

**Conceptualizing the Blue Frontier:**  
**The Great Qing and the Maritime World in the Long Eighteenth Century**

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## Abstract

Most previous scholarship has asserted that the Qing Empire neglected the sea and underestimated the worldwide rise of Western powers in the long eighteenth century. By the time the British crushed the Chinese navy in the so-called Opium Wars, the country and its government were in a state of shock and incapable of quickly catching-up with Western Europe. In contrast with such a narrative, this dissertation shows that the Great Qing was in fact far more aware of global trends than has been commonly assumed. Against the backdrop of the long eighteenth century, the author explores the fundamental historical notions of the Chinese maritime world as a conceptual divide between an inner and an outer sea, whereby administrators, merchants, and intellectuals paid close and intense attention to coastal seaways. Drawing on archival sources from China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and the West, the author argues that the connection between the Great Qing and the maritime world was complex and sophisticated. The evidence reveals beyond doubt that the Manchu administration indeed never lost sight of the harsh strategic and logistical realities of managing, if not ruling, a vast maritime landscape. In summary, this dissertation provides new insights into the East Asian maritime world, China's regional links on the eve of the modern age, and the area's deepening role in the development of an increasingly global history. It also has an obvious topical relevance, with the People's Republic of China's increasing efforts to extend its control over natural resources and seaways in the Western Pacific. It might be seen as the largely overlooked maritime counterpart to that covered by Peter Perdue's impressive volume: *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, which looks at the history of imperial China's western landward expansion in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century.

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## Emperors of the Qing Dynasty

<i>Years of Reign</i>	<i>Personal Name</i>	<i>Reign Title</i>
1636-1643	Hong Taiji	Chongde
1643-1661	Fulin	Shunzhi
1661-1722	Xuanye	Kangxi
1722-1735	Yinzhen	Yongzheng
1735-1796	Hongli	Qianlong
1796-1820	Yongyan	Jiaqing
1820-1850	Minning	Daoguang
1850-1861	Yizhu	Xianfeng
1861-1875	Zaichun	Tongzhi
1875-1908	Zaitian	Guangxu
1908-1912	Puyi	Xuantong



## Introduction

On March 19, 1840, exactly a year after the outbreak of the First Opium War, the Qing navy was introduced to the London public in a local daily newspaper *The Standard*,

The following details of the army and navy of China are extracted from the work on that country, by M. Gützlaff, a missionary, who resided in it many years: The total number of Chinese troops, including those of the navy, but not the militia nor the Mongul auxiliaries, amounts to 785,222. China has two fleets, one for the river, and the other for the sea. The first comprises 1036 ships, the second 918. The river fleet has crews to the amount of 9500 men, and that for the sea 98,421, making an aggregate of 107,921 sailors...The officers and men are equally ignorant of navigation. Many sailors of their merchant vessels belong to the navy. Their war junks differ in nothing from those employed in trade; the largest do not exceed 300 tons in burden.<sup>1</sup>

The above commentary was written by Father Karl Gützlaff (1803-1851), the German missionary who traveled and worked in China and Asia for altogether twenty-five years. Between 1838 and 1842, he served as an interpreter for the Jardine & Matheson Company and later the British diplomatic mission in China. He was one of the first Protestant missionaries to record in detail the Chinese naval forces at that time. His above short piece

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<sup>1</sup> "Multiple Commerce Items: China," in *The Standard* (London, England), issue 4913, Thursday, March 19, 1840.



excerpted in *The Standard* was soon reprinted and circulated widely in other newspapers across England such as the *Blackburn Standard*,<sup>2</sup> the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette*,<sup>3</sup> *The Newcastle Courant*,<sup>4</sup> and the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*.<sup>5</sup> As observed by Father Gützlaff, the Qing navy, despite the sizable number of its soldiers, was undertrained and disorganized; while the officers were equally ignorant of navigation in the 1840s. True or not, it was well known that the Royal navy eventually defeated the Qing forces after the occupation of Shanghai in August 1842, followed by a peace settlement held aboard the HMS Cornwallis, a British third-rate battleship.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “News: China,” *Blackburn Standard* (Blackbrn, England), issue 271, Wednesday, March 25, 1840.

<sup>3</sup> “News: China,” *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (Devizes, England), issue 1263, Thursday, March 26, 1840.

<sup>4</sup> “London March 25: China,” *The Newcastle Courant* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England), issue 8627, Friday, March 27, 1840.

<sup>5</sup> “China,” *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (Salisbury, England), issue 6150, Monday, March 30, 1840.

<sup>6</sup> As argued by Bryant Avery, “the Opium War was many things.” John King Fairbank, Hsin-pao Chang, Peter Ward Fay, Jack Beeching, and others have written of the diplomatic and cultural confrontations. See John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1953); Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1964); Peter Fay, *The Opium War, 1840-1842* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Jack Beeching, *The Opium Wars in China, 1834-1860* (London: Hutchison, 1975). On the Qing side, Arthur Waley and Frederic Wakeman’s accounts of the impact of the war on the Guangdong gentry and peasantry remain two of the classics. See Arthur Waley, *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958); Frederic Wakeman, “The Canton Trade and the Opium War,” in Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 163-212. Another illuminating study is the one written by J.Y. Wong. Wong examines British and Chinese intentions, perceptions, and reactions, their diplomatic and economic agendas, the impacts of personalities, popular opinion, as well as the roles which other powers played in the Arrow Incident, an incident that lead directly led to the First Opium War. See J.Y. Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the ‘Arrow’ War (1856-1860) in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Even until recently, the Opium War continues to be studied as a keynote event in Chinese history. W. Travis Hanes III and Frank Sanello, for instance, go into great detail about the negotiations and behavior on both sides during the Opium War periods. The author also make some analogies between the economics and empire of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth-first century forms of money, politics, and war. See W. Travis Hanes III and Frank Sanello, *Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Illinois: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2002). Julia Lovell, in turn, makes a lucid account of the First Opium War by studying the war from a global perspective. See her *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (London: Picador, 2011). In my opinion, the Opium war would remain its importance in the craft of contemporary history and the patterns of the ever-shifting global market.

Eighteen years after the Qing forces were defeated in the First Opium War, Father Gützlaff was once again proved right about the Qing navy. The Qing was in no position to resist the British and the French in the Arrow War that lasted from 1856 to 1860. The result of the war was even described flatly as a “distinguished success of the British” by a Yorkshire reporter.<sup>7</sup> Thirty-four years later in 1894, the Qing experienced another humiliating defeat at sea. Almost the entire Northern Ocean Fleet, the dominant navy of the Qing, was severely crushed by the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Battle of the Yalu. The remnants of the Beiyang Fleet retired into Lüshunkou for repairs, but it was later destroyed by an amphibious attack during the Battle of Weihaiwei in 1895.<sup>8</sup> With hindsight, for almost six decades after the outbreak of the First Opium War, the Qing regime faced its gravest maritime threat ever and these clustered defeats demonstrated the failure of the Qing navy to master the ocean. As James Bell in the nineteenth century concluded,

The navy of the Chinese is very contemptible. Their trading-vessels are ill-built, and however safe in their rivers and canals, are unfit for the open sea. With a square bow, no keel or bowsprit, thick masts of one piece, single sails of bamboo-matting, folded like a fan, heavy and unmanageable, and a moveable and unsteady rudder, these crescent-shaped vessels, adorned with dragons' mouths, frightful heads, and goggle eyes, are almost ungovernable in boisterous weather, and it is inconceivable the number of souls who annually perish with them.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “The Lord Mayor’s Banquet,” in *The Huddersfield Chronicle and West Yorkshire Advertiser* (West Yorkshire, England), issue 557, Saturday, November 17, 1860.

<sup>8</sup> The First Sino-Japanese War has long been considered the earliest significant conflict between Asian nations in modern times. The War also set the pattern for later wars in which Japan took on other rivals with greater powers such as Russia and the United States. For detailed studies on this significant event in English, see for example S.C.M. Paine’s *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Makito Saya, David Noble (trans.), *The Sino-Japanese War and the Birth of Japanese Nationalism* (Tokyo: International House of Japan, 2011); and Stewart Lone, *Army, Empire, and Politics in Meiji Japan* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); and Seiji Hishida, *Japan Among the Great Powers* (New York: Longmans Green & Company, 1940).

<sup>9</sup> James Bell, *A System of Geography, Popular and Scientific: A Physical, Political and Statistical Account of*

No one could claim that the Qing defeats briefly mentioned above have been ignored. Every textbook mentions them. This dissertation is therefore not an attempt to recover a series of familiar events. Yet the problem lies with the fact that there has been a strong tendency to accentuate the lack of maritime awareness of the Manchu Empire by overemphasizing its failure in nineteenth century sea battles. The imperialist intrusions of Great Britain and other naval powers beginning with the First Opium War appear in this persistent view as a perhaps rude but long overdue wake-up call for a land-focused empire reluctant to embrace the opportunities, and guard against the dangers, of the wider world beyond its neglected coastlines. In the word of Benjamin A. Elman,

the image of China as a sick man who is irrevocably weak and backward, in contrast to a powerful and industrialized Europe and a rapidly industrializing Japan, has been dominated by the incontrovertible fact that China was defeated in most wars in the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Under the influence of such a dominant narrative, many scholars have depicted these defeats as clear representations of reality. They not only provided a tumultuous ending to the prosperous high Qing period (ca. 1683-1839)<sup>11</sup> but also indicated that the Manchu court was unable to engage properly and willingly in maritime militarization. Manchu warriors

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*the World and its Various Divisions* (London, Edinburgh, and Dublin: A. Fullarton & Co., 1849), vol. 5, p. 117.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, "Naval Warfare and the Refraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms into Scientific and Technological Failure, 1860-1895" (paper presented at the conference "The Disunity of Chinese Science" organized by the University of Texas, Austin; May 10-12, 2002), p. 34 (Cited with permission).

<sup>11</sup> The term "high Qing" is applied to the period when the Qing Dynasty was at its peak of expansion and ranked among the most powerful polities in the world. On a succinct discussion of the high Qing, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "High Qing: 1683-1839," in James B. Crowley (ed.), *Modern East Asia: Essays in Interpretation* (Harcourt Publishers Group Ltd., 1970), pp. 1-28.

and the ruling elites, presumably unprepared by their past for either imperial or commercial seafaring, were stereotyped as a group of landmen who regarded the sea as an alien platform for warfare. The Qing Empire was thus characterized as the victim of Western imperialism according to a “Mahanian sea power paradigm,”<sup>12</sup> as the result of its crushing military experiences, mostly on the seas, in the nineteenth century. Edward L. Dreyer had this to say about the Qing and its failure at sea,

China’s nineteenth-century humiliations were strongly related to her weakness and failure at sea. At the start of the Opium War, China had no unified navy and no sense of how vulnerable she was to attack from the sea; British forces sailed and steamed wherever they wanted to go.....In the Arrow War (1856-60), the Chinese had no way to prevent the Anglo-French expedition of 1860 from sailing into the Gulf of Zhili and landing as near as possible to Beijing. Meanwhile, new but not exactly modern Chinese armies suppressed the midcentury rebellions, bluffed Russia into a peaceful settlement of disputed frontiers in Central Asia, and defeated the French forces on land in the Sino-French War (1884-85). But the defeat of the fleet, and the resulting threat to steamship traffic to Taiwan, forced China to conclude peace on unfavorable terms.<sup>13</sup>

Bodo Wiethoff, a specialist in Qing history, even defined the sea space embracing China as the “third frontier,” metaphorically meaning that the Qing court was disinterested in

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<sup>12</sup> The “Mahanian sea power paradigm” is referring to the theory founded by Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), the navy admiral of the United States. As argued by Mahan, “the history of sea power is largely, though by no means solely, a narrative of contests between nations, of mutual rivalries, of violence frequently culminating in war. The profound influence of sea commerce upon the wealth and strength of countries was clearly seen long before the true principles which governed its growth and prosperity were detected.” Therefore, the Mahanian sea power paradigm, while embraces in its broad sweep all that tends to make a people great upon the sea or by the sea, is largely a military history related to confrontations, conquests, and expansions at sea. See Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence Of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1991). I will have an extended discussion of this paradigm in the subsequent section.

<sup>13</sup> Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Ocean in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (New York: Pearson Education Inc., 2007), p. 180.

incorporating the sea space into its empire.<sup>14</sup>

The above analyses seem to contain some measure of truth; however, are we to suspect that the Qing court was ignorant of the ocean throughout its long history simply because of its numerous failures at sea during the nineteenth century? Is it fair enough to say that the Qing rulers in the nineteenth century largely inherited a long-term negligence towards the ocean, intensified by their seminomadic origins and their preoccupation with the empire's inland frontiers in the north and northwest during the high Qing period? This study is intended to tell a story less structured by later outcomes. It is short-sighted to rely on an analysis based on nineteenth century experiences to draw conclusions about the attitude of the Qing to the maritime world. In fact, the high Qing emperors, namely Kangxi (r. 1661-1722), Yongzheng (r.1722-1735), and Qianlong (r.1735-1795), emphasized and propelled political-administrative control across the maritime frontier by establishing a strong navy and consolidating a customs structure that better prepared the empire for (potential) crises from the sea. Thanks to their efforts, the Qing court was able to maintain its superiority across the maritime space in East Asia for almost a hundred years. Similar to Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603) who asserted national control over the seawaters surrounding England and Ireland, high Qing monarchs were aware that for security reasons a strong military presence was required across their domestic sea zone. The Kangxi emperor, for instance, once mentioned that

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<sup>14</sup> Bodo Wiethoff, *Chinas dritte Grenze: Der traditionelle chinesische Staat und der küstennahe Seeraum* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1969), p. 79. Paola Calanca also shared similar view in her thesis: "Piraterie et contrebande au Fujian: L'administration face aux problèmes d'illégalité maritime (17e-debut 19e siècle)" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Paris: EHESS, 1999), vol. I, pp. 32-33.

Our Great Qing is embraced by the ocean. We have a long coastline. If we want to maintain the stability of our empire, we cannot ignore the vast maritime frontier. In order to rule the maritime frontier properly, we have to make sure that our navy is strong enough to patrol and police the maritime territory.<sup>15</sup>

Kangxi's edict provides a piece of evidence that the Qing in the early eighteenth century did not ignore its maritime frontier. It instead paid considerable attention to the political-administrative control of the watery world and considered the immediate sea space a frontier that required political domestication by means of control and surveillance.

My overarching goal in this study is to investigate high Qing maritime policies in order to restore the nature and significance of Qing management of the China coastal littoral and the “inner” East Asian Sea that bounds the Chinese maritime frontier from the 1680s to 1800. It explores, first of all, the fundamental, historical notions of the Chinese maritime world as a conceptual divide between an inner and an outer sea, whereby Qing administrators paid close and intense attention to coastal seawaters. Second, I move on to analyze the Qing placement of coastal guard posts and the deployment of naval fleets in a holistic context that includes the four commercialized southeastern as well as the more strategically important northeastern coastal provinces. Thirdly, I will introduce the role of the maritime customs stations and examine the way they managed and facilitated sea trade along the inner sea perimeter. This dissertation argues that the high Qing strategic approach to its maritime frontier was important, coherent, and successful in pacifying and stabilizing the inner ocean, thereby leading to a close partnership between the Qing state and

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<sup>15</sup> *Da Qing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu* 大清聖祖仁皇帝實錄 [Complete records of Emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), dated to “Kangxi liunian (1667) dingwei jiyue, renyin shuo.”

commercial organizations that sparked dramatic commercial development across the East Asian Sea, a novel term recently used by the United Nations Environment Program and some maritime historians and political analysts such as Chua Thia-Eng, Danilo A. Bonga, and David Cyranoski.<sup>16</sup>

To rediscover the connection between the Qing and the ocean, one should broaden the spectrum of analysis by studying the evolving sense of *Chineseness* and the maritime world. Over the past few decades, there has been a wealth of literature concerning topics such as “China and the sea” and “maritime China in transition.” Much attention has been especially paid to the importance of foreign incursions, maritime commerce, nautical technology, and overseas diasporas. The “Fairbank School,”<sup>17</sup> for instance, has long been directing interest towards diplomatic relations with maritime powers in the West.<sup>18</sup> The influence of G. William Skinner’s regional model of China<sup>19</sup> led scholars to turn towards intensive socioeconomic studies of macro-regions covering the Western and Northern

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<sup>16</sup> See the “United Nations Environment Program” (<http://www.unep.ch/regionalseas/regions/eas/eashome.htm>); Chua Thia-Eng and Danilo A. Bonga (ed.), *Safer Coasts, Living with Risks: Selected Papers from the East Asian Seas Congress 2006* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2009); David Cyranoski, “Angry Words over East Asian Seas: Chinese Territorial Claims Propel Science into Choppy Waters,” *Nature*, vol. 478 (2011), pp. 293-294. I will further discuss the term by the end of this introduction.

<sup>17</sup> The term “Fairbank School” applied to the research inspired by John King Fairbank. This term has been used by scholars such as Kelly Boyd, Chihyun Chang, Mary G. Mazur, and Wang Hui.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967); Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964); Ssu-yu Teng, John K. Fairbank (eds.), *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Ssu-yu Teng, *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers: A Comprehensive Survey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Franz Schurmann and Orville Schell (eds.), *Imperial China: The Decline of the Last Dynasty and the Origins of Modern China: The 18th and 19th Centuries* (New York: Random House, 1967), to name but a few.

<sup>19</sup> See G. William Skinner, “Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China Part I to III,” (Association Journal of Asian Studies, Inc.; reprint from the *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 24 [November, 1964]).

frontiers, China Proper, as well as the coastal region.<sup>20</sup> The studies of Wang Gangwu,<sup>21</sup> in turn, stimulated research on the patterns and processes of Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> In terms of periodization, most studies have concentrated on the age of the Opium Wars (1839-1860), the Restoration Era (1861-1875), and the last few decades of the Qing rule (1875-1912).<sup>23</sup> Even if the recent significant research conducted by Gang Zhao and Yangwen Zheng has successfully moved the Qing maritime experience in the eighteenth century from a marginal position to the center of attention, their studies primarily focus on sea trade in response to the period of early globalization in general and the process of East Asian integration in particular rather than the “official mind”<sup>24</sup> and conceptualization of the

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<sup>20</sup> Skinner provides an analytical tool to study the economic and cultural development of coastal China within a regional system. For details, see William Skinner, “Introduction”, and Sow-Theng Leong and Tim Wright, “Hakka Migrations in Lingnan and the Southeast Coast,” in their edited volume, *Migration and Ethnicity in Chinese History: Hakkas, Pengmin, and their Neighbors* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1-18; 39-68; Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, *The Bible and the Gun: Christianity in South China, 1860-1900* (New York : Routledge, 2003), pp. 5-20; Ivy Maria Lim, *Lineage Society on the Southeastern Coast of China: The Impact of Japanese Piracy in the Sixteenth Century* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2010), pp. 1-12.

<sup>21</sup> See for example Wang Gungwu, *Don't Leave Home: Migration and the Chinese* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003); *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Time Academic Press, 1991); *Community and Nation: China, Southeast Asia and Australia* (St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin for the Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1992); Wang L. Ling-chi and Wang Gangwu (eds.), *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> To name a few example: Yow Cheun Hoe, *Guangdong and Chinese Diaspora: The Changing Landscape of Qiaoxiang* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013); Wanning Sun (ed.), *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, Communications and Commerce* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006); Laurence J. C. Ma, Carolyn L. Cartier, *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> See Chi-Kong Lai, “The Historiography of Maritime China since c. 1975,” in Frank Broeze (ed.), *Maritime History at the Crossroad: A Critical Review of Recent Historiography* (St. John's, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1995), pp. 53-80.

<sup>24</sup> Leonard Blussé used the term “official mind” in his remarkable *Visible Cities*. He mentioned that John King Fairbank and his students have studied the connection between China and overseas community from a viewpoint of the “official mind” of the Ming and Qing governments based on the tribute system framework. Blussé found this approach problematic because the overreliance of the tribute system framework is a very one-sided view of the past. For details, See Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 11-12. For the problem of the overreliance of the tribute system, see Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).



Qing administration towards its maritime frontier.<sup>25</sup> Despite the significant contributions these scholars have made, there has yet to be undertaken an in-depth examination in English on the interrelationships between the imperial projection of power of the maritime world as well as the way in which the high Qing government conceptualized the maritime world before the 1840s. As such, this research aims to foreground the indigenous dynamism of high Qing maritime policies so as to substantiate the history of frontier and maritime studies in East Asia.

In trying to encourage greater recognition of the maritime awareness of the Qing empire, I am not suggesting that the “continental expansion” achieved by the Qing was insignificant. There is no doubt that the Qing, by the middle of the eighteenth century, was at its peak of aggressive expansion and ranked among the most powerful polities in the world.<sup>26</sup> In addition to governing the traditional territories of China and the northeastern homelands of the Manchu ruling house, the high Qing monarchs expanded their territory to include Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, and the vast tracts of Inner Asia through a protracted process of strategic alliances and military conquests.<sup>27</sup> In his landmark volume *China*

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<sup>25</sup> See Gang Zhao, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684-1757* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013) and Yangwen Zheng, *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). But it has to be emphasized that Zhao and Zheng have provided a very appropriate platform for revisiting the Qing from a maritime perspective, my project will therefore align with their critical and analytical enterprises.

<sup>26</sup> For details, see Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005); Lawrence Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule, 1661-1684* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 1-17; Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self Portrait of K'ang Hsi* (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp. 105-106; Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Images and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1971); Pamela Kyle Crossley, “Review Article: The Rulerships of China.” *American Historical Review*, vol. 97 no. 5 (1992), pp. 1468-1483; and David M. Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1 (June, 1978), pp. 5-34.

<sup>27</sup> Several scholars have examined the special characteristics of Qing rule in Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet.

*Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, Peter C. Perdue forcefully explains how the Qing Empire considerably expanded its frontier to the West.<sup>28</sup> Except for the Pan-Asian *Pax Mongolica*,<sup>29</sup> the expansive Great Qing Empire was by far the largest political entity ever to govern what is known today as Central Eurasia.<sup>30</sup> Due to a series of continental triumphs achieved by the Qing armies, most historians and social scientists tended to focus on these Inner Asian conquests in the long eighteenth century,<sup>31</sup> thereby describing the Qing as one of the most successful and expansive powers throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Great Qing was, arguably, similar to other Euro-Asian empires such as the Muscovite-Russian, the Mongolian Zunghar, the Ottoman, and the Habsburg, in patterns of “administrative centralization, deliberate multinational

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See Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Evelyn S. Rawski, “Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 55 (1996), pp. 829-850; Ann Waltner and Thomas A. Wilson, “Forum: Four Books on the Manchus in China and in Greater Asia,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 61 (February 2002), pp. 149-177; Peter C. Perdue, “A Frontier View of Chineseness,” in Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita, and Mark Selden (eds.), *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150, and 50-Year Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 51-77. See also Jürgen Osterhammel, *China und die Weltgesellschaft. vom 18 Jahrhundert bis in unsere Zeit* (München: C. H. Beck Verlag, 1989), pp. 86-105. For some Chinese and Japanese scholarship, see Wu Cengqi, *Qingshi gangyao* 清史綱要 [Summary of the Qing history] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1934), pp. 39-41; Xiao Yishan, *Qingshi* 清史 [History of the Qing] (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chubanshe, 1952); Naitō Torajirō, *Shinchō shi tsūron* 清朝史通論 [Treatise on the Qing history] (Tōkyō: Kōbundō Shobō, 1944), pp. 20-23; Zheng Tianting, *Qingshi* 清史 [History of the Qing] (Taipei: Yunlong chubanshe, 1989), pp. 12-18; Abe Takeo, *Shindaishi no kenkyū* 清代史の研究 [Researches on Qing history] (Tōkyō: Sōbunsha, 1971), p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire: Its Rise and Legacy* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), p. 347.

<sup>30</sup> The Qing conquests towards the heart of Eurasia formed part of a global process in the late modern era, in which Western European historians tend to typify this historical conjuncture as that of the “seventeenth-century crisis of state formation” followed by “eighteenth century stabilization.” See William T. Rowe, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 1-10. See also Piper Rae Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation on the Chinese Frontiers* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996); Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise, Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> Generally, the “long eighteenth century” spanned from Kangxi’s final consolidation of Qing rule, around 1680, to the death of the Qianlong emperor in 1799. See Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997).

inclusion, and aggressive land settlement.”<sup>32</sup> Contrary to the conventional understanding that the Qing was an exception to imperialistic power in world history, the “Inner Asian focus” has rightly provided an illuminating angle for studying the Qing in ways that counter the conventionally held understanding that the Great Qing was an exception to imperialistic power in world history which is similar to other ambitious powers in the “Great Game.”<sup>33</sup> Yet this focus has been overwhelmingly structured in terms of the Westward, territorial expansionism of the Great Qing that it announced. The focus gives us an impression that the Qing court, especially before the First Opium War, paid exclusive attention to its central Eurasian frontier while ignoring that of its maritime coastline. Some historians even conclude that the Qing court expanded the territorial borders of the empire but deliberately decided to “turn away from its maritime frontier” since the sea only had a limited influence on the high Qing administrative body.<sup>34</sup> However, as demonstrated by Palmira Brummett, “empire building was depended upon the ability to mobilize irresistible armies and navies.”<sup>35</sup> What if we try to reject the dichotomizing view of “the land-sea relationship,” in which the expansion on land has to be predicated on the negligence of the ocean, or vice

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<sup>32</sup> For instance, see Victor Lieberman (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c.1830* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), “introduction”; Lynn A. Struve (ed.), *The Qing Formation of World-Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> The idea of “Great Game” here refers to the geopolitical rivalry over Central Eurasia between different powers in the nineteenth century. For details, see Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha, 1992); Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (Washington D.C. Counterpoint, 1999). Moreover, I side with those who do not find a distinctive contrast between the Qing empire and the European state system until the mid-eighteenth century. The high Qing was not an isolated, stable “Oriental empire (words used by Peter Perdue),” but an evolving state structure engaged in mobilization for expansionist warfare. See Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*, pp. 524-532.

<sup>34</sup> C.K. Woodworth, “Review Article: Ocean and Steppe: Early Modern Empires,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 11 no. 6 (2007), pp. 505-506.

<sup>35</sup> Palmira Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower and Levantine Diplomacy in the Age of Discovery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 7.

versa? What if we pay closer attention to the maritime consciousness and the naval awareness of the Qing court in the long eighteenth century, during its greatest years of expansion? Another purpose of this research, therefore, is to break through the “land power - sea power” dichotomy that has animated much of the discussion of high Qing maritime politics.

Many scholars would resist thinking that the Qing was a sea power. “For the greater part of its long history,” as John K. Fairbank puts it, “Chinese naval power in the modern sense of the term remained abortive.”<sup>36</sup> The American admiral Bernard D. Cole who commands the Destroyer Squadron 35 also remained determined that “China historically has been a continental rather than a maritime power, despite its more than eleven thousand miles of coastline and six thousand islands.”<sup>37</sup> Even for contemporary China, a Chinese analyst explains in a similar fashion that “for a power like China, possession of strong sea power can only become a component part of China’s land power.”<sup>38</sup> Such resistance to consider the Qing or China a sea power is in part formed by an ingrained conception conditioned by the binary logic that a particular country/empire can only be either a land-power or a sea-power. To restore a more faithful picture of the geopolitics of the Great Qing, which has long been colored by the reductive and binary logic, which divided along the line between the land and the sea, this dissertation thus challenges the above resistance,

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<sup>36</sup> John King Fairbank, *China Perceived; Images and Policies in Chinese-American Relations* (New York: Knopf, 1974). p. 25.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China’s Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), p. xvi.

<sup>38</sup> Ye Zicheng, “China’s Sea Power Must be Subordinate to its Land Power,” *Xiandai guoji guanxi*, vol. 20 (April 2008), pp. 53-60.

describes and explains the maritime awareness of the Qing empire, and argues that there existed a close link between Qing policies for land and sea. Even while the Great Qing was often believed to be a continental power, it engaged considerably with the sea in terms of political vision, military deployment, and administrative practices. Based on a variety of imperial archives, I argue that in many respects the Qing court was a composite part of the maritime world before the advent of Euro-American battleships in the East Asian Sea. Although the Manchu bannermen were keen on conquering adversaries by means of horse, bow and arrow,<sup>39</sup> the imperial court was practical and conscious of stabilizing the coastal region and keeping their inner sea space under tight supervision and effective control. What the Qing court wanted to achieve was to maintain a sustainable balance between naval management and westward inland expansion in governing its land and sea borders – which is similar to the People’s Republic of China’s “one road - one belt” (*yidai yilu*) policy, while the “road,” the Silk Road region, is referring to the development of the Northwestern frontier and the “belt,” the maritime Silk Road sector, to the Southeast Asian body of seawater. Even though its success varied over time, the Qing persistent efforts on maritime management showed that the Qing state, as an Asian empire in the eighteenth century, neither neglected nor ignored the maritime frontier between the time after Taiwan was annexed in 1684 and the outbreak of the First Opium War in 1839. This study is important because it not only examines high Qing maritime policy as an integral part of China’s land and coastal frontier management, but it also revises current approaches to the topic which have hitherto emphasized the Eurocentric definitions of Qing maritime policy and the

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<sup>39</sup> Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 89-132; Franz Michael, *Origin of Manchu Rule: Frontier and Bureaucracy as Interacting Forces in the Chinese Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942), p. 119.

binary approach in dealing with land and sea power.

## Sea Power

As one of the key concepts in this study, sea power merits more explanation here. Sea power, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, means by which a nation extends its military power onto the seas. The classic exposition of the role of sea power as the basis of national power was the theory established by Alfred Thayer Mahan's (1840-1914), which has been frequently examined and restated by admirals, politicians, and even national leaders such as Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) in China, Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) in the United States of America, and Wilhelm II (1859-1941) in Germany.<sup>40</sup> In his *The History of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, Mahan theorized naval strategy and the commercial expansion backed by sea power – “mercantilist imperialism,” in the words of maritime historians Margaret and Harold Sprout. Like Smith for political economy and Darwin for natural selection, Mahan strove to discover those “considerations and principles [which] belong to the unchangeable, or unchanging, order of things, remaining the same, in cause

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<sup>40</sup> Influenced by Mahan's sea power theory, Sun Yat-sen advocated prioritizing the establishment of the navy for national defense, as he wrote “the navy is the basis for strength and prosperity. As is often said by people in Britain and the US, whoever dominates the sea dominates world trade; whoever dominates world trade dominates the Golconda; whoever dominates the Golconda dominates the world...Boost the shipping industry to expand the navy, let our national navy keep pace with the big powers and get into the rank of first-class powers. The only way for China to become prosperous is to develop its military arms.” Sun Yat-sen, *Guofu de guofang xueshu sixiang yanjiuji* (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1996), p. 321 [translation extracted from Andrew Erickson and Lyle Goldstein, *China, the United States, and 21st-Century Sea Power: Defining a Maritime Security Partnership* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), p. 479]; Kaiser Wilhelm II also wrote in 1884, “I am just now devouring the book (*The Influence of Sea Power upon History*) and am trying to learn it by heart.”

and effect, from age to age.”<sup>41</sup> His central thesis was elaborated chiefly in the first chapter of his book entitled “Discussion of the Elements of Sea Power,” which is well enough known to need only a brief summary here. Writing in both a descriptive and analytical way, Mahan sought to demonstrate that in wartime international struggles were often affected by command of the sea, and that in peacetime, sea commerce was of profound influence upon the strength and wealth of nations. It was sea power that fostered European imperialism in the eighteenth century, whereby strong monarchs exported the products and people of their kingdoms, in the numerous vessels of their national merchant marines, protected by their large navies, to overseas colonies that were designed to function as closed, monopolized markets. Sea power, in Mahan’s view, was pervasive wherever large warships could operate and mobilize. It meant that the feats of an empire no longer marked the outer limit of imaginable conquest.

Expanding Mahan’s theory to include imperial China is no easy task, for one immediately runs into an assumption that China was by no means a sea power. Scholars, both in China and the West, frequently argued that “Chinese strategists and leaders did not articulate a commitment to, or even a firm grasp of, sea power in the classical sense.”<sup>42</sup> Unlike the Atlantic seafaring empires, “China had not elevated sea strategy to the level of grand strategy.”<sup>43</sup> Fundamentally different from a sea power, China “was not a seafaring

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<sup>41</sup> Alfred Mahan, *The History of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> Gang Deng, *Maritime Sector, Institutions, and Sea Power of Premodern China* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), p. xvi.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel M. Hartnett and Frederic Vellucci, “Toward a Maritime Security Strategy: An Analysis of Chinese Views since the Early 1900s,” in Phillip C. Saunders, Christopher Yung, Michael Swaine, and Andrew Nien-dzu Yang ed., *The Chinese Navy: Expanding Capabilities, Evolving Roles?* (Washington, D.C, National Defense University, 2014), pp. 8-10.

nation in the mold of the United States, Great Britain, Japan, Spain, and France.”<sup>44</sup> Jeanette Greenfield even stated that “in the past, China did not need to consider the sea or sea power as it was irrelevant to the maintenance of a great land empire.”<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the notion of sea power, principally derived from Mahan’s theoretical insight, is itself problematic. Historians and political scientists such as Paul Kennedy and J.R. Jones have shown that there is no single model of sea power: what control of the sea meant to Great Britain and Japan in the Second World War was totally different from what it meant to the Soviet Union, just as the influence of sea power upon the history of the Ukraine, in the sixteenth century, was far less than it was upon the history of Portugal.<sup>46</sup> Theorists of strategy in the United States and England have also long been concerned with the limitation of the Mahanian insight. They have questioned the influence of sea power and challenged its significance in the modern and pre-modern era. In 1935, for instance, Tyler Dennett (1883-1949), a distinguished expert on Far East politics and history, sharply criticized Mahan for overestimating the influence of sea power.<sup>47</sup> Julius W. Pratt (1888-1983), in 1937, noted that there was nothing original in Mahan’s influence on sea power that “it was narrowly and unacceptably mono-causal, and that it was interpretatively superficial.”<sup>48</sup> R.B. Wernham

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew S. Erickson, “Can China Become a Maritime Power?” in Toshi Yoshihara, James R. Holmes ed., *Asia Looks Seaward: Power and Maritime Strategy* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008), p. 70.

<sup>45</sup> Jeanette Greenfield, “China and the Law of the Sea,” in James Crawford, Donald R. Rothwell ed., *The Law of the Sea in the Asian Pacific Region: Developments and Prospects* (Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Kennedy, “The Influence and the Limitations of Sea Power,” *The International History Review*, vol. 10, No. 1 (Feb, 1988), pp. 2-17.

<sup>47</sup> Tyler Dennett, “Mahan’s ‘The Problem of Asia,’” *Foreign Affairs*, April (1935), pp. 464-472.

<sup>48</sup> Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), pp. 3-28.



and Garrett Mattingly (1900-1962) also called attention to the limitations of maritime force, not only because of the amateurish nature of navies at that time, but also because the struggle between the Habsburgs and their enemies for the mastery of Europe took place chiefly on land. Edward Ingram, representing the British navalist school studying in the Nelson era (1774-1777), roundly attacked those who “cling to the mythology of the Mahanian blue-water school.”<sup>49</sup> Sir Hew Strachan even questioned the efficacy of the Mahan’s theory in conquests and battlefields in his famous article entitled “The British Way in Warfare Revisited.”<sup>50</sup> Mahan’s theory received criticism and censure in twentieth century scholarship, but, as Philip Crowl has pointed out, Mahan as the premier theorist of sea power will “rise as well as decline, refreshed by the recollection that he asked his nation and his navy some very difficult and pertinent questions, questions still relevant, questions each generation must ask and answer anew.”<sup>51</sup> In light of Crowl’s observation, I argue that it would make more sense to admit that the Mahanian sea power model has had its influence and limitations. It largely depends upon the historical and geographical context of the period and war in question.

The concept of sea power itself, furthermore, was not exclusively a western concept. An intriguing statement made by a seventeenth century maritime writer, Zhang Xie (1574-1640), demonstrated that there were Chinese literati who employed the notion of “extending

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<sup>49</sup> Edward Ingram, “Illusion of Victory: The Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar Revisited,” *Military Affairs*, vol. xlvii (1984), pp. 140-143. See also his *In Defense of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East, 1775-1842* (London: Cass, 1984), chapter 5 and 7.

<sup>50</sup> Hew Strachan, “The British Way in Warfare Revisited,” *Historical Journal*, vol. 26 (1983), pp. 447-461.

<sup>51</sup> Philip Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” Peter Paret ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 476-477.

military control onto the sea.”<sup>52</sup> Joseph Needham called our attention to the nature of sea power that “naval armed might meant something very different indeed in the Chinese and the Portuguese interpretations.”<sup>53</sup> David Kang also rightly sounded a note of caution about the problem using Mahan theory derived exclusively from the European experience to analyze maritime history in Asia. The analytical model of sea power, as stated by Kang, should be applied to Asia with due respect to the differences in European and Asian historical experience of the sea as a substantial factor in maritime management.<sup>54</sup> My use of the term sea power therefore rests on the premise that it is a complex and multivalent conception which refers to a variety of historical and regional experiences, ranging from imperialistic overseas expansions to the consolidation of political power across a body of strategic water such as a maritime frontier.<sup>55</sup> Acquiring sea power or becoming a sea power does not necessarily mean having and using power over the sea. To quote David C. Gompert, sea power is “the ability to exert power over what occurs *at* sea – or power *of* the sea.”<sup>56</sup> The historical and contemporary variations of sea power point to real processes which have to be studied on their own terms. To this end, I apply the conception of sea power in this study to refer to the Qing control of vast tracts of its domestic sea space through military force, as well as the ruling mechanism of its maritime frontier from an imperial center. More fundamentally, I use “sea power” to denote the set of maritime

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<sup>52</sup> See Zhang Xie, *Dongxiyang kao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), “Zhou shi kao.”

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Needham, Mansel Davies (ed.), *A Selection from the Writings of Joseph Needham* (London: McFarland & Company, 1994) p. 175.

<sup>54</sup> David C. Kang, “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks,” *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Spring, 2003), pp. 58.

<sup>55</sup> I will provide a detailed examination on maritime frontier in the subsequent chapter.

<sup>56</sup> David C. Gompert, *Sea Power and American Interests in the Western Pacific*, p. 6.

practices and policies through which the Qing court fashioned and maintained. I argue that sea power also means the practice, conceptualization, and attitudes of a dominating center ruling a vast body of seawater. As a concept, moreover, sea power can serve as a platform that we can begin to find the common ground on which “European, Mahanian sea power,” and “Qing sea power” can be discussed. This is not to deny the historical specificity of late nineteenth century European imperialistic experience or of Qing experience in the eighteenth century. Nor is it a plea for a return to the general or Mahanian definition of sea power. Rather, it is an attempt to extend the ground on which historical, particular, and localized accounts of sea power can be delineated. It is at the same time an attempt to initiate a dialogue between the maritime experience in East Asia and the European sphere. Seeing the Qing experience within a broader framework of sea power studies rather than confining it within the perimeter of area studies, I believe, allows us to see China in the context of global historical processes rather than as a unique and timeless power unto itself.

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### **The East Asian Mediterranean?**

Although the primary focus of this study is the Qing conceptualization of the ocean and its maritime policies in the eighteenth century, in writing this introduction I also hope to draw my readers’ attention to the prevailing academic trend of modelling the East Asian Sea as the East Asian Mediterranean. The presumption of naming the body of seawater in

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<sup>57</sup> In this I follow the discussion of Qing colonialism introduced by Peter Perdue. He emphasized the importance to position Chinese experience of colonialism within a broader and global context. See Peter Perdue, “Boundaries, Maps, and Movement: Chinese, Russian, and Mongol Empires in Early Central Eurasia,” *The International History Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1998), pp. 263-286.

East Asia as the East Asian Mediterranean is inspired by the magisterial research conducted by Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), the godfather of maritime studies. In his *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II), Braudel defined and depicted the Mediterranean in its broadest geographical context, inclusive of the great civilizations of Iraq and Egypt, the steppes of Russia, the forests of Germany, and the deserts of the Sahara. He saw the Mediterranean as a body of water that facilitated rather than prevented trade and contacts between its surrounding nations. As a key geographical space, the Mediterranean hub was, Braudel suggested, a “circulation space of trade,” a “contact zone of cultures,” and a maritime landscape which many political, economic and cultural interactions took place. He further made the essential point that “the Mediterranean has no unity but that created by the movements of men, the relationships they imply, and the routes they follow.”<sup>58</sup>

This analysis, widely known as the “Braudelian Mediterranean structure” has inspired many subsequent maritime studies, in which the classic model itself is readily employed. W. Blockmans, Lex Heerma van Voss, Ralph Kauz, and Paul Gilroy, for instance, have written a cultural history of the areas around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea using the classic Braudelian model.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, in the maritime research project led by Angela Schottenhammer in Munich,<sup>60</sup> the East Asian Sea is examined within the

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<sup>58</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London: Collins, 1972), pp. 17-24.

<sup>59</sup> W. Blockmans and Lex Heerma van Voss, “Urban Networks and Emerging States in the North Sea and Baltic Areas: A Maritime Culture?” in Juliette Roding and Lex Heerma van Voss (eds.), *The North Sea and Culture (1550-1800)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), pp. 10-20; Paul Gilroy, “North Sea Culture, 1500-1800,” in *ibid.*, pp. 21-40.

<sup>60</sup> The project, “The East Asian Mediterranean, c. 1500-1800,” was conducted in the Institut für Sinologie

terminological framework of the Mediterranean – the “East Asian Mediterranean” – with the assumption that it is, or ought to be, in many ways comparable to the Mediterranean world, particularly in the aspects of economic and cultural exchange.<sup>61</sup> In a similar vein, Christine Moll-Murata also argues that the “East China Sea” is analogous to the Mediterranean because the two oceans are both “specific economic, political and cultural contact zones.” She further validated the model by asking, “why should China, the Middle Kingdom of the Chinese (*zhonghua*), not possess a *dizhonghai* (the Mediterranean in Chinese) that lies in the middle of the earth?”<sup>62</sup> Lyman van Slyke even ruminated over the Yangtze region in Braudelian terms. He further developed a view of Northwest China between the Gobi desert in the North and the Himalayas in the West as an economic and cultural contact zone with similarities to the Mediterranean. In Roy Bin Wong’s description, van Slyke replaced “camel caravans with ships on Mediterranean waters.”<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Braudel also believed in the possibility of fitting all oceans, including the Baltic, the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Indian Ocean, as well as the China Seas into the Mediterranean framework as regional maritime spaces.<sup>64</sup>

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(Sinology Institute) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München, from 2005 to 2014.

<sup>61</sup> Angela Schottenhammer, “The Sea as Barrier and Contact Zone: Maritime Space and Sea Routes in Traditional Chinese Books and Maps,” in Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Christine Moll-Murata, “Sundry Notes on the Zhoushan Archipelago: Topographical Notation and Comparison to Braudelian Islands,” in Angela Schottenhammer, Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources*, p. 123.

<sup>63</sup> Roy Bin Wong, “Entre monde et nation: les regions Braudeliennes en Asia,” *Annales* vol. 66, no. 1 (2001), pp. 9-16.

<sup>64</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Sozialgeschichte des 15-18 Jahrhunderts: Der Handel* (München: Kindler Verlag, 1986), p. 646.

Braudel's model, written in the late 1940s, is so hegemonic that it has become the academic custom to define, examine, and re-evaluate every single piece of seawater in the world in relation to it. It goes without saying that the conceptions of maritime spaces like the East Asian Sea need to be aware of the perspective. However, as Craig A. Lockard suggested, not all historians find the "Mediterranean analogy" a compelling one, especially because the empirical data shows that the geographical, cultural, and historical settings of Asia are not exactly the same as the Mediterranean.<sup>65</sup> Contrary to Braudel's observation, John H. Pryor, for instance, argued that the Mediterranean was neither a barrier nor a highway but a complicated, seasonally varying, combination of both.<sup>66</sup> In an edited volume *Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean*, contributors like Ottavia Niccoli, Henry Kamen, and Jack A. Goldstone also point out that the Braudelian model is in many respects flawed or at least open to criticism.<sup>67</sup> Kirti Narayan Chaudhuri and John E. Wills, in turn, asked with resonance, "does the history of the civilizations around and beyond the ocean exhibit any intrinsic and perceptible unity, expressed in terms of space, time or structure,

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<sup>65</sup> Craig A. Lockard, "'The Sea Common to All': Maritime Frontiers, Port Cities, and Chinese Traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400–1750," *Journal of World History*, vol. 21 no. 2 (June 2010): 220. As the Braudelian model is a somewhat imprecise means of fully scrutinizing the history of the East Asian seascape, Wang Gangwu suggests adopting the "Mediterranean thesis" in stressing that the process of historical change in the "Mediterranean complex" was not native to the Asian Sea. Wang introduces the concept "Semiterranean," or "semi-Mediterranean." By semiterranean he means that the Asian Sea, in particular the China Seas (including Nanhai and Donghai), was not at all Mediterranean in earlier times but became increasingly comparable only after the tenth century. For details, see Wang Gangwu, "The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea," "The China Seas: Becoming an Enlarged Mediterranean," in *The East Asian Mediterranean: Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), pp. 9-22.

<sup>66</sup> See John H. Pryor, *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>67</sup> See John A. Marino, ed., *Early Modern History and the Social Sciences: Testing the Limits of Braudel's Mediterranean* (Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2002).

which allows us to construct a Braudelian framework?”<sup>68</sup> In my opinion, the Braudelian model is not effective enough to be widely adopted in a global historical context because the differences between the aforementioned maritime spaces are vast and significant. First of all, regarding the difference of scale, one may realize that the Baltic covers approximately 414,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the North Sea 520,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Mediterranean 2, 516,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The East Asian Sea, in the largest definition, going down to the coast of Indonesia, covers no less than 12,378,796 km<sup>2</sup>, which is nearly five times larger than the Mediterranean. In addition to its smaller size, the Mediterranean is more manageable and topographically enclosed than the East Asian Sea. Cultural and economic ties across the Mediterranean are weaker than those across some oceans that were larger in size and more open-ended. Oceanic passages of the East Asian Sea, from east to south, from Tianjin to Makassar, and from Singapore to the Birds Head coast of New Guinea, connect people from very distant places; by definition passages across the Mediterranean, as highlighted by Michael Pearson, do not.<sup>69</sup> The East Asian Sea is not only larger in size, it also has a fundamentally different history. The Mediterranean was always been dominated by peoples along its littoral; the North Atlantic was the creation of people from one of its coasts, the Pacific arguably was constructed by the Europeans; but a significant portion of the East Asian Sea was firmly linked to a major empire, China, and was bordered by the Korean peninsula and the islands of Japan. In a sense, applying a Braudelian framework to

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<sup>68</sup> K.N. Chaudhuri. ‘The Unity and Disunity of Indian Ocean History from the Rise of Islam to 1750: The Outline of a Theory and Historical Discourse’, *Journal of World History*, IV, 1 (1993), pp. 1-7; John E. Wills, “The South China Sea is Not a Mediterranean: Implications for the History of Chinese Foreign Relations” in Tang Xiyong ed., *Zhongguo Haiyang fazhan shi lunwen ji di shi ji* (Taipei: Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Academia Sinica, 2008), pp. 1-24.

<sup>69</sup> Michael N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 4.

construct Asian maritime history might be considered narrowly Eurocentric.

Heather Sutherland, Maurice Aymard, Roy Bin Wong, O.W. Wolters, and Rene Barendse, to name but a few scholars, have reconfirmed the need for a more sensitive understanding of the asymmetrical maritime settings in Asia. All of them advocate approaching Asian maritime history with fewer Braudelian (European) elements. To Heather Sutherland the Braudelian model was not suitable enough for us to refer to the East Asian Sea as the “East Asian Mediterranean.”<sup>70</sup> She maintained that even though “Braudel’s prose and intellectual ambition are justly seen as inspiring, conceptual confusion and analytic evasion limit his contribution.”<sup>71</sup> Likewise, Roy Bin Wong disagreed with the idea of a Chinese Mediterranean in the South China Sea, proposing that the seas off China’s shores were much more open culturally and economically than the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>72</sup> Maurice Aymard found the only possible way to read Braudel is to receive inspiration for exploring unknown fields, not to try to imitate or repeat him. In exploring the sea’s influence on shaping history in Southeast Asia, O.W. Wolters rejected viewing the Mediterranean “as a fitting analogy for the region’s sea.”<sup>73</sup> Rene Barendse also reminded us to avoid negatively contrasting the Asian oceans with European sea space.<sup>74</sup> In agreement

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<sup>70</sup> Heather Sutherland, “Southeast Asian History and the Mediterranean Analogy,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2003), p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Roy Bin Wong, “Entre monde et nation: les regions Braudeliennes en Asia,” pp. 9-16.

<sup>73</sup> O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Religion in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publication, 1999), pp. 36-37.

<sup>74</sup> R.J. Barendse, “Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 6 no. 2 (2000), p. 173.



with the above scholars, I would argue that the stereotype, which is based on the Braudelian framework, to investigate Asian maritime histories make the European experience of the ocean into the normative standard against which others are measured. It also by and large assumes that external factors with relations to the Europeans play a more dominant and decisive role than internal historical experience in shaping East Asian understandings of the maritime world. Therefore, if an uncritical adoption of the Braudelian model must be problematized, then why shouldn't we examine the various ways in which Asian peoples have conceptualized their "own" oceans and have modeled the maritime world?

### Sources

This thesis closely considers the central government's role after Kangxi's annexation of Taiwan in 1684.<sup>75</sup> Because the central state was the prime protagonist in shaping and maintaining the stability across specific sea spaces, such a topic must take into consideration factors beyond the local and provincial levels. This study, therefore, draws extensively on governmental documents, including the palace memorials (*zouzhe*), imperial edicts (*shangyu*), routine memorials (*tiben*), official books (*dangce*), and the correspondence between the central authority, the grand council, and the provincial and local officials. Many of these materials are familiar to historians, but the entries which are of the greatest importance to the present study, those relating to maritime affairs, have not been fully examined. In addition to these materials, this study also employs a private corpus

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<sup>75</sup> The year 1684 marked one of the most significant watersheds in the history of Qing governance, which was embodied by her initiation of maritime militarization between the North and the South, as well as the extension of power across territory (including both continental and maritime) that previously belonged to the Ming Dynasty. We will discuss in detail "the importance of 1683" in due course.

of poems, diaries, letters, and chronologies (*nianpu*), authored by ruling elites who settled in coastal provinces. These materials, like those government documents pertaining to maritime affairs, have not been explored in great depth prior to this research. Other lesser known governmental archives used in this study include reports, minutes, surveys, and statistical data compiled by Governor-generals (*tidu*), such as the Governor generals of the nine gates (*jiumen tidu*), the Navy commanders (*haijun tidu*), and the Generals of frontiers (*zhufang dachen*) in coastal prefectures. These records contain valuable sections relating to transport, hydrology, fishery, piracy, and natural maritime resources. In my attempt to paint an accurate and balanced picture, I have also consulted local gazetteers, private anthologies, and some imperial accounts written in Manchu (e.g. the *Manwen zhupi zouzhe* [Palace memorials written in Manchu]). I have also relied upon Western language primary accounts stored in Germany, England, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

I organize this dissertation into five chapters framed by an introduction, a conclusion, and a bibliography. Chapter 1 *Setting the Scene*. Starting with Owen Lattimore's frontier theory, I define the maritime frontier as a multi-layered, transcultural region that can be understood in both physical and cultural terms. Rather than a static boundary, a maritime frontier is a dynamic canvas of interaction, whose conceptualization shapes imaginaries, policies, and patterns of behavior. By reconstructing Qing views of the maritime blue frontier, I suggest that we can obtain a deeper understanding of their governments' changing aims and motivations in dealing with the maritime world. One aspect shaping

conceptualizations of this frontier are the physical features of the East Asian seascape. In reviewing these features, I highlight the multiple ways in which geography, ecology, climate, winds, and tides contributed not only to shaping trading and travel patterns but also gave rise to an awareness of the East Asian Sea.

Chapter 2 *Modeling the Sea Space*. The formation of a maritime space, according to Philp E. Steinberg, entails a complex process of social construction based on three interacting mechanisms: external utilization, internal perception, and regulatory representation. Hence any in-depth analysis of the sea space requires not only an examination of its natural geography, or as Michael Pearson calls it “deep structure,” but also a history of how it was used and conceptualized. Therefore I turn to analyze in this chapter the nuanced conceptualizations of the maritime world by the high Qing emperors and their advisors. I show that in the high Qing a distinction between an “inner” (*nei*) and an “outer” (*wai*) sea space emerged that framed many of the policies adopted throughout the three emperors’ (Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong) reigns. In this model the “inner” sea was conceived as an integral part of the Qing empire whose governance and control demanded undivided attention, while the outer ocean was seen as a territory beyond administrative governance and economic extraction. This hierarchical distinction mirrored the classification of tribute states into inner and outer polities: the former dependent on Qing military protection, whereas the latter were not directly subordinated to Qing rule. This inner-outer model could significantly corroborate my argument that there existed a close link between Qing policies for land and sea.

Chapter 3 *The Dragon Navy* and Chapter 4 *The Sea Passes* are designed to illustrate how conceptualizations of an inner and outer sea space shaped concrete, actual policies. Chapter 3 is devoted to a reconstruction of high Qing coastal defense. Based on a series of historical archives written in Chinese, Manchu, Korean, and Japanese, I review the measures to strengthen and maintain the military defenses of the seven coastal provinces bounded by five interconnected strategic sea zones, namely the Guangdong sea zone, the Taiwan Strait, the Zhejiang sea zone, the Jiangsu sea zone, and the Bohai area. I paint a complex picture of the strategic problems the high Qing emperors faced along their extensive coastlines and of the policies they adopted to resolve them. Many pre-modern states maintained a rather modest standing army and instead recruited and trained soldiers and sailors as military campaigns demanded. The Qing also has the reputation of having kept a rather thin layer of bureaucracy and a limited military in relation to its population size. This chapter shows recurrent attempts at rebuilding bases and ships of certain kinds and sizes. In the high Qing era there was no emergence of something like a central British Admiralty and main state navy dockyard investing in innovation and working systematically to improve technology. The overarching fear of the Qing court seems to have been more with assembling a domestic military force that could threaten the throne than an awareness of external changes in maritime warfare and a new balance of power on the high seas.

Organized in a chronological way, Chapter 4 *The Sea Passes*, offers an analysis of the maritime customs office, a neglected branch of the high Qing administration, that underlines its significance for the Qing imperial enterprise. Well aware of the intimate

connection between military defense and economic growth, the high Qing government spent considerable energy to establish an efficient customs regime along their entire coast. Periodic shifts between more open and more restricted maritime trade policies reflected changing strategic exigencies in a framework of guarded management rather than hint at ignorance or irrational swings in attitudes toward the maritime world. Enriched by a wealth of statistical and geographical data and fruitful comparisons, I detail and examine in this chapter the institutional development and investment of the Qing state into this customs organization, such as its personnel recruitment and management strategies.

Chapter 5 *Writing the Waves* returns from the realm of policy to a more conceptual level. To bolster my case for the significance of the maritime world to the Qing imagination, I excavate three non-official texts composed by Chen Lunjiong (?-1751), Wang Dahai, and Xie Qinggao (1765-1821), which dedicated to the maritime world and China's place within it. In responding to Chinese geographical traditions and contemporary intellectual trends, such as the turn toward "evidential scholarship (*kaozhengxue*)," this chapter offers an overview of scholarly treatments of the sea and the countries with which it connected the Qing empire. Although the surviving non-official materials dedicated to the maritime world is smaller than the official record, it is no less significant. In fact, a more complete understanding of the meaning that the maritime world had for the Qing can be gained by examining these maritime writings in conjunction with a series of imperial official documents.

The conclusion recapitulates the study's main arguments and findings and relates

them to maritime histories and global studies. It shows that Qing's maritime management in the eighteenth century can be understood in terms of the empire's multifaceted strategies towards the maritime world. The sustainability of the empire and the growth of international as well as domestic sea trade propelled the Qing court to initiate a series of moderate, decisive, pragmatic, and highly interventionist policies in managing a variety of maritime issues (*haiyang zhi shi*). It is in this sense that the Qing court in the eighteenth century played a positive and proactive role in the East Asian sea space. Furthermore, this research highlights the fact that high Qing maritime policies changed over time from the Kangxi to the Qianlong reign. The high Qing, which is traditionally regarded as a hallmark of impressive and prosperous development (*shengshi*), was in fact burdened by short-term crises and long term intractable problems. Even though Max Weber (1864-1920) saw Asian history as stagnant and as lacking the spark that produced dynamic, self-motivated change,<sup>76</sup> this dissertation suggests that high Qing maritime management had been driven by a series of remarkable crises that constitute a transformative aspect of its seemingly stagnant tradition. Those crises such as the shortage of rice production, piratical violence, and the problems with foreign traders, provided a set of key catalyst for the Qing court to alter, modify, and refine their maritime policies within different temporal and spatial contexts.

### **Maritime History and the Great Qing**

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<sup>76</sup> Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen: Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922). Weber's theses are quoted by many Western sociologists and political scientists writing on China. For instance, Richard Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Marion Levy et al., *The Rise of the Modern Chinese Business Class* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1979); and Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1968).

Before ending this introduction, a few paragraphs highlighting the way how maritime history (might) shape the history of East Asia in general and the Qing Empire in particular is in order. Water covers 360 million square kilometers of the earth and constitutes seventy-one percent of its surface area, it was the only spatial medium that connected dislocated landmasses before the development of air transportation. As suggested by Jerry H. Bentley,

most of the interactions between cultures were transmitted from shore to shore.....an increasing density and scale of interregional interaction had led to the forging of a single world system, and oceans, namely the Baltic, the Atlantic, the Indian and the East Asian, were major sites in which that processes played out.<sup>77</sup>

Echoing what Bentley identifies as a frequent neglect of maritime history, the sociologist Philip E. Steinberg has pointed out that the East Asian sea spaces, which embrace China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam served as highways of trade, routes of migration, lifelines of empires, and venues of opportunity for pirates and smugglers.<sup>78</sup> However, historians have only recently begun to chart the history of maritime regions around Asia.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Jerry H. Bentley, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," *Geographical Review*, vol. 89 (1999), pp. 215-224.

<sup>78</sup> Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 11, 32; Wang Gungwu and Ng Chin-keong (eds.), *Maritime China in Transition 1750-1850*; Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), pp. 1-17; J.L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," *Journal of World History*, vol. 6 (1995), pp. 175-199.

<sup>79</sup> The sea, as Gesa Mackenthun and Bernhard Klein have suggested, tends to have no history: "Like the desert, the ocean has often been read as an empty space, a cultural and historical void, constantly traversed, circumnavigated and fought over, but rarely inscribed other than symbolically by the self-proclaimed agents of civilization." Extracted from the "Call for Papers for the conference 'Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean, c.1500- c.1900' (University of Greifswald, Germany, July 20-24, 2000)."

As Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-Francois Salles concluded in general terms from their research on the Indian Ocean,

[h]istorians have too often neglected the role of sea in world history, in which will produced skewed, incomplete histories of human kind.<sup>80</sup>

One of the reasons why maritime studies were overlooked for a long time is, as Ian K. Steele suggested, that history has “tended to become overwhelmingly about lands.”<sup>81</sup> The material, cultural, and intellectual constructs that inform and explain historical experiences of maritime Asia, especially during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, have only begun to receive attention in the past two decades. While sinologists interested in the spatial and political history of regimes have focused largely on questions related to international territorial borders and frontiers and the making of state power in provinces, historians have tended to focus either upon highly commercialized or urbanized regions that were centers of intellectual, artistic, and commercial exchange or, less often, places at the peripheries of the empires’ *terra firma*. In contrast, historians have not explored in detail the processes by which the sea space became an integrated territory that could be apprehended and ruled, nor have they analyzed what the sea space can reveal about politics and policy. It was not true that the Asian Sea before the middle of the nineteenth century was an “empty maritime zone” disconnected from the ruling mechanism of the Asian empires. In the introduction to *The Geography of Border Landscapes*, David

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<sup>80</sup> Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-Francois Salles (eds.), *Tradition and Archeology: Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), pp.1-2.

<sup>81</sup> Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communications and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. vi.



Knight states that

the cultural landscape – the physical landscape as modified by international and unintentional human action – has long been the focus of study by geographers.....[yet] one old theme that still demands exploration is the impact on landscape of political decision making and actions which may reflect ideological commitments.<sup>82</sup>

Knight's idea applies also to the study of the maritime landscape during the high Qing period. As mentioned earlier, the Qing maritime strategies should demand historians' attention as much as those carried out on land. It is thus important to enrich the understanding of late imperial China's political history by articulating a maritime perspective, aimed at complementing the land-based focus, and, as Kären Wigen has aptly underscored, "[moving] the seas from the margins to the center of interdisciplinary academic inquiry, as a new construct and meta-narrative."<sup>83</sup>

This study, in sum, aims at leveraging historical documentation and contextual information so as to illustrate the ways and strategies high Qing leaders conceptualized and governed the maritime territory. Contrary to an overriding conception of withdrawal from the ocean, the Qing court in the eighteenth century, which it is usually seen as a continental empire, did not regard the sea as the third frontier or a space of indifference. Even if there were differential relations between the natures of land power and sea power, the

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<sup>82</sup> David Knight, "Introduction," in Rumley and Mingli (eds.), *The Geography of Border Landscapes* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. xvii.

<sup>83</sup> Kären Wigen, "Introduction," in Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen (eds.), *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p. 17.

associations between them were not unidirectional. The Qing Empire did not see the land-sea relationship in such a dichotomy – the expansion of land territory predicated on their negligence of the sea, or vice versa. Instead, the Qing in the eighteenth century intended to balance its control between naval management and Westward expansion while maintaining its power over specific geographic settings, either on the land or in the sea. As a result, the connection between continental governance and maritime control was never as clear-cut as has been commonly assumed.

### **A question of the term: East Asian Sea**

In the course of my dissertation, I employ the term “(East) Asian Sea” rather than more traditionally used the “China Sea,” the “Japan Sea,” or the “Sea of Korea.” I do so because these latter terms “nationalize” East Asian seas, placing China and Japan at the center of their periphery. Indeed there have been similar discussions among historians about whether the Indian Ocean region had ever had any real coherence and unity, and what this extensive sea space should properly be called.<sup>84</sup> Many maritime historians have suggested that the term “Indian Ocean” is a somewhat misleading designation, doing scant justice to the interlocking regional maritime systems that have stretched from East Africa to the Indonesian archipelago during early modern times.<sup>85</sup> In view of these discussions, it is appropriate to use the wider geographic term East Asian Sea so as to avoid assuming the

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<sup>84</sup> For a brief discussion which sets the scene very effectively, see K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1-33.

<sup>85</sup> See Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 13-26.

Chinese centrality as implied in the term “China Sea,” the Japanese dominance as in the “Japan Sea,” or privileging the position of India in the “Indian Ocean.” The maritime historian Michael Pearson introduced the term “Afrasian Sea,” as a way of including the often ignored area of the East African coast: Chandra de Silva questioned the suitability of using this “invented term” to signify the body of seawater across Asia. Silva argued the term “Afrasian” is unnecessarily divisive, and it fails to imply the dominance of any one area around the shore.<sup>86</sup> Hence, I have decided to restrain myself and try not to use various terms (unless in some specific situations) but to apply the term East Asian Sea throughout this study. After all, my aim has been to alert the reader to the assumptions, arguably invalid, in the use of some of the specific terms to label particular seawaters across the globe.

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<sup>86</sup> See Chandra Richard de Silva, “Indian Ocean but not African Sea,” *Journal of Black Studies*, XXIX no. 5 (May 1999), pp. 684-694.

## **Chapter One**

### **Setting the Scene**

#### *Abstract*

Starting with Owen Lattimore's frontier theory, in this chapter I define the maritime frontier as a multi-layered, transcultural region that can be understood in both physical and cultural terms. Rather than a static boundary, a maritime frontier is a dynamic canvas of interaction, whose conceptualization shapes imaginaries, policies, and patterns of behavior. By reconstructing Qing views of the maritime blue frontier, I suggest that we can obtain a deeper understanding of their governments' changing aims and motivations in dealing with the maritime world. One aspect shaping conceptualizations of this frontier are the physical features of the East Asian seascape. In reviewing these features, I highlight the multiple ways in which geography, ecology, climate, winds, and tides contributed not only to shaping trading and travel patterns but also gave rise to an awareness of the East Asian Sea.

## Introduction

Owen Lattimore (1900-1989), the renowned expert on Eurasia, once noted that a frontier is not the same as a boundary. In his remarkable monograph *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, he explained that a boundary represents the intended limit of political power, “the farthest extent to which a state or empire is able to exert its will on geographical space,” whereas a frontier is a zone of active interaction that “exists on both sides of the boundaries.”<sup>87</sup> Within the frontier region, one might identify distinct communities of “boundary-crossers,” which transgress the physical borders between polities and environments as well as the sociological borders between ethnicities, religions, and languages.<sup>88</sup> It is also a zone of contention across which competing ideas of civilization come into contact and conflict. Richard White has added to this idea the notion that the “zone of frontier is a middle ground where people following radically different ways of life adapted to one another and to the environment.”<sup>89</sup> Building upon this research, I argue that a frontier is in essence a multi-layered trans-cultural region that can be understood in both

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<sup>87</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1951), chapter 8. This definition developed by Lattimore in the 1950s is still largely accepted in contemporary scholarship. Scholars like Peter C. Perdue, William T. Rowe, Hugh R. Clark, and Craig A. Lockard still make use of Lattimore’s observations to explicate their own argument about the nature and significance of “a frontier zone.” See Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 41–44; William T. Rowe, “Owen Lattimore, Asia, and Comparative History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Aug., 2007): 759–786; Hugh R. Clark, “Frontier Discourse and China’s Maritime Frontier: China’s Frontiers and the Encounter with the Sea through Early Imperial History,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 20 no. 1 (March 2009): 1–33; Craig A. Lockard, “The Sea Common to All”: Maritime Frontiers, Port Cities, and Chinese Traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400–1750,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 21, no. 2 (June 2010): 219–247.

<sup>88</sup> See Richard Wright, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>89</sup> Richard Wright, *The Middle Ground*, ix–xvi.

physical and cultural terms.<sup>90</sup> Physically, the frontier refers to the geographical setting of a landscape or seascape that is shaped by a number of cosmological and ecological factors. Culturally, a frontier is the product of the different ways in which certain groups of people conceptualize and model a space. Peoples with varied politico-social backgrounds (such as emperors, government officials, traders, seamen, educated elites, or pirates in a specific time-space) may understand the nature and significance of a particular frontier differently. Some may conceptualize it as a canvas of interaction, a cosmopolitan gateway for the import and export of people, goods, and ideas or as a barrier that divides the earth among civilizations. Different conceptualizations of frontiers will (in)directly affect diplomatic strategies, political dynamism, trading patterns, and the consciousness and identity of nations. Furthermore, because a frontier is by nature a contact zone, it also links with questions that center on the antagonistic relationship, or interaction, between two binary opposing forces. This usually takes the shape of a more civilized, and economically superior power subordinating what it conceives of as “barbaric” and inferior natives (consider Captain Cook and Hawai’i or Commodore Perry and Japan, to name two examples).

Since they allow the interactions and movements of people who carry goods, technologies, fashions, and ideas, oceans, as suggested by Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), can certainly form a frontier that provides the dynamics for sociopolitical and cultural

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<sup>90</sup> In his study of the history of Bangladesh, Williem van Schendel suggests that Bangladesh is a region of “multiple frontiers” including a “land-water frontier,” “the ancient cultural ‘Sanskritic’ frontier,” the agrarian, state, Islamic and Bengali language frontiers. See Williem van Schendel, *A History of Bangladesh* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xxv–xxvi. To a certain extent, my attempt to argue that a frontier is a multi-layered region is very similar to Schendel’s conception.

development across different spatial levels.<sup>91</sup> However, as Hugh R. Clark has pointed out, maritime frontiers stand apart from all other frontiers in imperial times.<sup>92</sup> One of the differences between watery and land frontiers hinged on the difference in the transportation costs they incurred. Travel by sea in the pre-modern period was usually “cheaper in human terms.”<sup>93</sup> As Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell have observed,

...incidental hazards of negotiation, protection money, willful obstruction, and downright violence at sea were much rarer than in the carrying of goods across region and region, through settlement after settlement, by land.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> In his compelling *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II), Braudel analyzes the Mediterranean as a body of water that facilitates rather than constrains trade and contacts between its surrounding geographies. As a key frontier, the Mediterranean hub is, Braudel suggests, a “circulation–space of trades,” a “contact zone of cultures,” and a virtual canvas upon which many political, economic and cultural interactions unfold. See Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London: Collins, 1972), pp. 17-24. This idea, widely known as the “(Braudelian) Mediterranean model,” has inspired many subsequent maritime studies. For instance, scholars like W. Blockmans, Lex Heerma van Voss, Ralph Kauz, and Paul Gilroy have written a cultural history of the areas around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea using the classic Braudelian model. See W. Blockmans and Lex Heerma van Voss, “Urban Networks and Emerging States in the North Sea and Baltic Areas: A Maritime Culture?,” in Juliette Roding and Lex Heerma van Voss (eds.), *The North Sea and Culture (1550-1800)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1996), pp. 10-20. Likewise, in the maritime research project led by Angela Schottenhammer in Munich, the East Asian Sea is examined within the terminological framework of the Mediterranean – the “East Asian Mediterranean” – with the assumption that it is, or ought to be, in many ways comparable to the Mediterranean world, particularly in the aspects of economic and cultural exchange. See Angela Schottenhammer, “The Sea as Barrier and Contact Zone: Maritime Space and Sea Routes in Traditional Chinese Books and Maps,” in Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), p. 4. In a similar vein, Christine Moll-Murata also argues that the “East China Sea” is analogous to the Mediterranean because the two oceans are both “specific economic, political and cultural contact zones.” She further validates the model by asking, “why the Middle Kingdom not possess a *dizhonghai* 地中海 (the Mediterranean in Chinese) that lies in the middle of the earth?” Christine Moll-Murata, “Sundry Notes on the Zhoushan Archipelago: Topographical Notation and Comparison to Braudelian Islands,” in Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources*, p. 123.

<sup>92</sup> Hugh R. Clark, “Frontier Discourse and China’s Maritime Frontier: China’s Frontiers and the Encounter with the Sea through Early Imperial History,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 20, no. 1 (March 2009), pp. 1–33.

<sup>93</sup> Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, “General Editors’ Preface,” in *The Pacific World: Land, Peoples and History of the Pacific, 1500-1900, volume VI: Science, Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific*, ed. Tony Ballantyne (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), p. xiii. Alfred Mahan also pointed out, “travel and traffic by water have always been easier and cheaper than by land.” See Alfred Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, vol. I

Sea travel was also cheaper because of its low energy and technological requirements. Even before the age of the steamship (circa 1840s), sea traffic was far more cost effective than overland trade. H. Neville Chittick has calculated that one needed more or less the same energy to move 250 kg on wheels, 2,500 kg on rails, and 25,000 kg on water.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, it has been estimated that one dhow could travel the same distance as a camel caravan in one-third of the time, and that each boat could carry the equivalent of 1,000 camel loads. Furthermore, only one dhow crew-member was needed for several cargo tons, as compared with two or more men for each ton in a camel caravan.<sup>96</sup>

Since seaborne travel was by and large more cost-effective before the age of air transportation,<sup>97</sup> cross-border sea trade experienced a stupendous growth in both scale and complexity from the fifteenth century on.<sup>98</sup> The Western Europeans began to expand

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(Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 377.

<sup>95</sup> H. Neville Chittick, "East Africa and the Orient: Ports and Trade before the Arrival of the Portuguese," in *Historical Relations across the Indian Ocean*, ed. C. Mehaud (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), p. 13.

<sup>96</sup> Ralph Austen, *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency* (London: James Currey Press, 1987), 58. However, it may also be the case that, at least on some routes, land travel was faster than by the sea. For example, when an empire like the Ottoman or Tang China, set up secure and highly accessible road networks, people chose to travel by land even though they would have traveled via the ocean.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel R. Headrick, *Power over Peoples: Technology, Environments, and Western Imperialism, 1400 to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 302–328.

<sup>98</sup> See for example, Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680* (New Heaven, Conn.: Yale University Press, second edition published in 1993); "An 'Age of Commerce' in Southeast Asian History," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 24 no. 1 (1990): 1–30; John E. Wills, Jr., "Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World," in *Qing Formations in World Historical Time*, ed. Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 167–203; Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, "Chinese and Muslim: Diasporas and the Indian Ocean Trade Network under Mongol Hegemony," in *The East Asian Mediterranean: Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce and Human Migration*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 91–93; Geoff Wade, "Engaging the South: Ming China and Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 51 (2008): 606–608; Kenneth R. Hall, "Multi-Dimensional Networking: Fifteenth-Century Indian



previously known boundaries and to extend their reaches into the so-called New World, where societies were particularly vulnerable to the guns, germs, and steel of invading Europeans. During the period between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries,<sup>99</sup> Western sea traders even expanded their established shipping routes across the Atlantic to America and Africa, and across the Indian Ocean to India, Southeast Asia, and the Far East. A large volume of consumer commodities, including sugar (from the West Indies), coffee (from South America), tea (from China), tobacco (from Chesapeake), fish (from Newfoundland), and spices (from the East Indies) flowed to Europe from different corners of the world.<sup>100</sup> By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the extent of commerce and cultural interactions across the ocean was truly global. As Michael Geyer and Charles Bright have demonstrated, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represented a decisive turning point in the history of globalization, not only for the evolution of the world system in general but for the role of oceans in particular.<sup>101</sup>

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Ocean Maritime Diaspora in Southeast Asian Perspective,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 49, no. 4 (2006): 454–481. Moreover, it should be noted that some scholars also see the period from 1400–1800 as an era of “proto-globalization” in the broadest sense; in other words, as a world with more international connections than the earlier period. See, for instance, Geoffrey Gunn, *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004); and Dennis Flynn and Arturo Firaldez, “Born with a Silver Spoon: The Origin of World Trade in 1571,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 6 no. 2 (Fall 1995): 201–221.

<sup>99</sup> Timothy Brook termed these centuries as the age of improvisation, when “the age of discovery [was] largely over, and the age of imperialism [was] yet to come.” See Timothy Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), p. 21.

<sup>100</sup> Prior to 1830, however, the so-called “inter-continental market integration” was very limited, although the volume of spices, precious metals, porcelain, sugar, tobacco, slaves, and cloth traded soared, and the shipping costs on some inter-continental routes fell dramatically even before the advent of steam. Early modern market integration only happened on regional scales and was still very intermittent. For details, see Kevin O’Rourke and Jeffery Williamson, “After Columbus: Explaining the Global Trade Boom, 1500–1800,” in “National Bureau of Economic Research (Working Paper),” no. 8186 (March, 2001), pp. 9–49.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, “World History in a Global Age,” *American Historical Review*, vol. 100 (1995): 1045–1046. See also Jerry H. Bentley, “Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis,” *Geographical Review*, vol. 89 (1999), pp. 215–224.

Although oceans were understood in the twentieth century as trans-national watery frontiers fostering “[the] global flow of commodities and ideas,”<sup>102</sup> the question remains whether the Qing authority in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also conceptualized them as a contact zone where international trade and cultural interactions could be forged. If not, in what ways did the views of Qing emperors differ from the Western powers? How did the Qing court model the ocean at a time when trans-oceanic interaction was frequent and vibrant? Yet before proceeding to these discussion, I shall first give a brief introduction to the “deep structure”<sup>103</sup> of the East Asian Sea such as its geographical boundaries, climatology, and topography, so as to provide some background information for readers and set up the scope of our study.

### **Geography and Ecology**

Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen contend that the “ancient” division of the Earth’s landmasses and sea spaces are “in fact recent human constructs.”<sup>104</sup> They believe the “social constructions of physical spaces” are imprecise and full of biases.<sup>105</sup> But at the same time, geographical divisions and the specifications of their properties provide a useful

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<sup>102</sup> Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, “World History in a Global Age,” p. 1045.

<sup>103</sup> The term “deep structure” is first used by Michael Pearson to indicate the geographical settings of the maritime landscape surrounding India. See Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, pp. 13-26.

<sup>104</sup> Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-20.

<sup>105</sup> See also Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 36-62.

framework for exploring the geography across the globe in general and East Asia in particular: its land, water, and people. They also inspire a simple set of questions into the study of maritime Asia such as what is the (East) Asian Sea? And where is it? As Ronald G. Knapp once puts forward, the “division of the world in spatial terms” helps us not only visualize spatial patterns and associations across the Earth’s surface, but also constitutes a useful background for understanding histories, civilizations, and even contemporary events.<sup>106</sup>

The East Asian Sea is a vast body of water which covers some thirty seven percent of the maritime surfaces of the world (The East China Sea 1,249,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the South China Sea 3,500,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Bohai Bay 78,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and the Sea of Japan 1,300,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Its average depth is about 3,478 feet (1,060 m). The deepest part is called the China Sea Basin, with a maximum depth of 16,457 feet (5,016 m).<sup>107</sup> A broad, shallow shelf extends up to 150 miles (240 km) in width between the mainland and the northwestern side of the basin and includes the Gulf of Tonkin and Taiwan Strait. To the south, off southern Vietnam, the shelf narrows and connects with the Sunda Shelf, which is one of the largest sea shelves in the world. The Sunda Shelf covers the area between Borneo, Sumatra, and Malaysia, including the southern portion of the South China Sea.

Wang Dahai, the native of Fujian, once illustrated in his *The Records of Island* that

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<sup>106</sup> Ronald G. Knapp, “East Asia and the National Geography Standards,” *Education about Asia*, vol. 16 no. 1 (Spring, 2011), pp. 5-11.

<sup>107</sup> John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History* (Oxford University Press, 2007), “South China Sea” and “East China Sea.”

it is impossible to measure the full extent of the sea in the eighteenth century,

except with the eye of fantasy, no one will ever delve to the bottom of that sea except by plunging into the waves of his wildest dreams. We were surrounded by a limitless desert of water. The days were white and the nights were black. You could not spy a single speck afloat on those fields of water, only the dark blue of the heavens reflected on the blue black of the sea.<sup>108</sup>

Wang was right to point out that it was almost impossible to contour the limit of the ocean, even though a series of sailing techniques were well developed in the Ming Dynasty;<sup>109</sup> however, it is perhaps possible to delineate the extent of oceans if we utilize contemporary topographic measurements to set up the scope of the present research. According to the United Nations Oceans Atlas (UNOA) and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), the two leading maritime geographical centers, the longitudes of the East Asian Sea are roughly 120 °E to 140 °E. If we include the Sea of Japan, the island Sakhalin is the northern limit, and then we go around the coast, passing through the gulf between Korean peninsula and Shikoku, past the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and so to what geographically is the southern limit, that is the Malay peninsula and the Sunda Island.

Some other international geographical organizations may go past Northern Australia to around the Arafura Sea and the Arnhem Land, Mackay, Brisbane, the east coast of Tasmania, and then down to Antarctica. Nonetheless, this sketch of geography is too vast

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<sup>108</sup> Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi* [The records of islands] (Hong Kong: Xuejin chubanshe, 1992), *juan* 2, pp. 2a-3b.

<sup>109</sup> John H. Gibbons (ed.), *Technology and East-West Trade* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1979), pp. 245-248.

and coarse, especially when we refer to how Alan Villiers (1903 – 1982) explicates the problem of geopolitical congruency.<sup>110</sup> In his book *The Western Ocean: Story of the North Atlantic*, Villiers evocated how geopolitics conditions empire, trade, and people in an unsymmetrical way in the North and South Atlantic.<sup>111</sup> What Villiers has rightfully contended also is applicable to the maritime seascape of East Asia. The intricacies of particular coastline, the distribution of islands, the variety of marine resources, and the location of port cities shape not only the pattern of shipping circuits, fisheries, and piracy, but also the maritime strategy of the High Qing authority. For instance, Emperor Kangxi and his meritocratic bureaucracy kept refining the blueprint of empire's coastal administration. He ordered government-officials to “scale the mountains and navigate the littorals” in Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong on a regular basis. Soon after their surveys were completed, officials submitted memorials to the emperor providing detailed analysis to harness dissimilar seascape. Kangxi's grandson Qianlong even launched a series of “grand projects” to thoroughly examine the coastline so as to practice his maritime policies. Therefore, detailed and precise sea charts were officially produced between the 1750s and the 1780s. Examples like the “Maritime map of Shandong, Zhili, and Shenjing (Shandong, Zhili, Shengjing haijiang tu),” the “Complete maritime map of the seven provinces (Qisheng yanhai quantu),” the “Strategic map of the maritime frontier (Haijiang yangjie xingshitu),” and the “Pictorial study of the Zhejiang sea (Zhejiangsheng

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<sup>110</sup> See Li Xiacong, “Maritime Space and Coastal Maps in the Chinese History,” in Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 155-176. These coastal maps and geographical treatises did not only define the perimeter of the sovereignty and enumerated precisely what jurisdictions constituted its extent, they also depict the littoral areas organized into jurisdictions and clearly distinguished from its neighboring countries.

<sup>111</sup> See Alan Villiers, *The Western Ocean: Story of the North Atlantic* (London: Museum Press, 1957), pp. 13-15.

quan hai tushuo)” were all famous maritime diagrams (*haitu*) composed by scholar-officials and geographers under imperial supervision in the long eighteenth century.

Furthermore, the attempt to include the eastern part of Australia into the East Asian Sea is not very helpful because most of the commercial and maritime activities between Asia (China in particular) and the rest of the world did not happen in the Eastern coast of Australia in the eighteenth century. By that time, the people who inhabited Australia only had marginal contacts with China, India and Southeast Asia. It was until the mid-nineteenth century that the east coast of Australia was visited by foreign merchants, while its aboriginal peoples seldom ventured beyond shallow coastal waters. Therefore, instead of extending our scope to Australia and Antarctica, I incline to stop at the South China Sea, and go no further south. One way to visualize what I think of as the East Asian Sea is to see it as an outstretched belt embracing the Eastern part of Asia. The starting point is slightly above the tropic of Cancer, that is 50°N. The belt then goes south, including the Bohai Bay, the Liaodong peninsular, the Shandong peninsular, the Hainan Island, up to the east coast of Vietnam, and then down from the apex through Malaysia and the Strait of Malacca.

The topography of the East Asian Sea obviously varies from place to place, being quite different in the bays which are more enclosed, for example the strategic Bohai Gulf, as compared with the coastal area exposed to the wide, open ocean. Some shores along the Russian seaboard are uninhabited regions perpetually covered by snow and ice since the early ages,<sup>112</sup> some cut off from the interior by mountains which are hardly penetrable. But

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<sup>112</sup> Nicholas T. Mirov, *Geography of Russia* (New York: Wiley Publications, reprinted in 1958), pp. 14-22.

most of the shores of the East Asian Sea are not quite as inhospitable as these “Russian examples.” On the western shore of the East Asian Sea, close to South Korea, the North China Plain, and the Southeastern part of China, the coastal fringe is a large area of fertile and productive region. Ancient Chinese had long been favored by the pleasant environment since the Warring State period.<sup>113</sup> Yet such topography does not only abet the Chinese, but the Koreans and the Japanese. Even though some landscapes in Cholla-Namdo, Kyongsang-Namdo and Honshu are backed by high mountain ranges, these were nowhere completely impassable.<sup>114</sup>

### **Meteorology and Climatology**

Meteorological and climatic factors posed directions and constraints for many, if not all, seafaring activities in the age of oars and wind. These factors profoundly influenced the designs of the ships, the periodical cycle of seasonal voyaging, the choices of routes, fisheries, harbor control, as well as naval policies. For instance, the evolution of ship design in both the North Sea and the Bohai Bay were affected by the patterns of tides and the level of fathom.<sup>115</sup> Mariners in the Black Sea had long been warned to beware of crossing the chokepoint between Cape Sarych in Crimea and Cape Kerempe in Anatolia because of the

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<sup>113</sup> Ping-hua, Lee, *The Economic History of China: With Special Reference to Agriculture* (New York: Columbia University, 1921), pp. 1-7.

<sup>114</sup> See Yongwoo Kwon, Jaeduk Lee (eds.), *The Geography of Korea: National Geographic Information Institute, Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs* (Suwon-si: National Geographic Information Institute, 2010); Robert Clayton, *Japan & Korea* (St. Albans: Hart-Davis Educational, 1973), “Introduction”.

<sup>115</sup> Roger Morris, *Atlantic Seafaring: Ten Centuries of Exploration and Trade in the North Atlantic* (Camden, Maine: International Marine, 1992), pp. 112-113.

sea-storms there.<sup>116</sup> Even until very late in the Middle Ages (1031-1350), there was great difficulty for shipping to exit from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic because of the formidable ocean currents.<sup>117</sup> Naval bases, in addition, were often established in deep water ports with moderate climatic conditions, such as Tianjin, Amoy, Baltimore, Canaveral, Portsmouth, Devonport, and Ryojun.<sup>118</sup> Obviously, the sociological and cultural history of the maritime world during “the age of sail” was strongly affected by oceanic climatology. And these meteorological phenomena include the patterns of prevailing winds, the set of currents and waves, and the configuration of the coasts.

### *Winds and Currents*

From ancient times to the age of exploration, shipping routes and schedules were highly determined by the patterns of winds – including scorching winds and seasonal monsoons. As Felipe Fernanadez-Armesto observes, what really matters in pre-modern maritime history is the wind system, especially the difference between monsoonal patterns and those with year-long prevailing winds. He explicates,

[b]efore the age of steam, wind determined what man could do at sea: by comparison, culture, ideas, individual genius or charisma, economic forces, and all the other motors of

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<sup>116</sup> Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> A.R. Lewis, “Northern European Sea Power and the Straits of Gibraltar, 1031-1350 A.D.,” in W.C. Jordan, et. al, (eds.), *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 139-164.

<sup>118</sup> Yet, we should be aware that some naval ports were “man-made” ever since the Middle Ages. See J.L. Yarrison, “Force as an Instrument of Policy: European Military Incursions and Trade in the Maghrib, 1000-1355” (PhD thesis; Princeton University, 1982), pp. 21-23.



history meant little.<sup>119</sup>

It was the wind system which largely regulated when people could, and could not, sail to where. Sailors in imperial times learned by experience that in order to cross the sea as expeditiously as possible, the best route did not necessarily follow the shortest line recorded on sea charts. Rather, it depended on whether they could “catch a proper wind patterns.” For instance, because of the strong northerly winds prevailing in winter, the Greeks and the Romans left their shipping in port from October to April.<sup>120</sup> In Muslim Egypt of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the sea was also closed from November to March because of the same reason.<sup>121</sup> In the High Qing, Emperor Kangxi also realized the importance of wind pattern in the mission to conquer Taiwan.<sup>122</sup>

In simple terms, monsoons are generated by the rotation of earth and governed by the interaction of continental pressure systems and the watery surface. The East Asian Sea is affected by the East Asian monsoonal system (EAMS) that carries moist air from the Indian Ocean and the Pacific to East Asia. According to the report released in the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Conference, the EAMS affects approximately one-third of the global population, influencing the climate of Japan, Korea, and much of the coastal region of China. The EAMS is divided into (i) the warm and wet summer monsoon and (ii) the cold

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<sup>119</sup> Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, “The Indian Ocean in World History,” in Anthony Disney and Emily Booth (eds.), *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16.

<sup>120</sup> Lionel Casson, *The Ancient Mariners: Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, second edition), pp. 39, 234.

<sup>121</sup> Shlomo.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 316-317.

<sup>122</sup> *Kangxi qijuzhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 1454.

and dry winter monsoon. In summer, considerable heat warms the Asian continental land mass. Hot air rises and creates a low pressure zone, moisture-laden air from the East Asian Sea then moves in to this low pressure area, rises in the upward air current, cools, and finally produces clouds and rain. In winter the reverse occurs, as the sea cools more slowly than the land, offshore winds thus flow out from China to the East Asian Sea. Because of the EAMS, monsoons in East Asia follow a quite regular pattern: in the East China Sea essentially southwest from May to September, whereas northeast from November to March.<sup>123</sup> In comparison with the Atlantic, where there is also a regular pattern of trade winds year-round, both seaways have a predictable wind system. Yet, it is much easier to complete a round trip along the East Asian Sea than in the Atlantic, as it used to be said “the mariners always have to beg Neptune’s forbearance while they passed through the Atlantic Ocean.”<sup>124</sup> The East Asian Sea, in contrast, offers favorable conditions for shipping – such as clearer skies and warmer temperature – for many more months a year. Also because of the smaller size of the sea, the huge rollers which make Atlantic navigation so dangerous in storms are not to be found that frequently in East Asian seaways.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> In most years, the monsoonal flow shifts in a very predictable pattern, with winds being southeasterly in late June, bringing significant rainfall to the Korean peninsula and Japan (in Taiwan and Okinawa this flow starts in May). This leads to a reliable precipitation spike in July and August. However, this pattern occasionally fails, leading to drought and crop failure. In the winter, the winds are northeasterly and the monsoonal precipitation bands move back to the south, and intense precipitation occurs over southern China and Taiwan. For more details, see P.D. Clift, R. Tada and H. Zheng (eds.), *Monsoon Evolution and Tectonic: Climate Linkage in Asia* (London: Geological Society, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 20.

<sup>125</sup> Alexander Bridport Becher, *Navigation of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and the China and Australian Seas* (London: Elibron Classics, first published in 1859, reproduced in 2005); see also Ernle Dugate Selby Bradford, *Mediterranean: Portrait of a Sea* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), p. 36 and J.J. Branigan and H.R. Jarrett, *The Mediterranean Lands* (London: Macdonald & Evans, 1969), p. 21.

Navigation under oars and sail was highly influenced by the set of monsoonal patterns mentioned above. If a sea-merchant successfully caught the wind pattern, his expedition would not be overly challenged. Those who ignored the monsoons, or were ignorant to them, would experience difficulties to cross the ocean. For example, if a merchant decided to make his way from Shanghai to Makasar in June via a junk, sailing against the summer monsoon, his voyage would take a minimum six weeks, which is roughly twice the time taken by the same vessel making the crossing earlier in the season.<sup>126</sup> Similar to Asian sailors, Atlantic shipmen were also restrained by formidable monsoons across the Asian Sea. In 1541, for instance, a Portuguese marauding vessel departed the Red Sea to India in early July. The audacious, yet headstrong, captain refused to listen to the advice of his experienced Muslim pilots who told him that no ship by that time could navigate in the Arabian Sea without the trade winds. Those “Muslim advices,” of course, turned out to be correct.<sup>127</sup> Likewise, in 1980, Tim Severin, sailing on his *Sinbad* voyage from the Persian Gulf to China, refused to listen to the voyagers who advised him to better catch the monsoonal winds. Severin was finally becalmed east of Sri Lanka on his dhow for thirty-five days in March and April.<sup>128</sup>

Apart from the wind pattern, sea voyages in East Asia were conditioned by many other climatic factors such as ocean currents and breaking waves. These two geographical factors also alter how and when one travelled and departed. In the most general terms, an

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>127</sup> Goerge F. Hourani, revised by John Carswell, *Arch Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Medieval Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 150.

<sup>128</sup> See Tim Severin, *The Sinbad Voyage* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).

ocean current is a continuous, directed movement of ocean water driven by waves, winds or differences in density. The effect on the movement of ships was known to most captains and sailors. Seafarers either choose to avoid a course that would oblige them to sail against the current or one that enabled them to pick up additional speed by sailing with the current. In other words, ocean currents can either be an opportunity or a problem. Ever since the ninth century BC, Chinese made use of water currents to speed up their voyages. They learned that sea currents would enable them to sail from point to point efficiently like “a man traveling on horseback without any friction.”<sup>129</sup> Nearly around the same period, the Greeks also utilized ocean currents for navigation in the Black Sea. They could travel from Odessa to Istanbul “without hoisting a sail only in one day” if they met an appropriate current pattern.<sup>130</sup> Yet, as I have mentioned, water currents can also be detrimental. When traveling to the East in the 1270s, Marco Polo (1254-1324) recorded that the Muslim sailors never went south of Madagascar, or even Zanzibar, because of the Lagullas or Agulhas current. To the Muslims, both currents “would obstruct their way to return to the north.”<sup>131</sup> The Portuguese Jesuit Jerónimo Lobo (1595-1678) also believed that “if one ignored the impact of water current, things could go badly astray.” When his ship had trouble getting around the Cape, he regretted if it had kept closer to land in southeast Africa he could have made good progress because “the water current between Madagascar and the East African coast was so strong that it could carry a ship to the south even when the winds were

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<sup>129</sup> Xiang Da, *Liangzhong haidao zhenjing* 兩種海道針經 (Beijing : Zhonghua shu ju : Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing, 1961), p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> Jamie Morton, *The Role of the Physical Environment in Ancient Greek Seafaring* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 164.

<sup>131</sup> See Jennifer Ackerman, “New Eyes on the Oceans,” *National Geographic* (October, 2000), pp. 92-93.

contrary.”<sup>132</sup>

Wave was another climatic element which affected sea voyages. Maritime writers of Fujian had described some huge waves and the impact in the South China Sea,<sup>133</sup> though some of these may be exaggerated by excited narrators. But it should not be hard to understand that a serious wave could make sea travels difficult and even caused traumatic shipwrecks. Not only did the pattern of waves obstruct a passage, waves beating on lee shores damaged poor harbors and littorals. As recorded in the *DaQing Shichao shengxun* (The sacred instructions of the ten reigns [ 1616–1874 ] ) and the *Qing shilu* (The veritable records of Qing dynasty), hydrological disasters generated by strong waves occurred regularly in the reign of Kangxi (1662-1723).<sup>134</sup> Local gazetteers of coastal provinces recorded that some lee shores in Jiangsu, Fujian, Zhejiang, and Shandong, when hit by serious sea-waves, were almost unapproachable in a fishing boat.<sup>135</sup> Tides - the rise and fall of sea level - are also perilous for sailors in “narrower” seaways like the Taiwan Strait.<sup>136</sup> The effect of a strong tide can be felt hundred miles up the Fujian coast and into the

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<sup>132</sup> Jerónimo Lobo, Donald M. Lockhart (trans.), *The Itinerary of Jerónimo Lobo* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984), p. 308.

<sup>133</sup> *Fujian tongzhi*, vol. 6, p. 4a.

<sup>134</sup> Chung-yam PO, “When the Sea Dragon Roars: Hydrological Disasters and the High Qing Emperors,” *The School of Historical Studies, Newcastle University: Postgraduate Forum E-Journal*, edition seven (2010), p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> *Fujian tongzhi*, *juan. 7*, p. 11a.

<sup>136</sup> Li Youyong 李有用 (Fujian shuishi tidu [Commander of the Fujian navy] 福建水師提督), “zoubao bingchuan zaofeng jipo 奏報兵船遭風擊破,” *Junjichu dangan* 軍機處檔案 [Documents from the Grand Council; unpublished archives preserved at the Academia Sinica, Taiwan] (Qianlong 16 nian, December 11; no. 403000947); 熊學鵬 Xiong Xuepeng ([Acting governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang] 暫署閩浙總督), “zoubao Taiwan haiwai qianzong yu fenglang zhe 奏報台灣海外千總遇風浪擱,” *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 32 nian, December 17; no. 403023679).

estuaries and deltas in South China. These incalculable factors had always presented daunting challenges to Chinese mariners sailing across the East Asian Sea.

To recapitulate, this chapter touches upon the “deep structures” of the East Asian Sea, from climate and topography to current and winds. Almost all seafaring activities, from the ancient era to around the 1800s, were greatly affected by the foregoing “deep structures.” It was until the very late nineteenth century that the direct influences of these climatic factors became less predominant – as monsoons, currents, and waves were all overcome by combustion engines and coal steamers. By the Age of Steamship, marine navigations had evolved into a fully systematic technique;<sup>137</sup> while the history of the East Asian Sea, similar to the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean, entered into a new chapter, in which, for the first time, its economical and sociological dimensions were dramatically altered by the “industrialization of ocean passage.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> For more details, see, for instance, James T. Flexner, *Steamboats Come True: American Inventors in Action* (New York: Viking, 1944); Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949).

<sup>138</sup> Lewis R. Fischer and Gerald E. Panting, “Indian Ports and British Intercontinental Sailing Ships: The Subcontinent as an Alternative Source of Cargo, 1870-1900,” in K.S. Mathew (ed.), *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History* (New Delhi: Manohar Press, 1995), pp. 371-384; Paul Butel, *The Atlantic* (London, Routledge, 1999), pp. 232-234.

## Chapter Two

### Modelling the Sea Space

#### *Abstract*

The standardized naming of oceans, namely the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern, and Arctic, was only introduced by Euro-American hydrologists in the late nineteenth century. Arguably however, these oceans were conceptualized in various ways in the centuries before the 1800s. The Chinese in the Ming and Qing, for instance, applied a specific nomenclature to indicate the Indian Ocean which was different from the way in which the Ottomans referred to the same piece of seawater. The Manchu monarchs and the Japanese daimyo also conceptualized the East Asian Sea as a constituent part of their maritime territories in different ways. Therefore, by analyzing the novel schemes of oceanic division of a particular region, one can see the maritime world afresh and even discover the historical, political, and cultural constructions of the maritime spaces that are obscured by conventionally accepted English-language terms for bodies of water. In this chapter, I will examine how the central authority of the Qing named and modeled maritime spaces from the early seventeenth to the second quarter of the nineteenth centuries. I argue that the Qing court named the maritime world in their own way and tended to conceptualize the ocean as an asymmetrical relationship between inner and outer space from a state-centered perspective. Unlike the European seaborne powers, which successfully established trans-maritime empires, the Qing government showed little interest in mapping a capitalist geography across the globe where the access to goods and resources mattered most; it instead directed its attention to its inner ocean, where the empire could claim ownership of the marine resources within the oceanic realm that was readily accessible. The outer ocean, or the outer sea space, was regarded as a capricious domain increasingly beyond administrative governance and economic extraction. Even though the inner-outer correlation in some cases might not be hierarchical in a straightforward fashion, such spatial construction is worth analyzing because, on the one hand, it was a continuation of an existing Han-Chinese spatial conceptualization, while on the other hand, it signified the political ideology of the Qing ruling authorities in frontier management. By studying the ways in which the Qing conceptualized the maritime space over the course of the long eighteenth century, we can better understand its maritime policies within a broader picture of its frontier governing strategies.

## Introduction

We are all familiar with the five great oceans in the world, namely the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern, and Arctic. These oceans that constitute the division of our globe seem natural and normal. They are generally regarded as geographic features that have been discovered through objective analysis rather than defined by convention. If we take a quick glance at the watery portions of the globe, however, the division between the Indian and the Pacific oceans is not discernable by physical criteria. Similar to the separation of Asia and North America, as argued by Kären Wigen and Martin W. Lewis, the Indian and the Pacific Oceans are as much intellectual constructs as they are given features of the natural world.<sup>139</sup>

It is hard to divide the body of world's oceans into different specific oceans simply because the waters themselves is boundless. Although a series of geographical materials have presented an "exact" depiction of each ocean's areal extent, these figures are not standardized at all. For example, we are informed by the *World Almanac and Book of Facts* that the Pacific Ocean covers 64,186,300 square miles,<sup>140</sup> whereas *Goode's World Atlas* records that the Pacific is 63,800,000 square miles.<sup>141</sup> Even if the discrepancy regarding the

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<sup>139</sup> Kären E. Wigen and Martin W. Lewis, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>140</sup> R. Famighetti, ed., *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (Mahwah, New Jersey: World Almanac Books, 1997), p. 593.

<sup>141</sup> J.P. Goode, *Goode's World Atlas* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1990), p. 250.



size of the Pacific for a few million square miles might be of little account and hardly a pressing matter, most maritime geographers have contended that these numbers are merely approximations, thereby reflecting the arbitrary division of the boundless sea. Despite the matter of size, what is more problematic is that the same piece of ocean might be on many occasions named differently. The Chinese in the Ming and Qing, for instance, applied a specific nomenclature to indicate the Indian Ocean that was different from the way in which the Ottomans named the same piece of seawater. Even today, the South Koreans would insist that the body of water embracing their country is the “Eastern Sea” but not the Sea of Japan due to political considerations. Similarly, some Vietnamese and the Western Africans occasionally refer to their immediate body of seawater as the Indonesian Ocean or the African Ocean rather than the Indian Ocean. These differences of nomenclature indicate the fact that the way we used to divide oceans into “relatively internationally recognized units” is not flawless to the extent that it disguises the historical, political, and cultural construction of the sea space. It is, in this regard, noticeable that the maritime world, as suggested by Martin Lewis, can be named and conceptualized beyond the so-called “modern standard.”<sup>142</sup> Arguably, these alternative views or conceptualizations of the ocean allow us to see the maritime world afresh and to discover the patterns and connections that have been obscured by our standard worldview. In fact, the standardization of maritime spatial classification (the five great oceans) only emerged in the nineteenth century, while such schema of maritime geography was rooted in a specifically European colonial model.<sup>143</sup> Before the age of colonialism, the boundless sea space was conceptualized

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<sup>142</sup> See Martin W. Lewis, “Dividing the Ocean Sea,” *Geographical Review*, vol. 89 no. 2 (April, 1999), pp. 188-214.

<sup>143</sup> During the colonial era, Western European ideas about the division of the globe, encompassing continental

distinctively in the non-Western world. Compared to the Dutch and the British authorities, for example, the Qing monarchs and the Japanese *daimyo* conceptualized the East Asian Sea as a constituent part of their maritime territories differently. By studying the oceanic conceptualizations in the pre-1800 era, I am interested in showing not only these oceanic conceptualizations are possible but that these alternative visions can shed light on certain political usage of geographical ideas as well as the historical patterns and processes beyond our constricted assumptions about the maritime world in East Asia.

Taking the above research questions into consideration, I attempt to examine in this chapter how the Qing Dynasty named and modeled maritime spaces in the long eighteenth century. I argue that the Qing court named the maritime world in their own way and tended to conceptualize the ocean as an asymmetrical relationship between inner and outer space from a state-centered perspective. Unlike the European seaborne powers, which successfully established trans-maritime empires, the Qing court showed little interest in mapping a capitalist geography across the globe where the access to goods and resources mattered most; it instead directed its attention to their inner ocean, where the empire could claim ownership of the marine resources within the oceanic realm that was readily accessible.<sup>144</sup> The outer ocean, or the outer sea space, was regarded as a capricious domain

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and oceanic constructs alike, were forced on many other societies, thereby largely extinguishing competing geographies.

<sup>144</sup> Recent scholars, such as Yangwen Zheng, Gang Zhao, and Wensheng Wang, have argued that the Qing did not ignore its maritime frontier in the long eighteenth century by reexamining the relationship between the Great Qing and the maritime world from various perspective. Yangwen Zheng's *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) argues that Qing China was a strongly consumerist society, and that much of what it consumed arrived by sea, often on foreign ships. The author is interested in examining what the seas brought and shaped to the sociological landscape of late imperial China. Gang Zhao's *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684-1757* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013) offers a convincing reinterpretation of Chinese attitudes toward maritime trade. This

increasingly beyond administrative governance and economic extraction. Even though the inner-outer correlation in some cases might not have been hierarchical in a straightforward fashion, such spatial construction is worth analyzing because, on the one hand, it was a continuation of an existing Han-Chinese spatial conceptualization, while on the other hand, it signified the political ideology of the Qing ruling authorities in frontier management. By studying the way in which the Qing conceptualized the sea space over the course of the long eighteenth century, we can better understand its maritime policies within a broader picture of its frontier governing strategies.

The inner-outer model underwent a transformation when the Qing Empire was threatened both internally and externally during the transition from the Qianlong (1735-1796) to the Jiaqing-Daoguang era (1797-1850). During this period of significant turmoil and disorder, the Manchu court in the early nineteenth century was no longer as eager to maintain its domination or to be as proactive in controlling the inner sea space as it had been during the previous century. Eventually, the inner-outer model that had been maintained for decades was sternly challenged by Western intruders, who sought to realize their aggressive policies in East Asia during the age of high imperialism. In addition to introducing the inner-outer spatial construction of the Chinese maritime world and how it underwent a transformation from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, I will also

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work is important as it details China's unique contribution to maritime commerce in particular and to the wave of early globalization in general. Wensheng Wang's *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014) argues that the dramatic combination of internal uprising and transnational piracy propelled the Manchu court to reorganize itself through a series of modifications in policymaking, covering both maritime and inland management. It is also an impressive research on a critical yet little-known period in the Qing dynasty, the Jiaqing reign (the first decade of the nineteenth century).

examine in this chapter whether the Qing court had divided the oceans into parts or sections and whether they shared similar views with the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, or later the British with respect to conceptualizing the sea space as being a free sea (*mare liberum*).

### The Classical Tradition

To examine the way the Qing authorizes named and modeled the ocean, one must begin with the ancient Chinese cartographic tradition. The ancient Chinese view of maritime geography was focused, not surprisingly, on the immediate sea space embracing Northern China. One of the earliest recorded representations, the *Shanhai Jing* (Classics of Mountains and Seas), pictured the maritime world as an unknown and eerie region full of strange animals and gods.<sup>145</sup> Similar to the ancient Greeks who saw the sea as a boundless space (*aperion*) which represented everything they feared,<sup>146</sup> the sea off the China coast was also conceptualized in myths and fantasies in the ancient period. Perhaps the legend of the Isles of Penglai might serve as a good example. Situating somewhere thought to be in the furthest reaches of the Bohai Bay or beyond, Penglai was one of the many mythical and mystical islands inhabited by celestial beings in the sea. For several times the First Emperor of China Qin Shi Huang (259BC-210BC; r. 220BC-210BC) decided to send missions in search of the islands, but his envoys never returned to Qin.<sup>147</sup> According to other Daoist

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<sup>145</sup> Guo Pu, *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985); see also Richard E. Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002) p. 41.

<sup>146</sup> James Hamilton-Paterson, *The Great Deep: The Sea and Its Thresholds* (New York: Random House, 1992), p. 67.

<sup>147</sup> Robert Ford Campany, *Making Transcendent: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), p. 122.

records, the ocean, mythologically, was ruled by four dragon kings, who respectively governed the four cardinal sections of the sea space.<sup>148</sup> The dragon kings had their own royal courts and commanded armies comprising various marine creatures. In this view, the sea space was literally and figuratively a hierarchical kingdom that existed under the sea surface.

The mythological vision of a primordial ocean gradually yielded to a more mundane conceptualization. Although some of the underlying Daoist perceptions of the maritime world, such as the existence of dragon kings, remained unchanged, the sea space was considered part of the territory ruled by the Son of Heaven (the Chinese monarch) within the framework of the *sihai* worldview (the four seas). Literarily meaning the seas of the four directions (north, east, south, and west), the term *sihai* referred to the vast domain, covering both land and sea, under imperial control. When the Chinese statement of the Han Dynasty, Jia Yi (201BC-169BC), commented upon the aggressive expansion of the Qin empire (221BC-206BC), he described the Qin as a power that “swept across the four seas and invaded the eight borderlands (*nangkuo sihai, bingtun bahuang*).”<sup>149</sup> Jia’s comment indicates that the maritime territory, at least in the Han era, was no longer an unknown region but a known space that was considered part of the empire.

As the Qin and the Han dynasties expanded, the southern coast of China became

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<sup>148</sup> See Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi: The Alchemical Adventures of a Daoist Immortal* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), pp. 171-172.

<sup>149</sup> Jia Yi, “Guo Qin lun 過秦論,” in *Jia Yi zhuan zhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chuban she, 1975), p. 43.

part of these empires. Even before the arrival of the Qin and the Han armies, however, the *Nanyue* peoples of the far south already interacted with coastal seawaters as well as the littoral regions of Southeast Asia. As recorded in the *Shanhai jing*, “Panyu (nowadays Guangzhou) is the first place where ships were built.”<sup>150</sup> A Han text only survives in fragments, the *Nanyue zhi*, also noted that “the king of Yue constructed a great boat, and three thousand people drowned.”<sup>151</sup> More importantly, archeologists have excavated clay, wooden models of a dozen boat designs, and a boatyard in an ancient tomb in Guangzhou.<sup>152</sup> If these figures are reliable enough, the *Nanyue* civilization would be among the first group of peoples who started developing maritime technology in the world.

In the centuries that followed, the south was more and more integrated into the empire. The southeastern coast, of China thus became a key platform that linked Southeast Asia to the Chinese empires. Identified in the Han and Tang official documents, “there were over a hundred tribute missions to the Chinese courts from fourteen different kingdoms throughout Southeast Asia via the sea.”<sup>153</sup> From this perspective, the sea space that connects China and Southeast Asia (the *nanyang*) was where the tributary system took place. Even though the Chinese empires might not view that body of seawater as their territory, the *nanyang* was considered one of the gateways to consolidate the tributary system. Arguably, in the increasingly China-centered worldview, the maritime world was held to have

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<sup>150</sup> Guo Pu, *Shanhai jing*, p. 67.

<sup>151</sup> Huang Qichen, *Guangdong haishang sichou zhi lu shi* 廣東海上絲綢之路史 (Guangzhou: Xinhua shuju, 2003), pp. 21-25.

<sup>152</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), vol. 4, see figs. 961-965.

<sup>153</sup> Huang Qichen, *Guangdong haishang sichou zhi lu shi*, p. 25.

profound politico-cultural significance, whereas the Daoist and the mythical perception of the ocean at that time were of relatively little account.

During the centuries between the Han and Tang, specific segments of the ocean received locational referents within the tributary framework, such as the Eastern Ocean (*donghai*) and the Southeastern Ocean (*dongnan yang*). The aforementioned term *nanyang* (Southern Ocean) was employed to refer to the body of water near the Malay-Indonesian archipelagoes, whereas the Indian Ocean was commonly called the *xiaoxiyang* (the little Western ocean), covering the seawater off the coast of India and Sri Lanka (the Lion Kingdom). In addition to the locational terms, Chinese thinkers had long been appending the terms *hai* and *yang* to the ocean. By the tenth century BCE an inscription of the character *hai* was recorded in a bronze inscription and was understood to represent the sea. Around the same period, the term *yang* began to stand for the idea of a “border region,” a “mythical area,” or an “extensive space;”<sup>154</sup> gradually, *yang* also became a synonym of *hai*, meaning the sea.<sup>155</sup>

From the Song period onward, there were maritime diagrams (*haitu*), which depicted spatial patterns of land and sea, produced officially and non-officially. The *Yu di tu* (Map of the world) produced by the imperial court in the 1260s, for example, depicted the

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<sup>154</sup> The concept of extensive space was expressed early on in the *Shijing* (Book of Odes) and the Daoist classic *Liezi* in early imperial China. For instance, the term *donghai* (Eastern Sea) was considered a mythical place in *Liezi*.

<sup>155</sup> Angela Schottenhammer, “The Sea as Barrier and Contact Zone: Maritime Space and Sea Routes in Traditional Chinese Books and Maps,” in Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak, *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources*, p. 1.

Southern Song Empire surrounded by the East Asian Sea as well as a cluster of islands in Southeast Asia.<sup>156</sup> In the *Nantai an zhi sansheng shidao tu* and the *Guangyu jiangli tu*, two official maps produced by Han-Chinese cartographers in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), the southern part of the empire was encircled by the ocean (the maritime frontier). What might strike the modern viewers on one of these maps is that the maritime frontier at the periphery of the terrestrial region, whatever its width might be, was not conceived as the edge of the known world. As indicated in the southwestern reach of the *Guangyu jiangli tu*, it stated that “this way connects to India and the Indian Ocean.” From this evidence, the ocean was not only perceived as part of the empire but as a potential conduit for interregional communication. Unlike the Daoist ecumene, the surrounding sea was no longer represented as the huge realm of non-humanity.

The seven voyages led by Zheng He (1371-1433) in the Ming necessitated a radically new vision of the Sino-centric world and its oceanic reaches. The east coast of Africa and part of the Atlantic region was introduced to the Chinese maritime worldview. The vast maritime expanse was discovered and the maritime world was not simply divided according to the cardinal system but also represented in an inner-outer model. One example would be the naming of the Indian Ocean. The body of water that we now call the Indian Ocean was usually named in Chinese records as the *siyang* (the Western ocean), a term first recorded in an anecdote entitled *Sishan zaji* published in the Five Dynasties era (897-

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<sup>156</sup> Li Donghua, “Qin Han bianju zhong de NanYueguo: Lingnan diqu duiwai fazhan shi yanjiu zhi yi,” in Zhang Yanxian (ed.), *Zhongguo haiyang fazhan shi lunwenji* 中國海洋發展史論文集 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan sanmin zhuyi yanjiusuo, 1988), vol. 3, p. 234.



979).<sup>157</sup> Chinese geographers in the following decades continued to depict the Indian Ocean as the Western Ocean. In his *Daoyi jilüe* (Records of island barbarians) published in the Yuan period, for example, Wang Dayuan considered Calicut as the strategic front gate of the *siyang* region covered the Indonesian seawaters and the northern portion of the Indian Ocean.<sup>158</sup> In Zhou Zhizhong's *Yiyu zhi* (Gazetteer of strange regions), most of the countries located in the Indian Ocean were listed under the chapter entitled “*siyang guo* (countries in the Western Ocean).”<sup>159</sup> Later in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the term *siyang* appeared with increasing frequency, but the term did not only refer to the Indian Ocean region since the maritime landscape was significantly broadened after the Zheng He voyages. The term *siyang*, at that time, encompassed broader expanses of the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic region, while the latter was labeled as the *wai dasiyang* (the Outer Great Western ocean) and the former was renamed as the *xiao siyang* (the Little Western Ocean) in a series of geographical writings.<sup>160</sup> Yet how much this reflected popular usage is difficult to determine, but in any case, what is notable is that the term outer (*wai*) used in some Ming records implies that the Atlantic Ocean was regarded as a discrete sea space far from China. Viewing this expanse of ocean as a distinct area, the Atlantic sphere was categorized as an outer sea space that was beyond the influence of the tributary system.

### The Maritime Frontier in the Eighteenth Century

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<sup>157</sup> Zhou Zhizhong, *Yiyu zhi* 異域志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p. 373.

<sup>158</sup> Wang Dayuan, *Daoyi zhilüe* 島夷志略 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), p. 44.

<sup>159</sup> See Tang Wenji, *Fujian gudai jingji shi* 福建古代經濟史 (Fujian: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), p. 190.

<sup>160</sup> See, for instance, Zhang Xie, *Dongxi yang kao* 東西洋考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985); Gong Zhen, *Xiyang fanguo zhi* 西洋番國誌 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995).

The inner-outer construction gradually became one of the dominant geographical and political means of conceptualizing the maritime frontier in the Qing period, especially after Emperor Kangxi conquered Taiwan in 1684. Officials tended to perceive the inner sea (*neihai*) as the farthest extent of their maritime authority, a region legitimately subject to sustainable governance and state possession, whereas the outer sea space (*waihai*) was considered a capricious blue-water domain increasingly beyond administrative governance and economic extraction.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, however, it should be noted that it is hard to draw a dividing line in the ocean because of its boundlessness. There is no clear physiographical boundary such as mountain ranges or dense forests that could help demarcate the two imagined zones of inner and outer ocean. The division of a natural and cohesive realm into two discrete parts was a matter of sociopolitical construction rather than unchanging topography and ecology. While making little sense to the seafaring people who regarded the sea as a vital resource for their survival, the separation of inner and outer ocean functioned primarily to set limits on the reach and responsibilities of the state to regulate government operations across the sea space. The Qianlong Emperor and his son the Jiaqing Emperor (1760-1820; r. 1796-1820) mentioned that the officials in coastal provinces did not dare to venture into the outer sea space. They often wrote off incidents in these waters as beyond their jurisdiction and thus of little concern. Some of the officials even ordered that official salt junks avoid passing over the outer ocean, suggesting the government gave up

policing this unfamiliar sea space altogether.<sup>161</sup> While the outer sea represented the place where maritime governance ceased, as argued by Wang Wensheng, it was also the space where pirates sought to maximize their autonomy and power.<sup>162</sup>

Considering the demarcation between the inner and outer sea space, one might notice that the inner sea space was literally identified as *waihai* or *waiyang* (which literally means the outer ocean) in some Qing official documents. In such case, it should be emphasized that the word *wai* (outer) did not essentially connote a sense of externality or exteriority. Given that the boundary between *nei* and *wai* is always shifting, did such mutability undercut the very notions of these binary pairs as meaningful categories for differentiation? I argue that this question cannot be approached from a ratiocinative perspective but from the idea of perspectivism and the very logic of the political ideology of the Qing court. By perspectivism I refer here to the spatialization that was contingent on the land-sea relation. When both the sea and the river were juxtaposed, the Qing government, as well as many other ruling elites, considered the sea to be a space relatively external to the river. Thus, on such occasions, even the inner sea belonged to its sovereignty and the Qing government used *waihai* to indicate this, whereas the rivers were termed as *neihe* (inner rivers). For instance, in *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu* (Completed records of the Qianlong Emperor), it was recorded that some areas in the *waiyang* off the Dongguang coast were labeled as the locations where pirates and gangsters hid, while the “*neihei* (inner-

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<sup>161</sup> Imperial edicts of January 10 and November 10, 1796, in *Jiaqing daoguang liangchao shangyudang* 嘉慶道光兩朝上諭檔 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>162</sup> Wensheng Wang's *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire*, p. 103.

river) region” was comparatively less troublesome (*di bijin waiyang, yicang jianfei.....dizai neihe, shiwu jianshao*).<sup>163</sup> When specifying the difference between *waihai* and *neihe*, the scholar-official Wu Shijun (1800-1883) also juxtaposed the two terms in his analyses of the maritime militarization along the coast. He wrote, “[until now], some obstinate officials still uphold an idea that it is much more practical to guard against invaders along the inner river [*neihe*] rather than across the ocean [*waiyang*] (*yu zhu waiyang, buru yu zhu neihe*).”<sup>164</sup> Clearly, the sea was often conceptualized as an external space when mentioned in comparison with the river-region, although this does not necessarily mean that the former was less important than the latter.

In the use of the term perspectivism I am also referring to the elastic classification of sea space, which was contingent on the position of the person in relation to the sea. For example, if one looked at the ocean from the coast of Fuzhou, s/he might regard the shallower, easily accessible seawaters facing her/him as the inner sea space. Looking at the question from the other way around, one might regard the seawater beyond sight and reach as the outer sea space.<sup>165</sup> In this case, the deep seawater around the islands that were located

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<sup>163</sup> *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), *juan* 155, “Zuo dou yushi guan Guangdong xunfu Wang Anguo yifu, anchashi Pan Siqiu zouqing Dongguang xian quekou zhensi xunjian” (Qianlong liunian, xinyou, shiyi yue, renwu).

<sup>164</sup> Wu Shijun, *Zhurong zuoshi zhenquan*, collected in Guojia tushuguan fenguan (ed.), *Qingdai junzheng ziliao xuancui* 清代軍政資料選粹 [Collection of military documents in the Qing] (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2002), *juan* 6, “shuizhan huoqi zonglun,” pp. 463-464.

<sup>165</sup> See Fang Junshi, *Jiaoxuan suilu* 蕉軒隨錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), *juan* 8, “haiyang jilue 海洋記略 [Records on the ocean],” *juan* 8, 35b–36a; Chen Changyuan, *Guangdong tongzhi* 廣東通志 [Gazetteer of Guangdong] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), *juan* 123, “haifang lue”1, 1093; Jiang Chenying, *Haifang zonglun* 海防總論 [A Comprehensive study on naval defense] in *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), vol. 3229, 8a–8b. In addition, from time to time the Chinese regarded the sea space beyond their sight and reaches as an area where the pirates congregated and sat up their bases. See Chen Lunjiang, *Haiguo wenjian lu* 海國聞見錄 [Things heard and seen from the maritime kingdoms],

a hundred miles away from Fujian could be regarded as the outer sea space. Dian Murray also touched upon the idea of perspicitvism when she discussed the dividing line between the inner and outer ocean,

offshore, as the open expanse of the South China Sea stretched from the border of Guangdong and Fujian provinces, around Hainan island and the Leizhou peninsula to the Gulf of Tonkin, the saltwater realm of shallow seas and inshore islands were referred to in Chinese sources as the inner sea (*neihai*) or inner ocean (*neiyang*). Once the shallows deepened, the inshore islands gave way to offshore islands farther from the land, and the South China Sea became the southern ocean (*nanyang*). This region of deep seas, offshore islands and coral reefs constituted the outer sea (*waihai*) or outer ocean (*waiyang*).<sup>166</sup>

By political ideology, I refer specifically to how the Qing court defined the sea space from a state-centered perspective. For instance, in most cases high Qing monarchs regarded the seawater that was instrumental to their maritime and economic policies as the inner sea, whereas the one that fell outside of their plans was seen as the outer one.<sup>167</sup> When the Qianlong Emperor prescribed the patrolling limit (*xunshao jiangji*) of the Fujian navy, he declared that the navy was responsible for policing all of the assigned area across the

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“tianxia yanhai xingshi lu,” pp. 2a-3a.

<sup>166</sup> Dian Murray, “Piracy and China’s Maritime Transition, 1750-1850,” in Wang Gangwu and Ng Chin-keong (ed.). *Maritime China in Transition 1750–1850* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), p. 55.

<sup>167</sup> See, for example, *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu* 大清聖祖仁皇帝實錄 [Complete records of Emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), *juan* 232, gengwu, “Duo chayuan qiandou yushi Lo Zhibian shuyan;” *juan* 243, runqi yue, “Yu bingbu: Ju Shandong xunfu Jiang Chenxi zoubao;” *juan* 251, bingwu, “bingbuyifu: Zhenhai jiangjun Ma Sanqi shuyan;” See also *DaQing Shizong Xianhuangdi shilu* 大清世宗憲皇帝實錄 [Complete records of Emperor Yongzheng] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), *juan* 72, dingwei, “Yizheng wang dachen deng yifu;” *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, *juan* 105, jiwei, “Jiangsu xunfu Zhangqu zou;” *juan* 167, dinghai, “Yuju Zhejiang tidu Peishi zou;” *juan* 176, gengyin, “Zai ju Min-Zhe zongdu Nasutu zou.”

“*neiyang* sector (*liuzi neiyang xunqi*).”<sup>168</sup> On another occasion, he declared that *neiyang* was subject to imperial prerogative since it was more “manageable and accessible (*neiyang yiyu kanding*)” than the *waiyang* surface.<sup>169</sup> In *Guozhao xianzheng shilüe*, Li Yuandu (1821-1887) also recalled the directive promulgated by Yongzheng to expel unregistered foreign battleships that anchored and sailed across the inner sea space (*waiyi bingchuan huoji neiyang, ju diaobing jishi quzhu*).<sup>170</sup> In Li’s record, the inner sea space was in this regard not conceptualized as a contact zone where international trade and cultural interactions could be forged freely. Instead, all maritime activities across the *neiyang* region were under strict state supervision. From the 1720s onward, all maritime activities operated by Western merchants were obliged to their Chinese counterparts in the form of an authorized monopolistic guild known as the *cohong*. Partly as a measure of cultural protection, direct contacts between Chinese and “barbaric merchants (*yishang*)” were strictly forbidden, except for the government-designated agents, the *cohong*, who served as the only middlemen between them.

The existence of the inner sea from a state-centered perspective is also evident in imperial maps officially produced in the eighteenth century. By 1760, the Qing had achieved the incredible feat of doubling the size of the empire’s territory, both at sea and inland. In order to promote this new conception of the empire, the Qing court commissioned

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<sup>168</sup> *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, juan 156, “bingbu deng bu yizhun yuanshu LiangJiang zongdu Yangchaoceng huiyi” (Qianlong 156 nian, xinyou, shier yue, renchen shuo, jihai).

<sup>169</sup> *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, juan 750, “Xingbu deng bu yifu: LiangJiang zongdu Gaojin dengzou, xunfang haiyang ge shiyi” (Qianlong 30 nian, yiyou, shier yue, renyin shuo, bingchen).

<sup>170</sup> Li Yuandu, *Guozhao xianzheng shilüe* [collected in *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要] (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shuju, 1989), vol. 46 ]juan 21, “Mingchen Wu Huaijiang gongbao shilüe,” 275.

a number of geo-political projects to depict the expanded imperial domain such as the *Kangxi Atlas* compiled by the Jesuits in 1717, the *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing Realm* (*Da Qing yitong zhi*) in 1746, and the *Qing Imperial Tribute Illustrations* (*Huang Qing zhigong tu*) in 1769.<sup>171</sup> Among these imperial projects the importance of the inner sea space was precisely articulated in a maritime diagram (*haitu*) entitled the *Maritime Diagram of the Seven Coastal Provinces* (*Qishan yuanhai quantu*) produced in 1798. This *haitu* was one of the very few topographical maritime diagrams showcasing information that was crucial for strategic management across the maritime frontier in the eighteenth century. This is also one of the very few imperial maps printed in the Qing featuring the inner sea that is preserved in good condition. Yet this *haitu* is worth noticing not only because of its rarity, but also because of its salient features. By salient features I refer to the detailed paratextual information printed on the map, which touch upon a variety of issues such as the importance of coastal defense, the significance of the Bohai Bay, as well as the dividing lines between certain sea spaces. Unlike other maritime diagrams produced in the Ming-Qing period such as the *Topographic Diagram of Maritime Defense* (*Wanli haifang tu*) [1561] and the *Complete topographic Diagram of Maritime Defense of the United Empire* (*Qiankun yitong haifang quantu*) [1605], the *Qishan yuanhai quantu* showed the maritime frontier horizontally, placing the land mass of coastal China in the upper part of the map, while the vast body of water was depicted in the lower part. In this regard, the

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<sup>171</sup> As argued by Mark Elliott, cartographic projects in the Qing were important because they enabled the representation of a space that the Manchus could claim as their own, thereby sustaining the idea of the superior Manchu power. See Elliott, Mark C. "The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 9 (2000), pp. 603-646. Peter Perdue also suggested that imperial map making in the Qing served to legitimate territorial claims. See Peter Perdue, "Boundaries, Maps and Movements: Chinese, Russian, and Mongol Empires in Early Central Eurasia," *The International History Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1998), pp. 263-286.

diagram showed the eastern side of China and the western part of the East Asian Sea in a landscape orientation. In most of the coastal diagrams or atlases produced under official supervision in the Qing Dynasty, one significant feature is that if the area was beyond governmental control, it would not be described in detail and was even left blank because, as examined by Emma J. Teng, the extension of Qing mapping was directly related to imperial expansionism.<sup>172</sup> In the *Qishan yuanghai quan tu*, a large portion of sea space was filled with detailed information. Some particular sea space, such as Dinghai (seawater off the Jiangsu coast), was even indicated as the “foremost region guarding the inner sea (*you Dinghai wei zhi hanwei, shi neihai zhi tang ao ye*).” Moreover, the *haitu* marked the boundary between the Guangdong and Vietnam seawaters with the phrase “the limit and the edge (*yuan jin zhi chu*),” signifying the sea space beyond that boundary was utterly outside imperial control.<sup>173</sup> This cartographic evidence thus supports the notion that some further sea space had “not yet entered the map” (*weiru bantu*) and served visually as an outer sea space from the state-centered perspective.

According to the paratextual information on the *Qishan yuanghai quan tu*, the inner-outer framework could also be conceptualized as a double-layered framework. Within the inner sea, the water space was deliberately divided into another layer of *wai* and *nei*. As written by the cartographer of the *Qishan yuanghai quan tu*, “the outer sea was strategically

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<sup>172</sup> Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004). p. 143.

<sup>173</sup> This piece of information might also help substantiate Charles Wheeler's argument that it was difficult to ascertain where the Gulf of Tonkin started and ended. See Charles Wheeler, “Rethinking the Sea in Vietnamese History: Littoral Society in the Integration of Thuan-Quang, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 37 (2006), pp. 123-153.



important, while the inner sea was full of scattered islands and tiny isles.” Such differentiation mentioned in this *haitu* primarily based on the depth of seawater and the geographical distances off the coast. On one hand, because large-sized war junks often found it difficult to come close to shore in a low tide situation which only enabled smaller warships to do the policing, they were thus responsible to patrol the deeper “outer coastal water [it has to be noted that this part of “outer water” was still included in the inner sea region]” so as to “defend the frontier (*han bianzu*).” On the other hand, small patrol warships were given the duty to police the shallower “inner coastal water” so as to “strengthen the foundation (*cun genben*).” To give another illustrative example, we can make use of the account recorded in the *Guangdong haifang huilan* published in the 1760s. Across the Guangdong sea space, the strength of the water forces consisted of 167 war junks of various sizes in the 1700s. In order to interdict smuggling activities happening in shallower seawaters, it was decided in 1730 that the inner sea space should be divided into two sectors according to the aforementioned logic. Therefore, the 167 vessels (and perhaps even more) were divided into 38 separate units under the command of the admiral (*shuishi tidu*) along the Guangdong coast, covering some 3,000 *li* of the seawater from Chaoyang on the eastern flank to Hainan on the western flank. Islets, harbor-areas, shoals, and half-tide rocks were meticulously patrolled by the “inner-water fleet,” while the “outer-water fleet” was responsible for policing the region at a greater distance. Yet unfortunately, it was not recorded either in official gazetteers or in memorials what the exact limit of the area (in terms of kilometers) the “outer-water fleet” was given the authority to undertake its patrol duties. But it was mentioned in the account that other land-based military units across Guangdong, which were close to seaports, carried the dual responsibility of cooperating

with the “inner- and outer-water fleets” to help defend the maritime frontier.<sup>174</sup>

The above attempts to demarcate inner and outer space in the sea were also practiced in the diplomatic strategies used for the inner Asian tributaries that lay beyond the western boundaries. Under the tributary system, the Manchu court deliberately divided their tributaries into inner polities (dependencies) and outer polities. Only the inner polities (such as Nepal and Kanjut) would be granted military protection;<sup>175</sup> whereas the outer polities (such as Tashkent, Bukhara, Badakhshan, and Kazakas) were client states that were not directly linked to the Qing Empire.<sup>176</sup> In 1751, for instance, the Qianlong emperor issued an imperial decree stating that,

Our dynasty has unified the vast terrain that lies within the frontiers. The various barbarians, inner and outer, have submitted and turned toward civilization. Each of them has a different costume and appearance. We order the governor-general and provincial governors along the frontiers to have illustrations made copying the likeness of the clothing and ornaments of the Miao, Yao, Li, Zhuang, under their jurisdiction, as well as of the outer barbarians, and to submit these illustrations to the Grand Council, that they may be compiled and arranged for imperial survey.<sup>177</sup>

The above imperial edict reflected not only the Qianlong emperor’s desire to order his officials to compile the *Imperial Tribute Illustrations of the Great Qing* (*Huang Qing zhigong tu*), but also his interest in using the inner-outer correlation as a language or a

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<sup>174</sup> *Guangdong haifang huilan* 廣東海防彙覽, chapter 12, pp. 25a-27b.

<sup>175</sup> See Nicola Di Cosmo, “Qing Colonial Administration in Inner Asia,” *The International History Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1998), pp. 287-309.

<sup>176</sup> See Joseph Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia c. 1800,” in *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge, MA.: Cambridge University Press, 1978), vol. 10, part 1, 35-38.

<sup>177</sup> See Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, *Qing zhigong tu xuan* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1963), p.3. This imperial edict is translated by Emma Teng.

rhetoric of governance and control that explicated, if not justified, the Qing exertion of power over certain selected or desired peoples and regions — whether on land or sea.<sup>178</sup> Moreover, in dealing with the question of civilization and “barbarity,” the Qing tended to follow the inner-outer model in the seventeenth century. Unlike the Ming Dynasty that worked with the basic dichotomy between civilization and “barbarity,” the Qing tended to eschew this binarism and considered “civilized” and “barbaric” relative and nested with each other by applying the inner-outer conception. By the eighteenth century, as argued by Pamela Crossley, “these degrees of inner and outer were distinctly narrative, that is, they might be contrasted to moral, ethical, or cultural criteria.”<sup>179</sup> Most of the inner groups were those associated with the early conquest such as the Banner Manchus, the Mongols, and the Hanjun, while most of the outer group were those who remained unincorporated objects of the conquest. The inner-outer model here is demonstrably hierarchical, with the innermost enjoying the greatest intimacy with the ruling lineage and the outermost having the least.

### **A Traditional Pair: Inner - Outer**

The inner-outer correlation was not only applicable when modeling and demarcating the sea space, it had long been viewed as a traditional spatial binary in Chinese philosophy

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<sup>178</sup> Some scholars such as Pitman B. Potter also apply the inner-outer model to analyze the PRC’s frontier management. According to Potter, “conditions in China’s inner and outer peripheries serve as an essential context for understanding China’s policies of governance and control.” By inner periphery the author referred to Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang where constitutional arrangements of local governance were applied. The outer periphery covers Hong Kong and Taiwan, where the Beijing authorities established the “special administrative region” or applied another constitutional model of governance. See Pitman B. Potter, “Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives on the Periphery,” in Diana Lary ed., *The Chinese State at the Borders* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), p. 249.

<sup>179</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu and Donald S. Sutton, eds., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 15.

and philology. Throughout the history of imperial China, ideas about the configuration of space and mankind's position within such a configuration were of significant importance to officials, thinkers, writers, and other intellectuals of all sorts. Exploring China through the lens of spatial configuration, as argued by Robin McNeal, is analytically productive, because "it opens up a mode of inquiry that was itself enormously productive in Chinese history." In his masterpiece *The Construction of Space in Early China*, Mark Edward Lewis has shown how spatial configuration was applied at every level of Chinese thinking, from the skin as the boundary of the human body to visions of the cosmos:

Chinese thinkers insisted on the importance of boundaries and at the same time of proper relations across them, so that order within and openness to the outside remained compatible.<sup>180</sup>

Mark Lewis unequivocally demonstrates that the importance of boundaries, consisting the inner sphere and the outer sphere, was deeply rooted in the Chinese conception of space from a philosophical perspective. Similar to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Lewis believed that space, like time, is relational. As it evolved in imperial China over the span of about a thousand years, space came to be ordered and conceived primarily in terms of basic juxtapositions such as inner and outer, central and peripheral, superior and inferior. The inner and the outer space, in this regard, came to be constructed or represented, through actual and conceptual means, to produce or reproduce social and political hierarchies, to reveal relationships among micro- and macro- levels of society. For example, in the symbolic language of sacred writing, the outer and the inner are referring to images and

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<sup>180</sup> Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 1-12.

formulations that embrace the law of one's own inner world and the greater world simultaneously;<sup>181</sup> in the *I-Ching* there are the inner spirit and the outer presence;<sup>182</sup> the civil court contained an inner administrative office (*neiting*) and an outer political office (*waiting*);<sup>183</sup> in the Chinese houses there are inner chambers and outer courtyards; and inside those inner chambers there are further divisions between exteriority and interiority.<sup>184</sup> In this regard, it is essential in Chinese culture to be able to understand one's position in space, time and society, and the establishment of a structure of tangible spatial reference greatly facilitated this process of orientation. In other words, spatial division such as the inner-outer juxtaposition is ubiquitous and omnipresent in Chinese settings and in their spaces.

### **Ruling the Inner Sea Space**

Unlike the Portuguese in the seventeenth century who claimed sovereignty over a

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<sup>181</sup> Laozi, translated by Gia-fu Geng, Jane English and Toinette Lippe, *Tao Te Ching* (New York: Vintage Book, 2011), p. xl

<sup>182</sup> See Alfred Huang, *The Numerology of the I Ching: A Sourcebook of Symbols, Structures, and Traditional Wisdom* (Rochester: Inner Tradition International, 2000).

<sup>183</sup> These two offices were crucial distinctions made between two main spheres of government power. To reinforce absolute monarchical control over the unwieldy meritocratic officialdom, dynastic rulers often established the *neiting* as their personal staff in order to keep the growing *waiting* in careful check. See Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 4-7.

<sup>184</sup> In imperial China, men and women were encouraged to keep a strict separation between their respective spheres of influence within the household, which is architecturally divided into an inner space, reserved to women, and an outer space, reserved to men. Indeed, as argued by Giovanni Vitiello, "inner and outer were associated with women and men, and by extension with hetero- and homosexuality, respectively." See Giovanni Vitiello, *The Libertine's Friend: Homosexuality and Masculinity in Late Imperial China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 40. See also Francesca Bray, *Technology and Society in Ming China (1368-1644)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

sea space not through its proximity but by economic and martial forces, it never occurred to the Qing court that the control of a monarch could transcend physical and geographical boundaries across thousands of miles of ocean. Instead, the Manchu monarchs insisted on the importance of continued action in order to properly govern their inner sea space. They saw the inner ocean as a legitimate arena that was critical to the building of the empire as well as to national security.<sup>185</sup> The Qing court in the eighteenth century thus expended energy in ruling and supervising their inner sea space through the establishment of the imperial navy. The imperial navy was responsible for guarding and policing five different yet interconnected sea zones off the China coast from north to south, namely the Bohai Bay, the Jiangsu sea space, the Zhejiang sea space, the Taiwan Strait, and the Guangdong sea space. The division of the maritime frontier into five sea zones is evident, once again, in the cartographic depictions of the *Qishan yuanhai tu*. In the *Qishan yuanhai tu*, the cartographer introduced to viewers the conception of dividing line (*fenjia*) across the maritime frontier. For instance, the Jiangsu sea space and the Zhejiang sea space was divided by the Jiang-Zhe *fenjia* (the Jiang-Zhe dividing line), while the Taiwan Strait and the Guangdong sea space by the Fujian-Guangdong *fenjia* (Fujian-Guangdong dividing line). Usually, a particular island or a chain of isles was regarded as the indicating geographical feature to represent the boundary between the two sea zones on the map.

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<sup>185</sup> See, for instance, *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu* 大清聖祖仁皇帝實錄 [Complete records of Emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), dated to “Kangxi liunian (1667) dingwei jiuyue, renyin shuo,” “bingbu yifu [message directed to the Ministry of War],” Zhao Erxun, *et al.* (eds.), *Qing shi gao* 清史稿 [The draft of Qing history], *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, 4015–4018; Qing Gaozong (the Qianlong Emperor), *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* 清朝文獻通考 [Overview of literary studies in the Qing dynasty], *juan* 185, “bingkao,” no. 8, 6463–6470; Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan (ed.), *Yongzhengchao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* 雍正朝漢文朱批奏折 [Imperial documents approved by the Kangxi Emperor in Chinese] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989–1991), *juan* 8, “Memorial submitted by Gao Qizhuo,” p. 279.

Apart from guarding and policing the five sea zones, the imperial navy bore the responsibility of suppressing piratical violence. In fact, the Qing court was eager to actualize its sovereignty over its inner sea space by strictly fighting piracy in the eighteenth century. In the words of Anne Perotin-Dumon,

confrontations at sea were both an important instrument of state power and of a measure of the degree to which state authority was actually established.....the state was responsible for quashing piracy within its own territorial waters, that is, where it claimed sovereignty.<sup>186</sup>

Therefore, the piracy crises in China, especially in South China, created a challenge for the Qing court as to what sort of power and order could be enforced in the sea space, and how best to ensure security across the infested waters as well as the maritime littoral. The management of piratical violence, in short, was closely related to a consideration of real problems associated with maritime sovereignty. The Qing emperors in the eighteenth century were keenly aware of these waves of maritime violence. The Yongzheng Emperor, for example, instructed his officials many times to crack down on sea raiders. His son, Qianlong, ordered the Guangdong and the Zhejiang naval fleets to patrol frequently so as to leave no room for illegal trade and other unlawful activities. However, given the unpredictable environment and the pirates' high mobility, the sea bandits could easily escape government suppression by retreating to areas where the Qing naval force could hardly patrol. Some pirates even used resources in a supranational way so as to survive

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<sup>186</sup> Anne Perotin-Dumon, "The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and Law on the Sea, 1450-1850," in James D. Tracy ed., *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 202.

Qing suppression and expand their power and autonomy.<sup>187</sup> Consequently, the management of piratical disturbances long been remained a problem at the heart of Qing maritime spatiality.

In addition to the establishment of a strong navy, the Qing court also gave substantial administrative consideration to its inner sea space by setting up the customs system. After Taiwan was annexed in 1683, the maritime trade ban was also relaxed. To manage sea trade following the end of the embargo policy, Sun Hui, a supervising secretary in the revenue office, suggested to the Kangxi Emperor that the government establish a customs system to regulate the issuance of licenses and collection of duties. In 1683, Kangxi approved Sun's suggestion and decided to institute the customs system. He mentioned to his officials that,

without a regular way of collection, levying duties would trouble maritime traders [who would be subject to extortion from customs officials]. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the same system as the inland one in the coastal regions and appoint special officials to deal with the related affairs.<sup>188</sup>

One year after the emperor issued the above edict, Kangxi appointed two Manchu officials, Igeertu and Wushiba, as the first heads of the Guangdong (Guangzhou, Xiangshan, and Macau) and Fujian (Fuzhou, Nantai, and Xiamen) commissions. Over the next three years, two more customs offices were established in Zhejiang (Ningbo and Dinghai) and Jiangsu

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<sup>187</sup> See Wensheng Wang, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire*, pp. 209-229.

<sup>188</sup> Gang Zhao, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean*, p. 118.



(Huating, Chongque, and Shanghai). Once the four customs offices were established and institutionalized, the maritime activities across the inner sea were being controlled and governed. And the establishment of the new customs structure also suggests that the Qing court was aware of the fact that the inner sea was different from other land-frontiers in its rhythms and dynamics.

By policing and regulating maritime activities across the inner sea space, the Qing court was able to assert forcefully its sovereignty over its immediate coastal waters against (potential) foreign penetration and invasion. The Qing Empire, however, was not the only power in Asia who was proactive in guarding against foreign aggression on domestic seawaters. Other Asian rulers also expanded their naval powers to limit foreign influence within their maritime region. The Ottomans, for example, had long been in conflict with the Portuguese. During the sixteenth century, in order to protect their maritime interests, the Ottomans built up a considerable navy that they hoped would reopen the Red Sea route to the Persian Gulf despite the Portuguese blockade.<sup>189</sup> These Ottoman actions managed to hold off the Portuguese invasion for a certain period of time. In the early 1500s Gujarat also allied itself with Egypt to regain its trade networks from the Portuguese (they were defeated by Portugal in the battle of Diu in 1509).<sup>190</sup> There were also a number of small states in Asia that mounted an effective response to check the expansion of European sea powers.

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<sup>189</sup> S. Ozbaran, "The Ottoman Turks and the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, 1534–1581," *Journal of Asian History*, vol. 6 (1972): 45–87; see also Giancarlo Casale, "The Ottoman Discovery of the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth Century: The Age of Exploration from an Islamic Perspective," in Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen eds., *Seascape: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 87-104.

<sup>190</sup> See Edward A. Alpers, "Gujarat and the Trade of East Africa, c. 1500–1800," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 9 no. 1 (1976), pp. 22-44.

For instance, the Kingdom of Oman, located along the southeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, managed to oust the Portuguese from Muscat and a few other coastal enclaves in the seventeenth century.<sup>191</sup> Although Asian powers did not capitalize on the ocean in the same way that the Europeans did (for example, by using the sea as a means to colonize the globe), most of them regarded their domestic sea space as a significant sector of their activity. And as previously mentioned, they responded effectively to foreign incursions into their domestic sea zones with naval militarization or trading restrictions that protected their maritime interests.

Before the Manchus came to power, a telling example showing how China projected its power beyond the inner sea space was the seven great odysseys led by Zheng He as briefly mentioned above. In 1405, the Yongle Emperor (1360-1424; r. 1402-1424) sent sixty-three warships carrying 27,000 men across the equatorial and subtropical waters of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Over the next twenty-five years, six more expeditions were launched and some even reached the east coast of Africa and the Arabian peninsula. As Geoffrey Wade has concluded,

[in] the renowned voyages led by Admiral Zheng. He revealed that the Ming court exerted considerable power from the southern coastal region of China to the coast of India.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Abdul Ali, "Struggle between the Portuguese and the Arabs of Oman for Supremacy in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean," *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol. 9 no. 4 (1986), pp. 75-80.

<sup>192</sup> Geoffrey Wade, "The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 78 no. 1 (2005), pp. 37-58; Edward L. Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405-1433* (New York : Pearson Longman, 2007).

The projection of power across the sea space in the early Ming was primarily based on the sea-power paradigm theorized by the American admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) in the 1890s. Mahan established an extremely influential doctrine that related sea power to national strength and prosperity.<sup>193</sup> Western European states such as Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Britain had fought their way to power via the ocean, while Germany, Japan, and the United States were following the same path in the late nineteenth century. Within the paradigm set up by Mahan, modern historians tended to agree that Zheng He's voyages, representing the Ming court, indicated that China also had the capability to pursue a program of imperial and colonial expansion based on sea power. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the Chinese projection of power to the outer sea space differs from the trans-oceanic projection of power by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the British. The Chinese imperial court did not seek to claim sovereignty across other sea spaces in order to generate economic wealth. Even though Zheng He reached the coast of the Arabian world and eastern Africa, his large fleet did not attempt to conquer territories or set up colonies. His purpose was merely to establish and consolidate diplomatic relations with foreign countries, and to strengthen commercial contacts between the Ming and other Asian states across the Indian Ocean. According to Satish Chandra, the policy of combining trade with establishing monopolies by dominating the ocean "was uniquely European."<sup>194</sup> In contrast to those European seaborne powers that were interested in sponsoring overseas colonialism,<sup>195</sup> both the Ming and Qing Empires did not recognize the need to capitalize

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<sup>193</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957).

<sup>194</sup> Satish Chandra, *The Indian Ocean: Explorations in History, Commerce and Politics*, p. 26.

<sup>195</sup> European traders could rely on their states to provide military, financial, and legal support for overseas

upon their naval supremacy beyond their inner sea. In other words, they did not seek to transcend the division segregating domestic and foreign sea space.<sup>196</sup> It is probable that they viewed the domestic sea space as a part of their territorial realm and sought merely to keep the inner ocean under tight imperial control and supervision. In this regard, the inner-outer model could partly explain China's general disinclination, unlike that of Western Europe, toward conceptualizing the ocean as a power base and a battleground for international conflicts and competition.

When we talk about Qing ruling activities across its inner sea space, one might think of the sea blockade policy (*haijin*) issued by the high Qing emperors. In the late seventeenth century the Kangxi Emperor issued an imperial decree to "block the sea (*jin hai*)" by imposing a strict ban on navigation, which aimed at cutting off ties between the insurrection in Taiwan led by Zheng Chenggong (or Koxinga; 1624-1662) and the coastal population in Fujian.<sup>197</sup> In view of the sea blockade policy, some historians concluded that the Qing

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expansion. For example, the Dutch East India Company in the early seventeenth century benefited from exceptional government support. Although it was in name a private trading company, it was in actuality an official arm of the Dutch state, which intended to establish a trading empire all over the world. The Dutch East India Company had the right to sign treaties, subjugate people, and establish colonies, all in the name of the Estates General of the United Provinces. For more details, see John E. Wills Jr., "Maritime Asia, 1500–1800: The Interactive Emergence of European Domination," *American Historical Review*, vol. 98 (February 1993), pp. 83-105. In addition, I would argue that the Japanese daimyo during the Warring States period also supported maritime expansion, although they did not always combine trade with establishing monopolies to set up overseas colonies. Similar to the situation in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, Japan was divided into independent and fiercely competitive states, each of which sought revenues to fund wars against its rivals. Like the European seaborne power, the Japanese daimyo encouraged piracy and armed expansion overseas. But whereas the situation in Europe lasted until 1945, Japan's Warring States period only lasted a century.

<sup>196</sup> But it has to be noted that some scholars, such as Nicola Di Cosmo and Dorothea Heuschert, argue that the Qing should be considered a colonial empire. See for instance Nicola Di Cosmo, "Qing Colonial Administration in Inner Asia," pp. 287-309; Dorothea Heuschert, "Legal Pluralism in the Qing Empire: Manchu Legislation for the Mongols," *International History Review* vol. 20, no. 2 (1998), pp. 310-24.

<sup>197</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, "The K'ang-hsi Reign," in *The Cambridge history of China. Vol. 9. Part 1, Ch'ing Empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 150-160.

Empire “was an isolated land-power which ignored the ocean,” and ended up leaving the seas open to Western Europeans.<sup>198</sup> However, there is a problem to that conclusion because it has overlooked the actual reason for activating the sea ban. In fact, the coastal evacuation meant only that the specific concern about security had trumped all other concerns, it did not mean that the Qing court began to keep a distance from the sea. Even during the period of the sea blockade policy, Kangxi began extensive shipbuilding, the fortification of coastal cities, the training of marine forces,<sup>199</sup> as well as establishing an alliance with the Dutch in order to utilize and learn from their advanced naval technology.<sup>200</sup> As soon as the region was pacified and economic growth once again became politically feasible in the early eighteenth century, the emperor and the banner elites immediately questioned the blockade restrictions. In this regard, the Qing court was arguably far from ignoring the inner sea even during the so-called age of blockade as the *haijin* policy could be read as a strategy of sea denial,<sup>201</sup> which aimed to prevent opponents from achieving sea control. By rendering the sea secure for its own military and commercial purposes, the Qing still viewed every part of its inner ocean as a special strategic area that was of vital importance.

### **Beyond *mare liberum* and *mare clausum***

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<sup>198</sup> For instance, Barry Cunliffe, *Europe between the Oceans: 9000BC-AD1000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, second edition 2011), vii.

<sup>199</sup> See Du Zhen, *Yue Min xun shi ji lüe* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2008), *juan* 1, p. 10a.

<sup>200</sup> See John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China 1622–1681* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 98-99; pp. 125-132.

<sup>201</sup> For details about the strategy of sea denial, see Ministry of Defence, *British Maritime Doctrine* (Norwich, U.K.: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 2004), pp. 41–43.

In his *The International Law of the Sea*, D.P.O. Connell examines the history of ocean governance as a fluctuation between the concept of free seas (Grotius's *mare liberum*) and enclosed seas (Selden's *mare clausum*):

The history of the law of the sea has been dominated by a central and persistent theme: the competition between the exercise of governmental authority over the sea and the idea of the freedom of the seas...When one or two great commercial powers have been dominant or have achieved parity of power, the emphasis in practice has lain upon the liberty of navigation and the immunity of shipping from local control. When, on the one hand, great powers have been in decline or have been unable to impose their wills upon smaller states, or when an equilibrium of power has been attained between a multiplicity of states, the emphasis has lain upon the protection and reservation of maritime resources, and consequently upon the assertion of local authority over the sea.<sup>202</sup>

O'Connell's observation is somewhat accurate, but his binary characterization depends upon a conventional staticization of legal principles, and on ocean management strategies that overshadow what actually has been a dynamic and fluid history in East Asian seaways. Indeed, the Qing government in the long eighteenth century exercised its maritime hegemony in a manner that was very different from that exercised by the Portuguese, the French, and the British in the eighteenth century. As a corollary, Connell's example suggests that the binary classifications of "freedom" and "enclosure" in maritime governance might not be as absolute as they first appear. It also suggests that the construction of a "freedom versus enclosure" dichotomy can lie only within a specifically European organization of space and society, but is obviously not a global, symmetrical

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<sup>202</sup> O'Connell, *The International Law of the Sea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 1.

pattern.

One of the important systems mentioned by Connell is the *mare liberum*. In response to Iberian complaints about French encroachments on their littoral, Francis I (1494-1547; r. 1515-1547), the French monarch, proclaimed that navigation of the seas was open to all nations. In 1608 Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) theorized Francis I's actions as the notion of *mare liberum*. By *mare liberum*, Grotius declared that the sea was an international territory and that all countries were free to use it for seafaring activities. He further indicated that freedom to navigate the oceans was an essential condition for the development of international sea trade.<sup>203</sup> Unlike Francis I and Grotius, the Qing court did not mention anything about the freedom of navigation. Nor did it ever claim that all countries had a “basic right” to the open waters beyond their inner sea space.<sup>204</sup> In other words, High Qing emperors did not formulate any concepts similar to those of James I of England (1566-1625; r. 1567–1625), Elizabeth I, or Francis I — namely, that both “royal jurisdiction” and “free trade property right” could be exerted on any watery surface of the globe.<sup>205</sup> Rather, in the eighteenth century the Qing Empire continued to model the sea space after their inner-outer conception. To the Manchu government the inner sea was akin

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<sup>203</sup> Grotius was even praised as the “father of the law of nations.” For instance, John C. Colombos suggested that “Grotius’s treatise achieved such an international reputation that before the end of the seventeenth century it was generally considered embodying the rules of international law and he, therefore, deserves the title ‘Father of the Law of Nations,’ by which he is usually styled.” See John C. Colombos, *The International Law of the Sea* [the sixth edition] (New York: David McKay, 1967), p. 8.

<sup>204</sup> For instance, Emperor Qianlong had once stated that the seawater near the Ryūkyū Kingdom only belonged to the Ryūkyū monarch, even though at that time Ryūkyū was one of the Qing’s tributaries. See *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu, juan 167, dinghai*, “Ju Zhejiang tidu Pei Shi zou.”

<sup>205</sup> Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 11-28.

to the land-space and thus was subject to a high degree of social incorporation and territorial control. In contrast to Western European powers, the Manchu Empire viewed the inner sea as part of its territory; what lay beyond this space was simply beyond their interest to control. By understanding this inner-outer conception, we can also revise some of the conventional notions about the Qing Empire, including the idea that, unlike other seaborne powers, it viewed the ocean as an insignificant space outside or beyond the empire and therefore immune to societal, land-like territorial control. In fact, as this chapter seeks to illustrate, for the Manchu government the inner sea was spatially important to their territorial control and empire-building program. The Manchu court governed the sea as much as they governed the land: as a political space to be demarcated and controlled according to their spatial principles that were based on the conception of an inner-outer realm.

### **The Challenges**

From 1683 (the year of Taiwan's annexation) to 1795 (when the Qianlong Emperor abdicated the throne), the Qing Empire was at the zenith of its control and power; its resources were utilized in expansion, occupation, and stabilization. Throughout this golden epoch, the Manchu court had successfully maintained its dominance, which allowed it to claim sovereignty and jurisdiction over the inner sea space without fierce resistance. However, during the first two decades of the nineteenth century the Qing was in decline and, owing to a series of internal and external crises, the Manchu rulers were forced to revise their inner-outer model.



During this period of turmoil and disorder, it took some time for the Qing state to modify its ruling mechanism from one marked by “an extraordinary combination of expansion and stability”<sup>206</sup> to one that aimed at resolving the problems of overpopulation, economic downturn, and two destructive rebellions — the Miao Rebellion of 1795 and the White Lotus Rebellion a year later. Unfortunately, most of the new policies attempted by the Jiaqing government were futile. The costs of putting down the two rebellions in 1804 had almost depleted the state treasury,<sup>207</sup> and by the end of the 1810s the remaining 60 million silver taels in the reserve were drained away by other domestic crises.<sup>208</sup> The veneer of glorious stability created by Qianlong could no longer be maintained in his declining years.

With the death of the Emperor Qianlong in 1799, the Qing navy descended into a state of passivity and incompetence. The Qing court was no longer as proactive in safeguarding the inner sea space as it had been during the golden age. In the case of Guangdong, for example, the military presence along the coast was hopelessly overstretched: only 137 fortresses dotted the 2,500 kilometer coast in 1806. These fortresses, more importantly, were insufficiently manned, poorly equipped, and loosely coordinated. Patrolling fleets were also spread hopelessly thin, given the size of the area

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<sup>206</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), p. 108.

<sup>207</sup> William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 149–175; Wang Yeh-chien, *Land Taxation in Imperial China, 1750–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 131; John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 398.

<sup>208</sup> See Helen Dunstan, *State or Merchant: The Political Economy and Political Process in 1740s China* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press), p. 446.

they had to patrol and protect. According to Nayancheng, the governor-general of Liangguang, there were over 1,000 pirate vessels in Guangdong waters, but the provincial navy had merely 87 battleships at that time.<sup>209</sup> Furthermore, the Qing court was strained by its prolonged and expensive battles against domestic rebellions; further militarization along the maritime frontier would have seemed an exorbitant and unnecessary cost. Due to the shortage of funding the navy was incapable of enhancing their combat powers, and the government had to rely on customs revenues and borrowed money from merchants and religious groups to support the military operations against the Miao and the White Lotus.<sup>210</sup> Without state support and plentiful sponsorship, substantiation and aggrandizement of naval militarization were impossible. Over the course of the nineteenth century the Qing navy had deteriorated to an extent that they even lacked the ability to check illegal sea crimes along the littoral. For example, the period between 1802 and 1810 saw the rise of large-scale pirate leagues that pillaged and terrorized the south China coast. Pirate chiefs such as Zhu Fen and Cai Qian even formed an alliance, trying to set up a maritime regime in Taiwan. More importantly, these piratical predations in Guangdong and Fujian was directly supported by the newly unified Vietnamese state that emerged from the Tay Son rebellion of the 1770s. Secret sponsorship by foreign powers not only integrated different bands of Chinese pirates into several well-equipped fleets operating in the Guangdong sea zone, it also showcased the structural limits of the Qing state to properly govern its maritime frontier, thereby suggesting that the Manchu's suzerainty over the inner sea space became

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<sup>209</sup> Imperial edict of May 30, 1804, collected in *Jiaqing Daoguang liangchao shangyudang* (Imperial edicts of the Jiaqing-Daoguang reigns) (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>210</sup> *DaQing lichao shilu* 大清歷朝實錄 (*Renzongchao*) [Veritable records of successive reigns of the Qing dynasty, the Jiaqing reign] (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1964), *juan* 91, 6b–7b.

increasingly nominal.

Apart from this series of domestic crises, the Qing Empire in the nineteenth century was also challenged by the encroachment of Western imperialists. After the dissolution of the Napoleonic Empire at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the newly enshrined international order provided Western European powers with greater impetus for overseas expansion, asserted and materialized by the advancements in steel-making and other steam-powered industrial technologies that had ensured the modernization of the military. The seaborne powers of the West, as William T. Rowe has pointed out, “now found [themselves] suddenly in possession of the motives (a need for foreign markets), the ideological justification (the comity of nations and free-trade liberalism), and the means (new military technologies)” to force the “opening” of the Qing Empire, as well as other East Asian countries.<sup>211</sup>

Among various European powers, Britain – which had created a vast naval enterprise sustained by industrial might and unparalleled financial resources – was the first to declare war on China. Exploiting the chaotic situation in Chinese seawaters, Britain launched two naval expeditions to occupy the longtime Portuguese settlement of Macau in 1802 and 1808. Situated between the West River and Pearl River estuary, Macao consists of a small peninsula and two islands near Canton. Starting from the sixteenth century, the Portuguese gradually turned Macau from a desolate region into a flourishing trading seaport. In the words of Robert Montgomery Martin, Macao became “the best and most

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<sup>211</sup> William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 169-170.

important pillar the Portuguese had in all the East.”<sup>212</sup> Unlike the British, the Portuguese approach to China rested on a sense of economic pragmatism. Their assistance to the suppression of late Ming piracy helped them gain settlement rights in Macao in 1557. During the Ming and Qing, the Portuguese even paid a symbolic annual tribute and practiced obligatory rituals like the kowtow in order to show their submission. The Qing court therefore decided to bestow on the Portuguese the right to set up their own municipal government elected by local Portuguese inhabitants in Macao, enabling them to have a considerable amount of self-governing power in the settlement. However, none of this meant that the Qing had given up control over Macao and the seawaters surrounding the city. The Qing court instead gradually intensified their bureaucratic oversight over this region in the eighteenth century. In 1763, for instance, a Chinese official was posted in Macao, followed by a district magistrate at mid-century and a vice magistrate in 1800.<sup>213</sup> That said, the Qing was the real master of Macao before the outbreak of the First Opium War. Therefore, the British attempt to occupy Macao as their trading foothold in China was concretely violating the Qing’s rule over its inner sea space of Guangdong. Harney William Parish of the Royal Artillery at that time even calculated that a British occupation of Macao would lead to either the rise of contraband trade or the independence of south China from the Qing Empire.<sup>214</sup> Later in the 1802, the British decided to send warships to Chinese seawaters, even though they hoped to achieve their mission without waging a war with

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<sup>212</sup> Robert Montgomery Martin, *The Colonial Magazine and Commercial Maritime Journal* (London: Fisher & Son, 184), vol. I, p. 226.

<sup>213</sup> H.B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1910-1918), p. 43.

<sup>214</sup> Quoted from J.L. Cranmer-Byng, “The Defense of Macao in 1794: A British Assessment,” *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, no. 5 (1964), pp. 135-143.

Portugal or with the Qing. True or not, such military action undertaken by the British was sufficient enough to alarm the Jiaqing emperor. Yet unlike in previous decades, the Qing at that time was unable to suppress the British militarily in order to restore order in Macao. Alternatively, the Qing court turned to collaborate with the Portuguese so as to protect its sovereignty across the inner sea space by signing a convention with the Portuguese in response to British movements.

In order to avoid military conflict with both the Qing and the Portuguese, the British sought to find a new way to achieve their ambitions. In 1805, the British noticed that the seawaters off the Macao coast were disturbed by swarming Chinese pirate fleets, they thus volunteered to provide naval assistance to fight against the pirates between Macao and Canton. In return, the British presented a request to expand their interest and power in Macao and the Pearl River region. As the piracy crises intensified dramatically, the Qing court became more receptive toward offers of British help since the Portuguese had been found using their routine patrol off the Canton coast to facilitate opium trafficking. In order to suppress the sea bandits without further delay, the Jiaqing emperor accepted the British proposal to dispatch warships to escort the EIC's cargoes to and from the mouth of the Pearl River.<sup>215</sup>

The British, however, were not entirely satisfied with the arrangement. They became more aggressive in 1807 and 1808, when the army of Napoleonic France invaded Portugal

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<sup>215</sup> Memorial of Liangguang governor-general Woshipu and imperial edict of March 7, 1805. See also Paul A. van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), p. 131.

and forced the Lisbon government to flee to Brazil. On July 21, 1808, William O'Brien Drury, the British Admiral who was based in Bengal, arrived in Macao waters with a detachment of three hundred marines. His squadron of nine warships anchored off the place called Chicken Neck (Jijing), the sea space off Xiangshan county.<sup>216</sup> With only two hundred soldiers in the Portuguese garrison, the Portuguese governor of Macao, Bernardo Aleixo de Lemos Faria, believed that the only way to fight the British was to follow British orders while sending for Qing help.<sup>217</sup> As the British moved into the city of Macao on August 2, Miguel de Arriaga, the chief justice of Faria, worked diplomatically with the Qing authorities in Canton. He emphasized that if the Chinese were serious about the sovereignty over their inner sea off Macao, the Qing court should send troops to drive the British away.<sup>218</sup> Even though the Qing realized that Britain might menace and rock the empire, Jiaqing heavily criticized the British that their unauthorized intrusion was an outright assault on Qing sovereignty of their inner sea space,

If you say you (the British) come because the pirates have not yet been suppressed and you are eager to serve the Celestial Empire, this is utter nonsense! The pirates on the seas have been repeatedly suppressed, and now they are powerless, driven to escape now to the east, now to the west.....Within the near future, the remaining pirates will be annihilated. We do not need to borrow military aid from your country. We can well imagine that the barbarian merchants of your country, jealous of Portuguese privileges at Macao, wished to take advantage of the critical moment when the Portuguese were weak, and attempt to occupy

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<sup>216</sup> Horace Hayman Wilson, *The History of British India: From 1805 to 1835* (London: James Madden, 1858), vol. I, p. 318.

<sup>217</sup> Austin Coates, *Macao and the British, 1637-1842: Prelude to Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), p. 97.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

Macao and live there. If this is the case, you have drastically violated the laws of the Celestial Empire.<sup>219</sup>

This is an important edict because it shows that the Jiaqing Emperor, representing the Qing, was eager to protect its sovereignty over its inner sea space, even though the empire was suffering from a series of domestic crises and financial problems. Moreover, as carefully analyzed by Wensheng Wang, the emperor toned down in this edict the much “celebrated rhetoric of tributary superiority.....He instead took the moral high ground through another route: by emphasizing the relatively new norms of formal equality, territorial rights, reciprocity, and nonintervention.”<sup>220</sup> Since the British were not entirely ready to fight the Qing at that time and, more importantly, they were worried about destroying the trade for the season, Jiaqing’s warning achieved its desired effect. On October 25, British warships cruising near the Bogue and Whampoa were ordered to withdraw from the Pearl River within forty-eight hours, while all other ships of war anchoring at Macao had to leave the peninsula on November 12.<sup>221</sup>

Britain’s relationship with the Qing, however, seemed to take an uneasy turn for the worse. In the early 1840s, it is well known that the British were ready to wage a war by sending their fleets up the Pearl River and Canton, occupied Dinghai in July, and the next month threatened to move directly to Beijing. After the decisive blow to Qing defenses in

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<sup>219</sup> Lo-shu Fu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations, 1644-1820* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966), pp. 369-370.

<sup>220</sup> Wengsheng Wang, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire*, 244.

<sup>221</sup> Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), vol. 3, pp. 88-91.

the Yangtze Valley,<sup>222</sup> the Qing court was sent into a tailspin. Unlike his father, the Daoguang Emperor (1782-1850; r. 1821-1850) decided to conclude a treaty of peace in August 1842. The British Navy was then authorized to patrol the Yangtze region regularly and to set up a colony as well as a naval base in Hong Kong. But the Treaty of Nanjing did not contain any specific stipulations about extra-territoriality (*zhiwai faquan*), the jurisdiction that penetrated both water layers of protection and profoundly defaced the inner-outer model. Such provision was only formally granted to the British after the “General Regulations of Trade” were signed between England and the Qing in July 1843.

Following the British example, in subsequent years the French and Americans also concluded treaties with the Qing government that contained extra-territorial clauses. Against the backdrop of the humiliating treaty port system, the extra-territoriality practiced in China was likewise inequitable. While the foreigners settling and sailing along the coast would be exempted from the law of the Great Qing, Chinese sojourners in Europe and North America had to submit to foreign laws.<sup>223</sup> Clearly, extra-territoriality not only meant that foreigners in China could be tried under their own consular jurisdiction, but also forced the Qing Empire to give up its sovereignty over some part of its inner sea space. In stark contrast to the maritime policies in the High Qing, when all vessels sailing across the inner sea were strictly monitored by imperial supervision, the implementation of extra-

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<sup>222</sup> For a lively account of the First Opium War, see Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War, 1840–1842: Barbarians in the Celestial Empire in the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century and the War by Which They Forced Her Doors Ajar* (New York: Norton, 1976), and Chang Hsin-pao, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1964). While the former was based mainly on Western sources, the latter was more grounded in Qing archives.

<sup>223</sup> See Pär Kristoffer Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 46-55.



territoriality in China challenged the inner-outer framework substantially for the first time in Chinese history.

The Qing government was far from ignorant of the potential hazards and problems brought about by an unequal extra-territorial treaty. After signing the “General Regulations of Trade” with Britain, the Manchu government emphasized that the legal concessions made to the British should never be taken as precedents for other countries.<sup>224</sup> There was an incident in December 1842 (after the First Opium War) when Lawrence Kearny (1789-1868), an American commodore, went to Guangzhou and asked for similar privileges. He was directly rebuffed and commanded by the Daoguang Emperor to stick to the “old rules” that had been established during the High Qing. Yet things took a sharp turn under the advice of two Manchu statesmen, Yilibu (1772-1843) and Qi Ying (1787-1858), who suggested that Daoguang extend the same privileges granted to Britain to other foreign powers across the inner sea space. Their rationale was that this would avoid any appearance that the British Empire was a pre-eminent power along China’s maritime frontier.<sup>225</sup> By granting the same privileges to other foreign powers (*yiti junzhan*), the Qing government could limit the influence of the British to the extent that no other countries would rely on her agency to seek further interests in China. The Qing government called this diplomatic tactic “controlling one barbarian [with] the other barbarian.” This strategic turn also implied

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<sup>224</sup> See the note from Qizing, Yilibu, and Niu Jian to Sir Henry Pottinger, dated on September 1, 1842, in *Ahen Sensō no kenkyū. Shiryō hen*, ed. Sasaki Masaya (Tokyo: Kindai Chūgoku kenkyū iinkai, 1964), p. 218.

<sup>225</sup> See Tsiang T’ing-fu (Jiang Tingfu), “The Extension of Equal Commercial Privileges to Other Nations than the British after the Treaty of Nanking,” *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, vol. 15 (October, 1931), 423, and Guo Weidong, *Zhuanzhe: Yi zaoqi Zhong-Ying guanxi he “Nanjing tiaoyue” wei kaocha zhongxin* 轉折：以早期中英關係和《南京條約》為考察中心 [The turning point: A study of the early Anglo-Chinese relations by examining the Treaty of Nanjing] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2003), pp. 560-588.

an adjustment to the inner-outer model. By “decentralizing” some level of its sovereign power across the inner sea space to several foreign nations, the Qing government believed that it would be able to protect its imperial autonomy because foreign powers would have to compete with each other for commercial interests. To the Manchu monarchs these adjustments were, in a sense, tantamount to an overhaul of the strategy required to safeguard the maritime frontier and entailed a new type of sea-modeling.

### Conclusion

In his *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Philip E. Steinberg explained that the history of ocean space is “explicitly constructivist,” and one in which institutional arrangements, social structures, individual behaviors, and natural features all intersect to create special territorial space either on land or at sea.<sup>226</sup> By positioning the history of the ocean within the spatiality of territoriality, the inner-outer framework detailed in this chapter may reflect how particular seawaters were criss-crossed by natural features and institutional practice of actual regimes in special historical eras. My argument here resonates somewhat with Henri Lefebvre’s (1901–1991) “admonition” that the production of space is not only social and dialectical but also political.<sup>227</sup> In examining the epistemological perspective of the inner-outer model, I have also demonstrated that such spatial-pairs were very much the outcome of territorial politics. As Peter J. Talyor suggested in 1991, territoriality is

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<sup>226</sup> Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 1-7.

<sup>227</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

[a] form of behavior that uses [the] bounding of space for political advantage. Territoriality is about attempting to control both people and their activities within a delimited area and flows of people and their products in and out of an area.<sup>228</sup>

Patently, the inner-outer model was used to define possession and differential rights of access in the oceanic territory. It was also a conceptualization used by the Manchu government to define which peoples and resources were under their control, and to define exactly what that relationship of control should be. In fact, the inner-outer model adopted by the Qing Empire was similar to the territorial conception embraced by European seaborne powers in the eighteenth century, in which territoriality was constructed in a way that supported empire-building and the concept of a political space. In exploring the European history of territoriality in the eighteenth century, Edward W. Soja defined the concept of territoriality as

...a behavioral phenomenon associated with the organization of space into spheres of influence or clearly demarcated territories which are made distinctive and considered at least partially exclusive by their occupants or definers.<sup>229</sup>

Edward Soja pays little attention to the Qing Empire, but one sees in his statement that the Manchu government also conceptualized and constructed the inner sea space in a way that was similar to Western Europe. The inner-outer model presents one of the clearest pieces of

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<sup>228</sup> Peter J. Taylor, "Territoriality and Hegemony, Spatiality and the Modern World-System," (report submitted to the Fernand Braudel Center, Binghamton, New York, 1991), 2. [cited with permission]

<sup>229</sup> Edward W. Soja, *The Political Organization of Space* (Washington: Association of American Geographers, 1971), p. 19.

evidence for such similarities, since the model itself consolidated the political system of a sovereign, territorially defined sea space. Like the European oceanic powers, the High Qing also utilized various territorial mechanisms at sea to manufacture specific social constructions, while these social constructions created certain spatial patterns that were closely linked with the idea of sovereignty (the inner sea space) and otherness (the outer sea space). As a corollary, the inner-outer framework had played a key role in constructing “other” foreign sea space and in facilitating the conceptualization of the inner sea as a relative space (in distinction to the outer sea space) where power was to be applied and projected.

Over a century this “inner-outer framework” had been trusted as a viable principle upon which the Manchu monarchs could base their maritime affairs. But in the late eighteenth century, when the Qing Empire no longer had the resources to maintain a substantial naval power across her *neihai* region, it faced a cluster of crises. The passing away of the Qianlong Emperor marked a turning point in the political strength of the Great Qing, which had been tossed into a road of irretrievable decline. By the early nineteenth century the navy was plagued by inertia, backwardness, and indecision. Had the succeeding emperors been equal to their predecessors in terms of vision and ability, they would have mobilized a comprehensive naval reform to save their empire from the encroachments of the European seaborne powers. However, military revolution remained a pipe dream and the naval structure bequeathed by the high Qing continued until the First Opium War. As a result, by the 1840s most warships, naval bases, and armed forts were too outmoded to meet any challenges, and the navy was undermanned and badly trained. Although there was an

appeal for naval reforms during the Daoguang era, most attempts to facilitate change dribbled away into an ocean of inertia. As Mao Haijian has succinctly pointed out, “China at that time was in no position to challenge the British Empire.”<sup>230</sup> Compared to the European armadas, which were formed by armed and better-equipped warships, which were indispensable for the realization of their aggressive policies in East Asia,<sup>231</sup> the Manchu navy was pathetically inferior. Only after the two Opium Wars when the Qing Empire suffered crushing defeats did the Manchu monarchs begin to restore their sovereign power across the inner sea space.

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<sup>230</sup> Mao Haijian reaches the conclusion that the Chinese mandarins in the early nineteenth century, including the famous statesman Lin Zexu (1785–1850), had not done enough work to investigate the coastal defense system, the naval warfare, and the firepower of the British Empire. In short, Lin and his team had simply underestimated the British. Mao further explains why the Qing was defeated by Britain in the First Opium War. He argues that it was not a matter of bravery, patriotism, or even technology, but a complete reappraisal of what it would have taken to create the necessary defense for the Qing; the kind of rethinking that would have included a new attitude towards the navy. For details, see Mao Haijian, *Tianchao de bengkuai: Yopian zhanzheng zai yanjiu* 天朝的崩潰：鴉片戰爭再研究 [The Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty: A Reexamination of the Opium War] (Beijing: Joint Publishing Co., 1995).

<sup>231</sup> Frederick A. Talbot, *Steamship Conquest of the World* (London: William Heinemann, 1912); Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.17-82; Daniel R. Headrick, *Power Over Peoples: Technology, Environments, and Western Imperialism, 1400 to the Present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 177-225.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Dragon Navy**

#### *Abstract*

After examining how maritime space was conceptually modeled on an “inner-outer” conception in the high Qing, we will see how this model was put into practice as policy during the long eighteenth century. This chapter will thus uncover the historical background and overall structure of maritime militarization in the high Qing, including the establishment and construction of naval bases, warships, and coastal fortresses. By detailing the development of high Qing naval forces, I argue that maritime militarization under that regime aimed at securing major seaways and port cities within its inner sea perimeter. To better illustrate the goals and duties of Qing naval forces, I have divided the inner sea space into four different, yet interconnected, strategic sea zones, showing how specific naval tactics were applied to those respective zones. Although this chapter only provides an overview of the high Qing maritime militarization project from 1683 to 1798 (115 years), I believe, it amply demonstrates that the efforts of the Qing court were not simply a contingent reaction to unexpected circumstances, but a deliberate, precautionary strategy that offered an effective response that aimed at thorough, formal coastal rule.

## Introduction

In 1990, the naval commander of the Peoples' Liberation Army, Zhang Lianzhong, bemoaned the defeats of China's nineteenth-century sea battles:

We will never forget that China was invaded seven times by imperialist troops from the sea. The nation's suffering for lack of sea defense still remains fresh in our minds, and history must not repeat itself.<sup>232</sup>

In reminiscing these nineteenth-century maritime defeats, Zhang was calling for a strong PRC navy in the late twentieth century. He portrays the Qing as a passive victim on the sea and anything but a naval power. Zhang is not alone in refusing to grant the Qing Empire a place in world history as a sea power. Conventional historiography has cast the Qing as indifferent to the maritime world and portrayed naval development as a marginal and subordinate realm for the Qing court. In other words, the sea and the navy simply did not appeal to the Qing leadership or the Chinese literati. It has long been said that the Qing only began to realize the importance of establishing a powerful and sustainable naval force after the First Opium War. From this vantage point, eighteenth century Qing history seems to have nothing to do with maritime militarization or naval development. As Benjamin A. Elman once put it, "the Qing court in the 1860s and we today might have heralded the revival of the Qing navy after the Opium wars as a return to the brighter days of the early fifteenth, mid-sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries."<sup>233</sup> Thus, coverage of the eighteenth

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<sup>232</sup> Sen Shugen, "An Interview with Chinese PLA Navy Commander Zhang Lianzhong," *Junshi Shijie* no. 2 (Sept. - Oct. 1988).

<sup>233</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard

century is always left out of the naval history of late imperial China. This chapter aims to challenge this convention, showing that the high Qing can—and should—be studied from the perspective of naval-power. The Qing Empire was not merely driven by the imperialistic impulse to conquer territory in Inner Asia. Instead, the empire cared about security across East Asian seas, and its naval project was sufficiently deliberate and precautionary to offer an effective response that aimed at thorough, formal coastal rule. Furthermore, I would argue that the navy's ability to consolidate and maintain peace along the maritime frontier made it possible for Qing troops to carry out its conquests in Inner Asia in the eighteenth century. During most of the Kang-Yong-Qian period (1661-1796), the Qing navy was effective in suppressing piracy, protecting commodity shipping, and intimidating real and potential enemies. Its supremacy in East Asian seas also fostered domestic and Sino-*nanyang* trade before the Age of Imperialism, when the pattern of trade among Western European nations in East and Southeast Asia changed considerably. In the broader context of Asian power relations, the Qing navy was thus one of the vehicles the empire used to showcase the empire's sea power in the eighteenth century, developing its trading interests, securing the China coast, and supporting the transport and provisioning of activities required for the empire's littoral governance.

### **Establishing the Navy**

The history of the Manchu navy began in 1615, almost thirty years before the Manchus entered the Sea Mountain Pass (*Shanghai guan*) and swept across northeast China.



According to the *Collected Archival Materials written in Manchu (Menwen laodang)*, the founder of the Qing dynasty, Nurhaci (r. 1616-1626), was the first Qing monarch to organize and create a “navy”:

The Manchus were not familiar with warship construction before entering China. On July 9, 1615, Nurhaci sent out 600 followers to the River Ulgiyan in order to harvest timbers for navy construction. But at that time, the Manchus were only able to build 200 lightweight canoes.<sup>234</sup>

The text indicates that Nurhaci sent his troops to harvest timber for warship construction in what is now Huanren County. Although this navy was poorly structured, the Manchu did manage to establish a naval presence in Manchuria, mainly to facilitate logistical support for banner cavalries before invading the Ming Empire. At that time, the navy was not well trained as the Manchu administration did not give priority to naval development.

It was at the turn of the seventeenth century that the Qing firmly and decisively set out to develop and expand its navy, beginning earnestly under the Kangxi emperor. Under Kangxi’s reign, military and naval capabilities built up in earlier decades were utilized and expanded. At that time, the Zheng family attempted to overthrow the Manchu leadership and restore the Ming dynasty by establishing a remarkable navy based in Taiwan.<sup>235</sup> In response, the Qing emperor imposed an embargo to isolate Taiwan and began expanding its navy. Following this grand strategy, the Qing Empire worked toward building a most

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<sup>234</sup> *Menwen laodang*, p. 78.

<sup>235</sup> In 1654, Zheng even renamed Xiamen “the Ming Memorial Prefecture” (*Siming zhou*). Clearly, the Zheng party chose the side of the old regime, declaring themselves loyal to the Ming dynasty and recognizing the price of Tang (Zhu Yujian, a Ming descendant known as the Longwu emperor) as rightful heir to the empire.

formidable navy and planned ever greater naval conquests. The only obstacle was the lack of skilled sailors and an outstanding naval commander. To meet this need, the emperor skillfully recruited Shi Lang (1621-1696), who defected from Zheng's side to join the Qing force. As "one of the very few maritime experts in the very continental early Qing,"<sup>236</sup> Shi was given the authority to lead and direct the navy in Fujian. Over the course of two decades (1662 -1683), he launched a major naval reorganization aimed at increasing the number of skilled sailors, repairing the existing fleet, constructing more powerful new battleships, and adopting Dutch military technology on navy vessels.<sup>237</sup> Under Shi's leadership, Qing soldiers became effective fighting at sea and vessels became more formidable. After over twenty years of preparation, the emperor ordered Shi Lang, commanding 300 warships and a force of 20,000 sailors, to attack the Zheng naval base in the Pescadores in the summer of 1683. Shi's navy succeeded and moved on to attack Zheng Keshuang (1670-1707), the leader of the Tungning Kingdom and the grandson of Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga), and other surviving leaders in southern Taiwan. In August of that year, Zheng Keshuang was unable to repulse the Qing attack and surrendered to the Kangxi Emperor, instead of committing suicide. The fifty-plus year rivalry between Qing and Zheng forces ultimately came to an end. This long campaign against the Zheng was arguably one of the most successful examples of maritime warfare planned and fought by the Qing court, making the 1680s one of the most successful historical watersheds of Qing governance. This was embodied in the initiation of maritime militarization in the North and

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<sup>236</sup> John E. Wills, Jr. *The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan Under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime*, in Murray A. Rubinstein, *Taiwan: A New History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 96.

<sup>237</sup> Christine Verente *et al.*, *The Authentic Story of Taiwan: An Illustrated History Based on Ancient Maps, Manuscripts and Prints* (Taipei: Mappamundi Books, 1991), pp. 127-130.

South, as well as the extension of power across territory (both continental and maritime) previously controlled by the Ming Dynasty.

Other historians have called the 1680s a turning point in the development of the Qing Empire, but mostly based on the Qing defeat of the Revolt of the Three Feudatories, the Inner-Asia frontier, and the Zunghar question in the North.<sup>238</sup> However, the place of maritime development on this epochal change to Qing state development has not received the attention it deserves. I think this neglect of maritime concerns stems largely from the logic that once Taiwan was conquered and under Qing control; that is, as long as all of the known threats to the empire were eliminated, the Beijing court could ignore the ocean and devote all its energy to “marching West [to Inner Asia].”<sup>239</sup> However, I believe that elite Qing authorities did not dichotomize the land-sea relationship, in the sense that the expansion of land was not necessarily predicated on the neglect of the sea, and vice versa. I maintain that the Qing tended to control both naval management and Westward expansion so as to maintain the empire in a balanced manner. The logic of mutual exclusivity seems to stem from Emperor Kangxi’s statement that “Taiwan is a barbaric, distant island (*waidao*)

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<sup>238</sup> Before 1800 the focus of Qing history was on Inner Asia – its conquest, and its politics. See Lawrence D. Kessler, *K’ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch’ing Rule* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 97-103; Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations Until 1728* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), chapter 2-5; Joseph Fletcher, “Ch’ing Inner Asia c. 1800,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 10, Part 1, pp. 35-39; Jonathan D. Spence, “The K’ang-Hsi Reign,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, p. 150; Yuan Sengpo, *Kang Yong Qian jingying yu kaifa beijiang* [The Qing governance and explorations of the northern frontiers during the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 1991), pp. 36-58.

<sup>239</sup> See Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*. Pamela Kyle Crossley also pointed out that the Great Qing was by a significant empire, one of the largest, most powerful and influential of the early modern period. Along with the Romanov Empire based in Russia, the Ottoman Empire based in Turkey, and the Mogul Empire of India, “the Qing was one of the *land-based empires* which ruled Eurasia when Western Europe was a small and not obviously important outcropping of the greater continent.” See Pamela K. Crossley, *The Manchus*, p. 8.

unworthy of obedience”<sup>240</sup> before the island was conquered and annexed. Yet, if we take into consideration Kangxi’s capriciousness later in contradicting this above statement with various deliberations to impose control over sea trade with Taiwan,<sup>241</sup> the notion that Kangxi simply ignored this *waidao* should be taken with a grain of salt. After all, even if the emperor once decided to abandon the distant island, this does not necessarily mean that he ignored the Taiwan Strait that connected Fujian and the east coast of Taiwan.

After Taiwan was annexed, the succeeding decades were long considered a time of peace without large-scale rebellion or dissent. As a consequence, most Qing historians tend to focus more on the rapid development of short and long distance sea trade across the East Asian Sea. Much has been written on how Chinese sea merchants contributed to the promising growth of the coastal economy. Among other things there is consensus that sea trade played a key role in maintaining the stability of the Qing Empire during the long

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<sup>240</sup> When news of victory in Taiwan reached Beijing, courtiers suggested to Kangxi that the empire should incorporate a reference to the conquest of the island among his many titles. However, Kangxi dismissed the idea by replying that “Taiwan is outside the empire and of no great consequence.” See Hung Chein-chao, *A History of Taiwan* (Rimini, Italy: Cerchio Iniziative Editoriali, 2000), p. 128; Jonathan Manthorpe, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), pp. 111-124. In fact, some documents even show that Kangxi once tried to persuade the Dutch to buy back Taiwan, but the Dutch finally declined the offer. See John E. Wills Jr., *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K’ang-hsi, 1666-1687* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 148, 151. The act to “sell” the Taiwan Island happened again in 1895, when the Qing court realized that she was about to be defeated by the Meiji government in 1895. This time, the Qing government offered to sell Taiwan to the British. However, British Prime Minister the Earl of Rosebery and Foreign Secretary Lord Kimberley declined the Chinese offer. See James W. Davidson, *The Island of Formosa: Past and Present*, pp. 265-266.

<sup>241</sup> Although Kangxi once mentioned “Taiwan was outside the empire,” he took a series of measures to resume the mainland’s maritime trade with the island. And he soon made Taiwan a prefecture (*fu*) of Fukien Province on May 27, 1684. Therefore, hundreds of Chinese junks annually carried raw materials such as rice, sugar, peanut oil, deerskins, indigo, and hemp from Taiwan to Amoy, Foochow, Ch’uan-chou, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Tianjin. During the eighteenth century, three merchant guilds, supported by the central government, were established in Taiwan to facilitate commodity trading and other business transactions. See Chou Hsien-wen, *Chingji Taiwan jingjishi* [Economic history of Taiwan since the Qing rule] (Taipei: Bank of Taiwan Economic Research Room, 1957), p. 80; Chang Ben-cheng, *Qing Shilu Taiwan shi tsailiao quanqi* [Special edition on Taiwan’s historical documents contained in the Qing Veritable Records] (Foochow: Fukien People’s Publishing, 1993), pp. 59, 82-83; Ts’ao Yung-ho, “Taiwan as an Entrepot in East Asia in the Seventeenth Century,” *Itinerario*, vol. xxi no. 3 (1997), p. 105.

eighteenth century. However, few historians have touched upon how the Qing navy protected and policed sea space in order to establish relatively “risk-free” conditions for numerous maritime activities. This role of the Qing navy has been overlooked in most discussions. The navy should be given more consideration because, once the Taiwan Strait, the inner sea (from the Bohai Bay to the Guangdong coast) were assimilated into Qing political space, one of the aims of the high Qing maritime militarization project was to work in collaboration with the inland armed-force for policing of coastal areas and maritime business. Maritime militarization was, in fact, always tied to sea trade in the high Qing, as Kangxi noted in his 1686 imperial edict:

The development of maritime trade is regulated by the governor-general, the governor, and the military commanders. If they handle maritime affairs righteously, avoid groundless disputes, and work together, private traders will benefit from the peaceful situation. By contrast, if the provincial administration and the navy selfishly compete with the common people, this is bound to make things difficult for the regular traders. <sup>242</sup>

From this, we should appreciate that the significance of the navy could not be denied or overlooked in the socio-economic context of the high Qing. Even in peacetime, the navy had a significant role in monitoring, regulating, and overseeing the entire maritime frontier. Its role must be considered in line with the development of domestic and foreign sea trade beginning in the late seventeenth century.

Maritime militarization in the high Qing was best embodied in the establishment of a strong navy to garrison four sea zones, namely (1) the Bohai Gulf, (2) the Jiangsu-

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<sup>242</sup> *Kangxi qijuzhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 1454.

Zhejiang region, (3) the Fujian coast (or the Taiwan Strait), and (4) the Guangdong coast. Although the Qing court did not explicitly spell out these zones across its maritime frontier, I use this “four-zone model,” on the one hand, because high Qing officials often mentioned these specific zones in their memoirs. On the other, the seven large fleets – which we will consider in upcoming sections – were literally assigned to police and guard these four zones. As a result, although the four-zone structure was not a deliberate design of the Qing court, it is a model that helps us conceptualize the significance of the high Qing navy as well as the inter-relations between zones. Yet we must keep in mind that vast geographical differences in the four sea zones imply differences in wind patterns, direction of currents, sea depths, and wave levels, as well as other environmental conditions. In addition to ecological differences from one sea zone to another, each had specific problems requiring particular solutions, to which I will return in due course.

### **The Bohai Gulf**

Of all the sea zones bordering China, the Bohai Gulf was the closest to the Qing capital and the Manchu homeland (Manchuria). Therefore, in the eyes of many Qing intellectuals and officials, the Bohai region was one of the most important sections of the empire’s maritime frontier, due to its strategic location and plentiful resources. As the senior officer Du Zhen wrote in his *Haifang shulüe* (A concise study on maritime defense), “this lake-like sea space (Bohai) and its surrounding geography was a strategic maritime frontier guarding three prominent provinces, namely Xhandong, Liaodong, and Fengtian,

for the Qing empire.”<sup>243</sup> According to Du Zhen, this piece of maritime territory was “born to be a strategic sector (*tianzao dishe zhi xian*) to defend the Qing against invaders.”<sup>244</sup> The renowned Qing geo-historian Gu Zuyu also observed that the Bohai area was a “main gate as well as a protector” of the Qilu region, encompassing the three aforementioned provinces. Gu went on to describe the strategic importance of Bohai Bay to the mainland, “once Bohai is under strict control, the country would greatly benefit from this natural buffer.”<sup>245</sup> Like Du and Gu, the author of an undated, anonymous, presumably mid-1720s slim publication entitled *Qingchu haijiang tushuo* (maps and commentaries of the maritime frontier areas from the early Qing—hereafter QCHJTS), was equally aware of the strategic importance of the Bohai area to shelter the capital region from potential dangers. He emphasized, “[the Bohai region] is the front door of our capital [Beijing] that must be safely guarded by faithful sailors and a strong navy.”<sup>246</sup> In the high Qing at least, the Bohai Gulf—surrounded as it was by Manchuria, Zhili, and the Shandong peninsula—was considered to be both a strategic corridor to the open sea and a natural buffer for the region surrounding the Qing capital.

Another notable feature of the Bohai Gulf was its extensive maritime resources. From the early Ming, Zhou Hongzu had mentioned the Bohai’s fame for sea-salt and the variety of fish in *Haifang zonglun* (A comprehensive study on maritime defense).<sup>247</sup> In his

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<sup>243</sup> Du Zhen, *Haifang shulüe*, p. 3a.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Gu Zuyu, *Dushi fangyu jiyao*, *juan* 24, p. 7a.

<sup>246</sup> *Qingchu haijiang tushuo*, p. 5.

<sup>247</sup> Zhou Hongzu, *Haifang zonglun*, p. 5b.

*Dushi fangyu jiyao* (Essence of historical geography), Gu Zuyu also noted the bountiful sea-salt and seafood production across the Bohai, explaining how it contributed significantly to the prosperous coastal economy along northeastern China.<sup>248</sup> As many scholars have pointed out, beginning in the eighteenth century, significant maritime resources (e.g. sea salt) as well as some trading goods produced in northeastern China (e.g. soybean paste) were shipped to South China from the Bohai Gulf.<sup>249</sup> It was, therefore, not only a gate or natural buffer but a critical channel that facilitated the traffic and sea trade between the north and the south.

In order to protect this strategic and economically important sea zone, three major navies were gradually set up along the Bohai Gulf between the late seventeenth and the late eighteenth centuries. Based in Shandong, Fengtian, and Zhili, most of these navies were gradually expanded throughout the high Qing period. This growth in the scale of naval forces was marked by an increase in the number of sailors and warships stationed at the naval bases, which allowed more frequent maritime policing.

### *The Shandong Navy*

In another anonymous account titled *Shandong haijiang tuji* (Illustrated study on the maritime frontier of Shandong) published in the late Kangxi period, Shandong was

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<sup>248</sup> Gu Zuyu, *Dushi fangyu jiyao*, juan 24, p. 7a.

<sup>249</sup> Robert J. Antony, Jane Kate Leonard, "Introduction," in Robert J. Antony, Jane Kate Leonard (eds.), *Dragons, Tigers and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 1-26.



described as the front door of coastal defense. It was also the province where the Manchu, after entering China Proper, carefully set up their first naval base.<sup>250</sup> Early in 1644, Emperor Shunzhi established a naval base in Dengzhou in order to attack the Ming loyalists stationed in Pidao (Pi Island). At first, there were 386 sailors and 13 battleships (or 30 sailors per ship) stationed in the water castle (*shuicheng*).<sup>251</sup> Their primary duty was to police the assigned region in order to guard the merchant ships commuting to Tianjin from the South (mainly from Suzhou and Fujian) via Shandong Province.<sup>252</sup> In 1661, the Shunzhi Emperor, following Zhou Nan's suggestion, decided to consolidate the maritime frontier in order to make sure that the Ming loyalists had no way to attack the Qing from the sea.<sup>253</sup> As a result, 1200 sailors and 7 new battleships (around 180 sailors per ship) were added to the Dengzhou naval base by 1704.<sup>254</sup> The Dengzhou navy was further developed into a double-layered system (*qianhou lianyin*), which enhanced the mobility, flexibility, efficiency, and combat power of the navy. Two years later, in 1706, a portion of the battleships was moved from Dengzhou to Jiaozhou, catalyzing a new naval base. At that time, Jiaozhou navy patrolled the body of seawater in the southern part of Shandong, while the Dengzhou navy (*Dengzhou shuishi*) controlled the seawater surrounding northern

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<sup>250</sup> *Shandong haijiang tuji*, p. 1.

<sup>251</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu* 大清聖祖仁皇帝實錄 [Completed records of Emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), dated on “Kangxi liunian (1667) dingwei jiuyue, renyin shuo,” “bingbu yifu [message directed to the Ministry of War].”

<sup>252</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, “Kangxi wushisan nian (1714) jiawu shiyi yue, renyin,” “bingbu yifu:Shandong Dengzhou zongbingguan Li Xiong shu [message directed to Li Xiong, the general commander of the Dengzhou Navy].”

<sup>253</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, juan 2, pp. 54.

<sup>254</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, dated on “Kangxi liu nian (1667) dingwei jiuyue, renyin shuo,” “bingbu yifu [message directed to the Ministry of War].”

Shandong extending across a significant part of the Bohai Gulf.<sup>255</sup> From 1706 to 1734, there was further augmentation of naval size within the Shandong naval bases, namely in Dengzhou, Jiaozhou, and Chengshan Mountain.<sup>256</sup> Altogether 550 sailors and 27 battleships were introduced into the armed forces.<sup>257</sup> As sea trade surrounding coastal regions continued to boom, clamping down on pirates as well as contraband activity assumed more importance among their various duties. As a result, patrol lanes were officially standardized, extending to the Yingyoushan Mountain in the south, Matouzui in the east, and Chengshantou in the north.<sup>258</sup>

### *The Fengtian navy*

The Qing government considered Lüshun (Port Arthur) as one of the most important seaports in Fengtian Province because it was located at the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula, forming an integral part of the natural barrier (with Dengzhou and Jiaozhou) that shielded the highway to and from the capital area.<sup>259</sup> It was also the closest port city guarding Manchuria – the homeland of the Manchu. The nature of its harbor further elevated its importance because its depth and breadth made it ideal for large numbers of warships to

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<sup>255</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, dated on “Kangxi ershiyi nian (1682) renxu shiyiyue xinyou,” “Cai Shandong Yizhou zhen zongbing guanque [Replacement of the general commander of Yizhou in Shandong].”

<sup>256</sup> *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, dated on “Kangxi sishijiu nian (1710) gengyin run qiyue bingwu,” *juan* 243, “yu bingbu: ju Shandong xunfu Jiangchenxi zoubao [memorial submitted by Governor of Shandong, Jiang Chenxi].”

<sup>257</sup> Yue Jun, *Shandong tongzhi* 山東通志 [Gazetteer of Shandong] (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chubanshe, 2002), *juan* 16, “bingfang,” p. 9.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> Bi Zisu, *Liaodong shu gao* 遼東疏稿 [Writings on Liaodong] (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, reprint in 2000), *juan* 1.

anchor.<sup>260</sup> Early in the Shunzhi period, a “water castle,” harboring 10 battleships, was constructed in Lüshun. This castle overlooked almost all major seaways passing through the Bohai Gulf near the Liaodong Peninsula. Later in 1676, Kangxi conscripted 16 naval generals and 500 troops to serve in the Lüshun water castle, because he likened Lüshun to an arrow strategically pointing out at the sea.<sup>261</sup> In 1714, the emperor took steps to further enhance the naval strength of the Lüshun naval base, ordering artisans in Fujian to build six more battleships for the Lüshun navy. This was the first time a Manchu ruler had used warships constructed in the shipyards in the south to carry out military operations in the north.<sup>262</sup> Fifteen years later, Kangxi continued to develop the Lüshun naval base. He added ten sailors to every battleship, increasing the entire navy by 160 men.<sup>263</sup> At that time, Qing warships were capable of accommodating nearly 40 people armed with melee weapons (i.e. bows and arrows), as well as a small number of Dutch-style cannons and firing guns.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Guo Songyi, “Qing qianqi Tianjin de haishang jiaotong” [Maritime traffic near Tianjin in the early Qing period], in *Tianjin shizhi* [History of Tianjin] (1985), pp. 24-25; see also G.R.C. Worcester, *Sail and Sweep in China: The History and Development of the Chinese Junk as Illustrated by the Collection of Junk Models in the Science Museum* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1966); Yang Ying, et al., *Liaodong Bandao: Dongbei duiwai kaifang de chuankou* 遼東半島：東北對外開放的窗口 [The Liaodong Peninsula: The Northeastern window to the world] (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1988). For more information on the historical development of the Liaodong Peninsula, please refer to Jin Yufu, *Liaodong wenxian zhenglu* 遼東文獻徵略 [Selected historical documents on Liaodong] (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 2002).

<sup>261</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao*, *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, p. 4001.

<sup>262</sup> Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan (ed.), *Kangxi chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* 康熙朝漢文硃批奏摺彙編 [Imperial documents approved by Emperor Kangxi in Chinese] (Beijing: Dangan chubanshe, 1984), *juan* 3, no. 818, “memorial submitted by Guo Wangsen,” p. 316; See also Lan Dingyuan 藍鼎元, “Caoliang jianzi haiyun shu 漕糧兼資海運疏,” in He Zhangling 賀長齡 (ed.), *Huangzhao jingshi wenbian* 皇朝經世文編 (Taipei: Guofeng chubanshe, 1963), *juan* 48, p. 8b.

<sup>263</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao*, *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, p. 4001.

<sup>264</sup> Yet, it should be noticed that the Viking warships could accommodate seventy people early in the tenth century. For details, see Jonathan Clements, *A Brief History of the Vikings* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd., 2005), pp. 66-80; Jane Bill, “Viking Ships and the Sea,” in Stefan Brink (ed), *The Viking World* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 170-180.

Although the combat power of individual warships was enhanced, the Qing navy remained technically and qualitatively way behind Spanish and English fleets, whose battleships had gun ports installed in their hulls beginning as early as 1501, providing much more destructive power.<sup>265</sup>

Compared with other Bohai naval bases in Jinzhou, Moergen, and Qiqihaer, where only about 100 sailors were stationed throughout the long eighteenth century,<sup>266</sup> Lüshun clearly had the strongest naval force, which was located in Fengtian to protect the Bohai Gulf. The naval base in Fengtian near Heilongjiang began in 1684, forty years after the Manchu army seized Beijing. Initially, it was manned with nine generals, thirty warships, and 419 troops. In 1701, forty warships were added and more towers for fortification were built near the water castle.<sup>267</sup> But unfortunately, records of and references to naval development in Heilongjiang are rather scarce, and these are the only materials I have been able to access so far. Regardless, to the Manchus, the Fengtian naval context was essential to their naval tactics and political agenda. Compelled by cultural and ethnic ties to Manchuria (Fengtian being its natural barrier), Qing governors understandably strived to ensure the stability of Fengtian, despite the onerous burden. Its prominence was reflected in the ethnic backgrounds of its sailors. The Lüshun navy was one of the only naval forces

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<sup>265</sup> See Arthur Herman, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004); Roger Knight, Martin Wilcox, *Sustaining the Fleet, 1793-1815: War, the British Navy and the Contractor State* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 46-66; John D. Harbron, *Trafalgar and the Spanish Navy: The Spanish Experience of Sea Power* (London: Conway Maritime Press Ltd, reprinted in 2004), pp. 11-50; R. A. Stradling, *The Armada of Flanders: Spanish Maritime Policy and European War, 1568-1668* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 153-175.

<sup>266</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao, juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, p. 4001-4001.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

made up solely of bannermen – the most privileged soldier clan in the Qing, whose members had to declare their national identity to be Manchu, regardless of their original ethnicity. This changed only after the Yongzheng Emperor came to power in 1722, when he noticed that bannermen were weaker in sea battles than Han-Chinese in the Green Standard Army, as the emperor stated, “our Manchu warriors were capable of mastering several kinds of martial arts, but they were unfortunately not well trained in sea battles.”<sup>268</sup> In fact, bannermen at the naval detachments across the four sea zones had to master sailing skills, which are entirely different from hunting and equestrianism. For Chinese bannermen, perhaps this was not so traumatic, but for Manchu and Mongol troops, who often suffered from seasickness, operating on the sea was quite a challenge. Apart from basic techniques of sailing and navigation (taught by Chinese sailors from the Green Standard), bannermen had to learn how to effectively adapt muskets and cannon to maritime use. They also had to perfect other seafaring skills, such as boarding and disembarking, casting anchor, hoisting sails, scaling masts, and so on.<sup>269</sup>

### *Zhili*

Compared to bases in Shandong and Fengtian Provinces, the one and only large Zhili naval base was established in Tianjin in 1726 (during the Yongzheng period). One old saying sums up the strategic importance of Tianjin: “If you want to conquer the Qing, you

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<sup>268</sup> *DaQing Shizong Xianhuangdi shilu* (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), *juan* 23, p. 193.

<sup>269</sup> See *DaQing huidian* (year 1763), *juan* 67, p. 46a. There were also different types of special weapons reserved for naval use, such as the “sickle lance” and the “flag spear.” The former was curved and used for hooking as well as for cutting ropes, the latter was a straight throwing spear.

must conquer Beijing; and to take Beijing by sea, you must first seize Tianjin.”<sup>270</sup> Indeed, once the united force of Western imperial powers trashed the navy station outside of Tianjin during the Anglo-French Expedition to China (1856-1860), the Beijing authority went into a tailspin.<sup>271</sup> It goes without saying that the Zhili navy was one of the firewalls shielding the imperial capital. The first navy stationed in Tianjin was established in 1726. It was led by the Manchu commander Jiaoluo Bayande. Like the Lüshun navy, the Tianjin navy in North China consisted solely of Manchu and Mongolian bannermen. It was responsible for policing the coast off of Zhili Province. A large-scale patrol was deployed for six months a year from April to September. Most of the warships in the Tianjin navy were constructed in Jiangnan, Zhejiang, and Fujian. By the late Yongzheng era, roughly 30-35 vessels were based in Tianjin.<sup>272</sup> Another significant feature of the Tianjin navy is that sailors were required to attend lectures about maritime affairs and sea battles (*shuiwu*). This is perhaps the first example of naval education provided to bannermen by the Qing court. Prince Yinxiang, the 13th brother of Yongzheng, was the key figure who promoted this training. He once wrote:

Looking at the sea space of Tianjin, it is strategic because it connects Chengde and Korea in the east, Fujian and Zhejiang in the south, and Beijing the capital in the west.

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<sup>270</sup> Lai Xinxia, et al. (eds.), *Tianjin tongzhi: Jiuzhi dianjiaojuan* 天津通志：舊志點校卷 [A complete study on Tianjin] (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 1999), vol. 2, “Tianjin zhengsu yange ji.”

<sup>271</sup> Catherine Lamour and Michel R. Lamberti, Betty Ross (trans.), *The Second Opium War* (London : Lane, 1974), pp. 5-9; Xie Xingyao, *Ying Fa lian jun shiliao* 英法聯軍史料 [Historical archives of the Second Opium War] (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1974); Yano Jinichi cho 矢野仁一, *Arō Sensō to Enmeien* アロー戦争と圓明園 [The Second Opium War and the Summer Palace] (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, Shōwa, 1939), pp. 1-7; Young-tsu Wong, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), p. 135.

<sup>272</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao, juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, p. 4001; *juan* 138, “bingzhi,” no. 9, p. 4098.

Even though we have land forces guarding the coast, maritime defense is much more important. Our Manchu warriors are well trained on land, but not at sea. It is therefore essential to send them to Tianjin to study how to fight sea battles. After training our soldiers to become the best warriors on the sea, they will be able to help consolidate the defense system of our maritime frontier, on the one hand, and their battle capabilities will be very much enhanced, on the other.<sup>273</sup>

Tianjin became the only naval base where bannermen could receive naval education in the high Qing. Even though the program was not conducted like the admiral academy in Great Britain and the naval school in Tsar Russia, the move toward naval education was a significant step for the Manchu. It also shows that, at least during the Yongzheng period, Manchu ruling officials were not relying exclusively on land forces and a land-based defensive strategy to police the maritime frontier.

Although Tianjin weighed heavy as a strategic naval base, the Tianjin navy lost its capability as a reliable, united force. One of the significant problems was corruption. According to Qing archives, Tianjin was the most corrupt navy, even though corruption was well recognized as a nation-wide, rather than regional or local, problem. Only three years after the establishment of the naval forces, Tianjin navy commander Gong E Qi was demoted three levels for corruption. In 1732, four years later, it was reported that almost the entire navy was corrupt. Gong E Qi, the demoted commander, was sent to jail because he was involved in another large scale case of corruption that was discovered by Emperor Yongzheng. The problem with corruption in the navy led to a decline in navy discipline. As

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<sup>273</sup> *Shizong Xian huangdi shangyu qi wu yifu* 世宗憲皇帝上諭旗務議覆 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1984), *juan* 3, pp. 370-372.

in the case of Chang Jiu and Fu Qing, the commander generals of the Tianjin navy in the early Qianlong period, reported:

Even though the navy in Tianjin received training both on land and at sea on a regular basis, the bannermen lack discipline and have poor morale. Their ability to fight our enemies is thus significantly weakened. If we want to maintain the navy, sailors have to be better officered and their bad habits prohibited.<sup>274</sup>

To reform the navy, Emperor Qianlong granted Chang Jiu the authority to resolve the legacy of corruption in the Tianjin navy. The emperor even decided to add 32 war junks to the navy, showing that he was willing to make efforts to consolidate Manchu bannermen in the Zhili naval structure. However, Chang Jiu failed to engage in any serious reform with the other Manchu naval commanders and officers in Tianjin, and the navy failed to respond to or even constructively acknowledge the emperor's efforts. In 1767, Qianlong decided to dissolve the entire navy after visiting the Tianjin naval base. Zhao Lian recorded the precise details of this visit in *Xiaoting Zalu*,

In the year of Dinghai (1767), Emperor Qianlong visited the coast of Tianjin. It was a windy day, but the direction of the wind was inappropriate for the navy to leave the coast. Hou Yingjun was the commander in charge of the navy. He was old and ill. He was even too weak to carry the heavy armor and too inexperienced to command the navy. He gave out the wrong commands several times in front of the emperor. The sailors were not well trained either. They were noisy and unprofessional. The emperor was furious at what he had seen. He then decided to dissolve the entire navy.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> *Daqing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu* 大清高宗純皇帝實錄 [Completed records of Emperor Qianlong] (Taipei: Xin wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1978), *juan* 194, p. 497.

<sup>275</sup> Zhaolian, *Xiao ting za lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1980), *juan* 4, p. 106.



When the Tianjin navy was dissolved in 1767, the bannermen were relocated to Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Liangzhou, and Shanhai guan. Among them, 692 were removed from the banner system. Yet, with the disbandment of the Tianjin navy, the Qing court had not given up on the maritime militarization project in Zhili. Indeed, the governor-general of Zhili county, Fang Guancheng (1698-1768), had proposed in the same year that the navy stationed in Daigu should replace the Tianjin navy, otherwise the maritime frontier of Zhili would be endangered. The emperor agreed with Fang's proposal and moved the Daigu navy to New City (Xincheng), where the Tianjin navy was originally based. The Daigu navy, which consisted mainly of Han-Chinese, thus became the major force to police the western side of the Bohai Gulf. Yet, it was far smaller than the Shandong or Fengtian navies.<sup>276</sup>

### **The Jiangs-Zhejiang Zone**

The Jiangsu-Zhejiang zone had long been considered the “fishing (and rice) basket of China.”<sup>277</sup> There were numerous fishing areas in the seawater off Jiangsu and Zhejiang, which was inhabited by thousands of species of fish and other marine life. In the 1830s, Liu Menglan vividly captured the evocative picture of the scene in the Zhuoshan Archipelago, the chain of islands off the coast of Zhejiang and Jiangsu Provinces that makes up China's most important maritime fishing ground:

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<sup>276</sup> *DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, juan 797, pp. 762-763.

<sup>277</sup> John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 233. For history and development of fisheries in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang region (more specifically in the Zhoushan Archipelago), see Micah S. Muscolino, *Fishing Wars and Environmental Change in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 13-17.

Countless fishing boats, gathered in a harbor. The flickers of fishing lanterns flow in the rippling waves. Highest heaven's stars have fallen in the dead of night. Shining everywhere, like a coral islet in the sea.<sup>278</sup>

Indeed, ever since the period of disunity, or the so-called “Six States Period” (220-589), the Jiangnan area had functioned as the key economic zone for successive empires because of its significant sea trade, agricultural productivity, and commercialization.<sup>279</sup> During the Qing, Jiangsu and Zhejiang retained their economic vibrancy. As Kangxi once noted, “the southeast (Jiangnan) is the key economic area, I often give my thoughts to it.”<sup>280</sup> Moreover, the importation of copper from Japan (Nagasaki) to China (Jiangsu) rose dramatically in the eighteenth century until copper mines were discovered in Yuannan in the 1780s.<sup>281</sup> By the middle of the Qianlong reign, Jiangsu was one of the busiest coastal provinces in China,

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<sup>278</sup> Liu Menglan, “Qugang yudeng,” in *Daishan zhenzhi* [Daishan market-town gazetteer], *juan* 20, p. 6b.

<sup>279</sup> When the Eastern Han Dynasty (190-220) collapsed in 220, China entered the so called “Three Kingdoms era.” At that time, the Kingdom of Wu ruled the southern part of the Yangzi River valley and largely developed the region. After the Jin dynasty (265-420) reunified the country, the Jiangnan region remained to be the most productive area until the Southern Song period (1127-1276). See Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 327-333; Li Bozhong, *Jiangnan de zaoqi gongyehua, (1550-1850 nian)* 江南的早期工業化 (1550–1850 年) [Early industrialization in Jiangnan, 1550-1850] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000); see also his *Fazhan yu zhiyue: Ming-Qing Jiangnan shengchanli yanjiu* 發展與制約：明清江南生產力研究 [Development and regulations: Production power in the Ming-Qing era] (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 2002); *Duo shijiao kan Jiangnan jingji shi, 1250-1850* 多視角看江南經濟史 (1250–1850) [Looking at the Jiangnan economy from a multi-dimensional perspective] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2003); Michael Marmé, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of All the Provinces Converge* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 2–3.

<sup>280</sup> See *DaQing lichao shilu, Shengzuchao* [Veritable records of successive reigns of the Qing Dynasty, the Kangxi reign], *juan* 192, p. 21b.

<sup>281</sup> See Patrizia Cariotti, “The International Role of the Overseas Chinese in Hirado (Nagasaki) during the First Decades of the XVII Century,” in Chen Huang, et al., (ed.), *New Studies on Chinese Overseas and China* (Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, 2000), pp. 31-46; Chen Chingho, “Chinese Junk Trade at Nagasaki at the Beginning of the Qing Dynasty,” *New Asia Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1960), pp. 273-332; Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 44-50; and Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 9-11; 23-29.

connecting with other East Asian polities, and the headquarters of the country's greatest traders of goods shipped from Northern China and the very strong economic neighbor Japan.

<sup>282</sup> Indeed, compared to Ming rulers, the high Qing monarchs had a more open attitude towards sea trade with the Japanese. For instance, this is clearly reflected in Kangxi's reaction to the governor-general Wang Lian's proposal to impose more limits on Japanese traders. Kangxi noted:

During my tours to Southern China, I noticed the presence of forts and asked locals what they were for. I was told that in the late Ming, some from Japan had come to Huizhou to trade, but they were arrested and then killed by the Ming army. None of them survived. Since then, the conflict has never ceased....But time has changed, our court is now diligent and capable of dealing with these affairs.<sup>283</sup>

Apart from this, Kangxi also promoted private trade with the Japanese by sending two provincial officials to Japan in order to explore other trading opportunities between the two countries.<sup>284</sup> Kangxi's work proved successful. According to the *Ka'i hentai*—a collection of Sino-Japanese sea trade reports between 1684 and 1722 edited by the Japanese scholars Hayashi Harunobu and Hayashi Nobuatsu in 1730<sup>285</sup>—by the middle of the 1730s, nearly

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<sup>282</sup> Adachi Keiji, "Dai mamekasu ryuutsuu to kiyoshi dai no shougyou teki nougyou 大豆粕流通と清代の商業的農業," *Touyoushi kenkyuu*, vol. 37, no. 3 (December, 1978), pp. 35-63; Zheng Zhongmin, "Qing qianqi Shanghaigang fazhan yanbian xintan 清前期上海港發展演變新探 [New examination on the development of Shanghai in the early Qing period]," *Zhongguo jingjishi yanjiu*, vol. 3 (1987), pp. 85-94. Incidentally, up to nine Chinese operated Ayutthayan ships sailed to Nagasaki each year between 1635 and 1723. Some brought Japanese copper and silver back to Ayutthaya. This forms a triangular Sino-Siamese-Japanese trade network in East Asia. See Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003-2009), pp. 189-191; Anthony Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000), p. 95.

<sup>283</sup> *DaQing shengzu renhuangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), vol. 5, p. 556.

<sup>284</sup> Hayashi Shunsai and Hayashi Hoko (ed.), *Ka'i hentai* (Tokyo: Toyko bunko, 1958), p. 499; 527-535.

<sup>285</sup> From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, the Tokugawa bakufu required all merchants, including

seventy Chinese ships departing from China sailed to Japan every year.<sup>286</sup> The Japanese were also interested in opening the Chinese market in the eighteenth century. For example, one of the biggest cities in the Jiangsu region, Suzhou, attracted a sizable number of Japanese traders importing raw materials for manufacturing ceramic goods and porcelain.<sup>287</sup>

The warships operating in the Jiangsu–Zhejiang region had to be designed to navigate numerous clusters of small islands scattered off the coast.<sup>288</sup> Because of this geography, naval policy had to be island oriented to accommodate the complex, crisscrossing, interlocking, and rugged terrain. Compared to naval defenses under previous dynasties (particularly the Ming) the Qing was a more meticulous, primarily because the Ming government had no contingency plans to take care of the minor, small islands along the sea coast. In other words, the Qing advanced their line of defense, which signified their will to incrementally expand their inner sea space.<sup>289</sup>

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foreign and Japanese traders, who arrived in Nagasaki from abroad to submit a report on their travels. About twenty-three hundred of these reports were collected in the *Ka'i hentai*.

<sup>286</sup> See also Iwao Sei'ichi, "Kinsei Nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryoteki kosatsu," *Shigaku zasshi*, vol. 62, no. 11 (1953), p. 1015.

<sup>287</sup> On the Japanese admiration for Chinese products made in Suzhou, see Wang Zhenhong, "Tangtu mengbo yu haiyang laiwang huotao: Yicun Riben de Suzhou huishang ziliao ji xinanguang wenti yanjiu," *Jianghui luntan*, no. 2, pp. 18-29. While importing a lot of Chinese ceramic products and porcelain from the Jiangsu region, the Japanese exported a lot of silver and copper to China. Some Japanese educated elites became increasingly worried about the problem of trade imbalance pertaining to the outflow of silver. For instance, Arai Hakuseki, a leading government officials once warned in 1716, "Over the past one hundred years, one-quarter of the gold coins and three quarters of the silver currency made by our government has flowed abroad. If no limits are imposed, in less than one hundred years our country will have no silver at all. Our production of copper has not yet met the demand of foreign trade, let alone domestic needs. It is inappropriate to export our gold, silver, and copper, which should be preserved for future generations, when all we get in exchange is useless foreign products." See Arai Hakuseki, Zhou Yiliang (trans.), *Zhenfen chaji* [折りたく柴の記 *Oritaku Shiba no ki*] (Beijing: Beijing daxue chbanshe, 1998), p. 134.

<sup>288</sup> 高晉 Gao Jin ([Viceroy of Liangkiang] 兩江總督), "Waiyang ge shandao qingxing 外洋各山島情形," *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 36 *nian*, June 18; no. 014274).

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

There were two substantial naval forces in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang region, namely the Jiangnan navy (*Jiangnan shuishì*) and the Zhejiang navy (*Zhejiang shuishì*). The two navies were responsible for managing a total of 83 naval bases scattered along the sea front stretching across a 4,623 mile coastline.<sup>290</sup> Despite the vastness of the sea zone, what characteristically tied together the naval bases was their locations: all of them were at or near the intersection of the Yangtze River and the sea. Therefore, the responsibilities of these naval bases were bifurcated into river defense and sea defense.

### *The Jiangnan Naval Force*

The Jiangnan navy was once the largest naval force of the Great Qing, comprising 365 battleships that were assigned to 73 naval bases.<sup>291</sup> They were specially administered by high ranking officials, such as the Governor of Jiangsu and Jiangxi (Liangjiang zongdu),<sup>292</sup> the General of Jiangnan (Jiangnan tidu),<sup>293</sup> and the Chief Commander of Susong

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<sup>290</sup> Zhu Zhengyuan, *Zhejiang yanhai tushuo* 浙江沿海圖說 [The seafront of Zhejiang] (Beijing: Zhishi chanquan chubanshe, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>291</sup> See Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao* 清史稿 [The draft history of Qing], *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, pp. 4003-4010; Qing Gaozong (Emperor Qianlong), *Qingchao wenxian tongkao* 清朝文獻通考 [Overview of literary studies in the Qing dynasty], *juan* 185, “bingkao,” no. 8, pp. 6463-6470. More information of naval drill across the Jiangnan seawater, see Li Fengyao 李奉堯 (Jiangnan tidu 江南提督 [general of Fujian and Zhejiang]), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 44 nian, May 24; no. 023942).

<sup>292</sup> Ranking higher and with more power than a governor, who was by default a civil official, a governor-general was the highest civil and military overseer in a given region that often consisted of two provinces. For a detailed discussion on the distinction between a governor and a governor-general in rank, duties, functions, and scope of power, see Kent. R. Guy, *Inspiring Tinkering: The Qing Creation of the Province* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), chapter 3.

<sup>293</sup> Chen Kui and Chen Jie are two of the Jiangnan *tidu* who reported to the emperor periodically about the naval drill of the Jiangnan sea force. See for instance, Chen Kui 陳奎, “Chayue waiyang shuizhen qingxing 查

(Suzhang zhongbin). Ever since 1675, this powerful naval force had been responsible for defending the Jiangsu coastline, spanning 593 miles.<sup>294</sup>

The Jiangnan Navy was indispensable to the boom in North-South sea trade, as well as Sino-Japanese trade. The first reason lies in the fact that most shipping lanes were established to connect Zhili (Tianjin), Shandong (Dengzhou), and Jiangsu (Suzhou) – the three highly developed provinces economically. Due to its relative closeness to the North, Jiangsu was the cradle of goods and fresh resources, and merchant ships that departed from it (mainly from Suzhou and Jingkou) out-competed their counterparts from Fuzhou and, hence, dominated the sea trade with the North.<sup>295</sup> As merchant ships traveling between Tianjin and Suzhou gradually became one of the financial pillars of the Qing government, their safety on the sea also became an imperative concern for the Qing court.<sup>296</sup> One major policy was for officially appointed battleships to escort specific Jiangnan merchant ships to

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閱外洋水陣情形” *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 43 nian, October 14; no. 021191); Chen Jie, “Waiyang shuicao qingxing 外洋水操情形,” *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 53 nian, October 1; no. 037748).

<sup>294</sup> Shan Shumo, Wang Weiping, Wang Tinghuai (eds.), *Jiangsu dili* 江蘇地理 [Geography of Jiangsu] (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1980), pp. 7; Yuan Cheng, *Zhongguo haian he daoyu* 中國海岸和島嶼 [Coast and islands in China] (Taipei: Haiwai wenku chubanshe, 1957), the entry of “Jiangsu.”

<sup>295</sup> Duan Guangqing, *Jinghu zizhuan nianpu* 鏡湖自撰年譜 [Chronology of Duan Guanqing] (Beijing : Zhonghua shu ju, 1960), p. 66; Tōa Dōbunkai, *Shina shōbetsu zenshi* 支那省別全誌 (Tōkyō: Tōa Dōbunkai, Shōwa, 1917-1920), dai 8-kan, “Kanan-shō”; see also Yoshinobu Shiba, “Ningpo and its Hinterland,” in G. C. William Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977).

<sup>296</sup> See Guoli gugong bowuyuan (ed.), *Gongzhongdang Yongzheng chao zouzhe* 宮中檔雍正朝奏摺 [Imperial documents in the Yongzheng era] (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuguan, 1977), “memorial submitted by Liu Yuyi,” p. 265; “memorial submitted by Li Wei,” p. 761; see also Liu Hui (ed.), *Wushinian gebu haiguan baogao, 1882-1931* 五十年各埠海關報告 1882-1931 [China Imperial Maritime Customs: Decennial Reports, 1882-1931] (Beijing: Zhongguo haiguan chubanshe, 2009), vol. 3, pp. 377-378; Matsura Akira 松浦章, “Shindai kounan senshou to enkai kouun 清代江南船商と沿海航運 [Jiangnan merchants and commercial trades in the Qing period],” in his *Shindai uchikawa suiun shi no kenkyuu* 清代内河水運史の研究 [Examination on canals and rivers of the Qing dynasty] (Kansai: Kansaidaigaku shuppan bu, 2009).

and from the Tianjin-Jiangsu sea lanes.<sup>297</sup> Merchant ships that were not being escorted had the following legal rights. If a merchant ship got wrecked, the navy was not permitted any delay in rescuing and dredging for victims. If a merchant ship was attacked by pirates, the Qing navy was required to begin investigating the crime no less than a day after the initial report. If these rules were not followed, the naval officer in charge would risk demotion to a lower badge rank. Records were kept on naval officers who were found to have abused or shirked their duties. For threatening victims not to report crimes, an officer would be demoted by three badges or sacked immediately. If the officer was found to have taken part in pirate activity, he would be sentenced to prison.<sup>298</sup>

The system of patrols and tactics used for protection by the Jiangnan navy were notable for their “demonstrative” nature (*jianghai huixiao*) throughout river and sea spaces. As mentioned earlier, most naval bases in Jiangnan were located where the Yangtze River intersected the ocean. The navy had a responsibility to the river as well as the sea. Its mandate was to weave a sprawling dragnet that could efficiently detect and eliminate pirates.

<sup>299</sup> To give a brief, figurative picture: When a pirate ship was detected in the inner sea, the

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<sup>297</sup> *Shengzu renhuangdi shilu* 聖祖仁皇帝實錄, Kangxi wushiqi nian, February, jiashen, “Fujian Zhejiang zongdu Jueluomanbao shuyan 福建浙江總督覺羅滿保疏言.” See also Lin Xiu 林秀 (Congming shuishi zongbing 崇明水師總兵 [Chief commander of Chongming]), “Zoubao waiyang xunshao zhe 奏報外洋巡哨摺,” *Junjichu dangan* (Yongzheng 6 nian, June 3; no. 402021493). Yan Ruyu (1759-1826), *Yangfang jiyao* 洋防輯要 [On naval defense], *juan* 2, “yangfang jingzhi 洋防經制,” pp. 91-96.

<sup>298</sup> Jiaoluo Langxu 覺羅琅玕 (Zhejiang xunfu [General of Fujian and Zhejiang] 浙江巡撫), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 54 nian, May 25; no. 403057218). See also Yan Ruyu, *Yangfang jiyao* 洋防輯要 [On naval defense], *juan* 2, “yangfang jingzhi 洋防經制,” pp. 91-96.

<sup>299</sup> Regarding the issue of pirates, Japan had provided a safe haven to pirate bands harassing the China coast since the sixteenth century. For further details, see the classic discussion on Tokugawa Japan written by Ronald Toby in his *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 110-167. For more recent research, see Mizuno Norihito, “China in Tokugawa Foreign Relations: The Tokugawa Bakufu’s Perception of and Attitudes toward

responsible battleship would immediately sail to the reported area and deal with the crime. Yet, in most cases, the pirates would escape through the closest connecting river and battleships would have to pursue them. Due to the ineffectiveness of such pursuits, the Qing government divided the navy into two groups: one specialized in the sea (i.e. sea-navy) and the other in the river (i.e. river-navy). The sea-navy would pursue fleeing pirates until it reached the mouth of the winding river and would leave the pursuit to the river-navy. Meanwhile, the sea-navy had to be stationed at this confluence to block the pirates from escaping.<sup>300</sup> Moreover, the Jiangnan navy calculated climatological conditions and seasonal wind directions to assist them in projecting where to find targeted pirates.<sup>301</sup> Although there was no guarantee that pirates would not slip away using creeks or hidden inlets, the system was comprehensive in that they could be arrested “in any waters.”

### *The Zhejiang Navy*

Compared to Jiangsu, Zhejiang has a much longer coastline, spanning almost 1400 miles. This extensive length, of course, required a more complex and rigorous naval organization. There were eight key naval bases located along the Zhejiang coast in Zhapu, Jiaying, Shaoxing, Dinghai, Huangyan, Wenzhou, Ruian, and Yuhuan.<sup>302</sup> By the early

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Ming-Qing China,” *Sino-Japanese Studies*, vol. 15, p. 244-269.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao*, *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, pp. 4010-4013; Qing Gaozong (Emperor Qianlong), *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 185, “bingkao,” no. 8, pp. 6479-6484; Ji Zengyun, Li Wei, *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 [Gazetteer of Zhejiang] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), *juan* 97 and 98.



nineteenth century, ten naval bases were garrisoned with a total of 9400 sailors and 302 battleships.<sup>303</sup>

Among the ten “water castles,” Jiaxing, Shaoxing, Dinghai, and Huangyan were more heavily armed than the others. The four naval bases complemented one another to form a comprehensive protection net. With more than 7000 sailors, navies stationed there were the principal entity patrolling the inner sea surrounding Zhejiang as well as protecting major ship lanes throughout Zhejiang waters.<sup>304</sup> Over the eighteenth century, the Zhejiang navy never ceased to train and patrol on the sea. From February to September, the prime time of commercial and fishing activities, the navy would run a large scale sea-patrol (*haiyang huaixiao*) conducted by the chief commander.<sup>305</sup> In every large scale sea-patrol, battleships from two or three naval bases would join together to augment defensive forces as well as to provide a sense of military deterrence.<sup>306</sup> For example, an imperial edict promulgated by Emperor Qianlong stated that:

The Dinghai navy and the Huangyan navy must patrol the Bay of Kowloon on March 15 and September 15. On May 15, the Dinghai navy must join the navy in Congming to patrol the waters off Mountain Goat Island; the Huangyan navy must join the Wenzhou navy on September 1. These

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Yin Jishan 尹繼善 (Liangjiang zongdu [Viceroy of Liangjiang] 兩江總督), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 4 nian, April 9; no.00464).

<sup>305</sup> Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan (ed.), *Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* 雍正朝漢文朱批奏折 [Imperial documents approved by Emperor Kangxi in Chinese] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989-1991), *juan* 8, “memorial submitted by Gao Qizhuo,” p. 279; Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao, juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, pp. 4015-4018.

<sup>306</sup> Kaer Jishan 喀爾吉善 (Minzhe zongdu 閩浙總督 [Viceroy of Fujian and Zhejiang]), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 14 nian, July 6; no. 004530).

dates are unchangeable. The naval generals must send their officers to the destinations in order to report to and exchange information with each other regarding their patrol areas for further actions of combined effort.<sup>307</sup>

Strict policies regulated large-scale sea patrols. If any battleships arrived at a particular meeting point more than one (or sometimes two) day(s) late without having a proper reason, the chief commander would be demoted or even sentenced to prison. But the Qing court also realized that, in some cases, initiating a large scale sea patrol might not be possible due to weather conditions. For instance, the Qianlong Emperor made this announcement:

Large-scale sea patrols were conducted under a set of strict regulations. Generals and naval commanders cannot refuse to fulfill their duties simply because of strong wind or bad weather. But I understand that weather conditions could sometime be worse than expected. In such case, it is possible for generals and naval commanders to delay their operations. Yet they have to report to other naval bases and reschedule sea patrols as soon as possible. The governor-generals should also check with the naval commanders to see if weather conditions are tolerable or not. If it is found that a naval commander is not reporting actual weather conditions, he and his team must be severely punished.<sup>308</sup>

The Zhejiang navy served as a pivotal lever in the commercial hub connecting Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian. It was the merchants from Jiangsu, Fujian, and Guangdong who became the most dominant in domestic sea trade, although merchants from many different provinces had businesses across the seacoast.<sup>309</sup> Before 1850, seventy percent of

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<sup>307</sup> Yan Ruyu, *Yangfang jiyao*, *juan 2*, “yangfang jingzhi,” pp. 91-96.

<sup>308</sup> Kungang, *et al.*, *Qinding daQing huidian shili*, *Guangxu chao* (Shanghai : Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), *juan 632*, “waihai xunfang in Qianlong 17 nian,” p. 1187.

<sup>309</sup> Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, “Qingdai qianqi Xiamen yanghang 清代前期廈門洋行 [Xiamen’s business in the early Qing],” in his *Ming Qing shidai shangren ji shangye ziben* 明清時代商人及商業資本 [Merchants and capitals in the Ming-Qing era] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1956), pp. 203-204; Zhou Kai, *Xiamen zhi* 廈門

the “sea-trading enterprises” on China’s coast were based in Fujian, Jiangsu, and Guangdong. And at major sea ports, such as Tianjin, Shanghai, and Canton, eight out of ten companies were affiliated with businessmen who came from one of these three provinces.

<sup>310</sup> Because Zhejiang was geographically proximate to Jiangsu and Fujian, a large number of sloops, barges, and coasters in full sail passed to or from Zhejiang every year.<sup>311</sup> Therefore, Zhejiang’s navy was not only responsible for handling local affairs, but for protecting those merchant vessels departing from Jiangsu and Fujian. Apart from offering protection, the Zhejiang Navy was also required to police some areas near the two neighboring provinces. According to an edict pronounced by the Qianlong Emperor in 1750:

As the Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Fujian coastlines are interconnected for a thousand *li*, the Zhejiang navy has had to assist both the Jiangsu and the Fujian navies by sending warships to stretches of islands off the Jiangsu and Fujian littorals. The Zhejiang navy should patrol the sea zones of Fujian and Jiangsu every two months in order to protect the merchants and eliminate the pirates (*baosheng chengdu*).

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志 [History of Xiamen] (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1999), p. 193.

<sup>310</sup> For details, see John Chaffee, “At the Intersection of Empire and World Trade: The Chinese Port City of Quanzhou (Zaitun), Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries,” in Kenneth R. Hall (ed.), *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400-1800* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2008), pp. 99-121; John E. Wills, Jr., “Contingent Connections: Fujian, the Empire, and the Early Modern World,” in Lynn A. Struve (ed.), *Qing Formations in World Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 167-203; Philip A. Khun, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Lanham, Mtd.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), pp. 33-36; Wang Gangwu, “Merchants without Empire: The Hokkien Sojourning Communities,” in James D. Tracy (ed.), *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 400-421; Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast*; Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven Topik, *The World that Trade Created: Society, Culture, and the World Economy, 1400 to the Present* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 9-11; Chang Pin-tsun, “The Formation of a Maritime Convention in Minnan (Southern Fujian), c. 900-1200,” in Claude Guillot, *et al* (eds.), *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), pp. 143-155; and Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 119-124.

<sup>311</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao, juan 135*, “bingzhi,” no. 6, pp. 4015-4018.

As an armed force regimented by large numbers of battleships and sailors, the Zhejiang Navy was instrumental in placating sea crimes and helping thwart pirates in these areas. The extent of responsibilities of the Zhejiang Navy demonstrates that the Qing state endeavored to strengthen Zhejiang's capability as a launching pad for its military operations in sea waters stretching from Jiangsu to Fujian, extending across at least sixty percent of the Southeastern coastline.

### **The Fujian Coast/Taiwan Strait**

Covered with a series of undulating mountain chains, Fujian Province has a very twisted and convoluted coastline, second only to Guangdong in length. The largest waterway in the province, the Min River and its tributaries traverse the northern half of Fujian before winding eastward into the sea, creating narrow drainage basins facing out to the Taiwan Strait. In Song-Yuan times, Fujian was a key economic area due to its vibrant sea trade with Southeast Asia, India, the Muslim heartland, and indirectly with Western Europe.<sup>313</sup> Quanzhou harbor was once considered the biggest center of trans-national trade

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<sup>312</sup> Ji Zengyun, Li Wei, *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 [Gazetteer of Zhejiang] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991), *juan* 98.

<sup>313</sup> Fujian qualifies as a maritime province, with only a small hinterland suitable for farming, and a long history of Fujianese moving and migrating along the coast. As Lan Dingyuan once mentioned, "Fujian never had much farmland, yet the population growth, and more than half the population turned to maritime trade. Chinese products worth nothing at all appeared like gold and jades when they were shipped to the southeast. The prosperous trade with Southeast Asia yielded annual revenues of nearly one million taels. Those who lacked other employment rarely joined the bandits. Instead sailing to make their fortunes." See Lan Dingyuan, *Luzhou quanji*, *juan* 3, 3a. For details discussions on the integration between overseas trade and the Fujian's local economy in imperial China, see Y.M. Yeung and David K.F. Chu, *Fujian: A Coastal Province in Transition and Transformation* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000); Billy K.L. So, *Prosperity,*

in world history.<sup>314</sup> At the end of the thirteenth century, Marco Polo spared few words in describing the wealth of trade passing through Quanzhou. He wrote Quanzhou was the port “to which all the ships from India come with many goods dear,” carrying to and from the city “so great abundance of goods and of stones and of pearls that it is a wonderful thing to see.” “You may know,” he concluded, “that this is one of the two ports in the world where most merchandise comes, for its greatness and convenience.”<sup>315</sup> Unfortunately, Quanzhou lost this status following the destructive Ispah Rebellion (1357-1366). After that, Fujian did not merit the status of a key economic area until the Ming-Qing transition, or as Anthony Reid puts it, “the Age of Commerce.”<sup>316</sup> Fujian’s rebirth as a key economic area in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries served as a critical event in the naval management of the Ming and Qing governments as well as the socioeconomic development of maritime China.

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*Region, and Institutions in Maritime China: The South Fukien Pattern, 946-1368* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735*; and Chen Dasheng and Denys Lombard, “Foreign Merchants in Maritime Trade in Quanzhou (Zaitun): Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,” in Denys Lombard and Aubin, *Asian Merchants and Businessmen in the Indian Ocean and the China Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 19-23.

<sup>314</sup> See Angela Schottenhammer (ed.), *The Emporium of the World: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400* (Leiden, Boston and Köln: E.J. Brill, 2001).

<sup>315</sup> Marco Polo, A.C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (trans.), *Marco Polo: The Description of the World* (London : Routledge, 1938), p. 351.

<sup>316</sup> On “the Age of commerce” thesis, see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988-1993); Anthony Reid, “An ‘Age of Commerce in Southeast Asian History,’” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 24 no. 1 (1990), pp. 1-30; and Anthony Reid, “Economic and Social Change, c. 1400-1800,” in Nicholas Tarling (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 460-504. See also Yokkaichi Yasuhiro, “Chinese and Muslim Diasporas and the Indian Ocean Trade Network under Mongol Hegemony,” in Angela Schottenhammer (ed.), *The East Asian Mediterranean: Maritime Crossroads of Culture, Commerce, and Human Migration* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), pp. 91-93.

Fujian experienced another economic downturn in the late seventeenth century when a “sea blockade” policy was decreed. The state’s strategic focus changed and many trading connections between Fujian and Southeast Asia were destroyed. Although most maritime businesses linking Fujian and other countries were wiped out, the number and capacity of the naval settlements along the Fujian coast did not decrease. Emperor Kangxi decided to strengthen Fujian’s naval forces for its military operations toward Taiwan, which was then occupied by Zheng Chenggong as his base of operations in his bid to become emperor.<sup>317</sup> After the suppression of the Three Feudatories, Kangxi sought someone to lead an amphibious operation against Zheng’s regime; and, following the advice of Li Juanqi, chose Shi Lang. Under the expansive strategy attempted by Kangxi, the Fujian Navy had to shoulder the exclusive and critical task of supporting Qing engagement in Taiwan. By that time, it was well officered and well captained, with relatively well-trained crews. Nonetheless, the frequent mobilization and reinforcement of naval strength did not necessarily increase Qing control over coastal Fujian Province. Rather, the littoral control and the sea-policing system were weakened by war mobilization. The civil bureaucracy became so preoccupied with the task of supporting the military campaign that it did not have the capacity to police the sea zone.

As mentioned previously, in September 1683, Shi Lang assembled a fleet of three hundred vessels, mostly from the Fujian Navy, and swiftly defeated the leading naval commander of the Zheng forces, Liu Kuohsuan, in a major engagement near the Pescadores. A few weeks later, the last member of the Zheng family in Taiwan surrendered. Capturing

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<sup>317</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, “The K’ang-hsi Reign,” in Willard J. Peterson, *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 9. Part 1, Ch’ing Empire to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 150-160.

put Kangxi at ease, as he expressed in a poem: “I am always concerned with the hardships faced by the coastal people; now all the people in the empire will be able to live in peace and prosperity.”<sup>318</sup>

Following the campaign, Taiwan was divided into three counties (*xian*) and established as a prefecture of Fujian Province. The establishment of central control over Taiwan was remarkable, as John Robert Shepherd has explained in his monumental research on the Taiwan frontier during the first half of the Qing dynasty. “Taiwan’s location was strategically critical as the Qing holding of Taiwan would prevent pirates and foreign powers from using the island for activities that might be harmful to the Qing Empire.”<sup>319</sup> Even so, Taiwan’s militarization over the eighteenth century was not as intensive as other peripheral territory (such as Sichuan Province). The Fujian provincial office and its navy took care of Taiwan’s administrative and military affairs, respectively.<sup>320</sup> The naval organization along the Fujian coast demonstrates rather conclusively that the Manchu monarchs were attentive to maintaining control over the Taiwan Strait, rather than over the Island of Taiwan itself, until the Mudan Incident in 1874.

The capture of Taiwan fostered changes in Qing naval tactics in Fujian. The Manchu rulers, on the one hand, had skillfully made use of the Fujian navy to sustain and shelter sea

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<sup>318</sup> *Kangxi yuzhi wenji* 康熙御製文集 [Imperial poems written by emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1966), *juan* 38, p. 86.

<sup>319</sup> John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford, Cali.: Stanford University Press, 1993) p. 182

<sup>320</sup> In fact, the Qing official record states, “Among the Taiwanese, there was an outbreak every three years, and every five year a rebellion.” See Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 24-27.

trade across the region.<sup>321</sup> On the other, they began to adopt a more interventionist approach to the Taiwan Strait, in an attempt to ensure that no anti-Qing forces could alter the stability of this piece of sea, which had just been assimilated into the jurisdiction of the Manchu Empire. Because of this strategic turn, the Fujian Navy underwent another transformation. As reflected in the *Fujian tongzhi* and the *Qing shigao*, the Fujian navy was made up of 237 warships (comprising ten different types, each with specific military functions) by 1722 (the year of the Kangxi Emperor's death).<sup>322</sup> No doubt, this was an impressive array of warships at their disposal. Each warship was able to carry 30 to 40 mostly well-trained sailors.<sup>323</sup> The size of the naval force in Fujian after the 1730s was nearly frozen because Emperor Yongzheng found further expansion too expensive, while his son Qianlong was confident that the Fujian Navy was already sufficient.<sup>324</sup> Another reason for limiting expansion was because the early eighteenth century was a low point in Fujian's regional fortune following on the sea blockade. Although the end of this embargo brought Fujian some fifty years of gradual resuscitation, Guangdong's maritime economy ultimately overshadowed it through the establishment of the Canton system in 1757. Guangdong thereafter monopolized most of the sea trade connecting China with the

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<sup>321</sup> See Zhong Yin 鍾音 ([Governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang] 閩浙總督), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 42 *nian*, November 12; no. 403033212).

<sup>322</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao*, *juan* 135, "bingzhi," no. 6, pp. 4014-4015; Chen Shouqi, et al., *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志 [Gazetteer of Fujian] (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1968), *juan* 86 and 87.

<sup>323</sup> Du Zhen 杜臻, *Yue Min xunshi jilue* 粵閩巡視紀略 [Inspection of Guangdong and Fujian] [compiled in *Jingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), "shibu"7, "chuanji lei"4], *juan* 5, pp. 67-75.

<sup>324</sup> The only increment of the Fujian navy was a direct response to a rebellion occurred in Taiwan led by Liu Shuangwen in 1787. For more information about the Fujian navy in the early Qianlong period, see 新柱 Xin Zhu (Fuzhou jiangjun [General of Fujian and Zhejiang] 福州將軍), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 16 *nian*, October 21; no. 007531).



*nanyang* region (Southeast Asia) and Western Europe. Competition from the neighboring province resulted in a gradual decline of Fujian's maritime shipping from the 1780s onward. More and more junks moved their base of trade from Fujian to Guangzhou, the Leizhou peninsula, and the Hainan island. This southward shift from Fujian to Guangzhou in turn contributed to a dramatic upsurge in predation by Fujianese pirates along the coasts of Fujian and Guangdong.

Labelled a "heaven for pirates" by some Qing officials, Fujian Province furnished a large part of the coastal population with illicit jobs that enabled them to make a living. According to Robert Antony's research, the people who struggled on the edge of survival accounted for 73.8 percent of the pirate population. By another estimate, fishermen alone made up 80.7% of all sea robbers. These pirates pillaged up and down the coast of Guangdong, Fujian, and Zhejiang. The Fujian navy thus faced a thorny problem in its battle against this pirate activity. The Fujian navy was thought to have conducted the highest number of sea patrols throughout the year. For example, according to the records of the *Gazetteer of Jinmen*, one of the navies in Fujian, the Jinmin navy:

Every year on February 1, the naval commander of Jinmen was ordered to lead six warships to operate a large scale sea patrol. The navy had to first reach Xianjiang on April 1, meet with the Haitan navy, and police that maritime territory. On 15 June, the navy had to reach the southern part of the Fujian seawater and police that region; on August 1, it needed to sail north and oversee the northern seawater. According to the schedule, the navy had to return to Jinmen on September 30 on time. From October to January, the navy had to initiate two other large scale sea patrols. During the patrol, the navy had to collaborate with the land forces in order to spot pirates and eliminate

them.<sup>325</sup>

Even though the Fujian navy was busy combatting plunder by pirates, many local officials and scholar-officials believed that the ultimate solution to piracy was to expand the maritime economy by encouraging coastal trade. They realized that downtrodden people were not born pirates and that poverty had pushed them into this illegal activity. In his *Yangfang jiyao*, for example, Yan Ruyi explained the persistence of piracy in the South China Sea, noting that the pirates in Fujian were not like the Miao rebels who attempted to reclaim the lands occupied by the Manchu, nor were they like the White Lotus sectarians who strove to overthrow the Qing regime. The pirates' primary motivation was profit, and they attained this through theft, extortion, kidnapping, looting villages, attacking ships, and collecting protection money. When they were offered better opportunities by surrendering, many did so. In responding to the piracy crisis, Qing policies were therefore both offensive and caring. The government believed that the ultimate solution was to expand the maritime economy by encouraging coastal trade in Fujian territory instead of prohibiting it. By the late Qianlong era, the combination of aggressive and appeasement policies mitigated the problem of piracy along the Fujian coast considerably. By that time, only small scale petty piracy, a form of sporadic raiding led by disorganized bands of impoverished seafarers or marauders, was found in Fujian waters.

### **The Guangdong Coast**

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<sup>325</sup> Lin Kunhuang, *Jinmen zhi* (Taipei: Taiwan yin hang chubanshe, 1960), *juan* 5, pp. 88-89.

As the Liangguang governor-general Lu Kun once commented, Guangdong consists “of hills and rivers blended together, and borders on foreign countries.”<sup>326</sup> Of all the Chinese provinces, Guangdong enjoys the most extensive trade links with other parts of Asia due to its many well-endowed seaports connecting the open seaboard with the landlocked interior. These powerful trade links could not even be severed by two sea blockades (first imposed by the Ming government on maritime emigration and on private sea trade between the 1470s and 1567, then by the Qing government between the 1660s and the 1680s [which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter]).<sup>327</sup> The Guangzhou traders (mostly Hokkien sea-traders) were tenacious in circumventing these enforced embargoes. They willed to exploit the sea, or “land the sea,” which hints at their tendency to conceive the sea as walk-on land.<sup>328</sup> As a Guangdong official noted in the Qianlong era, “whereas Guangzhou has a huge population, its land is very limited. Most of the coastal residents make their living by relying on seagoing ships.”<sup>329</sup> Therefore, it is not hard to understand the vivid and immediate resurgence in sea trade around the Guangdong area once the embargo was lifted. This compelled the establishment of a stronger naval force working exclusively for the Guangdong region.

The Guangdong Navy was directed and administrated by the Governor General of

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<sup>326</sup> Almost one-seventh of Guangdong’s counties and prefectures bordered the maritime world.

<sup>327</sup> Ye Xian’en, *Guangdong hangyun shi: Gudai bufen* 廣東航運史：古代部分 [Maritime history of Guangdong: Ancient and imperial eras] (Beijing: Renmin jiaotong chubanshe, 1989), pp. 212-213.

<sup>328</sup> In his *New Discourses on Guangdong*, first published in 1700, the Qing scholar Qu Dajun captured the quintessence of the most southerly of China’s maritime province with two simple sentences, “Guangdong is a kingdom of water; many people need boats to make a living.” See Qu Dajun, *Guangdong xinyu* 廣東新語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p. 395.

<sup>329</sup> *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 15, pp. 1023-1025.

Guangdong and Guangxi (*LiangGuang zongdu*).<sup>330</sup> In practice, the navy was divided into two categories: a “governor’s fleet (*dubiao shuishi*)” and a “regular fleet (*chengshe shuishi*).” The former was commanded directly by the Governor General and the later by the Military Commissioner of the Navy (*shuishi tidu*). By 1745, the “governor’s fleet,” consisting of 56 warships and approximately 1700 sailors, was responsible to garrison eight key spots along the Guangdong coast;<sup>331</sup> whereas the “regular fleet” was much larger in terms of the number of its sailors and warships. According to the *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, there were around 400 battleships under the “regular fleet,” stationed in Nanaou, Chaozhou, Gaolian, and Luqin. By the 1850s, each battleship could carry 20 to 30 sailors.<sup>332</sup> Moreover, a new, special “fleet” manned exclusively by bannermen was added to the Guangdong Navy in 1745. But the force itself was relatively smaller in size and consisted of merely 500 sailors. Like the Fujian Navy, the “regular fleet” of the Guangdong Navy had a wide variety of warships. Among them, the armed “rice boat” (*mitian*) was considered the largest and fastest.<sup>333</sup> Weighing 2500 *shi*, the *mitian* was 31.7 meters long and 6.8 meters wide. It was first used in commercial trade and later remodeled as a battleship in the early 1720s.

When the Qianlong Emperor was petitioned in the 1750s regarding the large number

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<sup>330</sup> If a navy was directly administrated by a particular Governor General, it was called “*dubiao shishe*” in Chinese.

<sup>331</sup> Zhao Erxun, et al. (eds.), *Qing shi gao*, *juan* 135, “bingzhi,” no. 6, pp. 4015-4018.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid. See also Mao Keming 毛克明 (Left-wing commander of Guangzhou [Guangzhou zuoyi dutong]), *Junjichu dangan* (Yongzheng 11 *nian*, March 28; no. 402004075).

<sup>333</sup> Ibid. See also Qing Gaozong (Emperor Qianlong), *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 189, “bingkao” no. 11, pp. 6511-6515.

of Western merchant ships, mostly armed with weapons, harboring in the customs' ports (i.e. Zhejiang, Fuzhou, and Canton), he was keenly aware of their strength along the empire's sea front.<sup>334</sup> Therefore, he soon ordered the closure of all customs offices, except the one in Canton, for overseas businesses in 1757, and explicitly declared all armed foreign merchant ships harbored along China's coast to be illegal.<sup>335</sup> Curbing the trading rights of all European merchants in 1750, he promulgated a policy requiring European merchants to trade with a Chinese trader association known as a *cohong*.<sup>336</sup> In addition to this constraint, all Europeans without official permits were restricted to settlements in the so-called "thirteen factories (*shisan hang*)" next to the Canton harbor during the trading season.<sup>337</sup> The (in)famous "Canton System" was thus inaugurated, swiftly transforming Canton from a "median point" to a core city in the Eurasian trade network, and China's only sea port where European traders could congregate.<sup>338</sup> The Canton System provided the Qing court

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<sup>334</sup> *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu*, juan 15, pp. 1023-1025.

<sup>335</sup> In fact, in 1745, the imperial court had already started the discussion about how to respond to the Dutch massacre of Chinese in Batavia. It was the Guangdong officials who convinced the emperor that trades with Southeast Asia had to be continued and Canton could not be blocked for overseas business. As recorded in the imperial documents, the Guangdong officials argued that "whereas Guangzhou has a huge population, its land is very limited. Most of the coastal residents make their living by relying on seagoing ships and the twenty-six hong merchants. Thus it is right to channel Western merchants to Guangdong. This is beneficial to the livelihood of the people of Guangdong and contributes to tax revenues in Jiangxi and Shaoguan. It also eliminates the potential threat to maritime defense in Zhejiang." See *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu*, juan 15, pp. 1023-1025.

<sup>336</sup> Yet, not all European could trade in Canton. For instance, the Russians were forbidden to have direct contact by sea with Canton.

<sup>337</sup> Liang Jiabin, *Guangdong shisanhang kao* 廣東十三行考 [Research on the Canton thirteen merchants] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 2-7; Paul Arthur van Dyke, "Port Canton and the Pearl River Delta, 1690--1845 (China)" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southern California, 2002), pp. 78-91.

<sup>338</sup> Since the inauguration of the Canton System, Canton became a key port in the cohesive maritime network that connected the Southeast Asian archipelagos (Indonesia and Philippines), India, and Western Europe. Unlike Tianjin, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu where domestic sea trade dominated the trading network, Guangdong was an international clearinghouse for east-west encounters. It fostered not just economic but also cultural exchanges, as Rhoads Murphey suggests, "A port city is open to the world.....In it races, cultures, and ideas

with a plausible justification for giving extra attention and military support to Guangdong. As a result, a cadre of warships (around 10) and sailors (around 1,000) led by veteran generals were added to the Guangdong forces during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>339</sup> From then on, the Guangdong Navy had to keep constant and utmost surveillance over Western merchant ships sailing along the Guangdong coast. Apart from checking pirates and domestic sea crimes, it was responsible for warding off even the slightest danger that foreign seafarers might pose.<sup>340</sup>

Apparently, the inauguration of the Canton system, together with the aggrandizement of the Guangdong Navy, was a political move limiting Western access to operate in the inner sea space (i.e. along the coast). Yet we should keep in mind that the Canton system, in itself, does not provide a complete picture of the dynamic sea trade between China and the rest of the world. Most scholarship before the 1970s reinforced the perception that virtually all of China's foreign trade in Canton after 1757 was conducted by the *cohong* and that the Guangdong Navy was the only military force governing foreign maritime trade. As early as the 1990s, Jennifer Cushman's classic work convincingly refuted this perception, however. Cushman pointed out that throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Chinese sea traders were active and major economic actors in

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as well as goods from a variety of places jostles, mix, and enrich each other and the life of the city." Rhoads Murphey, "On the Evolution of the Port City," in Frank Broeze (ed), *Brides of the Sea; Port Cities of Asia from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), p. 225.

<sup>339</sup> Qianlong chao Manwen zhupi zouzhe, *juan 2*, p. 92. Yan Ruyu, *Yangfang jiyao*, *juan 2*, "yangfang jingzhi," pp. 97.

<sup>340</sup> *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan 15*, pp. 1023-1025.

global trade.<sup>341</sup> Sailing in large and versatile junks, many with three masts, Chinese merchants from Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong traveled regularly between China, Java, Indonesia, Siam, and the Philippines.<sup>342</sup> Some of them even settled down permanently in Southeast Asian seaports to solidify and expand trade connections.<sup>343</sup> If we accept Timothy Brook's view that China's superiority in the manufacturing and transport sectors drew China, Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Americas into an extensive trading network that laid the foundation for the modern global economy early in the sixteenth century,<sup>344</sup> it is fair to say that Canton and Fujian traders had effectively linked the Qing Empire to "the hemispheric trade nexus."<sup>345</sup> Increasing numbers of Chinese sea traders ushered in what Carl Trocki has called a "Chinese century" in the global economy from around 1750 to the mid-1800s.<sup>346</sup> By that time, as many as one million Cantonese seafarers were plying Asian

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<sup>341</sup> Jennifer Wayne Cushman, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*.

<sup>342</sup> Wang Gungwu, *A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1979), pp. 1-13; see also his *The Nanhai Trade: The Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998); Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 7-9; Wai-keung Chung, "Western Corporate Forms and the Social Origins of Chinese Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks," in Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History*, pp. 287-312; Kenneth R. Hall, "Multi-Dimensional Networking: Fifteenth-Century Indian Ocean Maritime Diaspora in Southeast Asian Perspective," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 49, no. 4 (2006), pp. 454-481; Kenneth R. Hall, "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Malacca Region, 600-1500," in Najendra Rao (ed.), *Globalization in Pre-Modern India* (New Delhi: Regency, 2005), pp. 92-142; Tansen Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks to Southern Asia," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 49, no. 4 (2006), pp. 421-453.

<sup>343</sup> Chinese merchants even motivated a "trade diaspora," which is "an interrelated net of commercial communities from the same ethnic group that formed a trade network." Because of this "trade diaspora," entrepôts such as Melaka, Malina, Hoi An, and Ayutthaya had developed a strong commercial ties to the Chinese markets.

<sup>344</sup> Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World*, pp. 22-25.

<sup>345</sup> Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System III: The Second Era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-economy, 1730-1840s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

<sup>346</sup> Carl Trocki, "Chinese Pioneering in Eighteenth-Century South Asia," in Anthony Reid (ed.), *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies: Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1760-*

waters, facilitating sea trade across the globe.<sup>347</sup>

### Fortress Protection

The dragon navy stationed in the four sea zones were supported and protected by a chain of forts (*paotai*) with artillery batteries arrayed along the maritime frontier from north to south. In contrast to the navies of other dynastic states in greater Asia, such as those of the Ottoman Empire, the Arabic Empire, and the Russian Empire,<sup>348</sup> the Qing Seven Navies were well fortified by an assemblage of protective cannons onshore. Owing to the fact that the Qing created structured fortifications, historians generally speculate that the Manchu relied exclusively on “passive defense,” which simply consisted of fortifying the shoreline.<sup>349</sup> However, I would argue that the Qing court often found maintaining a “passive defense” strategy inadequate. It held that integrated naval management required comprehensive sea patrol, as well as substantial coastal and estuarine management. To this end, they made use of co-operative measures—combining a standing navy with a powerful fortress structure—to consolidate existing hegemony over their inner sea space. This “land-sea protection scheme (*hailu lianfang*),” to some extent echoes what I argued earlier: Manchu emperors of the eighteenth century were inclined to integrate inner sea space into their terrestrial

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1840 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), pp. 83-102.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Hassan S. Khalilieh, “The Ribat System and Its Role in Coastal Navigation,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 42, no.2 (1999), pp. 212-225; Ian M. Matley, “Defense Manufactures of St. Petersburg 1703-1730,” *Geographical Review*, vol. 71, no. 4 (October, 1981), pp. 411-426.

<sup>349</sup> For instance, see Yang Jinsen, Fan Zhongyi, *Zhongguo haifang shi* 中國海防史 [History of coastal defense in China] (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 2005); Zhang Tieniu, Gao Xiaoxing, *Zhongguo gudai haijun shi* 中國古代海軍史 [History of Chinese navy in imperial China] (Beijing: Bayi chubanshe, 1993), pp. 68-72; John R. Dewenter, “China Afloat.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 50 issue 4 (July 1972), p. 738.



domains.

A coastal *paotai* was a fixed, fortified military installation equipped with cannons, magazines, and cisterns. It functioned as a launch pad for attack, a storehouse for provisions, a tower for signaling, and sometimes a warning station when enemy and pirate vessels were sighted along the coast. Qu Dajun, a native of Guangdong, described how a *paotai* acted as a warning station:

along the seacoast of Guangdong are ‘fortresses (baocheng),’ from which the summons to arms is given . . . . . Whenever an enemy appears, the fortress gives an alarm by lighting up a bush at night, while generating much smoke during daytime, so as to alert the nearby troops.<sup>350</sup>

Under this chain of protection, the navy as well as merchant ships could seek shelter from potential dangers at coastal fortifications. And sometimes, battleships could stop at some large *paotai* for minor repairs and replenishment. Located near the mouth of navigable waterways, coastal *paotai* did not arise from the need to protect the interior, but to facilitate access for military and commercial shipping.

Most of the *paotai* of the Qing Empire were constructed in two separate periods, first in the first decades of the Qing dynasty, with a later period of expansion coming at the middle of the Kangxi reign and extending through the early Daoguang era (1821–1850). As the installation of armed fortifications may have spanned nearly two centuries, it should not be considered a “single” project—even though certain construction projects may have been

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<sup>350</sup> Qu Dajun, *Guangdong xinyu* 廣東新語 [New words on Guangdong] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991), *juan* 2, pp. 18-19.

more-or-less coherent, planned building programs. Early in the 1650s, for instance, Kangxi stated a definite need to create coastal forts to protect harbors and anchorages against possible enemy landings along the Guangdong coast. He further pointed out that such an undertaking would have to be planned and supervised by experienced generals and military architects.<sup>351</sup> As a result, many *paotai* were constructed along China's southeastern coast after the first one was built in Guangzhou in 1661.<sup>352</sup> Thereafter, the construction of armed forts proceeded at a moderate pace. Following on Kangxi's emphasis on coastal fortifications, Yongzheng and Qianlong both considered the network of forts a vital component of the empire's defense network along the maritime frontier.

The "land-sea protection" devised in the high Qing represented a developed form of coastal defense on the part of an Asian empire. Until the 1780s, the Qing court demonstrated distinctive cohesion in coordinating dragon navies and coastal fortifications. Yet during the nineteenth century, the system was toppled when the empire was beset by internal rebellion and, later, Western and Western-inspired imperialistic incursions burst onto Asian waters. Although some domestic rebellions had been quelled in the 1820s,

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<sup>351</sup> "Kangxi wushiliu nian bingbu jinzhi nanyang yuanan 康熙五十六年兵部禁止南洋原案," in Zhang Weiren (ed.), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo xiancun Qingdai neige daku yuancang Ming-Qing dangan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所現存清代內閣大庫原藏明清檔案 [Imperial documents of the Ming and Qing preserved by the Academic Sinica] (Taipei: Academic Sinica, 1986-1990), vol. 39, no. B22301.

<sup>352</sup> Lu Kun, *Guangdong haifang huilan* 廣東海防彙覽 [An overview of the coastal defense in Guangdong] (unpublished material, preserved in the Cambridge University Library and the University of Hong Kong Library), *juan* 31, "fanglüe" 20a, "Liangguang zongdu Yang Lin jian yanhai paotai xu 兩廣總督楊琳建沿海炮台序 [Preface of an article "constructions of coastal forts" written by Yang Lin, the Governor General of Guangdong and Guangxi]"; Yue Jun, *Shandong tongzhi* 山東通志 [Gazetteer of Shandong] (Hong Kong: Dizhi wenhua chubanshe youxian gongsi, 2002), *juan* 20, chapter entitled "haijiang"; Ruan Yuan, *Yanjingshi ji* 擘經室集 [Collection of the "Yanjingshi" study] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), vol. 2, *juan* 7, "Guangzhou Dahushan xinjian paotai beiming 廣州大虎山新建炮台碑銘 [Writing on the coastal fort newly constructed in Guangzhou]."

Emperor Jiaqing (r. 1796–1820) and his successors felt incapable of restoring a powerful “land-sea” system of protection. Like the Islamic rulers who used *ribat* fortifications, the Manchu monarchs shifted to “passive defense” by forming a chain of *paotai* in military strongholds.<sup>353</sup> As a result, a remarkable surge of *paotai* construction took place between the 1820s and the 1840s. However, the architectural design of *paotai* built in the nineteenth century fell considerably short of the “modern” standard used by Western Europeans. Moreover, it has long been argued that heavy reliance on “passive defense” was no longer viable, as demonstrated in the Korean and Japanese cases, where Western iron-clad steamships armed with batteries and carronade triumphed in sea battles.

### Concluding Remarks

By standards of durability and combat effectiveness, the Qing Empire was weaker than European seafaring powers in the nineteenth century. Western sea powers such as Spain, Portugal, France, and Britain had mastered Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Arctic sea spaces remarkably well in “the age of enhanced maritime capability.”<sup>354</sup> The British, for example, were almost without rival at sea, which proved to be the “key arena of expansion.”<sup>355</sup> Compared with seafaring European powers, the Qing displayed neither an appetite for nor success at sea. Those who adhere to a Eurocentric perspective are even prone to

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<sup>353</sup> Hassan S. Khalilieh, “The Ribat System and Its Role in Coastal Navigation,” pp. 411-412.

<sup>354</sup> Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 26-27; see also Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 21.

<sup>355</sup> Jeremy Black, *War and the World: Military Power and the Fate of Continents* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 170.

attribute this to “Chinese flatulence,” suggesting that the Qing, being the dominant state in Asia, cared little about the sea and naval affairs.

In the eyes of these Eurocentric critics, by subjecting “weaker” and “less civilized” subordinate nations to highly ritualized displays of respect, the Qing merely projected itself as more civilized and powerful. For them, it had only acquired a continental dynastic empire underpinned by a single hierarchy and set of bureaucratic precedents—the tribute system, a Chinese model of foreign relations which was premised on a higher and lower, lord-vassal relationship. As this chapter has shown, this assessment is not convincing because it ignores Qing maritime policies and naval strategies. Even though the tribute system had broad hegemony, this does not mean that the Qing never projected its power over Asian seaways. Indeed, applying the ideology embodied in the tribute system to the high Qing’s political decisions concerning naval development would help clarify things.<sup>356</sup> The eighteenth century Qing court clearly understood the significance of the long seacoast to the empire. This empire required deliberate justification to develop a sophisticated maritime strategy (*yijing haijiang*).<sup>357</sup> The relationship between China’s foreign relations model and maritime consciousness is patently not as clear cut as commonly assumed. The maritime strategy put in place by the Qing court before the 1800s served an important role in projecting Qing power in East Asian seas, and was considered one of the measures of her sovereignty and protective capacity across her home territory.

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<sup>356</sup> Indeed, historian has recently explored the process whereby China, Japan, and Korea developed a new “international order” for East Asia. For details see Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 328-351.

<sup>357</sup> This phrase was once mentioned by the Qianlong emperor in 1765. See 王檢 ([Governor of Guangdong] 廣東巡撫), *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 30 nian, August 26; no. 403021279).

According to Nicholas Rodger, maritime strategies and naval power have long been assumed to support overseas expansion.<sup>358</sup> The Japanese scholar Takekoshi Yosaburo even equates the “heritage of a maritime country” with the “idea of national expansion.”<sup>359</sup> Although imperialistic Europeans owed their maritime dominance over their neighbors in more southern waters, and ultimately over most of the water surface of the world, to the outburst of maritime expansionism, Stephen Conway reminds us that the primary concern and purpose of a country’s maritime strategy was “unquestionably home defense.”<sup>360</sup> Like the Ottoman Empire and some Mediterranean seafaring powers, the function of the Qing navy was mainly policing, defense of commerce, and protection against piracy. Generals of coastal provinces were ordered to discipline a variety of naval squadrons to guard against the blue frontier from (potential) incursions, and certain coastal provinces were even policed by stronger naval forces. One significant example is the Manchu government’s establishment of a triangular-shaped protection site in the Bohai Bay simply because the Manchu monarchs viewed it as very close to the heartland of the central authority (*jingjie*), extending to Beijing, Chengde, and Mukden.<sup>361</sup> As Xue Chuanyuan pointedly argued in the

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<sup>358</sup> Nicholas Rodger, “Sea-power and Empire, 1688-1793,” in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. II, “The Eighteenth Century,” pp. 170-171.

<sup>359</sup> Takekoshi Yosaburo, “Keizai gunji futatsu homen yori maitaru hanto,” in Aoyagi, *Chosen*, pp. 262-263.

<sup>360</sup> Stephen Conway, “Empire, Europe and British Naval Power,” in David Cannadine (ed.), *Empire, the Sea and Global History: Britain’s Maritime World, c. 1763-c.1840*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>361</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Philippe Foret, *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000); Mark C. Elliot, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. Jane Kate Leonard also observes that, “the Qing leadership saw the Bohai Straits and the Manchurian ports as a dangerous strategic zone.....although trade was allowed in northeastern ports, it was carefully supervised and regulated.” See Jane Kate Leonard, “The Qing Strategic Highway on the Northeast coast,” in Angela Schottenhammer, Roderich Ptak (eds.), *The Perception of*

Qianlong period:

Regarding previous studies on coastal defense, scholars generally saw the coast of Guangdong as the most strategic and important, followed by the coast of Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangnan, and finally Shandong and Liaodong (i.e. Bohai Bay). However, in my viewpoint, the importance of the Bohai region should come first mostly because it is the nearest sea space guarding Shengjing (the Manchu homeland) and Beijing (the center of the Qing Empire) against external threats and dangers.<sup>362</sup>

Another example is the imperial navies arrayed along the Fujian and the Zhejiang coasts, which aimed at striking the Japanese pirates (*wokou*, or *wako* in Japanese). For instance, Emperor Yongzheng was particularly aware of potential threats from Japanese pirates. As a result, he asked Li Wei, one of his trusted officials, to gather relevant information in the Jiangsu region for a given period of time. In Li's memorial, he linked Japan's efforts to acquire sensitive information about China to the pirates of the mid–sixteenth century:

Although Japan is a small country on remote islands, its copper cannon can attack distant places, and its knives and swords are also of unusually high quality. Thus, Japan became a serious maritime threat to China during the Ming and its pirates dominated the Eastern Ocean.<sup>363</sup>

After reading Li's report, Yongzheng believed that Japan could invade China easily. He thus reminded Li Wei, the relevant provincial officials, and other naval officers to pay

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*Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), p. 31.

<sup>362</sup> Xue Chuanyuan, *Fanghai beilan* 防海備覽 [An overview of coastal defense], “fanli 凡例,” 1a [compiled in Guojia tushuguan fenguan (ed.), *Qingdai junzheng ziliao xuancui* 清代軍政資料選粹 (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin, 2002.), vol. 8, p. 17]

<sup>363</sup> Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan (ed.), *Yongzheng chao hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1991), vol. 13, p. 140.

particular attention to Japanese activities along the coast.<sup>364</sup> Therefore, in stark contrast to the elites of the Manchu conquest, with their largely self-contained economy (based on agriculture and hunting) and insignificant intercourse with the ocean,<sup>365</sup> the high Qing emperors distinctly managed the sea space under a rather diverse and multifaceted maritime strategy. As the Qianlong Emperor mentioned in 1748, “the maritime frontier is of utmost importance. We can never ignore or neglect it (*haijiang guanxi jinyao, bushi liuxin jicha*).”<sup>366</sup> We learn that the maritime militarization actualized in the eighteenth century under Qing rule was not merely “fortress protection,” commonly regarded as a passive perimeter to discourage rivals and intruders on the sea. Instead, naval deployment, or the mobilization of warships, also aimed at policing certain areas of the sea and deterring (potential) enemies from pursuing maritime intrigues.<sup>367</sup> It must be noted once again that the Qing did not require as extensive naval policies as eighteenth century Western seafaring powers for several reasons. First, the Qing faced fewer threats from rivals than Mediterranean powers.

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> David Christian outlines five distinct ecological adaptations in succession responded to the ecological and geographical characteristic in northern latitude area with cold weather and low rainfall, that is hunting, pastoralism, pastoral nomadism, agrarian autocracy and command economy. See David Christian, “Inner Eurasia as a Unit of World History,” *Journal of World History*, vol. 5, no.2 (1994), pp. 173-213. In fact, hunting for the Manchus was a form of military training and an expression of tribal community, as it had been for the Khitans, Jurchens, and Mongols. And it should be noted that the tradition of huntings was not forgotten even after the conquest of China. In 1684, for instance, emperor Kangxi ordered the garrison generals at Xi’an, Suiyuan, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Jingzhou to organize local hunts. Kangxi announced, “if the officers and soldiers at the provincial garrisons are not made every year to go hunting to practice their martial skills, they will eventually become lazy.” See *Baqi tongzhi chujì*, juan 31, p. 583. For the significance of hunting, please also refer to *Qianlong chao Manwen zhupi zouzhe*, juan 72, Uhetu, “Qianlong 3 nian, April 9.”

<sup>366</sup> Qianlong’s word was recorded in his response to Wang Deng’s memorial. See Wang Deng 王澄 ([chief commander of the Jiangnan Susong naval force] 江南蘇松水師總兵官), “zoubao xuncha haijiang suijing qingxing 奏報巡海疆綏靖情形,” *Junjichu dangan* (Qianlong 13 nian, June 30; no. 002501).

<sup>367</sup> For instance, when Yongzheng replied Wang Chaoen’s memorial in 1728, he highlighted his concern about the potential dangers from the Japanese via the ocean. See Wang Chaoen 王朝恩 (Shengjing hubu shilang shuli xingbu shi [盛京戶部侍郎署理刑部事]), “yizou Riben dengguo fengfan haijiang deng shi 議奏日本等國防範海疆等事,” *Junjichu dangan* (Yongzheng 6 nian, October 13; no. 402015712).

It had relatively little to fear from the sea in peace time. The primary threats were Japanese pirates and local, including Chinese, pirates and anti-Qing rebels. Compared with the situation a century later, the Qing in the eighteenth century was less preoccupied with internal and external crises. This afforded the empire with more resources and initiative for naval efforts and enabled it to maintain its superiority and hegemony across the East Asian Sea.



## **Chapter Four**

### **The Customs Office**

#### *Abstract*

This chapter seeks to offer an analysis of a neglected branch of the high Qing administration – the maritime customs office – that underlines its significance for the Great Qing imperial enterprise. Well aware of the intimate connection between economic development and empire’s stability, the Qing court in the eighteenth century spent considerable energies to establish an efficient customs regime across their maritime frontier. Periodic shifts between more open and more restricted maritime trade policies reflected changing strategic exigencies in a framework of “guarded management” rather than hint at ignorance or irrational swings in attitudes toward the maritime world. Drawing on a series of imperial archives, I detail and examine in this chapter the institutional development and investment of the Qing into this customs organization, such as its personnel recruitment and management strategies. Such guarded management reveals the fact that the high Qing administration never lost sight of the harsh strategic and logistical realities of ruling a vast maritime landscape.

## Introduction

An institutional innovation that emerged after emperor Kangxi annexed Taiwan in 1683, the maritime customs provided the Qing court with a more systematic and centralized approach to the management of sea trade and maritime security. As a result, maritime activities along the China coast were deliberately regulated, policed, and governed under an organized administrative framework set up by the Qing court in the beginning of the long eighteenth century. To illustrate a more detailed picture of this first government institution for managing domestic as well as overseas trade in the eighteenth century, this chapter focuses on the founding, development, and transitions of the four major custom offices from the late seventeenth century to the eve of the First Opium War. In tracing the history of the customs *offices* (but not the customs *service* chaired by foreigners such as Sir Robert Hart [1861–1911] in the mid–nineteenth century),<sup>368</sup> the present chapter also aims at reminding readers that the ties between high Qing maritime politics and the Customs office have been more significant than we might realize. Since national security and economic well-being

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<sup>368</sup> This objective is mentioned here because the general history of the Chinese Customs has been dominated by the period when foreigners took up positions as Inspector Generals starting from the mid-nineteenth century, whereas what had happened during the long eighteenth century is often overlooked, if not omitted, by historians. See for example the statistical research about the Customs Service conducted by Andrea Bréard (“Robert Hart and China’s Statistical Revolution,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40, issue 3 [July 2006], pp 605-629), Richard O’Leary’s research on the relationship between Robert Hart and his Irish connection (“Robert Hart in China: The Significance of His Irish Roots,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3 [July, 2006], pp. 583-604), as well as Richard Horowitz’s examination on how Robert Hart rise to power (“Politics, Power and the Chinese Maritime Customs: The Qing Restoration and the Ascent of Robert Hart,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3 [July, 2006], pp. 549-581). Of course, Stanley Fowler Wright’s researches on Robert Hart and the Customs Service cannot be missed. See his *Hart and the Chinese Customs* (Belfast: Wm. Mullan, 1950); *China’s Customs Revenue since the Revolution of 1911* (New York: AMS Press, 1973); *China’s Struggle for Tariff Autonomy: 1843-1938* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1938). Indeed, more researches need to be undertaken on the connective tissue between the Customs Offices and the High Qing government – and that is exactly what I hope to demonstrate in the present chapter.

along the maritime frontier are symbiotically related, the maritime policy of the Qing court was very much orientated by their attainment and coordination. It is perhaps understandable why high Qing monarchs had to expend tremendous energies on administrating the customs networks which covered “eight major coastal trading routes”<sup>369</sup> stretching from the Bohai basin to the coast of Guangdong. In projecting imperial control over the maritime frontier by institutionalizing customs affairs, such maritime policy did not only yield a significant evolution in sea trade management of late imperial China, but also enshrine the Great Qing as what Charles Hucker has termed the “last golden age”<sup>370</sup> from a maritime-economic perspective. However, it should be taken into account that the Manchu leaders bestowed a modicum of autonomy on a sizable number of local commercial elites in establishing and running the customs offices because the central government, lacking the historical tradition of interaction with the sea, depended upon a deliberative group of local merchants to make key decisions. As Emperor Yongzheng once mentioned,

I am not that familiar with the ocean and maritime affairs, I therefore appreciate any advices from my officials and those local experts (provincial officials and sea merchants).<sup>371</sup>

Such “reciprocal cooperative policy,” in which a merchant’s allegiance to the government was reciprocated by the monarch’s legal obligation to provide him business interests and protection that ranged from monetary rewards to social privileges, somewhat contributed to

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<sup>369</sup> Huang Guosheng, “The Maritime Customs in Transition,” pp. 183-185, Akira Matsuda (ed.), *Jindai dongya haiyu jiaoliu shi xubian* (Taipei: Boyang wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 2011), pp. 7-13.

<sup>370</sup> Charles O. Hucker, *China’s Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 295.

<sup>371</sup> See “Shandong xunfu Chen Shiguan, Dengzhou zongbinguan Huang Yuanxiang zouwei jingchen caifang shiyi 山東巡撫陳世倌、登州總兵官黃元驥奏為敬陳採訪事宜 [Yongzheng simian bayue chusi ri],” in *Yongzhengzhao zhupi yuzhi* [Collection preserved in the Kyoto University], no. 8, ‘Huang Yuanxiang,’ p. 93a.

the remarkable growth of domestic sea trade between the northern and the southern sectors of the coastal economy and also the gradual, unprecedented development of overseas shipping between China and the rest of the world.<sup>372</sup>

### **From Sea Ban to Sea Passes**

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, a series of sea bans were implemented to the Southeastern Chinese coast between the Shunzhi and the Kangxi eras. The strict ban on navigation and the coastal evacuation policy not only caused depopulation but also created untold hardship for coastal families and maritime businesses.<sup>373</sup> During the period of the severe prohibitions, smuggling along the coast of Fujian and Guangdong increased drastically. Many officials who were supposed to enforce the maritime prohibition were even involved in smuggling themselves; while many others were bribed or bullied into cooperation.<sup>374</sup> Therefore, after Taiwan was seized, a cluster of scholar-officials complained

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<sup>372</sup> In fact, the Customs office also strengthened the commercial ties between the coast and the interior regional economies via riverine and caravan transport. But in this chapter, I will merely pay heed to the maritime commerce between the coastal provinces as well as the expansion of Chinese overseas trade in East and Southeast Asia, as well as Western Europe. For more details on riverine transport, see Grant Andrew Alger, "The Floating Community of the Min: River Transport, Society and the State in China, 1758 – 1889" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2003).

<sup>373</sup> During the period of the sea ban policy, Macau holds a different story. Since the early Qing era, Macau already became an important gateway for Sino-foreign sea trades. Similar to other sea ports, Macau was first included in the 1661 evacuation program, and the provincial officials planned to deport all foreigners and move all Chinese settlers along the coast back to the interior region. Yet it soon became evident that the logistics of such an undertaking were undecidable. In 1671, therefore, Kangxi officially exempted Macau from the sea ban policy and allowed Chinese traders to conduct businesses in Macau. For more details, see John E. Wills, *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to Kang-his, 1666-1687* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 116-144; Tang Kaijian, *Ming Qing shidafu yu Aomen* (Macao: Aomen jijinhui, 1998), pp. 158-183.

<sup>374</sup> Lo-shu Fu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644-1820)*, vol. I, pp. 43 and 46. Cushman skillfully shows how restrictions were imposed when security problem arose, and how the prohibitions harmed the coastal economy. But she also observes that the Kangxi government in general supported the sea traders. See Jennifer Wayne Cushman, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam*

about the sea ban and petitioned Kangxi to rescind the restriction.<sup>375</sup> After reading the memorials submitted by the officials who petitioned to cancel the sea blockade policy, Kangxi decided to dispatch a team of officials, including Du Zhen (jinshi 1658), Si Ju, and Jin Shijian (1647–1689), to investigate the situation in Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangnan. Few years later, investigations were done and reports from these coastal provinces read alike. Most officials advised the emperor to revive sea trade so as to relieve the worsening economic misery.<sup>376</sup> In 1684, Kangxi instated an “open sea edict,” allowing Chinese traders to sail legally to some foreign sea ports,

I decide to lift the ban of sea trade simply because it would benefit my people settling along the coast of Fujian and Guangdong. If the economic misery of these two counties could be solved, the circulation of money and goods will also benefit the neighboring provinces.....In short, I agree that maritime businesses are important and beneficial to the development of the empire, and I therefore lift the ban on maritime trade.<sup>377</sup>

The edict shows that the Qing court under the Kangxi reign (even during the *haijin* era) was not seeking to close China off; nor were they insisting that they did not need to trade with other countries by isolating the empire from the maritime world. Instead, Kangxi

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during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 160-187.

<sup>375</sup> Most of them complained about the lack of funds ever since the Manchus began the southern campaigns by blaming the maritime ban and suggesting lifting it. See Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), pp. 249-303

<sup>376</sup> However, it is useful to consider that some officials hold a very different attitude. For example, in his report submitted to Kangxi, Si Ju suggested to postpone lifting the sea ban for a couple of years. Si believed the government should be vigilant about the newly conquered territories including Taiwan, Jinmen and Xiamen. But Kangxi rejected his suggestion and soon decreed the resumption of sea trades. See *Da Qing Shengzu renhuang shilu* (Kangxi) [Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1964], *juan* 116, pp. 3b-4a.

<sup>377</sup> *Qing Shengzhu shilu*, vol. 166, p. 212. See also Dou Ruyi and Sun Rong, *Huangchao wenxian tongkao* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), vol. 33, pp. 10b-11a.

recognized that maritime trade would benefit both his people and his rule, and the people would be able to make money which he would then be able to tax. By lifting the strict ban on sea trade, the Kangxi Emperor was attuned to the fact that his empire would largely benefit from the circulation of money and goods across East and Southeast Asia (*haisheng maoyi yuyi yu shengmin*),<sup>378</sup> with residents of diasporic merchant communities such as Arab Muslims, Hindus, Persian Muslims, Parsis, Jews, Armenians, Chinese, or more recently arrived Portuguese, Dutch, Spaniards. The emperor also realized that those who could operate junk trade overseas were the wealthy Chinese merchants instead of the lower classes. Without burdening the poor, the government could tax merchant shippers heavily and invest the revenues for military and administrative purposes, and the country would then enjoy peace and prosperity.<sup>379</sup> As a consequence, Chinese were allowed to return to the coast of South China when the maritime world was officially re-opened for sea trade. Whereas Leonard Blussé would argue that such relaxation of coastal businesses was an act of “liberalization,”<sup>380</sup> I would suggest that the “re-opening policy” launched by the Kangxi government contained many confinements. In other words, the Manchu authorizes did not liberalize sea trade entirely with a “free-hand.” Rather, they intended to control and supervise maritime commerce intensively by setting up four main customs bureaus in Guangdong (substations in Guangzhou, Xiangshan, and Macau), Fujian (Fuzhou, Nantai,

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<sup>378</sup> *Neige qiju zhu*, “Kangxi lingzhuoding haiyang maoyi shoushui zeli 康熙令酌定海洋貿易收稅則例 [Kangxi ershisan nian liuyue chuwu ri],” in *Zhongguo diyi lishi dangan guan* (ed.), *Ming Qing gongchang zhongxi shangmao dangan* (Beijing: Zhongguo dangan chubanshe, 2010), *juan* 1, p. 127.

<sup>379</sup> *DaQing Shengzu renhuangdi shilu* (Kangxi), *juan* 116, p. 18a (1555); see also *juan* 117, p. 10b. See also Zhang Bincun, “Shiliu zhi shiba shiji Zhongguo haimao sixiang de yanjin,” in *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwen ji*, vol. 2, pp. 39-58.

<sup>380</sup> Leonard Blussé, “Chinese Century: The Eighteenth Century in the China Sea Region,” *Archipel* 58, Paris (1990), pp. 107-129.

and Xiamen), Zhejiang (Ningbo and Dinghai), and Jiangsu (Huating, Chongque, and Shanghai).<sup>381</sup> As Kangxi clearly mentioned,

“Without a regular way of collection, leying duties would trouble maritime traders. Thus, it is necessary to establish the same system as the inland one (*quguan*) in the coastal regions and appoint special officials to deal with the related affairs....

The state establishes customs office for collecting taxes in order to increase wealth, to develop trade, and ultimately to enrich the people. In the process of handling customs affairs, customs officials must follow rules and avoid mistakes. If they do so, all goods will circulate smoothly, and the society will become prosperous.”<sup>382</sup>

As part of the ruling strategy over the maritime frontier, the four customs offices consisted of three layers (see Table 1) and were subordinate to the Imperial Household Department (*neiwufu* 內務府) under direct interference from the central authority.<sup>383</sup> This institution subsequently became the necessary mechanism to establish imperial control over trading matters across the seaboard. Even though no customs offices were formally established in Shandong and Zhili (the two coastal provinces in the north), a set of regulations regarding sea trade were likewise implemented.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Meanwhile, according to the *DaQing Shengzu renhuangdi shulu*, it was recorded that “all four coastal provinces – Jiangnan, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong – have been opened, and foreigners are now permitted to enter and trade in any of their ports.” See *DaQing Shengzu renhuangdi shulu*, *juan* 5, p. 205.

<sup>382</sup> The first quote, see Jin Duanbiao, *Liuhe zheng jilüe*, compiled in *Zhongguo defang zhi jicheng*, volume 9 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1992), *juan* 3, 14b; the second quote, see *Da Qing shengzu renhuangdi shilu*, *juan* 5, p. 327.

<sup>383</sup> He Zhangling, “Si queguan zhi shiyi yu shibo zhi she,” in He Zhangling (ed.), *Huangchao jingshi wenbian* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1972), *juan* 83, p. 10b (2958).

<sup>384</sup> *Zhongguo renmin daxue*, *Qingshi biannian*, vol. 2, p. 485; see also Yao Meilin, *Zhongguo haiguan shihua* (Beijing: Zhongguo haiguan chubanshe, 2005), p. 108.

Main Customs House	<i>daguan</i> 大關	Provincial headquarters, housing the offices of the superintendent of customs ( <i>haiguan jian du</i> 海關監督)
Customs Stations	<i>shuikou</i> 水口	It was divided into large stations ( <i>dakou</i> 大口) and small station ( <i>xiaokou</i> 小口)
Inspection Stations	<i>jicha kouan</i> 檢察口岸	An office that is responsible for the suppression of smuggling and maintaining order in commercial activities.

### Customs Offices in the Kangxi Era

The maritime customs established in the four southeastern coastal provinces evolved from the Kangxi to the Qianlong period. After abolishing the sea ban in 1684, the Manchu government aimed at restoring and facilitating the coastal economy so as to maintain the empire's stability. As Kangxi mentioned,

Why did I open trade along the coast? The development of maritime trade will largely benefit the people of Fujian and Guangdong. As the people of these two provinces become rich and commercial commodities circulate smoothly, this prosperity will benefit other province and our empire.<sup>385</sup>

In order to enrich the state by means of properly regulating sea trade, emperor Kangxi first introduced “uniform” procedures to inspect and tax merchant ships and cargo

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<sup>385</sup> *Kangxi yuzhi wenji* 康熙御製文集 [Imperial poems written by emperor Kangxi] (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1966), *juan* 14, 8a.



(based on tonnage) to minimize exactions, smugglings, swindles, and illegal conduct of trade. Subject to these regulations, ship merchants, either incoming or departing, had to register their names, the size of their vessels, and their final destinations.<sup>386</sup> Meanwhile, one of the most important functions of the maritime customs was to issue licenses to sea merchants. First of all, traders and ship-owners had to present to the local officials their commercial plan and a document drawn up by the head of their local communities confirming that they did not commit any crimes before. Once an application was approved, the trader would then receive a license from the customs office. Such license contained some personal information such as age, birthplace, and appearance of the bearer, together with some details about the ports of departure and arrival. Maritime traders could only leave or enter a Chinese sea port by showing their licenses to the customs inspectors.<sup>387</sup>

Furthermore, in cooperation with the navies deployed along the coast, customs officials were supposedly responsible for inspecting almost every vessel on a regular basis, though the inspection process sometimes did not work out as smoothly as claimed. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the situation in Fujian was different from that of other coastal provinces before 1720. In order to deal with the remaining security problems that loomed after the Zheng's force was "suppressed,"<sup>388</sup> the commander of the Fujian Navy

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<sup>386</sup> Customs offices were usually differentiated according to their functions and duties (i.e.: tax collection [*zhengshui*], inspection [*jicha*]; and registration-patrolling [*guahao*]). For example, inspection stations were responsible to examine cargoes and the vessels' registration documents as well as the bills of landing. After that, the Customs inspectors would issue a security receipt called "*danya*" designating the amount of fees to be paid, and directed the merchants to the nearest tax collection station. In most cases, the tax collection stations were protected by the inspection stations and the navy.

<sup>387</sup> *Qinding daQing huidian* 欽定大清會典 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban wenhua gongsi, 1969), p.240.

<sup>388</sup> The tension between the Fujian communities and the Qing regime grew strongly after the suppression of the Zheng resistance in 1683. Therefore, the Qing government also deployed a great number of Banner and

was assigned to administer the customs office concurrently. Apart from regular patrolling duties along the coast, the Fujian Navy was in charge of the inspection and registration of private shippers as well as the management of grain trade between Taiwan and Fujian.<sup>389</sup> Additionally, the Fujian Navy was in a position to mobilize local merchant elites to assist customs administration.<sup>390</sup> Only during the mid-Kangxi period – when the emperor believed most regions were completely under control – did the central authority appoint specific superintendents to manage the Fujian customs offices and the related substations along the southeastern sea front.<sup>391</sup>

In examining the interrelationship between the central government and the customs offices, Huang Guosheng described that the four customs offices “develop[ed] out of local practices.” Huang’s observation can be further interpreted in light of Jerry Dennerline’s argument that “the key factor in the successful establishment of any regime in imperial China was the forging of an alliance between the local gentry and the central bureaucracy.”<sup>392</sup> As Dennerline argued, cooperation of the local gentry was necessary to the consolidation process of an empire across different provinces. In a similar vein, the Qing court relied upon the help of commercial elites in stabilizing local projects and the

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Green Standard troops on Fujian during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

<sup>389</sup> Zhun Tai 準泰 (Acting general of Fuzhou and the supervisor of the customs office [shuli Fuzhou jiangjun yinwu haiguan jiandu langzhong]), *Junjichu dangan* (Yongzheng 13 nian, April 24; no. 402001300).

<sup>390</sup> Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735*, pp. 42-79.

<sup>391</sup> But in the Qianlong era, the Customs office in Fujian was sometimes administrated by the naval general (*Fujian haiguan shuiwu, zhe jiangjun guanli* 福建海關稅務, 著將軍管理). See Tuojin, et. al. (eds.), *Da Qing huidian shili (Jiaqing chao)* 大清會典事例 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1991-1992), *juan* 189, “hubu juan.”

<sup>392</sup> Jerry Dennerline, “Fiscal Reform and Local Control,” in Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn Grant (eds.), *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 86-120.

management of the four customs offices. In other words, commercial elites were one of the critical voices in shaping the Customs network as a lot of secret edicts and memorials ranging from the Kangxi to the Qianlong era reflect this situation. For example, in Guangzhou and Fujian, local elites not only invested money in setting up the infrastructure of the Customs stations, but also helped advising the inspecting and taxing procedures.<sup>393</sup> Perhaps the two customs offices would not have experienced a gradual development without the strong alliance between the Beijing authorities, the local government, and provincial merchants in its initial stage. Conceived in this broad frame, the customs office was perhaps working in tandem with the local communities to rebuild and foster the coastal economy, which in turn crucially related to the imperium's goals of pacification and security across the maritime frontier.<sup>394</sup>

The release of the sea ban in 1684 also resulted in substantial developments of maritime trade between China and other Asian, European countries in terms of patterns, scales, and complexities. The renowned maritime historian Zhu Delan has estimated a total of 7 Chinese junks called at Nagasaki in 1684, plying routes between Japan, Jiangsu, and various southeast Asian ports, and the figure climbed up to 57 in 1685 and reached an impressive 153 three years later.<sup>395</sup> Yu Dingbang and Yu Changsen also calculated the

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<sup>393</sup> Liang Tingnan, *et. al.* (eds.), *Yue haiguan zhi* 粵海關志 (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1975), *juan* 25, "hangshang," pp. 47-51; Peng Zeyi 彭澤益, "Qingdai Guguangdong yanghang zhidu de qiyuan 清代廣東洋行制度的起源," *Lishi yanjiu* (1957), vol. 3, p. 16.

<sup>394</sup> For instance, the local elites also helped constructing waterways, harbor's facilities, and warehouses near the customs stations. Some customs officials even placed operational aspects of trade management in the hands of coastal commercial groups. For fuller details (especially the cooperation in Fujian), see Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735*, pp. 95-152.

<sup>395</sup> Zhu Delan, "Qing kaihai linghou de Zhong-Ri changqi maoyi yu guonei yanhai maoyi," in Zhang Yanxian (ed.), *Zhongguo haiyang fazhanshi lunwenji*, vol. 3, pp. 369-416; See also Lan Daju, *Xuannao de haishi*

number of Chinese vessels that called upon the Philippines from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century. According to their statistics, fewer than 7 Chinese vessels departed from Guangzhou and sailed to the Philippines by the time in 1684. However, almost 20 vessels annually anchored in Manila during the period between 1685 and 1716.<sup>396</sup> With reference to another meticulous research conducted by the Thai historian Sarasin Viraphol, the number of Chinese junks calling at Siam also increased steadily from the year 1685 to 1689.<sup>397</sup> In light of these quantitative analysis, economic conditions in China were considerably moving out from the “sea-ban depression” that spread across coastal China in the mid-seventeenth century. And Kangxi was much more than satisfied to learn that sea trade flourished across the seaboard of his empire,

The growth of private sea trades is a reflection of the richness of our country and a reward bestowed by our ancestors and the grand heaven.<sup>398</sup>

As the relaxation of the sea ban stimulated the continued expansion of sea trade between China and the rest of the world in terms of the amount of shipping business, the four Customs offices, understandably, were responsible to oversee the unprecedented growth of all these coming and going vessels across the Asian Sea. However, as mentioned earlier, the Customs office was not the only protagonist in the arena. The Qing court had to cooperate with local merchants in administrating and handling shipping affairs. One

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(Nanchang: Jiangxi gaoxiao chubanshe, 1999), p. 166.

<sup>396</sup> Yu Dingbang and Yu Changsen, *Jindai Zhongguo yu dongnan ya guanxi shi* [The history of modern China and Southeast Asia] (Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1999), pp. 386-387.

<sup>397</sup> Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 55.

<sup>398</sup> Du Zhen, *Yue Min xunshi julue* (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), *juan 2*, 21a.

significant example is the *baoshang zhidu* established by Kangxi in 1704. It was a system aimed at designating local merchants the exclusive rights to trade with foreigners within a selected framework. In return, the Chinese merchants who received such “privileges” had to assist the Custom offices to collect revenue from overseas merchants. Over time, the *baoshang* system proved to be a successful synergy in aligning the central government with local merchants throughout the late-Kangxi reign, and also laid the foundation for the establishment of the *cohong* system later in 1725.<sup>399</sup>

By 1716, the year before the second sea ban was imposed, Chinese junk trade within “the Asian network” experienced a vibrant growth in both scope and magnitude. However, the notorious “Rites Controversy,” as Yangwen Zheng points out in her recent monograph, profoundly altered the Manchu’s attitude and policy towards foreign maritime business, which later resulted in another enactment of sea-blockade in 1717.<sup>400</sup> Changes in political philosophy and control mechanism thus required new institutional adaptations and approaches to the management of provincial customs operations. In order to deal with the

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<sup>399</sup> Ramon H. Myers and Yeh-chien Wang, “Economic Developments, 1644-1800,” in Dennis Twitchett and John King Fairbank (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 9 part I: The Ch’ing Empire to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 589.

<sup>400</sup> The most relevant statement made by Kangxi regarding the Rites Controversy and the second sea ban that followed is his reaction after hearing from the Pope. Kangxi stated in 1704 that, “Reading his (the pope’s) proclamation, I can only say that the European are really small-minded. They don’t read and understand Chinese, how can they have an opinions and lecture us about China? This is one of the most ridiculous and nonsense things I have ever heard of.....To avoid further trouble, we should not allow them to preach in China starting from today.” See Gu Weimin, *Zhongguo yu Luoma jiaoting guanxi shilue* (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2000), p. 79. For details about the Rite Controversy, see D.E. Mungello (ed.), *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettetal: Stezley Verlag, 1994); Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 160-168; Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)* (San Francisco: Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, 1992); Paul A. Rule, *K’ung-tzu or Confucius: The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 88-149.

problems brought by the Rites Controversy between the Catholic Church and the Qing court, Kangxi – the aging emperor at that time – decided to keep his empire within a certain distance from European traders who had established considerable influence in China as well as the “Southern Ocean” (in particular in Siam, Java, and Luzon). In January 1717, he announced:

Merchant vessels can merely go and trade in the Eastern Ocean (*dongyang*), while sailing to the Southern Ocean (*nanyang*), namely Luzon and Java, is prohibited. All merchant ships are required to stop at Nan’ao and go no further west or south. Customs officials and the coast guard of Guangdong and Fujian are given the power to arrest and punish those who break the sea ban.... Foreign vessels can continue to trade in China but should be strictly supervised.....From now on, those who make ships must report to the Customs Offices immediately. Ship makers are told to sign a contract indicating details of their vessels; and customs officials have to check, categorize, and file all details every single month.<sup>401</sup>

Yet the “1717 sea ban” was in fact a flexible and adaptive one. Using his vermilion brush, Kangxi only stated that this particular sea ban was imposed on Java and Luzon, though the area of the “Southern Ocean” was much boarder in scope. Because the emperor did not mention other Southeast Asian countries such as Siam and Vietnam, maritime merchants could adroitly pretend and report to the Customs offices that their final destination was Siam but made a quick stop at Java. More importantly, how could the Customs officials insure that all Chinese vessels had followed the rules and stopped at Nan’ao? It was almost impossible to do so especially when Java and Luzon were at that time controlled by the Dutch and the Spaniards respectively. Although superintendents of

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<sup>401</sup> Zhonghua Shuju, *Qing Shengzhu shilu*, vol. 271, p. 658; see also Dou Ruyi and Sun Rong, *Huangchao wenxian tongkao*, vol. 33, pp. 26a-26b.

the Customs offices also realized these “loopholes” and reported to Kangxi where the problems lay, the emperor responded to these memorials merely with a simple “noted” – which is not resounding at all – and did not come up with any substantial actions. Given such a context, how shall we interpret the “arbitrary” management attitude of the emperor? Some scholars might simply explain it as inconsistency, but I suspect the story is more complicated. Indeed I would argue that the trajectory of Kangxi’s attitude towards sea trade was neither arbitrary nor sloppy, but marked by a dual-standard. On one hand, it was pretty clear that Kangxi had some qualms about the potential dangers from foreign missionaries and traders after the Rites Controversy, even though he himself respected Western astronomy and mathematics.<sup>402</sup> For instance, according to an imperial edict, it was recorded that the emperor had nightmares of the Qing empire being threatened on all sides by European countries,

The Russians, Dutch, and Portuguese, like the other Europeans, are able to accomplish whatever they undertake, no matter how difficult. They are intrepid, clever, and know how to turn a profit. As long as I imagine there is nothing to worry about from them for China, yet if our country became weak, or if we failed to control the Chinese in the southern provinces who had numerous contacts with foreigners, what would happen to our empire? With the Russians to the north, the Portuguese from Luzon to the east, the Dutch to the south, [they] would be able to threaten China in numerous ways.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> See Benjamin A. Elman, “Who is Responsible for the Limits of Jesuit Scientific and Technical Transmission from Europe to China in the Eighteenth Century?,” in Clara Wing-chung Ho (ed.), *Windows on the Chinese World: Reflections by Five Historians* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), pp. 45-66.

<sup>403</sup> This imperial edict was translated and preserved in a letter by Father Anthony Gaubil (1689-1759), a Jesuit who served at the Qing court during the Kangxi’s reign. This edict was later translated in English by Laura Hostetler. See her *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 40.

Apart from the imminent danger from those foreigners, Kangxi even became aware of the potential threat for Qing subjects to travel abroad and involve themselves in subversive activities. As a result, he set up time limits on the length of staying abroad, prohibitions on Chinese emigrations, and restrictions of foreign sea trade.<sup>404</sup> Yet, on the other hand, the emperor realized the enactment of an absolute sea ban would make life difficult for coastal communities as shown in previous experiences. It might have a disruptive influence on the coast and was threatening to national security. Such an attitude, in fact, closely resembled the trade policy of seventeenth-century western European nations, where sea trade was considered one of the major sources of state power and wealth.<sup>405</sup> Therefore, by maintaining a flexible and adaptive sea blockade policy, Kangxi believed that it would allow his empire to straddle a comfortable line between the mission of checking potential dangers from foreigners and maintaining peace and prosperity along the coast.

Kangxi strove hard to maintain the older equilibrium policy, but the sea ban was forced to be relaxed in June 1722, six months before the emperor passed away. In 1721, a series of shortages of rice and grains swept across Guangdong and Fujian, and the two provinces could no longer rely on the import of rice from neighboring or inland counties.<sup>406</sup> A number of officials in South China thus promptly advised Kangxi to authorize the import

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<sup>404</sup> John E. Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 194-198. Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 72.

<sup>405</sup> Jacob Viner, "Power versus Plenty as Objectives of Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Douglas A. Irwin (ed.), *Trade in the Pre-Modern Era, 1400-1700* (Brookfield: Elgar, 1996), p. 303-321.

<sup>406</sup> See Zheng Yangwen, *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 84-86.



of rice from Southeast Asia (mainly from Siam). As Gao Qizhuo, the Governor–General of Fujian, appealed:

The cultivable land in Southeastern China is limited, but the population is large. Since the pacification of Taiwan, the population has increased day by day. What eventually followed is a shortage of rice to feed the people. The only way to resolve the problem is to “open the ocean (*kaiyang*) so that surpluses from trade can supplement the insufficiency in farming, and both the rich and the poor will benefit from it...Such a benefit will further increase by instructing seagoing junks to carry certain amounts of rice on their return journey to Fujian.<sup>407</sup>

Intending to alleviate the worsening jeopardy as quickly as possible, Kangxi did not hesitate to endorse foreign rice imported from Southeast Asia and permitted maritime merchants to sail across the “Southern Ocean” to purchase edible grain.<sup>408</sup> As a result, the sea ban was once again relaxed (yet not cancelled) in June 1722. But it is important to emphasize that imperial control over sea trade (especially rice trade) via the customs system was not lessened once the sea ban was relaxed. Governmental control over the customs network was instead much tightened after the death of Kangxi in December, 1722 – which marked the second wave of transition of the customs administrative framework in the Yongzheng era.

### **Customs Offices in the Yongzheng Era**

An energetic and astute ruler, emperor Yongzheng was quite a different man when compared to his father. He was ruthless towards his brothers and officials who opposed his

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<sup>407</sup> *Qing shizhong shilu*, *juan* 54, p. 18.

<sup>408</sup> Indeed, this seems to be the first time the Qing government authorized a rice import to alleviate the worsening situation which could lead to unrest and rebellions.

accession and endured rumors that he was a usurper. By all accounts, “he was blunt, strict, and severe, with little of Kangxi’s showmanship and aesthetic tastes.”<sup>409</sup> In spite of all these, however, Yongzheng was a prominent figure (or “an early-modern state-maker of the first order”<sup>410</sup>) who left an indelible mark on the Qing history by further rationalizing bureaucratic administration and centralizing imperial control. His initiative was to make every administrative unit more structured under governmental supervision. As a consequence, central, if not authoritarian, power was extended over the four customs offices throughout his thirteen-year stewardship. Announcing that the hallmark of his empire would be discipline and efficiency, Yongzheng introduced a set of regulatory and institutional changes in provincial customs agencies so as to establish greater uniformity in administrative practices over maritime affairs (*haiyang zhi shi*). In 1724 he ordered maritime officials to publish the tax law and circulate copies among maritime merchants. At the same time, he ordered customs officials to post the official law and crack down on those who did not comply.<sup>411</sup> Meanwhile, each Customs superintendent was required to report in precise details on shipping conditions in its respective province, the amount of revenue collected, as well as the registration of vessels at all provincial substations on a seasonal basis.<sup>412</sup> Such “reporting practice” was largely different from the one during the Kangxi years. As commented by Liu Yuyi, the Fujian governor, in 1742:

Before 1729, the Fuzhou customs did not have to submit

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<sup>409</sup> William T. Rowe, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing*, p. 66.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>411</sup> *Qingding DaQing huidian shili* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban wenhua gongsi, 1969), p. 8259.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8257.

detailed reports regularly to the Beijing government since Emperor Kangxi embraced a comparatively flexible managing style. During the Yongzheng period, we were told to report every single figure to the emperor without any excuse and delay.<sup>413</sup>

Yongzheng was so persistent to supervise the amount of customs revenue not only because he intended to centralize imperial power over every administrative unit of his empire, he also saw the importance of stabilizing the coastal commercial market through maintaining a steady flow of silver. Throughout the eighteenth century, Chinese used silver ingots instead of paper currency in large market transactions. As a result, the stability of sea trades, either domestic or long-distanced, largely depended upon the circulation of silver within the market.<sup>414</sup> By regularly surveying the statistic of the monthly amount of maritime imports from the Customs offices, the central government could therefore decide whether or not to impose a corresponding levy and control the price of maritime goods at a stipulated quantity. These policies displayed how the Yongzheng government engaged, if not intervened, actively in sea trades by adjusting the amount of imposition so as to obtain specific goods but prevent a deleterious outflow of silver. Similar to Tokugawa Japan,<sup>415</sup> the Yongzheng government aimed at maintaining the stability of commercial markets over sea trades by using such intervention strategy to moderate the circulation of silver across East Asia. Apparently, this fastening measurement served as one of the examples to demonstrate the increasing role that the Manchu government played in mid-eighteenth century Asian

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<sup>413</sup> “Qianlong zhao neige huke tiben: Guanshuixiang 乾隆朝內閣戶科題本關稅項” (preserved in *Beijing diyi lishi dang'an guan*), no. 39, “Liu Yuyi memorial dated on Qianlong qinian shiyue ershier ri.”

<sup>414</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *China in the Tokugawa World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 8-10.

<sup>415</sup> See Arai Eiji, *Kinsei kaisanbutsu keizaishi no kenkyu* [An economic history of marine products in the early modern period] (Tokyo: Meicho shuppan, 1988), pp. 21-27.

maritime commerce.

In addition to monitoring the flow of silver, Yongzheng was equally concerned over the issue of accountability and the selection process of customs superintendents. Before Yongzheng came to power, the selection of customs superintendents was based on a so-called “lottery system (*lunbang cheqian*)” traditionally employed in the internal customs offices (*queguan*). Early in the Shunzhi period, the lottery was administered by the Grand Secretariat; and the selection pool of candidates was overwhelmingly Manchus who worked in the six ministries (*liubu*), and mainly the *neiwufu*.<sup>416</sup> Throughout the Kangxi era, the emperor maintained the system but decided to reduce the secretariat’s power by transferring the “control of lottery” to the Manchu commanders stationed in Beijing. In contrast to his predecessors, Yongzheng eliminated the lottery system during the first few years of his rulership and established a much more sophisticated selection process. To ensure the recruitment of capable officials for the Customs offices, Yongzheng formulated his own strategy. According to his plan, every new appointment of a customs superintendent required recommendations from high ranked provincial civil or military officials; after that, the emperor would evaluate the shortlisted candidates before making any direct official appointment.<sup>417</sup> In practice, this institutional change proved to be a remarkable reform for

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<sup>416</sup> Within the first decades after the Customs offices were established, Manchu were the officials who dominated the system. For example, the first supervisor of the Fujian and the Guangdong customs offices were Usiba (Wushiba), a former director of the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu langzhong*), and Irgetu, another Manchu officer who had long been responsible for collecting “land tax” in South China. Although Kangxi once ordered that in Fujian and Guangdong the customs offices should be supervised by one Manchu and one Han-Chinese official in a parallel way, in most of the case the Manchu supervisor was the one to make the final decision.

<sup>417</sup> Nonetheless, as Yongzheng aimed at enhancing the degree of centralization of imperial power, customs offices were also staffed by personal clients of the emperor rather than by those recommended candidates. See *DaQing shizong xianhuangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 7, p. 52.

the customs administration. It did not only lessen the problem of incompetency, but also diminished nepotism and bribery.<sup>418</sup> However, although the selection process was revised, the customs offices were still dominated by officials who were ethnically Manchu. For over half a century, most Han-Chinese were employed in Customs only in subordinate positions. If we look at the forty supervisors in the Guangdong offices before 1735, for instance, twenty-four were ethnic Manchu, fourteen were Chinese bannermen, and Mao Keming and Zheng Wusai were the only two Chinese without banner affiliation (because of their trading knowledge).<sup>419</sup> In Fujian, thirty-seven out of forty-four supervisors were Manchu between 1684 to 1735, while there were five Chinese bannermen, one Han-Chinese, Shi Qixian (1686 in office), and one Mongolian, Samha (1711 in office). The case in Zhejiang was very similar. Of seventy-four supervisors between 1686 and 1733, fifty-three were Manchu, eight to thirteen Chinese bannermen, and only seven Han-Chinese were appointed (which includes Tu Yi [? – 1723; 1722 in office], Yan Shao [1724 in office], Wang Yidao [1725 in office], Jiang Chengjie [1727 in office], Sun Zhao [? – 1733; 1727 in office], Cao Bingren [1732 in office], and Wang Tan [1733 in office]).<sup>420</sup> Even though Yongzheng and his son Qianlong saw that greater use of Chinese officials should be made (since most of Han-Chinese were much more familiar with maritime affairs), most of the palace officials were conservative and slow to make changes. As late as the 1770s it was still the official policy that no Manchu should serve under a Chinese in the bureaucracy in which the latter were

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> See *Yue haiguan zhi*, juan 7, pp. 20 b-51a.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid. See also *Fujian tongzhi*, juan 107, pp. 21b-22a; Yu Chenglong, Wang Xinming (eds.), *Jiangnan tongzhi*, juan 105, pp. 20b-21b; and the *Zhejiang tongzhi*, juan 121, pp. 14b-16a. See also Huang Guosheng, *Yapian zhanqian de dongnan sisheng haiguan* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2000), pp. 41-46.

excluded from the highest official positions. It was not until the 1820s that more Chinese were appointed customs superintendents when a torrent of external and internal crises threatened Manchu domination.

Yet we should be careful not to divide the customs system too neatly between those who were bannermen and those who were not (just like the customs historians, who focus on the history of the late nineteenth century, have tended to divide the customs officials into Han-Chinese and foreign circles). Although the Manchu supervisors were given the jurisdiction over the seaports where the customs headquarters were located, their superintendencies were largely dependent upon provincial civil and military officials who were Han-Chinese. In most cases, the Han-officials shared many of the customs administrative duties and jointly memorialized the throne on critical customs issues. More importantly, those Han-Chinese officials were the linchpin in co-operating with local commercial elites in managing coastal and anchorage affairs. In the Zhejiang customs, for instance, Chinese provincial officers outside the customs offices were the key men allying local merchants and the customs offices to overcome the problems of dangerous tides and consequent siltation along the Zhejiang coast.<sup>421</sup> Even in the Guangdong customs, where the emperor continued to appoint *special* (Manchu) superintendents to oversee critically important foreign overseas trades through Canton, the special intendants had to work

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<sup>421</sup> The Zhejiang branch customs located at the mouths of rivers were subject to tidal bores and siltation. Vessels from Fujian and Guangdong often could not anchor in these sea ports and were forced to off-load cargoes to shallow-draft craft, or had to proceed to more distant customs ports for inspection and payment of duties. To solve the problem, the provincial Han-officials (on behalf of the merchant groups) advised the Zhejiang customs to adopt flexible arrangements for the inspections and payment of duties of inbound vessels. After a series of negotiations, the customs office agreed that if the destined harbors of the ship merchants were not navigable, they were allowed to anchor in the harbor nearby in order to expedite the customs procedures.

closely with the *yamen* personnel (mostly Han-Chinese) in order to maintain commercial prosperity.

Compared to his father, Yongzheng was more suspicious of sea trade with Western Europeans. The Jesuit Matteo Ripa (1682–1745), one of the favorite painters of Kangxi, once illustrated the difference between the two emperors,

A few months after (the death of Kangxi), all Europeans were summoned to appear before the Too-yoo-soo (Board of the Imperial Household), when the mandarins informed us in the name of the Governor, who was the seventeenth brother of the Emperor, that for the future, when they wanted anything, they must no longer go to the palace, but communicate with the Board. In consequence of this measure, which has certainly emanated from the Sovereign, the Europeans were excluded from the imperial residence, to which they had hitherto been admitted; and from that day forward no one of them was allowed to enter it unless by his Majesty's special permission, as in Scipel's case and my own.<sup>422</sup>

Apart from establishing rules to restrict the power of Europeans in Beijing, Yongzheng was equally worried about the potential dangers from foreign traders scattered across the coastal region. It is possible to catch a glimpse of Yongzheng's attitude towards foreign sea trades from Kong Sunxun's memorial dated in 1723.<sup>423</sup> In order to facilitate the import of rice from Southeast Asia and further rekindle the prosperity of the coastal economy, Kong proposed to “open the sea” for maritime business by completely cancelling

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<sup>422</sup> Matteo Ripa, Fortunato Prandi (trans.), *Memoirs of Father Ripa during Thirteen Years' Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China: With an Account of the Foundation of the College for the Education of Young Chinese at Naples* (New York: AMS Press, 1979), p. 124.

<sup>423</sup> Kong Sunxun was by that time the Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi.

the “1716-sea ban.”<sup>424</sup> Similar to Kong, Lan Dingyuan (1680–1733), a specialist on overseas trade frequently consulted by officials who worked in Fujian and Guangdong, also criticized those who supported the embargo. Lan argued that those countries in Southeast Asia were too small to become a threat of the Qing empire, when compared to Japan and other European powers,

Japan devastated Jiangsu and Zhejiang during the Ming dynasty. Many people still have clear and painful memories of the massacres. The weapons of the red barbarians [the Dutch] and of Western countries such as Britain, Spain, and Portugal were more advanced than China's. Their ships could withstand storms, and their people were ambitious, cunning, and aggressive. They set out to conquer every land they visited. When we set about protecting China, we should be concerned about Western countries and Japan, but not Southeast Asia.<sup>425</sup>

In spite of these critical observations, Yongzheng was hesitate to give a green light as he was inclined to prevent any potential threats from foreigners. Suspicious by nature, he asserted that,

We must be extremely careful and always heed the warning about the lack of safety routines; thereby we can avoid any potential concern (about foreign encroachments) to come true.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> But ironically, Kong turned to be anti-foreigner in the year that followed, as he wrote to Yongzheng, “those foreigners who came without a reason should not be allowed to stay, even they came to trade and make money, they cannot settle in China here and mix with our people.” See Diyi lishi dang'an guan (ed.), *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>425</sup> Lan Dingyuan, *Luzhou quanji*, juan 3, 2a-b.

<sup>426</sup> See his reply to Liang Wenkai's memorial, the colleague of Kong Sunxun. Cited in Diyi lishi dang'an guan, *Ming Qing shiqi Aomen wenti dang'an wenxian huibian*, p. 140-141.



As far as those potential crises were concerned, Yongzheng was at the same time convinced that Chinese who had been staying abroad would be exposed to and return with evil designs for their motherland. As he wrote,

I do not really mean that I want to see these people [Chinese maritime traders who departed from China] come back. What I am concerned with is those who left and settled in foreign lands since they must harbor the idea of returning to China one day. Once they return home [China], we cannot guarantee there are no traitors among them who might harbor bad designs.<sup>427</sup>

Nonetheless, parallel to all the above uneasiness and vexation, Yongzheng, similar to his father, also learned the lesson about being too harsh and hasty. He was aware of the danger of a domestic, economic crisis if strict sea-ban was once again imposed. If coastal merchants were prohibited from sea trades as during the Shunzhi and the early Kangxi period, Yongzheng feared those “rejected” would turn to piracy or even collude with foreigners in clandestine activities ranging from undercover trade to illicit exchanges of metal wares and weapons.<sup>428</sup> Moreover, as the supply of rice had been stretched to its limit in 1723 and 1724, there was a demand to open foreign rice markets to relieve the unevenness, and above all, the local disorders that soon followed. As Gao Qizhou, the Governor-General of Fujian and Zhejiang, reported,

In Nantai county of Xinhua prefecture, people have plundered rice shops...in

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<sup>427</sup> Taipei Gugong Buwuyuan, *Yongzheng zhupi yuyhi* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1965), vol. 8, pp. 49-51; see also Wang Hongbing, *Qingdai qianqi haifang*, pp. 39-46.

<sup>428</sup> Kong Yuxun, “Xiurong yanhai botai yinfang shi 修葺沿海礮臺營房事 [Yongzheng liunian san yue ershier ri],” in *Yongzheng zhao zhupi yuzhi*, no. 1, “Kong Yuxun,” p. 26b - 27a.

Fuzhou, people have demanded that the price of rice be lowered,...when Governor Mao Wenquan refused to lower the price, people broke into his office compound and destroyed his official sedan. In Jianning county of Zhaowu prefecture, people have a large scale of protest.....In Tingzhou, people have chased and harassed the magistrate He Gudong, and in Shanghang they have plundered the rice depot.<sup>429</sup>

Patently, lifting the restrictions in regard to foreign sea trades would facilitate rice imports from Southeast Asia, thereby immediately feeding the poor. Taken the above discussions into account, Yongzheng and his Grand Council more or less agreed to lessen the maritime restrictions. The only question that concerned the emperor was how to properly regulate the connection between coastal merchants, foreigners conducting business in Southeast Asia, and the wider maritime world. In response to all these, Yongzheng decided to entail a more statutory web of commercial management by intensifying imperial control over the Customs offices with administrative measurements, thereby to reconcile the diversity of “foreign dangers” and “local interests” with the bureaucratic impulse to uniformity. From that time onwards, all trading routes, as well as the conducts and behaviors of foreign traders, predominantly the British East India Company (EIC) and the Chinese trading overseas, were intensely supervised and policed by customs officials.<sup>430</sup> For instance, each foreign vessel had to register at the Customs houses and pay taxes on its cargo upon its arrival; all shiploads imported by foreign merchants had to be scanned prior to sale, otherwise goods would be labeled as illegal and unwarranted, in which the Customs

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<sup>429</sup> Taipei Gugong Buwuyuan, *Yongzheng zhupi yuyhi*, vol. 8, pp. 49-51.

<sup>430</sup> *DaQing Shizong Xianhuangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 7, p. 52; see also *Yongzheng Ningbo fuzhi* (1741), *juan* 12, 67b.

office was allowed to confiscate the bulk, regardless of its value or quantity. Unregistered foreign vessels would possibly get sacked if the customs officials found out they had been moonlighting.<sup>431</sup> In some key commercial hubs (e.g. Canton and Fuzhou), the customs officials, primarily working with some prominent local merchants, were even told to keep a watchful eye on foreigners' settlements so as to prevent crime and disorder.<sup>432</sup>

Foreign vessels that approached the China's coastline in the eighteenth century often called at trading ports in Southeastern China because of their favorable geographic locations. However, even if foreigners were allowed to trade in Fujian (Xiamen) and Zhejiang (Dinghai),<sup>433</sup> most European traders chose to stop at Canton, the perfectly positioned way-station which is much closer to Southeast Asia, simply because it was not profitable to sail north. As a result, Canton began to handle a growing volume of long-distance trade and the Canton Customs swiftly became one of the most active offices as well as the key nodal points in the trans-maritime network between China, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean region, and Western Europe. Against the backdrop of this situation, Chinese commercial elites who excelled in dealing with European traders also proliferated apace in Canton from the 1720s. In response to the growing number of "overseas trading experts," Yongzheng

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<sup>431</sup> See 柏之蕃 Bo Zhifan (*Jiangnan Songjiang tidu zongbing guan* 江南松江提督總兵官), Junjichu dang'an (Yongzheng 6 nian, December 5, no. 402008790).

<sup>432</sup> See *DaQing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, juan 5, p. 205.

<sup>433</sup> Since the opening of four customs offices under the rule of Kangxi, the coastal region of Southeastern China, using the description of Gang Zhao, was "completely opened." See Gang Zhou, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684-1757* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), pp. 79-98. Compared to the Ming empire (only Macao was open to foreign vessels and Guangzhou and Yuegang were open to tribute vessels), merchants from Asia and Europe were first allowed to anchor at Shanghai, Ningbo, Dinghai, Wenzhou, Quanzhou, Chaozhou, Guangzhou, or Xiamen. See *DaQing Shengzu renhuangdi shilu*, juan 5, p. 205.

soon refined the aforementioned “*baoshang zhidu*” in 1725 by establishing an umbrella organization, known to foreigners as the *cohong* system,<sup>434</sup> to organize these mercantile elites who engaged in Sino-European sea trade. In cooperation with the Canton customs, the *cohong* was legally responsible for regulating trading matters, in particular with the British and the French, under governmental control. Thanks to the structured customs network and the *cohong* practice, international commerce between China and the rest of the world continued to grow steadily – without significant incident – under the thirteen-year rule of emperor Yongzheng. Over the fifty year span from 1685 to 1735, more than 1,500 ships traded between Southeast Asia, Japan, and twenty five coastal Chinese ports, and this volume of foreign trade was arguably unprecedented in the history of imperial China.<sup>435</sup>

### Customs Offices in the Qianlong era

Yongzheng was succeeded by his fourth son Qianlong in 1735, the time when China was experiencing an explosive growth of domestic sea trade. According to the archives of the Zhejiang customs office, at least fifteen thousand vessels were checked and registered by the different branches of the Zhejiang offices. Over seventy percent were domestic

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<sup>434</sup> Some scholars point out that the *cohong* system is similar to the “maritime trade bureau” during the Tang-Song-Yuan era. See for example Liang Jiabin, *Guangdong shisanhang kao* (Shanghai: Guoli bianzhiguan, 1937); Li Guorong and Lin Weisen (eds.), *Qingdai Guangzhou shisanhang jilüe* (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2006); Diyi lishi dang’an guan & Guangzhou shi liwanqu zhengfu (eds.), *Qingong Guangzhou shisanhang Dang’an jinxuan* (Guangzhou: Guangdong jingji chubanshe, 2002), “preface.”

<sup>435</sup> See Iwao Sei’ichi, “Kinsei Nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryoteki kosatsu 近世日支貿易に關する数量的考察 [A quantitative study of Sino-Japanese trade in the seventeenth century],” *Shigaku zasshi*, vol. 62, no. 11 (1953), pp. 981-1121; and Yamawaki Teijiro, *Nagasaki no Tojin boeki 長崎の唐人貿易* [Chinese trades in Nagasaki] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1964).

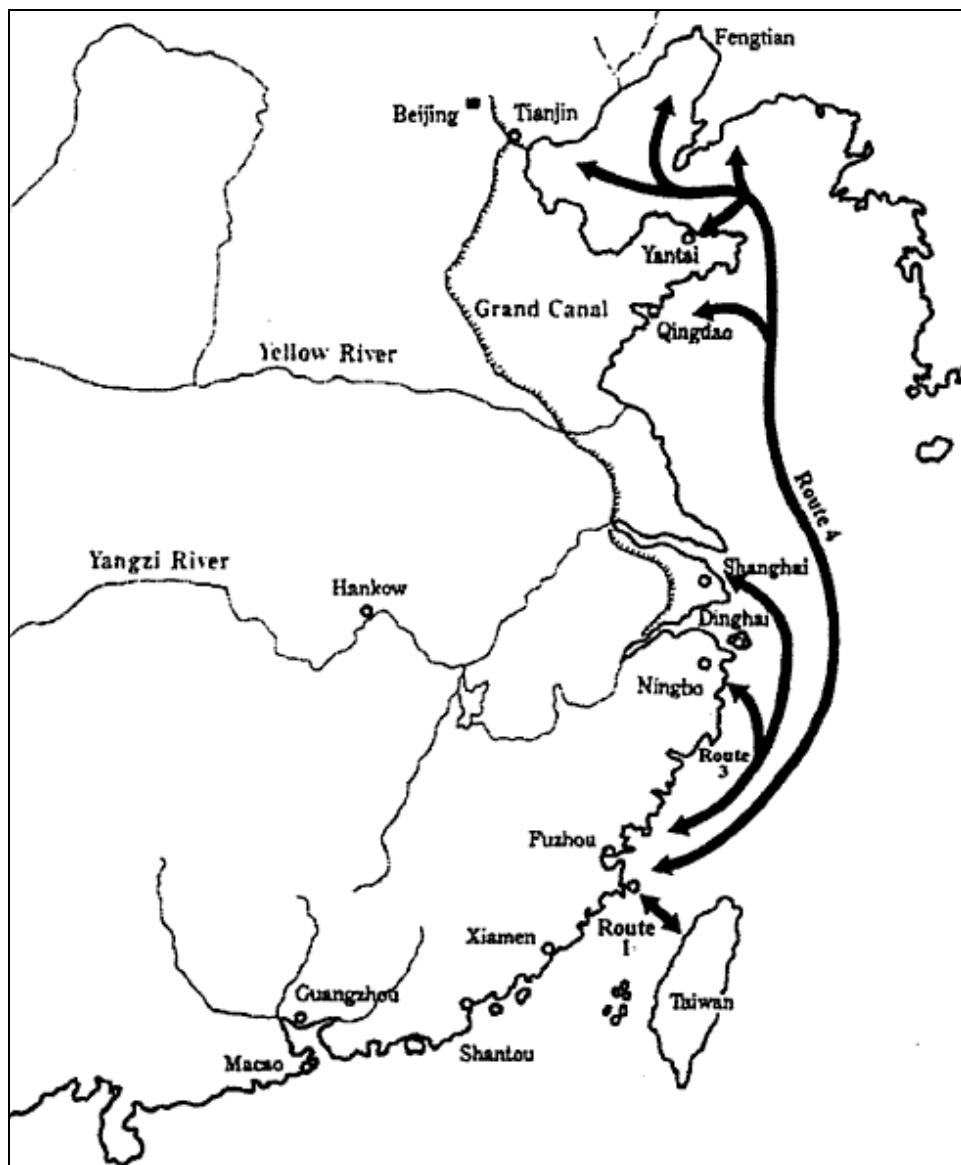
trading ships.<sup>436</sup> In fact, by the time Qianlong came to power, cargo ships that routinely hugged the coastlines carried goods chiefly on eight main routes, with an interlocking series of regional circuits that facilitated the movement of commodities, people, and information along the maritime highways. In their textured studies of coastal sea trades in eighteenth century China, Akira Matsuda and Huang Guosheng amply demonstrated the eight prominent regional networks in the mid-eighteenth century: (i) The first one was from Fujian to Taiwan, which centered on the exchange of Taiwanese rice, sugar, oil, and deer products<sup>437</sup> for porcelain, clothes, salt, and iron from the mainland. (ii) The second was a short-distance one between Fujian and Guangdong. Fujian traders, mostly from Futai, shipped rice, wheat, and ox-bones to Guangzhou so as to trade for miscellaneous products. (iii) The third route operated between Fujian and the Jiangzhe region, in which Taiwan and Fujian traders carried sugar products to Jiangsu and Zhejiang, returning with olives, oils, fir, cotton cloth, silk, satins, and yarn. (iv) The fourth one linked Fujian and the Bohai region. Southern traders took sugar, paper, pottery, pepper, and wood products to trade for bean dough, melons, red pears, yellow beans, medicines, and salt meat. (v) The fifth one ran between Guangdong and the Jiangzhe region, in which sugar products and pines from Guangdong were shipped to Jiangsu in return of cotton, local silks, and a certain amount of bean dough (imported from Tianjin). (vi) The sixth was from Guangdong to Shandong and Tianjin, the longest domestic maritime trade route compared to the others. Traders from the

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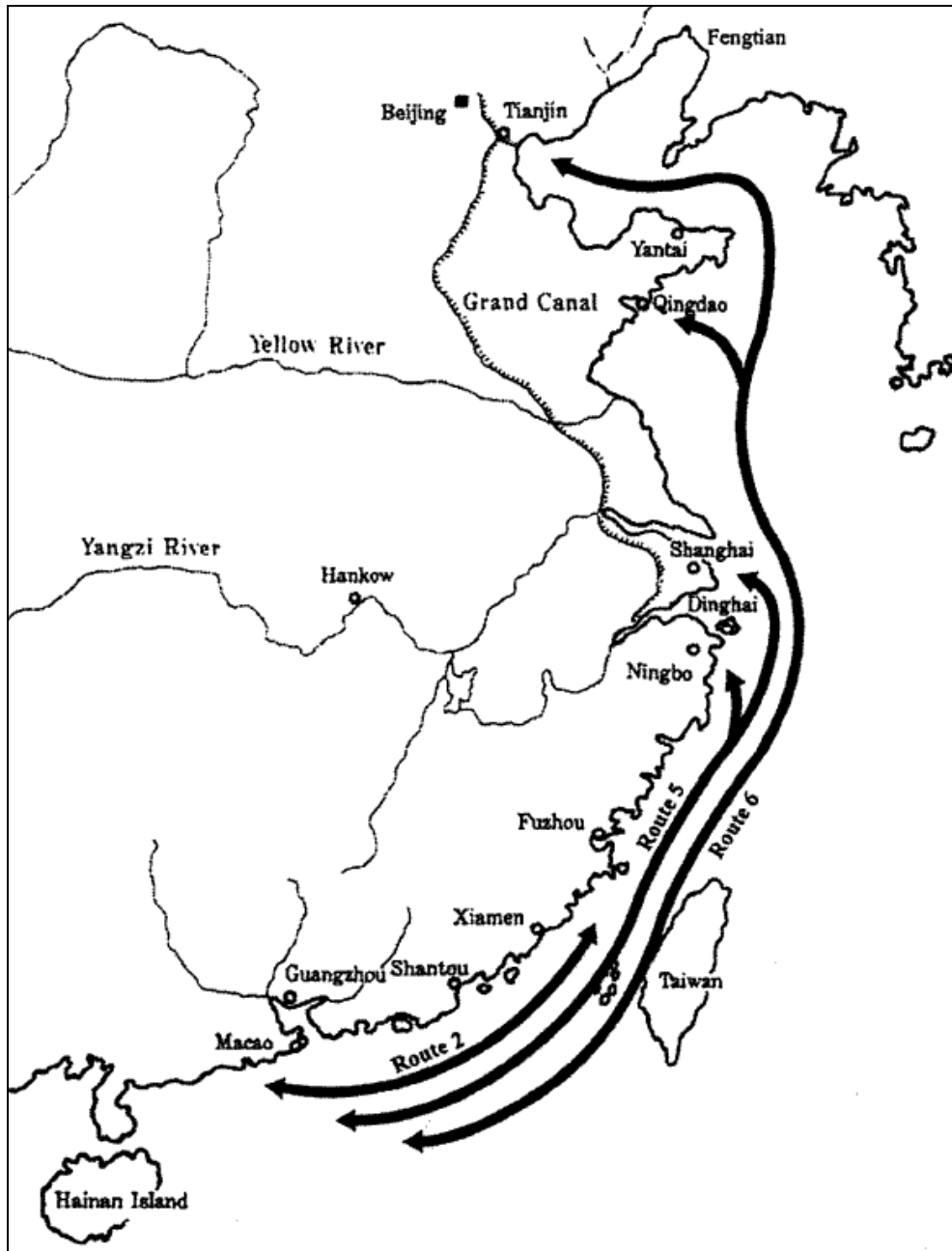
<sup>436</sup> Matsuura Akira, "Shincho zenki no Sekko kaikan to kaijo boeki," *Shien*, vol. 85 (1997), pp. 19-32.

<sup>437</sup> Deer products were hot commodities. Since hides were sold in Japan for tremendous profits, and venison fetched high prices in China, as did horns and genitals sold as medicine. For details, see Murray A. Rubinstein (ed.), *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 92; Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 33; John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 365.

north carried yellow beans, wheat, and bean dough to Guangdong in exchange for pottery, paper, and sugar goods. (vii) The seventh connected the Jiangzhe coast (Jiangsu, Zhejiang) and the Bohai Bay (Fengtian, Shandong). Bohai traders brought bean dough and wheat to Shanghai, and yellow beans, green cakes, pears, and melons to Ningbo and Zhenhai, in return for tea, cotton, and southern silk products. (viii) The final one was the shortest sea route, linking Jiangnan and Zhejiang, which focused on the exchange of Jiangnan porcelain and Zhejiang pears, tofu, and walnuts.



**Map 5.1 Eight major sea routes I [highlighting sea routes 1, 3, and 4]**  
(All maps are prepared by Professor Jane Kate Leonard and used by permission)



Map 5.2 Eight major sea routes II [highlighting sea routes 2, 5, and 6]



No.	From	To	Trading goods
1	Futai (Fujian)	Taipei (Taiwan)	Processed goods (Fujian) Rice, oil, sugar, deer products (Taiwan)
2	Futai (Fujian)	Guangzhou (Guangdong)	Rice, wheat, ox-bones (Fujian) Mulberry silk, persimmon, plum, longan (Guangdong)
3	Futai (Fujian)	Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Jiangzhe)	Sugar product (Fujian) Indigo, olives, various oils, dir, cotton cloth, silk, satins, yarn
4	Futai (Fujian)	Shandong, Tianjin and Fengtian (Bohai region)	Sugar, paper, pottery, pepper, wood products (Fujian) Bean dough, melons, red pears, medicines, salt meats (Bohai region)
5	Guangzhou (Guangdong)	Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Jiangzhe)	Sugar product, pine (Guangdong) Cotton, cotton cloth, bean dough [shipped from the north], local silks (Jiangzhe)
6	Guangzhou (Guangdong)	Shandong and Tianjin (Bohai region)	Sugar product (Guangdong) Bean dough, yellow beans, wheat (Bohai region)
7	Fengtian, Shandong (Bohai region)	Shanghai (Jiangsu), Ningbo, Zhenhai (Zhejiang)	Beans, wheat (Bohai region) Yellow beans, green cakes, pears, melons (Shanghai) Tea, cotton, cotton cloth, silk (Ningbo and Zhehai)
8	Jiangnan	Zhejiang	Porcelain (Jiangnan) Pears, tofu, walnuts (Zhejiang)

**Table II: Summary of the eight domestic trading routes**

In response to the momentous growth of domestic sea trades across the four sea zones, emperor Qianlong decided to establish more satellite substations over the entire customs network. These newly established substations not only reinforced and stimulated the growth of the eight shipping ties within and between the seven maritime provinces, but also served as commercial hubs and distribution centers for small sea ports and their immediate hinterlands, thereby spurring the development of “a commodity economy in more remote locations on the coast.”<sup>438</sup> Using Fujian as an example, in the last few years of

<sup>438</sup> Huang Guosheng, “Chinese Maritime Customs in Transition, 1750-1830,” p. 178.

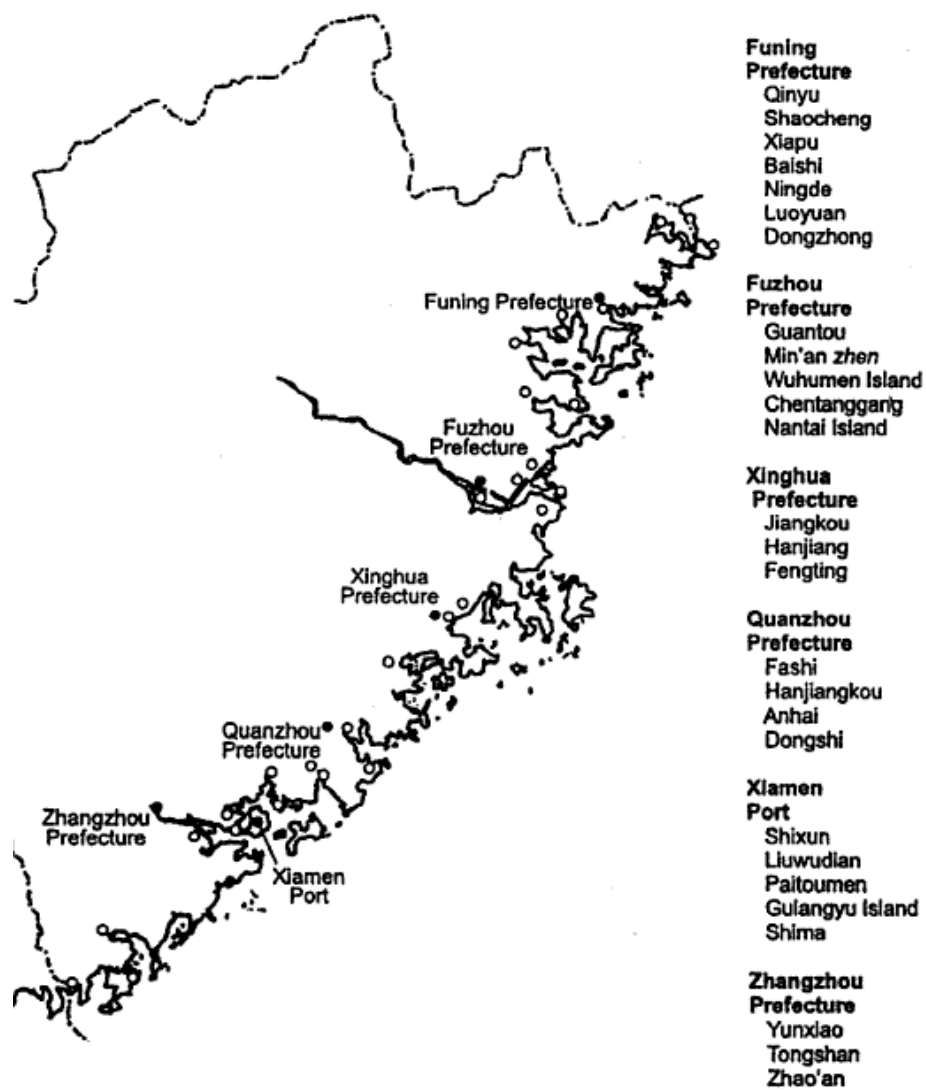
the Yongzheng era, there were about twenty substations responsible for the collection of ship taxes and the registration process of merchant vessels. But the number increased significantly during the Qinglong period. According to the report prepared by Celeng, the Customs superintendent in Fujian, sixty more “collection stations (the so called “money and rice ports” [*qianliang kou* 錢糧口] or “red-receipt ports” [*hongdan kou* 紅單口])” were found at locations extended over 2,000 *li* along the coast by the time of 1743.<sup>439</sup> These newly established customs ports were designated to handle sea trades from particular cities and locales; while in some substations, special customs officials or commercial firms (*minfang* 民坊) were appointed to take care of and protect the interests of local traders.<sup>440</sup> In return, provincial merchants were expected to assist the Customs office and police themselves by maintaining stability in pricing, supply, and quality of their commodities.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> “Qianlong zhao neige huke tiben guanshuixiang,” no. 5.

<sup>440</sup> Although local merchants relied on the protection provided by the government, they organized to enforce commercial rules among themselves, protecting their interests against being cheated. See Ping-ti Ho, *Zhongguo huiguan shilun* 中國海關史論 [Historical essay on Chinese native place associations] (Taiwan: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1966) and Peter Golas, “Early Ch’ing Guilds,” in G. William Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977), pp. 555-580. Arguably, such mercantile networks were critical to maintaining and regulating a much safer and equal commercial situation between local merchants in the eighteenth century. Yet Chinese merchants were not the only traders aiming to establish a set of “local justice,” other examples appear in many locations. For example, Maghribi Jewish merchants also formed mutual agreements between themselves. If any one of them cheated another who had entrusted him with business, the entire group would boycott the cheater until he made restitution. See Avner Greif, “Reputation and Coalitions in Medieval Trade: Evidence on the Maghribi Traders,” *Journal of Economic History*, vol. 49 no. 4 (December, 1989), pp. 857-882. American merchants from New Julfa, likewise, agreed to blacklist any member who acted dishonestly when employed by another New Julfan. See Sebouh Aslanian, “Social Capital, Trust, and the Role of Networks in Julfan Trade: Informal and Semi-formal Institutions at Work,” *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1 no. 3 (2006), pp. 383-402. The Chinese, Maghribi, or New Julfan example thus revealed that the merchants themselves worked with each other and swiftly collected information about merchants’ behavior. Similar examples can be found in Mexican California, and the trans-Saharan slave trade of Western Europe. For details, see Karen Clay, “Trade without Law: Private-Order Institutions in Mexican California,” *Journal of Law Economics, and Organization*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1997), pp. 202-231 and Sebastian Prange, “Trust in God, But Tie your Camel First: The Economic Organization of the Trans-Saharan Slave Trade between the Fourteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1 no. 2 (2006), pp. 219-239.

<sup>441</sup> This is in fact very similar to how the *bakufu* leaders in Tokugawa Japan forbade non-sanctioned merchant



Map 5.3 The Fujian Province

The expansion of the customs network also occurred in Guangdong almost around the same

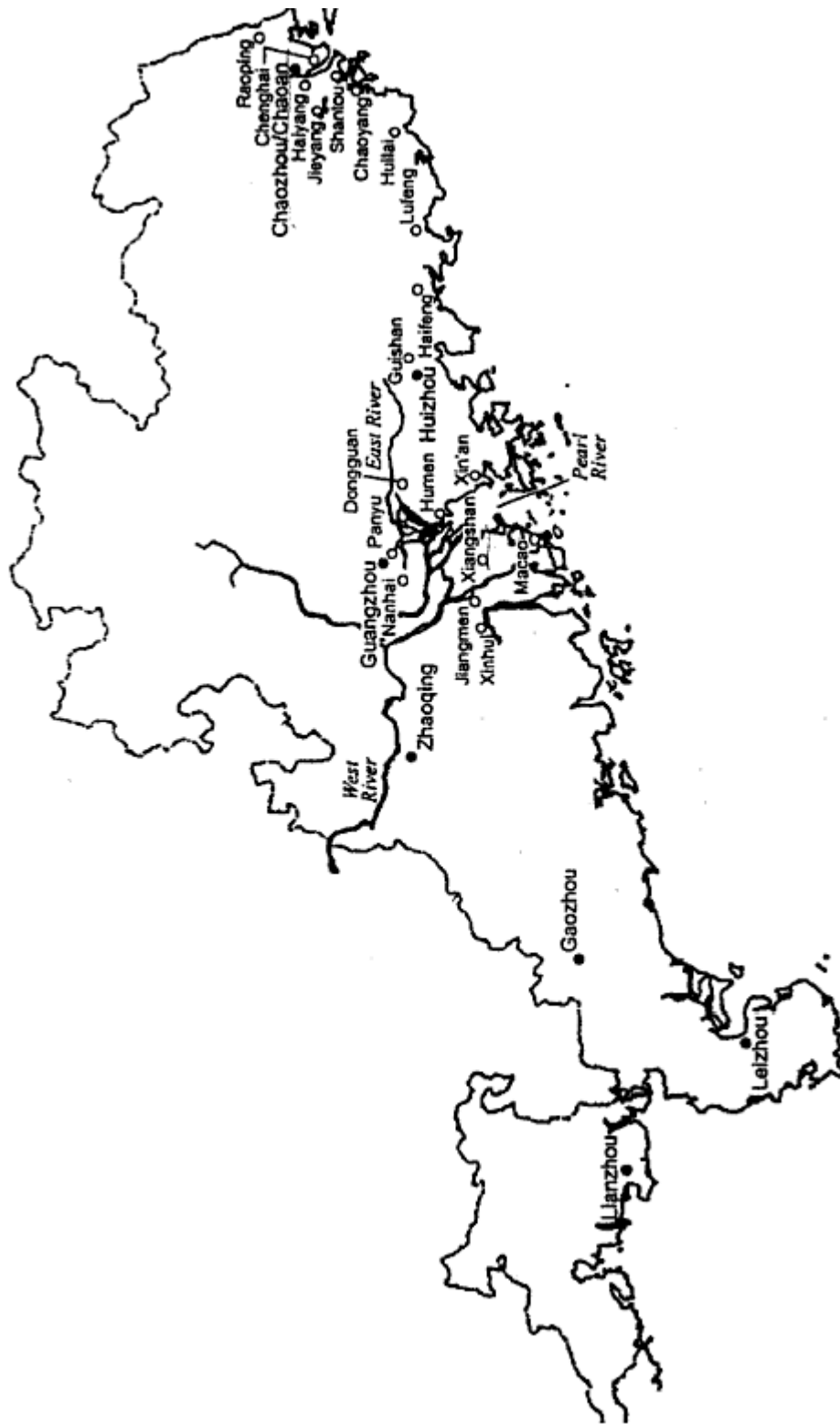
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group from infringing upon the activities of the chartered merchant houses in the eighteenth century. By receiving the “protection” provided by the government, members of the chartered trade association (*kabu nakama*) had to pay fees to the *bakufu* and regulated their trading behaviors. For details, see Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 300-301.

period. Prior to the 1750s, the Guangdong province comprised and was shored up by eight prefectural customs offices, locating in Chaozhou, Huizhou, Guangzhou, Zhaoqing, Gaozhou, Qiangzhou, Leizhou, and Lianzhou respectively. But this institutional framework expanded in Qianlong's time. For example, in Chaozhou, located in the northeast corner of the Guangdong coast, eighteenth customs stations, including ten registration passes and eight tax collection ports, were established across seven coastal counties of Raoping, Chenghai, Chaoan, Haiyang, Jieyang, Chaoyang, and Huilai. Likewise, ten additional collection stations in Lufeng, Haifeng, and Guishan counties were set up in Huizhou prefecture. Meanwhile, thirty satellite inspection and registration stations were found across the delta counties of Dongwen, Xin'an, Panyu, Nanhai, Xiangshan (Macau), and Xinhui (Jiangmen) across the customs network of Guangzhou. In turn, ten branch stations were established in Leizhou and Qiangzhou; six in Gaozhou, three in Lianzhou, and one in Zhaoqing.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Xi Yufu, *et. al.* (eds.), *Huangchao zhengdian leizuan: guanshui* 皇朝政典類纂: 關稅 [Sources on the governmental institutions of the reigning dynasty, arranged by categories] (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1969), *juan* 85, pp. 7-10.



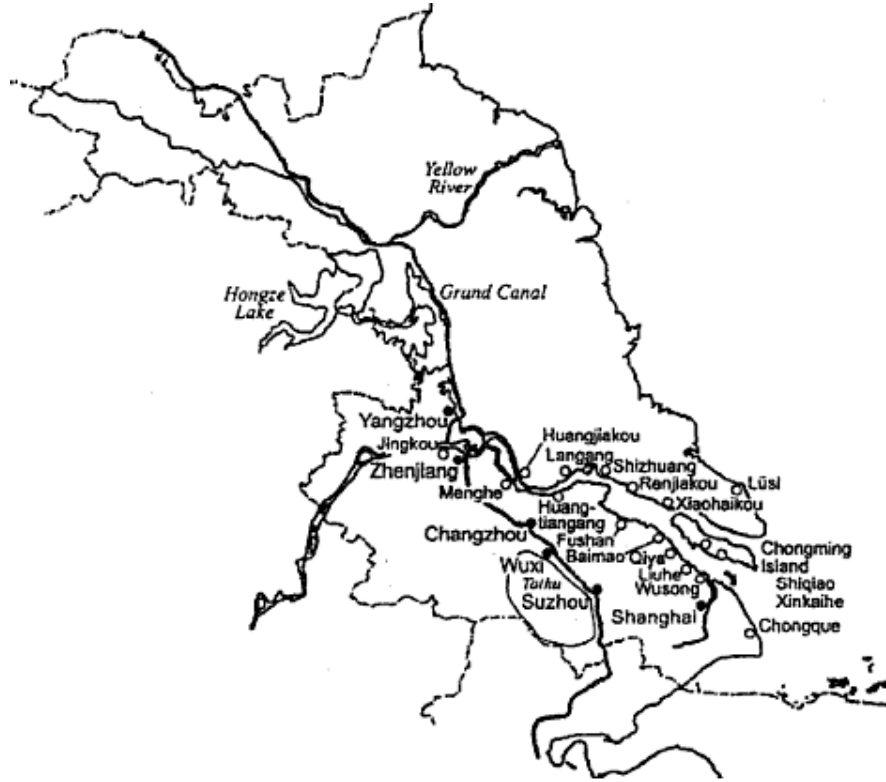
Map 5.4 The Guangdong coast

The situations in Jiangsu and Zhejiang went through very similar processes. By 1750s, eighteen customs ports were set up across the Jiangsu province, all within 600 *li* of the headquarter based in Shanghai. Among the eighteen stations, Shanghai (on the Huangpu River) and Liuhe (on the south bank of the Yangzi in Taicang) were the busiest, while the former served as an entrepôt for vessels arriving from Fujian and Guangdong; the latter was the key harbor for merchants engaged in northeastern sea trade.<sup>443</sup> In order to alleviate the workload of the two customs stations, three additional checkpoints were later established on the Chongming Island, and ten more stations on three estuary counties, namely Taicang, Suzhou, and Changzhou. Similar to Jiangsu, the Zhejiang customs also experienced a rapid growth of the number of substations. Apart from the customs head office at Ningbo, there were six customs ports set up in Zhapu, Ganpu, Zhenhai, Dinghai, Jiazikou, Wenzhou, and Ruian in the beginning. As maritime traffic continued to increase across the Zhejiang sea zone within the second quartile of the mid – eighteenth century, an additional eleven substations and fifteen branch ports were founded at the river mouth of the Yangtze River so as to handle the intra – provincial trades between Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> The maritime customs located in Shanghai functioned as an entrepot in cotton trade. Ever since the Song period, and likely much earlier, the Jiangnan region had long been the center of cotton-spinning and weaving in China. During the eighteenth century, Shanghai gradually became the biggest distribution and transshipment sea port for the cotton trade with neighboring provinces as well as the foreign market which connected East and Southeast Asia, India, Western Europe, and America. By the early nineteenth century, a series of sand junks sailed north from Shanghai and Zhapu carrying cotton products to the Bohai region, in return of white beans, salt pork, bean oil, and bean dough. See Zhang Zhongmin, *Shanghai cong kaifa zouxiang kaigang, 1368-1842* (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chnbanshe, 1990).

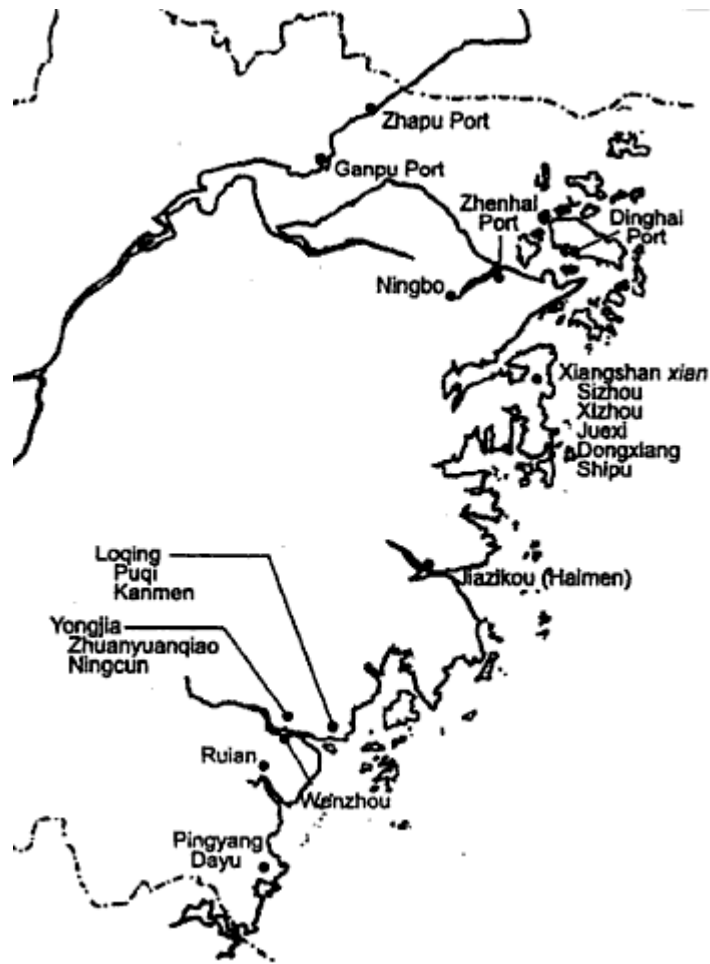
<sup>444</sup> It should be reminded that the location of substations, in particular in Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Fujian,



Map 5.5 The coast of Jiangsu

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changed frequently with trade patterns and geographic situation. For example, when the port of Zhapu became silted, an additional port station would set up and served as a so called “nearby port.” In Fujian, when Quanzhou declined, the port of Hanjiang rose in commercial importance and consequently, was made an inspection collection station and designated as the mainland terminus for the bilateral trade with the Taiwanese port of Luzigang (Zhanghua). See Xi Yufu, *et. al.* (eds.), *Huangchao zhengdian leizuan: guanshui* 皇朝政典類纂：關稅 [Sources on the governmental institutions of the reigning dynasty, arranged by categories] (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1969), *juan* 86, p. 4. Huang Guocheng, *Yapian zhanzheng qiande dongnan sisheng haiguan*, pp. 59-61, 131-136.



Map 5.6 The coast of Zhejiang

The increased number of substations also implies the enlargement of the customs' personnel, thereby tripling the number of customs officials stationed in the four coastal provinces. In order to operate and maintain a largely expanded structure, the Qianlong government had to pour extra funding to underpin the newly established Customs stations, while it was not enough to simply generate resources from the customs revenues. And we need to keep in mind that the large sum of money did not only cover the salaries of *official* customs staffs, but also included a set of surcharges for supporting the sub-bureaucratic, or extra-bureaucratic, custom officials outside the customs stations. As mentioned previously, the



operation of the customs offices depended largely upon the performance of a range of complex tasks that were, for most of the time, handled by a group of sub-bureaucratic Han-functionaries (including the *yamen* 衙門 staffs). Their responsibilities included the recruitments of labor, boatmen, and interpreters, the purchase of provisions for foreign merchants, document editing, and the collection of general port maintenance fees. Additionally, they acted as the conduits for the *official* customs officers to collect special donations and gifts from local businessmen to cover some segments of the customs' expenses.<sup>445</sup> In the 1760s, the Qing court was still able to provide these expanding maintenance fees by imposing extra and heavy taxes on local and foreign traders. But the Qianlong government faced difficulties to afford such expenditures when the Qing state was beset by the decline of land tax revenues, the disruption of the currency system, and a series of economic crises starting from the 1770s. The lion's share (almost over 60 percent) of these exactions was then imposed on the European shippers who were eager to trade with China at that time.<sup>446</sup>

As discussed in the preceding section, European traders were allowed to sail up the coast to conduct businesses. However, when the British decided to set up and secure a permanent trading base for tea and silk trades near Zhejiang and Fujian in 1756, they received a stern imperial rebuke from the Qianlong government.<sup>447</sup> As mentioned by

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<sup>445</sup> Xin Zhu, *et al.*, *Shiliao xunkan* (Beijing: Peiping Palace Museum, 1930), part 5, p. 159.

<sup>446</sup> See Huang Guosheng, "The Maritime Customs in Transition," p. 185.

<sup>447</sup> Perhaps it was because Qianlong discovered a new pocket of illegal Christian missionaries in the late 1750s. He feared a renewed wave of heterodox proselytizing in his empire. As William Rowe comments, "[n]ow turning fifty and some twenty-five years into a reign that all around him understood to be a nearly unprecedented prosperous age, Qianlong was not unreasonably nervous lest something unpredictable, such as

Qianlong,

Some sea ports in Zhejiang (such as Ningbo) and Fujian (Fuzhou) are the same as Macao in terms of developing overseas trades. But if we open the port, it will lead more and more foreigners to make their homes in the interior, which is a strategic area. This is not consistent with our principle of eradicating all problems at the earliest opportunity.....We shall therefore confine the foreigners to Guangzhou and will not allow them to come to Ningbo.<sup>448</sup>

Thereafter, all Western trading activities were restricted to Canton and foreign merchants were only permitted to do businesses through the *cohong* merchants supervised by the Customs office. The year 1756 thus becomes a watershed for foreign relations in which the Qianlong government began to interact with the outside world based on a refined and selected framework of “guarded engagement”<sup>449</sup> that would also define later Qing trading policy until the Treaty of Nanjing was signed in the nineteenth century.<sup>450</sup> Even though the Qianlong government sought to trade with the outside world, as commented by Joanna

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a massive influx of foreigners with wild and unconventional ideas, undermine what he and his forebears had so gloriously achieved.” See William Rowe, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing*, p. 144.

<sup>448</sup> *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 15, pp. 1023-1024.

<sup>449</sup> Robert I. Hellyer also uses the term “guarded engagement” to describe the trading policies with foreigners initiated by the Tokigawa leaders. See Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 73-115. In fact, it is worth comparing the Qing and the *bakufu* in terms of their trading policies, but it could be another doctoral project.

<sup>450</sup> Meanwhile, Qianlong also refined a more flexible policy in controlling how long overseas traders from China could stay abroad after reading Chen Hongmou’s, the governor of Fujian, memorial. Chen stated that, “almost half the people of Fuzhou, Zhangzhou, and Quanzhou rely on overseas trade to make a living...Since Chen Yilao [a Chinese trader who failed to return to China on time after conducting business in Southeast Asia] was sentenced to exile, the Chinese in Southeast Asia have been terrified to return home. Meanwhile, even though traders have routinely failed to return on time in the past, this is in most cases a result of the complexity of the business, variable weather, delays in receiving payment, and other commercial factors. These people who return late should be given amnesty.....I therefore suggest that those merchant who have remained abroad for too long as a result of commercial problems be permitted to return no matter how long they have lived abroad.” *DaQing gaozong chun huangdi shilu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), *juan* 14, p. 1012. See also William Rowe, *Saving the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 302-303.

Waley-Cohen, the Manchu authority was reluctant to repeal official restrictions that checked the potential dangers (i.e. it is mostly about fear of disruption and ceasing off monopoly benefits) that might be provoked by foreigners from afar, whom were often stereotyped as warlike and greedy in official documents. The Canton System (or the so-called “One Port Trading Policy”) was therefore a means developed from the *baoshang zhidu* to interact with the global market in a measured – and from the Qing perspective, more beneficial-manner. To put it another way, the Canton System emerged because the Manchu government decided to remain connected with the vital global market connected by the sea but in a more managed and less threatening way.

Because of the emergence of the Canton system, a sizable number of historians conclude that Qianlong’s trading policies were passive and retrograde as they hindered the direct access of Fujian, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu traders to Westerners.<sup>451</sup> In his *The Walled Kingdom: History of China from 2000 B.C. to the Present*, Witold Rodzinski even argued that Sino-foreign trade was solely dominated and stimulated by Western Europeans:

Trade relations between China and the West had increased considerably from the middle of the eighteenth century, and it is indisputable that the initiative in this development rested solely with the latter. In view of the economic self-sufficiency of its immense empire, the Ch’ing government had no particular interest in favouring a further growth in foreign trade, which it regarded as a marginal importance.....the bulk of the China trade rested in British hands, with the East India Company playing the principle role, until its demise in 1834.<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> See for example Dai Yi, “Qingdai Qianlong chao de Zhong Ying guanxi 清代乾隆朝的中英關係,” *Qingshi yanjiu*, no. 3 (1993), p. 3.

<sup>452</sup> Witold Rodzinski, *The Walled Kingdom: History of China from 2000 B.C. to the Present* (Flamingo: Fontana, 1984), pp. 177-178.

While Rodzinski observed that the High Qing remained a passive respondent to foreign sea trades – as if she retained a remarkable disinterest in maritime affairs, the explanation he advanced is unfortunately deceptive and unsatisfactory as to call for careful scrutiny. Far from “being self-sufficient all the time (e.g. rice production),” the Great Qing was eager to establish trading networks as foreign sea trade was critical to their survival.<sup>453</sup> The policy of the Manchu emperors managing sea trades actually contributed to the sensibility expressed by Charles de Montesquieu that “the natural effect of commerce is to lead to peace.”<sup>454</sup> It is therefore inappropriate to follow Rodzinski’s idea to thoroughly define the political outlook of the High Qing government. Moreover, even though the Qianlong authority promulgated a set of regulations of overseas shipping, as John E. Wills suggests, the Qing court in fact reacted flexibly and responsive to the needs of foreign traders. For example, although all foreign vessels on one hand were strictly supervised by the Customs Office, the Qianlong government, on the other, increased the number of Western headmen (as assistants to the Customs) to accommodate the presence of private foreign traders – especially for those with limited connections, or even no connection, with the British East India Company. Furthermore, contrary to the old practices, Western traders (including the EIC merchants) were allowed to stay in Canton during winter time. It was no longer compulsory for them to move to Macau as they were previously forced to do from the 1760s onwards.<sup>455</sup> According

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<sup>453</sup> Zheng Yangwen, *China on the Sea: How the Maritime World Shaped Modern China*, p. 9.

<sup>454</sup> Charles de Montesquieu; Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold Stone (eds. and trans.), *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 338.

<sup>455</sup> Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005).

to the Customs documents, special tax exemptions were also given for the import of food, supplies, and refreshments for foreign traders who resided in Canton. In addition to several tax deductions, some measurements were at the same time taken to protect the basic rights of foreign merchants as well as their property.<sup>456</sup> But yet, these flexible responses to the needs of Western traders, ostensibly for peaceful sea trades with foreigners, did not produce fruitful results. Western merchants, especially the British, were not satisfied with the Canton System since they were keen on penetrating the lucrative markets of East Asia as much as possible.<sup>457</sup> When the British failed to convince the Manchu leader to alter their established trading policies through the Macartney Mission in 1794 and the Amherst Visit in 1816,<sup>458</sup> both sides found themselves on steep curves to reach a stage of mutual agreement. The British's demand for "free trade privileges" thus led to a confrontation between the two empires in 1839, followed by a century of Western economic imperialism in various port cities and special trading sphere.<sup>459</sup> After the Opium Wars, the Customs office was once again reshaped in terms of its administrative structure and included Western

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<sup>456</sup> Yao Xianhao (ed.), *Zhongguo jindai duiwai maoyi shizi liao* 中國近代對外貿易史資料 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 222, 227, and 231.

<sup>457</sup> From a commercial perspective, China was considered a relatively important part of the British Empire. According to the description of H.B. Morse, the British "had striven for a third of a century to obtain entrance to China trade, and had had no success." See H.B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company, 1635-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926-1929), vol. 1, p. 31. As a matter of fact, the British are not the only Europeans who were eager to explore the commercial and trading market in China. C.G.F. Simkin also observed that from the eighteenth century onwards, European powers fought against each other in order to take part in the Chinese market, a struggle for profit which continued over the centuries and which economic historians recognize as a "historical constant." See C.G.F. Simkin, *The Traditional Trade of Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 251-260.

<sup>458</sup> For a revisionist account of the Macartney Mission, which is influenced by postcolonial theory, see James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>459</sup> On Western, in particular British, imperialism and gunboat diplomacy in Asia, see Christopher Munn, "The Chusan Episode: Britain's Occupation of a Chinese Island, 1840-46," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25 (1997), pp. 82-112; Barry Gough, *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-1890* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

officials.<sup>460</sup> Constituting the front lines of engagement with foreign traders, the Customs offices experienced another wave of transformation from established channels and guarded practices of sea trades to a focus on more direct commercial ties with the aggressive Western powers. Indicative of its growing political weakness, the Qing monarchs were compelled to reassess the manner and attitude they used to manage maritime businesses and commercial activities.<sup>461</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

As the above discussion illustrates, the establishment of the four Customs Offices and later the articulation of guarded engagement with Western merchants demonstrates that Manchu leaders possessed their own understanding of their position across specific sea spaces during the long eighteenth century. Seeking to enunciate a state-centric view of sovereignty over a wide swathe of domestic seawaters, High Qing monarchs made use of the Customs structure to supervise, manipulate, and monitor maritime shipping under their stewardship.<sup>462</sup> The development of the Customs office thus unfolds that the Manchu maritime politics was not defined by an overriding ideology of seclusion and stagnation, as is conventionally argued, but rather by particular imperial agendas of different historical moments – which can possibly be framed by three main waves of transitions from the

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<sup>460</sup> Subjected to Article 10 of the Rules Supplementing the Treaty of Tianjin, Qing China had to employ foreigners to establish and maintain a new form of Customs system at all trading ports.

<sup>461</sup> For details, see Hans van de Ven, “Robert Hart and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40 no. 3 (Jul., 2006), pp. 545-548; Robert Bickers, “Purloined Letters: History and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40 no. 3 (Jul., 2006), pp. 691-723.

<sup>462</sup> In comparison with the mid and late Ming Dynasty who saw sea commerce as an evil, something that might at best be tolerated, the Manchu fostered it in a comparatively active way.

Kangxi to the Qianlong reign. As both domestic and foreign sea trade grew dramatically after 1700, boosted by expanding sales of Chinese tea, silks, and porcelains in Western Europe,<sup>463</sup> the rapidly globalizing economy encouraged High Qing monarchs to take a more activist approach to Customs affairs. Similar to the Ottoman and Russian emperors,<sup>464</sup> the Manchu leaders regarded their domestic sea space neither as a castled-like buffer zone nor a distanced irrelevant geographic sector. They instead conceptualized and regarded the inner sea as a frontier of strategic and commercial importance which required deliberate ruling tactics. Yet in the parleys with the British merchants, who sought to establish more trading bases near Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the Qianlong emperor decisively adjusted the trading policies in response to the challenges of another new global commercial and cultural wave. Indeed it is quite noticeable that the Canton System indicates a more guarded and “Sino-centered” approach to monitor sea trades with Western countries than previous forms of monitoring commercial networks.

If we look at the development and transformation of the Customs office in the High Qing from a broad chronological spectrum (spanning from the late seventeenth century to the early twentieth century), it would not be exaggerated to argue that High Qing monarchs paved the way for Chinese participation in a world later dominated militarily and economically by European-based empires in several ways that have too often been ignored

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<sup>463</sup> Jacob M. Price, “The Imperial Economy,” in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire II : The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 101 (table 4.4).

<sup>464</sup> For instance, in exploring the significant, yet often overlooked, linkages between the Ottoman Empire and the sea, Giancarlo Casale argues in his recent monograph that scholars have underestimated the importance of the Ottoman's “soft empire,” which as he writes as “based not on territorial expansion, but instead on an infrastructure of trade, communication, and religious ideology.” For further details, see Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

by historians. First of all, the Customs System was the first governmental institution, which was coherent and fairly streamlined, for managing domestic as well as overseas trades in the history of the Manchu empire. Without a doubt, the Customs office was the most prominent institution that stimulated and contributed to the explosive and dramatic growth of sea trades between northern and southern China (especially from the 1750s to the 1830s), yet more importantly, it served as an significant preparatory role in China's participation in the modern global economy followed by high imperialism and semi-colonization.<sup>465</sup> Secondly, as Jane Kate Leonard suggested, the emergence of the Customs system also stimulated the co-operation between the central government and local commercial elites. Apart from the *baoshang zhidu* or the *cohong* practice, local commercial groups began to play a more significant part in urban port governance, harbor management, and a variety of trading affairs. This kind of cooperation proved to be effective and continued during the early treaty ports era (ca. 1843 – 1870) when coastal China was sucked into a new form of global historical process.<sup>466</sup> It was only during the 1900s that the mutually dependent relationship between the central government and the local merchants began to attenuate as local businessmen could undertake overseas shipping without the administrative and financial support from the central authority but on their own terms.<sup>467</sup> Last but not least, the institutionalization of the Customs offices also represented a major step in connecting

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<sup>465</sup> But, of course, to focus on the Customs structure alone is to overlook the existence of other important conduits that played a key role in facilitating the eighteenth-century growth of trade. These conduits include, for example, the significance of overseas Chinese, improving shipping technologies, maritime expertise, and the aforementioned *huiguan* connection.

<sup>466</sup> See, for instance, Jane Kate Leonard, "Coastal Merchant Allies in the 1826 Sea Transport Experiment," in Wang Gangwu, Ng Chin-keong (eds.), *Maritime China in Transition*, pp. 271-286.

<sup>467</sup> After the Boxer Uprising, the central authority in Beijing almost lost the control of some key economic provinces. The emergence of the "joint defense of Southeast China 東南互保 [*dongnan hubao*]" serves as a very good example.



China's overseas trade to Western nations. The path to this event, involving negotiations with foreign envoys and internal political machinations (mostly in 1770–1800), has been described in many previous studies. However, this chapter has in particular highlighted that the High Qing government, similar to Tokugawa Japan, did not isolate the empire from the wider maritime world – that was mature and sophisticated – but moved toward a more guarded engagement with Westerners.<sup>468</sup> What is important to emphasize here, however, is that the policy of guarded engagement does not equal anti-foreignism or xenophobia. For many historians, it is generally accepted that the Canton System, which is assumed to be unable to evolve beyond a certain point, profoundly indicates China's repudiation of Western trade and technology.<sup>469</sup> In practice, the High Qing government was not resistant to contact with Europeans, nor was she merely a passive respondent to mounting external pressure to sea trade. It was not the case, then, that the Manchu leaders lacked the means or the interest in operating foreign trading via their maritime frontier in the long eighteenth century. Even after the Canton System was initiated, the Qing court continued to deal with Western merchants on a justifiable, if not rationalized, basis by adjusting to the needs of Western traders in numerous respects prior to the First Opium War. In view of this, the frictions between the Qing and those seaborne European empires might indicate the two sides adapted a different set of engaging policies that varied in strategic concern and economic calculation, but does not essentially mean that the latter had to trade with the

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<sup>468</sup> My argument hopes to echo with Peter Perdue's observation that "China was never completely isolated from the global processes." See Peter C. Perdue, "Comparing Empires: Manchu Colonialism," *The International History Review*, vol. 20 no. 2 (June, 1998), p. 256.

<sup>469</sup> See for example David Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some are so Rich and Some so Poor* (London: W.W. Norton, 1998), pp. 335-349; Maxine Berg, "Britain, Industry and Perceptions of China, 1792-94," *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1 (2006), pp. 269-288.

former “on humiliating and frustrating terms,”<sup>470</sup> and thus results in a torrent of diplomatic conflicts and military confrontations.

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<sup>470</sup> See W. Travis Hanes III and Frank Sanello, *Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2002); Jack Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 18-19.

## Chapter Six

### Writing the Waves

#### *Abstract*

This chapter returns from the realm of policy to a more conceptual level. To bolster my case for the significance of the maritime world to the Qing imagination, I excavate three non-official texts composed by Chen Lunjiong (?-1751), Wang Dahai, and Xie Qinggao (1765-1821), which dedicated to the maritime world and China's place within it. Unlike the literary texts that depicted the sea as a poetic trope or mysterious sphere full of mythical fantasies, maritime writings in this period invariably reflected a sense of the physical and cultural geography of the empire's maritime frontier and its impact on littoral societies and coastal defense. Compared to earlier maritime writings, these works introduced new ways of looking at the political, economic, and social conditions in coastal regions and the spaces that affected sea trade and military strategies. Influenced by geo-historical studies, and supplemented by evidential and cartographical research, the three maritime writers produced detailed and verifiable descriptions of the maritime sphere. They hoped their writings could contribute to coastal governance. To make such a contribution, they studied the *haijiang* district (maritime frontier), rediscovered the traditional *nanyang* region (South China Sea), and added important information about the wider world that went beyond, and challenged, the conventional *tianxia* order. Relying mainly on their personal experiences, they revised and updated Chinese knowledge of maritime Asia and gave special attention to issues of maritime affairs, such as how to stabilize the maritime frontier, how to guard against pirates and potential dangers from the sea, how to properly manage domestic and foreign sea trade, as well as how to keep domestic sea space sound and safe.

## Introduction

A breath of airy being  
Floating in the universe  
Where from ancient times  
The sun and moon's spheres  
Have been immersed.<sup>471</sup>

—Zhang Zhao (1691-1745), “Gazing at the Sea (*Guan hai*)”

In his verse “Gazing at the Sea,” Zhang Zhao, a native of Jiangsu in the Qing, conceptualized the sea as the cradle of nature, embodying the sun and moon since prehistoric times. With the touch of Zhang’s brush, the often seemingly peaceful and silent ocean was filled with unfathomable energies. But he was not the only writer within China’s poetic and cultural landscape to feature the sea. In fact, the sea played an important role in Chinese cultural history from early antiquity. From ancient times, when the *Shanhai jing* (Classic of the mountains and seas) was compiled circa 4th century BC, the Chinese never looked upon the sea with indifference.<sup>472</sup> Like mountains and forests and other natural landscapes, the sea was recorded, imagined, conceptualized, and written about in a variety of ways within Chinese literature.<sup>473</sup> Cursed as a mythical, hostile monster, worshipped as a superior, impervious deity, or seen as a protective frontier, the sea was taken as something

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<sup>471</sup> Zhang Zhao, “Guan hai,” in Xu Shichang (ed.), *Wan qingyi shihui* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1996), *juan* 58, p. 2335. The original text is *Qiankun fu yiqi, jin gu jin shuangwan* (乾坤浮一氣, 今古浸雙丸).

<sup>472</sup> Guo Pu, *Shanhai jing* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985); see also Richard E. Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), p. 41.

<sup>473</sup> See Liang Erping, *Zhongguo gudai haiyang ditu juyao* (Beijing: Haiyang chubanshe, 2011), pp. 1-4.

inextricably linked to Chinese society. Whatever passion and conceptualization the textual records may have conveyed about the sea, it was a presence that could not be ignored in the Chinese context.

Although the literature reveals the intimate link between the sea and Chinese culture from ancient times, outlining all of the ancient texts that mention the sea would be impossible within the confines of this chapter. I have therefore focused my attention on three maritime writings<sup>474</sup> composed respectively by Chen Lunjiong (?-1751), Wang Dahai, and Xie Qinggao (1765-1821) in the high Qing. Unlike the literary texts which depicted the sea as a poetic trope or mysterious sphere full of mythical fantasies, the three maritime writings selected for this chapter invariably reflected a keen sense of the physical and cultural geography of the empire's maritime frontier and its impact on littoral societies and coastal defence. Compared to maritime writings published in previous dynasties, the three texts selected for this article introduced a new way to look at the political, economic, and social conditions in coastal regions and the spaces that affected maritime shipping and military strategies. Surprisingly, despite their considerable contributions to the conceptualization of sea space, most of their writings have not been studied sufficiently by Chinese and western historians. One of the reasons for this neglect, I suspect, is that contemporary scholars have been inclined to study geo-historical writings that focused on inland frontier regions during the early and high Qing.<sup>475</sup> By geo-historical studies I refer to

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<sup>474</sup> By maritime writings I mean the writings that can be read as a projection of consciousness, ideas, and sentiments onto the sea. These writings often reveal themselves to be mirrors of the writer's own concerns about the maritime world.

<sup>475</sup> Most of the geo-historical writings in the high Qing deal with the foreign world centered on Inner Asia, which reflects the Manchu intense concern with the threatening posture of the western Mongols and the

a broad range of practical subjects, including local customs, topography, history, politics, and economic conditions.<sup>476</sup> By analyzing how Chen Lunjiong, Wang Dahai, and Xie Qinggao conceived of maritime space, I believe we can understand their significant contributions to geo-historical scholarship as well as how the Qing's intellectual and cultural borders expanded to incorporate the wider maritime world. We can also obtain a more complete understanding of the meaning that the maritime world had for the Qing by examining these maritime writings in conjunction with a series of imperial official documents.

My focus on just three maritime writers inevitably raises the question: Were they representative of the Chinese scholar-officials as those we have discussed in the previous chapters? The short answer to this is no. Wang Dahai and Xie Qinggao never held government offices. And although Chen Lunjiong served in the Guangdong naval forces, neither he nor the other two maritime writers enjoyed special social or economic status. They were people whom historians of early modern Europe would refer to as a “middling sort.”<sup>477</sup> During their lifetimes, their writings had only limited circulation in some coastal

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expanding Russian empire. Imperial studies such as the *Qinding Huangchao wenxian tongkao* and the *DaQing yitong zhi* mirrored the dynasty's strategic interests in Inner Asia, as did some privately written accounts, such as the works of Song Yun (1752-1835), Xu Song (1781-1848), and Gong Zizhen (1792-1841). See Liang Qichao, translated by Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. xxvii-xxviii; David M. Farquhar, “Origins of the Manchus' Mongolian Policy,” in John King Fairbank (ed.), *Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 198-205; Nicola Di Cosmo, “Qing Colonial Administration in Inner Asia,” *The International History Review*, vol. 20, no. 2 (Jun., 1998), pp. 287-309; and Hou Deren, *Qingdai xibei bianjiang shidixue* (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>476</sup> Zou Yilin, *Zhongguo lishi dili gaishu* (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1993), pp. 1-2. Some scholars might also include travel writings (*yuzhi*) within the scope of geo-historical studies. For more details on the development of travel writings in imperial China, see Richard E. Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 1-56.

<sup>477</sup> See, for example, Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England*,

provinces, such as Guangdong and Fujian. Only after the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did their ideas circulate widely. It was during the Opium Wars (1839-1842) that some prominent officials and literati, such as Lin Zexu (1785-1850) and Wei Yuan (1794-1856), began citing their works.<sup>478</sup> Unfortunately, Chen, Wang, and Xie were not renowned political figures, theorists, or writers of the sort that historical accounts are usually confined. Regarding themselves as intellectuals in the Chinese context, the three maritime writers did hope to be successful officials or prominent leaders; but like most people they never achieved that goal. Their lack of prominence should not be taken as a measure of the worth of their writings, however. I have chosen to write about them because I think that their ideas and patterns of thought grew out of the social and cultural environment in which they lived, reflecting how the maritime world was conceptualized from that perspective. Although they were not as well-known as Gu Yanwu (1613-1682) or Gu Zuyu (1631-1692) and other geo-historians, their conceptualizations of the ocean as a geographical, political, cultural, and trans-regional landscape were exceptional. What makes them even more notable is that they incorporated the customs, religions, and commercial practices of other maritime countries (*haiguo*; e.g., Japan, some Southeast Asian and Western European countries) into their conceptualizations of the seascape. As keen maritime observers, they may have been among the first writers to report on the growth of European sea powers and their navigation and expansion overseas, and to identify the global thrust of European commercial expansion in Africa, Latin America, and Asia in the long eighteenth century. Their work provided a more detailed account of European

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*1680-1780* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

<sup>478</sup> It should be noted that Wang Dahai's *Haidao yizhi* was even translated into English by an English Congregationalist missionary, Walter Henry Medhurst (1796-1857), in 1848.

seaborne powers, thus subtly altering the Chinese worldview during the age of improvisation.<sup>479</sup> We must keep in mind that, in illustrating a number of maritime countries, these maritime writers were decisively influenced by the “Sino-*nanyang*” connection. *Nanyang* (South Ocean) refers to the sea surrounding Southeast Asia; and the Sino-*nanyang* connection is the tie indicating the historical connection between the Chinese coast and Southeast Asia. And because of this Sino-*nanyang* connection, maritime writers were customarily interested in depicting the history, economy, and culture of the “South Ocean” region. As one of the significant gateways that connected Europe and East Asia in the eighteenth century, the *nanyang* region thus became the lens through which the three maritime writers described and examined the Far West (i.e., Europe).

By viewing the sea as an open-ended space and generating geographical knowledge on a global scale, they were forging links not only between the Qing and the rest of the world, but also between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Although some of their illustrations were insufficiently meticulous or accurate to convey the exact circumstances of the western world – at a time when some exegesis of the West underestimated the potency of their own naval power – these writers nevertheless had begun to rethink their worldview from a maritime perspective, positioning the Qing as an empire coexisting with other countries, but not as the greatest power in the world. This Sino-centric worldview had dominated Chinese political and cultural ideology since the Zhou era. In short, one of the reasons I decided to write about these maritime writers is because I believe their writings can help us rethink the connection between geo-historical studies and maritime writings predating the First Opium

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<sup>479</sup> The term “age of improvisation” was first introduced by Timothy Brook in his *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2007).



War that deserve further consideration by historians. With the rise of geo-historical studies in the early Qing, which emphasized the importance of evidence-based frontier studies, many scholars began studying the inner Asian frontier region, while only a few of them were interested in the maritime frontier. A sense of “maritime consciousness” is one of the things that set the three maritime writers apart from other writers who were part of this new trend in frontier studies. Yet before turning to the maritime writings composed by Chen, Wang, and Xie in detail, we must first consider the Chinese geographical tradition before the long eighteenth century so as to situate these writings in broader historical perspective.

### **Chinese Geographical Tradition and the Conception of *tianxia***

Maritime writing is a genre of literature with a tradition dating back to the Warring States Period (476 B.C.–221 B.C.). That it is closely connected with the history of geo-historical studies in imperial China is well known. Among the various significant features of Chinese geo-historical scholarship are studies of foreign and unfamiliar regions, which illustrated how the Han-Chinese projected and represented their cultural identity across the known space of the world. Such features showed that the Chinese regarded themselves as highly civilized, and believed that other social groups surrounding them were inferior and uncivilized. This worldview was based on the concept of *tianxia*.<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> See Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-12; ; Roger V. Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Chang in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 1-14; Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 31-69.

The first mention of *tianxia*, literally “all under heaven,” was recorded in the *Yu’s Tribute* (*Yugong*), a text traditionally attributed to Da Yu (Yu the Great, ca. 2205 B.C. – 2105 B.C.) – the legendary hero who was best remembered for taming an epic flood.<sup>481</sup> In this conceptualization of *tianxia*, the world was divided into five zones (*wufu*) and nine geographic divisions (*jiuzhou*), with the midstream region of the Yellow River being at the center. It should be noted that this center was not just a geographical index used to differentiate the five zones (as they were established in accordance with their respective distances from the Yellow River) but also an index for measuring their cultural levels. The farthest region, occupied by people who were considered to be the most uncivilized, was identified as the desert zone (*huangfu*), whereas the center, which was populated by the most civilized group, was known as the privileged zone (*houfu*). Because most ancient Chinese believed that they inhabited the center of the world, “civilizing the rest” became their “natural” mission.<sup>482</sup> Richard J. Smith has pointed out that the “cultural superiority” assumed by the Chinese was the cornerstone for establishing relationships with neighboring tribes and civilizations.<sup>483</sup> As such, the *tianxia* ideology encoded China and its surrounding states along a “superior center – inferior periphery” axis, dating back to the early imperial epoch. And most of the geographical writings up to the Ming-Qing transition were arguably part of this same established tradition.

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<sup>481</sup> See Mark Edward Lewis, *The Flood Myths of Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 52-53.

<sup>482</sup> Ban Gu (32-92), *Hanshu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), chapter 28, pp. 1523-1537; see also Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer (ed.), *Lebenswelt und Weltanschauung im frühneuzeitlichen China* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1990).

<sup>483</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Fathoming the Cosmos and Ordering the World: The Yijing (I ching, or Classic of Changes) and Its Evolution in China* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), p. 29.

Unlike the voyaging empires of Western Europe that realized the importance of maritime navigation and exploration during the Age of Discovery, the late Ming still embraced a Ming-centered perspective to conceptualize the world. Although, as the supreme Asian power, it was likely to come into direct contact with other civilizations across the ocean, most geographers and literati in the Ming were nevertheless almost unaware of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic regions, let alone the numerous studies of those places. Guided by the concept of “all under heaven,” Chinese intellectuals in the Ming were largely dependent on traditional sources of information on the wider world generated centuries earlier.<sup>484</sup> Even though detailed maps of the world were being produced, such as the Jesuit Matteo Ricci’s famous map, these geographical materials only circulated inside the imperial court, not among ordinary citizens.<sup>485</sup>

The Chinese began to explore the wider world, starting in the late seventeenth century, when a new trend in geo-historical studies emerged. This trend must be briefly discussed in light of the geographical texts that were written by Gu Yanwu and Gu Zuyu

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<sup>484</sup> From a certain perspective, however, there should be nothing particularly surprising about this. To take an analogous example, no one would expect navigators or learned scholars from late medieval Genoese to be intimately familiar with Scandinavian geographical studies. Quite naturally, the lands of the Baltic had their own intellectual traditions and a shared set of practical concerns that were distinct from those of southern Europe, so even if individual pilgrims, church officials, or merchants traveled from one place to the other, it would be unreasonable to assume that because of this the two regions had access to exactly the same body of knowledge about the world. In the similar way, Chinese in imperial times simply embraced a basic understanding of the world that was common and familiar to them. As such, some distant sea spaces such as the Mediterranean, the Western Pacific, and the Atlantic remained a remote and unfamiliar region in their geographical studies before the Ming-Qing transition.

<sup>485</sup> See Cordell D. K. Yee, “Traditional Chinese Cartography and the Myth of Westernization,” in J.B. Harley and David Woodward (eds.), *Cartography in the Traditional East and Southeast Asian Societies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 174-175. .

and other geo-historians in the late Ming and early Qing periods.<sup>486</sup> The studies conducted by the two Gu not only faithfully recorded the history of the frontier regions but also reflected a changing consciousness that indirectly altered their conceptualization of *tianxia* as well as frontier regions. These writings are best remembered for their analyses of the history, geography, and society of the Qing Empire's inner and southwestern Asian frontiers.<sup>487</sup> Their method of examining the frontier influenced many subsequent geo-historical studies. Some of these latter works were compiled by scholar-officials or supervised by the imperial court,<sup>488</sup> while others were made "beyond the purview of imperial supervision" and published by private publishing houses.

The development of geo-historical studies in the early Qing not only stimulated comprehensive reexaminations of various inland regions and Inner Asia, it also provided a way for Chinese intellectuals to (re)conceptualize the maritime spaces along China's shores. As a consequence, geo-historical research fostered a kind of "sea consciousness" among some Qing scholars. They came to view the sea as a fundamental, yet tangible space that linked them to faraway lands. Although the Qing court was principally concerned with

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<sup>486</sup> It would not be an exaggeration to say that Gu Yanwu and Gu Zuyu revolutionized the methodology of conducting geo-historical researches and laid the foundation for future studies. For more details about the two Gu, see Willard J. Peterson, "The Life of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682)," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 28 (1968), pp. 114-156 and vol. 29 (1969), pp. 201-247; Gu Zuyu, *Dushi fangyu jiyao*, juan 1, p. 4a; See also Peng Minghui, *Wanqing de jingshi shixue* (Taipei: Maitian chubanshe, 2002).

<sup>487</sup> Hou Deren, *Qingdai xibei bianjiang shidixue* (Beijing: Qun yan chubanshe), pp. 1-16.

<sup>488</sup> Laura Hostetler has argued that in the course of the eighteenth century, as the size of the Qing empire almost doubled, the Manchus showed considerable cartographic interest in the people recently subjugated by them. She also mentions that the quest for knowledge about non-Chinese tribes on the empire's internal frontiers was mostly carried out by official representatives of the Qing court with increasingly rigorous empirical methods. See Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p.5.

westward inland expansion in the eighteenth century, some members of the educated elite, such as Lan Dingyuan, Li Yuandu, and Li Yuandu I introduced in the previous chapters, and maritime writers that we are going to discuss were interested in the ocean. Rather than viewing the sea as a barrier leading to nowhere or as a hindrance to communication, they regarded the ocean as a trans-regional contact zone that “led everywhere.”<sup>489</sup> Before the outbreak of the First Opium War, Chen Lunjiong, Wang Dahai, and Xie Qinggao realized that there were a growing number of economic and cultural encounters between the Qing and the world across the sea. Regarding the ocean as a passage of connections linking two or more geographical spheres, they thought that the Qing should be (re)positioned in a multi-cultural, or multi-layered, world model.

While maritime writings in the eighteenth century were influenced by the outstanding geo-historical research of Gu Yanwu and Gu Zuyu, they were simultaneously heir to a legacy of maritime accounts published during the Ming period. After the great expeditions led by the famous Admiral Zheng He (1371-1433) from 1405 to 1433, the exotic “Southern Ocean (*nanyang*),” stretching from the China Sea to the east coast of Africa, was painted in vivid detail in the *Yingya shenglan* (The overall survey of the ocean shores). This was compiled by Ma Huan, a voyager who accompanied Zheng on three of his seven expeditions.<sup>490</sup> The widely circulating *Yingya shenglan* was important because it gave the Chinese images of unfamiliar oceanic regions, extending outwards from China to the

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<sup>489</sup> Compared to the Chinese, the Europeans changed their attitude towards the ocean early in the sixteenth century. Before the fifteenth century, according to Daniel Boorstin, “the Ocean led nowhere, in the next centuries people would see it led everywhere.” See Daniel Boorstin, *The Discoverers* (New York: Random House, 1983), p. 154.

<sup>490</sup> Ma Huan, *Yingya shenglan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985).

east coast of Africa – apparently remote and distant places from the perspective of traditional writings. It thus injected new emotion into the historical imagination regarding the outer sea, by situating, if not authenticating, Ma’s personal experience in context.<sup>491</sup> In addition to the *Yingya shenglan*, the substantial part of the section on foreign countries recorded in the *Xu wenxian tongkao* (Encyclopedia of the history and biography), edited by Wang Qi (1530-1615), as well as the private jottings such as the *Dongxi yangkao* (Study of the eastern and western oceans), written by Zhang Xie (1574-1640), also influenced the style and context of maritime writings in the high Qing.<sup>492</sup> For instance, maritime writers in both the Ming and Qing did not compile their studies merely out of personal interest in geography. Most of their writings were a practical response to problems related to coastal governance and the empire’s security. In the prefaces of their accounts (e.g., *xuyan*),<sup>493</sup> most maritime writers express their hope that their works could be handbooks and guides that would contribute to political and social-economic stability across the maritime frontier (*jinghai*). As Chen Lunjiong, one of the maritime writers we will address in the upcoming section, clearly stated,

Apart from dedicating it to Emperor Kangxi and my father, this work (the *Haiguo wenjian lu*) aims at providing valuable information for the officials in charge of the maritime frontier areas (*ren haijiang zhe*) to govern the coastal region properly.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> J.V.G. Mills (ed. and trans.), *Ying-yai sheng-lan: ‘The Overall Survey of the Ocean’s Shores’ (1433)* (Bangkok, Thailand: White Lotus, 1997), pp. 1-23.

<sup>492</sup> Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China’s Rediscovery of the Maritime World* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 95.

<sup>493</sup> Yet not all prefaces of these maritime writings were written by the authors of the texts themselves. While some prefaces were written by them, some were prefaced by their friends or colleagues.

<sup>494</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu*, “preface,” p. 11b. We will discuss what Chen meant by “to govern the coastal region properly” in the next session.

Maritime writers in both periods also used similar keywords for maritime matters (*haiyang zhi shi*). For instance, they delineated outer sea spaces as the “Large Western Ocean” (*daxiyang*), the “Little Western Ocean” (*xiaoxiyang*), and the “Southwestern Ocean” (*xinanyang*). They also tended to use the term *yangren* to refer to foreigners, *waiyang* to indicate regions beyond the orbit of the Qing Empire, *haiyu* for “sea words” (languages spoken by crewmembers), and *haitu* for sea charts. As another example, when Wang Liu (1786-1843) stressed the need to obtain extensive background information on maritime countries to help statecraft writers better safeguard the country, he used the term “*waiyang yudi*,” following Zhang Xie, for maritime countries in the far west.<sup>495</sup> In his writings, Xie Qinggao carefully and effectively used the sea charts produced in the Ming period, thereby producing a relatively accurate picture of the seascape in Southeast Asia.<sup>496</sup> Furthermore, maritime writers in the Ming and Qing assiduously used names from ancient Chinese records to indicate places during the Qing. For example, they would use the Han-era term DaQin to refer to Rome in the eighteenth century. Whatever similarities might be found in their approaches to statecraft or uses of terms, the above examples suggest that the methods of exploring the sea among local elites in the eighteenth century partly reflected the established predilection for such exploration dating from Ming times.

### **Eighteenth Century Maritime Writings**

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<sup>495</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, “Wang’s preface on *Hailu*,” p. 2.

<sup>496</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, p. 4, 6, 11, 18, 22, 24.

The first maritime writing we will address is the *Record of Things Seen and Heard among the Maritime Kingdoms* (*Haiguo wenjian lu*), which was completed in 1730. The author, Chen Lunjiong (who also went by courtesy names Cian and Zizhai), was a native of Tong'an who served as a general in various places along the southeastern coast (e.g. Suzong, and Wuzong). Born into a merchant family in Fujian, Chen had numerous opportunities to interact with the maritime world from early childhood. The Chen family's close connection to overseas trade distinguishes Chen from other maritime writers.

His father, Chen Ang, was a successful businessman who conducted frequent sea trade with the Japanese and the Southeast Asians. As Chen Lunjiong himself stated,

My father was born into a poor family, but he was a trained businessman in overseas shipping across the outer ocean. Apart from that, he was good at sailing. He could identify the most favorable wind direction and the wave action for his voyages: not every experienced sailor was able to do that.<sup>497</sup>

Because of Chen Ang's maritime expertise, Shi Lang invited him to join the campaign to annex Taiwan. After Taiwan was conquered in 1683, Chen Ang was appointed an assistant general (*fudutong*) in Guangdong to train the navy.<sup>498</sup> Chen Lunjiong's family background enabled him to develop a sophisticated knowledge of the maritime world and follow in his father's footsteps into officialdom. He received his first posting as Brigadier (*canjiang*) of Southern Taiwan in 1721 and served in several positions at that rank before being promoted to Regional Commander (*zongbing*) of the Eastern Guangdong naval force. From the

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<sup>497</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu*, "preface," p. 10a- 11a.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10b.



Kangxi to the Qianlong period (1721-47), Chen was transferred to different coastal cities, where he collaborated with a number of sea merchants and Westerners who provided him with firsthand information about the customs and lifestyles of many foreign regions. Inspired by the practical geo-historical research of the late seventeenth century, Chen searched for facts about unfamiliar parts of the world that would enlighten the intellectuals and ruling elites. He then began to compile the *Haiguo wenjian lu*, using his personal experience as well as some Ming writings mentioned earlier. Notwithstanding his expertise and firsthand knowledge, his work did not gain wide circulation in his lifetime. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that his work was frequently cited in official documents and private writings, such as the renowned *Haiguo tuzhi* (*Illustrated Treatise on the Sea Kingdoms*), written by Wei Yuan (1794–1856) and the *Sizhou zhi* (*Geography of the Four Continents*), by Commissioner Lin Zexu (1785-1850). The impact of Chen’s work in the nineteenth century, as Jane Kate Leonard argues, surpassed that of all subsequent unofficial writings about the sea during the eighteenth century and was considered one of the most authoritative works on the maritime world during the Opium War period.<sup>499</sup>

Chen made illustrations of the maritime space that was accessible to him in south China. In his *Haiguo tuzhi*, the renowned scholar Wei Yuan excerpted long descriptive passages from Chen’s study on Southeast Asia, Japan, and especially India. Wei Yuan praised Chen’s work as a dependable source for finding foreign places and locations.<sup>500</sup> To

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<sup>499</sup> Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China’s Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 96.

<sup>500</sup> In fact, Wei Yuan drew long descriptive passages from Chen’s work on Southeast Asia, Japan, and especially India. Wei appeared to have regarded the study conducted by Chen as the authoritative sources on these regions. And what makes Wei Yuan’s research much more compelling is that he did not rely on those “outdated” Ming geographies, as most Qing writings did.

compile his work, Chen made use of the maritime writings published in the Ming, including the aforementioned *Dongxiyang kao* and the *Xu wenxian tongkao*, as well as his extensive maritime connections. But Chen did not realize that some of the information in those Ming materials was inaccurate. As Zhang Weihua has pointed out, some parts of Chen's work "portrayed, often imperfectly, the maritime world as it was known in the previous dynasty."<sup>501</sup> In spite of these deficiencies, however, Chen's work represented how a scholar-official living along the coast conceptualized the maritime space in the eighteenth century. It presents the sea along the China coast as a medium connecting a variety of concerns, such as littoral governance and territorial control.

Chen's *Haiguo wenjian lu* contains a wide range of materials about the maritime world. It introduces some measurements and navigational directions to promote the consolidation of Qing sovereignty across the ocean. In describing the geography of the maritime frontier and interpreting miscellaneous reconnaissance of European seafaring powers, Chen provides valuable insights into Chinese perceptions of the sea and guidelines for Chinese maritime strategy. In the fifteen-page opening chapter of the *Haiguo wenjian lu*, entitled *tianxia yanhai xingshilu* (Maritime condition along the sea front),<sup>502</sup> Chen relates the geography of the Bohai area. He then moves on to detail the southern coast of the empire, covering Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. To weave an extensive dragnet for maritime defense, Chen envisioned a comprehensive protection strategy extending up

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<sup>501</sup> Zhang Weihua, *Ming shi Folangji Lüsung Helan Yidaliya si zhuan zhu shi* (Taipei: Dongfang wenhua shuju, 1973), p. 43.

<sup>502</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu, shang juan*, pp. 1a- 8a.

the entire China coast and including important sea ports, coastal cities, as well as the entrances to China's inland waterways. Chen believed that concerns over coastal cities and access to inland waterways mainly stemmed from violence inflicted by pirates, with Jiangsu and Zhejiang being considered the most problematic districts.<sup>503</sup> He thus suggested establishing more fortifications in key areas along the coast (e.g., Congmin, Langshan, Dinghai, Zhapu, Wuzong, and the Island of Pi [Pidao]) in order to “sweep away all potential dangers.”<sup>504</sup> Chen introduced to his readers the importance of having an effective system of sea patrols to secure and maintain coastal communications, as well as arming and fortifying these strategic strongholds. However, the introduction does not provide a comprehensive solution to achieve these ends. In fact it only focuses on the strategic importance of key locations along the coast — something which Chen gave considerable weight. As he mentions in his preface, “if China would like to strengthen its maritime militarization, the ruling elites must first thoroughly analyze the coastal geography before launching a long-term development of coastal defense.”<sup>505</sup>

In the chapter following the introduction, Chen shifts his focus to the outer sea space. In setting the scene, Chen arranges the geography of the sea into five parts to correspond to his perception of the five major divisions, or ocean regions, of the maritime world beyond the inner ocean (as described in figure 1). Although Chen might have been aware of the geographical divisions of the maritime world used in Western sources, he did not adopt that

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<sup>503</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu, shang juan*, p. 2b.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3a-4b.

<sup>505</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu*, “preface,” p. 11b.

framework as it did not conform to the Chinese view of the ocean. Instead, he used the traditional vocabulary *yang* to describe these maritime regions. He arranged the major ocean regions in sequence, from east to west, beginning with the Qing’s close neighbor Japan in East Asia, moving then to tributary states in Southeast Asia, and concluding finally with Europe.

Ocean regions	Number of Pages
The Eastern Sea ( <i>dongyang</i> )	8 ( <i>shangjuan</i> , pp. 9a-12b)
Southeastern Ocean ( <i>dongnanyang</i> )	9 ( <i>shangjuan</i> , pp. 13a-18a)
Southern Ocean ( <i>nanyang</i> )	18 ( <i>shangjuan</i> , pp. 19a-27b)
Small Western Ocean ( <i>xiaoxiyang</i> )	6 ( <i>shangjuan</i> , pp. 28a-30b)
Great Western Ocean ( <i>daxiyang</i> )	10 ( <i>shangjuan</i> , pp. 31a-35b)

**Figure 1: Chen’s “maritime categorization”**

Chen’s ocean-based geographical categorization is worth consideration because it did not use a “civilized” versus “barbaric” yardstick to divide the world along the lines of the *tianxia* matrix, in which geographical distance mattered most. Even though the West, or the Great Western Ocean, is located far away from the Chinese cultural sphere, Chen did not depict it as culturally inferior. For Chen, these places were, in some regards, comparable to the Qing in terms of history and cultural development (*jianyou yu Zhonguo xiangsi*).<sup>506</sup> In other words, the Qing was not singularly superior to these maritime countries located in the Far West. In stark contrast to the conception of *tianxia*, Chen’s maritime geography made geographical distance less important in measuring cultural difference between China and

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<sup>506</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu, shang juan*, p. 24b.

other civilizations.

### The *Yanhai quantu*

In addition to writing the text for his *Haiguo wenjian lu*, Chen was a cartographer. One of his famous coastal diagrams (*haitu*), entitled *Yanhai quantu* (The Complete Overview of the Coastal Region), was an undated and colored scroll map. The preface was by Peng Qifeng (1701–1784) and Chen Lunjiong himself. The map was delicately drawn on a paper scroll from right to left. According to a description in the Nanjing Museum, where the original map is preserved, the height between the margins is 30 cm, and the total length, from right to left, is 928 cm. Like the *Sihai quantu* (Map of the Four Seas), another sea chart prepared by Chen and appended to the *Haiguo wenjianlu*,<sup>507</sup> the *Yanhai quantu* was followed by four other coastal maps depicting the Pescadores, the west coast of Taiwan, the Inner Mountains of Taiwan, and the Hainan region. Judging from the sea space described in the *Yanhai quantu*, this maritime diagram clearly delineates the areas of the seawater that Chen conceptualized as part of the domestic sea space of the Qing Empire. A significant feature of most of the coastal diagrams and atlases produced under official supervision in the Qing such as the *Guangdong yanhai tu* (Map of Guangdong Coast) and the *Zhe Tang jianbian tu* (Simplified Map of Zhejiang and the Qiantang River) is that if the area was beyond governmental control, it would not be described in detail and might even be left blank.<sup>508</sup> Unlike the sea spaces that had “not yet entered the map” (*weiru bantu*), the Taiwan Strait, Bohai Bay, Hainan Island, and the west coast of the Pescadores (though

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<sup>507</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu, shang juan*, pp. 41b-42a.

<sup>508</sup> See discussion in chapter 3.

without clear geographical limits) were introduced thoroughly in this *Yanhai quantu*. These maritime sectors arguably served as part of the domestic sea space under administrative governance. In order to maintain peace and control throughout the region, Chen was convinced that considerable attention should be paid to the Shandong coast and the Leizhou Peninsula (the southernmost part of Guangdong), the two strategic regions that guarded two “key entries” of the coastline.

### The *Haidao yizhi*

In addition to Chen’s study, the *Desultory Account of the Islands of the Sea (Haidao yizhi)* by Wang Dahai in 1791 was another significant maritime work that was published in the high Qing. It is important as the first comprehensive study by a Chinese scholar focusing specifically on Dutch control of Java and the Straits of Sunda, as well as their powerful hold on Asian trade in the Indonesian archipelago. Leonard Blussé has called Wang “one of the very few Chinese who traveled overseas and left an account of his adventures in [Southeast Asia].”<sup>509</sup>

Wang Dahai (who also went by courtesy names Biqing or Liugu) was a native of Longxi in Fujian Province. After failing the civil service examination in 1783, Wang worked as a sea trader in Southeast Asia and lived in Java for almost ten years.<sup>510</sup> Although

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<sup>509</sup> Leonard Blussé, *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 72.

<sup>510</sup> Between 1783 and 1793 Wang also served as preceptor to the children of the Chinese captain of Pekalongan, a port city on the north coast of Java. From his writings, we can see that Wang decided to settle down in Java. He married an overseas Chinese woman from a moderately affluent family.

Wang devoted most of his energy to sea trade, he never stopped writing. His associate Li Wei wrote this in the preface to the *Haidao yizhi*,

My townsman, Wang Dahai, in his youth possessed irrepressible vigor of mind, and scorning to submit his lucubration to the criticisms of the examining official, gave up his prospects of advancement to official rank, and contented himself with the publication of private essays.<sup>511</sup>

During his lengthy stay in Southeast Asia, he kept assembling primary sources about the culture and history of islands in Southeast Asia, and eventually compiled six volumes of his *Haidao yizhi* in 1791. Although some might take Wang's work to be nothing more than a personal account, I submit that it is personal only in the sense that he provided a succinct record of his daily experiences — whom he met, what he ate, the seascapes, and the weather. For instance, in the chapter “Fruit and Flowers,” Wang introduces various species of plants such as champaka, *Lawsonia Americana*, plantain, and sugar cane.<sup>512</sup> The main purpose of this account, however, appears to have been recording the distances between different sea ports, noting where hazardous weather conditions might be encountered and where aboriginal peoples were particularly irksome, and whether stopping ports afforded food and clean water. In his preface, Wang writes:

We have heard that districts have their statistics, just as kingdoms have their histories. No statistics are records, giving an account of the hills and rivers, appearance of the country, antiquities, production, inhabitants, works of art, regions and superstitions of a district; in short nothing

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<sup>511</sup> Li Wai's “preface,” in Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi* (Jiaqing edition), p. 6a.

<sup>512</sup> See W. H. Medhurst, *Ong Dae Hae [Wang Dahai], translated by W. H. Medhurst, The Chinaman Abroad: or a Desultory Account of the Malayan Archipelago, Particularly of Java* (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1848), pp. 69-75.

should be omitted.....European countries are originally on the outside margin of civilization, and their being assimilated now to the villages of our inner land, is entirely owing to the virtuous influence of our august government, which transforms those distant and unknown regions, by the innate force of its majesty..... Although far from being intelligent, I dare not refuse carefully to record the things which I have seen and heard, together with some references to the country and its inhabitants; in short every individual word and action worthy of being noted down; thus publishing the whole, in order to render some small assistance towards correcting men's minds, and spreading right principles in the world.<sup>513</sup>

This excerpt shows that Wang wanted to better acquaint China, Southeast Asia, and the western world with each other. Although those maritime countries (e.g., Java and the Malaccas) were located beyond the domestic sea space of the Great Qing, they influenced the Empire, economically and culturally, through the medium of Wang's record as he traveled over the seas. In addition to identifying sea routes, port cities, and stopping places with names transcribed into Chinese, Wang detailed the strict Dutch trade monopoly, their base at Batavia in western Java, the northern Javanese ports, Banjarmasin, Makassar, Banda, and above all, how these business centers were connected with the Qing Empire.<sup>514</sup> The nature of these descriptions suggested that Wang's study was not merely a personal handbook but a treatise that expressed deep concern for practical matters for managing the Qing's relations with maritime Asia. Zhou Xuegong in the eighteenth century had this to say about the book:

Wang Dahai's work is calculated to make up the deficiencies of our former accounts, being equally clear

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid., pp. v-vi.

<sup>514</sup> Wang Taihai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 4-12.



and perspicacious as the *Records of Things Seen and Heard in the Western Regions (Xiyu wenjian lu)*.<sup>515</sup> This one little work serves extensively to testify that the instructions of our august dynasty are gracefully wafted over the sea.<sup>516</sup>

Like Chen's *Haiguo wenjian lu*, the aim of the *Haidao yizhi* was to serve as a substantial guidebook for those who were interested in exploring the wider maritime world and coastal governance by providing them with firsthand, accurate information that reflected political and economic realities in Southeast Asia.

### The *Hailu*

In 1820, twenty-nine years after Wang published his *Haidao yizhi*, Xie Qinggao completed his *Records of the Sea (Hailu)* in Macau – which is considered by later Qing writers such as Wei Yuan to be one of the most important works on “current” maritime affairs in the long eighteenth century. Born into a middle gentry family in eastern Guangdong, somewhere near present-day Meizhou, Xie was an astute polyglot. Even though he did not take the civil service examination, he learned a variety of European languages as well as some Southeast Asian ideographs. One of his closest friends, Yang Bingnan, recalled, “[Xie] was smart, brave and multilingual since his early years.”<sup>517</sup> However, despite his talents, Xie had no interest whatsoever in an official career but was

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<sup>515</sup> The *Xiyu wenjian lu* was a writing written by a Manchu named Qishiyi in 1777. This book describes in detail the history and culture of the western frontier region of the Qing dynasty during the mid- and late eighteenth century.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2b.

<sup>517</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, p. 329.

instead committed to Canton's sea-trade.<sup>518</sup> Sprawling along the Pearl River's banks, late eighteenth-century Canton was a vibrant coastal city with a long history of commercial interaction with foreign merchants. For conducting overseas business, it was the place to be. Canton, which had a significant European population, was the only Chinese sea port open to western traders in the late eighteenth century.<sup>519</sup> This gave Xie plenty of opportunities to interact with Westerners. When he was eighteen, Xie's life changed suddenly when, en route to Southeast Asia, he was shipwrecked. Rescued by a Portuguese captain, he was escorted all the way to Lisbon, Portugal. Xie did not immediately return to China but decided to stay in the West to broaden his horizons.<sup>520</sup> Unlike most of his Chinese contemporaries, Xie's willingness to spend ten years travelling throughout western Europe made him exceptional. This enabled him to witness the political, economic and cultural differences between China and this part of the world between 1783 and 1793. In *Hailu*, a record of his European travels, Xie later demonstrated that he was a man of learning as well as a merchant, with personal experience of the "New World" far beyond the Chinese homeland. In 1793, Xie returned to the Qing and settled down in Macau, but his sight gradually grew worse and he eventually became totally blind. His friend Yang Bingnan assisted him in writing down his remarkable travel story in *Hailu* (which was later published as a slim volume in 1820) in order to "perpetuate his knowledge and experience."<sup>521</sup>

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<sup>518</sup> "Preface written by Lü Tiaoyeng," in Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, p. 331.

<sup>519</sup> For details, see Gang Zhou, *The Qing Opening to the Ocean: Chinese Maritime Policies, 1684-1757* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), pp. 169-186.

<sup>520</sup> "Preface written by Yang Bingnan," in Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, 329.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

Comprising three chapters (*juan*), the *Hailu* touched upon geographical locations, politics and trading conditions in both Southeast Asia and Europe. In the first two chapters, Xie examined the history and culture of Borneo, Java, Sumatra and the southern part of the Malay Peninsula. For an insightful traveller such as Xie, who had travelled to southeast Asia, he recorded the changing political and trading conditions on the Straits of Malacca and the rise of European influence across the Southern Ocean (*nanyang*), covering the trading kingdoms of Srivijaya and Malacca. Xie cautioned that rapid developments brought by western influence in Southeast Asia might become a threat to the Qing Empire in the near future.<sup>522</sup> Xie's concern with the Malacca Straits is significant, since it reflects the longstanding Chinese interest in the region as a centre of Asian interaction and communication, an interest that extends back as far as the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>523</sup> Xie's observations in this section are reasonably positive. It is precisely this kind of observation that makes his study a sophisticated early Chinese re-conceptualization of the non-Chinese world, increasingly influenced by western Europeans, in the eighteenth century.

In the final chapter, Xie described some of the cultures he had encountered in the Far West as well as their spread across the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Xie explored several countries located in what we now call "Europe," which raises the question of whether he himself viewed these countries collectively as "Europe" or as part of

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<sup>522</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, *juan* 2.

<sup>523</sup> Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 35.

“Europe.” In other words, did Xie use a specific term to label Europe as a unity? As far as I can tell, Xie did not employ a standard term to refer to all the western regions he explored together, but he loosely applied glosses such as *xiyang* (Western Ocean), *daxiyang* (Great Western Ocean), *wai daxiyang* (Outer Great Western Ocean) and *xinanyang* (Southwestern Ocean). On the other hand, Xie did not use the word *ouluoba*, the Chinese word for Europe as a unity, which was commonly used by scholar-officials later in the late nineteenth century.<sup>524</sup> Although he did not consistently use a term or label for Europe as a unity, Xie was aware of the connectedness of the countries he described, if only vaguely. This sense of connectedness resembled the traditional connections that were understood to exist in China, Korea and Japan in East Asia. If Xie had not perceived such — largely implicit — connections, he would not have used the notion of a series of “oceanic categories” (e.g., *daxiyang* or *xinanyang*) to categorize those selected western European polities he discussed in the third chapter of his *Hailu*. Although Xie expressed this sense of connectedness, he was sensitive to the regional diversity among the maritime kingdoms in the Far West. He observed, for instance, that the Dutch shared similar customs with the Portuguese, the French and the Prussians, but also maintained their cultural uniqueness in many ways.<sup>525</sup> So even though Xie did not use a specific standardized term to identify the vast landmass that we now call “Europe,” he did understand that the regions he lumped together as “western” were not simply a randomly diverse collection of territories, but could be regarded, at least to some extent, as a coherent region located in the Far West.

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<sup>524</sup> Though it has to be noted that the term “ouluoba” was found in a Ming writing *Sancai tuihui* compiled by Wang Qi.

<sup>525</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, p.220.

### Illustrating Maritime Countries (*haiguo*)

For the three maritime writers, the sea was not only a region requiring maritime militarization to ensure the security of the empire, it was also a geographical contact zone connecting the wider world that was unfamiliar to Chinese audience. As such, the maritime writers were not only forging links between the Qing and the domestic sea space; they were also mediating the familiar and the unfamiliar. Although their descriptions of the unfamiliar were somewhat selective and stylized, they no longer regarded the ocean as a mythical, untouchable space or an unknown barrier which kept other peoples apart from themselves geographically, but a spatial medium for exploring other accessible civilizations.

Like the geo-historians who researched Inner Asia, such as Gong Zizhen (1792–1841), Sun Zhengze (1593–1676), and Shao Yuanping (1662–1735),<sup>526</sup> maritime writers in the eighteenth century understood the problem of conceptualizing the world from a Sino-centric perspective. They consequently devoted much of their studies to the evaluation of other Southeast Asian and European countries, from which a sizable number of advanced civilizations had emerged. Most of the maritime writers wrote about the early origins of

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<sup>526</sup> In his *Chronological Account of the Emergence of the Yuan Dynasty (Yuanchao diangu bianniankao)*, Sun Chengze's collected detailed materials about the geography, architecture, economy, social customs, education, and political institutions in Mongolia. See Nicola Di Cosmo, "Beasts and Birds: The Historical Context of Early Chinese Perceptions of the Northern Peoples," in his *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History*, pp. 93-126. Additionally, Shao Yuanping's abridged and reorganized the *History of the Yuan Dynasty (Yuanshi)*, which was written by official historians in the Ming times, and finally published the *Topical Studies of Mongolian History (Yuanshi leibian)*. Shui Yuanping, *Yuanshi neibian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), *juan* 1, pp. 1-7. In his thorough study of the Yuan Dynasty, Shao reexamined the distinctive traditions and customs of the herdsmen, and further underlined the historical significance of the Mongol Empire. Showing great affinity to evidential research and geo-historical studies, Wang Huizu (1730-1807), Qian Daxin (1728-1804), and Wei Yuan also made considerable efforts to rectify dubious and inaccurate details in the *Yuanshi*. They even indicated that the Mongolian cultural tradition was very similar to the Han's because they were both moulded by a long history. Wei Yuan, *Yuanshi xinbian* (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guangling guji keyinshe, 1990).

these states, tracing the history of their first maritime contacts with China. These writers also examined the institutional organizations that accounted for the wealth and power of these states, and outlined their cultures and customs.

The Qing was no longer seen as the center of the world in the accounts of these maritime writers. Through texts, illustrations, and/or maps, Chen, Wang, and Xie each introduced to their readers the physical features of the known globe, including its continents and its watery surface. Usually beginning with Asia, they recognized that the northeastern corner of Manchuria was connected to Russia, while Kokonor was located in the southeast frontier of the Qing Empire. Turkestan in the northwest were composed of many states, as noted in early Han records of the western Region (*xiyu*) — whereas the various tribes, such as Kirghiz and Burut from beyond the frontier, were seen as traditional tributary peoples. The tribute countries such as Korea, the Pescadores, as well as the various countries bordering on the south (i.e., Cochin China, Siam, Burma, Laos, and Nepal) were connected to China by the East Asian Sea. Located across the Eastern Sea (*dongyang*), Japan was one of the Asian states that did not subordinate itself to Qing authority. But, according to these writers, Japan had sent envoys to China and studied Chinese culture and had remained intimately connected with China for centuries.

Aside from these Asian states, there are islands situated in Southeast Asia, including Java and other islands in the Indonesian archipelago. These regions, except the sea off the eastern coast of Australia, were often described as trading spheres frequented by numerous merchant vessels and connected by major sea ports, such as Jakarta, Banten, Manila, and

Malacca. And this trading sector was closely connected to the Qing, especially the southeastern coast. As Wang Dahai observed, “Those who ply the oar and spread the sail [in Southeast Asia] are principally the inhabitants of the Fujian and Guangdong provinces, who have been in the habit of emigrating, for the space of 400 years. From the early part of the Ming Dynasty up to the present day, while those of our countrymen who have remained and sojourned in those parts, after propagating and multiplying, amount to no less than 100,000.”<sup>527</sup>

Europe was usually referred to as the “Great Western Ocean (*daxiyang*)” in these maritime writings. Although this continent was bordered by a series of mountain ranges, it was essentially a maritime sphere otherwise encircled by the sea. Depicted as almost the same size as Asia, Europe was conceptualized by maritime writers as a region composed of many civilizations that came and went long before the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.). For example, to Chen and Xie, Europe had been inhabited even before the Qin-Han eras, when its people roamed and hunted for their livelihood. Indeed, during the early Han period the state of Rome in Italy founded a governmental system and opened up territory on the four sides to form a unified power in the Occident. The state called “DaQin” in Han histories probably referred to the Roman Empire. However, Chen and Xie failed to provide an overview of European history from antiquity; they focused instead on more recent history (*xiangjin lüeyuan*). By the eighteenth century, Western Europeans who came from the “Great Western Ocean (*daxiyang*)” were described as foreign, yet superior, as they had produced machines and were accomplished at sailing ships. These technologies enabled

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<sup>527</sup> Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 1b-2a.

them to reach almost every corner of the globe across the seven seas and accomplish their expansionist missions.<sup>528</sup> For instance, in his description of British expansion, Xie Qinggao asserted that:

Maritime commerce is one of the chief occupations of the English, and wherever there is a region in which profits could be reaped by trading, these peoples strive for them, with the result that their commercial vessels are to be seen on the sea. Commercial traders are to be found all over the country. A large foreign mercenary army is also maintained. As a consequence, although the country is small, it has such a large military force that foreign nations are filled with fear.<sup>529</sup>

Some maritime writings briefly mentioned Africa; but generally this huge continent was sketched as a triangular-shaped landmass surrounded by the ocean.<sup>530</sup> Because Zheng He had reached the eastern coast of Africa in three of his voyages, in the context of bridging the familiar and unfamiliar, the continent was supposed to be historically connected to China from a Chinese cultural perspective. The Dutch and Portuguese conquest of some western and southern coastal areas of this landmass was also recorded. Though very sketchy, most of the descriptions by the maritime writers casted the people of Africa as black barbarians, or black ghosts (*wugui*). They were thought to be chaotic and barbaric — notions that Europeans used to exploit them.<sup>531</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjianlu*, shangjuan, p. 25a.

<sup>529</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, p. 251. The text is translated by Jeanette Mirsky. See her “The Great Chinese Travellers,” in Mark A. Kishlansky, ed., *Sources of World History* (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1995), pp. 126-128.

<sup>530</sup> In the *Haiguo wenjian lu*, Africa is named as “the country of black monsters (*Wugui guo*)”.

<sup>531</sup> For details, see Xu Yongzhang, “*Haiguo wenjian lu* zhong Feizhou diming kaoshi,” *Huanghe keji daxue xuebao*, vol. 4, no. 4 (December, 2002), pp. 91-97.



In considering various states and civilizations, several remarkable features in these maritime writings are worth mentioning. First of all, even though place names were listed or introduced, the world was generally categorized according to oceans. One significant example is the categorization Chen Lunjiong used in *Haiguo wenjianlu*, which I addressed in the previous section. Chen deliberately divided the world outside China into five zones, using the names of five oceans as his indicators (i.e., the Eastern Sea, the Southeastern Sea, the Southern Ocean, the Little Western Ocean, and the Great Western Ocean). By categorizing the world on the basis of a maritime model, Chen's study shows the author's emphasis on the importance of oceans, which cover seventy percent of the globe. Secondly, the works of maritime writers usually begin with descriptions about the Qing Empire (or the DaQing guo).<sup>532</sup> They then describe Korea, Japan, the Pescadores, the states of the South China Sea (*nanyang*), the various countries of Southeast Asia and the islands of the South Pacific; then they address the political and social features of India, the states that border India and Tibet, and Western and Central Asia. The final section is usually dedicated to descriptions of Western Europe (and sometimes Africa), with particular attention to the Atlantic seafaring powers such as the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, and Britain. Although the maritime writers were generally sensitive to their Qing identity in mapping geography, this did not make them exaggerate the importance of the Qing Empire. In his *xihai zongtu*, for instance, Chen Lunjiong even suggested that the Da Qingguo (the Great Qing) was not at the center on the map; it rested on top of the Asian continent in a corner.

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<sup>532</sup> See his "sihai zongtu" for instance.

### *From nanyang to Europe*

As Jane Kate Leonard has cogently demonstrated, the Chinese conception of the maritime world was decisively influenced by the “Sino-*nanyang* connection (China-South Sea connection)” dating back to the Eastern Zhou period.<sup>533</sup> Against the backdrop of this traditional Sino-*nanyang* framework, maritime writers in the eighteenth century were customarily interested in depicting the image of *nanyang*, which shaped Chinese geopolitical perceptions of maritime Asia. Most writers devoted the lengthiest section of their studies to the history, geography, and current situation of this maritime location. This Sino-*nanyang* connection was, in fact, the lens through which these eighteenth-century maritime writers conceptualized the West and the quickening pace of European commercial and political expansion in Southeast Asia.<sup>534</sup>

These maritime writers usually focused on Vietnam, Siam, Burma, and Java because these states were connected to the Qing by tributary politics and ongoing sea trade. They argued that Southeast Asian states had had their own governmental structures since the Han dynasty. But at the same time, they paid tribute to China in order to maintain a peaceful

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<sup>533</sup> Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, p. 35.

<sup>534</sup> The Chinese traditional relations with the *nanyang* developed with the growth of the *nanhai* trade (trade with Southeast Asia countries). In the beginning, around the Tang Song period, trade was based on luxuries associated with court demands for exotic goods and encouraged by both court and officials who used the tributary system to promote trade. This pattern was dramatically altered from the late Song to the Qing period by the expanding Chinese junk trade, which came to control and dominate both the Chinese coastal trade as well as that of maritime Asia. For fuller details, see Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, pp. 33-62

relationship with the Chinese Empires.<sup>535</sup> The history of Vietnam (also known as Annam and Champa), for example, was sketched out in relation to China's dynastic periods by historians since the Qin era, the time when China first controlled part of Vietnam; Siam, Burma, Sungora, Patani, and Trengganu were also listed as loyal tributaries of China since ancient times.<sup>536</sup> Yet maritime writers also realized that the tributary connections between China and these Southeast Asian countries had gradually begun to change when Europeans began encroaching on the region. Writers such as Wang Dahai and Xie Qinggao commented upon the European threat to Southeast Asia. The practical question that concerned them was what the Qing could do to maintain a balance of power in the *nanyang* region. As such, both of them subtly proposed that the Qing should use trade links with these states more effectively to exert political influence and counteract Western influence. In light of these circumstances, Wang and Xie sought to send the message that the Qing could no longer take its security for granted or, above all, remain oblivious to changes in the East Asian geopolitical sphere. Maritime countries previously described as weak and inconsequential tributary states were now treated as substantive civilizations. They developed semi-independently, according to individual patterns, and had become increasingly influenced by Europeans over the preceding decades.

Chen, Wang, and Xie all considered Europe exotic, in contrast to the states that had established tributary relations with the Qing. Across the European continent, they were particularly alerted by the historical, sociological, and expansionist development of Spain,

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<sup>535</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, pp. 13-24; Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 1a-4b.

<sup>536</sup> Xie Qinggao, *Hailu*, pp. 37-40.

France, Spain, Portugal, England, and the Netherlands. They believed these maritime kingdoms had gained eminence because they possessed a technology capable of “harnessing guns and cannons (*jingyu huojiao*),” which, they thought, the Qing should imitate as much as possible.<sup>537</sup> With the use of new weapons and accurate, scientific techniques in navigation and cartography, Westerners had extended their influence around the world. They successfully invaded the Americas, Africa, Australia, the Pacific islands, and South Asia, as well as numerous places in Southeast Asia. As a consequence, these major states in Europe shared the benefits of policy of overseas expansion. With each state aiming at specific political and power-orientated goals, the people maintained a close identity with the state and fought with patriotic zeal that made even small states like the Netherlands powerful.<sup>538</sup> These states, according to Chen, Wang, and Xie, also possessed impressive sea ports and public services, such as banking, water systems, and educational institutions, and other amenities that suggested a high level of cultural accomplishment (*wei haiwai qinshan ye*).<sup>539</sup> The cultural level implied by the provision of such services in Western Europe put it closer to China than Inner Asian or Southeast Asian states.

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<sup>537</sup> Chen Lunjong, *Haiguo wenjianlu, shang juan*, p. 25a.

<sup>538</sup> For example, when Xie Qinggao mentioned the administrative structure of the Dutch, he admired it a lot. It appeared to the author that the Dutch government was now ruled by four ministers rather than a particular monarch. Having noted considerably that the power of the king was taken away from those ministers, Xie was amazed to see that the country was still able to maintain its strength and power across the continent and even the seven seas. Other than their overseas achievements, the author was very much impressed by the Dutch, even though it is only a small country, in managing their country with such a good and deliberated administrative strategy – in which successfully consolidate the loyalty of their peoples. See Xie Qinggao, *Hailu, juanxia*, p. 6.

<sup>539</sup> Taking once again the *Hailu* as an example, one of the public services that much amazed Xie was the water system designed by the mayor in London. According to the author’s description, the water system of London was made up of a sizable number of small pipes hidden behind the walls of the buildings. These small pipes were directly linked to the river Thames so that citizens in town could simply collect useable water from their water taps. And the government would monthly collect “water taxes” so as to maintain this water service. See Xie Qinggao, *Hailu, juanxia*, p. 11.

Yet, although the three maritime writers realized the institutional and military superiority of Western powers, they failed to offer a comprehensive strategy that could help protect the Qing from the growing menace posed by those same powers. Their endeavor to redefine these Atlantic powers moreover failed to evoke a favorable response from most of the officials and literati in high Qing China. Ultraconservatives believed that contact with westerners would contaminate Chinese culture unless it were strictly regulated. For instance, Li Wei regretted to see that “Wang Dahai had given his attention [in *Haidao yizhi*] to such a strange and distant region [under European control], which had not yet come under the influence of our civilizing teaching.”<sup>540</sup> To mainstream literati in the early nineteenth century, the broader vision of the maritime world could not compete with the Confucian classics and canons. As such, the worldview embraced by Chen, Wang, and Xie failed to generate a viable and substantial alternative for the Qing court in preparing to deal with the fierce aggressions of various imperialistic powers during the Opium War period, when the Qing Empire continued to debate whether it would open its doors to the wider world or remain an isolated, sleeping dragon in the East. It is only until the mid-nineteenth century (after the Opium Wars) that their worldview being reviewed deliberately by scholar-officials who intended to refine the existing maritime policies in response to a set of external crises approaching from the sea.

## Conclusion

Influenced by geo-historical studies, and supplemented by evidential and

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<sup>540</sup> Li Wai’s preface, in *Haidao yizhi*, p. 7a.

cartographical research, Chen, Wang, and Xie produced detailed and verifiable descriptions of the maritime sphere. Similar to the imperial court in Beijing, they did not neglect the ocean and hoped their writings could contribute to coastal governance. To make such a contribution, they studied the *haijiang* district (maritime frontier), rediscovered the traditional *nanyang* region, and added important information about the wider world that went beyond, and challenged, the conventional *tianxia* order. Relying mainly on their personal experiences, they revised and updated Chinese knowledge of maritime Asia and gave special attention to issues of maritime affairs, such as how to stabilize the maritime frontier, how to guard against pirates and potential dangers from the sea (*shizhi tuzei*), how to properly manage domestic and foreign sea trade, as well as how to keep domestic sea space sound and safe (*potao fujing*).

Their examinations of other maritime countries (*haiguo*) in Southeast Asia and Europe conformed to the statecraft approach. Unlike such administrative documents as imperial edicts and official memorials, which mainly focused on maritime militarization and customs management along the coast, the works of the three maritime writers discussed the historical and geographical significance of regions lying beyond the maritime frontier. In this regard, the ocean provided Chen, Wang, and Xie with an opportunity for charting a world connected to the Qing via the sea (geographically) and numerous maritime activities (trade and travel). In their conceptualizations, the sea was an interconnected chain of separate regions, accessible and ready for exploration. They used the sea as a starting point to illustrate and examine the world of maritime countries outside of Qing borders, to locate those *haiguo* in the Far West (i.e., the Atlantic and the Mediterranean regions), and to

formulate strategies to protect their country. All of these arguably went to motivate later generation in the mid-nineteenth century to rethink the role of the Great Qing in a world full of interactions, synergies, and contestations across a vast, interconnected maritime landscape.

## Conclusion

The defeat of the Qing navy during the Opium Wars, the Battle of Fuzhou, and the Battle of the Yellow Sea paved the way for the downfall of the Qing dynasty.<sup>541</sup> For many decades scholars and laymen alike have been inclined to believe that the Qing, because of the above humiliating defeats on the sea, lacked a “maritime consciousness.”<sup>542</sup> As the previous chapters have demonstrated, however, their defeats in sea battles throughout the nineteenth century did not necessarily mean that the Qing court in the eighteenth century was unable to rule and understand the maritime world. The efforts made by the Manchu leaders via maritime militarization and customs institutionalization should remind us that

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<sup>541</sup> Julia Lovell makes a lucid account of the First Opium War by using a variety of primary and secondary sources. See her *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China* (London: Picador, 2011). The most illuminating study on the Second Opium War in English remains Catherine Lamour and Michel R. Lamberti, Peter and Betty Ross (trans.), *The Second Opium War* (London: Lane, 1974). For details about the Battle of Fuzhou in 1884, see David Pong, *Shen Pao-chen and China's Modernization in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 241-243; 261. On the impact of the Sino-French War, see Benjamin A. Elman, “Naval Warfare and the Refraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms into Scientific and Technological Failure, 1865-1895,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 38 no. 2 (May, 2004), pp. 315-381. On the inadequacy of the Qing's navy during the First Sino-Japanese War, see Allen Fung, “Testing the Self-Strengthening: The Chinese Army in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 30 no. 4 (1996), pp. 1007-1031, Richard J. Smith, “Foreign Training and China's Self-Strengthening: The Case of Feng-huang-shan,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 10 no. 2 (1976), pp. 195-223. On the Self-Strengthening Movement and most of the Sino-foreign battles in the mid-nineteenth century, see Kwang-Ching Liu, “Nineteenth-Century China,” in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (eds.), *China in Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 93-178.

<sup>542</sup> Meanwhile, in the Oxford *Encyclopedia of Maritime History*, even if China's (as a continental power) maritime consciousness is introduced, what had happened during the high Qing is completely ignored. See John B. Hattendorf (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Maritime History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), vol. 1, p. 397.



the very idea of “ruling the sea (*jin hai* or *ding hai*),” guided by the principle of an “inner-outer spatial conception,” has remained among the nervous system of the Qing court for at least an entire century. Meanwhile, maritime writers who settled along the coast were equally aware of the importance of maritime management at their times. It is therefore not convincing enough to say that the sea made no appeal to the Qing and the Chinese literati before the outbreak of the First Opium War.

Even though it had launched expansive campaigns in Inner Asia, the Qing empire considered the inner sea space as an essential part of the kingdom, of which negligence was unaffordable.<sup>543</sup> Such a conception of the sea was generally founded on the observation that the country’s stability was tied to various maritime connections: different sea routes yoked together the coastal provinces (including Taiwan), Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia by establishing economic and cultural ties between them.<sup>544</sup> Therefore, the navy and the customs offices were committed to policing and regulating sea lanes across different sea zones to facilitate provincial sea trades as well as resolving conflicts across a wide swath of domestic seawaters.

From the time of Taiwan’s capture in 1683 to the year when Qianlong passed away at the age of eighty-seven (1799), the Great Qing was considered a “golden empire,” whose

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<sup>543</sup> Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan (ed.), *Kangxi chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian*, vol. 3, no. 818, “Min-Zhe zongdu Fan Shisui zouwei zunzhi yifu Guo Yusen tiao haifang shishi zhe 閩浙總督范時崇奏為遵旨議覆郭玉森條海防十事折”; Zhongguo diyi lishi danganguan (ed.), *Yongzhengchao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian*, vol. 8, no. 279, “Zhe-Min zongdu Gao Qizhuo zouqing shefa caolian shuishi jiangbing zhe 浙閩總督高其倬奏請設法操練水師將兵折 [reply on the memorial of Gao Qizhuo’s comments on naval management].”

<sup>544</sup> It should be noted that a number of sea lanes did not only include those within the China coast, but extend into the Sea of Japan, South Asia, the Indian Ocean, and even the Arabian peninsula. For that reason, sea lanes connecting China and its neighbors were not only vital to the Great Qing, but to all states with economic and security interests in Asia.

resources were centered on invasion, occupation, and stabilization. During the “golden age,” the aggrandizement of naval strength along the sea front was significant in terms of the number of warships and soldiers. Contrary to the conventional views which assume that the Qing government paid attention to naval affairs only after the First Opium War,<sup>545</sup> the Manchu monarchs in the eighteenth century did not ignore the sea. Compared with the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk state in Egypt, who were only occasionally able to send major fleets to defend their fellow Muslims,<sup>546</sup> the Qing court practically and vigorously participated in naval policies to consolidate its control and commercial hegemony in the economic space stretching from the Bohai Gulf to the coast of Guangdong. The Qing navy, in the eighteenth century, was not a fleet that aimed at high sea expansion, but an avenue by which the empire could engage in maritime trade, a military mechanism for protecting the exchange of commodities, a transport system, and a force of intimidation in the conduct of foreign relations. The existence of the navy enabled the Qing empire to subordinate its maritime tributaries such as Korea and other Southeast Asian states to dependency relationships. It also provided Chinese merchants along the coast, for example the Bohai and the Guangdong merchants, access to avenues of commercial investment and accumulation of wealth.

Although the term “sea power” is often related to the naval force of a state organized

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<sup>545</sup> Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2010), p.4, 189.

<sup>546</sup> A short-lived exception to the general weakness of Muslim mobilization was the effort of a powerful group on the Malabar coast to mobilize naval power and mercantile wealth. See Genevieve Bouchon, “Regent of the Sea: Cannanore's Respose to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528” (Delhi, 1988), and Bouchon, “Sixteenth Century Malabar and the Indian Ocean,” in Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson (eds.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Calcutta, 1987), pp. 162-184.

for the purpose of achieving imperialistic aspirations, it is, in the view of naval historians, much broader in scope. P.A. Silburn, for instance, believed that

maritime commerce created by necessity had always preceded naval forces.....armed fleets were brought into being for the protection and security of peaceful merchantmen and the merchant marine comprised the reserve and the backbone of the fighting service.<sup>547</sup>

J.R. Hill and Jon Tetsuro Sumida also theorized “sea power” as an actualization which

employs sea forces to gain control of a particular maritime zone for a particular period of time.....to eliminate potential threats to the friendly side, and enable the friendly side to effectively utilize the ocean to undertake political, military, and economic action; and when necessary, to strip the hostile parties’ command of the sea, and stop them from using the ocean or cause his maritime activities to be limited.<sup>548</sup>

By granting economic intentionality to the Qing court, this study allows for the inclusion of the Qing empire in the scholarly discussion and comparative analysis of a broader discourse of sea power, rather than supporting its exclusion as merely a land, continental power in the East. The Qing, at least in the eighteenth century, was conscious participants in the East Asian Sea trading networks among which the empire itself emerged. The Qing court in the eighteenth century can be compared to other Asian and European powers on the bases of naval development, commercial policies, and claims to sovereignty across a specific maritime territory. Similar to the Ottoman Empire, for instance, the Qing naval project was

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<sup>547</sup> P.A. Silburn, *The Evolution of Sea Power* (London, 1912), p. 97.

<sup>548</sup> J.R. Hill, *Maritime Strategy for Medium Powers* (Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1986), p. 229; Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

directed to the protection of that wealth and to the provisioning and support of campaigns which would consolidate Qing control over its inner sea space. The Qing used their navy to dominate a significant part of the East Asian Sea and to effect, without direct military engagement, a diplomacy of submission on the part of competing states like Japan and Vietnam. All of these efforts show that the empire was able to create, enhance, and further its political objectives, which included an absolute control of commercial seawater and numerous strategic islands off the China coast.

Nevertheless, starting from the turn of the eighteenth century the Qing court failed to maintain herself as a sustainable sea power, while the European states had significantly enhanced their maritime aggressiveness with naval machinery and technology. Until the dawn of the First Opium War, the Qing navy remained a police force operating to exterminate pirates and illegal trading activities. Even though it still aimed at guarding the empire from potential enemies, such as Japan and Russia, the navy was technically incapable of sailing off to the high sea; and the lack of a regular, professional training scheme for the navy rendered its combat capacity insufficient. Unlike Peter the Great (1672-1725; r. 1682-1725), who designed a comprehensive naval policy for the Russian Empire within a decade,<sup>549</sup> the Qianlong government, even though it had heard of Peter's maritime policies, overlooked the importance of specialized naval education and the training of marine surveyors. The Qing court at that time was satisfied with its naval power. The Qianlong emperor and most of his officials believed that the "well trained" seawater troops derived from the Green Standard Army were competent and brave enough to defeat

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<sup>549</sup> Ian M. Matley, "Defense Manufactures of St. Petersburg, 1703-1730," pp. 411-426.

any enemy on the sea. Furthermore, Qianlong held an idea that the growth rate of naval strength should be enhanced step by step on a moderate scale. Yet the advent of a new era – a period which is full of domestic chaos and imperialistic encroachments – did not allow such a “moderate” policy to take place.

In the transition from the Qianlong to the Jiaqing period, the Qing court was marred by a torrent of natural disasters, economic crises, and the eruption of two destructive rebellions – the Miao Rebellion that started in 1795 and the White Lotus Rebellion a year later. During the period of formidable turmoil and disorder, it took a while for the Qing to modify its ruling mechanism, from “an extraordinary combination of expansion and stability”<sup>550</sup> to the one that aimed at resolving the problem of overpopulation, economic downturn, and two destructive rebellions. Unfortunately, most policies attempted by the Jiaqing government were unsuccessful. As a result, the glorious façade created by Qianlong could no longer be maintained in his declining years.

With the death of the Qianlong emperor and his many decorated officials, the Qing navy descended into a state of passiveness and incompetence. The Qing court, at the time, was no longer as proactive in safeguarding the inner sea space as it had been during the previous century. It was strained by prolonged and expensive battles against domestic rebellions, so without any concrete threat militarizing the inner sea space seemed unnecessary. The naval force was incapable of enhancing its combat powers due to a shortage of funding, as well as the problem of corruption and nepotism. The government

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<sup>550</sup> Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1997), p. 108.

even had to borrow money from merchants and religious parties to support its military operations against the Miao and the White Locus.<sup>551</sup> Meanwhile, the Qing could not sustain its navy because of its rigid political and strategic culture and the traditional orientation among some scholar-officials who remained wedded to land forces as the foundation of state power. Over the course of the early nineteenth century, the Qing navy was so decayed that it even lacked the ability to check illegal sea crimes along the coast.

The Customs Office grappled with similar challenges and was in decline. Although the high Qing leaders had been moving to engage closely in domestic and foreign sea trade, the internal crises did not allow the Jiaqing and the later the Daoguang government to reform the Customs structure. Unlike the preceding governments, who hold the ultimate autonomy to manage Customs issues, the Daoguang court was eventually forced to refashion the established customs structure to meet the new circumstances created by the Europeans who valued the importance of free sea trade. In the years immediately after the First Opium War and the opening of five treaty ports, the British attempted to increase their profits and maintain commercial advantages over the trading sphere by taking the autonomy to handle the Customs Office. By then, the maritime Customs was managed entirely by foreigners in its administrative grade, which arguably toppled the Qing's inner-outer conception in supervising sea trade and maritime business.

Yet, although the Qing was brought to its knees starting from the mid-nineteenth century, it is necessary to avoid the temptation of combining the high Qing story with the

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<sup>551</sup> *DaQing lichao shilu* 大清歷朝實錄 (Renzong chao 仁宗朝) [Veritable records of successive reigns of the Qing dynasty, the Jiaqing reign] (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1964), *juan* 91, p. 6b-7b.

one that happened in the following century. In this study, I have illustrated that there was a strong maritime consciousness and the naval awareness demonstrated by the Qing court in the eighteenth century. The triumph of the high Qing maritime policy was its successful ability to act, or at least appear to act, independently and exclusively on its own behalf in maritime affairs. Its ability to manipulate the naval force and the maritime customs served both to assure the physical security of the empire, with a coastline stretching over 18,000 kilometers. It also served to legitimate Qing-order across the inner sea space in East Asia. As such, the Great Qing never lost sight of the strategic and logistical realities of governing its vast maritime landscape in the eighteenth century.

## Glossary

- Bohai 渤海  
*canjiang* 參將  
Chen Ang 陳昂  
Chen Lunjiong 陳倫炯  
cohong 公行  
cun genben 存根本  
Da Qing yitong zhi 大清一統志  
Daoyi jilüe 島夷志略  
DaQin 大秦  
DaQing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu 大清高宗純皇帝實錄  
DaQing guo 大清國  
*daxiyang* 大西洋  
di bijin waiyang, yicang jianfei……dizai neihe, shiwu jianshao 地逼近外洋, 易藏奸匪……地在內河, 事務簡少  
Dong xi yang kao 東西洋考  
*Dongxi yangkao* 東西洋考  
fenjie 分界  
*fudutong* 副都統  
Gong Zizhen 龔自珍  
Gu Yanwu 顧炎武  
Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹  
*Guan hai* 觀海  
Guangdong haifang huilan 廣東海防彙覽  
*Guangdong yanhai tu* 廣東沿海圖  
Guangyu jiangli tu 廣輿疆里圖  
Guozhao xianzheng shilüe 國朝先正事略  
*Haidao yizhi* 海島逸誌  
*Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志  
*Haiguo wenjian lu* 海國聞見錄  
*haiguo* 海國  
*Hailu* 海錄  
*haitu* 海圖  
*haiyang zhi shi* 海洋之事  
*haiyu* 海語  
han bianzu 捍邊陲  
*houfu* 候服  
Huang Qing zhigong tu 皇清職貢圖  
*huangfu* 荒服  
*jianyou yu Zhongguo xiangsi* 間有與中國相似  
*Jinghai* 靖海  
*jingyu huojiao* 精於火駁  
*jiuzhou* 九州  
Li Wei 李威  
Li Yuandu 李元度  
Lin Zexu 林則徐  
*liuzi neiyang xunqi* 留資內洋巡緝  
Ma Huan 馬歡  
*Mingshi* 明史  
*nanguo sihai, bingtun bahuang* 囊括四海, 並吞八荒  
*Nantai an zhi sansheng shidao tu* 南台接治三省十道圖  
*nanyang* 南洋  
*neihai* 內海  
*neihe* 內河  
*neiting* 內廷  
*neiyang yiyu kanding* 內洋易於勘定  
*ouluoba* 歐羅巴  
Pidao 皮島  
*potao fujing* 波濤弗靜  
Qi Ying 耆英  
*Qiankun yitong haifang quantu* 乾坤一統海防全圖  
*Qishan yanhai quantu* 七省沿海全圖  
*ren haijiang zhe* 任海疆者  
*Shanghai jing* 山海經  
Shao Yuanping 邵遠平  
*shizhi tuzhi* 矢志圖賊  
*shuishi tidu* 水師提督  
*Sihai huayi zongtu* 四海華夷總圖  
*Sizhou zhi* 四洲志  
Sun Chengze 孫承澤  
*tianxia yanhai xingshilu* 天下沿海形勢錄



*tianxia* 天下  
*wai dasiyang* 外大西洋  
*waihai* 外海  
*waiting* 外廷  
*waiyang yudi* 外洋輿地  
*waiyang* 外洋  
*waiyang* 外洋  
*waiyi bingchuan huoji neiyang, ju diaobing  
jishi quzhu* 外夷兵船或寄內洋, 俱調兵立  
時驅逐  
Wang Dahai 王大海  
Wang Dayuan 汪大淵  
Wang Liu 王鑾  
Wang Qi 王圻  
Wanli haifang tu 萬里海防圖  
*wei haiwai qinshan ye* 為海外欽善耶  
Wei Yuan 魏源  
*weiru bantu* 未入版圖  
*weiru bantu* 未入版圖  
Wu Shijun 吳士俊  
*wufu* 五服  
*wugui* 烏鬼  
*xiangjin lüeyuan* 詳近略遠  
*xiaoxiyang* 小西洋  
Xie Qinggao 謝清高  
*xinanyang* 西南洋  
Xishan zaji 西山雜記  
*Xiyu wenjian lu* 西域聞見錄  
*Xu wenxian tongkao* 續文獻通考  
*xunshao jiangjie* 巡哨疆界  
*xuyan* 序言  
Yang Bingnan 楊炳南  
*yang* 洋  
*yangren* 洋人  
*Yanhai quantu* 沿海全圖  
Yi yu zhi 異域志  
Yilibu 伊里布  
*Yingya shenglan* 瀛涯勝覽  
*yishang* 夷商  
Yiti junzhan 一體均霑  
*you Dinghai wei zhi hanwei, shi neihai zhi*

*tang ao ye* 有定海為之捍衛, 寔內海之堂奧  
也  
*yu zhu waiyang, buru yu zhu neihe* 禦諸外  
洋, 不如禦諸內河  
*Yuanchao diangu bianniankao* 元朝典故編  
年考  
Yugong 禹貢  
*Zhe Tang jianbian tu* 浙塘簡便圖  
Zheng He 鄭和  
Zheng Xie 張燮  
Zhou Xuegong 周學恭  
*zongbing* 總兵

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