

China and the Modern World: Imperial China and the West Part I, 1815–1881

Digitised from British Foreign Office Files at the UK National Archives, Part 1 of *Imperial China and the West* provides General Correspondence relating to China from 1815-1881. The primary source material from the FO 17 series provides a vast and significant resource for researching every aspect of Anglo-Chinese relations during the 19th century, ranging from diplomacy and war, to trade, piracy, riots and rebellions within China, international law and foreign affairs.

TNA MR1/907, China: Canton (now Guangzhou). Map of the city and harbour, showing roads, buildings and gardens. 1855.



ABOUT THE ARCHIVE

Part 1 contains over 500,000 manuscript pages pertaining to the diplomatic, political, mercantile, legal, and military relations among China, Britain, France, Russia, the United States, and other Western Powers, as well as the relationships between these and China's nearer neighbours including Japan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, India, and even Australia. It presents an excellent primary source in English for scholars and students around the world researching China's political, diplomatic and economic history across the 19th century.

ARCHIVE SNAPSHOT

Approximate Size

540,000 pages

Source

The National Archives, Kew

Language

**Majority in English,
with some in Chinese**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLECTION

Major historical events and topics covered in the series include:

- The Canton (trade monopoly) System, 1757-1842 (工行製度)
- Lord Amherst's mission to China, 1816 (阿美士德使团)
- The two Opium Wars, 1840-42; 1856-60 (鴉片戰爭)
- The cession of Hong Kong, 1842 (割讓香港)
- Anti-foreign riots such as the Tientsin Massacre, 1870 (天津教案)
- Taiping Rebellion, 1850-1864 (天平天國)

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Handwritten text recognition (HTR) technology has been incorporated into the digitisation of FO 17 for the benefit of improved searchability enabling unexpected discoveries not possible from traditional finding aids. This technology makes the documents in this collection more accessible to those without palaeography skills and enables powerful inclusion in digital humanities/scholarship projects.

Itemised Indexes

Alongside Volumes 1-872 of the General Correspondence, item-level information has been sourced from the Foreign Office Indexes in series FO 605, increasing researchers' ability to search and browse through the wealth of subjects and material presented in this collection.

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