

## **Chinese visitors to eighteenth-century Britain and their contribution to its cultural and intellectual life.**

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In the eighteenth century, Chinese travelers to the West were rare, but perhaps for that very reason the impact of each visitor could often be substantial. In this essay I will give a brief introduction to three such visitors to Britain in that century to indicate something of the important role they played in cross-cultural contact, and to clarify how much the development of Western knowledge about China was at that time a consequence of personal contact between a relatively small number of individuals. Not only were these early Chinese visitors to Britain significant as rare unofficial cultural ambassadors, but they all in their own individual ways played a role in the transfer and production of artistic and intellectual knowledge about China.

The first of the three visitors I wish to consider was known as 'Loum Kiqua' and our main source of information about him is an engraving made by Thomas Burford (c. 1710 - c. 1776) after a painted portrait by Dominic Serres (c. 1719 -1793) which cannot currently be located. This portrait shows a man in full Chinese dress and hat, with a pipe in his left hand, placed in a rather bare interior setting with checkered flooring. Behind him is a riverside landscape of a fanciful nature, perhaps intended to represent the region of Canton (Guangzhou) and the Pearl River. Despite this imaginary aspect to the figure's setting, the print has a Latin inscription on it claiming that the original painted portrait was made from life. This information helps us to date the painting to around 1756, since the print also has some other information inscribed on it about its subject which includes a date of his arrival in London. The name 'Loum Kiqua' is given above the aforementioned inscription, and to its left a Chinese character equivalent allows us to identify his name with some certainty, despite the vagaries of romanization. In the *pinyin* romanization of modern standard Chinese his name would be 'Lin Qi', but the romanization is more consistent with the Cantonese pronunciation of the character for his common Chinese family name, which would nowadays often be romanized as 'Lam'. The 'qua' at the end of the name (*guan* in pinyin) is an honorific title commonly appended in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to names of

prominent Chinese when romanized.

The print's inscription states that Loum Qiqua 'came to Lisbon in 1755, was there at the Time of the Earthquake [1 November 1755], and providentially escaped with life; after many hardships & ill-treatments from the Portuguese, he came over to England in 1756, where he met with different usage, having had the honour of being seen by his Majesty and the rest of the Royal-Family, most of the Nobility, &e, by whom he was much caress'd. Having made application to the Hon.<sup>ble</sup> the East India Company, for his passage home, he was kindly received and generously accommodated on Board one of their Ships, to carry him to Canton, his Native Country'.

In earlier research I have suggested, partly on the basis of date, that Loum Qiqua can be identified as the anonymous 'Chinese merchant' from Canton who gave a performance of music on a Chinese instrument in London in 1756.

(1) An important moment in Chinese/Western musical exchange since it is quite possibly the earliest known Chinese musical performance in the West, one of the pieces played was documented by a short sample of musical notation which was published during 1757 in the prominent British journal, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the heading 'A Chinese Air' (**see Figure 1**). (2) Given the rarity of published transcriptions of Chinese music in Europe during the eighteenth century this document has a particular importance for Chinese music history. It predates the 1779 publication of a book on Chinese music by the Peking-based Jesuit Joseph-Marie Amiot (1718-1793), and by an even greater time span the making public of data gathered by British music historian Charles Burney (1726-1814) or by members of the 1793 Macartney embassy. (3) The evaluation of this document is by no means a simple matter, however, given that 'A Chinese Air' was not a purely textual exercise of transcribing a piece of music that had been previously written in Chinese notation, but was notated by ear from a particular performance given by a Chinese musician by a listener who would have had no previous acquaintance with the musical world it sprang from. Perhaps for this reason the piece as it stands has no marked 'Chinese' quality to it. (4)

In addition to the note on the Serres print and the transcription of the 'Chinese Air' some further information about Loum Qiqua can be gleaned from a letter from a Mr. Ames to a Mr. T. Martin, dated 30 December 1756, which describes a visit to a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries in London. Ames notes that he

saw there 'the Chinese Mandarine, who behaved very complaisant, yet could not speak English – only, as I am informed, Portuguese, of all the European languages'. (5) Ames states of the Chinese that 'their great antiquity makes them the proper subject of a universal antiquary', speculating that 'they are the likeliest persons in the known world to read the hieroglyphical signatures of Thebes and Egypt'. (6) Apart from an interest in Chinese culture itself, conjectures that the Chinese language might be close to that of the Garden of Eden ( a not uncommon idea of the time) might also have been behind the Society of Antiquaries interest in meeting Loum Kiqua.

One precondition for Loum Kiqua to play a meaningful role in China/Western cultural exchange was his mature age, which had allowed him to immerse himself in his own culture prior to his arrival in Europe. Previous Chinese visitors to the West had rarely been independent travelers - most of the small handful of other such Chinese visitors in the eighteenth century or earlier were brought by sponsors, for example in a religious context. The first recorded such visitor to reach Britain, Shen Fu-Tsung (d. 1691, Shen Fuzong in *pinyin*), who was in Britain and continental Europe during the 1680s, had been brought from China by the Jesuit priest Philippe Couplet (1623-1693). (7)

The second case I want to discuss is also that of an independent traveler of mature age, the portrait modeler known as Chitqua, who owned a store in Canton where - we are told - he made portraits of visiting Western traders and mariners. (8) As one of the smaller independent merchants specializing in trade with foreigners, and presumably having his business in the relatively tiny area to which these overseas visitors were restricted when resident, he would have had the opportunity to develop a comparatively deep first hand understanding of aspects of Western culture. Contact with Westerners was also happening in eighteenth-century Beijing because of the presence of the Jesuit missionaries at the Qing court, but Canton too was a prime site for sophisticated cross-cultural interaction and not simply for trade. (9)

Most of the trade at Canton was in bulk commodities such as tea which already had a ready market and an established connoisseurship within China itself, but as a portrait sculptor Chitqua was making personally (as opposed to simply buying in bulk) novel items for which there was no direct previously-existing counterpart in China. Since he was making portraits he furthermore needed to satisfy individual clients as end users, and had to

display sufficient understanding of their sense of self to do so. Whereas the larger merchants employed specialist 'linguists' for their communication with foreigners, Chitqua would have needed to have language abilities in China Coast Pidgin or elementary English to communicate directly himself with clients, and thus his language skills would probably have been pretty exceptional when compared to those of almost anyone else in China at that time.

Presumably as a result of contacts made through his trade, Chitqua took the decision to travel to London, arriving in 1769 on the East Indiaman *Horsendon*. He was to stay till around 1772, becoming the first Chinese artist to visit the West. Aided by his language skills and his relative maturity (he might have been in his early forties at the time) he lived independently, taking lodgings near the Strand. He pursued his existing business of making small portrait figurines in this novel environment, using a stock of clay that he had apparently brought with him. (10)

Not only was Chitqua able to work at his existing trade while in London, he was to experience great success with it, being able to charge as much as fifteen guineas for a figurine (about three-quarters the annual salary of a 'cook-maid' at that time). Whatever the status of his work within China itself, in England Chitqua was treated by artists as their professional peer. He was invited, for instance, to a grand dinner held by the Royal Academy on 23 April 1770 in the Great Room of their building on the south side of Pall Mall which was also attended by the actor David Garrick (1717-1779), the statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797), and the politician, author and antiquarian Horace Walpole (1717-1797), as well as other luminaries. (11) Chitqua was even to appear in an oil painting by Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1771-2), which documents the members of this new body. The only figure shown wearing a hat, he can be found at the back on the left side. A sense that he is a member of this convivial grouping, and not an outsider, is created by Zoffany's depiction of the miniature painter Jeremiah Meyer turning to him in conversation. In addition to this symbolic inclusion in the British artistic community, Chitqua was also allowed to exhibit a work (now lost or at least unidentified), described as 'a portrait of a gentleman, a model', in the second Royal Academy exhibition in 1770. (12) By a long lead, therefore, Chitqua became the first named Chinese artist to have a work shown in an overseas exhibit. This professional success

was paralleled by a certain social celebrity: Chitqua was to meet various well-known figures of the age such as James Boswell (1740-1795) and Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795), who apparently had a portrait made. (13) He was even introduced to King George III (as Loum Kiqua had been) and to Princess Augusta. (14)

While a number of works survive which could be by Chitqua's hand, such as a figure of the Fleet Street druggist Thomas Todd (b. 1726) which was acquired by the Museum of London in 2011, there is only one where we have a very high degree of confidence concerning authorship, and this is a seated portrait of Dr. Anthony Askew (1722-1774), which is in the collection of the Royal College of Physicians in London. The figure, made in unfired clay, subsequently painted, is around 13 inches in height. It leaves us with a definite sense of an individualized portrait, not only because of the degree of definition of the features and the effort that has gone into fashioning a coherent facial expression, but also because the whole body pose reads as expressive of character. Askew wears a red medical doctor's robe, and there is a great deal of attention to the details of his dress and accessories (including his cane, a common badge of medical office at the time). Askew's prominent stomach helps give a sense of corporeality, thus ensuring the clothes do not overwhelm the figure beneath them.

It is worth noting that Chitqua's success in London was achieved without him having to make a spectacle of his Chineseness, at least with respect to his art. Commentators do not single out any 'Chineseness' in his works, and seem to have no expectation of anything exotic from them – in this work only the rock on which Askew is perched has anything overtly 'Chinese' about it. In an age before British imperial ambitions towards China had matured, and in which the racial theory whose consequences for inter-cultural interaction we still face today had not yet fully developed, contacts between cultures were it seems differently configured.

In addition to the portrait of Chitqua in Zoffany's *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* there are individual portraits by Charles Grignion (1754-1804), who produced two drawings of Chitqua, one of which is in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and by John Hamilton Mortimer (1740-1779), whose oil of c. 1771 is in the collection of the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in London (**see Figure 2**). All these images

show Chitqua in Chinese dress, offering descriptions of his appearance which broadly match the verbal accounts of him given by the antiquary Richard Gough (1735-1809) and by Thomas Bentley (1731-1780), the business partner of Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795). (15)

While Chitqua was in England he served as a source of information about Chinese culture on many occasions, and the fact that he was able to interact with many figures of great social importance only amplified the significance of his role as a source of information about his home country. No doubt his ability to communicate in English or at least China Coast Pidgin made him a more significant interlocutor than Loum Kiqua had been.

The range of topics Chitqua was able to help with were broad. Bentley, who had already met Chitqua three times by November 1769, may have been seeking specific information about porcelain manufacture. Certainly he prefaces his mention of Chitqua in a 1769 letter to Wedgwood (who had not yet himself met the Chinese visitor) by noting that 'We are every day finding out some ingenious man or curious piece of workmanship, all of which we endeavour to make subservient to the improvement of our taste, or the perfection of our manufacture'. (16) Boswell, on the other hand, recounts learning a little about the sound of spoken Chinese from Chitqua: 'I got him to read a little to me from a fan with Chinese characters. It was just what Mr. Johnson told me of another Chinese: a sound like the ringing of a small bell'. (17) This reference to Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) is interesting, since it raises the suggestion that this cultural luminary was amongst those who had met Loum Kiqua during his earlier visit. (18)

One occasion where Chitqua appears to have been of specific help was in interpreting an album of paintings produced in China. The leather-bound album in question contains a total of thirty images of figures of various kinds, including historical characters, a monk, a student, and a doctor, and is dated to around 1735. Now in the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, it originally belonged to Mr. R. Martin, who was Supercargo on a voyage of that year, becoming Chief of Council in 1743. It was purchased from the sale of Martin's effects in March 1747 by 'P. Yorke'. This is almost certainly Philip Yorke (1720-1790), who became the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Hardwicke in 1764.

According to a handwritten note incorporated within the album itself, 'Che Qua,

a Chinese modeler, who was in England in 1769' is said to have 'read and explained the characters in this book, which he said were in the Mandarine language'. The note continues by stating that Chitqua's comment was 'exactly like the missionaries', indicating that help had previously been sought in deciphering the subject matter of the images and with translation of their Chinese-character explanations (which are written on strips of red paper that accompany each image). Since a handwritten list of the subjects accompanying this note is given in French rather than English (with romanizations of the Chinese pronunciation, including accents) it was perhaps missionaries who had been in China who were responsible for this, rather than Chitqua. The note does indicate, however, that Chitqua was able to provide further information about the figures represented, sometimes attempting to correct the interpretations of the missionaries. He was particularly helpful in providing information concerning some of the images of famous beauties in the collection. (19) At one point Chitqua is noted as acknowledging the limits of his knowledge about the figure depicted, so one must not overestimate the extent of his education.

Chitqua's value as an informant concerning the Chinese language, about which any real expertise was lacking in England at that time, can be seen from Lemuel Dole Nelme's *An Essay towards an Investigation of the Origin and Elements of Language and Letters*. Published in 1772, this work was a speculative study into the origins of language (which I have already noted as a particular concern of that time). Early on in his study Nelme makes reference to 'A Chinese grammar, published in that language for the instruction of their youth, not only in letters, but in the rudiments or *radix* of letters; in the knowledge of the constitution of the empire; its internal police, number of inhabitants, duties, laws, genealogies, geometry, astronomy, computation, and the geography of the Chinese empire; as Mr. Chitqua, a native of China, now in England, assured the writer hereof'. (20)

In December 1770 Chitqua was also invited to examine Chinese books in the collection of the British Museum, at that point in its then relatively short history (it had been founded in 1753) more a collection of books and natural history artifacts than of antiquities. According to Frances Wood he looked at both Chinese and Japanese language volumes, including several from Sir Hans Sloane's collection (one of the Museum's founding collections). He 'managed brief descriptions of a number of Chinese books, including simple illustrated

primers, and correctly described the *Tian zhu jiao yao* as a work on “Christianity in Chinese”. (21) The inscriptions on the books which record his examination of them (and which appear to be by another hand than his own) help us to date when he was visiting the library: one text, for instance, is marked as 'A book of medicine. Examined by Chetqua. Dec<sup>r</sup> 17. 1770'. (22)

The third Chinese visitor to England I wish to consider was ‘Whang Atong’ (Huang Yadong). Whang was only in his early twenties at the time of his arrival in England in August 1774, and thus much younger and less culturally-knowledgeable than both Loum Kiqua and Chitqua, although it appears he had undertaken study in China before his departure. (23) According to one contemporary account Whang made the voyage after hearing Chitqua’s ‘favourable account of his reception in England’, and motivated partly by curiosity, as well as ‘a desire of improving himself in science, and partly with a view of procuring some advantages in trade’, in which he was already engaged with his elder brother. Whang is described as having ‘a great thirst after knowledge’, ‘he scruples no pains that will further his improvement’. (24)

Whang’s trip to England seems to have been facilitated by John Bradby Blake (1745-1773), with some accounts claiming that he brought Whang back with him. (25) Given that Blake died in Canton on 16 November 1773, this does not seem correct, however, and the exact relationship between the two men in Canton remains somewhat unclear. (26) Blake, in addition to his role as a resident Supercargo for the East India Company in Canton, was also active as a botanist, collecting samples of seeds and plants and arranging for images of them to be made by either one or two Chinese artists working directly with him. (27) Blake himself had studied drawing before leaving for China, so would have had some personal proficiency in that area. (28) As well as sending back seeds and plant material Blake is also said to have collected fossils and ores, sending back specimens such as lead ore ‘from a mine the Chinese had of late discovered in the interior parts of China’, and also ‘white copper’ (‘paaktong’, *baitong*), ‘from the mines in the province of Yunnan’. (29) Experiments with this were made by Samuel More (1724-1798), secretary to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, who had been amongst Blake’s mentors in chemistry. Blake also sent More ‘specimens of the earths, clays, sand, stones, and other materials used in making the true Nankin porcelaine’, which were passed on to Josiah Wedgwood for further



investigation. (30)

After his arrival in England Whang was looked after by John Bradby Blake's father, Captain John Blake (1713-1790). Captain Blake had himself served in the East India Company, and he seems a considerable personality in his own right, worthy of further research. (31) Whang was placed in Sevenoaks School to receive further education, and is known to have become a page in the household of the Third Duke of Dorset, John Frederick Sackville (1745-1799), who had been at school with John Bradby Blake. (32) There is a drawn profile portrait of Whang by George Dance, in which he is shown in Western dress, as well as two portraits by Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), including one datable to 1776 which is held at Knole House, the Sackville family home (**see Figure 3**). In this Knole portrait Reynolds shows Whang seated with a fan, and wearing Chinese dress, which has the look of being a costume donned for the occasion rather than his natural attire. (33) He also appears in the background of a Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) sketch (also held at Knole) for his portrait in oils of the Duke's mistress Giovanna Zannerini (1753-1801, whose stage name was Giovanna Baccelli). The painting itself, now in the Tate collection, does not show Whang.

Despite his youth Whang was able, like Chitqua, to furnish Wedgwood with information about Chinese ceramic manufacture. The two were to meet in London in 1775, with Wedgwood's commonplace book noting 'information from a Chinese man' about 'the Chinese method of manufacturing their China ware'. Wedgwood notes particularly that 'Mr. Whang at Tong says that the blue Nankin China is always painted before it is put in the kiln, which is the reason the blues never wash off, which the red, gold, etc, does – for the gold, red, etc, is added afterwards, and then burnt or baked again'. (34)

Whang also helped while in England with botanical information, inscribing the Chinese character name of a plant (together with a romanization and literal English translation – 'old tigers ear') on a slip of paper which is now attached to one of Mary Delany's botanical watercolour collage images (depicting *Saxifragia Stolonifera*). His visit to Mary Delany (1700-1788) and Margaret Bentinck the Duchess of Portland (1715-1785) at Bulstrode Hall, Buckinghamshire is recorded by Delany in a letter of 11 June 1775 to her niece Mary Port, which includes a representation of Whang's name in Chinese characters (which she has mistakenly copied upside down). She notes that he

came with Captain Blake, 'who has taken him under his protection, and has had him instructed in necessary knowledge'. (35) The visit was perhaps arranged because of an existing record of participation in botanical translation on Whang's part, although since the plant he gave the Chinese name for is also found in Europe it would presumably not have been perceived as an exotic unknown in especial need of identification. (36) Maybe this 'extraordinary visitor' (as Mary Delany called him) was simply one of the many who were drawn to the Duchess's extensive and well-known natural history collection, and any agency in making the visit was likely Captain Blake's rather than Whang's. (37)

Delany's letter, by describing Whang as still under the protection of Captain Blake, also indicates that his duties as a page at Knole were not all-consuming, and that he was able to travel. A letter of 13 February 1775 from the antiquary Richard Gough (who had met Chitqua during his English sojourn) also suggests this to be the case. Writing to the Rev. Michael Tyson, Gough mentions meeting Whang the previous week, and says that he expects a visit from Whang over the summer at his Enfield home. A brief pen portrait of Whang is given – according to Gough 'he is very intelligent, has made surprising progress in our language and figures, writes a free English hand, is very communicative, well-behaved, and affable'. (38)

A note attached to one of John Bradby Blake's images of Chinese plants in volume 3 of the collection of the Oak Spring Garden Foundation also has a Chinese character name for a plant attributed to Whang in the accompanying text (again with an adjacent romanization but this time, unlike in the case of Mary Delany's image, without a translation), suggesting that Whang might have been involved in some way with Blake's botanical activities. This note, however, being an addendum, seems most likely added after the illustrations had arrived in England, perhaps while they were still in Captain Blake's possession, and thus does not help clearly evidence a role for Whang in Blake's information gathering and image production in Canton itself. (39) Other information attributed to Whang which is found in a description of a Chinese herbal also in the Oak Spring Garden Foundation collection sometimes betrays a knowledge of Britain, suggesting that it too dates from a time after he left Canton. (40) One can conjecture that such notes belong to Whang's intellectual exchange with Captain Blake, as part of the latter's attempts to extract as much value as possible from his son's work, left as it was in a state

of incompleteness. Whang's role may perhaps have been more as a courier and posthumous explicator of John Bradby Blake's botanical images and associated papers than as a closely-involved participant in their production. (41)

Whang also (like Chitqua before him) helped identify Chinese books in a library, in his case that of St. John's College Oxford, which he visited in June 1775. (42) He is also credited with helping decipher Chinese writing on another occasion, and with giving information about Chinese medical practices when confronted with a Chinese 'drawing or print representing a naked man, [...] with straight lines drawn to different parts of the body'. (43) Like Chitqua he connected with polite society, dining with Reynolds and the philologist William Jones (1746-1794), whom he (and possibly Chitqua before him) may have helped with his study of the Chinese language. (44) One can only conjecture what conversations Whang may have had with Reynolds about Chinese art, but intriguingly Gough in a 7 May 1774 letter to Tyson writes of two exhibitions he has recently seen 'where Reynolds reigns unrivalled in every thing but colour; which China, by the industry of Capt. Blake's son [that is, John Bradby Blake], is to help him out in, when the chemists have analyzed her crayons, and the Botanical painters have caught that glow of colour which almost compensates for the stiffness of the various specimens of Chinese plants sent over to astonish European artists'. (45) 'Colours' (along with 'paintings on glass' and 'various specimens of wrought gold, silver, enamel and ivory') were amongst items John Bradby Blake is indeed known to have sent back to his father, and Gough here suggests a possible inspiration from both the chemical and botanical work of Blake for British art of the time, and at a moment when Whang was on hand in England as a native informant able to provide further elucidation. (46)

A note pasted onto p. 49 of volume 1 of the four volume Oak Spring Garden Collection of Chinese plant images records that '17 specimens sent by Whang at Tong [...] arrived in 1781 by ship Granby'. This information places Whang back in Canton by that date, while also indicating that he remained a valued informant to his British associates even after his return to China. He was either continuing John Bradby Blake's botanical work on behalf of Blake's contacts or (perhaps more likely) just forwarding on one occasion specimens of Blake's that had been preserved in Canton after his death. There is also a letter from Whang to Jones (by then based in Calcutta) dated 10 December 1784 that

indicates Jones has asked Whang to help with a translation of the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry). Whang declines, explaining that a task of that scale would 'require a great deal of time, perhaps three or four years', and explains that he is unable to undertake it since he is 'so much engaged in business'. (47)

Concerning the lives of Chitqua and Whang following their return to China very little of substance is known, and of Loum Kiqua nothing at all. A letter from Whang to the President of the Royal Society, Joseph Banks (1743-1820), dated 18 June 1796, has been found in the extensive Banks Correspondence in the British Library, in response to one from Banks himself. (48) According to the letter itself it accompanied a set of books on the history of China, as well as tea and two pots containing Peony flowers. Dating from after the Macartney Embassy of 1793, a watershed moment in British/Chinese interaction which brought a wealth of new information about China even if it failed in its diplomatic aims, this is the last we hear of Whang. Interestingly, when the artist William Alexander (1767-1816), a draughtsman on the Macartney Embassy, was in Canton in 1793 he encountered a Chinese portrait modeler that could only have been Chitqua who claimed to 'sa-vy Mis-sa Banks velley well'. (49) The last news of Chitqua comes around the same time as the last news of Whang, with a report in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of December 1797 that he had died in 1796. His death is described as 'having been occasioned by his taking poison', although the exact circumstances are not clarified. (50)

Three figures who emerged into a spotlight of temporary celebrity during their time in England, playing significant roles in the expansion of British knowledge about China, disappeared into almost complete darkness after their return to their home country, where they failed to become part of the historical record, and returned to lives of lesser social prominence. While we are able to track some of their role as cultural ambassadors in the West, it seems their extraordinary overseas experience and connections did not enable them to play a similar role of bridging cultures when back in China, and their own personal understandings of their cross-cultural experience, so unique in its century, will remain forever unknown to us. Without a Canton equivalent to Joseph Banks or William Jones, with their unquenchable thirst for encyclopedic knowledge of distant cultures, or a Chinese equivalent to Josiah Wedgwood attempting to put such knowledge to practical use in industrial production, none of these three visitors to England was to play a role within

their own home cultural environment comparable to that which John Bradby Blake played in British intellectual life through his gathering of information about Chinese botany and other matters while in Canton. (51)

Notes:

1: See David Clarke, 'An encounter with Chinese music in mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century London', *Early Music*, 2010, Vol. XXXVIII, n. 4, 201, p. 543-557.

2: A.B., 'A Chinese Air', *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXVII (January 1757), p. 33. The author cannot currently be identified.

3: On Amiot, Burney, the Macartney Embassy, and the wider issue of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Western knowledge of Chinese music see Clarke, *Early Music*, especially p. 543-547.

4: For further consideration of the lack of overt 'Chineseness' in 'A Chinese Air' see Clarke, *Early Music*, p. 551-2. An analogous lack of 'Chineseness' can be observed in the translations of classical Chinese poetry William Jones offers in his essay 'On the second classical book of the Chinese', in William Jones, *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. II, Calcutta, Manuel Cantopher, 1790, p. 195-204 (see especially p. 199-201).

5: See 'Two Original letters from Mr. Ames to Mr. T. Martin', *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. IX, 1815, p. 604.

6: Ibid, p. 604-5.

7: On Chinese visitors to Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century see Peter J. Kitson, "'The kindness of my friends in England": Chinese visitors to Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and discourses of friendship and estrangement', *European Romantic Review*, 2016, 27:1, p. 55-70, and Linda L. Barnes, *Needles, Herbs, Gods, and Ghosts: China, Healing, and the West to 1848*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, Harvard University Press, 2005, p. 81-84 and p. 142-145.

8: On Chitqua's shop in Canton see Richard Gough, letter of 3 August 1770 to

the Rev. B. Foster, in John Nichols, *Illustrations of the literary history of the eighteenth century*, Vol. V, London, 1828, p. 318. Gough's father had travelled to Canton for trade, giving him a personal connection to things Chinese. For a more extended discussion of Chitqua see David Clarke, *Chinese art and its encounter with the world*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2011, p. 15-84. Chitqua's name is romanized in a variety of ways ('Chetqua' and Che Qua' are also found, for instance). Architect William Chambers (1723-1796), who had himself travelled to Canton in trade as a younger man, refers to him as 'Tan Chet-qua' (which would give him the family name 'Chen' in standard Chinese). We are entitled to a degree of scepticism about this, though, since Chambers only mentions the name when, in a curious act of cultural ventriloquism, he is pretending that his *Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* has been authored by Chitqua (William Chambers, *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening, Second Edition, with additions to which is annexed an explanatory discourse by Tan Chet-qua of Quang-Chew-fu, Gent.*, London, W. Griffin, 1773).

9: The cultural sophistication of the Canton trading world of that time is instanced by a story told by visitor William Hickey (1749-1830). Hickey records attending a dinner hosted by the merchant Pankeequa (*Pan Qiguan*, 1714-1788) for a mixture of Chinese and Western guests on 1 October 1769 which was (in his words) 'dressed and served à la mode Anglaise', with everyone expected to use knives and forks. This was followed by a Chinese-style dinner on the very next night where all were required to use chopsticks. Clearly this pair of evenings was a self-conscious performance of cross-cultural knowledge on the host's part, displaying his cosmopolitan sophistication and presenting alternately one or the other section of his guests with a challenge concerning the mastery of dining implements which they might not have altogether met. After each dinner was a performance in the appropriate cultural style for this cross-cultural audience, with the 'English' one involving a Chinese actor making a comic impersonation of an Englishman. Pankeequa was clearly displaying his understanding of Western culture in order to enhance his personal prestige and thus consolidate his position as one of the leading merchants in the city's international trade, and in a not so showy way the less socially-exalted trader Chitqua would also have been exploiting his cross-cultural capital for personal gain. For sources and further discussion see David Clarke, 'Chitqua's English adventure: an eighteenth century source for the study of China coast pidgin and early Chinese use of

English', *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2005, X: 1, p. 56.

10: Information about Chitqua's lodgings and his store of clay come from Gough's letter of 3 August 1770 and from remarks by James Boswell (see Frank Brady and Frederick A. Pottle, *Boswell in search of a wife, 1766-1769*, Melbourne, London and Toronto: William Heinemann Ltd, 1957, p. 317).

11: An account of the Royal Academy dinner is given in a clipping of unknown source (but possibly from the *Middlesex Journal* or the *Morning Post*), dated 26 April 1770, in the news clippings book held in the Royal Academy of Arts archive.

12: See the catalogue of the exhibition: *The exhibition of the Royal Academy MDCCLXX The second*, p. 22. The exhibition was open from 24 April - 26 May 1770.

13: On Chitqua's portrait of Wedgwood, which no longer survives, see Eliza Meteyard, *The life of Josiah Wedgwood*, Vol II, London, Cornmarket Press, 1970 [a facsimile of the original 1866 volume published in London by Hurst and Blackett in 1866], p. 231-2. Meteyard notes that this was the first portrait made of Wedgwood: 'In the spring or summer of 1770 we first hear of Mr. Wedgwood sitting for his likeness. This was to an ingenious Chinese modeler, who had arrived in this country the previous Autumn, and becoming a sort of fashion, received a large share of the capricious patronage of the time'. Further information on the timing of the portrait is given in Geraldine Mozley, 'Captain Blake's Chinese Boy', *Notes and Queries*, 1936, CLXX (4 January), p. 2-4. On p. 4 Mozley notes a 23 April 1770 letter from Wedgwood to Bentley putting off his appointment to sit for Chitqua since he needs to leave London, but stating 'it shall be the first thing I do when I return to town'. She also notes a 16 February 1771 payment to 'Checqua' of ten guineas (which we know from Gough was his usual fee for a portrait bust rather than a full figure).

14: A letter from Thomas Bentley to Josiah Wedgwood of November 1769 offers evidence that Chitqua's royal audience had already occurred by that date, recording that the royal couple 'were very much pleased with him'. A royal commission to 'take the portraits of the Royal Infantry' is mentioned, but no other evidence confirms whether this actually happened. See Llewellynn Jewitt, *The Wedgwoods: being a life of Josiah Wedgwood*, London: Virtue

Brothers and Co. 1865, p. 209-10.

15: For Gough's and Bentley's descriptions of Chitqua's dress see Clarke, *Chinese art and its encounter with the world*, p. 30, and for accounts of his physical appearance see p. 22-23.

16: For Bentley's letter see Jewitt, *The Wedgwoods: being a life of Josiah Wedgwood*, p. 209-10.

17: Brady and Pottle, *Boswell in search of a wife, 1766-1769*, p. 317

18: For a conjecture that Loum Kiqua may also have met Johnson's friend Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), and helped to inspire his *The Citizen of the World*, a satirical account of British society purporting to come from a Chinese visitor, see Clarke, *Early Music*, p. 549. Goldsmith's Chinese visitor is 'Lien Chi Altangi', and 'Lien Chi' is close in sound to 'Lin Qi', Loum Kiqua's name when pronounced in Mandarin Chinese. Interestingly Horace Walpole (1717-1797) had earlier used the name 'Lien Chi' in his *A letter from Xo Ho: A Chinese philosopher at London, to his friend Lien Chi at Peking* (London, Printed for J.Graham, 1757), which is similarly a comment on British society placed in a Chinese outsider viewpoint. Given the name used and the date, this could also have been partly inspired by Loum Kiqua's visit.

19: The Chinese notion of the 'Four Great Beauties' (*si da mei nu*) is noted, and some information about the lives of certain of the women represented is given. Image number 22, for instance (already identified by the French list of titles as 'Tshao kiun. La dame Tchao', that is, Wang Zhaojun) is correctly noted as having been given by an emperor to a nomad leader (this is offered as an explanation for her non-Chinese dress), although not all details of this and other biographic accounts seem to tie up exactly with the picture given in known histories and legends. It is hard to tell whether this is because accuracy was lost in transcription, perhaps on account of Chitqua's limited ability to explain in English, or whether it reflects the limits of his cultural understanding.

20: Lemuel Dole Nelme, *An essay towards an investigation of the origins and elements of language and letters*, London: printed by T. Spilsbury for S. Leacroft, 1772, p. 19.



21: See Frances Wood, 'Curiosities of the British Library Chinese Collection', in *Chinese Studies*, British Library Occasional Papers 10, ed. Frances Wood, London, The British Library, 1988, p. 99-100.

22: The British Library catalogue number of the medical text examined by Chitqua is 15252.a.5.

23: Whang is described as 'a young man of twenty-two' in a letter dated 18 February 1775 reproduced in 'Hints respecting the Chinese language', *The Bee, or literary weekly intelligencer*, edited by James Anderson, Edinburgh, 1792, Vol. 11, p. 48-52 (the letter is reproduced on p. 50-52). We can surmise Whang's date of birth to be around 1752 or 1753. The same letter gives the date of Whang's arrival in England. Although the original source doesn't identify the letter's author, simply describing it as being written by 'a gentleman who is now no more', some secondary sources suggest that the letter was written by Joshua Reynolds, but without clarifying the reasons for this attribution. We know of Whang's study before he left China from William Jones, who notes that he 'passed his first examinations with credit in his way to literary distinctions, but was afterwards allured from the pursuit of learning by a prospect of success in trade' (see p. 203 of William Jones, 'On the second classical book of the Chinese', in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. II, Calcutta, Manuel Cantopher, 1790, p. 195-204).

24: See 'Hints respecting the Chinese language', p. 50-51. It is interesting to note that Whang's apparent motives for travel to England relate more to his own personal concerns, and don't suggest someone who is merely there to aid with John Bradby Blake's initiatives.

25: The claim that Whang was brought back by Blake is given in Geraldine Mozley, *The Blakes of Rotherhithe*, London and Southampton, The Camelot Press, 1935, p. 23 (apparently relying on information from Wilfred Cripps, *Pedigree of the family of Harrison*, privately printed, 1881, p. 20, quoted on p. 24).

26: The only possibility for Whang to have come back to England with John Bradby Blake would have been if he returned with him from Canton in 1768.

27: An account ('Curious discoveries of Bradby Blake, Esq.') in *The Town and*

*Country Magazine, or universal repository of knowledge, instruction and entertainment*, London, printed for A. Hamilton, Vol. 16, 1784, p. 237-240, which offers one of the most useful contemporary descriptions of Blake's scientific work in Canton, states (p. 239), that Blake 'had engaged to his assistance one of the most ingenious draughtsmen in China, who, under Mr. Blake's directions, followed nature as close as pencil and paint could enable him'. They would work together on a daily basis in the three or four years prior to Blake's death: 'Mr. Blake sat at the same table with him eight or nine hours a day, laying out the natural specimens as they were from time to time gathered, dissecting the parts of fructification, which the Chinese know nothing of, and drawing the outlines for his assistant to colour and finish'. Another account (John Ellis, *Some additional observations on the method of preserving seeds from foreign parts*, London, MDCCLXXII), states (p. 14) that Blake employed two artists. Ellis (c. 1710-1776), was one of the scientists to whom Blake is known to have sent botanical and geological samples ('fine Cochin China rice' and 'lead ore', according to *The Town and Country Magazine*, p. 238 and p. 239 respectively), so he may have been in a position to know about Blake's working methods. A letter from John Bradby Blake to his father (Canton, November/December 1772) mentions only one artist, however, so if a second was employed it might have been after that date.

28: Information on John Bradby Blake's artistic training is given in a useful contemporary biography of him found in *The Monthly Review*, 1780, Vol. 163, London, Printed for R. Griffiths, p. 82: 'To render him complete in drawing, he was put under the best masters'. The same source also notes: 'In botany, which was his favourite study, he obtained no small degree of skill before he went abroad'.

29: See 'Curious discoveries of Bradby Blake, Esq.', in *The Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 16, 1784, p. 239.

30: See 'Curious discoveries of Bradby Blake, Esq.', in *The Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 16, 1784, p. 240. This source indicates that Wedgwood was seeking further information from Blake concerning the locations in which the samples were found at the time of the latter's death. On Blake and Wedgwood see also Meteyard, *The life of Josiah Wedgwood*, Vol II, p. 452 (where the two are described as friends - Blake's middle name is given erroneously here as 'Bradley'). A Wedgwood white jasper medallion of John Bradby Blake

(modelled by Joachim Smith, c. 1737-1814) is reproduced as plate LV (b) in Aubrey J. Toppin, 'Chitqua, the Chinese modeler, and Wang-Y-Tong, the "Chinese boy"', *Transactions, English Ceramic Circle*, 1942, p. 149-152. Mozley (see 'Captain Blake's Chinese Boy', *Notes and Queries*, 1936, 4 January, p. 2) claims the medallion was modelled in 1774, making it a posthumous portrait. She also notes references to John Bradby Blake's samples in Wedgwood's 'experiment book'. Information that More had been one of Blake's chemistry teachers, along with a Mr. Read and a Henry Baker, is given in *The Monthly Review*, 1780, p. 82. On More see Thomas Mortimer, 'Memoirs of Mr. Samuel More', in *The European Magazine and London Review*, December 1799, p. 363-365.

31: Captain John Blake had been involved with the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (more commonly known just as the Royal Society of Arts), joining in 1758 and chairing its Committee of Colonies and Trade only a year later. In 1761 he also accepted chairmanship of its Committee on Manufactures. He was involved with efforts to encourage turbot fishing, and personally developed and implemented (with support from the RSA) an elaborate scheme to provide Londoners with fish by overland delivery. See Walter M. Stern, 'Fish supplies for London in the 1760s: an experiment in overland transport', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, May 1970, p. 360-365 and June 1970, p. 430-435, (especially May 1970, p. 361-362). I am grateful to Jordan Goodman and Peter Crane for bringing this article to my notice. John Bradby Blake's connection to Samuel More might be presumed to have been established through his father's relationship to the RSA.

32: Secondary sources which have collated information about Whang's stay in England include Mozley, *The Blakes of Rotherhithe*, p. 23-27; Toppin, 'Chitqua, the Chinese modeler, and Wang-Y-Tong, the "Chinese boy"', p. 149-152 (especially p. 151-152); Emile de Bruijn, 'An 18<sup>th</sup>-century ornamental adventurer: the enigmatic and ambiguous portrait of Huang Ya Dong at Knoke', *National Trust Arts/ Buildings/Collections Bulletin*, Summer Issue, July 2011, p. 10-11, now available online at [http://www.academia.edu/9404479/An\\_18th-Century\\_Ornamental\\_Adventurer\\_the\\_Enigmatic\\_and\\_Ambiguous\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Huang\\_Ya\\_Dong\\_at\\_Knoke](http://www.academia.edu/9404479/An_18th-Century_Ornamental_Adventurer_the_Enigmatic_and_Ambiguous_Portrait_of_Huang_Ya_Dong_at_Knoke) (accessed 5 February 2017); and Kitson, *European Romantic Review*, p. 61-63. That someone of mature age and of exotic background should be

placed in school by a sponsor is not unusual – Samuel Johnson placed his manservant Francis Barber, born a slave in Jamaica, in a school at Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire (see James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, Vol. 2, Oxford, Talboys and Wheeler and London, William Pickering, 1826, p. 52).

33: In Algernon Graves and William Vine Cronin, *A history of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, London, Henry Graves and Co., 1899, Vol. III, p. 1028-9, three portraits of Chinese subjects by Reynolds are listed, with the Knoke portrait listed as bought by the Duke of Dorset in August 1776 for £73.10s - the Duke's own records apparently record the price as £52. 10s: see Stephanie Barczewski, 'Is Britishness always British? Country houses, travel, and the cosmopolitan identity of the British elite in the Eighteenth century', in Martin Farr and Xavier Guégan (eds.), *The British abroad since the Eighteenth century*, Volume 1, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 52. A second portrait may have been in the possession of Captain John Blake, possibly gifted to him by the Duke. Mozley ('Captain Blake's Chinese Boy', *Notes and Queries*, 1936, 4 January, p. 3) claims that a 'family tradition' supports this idea of presentation by the Duke, and the work can be documented as having been in the possession of Blake's heirs. The third portrait, described as 'Wang-Y-Tong or Tanchequa', but definitely of Whang rather than Chitqua, is no longer attributed to Reynolds. See discussion in Mozley, *The Blakes of Rotherhithe*, p. 25-27. Thanks to Emile de Bruijn and his colleagues at the National Trust for help in securing an image of the Knoke Reynolds portrait.

34: Wedgwood is here quoted from Mozley, 'Captain Blake's Chinese Boy', *Notes and Queries*, 1936, 4 January, p. 4.

35: *The autobiography and correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, edited by Lady Llanover, Second series, Vol. II, London, Richard Bentley, 1862, p. 133-4 (quoted from p. 134). Although Delany's transcription of Whang's name is inverted the characters are still identifiable and are the only known source from which his Chinese name can be verified. Amongst other variations in the romanization of his name are 'Wang-Y-Tong' and 'Whang at Tong' – I have chosen to favor the one he is recorded as using himself. My thanks go to Alicia Weisberg-Roberts for advice concerning Mary Delany.

36: A note on the verso of the image does describe it as 'A Chinese Plant',

however.

37: Since Delany refers in her account of the visit to 'a Capt. Blake', rather than simply 'Captain Blake', a lack of pre-existing social acquaintance is suggested. One can perhaps imagine Joseph Banks making the introduction between Captain Blake and the Duchess of Portland.

38: *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. VIII, London, John Nichols, 1816, p. 670. Wedgwood had met Whang at Captain Blake's London home (which was in Parliament Street, Westminster), rather than at Knole, again suggesting Blake as his primary guardian, and his duties at the Duke of Dorset's residence as not too taxing. Mozley ('Captain Blake's Chinese Boy', *Notes and Queries*, 1936, 4 January, p. 4) describes Captain Blake's house as 'filled with treasures from the East, including the "China paintings, China ware, Lacquer ware and all Chinese curiosities" that John Bradby Blake either sent to Europe or bequeathed to his "honoured ffather" in his will proved in 1774'.

39: 'Curious discoveries of Bradby Blake, Esq.', in *The Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 16, 1784, p. 239 states that John Bradby Blake's drawings were 'in the possession of his father', noting that they 'have been shown to many of the curious, particularly to that ingenious and learned botanist Dr. Solander [Daniel Solander, 1733-1782, from 1773 to 1782 Keeper of the Natural History Department of the British Museum], who has declared them to be exquisite performances, and has classed and arranged the plants they represent according to the great Linnaeus's system, from their parts of fructification so accurately were these parts described in the drawings'. Although seeds were sent by John Bradby Blake directly to well-known botanists such as Ellis and Alexander Garden (1730-1791) - p. 238 notes Garden receiving seeds of two sorts of Chinese indigo in 1773 - his father is also noted (p. 238) as distributing seeds to Kew Gardens, etc. Together with his introduction of Whang to various key figures it seems clear he played a very significant role in furthering his son's work.

40: That the comments by Whang are retrospective ones explicating John Bradby Blake's work to third parties is suggested by a note in the description of the Chinese herbal which says they are his 'remarks on looking over the five volumes of China Silk bound book particularly those pages in which Mr. Blake had made some remarks'. That they are made in Britain is suggested by a

reference to the Duke of Dorset, whose page Whang had been.

41: A letter from John Bradby Blake to his father (Canton, November/December 1772) makes no mention of Whang by name as a collaborator in his project, only singling out for mention a Chinese artist who worked with him on a daily basis. This could be taken as suggesting that Whang's role in his botanical project was not a major one, at least up to the point when that letter was written.

42: See T.H. Barrett, *A singular listlessness: a short history of Chinese books and British scholars*, London, Wellsweep Press, 1989, p. 46 (note 1). Shen Fuzong had similarly been invited to catalogue Chinese books of the Bodleian Library.

43: See 'Hints respecting the Chinese language', *The Bee* 1792, Vol. 11, p.51-52. The characters Whang translated were written on an ink stick.

44: Whang recalls dining with Jones, Reynolds and Captain Blake in a letter to Jones from Canton of 10 December 1784, where he also writes 'I shall always remember the kindness of my friends in England' (see Jones, 'On the second classical book of the Chinese', in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. II, 1790, p. 204, where the letter is transcribed). On Jones and Chitqua see the discussion in Clarke, *Chinese art and its encounter with the world*, p. 40 and p. 222, note 63. Jones was acquainted with Askew, whose portrait was modelled by Chitqua.

45: See *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. VIII, London, John Nichols, 1816, p. 611. Gough adds: 'these are modern matters'. Contemporaries frequently criticized Reynolds concerning his use of colour, which was known in his lifetime to lack permanency. See for instance M. Kirby Talley, Jr., "All Good Pictures Crack": Sir Joshua Reynolds's practice and studio', in Nicholas Penny (ed.), *Reynolds*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1986, p. 55-70, especially p. 55. Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann in 1775 after attending the opening of the Royal Academy of Arts exhibition that 'Sir Joshua Reynolds is a great painter; but unfortunately, his colours seldom stand longer than crayons' (see 'Letters of Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann (concluding series). Vol. i. ii' in *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 20, September 1843, p. 245).

46: See 'Curious discoveries of Bradby Blake, Esq.', in *The Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 16, 1784, p. 240.

47: See Jones, 'On the second classical book of the Chinese', in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. II, 1790, p. 204. Jones explains (p. 203) that Whang has sent him copies of two Chinese classics, 'the three hundred odes in the original together with the Lu'nyu [*Junyu*, the Analects of Confucius]". Whang's own letter (p. 204) refers to the volumes enclosed with his letter as 'the Chinese book, Shi King [*Shijing*, the Classic of Poetry], that contains three hundred poems with remarks thereon, and the works of Con-fu-tsu, and his grandson, the Tao Ho'. Jones notes that his Canton contact, Mr. Cox, informs him that 'none of the Chinese, to whom he has access, possess leisure and perseverance enough' for the task of translating the classics, but he claims Cox expresses the hope that 'with the assistance of Whang Atong', he will be able 'to send me next season some of the poems translated into English'. He also outlines a plan to bring Whang 'and some of his countrymen' to India at some point in the future, because of the considerable advantage to the publick, as well as to letters' which 'might be reaped from the knowledge and ingenuity of such emigrants'.

48: On Whang's letter to Banks see Ching Maybo, 'The story of "Whang Tong": traces of ordinary Chinese in 18<sup>th</sup> century England' (in Chinese with an English abstract), *Shi lin [Historic review]*, 2003, no. 2, p. 106-124 (especially p. 107, which offers the text of the letter and gives its location as Add. MS. 8099.209, Banks Correspondence, British Library). Perhaps Whang first met Banks on a visit he is reported to have made to the Royal Society on 12 January 1775 (see Kitson, *European Romantic Review*, p. 62). This would have been before Banks became president of that institution in 1778 (he had been a member since 1766). One can certainly imagine Banks asking Whang questions about Chinese botany when they met. On the Jesuits based in Peking as an important source on China for the Royal Society see Han Qi, 'Sino-British Scientific Relations through Jesuits in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in Michel Cartier (ed.), *La Chine entre amour et haine: Actes du VIIIe colloque international de sinologie (Chantilly, 1995)*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1998, p. 43-59.

49: See Kitson, *European Romantic Review*, p. 60. Banks had only returned from his Australian voyage with James Cook (1728-1779) on 12 July 1771,

well into the time of Chitqua's London stay, and he was to leave again in July 1772 for a voyage that took him to Iceland. The window of opportunity for the two to have met in London is therefore rather small.

50: See *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXVII, Part II, No. 6, December 1797, p. 1072.

51: 'Give us time [...] for our investigations, and we will transfer to Europe all the sciences, arts and literature of Asia', Jones writes in 'The design of a treatise of the plants of India', Dissertation XIV in William Jones et al., *Dissertations and miscellaneous pieces relating to the history and antiquities, the arts, sciences, and literature of Asia*, Vol. 1, London, printed for G. Nicol, 1792, p. 391, using language which almost foreshadows that of imperialist physical appropriation. In addition to the encyclopedic nature of William Jones's or Joseph Banks's personal intellectual projects one can also talk of a systemic mapping paradigm inherent in botanical understanding after Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), which John Bradby Blake and his correspondents would have bought into (Blake intended publishing a systematic illustrated study of Chinese plants). Arguably natural history knowledge after Linnaeus has an uncanny parallel to the project of imperialism, both being global projects which had to deal systemically with difference in the way that chemistry or physics do not, on account of their address to phenomena which are not quite so unevenly geographically distributed. Racial ideology, which came to play such a significant role in the imperialist project, is linked to the notion of classification developed by Linnaeus. The link between Asian trade specifically and Linnaeus's development as a botanist can be documented by his time as the curator of the herbarium of George Clifford III (1685-1760), a director of the Dutch East India Company. While all scientific knowledge, including that which learnt from other parts of the globe, helped with technological advancement, one can certainly see in a direct way how John Bradby Blake's gathering of Asian botanical information helped British imperial aims. The 'fine Cochin China rice' he sent to John Ellis had already by 1784 been sent on to 'Henry Ellis, Esq.' in Jamaica (presumably a relative), where it is reported as having 'already been propagated' in the account given in *The Town and Country Magazine*, Vol. 16, p. 238.