



### Small silver ingots

Silver ingots used in different places in China had different specifications and purity. To ensure quality, they all had markings stating the area and purpose of manufacture, and the name of the mint and the silversmith.

However, silver ingots that weighed less than two or three taels were not regulated in this way. They therefore took numerous shapes, weights and levels of purity. These small ingots were given different names according to their shapes. The most popular of them were boat-shaped little “yuan-baos”. They weighed 0.1 tael to over three taels and were used for transactions of small amount and as change.

From the Sung Dynasty onwards, parents would give their children a small amount of money wrapped in red paper at the eve of the Lunar New Year for a safe and auspicious year ahead. This money was called “yasui” money. In common households, parents used one or two copper coins for “yasui” money. In better-off families, small silver ingots were used. This custom continued in Hong Kong up to the 19th century.



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