港脚商人与鸦片经济

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鸦片：群岛的一种“货币”

任何关于转口港经济的叙述都绕不开鸦片。在东南亚各港口，印度鸦片既是贸易商品，也是交换媒介和政府收入来源。港脚商人（country traders）是持英国东印度公司许可经营的英国和印度私商，他们将鸦片从加尔各答和孟买运往群岛各港口和中国沿海。在新加坡，鸦片由华人经销商购入，重新包装，再分销到该地区的较小港口、锡矿和种植园。[1]

鸦片在群岛流通之规律，几乎使其成为一种货币。商人乐于接受鸦片作为支付手段，因为它在各地都能转售，而且单位重量价值高，便于运输。前文引用的武吉斯人货物清单中，鸦片就是他们带回家乡的商品之一。对于种植园和矿场的劳工（其中大多是华人移民）而言，鸦片是一种消费品，购买鸦片吞噬了他们工资的很大一部分。因此，这项贸易的利润又回流到供应鸦片的商人和对其征税的政府手中。

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新加坡与对华鸦片贸易

最大的鸦片市场在中国。中国禁止鸦片进口，但沿海走私猖獗。广州（后来是香港）各大代理行的船只将鸦片从印度运到停泊在中国沿海的趸船上。新加坡并不是这项贸易的主要航线，因为鸦片是从印度直接运往中国的；但新加坡是一个停靠港、补给站，也是部分货物的销售市场。[2]1842年后通商口岸的开放以及同一时期香港的建立，确定了这种分工。香港成为对华鸦片贸易的中心，而新加坡仍是东南亚分销网络的中心。

税收与责任

正如第II章所述，鸦片饷码成为殖民地新加坡政府最重要的收入来源。饷码以拍卖方式承包给华商财团，他们向政府付费，换取在殖民地内加工和销售鸦片的专营权。由于其利润帮助造就了19世纪一些最大的华人财富，饷码的控制权成为敌对集团之间激烈争夺的对象。[3]殖民地的财政、其头面商人的财富和劳工的工资，就这样被一种商品捆绑在一起。

现代读者看待这一制度难免感到不安。自由港的繁荣部分依赖于一种贸易，它损害了许多消费者的健康，而且在中国销售违反了中国法律。研究金融中心历史的人必须如实记录这种依赖，既不为之开脱，也不以今天的标准对其加以谴责。它与本书讨论的其他事件同属一类：从殖民时期的大宗商品贸易，到20世纪利用银行保密制度逃税。每一个事件都表明，金融中心可能从日后合法性遭到质疑的活动中获利。E部分和H部分讨论的声誉风险与合规方面的教训，便由此开始。

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常见误解

有时人们以为新加坡早期的繁荣主要建立在对华鸦片贸易之上。实际上，直接的鸦片航线是从印度通往中国沿海，1842年后则经由香港。新加坡的角色主要是东南亚的区域分销中心，在那里，鸦片通过特许饷码制度出售给华人劳工和商人。饷码收入为殖民政府提供了大部分财政资金。而港口的整体贸易范围要广泛得多，涵盖纺织品、锡、胡椒、甘蜜、海产品和制成品。

注释

1. 关于新加坡在东南亚印度鸦片再分销中的角色，参见Carl A. Trocki, *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800–1910*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990年；以及Carl A. Trocki, *Opium, Empire and the Global Political Economy*, London, Routledge, 1999年。 ↩
2. 关于新加坡在对华鸦片贸易中相对于印度至中国沿海直接航线的次要角色，参见Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China 1800–42*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951年；以及Trocki, *Opium and Empire*。 ↩
3. 关于鸦片饷码财团及其对饷码控制权的争夺，参见Trocki, *Opium and Empire*, 第4–6章。 ↩

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