Food and Drink as Negotiation Sites: Sino-Western Encounters in Canton and Macao, ca.1700–1845

Leiyun Ni

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of Warwick, Department of History

April 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Literature Review 4

Theories and Approaches 9

Methodology 11

Chapter Plan 13

Primary Sources 15

Chapter 1: Provisioning the Canton Trade: The Agency of the Comprador

Introduction 20

The Emergence of Compradors in Canton Trade 27

Between China and English EIC: Compradors' Dual Obligations 33

Compradors Refused to Supply Provisions: A 'Strike' in 1819 35

Nurturing Reliance: Compradors as Indispensable Figures in Foreign Households...39

Conclusion 55

Chapter 2: Rebecca Brought a Cow to China: Household Economy and Culinary Knowledge Production in Macao and Canton

Introduction 57

Imported Cows and Daily Lives of Foreign Communities in Canton and Maca.... 64

Cow-keeping and Chinese Labourers in Foreign Households 73

Ice-cream and Culinary Knowledge Exchange..... 79

Conclusion 92

Chapter 3: 'Chinese people do not use milk': Western Perceptions of Chinese Dairy Culture

Introduction 94

Dairy Products in Late Imperial China..... 98

The Absence of Milk in Chinese Tea-Drinking 102

Racializing Chinese Dairy Consumption..... 113

Conclusion 122

Chapter 4: Spicing Up Trade: The Consumption of Curries in Foreign Factories
Introduction 122
Curry Dishes in Foreign Factories 127
What Was 'Curry' in China? 129
Spicing up Curries in Foreign Factories 139
Conclusion.....151

Chapter 5: Foreign traders' Dinner Tables in Canton Trade
Introduction 152
Early English Encounters with Chinese Dinners 155
'Chopstick Dinner' 160
Dinner Tables in Foreign Factories 175
Foreign Traders' Chinese New Year Feasts 182
Conclusion 190

Conclusion 192

Bibliography.....198

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1
Figure 1: House Comprador's Account, commenced 30 September 1803, Carrington Paper, Rhodes Island Historical Society Providence.
Chapter 2:
Figure 2: Anonymous, *Canton Factory*, ca.1825. Hong Kong Museum of Art.
Chapter 4:
Figure 3: Account of Sea Stock received from Comprador. Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Photo by the author.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my journey of completing this Ph.D at Warwick from 2018-2023, I have been fortunate to encounter so many kind people who have trusted me and supported me in various ways. Without their generous help, I could not have come this far.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors: Professor Anne Gerritsen and Dr. Song-Chuan Chen. I feel privileged to have had their guidance throughout my research journey. Anne has enormous knowledge in material history, global history, and Chinese history, and provided me with invaluable guidance in developing my theoretical framework. Song-Chuan is an expert in Canton trade and Chinese history, and their combined expertise exceeded my expectations. Anne and Song-Chuan consistently provided me with insightful advice, challenged me in a warm and supportive manner, and encouraged me to develop my own ideas and analysis. Anne has been with me from the start of my project to the very end. She encouraged me to apply for the CSC scholarship and provided me with invaluable support during the application process. Anne always enlightens me when I have trouble developing or improving my arguments. She is patient with my progress, and when my progress was slow, she tried different approaches to help me rebuild my confidence in writing. In the final stage of my writing, when I was feeling stressed and doubtful about my ability to finish this thesis, Anne's encouragement gave me the strength to keep going. Her unwavering support will undoubtedly help me face future challenges.

The history department at Warwick provides the most stimulating environment for academic research. Besides seminars, workshops, and conferences held in our department and Global History and Culture Centre, I was fortunate to have been part of the Food and Drink history reading group with Ricardo, Louise, Serin, Daniel, and Shrikant. Our food and drink history reading group has also benefited from the constant attention and support of Professor Rebecca Earle and Professor Beat Kümin. I have thoroughly enjoyed every session of our discussions on food studies. I am also grateful to Sander, Cheng, Qiuyang, Bobby, Jiaqi, Qing, and Juul for reading my draft papers and providing constructive feedback during our China Studies group sessions. I am lucky to have been surrounded by talented and supportive people who share my passion for food history and Chinese history.

My parents, who never had the opportunity to attend college, have been incredibly supportive throughout my life. My mother, Zhu Hui, did not attend high school as an adopted child who could not ask for much attention and investment from her parents. She supported my decision to pursue degrees in a foreign country, not expecting that she would not be able to see me for almost four years due to Covid policies. While writing my thesis, I often thought of her.

My mother left her hometown to support my father's business in Nanjing. Although she did not enjoy urban life, she stayed in Nanjing to ensure our family always had good food on the table. She is a talented cook and an epicure who knows where to buy good-quality foodstuffs and is talented at making friends with grocery stall owners. This skill has been key to providing delicious meals on a budget. I can never repay her for her years of sacrifices and for feeding me so well. Although we may disagree on many things, I am grateful that my mother and I share a passion for food and life. When we could not see each other, at least we could discuss what we ate during my phone call.

I would like to thank my chosen family, my feminist sisters, Tong, Haidan, Daxi, Dr. Jin, Mandi, Qiqi, Xizi as well as many other feminist friends who supported me during the last four years. They believed me and took good care of me. I am grateful to be part of this supportive and creative community in the UK. Their thoughts and actions have always inspired me and gave me hope.

I would like to express my gratitude to my partner Jack, who gave me a lot of kisses, hugs and fed me with mango gelato (my favourite flavour) when I was tired from reading and writing.

I dedicate this work to those who cherish the beauty of life even in the darkest time.

Author's declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Note on currency and weight

The tael was a form of Chinese specie used in Canton trade. It was worth 10 maces, 100 candareen and 1,000 catties. One tael equated to about six English shillings, eight pence. The Spanish dollar was equivalent to 0.72 taels. In terms of weight, one picul was 100 catties, and 1600 taels. The tael was 1 1/3 oz.

Abstract

This thesis offers a fresh perspective on Canton trade and Sino-Western relations from the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries by examining the role of food and drink. While previous studies have focused on commerce and politics, this research explores how food and drink served as crucial sites for foreign traders to negotiate their cultural, social, racial, gender, and political identities, as well as their relationships with local people in Canton and Macao. Drawing on a variety of sources, including travel accounts, diaries, letters, EIC records, vocabularies, gazetteers, and account books, this research sheds light on the different views of food, food culture, and food-related activities in foreign factories. The study proposes that foreigners' commercial and political activities in China were intimately tied to their eating and drinking experiences, which reveal power dynamics between different groups of people and were impacted by the changes in Sino-Western relations. In particular, this research shows that food is a crucial lens for understanding the roles of women and laborers in Canton trade, who have often been overlooked in traditional studies. By examining their involvement in food-related activities, this study reveals that they played essential roles in Sino-Western exchange. This research demonstrates how food and drink provided a space for negotiating power, and how it was central to the lives of foreigners in Canton and Macao. Ultimately, this thesis proposes that food and drink offer a new and fruitful way to understand the complexities of Sino-Western relations during this period.

Introduction

This thesis examines the eating and drinking experiences of foreign traders, especially British and Americans, in Canton and Macao during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It focuses on how these foreigners and their communities negotiated their dietary needs, tastes, and culinary practices within the local social, cultural, and political environments of Canton and Macao. It investigates the ways in which their knowledge of and practices with food were exchanged, modified, and applied in different daily and special settings in Canton and Macao.[1] In order to unravel the multi-layered relationships that were built upon food and drink, this thesis focuses on different aspects of the eating and drinking practices within these foreign communities. It analyses these through the study of people, such as food purveyors and cooks, consumables, such as specific foods and drinks (such as curry and cow's milk), animals, such as imported domestic animals (cows), and materialities such as chopsticks and dinner tables to provide a comprehensive and diverse foodscape of the foreign communities in Canton and Macao.

By using the lens of food, this research provides a new perspective for examining the Canton trade and Sino-Western relations throughout the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. There are two intertwined threads in the thesis: food and people who were connected by food. This thesis uses food as a method for deciphering different relationships built upon food. In this research, food is a useful tool because it has the power both of building connections and creating boundaries between people from different racial, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds. Moreover, food is useful for helping us to understand how foreign traders developed relationships with Hong merchants by eating and drinking together. Food as an essential marker of individual and group identity shows one's identity and how it changes over time. By focusing on food and drink, we might better understand how foreigners negotiated their cultural, social, racial, and political identities during their daily lives in China. It also reveals the ways in which these foreign traders understood Chinese culture and people and how their perceptions changed over time. This research investigates British and American traders who constituted an Anglophone commercial community in

[1] Alan Warde, 'Eating' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption,* ed., by Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 376-395. Warde explains how these food-related processes happened as people, goods, and ideas mobilised in the process of globalization.

Canton and Macao, although they had different food customs and rituals. Since their living areas were confined to Canton and Macao, the food culture and people they daily encountered prior to the 1840s were mostly Cantonese. They did not have opportunities to explore food cultures in China beyond Canton and Macao, however, they tended to record the food and drink they consumed generally as 'Chinese'. From the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, Sino-Western relations experienced a drastic change. These changes can be detected in Western perceptions of Chinese food culture and in the ways in which foreigners and Chinse merchants ate and drank together. This food-centred research emphasises that foreign communities' activities in China centred not only on commercial and political activities, as the current scholarship might suggest, but also on eating and drinking activities. This dissertation is based on the premise that these eating and drinking activities are essential for our understanding of Sino-Western relations during the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

Although this research mainly focuses on foreign traders, especially those who left substantial material about their eating and drinking activities in China, I endeavour to include in my analysis ordinary people worked in in foreign 'factories'.[2] Ordinary people are often invisible in traditional historical writing about the Canton trade and Sino-Western relations. Evan Lampe who works on the history of labour in the China trade argues that 'looking at China trade through events such as the dinner party, essentially moments for ruling class camaraderie, limits our understanding of the participation of working people.'[3] However, my research argues that events such as dinner parties were not just an arena for building up ruling class friendship; it could provide a lens to study working people in the Canton trade. Ordinary labourers built intimate connections with foreigners by procuring provisions, cooking, and serving Western food for them at dinner parties. Compradors (i.e. licenced food purveyors), cooks, cow-keepers, and servants, were all connected to foreigners and the Canton trade by participating in various food-related activities. They directly and actively participated in the process of localising Western food in China and introducing foreigners to local food. My research acknowledges the labour, knowledge, and skills of ordinary Chinese labourers in providing food and drink for their foreign employers. This thesis argues that these ordinary people had agency in shaping foreigners' eating and drinking experiences. By fulfilling

[2] Factories were also called *Hong,* the houses where foreign traders lived and worked in Canton.
[3] Evan Lampe, *Work, Class, and Power in the Borderlands of the Early American Pacific: The Labors of Empire* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), p.2.

foreigners' culinary needs, compradors, cooks, and servants nurtured the foreigners' dependency. They were not passive or trivial figures. They were active and essential participants in Sino-Western exchange.

This thesis also argues that women played key roles in facilitating the interactions between Westerners and the Chinese. It does this by investigating the role women played in sustaining the activities of foreign communities in these locations far from their home comfort. The case I explore specifically is of American women providing food and drink for their family members, especially their children, in Macao in the 1830s and 1840s. The Canton trade has been traditionally understood as a homosocial business environment, as women were prohibited from living in Canton before the 1840s. Under these circumstances, eating and drinking experiences have thus far mostly been examined through men's perceptions. However, beginning in the 1830s, a steadily increasing number of foreign women resided in Macao and began providing valuable written records about their daily lives. American women were not only food consumers, as were their male counterparts, but also food providers and household managers who created diverse social relations with members of the foreign communities and local labourers in foreign household. Their activities were not confined to their households in Macao. In fact, they were active observers and participants of Sino-American political events. Their participation in eating and drinking with Manchu officials offers a new perspective for analysing how the image of China was constructed in American society during the 1840s. Using gender and race as interrelated analytical tools, this research explores American women's roles in shaping food culture in foreign communities and in the power dynamics of Sino-American interactions in Macao.

Through a detailed scrutiny of food and people related to food, my thesis contributes to a greater understanding of dynamic power relations between different groups of people during this period. Previous historical analysis of Sino-Anglo encounters during this period have mainly focused on the mechanisms of trade, British diplomatic activities in the Qing court, and the origins and impacts of the Opium War.[4] These studies often emphasize prominent male political figures, rely heavily on official records, and privilege trade

[4] H.B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635–1834* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino Pub, 2007); Paul Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast 1700–1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005); *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions*, ed. by John E. Wills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Wen Cao 曹雯 'Qingdai Guangdong tizhi zai yanjiu' 清代广东体制再研究 [Revisiting the Canton System of Trade in the Qing Dynasty], *Qingshi Yanjiu*, 2 (2006), pp. 82-96.

regulations, proceedings, and political interactions.[5] My research points out that foreigners' commercial and political activities in China were closely connected to their eating and drinking activities. My research challenges the traditional narratives about the Canton trade by focusing on eating and drinking experiences in the daily lives of male and female foreign communities in Canton and Macao. I argue that food and drink were important sites for understanding the power dynamics between foreigners and various groups of Chinese people during this period. By revealing the ways in which foreigners and Chinese people negotiated their political, racial, gender, social, and cultural identities via food and drink, this research sheds light on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Sino-Western relations.

Literature Review

This research is built on the recent progress of two fields: food history and history of Canton trade. Recent historical research on food in global contexts provides many insightful approaches for this research. As commodities, food and drink have received the most attention for revealing the development of global trade and the expansion of empires.[6] Erika Rappaport, for example, explores how tea culture was adopted, appropriated, and changed in Britain and how the British Empire dominated the global tea industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. She examines tea culture from the perspective of imperial expansion and the development of the global economy.[7] Rebecca Earle's research focuses, amongst other things, on ideas about food and the body. Her work shows that ideas about food and bodies informed how Spaniards understood both the environment and inhabitants of the New World as well as how this understanding facilitated their colonial expansion.[8] Through the lens of British imperial experiences, Elizabeth Collingham considers how food aided the construction of bodies and identities of British colonizers in India. She regards food

[5] H.B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company.*
[6] For example, Bertie Mandelblatt, 'A Transatlantic Commodity: Irish Salt Beef in the French Atlantic World', *History Workshop Journal,* 63 (2007), 18-47; Kaori O'Connor, 'Beyond "Exotic Groceries": Tapioca/Cassava/Manioc, a Hidden Commodity of Empires and Globalisation', in *Global Histories, Imperial Commodities, Local Interactions*, ed. By Jonathan Curry-Machado (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 224-247.
[7] Erika Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).
[8] Rebecca Earle*, The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race, and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

consumption as bodily experience and argues that, as British vegetables and tinned food were strong representations of their Britishness, the colonizers insisted on having them; this insistence was a refusal to compromise with local Indian environments.[9] The transformation of Japanese food beginning in the nineteenth century has also received some scholars' attention. Katarzyna Joanna Cwiertka's research shows that, in addition to the promotion of Western-style cuisine by the Meiji government, Western merchants and travellers who resided in treaty ports played an important role in introducing Western food to Japan. They often had business interactions in China and imported food from China. Western managers and cooks operated inns, hotels, and restaurants in Japan and often had former experiences in Shanghai and Hong Kong hotels.[10] This book opens a window for me to understand the situation of foreign merchants in Japan and their connections with China.

Chinese food history is relatively under-studied and often confined to national histories. Some anthropological research and cultural studies have provided historical information on food production and techniques, food culture, and food representations in classical literature. There is still a limited discussion of changes in eating and drinking practices in the Qing dynasty.[11] Since the 1990s, Chinese scholars have noticed the impact of introducing Western cuisine on Chinese society. However, these discussions are often descriptive and general. They often take an essentialist perspective that contrasts Western and traditional Chinese cuisine. The adaptation of Western food culture is often only discussed in narratives about Chinese modernization.

In the past decade, scholars have begun to consider the role of Western food in the development of urban spaces in China.[12] Shanghai is the main research subject in this

---

[9] Elizabeth Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[10] Katarzyna Joanna Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), p. 41.
[11] E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press,1988); Kwang-ching Chang, *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Roel Sterckx, *Food, Sacrifice, and Sagehood in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Saishi Wang 王赛时, '*Zhongguo Jiushi* 中国酒史 [History of Alcohol in China]'(Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe 2010).
[12] Changhong Yan 严昌宏, *Xisu Dongjian Ji: Zhongguo Jindai Shehui Fengsu De Yanbian* 西俗东渐记：中国近代社会风俗的演变 [The Spread of Western Customs in the East: Transformation of Chinese Social Customs] (Changshai: Hunan Chubanshe, 1991); Weijun Yao 姚伟钧, 'Yinshi shenghuo de yanbian yu shehui zhuanxing 饮食生活的演变与社会转型 [The Changes of Food Culture and the Transformation of the Society]', *Tansuo yu Zhengming*, 4 (1996), pp. 28–29.

analysis. Zou Zhenhuan discusses the ways in which Western food and Western restaurants shaped concessions in Shanghai after the Opium War. He focuses on how Western food culture influenced Chinese people's food habits, food categories, and food safety regulations in Shanghai. He argues that the hybrid food culture of Shanghai is an indispensable part of the cultural identity of modern Shanghai.[13] Mark Swislocki traces food culture in Shanghai from its beginnings in the Republican period. His work demonstrates that food and restaurants were essential in the construction of regional identities. He argues that Chinese people's thoughts about food reveal how they viewed their relationships with other places in China and in the Western world and how they experience changes in the city over time. He argues that, through the lens of food history, Shanghai is seen as a deeply nostalgic place that challenges the idea of Shanghai's essentially 'modern' or 'Westernized' character.[14] These works approach food history in a cross-cultural context within local and Chinese historical narratives. They heavily rely on Chinese sources and focus on Chinese people's experiences and attitudes. Western people's food experiences in China and their interactions with Chinese culture are generally not included in these discussions. One of the exceptions is the study of missionary encounter with China. Since Buddhism in China was strongly associated with nonmeat diet, as Eric Robert Reinders argues, western missionaries in China have strategically used antivegetarianism to convert Chinese to Christianity.[15]

My research considers interactions with food and drink among Anglophone communities and Chinese communities. It benefits from historical research on global trade in China. Rather than focusing on charted companies, recent research has turned its focus on individual merchants and their daily lives. Lisa Hellman analyses the everyday lives of employees of the Swedish East India Company in Canton and Macao and considers how groups, space, communication, materiality and trust, shaped the everyday lives of these foreigners.[16] She also examines eating and drinking as an essential part of their daily lives. Hellman argues that, by describing the culinary habits of others, Europeans created difference

---

[13] Zhenhuan Zou 邹振环, '*Xican Yinru Yu Jindai Shanghai Chengshi Wenhua Kongjian De Kaituo* 西餐引入与近代上海城市文化空间的开拓 [The Introduction of Western-style Food and Exploration of City Cultural Space in Modern Shanghai]', *Shilin*, 4 (2007), 137-149.
[14] Mark Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
[15] Eric Robert Reinders, 'Blessed are the Meat Eaters: Christian antivegetarianism and the missionary encounter with Chinese Buddhism,' *positions: east asia cultures critique*, 2(2004), pp. 509-537.
[16] Hellman, Lisa. *This House Is Not a Home: European Everyday Life in Canton and Macao 1730–1830: European everyday life in Canton and Macao 1730–1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

and established the exoticness of other cultures. Meike von Brescius's research points out the central role of what she calls 'British interlopers' and how their informal networks helped them succeed in Chinese trade.[17] Her work suggests that there was an increasing demand of wine from foreigners and Chinese people in Canton. British interlopers played a significant role in the transnational wine trade. Both studies highlight the role of food and drink in the Canton trade, but they involve limited analysis of these practices and changes over time as well as the impact of these practices on Chinese society.

Recently, several exciting topics related to the Canton trade have been published. Josepha Richard's Ph.D. research studies Hong merchants' gardens during the Canton System and after the Opium War.[18] Richard analyses Hong merchant's invitations to foreign merchants to have dinners in their gardens. She argues that the luxurious dinners hosted by Hong merchants for foreign guests were calculated to obtain diplomatic or trade advantages. Richard's research focuses on residences and gardens as the site of Sino-Western interactions rather than on what was served at these banquets in Hong merchants' residences. In 2020, Richard published an article called 'Collecting Chinese Flora: Eighteenth- to Nineteenth-Century Sino-British Scientific and Cultural Exchanges as Seen through British Collections of China Trade Botanical Paintings'.[19] By examining the English botanist John Bradby Blake's (1745–1773) Chinese plant collections, Richard points out that Blake's botanical collection highly relied on Chinese 'go-betweens'. Her research emphasizes the agency of 'Chinese go-betweens', such as Chinese artists and translators, in Sino-Western scientific and cultural exchanges. In a recent book, *Listening to China Sound and the Sino-Western Encounter, 1770–1839*, Thomas Irving investigates Sino-Western encounters though music. Irvine traces Western perceptions of Chinese music and how it shaped the development of European music. Irvine also notes how the settings of the Hong merchants' banquets were Sino-Western sonic encounters. Irvine argues that, although Hong merchants and foreigners shared a desire for profits and mutual recognition, Europeans were generally repelled by Chinese theatre because of its strangeness.[20] Richard and Irvine's research both provide new

[17] Meike von Brescius, *Private Enterprise and the China Trade: Merchants and Markets in Europe, 1700-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).
[18] Josepha Richard, 'The Hong merchant's Gardens during the Canton System and the aftermath of the Opium Wars' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2017).
[19] Josepha Richard, 'Collecting Chinese Flora: Eighteenth- to Nineteenth-Century Sino-British Scientific and Cultural Exchanges as Seen through British Collections of China Trade Botanical Paintings', *Ming Qing Yanjiu*, 2(2020), pp. 209–44.
[20] Thomas Irvine, *Listening to China: Sound and the Sino-Western Encounter, 1770-1839* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

perspectives for understanding how banquets were important sites of Sino-Western encounters, but neither of them focus on cutleries and dishes on dinner tables and how they reflect changes of cross-cultural interactions over time.

Over the past two decades, historian May-bo Ching (Cheng Meibao 程美宝) has conducted substantial research on ordinary people (pilots, linguists, artisans, painters, cooks and servants) and their activities in the Canton trade. Ching has published several articles about a Chinese servant named Whang Tong (黄东/黄遏东), who worked in foreign factories and travelled to Britain with Captain John Blake around 1766–1773 and returned to China around 1796. By collecting archival materials from Britain and the US, Ching traces Whang Tong's working experiences in foreign factories and during his time in Britain. Ching discusses the roles that Whang Tong and ordinary Chinese people like him played in Sino-Western cultural interactions.[21] She is particularly interested in discovering the linguistic, botanical, artistic, and commercial knowledge that ordinary people acquired from their working experiences in the Canton trade.

In 2021, Ching published a monograph on Wang Tong and ordinary people in the Canton trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[22] In this book, May-bo Ching uses substantial archival materials to provide details of Wang Tong's activities in China and Britain and his interactions with British people of different classes. In particular, in the section on cooks, she uses foreign traders' travel writings and English vocabulary books to examine Chinese cooks' culinary knowledge of western foods. She mentions several dishes with transnational features cooked by Chinese cooks. In another article, she examines the

---

[21] Meibao, Cheng 程美宝, '*Shuishangren Yinshui—16–19 Shiji Aomen Chuanmin De Haiyang Shijie* 水人上引水：16–19 世纪澳门船民的海洋世界 [People living over river guides water: boat people's ocean world in the 16–19th centuries Macao], *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 4(2010); Meibao Cheng 程美宝, *Aomen Zuowei Feidi De Wei Yu Ji* 澳门作为飞地的危与机：16-19 世纪华洋交往中的小人物 [The dangers and opportunities of Macao as an enclave—humble people in Sino-Western encounters in the 16–19th centuries]'*Henan Daxue Xuebao*, 3 (2012), 74-82; Meibao Cheng 程美宝 and Zhiwei Liu 刘志伟, '18-19 Shiji Guangzhou Yangren Jiating De Zhongguo Yongren 18-19 世纪广州洋人家庭的中国佣人[Chinese Servants in Foreigners' Families in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth Century Guangzhou]', *Shilin*, 4 (2004), 1-11; Meibao Cheng 程美宝 ed, *Ba Shijie Daijin Zhongguo: Cong Aomen Chufa De Zhongguo Jindaishi* 把世界带进中国： 从澳门出发的中国近代史 [In Light of Macau: Alternative Perspectives on Modern China] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013).

[22] Meibao Cheng 程美宝, *Yujian Huangdong: 18-19 shiji zhujiangkou de xiaorenwu he dashijie* 遇见黄东：18-19 世纪珠江口的小人物和大世界 [Encounter with Huangdong: small figures and big world in the 18th and 19th centuries in Pearl River Mouth] (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2021).

global narrative of 'English-fashioned' turtle soup and how it arrived at foreigners' tables in Canton during the mid-nineteenth century.[23] Ching also mentions that curry dishes appeared on dinner tables of foreign residents would be interesting to study, but she does not give profound analysis on curry dishes, which leaves room for my research.

May-bo Ching's research on ordinary people in the Canton trade has built a solid foundation for my research. Her research shows great potential for writing 'history from below', from the perspectives of Chinese cooks and servants in Sino-Western relations during the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. As she argues, those Chinese servants who worked for foreigners had the lowest social status, but they acquired the most cutting-edge knowledge: 'the humblest but the most pioneering'(*zui beiwei que zui qianyan* 最卑微却最前沿). Ching also reminds us that their knowledge was not often considered 'Western knowledge' (*xixue* 西学), but this knowledge was useful and helpful for ordinary people to earn profits.[24] Ching has provided much rich material related to food and drink, which is very valuable for further studies. Ching mentions that she has not discovered material about the ways in which Chinese cooks learned to cook western food.[25] By examining American women's letters, my research provides evidence of the cooks' learning processes and illuminates how their knowledge was related to the gendered and racialized household structure of American families in Macao.

The research presented in this thesis builds upon the fruitful research in the fields of global food history and Chinese food history, with its recent scholarly focus on private traders and Chinese servants in Canton trade. By bringing the perspectives of food to the study of foreign traders' daily lives and their interactions with local Chinese in Canton trade, this research aims to uncover the nuanced power dynamics at play in food-related activities and shed new light on the experiences of foreign traders and Chinese labourers involved in the trade.

[23] May-bo Ching, 'The Flow of Turtle Soup from the Caribbean via Europe to Canton, and Its Modern American Fate', *Gastronomica*, 1 (2016), 79–89.
[24] Ibid., p.183–184.
[25] Ibid., p. 167.

Theories and Approaches

This research approaches the study of the Canton trade by looking at food and food-related activities, drawing on theories and approaches from food anthropology and food sociology. Thanks to the growing field of food studies, scholars now have the critical tools to analyse the meanings of food-related activities among different groups of people. May-bo Ching has highlighted that knowledge about food and cooking has not received as much attention in studies of Sino-Western cultural exchange due to the perceived hierarchy between mental and manual work, the distinction between theory and practice in the Western philosophical tradition, as well as the historical invisibility of the women, people of colour, immigrants, enslaved people, and lower-class people who were involved in food-related activities.[26] And it also related to the fact that, traditionally, the field of history has been dominated by scholars with limited embodied knowledge about growing, purchasing, processing, cooking, and serving food. Given the inequalities of ordinary people who managed food production, it is necessary to rediscover their experiences through historical analysis. With the development of feminist studies and racial studies, food historians can now more critically analyse food history from the perspectives of ordinary people.

Food philosopher Lisa M. Heldke invites us to understand foodmaking as 'a "mentally manual" activity, a "theoretically practical activity"—a "thoughtful practice"'.[27] Feminist food studies have also highlighted women's relationships with food and used feminist analysis to examine the relationship between food, gender, and power.[28] While studies of women's roles in food knowledge production have accumulated, food historians such as Amanda Herbert and Rachel Love Monroy remind us that Anglo-American women stole and erased enslaved people's knowledge and labour when they wrote recipes and cookbooks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[29] Feminist food historians remind us

[26] Lisa M. Heldke, 'Foodmaking as a Thoughtful Practice' in Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food, ed. By Deane W. Curtin, and Lisa M. Heldke (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 203-229.
[27] Ibid., p.203.
[28] Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber, 'Feminist Food Studies: A Brief History', in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. by Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), pp. 1–26.
[29] Rachel Love Monroy, 'You know I am no epicure': Enslaved Voices in Eliza Lucas Pinckney's Receipt Book, *The Recipe Project*, 2021, <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/17859#_ftn5> [accessed 15 April 2023]

to reconsider the multi-layered power dynamics in food knowledge production during the early modern period.

This research benefits from recent anthropological and sociological studies of food, particularly the theory of the agency of eating proposed by Emma-Jayne Abbots.[30] This theory considers how 'the human eating body, the material stuff of food, and cultural knowledges about food all dynamically interplay to shape social understandings of what and how we should—and should not—be eating.'[31] More importantly, Abbots considers how power plays in the interactions between body, food, and knowledge. This theory has helped me in analysing foreigners' eating and drinking activities in China. The process of how foreigners adapted to a new environment and a different food system provides an exciting opportunity for examining their agency in eating and how racial, gender, and class relations mediated their food practices. Furthermore, it encourages me to consider the interactions between eaters, food, and food-knowledge makers. In the context of the Canton trade, the boundary between these actors was often blurred. Sociological studies on commensality are also useful for examining both banquets and drinking practices. As Claude Fischler suggests, commensality is one of the most important articulations of human sociality in any society.[32] Although food sociologists suggest that commensality is about creating and reinforcing social relations, the reality of people in cross-cultural encounters might be different. It requires careful analysis of the pattern and practices of cross-cultural commensality.

Drawing on theories and approaches from food anthropology and sociology, as well as studies of feminist food history, my research demonstrates the need to rediscover the experiences of marginalized groups such as women and labourers. This research considers the interactions between foreign eaters, food with transnational features and food-knowledge makers from different backgrounds. Canton trade provides an intriguing and promising context to examine interactions between foreign eaters, Chinese and western food and Chinese food purveyors, cooks, and servants. Canton is specifically intriguing and promising area to study because it was not under direct colonial rule by European powers. Foreign traders were generally confined in a living quarter outside of city wall of Canton and under restrictions and regulations of Qing government. It means that the power dynamics between

---

[30] Emma-Jayne Abbots, *The Agency of Eating: Mediation, Food and the Body* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
[31] Ibid., p.1.
[32] Claude Fischler, 'Commensality, Society and Culture', *Social Science Information*, 3-4 (2011), 528–548 (p.529).

foreign traders and local people were different from those in many other trading ports under direct colonial control.

Methodology

This research explores various food-related topics to examine the power dynamics among different groups of people involved in the Canton trade. It examines people who were related to food procurement, management, making, and serving. It analyses the changes in representations of food and food culture that shaped Western perceptions of China, as well as the adaptation and localization of foreign food related to imperial and colonial expansion. Additionally, this research studies the dynamics of dinner tables where people from different backgrounds ate and drank together. These topics centre food, food culture, and occasions respectively. The variety of the nature of these topics means that each chapter requires different methodologies to uncover the stories behind them.

To investigate these topics, this research draws on methods from food history, global history, material culture history, and cultural history. Food history and global history are helpful in studying dishes and their global connections. Chapter 4 focuses on a specific dish: curry. It studies foreign traders' consumption of curry in Canton and Macao, by looking at foreigners' descriptions of curries, it uses methods from food history to trace two main ingredients that were used in the curry dishes in Canton and Macao. This chapter examines how these ingredients were imported to China and how they were used and understood in Chinese medicine and culinary culture. Furthermore, it looks at how foreign dishes were translated into Chinese and used by Chinese people. By using methods of global history, this chapter explores how curry acquired new meanings and new forms when it travelled along with merchants, their families and servants.

Culture history is particularly useful to examine representation of food culture. In Chapter 3, it focuses on Western perceptions of dairy culture in China. It applies the methods of cultural history. This chapter traces the representations of Chinese dairy culture in Western travel writings by missionaries, merchants, and diplomats beginning in the sixteenth century, examining how narratives about Chinese dairy culture changed in Western perceptions and contextualize these changes with western travellers' experiences in Canton and Macao. It also analyses these changes in the context of sociocultural environments of European societies to understand how these changes occurred and why.

Material culture studies provide useful tools to explore occasions where specific materials were involved in. Chapter 5 focuses on occasions like dinners and banquets. It studies foreigners' dinner tables in Canton and Macao and draws on methods from both material culture history and cultural history. It pays attention to the materiality of utensils, such as chopsticks, to show the role that chopsticks played in Sino-foreign interactions at the dinner table. I also analyse the representations of 'chopsticks dinners' in Western travel writings to uncover how attitudes of foreigners changed towards Chinese food culture and Chinese civilisation. Furthermore, it explores how the knowledge of Chinese dinners and Chinese food culture constructed foreigners' experiences of dining with Chinese merchants. To analyse changes in the meanings of Chinese dinners, it uses the lens of gender and race to see how power mediated the construction and changes of discourses of the Chinese dinner.

By drawing methods from food history, material culture history, and cultural history to study various food-related topics, this research aims to decipher social, cultural, and material aspects and multi-layered meanings of eating and drinking activities of foreigners in Canton and Macao. These methods are also very useful to analyse different types of primary sources.

Chapter Plan

There are five chapters in the dissertation. These chapters aim to provide an analysis of different aspects of the eating and drinking experiences of foreign traders in Canton and Macao. The first chapter, 'Provisioning the Canton Trade: The Agency of the Comprador', focuses on the role of compradors, a group of Chinese people who provided provisions for factories and ships. This chapter explains how Chinese compradors became essential for providing food to foreign factories and ships and taking on the responsibilities of household management in foreign factories. It argues that, although compradors were vulnerable figures because of their lower social status, they were powerful figures who used their agency to nurture foreigners' dependence on their services.

The second chapter explores foreigners' importing cows to supply themselves and their families with fresh milk during their time in China. In particular, this chapter focuses on foreign women's association with food and household management. It shows how foreign women built their social and support networks in Macao by exchanging food and information about food. Taking cow-keeping as an example, the chapter explores foreign women's

interactions with their Chinese servants and shows that foreigners' introduction of foreign food was dependant on their Chinese servants' and cooks' knowledge of and skills. It presents how culinary knowledge was exchanged between the Chinese people and foreigners in the context of foreign households in Macao.

The third chapter moves beyond cow-keeping to look at western perceptions about cows in China and Chinese dairy culture. It investigates the process of understanding and constructing Chinese dairy culture in Western eyes. It investigates how the concept of the absence of dairy products in China was constructed and how it related to Sino-Anglo relationships through time. In particular, this chapter points out how western perceptions about Chinese dairy culture related to the development of tea-drinking culture in Europe. It discusses how foreign residents' living experiences shaped western narratives of Chinese dairy culture and food culture in general.

The fourth chapter focuses on the curry dishes that were consumed in foreign factories in China. This chapter focuses on this specific dish, which has an Indian background, and shows how it was adapted through the Canton trade. This study explores the features of curries in China and their roles in the daily lives of foreign traders and their families in Macao. It explores ingredients such as turmeric and chili peppers in curries and the global networks which brought them to the tables of foreign traders in China. It also considers how people in Canton and Macao understood the ingredients of curries and used them in Chinese food and medical culture. It also looks at the role of Chinese cooks played in the process of the modification and transmission of curry dishes in China.

The fifth chapter explores how food from different origins came together on the dinner table and connected both foreigners and Chinese through eating and drinking. This chapter focuses on foreigners' dinner tables as the site of negotiation of identities and relationships between foreigners and Chinese in Canton and Macao. The chapter investigates foreigners' descriptions of dinners that they were invited to by Chinese officials and merchants. These descriptions demonstrate the foreigners' changing attitudes towards Chinese dinners. As a comparison, I also analyse foreigners' dinner tables in their factories to show how power shaped the content and forms of their dinner tables. This chapter shows that, although foreigners differentiated themselves from Chinese people and culture by establishing narratives about 'chopstick dinners', their own dinner tables were also influenced by Chinese food culture, and they actively incorporated some Chinese food into their daily consumption habits.

These five chapters provide a holistic view of the eating and drinking experiences of foreign communities in Canton and Macao during the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. It offers an analysis of specific eating and drinking events to show the power dynamics among different groups of people. This research brings a micro-perspective through stories of individuals, such as the American woman, Rebecca Kinsman, together with a macro-view of the Sino-Western relations during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Gender and race are useful analytical tools to study Canton in both micro and macro perspectives. The discussions about foreign women and their relationships with Chinese servants in Macao and their interactions with Chinese officials at dinner parties expands our understanding of gender and racial relations in China trade. The thesis sheds light on figures from lower classes, such as compradors, cooks, servants, and cow-keepers, who were involved in Canton trade. It shows the ways in which food connected people from different racial, class, ethnic, and gender backgrounds. Boundaries that were seemingly built on cultural differences and power relations were not stable given the changes in the eating and drinking practices of the foreign communities in Canton and Macao. By examining racial, ethnic, class, and gender politics around food, this research sheds new light on our understanding of China trade.

Primary Sources

Sources related to food and drink, foreigners' eating and drinking experiences, and the activities of the compradors, cooks, and servants are rich in this period, but they are scattered amongst different types of materials. Since this research investigates different activities and materials related to food, I must use all possible materials to discover how food and drink were produced, presented, consumed, served, and understood by different groups of people. This research uses both traditional materials for examining China trade in the eighteenth centuries, such as English East India Company (EIC) records held in the British Library and Foreign Office records in the National Archives, UK (NAUK, Kew) as well as unconventional materials and unpublished archives to provide new sources that uncover new voices from, for example, American women.

First, this research uses English EIC records stored in the British Library. In particular, I examined Factory Records of China since 1699, which was the beginning of the establishment of English factories in Canton. This research uses 'China materials' and 'Diary

and Consultations of the Council in China'.[33] This source provides information about the figure of Chinese compradors and their work in Canton factories. These materials recorded Chinese compradors' activities, EIC regulations on this figure and EIC, and Chinese authorities' negotiations for compradors' fees. With the help of modern technology, the factory records could be accessed from the internet. It is convenient to search using keywords and examine a substantial number of volumes. However, only searching with keywords might have led to omissions of important information. To avoid this problem, I also read physical copies of some volumes to search for more information.

Records from the Foreign Office serve similar research purposes. I mainly consulted 'East India Company: Select Committee of Supercargoes, Chinese Secretary's Office: Chinese-language Correspondence and Papers' stored in The National Archives at Kew.[34] This correspondence between Chinese merchants, Chinese officials, and English EIC provides information about the communications and negotiations between the Chinese and English EIC. I use this source on the chapter about compradors to analyse how the English EIC interacted with Chinese officials regarding the Chinese compradors.

I also consulted published Chinese official records to study the compradors. These materials have been selected and edited by scholars for the study of Sino-Western relations and history of customs. In particular, I used *Collection of Ming-Qing documents concerning Macao affairs* (Ming qing shiqi aomen wenti dangan wenxian huibian 明清时期澳门问题档案文献汇编), *Collection of Documents of Modern Diplomatic History of China* (Jindai zhongguo waijiaoshi ziliao jiyao 近代中国外交史资料辑要) and *Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs* (Yue haiguan zhi 粤海关志) .[35] These collected volumes of official materials provide information from the perspective of Qing government. They are useful for providing insight into the official regulations that governed Sino-Western relations. In particular, I investigate

[33] London, British Library, IOR/G/12/5; IOR/G/12/7; IOR/G/12/8; IOR/G/12/31; IOR/G/12/33; IOR/G/12/216; IOR/G/12/219; IOR/G/12/240A; IOR/G/12/290.
[34] London, The National Archives, FO 1048/22/44; FO 1048/22/47; FO 1048/11/84.
[35] *Collection of Ming-Qing documents concerning Macao affairs* (Ming qing shiqi aomen wenti dangan wenxian huibian 明清时期澳门问题档案文献汇编), ed. by Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Danganguan, Aomen Jijin hui, Jinan Daxue Guji Yanjiusuo 中国第一历史档案馆、澳门基金会、暨南大学古籍研究所 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999); Tingfu Jiang 蒋廷黻, *Jindai Zhongguo Waijiao Shiliao Jiyao* 近代中国外交史资料辑要 [Compilation of Primary Sources of Modern Chinese Diplomatic History] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008); Liang Tingnan 梁廷楠, *Yuehaiguan zhi* 粤海关志 [Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou Renmin Chubanshe, 2001).

Chinese official documents pertaining to their regulations on Chinese compradors and servants.

My research also draws on substantial accounts written by foreign merchants, missionaries, and diplomats who travelled to China during the seventeenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. They are regarded as 'a key source for the study of global encounters in the early modern world' by historians.[36] The letters, journals and accounts they wrote about their stay in China provide first-hand observations and rich information about their eating and drinking experiences, opinions with Chinese food culture, and interactions with Chinese merchants, compradors, cooks, and servants. By analysing the language used in these travel writings, this study explore how western perceptions of Chinese food culture and China changed with changes in Sino-Western relations.

Moreover, this research consults American women's diaries and correspondence with their families in China and America. In addition to material from Harriet Low, who is studied the most, I used materials from Rebecca Kinsman. Some of her correspondence and diary have been published.[37] I also used Mary Parry Sword's unpublished correspondence and diary from her stay in Macao in 1840s.[38] These materials provide insight into American women's personal lives in Macao. Kinsman's materials are very rich given their focus on eating and drinking experiences and her stories about cows. Sword's materials provide fewer descriptions about her eating and drinking experiences. However, they record the same events that Kinsman writes about since both lived in Macao during the same period (1843–1845). Her materials provide opportunities for comparing the women's different attitudes and experiences towards the same thing.

Another primary source that I found particularly useful but has received less scholarly attention are the Comprador's Account books. I mainly used the Comprador's Account books

---

[36] Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall, 'Material Culture and the Other: European Encounters with Chinese Porcelain, ca. 1650–1800', *Journal of World History*, 1 (2012), 87–113 (p.13).

[37] 'Nathaniel Kinsman, Merchant of Salem, in the China Trade, from the Kinsman Family Manuscripts.' By Mary Kinsman Munroe, in *Essex Institute Historical Collections* (EIHC), 85(1950); 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China, Excepts from Letters of 1845', Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC*, 86 (1951); 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman on A Trip to Manila', Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC*, 87 (1951); 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China, 1846' Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC,* 87(1952).

[38] Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Sword Family Papers，Box 6 Letters of Mary Parry Sword, 1837-1845; Box 7 Journals of Mary Parry Sword, 1837-1842.

from Russell & Co and Carrington Paper.[39] These account books provide direct information about the food and drink that were purchased for the foreign factories on a daily basis. It provides information not only about specific foodstuffs that foreigners consumed but also about their quantities, prices, and the time when they were purchased. It is very useful for studying the diets and tastes of foreigners in China.

I also consulted local gazetteers in Guangdong province.[40] They were very helpful for analysing specific food ingredients and their use in certain regions. Local gazetteers contain key information about agriculture and food culture in local regions. In particular, local gazetteers often contain a section called *wuchan* (物产), which means 'local food products' or 'crops and products'. This section recorded local varieties of vegetables, fruits, and specialty foods and was important for contemporary compilers of gazetteers because it 'provided a framework for locals to boast about the high quality of local crops and products.'[41] Therefore, this section provides information not only about the growth and use of certain foods but also about local people's attitudes and understandings of them.

Last but not the least, this research uses English-Chinese vocabulary books that foreigners published in the early nineteenth century, such as Robert Morrison's *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* published in 1828, and vocabulary books and manuscripts compiled by Chinese in Canton and Macao.[42] They provide information about the translation of foreign dishes in Chinese. English-Chinese vocabulary books published by missionaries have received much more scholarly attention than those compiled by Chinese. English vocabulary books complied by Chinese people in Canton and Macao often targeted Chinese people, such as compradors, servants, and cooks, who were involved in Canton trade. They often contain the category of *shimu men* (食物门), which means 'the category of food'. This type of source

[39] Washington DC, Library of Congress, Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894, Box 9, Reel 7, Account books in 1820; Providence, Rhodes Island Historical Society, Carrington Paper, MSS 333, Comprador's account.
[40] Yulin Hao,郝玉麟, ed., *Yongzheng Guangdong Tongzhi* (1730) 雍正广东通志 [The Gazetteer of Guangzhou in Yongzhen Era], in *Jingyin Wenyuange Siku Quanshu* 景印文渊阁四库全书, reprint (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan gufen youxian gongsi, 1983)
[41] Swislocki, p. 13.
[42] Robert Morrison, *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect*, Part 1, (Macao: East India comp. Press, 1828); London, British Library, *Hongmao tongyong fanhua* 红毛通用番话[*Common Foreign Expressions of the Red-Haired People*]; Berlin, Berlin State Library, *People* Hongmao fanhua maoyi xuzhi 红毛番话贸易须知 [*Necessary Business Expressions of Red-Haired*].

provides information about the culinary language that Chinese compradors, cooks, and servants used in their working lives.

By using different types of primary sources, this research endeavours to show the perspectives of people from different racial, gender, and class backgrounds. In doing so, this research examines new groups in the well-studied history of Canton trade. These sources provide different angles for understanding material, cultural, social, medical, and political meanings of food and drink and food-related activities. Some of these sources have never been used to analyse food culture. By examining these sources through the lens of food, this research attempts to show the power of food studies in historical writing.

Chapter 1:
Provisioning the Canton Trade: The Agency of the Comprador

Introduction

This chapter explores the figure of the comprador (*maiban* 买办). Compradors were licensed by local governments to provide food and other necessities for foreigners in Canton and Macao. This research begins with the compradors because they played an essential role in providing food and managing the household work related to food and drink in the foreign factories in Canton and Macao. In the scholarship, compradors have been perceived as controversial figures, especially by nationalist historians because, beginning in the 1840s, they increasingly participated in business, industries, and politics related to western powers. The meaning of 'comprador' has been extended beyond the profession itself and is used to refer anyone who works for foreigners and betray their people and nation. In the last century, compradors were often portrayed as traitors and exploiters who impeded Chinese modernisation.[1] Today, the term is still associated with negative connotations in nationalist narratives. For example, in today's mainstream Chinese social media, Sina Weibo, nationalist netizens use *maiban* to attack those who support American (or Western) values.[2] This type of '*hanjian*' (汉奸, lit. 'traitor') narrative has more recently been challenged by historians. As Gary Chi-hung Luk points out, for example, the usage of terms like '*hanjian*' and 'collaboration' to label ordinary Chinese people like compradors cannot adequately explain the Chinese assistance of foreigners during the Opium war. Luk argues that the Chinese accommodation of foreigners in the lower Pearl River delta should be regarded instead as an

[1] Baozhang Nie 聂宝璋, *Zhongguo Maiban Zichanjieji De Fasheng* 中国买办资产阶级的发生 [The Emergence of the Class of Comprador] (Beijing: Zhonguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1979); Yifeng Huang 黄逸峰, *Jiuzhongguo de maiban Jieji* 旧中国的买办阶级 [The Class of Compradors in Old China] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982).

[2] A recent example is Dr. Wenhong Zhang (张文宏), a well-known but controversial doctor in Shanghai, who was negatively labeled a *maiban* because he supported using Paxlovid, which is produced by the American medical giant, Pfizer. Dr. Wenhong Zhang and many other people who had different opinions with the 'zero Covid' policies suffered from cyberattacks in 2022.

extension of local people's activities before 1839 and should situate their accommodating activities in the socioeconomic context of their daily lives in the mid-Qing Guangdong area.[3]

Yen-p'ing Hao was one of the first historians to acknowledge the pioneering role of compradors in Chinese history.[4] His book on the comprador laid the foundations for historians to analyse contributions of compradors in the history of Chinese modernisation. He argues that compradors' entrepreneurial skills and commercial knowledge contributed to China's early industrialization. He believes that compradors acted as a bridge between China and the West during the nineteenth century. In the past ten years, historians have provided fresh perspectives for exploring compradors, revaluating the contributions of compradors in modern Chinese history. Historians moved beyond analysing the economic, industrial, and political roles of comprador and began examining their daily lives and their cultural impact on modern Chinese history.[5]

Themes and approaches for the historical analysis of compradors have accumulated, but most historical work focuses on the period following the Opium War, when compradors were directly involved in foreign trade and acted as agents of their foreign employers. Yen-p'ing Hao noticed that it was the compradors rather than their superiors, the linguists (*tongshi* 通事), who took the place of Hong merchants after the collapse of Canton System in the 1840s.[6] He acknowledges that the compradors' rise was partly the result of their experience under the Canton System, but he does not provide any detailed analysis of compradors in the Canton trade before the 1840s. Moreover, he does not provide any solid explanation of how

[3] Gary Chi-hung Luk, 'Accommodating foreigners in a littoral borderland: The lower Pearl River Delta during the Opium War', *Modern China*, 1 (2022), pp. 197-228.
[4] Yen-p'ing Hao, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge between East and West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
[5] Bo Hu 胡波, *Xiangshan Maiban Yu Jindai Zhongguo* 香山买办与近代中国 [Xiangshan Compradors and Modern China] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2007); *Maiban Yu Jindai Zhongguo* 买办与近代中国[Comprador and Modern China], ed. by Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue Wenhua Yanjiusuo Wenwuguan and Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue 香港中文大学文化研究所文物馆、香港中文大学 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2009).
[6] Canton System, as historian Frederic Wakeman, Jr. argues, was a system of hierarchic subordination that to regulate China's European trade in Canton. In this system, foreigners were subordinated to the licensed Chinese merchants, known collectively as the 'Cohong'. The latter were subordinated to the imperially appointed superintendent of maritime customs at Canton, known as 'Hoppo'. There was a debate on the period of Canton System, while historians like Frederic Wakeman, Jr., sustains that it covers from 1760 to 1834, Paul Van Dyke argues that as far as the daily transactions and the basic structure of the trade concerned, the entire period from 1700 to 1842 should be referred as the 'Canton System'.

the compradors' experience under the Canton System contributed to their success in later periods.

In a more recent book, *Chinese Middlemen in Hong Kong's Colonial Economy, 1830–1890*, published in 2017, Kaori Abe focuses on compradors' roles in the economy and politics of Hong Kong during the nineteenth century. Contrary to the traditional view that the colonial economy of Hong Kong was dominated by Western companies, Abe argues that Chinese compradors played a key role in the formation and development of Hong Kong's economy and society. Kaori Abe also raises a question about why compradors became dominant in the nineteenth century and not another type of licensed Chinese intermediary, such as the linguists, the Hong merchants, or the pilots. She proposes that the importance of providing food and water made compradors important: 'Without such basic supplies, foreign traders were unable to survive and conduct trade, and therefore foreigners hired compradors.'[7] This view provides a simplistic picture of the profession before the collapse of the Canton System. It hardly explains why foreigners relied on Chinese compradors when they could source food supplies from other places, especially during the early nineteenth century when linguists and Hoppomen (custom officers) participated in provision trade.

Paul Van Dyke's research on the provision trade under the Canton System provides a more detailed analysis of compradors' profession and the changes to the provision trade before the 1840s. In the article, 'Pigs, Chickens, and Lemonade: The Provisions Trade in Canton, 1700–1840', which was published in 2000, he offers a detailed introduction of compradors' various responsibilities when foreign companies employed them.[8] Van Dyke's research covers a great variety of primary sources from English, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, French, and American trade companies. His research studies the situations in which those companies employed compradors, especially of their engagement fees. He points out that the increase of comprador's engagement fees encouraged foreign traders to find alternatives, which led to the weakening of Chinese authorities' control over foreigners. This weakening thus contributed to the collapse of the Canton System. His analysis of the provision trade is mainly used to measure the effectiveness of the Hoppos' control over foreign traders. Van Dyke does not discuss the uniqueness of food provisions other than their fundamental role as providing sustenance. He also does not explain in any detail the three intriguing foodstuffs—

[7] Kaori Abe, *Chinese Middlemen in Hong Kong's Colonial Economy, 1830–1890* (London: Routledge, 2017), p.2.
[8] Paul A. Van Dyke, 'Pigs, Chickens, and Lemonade: The Provisions Trade in Canton, 1700–1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 1 (2000), pp.111–144.

pigs, chicken, and lemonade—of the title of his article. Instead, he takes the price of provisions and compradors' engagement fees as primary factors that impacted the relationship between foreigners and compradors. He does not consider cultural and social perspectives of food provisions and management so that his depiction of compradors is primarily functional. As a consequence, in his analysis of the power dynamics of Sino-Western relationships, the compradors lack agency.

Historians of China trade and Sino-Western relations predominately perceive food provision as mainly important for the survival of foreigners in China. This perspective not only underestimates the role of food in the traders' lives in China but also downplays the role of the compradors. This chapter considers the fundamental role of compradors played in the everyday lives of foreign traders in Canton. In doing so, this chapter analyses the complexity of the compradors' profession and their responsibility for providing food to both foreigners living in factories and sailors on ships. This chapter argues that providing food for foreign traders and sailors was a complicated and profound responsibility, which required a deep understanding of human relations and cultures. This was particularly difficult to acquire, but important to obtain for people engaged in trade in China because communication between different groups of people was limited. Compradors' responsibilities went beyond food provisions; however, these responsibilities were interrelated with supplying food and reliant on the trust and mutual understanding built on supplying food to foreigners and their ships.

This chapter explains how compradors became essential figures in the trade in China and how they used their agency to ensure that foreigners remained dependent on their services, so that the compradors continued to earn a profit and maintained their position in the foreign factories. Foreigners' daily consumption was highly dependent on the compradors' work. Compradors were vulnerable figures who navigated between Chinese authorities and their foreign employers. Both the Chinese authorities and the foreigners held power over compradors. They could be punished by Chinese authorities for getting involved in illegal activities. They could also be punished by their foreign employers for not fulfilling their needs. Compradors were vulnerable because they held little economic and political power before the end of nineteenth century. Formally speaking, they were in a low position in the hierarchy of the Canton System and were perceived as minor figures in the eyes of Chinese authorities. Although compradors did not hold formal power, their essential roles in providing food and household management gave them a great deal of informal power in their hands. By discovering the agency of compradors in foreign factories and in Whampoa, this research

reveals the invisible veins that these figures channelled and how they gained their informal power in a daily basis.

I will use the concept of 'go-betweens' to look at compradors and their activities which connected different peoples and cultures in Canton. Kapil Raj argues that in the relationships between maritime Asia and western Europe countries, there were at least five major functional types of intermediaries: the interpreter-translator, the merchant-banker, the comprador, the legal representative or attorney, and the knowledge broker.[9] Among these go-betweens, compradors have received less attention from historians than the other intermediaries. Historians of the Canton trade have paid more attention to analysing Hong merchants and their interactions with foreigners prior to the Opium War.[10] There is substantial research about some of the major Hong merchant families and influential individuals, such as Houqua (伍秉鉴).[11] Hong merchants have received more scholarly attention because they were often regarded as key participants in foreign trade and Sino-Western relationships. Under the Canton System, Hong merchants were the only group allowed to trade with foreigners. They directly participated in foreign trade and some of them developed intimate relationships with foreign traders during years of commercial and social interactions. Linguists, figures in the Canton System with a status below the Hong merchants, have received a recent increase in scholarly attention. Historian Si Jia has examined the role of linguists in the communication between China and the West. She focuses on their roles in translation and negotiations from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century in Canton and Macao and compares them with official translators from a later period.[12] Translation scholar Lawrence Wang-chi Wong (Wang Hongzhi 王宏志) publishes

---

[9] Kapil Raj, 'Mapping Knowledge Go-Betweens in Calcutta, 1770–1820', in Simon Schaffer et al (eds), *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009), p. 108.

[10] Weng Eang Cheong, *The Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade, 1684–1798* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997); Paul Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao. Politics and Strategies in eighteenth-century China trade* (Hongkong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011); Shuo Wang, *Negotiating Friendships: A Canton Merchant Between East and West in the Early 19th Century* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020).

[11] John Wong, 'Global Positioning: Houqua and His China Trade Partners in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2012); Shuo Wang, *Negotiating Friendships*.

[12] Jia Si 司佳，'Cong Tongshi Dao Fanyiguan—Lun Jindai Zhongwai Yuyan Jiechushi Shang De Zhu, Beidong Juese De Zhuanyi' 从"通事"到"翻译官"—论近代中外语言接触史上的主、被动角色的转移 [From 'Linguists' to 'Official Translators': On the Transformation between Active and Passive Roles in the History of Language Contact between China and Western Countries]' *Fudan Xuebao*, 3 (2002), pp. 44-50.

substantially about the role of translation, translators, and the figure of linguists in Sino-British relations. In particular, he studies the role and position of linguists played in Canton system by examining incidents such as the 'Ayow incident' in 1814.[13] Hong merchants and linguists were valued by historians mainly for their roles in economic, political, cultural, and communicational activities with foreign traders. Compared with compradors, they were regarded as enjoying more agency in Sino-Western relations. The role of compradors played in Sino-Western relations has been deemed as mainly material and exists at the bottom of the hierarchy of intermediaries, thus received less scholarly attention.[14]

However, as Raj argues, the physical, transactional, and representational forms of intermediaries are intertwined and are very often practised by the same individuals. To procure food for foreigners, compradors communicated, translated, and negotiated with their foreign employers, ship crews, Chinese servants, labours, merchants, and officials. Although, before the 1840s, they were not allowed to directly engage in foreign trade or political issues, they connected disparate worlds and cultures through their provisioning services.[15] The go-between's role is more than intermediary. As Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels point out, Renaissance go-betweens were liminal figures who forever crossed borders and problematised the notion of borders.[16] Similarly, compradors as go-betweens constantly crossed physical borders between the Chinese world and the foreign factories, and the cultural borders between the Chinese and western worlds. Go-betweens thrived on the ambivalent boundary between China and the West. Their presence mediated differences between two different worlds and constantly questioned the boundary between them.

In order to understand compradors as go-betweens, this chapter traces the changes in regulations that governed this group of people over time. By figuring out different responsibilities of compradors for ships in Whampoa and factories in Canton, this chapter investigates the different ways in which Chinese compradors connected foreign traders and other Chinese people involved in foreign trade. It argues that compradors were ordinary

---

[13] Hongzhi Wang 王宏志 '1814 Nian A Yao Shijian: Jindai Zhongying Jiaowang Zhong De Tongshi' 1814 年"阿耀事件": 近代中英交往中的通事 [The Ayew Incident: Linguists in Sino-British Relations in the Nineteenth Century]', *Journal of Chinese Studies*, 57 (2014), pp. 203-232.

[14] Alida Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

[15] *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820*, ed. by Simon Schaffer et al. (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009), p.14.

[16] Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels, eds. *Renaissance go-betweens: Cultural exchange in early modern Europe*. Vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), p.6.

people who were situated between Chinese authorities and foreign merchants, between Chinese culture and Western culture, between Chinese servants and foreign employers, and who accumulated knowledge and skills in navigating multi-layered relationships. They had agency in nurturing and maintaining foreigners' dependence on them and did so for their own interests to survive and thrive in their profession.

This chapter uses five kinds of primary sources to investigate the figure of the comprador and evaluate their roles in Canton trade. The first kind of source are the Factory records of English East India Company (EIC), which are stored in the British Library. Records related to Canton factory are mainly classified in IOR/G/12. These provide information about the English EIC and Chinese authorities' interactions regarding the compradors. They also include the English EIC's regulations on compradors. These records provide the EIC's perspective of compradors and records their interactions with Chinese authorities. The second kind of source is 'East India Company: Select Committee of Supercargoes, Chinese Secretary's Office: Chinese-language Correspondence and Papers', stored in The National Archives at Kew. It contains Chinese-language correspondence and papers from the Office of the Chinese secretary to the Select Committee of Supercargoes of the EIC in Canton and Macao from 1793 to 1834. These records provide information about how Chinese authorities and English EIC dealt with issues related to provision and the compradors. The main weakness of this source is that these correspondences were often made when foreigners had problems with compradors or when compradors were involved in illegal activities. Information about the daily activities of compradors is rarely found in this source.

For foreigners' interactions and impressions about the compradors, this chapter mainly uses the published travel writings of Western travellers, traders, and missionaries. These materials provide rich sources about foreigners' attitudes about compradors and their profession. This type of source includes the diaries and letters of American women, including Rebecca Kinsman and Mary Parry Sword, who spent years in Macao. Foreigners' travel writings, personal letters, and diaries are often biased because of the writer's class and race. Foreigners who spent less time in China had negative attitudes towards Chinese people from lower socio-economic classes. This chapter also consults contemporary English newspapers, such as *The Canton Register*, the first English newspaper published in China, that were published in Canton. The papers recorded contemporary events related to compradors as well as comments about them. English newspapers provided useful information for foreign residents in China and for overseas English readers. They reflect contemporary foreign traders' interests about the compradors. Lastly, this chapter uses compradors' account books

from two American firms. A Comprador's Account dated 1820 from Russell & Co is stored in the Library of Congress, Washington DC, US. I also used two comprador account books from Carrington Papers, which are stored in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island, US, that are dated 1803 and 1805, respectively. These compradors' account books provide detailed information about the provisions that compradors purchased daily. More importantly, they contain the quantity and price of each item, and thereby provide important information about food provision for both ships and factories.

It should be noted that none of those sources were directly written by compradors themselves. They were all produced either by foreigners or Chinese authorities. Thus, these sources do not provide perspectives from compradors themselves. Nevertheless, with these sources, this chapter endeavours to deliver some perspectives on the figure of compradors.

The Emergence of Compradors in Canton Trade

The word 'comprador' stems from the Portuguese and means 'buyer'. One of the first references to compradors in Portuguese records (1507) is made by Afonso de Albuquerque (1453–1515), who was governor of the Estado da India (the State of India) from 1510 until his death in 1515.[17] This record suggests that the appearance of the profession was related to Portuguese colonial activities in India. The word 'comprador' and its meaning may have been brought to Macao by Portuguese traders from India. One of the earliest references of comprador in English is from *Diary of Richard Cocks* (1615). Richard Cocks, the head of the English East India Company in Japan, mentions a comprador employed by Hollanders in Japan and introduces the figure as a 'cats buyer'. According to Cocks, 'the Hollanders…thrust their comprador (or cats buyer) out of dores for a treacherous knave, who, with hym that is dead, have confessed of much goods (as cloves, mace, pepper, and stuffs) which are stolen'.[18] This record suggests that the comprador, who was hired by Dutch

[17]Afonso de Albuquerque, *Comentarios do grande Afonso de Albuquerque capitão geral que foi das Indias Orientais em tempo do muito poderoso Rey D. Manuel o primeiro deste nome* [The Commentareis of the Great Afonso Albuquerque Captain General Who Went from the East Indies in the Time of the Very Powerful King D. Manuel the First of This Name], vol. 2 (Lisbon: Impresa nacional, 1973; originally published: Lisbon, 1576), p. 51.
[18] Richard Cocks, *Diary of Richard Cocks, Cape-Merchant in the English Factory in Japan 1615–1622, with Correspondence: Volume I*, ed. by Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.19.

merchants in Japan, was involved in a theft. The 'cats buyer' might suggest that the comprador's responsibilities included buying cats for foreign factories.[19] These cats might have been useful for protecting goods from rats. This is the only entry in Cocks' diary about compradors. He does not mention any further responsibilities of compradors who were hired in Japan's factories.

The role of the comprador is clearer in Charles Lockyer's *An Account of Trade in India*, which records the situation of compradors in China in 1704. He writes that:

> Every Factory had formerly a Compardore, whose Business was to buy in Provisions, and other Necessarys: But the Hoppos have made them all such Knaves[20], by exacting Money for their Liberty to serve in that Stations, that they must be notoriously so, or break in the Bussiness; whence they have of late been quite discarded, and their Places supply'd with Europeans who do soon know enough to prove Compradors were useless from the Beginning; however, you may keep one of them a Week or a Fortnight, to initiate your Steward in the Weights, Prices, Markets, and way of buying, &c.[21]

This record introduces the compradors' responsibilities and their relationships with the Hoppo and foreigners during the early eighteenth century. It shows that compradors were commonly employed by foreign traders to buy provisions and other necessities for factories. However, with intervention from the Hoppos, compradors had to pay to entering the profession. This change might result in an increase in the comprador's fee. Foreign traders were unsatisfied with this situation and replaced compradors with Europeans to avoid paying extra fees for provisioning goods. However, foreign traders did not fully give up hiring compradors. Since the traders were unfamiliar with the Chinese market and currency, they needed a local comprador to supply provisions and help their stewards become familiar with 'Weights, Prices, Markets and way of buying, &c.' Although foreigners had much liberty in

---

[19] Van Dyke mentions that many foreign companies purchased cats regularly. Cats were possibly used for rodent control. See Van Dyke, 'Pigs, Chickens, and Lemonade', p.118.
[20] According to OED, 'Knaves' in this context could mean 'A dishonest unprincipled man; a cunning unscrupulous rogue' see: 'Knave, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/103934> [accessed 29 April 2023].
[21] Charles Lockyer, *An Account of the Trade in India: Containing Rules for Good Government in Trade, Price Courants, and Tables: With Descriptions of Fort St. George, Acheen, Malacca, Condore, Canton, Anjengo, Muskat, Gombroon, Surat, Goa, Carwar, Telichery, Panola, Calicut, the Cape of Good-Hope, and St. Helena: To which is Added, an Account of the Management of the Dutch in their Affairs in India* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1711), p.108.

choosing European or Chinese compradors to supply provisions, a Chinese comprador equipped with knowledge of the local market made them indispensable, especially in the early years before foreign traders settled in Canton. This record also shows that, as early as 1704, the Hoppo had started managing Chinese compradors and provision trade by collecting fees.

Before the 1730s, as the Canton System had not been established, there were no formal regulations on compradors. Foreign traders had much freedom in choosing their compradors and receiving fresh provisions from local markets. On 19 June 1723, English EIC supercargoes visited the Hoppo and demanded the liberty to choose linguists, compradors, and servants.[22] Their demand was approved by the Hoppo and their ships were given an order to go up to Whampoa.[23] Beginning in 1731, Chinese officials regulated the compradors. In August 1731, ship captains for the English EIC sent letters to Council of Supercargoes in Canton and complained that their compradors were taken away from them and that they were obliged to pay considerably more for provisions than previously. They asked for protection from the Council but intervention from the Council failed.[24]

Under these circumstances, in 1732, Colin Campbell (1686–1757), a Scottish merchant who co-founded the Swedish East India Company, sailed to China and attempted to trade. In his diary, he states how he hired a ship comprador:

> as Capt Kitching was best acquainted with the buying of provisions here for the ships Company, I had left him to keep the Account with the Comprador after consulting together what was proper for Dieting them here, I mention'd this on purpose to take it out of his power to cheat the Company either by his Knavery (which I much suspected) or Ignorance in making wrong & foolish Bargains or by putting things to Account that he never bought &c And to take care to selling nothing that belongd to the ship.[25]

---

[22] A supercargo was a chief trader who was responsible for overseeing the cargo and its sale. They were called 'Taipan 大班' in Chinese.
[23] London, British Library, IOR/G/12/8, 19 June 1723. fol 1430.
[24] IOR/G/12/31, fols.78–82.
[25] Colin Campbell, *A Passage to China: Colin Campbell's Diary of the First Swedish East India Company Expedition to China, 1732–1733,* ed. by Paul Hallberg and Christian Koninckx (Göteborg: Royal Society of Arts and Science, 1996), p.87. This diary was written by Colin Campbell after the voyage according to his memories and some loose papers preserved. He explained that he had to destroy his papers and writings because he was stopped by Dutch ships at the Straits of Sunda to prevent Dutch seized information of Swedish company.

Campbell mentions that the comprador had the power to cheat the company. This power came from their understanding of the Chinese provision market and their strong connections with different kinds of food suppliers in Canton, which was not well understood by the foreign traders. Because of the language barrier and physical confinement of foreigners, it was difficult for supercargoes and their servants to have the same knowledge that the Chinese compradors did. Information and connections were important for successful food trade, and it took time to build these connections.

The Swedish East India Company's first expedition to China occurred in 1732. Colin Campbell, as the first supercargo, was very cautious with each step in establishing trade with China. Before he joined Swedish East India Company, Campbell worked for Ostend Company and went to Canton in 1726, so that he had already had experience and connections for Canton trade. During his first expedition to China as the first supercargo, he took extra care with competition from other European companies. He paid attention to other European companies' operations in Canton and tried to avoid mistakes they had made which might lead to a loss of money for the company and himself. He compared the price of provisions he settled with compradors to that of other companies and was content with the fact that his company spent less on provisions than did other European companies.[26]

Under the new regulations of 1731, foreigners did not have much liberty in choosing their own compradors. Therefore, Campbell was afraid that Chinese compradors, under pressure from Chinese officers, would charge them more money:

> A custom the Hoppo had or some of his servants to make the Compradores the Europeans imployd either for their ships or Factorys to pay them some 100 Tales others 150 by way of present for suffering them to act for us, which obligd the Compradores to lay so much a higher price on the provisions we bought of them.[27]

Under the Canton system, the Chinese officials at Canton required that Hong merchants guarantee the linguists, the linguists guarantee the compradors, and the compradors guarantee the servants and workmen.[28] Compradors were placed at the lower position of the hierarchy,

---

[26] Ibid. For more discussion of Colin Campbell's expedition to China, see Hellman, p.75–81; Yinghe Jiang 江莹河 '*Kelin Kanbeier Riji Chutan——Zaoqi Ruidian Dui Hua Maoyi Yanjiu* 《科林 坎贝尔日记》初探——早期瑞典对华贸易研究 [A Preliminary Study of The Diary of Colin Campbell A Preliminary Research of The Diary of Colin Campbell——A Research of Early Swedish Trade with China]', *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 6 (2011), pp. 120-128.

[27] Campbell, *A Passage to China*, p.125.

[28] The imperial officials that gave orders and regulations to the Hong merchants included

below Hong merchants and linguists, and during this period they were not responsible for guaranteeing the behaviour of their foreign employers. However, more responsibilities meant higher risks in the Canton System. In this system, Hong merchants held the most responsibilities: in addition to their business with foreigners, they were responsible for foreigners' behaviours. Hong merchants had to pay for the debts of other Hong merchants who went bankrupt.

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, as opium smuggling activities became increasingly serious, central and local governments strengthened regulations that governed foreigners and their interactions with Chinese intermediaries. In 1835, eight regulations were established as precautionary methods against foreigners.[29] *The Canton Register* published an English translation:

> If the barbarian ships oppose the laws either in coming or going, or if the barbarians conceal themselves in small boats, lurking about the villages on the coast—then seize the pilots and punish them severely. And punish the compradors if they do not report all opposition to the laws respecting foreign goods.[30]

Under this regulation, compradors and servants who were hired in the factories were checked frequently. When foreign ships anchored at Macao and Whampoa, the hired compradors were given badges by Sub-prefect of Macao (*Aomen tongzhi* 澳门同知). The *Aomen tongzhi* was tasked with inspecting compradors in Macao, while the Panyu 番禺 county magistrate was tasked with inspecting compradors in Whampoa.[31] All the licensed compradors and others employed by the foreign merchants were checked with their names and birth places every month. And this list would be presented to the county magistrate and recorded.

English EIC records indicate that there were constant complaints about the regulations that Chinese governors imposed about the compradors on them. They were unsatisfied with the situation that they could not choose compradors as they wished, and they were unhappy with the extra fees that compradors charged to pay for their licences. However, foreigners

---

Hoppos and the governor of Guangdong and the governor-general (or 'viceroy' of Guangdong and Guangxi).

[29] *Fangfan yi zhangcheng batiao* 防范夷人章程八条 [Eight Regulations on Foriegners], See Tingfu Jiang 蒋廷黻，*Jindai Zhongguo Waijiao Shiliao Jiyao* 近代中国外交史资料辑要 [Compilation of Primary Sources of Modern Chinese Diplomatic History] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008).

[30] *The Canton Register*, Vol. 8. Tuesday, 24 March 1835.

[31] *Mingqing Shiqi Aomen Wenti Dangan Wenxian Huibian*, 明清时期澳门问题档案文献汇编 p.149.

also benefited from these regulations. In fact, since compradors were chosen by the local government and were guaranteed by their superiors, both their service and behaviour were inspected and managed. Chinese authorities took some responsibility for choosing financially capable and morally reliable compradors. For example, in 1809, Viceroy of Liangguang (两广总督) Bai Ling 百龄(1748-1816) regulated that the compradors of foreign traders should be chosen among well-off nearby local people by *Aomen Tongzhi*.[32] In 1810, *Aomen Tongzhi* further regulated that after examination, those local compradors in Macao who were honest should be given licence. They should be exempt for renewing their license to avoid them colluding with officers and charging fees with this excuse.[33] This regulation was published to prevent people from lower socio-economic background from becoming compradors and colluding with foreigners. And this was supposed to make it difficult for local people who did not have licenses to take part in the trade. It could be helpful for foreign traders who were new to the Canton trade and unfamiliar with reliable compradors.[34]

Those regulations on compradors from Chinese authorities helped to guarantee the honesty and security of compradors. When an English medical officer, Charles Downing, travelled to China in 1836, he found the honesty of compradors had improved since George Anson's arrival in China during the 1740s. He argued that, in general, compradors were very honest and well-meaning men.[35] One of the reasons for this change was that, as Downing argues, '[compradors] found that they cannot cheat without impunity'.[36]

These regulations were designed for conveniently controlling foreigners, and helped to ensure the smooth conduct of this lucrative trade, which required the Chinese authorities to protect foreigners from deceptions by the Chinese people. However, when conflicts occurred between Chinese officials and foreigners, removing their access to compradors was a common strategy to compel foreigners to concede. In 1808, when Admiral William O'Bryen Drury (1754-1811) arrived in China and attempted to occupy Macao, the trade was stopped, and compradors were prohibited from attending ships to supply food according to the orders

---

[32] *Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs* 粤海关志, p.544. '夷商买办应令澳门同知就近选择土著殷实之人'。
[33] Ibid., p.559. '澳夷买办既经点验，乡民诚实者，给领牌照，免其改换新牌， 不致串通衙差、弁役， 借端需索。'
[34] IOR/G//12/7, fol. 1027. In 1704, there were several persons who pretended to be authorities from the Hoppo and impose themselves on the English supercargoes as compradors.
[35] C. T Downing, *The Stranger in China, or The Fan-qui's Visit to the Celestial Empire in 1836–7* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1838), pp. 52–53.
[36] Ibid, p. 52.

from the Chinese authorities.[37] In the end, Drury was compelled to consent to withdrawing his troops. Cutting provisions was one reason for this consent, as well as other reasons, such as the stoppage of trade between China and Britain. After this conflict, the Canton Viceroy ordered that all compradors must be registered by the *Junmin fu* (军民府) (a military garrison at Qianshan 前山) for a fee of 49 1/2 dollars.[38]

Charles Downing commented that removing Chinese compradors was very wise. He argued that, when English EIC ships had trouble with Chinese officials, 'the best way to bring them to reason was to stop the supply of provisions; and this agreed very well with their notions of government, which they consider should be like that of a father over his children.'[39] This judgement points out that, although it was effective for Chinese government to force foreigners to comply with them by cutting down provisions, it did not solve the real problem and only strengthened the English's stereotypes of and hostilities towards the Chinese people.

Between China and English EIC: Compradors' Dual Obligations

Go-betweens often are instrumental in defining, objectifying, and maintaining the boundaries between cultures as well as influencing power dynamics and sometimes exploiting their position for their own benefit.[40] The compradors are examples of go-betweens in the context of Canton trade. The position was created by the Chinese side for the instrumental purpose of defining and maintaining boundaries between Chinese and foreigners. However, in order to fulfil their responsibilities, compradors had to constantly cross physical boundary between Chinese living areas and foreign factories as well as cultural boundaries. Their profession required that they communicate with both sides. Meanwhile, compradors had their own interests to pursue, namely earning a profit. Their interests often deviated from the interests of Chinese authorities and of their foreign employers. Compradors faced a dilemma: they

[37] Morse, *The chronicles*, Vol III, pp.88-90.
[38] In 1744, the *Haifang junmin tongzhi* (海防军民同知) was established to manage coast defence, foreigners, and local people in Macao. It was called *Junmin fu* (军民府) for short. See Yin Guangren 印光任 and Zhang Rulin 张汝霖, *Aomen Jilue* 澳门纪略 [A Brief Record of Macao]（Taipei: Chengwen Chubanshe, 1968, first published in 1751）. '九年始以肇庆府同知改设前山寨海防军民同知，以县丞属之，移驻望厦村', pp. 122–123.
[39] Downing, *The Stranger in China*, Vol 1, p. 49.
[40] *The Brokered World,* ed.by Schaffer et al (eds), p. 15.

were obliged to follow instructions from Chinese officials while they served their foreign employers. These double obligations meant that, when the obligations were in conflict, each side would find the compradors suspicious. Each side doubted who the comprador was genuinely serving. These doubts and suspicions made maintaining their job difficult, especially when there were conflicts between employers and Chinese authorities.

As the relationships between the Chinese authorities and English merchants deteriorated, the English communities in Canton often criticised the corruption of the Hoppo. Evidence of this corruption included how Chinese officials overcharged compradors. When introducing the figure of compradors, individual accounts and commercial guides commonly point out the excessive extortions of compradors by the mandarins.[41] Furthermore, the excessive fees that compradors paid became financial burdens for the English EIC, which in turn resulted in their deepening discontent with the Chinese government and distrust of the Chinese compradors. For example, in 1836, the *Canton Register* published 'List of Fees Paid by The Ship-Compradors at Whampoa'. The article listed eighty-seven kinds of fees that ship compradors had to pay the custom houses for serving one ship at Whampoa. The expenses of all the fees paid to custom houses and all the fees on one ship totalled to $970.[42] The author complained that 'we do not see the necessity for the employment of a Chinese steward, or comprador, to cheat the owners, captains, and crews, whilst he is, in his turn, a spunge to the officers of government.'[43] This complaint shows the frustration and anger that foreigners had toward the extensive fees for the compradors' services. Compradors were not considered reliable because their main purpose was assumed to be the gathering of extensive wealth for the officers of Chinese government from the foreigners who employed them. On the other hand, as Paul Van Dyke points out, the rising comprador fees might be related to the increasing living expenses from 1700 to 1830. When their incomes did not match up with the rising expenses, officials added surcharges to their normal fees or created new fees to compensate for their fixed salaries.[44]

However, these recurring complaints from foreigners did not mean that the charges were not negotiable. The English EIC constantly took action against these fees. In 1732, English supercargoes complained to the Hoppos (custom superintendent) that 'our

---

[41] John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants* (London: Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, 1836), p. 448.
[42] *The Canton Register*, 26 Jan 1836, p.13.
[43] Ibid, p. 16.
[44] Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*, p.65

compradores are forced to pay a large sum for their chop or liberty of serving our factories, & in order to regain the same they make us pay extravagantly for our provisions, which will, we hope, be redressed by issuing out a chop (official seal/stamp, permission slip) that they pay nothing for their chops in future'.[45] In 1822, English supercargoes sent a letter to Howqua 伍秉鉴 (1769-1843), the head of Hong merchants that complained that 'our newly arrived ship had anchored for several days without compradors providing fresh food. It has been reported that compradors were extorted by so many customs that they left this business to avoid losing money.'[46] This complaint finally worked with the help of Howqua. Three days later, Howqua replied that he had solved the problem of finding a comprador.[47] Under the Canton System, Hong merchants were responsible for issues related to foreign traders. Hong merchants could get into trouble if foreign traders caused problems when they were not served by a proper comprador. Thus, Hong merchants were obliged to find a comprador for foreigners as quickly as possible. Under this system, compradors' financial pressure could be mediated by Hong merchants with the help of the compradors' foreign employers.

Negotiations between English traders and Chinese merchants and officials did not mean that compradors were passive figures. Sometimes they took action for their own profit. Compradors were clearly aware that their service was crucial for ensuring smooth trade, and their financial pressure would in turn pressure their employers. In 1811, a captain of the EIC sent a petition letter to the Hoppo and wrote that 'this morning, compradors came to his factory to resign their positions. They said that their concerns could not be delivered to the officials […] We hope Chinese officials could use the old regulation so that we could have food supply.'[48] On this occasion, compradors used resignation to force the English captains to speak for them, which tactfully avoided their having to deal with Chinese officers themselves.

Compradors Refused to Supply Provisions: A 'Strike' in 1819

In 1819, another major conflict arose. In that year, the compradors refused to supply provisions to the EIC ships in Whampoa until they received a considerable reduction to their

[45] IOR/G/12/33, fol. 104.
[46] London, The National Archives, FO 1048/22/44, 8 August 1822.
[47] FO 1048/22/47, August 11, 1822.
[48] FO 1048/11/84, 1811.

fees. Several factors led to compradors' refusal to provide their service. During the negotiation process with the EIC, it was obvious that the main reason for the comprador's action were the increasing charges from Chinese officials. Another factor that caused a loss to compradors' profit was the development of long-distance traveling. In a letter from the president of the Select committee of Supercargoes to a Hong merchant, the president writes that 'as the time of performing the voyage is greatly reduced, they [i.e. the compradors] find the provisions placed on board in England were nearly adequate for consumption on the homeward voyage, by which a considerable portion of the profit to the comprador is lost'.[49] Compradors were charged not only by Chinese officials for their permission fees but for the illegal activities they participated in because they had to bribe the officials to avoid punishment. One type of illegal activity that compradors participated in was serving as agents of the EIC and recruiting Chinese labours.[50] For example, a comprador of the EIC was asked to pay 1200 dollars when he was caught sending twenty Chinese labours to an EIC ship set for St. Helena. In the end, the comprador paid 1,000 dollars to settle the issue.[51] The charges related to their illegal activities were much higher than their annual permission fees. These factors ultimately became unbearable burdens for compradors and pushed them to take risks and request that the EIC interfere for them.

Before taking actions, compradors sought help from the EIC. The negotiation process was not smooth. In the end, the president of EIC agreed to send a letter asking Hong merchants to interfere with the mandarins on this issue.[52] The English EIC did not want to intervene initially, but they compromised with the compradors because compradors had chosen a strategic time to go on 'strike', namely when ships from England were about to arrive in China. Crews on EIC ships were desperately in need of fresh provisions after travelling a long distance. This specific timing pushed the EIC to respond to compradors' demands. In a letter from the EIC to a Hong merchant, the author wrote:

> We beg you with endeavour to accomplish their point as early as possible that the Comprador may proceed to sea to meet the ships and that no anxiety may exist for the

[49] IOR/G/12/216, 26 July 1819, fol. 86.
[50] In 1685, the Kangxi Emperor published a regulation that prevented foreign ships, returning to their home countries, from bringing any Chinese with them. In 1725, a regulation was issued that dismissed local officials if Chinese people were discovered on board foreign ships. See *Yuehaiguan zhi* 粤海关志, p. 342.
[51] IOR/G/12/219, 14 July 1820, fol.3.
[52] IOR/G/12/216, 24 July 1819, fol 72-73.

> supply of fresh provisions in their arrival, a point of humanity to men who have been several months at sea.[53]

On this occasion, the compradors utilized the EIC's anxiety about ensuring that their crews had food supplies. After years of service, compradors understood their employers' concerns, fears, and cares. The necessity of their position brought them some advantages during negotiations with their foreign employers.

It is peculiar that the compradors did not seek support from Hong merchants first. Compradors could approach Hong merchants, because they were guaranteed by Hong merchants. After all, foreigners were not allowed to communicate with Chinese officials directly. However, the compradors turned to the president of the select committee of supercargoes for support before they had communicated with Hong merchants directly. After the president promised to send a letter, they waited for a whole month before the Hong merchants responded to their complaints. This strategy suggests that compradors were more interdependent with their foreign employers than with the Hong merchants. They shared more mutual interests with foreigners because the smooth conduct of their service guaranteed the wellbeing of the crews. On the other hand, it was obvious that the EIC had more capacity to negotiate with Hong merchants than did the compradors, given that the Hong merchants were their superiors.

Another consideration is that the compradors knew that the Hong merchants were under certain obligations to the foreign companies. Under the Canton System, Hong merchants were responsible for managing foreign trade and the behaviour of foreigners. Hong merchants could be punished by Chinese officials if foreigners had committed offences.[54] These responsibilities and obligations meant that Hong merchants had to respond to demands from the EIC to prevent or minimise any disturbances. There was dissatisfaction among EIC employees, who worried that the compradors' refusal to supply provisions could trigger a disturbance. This endowed capacities for foreigners when they negotiated with Hong merchants. In the letter sent to Hong merchants on 23 August, when the first ship arrived without being supply by the compradors, the EIC threatened Hong merchants: 'you will be aware that it is impossible for us to remain silent should any delay occur in granting a regular

[53] Ibid., 26 July 1819, fol.74-75.
[54] Paul Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), p.9.

and daily supply to our ships'.[55] Two days later, compradors informed the president that Hong merchants had communicated with them about reducing their fees.[56]

Compradors were unsatisfied with the fee reductions that the Hong merchants had proposed. However, they compromised with the EIC and found alternative food supplies. According to EIC records of Canton factory consultation papers, instead of supplying provisions for ships in Whampoa, compradors promised to help supply pigs and live bullocks to the company's ships at Lintin Island.

> The Compradors on their part have promised that the person who may be conditionally engaged for a ship with endeavour to procure a supply of pigs or even live bullocks from Lintin. Should they be required: as some delay may occur in your obtaining fresh provisions at Whampoa, it may be advisable to procure some bullocks.[57]

This was illegal, but it ensured that the compradors would not be charged by Chinese officials at Whampoa while EIC ships could acquire food supplies. It secured the interests of both sides. The EIC president agreed with this solution and informed his captains that they should procure provisions from Lintin Island. The 1819 'strike' challenged the relationship between compradors and their employers. They could not stop the provision for too long without any compromise, otherwise they would lose their employers' support.

At each step of the action, compradors took risks that might have offended their employers, the Hong merchants, and Chinese officials. They were violating boundaries that regulated and protected their own interests. This action suggests that, although compradors were at the bottom of the hierarchy of the Canton System, their provisioning services provided them with the agency required for navigating this hierarchical system. Cutting food provision was a method to solve conflict, and one that not only the Chinese officials used to threaten foreign communities. Compradors saw power in providing food for company ships and used this power to negotiate for a better position. This shows that, under the Canton System, although compradors did not have similar power to those compradors who worked for foreign firms after 1840s, they had agency in taking actions for their own benefit.

Negotiations for a salary that secured their profits continued in the following years. In 1829, a comprador who had worked for the EIC for ten years complained about his losses in provision business to EIC. As a result, the EIC decided to pay the comprador 2,000 taels

[55] IOR/G/12/216, 23 August 1819. Fol. 92.
[56] Ibid., 25 August 1819, fols. 92-93.
[57] Ibid.

every year to ensure that their compradors continue working for them. They made this decision 'As it is not to be expected that our Comprador will continue to serve us under the existing state of their affairs, and as it is impossible we can allow them to discharge the duties of important and trustworthy situations in our factory without receiving a remuneration commensurate with their services […].'[58] In this case, the EIC had to compromise with compradors in order to persuade their compradors to stay.

With dual obligations from both Chinese officials and their foreign employers, the compradors had difficulties navigating the power relationships between Chinese authorities and the EIC. They suffered not only from different levels of Chinese authorities' pressure but from the foreign companies. Colin Campbell wrote about his expedition to China in 1732 that:

> another piece of Roguery but too often practis'd in some European Factorys here is The person that keeps Account with the Compradore obliges him to make him a Present sometimes pretty considerable & to make him amends pays him a higher price for his provisions (which he charges to his Company) or receives any sort that he pleases to give him. This little piece of Roguery we also took care to avoid in ours.[59]

It was not easy for compradors to survive under such pressure and competition. Those who survived and managed years of service in foreign factories were the most capable at trading and negotiating for their own profits among their foreign employers and Chinese authorities. The significance of provisioning supplies for foreigners gave compradors the necessary space to negotiate with their foreign employers and Chinese officials for better treatment. However, these negotiations were limited since compradors were in an inferior position in these multilateral relationships. In order to survive and thrive, they managed to provide household service for foreigners that nurtured foreigners' dependence on them in the foreigners' everyday lives.

[58] IOR/G/12/240A, 12 February 1829, fol 748.
[59] Campbell, *A Passage to China*, p.125.

Nurturing Reliance: Compradors as Indispensable Figures in Foreign Households

The intermediary roles of compradors are evident through their daily interactions with their foreign employers. In a period when direct communication between Chinese officials and foreigners was constrained, compradors were cultural mediators between local people and foreign traders. They transmitted information between household servants they managed and the traders. This involved a process of interpreting and translating foreigners' physical and social needs so that local people could understand these needs. They became one of the most important figures in the foreign traders' daily lives. However, the foreigners' accounts offer mixed comments about the compradors. Some foreign travellers appreciated the compradors' extraordinary skills, while some despised compradors. Foreigners' complaints and praise about compradors reflect two sides of their increasing capability and power in foreign households.

Compradors, especially factory compradors, nurtured their power through daily management. In the mid-nineteenth century, foreigners were so reliant on compradors' services that they put their household management entirely on the shoulders of the compradors. As the discussion below will show, compradors managed to provide diverse foodstuffs that their employers needed, and they supervised other household servants to ensure food service was appropriate. In doing so, they gradually gained informal power in the foreign factories. They authority over other servants and power in household management even made their female employers feel uncomfortable. Both food provisions and household management services gave compradors power to build trust and reliance with the foreigners and consequently made them indispensable in the foreigners' daily lives.

When an American trader Osmond Tiffany (1823–1895) visited Canton in the 1840s, he praised the food he had in foreign factories:

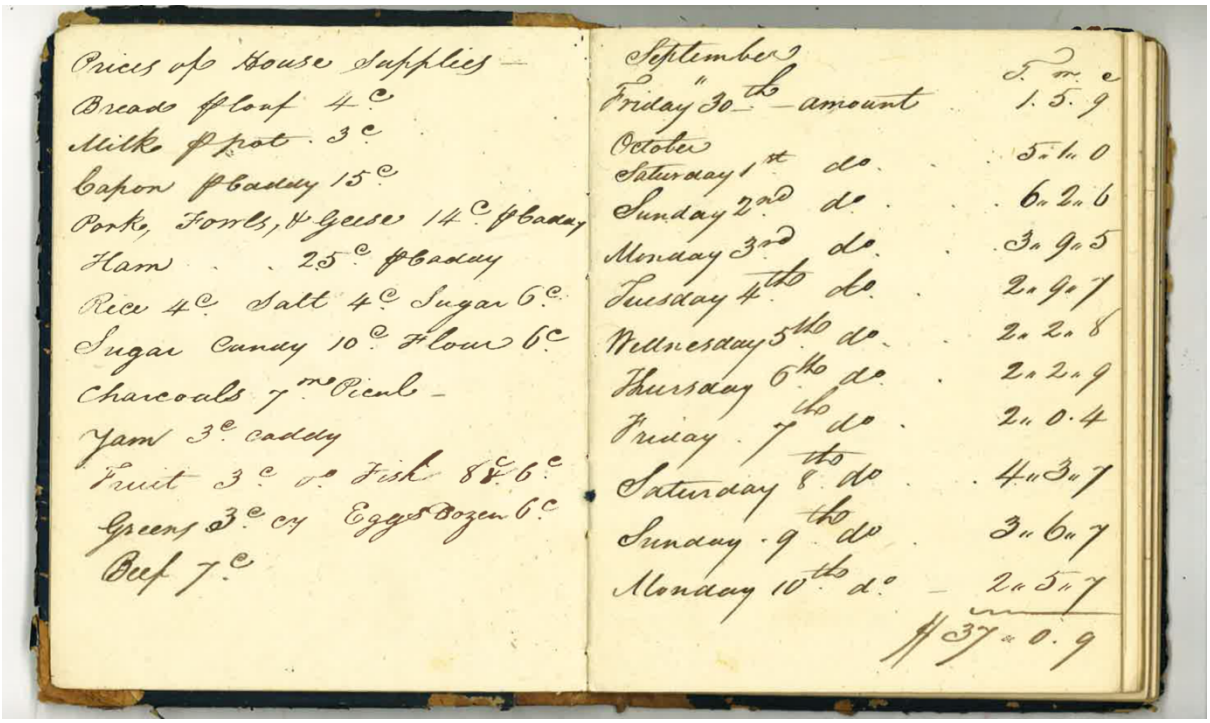
> It would be like violating the sacredness of a family to detail any account of the pleasant and luxurious entertainments, the conversation and fun of the dinners, the sentiments proposed, and the bumpers drained; but one may, without scruple, revel in the recollection of the delicacies of the animal and vegetable kingdoms daily served at Canton.
>
> There is delicious mutton brought down from the mountains, like the Southdown of England in flavor and tenderness, and game in the greatest abundance, and of the finest quality.

Teal or wild ducks of several varieties, and like pets, like the reed birds of the middle states, that can be devoured flesh and bones, are plenty as blackberries, and found in millions about the Bogue, frequenting the lonely islands at the mouth of the river.

You will often see a ragged hunter enter the hong with his enormous gun, twelve or fifteen feet long, over his shoulder, balanced by the bunch of birds that he offers to the compradore in exchange for chop dollars.

But in all other good things the hongs of Canton offer as great a variety as an epicure can desire, and the varieties and excellence of vegetables and fruit are unsurpassed.[60]

Tiffany mentions that the birds sent from local hunters were brought to the factory comprador in exchange for chop dollars.[61] We might imagine that different types of food were sent to foreign factories every day. To fulfil diverse culinary needs of foreigners, factory compradors had to deal with local hunters, farmers, fruit vendors, fishermen, milk vendors, grain store owners, spice store owners, and butchers. Compradors had to settle prices of each category of food supplies at the beginning of their service, so they could find reliable sources of food with reasonable prices and profit from each transaction.



[60] Osmond Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese: Or, The American's Sojourn in the Celestial Empire* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1849), p. 225.
[61] Chop dollars were Spanish dollars. They were often stamped when they were passed through hands.

Figure 1, House Comprador's Account, commenced 30 September 1803, Carrington Paper, Rhodes Island Historical Society.

The above picture (Figure 1) shows the first page of a House Comprador's Account; the comprador worked for Edward Carrington (1775–1843). Carrington was born in New Haven, Connecticut; he arrived at Canton in 1802 and served as the American consul until 1811. The list of house prices written on the first page suggests that it was listed at the beginning of his engagement as the house comprador in the American factory. It would have been convenient for the account holder to check the price of each item of food supply and review the household expenses. This list shows that the house comprador provided at least seventeen kinds of foodstuffs for the factory. It is noteworthy that some listed categories, such as 'greens', 'fruit', 'fish', are not very specific. That means, although the price for each category had been settled at the beginning, the actual price of each food item could fluctuate according to what the house comprador bought each day. This gave compradors some space to source food according to the changes in the market. In reality, the variety of foodstuffs that a house comprador purchased was probably more diverse than what is listed on the page. According to the comprador's account book, on the 19 August 1805, the house comprador purchased thirty kinds of food, including sixteen loaves of bread, twenty-two pots of milk, four and a half catties of pork, four catties of mutton, two catties of sausages, two catties of shrimp, six catties of pears, two catties of limes, and one catty of nutmeg.[62] The variety and quantity of this large sum suggests that this comprador was preparing a sumptuous dinner party on that day.

Supplying food was a competitive and demanding job, which required compradors to take great care and caution in managing business with different food suppliers so that they could secure their positions with their foreign employers. Osmond Tiffany comments on comprador that 'He cannot make much from the foreigners directly, but manages in a roundabout way, and scrapes his earnings from his own countrymen. If a Chinaman brings any thing to the hong to sell, he never lets him go away without squeezing him, he is in fact a broker, and earns a fat commission for every transaction.'[63] Compradors were often depicted as greedy and dishonest figures in foreign travellers' writings. However, as Van Dyke argues, it would be very difficult for professional compradors to succeed in such deceptions with the

[62] Carrington Paper, Comprador's account, commenced 14 August 1805.
[63] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, p.225.

'regular' traders.[64] Similarly, a professional comprador would have little success in exploiting their food suppliers.

Karl (Charles) Gützlaff (1803–1851) was a Lutheran missionary born in Prussia, who travelled to China and became an interpreter. He participated in the opium trade while promoting Christianity in China. He praised the compradors because:

> Few persons are so clever in running up a long account as [are] compradors. Always ready and prompt in procuring everything one may require, they render themselves useful and nearly indispensable, and exercise a considerable influence in various departments. Those residing in large mercantile houses are very trustworthy persons, and keep a very exact account of all the treasure, frequently amassing large property.[65]

Gützlaff compliments the compradors, which may have come from his years of observing of Chinese society during his stay in China. He arrived in China in 1831 and travelled along the China coast from 1831 to 1834. In 1835, Gützlaff entered the British government as an assistant interpreter and Chinese secretary to the chief superintendent of trade in China. He died in Hong Kong in 1851. He might have had extensive experience of interacting with Chinese compradors in Canton, Macao and later in Hong Kong. He might have witnessed how compradors gradually replaced the position of Hong merchants in the China trade after the Opium War.

Some compradors collaborated with other compradors to become more competitive in their trade. This strategy helped them to meet challenges from a more competitive provision market. Peter Dobell points out that, when his captain interacted with the compradors, the captain engaged one as a ship comprador and another, who happened to be friends with the first, as factory comprador. Dobell comments that 'Those who have partners at Whampoa are preferred for factory-compradors, as they supply one better with beef.'[66] This suggests that, in order to secure business with foreigners, factory and ship compradors collaborated to secure a steady supply of foodstuff from specific areas. Beef was especially important since it was

---

[64] Van Dyke, *The Provisions Trade in Canton, 1700–1840*, p.143.
[65] Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff, *China Opened, Or, A Display of the Topography, History, Customs, Manners, Arts, Manufactures, Commerce, Literature, Religion, Jurisprudence, Etc., of the Chinese Empire, Volume* 1 (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1838), p. 69–70; for a discussion about Gützlaff, see Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl FA Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827-1852* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008).
[66] Peter Dobell, *Travels in Kamtchatka and Siberia: With a Narrative of a Residence in China*, vol 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 129.

considered essential for both foreigner's daily consumption and for making salted beef for sailors' consumption. It was also necessary for compradors to maintain good relationships with local farmers who produced quality beef. When Hoppo and linguists participated in the provision trade during the nineteenth century, competition become even more severe.[67] This change was beneficial for foreigners because they had more choices among food suppliers. Some of the large American companies, such as Russell & Co, hired both compradors and Hoppomen for food provisions.[68] Competition from custom officers did not drive compradors out of business. Those who had strong connections with food suppliers and foreign companies remained competitive, and some compradors worked for a single company for decades.[69] This change brought both challenges and opportunities for the compradors. On the one hand, they might lose their positions with foreign companies because of competition with the Hoppo and the linguists. On the other hand, competition pushed them to strengthen their business networks with food suppliers and other compradors.

The profession of compradors was not without its hazards and dangers. William Wightman Wood, founder and editor of the first English newspaper in China, *The Canton Register* describes how, at Whampoa:

> [t]he boats employed in this business are long, narrow, and very fast, usually two-masted, with large mat sails, and manned with from ten to twenty men. As a defence against the ladrones or pirates, which sometimes lurk among the numerous small islands at the river's mouth, they are provided with pikes, spears, and large stones, in the use of which they are very skillful, throwing with great accuracy.[70]

Wood's description indicates that comprador's daily business involved dangers and hazards from pirates. They had to be vigilant and agile when transporting foodstuffs and other provisions safely.

As the China trade expanded, foodstuffs and food suppliers with who the compradors dealt became varied and diversified as the number of traders from different countries increased. Imported alcohol, such as claret, wine, madeira, beer, and rum, were indispensable

---

[67] Van Dyke, The Provision Trade in Canton; John Robert Morrison, *A Chinese Commercial Guide: Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China* (Canton, 1834), p.23. John Robert Morrison introduced the idea that in Whampoa port, linguists sometimes were employed to supply ships with provisions.
[68] Comprador's Account, commenced 3 August 1820 at Macao, Russell & Co.
[69] Van Dyke, *The Provision Trade in Canton*, p.119. Van Dyke provides a few examples of compradors who were employed by foreign traders for many years.
[70] William Wightman Wood, *Sketches of China: With Illustrations from Original Drawings* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1830), p. 15.

for foreign traders' tables. Factory compradors also had to deal with foreign companies in Canton and Macao, such as Markwick & Lane, who supplied imported European food and drink.[71] Compradors were supposed to understand the differences of the European and American food and drink that were imported and supplied at dinner parties in foreign factories.

As compradors developed skills in bargaining with food suppliers and maintaining relationships with them and other compradors, they accumulated connections and influence beyond the foreign companies. They became middlemen between the foreign companies and the local people who made a living by providing food for foreigners. On the other hand, their role in managing households strengthened their power and influence inside the foreign households, especially over servants, cooks, and coolies. According to May-bo Ching's study, from the sixteenth century to 1830s, Chinese official attitudes towards the phenomenon of Chinese servants employed by foreigners changed from strict to loose.[72] It provided opportunities for compradors to gain informal power over Chinese labourers employed in factories.

Although there were some regulations that forbade Chinese to be employed by foreigners, this phenomenon never disappeared as local servants were necessary for daily lives of foreign traders. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Qing government published several regulations about Chinese people hired by foreign factories. For example, in 1831, Li Hongbin 李鸿宾 (1767–1846), who served as the Viceroy of Liangguang (两广总督) between 1826 and 1832 wrote that:

> The regulations on the employment of common people by foreign merchants should be slightly modified. According to the original regulation, apart from compradors and linguists, hiring common people in foreign factories is strictly examined and forbidden…. Nowadays, the arriving foreign merchants from different countries have been numerous, they are in need of goods-keepers, gatekeepers, watercarriers and porters. However, the black devil slaves brought by foreign merchants were mostly stupid and violent. If they all use black devil slaves, I am afraid that they would amass, and quarrel, disturbing common people

[71] Markwick & Lane was established by Richard Markwick (1791–1836) and Edward Lane (d. 1831). They opened a European bazar and English tavern (hotel) in both Canton and Macao in the 1830s. They advertised imported alcohol in English newspapers, such as *The Canton Register.* See Lindsay Ride and May Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), p. 186.
[72] Cheng, *Yujian Huangdong*, p.137.

when they go outside, eventually leading to making troubles. When foreign factories are in need of goods-keepers, gatekeepers, watercarriers and porters, compradors should hire common people for them. Compradors should tell Hong merchants about those employed people's names. Compradors and Hong merchants have the responsibility to inspect and regulate those people. If those common people are lured by foreign merchants into committing illegal activities, Hong merchants and compradors should report this to the authorities and have them arrested immediately.

夷商雇倩民人服役，應稍變通也。查原定章程，夷商居住館內，除设立買辦、通事外，如民人受僱服役者，嚴查禁止等因…. 惟今日各國夷商來著益眾，其看貨守門及挑水挑貨等項，在在需人，而夷商所帶黑鬼奴，性多蠢暴，若令其全用黑鬼奴，誠恐聚集人多，出外與民人爭擾，轉至滋生事端。應請嗣後夷館應需看貨守門及挑水挑货人等，均由買辦代為顧倩民人，仍將姓名告知洋商，責成該管買辦及洋商稽查管束。如此等民人內有教誘夷商做奸，洋商買辦即隨時稟請拘究。[73]

According to Li, the change in regulations for employing local people in foreign factories was adopted because of foreigners' demand for servants and labourers and as a response to Chinese authorities' concerns about social security. Chinese authorities were concerned with the potential social unrest and conflicts brought by the 'black devil slaves' (*heiguinu* 黑鬼奴).[74] Compradors were given the trust from the government to recruit Chinese labourers in foreign factories. This trust might come from their already established position and skills in dealing with household matters in factories. Although Hong merchants were required to manage Chinese labourers in foreign factories along with compradors, they did not have the same opportunities as the compradors did in supervising and managing the daily behaviour of Chinese hired in foreign factories.

In 1835, Viceroy of Liangguang Lu Kun 卢坤 (1772-1835) set another detailed regulation about labourers hired by foreign factories, ensuring that foreign factories were allowed to hire gatekeepers, watercarriers, and porters. Each factory, regardless of the number of residents, was allowed to hire two gatekeepers, four water-carriers, and one porter.

---

[73] *Mingqing Shiqi Aomen Wenti Dangan Wenxian Huibian Juan liu* 明清时期澳门问题档案文献汇编卷六, p. 145. The English version is provided by the author.

[74] For discussion of foreigners' slaves in Canton, see Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home*, 38–41; for a discussion of black people in Canton, see, Don J. Wyatt, *The Blacks of Premodern China* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), Chapter 2: The Slaves of Guangzhou, p. 43–79.

They should be hired by compradors in foreign factories.[75] This regulation confirmed that it was comprador's responsibility to hire limited numbers of Chinese labourers and they should regulate their behaviours to avoid any collusions with foreigners. These regulations were not strictly followed by the foreign factories. Chinese authorities tried to restrain foreigners from contacting and colluding with Chinese locals by regulating the number of labourers, although officials never strictly enforced this regulation.

This provided opportunities for the compradors to acquire power over an increasing number of labourers and servants while providing for the foreign traders' lavish lifestyles. Some foreign factories hired dozens of Chinese servants under the supervision of compradors. Robert Bennet Forbes (1804–1889), an American merchant, observed that, Russell Sturgis, a partner of Russell & Co, 'necessarily had 15 servants'.[76] Forbes's comment suggests that, in the 1830s, compradors had to hire and manage a large number of servants for their foreign employers. The power of hiring and managing servants brought authority to the compradors in foreign factories. Since working in a foreign factory as a servant provided good opportunities for Chinese who intended to participate foreign trade, it was necessary for those servants to maintain good relationships with the compradors.

William Hunter, an American trader who lived in Canton from 1829 to 1842, explains that:

> [a]ll Chinese employed in any factory, whether as his own "pursers", or in the capacity of servants, cooks, or coolies, were the Comprador's "own people"; they rendered to him every allegiance," and he "secured" them as regards good behaviour and honesty. This was another feature that contributed to the admirable order and safety which characterized life at Canton.[77]

Osmond Tiffany explains that:

> The housekeeping is entirely under the charge of a compradore, and he is a very important functionary[...] He has under his thumb, the cooks and the cooleys, the purveyors and the servant boys[…] Next to the compradore in dignity and self-importance, are the native boys who wait on the table, and attend to the

[75] *Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs* 粤海关志, p.570.
[76] Robert Bennet Forbes, *Letters from China: The Canton-Boston Correspondence of Robert Bennet Forbes, 1838-1840,* ed. by Phyllis Forbes Kerr (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1996), p.64.
[77] William C. Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844, by an Old Resident* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Company, 1882). p.53.

> rooms[...]They have a horror of offending the compradore, who could cut them off with a wink of his eye, but they fear no one else.[78]

Hunter's and Tiffany's words confirmed the importance of the figure of compradors in factory and Canton life. They observed that the position of comprador was above other Chinese labourers. It was comprador who controlled the personnel in foreign factories, rather than their foreign employers. As Tiffany suggested, the native boys feared no one else but compradors. In Hunter's and Tiffany's eyes, compradors held unchallenged authority over the Chinese staff of the foreign factories during the early nineteenth century. At the same time, they reveal their own anxiety over losing authority over their servants. This sense of anxiety was understandable, especially for newcomers. When foreigners first entered factories, they were unfamiliar with the household rules in Canton and Macao. They could hardly understand the language used in the Canton trade. Hence, it was not easy for foreigners to communicate with their Chinese servants, cooks, and coolies. Compradors, however, could channel the foreigners' demands to other departments of the households. For those compradors who worked for the same foreign company for decades, they understood much more about the rules and structures of the foreign factories than did the newcomers. Foreigners had to rely on compradors to sort out their different needs, especially when they could not speak Canton English.

Writing to his father about his daily life in Canton, Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), an American missionary who resided in a foreign factory, wrote: 'nearly breakfast time at eight. The breakfast is usually boiled rice, and a relish of curry, eggs, or fish, as the case may be, and as the comprador chooses.'[79] Missionaries were not as wealthy as the European and American traders who could afford lavish lifestyles in Canton and Macao. The English East India Company employees, as William Hickey describes, preferred dining alone, and 'upon communicating such wish to the steward he would bring a bill of fare, and furnish whatever articles we ordered there from.'[80] It suggests that depending on foreigner's status, the food provisioning service they received from comprador could vary. Their way of communicating with their employers in terms of food choice could be different. Compradors

[78] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, pp. 215–216.
[79] Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889).pp. 107–108.
[80] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey Vol 1,* ed. by Alfred Spencer (London: Hurst & Blackett, Limited, 1782). p.203.

had more agency in choosing food for their employers if they had smaller budget like Samuel Wells Williams did.

Foreigners' daily eating and drinking activities were reliant on compradors' arrangements. Accounts from American men like William Hunter, Osmond Tiffany and Samuel Wells Williams showed admiration and agreement with compradors' service. However, American women's accounts showed some different attitudes towards the figure of compradors in household management. The control of Chinese comprador over the household made some household mistresses uneasy. The position of comprador in foreign household created difficulties for American women establishing control over their household servants. When Rebecca Kinsman (1810–1882) moved to Macao in 1843, she inherited a comprador, cook, and some coolies who had worked in the house of Wetmore & Co for a long time. At the beginning, she stated that the comprador and other servants 'known to be faithful, these will be transferred to us—or as many of them as we may find desirable.'[81] However, after managing the household in Macao for a while, she began complaining about her Chinese comprador. She threatened to cut the comprador's salary when she found fault in his household management.

Moreover, Kinsman was frustrated with the amount of money she spent on household expenses. She acknowledges that 'if one lives here, it must cost a large sum, and it is difficult to economize, and impossible beyond a certain limit.'[82] She transferred her frustration with the household finances to her comprador. She often scolded the comprador when she settled the monthly household account with him. For example, one day after breakfast, she settled comprador's account, 'which caused me a trial of temper, as he is a regular 'Squeeze,' as the Chinese say—& impose on me sometimes unbearably—but if we were to change we might get a worse one, they are all great trials.'[83] This account shows that Rebecca Kinsman was helpless with finding a comprador that suited all her needs in Macao. She had no choice but to accept the current comprador because she knew that the group of compradors had established their own way of working in foreign households before her arrival. Foreign communities were used to and dependent on compradors' service.

Mary Parry Sword (1812–1846), another American woman who lived in Macao from 1841 to 1845 did not express her disappointment with her comprador directly, but she found

---

[81] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in China, 1846' in *EIHC*,85(1949), p.126.
[82] Ibid., p. 122.
[83] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman', *EIHC*, 87 (1951), p. 407.

it ‘strange’ that the compradors took care of everything related to household management. Writing to her sister-in-law, she explains her comprador’s work:

> He buys and pays for every thing, takes care of every thing, hires all the other servants & c. This is such a strange place; foreigners cannot buy any thing for themselves. They are not allowed to go into the market or the bazaar; I have no use for money here; I have not seen a dollar since I came on shore. If I want any thing I tell the Comprador. He buys it, or brings it for me to look at.
>
> This is the way all the foreigners live; so you see we have very little trouble in housekeeping, and though we appear to live in a great deal more style here, yet from all accounts it does not cost any more than living at home. [84]

Sword had arrived in Macao with her husband John Dorsey Sword and their two children. The Sword family was a prominent merchant family of Philadelphia and New Castle, Delaware. John Dorsey Sword was a supercargo for West India, South America, and China. Like Rebecca Kinsman and her husband, Mary lived in Macao and took charge of the household while John stayed in Canton. Living without her husband’s company was not easy. Sword was not used to the meticulous service that the compradors provided, and she believed that it was strange that she was unable to purchase anything in the local market herself. She clearly felt a loss of her agency in managing her house in Macao; her supposed gender role as household mistress was claimed and taken over by the Chinese compradors. This feature of foreigners’ society in Macao and Canton resulted from Chinese authorities’ regulations that foreign women were not allowed to reside in Canton. As a result, especially before the mid-nineteenth century, there were fewer foreign women than foreign men living in China. Compradors benefited from this regulation in that their authority over foreign households was rarely challenged because of the lack of foreign women. Some foreigners, mostly men, became used to meticulous services from their compradors, who bought everything for them and completed all the errands for the factories. Foreign women’s uncomfortable feelings are telling of just how dependent foreign traders’ lives were on their compradors’ services. Foreign women felt uncomfortable because they had less agency in household. Some of their household responsibilities were replaced by compradors.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, as Yen-p’ing hao comments, the Western merchant seemed entirely reliant on his comprador. Augustine Heard, Jr. (1827–1905), an

[84] Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Sword Family Papers, To Miss S. D. Sword, Macao 10 Nov 1841.

American merchant of Ipswich, MA, called his comprador to chase away mosquitos inside his bed at 2 o'clock in the morning.[85] The price paid for this convenience and comfort was that, when the compradors were absent, the foreigners' comfortable lives would be disrupted. Ironically, while foreign men complained about the control from Chinese authorities, they willingly accepted Chinese compradors' involvement in almost every detail of their daily lives. It suggested that foreign men's complaint about the sense of control was gendered. They were more sensitive with controls related to political and commercial affairs, which was regarded as masculine issues. They were less sensitive with daily consumptions and household management, which was related to feminine and lower-valued work.

The deep involvement of compradors in their daily lives meant that when compradors were removed from foreign factories, foreigners would face consequences more than food shortage. When the conflict between foreigners and Chinese authorities over opium broke out in 1839, the Chinese authorities removed the Chinese compradors, servants, and coolies from foreign factories. However, they did not entirely cut the food supply to foreign factories. After all, their aim was not to starve and kill foreigners, but to force foreigners to give up opium. Robert Bennet Forbes records in 1839 that:

> One very serious feature at this crisis occurred—every servant & cook & Comprador was ordered away & we were left to cook our own supplies if we wanted any…but what makes this whole farce supremely ludicrous was the fact of men being sent in with loads of provisions, wood, coal, &c.
> I went into Delanos ½ past 7 & there found him, Low, King & one or two more boiling the Eggs—cooking potatoes, rice, ham, &c. in the very *worst* style—The only good things we could get for breakfast were the Tea & Eggs & bread—for dinner we are better provided having a sailor boy & a lascar to help us—our poor cows have had to be sent away as we could not well act servants & grooms.[86]

When confined to foreign factories in 1839, foreign merchants were still supplied with food, wood, and coal. In fact, Forbes also mentions that his business partner, Houqua, sent them some food. His Parsi merchant friend also sent them cooked food. Even with piles of cooked food, meat, vegetables, and other provisions, it was not easy for foreign traders to sort out how to provide meals for all the people living in the factory. Without their compradors, servants, cooks, and cow-keepers, they had to arrange and conduct all the housework

[85] Yen-p'ing Hao, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China*, pp. 100–101.
[86] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p. 113.

themselves. It should be noted that sourcing and managing provisions in foreign factories was not an easy task, especially for men who had never done any household work. Without the comprador, foreigners had to do the household work. They endeavoured to cook simple dishes for themselves. The result, as Forbes describes, was 'in the worst style'. Forbes mentions how the foreign merchants divided the household in their factory. Among them, Gilman had the following responsibility: he 'looks out for Beer, wine, cheese & begs, borrows, buys or steals small grub such as Eggs, bread &c'.[87] Forbes's letters suggest that, when confined to the foreign factories by Chinese authorities, foreigners still wanted to live their normal lives and have their usual meals with cheese, wine, and beer. However, without compradors sorting the supplies from different food suppliers, foreigners had to use their own personal connections to acquire food and drink.

Compradors were not easily replaced. When foreign merchants took charge of the household management, they could not manage the food allowance properly. Forbes states that they were 'eating double our usual allowance'. There was much hidden labour in managing large households, especially those of foreign merchants who had high demands for diverse food and alcohol. During the conflict, while the foreigners did not starve, they faced confusion and anxiety caused by their poor household management and a lack of skilled and experienced household labour.

The crisis indicates that compradors were far more than food suppliers. As Harriet Low, an American woman who lived in Macao from 1829 to 1833, describes in her diary, the role of house comprador was a 'steward'.[88] In the second edition (1844) of *A Chinese Commercial Guide*, compradors are introduced as 'stewards of the household of the foreigners at Canton, or of his ships at Whampoa, and in both places their duties are similar'.[89] The role of a steward in an English household is closely related to the contemporaneous polite culture. In eighteenth-century Britain, as Lawrence Klein argues, politeness was a highly useful tool for understanding and organizing cultural practices. In a polite society, food, clothing, furnishings, and furniture were purchased with precise

[87] Ibid., p. 115.
[88] Harriet Low, *My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834,* ed. by Katherine Hillard, (Boston: GH Ellis, 1900), p. 30.
[89] J. R Morrison, *A Chinese Commercial Guide* (Canton, 1848), third edition p. 201; S. Wells Williams, *A Chinese Commercial Guide* (Canton,1856), fourth edition, p. 224.

measurements and specifications.[90] Not only 'the polite' people had to adopt polite manners, but so did those who served 'the polite'. Hence, compradors had to adopt polite manners themselves and regulate the behaviour of Chinese servants in serving their foreign employers.

Compradors were responsible for ensuring that servants wore appropriate clothing and served the table of their employers properly and politely. The polite society that foreigners kept in Macao and Canton was highly reliant on the services of both compradors and servants. As Mary Parry Sword observes in Macao, when she arrived in 1841, there were great differences between Chinese on the street and the Chinese servants employed in her house, especially in their outfit and appearance:

> the greater proportion of those we see in the shops and in the streets, are literally half naked, and it is disgusting to look at them. The servants in the house always look clean and nice. They generally wear white; their head is shaved excepting the back part, which is plaited in a long tail reaching nearly to their heels, and their shoes have soles two inches thick.[91]

The servants, who wore white clothes, were contrasted with lower-class labourers on the streets. Their clean appearance and polite manners constituted a polite household environment for the foreign residents in Macao and Canton. Compradors and servants who were familiar with the polite manners that their employers required shielded their employers from the Chinese people and Chinese culture that existed outside of the factories.

As stewards for English factories, compradors were required to maintain the economics of the factory. In 1828, the Select Committee of Supercargoes at Canton assembled to discuss how to remodel the system of auditing the compradors' accounts to control factory expenses 'for the more effectual control of this department'.[92] They drafted four regulations for auditing compradors' accounts to ensure an equality of the charges and the accuracy of accounts. Instructions for supercargoes in how to choose suitable compradors occurred many times in the British EIC records. On the 24 April 1832, the Court of Directors of the EIC in London published a document called *Standing Rules, Orders and Instructions for Supercargoes Appointed by The Court of Directors of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to The East Indies, for The Management of the Said Company's Affairs*

---

[90] Lawrence E. Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 4 (2002), pp. 869–898.
[91] Sword Family Paper, Box 7, Chinese Diary, p. 20.
[92] IOR/G/12/240A, fol.4-5. Feb 29, 1828. Consultations.

in China.[93] It required supercargoes in China to 'be frugal in your House-keeping, as well as in all other Expenses, during your Residence in China'. To achieve that goal, it required supercargoes to find 'the properest person for Compradore' who would buy provisions at the best terms. Furthermore, they should examine the comprador's accounts each month and note in the diary that they had done so.[94]

An expectation on compradors' saving money for the factory is related to contemporary discourse about 'oeconomy', which in eighteenth-century England was 'the practice of managing the economic and moral resources of the household for the maintenance of good order'.[95] It was a steward's responsibility to manage the household in an orderly fashion. As Edward Laurence explains in his book*, The Duty of a Steward to His Lord* (1727), the landowner was the 'good *Oeconomist*' while his steward managed the household accounts.[96]

Like their counterparts in England, compradors in Canton factories were required to keep the oeconomy of the factory. William Hunter mentions that:

> The Comprador also exercised a general surveillance over everything that related to the internal economy of the 'house,' as well as over outside shopmen, mechanic, or tradespeople employed by it. With the aid of his assistants, the comprador kept the house and private accounts of its members. He was the purveyor for the table, and generally of the personal wants of the 'Tai-pans' and pursers.[97]

Hunter's description suggests that factory compradors were deeply involved in the management of economies in different levels in foreign factories. He was not only in charge of household economy, but also kept both household accounts and private accounts of foreign traders. With years of experience managing household economies in the foreign factories, compradors were familiar with the financial status and business relationships of foreign

---

[93] The Court of Directors was based in London. It provided entrepreneurial services and made decisions about raising and managing trading capital as well as determining the volume of trade. For the organization and structure of the EIC, see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and The English East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 25–28.

[94] IOR/G/12/290, pp. 526–527. 24 April 1832, Despatches to China.

[95] Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.24.

[96] Edward Laurence, *The Duty of a Steward to His Lord* (London: John Shuckburgh, 1727), p. 15.

[97] Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton* pp.53-54. 'Tai-pans' means supercargoes.

companies in Canton and Macao. This enabled them to act as business assistants and partners with foreign merchants in later periods.

With the social and cultural knowledge of China and foreign countries and by understanding various networks, compradors dealt with different tasks among different groups of people in the Canton trade. They accumulated profits through different channels. According to William Hunter, compradors had many sources of income in addition from those they acquired from the provision trade:

> One-fifth of a dollar per one thousand for examining money during shroffing process (examining the quality of money); five copper cash (about halfpenny) per dollar on all payments; loans or advances made to "Outside" Chinese merchants (and from them) on contracts for silks and other merchandise entered into with his employers.[98]

He does not mention the compradors' illegal sources of income, such as human trafficking and opium, which could be very lucrative. These activities reveal that compradors had been participating in different financial activities in foreign trade before the 1840s. These activities provided compradors with experiences in dealing with foreign trade. In fact, according to Charles Downing, some compradors who had monopolized the provision trade became wealthy and were looked upon as inferior only to Hong merchants.[99] The financial and social capital they accumulated prepared them for replacing the Hong merchants' position following the collapse of the Canton System.

Conclusion

Compradors acted as go-betweens and connected different groups of people and cultures in Canton by providing foods. They were not passive figures but actively participated in Canton trade. Their roles were more than material; they were transactional and representational. The practical knowledge they acquired of the provision trade and cultural and social knowledge of food in Chinese and European societies enabled them to maintain their positions in Canton trade. The social and financial skills they developed managing households enabled them to extend their working responsibilities. They were humble figures, who were vulnerable and

[98] Ibid., p.55. Outside merchants (*hangwai shangren* 行外商人) were traders who had shops in Canton near the foreign factories. See Paul Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao,* pp. 10–13.
[99] Downing, *The Stranger in China*, p. 50.

powerful at the same time. Although compradors were utilized as a means to control foreigners and were extorted by Chinese officials through increasing fees, as the example of the strike shows, compradors developed their own tactics to protect their own interests. They relied on both legal and illegal foreign trade to increase their profits. Their expertise in procuring provisions and managing households won the trust of their foreign employers and provided them with opportunities to take part in activities related to foreign trade. Moreover, as we saw in the case of Sword, their service for purchasing food and managing household personnel gave them informal power in foreign factories. The Canton trade and increasing culinary needs of foreigners provided opportunities for ordinary Chinese people, like compradors, to thrive; their service in turn contributed to enhancing trade in Canton.

Chapter 2:

Rebecca Brought a Cow to China:
Household Economy and Culinary Knowledge Production in Macao and Canton

Introduction

On 5 July 1843, the Kinsman family of Salem, Massachusetts set sail to China. The family comprised Rebecca Kinsman, Nathaniel Kinsman (1798–1847), their niece Mary Anne Southwick, their two children Ecca and Natty, and their enslaved servant John Alley. Nathaniel was a partner of the American firm Wetmore & Co. A cow travelled with the family to supply milk for the two children. After a three-month voyage, the Kinsman family and their cow safely arrived at Macao.

Rebecca Kinsman was relieved that the cow was still alive when they arrived in China. Shortly after settling in Macao, Kinsman sent a letter to her family in Salem reporting that:

> Our cow came on shore in perfect health and spirits, very thin to be sure, and a little bruised by the hard knocks she got, the last few days of our passage, but she gains every day now. They have a nice barn here for her, and she too goes out walking every day, attended by *Coolies*. Mr. Lejée, too, has a fine cow. Our Mully now gives a very good supply of rich milk which is entirely appropriated to the children. Please tell Enoch Paige how excellent she proved, and how invaluable she was to us on the passage, and will be here, where milk is enormously high, 50 cts. For a small *supful*, about enough for six people![1]

Rebecca Kinsman was satisfied with the cow she brought to Macao, especially with the milk the cow produced for the whole family. Before coming to China, she might have learned about the situation regarding milk and cows in Macao from her social circle of established American merchant families returning from Canton and Macao. She might have heard those merchants complain about the difficulties of sourcing sufficient milk, butter, and cheese at reasonable prices for daily consumption. Regardless of the uncertainties and troubles that

[1] 'Life in Macao in the 1840's', in *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 20.

livestock on the long-distance voyage might cause, Kinsman made up her mind to bring this cow with her to China.

Although experienced compradors supplied food for foreigners in Canton and Macao, some foreign traders and their families brought livestock, vegetables, and preserved foodstuffs with them when they travelled to China. They also planned to establish gardens to grow fresh vegetables for their tables. As James Main (1775?–1846), a Scottish botanist who travelled to China between 1792 and 1794, observes of the English EIC's garden in Canton, '[t]he Company's officers had a kitchen garden of their own about three miles distant from the city on the north side, and in which they endeavoured to get the native gardeners to grow as many of the European vegetables as their skill or the climate would permit.'[2] So, at least in the late eighteenth century, the English EIC had their own gardens under the care of Chinese gardeners that supplied fresh European vegetables. Rebecca Kinsman also mentions that Catharine Lyman Delano (1825–1896) had a garden in Macao. Catharine was the wife of an American merchant, Warren Delano (1809–1898), a partner of Russell & Co. She came to Macao with her husband in 1843 and stayed until 1846.[3] These examples indicate that some foreign traders and their families desired to bring and grow their own food in Canton and Macao. Groceries from the local market could not satiate their appetite or fulfil their culinary needs.

Transporting a live cow is different from transporting plants over long distances and represents an extraordinary instance of foreigners' endeavours to reproduce their eating habits in China. It was apparently necessary for foreigners to replicate a familiar diet (drinking tea with milk, feeding children with cow's milk) and lifestyle (having afternoon tea with milk, serving ice-cream for parties) in China. For women who travelled with children, bringing a cow was important because it helped to feed their children. During her stay in Macao from 1843 to 1847, Rebecca Kinsman recorded many events pertaining to the cows that were kept in her household. In addition, she commented about other imported food, such as preserved strawberries from America.[4] She also recorded the food and drink she had on a daily basis and on special occasions. These abundant records enable us to more closely examine the daily lives of foreign households in Macao.

---

[2] James Main, 'Reminiscences of a Voyage to and from China', in *The Horticultural Register* vol 5*,* ed. by James Main (London: W.S. Orr & Co, 1836), p. 172.
[3] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 86 (1951), p.123.
[4] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p.123.

Through the lens of Rebecca Kinsman's daily life in Macao, this chapter sets out to discover how foreign merchant families endeavoured to construct a sense of home in a foreign land by in bringing specific foods from their homeland, which was essential for maintaining their cultural, social, and racial identities. Moreover, this chapter discusses how these imported cows were maintained and how dairy products were produced in the households. In particular, this chapter explores two specific cases: cows and making ice-cream. Through these two cases, this chapter reveals how foreigners built and negotiated their relationships with family members, servants, and cooks. It also discusses the ways foreigners managed their social networks within foreign communities. It reveals how, through food and drink, foreigners navigated the distance between their homeland and China.

Importing food and drink, especially livestock and plants, to China through Canton has not yet received substantial scholarly attention. When discussing the changes of the dairy industry in China, historian Thomas David DuBois argues that '[t]he first major change to China's dairy industry arrived by sea. European and American Missionaries began importing dairy cattle in the 1860s'.[5] DuBois does not consider the activities of those European and American merchant families who imported cows before the 1860s because these activities were largely obscured by their trading activities in China.

Lisa Hellman discusses the Swedish EIC employees' consumption of food and alcohol in Canton and Macao. Hellman focuses on how Swedish EIC employees perceived Chinese food culture and how they adapted to Chinese food. She states that 'adapting to a Chinese diet seems to have been interpreted mostly in terms of an economic necessity; there are no signs of a fear that the Chinese food and culture would change these men, or be brought back to Europe.'[6] She notes that supercargoes had European-style meals cooked by Chinese cooks while sailors, for economic reasons, adapted to a Chinese diet. She does not explore further whether these European-style meals involved imported food or whether the sailors preserved their eating habits when they could do so inexpensively. Instead, Hellman pays more attention to the importation of wine to China. Alcohol-drinking has received more scholarly attention and has been studied as a symbol of civility in European society. Foreign wine was integrated into the masculine culture of foreign communities and Chinese merchant

[5] Thomas David DuBois, 'China's Dairy Century: Making, Drinking and Dreaming of Milk' in *Animals and Human Society in Asia: Historical, Cultural and Ethical Perspectives*, ed. by Rotem Kowner, et al (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).
[6] Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home*, p. 190.

communities during the eighteenth century.[7] In comparison, importing cows and consuming dairy products has received less attention in the context of Canton trade. Cow's milk did not have as high a social and cultural value as did alcohol, especially in homosocial communities in Canton.

Over the past two decades, studies on milk and cows have increased. In 2002, E. Melaine DuPuis published *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink*, which traces the history of cow's milk consumption in America and explains how cow's milk became infant food in nineteenth-century America.[8] In 2011, Deborah Valenze published *Milk: A Local and Global History*, which explores the history of milk consumption in Western Europe and America since ancient times.[9] Both Dupuis's and Valenze's work focus on Western Europe and America and both barely mention China. Andrea S. Wiley and like-minded researchers are interested in the globalization of cow's milk production and consumption in contemporary China. Wiley argues that the consumption of milk is being widely promoted for children with its benefit of 'healthiness' and 'enhancing growth of children'. The perception of milk as 'modern' and 'western' food contributes to the increase of milk consumption in China.[10]

Recently, scholars have contextualized the globalization of cow's milk through the lens of postcolonialism and feminism. Building on an analysis of Greta Gaard's 'Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies', Mathilde Cohen examines 'milk colonialism' since the sixteenth century.[11] Cohen argues that when European colonisers transported lactating animals, such as cows and sheep, to colonies, they disrupted local ecosystems and relational patterns.[12] Historian Tatsuya Mitsuda in his recent 'Imperial Bovine Bodies: Rendering Chinese Milk and Meat Fit for German and Japanese Consumption' examines the process of how Chinese cows' milk and meat were rendered suitable for German and Japanese

---

[7] Ibid, p.192.
[8] E. Melaine DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
[9] Deborah Valenze, *Milk: A Local and Global History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
[10] Andrea S. Wiley, 'The Globalization of Cow's Milk Production and Consumption: Biocultural Perspectives', *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 3–4 (2007), pp. 281–312.
[11] Greta Gaard, 'Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies', *American Quarterly*, 3(2013), pp. 595-618.
[12] Mathilde Cohen, 'Animal colonialism: The case of milk', *American Journal of International Law* (2017), pp. 267-271.

consumption when German and Japanese colonisers occupied Qingdao, Shandong Province, during the first three decades of the twentieth century.[13]

These studies are helpful for understanding the role that animals played in colonial and imperial expansion. However, the situation in Canton and Macao before the 1850s was different from colonies under Western control. European and American traders in Canton and Macao did not have the same power as did colonisers in other countries. Before the late nineteenth century, importing cows to China occurred at a small scale and infrequently. Historian Tang Kaijian studies how Europeans introduced animals and plants from different areas in the world to Macao. He argues that Macao was an important entry port for foreign animals and plants that entered China through the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tang's research uses local gazetteers and foreign traders' and missionaries' accounts. His work lists foreign animals and plants that were mentioned in these sources but does not elaborate on how these foreign plants and animals were taken care of or maintained as a source of food. Although he mentions the cows that the Kinsman family kept, he does not provide detailed discussion on this phenomenon.[14] It is noticeable that Tang does not use the primary sources of Rebecca Kinsman's letters or diaries, which probably explains why his discussion on cows is limited.

There are very few studies on how knowledge and skills related to processing and cooking foreign dishes that utilized foreign plants and animals were exchanged, transmitted, or practiced in China.[15] Jin Guoping is one of the few historians who explores the introduction of foreign food in the context of foreigners' daily culinary experiences. His research on the introduction of bread in China discusses how 'bread' (*mianbao* 面包) entered the Chinese language and how bread was made by Jesuits and local Chinese people.[16]

---

[13] Tatsuya Mitsuda, 'Imperial Bovine Bodies: Rendering Chinese Milk and Meat Fit for German and Japanese Consumption', *Journal of Global History* 1 (2019), pp. 22-43.
[14] Kaijian Tang 汤开建, *Tianchao Yihua Zhi Jiao: 16-19 Shiji Xiyang Wenming Zai Aomen* 天朝异化之角： 16-19 世纪西洋文明在澳门 [A Touch of Alienation in the Celestial Empire: Western Civilization in Macau, 16-19 Centuries] (Guangzhou: Jinan Daxue Chubanshe, 2016), p. 841.
[15] Kaijian Tang 汤开建, 'Mingqing Shiqi Wailai Zhiwu Yinru Aomen Kao 明清时期外来植物引入澳门考 [On the Introduction of Exotic Plants into Macau in the Ming and Qing Dynasties]', *Zhongguo Nongshi*, 5 (2016), pp. 3-14.
[16] See Guoping Jin 金国平, 'Shilun mianbao wu yu ming shiyu aomen 试论'面包'物与名始于澳门 **[**Macao: Birthplace of Mianbao, Both the Entity and its Name**]** *Haiyangshi yanjiu,* 2 (2020) , pp. 365-378.

Canton and Macao require further exploration and discussion as a space where foreign animals, plants, and dishes were introduced. Moreover, there are limited studies on how foreign animals and plants were maintained in China or on the people who devoted their labour and intelligence to localise them. This chapter aims to contribute to the discussion about the introduction of cows and dairy products to China and their interactions with local people during this process. I argue that when foreigners endeavoured to reconstruct their familiar foodways in Macao, they were reliant on the local people's culinary knowledge, skills, and labour in food-related activities. Successful introduction and maintenance of foreign livestock and adapting foreign dishes could not happen without the effort and intelligence of labourers in foreign households. This chapter argues that food foreign to China was not simply imported to Macao and Canton by foreign merchants but generally involved a joint effort with local servants and cooks. This helps deconstruct a Eurocentric historical narrative of Western influence in China, a narrative that emphasizes only European and American people's agency in historical change. Working alongside compradors, these servants and cooks played an active role in everyday lives of foreigners.

In terms of primary sources, this chapter uses the correspondence between Rebecca Kinsman and her family. Rebecca Kinsman's materials are mostly preserved in the Nathaniel Kinsman Papers, 1784–1882, which are stored in the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. It contains the business and personal papers of Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman. Series II: 'Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman Correspondence' contains their letters to each other while in China from 1843 to 1847. Series III: 'Personal Papers of Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman' contains their correspondence with their friends and family in America. This collection has been digitalized by the company Adam Matthew Digital. The Nathaniel Kinsman Papers, 1784–1882, is categorized as 'China, America and the Pacific'. I did not have the opportunity to visit the Peabody Essex Museum in person, so the digitalized archive was very useful for remotely accessing Rebecca Kinsman's correspondence during her stay in Macao. Apart from the digitalized materials, many of the letters and journals of Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman have been published by the Essex Institute Historical Collections. More specifically, they were reproduced and introduced by Mary Kinsman Munroe, the great-grand daughter of Nathaniel Kinsman, in 1949, 1950, 1951, and 1952 respectively for the Essex Institute Historical Collections. I also consulted a copy of Rebecca Kinsman's journal and

letters in the Peabody Family Papers, which are stored in Smith College.[17] It contains the correspondence of Rebecca Kinsman. These materials are included in the published correspondence by Essex Institute Historical Collections. Rebecca Kinsman's materials are rich in descriptions of her life in Macao and provide invaluable insights about women's eating and drinking experiences in China. The weakness of this source is that Rebecca Kinsman's view of Chinese people from lower socio-economic classes was often based on stereotypes and was heavily racialized. Her writings do not present the views of her servants. Apart from materials from Rebecca Kinsman, this chapter consults published travel writings from other British and Americans who travelled to China for their insights about milk and cows. Since these records lack specific descriptions of cooking, this chapter uses published recipe books in America in the 1840s to discuss the possible situation women faced while cooking in Macao. This chapter also uses paintings that depict foreign factories with cows and goats to show representation of cows in Canton in contemporary art. Nevertheless, there are very few primary sources from labourers themselves, which made it difficult to analyse the thoughts and activities of the Chinese people who worked in the foreign households. This chapter uses pidgin English vocabularies to present their involvement in Western culinary knowledge production and transmission in China. This chapter uses *Common Foreign Expressions of the Red-Haired People Hongmao tongyong fanhua* 红毛通用番话, which is stored in the British Library, and *Necessary Business Expressions of Red-Haired People* Hongmao fanhua maoyi xuzhi 红毛番话贸易须知，富桂堂藏板, which is stored in the Berlin State Library. These pidgin English vocabularies were useful tools for labourers to learn the working language of the foreign households in Canton and Macao.[18] They were sold in local markets and circulated among compradors, servants, and cooks. These vocabularies often contained vocabulary for food. They are useful for understanding Chinese labourers' knowledge of Western culture, especially food culture. The weakness of this source is that these vocabulary books do not indicate the name of the author or the publication date. Moreover, there is little about how Chinese people accumulated knowledge of Western food because the vocabularies do not provide context about how the words were used in real life.

[17] The librarian Colette Puhala at Smith College scanned their collections related to Rebecca Kinsman and sent to me. I thank for her generous help during the pandemic.

[18] Zhihong Qiu 邱志红, 'Guihua Donglai: Hongmao Fanhua Lei Zaoqi Yingyu Cihuishu Kaoxi' "鬼话"东来："红毛番话"类早期英语词汇书考析 [The Introduction of "Devilish Language" to China: An Examination of the English Vocabulary Books such as "Words in Use among the Red-Haired People" in the Qing Dynasty]', *Qingshi Yanjiu*, 2 (2017), pp. 113-121.

Imported Cows and Daily Lives of Foreign Communities in Canton and Macao

When Osmond Tiffany, a Baltimore merchant, arrived in Macao in 1844, he complained that '[i]t is extremely difficult in Canton to procure tolerable butter…so it is with milk and cream, China not being a grazing country.'[19] Comments on the shortage of cows and milk in China from American merchants were not uncommon. Information about the food and drink in China were exchanged through letters, published books, and newspapers in America. Those American merchants and their families who had business connections in China would be familiar with the situation there. We could imagine that, when Rebecca Kinsman heard that foreign residents did not have good milk supply in Macao, she would have been worried about her family, and especially about her two children's diet in Macao.

Demand for imported cows in the foreign communities of Macao and Canton was reflected in advertisements listed in the English newspapers published in Canton and Macao. In *The Canton Register*, foreign residents could find advertisements for 'an English cow, in full milk' advertised by Markwick & Lane in 1831. According to *The Canton Register*, Markwick & Lane opened shops both in Canton and Macao that sold European food and drink to foreigners. In Canton, they opened Europe Bazar in No. 3 Imperial Hong. In Macao, it ran a European Warehouse in Campo Sam Francisco.[20] This company provided imported foodstuff and drinks that were difficult to procure in local markets. In addition to cows, dairy products, such as butter and cheese, are listed in these advertisements.[21] Dairy products that were transported by ship were not appreciated by the foreigners. Mary Parry Sword commented that: '[t]he butter that is brought out in ships I never can eat.'[22] After months of transportation, the butter lost it flavour, which made it unappealing for consumption. Hence, foreigners chose to keep their own cows and have a supply of fresh butter from their cows. Advertisements for cows from England and other dairy products were infrequently published in newspapers. Long-distance trade proved difficult for keeping livestock alive and healthy during transport. Compared with preserved food and wine, transporting live animals involved more risk and smaller profits. The rarity of such advertisements in contemporary English

[19] Tiffany*, The Canton Chinese*, p. 227.
[20] *The Canton Register,* Vol 2, No.1, 2 June 1829.
[21] *The Canton Register,* Vol 4, No. 23, 1 December 1831.
[22] Sword Family Papers, To Mr. Rowland Parry, Macao, 23 November 1843.

newspapers suggests that the supply or demand for imported cows or dairy products was not very steady during the 1830s.

Figure 2. Anonymous, *Canton Factory*, ca.1825. Hong Kong Museum of Art.

This painting (Figure 2) depicts a view of a foreign factory in Canton during the 1820s. The painter is not known and may have been a Chinese painter who worked in a studio and produced the painting for a European market.[23] Paintings of Canton and Canton factories were popular among Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, compared with architecture and natural scenes, domesticated animals are not a very common theme in these export paintings. In this painting, a cow and several goats are positioned in the lower middle, which draw the viewer's attention. These animals were kept in a fenced garden attached to a foreign factory; they would have supplied fresh milk for consumption and dairy

[23] Studies of export paintings and Canton trade, see, Ming Wilson 刘明倩 and Liu Zhiwei 刘志伟 (eds), *18-19 shi ji Yangcheng feng wu: Yingguo Weiduoliya Abote bo wu yuan cang Guangzhou wai xiao hua* 18-19 世纪羊城风物 : 英国维多利亚阿伯特博物院藏广州外销画 [Souvenir from Canton: Chinese export paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003); Yinghe Jiang 江莹河, *Qingdai Yanghua Yu Guangzhou Kouan* 清代洋画与广州口岸 Foreign Paintings in Qing Dynasty and Canton Port (Shanghai, Zhonghua shuju, 2007); Paul A. Van Dyke and Maria Kar-Wing Mok, *Images of the Canton Factories 1760–1822: Reading History in Art* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015).

production. This painting provides a glimpse into the living conditions of cows and goats that were kept in the foreign factories. They were kept in an open area rather than a stable, and the garden seems bit small for the animals.

It is possible that these animals were kept by Dr Richard Henry Cox, a Welshman who worked as a surgeon for the English EIC. Gideon Nye (1812–1888), an American merchant who stayed in Canton from 1833 to 1839, records that:

> There was also here living the hearty, rubicund Dr Richard Henry Cox, one of the Company's Surgeons, a Welshman with a flock of goats filling this enclosure in front of the Danish Hong, in which he lived :—Who used to '*double us up*' by the vigorous thrusts of his fists of a morning, to see if our liver was sound; and finding us unflinching, would often invite us to his bountiful Breakfasts,—sure to be garnished with Goat's Milk and Cheese.[24]

The practice of keeping various animals supplanted daily food supply for foreigners. This practice was conducted by both individuals and foreign companies. From this record, it is not clear whether these goats were imported or from a local market. It is more likely that they were from a local market, since imported goats were hard to be found on the advertisements on newspaper. There were also some records of goats raised by local people on Lintin island.[25]

Employees of the established trading companies, especially the English EIC, had a sufficient supply of fresh milk because cows were kept in the factories to supply fresh milk for daily consumption. English EIC employees travelled between Macao and Canton every year, as according to the contemporary Chinese policy, foreign traders were only allowed to live in Canton during trading season. On those occasions, they brought cows on board so that they could have fresh milk supplied for them during the trip. William Hunter recorded a three-day trip with the English EIC from Macao to Canton in October 1831. He states that 'we breakfast and dine as regularly and in as good style as on shore […] Provisions and furniture-in fact, all things needful-are also supplied by the Company'. Hunter recorded that their comprador controlled three or

[24] *The Morning of My Life in China: Comprising an Outline of the History of Foreign Intercourse from the Last Year of the Regime of Honorable East India Company, 1833, to the Imprisonment of the Foreign Community in 1839,* by Gideon Nye, jr. (Canton, 1873), p. 33.
[25] Gaard, 'Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies', p.53.

four fast boats to distribute fresh milk for EIC employees every morning before eight o'clock.[26] With the comprador's management, 'everything is as cosy as possible'.[27]

For Rebecca Kinsman, who was not affiliated with the English, dealing with cows and fresh milk was not carefree. She not only brought her own cow to Macao but also invested a lot of effort in addressing different issues related to the cow. Some scholars have attended to foreign women and their lives in Macao. However, their eating and drinking experiences are understudied. Over the last two decades, more research on the experiences of foreign women in China during the 1830s and 1840s has been published. In 2006, Kimberly Sayre Alexander published an article entitled 'Demure Quakeress: Rebecca Kinsman in China, 1843–1847'.[28] Kimberly Sayre Alexander is among the first scholars to discuss Rebecca Kinsman and her experiences in China during the 1840s. Alexander discusses Kinsman's life in Salem, in Macao, and her return to America. In particular, she mentions an episode in which Kinsman dined in a Hong merchant's house and received a gift of candy from Salem. However, Alexander does not provide a detailed examination and historical analysis of Kinsman's eating and drinking experiences in China. In a more recent article, published in 2014, Alexander offers a more detailed analysis of Kinsman's accounts on the architecture in Macao.[29] In 2012, Rogério Miguel Puga published 'Representing Macao in 1837: The Unpublished Peripatetic Diary of Caroline Hyde Butler (Laing)', which discusses Caroline Hyde Butler, an American woman who stayed in Macao for two months in 1837. He mentions Butler's daily routine, including her dinner.[30] In 'Fidelity and Sacrifice: The Gender Discourse of Traders in Pre- and Post-Opium War Canton' published in 2019, John D. Wong analyses the experiences of two American couples to discuss the gendered discourse of American traders in China. Wong mentions that Paul Siemen Forbes wrote letters to his wife Valeria Wright Forbes and described a Chinese dinner he had in Canton in 1844.Wong

---

[26] Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae'*, pp. 83–84.
[27] Ibid. p. 84.
[28] Kimberly Alexander, "'Demure Quakeress': Rebecca Kinsman in China, 1843–1847.' *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 2006/2007* (Boston: Boston University, 2009), pp. 102-113.
[29] Alexander, Kimberly Sayre, Rebecca Kinsman and the Architecture of Macao, 1843-1847. *World History Connected*, 1 (2014). https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/11.1/forum_alexander.html (accessed 15 Apr. 2023).
[30] Rogério Miguel Puga, 'Representing Macao in 1837: The Unpublished Peripatetic Diary of Caroline Hyde Butler (Laing)', in *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations*, ed. by Kendall Johnson (Hong Kong University Press, 2011), pp. 117-130.

argues that the detailed description of this Chinese dinner was meant to satiate his wife's inquisitiveness of his life in Canton.[31] Wong's discussion of this phenomenon does not go further: he neither uses food to discuss gender relations in Canton trade nor examines the details of the American couples' diets. These studies have touched the topic of food in American women's lives in Macao, but seldom use the lens of gender and race to decipher food and food-related occasions.

Among the foreign women who lived in Macao, the case of the American Harriet Low (1809–1877) has received the most scholarly attention. When scholars use Low's accounts to study the daily lives of foreign women in Macao, they study her activities of writing, reading, language-studying, gardening, walking, gossiping as well as her descriptions of social gatherings and entertainments.[32] Low was twenty years old when she went to Macao. She was the only single woman from America in her social circle during her stay. Therefore, her experience was peculiar and is not very representative of the foreign women in Macao, especially those who were married and living with children.

Married women like Rebecca Kinsman and Mary Parry Sword had more household responsibilities, including providing food and drink for their families, especially for their children. Sword writes that '[s]ome people would like this life, and perhaps I might if I had no children, but with as large a family as mine, I have quite enough to employ and interest me, without seeking amusement abroad.'[33] The experiences of bringing children to, giving birth to babies in, and raising children in Macao ensured that the women's everyday lives were drastically different from the lives of foreign men and single women. The existing research offers a limited analysis on foreign women's household management and their relationship with children in Macao during the 1840s. The case of Kinsman provides opportunities for discovering the roles of a married woman in households in foreign communities. In particular, her activities around cow-keeping enable us to observe her

[31] John D. Wong, 'Fidelity and Sacrifice: The Gender Discourse of Traders in Pre- and Post-Opium War Canton', *Frontiers of History in China*, 4 (2019), 473–507.
[32] Rosemary W. N. Lamas, *Everything in Style: Harriet Low's Macau* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004). For more discussion of American women in Macao, see Stacilee Ford, *Troubling American Women: Narratives of Gender and Nation in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011); Etsuko Taketani, *U.S. Women Writers and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1825–1861* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003); Susan E. Schopp, 'Five American Women's Perceptions of China 1829–1941: "A Yard-stick of Our Own Construction"' in *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast*, ed. by Paul A. Van Dyke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).
[33] Sword Family Papers, To Mrs. A. C. Sword, Macao 15 July 1844.

interactions with female and male servants and with other foreigners as well as how she established and maintained (or failed to maintain) her status as a mother, wife, and household manager.

Before the Opium War, foreign women were forbidden from entering Canton city, although this policy was sometimes violated by British and American women, which could lead to conflict between Chinese authorities and foreigners. This is another difference between Low's and Kinsman's experiences in Macao. When Harriet Low and her aunt dressed up as men and entered Canton, the Chinese officials threatened to stop trade.[34] In comparison, Rebecca Kinsman was allowed to visit Canton and live with her husband for several days. Nevertheless, changes in the political environment did not mean that gender segregation in the foreign community disappeared. Because of sexism and racism, most foreign women who travelled to China with their husbands remained in Macao. Osmond Tiffany explains why most foreign women lived in Macao: if foreign women entered a street in Canton,

> they would be mobbed; if they look out of a window, they attract the gaze of five hundred idlers, and their walks are confined to the square, into which none but the most respectable natives are allowed. Every thing they wish to purchase must be brought to them, and, in short, they are as uncomfortable in Canton as a Chinese woman would be in New York.[35]

Tiffany's description points out concerns about foreign women's presence in Canton among foreign communities. Given the excessive and unwanted attention from Chinese men, foreign women were expected to stay in Macao while their husbands conducted business in Canton. This gender segregation meant that Kinsman and her husband were often separated during their stay in China. She wrote letters to her husband almost every day to share her daily life.[36] Their separation meant that Kinsman must rely on herself and her female social circle in Macao to adapt to the local environment and make everyday decisions. Newly arrived in a foreign land with two young children, Kinsman had to deal with many uncertainties about her children's health in an unfamiliar environment.

Every morning, as Kinsman describes, 'children have their bowls of delicious bread and milk as soon as they are dressed—The children's milk from our own cow who is a

---

[34] Low, *My Mother's Journal,* pp. 76–80.
[35] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, p. 225.
[36] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 86(1950), p. 324.

treasure here'.[37] Fresh milk constituted an essential part of the children's breakfast, which differed from that of an adult. Adults ate a much more varied diet for both breakfast and dinner. Children's health was one of the major reasons that parents decided to bring young children to Macao. The arrival of some American and English children in Macao might have contributed to the growing market for imported cows and fresh cow's milk in Macao.

American and European families brought their young children to Macao not only for family unity but also for the health benefits. Kinsman brought her two younger children to China and left her eldest son, William, home. Rebecca Kinsman believed that the weather in Macao would be beneficial to her younger children's health but dangerous to her older son's. In her letter to her family, she explains:

> I have before mentioned the peculiar healthiness of the climate for young children—scarlet fever, measles, and other scourges of the juvenile human race with us, are here unknown, and whooping cough if it appears at all, comes in so mild a form as hardly to be recognized. The climate here is considered very healthy for children until about 9 years old—Then the growth becomes so rapid, that in most instances Parents find it necessary to send them home, about that age.[38]

When the Kinsman family went to Macao, their eldest son was seven years old, their daughter Rebecca (Ecca) was four, and their youngest son Nathaniel (Natty) was two. Although bringing young to children to a foreign country involved additional difficulties (and for Rebecca, required bringing a live cow), the benefits for their children were thought to outweigh these problems. The myth of the healthy climate of Macao for young children was circulated among American families. Sword also mentions that '[t]hey say this is a fine place for children; that they suffer very little cutting their teeth, and they have the hooping-cough, measles, &c. so lightly they hardly notice it.'[39] Sword's words indicate that this myth existed before 1841. For women who were critically concerned with their children's health, the healthy benefits of regions were an important factor when deciding to travel and reside in a foreign place.

The price of imported cows was high when Kinsman arrived in Macao. Imported cows were a precious property for foreign households. For example, in an 1845 letter,

---

[37] Ibid., 17.
[38] Ibid., p. 19.
[39] Sword Family Papers, To Miss S. D. Sword, Macao, 10 November 1841.

Kinsman mentions that Mrs. Ritchie paid $100 for buying an imported cow.[40] The price people paid for maintaining cows was even higher than the price of the cow itself. Rebecca paid $12 every month to hire a cowman and for the cow's food, so it could cost at least $144 to keep a cow each year. In comparison, the physician who looked after the Kinsmans' health was paid $200 a year by Wetmore & Co.[41] Meanwhile, the price for local cows was much cheaper than the price for English or American cows. When Rebecca Kinsman's cow died in 1845, she considered buying a local cow. The owner of the cow asked for $55. However, Kinsman thought the price was exorbitant. She suspected that her comprador was adding at least $10 to their pocket.[42] Hence, the price of a local cow was about a half of what an English or American cow cost.

In the end, Kinsman did not buy a local cow. Writing to her sister, she explains that '[t]he Chinese Cows are very small, and give very little milk, but it is of very rich quality, much richer than that of English or American Cows. But as they are not accustomed to being milked, (the Chinese never using milk in any form), they soon go dry, and it is very unprofitable buying one.'[43] In this letter, Rebecca compares local cows with English and American cows. Although she mentions that local cows were very small, she acknowledges that the quality of local cows' milk was much richer than that of English or American cows. However, this rich quality does not necessarily mean that local cow's milk was suitable for children. According to a study conducted by the Agricultural Department of Canton Christian College in 1916, milk produced by Canton buffalo contained 12.6% fat, while milk produced by European cows contained only 3.8% fat. Compared with 4% fat in mother's milk, Canton buffalo milk contained an extraordinary amount of fat, which was not easy for young children to consume.[44] Prior to the invention of nutrition science, it was unlikely that Kinsman would have access to scientific statistics about the fat of different cows' milk. However, she was aware of the differences between the cows and made decisions based on this information.

Although Rebecca Kinsman did not buy a local cow, she had an agreement with a man to bring a cow to her house every morning and evening for $16 a month. She paid an extra $4 for fresh milk every month rather than keep a cow at her house. However, as she said

---

[40] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', in *EIHC,* 87(1951), p.128.
[41] 'Life in Macao in the 1840's', in *EIHC*,86 (1950), p. 36.
[42] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 87(1951), p.128.
[43] Ibid., pp. 127–128.
[44] C. O. Levine, 'A Study of the Different Kinds of Milk Produced in Kwangtung', *The China Medical Journal*, 6 (1918), pp. 537–538.

in a letter, 'the risk of the cow's dying was I think greater than the extra 4 dollars.'[45] This consideration reveals that household management in Macao involved financial calculation as well as risk management. This required Kinsman's constant communication with her social circle about cows in Macao. Apart from the availability of cows on the market, she likely paid attention to the news from families leaving Macao, who might leave cows behind. Kinsman also regularly communicated with her comprador, servants, and cow-keeper to ensure a steady, fresh milk supply for her children. Sometimes she inspected the condition and health of the cow herself. She also collected the latest information about prices of cows and milk in the market and shared this information with her family members in Salem.

Foreign women in Macao shared information about cows and milk in the local markets. Sharing this information was especially important when a family unexpectedly lost a cow and experienced a shortage of fresh milk for their children. When Rebecca Kinsman lost two cows in her household (the other cow belonged to Wetmore & Co), she received goat's milk from Mrs. Richie to feed her new-born baby twice a day.[46] Kinsman comments that the goat milk from Mrs. Ritchie 'is very good for him.'[47] Mrs. Ritchie (a.k.a. Martha Hamilton), the wife of an American merchant Archibald Alexander Ritchie (1806–1856), accompanied her husband to China in 1838. She was from Philadelphia and had more experience living in Macao than either Mary Parry Sword or Kinsman. These experiences gave her a certain authority on matters related to household-management in the American women's circle in Macao. When Sword started to manage her household in Macao in 1841, she states that 'Mrs. Ritchie is very economical, and she has given me a great deal of information how to manage things.'[48] The advice and help from a more experienced American woman was crucial for American women who were unfamiliar with the environment and who lacked support from their family. Mrs. Richie, as Kinsman writes, 'is almost like a sister'.[49] When her siblings and husband were away from her, such support from other foreign women was critical, especially in difficult days.

In 1846, when Kinsman received news that her daughter Ecca had died on a return trip to America (Rebecca had hoped that sending Ecca home would help her recover from an illness), her husband was in Canton. Her female friends in Macao comforted her and helped

---

[45] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 87(1951), p. 128.
[46] Abbot Kinsman was born in 1844 in Macao. Rebecca Kinsman hired a Chinese wetnurse to look after him.
[47] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 87 (1951), p.127.
[48] Sword Family Papers, To Miss S. D. Sword, Macao, 10 November 1841.
[49] The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86(1950), p. 312.

her through such a difficult time: 'Mrs. Forbes, dear kind friend, sent a bowl of nice soup to tempt my appetite, and a plate of mutton & green peas, was she not kind, but I could only eat the soup.'[50] In a time of uncertainty, the information exchange and food-gift exchange between women was pivotal for managing their households and crucial for the survival of their children. Foreigners' activities of keeping and buying cows revealed their ways of organising their daily consumptions and maintaining social connections with other members in foreign communities in Macao.

Cow-keeping and Chinese Labourers in Foreign Households

While Rebecca Kinsman took over the responsibilities of managing her household and exchanging information about cows with other American women, she was not herself responsible for maintaining the cows. Instead, she hired local labourers to handle the everyday work of caring for the cows. As historians May-bo Ching and Liu Zhiwei point out, it was impossible for foreign traders to live in China during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries without servants who provided various services for them.[51] Ching and Liu also point out that Chinese servants who worked in foreign households played an important role in Sino-Western cultural interactions. Their research has revealed that Chinese servants and pilots acquired knowledge, skills, vocabularies, and language through their daily service for Westerners.

There were many Chinese labourers who provided household services for the Kinsman family. When Rebecca Kinsman first arrived, she was pleased with the fact that many servants were in charge of different duties in her house. In a letter, she writes:

> The Coolies perform all menial services—sweeping and dusting—bringing & carrying, etc.—The Chair Coolies carry the Sedan Chair when we ride—There is a Horse Coolie, Cow Coolie, and Dog Coolie, each having his separate duties—Then there is the Cook, Cook's Mate, and these complete the list of servants, I believe. We shall enjoy a great advantage in the way of servants—The

[50] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in China, 1846' *EIHC*, 88(1952), p. 62.
[51] Cheng Meibao, 2004, 2010, 2012, 2013.

> Comprador, Cook, and some of the Coolies having been in the house a long time, and known to be faithful.[52]

Kinsman enjoyed the advantage of having various household labourers perform almost all of the menial services needed for her family. Moreover, some of these labourers were experienced in providing services to foreign households and were trusted by their employers. When Kinsman first arrived in Macao, she thought she 'never could like the arrangement' but soon thought that having these servants 'is the best way'.[53] She felt comfortable with the convenience that came from hiring a great number of Chinese labourers.

Kinsman's interactions with her servants who were involved in cow-keeping provide us a lens for understanding the gender and racial politics in foreign households in Macao. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in rural farms in Britain, dairying was understood to be women's work. Women who provided fresh milk for urban consumers were called 'milkmaids', and they dominated the milk trade in urban areas. Producing and selling dairy products were also generally considered women's work during this period in Britain, despite their labour and knowledge not being well acknowledged in society.[54] However, the situation in Macao during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was quite different. Chinese labourers, including those who took care of cows in European and American households were predominately men; men from lower socio-economic classes took on the work of keeping cows.

Chinese labourers, including cow-keepers, from lower socio-economic classes who worked for foreign families have received very limited attention from scholars. Located at the bottom of the social hierarchy in foreign households, they left very few records for scholars to explore. Nonetheless, we may learn something about their status in foreign households through the contemporaneous literature. For example, *A Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect*, published by Elijah Coleman Bridgman, the first American Protestant Christian missionary appointed to China in 1839, provides some information about servants' salaries in foreign households: 'The personal servants receive each five dollars; the coolies and porter, each four dollars; the cook, seven; and the cowkeeper, three; making a total sum of forty dollars, monthly wages.'[55] Compared with coolies, porters, and cooks, cow-keepers received

---

[52] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86(1950), p. 18.
[53] Ibid., p. 19.
[54] Valenze, *Milk: A Local and Global History*, pp. 120–121, 133.
[55] Elijah Coleman Bridgman*, A Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect* (Macao, 1839), p. 169.

the lowest wage. Although this record might not reflect the actual situations of foreign families in China during the early nineteenth century, it tells us about the relatively low position of cow-keeper.

Cow-keeping was demanding and labour-intensive work. Moreover, taking care of European and American cows posed more challenges to their keepers because foreign cows might have different habits from native ones. Moreover, when cows were imported to China, they were often weak and prone to illness because of several months of long-distance travel. Cow-keepers had to look after them and help them adapt to the local environment. It required specific knowledge and experience to help the cows adapt to the change of climate and sudden illnesses.[56] The cow-keepers who were hired by foreign households might have had previous experience in keeping local cows or water buffalos, but they had to teach themselves about how to keep the foreign animals healthy and producing milk for an entire household's daily consumption. In addition to keeping cows, cow-keepers and household servants in foreign factories might also have to learn how to make butter, cream, and cheese from the fresh milk the cows produced. For example, Mary Parry Sword mentions that 'They make me fresh butter every day from our cow's milk. It is pretty good, but it is not like Philadelphia butter.'[57] Sword yearned for butter made in her hometown Philadelphia. She often talked about how much she missed the taste of grass butter with her relatives in Philadelphia.[58] However, it was impossible for her to get the same thing in Macao. She had to rely on her cowman to supply fresh butter every day. We do not have any direct sources about how local cow-keepers of the period exchanged and spread their knowledge and skills of keeping imported cows and making butter and other diary products. It is possible that these skills and knowledge were communicated and exchanged directly between cow-keepers from different households.

We may learn of cow-keepers' daily routine from Kinsman's record. She records that her two cows were walked out every day 'for the benefit of their health', so cow-keepers must have walked the cows to ensure they had sufficient exercise. Of the food provided to the cows, she writes that '[t]he grass such as it is, is cut and brought to them, they are fed

---

[56] In 1845, the old cow from Wetmore & Co was sick for several days and died afterwards. Rebecca Kinsman states that every remedy was tried but all were in vain. 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 86(1950), p. 236.
[57] Sword Family Papers, Mr. Rowland Parry, Macao, 23 November 1843.
[58] Grass butter is butter made from the milk of cows kept at pasture. See 'Grass, n.1', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/80887> [accessed 18 April 2023].

morning evening, with warm mess, consisting of paddy, some other ingredients boiled together, don't know what, of which they seem very fond.'[59] According to her description, the cow-keeper prepared different ingredients for the cow, mixed them, and boiled them before feeding the cows. Cow-keepers had to determine what to feed specific breeds of cows and the exact quantity to feed cows in different life stages and conditions. They also had to calculate the allowance for cows' food and had to pay attention to changes in grain prices in local markets.

Since supplying steady and quality milk was significant for children's health, Rebecca Kinsman was concerned with the cow-keeper's work. Cow-keepers were often under suspicion when cows became ill or died. After living in Macao for a while, Kinsman no longer regarded her Chinese labourers as 'faithful', especially when she was unsatisfied with their work. Since cows were precious property for the households, it was a great loss when an imported cow died. When the cow from America died, Rebecca Kinsman held an informal inquisition to determine who was responsible. Kinsman provides an example of how incidents related to domestic animals were reconciled in foreign households.

When her cow died in 1844, Kinsman suspected that her cowman poisoned it.[60] During an informal inquisition, her most trusted servant John Alley, an enslaved servant whom Nathaniel Kinsman had purchased in the East Indies, played an intermediary role between Kinsman and the other servants. Alley accompanied the Kinsman family to Macao in 1843. He was considered a 'friend' of Kinsman family and had a close and intimate relationship with the family.[61] During their stay in Macao, Alley often accompanied the children and played with them. Children enjoyed staying with him as well.[62] During years of service for the Kinsman family, Alley would make pudding for dinner.[63] He could also make some 'cold sauce', which in Rebecca Kinsman's words, 'give[s] the pudding a *home* taste, and which our cook does not understand making.'[64] Her comment suggests that Kinsman was reliant on Alley's cooking for providing a sense of home for her family.

After Kinsman formed an agreement with a local to bring his cow to her house twice a day, she asked Alley, who supervised the milking process, to ensure that the milk was not

---

[59] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86(1950), p. 268.
[60] Ibid., p. 137.
[61] 'Nathaniel Kinsman, Merchant of Salem, In the China Trade', *EIHC*, 85(1949), p. 31.
[62] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 87(1951), p. 145.
[63] 'Nathaniel Kinsman, Merchant of Salem, In the China Trade', *EIHC*, 85 (1949), p. 141.
[64] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 136.

diluted with water.[65] Kinsman was annoyed that the milk was abstracted and put into water. She assumed that, given the high price of milk on the market, cow-keepers were tempted to do so.[66] Her anxiety about the quality of milk was not unique in early-nineteenth-century Macao. Since the late seventeenth century, when town dairies had become established in Britain, the quality of milk had become a concern for consumers. The food historian Constance Anne Wilson suggests that in Britain'[t]own milk was often diluted with water by the milkmen; and furthermore, since it was carried through the streets in open pails, was liable to have all sorts of filth either blown or thrown into it.'[67] Consumers were anxious with the quality and hygiene of milk until reliable sanitisation methods and standardised dairy production emerged.

Some incidents pertaining to the quality of milk occurred in foreign households in Macao. Mary Parry Sword records in her dairy that '[w]e had a row about the milk a few days ago. They actually brought it in the evening for the children half water. Mr Sword made a great fuss about it, and we have had it good ever since.'[68] The Swords were angry that the children's milk had been diluted with water. These incidents deepened the distrust between foreigners and their milkmen. It also contributed to, as John Carroll argues, the foreigners' feelings of vulnerability in a foreign place.[69]

Rebecca Kinsman's assumptions about the lower-class Chinese labourers' dishonesty led to an inquisition when her cows died, although there were many other possible reasons for their illnesses and deaths. During the informal inquisition, Alley called on the comprador and the cow-keeper to see whether the cow-keeper appeared guilty or not. Since Kinsman did not speak Chinese, it was more likely that Alley and the Chinese comprador asked the cow-keeper questions. Kinsman records that '[t]he poor fellow looked pale and frightened enough, but nothing could be proved against him.' [70] In the end, they found this cowman not guilty and let him go.

---

[65] Ibid., p. 275.
[66] Ibid.
[67] C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain: From the Stone Age to the 19th Century* (New York**:** Barnes & Noble, 1974), p. 165.
[68] Sword Family Papers, China Diary, Sunday 9 January 1842.
[69] John M. Carroll, 'Slow Burn in China: Factories, Fear, and Fire in Canton' in *Empires of Panic: Epidemics and Colonial Anxieties*, ed. by Robert Peckham (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015).pp.35-55.
[70] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China, Excerpts from Letters of 1844', *EIHC,* 86 (1950), p. 137.

Rebecca Kinsman was reliant on Alley and the comprador's support for managing the household. Nathaniel's absence in Macao required that Rebecca take up additional duties. She complained:

> I sometime think it never could have been intended that such a variety of occupations should devolve upon one person,—nursing a baby, mantua making, reading, writing letters, entertaining visitors, opening the treasury (the key of which is confided to my charge, as I am now virtually Wetmore & Co. in Macao) receiving and paying out money, with other and divers matters too numerous to particularize.[71]

From her complaint, Kinsman's role seems to have extended far more beyond that of a housewife. She was actively and deeply involved in the business of Wetmore & Co, especially its business transactions in Macao. Kinsman faced problems common to modern working women in that she was constantly balancing her duties as mother and, although her position in the company was informal, as a representative of Wetmore & Co. Mary Parry Sword makes a similar complaint: 'As it is I have double duty to perform. I am governess, mantua-maker, housekeeper, secretary and lady, all at once; besides having all the babies, and nursing them, which is no sinecure I assure.'[72] Sword's words indicate that it was common for American women to perform different roles and various tasks inside and outside household at the same time. In this foreign land, the traditional boundary of gender roles was blurred, which created obligations and challenges for the women. In this context, foreign women had limited time and energy for supervising the work of different labourers in their houses. Kinsman had to delegate tasks to servants, such as John Alley, whom she trusted to oversee her other household employees.

After the foreigners brought livestock to China, they had to negotiate with the local environment to have a steady supply of fresh milk. They were reliant on their household labourers, such as cow-keepers and servants, to look after these valuable but vulnerable animals. The illness and death of these animals were losses for the foreign households, which could bring tensions between foreigners and their household labourers. Although foreigners had distrust with their cow-keepers, they had to depend on the latter's service to fulfil their daily culinary needs.

---

[71] Ibid., p. 324.
[72] Sword Family Papers, To Miss S. Parry, Macao, 4 March 1845.

Ice-cream and Culinary Knowledge Exchange

Rebecca Kinsman's bringing cows to China reveals how foreigners' tastes and diets were replicated in China through the knowledge and skills that the Chinese labourers obtained in their employment. Bringing cows to China not only enabled a supply of fresh milk but also provided opportunities for foreigners to enjoy desserts such as ice-cream. Making American and European dishes and desserts with milk and cream involved a system of culinary knowledge and skills. This knowledge did not immediately spread to China when foreigners arrived. Instead, Chinese cooks in foreign households had to learn and practice these skills daily. As the numbers of foreigners from different countries and cultures increased, they brought new requirements for the food and drink served at their tables for ordinary meals and special occasions such as Christmas. Through years of working in foreign households, Chinese cooks learned, experimented, and practiced new dishes, and Chinese servants learned about Western culinary knowledge. Both types of workers contributed to Sino-Western cultural and material interactions during this period. The case of ice-cream-making in a foreign household in Macao provides an example to reveal cultural and material interactions between Americans and their household labourers.

On 31 March 1844, Rebecca Kinsman wrote to her friends to share her experience of eating ice-cream in Mrs. Sword's Macao home: it was 'an unheard of luxury.'[73] It was the first time that Kinsman enjoyed ice-cream since she arrived at Macao in October 1843. Her records reveal her excitement about the dessert that foreigners rarely consumed. Kinsman was among the first Americans who had the opportunity to taste freshly made ice-cream from imported ice from America via the clipper ship Paul Jones.

Robert Bennet Forbes, one of the owners of the ship Paul Jones states that 'The "Paul Jones", in 1844, took the first American ice to China, and, on her way to Bombay, landed a piece at Singapore; whereupon the Singapore "Free Press" congratulated the people on the prospect of getting ice from China!'[74] Forbes stresses that the ice shipped from America to China was 'American ice'. He boasted about the remarkableness of his fast-speed ship and its achievement in shipping ice from America to Asia. Historians have stressed the role of clippers in transporting tea from China to America and Europe; however, shipping American

[73] Ibid., p. 120.
[74] Forbes, *Letters from China,* pp. 297–298.

ice to Macao for ice-cream making suggests that the development of ship technology also brought changes to food consumption for long-distance travellers. When shipping ice—a perishable food—over long distances became possible, it also made transporting fresh foodstuffs possible and diversified the food on foreigners' tables in China. Rebecca Kinsman records that the 'Ice House' on the Paul Jones which contained thirty tons of ice also stored fresh meat and fruits, such as mutton, beef, poultry, apples, and pears.[75] In addition to the ice, Kinsman received a plate of apples from Warren Delano, an American merchant who worked for Russell & Co. Rebecca describes that 'the apples retained their flavor perfectly'.[76]

Eating ice-cream was one of the most extraordinary culinary experiences that foreigners could have in China. Until the mid-nineteenth century in America, most people could not afford ice cream, whether it was made at home or bought from a confectioner. Neither ice nor cream was always affordable or available. Most importantly, making ice cream was so labour-intensive that, unless they had help from servants, most people did not have the time to make it.[77] Ice-cream was extraordinary in this context not only for its luxurious ingredients (imported ice, cream, and sugar) but also for the time, skills, and labour required to make it successfully in a foreign land.

Although there were cold desserts and drinks in Chinese food culture, cooks in foreign households may not have been familiar with the European or American ways making of ice-cream.[78] When Kinsman received ice from the clipper Paul Jones, she considered making ice-cream but gave up the idea when she was invited to have ice-cream at Mary Sword's. In a 10 July 1845 letter to her sister, she writes that she received a large piece of ice (about fifteen or twenty pounds) and had obtained a decent supply of milk, and only then resolved to make ice-cream. She mentions that 'we enjoyed making them very much.'[79] Kinsman does not mention the specific method for how ice-cream was made in Macao, but we can consult a contemporary recipe to have a rough idea of how they may have made the ice-cream. I consulted *The American System of Cookery: Comprising Every Variety of*

---

[75] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China', *EIHC,* 86 (1950), pp. 119–120.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Andrew Smith (ed), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Food and Drink in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 311.
[78] Zhenya Liu and Puyu Liu 刘振亚、刘璞玉, 'Woguo gudai yinliao yu lengliang shipin Taiyuan 我国古代饮料与冷凉食品探源(Exploring the origins of drinks and cold food in ancient China), *Gujin Nongye*, 2 (1989), pp. 40–45.
[79] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 87(1951), p.142

Information for Ordinary and Holiday Occasions written by Susan Crowen (1821–1870) and published in 1847 in New York. This cookbook was reprinted several times in the 1850s and 1860s. American housewives might have consulted the book during their cooking lives. The cookbook gives detailed directions for making ice-cream at home:

> To Make Ice Cream.—Ice pots for making ice cream are of two sorts, block-tin and pewter. Of these, pewter is best, the substance to be iced congealing more gradually than in the former, an object much to be rough and coarse, like hail, especially if it is not well worked with a spatula or flat wooden spoon.
>
> The other utensils necessary for the operation, are a deep pail six or eight inches larger in diameter, than the ice pot with a vent peg at the bottom, and a wooden spatula ten or twelve inches long; then having put the cream (or whatever it may be) into the ice pot, put a layer of ice broken fine, and mixed with coarse salt in the pail; set on the ice pot, fill the space around the sides with ice broken fine, and mixed with coarse salt, nearly to the top of the pot; take care that none of the ice gets into it, strew over the top of the ice a large handful of coarse salt, cover it with a woolen cloth, and let it stand for fifteen minutes; then take the cover from the ice pot, and with the spatula, stir the contents up together, so that those parts which touch the sides of the mould, and consequently congeal first, may be mixed with the liquid in the middle, work it well for ten minutes or so, then replace the cover, take the ice pot by the ears, and stir it back and forth for quarter of an hour, then open the mould a second time, and stir the cream as before. Continue these operations alternately until the cream or whatever it is to be frozen, is perfectly smooth, and free from lumps.
>
> During the process, take care to let out the water which will collect at the bottom of the pail, by means of the vent peg; keep the ice pressed close to the pot.
>
> It is to be served in a mould; after having nicely frozen the cream, put some of it in, press it close to the shape, put in more, and press it close until the mould is full, cover it, and set in a pail of fine ice, mixed with salt for one hour; then take it out, wipe the mould dry with a cloth dipped in hot water, then turn it into a deep plate and serve quickly.[80]

[80] Susan Crowen, *The American System of Cookery: Comprising Every Variety of Information for Ordinary and Holiday Occasions* (New York: T.R. Dawley, 1864), pp. 115–116.

As the recipe suggests, making ice-cream required several specific utensils for the best results, including a block-tin or pewter ice pot, as well as 'a deep pail six or eight inches larger in diameter, than the ice pot with a vent peg at the bottom, and a wooden spatula ten or twelve inches long'.[81] These specific requirements meant that, to make ice-cream in Macao, one had to have these utensils in their kitchen prior to starting. As food historian Lucy Harvard suggests, cooking utensils were essential for knowledge-making in the early modern kitchen. Her studies of early modern recepies suggest that knowledge about kitchen utensils was intrinsic to the successful production of food and medicine by early modern housewives.[82] In her letters to her sister, Kinsman pays particular attention to the utensils when she asks her sister to send starch and pork from America to Macao. She asked for twelve pounds of starch, which should be put up in a tin box. When she talked about the pork she asked for, she mentions that 'The pork father will speak to Sawyer to put up---He will know what kind Nathaniel usually has---*middling* young pig.'[83] Rebecca was meticulous about the food and their containers. She had to select carefully so that the preserved food would keep its taste and freshness during long-distance transportation: after being shipped to Macao, the food could be used to replicate the taste of food from home. This food-shipping process with her family relied on their mutual understanding on taste and eating habits.

As it was the first time that ice was transported from America to China, we can assume that ice-cream-making was a new activity in the foreign community. Moreover, the knowledge and skills of the necessary cooking utensils and procedures that had been established in America would have to be adapted to local kitchens in Macao, including the utensils on hand and their cooks' and servants' culinary knowledge and skills. Although cooks and servants in foreigners' houses had become familiar with Western cooking, they had to communicate with their American and European employers in preparing the equivalent utensils and ingredients needed for this new dessert, ice-cream. Whether or not this ice-cream was made by foreigners themselves or by their cooks and servants, the latter must have been involved in utensil preparation, since they were much more familiar with local kitchens and cooking equipment. In Rebecca Kinsman's case, before she came to the house in Macao, the servants had worked there for years and were trusted by their former employers. Foreigners might have been equipped with knowledge and experience in making certain Western dishes,

[81] Ibid., p. 115.
[82] Lucy J. Havard, '"Almost to Candy Height:" Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Kitchen, 1700-1850', *Cultural and Social History*, 2 (2022), pp. 119–39.
[83] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p.30.

while their Chinese cooks and servants were possibly better equipped with making Western food given their knowledge and skills of local kitchen utensils.

To achieve the correct temperature for making frozen, smooth cream, the ice-cream maker would need the necessary sensory and embodied knowledge and skills. At the time, thermometers were not commonly used in the kitchen, so one must have knowledge and skills to measure, adjust and keep the temperature during cooking. In Macao, this embodied knowledge would have had to be accommodated to the local environment. It might take several experiments for the ice-maker to fully grasp the procedure. In this context, the specificity of a kitchen in Macao created further challenges: How much ice should be used? How much salt should be added? How long should each step take? The maker had to consider these questions as they adapted the process to the local cooking environment. Moreover, because the quantity of ice was limited, the ice-cream maker should take extra caution as they experimented. When foreigners made ice-cream themselves, they might have consulted local Chinese servants or cooks for advice.

Foreigners did not have an easy time preparing European or American food in Macao. American and European residents sometimes failed to cook food from home. Harriet Low, an inexperienced cook, found it difficult, for example, to make molasses candy by herself. She recorded her experience of making the candy on the terrace of her house. In the first attempt, she burned the candy because the temperature was too high. Her Chinese comprador, Achow, came up to put out the fire. In her second attempt, the heat was too low. Achow came up again with a coolie and a boy to add more coals to the furnace. With help from Achow and two other servants, Low finally 'succeeded *à merveille'*.[84] Low was proud of her accomplishment and sent some to other foreign residents in Macao. Unfortunately, the candy was not as successful as she expected. In the evening, the candy turned back into molasses. From Low's unsuccessful attempt of making candy, we see that managing fire and heat was not an easy task. Despite the fact that Low had help from her Chinese servants, failure was unavoidable.

Luckily, when foreigners' cooking was unsuccessful, they could rely on their Chinese cooks to prepare food. It required proper communications between foreigners and their servants. Kinsman provided an example of the importance of Canton English in mutual understanding in foreign households. Kinsman had spent the whole morning making a bread pudding but had failed to bake it well. In the end, she asked a servant to tell her cook to make

[84] Low, *My Mother's Journal*, p. 212.

a custard pudding for her children.[85] Rebecca told her servant: 'Speaky that cook, make custard pudding children's dinner, all same same gentleman's dinner—Savy?' The servant answered: 'Savy'.[86] This conversation suggests that both Kinsman and her servant used Canton English to communicate about daily meals.

According to Wu Yixiong's study, Canton English was a variety of English used in the business and daily settings in Canton trade from the early eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. This language was influenced by Mandarin, the Guangzhou dialect, and Portuguese pidgin of Macao. After the 1860s, the language was gradually replaced by another pidgin English used in Shanghai.[87] Wu Yixiong also points out that the Chinese played an important role in the invention of Canton English. When they first arrived in Canton and Macao, foreigners had a difficult time understanding the mixed language. However, it was necessary for them to understand and use it when they communicated with their Chinese servants because, during this period, standard English was not a working language in the Canton trade. Foreigners had to follow the customs of the local environment and use language that their servants could understand. That American residents in Macao, such as Rebecca Kinsman, learned Canton English rather than expect their servants to know standard English suggests that, after the Opium War, the daily lives of foreign communities in China were not completely changed. The daily language that the Kinsman's household used reveals that some Sino-Western interactions remained during the 1840s. The culinary linguistic usages established during years of interactions between foreigners and local people had lasting impact on daily communications in foreign households in Macao.

From this conversation, we see that her servant understood a certain level of Canton English necessary for him to communicate with his employers in terms of food like 'custard pudding' and 'dinner'. His language ability was essential for foreign residents' daily consumption of food given that he was an intermediary between his employer and the cooks. Sometimes, European and Americans residents had to rely on their Chinese servants and cooks for having European and American dishes. Chinese cooks could produce the dishes more reliably because they were more familiar with the kitchens of Macao and the local

---

[85] Ibid. p.35
[86] Ibid.
[87] Yixiong Wu 吴义雄， 'Guangzhou Yingyu Yu 19 Shiji Zhongye Yiqian De Zhongxi Jiaowang 广州英语'与 19 世纪中叶以前的中西交往[Canton English and Sino-Western Interactions before the mid of nineteenth century]', *Jindaishi Yanjiu*, 3 (2001), 172–202; Kingsley Bolton, *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

ingredients. As Osmond Tiffany stated: 'The Chinese show their imitative powers in nothing more than in the ease with which they emulate European dishes, and every meal could not have been more completely like home had it been transported by lightning line.'[88] Cooking European dishes in Canton and Macao was not simply a task of imitation but required substantial knowledge and skills acquired during the process of adaptation to the local environment.

Chinese cooks' and servants' knowledge and skills in cooking western food were revealed in the inclusion of western food into local language. As May-Bo Ching suggests, Chinese servants and cooks also contributed to the invention of new Cantonese phrases or ideographs for denoting Western novelties.[89] As early as 1828, cooks working for foreign households might be familiar with making custard puddings. Custard pudding is listed in Robert Morrison's *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect*, which was published in 1828. In *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* , it is listed as 'Gǎw-nai-poo-teen 牛奶布颠 (lit. 'cow's milk poo-teen (or, in pinyin: buding)', i.e. custard pudding. The word 'poo-teen', is an imitation of the sounds of the English word 'pudding'. The Chinese translation would actually be 牛奶膏 Gǎw-nai-kow'.[90] The *Hongmao fanhua maoyi xuzhi* (红毛番话贸易须知) lists milk with its Cantonese pronunciation, 牛乳 觅 （in pinyin: niunai, mi） , and butter as 牛奶油 士孖以 (pinyin: *niunai you, shi ma yi*).[91] This vocabulary for cow's milk and butter suggests that the words for and knowledge of these foodstuffs had been integrated into Chinese servants' and cooks' knowledge. Since Chinese servants and cooks used this vocabulary daily, it is possible that Chinese cooks and servants contributed to the process of integration of Western foods such as custard pudding into the Chinese language.

The example of custard pudding reveals a glimpse of the ways in which foreigners and their servants talked about certain western food. Kinsman's record of making mince pie provides a more detailed example of how foreigners taught their servants and cooks to make western food, which involved more than oral communication, but more detailed instructions. In a letter to her sister in December 1843, Kinsman states that she did 'nothing less than assit [sic] in making some Minced Pies.' As Christmas was approaching, her cook made some

[88] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, p.221
[89] May-bo Ching, The 'English Experience' among the Humblest Chinese in the Canton Trade Era (1700s–1842), *Curtis's Botanical Magazine,* 4 (2017), p. 308.
[90] Robert Morrison, *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect*, Part 1, (Macao: East India comp. Press, 1828), p. 238.
[91] The origin of '牛奶油 士孖以' could be from Swedish 'Smör'.

minced pies, but they 'did not taste just right'.[92] In order to achieve the right taste, Kinsman offered to provide a recipe for the cook:

> I offered to furnish a receipt, and assist in the seasoning, etc. Accordingly, one of the boys wrote the receipt in Chinese, and the Cook prepared the ingredients all very nicely, and brought them into the dining room, and I went in and superintended the mixing—or rather we all went, for I found Mr. L. [William Lejee] there, ready to translate any instructions I might wish to give, and my husband and Mary Ann soon came too, and we had quite a merry time, seasoning and tasting, and fortunately the pies proved very nice.[93]

This description of making minced pies provides an example of the ways in which knowledge of and skills in making Western food were transferred from American employers to their servants and cooks. May-bo Ching suggests that it is very likely that Chinese cooks learned English cooking skills from Western cooks who worked on ships.[94] This case suggests that some foreign employers were also involved in teaching Western dishes to their Chinese employees. That foreign employers were increasingly involved in teaching cooking knowledge and skills may be related to the increased number of foreign women living in Macao.[95] Their cooking activities provided opportunities for their Chinese cooks and servants to learn and practice Western cooking. Furthermore, servants from Southeast Asia, such as John Alley, who accompanied foreign women to China were also equipped with knowledge of and skills in Western cooking. They also played important roles in transmitting Western cooking.

Indeed, Americans were reliant on their Southeast Asian servants who had excellent skills in cooking and tended to bring their servants along when they travelled. Henrietta

---

[92] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC,* 86 (1950), p. 38.
[93] Ibid.
[94] May-bo Ching, The 'English Experience'.
[95] One of the first English cookery books published in China was called *Foreign Cookery in Chinese with a Preface and Index in English* (*Zao yang fan shu* 造洋饭书) and was written by an American missionary woman, Martha Crawford (1830-1909). The first edition was published in Shanghai in 1866. It was republished in 1885, 1899, and 1902. For research on English cookery books in China, see Zouhuan Zou, 137–149; Yiming Yang 杨一鸣, 'Guanyu zao yang fan shu yu xi fa shu pu' 关于造洋饭书与西法食谱的考察 An Examination of Zao Yang Fan Shu and Xi Fa Shi Pu, *Journal of East Asian Cultural Interaction Studies*, 2021, pp. 317–328; Xiaohong Xia 夏晓虹， '*Wanqing De Xican Shipu Ji Qi Wenhua Yihan* 晚清的西餐食谱及其文化意涵 [Western Food Recipes in Late Qing China and Their Cultural Meanings]'， *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 1 (2008), pp. 138-146.

Shuck (1817–1844), the first American female missionary to China, who brought a Chinese cook called Ah Loo from Singapore to Macao. Before Shuck and her husband travelled to China, they stayed in Singapore to learn Chinese in 1836. In a letter to her father, Henrietta Shuck mentions that,

> I will just here repeat that I am wonderfully pleased with our cook. His name is Ah Loo. He can do any thing, and every thing, I believe. He will frequently cook some little nice thing for a dessert, without our telling him. To-day, for dinner, he gave us a very delicious pine-apple pie. I call him a cook, because cooking is his chief business; but he by no means confines himself to that occupation….I prefer keeping my chamber in order myself; but if Ah Loo sees me sweeping, he comes deliberately, and takes the broom out of my hand, and does it himself. The Chinese servants very soon become attached to those whom they serve, and are unwilling to leave them. We hope this may be the case with our man, for if he continues to please us we shall be very unwilling to give him up. We are truly attached to him, and wish him to live with us on earth and in heaven.[96]

Henrietta Shuck was impressed with Ah Loo's service and pleased with his cooking skills, especially in making desserts. It is noticeable that Henrietta Shuck was satisfied with Ah Loo's pine-apple pie, which combined a tropical fruit with pie-making techniques. Pineapples had been a popular, luxury fruit in Europe since the seventeenth century. In the early nineteenth century, pine-apple desserts had been incorporated into American household cookery books. A recipe for 'Pine-apple tart' is listed in Eliza Leslie's *Seventy-five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes and Sweetmeats* published in Boston in 1834.[97] This dessert provided an indulgent flavour with fresh ingredients from local markets, which made it popular among foreign communities in Singapore. Local household servants like Ah Loo had learned to make it before Shuck's arrival. It was possible that Ah Loo had worked for English colonizers before. His excellence in cooking and housework made him indispensable to Henrietta's life in Singapore. Later in 1836, Shuck brought Ah Loo with her to Macao, so presumably Shuck could enjoy her favourite pine-apple pies during her stay in Macao. It was noteworthy that when Shuck moved to Macao, she was pleased to learn that Ah Loo 'has

[96]Jeremiah Bell Jeter, *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck: The First American Female Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1846), p. 64.
[97] Eliza Leslie, *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes and Sweetmeats* (Boston: Munroe & Francis, 1834), pp. 19–20.

conducted himself in a most Christian-like manner.'[98] Ah Loo, this talented Chinese cook not only fulfilled her culinary needs but also provided evidence of her success as a missionary. Moreover, Ah Loo's arrival in Macao may have created opportunities for other Chinese cooks and servants to learn how to make pine-apple pies. The migration of cooks and servants from other countries who followed their foreigner employers was an indispensable force for the exchange of culinary knowledge and skills.

Another point worth noting about the mince pie episode is that a Chinese servant transcribed Kinsman's recipe from English to Chinese. This Chinese servant could not only write Chinese but also was capable of reading, listening, and speaking a certain level of English.[99] Kinsman offers very little information about this servant; she does not even mention his name. Did he have adventurous experiences like Wang Tong, a Chinese servant who travelled to England in 1770s? We do not know. According to May-bo Ching's detailed research on Wang Tong, his Chinese writing, English skills, knowledge of natural history, and understanding of commerce and market were equivalent to those a linguist or comprador might have.[100] The Chinese servant who translated the minced pie recipe may not have been as knowledgeable as Wang Tong; however, by accomplishing this task, he must have been familiar with English vocabulary of food ingredients, utensils, and American cooking methods. The culinary knowledge learning was not one-direction. Foreigners learned local knowledge about food from their Chinese servants. For example, when John Blake was collecting knowledge of fish in China, he relied on his servant Wang At Tong to learn if they are edible or not. When writing about puffer fish (*he tun* 河豚), John Blake records that 'Wang a Tong says He knew a Man who Eat of this fish – not sufficiently boiled died vomiting - & a cat also who eat some of it vomit dyed also – he saw it himself'.[101] We could imagine that, through years of interaction, foreigners also learned a lot from their Chinese servants about Chinese food and Chinese cooking, especially for those who were curious naturalists.

---

[98] Ibid., p. 98.

[99] There were a few Chinese who spoke and wrote English well before 1839, such as Yong Sam-tak 容三德 who studied English in London and later became Robert Morrison's Chinese teacher. See Peter J. Kitson, *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange 1760–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). p.84; David Clarke, 'Chinese visitors to 18th century Britain and their contribution to its cultural and intellectual life', *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 4 (2017), pp. 498-521.

[100] Cheng Meibo, *Yujian Huangdong*, p. 31.

[101] Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral Library, W/S-19-22

In recent years, historians have acknowledged that 'translation' is an important approach in understanding Sino-Western interactions. However, their research has mainly focused on diplomatic, political, commercial, and religious settings.[102] Missionaries, politicians, traders, translators, and naturalists were considered main characters in knowledge production and transmission.[103] In contrast, translations that happened in daily settings, especially surrounding food and drink, have not received similar levels of attention in the historical studies of Sino-Western interactions during this period. Chinese servants and cooks are often not considered important figures in Sino-Western knowledge exchange and production. For example, in a study of a Canton English vocabulary manuscript, Zhou Zhenhe comments that 'for practical reasons, this manuscript wasted its space that it not only records bird's nest and tomato, but also bird's nest soup and tomato soup'.[104] Zhou's comment is no longer tenable if we consider the manuscript from the perspective of a Chinese servant or a cook working in a foreign household. In the manuscript, there were over 1400 entries. More than a third are related to food and drink, including the names of dishes, vegetables, meat, fish, and so on. The prevalence of food vocabulary suggests that the owner of this manuscript dealt with a lot of food-related works. Repeating the names of dishes and their ingredients could be a useful strategy for helping the owner efficiently memorize food-related vocabulary. Moreover, new food vocabulary, such as 'ice-cream', were constantly added through daily conversations with foreign employers. It was necessary for Chinese servants and cooks to strategically learn and understand food vocabulary. Therefore, it would

---

[102] Henrietta Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting: The Extraordinary Lives of Two Translators between Qing China and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021); Hongzhi Wang, *Long yu shi de duihua: fanyi yu magaerni fanghua shituan* 龙与狮的对话 翻译与马戛尔尼访华使团 [Conversations between Dragon and Lion: Translation and Macartney Embassy to China] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022); Lawrence Wang-chi Wong and Bernhard Fuehrer (eds). *Sinologists as Translators in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2015).

[103] Rogerio Miguel Puga, 'The First Museum in China: The British Museum of Macao (1829–1834) and Its Contribution to Nineteenth-Century British Natural Science', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3–4 (2012), pp. 575–586; Fa-ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[104] Zhenhe Zhou 周振鹤, '*Neitian Faxian De Hongmao Fanhua (ni ming) chaoben yi jie* 内田发现的《红毛番话》（拟名）抄本译解 [The translation and explanation of a manuscript of Hongmao fanhua found by Uchida], in Zhou Zhenhe 周振鹤, *Yi Yan Shu Yu* 逸言殊语 [Anecdotes and Unusual Phrases] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2008), p.225.

not be unnecessary for writers of vocabulary books to include repetitive expressions in their work.

During his stay in Macao in the 1830s, American missionary Samuel Wells Williams noticed that some local people studied manuscript vocabularies to learn English. These vocabularies:

> were frequently seen in their hands, and which each individual formed as his circumstances required. Some of them attain a very respectable size, containing upwards of three thousand words and phrases, and are valuable to those who wish to learn the modes employed by natives in expressing foreign objects.[105]

Williams did not offer positive comments about this kind of manuscript English, which he regarded as 'imperfect' 'defective' and 'barbarous'.[106] This judgement about Canton English was his justification for publishing Cantonese-English vocabularies. William Hunter had much more positive comments for Canton English vocabularies. Of vocabulary pamphlets, he writes that:

> This pamphlet, costing a penny or two, was continually in the hands of servants, coolies, and shopkeepers. The author was a Chinaman, whose ingenuity should immortalize him. I have often wondered who the man was who first reduced the 'outlandish tongue' to a current language. Red candles should be burnt on altars erected to his memory, and oblations of tea poured out before his image, placed among the wooden gods which in temples surround the shrine of a deified man of letters.[107]

William Hunter highly praised the author of these vocabulary pamphlets. It is possible that the pamphlets had no single author. The content of the vocabulary pamphlets could be produced by many people who had participated in Canton trade. This pamphlet was cheap in price and was widely used in different occasions. Contemporary Chinese servants and cooks would have agreed with William Hunter in praising its author or authors. With these pamphlets and manuscripts, Chinese servants and cooks could learn and practice speaking Canton English to communicate with their employers and earn a living. It was very likely that the vocabularies were not sufficient for every working environment or every occasion, and it is likely that cooks and servants were supposed to learn more practical language for their

---

[105] *The Chinese Repository*, Vol. 5, No. 6, October,1837, pp. 276–277.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Hunter, *The 'fan Kwae' at Canton,* pp. 63–64.

everyday working lives. Their knowledge, accumulated through their work, in turn would enrich the content of later vocabulary pamphlets.

Purchasing or transcribing a Canton English vocabulary book was a first step towards learning how to communicate with foreign employers. Being able to translate an English recipe into Chinese required years of learning, practicing, and communicating. There were many nuances in translating recipes. A single mistake could deliver drastically different meanings. Translating a recipe for cooking is no less serious or easier than translating a diplomatic document for an embassy visit. Chinese labourers and upper-class English translators had similar linguistic and cultural barriers to cross, although their contexts could be very different. The peril of translation that Chinese servants and cooks faced was that a misunderstanding or misinterpretation might lead to a dish's or even the whole dinner's failure. Perhaps Chinese servants and cooks working in foreign households in Macao and Canton were luckier than translators, such as George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859) and Li Zibiao 李自標, a Chinese Catholic priest, who had more opportunities to practice and experiment using foreign languages as well as many colleagues to communicate with and learn from. Zibiao and Staunton worked as interpreters for the first British embassy in China. After all, before the Macartney Embassy, Chinese servants and cooks had been working in foreign households for decades. Like Zibiao and Staunton, Chinese servants and cooks lived between two cultures. Henrietta Harrison argues that 'successful interpreting was far more than a matter of linguistic competence.' Translators of this period often acted more as negotiators than as translators.[108] This could also be true of Chinese cooks and servants, whose work involved negotiating their foreign employers' needs for Western food in a local kitchen setting. Since it was almost impossible for Chinese cooks and servants to be equipped with the same ingredients and cooking utensils as those of a European or American kitchen, Chinese cooks were supposed to use their creativity and flexibility to recreate Western food in a Chinese kitchen. Transcultural communication and understanding were essential for living in Macao and Canton. Foreign traders and their family benefited from their Chinese servants' expertise in language. Rebecca Kinsman did not need to learn Chinese/Cantonese when she arrived in Macao because her servants already comprehended a certain level of Canton English to communication with her.

The literal translation of Western food recipes is only one step of culinary knowledge transmission. People who have experience in consulting recipes while cooking know that

[108] Ibid., p. 9.

comprehending a recipe is far from being able to cook it well. Literal recipes could not convey every detail about the cooking process, especially of the sensory elements that were involved, such as the smell, taste, and texture of the food in different steps. Most of the time, sensory elements were decisive for whether the dish was successful, but such details are difficult to convey with words. Instead, cooks must carefully observe the whole process and muster their skills and embodied knowledge to gauge and adjust ingredients, cooking times, and methods to achieve the best result. Moreover, cooks had to adjust recipes and cooking methods according to their employers' taste. While the minced pie tasted good to William Lejee, to Rebecca Kinsman it did not.[109] Chinese cooks had to constantly learn and unlearn cooking skills to fulfil their employers' demands. Osmond Tiffany offered this praise: 'The Chinese show their imitative powers in nothing more than in the ease with which they emulate European dishes, and every meal could not have been more completely like home had it been transported by lightning line.'[110] Tiffany's comment indicates that Chinese cooks were capable of learning and imitating western cooking at a proficient level. Their cooking provided a sense of home for foreign residents in Canton and Macao.

With years' experience of working in foreign houses or factories, Chinese cooks were equipped with the knowledge and skills for cooking different types of European and American dishes, baked goods, and desserts. With the reliable and efficient work of her cooks and servants, Rebecca Kinsman did not have to worry about upsetting her children when she failed to make a bread pudding because she was assured that her cook could make a custard pudding for them instead. Moreover, Rebecca Kinsman and Mary Sword could be confident in inviting other foreign traders and their families over to have ice-cream because their cooks and servants were reliable in helping to prepare and serve ice-cream.

Conclusion

When foreigners came to China, they brought livestock and food with them. These imported foods linked these expatriates to their home countries and helped them replicate a familiar lifestyle in a foreign land. Bringing cows to China became important for foreign households like the Kinsman family, especially for their children. Foreign women and their servants

[109] William R. Lejee was a partner of Wetmore & Co between 1839 and 1844.
[110] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese,* p. 221.

played an important role in adapting to life in Macao and Canton, especially by providing familiar food and drink. This chapter had attempted to show that foreigners' experiences of eating and drinking Western foods were highly dependent on the culinary knowledge, skills, and experiences of their servants and cooks.

Chinese servants and cooks were important figures in Sino-Western knowledge exchange. These ordinary people often have been obscured in historical narratives of Canton trade and Sino-Western relations. Though more archival research by historians, through more primary sources about ordinary people, such as pilots, servants, and compradors, who participated in Canton trade, historians have discovered their stories and have given more attention to ordinary people's involvement in cultural exchanges between China and the West. Historians no longer merely focus on business and political activities in which only merchants and political figures had important roles. The shift to the history of everyday lives has made visible ordinary people's work and thoughts. This chapter reveals that ordinary Chinese people were active participants in the introduction and localizing of Western culinary knowledge and skills in China through the Canton trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Chapter 3:

‘Chinese people do not use milk’: Western Perceptions of Chinese Dairy Culture

Introduction

Rebecca Kinsman was not the only person who travelled with a cow on their trip to China. In 1826, Robert Morrison and his family brought a cow to supply milk for their son during the trip from England to China. However, they were not as lucky as the Kinsmans. Their cow died during the trip.[1] Mary Parry Sword, who arrived in Macao two years before Rebecca Kinsman did, also brought a cow to Macao for fresh milk for her household.[2] Sword was glad that she had a cow with her, ‘for it is impossible to buy good milk here.’[3] These examples indicate that, during the early nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for American and English families to bring cows to China. This practice was related to Western perceptions about cows and dairy culture in China. However, the historical circumstances behind this practice have not been fully explored by historians. Why did these foreigners bring their own cows rather than use milk from Chinese cows? How did they understand Chinese dairy culture? How did their understanding of Chinese dairy culture change over time? What role did foreign traders play in this change? While the previous chapter focuses on foreigners’ practices of importing cows to China and their interactions with local people, the approach this chapter takes is analysing western representations of Chinese dairy culture. This chapter aims to unpack how Western perceptions of Chinese dairy culture have changed since the sixteenth century. It endeavours to show how the Western understanding of Chinese dairy culture was closely linked with the consumption of tea and their own food culture.

In the early nineteenth century, Europeans and Americans in China commonly believed that Chinese people did not drink milk or consume any other dairy products. Therefore, the assumption was, foreign factories had to keep imported cows so as to be able to provide the foreign residents with fresh milk for their daily consumption. The idea that

---

[1] Elizabeth Morrison (ed), *Memoirs of the Life and Labours Robert Morrison... Volume 2* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, and Longmans, 1839). p. 349.
[2] Sword Family Papers, To Miss. S. D. Sword, 10 November 1841.
[3] Ibid., To Miss S. D. Sword, Macao, 10 November 1841.

'Chinese people do not drink milk' is still popular among the public, as well as some scholars, given that the majority of the current Chinese population is lactose-intolerant, especially people of Han descent.[4] For example, Andrea S. Wiley argues that China is a particularly good example of a population with no history of milk drinking that embraced this new beverage with the promotion from the Chinese government in the early 2000s.[5]

However, as anthropologists and historians of Chinese food have shown, there is in fact a long history of milk consumption in ancient China, although it is true that fresh milk has not been consumed in great quantities throughout Chinese history.[6] The renowned food historian Huang Hsing-Tsung in his studies on fermentation and food science in China, introduces koumiss and some fermented milk products, such as *lo* (酪), *soo* (酥), and *thi hu* (醍醐), which have been popular throughout Chinese history. By examining agricultural treatises as well as food canons and recipes from different time periods, Huang was able to demonstrate that dairy foods were a significant, if minor, factor in the diet of the Chinese throughout the Tang, Song, and Yuan periods (between the sixth century and the fourteenth century). In particular, *soo* 酥 (which Huang translates as 'butter') was particularly popular.[7]

In the article 'Hypolactasia and the Chinese Diet', Huang argues that that the consumption of dairy products in the Chinese diet faded after the Yuan dynasty for various reasons. E. N. Anderson proposed that dairy foods were marked as barbarian due to the resurgent Chinese nationalism during the Ming dynasty after the fall of Mongol regime.[8] Huang, instead, argues that the decline of interest in dairy products was mainly economic and gastronomic. Dairy-farming became less and less cost-effective and it was not as competitive as tofu, which had become commercialized as early as the late Tang and Song Dynasties. Huang also points out that writers on food in the southern areas of the Chinese empire became less and less informed of the use of milk and dairy products.[9]

---

[4] Jia-ju Zheng, Zheng-liang Gong, Lian-sheng Xue, Xia-shuang Zhu, 'Lactose Malabsorption and Its Ethnic Differences in Hans and Uyghurs,' *Chinese Medical Journal* 4 (1988), pp. 284–286.
[5] Andrea S. Wiley, 'The Globalization of Cow's Milk Production and Consumption: Biocultural Perspectives', *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 3–4 (2007), pp. 281–312.
[6] H. T. Huang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Volume 6. Biology and Biological Technology, Part 5. Fermentations and Food Science (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 248–257.
[7] Ibid., p. 255.
[8] E. N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p.81
[9] H. T. Huang, 'Hypolactasia and the Chinese diet', *Current Anthropology*, 5 (2002), pp. 809-819.

Recently, Huang's argument has been challenged by several scholars. In 'Mr. Song's Cheeses: Southern China, 1368–1644,' published in 2019, food historian Miranda Brown provides evidence that dairy products were appreciated in Southern China after the Yuan dynasty. Brown challenges Huang's argument by exploring the production and consumption of cheese in the Jiangnan area during the Ming dynasty.[10] Through a close analysis of a recipe collection—*Mr. Song's Book of Nourishing Life* (*Songshi yangsheng bu* 宋氏養生部) composed by Song Xu 宋詡 around 1504—Brown explores Song Xu's techniques for making cheese and the culinary applications of cheese in around Jiangnan. By doing so, Brown challenges the stereotypical idea that traditional Chinese cuisine was dairy-free. Mak Sau Wa's research provides information about dairy consumption in the Guangdong area. Mak argues that, rather than a result of Western influence, milk production and consumption was a continuation of a long-standing Chinese tradition. In particular, water buffalo milk had been consumed in south China. Longjiang (located in Shunde district, Guangdong province) buffalo milk has been famous since the Qing dynasty.[11] Scholar of religions Jeffrey Kotyk takes a perspective beyond China. In his article 'Milk, Yogurt and Butter in Medieval East Asia: Dairy Products from China to Japan in Medicine and Buddhism', Kotyk explores the transmission of the dairy industry from China to Japan through the role of dairy products in medicine and Buddhism during the medieval period.[12] Kotyk points out that dairy products constituted a significant transfer of material culture between China and Japan.

These articles provide insights about the history of dairy consumption in China and beyond during the premodern period; they all challenge the myth of 'China as a dairy-free country'. However, there have been only a few studies on the history of the construction of this myth. Françoise Sabban argues that the stereotype of the absence of dairy consumption in China was chiefly evident in Western travelogues at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.[13] My research shows that this stereotype was accepted as early as at least in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries and was

---

[10] Miranda Brown, 'Mr. Song's Cheeses: Southern China, 1368–1644', *Gastronomica*, 2 (2019), pp. 29-42.
[11] Sau Wa Mak, 'Milk and Modernity: Health and Culinary Heritage in South China' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2012).
[12] Jeffrey Kotyk, 'Milk, Yogurt and Butter in Medieval East Asia: Dairy Products from China to Japan in Medicine and Buddhism', *Religious*, 5(2021), p. 302.
[13]Françoise Sabban, 'The Taste for Milk in Modern China (1865–1937)', in *Food Consumption in Global Perspective: Essays in the Anthropology of Food in Honour of Jack Goody*, ed. by Jakob A. Klein and Anne Murcott (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), p. 184.

closely related to European residents' experiences in Canton and Macao. Moreover, this stereotype was constructed and developed alongside changes in dairy production and consumption in Europe. This chapter explores the construction of the no-dairy stereotype and asks how it emerged out of the literature associated with Sino-Western interactions dating to the seventeenth century, especially in Canton and Macao.

In order to analyse Western perceptions about Chinese dairy consumption and chart how these perceptions changed over time, this chapter mainly uses European and American travel accounts from the sixteenth century forward. These travel writings include accounts from merchants, missionaries, and diplomats. These accounts present their observations and understanding of Chinese food culture. Their perceptions were mediated by the writers' own positions in society and their personal experiences in China. This chapter also draws on contemporary English periodicals, such as *The Chinese Repository*, which was first published in Canton in 1832 and stopped publication only in 1851. E. C. Bridgman (1801–1861), the first American Protestant missionary appointed to China, acted as the editor for *The Chinese Repository*. Later, another American Protestant missionary, Samuel Wells Williams, joined as associate editor when he arrived in Canton in 1833. The aim of *The Chinese Repository* was to introduce China and Chinese culture to the West. Its articles introduced Chinese history and culture and covered current events in China. The Chinese diet, including dairy culture was a topic that was introduced repeatedly in *The Chinese Repository*.

This chapter also consults Chinese recipe books and draws on literary texts published during late Ming and Qing dynasties. In particular, I analyse some influential works by literati in the Jiangnan area, such as *Dream Collections of Tao'an* (*Taoan mengyi* 陶庵梦忆), *Small Treatise on Nourishment (Yang xiaolu* 养小录), *Record of Beauty and Plenty (Qing jia lu* 清嘉录), *Essays on Drinks and Delicacies for Medicinal Eating* (*Yinzhuan fushi jian* 饮馔服食笺), and *Recipes from the Sui Garden* (*Suiyuan shidan* 随园食单).[14] These writings provide materials about Chinese literati's dairy consumption and presents dairy culture in the Jiangnan area during the late Ming and Qing periods. Since this chapter discusses the connections between tea culture and milk in British society, it also uses English medical books and advertisements for tea in London markets that were published in the seventeenth

[14] For an introduction of Chinese cookery books, see Yao Weijun 姚伟钧: Liu Pubing 刘朴兵 and Ju Mingku 鞠明库, *Zhongguo yinshi dianji shi* 中国饮食典籍史[The History of Chinese Culinary Books], ed by Zhao Rongguang 赵荣光 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011).

and eighteenth centuries. Both present contemporary medical ideas behind the practice of drinking tea with milk.

Dairy Products in Late Imperial China

As already mentioned above, dairy products were not totally absent in early missionaries' writings about China. However, such discussions were usually related to dairy consumption among nomadic peoples, such as the Tartars and Mongols.[15] Huang Hsing-Tsung's research on fermented milk products and their technology in Chinese history shows that dairy products were not unfamiliar to Chinese people, especially the literati of the Jiangnan area, during the Ming and Qing periods.[16] Lu Shuying shows that in many Chinese medical treatises cow's milk was appreciated for its beneficial effects on nurturing life (*yangsheng* 养生) and nourishing body (*zibu* 滋补).[17] Food with cow's milk as a main ingredient was highly valued in some influential recipe books. Some dishes, such as *rulao* 乳酪, a type of milk pudding, appeared in several recipe books and in literary texts, such as *Tao'an mengyi*, *Yang Xiaolu*, and *Qingjialu*. These recipes with cow's milk very likely circulated among the literati of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Thus, contrary to some scholars' assumptions, dairy consumption was not confined to groups who lived in pastoral areas. Many contemporary scholars assume that lactose intolerance would have prevented Chinese people from trying dairy products. On the contrary, Chinese elites found many ways to adapt the dishes for their gastronomic and medicinal values.

---

[15] Pierre Joseph d'Orléans, *History of the Two Tartar Conquerors of China: Including the Two Journeys Into Tartary of Father Ferdinand Verbiest, in the Suite of the Emperor Kang-Hi, from the French of Père Pierre Joseph D'Orléans, to Which Is Added Father Pereira's Journey Into Tartary in the Suite of the Same Emperor, from the Dutch of Nicolaas Witsen*, (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1854); Cornelius Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992) , pp. 109, 113, 259.

[16] For a discussion of the role food culture among literati group in late imperial China, see Isaac Yue and Siufu Tang (eds*), Scribes of Gastronomy: Representations of Food and Frink in imperial Chinese literature* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).

[17] Shuying Lu 卢淑樱, *Muru yu Niunai: Jindai Zhongguo Muqin Juese de Chongsu:1895-1937* 母乳与牛奶：近代中国母亲角色的重塑 1895-1937 [Mother's Milk and Cow's Milk: Infant Feeding and the Reconstruction of Motherhood in Modern China, 1895-1937] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020), p. 10. For a discussion of Yangsheng culture, see Vivienne Lo, 'The influence of "Yangsheng" culture on early Chinese medicine' (unpublished doctoral thesis, SOAS, 1998).

The essayist Zhang Dai (1597–1689?) was famous for his luxurious taste in food.[18] His luxurious taste was also evident in his way of preparing *rulao*. Zhang introduced at least eight ways of preparing *rulao*, such as steaming it, mixing it with soya bean powder, and pickling it with salt. He stated that a *rulao* dish made by the people from Suzhou was the best in the world: 'The whole world praises its utmost flavour' [*tianxia cheng zhi wei* 天下称至味]. Zhang mentions that the recipe was kept as a highly valued secret: 'Its making method was kept as a secret. It was locked in a secret room and sealed with paper. It was not easily passed, even between father and son.' [*chaunzhi qi zhifa mi shen, suo mi fang, yi zhi fenggu, sui fuzi bu qing chuan zhi* 傳之其製法秘甚，鎖密房，以紙封固，雖父子不輕傳之].[19] Zhang's description suggests that a popular recipe for *rulao* was highly valued not only in the market but also among those in literati circles. He regarded the *rulao* that cow merchants produced as inferior because it would often lose its smell and taste. In order to get the best quality of cow's milk, he kept a cow at his own place so that he could have fresh milk for making *rulao*.[20] In an essay on a Crab Party (*Xie hui* 蟹会) that Zhang held with his friends and brothers, Dai also mentioned he had *rulao* to accompany the crab. Crab parties were a specific, private social practice among social and cultural elites in which gourmets in the Jiangnan area combined milk cakes (*rubing* 乳餅) and crabs to make a dish called 'agate crab' (*manao xie* 瑪瑙蟹). Miranda Brown comments that the dish was 'a Jiangnan favourite *par excellence*'.[21] The combination of milk cakes and crabs represented literati's delicate taste. As Guanmian Xu's research shows, this shift to delicate and sophisticated taste from the taste of pepper and spicy food happened in the end of sixteenth century.[22]

The ways they enjoyed food and drink was a marker of the literati's social and cultural status. This particular method of cooking and consuming exquisite *rulao* and crab dishes were only shared in private social circles. Zhang Dai writes that '[l]ooking back, it really seems like a banquet of ambrosia from the celestial kitchen, at which we ate and drank

[18] For discussion of Zhang Dai's food and drink writing, see Duncan Campbell, 'The Obsessive Gourmet: Zhang Dai on Food and Drink', in *Scribes of Gastronomy: Representations of Food and Frink in imperial Chinese literature*, ed. by Isaac Yue and Siufu Tang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), pp.87-96.
[19] Dai Zhang 张岱，*Tao An Meng Yi* 陶庵梦忆 [Dream Collections of Tao'an] (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 2023), p. 124.
[20] Ibid. '乳酪自驅侭为之，气味已失，再无佳理'.
[21] Miranda Brown, 'Mr. Song's Cheeses: Southern China, 1368-1644', *Gastronomica*, 2019
[22] Guanmian Xu, 'Pepper to Sea Cucumbers: Chinese Gustatory Revolution in Global History, 900–1840', (unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden, 2021).

our fill. I feel ashamed just to think about it.'[23] *Rulao*'s prestigious position in Zhang's writing is also presented as a metaphor when he describes other delicious food. For example, Zhang describes a kind of fish called 'dotted fish' (*banzi yu* 斑子鱼) by saying 'its taste is sweet and refreshing, almost like *rulao*' [*wei zhi gan mei, ji tong rulao* 味之甘美，几同乳酪].[24]

From Zhang Dai's writing about *rulao*, we see that the knowledge and practice of making *rulao* was kept by elite individuals and communities. The complicated process of making it and the financial burden of procuring fresh milk made it difficult for common people to access the delicacy. The rarity of this dish and its popularity among the elite is also evident in a dish called 'mock cow's milk' (*jia niuru* 假牛乳). Another famous Jiangnan gourmet, Yuan Mei 袁枚(1716-1797)wrote in his *Menu of Sui Garden* (*Suiyuan shidan* 随园食单) that the dish used egg whites, honey, and sweet rice wine (*jiuniang* 酒酿) to emulate the taste and texture of *rulao*.[25] Desserts made from cow's milk were also found in the royal kitchen. For example, in his *Essays on Drinks and Delicacies for Medicinal Eating*, Gao Lian (1573-1620) lists 'the way of making *tanglu*' (*qi tanglu fa* 起糖卤法). It stated that 'Preparing *tanglu* is the first step of making desserts, as it is a secret recipe from the royal palace.'[26] This recipe used cow's milk, but it could be substituted with egg whites diluted with water. These examples all revealed that dairy dishes were delicacies among the elite of the late Ming and Qing dynasties.

From such recipes, we see that cow's milk was consumed in various ways by and on different occasions among elites. Cow's milk not only was a common food for the nomadic people of China but also was a precious food ingredient and medicine for Han elites in Ming and Qing dynasties. Since the culinary knowledge and use of these prestigious dairy products were kept within elite circles, it is not very likely that foreigners would have opportunities to taste it when they visited China, especially for those who were only allowed to reside in Canton and Macao where dairy culture was not as prominent as in Jiangnan area. Foreigners' understanding of diverse dairy cultures in China, especially the uses of cow's milk among

---

[23] Yang Ye, trans., *Vignettes from the Late Ming: A Hsiao-p'in Anthology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), p.97.

[24] Yu Li 李渔，*Xian Qing Ou Ji* 闲情偶寄[Enjoyment in Leisure Time] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Chubanshe, 2005), p. 166

[25] Mei Yuan 袁枚，*Sui Yuan Shidan* 随园食单 [Recipes from the Sui Garden] (Xi'an：San Qin Chubanshe， 2005). P.11 '用雞蛋清拌蜜、酒娘，打掇入化，上鍋蒸之。'

[26] Lian Gao 高濂, *Yinzhuan Fu Shi Jian* 饮馔服食笺 [Essays on Drinks and Delicacies for Medicinal Eating] (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 1985), p. 78.

different ethnic and socio-economic groups, was limited. Although they may have acquired some information about dairy consumption in China, their doing so was often second-hand. For example, Matteo Ricci wrote about Suzhou in his journal, mentioning that '[n]owhere in China can one find more butter and milk products, nor better rice wine, which is exported to Pekin and to the realm in general.'[27] He had learned this information about dairy products in Suzhou and found that it was an area for the consumption and production of quality butter and milk products. However, he also notes that '[t]he Chinese only drink milk of cows and do not use milk of goats either for making cheese or as a beverage.'[28] It is not true that goat's milk was not used. Goat's milk was generally recommended by Chinese physicians for children as a substitute for breastmilk because of its beneficial effects on children's health, especially in northern areas. Medical canon such as *Bencao gangmu* mentioned the medical effects of goat's milk for treating children's illness.[29] During the Ming and Qing periods, missionaries travel in China was often impeded and was highly dependent on authorities' policies and the emperor's will. Thus, it was not easy for travellers to develop a comprehensive understanding of dairy consumption in China.

When missionaries did have first-hand experiences of eating and drinking together with Chinese people, it is unlikely that their Chinese hosts would treat them to delicacies made from cow's milk. Foreign missionaries might have no opportunity to participate in private occasions in which social elites gathered to eat such things as crabs with *rulao*. Another reason foreigners may have been ignorant of dairy consumption among the Han is the system of etiquette and table manners operative during Chinese dinners. In 1723, the Qing government outlawed Catholicism and reduced activities of missionaries in China in the eighteenth century.[30] In 1845, when traveling in the interior of China and pretending to be a Chinese person, English missionary Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857) notes that he was not encouraged to ask many questions during dinner.

> No matter what was brought on table, however, the guide urged the Impolicy of asking questions about it; because the simple circumstances of making enquiry

---

[27] Matteo Ricci, *China in the sixteenth century: the journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610*, Translated from the Latin by Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 317.
[28] Ibid., p.13.
[29] Bingzhen Xiong 熊秉真, *Youyou: Chuantong Zhongguo De Qiangbao Zhi Dao* 幼幼：传统中国的襁褓之道[To Nurse the Young: The Way of Feeding Enfants in Ancient China]（Taipei: Lianjing Chuban Shiye Gongsi, 1995）p.123; Lu, *Muru yu Niunai*, p. 9.
[30] Daniel H. Bays, *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford University Press, 1996).

> would show that the traveller was not familiar with what he saw; and, to be unacquainted with what came upon the table every day, would be a display of ignorance, that would be unpardonable even in a child, and could not fail to mark out the individual as a stranger or a foreigner.[31]

Medhurst was one of the first foreigners to visit the interior of China after the first Opium War. In order to accomplish this journey, Medhurst explains that 'it is necessary […]to assume the Chinese dress, to shave the front part of the head and temples, and to wear what is commonly called a tail.'[32] Under such circumstances, it was difficult for missionaries like Medhurst to collect substantial information about the food he encountered during his travels. So, even if foreigners were treated with dairy products, they were not supposed to ask detailed questions about the dish.

The foreign traders who lived in Canton and Macao occasionally were invited to a Hong merchant's house to have dinner in the Chinese style. However, in the descriptions of the occasions, we could hardly find out dairy products appeared in these occasions. The Hong merchants from the Canton and Fukien areas may not have shared the tastes of the literati from Jiangnan. Even if they did consume dairy products, such as *jinbang niuru* 金榜牛乳 from the Shunde area, they may not have shared it with foreigners because they assumed their guests would not enjoy it.[33] All of this contributed to foreigners' belief that dairy products were absent in Chinese food culture.

---

[31] Walter Henry Medhurst, *A Glance at the Interior of China: Obtained During a Journey Through the Silk and Green Tea Districts Taken in 1845* (Shanghai: Mission Press, 1845) , p.17.
[32] Ibid., p.1.

[33] *Jinbang niuru* is a kind of cheese made from water buffalo's milk. According to Mak Sau Wa's research, *jinbang niuru* 'is made by adding a few drops of warmed vinegar into warmed buffalo's milk, so that a thin layer of milk curd is formed.' Shunde was famous for its water buffalo's milk and milk cheese in Qing dynasty. See, Mak Saw Wa, Milk and Modernity, p.30, 37.

The Absence of Milk in Chinese Tea-Drinking

Western travel writings contributed to the construction of the myth that the 'Chinese do not consume dairy products'. These travel writings helped to construct their European and American readers' understanding and imagination of China and food culture in China. In particular, the authors' observations about Chinese dairy consumption were often related to their observations of Chinese practices of drinking tea, which contrasted with European practices. Drinking tea without milk was a custom of the Chinese, whereas Europeans generally added milk and sugar to their tea. Drinking tea with or without milk, thus, became a marker of cultural and racial identity for Western travellers. In the early nineteenth century, foreigners confirmed the absence of milk in tea when they visited Hong merchants' homes in Canton. As these narratives accumulated, cultural and racial differences were confirmed.

According to James Benn's research, it was not until the end of the ninth century that tea became a vital component of everyday life and economy in China. It was after the publication of Lu Yu 陆羽 (733-804)'s compilation of the *Classic of Tea* (*Cha jing* 茶经) and the dissemination of tea drinking by itinerant Buddhist monks that tea culture become widely known and appreciated in China. Benn also observes that the rise of tea in Tang times was a victory of a Southern drink over Northern milky drinks such as koumiss or yogurt (*lao* 酪). And there was an enduring tension between tea and alcohol in medieval China.[34] In the west, it was a long process when western knowledge and practices about tea-drinking was established. During the sixteenth century, tea was not a well-known drink in Europe. European travellers were curious about the drink in the East, so they described it and compared differences in tea drinking between different areas. In Western travellers' early writings about China, the absence of milk was not a curious fact to pay attention to. For example, the Italian merchant Francesco Carletti (1573–1636) travelled to China and described the Chinese usage of tea by writing: 'They also use cha, not powdered as the Japanese use it, nor having that superstition about the vases for preserving it, but cooking the leaf in water and then drinking that decoction hot.'[35] In this record, Carletti did not attend to the absence of milk or sugar. He was more curious about the differences between Chinese

[34] James Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), p.10, 42.
[35] Francesco Carletti, *My Voyage around the World, by Francesco Carletti A 16th century Florentine Merchant translated form Italian by Herbert Weinstock*, (London: Methuen, 1965), p.175.

and Japanese practices of drinking tea. He noticed that Chinese people drank cha (tea) by boiling tea leaves rather than using tea powders as the Japanese did. He also observed that Chinese people did not use specific vases to preserve tea, a Japanese practice that Carletti regarded as superstitious.

In some seventeenth-century European travel writings about China, however, the practice of drinking tea did relate to milk. Johan Nieuhof (1618–1672) travelled to China with the Dutch embassy in 1655–1657. He writes of a feast hosted by the Viceroys in Canton for the embassy:

> At the beginning of the Dinner, there were several bottles of The or Tea, served to the Table, whereof they drank to the Embassadours, biding them welcome: This drink is made of the Herb The or Chay after this manner ; they infuse half a handful of the Herb The or Cha in fair water, which afterwards they boyl till a third part be consumed, to which they adde warm Milk about a fourth part, with a little Salt, and then drink it as hot as they can well endure. The Chineses boast as much of the excellency of this infusion, as the Alchymists of the Vertues of their expected Elixir.[36]

Nieuhoff's description is more detailed than Carletti's. He not only introduces the symbolic meaning in serving tea to guests but also gives a detailed description of how tea was made and drank. He also noticed that tea was highly appreciated in Chinese culture. In particular, he notes that warm milk and salt were added to the tea. For Nieuhoff, the practice of adding warm milk and salt to tea became a practice of the 'Chinese' rather than of the Manchu/Tartar or Han Chinese, although he does mention that the Tartars conquered China. When Nieuhoff travelled to China, he neither compared the different practices of drinking tea, nor was aware of the differences of tea consumption between different ethnic groups in China. Nonetheless, as the accounts of travels to China accumulated, Europeans began to pay more attention to the different tea-drinking practices among ethnic groups and began to compare these with their own practices.

When tea was introduced to Britain in the mid-seventeenth century, the advertisements for a coffeehouse already suggested adding milk to it. In 1657, Thomas Garraway opened his coffee house in London and sold tea there along with coffee and chocolate. His was one of the first English advertisements for tea.

---

[36] Johan Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperour of China* (London: John Macock, 1669), p.41

> Tea is generally brought from *China*…The said Leaf is of such known vertues, that those very Nations so famous for Antiquity, Knowledge and Wisdom, do frequently sell it among themselves for twice its weight in Silver, and the high estimation of the Drink made therewith hath occasioned an inquiry into the nature thereof among the most intelligent persons of all Nations that have travelled in those parts, who after exact Tryal and Experience by all ways imaginable, have commended it to the use of their several Countries, for its Vertues and Operations, particularly as followeth, *viz*
>
> […]
>
> It (being prepared and drank with Milk and Water) strengthens the inward parts, and prevents Consumptions, and powerfully asswageth the pains of the Bowels, or griping of the Guts and Looseness.[37]

In this advertisement, Garraway first points out that tea was brought from China and purposedly portrays the image of China and other tea-drinking nations with positive features of 'Antiquity, Knowledge and Wisdom'. In doing so, Garraway skilfully advertised tea for its virtues, which were attested by those nations British society esteemed. Garraway lists many health benefits of drinking tea. As he suggests, these benefits occurred when tea was prepared and drank with milk and water, so adding milk to tea was generally done for its medicinal effects. In the advertisement, Garraway mentions that he consulted works by Jesuits on China. For example, he mentions Alexandre de Rhodes (1593–1660), a French Jesuit who spent ten years in Macao in the early seventeen century. However, Rhodes's does not mention that Chinese people drank tea with milk, though he does mentioned that they drank tea with sugar. Rhodes compares differences between Japanese and Chinese practices of drinking tea: both the Chinese and Japanese 'add a little sugar to the tea to offset its bitterness, which nevertheless doesn't seem to be disagreeable.'[38] The differences between Thomas Garraway's and Rhodes's writings about tea suggest that, in the seventeenth century, there were no established standards for drinking tea in Europe. That Thomas Garraway did not follow Rhodes's description suggests that he had his own reasons for promoting the novelty drink in the English market. For instance, he might have considered the differences

---

[37] Thomas Garway, *An Exact Description of the Grovvth, Quality, and Vertues of the Leaf Tea. by Thomas Garway in Exchange-Alley Near the Royal Exchange in London, Tobacconist, and Seller and Retailer of Tea and Coffee* (London, 1660).

[38] Alexander de Rhodes*, Rhodes of Viet Nam; the travels and missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and other kingdoms of the Orient, translated by Solance Hertz* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1966; first published in Paris in 1653), p.33.

between Chinese and English bodies and wrote the advertisement according to his understanding of the English market. Coffeehouse owners like Thomas Garraway designed their advertisements to feed their potential customers' imaginations about China and to tout the medicinal effects of the drink.

In the late seventeenth century, when tea became known to Europeans, contemporary writers pointed out different tea-drinking practices among different groups. They compared European ways of drinking tea with Chinese and Tartar practices. In John Chamberlayne's (1666–1723)'s *The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate and Tabacco* published in 1682, he describes the different practices this way: 'The Chinese boyl the Leaves with Water and a little Sugar. Some Europeans make Tinctures Infusions, Conserves, and Extracrts of Thee. The Tartars are observ'd to boyl their Thee in Milk with a little Salt, which way they think it the very best.'[39] From this observation, we see how the use of sugar, salt, and milk in tea became markers of the different groups. Chamberlayne was interested in the relationship between Chinese and Tartar practices, especially given the Tartars' conquest of China. He assumed that the Chinese practices were learned from the Tartars. He points out that 'we are all acquainted with the several conquests, which the Tartars have made in China, so that the Chinese have had serval opportunities of learning the use of Thee from the Tartars, in whose country it is observ'd to be in great plenty, and of little value.'[40] This assumption suggests that, when John Chamberlayne and other contemporary European writers wrote about China, the materials they relied on were limited. Their writings about Chinese tea-drinking practices were often based on assumptions.

Historians of tea consumption often focus on the tea plant itself or on the sugar that was added to tea, but they seldom consider the significance of milk in tea consumption and its meanings throughout history. The relationship between the consumption of sugar and tea, as well as coffee and chocolate, has been discussed by historians and anthropologists since Sidney Mintz published his influential research on the history of sugar in 1985 *Sweetness and Power: the Place of Sugar in Modern History*.[41] Perhaps, because the consumption of milk and its relation to the history globalisation and capitalism is still understudied, the

---

[39] John Chamberlayne*, The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate and Tobacco, in Four several Sections: With a Tract of Elder and Juniper-Berries, Shewing how Useful they may be in our Coffee-Houses : And also the Way of Making Mum, with some Remarks on that Liquor* (London: Christopher Wilkinson, 1682), p. 11.
[40] Ibid., p. 9.
[41] Sidney Wilfred Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985)

significance of milk in tea has received less scholarly attention. Historian of the imperial history of tea, Erika Rappaport traces the origin of the British habit of drinking tea with sugar and milk to the English translations, especially Chamberlayne's book, of Eastern modes of tea consumption.[42] However, she does not specify which Eastern mode English people inherited. In Chamberlayne's book, there is no single 'Eastern mode' of tea consumption. As food historian Helen Saberi has suggested, one possible reason for the practice of adding milk to tea was to prevent the porcelain teacups from cracking. Another possibility was that adding milk, along with sugar, could reduce the bitterness of black tea.[43] George Driem suggests that the European fashion of drinking tea with milk was related to French aristocratic society. He gives an example of Marguerite Hessein (1640–1693), dame de la Sablière, who had innovated the practice of taking tea with milk in 1680.[44] It is possible that women from high society practiced drinking tea with milk in their salons and promoted the practice throughout Europe as a fashionable taste.

In the mid-eighteenth century, English physicians stressed the medicinal effects of milk in tea. In his book published in 1750, Thomas Short (1690–1772), an English physician, notes changes to tea-drinking practices in England:

> Formerly, in England, when they had breakfast on Tea, they boiled the Leaves, strained the Liquor, and drunk it to their Afternoon drinking. Some now infuse their Tea in boiled Milk instead of Water, which is exceeding nourishing (especially if 'tis Bohea) and well adopted for consumptive, thin, and hectic persons, or that have coughs, or profuse draining Ulcers, or an acrid Humour in their Blood; if it goes off their Stomach as well.[45]

According to Short, adding boiled milk to tea, especially Bohea tea, became popular in England for its nourishing effects and was thought suitable for certain people with specific illnesses or humoral characteristics. This change in English tea consumption is related to changes in the tea market during the eighteenth century as English consumers became increasingly familiar with different types of tea. The East India Company began to differentiate between 'Green Tea' and 'Bohea Tea'. These distinctions reflect a sophisticated

---

[42] Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire*, p. 38.
[43] Saberi, *Tea: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), p. 91.
[44] George van Driem, *The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 430–432.
[45] Thomas Short, *Discourses on Tea, Sugar, Milk, Made-wines, Spirits, Punch, Tobacco, &c: With Plain and Useful Rules for Gouty People* (London: T. Longman, 1750), pp.40–41.

tea market and a greater curiosity about different types of tea among its consumers.[46] Short's emphasis on the nourishing effect of boiling Bohea tea with milk suggests that English consumers had accumulated knowledge about Bohea tea. Some people had developed a preference for specific teas that involved different serving practices. This refined knowledge about tea and its medicinal effects contributed to changes in tea-drinking practices.

The appearance of milk in the British consumption of tea also corresponds to changes in the milk industry. The practice of adding cow's milk to novelty drinks such as tea, coffee, and chocolate became popular alongside an expanding milk industry in late-seventeenth-century British towns. The increasing availability of fresh milk allowed consumers to enjoy their hot drinks with milk. Food historian Joan Thirsk maintains that, in the sixteenth century, dairy products were generally considered 'poor man's fare'.[47] Dairy products were only sold in local markets in the countryside. By the late seventeenth century, milk was consumed more regularly, especially in towns. Dairy shops and town dairies were established to meet the increasing demand of milk and other dairy products for consumers who lived in towns and larger cities, such as London and Liverpool.[48] By 1760, the dairy industry had become a highly competitive business and was integrated into the national market. British dairy products, such as butter, cream, and cheese were produced, sold, and exported in a wide range of qualities and quantities.[49] With the increasing supply of fresh milk in the market, it became more and more convenient for consumers in urban areas to purchase milk and add it to tea, coffee, and chocolate during their tea parties.

As drinking tea with sugar and milk became a national practice during the late eighteenth century, it became the norm for travellers who visited China. Some European travellers used their own standards to comment on Chinese tea-drinking practices, and they were eager to point out the differences between the Chinese practices and their own. In contrast to the European practice, drinking tea without milk or sugar was constructed in European travellers' writings as a Chinese custom. For example, Peter Osbeck (1723–1805),

---

[46] Markman Ellis, Richard Coulton, and Matthew Mauger, *Empire of Tea: The Asian Leaf That Conquered the World* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), p. 78.
[47] John Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500–1760* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), p.270.
[48] C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain: From the Stone Age to the 19th Century* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974), p. 165.
[49] Thirsk*, Food in Early Modern England*, p. 271.

a Swedish explorer who travelled to China in the 1750s, observes that '[t]he Chinese always drink tea without sugar or milk'.[50]

In the early nineteenth century, the absence of milk and sugar in tea became a marker of Chinese tea-drinking practices in foreigners' travel writings. In 1838, Robert Bennet Forbes attended a 'Chinese chopstick dinner' held by a Hong merchant Mingqua. He records that 'tea was brought in the small porcelain cups with covers & stands which we sipped a la chinese without sugar or milk'.[51] Forbes labels drinking tea without sugar or milk as the 'Chinese mode'. Tea without milk or sugar became a part of the experience of 'Chinese chopstick dinner' in Canton and Macao that European and American traders anticipated. They took the absence of milk and sugar for granted and did not enquire into the reasons behind these differences. Finding and confirming the different practice was the end of their exploration. By stressing the 'Chinese mode' and 'English mode', the foreigners confirmed the cultural boundary between themselves and their Chinese counterparts.

This cultural boundary was further established by daily tea-drinking practices in foreign communities. In foreign households in Canton and Macao, foreign traders and their families expected their servants to serve tea according to their own customs. Indeed, having tea parties was one of the most important social activities in Macao. Foreign traders fostered relationships, especially with merchant families from the same nation, during these social occasions. There was much attention paid to tea parties and the service provided by hosts and hostesses, which involved a lot of social pressure for the foreigners.

When Rebecca Kinsman hired a new comprador, she was neither satisfied with him nor with his tea service. After hosting an agent for Wetmore & Co in Macao, she complained to her husband that 'I wish thee could have seen what a fuss they made. Neither Comprador nor boy knew in the least how to bring in tea.'[52] Then she asked her husband to send a 'good comprador, one who can speak some English.'[53] Since the comprador was new to the house, he might not be familiar with the Kinsmans' tea-drinking practices; it is possible that he did not understand the requirements of Kinsman and her guests. Foreigners expected that they

---

50 Pehr Osbeck, *A Voyage to China and the East Indies, by Peter Osbeck,... Together with a Voyage to Suratte, by Olof Toreen,... and an Account of the Chinese Husbandry, by Captain Charles Gustavus Eckeberg. Translated from the German by John Reinhold Forster,... to Which Are Added a "Faumula and Flora Sinensis"...*, 1771. Vol 1 (London: Benjamin White, 1771), p. 314.

51 Forbes, *Letters from China,* pp.79-83

52 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC, 87*(1951), p. 133.

53 Ibid., p. 134.

would enjoy the same standard in their tea service as they had at home. When they complained about the bad quality of milk procured in Macao or the bad tea service performed by their servants, they expressed their uncomfortableness with not being able to be perceived by their guests with civility and sociability. To keep their jobs, Chinese servants and compradors who worked in foreign households in Macao and Canton had to learn the European and American customs surrounding tea.

Europeans and Americans in Canton did not always have the luxury of having their tea with milk or cream because the milk and cream supply did not always meet their standards. Osmond Tiffany complains that '[t]here is so little of good cream to be had in Canton, (I do not think there were more than one or two lean cows attached to the hongs,) that every one learns to drink tea without that mixture, which does in a great degree impair the delicate flavor.'[54] Tiffany's complaint, as well as others found in contemporary travel writings, reflects foreign communities' reluctance to compromise their tea-drinking practices in Canton.

Mary Parry Sword also complained about the differences of tea-drinking culture in Macao. She wrote to her sister Sophia that,

> It is not the fashion to set a tea-table here, we use teapoys, and the tea is handed round. We have smear-case for tea now every evening; I make it myself out of the sour milk, and we all enjoy it very much. I never cared for it at home, but out here it is a rarity, and it is such a treat to get any thing that tastes like home. I get dreadfully tired of every thing that is made here.[55]

Sword first noticed the differences in furniture used for tea-drinking. She found out that the fashion of tea-drinking in Macao was to use teapoys instead of tea-tables. Teapoy, according to Hobson-Jobson's Anglo-Indian dictionary, is 'a small tripod table…Tipāi is a Hindustāni, or perhaps rather an Anglo- Hindustāni word for a tripod, of hybrid etymology, from Hind.'[56] Its name suggests its colonial origin in British India. It was possible that English EIC developed the practice of using teapoys in India and then brought this fashion to China. Although the tea-drinking culture among foreign communities in Macao was heavily influenced by English traders, Americans tried to

---

[54] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, pp. 233–234.
[55] Sword Family Papers, To Miss Sophia Parry, Macao, August 7, 1844.
[56] Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: Being a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of Kindred Terms Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.692.

replicate their own tea-drinking habits in Macao. Making smear-case to accompany tea was an endeavour for Americans from Philadelphia to create a sense of home. It is noticeable that Sword stated that she did not care for smear-case when she was at home. However, being displaced in a foreign land made Sword realise the importance of having smear-case while drinking tea in Philadelphia. Indeed, the experience of displacement provided a new vision for Sword to examine her food practices. According to *Dictionary of Americanisms* published in 1848, smear-case is from the Dutch word, Smeer-kass. It is 'A preparation of milk made to be spread on bread, whence its name; otherwise called cottage-cheese.'[57] This name tells the impact of Dutch colonial history on food culture in America. Americans not only used milk in tea, but also made dairy products to accompany tea-drinking. Good-quality milk was essential for different aspects of tea-drinking. The arrival of Sword family brought American tea-drinking culture to Macao and combined with the dominant tea-drinking culture established by English EIC employees. Although foreigners were embracing new food cultures in Macao, they marked their own identities by making and consuming their home food. The differences in food culture that foreigners observed and experienced in Macao provided them opportunities to examine their own food culture. In doing so, they reaffirmed and manifested their own culture and national identities by presenting their unique food culture.

In the early years of Sino-Western encounters, while tea-drinking had not become established as a symbol of the British Empire, Westerners described Chinese tea-drinking practices without emphasising the differences in the practices because they were still learning about other cultures. However, as they gradually established their own tea-drinking culture and endeavoured to build up their own tea empire, they became less interested in understanding Chinese tea-drinking culture. Milk and sugar became a token in this cultural shift. Interestingly, in the early nineteenth century, when discussing Chinese tea-drinking culture, British writers seldom mentioned that tea was native to China or tea-drinking had been practiced in China for thousands of years. Neglecting this fact made it more convenient for British writers to manifest their civility and superior tea-drinking culture. It was not originality but the difference that defined their practices. While their tea-drinking culture

[57] John Russell Bartlett, *A Glossary of Words and Phrases, Usually Regarded as Peculiar to the United States: Dictionary of Americanisms, Volume 1* (Boston: Little, Brown & Comp., Trübner & Comp., 1859) , p.314.

changed through global trade, they treated others' cultures as static. They were consumers while people in Asia provided material to be consumed. Complaints about the quality of milk for use in tea was another manifestation of this power. They took their own food culture as a standard by which to judge other cultures. As Linda Barnes notes, China became part of the project that Eurocentric observers applied their own intellectual structures to everyone else.[58] Dairy consumption was part of this process that Eurocentric travellers and writers applied their own knowledge to China and Chinese people. Chinese people, especially elites, shared with the wealthy British merchants in Canton a self-centred view of their own culture; their Sino-centred worldview had diminishing power over people from other areas.

Racializing Chinese Dairy Consumption

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, accounts from the English embassies to China influenced Western impressions and imaginations about Chinese food practices, including dairy consumption. The two embassies, especially the Macartney Embassy, were significant events in Sino-Western relations. The embassy members' attitudes towards Chinese culture and Chinese practices are crucial for understanding broader British attitudes about China and its people. Descriptions of and comments about Chinese culinary practices, such as milk consumption, reflect their perceptions of China and serve their political agendas, although English embassy members had different agendas. As Gao Hao points out, embassy members' views about China and Chinese culture differed depending on their rank in the embassy. In contrast to the negative views that Macartney and Staunton held, some middle- and lower-ranking embassy members had rather positive attitudes towards China.[59]

This difference in attitudes reflect their attitudes about the provision of milk during their trip. For example, George Staunton writes that '[m]ilk, cheese, and butter, the principal resources of pastoral life, are little known to the Chinese; and when it was found that the gentlemen of the Embassy wished to be supplied with the first of those articles, it was necessary to take some pains to find out a person who understood the management of

[58] Linda L. Barnes, *Needles, Herbs, Gods, and Ghosts: China, Healing, and the West To 1848*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), p.126.
[59] Hao Gao, *Creating the Opium War: British Imperial Attitudes Towards China, 1792–1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), p. 26.

cows'.[60] Here, Staunton stresses the cultural differences in their eating practices. The difficulties that the embassy faced in finding a person to manage cows was a proof of this drastic difference. By emphasizing cultural and political differences, including those implicit in the kowtow ceremony, Staunton absolve the embassy of the failure of the mission.

John Barrow (1764–1848), the comptroller of the mission, interpreted the provision of milk differently. In his account, the Chinese endeavour to provide milk was 'a singular proof of attention shewn to us in the commencement of this journey, our conductors, having observed that we used milk with our tea, had purchased two fine cows in full milk, which were put on board a yacht prepared for their reception, for a supply of that article.'[61] Barrow did not expect a supply of fresh milk during their trip in China. Presumably those two 'fine cows' were of a local breed. Barrow was quite satisfied with the cows and showed no prejudice against them.

However, in later periods, especially in the early nineteenth century, European and American residents in Canton and Macao developed an increasingly negative attitude towards cows and other mammals native to China. Cows in China were described as a small breed that lived in poor conditions. For example, Charles Downing refers to Barrow's writings but offers a much more miserable picture about living condition of cows and other domestic animals in China:

> A few cows, mules, and buffaloes were seen by Barrow in his travels into the interior, but they were in a wretched condition. No pasture-ground could be spared for them, but they were obliged to pick up their scanty subsistence from the herbage which grows on the footpaths, or the banks of the ditches between the fields.[62]

Downing's words depict China as a nation with a backward husbandry culture. This negative narrative about Chinese cows and their living conditions was widespread during the period.

---

[60] George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China: Including Cursory Observations Made, and Information Obtained in Travelling Through That Ancient Empire, and a Small Part of Chinese Tartary. Together with a Relation of the Voyage Undertaken on the Occasion by His Majesty's Ship the Lion, and the Ship Hindostan, in the East India Company's Service, to the Yellow Sea, and Gulf of Pekin; as Well as of Their Return to Europe* (London: G. Nicol, 1797), p. 361.
[61] John Barrow, *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey Through the Country from Pekin to Canton* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804), p.489.
[62] Downing, *The Stranger in China*, Vol 2, p.17.

Although the poor living condition of domestic animals they saw was probably true, their way of descriptions could contribute to a growing negative Western impression of Chinese husbandry. An 1835 article published in *The Chinese Repository* argues that most domesticated animals in China were known in Europe, 'but the perfection to which they have been brought by culture is very inferior.'[63] By emphasizing the inferior status of domesticated animals in China and husbandry skills of Chinese people, writers could establish the superior position of British culture and society. John Francis Davis, who accompanied Lord Amherst to Beijing, left his negative comments toward cows and buffalos in China. He states that 'As the Chinese themselves never use milk, cows are only met with near Canton or Macao, of a peculiarly small breed; perhaps the very smallest of the ox tribe'; similarly, he states that Chinese buffalo was a very small species and that it was 'ugly' and 'has all the sluggish habits of the species'.[64] In Davis' writing, not only the living habits but also the appearance of Chinese buffalos became the subject of his Anglo-centric judgements.

Although the myth that 'Chinese people did not consume milk, butter, or cheese' was widespread, some articles published in contemporary English newspapers did provide some information about Chinese dairy culture. For example, the author of 'Diet of Chinese', an 1835 article in *The Chinese Repository*, claims that

> The products of the dairy, as milk, butter and cheese, are hardly known among the Chinese. Milk is usually cooked by boiling; it is also employed in making cakes, pastry, &c. Butter and cheese are not used by them, nor do they understand the process of making the latter. Perhaps, however, the uses to which milk can be applied are better known in the north where cattle are more common.[65]

Although its author held an opinion—that milk, butter, and cheese were hardly known among Chinese people—similar to other contemporary writers, the author provides information about the Chinese consumption of milk, particularly that it is boiled and used in making cakes and pastry. The author also suggests that uses of milk were better known in the north. This more nuanced narrative suggests that the author might have acquired some knowledge of the milk cakes and pastry-making in the Jiangnan area, where cow's milk was used to make delicate desserts and dishes. Although the author did not have the opportunity to visit northern China, he assumed, based on his geographical knowledge, that northern people in

---

[63] *The Chinese Repository*, Vol 3, 1835, p. 463.
[64] John Francis Davis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants, Volume 2* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836), p. 312.
[65] *The Chinese Repository,* Vol 3, 1835, p. 464.

China consumed more dairy products. In effect, he avoided restating a generic, stereotyped judgement as other contemporary writers usually did.

Another 1838 article published in *The Chinese Repository* introduces several Chinese dairy products, such as *lo* 酪 and *soo* 酥.

> The Chinese describe a preparation made from the milk of various domestic animals, that resembles the kumiss found among the Tartars. It is called *lo*, and is both wet and dry; it is made in the following manner.…The best is made, according to our author, from the milk of the buffalo, mare and camel; that form the cow and ewe is not so invigorating. The *soo,* spoken of in making the *lo*, is a kind of oil made from milk.[66]

This article may have been a translation from a Chinese source about making dairy products, such as *lo* and *soo*. The author was more familiar with 'kumiss', a well-known dairy drink of Tartars, than they were with *lo* and *soo*. Apart from these translations, the author does not comment about the Chinese method for preparing dairy products. Nonetheless, these discussions of Chinese dairy products did not replace widespread myths about Chinese dairy culture. Since foreigners would be unlikely to see or taste these cakes and pastries, they were unlikely to believe that they existed. These descriptions might satisfy Western readers' curiosity about Chinese culture but would not change their perceptions, which were based on their lived experiences.

The complaints about the quality of butter and cream in China were also based on the essential role those dairy products played in their diet. Foreigners' increasingly attention to Chinese dairy culture may also be related to the increasing amount of butter in English cookery. As Constance Wilson argues, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the consumption of butter increased drastically among rich people: 'Not only was it employed, as hitherto, in cake and pastry making, in fish frying and meat basting, in cereal pottages and buttered ales; but it was now added as well to virtually all forms of boiled food.'[67] The ubiquitous role butter played in English cookery created a standard in English people's mind, especially among elites. They had been accustomed to being served all kinds of dishes and pastries that were lavishly buttered. Therefore, they would especially note the drastic differences in Chinese food.

---

[66] Ibid., 1838.
[67] Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain,* p. 182.

Furthermore, in addition to noting the absence of dairy products in the Chinese diet, English writers connected dairy culture in China to the Tartars. For example, in Robert Morrison's *Chinese Dictionary of Chinese Language*, which was the first Chinese-English dictionary published in China, the entry for 'milk' is: '嬭 the female breast; milk; to suckle. 牛奶 cow's milk; 奶子茶, a preparation of milk, which the Tartars drink as tea.'[68] This entry shows that, when Morrison introduces the Chinese word related to cow's milk, he thought of Tartar's milk tea as the most representative example. Moreover, the entry suggests that, for Morrison, the Tartar's dairy culture was more representative of dairy culture in China. In 1840, an article in *The Chinese Repository* describes Tartar cheese.

> A Tartar cheese.—I once saw an account of a 'mammoh cheese,' as it was called, which was presented by a New England farmer to Daniel Webster; it was nearly of the circumference of a cart-wheel, and fully required a cart to carry it. In China, where everything goes by contraries, we have the antithesis to the big cheese of the west in a Lilliputian cheese which we suppose has come all the way from Tartary. It is made from mare's milk, weighs 1 ½ oz., and was a cast in a mold not quite one inch in diameter by half an inch in thickness, having the character *luk* 禄 'happiness' stamped on the top. It ought to be packed in a glass case, and forthwith sent 'this side up' to the British Museum.[69]

This description contrasts Chinese and Western objects and focuses on the size of the cheese. The relatively small size of the mare's milk cheese was peculiar to this author because it provided another exemplar object through which to contrast China and the West. Moreover, the Chinese character stamped on the top of this cheese made it representative as a Chinese object that was worthy of exhibiting in British Museum. Apart from its physical information, this author did not provide any cultural background of this so-called 'Tartar cheese'. We do not know where and how this cheese was made or for what occasion it was consumed. It is likely that the author determined this cheese's origin as Tartary only because it was made from mare's milk. The intention of sending this cheese to the British Museum manifests the

---

[68] Robert Morrison, *A Chinese dictionary of Chinese language, Vol.1* (Macao: East India Company's Press, 1815), p. 694.
[69] *The Chinese Repository*, Vol 9, 1840, p. 507.

author's ambition for presenting their knowledge about China; however, the story was told to feed British curiosity and fuel imperial and colonial knowledge production.[70]

The image of 'Tartars' served the Western imagination in many ways. During the 1830s, it 'justified' the inferiority of the Han Chinese: since Tartars ate horse flesh and drank cow's milk, they were strong enough to conquer China. The author of an 1832 article in *The Chinese Repository* states that '[t]he milder sons of Han could not withstand the arms of the conquering Khan. The wild Scythian, who ate the flesh of horse, and drank the milk of cows, was fit for every enterprise.'[71]

These attitudes towards the Chinese and cows in China fed British imperialism: negative descriptions about Chinese agriculture and domesticated animals helped to construct an image of an uncivilised and backward culture. In the catalogue of the Chinese Collection, which was exhibited in Hyde Park between 1842 and 1846, William Langdon introduces Chinese husbandry and domesticated animals negatively:

> No good land is ever reserved in China for pasture, which in fact can scarcely be considered as forming a department of their husbandry. The few cattle that they have, are turned out only upon waste lands, which are never improved by any sort of artificial manuring or dressing. To this must partly be ascribed the poor and stunted appearance of their cows and horses….Chinese do not use either milk, butter, or cheese.[72]

Although John Francis Davis, as well as many others, claimed that the Chinese people did not use any milk, butter, or cheese, Davis does mention the use of milk during an imperial feast held for the Amherst embassy. Clark Abel, the chief medical officer and naturalist of the Amherst embassy, also recorded the incident in his journal; they were served a soup composed of mare's milk and blood.[73] Abel did not find anything contradictory about the use of milk in the soup. However, Davis was surprised to learn

---

[70] Rogério Miguel Puga, 'The First Museum in China: The British Museum of Macao (1829–1834) and its Contribution to Nineteenth-Century British Natural Science.' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3-4 (2012), pp. 575-586.
[71] *The Chinese Repository*, Vol 1, 1832, p. 328.
[72] William B. Langdon, *'Ten Thousand Chinese Things.' A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection, Now Exhibiting at St. George's Place, Hyde Park Corner, London* (London: The Proprietor, 1843), p. 95.
[73] Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China: And of a Voyage to and from That Country, in the Years 1816 and 1817 : Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Transactions of Lord Amherst's Embassy to the Court of Pekin and Observations on the Countries Which It Visited* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), p. 84.

that the soup was composed of mare's milk and blood, and he used what he learned to argue that it was a remnant of the Tartars' pastoral state.[74] For Davis, this use of milk was uncivilised and was inferior to British uses of milk. When he states 'no Chinese ever use milk, butter or cheese', he really means that no people in China ever used milk, butter, or cheese in a civilised way as the British people do.

Davis' description of the use of mare's milk and blood in soup also influenced Americans' imagination of the Chinese diet. Nathan Dunn, an American merchant who resided in Canton for twelve years, presented Chinese items he had collected during his travels in an exhibit called 'The Silk Mercer's Shop' in Philadelphia in December 1838. Among other items, he presented a circular, eight-legged table that was set for breakfast. In introducing this exhibition, E. C. Wines discusses the breakfast table and the Chinese diet.

> The flesh of dogs, cats, rats, and mice, enters into the bill of fare of the Chinese poor. The larvae of the sphinx-moth and a grub bred in the sugar-cane are much relished, as also sharks' fins, the flesh of wild horses, the sea-slug, and a soup made of a species of birds'-nests. At an imperial feast given to the last British embassy, a soup concocted of mare's milk and blood was among the dishes![75]

This description lists the 'strange' food that the Chinese poor and rich consumed. Such lists were common in the nineteenth-century Western writings about China. The exclamation in the end of the paragraph suggests that a soup of mare's milk and blood was culturally unacceptable to both Wines and his intended audience. Mare's milk and blood soup, as well as other notorious Chinese foodstuffs, such as dogs, cats, and rats, constituted an image of Chinese people as peculiar eaters.

It was noteworthy that, when the exhibition opened on the evening of 22 December 1838, tea was served to those attending: 'The beverage extracted from China's most celebrated plant, of a richness and delicacy of flavour extremely rare among us, was served to the guests in cups of native manufacture, various in shape and size. Though not without those heretical accompaniments of sugar and cream, which would destroy its value in the eyes, or rather to the palate, of a true Chinaman.'[76] Wines uses a self-mocking tone to explain that adding sugar and cream to tea was 'heretical'. As Wines mentions, the exhibition was

---

[74] Davis, *The Chinese, Vol 1*, p. 330.
[75] E.C. Wines, *A Peep at China in Mr. Dunn's Chinese Collection: With Miscellaneous Notices relating to the institutions and customs of the Chinese and out commercial intercourse with them*, (Philadelphia, 1839), p.56.
[76] Ibid., p. 10.

targeted to members of the Philadelphian upper-class, among those attending were many eminent citizens, including artists, merchants, mechanics, editors, literati, and military and naval officers. The tea provided to the American elite catered to their tastes rather than represent taste preferences of Chinese people. Instead, the mere presence of tea and teacups from China were sufficient for the Americans to consume a sense of 'Chineseness'.

The European and American narratives about Chinese dairy consumption were often static and homogenous. However, when they mention changes in Chinese consumption, especially the introduction of Western cows and dairy products, they would emphasise that Westerners were responsible for the change. As early as the early seventeenth century, a Spanish Jesuit, Adriano De Las Cortes (1578–1629), noted that Chinese people sold cheese to Portuguese merchants:

> It did not seem to me that the Chinese consume milk or cheeses, or that they produce any of these for their own use, but I did see one or two people selling some of these products to the ships of the Portuguese merchants in the river of the city of Canton during the time of festivities. The cheese were between a sort of junket and curd cheese and did not get to be as firm as our cheese.[77]

Cortes was instructed by his superiors to go to Macao in 1625. His predecessors, including Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) had begun missionaries in Macao during the late sixteenth century. Cortes's experience was unusual in that the ship he boarded wrecked on its way to Macao and he was caught and kept in prison in Guangdong province for over a year. He was released and arrived in Macao in 1626. His writings record his experiences in Guangdong and Macao and offer commentaries about Chinese culture. Cortes was interested in the food culture of China and wrote a whole chapter, 'About the Meat and Fish of China', on Chinese food. While Cortes notes that, although milk or cheese were not commonly consumed, some Chinese people produced cheese for the consumption of Portuguese merchants. Cortes mentions that this transaction occurred during a festival. It was possible that it was boat people who took part in this trade and provided food to foreign ships. The sampans they used were convenient for transporting food provisions. However, we cannot tell what kind of cheese it was from his description. It is possible that the Portuguese merchants' preferences influenced the production method of the cheese.

---

[77] P. Adriano De Las Cortes*, The Journey to China, 1625 and Beyond,* ed. by Alan Macfarlane, Beatriz Moncó, Zilan Wang and Yuchen Qin, trans. by Iraida Blanco, Eliezer Arias and Javier A. Nieto (Cambridge: Cam Rivers Publishing, 2022), p. 224.

Charles Gustavus Eckeberg (1716–1784), the captain of a ship in the Swedish East India Company, travelled to Canton in the 1740s. He also mentions the European influence on Chinese dairy production.

> They keep cows only to preserve the breed, because they seldom make use of the milk. Some years ago they made little account of great cattle; but since the *Europeans* have been more numerous here, and use every year a good quantity, not only in *China* but likewise on their return; they have been induced to keep more great cattle, on account of the flesh and the milk.[78]

Eckeberg comments that the increasing number of cattle in China was a result of the growing population of Europeans. He emphasizes the importance of the growing provision trade for both European residents and homebound ships, which contributed to the increasing number of cattle. This description suggests that, although Eckeberg's narrative was Euro-centric, Europeans had an active role in changes to Chinese husbandry, while the Chinese were passive actors.

The importance that European and American merchants placed on milk and other dairy products impacted Chinese merchants. Some Hong merchants who had intimate relationships with the foreign traders accepted the symbolic and material values that Westerners put on cows and milk. The mutual understanding of their role was evident when, in 1842, Cushing sent Houqua a cow from Boston as a gift. Houqua wrote to Cushing:

> The Cow which you were so kind as to send to me for which I return you many sincere thanks….When landed the Cow was very thin, she had a calf then about two months old which was also thin and very weak— but with good care and plenty of good food they have both become quite fat and the cow furnishes us with a most liberal quantity of rich milk.[79]

Hong merchants, including Houqua, would have heard of their foreign business partners' complaints about the quality of Chinese milk and butter as well as their praise for European and American cows. It is possible that Houqua himself had visited factories and drank tea with milk from European and American cows. Through years of interactions and business collaborations, Hong merchants acquired a taste for the rich milk produced by imported

---

[78] Charles Gustavus Eckeberg, 'A Short Account of The Chinese Husbandry, by Charles Gustavus Eckeberg, Captain of a ship in the Swedish East India Company's Service', in Peter Osbeck, *A Voyage to China and the East Indies* Vol 2, pp. 307–8.
[79] MHS Houqua Letters, 11 May 1842. Reference from John D. Wong, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.132.

cows. This experience helped establish a mutual understanding among Chinese and foreign merchants of the imported cows' value.

Conclusion

Although there is a rich history of the Chinese consumption of dairy products, European travellers did not widely know about Chinese practices that used cow's milk. In part, foreigners had limited opportunities and few direct experiences of consuming various Chinese dairy products. Moreover, Europeans' self-centred approach to judging the food cultures of other countries also helped to construct the myth that a dairy culture was absent in China. As the European habit of drinking tea with milk and sugar became established in the eighteenth century and as Europeans and Americans developed imperialism and colonialism, the differences between Chinese and Western dairy consumption became exaggerated. The differences became a marker of the cultural and racial differences between China and the West.

Chapter 4:
Spicing Up Trade: The Consumption of Curries in Foreign Factories

Introduction

In an 1820 account book of sea stock from a comprador who worked for Russell & Co (an American trading company in Canton), we find items such as molasses, rice, paddy, and potatoes. An entry for a bottle of curry powder seems quite unusual.[1] This bottle of curry powder was unique among the sea stock for the homeward ship. It is not clear whether this curry powder was used in preparing food for sailors or for ship captains and supercargoes on board, or both. We also do not know how this curry powder was used. Nonetheless, this single bottle of curry powder is intriguing: When, how and why did foreign traders in Canton begin to consume something called 'curry'? What can this bottle of curry powder tell us about the everyday life of foreigners in Canton and Macao during the early nineteenth century?

Curry was as staple for employees of the English EIC living in India in the eighteenth century. When they returned to Britain, they brought a taste for and the ingredients for making curries with them. From the comprador's account book, we see that curry powder could also be purchased in Canton in the 1820s and that it was consumed by people on board the ship as they travelled back to America. While these foreigners may not have had direct experience of living in India, they still had acquired a taste for curry, which may have been established through the influence of the eating habits of English EIC employees in China. As May-bo Ching argues, the English EIC was the dominant company in the foreign communities of China, so their dinner style had a strong influence on the tables of other factories.[2] American traders' taste for curry might well have developed during their years of socialising with their British counterparts in Canton and Macao.

The history of curry is entangled with British colonial history. 'Curry' is a contested and controversial food. Recently, there was a call to cancel the term given its relationship

[1] Washington DC, Library of Congress, Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894, Box 9, Reel 7, Account books in 1820. 'Sea stock' is food provision for sea voyage.
[2] May-bo Ching, 'Chopsticks or Cutlery? How Canton Hong Merchants Entertained Foreign Guests in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in Kendall Johnson(ed) *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations* (Hongkong, 2012), pp. 99–115.

with British colonialism.[3] Historians have explored the history of curries through the lens of British colonial expansion. They have focused on the spread of the consumption of curries in Britain and British colonies.[4] The transmission of curries to trading ports not under rules of the British empire such as Canton and Macao, received less scholarly attention. Since the early 1990s, historians have explored the effects of imperialism in British society through the lens of food. Napur Chaudhuri's article 'Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice in Victorian Britain' discusses the role of memsahibs played in shaping the imperial world view of Victorian society. In particular, Chaudhuri explores how memsahibs of the nineteenth century adapted curry and rice and other Indian dishes to British tastes.[5] Building on Chaudhuri's research, Susan Zlotnick, in 'Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England', argues that Victorian women not only functioned as 'agents of cultural exchange' but also actively undertook the ideological work of domesticating imperialism through their moral agency and figurative power. Middle-class Englishwomen helped to incorporate Indian dishes into the national diet and India into the British empire by publishing curry recipes in their cookery books.[6] In her article, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian Discourse', Mary Procida focuses on the Anglo-Indian community in the late nineteenth century and examines how Anglo-Indian cookbooks were used in the imperial communities in India to contribute to the construction of imperial knowledge.[7]

In 2006, Lizzie (Elizabeth) Collingham published a monograph dedicated to the history of Indian food: *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors.* Collingham traces the history of different curry dishes through the long history of India. She analyses the impact that immigrants had on the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent. In particular, she examines how central Asian, Persian, and European cookery influenced Indian cuisine. In the last

---

[3] Cancel 'curry'? Why South Asian American chefs say it's time for the word to go , *NBC News*, 2021 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/it-s-not-always-curry-desi-cooks-call-change-western-n1275855> [accessed 16 April 2023].
[4] Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Stephanie R. Maroney, 'To Make a Curry the India Way: Tracking the Meaning of Curry Across Eighteenth-Century Communities', *Food and Foodways*, 1-2(2011), pp. 122–134.
[5] Napur Chaudhuri, 'Shawls, Jewelry, Curry, and Rice in Victorian Britain' In *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 235–236.
[6] Colleen Taylor Sen, 'Curry A Global History', p.143; Susan Zlotnick, 'Domesticating Imperialism: Curry and Cookbooks in Victorian England', *Frontiers,*2/3 (1996), 51–68.
[7] Mary A. Procida, 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian Discourse', *Journal of Women's History*, 2(2003), pp. 123–149.

chapter, Collingham examines how curry travelled the world along with Indians, especially indentured labourers. She mentions that curry was introduced to Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, South Africa, the United States, and Japan. However, China is not included in her discussion. Colleen Taylor Sen's work *Curry: A Global History*, published in 2009, offers another introduction of the origins of curry dishes and their spread from the Indian subcontinent through British colonial expansion and the Indian diaspora.[8] This book does mention that, in South China today, a few dishes use curry powder.

Since China neither was fully colonised by the British empire nor experienced substantial immigration from the Indian subcontinent, China is neglected in the historical narrative about the globalisation of curry. Although scholars such as Madhavi Thampi have begun examining the history of Indian communities in China during the colonial era, their research has focused mainly on politics, religion, and economics.[9] R.A. Donkin's research shows the similarity between ancient China and India in the appetite for spices, especially in public and private ceremonies and in preventive and general medicine. Donkin notes that culinary and medicinal spices were not clearly distinguished in China and India.[10] Tom Hoogervost points out that South Asian cooks transformed the foodscapes of the Indian Ocean. By examining languages of food, he mentions that Macao features several pan-Indian Ocean dishes.[11] Chinese linguist and historian, Ji Xianlin has researched the influence of Indian sugar making technologies in China; Ji offers one of the few historical analyses of Sino-Indian food-knowledge exchange.[12] Consequently, the food and cultural exchange between India and China as well as historical exchanges between Indian communities and Chinese people is thus relatively understudied.

Currently, academic research on the history of the introduction of curry in China is at a preliminary stage. Li Jingwei is one of the few Chinese scholars who explores the

---

[8] Colleen Taylor Sen, *Curry: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).
[9] Madhavi Thampi*, Indians in China, 1800–1949* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005).
[10] R.A. Donkin, *Between East and West: The Moluccas and the traffic in spices up to the arrival of Europeans* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003), p.155, 189. A general introduction of spice trade, see John Lawton, *Silk, Scents & Spice: Tracing the world's great trade routes – The silk road, the spice route, the incense trail* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing: 2004).
[11] Tom Hoogervorst, 'Sailors, Tailors, Cooks, and Crooks: On Loanwords and Neglected Lives in Indian Ocean Ports', *Itinerario*, 3 (2018), pp. 516–48.
[12] Xianlin Ji 季羡林, *Tang Shi* 糖史 [The history of sugar] (Nanchang: Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009).

localization of curry in China.[13] Li discusses the influence of British colonial officers on the importation of curry to China and traces the introduction of curries, in the form of canned food, in early twentieth-century Shanghai. However, the bottle of curry powder from the comprador's account book indicates that, as early as 1820, people could find bottled curry powder in Canton markets. Li's research does not touch on the situation in trading ports like Canton and Macao, where curry was consumed in the foreign communities during the nineteenth century. This neglect is mainly the result of her exclusive reliance on primary sources such as newspapers published in Shanghai in the early twentieth century.

This chapter aims to fill this research gap by exploring how foreign traders, especially the English EIC employees and American traders in Canton and Macao, consumed curry. It explores the features of curries in China and curry's role in the daily lives of foreign traders and their families. In particular, this chapter examines two ingredients of curries that foreigners consumed in China: turmeric and chili peppers. This chapter investigates the ways in which these foreigners mediated their identities by consuming curry dishes. It also looks at the role Chinese people had in the process of modifying, transmitting, and localising curry in China. By including China in global narratives about curry, this chapter aims to widen the scope of the research on the globalization of curry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In terms of primary sources, this chapter uses a comprador's account book from Russell & Co to examine the purchase of curry powder and other ingredients related to curry and investigate how curry was consumed in foreign companies. To examine the way that foreigners' used curry in their everyday lives, this chapter also uses travel accounts of foreign merchants and travellers. Rebecca Kinsman's correspondence is also very useful because it provides information about how she ate curry and gifted it in her social circle in Macao. In order to analyse the incorporation of curry dishes into the Chinese language, this chapter uses published English and Cantonese dialect dictionaries, such as *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, in Three Parts* (published between 1815 and 1823) and *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* (published in 1828) that Robert Morrison complied and published in Macao. These dictionaries provide information about how English words for curry dishes were translated into Chinese. Contemporary Canton English vocabulary pamphlets were also used to study how curry-related language was used among Chinese labourers' working for foreigners.

---

[13] Jingwei Li 李静玮, '*Sheng Shu Zhijian: Gali Zai Zhongguo De Zaidihua* 生熟之间：咖喱在中国的在地化 Between What is New and What is Old: The Localization of Curry in China', *Sixiang Zhanxian*, 2 (2020), pp. 40-47.

This chapter traces turmeric and chili pepper as two main ingredients of the curry dishes consumed in China. It uses Chinese medical and cookery books to study how turmeric and chili pepper were understood in Chinese medical and culinary culture. In particular, I used *Proper and Essential Things for The Emperor's Food and Drink* (*Yin shan zheng yao* 饮膳正要), which was written by the imperial dietary physician Hu Sihui 忽思慧 in 1330, and the *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Ben cao gang mu* 本草纲目), which was compiled by herbalist and physician Li Shizhen 李时珍 (1518-1593) and published in the late sixteenth century.[14] These two books provide information about how turmeric was used in cuisine and medicine during the Yuan and Ming dynasties. I also use *The Gazetteer of Guangzhou* (*Guangdong tongzhi* 广东通志) published in 1730 to study how turmeric was grown and used in Canton society during the Qing dynasty. Finally, this chapter uses published English recipe books in Britain and American from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to study how members of foreign communities used turmeric and chili in curry dishes.

Curry Dishes in Foreign Factories

In the early nineteenth century, curries were served on the tables of European and American traders in the factories in Canton and Macao. As the population of foreign traders increased in China, they imported foods to China fulfil their needs. Foreign traders could find many kinds of imported foods and drinks imported in Canton markets. An 1813 commercial guide to East India trade maintains that '[i]n no part of the world are provisions more abundant than in China, or of better quality.'[15]As Jacques Downs argues, life in Canton was most comfortable for foreign residents.[16] A wide selection of food was available and contributed to a decent life for foreign traders in China. Among the various kinds of foods on their tables, as the discussion below will show, curry was among some of their favourite dishes. Curry dishes appeared on their breakfast and dinner tables and were used on special occasions.

[14] This translation of *Yin shan zheng yao* consulted Paul D. Buell and Eugene N. Anderson's translation.
[15] William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce: Containing a Geographical Description of the Principal Places in the East Indies, China, and Japan, with Their Produce, Manufactures, and Trade* (London: Black, Parry & Co, 1813), p. 496.
[16] Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844* (Hongkong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), p. 36.

When Rebecca Kinsman, her husband and two children settled in China in 1843, she indulged in a pleasant life in Macao. When she introduced her routine in Macao to her family back in Salem, she described her daily meals in detail. For breakfast, she had a selection of fish, cooked rice, eggs, ham, curried chicken, bread, tea, coffee, fritters, Johnny cakes, and waffles.[17] For dinner, she had soup, fish, meats, vegetables, curried chicken and rice, salads, and roasted birds as well as puddings, pastry, and fruit for dessert.[18] Although there was an implicit difference between the choices of foodstuffs for their breakfast and dinner, curried chicken and rice was served for both breakfast and dinner. This suggests that curried chicken and rice were consumed regularly by American families living in Macao.

Curried chicken was not only used for everyday consumption but also exchanged as gift in foreign communities in China. In 1844, on her thirty-fourth birthday, Kinsman recorded that she received 'a dish of delicious curried chicken' from Gideon Nye of New Bedford who 'has a cook, who is very remarkable for his skill in this, as well as other departments of his profession, and the other day, he kindly offered to send me some, and sent to inquire what day I would prefer receiving it.'[19] From this letter, we may assume that curried chicken was a well appreciated gift in American communities in China during this period. The letter suggests that having a good cook who was proficient in cooking curried dishes could help establish social relations in the local communities. Although it was not mentioned in her account, these cooks, as well as Kinsman's own, were often Chinese.

Curry dishes were often served during social events among foreign traders. William Hunter, an American who worked for Russell & Co, describes a dinner he had with other Canton residents in the 1820s. This dinner was held by an American merchant and consul, Benjamin Wilcocks (1777–1845), as a treat for his friend George Chinnery (1774–1852), an Irish artist who spent years in India before coming to China. Hunter records that:

> When rice and curry were served, he [George Chinnery] transferred nearly all rice to his plate. Observing it from the head of the table, 'Chinnery,' called out Wilcox, 'you're taking all the rice; twice as much as you can manage'. 'I always do so,' applied Chinnery. 'that while I'm eating one half, the other half

[17] Johnnycake is a kind of flat cake made of cornmeal. See: 'Johnnycake, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/101517> [accessed 29 April 2023]. Eliza Leslie provides recipes of two types of Johnny cakes in her cookery book: *The Indian Meal Book: Comprising The Best American Receipts for the Various Preparations of that Excellent Article* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1846), pp.15-16.
[18] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 17.
[19] Ibid., p. 122.

> will keep it warm.' A splendid dinner it was, as in fact were all in Canton, where the bazaar was of the most diversified kind in all sorts of provisions, tame and wild, in the season, with curries matched only in India, from whence they were introduced. When over, and the decanters placed at both head and foot of the table, as was then customary, Suy-pee was ordered up. 'You dinner No. 1' said his master; 'all men contentee.' 'Too much chin-chin, all men,' replied the *chef*; then disappeared smilingly and delighted.[20]

Hunter gives much attention to the curry and George Chinnery's way of eating it. It is evident that curry played an important role in the 'splendid dinner', since Hunter compared them to the best from India. Moreover, the foreign residents gave the curries of Canton high praise: the merchants had extensive travelling experiences in the East Indies, so they had many opportunities to taste different types of Indian food from different areas. Their mobility enabled them to develop a taste for curry and compare the different curries of the East Indies. And, as Europeans and Americans who had accumulated substantial wealth from trade in China, they could require their cooks to provide food that catered to the tastes that they had developed during their travels. Many foreign residents in Canton had lived in India previously. For example, George Chinnery went to Madras in 1802, then moved to Calcutta in 1807. In 1825, Chinnery arrived at Macao and died there in 1845. He spent twenty-three years in India before travelling to China.[21] Although his friend Wilcocks expressed discontent with his behaviour at the table, he insisted eating curry and rice in his own way. This eating habit may have been developed during his time in India. Moreover, his eating experiences in India may have given Chinnery some authority for his insisting to eat in this way.

In the early nineteenth century, curries had become staples of the tables of foreign traders living in Canton and Macao. Curries were not only essential parts of their daily diets but important to their social lives. Their habit of eating curry developed during their commercial and colonial activities in East India, and the preservation and development of this habit in China in turn marked their identities as foreign traders in Canton.

---

[20] William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China* (London: K. Paul, Trench, & Company, 1885), pp. 267-268.

[21] 'Chinnery, George (1774–1852), Painter', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5311> (accessed 13 April 2023).

What Was 'Curry' in China?

On the basis of the foreign residents' accounts of curry, it is difficult to determine what types of curry they ate, what ingredients they used in China, and if, and if so how they differed from the curries of India. It is noticeable that Hunter called the dish 'rice and curry' because curry dishes were called 'curry and rice' by EIC employees in India as well. Stephanie Maroney points out that British colonists in India used the phrase 'curry and rice' to describe every Indian dish on their table. They simplified various Indian food as either 'curries' or 'pillaus'.[22] This simplification makes it difficult to preserve the differences and uniqueness of various Indian foods, especially when they were introduced to other areas. This simplification process was also criticized by contemporary British commentators. For instance, *The Magazine of Domestic Economy* offers this criticism: 'The curries usually presented at our tables in England bear no resemblance to those of India than in the name. They are abominable compounds of cumin and coriander seeds, and turmeric powder and ginger and cayenne pepper'.[23]

William Hunter mentions that everything on the table could be purchased in the Canton markets. However, it is hard to tell whether the ingredients of the curry were produced locally or imported from India. Was the curry prepared from a mix of spices made by local cooks or purchased in a bottle? Although the origin of commercialized curry powder is unknown, David Burton estimates that it was invented in the seventeenth century as an export commodity for EIC employees to take back to England.[24] Since the late eighteenth century, commercial mixtures have been available to cooks in Britain.[25] Maroney suggests that curry powder was designed to be exported from India for the European market.[26] However, it is also possible that commercialized curry powder was exported from India to China to fulfil the needs of EIC employees and other European and American residents in China, such as William Hunter and his colleagues. For consumers in Britain, especially colonial officers, curry powder imported from India was often appreciated. *The Magazine of Domestic Economy* points out that curry powder brought from India was preferable for

[22] Maroney, 'To Make a Curry the India Way'.
[23] *The Magazine of Domestic Economy, vol2* (London: W.S. Orr & Company, 1837), p. 53.
[24] David Burton, *The Raj at Table: A Culinary History of the British in India* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994), p.74.
[25] Alan Davidson, 'Curry Powder,' *The Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 236.
[26] Maroney, 'To Make a Curry the India Way'.

making curry dishes.[27] Since it was believed that curry was an Indian food, the authentic taste would be more valued among the foreign traders. However, since various kinds of spices could be easily obtained in Canton markets, local cooks could also readily procure the ingredients they needed for curries. They could pound and mix fresh spices by themselves to prepare curries for their employers. Compared to imported curry powder, these freshly made curry sauces would preserve more aroma and flavour.

Although it is difficult to discover the exact lists of ingredients that were used in curries in Canton and Macao, we can identify some of the possible ingredients by exploring the main features of curries that foreign traders in Canton consumed. From compradors' account books, travel accounts and dictionaries published in China in the early nineteenth century, we can conclude that turmeric and cayenne pepper were common ingredients in curries in China. Moreover, like Anglo-Indians in India, foreigners in Canton and Macao often consumed curry with rice.

Turmeric was one of the most important features of curries consumed in China, as suggested by the Cantonese dialect of the period. Robert Morrison, a British missionary who translated the Bible into English, published *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* in Macao in 1828. Turmeric was called either (*jianghuang* 姜黄) or (*huangjiang* 黄姜).[28] The vocabulary also has entries for two curry dishes: fowl curry, *wong-keong-kei* (黄姜鸡), and shrimp curry, *wong-keong-ha* (黄姜虾); 'curry stuff' was called *wong-keong-tsoy-lew* (黄姜材料).[29] These entries suggest that curry dishes had been incorporated into Canton dialects, at least among foreign service circles in the early nineteenth century. It also suggests that curries in Canton were closely linked to turmeric.

It is interesting that among the many spices that were used in curries, turmeric was the main feature of those consumed by foreigners. In the Ming and Qing periods, turmeric was mainly used in medicine. Turmeric is still used in traditional Chinese medicine today for its efficacy in invigorating blood and moving *qi*, unblocking the channels, and relieving pain.[30] In his *Compendium of Materia Medica* (*Bencao gangmu* 本草纲目) a grand encyclopaedia of pharmaceutical lore published in the late sixteenth century, Li Shizhen mentions that the

---

[27] *The Magazine of Domestic Economy*, p.54.
[28] Morrison, *Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect*, p.279, 303; 黄姜, curcuma or Turmeric, in Robert Morrison, *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, in Three parts*, p. 631.
[29] Ibid., p. 303.
[30] Shengyan Xi and Yuewen Gong, *Essentials of Chinese Materia Medica and Medical Formulas: New Century Traditional Chinese Medicine* (London: Academic Press, 2017) p. 230.

Xirong 西戎 people called turmeric *shu* 莪, a fact that he traces back to the *Tang Materia Medica* (*Tang bencao* 唐本草).[31] Xirong were tribal groups and could refer to the area that is present-day Tibet and areas occupied by the various Tibetan ethnic groups.[32] Li probably borrowed this reference from the *Tang Materia Medica*, which was compiled by Su Jing, a Tang scholar-official.[33] In the *Tang Materia Medica*, turmeric is also noted as being called *shu* (莪) by Xirong people. Accordingly, during the Tang dynasty, turmeric was associated with the Xirong people and may have been introduced to China from the Tibetan area as early as the seventh century. Vivienne Lo's research shows that culinary arts shaped and structured medical knowledge presented in *Bencao gangmu*. Sometimes a concern for flavour and texture transcends the medical significance, especially in the descriptions on meat, game bird and seafood recipes.[34] The absence of turmeric's culinary uses in *Bencao gangmu* suggest that turmeric was not commonly used for culinary purposes at that time.

One of the earliest records in China that mentions turmeric as an ingredient in cuisine is Hu Sihui's 忽思慧 *Yinshan Zhengyao* (饮膳正要).[35] This dietary manual was presented to emperor Wenzong of Yuan by his imperial dietary physician Hu Sihui in 1330. As Paul D. Buell and Eugene N. Anderson argue, this dietary manual incorporates foods from every area conquered or affected by the Mongols.[36] Medical historian Vivienne Lo claims that *Yinshan*

---

[31] Li Shizhen 李时珍，*Ben cao gang mu, Volume 14* 本草纲目 卷十四 [*Compendion of Materia Medica*] (Nanjing,1573–1593), p. 12–13. For an introduction to historical medical terminology in *Ben cao gang mu*, see Zhibin Zhang and Paul U. Unschuld, eds., *Ben Cao Gang Mu Dictionary*, *Volume* O*ne, Chinese Historical Illness Terminology* (Oakland, 2015).
[32] Hua Linfu, Paul D. Buell, and Paul U. Unschuld (eds), *Ben Cao Gang Mu Dictionary, Volume Two, Geographical and Administrative Designations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), p. 319.
[33] Gucheng Zhou 周谷成 (ed), *Zhongguo Xueshu Mingzhu Tiyao Keji Juan* 中国学术名著提要 科技卷 [Essentials of Important Academic Works in China](Shanghai: fudan daxue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 526–528.
[34] Vivienne Lo, 'Pleasure, prohibition, and pain: food and medicine in traditional China' in Roel Sterckx, ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, politics, and religion in traditional China* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.175.
[35] Studies of *Yin shan zheng yao*, see Françoise Sabban, Court cuisine in fourteenth-century imperial China: Some culinary aspects of hu sihui's *Yinshan Zhengyao*, *Food and Foodways*, 1-2 (1985), 161-196; Weijun Yao 姚伟钧, 'Yinshan zheng yao yu yuandai menggu zu yinshi wenhua《饮膳正要》与元代蒙古族饮食文化[Yin shan zheng yao and Mongol people's food culture in Yuan Dynasty] ', *Zhongguo Dianji Yu Wenhua*, 2 (1993), pp. 43-48.
[36] Paul D. Buell and Eugene N. Anderson, *A Soup for the Qan: Chinese Dietary Medicine of the Mongol Era as Seen in Hu Sihui's Yinshan Zhengyao–Introduction, Translation, Commentary, and Chinese Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 6.

Zhengyao reached 'a level level of internationalism never before'. However, according to Lo's research, medical values of food are not consistently assigned in this work. Most of the Mongolian meat recipes do not have specific medical values. Those that do, are loosely classified.[37]

The usage of turmeric in several dishes evidently reveals that the contacts of Mongol court extended to India. For example, the *Yinshan Zhengyao* records a dish called 'bal-po soup' (八儿不汤) which, according to Buell and Anderson's research, was the name of a Western Indian food. This soup is listed as the third dish in the category 'Strange Delicacies of Combined Flavours' (*ju zhen yi zhuan* 聚珍異饌). This category contains ninety-five recipes in total and is the one with the most recipes under its heading. The title of this category suggests that the dishes have a precious and prestigious status and that, because that were delicacies with exotic elements, would display the sovereign power of the Mongol emperor. This recipe records that the soup 'supplements the centre and brings down *qi*. It extends the diaphragm' and requires two *qian* of turmeric.[38] Although this recipe was influenced by Indian cuisine, it emphasised its medicinal qualities according to Chinese medicine. This suggests that when imported to the Mongol court in China, foreign food was mediated through Chinese medical knowledge.

Another dish, Yellow Soup (*huang tang* 黃湯), used three *qian* of turmeric and 'supplements the centre, and increases *qi*'. In addition to turmeric, it requires five *qian* of ground ginger, one *qian* of za'faran, and coriander leaves.[39] Buell and Anderson suggest that the combination of turmeric, ground ginger and saffron was unique but echoes the spice mixes of Iran, northwest India, and Uyghur areas. The name of this recipe suggests that the outstanding feature of this dish was its bright yellow colour. Two other dishes have names related to turmeric: Turmeric[-coloured] Tendons 薑黃腱子 and Turmeric[-coloured] Fish 薑黃魚. However, it is noteworthy that turmeric was not used in these dishes. The dishes were iconic for their yellow colours, but their yellow colour was associated with turmeric, which had a prestigious place in the Mongol court diet.

However, it seems that the influence of Indian cuisine in China, especially the use of turmeric in cuisine did not persist after the Yuan dynasty. Indian cuisine is rarely found in the cookery books of later periods. It is possible that foods, such as bal-po soup, that Mongol

[37] Lo, 'Pleasure, prohibition, and pain: food and medicine in traditional China', pp.173-174.
[38] Buell and Anderson, *A Soup for the Qan*., p.272. '八不儿汤。系西天茶饭名。补中，下气，宽胸膈。'
[39] Ibid., p.282.

elites enjoyed were not incorporated into the daily meals of Han Chinese people. That turmeric was mainly used as medicine in later periods could have been a result of its specific medicinal qualities in the Chinese medical system. According to the medical canonical text *Huang di nei jing* 黄帝内经: Toxic drugs attack the evil. The five grains provide nourishment. The five fruits provide support. The five domestic animals provide enrichment. The five vegetables provide filling.' That is, toxic drugs were different from food because the former have a specific *qi* or flavour that is unilaterally strong and could eliminate evil and nourish the proper *qi*.[40] In the *Compendium of Materia Medica*, turmeric was regarded as 'massively cold'.[41] This description may have prevented Han Chinese people from using turmeric in their daily meals.

During the Qing dynasty, turmeric in food was used for its yellow colour rather than for its flavour. In the Canton area, local gazetteers compiled during the Qing dynasty suggest that local people produced turmeric as a source of dye. *The Gazetteer of Guangzhou* in 1730 records that 'Panyu grows turmeric to use its powder to dye incense as sticks and cakes, then it is called *Huangxiang* [yellow incense]. Dried *longan* must be mixed with turmeric powder so that its colour keeps bright yellow and will not attract moths.'[42] Qu Dajun comments that when *longan* was transported outside of Lingnan (two southern provinces), it must be mixed with turmeric powder to make these *longan* first-class fruits.[43] It suggests that in the eighteenth century, turmeric was mainly used to dye incense and cakes and to keep fruits fresh for long distance trade. In the Jiangnan area, turmeric was also used to colour cakes. In *Xingyuan Records* (*xingyuan lu* 醒园录), which was a cookery book complied by a scholar-official Li Huanan 李化楠 (1713-1769) during his travels to the area in the mid-Qing dynasty, there is a recipe for a cake called 'Sponge Rice Cake (*songgao* 松糕)'. The recipe

[40] Paul U. Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow in Collaboration with Zheng Jinsheng, *Huang Di nei jing su wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic–Basic Questions,* Volume I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 399.
[41] Shizhen Li, *Ben Cao Gangmu*, p, 13.
[42] Hao, Yulin 郝玉麟, ed., *Yongzheng Guangdong Tongzhi* vol 52. '黄姜番禺多种之以其末染诸香屑为香綫香饼是名黄香又乾龙眼必以黄姜末糝之则色鲜黄不生蠹.' Panyu 番禺 means Panyu County.
[43] Dajun Qu 屈大均, *Gungdong Xinyu* 广东新语 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985). Vol 27,'故果箱度岭必资之，又可使龙眼色黄为上果。'

recommends, that if the colour of yellow is wanted for the *songgao*, turmeric should be added.[44]

The absence of turmeric as a spice in local gazetteers in Canton suggests that turmeric might not be widely used in cooking by local people. One of the earliest records to suggest turmeric was used in foreign cuisine is a comprador's account book for a Catholic church in Macao between 1692 and 1699. In the comprador's accounting, the purchase of turmeric appears eleven times with a cost ranging from one to four cash (*wen* 文).[45] From this account book, we see that turmeric was often purchased alongside various vegetables and meat, such as pork or chicken livers, pork trotters, and brains.[46] Although turmeric was classified as a food in the account book, there is no solid evidence that people in the church were using turmeric to cook 'curry'.

Europeans and Americans in China were also interested in the botanical and medicinal qualities and commercial value of turmeric produced in China. James Main, a Scottish botanist, was dispatched to Canton to collect plants in China in 1793.[47] He classified turmeric as a dietetic plant along with other root plants, such as potatoes, yams, ginger, carrots, and scallions that he saw in Canton farms.[48] The botanical and medical knowledge collected and produced by European botanists in China was recorded in medical books that were published in Europe in late eighteenth century. For example, William Woodville (1752–1805), an English physician and botanist, included a discussion of turmeric in his book *Medical Botany* published in London in 1792: 'Turmeric is a native of the East Indies, and common in the gardens of the Chinese…. It has been very generally employed for the purpose of dying, and in eastern countries it is much used for colouring and seasoning of food….It enters the composition of the Curry powder which is now much used here.'[49] Interestingly, Woodville recorded that the Chinese people use turmeric as a sternutatory, a

---

[44] Huanan Li 李化楠，*Xingyuan Lu* (1782) 醒园录 [Xingyuan Records], reprint (Beijing:Zhongguo Shangye Chubanshe, 1984), p. 44. '要用红的，加红曲末；要绿加青汁；要黄加姜黄，即各成颜色'。

[45] A string of 1000 cash was equal to the value of 1 tael of silver.

[46] *Qingdai Aomen Zhongwen Dangan Huibian* 清代澳门中文档案汇编 [Collection of Chinese Documents in Macao in Qing dynasty], ed. by Fang Liu 刘芳, (Macao: Aomen Jijin Hui, 1999), pp. 785–792.

[47] *Proceedings of Linnean Society of London,* 1 (1846), pp.303–304.

[48] Main, *The Horticultural Register,* p. 218.

[49] William Woodville, *Medical Botany: containing systematic and general descriptions, with plates, of all the medicinal plants, indigenous and exotic, comprehended in the catalogues of the Materia Medica* (London: James Phillips, 1792), p. 360.

drug that causes sneezing.[50] However, this usage was not mentioned in contemporary medical books in China. Perhaps its inclusion was the result of misunderstandings and misinterpretations during the process of knowledge transmission.

Contemporary people in Europe were interested in Chinese turmeric because of its economic value in the market. Turmeric produced in China was more valuable than that produced in India in the early nineteen centuries. As a commercial guide explains, '[t]his root [turmeric] is produced in China and Bengal; but the former is most valuable.'[51] In 1804, according to the guide, the sale of turmeric in the Canton markets was about 35 tons per year, and it increased to about 66 tons in 1807 per year.[52] These figures suggest that, in the early nineteenth century, turmeric from Canton was becoming increasingly popular in the British market.

One of the reasons that turmeric imported from China was popular was its medicinal value. A physician at the London Hospital, Jonathan Pereira, compared different varieties of turmeric imported to England in terms of their characteristics and qualities. According to his account, among the five varieties (from China, Bengal, Madras or Bombay, and Java) in the English market, Chinese turmeric was the most preferred and most expensive. He writes that '[Chinese turmerics] yield a bright powder, and on that account are much preferred for medicinal purposes. Probably, if much of this sort were brought to market, it would not fetch more than the Bengal sort.'[53] In Mincing Lane in 1849,[54] Chinese turmeric was sold at the price of 25s while other varieties, such as those from Java, Madras and Bengal were around 15s .[55] Pereira explains neither how and why people believed that Chinese turmeric had more medicinal value than other varieties nor where this medicinal knowledge came from.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the reputation of China turmeric had travelled beyond the Atlantic. Chinese turmeric was recommended for use in some Indian dishes in American cookery books. That American writers were doing so suggests that Chinese turmeric was

---

[50] 'Sternutatory, Adj. and n.', OED Online (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/190032> [accessed 29 April 2023].
[51] Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, p. 542.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Jonathan Pereira, 'On the Commercial Varieties of Turmeric'in *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*, Vol 9, 1849–50, ed. by Jacob Bell (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1850), p. 311.
[54] Mincing Lane was a leading centre for tea and spices from across the world, see Fiona Rule, *London's Docklands: A History of the Lost Quarter* (Stroud: The History Press, 2019), pp. 177–78.
[55] Pereira, p. 313.

regarded as a useful ingredient in American household cookery. For example, a recipe for Mullagatawny soup, which was published in Philadelphia in 1837 in *Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery*, begins with a quarter of an ounce of China turmeric.

> Mullagatawny Soup as made in India
>
> Take a quarter of an ounce of China turmeric, the third of an ounce of cassia, three drachms of black pepper, two drachms of cayenne pepper, and an ounce of coriander seeds. These must all be pounded fine in a mortar, and well mixed and sifted. They will make sufficient curry powder for the following quantity of soup.[56]

The recipe suggests that Chinese turmeric had been incorporated into American cookery books through British colonial food, such as mulligatawny soup. And it travelled to America through British cookery books and was probably cooked by and consumed in middle and upper-middle class American households. As food historian Cecilia Leong-Salobir argues, mulligatawny soup was the second most important dish associated with colonial tables after curry.[57] According to *A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*, the name of this soup is a corruption of the Tamil *milagu-tannīr*, or 'pepper-water'.[58] It is noteworthy that Chinese turmeric was specifically selected as an ingredient in the curry powder used in preparing mulligatawny soup. However, in this cookery book, there is no Chinese dish that uses Chinese turmeric, so the culinary value of Chinese turmeric was understood and accepted in Indian cuisine that had been adapted to British colonial taste and then further modified for American tastes.

More interestingly, this recipe was marketed for its authenticity: 'as made in India'. Troy Bickham has pointed out that authenticity, or at least the pretence of it, was paramount in recipes of foreign dishes in British cookery books from the late eighteenth century. Even though the ingredients were predominantly British, authors still claimed the dishes were

---

[56] Eliza Leslie, *Directions for cookery, in its various branches* (Philadelphia: E.L Carey & A Hart, 1837), p. 29. Eliza Leslie was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787. Her cookery book *Directions for cookery, in its Various Branches* was the most popular cookbook and sold at least 150,000 copies. For more information about Eliza Leslie, see Alice B Haven, 'Personal Reminiscences of Miss Eliza Leslie,' in *Godey's Lady's Book,* 56 (1858), pp. 344-350.

[57] Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2011), p.16.

[58] Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell, p.456.

authentic.[59] In this context, using ingredients from areas different from the dish's origins did not necessarily compromise its authenticity. Therefore, using Chinese turmeric in a dish of Indian origin did not impact its authenticity.

Authenticity is an ambiguous notion in these cookery books. If authentic ingredients were not necessary for an authentic dish, then what elements of the dish constituted authenticity? Who could define an authentic foreign dish? Many English and American cookbook writers neither travelled to India nor had an Indian cook at home, yet they gained authority by writing recipes for foreign dishes. As Maroney argues, English women had become the community responsible for defining the meaning and composition of curry. Cookbook authors focused on economics, convenience, and domestic utility in creating the discourse about curry dishes.[60] Hannah Glasse, in her *The Art of Cookery*, does not emphasise the use of 'China turmeric' but simply 'turmeric'.[61] It is possible that using Chinese turmeric in 'Mullagatawny Soup as made in India' was the result of the turmeric market in America. It is also possible that the reputation of Chinese turmeric was based on the experiences of American traders who had returned from China in the early nineteenth century.

When American traders and their families came to China, they had opportunities to taste mulligatawny soup that was prepared by their Chinese cooks. Cooks and servants may have been familiar with mulligatawny soup as it is listed in a contemporary manuscript of Cantonese English as '黃羌汤 麥見当尼叔'(*huangjiang tang mai jian dang ni shu*).[62] The '*qiang* 羌' could mean '*jiang* 姜' in this case. Since mulligatawny soup was known as *huangqiang tang* 黃羌汤 in this manuscript, this soup seems to have been considered as a curry dish among foreign service circles. In an 1846 letter to her sister, Rebecca Kinsman describes a dinner: 'does thee wish to know what we had? I hope this letter won't be read by any but loving friends because it would sound to others so supremely silly. Well, Mullicatawney soup—broiled fowl and pork chops, curried fowl and rice, bread pudding, plantains and persimmons. Coffee…'[63] Rebecca Kinsman does not mention any specific ingredients in the mulligatawny soup. In her correspondence, she does not mention cooking

[59]Troy Bickham, *Eating the Empire: Food and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020), p. 184.
[60] Maroney, 'To Make a Curry the India Way'.
[61] Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (Edinburgh: J. Donaldson, 1791), p.115, 385, 421, 426, 427, 431, 432.
[62] Zhenhe Zhou 周振鹤, *Yi Yan Shu Yu* 逸言殊语 [Anecdotes and Unusual Phrases] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2008), p. 248.
[63] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in China', *EIHC*, 87(1952), p.52.

any Anglo-Indian dishes by herself, so she probably did not cook these dishes or learn how to from her Chinese cook. Therefore, she may not have been familiar with the ingredients of the mulligatawny soup or curried fowl on her table. She relied on her comprador to purchase foodstuffs from the market and on her cook and servants to prepare the dishes. When she settled the household account with the comprador every month, she did not necessarily ask about the origins of the provisions. The comprador's accounts for factories often record only the name, price, quantity, and date of purchase for their provisions.

Rebecca Kinsman reckoned that her sister in America would find it silly to eat 'Mullicatawney soup—broilded fowl and pork chops, curried fowl and rice, bread pudding, plantains and persimmons' for dinner. It is possible that eating Anglo-Indian dishes was not typical for her social circle back in Salem. Although Kinsman's eating experience may not have contributed directly to the knowledge production of the recipe for Mulligatawny soup with China turmeric, the presence of American traders and their families in Macao enabled trade between China and America. The mobility of people between China and America stimulated the cultural and material exchange between China and America and made it possible for American women to purchase turmeric from China and cook Anglo-Indian dishes with local ingredients. Trade also provided both material and cultural ingredients for cookbook writers and readers in America to create discourse about Indian food with Chinese ingredients.

As the vocabulary used among foreign service circles shows, the words for 'curry' and 'turmeric' were associated with each other. They might have found it unusual to cook meat with turmeric so that the word for 'curry' included the Chinese word for 'turmeric' to mark this peculiarity. Perhaps the yellow colour of these curries impressed their Chinese contemporaries. By tracing the usage of turmeric in Chinese food history, we see that the English EIC employees were not the first group of people who introduced Indian food to China. As early as Yuan dynasty, Indian cuisine, such as bal-po soup which used turmeric, was consumed in the Mongol court. However, as Mongol reign declined, the Mongol influence on cuisines in China faded away. When the China trade flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Indian food such as curries was reintroduced to China by foreign traders. Tracing turmeric as an ingredient of curry dishes reveals the interactions between foreign trade and Chinese food culture.

Spicing up Curries in Foreign Factories

As perceived by foreigners, the differences between the Chinese people were marked not only by the language of curry and knowledge of turmeric but also by their different culinary preferences and tastes in food. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century China, people could enjoy curries only in foreign factories. For some foreign traders, especially for those from America, they first acquired the taste for curries when they stayed in foreign factories in Canton. Eating curry might even have served as a marker of being a member of the Canton trade community.

William Hunter provides an interesting example that shows how the taste for curry marked his identity as a foreign trader in China. He describes a dinner with his colleagues at Russell & Co and two Chinese guests. One of the guests, Lo, who was their acquaintance and a son of a salt merchant, brought a Chinese friend with him. Hunter quotes from a letter that Lo had written that reveals Lo's unpleasant feelings about the food. In particular, Lo found that the curry was too spicy: 'There followed a dish that set fire to our throats, called in the barbarous language of one by my side Kā-Lē, accompanied with rice which if itself was alone grateful to my taste.'[64] Presumably this Kā-Lē dish was a curry.

Judging from the tone of the letter, it may not have been written by Lo. Perhaps, Hunter fabricated the letter to entertain his readers. If so, the letter's entertaining effect is only successful if both Hunter and his English readers understood the difference between the preferences of the foreign traders and their Chinese counterparts, who appreciated delicacies, such as shark's fins and deer's sinews, while the foreigners enjoyed curries, cheese, and beer. The differences of tolerance of spiciness might be exaggerated in this case. Before the dinner, Hunter and his colleagues asked their Chinese cook, Suy-pe, to add extra chilies and cayenne pepper to the curry dish to make it spicier.[65] Therefore the curry dish that they provided for their Chinese guests was an extra spicy version. No wonder that that Chinese merchant found the curry dish 'set fire' to his throat.

Nevertheless, Hunter and his colleagues' prank of adding extra spice to the curry dish suggests another important feature of curry dishes in China: the use of chilies and cayenne pepper to make the curry spicier. This use poses questions similar to those posed about turmeric: What was 'cayenne pepper'? Where did these peppers come from? How did they

[64] Hunter, *Bits of old China*, p. 39.
[65] Ibid, p. 40.

become a feature of curries in nineteenth century Canton and Macao? The story of how cayenne pepper came to be used in curries is complicated—perhaps more complicated than the story about how turmeric came to be used—because chilies were native to America and their spread to different areas of Europe and Asia has a complicated and entangled history.[66] The story of cayenne-peppered curries in Canton may help us better understand the history of globalisation of chili peppers and curries in the early nineteenth century.

A close look at an 1820 account book of sea stock (Figure 3) that a comprador kept for Russell & Co shows a record for one bottle of cayenne pepper right below the bottle of curry powder discussed earlier. Both have the same price: 5 mace (*qian* 钱).[67] The ship comprador may well have purchased this bottle of curry powder with the bottle of cayenne pepper. It is possible that both were sold together in a local market given that they were both necessary for cooking spicy curry dishes. If this is true, then the practice that curry powder accompanied cayenne pepper was already known in Canton and Macao provision market as early as the 1820s. It is noteworthy that both curry powder and cayenne pepper were stored in glass bottles, which would have been essential for their preservation during long-distance transportation.

[66] For the history of chilli pepper, see Jean Andrews, 'The peripatetic chilli pepper: diffusion of the domesticated capsicums since Columbus,' in *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World,* ed. by Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), pp. 81-94; Heather Arndt Anderson, *Chillies: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016).
[67] Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894, Account books in 1820.

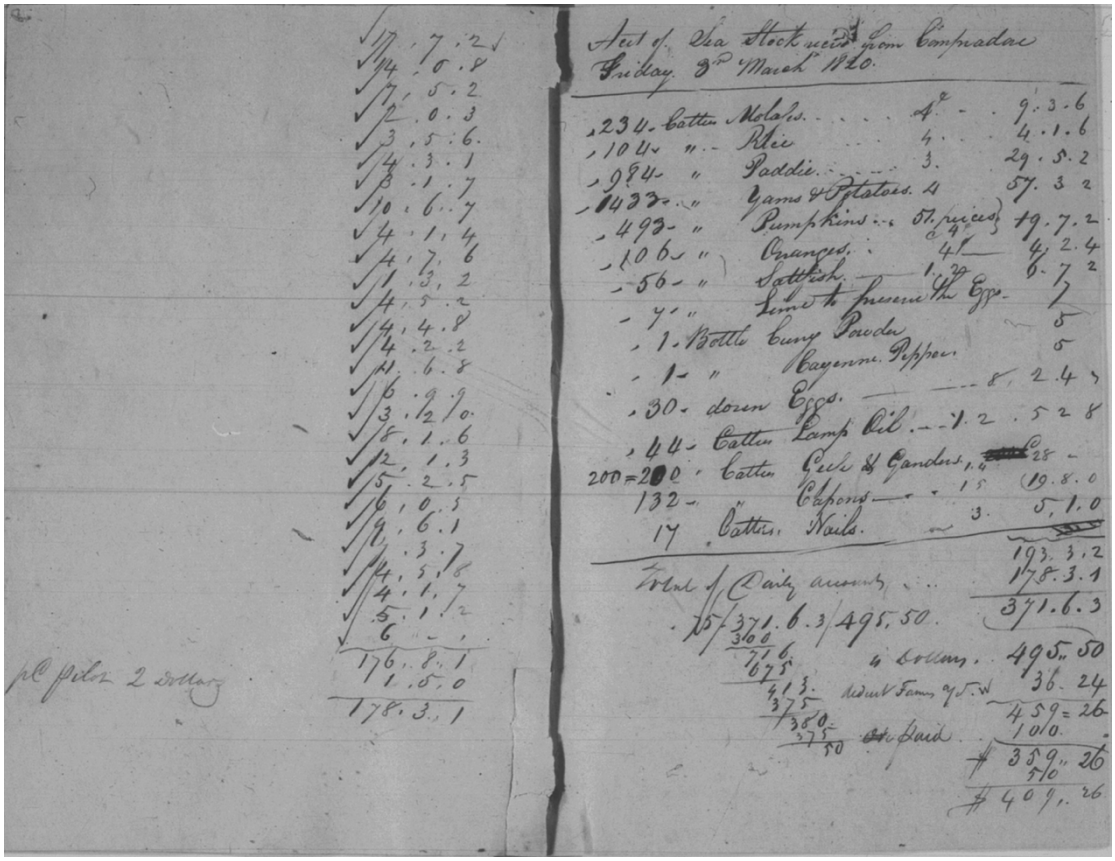


Figure 3. Account of Sea Stock received from Comprador. Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894, Library of Congress, Washington DC, Photo by the author.

What exactly was the 'cayenne pepper' stored in this bottle? Did this cayenne pepper indicate a single origin of chili pepper or was it a mix of chili peppers? Historians of early modern natural history and material culture point out that the meanings of a plant are often ambiguous, because they changed over time and acquire different meanings when they travel to different places.[68] Cayenne pepper as it was known in early nineteenth century Canton and Macao might be very different from what we can purchase in Tesco or Sainsbury's today.

[68] Examples such as ginseng, rhubarb and China root, see: Carla Nappi, 'Surface tension: Objectifying ginseng in Chinese early modernity' in *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. by Paula Findlen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 29-50. M.P. Romaniello, 'True rhubarb? Trading Eurasian botanical and medical knowledge in the eighteenth century', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2016), 3-23; Chang Che-Chia, 'Origins of a Misunderstanding: the Qianlong Emperor's Embargo on Rhubarb Exports to Russia, the Scenario and its Consequences", *Asian Medicine* 1.2 (2005), pp. 335-354; Gao Xi 高晞, 'Wenyi Fuxing Shiqi Ouzhou Yisheng Yanzhong De Yiyu Xinyao: Zhongguo Gen 文艺复兴时期欧洲医生眼中的异域新药: "中国根" "Chinese Root" A New Exotic Drug in the Eyes of European Physicians during the Renaissance Period', *Huangdong Shifan Daxue Xuebao (Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban)*, 1 (2023), pp. 22-32.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, cayenne pepper is 'a very pungent powder obtained from the dried and ground pods and seeds of various species of Capsicum, esp. *C. annuum* and *C. frutescens*, of South America; used as a condiment in cookery and as a stimulant in medicine; formerly called Guinea pepper.'[69] This entry suggests that cayenne pepper is generally made from different types of chili peppers that originated from South America.

The history of cayenne pepper is intertwined with British colonial history in the Caribbean. One of the earliest English records of cayenne pepper is from Edward Long (1734–1813), a British colonial administrator and pro-slavery advocate who lived in Jamaica from 1757 to 1769. In 1774, he published a three-volume *History of Jamaica, or General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of that Island*, which contributed to his reputation as a leading commentator of the eighteenth-century British Caribbean.[70] In his book, Long introduces different varieties of capsicum found in Jamaica, including bird-pepper which was known as 'cayan butter':

> There are about fifteen varieties of the capsicum in this island, which are found in most parts of it….The bird-pepper is gathered when ripe, dried in the sun, pounded, and mixed with salt, and kept, close-stopped in bottles, for use. This is commonly known by the name of cayan-butter, and in general esteem for the excellent relish it gives to soups, turtle, and other dishes.
>
> These peppers are used liberally in the West-Indies, gathered fresh from the bush, generally before they are ripe; though the bird-pepper has the best flavour in its mature state. Perhaps they are necessary, in this climate, to assist digestion, promote the tonic motion of the bowels, invigorate the blood, and correct the flatulency of vegetable aliments.[71]

Long mentions that 'cayan-butter' is made by mixing bird-pepper and salt and is kept in bottles. More importantly, he mentions that this 'cayan-butter' is used in soups and turtle dishes. He, thus, suggests a close link between turtle soup, a prestigious dish in eighteenth-

---

[69] 'Cayenne, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/29324> [accessed 16 April 2023].
[70] 'Long, Edward (1734–1813), Planter and Commentator on Jamaican Affairs', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16964>.
[71] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica. Or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of That Island:: With Reflections on Its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government. In Three Volumes. Illustrated with Copper Plates.*. (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), pp.722-723.

century Britain, and cayenne pepper.[72] Long also mentions the beneficial medicinal effects of bird-pepper in West-Indies in the local climate. This culinary and medicinal knowledge might have been acquired from indigenous people in Jamaica. Moreover, Long may have tasted turtle soup seasoned with cayenne pepper provided by enslaved Africans on his plantation in Jamaica. But, in his writing, Long does not acknowledge those who created and used cayan-butter in various ways; he simply appropriated their knowledge.

The knowledge of cayenne pepper was brought to Britain at least by the eighteenth century when it can be found in cookery books. As early as 1767, in the 'Addition' section of Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, there is a recipe called 'To dress a turtle the West Indian way'. In this recipe, Glasse mentions adding 'cayan pepper' three times during the process of cooking a turtle.[73] When adding cayenne pepper for the second time, she reminds the reader to 'take care not to put too much'. This reminder suggests that her audience was not accustomed to the spiciness of cayenne peppers. In the first edition of *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, cayenne pepper is not mentioned, which suggests that turtle soup made with cayenne pepper did not gain popularity until the 1760s.

Food historian Lizzie Collingham has suggested that chillies did not begin to appear in British recipes until the nineteenth century. It entered cookery books with Indian curry dishes.[74] However, the turtle recipe in Glasse's *Art of Cookery* suggests that chili peppers appeared in British recipes in the form of cayenne pepper earlier than Collingham has suggested. Moreover, its introduction is related to West-Indian dishes rather than Indian dishes. Collingham is right that chili peppers entered cookery books through nineteenth century Indian curry recipes.[75] Nonetheless, the incorporation of cayenne peppers into British recipe books may have come from at least two directions that both involved British colonial expansion into the West and East Indies.

---

[72] For studies on turtle soup in British and American food culture, see Amy B. Trubek, 'Turtle Soup', *Gastronomica*, 1 (2001), 10–13; Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins, and Barbara Santich. 'Introduction: of turtles, dining and the importance of history in food, food in history.' *Dining On Turtles: Food Feasts and Drinking in History,* ed. by Diana Kirkby and Tanja Luckins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1–12.
[73] Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made plain and easy* (London, 1767), p. 331–332. For a discussion of the history of turtle soup consumption in Canton, see May-bo Ching, 'The Flow of Turtle Soup from the Caribbean via Europe to Canton, and Its Modern American Fate', *Gastronomica*, 1 (2016), pp. 79–89.
[74] Collingham, *Curry*, p. 54.
[75] Ibid.

The story of the incorporation of cayenne peppers from the East Indies is complicated and involved different groups of people. Since the sixteenth century, chili peppers had been incorporated into Indian cuisine under the influence of Portuguese colonial expansion. Portuguese merchants brought chili peppers to India, and Indians quickly accepted the chilies. They were cultivated locally and exported to other regions of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.[76] When the English East India Company merchants arrived in India later, in the eighteenth century, curries spiced by chili peppers had become a staple in their factories. English merchants were not the only community of Europeans who lived in India and who accepted curries. European sailors also appreciated curries that were seasoned with cayenne pepper and that were consumed by their Indian counterparts.

Captain Thomas Forrest, a Scott, was employed in the Indian seas for about twenty years beginning in 1753.[77] He noticed that during his voyages in ships from other countries that the European sailors, 'with a kind of discontent, took notice that the blacks lived better than they; but the lascars did not cost in victualling above one half of what was laid out to victual the Europeans, when European salt meats were purchased.'[78] He observes the lascar sailors' diet on board in detail:

> The lascars would never touch any thing but what their own cook (banderey) dressed, and they sometimes mixed fish and flesh, making a savoury dish, of which the Europeans had no objections to partake; the vegetables were yams or potatoes; either the European or the sweet, called the Spanish onions, raw or preserved in vinegar, made of toddy drawn from the cocoa nut tree; cabbage sprouts dried in the sun, and so

---

[76] Jean Andrews, p.87; For a historical study of chili pepper in China, see Brian R. Dott, *The Chile Pepper in China: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020); Yu Cao 曹雨, *Zhongguo Shila Shi* 中国食辣史 [The History of Eating Spicy Food in China] (Beijing: Beijing Lianhe Chuban Gongsi, 2019).

[77] 'Forrest, Thomas (c. 1729–c. 1802), Navigator', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9891>.

[78] Thomas Forrest, 'A Proposal for a better mode of victualling the navy in warm climates, applicable also to East India Ships, and containing many hints for curing provisions in Europe, by captain Forrest of the navy', *The Bee, Or Literary Weekly Intelligencer, 1792, Vol. 7: Consisting of Original Pieces and Selections From Performances of Merit, Foreign and Domestic; A Work Calculated to Disseminate Useful Knowledge Among All Ranges of People at a Small Expence* Vol 7, ed. by James Anderson (Edinburgh, 1792), p. 226. The term 'lascar' was used by British and Portuguese sailors to refer to South Indian men who were attached to artillery pieces; later the term was used to refer to South Asian sailors. In the nineteenth century, this term was a label for any sailor from the Indian Ocean region. For a discussion of this term, see Aaron Jaffer, *Lascars and Indian Ocean Seafaring, 1780-1860: Shipboard Life, Unrest and Mutiny* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015).

preserved; pumkins, which keep long being hung in the air; mangoes, cut green from the stone and dried in the sun, (plumbs and apples would correspond;) a little tamarind, and that great antiscorbutic, salted limes, lemons or oranges; of which (the lime particularly) the lascars carry always a tock to sea; a few ounces of cayan pepper, (capsicum would correspond;) and last of all, an emulsion, made by pouring hot water over a ripe cocoa nut rasped down; this emulsion, though grateful to the taste, is bad for the stomach raw, but when boiled, a little is exceeding well flavoured, and antiscorbutic; the rasped cocoa nut, well squeezed, is generally thrown to the fowls. A stew made in the above manner, varying the ingredients, was served twice a-day, and was exceeding good, never too salt; for I apprehend, the roots and vegetables, in digesting, farther extracted the salt from the meat, and the whole expence for the Europeans, was much less than when I bought European provisions, and they were better pleased. The stew was served with a ladle, and ate with rice, calling it curry.[79]

Given the European sailors' diet, which consisted mainly of salted beef, port wine, rice and Bengal biscuit, the lascar sailors, who consumed curry with rice, had many advantages. In particular, their diet was antiscorbutic, which was important for the sailors' health and survival during long-distance voyages when the provisions of fresh vegetables and fruits were limited. And thus it was economical because sailors' health was critical for the ship captains' commercial interests. Thomas Forrest also mentions that he learned how Portuguese merchants in Calcutta preserved fish: he used salt, sugar, tamarind and 'cayan' when preserving meat.[80] Cayenne pepper had versatile functions and could both season and preserve food. Forrest's article was published to promote victualling and preserving meat, which was inspired by Indian and Portuguese practices. It was one of the endeavours that implemented the British colonial and imperial enterprise during the eighteenth century.

According to Forrest, South Indian sailors and cooks would bring cayenne pepper and other food ingredients for their daily consumption on board the ships. Their diet was adopted by European sailors and promoted by some English EIC captains. During the nineteenth century, as trade between Indian and Chinese ports grew, more and more South Asian merchants and sailors arrived at Macao and Canton. For instance, Parsi merchants became a dominant group of Indian traders in China.[81] As mentioned in Chapter 1, in 1839, when

[79] Ibid., pp. 227–228.
[80] Ibid., p. 229.
[81] Guo Deyan 郭德焱, *Qingdai Guangzhou de Basi Shangren* 清代广州的巴斯商人 [Parsee merchants in Canton during the Qing period] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005); Paul Van

Robert Bennet Forbes was confined to a foreign factory and his servants and comprador were removed, his Parsi friend sent him 'an abundance of cooked food it being their custom to retain their own native servants'.[82] The servants who accompanied Parsi merchants constitute another major group who carried cayenne pepper and other ingredients necessary for curries to Canton and Macao on their ships. More importantly, they brought knowledge and skills about how to prepare cayenne pepper and South Asian dishes. They may have taught their Chinese counterparts about preparing cayenne pepper and curries.

Unfortunately, the knowledge and skills that Indian and Chinese servants and cooks exchanged were rarely preserved in written forms to later be archived. It is difficult to know the ways in which cayenne pepper was prepared in foreign factories. However, we can consult contemporary recipe books, for instance one written by Eliza Leslie in 1837, to understand one preparation technique for cayenne pepper:

> To Make Cayenne Pepper.—Take ripe chillies and dry them a whole day before the fire, turning them frequently. When quite dry, trim off the stalks and pound the pods in a mortar till they become a fine powder, mixing in about one sixth of their weight in salt. Or you may grind them in a very fine mill. While pounding the chillies, wear glasses to save your eyes from being incommoded by them. Put the powder into small bottles, and secure the corks closely.[83]

These instructions suggest that, from drying to packaging, making a bottle of cayenne pepper required several procedures and took at least two days to complete. In the foreign factories in Canton and Macao, coolies probably provided the labour of pounding the chilies. These repetitive and laborious tasks were often performed by people from lower socio-economic classes. However, unlike European and American housewives, they may not have had glasses to shield them from the capsaicin released from pounding the peppers.

Similar to chili-powder making, preparing sugar was also a laborious task that performed by coolies in foreign factories. Osmond Tiffany, in explaining how foreigners in Canton drank their tea, writes that if one 'clings to his sweet taste, he precipitates a spoonful

---

Dyke, 'Ambiguous Faces of the Canton Trade: Moors, Greeks, Armenians, Parsees, Jews, and Southeast Asians', in *The Private Side of the Canton Trade, 1700–1840: Beyond the Companies*, ed. by Paul A. Van Dyke and Susan E. Schopp (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2018).

[82] Forbes, *Letters from China,* p. 112.

[83] Eliza Leslie, *Directions for cookery*, p. 182.

of crushed rock candy.' The sugar used in this occasion was not pre-made, but freshly crushed by Chinese labourers working in foreign factories.

> The cooleys are called into exercise to prepare this saccharine infusion. A great stone vessel is filled with the crystalline mass, and two of the laborers stand over it and beat it alternately with heavy wooden instruments, like paviours pounding stones, until the whole quantity is reduced to the white powder used at the tea table.[84]

Chinese labourers, who were employed in foreign factories in Canton and Macao, produced many different types of food ingredients to cater to foreigners' taste. Curry powders and cayenne peppers would have been pounded for the ingredients of different types of Indian dishes. However, these labourers were not given credit when British and American cookery books were written. Their efforts and labour, just as with the labour of enslaved people in American households and of Indian servants in British households in India, were eliminated during the production of culinary knowledge. And they were often depicted with degrading and stereotypical narratives.[85]

Along with the localised knowledge and skills that resulted from exchanges between Indian and Chinese cooks and servants, the curry dishes on European and American tables had included local seafood into the dishes. This process is exemplified in the consumption of oyster curry. According to William Hunter, there was a dish of 'freshest oysters (curried) from Macao' on the table for a Chinese New Year feast.[86] Using fresh oysters from Macao to make curried oysters suggests that signature foodstuffs in Macao was used to cater to foreign traders' taste.[87] In the nineteenth century, oyster curry was one of the most favoured curry dishes among the British colonists in India and domestic British people: 'No East Indian who has visited Madras is ignorant of the attractions of oyster curry, for which the capital of that presidency is famous.'[88] *The Household Encyclopaedia* also claims that 'One of the greatest

---

[84] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, p. 234.
[85] Food historians have been rediscovering enslaved people's voices and labour in American recipe books. See, R. A. Kashanipour, '"You Know I Am No Epicure": Enslaved Voices in Eliza Lucas Pinckney's Receipt Book', *The Recipes Project*, 2021 <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/17859> [accessed 16 April 2023].
[86] Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, pp.11–12.
[87]A sixteenth century Italian merchant, Francesco Carletti, was fond of oysters in Macao and writes that '[t]here are also quantities of oysters, and especially of a variety so large that each one of them weighs more than two pounds.' In Francesco Carletti, *My Voyage*, p. 175.
[88] *The Magazine of Domestic Economy, and Family Review*, Vol 1 (London: W.S. Orr & Co, 1843), p.52.

delicacies among the curry tribe is the oyster curry, a dish more especially celebrated at Madras.'[89] Foreign traders brought this taste for oyster curry to Canton and Macao as well.

While European and American traders ate curries seasoned with spicy cayenne pepper, some writers in Britain questioned the ubiquitous use of cayenne pepper. *The Magazine of Domestic Economy, and Family Review* writes that 'the curry is made so hot with cayenne pepper, that few can eat it without blistering their tongue. This is another mistake. In India there is the mild curry and the hot curry; the former contains no cayenne pepper or chili; the latter is warmed, not with cayenne pepper, but with the green chili, which is always preferable'.[90] It is noticeable that oyster curry recipe that was published in the magazine did not include cayenne pepper. The recipe for oyster curry in *Indian Cookery*, which was published by Richard Terry, the chef de cuisine at the Oriental Club, does not mention cayenne pepper but uses both butter and cream.[91] This suggests that, on the tables of the social elites of London, oyster curry was mild and creamy.

Perhaps eating curry in Canton and Macao brought European and American traders closer to local food culture in Canton and Macao, although in an indirect way. By eating curries, foreign traders got used to eating rice, as it was often served with curry dishes. Rice as a staple food was a novelty for some foreign merchants when they came to China. Recently, historians have explored the history of rice and how it entwined with the early modern world economy and the global networks of industrial capitalism. And the rice market in China has been studied in a transnational framework.[92] The habit of eating curry with rice led to rice becoming a staple food during foreigners' time in China. Kinsman's description of rice on her table reveals just how much they appreciated it: 'rice cooked as you have heard Nathaniel describe (perfectly white, every kernel swollen to its full extent, but unbroken, though perfectly soft)'.[93] Some contemporary recipe books provided detailed instructions for cooking and serving rice with curry, sometimes the instruction for making rice was longer

---

[89] Household encyclopaedia, *The Household Encyclopædia; or, Family Dictionary of Everything Connected with Housekeeping and Domestic Medicine, by an Association of Heads of Families and Men of Science* (London: W.Kent & Co,1858), p.391.
[90] *The Magazine of Domestic Economy*, vol 2, p. 53
[91] Richard Terry, *Indian Cookery* (London: F.K. Gurney, 1861), p. 25–26. In the preface, Richard Terry states that he gathered these recipes not only from his own knowledge of cookery but from native cooks. However, he does not mention their names.
[92] *Rice: Global Networks and New Histories,* ed. by Francesca Bray, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[93] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 17.

than cooking curry itself.[94] It suggests that the quality of cooked rice and its serving manner were an essential part of curry dishes. Foreigners were satisfied with rice cooked by their Chinese cooks.

At social events and dinner parties, the social and cultural boundary between Chinese and foreigners could be blurred. Through years of interaction, some foreign traders had developed friendships with Chinese merchants. As Lisa Hellman argues, hosting dinners and paying visits formed a basis for traders from different backgrounds to establish and evaluate trustworthiness.[95] Lo, the Chinese friend of William Hunter, showed his familiarity with food in foreign factories. He could have developed a taste for curry through years of interactions with foreign traders. On the other hand, having a taste for curry was not a defining feature of foreign traders given that this taste was shaped through the interactions between foreigners and their Chinese cooks. When William Hunter and his colleagues tried to make fun of their Chinese guests, they had to rely on their Chinese cook Suy-Pee. They themselves neither knew how to cook curry nor knew how to maintain a delicate balance of spice so that it could be over spiced for their Chinese guest but remain tolerable to Hunter and his colleagues. Perhaps Suy-Pee and his colleagues also modified the oyster curry recipe by using oysters produced in Macao.

During years of service in foreign factories, Chinese cooks and servants familiarized themselves with foreign dishes and learned to cook dishes of different origins by using ingredients from Canton, other regions of China, South and Southeast Asia, Europe, and America. They also needed to familiarise themselves with the language of these ingredients to communicate with their employers. For example, in a Canton English vocabulary, *Hongmao fanhua maoyi xuzhi* 红毛番话贸易须知, 'chili' is listed as 辣椒 至烈 (lit: chili extremely spicy, pinyin: lajiao zhilie).[96] This is noteworthy because of the pronunciation of *zhilie* 至烈, which means 'very strong' in Chinese. *Zhilie* 至烈 connotes the English pronunciation and the meaning of this English word at the same time. When Chinese cooks and servants learned the meaning and pronunciation of chili from this book, they were reminded of the specific characteristic of chili: strong spiciness. This tactic was helpful to servants and cooks because they could quickly memorise food-related words and their uses in dishes. Understanding food for other countries and being able to excel in cooking that food so

[94] Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery*, 5th edition (1755), p. 101.
[95] Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home*, p.226.
[96] *Hongmao Fanhua Maoyi Xuzhi* 红毛番话贸易须知, p.12.

to catered to their employers' taste was not an easy task. They must have experimented with different ingredients and regularly communicated with their employers about how the food tasted.

Cooks and servants who were equipped with culinary knowledge of various dishes were popular in the foreign communities. According to William Hunter, it was a custom at the table to call the cook and compliment them. On these occasions, Chinese cooks had opportunities to converse with their foreign employers and their guests, which means that it was necessary for them to be reasonably well versed in Canton English. Hunter calls Suy-pee 'chef', which indicates that Hunter thought his cooking skills excellent. Suy-pee first worked for William F. Megee (1765–1820), an American supercargo from Providence. When Megee died in 1820, Willcocks hired Suy-pee immediately. After Willcocks left Canton in 1827, Suy-pee was hired by Russell & Co.[97] These Chinese cooks employed in foreign factories were important figures in providing curry dishes and nurturing foreign traders and their Chinese guests' taste for curries, and transmitting knowledge of curry.

Conclusion

As China trade grew, foreign communities in Canton and Macao expanded, and their eating habits were introduced to their living quarters in China. Cuisines like curries were developed in India and later transmitted to the British colonies and trading ports through British imperial expansion. As an important, international trading port, Canton became a place where foreign foodstuffs and cuisines were introduced and localised. Because curries were commonly consumed by foreigners in factories during both daily and social occasions, curries were gradually adapted to local food culture in Canton. This process was influenced by local food culture and local people, especially Chinese cooks and servants employed in foreign households and factories. While Chinese people learned about and accepted curries, Chinese knowledge of the main ingredient of curry—turmeric—was transmitted to Europeans. In Canton and other important trading ports, food knowledge was in a constant process of exchange, modification, and transmission. By looking at the consumption of curries in Canton, we see how foreigners marked their differences with the Chinese and manifest their taste in China.

[97] Hunter, *Bits of old China*, p. 268.

Curry dishes in China tell a story of inclusion, exclusion, and adaptation. Colonial dishes travelled with people but acquired different stories in different places. Curry and its ingredients linked China, India, Britain, and America. Curry is an ambiguous dish, yet we can trace its taste and ingredients to different locations. Curry connected people from different cultures as well as different types of people who played different roles in global trade and British colonialism and imperialism. While wealthy Canton merchants consumed gelatinous soups with sea products imported from the Indian ocean, European and American merchants consumed spicy curry dishes seasoned with turmeric and cayenne pepper. The flows of the global food trade and the people involved in this trade enabled the preservation of different food cultures in China.

Chapter 5:
Foreign traders' Dinner Tables in Canton Trade

Introduction

By the early nineteenth century, foreigners living in factories in Canton and Macao led comfortable lives, and even luxurious to some. Their compradors purchased a great variety of fresh meat, fish, and vegetables; their cooks prepared dishes of different styles; and these dishes were served by an array of servants. When they had tea parties, their cowmen supplied them fresh milk to accompany their tea. It seems that they could enjoy their European and American styles of eating and drinking at their dining tables and do so in a way that excluded the influence of local food culture. Cantonese food had gained a national reputation in Qing dynasty for its abundance and great diversity of foodstuffs from both land and sea. The wealth of the merchant families, the competition of cooks and a rivalry in creating new dishes by the leisure class, all contributed to the leading position of Cantonese cuisine in Qing dynasty.[1] In particular, in late Qing period, Cantonese food culture was known for its preference of seafood and a blander taste.[2] Foreign traders benefited from the diversity and abundance of Cantonese food culture that, they were always supplied with a great varieties of seafood, fowls, vegetables and fruits from the local market.

It is peculiar that, while foreigners accepted Chinese porcelain, silk, and furniture, they did not incorporate Cantonese or Chinese cuisine into their everyday lives. British and other European traders did not bring Chinese cuisine to the metropole and their colonies like they did with Indian cuisine. The spread of Chinese food to Western countries mainly resulted from the Chinese migration since the mid nineteenth century.[3] Although foreign traders were generally confined to foreign quarters, they had some opportunities to try local food. In fact, foreigners were invited by Hong merchants to dine in their homes, so

---

[1] Frederic J. Simmons, *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry* (London: CRC Press, 2008), P.55. For a discussion on food regionalization in China, see Michelle T. King, "What is 'Chinese' food? Historicizing the concept of culinary regionalism", *Global Food History*, 2 (2020), pp.89-109.

[2] Ke Xu 徐珂, *Qing bailei chao* 清稗类钞 [Petty Matters of the Qing], vol 47 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1917), p.9, 14.

[3] J. A. G. Roberts, *China to Chinatown: Chinese Food in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 135.

Americans and Europeans in Canton and Macao had first-hand experiences of trying Chinese food in Hong merchants' houses.

Like other representative objects, such as Chinese porcelain, of Chinese material culture, European perceptions about the Chinese dinner table changed between the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. In their article, 'Material Culture and the Other: European Encounters with Chinese Porcelain, ca. 1650–1800', historians Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall reveal that, at the end of the eighteenth century, 'the European fascination with both china and China had given way to impatience, irritation, and disdain.'[4] Similarly, as European travellers' accounts of China accumulated, their admiration and curiosity towards Chinese dinners transformed into caricature. However, compared to the more concrete and portable materials, such as porcelain, lacquerware, and furniture, scholars have not given sufficient attention to European experiences and perceptions of Chinese dinners.

Historian May-bo Ching is one of the first historians to explore the dinner table as a site of social and cultural exchange between Chinese and foreign merchants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially on chopsticks and cutlery. Ching investigates the food and serving manners at dinners in which Hong merchants hosted their foreign guests. She discusses the impact of the material cultural exchange on Cantonese food during these dinners. She also points out that Chinese cooks and servants were important for blending Cantonese and European cuisines and dining etiquette.[5] Building on Ching's research, this chapter gives a detailed analysis on how Western perceptions and attitudes about 'chopsticks dinner' developed and changed.

Ross G. Forman examines varied and uneven descriptions of Chinese food from mid-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century sources. He argues that descriptions of Chinese dinners 'formed a crucial part of the way in which the British public conceptualized China as foreign and inaccessible, while also offering cultural explanations of manners and customs aimed at making the inscrutable scrutable through common bonds of etiquette, eating, and after-dinner entertainment.'[6] Rather than focusing on food and dishes, historian Kyoungjin Bae studies the round tables that were used during the dinners. She points out that two types of European round tables were introduced to China through Canton trade during

---

[4] Gerritsen and McDowall, 'Material Culture and the Other'.
[5] May-bo Ching, 'Chopsticks or Cutlery?'.
[6] Ross G Forman, 'Eating out East: Representing Chinese Food in Victorian Travel Literature and Journalism', in *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s* , ed. by Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), p.65.

the Qing dynasty. She situates the introduction and circulation of these European tables in the Chinese dining material culture of the period and argues that 'the two types of tables were imbricated with a new popular interest in utility and new voices for social equality.'[7] Jonathan Farris studies architecture as a frame for Chinese-Western relationships. He explores the residence of Hong merchants as a site for cross-cultural social events such as banquets. He argues that by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, these sites became items to be checked off rather than experienced.[8]

Current studies of the dinner table in Canton mainly focus on the period between the mid-eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Building on these studies, this chapter looks at English traders' descriptions of tables from the turning point of the seventeenth century, and traces changes of their narratives since then. To borrow Mary Louise Pratt's theory of 'contact zone', this research regards the dinner table as a social space where 'disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other''.[9] The context of dinner tables in Canton and Macao was bit different from the colonial context that Mary Louise Pratt's research is based on, as foreign traders and Hong merchants were not 'the colonisers' and 'the colonised'. However, the idea of 'contact zone' provides a useful tool to understand the 'co-presence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices' between foreign traders and Hong merchants on dinner tables.[10] Rather than taking a binary approach, such as Chinese or British/European, this research looks at different ethnic and cultural elements, such as food ingredients, cutleries, and etiquette, that come together at the site of the dinner parties. My analysis of the records shows that people from many other ethnic and national groups were at these dinner parties. Canton was a global trading port and an arena in which different people and cultures gathered and mingled. It was a place of novelties and fashions as well as exploitation and appropriation. In this chapter, rather than think through the issue as one focused on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or through the lens of a binary relationship, I propose that we understand the dining table as the site of constant negotiations

[7]Kyoungjin Bae, 'Around the Globe: The Material Culture of Cantonese Round Tables in High-Qing China', in *EurAsian Matters: China, Europe, and the Transcultural Object, 1600-1800*, ed. by Anna Grasskamp and Monica Juneja (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 37–55 (p.39).
[8] Johnathan Andrew Farris, *Enclave to Urbanity: Canton, Foreigners, and Architecture from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016) , pp.145-146.
[9] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.7.
[10] Ibid., p.8.

between different communities in Canton and that we understand this process as ongoing, at least, from the turn of the seventeenth century to the mid of nineteenth century.

This chapter traces the development of banquets among foreign traders and Hong merchants and officers in Canton and Macao from the late seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. It concerns the ways in which patterns of these cross-cultural events were established and modified. In particular, this chapter traces the establishment of a dining culture between foreigners and Hong merchants. While foreigners experienced Chinese food culture during a chopstick dinner at Hong merchant's house, they recorded cultural and racial differences they saw and tasted on the table. The foreign traders introduced their 'home dishes' to create a sense of familiarity and preserve their national and cultural identities. However, these boundaries were porous because their meals were impacted by Cantonese food culture. Foreigners' taste was also in a state of change, and changes in the content and style of the dinners reflect the power dynamics between different groups in the Canton trade.

The primary sources used in this article include the English EIC records of the China Factory. This record contains descriptions of early commercial interactions between English EIC employees and Chinese officials. It provides information about the Sino-Anglo interactions at their dinner tables and provides details about the dishes and table manners in the early years of Sino-Anglo interactions. This chapter also uses evidence from European and American accounts from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. These accounts were written by European and American travellers, merchants, and missionaries and provide first-hand descriptions about their dinners in China. In particular, this chapter analyses the language they used to describe dinners in Hong merchants' houses and in foreign factories. On the basis of the changes to their descriptions of Chinese dinners, this chapter discusses the development of Western perceptions of Chinese dinner culture. Furthermore, by examining travel accounts, this chapter analyses European and American travellers, traders, and missionaries' descriptions of their dining experiences in foreign factories. These accounts provide information about the changing customs of the dining cultures of foreign factories and the impact of the foreigners' different food cultures.

Early English Encounters with Chinese Dinners

One of the earliest records of a dinner party in Canton was on 6 November 1699, when the Macclesfield, an English Company ship, arrived in China. On that day, Hunshunquin, a

Chinese merchant who traded with the English supercargo Robert Douglas, informed the latter that two Hoppos were coming to see English goods and intended to dine with the English men. Given their limited experience in directly dealing with Chinese officials, English supercargoes had to follow Hunshunquin's suggestions to 'bespeak some tables of victuals from the cookshop'.[11] From this record, we see that English merchants were reliant on a Chinese merchants for both trade and their interactions with Chinese officials. Hunshunquin was favoured by these English merchants not only because the third supercargo, Mr. Biggs, had done business with him before but also because he could speak Portuguese and could communicate directly with the foreign traders.[12] In this case, Hunshunquin acted as a middleman in arranging a dinner for the Hoppos and English supercargoes.

This dinner was recorded in detail in the EIC diary. More than seventy people were invited to the dinner because the servants and soldiers of the two Hoppos were invited as well. The food for each person cost the English five candareens (*fen* 分).They ordered eight tables in total, one for each Hoppo, one for themselves and their assistants, and five for the Hoppo's officers. It is notable that the English traders did not sit together with the Chinese officials. This table arrangement indicates the social distance between the two sides.

> The Chinese Hoppo's table was placed at the upper end of the room, upon the left hand side and the 2[n]d Hoppo's on the right hand side. (The other being the highest place according to the Chinese and Tartar fashion.) Our table was placed in the same room, fronting the Hoppos, with our faces towards them; the table for the secretarys was in the next [room] adjoyning to that where we satt; and the tables for the other officers where below. Every table was served with 5 or 6 dishes, dressed in whole joynts, Tartar fashion (according to the Europe manner) but brought in only one dish at a time; and afterwards several services of Chinese victualls, brought in after the same manner, but not remained till the whole number was compleat, which was 16 in all, sett in a peculiar forme and manners, and brought in at a considerable distance of time, drinking tea, wine, or cordiale waters, between each service, according to the 'custome'. The dinner being over, the Hoppos retired till the tables were 'cleaned' for they use no table clothes. The desserts, consisting of sixteen sorts of fruits, sweatmeats, and pickles, being

[11] IOR/G/12/5, fol. 683. Nov 6. 1699. English Company Canton, China Materials from 1694 to 1701 (compiled 1821).
[12] Ibid, fols. 653–654.

> placed on the tables, the Hoppos returned, the Chief Hoppo being an old man, drank sparingly but the second Hoppo took his cups freely, and urged us to do the same. The eight tables were each served with the same sort of victuals and alike in quantity and quality, 'according to the Chinese custome at feasting'.[13]

For the most part, the dinner party was arranged according to Chinse customs. Although English supercargoes were supposed to host the dinner party, they had limited authority in deciding its style and content. As newcomers in the China trade, they neither had established a stable business connection with Chinese merchants and officials nor were they familiar with the social and commercial environment in Canton. The description does not state the exact location of this dinner party. It is possible that the dinner party was held in the English traders' own house in Canton since the two Hoppos examined a chest and obtained some rarities from them following the dinner.[14] This house was rented on 10 October 1699. Before they rented this house, the English supercargoes had lived in Hunshunquin's house.[15] The rented house, thereby, was the first English factory in Canton. Although they had hired Chinese servants and coolies, they were not capable of providing a dinner party for seventy Chinese people. Nonetheless, because of the dynamic commercial food market in the port city, they could obtain large quantities of cooked food of good quality from a so-called 'cookshop' to feed seventy Chinese guests simultaneously. The convenience of cookshops in Canton was also appreciated by other European travellers during the period. Some even considered the service provided by these cookshops as superior to those in Europe. For example, Domingo Navarrete, a seventeenth-century Spanish missionary who travelled to China in the 1650s, writes that 'there are many considerable Eating-houses, where if any Man will have a Dinner for half a Ducat, for one, two, three, or more, in an hour's time they will send it home in good order, cleanly, and on the finest earthen Ware. The Inns of Italy, or other Parts, do no way outdoe them.'[16]

Before the English EIC employees arrived in China and had first-hand experiences of dinners with Chinese officials, European perceptions about and imaginations of Chinese dinners and banquet culture were primarily based on missionary reports and observations of China and Chinese culture. These writings helped to construct European curiosity about and

[13] Ibid, fols. 683–684.
[14] Ibid, fol. 684.
[15] Ibid, fol. 675.
[16] *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1616-1686: Volume I*, ed. by J. S. Cummins (Farnham: Hakluyt Society, 2010) , p. 155.

admiration for Chinese food culture. The Portuguese Jesuit Alvaro Semedo (1585–1658), who first travelled to China in 1610, remained in China until 1637 and returned to Europe in 1644, after the Ming dynasty was defeated by the Qing. Alvaro Semedo died in Canton in 1658. After decades of living in China and extensive experiences travelling in different areas, Semedo accumulated a fair amount of knowledge about banquets in China. In *The History of that Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*, he devotes a whole chapter, 'Of their Banquets', to discuss banquets in China. In particular, he compares banquets in the north and south:

> Those of the North are very much different from them of the South: for they of the South are very exact, even to the least matters in these courtesies of Banquets, and they do esteem themselves more friendly and courteous, than the others; as in truth they are. […] In their *Banquets* they are more carefull to have varietie, and to have it well drest, than for the quantities of the meat; and feast more for conversation and to treate one another, than to eat and drink; although they do both the one and the other pretty well. They drink at the beginning of the feast, and so continue it with wine and meat, without bread or rice, till the guests say, they have had wine enough. Then presently the rice is brought, and the glasses are set by, and there is no more drinking.[17]

Alvaro Semedo notes the differences of people's manners in banquets in the north and the south. He emphasizes a difference that is created by a generic geographical division rather than by ethnicity. The comparison shows his appreciation of the banquet culture in the south. In particular, he appreciates their friendly and courteous manners. He also notes that the southern people paid more attention to the variety of their food rather than to its quantity. Southern people valued conversations in banquets over food and drink. Semedo also admires the manners of the southern people's drinking and eating and how guests were treated during the banquet. His writings suggest that the southern people's banquets provided a civilized model in which courtesies and manners were essential.

Although Semedo valued the manners, he also appreciated the material culture of a Chinese banquet, especially that of the elites:

---

[17] Alvaro Semedo, *The History of That Great and Renowned Monarchy of China: Wherein All the Particular Provinces Are Accurately Described: As Also the Dispositions, Manners, Learning, Lawes, Militia, Government, and Religion of the People. Together with the Traffick and Commodities of That Countrey* (London: E. Tyler, 1655), pp. 65–66.

> The people of the better qualities make *Banquets* of more states; for they have houses of recreation, either in the City, or very neere it for this purpose; adorned with many costly pictures and other curiosities. And if the person invited to be an Officer, or man of great qualities, although the use of *Tapestrie hanging* in China is very rare, yet for the entertainment of these, they hang their houses with them very curiously, even the seeling and all….They set neither salt, pepper, nor vinegar, but yet mustered, and other sauces, of which they have many and very good. They serve in at the same *Banque*t flesh and fish; boyld and roast; fry'd meat; and meat in pottage and white-broth; and several other viands drest after their manner; and very good. They use broths much; but they never serve up any without flesh or fish in it, or a kinde of Paste, like that which the Italians call *Vermicelli.*[18]

Here Semedo introduces the recreation houses where rich people held banquets. Semedo was interested in the 'costly pictures' that adorned the walls of these houses. He was also impressed with the tapestries that hung in houses of the elites. Semedo also attends to the differences among condiments, sauces, dressing manners, and content of the dishes through the framework of European cooking to evaluate Chinese cooking. However, despite the drastic differences in condiments and dressing manners, Semedo shows a great appreciation for Chinese cuisine. He did not take the absence of some spices that were used in European cuisine as a basis for judging Chinese cuisine as peculiar or inferior. Instead, Semedo accepts those differences and praises them as 'very good'.

Alvaro Semedo spent most of his time in southern China. In his writings about banquets in China, he did not discern the differences as those between different ethnic groups. When English EIC employees dined with Chinese officials in 1699, they paid close attention to Han Chinese and Tartar food fashions, table manners, and customs. Robert Douglas notes that they were first served with whole joints of meat in the Tartar fashion and several Chinese victuals afterwards. It is possible that he acquired knowledge about the differences between Chinese and Tartar food culture during his visit to Macao. On 5 September 1699, a Manchu merchant named Shemea treated him and his companions to food in the Tartar fashion: 'The meat being roasted and boiled in whole joints, whereas the Chinese cut these meat in small bits.'[19] Such experiences helped English supercargoes

[18] Ibid. pp. 66–67.
[19]IOR/G/12/5, p. 654. 5 September 1699. English Company Macao, China Materials.

become familiar with different food cultures among the different ethnic groups in China so that they could discern different food types when they dined with Chinese officials in Canton. We can assume that they were first served five or six dishes of whole joint meat and then sixteen dishes of meat that were cut into small pieces. This serving sequence reflects the superior position of the Hoppo, which was often taken by Manchu elites.[20] Moreover, observing this sequence provided the English supercargoes with an opportunity for understanding the power relations between different ethnic groups in China. Before they arrived, they had known that China was conquered by the Manchu. This fact was further confirmed in the details of their daily interactions with Chinese officials and merchants, especially at the dinner table.

Robert Douglas not only discerned the different features of Chinese and Tartar food culture but also compared them with European food culture. In particular, he notices the spatial arrangement of tables for guests of different ranks, serving manners, table decorations, structure of the dinner, and forms and numbers of dishes. For him, these elements constituted the customs of Chinese feasting. His presentation of Chinese dining culture reveals his process of his understanding and interpretating 'the other', which was mediated by his own food culture. He is more interested in the form and manner of Chinese dining culture than its material and sensual elements. His description does not provide much detail about the ingredients of the dishes or about their flavour. Another feature of his description, a feature which differs from descriptions from later periods, is the lack of description about the utensils they used during the dinner. Presumably, the Chinese guests used chopsticks during their dinner. However, his description does not mention chopsticks or any other peculiarities of Chinese customs. Similarly, Johan Nieuhoff does not mention the use of chopsticks when he describes a feast that Dutch ambassadors were invited to by Chinese viceroys in Canton in 1655.[21] In contrast, using chopsticks or cutlery when dining with their Chinese counterparts is a major concern in many mid-eighteenth century travellers' accounts.

[20] In 1699, the Hoppo (custom officer) is Suo Er Bi 索尔弼, see *Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs* 粤海关志, p. 129.
[21] Joan Nieuhof, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Province to the Grand Tartar Cham Emperour of China. Deliv. by Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer: Wherein the Cities, Towns, Villages, Ports, Rivers, Etc. in Their Passages from Canton to Peking…*(London: John Macock, 1669), pp. 40–41.

'Chopstick Dinner'

As Q. Edward Wang's research on the history of chopsticks shows, Peter Mundy (1600–1667) may be the English person who coined 'chopsticks' as the name for the Chinese eating utensil.[22] Peter Mundy visited Macao and the surrounding islands in 1637. He describes a boatman who 'thrusts, Crammes and stuffes it [his mouth] full of the said Rice with the Chopsticks in exceeding hasty Manner until it will hold No more'.[23] As Wang argues, Peter Mundy was impressed by the deftness of this boatman but ultimately disapproved of the Chinese utensil.

William Hickey, who travelled to Canton in 1769 as an English EIC cadet, offers one of the first recorded mentions of 'chopsticks'. He describes a banquet given by a Hong merchant, Pankeequa:

> These fêtes were given on the 1st and 2nd October, the first of them being a dinner, dressed and served à la mode Anglaise [sic], the Chinamen on that occasion using, and awkwardly enough, knives and forks, and in every respect conforming to the European fashion…
>
> The second day, on the contrary everything was Chinese, all the European guests eating, or endeavouring to eat, with chopsticks, no knives or forks being at table.[24]

On this occasion, the use of knives and forks became a marker of English/European fashion while using chopsticks marked the Chinese fashion. Hickey states that 'everything was Chinese', but he does not mention whether other elements on the table also presented 'Chineseness'. Chopsticks stood out as the single marker of 'Chineseness'. From his description, we may assume that Hickey and the other European guests were not familiar with using chopsticks. However, they enjoyed the dishes and entertainment, and Hickey was particularly satisfied with the play that was put on.

When George Macartney, the first British embassy, visited China in 1793, he was eager to present British superiority in science, manufacturing, and technology to impress the

---

[22] Q. Edward Wang, *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 147.
[23] *The Travels of Peter Mundy, in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667* Vol. 3, Part 1, ed. by Richard Carnac Temple (London: Ashgate, 2010), p. 195.
[24] Alfred Spencer (ed), *Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett, Limited, 1921), pp.223-224.

Chinese emperor. The failure of the Macartney Embassy was a turning point in British perceptions of China and Chinese culture. Macartney was an eager observer of Chinese culture and, in his diary, compared Chinese table manners with English table manners. His writing expresses his sense of superiority in English manners and his disapproval of the use of chopsticks. In his eyes, using towels, tablecloths, knives, and forks was a clean way of eating, so he thought that using chopsticks was not very 'cleanly':

> At their meals they use no towels, napkins, table-cloths, flat plates, glasses, knives nor forks, but help themselves with their fingers, or with their chopsticks, which are made of wood or ivory, about six inches long, round and smooth, and not very cleanly.[25]

Macartney was confident about his judgement on the inferiority of Chinese utensils. He believed that the superiority of English utensils, such as knives, forks, and spoons, would be accepted and become popular in countries like China. His attitude that English culture was superior is evident in his comparison of the utensils of the two cultures. In his journal, he writes:

> Our knives and forks, spoons, and a thousand little trifles of personal conveniency were singularly acceptable to everybody, and will probably become soon of considerable demand.[26]

Although Macartney's attitude towards Chinese chopsticks was not universal among members of the foreign communities in China during the late eighteenth century, it shows that 'chopsticks' and 'knives & forks' increasingly came to represent Chinese and English dinners, respectively. The prominence of this representation contributed to Westerners' labelling Chinese dinners as 'chopstick dinners'. As Q. Edward Wang argues, although Europeans' overall interest in Asia as a potential market increased in the eighteenth century, their interest in Asian civilization and culture, especially in chopsticks, declined.[27]

---

[25] George Macartney, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793–1794*, ed. by J. L. Cranmer-Byng (St. Clair Shores: Scholarly Press, 1972).
[26] Ibid., pp. 225–226.
[27] Wang, *Chopsticks*, p. 148. Wang's research traces how Chinese customs of using chopsticks were perceived by Westerners since the sixteenth century. His work mentions 'chopsticks dinner' but does not give a detailed analysis of chopsticks-using in this specific context. He simply introduces 'chopsticks dinners' as dinners 'in the Chinese style', rather than digging up nuances of the so called 'Chinese style' and the performativity of chopsticks-using during these banquets.

In the early nineteenth century, the foreign traders in Canton commonly called dinners in the Chinese style 'chopstick dinners'. For example, a Bostonian merchant, Bryant Parrot Tilden (1781-1859) records that, in 1818, a Hong merchant Puankhequa II 潘有度 (1755-1820)'did me a signal honor by giving a genuine Chinese chop stick dinner'. Tilden visited Canton five times between 1815 and 1837. The dinner occurred during his third journey to Canton. When they were seated, as Tilden records, 'there were on the table only elegant cut English glasses, gilt and silver cups and goblets, wine in decanters, and ivory and ebony chop sticks instead of knives & forks, also queer shaped Chinese silver spoons.'[28] The use of English glasses and decanters of wine shows that this dinner was not entirely in the Chinese style, despite Tilden's claim otherwise. The foreign influences on the Hong merchant's dinner manifested in many ways. During the dinner, they conversed in English and drank wine from Madeira and Europe.

William Hunter, who visited Canton between the 1820s and 1840s, also records how Hong merchants occasionally invited him to 'chopstick' dinners and 'signif[ied] that no foreign element would be found in it'.[29] When Hunter uses the term 'foreign element', he means 'European element' or 'Western element'. Hunter records that he had bird's nest soup, Beche-de-Mar (sea cucumber) and shark's fin at a chopstick dinner.[30] These luxury food products were mainly imported from Southeast Asia. As Roderich Ptak argues, in Ming dynasty, Chinese constituted the leading group in Southeast Asian maritime trade.[31] As the demand for these luxury marine products increased, a maritime trade between Southeast Asia and China expanded. Birds' nests were often collected from remote caves on islands in Southeast Asia; sea cucumber was not only imported from the seas of Southeast Asia but also from Australia; shark fins were also imported from Southeast Asia. Both Chinese and European ships carried these marine products to Canton.[32] However, for European and American travellers, these imported food products were not regarded as 'foreign' when they were served on Chinese tables. These dishes became a symbol of the lavishness of Chinese

---

[28] Lawrence Waters Jenkins, 'An Old Mandarin Home', *EIHC*, 71 (1935), p. 115.
[29] Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae'*, p. 40.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Roderich Ptak, *China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trade (c. 1000 to 1600)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
[32]Joanna Waley-Cohen, 'Food and China's World of Goods in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Elif Akçetin and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Eric Tagliacozzo, 'A necklace of fins: marine goods trading in maritime southeast Asia, 1780–1860', *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 1 (2004), pp. 23–48.

food in westerners' eyes. In fact, the preference for these dishes reflected changes in Chinese high cuisine. As historian Guanmian Xu argues, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a more delicate flavour *xian* (鮮), with the help of a clear broth, redefined Chinese high cuisine. Preserved marine products, such as shark's fins and sea cucumbers, were praised as perfect carriers of the *xian* flavour because their gelatinous or fibrous texture could absorb the clear broth. The emergence of *xian* coincided with the decline of strong condiments, such as pepper.[33] These historical changes in Chinese high cuisine were not common knowledge among foreign traders. They often took it for granted that dishes like bird's nest soup and sharks' fins were an essential feature of Chinese cuisine.

In 1838, American merchant Robert Bennet Forbes was invited to the Hong merchant Mingqua's 'Chinese chop stick dinner preserving the Chinese Etiquette'.[34] His definition of a 'chopstick dinner' was different from Hunter's. Hunter emphasized that no foreign element would be found in a Chopstick dinner, while Forbes stressed that the dinner would preserve Chinese etiquette. Forbes's description implies that the authenticity of a Chinese dinner was revealed through etiquette. Among 'Chinese etiquettes', the use of chopsticks was one of the most prominent practices, especially in light of what Europeans and Americans called the dinners.

How did chopsticks come to define the authenticity of Chinese dinners during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? What does this tell us about the identities of the diners and their relationships? As the earlier discussion of curry dishes suggests, authenticity was an ambiguous notion in cookery books. The presence of foreign ingredients might not compromise the authenticity of a dish. Similarly, in this case, the presence of some foreign ingredients did not compromise the authenticity of a Chinese dinner. It seems that etiquette of utensils could be more important than the origins of dishes. Lisa Hellman explains that, for the European middle class, the utensils in a dinner party were significant because, in using forks and knives correctly, one showed their origins and class.[35] However, this cannot fully explain the foreigners' interest in Chinese chopsticks among all the other elements on a dinner table. I argue that it was the performativity and materiality of chopsticks that became the central element in the cross-cultural interactions that marked their significance in Chinese

[33] Guanmian Xu, Pepper to Sea Cucumbers, p.22.
[34] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p. 79.
[35] Lisa Hellman*, Navigating the Foreign Quarters: Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730–1830* (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Stockholm University, 2015), p.199.

dinner parties. The feature of performativity is not stressed in Wang's work on chopsticks. Theatre and performance scholars have explored theatrical and performative elements of European banquets to reveal their theatrical nature.[36] These performative and theatrical elements appeared in Chinese dinner parties not only through the plays and music that were performed during dinners but also through eating and drinking practices.[37] These elements were significant in negotiating cultural differences on each side.

Bryant Parrot Tilden recounts a chopstick dinner given by Puankhequa II; he describes in detail his experience with and feelings about using chopsticks.

> Paunkeiqua now began discussing the merits and kinds of each mess—naming of what they consisted, etc., and then politely requested us to help ourselves—and here began the fun for our host, as we exposed our awkwardness, having only the chop sticks and the spout like crescent shaped spoons to *do it* with. Having tried a while under the teaching of our much amused host, we soon had to give it up, except Captain Haskell excepted, who had practiced on board his Hoppoo, or guard host, at Whampoa.
>
> Thus, in attempting to bait out soup with the confounded spoons, some of us filled the sleeves of our white jackets, which fortunately had been substituted for our dress cloth coats in which we came; when finally the old gentleman seeing our distress, ordered plates & english knives, forks and spoons.
>
> The treacherous-like chop sticks are round at one end, and square at the other, and we untutored barbarians ignorantly made use of both. Only imagine a china man sticking the handle of a fork into his mouth instead of the prongs and we may readily conceive the amusement afforded our host and table servants. To us a pair of sugar tongs would have been far more convenient than these little sticks, held at the square ends between the thumb & fingers, like a pen, in only *one* hand. Monkies with knitting needles would not have looked more ludicrous than some of us did; and yet, we every day see quite small children easily pick up even a kernel of rice with them.[38]

This scene contains some dramatic elements. He makes two analogies in describing how they ate with chopsticks: one involves imagining a Chinese person placing the handle of a fork in

[36] Athena Stourna, 'Banquet Performance Now and Then: Commensal Experiments and Eating as Mise en Scène', *Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts*, 1 (2018), pp. 10-31.
[37] For studies on music performed during chopstick dinners, see Thomas Irvine, pp.53-86.
[38] Jenkins, pp.115-116.

their mouth; the other compares himself and his peers to monkeys holding knitting needles. Consequently, their clumsiness and awkwardness in using chopsticks are exaggerated in the description so that he emphasises their status as outsiders. After all, he calls himself and his peers 'untutored barbarians'. This self-effacing description resolves their awkwardness in front of their Chinese hosts. Foreigners knew that they were called 'barbarians' or 'devils' by some Chinese people. Many foreign travellers in their writings about China expressed unhappiness with such insulting language and related how Chinese authorities unfairly treated them.[39] However, in this context, Tilden maintained a friendly relationship with Puankhequa II. He did not mind calling himself 'barbarian' to entertain his Chinese host and his readers.

Their clumsy and awkward performance fulfilled expectations from their host. When a Chinese host invited them to use chopsticks, he expected to see his foreign guests' awkwardness. As the host, he had power to provide them with chopsticks and enjoy their awkwardness. More importantly, he had power to end the performance by providing knives and forks to his guests. Providing different types of utensils gave power to the host to mediate the behaviour of his guests. However, this power does not mean that Chinese hosts could manipulate foreign guests at a Chinese dinner. Both sides negotiated this sort of power and control. Foreigners were aware they were a spectacle at the table, and they were pleased to become the spectacle because being the spectacle was a part of the Chinese experience that they were eager to accommodate. Their performance in using Chinese utensils brought excitement to both parties. Although sharing food from another culture may foster mutual understanding and trustworthiness, it may also reinforce and reproduce stereotypes about the other group at the same time.

The awkwardness of using chopsticks was highlighted when the contemporary English periodical, *The Chinese Repository*, discussed chopsticks.

> The use of the chop-sticks, *kwae tsze*, 'nimble lads', as they are termed by the Chinese, is very ancient. The dexterity with which they are handled, and the celerity with which the food is made to disappear, is a proof of the rightfulness of the name; but to a foreigner they are almost unmanageable, and the many vain attempts made to convey a piece of slippery birdsnest to the mouth with two smooth sticks, afford much amusement to the Chinese host. They are made of

[39] Samuel Wells Williams, 'Jargon Spoken at Canton', *Chinese Repository* 4 (1836), pp. 428–35.

> ivory, wood, or bamboo, and often form an appendage to the person, hanging from the girdle in a case, accompanied by a small knife. [40]

The author also states that '[t]he cooking and mode of eating among the Chinese are peculiar'.[41] The use of chopsticks was one feature of this so-called peculiar Chinese mode of eating. It is noticeable that, in addition to the pronunciation, meaning, and materiality of chopsticks, the article includes important information about foreigners' dining experiences at Hong merchants' homes. The Chinese host's amusement was part of the experience that foreigners in the 1830s associated with the nature and meaning of chopsticks.

James Wathen, an English artist who travelled to India and China in 1811 provides another example of an awkward chopstick-user. He recounts a dinner to which he was invited by the Hong merchant Pon-qua-qua:

> After a great many trials, and consequent failures, (to the great amusement of my English friends, and indeed I could see that the Mandarins present could scarcely refrain from laughing at my awkwardness,) I gave up the chop-sticks, and took to the knife and fork, with which I contrived to make an excellent dinner on some fine roast beef, and ham and fowls.[42]

Wathen's clumsiness was an amusement not only to his Chinese host but also to his English friends. The awkward English user of chopsticks became an entertainment for both experienced foreign and Chinese diners. It provided an occasion for laughter during the dinners and could bring amity between guests and hosts.

Using or trying to use chopsticks were essential parts of the chopstick-dinner experience. It was one of the most interactive ways to experience a Chinese dinner and Chinese material culture. Along with some signature dishes, such as shark's fin soup and bird's nest soup, it was the highlight of the dinner. The peculiar dishes and chopsticks were not incorporated into their daily meals at foreign factories. Although foreigners had different opinions about certain dishes, such as shark's fin, bird's nest soup, and fried frogs, they were eager to try and form their own judgments. Chinese dinners became a site for foreigners to fulfil their curiosity about Chinese culture.

---

[40] *Chinese Repository*, vol 3, 1835, p. 465–466,
[41] Ibid., p. 465.
[42] James Wathen, *Journal of a voyage in 1811 and 1812, to Madras and China; returning by the Cape of Good hope and St. Helena; in the H. C. S. The Hope, capt. James Pendergrass. By James Wathen. Illustrated with twenty-four coloured prints, from drawings by the author*. (London: J. Nichols, Son and Bentley, 1814), pp. 200–201.

Sometimes there were mismatches and misunderstandings between Chinese hosts and foreign visitors about the expectations for a chopstick dinner. James Holman's visit to a Chinese dinner is one of the most telling examples of the misunderstanding between the two sides. James Holman describes his experience of being invited to a Chinese merchant's house: 'Mr. M'Vicar invited me to accompany him to the house of a Chinese, with whom a party of his English friends were about to dine. We repaired to the Chinaman's abode at half-past five, in the expectation of a repast in the Chinese style, but were much disappointed on finding it almost wholly composed of English dishes.'[43]

Holman was a British adventurer who travelled to China in 1830. He stayed in China for two months and he had many opportunities to experience Chinese culture during his stay. In this case, Holman and his fellow Englishmen were expecting to have a Chinese dinner regardless of whether they would like it or not. The Hong merchant expected that the Englishmen would prefer an English style dinner. It is possible that the Hong merchant had treated foreign merchants several times before, and some of those merchants might have complained about unfamiliar Chinese dishes and having to use chopsticks. In order to entertain his foreign guests, he hired cooks and servants who were familiar with English dinners so that he could treat his foreign friends with English dishes. It is possible that those cooks and servants had worked in foreign factories before and could cook English dishes and provide table service to the foreigners. A Hong merchant's dinner table could be modified according to their foreign guests' tastes and needs. Moreover, they had to devote a substantial amount of money to buy cutlery, food ingredients, and imported wines to furnish the table. The mobility of those servants and cooks made it possible for foreigners to have familiar food in Hong merchants' homes. Nonetheless, mutual understanding was not always achieved. Sometimes those foreign merchants wanted to have familiar food; other times they preferred the adventure of a chopstick dinner. Hong merchants had to be prepared to provide either style to cater to the different needs of their foreign visitors.

On another occasion, Holman was invited by Tinqua, a Hong merchant, to dine 'à la mode Chinois'. Holman was impressed by the luxurious materials that were used for the chopsticks and other utensils:

> we were conducted to a circular table, each of us provided with a pair of ivory chopsticks mounted with silver, a silver ladle with the handle much curved, a

[43] James Holman, *Travels in China, New Zealand, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, Cape Horn, Etc., Etc*, By James Holman (London, Routledge, 1840), p. 137.

> small cup of soy, a saucer or stand for the bowls out of which we were to eat, and an elegant silver cup richly gilt, with two handles, mounted on a stand of similar material, and resembling in form an inverted saucer.[44]

Holman's detailed description of the silver and ivory used in the Chinese utensils is common in foreigners' descriptions of Chinese dining culture. Foreigners appreciated the wealth that Hong merchants displayed as well as their taste in material culture. Holman notes that foreigners were provided with knives, forks, and bread in addition to chopsticks. These additions suggest that this dinner 'à la mode Chinois' had been adapted to the foreigners' eating habits. Hong merchants prepared knives, forks, and bread so that the foreigners would not be disappointed or starved if they were not able to use chopsticks. This was a way to show their hospitality to their foreign merchant friends.

However, James Holman did not extend his admiration of the chopsticks' luxurious material to the Chinese way of using chopsticks. He notes that the 'Chinese do not clean or change their chop-sticks during the dinner, but each thrusts his own into every dish and helps himself throughout the repast. They also consider it excessively polite to help a foreigner with their chop-sticks, after having eaten with them themselves from various dishes.'[45] This example shows that the cultural difference of 'politeness' was revealed and stressed in the custom of using chopsticks in the eyes of foreign eaters. The Chinese way of politeness could be socially and culturally unacceptable for an Englishman.

The scene of eating in a Hong merchant' house was drastically different from the situation of the earliest English merchants who had dinner with Chinese officials. During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, English merchants could not expect that their eating habits would be acknowledged when they were invited to dine with Chinese officials. However, as the China trade expanded, foreign communities established their dining styles in Canton and Macao. The differences in their ways of dining were gradually acknowledged and learned by Hong merchants. In order to show their hospitality and foster business bonds with foreign merchants, Hong merchants endeavoured to provide entertainment for foreign traders during chopstick dinners, although this gesture of hospitality was not often mutual and equal. There are fewer examples of foreigners who treated Hong merchants to English dinners at their factories.

---

[44] Ibid., p. 139.
[45] Ibid., p. 141.

Chopstick dinners were a site of producing and reproducing stereotypes and racial distinctions between Chinese and foreign traders. When foreigners were invited to a chopstick dinner, they searched for certain dishes and etiquette that marked their differences with their Chinese hosts. Stereotypical and negative descriptions of Chinese eating habits, such as eating dogs, cats, and rats also frequently appeared in European travel writings. When describing the scene of a street market in Canton, Charles Nobles writes that 'I was very much surprised at first, to see dogs, cats, rats, frogs, &c. in their market-places for sale. But I soon found that they made no scruple of eating any sort of meat, and have as good an appetite for that which died in a ditch, as that which was killed by a butcher.'[46] Clark Abel, a British surgeon who accompanied Lord Amherst's embassy in 1816–17 made similar remarks: 'The Chinese are less fastidious than perhaps any other people in the choice of their food, feeding on those animals which amongst other nations are considered unclean, and upon the parts of animals which are usually rejected with disgust. They proved that the means of human sustenance are much more numerous and widely diffused than is commonly supposed….Dogs, cats and rats, are exposed for sale in the markets, and eaten by those who can afford to purchase other food.'[47] This stereotype about Chinese people had been popular among European communities since the early nineteenth century and had been used as evidence of the inferiority of the Chinese and their lack of civilization. In particular, dog-eating formed a prominent feature of travellers' descriptions of Chinese food culture and, as Ross Forman discusses, stereotypically depicts the Chinese people as 'universal omnivores'.[48]

There were some different narratives. William Hunter writes that '[i]t is not true, as has been supposed, that on these convivial occasions the guests were served with roast or boiled "puppy" as a *bonne bouche*,[49] and I am sure that the author of the following lines gave way to his imagination after a "chopstick" dinner with "green pea" wine when he wrote them, or to fortify a current joke.'[50] On this occasion, Hunter appeals to his personal experience to contradict the 'current joke' about dog-eating practices among the Chinese people.

However, most contemporary foreign travellers did not have the intention to learn about or better understand Chinese food culture. Few foreigners had substantial knowledge of

---

[46] Noble, *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 and 1748,* p. 211.
[47] Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China*, pp. 230–231.
[48] Ross G Forman, '"Nothing corresponding to it in China": Asian Food at London's International Health Exhibition, 1884.' *Food, Culture & Society*, 2 (2021), pp. 202-226.
[49] An elegant treatment.
[50] Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae',* p. 40.

the Chinese diet to appreciate the cultural differences of taste. Nor did many foreigners have an opportunity to visit the homes of Chinese people and dine there. They were content with the few extraordinary experiences that came with visiting Hong merchants' houses and attempting to use chopsticks. During these interactions with foreigners, Hong merchants also adapted to the foreigners' needs and presented dinners in different styles to please their business partners. The stereotypical image of chopsticks was established after years of mutual interactions at the table. However, Hong merchants had less agency in this process given that their position in the China trade was diminishing, and they were suffering from the chronic phenomenon of insolvency since 1760s.[51]

The signing of the Treaty of Nanjing and other unequal treaties after the debacle of the Opium War (1839-1842) brought many changes to dinner tables that foreigners and Hong merchants shared.[52] One change was that women were allowed to participate in the banquets. Before the 1840s, narratives about Chinese dinners were dominated by men. Foreign women's participation and observation of these dinners provide a new perspective of Sino-Western interactions. Their perspectives were often neglected when historians wrote about Sino-American relations. American women's accounts about their experiences of having dinner with Chinese officials shows that American women living in Macao were active observers and participants in early Sino-American political activities. Their presence in Macao helped shape Sino-American interactions in the mid-nineteenth century. In particular, their records about their participation in dinners with Chinese officials demonstrate how gender and race played out at dinner tables during the early stages of Sino-American relations. Mary Parry Sword records a dinner in which Caleb Cushing (1800–1879) hosted Keying (Qiying 耆英; 1787–1858). The dinner occurred in Macao on 24 June 1844, nine days before signing of the Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce (also known as The Treaty of Wanghia 望厦条约) between the United States of America and the Chinese Empire.[53]

---

[51] Kuo-tung Anthony Ch'en, *The insolvency of the Chinese Hong merchants, 1760-1843* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1990).

[52] Treaty of Nanjing was signed in Nanjing on 29 August 1842, which marked the end of the Opium War. It was the first unequal treaty that China signed with foreign imperialist powers. Under this treaty, China ceded Hong Kong to Britain. British merchants were allowed to trade in five treaty ports rather than in Canton alone.

[53]Stephen Davies, *East Sails West: The Voyage of the Keying, 1846–1855* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013) ; Yeewan Koon, 'The Face of Diplomacy in Nineteenth-Century China: Qiying's Portrait Gifts' in *Narratives of free trade: the commercial cultures of early US-China relations*, ed. by In Kendall Johnson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), pp. 131-148.

> Keying was desirous to see all the American ladies[54] when he was in Macao, so one day Mr. Cushing invited us all to his house to tiffin at two o'clock, to meet Keying….We enjoyed the affair as a matter of curiosity, though there was nothing particular to admire in the Chinese statemen. There were five of them; Keying the great man, Wang the provincial judge at Canton, and three great Mandarins….I had the honour of sitting on one side of Keying and Mrs. Parker[55] on the other. The Chinese did not use their chop-sticks to any thing but the rice; they managed the forks and spoons very well. The greatest compliment and politeness that a Chinese can shew you at table is to feed you. One of them stuck his fork into a piece of potato and ate it; finding it good he stuck it into another piece and handed it to me. Keying constantly gave Mrs. Parker and I piece of whatever was put upon his plate. I did not relish these gifts much, but of course I received them as graciously as possible. They all drank wine with the ladies. One of the Mandarins showed his good taste by being very much smitten with Mrs. Delano, who is a perfect American beauty. He scarcely took his eyes off from her while at the table, and drank wine with her five times. Keying is rather ugly; he was very grave and quiet, talked little, and they all took leave as soon as we left the table. Wang has a fine, amiable countenance. There was not much display of Chinese dress on the occasion, on account of its being hot weather. The winter dresses are generally very splendid, but the summer dress is very plain, of a thin material, no embroidery.[56]

Mary Parry Sword's experience of eating with Keying and other high Qing officials was extraordinary but not pleasant to her. She was aware that she and her fellow Americans were invited to eat with Keying so that he could fulfil his desire for meeting with American women. The American Plenipotentiary Caleb Cushing arranged that the women would attend the dinner to present amity and hospitality from the American side. This dinner was meaningful for American politicians as part of the preparation

---

[54] Seven American women attended this dinner: Mary Parry Sword, Rebecca Kinsman, Mary Ann Southwick, Mrs. King, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Tiers and Mrs. Parker; Mrs. Ritchie did not attend.

[55] Harriet Webster (1818–1896) was wife of the American medical missionary Peter Parker (1804–1888). Peter Parker worked as the interpreter for Caleb Cushing during his mission in China. During their stay in China, Harriet Webster became close friends with both Rebecca Kinsman and Mary Parry Sword.

[56] Sword Family Papers, To Mrs. M. Parry, Macao 13 July 1844.

process for negotiating and signing the first treaty between America and China. Caleb Cushing understood the Chinese officials' curiosity about the American women, and he endeavoured to satisfy Keying's curiosities as a show of his hospitality and friendliness.

Although Mary Parry Sword was placed in a position in which five 'great Mandarins' gazed at her, she was not a passive agent at the table. In fact, as she was gazed at by Keying and the other Qing officials, her American female gaze was directed towards the Chinese men. Attending the dinner, Mary writes, was 'a matter of curiosity'. She and her female social circle were eager to learn about the Qing officials, particularly what they looked like, how they behaved, and how they dressed. Throughout the dinner she constantly judged Keying and other Chinese officials according to her own values. It was an extraordinary experience for the American women to meet with high-ranking Qing officials and participate in Sino-American political events. This experience provided interesting material that she would share with her female relatives and friends in America.

During this dinner, Mary Parry Sword paid attention to the cutlery that Keying and the other Chinese officials used. She noticed that they used chopsticks to eat rice and used forks and spoons to eat other dishes. This suggests that Keying and other Chinese officials were trying to show that they were acquainted with Western culture and trying to be polite toward the American women. Despite their attempts, Sword was not comfortable with their behaviour, especially when Keying fed her food from his own plate. This aversion to the Chinese practice is not uncommon in foreigners' accounts. James Holman also found it unclean. However, on this occasion, the behaviour disregarded the gender boundary between the Chinese men and American women. Although Sword did not appreciate Keying's gesture, her own sense of politeness prevented her from rejecting the unwanted gift. In addition to this behaviour, Sword also was uneasy with the Mandarin who stared at Mrs. Delano the whole time and drank wine with her five times. That she recounts a precise number suggests that Sword had given a substantial amount of attention to the men's interactions with her and the other American women. The Chinese officials' behaviour was under constant scrutiny by Sword.

Mary Parry Sword did not admire the Chinese high officials. Rather, her comments about them are bit condescending. She writes that 'there was nothing particular to admire in the Chinese statemen', and comments the Keying was 'ugly'. During this dinner, the mysterious faces of the high-ranking Chinese officials were

revealed. Furthermore, and to Sword's disappointment, the encounter did not provide her an opportunity to examine luxurious Chinese winter clothing that had splendid embroidery. This encounter with high-ranking mandarin officials provided Sword an opportunity to examine the manners of the Chinese men and Chinese material culture closely. Her experiences that night, of China and Chinese civilisation, further contributed to the disillusionment of Western perceptions about Chinese civilisation.

Rebecca Kinsman was also among the seven American women who attended the dinner, and she provides a slightly different view from Sword's. Kinsman was kind in commenting on Keying's appearance: 'Keying is rather good-looking for a Chinese, but has rather a heavy, sleepy expression, though there is a keenness about his small eyes betokening shrewdness, for which, as well as extraordinary diplomatic skill, he is said to be remarkable.'[57] Rather than simply describing him as 'ugly' as Sword does, Kinsman offers a more detailed description about Keying. Her description is mediated by her knowledge of Keying's diplomatic skills.

Kinsman paid attention to cutlery as well. She writes that the Chinese officials 'behaved very decently, being furnished with chop-sticks as well as knives and forks, which latter they used (some of them particularly) awkwardly enough'.[58] While Sword describes the Chinese officials as managing their forks and spoons very well, Rebecca Kinsman thought they did so awkwardly. So, Sword and Kinsman were using different standards to judge the officials' dexterity in using the Western-style utensils. Accordingly, they likely had different expectations about what they would see at the dinner table.

Rebecca Kinsman also noticed the inappropriate social behaviour of the official who 'scarcely took his eyes from' Mrs. Delano during dinner.[59] Moreover, Kinsman found this man's behaviour even more unacceptable when he left the table: 'On being told that Keying was ready to depart, he hastily took his little helmet-like straw hat from his attendant, and left us without *even a glance.* So much for their *respect* for the *sex.*'[60] For Kinsman, it was not just his excessive attention toward Delano but also his neglect of the other American women that she found socially unacceptable. She was annoyed by the men's unrespectful behaviour throughout the dinner: 'In fact, they all seemed to me very much like overgrown children.'[61]

---

[57] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 132.
[58] Ibid., p.133.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., p. 134.
[61] Ibid.

Her comment suggests that Kinsman perceived the high-ranking Chinese officials as uncultured and immature. In Kinsman's eyes, not being able to show politeness towards the opposite sex at dinner indicated the inferiority of Chinese men and their masculinity.

Rebecca Kinsman's condescending comments about Keying and the other Chinese officials are based on her direct experience of having dinner with them as well as on her observations on the on-going political events between China and America. When Keying arrived at Macao on 17 June to sign the treaty, Kinsman notes that 'This was considered by many of the Chinese a very undue condescension (and indeed Keying is said to be quite unpopular on account of his friendliness to foreigners) as they said Mr. Cushing should at least have met him at Canton—however to Macao he came, accompanied by several Mandarins of high rank.'[62] Kinsman notes that Keying was unpopular with his own countrymen because of his friendliness to foreigners and that his visit to Macao was degrading to the Chinese empire and its people. Although Keying held a high position in Chinese empire, Keying represented a country that was losing power through Sino-American negotiations. Sword's and Kinsman's comments about Keying and other Manchu officials reveal the women's beliefs about their cultural, social, and political superiority over the Chinese and Chinese empire. It is noteworthy that the American men who were also present at the dinner are absent in both narratives. These American men had escaped both the Chinese male gaze and the American female gaze, yet they were the group at the table who held real power. By presenting American women, the American men provided entertainment for their Chinese guests and doing so helped American men secure political and commercial advantages in the treaty negotiations in the following days.

Kinsman's and Sword's descriptions of the dinner are in stark contrast with the experiences of the English EIC supercargoes in 1699. As foreigners' economic, political and military power grew in China, their power also extended to the dinner table. They acquired more power to decide what to eat and how to eat with Chinese merchants and officials. Chinese merchants and officials tended to please foreigners by inviting them to 'chopstick dinners' and European-styled dinners. Since the eighteenth century, racial differences had been important elements of the dinner parties. Through years of interactions, these differences were negotiated between Chinese merchants and foreigners. Since the mid-eighteenth century, a pattern for 'chopstick' dinners had been established to accommodate the needs on each side. The performativity of using chopsticks helped to negotiate cultural

[62] Ibid., p. 131.

differences and power relations. However, as hostilities against Chinese people and culture accumulated, the dinner parties became a site for producing and reproducing stereotypes and racial distinctions between the foreign traders and their Chinese counterparts.

Dinner Tables in Foreign Factories

While stereotypes of Chinese chopstick dinners were established and confirmed by the foreigners, English, European, and later American styles of dining were established and confirmed in the foreign factories of Canton and Macao. Attending a chopstick dinner was extraordinary experience for many foreign traders in Canton and Macao, and it contrasted with the everyday dinners they ate in their own factories. European and American dinners in foreign factories established a certain degree of familiarity for foreigners while they adapted to a foreign land. This sense of familiarity was neither static nor determined by a single group of foreigners. The form and elements of the dinner tables in foreign factories were negotiated by different groups who lived in the factories. Moreover, they were impacted by changes in the dining habits of people who lived outside the factories. The influx of foreign merchants and the servants who came with them brought new foods and culinary knowledge and experiences to China.

The dinner tables in foreign factories represented a sense of cosmopolitanism in which different types of cuisine came together on the table. However, the dinner tables did not escape displays of power and interventions. Certain groups of people and their culture were often more prominent than other groups. May-bo Ching notes that the English EIC company's dining style had a strong influence in other foreign factories and that the company established rules and customs for dining in the foreign communities.[63] Their lavish living style was admired by some American residents in Canton. There were customs and rules that regulated when, where, and how one could eat as well as with whom. Foreign factories in Canton and Macao developed a system of eating and drinking which defined their employees' identities. Dinner tables regulated foreign traders' relationships within each factory and connected different trading communities of merchants from different countries. The uniqueness of these customs and rules was most conspicuous when newcomers first arrived in China. Their descriptions reveal the complexity of this coded system which

[63] Mei-bo Ching, 'Chopsticks or Cutlery?'.

required newcomers to learn and comprehend the system so that they could fully became part of it. That is to say, dinner tables in foreign factories not only differentiated foreign traders from their Chinese counterparts but also differentiated foreigners inside and outside of the trading community.

Compared with the peculiarities of Chinese dining culture, the dinner table in foreign factories provided a relatively familiar place, but the table was not 'home', especially to American traders who were late arrivals to the trading communities in 1780s. The lifestyle in Canton was heavily impacted by British EIC employees. American merchants encountered a double sense of alienation in their daily lives in Canton and Macao—from the Chinese environment and from the traders' communities. There was a hierarchy among the trading companies, and newcomers had to learn the rules and customs of its dining practices to join social circles. The dinner table in a foreign factory provides a window for understanding how foreign traders navigated their daily lives in Canton and Macao.

When Robert Bennet Forbes arrived in Canton on 11 October 1838, he was eager to join a company and establish himself in the trade community. This was not the first time Forbes travelled to China. In 1817, when he was thirteen years old, he first participated in China trade with his uncle Thomas Perkins. He started as a sailor and later worked in Lintin Station on Lintin Island, which consisted of the Perkin & Sons ship *Lintin*, which provided provisions and equipment to other ships, and a storage ship for opium. He returned to Boston in 1832 with the fortune he earned during his time in China, but he was hit by the financial crisis of 1837.[64] He offers a meticulous record of his life in China and his account gives us an opportunity for understanding dinner culture in the foreign factories from the perspective of an American merchant. When he arrived in Canton in 1838, he had to relearn the trading community, which had become a new environment after his six years away. On the fourth day of his arrival, he writes to his wife that 'I find Canton itself but little changed but there are as many new people as customs & I am like a cat in a strange garret.'[65] In order to familiarise himself with the people and customs in Canton, he felt obliged to accept invitations to dine with other merchants, although doing so might negatively impact his health. On 18 October, he writes that,

> eat & drank a good deal & staid to Whist until midnight-sick all day as usual after a debauch- & am under the influence of medicine to day-serves me right-however

[64] Forbes, *Letters from China,* pp.12–13.
[65] Ibid., p. 63.

> I have not been regularly well since I came on the coast-rather bilious-I shall not accept invitations to dine after I have seen all the people-but one must make sacrifices when coming to a new society[66]

Eating at the same table is an essential way of making connections and building trust, and it had become a strong social custom for foreigners to follow, even at the cost of one's health. It was important for newcomers to accept dinners with long-standing residents, which is why there was a custom that supercargoes ate together in the English EIC in Canton.[67] The American firms in Canton shared this custom.

In Macao, Forbes found pleasure in dining with women from his country. Although it may have been a pleasure for him and other men, it was not the same for foreign women in Macao. Robert Forbes observes that 'any Lady established…[in Macao] that she should entertain all transient visitors of her country women….Then you must see all Americans & even English Gentlemen who visit Macao, they go there as a matter of course must visit all the ladies & if you dont see them they talk, it is a place of gossip'[68] This comment explains why Forbes did not want his wife to go with him to China. He noticed the social burdens that women living in Macao had to carry. Nonetheless, he enjoyed the American women's company and cooking during his stay in Macao.

Forbes' letters suggest that the social norms at the dinner table were more difficult for foreign women to follow than they were for men. This is confirmed by Mary Parry Sword, who complained about going to dinner parties and returning visits from other foreigners. More importantly, she was unhappy with the expense of hosting lavish dinner parties. She told her mother that 'Nothing but balls and parties this winter; sometimes 3 or 4 in one week. John says these parties must cost at east 500 dollars, and some even as much as $1000.'[69] Rebecca Kinsman complained about how busy she was in Macao because she had to entertain visitors. Although they had an array of servants and coolies to perform household tasks, the foreign women living in Macao still had to make certain dishes that were valued by their fellow Americans. For example, Forbes mentions that, when he was in Macao in December 1838, he had 'a Yankee *minced* pie made by the fine hands of Miss Pierce.'[70] When F. Bush received minced pies from Rebecca Kinsman, he said that these pies 'reminded him of

---

[66] Ibid., p. 64.
[67] William Hickey mentions that all the supercargoes in English EIC dined together daily in the great hall at two o'clock. William Hickey, p. 203.
[68] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p. 78.
[69] Sword Family Papers, To Mrs. M. Parry, Macao, March 20, 1842.
[70] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p. 77.

home'.[71] The hand-made food had special meanings for male American merchants. Women's hands were symbolic of their national values and provided a sense of home by making festive food for their countrymen.

In addition to the Christmas season, the Fourth of July was another important occasion for the American communities in China. Americans gathered together for dinner parties and celebrated with specific dishes. In Macao, it was extraordinary to see American merchants and their families dine on a turtle to celebrate the Fourth of July. Mary Parry Sword writes that, on the Fourth of July in 1843, she suggested that they eat turtle on shore rather than on board their boat, 'so we had the Turtle brought on shore, and the cook and steward from the ship to cook it American fashion, and had the dinner party at our house.'[72] Her reflection suggests the significance of the turtle dish for American communities and that cooking it in the 'American fashion' reflected the dish's cultural value in this specific context.

The arrival of American women in Macao in the early nineteenth century gradually changed the social scene and the dinner table. In addition to being dissatisfied with the dairy products in Macao, they were dissatisfied with the vegetables provided by Chinese gardeners. Therefore, they cultivated vegetables in their own gardens and shared home-grown vegetables with each other. Furthermore, they were not satisfied with the cooking of their Chinese cooks and tried to replicate dishes from home. Rebecca Kinsman writes that

> We had for dinner today some green peas, sent me by Mrs. Delano. They were raised in their garden. The Chinese gardeners cultivate peas, but they are not at all good. We are getting more & more in the way of having home dishes—Aster-House corn-bread takes its place on the breakfast table every morning and hasty pudding is a favorite dish—Bread puddings & custards John makes, just as we used to have them at home, and far better than any of the *concoctions* of the Chinese cooks.[73]

Kinsman describes how she and the other American residents of Macao Americanised their diets. By adding familiar dishes to their dining table, they created a sense of home. Kinsman also mentions that her breakfast usually concluded with waffles made with Indian meal.[74] Indian meal was corn flour and iconic of American cuisine in the nineteenth century.

---

[71] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 327.
[72] Sword Family Papers, Letter to Mrs. A.C. Sword, Macao 18 July 1843.
[73] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC, 87*(1951), p. 123.
[74] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 270. This 'Indian' means West Indian.

According to Eliza Leslie, a successful female cookery book writer from Philadelphia, the term 'meal' means a coarse preparation of flour.[75] In order to prepare these home dishes with Indian meal, American women might ask their female relatives to send Indian meal from America. With help from their servants and female relatives from home, the American women in Macao diversified their dining tables with dishes of different origins that catered to people from different areas.

Nevertheless, while American merchants endeavoured to adapt to local dinning culture, they enjoyed a lavish life which many of them had not enjoyed before. For instance, their lavish dinners, a major feature of their lifestyle in Canton and Macao, were supported by a large group of servants and coolies. John Latimer (1793–1855), an American supercargo writes that, 'the old fashioned manners have been preserved in Canton and on arrival here, most men are admitted to better society than they have been accustomed to at home.'[76] Latimer suggests that in foreign factories some American merchants eat and drank better than they had at home.

One feature of their lavish lifestyles was the attentive table service that foreigners enjoyed during their dinner parties. The presence of a large number of male Chinese servants made newcomers feel comfortable in a new environment. One of the first comments Nathaniel Kinsman made about his life in Canton is: 'The living so far as eating goes is most excellent; the cookery fine, provisions good and abundant, and certainly the best servants I have ever seen in any part of the world. I have a boy constantly in attendance, and when I dine out he stations himself at the back of my chair, this is the custom here, when a man dines abroad his servant here always accompanies him.'[77] Presumably Kinsman had never enjoyed such elite service before. His wife, Rebecca, made similar, positives comment about her servant: 'Each person has a boy to wait on him at table, take charge of his room, etc.—and they are excellent servants, know their duties perfectly, and seldom require telling except something out of the usual routine.'[78] However, when Rebecca Kinsman had become used to their service, she was no longer content with them. When she visited Manila and was

---

[75] Eliza Leslie, *The Indian Meal Book: Comprising The Best American Receipts for the Various Preparations of that Excellent Article* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1846), p. vi.
[76] Letter: John Latimer to Mary Latimer, 28 March, 1831, Latimer Papers, Library of Congress, reference from: Philadelphian's Social and Business Relationships at Canton, 1784–1846, p. 55 reference from Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).
[77] 1949, p.113.
[78] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p.18.

attended to by Indian servants, she writes that '[t]he Indian boys are quiet, attentive servants, far more so than the China boys, springing with alacrity'.[79] For privileged white merchants, it seems that there was no end to their demands for more obedient racial groups.

In addition to the attentive and meticulous service provided by their servants, there were many other hidden labours involved in the dinner services in foreign households. One of the most laborious tasks was operating the 'punka', which was powered by coolies during the summer.[80] Osmond Tiffany writes that:

> each one making himself as comfortable as the thermometer at 95° will permit him to be, indulges in a luxurious whiff, fanned all the while by the swinging punka. This is an immense fan suspended by the two ends to the ceiling, and kept in motion by means of a rope alternately pulled and slackened by a machine in shape of a cooley, who stands outside of the dining room, and who never thinks of stopping until he is told to, should the dinner continue six hours. A cooley is so accustomed to obey, that he seldom has the wit to form and carry out an idea, and should he leave off jerking the rope, he would be sharply reprimanded by the boys, and annihilated by the compradore.[81]

This description vividly introduces how coolies operated punkas for their foreign employers. Their service provided a luxurious life for foreign residents in Canton and Macao. Rebecca Kinsman writes that the '*punkah* is one of the luxuries of a warm climate' and compares the situation of summer in Macao to her home in Salem: 'we are thus rendered cool & comfortable while at meals, the time when in hot weather at home, we often feel the heat most'.[82] Having coolies operate a punka was an extraordinary feature of dinner in the foreign factories of Canton and Macao. It was a novelty for the American merchants who had never visited India. Having Chinese labourers operate a punka did not create a familiar sense of home but did replicate the lavish life of British colonists in India and fulfilled their increasing demand for luxuries and leisure during their time in China. By enjoying a cool wind provided by a punka, those American merchants shared the fruits of British colonial and imperial expansion in Asia. In their eyes, the Chinese labourers were obedient, and they did not have their

---

[79] 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao', *EIHC, 87*(1951), p. 274.
[80] Nitin Varma, *Coolies of Capitalism: Assam Tea and the Making of Coolie Labour* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co, 2018).
[81] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese,* p. 229.
[82] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 275.

own thoughts. Such attitudes justified their exploitation of these labourers without experiencing any guilt. Tiffany literally refers to the coolies as a 'machine'. He took his privilege for granted as he enjoyed a cool breeze while Chinese labourers suffered from repetitive labour in hot weather.

Foreign Traders' Chinese New Year Feasts

Foreign traders endeavoured to recreate familiar eating and drinking practices in foreign factories, and these practices helped them to differentiate themselves from the Chinese people outside of the factories. However, they did not totally exclude themselves from the influence of Chinese food culture. Apart from the extraordinary eating experiences of Chopstick dinners at Hong merchants' houses, they were curious about Chinese New Year feasts and actively participated in celebrating Chinese New Year. It was a custom for some foreigners in Canton to enjoy a Chinese New Year feast in the area known as 'Huadi' (花地).[83]

William Hunter recorded a Chinese New Year feast that he had with about thirty or forty foreigners in Huadi. They brought at least thirty servants and cooks to provide a dinner service for them. It is worth noting that Hunter records the sequence of each dish as well as the origins of some food that was on the table:

> And this is the 'order of the day':—
> Our New Year's feast, as custom, we begin,
> With bird's-nest soup and plovers' eggs within;
> Pomfret and sole, with samlye then succeed,
> With hen's egg sauce, which either one will need;
> From Great Nankin the flavoury mutton see;
> From Ho-Nam's Isle the capon fat, by Suy Pee.
> 'Hav bilum no. 1, first chop,' with oyster sauce;
> Next wildest duck, fly goosoo, nimble teal, a course;
> Once more the freshest oysters (curried) from Macao,
> With ducks of Bombay and cutney from Lucknow.
> Lychee sun-dried, while *crimson* 'mandarin'

[83] 'Huadi' was spelled in different ways by foreigners, such as 'Fa-tee' and 'Fa-te'. More information about Huadi nurseries, see Fa-ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China,* p.29.

Confronts the yellow 'cooly' of a thicker skin;
Then dates, the very latest from Nankin,
Are next discuss'd, and dried Wampee,
And Chyloong's ginger— 'All man chow-chow he'—
Goes round the Cheshire and Hodgson's ale so pale
('Tis Bobby Edwards has them both for sale);
Throughout, 'Sampane' in long-stemm'd glasses flows,
Gordon's Madeira, and smooth Chateau La Rose;
The fragrant Mocha now appears in sight—
'Tis time, or else we'd see *some* brother Fankwaes tight.
Follow Manilas no. 2 and joss stick boat,
Whence o'er our heads thin clouds of incense float.
Such prog! Such tipple! But now, alas, the 'whitewash' shows,
Our New Year's feast, as custom we do CLOSE!'[84]

William Hunter's record provides some key elements of a Chinese New Year feast that was celebrated by foreign communities in Canton. This sumptuous feast table was filled with luxurious foodstuffs and alcohols from different areas of China, India, England, Madeira, and France. The power and wealth of the foreign merchants were ostentatiously presented on the table as they could source the best foods from different areas to fulfil their desires. Their knowledge of the origins of the best food was established as their global trading networks were built. The mobility of the foreign traders made it possible that their acquired tastes from different areas could be incorporated at one table. In this case, Indian food, English ale, and French wine were incorporated into their Chinese New Year celebration.

Hunter specifically mentions the origins and brands of the food, which reveal the traders' specific requirements for each dish and drink. These dishes and drinks reflect their tastes that were acquired in their homelands as well as those formed during their stays in China. Some of the dishes were luxurious dishes that were popular among wealthy Hong merchants. Foreigners might have learned of these dishes and their status in local society from their visits to Hong merchants' chopstick dinners. They knew the origins of these well-appreciated foodstuffs, such as mutton and dates from Nanjing and oysters from Macao.

[84] Hunter, *Bits of Old China*, pp. 11–12.

The reputation of these places was recorded by and circulated among foreign communities. For example, Charles Frederick Noble, an officer of the English EIC, travelled to Canton in the 1740s, and wrote that:

> Nankin is the most celebrated among the Chinese not only as the greatest city, though the court has been long removed thence to Pekin, but likesides as the place where all kinds of commodities are best manufactured. When they would set off any thing to advantage, it is common for them to tell you, that it is a Nankin thing, or of Nankin fashion; from which they conclude, we must esteem it good.[85]

This record suggests that the fame of Nanjing had been developing for centuries. The fame of Nanjing had been described in many English travelogues, which offered positive images of food from Nanjing. Foreign traders included dishes of mutton and dates from this area at their tables, especially for festive occasions. Indeed, dates from Nanjing were valued among foreign communities and even gifted as a form of social currency. After Rebecca Kinsman sent some home-made minced pies to F. Bush, Bush sent two baskets of the 'latest dates' from Nanjing 'with care'. Kinsman commented that the 'dates are very nice and resemble figs more than they do the dates we get at home. Which come I believe from Persia and Arabia.'[86] Some foreigners were eager to try foodstuffs that had long-established fame and were discussed widely in the travelogues. They appreciated local foodstuffs with good quality as source of ingredients, but they would prefer consuming them in their own way.

Another noteworthy feature of Hunter's description of the Chinese New Year feast is that it began with bird's nest soup with plovers' eggs, which means that the foreign dinners acknowledged the prestigious status of bird's nest soup with plovers' eggs within Chinese culture as they perceived in Hong merchants' house. Bird's nest soup was a symbol of luxurious Chinese dinners and a marker of social status. Some foreign merchants enjoyed the taste of this dish. For example, when Robert Bennet Forbes tasted this dish in a chopstick dinner hosted by Mingqua, he found it 'very palatable.'[87] However, many other foreigner traders did not. In 1830, when James Holman was invited to have dinner with the Hong merchant Tinqua, the dinner commenced with bird's nest soup. However, he found it 'very insipid until flavoured with soy, as the necessary condiments of salt and pepper seem to be

[85] Noble, *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 and 1748,* p. 262.
[86] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p. 327.
[87] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p. 82.

wholly neglected in Chinese cookery.'[88] Foreigners' attitudes towards the same Chinese dish could be very different given their values, expectations, and eating experiences.

Although not all of foreigners appreciated the taste and texture of bird's nest soup, they learned its cultural and social value and its importance as a Chinese luxury. When they consumed bird's nest soup, whether they found it palatable or not, its symbolic meaning mattered. As Troy Bickham argues, non-European dishes were not appreciated for their taste but for their authentic association with Chinese culture.[89] Bird's nest soup, as the first course, operated as a digestible artefact of this Chinese New Year feast. Although the only Chinese person who Hunter mentions is Suy-Pee, the Chinese cook employed by his company, the 'authentic' and prestigious Chinese dishes presented on the table made them suitable for a Chinese New Year feast, which was part of their cultural experience in China.

Another intriguing object on the table was the fruit 'wampee'(*huangpi* 黄皮), which is a kind of grape-sized citrus fruit. It was served with other fruits native to Canton, such as lychee and mandarin. They were all popular fruits among foreigners. Wampee has received less scholarly attention and is less known among the general public. Today we may purchase fresh lychee and mandarins in supermarket chains, such as Tesco and Sainsbury's, in the UK, but wampee is not on the shelves of these supermarkets. In fact, although wampee is a native fruit of China, it is not well-known outside of South China. While consumers may buy fresh lychee and mandarins almost everywhere in China, wampee is not widely available in markets outside of where it grows natively. It is intriguing that some fruit, which is not well-known in China or Britain today, was popular among foreign communities in Canton and Macao during the early nineteenth century.

Unlike bird's nest soup, which was occasionally consumed by foreigners, for instance, during a Chinese New Year feast or at a chopstick dinner in Hong Merchant's house, wampee was integrated into their daily consumption. It was consumed in many ways all year round, as fresh fruit, dried fruit, sweetmeat, and fruit jelly accompanying roast fowl. Compared to other representative local fruits such, as lychee and longan, wampee was even more successful because it was incorporated into dishes and just consumed as fruits. Qu Dajun describes wampee as:

> golden bullets, ripen in June [of the lunar year], its juice is sour like grapes. It helps digestion, channel Qi, and alleviate summer heat. It is consumed with

[88] Holman, *Travels in China*, p. 140.
[89] Troy Bickham, 'Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth-Century', *Past & Present*, 1 (2008), p. 100.

> Lychee. When satiated with Lychee, relieve with Whampee. The old saying says: eat Lychee when you are hungry, eat Whampee when you are full.
> 狀如金彈，六月熟，其漿酸甘似葡萄，可消食順氣、除暑熱。與荔支丛進，荔支餍饫，以黃皮解之。諺曰：饑食荔支，飽食黃皮.[90]

Qu suggests that in the Canton area, wampee was often consumed after eating because it helped digestion. This is confirmed in records about chopstick dinners, where fruits were often served last.[91] Some foreign dinners called these fruits 'desserts'.[92] When wampee (whether as dried fruit or fresh fruit) was served with tea after a chopstick dinner, it may have functioned as digestive and refreshment. This arrangement was much appreciated by some foreigners, since after eating sumptuous courses of different meats, they had become overwhelmed. Robert Bennet Forbes was surprised to find out that there were more courses during a chopstick dinner than he expected: 'just as we were congratulating ourselves for the third time that nothing more could come—a bowl of rice to each was brought' followed by a whole roast pig.[93] We can imagine how relieved he was when fresh and dried fruits were finally presented after the greasy roast pig.

Eating local, fresh fruits at the end of a sumptuous dinner was an eating practice that the foreign communities in Macao and Canton also shared. For example, Rebecca Kinsman records a dinner party with American merchants in which

> We had a roasted dindon at one end of the table, and a leg of mutton at the other—with Ham between and some side dishes—I don't recollect what—(I should have mentioned first—Tomato Soup—and then boiled fish—the 'Garupa' very nice), Curried Chickens—Plum pudding of John's making, with cold sauce, custards & stewed pears; radishes, cucumbers & onions with crackers & cheese.—Fruit, consisting of pineapple, Whampees, Plantains, & Water Melon.[94]

Kinsman's list shows that local fruits like wampee had become a regular component of their dinners alongside American, European, and Indian style dishes. Wampee was incorporated into their meals as well as their language. Similar to lychee and longan, the pronunciation of

---

[90] Qu, *Guangdong Xinyu*, vol 25, 广东新语，卷二十五.
[91] James Johnson, *An Account of a Voyage to India, China &c. In His Majesty's Ship Caroline: Performed In the Years 1803-4-5, Interspersed With Descriptive Sketches And Cursory Remarks* (London: R. Phillips, 1806), p. 81.
[92] Wathen, p. 207; Holman, p. 142.
[93] Forbes*, Letters from China,* p. 82.
[94] Northampton, Smith College, Peabody Family Papers, Journal (excerpts): The Essex Institute Historical Collections; published letters from Macao, 1843-46, pp. 141–142.

'wampee' was influenced by the local dialect in Canton. In *A Commercial Vocabulary, Containing Chinese Words and Phrases* published by John Francis Davis in 1824, wampee is listed as 'Wampee, fruit, 黃皮, hwang-pe'.[95] The entry indicates that the pronunciation of this native fruit was important for foreigners' commercial lives in Canton and Macao.

Indeed, learning how to pronounce 'wampee' enabled foreigners to enjoy wampee and order dishes that were accompanied by wampee jelly. Osmond Tiffany recounts a dinner with several captains that consisted of roasted teal:

> As a chosen few sit down, the boys come in bearing on high the delicate roasted teal, smoking hot, and so tender that a sharp knife goes directly through them, followed, as it is drawn out, by the savory juice in abundance. The boy brings a little jar of the wampee jelly, which melts into the meat, and when the captain has eaten a whole bird he feels exceedingly refreshed from the labor of signing dozens of bills of lading, and still further exhilarated when the champaigne streams foaming into his glass.[96]

This description vividly depicts the captains enjoying a delicious roasted teal (which was possibly captured in Pearl River Delta by local hunters) accompanied with wampee jelly from a little jar. According to Tiffany, wampee jelly was a suitable companion for the roast teal as it melt into the meat and enhanced the flavour of the wild bird. It was even more refreshing when the dish was followed by a glass of champagne. It is not very clear if the wampee jelly was prepared according to a local Cantonese recipe or had been adapted to the foreigners' tastes. It is possible that during years of consumption and interaction between foreigners, their compradors, and cooks, the wampee jelly on the table was tailored to foreigners' tastes, especially the amount of sugar in it.

Fruit jellies were popular among foreign communities in Canton and Macao. Rebecca Kinsman mentions that she used guava jelly from Manila to replace butter.[97] American traders and their family brought currant jelly with them when they travelled from America. Robert Bennet Forbes' mother sent him four or five jars of cranberry sauce.[98] Mary Parry Sword asked her mother-in-law to send two boxes of cranberry sauce, which she shared with

---

[95] John Francis Davies, *A Commercial Vocabulary, Containing Chinese Words and Phrases, Peculiar to Canton and Macao, and to the Trade of those Places* (Macao: East India Company's Press, 1824), p. 74.
[96] Tiffany, *The Canton Chinese*, p. 239.
[97] 'Life in Macao in the 1840s', *EIHC*, 86 (1950), p.270.
[98] Forbes, *Letters from China*, p.33.

two American women in Macao.[99] When currant jelly or other fruit jellies and sauces from Europe and America were not available, wampee jelly could be a good substitute as it provided a balanced sweet and sour taste that enhanced the flavour of meat.[100]

Moreover, local wampee jelly would be cheaper and more convenient than imported fruit jellies were; it could be made by the cooks themselves. Foreigners appreciated local fruit trees. They grew iconic, local fruit trees, such as loquat, lychee, and wampee. For example, Mary Parry Sword writes that '[w]e have in our garden a custard-apple tree, a loquot tree, a whampee tree, and two peach-trees.'[101] Sword notes that wampee tasted 'something like gooseberries.'[102] Apart from consuming fruits from her garden, Sword also observed how her Chinese gardeners tended the fruit trees. She found their way of cultivating fruit trees absurd: 'They pull nearly all the fruit green, and let it ripen off the tree, which of course makes a great difference. If you ask them why they do it, they will tell you it is 'custom'. 'Custom', seems to be a sufficient reason for every thing with them, no matter how absurd or unreasonable it may be.'[103] This account suggests that, while foreigners appreciated wampee fruits and cultivated them in their own gardens, some perceived horticultural skills/methods of their Chinese gardeners were absurd and unreasonable.

The popularity of wampee is revealed through its exportation to other countries. According to John Robert Morrison, conserved fruits such as 'whampee, guava, and pear, jelly, citron, kumquat oranges &c., &c., are also sent abroad; the total exportation may be put down at 10, 000 boxes, value about $50,000. A box is estimated at 25 catties.'[104] It is not very clear how much wampee was exported in the early nineteenth century. However, the botanical, horticultural, and commercial value of wampee was esteemed by the British colonists. Wampee was not exempt from the British botanical gardens as it was brought by botanists and merchants to Britain and its colonies.

---

[99] Sword Family Papers, To Mrs. A.C. Sword, Macao, 18 July 1843.
[100] According to my friend Taoyuan Luo, who was born and raised in Beihai, Guangxi province, local roast-duck vendors provide customers with wampee sauce for free. Although plum sauce is becoming more and more popular, some people still prefer the humbler wampee sauce with roast duck. In the summer, street vendors will make wampee ice (黄皮冰沙) and pour it into recycled water bottles. It is a refreshing summer ice-drink and was sold for only 5 Chinese yuan (about 60 pence) per bottle in 2016.
[101] Sword Family Papers, To Mr. Rowland Parry, Macao, 23 November 1843.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] John Robert Morrison, *A Chinese Commercial Guide*, p. 178.

The *Kew Record Book (1793–1809)* records that, in June 1800, several boxes of plants, including 'Wampee Chinensis', were sent from William Roxburgh (1751–1815), the superintendent of the British East India Company's Botanical Garden in Calcutta, to Joseph Bank (1743–1820), who was in charge of Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew.[105] Knowledge of and its reputation was recorded by British botanist and horticulturist John Lindley: 'The Wampee, a fruit highly esteemed in China and the Indian archipelago, is the produce of Cookia punctata. Ch. Whong-Pi. 14, China, before 1794.'[106] Wampee was imported to different British colonies as early as 1794.[107] It has an entry, as Cookia punctata, in Roxburgh's *Hortus Bengalensis or A Catalogue of the Plants Growing in The Honourable East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta* as.[108] According to Roxburgh, the wampee tree in flowered in the hot season (from the beginning of March to the middle of June) and seeded in the rainy season (from the beginning of November to the middle or end of June). We may assume that wampee was first brought from China to Calcutta and successfully grown in the East India Company's Botanical Garden for about six years before being sent to Kew Garden in London. During this process, Roxburgh played an important role in the information exchange between India and Britain.

The botanical experiment of planting fruit trees like wampee is related to the British enterprise of growing tea in India to end the monopoly of the Chinese tea trade in the early nineteenth century. As John Forbes Royle, a superintendent of British EIC Botanic Garden at Seharánpúr says in an 1832 speech:

> The plants of China, which have succeeded in the Seharánpúr Garden, and are now in a flourishing state, are the litchee, loquat, wampee, longan, flat peach, and digitated citron, spiræ corymbose, dianthus chinensis, rosa chinensis, and althæa rosea. The numbers are few, but they are all that have been introduced, and now appear so perfectly naturalized as to excite the wish to make a more extended trial, and to attempt the cultivation of the tea plant, of which the geographical

---

[105] Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Kew Record Book (1793–1809), GIO/1/1.
[106] John Lindley, *An introduction to the natural system of botany* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830), p. 124.
[107] Wampee is also recorded in the *Catalogue of Exotic Plants Cultivated in the Island of Mauritius, At the Royal Botanic Garden Pamplemousses* published in 1822 and in *A Catalogue of Green House Plants, Hardy Trees, Evergreen Shrubs, Flowering Shrubs, Bulbous Rooted, and Herbaceous Plants* published in Philadelphia in 1824. These entries suggest that wampee attracted the interests of botanists beyond India and Britain.
[108] W. Roxburgh, *Hortus Bengalensis or A Catalogue of the Plants Growing in The Honourable East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta* (Serampore, 1814), p.32.

> distribution is extended, and the natural sites sufficiently varied to warrant its being easily cultivated.[109]

Planting fruit trees was part of the imperial project of cultivating tea in India. The success of fruit trees in northern India gave British botanists confidence for experimenting with tea planting. The plantation of wampee in India and other colonial gardens in the British empire were a by-product of the tea planting experiment. Perhaps, this is why wampee does not receive much attention in later periods. The success of tea plantation and expansion of tea trade in India overshadowed another potentially lucrative plants.

Wampee and wampee jelly were transient edibles on the dinner tables of foreign traders. From William Hunter's description of a Chinese New Year feast, we have a glimpse of how much they appreciated wampee. The untold story of wampee in Canton trade reveals that dishes on the foreigners' tables linked them to Chinese food culture, the global food trade, and British imperial expansion.

Conclusion

Since the end of seventeenth century, foreign traders' dinner tables in Canton and Macao were an important site for interaction and communication with Chinese officials and Hong merchants. The tables were a site in which both sides could come to understand their differences and build connections. However, as the pattern of dinning together developed into 'chopstick dinners' and became a site only for curiosity and entertainment, the possibilities of further mutual understanding came to an end. As chopstick dinners became a spectacle for foreigners, they tried to establish their own dinner tables with the ordinary and familiar characteristics of their own food culture. However, these tables were supported by Chinese servants and coolies. By establishing European and American styles of dinners, foreigners set up cultural and racial boundaries between themselves and their Chinese counterparts. However, this boundary was neither static nor firm. Their consumption practices were influenced by Chinese food culture. Some foodstuffs in China became highly appreciated by foreigners and were chosen to facilitate British imperial expansion during the period. By

[109] Account of the Honorable Company's Botanic Garden at Seharánpúr, by J.F. Royle, Esq. late Superintendent, [Read before the Physical Class] *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of* Bengal, 1(1832), p.51.

looking at foreigners' dinner tables and how it changed over time, we have come to better understand Sino-Western relations through food.

Conclusion

This thesis has thought to provide a new perspective and new evidence for understanding the Canton trade during the eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. It explores foreigners who were involved in the Canton trade not just as traders but as eaters and drinkers. Foreign traders in Canton are often considered to be important agents of the global tea trade, but they are seldom regarded as food consumers and agents of food culture. These roles are not disconnected; they are highly connected and interdependent. Eating and drinking not only provided the necessary physical sustenance for the foreigners' survival but also helped them to build connections with other foreign traders, create a convivial community in a foreign land, and establish commercial and social relationships with Hong merchants. Eating and drinking activities mediated different types of relationships in the foreign quarters on a daily basis. Moreover, these practices were affected by ongoing Sino-foreign relations.

When we look closer at what foreigners ate and drank, we learn more about their adaptation and compromise in an environment in which they were not the dominant group. Throughout the period that this research covers, foreigners' eating and drinking activities in China underwent significant changes as the China trade expanded and an increasing number of foreign populations arrived in China, they had more sources of food supply and increasing varieties of cuisine on their table. Focusing on food and drink, we can explore how these changes happened at foreigners' dinner tables in their factories and at chopstick dinners hosted by Hong merchants. By looking at food and drink, this research illuminates the history of Sino-foreign relations and shows how power shaped the eating and drinking activities of foreigners' and their Chinese counterparts.

Focusing on foreigners' eating and drinking experiences in China also sheds light on the history of food in the early modern period. Canton and Macao have not received substantial scholarly attention from food historians. Canton, which attracted merchants from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, was one of the most important trading ports in China. These merchants and their families who lived in Canton and Macao brought their food and food culture with them when they travelled to China. Their eating and drinking practices were impacted by the local food culture that they enjoyed a great diversity of seafood, meat and fowls, and they often had local fresh and dried fruits as desserts in their daily meals. They also had agency in changing the foodscape in factories by bringing their own food culture. Canton and Macao were where the European and Chinese empires met, so they can provide exciting settings in which food historians can analyse cultural exchanges in an

intercultural setting. By looking at food consumed by foreigners in Canton and Macao, we better understand how China, Britain, Portugal, America, and British India were connected by trade as well as food and food culture.

Food as Negotiation Sites

Through a discussion of food provisioning, the importation of cows, dairy culture, curry dishes, and dinner tables, this research investigates the diverse ways in which food functions as negotiation sites between foreigners and the Chinese people involved in Canton trade. These cases show that the forms, content, and meanings of food could be negotiated in certain circumstances. These cases were also chosen for their rich and complicated social, cultural, and political meanings for foreigners who lived in China. Moreover, these meanings could change or acquire new elements during complex, Sino-foreign interactions. When foreign traders travelled to China, they encountered an environment that was extremely different from their previous experiences. Adjusting their eating and drinking behaviours to the local environment and the regulations of the Chinese authorities was a first step in negotiating their identities in China. Hong merchants and Chinese officials also adjusted their food and drink practices as they interacted with foreigners and negotiated their relationships with foreign traders for commercial and political reasons. The perspective of food provides us with the tools for analysing how negotiations between different groups occurred.

Regulations on foreigners' food provision was a means that the Chinese authorities employed to controlling the lives of those in foreign factories. Foreign traders constantly requested more liberty in choosing their own compradors and complained about the fees required for engaging these compradors. Food provisioning was an important site for negotiating foreigners' control over their own food consumption. Compradors benefited from their position as licenced food purveyors and, later, as household managers. Being responsible for food provisioning and household management provided compradors with opportunities to nurture foreigners' dependence on them and negotiate for a better position in and more financial benefits from the Canton System.

Importing cows to China was a way in which foreigners negotiated with the local dairy culture and environment. Some foreigners accepted cow's milk and butter produced in China, but others chose to import cows from their home country and consume dairy products from these cows. They were not able to replicate the dairy industry from their home

countries. Instead, they relied on their Chinese cow-keepers' work and constantly dealt with the uncertainties posed by the cows' health. Foreigners had to constantly negotiate with the local cow market and their cow-keepers to maintain a regular supply of cow's milk.

The introduction of curry dishes shows how foreigners' taste developed during British colonial experiences in India and then how these tastes were transmitted to China. It provides an example of how British imperial tastes were mediated by Chinese cooks in Canton factories. It shows how, by consuming spicy curry dishes which were unique to their imperial and colonial experiences, foreign traders marked their differences with Hong merchants. Food with origins in British imperialism were not necessarily markers of cultural dominance but more often markers of cultural difference.

Dinner tables are one of the best arenas to explore the power dynamics between diners and the cultures and countries they represent. This research shows the content, forms, and manners of the dinner tables that Hong merchants and Chinese officials provided for their guests. We see that, as foreign traders gained more power in China trade, Hong merchants increasingly appealed to their tastes and table manners and developed a unique form of service, the 'chopstick dinner'. Although Hong merchants were flexible and provided different types of dinners for foreigners, Western perceptions of Chinese dining culture became static and stereotypical. The growing power of European empires enabled foreign traders to enjoy these chopstick dinners without learning and appreciating the Hong merchants' dining culture.

Perspectives from American Women

Perspectives from American women are also a rich source for this research. In particular, Rebecca Kinsman from Salem and Mary Parry Sword from Philadelphia recorded many details about their daily lives in 1840s Macao. Their writings present unique evidence of the everyday lives of foreign women during and after the Opium War; the writings present women's experiences and attitudes about food and their eating and drinking experiences in China. Their views and experiences are not just a supplement to the records of their male counterparts' experiences in China. Instead, they profoundly reveal how power dynamics between foreigners and the Chinese people of Canton and Macao changed. More specifically, their gender roles in foreign households required them to take on the responsibilities of household management, which were often completed by Chinese compradors before foreign

women arrived in Macao. The women's complaints and vexations with Chinese compradors reveal the accumulated power of the compradors.

Foreign women had to follow a system of customs when they established their lives in Macao. These customs regulated their ways of living and where they could be. They felt uneasy adapting to these customs because they were heavily influenced by commercial culture developed for Canton trade and mediated by the male-dominated foreign communities established in Macao to fulfil the commercial and social needs of the foreign traders. However, foreign women had agency in gaining control of their lives in Macao. Their bringing cows and cooking food from their home countries were an important means in creating familiar living environments for themselves and their children. Because of the absence of their husbands, foreign women had to navigate Macao on their own and manage an array of Chinese servants. In such circumstances, it was necessary for them to build connections with other foreign women. Food and drink became an essential medium in building these supportive communities.

American women's participation in dinner parties that were for Sino-American political purposes also provide a unique opportunity for understanding how gender and race mediated early Sino-American interactions. American women's observations of and participations in these dinner parties helped to shape the social and political lives of the foreign communities in Macao. By looking at American women's association with food within and outside of their households, this research sheds light on early Sino-American relations.

The Agency of Ordinary People

One of the aims of this research has been to discover the agency of ordinary Chinese people involved in Canton trade. This research investigates how ordinary Chinese people provided food and food services for their foreign employers in factories and households in Canton and Macao. This research shows that the lavish lives of foreigners, especially their luxury culinary experiences comprised of European, Indian, and Chinese food, were heavily reliant on an array of Chinese labourers' skills and knowledge. By focusing on Chinese people's knowledge of and skills in Western cooking and food-related languages, this research contributes to understanding Sino-Western culinary cultural exchanges. Rather than just focus on foreign traders and their impact on the introduction of Western food in China, this

research studies ordinary Chinese people's involvement in translating, modifying, and localising Western food. This research proposes that Chinese cooks and servants did not just have an intermediary role in culinary cultural exchanges, they also had an active role in creating and spreading knowledge of and skills in Western cooking.

The agency of ordinary people who worked in foreign households is evident through their interactions with their employers. Compradors, cooks, and servants who worked in foreign factories for years and decades had accumulated substantial knowledge about the workings of foreign households in Canton and Macao. Compared with newcomers from abroad, they knew much more about the language, household arrangement and management, market information, and dinner tables of Canton and Macao. They helped their foreign employers adapt to the local environment and an unfamiliar culture. Their employers learned their working language to communicate with them and did not expect the Chinese labourers to speak standard English. The daily interactions between Chinese labourers and their employers shaped the working language of Canton and Macao. The shape of their language suggests how the Chinese labourers' thought and expressed their practical knowledge. In addition to compradors, cooks, and servants, this research also discusses cow-keepers and gardeners. These figures played important roles in providing dairy products, European vegetables, and fruits for foreigners' daily consumption.

This research also points out that, while the mobility of European and American traders contributed to the introduction of Western food in China, so did the mobility of their servants, who were often enslaved people from European colonies. John Alley and Ah Loo are two examples of people who contributed to Sino-Western culinary knowledge exchanges. John Alley and Ah Loo, as well as other ordinary people, may have never considered their role in the introduction of Western cooking in China. But their travel and labour helped to circulate knowledge of and skills in cooking different dishes. This exchange of knowledge might have occurred frequently between foreign servants and Chinese servants. Although there is no direct evidence that shows communication between servants from different cultures, it is easy to imagine these servants communicating as they lived and worked together.

Outlook

Food history is an interdisciplinary field and requires knowledge from many different areas. While I explored the food and drink that was consumed in foreign factories, I constantly

realized the deficiency of my existing knowledge for deciphering the meaning of these food and drink practices. The accounts from American and British travellers, and the food and drink they discussed therein, encouraged me to think about why and how they came to Canton and Macao during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In order to decipher the meanings of food and drink presented on foreigners' tables, I not only had to understand the history of the food and their ingredients, but I had to understand their routes to China and their meanings in a Chinese context and a more local contex in Canton and Macao. This research cannot explore all of the possible explanations about the food and drink discussed within. The lack of sources from languages other than Chinese and English means that this research represents a limited view of people's experiences. More research should be done to discover the influences of other European empires and Southeast Asian countries. This research has briefly touched on food, medicine, and the body. There is still limited discussion about foreign traders' health and diet in China. I hope there will be more exciting research that explores these topics in the future.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

UK

British Library, London, India Office Records and Private Papers

IOR/G/12/5, China materials', 1694-1701

IOR/G/12/7, China materials', 1702-1704

IOR/G/12/8, China materials', 1712-1725

IOR/G/12/31-33, Diary and consultations of the Council in China, 1730-1732

IOR/G/12/216, China and Japan: Canton Consultations, 1819

IOR/G/12/219, China and Japan: Canton Consultations, 1820

IOR/G/12/240A, China and Japan: Duplicates, 1828-1829

IOR/G/12/290, China and Japan: Despatches to China, 1832

Canterbury Cathedral Library, Canterbury

W/S-19-22/23 Manuscript notebook including Chinese to English phrases, observations, and business notes

The National Archives, Kew, London

FO 1048/22/44: Urmston to Howqua. Customs posts demand so many dues that compradores are unwilling to provision the Company's recently arrived ship(s). The hong merchants' assistance is resolving the difficulty is requested. (Dated: 6m 22d). 1822

FO 1048/22/47: Howqua to Select Committee. Ship provisioning by compradores has been settled. Muwanjee is the only Parsee still set on an immediate petition against Pakqua. A price for cotton will be quoted as soon as samples are available. The Company's first ship hasbeen secured by Kingqua. Confirmation of the number of ships coming is requested. (Dated: 6m 25d). 3 sheets. 1822

FO 1048/11/84 Petition to Hoppo from the captains of twelve Company vessels, asking that the compradores should resume provisioning. (Dated: 11m 7d). 1811

USA

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Sword Family Papers

Box 6 Letters of Mary Parry Sword, 1837-1845

Box 7 Journals of Mary Parry Sword, 1837-1842

Library of Congress, Washington DC

Russell & Co., Guangzhou, China, records, 1812–1894

Box 9, Reel 7, Account books in 1820

Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem

Nathaniel Kinsman (1798-1847) Papers, 1784-1882

Series II. Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman Correspondence

Series III. Personal Papers of Nathaniel and Rebecca Kinsman

Rhodes Island Historical Society, Providence

MSS 333 Carrington Paper

Series 5: Personnel Records

Comprador's accounts

Smith College, Northampton

Peabody Family Papers (SSC-MS-00118)

Series II. Rebecca Chase Kinsman

Correspondence

Folder 6: To family and friends en route to Macao, China, 1843 (as41521)

Folders 7-8: Journal (excerpts): The Essex Institute Historical Collections (?); published letters from Macao, 1843-46 (as41522)

Folder 9: *Nathaniel Kinsman, Merchant of Salem, in the China Trade* by Mary Kinsman Munroe: reprint, *The Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 1949 (as41514)

Printed Primary Sources

Abel, Clarke, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China: And of a Voyage to and from That Country, in the Years 1816 and 1817: Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Transactions of Lord Amherst's Embassy to the Court of Pekin and Observations on the Countries Which It Visited* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818)

Albuquerque, Afonso de**,** *Comentarios do grande Afonso de Albuquerque capitão geral que foi das Indias Orientais em tempo do muito poderoso Rey D. Manuel o primeiro deste nome* [The Commentareis of the Great Afonso Albuquerque Captain General Who Went from the East Indies in the Time of the Very Powerful King D. Manuel the First of This Name], vol. 2 (Lisbon: Impresa nacional, 1973; originally published: Lisbon, 1576)

Anderson, James, *The Bee, Or Literary Weekly Intelligencer, 1792, Vol. 7: Consisting of Original Pieces and Selections From Performances of Merit, Foreign and Domestic; A Work*

Calculated to Disseminate Useful Knowledge Among All Ranges of People at a Small Expence (Edinburgh, 1792)

Ball, Samuel, *An Account of the Cultivation and Manufacture of Tea in China: Derived from Personal Observation during an Official Residence in that Country from 1804 to 1826* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans 1848)

Barrow, *John, Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey Through the Country from Pekin to Canton* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804)

Bartlett, John Russell, *A Glossary of Words and Phrases, Usually Regarded as Peculiar to the United States: Dictionary of Americanisms* (Boston: Little, Brown & Comp., Trübner & Comp., 1859)

Bridgman, Elijah Coleman, *A Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect* (Macao, 1839)

Campbell, Colin, *A Passage to China: Colin Campbell's Diary of the First Swedish East India Company Expedition to China, 1732–1733,* ed. by Paul Hallberg and Christian Koninckx (Göteborg: Royal Society of Arts and Science, 1996)

Carletti, Francesco, *My Voyage around the World, by Francesco Carletti A 16th century Florentine Merchant translated form Italian by Herbert Weinstock*, (London: Methuen, 1965)

Chamberlayne, John, *The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate and Tobacco, in Four several Sections: With a Tract of Elder and Juniper-Berries, Shewing how Useful they may be in our Coffee-Houses: And also the Way of Making Mum, with some Remarks on that Liquor* (London: Christopher Wilkinson, 1682)

Cocks, Richard, *Diary of Richard Cocks, Cape-Merchant in the English Factory in Japan 1615–1622, with Correspondence: Volume I*, ed. by Edward Maunde Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Cortes, P. Adriano De Las, *The Journey to China, 1625 and Beyond,* ed. by Alan Macfarlane, Beatriz Moncó, Zilan Wang and Yuchen Qin, trans. By Iraida Blanco, Eliezer Arias and Javier A. Nieto (Cambridge: Cam Rivers Publishing, 2022)

Cummins, J. S., *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1616-1686* (Farnham: Hakluyt Society, 2010)

Davis, John Francis, *The Chinese: A General Description of the Empire of China and Its Inhabitants* (London: Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, 1836)

———, *A Commercial Vocabulary, Containing Chinese Words and Phrases, Peculiar to Canton and Macao, and to the Trade of those Places* (Macao: East India Company's Press, 1824)

Dobell, Peter, *Travels in Kamtchatka and Siberia: With a Narrative of a Residence in China*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Dunn, Nathan, and William B. Langdon, *'Ten Thousand Chinese Things.' A Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Collection, Now Exhibiting at St. George's Place, Hyde Park Corner, London* (London: The Poprietor, 1843)

Downing, C. T, *The Stranger in China, or The Fan-qui's Visit to the Celestial Empire in 1836–7* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1838)

d'Orléans, Pierre Joseph*History of the Two Tartar Conquerors of China: Including the Two Journeys Into Tartary of Father Ferdinand Verbiest, in the Suite of the Emperor Kang-Hi, from the French of Père Pierre Joseph D'Orléans, to Which Is Added Father Pereira's Journey Into Tartary in the Suite of the Same Emperor, from the Dutch of Nicolaas Witsen*, (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1854)

Gao Lian 高濂, *Yinzhuan Fu Shi Jian* 饮馔服食笺 [Essays on Drinks and Delicacies for Medicinal Eating] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1985)

Haven, Alice B, 'Personal Reminiscences of Miss Eliza Leslie,' *Godey's Lady's Book,* 56 (1858), pp. 344-350

Hunter, William C., *Bits of Old China* (London: K. Paul, Trench, & Company, 1885)

———, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days, 1825-1844, by an Old Resident* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Company, 1882)

Johnson, James, *An Account of a Voyage to India, China &c. In His Majesty's Ship Caroline: Performed In the Years 1803-4-5, Interspersed With Descriptive Sketches And Cursory Remarks* (London: R. Phillips, 1806)

Jeter, Jeremiah Bell, *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck: The First American Female Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1846)

Leslie, Eliza, *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes and Sweetmeats* (Boston: Munroe & Francis, 1834)

———, *Directions for cookery, in its various branches* (Philadelphia: E.L Carey & A Hart, 1837)

———, *The Indian Meal Book: Comprising The Best American Receipts for the Various Preparations of that Excellent Article* (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1846)

Levine, C. O.,'A Study of the Different Kinds of Milk Produced in Kwangtung', *The China Medical Journal*, 6 (1918), 537–538

Lindley, John, *An introduction to the natural system of botany* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830)

Garway, Thomas, *An Exact Description of the Grovvth, Quality, and Vertues of the Leaf Tea. by Thomas Garway in Exchange-Alley Near the Royal Exchange in London, Tobacconist, and Seller and Retailer of Tea and Coffee* (London, 1660).

Glasse, Hannah, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (Edinburgh: J. Donaldson, 1791)

Nye, Gideon Jr., *The Morning of My Life in China: Comprising an Outline of the History of Foreign Intercourse from the Last Year of the Regime of Honorable East India Company, 1833, to the Imprisonment of the Foreign Community in 1839* (Canton, 1873)

Gützlaff, Karl Friedrich August,*China Opened, Or, A Display of the Topography, History, Customs, Manners, Arts, Manufactures, Commerce, Literature, Religion, Jurisprudence, Etc., of the Chinese Empire, Volume* 1 (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1838)

Hillard, Katherine (ed.), *My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary of Five Years Spent in Manila, Macao and the Cape of Good Hope from 1829–1834* (Boston: GH Ellis, 1900)

Holman, James, *Travels in China, New Zealand, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, Cape Horn, Etc., Etc.* (London: Routledge, 1840)

Laurence, Edward, *The Duty of a Steward to His Lord* (London: John Shuckburgh, 1727)

Hickey, William, *Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett, Limited, 1782)

Jiang Tingfu 蒋廷黻，*Jindai Zhongguo Waijiao Shiliao Jiyao* 近代中国外交史资料辑要 [Compilation of Primary Sources of Modern Chinese Diplomatic History] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2008)

Li Yu 李渔，*Xian Qing Ou Ji* 闲情偶寄 [Enjoyment in Leisure Time] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Chubanshe, 2005)

Liang Tingnan 梁廷楠, *Yuehaiguan zhi* 粤海关志 [Gazetteer of Guangdong Maritime Customs] (Guangzhou: Guangzhou Renmin Chubanshe, 2001)

Lockyer, Charles**,** *An Account of the Trade in India: Containing Rules for Good Government in Trade, Price Courants, and Tables: With Descriptions of Fort St. George, Acheen, Malacca, Condore, Canton, Anjengo, Muskat, Gombroon, Surat, Goa, Carwar, Telichery, Panola, Calicut, the Cape of Good-Hope, and St. Helena: To which is Added, an Account of the Management of the Dutch in their Affairs in India* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1711)

Long, Edward, *The History of Jamaica. Or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of That Island: With Reflections on Its Situation, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government. In Three Volumes. Illustrated with Copper Plates*. (London: T. Lowndes, 1774)

Macartney, George, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal Kept by Lord Macartney during His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793–1794*, ed. by J. L. Cranmer-Byng (London: St. Clair Shores: Scholarly Press, 1972)

Main, James, 'Reminiscences of a Voyage to and from China', in *The Horticultural Register* vol 5, ed. by James Main (London: W.S. Orr & Co, 1836)

Medhurst, Walter Henry, *A Glance at the Interior of China: Obtained During a Journey Through the Silk and Green Tea Districts Taken in 1845* (Shanghai: Mission Press, 1845)

Milburn, William, *Oriental Commerce: Containing a Geographical Description of the Principal Places in the East Indies, China, and Japan, with Their Produce, Manufactures, and Trade* (London: Black, Parry & Co, 1813)

Morrison, Elizabeth**,** *Memoirs of the Life and Labours Robert Morrison... Volume 2* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, and Longmans, 1839)

Morrison, John Robert, *A Chinese Commercial Guide: Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China* (Canton, 1834)

———, *A Chinese Commercial Guide*, third edition (Canton, 1848)

———, *A Chinese dictionary of Chinese language, Vol.1* (Macao: East India Company's Press, 1815)

Munroe, Mary Kinsman, ed., 'Nathaniel Kinsman, Merchant of Salem, in the China Trade, from the Kinsman Family Manuscripts.' in *Essex Institute Historical Collections* (EIHC), 85(1950)

———, 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China, Excepts from Letters of 1845', Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC*, 86 (1951)

———, 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman on A Trip to Manila', Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC*, 87 (1951)

———, 'The Daily Life of Mrs. Nathaniel Kinsman in Macao, China, 1846' Contributed by Mrs. Frederick C. Monroe, in *EIHC,* 87(1952)

Nieuhof, Joan, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Province to the Grand Tartar Cham Emperour of China. Deliv. by Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer: Wherein the Cities, Towns, Villages, Ports, Rivers, Etc. in Their Passages from Canton to Peking…*(London: John Macock, 1669)

Noble, Charles Frederick, *A Voyage to the East Indies in 1747 and 1748. Containing an Account of the Islands of St. Helena and Java. Of the City of Batavia. Of the Government and Political Conduct of the Dutch. Of the Empire of China, with a Particular Description of Canton ...* (London:T. Becket and P. A. Dehondt, 1762)

Osbeck, Pehr, *A Voyage to China and the East Indies, by Peter Osbeck,... Together with a Voyage to Suratte, by Olof Toreen,... and an Account of the Chinese Husbandry, by Captain Charles Gustavus Eckeberg. Translated from the German by John Reinhold Forster,... to Which Are Added a "Faumula and Flora Sinensis"...*, 1771. (London: Benjamin White, 1771)

Pereira, Jonathan, 'On the Commercial Varieties of Turmeric' in *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*, Vol 9, 1849–50, ed. by Jacob Bell (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1850)

Qu Dajun 屈大均, *Gungdong Xinyu* 广东新语 [A new introduction to Guangdong] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1985)

Rhodes, Alexander de, *Rhodes of Viet Nam; the travels and missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and other kingdoms of the Orient, translated by Solance Hertz* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1966; first published in Paris in 1653)

Ricci, Matteo, *China in the sixteenth century: the journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610*, Trans. from the Latin by Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953)

Roxburgh, W., *Hortus Bengalensis or A Catalogue of the Plants Growing in The Honourable East India Company's Botanic Garden at Calcutta* (Serampore: The Mission Press, 1814)

Royle, J.F., Account of the Honorable Company's Botanic Garden at Seharánpúr, by Royle, J.F. Esq. late Superintendent, [Read before the Physical Class] *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1(1832), 41-58

Semedo, Alvaro, *The History of That Great and Renowned Monarchy of China: Wherein All the Particular Provinces Are Accurately Described: As Also the Dispositions, Manners, Learning, Lawes, Militia, Government, and Religion of the People. Together with the Traffick and Commodities of That Countrey* (London: E. Tyler, 1655)

Short, Thomas, *Discourses on Tea, Sugar, Milk, Made-wines, Spirits, Punch, Tobacco, &c: With Plain and Useful Rules for Gouty People* (London: T. Longman, 1750),

Spencer, Alfred, ed., *Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1921)

Staunton, George, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China: Including Cursory Observations Made, and Information Obtained in Travelling Through That Ancient Empire, and a Small Part of Chinese Tartary. Together with a Relation of the Voyage Undertaken on the Occasion by His Majesty's Ship the Lion, and the Ship Hindostan, in the East India Company's Service, to the Yellow Sea, and Gulf of Pekin; as Well as of Their Return to Europe* (London: G. Nicol, 1797)

Terry, Richard, *Indian Cookery* (London: F.K. Gurney, 1861)

Temple, Richard Carnac, ed., *The Travels of Peter Mundy, in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667* Vol. 3, *Part 1* (London: Ashgate, 2010)

Tiffany, Osmond, *The Canton Chinese: Or, The American's Sojourn in the Celestial Empire* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1849)

The Magazine of Domestic Economy (London: W.S. Orr & Company, 1837)

The Magazine of Domestic Economy, and Family Review, Vol 1 (London: W.S. Orr & Co, 1843)

The Household Encyclopædia; or, Family Dictionary of Everything Connected with Housekeeping and Domestic Medicine, by an Association of Heads of Families and Men of Science (London: W.Kent & Co,1858)

Wathen, James, *Journal of a voyage in 1811 and 1812, to Madras and China; returning by the Cape of Good hope and St. Helena; in the H. C. S. The Hope, capt. James Pendergrass. By James Wathen. Illustrated with twenty-four coloured prints, from drawings by the author* (London: J. Nichols, Son and Bentley, 1814)

Williams, S. Wells, *A Chinese Commercial Guide*, *fourth edition* (Canton: The office of Chinese Repository,1856)

Williams, Frederick Wells, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams: Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889)

Wines, E.C., *A Peep at China in Mr. Dunn's Chinese Collection: With Miscellaneous Notices relating to the institutions and customs of the Chinese and out commercial intercourse with them* (Philadelphia, 1839)

Wood, William Wightman, *Sketches of China: With Illustrations from Original Drawings* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1830)

Woodville, William, *Medical Botany: containing systematic and general descriptions, with plates, of all the medicinal plants, indigenous and exotic, comprehended in the catalogues of the Materia Medica* (London: James Phillips, 1792)

Xu, Ke 徐珂, *Qing bailei chao* 清稗类钞 [Petty Matters of the Qing] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1917)

Yuan Mei 袁枚，*Sui Yuan Shidan* 随园食单[Recipes from the Sui Garden] (Xi'an：San Qin Chubanshe, 2005).

Collection of Ming-Qing documents concerning Macao affairs (Ming qing shiqi aomen wenti dangan wenxian huibian 明清时期澳门问题档案文献汇编), ed. by Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Danganguan、Aomen Jijihui、Jinan Daxue Guji Yanjiusuo 中国第一历史档案馆、澳门基金会、暨南大学古籍研究所 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999)

Secondary Sources

Abbots, Emma-Jayne, *The Agency of Eating: Mediation, Food and the Body* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

Abe, Kaori, *Chinese Middlemen in Hong Kong's Colonial Economy, 1830–1890* (London: Routledge, 2017)

Alexander, Kimberly, " 'Demure Quakeress': Rebecca Kinsman in China, 1843–1847.' *Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 2006/2007* (Boston: Boston University, 2009), 102-113

Anderson, E. N., *The Food of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988)

Anderson, Heather Arndt, *Chillies: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016)

Avakian, Arlene Voski, and Barbara Haber, 'Feminist Food Studies: A Brief History', in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. by Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005)

Bae, Kyoungjin, 'Around the Globe: The Material Culture of Cantonese Round Tables in High-Qing China', in *EurAsian Matters: China, Europe, and the Transcultural Object, 1600-1800*, ed. by Anna Grasskamp and Monica Juneja, Transcultural Research – Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), pp. 37–55

Barnes, Linda L., *Needles, Herbs, Gods, and Ghosts: China, Healing, and the West To 1848*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005)

Bays, Daniel H., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996)

Benn, James, 'Buddhism, Alcohol, and Tea in Medieval China', in: Roel Sterckx, ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, politics, and religion in traditional China* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 213–36

———, *Tea in China: A religious and cultural history* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015)

Bickham, Troy, *Eating the Empire: Food and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020)

———, 'Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery and Imperialism in Eighteenth-Century', *Past & Present*, 1 (2008), 71–109

Brown, Miranda, 'Mr. Song's Cheeses: Southern China, 1368–1644', *Gastronomica*, 2 (2019), 29-42

Buell, Paul D., and Eugene N. Anderson, *A Soup for the Qan: Chinese Dietary Medicine of the Mongol Era as Seen in Hu Sihui's Yinshan Zhengyao–Introduction, Translation, Commentary, and Chinese Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2010)

Bolton, Kingsley, *Chinese Englishes: A Sociolinguistic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Burton, David, *The Raj at Table: A Culinary History of the British in India* (London: Faber & Faber, 1994)

Bray, Francesca, et al., ed., *Rice: Global Networks and New Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Brescius, Meike von, 'Private Enterprise and the China Trade: Merchants and Markets in Europe, 1700-1750', in *Private Enterprise and the China Trade* (Leiden: Brill, 2022)

Cao, Wen 曹雯 'Qingdai Guangdong tizhi zai yanjiu' 清代广东体制再研究 [Revisiting the Canton System of Trade in the Qing Dynasty], *Qingshi Yanjiu*, 2 (2006), 82-96

Cao Yu 曹雨, *Zhongguo Shila Shi* 中国食辣史 [The History of Eating Spicy Food in China] (Beijing: Beijing Lianhe Chuban Gongsi, 2019)

Chang, Che-Chia, 'Origins of a Misunderstanding: the Qianlong Emperor's Embargo on Rhubarb Exports to Russia, the Scenario and its Consequences", *Asian Medicine* 1.2 (2005), 335-354

Chang, Kwang-ching, *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978)

Chaudhuri, Nupur, and Margaret Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992)

Ching, May-bo, 'Chopsticks or Cutlery?', in *Narratives of free trade: the commercial cultures of early US-China relations*, ed. by Kendall Johnson (Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 99–116

———, 'The Flow of Turtle Soup from the Caribbean via Europe to Canton, and Its Modern American Fate', *Gastronomica*, 16.1 (2016), 79–89

———, '*Shuishangren Yinshui—16–19 Shiji Aomen Chuanmin De Haiyang Shijie* 水人上引水：16–19 世纪澳门船民的海洋世界 [People living over river guides water: boat people's ocean world in the 16–19th centuries Macao], *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 4(2010)

———, *Aomen Zuowei Feidi De Wei Yu Ji* 澳门作为飞地的危与机：16-19 世纪华洋交往中的小人物 [The dangers and opportunities of Macao as an enclave—humble people in Sino-Western encounters in the 16–19th centuries]'*Henan Daxue Xuebao*, 3 (2012), 74-82

———, and Zhiwei Liu 刘志伟, '18-19 Shiji Guangzhou Yangren Jiating De Zhongguo Yongren 18-19 世纪广州洋人家庭的中国佣人[Chinese Servants in Foreigners' Families in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth Century Guangzhou]', *Shilin*, 4 (2004), 1-11

———, *Ba Shijie Daijin Zhongguo: Cong Aomen Chufa De Zhongguo Jindaishi* 把世界带进中国：从澳门出发的中国近代史 [In Light of Macau: Alternative Perspectives on Modern China] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013)

———, *Yujian Huangdong: 18-19 shiji zhujiangkou de xiaorenwu he dashijie* 遇见黄东：18-19 世纪珠江口的小人物和大世界 [Encounter with Huangdong: small figures and big world in the 18th and 19th centuries in Pearl River Mouth] (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue Chubanshe, 2021)

Clarke, David,'Chinese visitors to 18th century Britain and their contribution to its cultural and intellectual life', *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 4 (2017), 498-521

Cohen, Mathilde, 'Animal colonialism: The case of milk', *American Journal of International Law* (2017), 267-271

Collingham, Elizabeth*, Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

———, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Cheong, Weng Eang, *The Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade, 1684–1798* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997)

Ch'en, Kuo-tung Anthony, *The insolvency of the Chinese Hong merchants, 1760-1843* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1990)

Crowen, Susan,*The American System of Cookery: Comprising Every Variety of Information for Ordinary and Holiday Occasions* (New York: T.R. Dawley, 1864)

Cwiertka, Katarzyna Joanna, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006)

Davies, Stephen, *East Sails West: The Voyage of the Keying, 1846–1855* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013)

Donkin, R.A., *Between East and West: The Moluccas and the traffic in spices up to the arrival of Europeans* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2003)

Dott, Brian R., *The Chile Pepper in China: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020)

Downs, Jacques M., *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014)

Driem, George van, *The Tale of Tea: A Comprehensive History of Tea from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (Leiden: Brill, 2019)

DuBois, Thomas David, 'China's Dairy Century: Making, Drinking and Dreaming of Milk' in *Animals and Human Society in Asia: Historical, Cultural and Ethical Perspectives*, ed. by Rotem Kowner, et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

DuPuis, E. Melaine, *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002)

Dyke, Paul A. Van, 'Pigs, Chickens, and Lemonade: The Provisions Trade in Canton, 1700–1840', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 12.1 (2000), 111–44

———, and Susan E. Schopp, *The Private Side of the Canton Trade, 1700–1840: Beyond the Companies* (Hong Kong University Press, 2018)

———, *Merchants of Canton and Macao. Politics and Strategies in eighteenth-century China trade* (Hongkong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)

———, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast 1700–1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005)

———, and Maria Kar-Wing Mok, *Images of the Canton Factories 1760–1822: Reading History in Art* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015).

Earle, Rebecca, *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race, and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Ellis, Markman, Richard Coulton, and Matthew Mauger, *Empire of Tea: The Asian Leaf That Conquered the World* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015)

Fan, Fa-ti, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004)

Farris, Johnathan Andrew, *Enclave to Urbanity: Canton, Foreigners, and Architecture from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016)

Findlen, Paula, *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021)

Fischler, Claude,'Commensality, Society and Culture', *Social Science Information*, 3-4 (2011), 528–548

Ford, Stacilee, *Troubling American Women: Narratives of Gender and Nation in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)

Forman, Ross G, 'Representing Chinese Food in Victorian Travel Literature and Journalism', in *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s* , ed. by Douglas Kerr and Julia Kuehn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007) , pp.63-74

———, '"Nothing corresponding to it in China": Asian Food at London's International Health Exhibition, 1884.' *Food, Culture & Society*, 2 (2021), 202-226

Foster, Nelson, and Linda S. Cordell, *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992)

Gao, Hao, *Creating the Opium War: British Imperial Attitudes Towards China, 1792–1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019)

Gao, Xi 高晞, 'Wenyi Fuxing Shiqi Ouzhou Yisheng Yanzhong De Yiyu Xinyao: Zhongguo Gen 文艺复兴时期欧洲医生眼中的异域新药: "中国根" "Chinese Root" A New Exotic Drug in the Eyes of European Physicians during the Renaissance Period', *Huangdong Shifan Daxue Xuebao (Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban)*, 1 (2023), 22-32

Gerritsen, Anne, and Stephen McDowall, 'Material culture and the other: European encounters with Chinese porcelain, ca. 1650-1800.' *Journal of World History* (2012), 87-113

Goldstein, Jonathan, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978)

Guo Deyan 郭德焱, *Qingdai Guangzhou de Basi Shangren* 清代广州的巴斯商人 [Parsee merchants in Canton during the Qing period] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2005)

Hao, Yen-p'ing, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge between East and West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970)

Harrison, Henrietta ,*The Perils of Interpreting: The Extraordinary Lives of Two Translators between Qing China and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021)

Harvey, Karen,*The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Havard, Lucy J, '"Almost to Candy Height:" Knowledge-Making in the Early Modern Kitchen, 1700-1850', *Cultural and Social History*, 19.2 (2022), 119–39

Heldke, Lisa M., 'Foodmaking as a Thoughtful Practice' in *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*, ed. By Deane W. Curtin, and Lisa M. Heldke (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 203-229

Hellman, Lisa. *This House Is Not a Home: European Everyday Life in Canton and Macao 1730–1830: European everyday life in Canton and Macao 1730–1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2018)

———, *Navigating the Foreign Quarters: Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730–1830* (Ph.D thesis, Stockholm University, 2015)

Höfele, Andreas and Werner von Koppenfels, eds., *Renaissance go-betweens: Cultural exchange in early modern Europe*. Vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011)

Hoogervorst, Tom, 'Sailors, Tailors, Cooks, and Crooks: On Loanwords and Neglected Lives in Indian Ocean Ports', *Itinerario*, 42.3 (2018), 516–48

Hu, Bo 胡波, *Xiangshan Maiban Yu Jindai Zhongguo* 香山买办与近代中国 [Xiangshan Compradors and Modern China] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2007)

Hua Linfu, Paul D. Buell, and Paul U. Unschuld, eds., *Ben Cao Gang Mu Dictionary, Volume Two, Geographical and Administrative Designations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017)

Huang, H. T., 'Hypolactasia and the Chinese diet', *Current Anthropology*, 5 (2002), 809-819.

———, *Science and Civilisation in China*, *Volume 6. Biology and Biological Technology, Part 5. Fermentations and Food Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Huang, Yifeng 黄逸峰, *Jiuzhongguo de maiban Jieji* 旧中国的买办阶级 [The Class of Compradors in Old China] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1982)

Irvine, Thomas, *Listening to China: Sound and the Sino-Western Encounter, 1770-1839* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

Jaffer, Aaron, *Lascars and Indian Ocean Seafaring, 1780-1860: Shipboard Life, Unrest and Mutiny* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015)

Jiang, Yinghe 江莹河 'Kelin Kanbeier Riji Chutan——Zaoqi Ruidian Dui Hua Maoyi Yanjiu《科林坎贝尔日记》初探——早期瑞典对华贸易研究 [A Preliminary Study of The Diary of Colin Campbell A Preliminary Research of The Diary of Colin Campbell——A Research of Early Swedish Trade with China]', *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 6 (2011), 120-128

———, *Qingdai Yanghua Yu Guangzhou Kouan* 清代洋画与广州口岸 Foreign Paintings in Qing Dynasty and Canton Port (Shanghai, Zhonghua shuju, 2007)

Lamas, Rosemary W. N., *Everything in Style: Harriet Low's Macau* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004)

Li, Jingwei 李静玮, '*Sheng Shu Zhijian: Gali Zai Zhongguo De Zaidihua* 生熟之间：咖喱在中国的在地化 Between What is New and What is Old: The Localization of Curry in China' , *Sixiang Zhanxian*, 2 (2020), 40-47

Liu, Ming Wilson 刘明倩 and Liu Zhiwei 刘志, eds., *18-19 shi ji Yangcheng feng wu: Yingguo Weiduoliya Abote bo wu yuan cang Guangzhou wai xiao hua* 18-19 世纪羊城风物 : 英国维多利亚阿伯特博物院藏广州外销画 [Souvenir from Canton: Chinese export paintings from the Victoria and Albert Museum] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003)

Ji Xianlin 季羡林, *Tang Shi* 糖史 [The history of sugar] (Nanchang: Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009)

Jin, Guoping 金国平, 'Shilun mianbao wu yu ming shiyu aomen 试论'面包'物与名始于澳门 **[**Macao: Birthplace of Mianbao, Both the Entity and its Name**],** *Haiyangshi yanjiu,* 2 (2020)**,** 365-378

Kerr, Douglas, and Julia Kuehn, *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s* (Hong Kong University Press, 2007)

King, Michelle T., "What is 'Chinese' food? Historicizing the concept of culinary regionalism", *Global Food History*, 2 (2020), 89-109

Kirkby, D., and T. Luckins, *Dining On Turtles: Food Feasts and Drinking in History* (Springer, 2007)

Kitson, Peter J., *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange 1760–1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Klein, Lawrence E., 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 4 (2002), 869-898

Kotyk, Jeffrey, 'Milk, Yogurt and Butter in Medieval East Asia: Dairy Products from China to Japan in Medicine and Buddhism', *Religious*, 5(2021), 1-11

Lampe, Evan, *Work, Class, and Power in the Borderlands of the Early American Pacific: The Labors of Empire* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013)

Lawton, John, *Silk, Scents & Spice: Tracing the world's great trade routes – The silk road, the spice route, the incense trail* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2004)

Leong-Salobir, Cecilia, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* (Taylor & Francis, 2011)

Lo, Vivienne, 'Pleasure, prohibition, and pain: food and medicine in traditional China' in Roel Sterckx, ed., *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, politics, and religion in traditional China* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 163-185

———, 'The Influence of "Yangsheng" Culture on Early Chinese Medicine.' (unpublished Ph.D., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1998)

Liu, Zhenya and Puyu Liu 刘振亚、刘璞玉, 'Woguo gudai yinliao yu lengliang shipin Taiyuan 我国古代饮料与冷凉食品探源(Exploring the origins of drinks and cold food in ancient China), *Gujin Nongye*, 2 (1989), 40–45

Lu, Shuying 卢淑樱, *Muru yu Niunai: Jindai Zhongguo Muqin Juese de Chongsu:1895-1937* 母乳与牛奶：近代中国母亲角色的重塑 1895-1937 [Mother's Milk and Cow's Milk: Infant Feeding and the Reconstruction of Motherhood in Modern China, 1895-1937] (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2020)

Luk, Gary Chi-hung, 'Accommodating foreigners in a littoral borderland: The lower Pearl River Delta during the Opium War', *Modern China*, 1 (2022), 197-228

Lutz, Jessie Gregory, *Opening China: Karl FA Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827-1852* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008)

Mak, Sau Wa, 'Milk and Modernity: Health and Culinary Heritage in South China' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2012)

Mandelblatt, Bertie, 'A Transatlantic Commodity: Irish Salt Beef in the French Atlantic World', *History Workshop Journal,* 63 (2007), 18-47

Stephanie R. Maroney, 'To Make a Curry the India Way: Tracking the Meaning of Curry Across Eighteenth-Century Communities', *Food and Foodways*, 1-2(2011), 122–134

Metcalf, Alida*, Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005)

Mintz, Sidney Wilfred, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985)

Mitsuda, Tatsuya, 'Imperial Bovine Bodies: Rendering Chinese Milk and Meat Fit for German and Japanese Consumption', *Journal of Global History,* 1 (2019), 22-43

Morse, H.B. , *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635–1834* (Mansfield Center, CT: Martino Pub, 2007)

Nie, Baozhang,聂宝璋, *Zhongguo Maiban Zichanjieji De Fasheng* 中国买办资产阶级的发生 [The Emergence of the Class of Comprador] (Beijing: Zhonguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1979)

O'Connor, Kaori , 'Beyond "Exotic Groceries": Tapioca/Cassava/Manioc, a Hidden Commodity of Empires and Globalisation', in *Global Histories, Imperial Commodities, Local Interactions*, ed. By Jonathan Curry-Machado (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 224-247.

Peckham, Robert, *Empires of Panic: Epidemics and Colonial Anxieties* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015)

Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992)

Procida, Mary A., 'Feeding the Imperial Appetite: Imperial Knowledge and Anglo-Indian Discourse', *Journal of Women's History*, 2(2003), 123–149

Puga, Rogério Miguel, ‘The First Museum in China: The British Museum of Macao (1829–1834) and its Contribution to Nineteenth-Century British Natural Science.’ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3-4 (2012), 575-586

———, ‘Representing Macao in 1837: The Unpublished Peripatetic Diary of Caroline Hyde Butler (Laing)’, in *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations*, ed. by Kendall Johnson (Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 117-130

Ptak, Roderich, *China, the Portuguese and the Nanyang: Oceans and routes, regions and trade (c.1000-1600)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003)

Qiu, Zhihong 邱志红, ‘Guihua Donglai: Hongmao Fanhua Lei Zaoqi Yingyu Cihuishu Kaoxi’ “鬼话”东来：“红毛番话”类早期英语词汇书考析 [The Introduction of “Devilish Language” to China: An Examination of the English Vocabulary Books such as “Words in Use among the Red-Haired People” in the Qing Dynasty]’, *Qingshi Yanjiu*, 2 (2017), 113-121

Rappaport, Erika Diane, *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017)

Raj, Kapil, ‘Mapping Knowledge Go-Betweens in Calcutta, 1770–1820’, in Simon Schaffer et al (eds), *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009)

Reinders, Eric, 'Blessed are the Meat Eaters: Christian antivegetarianism and the missionary encounter with Chinese Buddhism,' *positions: east asia cultures critique*, 2(2004), 509-537

Richard, Josepha, ‘Collecting Chinese Flora: Eighteenth- to Nineteenth-Century Sino-British Scientific and Cultural Exchanges as Seen through British Collections of China Trade Botanical Paintings’, *Ming Qing Yanjiu*, 24.2 (2020), 209–44

———, 'The Hong merchant’s Gardens during the Canton System and the aftermath of the Opium Wars’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2017)

Ride, Lindsay, and May Ride, *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996)

Roberts, J. A. G., *China to Chinatown: Chinese Food in the West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002)

Romaniello, M.P., ‘True rhubarb? Trading Eurasian botanical and medical knowledge in the eighteenth century’, *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2016), 3-23

Rule, Fiona, *London’s Docklands: A History of the Lost Quarter* (Stroud: The History Press, 2019)

Sabban, Françoise, ‘The Taste for Milk in Modern China (1865–1937)’, in *Food Consumption in Global Perspective: Essays in the Anthropology of Food in Honour of Jack Goody*, ed. by Jakob A. Klein and Anne Murcott (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 182–208

———, 'Court cuisine in fourteenth-century imperial China: Some culinary aspects of hu sihui's *Yinshan Zhengyao*', *Food and Foodways*, 1-2 (1985), 161-196

Schopp, Susan E., 'Five American Women's Perceptions of China 1829–1941: "A Yard-stick of Our Own Construction"' in *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast*, ed. by Paul A. Van Dyke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012)

Sen, Colleen Taylor, *Curry: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009)

Schaffer, Simon et al., eds., *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2009)

Smith, Andrew, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Food and Drink in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Si, Jia, 司佳，'Cong Tongshi Dao Fanyiguan—Lun Jindai Zhongwai Yuyan Jiechushi Shang De Zhu, Beidong Juese De Zhuanyi' 从"通事"到"翻译官"—论近代中外语言接触史上的主、被动角色的转移 [From 'Linguists' to 'Official Translators': On the Transformation between Active and Passive Roles in the History of Language Contact between China and Western Countries]' *Fudan Xuebao*, 3 (2002), 44-50

Simmons, Frederic J., *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry* (London: CRC Press, 2008)

Sterckx, Roel, *Food, Sacrifice, and Sagehood in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

———, *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, politics, and religion in traditional China* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Stourna, Athena, 'Banquet Performance Now and Then: Commensal Experiments and Eating as Mise en Scène', *Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts*, 1 (2018), 10-31

Swislocki, Mark ,*Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009)

Taketani, Etsuko, *U.S. Women Writers and the Discourses of Colonialism, 1825–1861* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003)

Tagliacozzo, Eric, 'A necklace of fins: marine goods trading in maritime southeast Asia, 1780–1860', *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 1 (2004), 23–48

Tang, Kaijian 汤开建，'Mingqing Shiqi Wailai Zhiwu Yinru Aomen Kao 明清时期外来植物引入澳门考 [On the Introduction of Exotic Plants into Macau in the Ming and Qing Dynasties]', *Zhongguo Nongshi*, 5 (2016), 3-14

———, *Tianchao Yihua Zhi Jiao: 16-19 Shiji Xiyang Wenming Zai Aomen* 天朝异化之角： 16-19 世纪西洋文明在澳门 [A Touch of Alienation in the Celestial Empire: Western Civilization in Macau, 16-19 Centuries] (Guangzhou: Jinan Daxue Chubanshe, 2016)

Thampi, Madhavi, *Indians in China, 1800–1949* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005)

Thirsk, John, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500–1760* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010)

Unschuld, Paul U., and Hermann Tessenow in Collaboration with Zheng Jinsheng, *Huang Di nei jing su wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic–Basic Questions,* Volume I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011)

Varma, Nitin, *Coolies of Capitalism: Assam Tea and the Making of Coolie Labour* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018)

Waley-Cohen, Joanna, 'Food and China's World of Goods in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Living the Good Life: Consumption in the Qing and Ottoman Empires of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Elif Akçetin and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2017)

Wang, Hongzhi 王宏志 '1814 Nian A Yao Shijian: Jindai Zhongying Jiaowang Zhong De Tongshi' 1814 年"阿耀事件"：近代中英交往中的通事 [The Ayew Incident: Linguists in Sino-British Relations in the Nineteenth Century]' *Journal of Chinese Studies*, 57 (2014), 203-232

———, *Long yu shi de duihua: fanyi yu magaerni fanghua shituan* 龙与狮的对话 翻译与马戛尔尼访华使团 [Conversations between Dragon and Lion: Translation and Macartney Embassy to China] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2022)

———, and Bernhard Fuehrer, eds., *Sinologists as Translators in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2015)

Wang, Q. Edward, *Chopsticks: A Cultural and Culinary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Wang, Saishi,王赛时, *Zhongguo Jiushi* 中国酒史 [History of Alcohol in China] (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe 2010)

Wang, Shuo, *Negotiating Friendships: A Canton Merchant Between East and West in the Early 19th Century* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020).

Warde, Alan, 'Eating' in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption,* ed., by Frank Trentmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Wessels, Cornelius, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992)

Wiley, Andrea S., 'The Globalization of Cow's Milk Production and Consumption: Biocultural Perspectives', *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 3–4 (2007), 281–312

Wills, John E., ed., *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Wilson, C. Anne, *Food and Drink in Britain: From the Stone Age to the 19th Century* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1974)

Wong, John D., *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

———, 'Global Positioning: Houqua and His China Trade Partners in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 2012)

———, 'Fidelity and Sacrifice: The Gender Discourse of Traders in Pre- and Post-Opium War Canton', *Frontiers of History in China*, 4 (2019), 473–507

Wu, Yixiong 吴义雄, 'Guangzhou Yingyu Yu 19 Shiji Zhongye Yiqian De Zhongxi Jiaowang 广州英语'与 19 世纪中叶以前的中西交往[Canton English and Sino-Western Interactions before the mid of nineteenth century]', *Jindaishi Yanjiu*, 3 (2001), 172–202

Xi, Shengyan, and Yuewen Gong, *Essentials of Chinese Materia Medica and Medical Formulas: New Century Traditional Chinese Medicine* (London: Academic Press, 2017)

Xia, Xiaohong 夏晓虹, '*Wanqing De Xican Shipu Ji Qi Wenhua Yihan* 晚清的西餐食谱及其文化意涵 [Western Food Recipes in Late Qing China and Their Cultural Meanings]', *Xueshu Yanjiu*, 1 (2008), 138-146

Xiong, Bingzhen 熊秉真, *Youyou: Chuantong Zhongguo De Qiangbao Zhi Dao* 幼幼：传统中国的襁褓之道[To Nurse the Young: The Way of Feeding Enfants in Ancient China]（Taipei: Lianjing Chuban Shiye Gongsi, 1995）

Maiban Yu Jindai Zhongguo 买办与近代中国[Comprador and Modern China], ed. by Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue Wenhua Yanjiusuo Wenwuguan and Xianggang Zhongwen Daxue 香港中文大学文化研究所文物馆、香港中文大学 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 2009)

Xu, Guanmian, 'Pepper to Sea Cucumbers: Chinese Gustatory Revolution in Global History, 900–1840' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2021)

Yan, Changhong 严昌宏, *Xisu Dongjian Ji: Zhongguo Jindai Shehui Fengsu De Yanbian* 西俗东渐记：中国近代社会风俗的演变 [The Spread of Western Customs in the East: Transformation of Chinese Social Customs] (Changshai: Hunan Chubanshe, 1991)

Yang, Yiming 杨一鸣, 'Guanyu zao yang fan shu yu xi fa shu pu' 关于造洋饭书与西法食谱的考察

An Examination of Zao Yang Fan Shu and Xi Fa Shi Pu, *Journal of East Asian Cultural Interaction Studies*, 2021, 317–328

Yao, Weijun 姚伟钧, 'Yinshi shenghuo de yanbian yu shehui zhuanxing 饮食生活的演变与社会转型 [The Changes of Food Culture and the Transformation of the Society]', *Tansuo yu Zhengming* 4 (1996), 28–29

———, and Liu Pubing 刘朴兵 and Ju Mingku 鞠明库, *Zhongguo yinshi dianji shi* 中国饮食典籍史, ed by Zhao Rongguang 赵荣光 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2011)

———, 'Yinshan zheng yao yu yuandai menggu zu yinshi wenhua'《饮膳正要》与元代蒙古族饮食文化[Yin shan zheng yao and Mongol people's food culture in Yuan Dynasty], *Zhongguo Dianji Yu Wenhua*, 2 (1993), 43-48

Ye, Yang, trans., *Vignettes from the Late Ming: A Hsiao-p'in Anthology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011)

Yue, Isaac and Siufu Tang, eds., *Scribes of Gastronomy: Representations of Food and Drink in imperial Chinese literature* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013)

Yule, Henry, and Arthur Coke Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: Being a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of Kindred Terms Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Zhang, Zhibin, and Paul U. Unschuld, eds., *Ben Cao Gang Mu Dictionary* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015)

Zheng, Jia-ju,Zheng-liang Gong, Lian-sheng Xue, Xia-shuang Zhu, 'Lactose Malabsorption and Its Ethnic Differences in Hans and Uyghurs,' *Chinese Medical Journal,* 4 (1988), 284–286

Zhou, Gucheng 周谷成, ed., *Zhongguo Xueshu Mingzhu Tiyao Keji Juan* 中国学术名著提要 科技卷 [Essentials of Important Academic Works in China](Shanghai: fudan daxue chubanshe, 1996)

Zhou, Zhenhe 周振鹤, *Yi Yan Shu Yu* 逸言殊语 [Anecdotes and Unusual Phrases] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2008)

Zou, Zhenhuan 邹振环, '*Xican Yinru Yu Jindai Shanghai Chengshi Wenhua Kongjian De Kaituo* 西餐引入与近代上海城市文化空间的开拓 [The Introduction of Western-style Food and Exploration of City Cultural Space in Modern Shanghai]', *Shilin,* 4 (2007), 137-149

Digital Resources

‘Cayenne, n.’, OED Online (Oxford University Press) https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/29324

‘Chinnery, George (1774–1852), Painter’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5311

‘Forrest, Thomas (c. 1729–c. 1802), Navigator’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9891

‘Grass, n.1’, OED Online (Oxford University Press) https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/80887

‘It’s Not Always “Curry”: Desi Cooks Call for Change to Western Whitewashing of Food’, NBC News, 2021 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/it-s-not-always-curry-desi-cooks-call-change-western-n1275855>

‘Johnnycake, n.’, OED Online (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/101517>

Kashanipour, R. A., ‘“You Know I Am No Epicure”: Enslaved Voices in Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s Receipt Book’, The Recipes Project, 2021 <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/17859> [accessed 16 April 2023]

‘Knave, n.’, OED Online (Oxford University Press) https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/103934

‘Long, Edward (1734–1813), Planter and Commentator on Jamaican Affairs’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16964

‘Sternutatory, Adj. and n.’, OED Online (Oxford University Press) <https://0.www.oed.com/view/Entry/190032>