# Essay Plan

The objective of this essay is to identify characteristics of guilds by conducting a comparative analysis. This essay is a response to Praak. Praak in his book takes characteristics found in guilds in Europe and applies them to China. However, this approach may lead to overlooking certain unique characteristics. Therefore, this paper aims to address by analysing Chinese guilds, find general characteristics and if they overlap with Praaks findings. Some of the preliminary research regarding guilds indicate a strong religious role as well as financial. A preliminary structure would be:

1. Discussion of the Chinese terminology and see if the term is translatable to European notions.
2. Discussion of characteristics (about three main traits)
3. Similarities between China and European guilds
4. Conclusions

# Difficulties

Praak required an entire book to discuss guilds and how they shifted through time across Europe. I am facing several issues regarding the scope of the issue. Firstly, guilds in China are merchant and craft, merchants evolving first. I am unsure on how to account for this specific development. Should I gather the characteristics of both and treat them as a single unit? Secondly, and it is still an issue of scope. China is a huge territory, and guilds have regional variation within China. I am therefore unsure on how to approach this issue.

I was thinking that maybe focusing on a specific guild would be useful but then the scope might be too narrow. Since I do not speak Chinese, I am limited to only English and Spanish sources. Specifying on a specific guild might lead to a lack of literature in my target languages.

# Preliminary bibliography

***Definitions and terms***

Chen, Zhongping. ‘The Origins of Chinese Chambers of Commerce in the Lower Yangzi Region’. *Modern China* 27, no. 2 (April 2001): 155–201. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009770040102700201>.

Moll-Murata, Christine. ‘Chinese Guilds from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries: An Overview’. *International Review of Social History* 53, no. S16 (December 2008): 213–47. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859008003672>.

***Financial aspect***

Liu, Kwang-Ching. ‘Chinese Merchant Guilds: An Historical Inquiry’. *Pacific Historical Review* 57, no. 1 (1 February 1988): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3639672>.

Qiao, Zhijian. ‘The Rise of Shanxi Merchants: Empire, Institutions, and Social Change in Qing China, 1688-1850’. Stanford University, 2017. <https://purl.stanford.edu/bg803zm7823>.