
The Trading Passes in Qing Empire's Overseas Trade Administration: 1684-1840

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The Qing Empire abolished *haijin*, the Maritime Prohibitions, in 1684 and meanwhile legalized the overseas trade of private merchants. As a result, numerous Chinese merchants began to sail to Nagasaki of Japan and various places in Southeast Asia for trade, and on the other hand, foreign traders were also able to legally enter and engage in transactions at port cities of China. It is known that, the empire established custom houses called *haiguan* to collect trade duty and to oversee the movement of merchants and ships. And it is also worthy of note that a series of official passes were issued to merchants or ship-owners for assisting trade management. There still exist several original passes generally called *Grand Chop* in English used in the Canton trade and several manuscripts of passes used by the Chinese trading ships to Nagasaki. There are a few case studies on one kind of or several kinds of the trading passes, and the utilization of trading passes also have been discussed to some extent in several comprehensive studies on Chinese marine ships' administration of the Qing Empire or studies on the Canton trade. Yet, they seldom try to integrate the examination of the passes used by Chinese merchants and those issued to foreign traders, and thereby to show us a whole picture of the trading passes system.

This article aims to examine the process of the systematic formation and discusses the functions of these passes in a wide vision on the overseas trade of Qing China especially in the period from 1684 to 1840. For these purposes, this study analyzes in detail the text of passes which original or manuscript still exist currently and analyzes the Qing's official documents related to the utilization of trading passes.

There are several discussing points in the conclusion: we can see the institutional inheritance in the pass system between the Qing and its former dynasty, the Ming; more kinds of passes were issued and used in the Qing than the Ming, and it can be seen as a result of the institutional development; even though different kind of passes had different roles, they functioned complementarily, since the Qing authorities expected them to benefit the maintenance of empire's coastal security and duty collection; the commercial brokers called *chuanhang* in trading port cities generally played a role of agent for applying for trading passes.

Key words: Trading Pass, *Paizhao*, *Xianzhao*, *Guanpai*
