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A Review of Research on Macau Chinese Workers Going Abroad

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Abstract

This article summarizes the historical research on the Chinese labor migration from Macao. The article explores the background, types, motives and impacts of Macau's Chinese labor migration to the sea, and points out that the migration of Macau's Chinese laborers is not only an important part of Macau's modern history, but also an important topic in the study of the history of international migration and the history of overseas Chinese. The article points out that current research is deficient in terms of the motives for labor migration, relevant regulations of the Portuguese authorities, economic relations, mortality rates and causes, the Hong Kong factor, and the attention paid to laborers by the Portuguese Consulate in the Americas. To address these issues, the article suggests adopting a thematic research approach, enhancing problem awareness, and expanding the selection of historical materials in order to deepen the understanding of the history of Chinese labor migration from Macao.

Keywords: Chinese labor migration, current research, Macau's modern history

Introduction

With the onset of globalization, the movement of people between countries has taken on various forms and scales. European colonizers, through the triangular trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, transported large numbers of African slaves to the Americas for plantation labor. In the early 19th century, after the abolition of this heinous human trafficking, another form of contracted labor trafficking emerged in some Asian ports, continuing to supply labor for European overseas colonies.

Following the Opium Wars (1839-1842), with the gradual formation of the treaty port system, ports along the southeast coast of China, such as Xiamen, Shantou, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, and Macau, successively participated in the trafficking of Chinese laborers abroad, leading to a peak in the mid-to-late 19th century. The port of Macau, with its unique conditions, actively participated in this period of Chinese labor migration and played a special role.

1. Basis for the Topic

1.1 Research Purpose and Significance

The migration of Chinese laborers constituted an important part of Macau's maritime shipping and trade activities in the 19th century, once becoming the main driving force behind the development of Macau's ocean shipping and playing a significant role in its maritime trade. Therefore, whether from the perspective of Macau's history itself or from the fields of Sino-foreign relations, international migration history, and overseas Chinese history, the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau is a historical topic worthy of specialized research.

In 1851, the first ship transporting Chinese laborers departed from Macau to Peru, marking the beginning of Macau's involvement in the migration of Chinese laborers. In March 1874, following the decision of the Portuguese government, Macau's involvement in this trade ceased. According to scholars, between 1851 and 1874, a total of 210,054 Chinese laborers were transported via Macau, including 122,454 to Cuba, 81,552 to Peru, 3,833 to Southeast Asia, 760 to British Guinea, 685 to Costa Rica, 500 to Suriname, and 240 to Australia.¹ The migration of Chinese laborers from Macau is not only an important issue in Macau's modern history but also a significant part of the broader history of Chinese labor migration.

In the 19th century, Chinese laborers going abroad were divided into two types: contracted laborers (indentured) and credit-ticket laborers (free). Contracted laborers had to serve according to a written agreement with a fixed term and clear conditions, while credit-ticket laborers agreed (usually verbally) to work for the person who provided their travel expenses until the debt was paid off. Macau primarily used the contracted labor system, while Hong Kong initially exported contracted laborers but later developed a system of credit-ticket laborers. This paper focuses on the migration of contracted laborers from Macau, particularly to Cuba and Peru.

In Western historical literature, this phenomenon is often referred to as the "Coolie Trade" or even the "Slave Trade". In Guangdong and Macau, it is commonly known as "selling piglets" (Mai Zhuzai). Chinese historical documents generally refer to it as "Chinese laborers going abroad". This paper will generally use the term "Chinese laborers going abroad", but when quoting historical documents or others' discussions, the original terms will be retained to respect the sources.

Regarding the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau, previous scholars have collected some historical materials and published some papers. However, many aspects of this process remain unclear or are only broadly described, requiring further in-depth research. This paper does not aim to continue the general discussion of the process but to conduct specialized research, examining specific aspects of the migration process from Macau, identifying several issues for more in-depth exploration. In international migration theory, the "push-pull" model is used to explain migration motivations. While this model is valid at a high level, specific research cases require more detailed analysis. This paper will use this model to analyze and explain the motivations behind the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, considering

the specific situations in mainland China, Macau, Cuba, and Peru. The Macau Portuguese government issued several decrees and regulations on the migration of Chinese laborers, establishing a set of management rules. Past Portuguese scholars have cited some of these from a defensive standpoint. This paper will go beyond the limitations of "British condemnation" and "Portuguese defense", comprehensively presenting these regulations and evaluating their implementation. The causes and rates of mortality among Chinese laborers during their journey are unavoidable issues, with various accounts in previous works. This paper will extensively use original documents, select more research cases, and provide new statistics and explanations on this issue. Some works claim that the migration of Chinese laborers was an important source of tax revenue for the Macau Portuguese authorities but do not reveal how the government profited or the exact amount. This paper will use specific documents from Macau to discuss the economic relationship between the Macau Portuguese authorities and the migration of Chinese laborers and its fiscal contribution. Some scholars emphasize the "Hong Kong factor" in the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, suggesting that the rise, development, and eventual abolition of the trade were influenced by Hong Kong. This paper will examine these arguments and provide its own interpretation. The management of Chinese laborers after they left Macau is an indispensable topic in the study of their migration history. This paper will dedicate a chapter to discussing the involvement of Portuguese consulates in Cuba and Peru in the migration process, their concern for the laborers' conditions, and the measures taken to protect their interests, providing a complete picture of the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau.

In summary, this paper is a specialized study on the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau, examining different cross-sections of the topic to achieve significant progress in both scope and depth.

This research has certain academic significance. First, studying the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau enriches the study of Macau's modern history. The migration of Chinese laborers was an important part of Macau's maritime shipping and trade history in the 19th century, constituting the main driving force of Macau's maritime activities for a quarter of a century. Conducting specialized research on this topic and forming a monograph will greatly enrich the overall historical research on Macau and lay a solid foundation for future multi-volume general histories of Macau. Second, from a broader perspective, studying the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau can deepen the study of international labor migration history. In the early stages of global economic integration and globalization that began with the Age of Exploration, the global division and movement of labor was an important historical aspect, and the port of Macau participated in this process with its unique characteristics. In-depth research on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau can enhance the study of global labor migration in the early stages of globalization, thereby advancing the study of early globalization. Third, studying the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau can promote research on international migration theory. Globally, the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau was part of the overall history of international migration in the 19th century. Conducting specialized research on this topic can advance the in-depth study of international migration history. The migration of Chinese laborers from Macau presents unique forms and characteristics; at the same

¹ Arnold Joseph Meagher, *The Introduction of Chinese Laborers to Latin America – The Coolie Trade, 1847-1874*, University of California, Davis, Dissertation of Ph. D., 1975, p. 130A.

time, it can enrich the “push-pull” model of international migration theory with specific historical data from Macau. Fourth, the history of Chinese laborers going abroad from Macau constitutes an important part of the history of overseas Chinese in the Americas, representing its initial development stage. In-depth research on this issue will provide unique cases for the study of overseas Chinese in Cuba and Peru, and the related research results will become important chapters in the history of overseas Chinese in the Americas, thereby promoting the in-depth study of the history of overseas Chinese in Cuba and Peru.

2. Current Status and Trends in Domestic and Foreign Research

2.1. China's overseas research

Scholars from outside China's research on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau first appeared in general historical works. Portuguese scholar Montalto de Jesus (1863-1927), in *Historic Macao*, dedicated a chapter to discussing the issues related to the coolie trade (migration of Chinese laborers) in Macau. He first listed the measures taken by the Macau Portuguese government to curb the abuses in the migration of Chinese laborers, pointing out that the main source of these abuses was the lawlessness of human traffickers in mainland China. He acknowledged that the inherent violence in the coolie trade led to a series of maritime disasters, suggested that Hong Kong deliberately harmed Macau in the coolie trade, and noted that Hong Kong's coolie trade was also rife with abuses.² De Jesus's research had a defensive intent for Portugal and provided few details on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau.

Foreign scholars' specialized research began with studies on Chinese laborers in the Americas. In 1951, Walt Stewart published *Chinese Bondage in Peru*. The second chapter of this book specifically discusses the coolie trade in Macau, and other chapters also mention the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau. The book uses local archives and newspaper materials in Peru to study the process of Chinese laborers going abroad and their lives in Peru, paving the way for research on this topic.³ In 1959, Mario Duarte published *Eça de Queiroz, Consul, al Servicio de la Patria y de la Humanidad*, using Portuguese and Spanish documents to study the efforts of the Portuguese consul in Havana, Queiroz, to improve the treatment of Chinese laborers, with some content related to the coolie trade in Macau.⁴

In 1971, Duvon Clough Corbitt published *A Study of the Chinese in Cuba 1847-1947*. This book provides an overall narrative of the history of Chinese laborers in Cuba, not specifically focusing on Macau, such as the ships transporting Chinese laborers and the mortality rates on these ships. However, the book does disclose some information on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, including a description of the operation of a Chinese laborer camp in Macau, new regulations on the management of Chinese laborers issued by the Macau Portuguese authorities in

1856 and 1860, and a few cases of coolie ships arriving in Cuba from Macau.⁵

In 1975, Arnold Joseph Meagher wrote his doctoral dissertation, *Introduction of Chinese Laborers to America: The "Coolie Trade", 1847-1874*. The dissertation extensively uses official archives and newspaper materials to explore the history of Chinese laborers being brought to Cuba, Peru, and the British West Indies. When discussing the ports exporting Chinese laborers, there is a section on Macau, and the transportation of Chinese laborers often mentions Macau. The book also discusses the situation of Chinese laborers in these regions, especially those from Macau. The numerous statistical tables in the book (such as “Statistics on the Number of Chinese Laborers Going Abroad from Macau, 1851-1874”, “Statistics on the Number of Chinese Laborers Imported to Cuba, 1847-1874”, and “Statistics on the Number of Chinese Laborers Going to Peru, 1860-1874”) are of great reference value for this paper.⁶

In 1977, Humberto Rodriguez Pastor published *Los Trabajadores Chinos en Peru*. The book includes a “Chronology of Chinese Laborers in Peru”, with some content related to the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, such as the death toll on a coolie ship from Macau in 1856, Macau's temporary ban on transporting Chinese laborers to Cuba, the death toll on a French ship arriving from Macau in 1871, the death statistics of two ships arriving from Macau in 1872, the Macau Governor's decision to stop the coolie trade in March 1874, and the last coolie ship arriving in Peru from Macau in July 1874.⁷

Portuguese scholars have made noteworthy contributions to this topic. In 1976, Macau Portuguese scholar Father Manuel Teixeira published a pamphlet, *O Comercio de Escravos em Macau / The so Called Portuguese Slave Trade in Macao*, a compilation of two previously published articles. The author, aiming to clear Portugal's name in the slave trade, collected a number of Portuguese archives, disclosing some details and data on the coolie trade in Macau, such as several letters between the Portuguese consul in Peru, Eça de Queiroz, and the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Corvo. The author particularly emphasizes the special regulations implemented by the Macau Portuguese authorities, affirming their active stance in curbing the abuses of the slave trade, thereby defending Portugal against some accusations.⁸

In 1994, another Portuguese scholar, Beatriz Basto da Silva, published *Emigração de Cules--Dossier Macau, 1851-1894*. The book outlines the basic process of Macau's involvement in the coolie trade, affirming Macau's role as a transit center for coolies, and includes several related historical documents in the appendix, such as certificates from the Portuguese consulates in Peru and Havana, documents from the Macau Portuguese authorities on the migration of Chinese laborers, special reports on the migration of

⁵ Duvon Clough Corbitt, *A Study of the Chinese in Cuba 1847-1947*, Wilmore: 1971.

⁶ Arnold Joseph Meagher, *Introduction of Chinese Laborers to America: The "Coolie Trade", 1847-1874*, University of California, Davis, Dissertation of Ph. D., 1975.

⁷ Humberto Rodriguez Pastor, *Los Trabajadorio Chinos en Peru*, Lima: 1977.

⁸ Pe. Manuel Teixeira, *O Comercio de Escravos em Macau / The so Called Portuguese Slave Trade in Macao*, Macau: Imprensa Nacional, 1976.

² C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao: International Traits in China Old and New*, Macao: Second Edition, Salesian Printing Press and Tipografia Mercantil, 1926.

³ Walt Stewart, *The Chinese Bondage in Peru (A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1849-1874)*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1951.

⁴ Mario Duarte, *Eça de Queiroz, Consul, al Servicio de la Patria y de la Humanidad*, Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1959.

Chinese laborers published in the *Macau Government Gazette*, civil case files from Macau courts, and excerpts from the *1874 Report and Documents on the Abolition of the Coolie Trade* published in Lisbon.

Father Teixeira and Basto da Silva's works are currently the only Western scholarly works specifically on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, and they are instructive in using archives for research. However, these works are not comprehensive studies of the migration process, and many important issues still need further clarification and elaboration.

In 2010, Benjamin Nicolas Narvaez wrote his doctoral dissertation, *Chinese Coolie in Cuba and Peru: Race, Labor, and Immigration, 1839-1886*. The dissertation, after outlining the basic historical facts of the migration of Chinese laborers to Cuba and Peru, focuses on various issues related to Chinese laborers in these two countries, including the policies on using Chinese laborers, the new labor relations after their introduction, the legal status of Chinese laborers, and their subsequent fate. These contents are of great reference value for the writing of Chapter 6 of this paper.⁹

2.2 China Domestic Research Status

As early as 1936, Mr. Li Changfu published *History of Chinese Colonization*, which mentions some historical facts about the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau. Chapter 5 of the book includes a section on “The Trafficking of Piglets and the Issue of Contracted Laborers”, discussing the rise of Chinese laborers going abroad due to the development of cotton and sugar production in the Americas, the number of Chinese laborers transported to Havana and Peru from Macau in 1864 and 1865, the mortality rates on piglet ships from China to the Americas between 1850 and 1856, the riots on piglet ships between 1850 and 1872, and the content of 85 petitions submitted by Chinese laborers, pointing out the proportion of abducted and deceased individuals.¹⁰ The author was one of the earliest Chinese scholars to pay attention to the issue of Chinese laborers going abroad. However, as a general study, it provides limited information on Macau.

In 1963, Mr. Chen Zexian published “The Contracted Labor System Prevalent in the 19th Century”, studying the origin and evolution of the contracted labor system, the general process and scope of Chinese laborers going abroad, the competition and disputes among countries over contracted laborers, and particularly exposing the cruelty of the contracted labor system.¹¹ As these two works are general discussions, they only touch on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau in a few places, and the related research is not in-depth or systematic.

Since the 1980s, Chinese scholars have made progress in researching this topic. In 1980, Mr. Peng Jiali published “Chinese Laborers Developing Western Colonies in the 19th Century”. The article generally discusses the two factors behind the rise of the coolie trade from the perspective of domestic feudal oppression

and Western colonial exploitation, points out the difference between the trafficking of piglets and the coolie trade, discloses some data on the coolie trade in Macau, and notes the relationship between Anglo-Portuguese competition and the cessation of the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau.¹²

The following year, Mr. Peng Jiali published “The Plunder of Chinese Laborers by Western Invaders in the 19th Century”, generally discussing the factors behind the rise of the coolie trade in China, mentioning the number of coolies transported from Macau to Cuba between 1847 and 1875, and the number of coolie ships and their loads departing from Macau to Cuba in 1765 and 1866, as well as the number of piglet houses in Macau in certain years. The article also discloses data on the sales and transportation profits of coolies sent to Cuba, although not specifically from ships departing Macau, which is still of reference value for studying the migration of coolies from Macau. Particularly, the article compiles a table of mortality rates on some coolie ships between 1847 and 1873, which is of great value for studying mortality rates in the coolie trade.¹³

In 1988, Mr. Wu Fengbin published *History of Contracted Chinese Laborers*, with the first section of Chapter 4 dedicated to the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau, discussing the number of piglet houses in Macau in certain years, the methods of coolie brokers, the tricks of human traffickers, the sources of coolies, some coolies' complaints about their treatment, the abuse in piglet houses, the number of contracted laborers exported between 1856 and 1873, some criminal cases on coolie ships, and the background of the cessation of the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau. Later chapters on Cuba and Peru also touch on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau. Chapter 10 includes the number of contracted laborers going to Cuba between 1847 and 1874 (including those from Macau), the number of coolie ships and their loads departing from Macau to Cuba between 1847 and 1874, the mortality rates on several coolie ships, the resistance struggles of Chinese laborers during their journey, the sale prices of contracted laborers in Cuba, and the labor and living conditions of coolies in Cuba. Chapter 11 includes the format of contracts signed in Macau for going to Peru, the equipment and voyage duration of Peruvian coolie ships, the mortality rates on several coolie ships, the sale methods and prices of Chinese laborers in Peru, and their labor and treatment in Peru.¹⁴ This book is the most comprehensive early research by Chinese scholars on the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau and is of great reference value for this topic. However, as part of a general study, it does not use Portuguese or Macau local archives and does not conduct in-depth specialized research on the history of the migration of Chinese laborers from Macau.

Since the 1990s, several papers have emerged in the Chinese academic community that specifically study the overseas Chinese workers from Macau. Mr. Xu Yipu's “A Review of the Piglet Houses in Macau in the Late Qing Dynasty” uses a number of Chinese archives from the Qing Palace to list the information of 15

⁹ Benjamin Nicolas Narvaez, *Chinese Coolie in Cuba and Peru: Race, Labor, and Immigration, 1839-1886*, Dissertation of Ph.D., The University of Texas, 2010.

¹⁰ Li Changfu, *History of Chinese Colonization*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936; Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, reprinted in 1976.

¹¹ Chen Zexian, “The Contract Labor System Prevalent among Chinese in the Nineteenth Century”, *Historical Research*, No. 1, 1963.

¹² Peng Jiali, “Chinese Workers Developing Western Colonies in the 19th Century”, *World History*, No. 1, 1980.

¹³ Peng Jiali, “The Plunder of Chinese Laborers by Western Invaders in the 19th Century”, in Chen Hansheng, ed., *Collection of Historical Materials on Chinese Laborers Going Abroad*, Volume 4, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981.

¹⁴ Wu Fengbin, *History of Contracted Chinese Workers*, Nanchang: Jiangxi People's Publishing House, 1988.

piglet houses and conducts analysis and evaluation.¹⁵ Mr. Deng Kaisong's "Macau Coolie Trade and Its Impact on the World Economy" describes several links of Macau's coolie trade and analyzes the impact of Macau's coolie trade on the world economy.¹⁶ Mr. Kang Dashou's "Coolie Trade in Modern Macau" involves the rise of Macau's coolie trade, the main sources of coolies, the abuse of coolies during operations, and the policies of the Chinese government.¹⁷ Mr. Jin Guoping and Mr. Wu Zhiliang's "The Cuban Chinese Workers and the Coolie Trade in Macao" points out the acquiescence and support of the Portuguese Macao government to the coolie trade, comments on the effects of the relevant laws and regulations of the Portuguese Macao authorities, discusses the concern of the Portuguese Consul in Havana, Esa, for the situation of the Cuban Chinese and his measures, points out Esa's criticism of the Spanish immigration system, believes that Britain's condemnation of Portugal is unfair, points out that the economic relationship between the Portuguese Macao authorities and the coolie trade is to collect handling fees, and lists the reasons and purposes that led Portugal to stop the coolie trade in Macao.¹⁸ Compared with previous articles, this article has some breakthroughs (such as noting the Portuguese Embassy's concern for the Chinese in America, the interest relationship between the Portuguese Macao authorities and the coolie trade, etc.), which has a certain inspiration for the writing of this article.

In 2006, a master's thesis specifically studying the overseas Chinese workers from Macau appeared, namely, "Modern Macau and the Coolie Trade" by Ms. Wang Shanshan. First, regarding the reasons for the rise of the coolie trade in Macau, the author elaborated on three aspects: domestic factors, international factors and Macau factors, discussing the domestic overpopulation, insufficient arable land, natural disasters and the impact of war, the international demand for cheap labor in the development of colonies by the West and the high profits of human trafficking, and the Macau side of the decline of Macau's re-export trade after the Opium War. Regarding the development of the coolie trade in Macau, the author discusses the three major sources of coolies, lists the number of piglet houses in Macau in several years, quotes the description of the inspection and contract signing of Chinese workers in Macau before boarding the ship, quotes the number of Chinese workers shipped from Macau to Cuba and Peru from 1856 to 1873, quotes the data of the profit of Chinese workers sold in Cuba, quotes the "Example Table of Death Rate of Coolie Ships" compiled by predecessors, lists the example of women being removed from the Macau port, mentions the cessation of the coolie trade in Macau, and analyzes the reasons for the decline of the coolie trade in Macau from three aspects: the anti-Chinese trend, China's policies and Britain's suppression.¹⁹ This article is a special study on the coolie trade in Macau (Chinese workers going

abroad), and compared with previous articles, it has made breakthroughs in framework and details. However, there are still some shortcomings in the issues discussed; the historical materials cited are still relatively single, and the historical materials preserved in Macau itself are not used at all.

In 2016, Mr. Mo Shixiang published "The Coolie Trade in Hong Kong and Macao and the Anglo-Portuguese Dispute", which described the development of coolie trade in Hong Kong and Macao respectively, and then analyzed the disputes between Britain and Portugal on several issues of coolie trade, and believed that the pressure from Britain was an important factor that prompted the Portuguese to stop the coolie trade in Macao.²⁰

In 2018, Mr. Mo Shixiang published "A Study on the Economic and Trade Relations between Macao and Hong Kong in Modern Times - Focusing on the Economic Transformation of Macao", in which the third chapter deals with the coolie trade in Macao Port. Compared with other works, the main features of this book include the following aspects. First, it emphasizes the role of Guangzhou and Hong Kong in the prosperity of coolies in Macao. As a result of Hong Kong's implementation of the "Chinese Passenger Act" (1855), most of the coolies who originally boarded ships from Hong Kong to areas outside the British colonies were diverted to Macao, Guangzhou and Huangpu Port. After the British and French forces withdrew from Guangzhou in 1861, Macau's coolie trade became more prosperous because similar trades in Hong Kong and Guangzhou were successively restricted. Second, the article recounted the number of Chinese farmers who went abroad through Macao from 1856 to 1873, and inferred that the number of people exported from Macao was greater than that from Hong Kong. Third, the article quoted some data to calculate the annual income of the Portuguese Macao authorities from the overseas Chinese workers, and believed that during the heyday of the coolie trade, this income accounted for 30% to 40% of the Portuguese Macao fiscal revenue, and constituted the second largest fiscal income after gambling. Fourth, the article affirmed the serious impact of the cessation of the coolie trade on the Portuguese Macao authorities, and agreed that the Portuguese Macao authorities lost 200,000 yuan in annual income in the two fiscal years of 1873-1874 and 1874-1875. Fifth, the article emphasized the Hong Kong factor in the development of the coolie trade in Macao, and summarized the relationship between the two places in the coolie trade as "Hong Kong made it, and Hong Kong made it fail."²¹ These contents have put forward new thoughts on the history of the overseas Chinese workers in Macao, and deserve the attention of researchers.

3. Existing problems and solutions

As far as domestic and foreign scholars are concerned, the history of Macao Chinese workers going abroad has received a certain amount of attention, relevant historical materials have been sorted out and disclosed, and some issues have been discussed to varying

¹⁵Xu Yipu, "A Review of the Pig Farm in Macau in the Late Qing Dynasty", Chinese version of *Cultural Magazine*, Issue 19, 1994.

¹⁶Deng Kaisong, "Macau Coolie Trade and Its Impact on the World Economy", *Guangdong Social Sciences*, No. 1, 1998.

¹⁷Kang Dashou, "Coolie Trade in Modern Macau", *Historical Monthly*, No. 4, 1998.

¹⁸Jin Guoping and Wu Zhiliang, "The Beginning and End of the Coolie Trade between Cuban Chinese Workers and Macao", *Journal of Chinese and Western Cultural Studies*, No. 1, 2003.

¹⁹Wang Shanshan, *Modern Macau and Coolie Trade*, Zhengzhou: Master thesis of Zhengzhou University, 2006.

²⁰Mo Shixiang: "Coolie Trade in Hong Kong and Macao and the Anglo-Portuguese Debate", *Guangdong Social Sciences*, No. 1, 2016.

²¹Mo Shixiang, *Research on the Economic and Trade Relations between Macau and Hong Kong in Modern Times - Focusing on Macau's Economic Transformation*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press; Macau: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao Special Administrative Region, 2018.

degrees. Relevant books and articles have noted the historical background of Macao Chinese workers going abroad, the treatment of Chinese workers before boarding the ship, the mortality rate during transportation, the sale after arriving at the destination, and the Chinese government's attitude and policy towards Chinese workers going abroad. However, these results are similar and repetitive; the citation of historical materials is very limited, and almost no Portuguese and Spanish historical materials preserved in Macao have been used; there is a lack of in-depth research on the relevant links of Chinese workers going abroad, and the scale of the research results is quite limited. In summary, there are still the following problems in the research on Macao Chinese workers going abroad.

First, the motivation for the rise of Macao Chinese workers going abroad. This is the first problem encountered in the study of the history of Macao Chinese workers going abroad. This problem is to solve the problem of the historical motivation of Macao Chinese workers going abroad. Regarding this issue, scholars have made explanations from two aspects, domestic (including Macao) and international, involving some relevant factors. However, there are two problems in the research: one is that the discussion is not detailed enough; the other is that some matters have not been noticed, and the research needs to broaden the thinking and increase the matters discussed. Therefore, there is still a lot of room for development on this issue.

Second, the relevant instructions and regulations of the Portuguese Macau authorities. During the process of Chinese workers going abroad in Macau, the Portuguese Macau authorities successively issued a series of announcements, regulations and ordinances to correct and curb the malpractices and illegal acts in the trafficking of Chinese workers. In the past, Portuguese scholars cited some of them for the purpose of defending Portugal from the British condemnation, and Chinese scholars also made some brief mentions, but lacked a comprehensive explanation. The study of the history of Chinese workers going abroad should pay attention to these regulations, comprehensively state the key points of these regulations, and evaluate their factual effects, so as to make an evaluation that is more in line with historical reality. The study of this issue helps to deeply understand the reasons and significance of the cessation of Chinese workers going abroad.

Third, the interest relationship between the Portuguese Macau authorities and the overseas Chinese workers. This is an issue that must be clarified when studying the history of overseas Chinese workers in Macau. Some people believe that the Portuguese Macau authorities have gained huge benefits from the overseas Chinese workers business, and the income from the overseas Chinese workers business constitutes an important source of Macau Portuguese fiscal revenue, second only to the gaming industry. However, to date, people have lacked due discussion on the way and amount of the income obtained by the Portuguese Macau authorities. As a result, the economic interest relationship between the Portuguese Macau authorities and the overseas Chinese workers business has always remained on the basis of inference, lacking in-depth and detailed discussion and discussion, especially lacking statistical data support. This article will use original documents to make some progress on this issue.

Fourth, the mortality rate and causes of death of Chinese workers going abroad. This is an important issue in the study of the history of Chinese workers going abroad, and almost all papers have touched on it to varying degrees. However, in addition to the

textual description, the mortality rates listed are mostly "examples" in nature, and the coverage of the data is too small to reflect the overall situation of Chinese workers going abroad; as for the causes of death, apart from riots, fires and suicides, there is a lack of discussion on specific causes. In this regard, it is necessary to widely cite original documents, greatly increase the number of cases of research objects, expand the coverage of mortality calculations, and especially use the death reports of specific ships to study specific causes of death, so as to obtain a closer understanding of the mortality rate and causes of death of Chinese workers going abroad that is closer to historical facts.

Fifth, the Hong Kong factor in the overseas Chinese workers of Macao. Some scholars emphasize the Hong Kong factor in the overseas Chinese workers of Macao, and believe that the reliance on Hong Kong in the overseas Chinese workers business is an important aspect of the economic and trade relations between Macao and Hong Kong, and describe the relationship between the two as "Hong Kong is the reason for their success and Hong Kong is the reason for their failure". However, what is the connection between Macao's rise as a coolie trade center and Hong Kong? Do the coolie ships sailing from Macao rely on Hong Kong for equipment and maintenance? Do the coolies carried by Macao merchant ships come from the transfer and transfer of Hong Kong? To what extent was Portugal's decision to stop the overseas Chinese workers of Macao the result of British pressure? Although there are many speculative discussions on these issues, not only are the discussions not specific and detailed enough, but the cited data are also problematic. This article will examine and discuss the relevant arguments and evidence to draw a more reliable conclusion.

Sixth, the Portuguese Embassy and the situation of Chinese workers in America. Almost all previous research results have described the suffering and miserable situation of overseas Chinese workers in Cuba and Peru. This part of the content has become an integral part of the history of overseas Chinese in America and the history of Cuba and Peru. However, Cuba and Peru are the main destinations for overseas Chinese workers from the Macao port, and the situation of Chinese workers there is inseparable from Macao. Therefore, paying attention to the attention of the Portuguese consulates in Cuba and Peru to the situation of Chinese workers and the efforts made to improve the situation of Chinese workers has become an important aspect of the study of the history of overseas Chinese workers in Macao. Therefore, this article will discuss this issue in a special chapter, revealing the attitudes and practical actions of the Portuguese consulates in Cuba and Peru around the issue of overseas Chinese workers from multiple levels.

To solve the above problems, we need to change the research methods and ideas. I think we should start from the following three aspects. First, we need to break through the old pattern of general discussion and carry out special research on the process of Chinese workers going abroad at the Macao port. The issues involved in the relevant papers of the aforementioned Chinese scholars are relatively fixed and similar, and there are many repetitions between them, which leads to the limited overall scale of research on this topic, and there are great limitations in depth and breadth. To carry out special research is to go deep into the subject and carry out research on its different aspects, so that the overall scale of research can be significantly expanded. Secondly, we should further enhance the awareness of problems. The history of Chinese workers going abroad at the Macao port should be broken down

into some problems, and specific research should be carried out on different aspects, striving to solve some problems, such as the cause of death and mortality, and the relationship between the Portuguese authorities in Macao and Chinese workers going abroad. Thirdly, we should further expand the scope of historical material selection. In addition to further using Chinese historical materials, we should significantly increase the use of Portuguese and Spanish historical materials, especially the historical materials preserved in Portugal and Macao. By enriching historical materials, we can conduct special research on various aspects of the process of Chinese workers going overseas in Macau ports, expand the research breadth and depth of this topic, and significantly expand the overall scale of research results.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, while previous research has made some progress in understanding the migration of Chinese workers from Macao, there remains much room for further exploration. By adopting a specialized and thematic research approach, expanding the use of historical materials, and enhancing problem awareness, future research can significantly deepen our understanding of this important historical phenomenon.