756) - Zhejiang Customs intends to levy foreign tax provisions in accordance with the example of Guangdong Customs²⁸³

*Note: Weight unit: 1 jin (chin/catty) = 16 taels (liang 两) = 604.53 grams²⁸⁴

No.	Goods' name on the original document	Translated name	Unit of account	Guangdon g Customs Import and Export Goods Tax (tael)	Zhejiang Customs discretionary tax on import and export goods (tael)
1	湖丝	Huzhou silk	100 jin	5.4	10.8
2	细茶	Fine tea	100 jin	0.2	0.4
3	细瓷器	Fine porcelain	100 jin	0.3	0.6

²⁸² FHAC, *Ming Qing Gong Cang*, 989-1093.

²⁸³ *ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China 1600-2000, 6th Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

4	中瓷器	Medium porcelain	100 jin	0.2	0.4
5	大黄	Rhubarb	100 jin	0.2	0.4
6	硼砂	Borax	100 jin	0.6	1.2
7	漆器	Lacquerware	100 jin	0.25	0.5
8	硃砂	Cinnabar	100 jin	2.4	4.8
9	银硃	Vermilion	100 jin	1.2	2.4
10	加石仑片	Jiashilun slice	1 small piece	0.2	0.4
11	加石仑茶杯	Jiashilun Tea Cup	1 item	0.8	1.6
12	丁香油	Clove oil	1 jin	0.5	1
13	槟榔膏	Gambier	100 jin	0.33	0.66
14	番茶	Foreign tea	100 jin	0.33	0.66
15	大玻璃球	Big glass ball	1 item	0.4	0.8
16	小玻璃球	Small glass ball	1 item	0.2	0.4
17	膏药	Plaster	100 jin	1	2
18	银标钟	Silver clock	1 item	0.8	1.6
19	大铜标	Big bronze sign	1 item	0.4	0.8
20	油画玻璃盒	Oil painting glass case	1 item	0.3	0.6
21	鹿茸	Antler	100 jin	0.6	1.2
22	银镶边玻璃油画盒	Silver rimmed glass painting box	1 item	0.3	0.6

23	铜镶边玻璃鼻烟盒	Copper rimmed glass snuffbox	1 item	0.06	0.12
24	金扇面	Golden fan	100 jin	5	10
25	玛瑙器	Agate product	1 jin	0.1	0.2
26	大番琴	Big lyre	1 item	0.4	0.8
27	小番琴	Small lyre	1 item	0.2	0.4
28	洋花石调羹珠	Foreign floral stone for spoon	1 item	0.04	0.08
29	玛瑙杯碟	Agate cup and saucer	1 item	0.05	0.1
30	海葛	Haige	1 piece of cloth	0.15	0.3
31	牙兰米	Yalan rice	100 jin	1	2
32	铁锡粉	Iron tin powder	100 jin	0.2	0.4
33	洋鞭杆	Foreign whip	100 jin	0.1	0.2
34	镶花石金鼻烟盒	Stone inlaid gold snuffbox	1 item	0.4	0.8
35	红树皮	Red bark	100 jin	0.03	0.06
36	金鼻烟盒	Gold snuffbox	1 item	0.2	0.4
37	丝帽	Silk hat	1 item	0.01	0.02
38	洋花石	Foreign floral stone	1 jin	0.05	0.1
39	乌金茶水酒壶	Black gold tea and wine pot	1 item	0.08	0.16
40	点马油	Dianma oil	1 jin	0.01	0.02

41	影木	Shadow wood	100 jin	0.08	0.16
42	大蜜珀箱	Big amber box	1 pair	1	2
43	小蜜珀箱	Small amber box	1 pair	0.4	0.8
44	胭脂末	Rouge	100 jin	0.4	0.8
45	象牙碎	Ivory pieces	100 jin	3	6
46	银器	Silverware	1 jin	0.08	0.16
47	番豆	Foreign bean	100 jin	0.1	0.2
48	洋珐琅自鸣钟	Foreign enamel chime clock	1 item	4	8
49	玻璃时辰牌	Glass hour panel	1 item	0.12	0.24
50	玻璃影盖时辰牌	Glass hour panel cover	1 item	0.3	0.6
51	盘砂	Pan sand	100 jin	0.3	0.6
52	洋烧料	Foreign fuel	1 jin	0.03	0.06
53	玻璃缸	Glass jar	1 item	0.6	1.2
54	洋青石	Foreign bluestone	1 jin	0.05	0.1
55	镶洋花石杯	Floral stone inlaid cup	1 item	0.08	0.16
56	大玻璃灯	Large glass lamp	1 item	0.24	0.48
57	加石仑刀叉	Jiashilun knife and fork	1 item	0.04	0.08
58	金精石器	Vermiculite ware	1 item	0.04	0.08

59	水精器	Shuijing ware	1 item	0.04	0.08
60	香树皮	Fragrant bark	100 jin	0.03	0.06
61	砂仁肉	Amomum villosum	100 jin	0.6	1.2
62	各色剪绒 番衣	Various foreign shearling clothes	1 item	0.04	0.08
63	各色哆囉 绒羽纱番 衣	Various foreign duoluo (droguet) woolen clothes with second sort of camblets	1 item	0.08	0.16
64	布番衣	Foreign cloth gown	100 jin	0.3	0.6
65	洋红	Magenta	1 jin	1.2	2.4
66	绿松石器	Turquoise	1 jin	0.2	0.4
67	宝纱石	Baosha stone	100 jin	0.2	0.4
68	银镶沙鱼 皮鼻烟盒	Silver sand fish skin snuffbox	1 item	0.08	0.16
69	零绒	Zero velvet	100 jin	2.2	4.4
70	量天尺	Measuring scale	1 item	1	2
71	金剑头事 件	Golden sword hand	1 pair	0.04	0.08
72	银鼻烟盒	Silver snuffbox	1 item	0.04	0.08
73	聚丝金器	Polysilver	1 item	0.08	0.16
74	银鞭杆头	Silver whip head	1 item	0.02	0.04
75	小银调羹 叉	Small silver spoon	1 item	0.02	0.04

76	镶宝石扣	Gemstone buckle	1 item	0.02	0.04
77	金鞋扣	Gold shoe buckle	1 item	0.02	0.04
78	银鞋扣	Silver shoe buckle	1 item	0.01	0.02
79	千里影	Telescope	1 item	0.4	0.8
80	小铜画	Small copper painting	1 item	0.3	0.6
81	鹤顶器	Heding utensil	1 jin	0.4	0.8
82	大铜画	Big copper painting	1 item	0.6	1.2
83	镶花石小 规矩	Stone inlaid small ruler	1 item	0.4	0.8
84	玻璃小人 物	Glass mini figure	1 item	0.06	0.12
85	蜜饯丁香	Candied cloves	100 jin	0.5	1
86	羽纱剪绒 绸缎番袴	Foreign shearling pants	1 item	0.02	0.04
87	丁香子	Lilac	100 jin	1.4	2.8
88	金颈扣	Gold neck buckle	1 pair	0.04	0.08
89	椰子油	Coconut oil	100 jin	0.1	0.2
90	绣洋大画	Embroidered foreign large painting	1 item	1.2	2.4
91	绣洋小画	Embroidered foreign small painting	1 item	0.6	1.2
92	羊肚菜	Lamb vegetable	100 jin	0.3	0.6
93	皮手套	Leather gloves	100 pairs	0.4	0.8

94	象骨	Elephant bone	100 jin	0.03	0.06
95	玻璃灯罩	Glass shade	1 item	0.2	0.4
96	核桃	Walnut	100 jin	0.1	0.2
97	镶金丝玛瑙规矩	Gold wair inlaid agate ruler	1 item	0.4	0.8
98	宝心石	Baoxin stone	1 item	0.375	0.75
99	洋花石片	Foreign floral stone slice	1 jin	0.05	0.1
100	虎骨	Tiger bone	100 jin	0.2	0.4
101	青金石小鼻烟壶	Lapis small snuff bottle	1 item	0.08	0.16
102	洋花石鼻烟壶	Foreign floral stone snuff bottle	1 item	0.04	0.08
103	玻璃影画箱	Glass picture box	1 item	0.1	0.2
104	镶洋法蓝鼻烟壶	Foreign enamel inlaid snuff bottle	1 item	0.08	0.16
105	小洋法蓝器	Small foreign enamel vessels	1 item	0.04	0.08
106	洋花石小箱	Small floral stone case	1 item	0.04	0.08
107	洋花石小盒	Small floral stone box	1 item	0.08	0.16
108	洋花大桌布	Large floral tablecloth	1 item	0.02	0.04

109	洋花小桌布	Small floral tablecloth	1 item	0.01	0.02
110	小牛角千里镜	Small horn telescope	1 item	0.04	0.08
111	黑地百花石	Black floral stone	100 jin	0.4	0.8
112	铜自行珠箱	Copper self-moving case	1 item	0.4	0.8
113	药水	Liquid medicine	1 bottle	0.02	0.04
114	药水	Liquid medicine	1 tin	0.004	0.008
115	玻璃纽扣	Glass button	1 item	0.0015	0.003
116	洋罗经	Foreign compass	1 item	0.01	0.02
117	小加石仑器	Small addition stone	1 item	0.12	0.24
118	洋白纸	Foreign white paper	100 jin	0.4	0.8
119	螺石器	Luo shi wares	1 jin	0.1	0.2
120	麝香壳	Musk shell	1 jin	0.05	0.1
121	海鸟翎	Seabird feather	100 jin	0.4	0.8
122	镶蜜珀鼻烟盒	Amber inlaid snuffbox	1 item	0.2	0.4
123	人参	Ginseng	1 jin	0.03	0.06
124	臭皮	Stinky skin	100 jin	0.03	0.06
125	洋瓷器	Foreign porcelain	100 jin	0.3	0.6

126	洋小皮盒 镜	Small foreign leather mirror box	1 item	0.02	0.04
127	各色洋颜 料	Various color pigments	100 jin	1.2	2.4
128	皮箱玻璃 小沙漏	Leather glass small hourglass	1 item	0.03	0.06
129	银丝小玻 璃铸	Silver glass casting	1 item	0.01	0.02
130	黏金木鹤	Wood crane with gold	1 item	0.2	0.4
131	黏金小木 桌	Wood table with gold	1 item	0.4	0.8
132	铜镶瓷器 鼻烟盒	Copper inlaid porcelain snuffbox	1 item	0.02	0.04
133	织绒	Woven	100 jin	1.8	3.6
134	银镶螺...鼻 烟盒	Silver inlaid screw... snuff box	1 item	0.04	0.08
135	银小自鸣 钟	Small silver chime clock	1 item	1	2
136	紫草	Lithospermum	100 jin	0.1	0.2
137	...金木扣	...golden buckle	10 items	0.005	0.01
138	小香琴	Small fragrant	1 item	0.2	0.4
139	洋针	Foreign needle	1 jin	0.1	0.2
140	绣梭布	Embroidered shuttle	100 jin	2.2	4.4
141	玻璃圆小	Glass round hand mirror	1 item	0.01	0.02

	手镜				
142	通大海	Tong da hai	100 jin	0.2	0.4
143	黏银木扣	Wood buckle with silver	10 items	0.0025	0.005
144	镶花石金标	Stone inlaid gold mark	1 item	0.8	1.6
145	玻璃影画时辰钟	Glass film hour clock	1 item	1	2
146	铜规矩	Copper ruler	1 item	0.1	0.2
147	喻铁石	Neodymium iron	1 jin	0.1	0.2
148	吊驼标	Hanging camel mark	1 item	0.4	0.8
149	大吊驼钟	Big hanging clock	1 item	1	2
150	玻璃箱	Glass case	1 item	0.5	1
151	铜线玳瑁鼻烟盒	Copper wire hawksbill snuffbox	1 item	0.02	0.04
152	铜架大显显微镜	Copper frame large microscope	1 item	0.4	0.8
153	珀末	Amber powder	1 jin	0.01	0.02
154	镶钻石戒指	Diamond ring	1 item	0.04	0.08
155	安息油	Anxi oil	1 jin	0.2	0.4
156	玻璃时辰标盖	Glass clock pointers cover	1 item	0.005	0.01
157	核桃肉	Walnut kernel	100 jin	0.2	0.4

158	青金石盘 杯	Lapis cup and saucer	1 item	0.4	0.8
159	青金石磐	Lapis plate	1 item	0.8	1.6
160	玛瑙镶钻 石鼻烟罐	Agate diamond snuff jar	1 item	0.8	1.6
161	玛瑙镶钻 石小规矩	Agate diamond small ruler	1 item	1.2	2.4
162	玛瑙镶钻 石大规矩	Agate diamond large ruler	1 item	1.6	3.2
163	镶玛瑙鼻 烟罐	Agate snuff bottle	1 item	0.2	0.4
164	镶钻石扣	Diamond buckle	1 item	0.04	0.08
165	番黄杨	Foreign box wood	100 jin	0.08	0.16
166	洋漆	Foreign paint	100 jin	0.6	1.2
167	洋明角片 料	Foreign mingjiao tablet	1 jin	0.01	0.02
168	金镶乌木 槟榔箱	Gold inlaid ebony betel box	1 item	0.08	0.16
169	花露油	Floral oil	1 bottle	0.15	0.3
170	花露油	Floral oil	1 tin	0.3	0.6
171	象胆	Elephant gall	100 jin	3	6
172	绣斜纹布	Embroidered twill fabric	100 jin	2.2	4.4
173	绣布幔	Embroidered fabric	1 piece of cloth	0.22	0.44

174	鸂鶒	Egret feather	1 pair	0.04	0.08
175	波萝蔴料	Boluo linen	100 jin	0.4	0.8
176	雷公铜	Leigong Copper	100 jin	4	8
177	榛子肉	Scorpion kernel	100 jin	0.2	0.4
178	糟烛大珊瑚珠	Big coral beads	1 jin	0.8	1.6
179	糟烛小珊瑚珠	Small coral beads	1 jin	0.6	1.2
180	玻璃镜镶玻璃油画	Glass mirror with glass oil painting	Height 7 cun and width 5 cun	0.1	0.2
181	玻璃镜柜作玻璃镜	Glass mirror cabinet for glass mirror	Height 7 cun and width 6 cun	0.1	0.2

At that time, the governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces, Ka Er Ji Shan, drafted and submitted this draft tax bill to the emperor. It was expected that later Zhejiang Customs could also undertake some import and export tasks like Canton Customs was always did and collect foreign taxes from it. Due to the official establishment of the Canton System ordered by Emperor Qianlong, the other three customs Zhejiang, Fujian and Jiangsu Customs was not able to become ports to trade with Europeans, this draft became useless. However, because the basis of this draft was Canton's tax collection standards, when I did not find Guangdong files, it is very illustrative.

This file thoroughly listed 181 products and the tariffs collect in Canton, Zhejiang planned to charge twice as much as Canton. Before the Opium War, the customs records written in Chinese were relatively general, so it is unable to calculate the specific goods and quantities imported and exported each year from the relevant documents. What can be seen are only the names. It is unable to tell whether some of these items were imported or exported. However, some goods that indicate domestic origin such as “Husi 湖丝/Huzhou Silk” must be exported goods. While for the names with “Yang 洋”, “Yi 夷” and “Fan 番” in the name, they were

obviously imported goods. These 181 items include all types of goods, such as textiles, clothing, accessories, art, handicrafts, handmade parts, raw materials, food, animal products, plant products, pharmaceuticals, minerals, groceries and so on. Canton Customs collected taxes on their weight, numbers of piece or size. In the list, the amount of tax collected by Canton Customs is not high, but in fact this is only the “main tax”, and there are many other kinds of taxes and fees that need to be collected.

It is unable to calculate the specific quantity of imported goods through the Chinese materials that was discovered in FHAC, but it is clear that the 181 items mentioned in this file are relatively mainstream products with relatively large import and export volume. Among these items, there are 26 categories of goods with the name of “Yang 洋” which means foreign. “Yang” in Chinese has the meaning of the ocean, so most of these goods are transported to China by sea, and this name is more popular since the Qing Dynasty and later. One can even say that these goods are relative fashion in the Qing Dynasty. The 26 kinds of commodities with “Yang 洋” are foreign floral stone for spoon, foreign whip, foreign floral stone, foreign enamel chime clock, foreign fuel, foreign bluestone, floral stone inlaid cup, magenta, embroidered foreign large painting, embroidered foreign small painting, foreign floral stone slice, foreign floral stone snuff bottle, foreign enamel inlaid snuff bottle, small foreign enamel vessels, small floral stone case, small floral stone box, large floral tablecloth, small floral tablecloth, foreign compass, foreign white paper, foreign porcelain, small foreign leather mirror box, various color pigments, foreign needle, foreign paint, foreign mingjiao tablet.

In addition, there are also 9 types of goods name with the word “Fan 番” or “Yi 夷”, which are foreign tea, big lyre, small lyre, foreign bean, various foreign shearling clothes, various foreign duoluo woolen clothes, foreign cloth gown, foreign shearling pants, foreign box wood. Most of the mainstream imported goods were textiles, clothing, industrial products, craft products, raw materials, utensils made of special materials overseas, raw materials, etc. Product names with “Fan 番” or “Yi 夷” are more likely imported goods, and they are mostly crafts and raw materials. Some of them are in line with imperial purchase requirements, some have not been seen in other materials, and some such as wine, the goods mentioned in Table 3-3, have not appeared in this tax form. There are two possibilities for goods not appearing on this tax bill. First, it may be because the import volume of these goods is too small to be counted as a regular tax item. Second, those goods may belong to the category of tribute and only be purchased through special channels instead of being taxed in the conventional “private trade” system.

3.4: Volume and value of imported European products: necessity or luxury?

A large part of these imported goods was from South and Southeast Asia. Many of these herbs, foods, spices and raw materials are called “crude goods” in Chinese files and are therefore low value. In contrast, some European goods have become rare and expensive, and they have become the treasures that Emperor Qianlong asked Guangdong officials to look for. I tried to figure out whether these European goods created a luxury market in China’s high society in the 18th and early 19th centuries, before analyzing the consumer’s demand on luxuries, I should figure out one more thing: which of these foreign goods can be called luxury product in China. In Yan Yun’s opinion, “even if exotica frequently appear in inventories of the time, they did not become a driving force behind the expansion of consumption in the same way as that ‘oriental luxuries’ did in Europe”.²⁸⁵ So in his study of luxury consumption of Qing elites, jade, porcelain and furs were listed as examples, because jade and porcelain are fashion and expensive, and could be connect to the elite tastes and connoisseurship.²⁸⁶ The degree of popularity may require more data to compare and obtain, but many other European products have three other characteristics: taste, connoisseurship, and expensive price, which are enough to prove that they are real luxury goods.

But how to estimate the price and value of the goods do not appear on the tax rate table? Another document from the Governor of Fujian and Zhejiang Province, Ka Er Ji Shan, explains the question. This file is another document at the same time as the tax list listed above. In 1757, Zhejiang Customs used the Guangdong standard at that time, and not only assessed the tax standards for common import and export goods, but also estimated the values of other import and export commodities for future tax reference. The commodities were listed below. Zhejiang Customs was trying to give the same or a higher valuation than Canton. This document estimates the value of 271 kinds of commodities, but in my opinion the full number of goods should be more than this. The Qing officials used to write the signature and date at the end of the official document, but this document has no signature date at the end, so this study deems it as a broken file. Nevertheless, as shown in table below, it is still a valuable material. The value of the goods could be estimated by comparison, and I selected and analyzes a few products that she believes to be luxury imports from Europe.

²⁸⁵ Yan Yun, “Elite Objects and Private Collections in Eighteenth-Century China: A Study of Chen Huizu’s Confiscated Goods,” in *Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Elif Akçetin & Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 82-89.

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*

In terms of price valuation, this study adopts Chinese tael (liang 两) of silver as the calculation currency. According to the Hsu, between 1600-1814, the currencies of Chinese silver 1 tael 两 = £1/3 = Spanish \$1.67.²⁸⁷ According to Morse, 0.72 tael 两 = Spanish \$1, while £1 = Spanish \$4 between 1619 to 1814, and from 1815 the rate became £100 = Spanish \$ 416.67.²⁸⁸

Table 3-4: Ka Er Ji Shan's reported draft on Qianlong 21st Year (1756) - Drafting the valuation of foreign cargo levied by Zhejiang Customs²⁸⁹

*Note: Weight unit: 1 jin (chin/catty) = 16 taels (liang) = 604.53 grams

No.	Goods' name on the original document	Translated name	Unit of account	Canton Customs Import and Export Goods Valuation (tael)	Zhejiang Customs discretionary valuation of import and export goods (tael)
1	湖丝	Huzhou silk	100 jin	100	180
2	土丝	Domestic silk	100 jin	100	160
3	土绒线	Domestic knitting wool	100 jin	100	130
4	丝带	Silk ribbon	100 jin	100	120
5	丝经	Natural silk	100 jin	100	150
6	绢	Thin silk	1 piece of cloth	3.3	4.5
7	线绸	Silk cloth with lines	1 piece of cloth	2.8	4.4
8	点绸	Silk cloth with points	1 piece of cloth	2	3.6
9	剪绒	Shearing	1 piece of cloth	6	8

²⁸⁷ Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*.

²⁸⁸ Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China*.

²⁸⁹ FHAC, *Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang'an*, 1033-1093.

10	土绫	Domestic damask silk	1 piece of cloth	0.7	1.2
11	土绸	Domestic silk cloth	1 piece of cloth	0.7	1
12	土绢	Domestic thin silk	1 piece of cloth	0.7	1.1
13	闪缎	Shine satin	1 piece of cloth	4.5	6.5
14	丝缎	Silk satin	1 piece of cloth	4.5	7
15	麻纱彩	Hemp yarn	1 piece of cloth	2.8	3.6
16	麻纱小彩	Small hemp yarn	1 piece of cloth	1	1.5
17	绣缎	Embroidered satin	1 piece of cloth	8	12
18	银罗麻彩	Silver hemp yarn	1 piece of cloth	1.5	2.2
19	八丝缎	Eight silk satin	1 piece of cloth	4.4	7
20	五丝缎	Five silk satin	1 piece of cloth	3.5	5.2
21	象眼绸	Elephant eyes silk	1 piece of cloth	2	3
22	土棉绸	Domestic cotton silk	100 jin	20	34
23	帐纱	Yarn tent	1 piece of cloth	1	1.4
24	牛郎绸	Niu lang silk cloth	1 piece of cloth	3	4.8
25	小绒	Small velvet	1 piece of cloth	4	5.6
26	棉布	Cotton	100 jin	10	16

27	夏布	Grass cloth	100 jin	5	7
28	麻布	linen	100 jin	4	6
29	番布幔	Foreign curtain	1 piece of cloth	1	1
30	麻线	Twine	100 jin	10	14
31	斜纹布	Twill fabric	1 piece of cloth	0.5	0.7
32	斜纹布	Twill fabric	100 jin	20	28
33	金线	Gold thread	100 jin	50	80
34	天蚕丝	Tiancan silk	100 jin	30	42
35	暖帽	Warm hat	1 item	0.04	0.04
36	丝袜	Stockings	1 pair	0.26	0.26
37	缎靴	Satin boots	1 pair	0.4	0.4
38	缎鞋	Satin shoes	1 pair	0.1	0.1
39	布袜	Cloth socks	1 pair	0.05	0.05
40	布鞋	Cloth shoes	1 pair	0.08	0.08
41	毯条	Blanket	1 jin	0.1	0.14
42	金扇	Gold fan	1 item	0.09	0.2
43	牙扇	Ya fan	1 item	0.09	0.3
44	纸扇	Paper fan	1 item	0.01	0.02
45	纸画	Paper painting	1 sheet	0.025	0.025
46	绸纱画	Silk painting	1 sheet	0.05	0.05
47	纸裱画	Mounted paper	1 roll	0.05	0.05

		painting			
48	纸堆花	Paper pile flower	1 sheet	0.025	0.025
49	绒花	Velvet flower	100 jin	15	15
50	纸通花	Paper pass flower	1 jin	0.1	0.1
51	各色纸	Various papers	100 jin	3	5
52	金箔	Goldleaf	1 jin	1.5	1.5
53	锡箔纸	Tinfoil paper	100 jin	3	5.2
54	草纸	Grass paper	100 jin	1	1
55	酒	liquor	100 jin	0.5	...
56	火腿	Ham	100 jin	8	10
57	夷茶	Foreign tea	100 jin	8	15
58	松茶	Pine tea	100 jin	7	12
59	白糖	White sugar	100 jin	1	2.2
60	水糖	Water sugar	100 jin	2.5	4
61	黄糖	Brown sugar	100 jin	1	1.5
62	蜜糖	Honey	100 jin	2	3.2
63	蜜饯糖果	Candied candy	100 jin	1.2	2
64	橘饼	Orange pie	100 jin	4	5
65	沙谷米	Sand rice	100 jin	1.5	1.5
66	白麦头干	Dried white wheat	100 jin	1	1

67	香蕈	Toon	100 jin	7	10
68	番小菜	Foreign pickles	100 jin	1.2	1.2
69	腌肉	Bacon	100 jin	2	4
70	蒜头	Garlic	100 jin	0.2	0.2
71	胡椒	Pepper	100 jin	6	9
72	福烟	Fuyan	100 jin	5	7.5
73	茶稿桐油	Tea based tung oil	100 jin	2	2
74	牛烛	Beef tallow candle	100 jin	2	3
75	牛油	Beef tallow	100 jin	2	3
76	羊烛	mutton tallow candle	100 jin	4	8
77	...蜡	...wax	100 jin	15	20
78	药材	Medicinal herbs	100 jin	2	3
79	大黄	Rhubarb	100 jin	1.5	2.4
80	姜黄	Turmeric	100 jin	0.7	1
81	良姜	Fine ginger	100 jin	0.7	1.2
82	紫梗	Purple stem	100 jin	7	12
83	贝母	Fritillaria	100 jin	30	40
84	丁香	Clove	100 jin	100	160
85	蜡丸	Wax pill	100 jin	10	10
86	柯子	Ke zi	100 jin	1.2	1.7

87	冷饭头	Leng fan tou	100 jin	0.7	2
88	麝香	Musk	1 jin	1.5	3
89	八角	Star anise	100 jin	3	4
90	樟脑	Camphor	100 jin	7	10
91	芥菜子	Mustard	100 jin	2	2
92	膏药	Plaster	1 jin	0.5	0.5
93	红花	Safflower	100 jin	10	20
94	颜料靛花蓝	Pigment blue	100 jin	5	7
95	石黄	Shi huang	100 jin	5	6
96	银硃	Vermilion	1 jin	0.35	0.6
97	水银	mercury	100 jin	35	60
98	...砂 ²⁹⁰	...sand	100 jin	35	45
99	朱砂	Cinnabar	100 jin	35	50
100	藤黄	Garcinia	100 jin	10	15
101	柳条绢	Wicker thin silk	1 piece of cloth	3.5	5.2
102	柳条缎	Wicker satin	1 piece of cloth	4.5	5.5
103	锦	Brocade	1 piece of cloth	8	12
104	线缎	Line satin	1 piece of cloth	8	10
105	丝纱	Silk yarn	1 piece of cloth	1	1.6
106	线纱	Thread	1 piece of cloth	3.5	4.5

²⁹⁰ Part of the name was missing due to the damage of profile.

107	纱	yarn	1 piece of cloth	3.3	4.4
108	画绢	Painting thin silk	1 piece of cloth	1	1
109	画花绢	Painted flower thin silk	20 pieces regards as 1 piece of cloth	3.3	4.4
110	绣绢	Embroidery thin silk	1 piece of cloth	6	9
111	绣花被面	Embroidered quilt	1 sheet	3.5	4
112	洋手巾	Foreign towel	1 item	0.2	0.2
113	绸手巾	Silk towel	1 piece of cloth or 20 small items	0.7	1.6
114	一等西洋布	First-class western cloth	1 piece of cloth	4	6
115	二等西洋布	Second-class western cloth	1 piece of cloth	3.5	5
116	惠金纱	Huijin yarn	1 piece of cloth	2.8	4.4
117	棉花	Cotton	100 jin	8	12
118	棉布手巾	Cotton towel	100 jin	10	14
119	棉纱袜	Cotton socks	a pair	0.2	0.2
120	大花藤席	Big flower rattan	1 sheet	1	1.5
121	小花藤席	Small flower rattan	1 sheet	0.8	1.2
122	虎皮	Fur of tiger	1 sheet	2	4
123	牛皮胶	Kraft gum	100 jin	4	7

124	鱼胶漆	Fish gel paint	100 jin	5	6
125	...胶	...gum	100 jin	20	30
126	鹿胶	Deer gum	100 jin	20	40
127	铁线	Iron wire	100 jin	30	30
128	土琉璃	Earthen glass	100 jin	12	12
129	玉器	Jade	1 item	1	2
130	玛瑙器	Agate	100 jin	50	70
131	牙器	Teeth	100 jin	50	70
132	木器	Wood	100 jin	3	3
133	番漆器	Foreign paint lacquer	100 jin	10	10
134	犀角	Rhinoceros	1 jin	0.8	1.2
135	松杂木板柄	Pine wood handle	1 item	0.3	0.3
136	倭烟叶	Wo smoked leaf	1 jin	0.3	0.3
137	黄连	Huang Lian	100 jin	30	60
138	黄蜡	Yellow wax	100 jin	20	25
139	砂仁	Amomum	100 jin	20	30
140	鸦片	Opium	1 jin	0.5	0.5
141	木香	Woody	100 jin	20	30
142	枝圆	Branch circle	100 jin	1.2	2
143	肉桂	Cinnamon	100 jin	100	150

144	豆蔻	Cardamom	1 jin	0.5	0.7
145	京果	Jinguo	100 jin	4	5
146	附子	Aconite	100 jin	30	40
147	酱油酱	Soy sauce	100 jin	1.2	1.2
148	洋酒	Foreign wine	round can	0.3	0.3
149	洋酒	Foreign wine	square bottle	0.5	0.5
150	顺酒	Shun wine	bottle	0.05	0.05
151	骨器	Bone	100 jin	5	5
152	角器	Corner	100 jin	5	5
153	竹器	Bamboo	100 jin	3	3
154	姑羴	Gu Rong	1 piece of cloth	8	12
155	红土	Red clay	100 jin	0.3	0.45
156	黄丹	Huang Dan	100 jin	3.5	5.2
157	石绿	Stone green	100 jin	5	7.5
158	土粉	Earth powder	100 jin	1	1.5
159	乌烟	Black smoke	100 jin	0.15	1
160	铜丝	Copper wire	100 jin	4	6
161	土墨	Domestic ink	100 jin	4	5
162	青白矾	Iron vitriol	100 jin	0.6	0.9
163	松香	Rosin	100 jin	0.5	0.75
164	白铅	White lead	100 jin	4.4	6.6

165	土硃	Domestic vermilion	100 jin	5	7.5
166	白蜡	White wax	100 jin	25	37
167	黑铅	Black lead	100 jin	3	4.5
168	杂货	Groceries	100 jin	5	7.5
169	包索	Bao suo	100 jin	5	5
170	土针	Domestic needle	1 jin	0.5	0.5
171	草珠	Grass beads	1 jin	0.04	0.04
172	土眼镜	Domestic glasses	100 items	3	3
173	龟筒	Tortoise shell	100 jin	50	50
174	象牙	Ivory	100 jin	25	37
175	雨伞	Umbrella	100 jin	1.5	2.5
176	连香	Lianxiang	100 jin	30	45
177	牛皮	Cowhide	100 jin	2	3
178	粗草席	Rough mat	100 jin	0.6	0.6
179	珠海壳	Zhuhai shell	100 jin	2.5	2.5
180	小螺壳	Small shell	100 jin	2.5	2.5
181	铁锅	Iron pot	100 jin	2	2
182	土线香	Domestic incense stick	100 jin	0.5	1
183	大漆圆屏	Large paint round screen	1 item	5.4	5.4

184	小漆圆屏	Small paint round screen	1 item	3	3
185	玻璃杯瓶	Glass bottle	1 item	0.1	0.1
186	银人物船	Silver character ship	1 item	0.05	0.05
187	螺蛳寿山石	Agalmatolite	100 jin	5	5
188	铜丝	Copper wire	100 jin	12	12
189	铜器	Bronze	100 jin	12	12
190	铜片	Copper sheet	100 jin	12	12
191	锡器	Pewter	100 jin	10	15
192	漆器	Lacquerware	100 jin	5	5
193	细磁器	Fine magnetizer	100 jin	4	6
194	中磁器	Medium magnetizer	100 jin	3	4.5
195	细土罐	Fine earth tank	100 jin	3	4.5
196	铁器	Iron	100 jin	1.6	1.6
197	花梨器板	Rosewood board	100 jin	5	8
198	木梳	Wooden comb	100 jin	2	3
199	竹篾	Bamboo raft	100 jin	5	6
200	沙藤	Sato	100 jin	3	4.5
201	藤丝	Rattan	100 jin	3	4.5
202	藤鞭杆	Rattan whip	100 jin	5	7.5

203	黄白藤	Yellow and white vine	100 jin	1.5	2.2
204	大竹	Big bamboo	1000 pieces	3	0.6
205	小竹	Small bamboo	1000 pieces	2	4
206	玳瑁器	Hawksbill	1 item	0.05	0.05
207	玻璃镜	Glass mirror	Height 1 chi	5	7.5
208	玻璃镜	Glass mirror	Height 2 chi	10	15
209	铅器	Lead	100 jin	3	4.5
210	灯草	Lamp grass	100 jin	5	5
211	雄黄	Realgar	100 jin	10	15
212	大羊角灯	Big horn light	1 pair	8	8
213	小羊角灯	Small horn light	1 pair	4	4
214	土磁器	Earth magnet	100 jin	2	3
215	大皮鼓	Big drum	1 item	0.2	0.5
216	小皮鼓	Small drum	1 item	0.1	0.25
217	堂鼓	Hall drum	1 item	1	2
218	米粉	Rice flour	100 jin	1	1.2
219	大蓝绞绢	Big blue handkerchief	1 piece of cloth	2	3
220	小黄绞绢	Small yellow handkerchief	1 piece of cloth	4	6
221	斜纹...	Twill...	1 piece of cloth	3	4.5
222	洋螺蛳盒	Foreign snail	1 item	1	1

		box			
223	土螺蛳盒	Soil screw box	1 item	0.1	0.1
224	万金线	Wanjin line	100 jin	30	30
225	燕窝	Bird's nest	100 jin	150	220
226	紫檀器	Rosewood	100 jin	6	6
227	东洋米	Dongyang Rice	1 pack	0.2	0.2
228	咸鱼	Salted fish	100 jin	1	2
229	油布	Tarpaulin	100 jin	5	7
230	包酒	Packaged wine	1 pack	0.2	0.2
231	银鼠皮	Silver rat skin	1 sheet	0.2	0.4
232	大纱灯	Large yarn light	1 item	2	2
233	小纱灯	Small yarn light	1 item	1	1
234	虾米	Shrimp	100 jin	6	8
235	烧酒	Chinese distillate spirits	100 jin	1	1
236	大草珠盒	Big grass bead box	1 item	4	4
237	小草珠盒	Small bead box	1 item	2	2
238	椰器	Coconut	100 jin	5	5
239	香连香	Fragrant incense	100 jin	50	75
240	棕杯碗	Brown cup bowl	1 item	0.05	0.05

241	马钱	Nux vomica	100 jin	5	5
242	人参	Ginseng	1 jin	50	50
243	琴线	Musical string	100 jin	100	180
244	土法蓝器	Domestic enamel	1 item	0.5	0.5
245	银累线玻璃盒	Silver line glass box	1 item	4	4
246	牙宝塔	Tooth pagoda	1 item	1.5	1.5
247	花梨木	Rosewood	100 jin	4	6
248	乌木器	Ebony	100 jin	5	7.5
249	倭烟	Wo smoke	1 jin	0.5	0.5
250	粗土罐	Coarse earthen jar	100 jin	2	3
251	金银胶纸	Gold and silver adhesive tape	100 jin	35	35
252	银器	Silverware	1 jin	4	8
253	儿茶	Catechu	100 jin	5	7.5
254	土沙鱼皮	Sandy fish skin	1 sheet	0.05	0.05
255	柠檬	Lemon	100 jin	0.2	0.2
256	靛	Mian	1 piece	0.1	0.1
257	沙血蝎	Blood sputum	100 jin	5	10
258	鸡...	Chicken...	100 items	0.1	0.1
259	倾银罐	Tilting silver pot	100 items	0.1	0.2

260	大油画	Big oil painting	1 item	3	3
261	洋剑刀	Foreign sword	1 item	1	1
262	洋刀叉	Ocean knife fork	1 item	0.1	0.1
263	洋酒	Foreign Wine	100 jin	20	20
264	徽墨	Huizhou ink stick	100 jin	8	12
265	金笺纸	Gold paper	1 sheet	0.1	0.15
266	苧麻	Ramie	1 jin	0.05	0.05
267	海葛	Haige	1 piece of cloth	2	2
268	檀香器	Sandalwood	1 jin	0.5	0.8
269	槟榔	Areca	1 jin	0.04	0.06
270	程乡...	Cheng xiang...	1 piece of cloth	4	5
271	玻璃松器	Glassware song qi	1 jin	0.1	0.1

All of these goods' prices in Guangdong and Zhejiang was showed in this table. In addition, I also compared it with the Table 3-3 on tax rates, to estimate the commodities not listed in this Table 3-3. Take the typical expensive products, the best silk, Huzhou silk (湖丝 hu si), and the price of imported clocks as reference. 100 jin Huzhou silk worth 100 taels in Guangdong or 180 taels in Zhejiang, which would be charge 5.4 taels of silver as tax in Guangdong or 10.8 taels in Zhejiang.

This study considers the following goods to be luxury goods, and they have already gained some popularity in high society, especially the imperial family.

- High-end western fabrics

一等西洋布/First-class western cloth (No. 114 in Table 3-4), in Canton Customs its price assessed to be 4 taels of silver every 1 piece of cloth, Zhejiang Customs assessed it to be 6 taels of silver. The price of such high-quality western fabric was almost above the average

level of similar textiles listed in the Table 3-4. In addition to the price of luxury goods, there was other criterions like taste, and the imperial files can prove it. Emperor Yongzheng once asked the Canton official to purchase the western fabrics with specific decorative design.²⁹¹ In Qianlong period, Jiangnan Weaving was assigned the mission of imitating this type of western cloth. A record from Imperial Household department showed that on Qianlong 44th Year (1779), the department sent 3 pieces of western fabrics to Suzhou, and asked to make a similar one then send to Beijing.²⁹² It can be seen that the emperors liked this western aesthetic, and high-level western cloth was recognized in the high society.

- High-end crafts

Although the prices of these artifacts do not find a specific corresponding item in the two tables, the cost of Li Shiyao's purchase of tribute for Qianlong explains this price. When Li Shiyao spent 6,612.6 taels of silver for purchasing gold-plated decorations, striking clocks, musical clocks, wall clocks, snuff bottles, glassware, drawing tools, pearls, etc. The Qianlong Emperor considered such high expenses reasonable and told him not to save money.²⁹³ Qianlong's interests for handicrafts raised the development of high-end handicraft industries in Guangdong. In addition to importing high-quality crafts, Guangdong local also produced similar tributes to the emperor each year. However, the Qianlong Emperor was difficult to please. As a collector, he formed his own preference in many years of handicrafts collection. An archive of the Imperial Household Department stated that he felt a glass decoration tribute made by Canton local is vulgar and asked them not to present similar items anymore. However, at the same time he said if there is any foreign glass decoration they must present.²⁹⁴

- Clocks

In the Guangdong tax rate standard (in Table 3-4), an imported foreign enamel chime clock requires a tax of 4 taels of silver, which is quite high. In fact, watches and clocks were "useless and expensive things" that defined by Emperor Jiaqing. It was in Jiaqing 4th Year (1799), the Governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, Ji Qing 吉庆 wrote in the memorial to Jiaqing: "It's usually the western ocean ships bring cargos of goods worth million taels of silver, that leads to Chinese large amount of silver consumption. For instance, clock, it is an useless thing made of pieces of copper and glass by the island people (British). That will be harmful for the vitality of China." Then Jiaqing replied to his memorials with comments: "I

²⁹¹ ZPZZ, 1725 (Yongzheng 3rd Year, Month 4, Day 7), 04-01-30-0144-003, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁹² NWFCW, 1779 (Qianlong 44th Year, Month 10, Day 4), 05-08-030-000007-0055, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁹³ ZPZZ, 1759 (Qianlong 24th Year, Month 1, Day 9), 04-01-14-0029-001, FHAC, Beijing.

²⁹⁴ NWFCW, 05-08-030-000007-0079, FHAC, Beijing.

never like the expensive treasures. This is my nature, not pretentious. Grain and cloths are the necessities for people and family. Clocks is used for checking the time. But for ordinary people, they do not have it but never missed their daily work. And the striking birds are even more useless. This is a trick used by foreigners to undermine the simple folk customs of our country. Your ministers should help me to manage this.”²⁹⁵ Jiaqing 4th Year (1799) is the year when Qianlong died. Even Jiaqing already became the emperor for more than 3 years, his retired father always supervising him. It is not sure that if that is Emperor Jiaqing’s nature to dislike watches, or he was simply expressed his dissatisfaction with his father’s excessive purchase of luxury watches. Now in the museum of the Forbidden City, there are still exquisite Western clocks and ornaments of Qianlong era.

- Wine

In this Table 3-4, the name of “jiu 酒” means wine or liquor appeared seven times and the price was recorded as:

酒/Liquor (No. 55 in Table 3-4) - Canton Customs assessed its price to 0.5 tael of silver every 100 jin, the Zhejiang data is lost, but compared with commodities upon the calculate regulation, it would not be more than 1.2 taels of silver every 100 jin. In the document it does not mention what kind of wine it is. Based on the price, I considered the reason that they are Chinese local wine, which was ordinary and not expensive.

洋酒/ Foreign wine (No. 148 in Table 3-4) - Canton Customs assessed its price to 0.3 tael of silver every round can, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 0.3 tael of silver every round can. The unit of measurement used for this commodity is “can”. Due to the ambiguity and inaccuracy of Chinese language, this study deems that the “can” mentioned here is the same measurement method as the “barrels” in the above mentioned memorial. Compared to the price of Huzhou silk (100 taels per 100 jin in Canton), the value of a barrel of red wine is already relatively expensive.

洋酒/ Foreign wine (No. 149 in Table 3-4), Canton Customs assessed its price to 0.5 tael of silver every square bottle, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 0.5 tael of silver every

²⁹⁵ ZPZZ, 1799 (Jiaqing 4th Year, Month 11, Day 20), 04-01-06-0005-002, FHAC, Beijing. Original text in classical Chinese: “向闻西洋载货远来一船之货所值百万皆在内地销售是以中国之银因此虚耗者不少即如钟表一项岛人以铜铁数星巧取中国之银数钱数百玻璃一项不过土中取液煎熬而成一窗一屏亦有数十数百之值此其明验以无用易有用舍本逐末暗损中国元气大有关系……朱批：朕从来不贵珍奇不爱玩好乃天性作禀非矫情虚饰粟米布帛乃天地养人之物家所必需至于钟表不过为考察时辰之用小民无此物者甚多又何曾废其晓起晚息之恒业乎尚有自鸣鸟等物更如粪土矣当知此意悞令外夷巧取渐希淳朴之俗汝等大吏共相劝勉佐成朕治……”

square bottle. This is the same wine as mentioned above, but the packaging is different, the bottled wine is in relative refined packaging, therefore its price is higher. Compared to the price of Huzhou silk, it is undoubtedly an expensive commodity. If the bottled wine entered China and then passes through the dealer's hand, its price is likely to rise several times.

顺酒/Shun wine (No. 150 in Table 3-4), Canton Customs assessed its price to 0.05 tael of silver every bottle, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 0.05 tael of silver every bottle. In the contemporary Hebei Province and Guizhou Province of China, there are wine production called "Shun Jiu". But before, there is no such type of famous wine in ancient Chinese, neither any other common imported wine was called this name. Therefore, it is unable to tell whether this is a Chinese-originated export wine or a wine imported from a specific region. Compared to the price of bottled foreign wine, it is not very expensive.

包酒/ Packaged wine (No. 230 in Table 3-4) - Canton Customs assessed its price to 0.2 tael of silver every pack, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 0.2 tael of silver every pack. The price can not show whether it is imported or local.

烧酒/ Chinese distillate spirits (No. 235 in Table 3-4), Canton Customs assessed its price to 1 tael of silver every 100 jin, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 1 tael of silver every 100 jin. This is a kind of Chinese domestic wine with a high alcohol content, so its price is also higher than the first mentioned liquor.

洋酒/ Foreign wine (No. 263 in Table 3-4), Canton Customs assessed its price to 20 taels of silver every 100 jin, Zhejiang Customs assessed its price to 20 taels of silver every 100 jin. Same as the foreign wine above, this is another way to calculate the price, which means besides barrel and bottled wine, other types of packaging were calculated by weight. Compared with the price of Huzhou silk, the value of wine is more intuitively: 4 taels of silver = 4 jin Huzhou Silk = 20 jin foreign wine.

It can be figured out that in the Qing Dynasty from 1680 to 1840, European wine, including red wine, was imported into China. Perez-Garcia believes that the trade networks, intermediation and coalitions between the local Chinese traders of Macao and Canton and the transnational communities that had settled in Macao made the introduction of goods from European markets (in this case the example is of French, Portuguese and Spanish wines and liquors) possible and increased the demand for these goods in local communities of South China.²⁹⁶ According to my research of Chinese materials, the import volume of wine may not

²⁹⁶ Perez-Garcia, Manuel. "Global Goods, Silver and Market Integration: Consumption of Wine, Silk and Porcelain through the Grill Company Via Macao-Canton and Marseille-Seville Trade Nodes,

be large enough to be mentioned in many Chinese documents, but there are still clues about the import of wine. Not only the novels and poems mentioned European wine in the early and mid-Qing Dynasty, but there are also records in the *Zhu Pi Zou Zhe*. In Kangxi 57th Year (1719), the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces named Yang Lin 杨琳 had written a memorial to Emperor Kangxi, saying that in May there were two Portuguese ships arrived Canton, one ship was for the shift soldiers in Macao, the other was full of goods, mainly some rough cargos with wine, ebony and sea vegetables.²⁹⁷ This document provides three pieces of information: First, there were indeed European wines entering China since early 18th century. Second, the wine is brought by the Portuguese. Third, Yang Lin wrote “rough cargos” in this memorial. In other words, in the eyes of officials at that time, wine was not a “fine and expensive commodity”, it was more like a daily necessity. Refer to another document mentioned in the Table 3-1, in December 1823, there was a record about the arrival of ten barrels of wine, three boxes of hats, ten buckets of beef intestine, twelve bags of ropes ten bucket of milk cookies from foreign ship.²⁹⁸ This study tends to believe the wines mentioned by Yang Lin in memorial is probably the same type of barreled wine, and the barreled wine was not in a high-grade at that time.

3.5: Discussions and reflections

The research of Chapter II and III relies on the imperial files from FHAC, Macao and the local chronicles (*Di Fang Zhi*). With these primary Chinese sources, This study figures out the following reasons of why Canton is the main entrance of foreign goods and how the the Canton System was made: unique geographical advantage, long-term stability system of foreign trade accumulation, and more specifically, Qing government’s desire to maintain Canton Customs as the only foreign trade port. Behind it was the ruler’s idea of keeping traditional tribute system, the great interest between the emperors and the entire Guangdong group, as well as the Qing ruler’s consideration of regime stability. China has a history of feudal rule for thousands of years and has formed a relatively independent and complete economic ecosystem. In the early and middle Qing period before the outbreak of the Opium War, the Qing government did not actually consider it was necessary to conduct large-scale

18th Century,” *Revista De Historia Económica / Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, vol.38, special issue 3 (2020): 457.

²⁹⁷ FHAC, ed. *Ming Qing Gongcang Zhongxi Shangmao Dang’an Vol.1*, (Beijing: China Archives Publisher, 2010), 172-174.

²⁹⁸ 0102/C0614-021/Cx.03, R.12/1424, 1823, ANTT, recorded in Liu Fang and Zhang Wenqin, *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dang’an Huibian*, 204-205.

of foreign trade.

Most Qing rulers are not as active as the European rulers that supported the merchants. However, in the 18th and early 19th centuries, there is still a large amount of trade between China and other countries according to the high annual tariffs in Canton Customs. In a long period of time, Qing was in trade surplus, exporting silk, porcelain, tea and other commodities. Overseas merchants, not only bring their money to China to buy goods, but also export some products into China. From the listed file, it can be found that the mainstream foreign commodities that China imported were textiles, clothing, accessories, art, handicrafts, handmade parts, raw materials, food, animal products, plant products, pharmaceuticals, minerals, groceries and so on.

From time by time, the Qing government would issue decrees or orders to prohibit the export or import of certain goods in order to keep the trade under control. There were even policies to prohibit foreign merchants that mainly were male from bringing any womenfolk to China because as long as their family members do not come, they will not stay permanently in China.²⁹⁹ The logic behind such act is simple and clear. First, Qing government's priority was national security, more specifically, the security of the Manchu regime, and the strict management of niter, sulphur, ironware and weapons imports was to prevent the creation of riots and wars. Secondly, as the population grew, the Qing government wanted to ensure basic livelihood as much as possible, for example, by prohibiting grain shipments out of the port and encouraging overseas merchants to buy grain. Again, the Qing ruler did not want the domestic market to be affected by international trade, and rather to maintain the original domestic market as much as possible. The government also wanted to keep the original price level, therefore, it restricted the export of silk and to prohibit the import of cotton. Lastly, as the population grew and the volume of trade in the domestic market increased, the Qing government also encouraged the import of copper to ensure the need for coinage and the normal operation of the money market, in order to maintain the ratio of silver to copper normal. However, with the increasing frequency and volume of foreign trade, it became clear that the royal family, and especially the emperor himself, also took a great interest in the wide array of imported goods, not as a ruler and administrator, but simply as the possessor of vast wealth. The Qing emperors were very direct and idealistic about foreign trade - they wanted to maintain the status quo of domestic commodity market, but at the same time had needs of imported goods. However, the relationship between the currency and the market was

²⁹⁹ Guo Weidong. "Yapian Zhanzheng Qianhou Waiguo Funv Jinru Zhongguo Tongshang Kou'an Wenti," *Modern Chinese History Studies*, no.1 (1999): 244-269.

complicate, and China could not be independent of the world market. The massive export of tea, silk, porcelain and other commodities and the inflow of silver directly led to a certain rise of the price hike in China in the 18th century.³⁰⁰ European merchants, especially British merchants, were also eager to break China's solid original economic structure and create a larger market. Since cotton textiles did not work well, they chose opium instead.³⁰¹ What about the clocks and high-end crafts that appear many times in various historical documents? The Qianlong Emperor, for example, gave Guangdong officials a lot of money to purchase "Western treasures" for him, and was happy to accept gifts from overseas emissaries and local officials. Among them, luxury goods from Europe occupied a certain proportion, and according to the comparison of the prices of goods in the above materials, I deem the European imports that can be called luxury included high-end western fabrics, high-end handicrafts, clocks and wine, etc. Were they really that popular and sold well in China? Did they create a big market? The next chapter will give a thorough analysis and discussion about the influence of these European luxury goods on the consumer market of early and middle Qing Dynasty China.

³⁰⁰ Wang Wei. "Qianyi Qianlong Shiqi de Wujia Shangzhang Wenti – Yi Liangjia wei Zhongxi." *The Science Education Article Collects*, vol.6 (2017): 166.

³⁰¹ Wang Xiaoyan. "Dakai zhongguo Damen de shi Mianfangzhipin haishi Yapian? Jianxi Liangci Yapian Zhanzheng Qijian Yingguo Duihua Zhengce Mubiao Xuanze." *Journal of Donghua University (Natural Science)*, vol. 25, no.1 (1999): 119.

CHAPTER IV

Consumer Group, Consumption Culture and the Formation of Imported European Luxury Market in Early and Middle Qing

As Pomeranz writes in *Great Divergence*, it has been a commonplace of Western scholarship on China that the people were not interested in foreign goods, for they were so convinced of the superiority of their civilization. Before the Opium Wars, about 90% of China's imports from Europe and the European colonies were silver. Such phenomenon leads to historians argue that China as a whole (not just the court) lacked interests in foreign things., which makes a “Chinese” attitude that was held to be the opposite of the curious, acquisitive, dynamic “Western attitude”.³⁰² Based on this view, Pomeranz preferred the argument that “the West’s huge comparative advantage in the export of silver sucked in trendsetting prestige goods from Asia. This helps explain why so many other exotic goods flooded into Europe—they paid for silver and made the wheel of fashion spin faster here than elsewhere. It roots this unique influx in an economic conjuncture spanning Europe, Asia, and America, rather than in any uniquely European ‘materialism’ or ‘curiosity.’”³⁰³ This is also consistent with what this study has researched during the extensive historical inquiries: the Chinese, including emperors, nobles, intellectuals and merchants, were extremely interested in European manufactured goods and actively participated in the consumer behavior. Even if the import volume of these products was not large, the consumer market like China could not be ignored with such a large population base and market size. This chapter focuses on the Chinese “curiosity” about European imports, including but not limited to: the main imported European luxury goods which were sought after by the upper classes of Chinese society, the way these commodities were consumed, and their influence on the luxury market, Chinese consumption habits in Qing Dynasty China, the attitude of Chinese intellectuals towards European goods, etc.

³⁰² Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, 157-159.

³⁰³ *ibid.*, 161.

4.1: Luxury consumption trend and fashion taste of the upper class

Hard, a British diplomat, once wrote: “China needs neither import nor export, and can do without foreign intercourse.... and the reason is not that the Chinese Government actively opposed foreign commerce, but that the Chinese people did not require it. Chinese have the best food in the world, rice; the best drink, tea; and the best clothing, cotton, silk, and fur. Possessing these staples, and their innumerable native adjuncts, they do not need to buy a penny’s worth elsewhere; while their Empire is in itself so great, and they themselves so numerous, that sales to each other’ make up an enormous and sufficient trade, and export to foreign countries is unnecessary.”³⁰⁴ It seems like there is no market for imported goods in China. Hundreds of millions of peasants live scattered in the countryside, economically self-sufficient and politically bound by the ropes of feudal patriarchy, without the need and possibility of frequent contact with the wide world around them.³⁰⁵ And the letter of Emperor Qianlong’s rejection to George III’s offer of trade privileges to Britain has been used by some scholars as an evidence of Qing China’s lack of interest in European goods.³⁰⁶ The Qing dynasty ruler, represented by the Qianlong Emperor, and those power holders around him, are portrayed as closed, arrogant, and uninquisitive people who “did not realize the value of these gifts”. However, at the same time, Macartney discovered that Qianlong owned at least £2,000,000 worth of British goods.³⁰⁷ Among the large collection of luxury goods, the most representative are clocks and watches. Some of them were still preserved in the Palace Museum, proving Qianlong was indeed fond of these foreign goods and could be called as a “frequent consumer”. With regard to these views and discussions, I believe that Qianlong’s reasons for rejecting the Macartney mission were merely a diplomatic wording. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the Chinese emperor had always maintained an attitude of keeping the port trade as it was for the sake of regime stability. Qianlong refused the privileges requested by the British mission, but did not deny the trade between China and Britain, nor did he refuse to import goods. In fact, it was enough to satisfy the Qing court’s shopping needs for foreign goods just through Guangzhou. Similarly, Hart’s statement that “Chinese people don’t need foreign goods” can only be reflected at the level of mass consumption. For the rich

³⁰⁴ Robert Hart, *These from the land of Sinim: essays on the Chinese question* (London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1901), 60-61.

³⁰⁵ Chang Zhu, “Lun Qingchao Biguan Suoguo Zhengce de Lishi Genyuan jiqi Jiaoxun,” *Journal of Guizhou University (Social Sciences)*, no. 5 (2001): 50-57.

³⁰⁶ Ji Yunfei, “Lun Qingzhengfu yu Qingmo Jindaihua de Chihuan,” *Academic Monthly*, no.3 (1994): 51-56, 113. Lin Guijun and Sun yuqin. “Zhongguo Duiwai Kaifang Siwei Dingshi de Wendixing,” *Journal of International Trade*, no.2 (2005): 11-18, 28. etc.

³⁰⁷ George Macartney, auth. He Gaoji and He Yuning, trans. *An Embassy to China*, (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2013), 56.

classes such as the emperor, nobles, government officials and rich merchants, their pursuit of novelty and fashionable luxury never stopped.

Most of the data content of current Chinese scholarly studies on luxury consumption in early modern China is about the late Ming Dynasty, i.e., the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Some literary works that documented the lifestyles of the wealthy (such as the novel *Jin Ping Mei*),³⁰⁸ and books like *Chang Wu Zhi*,³⁰⁹ the “guide to consumption and taste”, portrayed the state of luxury consumption in China during the late Ming Dynasty from multiple perspectives. The Qing dynasty, as a continuation of the Ming dynasty, was considered similar in its luxury consumption style despite the change of rulers. There is not much research on imported goods of Qing dynasty, especially European imported manufactured luxury goods. Chinese scholars tend to focus more on the importation of silver and opium, and the impact of these imports on China’s pre-existing economic structure and trade system. Admittedly, the amount of European luxury imports was much lower than the amount of silver, and even far lower than exotic goods from South Asia, such as spices and fish products. But at that time, China had such a large population and such a large market that even a relatively small amount of imports would create a market of a certain size and affect the economic structure and consumption culture to some extent. The content of this chapter aims to find the consumption of these imported European luxury goods in the first and middle period of Qing Dynasty, and in the process, I find a difference in luxury consumption habits between Qing Dynasty and Ming Dynasty, that is, the great increase in the demand for imported exotic products.

As Schlesinger described, “the Manchus intended to look different. The early Qing court worked to win over as many loyalists as possible, and it adopted much of the governing language, institutions, and dress of the Ming court before it. Yet it also attempted to keep Manchus distinct”.³¹⁰ This concept is perhaps the beginning of the Qing noble’s pursuit of exotic luxury goods, and that also influenced the aesthetic direction of the Qing Dynasty luxury consumption market afterwards which was no longer led by the scholars (shi da fu 士大夫) as in the Ming Dynasty. These scholars pursued “elegance and taste”, but they added more request of “nature” and paid more attention to whether the goods came from a distant place of origin. Once regarded as barbarian dress by the Han Chinese, fur became a popular dress in Beijing by the 18th century. Not only did the Manchus wear fur products, but the Han Chinese also followed suit. At that time, Manchurians and Han Chinese only see in the

³⁰⁸ Lanling Xiaoxiao Sheng, *Jin Ping Mei* (Singapore: South Ocean Publishing House, 2016).

³⁰⁹ Wen Zhenheng, *Chang Wu Zhi*.

³¹⁰ Jonathan Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 20.

material aspects of the barrier is basically no longer visible, people are difficult to distinguish the two communities from the appearance.³¹¹ In fact, by the 18th century, maritime trade was only one part of the empire's foreign trade, it also had a very large amount of frontier trade with the northern and western border countries. The natural products sought by the upper classes of the Qing dynasty were not only furs, but also minerals, ocean life, forest products, etc. Schlesinger sees this as characteristic of the early modern romanticization and economization of nature.³¹² However, I believe that the significance is much greater than that. In examining the economic and consumer attitudes of Qing rulers, one should never lose sight of the political implications behind them. From very early on, Manchu people held the habits of wearing furs and eating wild game, but not until late 18th century, these Manchu habits became a large-scale fashion. It was also closely linked with Qing rulers' promotion and desire to show the strength of the country. The Qianlong Emperor ruled from 1735 to 1796, and in 1792 he wrote the *Shi Quan Ji* (*Ten Perfect Records* 十全记) himself, after which he called himself the Shi Quan Lao Ren (Ten Perfect Old Men 十全老人). In this article he listed ten victorious battles during his reign to express his pride in the frontier conquests and possessions.³¹³ This confidence from the emperor and the prosperity of the empire affected the whole of Beijing, even the whole empire. The constant flow of goods from neighboring countries, consumed and flaunted by the nobility and other wealthy people, seemed to be a "symbol of national power". In this logic, although European manufactured goods are not so natural as the Chinese preferred, but the possession of these sophisticated, precious, luxury "gadgets" also added a lot of psychological satisfaction for the Qing court. And Beijing, as the heart of the entire empire, had multiple channels to obtain these goods. At the same time, Manchu and Chinese Han are influenced by each other in terms of fashion and taste. The refinement and elegance of those scholarly types inherited from the Ming Dynasty also had some similarities with imported European handicrafts, which made the fashion and luxury tastes of the Qing Dynasty more diverse than those of the Ming Dynasty.

Guangdong was the main channel for the Qing court to purchase these European luxury goods, and the variety of these goods was even richer more detailed than those listed in the customs duty list mentioned in the previous chapter of this article. Take the tribute of "foreign goods" submitted by Guangdong officials to the court in the eight years from Emperor Yongzheng 6th

³¹¹ *ibid.*, 39.

³¹² *ibid.*, 54.

³¹³ Chang Lin and Bai Hequn. "Yishi Weijian, Zhuangwo Zhonghua: Ping Qinggaozong Qianlong de 'Shi Quan Wu Gong' zhi Deyushi." *International Conference on Manchu Ethnology and Beijing Culture*, (2004): 17-18.

Year (1728) to Emperor Yongzheng 13th Year (1735) as an example, including the following categories: sundial, two foreign monkey dates, Western snuff and foreign tobacco boxes, foreign enamel tea cups, kashilun bracelets, Italian bracelets, kashilun water basin, kashilun candle holder, Italian stone knife sheath, foreign porcelain large plate, foreign porcelain medium plate, foreign porcelain tea bowl, foreign porcelain lacquer ware, foreign mirror, large glass pieces, Western wind balsam incense, Western deliyaka, Western biluba'ershama incense, Western sandalwood oil, Western clove oil, Western ice oil, Western nutmeg oil, Western plum oil. Western oil of hundred flowers, balima oil, walnut oil, Western yellow flower dew, asking bell, self-timing bell, foreign red, foreign blue, organ painting, foreign painting piece, foreign oil painting, midela, foreign hand towel, foreign brocade, foreign peach flower door curtain, foreign peach flower hand towel, foreign dog, clairvoyant mirror, clairvoyant eye, self-timing chime clock, self-timing musical clock, foreign kashilun rulers, foreign snuff, foreign kashilun snuff box, foreign tortoiseshell snuff box, foreign onyx snuff box, colorful silk onyx snuff box, flower camblet, double-sided droguet, flower velvet felt, foreign square carpet, foreign carpet, foreign embroidered door curtain, foreign embroidered handkerchief, brocade foreign paper, etc.³¹⁴ Th total number of these goods are more than 60 kinds, including textiles, tableware, watches, paintings, perfumes and many other categories, penetrating into almost every aspect of life. In fact these imported luxury goods did penetrate the lives of some wealthy families from all aspects of clothing, food and housing. For example, Cao Xueqin, the author of the Chinese masterpiece *Hong Lou Meng* (*红楼梦 A Dream in Red Chamber*), lived in the mid-18th century and came from a once prominent official family. His novel tells the story of how a once-great family declined. In describing the lavish lifestyle of the large family Jia Fu, there are imported goods such as clocks, dressing mirrors, glasses, glass screens, glass cups, glass embroidery ball lamps, droguet textile, western cloth handkerchiefs, wine, snuff, yifuna medicine (a kind of headache medicine), oil paintings, western silver scissors, etc.³¹⁵ In many literary accounts from the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was considered fashionable to own these European goods. For example, the 18th century poet Yang Miren 杨米人 once wrote: “Three handed foreign watches are the most fashionable”

³¹⁴ The Palace Museum and the Chinese University of Hong Kong Art Museum, eds. *Qingdai Guangdong Gongpin* (Beijing: The Palace Museum, 1987), 14-15. These files are Chinese, many imported goods using similar pronunciation of Chinese records, for the failure to find the corresponding English translation of the goods, here I used the Pinyin note. The translation of *Balsam is* from Berthold Laufer, auth. and Lin Yunyin, trans. *Sino-Iranica: Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran with Special Reference to the History of Cultivated Plants and Products* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2001), 255.

³¹⁵ Cao Xueqin, *Hong Lou Meng* (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2005).

and “Glasses are worn to pretend to be nearsighted, just like the famous old gentlemen”.³¹⁶ European luxury goods were also considered by the high society as good gifts, and as the saying goes, “the thirteen lines of goods are always boastful”, and “the first to pick gifting to the officials”.³¹⁷ After leaving Guangzhou, Colin Campbell, a Swedish merchant, asked a merchant ship to bring his friend Chen Shou some foreign wine and a Portuguese snuff as gifts.³¹⁸ There is also a plot in *Hong Lou Meng* that mentioned Old Lady Jia received a glass screen as a birthday present from General Wu of Guangdong.³¹⁹

The variety of imported goods from Europe is too diverse and versatile to be enumerated here. In the next part of this chapter, I will list some typical, i.e., the very often mentioned goods in the historical sources, in order to analyze their consumption in the Chinese market.

4.2: Examples of popular European luxury goods

- Optical Devices

From the time they first entered China, the Jesuit missionaries realized the powerful appeal of overseas curiosities to all social classes in China. Thus, European paintings, books, musical instruments, chime clocks, maps and astronomical instruments became the most common gifts given by Matteo Ricci to Ming officials and emperors.³²⁰ Among these gifts was the dispersive prism (triangular prism). Although it did not attract the emperor’s attention, this small object was widely loved among the officials and was called “the glass stone that reflects the colors”.³²¹ By the mid-seventeenth century, Emperor Kangxi of Qing dynasty, held great enthusiasm and interest for science, therefore the Belgian Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest and other Jesuits built a large number of instruments for Kangxi to demonstrate European knowledge in sundial science, mechanics, hydraulics, optics and refraction, perspective, statics, fluid mechanics, gas mechanics, horology, meteorology, etc.³²² This also includes optical

³¹⁶ Yang Miren, “Dumen Zhuzhici,” in *Qingdai Beijing Zhuzhici*, ed. Lu Gong (Beijing: Beijing Guji Publisher, 1982), 19-20. Original text in classical Chinese: “三针洋表最时兴”, “眼镜戴来装近视, 学他名士老先生”.

³¹⁷ Pan Zhaokeng, “Zhujiang Zhuzhici,” in *Zhonghua Zhuzhici*, ed. Lei Mengshui (Beijing: Beijing Guji Publisher, 1997), 2896. Original text in classical Chinese: “十三行货总堪夸”, “争先挑取送给官家”.

³¹⁸ A Hai, *Yongzheng Shinian: Natiao Ruidianchuan de Gushi* (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2006), 126

³¹⁹ Cao Xueqin, *Hong Lou Meng*, 987.

³²⁰ Wang Qingyu, “Li Madou Xiewu Kao,” *Zhongwai Guanxishi Luncong*, vol.1 (1981): 84-122.

³²¹ *ibid.*, 109.

³²² Noel Golvers, *The Astronomia Europaea of Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (Dillingen, 1687): text, translation, notes and commentaries* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1993), 102-129.

appliances, for example, Verbiest once made an optical camera obscura for Kangxi. Kangxi liked it very much and asked Verbiest to build one in the palace garden, so that he could see what was happening on the main road outside the palace, and he would not be seen by people outside.³²³ In addition, Verbiest also made anamorphic pictures, multiplying spectacles, “magic lantern”, etc. for Kangxi. These interesting scientific instruments aroused the Kangxi Emperor’s curiosity and stimulated his strong interest.³²⁴ In addition to the Jesuits, which was the main channel, there were other means for European optical devices to enter the Qing court through other means in early Qing period, such as foreign tribute and diplomatic gift. After the Yaksa War, the Russian government, in order to ease the urgent situation in the Far East, decided to accept the proposal of the Qing government to hold border negotiations. Therefore, the Russian envoys arrived in Beijing in November 1686 in advance and brought gifts to the Chinese emperor. Among the gifts were: a pair of Ginza clocks, a French silver watch, a pair of German small watches, a Turkish small watch, nine walrus tusks, six pairs of fine glass glasses, 130 coral beads, a framed German mirror, two German decorated gold hats, two monocular telescopes, two pairs of French fine glass telescopes, and a Turkish carpet.³²⁵ The gifts brought to Beijing by Russian emissaries in 1720 included telescopes and microscopes.³²⁶ According to *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, the tribute brought by the Italian emissaries in Yongzheng 3rd Year (1725) also included gifts such as telescopes.³²⁷

There are a large number of various types of telescopes in the Qing Palace scientific instrument collection, which has to do with the wide range of uses of telescopes. Telescopes were very important tools in astronomy off observation and various measurements, and what is said here is that telescopes were also widely used in warfare during the Qing Dynasty. For example, in 1696, during the Kangxi Emperor’s expedition to Mongolia, “the emperor used a telescope to spot the Erutians at a height of 40 miles”.³²⁸ The Kangxi Emperor also often chose the telescope when rewarding his clansmen and ministers, which was one of the reasons for the large palace collection in addition to its own practicality. Guo Fuxiang, based on the Palace Museum’s collection of *Cheng She Dang*, File no. 124, has compiled the following scientific instruments that the Kangxi Emperor rewarded during the period 1699-1713.³²⁹

³²³ *ibid.*, 114.

³²⁴ *ibid.*, 114-117.

³²⁵ Н. Вантис-Каменский, auth. and Russian Language Teaching and Research Office, Renmin University of China, trans. *Collection of Russian and Chinese diplomatic documents (1619-1792)* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1982), 65.

³²⁶ *ibid.*, 115.

³²⁷ Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, 144.

³²⁸ Thomaz de Bossierre, and Yves de Mme. *Jean-François Gerbillon, S. J.*, 48.

³²⁹ *Chen She Dang*, file no.124, cited in Guo Fuxiang, “Xiyang Yiqi yu Qingdai Gongting de Kexue

Table 4-1: Records of Optical Devices Rewarded by the Qianlong Emperor from 1699 to 1713

Date of rewarding it out	Specification and number of telescopes that rewarded	How the telescope was obtained	Recipient of the reward
Kangxi 38 th Year, Month 9, Day 18 (1699)	1 large telescope		Jebtsundamba Khutuktu
Kangxi 38 th Year, Month 10, Day 9 (1699), the emperor handed them over to the subordinates	4 different sizes of telescope: 2 in size no.1 1 in size no.2 1 in size no.2	Made by the foreign attendants	Yikun Palace (Kangxi's Concubine Yi), received a size no.2 telescope on Kangxi 39 th Year, Month 3, Day 28 (1700) Lazang qan, on Kangxi 50 th Year, Month 4, Day 4 (1711) Wang Yichen, on Kangxi 54 th Year, Month 6, Day 27 (1715), for military use
Kangxi 38 th Year, Month 10, Day 18 (1699)	1 large telescope		Chengzhi Wang ³³⁰
	1 middle telescope		Fourth Beile
	1 middle telescope		Seventh Beile
	1 small telescope		Thirteenth Age (prince)
Kangxi 39 th Year, Month	2 small telescopes, one		The one with case was keeping by Wei Zhu

Shijie," *A Collection of Essays on the Ming and Qing Dynasties*, no.1 (2016): 484-486.

³³⁰ Wang (King)王, Jun Wang 郡王, Beile 贝勒, Age 阿哥, refer to the titles and honorifics of Manchurian clansmen respectively.

7, Day 12 (1700)	with case		(the palace eunuch) Another one gave to Zhi Jun Wang on Kangxi 40 th Year, Month 5, Day 17 (1701)
Kangxi 40 th Year, Month 5, Day 7 (1700)	2 telescopes	Presented by Wang Daohua, made by Su Lin	Thirteen Age Baotai Age
	3 telescopes, one with case	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 39 th Year, Month 7, Day 23	Fourth Beile Fourteenth Age Fifteenth Age (received the one with case)
Kangxi 39 th Year, Month 7, Day 26 (1700), the emperor handed it over to the subordinate	1 microscope		Fourth Beile (received on Kangxi 39 th Year, Month 8, Day 4)
Kangxi 40 th Year, Month 5, Day 7 (1701)	1 telescope	Tribute from Guangdong General Lu Chongyao	Crown Prince
Kangxi 56 th Year, Month 2, Day 25 (1717)	1 telescope	Presented to emperor by Crown Prince on Kangxi 40 th Year, Month 10, Day 1	A certain Age
	1 telescope	Presented to emperor by Crown Prince on Kangxi 41 th	A certain Age

		Year, Month 1, Day 13	
	1 small telescope	Presented to emperor by Catholic Foreigners in Tai'an, on Kangxi 42th Year, Month 1, Day 26	A certain Age
	1 small telescope	Presented to emperor by Catholic Foreigners in Zhenjiang, on Kangxi 42 nd Year, Month 2, Day 9	A certain Age
	1 small telescope	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 42 nd Year, Month 2, Day 12	A certain Age
	2 sundials	4 items in total presented to the emperor on Kangxi 42 nd Year, Month 10, Day 7	Lobsang Tendzin Dai Yan Beile
	1 telescope	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 43 rd Year, Month 3,	A certain Age

		Day 22	
	1 telescope	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 43 rd Year, Month 11, Day 21	A certain Age
Kangxi 56 th Year, Month 2, Day 6 (1717)	3 bronze sundials	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 49 th Year, Month 4, Day 17	Twelfth Age
Kangxi 56 th Year, Month 2, Day 25 (1717)	1 telescope	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 49 th Year, Month 5	A certain Age
	1 telescope	Presented to the emperor on Kangxi 50 th Year, Month 6, Day 11	A certain Age
	1 telescope	Presented to the emperor by the former Grand Secretariat Ma Qi on Kangxi 52 nd Year, Month 3, Day 8	A certain Age

Through the above archival records, it can be seen the various situations in which Western scientific instruments were used as rewards at the Kangxi Palace. However, due to the amount of Western scientific instruments are small and precious, the object of the reward was limited to a small range, mainly the princes (Age), Beile and Mongolia, Tibetan and other tribal chiefs. The types of scientific instruments used as rewards were also relatively homogeneous, mostly telescopes, sundials, and other commonly used species. This reward continued in the same

way until late Qing, but from the Yongzheng period onwards, the record of rewarding the small scientific instruments, especially telescopes and spectacles (eyeglasses), has increased, which is directly related to the fact that the Qing court's Manufacturing Office of Imperial Household Department (Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu 内务府造办处) has mastered the technology of imitation. It is recorded in the department's files that small instruments are made from time to time. Take Yongzheng 9th Year (1731) as an example: on Month 1, Day 5, "to the chief administrator of Imperial Household Department, Hai Wang, the vice director Man Bi: according the style of the small telescope on Yongzheng 7th Year, Month 7, Day 21, and then reproduce fifteen pieces telescopes."³³¹ On Month 2, Day 9, the department was asked to make another 20 pieces of telescopes.³³² Later the file followed by the reward and use of records, The range of recipients of the reward has been significantly expanded. In addition to the guards who were responsible for the security of the court, there were also military generals who held military power and army generals such as the chief soldiers and captains who were responsible for the security of various places, etc.³³³ These telescopes and sundials were not only necessary for the army in times of war, but also an important means for the emperor to communicate with his subjects, and it is easy to understand the political strategy and national interests implied by such rewards.

By the middle and late 18th century, with the increase of trade between China and the West and the diversification of imported product categories, European optical devices were no longer a court specialty, but were purchased by some rich Chinese, and gradually became a fashion among the whole society. In addition to the above-mentioned *Hong Lou Meng* and the *Zhu Zhi Ci* by Yang Miren, in the early 19th century, Yang Jingting 杨静亭 also wrote in poem, "Glasses are worn to pretend to be myopic, so that people know that they are scholars."³³⁴ It was already fashionable for scholars in Beijing to wear glasses from the early 19th century. And in Guangzhou, the collection of Pan Youdu 潘有度 (Punkhequa II), a wealthy merchant of Canton Thirteen Hongs, included telescopes, and he composed a poem to this effect, praising their usefulness in an exaggerated and fanciful manner – one can even see the smoke of the palace on the moon.³³⁵ This exemplifies his sense of superiority in

³³¹ The Palace Museum and the Chinese University of Hong Kong Art Museum, eds. *Qingong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang'an Zonghui*, vol.5 (Beijing: People's Press, 2005), 90.

³³² *ibid.*, 96.

³³³ *ibid.*, 91-108.

³³⁴ Yang Jingting, "Du Men Za Yong," in *Qingdai Beijing Zhuzhici*, ed. Lu Gong, 76. Original text in classical Chinese: "方鞋穿着趁时新, 摇摆街头作态频, 眼镜戴来装近视, 教人知是读书人。"

³³⁵ Cai Hongsheng, "Qingdai Guangzhou Hangshang de Xiyangguan – Pan Youdu 'Xi Yang Za Yong' Pingshuo," Review of *Xi Yang Za Yong*, by Pan Youdu. *Social Sciences in Guangdong*, no.1 (2003): 70-76. 《西洋杂咏》第十二首: "万顷琉璃玉宇宽, 镜澄千里幻中看, 朦胧夜半炊烟起,

owning this luxury product. The popularity of these optical instruments among the intellectuals and upper class certainly caught the attention of scientists and inspired their research. *Jing Jing Ling Chi* 鏡鏡諗痴, compiled and published by Zheng Fuguang 郑复光 in the 1840s, is one such work on optics.³³⁶

- Clocks and watches

As with the previously mentioned scientific instruments, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci brought clocks and watches to China as early as the 16th century. The chime clock was considered to be his stepping stone into the Forbidden City.³³⁷ In 1682, Matteo Ricci came to Macau and brought with him from India a large mechanical clock with gears made in Europe. Before coming to China, he had studied clockmaking at the Roman Academy. In India, he often spent the busiest hours of the day in the factories of the auxiliary friars to learn the art of clockmaking, mechanics and printing.³³⁸ Later in 1583, Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggieri then went to Zhaoqing, Guangdong Province. Not content with the results of his missionary work in Guangdong, Ricci continued to give away clocks, dispersive prism, and other curiosities to local officials and imperial envoys in exchange for permission to stay in the region or to enter the capital. Finally, in 1601, he presented his gifts to the emperor and got the opportunity to stay in Beijing.³³⁹ In 1687, Louis XIV sent a five-member mission with a large number of gifts, the mission arrived in Ningbo on July 23 but found that it had brought only enough to give to the Kangxi Emperor, but not enough for the large number of noble bureaucrats. Therefore, Jean de Fontaney, as president, wrote to Father Verju in Paris, on August 25, asked the Jesuits in France to bring in a larger quantity of exotic objects when they came to China or later. In his letter, he listed 11 categories of items needed, included clocks (chime and pendulums clocks), as well as eyeglasses.³⁴⁰ Not only the missionaries but also the diplomatic missions took great pains to select clocks and watches for tribute. The earliest record I found was in 1682, when Du Zhen visited Macau, the Portuguese governor sent Du Zhen gifts, including “two chime clocks, the larger one is six or seven inches high and the

可是广寒人家住。”

³³⁶ Zheng Fuguang. *Jing Jing Ling Chi* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1937).

³³⁷ Wang Qingyu, “Li Madou Xiewu Kao,” 90.

³³⁸ Henri Bernard, auth. and Guan Zhanhu, trans. *Matteo Ricci's Scientific Contribution to China* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1998), 50.

³³⁹ Wang Qingyu, “Li Madou Xiewu Kao,” 78.

³⁴⁰ Di Er Gong and Li Shengwen, “Shilun 17, 18 Shiji Faguo Yesuhui Zaihua Chuanjiao Celue Zhiyi – ‘Xiyang Qiqi’ de Shiyong” *Proceedings of the Seventh International Symposium on Ming History*, (1999): 468-473.

smaller one half that.”³⁴¹ In 1686, the king of the Netherlands sent an envoy to pay tribute to a chime clock,³⁴² and since then, chime clocks have been the first choice of the missions of various countries, Russia and Britain being the most prominent examples, and the Russian mission to Beijing in 1686 included a pair of silver base clock, a French silver watch, a German small watch, and a Turkish small watch.³⁴³ In 1793 Lord Macartney and his embassy came to Beijing with their carefully selected gifts. Then he noticed and assumed that Emperor Qianlong might already purchase two million sterling at various toys, jewelry, glass, musical automatons, and other instruments of microcosms, clocks, watches, etc., which were all made in London.³⁴⁴

Slightly different from his studious grandfather Kangxi and diligent father Yongzheng, Emperor Qianlong was confident to the point of arrogance and had a unique and magnificent aesthetic for things. This is evident from his taste in clocks and watches collecting. It is an obvious fact that the vast majority of the clocks and watches now in the collection of the Palace Museum were collected and made during the Qianlong period. It is also because of his avid collection of clocks and watches that he left the richest material historical information about clocks and watches among the European imports of the early and middle Qing Dynasty. The most important way for Qianlong to acquire watches was to buy them from Guangzhou. As can be seen in the existing FHAC files, he asked Li Shiyao, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, to purchase various overseas curiosities, including clocks, for him in 1758, and asked him “don no to be stingy with the expenditure”.³⁴⁵ Qianlong’s annual purchase of clocks and watches of best kinds to the value of 30,000 to 60,000 taels (£12,000-£25,000). Thus, by middle of 18th century the East India Company was buying clocks and watches in London for value of £20,000 and more every year, to send to Canton.³⁴⁶ In this case, the officials in charge of procurement exerted all their efforts to search for all kinds of exotic clocks and watches to satisfy the emperor’s desire for clocks and watches. This also greatly stimulated the watch trade. However, Qianlong did not always accept all of the clocks and watches submitted by individual officials, and sometimes they were rejected. For example, in Qianlong 47th Year (1782), two pairs of three-handed watches tributed by Li Fengyao, governor of Fujian, one pair of rule boxes of foreign watches tributed by Zhu Chun, governor

³⁴¹ Du Zhen, *Yue Min Xunshi Jilue*, vol.2.

³⁴² Liang Tingnan, *Yue Hai Guan Zhi*, 444.

³⁴³ Н. Вантис-Каменский, *Collection of Russian and Chinese diplomatic documents*, 44.

³⁴⁴ Macartney, *An Embassy to China*, 56.

³⁴⁵ ZPZZ, 04-01-14-0028-049, 04-01-14-0029-001, FHAC, Beijing.

³⁴⁶ J. M. Braga, *A Seller of ‘sing-songs’: a Chapter in the Foreign Trade of China and Macao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1967), 69.

of Guangxi, three pairs of crown stands and three-handed watches tributed by Yong De, general of Fujian, and two pairs of four- and five-handed double-sided watches tributed by Ya De, governor of Fujian, were rejected.³⁴⁷ The officials used the emperor's acceptance and rejection to gauge his tastes and preferences, and then approached the merchants more aggressively, seeking out high-class watches. Guangdong Hong merchants, as the only capital group that could trade with European merchants, bore the main responsibility, but also faced exploitation by officials.³⁴⁸ A very complex network of interests was woven between British merchants, traders, local officials and Beijing officials, and contributed to the problem of corruption in the Qing government. The merchants were unable to resist the constant blackmail of the officials, and the merchants relied on the Taipans to be their protectors. The officials did their best to collect and keep the precious articles imported by private trade, including music boxes, machine toys, chime clocks, watches and other rare, beautiful and precious articles, or send them to Beijing to present to the court or ministers.³⁴⁹

The Clocks and watches, as the popular luxury items, also became one of the most chosen gifts that merchants gave them to officials and officials who embezzled them. The reign of Qianlong was a period of very frequent cases of official corruption, and the private property confiscated from these officials often included imported clocks and watches. For example, In Qianlong 46th Year (1781), Wang Sui, the official of Hangjiahu Road was punished for his greed, and his family's assets were confiscated to the tune of 200,000 taels, including "five chime clocks, a pendulum clock and a watch".³⁵⁰ In Qianlong 47th Year (1782), Guo Tai, the governor of Shandong Province, was given a deficit of more than two million taels due to greed and his self-interest. He was given to kill himself by emperor, his family's assets were confiscated, including clocks and watches.³⁵¹ In 51st Year (1786), Fu Le Hun, the governor of the Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, was investigated for conniving at his family's extortion and apportionment at various ports. Among them, his own family's assets were confiscated include "a pair of tortoiseshell eight-tone table clocks, a pair of clock hat stands, a pair of musical clocks, a pair of ebony table clocks, a pair of hanging clocks, a pair of small hanging clocks, a pair of old clocks, a pair of two-sided seven-handed watches, two pairs of three-handed watches, two pairs of old watches", and his family members Chen Hansan's family assets also include "A pair of self-timing clocks, a pair of old table clocks, two table

³⁴⁷ The Palace Museum, *Qinggong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang'an Zonghui*, Vol.46, 441.

³⁴⁸ Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China*, Vol. 5, 21-35.

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 133-143.

³⁵⁰ The First Historical Archives of China (FHAC), ed. *Qianlong Chao Chengban Tanwu Dang'an Xuanbian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1994), 2127.

³⁵¹ *ibid.*, 2493.

watches, a pair of hanging clocks, and a sedan chair watch”.³⁵² Some scholars say that the Qing imperial family, in addition to the normal scavenging from the salt tax tariff, but also a large number of confiscations to increase the wealth of the imperial family.³⁵³ Confiscation seems to have become another important way for the Qianlong Emperor to purchase imported clocks and watches, in addition to court purchases and local and foreign tributes.

At the same time, the Qing court employed a very large number of foreigners, mostly Jesuits, to make clocks and watches for the emperor to suit his taste and aesthetic, and to maintain them for daily use. The Qing court controlled missionaries to China very strictly, allowing only those with expertise to enter Beijing, and assigning them to work according to their strengths and the special needs of the emperor. The active and prudent use of Western science and skills in the service of the court was the strategy adopted by the Qing emperors. While serving the court was a common tactic used by Western missionaries to preach in China. For the Western watchmakers at court, their skills in watchmaking were used to better serve the spread of the Gospel and to win the favor of the Qing emperor in exchange for relaxing restrictions on missionary activities. Among these watchmakers (missionaries) who served the court, the more famous ones were Gabriel de Magailles (1609-1677), Jacques Brocard (1661-1718), Pierre Jartoux (1668-1720), Francois Louis Stadlin (1658 -1740), Karel Slavicek (1678-1735), Valentin Chalier, (1697-1747), etc.³⁵⁴

Information about the demand for Western clocks and watches at the palace was fed back to the Western watch industry through procurement officials and middlemen. In order to sell their products, Western watchmakers and dealers, taking advantage of the huge market in China, paid attention to Chinese tastes and produced a large number of clocks and watches that suited Chinese aesthetics and were sold exclusively to China. In this aspect, the case of England is quite typical. In the 18th century, China had become the largest market for British watches abroad, and its aesthetic catering to the East is also evident through a visit to examine the current collection of watches in the Palace Museum.³⁵⁵ At present, the Palace Museum has a collection of more than 1500 clocks and watches, and has more than 100 pieces of Qing court clocks on display, most of them were collected during the Qianlong period, which are extremely luxurious and sophisticated. There are also many clocks made in Guangzhou,

³⁵² *ibid.*, 2971-3009.

³⁵³ Mou Runsun, “Lun Qianlong Shiqi de Tanwu,” in *Zhu Shi Zhai Cong Gao* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987), 446.

³⁵⁴ Guo Fuxiang. “Qinggong Zao Ban Chu lide Xiyang ZHongbiao Jiangshi,” *Journal of Gugong Studies*, no.1 (2012): 171-203.

³⁵⁵ Guo Fuxiang, “Qianlong Shiqi Gongting Zhongbiao Shoucang Kaoshu,” *Journal of Gugong Studies* (2011): 234.

Suzhou and the watchmaking office of Qing Palace. Although the aesthetics of these clocks were more oriental, but the degree of sophisticated skill already fully equaled to imported clocks. It is no wonder that Qianlong expressed disdain for the gifts brought by the British ambassador Lord McCartney, for what his own collections were much richer and more luxurious.

As Qing China became the world's largest consumer market for Western clocks and watches, a large number of Western merchants, including large numbers of private merchants and captains of foreign ships flocked to Guangzhou to import Western watches. Thus in the middle and late 18th century, it led to a surplus of Western watches in the Guangzhou market, and prices fell, resulting in heavy losses for many Western operators.³⁵⁶ Private traders that grabbed the market may be one of the reasons for the price reduction of watches.³⁵⁷ However, I think that the rise of the watch manufacturing industry in Guangzhou and Suzhou has also given these imported watches a strong competitor. This section is discussed in the next subsection of this chapter. It is also worth noting that since the stock of clocks and watches at the court was already quite large and their properties had mostly been transformed into decorative mechanical toys rather than timekeeping tools, Qianlong's son, the Jiaqing Emperor, apparently did not approve of his father's consumption habit.³⁵⁸ Qianlong's achievement of a large collection of clocks was closely related to the economic and social characteristics of the time. The Qianlong Emperor inherited a wealthy fortune from his grandfather and father, and during his sixty-year reign, China enjoyed a strong state, a prosperous economy, relative social stability and few wars, allowing society to accumulate wealth. With the growth of the court's financial resources, material conditions were provided for the Qianlong Emperor to pursue a life of luxury and enjoyment. At the same time, as the forbidden city and other imperial palaces and gardens were expanded and altered, he needed more clocks and watches for decoration.³⁵⁹ For Jiaqing, on the other hand, no longer possessed the necessity and conditions for conspicuous consumption as his father did. The emperor's attitude often had a direct impact on the direction of upper-class consumption in China, so the decline of the watch market was an inevitable trend that could be predicted.

³⁵⁶ Ye Nong, "Ming Qing Shiqi Guangzhou yu Xiyang Zhongbiao Maoyi," *Social Sciences in Guangdong*, no.2 (2008): 128-135.

³⁵⁷ Catherine Pagani, "*Eastern Magnificence, European Ingenuity*": *Clocks of Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 108.

³⁵⁸ ZPZZ, 04-01-06-0005-002, FHAC, Beijing.

³⁵⁹ Lei Jin, "A Study on the Clock and Watch Collection of Qianlong Emperor During Qing Dynasty," *Art and Design*, vol. 5, issue 3 (2022): 42.

- Wine

Unlike the scientific instruments and clocks mentioned earlier, wine entered the Chinese market in a way that had little to do with the court. The wine is not the “industrialized product representing advanced technology”, and the reason it made Chinese consumers understand is only its exotic flavor. China has long history of making and drinking wine (or liquor) that can date back to 5500 B.C.E. to 2500 B.C.E. on the *Yang-shao* Neolithic. Different from European wine mainly use grapes as raw materials, the most produce forms of wine in China were made from grain. In *Qi Ming Yao Shu* 齐民要术, the earliest agriculture handbook written by *Jia Sixie* 贾思勰 around 533 A.D. to 544 A.D. in the Northern Wei Dynasty, several chapters were devoted to the discussion of various methods of wine making.³⁶⁰ The making of Chinese wine mainly uses grain such as rice and sorghum as raw materials, it is necessary to add the distiller’s yeast. The production process and preservation methods are different while the Western wine using grapes that can self-ferment. *Qi Min Yao Shu* recorded the methods of how to make distiller’s yeast and described clearly about more than 40 ways of making wine.³⁶¹ In fact, grape wine was also made in China before the Ming Dynasty until “the rise of liquor in the Central Plains and the weakening of control over the West, as well as the expanding influence of Islam, which advocated prohibition, slowed down the trend of wine production and export to the East.”³⁶² The Jesuits who came to China also recorded this that “the Chinese used to make wine, for the word wine is in their ancient books, but now the Chinese no longer make wine, they make it from rice....”³⁶³

Since 16th century, the Portuguese who lived in Macau were the first ones who consumed the European wine in China. As a port city where Eastern and Western culture meet, inhabitants with different nationalities, races and religions are engaged in commercial activities or in missionary work. They have settled in this area or travelled frequently to Macau, with different ways of consumption. A study by Huang Qichen shows that Macau has been inhabited by Chinese and Portuguese people since 1562. The total population at that time was only 800. By the first part of the 19th century, the total population, although fluctuating occasionally, had always exceeded 20,000.³⁶⁴ Chinese and Western culture exchange also

³⁶⁰ Jia Sixie, *Qi Min Yao Shu* (Beijing: China Agriculture Press, 1998).

³⁶¹ Wang Jianguo, “Jiedu Qi Min Yao Shu de Zhiqiu he Niangjiu Gongyi,” *China Brewing*, vol. 16 (2008): 107.

³⁶² Kong Qingshan, *Zhongguo Putao Zhi* (Beijing: China Agriculture Science Technology Publishing House, 2004), 13.

³⁶³ Matteo Ripa, *Memoirs of Father Ripa during Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China* (London: J. Murray, 1855), 51.

³⁶⁴ Huang Qichen, *Aomen Tongshi* (Guangzhou: Guangdong Education Publishing House, 1999), 9.

made Chinese citizens had a voguish understanding of Western consumer taste. Compared with residents from mainland China who were frugal, Macau's foreign residents had a greater power of consumption. Chinese residents tended to consume most of the practical consumption, in other words, the idea of anti-hunger is more common. While foreign residents' pursuit more to the hedonistic or luxury consumption. The foreign residents were fond of alcohol and preferred to the wine with good quality and tasty so that they are definitely the main consumer crowd of imported wine. With centuries of social change, the Portuguese in Macau also appeared in class differentiation. The rich classes are businessmen, doctors and teachers. In middle are soldiers, sailors, helmsmen, brokers and agents that with jobs. There are also Portuguese who are poor like beggars.³⁶⁵ Regardless of their consumption level, they consumed both Chinese and foreign wine and the pursuit of wine has become an indispensable part of life. Some scholars even considered that wine was an important factor in many Portuguese families decline.³⁶⁶

Several books during Qing Dynasty mentioned when the Portuguese Settled in Macau, they brought their original consumption habits of clothing, food, living and entertainment into China. In 1684 when an officer from Beijing named Du Zhen visited Macau, the Portuguese hold a banquet in honor of him. After that Du Zhen wrote what he saw in *Yue Min Xun Shi Ji Lue* 粤闽巡视纪略: "They keep food in glass plate with porcelain holding, they offered me several fruits and cakes, all of which origin from West, with unique sweat and fragrance."³⁶⁷ It reflected that since Macau opened to the outside world, imported consumer goods were so popular that their original consumption habits proudly retained. *Daoguang Xiangshan Xian Zhi* 道光香山县志 (Gazetteer of Xiangshan County) mentioned a book named *Wai Guo Ming Jiu Ji* 外国名酒记, which listed dozens of foreign wines, not only the European ones but also those from Southern Asia and America.³⁶⁸ Unfortunately, there is no more information could be found such as the author or written date about this specific book in the gazetteers, and also, all these foreign wine names were transliterating into Chinese by their pronunciation which are different from current Chinese translation regulation. Currently I cannot make sure what these wines are.

The Chinese who lived in Macau began to show their interests in Western wine and regarded

³⁶⁵ Chen Weiming, *Qingdai Aomen Shehui Shenghuo Xiaofei Yanjiu (1644-1911)* (Guangzhou: Guandong Renmin Press, 2009), 66-89

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 73-76.

³⁶⁷ Du Zhen, *Yue Min Xun Shi Ji Lue*, vol.2. Original text in classical Chinese: "其贮菜用玻璃瓯, 承以磁盘, 进果饵数品, 皆西产也, 甘芬绝异。"

³⁶⁸ Zhu Huai, "Xiang Shan Xian Zhi," cited in Chen Weiming, *Qingdai Aomen Shehui Shenghuo*, 23-25.

it as a kind of fashion.³⁶⁹ Similarly, the residents in Guangdong region also began to recognize the Western food and wine because of frequent foreign trade. As a result of the Qing government monopoly of trade, Western consumption patterns initially only for the Hong merchants who are the only brokers for Western-China trade to understand. In 1769 a Thirteen-Hong merchant Pan Qiguan 潘启官 (Paunkhequa I) had held a three-day banquet at home, one day is Chinese and the other days full of Western style food.³⁷⁰ Apparently, he was in order to meet the living habits of foreigners at that time. In addition, according to *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, edited by Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869-1928) during the late Qing, recorded that in 1828 an officer from Beijing visited Guangzhou and was very surprised by the customs of foreigners. He wrote in his diary that: “After the meal we went to a foreign building, with wonderful view... had cups of foreign wine which are in very beautiful color and with sweet taste. Even I didn’t meet any foreign people but still feel really surprised of it.”³⁷¹ Up to the late 19th century, western food and wine was popular among the rich merchants and became a consumption fashion in Guangzhou.

Western wine is not only consumed by foreigners and Guangzhou merchants, it was gradually introduced to other regions of Chinese. Several Chinese scholars reviewed the documents, books and records of Qing period to prove it. For example, there is an event also recorded in *Qing Bai Lei Chao* about in a winter day of some year in Jiaqing period: Renhe scholar Hu Shunong made a banquet, a younger generation from his family names Wang Xiaomi from Qiantang attended as well, drank *gui zi jiu* (foreign wine). Next day, Yan Oumeng gave Wang Xiaomi two bottles of *gui zi jiu* as presents so Xiaomi wrote a poem of 40 lines to thank for it. *Gui zi jiu* is an imported good, it might be the western wine like brandy, whisky or other liqueurs. While few people know western language at that time, so they named westerners *gui zi* and called the western wine *gui zi jiu*.³⁷² The Jiaqing Emperor was in power from 1796 to 1820, while Renhe is a region in Sichuan and Qiantang is in Zhejiang so this literature showed before 1820 in main land China the consumption of Western wine not only limitedly consumed among the southern coast area consumers but also in other regions of China. Because few local Chinese residents knew western language, the name and produce method

³⁶⁹ Xian Jianmin and Lu Jinling, “Ming Qing Shiqi Aomen Zhongxi Yinshi Wenhua de Jiaoliu,” *Guangxi Social Sciences*, vol. 11 (2005): 125.

³⁷⁰ Jiang Jianguo, *An Exploration into Cantonese Consumer Culture in Late Qing Dynasty*, PhD Thesis (Jinan University, 2005), 135.

³⁷¹ Xu Ke, “*Qing Bai Lei Chao*,” cited in Jiang Jianguo, *ibid.* original text in classical Chinese: “广州府请饭后，登鬼子楼，……凭栏一眺，极目青苍，……饮鬼子酒数杯，五色味甘。楼上无一夷人，盖有司先期遣也。”

³⁷² Xu Ke, “*Qing Bai Lei Chao*,” cited in Guo Xu, *The Research of Alcohol Industry*, 59.

of the foreign wine was not recorded. There are also poetry and novels mentioned about the European wine, more specifically, these wines are grape wine. Poet Zha Shenxing 查慎行 (1650-1727) who came from Zhejiang wrote a poem named *Xie Yuan Zhang Hui Xi Yang Pu Tao Jiu* 谢院长惠西洋蒲桃酒, in the poem he describe the good taste and the color of western grape wine, showed he was fond of this exotic product.³⁷³ The novel *Hong Lou Meng* mentioned that the protagonist Jia Baoyu also drinks western grape wine, and the color of it is like rouge.³⁷⁴

In the Qing court, there were also records of wines. They were tributes from missionaries and local officials, as well as tributes (gifts) from the King of Portugal. On Kangxi 49th Year, Month 7, Day 14, Guangdong Officials Zhao Hongcan and Fan Shichong wrote a memorial to Kangxi saying that Sha Guo'an (Sabino Mariani), a foreigner living in Macau, had sent a letter stating that Duo Le (Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon) had died, but that he had remembered Kangxi's wine drinking, so he had sent a case of Canaries wine for 70 small bottles inside, two cases of Persian wine for 24 large round bottles, and two cases of Portuguese wine for 24 square bottles. The official wanted to know if the wine could be presented to Beijing. The Kangxi Emperor replied: Bring it.³⁷⁵ Same year on Month 10, Day 3, Zhao Hongchan wrote again to notice that a foreigner had brought two cases of wine from the Canaries to present to the emperor.³⁷⁶ This indicates that Kangxi did have a demand for wine. However, there is no record of foreigners sending wine to the emperor through the local officials during the reign of Yongzheng and other emperors, but only the list of tributes from Portuguese kings is mentioned, for example, in 1740, 1752, 1727, etc.³⁷⁷ It is possible that Kangxi's wine consumption may have been related to his health condition. In 1708 Kangxi suffered from palpitations due to exertion and anxiety, but no good treatment was found. "The Chinese doctors were at their wits' end and had to turn to the Europeans for help. They heard that Bernard Rhodes was well versed in pharmacology and thought he might be able to relieve the emperor's condition. He prepared a carmine wine for the emperor to take, which first stopped the severe palpitations that disturbed him the most; he then advised him to take wine

³⁷³ Zha Shenxing, "Jing Ye Tang Shi Ji, Vol. 38," in *Qin Ding Si Ku Quan Shu: Ji Bu* (Jinan: Shandong Qilu Press, 1997). 《敬业堂诗集》卷三十八《谢院长惠西洋蒲桃酒》：妙酿真传海外方，龙珠滴滴出天浆。醍醐灌顶知同味，琥珀浮瓶得异香。直可三杯通大道，谁教五斗博西凉。平生悔读无功记，误被村醪饮醉香。

³⁷⁴ Cao Xueqin, *Hong Lou Meng*, 836.

³⁷⁵ Shanghai Shudian Publisher, ed. *Qingdai Dang'an Shiliao Xuanbian, Kangxi reign* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian Publisher, 2010), 792.

³⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 794-795.

³⁷⁷ *Qin Ding Da Qing Hui Dian (QDDQHD)*, Jiaqing reign, vol.390, 450.

from Canaries.”³⁷⁸ However, I did not find any other records in this this medicinal value of wine in the Qing literature.

In spite of the higher and affluent class, there was no evidence indicate that before 1850s the mass had already tried foreign wine. Until the first part of the nineteenth century, the Western way of eating was not widely accessible even in Canton, where foreign trade was most frequent. In Hunter’s Bits of Old China, he mentions the confusion of a Chinese man named Lo Yung who complained about the vulgarity of Western food, his dislike of raw fish and cheese, and his inability to drink soup and beer.³⁷⁹ After the 1850s in Guangzhou, eating western-style food and drink foreign liquor then became fashionable. Many restaurants transformed for local food and Western food together or specialized in western food. At the same time, few Chinese ordinary people had the opportunity to taste foreign wine. When they tried were soon fond of it. Guo Xu cited two cases in his research, that among the Second Opium War, when a soldier shared his brandy to a local, he surprised with the flavor loved it a lot. As well as that a Qing soldier loved so much the absinthe which was brought by a British doctor.³⁸⁰

- Woolen fabrics

The most valuable European goods that came to China in the second half of the 18th century were fabrics. Among them, woolen fabrics occupied the third place among the goods imported into China from Western European countries before 1840s.³⁸¹ British and Dutch merchants brought these woolen goods to China by ship, not only through Guangdong, but also through Fujian. Until the establishment of the Canton System, then it was mainly through the port of Guangzhou. In the case of the British East India Company alone, the value of woolen goods sold to China more than quintuple in the decades from 1775 to 1833.

Table 4-2: Value of Woolen Goods Exported to China by the British East India Company, Annual average, 1775-1824³⁸²

Year	Value (Unit of measurement: tael)
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³⁷⁸ Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, ed. Zheng Dedi, Lv Yimin, and Shen Jia, trans. *Yesuhuishi Zhongguo Shujian [Jesuits Letters of China]* (Zhengzhou: Daxiang Publisher, 2001), 36-37.

³⁷⁹ Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, 35-40.

³⁸⁰ Guo Xu, *The Research of Alcohol Industry Development*, 60.

³⁸¹ Yao Xiangao, *Zhongguo Jindai Duiwai Maoyishi Ziliao*, 259.

³⁸² Yan Zhongping, et al. *Zhongguo Jindai Jingjishi Tongji Ziliao Xuanji* (Beijing: China Science Publishing & Media, 1955), 11.

1775-1779	277,671
1780-1784	378,696
1785-1789	801,879
1790-1794	1,586,662
1795-1799	1,556,662
1817-1819	1,951,267
1820-1824	2,042,102
1825-1829	1,903,266
1830-1833	1,584,940

From the data in the table, it can be seen that as early as the last decade of the 18th century, China imported an average of over 1.5 million taels of silver worth of British woolen fabrics per year. With such an enormous value of woolen goods being purchased by the Chinese, the consumption of European textiles in China before the end of the 18th century should not be overlooked. After a lot of review of Chinese materials, the more mainstream of these woolen products are: droguet/broad cloth 哆罗呢, broad cloth, scarlet 猩猩毡, first sort of camblets 羽缎, second sort of camblets 羽纱, biji fabric/long ells 哔叽缎, foreign flowered callimancoes 番紬, etc.³⁸³

The imperial use of these woolen fabrics can often be seen in the Qing dynasty palace archives. And the way the royal family acquired these products was similar to many of the commodities mentioned above: tributes from Western envoys, local officials buying them themselves and then present to the royal family, and the palace asking customs to buy them. For example, in Qianlong 58th Year (1793), the British tribute included “broad cloth” and “second sort of cambles” of various colors.³⁸⁴ In Qianlong 26th Year (1764), the tributes from Su Chang, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces, included “various colors of broad clothes”, “various colors of second sort of cablets” and “red long ells”.³⁸⁵ In the Qianlong 35th Year

³⁸³ The cross-referencing of the Chinese and English names of these woolen items was compiled by Song Wen from the *Hoppo-book* held in the National Library in Berlin, Germany, which is an archive of several customs books translated into English, recording the duties payable on all goods imported and exported at the port of Guangzhou in 1753. See Song Wen, “Qingdai Xiyang Nirong Kaoxi,” *Palace Museum Journal*, no.4 (2021): 57-19. The translation of *droguet* comes from Liu Ruiming, “After Reading ‘Aleni’s Contributions to Modern Chinese’,” *Chinese Language Review (Hong Kong)*, vol. 73 (2003): 13-15.

³⁸⁴ *QDDQHD*, Jiaqing reign, vol. 394.

³⁸⁵ The Palace Museum, *Qinggong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang'an Zonghui*, Vol. 26, 800,

(1770), the tribute of Cui Yingdi, governor of Zhejiang and Fujian, included “various colors of broad clothes” and “various colors of first sort of camblets”.³⁸⁶ In Qianlong 43rd Year (1778), the Canton Customs was ordered to purchase some broad clothes scarlet in accordance to the samples issued by the court. Canton Customs Supervisor Tu Ming E wrote in the report: “this flower felt is the Dutch place out of ... if this year the Dutch merchant ship bring it to Guangdong, we will buy them. If they did not bring this kind of felt, I will give the sample to the foreign ship that is about to return to the sail, and instruct them to make sure to follow each kind to weave a few more boards. It is estimated that the ship from that place will not arrive Canton until Qianlong 46th Year... until November 18, 46, and Canton Customs plans to send on Qianlong 46th Year, Month 11, in amount of ten boards of white ground red felt, ten boards of yellow ground red felt, five boards of red ground black felt, and seven pieces of the original samples.”³⁸⁷ It is clear from these archives that the court had a great demand for imported woolen fabrics and already had their own consumption preferences. They customized the desired styles from European suppliers through local officials.

In the Qing court, as well as in the families of nobles and officials in the north, these imported woolen fabrics were used for a long time to make clothes, especially for protection against rain and snow. “All rainhats and raincoats are made of camblets or oiled silk.”³⁸⁸ *Hong Lou Meng* also wrote that when it snows the girls wear “either broad clothes or camblets, ten or so the red dresses, neatly reflecting the heavy snow”.³⁸⁹ In addition, because of their beauty and warmth, these woolen fabrics were often used for padding at court, not only on chairs and floors, but also on sedan chairs and horse-drawn carriages. According to the Chen She Dang records, the rosewood seat in Juan Qin Zhai of Forbidden City was covered with a “beige background red flowers broad cloth, scarlet”.³⁹⁰ On the seat beds of Jingming Yuan Huazi Guan, “broad cloth scarlet, flower mattress, long ells” will be laid on the holiday.³⁹¹ These imported woolen fabrics were also used as curtains for houses and sedan chairs. In Qianlong 25th Year (1760), Emperor Qianlong ordered to make a curtain with yellow second sort of camblets on the sedan chair he was riding in.³⁹² In Qianlong 29th Years, Month 3, Day 1 (1764) it is recorded that the Guang Chu Si (广储司 Storage Department) requested for the Empress

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*, Vol. 34, 125.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*, Vol. 41, 420–421

³⁸⁸ *QDDQHD*, Jiaqing reign, Vol. 396.

³⁸⁹ Cao Xueqin, *Hong Lou Meng*, 693.

³⁹⁰ The Palace Museum, *Gugong Bowuyuancang Qinggong Chenshe Dang'an* (Beijing: The Palace Museum Publisher, 2013), 252-273.

³⁹¹ The First Historical Archives of China and Phoenix Media, eds. *Qingdai Huangjia Chenshe Midang - Jingmingyuan Juan, Vol.3* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2016), 1321.

³⁹² The Palace Museum, *Qinggong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang'an Zonghui, Vol.50*, 351.

Dowager and the Queen's carriage needs to use yellow broad clothing: "Applying felt pieces for the Empress Dowager and the Queen to make carriage curtains, need to use yellow broad clothes 9 zhang 6 chi 3 cun 8 fen 8 li (refers to the size). I see the storehouse existing yellow broad clothes are too ordinary. Please receive from the inner court, so as to make the application can also be for this respectfully submit a request. I request that I may receive some from the inner court, and I respectfully ask for permission."³⁹³ In addition, because Western woolen fabrics were expensive at the time, and could show the subservience of these countries, the emperor was happy to reward his subjects and other nobles with them. In Qianlong 58th Year (1793), Qianlong rewarded his subjects with many long ells for making coats, and issued an edict saying: "England sent an envoy to Beijing to congratulate me and give me gifts. Considering that these gifts they have brought from a very far place, it is therefore distributed to you all, so that the ministers inside and outside may know of this wonderful reputation."³⁹⁴ The British envoys he mentioned here are none other than the Macartney mission.

In addition to the palace, Western woolen fabrics were also sold in the private market through merchants. During the Qianlong period, Western woolen goods were more popular and profitable among the folk in Beijing. Qianlong dabbled in an edict criticizing Li Yongbiao, the supervisor of Canton Customs, wrote: "I heard that his staff, whenever they encountered foreign ships importing, bought items such as woolen goods and camblets then brought them to the capital by the way to sell them for huge profits."³⁹⁵ Liu Tingji 刘廷矶 wrote that in the early years of the Qing Dynasty, folk had the entertainment of quail fighting for the New Year, and some of the pockets for quail were made of broad cloth.³⁹⁶ In addition to the extensive costume descriptions in *Hong Lou Meng*, there are references to imported woolen fabrics in other novels. In the novel *Shen Lou Zhi* 蜃楼志, which depicts story of the son of a Guangdong merchant, in which the Guangdong customs supervisor, Master He, is confiscated from his family, and the European textiles seized include eight hundred boards each of red, green and blue broad clothes, and four hundred boards each of red, green and blue long ells.³⁹⁷

³⁹³ NWFCW, 05-0215-010, FHAC, Beijing.

³⁹⁴ *Qing Shi Lu*, Qing Gao Zong Shilu, Vol. 1437, 1793 (Qianlong 58th Year, Month 9). Original text in classical Chinese: "英吉利国遣使赴京，祝禧纳赆，朕因系远夷所进方物，特命分赏，俾内外大臣，共知声教覃敷之盛。"

³⁹⁵ *Qing Shi Lu*, Qing Gao Zong Shilu, Vol. 593, 1759 (Qianlong 24th Year, Month 7).

³⁹⁶ Liu Tingji, *Zai Yuan Za Zhi* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 2012), 163.

³⁹⁷ Geng Ling Lao Ren, *Shen Lou Zhi Quan Zhuan* (Nanchang: 21st Century Publishing House, 2016), 200.

4.3: Records and attitudes of Qing scholars towards imported goods

In addition to those mentioned above, there were also a large number of imported luxury goods being consumed that were widely recorded and mentioned in court archives and folk notes, poems, essays and novels, including but not limited to: all kinds of scientific instruments, all kinds of textiles, weapons, glass products, western medicines, perfumes, western paintings, musical instruments, etc. There is a saying about China at that time, xi qi dong jian 西器东渐, which means that things from the West flowed to the East. For these new and exotic things, Chinese scholars of Ming and Qing dynasties have expressed their views on these things while literary description of them, and their attitudes are varied.

Before the first half of the 19th century, Chinese scholars always had a diverse view of European objects. Western artifacts were sometimes considered “strange” and “ingenious”, but these two words had derogatory meanings. There was a view that European products were useless. For example, Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮 (1775 - 1840) commented on Europeans: “The foreigners say that their knowledge is in their brains but not in their hearts, so they make the most exquisite things, but their hearts are not yet open.”³⁹⁸ Li Wei 李卫, an official during the Yongzheng period, compared the Western precision instruments, clocks and mechanical toys with the ancient Chinese armillary sphere, guiding car, copper pot drip, and wooden bull runner, arguing that there was nothing to boast of in these “curiosities” because there were similar things in ancient China.³⁹⁹ Xiao Lingyu 萧令裕 (1789 -?) said that the trade between China and Europe was “exchanging tea, rhubarb, for useless things like woolen fabrics and clocks”.⁴⁰⁰ Guan Tong 管同 (1780-1831) also believed that the foreign goods sold to China were all exquisite but useless things.⁴⁰¹

However, there are many scholars who understood the practicality of European products and recognized them after experienced them in daily lives. A famous Qing poet, Nalan Xingde 纳兰性德 (1655 - 1685) once wrote a poem in praise of the use of the clocks, with a view that people in all walks of life could benefit from it: the emperor dealt with political affairs on time, officials went to work on time, those who treasured time seized the time to study, embroiderers added silk accurately, farmers farmed on time, and even people who lived in the

³⁹⁸ Yu Zhengxie, “Tianzhujiao Lun,” in *Yu Zhengxie Quanji, Vol.1* (Hefei:Huangshan Press, 2005), 747.

³⁹⁹ Liu Zaifu and Lin Gang, *Chuantong yu Zhongguoren* (Beijing: Joint Publishing, 1988), 331-332.

⁴⁰⁰ Xiao Lingyu, “Yue Dong Shi Bo Lun,” in *Hai Guo Tu Zhi*, ed. Wei Yuan (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1998), 1916-24.

⁴⁰¹ Guan Tong, “Jin Yong Yang Huo Yi,” in *Yin Ji Xuan Wen Ji, Vol.2* (Guangxu 5th Year Edition, 1879), 7-8.

mountain areas could know the time accurately.⁴⁰² According to Zhao Shenzen 赵慎畛 (1761 - 1825), traditional Chinese timekeeping instruments would freeze in winter due to low temperatures, making it impossible for water to drip down, and only fire could be used to heat them to keep them functioning. But the Western watch was not afraid of freezing, and the method was more subtle.⁴⁰³ Poetess Gao Jingfang 高景芳 thought that snuff could refresh the mind and was easy to carry.⁴⁰⁴ In *Hong Lou Meng*, Cao Xueqin used the words of Lin Daiyu to compare European lamps with glass shades to traditional Mingwa lamps made from clam shells, both of which can be lit in the rain, the former being much more expensive but also brighter.⁴⁰⁵

Many interesting stories related to foreign objects have been recorded. According to *Lv Yuan Cong Hua 履园丛话*: “Kangxi ordered Wu Tingzhen to write a poem about the three rivers, and while Wu Yingzhen was composing two lines, he suddenly heard the self-timing bell ringing, so the Minister Song joked that: ‘it looked like you had arrived in Wu River.’”⁴⁰⁶ Li Dou 李斗 (1749 -1817), the author of *Yangzhou Huafang Lu 扬州画舫录*, Li Dou, thought that the vivid Western painting looked like a gather of real things: “I saw a small room with a couch and a bookshelf next to it, and the books were stacked in a messy way. When I looked closer, I found that it was a Western painting.”⁴⁰⁷ The painter Mao Xianglin 毛祥麟 (1815 -?) once told a story: “a rich merchant who came to Hu 沪 (was called Songjiang, now Shanghai) with money and lived in a building facing the Huangpu River. He set up a telescope, which like a big bamboo, and looked out from the inside and could see the fields and fish ponds of Pudong as if they were close at hand. Occasionally a village woman passed by, followed by children, close as if you could talk to them, in fact, they were four or five miles away, it was amazing.”⁴⁰⁸ According to the content Lin Sumen’s 林苏门 (c. 1748 - 1809) wrote in *Hanjiang Sanbai Yin 邗江三百吟*: “there was a group of people in Yangzhou who did not know how to take snuff and followed the fashion of carrying snuff to social

⁴⁰² Nalan Xingde, “Zi Ming Zhong Fu,” in *Tong Zhi Tang Ji, Vol.1* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 1979), 29-30. Original text in classical Chinese: “于是深宫听之，不失九重之宵旰；在位闻之，毋愆百职之居诸。纵令雨晦风潇，而惜阴之士自识晨昏而运甓；即使终霾且曠，而刺绣之姬应知中昃而添丝。或处深山幽谷之中，若聆音而起，当弗昧于茅索絢之候；或居修竹长林之内，若辨响而兴，亦勿迷弋凫与雁之期矣。”

⁴⁰³ Zhao Shenzen, *Yu Chao Za Shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012), 229-230.

⁴⁰⁴ Gao Jingfang, “Bi Yan Hu,” in *Qingdai Shiwenji Hubian, Vol.204*, ed. Ji Baocheng (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 2010), 663.

⁴⁰⁵ Cao Xueqin, *Hong Lou Meng*, 611.

⁴⁰⁶ Qian Yong, *Lv Yuan Cong Hua* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979), 22.

⁴⁰⁷ Li Dou, *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1960), 333.

⁴⁰⁸ Mao Xianglin, *Mo Yu Lu* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 1985), 46.

gatherings.”⁴⁰⁹

From these accounts, it is evident that the Chinese were not always so conservative, and that a wide variety of views existed. And many people who have consumed or studied imported European goods have expressed approval of their practicality. In addition, scholars have drawn some patterns from it. According to Xie Gui'an, first, in terms of time, the later Ming and Qing records were written, the more detailed the descriptions of these Western goods were. Second, in terms of space, authors in the south and southeast coastal areas, or those who visited these areas, recorded more Western goods, while inland authors rarely mentioned them; third, in terms of content, the notes in turbulent times described more weapons and practical tools, while those in peaceful times focused on those artworks and luxury goods.⁴¹⁰ It is clear that the understanding and acceptance of these European goods by Chinese consumers is a gradual process, and that the residents of the South, Southeast and Beijing, where foreign trade was frequent and more affluent, have more access to those commodities. From the late 17th century to the mid-19th century, most of China was in a relatively peaceful environment, which also provided sufficient conditions for the residents to accumulate wealth and invest it in consumption.

4.4: Market competition: rise of local manufacturing of similar products in China

- The rise of China's domestic clocks and eyeglasses manufacturing industry

After visiting the large collection of clocks and watches on display in the Palace Museum, I found that clocks and watches imported from Western countries such as England, Switzerland, France and Italy account for roughly half of all the Qing court collection, while the remaining half are made by the court itself, or locally produced clocks and watches from Guangdong and Jiangnan areas.

While reviewing the FHAC archives, I came across records about two departments related to clocks and watches, one is called the Zi Ming Zhong Chu 自鸣钟处 (Chime Clock Office) and the other is called the Zuo Zhong Chu 做钟处 (Clock-Making Office). I then conducted a study of the two departments and came to the following results. First, both departments were established in the Kangxi period in all probability. According to Liu Yuefang's research, the

⁴⁰⁹ Lin Sumen, *Han Jiang San Bai Yin* (Yangzhou: Guangling Bookstore, 2005), 92.

⁴¹⁰ Xie Gui'an and Xie Sheng, "Chuizhou Chunshui: Ming Qing Biji di Xi Qi Dong Chuan de Guanzhu yu Shuxie," *Collected Papers of History Studies*, no.2 (2019): 7-10.

Chime Clock Office was probably established in Kangxi 28th Year (1689) or earlier.⁴¹¹ The establishment of the Clock-making Office was not later than the first year of Yongzheng 1st Year (1723). According to the citation of Guan Xueling, this is the first mention of this department in the archives of the Imperial Household Department.⁴¹² However, the clock made by the Clock-making Office was recorded under the entry of Chime Clock Office in this file, so Tang Kaijian believes that the Clock-making Office was probably a subdivision of Chime Clock Office.⁴¹³ Moreover, no later than Qianlong 7th Year (1742), the Clock-making Office should have become independent from the Chime Clock Office. A file from Month 11 of the same year recorded that when Qianlong went to the Temple of Heaven, he was accompanied by five eunuchs, five horses, and two ox carts from the Chime Clock Office, and two eunuchs and two horses from the Clock-making Office. This way of recording means that the two departments were independent from each other.⁴¹⁴

According to Guo Fuxiang's research, the job duties of the Chime Clock Office at the beginning were to learn mechanical principles, to maintain clocks and to make clocks. Later, due to the expand demand ordered by the palace manufacture, the Clock-making Office became an independent department.⁴¹⁵ The clockmaking office consisted of three main types of staff: foreign missionaries, clockmakers recruited from the private sector, and clockmaking eunuchs. Because of the Qianlong Emperor's love of clocks and watches, the scale of the Clock-making Office was the largest during the Qianlong period. According to Valentin Chaliier, more than 100 people worked under his command in the 1730s and 1740s in both these two clock offices.⁴¹⁶ According to the archives about the restored houses of the Qing court, there were nine rooms for the work of the clocks and watches making in Qianlong 37th Year (1772), enough to prove that it was a very large department.⁴¹⁷

According to the emperor's will to manufacture all kinds of clocks and mechanical toys is the most important task of the clock craftsmanship. Generally, the emperor first put forward basic intentions and specific requirements, or the minister of Nei Wu Fu 内务府 petitioned it according to the established practice, and the craftsman designs it accordingly, then makes it

⁴¹¹ Liu Yuefang, "Qingong Zuo Zhong Chu," *Palace Museum Journal*, no.4 (1989): 49-54+99.

⁴¹² Guan Xueling, "Zhongguo Zhongbiao," in Gugong Zhongbiao, ed. the Palace Musuem (Beijing: The Forbidden City Publishing House, 2008), 42.

⁴¹³ Tang Kaijian and Huang Chunyan, "Ming Qing Zhiji Xiyang Zhongbiao zai Zhongguo de Chuanbo," *Jinan Shixue*, (2005): 313

⁴¹⁴ *Qing Dang: Za Lu Dang*, Package 33, cited in Liu Yuefang, "Qingong Zi Ming Zhong Chu fei Zuo Zhong Chu," *Palace Museum Journal*, no.2 (1987): 95.

⁴¹⁵ Guo Fuxiang, "Qianlong Shiqi Gongting Zhongbiao," 235.

⁴¹⁶ Tang Kaijian and Huang Chunyan, "Ming Qing Zhiji Xiyang Zhongbiao," 325.

⁴¹⁷ The Palace Museum, *Qingong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang'an Zonghui*, Vol. 36, 840.

as it is after approval. The emperors paid attention to and intervened in watchmaking in many aspects, and even some specific details were not overlooked. From the design of the watch style to the materials used in the production, they all had to go through his revisions and approvals.⁴¹⁸ During the Kangxi period, the clocks and watches produced by the court clock offices had already reached very good quality. In Kangxi 47th Year, Lang Tingji, Governor of Jiangxi Province, paid a tribute to Kangxi with a western watch. Kangxi's comment is: The inner court made much better watches than this Western one, so there is no need to pay tribute in the future.⁴¹⁹ In the Qianlong period, according to Qianlong's preference, the products which the clocks were made became more luxurious and complicated, and they became closer to works of fine arts and mechanical toys. From Qianlong 22nd Year to Qianlong 59th Year, there were 116 clocks and watches produced by the Clock-making Office and preserved in the Qing Palace.⁴²⁰ This may not seem like a large number, but the clocks made by the Qing court were intended for decoration in various palaces and gardens, and each of them cost a great deal of labor and material resources. Comparing with the clocks and watches imported from Europe, even though they already catered to Chinese tastes, it is obvious that there is a huge difference in aesthetics between the clocks and watches made by the court. Most of the court made clocks wooden structures, many of them made in the shape of buildings, showing exquisite, flamboyant and elegant features.

Picture 4-3: Luxury clocks from the Qianlong Emperor's Collection on display at the Palace Museum⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ Guo Fuxiang, "Qianlong Shiqi Gongting Zhongbiao," 236.

⁴¹⁹ FHAC, *Kangxi Chao Hanwen Zhu Pi Zou Zhe Huibian*, Vol.8, 1118.

⁴²⁰ Tang Kaijian and Huang Chunyan, "Ming Qing Zhiji Xiyang Zhongbiao," 315.

⁴²¹ Exhibits from the Palace Museum: 1, Gold-plated copper flower and bird cage striking clock (Made in Switzerland, 1783). 2, Gold-plated copper elephant chariot clock (Made in Britain, 18th century). 3, Painted gold self-opening door clock (Made by the clock center of Qing Palace, Qianlong era). 4, Gold-plated copper enamel clock (Made in Guangzhou, Qianlong era).



Many of the Qing Dynasty clock collections were preserved in the Palace Museum at present. Among the collections, in addition to imported clocks and clocks made by the Qing court, the other two huge number of categories that are made in Guangzhou and Suzhou. There is still some controversy in Chinese scholarship about the beginning of the manufacture of Suzhou clocks. Xu Wenlin and Li Wenguang, based on references to objects in the Nanjing Museum, suggest that the production of Suzhou clocks began during the Kangxi period of the Qing

Dynasty.⁴²² Their views were widely adopted and accepted. However, there were very few archives can be found about Suzhou made clocks before 19th century, the earliest palace text file that can be traced is a Suzhou clock that entered the warehouse on the tenth day of the second month of the nineteenth year of the Jiaqing period (1814): a gilded inverted ring-topped black polished lacquer frame with bronze flowers and bronze stripes on an oil-painted drawer plate with a single hand (none rank).⁴²³ Guo Fuxiang claims that local officials paid tribute to the court every year, and if Suzhou clocks were often chosen as tribute, more records should be available. Moreover, the clock was not graded. The palace had certain criteria for judging all items, and clocks could be classified as first, second, third, fourth, or none ranks. Since this Suzhou clock was rated as a none rank item, it means that it is rather mediocre in all aspects of its shape and structure.⁴²⁴ Guo Fuxiang also cites the economic situation of watchmakers in Suzhou, the notes of Qing Dynasty scholars, and other sources to suggest that there were no technically sophisticated watch practitioners in Suzhou until the Jiaqing period (early 19th century).⁴²⁵ Nevertheless, Tang Kaijian believes that the style of this Suzhou-made clock described in this Jiaqing court file is already very complicated, which should indicate that the production process of Suzhou clocks in the early 19th century was very mature.⁴²⁶ Regardless of when Suzhou watchmaking began, it was clear that by the 19th century it had already taken a certain market share. One of the best-known preserved 18th and 19th century Suzhou clocks is the table screen clocks, which are often framed in redwood, giving the clock face the appearance of a traditional Chinese decorative screen.⁴²⁷

In fact, according to numerous historical sources and folk notes, in late Ming Dynasty, many watchmaking workshops already existed in Nanjing, Songjiang (Shanghai), Yangzhou and Hangzhou, as well as in Fujian and Anhui Provinces, and developed rapidly in the Qing Dynasty. Li Shaowen 李绍文, a scholar of the late Ming Dynasty, wrote that: “Western monks made chime clocks, which I saw with my own eyes at Wang Taiwen (Alphonse Vagnoni)’s house in Jinling (Nanjing). Now the Shanghai people can also imitate it, but the kind I have seen before is only in a small size of few inches, while the Shanghai one is bigger.”

⁴²² Xu Wenlin and Li WenGuang, “Tan Qingdai de Zhongbiao Zhizuo,” cited by Guo Fuxiang, “Guanyu Qingdai de Suzhong,” *Palace Museum Journal*, no.1 (2004): 65.

⁴²³ *Chengnei, Yuanmingyuan Zuo Zhong Chu Zhongbiao Xishu Qingce, Chense Kuzhu, file no. 396*, cited by Guo Fuxiang, *ibid.*, 67.

⁴²⁴ *ibid.*, 68.

⁴²⁵ *ibid.*, 67-70

⁴²⁶ Tang Kaijian and Huang Chunyan, “Ming Qing Zhiji Xiyang Zhongbiao,” 325.

⁴²⁷ Liao Pin, ed. *Clocks and Watches of the Qing Dynasty – From the Collection in the Forbidden City* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2002), foreword.

⁴²⁸ Liu Xianting 刘献廷 (1648-1695) recorded in the *Guang Yang Za Ji* 广阳杂记 that a man from Jiangning (Nanjing) named Ji Tanran made a chime clock called “Tongtian Tower”, which could tell the time and had a lot of Buddhist elements and decorations on it, suitable for worshipping in front of Buddha. However, when Liu Xianting was curious about it and asked to take it apart, he found that it was a crude and easily broken machine. Ji Tanran said that he once saw Westerners doing it so he learned something about it, but he didn’t have much mechanical knowledge.⁴²⁹ It is clear from these documents that in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, people in Jiangnan had already learned the practice of clocks from the missionaries, but perhaps not to a very high level of quality and precision. By the 18th century, this technological gap was very small. In Xu Yue 徐岳’s *Jian Wen Lu* 见闻录, it is written that a man surnamed Zhang in Hangzhou was good at making all kinds of Western exotic wares, and his clocks and telescopes were very exquisite.⁴³⁰ The watchmaker Xu Chaojun 徐朝俊, who lived in Huating County, Songjiang (Shanghai), claimed that his family has been engaged in the study and production of Western machinery and clocks for five generations, and the book he wrote is a summary of his knowledge and experience.⁴³¹

Compared with those in Jiangnan region, Guangzhou’s clock and watch industry developed in a clearer vein, i.e., it developed in parallel with the foreign trade of Guangzhou port since the 17th and 18th centuries. I found no records of local clockmaking in Guangzhou before the 17th century. It was not until the Kangxi period that documents related to Guangdong clockmaker appeared in the relevant documents. In Kangxi 59th Year, Yang Lin, the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi Province, wrote in a memorial to the emperor that Pan Chun, a craftsman whose ancestors were from Fujian and who lived in Guangdong, could bring his two apprentices together to work in the capital, and his contact work included an enamel watch.⁴³² The enamel work was a characteristic of Canton clocks and watches. In Qianlong 14th Year, Month 11, Qianlong sent an order to Shuo Se 硕色, the Governors of Guangdong and Guangxi with demands: “the previous tribute of clocks and foreign lacquer ware are not foreign-made, in the future, if there are tributes of foreign watches, foreign lacquer ware, gold, silver, silk satin, carpets, etc., make sure that foreign-made.”⁴³³ Qianlong considered these

⁴²⁸ Li Shaowen, *Yun Jian Za Shi*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Ruihua Yinwuju, 1935), Vol.2.

⁴²⁹ Liu Xianting, *Guang Yang Za Ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1957), 141.

⁴³⁰ Xu Yue, “Jian Wen Lu,” in *Xu Xiu Si Ku Quan Shu* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 2002), Vol.1268.

⁴³¹ Xu Chaojun, *Gao Hou Meng Qiu* (Shanghai: Yunjian Xu Shi Edition, 1807).

⁴³² FHAC, *Kangxi Chao Hanwen Zhu Pi Zou Zhe Huibian*, Vol.8, 373.

⁴³³ *Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Huo Ji Dang*, file no. 3418, cited in Tang Kaijian and Huang Chunyan, “Ming Qing Zhiji Xiyang Zhongbiao,” 323.

clocks purchased from Guangzhou were not foreign-made. The probability is that they are made in Canton. And apparently, Qianlong was not so satisfied with their quality, which is why he requested that they had to be imported. Many of the Canton made clocks currently were kept in the Palace Museum are from the 18th century, and are beautifully elegant and flamboyant, so it is possible that Canton clocks were still frequently tributed to the emperor afterwards, and that their technical level of craftsmanship was very much enhanced in the mid to late 18th century. Leng Dong believes that Canton System is an important reason to stimulate the development of Guangzhou clock and watch manufacturing industry. A large number of excellent European clocks entered China through Guangzhou, and watchmakers settled in Guangzhou for production, making Guangdong clocks from the beginning of imitation to later can be produced independently and innovate, and the price is cheaper than imported ones, so that Western merchants felt the competitive pressure.⁴³⁴

The prevalence of imitation products is a sign of popularity and marketability. Many local industries started from imitation in the beginning. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, local products that also became popular through imitation of imported goods included eyeglasses and optical toys. In the 15th and 16th centuries, eyeglasses were still a very expensive and rare thing. Zhao Yi 赵翼 (1721-1814) wrote: “It is said that the spectacles were brought into China from the West during the Xuande period (1425-1435) following the sea ships, and they were once given as gifts to the old ministers by the court at a price more expensive than gold It was originally inlaid with glass in the middle, and when China copied it, it used with crystal.”⁴³⁵ Sun Chengze 孙承泽 (1592-1676) once wrote: “eyeglasses first entered China, the name is Ai Dai 爱戴, it is expensive in the lens, the value can be compared to a horse. Now three or five *fen* (0.03-0.05 taels of silver) can buy.... glass is expensive, crystal more expensive. Dark crystal can be as expensive as seven or eight (taels of) gold, and other types of prices in decreasing order. It’s really a good help for reading.”⁴³⁶ Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠 wrote: “eyeglasses, when I was a child, I saw an old man wear it by chance, and did not know its price. Later I heard that the best Western-made, each pair is worth four or five taels, with glass for the lenses, elephant skin for the frame. Shunzhi period (1644-1661) and after its price is getting lower and lower, each pair is not more than five or six *qian* (0.5-0.6 taels of silver). Recently, many people in Suzhou and Hangzhou can make them, and they are sold everywhere and available to everyone. The most expensive ones were worth no more than

⁴³⁴ Leng Dong, “Guangzhou Shisanhang yu Qingdai Zhongqi Zhongbiaoye de Fazhan,” *Lingnan Culture and History*, no.1 (2012): 49-51.

⁴³⁵ Zhao Yi, *Ou Bei Ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese classics publishing house, 1997), 186.

⁴³⁶ Sun Chengze, *Yan Shan Zhai Za Ji* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1936), Vol.4.

seven or eight *fen* (0.07-0.08 taels of silver) per pair, or even four or five *fen* (0.04-0.05 taels of silver). There were also two *fen* (0.02 tael) a pair, can help to see things clearly in daily use. Only one kind of outer was thicker than the middle, can let the near-sighted people see clearly, each pair is worth 2 taels of silver, if the farsighted elderly people use instead more difficult to see, this kind of eyeglasses temporarily did not see the sale on the market, maybe wait for a few years, and here has so many skilled craftsmen, also began to manufacture them, the price will be cheaper.”⁴³⁷ The exact date of Ye Mengzhu’s birth and death is not available, but he was probably active in the mid-to-late 17th century. It is apparent that eyeglasses were already circulating on the mass market in China at that time, and at an affordable price. In late 18th century, Staunton saw the skills of Canton craftsmen polishing crystals and making them into eyeglasses. And he noted: “the workmen did not seem to understand any principle of optics, so as to form the eye-glasses of such convexities or concavities, as to supply the various defects of vision; but left their customers to choose what was found to suit them best.”⁴³⁸

Despite the lack of optical knowledge, it is still possible to imitate glasses in large quantities. The same is true for some other optical toys. For example, Gu Lu 顾禄 (1793-1843) recorded: "Jiangning (Nanjing) made square round wooden box, decorated with flowers, trees, fowl and fish, gods and monsters, such as the secret game, outside the open round hole, covered with five-colored tortoiseshell, an eye to see, barrier small for large, called the *xi yang jing* 西洋镜.”⁴³⁹ *Xi yang jing* is literally translated as Western mirror, in fact it is peep show or thaumatrope. He described the shape and plays of the toy comprehensively, but did not mention the convex lens it uses. John Francis Davis had his observations about the market for optical products in China at the time, he saw the workers made eyeglasses in Canton “They possess glass in a very coarse and inferior state, and that at Canton they sometimes melt down broken glass from Europe. In spectacles, however, the want is supplied, all over the empire, by the use of rock crystal... and if anything could prove the Chinese spectacles to be original inventions, or not borrowed from Europe, it could be their very singular size and shape, as well as the strange way of putting them on.” And about other optic devices, he said, “... Chinese have been known to attempt slavish copies of European telescopes; but a little science became requisite in the construction of instrument consisting of compound lenses, and they accordingly failed. When, however, a few specimens of Sir David Brewster’s optical toy, they

⁴³⁷ Ye Mengzhu, *Yue Shi Bian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007), 185.

⁴³⁸ George Staunton, *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: W. Bulmer for G. Nicol, 1797), 542-543.

⁴³⁹ Gu Lu, *Qing Jia Lu* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1999), 13.

kaleidoscope, first reached Canton, these were easily imitated.”⁴⁴⁰ It was not until 1847, when *Jing Jing Ling Chi* was published, that the first Chinese work that theorized the knowledge of Western optical instruments was published.⁴⁴¹ Yet with or without sufficient scientific knowledge, Chinese craftsmen could still imitate many things, as Staunton recorded: “The Canton artists are uncommonly expert in imitating European works. They mend, and even make watches, copy paintings, and color drawings, with great success. They supply strangers with coarse silk stockings, knit or woven at Canton, though none of the natives wear such, unless it be some young Chinese, who are privately fond of following fashions of Europeans.”⁴⁴²

The European fad that spreads quietly among young people reflects the emergence of another potential consumer of Western imported luxury goods, in addition to the upper class and wealthy merchants, while this market is occupied by imitation products. It is always easier for the locally produced cheap goods to encroach on the market. However, as a matter of contrast, I found in the research that imported European woolen fabrics and wine were not produced locally on a large scale or imitations were prevalent in early modern China before middle 19th century. In response to this phenomenon, I have the following analysis.

To start with the wine. First of all, although European wine is loved by a part of the aristocracy and intellectuals, it does not have the ability to shake up the original Chinese wine market. The Chinese have had the habit of drinking wine for thousands of years. In ancient China, wine has many purposes. It was used to invite the blessing for royal ancestors and to pray for rain or good harvest the gods. For secular ceremonies, it was also an essential for religious offerings, funerary rituals, marriage and adulthood ceremonies.⁴⁴³ Furthermore, wine has its medical treatment in traditional Chinese medicine, while Taoist regarded it as one of the ingredients for making longevity elixirs.⁴⁴⁴ Besides, its main use is always as a daily drink, for any class of people. For example, since Ming Dynasty, wine became the necessities of life for common people who live in the south of the lower reaches of the Jiangnan regions. It was not only for daily drinking and cooking, but also for festival ceremonies.⁴⁴⁵ Compared with European wine, Chinese wine has similarities with it, as well as with its unique characteristics.

⁴⁴⁰ John Francis Davis 1795-1890, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and its Inhabitants* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836), 253-254.

⁴⁴¹ Zheng Fuguang, *Jing Jing Ling Chi*.

⁴⁴² Staunton, *An authentic account*, 543.

⁴⁴³ Muchou Poo, “The Use and Abuse of Wine in Ancient China,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 42, no. 2, (1999): 134.

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 139-142.

⁴⁴⁵ Huang Jingbin, *Minsheng yu Jiayi: Qingchu zhi Minguo Shiqi Jiangnan Jumin de Xiaofei* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2009), 20.

Chinese distillate spirits' producing process is close to the Western brandy. While rice wine is similar to red wine in producing, only need to ferment without distill. In terms of flavor alone, European wine has its uniqueness, but it is not enough to overcome the original Chinese wine and liquor.

Secondly, it may be related to the *jin jiu ling* 禁酒令 (alcohol prohibition policies) of the Qing Dynasty. "The moral cultivation/action dilemma in disaster management was never solved on a theoretical level during the dynastic era."⁴⁴⁶ Disaster prevention and mitigation was regarded seriously in any dynasties in, as well as conducting heaven-appeasing rituals. Lots of measures to improve agricultural production were taken, such as irrigation works, reservoirs, and levies were constructed to protect against drought and flooding.⁴⁴⁷ In consideration of population feeding and sake preventing, as well as the slow improved productivity, the implement of regulations restricting the wine production origins from Han Dynasty to Qing dynasty. During the period of Qing, Emperor Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong and Xianfeng had all issued *alcohol prohibition policies*, the reasons were always it was a waste of grain, or drinking easily leads to social unrest.⁴⁴⁸ In the eighteenth century, the population of Qing Dynasty China was huge, and the conflict of having more people and less land became increasingly prominent. The Qing government encouraged grain imports for this reason. Under such logical, it can easily understand why grape planting was not encouraged in China and there were no large-scale grape growing in China.

Thirdly, there is the possibility that local vintners do not consider the production of wine profitable enough and that it does not have a large enough consumer market. Compared to precision instruments and watches, wine is not very difficult to produce. Its high price is often due to the cost of preservation and transportation from Europe to China. In the case of locally produced grape wines such costs are greatly reduced and the price cannot be raised. And it seems that it lacks a marketer if it is to be brought to mass consumption. Current archives show that Kangxi liked wine so much that he even sent emissaries to purchase it overseas. But about the emperors after him, I did not find any record of loving and promoting wine. In addition, after Kangxi's restriction of Catholicism was enacted in 1706, the development of Catholicism in the interior of China was greatly hindered and the large-scale religious consumption of wine was not possible. Furthermore, from the information I collected so far, until the mid-19th century, there is no information about Chinese people promoting Western

⁴⁴⁶ Lauri Paltemaa, *Managing Famine, Flood and Earthquake in China: Tianjin, 1958-85* (Oxon: Routledge), 6.

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ Fan Jinmin, "Qingdai Jinjiu Jinqu de Kaocha," 92-97.

food habits, and there are only records of Cantonese merchants eating Western food when they entertained Western guests. And red wine as an accompanying beverage, if there is no supporting dietary habits of the popular, it is difficult to mass popularity.

Finally, the most important value of European wine may be that it is “exotic”, and the merchants understood that. Grape wine was made and be drunk in China in the 14th century and before, leaving behind a number of poems, the most famous of which is Wang Han’s 王翰 (687-726) “At night, fine wine is poured into glistening cup. Before drinking, battle pipa sounds urge combat.”⁴⁴⁹ Then until Ming and Qing dynasty, viniculture method in China had almost lost. Until early Qing, due to the opening of the maritime ban, variety of western wine into the China that make Chinese wine cognition to be updated. The authentic method of wine therefore introduced again to China.⁴⁵⁰ For many Qing intellectuals, wine was a complex commodity that combined fresh tastes with vintage sensibilities - it came from the West, though not from the same region as the West in Wang Han’s time; while it had disappeared for years, until European merchants shipped them back to the Chinese market. Wu Shengqin 吴省钦 wrote this after receiving the wine as a gift: “The scene of grapes dangling from the eaves appeared frequently in my dreams until I received these two bottles of wine with joy. Knowing that you are tired of guarding Liangzhou, therefore share the wine with someone.”⁴⁵¹ The friend who gave him the wine was the Yuemen Taishou, not from Liangzhou, and Wu Shengqin wrote this precisely to connect the imagery of wine with the Tang poet Wang Han. Chinese poets used to put their feelings into things, so wine became a new vehicle for expressing “leisurely feelings”. This romantic thought permeates the consumer taste of the intellectual class, and only wines from the West can satisfy this.

Similarly, but differently, the Manchurian aristocracy of the late 18th century was in pursuit of a wild and exotic style, which could be seen not only in their fervor for furs, but also in woolen fabrics. I had some confusion at the beginning when he researched imported woolen textiles through Chinese materials about the Chinese translation of first and second sorts of camblets. Literally only, first sort of camblets is translated as feather satin, while the second sort is feather veil. This indicates that the translator believed that the fabric was woven from feathers, not wool. Song Wen's examination of the Manchu source, *Yu Zhi Zeng Ding Qing*

⁴⁴⁹ Wang Han, “Liang Zhou Qu” in *Tang Shi San Bai Shou* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2009), 314. Original text in classical Chinese: “葡萄美酒夜光杯，欲饮琵琶马上催。”

⁴⁵⁰ Wang Shizuo and Huang Ping, “Discussion on Grape Wine Culture in China,” *Liquor-making Science and Technology*, no. 11 (2009): 136-140.

⁴⁵¹ Wu Shengqin, *Bai Hua Shi Chao, Li Qu, Vol.2*. Qing Dynasty Edition. Original text in classical Chinese: “马乳垂檐远梦频，双瓶酿就喜相亲。知君心厌凉州守，也把蒲陶酒让人。”

Wen Jian 御制增订清文鉴 confirms the author’s suspicion that there might have a misunderstanding of these wool products among the Manchus of the time, or another possibility, they deliberately ignored the material of these wool products themselves and attach some wild meaning to them.

Table 4-4: Translation of Manchu definitions of imported woolen products⁴⁵²

Type of Woolens	Definitions (Translated from Manchu)
哆啰呢 broad cloth	Felt-like fabric made from the down of birds
猩猩毡 broad cloth, scarlet	Dyeing broad cloth with orangutan blood into bright red
哔叽缎 biji fabric/long ells	Satin woven from the down of birds
羽缎 first sort of camblets	Satin woven with bird’s feathers
羽纱 second sort of camblets	Rougher and sparser fabric than first sort of camblets

Among the chart, the editors defined all these common woolen fabrics as being woven from the down of birds. This collection of books is the first Manchu-Chinese combined dictionary edited by the emperor, compiled by translating, adding and revising the *Yu Zhi Qing Wen Jian 御制清文鉴*, and with notes. The physical book currently preserved in the National Palace Museum is from Qianlong 36th Year (1771).⁴⁵³ That is to say, until the mid to late 18th century, the Qing people continued to adopt the wrong definition of these woolen fabrics. In the opinion of Song Wen, the misunderstanding of European woolen fabrics by Manchu aristocrats was systematic and was not corrected until the late Qing Dynasty when they had more contact with Europeans.⁴⁵⁴ However, I consider that if there was such a misunderstanding when these woolen products were first introduced to China, it is normal, but it is obviously unreasonable to have it in the mid to late 18th century when the trade increased rapidly, and the consumers in the north of Qing Dynasty were using a lot of European woolen products. What is more, in *Xi Yang Yao Shu 西洋药书*, the author had long

⁴⁵² Translation of the definition of Manchu, see Song Wen, “Qingdai Xiyang Nirong Kaoxi,” 63-64.

⁴⁵³ The Palace Museum Collection. <https://www.dpm.org.cn/ancient/nation/165173.html>

⁴⁵⁴ Song Wen, “Qingdai Xiyang Nirong Kaoxi,” 64.

stated that the broad cloth, scarlet is made of fine pieces of wool.⁴⁵⁵ According to Li Huan's testimony, the authors of this book are the Jesuits Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) and Jean-François Gerbillon (1654-1707).⁴⁵⁶ Qing dynasty minister Nalan Kuixu 纳兰揆叙 (1674-1717) also wrote: "yu duan 羽缎 (first sort of camblets, the Chinese meaning is directly translated as feather satin) come from the West, here they are made of bird feather, so we name it in this way. And it is actually with sheep wool woven, for foreign wool is finer than the Chinese." And also, "xing xing zhan 猩猩毡 (broad cloths scarlet, the Chinese meaning is directly translated as orangutan felt), some people say it is dyed with orangutan blood to get the name, it is not true. I asked the Westerners, they told me that there is a red fruit, sweet taste and edible, dyed cloth with its juice would make a big red, no matter washed with the water or mud, the color is permanent and unchanging."⁴⁵⁷ That is, by the early 18th century at the latest, the Qing court had already corrected this misperception. Yongzheng 5th year (1727) an archival history records, Yongzheng, after looked at Haiwang painted foot felt, commented that: "pattern is very good, but is too fine, I am afraid it might be difficult to dye. You can keep the pattern for future use as a cushion or felt."⁴⁵⁸ This shows that Yongzheng had certain knowledge of the weaving and dyeing process of woolen fabrics. He understood the difference in the technical difficulty of weaving and dyeing different types of blankets.

Therefore, I believe that another possibility is more plausible, namely that the Manchus, as consumers, are more inclined to interpret it through this wild perspective. "The value of the object was inextricable from its provenance and the story of its production."⁴⁵⁹ The concept of woolen goods from the West alone is not enough to attract Manchu consumers. For the Qing court, European woolen fabrics were not without alternatives, and the palace also used Zhang velvet and woolen felt blankets for bedding, which were produced domestically. The technique of Zhang velvet was widely spread in China, and was also woven in Mongolia and Ningxia. At the same time, the court also employed many craftsmen to weave and dye all kinds of felt carpets.⁴⁶⁰ As for clothing, furs, silks and cottons were sufficient for all the daily needs of the court.

⁴⁵⁵ *Xi Yang Yao Shu*, in *Gugong Zhenben Congkan, Vol.727*, ed. the Palace Museum (Haikou: Hainan Publishing House, 2001), 295. Cited in Song Wen, "Qingdai Xiyang Nirong Kaoxi," 63.

⁴⁵⁶ Li Huan, "Qinggong Jiucang Manwen Xi Yang Yao Shu," *Forbidden City*, no.4 (1999): 32.

⁴⁵⁷ Kuixu, *Xi Guang Ting Za Shi* (Qian Mu Tang Edition of Qing Dynasty), 47-48.

⁴⁵⁸ Zhu Jiajin, ed. *Yang Xin Dian Zao Ban Chu Shiliao Jilan, Vol.1 Yongzheng Reign* (Beijing: The Forbidden City Publishing House, 2003), 91.

⁴⁵⁹ Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*, 28.

⁴⁶⁰ Fu Chao, "Qinggong Shenghuo zhong de Kangtan," *A Collection of Essays on the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (2011): 312-316.

“Steppe mushrooms had to come from north of the Great Wall. Venison required hunting. Tigers required trapping. To taste a wild mushroom, dine on game meat, or visit the menagerie was to travel in time: to touch something uncorrupted, unaltered, and pristinely Manchu.”⁴⁶¹ Compared with “a wool blanket woven by machine and dyed with the juice of red fruits”, it is obvious that “a cloth from far West, woven with the down of birds and dyed with the blood of orangutans” is more attractive for the Manchus. The Manchus were happy to spread this knowledge widely to enhance the value of woolen fabrics to satisfy their consumer mentality. Perhaps to a certain extent, this explains why there was no indigenous production of such woolen fabrics in China at the time - once it was proven that they could be domestically produced and made from wool, the mystery and wildness was broken. Of course, the differences in tweed weaving and dyeing technology between China and Europe at the time were also objective.

To sum up, in early modern, Chinese were as curious about new things as Europeans were. European luxury goods as well had adapted to the Chinese market and found their proper position in consumption. These were novel scientific instruments, clocks, art, textiles, glassware, paintings, wine, medicines, etc. They were brought to China by missionaries, and the products themselves and the related technology were passed on at court and among the public. The changing trends in the consumer popularity of European goods seem to be directly related to the preference for court consumption, to changes in the volume of trade, to the socio-economic and military conditions in Qing China at the time.

I cited four representative European luxury commodities that are consumed in China in early and middle Qing. Scientific instruments, including optical instruments, were brought to China by the Jesuits and were favored by the Qing court for their scientific, practical and interesting nature. Emperor Kangxi loved science and gave great attention to these things. The Yongzheng Emperor, because of his diligent work habits, was fonder of spectacles. By the Qianlong period, the emperor’s hobby favored magnificent mechanical clocks and all kinds of artwork. Complex and diverse scientific instruments were no longer valued at court, but some common and practical optical appliances spread among the nobility and high society, and had a market among the common people. The most typical of them were telescopes, eyeglasses and some optical toys. Although many craftsmen did not have knowledge of optics, they succeeded in making large-scale imitations. The price of a pair of glasses went from “as expensive as gold” and “equivalent to the price of a horse” to as low as 3 to 4 fen.

⁴⁶¹ Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur*, 28.

Watches were initially timekeeping tools, and then gradually evolved in two lines as technology developed and the market demanded it. The first category of consumers was represented by the Qianlong Emperor, a typical upper-class consumer. He liked ornate, sophisticated and interesting clocks and watches, and was more concerned with aesthetic and other added values than the practicality of timekeeping. Clocks became more like fine art and mechanical toys. However, it is difficult to please these consumers. Only those made by excellent craftsmen and made of expensive materials such as gold and jewels could meet the demands of consumers like Qianlong. This made the production cost of such watches high and the output extremely low. In contrast, another category of clock and watch market faced the possibility of more mass consumption. A large number of clocks and watches from European countries such as Britain, France, Switzerland and Italy were sold to China, and they were in fierce competition with each other and with the local watches produced in Guangzhou and Suzhou. After the death of the Qianlong Emperor, the popularity of clocks in China faded away due to financial considerations and the Jiaqing Emperor's own simplistic habits.

The warm and waterproof properties of European woolen fabrics and the exotic floral colors make them a favorite product of the nobility in northern China. At court, these cloths from Europe were used extensively for interior bedding, drapery making, and the making of rain and snow coats. The Manchurian aristocracy liked the exotic nature of these textiles, their rarity "woven from the down of birds" and the beautiful color "dyed with the blood of gorillas". This yearning and meaningful expression of wild and nature may be more attractive to Manchu consumers than the practicality of the woolen fabrics themselves. Similarly, the spiritual core of this consumption style has been given to wine by Chinese intellectuals. The religious use and medicinal value of wine was not mentioned, and even its taste seemed to be unimportant; there was already plenty of local good wine in China, and the Western diet was not accepted at the time. Intellectuals at that time preferred to give it to each other as a gift, and use it as a symbol to write poems to express their own emotions and hopes, linking their current conditions to the poets of the frontier who "lay drunk in the sands" a thousand years ago.

The Manchu aristocrats' houses were full of luxurious clocks as decorations, chairs were covered with felt blankets from Europe, woolen draperies hung on the carriage and by the door, dressed in furs and carrying snuff in their sleeves, wild, rich and fashionable. Intellectuals wore eyeglasses, shared wine from the West and all the exotic novelties, and tried to study them, or at least record them in a poem. The merchants of Canton, who received their

friends from Europe with Western food and Western manners, gained great wealth from foreign trade and kept at home a large collection of expensive and interesting imported goods: clocks, telescopes, cotton and woolen goods, glassware, Western paintings, musical instruments, and so on. The craftsmen in Jiangnan and Guangdong saw a lot of business opportunities, they copied European goods, sold them to the “fashionable young people” and built up a local industry after accumulating a certain level of skills. The Qing residents’ love for European goods was intuitive. The Chinese upper class luxury consumers also showed the same interest as the European ones in the exotic, interesting and special goods.

In a word, the consumption of Chinese society in the 18th century did not involve only Chinese products, but was also influenced by global influences. In the multiple historical accounts mentioned above, China was already a place where products from all over the world were consumed and no doubt an important part in the global circulation of commodities. The records and statistics not only reflect the growing interest of European goods in the upper class, but also illustrated the trivial and real daily life and consumption of the imperial family and upper class, with European goods existed as living essentials and tools to satisfy the show-off mentality.

Conclusion and Discussions

The thesis draws on a wide range of archives from the Qing court, such as Zhu Pi Zou Zhe, Jun Ji Chu Shang Yu Dang, Nei Wu Fu files, etc., as well as local documents, such as the local gazetteers of Canton and Macau, along with literary works written by various intellectuals, and a selection of British, Portuguese, and Spanish archives, in order to reconstruct the foreign trade and consumption of European luxury goods in the Chinese market from the late 17th century to the mid-19th century before the Opium War. The previous chapters of this thesis focus on the peculiarities of China, namely the emperor's attitude toward foreign trade, to explain the establishment of the Canton System, the issuance of various prohibitions, and a series of other issues.

For idea of international trade, the Chinese emperors and Europeans have a huge difference in perception. The Qing court inherited the tribute system from the Ming dynasty and considered the tribute trade not simply as commercial intercourse, but as a diplomatic act, a sign of subordination of each country to the central empire. For the "in calendar" tribute trade, the Qing court gladly accepted, while for the private trade, the Qing court did not encourage. It feared that too much contact between Han Chinese and overseas would bring the risk of rebellion, riots, etc., because the Qing rulers were Manchus from the north, not Han Chinese, who made up the majority of the population. After 1683, the four major customs houses were opened one by one, and the Canton System was gradually formed. In my opinion, the establishment of the Canton System did not begin with the decree of the Qianlong Emperor in 1757 that "foreign ships are only allowed to trade in Canton", but was a system that was naturally formed after more than half a century of maritime trade due to the advantages of Canton's geographical location since the late 17th century and beyond. The decree of the Qianlong Emperor consolidated this system and eliminated the possibility of other ports replacing Guangzhou. The emperors, the central government, the Canton local officers, as well as the staffs of Canton Customs have formed a large interest group, that everyone benefited from the system. The most important issue that the Qing government concerned was the stability of its governing. Political factors were the primary cause of their attitude toward foreign trade. They preferred no changes of current situation. The Canton System is not a purely commercial trade management method, but also has defense and military functions. Maintaining such a system required strong state capacity, which the Qing court clearly did not have. This system was finally broken after the Opium War in 1840 as central control over localities gradually weakened.

In contrast to the relative stable revenue collection situation in Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the rapid growth of customs revenue in Guangdong from the mid-to-late 18th century to the mid-19th century directly reflected the prosperity of maritime trade at that time. Although the British merchants were the most active ones in Canton at that time, merchant ships from other European countries, along with those from South and East Asia, also had active trading activities in Canton. The increase of tariffs better reflects China's further involvement in global trade.

The Qing Dynasty rulers were simple and straightforward in their attitude toward the import and export of goods. They banned the export of niter, sulphur, ironware and weapons to maintain national security. They controlled the export of silk because the Qianlong Emperor noticed the rising price of silk and attributed it to the excessive demand from foreigners, thus ignoring the problem of inflation caused by the inflow of silver. They banned grain exports and encouraged imports in an attempt to solve the problem of feeding hundreds of millions of people. They controlled the import of cotton because they saw that imported cotton was cheaper than domestic cotton and thought it would affect the domestic cotton industry, actually ignoring the problems behind it because of the relationship between land, population and food. The Qing court wanted to maintain the original situation of commodity flow without letting the demand of foreigners or the import of foreign commodities affect the domestic industry too much. In terms of state administration and policy, only grain, copper and some certain metals, the most obvious silver, were welcomed. However, as the administrator of a central empire with great wealth, the Qing court had a great interest and demand in the new and exotic luxuries. The customs' lists of imported and exported goods probably restores the categories and names of the main imported and exported goods at that time. A large part of the imported goods came from Southeast Asia and South Asia, including some herbs, foods, spices and raw materials, and the main imports from Europe were industrial goods, which could be called luxury goods in terms of price, including high-grade western cloth, high-grade handicrafts, watches, wine, etc.

This thesis starts from the particularities of Qing Dynasty China. Both the second and third chapters aim to analyze the logic of the behavior behind the Qing court while examining the historical facts of the commodity trade. In contrast, in the fourth chapter, the consumption of European luxury goods by the Qing court and Chinese high society reflects the same characteristics of Chinese consumers as European ones. Curiosity was not something unique to Europeans; the wealthy Chinese were equally interested in imported goods of all kinds.

I listed four typical commodities: optical instruments, clocks and watches, woolen fabrics and

wine, and analyzes the reasons for their popularity in China. Scientific instruments and optical instruments made by Ferdinand Verbiest for the Kangxi Emperor were diverse and well liked by him. After him, however, the only things that seemed to be favored by nobles, officials, wealthy merchants and intellectuals, and even the emperor himself, were those that were either interesting or useful, such as telescopes, spectacles and some optical toys. And the massive sales of clocks and watches in China in the 18th century were more influenced by the Qianlong Emperor's own fondness for them. Qianlong and his tasteful followers preferred clocks and watches as an interesting mechanical toy and a magnificent ornament rather than as a timekeeping tool. By the late 18th century, many foreign merchants were experiencing competition and price reductions in the Guangzhou watch market, not only between watch merchants from several European countries, but the development of the local Chinese watch industry also had a significant impact on their sales. Chinese artisans good at imitation and were soon able to develop a related industry from it, producing glasses and clocks with local characteristics. But European woolen fabrics and wine seemed do not have such "local rivals". In fact, China already has a very diverse range of woolen goods and local liquors, and they consume imported woolen goods and wines for the exoticism and the expression of ideas derived from them.

It is obvious that Chinese consumers are also interested in and thirsty for European luxury goods, but this thirst seems to be somewhat different from the European consumers' thirst for Eastern goods. Compare the value of tea and silk imported by Britain from China in the 18th century with the value of watches and woolen fabrics imported by China from Britain that can see the difference. There are few studies related to the consumption revolution in China during the Ming and Qing dynasties, but extensive studies of luxury consumption have been conducted. The Ming and Qing dynasties were an era of developed commodity economy and more diversified consumption content for the wealthy. Chinese upper-class consumers had a very wide range of choices, the range of their consumption included not only luxury goods from Europe, but also furs from the northern and western frontiers, pearls from the northeastern seas, gems and spices from South Asia, fish products from Southern Ocean, and so on. Of course, there were also many domestic products, quality silk, porcelain, antiques, tea and wine, as well as some regional consumer products.

Ignoring European luxury imports, conspicuous consumption was already popular among the affluent. For example, the famous Lianghuai Salt Merchants 两淮盐商 being active during Qing, was the largest commercial capital group in the country. They monopolized the entire circulation of salt produced in the salt land at Lianghuai. They seized a huge amount of

monopoly profits during the salt water transportation and sales.⁴⁶² Except for bribing officials, engaging in government and purchasing daily necessities, the vast wealth owned by these salt merchants along the Huaihe River Area is mainly used for luxury living expenses.⁴⁶³ As a record of the imperial edict announced by Emperor Yongzheng which described and criticized the consumer habit of these salt merchants: “Salt merchants were everywhere, appeared to be luxurious but actually empty inside. They are extremely extravagant in clothing and houses; ingenious in food and tableware; comedians and singing girls were invited to performed, holding ceremonies and parties every day; they treat golden, money, jewelry just as silt; even their servants are pride and fierce; their daily living and clothing are just equal to the officials, behavior unruly, never have self-examination; they are extravagant and dissipated, learn from each other and make their living style become a fashion. The salt merchants behave similarly everywhere, especially those who live in Huaiyang region.”⁴⁶⁴ Huaiyang is the area that near Huaihe River and Lower Yangtzi River, current Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Yancheng and Huai’an regions. In this affluent Jiangnan region, merchants emulated each other’s extravagant spending behavior to show off their wealth and connections.

The growing maritime trade that began to flourish in the late seventeenth century directly stimulated the creation of another commercial and economic center, Guangzhou. Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696) wrote in *Guang Dong Xin Yu* 广东新语, “The incense, pearls, rhinoceros horn and ivory products were piled up like mountains, the flowers and birds were as numerous as the sea, foreign goods were carried back and forth in carts, costing tens of millions of gold per day, and the food and drink were more abundant, and the songs and dances more numerous than those of Qinhuai several times.”⁴⁶⁵ When Guangdong merchants became rich through foreign trade, their extravagant spending was even better than that of Huaiyang merchants. It is the accumulation of wealth that is directly associated with conspicuous consumption, not any particular commodity. The influx of imported goods increased their choices. In contrast to the wealthy merchants of Guangdong and Jiangnan, the

⁴⁶² Xiao Guoliang, “Qingdai Lianghuai Yanshang de Shechixing Xiaofei jiqi Jingji Yingxiang,” *Historical Research*, vol. 4, (1982): 135.

⁴⁶³ *ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁶⁴ Zhang Tingyu, ed. “Huangchao Wenxian Tongkao Juan Ershiba,” in *Qin Ding Si Ku Quan Shu: Shi Bu* (Jinan: Shandong Qilu Press, 1997), Vol.28. Original text in classical Chinese: “各处盐商，内实空虚而外事奢侈，衣物屋宇，穷极华靡，饮食器具，备求工巧，俳优妓乐，恒舞酣歌，宴会嬉游，殆无虚日，金钱珠贝，视为泥沙，甚至悍仆豪奴，服食起居，同于仕宦，越礼犯分，周知自检，骄奢淫佚，相习成风，各处盐商皆然，而淮扬尤甚。”

⁴⁶⁵ Qu Dajun, *Guangdong Xinyu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 519. Original text in classical Chinese: “香珠犀象如山，花鸟如海，番夷辐辏，日费数千万金，饮食之盛，歌舞之多，过于秦淮数倍。”

Qianlong Emperor flaunted not only wealth but also his arrogance as ruler of the great empire at the center when he rewarded and furnished those expensive imported goods.

Compared with the rich merchants' consumer habit, the consumption of ordinary residents and peasants during Qing Dynasty are still considering priority for subsistence or survival consumption, including food (staple food mainly cereals; non-staple food including cooking oil, salt, sauces, vegetables, wine, etc.), clothing, housing and fuel, which reached the percentage of all consumer spending of 76% to 83%.⁴⁶⁶ Beyond that, the extra consumption spending of ordinary households are education, festival and marriage celebration, as well as religious sacrifice.⁴⁶⁷ Compared with northern residents of China, the Lower Yangzi Region families had relative higher living standards. For the general population in some of the more economically developed regions, the market for luxury consumption also existed. Those consumers who were willing to buy eyeglasses made locally for 3 *fen* a pair were likely to come from these groups.

The consumers of top luxury goods and mass luxury goods are not the same group of people. For ordinary families in richer areas who can afford to consume part of luxury goods, do a good market research and marketing is the right strategy. European merchants saw such purchasing power of the Chinese market. For China, the causes of this luxury consumption were not only technological progress and the development of the commodity economy itself, but also the influx of large amounts of silver as a major stimulus. That explains why many Chinese scholars, when examining the economic situation in modern China, are accustomed to focus their studies on silver. Another popular subject of study, opium, was another method of payment found by the British. Prior to the Opium Wars, despite many attempts, Britain had not been able to find an ideal alternative to silver that would pay for their raw silk and tea.

The problem may have been that the Western merchants were ignorant of the Chinese market, or rather, powerless to do anything about it. In my opinion, the failure of European merchants to enter China profoundly for market research and development was a big problem in this. The Jesuits serving the court did not take up this responsibility; they understood the emperor's preferences, relied on various skills (such as watchmaking, painting techniques, etc.) to gain the emperor's love and trust, and tried to gain space for missionary work. But the Chinese emperors were strong in their prohibition of missionary work, and they also treated these missionaries more as artisans serving the court. As for other foreign merchants, they were not

⁴⁶⁶ Zhang Yan, "Shiba Shiji Qianhou Qingdai Nongjia Shenghuo Xiaofei de Yanjiu," *Ancient and Modern Agriculture*, vol. 4 (2005): 83-86.

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 86-88.

allowed to live in China except Macau during that time. Although they integrated with the local Chinese in Macau into a diverse and vibrant living environment, just a few months of trading in Canton was not enough for them to understand the Chinese market and open the wallets of Chinese consumers. For this reason, James Flint wanted to find a more northerly trading port, and it became clear that tweed-like products would fetch a better price in the colder north than in the humid heat of Guangzhou. The Macartney mission saw a huge market for cotton in China for mass consumption. British merchants made great efforts to develop the consumer market for cotton and achieved certain results. However, they were still unable to break the emperor's determination to maintain the status quo. While the Qing court had somewhat overestimated the state capacity for it did not have complete control over the local area.

With the development of trade, how the Europeans perceive the attitude and demand of Chinese towards their products was closely related to the trend of European products exporting to China. Compared to tea and raw silk, the target market for watches in China is too narrow. They either have to be the most flamboyant works of art made by the best craftsmen, valuable but costly and susceptible to fad factors that can lead to stagnant sales. Or when they faced the mass market, the emphasis was on quantity rather than quality, which was obviously unsuccessful since local merchants could always make similar products cheaper. And for the average income family, clocks and watches did not count as a repeat product. European merchants desperately needed a high-margin, fast-moving product to gain a larger market. Woolen products and wine seemed to be popular, but in reality the cost of making high-quality products and shipping them from Europe to China was not low. The kind of products based on additional meaning and emotional expression, such as the concept of wild and vintage, will easy to make their market influenced by the trend, or replaced by other new fashion.

Before the mid-19th century, European goods in China were expensive and appeared as luxury goods, which were mainly popular among the upper class and had limited purchasing power of the masses. In early and in the middle of Qing China, it was not possible to realize the mass of European luxury goods. Western merchants also realized that to open the Chinese market, they needed more popular goods. The British thought of cotton, while the Qing rulers were trying to prevent the import of cotton imports to seize the market, and cotton alone was not enough to occupy the Chinese market. Despite the success of the British by the late 18th century, even the emperor could not stop the Chinese from buying cheaper Indian cotton. But cotton alone was not enough to replace silver, and Britain still had to find other products to

pay for silk and tea. From this point of view, the outbreak of the Opium Wars was inevitable, not only to sell opium to China to recover silver, but also because European capital, represented by Britain, wanted to understand China in depth and enter the Chinese market before it could further increase the circulation of goods.

Despite the cliché that Chinese consumers were not interested in Western goods, Chinese scholars also often talk about Qing Dynasty China as a “self-sufficient” agriculture-based society. The fact is that China was already in the cycle of international commodity trade, whether it is consuming silver or high-end luxury goods, and the result is that China is gaining deeper access to the global market, step by step. The Chinese emperor’s unchanging old ways are finally being broken. How to get China more deeply involved in the global commodity market is an ongoing effort and attempt by Western capitalists.

Conclusión y debates

La tesis se basa en un amplio abanico de archivos de la corte Qing, como Zhu Pi Zou Zhe, Jun Ji Chu Shang Yu Dang, archivos Nei Wu Fu, etc., así como en documentos locales, como los nomenclátos locales de Cantón y Macao, junto con obras literarias escritas por diversos intelectuales, y una selección de archivos británicos, portugueses y españoles, para reconstruir el comercio exterior y el consumo de artículos de lujo europeos en el mercado chino desde finales del siglo XVII hasta mediados del XIX, antes de la Guerra del Opio. Los capítulos anteriores de esta tesis se centran en las peculiaridades de China, concretamente en la actitud del emperador hacia el comercio exterior, para explicar el establecimiento del Sistema de Cantón, la promulgación de diversas prohibiciones y otra serie de cuestiones.

Para la idea del comercio internacional, los emperadores chinos y los europeos tienen una enorme diferencia de percepción. La corte Qing heredó el sistema de tributos de la dinastía Ming y consideraba el comercio de tributos no simplemente como una relación comercial, sino como un acto diplomático, una señal de subordinación de cada país al imperio central. Para el comercio de tributos “en calendario”, la corte Qing aceptaba de buen grado, mientras que para el comercio privado, la corte Qing no lo fomentaba. Temía que un contacto excesivo entre los chinos Han y los de ultramar conllevara el riesgo de rebeliones, disturbios, etc., porque los gobernantes Qing eran manchúes del norte, no chinos Han, que constituían la mayoría de la población. Después de 1683, se abrieron una a una las cuatro aduanas principales y se fue formando el Sistema de Cantón. En mi opinión, el establecimiento del Sistema de Cantón no comenzó con el decreto del emperador Qianlong en 1757 de que “los barcos extranjeros sólo pueden comerciar en Cantón”, sino que fue un sistema que se formó de forma natural tras más de medio siglo de comercio marítimo debido a las ventajas de la situación geográfica de Cantón desde finales del siglo XVII y más allá. El decreto del emperador Qianlong consolidó este sistema y eliminó la posibilidad de que otros puertos sustituyeran a Guangzhou. Los emperadores, el gobierno central, los funcionarios locales de Cantón, así como el personal de la Aduana de Cantón formaron un gran grupo de interés, que todos se beneficiaron del sistema. La cuestión más importante que preocupaba al gobierno Qing era la estabilidad de su gobierno. Los factores políticos eran la causa principal de su actitud hacia el comercio exterior. Preferían que no hubiera cambios en la situación actual. El sistema de Cantón no es un método de gestión del comercio puramente comercial, sino que también tiene funciones de defensa y militares. El mantenimiento de dicho sistema requería una fuerte capacidad estatal, que la corte Qing claramente no tenía. Este sistema se rompió finalmente tras la Guerra del Opio en 1840, ya que el control central sobre las localidades se fue debilitando.

En contraste con la relativa estabilidad de la recaudación de ingresos en Fujian, Zhejiang y Jiangsu,

el rápido crecimiento de los ingresos aduaneros en Guangdong desde mediados y finales del siglo XVIII hasta mediados del siglo XIX reflejaba directamente la prosperidad del comercio marítimo en aquella época. Aunque los comerciantes británicos eran los más activos en Cantón en esa época, los barcos mercantes de otros países europeos, junto con los del sur y el este de Asia, también tenían actividades comerciales activas en Cantón. El aumento de los aranceles refleja mejor la mayor participación de China en el comercio mundial.

Los gobernantes de la dinastía Qing eran sencillos y directos en su actitud hacia la importación y exportación de mercancías. Prohibieron la exportación de salitre, azufre, artículos de hierro y armas para mantener la seguridad nacional. Controlaron la exportación de seda porque el emperador Qianlong se dio cuenta del aumento del precio de la seda y lo atribuyó a la excesiva demanda de los extranjeros, ignorando así el problema de la inflación causada por la entrada de plata. Prohibieron las exportaciones de grano y fomentaron las importaciones en un intento de resolver el problema de la alimentación de cientos de millones de personas. Controlaron la importación de algodón porque vieron que el algodón importado era más barato que el nacional y pensaron que afectaría a la industria algodонера nacional, ignorando en realidad los problemas que había detrás por la relación entre tierra, población y alimentos. La corte Qing quería mantener la situación original del flujo de mercancías sin dejar que la demanda de los extranjeros o la importación de mercancías extranjeras afectaran demasiado a la industria nacional. En cuanto a la administración y la política del Estado, sólo se acogieron los cereales, el cobre y algunos metales, el más evidente la plata. Sin embargo, como administradora de un imperio central con gran riqueza, la corte Qing tenía un gran interés y demanda en los nuevos y exóticos lujos. Las listas de mercancías importadas y exportadas de las aduanas probablemente restablecen las categorías y los nombres de las principales mercancías importadas y exportadas en aquella época. Una gran parte de las mercancías importadas procedía del sudeste asiático y del sur de Asia, incluyendo algunas hierbas, alimentos, especias y materias primas, y las principales importaciones de Europa eran bienes industriales, que podrían denominarse bienes de lujo en términos de precio, incluyendo telas occidentales de alta calidad, artesanía de alta calidad, relojes, vino, etc.

Esta tesis parte de las particularidades de la China de la dinastía Qing. Tanto el segundo como el tercer capítulo pretenden analizar la lógica del comportamiento de la corte Qing al tiempo que examinan los hechos históricos del comercio de mercancías. En cambio, en el cuarto capítulo, el consumo de artículos de lujo europeos por parte de la corte Qing y la alta sociedad china refleja las mismas características de los consumidores chinos que de los europeos. La curiosidad no era algo exclusivo de los europeos; los chinos adinerados estaban igualmente interesados en bienes importados de todo tipo.

He enumerado cuatro productos típicos: instrumentos ópticos, relojes, tejidos de lana y vino, y analizo las razones de su popularidad en China. Los instrumentos científicos y ópticos fabricados

por Ferdinand Verbiest para el emperador Kangxi eran diversos y le gustaban. Sin embargo, después de él, lo único que parecía gustar a nobles, funcionarios, comerciantes e intelectuales ricos, e incluso al propio emperador, eran los que eran interesantes o útiles, como los telescopios, los anteojos y algunos juguetes ópticos. Y las ventas masivas de relojes en China en el siglo XVIII estaban más influenciadas por la propia afición del emperador Qianlong. Qianlong y sus seguidores de buen gusto preferían los relojes como un interesante juguete mecánico y un magnífico ornamento más que como una herramienta para medir el tiempo. A finales del siglo XVIII, muchos comerciantes extranjeros experimentaban la competencia y la reducción de precios en el mercado de relojes de Guangzhou, no sólo entre los comerciantes de relojes de varios países europeos, sino que el desarrollo de la industria relojera china local también tenía un impacto significativo en sus ventas. Los artesanos chinos eran buenos en la imitación y pronto pudieron desarrollar una industria relacionada con ella, produciendo vasos y relojes con características locales. Pero los tejidos de lana y el vino europeos parecían no tener tales “rivales locales”. De hecho, China ya cuenta con una gama muy variada de artículos de lana y licores locales, y consumen artículos de lana y vinos importados por el exotismo y la expresión de ideas que se derivan de ellos.

Es obvio que los consumidores chinos también están interesados y sedientos de productos de lujo europeos, pero esta sed parece ser algo diferente a la de los consumidores europeos por los productos orientales. Si se compara el valor del té y la seda importados por Gran Bretaña desde China en el siglo XVIII con el valor de los relojes y los tejidos de lana importados por China desde Gran Bretaña, se puede ver la diferencia. Hay pocos estudios relacionados con la revolución del consumo en China durante las dinastías Ming y Qing, pero se han realizado amplios estudios sobre el consumo de lujo. Las dinastías Ming y Qing fueron una época en la que se desarrolló la economía de las mercancías y se diversificó el contenido del consumo de los ricos. Los consumidores chinos de la clase alta tenían un abanico muy amplio de opciones, la gama de su consumo incluía no sólo los productos de lujo de Europa, sino también las pieles de las fronteras del norte y del oeste, las perlas de los mares del noreste, las gemas y las especias del sur de Asia, los productos de la pesca del océano meridional, etc. Por supuesto, también había muchos productos nacionales, seda de calidad, porcelana, antigüedades, té y vino, así como algunos productos de consumo regional.

Sin tener en cuenta las importaciones de lujo europeas, el consumo conspicuo ya era popular entre la gente acomodada. Por ejemplo, los famosos comerciantes de sal de Lianghuai, activos durante la época Qing, eran el mayor grupo de capital comercial del país. Monopolizaron toda la circulación de la sal producida en la tierra salada de Lianghuai. Se apoderaron de una enorme

cantidad de beneficios del monopolio durante el transporte y la venta de agua salada.⁴⁶⁸ Excepto para sobornar a los funcionarios, participar en el gobierno y comprar las necesidades diarias, la gran riqueza que poseen estos comerciantes de sal a lo largo de la zona del río Huaihe se utiliza principalmente para gastos de vida de lujo.⁴⁶⁹ Como constancia del edicto imperial anunciado por el emperador Yongzheng que describía y criticaba el hábito de consumo de estos comerciantes de sal: "Los mercaderes de la sal estaban por todas partes, parecían lujosos pero en realidad estaban vacíos por dentro. Son extremadamente extravagantes en la ropa y las casas; ingeniosos en la comida y la vajilla; se invitaba a comediantes y chicas cantantes para que actuaran, celebrando ceremonias y fiestas todos los días; tratan el oro, el dinero y las joyas como si fueran limo; incluso sus sirvientes son orgullosos y feroces; su vida diaria y su ropa son iguales a las de los funcionarios, su comportamiento es desordenado, nunca tienen autoexamen; son extravagantes y disipados, aprenden unos de otros y hacen que su estilo de vida se convierta en una moda. Los comerciantes de sal se comportan de manera similar en todas partes, especialmente los que viven en la región de Huaiyang".⁴⁷⁰ Huaiyang es la zona que cerca del río Huai y el río Yangtzi inferior, actuales regiones de Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Yancheng y Huai'an. En esta acomodada región de Jiangnan, los mercaderes emulaban el comportamiento de gasto extravagante de los demás para mostrar su riqueza y sus conexiones.

El creciente comercio marítimo que comenzó a florecer a finales del siglo XVII estimuló directamente la creación de otro centro comercial y económico, Guangzhou. Qu Dajun (1630-1696) escribió en *Guang Dong Xin Yu*: "El incienso, las perlas, el cuerno de rinoceronte y los productos de marfil se amontonaban como montañas, las flores y los pájaros eran tan numerosos como el mar, las mercancías extranjeras iban y venían en carros y costaban decenas de millones de oro al día, y la comida y la bebida eran más abundantes, y las canciones y los bailes más numerosos que los de Qinhuai varias veces."⁴⁷¹ Cuando los mercaderes de Guangdong se enriquecieron gracias al comercio exterior, sus gastos extravagantes eran incluso mejores que los de los mercaderes de Huaiyang. Es la acumulación de riqueza la que se asocia directamente con el consumo conspicuo, no con ninguna mercancía en particular. La afluencia de bienes importados aumentó sus opciones. En contraste con los ricos mercaderes de Guangdong y Jiangnan, el emperador Qianlong hacía alarde no sólo de riqueza sino también de su arrogancia como gobernante del gran imperio del centro cuando recompensaba y amueblaba esos costosos bienes importados.

⁴⁶⁸ Xiao Guoliang, "Qingdai Lianghuai Yanshang de Shechixing Xiaofei jiqi Jingji Yingxiang," *Historical Research*, vol. 4, (1982): 135.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 136.

⁴⁷⁰ Zhang Tingyu, ed. "Huangchao Wenxian Tongkao Juan Ershiba," in *Qin Ding Si Ku Quan Shu: Shi Bu* (Jinan: Shandong Qilu Press, 1997), Vol.28.

⁴⁷¹ Qu Dajun, *Guangdong Xinyu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), 519.

En comparación con el hábito de consumo de los mercaderes ricos, el consumo de los residentes ordinarios y los campesinos durante la dinastía Qing siguen considerando prioritario el consumo de subsistencia o supervivencia, incluyendo los alimentos (alimentos básicos principalmente cereales; alimentos no básicos incluyendo aceite de cocina, sal, salsas, verduras, vino, etc.), la ropa, la vivienda y el combustible, que alcanzaron el porcentaje de todos los gastos de consumo del 76% al 83%.⁴⁷² Además, los gastos de consumo adicionales de los hogares ordinarios son la educación, la celebración de festivales y matrimonios, así como el sacrificio religioso.⁴⁷³ En comparación con los habitantes del norte de China, las familias de la región del Bajo Yangzi tenían un nivel de vida relativamente más alto. Para la población general de algunas de las regiones más desarrolladas económicamente, también existía el mercado del consumo de lujo. Los consumidores que estaban dispuestos a comprar gafas fabricadas localmente por 3 *fen* el par probablemente procedían de estos grupos.

Los consumidores de bienes de lujo de alta gama y de bienes de lujo de masas no son el mismo grupo de personas. Para las familias corrientes de las zonas más ricas que pueden permitirse consumir parte de los bienes de lujo, hacer un buen estudio de mercado y marketing es la estrategia adecuada. Los comerciantes europeos vieron ese poder adquisitivo del mercado chino. Para China, las causas de este consumo de lujo no fueron sólo el progreso tecnológico y el desarrollo de la propia economía de las materias primas, sino también la entrada de grandes cantidades de plata como gran estímulo. Eso explica que muchos estudiosos chinos, cuando examinan la situación económica de la China moderna, acostumbran a centrar sus estudios en la plata. Otro tema de estudio popular, el opio, fue otro método de pago encontrado por los británicos. Antes de las Guerras del Opio, a pesar de muchos intentos, Gran Bretaña no había sido capaz de encontrar una alternativa ideal a la plata que pagara su seda cruda y su té.

El problema puede haber sido que los comerciantes occidentales desconocían el mercado chino, o más bien, no podían hacer nada al respecto. En mi opinión, el hecho de que los mercaderes europeos no entraran profundamente en China para investigar y desarrollar el mercado fue un gran problema en este sentido. Los jesuitas al servicio de la corte no asumieron esta responsabilidad; entendieron las preferencias del emperador, se apoyaron en diversas habilidades (como la relojería, las técnicas de pintura, etc.) para ganarse el amor y la confianza del emperador, y trataron de ganar espacio para el trabajo misionero. Pero los emperadores chinos prohibían tajantemente la labor misionera, y además trataban a estos misioneros más bien como artesanos al servicio de la corte. En cuanto a otros comerciantes extranjeros, no se les permitía vivir en China, excepto en Macao, durante esa época. Aunque se integraron con los chinos locales de Macao en un entorno de vida

⁴⁷² Zhang Yan, “Shiba Shiji Qianhou Qingdai Nongjia Shenghuo Xiaofei de Yanjiu,” *Ancient and Modern Agriculture*, vol. 4 (2005): 83-86.

⁴⁷³ *ibid.*, 86-88.

diverso y vibrante, sólo unos meses de comercio en Cantón no fueron suficientes para que entendieran el mercado chino y abrieran las carteras de los consumidores chinos. Por esta razón, James Flint quiso encontrar un puerto comercial más septentrional, y quedó claro que los productos similares al tweed alcanzarían un mejor precio en el norte más frío que en el húmedo calor de Guangzhou. La misión Macartney vio en China un enorme mercado para el algodón de consumo masivo. Los comerciantes británicos hicieron grandes esfuerzos para desarrollar el mercado de consumo del algodón y lograron ciertos resultados. Sin embargo, seguían sin poder romper la determinación del emperador de mantener el statu quo. La corte Qing había sobrestimado un poco la capacidad del Estado, ya que no tenía un control total sobre el área local.

Con el desarrollo del comercio, la forma en que los europeos perciben la actitud y la demanda de los chinos hacia sus productos está estrechamente relacionada con la tendencia a exportar productos europeos a China. En comparación con el té y la seda cruda, el mercado objetivo de los relojes en China es demasiado estrecho. O bien tienen que ser las obras de arte más extravagantes hechas por los mejores artesanos, valiosas pero costosas y susceptibles a los factores de moda que pueden llevar a un estancamiento de las ventas. O bien, cuando se enfrentan al mercado de masas, se hace hincapié en la cantidad y no en la calidad, lo que obviamente no tiene éxito, ya que los comerciantes locales siempre pueden fabricar productos similares más baratos. Y para la familia de ingresos medios, los relojes no contaban como un producto de repetición. Los comerciantes europeos necesitaban desesperadamente un producto de alto margen y rápida rotación para conseguir un mercado más amplio. Los productos de lana y el vino parecían ser populares, pero en realidad el coste de fabricar productos de alta calidad y enviarlos de Europa a China no era bajo. El tipo de productos que se basan en un significado adicional y en la expresión emocional, como el concepto de lo salvaje y lo vintage, será fácil que su mercado se vea influenciado por la tendencia, o que sea sustituido por otra nueva moda.

Antes de mediados del siglo XIX, los productos europeos en China eran caros y aparecían como artículos de lujo, que eran populares principalmente entre la clase alta y tenían un poder adquisitivo limitado de las masas. A principios y mediados de la China de los Qing, no era posible hacer realidad la masa de artículos de lujo europeos. Los comerciantes occidentales también se dieron cuenta de que, para abrir el mercado chino, necesitaban productos más populares. Los británicos pensaron en el algodón, mientras que los gobernantes Qing trataban de impedir la importación de algodón para hacerse con el mercado, y el algodón por sí solo no era suficiente para ocupar el mercado chino. A pesar del éxito de los británicos a finales del siglo XVIII, ni siquiera el emperador pudo impedir que los chinos compraran algodón indio más barato. Pero el algodón por sí solo no era suficiente para sustituir a la plata, y Gran Bretaña aún tenía que encontrar otros productos para pagar la seda y el té. Desde este punto de vista, el estallido de las Guerras del Opio era inevitable, no sólo para vender opio a China y recuperar la plata, sino también

porque el capital europeo, representado por Gran Bretaña, quería conocer a fondo China y entrar en el mercado chino antes de poder aumentar la circulación de mercancías.

A pesar del tópico de que los consumidores chinos no estaban interesados en los productos occidentales, los estudiosos chinos también suelen hablar de la China de la dinastía Qing como una sociedad “autosuficiente” basada en la agricultura. El hecho es que China ya estaba en el ciclo del comercio internacional de mercancías, ya sea consumiendo plata o bienes de lujo de alta gama, y el resultado es que China está ganando un acceso más profundo al mercado global, paso a paso. Por fin se están rompiendo las viejas costumbres del emperador chino. Cómo conseguir que China participe más profundamente en el mercado mundial de materias primas es un esfuerzo e intento continuo de los capitalistas occidentales.

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