

СЕКЦІЯ II. ІСТОРІЯ ТА КУЛЬТУРА КРАЇН СХІДНОЇ АЗІЇ

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CHINA ARCHIVE ON ECONOMY OF MEDIEVAL YANGZHOU PREFECTURE

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During the study of Yangzhou School of Painting development, it was found that at its height at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, Yangzhou prefecture became one of the leading economic centers of China. This influenced artists of the School to decrease the dependance on the scare subsidies from Qing imperial court. Instead, they tried to sell painting on the market, get profits and thus – to create and express their personality more freely than in the past. Thanks to their departure from the then-dominant court style, relying on liberal stile of painting and demand from the wealthy classes of industrialists and merchants, the School achieved great success and recognition not only in China but also in the world.

In research, sometimes overlooked, appeared an important source on Yangzhou's economy, trade and urban infrastructure of that era – a collection of criminal registration records from Yangzhou found in the First historical archive of China and published in China [1, 2028 p.].

When reviewing the criminal cases, it can be found out that some of them contain information on structure of its economy, income and spending level

of households and residents in Jiangdu and Ganquan counties under Yangzhou prefecture (the two places should be the core areas of Yangzhou at that time) and exposed features of their way of life. The archive cases of criminal subjects, mainly filed in land debt, marriage and family sub-archives, contain multiple cases that could reveal the level of people's living conditions in mentioned counties. Although case information cannot provide a panoramic view of a county's economic development level and people's lives, it might be quite informative.

If each case is taken as the object of observation and analysis, one can understand the urban economic development level of Yangzhou in early Qing Dynasty from a part and a certain side, and then have general knowledge of the lifestyle of urban residents of that time.

However, new foundations of the Yangzhou economy were laid during the early transition even before the Qing imperial era and endured throughout its existence. That time fundamental institutional transformations were followed by the collapse of the equal-field system and installation of private ownership of land. Progressive taxation based on household assets of town dwellers replaced the old principle of uniform taxation. The abolition of statutory labor obligations for most of the population and the long-term decline in personal bondage eliminated key constraints on the allocation and migration of household and individual labor. The steady trend toward monetization of taxation and the sharply reduced scale of tax payments allowed households greater freedom to invest their labor and resources as they saw fit.

To some extent the local market can be considered as one of the major driving forces of both economic and cultural development in Yangzhou prefecture and city.

The decline of agrarian economy facilitated the development of industry and service sector. The industry (metal melting and casting, shipbuilding, construction materials, production of home utensils like furniture, salt purifying and tea packing etc.) along with the transportation and construction services were closely connected to the market, and driven by market competition. Money circulation and credit lending services were provided by banks, collective or individual financiers. Painting, sculpture, porcelain, wood carving, silk weaving and other items in bulk were sold through the market system.

And then Yangzhou industrial manufacture and commerce was developing rather fast for a long period of time, until late Qing period. The urbanization of the prefecture has been developing along with the rise of production and population. Meanwhile local people's income increased causing a jump in consumption.

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Yangzhou logistics. Case 1. From the testimony, delivered by Wang Deluo: A native of Ganquan County, the leader, opens the store of delivery of fresh fruits [2, p. 1].

The "leader" here actually obtains a business license from an official institution, and is a formal "businessman". It means that there are more local commercial stores, forming a commercial scale. In the same case, the confession of some other persons involved illustrates this point.

Commercial logistics is embodied in the division of labor and cooperation between commercial operators in the same field. Only sound logistics services can promote the upgrading of business activities. While some other archive cases show that the logistics links in Yangzhou were relatively sound.

For example, those who run grocery stores are among the dealers, and some other dealers may deliver the goods. Many cases show that some of them actually purchased goods on credit, and settled with the supplier after the goods are sold. This form of logistics shows that the business network in Yangzhou has been formed and the business credit has a foundation. Even business operations in the same industry have multiple links that complement each other. It is a high degree of commercial sub-engineering.

The direct effect of a sound logistics service led to the reduction the labor cost of shop owners. It can be operated with less or no labor. Therefore, the capital threshold for opening a shop is lowered. It has a promoting effect on the development of township commerce. Of course, there are advantages and disadvantages of credit behavior in the business process. For hoteliers, credit can solve the problem of shortage of funds. However, if the credit amount reaches a higher level and cannot be settled for a longer period of time, credit will be lost and the supply chain or cooperation will be interrupted. At the same time, for those who are credited, a shortage of funds will appear, the degree of difficulty in operation will increase, and the severe ones may close their doors. Because of this worry, operators often have to ask people who owe money repeatedly.

Commercial activities. Case 2. Cao Da Gong: A native of Shandong, in March of the eighteenth year of Jiaqing, a small pear vendor came to Yangzhou fresh fruit shop to sell seventy-seven packs of pears. Huo Yonggui and Huo Yongtai from their hometowns came to persuade the small ones to transport up to thirty packs to another branch to sell them separately, so as not to block other goods delivery [3, p. 1]

It can be seen that there are many local fresh fruit shops in Yangzhou run by merchants from outside who transport fruits to venues provided for them by the fresh fruit shops. And locals sell fruits on their own. A commerce bank charged management fees based on the sales volume. Commerce bank engagement in business activities was a manifestation of the standardization of urban business management. Of course, there were also retailers whose locations were not fixed, and they may not need to apply for a license. Some cases further show that bank management is not a requirement for small vendors. In a large vegetable market, the vegetable shop may let them have permanent stalls.

Case 3. Xu Yinglong Gong: A native of Ganquan County, fifty-four years old. The young one and Yang Dehuai both lead the way in the physiology. In the twenty-first year of Jiaqing, the small ones had no money to use, so they made a deed to Yang Dehuai for selling the vegetable shop lots for 15 thousand yuan [4, p. 1].

It can be seen that Yangzhou business environment had the characteristics of a combination of standardized management and flexible operation. Perhaps it is very similar to the vegetable and fruit trading markets established in modern Chinese cities.

Deeper specialization. Case 4. Xiao Xiangyou rowed a boat, hired Chen Wu to carry it out, and met Liu Ba. On the evening of October 8th of the seventeenth year of Jiaqing, Chen Wu told the junior that the ship saw three loads of passengers and cargo in Zhenjiang. Liu Ba's son, Liu Dajinjin, went to pick up the load first. The price of the ship was unsuccessful. The guests hired a boat by themselves. If he operates the ship, he will pretend to deliver it at a reduced price. On the ninth day, when Xiao Xiao was sweeping the street, Liu Ba came and said that his son Liu Dajinjin took three loads of passengers and goods in Zhenjiang, and Chen Wu reduced the price to load them [5, p. 1].

Yangzhou stores and special operators were mostly commensurate with general trends of market management. There were not only grain shops and fruit shops, but also on-boat shops and "on-grass" shops (with firewood or coal on sale). This embodied the professionalism and specialization of management and shows that business competition was in place then. Such a situation can be seen in various industries and competition. It seems, it was a common phenomenon and beneficial to consumers, being a sign of a market environment. For example, competition among shippers, who tried to attract customers by lowering prices.

This and other related cases show that starting of the early Qing dynasty, the urban market in Yangzhou was rather active and formed a relatively complete commercial service system. Business, employment, and consumption behavior of Yangzhou government, firms and consumers were closely related to the market because:

- the prefecture market was considered as one of the major driving forces of both economic and cultural development in Yangzhou prefecture;

- the decline of agrarian economy facilitated the development of industry and service sector. The industry (metal melting and casting, shipbuilding, construction materials, production of home utensils like furniture, salt purifying and tea packing etc.) along with the transportation and construction services were closely connected to the market, and driven by market competition;

- money circulation and credit lending services were provided by banks, collective or individual money lenders. Painting, sculpture, porcelain, wood carving, silk weaving and other items in bulk or retail were being sold through the market system.

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