

Appendix 7.1: Chinese Thefts

Date & Co.	Description	Source
1699.02.00 English	'The Rising Eagle, lately arrived from Canton had the following Trick put upon the Supercargoes, which was not discovered till she was unladen in England. They bought a parcel of Silks at Canton, and sealed and sent aboard a chest supposed to contain them: but the chest, when opened at home, is found to be filled with Wood'.	BL: IOR G/12/4, p. 791
1712.12.01 EIC	'in one of the boat's our guardans had detected the people of the boat in opening a chest of Tee the cheif man or Chincew they delivered to the Hoppo men whoe carryed him prisoner to the Hoppo. Advised the Supra Cargoe's of the accident but belive that they had not medled with the Tootenage wee searche the boat found yt all nessesary for openinge and closing the chests, as paper Cherong Oyle past &c.; but found no sort's of any thing tht belong'd to us: the Guardans did not permitt any boat to come neare, and besides wee forced downe into the after roome with the people of the boat one or 2 hands which before they would never permitt by w ^h means with the least of vigilancy all their attempts must be fruitless'. December 4: 'had advise that the Chincew of the boat that brooke [broke] open the Tee chests had him bamboed with all the boats crew and now satt att the Factory gate with a large Congo [cangue] ab ^t his neck'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/112B <i>Herne</i>
1721.09.14 EIC	'our best bower boyd being stollen by the Chineese, occassiond us this morning to under run the cable and weigh the anchor'	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/0682B <i>Cadogan</i>
1723.10.23 EIC	'last night was stolen out of ye Banksall a large Kittle & a Hogg'	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/700B <i>Duke of Cambridge</i>
1727.01.06 GIC	After cargo was unloaded onto the GIC ship <i>Lion</i> at Whampoa from a chop boat, twelve Chinese were discovered hiding on the boat, with a chest and pieces of silk in their possession. The chief writer Pullion immediately jumped into the sampan to apprehend the men, but he fell overboard in the commotion and drowned. The Chinese immediately threw their stolen items into the water and jumped overboard. Eight of the men were captured and put in irons and pieces of silk were recovered from the water. Upon investigation, they found that six chests had been opened and a total of 89 pieces removed from them. Ten bundles of raw silk were also stolen. The Hong merchants from whence they were purchased made good on all of the items. The Mandarins went aboard the ship and apprehended the eight men.	SAA: GIC 5701, p. 58-59, GIC 5757, 1727.01.06-10
1727.11.23 GIC	In a shipment of 200 chests of tea sent to the GIC ship <i>Concordia</i> 48 chests were found to have 20 to 40 catties of tea taken out of them during their trip from Canton to Whampoa. The Chinese	SAA: GIC 5704, 1727.11.25-29

	crew of the chop boat had apparently opened the chests, taken the tea out, and then nailed the covers back on. The chests were sent back to the Hong merchant from whence they came, which were replaced with full chests. The incident was left up to the Hong merchant to report to Canton officials.	
1731.09.29 Danish	In the previous night, Chinese stole clothes and a chest out of the bankshall.	Wigandt 202
1733.01.10 GIC	Several Chinese were apprehended from a chop boat when 26 pieces of silk were found hidden in a hole in the boat. The men were taken aboard the GIC ship <i>Gertogh van Lorreyn</i> . The men and the stolen items were delivered to the Hoppo on January 12.	SAA: GIC 5708
1739.11.20 VOC	The chop boat men were accused of stealing pepper from the sacks and replacing it with sand.	NAH: VOC 2467, reports dated 1739.11.20 and 1740.02.28
1743.12.31 DAC	When unloading a chop boat at the DAC ship <i>Dronningen af Danmark</i> , two sacks were found stuffed under some boards filled with galingale, which belonged to the Danes. The Chinese aboard the boat were arrested and the boat and men were delivered to the Whampoa tollhouse the next morning.	RAC: Ask 883, pp. 102-103.
1748.10.20 EIC	'at night the stage [stairs?] w ^{ch} I suppose was call[ed] away by the Chinese, although strick [sic] search has been made cannot find it'	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/650E <i>Duke of Dorset</i>
1748.12.12 EIC	Upon receiving 216 tubs of Hysan tea aboard the EIC ship <i>Wager</i> , two tubs were found to be short in contents. On December 20, another pilfered tub was discovered. The three tubs were sent to the factory to be reimbursed by the Hong merchant from whence they came. The reporting of the case to officials and the capturing of the thieves was left up to the Chinese to handle.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/592E <i>Wager</i>
1755.09.06 EIC	'This even. found our main hatches broke open but co ^d not detect the p[er]sons search'd the Hoppo Boats & found pepper & sundry other things in the Larb[oard]. Boat'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/571B <i>Warren</i>
1767.01.01 EIC	'In the morning we found the Pinnacle missing from the Bankshall where she was hauld up. Sent the Jolly Boat in search of her Att 3 PM she returned with the shell of the pinnacle, the Chinese having taken away all her thwarts back board and all the inner work they could gett out. Sent her ashore to the Bankshall to be repair'd'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/545A <i>Duke of Kingston</i>
1767.11.06 EIC	'Captain Moffat wrote to the Council to inform them that the Boats of Tea sent last on board his Ship [<i>Latham</i>] had been robbed that he had secured the Boat and Boatmen. This practice having been of long continuance but grown more frequent of late the Council came to the resolution of burning the Boat and delivering the Boatmen to the merchants they have frequently without avail desired the merchants to procure Boats and People of their own	BL: IOR G/12/20, p. 31, BL: IOR L/MAR/B/557B <i>British King</i>

	they can expect no redress from petitioning the Mandarins, as their addresses must pass thro the Hands of the Merchants who can alter them as they please’.	
1773.01.18 EIC	‘PM Rec ^d on board 150 B. [Bales] of Raw silk and one boat load of tea & 20 chest of Nankeen on Account of the Company—finding there had been some fraud in the Tea took the boat & 5 men into custody’. The men and the stolen tea were sent to the factory the next day and handed over to the Chinese officials.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/542D <i>Earl of Ashburnham</i> , R/10/9, p. 174; MCM 1: 129.
1777.01.08 EIC	‘In the night the Chinese cut the Long Boat adrift & stole her anchor & 1/2 cable’.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/499C <i>Granby</i>
1778.10.01 EIC	‘A little after six o’clock in the morning when under sail, the Tiller being foul sent the gunner down in the gun room to clear it when to his great surprise he found the Larboard gun room port open and several packages had been taken away from the after part of the gunroom, and on a farther examination it was found a large hole had been cut through the Brakwater & Rudder-coat through which they got in, between the Rudder Head & Counter, after which they forced open the port which was caulked in and at a time when the Gunner was sleeping close to the gunroom door and he never having heard the least noise. At this time a regular watch was kept upon the deck & poop under the command of a Sworn officer with particular orders to guard against & prevent any boat coming near the ship’.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/17-I <i>Royal George</i>
1780.07.30 DAC	In the past evening, Chinese cut and stole the cable from the toy anchor.	RAC: Ask 1067, p. 87r
1780.12.00 DAC	After the DAC ship <i>Disco</i> arrived in Copenhagen from China in July 1781, it was discovered that 30 pieces of silk damasts and 35 pieces of silk satins had been stolen out of the silk chests. The chop boat men (sampan men) were suspected of pilfering the goods. When the Danes arrived back in Canton in 1782, they demanded to be reimbursed by the silk dealer Zukien (Weaver Suckin). However, the silk that was supplied in 1780 was from the failed merchant Ziunqua (also spelled Tsjonqua, Cai Xiangguan 蔡相官), which meant that it was not Zukien’s fault. The Danes then pleaded with the Chinese Hong merchants and Mandarins for justice, and to catch the chop boat men who had carried out this theft, but the outcome is unclear.	RAC: Ask 1186, pp. 110v-111v.
1785.11.28 DAC	The Hong merchant Kiauqua (Geowqua, Wu Qiaoguan 伍喬官) informed the Danish supercargos that a large amount of DAC tin had been stolen out of seven chop boats that had brought the metal to Canton from the ship <i>Charlotte Amelia</i> . After Geowqua had tortured them with bamboo beatings, they confessed to the crime. All of the men and the seven sampans were then handed over to the Hoppo for processing. He in turn handed the men over to the Magistrate of Nanhai County (南海縣). The total amount stolen was estimated at 1,000 taels all of which was recovered.	RAC: Ask 1198, p. 131-132

1786.10.16 EIC	'In the night the Chinese cut the long boats cable and stole the anchore, they left her moored with a stone & a small line'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/440C <i>General Goddard</i>
1786.12.02 EIC	The British had some silk stolen from the chop boats this year. The Hong merchants reimbursed them for the losses, and it was left up to them to catch the thieves.	BL: IOR G/12/82, pp. 154-155
1789.09.13 EIC	'In the night the Chinese boarded our long boat & stole her main sail'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/450G <i>Middlesex</i>
1789.11.20 EIC	'AM found our Kedge Anchor cut from the Hawser & Stolen Hove short on the Best Bower'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/450G <i>Middlesex</i>
1791.01.22 EIC	'AM found the Kedge anch[or]. was stole in the Night by Chinamen'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/447B <i>Surprise</i>
1793.10.31 VOC	Captain Barendse of the ship <i>Nagelboom</i> reported that his bankshall was attacked by about 60 Chinese bandits. The men stole what they could and then set the bankshall on fire. Rain prevented the fire from spreading. The theft was reported to the Mandarins, who sent soldiers to look for the bandits.	NAH: VOC 4577 DR, p. 64
1795.12.31 USA	'Found the small Bower [anchor line], cut 1/2 of by ye Chinese, bore it in'. This seems to imply that half of the length of the anchor cable was stolen.	Boit p. 91 <i>Union</i>
1797.05.08 EIC	'found a chest of Congo [tea] plundered N° 15 + 05 detained two of the Boat people & sent notice to Mr Cuming'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/181A <i>Walmer Castle</i>
1798.01.21 EIC	'A Chinese boat cut away the Buoy of the small Bower anchor sent the Jolly boat after her & brought the Buoy on board again with about 5 fm [fathoms] of the buoy rope for it—the Chinese boat escaped'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/420G <i>Barwell</i>
1801.00.00	The trade was interrupted in consequence of a seaman on board His Majesty's ship Madras firing on a Chinese, who he supposed was going to cut the ship's cable.	Milburn, 2: 470
1802.09.29 EIC	'loaded four chops with Hble Comps [Honourable Company's] Cargo. In chop N° 10 found the Chinamen had secreted two pigs of lead & have reason to believe they have thown [sic] 8 pigs over board'.	BL: IOR L/MAR/B/0172N <i>Glatton</i>
1805.01.20 EIC	'ship <i>Ocean</i> . . . her Commander since signing the Manifest has represented to the Select Committee, a theft successfully committed by the People of the Hoppo Boats alongside, of six Chests of Tea, which with some others the want of time had prevented being stowed away. The Boat & people were carried to the Whampoa Custom House & every possible means will be employed to obtain their punishment & to prevent the recurrence	BL: IOR G/12/148 p. 83-84

	<p>of similar nefarious practices, But as the Grand Chop is already issued it is now too late to replace the quantity stolen, or to alter the Manifest, Invoices & Bills of lading, admitting even the Company or the Merchants would be deemed liable for the loss incurred, which the Teas being regularly received and receipts granted I cannot suppose to be the case. The letters of Capt. Merthó & his Officer will be entered on the proceedings. . . .</p> <p>Mowqua [Lu Maoguan 盧茂官] who was Security Merchant of the <i>Ocean</i>, having been sent for by the President, the circumstance of the theft committed on board that ship was explained to him & he was requested to adopt such measures for the punishment of the offenders as he might deem effectual, towards the prevention of similar practices, which he faithfully promised & immediately went into the city to lodge a complaint with the Hoppo's Officers'.</p>	
1807.01.00 EIC	<p>'We got Chinamen on board to help to discharge. They are notorious theaves. One of them was ketched [caught] going over the side with a pig of tooth and egg which is call'd nest to or the dross of silver. They make fals dollars of it. This Chinaman was taken aft and tied up and got a severe flogging, then cast loose, the capt[ain] ordered the boatswain and his two mates to thrash him round the decks in a shocking manner till he got on the gangway and jumped overboard and swam to one of the boats'.</p>	Dann, p. 266. EIC ship <i>Neptune</i> .
1813.02.22 USA	<p>'Morning the steward said a Chinaman woke him in Cabin missed a Tumbler & Decanter'.</p>	PEM: Log of Ship <i>New Hazard</i>