

Exploring Trade and the World Economy: A City Street and Shops in 18th Century China

Sean McManamon, Bronx High School of Science (NY)

Student Assignments and Class Activities

- Adopting Characters in the Street Scenes
 - Identifying Trade Items in the Markets and Shops
-

Introduction

In 1644, the Manchu invaders established the Qing Dynasty in China, replacing the ethnic Chinese Ming Dynasty. Working with the Southern Inspection Tour Scrolls of two famous Qing emperors, students will become familiar with the state power, economy, and geography of China under the Qing.

Guiding Questions:

1. What can we learn about the power and wealth of the Qing Dynasty China by viewing the scrolls of the Southern Inspection Tours of the Chinese emperors?
2. How developed was the Chinese economy and how integrated was it with the world economy of the time?

Preparing to teach these lessons:

These lessons should be done in a room with at least one computer, but would be best in a computer lab so all of the students would be able to view the website.

The resource for the lessons is the Web module: **Recording the Grandeur of the Qing: The Southern Inspection Tour Scrolls of the Kangxi and Qianlong Emperors**

(<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/qing/index.html>)

Student Assignments and Class Activities

Homework:

To prepare for this lesson, the students will read for homework the sections on “The Emperors,” “The State” and “The Economy” on the Recording the Grandeur website. <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/qing/index.html> . (Have the students cut and paste this url. They can then click on each of these titled sections to access the PDF with information on the “Emperors,” “State,” and the “Economy,” respectively. Print and copy the PDF files for those students without internet access.)

Class Activities:

1. Have students open the page of “Interactive Urban Mapper for 18th Century Suzhou” <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/qing/q6-districts.html> (cut and paste this url.) There are 8 different categories of shops and other establishments "pinned" in the scroll (see list in upper right-hand corner of the link). Divide students into 8 groups and assign each group to one of the categories. Allow students to explore their categories together for five minutes.
2. Ask students to imagine that they are one of the characters they see in the city. (Each student can choose a different character, be it a merchant, a farmer, an official, an entertainer, a housewife, a child, a peddler, or member of the Emperor’s advance party or entourage. Have them work together to determine:
 - Who is each character?
 - What type of life does he lead – does he travel, live and work only in Suzhou?
 - What might be the economic and social position of the person in the society?
 - How is his position a reflection of the power of the Qing?
 - What might be this person’s impression of the Emperor and his entourage?
 - What activities might this person engage in within the city? What would he buy? Sell? Where would he eat? Would he have entertainment available to him?
3. Ask students to discuss their shops or establishments as well as any evidence of commercial activity they see along the street itself.
 - What types of goods are being carried and traded?
 - Where do these goods come from – can students determine if they are from Suzhou? From other parts of China? From countries beyond China?
 - What impressions of the Chinese economy do students have from viewing the activity on the Suzhou street?
 - What type of transportation is available and what is its significance?
 - What evidence is there, if any, of international trade and China’s involvement in it? Use examples.