

How to Deal with Foreign Trade

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ABSTRACT: This article presents annotated translations of two long poems by leading Chinese literati of the eighteenth century who both happened to find themselves in Guangzhou in the fall of 1770, on the eve of the official dissolution of the Co-hong. Zhang Jiuyue's 張九鉞 (1721-1803) poem *Ballad on the Foreign Hongs* (Fanhang pian 番行篇) provides a description of the Guangzhou water front and the interactions of Westerners and Chinese, while Zhao Yi's 趙翼 (1727-1814) *The Foreign Vessel* (Fanbo 番舶) provides a detailed description of a Western square-rigged vessel and of his interactions with the officers on board of the ship. In their conclusions both authors give their opinion on foreign trade: whereas the unemployed Zhang Jiuyue urges the foreign merchants to return next year, the local prefect Zhao Yi insists on strict control of the foreigners because "the energy of these people is very volatile," and "treasonous people secretly conspire with them." Verbal echoes between the concluding sections suggest that the two poems were written on the same occasion.

KEYWORDS: Zhang Jiuyue; Zhao Yi; Foreign trade at Guangzhou; Co-hongs; Foreign vessels.

While the first generations of Jesuit missionaries aroused quite some curiosity in the circles of Chinese literati, that curiosity had mostly ebbed away by the eighteenth century. The trade with Westerners, increasingly concentrated at Guangzhou (Canton), drew even less interest, despite its continuous growth.¹ Chinese officials entrusted

the actual trade to selected merchants, and (with the exception of the Hoppo) limited their direct involvement in the interactions with foreigners.² Unfortunately, the Chinese merchants left no memoirs that can be compared to the accounts left by Western visitors.³ From time to time, however, Chinese poets commented on Westerners and their products, and in recent years Chinese scholars have scoured the available sources to collect such poems.⁴ The amount of poems collected in this manner is still limited, and most of these works are relatively short, but two of these poems stand out by their length. These two works would both appear to have been written in late 1770, and the verbal echoes between the two works suggest they were written on the same occasion.

The first poem translated here was written by

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Zhang Jiuyue 張九鉞 (1721-1803), who stayed in Guangzhou from the summer of 1770 till early 1771. Zhang had served as district magistrate in several places but had been involved in a legal affair, and at the time did not occupy any official position. He was a well-known poet in his time and traveled widely. One reason for Zhang's visit might have been that he had been hired by one of the local officials as a reader of examination essays for the provincial examinations that were held in the fall of 1770.

The second poem was composed by Zhao Yi 趙翼 (1727-1814), who served as prefect of Guangzhou from the summer of 1770 till the spring of 1771. Zhao Yi was a man with a remarkable curiosity.⁵ He had started out on his official career as a clerk in the capital. When serving in the provinces his postings took him to the borders of the empire. Following his retirement from officialdom he would become one of China's most original historians. He also was a well-known

and quite productive poet. During his short term of office in Guangzhou, Zhao Yi twice (in the tenth lunar month of 1770, and again in the spring of 1771) visited the temple of the god of the ocean to the east of the city near Whampoa to offer sacrifice; on the first occasion he also traveled on down the river to Shiziyang (Bocca Tigris Roads), north of the Bocca Tigris, where he visited a Western ship that was riding at anchor there (probably to complete loading before departure).⁶

Zhang Jiuyue's *Ballad on the Foreign Hongs* (*Fanhang pian* 番行篇) is written throughout in lines of seven syllables. It is divided into sections by change of rhyme.⁷ Such a change of rhyme is indicated in the translation by a line space. The poem starts with a description of the Guangzhou waterfront. There the buildings of the Chinese merchants and the factories of Western companies had been rebuilt with Western-style fronts after devastating fires of the early 1760s. We know the Guangzhou harbor view from export painting from the same



'Hong bowl', China, 1769-1770, porcelain, h. 16 cm., d. 39,7 cm. Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam, A.3484

years,⁸ and if I understand Zhang Jiuyue correctly he refers to such paintings of the harbor view in his poem. While junks sailed up to the city, the foreign vessels remained moored at Whampoa, where substantial Chinese troops were camped to maintain law and order (the crews of the ships had to stay at Whampoa and at times got involved in fights). Following a description of the actual exchange of goods on the arrival of a Dutch ship, Zhang continues with an evocation of the wide-spread corruption of the Co-hong merchants and of the conspicuous consumption young men indulge in on Canton's famous flower boats,⁹ to move on to a description of a naval exercise.¹⁰ How many of the scenes out-

side the city he had witnessed himself is difficult to ascertain.¹¹

Zhao Yi's poem, *The Foreign Vessel* (*Fanbo* 番舶), is composed throughout in lines of five syllables and maintains the same rhyme throughout.¹² It is focused on the description of the large ocean-going vessels.¹³ Zhao actually boarded one of these to inspect it personally. This description is somewhat bewildering because it seems at first to describe an ocean-going Chinese junk rather than a square-rigged Western vessel,¹⁴ but in the entries on Guangzhou in the memories of his career he dictated later in the 1790s and published as *Yanpu zaji* 簪曝雜記 (translated in an appendix) he explicitly



identifies the subject of this poem as a Western ship. Following the extended description of the ship, Zhao proceeds with an evocation of the dangers of ocean trips, and follows this with an account of his interactions with the ship's officers he met on board.

Zhang Jiuyue and Zhao Yi wrote their poems during the heyday of the chartered trade, when trade was conducted under the terms of strict regulations laid down in 1755. On the Chinese side the trade was conducted by a selected number of licensed merchants, some of who were united in a guild, usually designated as the Co-hongs. This guild, established in 1760,¹⁵ was disbanded in early 1771, and in this respect it is interesting to note that both

poets, speaking as members of the bureaucratic elite, comment on the corruption of the Chinese traders, probably reflecting discussions among the local officials about the management of the foreign trade.

If one reads the final lines of Zhang Jiuyue poem one surmises that there must have existed some fear that foreign traders might even stay away.¹⁶ Zhang's high praise for the probity of the Chinese officials is ironic in hindsight, as these years were the early years of service as Hoppo of Tekui 特貴 (1766-1774, 1775-1778), who would become proverbial for his rapacity.¹⁷ It is also interesting to note that a line in Zhang's poem that would seem to

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hint at official rapacity as a danger to the profitable trade was changed in a later printing of his collected works. Perhaps the dissolution of the Co-hongs in 1771 was intended to do away with the corrupt connivance of certain Co-hong merchants and certain Qing officials. Both Zhang Jiuyue's poem and that by Zhao Yi end by claiming that the sagely emperor will "softly cherish" the foreign merchants, but while Zhang Jiuyue seems to welcome Western traders without restriction and even urges them to spread the message of China's prosperity and the favorable trade conditions (low taxes, honest officials), Zhao Yi (as prefect responsible for local law and order) strikes a much more guarded note because "the energy of these people is very volatile," so regulations will have to be strictly enforced to avoid future problems. While both of these poems have been repeatedly quoted or referenced in publications on Sino-Western trade of the eighteenth century, they have never been placed side by side. Nor have they been discussed in the context of the 1771 dissolution of the Co-hongs.



Plate with an image of the Dutch VOC ship Vrijburg, anonymous, c. 1756. Painting, h 2.3cm x d 22.2cm. China. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. AK-NM-13527

The translations of the poems are based on the annotated editions in Chen Yongzheng 陳永正, *Zhongguo gudai haishang sichouzhilu shixuan* 中國古代海上絲綢之路詩選. Guangzhou: Guangdong lüyou chubanshe, 2001, 293-96 and 300-03. Both poems contain a few problematical lines.

Three Dutch merchants in a pinnace, anonymous, c. 1725 - c. 1750 ivory, h 0.8cm x w 16cm x d 7cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam NG-1994-12.



Vase, China, 1740-1760, porcelain, h. 21,3 cm., d. (rim) 5,6 cm.,
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, AK-NM-13365-2. Foreign merchant
and black servant.



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Zhang Jiuyue (1721-1803)

Ballad on the Foreign Hongs

Guangzhou's International Market is made up
of thirteen hong:
Like goose wings lined up as a wall, like bees
stringing cells.
The Pearl Sea and Pearl River mightily stretch
out in front;
Brocade sails and brocade cables soar up highly
day after day.
Coral trees contained in Clams are transplanted
from jasper isles;¹⁸
Icy silk woven by mermen depicts [the scene]
for silver dollars.¹⁹
Here one erects towering buildings, resembling
giant mirrors;
There one arranges deep rooms where trading
barbarians hide.

The towering buildings and deep rooms are not
of one mold;
The curious flowers and strange buds are not
the same color.
Agate: the red is pierced—the screen faces the
garden;
Glass is encased in green: windows obliquely
fastened.²⁰
The colored banners on sala trees flutter in the
wind;²¹
The balustrades of green jade reach out beyond
the clouds.
When one welcomes a captain one doesn't
known his name;
From the translation of interpreters his country
is learned.²²

Such a curly-bearded, eagle-eyed fellow from some
country
Dressed in gold asks his questions—who does he seek
to impress?
Discussing the price, he can understand the dialect
of Wu and Yue;²³
Entertaining guests he also knows the protocol of
the Han and Tang.²⁴

Their silver coins carry the image of the face of
their foreign ruler,
The glass mirrors are decorated with the shapes of
flower maidens.
Kept in the cages are silky calves and uncovered
hounds;²⁵
Covering the stairs are feather weaves and camel-
hair carpets.

Camel-hair carpets and feather weaves are not
worth listing;
Terebinth resin and agalloch eaglewood are used at
will.
A lotus-flower clock estimates the movement of
the sun,
A richly decorated watch hangs the needle at noon.
Disorderly one throws into the jade the storax
balm;
And one pours out the red and yellow juice of
grapes.
The water music is taught to become little phoe-
nixes;
On the organ the playing brings forth the red
cockatoo.²⁶

Then there are foreign fellows who walk arm in
arm;
Their bodies wrapped in cotton, their trousers are
tight.
The short sword at their waist hails from the far
west;
The revolvers in their sleeves come from Portugal.
Ink-black dragon-slaves²⁷ happily carry their guns;
Red-haired barbarians twirling try out their
blades.²⁸

When the red-haired barbarians arrive at
Wampoa,
People rush to announce they load wares and
open their hold.
Centipede-like sharp boats fly on and off, plying
their oars,
To be covered by huge crates or large baskets of
one *polan*.²⁹
Calling and shouting to each other no one hears
anything—

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Who can guess whether they are happy or angry?

The Hong merchant looks happy, the foreign
merchant is pleased;
Happy together they lay out a banquet, jugs and
cups compete.

Which ship has most *huoji* or *munan*?³⁰
From where come ostriches and zebras?
Dispersed into city shops, these attract traveling
merchants:
As middlemen the brokers make the Co-hong
great.

The Co-hongs officially pay taxes but privately
fill their coffers;
Inside and outside seeks to win and are equal
in guile.
Huzhou silks and Guangzhou satins display
their colors;
Ouning tea and Raozhou porcelain both are
brilliant.
In a moment round and baroque pearls rush to
high officials,
At times “sing-songs” scheme for ingenious
construction.³¹

At this moment noble sons enjoy themselves in
the company of flowers;
On this occasion bewitching maidens sing on
their house boats.
Wanting to emulate mandarin ducks they
embroider feathered kerchiefs;
Wanting to become pampered birds they hang
up the golden hook.
But how can the jewels of Qin press down all
their temple locks?
They really detest that ‘washed-in-fire’ does not
wrap their head.³²

On the Yongqing Terrace the drums are rapidly
beaten;³³
Mountains shake, waves collapse as a thunder-
storm starts.
The General who Pacifies the Ocean returns
after washing his cannon;
The Commander for Castigating the Natives

enters with furled banners.

At the main gate the troops are rewarded,
standing there for a while;
The passes are then inspected of the ships
returning to Macao.³⁴

The returning ships are only leaving with a
northerly monsoon;
As you shed tears don’t refuse to lodge in
rooms on the deep!
May you only narrate that the Celestial Court’s
dues and taxes are light;
May you only praise the wealth of China’s
agriculture and sericulture.
The eaglewood official is a Censor Wu;
The clerks refusing bribes are like Governor
Kong.³⁵
No whale has his cave here,³⁶ typhoons brings
no fog;
The Sagely Virtue cherishes you softly for myri-
ads of springs.
Next year the manner of the new houses will
have changed:
May distant regions come again to ask for the
ford.³⁷

Zhao Yi (1727-1814)

The Foreign Vessel

Arising steeply—a boat of a hundred rods
That blocks the tide just like a mountain range:
It carries in one go a thousand *polan*,³⁸
So its enormous bulk cannot be fathomed.
In front is painted a ferocious roc-head³⁹
And to the sides two fish-eyes have been dotted.
The size is large, so the materials are many,
And its construction needed lots of artisans.
Mountain thorns and water *sala* trees are used
Because they can withstand the briny waves,
And to avoid collision with magnetic rocks
They don’t rely on any kind of iron.
The cracks are filled by running tar
And coir palm rods are used as nails.

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The hold is divided into several layers,
 And each of them has transverse bulkheads.
 Cannon are arrayed at the portholes;
 The compartments are filled with goods.
 The water vats are filled with hundreds of *hu*,
 The rice stores are a thousand picul of food.
 Entering, people go down by a rope
 And exiting they climb up by a rope.
 When closed it's dark like a hole of ink;
 When opened, there's one line of light.⁴⁰
 The cabin in the rear, however, has bright windows;
 The captain lives there in considerable comfort.
 Glass encases open-weave silk
 And woolens carry brocade curtains.⁴¹
 On earth in boxes there are vegetable patches
 And pots are arrayed to form a flower screen.
 Of all little things there's none that isn't there,
 So showing even more the size of the ship.

When such a foreign vessel sails on the sea,
 It's carried by the waves across the main.
 The helmsman inspects the compass
 And determines the course without markers.
 For spreading the sails there are three masts;
 In rolling up and unfurling [these sails] they
 show strange ingenuity.
 Hanging down, they're like clouds covering
 heaven
 And serve as a protection against the fierce sun.
 In a moment it is a hundred, a thousands of
 miles
 As they quickly rush forward through the void.
 They move the boat not by any physical exertion
 But only employ the force of the high winds
 And inside this all-enclosing single breath
 They go alone without any companion at their
 side.
 The stars and the Dipper appear to sink again
 While the sun and the moon touch each other.
 During rains often a chilly fire arises,
 And when it's dark a red glare may shine.⁴²

At times they encounter the dragon Ananda⁴³
 And billows are stirred up as it whips its tail;
 And then there are the mighty *mojie* whales,
 That widely open their maw to swallow the boat.
 Such weird dangers may appear any moment
 And the boatmen oppose them, fighting for
 their lives.
 Their one hundred Frankish cannon
 Rumble together, spitting out a poisonous mi-
 asma.
 Having fired all arrows of their tight crossbows
 They throw them into the middle of the vat.⁴⁴
 Crying out, the call on the Heavenly Consort;⁴⁵
 Deeply frightened they pray for divine generals.
 When exhausted they're lucky enough to escape,
 They are bereft of their souls for several days.
 Alas! How would these people from abroad
 Love to be buried in the stomachs of fishes?
 Traveling they're willing to risk their life nine
 times,
 Because they hope for a threefold reward.
 To slight one's life for the sake of profit
 Is sure an illness shared by the whole world.

When I passed by the Tiger's Mouth,⁴⁶
 It so happened they had anchored there.
 I went up by a rope ladder to have a look
 So I might expand my experience.
 These trading barbarians have green eyes
 And their towering buns are quite exceptional.⁴⁷
 Their tight clothes closely wrap their bodies;
 Dressed in woolens, they don't use silk padding.
 At their waist they carry a gold-inlaid sword;
 With their hands they pour a jade-colored
 brew.⁴⁸
 Taking off their hats, they hold them under their
 arms
 And bow at the waist to show deference.
 They say they so respect an honored guest;
 This custom of theirs is praised by the rites.
 Babbling they tell through an interpreter

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That even though this ship may be tall,
That once they are out on the open ocean
It is only just like a little bean.
This principle definitely is right;
This word truly is not unfounded.

I pondered the size of the Nine Continents
That are surrounded by the sea on all sides.
If Heaven were to firmly block them,
Who could direct them towards the center?
Only here in the middle this dynasty has its Sage
And the joyous energy stretches far and wide.
The sight of communication through multiple
interpreters
Suffices to prove the splendor of these lustrous
times.
Now I look down on Zhang Qian of the Han
who only
Investigated the [trading route] of betel pepper
paste.⁴⁹
A Confucian official, I humbly administer this
region;
Visiting the borders, I make detailed investiga-
tions.
Now times are clear, foreign barks congregate
from afar,
And surely the peaceful meetings are unob-
structed.
It also imports to rule and govern them fittingly
So they'll honestly abide by rules and regula-
tions.
But hunting for trifles they brave storms and
waves,
And the energy of these people is very volatile.
Treasonous people secretly conspire with them
And the market brokers flatter and serve them.
Softly Cherishing truly depends on pacification
And one has to guard against any fault or rift.
In writing this poem I consider the distant fu-
ture,
This isn't the same as some little song of the sea.

Appendix

Two Entries from Zhao Yi's Yanpu zaji

Western Ships

For the length and width of Western ships, see the poem *The Foreign Vessel* that I wrote. Their sails are especially peculiar. The masts are several tens of rods in height; the biggest ones need more than ten people to embrace them, and a single mast costs several thousands of tael. A ship has three masts, and the central mast is the biggest one. Chinese sails are from top to bottom of the same width, but western sails are broader above and narrower below, and look liked an opened folding fan. When you see them from afar, they almost resemble clouds that hang down from heaven—at their widest they must reach a hundred rods! When Chinese sails are hoisted up, one only pulls a single cable. To their side each section has one rope, which is only used to pull and make them catch the wind. In the case of Western sails, each rope is pulled, and a single sail may have hundreds of ropes that are mixed up like tangled hemp, but these foreigners know the function of each without any confusion.⁵⁰ They also can turn a head wind into a favorable wind: Using the first two sails they open a gate, causing the wind from ahead to collide with the sail in the back, so the wind will turn and change into a favorable wind—their ingenuity is unfathomable! The vessels of the red-haired barbarians have several tens of sails on each vessel, so as to be even more capable of making side winds and head winds into favorable winds.

The Barbarians

Guangdong is the place where the overseas barbarians congregate. There are white barbarians and black barbarians, and the Cantonese call them 'white devils' and 'black devils.' The white ones are reddish in the face, but their eyebrows are white; even young

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people are hoary like frost and snow. The black ones have black eyebrows and their face is also dark, but somewhat lighter than their eyebrows, like a light ink wash. The whites are the masters and the blacks are their slaves; this difference in status is determined from birth. These black slaves are very conscientious by nature and also quite strong. They also can dive and fetch things underwater, and when their masters order them to dive into the sea, they will not shirk from krakens and snakes. ‘Mohe’ and ‘black Kunlun’ as they were called anciently also must have belonged to this race.⁵¹

One family bought a black slave and gave him a Cantonese servant as wife. When she gave birth to a son, someone taunted him by saying, ‘You are a black devil, so your son also should be black. Now your son is white, so it cannot be your son.’ The black slave was indeed filled by doubt and with a knife hacked through its shin so it died. When the shin bone turned out to be solidly black,

he was overcome by grief, only now realizing that the bones belong to the father, while the skin and the flesh come from the mother’s body.⁵²

There is also a kind of red barbarians. While their face is white, their eyebrows and hair are both red. That’s why they are called red-haired barbarians. Their country is Holland.

Aomen (Macao) in Xiangshan district has long been a place where these barbarians have settled and our dynasty has established an assistant magistrate there to control them. Those barbarians who live in Aomen make their living by trading overseas by boat. The women are skilled in needlework, but they refuse to marry their daughters out, they only accept living-in sons-in-law. The people of Xiangshan all can speak the foreign tongue, and those who desire the profit, often become living-in sons-in-law.

Zhao Yi and Yao Yuanzhi, *Yanpu zaji Zhuyeting zaji*. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, 65-66.⁵³ 

NOTES

- 1 Wilt L. Idema, “Cannon, Clocks and Clever Monkeys: Europeana, Europeans and Europe in Some Early Ch’ing Novels.” In *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, edited by E.B. Vermeer, 459-88. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990.
- 2 Weng Eang Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade, 1684-1798*. Richmond: Curzon, 1997. For a general description of Canton trade in the eighteenth century see Paul A. van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005.
- 3 One merchant, Pan Youdu 潘有度 (Poankeequa II), produced a set of twenty quatrains on Westerners and their customs in the early nineteenth century. See Cai Hong-sheng 蔡鴻生, “Qingdai Guanzhou hangshang de Xiyangguan—Pan Youdu Xiyang zayong pingshuo” 清代廣州行商的西洋觀—潘有度西洋雜詠評說, *Guangzhou shehui kexue* 2003.1: 70-76. Pan Youdu was the fourth son and successor of Pan Qiguan 潘啟官 (Poanqeequa I) who by his death in 1788 had long been the most successful Hong merchant. See Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015, 61-94.

- 4 For surveys of this kind of poetry see for instance Chen Yongzheng 陳永正, *Lingnan shige yanjiu* 嶺南詩歌研究. Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 2008, 493-512; Dai Shengde 戴勝德, *Zhongguo nanhai Haiyang wenhua zhuan* 中國南海海洋文化傳. Guangzhou: Guangdong jingji chubanshe, 2013, 331-62; Leng Dong 冷東, Jin Feng 金峰 and Xiao Chuneng 肖楚能, *Shisanhang yu Lingnan shehui bianqian* 十三行與嶺南社會變遷. Guangzhou: Guangzhou chubanshe, 2014, 297-304.
- 5 Chen Guowei 陳國威, “Zhao Yi shiwen zhongde Zhongwai jiaoliu shiliao kaolun” 趙翼詩文中的中外交流史料考論, *Shanxi gaodeng xuexiao shehui kexue xuebao* 22.6 (2010): 107-11.
- 6 Chen Qingyun 陳清雲, Zhao Yi nianpu xinbian 趙翼年譜新編. Shanghai: Shanghai shiji chubanshe, 2016, 206-08. I think it very likely that Zhang Jiuyue participated in the same event.
- 7 The poem starts out with four sections of eight lines. The following six sections all consist of six lines, and the final section is made up of ten lines.
- 8 See for instance “The Canton Waterfront, watercolour on silk, c. 1760-1780” in Craig Clunas, *Chinese Export Watercolours*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984, 18 (Pl.1); Paul A. Van Dyke and Maria Kar-wing

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Mok, *Images of the Canton Factories 1766-1822*. Reading History in Art. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015.

- 9 A detailed description of the flower boats and the sex industry is provided by Zhao Yi in his *Yanpu zaji* 簪曝雜記 (Zhao Yi and Yao Yuanzhi 姚原之, *Yanpu zaji*, Zhuyeting zaji 簪曝雜記, 竹葉亭雜記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, 62-63).
- 10 Piracy was a major concern at the time. Zhao Yi at one moment had to judge a case involving 118 pirates. See Zhao Yi and Yao Yuanzhi, *Yanpu zaji*, Zhuyeting zaji, 1982, 63-64.
- 11 The most extensive discussion of Zhang Jiuyue's poem is provided by Cai Hongshen in his "Qingdai Guangzhou de Helanguan" 清代廣州的荷蘭館 in Cai Hongsheng ed., *Guangzhou yu haiyang wenming* 廣州與海洋文明. Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1997, 338-55. Cai is convinced that the description of the factories focuses on the Dutch factory. He ignores the last sections of the poem. In his article he also includes a description of a visit to the Dutch factory by the Shandong juren Zeng Qiru 曾妻如 in his *Nanzhong xinglü ji* 南中行旅記. Like Zhang, Zeng is very much impressed by the opulence of the factories, outside and inside.
- 12 The translation divides the text by line spaces on the basis of content.
- 13 From the seventeenth century we have a description by Qu Dajun 屈大均 (1630-1696) of his visit to a Dutch ship in Canton. See Zhang Wenqin 章文欽, "Ming-Qing shidai Helan yu Guangzhou kou'an de maoyi yu jiaowang" 明清時代荷蘭與廣州口岸的貿易與交往 in Cai Hongsheng ed., *Guangzhou yu haiyang wenming*. Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1997, 304-05.
- 14 Some of the Chinese terms Zhao Yi uses may of course well be due to idiomatic translations by his interpreters.
- 15 The establishment of the Co-hongs had been met with great suspicion on the side of the foreign companies. For a detailed description of the Dutch reaction, see Yong Liu, *The Dutch East India Company's Tea Trade with China 1757-1781*. Leiden: Brill, 2007, 92-101.
- 16 For a detailed discussion of the establishment and the formal dissolution of the guild see Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011, 49-66. The East India companies at Canton had long asked for the dissolution of the guild. Van Dyke argues that the local officials sought and received imperial permission to disband the guild, but that Poankeequa, the leading Chinese merchant in Canton, convinced the British East India Company to provide him with 100,000 taels as a bribe for the officials to dissolve the guild, but that he used the money to distribute gifts to the local officials following the imperial decision in order to receive permission to retire.
- 17 Cheong, *Hong Merchants of Canton*, 208-13.
- 18 The "Clams" mentioned in this line are magical sea creatures that cause fata morgana on the oceans. Coral trees were highly prized exotics.
- 19 The translation of this line is tentative. The word translated as "silver dollars" is baiyang 白洋 ("white oceans", short for "white ocean coins") and has been chosen to contrast with

"jasper isles." One wonders whether the poet is inspired by a painting of the Canton waterfront as are already known from this period in water colors or in oil.

- 20 The translation of these two lines is tentative. The green color of western buildings was noted by more poets at the time.
- 21 The sala trees are the trees below which the Buddha achieved enlightenment. Here they would appear to describe the tall flagpoles outside the factories of the foreign traders.
- 22 More literally rendered this line would read, "Through translations one obtains from the interpreters from which country he is." Cai Hongsheng understands "which country" (heguo 何國) as "Holland."
- 23 "Wu and Yue" usually refers to the Jiangnan region.
- 24 The Han dynasty lasted from 206 BCE till 220 CE; the Tang dynasty lasted from 617-906. They here represent Chinese culture.
- 25 "Silky calves" and "uncovered hounds" are creatures of Chinese mythology. Silky calves are a kind of small bovines; uncovered dogs are flying dogs that can devour tigers.
- 26 The translation of these two lines is tentative. "Little phoenixes" and "the red cockatoo" might be the names of tunes or evoke the nature of the sounds produced. While the introduction of organs into China is well known, the meaning "water music" (shuiyue 水樂) is not clear to me. The two Chinese characters are usually understood as "the music of streams" or (read as shuile) as "the pleasures of streams." Perhaps the author refers to the marine bands that played on ships when the Hoppo measured foreign vessels at Whampoa. One could also surmise that he refers to the tinkling of the large glass lanterns outside the factories when moved by the wind that was noted by Zeng Qiru, who claims the lanterns are made of water crystal (shuijing 水晶).
- 27 "Dragon-slaves" (longnu 龍奴) most likely is a dialect expression meaning "slaves," chosen here for its parallelism with guizi 鬼子.
- 28 "Red-haired barbarians" does not exclusively refer to the Dutch, but may more generally refer to Europeans.
- 29 One polan 婆蘭 is the equivalent of three hundred pounds. Again, the translation is tentative.
- 30 Early sources describe huoji 火齊 either as a special kind of pearls or as a roseate precious stone that resembles pearls, originating from South or Southeast Asia. Munan 木難 is a name for precious dark-green pearls. Zhao Yi devotes one entry in his *Yanpu zaji* to the spectacular prices of imported pearls in Guangzhou.
- 31 These two lines puzzle me. While the preceding lines list the three main exports of China (silk, tea, and porcelain), all very useful products, these two lines would appear to refer to the overpriced and useless imports of the Westerners that were much sought after by officials. We already noted the exceedingly high prices the Chinese were willing to pay for imported pearls (Zhao Yi noted in his *Yanpu zaji* that the price had started to go up once one governor had started to buy them). The line was changed in a later edition of Zhang Jiuyue's collected works, perhaps because the criticism of official corruption was considered too blunt. The second line may refer to mechanical gadgets such as

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- watches that were requested from foreign merchants to be presented by the Canton authorities to their superiors and in which novelty was very much prized.
- 32 “Washed-in-fire” refers to asbestos, including textiles made of asbestos, presumably a very precious commodity. Zhao Yi in his *Yanpu zaji* estimated that seventy to eighty thousand people made their living from the sex industry, so it should not come as a surprise that not all girls made a fortune at their trade.
- 33 I have been unable to identify the location of Yongqing Terrace 永清台. One of the southern gates of Guangzhou was Yong-qingmen 永清門. One may note that the forts at Bocca Tigris also were called “terraces” (gun emplacements). While none of these eight forts was called Yongqing, perhaps our poet used Yong-qing (Forever Pure/Qing) as an appropriate general designation of these forts.
- 34 Western ships preferred to leave in November or December, but occasionally departed only in January or February. In order to be able to leave, foreign vessels needed a written statement from the Hoppo (the Grand Chop) that they had paid all their dues and were allowed to depart. The Grand Chop was checked at Bocca Tigris. Dian H. Murray, *Pirates on the South China Coast 1790-1810*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987, 98-106 sketches a depressing picture of the effectiveness of the Qing naval forces in Guangdong during the final decades of the eighteenth century.
- 35 Wu and Kong are honest officials of earlier days. Wu Yinshi 吳隱之 (d. 413) was widely renowned for his frugality throughout his life. In 400 he was dispatched to Guangzhou to deal with local corruption. Kong Kui 孔戣 (d. 824) when serving as governor of Lingnan only took his official salary and would not accept any gifts.
- 36 Whales are credited with the ability to swallow ships. The dangerous *mojie* 魔羯 whale is also mentioned by Zhao Yi.
- 37 The expression “to ask for the ford” is often used in the sense of asking about local conditions and prices.
- 38 A polan (bahar) weighs 300 pounds.
- 39 The bird that anciently was depicted at the prow of a Chinese boat is the *yi* 鷁, a mythic water bird that is good at flying. “Roc” is used here because the *yi* is said to be “ferocious.” By the Qing the bow of Chinese junks usually sported a tiger’s head.
- 40 Up to this line this poem would appear to describe a large ocean-going junk rather than a square-rigged western vessel.
- 41 The translation of these two lines is tentative.
- 42 St. Elmo’s fire.
- 43 The second son of the dragon god of the Eastern Ocean.
- 44 The translation of this line is tentative. Qian Mu 錢穆 (852-932), the founder of the tenth-century kingdom of Wu-Yue, once fought back the boar of the Qiantang River that threatened his capital Hangzhou by firing his crossbow at the huge waves.
- 45 Mazu.
- 46 Bocca Tigris.
- 47 The wigs of the officers?
- 48 Gin? White wine?
- 49 Tang Meng 唐蒙 (not Zhang Qian 張騫), when visiting the independent kingdom of Nanyue at Guangzhou in 135 BCE, established that the betel pepper sauce he was served had reached Guangzhou by way of Guizhou from Sichuan. In preparation for an attack on Nanyue, emperor Wu cut off this trading route. Zhang Qian (d. 113 BCE) had spent many years traveling in Central Asia and enjoyed great fame as an explorer. Zhao Yi here belittles the extent of his geographical knowledge.
- 50 Chinese observers were greatly intrigued by the intricate rigging of Western ships and their ability to sail against the wind. Cf. Idema, “Europeana, Europeans and Europe,” 471-72.
- 51 For “blacks” in China before the sixteenth century (many of whom originated from Southeast Asia), see Don Wyatt, *The Blacks of Premodern China*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. The blacks of Macao in the seventeenth and eighteenth century included Africans but also men and women from South and Southeast Asia. For the changing views on “blacks” following the appearance of Africans, see Pang Naiming 龐乃明, “Yinxi yu chongsu: Ming-Qing zhi ji Heiren xingxiang de lishi jiangou” 因襲與重塑明清之際黑人形象的歷史建構, *Hebei xuekan* 36.6 (2016), 60-67.
- 52 This urban legend is also already recorded by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715). See “Heigui 黑鬼” in Pu Songling, *Liao-zhai zhiyi jiaozhu* 聊齋誌異校註, ann. Sheng Wei 盛偉. 2 vols. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2000, vol. 1, 741.
- 53 Zhao Yi and Yao Yuanzhi, *Yanpu zaji Zhuyeting zaji*, 1982, 65-66.

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