

# THE KING'S OBSERVATORY

Old Deer Park, Richmond, Surrey, England



A Guide to the Dining Room Wallpaper based on the 1772 Painting Commissioned by Alexander Hume



Prepared by R. J. F. Brothers, Hong Kong, August 2020

Design and editing by Cliff Dunnaway, Tiger Bay Enterprises, Hong Kong

## A GUIDE TO THE 1772 PAINTING

The original painting commissioned by Alexander Hume (1726-1794), English sea captain, merchant and trader with the East India Company (EIC), was acquired by the Hong Kong Maritime Museum in 2015 and is now displayed as part of their permanent collection. This unusually large painting (gouache on a silk scroll, 91.5 cm high by 276.5 cm wide) was painted in the summer of 1772 and is among the earliest group of “hong paintings” produced primarily for Western clients.

Inevitably the tranquil scene portrayed would not remain for long. Just a month or so after this painting was completed on 22 August 1772, an exceptionally fierce typhoon hit the delta with one observer reporting that all the factories were flooded and that most of the boats on the river were either beaten to pieces or sunk, resulting in tremendous damage and loss of life.



Alexander Hume had first been appointed by the EIC in 1754 to trade in China as a junior supercargo. By 1759 he was based permanently in Canton and had been promoted to supercargo. He sailed back to England in 1765 on the *Latham* and returned to China in 1770.

He was the chief EIC representative in Canton from 1770 until January 1774, when he returned for the last time home to England on the ship *Prime*. Upon his return he married Anne Boughton, heir to Bilton Grange in Warwickshire, by whom he had four children. After her death he married Anne Schroeder of Enfield and had five more children.

The Hume family had strong associations with the EIC through several generations. Members of the family were involved with the company in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including Alexander's uncle, also named Alexander Hume (1711-1758), who was a director of the company from 1737 to 1748 and Sir Abraham Hume, 1<sup>st</sup> Bart (1724-1771). A third Alexander Hume, nephew of the owner of this painting, was appointed captain of the EIC ship *Fox* in 1756.

The hand-painted wallpaper in the dining room of the King's Observatory consists of twenty-nine silk panels painted in the Wuxi, China workshops of Fromental Limited between 2017 and 2018. The wallpaper took more than 5,000 hours to complete employing several skilled artists and is wholly unique in both its scope and breadth. Its purpose was to follow in the traditions of "the Chinese style" – a fashion adopted



*A team of skilled artists from Fromental Limited created the magnificent hand-painted wallpaper directly from the original artwork.*

widely throughout European art, furniture and architecture during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and reaching its height at the time of the construction of the King's Observatory by George III in 1769.

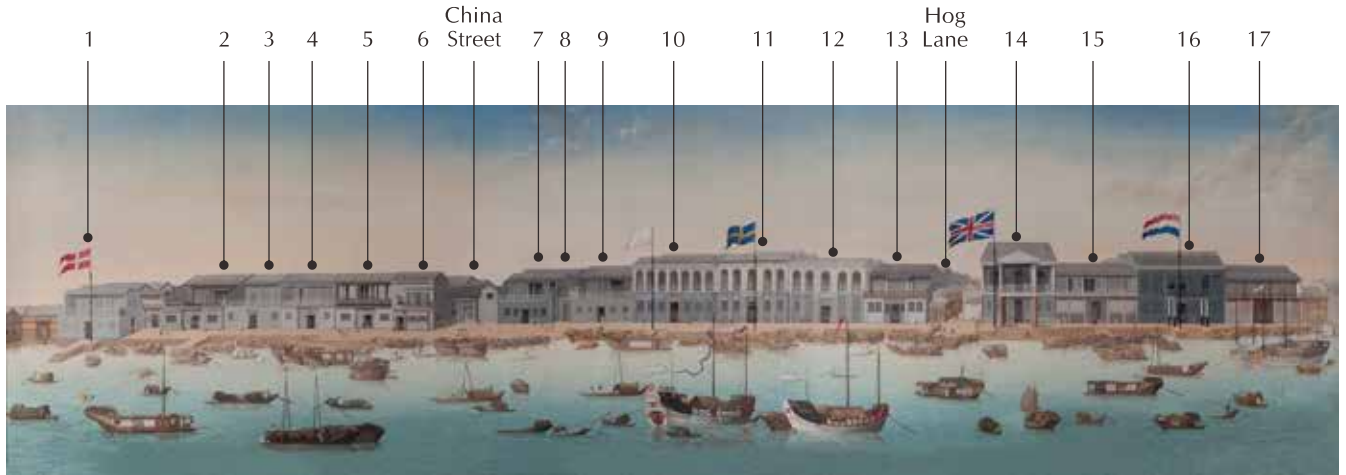
The panorama depicts the narrow strip of land along the Pearl River which was, at the time, the fulcrum of the China trade and the only place at which Western merchants were permitted to conduct trade with the Chinese. It portrays a row of spacious, colonial-style buildings which served as residences, offices and storage depots for the mix of Westerners – men only, as no women were permitted to visit – and an eclectic mix of Chinese city dwellers and merchants with whom they dealt.

The walkway in front of the factories was added in 1760. This was originally a wooden platform built on piles that was

later replaced with earth. Prior to 1760, foreign traders had entered their factories directly from their boats, which ran right up to their front doors.

Up to 1770, foreign trade at Canton was administered by the Co Hong (Gong Hong) 「公行」. It was abolished in early 1771. Although the Western merchants were happy to see it disappear, in reality it had brought valuable order and discipline to the trade.

## KEY TO BUILDINGS AND LOCATIONS





## 1 – Danish Factory

The Danes rented their main factory from Yan Swe Quan 「顏瑞官」 and his brother Yan Ying She 「顏瑛舍」. In March 1763, Swe Quan died and the ownership of No. 1 passed to his brother Ying She. At some point before the autumn of 1766, Poan Kee Qua I (Pan Qi Guan) 「潘啟官」 purchased the building. The Danish Factory was originally built in the spring of 1752. It was renovated in late 1769 or early 1770 when it was given a new façade with a balcony.



## 2 – Tong Wen Factory

The remains of the characters 同文 (Tong Wen) on the lanterns hanging in front of No. 2 are just visible. The Tong Wen Hong 「同文行」 was Poan Kee Qua I's factory which he established in 1760. Besides the foreign trade, the Poan family had been involved in the junk trade to Southeast Asia for many decades. The family was originally from Fujian province. Poan Kee Qua gained his language skills (he was fluent in Spanish) and early business experience from the trade between Xiamen and Manila. His family was the main supplier of the Spanish cargoes throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was also the head of the hong merchants from 1760 until his death in 1788. From 1760 to 1777, the Spaniards stayed in the Tong Wen Hong. The Poans supplied many of the exports for not only the Spaniards but also the Swedes, French and English. Most of those cargoes would have passed through building No. 2 which was not rebuilt after the disastrous fire of 1822. Instead, Poan Kee Qua III donated the land to the establishment of New China Street in 1823. In honour of the founder Poan Kee Qua I, the street was named Tong Wen Jie 「同文街」.



### 3 – Spanish Factory

Although No. 3, known as the Spanish Factory, was renovated by the Spanish in 1788 and thereafter used by them, there is no available information on the use of this building before that date.





#### 4 – Yu Yuan Factory

Factory No. 4 was previously used as a warehouse for the Co Hong. In the late 1760s, there was a severe shortage of apartments for rent in the foreign quarter which led to more rooms being added. In September 1769 the Co Hong was ordered by the Governor General to make room in their building to house a foreign captain who could not find accommodation. In February 1771 the Co Hong was disbanded and the building was sold to Kou Sia (Zhang Tian Qiu) 「張天球」 of the Yu Yuan Hong 「裕源行」. The new owners in the spring of 1772 gave No. 4 a new façade. The second-floor terrace or balcony was also enclosed with a new roof and may have only just been completed at the time of the Hume painting because it does not show the lanterns of the Yu Yuan Hong in the front. From 1789 until the fire of 1822, foreigners called No. 4 the French Factory.



## 5 – Tai He Factory

It is possible to see the characters 泰和 (Tai He) on the lanterns hanging in front of No. 5. The Tai He Hong 「泰和行」 was owned by the famous Yan family. Besides foreign trade, the Yan family was also deeply involved in the junk trade to Southeast Asia. Yan Te Xia (Yan De She) 「顏德舍」 founded the firm in 1734. His eldest son Yan Swe Tia (Yan Swe Quan) 「顏瑞官」 took over the firm in 1751 after his father died. Swe Tia died in 1763, and his brother Yan Ing Sia (Yan Ying She) 「顏瑛舍」 succeeded him. On 11 December 1772, Ing Sia led a funeral procession up to the White Cloud Mountains north of Canton in honour of reburying his father. There were about 15,000 people in the procession with 1,000 palanquins. The Dutch mentioned that the funeral cost Ing Sia upwards of 10,000 taels. In the late 1770s, the Tai He Hong suffered considerable setbacks until it eventually failed in 1779. Shortly thereafter

Ing Sia was exiled to Ili, Xinjiang 「新疆伊犁哈薩克」 as punishment for his debts. As far as the records reveal, he seems to have spent the remaining twelve years of his life cutting grass for the emperor's horses. His younger brother Yan Lim Sia (Yan Lin She) 「顏林舍」 continued trading, for a couple years thereafter, but then also failed.



## 6 – Chung Factory

The painting shows No. 6, a two-storey block that appears to be attached at the rear to a long, lower building, which forms the west side of China Street. This long structure is where the shops on China Street were located and was owned by hong merchant Chung Qua 「宗華」. He was one of the early hong merchants with whom the Westerners were obliged to trade. Otherwise little is known of Chung Qua himself or this building.



## China Street

China Street was created in 1760. It was called by several names, including China Street, Porcelain Street and New Street. The first two names came from the chinaware dealers being moved there in 1760.



## 7 – Guang Yuan Factory

No. 7 was the Guang Yuan Hong 「廣源行」 which firm was founded by Consentia Gi Quan (Ye Yi Quan) 「葉義官」. Gi Quan traded in Canton from 1729 to his death in April 1765. After his death, his son Ye Tiau Quan (Ye Chao Quan) 「葉朝官」 took over the firm until he died insolvent in 1775. The business was closed, but the building retained its name, which was probably rented out to private traders after Tiau Quan's death. In 1782, the French took over No. 7. At some point between 1786 and 1788 they moved from there to No. 4, and then No. 7 was again rented out to private traders, including Americans. In early 1792, the building was given a new façade that resembled the French Factory.



## 8 – Tan Factory

No. 8 was a very narrow, single-storey building owned by hong merchant Tan Hun Quan 「陳芳觀」. Chinese merchants operated out of this building from at least the 1760s onward. Little is recorded of Hun Quan himself although he appears to have been popular amongst his contemporaries.





## 9 – Bao Shun Factory

No. 9 was owned by the hong merchants Zhang Fou Tia 「張富舍」 and brother Zhang Kou Sia (Zhang Tian Qui) 「張天求」. The name of the building in Chinese was the Bao Shun Hong 「寶順行」. On the evening of 7 February 1773, a fire broke out in No. 9, which threatened the French, Swedish and two English factories. The fire burned for ten-and-a-half hours and completely consumed the Bao Shun Hong, No. 13 and many of the shops in Hog Lane 「新荳欄街」 before it was finally brought under control. Kou Sia's business failed in 1779, his properties were confiscated and he was exiled to Ili. It is unknown who purchased No. 9 thereafter, but it kept the name Bao Shun Hong up to the fire of 1822.



## 10 – French Factory

No. 10 was owned by the hong merchant Tan Tin Qua 「陳天華」 and rented to the French from 1750 until 1782. During this time the building was called the French Factory. In Chinese, it was referred to as Fo Lan Xi Hong 「佛蘭西行」, Fo Lan Xi being a common term used for the French at that time. It was the first building on the quay to take on a distinctly foreign appearance, and in 1767 a balustrade was added to the second floor. It then became the prototype that was copied on other buildings, and by 1800 many of the factories on the quay had adopted a similar appearance. In the late 1770s and early 1780s the French officers were suffering from a severe shortage of capital. In order to reduce their costs, they sub-let part of the factory to the Imperial Asiatic Company. From 1779 to September 1782, there were two flagstuffs and two flags displayed in front of this building – French and Imperial. Around October 1782, the French moved out of No. 10 and rented No. 7 instead. The Imperial Asiatic Company then took

over No. 10 leaving only one flagstaff and one flag. For a couple of years, No. 10 was called both the Old French Factory and the Imperial Factory. The Imperial Asiatic Company had a flag with a double-headed eagle (from the flag of the Habsburg Emperor) so the building then became known in Chinese as the Shuang Ying Hong 「雙鷹行」 or Ma Ying Hong 「孖鷹行」 (both referring to two eagles).

By early 1786, the Imperial Asiatic Company was broke and the Hoppo ordered those officers to cease trading under that name and to remove the flag from the quay. For a good part of 1786 and 1787, the front part of No. 10 remained empty, but some of the rear apartments were rented to Americans. Because there was a severe drought in those years causing the price of rice to escalate, local mandarins set up a distribution centre in front of No. 10 where rice was handed out to the poor. In 1788, the Prussian Company took over the building and it was rumoured that the Prussian flag was going to be raised in front of No. 10 that year.

1788 may have been the only year the Prussian flag was raised because it does not appear in later paintings despite a continual presence of Prussian agents in Canton. Even though Imperial ships ceased their voyages to China in later years, the building continued to be called the Imperial Factory or Shuang Ying Hong and Ma Ying Hong in Chinese, up to the fire of 1822.



## 11 – Swedish Factory

The Swedes rented No. 11 from Chen Su Quan (Chen Shou Quan) 「陳壽觀」 in 1752 and again from 1754 to 1757. In 1752, the Swedish ship *Hoppet* laid over in China for an entire year because there was not enough cargo available in Canton to load it. Consequently, the Swedes stayed in the same building from August 1752 to December 1753. From the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, No. 11 was known as the Swedish Factory by foreigners and Suy Wo Hong 「瑞和行」 by Chinese. Su Quan died in March 1760, and his son Chet Quan (Chen Jie Quan) 「陳捷官」 took over the business. The Swedes continued to rent No. 11 from Chet Quan up to at least 1769. Between 1768 and 1769, the building was renovated and given a new façade. The Swedes emulated the French style and had installed a triangular pediment above the front door similar to the one above the door on No. 10. For some reason it was replaced with a half-moon shaped header in early 1772. The Guang Shun Hong 「廣順行」 (Su Quan and Chet Quan's firm) went

broke in 1778 and their properties were confiscated and sold. In 1804, the Swedes paid rent to Poan Kee Qua II so at some point before then the Poan family merchants had purchased the building. Even though the Swedish East India Company sent no more ships to China after 1805, the Swedes continued to go to Canton almost every year up to at least 1829. There were a few private Swedish ships that arrived in the 1810s, but for the most part, the Swedes seemed to have run No. 11 more like a hotel, renting apartments out to whomever needed one.



## 12 – Old English Factory

From about 1761 onward, the EIC had settled into buildings No. 12 and 14. No. 12 was where the ships' people stayed when they were in Canton and No. 14 was where the supercargoes and their assistants lived. It was known as the Lung Shun Hong 「隆順行」. The EIC continued to occupy these factories until the fire of 1822. In January 1772 a fire broke out in No. 13 and the flames spread to No. 12. The Old English Factory was given its new façade in early 1772 and it is likely that the fire damage would have been a good reason to undertake those changes.



### 13 – Zi Yuan Factory

Also known as the Moors Factory, No. 13 was owned by the merchant Shy Kin Qua (Shi Meng Jing) 「石夢鯨」. The name of his business was the Er Yi Hong 「貳益行」, but the building continued to be called the Zi Yuan Hong 「子源行」. In 1773 the Dutch referred to the building as being both a Chinese hong (Zi Yuan Hong) and the Moors Factory, a place where the Muslim traders from India resided (it was also referred to as the Parsee or the Chow Chow Building). Muslim traders had been active in the trade at Canton since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and continued to be involved in the trade into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No. 13 seems to have been their residence of choice. Shy Kin Qua did not become a hong merchant until 1778 but he was already trading with foreigners before then in partnership with Zhang Kou Sia. He sold tea to the EIC as far back as 1761. The exact year when he took possession of No. 13 is unknown but we know that he was living in the building at the time of the fire on 22 January 1772. He may have moved there several years earlier. On 7 February 1773, another fire broke out in No. 13 and this time it was entirely consumed.





## Hog Lane

Hog Lane 「新荳欄街」 was the earliest shopping street in the foreign quarter dating back to before 1748. It is not known where the name Hog Lane came from but it was renowned as a filthy place of the lowest order. In Chinese, it was called Dou Lan Jie (Bean Column or Bean Fence Street) 「荳欄街」. It was a place where foreign sailors went to eat, drink and enjoy themselves and where they could buy knick-knacks, trinkets and souvenirs. There were guards placed at both ends of the lane in order to keep the peace. There was a fire in this location on 7 February 1773 when many of the shops were damaged and had to be rebuilt.



## 14 – New English Factory

The Chinese name for No. 14 was Po Ho Hong (Bao He Hong) 「保和行」. Foreigners referred to it as the New English Factory. From 1760 up until the fire of 1822, the English occupied No. 14 continuously. It was the main factory building where the English supercargoes lived and where all the meetings and business transactions were undertaken. It was also where the British flag was usually displayed. Prior to 1771, there was an enclosed structure that protruded out from the face of the building towards the river. In early 1771, it was removed and an open single-width verandah was built in its place.



## 15 – Chap Yi Factory

The Chap Yi Hong 「集義行」, No. 15, was owned by one of the hong merchants of the Wai Yang Hong 「外洋行」, Sem Quan (Qiu Kun) 「邱崑」 and his partner Ong Tsan Qua 「王讚華」. They fitted out junks there for voyages to Southeast Asia. Junks from Siam (present-day Thailand) and Cochin China (present-day Vietnam) also traded out of the Chap Yi Hong. In November 1763 there were insufficient apartments available to rent in Canton so Sem Quan was ordered to make room in his building for some of the English private traders. By 1772 the firm was carrying a crippling debt and Sem Quan and Ong Tsan Qua were ordered to hand over all their properties to the government so that they could be sold and have the proceeds applied to cover the arrears. In 1815, the English rebuilt their factories and merged Nos. 14 and 15 together into one. It remained under the English control up to the fire of 1822. After the merger of those two buildings, the new factory took on the name Chap Yi Hong. It is unclear when, how or why this happened. Before the trading season began in the autumn of 1773, No. 15 was also given a new façade.



## 16 – Dutch Factory

The Dutch rented the building called the Quang Ha Hong 「廣夏行」, No. 16, from 1753. At that time the Dutch made many repairs to the building including painting and refurbishing the balcony that appears in the painting. The Dutch continued to live there up to and including 1758 although in 1759 it was rented to the English instead and the Dutch had to find other accommodation. The Dutch regained possession of the building in 1760 and then occupied it every year until the fire of 1822. It is recorded that in 1770 the upper portion of the balcony was painted with a blue lime. The Yans owned the Dutch Factory until 1779 when their firm was declared bankrupt. No. 16 was then sold to Hong merchant Tsoi Tsjon Quan (Cai Xiang Quan) 「蔡相官」.



## 17 – Creek Factory

No. 17, known locally as the Yi He Hong 「義和行」, was often referred to by foreigners as the Creek Factory because it was located next to the creek. These names, “Creek” and “Yi He” remained the same up to the fire of 1822. Several junks were fitted out in this building each year for voyages to Southeast Asia and other foreign traders regularly rented apartments here.

## NATIONAL FLAGS

Several of the hongs are identified by their national flags.



**Danish Flag** – This flies in front of the Danish Factory – No. 1. This flag has a centre white cross over a red field and has been the flag of Denmark for over eight hundred years. As such it is generally considered to be the oldest continuously used national flag in the world. The flag adopted its current design – the Nordic cross (with the centre of the cross shifted towards the hoist) – as early as 1748 although the flag shown in the painting is the earlier version.



**French Flag** – It was not until 1794 that the blue, white and red tricolour was adopted as the national flag of France. The flag that flies in front of the French Factory – No. 10 as portrayed in this painting was all white and dates from the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



**Swedish Flag** – The Swedish Factory is No. 11 and the Swedish flag shown in the painting is of the same proportions and colours as the state flag with the notable difference of being square cut as opposed to a Nordic cross. This followed a government instruction of ship building of 1730. Sweden did not follow Denmark and adopt the Nordic cross design until 1906.



**Dutch Flag** – The red-white-blue tricolour has been the “States Flag” from 1662. The triband flag is said to have inspired the French and Russian Flags. This is the only flag in the painting that has not changed since the 1772 date of this painting.



**Union Flag** – Although the Old English Factory was located in No. 12, the flagstaff has always been located in front of the New English Factory – No. 14. The earlier flag of Great Britain was established in 1606 by a proclamation of King James VI of Scotland (and I of England) and presents the red cross of St. George edged in white (representing England), superimposed on the blue flag with a diagonal white cross of St. Andrew (representing Scotland). It is this flag that we see on the painting. The current flag of the United Kingdom was only officially created in 1801 when the diagonal red cross of St. Patrick (representing Ireland) was added thereby creating the Union Jack that we know today.

## WATERCRAFT ON THE RIVER

Below the hongs the river is crowded with junks and sampans of all kinds ferrying goods and passengers.

In the centre foreground, there are two large, ocean-going junks. One to the left of the Swedish flag is inscribed with the characters 明洋 (*Ming Yang*) and the one to the right 三廣興 (*Sam Kong Hing*). The junks usually left Canton in February or March for their voyages to Southeast Asia and then returned in July or August. However, 1772 was an exception. On 30 November of that year, the Swedes learned that the *Sam Kong Hing* was lost at sea. They had been investing in this junk so they had an interest in keeping track of its movements each year. The latter was reported lost off the coast of Cochin China some six months after the time of the painting. There were thirty to forty such trading junks based in Canton that sailed to

Southeast Asia each year. Most of them could carry a cargo of around 250 tons.

There are two other ocean-going junks on the far right of the painting that are anchored closer to the factories. One appears to have a green or blue head, indicating it is from Fujian province whereas the other has a red head indicating it is from Guangdong province. Many Fujian junks stopped at Canton on their way to or from Southeast Asia. They were a very common sight on the river and often appear in paintings. On the stern of most of the ocean-going junks a phoenix was painted, which can be seen on the *Ming Yang*. Junks were also painted with a face on the front and an eye on each side of the bow allowing them to “see” through darkness or storms.



## OCEAN-GOING JUNKS



*Ming Yang*

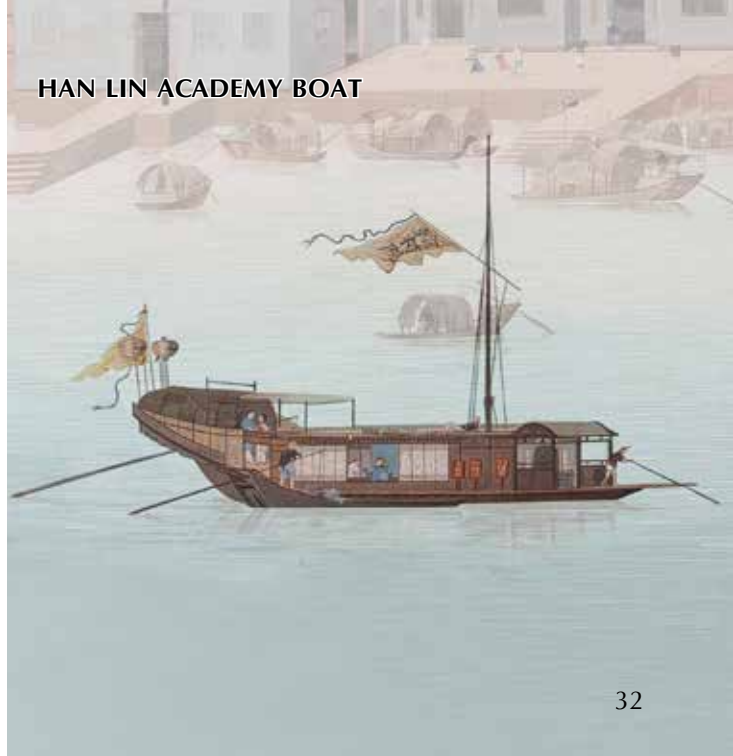


*Sam Kong Hing*

Unlike western vessels, Chinese junks had no keel, but used their huge perforated rudders to keep them steady and going in the desired direction. Also it will be noted that the junks in the painting are shown with anchor cables bow and stern which were necessary to keep them from drifting away in the current. Many Canton artists failed to show the anchor cables in their paintings but this artist paid careful attention to ensure accuracy, getting everything right. Maybe this was because he knew the painting had been commissioned by a former sea captain.

On the far left of the painting is the boat of the Han Lin Academy 「翰林院」. The name is on the flag hoisted on the mast, on the lanterns at the stern and on a signboard near the bow hatchway. Officials on this boat were responsible for organising the imperial exams, which were held in Guangzhou

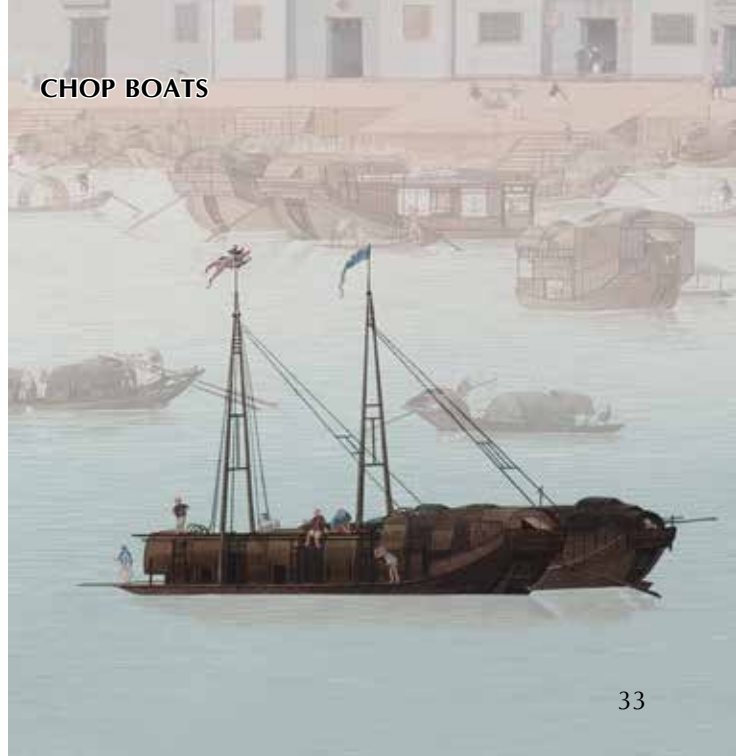
## HAN LIN ACADEMY BOAT



every three years. This vessel was apparently the academy's private pleasure boat that was used for the entertainment of visiting officials.

To the right of the Han Lin Academy boat are two “chop boats” 「大艇」 or “xi gua bian chuan” 「西瓜扁船」 which appear to be loaded. The chop boats were some of the most versatile craft on the river. Practically everything could be removed from them down to the hull. The mast served a dual purpose as a boom which could hoist heavy objects onto the vessel. When empty, the half-circle panels were stacked on top of the cabin at the stern. The boats were loaded starting from the stern. As each section was completed, the panels were put in place above the cargo to provide protection from the weather. When unloading, the panels were again stacked on top of one another at the stern, and then the boat went to receive another

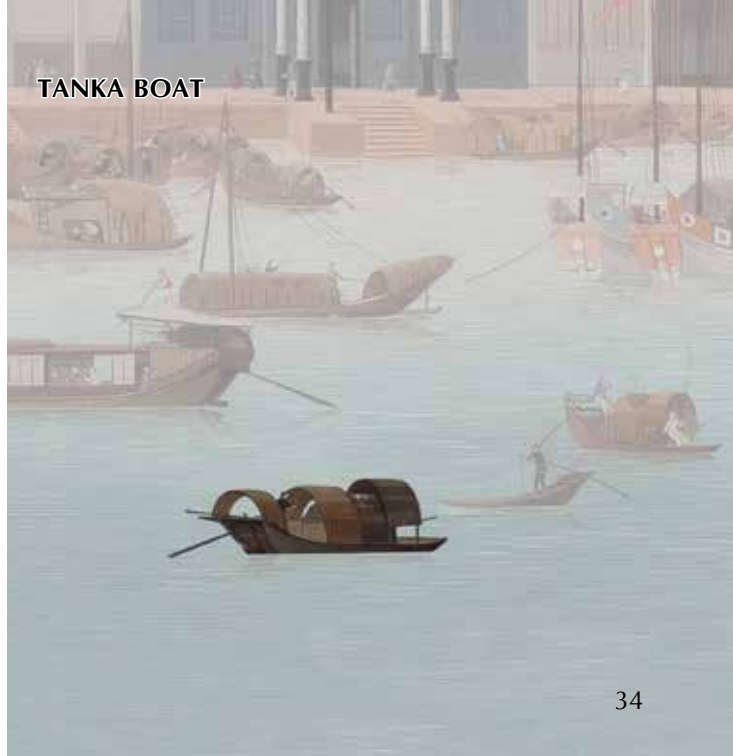
## CHOP BOATS



load. At the centre of the painting two smaller, empty chop boats can be seen returning after unloading their cargoes.

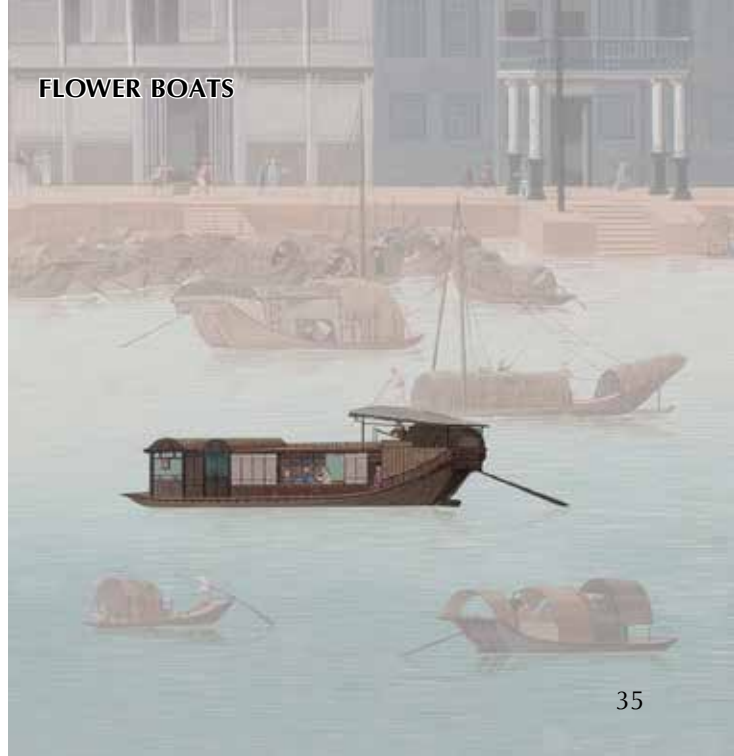
The smaller boats on the river were called by a variety of names including sampans, tanka boats or egg boats, slipper boats, watermelon boats (owing to their similarity to those objects), etc. As was the case with most of the boats on the river, the owners and operators actually lived aboard. Many operators raised their families and lived aboard their vessels their entire lives. The tanka boats were about the cheapest transport on the river and could be hired by Chinese to ferry people, goods or whatever small items needed to be moved from one place to another. Tanka boats, usually operated by women, also ferried Westerners on short trips or out to larger vessels. The Tankas 「蠶家人」, originally a non-Chinese ethnic group, had lived along the coast and rivers of southern China for several centuries and were renowned for their seafaring skills.

## TANKA BOAT



Of all the varied craft on the river at Canton, none were more fascinating to the male society of Western merchants than the elaborately decorated “flower boats” (hua ting) 「花艇」 or (hua fang) 「花舫」. Flower boats could be hired for a couple of hours, for dinner or for an entire evening to entertain important guests. If a local merchant wanted to land a contract for a batch of tea that one of the inland dealers had brought to Canton, or if a local mandarin wanted to impress a visiting official from another city, they might hire a flower boat on which to entertain them for an evening. They could order any cuisine they wanted, whatever music they preferred, entertainment, attractive women and virtually anything else they might desire. Often these flower boats were moored abreast so that one could walk across from one to the other. They had no masts or sails and when they moved at all, they were propelled by oars or long punt poles. These pleasure boats for hire played a very important role in

## FLOWER BOATS

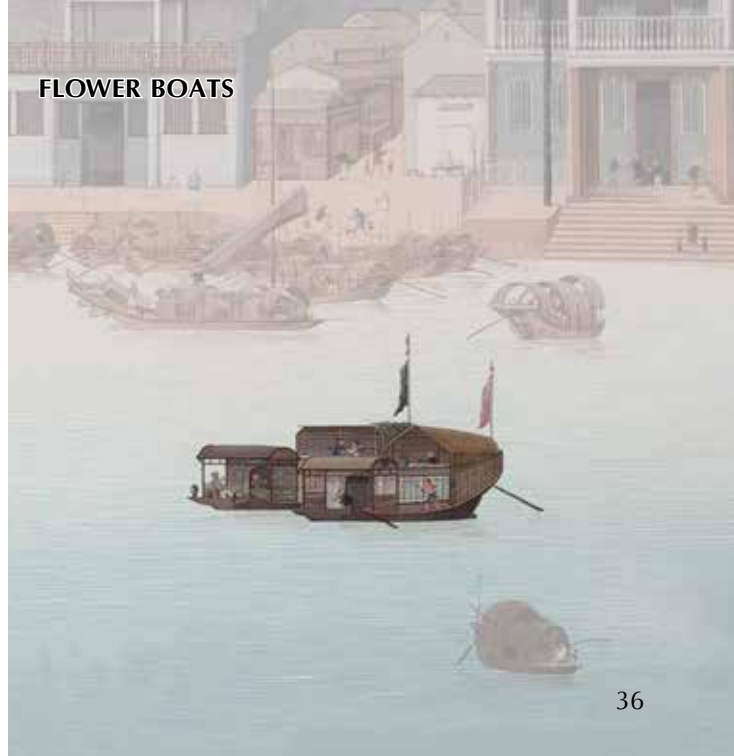


the trade that has often been overlooked in the history books. They were, however, strictly off-limits to foreigners.

There are two pleasure boats to the right of the painting that do have flags displayed. These craft, being privately owned, were not available to the public.

There are several other pleasure boats shown in the painting anchored in front of the factories. The ones without lanterns, flags or banners may have been boats for hire. These had their names displayed above their bow hatchways. Pleasure boats that were owned by hong merchants or government officials such as the Governor General or Hoppo usually had flags or banners displayed identifying who they belonged to.

## FLOWER BOATS

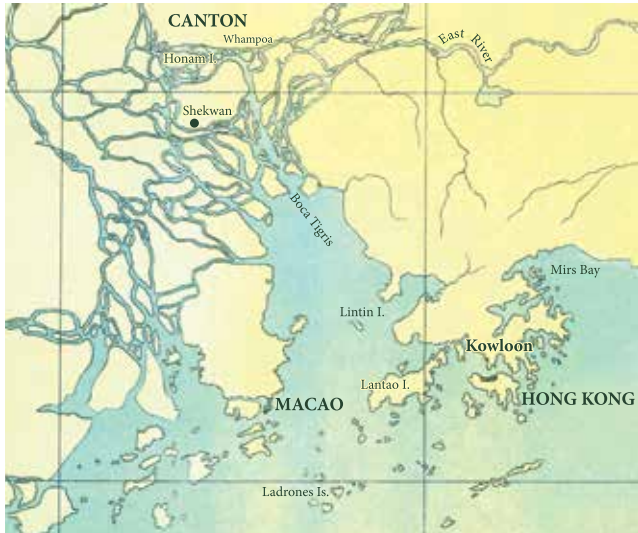


## LATER HISTORY

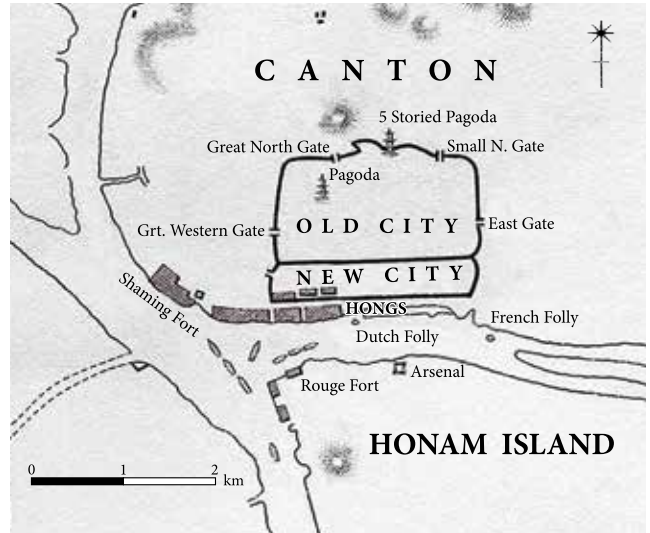
The Canton waterfront as portrayed in 1772 was to evolve and expand in the ensuing years with almost complete rebuilding and extensive reclamation following the devastation of typhoons, disastrous fires in 1822 and the two fires of December 1842 and September 1843. The final coup-de-grace was the fire of 1856, suspected to be the result of arson directly related to what is known as the Second Anglo-Chinese Opium War. This act eventually led to an attack by the British on Canton in December 1857 during which they set fire to the suburbs. With China and Britain being essentially at war, French and British forces landed to the east of the city and occupied it. The Chinese in retaliation destroyed the remaining buildings on the waterfront that had been untouched by the fire. They were never to be rebuilt.

The foreign businesses, needing somewhere from which to operate, began to transfer their offices across the river to Honam Island which was situated opposite from Canton. However, Honam was never seen as more than a temporary location and a more permanent replacement for the old factories was sought elsewhere. The answer came in the creation of an entirely new enclave for foreigners: the reclaimed island of Shamian that was located a few hundred yards upriver from the old site. The first plots on the island were put up for auction in September 1861. This foreign enclave continued for a further eighty-two years until 1943 when the concession was formally returned to China. Many of the old buildings on Shamian Island, however, have been very well-preserved and can be visited today.

## CANTON - HONG KONG - MACAO



## CANTON - THE HONGS ON THE PEARL RIVER







*The Dining Room of the King's Observatory.*

## Acknowledgements:

- ◆ The Hongs of Canton – Western Merchants in South China, 1700-1900, as seen in Chinese Export Paintings by Patrick Conner.
- ◆ Images of the Canton Factories, 1760-1822 by Paul A. Van Dyke and Maria Kar-wing Mok.
- ◆ Whampoa and the Canton Trade – Life and Death in a Chinese Port, 1700-1842 by Paul A. Van Dyke.
- ◆ “China Observed”, Catalogue 94, 2015-2016 – Martyn Gregory Gallery, London.
- ◆ “An Early Depiction of the ‘Thirteen Hongs’ in Canton”, Orientations, Vol. 48, No. 4, July/Aug 2017 by Libby Lai-pik Chang.
- ◆ “Hume Scroll of 1772 and the Faces Behind the Canton Factories”, Review of Culture, Vol. 54, 2017 by Paul A. Van Dyke.
- ◆ Göteborgs stadsmuseum, Gothenburg, Sweden – Ms. Katharina Wänseth, curator.
- ◆ The Hong Kong Maritime Museum for their generous assistance.  
(See link: <https://www.hkmaritimemuseum.org/chi/explore/collections/the-alexander-hume-painting/13/183/>)
- ◆ Fromental Limited – Tim Butcher, Katy Schnetler, Allen Wang and all the skilled painters in Wuxi, China without whose invaluable assistance and hard work this wallpaper could never have been produced.





[www.kingsobservatory.co.uk](http://www.kingsobservatory.co.uk)