

From a Small Town to the World Stage: A Historical Survey of the Development of Maotai Liquor in China (1915-1935)

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The presence of Maotai Liquor at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition has become the focus of research in China. Why was Maotai Liquor selected as a product to represent China at that time? How did it move from a remote village to the world stage? What criteria did the Expo organizers use to make the awards? Did Maotai Liquor really win an award? On what basis did it win the medal? What was the follow-up development and impact? These are questions that have initiated few comprehensive studies. This paper reveals the historical reasons why Maotai Liquor became a famous local product during the period of late Qing Dynasty to the early Republic. It discusses changes in the location of Maotai Liquor caused by major historical events, such as changes in the administrative system of the Maotai region during the Qing Dynasty, the dredging of the Chishui River for navigation, and the arrival of Sichuan salt in Guizhou. By studying its extraordinary history, this paper points out that the spread of Maotai Liquor's reputation was not accidental but it was closely related to changes in the local history, regional environmental characteristics and the national development which embody profound interaction between people and products, commodities and cultures, material civilization and spiritual pursuit. It also demonstrates the important position of liquor in Chinese culture.

Keywords: Maotai Liquor, Panama-Pacific International Exposition, national product campaign, Chinese culture

INTRODUCTION

Alcoholic drink is a substance closely related to human life in the world. For a long time, in the eyes of Chinese and Western researchers, alcoholic drink is not just a beverage. It is not only a stimulant, but also a cultural carrier used widely in sacrifice, such as prays to gods for blessings. In fact, “the human diet is not simply to satisfy biological needs but it is loaded with cultural qualities on top of biological needs” (Peng 2013, 1). The famous historian Fernand Braudel (1979, 265) once pointed out that alcoholic drinks are not only food but they have played a role in excitement and sorrow since the ancient times. Sometimes, like in Indian tribes, drunkenness is even a way of people to communicate with ghosts and gods. Some Chinese scholars hold the same view: “The essence of alcoholic drink is intoxication. The physiological and biological explanation for this point is the excitement, hallucinations and addiction caused by the action of ethanol on the nerve center. Although drinking tea has similar effects by means of theophylline, smoking by nicotine, and drinking coffee by caffeine, they are all inferior to the charm of ‘drinking intoxication’. This is because the alcoholic culture is not only related to the most fundamental

diet, but also integrated with the customs, etiquette, beliefs and sacrifices of the people everywhere.” (Xu 2019, 2-3)

Because of its exciting function, alcoholic drink has always been a controversial item. Because liquor is endowed with divinity, people all over the world have shown the similarity and correlation in cultural creation through the brewing and use of alcoholic drink. For example, Dionysius was the god of wine in ancient Greece, and Dukang in ancient China. “Christianity also accepted wine and absorbed it into the most important rituals” (Phillips 2019, 3). Researchers have also noticed that alcoholic drink, as a medium of communication with god is a symbol of power and status in almost all societies. “In ancient Egypt, people from all classes could drink beer, but only the elite class could drink wine. The Greeks only drink wine, but their wines are classified and of different quality. From the point of view of taste, flavor, and degree, the wine provided to the elite class is very different from that for the lower-class people.” (ibid.) In ancient China, since the Zhou Dynasty, the manner of drinking has three layers of divisions, including official manner, local manner and folk manner. In the formal “official manner”, the mysterious atmosphere of religious worship gradually gave way to the pleasures of court banquets. In other words, the original meaning of “respect for gods and ancestors” gives way to the hierarchical etiquette between guests and hosts (Xu 2019, 82), and in order to ensure the brewing and supply of “official liquor”, official positions, regulations and other liquor administration systems have been established for a long time.

The classification of liquor in China and the West actually puts different labels on various liquors. In the history of liquor, when a certain type of liquor won recognition from the elites of the upper class, it might be labeled as a representative of the national and national cultural image. The French philosopher Roland Barthes once pointed out: “Food usually become a symbol of a nation, such as French wines as a national totem, so people can explore the relationship between food culture and national identity through the food of a nation.” (Lin 2018, 160) Of course, the most basic nature of liquor is a kind of beverage, it can be favored by elites of the upper class, and the reason is directly related to the taste and style of the liquor itself and the effect that it gives to the body. The brewing of liquor is inseparable from the environment and the quality of liquor is often integrated with the nature of the production place. That is why researchers often emphasize the “authenticity” of food culture. The authenticity of food is complicated, which involves social, cultural, and natural aspects of a country, at least including physical properties, climate and social customs of a place, time and space elements, scientific research, construction of meaning and discourse, disputes of local traditions, changes of the times, emergence of invented traditions, popularity of consumer culture that “covers tasting styles” (Yu 2016, 1) Jeff Pratt’s research concludes that “the authentic concept in food culture is related to two major narrative themes. The first narrative theme is the connection between food and location. The second narrative theme is the narrative of food as a craft process.” (Lin 2018, 164-165) Indeed, liquor is an important social, economic, and cultural carrier of the production area. Famous liquors are often called “authentic”. However, China has produced many “authentic” famous types of liquor, but the only one that has eventually leapt into the status of national liquor is Maotai Liquor, which seems accidental, but also inevitable. This is jointly promoted by many historical opportunities related to “authentic” and the identification of elites in Chinese society.

Maotai Liquor became a local specialty in the period of the late Qing Dynasty (1728-1911) and the early Republic of China (1912-1915), mainly because it was selected by the government to participate in the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in the United States and won a prize. This was also the important foundation for its later popularity and gradual ascent to the throne of the national liquor. Of course, the long course of Maotai Liquor becoming famous is closely related to the historical geographical location of Maotai town, its unique natural environment, national development, and other factors. Any research on the historical status of Maotai Liquor requires a long-term systematic investigation of Maotai town and Maotai Liquor. Without Maotai town, Maotai Liquor will be just water without a source and tree without a root.

Maotai Liquor is named after the place of Maotai town, which is located by Chishui River in the upper reach of the Yangtze River bordering Sichuan and Guizhou. Formerly known as Maotai village, it

has become a town now,¹ and is administrated by Renhuai County, Zunyi City, Guizhou Province. In 1995, Renhuai County was restructured as Renhuai City, a county-level city.

From the Han Dynasty (BC206-AD220) to the mid-Qing Dynasty (1644-1728), Maotai village was under the jurisdiction of Sichuan (Figure 1). Until 1728 (the sixth year of Yongzheng in the Qing Dynasty), when the Qing government clarified and adjusted the borders of the provinces in southwestern China on the grounds of unclear provincial boundaries and unclear responsibilities, it gave permission to “divide Zunyi Prefecture in Sichuan and assign five of its counties, Zunyi, Zhengan, Suiyang, Tongzi and Renhuai, to the jurisdiction of Guizhou.”(Ertai et al. 1741/2019, 8) Maotai village has since become a place under the jurisdiction of Guizhou Province. Since the ancient times, administrative divisions have been an important means of administration for those in power and an important part of political power construction. When the administrative system of Maotai village was changed, the Qing government dug the Chishui River for navigation in order to move the salt from Sichuan into Guizhou and the lead from Guizhou to Beijing, which led to the historic change of its location. Since then, Maotai village gradually became the main wharf for land and water transportation on the Chishui River and was transformed from a small remote village in geographical location into one of the four major towns in northern Guizhou. It sweeps away the secluded landscape of the past and presents prosperity of “Sichuan salt entering Guizhou, and Shanxi businessmen gathering at Maotai town”. Maotai town has become an important transportation hub, township market and economic and cultural center in northern Guizhou.

With the change of the geographical jurisdiction, Maotai Liquor began to rise to prominence. In the past, though Maotai was remote when belonging to Sichuan province, it was close to the Chishui River, facing the Gulin of Luzhou in Sichuan across the river. Therefore, by means of the waterway transportation, it had communicated frequently with Luzhou since the ancient times and the two places had some similar customs (Wang 1990, 123). Early in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Maotai and Luzhou both started to brew liquor², and the ingredients and production methods of the two places are relatively similar. In terms of the ingredients, traditional brewers believe that “it is better to use pure sorghum than miscellaneous grains.” (Fang 1934, 6-7) Maotai Liquor uses sorghum as the ingredient, just like some old-brand liquors such as Sichuan Luzhou Daqu Liquor, Shanxi Fenjiu liquor and Shaanxi Xifeng Liquor, and it has kept the same ingredient until today. But in terms of production methods, there are differences between the north and the south China. Even the same kind of liquor has been evolving with the change of the time. In the old days, “the brewing method of sorghum liquor in our country was divided into two types, Xu Zha brewing method (adding new ingredient for several times) and Qing Zha method (adding ingredient only once). The former is popular in the three eastern provinces and Hebei province and Shandong province in the northern China, while the latter is applied to Shanxi province and Shaanxi province. By adding new ingredients for several times, sorghum can produce liquor more than twice, and because of the addition of raw sorghum, it is more economical, since it saves rice husk. Therefore, the territory of using Qing Zha method (adding ingredient only once) is gradually occupied by it.” (Fang 1934, 6-7)

Only Shanxi Fenjiu liquor has adhered to the Qing Zha method in order to keep its reputation, Maotai Liquor and Luzhou Daqu liquor have transferred from Qing Zha method to Xu Zha brewing method since it is more economic in cost. During the Daoguang Period of the Qing Dynasty (1821-1850), the method of producing Maotai Liquor was established: cooking ingredients, and adding Koji, then storing in the cellar. The liquor was taken out of the cellar one month later. Because its ingredients contain wheat, it is called Baishuiqu liquor, and is also commonly known as Daqu liquor by the people of Guizhou, or Maotai Liquor (Zheng and Mo 1841/1986, 56). It belongs to the traditional Qing Zha method, which is the same as Luzhou Daqu liquor. Later, due to the revolt of the Miao people during the Xianfeng (1851-1861) and Tongzhi reigns (1862-1874), the flames of the war broke out in Guizhou, and the war lasted for over 20 years. More than 20 original breweries were destroyed. When the brewing was resumed in the Guangxu period (1875-1908) of Qing Dynasty, under the pressure of various taxes and liquor taxes, brewing producing areas such as Maotai and Luzhou have replaced the Qing Zha method with the Xu Zha brewing method. It is worth mentioning that in the process of turning to the new method, Maotai Liquor took a different path of innovation, which not only retained the “steaming” of the old method, but also integrated

the “mixed processing” of the new method. At the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, Maotai Liquor only used sorghum as its basic ingredient, which was boiled and added thirty percent of wheat Koji, then was put in the brewing cellar and fermented for a few months, and then steamed. It must be re-brewed a few times before it is finished. The first is called Shengsha, the third and fourth rounds are called Suisha, and the sixth and seventh rounds are called big Huisha.³ After this round, the process is called small Huisha, and the drinkable liquor has been made in the end (Zhao and Yang 1936/1974, 512). Through this process, “Huisha” Maotai Liquor with superior quality has been created. Although Maotai Liquor and Luzhou Daqu liquor are both products of the Xu Zha brewing method, their production processes have been quite different. Because Maotai Liquor needs more distilling and brewing during the “Huisha” process, this undoubtedly increases the interaction between the fermented product and the unique microbial environment of Maotai town. In addition, the Koji of Maotai Liquor was made from pure wheat, and Koji is “the best made from pure wheat” (Wei and He 1935, 59). Therefore, compared with Luzhou Daqu liquor which uses a mixture Koji of wheat and sorghum, Maotai Liquor is even better. The unique natural environment of Maotai town cannot be copied. Therefore, Maotai Liquor enjoys the reputation that it possesses “mellow taste and fragrant smell, and is not made of fake Koji and spices, and hard to imitate” (Zhao and Yang 1936/1974, 512).

Just because of this, Maotai Liquor has become “the No. 1 liquor in Guizhou” in the late Qing Dynasty (Yu 1916/2009, 23) and was regarded as an important and precious local specialty. This situation can be seen from the “Products” of the *Zunyi Prefecture Annals* compiled and printed during the Daoguang period (1821-1850) of the Qing Dynasty, which set a special column for “Maotai Liquor”, as well as in some poems such as “the liquor is the best in Guizhou province” by Zheng Zhen and “Today’s good liquor is in Maotai town” by Zhang Guohua in the Qing Dynasty. Therefore, in the early years of the Republic of China, in accordance with the requirement of the Preparatory Bureau for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, which proposed that “the products to attend the exhibition should be more local products” and specially recommended “products of these categories: cotton, tea, liquor, fish, wool, oil, silk, sugar, hemp, and beans”(Chen 1916, 46), Guizhou undoubtedly introduced Maotai Liquor to attend the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in the United States, and provided Maotai Liquor with an unprecedented major opportunity to win a foreign prize for the first time.

After winning the prize, Maotai Liquor has become a treasure in Guizhou, and it has also attracted new capital to actively invest in production, transportation and marketing. With the prominent competition in Maotai brewing industry and the expansion of production and marketing, Maotai Liquor was also endowed with more symbols and expectation of responsibilities and played an important role in the revitalization of national goods during the period of the Republic of China.

The emergence of Maotai Liquor from a small village to the world stage is not only a typical case of “small place, big event”, but also a profound history of Maotai brewing culture, and a precious historical heritage. Unfortunately, there is very little long-term historical research on Maotai Liquor or Maotai town, and the number of publicly published papers on Maotai Liquor is less than 30. Among the limited studies, most of them focused on the historical event that Maotai Liquor attended the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 and won the award. However, the researchers generally stopped at some legends and far-fetched inferences either for the lack of research evidence or for their own intentions, which are unbelievable, and some works even contain errors that are clearly inconsistent with the facts. For example, on the issue of Maotai Liquor winning awards in the Exposition, there are articles such as “The Whole Story of the National Liquor Maotai Winning the Panama Gold Award” (Kuang and Miao 2005, 60-63), “How was the Case for the Maotai Liquor and Panama Winning Gold Award ended?”(Mao 1995, 41) Such misrepresentation has moved away from the original historical reality, and will also deface the objective historical value of Maotai Liquor itself, which is worthy of study and rectification.

In this paper, the author places the “short-term” major events in the “long-term” and “medium-term” historical backgrounds, uses precious historical data with focus on this period of the history that Maotai Liquor attended the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and became the main force of the National Goods Campaign from 1915 to 1935, and discusses the causes and consequences of the rise and expansion of the reputation of Maotai Liquor. This paper tries to display the original appearance of the

history, to reveal the reasons on how Maotai Liquor developed from a small village to the world stage, and the general laws which are contained in the phenomenon of individual cases, and to provide credentials for better understanding the heritage value of Maotai Liquor.

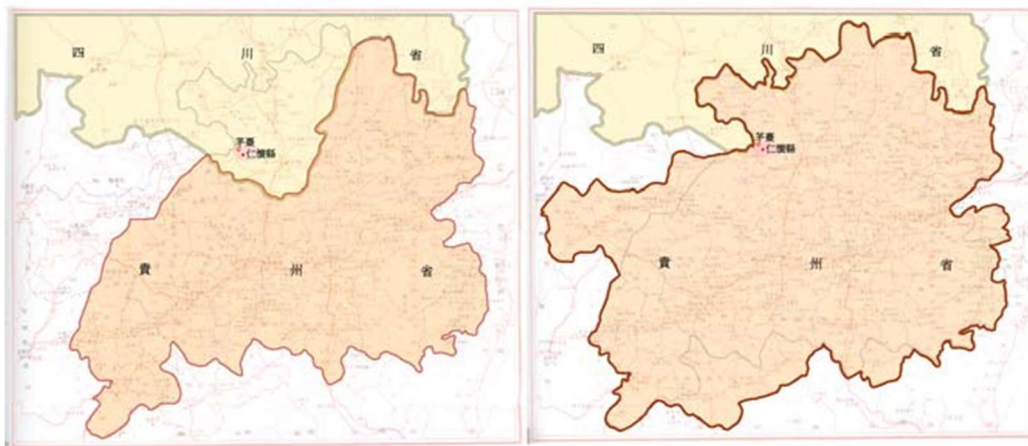
THE CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF MAOTAI LIQUOR PRODUCING AREA

Historically, Maotai has long belonged to Shu (Sichuan province). From Han Dynasty (BC206-AD220) to Tang Dynasty (618-907), the region of Maotai of Renhuai County and Hejiang County of Sichuan province belong to Qianwei County, which is located at the southeast corner of Shu (Sichuan province). From Sui Dynasty (581-618) to Song Dynasty (960-1279), it was under the jurisdiction of Luzhou. In Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) it was under the jurisdiction of Zunyi Prefecture which belonged to Sichuan Province. The creation time of Maotai Liquor was proved to be in the late Wanli period (1573-1619) of Ming Dynasty or the end of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), slightly later than the production time of Luzhou Daqu liquor. In terms of the time, Maotai Liquor was first born in Sichuan, originally Sichuan liquor (Mao 1995, 14).

In 1728, the imperial court of Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty (1723-1735) made a major adjustment to the administrative divisions of the southwest region, which divided Sichuan Zunyi Prefecture, and put Zunyi, Zhengan, Suiyang, Tongzi and Renhuai under the jurisdiction of Guizhou. Maotai town has since been transferred from Sichuan to Guizhou province and placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Renhuai County and Zunyi Prefecture. Maotai Liquor has subsequently become Guizhou liquor.

The huge change in the re-division of administrative territory has increased the area of Guizhou by one third, expanding by more than 57,000 square kilometers. The whole territory of Guizhou then reached over 170,000 square kilometers. Zunyi Prefecture in Sichuan with its five subordinate counties was changed to the jurisdiction of Guizhou. This adjustment actually turned Guizhou into a metropolis (Wu 1855/1992, 331) and it basically constructed the boundary of present-day Guizhou province (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
THE ADMINISTRATIVE LOCATION OF MAOTAI IN THE MING DYNASTY (LEFT) AND SIX YEARS AFTER YONGZHENG PERIOD IN THE QING DYNASTY (RIGHT)⁴



Indeed, Maotai town, along with Renhuai County and Zunyi Prefecture, was incorporated into Guizhou. Economically, it did not harm Shu (Sichuan province) a lot but benefited Guizhou greatly. It not only brought fertile soil and a vast land bearing the heavy heritage of the Shu civilization to Guizhou, but more importantly, it added a river to Guizhou, the Chishui River, which leads directly to the Yangtze River.⁵ By this river, lead, copper, and wood from Yunnan province and Guizhou province can be

transported outside, and the salt of Sichuan province can also be transported to Guizhou conveniently. In the event of a poor agricultural harvest in Guizhou, Sichuan rice can also be transported to Guizhou, which is indeed an infinite benefit for Guizhou Province. In the tenth year of Emperor Qianlong (1745), the Qing government allowed Guizhou to dredge the Chishui River. For the first time, the water transportation of the Chishui River was converged with the Yangtze River and boats could finally sail to Maotai town.

After the Chishui River was dredged and renovated, the navigable mileage was extended. "Goods was transported 150 kilometers by water from Hejiang county of Sichuan to Maotai in Renhuai, and then transferred by land to Guiyang via Qianxi, Weng'an, Qingzhen." (Zhou 1914/1915, 670) For the first time, Maotai town became the main wharf in the land-water transportation of Sichuan salt into Guizhou province. In 1746, the trans-shipment volume undertaken by Maotai accounted for 30% of the total amount of Sichuan salt shipped into Guizhou, which was the largest land-water trans-shipment post line in Guizhou at that time. Along this transport route, Guizhou and Yunnan moved minerals and local products to outside, including lead, bamboo, wood, firewood, charcoal, tea, silk, paper, and medical materials. With the import of Sichuan salt into Guizhou and the export of lead from Guizhou to Beijing, Maotai town in the late Qing Dynasty basically had the scale and function of a town in the Southern Yangtze River in the same period of time. According to the historical records, Maotai town was once named "Yi town" during this period, but because people had always been accustomed to calling it Maotai, the name of Yi town only lasted briefly. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, Maotai became a major commercial town, and one of the four famous towns in northern Guizhou. "Dagu town (now Jinsha County, Guizhou) is No.1. Yongxing (now in Meitan County, Guizhou) town is No.2, and Maotai town is No.3. Tuanxi (now in Zunyi County) town is No.4." (Li 1998, 187)

A river can be regarded as an obstacle or a waterway by a society (Burke 1990, 9). It was precisely during the Qianlong period that the decision-makers of the Qing dynasty realized the significant benefits of dredging the Chishui River and chose Chishui River as the main channel for Sichuan salt to enter Guizhou. This salt route used the waterway foundation laid by Ming Dynasty, and dredged and expanded the upward section to Maotai town, thus opening a new history of Maotai town which rose because of salt, and later prospered because of liquor.

Salt and liquor are important items for mankind and make their life more enjoyable. It is not difficult to imagine that after becoming an important town in northern Guizhou, Maotai town was well known far and widely. Salt and liquor also naturally became the most important factors to attract passers-by. Due to the prosperous transportation of salt from Sichuan to Guizhou, and gathering of Shanxi merchants there (Zheng 1866/2019, 9), Maotai, once an isolated remote village, began to be "central". Its liquor production industry ranks first in Guizhou province (Zheng and Mo 1841/1986, 56). Maotai Liquor had occupied a prominent place at least in northern Guizhou in the late Qing Dynasty.

STEPPING ONTO THE WORLD STAGE: ATTENDING THE 1915 PANAMA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

In modern China, fairs, exhibitions, trade fairs, and awards are commonly referred to as competitions. According to the venue and the geographical scope of participants, it is divided into international (or universal) fairs, domestic fairs, and local fairs. In the beginning, the Chinese government only regarded it as a competition of showing off treasures. Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), the Minister of Commerce and Industry in the late Qing Dynasty once said: "My country used the word 'competition' in the past without seeking the original meaning. So, it was wrongly translated, and the event was regarded as an activity for people to dazzle strangers and to show treasures." (Zhao 1997) Later, through participating in international expositions one after another, the government gradually realized that the purpose of participating was far more than that. At least there were eight benefits, such as "connecting transactions, expanding products, rewarding talents, investigating business situation, expanding trade, increasing tariffs, developing business land and eliminating accumulated habits." (Liu 1897/1901).

On February 20, 1915, “Americans held the World Exposition in San Francisco because of the completion of the Panama Canal. In the early stage (referring to 1912), Chinese officials and businessmen were formally invited to the Expo, and then a special commissioner (Robert Dalé) was sent to China to persuade Chinese government to participate the Expo. The central government cared about the diplomatic relations with America and the distress of the people, and generously accepted the invitation.” (Chen 1916, 1)

This was the first international competition for the government after the founding of the Republic of China, and the organizer was the United States. Yuan Shikai, who just gained the presidency for life was trying to restore the monarchy at that time (Chen 2002, 28). Therefore, Yuan Shikai’s government paid special attention to the invitation and lobbying by the United States, and specifically ordered the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to set up an organization and handle it with full authority, and instructed the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Finance to coordinate the preparations for the exhibition and appointed Chen Qi, who presided over Nanyang Industry Association and Jiangnan Park affairs in Jiangsu as the director of a bureau to supervise and handle preparations of the exhibition.

Yuan Shikai's pro-American behaviors were recognized and supported by the US government. In 1913, after the new U.S. President Woodrow Wilson took office, he started the process to recognize Yuan Shikai's Beijing government. In early May of the same year, “the United States became the first country among the world major powers to recognize the Republic of China.” (Curry 1968, 19) Therefore, in addition to the purpose of developing industry, China’s participation in the exhibition also had a sense of goodwill and friendship with the United States.

The Liquor Takes Part in the Competition on Behalf of the Country.

Due to political needs, Yuan Shikai and his staff intended to use this competition to maintain close relations with the US government. But for the Chinese business community and government officials who were concerned about the development of China's industry, this event was a great opportunity to promote the development of Chinese industry and commerce. Therefore, on June 28, 1913, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce held the establishment ceremony of the Bureau of Preparing Panama Exposition for China (abbreviated as: Preparatory Affairs Bureau) at the old Imperial Academy office in West Chang'an Street of Beijing. At the ceremony, Wu Tingfang, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, pointed out that China's exporting markets of silk, tea and other bulk goods were occupied by Japan, because the production improvement was not paid enough attention in China. So, the exporting volume was reduced. In his speech, he emphasized that China should export more local products in preparation for the World Expo and expand overseas sales to resist the import of European goods. “This is the most important point for us to pay attention to.” (Chen 1916, 9-10)

In order to effectively promote special local products from various provinces across the country to participate in the Panama Expo, the Bureau of Preparatory Affairs specially formulated and issued the “General Principles for China's Products for the Panama Expo”, which clearly listed the categories of products :(1) Fine Arts. (2) Education. (3) Social and economic sectors. (4) Literature. (5) Manufacture. (6) Mechanics. (7) Transportation. (8) Agriculture. (9) Livestock. (10) Gardening. (11) Mining and metallurgy. (12) New discoveries in the Pacific and navigation (Li 1914, 240).

At the same time, the Preparatory Affairs Bureau subdivided products into six categories (A, B, C, D, E, and F) according to their source of origin: (A) official products, (B) designated products (referring to those who have won prizes and awards in foreign countries or produced by new large companies, and powerful producers or famous manufacturers and technicians), (C) contract products (producers pool their capital and enter into a contract to produce an item to go to the Expo, such as a combination of silk, tea, etc.), (D) products by an organization (such as established organizations in agricultural, industrial, commercial, and education business), (E) products by the alliance (such as trading companies recently organized to export products), (F) products for sales (provided by those who go to the Exposition to display their products). (Chen 1916, 43)

It is fair to say that the National Government paid unprecedented attention to the preparations for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and all places across the country also actively cooperated with and supported it. Materials prepared for the Expo were sufficient. However, not all the items promoted by the provinces were eligible to compete in the United States, because “the purpose of the participation is to win prizes. Whether one can win an award or not all depends entirely on scrutiny.”⁶ For this end, the Bureau of Preparatory Affairs set up a special assessment regulation. “After products are collected, all associations shall hold exhibitions in public places regularly for a period of up to one month, and report to the Bureau in advance. The Bureau will assign evaluator to grade and award products and select qualified products to go to the United States. For each product selected for the Expo, each association shall, in conjunction with the respective manufacturer of the product, prepare an “English-Chinese manual.” (Li 1914, 207)

According to the regulations, the products collected by the provinces must first pass the exhibition in the country and should be selected and reviewed by the Bureau of Preparatory Affairs before they could be tagged as eligible to participate in the Panama Expo. Therefore, from June to July 1914, exhibitions were held successively in accordance with the plan for a maximum period of one month around China (Table 1).

TABLE 1
LIST OF EXHIBITION TIME FOR THE PRELIMINARY SELECTION OF PRODUCTS FOR THE PANAMANIAN EXPOSITION IN EACH PROVINCE IN 1914

Province	Opening Day	Closing Day
Shandong	15 June	05 July
Jiangsu	01 June	10 July
Hubei	20 June	20 July
Sichuan	20 June	20 July
Guangdong	15 July	
Jiangxi	1 July	21 July
Anhui	20 June	
Zhejiang	26 June	15 July
Hunan	1 July	
Fengtian	14 July	30 July
Henan	15 June	28 June
Jilin	Unknow	
Yunnan	Unknow	
Fujian	15 June	28 June

Source: Chen Qi (1916,58), “A Record of China's Participation in the Panama Pacific Expo”.

How were the products of Guizhou selected, and where were they exhibited for inspection? These issues were not mentioned in the historical documents of the Bureau of Preparatory Affairs. However, in the 4th issue of Guizhou Industry Magazine, there was brief report on “The World competition”.

The first exhibition of products was held in our province. There were a lot of suitable items, and visitors were impressed that the technology of Guizhou did not lag behind others. The Department of Industry now hereby announces that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has instructed that the World Exposition will be held in San Francisco in 1915 to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. The U.S. government has paid attention to the event and the duration of the event is very important. So, they are looking forward to the Department of Industry to prepare products for the Expo. The industry department has sent people everywhere to collect products and prepare everything for the Expo.⁷

It is true that the government of Guizhou province had instructed the Department of Industry to be responsible for the organization and preparation of the products. As for “the First Exhibition of Products” mentioned in the report, it refers to “the First Exhibition of Products of Guiyang” held in Guiyang in February 1914. However, the items on display in this exhibition were limited to Guiyang products. Where and when did Maotai Liquor, which was far away from Guiyang, take part in the selection exhibition? These are key questions related to whether Maotai Liquor was among the products ranked to enter the United States for the Expo.

However, in some documents, there is no record of how many products were organized in Guizhou for this competition, and where they were exhibited for review by the Bureau, and which products were selected to enter the Panama competition. There is indeed no record and not a single way to verify it. However, according to Chen Qi’s *Records of China's Participation in the Panama Pacific Expo*, we can speculate that there were not less than 28 products selected in Guizhou this time (Chen 1916, 97-125). Among the products that Guizhou selected, there was only one alcoholic item presented by “Guizhou Office”. Is this product of “Guizhou Office” Maotai Liquor?

Since 1915, when it comes to Maotai Liquor winning the prize in Panama Expo, there are many different opinions. In the relevant literature and enterprise propaganda, it is said almost without exception that Maotai has won the “gold medal”. Is this really the case? From the following information, one can draw a positive conclusion.

First, *Continuation of Zunyi Prefecture Annals*, which began to be edited in 1914 and published in 1937, specifically mentioned in the section of “Products-Maotai Liquor” that Maotai Liquor won the prize at the Panama Expo. “In previous years, Maotai Liquor was taken to the Panama Exposition and won the gold medal, and since then, it wasn't just Guizhou people who valued it.” (Zhao and Yang 1936/1974, 64) This is the earliest historical document that has been verified about Maotai Liquor participating in the Panama Exposition in the United States. From the records in *Continuation of Zunyi Prefecture Annals*, the historical facts of Maotai Liquor participating in the Panama Exposition should be credible. Maotai Liquor participation in the Exposition must have attracted the attention of the people at that time, and it should not be fabricated in the important local chronicles.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, there was a “Maotai” column in the “Products” section of “*Zunyi Prefecture Annals*” in the late Qing Dynasty, which indicated that Maotai Liquor was regarded as a famous local specialty in Guizhou. It is to comply with the requirement of the preparatory affairs bureau that “products for the Exposition should be more locally produced”. “Products that should be specially recommended include cotton, tea, liquor, fish, wool, oil, silk, sugar, hemp, beans.” (Chen 1916, 46) When Guizhou organized local specialties, especially the selection of liquors, Maotai Liquor was undoubtedly the first choice. This can also be confirmed from the records of some relevant documents since the Republic of China.

Thirdly, perhaps precisely because Maotai Liquor participated in the Panama Exposition and won a prize, it became a precious commodity in Guizhou. With the brand effect and the increasing market recognition and demand, it attracted more new capital to be invested, thus expanding the production scale of the Maotai Liquor industry. The producers of Maotai were mainly salt merchants, but after the award in 1915, it attracted more attention and more social capital was involved. For example in 1929, Zhou Bingheng, a native of Guiyang, went to Maotai and invested to establish “Hengchang Distillery”. He invested in the construction of 17 cellars from the very beginning, becoming the largest Maotai Liquor producer in the Republic of China. In 1931, a new “Zunyi Jiyi Mao Distillery” was also built at Longkengchang in Zunyi (now Yangliuwan) by a few friends. In 1941, Taihe Co., Ltd. was established in Guiyang. It was also an enterprise engaged in the production of Maotai Liquor. It clearly claimed that because Maotai Liquor had won the prize in the Panama Exposition and was ranked as the third in the world, the company pooled resources and manpower with a view to first meet domestic supply and demand, and then export to earn foreign capital. All the above cases indicate that Maotai Liquor did participate in the Panama World Expo.

The Liquor Won a Silver Medal in the Exposition

The purpose of the competition in the exposition includes winning prizes, which is important for all participating countries. Chen Qi (1916, 122) pointed out that the goal of China to win awards was “never lagging behind other countries.” The Article 2 of Chapter VII of the Regulations of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition issued by the United States claimed that this competition was designed for new items in recent and modern times, any items that were manufactured before 1905 would not be included in the awards and historical items would not be awarded (Li 1914, 193) However, liquor is different from ordinary goods. The longer the history, the higher is the value of a liquor. So, did Maotai Liquor try to promote its long brewing history in the brochure, or would it comply with this rule? Presumably, the former is the likely choice. The usual way of writing liquor product manual is to go as far back in time as possible, which is still the case today.

However, what awards Maotai won at the Panama Exposition in the United States is indeed worth researching. Because ever since the Republic of China, there have been many different opinions about this matter, such as gold medal, second place, third place...etc. Nowadays, for marketing purposes, the company’s promotional materials and product brochures have directly written Maotai Liquor “Won Gold Medal at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.”⁸ There are also related articles that do not investigate this claim, but support it. Some articles even made up the story that Maotai Liquor participated in the Panama Expo and the California International Exposition of Panama from August 1915 to June 1916 in the United States at the same time, and Maotai won the gold medal at these two expositions, thus winning double gold medals (Kuang and Miao 2005, 60-63). For a long time, the story of “throwing a bottle to revitalize our national prestige” has led to numerous anecdotes such as “the wisdom of throwing a bottle of liquor” (Chen 2002, 226), “breaking the liquor bottle, fragrance floating abroad” (Jiang 2005, 65), “a broken bottle of Maotai Liquor” (Zhi 2003, 46-47), etc. These anecdotes have turned the history of Maotai’s award-winning participation in Panama into some stories with too many legends. In addition, Maotai Liquor production enterprises also held “the Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of Maotai Winning the Gold Medal of the Panama World Expo” in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in 2005. In 2015, a large-scale celebration event was held in Maotai, Guizhou province to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Maotai Liquor winning the Gold Medal in Panama World Expo. Because of the official participation, many domestic media reported the celebrations one after another, which convinced the world about the assertion that Maotai won the gold medal at the 1915 Panama Expo. So, what are the facts?

First of all, it should be pointed out that hosting the World Exposition is an extraordinary undertaking. The Panama-Pacific International Exposition was officially opened on February 22 and ended on December 4, lasting more than 280 days. Its large scale was unprecedented in history, and it is still called the most influential World Exposition in China today. There were 35 participating countries, and the scale of participants and items reached unprecedented levels. To prepare for this event, the United States had spent four years on activities from issuing invitations to lobbying countries to participate the event until the opening ceremony. From the very beginning, the United States held this world exposition by mainly relying on funds from social forces, that is, besides a small amount of money from the federal, state, and municipal governments, most of the funds came from enterprises and individual people. Therefore, hosting such a large-scale world exposition was not only a demonstration of American economic strength, but also a test of economic affordability. Since holding an international exposition is by no means trivial, the United States government could not make such a major effort to run two world expositions simultaneously on its territory.

From the literature, the book titled *China and the History of the World Exposition (1851-1940)*, compiled and published by the Shanghai Library in conjunction with the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, lists the history of the world expos from 1851 to 1940. In the past 100 years, there have been 20 world expos, among which the 1915 World's Exposition was held only in San Francisco. There was no such thing as “California International Fair” or other world expos held in the United States in 1915.

Then what award did Maotai win? To clarify this issue, it is necessary to understand the rules of the award. The Article 22 of Chapter 22 of the Regulations of the Panama-Pacific International

Exposition issued by the United States before the event clearly says: “The method of awarding prizes is based on free competition. Award will be issued in accordance with the competition schedule set by the awarding organization. There are five awards: grand medal, gold medal, silver medal, bronze medal, and letter award (no medals).” (Li 1914, 202-203) Except for “letter award” which is only a certificate, the rest of the awards have both certificate and medal.

Through the competition, China finally achieved a relatively satisfactory result. “The one who has won the highest number of prizes among all countries is China.” China won roughly 1200 awards in total (Chen 1916, 198). Among them, more than 50 Chinese alcoholic products won awards. Five of them won the top awards, which are: Sorghum Fenjiu Liquor from Shanxi Province, Sorghum Liquor of Zhili Province, Sorghum Liquor of Henan Province, Fruit Wine of Guangdong Province, and various wines of Changyu Brewing Company from Shangdong Province. The rest won 22 gold medals, 19 silver medals, and 4 bronze medals. Among the award-winning products from Guizhou Province in this competition, the only liquor presented by Guizhou Government Office won a silver medal. Is this Guizhou government office liquor Maotai? According to the regulations, a certificate and a medal should be awarded for the silver medal. Where are these physical evidences?

In the archives of the Republic of China, there are several documents dealing with the disputes about the ownership of Maotai after winning the prize in Panama. One of them is the Guizhou Governor’s Office Directive signed by Liu Xianshi, Governor of Guizhou at that time.

One of the matters presented is that a series of Maotai Liquor products in the Panama Exposition were selected and presented by the two merchants of Ronghe and Chengyu, but they only won one prize, so it is difficult to distribute the prize. The matter is known and the case has been investigated. When the county submitted it to the office on that day, it was originally in the name of one liquor making company. So, there was only one award and medal. According to the details presented, although true, it was not counted separately. According to the two merchants on that day, the prize could not be collected again. Therefore, the governor of the county should send it to the office of the county Chamber of Commerce to keep and display it, and don't give it to the liquor makers so as to avoid disputes and keep it as a souvenir. As for the two merchants, both Ronghe and Chengyu were the winners, and the prizes can be printed on the sales leaflets and logos of the two merchants to add honor, and no one needs to collect the prize. Please comply with this order.

Governor: Liu Xianshi
June 14, The Seventh Year of
The Republic of China (1918)⁹

The other document is the Transfer Order by Qin Guangluan, Governor of Renhuai County. He transferred the governor’s instruction to Renhuai County Office after receiving it.

Governor’s Order:

Regarding the case submitted by this Department in relation to the products selected by the two merchants, Ronghe and Chengyu to the Panama Expo, which only won one prize, and it was difficult to distribute. The prize and certificate will be presented to the chamber of Commerce office for collection and display as a souvenir under the instructions of the provincial government. Let Ronghe and Chengyu workshop know it respectively, and let them go to the Chamber of Commerce as soon as possible to print the prize on their trademarks so as to add honor. Ronghe and Chengyu workshop of Maotai Village should comply with this order.

Qin Guangluan,
Governor of Renhuai County,
June 14th, Seventh Year of the Republic of China (1918)¹⁰

The third document is a letter from Qin Guangluan, the Governor of Renhuai County, to the Renhuai County Chamber of Commerce on August 4, 1918 in the name of the County Office. It says:

In addition to passing instructions to Ronghe and Chengyu merchants respectively and ordering them to comply with the instruction, the medal and certificate will be sent to your chamber accordingly. Please check and display them. It is still necessary to come to the office to fill in the receipt for reference. This is to the Chamber of Commerce of Renhuai County, for re-issuing two prizes of the Panama Expo.¹¹

From these three key documents, it can be inferred that the liquor sent by Guizhou Administrative Bureau is Maotai Liquor. This can further confirm that Maotai Liquor was indeed used as a product to participate in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915. However, the award-winning medal and certificate that were handed over to the Renhuai County Chamber of Commerce at that time are nowhere to be found, and no one can say clearly whether they are still there or not. But this does not affect the historical facts of this objective existence.

To sum up, the statement that “Maotai Liquor was awarded the gold medal in Panama Exposition in 1915” is actually erroneous and should be corrected. As a matter of fact, there were more than 100,000 kinds of products from China participating in this competition, among which Maotai Liquor stood out and won a silver medal. This has shown the extraordinary quality and value of Maotai, and it is a precious historical honor. If people had truly accepted the “silver medal” facts from the beginning, it would not have made up many false stories today to explain the story of “gold medal”.

THE ROLE OF MAOTAI LIQUOR IN THE CAMPAIGN TO REVITALIZE CHINESE PRODUCTS

After Maotai won the award at the Panama World Expo, its status as a famous product in Guizhou became more prominent. But at this time, China was under the rule of warlords, with frequent wars and turbulent political situation. In just over ten years, the governor of Guizhou had been frequently changed as many as 10 times. Each governor administered in his own way, constantly changing their governance policies, and making the social environment extremely unstable. The social environment they created also varies with time and place, and the replacement of commanders in local governments (Fairbank 1983, 335). During this period of time, there was basically no substantial change in the brewing and production of Maotai Liquor, which had been in the manual workshop stage for a long time without significant development. “The existing industries in Guizhou Province are mostly farm sideline businesses and there are local agricultural products in various regions, and the nature of public welfare varies accordingly. Strictly speaking, there is no machinery industry, but mostly handicraft industry. Those with a scale include match-making, textiles, paper making, liquor making, and leather making. However, most of them are handicraft and farm sideline industries.” (Li and Lin 1987, 460-463)

In order to promote the development of industrial and commercial economy, the Nanjing National Government, which was established in 1928, issued “The Declaration on Administration of Industry and Commerce”, clearly stating that “to establish museums of Chinese domestic products and commercial museums, it is necessary to prepare a large-scale nation-wide exposition.” (Zhou 1929, 1) This fully embodies the proposition that “the promotion of domestic products should be the priority” (Hong 2006). Obviously, it had a strong color of “Western style and Chinese usage”, which intended to use Western-style fairs as an important way to revitalize domestic products in China.

In 1928, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, together with the Shanghai Municipal Government and the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions, jointly organized the sensational Chinese Products

Exhibition. This was “the First Exhibition of National Products” held in the name of the central government, and it was also the largest official domestic exhibition in history (Ma and Hong 2009, 71). It is regarded as an important watershed in the development of the exhibition of domestic products since modern China.

While Shanghai was intensively preparing for the Chinese Domestic Products Exhibition, Guizhou was still in an era of war among various warlords. Even so, the heat wave of the domestic product campaign quickly spread to Guizhou. The Guizhou Chamber of Commerce tried its best to collect 26 pieces of exhibits to be sent to Shanghai for the exhibition,¹² to show its positive attitude of support. But unfortunately, Maotai Liquor was unable to be sent to the exhibition from remote Maotai town because of the warfare.

However, this exhibition had a strong impact on Guizhou, setting off an upsurge in the promotion of domestic products in Guizhou. In June 1930, the Guizhou Provincial Party Affairs Steering Committee, the Civil Affairs Department of the Provincial Government, the Department of Finance, the Department of Construction, the Department of Agriculture and Mines, the Department of Education, the Provincial Chamber of Commerce, the Provincial Trade Union and the Provincial Agricultural Association jointly organized the Guizhou Domestic Products Reconstruction Committee. On the one hand, this was intended to make domestic goods popular, and on the other hand, it was to revitalize domestic products.¹³ In 1931, the committee completed a survey of domestic products in various counties. Although the Guizhou domestic products revitalization campaign was started later than it was started in other provinces, it was full of confidence, and was not willing to be outdone in action.

In the list of domestic products of each county in Guizhou compiled by the domestic products revitalization Committee, there were 20 domestic products from Renhuai County, among which Mao liquor ranked first. From the survey results, the total annual production of Maotai Liquor at that time reached about 70,000 catty, nearly three times more as compared with the 20,000 catty in the late Qing Dynasty. In addition to the local sales in Guizhou, Maotai Liquor’s sales outside Guizhou and also accounted for about one-third.

In short, Maotai Liquor became the main exhibiting product at the local exhibition at that time. In 1930, it participated in the largest and most standardized exhibition (the industrial exhibition in the province) of local products ever held in Guizhou, and won a “Special Award” at this exhibition.¹⁴ In 1935, at the Material Exhibition of the Southwestern Provinces held in Chengdu of Sichuan, Maotai Liquor was also exhibited as a representative of Guizhou products and won a “Special Award”.¹⁵

While the domestic product campaign was being pushed forward, the situation in China changed drastically. On July 7th, 1937, Japan launched a full-scale war of aggression against China, and controlled a large part of China. The Chinese Communist Party put forward its economic policy during the Anti-Japanese War, which advocated boycotting Japanese products and promoting domestic products for the purpose of resisting Japan (Mao 1991, 334). The Nationalist Government also proposed five policies for domestic and foreign trade: control imports, promote exports, regulate transportation and sales, maintain price stability, and promote domestic products (Chen 2002, 368). During the Anti-Japanese War, the remote Guizhou became a natural defense for Chongqing (the secondary capital at that time) and the rear area of the war. A large number of people, institutions, materials, equipment, funds, etc. were poured into Guizhou in a short time, which provided a very precious historical opportunity for Guizhou’s economic development. The domestic products campaign continued without interruption, and it played an important role as the promoter of the domestic product campaign in the rear area of the Anti-Japanese War.

Maotai Liquor continued to be the main item in the domestic products exhibition organized by the Nationalist Government to resist Japanese products and promote domestic products in the rear area of the war. In 1938 and 1947, Maotai was an important main exhibiting product at “the Arts and Crafts Exhibition” and “Goods Exhibition” held in Guizhou respectively.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper takes Maotai Liquor and its producing area (Maotai Town) as the whole object of study. It focuses on the major historical event that Maotai Liquor participated in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 and places this event in the context of the long-term and mid-term changes of Maotai's regional history. It conducts detailed researches on what happened before and after the event, and analyzes the historical opportunity for Maotai Liquor to expand its reputation from a small remote place to the world stage, which reflects the close relationship between Maotai Liquor and the area where it is produced in terms of natural environment, economy, society, and culture. From its complex and typical development, one can say that Maotai Liquor laid an important foundation for its future development as a national brand at this historical stage, and set up some basic laws of mutual influence between liquor and human society.

First, Maotai Liquor was born in Maotai town. In history, Maotai town used to be controlled by Shu (Sichuan Province). It has long been a part of Luzhou of Sichuan province, and the humanistic characteristics of "being close to Shu" are strong and still exist today. As people have interacted with this area for a long time, they have made the "genuine" identification of the liquor and possessed the memory of living together with the brewing of the liquor. This not only affects the development of Maotai's brewing industry, which is similar to Luzhou. Due to the influence of traditional water transportation, Maotai has a long history of frequent contact with Luzhou. In terms of dialect, diet, etiquette and custom, people have shown the same cultural and spatial characteristics as those in Luzhou, which also confirms the view of British scholar Mike Crang (1991, 5-6) that specific space and geographical location always maintain a close relationship with culture. It is not difficult to understand why Luzhou, Yibin, and Zunyi located between Sichuan and Guizhou now form a golden triangle area where the liquor brewing industries get together.

Secondly, Maotai Liquor becoming a local specialty is the result of many factors. Among them, the core factor is the unique brewing method and high quality. Maotai Liquor is a kind of distilled liquor made from grains. "The mellowness of the taste and the fragrance of the smell" indicate that the production method is difficult and not easy. At the same time, the method is difficult to copy, reflecting the high dependence of the liquor industry on the natural environment of the production area. In the 1970s, in order to expand the production of Maotai Liquor and solve long-standing transportation problems due to its remote location, the government organized and carried out a large important scientific research project to produce Maotai Liquor in different places. This project lasted for ten years, involving nine production cycles and more than 3,000 sampling, monitoring and analyzing processes. But the project eventually failed. The key reason for the failure of this experiment is that in the brewing natural environment system of Maotai Liquor, the most special and decisive factor in producing Maotai Liquor that cannot be replicated is its microbial environment.¹⁶ This characteristic is the same as those of wines in many countries in the world. Once it leaves the original place, it cannot be copied. It has a distinct characteristic of regional monopoly, which adds to the preciousness of Maotai Liquor. By actively participating modern domestic competition exhibitions, the brewers gradually made the government realize that this was a product that was comparable to Western distilled spirits such as whiskey, brandy, and lime. Therefore, it was regarded as a treasure and was encouraged to go abroad to participate exhibitions. It was also classified as a luxury item in the promotion of domestic products. Therefore, it was not an ordinary drink, but a special drink with many special symbols and labels. Kolleen M. Guy studied the development of the French champagne industry from 1820 to 1920 and discussed the role of private interests in the process of creating national culture and national construction. The conclusion she reached is: by the end of the 19th century, the champagne-producing province of Marne had formed rhetoric of French identity, which promoted its success in markets as a representative of a country. This ability of local interests to represent national interests on national issues convinced government officials that champagne needed to be preserved as French heritage, both nationally and internationally (Guy 2003). This situation is similar to the later development of Maotai Liquor. After 1949, Maotai Liquor has become a key product under the guidance of the national authorities. Under the joint promotion of the

state and the local government, Maotai Liquor has been frequently consumed as a beverage or a gift in state banquets and other diplomatic activities, and gradually became a national liquor and diplomatic liquor in the eyes of the public. In 2001, with the help of relevant national and provincial departments, Guozhou Maotai Liquor was awarded the title of National Geographical Indicating Product. Undoubtedly, people's recognition of the national cultural image of Maotai Liquor not only continuously promotes the brand value of Maotai Liquor, but also makes the national cultural heritage value of Maotai Liquor more important.

Thirdly, since the ancient times, whether, when and how a place can be developed is the historical opportunity of this place, which largely depends on the administrative management and economic promotion strategies of the authorities at various historical stages of this place. If the adjustment and change of the administrative system of Maotai town had not been made by the Qing Dynasty, historical events such as the excavation of Chishui River and the transportation of salt from Sichuan into Guizhou could not have taken place, and naturally there would be no history of Maotai Liquor making fame at this period of time. It can be said that the excavation of the Chishui River channel is a direct cause of the fame of Maotai Liquor. Fernand Braudel also had a clear view of the phenomenon of certain liquor being famous due to the transportation, especially watercourses. "Until the 18th century, the reputation of various famous liquors was not established. The most famous liquor is famous not because of its high quality, but because of the convenient transportation provided by nearby roads, especially the waterways, or because of the proximity to big cities." (Braudel 1979, 274) Therefore, the development opportunities of any place are not only affected by geographic location, but also deeply affected by the country's political and economic strategies. Only when the country needs it, can there be opportunities for local development.

Fourth, the concept of "remoteness" and "centrality" of a location is only relative, and there is "centrality" in remote places and "remoteness" in central areas. Maotai town was located at the remote boundary of Sichuan before the Sixth year of Yongzheng period in the Qing Dynasty. However, when the Qing Dynasty put Zunyi Prefecture into the Guizhou boundary, due to the excavation of Chishui River, Maotai town became the main water and land transfer terminal for Sichuan salt to Guizhou, and soon became a famous town in North Guizhou, which created more opportunities for the outside world to contact and learn about Maotai's fine liquors, providing Maotai the development environment of publicity, and also highlighting the deep interactive relationship between people and products, commodities and culture, material civilization and spiritual pursuits in the process.

Fifth, the holding of expositions, exhibitions, and competitions is an important carrier to promote national and local economic and social development, as well as an important way to enhance communication and improve brand image and influence. The World Exposition has brought many opportunities to the development of the world economy and it has become a platform for exchanges and mutual benefit that all countries value, a channel for the display and dissemination of high-quality goods, and a touchstone to judge whether people have vision, courage, and creativity. Maotai Liquor went abroad, appeared at the Panama Exposition in 1915, and won awards, which set up not only the material value of winning awards, but also the value of the exquisite brewing technology of Maotai Liquor, and the rich cultural and spiritual value of the courage to compete with the world and win glory for the country. This is the foundation for Maotai Liquor to obtain various national cultural image awards such as national liquor, political liquor, diplomatic liquor, ecological liquor, hero liquor, revolutionary liquor, etc. It is also the precious wealth that helps Maotai to maintain its deserved status as a national liquor brand in the future.

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ENDNOTES

1. Since 2000, the geographical scope of Maotai Town has been adjusted greatly. The total area has expanded from 86.43 square kilometers in 2000 to 189.25 square kilometers in 2017, and the total population has expanded from 43,800 in 2000 to 106,600 in 2017. Among them, the urban area has expanded from 1.7 square kilometers to 2 square kilometers, and the urban population has expanded from more than 16,000 to more than 30,000.
2. The production history of Luzhou Daqu liquor can be proved by the liquor cellar remains. In 1958, the Ministry of Light Industry of China organized relevant experts from all over the country to inspect the liquor cellar site and unanimously identified it as a product during the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty (1573-1619 AD). Maotai Liquor originated slightly later than Luzhou Daqu Liquor.
3. "Huisha" process is a traditional liquor making process, which belongs to Maotai flavor technology. The method is to make Koji with high temperature of wheat, and distill liquor after mixing old Koji twice.
4. These two maps were created by the author based on the illustrations in Historical Evolution Map of Guizhou Province (Ming Dynasty), pp. 58-9, and Historical Evolution Map of Guizhou Province (Qing Dynasty), pp. 82-3 in *Geography Records of Guizhou Annals* (1), compiled by Guizhou Provincial Local Chronicles Compilation Committee.
5. Chishui River originates in Zhenxiong, Yunnan and merges into the Yangtze River at Hejiang River in Sichuan. The main stream is 436.5 kilometers long, 304 kilometers in Guizhou, and 119 kilometers in Renhuai alone. In the Ming Dynasty, due to the opening of the passage of Sichuan salt into Guizhou, the Chishui River was navigable to Shawan (now Shawan Village, Wenhua Township, Chishui City) in the lower reaches of Maotai, about 300 miles away from Maotai.
6. Cited from Industrial Section, Office of the Governor of Jiangsu Province, "Report on Jiangsu Handling Panama Expo", p. 75.
7. Cited from Guizhou Archives, "Brief Report on "World competition" (File No.: M60-1-6); see also in *Guizhou Industrial Magazine* 4: 9
8. This information is from the instruction pasted on the bottle of "Maotai" produced by Guizhou Province Maotai Co., Ltd in 2008.
9. Archives of Renhuai City, "Directive of the Office of the Governor of Guizhou Province". Chengyu mentioned in the letter refers to Chengyi liquor workshop.
10. Renhuai City Archives, "the Cases of Transfer Order to Carry Out Transactions Accordingly".
11. Renhuai City Archives, "Letter from Renhuai County Office to Renhuai County Chamber of Commerce."
12. Cited from "The Ministry of Industry and Commerce, China Domestic Products Exhibition and competition items by province list ", compiled by the Organizing Committee of Merchant Groups of Shanghai Special City, page 3.
13. Guizhou Archives, "Report by Dou Juren, Chairman of the Inaugural Meeting of the Guizhou Domestic Products Reconstruction Committee" (File No.:M68-1-116)
14. Cited from "Guizhou Province Industrial Exhibition Special Issue", compiled by Guizhou Provincial Construction Department,
15. Cited from "Maotai Liquor Awards", compiled by The Cultural and Historical Material Working Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference at Renhuai County, page 94-5.
16. Guizhou Provincial Archives, "The Research Project Materials of the Maotai Liquor Experiment in Different Place" (File No.: 77-1-769).

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