



Economic Thought in Modern China

In this major new study, Margherita Zanasi argues that basic notions of a free-market economy emerged in China a century and half earlier than in Europe. In response to the commercial revolutions of the late 1500s, Chinese intellectuals and officials called for the end of state intervention in the market, recognizing its power to self-regulate. They also noted the elasticity of domestic demand and production, arguing in favor of ending long-standing rules against luxury consumption, an idea that emerged in Europe in the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. Zanasi challenges Eurocentric theories of economic modernization as well as the assumption that European Enlightenment thought was unique in its ability to produce innovative economic ideas. She instead establishes a direct connection between observations of local economic conditions and the formulation of new theories, revealing the unexpected flexibility of the Confucian tradition and its accommodation of seemingly unorthodox ideas.

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Market and Consumption, c. 1500–1937

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For Maria and Bob

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Chronology</i>	xi
<i>Maps</i>	xiii
Introduction	1
1 The Political and Intellectual Framework: The <i>Minsheng</i> Mandate and China's Economy of Scarcity	16
2 Efficient Markets, Jiangnan's Luxury, and Productive Consumption (1500–1800)	51
3 Scarcity Revisited: Population Growth, Frugality, and Self-Strengthening (1800–1911)	109
4 Nation Building, Strategic Markets, and Frugal Modernity in the Early Decades of the Republic of China (1912–1930s)	158
Conclusion	197
<i>Glossary</i>	204
<i>Bibliography</i>	215
<i>Index</i>	230

Maps

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1 The maximum extent of the Qing Empire, c. 1780 | <i>page</i> xiii |
| 2 The Jiangnan Region during the Qing Empire | xiv |

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Chronology

Dynastic Timeline

Dynasty	Dates
Xia	c. 2100–1600 BCE
Shang	1600–1050 BCE
Western Zhou	1046–771 BCE
Eastern Zhou	
Spring and Autumn period	771–475 BCE
Warring States period	475–221 BCE
Qin	221–206 BCE
Former Han	206 BCE –9 CE
Xin	9–24 CE
Later Han	25–220 CE
Three Kingdoms period	220–280 CE
Western Jin	265–420 CE
Eastern Jin	317–420 CE
Southern and Northern Dynasties	420–588 CE
Sui	581–617 CE
Tang	618–907 CE
Five Dynasties	907–960 CE
Ten Kingdoms	907–979 CE
Song	
Northern Song	960–1127 CE
Southern Song	1127–1279 CE
Liao	916–1125 CE
Western Xia	1038–1227 CE
Yuan	1279–1368 CE
Ming	1368–1644 CE
Qing	1644–1911 CE
Republic of China (in Mainland China)	1911–1949 CE

Emperors of the Qing Dynasty

Reign Name	Dates of Reign
Shunzhi	1644–1661
Kangxi	1661–1722
Yongzheng	1722–1735
Qianlong	1735–1796
Jiaqing	1796–1820
Daoguang	1820–1850
Xianfeng	1850–1861
Tongzhi	1861–1875
Guangxu	1875–1908
Xuantong (Pu Yi)	1908–1912