

Citation: LIN Man-houng. Buddha versus state: imperial China's perception of political leaders' portraits on Western currency, 91 BC–AD 1911, *Researches in Chinese Economic History*, 2018 (02): 5-22.

Buddha versus state: imperial China's perception of political leaders' portraits on Western currency, 91 BC–AD 1911

LIN Man-houng^{1,2}

¹*Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica;*

²*National Taiwan Normal University,*

Abstract In world history, the patterns on currencies can be roughly classified into the Occidental Greek and Roman system and the Oriental Chinese system. The Occidental system involved the head of political leaders, while the Oriental system did not. The *Records of the Grand Historian* (史记), which was completed in 91 BC, already contained records in its 63th biography “Dayuan,” where “Anxi (Persia)” . . . uses silver as money coins on which the image of its king was minted.” However, this phenomenon was not observed in China until 1912, when Dr. Sun Yat-sen instructed to “print the portrait of the Republic’s first president” on the founding of the Republic of China commemorative coins and currencies in circulation. This change still bears its mark on the present day. For roughly two thousand years, the patterns on the traditional currencies in China have been dominated by text, while the use of images was rare, and the head of national leader had never been used. The Chinese era name printed on traditional Chinese currency was somewhat difficult for the common folk to identify. Copper coins from past dynasties or foreign copper coins were circulated concurrently with currencies from the contemporary dynasty. After the Opium War, China attempted to imitate minting foreign silver coins, and still, the head of rulers was not minted in imitation. Relatively speaking, after the 1st century, Buddhism received widespread popularity within China, and the image of Buddhas penetrated into corners of societies. In the Qing Dynasty, the head of political leaders on foreign silver coins was also referred to as “Fo” (Chinese: 佛;

About the author: LIN Man-houng, Research Fellow at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Professor at National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, 11526. E-mail: mhlmh@gate.sinica.edu.tw

Translated by ZHAN Haoyang; edited by WANG Liting

Buddha). By importing the head portrait of a national leader in the traditional Chinese currency culture, Dr. Sun Yat-sen made a revolutionary development in terms of national imagination. This study will employ the patterns on currencies that are deeply ingrained in the daily life of commoners to pinpoint that, while religious governmentality was obvious and deep-rooted in both traditional China and the West, and the national construct of China is relatively vague compared with the West. In contrast to other individual studies that examine the state image or Buddhist image in traditional China, this study sheds light on the difference in depth between the Buddha and national belief in traditional China. The paper is divided into four parts: (1) No political leaders' figurehead on Chinese imperial money; (2) Chinese traditional people's access to Buddha's figureheads from the 1st century onward; (3) "Buddha Head Silver" dominant in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries China's land contract for the Spanish coins with the king's bust; and (4) Buddha versus state in traditional China.

Keywords state perception, religious governmentality, state-society relation, cultural exchange between China and the West, currency patterns in traditional China

1 Introduction

In world history, based on societies with historical records, the patterns on currencies can be roughly classified into two major systems: the Occidental Greek and Roman system, and the Oriental Chinese system. The Occidental Greek and Roman system originated in Asia Minor and spread to Greece and Rome, influencing modern European and American countries. The Greek and Roman system often employs such precious metals as gold and silver for minting. The coins are manufactured through pressing, in round shape without holes. The inscription often marks the location and year of issue, the name of political leaders, and religious eulogy. The front depicts patterns of flower and birds, beasts, plants or figures (including political leaders). The Islamic countries of Asia, Persia and northern India are also affected by the culture of the Greek and Roman currency system because of the Eastern Expedition of Alexander the Great. However, because Islamic countries prohibit the worship of idols, they do not use portrait pattern in minting. Their other forms of currency are similar to the Greek and Roman system. The Chinese minting system often employs mould casting for copper coins, with a square hole

in the center, and inscribing texts rather than images.^① The Chinese system of currency culture was transmitted to East Asian countries such as South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.^②

In the developmental trajectory of currency culture traditions, where Western currency patterns feature portraits of political leaders and Eastern currency patterns lack such portraits, there is one record of note. Liang Shaoren of Qiantang, Zhejiang Province, wrote in 1837, that at least in the Western Han Dynasty, China was already aware of the custom in the West (the literature here refers to Persia) where head of the political leader is minted, “According to the law of foreign countries, once the successor to the throne is determined, its portrait is on the face of silver. The *Records of the Grand Historian* (史记) noted the so-called kingdom of Anxi where silver is used as currency, and the currency is minted with the king’s face. Once the king is dead, (they) will turn to serve the face of the king’s successor.”^③ In *The Records of the Grand Historian: Chronicles of Dayuan* (史记·大宛列传), it was written: “Anxi (author’s note: Persia or Iran) is thousands of miles to the west of the Great Yuezhi. . .the city is like Dayuan. . .close to Amu Darya, with civilians and merchants using carts and boats, traveling to neighboring nations by thousands of miles. Using silver as money, the money is minted with the king’s face. Once the king is dead, the money is replaced to mint the new king’s face.” *The Book of Han: Records of the Western Areas* (汉书·西域传) also noted, “north of Kangju, east of Sīstān, west of Antiochia. The nation is close to Amu Darya. The locals use silver as money, minted with its king’s face. Once the king is dead, the money is replaced to mint the new king’s face.” Between the end of East Han Dynasty and early Three Kingdoms, *Annotations to the Book of Han* (汉书注) by Zhang Yan noted, “the obverse of the money has a man riding a horse, and the reverse of the money has the face of a man.” In *Sound and Meaning of the Book of Han* (汉书音义), it was noted

^① Peng, X. 中国货币史, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 3–5, 7 (1958); Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 147 (2011).

^② Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 150–151

^③ [Qing Dynasty] Liang, S. 两般秋雨庵随笔, Vol. 3 in 近代中国史料丛刊, Vol. 157, Taipei: Wenhai Publishing House, 42 (1977).

that “Mu (幕) is the reverse side of money, and is pronounced as Man (漫).” In *Book of the Later Han: Records of the Western Areas* (后汉书·西域传), it also mentioned that Rome often used silver and gold: “The Roman Empire, reaching out to thousands of miles from each side. There are more than 400 cities. They have many gold and silver and treasures.”

^①This shows that the China of the Han Dynasty was aware of the culture of currency patterns featuring the head of the political leaders. Persian silver coins are currently unearthed in Xinjiang and Shaanxi,^② with obvious heads of political leaders, as in Figure 1.



Fig. 1 Persian silver coin (second half of 1st century BC, first half of AD 1st century)

Source: Editorial Department of Collection of World Art 編. *A Comprehensive Collection of World Art, East Asia* (Seikai bijutsu daisenshu, Toyo 編 15), Shogakukan, 127 (1999). This figure is provided by Dr. Xiong Changkun.

After the establishment of the Republic of China, the currency was administered by the Ministry of Finance. On March 11, 1912, the Minister of Finance of the Interim Government petitioned the provisional President Sun Yat-sen to cast a commemorative coin (also a circulating currency). Sun Yat-sen issued an order regarding the relevant image, instructing to

^① [Han Dynasty] Sima, Q. [Liu Song Dynasty] Pei, Y. (compiled and explained), [Tang Dynasty] Sima, Z. (index), [Tang Dynasty] Zhang, S. (proof) 新校本史记三家注并附编二种, Vol. 123, in 大宛列传第六十三. Taipei: Ding Clerical Bureau, 3157 (1981).

^② Xia, N. *Acta Archaeologica Sinica* (考古学报), (1) (1974); Sun, L. *Acta Archaeologica Sinica* (考古学报), (1) (2004).

“print the portrait of the Republic’s first president.”^① This is the first time the central government has placed the head of the national leader on the currency. The influence of this change has persisted to the present day. There is a delay of about two thousand years, between 91 BC when Sima Qian recorded the practice of the West to imprint head portrait of the leadership on coins in *Records of the Grand Historian* (史记), and 1912 when the founding commemorative coin of the Republic of China inscribed the portrait of Sun Yat-sen on the coin.

Between the two thousand years, traditional Chinese currency patterns have been dominated by characters; occasionally they featured images. However, no head portraits of leaders had been used. Regarding the regnal year printed on traditional Chinese currency, moving from copper coins, which were circulating across dynasties, to the foreign coins, which were largely circulating in Ming and Qing dynasties, it can be inferred that its state image does not match that of leaders’ head portraits. In the Qing Dynasty, China used Buddha to denote foreign silver coins that extensively used head portraits of foreign leaders. After the Opium War, China tried to imitate and cast foreign silver coins but did not include the leader’s head portrait. In comparison, since AD 1st century, Buddhism received widespread acceptance in China, and Buddhist statues were deeply popular among the common folks. Buddhist statue is not a boundless object of the Dharma, but it serves as a medium of imagination, giving people a sense of trust by virtue of prompting them to think about certain unspeakable forces. Fiat money, especially paper notes, have values significantly lower than the face value. It is the state symbol on top of banknotes that give people confidence that it can be exchanged for goods or services with a matching face value. The kind of transformation is akin to the measurement ladles, used by merchants, often placed in temples in Taiwan during Qing Dynasty, where the faith in deities make people believe that merchants will not beguile buyers. After the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, measurement ladles were issued by the

^①大总统令财政部准照铸纪念币并教示新币花纹文, History Data Compilation Committee, Central Committee of the Chinese Nationalist Party, 临时政府公报 No. 35, Taipei International Printing Factory, 10 (1968).

government. In Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty, merchant leadership was elected by lottery drawing before deities. After the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, merchant leadership was selected according to the regulations of the government's official laws on civil society organizations.^① Patterns on currencies symbolize that the 1911 Revolution caused changes in modern China as the nation-state partially replaced religion.

Both Philip A. Kuhn and Paul Katz refer to the phenomenon of religious governmentality in traditional Chinese society.^② C.K. Yang pointed out that, unlike many Westerners who supported the view that China did not have a religion for people's faith, the strong religious faith was replaced to a considerable extent, after the founding of the Republic of China, by the belief of the Three Principles of the People.^③ Sun Yat-sen introduced the head portrait of a national leader, amidst such Chinese traditions, and influenced China ever since. In terms of state image, it was indeed a revolutionary development. This study will point out the following points through patterns on currencies: traditional China was deeply influenced by the culture of Buddhist statues in the process of accepting cultures from the West, and yet there was no response to the leader head portraits on Western currencies. In the traditional Chinese society where religious governmentality was widespread and commonplace, the state image of traditional China was, in fact, vaguer than the West, where traditionally the phenomenon of religious governmentality was also strong. In relation to relevant studies on traditional Chinese state image or Buddhist statues, this study will use images to demonstrate the hierarchical relationship between Buddha and state belief in traditional China for the past two thousand years.

2 Traditional Chinese currencies occasionally featured images but without head portraits of leaders

^① Lin, M. in Huang, F. & Weng, J. 台湾商业传统论文集. Taipei: Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, 13 (1999).

^② Philip Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990, p.107; Paul R. Katz, *Divine Justice-Religion and the Development of Chinese Legal Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

^③ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961, p.381.

Regarding the patterns on traditional Chinese currency, we will take the example of copper coins that have been used for the longest time. The patterns conveying information on its weight, or the regnal year, or the bureau of coinage, are in characters. The copper coins from the Tang Dynasty would sometimes include patterns of the moon, clouds or flying birds. These patterns are influenced by Central Asia and thus are an exception.^① The copper coins from Khitan and Liao Dynasty would incorporate dragons, the moon, and stars,^② and thus are also an exception. Silver ingots would have inscriptions of the location of casting, the name of the old-styled Chinese bank, the name of the silversmith, and the year of casting, all expressed in characters. During the Yuan and Ming dynasties, apart from characters that denote its face values and names, the top of paper notes would often dedicate more words to indicate that it is forbidden to make counterfeit notes, with gradual appearance of patterns: paper notes from Yuan Dynasty feature vine leaves and fruit textures on borders, and paper notes from Ming Dynasty feature dragon textures.^③

Since the government stopped issuing Chāo and Guàn (Chinese: 钞贯; official banknotes) in Shunzhi Reign, the Qing government did not issue banknotes for more than 180 years. During the Xianfeng Reign, in order to raise revenues for war to suppress the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Ministry of Revenue began to issue Guan Piao (Chinese: 官票; official notes) in AD 1853. The face of the currency would write “Hu Bu Guan Piao” (Chinese: 户部官票; Official Note of the Ministry of Revenue), while also issuing Da Qing Bao Chao (Chinese: 大清宝钞; Official Money of the Grand Qing).^④ The dragon-shaped pattern from Ming Dynasty was retained for the printing of Hu Bu Guan Piao and Da Qing Bao Chao. Hu Bu Guan Piao is also known as Yin Piao (Chinese: 银票; silver note), using Silver Tael (Chinese: 银两; Yin Liang) as a unit. The note was printed on

^① Peng, X. 中国货币史. 184–185.

^② For the copper coins with Khitan scripts “Dà Dé Xīng Guó (大德兴国),” see Qiu, Y. & Chen, C. 契丹文珍稀钱币考释图说. Beijing: Anhui Fine Arts Publishing House, 88 (2011).

^③ Shanghai Bank Museum, Taiwan Yongfeng Financial Control Exhibition Group. 汇通天下—从钱庄到现代银行. Taipei: Yongfeng Bank, 76–77 (2012).

^④ Zhang, H. master's thesis, National Cheng Kung University, 15 (2008).

Korean paper, and the denomination of actual issuance ranges from 1 tael, 3 taels, 5 taels, 10 taels, and 50 taels. Da Qing Bao Chao uses Zhi Qian (Chinese: 制钱; standard copper coins) as a unit. It is also known as Qian Piao (Chinese: 钱票; paper notes in terms of copper coins) or Qian Chao (Chinese: 钱钞). The initial denomination ranges from 250 cashes (Chinese: 文; pinyin: wén), 500 cashes, 1000 cashes, 1500 cashes to 2000 cashes. The size of Guan Piao is similar to that of Bao Chao. The top, the left and right sides of Bao Chao use dragon-shaped pattern, while the bottom uses wave-shaped pattern.^①

The pattern of a dragon appeared at Hu Bu Guan Piao and Da Qing Bao Chao. Dragon is equivalent to an authoritative symbol that is exclusive to the emperor. On May 27, 1897, Imperial Bank of China (the first modern private bank in China established by the official shareholding), established by Sheng Xuanhuai who was the Governor of the Imperial Chinese Railways, started issuing Yin Liang Piao (Chinese: 银两票; notes of silver taels) from 1898, with the pattern of twin dragons plaining with the pearls. However, the pattern did not appear on notes without the year of issuance from Qian Zhuang (Chinese: 钱庄; a financial institution) and Piao Hao (Chinese: 票号; a credit institution for agiotage of silver notes) until 1906.^② The folk banknotes that appeared in Qing Dynasty frequently featured names with such characters as Zhi Zhao (Chinese: 执照; license), Xin Piao (Chinese: 信票; note of credit), Dui Piao (Chinese: 兑票; note of agiotage), and Zhi Piao (Chinese: 支票; cheque). On parts of note borders, the most frequent patterns are ancient texts, Hui (回) character-shaped patterns, cloud-shaped patterns, straight lines, revealed (covert) Eight Immortals, ancient figures, winter plants, the four arts (zither, Go, calligraphy, painting) of the Chinese scholar, and auspicious animals, totaling 9 varieties.^③

In addition, the copper coins of the Tang and Liao dynasties showed

^① Dai, J. & Chen, X. 中国纸币史话. Tianjin: Baihua Literature and Art Publishing House, 31–33 (2011).

^② Zhang, D. doctoral thesis,, Yunlin University of Science and Technology, 122–123 (2013).

^③ Zhang, D. 清代民间纸币编排设计之研究, 56.

natural landscape patterns, such as moons and clouds. The traditional Chinese currency contained some images in addition to the text-based patterns, but unlike the Greek and Roman system currencies, there was no appearance of head portraits of a national leader.

3 Regnal year does not match leaders' head portrait in terms of the state image

Before the Six Dynasties, China used the weight as the name of the copper coin, such as the Qin Ban Liang (Chinese: 秦半两; half tael from Qin Dynasty) money (twelve *Zhu* (Chinese: 铢), where 1 tael equals to 24 *Zhu*). Since the Han Dynasty, the copper coins were changed to Ba *Zhu* coins (eight *Zhu* money) during the time of Empress Lyu, to Si *Zhu* (four *Zhu* money) during the reign of Emperor Wen of Han, and once again to Wu *Zhu* (five *Zhu* money) during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han.^① After the Six Dynasties, coinage was gradually changed to the combination of the regnal year and the name of the weight. For instance, Tai He Wu *Zhu* (Chinese: 太和五铢; Five *Zhu* from Taihe Reign) and Yong An Wu *Zhu* (Chinese: 永安五铢; Five *Zhu* from Yong'an Reign). In Tang Dynasty, the copper coin was recalled Tong Bao (Chinese: 通宝; literally circulating treasure), and the name was crowned with the regnal year, for instance, the Kai Yuan Tong Bao (Chinese: 开元通宝; literally circulating treasure from the inauguration of a new epoch). Across dynasties, Tong Bao was also addressed as Quan Bao (Chinese: 泉宝), Zhong Bao (Chinese: 重宝), or Yuan Bao (Chinese: 元宝).^②

On the pattern of the traditional Chinese currency, the regnal year of the ruler expressed in the text can carry a state image. Taking the example of the situation after Qing Dynasty conquered Xinjiang and Tibet, it can be seen that the Chinese currency imprinted with regnal year was used to declare effective sphere of domination. Wei Yuan's *Records of Military Accomplishments of the Empire: Chapter on Military Reserves* (圣武记·军储篇) noted that "since Emperor Qianlong settled Xinjiang and Tibet, he

^① Peng, X. 中国货币史, 67–92.

^② The "Currency Section" of the Qingdao Museum, records from the visit on July 18, 2013.

ordered each area north and south to the Tianshan Mountain to set up bureaus to mint Pu Er money, with inscription Qianlong Tong Bao (Chinese: 乾隆通宝). The location of coinage was inscribed using Chinese characters and Moslem alphabets. He also ordered the Tibetan Minister to supervise the creation of large and small silver coins, with Qianlong baozang (Qianlong treasures) at the front, and Tanggut alphabets at the back, and cast the years of coinage at the side profile.”^① The second year after the Qing government unified Xinjiang in 1759, the government recycled Junggar Pu Er money for new money. “Pu Er” means money in local semantics. The new money would suit local customs, and each coin weights two *Qian*. It is made from purified red copper, giving a rich and red texture to the newly minted coins, and thus was customarily called “red money.” The red money has inscription Qianlong Tong Bao in Chinese on one side, with Manchu alphabet and Hui alphabet (i.e. Chagatai language) on the other side. The red money was only circulated in the area south to Tianshan (i.e. Southern Xinjiang), while area north to Tianshan (i.e. Northern Xinjiang) was using unified copper coins from the Chinese inland. Upon seeing the Qianlong Tong Bao cast from southern Xinjiang, Emperor Qianlong wrote a poem, “The heaven blesses the westward march, achieving great success and flourishing with circulating Qing coins. The shape is carrying the local style of Teng Ge, and the coins are forged with Qianlong to symbolize unification.”^② The circulation of money with the regnal year of Qianlong in Xinjiang and Tibet suggested that the ruling power of the nation had reached such regions. However, parts of Xinjiang and Tibet still inherited Greek and Roman currency cultures. Junggar Pu Er money utilized hammered coinage from the West. The red money in comparison used a mould and cast technique from Chinese inland. In 1840, Tibetan area minted Phags-pa script—Tangka (Chinese: 章噶) Coin (1 Tangka equals to 7.5 taels of silver), and based on

^① [Qing Dynasty] Wei, Y. in 近代中国史料丛刊, No. 102. Taipei: Wenhai Publishing House, 42a (1977).

^② Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 220–225. On page 227 of this book, it is also pointed out that during the Qianlong Reign, every Pu Er is equal to one cent of silver. In the beginning, fifty Pu Er is used as one Teng Ge (腾格), and then it was set that one hundred Pu Er equals to one Teng Ge, and equals to one tael of silver.

the hand-crafted coin inscription “Si Tu Ge Bei Zha Ya”(Chinese: 司徒格贝扎呀), it should be made by the Situ family in Kham District.^① Since Tibet did not produce copper, due to the influence from India’s East India Company, Tibet instead minted silver coins. The center of the silver circle features no square holes. Instead, a square-shaped pattern replaced the square hole.^② The back used Tanggut alphabets, and the year of coinage was cast to the side, demonstrating Greek and Roman currency culture.

As far as Chinese inland is concerned, were the majority of the illiterate people in traditional China able to identify the words that express the regnal year of the emperor? Around the time of the Opium War, Wang Liu, who proposed the issuance of banknotes when there was a shortage of silver, wanted to print on banknotes *Zhu Bolu’s Aphorisms on Running a Household* (朱柏庐治家格言), edited by Zhu Yongchun from the late Ming Dynasty.^③ In contemporary criticism, Xu Mei noted that *Zhu Bolu’s Aphorisms on Running a Household* (朱柏庐治家格言) was originally printed on notes issued by Qian Zhuang (native banks), but when notes were brought to rickshaw pullers in Beijing, none of them could identify the text. Some could not even identify the name of the issuing native banks. The text said, “I visited the capital. I saw many money notes with inscriptions of *An Epigraph in Praise of My Humble Home* (陋室铭) and *Zhu Bolu’s Aphorisms on Running a Household* (朱柏庐治家格言) in the light regular script. I tried to hold it and ask the rickshaw puller, and they were all lost and unsure about the language. Even there were some who did not recognize the name of the issuing native banks. They were thus illiterate.”^④

According to estimates by the maritime customs at the end of the Qing

^① China Finance Association. *中国金融珍贵文物档案大典(西藏卷)*, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 31 (2002).

^② Tan, B. 中国近代货币的变动 (originally on *Journal of Sun Yat-Sen University (Taipei)* (中山大学学报), (3) (1957)), in *Cun Cui Society. 中国近三百年社会经济史论*, Hong Kong: Chongwen Bookstore, 208 (1979); Peng, X. *中国货币史*, 785.

^③ Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线). Taipei: Taiwan University Press, 2nd edition, 146–147 (2016). Also see Zhang, D. *清代民间纸币编排设计之研究*, 177.

^④ [Qing Dynasty] Xu, M. *钞币论*, Haichang Xu’s *Gujun GePublication*, 19b (26th year of Daoguang Reign (1847)).

Dynasty, about half of the men above school age were educated to some extent in the coastal areas along the Yangtze River around 1880. In the 1930s, John L. Buck's large-scale survey of rural areas found that about 45% of men over the age of 7 received some form of education, of which about 30% were literate; about 2% of women over 7 years old received some form of education; and about 50% of them are literate.^① It can be seen that more than 85% of men and 99% of women in traditional China cannot read the emperor's regnal year expressed in characters on currencies.

Across dynasties in China, each dynasty would circulate minted coins from former dynasties. This more or less indicates that the general population in traditional China did not have a deep sense of the relationship between currency and the rulers. A dispute in the Qing Dynasty in 1685 also showed that the new copper coins were used in parallel with copper coins from prior dynasties. In the twenty-fifth year of Kangxi Reign (1686), the Fujian governor inquired the central government whether the use of ancient money in the provinces under its jurisdiction should be banned or if they should obey the will of the people. The Ministry of Revenue replied that all ancient money should be destroyed. Emperor Kangxi held his reservation and asked the cabinet officials to express their opinions. Xu Qianxue pointed out that for treasures of the past since ancient times, since the Han *Wu Zhu* (five *Zhu*), there had never been a case of abolishing the ancient coins and solely using the present-day money." There have been exceptions during Xin Dynasty, Sui Dynasty, and Tianqi Reign of Ming Dynasty, and all of the attempts failed.^② When Japan ceded Taiwan from China, it also found Chinese copper coins from past dynasties.^③

In general, the lack of a deep sense of the relationship between

^① Evelyn S. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979, pp.6–18.

^② Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线). 29–31. [Qing Dynasty] Xu, Y. 檐园文集, Vol. 13, 9a–11a (Courtesy of Zheng Yongchang).

^③ Compilation of the Ministry of Treasury [おおくらしょう Ōkura-shō]: Meiji Taishō zaiseishi. 明治大正财政史, Vol. 13, Tokyo: Society of Public Finance and Economics, 472–473 (1939), quoted from Zhang, H. 战后初期台湾货币改革之研究, 31.

currency and the rulers can also be seen in the use of Vietnamese or Japanese copper coins in parts of China in the Qing Dynasty. Vietnam coins, such as Cảnh Hưng Thông Bảo (Chinese: 景兴通宝), Cảnh Hưng Đại Bảo (Chinese: 景兴大宝), Cảnh Hưng Chí Bảo (Chinese: 景兴至宝), Vĩnh Thọ Thông Bảo (Chinese: 永寿通宝), Vĩnh Thịnh Thông Bảo (Chinese: 永盛通宝), and Gia Long Thông Bảo (Chinese: 嘉隆通宝), were unearthed in Urumqi and its nearby Toutun River area. They can be attributed to General Hoàng Công Chất (Chinese: 黄公缙), who was in disagreement with his ruler and defected to Qing Dynasty along with his soldiers during Qianlong Reign and used these coins there.^① In the 1930s, Chaozhou Prefecture of Guangdong Province and Fujian Zhangquan District all saw the circulation of Vietnamese copper coins with regnal years of Quang Trung (Chinese: 光中), Cảnh Thịnh (Chinese: 景盛) and Bảo Hưng (Chinese: 宝兴).^②

Vietnam was influenced by China and, by year 970, almost all coins minted in Vietnam were regnal year money. Some even borrowed the Chinese regnal years directly. All the texts inscribed on the coins were in Chinese, written in seal script, clerical script and regular script. Because the material, character, size and shape were completely in line with Chinese coins, they were often mixed in usage. Even in terms of the currency system, Vietnam also has systems similar to the Chinese Sheng Mo (Chinese: 省陌) system. For example, Trần Dynasty stipulated that 69 cashes should be used. The current unit of currency in Vietnam is as 100 cashes, and when paying taxes 70 cashes should be used as 100 cashes and 700 cashes as 1 Guan (đồng), which actually corresponds to Chinese character tóng (Chinese: 铜; copper). At the time of the establishment of many regimes in North Vietnam and South Vietnam, the Later Lê Dynasty, the southern Nguyễn Dynasty and the Tây Sơn Dynasty all minted their own regnal year currency. Among them, the coins that were used by Lê Hiến Tông of Lê Dynasty during 47 years of Cảnh Hưng Reign were the

^① Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 199.

^② Lin, M. "China Upside Down (银线), pp. 33

most complex.^①

In AD 1833, the governor of Fujian and Zhejiang, Cheng Zuluo, also pointed out that both Xiamen, Fujian, and Zhapu, Zhejiang had a circulation of Kan'ei coins from Japan.^② Japan was affected by China and began to use copper coins after AD 683. The source of copper coins was originally imported from China and was called "imported money" (Chinese: 渡来钱). Most of the coins were from Song Dynasty, followed coins from Tang Dynasty and coins from Ming Dynasty. Japan also imitated coinage based on ancient Chinese coins. The major target of imitation was money from Song Dynasty. It was known as Nagasaki trade coins (Japanese: 長崎貿易錢). However, after AD.708, Japan began to mint copper coins with own regnal years, similar to the style of Kai Yuan Tong Bao from Tang Dynasty. Kan'ei Tsūhō (Japanese: 寛永通寶) from the Edo period had been minted since the beginning of 1626 until the first year of the Meiji period. It lasted for more than 240 years. It was minted in various parts of Japan, with hundreds of types. It was the longest used coin, with the greatest number of coins and most complicated editions in ancient Japanese coins.^③

The most obvious use of foreign currency in China was the direct use of foreign silver coins in general transactions, and even in taxation, during the 18th and 19th centuries.^④ China's use of coins from various dynasties and the Qing government's acceptance of foreign currency for taxation purposes show that, as far as traditional Chinese are concerned, currency was not as important as to the modern men, who consider currencies as an important social system that divides the scope of the rule or the boundaries of the country. On the other hand, the Qing government's silver, whether it is silver coins or silver taels, all rely on the supply of merchants. This was different from the Indian and Japanese governments. India is another Asian country that uses a lot of silver. Its silver coins were cast by the government, and the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan cast

^① Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 152–153.

^② Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 33.

^③ Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 150–151.

^④ Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 42.

another form of silver coins. It can be seen that in terms of the Chinese currency supply in the Qing Dynasty, the common people were a stronger factor compared to the government.^①

In addition, from the 18th and 19th centuries, Chinese people called the silver coins with the head of the Spanish king as Fo Yin (Chinese: 佛银; literally Buddha Silver), Fo Mian Yin (Chinese: 佛面银; literally Buddha Face Silver) and Fo Tou Yin (Chinese: 佛头银; literally Buddha Head Silver), which shows that in the visual world of ordinary people, Buddha head and Buddha face were more familiar than the ruler's head.

4 Using “Buddha” to call the first widely used foreign leaders' head portraits

In the 17th century, China began to use Western silver extensively. At that time, the silver coins that circulated into China from the West were distinct from those that circulated in the 18th century, in terms of their manufacturers and methods of minting. Between Ming and Qing dynasties, much of the inflows were cast by various Dutch provinces. Yu Yonghe, who traveled to Taiwan during the reign of Emperor Kangxi in the Qing Dynasty, once pointed out: Known as Fan Qian (Chinese: 番钱; literally foreign money), they are the silver coins cast by the red-haired people. The size of the coins are different, and foreign flowers are printed on the coins.^② The silver coin is inscribed with horse and sword, and was thus named “Ma Jian Yin (Chinese: 马剑银; literally horse sword silver).” The silver used in the coinage mostly came from Spanish colonies in the Americas. The silver mined from Spanish colonies in the Americas was dominated by Peruvian silver mines in the 16th century. In the 17th century, it shifted to a domination by Mexican silver mines. The Netherlands was the financial center of Europe in the 17th century. Silver mines from Spanish colonies in the Americas were mostly privately mined. Apart from being shipped to the UK, France or other European countries to purchase products, many silvers were shipped to the Netherlands to

^① Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 62–64.

^② Tan, B. 中国近代货币的变动, 202.

mint silver coins. Before 1700, the Chinese businessmen of Batavia and the Dutch East India Company monopolized the export of Chinese tea to Europe, and thus Dutch-cast silver coins flowed in large quantities into China. During that time, there were also few silver coins from France or Italy that circulated to China, also featuring the head portrait of Louis XIV.^① Since 1536, Mexico already had hand-hammered silver coins, known as cobs (Chinese: 切币 or 方币) that were not circular. Also because Spain was once ruled by Islamic followers and influenced by patterns on Islamic currencies, there were no head portraits of kings on the silver coins.^② The silver coin mainly circulated through Manila into China when trading products such as raw silks. Besides, between Ming and Qing dynasties, there were also Portuguese-minted silver coins circulating into China to exchange for products like raw silk.^③

In the 18th century, Spain was transforming from the more divinity-aligned authoritarian Habsburg Monarchy from the 17th century to the enlightened Bourbon dynasty. In addition to the surge in silver production in the Spanish colonies of the Americas, changes in the forms of currency have also contributed to the circulation of money. After 1759, the number of silver coins minted in Mexico increased significantly, from 13 million pesos in 1759 to 25 million pesos in 1800. Since 1732, Spain had introduced a screw press to mint silver coins in the American colonies. The coin shape is rounded and more uniform, and the pattern of wheat ears is imprinted on the edge of the silver coins to avoid cutting. This kind of silver is called Hua Bian Yin (Chinese: 花边银; literally lace silver) in China. Because it has double pillars to represent the rocks on both sides of Gibraltar, it is also called Shuāng Zhù Yín (Chinese: 双柱银; literally double pillar silver) or Shuāng Zhú Yín (Chinese: 双烛银; double candle silver). In 1759, King Charles III gained accession to the Spanish throne

^① J. Busschers, *The Mexican Pieces of Eight Reales and Their Dominance in Southeast Asia: An Historic Survey of More Than Three Centuries of a Trading Coin*, Netherlands: Driebergen, 1999, pp. 46,51; Peng, X. 中国货币史, 78.

^② J. Busschers, *The Mexican Pieces of Eight Reales and Their Dominance in Southeast Asia: An Historic Survey of More Than Three Centuries of a Trading Coin*, p.56. On the 32nd page of another book, 台湾钱淹脚目 (2006, self-published) pointed out that the so-called qiè qián (切钱; literally cutting money) is generally called fāng qián (方钱) in 台湾府志.

^③ Peng, X. 中国货币史, 780.

and brought the Bourbon dynasty to its heyday. In order to strengthen the unity between the home country and the colonies, and the glory of the whole empire, Charles III ordered in 1772 to add his head portrait, with him wearing battle robes and laurels, on the silver coins that will be produced by the colony mints in future. In the home country, his head portrait does not have him wearing robes nor laurels. The silver coins minted in Spain were not exported either. In the 18th century Europe, where nationalism was rising, it was common to add the king's head to the silver coins.^①

It can be seen from Table 1 that the Double Pillar Silver coins were produced by Spanish mints in various Latin American colonies before 1772. The silver coins with the head portrait of Spanish Kings, including Carolus III, Carolus IV or Ferdinand VII, were minted between 1772 and 1822. While the conditions of Carolus III silver coins were lesser than silver coins before, the weight (417 grams) and alloy composition (92% purity) did not change until the independence of Mexico, yielding its massive popularity.

Table 1 The coinage situation in Central and South America in the 18th Century

Location of the mine (Current Country)	Double Pillar Silver	Silver with head portrait of the king
Mexico City (Mexico)	1732—1771	1772—1821 Silver; 1732—1821 Gold
Lima (Peru)	1751—1772	1772—1824 Silver; 1751—1821 Gold
Potosi (Bolivia)	1767—1770	1773—1825 Silver; 1778—1824 Gold
Bogota (Colombia)	1759—1762	1772—1819 Silver; 1756—1820 Gold
Cusco (Peru)	—	1824 Silver and gold
Guatemala City (Guatemala)	1733—1753 1754—1771	1772—1821 Silver; 1733—1752 Gold 1754—1817
Santiago (Chile)	1751—1770	1773—1817 Silver; 1749—1817 Gold
Popayan (Colombia)	1769	1810—1822 Silver; 1758—1820 Gold

Source: Chester L. Krause, Clifford Mishler, Colin R Bruce II, eds., *Standard Catalogue of World Coins Spain, Portugal and the New World*, Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 2002, p.11.

In the 18th century, Britain was the most important European country to export Latin American silver to China. Even after the independence of Mexico in 1822, silver coins with the head portrait of the Spanish king were no longer produced, such Spanish silver dollar remained legal tender in the United States until 1857. After the United States adopted the

^① J. Busschers, *The Mexican Pieces of Eight Reales and Their Dominance in Southeast Asia: An Historic Survey of More Than Three Centuries of A Trading Coin*, pp. 48, 55–56, 58.

Declaration of Independence in 1776, it began to join the existing traders to trade with China. According to speculation, from the beginning of Sino-US trade to 1833, the United States exported 90 million silver coins to China.^① Due to the development of Sino-British and Sino-US trades, increasingly more Spanish silver coins with the heads of Charles III, Charles IV, and Ferdinand VII have circulated into China. Coupled with its relatively reliable qualities, these silver coins gained widespread usage. In China, the Charles III silver coins were also known as Sān Gōng (Chinese: 三工; from Carolus III), the Charles IV silver coins as Sì Gōng (Chinese: 四工; from Carolus IIII) or Gōng Bàn (Chinese: 工半; from Carolus IV).^② The head portraits of the Spanish kings on these silver coins used to be called Guǐ Miàn (Chinese: 鬼面; literally ghost face) or Fān Miàn (Chinese: 番面; literally foreign face), and were later called Fó Tóu (Chinese: 佛头; literally Buddha head). See Figure 2.^③ In the last years of Qianlong Reign and during the Jiaqing Reign, Buddha head exceeded all other silver coins in terms of popularity. In the early years of Qianlong Reign, foreign silver coins were increasingly accepted in Fujian and Guangdong provinces. Outside the Fujian-Guangdong region, foreign silver coins were rarely used before 1770, even in Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. However, after 1780, “but there is a type of Buddha head, because of ease of transportation, it gained common usage later, with price gradually increasing. Thus, every kind of products in Suzhou was gradually priced in the foreign money.” When explaining the reason for the use of

^① Fumio Kotake (小竹文夫) (明清时代における外国銀の流入), 近世支那经济史研究, Koubundou, 67–70 (1942). According to the US statistics and the research by H.B. Morse, R.S. Latourette and Robert Montgomery Martin, data suggests nearly 100 million silver coins.

^② Carolus IIII and Carolus IV were both released because the King of Spain was converted from Carolus III to Carolus IV in 1788, and the silver coin mould was supplied by the home country to the Spanish colony in the Americas. When the colonies did not receive casting mould, they first converted the mould for Carolus III to use as the mould for Carolus IV, and later switch to the newer mould when the Carolus IIII mould arrived in 1790. On the Carolus IV mould was still the head portrait of the father Carolus III, while the mould for Carolus IIII was the head portrait of the succeeding king Carolus IIII. See J. Bussschers, *The Mexican Pieces of Eight Reales and Their Dominance in Southeast Asia: An Historic Survey of More Than Three Centuries of A Trading Coin*, p.56.

^③ Regarding the shape of the silver coins that flowed into China in the early Qing Dynasty and the 18th century, Peng Xinwei's 中国货币史 (661–663, 780–783) has a very vivid introduction.

silver coins to pay taxes during the Daoguang Reign, Huang Juezi explained, “Citizens like its being able to show value directly by counting the number of coins.”^① When foreign silver coins were introduced to China, the common folks held that the coins had fixed and recognizable forms and, based on its circular shape, named its unit of measurement as Yuán (Chinese: 圆). Also, because Yuán (Chinese: 圆) is homophonic with Yuán (Chinese: 元), the general populace gradually used 元 to replace 圆. As a result, Yín Yuán (Chinese: 银圆) and Yī Yuán (Chinese: 壹圆) can be written as Yín Yuán (Chinese: 银元) and Yī Yuán (Chinese: 壹元) respectively.^② Zheng Yongchang also pointed out: roughly since the 1750s, the unit for Spanish silver coins used in Taiwan had largely shifted from tael (Chinese: 两) that is a measurement of weight to Yuán/Yuán/Yuán/Gè (Chinese: 圆/元/员/个) that are measurements of number of coins.^③ The civil society contractually gave foreign silver coins such as Buddha heads a unit of Yuán (Chinese: 圆(元)). See Table 2 for reference.



Fig. 2 Spanish silver dollar known as Buddha Silver

Source: Jian Yixiong, *Taiwanese Money Floods Feet* (台湾钱淹脚目), 65.

^① Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 39–42.

^② Zhang, H. 战后初期台湾货币改革之研究, 11

^③ Zheng, Y. 故宫学术季刊 (Taipei), (1): 19 (2001).

Table 2 The expression of the Buddha Silver in the ancient texts from Netne (using the Jiaqing Reign as an example)

Time	Occurrence of Buddha Silver	Property of ancient text	Corresponding page
1st Year, Jiaqing Reign (1796)	Buddha Silver 35 Big Yuan	Zhaoxi contract	446
3rd Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 38 Big Yuan discount 28 tael 8 maces 8 cents	Pawn contract	404
	Buddha Silver 5 Yuan	Zhaoxie contract	485
4th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 25 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	293
6th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Buddha Silver 3 Big Yuan	Pawn land rent word	486
7th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 22 Big Yuan	Transfer pawn contract	276
9th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha 130 Big Yuan	Seek Pawn Contract	100
10th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Buddha Silver 90 Big Yuan	Sale of irrevocable contract	496—497
	Buddha Silver 4 Big Yuan	Zhaoxie contract	498—499
11th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 195 Big Yuan	Total sale of graden word of contract	540
15th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 275 Big Yuan	Irrevocable contract	206
16th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 4 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	176
	Buddha Silver 100 Big Yuan	Sale of irrevocable contract	500—501
17th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Face Silver 450 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	88
18th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 195 Big Yuan	Total sale word of contract	541
21st Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 10 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	61
	Current price Buddha Silver 100 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	200
	Current price Buddha Face Silver 275 Big Yuan	Total sale contract	258
	Current price Buddha Silver 180 Big Yuan Discount 136 Tael 8 Maces	Pawn contract	261
	Current price Buddha o House 30 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	293
	Current price Buddha Silver 10 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	295
	Current price Buddha Silver 100 Big Yuan	Pawn contract	330
	Current price Buddha Silver 275 Big Yuan	Total sale contract	388—389
		Pawn contract	391
		Current price Buddha Silver 52 Big Yuan	Pawn contract
	Current price Buddha Silver 18 Big Yuan	Land rent pawn contract	440

Continued

Time	Occurrence of Buddha Silver	Property of ancient text	Corresponding page
22nd Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 210 Big Yuan	Transfer pawn contract	248
	Buddha Silver 3 Big Yuan	Gift contract	287
	Current price Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver 90 Big Yuan	Complete sale	301
	Current price Buddha Silver 210 Big Yuan	Transfer pawn contract	379
	Buddha Silver 3 Big Yuan	Gift contract	421—422
	Current price Buddha Silver 330 Big Yuan	Irrevocable sale words of contract	533
23rd Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 10 Big Yuan	Pawn living land contract	77
	Current price Buddha Silver 85 Big Yuan	Pawn field contract	504—505
24th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Current price Buddha Silver 16 Big Yuan	典契	64
25th Year, Jiaqing Reign	Buddha Silver 62 Big Yuan	典契	97

Source: compiled based on relevant data from Chen, W. & Liu, Z. *Selected Works of Ancient Text Contracts from Netne* (力力社古文书契抄选辑), (Nantou: Taiwan Archive, 2006 Edition), 61 - 547.

The constant addition of steel stamps by Chinese Yin Hao (native banks) on Buddha Head Silver indicated the Chinese people's preference

for such silver dollars. The origination of this habit, according to Samuel Wells Williams, an American missionary in China during Daoguang Reign, was due to the shortage of Spanish silver in London as a result of the war between Spain and Britain in 1799. The British East India Company had a Chinese merchant in Guangzhou to forge the silver coin. The resulting condition and weight were far worse than authentic Spanish silver. When it comes to the private circulation of real coins, it was necessary for the Yin Hao to add a steel stamp of the firm, in order to verify the authenticity of the silver coin. Even after the constant addition of stamp such that the real coins turned into “bad editions,” the common folks still cherished the silver coin.^① Zhou Tenghu also described before 1887 that Buddha Head Silver was still popular after the Qianlong and Jiaqing eras, even if it became a bad version:

Jiangsu and Zhejiang used the Buddha Head Silver, made from the Spanish country of the Atlantic. Spain destroyed the Luzon nation (the Philippines) of the Southeast Asia, and customarily was called Greater Luzon. At the time of Qianlong and Jiaqing, the Spanish nation (actually it was the Great Britain) traded quite well in Guangdong, so the inflow of its foreign silver was the greatest in China, and China used it. After the country's decline and the minted silver had been replaced with a new style, the Buddha Head Silver ceased to be minted in early Daoguang years. The silver that came to China, through constant usage, was reduced in availability. In all provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, they would

^① J. Busschers, *The Mexican Pieces of Eight Reales and Their Dominance in Southeast Asia: An Historic Survey of More Than Three Centuries of A Trading Coin*, pp. 60–61. American scholar Richard von Glahn emphasized that the expensive price of Daoguang silver came from the internal urgent demand for Buddha Silver within China (see Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000–1700*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, pp. 256, 302). From the record, it can be seen that this urgent demand comes from the scarcity of the goods. In the case of the shortage of trustworthy money, people are more eager to pursue a trustworthy currency to ensure their wealth. This demand was mainly established in the 18th century, and the increase in demand in the first half of the 19th century came first from the shortage in supply. Lin Man-houng's *China Upside Down* (银线) pointed out on page 62, note 103, that during the Jiaqing and Daoguang eras, when China was in urgent pursuit of Buddha Silver due to the shortage of Buddha Silver, the West also increased the demand for Buddha Silver. After the Xianfeng and Tongzhi eras, the demand for Buddha Silver was still present, but due to the return flow of silver, the phenomenon of silver being expensive and money being cheap was alleviated. From these changes, it can be seen that the supply side exerted influence on the expensive price of the silver in the Jiaqing and Daoguang eras.

hammer it before use, and the silver showed imperfections as days went on. The merchants of Jiangsu and Zhejiang loved its simplicity of usage, and trades at civilian level was only conducted on their trust in the silver. Each money shop would decide its own style, with few adjustments. They colluded and claimed the silver was a forgery, establishing multiple accounts to suppress the people. This resulted in each silver coin becoming more expensive than sterling silver by as much as one additional tael. Any sales of the coins would cost much, and any purchases would soon be depreciated. In a very short time, the silver was 80% of its value.^①

The corresponding archival documents of the Ming and Qing dynasties from Taiwan University and ancient book databases related to Taiwan show that the total number of silver coins using the name silver is 11,579. Among them, the Buddha Silver (佛银) (including Buddha Face Silver (佛面银), Buddha Silver (佛银), Buddha Head Silver (佛头银), Foreign Buddha Silver (番佛银), Buddha Foreign Silver (佛番银), and Clear Water Silver (清水银), namely, Pure Light Silver (净光银)) accounted for 9127 of them. There are 866 cases of Foreign Silver (番银), 842 cases of Dragon Silver (龙银), 210 cases of Sword Silver (剑银), and 76 cases of Lace Silver (花边银) (including Floral Silver (花银) and Scorching Silver (灼银)), as well as 301 cases of Sterling Silver. Six-eight Silver (六八银) (68% silver) had 157 cases. We can infer that the cases called Buddha Silver accounted for 78.82% of the total. Its main appearance time frame is from the end of the Qianlong Reign to the end of Guangxu Reign.^②

5 Forged imitation silver coins and banknotes from the end of Qing Dynasty contained no head portraits of leaders

From around the Opium War to the 1911 Revolution, China began to hope to mint Chinese silver coins similar to Fo Yin. But it was interesting: in the process, the silver coins gradually changed to Greek and Roman style of

^① [Qing Dynasty] Zhou, T. 铸银钱说 in [Qing Dynasty] Sheng, K. 皇朝经世文续编, Vol. 85, 户政三十·钱币上, 23rd year of Guangxu Reign, Si Bu Lou copy.

^② Xiang, J. & Weng, J. in Xiang, J. *Essential Digital Humanities: Defining Patterns and Paths* (数字人文要义: 寻找类型与轨迹), Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 51–53 (2012). Figure 8 on 51–53. Research Center for Digital Humanities of National Taiwan University, <http://www.digital.ntu.edu.tw/>, Taiwan History Digital Library <http://thdl.ntu.edu.tw/>, December 2, 2016.

hammering and pressing casting, while the currency unit also gradually changed from tael to Yuán, but the head of the national leader had never been placed on the silver coins.

Before and after the Opium War, scholars and officials proposed the idea of China's own minting of silver coins from the motive of nationalism. The proposed forms of silver coins included the circular coin with a square hole, the circular coin without a hole, and animal patterns.^① In the late Qing Dynasty, the Qing government purchased coin-making machines from abroad and began the history of minting its own silver coins. The silver coins were either circular without holes, or with animal patterns, or using the same currency unit of Yuán as the Buddha Silver. Sometimes the silver coins would also contain Western characters, as well as decimal units of Yuan, Jiao and Fen (Chinese: 圆, 角, 分; literally, dollar, dime, cent), and character portraits, identical to Buddha Silver. However, there had just been no portraits of national leaders like the Buddha Silver.

The earliest machine-struck silver coins in 1884 had five types, namely, 1 tael, 7 maces, half tael, 3 maces and 1 mace. The coin has the inscription of Ji Lin Guang Ping (Chinese: 吉林广平) on the obverse, and Guang Xu Shi Nian (author's notes: 1884) Jilin Machine Bureau Supervision "on the reverse."^② At the beginning of 1887, Zhang Zhidong, who was the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, submitted a royal request to set up a money bureau and was approved. Zhang Zhidong purchased the machine from the UK and built a factory in Huanghuatang, outside Dadongmen, Guangzhou. In 1889, the construction of the money bureau was completed and it was named Guangdong Money Bureau. In 1890, the silver factory attached to the Guangdong Money Bureau began to mint silver coins.^③ In 1895, the Qing government ordered all localities to mint silver coins, and the Beiyang Machinery Bureau made modifications based on the machine from the Money Bureau.^④

In 1900, the Siege of the International Legations took place, and the

^① Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 198–199.

^② Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴. Beijing: Posts & Telecom Co. Ltd., 84 (1999).

^③ Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴, 100.

^④ Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴, 85–86.

Beiyang Machinery Bureau was obliterated. In 1901, Li Hongzhang, who was in charge of Beiyang affairs, passed away from diseases. His successor Yuan Shih-K'ai organized the Beiyang General Bureau of Silver Minting to manufacture silver and copper coins (Yuan). In 1903, Tianjin Central Mint was established. The factory commissioned the American mint to manufacture Guangxu Yuanbao (Chinese: 光绪元宝) silver coins, using taels, maces, and cents as units and later minted the silver coins with units of Yuan and Jiao. These currencies were all circulating currency. In 1906, the factory was renamed, and its silver coins were one of the most widely distributed silver coins in China before the 1911 Revolution. In 1910, the Qing government ordered the silver mint rights to be returned to the central government, and the Central Mint of the Ministry of Revenue would issue mother mold and distribute to various factories for minting silver coins. At the same time, the Minister of Finance promulgated the currency system, which stipulated that the Qing Dynasty silver currency would adopt Yuan and Jiao as units.^① Thus, Yuan was officially adopted by the Chinese government as a monetary unit. Some of the currency units related to Yuan include: 1 Yuan silver coin, weighs Kuping tael 7 maces and 2 cents, 1 Yuan equals to 10 Jiao, 1 Jiao equals to 10 Fen, and 1 Fen equals to 10 Li.^② In the same year, the Qing government also published Proposed Determination of the Currency System (厘定币制拟定则例) and the Regulations on the Exchange of Banknotes (兑换纸币则例). The unified form of the Qing Dynasty Silver Coin is "One Yuan Silver Coin, one side inscribed with Dragon pattern, one side inscribed with the characters "大清银币一圆" (One Yuan Silver Coin of the Grand Qing)," canceling such wordings as "weights Kuping tael 7 maces and 2 cents" or "one tael."^③ The middle of these silver coins did not have a square hole. Each coin weighs Kuping tael 7 maces and 2 cents. Same as the Buddha Silver, there is also the Western alphabet of One Dollar on the silver coin. Compared with the

^① Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴, 85–87.

^② 官报 折奏类, No. 922, April 17, 2nd Year of Xuantong Reign, 币制则例 in National Library Document Microcopying Center, 清末官报汇编, Vol. 75, Beijing: China National Microfilming Center for Library Resources, 37433 (2006).

^③ Zhang, H. 战后初期台湾货币改革之研究, 11.

lion pattern on the Buddha Silver, the Chinese silver has the pattern of a dragon, but still without the head of the national leader.

The development of the circular coins without holes would also be reflected in the minting of the copper coin. During the machine-struck minting process, if there were to be square holes, a tappet would have to be installed to puncture holes, which would wear out the machine quickly. The craftsmen started to mint copper coins with a size similar to the Dang Shi Da Qian (Chinese: 当十大钱; 10-large-cash) and without square holes. This copper coin was well received by merchants and civilians. The mint business was conducted not only at the central government level but also at various provincial level.^① These copper coins also featured dragon patterns, but still without the head of the national leader.

In the banknotes section, the banknotes printed by HSBC in 1888 were still using taels as a currency unit. In 1897, it used Yuan as the unit, and a silver coin was directly printed in the center of the banknote, seemingly to emphasize the creditworthiness of the paper note is on par with the silver coin. In the first decade of the 20th century, Chinese banknotes were mostly highlighting silver coins through text or images.^② Between the mid-19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was the global peak of doctrine that currency should be based on metals. This doctrine and related systems gradually changed when Georg Friedrich Knapp published the state theory of money in 1905. Knapp's claims held the same arguments as the inconvertible paper money.^③ After the establishment of China's first national bank, the Bank of the Ministry of Revenue, in 1904, the Ministry of Posts and Communications established the Bank of Communications in 1908.^④ In 1910, the Proposed Determination of the Currency System (厘定币制拟定则例) and the Regulations on the

^① Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴, 83.

^② Jennifer Purtle, "Money Making Nation: Picturing Political Economy in Banknotes of the Qing-Republican Transition," in Jennifer Purtle and Hans Bjarne Thomsen, *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from Treaty Ports to World War II*, Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, Art Media Resources, 2009, p.113.

^③ Zhang, H. 战后初期台湾货币改革之研究, 28-29.

^④ [America] Albert, F. *Economic Trends in the Republic of China, 1912-1949*, Linden, T. (trans.) Taipei: Huashi Publishing House, 62 (1978).

Exchange of Banknotes (兑换纸币则例) were published, authorizing the Grand Qing Bank, which was renamed from the Bank of the Ministry of Revenue, to issue banknotes alongside silver coins.^① The banknotes issued by Grand Qing Bank included silver coin tickets, namely, exchange certificates for silver coins. After the Republic of China, Grand Qing Bank was restructured into Bank of China Limited. The Exchange Certificates issued by the Bank of China was a banknote with the longest-running history and widest distribution in modern Chinese history. It has long enjoyed the status of the national currency and was listed as one of the major currencies by the central government.^②

On the banknotes printed by the Grand Qing Bank, there is a head portrait of Zaifeng, Prince Chun and father of Pu Yi, or Li Hongzhang or the Yellow Emperor.^③ This is the beginning of the currency patterns featuring character portraits, yet these characters are still not national leaders as seen from Buddha Silver coins. In the trend of minting silver coins that started from Guangdong and radiated to other provinces, Sichuan also bought the silver-milling machine in its provincial capital city Chengdu in 1898. Initially, the minted silvers were ill received. The Governor-general of Sichuan made a sloppy decision to use the Indian silver coins, replacing Queen Victoria with Emperor Guangxu and changing the One Rupee India text into Sichuan Province for circulation in the silver coin market. Given that Sichuan had relative independent development from central government, this silver coin began its production somewhere between 1902 and 1903 and had been used until 1938.^④ While Emperor Guangxu was the national leader, the result came from the local government modifying foreign currency. It was different from Buddha Head Silver, which was actively minted by the central government of a nation. Hence, until 1912, the currency minted by the

^① Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国历代钱币通鉴, 11.

^② Dai, J. & Sheng, G. 中国纸币史话, 40–41.

^③ Beith E. Notar, “Viewing Currency Chaos: Paper Money for Advertising, Ideology, and Resisitance in Republican China,” in *Terry Bodenhorn, Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics for a New China, 1920–1970*, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 2002, pp. 123–149, 134–135.

^④ Richard N. J. Wright, Joe Cribb, and Helen Wang eds., *The Modern Coinage of China 1866–1949: The Evidence in Western Archives*, London: Spink, 2012, pp. 36–38.

official government in China did not have head portraits of national leaders, unlike the Western system. When the silver coins with the head portraits of Spanish king were circulating in China, Chinese called it Buddha Silver, Buddha Head Silver, Buddha Face Silver, Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver (this paper sometimes collectively refer to them as Buddha Silver). The symbolic meaning deserves further exploration.

6 Cultural implications behind Buddha Head Silver and the likes

Bao Shicheng, who achieved the rank of Juren (a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level in the Ming and Qing dynasties) and worked as staff of provincial officials and county magistrate, said in 1837, “The purchases and sales of book vouchers, eighty to ninety percent counts with silver.”^① Based on the significant quantity of compilations of private sales and purchase trading contracts in Taiwan in Qing Dynasty, the silver that Bao Shicheng mentioned, if it were silver coins, and referred to like silver, it would be referring to Buddha Head Silver, Buddha Face Silver, and Buddha Silver. See Figure 3.

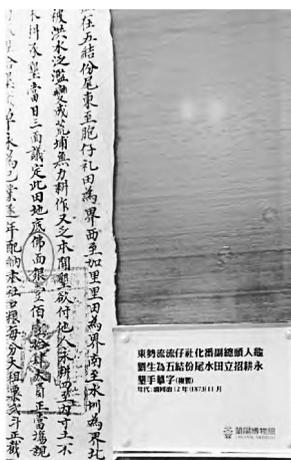


Fig. 3 Buddha Face Silver on the Call for Cultivation Sheet from Qing Dynasty

Source: photographed by the author in Lanyang Museum, Yilan County, September 27, 2015.

^① [Qing Dynasty] Bao, S. 安吳四種 Vol. 26, 近代中国史料丛刊, Vol. 294, Taipei: Wenhai Publishing House, 11a (1968).

The silver coins used by Taiwan folks were occasionally referred to as Buddha Head Silver or Buddha Silver in the Kangxi and Qianlong eras. They would obviously refer to silver coins inscribed with head portraits that flowed from European countries such as the Netherlands. But the number of such coins was extremely limited. They also differ from the Spanish silver coins minted in Mexico between 1772 and 1822.^① After 1775, silver coins with such names increased significantly.

During the Qing Jiaqing Reign, the Chen family migrated from Yongchun, Fujian to Netne of Taiwanese Plains Indigenous Peoples, in present-day Chaozhou Township and Kanding Township of Pingtung, Taiwan, leaving behind 388 ancient texts and contracts such as land sales and money lending. Among the contract texts, there are 195 cases of “Buddha Silver,” 22 cases of “Buddha Face Silver,” 1 case of “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver,” 5 cases of “Sword Silver,” 2 cases of “Lace Silver,” 2 cases of “Double Pillar Silver,” 1 case of “Clear Water Silver” (not “Bad Plate Silver”), and 7 cases of “Foreign Silver.” For these foreign silver coins with the names of “Silver,” “Buddha Silver” accounted for 82.97%; “Buddha Face Silver” accounted for 9.36%; and “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver” accounted for 0.42%. The three accounted for 92.75% of the total. The contract texts with “Buddha Silver,” “Buddha Head Silver” and “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver” accounted for 56.17% of all contract texts. See Table 2. Ranking them by the order of dynasties, we find that there are three cases from the Qianlong Reign, and all of them are “Buddha Silver”; there are 36 cases from the Jiaqing Reign, with 31 cases of “Buddha Silver,” 4 cases of “Buddha Face Silver,” and 1 case of “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver”; there are 78 cases from the Daoguang Reign, with 67 cases of “Buddha Silver” and 11 cases of “Buddha Face Silver”; there were 8 cases from Xianfeng Reign, with 6 cases of “Buddha Silver” and 2 cases of “Buddha Face Silver”; there are 20 cases from the Tongzhi Reign, and all of them are “Buddha Silver”; there are 18 cases from the Guangxu Reign, and all of them are “Buddha Silver”; there is 1 case from the Meiji Reign and it is “Buddha Silver.” See Table 3.

^① Zheng, Y. 故宫学术季刊 (台北), (1): 19 (2001).

Table 3 Buddha Silver appearance from ancient texts from Netne (by year)

Reign	Buddha Silver	Buddha Face Silver	Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver
Qianlong Reign	3	0	0
Jiaqing Reign	31	4	1
Daoguang Reign	67	11	0
Xianfeng Reign	6	2	0
Tongzhi Reign	20	0	0
Guangxu Reign	18	0	0
Meiji Reign	1	0	0

Source: compiled based on relevant data from Chen, W. & Liu, Z. *Selected Works of Ancient Text Contracts of Netne* (力力社古文书契抄选辑), (Nantou: Taiwan Archive, 2006 Edition), 61 - 547.

In addition to the Netne texts, if we sum up data from published ancient text contracts from 6 regions of southern and northern Taiwan, we get Table 4 and Table 5. Based on Table 4, we know that in terms of economic transactions, Daoguang Reign accounted for the most use cases of “Buddha Silver” (including “Buddha Head Silver,” and “Buddha Face Silver”), followed by Guangxu Reign, Tongzhi Reign, Jiaqing Reign, Xianfeng Reign, Qianlong Reign, and Mingzhi Reign consecutively. Based on Table 5, we know that the transaction contracts using “Buddha Silver” accounted for 96.90% of foreign silver coin transaction contracts with the name “Silver,” and 43.99% of total contracts. Thus, we can more closely inspect the usage conditions of such names as “Buddha Silver” in the relevant economic transaction texts.

Table 4 The statistical occurrences of names such as “Buddha Silver” in ancient contracts from various places

Age	Region							Total
	Netne	Gufengshan County	Dagangshan	Yuanli	Dajia	Hsinchu	Guanxi Pinglin	
Qianlong Reign	3	1	6	7	1	2	—	20
Jiaqing Reign	36	2	25	38	12	13	1	127
Daoguang Reign	78	2	41	77	44	70	5	317
Xianfeng Reign	8	1	15	42	19	6	4	94
Tongzhi Reign	20	5	9	46	37	10	4	131
Guangxu Reign	18	1	29	97	98	15	9	267
Meiji Reign	1	1	3	n/a	9	1	1	16
Total	164	13	128	307	220	117	24	972

Table 5 The proportions of usage of “Buddha Silver” in transaction contracts

	Netne	Gufengshan County	Dagangshan	Yuanli	Dajia	Hsinchu	Guanxi Pinglin	Total
Sum of all contracts using foreign silver coins	235	17	143	311	227	127	—	1 060
Proportion of contracts using Buddha Silver (%)	90.60	76.47	89.51	98.71	96.92	92.12	—	96.90
Total number of contracts	388	110	259	800	336	350	105	2 348
Proportion of contracts using Buddha Silver (%)	42.26	11.81	49.42	38.50	65.77	33.42	22.85	41.39

Source: See Liu, Z. 大甲东西社古文书, Nantou: Taiwan Historica, 203 - 560 (2003); Chen, Qi. & Cai, C. *The Collection of Ancient Contract Documents from Dagangshan Region* (大岗山地区古契约文书汇编), Kaohsiung County Government, 38 - 547 (2006); Tang, R. *Album of Documents from Gufengshan County* (古凤山县文书专辑), Kaohsiung City Archive Committee, 1 - 114 (2004); Xiao, F. & Lin, K. *The Collection of Ancient Books in Yuanli Region* (苑里地区古文书集), Nantou: Taiwan Historica, 157 - 852 (2004); Zheng, H. (orated), Zheng, Y. (compiled) *Hsinchu Zhengliyuan Collection of Ancient Texts* (新竹郑利源号典藏古文书), Nantou: “National History Museum,” Taiwan Historica, 87 - 413 (2005); Liu, Z. *Guanxi Pinglin Fan Family Collection of Ancient Books* (关西坪林范家古文书集), Nantou: Taiwan Historica, 79 - 264 (2003); Chen, W. & Liu, Z. *Selected Works of Ancient Text Contracts from Netne* (力力社古文书契抄选辑), 61 - 547.

To designate silver coins with the Spanish king’s portraits as “Buddha Silver,” “Buddha Face Silver,” “Buddha Head Silver,” “Buddha Foreign Silver,” “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver,” and the portrait of the Spanish King as “Buddha Head” or “Buddha Face,” what would be some of the profound meanings in the history of cultural exchange between China and the West? How did ordinary people construct their image of “Buddha,” “Buddha Face” and “Buddha Head” in their visual world?

We will first illustrate the origination of Buddhist sculptures with significant visual power. According to the research by Li Yumin, early Indian art was “idol-less, and so in early Buddhist arts, the Buddha was often represented by symbols such as Buddha’s foot, Buddha’s seat, sacred fig, dharmacakra, and stupa. Around the beginning of the Common Reign, Indian art began its era of idols. After Alexander’s early death after conquering India, the dynasty that his ministers built up greatly influenced India at that time. In addition to the spontaneous development of native culture in India, many sculptures of Buddha, Bodhisattva, and Avalokitesvara appeared. Since then, the variety of Buddhist sculptures increases, with increasingly more complex combinations.^①

^① Li, Y. in Feng, M. 佛陀形影. Taipei Palace Museum, 7-8 (2011).

Religious sculptures have a rather early date of origination in China. Even in the Neolithic Age, there had been the production of religious sculptures. Around the beginning of the Common Reign, which was when China entered the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was transmitted to China, and Buddhist art was transmitted through three routes: (1) from east India through the sea, to the southeastern coast of China, as well as the lower reaches of the Yangtze River; (2) from northeastern India, through Myanmar to Yunnan, north into the Bashu and Hanzhong areas; (3) from central and northwestern India, through the Central Asian Silk Road, east into the Yellow River Basin and the Interior China.^① However, Buddhism was still in its infancy in the Han Dynasty, and religious sculptures were secondary in Chinese sculptures. During the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, with the vigorous development of Buddhism, religious activities were frequent; Buddhist temples were everywhere; and the number of Buddhist sculptures soared, becoming the mainstream of Chinese sculpture. Some examples include the cave sculptures and gold and bronze statues of Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties. The Buddhist statues vary in terms of their styles from place to place, developing unique systems, some belonging to Han Chinese style, while others are full of vibrant colors of the West.^② According to the research of Liu Shufen, apart from important temples, the areas of Shanxi and Shandong already had villages constructing Buddhist sculptures as far as the Northern Dynasty.^③ On November 19, 2015, the writer visited the East China Normal University Museum, which included the statues from the Northern Qi and Sui dynasties. The statue of the Northern Qi Buddha is engraved in the bottom, “On the 25th day, 4th month, 6th year of Zuoping Reign, the Buddhist disciple Jia Yujing makes a stone. Now it is enshrined and we will make an offering to it as a whole family.” On the Buddhist sculpture from Sui Dynasty, it is engraved, “On the 23rd day, 6th month, 4th year of Daye Reign, Disciple Ma Guonu will to the seven

^① Li, Y. in Feng, M. 佛陀形影, 177.

^② Li, Y. in Feng, M. 佛陀形影, 157–158, 159, 175.

^③ Liu, S. in Editorial Committee of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica. “中央研究院”历史语言研究所集刊, No. 63, 3rd, Taipei: Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology, 506–522 (1993).

generations of parents Ma Wentong. . .and family. . .Amitabha. . .born.” In the following dynasties, some families of believers would also worship Buddhist statues. For instance, in the Buddhist chamber of a Ming Dynasty upāsaka, there were Buddhist sculptures of Sakyamuni, Mañjuśrī (文殊), Samantabhadra (普贤) or Avalokitesvara.^① According to the research by Stanley Kenji Abe, from the second half of the 18th century, many small Buddhist statues carved in bronze, jade or stones appeared in the Chinese antique markets. Relative to Japan where many large Buddhist statues flowed to the Western museum, most of the Chinese Buddhist statues that flowed to Western museums after 1845 were smaller Buddhist statues.^② The flow of the small Buddhist statue also allowed the visual imagery of the Buddha more popular among the people.

Apart from Buddhist statues, the traditional Chinese folks most probably saw the images of Buddha through the following methods:

First is the images found in markets and used to explain Buddhist stories. Victor H. Mair pointed out that there were people from India who traveled among various marketplaces and explained the Buddhist stories through pictures. There would be images of the Buddha among these images. With the transmission of Buddhism from India into China, the folk custom was also spread throughout China and even extended to Taiwan today.^③

Second is separately published Buddhist image on paper. Xuanzang traveled to India in 629 and returned to China in 645, after which he printed the image of Buddha on paper. The five single frame images of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra Avalokitesvara found in Dunhuang are similar to what was printed by Xuanzang.^④ Until 1936, when Fan Gunong wrote *Annotation to Buddhism by Gunong* (古农佛学答问), Fan was still discussing in what relative positions should be used to hang the sacred images of Sakyamuni, Amitabha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Avalokitesvara, and

^① [Ming Dynasty] Wen, Z. Hai, J. & Tian, J. (annot.) 长物志图说, Jinan: Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 427–428 (2004).

^② Stanley Kenji Abe, *Moving Buddha: Chinese Sculpture and Global Modernity*, lectured at the Department of Fine Arts of National Taiwan Normal University, May 14, 2013.

^③ [America] Victor, H. *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis*. Wang, B., Rong, X. & Qian, W. (trans.) Beijing: Yanshan Press, 1, 8–9, 11–13, 16, 29, 162, 163, 267 (2000).

^④ Zhang, X. 中国印刷史. Shanghai People's Publishing House, 14 (1989).

Kṣitigarbha at home.^① Craig Clunas saw the house of Pan Jinlian, who hangs an image of Avalokitesvara, based on the illustrations from *The Golden Lotus* (金瓶梅). The practice of hanging image of Avalokitesvara in female rooms was still quite popular in the Ming Dynasty. The case also applies to men, but if one were to succeed in the imperial examination, they would be less likely to hang it.^②

Third is Buddha images found in scriptures, mantras, or religious novels. In the Tang Dynasty, both the officials and the folks believed in Buddhism. After Xuanzang, there were many people who took transcribing scriptures as a profession. Because of the trouble of transcribing, some people used new woodcut techniques to expand circulation. The Longchifang of Chengdu in the Tang Dynasty sold mantra texts in the size of 1 square *chi*, mostly comprised of ancient Sanskrit, with small Buddhist images in the middle and the borders, similar to the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇīsūtra* (大随求陀罗尼经) inscribed in early Song Dynasty. The *Diamond Sutra* (金刚经) was printed in 868 and found in Dunhuang, with the seated image of the Sakyamuni Buddha printed at the beginning of the scroll. When woodblock printing was invented roughly in Tang Dynasty, Buddhists believed that printing Buddhist scriptures and images were of great merit. Not only did private individuals printed them, but the politicians themselves also printed in large quantities.^③ As far as the development of Chinese printing is concerned, text woodblock printing developed in the High Tang Dynasty and reached its pinnacle in the Song Dynasty. But it was not until the end of the Ming Dynasty did image woodblock reach its peak. People from the end of the Ming Dynasty onwards thus had more opportunities to see printed Buddhist images.^④ While some scholars who studied Confucian thoughts had the idea of repelling Buddhism, sometimes these scholars also arranged or participated in chanting repentance rituals, which eliminated bad karmas such as illness and death, where Buddhism related images were also

^① Fan, G. 古农佛学答问, Vol. 4, Beijing: Huangshan Publishing House, 150 (2006).

^② Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, London: Reaktion Books, 1997, pp. 163–164, Pictures 83–85

^③ Zhang, X. *The History of Chinese Printing*, pp. 31–32.

^④ Zhang, D. 台湾古文书学会会刊, (10) (2012)

found.^① The religious novel *A Complete Illustrated Account of the Avalokitesvara's Southern Travels* (全像观音出身南游记传) was published by Fujian Huanlintang from 1571 to 1602, distributing extremely simplified images of Avalokitesvara among common readers, including male readers.^②

Fourth, during Buddhist rituals of merit, many seals with images of Buddha were printed to dispel evil.^③

During the Japanese occupation period in Taiwan, a primary school in Caotun used the Buddhist statue to sculpt Ninomiya Sontoku, who was born in a poor family and diligently studied to become an important political figure.^④ It can be seen that Buddhist statue, after the Eastern Han Dynasty, is a traditional Chinese method to shape foreign figures, not just Western characters. The Mahayana Buddhism circulating in China had many different Bodhisattvas as the incarnation of the Sakyamuni to redeem everyone. Which specific Buddha does the “Buddha” in “Buddha Silver,” “Buddha Face Silver” and “Buddha Head Silver” refer to? It is impossible to test, but there are some hints and traces of clues that make people believe that Avalokitesvara is the most likely candidate. The traditionally circulated Avalokitesvara images from China (Fig. 4) most closely resemble the Carolus III, Carolus IV or Ferdinand VII on “Buddha Silver,” “Buddha Face Silver” and “Buddha Head Silver.” More importantly, according to the studies by Kevin McLoughlin, while the image of Avalokitesvara has gradually shifted from a male body to a female body since the end of the 16th century, 53 different image catalogues featuring the incarnation of Avalokitesvara in different sites of rescues still contain many frames of the male body. Among them, the Western Avalokitesvara image is very close to the portrait of Louis XIII, kept in the museums of Spain and the UK, with a similar European style flower ring adorning the head portrait of British-collected Louis XIII. See Figure 5 and Figure 6 for reference. The compassionate Avalokitesvara have different

^① Chen, Y. 明代佛门内外僧俗交涉的场域, Taipei: Daoxiang Publishing House, 443, 450 (2010).

^② Craig Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, pp.163–164, Pictures 83–85.

^③ Huang, S. 中古佛教木刻的文化流变:一个视觉研究的新视野 lectured at the Institute of History and Language, Academia Sinica, (2015).

^④ Geng, S. & Li, W. 书香远传 (Taichung), (88) (2011).

names in different sites of appearances. In the third scroll of Avalokitesvarajing, a relevant name for Avalokitesvara is “Little King,” while Avalokitesvara is also called “Buddha.” No other Bodhisattvas are like Avalokitesvara, who can have different appearances on different occasions to redeem people.^① Also because of the shifting appearances of Avalokitesvara, it is possible that for the lay people of the Qing Dynasty, the portraits of Louis XIII, Carolus III, Carolus IV, and Ferdinand VII are another image of Avalokitesvara. In November 1896, the land deeds of Fan family in Guanxi Pinglin have the words “using real estate as collateral, loaning Buddha Mother Silver, one thousand Yuan in full (胎借‘佛母银’一千大员正),”^② may have conveyed relevant information.



Fig. 4 Portrait of Avalokitesvara in the living room of Taiwan family in the Qing Dynasty

Source: The author photographed this on July 27, 2013, in the Chen family's old house from Qing Dynasty in Mamingshan, Changhua County.

^① Kevin McLoughlin, “Appropriation, Representation, And Efficacy: Three Case Studies of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in 17TH and 18TH Century Chinese Print Culture,” Ph.D. thesis, University of Sussex, 2005, pp.21, 51, 227–239, 349, 351–353.

^② Liu, Z. 关西坪林范家古文书集, 215.

the following section will discuss based on literature from the Ming and Qing dynasties. For ease of study, we will attempt to examine the word Fo Lang Ji through *Veritable Records of the Ming* (明实录),^① *Collection of Ming Statecraft Writings* (明经世文编) edited by Chen Zilong et al.^② and *Comprehensive Studies of Institutional History* (续文献通考)^③ written and edited by Wang Qi, making it into Table 6. Among them, the item “weapon” refers to the literature containing words like “Fo Lang Ji Chong (佛郎机銃),” “Fo Lang Ji Rui (佛郎机锐),” “Fo Lang Ji Pao (佛郎机炮),” or “Fo Lang Ji Kuai Qiang (佛郎机快枪).” The item “country name” refers to the cases in the literature mentioning “Fo Lang Ji Fan Ren (佛郎机番人)” and “Fo Lang Ji Guo (佛郎机国),” or by contextual inferences we know it is used to describe people or nations. For instance, if the literature mentions Fo Lang Ji and describes it as “Ao Yi (foreigners in Macao),” we know it means Portuguese people. For other entries with uncertain references, they are singled out as one more item.

Table 6 “Fo Lang Ji” in texts from the Ming Dynasty

Source	Implied meaning		Number of occurrences		
			Individual	Subtotal	Total
Veritable Records of the Ming	Weapons (cannons, artillery and fire)		24	24	33
	Country name	Portugal	6	9	
		Undetermined (lack of contexts)	3		
Collection of Ming Statecraft Writings	Weapons (cannons, artillery and fire)		15	15	23
	Country name	Portugal	0	8	
		Undetermined (lack of contexts)	8		
Comprehensive Collection of Institutional Studies	Weapons (cannons, artillery and fire)		9	9	12
	Country name	Portugal	3	3	
		Undetermined (lack of contexts)	0		

Source: compiled based on relevant materials from *Veritable Records of the Emperor Wu of Ming Dynasty* (明武宗实录), *Veritable Records of the Emperor Shi of Ming Dynasty* (明世宗实录), *Veritable Records of the Emperor Mu of Ming Dynasty* (明穆宗实录), *Veritable Records of the Emperor Shen of Ming Dynasty* (明神宗实录), *Veritable Records of the Emperor Xi of Ming Dynasty* (明熹宗实录), *Collection of Ming Statecraft Writings* (明经世文编), *Comprehensive Collection of Institutional Studies: Military* (续文献通考·兵考), *Comprehensive Collection of Institutional Studies: Matters* (续文献通考·物异考), and *Comprehensive Collection of Institutional Studies: Four Borderlands* (续文献通考·四裔考).

^① Taipei: Institute of History and Language, Academia Sinica, (1966).

^② Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, (1962).

^③ Taipei: Wenhai Publishing House, (1979).

According to the statistics in Table 6, among the 33 data entries in *Veritable Records of the Ming* (明实录), 24 entries belong to the category of weapons, far than 9 in the country name category. The same is true for the *Collection of Ming Statecraft Writings* (明经世文编) and the *omprehensive Collection of Institutional Studies* (续文献通考). Adding up the total entries to 68, there are 48 entries belonging to the weapon category or 70.59% of the total, and 20 entries belonging to the country name category and accounting for 29.41% of the total number. If we take a closer look at the 20 entries implying country names, we know that 9 entries refer to Portugal. There are 11 entries for which it would be impossible to know exactly which country it is referring to. The two are almost identical in entry counts. Therefore, in the literature of the Ming Dynasty, the word Fo Lang Ji mostly refers to weapons, and if it instead suggests a country name, it is generally known to be Portugal.

In the compilation of writings on statecrafts from the Qing Dynasty, there are relatively few entries with the word “Fo Lang Ji,” and thus they are combined and counted in Table 7. The actual use of the word was much more complicated than it was compared with the Ming Dynasty. Hence, Table 7 adds the three options of “France,” “known to be mixed use” and “unknown (not mixed use).” The first suggests that the “Fo Lang Ji” from the literature refers to France. The second means it broadly refers to foreigners. The third means it suggests some country, but the exact identity of the country is hard to be determined due to lack of contextual information from texts before and after.

Table 7 “Fo Lang Ji” in the compilation of writings on statecrafts from the Qing Dynasty

Implied meaning		Number of occurrences		
		Individual	Subtotal	Total
Weapons (cannons, artillery and fire)		9	9	29
Country name	Portugal	5	20	
	France	7		
	Known to be mixed use	2		
	Undetermined (not mixed use)	2		
	Undetermined (lack of contexts)	4		

Source: compiled based on relevant materials from He, C. *Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文编) (Guangbai Songzhai Edited Print Copy in the 17th year

of Guangxu Reign); Rao, Y. *Sequel to Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文编续集) (Guangxu Complementary Sequel Copy by Jiangyoursao Family Shuangfeng Bookstore in the 8th year of Guangxu Reign); Ge, S. *Sequel to the Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文续编) (Shanghai: Guangbai Songzhai Layout Copy in the 17th year of Guangxu Reign); Chen, Z. *Third Sequel Collection of the Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文三编) (Shanghai Bookstore Stone Carving Copy in the 27th year of Guangxu Reign); Shao, Z. *Collective Edition of the Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文统编) (Baoshanzhai Stone Carving Copy in the 27th year of Guangxu Reign); He, L. *The Fourth Sequel to the Statecraft Writings of the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝经世文四编) (Hongbao Bookstore Stone Carving Copy in the 28th year of Guangxu Reign); and Yu, B. *Collective Essays to Reserve Ideas for the Reigning Dynasty* (皇朝蓄艾文编) (Shanghai Official Bookstore Lead Print Copy in the 29th year of Guangxu Reign).

According to the statistical results of Table 7, there are 29 entries in total, and 9 of them belong to the weapon category, accounting for 31.03% of the total; there are 20 entries belonging to the country name category, accounting for 68.97% of the total. A closer inspection of the internal conditions of the country names, the most cases refer to France, including 7 of the entries, accounting for 35% of all country name entries. Following that is the 5 entries referring to Portugal (25%), and 4 entries of “unknown (lack of contexts).” Both “known to be mixed use” and “unknown (not mixed use)” each take up 2 entries (each accounting for 10%). Hence, in literature from the Qing Dynasty, the use of “Fo Lang Ji” as a name of weapon does not match half of the use as a country name. Even for its use as a country name, the uses are very complicated. While references to France was the most, it still does not reach half of the total count. It was also a relatively rare case to use it to broadly refer to foreigners.

By the comparison of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the word “Fo Lang Ji” in the Ming Dynasty was mostly used to refer to weapons, while in the Qing Dynasty, it was mostly used to refer to country names. In the Ming Dynasty, the word “Fo Lang Ji” is used in less than half of all occurrences to refer to the Portuguese, while there is no fixed rule in the Qing Dynasty, despite it being mostly used to refer to France, and there are also some cases using it to refer to Portugal. As a whole, the word “Fo Lang Ji” does not always correspond to the claims on the Internet that states it as the general name for Portuguese people or Westerners. In terms of the names of silver coins apart from Buddha Silver, they are all named after their

images rather than their country. For instance, the silver coin from the Netherlands is known as “Ma Jian Yin (Chinese: 马剑银; literally Horse Sword Silver)” because the image on the obverse features a fully armored sword-wielding knight. The uneven-shaped handcrafted Spanish silver coin is known as “Chu Tou Qie Zai Yin (Chinese: 锄头楔仔银; Hoe Anchor Silver)” because it is shaped like an anchor used to secure hoe in southern Fujian. In 1732, Spain employed new coin-manufacturing equipment to mine silver dollars. Because it has two pillars to represent the Strait of Gibraltar and the two Earths to represent the Spanish empire that incorporates parts of both the eastern hemisphere and the Western hemisphere, the coin was known as “Shuang Zhu Shuang Di Qiu Yin Bi (Chinese: 双柱双地球银币; literally Double Pillar Double Earth Silver Coin).” It has an anti-counterfeit lace, and is also known as “Lace Silver.”^① The silver dollars cast by the Mexican government after 1823 were known as “Ying Yang (Chinese: 鹰洋; literally Eagle Foreign).” This is because on the reverse of the silver coin was inscribed an eagle with a snake in its mouth standing on a cactus, the national symbol of the Republic of Mexico. This situation is also similar to what Hu Shi recorded when he was reading *Records of Traces of Dreams on the Bed of Sickness* (病塌梦痕录): One dollar with one pillar corresponds to how much money. How about two pillars and three pillars? Not sure about the terms like one pillar, two pillars or three pillars. It was only after studying by Wei Tingsheng, who told him: in the book, the so-called one pillar, two pillars, and three pillars are just Roman characters I, II and III, the symbols of the Spanish emperors I, II and III; China did not recognize these letters, and simply referred to them as one pillar, two pillars and three pillars.^②

The concepts of the Netherlands, Spain, and Mexico were concepts unbeknownst to the ordinary general public of the Qing Dynasty. *Little Thoughts from Ming Zhai* (明斋小识) published by Zhu Lian in 1821 also followed conventional customs and called the silver coins by its image.^③

^① The Deeds Museum, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/qtqw123>, accessed on December 2, 2016.

^② 适演讲集(一), Taipei: Yuanliu Publishing House, 210–211 (1986).

^③ [Qing Dynasty] Zhu, L. 言钱 Vol. 12 in 明斋小识, 14th year of Daoguang Reign.

Among the names of the silver coins, although the character “Fan” is used to refer to Westerners or foreigners, if the names like “Fo Fan Yin (佛番银; Buddha Foreign Silver)” and “Fo Mian Fan Tou Yin (佛面番头银; Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver)” would include “Fo (佛)” which can also refer to Western or Spanish, then it would create repetition in words like “Westerner foreigners (西洋人外国人)” or “Spanish foreigners (西班牙外国人).” Interpreting “Fo (佛)” as “Buddha (佛祖),” then the names “Fo Mian (佛面; Buddha Face),” “Fo Tou (佛头; Buddha Head)” and “Fo Mu (佛母; Buddha Mother)” would be more understandable.

In 1844, Liang Size, a Cantonese man, published a book entitled *Silver Treatise, Revealing the Secrets* (银经发秘) to help identify counterfeit coins. The book says, “Each silver face contains many items and Swastika side silver, with a jeweled parasol top in the fashion of a calabash. Within the jeweled cap is a Moutan peony. Underneath the jeweled cap is the incense burner. Within the censer are two lions and two city towers. On both sides of the incense burner are candlesticks. The body of the candlestick is wrapped in cloth. On the wrapping cloth is little ghost text. Outside the candlestick is foot with ghost text. Beside the ghost texts are circular stars as side beads. On top of the ghost texts are the tooth. The ghost head rests on a tied belt. The clothing that the ghost wears, is called big coat if it is larger than the ghost head and small coat if it is smaller than the ghost head. (各银面上花草名目凡万字边银。其宝盖顶为葫芦顶。宝盖内之花为牡丹花。宝盖之下为香炉。香炉内有狮子二只。城楼二座。香炉两边有烛台。烛台之身有缠带。缠带之上有小鬼字。烛台之外是鬼字脚。鬼字侧之圆星为间珠。鬼字顶之外是栏牙。鬼头后枕之带为扎带。鬼身上所着之衣。如大过鬼头者为大衣。细过鬼头者为小衣)”^① While the Spanish king on this silver coin was called a “Gui Tou (Chinese: 鬼头; literally ghost head)” rather than “Fo Tou,” the “Wan Zi (万字; Swastika),” “Xiang Lu (香炉; incense burner),” “Zhu Tai (烛台; candlestick)” are the same as

^① [Qing Dynasty] Liang, S. 银经发秘, Harvard University Yanjing Library and online sharing, <https://books.google.com.tw/books/about/%E9%8A%80%E7%B6%93%E7%99%BC%E7%A7%98.html?id=p4MpAAAAYAAJ&hl=zh-TW>, accessed on December 2, 201.

Ghost Head and Buddha Head. They are all terms from folk religions. The transition from Ghost Head to Buddha Head may be correlated to the fact of that people liked this kind of silver coins. “Citizens like to use its quantity as value, which is easy to use (市民喜其计枚核值便于运用)” and “The merchants of Jiangsu and Zhejiang loved its simplicity of usage, and trades at civilian level was only conducted on their trust in the silver. (江浙商民, 乐其便易, 市井贸易, 惟此信行)” all expressed that China was thoroughly impressed by Western silver coins as an industrialized product, before the massive inflow of Western industrialized products into China. That the Silver Treatise still used the term Ghost Head may have something to do with counterfeit coins flooding the market.

Taking into account the degree of penetration of Buddha statues in the traditional Chinese folks relative to national leader portraits, the explanation of Fo, from Fo Mian Yin (Buddha Face Silver), Fo Tou Yin (Buddha Head Silver), Fo Mu Yin (Buddha Mother Silver) and Fo Yin (Buddha Silver), interpreted as Buddha has its social foundation. The evidence also shows that, in traditional China, ordinary people do not have the opportunity to see the head of the country’s leader through the currency, but there are many opportunities to be in touch with images of the Buddha.

7 Conclusion

Relative to texts, images are more eye-catching. In the times with low literacy rate, the social impact of images is more profound. The West has currency imprinted with head portraits of political leaders. While not everyone gets to use or see it, at least some proportion of the population will see. One of the pathways for the transmission of Buddhism into China is the Silk Road. The Western currencies with head portraits of political leaders also flowed to China through the Silk Road, but it had no impact on the use of head portraits of political leaders on Chinese currency patterns. In the *Juan 24: Treaties on Food and Money* (食货志) of the *Book of Sui Dynasty* (隋书) recorded that, “various counties in Hexi Corridor used Western gold and silver money, while the officials did not put a ban.” With the trade from the Silk Road, some of the foreign money

that flowed to China included Persian silver coins, East Roman gold coins, Arabian gold and silver coins, as well as coins from early Kushan Empire.^① However, in Xinjiang, the Western cultural tradition of currency featuring head portraits of political leaders was put to a halt. The Turpan area in Xinjiang, known as the Gaochang in ancient times, is located in the eastern part of the western part of the country and is located on the main road of the Silk Road. Between the Sui and Tang dynasties, Gaochang issued copper coins inscribed with text “Gao Chang Ji Li (Chinese: 高昌吉利),” which “Ji Li” are mandarin characters used to spell out “King of Gao Chang” in Old Turkic language. In the early period of the Qing Dynasty, when Xinjiang was still under the rule of Dzungar, the minted Pu Er money was mostly circulated in the vast regions of Southern Tianshan and Northern Ili. The coin does not have a square hole, and the inscription is written in intagliated characters (with white lines). Reading in the sequence from right to left and then from top to bottom, it reads “Khardan Chirin” in Chagatai language, which is the name of the Dzungar Khan, Galdan Tseren. In 1866, the silver coins minted in Hotan, Xinjiang, has the obverse in Qur’an praises, “Lailaha Illalaha Muhammadum Rasulilla, 1283” (Translation: There is no lord worthy of worship except Allah. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, 1283 in the Islamic calendar, i.e. Common Reign 1866). The reverse is written in Chagatai text, denoting the place of coinage, “Zarb Latif,” (Translation: Minted in the Halal land of Hotan). These are phenomena of Chinese currency culture integrating with Greek and Roman currency culture in Western China.^② IDuring the Qing Dynasty, the Northern Xinjiang area was more well connected between the Western area and the Interior China and already used Zhi Qian (制钱). In the Northern Xinjiang area, from western Ili to eastern Hami, connecting Urumqi (Dihua), Bachitai (Old City), Balikun (Zhenxi) along the northern Tian Shan belt and the southern Turpan. In Urumuqi of Northern Xinjiang, many were Han and Hui ethnic groups who migrated from within China proper. The Qing government established Zhendi Circuits, jointly administered by the Governor of Shaanxi and

^① Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 175.

^② Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 3, 33, 37, 44.

Gansu and the General of Urumuqi, employing the same county institution as the inland.^① This may have provided a barrier, and the whole Interior China were not influenced by the Greek and Roman culture of currency coins with head portraits of political leaders.

Relatively speaking, Buddhism introduced from India in the Eastern Han Dynasty has a profound impact on the Chinese. The Juan 77 scroll of *Book of Sui Dynasty* (隋书), *Chronicles of the Hidden* (隐逸传) noted that there was someone asking the famous Li Shiqian about the pros and cons between the three religions, and Shiqian said, “Buddhism is the sun; Taoism is the moon; Confucianism would be five starts.” When discussing the similarities and differences between the three religions, Emperor Xiaozong of Song wrote in *On the Original Tao* (原道论), “Buddhism is used to govern the mind, Taoism is used to govern the body, and Confucianism is used to govern the world.”^② Liu Xufeng described the accounts of Korean refugees who drifted to Taiwan during the autumn and winter in the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries because of the northeast monsoon, pointing out that Taiwan has “the custom of each and every family making an offering to the Buddha.”^③ While both are cultures imported from the West in the 1st century BC or AD 1st century, China has profoundly absorbed Buddhism, and the culture of inscribing head of political leaders from Greek and Roman coins was not incorporated. This reflects the needs of China as the recipient body of cultures.

In addition to the images of the Buddha, which were used by generations in China to function as tools for ethical convincing, there were also images of Confucius and his disciples, storytelling of historical stories through images, and *The Picture Book for an Emperor's Reference* (帝鉴图说). It was mostly used by the emperor to learn in the imperial court and

^① Wang, Y. 钱币与西域历史研究, 223, 224, 226.

^② Rui, Y. in 中国学术与现代文化丛书: 社会学论集. Taipei: Huagang Publishing Department, 493 (1977); Institute of Historical Language Research, Academia Sinica, The Chinese Electronic Document Database, <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpc/hanjiquery>, accessed on December 1, 2015

^③ Liu, S. in 石堂论丛 (South Korea), Vol. 55, Busan: Sokdang Academic Research Institute of Traditional Culture, Dong-A University, 82 (2013).

only printed in large quantities at the end of the Qing Dynasty.^① However, these were no match to the Western practice of printing the head of the monarch on coins since the Greek and Roman periods in terms of penetration in society.

In comparison, Japan absorbed Buddhism very thoroughly. In the *Seiyō Senpu* (Japanese: 西洋錢譜, セイヨウ センブ) published in 1787, the portraits in the Western silver coins since the 17th century did not contain any entries named “Buddha Head,” but there are cases of “bearing the icon of the Deity Mother on cloud,” “short-haired half body portrait like mage fighter,” “wearing armor-like headscarf, head of half-body character wearing Kāṣāya or monk’s dressing,” “half face monk official portrait.” Because there were Dutch that can be consulted, the silver coins, with the portrait of Spanish king Carlos III, that the 18th Century Chinese deeply liked, the Japanese already knew it was the “King’s face,” though not fully correctly thought as the French King. Meanwhile, they can also correctly say that France is to the west of Germany, north of Spain and southwest of the Netherlands. The end of the book also attached brief images of Europe, and it also knew that the foreign coins introduced in the book were inscribed with letters of the producing nation. Thus, they had somewhat of an understanding of the various nations of Europe. With respect to the silver coin with the portrait of the Swedish King, the book also specifically mentioned it as the “King’s face.”^② It can be seen that Japan at the end of the 18th century, while also illustrating the characters found on the Western silver coins through religious language, was already aware of the presence of head portraits of political leaders on Western silver coins, compared with China in the same period.

The Spanish silver coins are inscribed with “Del Gratia (By the Grace of

^① Julia K. Murray, *Mirror of Morality: Chinese Narrative Illustration and Confucian Ideology*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007, pp.17–18, 39, 71, 109,120–121.

^② See Kutsuki Masatsuna. *Seiyō Senpu* (Japanese: 西洋錢譜, セイヨウ センブ), Tenmei 7 (1787), Edo: Matsumoto Heisuke, 6a, 8a, 14, 15b, 38b, 29a, 39b, 50, 21. Note: This book is thread bound in Tibetan–style, held in the collection of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, provided by Mr. Zheng Yongchang. For the Dutchman who was asked by Kutsuki Masatsuna, we knew when Professor Lyce Jankowski published the paper through the Centennial Conference held at the East Asian Centers of the SOAS, University of London, that it was Isaac Titsingh (1745–1812) of the Dutch East India Company.

God),” while in comparison, the currency supplied by the imperial Chinese government had no religion-related patterns. The portraits that Chinese folks were mostly in contact with were still Buddhist images. In the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese saw the silver coins inscribed with Spanish Carolus III, Carolus IV or Ferdinand VII as “Buddha Silver,” “Buddha Face Silver,” “Buddha Head Silver,” “Buddha Mother Silver,” “Buddha Foreign Silver” and “Buddha Face Foreign Head Silver.” In the Daoguang Reign, Taiwan minted Old Man Silver (老公仔银) featuring the Shouxing (寿星; the God of longevity) on the obverse and fully inscribed with Manchu texts on the reverse,^① showing religious imagination about currency in imperial China. Around the Opium War, when silver was in severe shortage, Wang Liu who proposed to issue paper banknotes hoped that the officials in charge of issuing would swear before deities: the value of the paper note will never change, “if you want to issue money, you must first broadcast the regulations to the world, and let everyone know the benefit of paper notes, and swear to the deity that you will never change the law.”^② The text “In God We Trust” is still written on American banknotes as of today. However, after 1911 until today, the New Taiwan dollar and Renminbi rarely feature symbolic representations that originate from folklore beliefs. Relatively speaking, following the appearance of head portraits of national leaders in 1912, such national symbols as “Central Bank,” “Central Engraving and Printing Plant,” “Central Mint,” “People’s Bank of China” gradually became currency patterns of China. These all reveal that: the replacement of religious beliefs by national beliefs is more thorough in the currency pattern of the Republic of China than in the West.

In Chinese history, the state was originally a constantly changing concept. Gan Huaizhen started from the textual research of the classics. He believed that in the Han Dynasty, the state could refer to the emperor himself or to a political group, especially “in the middle ages, the political group headed by the emperor was the state.”^③ Scholars and officials around

^① Jian, Y. 台湾钱淹脚目, 83–86.

^② [Qing Dynasty] Wang, L. 钱币与言, Qing Dynasty Daoguang Copy, 17a.

^③ Gan, H. in 皇权、礼仪与经典诠释: 中国古代政治史研究. Taipei: Taiwan University Publishing Center, 208–217, 227 (2004).

the Opium War in the Qing Dynasty usually use “Guo Jia (国家),” “Guo (国),” “Shang (上)” to refer to the government, which stands as an opposite concept to the “society” expressed as “Tian Xia (天下)” or “Xia (下).”^①

From the Northern and Southern Dynasties, China added the Emperor's regnal year to the copper coins. The Qing Dynasty asked the newly ruled Tibet to cast the Tongbao with the regnal year of the Qing Dynasty emperor. It can be seen that the traditional Chinese currency pattern also has several state images. Because for the average Chinese people, more than 85% of men and 99% of women were illiterate even in the 1930s. They did not have a deep concept about the regnal year of the emperors. Chinese copper coins from various dynasties can be used together, and the Ming and Qing dynasties, especially the Qing Dynasty, used a lot of foreign currency. China's copper coins, banknotes, and silver all use texts as the main axis of the pattern. Even if the banknotes have images of animals and plants, there has been no head portraits of national leader until 1912. These all prove that from the perspective of currency patterns, the relationship between most people in traditional China and the state is a weak one. Compared with previous studies on traditional Chinese national concepts or Buddha images, this study points out that traditional China in the past two thousand years has a profound difference between the belief in the Buddha and the belief in the state.

^① Lin, M. *China Upside Down* (银线), 197.