

The Tragic Hero Lin Zexu Immortalized in Macao's Lian Feng Miao

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ABSTRACT: A native of Fujian province, Lin Zexu was appointed Imperial Commissioner to halt rampant opium trafficking. Launching a "forcible" opium suppression campaign, he coercively confiscated and destroyed an enormous amount of opium at Humen in June 1839. Meanwhile, he went to Macao to press the Portuguese authorities for cooperation to curb the British opium trade, and the historic Sino-Portuguese meeting was held in Lian Feng Miao (Temple of the Lotus). His commanding role was crucial in the events leading up to the Sino-British animosities. After China's defeat in the First Opium War, the hardliner was banished to remote Yili in Xinjiang. Before long, he had been rehabilitated to tackle the Taiping Rebellion, but died on his way to take up his new appointment. Posthumously, he has been well remembered on the international stage. In his honour, the United Nations designated 26 June as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. In recognition of his brief visit to Macao, Lin Zexu has been revered in the prominent area of Lian Feng Miao.

KEYWORDS: Humen; Lin Weixi Incident; Opium War; Mercantile capitalism; Predatory imperialism.

After the death of the Qianlong Emperor in 1799, the Qing Empire began to decline during the reign of the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820) and a self-sufficient China was increasingly undermined by a booming drug trade that triggered severe socio-economic repercussions. With characteristic Fujianese traits of courage, integrity, and stamina, Lin Zexu 林則徐 (alternative spelling in Cantonese: Lin Tse-hsu) (1785–1850) was a scholar-statesman, writer, poet,

thinker, and reformer. Appointed *Qinchai Dachen* 欽差大臣 (Imperial Commissioner)¹ by the Daoguang Emperor (r. 1820–1850) to rein in unbridled opium trafficking, Lin Zexu launched a hard-hitting anti-opium campaign in Guangzhou² in 1839. The hardliner carried out significant destruction of opium cargoes at Humen 虎門,³ and went to Macao to press the Portuguese authorities for cooperation to ban the British opium trade. The subsequent Sino-British animosities were precipitated by the Lin Weixi 林維喜 Incident and further aggravated in the Battle of Chuanbi 穿鼻. Lin's quixotic mission to save his fellow countrymen from drug addiction turned into a catalyst for the First Opium War.

This paper considers Lin Zexu's fiery enthusiasm in carrying out the anti-opium operation, and his determined confrontation with Western predatory imperialism in the age of mercantile capitalism and

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economic exploitation. It discusses his pioneering rationale in learning about the outside world for reforms and self-strengthening in a declining and narcotized China. The focus then shifts to examine his distinguished posthumous recognition in Macao's Lian Feng Miao, and his literary creations during his exiled years.

The Rise of a Fujianese Scholar

Lin Zexu was born in Houguan 侯官 (present-day Fuzhou 福州), Fujian province. His father Lin Binri 林賓日 had passed the imperial civil service examination at the county level for the *xiucaí* 秀才 degree and served as a minor official in the Qing government. Since childhood, Lin was nurtured with Confucian education. At the age of 14,⁴ Lin obtained the *xiucaí* degree, and at 20 he passed the provincial level for the *juren* 舉人 degree. At 21 he joined the Ministry of Sea Defence as a secretary in Xiamen (the main trading port of Fujian), where he came to realize that many foreigners were collaborating with the Chinese in smuggling opium (Lee, 2005:3).

In 1811 Lin passed the national level for the highest *jinshi* 進士 degree, or Advanced Scholar, at age 26. Meanwhile, he worked at the prestigious Hanlin Yuan 翰林院 (Hanlin Academy)⁵ in Beijing, and was next appointed *daotai* 道臺 (intendant supervising a circuit of counties) in Zhejiang province. After 1816 he rose rapidly through the ranks of bureaucracy from a chief examiner, to a tax collector, to a lieutenant-governor, and to the director-general of the Yellow River and Grand Canal. In 1823 he served as *anchasi* 按察史 (judicial commissioner) in Jiangsu province. He soon earned the sobriquet “Lin Qing Tian” 林青天 (Lin, the Clear Sky) (Chang, 1964:122) in reference to the virtuous and upright Magistrate Bao Zheng 包拯 (999–1062) of the Song dynasty. In 1832 he was appointed Governor of Jiangsu.

Working in several localities, Lin took on different provincial services: supervising scholastic examinations; overseeing drainage systems; solving irrigation and flooding problems; reining in corruption; and helping



Portrait of Lin Zexu from the Lin Zexu Memorial Museum. Photo by the author.

impoverished farmers. All these experiences laid a good foundation for his future career as a prominent statesman. In 1837 he was promoted to the position of Governor-General (also called Viceroy) of Huguang 湖廣,⁶ fully referred to as the Governor-General of Hubei and Hunan provinces. It was during this tenure that the scholar-official began launching a suppression program, with remarkable results, against the trading of opium (Chang, 1964:120).

Accelerated Spread of Opium

In consequence of the Industrial Revolution (ca. 1760–1840), Britain established itself as an industrialized, capitalist country, let alone as the world's pre-eminent naval and colonial power. On behalf of the British Crown with a Royal Charter, the East India Company (EIC)⁷ had by then already become the dominant military and political force ruling the Mughal state of Bengal in 1757.⁸

In 1773 this mighty commercial organization obtained the monopoly on opium distribution at Patna and Benares in Bengal. The control of opium production in India instantly provided Britain with a booming opium trade in Asia⁹ ("The Drug Situation Prior to the Establishment of an International Drug Control System", 2008:20).

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the vice of opium smoking had already raised national concerns in China. When the first Chinese prohibition edict banning opium smoking was issued by the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1722–1735) in 1729, there were about 200 chests¹⁰ of opium being exported to China annually (Chang, 1964:19). From the 1770s the EIC started exporting sizeable, lucrative Bengali opium to Guangzhou. In particular, following the failed Macartney Mission to Beijing in 1793,¹¹ a triangular trade pattern was set in motion amid Britain's trade imbalance with a virtually self-sufficient China, that is, the imports of Chinese tea and silk were paid for by the huge exports of Indian opium (Lee, 2005:4).

In 1796 China's economy was collapsing due to the outflow of capital for the drug (Brochu et al., 2018:52). The ever-expanding opium consumption prompted yet another edict decreed by the Jiaqing Emperor (r. 1796–1820) to prohibit the importation of opium in 1799. But the imperial edict was ineffectual as drug smuggling continued through Macao and other

coastal regions because of the laxity of the prohibition laws. In 1807 Jiaqing came to know that the spread of opium had gone beyond Guangdong and Fujian provinces, and issued an edict to impose more severe punishments on opium smokers. In 1831 as many as five edicts were decreed reiterating anti-opium determination (Chang, 1964:19–20, 220).

Despite all harsh punitive edicts, the consumption of opium was appallingly on the increase. By the 1830s, there were some ten million opium addicts in China (Lee, 2005:1). In the year 1835–1836, over 27,000 chests of opium were unloaded in Guangzhou, and 34 million silver dollars left China to pay for the drug in the third decade of the nineteenth century (Wakeman, 1975:126). The mass addiction wracking China ruined personal health, undermined social stability, created havoc with productivity and wrecked the national economy.

Shocked by the vast narcotized population and the prosperous drug trade, the Daoguang Emperor was gravely concerned about the opium imports and silver exports, not to mention that he was disconcerted by the inefficacy of local officials in halting this insidious trade. Under these circumstances, there were a series of debates between those favouring opium legalization and those siding with suppression.

On the legalization of opium, Xu Naiji 許乃濟 (1777–1839), a sub-director of the Court of Sacrificial Worship, sent a memorial on legalizing opium in June 1836, suggesting that legalization would have eliminated the outflow of silver and stopped the dominant foreign role in the trade (Cheng et al., 1999:111–114). In a different vein, Zhu Zun 朱嶠 (1791–1862), a vice-minister of the Board of Rites, and Xu Qiu 許球, a supervising secretary, firmly argued against the legalizer Xu Naiji's proposal. These two memorialists advocated a "war on drugs" with strict prohibition designed to dry up the supply of the drug and discourage its domestic marketing and use. In October 1836 Zhu Zun sent a strong-worded memorial on banning opium (Cheng et al., 1999:114–119).



Image of the Patna opium in chests from the Lin Zexu Memorial Museum. Photo by the author.

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As opium turned out to be the most valuable commercial crop and the basis of almost all commerce with China, the torrent of poisonous inflow was escalating out of control. In the year 1838–1839, an unprecedented 40,200 chests of opium reached Guangzhou (Chang, 1964:223). The startling influx of opium had led to an even more serious drain of silver westwards and left the economy in tatters. Lin Zexu, one of the most avowedly anti-opium officials in the Qing court, presented a lengthy memorial proposing rigid prohibition of opium in July 1838 (Kuo, 1935:219–226). By October Daoguang received 28 memorials from provincial governors on dealing with these problematic issues, but he could not make up his mind on the various options.

In late 1838 two alarming factors expedited Daoguang's decision to impose austere interdiction. First, he came to know that two royals were caught smoking opium in the imperial household in Beijing. Second, he received a memorial reporting the seizure of 130,000 ounces of opium in Tianjin, brought from Guangdong (Mao, 2005:77). This was the largest haul since the 1729 prohibition of the drug. Obviously, opium had already penetrated into the power centre and poisoned its adjacent door—Tianjin. The very vicious lair of supply was the “South Gate” of China—Guangzhou.

Lin Zexu's Arrival in Guangzhou

Since the early nineteenth century, Guangzhou was the sole trading hub for foreigners. Qing officials often showed considerable laxity in managing the trade and ample compromise in dealing with the foreign community. With the abolition of the exclusive rights of the East India Company on 21 April 1834, free traders participated in various activities with exceptional freedom (Kuo, 1935:18–19). From an examination of the China trade done by the British Parliament in the 1830s, Paul A. Van Dyke cites their own remarks that “[G]reater facilities are given to trade in the port of Canton [Guangzhou] than in almost any port in the world” (Van Dyke, 2018:21).

In view of the accommodating and competitive ambience, foreigners engaged in all types of commerce, including smuggling. Thomas H. Cox has observed that in the 1830s and 1840s Guangzhou carried a commercial culture that unofficially tolerated drug smuggling. Fortunes could be made by trading in legitimate items just as successfully as in illegitimate ones, which tellingly suggests that the rapid spread of opium smuggling in Guangzhou could be the result of being too lax, if not inadequate, management. Turning a blind eye to the illegal transactions of opium that ran parallel to the legal trade, officials of all ranks were apparently involved in the drug trade (Cox, 2018:133–134).

Given the proliferating opium trade in Guangzhou and the uncontrollable consumption of the drug, the Qing court resolved to enact stricter anti-opium measures. As many memorials hinted, or stated explicitly, bribery flourished among corrupt officials in Guangzhou, and Daoguang thus chose not to rely on them for this task. From four well-qualified candidates, the emperor summoned Lin Zexu to Beijing for an audience in late 1838 (Mao, 2005:78).

Highly recognized for his integrity, impeccable reputation, and law-abiding dedication in various posts, Lin was appointed Imperial Commissioner on the last day of 1838. Daoguang bestowed on this incorruptible overseer the command of all the naval forces in Guangdong and sent an edict to the governor-general in Guangzhou demanding his full support for Lin (Chang, 1964:120).

In January 1839 the newly invested high official, described as a thoughtful person with an imposing exterior, having a dignified and firm expression, embarked on his journey to Guangzhou (Kuo, 1935:102). Lin Zexu's mission was to institute a rigid prohibition of the opium trade and to rein in the unbridled illegal inflow of opium by British merchants. At that moment, the 54-year-old Imperial Commissioner reached the height of his power and popularity.

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Casa Garden, Macao. Photo by the author.

Lin Zexu reached Guangzhou on 10 March 1839. He must have found this port city impressive with countless foreigners involved in numerous kinds of trade and commerce. People of multiple races, religions, or nationalities—Europeans, Americans, Armenians, Muslims, Parsees, Greeks, Turks, Jews, and Southeast Asians—were granted the same privileges and equal access to do business (with the exception of the Russians and Japanese, as they had treaties with China to trade in other Chinese ports) (Van Dyke, 2018:21–23). They lived and worked in the “factory area” within a small strip of land in the western suburbs of Guangzhou designated for foreigners (Lee, 2005:1).

Up to the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese civilization developed relatively independently from the rest of the world. China was overweening with a sense of superiority and imbued with a Sinocentric worldview. In such a way, officials at all levels had a limited understanding of the outside world. In light of the presence of these many nationalities, Lin Zexu aspired to gain deeper knowledge of the outside world. He began to gather information (or an anthropological study in a modern sense) about foreign people and their advanced technology and science. He believed that “learning from the West” would lead to reforms in China.

Since his arrival and until his downfall in late 1840, Lin paid close attention to translated foreign newspapers, and made laudable efforts in mobilizing a translation team to work on a number of foreign publications (Zhang, 2002:5–6). Among a group of translators was a young man, Liang Jinde 梁進德 (1820–1862), the son of a Protestant missionary from Macao. Liang was also Lin’s personal interpreter.

One remarkable work was the translation of Hugh Murray’s (1779–1846) *An Encyclopaedia of Geography* (1834). Edited by Lin himself under the title *Sizhouzhi* 《四洲志》 (*The Four Continents*), this book covered extensive reports on history, geography, society, commerce, industry, political institutions, traditions and customs of 34 countries, as well as the religions of the world.

In the twentieth century, some scholars regarded Lin as the first Chinese who proposed learning from the West (Mao, 2005:104). His innovative ideas precisely paved the way for the *Ziqiang yundong* 自強運動 (Self-Strengthening Movement), also known as the *Yangwu yundong* 洋務運動 (Western Affairs Movement) during the reign of the Tongzhi Emperor (r. 1862–1875). The movement (ca. 1861–1895) campaigned for economic, military and institutional reforms, and sought to acquire and apply Western naval and industrial technology for China’s modernization and revitalization.¹² Lin was *par excellence* the precursor of this movement.

Destruction of Opium at Humen

The year 1839 saw a series of cataclysmic events that represented a watershed in modern Chinese history. Under Qing law, selling opium was a crime punishable by exile or forced servitude in the military, and foreigners were subject to the same laws and punishments as they had no extraterritorial rights in China at that time (Mao, 2005:95). On 18 March 1839 Lin Zexu issued his first edict addressed to all foreigners in Guangzhou to observe laws and statutes, equally with Chinese subjects (Chang, 1964:139). With immense determination, and driven by his sense of righteousness and morality, Lin Zexu

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carried out his uncompromising anti-opium measures in Guangzhou. These measures were aimed at bringing the foreign traders/merchants under Chinese jurisdiction, and compelling them to surrender all their opium for destruction.

Through the foreigners' local liaisons—the cohong 公行,¹³ Lin coerced foreign merchants into forfeiting their opium stores within three days. Furthermore, he ordered them to sign pledges that they would not import any more into China. His commands were totally ignored. Under these trying circumstances he proceeded to blockade the foreigners' quarters and factories and cut off all supplies in order to press them into compliance with his orders. He also expanded the prohibition, forbidding the entire foreign community from leaving Guangzhou and stationed soldiers outside their factories to stop any escape (Mao, 2005:90–91).

Lin further detained Charles Elliot (1801–1875), the Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China, along with other British and American merchants, in the foreign merchants' factories. He additionally commanded the Guangzhou port authority to stop issuing passes for them to leave for Macao (Mao, 2005:95–97). Most of all, in April 1839 Lin instituted the death penalty for those who were involved in the opium trade, and ordered all merchants entering Guangzhou and foreign ships docking in Guangzhou to sign a new pledge, promising not to import opium (Hanes, 2002:57).

Coordinated with Guan Tianpei 關天培 (1781–1841)¹⁴, the Commander-in-Chief of Naval Forces of Guangdong province, Lin demanded all incoming foreign ships to be searched for opium in Guangzhou and forced their opium cargoes to be abandoned. In just six weeks, he arrested more than 1,700 Chinese opium dealers and confiscated over 70,000 opium pipes (Cox, 2018:136). Amid this raging suppression drive, Elliot reluctantly handed over massive opium stores on behalf of the merchants to the Chinese authorities and announced that all British subjects would leave Guangzhou.

Having offered a sacrifice and apologized to the God of the Sea for the impending decomposed opium being thrown into the sea, the Imperial Commissioner arrived at Humen, a town in Dongguan 東莞 (near Macao). This momentous work of narcotic destruction, commencing on 3 June 1839 and lasting for 23 days until 25 June, was carried out without interruption. It is on record that Lin destroyed 19,187 chests and 2,119 bags of opium—a total of 2,376,254 catties (about 1,400 tons) (Chang, 1964:171). This was about 60 per cent of all the opium brought to China from 1838 through to the monsoon season in 1839 (Mao, 2005:92).

Kuo Pin-chia has clearly described the process of destruction on the banks of the Pearl River outside Humen:

He [Lin] ordered two ponds to be constructed near the seashore, with paved bottom and protected walls, an aqueduct in its rear, and an exit in its front. Into the ponds was first introduced water, which was mixed with salt. Then the opium, cut in pieces, was put into the salt water to be dissolved. Finally, hot lime was thrown into the mixture, which totally decomposed the matter. The waste was thereupon sent out to the sea together with the receding tide by opening the front exit (Kuo, 1935:118).

The confiscated opium stocks were thrown into the sea with a workforce of about 500 labourers under the stringent surveillance of more than 60 civil/military officers and important officials, including Deng Tingzhen 鄧廷楨 (1776–1846),¹⁵ the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces (Chang, 1964:173–174).

Lin believed that British merchants who openly smuggled opium into China were breaking their country's own laws. The British Crown, he imagined, was probably ignorant of the situation (Mao, 2005:105). He thus wrote to the British monarch directly in an

open letter dated 27 August 1839¹⁶ requesting Queen Victoria to control her subjects and to stop the pernicious trafficking of opium. Lin was apparently unaware that the Queen, as a constitutional ruler, could not take any unilateral steps to stop the opium trade. For reasons unknown, the letter got lost “in the mail” during its eight thousand-mile trip from China to Britain (Hanes, 2002:39–41) (Lin’s letter will be taken up below).

In the meantime there was a celebration for the successful destruction of the confiscated opium and Lin Zexu, Guan Tianpei, and Deng Tingzhen met in the Shajiao Fort 沙角炮台 at Humen during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Bathed in bright moonlight and breezy wind, Lin composed a *ci* 詞 (verse) “Yue Hua Qing” 《月華清》 (Clear Moonlight) to commemorate this autumnal gathering (Lin, quoted in Ye, 2007:181). The lyric verse presents a picture of the unruffled sea, where seagulls are resting on the shores. Lin creates the impression of seeing the beautiful moon goddess and the shadow of the scented osmanthus tree on the moon. He even conveys a feeling of smelling the fragrance of the tree in that peaceful, relaxed evening. As the evening wears on, they drink wine and almost get drunk. The tone of the verse turns. Lin expresses sympathy to the homeless and the destitute. He looks forward to a time when all the opium houses will be closed, and when the opium trade will finally be suppressed.

While the trio was revelling in the Shajiao Fort, the lurking spectre of war had arrived on the South China coast. Annoyed by the Guangzhou detention and the Humen opium destruction, Charles Elliot repeatedly wrote to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston (1784–1865),¹⁷ pressing for stern measures by the British Crown on behalf of its subjects in China. Halfway across the globe, Britain already planned to go to war against China based on Elliot’s petition and reports dating from June 1839 (Mao, 2005:100–101).

The Lin Weixi Incident

As a further enforcement of the prohibition of opium, Lin Zexu conducted a thorough eradication of factories occupied by foreign merchants in Guangzhou. On 7 July 1839 he supervised their dismantling so as to prevent their re-occupation (Hanes, 2002:60). On that same day with sweltering heat, a brawl accidentally aggravated the mounting tension between China and Britain. A group of British and American sailors went ashore on the Kowloon peninsula. They were intoxicated and became riotous, destroying a temple and fighting with the locals. Two of the sailors killed Lin Weixi, a villager from nearby Tsim Sha Tsui 尖沙咀. Despite insistence from Chinese authorities, Charles Elliot refused to hand the culprits over, though he paid compensation to the victim’s family. Lin Zexu saw this as a violation of China’s sovereignty.

The Lin Weixi Incident immediately put the British community in peril. In view of Elliot’s refusal to hand the killers over while only charging five British sailors with riot and assault, Lin issued an edict on 12 August forbidding the sale of food and water to all British citizens in Guangzhou (Hanes, 2002:62). In addition, on 24 August Lin instructed the Portuguese Governor of Macao, Adrião Acácio da Silveira Pinto (d. 1868), to stop selling food to the British, to exclude British ships from entering into its harbour, and to expel the British residents from Macao. Lin also ordered the Chinese compradors and employees of the British to leave Macao (Mao, 2005:113–114). In short, Lin’s decision to expel the British from Guangzhou and Macao was based on his anger about the foreign offenders’ transgression on Chinese soil.

The British withdrew accordingly and gathered around Hong Kong¹⁸ and Kowloon. The situation grew more precarious as the Chinese authorities in Kowloon refused to supply food and water to them as well (Kuo, 1935:119–123). More than that, Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen set off to Macao on 3 September 1839, putting political and military pressure on the Portuguese authorities to stop the British from returning to Macao (which will be discussed below).

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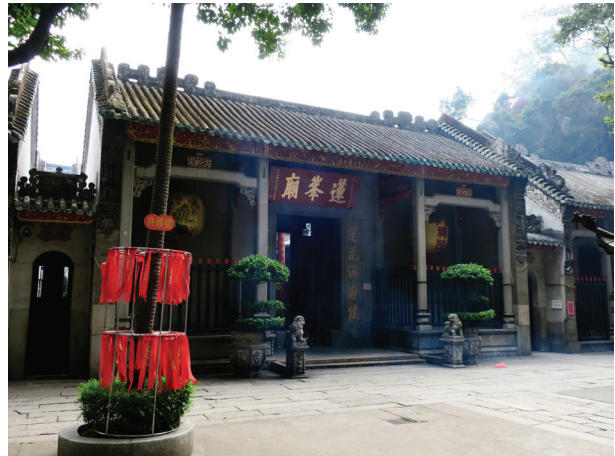
Lin Weixi's death led to a dramatic rise in tension. At the time of food sanctions, Elliot demanded the Chinese authorities supply provisions to the British community but to no avail. On 4 September 1839 the British opened fire on Chinese war junks off the Kowloon peninsula, ending the clash in a stalemate. Known as the Battle of Kowloon, this skirmish was the first armed conflict between China and Britain, and, significantly, marked the beginning of the Sino-British war.

The First Shot at Chuanbi

The escalating Sino-British animosities were not merely precipitated by the Lin Weixi Incident, but an unexpected battle soon added fuel to an already blazing fire. The origin of this battle was not even between the British and the Chinese. As mentioned above, in April 1839 Lin Zexu demanded a new pledge be signed by all merchants and foreign ships entering Guangzhou agreeing not to trade in opium, on pain of death. Alarmed at the threat of the death penalty for engaging in such a profitable business that opium traders wanted to continue, Charles Elliot compelled British ships not to sign this pledge. In October of that year, Elliot ordered two British frigates, the *Hyacinth* and the *Volage*, to be positioned near Chuanbi (an island at the entrance of Humen) to block any British ships bound for Guangzhou if they intended to sign the pledge (Hanes, 2002:68–69).

In defiance of Elliot's ban on signing the pledge, Captain Warner of the *Thomas Coutts* broke ranks. Sailing from Bombay (now Mumbai) and carrying only a cargo of cotton, the *Thomas Coutts* was the first British ship to sign the pledge, declaring it carried no opium and would not participate in any illicit trade. Lin was delighted with Warner's compromising stance. After unloading the cargo, Warner sailed away with a new mission as Lin's entrusted courier.

Further to Lin's letter to Queen Victoria of August 1839 which never arrived, he now gave a copy of that letter to Warner for the British monarch. Warner made good on his promise and upon his arrival in



Lian Feng Miao (Lin Fong Temple), Macao. Photo by the author.

London, he tried to make an appointment with Lord Palmerston in order to deliver Lin's letter. After Palmerston refused to see him, he forwarded the letter to *The Times of London*, by which it was published (Hanes, 2002:68). This letter thus never reached the Queen nor did it succeed in cooling down the imminent confrontation between Britain and China. On 18 October 1839 Palmerston had already written a top secret dispatch to Elliot informing him that a British expeditionary force would be sent to China in retaliation for perceived slights against Elliot and other British subjects and to rescue the ship-bound British in Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, another British merchant vessel, the *Royal Saxon*, carrying rice from Java, was on its way to Guangzhou. The *Royal Saxon* was willing to sign the pledge and attempted to sail to Guangzhou against Elliot's blockade. In order to rule out the example of the "defection" of the *Thomas Coutts*, the captain of the *Volage*, Henry Smith, fired a warning shot across the *Royal Saxon's* bow to prevent it from entering Guangzhou on 3 November 1839 (Hanes, 2002:69).

Under the command of Guan Tianpei, a fleet of 29 Chinese war junks sailed out to protect the *Royal Saxon*, and a naval confrontation between the British and the Chinese at Chuanbi occurred. The battle resulted in the

destruction of several Chinese war junks while the British suffered no fatal casualties (Kuo, 1935:130). This maritime conflict was known as the Battle of Chuanbi, in what came to be called the Opium War, as coined by *The Times of London* (Hanes, 2002:70). It was Henry Smith who fired the first shot in the Opium War.

Qing China's Humiliation by the West

Lin Zexu upheld an extraordinary mission to annihilate the opium trade and to restore and reform lawful trade in Guangzhou. His persistent demand for the rendition of the killers of Lin Weixi was an assertion of China's sovereignty. Moreover, the mandate for foreign merchants to sign a pledge agreeing not to import opium was no more than an insistence of Chinese jurisdiction over foreign trading on Chinese territory (Chang, 1964:213–214). That these incidents were to affirm China's rightful status sadly developed into bitter clashes and resulted in its subsequent humiliating concessions.



Four-cornered Pavilion, Macao. Photo by the author.

On 20 February 1840, Lord Palmerston penned a Declaration of War on China.¹⁹ The dispatch indicated Britain's intention to protect the interests of its subjects in China. George Elliot (1784–1863), Charles Elliot's cousin, was sent as the Commander-in-Chief of the expeditionary force. In mid-June 1840 the British fleet began to arrive in Guangzhou and placed a blockade around the city. In early July the British military first attacked Zhoushan Island in Zhejiang, as Guangzhou was soundly defended. In the meantime, Qishan 琦善 (1786–1854),²⁰ the Governor-General of Zhili 直隸, was appointed Imperial Commissioner to replace Lin Zexu and sent to Guangzhou in November of that year to negotiate with the British.

On 7 January 1841 British troops started to shell two Chinese forts at the entrance to the Pearl River. They then ravaged large areas of south China with formidable warships, guns, and cannons. On 20 January, without permission from the Qing court, Qishan agreed to the Convention of Chuanbi with Charles Elliot.²¹ On 26 January, Hong Kong was seized without any treaty granting the British a right to do so.²² On 27 January, Daoguang declared war against Britain's invasion. The British attacked Humen on 26 February, and the Qing forces suffered tremendous losses.

In the Battle of Humen, Guan Tianpei died a heroic death. Soon after Lin Zexu and Deng Tingzhen were impeached and sent into exile (which will be examined below). Qishan was dismissed and accused of making compliant concessions. Condemned as a traitor for secretly ceding Hong Kong, Qishan narrowly escaped the death penalty but his prodigious family fortune was confiscated, which was enough to pay for the British indemnity (Montalto de Jesus, 1984:305–306).

China was defeated in the first Sino-British Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing) was signed on 29 August 1842, which was the first in a series of unequal treaties signed later.²³ China had to pay an indemnity of 20 million silver dollars amid other

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humiliating concessions to Britain. Five treaty ports—Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai—were forced to open to foreign trade, in addition to the cession of Hong Kong.

The opium trade continued unregulated until after China's defeat by the Anglo-French invasion in the Second Opium War (1856–1860). The Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) was signed in 1858, in which the opium trade was legalized and tariffs were imposed. The treaty also opened the Chinese market to British opium imports, which reached 12,000 tons in 1886 (Brochu et al., 2018:53). By the end of the nineteenth century, one-out-of-every-ten Chinese was thought to have become an addict (Wolf, 1982:258). A drug-ridden, faltering Qing China was thus mocked as the “sick man of East Asia”, a phrase echoing the “sick man of Europe” that first derogatorily described the declining Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century.

Lin Zexu's Mistaken Convictions

One may argue that Lin Zexu's heavy-handed strategies were far too extreme against the opium dealers and traders, and he ought to bear responsibility for the ensuing catastrophe. Mao Haijian is of the opinion that his harsh methods were actually the result of earlier “non-extreme” measures. Moreover, he never overstepped the boundaries of Qing law (Mao, 2005:92, 97). Although Lin carried out the fierce anti-opium operation without violating the boundaries of Qing law, he misjudged the complicated situation due to cultural differences and misunderstanding of a mercantile capitalist empire on the other side of the world.

In hindsight, Lin's convictions were mistakenly construed as he supposed that the British government did not stand behind the opium traders in China (Chang 1964:131–132). When Charles Elliot surrendered the merchants' opium on their behalf, he declared that the British merchants' opium was the property of the British government; the opium merchants were *de facto* backed by their government.



Platform of the Four-cornered Pavilion, Macao. Photo by the author.

Worse still, Lin dismissed reports of the approach of British warships as mere rumours and speculation. He thought that the British dared not attack China as they bullied other countries, and also believed that Britain was a relatively small country in Europe and would have difficulties attacking China over such a long distance (Mao, 2005:103–105). In fact, not only naval ships from faraway Britain set sail for China in late 1839 but warships from “nearby” India also arrived opportunely (Kuo, 1935:129).

Although Lin had strived to learn about the outside world, he could not foresee that a withering Qing China would confront an imperialist supremacy that possessed a strong navy with advanced weaponry and unparalleled military capabilities. Nor could he perceive that this superior industrialized power would wage war to protect its trade profits, that is, profits from opium. Lin's mistaken convictions unfortunately led to cataclysmic consequences in the high age of mercantile capitalism.

While Lin was seen as the key personage leading up to the catalyst of the first clashes between the Celestial Empire (*tianchao* 天朝) and the “Empire-on-which-the-sun-never-sets”, Chang Hsin-pao is of the opinion that “of all the nineteenth-century statesmen, Lin outshines the others in stature and influence (...). It is ironic that Lin should have been blamed and

punished for touching off the Opium War, for war was ineluctable” (Chang, 1964:216–217). In short, Lin Zexu had taken up an impossible mission to stem the narcotic onslaught that perhaps nobody could have stopped with pre-modern China’s obvious military inferiority.

On the complexity of the Opium War, Chang Hsin-pao has trenchantly pointed out:

The Opium War, like most other historical events, was not brought about by a single factor; it had a wide range of causes. In abstract terms, it was a clash between two different cultures. When two mature cultures, each possessing its own peculiar institutions and values, come into contact, conflict of some kind is bound to arise. It was commerce that brought the English and the Chinese together, and the most important aspect of that commerce in the decade prior to the war was the opium trade. Chinese efforts to stop this trade were the immediate cause of the war (Chang, 1964:ix–x).

In the history of pillage during European global imperialism and colonialism in the nineteenth-century, the British remarkably benefited from the nefarious opium production and spiralling opium trafficking under the pretext of mercantilism. Western modernity in the wake of the Industrial Revolution ushered in a period of exploitative capitalism by selling opium in China, as well as an epoch of predatory imperialism in Asia by means of menacing armaments. In the words of Nigel Cameron, “The whole history of the importation of opium into China by unscrupulous merchants forms one of the most unsavoury and ignoble episodes in British mercantile ventures, surpassed only by the horrors of the slave trade” (Cameron, 1991:10). Apart from the trafficking of opium, the British also greatly benefited from the trafficking of slave labourers in Hong Kong, while Macao took the lead in the tragic history of this “dreadful trade” (Yee, 1992:71–72).

Banishment to the Border

It was an ill-starred twist of Lin Zexu’s fate in the aftermath of the British aggression when in September 1840 Daoguang issued an edict to dismiss him. Tried by the Board of Punishment, he was blamed for having thrown the nation into turmoil and banished to remote Yili 伊犁, the western region in Xinjiang (now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) in July 1841 (Kuo, 1935:141).

Staying in Kaifeng 開封, Henan province, for a while to help avert flooding of the Yellow River, he stopped over in Xi'an 西安, Shaanxi province, from whence he started an arduous itinerary westwards. Surviving the exiled journey amid heavy snowstorms as portrayed in his poem “Tuzhong daxue” 《途中大雪》 (Heavy snow on the way) (Lin, 1995:332), he finally reached the arid, barren land in late December 1842, and took up a less important post until 1845.



Statue of Lin Zexu, Macao. Photo by the author.

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Bordering modern-day Kazakhstan, Yili was mostly populated by Muslim Uyghurs and Kazakhs. Excelling in irrigation systems and water conservation, Lin devoted himself to solving flooding and cultivation problems, building a five-kilometre canal, and digging much-needed wells for local residents (Lee, 2005:5-6).

In an unfamiliar landscape, scholarly Lin must have found Yili exceptionally exotic. He chronicled a rich tapestry of the Muslims' daily lives, religious practices, dress styles, eating habits, music, marriage ceremonies, and burial customs. The vivid portrayal is collected in "Huijiang zhuzhici²⁴ ershisi shou" 《回疆竹枝詞二十四首》 (Twenty-four Bamboo Branch Lyrics on Muslim Xinjiang) (Lin, 1995:342-344). Besides, he conducted research on a wide range of information, such as history, geography, commerce, population, language, and weather, about Russia and its neighbouring countries. The writing is entitled *Eguo jiangjie fengsu zhi* 《俄國疆界風俗志》 (*Traditions and Customs of Russia and its Borders*) (Lin and Yao, 2000:623-643).

Three years later, 60-year-old Lin was called back from this isolated region and appointed Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces in 1845. During this tenure, he successfully put an end to various uprisings by minority groups. He also introduced improved guns based on foreign models he had seen in Guangzhou. In 1847 he was re-assigned as Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces. In this last position, he settled the Islamic unrest that had troubled Yunnan for decades, and strengthened relations between the Muslims and the Chinese (Chang, 1964:212-213).

The Qing Empire was not only defeated externally but also plagued by internal uprisings. From 1850 the Taiping 太平 Rebellion (1850-1864) plunged into a turbulent force to challenge an increasingly incompetent government. At this juncture, Lin was still highly regarded as a capable statesman and reinstated as one of the ministers to help suppress the Taiping insurrection in Guangxi.

On his way to take up this new assignment, the elderly and ailing minister died in November 1850, aged 65. His untimely death left a sense of a life that had not ever reached its full potential despite his many undoubted talents and skills, but for the fate of history and the disaster that was the First Opium War. In the last years of the Qing dynasty, strenuous endeavours were once more made to eradicate opium trading. Lin's reputation was duly rehabilitated as a respectable fighter in this war against illicit drugs.

Macao as an Opium Warehouse and Emporium

In retrospect, after pressing the Portuguese Governor of Macao for the prohibition of the British drug trade, and ordering the expulsion of the British from Macao in August 1839, Lin Zexu decided to inspect the Portuguese enclave. One may wonder about the role Macao played at that critical time, and the British primary undertakings in this "Christian City".

Macao had long been an enviable place for trade, either legal or illegal. It was not merely a gateway through which Westerners entered the Middle Kingdom; it was also an arena in which foreign merchants prepared for the lucrative trade in Guangzhou. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, Chinese authorities only allowed foreign traders to remain in Guangzhou during the "trading season" (October to May) after which they had to leave that city. Macao thus evolved into the sole Western residential area between trading seasons and was home to a sizeable community of multi-ethnic traders.

No sooner had the Dutch failed to capture Macao by force in 1622 than the British came for trade.²⁵ Their landing was precisely marked by the arrival of the British vessel, the *London*, in 1635. Since 1700 the British presence had been building up in Macao, where independent traders could set up in trade and compete with the EIC's monopoly (Puga, 2013:80, 132). The second half of the eighteenth century saw an increased flow of products and people from British settlements in India to Macao before the onward journey to Guangzhou (Hanser, 2018:7).

In the late eighteenth century, more British independent agents and traders set foot in Macao. Among them were two Scotsmen, William Jardine (1784–1843)²⁶ and James Matheson (1796–1878) (Puga, 2013:103). Jardine was a commercial agent for opium merchants in India, and Matheson a leading dealer in opium. The two men later co-founded the largest independent British trading company in 1832 for the opium trade—Jardine, Matheson and Company (Cameron, 1991:8).

Another newcomer was an Anglo-Scot, Robert Morrison (1782–1834), an early British Sinologist. He was the first Protestant missionary sent to Macao by the London Missionary Society (founded in 1799) and his arrival in 1807 constituted the second time in history that Macao served as the bridgehead for the introduction of Christianity into China.²⁷ In the Roman Catholic “City of the Name of God of Macao in China”, Morrison engaged in evangelizing Presbyterian Protestantism. Simultaneously, he worked as a Chinese interpreter for the EIC.

This powerful multi-national corporation had already established its headquarters at Casa Garden²⁸ at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was importing Indian opium for trafficking to China. Morrison was thus incongruously associated with the evangelizing mission and the selling of opium. In other words, evangelical imperialism blatantly went hand in hand with exploitative capitalism. For the Chinese people, perhaps it was not easy to make a distinction between a preacher of the Gospel and an importer of opium.

Since the Portuguese authorities relaxed their control over the opium trade in 1802, Macao readily emerged as the depot and emporium of opium (Chang, 1964:19). It also became a springboard and a strategic location for the EIC’s drug trade, because opium cargoes from India were easier to move into Macao than into Guangzhou, either by land or by boat. Above all, Macao was used by both Chinese and Westerners for the trafficking of opium, with the Portuguese profiting from the sojourn of these traders and their business (Puga, 2013:99, 121). Given the

Anglo-Portuguese alliance,²⁹ much of the British opium was stored in warehouses in Macao before being smuggled into Guangzhou. It was exactly the British opium den in Macao that Lin Zexu resolved to wipe out.

Lin Zexu’s Inspection of Macao

Carried on a sedan chair by eight bearers, the Imperial Commissioner entered Macao in the morning on 3 September 1839. He was accompanied by Deng Tingzhen and an entourage of 200 people with goodwill gifts (silk, fans, sugar, tea, meat, silver bars, etc.) for the Portuguese officials and troops. At the Border Gate, they were greeted by the Portuguese procurator with a guard of honour and 100 troops amidst Portuguese music. A 19-gun salute was fired in honour of Lin Zexu (Lei, 1988:96). Likewise, the Chinese residents welcomed them with decorative archway and cheers.³⁰

The Sino-Portuguese historic meeting was held in the central main building of Lian Feng Miao.³¹ In the vicinity of the Border Gate, this temple is believed to have been built in 1592 (Tang, 1994:197). With its structural and functional evolution through the ages, it has been transformed from a Daoist temple to an all-embracing “divine abode” enshrining deities from Daoism, Buddhism, and folk religion (Cheng, 2013:123–149). During the reigns of Jiaqing and Daoguang, this temple also functioned as the “office” for visiting Chinese officials when they came to Macao (Lei, 1988:97). As the venue embodied a religious aura of sanctity, Lin may have aspired to receive divine blessings and guidance during the discussions on the unruly opium trade.

The main building of the temple consists of the Four-cornered Pavilion and two successive halls. The first hall is dedicated to the Daoist Goddess of the Sea—Tian Hou, and the second hall to the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy—Guan Yin. Built on a raised stone platform, the Four-cornered Pavilion is supported by tall pillars and surrounded by balustraded railings, where there are decorative lions serving to ward off malignant spirits. On the frontal lintel of the pavilion, a wooden tablet

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Relief of the interdiction of opium, Macao. Photo by the author.

is hung, bearing four Chinese words *zhongwai liuen* 中外流恩 (China and foreign lands communicate amid Grace). At the back, another tablet bears *enguang haotai* 恩光浩大 (Grace and Brightness are enormous).

It was under these auspicious tablets on the sanctified platform of the Four-cornered Pavilion that Lin Zexu held a 45-minute meeting with two Portuguese officials, one civil and one military. The main objectives of his visit were to solicit neutrality of the Portuguese authorities amid conflicts between China and Britain, as well as to ascertain Portuguese observance of the opium interdiction in Macao. In the 3-hour inspection tour, Lin and the delegation passed through the Ruins of St Paul's, A-Ma Temple, and Praia Grande (Lei, 1988:96). Escorted by the Portuguese officials and troops back to the Border Gate, they left this "den of vice" (Montalto de Jesus' term).

As Macao was held on sufferance and not occupied by conquest, Qing China still maintained some ability to "influence and interfere". The Portuguese authorities readily complied with the decree of the Imperial Commissioner, whose power was just below that of the emperor. Regarding the vulnerability of the Portuguese in Macao, C. A. Montalto de Jesus has stated that starvation was an effective means of enforcing submission (Montalto de Jesus, 1984:40).

A Quasi-Divine Hero

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Lin Zexu's visit to Macao, a fine granite statue of Lin was unveiled on 10 December 1989 in the courtyard of Lian Feng Miao. It was sculpted by Tang Daxi 唐大禧 and designed by Lin Bin 林彬. The former was Dean and the latter Vice-Dean of the Guangzhou Sculpture Academy.

Standing sturdily and heroically on a 2-metre high pedestal, the 3-metre high statue, weighing 5 tons, depicts Lin in his Qing official robe and hat. Behind the statue, there is a large stele in a curvy shape bearing Chinese inscriptions. Entitled "Lin Gong Zexu Zaoxiang Beiji" 《林公則徐造象碑記》 (The Record of the Stele of Lin Zexu), the inscribed Chinese essay was composed and written in elegant *kaishu* 楷書 (regular script) by 83-year-old Liang Piyun 梁披雲 (1907–2010), a renowned educationalist and poet-calligrapher in Macao.³² Apart from chronicling Lin's grand visit, the essay illustrates his biography and his patriotic enthusiasm in trying to halt the opium trade, as well as the consequences of his failed mission.

Flanking the statue is a couplet:

苟利國家生死以
豈因禍福避趨之

For the benefit of my country, I would not hesitate to sacrifice my life

Regardless of personal gains or loss, my determination would not waver

The couplet is actually an extract from the second stanza of Lin Zexu's poem "Fu shu dengcheng kouzhan shi jiaren" 《赴戍登程口占示家人》 (Telling my family before embarking on the journey to the faraway region). The whole poem is compiled in *Yunzuo Shanfang Shichao* 《雲左山房詩鈔》 (Collected Poems of Yunzuo Mountain Lodge), Juan 卷 6 (the 6th scroll):

力微任重久神疲
再竭衰庸定不支
苟利國家生死以
豈因禍福避趨之
謫居正是君恩厚
養拙剛於戍卒宜
戲與山妻談故事
試吟斷送老頭皮 (Lin, 1995:332)

I have long felt tired of a weighty mission in my mere performance

For sure I could not continue my duty in a senile condition

For the benefit of my country, I would not hesitate to sacrifice my life

Regardless of personal gains or loss, my determination would not waver

The Emperor is benevolent enough sending me into exile

Holding back my incompetence is just appropriate as a border guard

*In a jesting way I tell a story to my simple wife
Reciting "I would give up my old head to my country"*

In the poem, Lin dejectedly bemoans his fatigue with officialdom and his growing old. Showing no regret about the anti-opium operation, he affirms his staunch patriotism and reiterates his steadfast devotion to his country. He plainly accepts the demotion and expresses gratitude to the emperor for sending him to *saiwa* 塞外 (areas beyond the Great Wall).



Relief of the destruction of opium, Macao. Photo by the author.

One may ask under what context Lin composed the poem. On his route into exile, he reached Xi'an prior to the ongoing journey to Yili. Leaving this ancient capital, he would pass through Jiayu Guan 嘉峪關, which was the strategic outpost at the western end of the Great Wall in Gansu province. Beyond this Guan (Pass) was an exotic barren land of ethnic minorities. In bidding farewell to his wife and eldest son, 57-year-old Lin left for Yili with two younger sons in the 7th lunar month of 1842 (Lai, 2011:519–520). Wrapped in sentimental thoughts and pathos, yet in a joking tone to amuse his wife, he created this poem.

Built near the statue, the Lin Zexu Memorial Museum was inaugurated on 5 November 1997 commemorating the decolonization of Hong Kong on 30 June 1997. There are two white marble reliefs outside the museum entrance. On the left side, the scene depicts the exchange of greetings among Lin Zexu, Deng Tingzhen and the Portuguese officials in front of Lian Feng Miao. Two Chinese characters *jinyan* 禁煙 (interdiction of opium) are inscribed on the top right corner of the relief.

The scene on the right side shows the destruction of opium cargoes, overlooked by the three protagonists—Guan Tianpei, Lin Zexu, and Deng Tingzhen. Only their surnames (from the left) Guan 關, Lin 林 and Deng 鄧 are indicated in Chinese on

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the three banners behind them. On the top left corner, two Chinese characters *xiaoyan* 銷煙 (destruction of opium) are inscribed. These two reliefs epitomize Lin's "mission impossible" to save his fellow countrymen from drug addiction.

Inside the museum, there are exhibits of relics of the Sino-Portuguese meeting, photographs and memorabilia relating to rampant opium trafficking during the peak era of Western imperialism and colonialism. In brief, the Lin Zexu statue and the Lin Zexu Memorial Museum are intended to arouse collective memories of foreign humiliation under the rule of the Manchu Qing.

Significantly, the statue and the museum occupy an arresting spot in the courtyard of Lian Feng Miao. Located on the left side of the temple, they grow into an intrinsic part, like a wing, of the whole temple-complex. In discussing Chinese temple-architecture, the description of the placement of wings is from the perspective of the main temple, and images of deities are from the perspective on the altar, rather than from the spectator's view.

As stated in *Zhouli* 《周禮》 (*The Rites of Zhou*, first appeared in the middle of the second century BC), the correct placement in temples should follow the principle of indicating the relative

importance of the "left side" over the "right side" (*Ci Hai*, 1977:638). Given the outstanding location of the statue and the museum on the left side of the temple-complex, Lin Zexu seems to have turned into a quasi-divine hero, enshrined in this eclectic religious space.

Conclusion

The First Opium War was the first time that a Western imperialist power mounted such a full-scale attack on China. On the one hand, the war nakedly exposed the wobbly Qing court to foreign aggressors, who shortly gathered like hungry wolves preying on the sickly dragon. And, on the other hand, the thundering guns and cannons awakened the lethargic empire from complacency. In the ensuing years, a new era was unveiled for modernization and institutional reforms. Be that as it may, China suffered more setbacks and was further humiliated by a series of military defeats: the Second Opium War (1856–1860), the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), and the subsequent assault and plundering of Beijing by the Eight-Nation Alliance in 1900. The war-stricken, crumbling Celestial Empire finally collapsed in 1911, ending a 2,000-year-old imperial China.

Lin Zexu's quixotic dedication was inadvertently transformed from an anti-opium crusade into a juggernaut force that Qing China and he himself failed to withstand. Kuo Pin-chia has argued that despite his *faux pas*, Lin was the first and last Chinese statesman who fought against opium with the zeal of a true patriot (Kuo, 1935:142). Belatedly, Lin's vigorous efforts were realized in the succeeding Republic of China. The British exports of opium into China at long last came to an end in 1917.³³

One hundred and fifty years since the Humen episode, Lin's earnestness and enthusiasm for the prohibition and abolition of opium were well remembered on the international stage. In 1989 the United Nations designated 26 June as International



Lin Zexu Memorial Museum. Photo by the author.

Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Observed annually, this date is in honour of Lin's exhaustive operation for staging 23 straight days of drug destruction, ending on 25 June 1839.

While his visit to Macao was only brief, Lin Zexu has been immortalized and is revered as a national hero in the foreground of Lian Feng Miao.

The temple has ever since been proud of being the locale of the Sino-Portuguese meeting for curbing the British opium trade. In a word, the tragic Imperial Commissioner has taken hold in Chinese people's hearts and is looked upon as a symbol of modern China's resistance to Western imperialism and economic exploitation. **RC**

NOTES

- 1 An imperial commissioner was a high-ranking government official commissioned by the emperor of China during the late Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. His power was just below that of the emperor, such that he could command viceroys and provincial governors by imperial edicts.
- 2 Guangzhou is also known by an older English-language name, Canton.
- 3 Humen, literally meaning “The Tiger Gate”, is referred to by Europeans as the Bocca Tigris (derived from the Portuguese Boca do Tigre). It once occupied a strategic location as the naval gateway to Guangzhou.
- 4 When mentioning Lin Zexu's age, the traditional Chinese age reckoning of the *zhousui* 周歲 system (a newborn reaches age one on anniversary) is adopted.
- 5 Founded in the eighth century, the Hanlin Academy was an academic and administrative institution. It comprised an elite group of scholars, who performed secretarial and literary tasks for the imperial court.
- 6 Huguang province was partitioned in the Qing dynasty, becoming the provinces of Hubei and Hunan.
- 7 The East India Company (or the British East India Company) received a Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I on 31 December 1600 to trade with Mughal India and the East Indies (Southeast Asia). It soon became the most voracious corporation in history to plunder profits, and emerged as the agent of British imperialism to subjugate and to loot the entire Indian subcontinent. One might refer to the work of William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).
- 8 Through a combination of coercion and monetary inducement, the EIC forced many farmers to switch from growing staple crops to opium poppies, resulting in the Great Bengal Famine of 1770. Approximately 10 million people—a third of the population in the affected regions—were starved to death in that “man-made famine”. One might refer to the work of William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006).
- 9 Here one might consider the work of Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: What the British did to India* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2017).
- 10 Each chest weighed 64 kg.
- 11 Named after the envoy George Macartney, the Macartney Mission was the first British diplomatic mission to China. All the requests for favouring the British trade in China were rejected by the Qianlong Emperor.
- 12 In the footsteps of Lin Zexu, Feng Guifen 馮桂芬 (1809–1874), a scholar-official, advocated a program of self-strengthening by learning from the West. His suggestions were supported by Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872), a prominent statesman and military general, and Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901), a famed politician and diplomat.
- 13 The cohong (*pinyin*: gonghang) was a guild of Chinese merchants who were approved by the local authorities to trade in monopoly with foreign merchants.
- 14 A native of Jiangsu province, Guan Tianpei passed the martial examination for military service in 1803. He then rose to various key military ranks. In 1834 Guan was appointed Commander-in-Chief of Naval Forces to strengthen coastal defence.
- 15 During Deng Tingzhen's tenure from early 1836 until early 1840, the amount of opium entering Guangzhou greatly increased, though he had taken measures against the drug trade. There have been controversial assessments of his dubious relationship to the opium imports and prohibition. See Mao Haijian, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War: The Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 82.
- 16 Lin Zexu's letter was translated into English by Peter Parker, an American linguist and eye doctor in Guangzhou. See Chang Hsin-pao, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 137.
- 17 Henry John Temple (in full Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston) was the Prime Minister from 1855 to 1858 and 1859 to 1865. He dominated British foreign policy from 1830 to 1865, when Britain was at the height of its imperial power.

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- 18 Before the Opium War, Hong Kong was merely a rocky island dotted with some fishing villages, but had already served as a transit for opium smugglers.
- 19 As the structures of the British Constitution provided Parliament with little control over foreign policy, the decision for war against China was made without parliamentary consultation. Neither the Parliament nor the nation was fully informed of the circumstances of the Opium War. See *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, eds. Cheng Pei-kai and Michael Lestz with Jonathan D. Spence. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1999), p. 123.
- 20 Qishan was born into an aristocratic Manchu family, whose fortune was fabulously substantial. He had enjoyed great imperial favour and occupied an unrivalled position in Qing officialdom.
- 21 Both China and Britain rejected the terms of the Convention of Chuanbi. Palmerston thought Charles Elliot acquired too little, while Daoguang believed Qishan conceded too much. The Convention was unratified and superseded by the Treaty of Nanking of 1842.
- 22 Charles Elliot was the first administrator of Hong Kong as a British colony in January 1841. He was dismissed in August of that year and replaced by Henry Pottinger.
- 23 These treaties have been regarded as “unequal treaties” by the Chinese because of the one-sided privileges they contained.
- 24 *Zhuzhici* is a form of lyric poetry derived from the style of folk songs.
- 25 The British replaced the Dutch as the dominant Western power in Asia as the eighteenth century progressed. On two occasions in 1802 and 1808, the British attempted to occupy Macao militarily, under the pretext of defending it from the menace of French expansionism. Also, during the peak of the Sino-British clashes in mid-1839, Charles Elliot planned to annex Macao. See C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 206–230, 299–302.
- 26 After the destruction of opium at Humen, William Jardine pressed Palmerston for a forceful retribution. It was he who almost single-handedly drew up the plans for the British expedition.
- 27 The first time for the introduction of Christianity into China through Macao was marked by Matteo Ricci’s arrival at Macao in 1582.
- 28 Just next to Camões Garden, the villa Casa Garden was built in 1770 as the residence of Manuel Pereira, a wealthy Portuguese merchant. Under Portuguese law, no foreigner could acquire land in Macao, so Casa Garden was only rented out to the EIC as its base of operations. Enlisted as part of the Historic Centre of Macao by UNESCO in 2005, this appealing building has now become the headquarters of Fundação Oriente.
- 29 It is worth mentioning that the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance (or Aliança Luso-Britânica), ratified at the Treaty of Windsor in 1386 between England (succeeded by the United Kingdom) and Portugal, is the oldest alliance in the world that is still in force today.
- 30 Prior to his visit, Lin Zexu decreed the first census to be made in Macao. At that time, there were over 12,000 people. The Chinese were about 7,000 and the Portuguese 5,600, in addition to 57 British households. See Lei Pang Chu, *Aomen Gujin* 《澳門古今》 (Macao: Starlight Publishing House, 1988), p. 95.
- 31 By the time Lin Zexu came to Macao, this temple was called Xin Miao 新廟 (New Temple). Since 1876 its name was changed to Lian Feng Miao after it was extensively renovated and expanded.
- 32 Liang Piyun has incessantly promoted the art of Chinese calligraphy in Hong Kong and Macao. See Christina Miu Bing Cheng, “The Land of the Lotus Flower: A Haven for the Diasporized,” *Review of Culture*, International Edition No. 55, 2017, pp. 64–81.
- 33 In Hong Kong, opium smoking was outlawed in 1946.

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