

LORD MACARTNEY'S EMBASSY TO PEKING IN 1793*

From Official Chinese Documents

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ALTHOUGH the British had been making sporadic attempts to trade with China throughout the seventeenth century, it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that permanent trade was secured, when the East India Company succeeded in establishing itself at Canton. As trade increased it became formalized by regulations laid down in various edicts issued by the Emperor Ch'ien-lung (1736-1796), as well as by various impositions and restrictions devised by the great officials at Canton. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the supercargoes of the East India Company were trading under increasingly difficult conditions, and the Government in England under William Pitt began to favour the idea of sending an embassy to the Emperor of China in order to obtain redress for existing complaints, and, if possible, to set the Canton trade on a proper treaty basis.¹ In fact an embassy under Colonel Cathcart was despatched in 1787, but Cathcart died on the outward voyage, and the scheme was temporarily shelved. However, between 1791-1792 preparations were made to send another embassy, this time under Lord Macartney,² and the Ambassador finally sailed in September 1792 aboard H.M.S. *Lion* (Captain Erasmus Gower, 64 guns) in company with the *Hindustan*, East Indiaman (Captain William Mackintosh), carrying valuable presents for the Emperor, and the *Jackall*, brig, to act as tender to the *Lion*.

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¹ This is, of course, a grossly oversimplified account of the matter. For a detailed description of the conditions under which the East India Company traded at Canton in the eighteenth century see H. B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834*. This great work in five volumes quotes extensively from the mass of documents relating to the China trade preserved in the India Office, and is in itself almost a source book of documents. For a more handy account of the development of English trade with China in the eighteenth century the reader is referred to E. H. Pritchard's excellent book *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800*. Since this article is intended to present Chinese material in translation I do not attempt to give the English background to the Macartney Embassy; this can conveniently be studied in Pritchard's book, especially Chapter V, which gives a clear summary of the difficulties of trading under the Canton system and the reasons which led to the sending of an embassy.

² See Helen H. Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China*, which gives a sympathetic biography of Macartney and at the same time contains most of his Journal of the Embassy to China.

Meanwhile, in order to prepare the way for the arrival of the Embassy in China the East India Company had sent out to Canton in advance a special Committee—the Secret and Superintending Committee. This consisted of Henry Brown as senior member, together with Eyles Irwin and William Jackson, and they reached Canton in September 1792. In their superintending capacity they were to put right certain abuses which had arisen among the Company's supercargoes at Canton, and in their secret capacity to prepare for the arrival of the Embassy in China. This, in itself, posed a difficult problem. The Chinese attitude to trade at this time was very different from that of the British. To begin with the Chinese Empire did not feel the need for foreign trade; it could flourish without the European trade which existed at Canton and Macao; in short, China was self-sufficient. Moreover, the profession of merchant had always been regarded with contempt by the scholar-official class which ruled China. If the 'Western Ocean' barbarians humbly petitioned the august ruler of the Celestial Empire for permission to trade, then he, out of his kindness to 'men coming from afar', might allow them to do so, provided that they remained at Canton where they could be strictly controlled by the local officials. Here, they were under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General (*tsung-tu*) of the two Kwangs, i.e. Kwangtung and Kwangsi, the Governor (*hsin-fu*) of Kwangtung province, and all the lesser officials under them. Furthermore, at Canton the Emperor had a special representative, the Superintendent of Maritime Customs for Kwangtung, called by the foreigners the 'Hoppon'.³ It was the duty of the Hoppon and his staff to assess the dues payable by all foreign ships visiting Canton, and to ensure that they were collected accordingly. The Hoppon himself had to pay a large sum into the Imperial Treasury for this privilege, and naturally he made certain that he recovered this amount several times over from the foreign trade, or more exactly by pressure on the Hong merchants.⁴ Since the Hoppon's tenure of office was normally for three years he fleeced the Hong merchants heavily while he was able, and they in turn passed on the burden to the western merchants. Because the officials despised trade they did not

³ The exact derivation of this word is uncertain. Some authorities maintain that it is a European corruption of the Chinese title of the office, the *hai-kuan-pu* 海關部 (maritime customs office), while others consider that it is more likely to be a corrupt pronunciation of *hu-pu* 戶部, the Board of Revenue at the capital to which the 'Hoppon' was bound to remit the duties which he had collected on foreign trade. For a discussion of this problem see J. K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, p. 49, especially footnote 15 to Chapter III.

⁴ The character *hong* 行 means 'a firm'. Certain firms at Canton were licensed by the officials to trade with foreigners, and it is these licensed firms (really family partnerships) to which the foreigners referred as the Hong merchants. In 1760 the Chinese authorities forced the Hong merchants to form the Co-hong in order to restrict the number of merchants trading with the foreigners, and so enable them to dictate terms to the 'barbarians'. The Co-hong was a kind of regulated company under the close scrutiny of the Canton officials. See Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, pp. 139-140 and 199-200.

have direct contact with the foreign merchants, but forced the Hong merchants to act as intermediaries between themselves and the barbarians. Since the Hong merchants were constantly being bullied by the Mandarins they lived in great awe of them, and naturally were not very enthusiastic advocates on behalf of any foreign merchants who wanted their grievances laid before the Chinese authorities. Thus the Secret and Superintending Committee wished to deliver in person the letter which they carried from the East India Company announcing the arrival of an Embassy to the Imperial Court. They wished to deal directly with the highest officials, and to avoid having to conduct their affairs through the Hong merchants; in this way they hoped to gain face. The whole idea of the Embassy was to make a direct approach to the Emperor and his advisors, and to avoid as much as possible the jealousy and graft of the local officials at Canton.

On October 10th, 1792 the three Commissioners managed to have an audience with the Governor, two of the Hong merchants acting as interpreters. They presented a letter from Francis Baring, Chairman of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, announcing that an Embassy was on its way. This document attempted to strike the happy mean by not being too humble towards the Chinese Emperor while yet showing him sufficient respect. It set the tone for the English attitude towards the Chinese throughout the Embassy. The letter reads as follows⁵:

'The Honorable the President and Chairman of the Honorable the Court of Directors under Whose orders and authority the Commerce of Great Britain is carried on with the Chinese Nation at Canton to the High and Mighty Lord the Tsontock or Viceroy of the Provinces of Quantong and Kiang-Si Greeting.

'These are with our hearty commendations to acquaint you that Our most Gracious Sovereign His most Excellent Majesty George the Third King of Great Britain France and Ireland &c. &c. whose fame extends to all parts of the World having heard that it had been expected his Subjects settled at Canton in the Chinese Empire should have sent a Deputation to the Court of Peking in order to congratulate The Emperor on his entering into the Eightieth year of his age, and that such Deputation had not been immediately despatched His Majesty expressed great displeasure thereat. And being desirous of cultivating the friendship of the Emperor of China and of improving the connection intercourse and good correspondence between the Courts of London and Peking, and of increasing and extending the commerce between their respective subjects resolved to send his wellbeloved Cousin and Counsellor The Right Honorable George Lord Macartney Baron of Lissanoure

⁵ Printed in English and Latin in *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* I, Macartney documents pp. 6a-7b, where an illustration of this document is also shown.

one of his most honorable Privy Council of Ireland and Knight of the most honorable Order of the Bath and of the most ancient and royal Order of the white Eagle, a nobleman of high rank and quality, of great virtue wisdom and ability who has already filled many important offices and Employments in the State as his Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Emperor of China to represent his Person and to express in the strongest terms the satisfaction he shall feel if this mark of his attention and regard serves as a foundation to prove the sincerity of his sentiments and of his earnest wishes to promote the advantage and interest of the two Nations of Great Britain and China, and to establish a perpetual harmony and alliance between them.

'The Ambassador with his attendants will very soon set out on his Voyage and having several Presents for the Emperor of China from the King of Great Britain which from their size nice mechanism and value could not be conveyed through the interior of the Country to so great a distance as from Canton to Peking without the risk of much damage and injury will proceed directly and without delay in one of His Majesty's Ships properly accompanied to the Port of Tien-Sing, in order to mark his particular respect by approaching in the first instance, as near as possible to the residence of the Emperor of China. We request therefore that you will please to convey this information to the Court of Peking, trusting that the Imperial Orders and Directions will be issued for the proper reception of the King of Great Britain's Ships with his Ambassador and his attendants on board them as soon as they shall appear at Tien-Sing or on the neighbouring Coasts. And so praying the Almighty God to grant you all happiness and long life and to take you under his heavenly protection we bid you heartily farewell.

'Given at London the 27th day of the month of April in the year 1792 of the Christian Aera. FRANCIS BARING'

A Latin version of this letter was given to a Chinese for translation while the English version was translated by the two Hong merchants with the help of the three Commissioners. As soon as the letter had been translated into Chinese difficulties at once arose. The Governor pointed out that, according to precedent, embassies from Western Ocean countries should come to Canton, and that a list of the presents should be available for sending to the Emperor in advance. However, the authorities in England had deliberately arranged that the Embassy should go direct to Tientsin, not only because the presents were liable to be damaged on the overland route but even more because they wished to avoid any risk of the officials at Canton obstructing the Embassy. These officials might well be afraid that the Ambassador would complain direct to the Emperor of their extortions and irregularities, and therefore they could be expected to put difficulties in the Embassy's way.

The Hoppo, who was present at this audience, was particularly displeased, and maintained that the Embassy must come to Canton, and that a list of presents be handed over before it could proceed. The Governor was naturally concerned about sending a memorial to the Emperor announcing the arrival of an Embassy which proposed to depart from traditional procedure. The Commissioners were questioned in great detail about the Embassy on subsequent days by the Hong merchants and by various minor officials.⁶ Eventually the Governor despatched the following memorial dated November 15th, 1792.

(Note. Unless otherwise stated all the Chinese documents concerning the Macartney Embassy quoted in this article are published in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* 掌故叢編, Palace Museum, Peking, 10 'volumes' 輯. This is a collection of documents selected from the archives of the Grand Council 軍機處. According to the scholar Hsü Pao-hêng 徐寶衡 who wrote the editorial note to this collection 'in the files of the Grand Council it (i.e. the story of the Macartney Embassy) is set out from beginning to end', and certainly the documents in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* give a very full account of the Embassy from the official Chinese angle. According to my reckoning there are 82 separate documents on the Macartney Embassy in this collection. Other collections of documents such as the *Ta Ch'ing li-ch'ao shih-lu* 大清歷朝實錄, the *Ta Ch'ing Tung-hua-lu* 大清東華錄 and the *Kao-tsung Shun Huang-ti shêng-hsün* 高宗純皇帝聖訓 are usually content to give only the main edicts, but the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* in addition contains a mass of memorials, memoranda, and instructions from the Emperor's ministers.)

*The Acting Governor-General of the Two Kwangs,
Kuo Shih-hsün, and others memorialize*

'The Acting official administering the seal of the Governor-General of the two Kwangs and Governor of Kwangtung, Your servant, Kuo Shih-hsün,⁷ and the Controller of the Canton Customs, Your servant, Shêng-chu, kneeling memorialize.

'We have to report that on the third day of the ninth month of the present year (October 18, 1792) according to the "foreign" merchant Tsai Shih-wên⁸ and others a petition 稟⁹ was received from the English barbarians

⁶ Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, pp. 312-316.

⁷ The Provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi each had a Governor, but were also grouped together under the superior authority of a Governor-General of the two Provinces. At this time Kuo Shih-hsün 郭世勳 the Governor of Kwangtung, was also Acting Governor-General in the absence of Fu-k'ang-an 福康安 who was away in Tibet campaigning successfully against the Gurkhas who had invaded Tibet from Nepal and defied the Chinese garrison there. See A. E. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, I, pp. 253-5, and for a more detailed account of the Sino-Gurkha war see S. Cammann, *Trade through the Himalayas*, pp. 102-143. See also A. Lamb, 'Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations: 1767-1842', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1957, p. 161 ff.

⁸ A prominent Hong merchant, better known to the West as Munqua (i.e. Wên-kuan 文官). He became chief of the Co-hong in 1788, but owing to heavy debts committed suicide in 1796. See Morse, *Chronicles*, II, p. 273.

⁹ This character *pin* (also read *ping*) was to cause trouble at Canton during Lord Napier's abortive period as First Superintendent of Trade there in 1834 as well as during the negotiations of the Treaty of Nanking which followed the First Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-1842. In

Po-lang (Browne), Ya-li-wan (Irwin) and Chih-chên (Jackson) who had come to Canton with the request that they might go to the Governor-General's *yamen* and the Canton Customs *yamen* to present a petition. Your servants thereupon jointly gave them audience, and received a petition in that country's characters in two documents.¹⁰ Accordingly we ordered the interpreters¹¹ and those who understand barbarian characters to translate the two original petitions. They state that

Because the year before last at the time of the mighty Emperor's eightieth birthday the King of that country did not manage to *kowtow* and present his congratulations¹² 叩祝 he is now sending an Envoy, Ma-chia-erh-ni (Macartney) to offer tribute, and he will proceed to the capital via Tientsin. He begs to make this known in advance in a memorial.¹³

Article XI of the Treaty of Nanking, where the Chinese terms to be used for British officials when corresponding with Chinese officials were laid down, the word *pin*, which had been regarded as offensive, was omitted. See W. C. Costin, *Great Britain and China 1833-1860*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁰ i.e. two copies of the document, one in English and the other in Latin. See footnote 5.

¹¹ The Chinese term *t'ung-shih* 通事 is usually translated as 'interpreter'. 'Linguist' was the term used by the English merchants in Canton. The word 'interpreter' generally indicates a reasonable degree of efficiency in verbal translation from one language into another, but the attainments of these 'linguists' were of a low grade, most of them not having progressed beyond the most elementary stage. However, there is a good deal of research still to be done on the problem of communication between the Chinese authorities and the European merchants at Canton in this period. (I hope eventually to publish something on this subject estimating the part played by these 'linguists').

¹² This involves a problem in translation. Duyvendak translated these two characters as 'respectfully (kneeling) to present congratulations', when he met exactly similar wording in documents dealing with the Dutch Embassy of 1794-95. See *T'oung Pao*, XXXIV (1938), pp. 21-24, and also 'Supplementary Documents' in *T'oung Pao*, XXXV (1940). This account of the last Dutch Embassy to the Court of China is well worth reading in conjunction with accounts of the Macartney Embassy, since it throws further light on the Chinese attitude to the first British Embassy. Meanwhile the reader will be in a better position to appreciate the problems of translation involved in the term *kowtow* after reading E. H. Pritchard's article 'The Kotow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793' in *Far Eastern Quarterly*, II, No. 2 (1943). In this article the author quotes from the relevant Chinese documents the characters connected with the *kowtow* ceremony. My own feeling is that when used together these two characters 叩祝 make a 'portmanteau' phrase in Chinese, formed by joining two longer phrases together and retaining only the key words, so that in translation one needs to preserve both the idea of 'to *kowtow*' and 'to present congratulations'. It does not seem to me sufficient to translate as 'respectfully kneeling'. In any case there were, of course, different degrees of *kowtow*. See also J. K. Fairbank, 'Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, I, No. 2 (1942).

¹³ i.e. in a memorial to the Emperor submitted by the authorities at Canton on behalf of the King of England. This section appears here in smaller type so as to indicate to the reader that these words represent the gist of what the 'petition' from the English contained. In the Chinese such paraphrasing of memorials is indicated by the characters 等語, having the sense of 'words to this effect'. Throughout this article I have used smaller type to indicate when a Chinese document is paraphrasing the gist of a memorial. Also it should be realized that the Chinese documents themselves are printed without any form of punctuation whatever, so that the paragraphs into which the translations have been divided are arbitrary, and have no counterpart in the original Chinese. The titles of each document are those supplied by the editors of the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*.

'Your servants presume to think that since the year before last Your Majesty happily reached your eightieth year and both inside and outside China there was great rejoicing, and from every frontier barbarian kings and chieftains flocked to the capital, so that in fact throughout the ages there never has been such a great occasion, now the King of England has sent an Envoy sailing across the oceans on a distant voyage to offer congratulations on the Imperial birthday. From this it can be seen that all who have blood and breath "offer their humble gift"¹⁴ with reverence and affection. Naturally it should be accepted and taken note of. Only, whenever any barbarians happen to present tribute they always forward, from the port of the province at which they are customarily allowed to enter,¹⁵ a copy of the state message and the list of tribute in a statement to the Governor-General and Governor, who then memorialize. After permission has been received they appoint officials to accompany the envoy bringing the tribute articles, and go with him to the capital to present them to Your Majesty. The English have all along been coming to Canton to trade yet now they want to go to the port of Tientsin. Also the king of that country has provided no copy of the state message and the list of tribute for communicating to your servants. The petition presented was merely sent in the name of that country's Chief Controller of trade, *Fo-lan-hsi-shih Pai-ling* (Francis Baring). Your servants would not presume to memorialize just on the strength of that but have subsequently enquired what the articles consist of and when the ship left. According to what those barbarians said

When they set out on their journey the tribute ship had not yet left. That it would leave their country about the eighth month and should reach Tientsin in the second or third month of next year. As to the tribute articles they were still being prepared when they left and they did not know the names of the items. Also, that many of the tribute articles are heavy, and if they were to go by the water-and-overland route from Kwangtung to the capital it would be a long journey and they are afraid lest they should be damaged. By this time they are already on their way direct to Tientsin by sea, and the barbarians have no way of finding out (i.e. what the articles consist of and when the ship left).

'Your servants have repeatedly taken into consideration the fact that when barbarians come to port the province off which their ships must anchor is appointed by precedent, and that if, in this case, we allow them to choose

¹⁴ A common phrase: therefore I have put it between inverted commas. The full quotation is 'I offer you parsley and the warmth of the sun', and it is used in a depreciatory sense. It is given in the *Tz'ü-hai* dictionary.

¹⁵ In the course of time a complex system of tribute-bearing had grown up. For a detailed analysis of the regulations governing this system see J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng, 'On the Ch'ing Tributary System', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 6 (1941), especially pp. 178 ff. For a shorter account see Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 23-53. The point is that the Westerners were only allowed to enter China at Canton. The Collected Statutes of Ch'ien-lung's reign (*Ch'ien-lung hui-tien*) of 1764 clearly stated this. 'For a tribute envoy's entrance of the frontier and the tribute route which he follows, in each case there are fixed places. Not to follow the regular route, or to go over into other provinces is forbidden.' (Translated by Teng and Fairbank in their article mentioned above, p. 172.)

the place where they anchor it will be improper. However, if we notify the king of that country to order them to go to Canton and there await an edict and then act in accordance with it, the ocean is vast and no one knows how long it will take to transmit. Moreover, they say that they (i.e. the ships bringing the Envoy) are going direct to the port of Tientsin and they are unable to send to find out (any details). Since that king's sentiments stem from gratitude and loyalty we have many times asked them whether or not the state message and the tribute articles have already been despatched, yet we have been unable to get any definite information. We do not presume to speculate, but must memorialize according to the facts. We also submit the chieftain's original petition together with a copy of the translation, and present them for Imperial perusal. If it receives the Imperial favour, and they are allowed to enter harbour at Tientsin, then in the course of their voyage they will be passing the provinces of Chekiang and Fukien and we are really afraid that they may meet with storms and have to furl their sails and anchor at the various harbours along the coast. We pray that an edict be sent to the Governors-General and Governors of the provinces of Chekiang, Fukien and Chihli ordering them and their subordinates to keep a watch and to let them go to the capital by way of Tientsin. Whether or not this is what will be done, prostrating ourselves, we await Your Majesty's august instructions.

'Respectfully memorialized on the second day of the tenth month of the fifty-seventh year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung (November 15, 1792).

'In the tenth month (November 14 - December 13) it received the vermilion endorsement: "Immediately there will be an Imperial Edict".'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* Vol. [輯] I. Macartney documents, p. 1a)

In short, we have here a self-portrait of two senior civil servants in a state of anxiety, being forced to report something to the Emperor which they are afraid might displease him. They had every reason to be worried since the Literary Inquisition conducted with personal rancour by Ch'ien-lung himself was at its height only twenty years previously, and the great provincial officials had been castigated by the lash of Imperial edicts. In fact in 1774 the Governor-General of the two Kwangs and the Governor of Kwangtung were frightened into replying most humbly to the Emperor when reprimanded for their failure to carry out a previous edict exactly to the letter.¹⁶ It is the old story of having to report to higher authority a happening which contravenes standing orders (in this case the *hui-tien*¹⁷), as well as established custom.

¹⁶ L. C. Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien Lung*, pp. 33 and 115-118.

¹⁷ The various editions of the Collected Statutes (*hui-tien* 會典) of the Ch'ing dynasty give the detailed regulations for the presentation of tribute at Court, and instructions about trade with foreign countries. They are therefore essential for understanding the Chinese attitude to the Macartney Embassy. Teng and Fairbank deal with these statutes at length in their article 'On the Ch'ing Tributary System'.

Finding themselves in this awkward position they naturally 'put up the umbrella' in order to soften the reactions of higher authority by at least showing that they themselves knew what the rules were, even if in this particular case they had been unable to prevent an unfortunate departure from them.

This document is immediately followed in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* by a Chinese translation of the Latin version of the letter from the Court of Directors of the East India Company together with a translation of the English version of the same letter. Both these translations reproduce reasonably accurately the gist of the original, but are somewhat paraphrased. Meanwhile the Governor's memorial had reached Peking and had been presented to the Emperor who had instructed the Grand Council¹⁸ to have further translations made of the English and Latin versions. In a short memorandum they state what they have done.

The Twentieth Day of the Tenth Month (December 3, 1792)
Memorandum by the Grand Council

'In obedience to orders we have taken the two original petitions from England enclosed in the memorial from Kuo Shih-hsün and others, and having summoned Western Ocean men living at the capital, have instructed them to identify them. According to their report,

One of the original petitions was in Latin which they were fully able to understand, and they have carefully translated it for perusal. They were unable to understand the petition in English characters, but report that this country is in fact the red-haired country to the north of the Western Ocean and to the north-west of the Celestial Empire.¹⁹ This country does not have the same religion as the Western Ocean countries and has not had any intercourse,²⁰ nor is there any subject of that country resident at the Capital at present. Moreover the three Western Ocean men who arrived recently—Tou Yün-shan 寶雲山²¹ and others—are likewise not from that country.

¹⁸ *Chün-chi Ch'u* 軍機處. Following Fairbank and Teng, I prefer to translate this term as Grand Council. It is sometimes referred to by such names as Privy Council, Council of State, etc. For a discussion of its functions see J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 5 (1940), and also Alfred Kuo-liang Ho, 'The Grand Council in the Ch'ing Dynasty', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, XI, No. 2 (1952).

¹⁹ The ideas of even the highest Chinese officials on the geographical locations of the various countries of Europe were very vague at this period and remained so right up to the time of the Treaties of 1842-44 which ended the Anglo-Chinese war of 1839-42. For a discussion on the Chinese identification of the various western countries at this time see Fairbank, 'Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West'. Also Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 8-13.

²⁰ That is to say, official contact through tribute embassies such as the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and Russians had already sent. It should be remembered that this is part of a statement made by missionaries living at Peking at this time, some of whom may have been hostile to the intended British Embassy. For an interesting account of the attitude of some of these missionaries to the Macartney Embassy see E. H. Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries at Peking relating to the Macartney Embassy', *T'oung Pao*, XXXI (1934). See also Pritchard, 'The Kotow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793' where he gives a useful summary of previous European embassies to China in an appendix. Also see Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 13-16.

²¹ So far I have been unable to identify this Westerner positively.

'Your servants have compared it with the translation of the original petition enclosed in the memorial of Kuo Shih-hsün and others, and they agree in general. Respectfully memorialized.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* I, p. 3b)

The new Chinese translation made by the missionaries at Peking from the Latin is then printed. It is clearer to understand than the Chinese version made at Canton, but is also shorter, the missionaries having given the gist of the letter but little of its style.

The only other document printed in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* for this period (i.e. 1792) is a Court Letter²² from the Grand Secretariat²³ to the Governors-General and Governors of Chihli, Shantung, Kiangsu, Chekiang and Fukien, and a 'transmitted edict'²⁴ to the Salt Administrator of Changlu, Chêng-jui.²⁵ It is dated the twentieth day of the tenth month of the fifty-seventh year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung (December 3, 1792). It is a typical document, and instructive in showing how the Ch'ing civil service worked at this time, and as such is worth analysing briefly. The Grand Secretariat, as Fairbank and Teng have shown, was a less important body than the Grand Council,²⁶ dealing mostly with routine administrative matters, which is exactly what we see it doing in this Court Letter. The Grand Secretaries

²² For suggested definitions and translations of the Chinese terms for these various kinds of official documents see Fairbank and Teng, 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', pp. 41-71. For the sake of standardizing these terms I have followed their suggested translations closely, and I wish to acknowledge the great help which I have obtained from this valuable article. For Court Letter see *op. cit.* under T'ing-chi.

²³ The Grand Secretariat (*nei-ko* 內閣) was an institution inherited by the Ch'ing dynasty from the Ming. For an explanation of its functions see Fairbank and Teng, 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', pp. 5-10. In general, at this time, the Grand Secretariat handled matters that were of less importance than those dealt with by the Grand Council. It tended to deal with routine administrative matters.

²⁴ Transmitted edict 傳諭. I use the translation 'transmitted edict' reluctantly since it sounds clumsy in English. It is defined by Teng and Fairbank in 'Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents' as 'sent from the Grand Council to lower provincial officials and embodying in its texts important imperial commands'. Thus, an imperial instruction sent to a Governor-General, a Governor, etc. was called 'Despatch' 字寄, while if sent to a Salt-Controller, Superintendent of Customs, etc. it was called a 'Transmitted Edict'.

²⁵ Chêng-jui 徵瑞 was a Manchu of the Plain White Banner. In the thirty-eighth year of Ch'ien-lung's reign (1773-4) he was made an official of the Imperial Household (*Nei-wu-fu*). He was appointed Salt Administrator of Changlu (for the second time) in Ch'ien-lung's fifty-eighth year (1793-4). For his services in escorting Macartney's Embassy to Jehol he was granted permission to wear the peacock feather. He was involved in the fall of Ho-shên when it transpired that Chêng-jui had 'given' Ho-shên large sums of money. He was dismissed from office, but later reinstated in a minor post. Eventually he rose to be Senior Vice-President of the Board of Works, and died in the twentieth year of Chia-ch'ing's reign (1815-16) when he was over eighty years of age. See *Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-chêng*, chüan 96, pp. 37a-42a.

²⁶ See Fairbank and Teng, 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', pp. 20-24, where the working of the Grand Council is described.

begin by stating that Imperial instructions have been received 奉上諭²⁷ concerning the memorial of Kuo Shih-hsün and others, and then proceed to make a précis of this memorial, which gives the gist of the original letter from the East India Company. This was normal procedure in Ch'ing state documents, namely to state briefly the gist of the memorial before giving the Emperor's reply. Then, speaking in the name of the Emperor, the letter states 'Naturally we ought to grant their request in order that they may satisfy their sincerity in sailing across the seas in their longing for civilization,²⁸ and let them enter port at Tientsin and go to the capital.' Then still in the name of the Emperor the Grand Secretaries get down to the main purpose of the despatch which is to give instructions to the Provincial authorities in case the tribute ship has occasion to anchor off their particular coast. 'If the tribute ship of that country happens to arrive at a port you will immediately depute a capable official to escort the tribute Envoy and the tribute articles to the capital with all speed.' They are then instructed to warn their subordinates to be on the lookout for the ship and 'to act in accordance with instructions'. Also, if the ship is too big to enter harbour, when it gets near Tientsin special arrangements will have to be made to transfer the tribute articles to smaller ships in order to bring them ashore. The document ends: 'Have these instructions transmitted to the various Governors-General and Governors, and moreover let Kuo Shih-hsün and Shêng-chu be informed.' (*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* I, pp. 5a-5b). Having stated these Imperial orders this document ends with the words: 'In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter is sent' (i.e. these are the Emperor's commands to you).

Here, then, we can see the chain of command in operation. The Emperor is informed of certain events in an original memorial from his two high officials in Canton, and after discussing these matters with his ministers on duty at a particular audience he then issues the necessary instructions to the Grand Secretaries.²⁹ They, then, pass on these orders in writing to the various Governors-General and Governors of the Provinces specified. The Salt

²⁷ That is, verbal instructions were given to one or more of the Grand Secretaries by the Emperor in audience. For this reason I translate this phrase as 'instructions' rather than 'we have received the Imperial Edict' which would imply something written. The main point is that they were orders which proceeded from the mouth of the Emperor and expressed his will.

²⁸ 嚮化 or in variants 向化 or 慕化. A stock phrase which occurs over and over again in documents of this period. Fairbank discusses this concept in 'Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West', pp. 132-3, and mentions the phrase 來化 which means 'to come and be transformed'. Duyvendak in his translation of the Chinese documents dealing with the last Dutch Embassy of 1794-95 brings out the idea of having turned towards Chinese culture and of being civilized by it.

²⁹ Fairbank and Teng have described the way in which business was conducted at the Imperial audience, and how drafts were prepared for the Emperor's reply to memorials submitted. See 'On the Types and Uses of Ch'ing Documents', pp. 24-29.

Administrator is mentioned separately because, being of a somewhat lower rank, he may not be included in the same breath with Governors of Provinces. Not only are these orders sent out to the officials who are to take action, but also the Grand Secretaries are charged by the Emperor with notifying the contents of these orders to the Governor of Kwangtung and the Superintendent of the Canton Customs, since these two officials were the original memorialists who reported the impending arrival of an English Embassy in the first place. All this sounds highly efficient and modern, and in the best traditions of any present day bureaucracy. It is most interesting to see the considerable amount of paper work which the English Embassy was to cause right from the outset, when they made trouble by not following precedent and landing at Canton, but instead insisted on sailing up the coast. Also the size and fragile nature of their presents was soon to cause a great deal of further correspondence and worry to the senior Ch'ing officials. In order to impress the Chinese with England's scientific and manufacturing skill those responsible for the Embassy had selected as presents such things as a planetarium, a big burning glass, a telescope, celestial and terrestrial globes, etc. But bulky crates with fragile contents were not the best choice for overland portorage, and light and unbreakable presents would have caused less paper work to the Ch'ing Civil Service.

The *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* contains no further documents dealing with the preliminaries of the Macartney Embassy, and the next group of documents date from the middle of 1793 when the Embassy was nearing China. Here again we see the action of the Commissioners of the East India Company at Canton provoking fresh correspondence. By the end of May 1793 the Commissioners were convinced that the Embassy had already passed Macao, and as they had despatches for the Ambassador they sent a small vessel belonging to the East India Company, the *Endeavour*, under Captain Proctor, to go to Tientsin with these despatches, with instructions that if the Embassy had not yet arrived it was to cruise off the coast till the end of June. This simple action was to cause considerable trouble for at least two Chinese officials, as the following Court Letter shows.

*The Second Day of the Sixth Month of the Fifty-Eighth Year
of Ch'ien-lung's reign (July 9, 1793)
A Court Letter*

'From the Grand Secretary Earl Ho³⁰ to Liang, Governor-General of Chihli; Shu, Governor-General of the two Kiangs; Ch'i, Governor of Kiangsu; Chi, Governor of Shantung; Ch'ang, Governor of Chekiang.

³⁰ Ho-shên (和珅 1750-1799), a Manchu of the Red Banner, rose from a relatively obscure position by means of the Imperial favour to become the most powerful minister towards the

'On the second day of the sixth month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung I received Imperial orders concerning Ch'ang-lin's memorial to the effect that:

The Garrison Commander 總兵 of Tinghai,³¹ Ma-yü, reported that England had sent an official, Ch'üan 唭 (Captain?) Po-lo-ta (Proctor) on ahead to reconnoitre harbours where the tribute ship could anchor.³² Without awaiting a reply from Ch'ang-lin and without authority he let him sail away. He (i.e. Ch'ang-lin) requests that Ma-yü and K'ê Shih-na, Prefect of Ningpo Prefecture, who acted in conjunction with him in letting him go should both be severely punished.

'What he did went rather too far. When foreigners come to our harbours if they make trouble and privately send out people to spy they ought immediately to be arrested and tried. In the present instance England is sending someone to the capital with a State message and to pay tribute, which is a good thing. In this case the barbarian official Ch'üan Po-lo-ta (Captain Proctor) whom that country sent has simply come to make enquiries, travelling in a single ship (?) and without any other motive.

'Recently, after Ch'ang-lin's memorial had arrived, we instructed that Governor (i.e. Ch'ang-lin, Governor of Chekiang) personally and in detail to tell the barbarian official that it was up to him whether he remained or went, and that he (i.e. Ch'ang-lin) must not make him remain at anchor for any length of time since this would lead to suspicion. We also instructed the Governors-General and Governors each and all to carry out these instructions. But after that country's reconnaissance vessel had anchored the Garrison Commander, Ma-yü, and others did not await Ch'ang-lin's reply but simply let it sail away. Of course they are to blame for that. But their mistake is confined to rashness, and is not a major offence. In the future when the Board³³ awards a punishment let them merely make it a fine or loss of rank 罰俸.³⁴ Now the said Governor asks to have Ma-yü and others referred to

end of Ch'ien-lung's reign, and it was in this capacity that he had the handling of the affairs of the Macartney Embassy. For his biography see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 288; for his downfall early in Chia-ch'ing's reign see D. S. Nivison, 'Ho-shên and his accusers', in *Confucianism in Action*, ed. D. S. Nivison and A. F. Wright. The full names of the officials to whom this letter was addressed can be found in the Appendix to this article.

³¹ On the island of Chusan in the Province of Chekiang. A walled town with a harbour, it was of considerable strategic importance. For a description of it as it appeared to the English Embassy see Sir George L. Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, I, p. 419.

³² This was the reason given by the Garrison Commander at Tinghai. But according to the Commissioners of the East India Company at Canton they sent him with despatches for Lord Macartney in case the Ambassador should not call at Macao. See Pritchard, *The Crucial Years*, p. 322.

³³ i.e. The Board of Punishments.

³⁴ i.e. He should be degraded in rank but retain his office. He would thus have to wear a differently coloured 'button of rank' on his official cap. For the nine ranks and their insignia see Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China* (1912 ed.) p. 508; H. A. Giles, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, Vol. I (1912 ed.); A. C. Scott, *Chinese Costume in Transition*, (1959, illustr.) pp. 21-22. The authorities do not always agree on details.

the Board for severe punishment. Also he has notified the Provinces of Kiangnan,³⁵ Shantung and Chihli respectively, instructing them to investigate the case. This is quite excessive. The Governors-General and Governors of Provinces always do either too little or too much. Ch'ang-lin usually understands affairs and should not have acted rashly like this. Moreover, that country's ship had already sailed away yet the Governor sent a separate despatch to the Governors-General and Governors of the Provinces of Kiangnan, Shantung and Chihli. Their reactions will probably be to interpret their instructions all the more literally, and they may even send orders to every port to intercept and question him. This will cause the barbarian official to think that he is being detained for interrogation, and he will be frightened. What a mess! Why could not Ch'ang-lin have realized this. . . .'

The document continues in this vein for a while longer and then ends up:

'Why have Shun and Lin and others not yet memorialized about this? Investigate the facts and quickly memorialize.

'Send this memorial at the rate of six hundred *li* per day³⁶ to Liang K'ên-t'ang and others. Moreover, order that Ch'ang-lin be informed. In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter is sent.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* II, pp. 8a-8b)

This interesting document shows intimately the workings of the Imperial Civil Service, and the almost paternal authority exercised by the Emperor over his great ministers, allotting 'praise and blame' in the ancient Chinese tradition. But if it was easy to be deprived of promotion, it was also fairly easy to win back one's rank, and in a Court Letter issued a few days later we read that they were forgiven. (*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* II, p. 10a, line 11)

Meanwhile the Governor of Kwangtung, Kuo Shih-hsün, reported that the 'tribute ship' passed Macao on the twelfth day of the fifth month (June 19). (According to Macartney's Journal they reached the Grand Ladrões near Macao on June 20th and anchored, sailing again on June 23rd.) In response to this and subsequent memorials from other officials on the coast, a Court Letter was sent out on July 16th from the Grand Secretariat to the Governor-General of Chihli and to the Governor of Shantung and also to Chêng-jui, the Emperor's special representative dealing with the English Embassy, giving them various instructions. In part this document reads:

³⁵ This was the name given during most of the Ch'ing dynasty to the province which was later subdivided into the present day provinces of Kiangsu and Anhwei.

³⁶ A *li* is equivalent to about one-third of an English mile. By Ch'ien-lung's reign there was a highly developed Imperial courier system, and at the express rate despatches from Peking could reach Canton remarkably quickly. For an interesting account of this courier service see Fairbank and Teng, 'On the Transmission of Ch'ing Documents', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 4, (1939).

'By the twenty-seventh day they had reached Tinghai in Chekiang. From this it can be seen that the winds at sea were favourable and that they spread their sails and went north very expeditiously. But when the tribute ship reaches the sea off Tientsin since its hull 身 is big and heavy it will be necessary to transfer the things to other small ships before it can anchor in the inner sea 內洋.³⁷ Moreover to reach the river inland from the inner sea one must again transfer to smaller boats. That country's tribute articles are very numerous and to transfer them in relays will all take time. It looks as if it will be after the twentieth day of the seventh month (August 26) by the time the tribute envoy reaches Jehol. Just then happens to be the time when the theatricals 演劇³⁸ are being performed, and the tribute Envoy can be feasted and given presents along with the Mongolian Princes and the tribute envoys of Burma and other places, which will be convenient. As soon as the tribute Envoy reaches Tientsin let Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui carry out our former edict and handle the matter properly. At the proper time Chêng-jui should also escort him along his route in order to take care of him. . . .'
(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* II, p. 9b line 5 ff.)

The document continues in the same way giving detailed instructions to the various officials. In fact, from this point onwards the next nine documents in this collection are concerned almost entirely with detailed points of administration, and therefore there is a constant repetition of the same themes. The brushes of the civil servants pass and repass over these details of administration not in any way evolving new policy to fit new circumstances but rather making the new circumstances fit the old conceptions by reiterating former precedents. Thus new facts were forced to fit old theories. The next nine documents contain detailed instructions about such subjects as the exact presents to be given the Envoy and the Assistant Envoy (Sir George Staunton) while they were being shown the sights at Jehol, and citing as precedents the gifts bestowed on previous embassies from Western countries. In particular these documents show great concern over the tribute articles which the Envoy was bringing. A full list must be obtained as quickly as possible, and detailed instructions are then given as to how they are to be transported to the capital, and which presents are to be taken on to Jehol.³⁹ Here again the

³⁷ This seems to be a clearly understood term at that time; perhaps a shortened version of a longer phrase. Although a common-sense guess would equate it with the sea inside the Taku Bar (which was several miles from the coast), I have been unable to find any authority to support this contention. For a description of the Bar at this time see Staunton, *Embassy*, I, pp. 478 and 516.

³⁸ For a description of the entertainment which Lord Macartney and Sir George Staunton witnessed see Robbins, p. 319 where Macartney's own account is given. Also Staunton, *Embassy*, II, p. 264.

³⁹ The summer residence of the Manchu Emperors in Manchuria, about a hundred miles north of Peking, and beyond the Great Wall of China. It contained beautiful palaces and temples.

English had upset tradition by bringing some very bulky and at the same time delicate inventions especially a planetarium designed according to recent improvements made in the construction of this device by the Astronomer Royal of that time, Sir William Herschel.⁴⁰ The officials on the spot were told by the English that it would take a month to set up the planetarium, and that several skilled craftsmen would have to be employed on this task. When this information was reported to the throne it caused a lot more paper work, especially since it was decided that the bulky articles would have to be left at the capital. Will there be enough craftsmen to set up the presents at Peking and Jehol simultaneously and have them ready in time for the Emperor's inspection? If not, instructions must be issued to the Western Ocean men resident at the capital and skilled in mechanical devices to help in the task.⁴¹ Again these documents betray constant anxiety to ensure that the Envoy and his retinue should arrive at Jehol neither too early nor too late. But above all there was the ever recurrent problem of how to treat barbarians correctly. For example a Court Letter of July 24th addressed to the Governor-General of Chihli, Liang K'ên-t'ang, and to Chêng-jui gives the following advice on how to treat barbarians: ' . . . But when dealing with barbarians one ought to strike the mean between being too lavish and too frugal; only by so doing can you conform to the proper system. The practice of the Provinces is either to err in doing too much or not enough. This time, when the English tribute Envoy arrives, although the entertainments as a whole should not be more elaborate than those set by precedent, yet since the tribute Envoy will have sailed from afar across the sea, and it will be his first time of visiting our illustrious country he should not be classed with Burma and Annam and other places which come to pay tribute every year.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* II, p. 12a line 10 ff.)

Meanwhile careful arrangements were made for the reception of the Envoy at Tientsin, and in another Court Letter instructions were given about the disposal of troops. 'Formerly an edict was issued that as soon as the Envoy arrives the soldiers must be drawn up in ranks in order to make a good impression' (*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* II, p. 13a line 6). In fact every contingency

From here the Manchu Emperors went on hunting expeditions in order to keep up the warlike spirit of their Manchu subjects and to keep in touch with their own homeland. For an account of the development and significance of Jehol see Sven Hedin, *Jehol, City of Emperors*. Translations of Chinese documents given in the text, however, should be critically examined. For illustrations see Sekino Tadashi, *Summer Palace and Lama Temples in Jehol*.

⁴⁰ See footnote 60.

⁴¹ The Jesuit Order had been disbanded by orders of Pope Clement XIV in 1773. In 1784 the *Congregation de la Mission* (Lazarists) was officially chosen by the Papacy to replace the Jesuits in China. The 'Western Ocean' men mentioned here were mostly either ex-Jesuits who had stayed on in the Emperor's service, or Lazarists. See Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries', especially the footnotes. Also see Joseph van den Brandt, *Les Lazaristes en Chine, 1697-1935*.

was provided for. Thus, if the Envoy wished to land at Tengchow⁴² and proceed to Peking overland instructions were given about which of the two possible routes should be taken, about informing the post-stations *en route*, and even instructions about which ranks among those in the Envoy's entourage might ride in palanquins and which ranks should travel by cart. Again the question of supplying food to the Embassy was dealt with, and instructions given for revictualling the ships for the voyage home. In short, anyone who has ever been a staff officer in the Armed Forces or a member of a Foreign or Colonial Service will know only too well the attitude revealed in these documents; the whole weary weight of authority at the centre issuing orders, instructions and memoranda which those at their posts in the field must comply with, and the written reports of their actions which those in the field must continually submit to the centre in order to cover themselves against possible mishap. The fact that all this fuss is being caused by the visit of certain incalculable foreign representatives only makes matters worse. The Emperor's dignity is at stake and all his officials must behave correctly.

Suddenly, among all these tedious and prosaic matters one long Imperial Edict stands out like a monolith on a desert plain. Even to a novice with only ten years' experience of Chinese texts this one immediately impresses itself as being in powerful and elegant Chinese, drafted by a master hand and not to be compared with the sometimes loosely-worded memorials and Court Letters preceding it. In an editorial note the editor of the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* states 'This edict was drafted and submitted to the Emperor on the twenty-seventh day of the sixth month (August 3), and it was promulgated on the nineteenth day of the eighth month (September 23).' This is one of the very few Chinese documents dealing with the Macartney Embassy which have been translated into English, and are known to historians generally.⁴³

The Twenty-Seventh Day of the Sixth Month (August 3)
A Memorandum from the Grand Council

'We have respectfully drafted an edict to the country of England which we now submit. As soon as it has been sent down⁴⁴ it should be translated into the Ch'ing (清 i.e. Manchu) and Western Ocean (Latin) characters, and again submitted. It should then be reverently copied out, and as soon as the

⁴² A commercial city occupying an excellent position on the coast of Shantung province.

⁴³ See E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland, *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking* p. 322 ff. The authors do not state from which collection of Chinese documents they translated this edict, nor do they give a translation of the memorandum by the Grand Council which states when the edict was drafted. Moreover their version appears to be a paraphrase rather than a translation so that Chinese ideas are made to fit neatly into English conceptions of what the Chinese were expected to have thought.

⁴⁴ i.e. approved by the Emperor and sent to the Grand Council for action.

tribute Envoy sets out to return to his country it should be given to him in accordance with precedent.

'Respectfully memorialized.'

AN EDICT

'We, by the Grace of Heaven, Emperor, instruct the King of England to take note of our charge.⁴⁵

'Although your Country, O King, lies in the far oceans, yet inclining your heart towards civilization you have specially sent an envoy respectfully to present a state message, and sailing the seas he has come to our Court to *kowtow* and to present congratulations for the Imperial birthday, and also to present local products, thereby showing your sincerity.

'We have perused the text of your state message and the wording expresses your earnestness. From it your sincere humility and obedience can clearly be seen. It is admirable and we fully approve. As regards the Chief and Assistant Envoys who have brought the state message and tribute articles, we are mindful that they have been sent from afar across the sea, and we have extended our favour and courtesy to them, and have ordered our ministers to bring them to an Imperial audience. We have given them a banquet and have repeatedly bestowed gifts on them in order to show our kindness. Although the officers, servants and others in charge of the ships, more than six hundred in number, returned to Chou-shan (Chusan) and did not come to the capital, yet we have also bestowed gifts on them generally so that all should receive favours equally.

'As to what you have requested in your message, O King, namely to be allowed to send one of your subjects to reside in the Celestial Empire to look after your Country's trade, this does not conform to the Celestial Empire's ceremonial system, and definitely cannot be done. Hitherto, whenever men from the various Western Ocean countries have desired to come to the Celestial Empire and to enter the Imperial service we have allowed them to come to the capital. But once having come, they were obliged to adopt the costume of the Celestial Empire, they were confined within the Halls,⁴⁶ and

⁴⁵ Many of the characters in this document have a slightly haughty and condescending sense. Thus the old-fashioned English word 'charge' has here been used to give the full flavour of *tsü* 咨 which in classical Chinese was the character used by the legendary Emperor Yao when charging Shun with the rule of the Middle Kingdom, where it has the sense of a senior ruler addressing a junior one. The wording of this edict is classical in tone, and is full of nuances of superiority which must have made it extremely satisfying to the Emperor and his officials to read but which were probably lost on the English barbarians in translation. In fact the missionaries who translated the official Chinese documents into Latin claimed that they modified expressions here and there which presumably they thought might offend the English. See Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries', p. 41, note 2.

⁴⁶ Presumably this refers to the four halls (堂 *l'ang*) or Churches in Peking where the various foreign missionaries and laymen in the Emperor's service lived at this time. For a history

were never allowed to return home. These are the fixed regulations of the Celestial Empire, and presumably you also know them, O King. Now, however, you want to send one of your subjects to reside at the capital. But he could neither behave like a Western Ocean man who comes to the capital to enter our service, remaining at the capital and not returning to his native country, nor could he be allowed to go in and out, and to have regular correspondence.⁴⁷ So it would really serve no purpose.

'Moreover, the territories ruled by the Celestial Empire are vast, and for all the Envoys of vassal states⁴⁸ coming to the capital there are definite regulations regarding the provision of quarters and supplies to them and regarding their movements 驛館供給行止出入. There never has been any precedent for allowing them to suit their own convenience. Now, if your Country retains someone at the capital his speech will not be understood and his dress will be different in style, and we have nowhere to house him. If he is to resemble those Western Ocean men who come to the capital to enter the Imperial service we must order him, without exception, to change his dress to that of the Celestial Empire. However, we have never wished to force on others what is difficult to do. Besides, if the Celestial Empire desired to send someone permanently to reside in your Country surely you would not be able to agree to it? Furthermore, there are a great many Western Ocean countries altogether, and not merely your one country. If, like you, O King, they all beg to send someone to reside at the capital how could we grant their request in every case? It would be absolutely impossible for us to do so. How can we go as far as to change the regulations of the Celestial Empire, which are over a hundred years old, because of the request of one man—of you, O King?

'If it is said that your object, O King, is to take care of trade, men from your Country have been trading at Macao⁴⁹ for some time, and have always

of these see W. Devine, *The Four Churches of Peking*. The author has based his research mainly on that valuable source for information on the missionaries in Peking at this period, namely *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions étrangères*, (Tomes 16-24). For a note on the missionaries in Peking at the time of the Macartney Embassy see Sir G. T. Staunton, *Miscellaneous Notices Relating to China*, pp. 78-86, where he lists them under the following Churches:

The Greater Portuguese Church	Nan-t'ang (Southern Hall)
The Lesser Portuguese Church	Tung-t'ang (Eastern Hall)
The French Church	Pei-t'ang (Northern Hall)
Church of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda	Hsi-t'ang (Western Hall)

⁴⁷ I think the idea implied is that such a person would not be allowed to send information home as a regular matter. At this time the Celestial Empire was, as always, very suspicious lest foreign countries should gain knowledge of her internal affairs.

⁴⁸ More specifically the vassal states on the borders of China, e.g. the Mongolian Princes, etc.

⁴⁹ It would have been more accurate if the edict had said 'Canton', since it was here that the actual English trade was carried on. The merchants were forced by Imperial edict to live in Macao during the off season (approximately the summer) but they did not trade with the Chinese there. They were only allowed at Canton during the trading season, i.e. October to April.

been treated favourably. For instance, in the past Portugal and Italy and other countries have several times sent Envoys to the Celestial Empire with requests to look after their trade,⁵⁰ and the Celestial Empire, bearing in mind their loyalty, treated them with great kindness. Whenever any matter concerning trade has arisen which affected those countries it has always been fully taken care of. When the Canton merchant Wu Chao-p'ing⁵¹ (Wayqua) owed money to foreign ships we ordered the Governor-General to advance the money out of the Treasury and to pay his debts for him at the public expense, and to have the debtor-merchant severely punished. Presumably your Country has also heard about this. Why, then, do foreign countries need to send someone to remain at the capital? This is a request for which there is no precedent and it definitely cannot be granted. Moreover, the distance between Macao, the place where the trade is conducted, and the capital is nearly ten thousand *li*,⁵² and if he were to remain at the capital how could he look after it?

'If it is said that because you look up with admiration to the Celestial Empire you desire him to study our culture, yet the Celestial Empire has its own codes of ritual which are different from your Country's in each case. Even if the person from your Country who remained here was able to learn them it would be of no use since your Country has its own customs and regulations, and you would certainly not copy Chinese ones.

'The Celestial Empire, ruling all within the four seas,⁵³ simply concentrates on carrying out the affairs of Government properly, and does not value rare and precious things. Now you, O King, have presented various objects to the throne, and mindful of your loyalty in presenting offerings from afar, we have specially ordered the Yamen⁵⁴ to receive them. In fact, the virtue and power of the Celestial Dynasty has penetrated afar to the myriad kingdoms, which have come to render homage, and so all kinds of precious things from

⁵⁰ Presumably with requests that they might be allowed to appoint someone to look after the interests of their trade at the capital. However the text may not mean more than that they petitioned the Emperor for redress of abuses by Chinese officials in Macao and Canton. In any case Italy did not send a mission. If Italy is meant then a Papal envoy is referred to, but this mission would be for diplomatic and not trade reasons. Probably Italy is here confused with some other European country. See footnote 19.

⁵¹ See Morse, *Chronicles*, II, p. 25, and Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p. 201.

⁵² Since one *li* is equivalent to about one-third of an English mile this statement is an exaggeration and probably means no more than 'a long way'. The actual distance as the courier went at that time may have been about one thousand five hundred miles. However despatches travelling at express rate were known to have reached Canton from the capital in about eighteen days. See footnote 36.

⁵³ A classical phrase with a long history. It is synonymous with 'ruling the world'.

⁵⁴ i.e. the appropriate Department dealing with foreign tribute. This was probably the Li-fan-yüan 理藩院 which dealt with the affairs of the dependencies such as Mongolia and Tibet, and even with Russian affairs, according to M. N. Pavlovsky, *Chinese-Russian Relations*, p. 102.

“over mountain and sea” 梯航⁵⁵ have been collected here, things which your Chief Envoy and others have seen for themselves.⁵⁶ Nevertheless we have never valued ingenious articles, nor do we have the slightest need of your Country's manufactures. Therefore, O King, as regards your request to send someone to remain at the capital, while it is not in harmony with the regulations of the Celestial Empire we also feel very much that it is of no advantage to your Country. Hence we have issued these detailed instructions and have commanded your tribute Envoys to return safely home. You, O King, should simply act in conformity with our wishes by strengthening your loyalty and swearing perpetual obedience so as to ensure that your Country may share the blessings of peace.⁵⁷

‘Besides giving both the customary and extra gifts, as listed separately, to the Chief and Assistant Envoys, and to the various officials under them as well as to the interpreters, soldiers and servants, now, because your Envoy is returning home we have issued this special edict, and confer presents on you, O King—elaborate and valuable things all, in accordance with the usual etiquette. In addition we have bestowed brocades, gauzes, and elaborate curios; all precious things. These are listed separately.

‘Let the King reverently receive them and know our kind regard for him.
‘This is a special edict.’ (Chang-ku ts'ung-pien III, pp. 18a-19b)

This is perhaps the most important single Chinese document for the study of Sino-Western relations between 1700 and 1860. It gives, in beautifully precise and balanced Chinese, a classical exposition of the relations between

⁵⁵ A stock phrase. Hence quotation marks have been added in the translation in order to denote that these two characters would strike a chord in the mind of a Chinese official of that time. They also occur in the edict issued by the Emperor Ch'ien-lung to the King of Holland in 1795. (Translated by Duyvendak in ‘The Last Dutch Embassy to the Chinese Court [1794-1795]’, *T'oung Pao*, XXXIV, pp. 76-77.)

⁵⁶ Lord Macartney was proud of the quality and workmanship of the English presents, and said so in his Journal. See Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China*, pp. 279-80 (August 23). However on September 15th he records having seen the various palaces at Jehol: ‘These are all furnished in the richest manner, with pictures of the Emperor's huntings and progresses, with stupendous vases of jasper and agate; with the finest porcelain and japan, and with every kind of European toys and sing-songs; with spheres, orreries, clocks, and musical automatons of such exquisite workmanship, and in such profusion, that our presents must shrink from the comparison and *hide their diminished heads*. And yet I am told that the finest things we have seen are far exceeded by others of the same kind in the apartments of the ladies and in the European repository at the Yuen-min-yuan.’ (Robbins, p. 309.) Certainly the statement that the Emperor had ‘never valued ingenious articles’ is hardly in accordance with the facts, since the great officials at Canton in the eighteenth century were continually on the lookout for ingenious European clocks and ‘sing-songs’ to present to Court in order to gain favour. For a description of such clocks see A. Chapuis, *La Montre Chinoise*. There is also a delightful description of an elaborate sing-song in the shape of a troupe of clockwork actors who could perform a play called *The Western Pavilion* in A. Waley, *Yuan Mei*, pp. 134-35.

⁵⁷ i.e. with the Celestial Empire, and with all those lands under its aegis.

the Celestial Empire and the countries of the Western Ocean as seen from the Chinese point of view. Thus China is the centre of the world and the prototype of civilization. Any barbarian country may send a special envoy to the capital to present tribute and so partake briefly in the benefits of a superior civilization. As regards trade this is a privilege which is granted to foreigners and must be kept under close supervision; it is not necessary to the Celestial Empire. It is permitted out of compassion to the barbarians who need tea and silks and porcelain with which to make their lives bearable. As for the idea of a regular ambassador residing at Peking, it is unheard of. How can barbarian states have permanent intercourse with the Celestial Empire itself? They have nothing to offer, they do not know the correct etiquette. Their only task is to remain at peace, and from time to time to show their submission and loyalty by presenting tribute to the Imperial throne. This is the classic theory of China as the centre of civilization which is so perfectly presented in this edict. Even after the first Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-1842 and the opening up of Treaty Ports the ideas embalmed in this document did not materially change. There was still no question of permanent ambassadors from Western countries being allowed to reside at Peking. Trade was still regarded as a concession, something that must be regulated at the ports by the local officials. It took the Second Anglo-Chinese War and the Convention of Peking in 1860 to bring about any real change in the Chinese outlook. Even then it was not a whole-hearted one. The basic ideas expressed in this edict have never entirely lost their power. Of course in practice trade with Western countries continued to be carried on at Canton after this edict was issued. It is doubtful whether, in fact, the Celestial Empire would have been willing to give it up for the good reason that from the Emperor downwards those in authority got their cut out of it. But this is a question which still requires further investigation. However, it is true that, apart from opium, China was self-sufficient and could have managed without this western trade.

Meanwhile, two days after this famous edict was drafted and presented to the Emperor, Lord Macartney landed at Taku at the mouth of the Peiho on August 5th, 1793. It was as well that he did not know that the edict dismissing him after he had presented his 'tribute' had already been drafted, otherwise he might have viewed his mission with less enthusiasm. On the following day the Ambassador was received by Liang K'ên-t'ang, the Governor-General of Chihli. This was Macartney's first meeting with a high Chinese official. It is true that in his Journal he refers to two lesser officials whom he called Chou and Van who were detailed to attend him personally throughout his visit, but although they figure largely in his Journal they are not mentioned by name anywhere in this collection of Chinese documents. From this point

onwards throughout the next ten documents two main themes predominate—the tribute articles and the etiquette to be observed at official meetings with the foreign envoy. As soon as Chou and Van had met Macartney almost the first thing they did was to make a formal request for a list of presents. In doing this they were following instructions sent to Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui from above. Sir George Staunton, who accompanied Macartney as Secretary, explains the problem of describing these presents in language which the Chinese could understand. 'A common catalogue containing the names of those (presents) on board the *Hindustan* would not convey any idea of their qualities or intrinsic worth, or indeed be understood by any effort of translation. . . . It was necessary, therefore, to make out somewhat in the oriental style, such a general description of the nature of the articles, now sent, as appeared likely to render them acceptable. . . .'⁵⁸ This description of the presents was then translated into Chinese, while another version was made in Latin which would enable the European missionaries in the Emperor's service at Peking to check the Latin version against the Chinese translation. In the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* this Chinese translation has been preserved, and it makes pretty curious reading. One can see the problems with which the unfortunate translators had to contend, especially in dealing with the first and most important item.

*A List of Tribute Articles respectfully presented to the Mighty Emperor
of the Celestial Empire by the King of the Red-haired English*

FIRST ITEM

'A large construction called in Latin *Pu-la-ni-ta-li-wéng* (Planetarium). It consists of the sun, moon, and constellations in the sky and a complete picture of the globe. On it the earth is very small in relation to its size. The sun, moon and stars are fixed on to it, together with a replica of the earth. The whole thing can be set in motion automatically to imitate the movements of heaven and earth. It is very realistic'.⁵⁹ . . . After further details which are difficult to understand the Chinese version states: 'Connected with this on the list there is another rare construction called a *Lai-fu-lai-ko-tu-erh*

⁵⁸ See Staunton, *Embassy*, I, pp. 490–498.

⁵⁹ Dr Needham, in his Wilkins Lecture before the Royal Society in 1958, mentioned this particular planetarium, and suggested that it was the same as one ordered by the East India Company in 1714, which was a magnificent replica of the planetarium copied for the Earl of Orrery from the original made by George Graham about 1706. See J. Needham, 'The missing link in horological history: a Chinese contribution', in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, Series A, CCL, pp. 170–171. I have translated this document as literally as possible since I do not wish to read into it the ideas of the English original, but rather to show the difficulties which the interpreters encountered in putting these ideas into Chinese.

(Refractor) by which you can observe the movements of even the farthest and minutest stars in the sky very clearly, and can also make what has been recorded 做記的 by the construction called a *Pu-la-ni-ta-li-wéng* (Planetarium). This mirror is not used by seeing direct but by seeing from an angle. This is a new method which was invented by an astronomer called Hê-chih-erh (Herschel). This man's name has been reported together with it'.⁶⁰ (*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* III, pp. 22a-22b). In fact the Chinese version does not follow the long and fulsome eighteenth century English version but simply tries to give briefly the main characteristics of the nineteen presents or groups of presents listed.

The other subject which figured prominently in the official Chinese correspondence throughout August 1793 was the question of how exactly the barbarian Envoy should be treated at meetings with the great officials. The Emperor, in various orders, had already reminded his officials neither to be too servile nor to be too overbearing. For instance in a Court Letter of August 5th from the Grand Secretariat to Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui the method of dealing with the barbarian Envoy was clearly laid down. The relevant passage reads:

'Although the tribute Envoy himself declared that he is an Assistant Minister of State 輔政大臣⁶¹ of his country and is a person in the close confidence of the King, nevertheless, whenever barbarian envoys enter our country to present tribute, the etiquette for the meeting of vassal officials with ministers of the Celestial Empire is governed by a definite code. For example Juan Kuang-p'ing was King of Annam⁶² but when he had a meeting with Sub-Prefect Wang Fu-t'ang the ceremony was nevertheless very reverential. How much more reverential should Macartney and others be, since they are merely envoys of their country, whereas Chêng-jui has been sent by Imperial command to go and take charge of the affair. When the Envoy waits on Chêng-jui he naturally ought to be all the more reverential. In dealing with barbarians it is all the more important to weigh up the situation

⁶⁰ Sir William Herschel (1738-1822). The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives much information about his astronomical inventions, but does not mention that he played any part in perfecting a refractor for presentation to the Emperor of China. Staunton's description has: 'These observations are made, not by looking directly at the object, as in common telescopes, in which the powers of sight are more limited; but by perceiving, sideways, the reflection of such an object upon mirrors, according to a method invented by a great philosopher called Newton, and improved by an excellent astronomer called Herschel; and who both have made such discoveries in science, as to deserve that their names should reach to his Imperial Majesty of China.' Unfortunately this was too much for the interpreters who produced a shortened and garbled version from which Sir Isaac Newton's name was omitted, so that he was never brought to the notice of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung.

⁶¹ Macartney had, in fact, been made a Privy Councillor in May 1792.

⁶² He went to Peking in 1790 to congratulate the Emperor personally on his eightieth birthday. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 681.

and to hit the mean, being neither too servile nor too overbearing. Since that country has sent an envoy sailing across the sea from afar on no account should he harbour any slight which might deflect him from turning towards civilization. Show him kindness and it will be all right. But if he is treated with too much ceremony then, the barbarian nature being greedy to gain advantage, the more liberally we treat them the more haughty they will become, and instead we will cause the barbarians to lose sight of the ceremonial system and dignity of the Celestial Empire and they may slight us. This is a matter of great importance. Since Chêng-jui has been employed at Court for a number of years he will naturally be fully acquainted with the proper degree of ceremonial to use.

'Since the Salt Administrator went to visit him on the twenty-third day (July 30) why has he not yet memorialized?⁶³ Let instructions be sent to Chêng-jui to forward a memorial immediately by express on how he received the Envoys and the nature of the etiquette employed.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* III, p. 20b, line 9 ff.)

Chêng-jui seems to have found some difficulty in hitting the mean because on the same day he was rebuked in a separate Court Letter from Ho-shên, the Emperor's favourite, which reads as follows:

The Twenty-Ninth Day of the Sixth Month (August 5)

A Court Letter

'From the Grand Secretary Earl Ho, a Court Despatch to Liang, Governor-General of Chihli, and to Ch'ang, Governor of Chekiang, and instructions to Chêng-jui, Salt Administrator of Changlu.⁶⁴

⁶³ This can be explained. Chêng-jui did not in fact meet Lord Macartney himself until August 11th when the Ambassador reached Tientsin. The first Chinese officials to greet Macartney were Van and Chou who came on board the *Lion* at noon on July 31st. Neither of these officials is mentioned by name in these documents, though since they were detailed to remain with the embassy throughout its stay in China they bulk large in Macartney's own Journal. It seems that Chou was a minor civil official, and Van was the military official at Tungchow. Perhaps he was the Circuit Military Commander who was ordered by Chêng-jui to go and visit the Ambassador on board ship, and who is referred to in the next document here translated. There is a coloured portrait of him as the frontispiece to J. Barrow's *Travels in China* (1806). The point is that according to a memorial previously sent by Chêng-jui he stated that he himself went on board the English tribute ship on the 23rd day of the 6th month (July 30) and examined the state letter and the list of tribute articles and that a memorial would follow. However, since this was not in fact true, Chêng-jui was hard put to describe the etiquette with which the barbarian envoy received the Imperial Commissioner. He later received a reprimand for his lapse and lost a rank (and a 'button') in the hierarchy. (For 'buttons' see footnote 34.) Barrow, who was Comptroller to the Macartney Mission, gives his version of the incident in *Travels in China*, p. 116.

⁶⁴ Here synonymous with Tientsin. For a contemporary mention of the salt pans there see Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 78 and Staunton, *Embassy*, II, pp. 20-23.

'On the twenty-ninth day of the sixth month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung I received an Imperial command in response to Chêng-jui's memorial stating that

The English Chief and Assistant Tribute Envoys considered themselves to be of high rank and so worthy to meet others on an equal footing, and that if Chêng-jui were to go and visit them first (i.e. instead of letting them come to visit him) this would be improper etiquette. Therefore he ordered the Circuit Military Commander 道將 and others to go to the ship and to obtain the state message and list of tribute articles for examination.

'What he did rather overstepped the mark. Previously we sent down an Imperial Edict on the method of receiving men from afar. If we treat them with too much ceremony then the etiquette will be improper. But we have never instructed the Salt Administrator to place himself in an exalted position and to haggle with men from afar (over precedence). However, when Chêng-jui received the former edict, because the Envoy (i.e. Macartney) wanted to be on an equal footing as regards etiquette, he (Chêng-jui) would not demean himself by going, but merely despatched the Circuit Military Commander to go to the ship and investigate. This is really overdoing it. Just realize that even if the Envoy did perform the ceremony of the *kowtow* to Chêng-jui he would not in any way be honoured by it,⁶⁵ and even if he did not *kowtow* what damage would be done? If Liang K'ên-t'ang is also particular about this point the matter will become even more ridiculous. The habit of the Provincial officials is to do either too much or not enough!

'Furthermore, these Envoys have sailed the sea from afar for a whole year before reaching Tientsin, so we ought to show them particular consideration. Surely we should not bargain with them over the ceremony for meeting one another. This is exactly the way how not to show consideration to men from afar. If the Salt Administrator is such a stickler, and is unable to comprehend our wishes, it may be rather difficult for us to instruct you. Also according to Liang K'ên-t'ang's memorial:

When they land at Tientsin they need not be given an additional banquet.⁶⁶

'This is not a very important matter. The other day an edict was issued to the effect that since Tientsin is a provincial capital, if the local officials give the Envoys a feast when they pass through it will only be in accordance with proper procedure. Let Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui simply obey the above-mentioned edict and give them a banquet. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* V, p. 25a)

⁶⁵ The ceremony, if performed, would be for the honour of Chêng-jui not as an individual but in his capacity as the representative of the Emperor.

⁶⁶ Macartney had already been offered a banquet at the mouth of the Pei-ho which he declined owing to fatigue. (Robbins, p. 254) It is interesting to compare the reception of the English embassy in 1793 with the Dutch embassy in 1794, which travelled overland and was forced to go at such a pace that there was no time for official banquets. See Duyvendak, *The Last Dutch Embassy*, pp. 87-88 for the official Chinese explanation of this discrepancy in the treatment of the two embassies given in an Imperial edict of December 22nd, 1794.

The despatch continues longer in this vein, but it could not have been much comfort to the Provincial officials who had to carry out Imperial instructions while at the same time endeavouring to hit the mean in their treatment of the barbarians. To urge these officials to adhere to the traditional ceremonial system while at the same time telling them to use their common sense was expecting rather a lot of bureaucrats. One gets the impression from these documents that it was easier for the Emperor and the Grand Secretariat at the top to urge a little flexibility in dealing with Western Ocean men than it was for the officials on the spot to show flexibility and yet still manage to do the right thing. Hitting the mean was a difficult accomplishment. The fact remains that the whole Imperial system was most sensitive to questions of rank, precedence and etiquette.

However, these were minor preoccupations with etiquette compared with the major issue over ceremony which was about to arise, namely the question of what ceremony Lord Macartney was to perform when received in Imperial audience at Jehol. A foreign envoy when having audience with the Emperor was expected to perform the full *kowtow* ceremony which consisted of nine prostrations and nine knockings of the head on the ground. This had been performed by most of the Western envoys who came to China between 1520 and the time of Macartney's embassy.⁶⁷ In order to ensure that the English envoy should comply with the usual ceremony the officials responsible for conducting him to Jehol began to prepare the ground well in advance.

On Monday, August 5th, 1793 Lord Macartney and his suite transferred from H.M.S. *Lion* to a number of smaller ships and proceeded to the mouth of the Peiho where they transferred to the Chinese 'yachts' provided to take them up the river to Tungchow near Peking. On the following day Macartney and Staunton went ashore at Taku, where they were received by Liang K'ên-t'ang, the Governor-General of Chihli province. Macartney described him in his Journal thus:

He is a very fine old man of seventy-eight years of age, of low stature, with small sparkling eyes, a benign aspect, and a long silver beard, the whole of his appearance calm, venerable, and dignified.

Only one thing disquieted Macartney during the interview.

With regard to the ships, imagining their stores must have been exhausted in so long a voyage, he offered to supply them with twelve months' provisions immediately. I hope this does not forebode his wishes for our speedy departure.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ See Pritchard 'The Kowtow in the Macartney Embassy to China in 1793', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, II, No. 2 (1943), especially the appendix. For an eighteenth century European account of performing the *kowtow* see *Memoirs of Father Ripa*, selected and translated by Fortunato Prandi, p. 48.

⁶⁸ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 258. There is a drawing of one of these 'yachts' (facing p. 264,) by William Alexander who accompanied the Embassy as 'draughtsman'. It looks like a

Macartney's fears were correct. The fleet of junks sailed up the river and arrived at Tientsin on August 11th. Here Macartney met the Imperial Commissioner, Chêng-jui, whom he described as 'the Emperor's Legate'. He was quick to sense Chêng-jui's hostility to the English Embassy and describing this first meeting wrote:

We then descended to particulars, and after a very long discussion, during which I easily discovered a perverse and unfriendly disposition in the Legate towards all our concerns. . . .

There was disagreement over the presents which Chêng-jui declared must all go to Jehol, while Macartney pointed out that it would be better to leave certain of them at Peking since they would be damaged on the rough journey to Jehol.⁶⁹

At this juncture began the far more important dispute over the correct ceremonial to be used when Lord Macartney was received in audience by the Emperor at Jehol. In view of this it was important for the Emperor and his ministers to know how the Envoy had conducted himself at the first interviews which he had had with Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui, and there was a note of urgency in the Court Letter of August 14th sent by the Emperor's Chief Minister, Ho-shên,⁷⁰ to these two officials commenting on their reports concerning these meetings. The first part of this Letter is taken up with instructions about assembling the presents for display, but the second part concerns the behaviour of the Envoy at Taku and Tientsin.

. . . Furthermore in the memorials of Liang K'ên-t'ang and Chêng-jui they both report that at the time of the banquet (August 11) the Envoy and others removed their hats and knocked their heads 免冠叩首.

'Formerly, according to Liang K'ên-t'ang's memorial, at his first meeting with the Envoy, when he reverently proclaimed the gracious edict (August 6), the Envoy removed his hat and stood in a deferential attitude. In this memorial (i.e. about the banquet) why does he now report that he removed his hat and knocked his head? We have always heard that Western men use cloth to bind their legs, and that it is inconvenient for kneeling and *kowtowing* 跪拜. This shows that among the customs of that country they are not acquainted with the ceremony of knocking the head 叩首. Perhaps the customs they have are only removing the hat, bowing the body and nodding the head 免冠, 鞠躬, 點首, and the Governor-General and others in their memorial failed to make this clear, and as a result it may be that they reported it as "knocking the head".

normal Chinese junk but has a superstructure of cabins built on its deck. A man in top hat and frock-coat can be seen seated in the bows with a drawing board on his knees. The original is in the British Museum.

⁶⁹ Robbins, *ibid.*, p. 261.

⁷⁰ See footnote 30.

'Let Chêng-jui be instructed that if at the time of the banquet the Envoy really knocked his head then that is the end of the matter, but if, as earlier (reported), he merely removed his hat and nodded his head then he (Chêng-jui) ought, casually in the course of conversation to inform him tactfully that "as regards the various vassal states 藩封,⁷¹ when they come to the Celestial Empire to bring tribute and have an audience, not only do all their envoys perform the ceremony of the three kneelings and the nine knockings of the head 三跪九叩首, but even the Princes who come in person to Court also perform this same ceremony. Now your King has sent you to bring birthday congratulations and naturally you should obey the regulations of the Celestial Empire. Although according to the custom of your country you all use cloth binding so that you are not able to kneel and *kowtow*, yet when you have an audience why not loosen the bindings temporarily, and as soon as you have performed the ceremony you can put on the bindings again. This can easily be done. If you rigidly follow your country's customs and do not perform this ceremony you will simply fail to carry out your King's loyal intentions, who has sent you sailing the sea from afar to come to present birthday congratulations and to pay tribute. Moreover, you will give the various vassal envoys cause to laugh and I fear that the Minister at Court who conducts the ceremony will not sanction it. I tell you this in confidence."

'If thus indirectly you enlighten him, when the Envoy arrives at the Imperial Lodge⁷² he naturally will reverently obey the etiquette of the Celestial Empire, and only then will it be right and proper.

'For this purpose let instructions be transmitted to Chêng-jui at the rate of six hundred *li* per day and also let Liang K'ên-t'ang be informed.

'In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter is hereby sent.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* V, p. 31a, line 9 ff.)

Further instructions for Chêng-jui on this subject were received from the Emperor by Ho-shên on the same day.

'On the eighth day of the seventh month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung (August 14) I received an Imperial command in response to the memorial by Chêng-jui and others that

On the fifth day of the seventh month after the English Envoy had been given a banquet at Tientsin he then set out on the sixth day (August 12) by boat for Tungchow, and that Chêng-jui is looking after him on the journey.

'As that country's tribute Envoy was to set out for Tungchow on the sixth day and to proceed leisurely all the way on his journey, there will still be many days before he reaches Jehol. While Chêng-jui is looking after him

⁷¹ i.e. the feudatory fiefs near the frontiers of the Empire.

⁷² i.e. the Imperial Hunting Lodge at Jehol where the audience was to take place.

en route and seeing him daily he can get to know all about his moods and bearing 性情禮貌. Although, according to the memorial of the Salt Commissioner (i.e. Chêng-jui), the tribute Envoy and others were entirely reverential, yet nevertheless we are afraid that he may not entirely be free from covering up for them.⁷³ Let an edict be sent to Chêng-jui that he should carefully notice whether the tribute Envoy is really reverential and obedient or not, or whether he cannot avoid giving himself airs somewhat. Then memorialize according to the facts, so that we may decide how to receive the tribute Envoy on his arrival. Do not screen him. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VI, p. 32b, lines 1-7)

It is significant that Chêng-jui is suspected of not reporting the true facts and of glossing over the Envoy's insufficiently reverential attitude. Later, as we shall see, Chêng-jui was to be severely reprimanded for his dissimulation. Part of the above letter deals with the presents, as do most of the other documents of this period, thereby showing that Chinese officials were not bothered by any rule of 'one subject to one despatch'. Also on the same day a letter was sent by the Grand Council to Chin Chien 金簡,⁷⁴ Minister of the Board of Works, and others outlining to them the programme of entertainment proposed for the Envoy on his return to Peking from Jehol. I have quoted this document, in part, in order to show the kind of 'sight-seeing' on which a visiting V. I. P. at this time might be conducted.

' . . . As to the Envoy, after he has reached Jehol and had an audience he is to set out on the sixteenth day of the eighth month to return to the capital. While at the Yüan-ming Yüan let him be housed in the Hung-ya Yüan 宏雅園, and in the city he is to reside in the dwelling confiscated from Mu-t'êng-ê 穆騰額. As to his food and other things, officials of the Imperial Household should be appointed to take care of these matters properly. As to the two sets of rooms they should decide to what extent they need to be redecorated and swept out in order to prepare them to be lived in.⁷⁵

⁷³ Chêng-jui was not likely to do this out of regard for the Envoy, but because he found it difficult to report anything which he knew might displease the Emperor.

⁷⁴ Chin Chien came from a Korean family, originally living near the Yalu river. For his biography see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 159-160. He died in 1795.

⁷⁵ For Macartney's own description of this accommodation see Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 274 where he states, 'Some of the apartments are large, handsome, and not ill-contrived, but the whole building is so much out of repair that I already see it will be impossible to reside in it comfortably during the winter.' Barrow in *Travels in China*, p. 102 was less restrained in his condemnation of the quarters assigned to him and Dr Dinwiddie at the Yüan-ming Yüan, and observed that these rooms 'seemed fitter for hogs than human beings'. It is interesting to note that at this date (August 21) Macartney was still hoping to be able to spend the winter in Peking in order to further his mission.

'It is the Imperial Command that on the return of the Imperial chariot⁷⁶—by which time the tribute Envoy will already be at the Yüan-ming Yüan—he should welcome it at the Great Eastern Gate. Also two or three days later let him go sight-seeing in the Yüan-ming Yüan and on the Wan-shou Shan 萬壽山⁷⁷ and also watch the water games 玩水法.⁷⁸ When he moves into the capital to receive the Imperial State message 勅書, this will enable him reverently to see the magnificence of the T'ai-ho 太和殿, the Pao-ho 保和殿, the Ch'ien-ch'ing 乾清宮, and the Ning-shou 寧壽宮 palaces.⁷⁹ When the time comes let all those places which have water sports and so forth be got ready. . . .'
(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VI, p. 33b, line 7 ff.)

' . . . Again, the Emperor desires that after the Envoy has reached the capital he should be allowed to go sight-seeing on the K'un-ming Lake 昆明湖 and ride in a K'un-ming "lucky" dragon-boat.⁸⁰ The waters of the lake must be sufficient for it to float on, and your Excellency (Chin) should have the lake dredged beforehand so that there will be plenty of water in it when the time comes, and nothing will go wrong. It is intended to give a

⁷⁶ A respectful way of saying 'the Emperor'.

⁷⁷ lit. 'hill of a myriad ages', which is in the (new) Summer Palace (I-ho Yüan), and is one of the show places for visitors to see to-day.

⁷⁸ Unfortunately, because he would not *kowtow*, all this part of the programme was cancelled and Macartney never saw these water games, and we do not know what they consisted of. Perhaps dragon-boat races were intended. The Dutch Envoys, Titsingh and van Braam, who went to Peking in 1794-95, described sight-seeing in the Yüan-ming Yüan (old Summer Palace), but because they were there in the winter their entertainments were different, and among other things they rode on the ice, 'seated in a number of sledges that were pulled along the canal with many curves, and went ashore on a place where on either side was an illuminated paper sledge in the shape of a swan'. Duyvendak, 'Last Dutch Embassy', p. 71. The standard work on the Summer Palaces is by C. B. Malone, *History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing dynasty*.

⁷⁹ These palaces are all in the Forbidden City, and have recently been renovated and redecored, and are open to the public.

The *T'ai-ho Tien* (Hall of Supreme Harmony) is the first of three great halls of ceremony in the Forbidden City. It was to this hall that the Emperors came to receive the congratulations of the court on New Year's day, the Winter Solstice, Imperial birthdays, announcements of victories and other great ceremonial occasions. See L. C. Arlington and W. Lewisohn, *In Search of Old Peking*, pp. 35-37. Also Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, pp. 31-33.

The *Pao-ho Tien* (Hall of Protecting Harmony) is the third of the Great Halls. Here the Emperor received the scholars who had taken the highest degree in the Metropolitan Examinations and also the princes of vassal states. Like the *T'ai-ho Tien* it was built in the Ming period.

The *Ch'ien-ch'ing Kung* (Palace of Heavenly Purity) is generally considered to be the most important of all the Imperial palaces. It was an audience hall under the Manchu dynasty. Arlington and Lewisohn, *ibid.*, p. 45.

The *Ning-shou Kung* (Palace of Peaceful Old Age). Built by Ch'ien-lung in 1773 and intended for his own use when he retired, and it was here that he actually did retire when he finally handed over the government to his son, Chia-ch'ing, in 1796.

⁸⁰ This lake is in the (new) Summer Palace (I-ho Yüan) and one can be taken across it in a punt to-day. But the auspicious dragon-boats, whatever they were, have disappeared.

dragon-boat display in the Yüan-ming Yüan and to let the tribute Envoy watch. His Excellency (I)⁸¹ must have it carefully repainted beforehand. This is what you are enjoined to do. We take this opportunity to enquire after your health in all possible ways 順候不一.⁸²

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VI, p. 34, line 5 ff.)

Meanwhile Chêng-juí was in trouble. To report to the throne that the barbarian Envoy was stubborn and steadfastly refused to practise the *kowtow* would have been to admit that his own powers of persuasion had failed, and thus to lose face. Macartney has described in his *Journal* how his two Chinese conductors, Chou and Van, raised the question again on August 15th when the junks were nearing Tungchow.

'They then introduced the subject of the court ceremonies with a degree of art, address, and insinuation that I could not avoid admiring. They began by turning the conversation upon the different modes of dress that prevailed among different nations, and, after pretending to examine ours particularly, seemed to prefer their own, on account of its being loose and free from ligatures, and of its not impeding or obstructing the genuflexions and prostrations which, they said, were customary to be made by all persons whenever the Emperor appeared in public.

'They therefore apprehended much inconvenience to us from our knee-buckles and garters, and hinted to us that it would be better to disencumber ourselves of them before we should go to Court. I told them they need not be uneasy about that circumstance, as I supposed, whatever ceremonies were usual for the Chinese to perform, the Emperor would prefer my paying him the same obeisance which I did to my own Sovereign. They said they supposed the ceremonies in both countries must be nearly alike, that in China the form was to kneel down upon both knees, and make nine prostrations or inclinations of the head to the ground, and that it never had been, and never could be, dispensed with. I told them ours was somewhat different, and that though I had the most earnest desire to do everything that might be agreeable to the Emperor, my first duty must be to do what might be agreeable to my own King; but if they were really in earnest in objecting to my following the etiquette of the English Court, I should deliver to them my reply in writing as soon as I arrived at Peking.' (Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 266)

⁸¹ i.e. I-ling-a 伊齡阿. A Manchu of the Yellow Banner. He had been Hoppo at Canton in 1780, and in 1793 was appointed a Junior Vice-President of the Board of Works. See Duyvendak, 'The Last Dutch Embassy', p. 58, footnote 2. For a description of the functions of the Board of Works see Hsieh Pao-chao, *The Government of China* (1644-1911), pp. 266-271.

⁸² This phrase is a stereotyped one for ending correspondence when the sender of the communication wishes to greet the recipient personally. Literally it means 'to take the opportunity to enquire after someone in every way'.

Instead of reporting Macartney's refusal Chêng-jui pretended that the Envoy had been practising the *kowtow*, evidently hoping that before they reached Jehol Macartney would have acquiesced. Thus the Grand Council, in a letter of instruction to Chêng-jui of August 18th commenting on his report, were under a false impression.

The Twelfth Day of the Seventh Month (August 18)
An Instruction from the Grand Council to Chêng-jui

'Your report has been read. The tribute Envoy and others will reach the Yüan-ming Yüan on the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the seventh month and will then require another six or seven days to check over the tribute articles. By the time they reach Jehol it will be about the beginning of the eighth month. This is not too late. But after he has arrived the tribute Envoy must first practise the etiquette. If he still does not conform fully to the etiquette you must instruct him point by point. Only when he is versed in the salutation of the *kowtow* may he be ushered into an Imperial audience. As to the tribute articles which should have arrived, the setting up and adjusting of them will also take time. The tribute Envoy, as well as the tribute articles which should be sent to Jehol, should arrive by the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth of the seventh month. Unofficially arrange for him to arrive a few days earlier so that he may carry out rehearsals (of the *kowtow*), and set up (the articles).

'Instructions are hereby issued for this purpose.

'The above instructions are for Chêng-jui, the Salt Administrator of Changlu. The seventh month, the twelfth day.'

(Chang-ku ts'ung-pien VII, p. 41b)

The Grand Council was still not entirely satisfied and warned Chêng-jui in a further letter that the Envoy must conform in detail to the traditional ceremonial at his audience with the Emperor.

'On the twelfth day of the seventh month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung (August 18), I (i.e. Ho-shên) received Imperial instructions in response to Chêng-jui's memorial that

The English envoy and others were deeply ashamed at being unversed in the etiquette of the Celestial Empire, and have daily been practising it, and are now gradually learning how to kneel and *kowtow* 跪叩. Chêng-jui has been instructing them from time to time so that they will be able to perform it properly.

The Envoy and others, having received a Commission from their King, have come from afar to bring congratulations and to present tribute. That they reverentially pay homage to the Celestial Empire 敬奉天朝 naturally stems from their great sincerity. Certainly they will not dare in the least to err over etiquette and thereby to be blamed for disrespect. Now the Envoy and the others have been briefed by Chêng-jui *en route* and have reverently been practising the *kowtow* salutation. When they have an Imperial audience they naturally ought to be able to obey the etiquette respectfully. . . .'

(Chang-ku ts'ung-pien VII, p. 41a, lines 1-5)

Meanwhile, preparations were being made for the reception of the Embassy at Jehol and these involved some of the European missionaries in the Emperor's service. Thus on August 19th the following Imperial edict was issued:

'On the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung (August 19) an Imperial Decree was issued:

England has sent an Envoy sailing the seas from afar to come with congratulations and tribute. It is ordered that in accordance with precedent the Assistant Supervisor, So Tê-ch'ao 索德超⁸³ should come to Jehol to take care of them, and to interpret and usher. Let him be given the button 頂帶 of the third grade.⁸⁴ Since So Tê-ch'ao has been given this favour, let the Chief Supervisor An Kuo-ning 安國寧⁸⁵ also be given the button of the third grade. Also let the other Western Ocean men, Ho Ts'ing-t'ai 賀清泰⁸⁶ and others whom he is bringing with him all be granted the favour of the button of the sixth grade.

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 42a)

Also at the same time a letter was sent from the Grand Council to Chin Chien, President of the Board of Works, and others, on the same subject.

'We have received instructions from the Grand Secretary, Earl Ho, to the effect that:

Previously So Tê-ch'ao was ordered to take several of the most skilful Western Ocean men from the Halls⁸⁷ who are versed in astronomy and capable of repairing clocks, and bring them to Jehol. Now So Tê-ch'ao only needs to bring along with him Ho Ts'ing-t'ai

⁸³ The Chinese name of Fr Joseph-Bernard d'Almeida (1728-1805), the last Portuguese Jesuit remaining in Peking. He had been trained in astronomy and at this time was a Vice-President (Assistant Supervisor) of the Board of Mathematics in which capacity he would be required to deal with astronomical matters. See Louis Pfister, *Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques*, No. 417. However, it must be remembered that these notes on the Jesuits in China were assembled by Pfister as far back as 1886, and contained many shortcomings. It is true that they were not printed until 1932, and then only after considerable additions and corrections had been made. However, they are unreliable in places and are often tantalizingly inadequate. Meanwhile scholars must wait for the researches of Fr Henri Bernard-Maître to appear in print before anything better than Pfister's *Notices* is available.

⁸⁴ A transparent pale-blue button. See footnote 34.

⁸⁵ The Chinese name for P. André Rodrigues (1729-1796). He arrived in Peking in 1759 together with Father d'Almeida, and like him was a member of the Board of Mathematics, being its President at this time. See Pfister, *Notices*, No. 418.

⁸⁶ The Chinese name for P. Louis de Poirot (1735-1814). He entered the Emperor's service in 1773 as a Court painter, and although he had never studied art, managed to please the Emperor. He was a good linguist and interpreted both in Chinese and Manchu at court. See Pfister, *Notices*, No. 436, and Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries', p. 15, footnote 1.

⁸⁷ i.e. The four 'Halls' or Churches which the missionaries had been allowed to build in Peking. The instructions to Father d'Almeida here referred to were dated the thirtieth day of the sixth month (August 6), and can be found in *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* V, p. 27a, lines 8-11. The ending of this document is interesting for the light which it throws on the administration of the missionaries. 'Let Officials of the Yamen of the Provincial Commander-in-chief 提督 and of the Imperial Household 內務府 who are in charge of the four Western Ocean Halls provide their carriages and travelling expenses (i.e. for the missionaries in the Emperor's service) in accordance with custom.' See also footnote 46.

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and P'an T'ing-chang 潘廷章,⁸⁸ who are skilled at portrait-painting, and come to Jehol after the twenty-eighth day of the seventh month. As to Tê T'ien-tz'ü 德天賜⁸⁹ and Pa Mao-chêng 巴茂正⁹⁰ who can both repair clocks, let So Tê-ch'ao choose one of them and bring him with him. The remainder are to stay at the capital and help to manage the tribute articles from that country which have been left in the capital, and need not come with the others.

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 42a)

These two documents give an indication of the Imperial attitude towards missionaries; that they were in Peking as super-craftsmen to obey the Emperor's mandate, but at the same time they were to be treated with respect as part of the Chinese hierarchy of officials.

A further snub was administered to Chêng-jui in a Court Letter of August 28th. Sometime previously he had reported on the size of the planetarium which the Envoy was bringing as the chief attraction among the presents, and he had reported that once it was put together it could not be dismantled. Certainly the Ambassador and his suite had been at pains to explain the delicate nature of the scientific instruments which they had brought, and the need for time and space in which to set them up. They had also insisted that these instruments were too delicate to be moved once the skilled craftsmen of the Embassy had got them working properly. This angered the Emperor and his ministers and a kind of game of exaggeration and deflation was played, in which Chêng-jui was involved. Hence the following passage rebuking Chêng-jui:

' . . . Since Chêng-jui has only been in the Salt Administration and the Customs Service in Kiangsu, Chekiang, Tientsin and other places and has not held the office of Superintendent of the Canton Customs,⁹¹ his acquaintance

⁸⁸ Chinese name for Fr Joseph Panzi (1733-1812), who came to China in 1771. He had some natural ability for painting, and can be mentioned together with Frs Castiglione and Attiret as painters who successfully adapted European techniques to Chinese subject matter, and taught them to Chinese painters. An engraving made from a portrait of Ch'ien-lung painted by Panzi in 1773 can be seen at the beginning of Vol. I of *Mémoires Concernant les Chinois*. However, this whole subject needs further research. For Panzi see Pfister, *Notices*, No. 437, also Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 372, and P. Pelliot, 'Les "Conquêtes de l'Empereur de la Chine"', *T'oung Pao*, XX (1921), p. 187, note 3.

⁸⁹ The Chinese name for P. Peter Adéodat, who entered the Emperor's service in 1784 as a clockmaker and mechanic. He is referred to by Macartney and Staunton as 'Deodati'. He was an interpreter to John Barrow (Comptroller of the Embassy) and Dr Dinwiddie (experimental scientist) when they remained at the Yüan-ming Yüan to set up the presents there. See Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 107, also Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries', p. 4, footnote 2, and additional note by Paul Pelliot.

⁹⁰ Chinese name of Fr Joseph Paris, a Lazarist who entered the Emperor's service in 1785. He was a skilled watchmaker.

⁹¹ In contemporary English documents he was called the 'Hoppon'. See footnote 3. When the Embassy was first announced in October 1792 the Hoppon at Canton was Shêng-chu 盛住 but in September 1793 he was replaced by Su-lêng-ê 蘇楞額, who, twenty-three years later was responsible for escorting a second mission, under Lord Amherst, from Tientsin to Peking in 1816. See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 967, and footnote 132 below.

with Western clocks and other articles is not extensive and he is inexperienced in such matters. Consequently he was overawed by what the tribute Envoy said. Now that the tribute Envoy has seen that there are also people in the Celestial Empire who are versed in astronomy, geography and clock-repairing, and are now helping alongside those who are setting up the articles, he can no longer boast that he alone has got the secret. Presumably he has begun to stop boasting.

'Let instructions be sent to Chin Chien and others to take the above points one by one and according to the facts memorialize in reply without waiting.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 45b, last line to p. 46a, line 5)

It appears that the Emperor and his ministers were jealous of any other nation claiming skills and inventions which the Chinese themselves had not already mastered. Meanwhile more trouble was in store for Chêng-jui. The Emperor was daily expecting to receive a report about the putting together of the large and intricate presents such as the planetarium, the globes (of the sky and the world), the great lens, the lustres, and the clocks and their display in the Chêng-ta-kuang-ming Palace of the Yüan-ming Yüan. Also he wanted to be assured that the missionaries and others skilled in repairing clocks under the direction of the Chief Eunuch were in attendance to watch the English craftsmen at this task and so learn how these instruments were assembled and kept working. It was now six days after the Envoy and his party had reached the Yüan-ming Yüan 'but actually not a single word has been memorialized'. Ho-shên was then instructed by the Emperor to find out why there was this delay.

' . . . Thereupon we asked Ho-shên, and according to his report:

There had been a letter from Chin Chien and I-ling-a to the effect that Chêng-jui would himself (i.e. alone) memorialize on these matters.

(*Vermilion note* 硃: 'Quite ridiculous'.⁹²)

'We ordered those three men conjointly to take charge, and naturally they ought to have worked together. The reason why former instructions were sent to Chêng-jui was because Chêng-jui was still *en route* accompanying the English tribute Envoy. Now that Chêng-jui has reached the capital and he and Chin Chien and I-ling-a are all together in the same place naturally they ought to send a joint memorial quickly. How could they interpret the

⁹² In the original text these words were in vermilion ink, and were therefore written by the Emperor personally, no official being allowed to use vermilion ink. For an illustration of what such Imperial notes looked like on state documents see *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, where a copy of a memorial by Nien Kêng-yao (年羹堯 d. 1726) is reproduced together with Emperor Yung-chêng's vermilion notes upon it. These Imperial notes could sometimes be most scathing. See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 589.

affair so literally and shift the responsibility 推諉.⁹³ Since Chêng-jui also procrastinated and has not yet memorialized all are in the wrong. Let a decree be sent reprimanding them. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 46b, line 6 ff.)

After discussing other matters this letter then returns to the same charge:

' . . . Let Chin Chien and others obey yesterday's instructions and one by one list the measurements of each article. . . .'

(*Vermilion note*) 'This time do not omit the name of I-ling-a and Chêng-jui. How can you be so stupid. . . .'

(*ibid.* p. 47a, lines 1-2)

This is a nice example of the paternal way in which the Emperor supervised the work of his ministers, and when necessary issued an Imperial 'rocket'.

In the very next document Chêng-jui was again in trouble. On August 25th Macartney had received a letter from Captain Gower of H.M.S. *Lion* which had been sent via the Imperial Courier Service, and had been delivered to him by Chêng-jui. Having had an answer prepared Macartney requested Chêng-jui to have it forwarded to Captain Gower, whereupon Chêng-jui asked about the contents of the two letters, and Macartney had them translated to him. However Chêng-jui, acting on his own initiative, held up Macartney's reply and memorialized the throne on the subject. It was not surprising, according to Macartney's account, that Van and Chou 'scarcely disguised their sentiments of the Emperor's partiality to the Tartars in preference to his Chinese subjects; nor do they seem much to like their colleague the Legate, who is a Tartar, but, being the first in the commission, has the exclusive privilege of corresponding with Court upon our affairs, and whom they consider a sort of crazy and morose man'.⁹⁴ Tartar or no Tartar, Chêng-jui received a sharp rebuke for having memorialized that he considered it improper for the barbarian ship to return to England in advance of Macartney and his suite, which was what Gower had suggested. Furthermore he had held up Macartney's reply and suggested in his memorial that the Governor of Chekiang should be instructed to tell the barbarian officer to anchor off Tinghai, in Chushan, and wait for the Envoy's return. The Court Letter of August 30th, containing this rebuke reads in part:

' . . . What he memorialized was extremely silly. This really shows how unlucky the Salt Administrator is to be so muddle-headed. Because the people on board that country's ships are unaccustomed to the climate the

⁹³ More colloquially we might say 'pass the buck'.

⁹⁴ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 257.

Envoy wants to send them home in advance, and naturally we ought to let them please themselves. How could Chêng-jui advise them and suggest that it would be improper for the ships to return home in advance? . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 47a, line 9)

After objecting to other matters reported by Chêng-jui in the same memorial, this Letter continues:

' . . . Chêng-jui reached the capital some time ago and is now together with Chin Chien and I-ling-a in one place. We have repeatedly sent instructions ordering the three of them to consult together, and naturally they ought to have memorialized jointly. Why did Chêng-jui alone sign his name on this memorial? This is really keeping too much to the letter of the law, and is muddle-headed; it is despicable and laughable. Moreover, Chin Chien and I-ling-a were great ministers of the Imperial Household 內務府,⁹⁵ and Chêng-jui was their subordinate official; they were all on official duty together at one place. How could they discriminate in the slightest between one another? Perhaps it is because on this occasion Chêng-jui actually regarded himself as an Imperial Commissioner detailed to look after the English tribute Envoy, that he therefore looked down on Chin Chien and I-ling-a, and would not jointly sign his name with them. Or perhaps it was because Chêng-jui used to be an official in the Imperial Household, Chin Chien and I-ling-a did not condescend to sign their names with him.⁹⁶ It must be for one of these two reasons. This pettifogging attitude is typical of the despicable practice of the Imperial Household and is really not worth a smile 真不值一噓也.⁹⁷ . . .'

(*ibid.* p. 48a, line 2)

Later in this document Chêng-jui was taken to task for failing to memorialize about the setting up of the presents by the English craftsmen, and the studying of their methods by those appointed to do so:

'Did Chêng-jui consider that this affair was not in his charge and so wanted to wait for Chin Chien and I-ling-a to memorialize separately? It is quite inexplicable. Have an edict sent to Chin Chien, I-ling-a and Chêng-jui, severely reprimanding them all. Also order the three of them to-morrow

⁹⁵ The Imperial Household (Nei-wu-fu), as its name implies, was the department which looked after all matters concerning the Emperor's household and formed an administration of its own within the Forbidden City. For details see Hsieh Pao-chao, *The Government of China (1644-1911)*, pp. 284-287; Brunnert and Hagelstrom, *Present Day Political Organization of China*, pp. 13-35.

⁹⁶ While Chin Chien and I-ling-a had both been Great Ministers 大臣 in the Imperial Household, Chêng-jui had merely been head of a department 司員 in it. The difference in rank might be considerable.

⁹⁷ Since all despatches were, in theory, sent out in the name of the Emperor, and the royal 'We' was often employed, I am tempted here to borrow the celebrated phrase attributed to Queen Victoria and to translate: 'We are not amused'.

speedily and in detail to report back on the circumstances pointed out above. Let there be no prevarication and delay or they will incur blame. . . .'

(*ibid.* p. 48b, line 2)

Revelations of such pettiness and irresponsibility among senior Civil Servants in official documents of this nature have an air of 'washing dirty linen in public'. Meanwhile in the very next document in this collection, a Military Despatch 兵寄 of August 31st from Ho-shên to Chin Chien, I-ling-a and Chêng-jui, the wretched affair of Chêng-jui alone memorializing on the Envoy's arrival in Peking was brought up again.

' . . . The English tribute Envoy is starting his overland journey from Tientsin, and therefore we have appointed Chêng-jui, because he is near at hand,⁹⁸ to look after him and accompany him to Jehol. This matter could be entrusted to anybody. The reason why we did not instruct Liang K'ên-t'ang to accompany him was that the Governor-General's rank is rather a high one. If we told the Governor-General to accompany him on his journey it was feared that this would enhance the tribute Envoy's arrogant air. However, since the tribute Envoy set out on the overland route from Tientsin he has been in Chêng-jui's sole charge, and as a consequence Chêng-jui reckoned that there was no service more important. He actually thought that his merit was as great as Fu-k'ang-an's 福康安 in suppressing 平定 the K'uo-erh-k'ê (Gurkhas).⁹⁹ Thereupon he smugly looked upon himself as an Imperial Commissioner, in his own eyes belittling Chin Chien and I-ling-a and not signing with them. We think that Chêng-jui, in fact, is not worthy to receive our favour, he is so muddle-headed and blundering. Meanwhile Chin Chien and I-ling-a also think that Chêng-jui is in charge of this matter, and that very soon he may hope to receive the favour of promotion, and will then be on the same level as themselves, and so, in their hearts, they harbour jealousy. They look on as spectators and do not say a word. Chin Chien is a President and I-ling-a is a Vice-President and both are ministers 卿貳 yet

⁹⁸ He was Salt Administrator of Changlu with his Headquarters at Tientsin.

⁹⁹ The Gurkhas of Nepal invaded Tibet for the first time in 1788, hoping to acquire some of that country's wealth. The Chinese garrison in Tibet proved frightened and ineffective, and eventually the Gurkhas were bought off with a tribute of Tibetan silver. In 1791 they again invaded Tibet to claim a further instalment of their tribute, and it was at this juncture that Ch'ien-jung sent a strong Chinese force under Fu-k'ang-an, the Governor-General of the two Kwangs, to drive the Gurkhas out of Tibet. The campaign was well planned under the direction of A-kuei (Duke A), and other senior ministers in Peking. The campaign lasted from early 1792 until the autumn of that year when the Gurkhas suffered a final defeat only a few miles from their capital, Khatmandu. It was a most remarkable campaign fought in mountainous country which was previously unknown to the Chinese, but well planned and organized. Fu-k'ang-an remained in Tibet for a while to strengthen the Chinese hold over that country, but had returned to Peking by the summer of 1793 since he was at Jehol at the time of Macartney's visit there in September. See footnote 7.

they are still not able to shake off the mean and unworthy practices of the Imperial Household. It is really despicable, laughable, and abominable. . . .'
 (*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 50a, line 2)

This hard-hitting despatch ends up:

' . . . Again transmit an Imperial Command to Chin Chien, I-ling-a and Chêng-jui sternly rebuking them. Let them carry out yesterday's instructions and promptly memorialize in reply. Do not let them again prevaricate and delay or they will incur blame.

'Have this sent by express at the rate of six hundred *li* per day and order them to know it.'
 (*ibid.* p. 50b, line 2)

Enough quotations have now been given to show that although Macartney had his troubles and vexations over the English Embassy the Chinese officials appointed to cope with it also had their own troubles and vexations. The picture given by these quotations shows that human weakness and error was liable to upset the smooth working of the Ch'ing administration even if the officials did happen to be Manchus.

It is a relief to turn to a different subject. On September 9th a Court Letter was sent by Ho-shên to the Governors-General and Governors of Shantung, Kiangnan, Kiangsi and Kwangtung giving them instructions about Macartney's return journey overland to Canton. Thus five days before Macartney was received in audience by the Emperor instructions were being issued about his return journey. The refusal of Macartney to practise the *kowtow* had clearly displeased the Emperor and his Ministers.

The Fifth Day of the Eighth Month (September 9)
A Court Letter

'From the Grand Secretary Earl Ho, a Court Despatch to the Governors-General and Governors of Shantung, Kiangnan, Kiangsi and Kwangtung.

'On the fifth day of the eighth month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung I received Imperial instructions that the original English ships have now returned to Tinghai in Chekiang, and are forthwith to sail away from there and return in advance to their own country. In the future the Chief and the Assistant Envoys ought to go to Canton by waterways and then, travelling on that country's trading ships, return to their native country.

'However, the Envoys who have come to Jehol¹⁰⁰ are totally ignorant of the proper ceremonies and we are deeply dissatisfied. Recently, on their way to Peking, when they were well received by the various local officials and given

¹⁰⁰ Macartney and his suite had reached Jehol on September 8th, and this Court Letter was written on the following day.

supplies at various places along the route they were treated too generously which has caused them to become unwarrantably haughty. In future when they return to their country we ought to send them by inland waterways as far as Kiangnan, then by the long river (i.e. the Yangtze) to Mei-ling 梅嶺, and overland,¹⁰¹ and then again by waterways to Canton. On the overland journey they should be provided with food and accommodation according to precedent. At the places which they pass through on their waterborne journey the local Governors-General and Governors need only order the various *chou* 州 and *hsien* 縣¹⁰² to supply them in the usual way. Although there should be no shortage of what is needed for each person it is only necessary to provide according to precedent. Do not exceed the existing scale in luxury which would merely be a troublesome expense.

'These are ignorant barbarians, and it is not worth while treating them with too much courtesy (i.e. giving them more generous treatment). The posts, garrisons and beacons which they pass *en route* must be put in good order. The officers and men must, without exception, be well disciplined in order to create a good impression 以壯觀瞻而昭威重.

'Apart from the instructions to Liang K'ên-t'ang who is near at hand, have these instructions made known to them all (i.e. the other addressees).

'In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter is hereby sent.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, pp. 52b-53a)

The next document in this collection is in the same vein of displeasure at Macartney's refusal to practise the *kowtow*, and refers to reprisals to be taken against Macartney and his suite by cutting down on the Imperial bounty.

¹⁰¹ The Mei-ling Pass lies in the Province of Kiangsi and was an obstacle in the way of those travelling from Central China to Canton, since the easy method of house-boat had to be abandoned here, and the traveller crossed the pass on sedan chairs carried by coolies. Dr Arthur Waley in *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*, p. 19, describes a great official travelling to Canton by this route. 'After Nan-an the Kan river is no longer navigable. The next twenty-four miles of the journey have to be performed by land and include the crossing of the Mei-ling Pass, about 1,000 feet high.' The traveller was able to resume water transport at Nan-yung. Father Ripa described the journey in the reverse direction which he made in 1710. He mentioned reaching Nan-yung and then wrote: 'At this place all our luggage was weighed and divided into lots that could be carried by one or two men; for here the river ends, and a mountain is to be passed which divides the province of Canton from Kian-sy. This mountain, called Mei-ling, has two miles of steep ascent on one side, and two of descent on the other, and is about thirty miles distant from another river, on which we were again to embark. Everything is carried the whole of this distance by porters, vehicles and animals of every kind being excluded; and as these two rivers form the chief channel of communication between the south and the north of the empire, the road which connects them is so covered with people, that, during its whole length of thirty miles, it has constantly the appearance of a fair.' *Memoirs of Father Ripa*, pp. 38-39. Macartney and his entourage crossed the Pass between November 21 and 24. See Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 365 where Macartney gives only a brief description, and Barrow who gives a fuller account in his *Travels in China*, pp. 543-544.

¹⁰² A *hsien* is generally translated in English as a 'District'. It was a subdivision of a Prefecture (*fu* 府), while a *chou* was an administrative division between a *fu* and a *hsien*.

'From the Grand Secretary Earl Ho, a Court Despatch to the Princes and Ministers remaining at the Capital.

'On the sixth day of the eighth month of the fifty-eighth year of the Emperor Ch'ien-lung (September 10) I received Imperial instructions that: in connection with the English Envoy's visit to the Capital, originally it had been intended in accordance with the precedent of the eighteenth year of Ch'ien-lung's reign (1753-54),¹⁰³ that he should be allowed to tour the beauty spots and see the entertainments 伎 and opera 劇.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, because they sailed across the sea on a rather long journey to come to Court it was intended to increase the Imperial favour compared with last time (i.e. 1753). After the tribute Envoy reached Jehol he procrastinated and feigned illness, and there were many instances in which he was ignorant of the etiquette.

'Yesterday we commanded the Grand Councillor (i.e. Ho-shên) to summon the Envoy to an interview. The Chief Envoy feigned illness and did not arrive, but simply (read 止 for 上) instructed the Assistant Envoy to come, and he presented a document, the wording of which showed ignorance.¹⁰⁵ Thereupon Ho-shên and others personally refuted it with stern words and just reasons, and Ho-shên acted very much as befits his position as a Great Minister.

'At present instructions have been given (for him) to practise the ceremonial but he still pretends to be ill and procrastinates. We are extremely displeased at this unwarranted haughtiness, and have given instructions to cut down their supplies. All those special gifts will not be given again here. Also it is not necessary to prepare entertainments and opera in the capital. As soon as they have been given a feast in accordance with precedent on the

¹⁰³ The only Western Embassy to the Court of Peking during the eighteenth year of Ch'ien-lung's reign was sent by Portugal in 1753, when Francisco Xavier Pacheco e Sampayo was the Envoy. According to Ljungstedt he 'performed the usual ceremony of obeisance (i.e. he *kowtowed*) and received from Ch'ien-lung fifty cases and boxes of presents for the King of Portugal, as well as presents for himself and his retinue'. He was in Peking from May 1st to June 3rd. It is interesting to compare the account of his embassy with that of Macartney and the Dutch one under Titsingh and van Braam. See A. Ljungstedt, *An Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China*, pp. 103-4; also C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, pp. 183-188.

¹⁰⁴ Though they did not see any entertainments in Peking, Macartney and Staunton saw a morning's theatrical entertainment at Jehol ending with what the Ambassador called 'the grand pantomime'. See Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 318-320, and Staunton, *Embassy II*, pp. 260-266. In the early evening there was wrestling, dancing, acrobatics and a firework display to end with.

¹⁰⁵ This was the letter to Ho-shên written by Macartney on August 28th, stating that he was willing to conform to the Chinese etiquette 'provided a person of equal rank with mine were appointed to perform the same ceremony before my sovereign's picture that I should perform before the Emperor himself'. It had originally been sent to Chêng-juí on August 29th, and was now delivered officially and in person by Staunton. It was this suggestion which showed ignorance of the Chinese etiquette. See Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 284, and Pritchard, 'The Kotow', p. 188.

occasion of the Imperial birthday instruct the Envoy and others to return to the Capital. After they have reached the Capital let the Princes and Great Ministers who have remained in the Capital summon them to an interview in three rooms which have been prepared to the east of the Chung-tso Gate 中左門. The Princes and Ministers should act in accordance with the ceremony when Grand Councillors summon people to an interview and be seated by seniority. It is not necessary to stand up, it is only necessary to have ready a stool for him, and tell him to sit at your side. All the tribute articles from that country have already been completely set up, and naturally there should be no need to remove them. The things issued which are to be given to the king of that country should be displayed outside the Wu-mên on that day, and let the Princes and Ministers, in his presence (i.e. of the Envoy) transmit the Imperial decree of bestowal, and let his servants and our own take them to their lodgings. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 53a, ff.)

It continues in this way for a bit longer and then ends up:

' . . . If, when the barbarians come for an audience with the Emperor, they are sincere and reverential we always grant them our favour, so as to display our "cherishing by kindness". If they tend to be in the least haughty then they are not destined to receive our favour. Also we should immediately cut down the ceremony of their reception in order to demonstrate our system. This is the way to restrain foreign dependencies. A-kuei 阿桂¹⁰⁶ usually is far-sighted, what does he think about it?

'Have this edict made known to him.

'In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter has been despatched.'

(*ibid.* p. 54a, lines 3-6)

Meanwhile, Macartney was still proving refractory over the *kowtow* and refused to practise it himself or see it practised by others. Instead he had written a document dated August 28th, in which he stated he would only perform the *kowtow* to the Emperor if a Chinese official of equal rank would perform the same ceremony in front of a portrait of King George III. In his Journal for September 9th Macartney noted:

¹⁰⁶ A-kuei (1717-1797). A Manchu of the Plain Blue Banner, a distinguished official and general, who received very high appointments as a reward for successful campaigns against rebellious vassal states. He became a senior member of the Grand Council and Grand Secretariat. During the last years of his life (1789-96) he was usually entrusted with affairs in the capital while the Emperor was at Jehol or on tours. This was certainly the case during the visit of Lord Macartney since A-kuei remained in Peking the whole time. It is probable that the favourite, Ho-shên, was afraid to have such a trustworthy official near the Emperor, and made certain that he was kept away from the Emperor as much as possible. See his biography by Knight Biggerstaff in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 6-8.

'The Legate, Van-ta-gin, and Chou-ta-gin came this morning to urge me to give up the reciprocal compliment I demanded, but I dwelt upon the propriety of something to distinguish between the homage of tributary Princes and the ceremony used on the part of a great independent Sovereign. I understand privately that the Emperor is not acquainted with the difficulties that have arisen on the subject, but that when he is the matter will probably be adjusted as I wish.'¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, Ho-shên in a Court Letter of September 11th addressed to 'The Princes and Ministers remaining at the Capital', conveniently glossed over Macartney's attitude, and put a good face on the matter.

' . . . Now that the Grand Councillor and others have passed on to the Envoy and others the Imperial command warning them, they fully realize and regret (i.e. their folly in not practising the *kowtow*). To-day (September 11) the Chief and Assistant Envoys went to wait on the Grand Councillor and the ceremonial was very reverential.¹⁰⁸ Because they have sailed the seas and came from afar, when they first reached the Celestial Empire they were not conversant with the ceremonial system, and we had to restrain 裁柳 them a little.¹⁰⁹ Now that they are sincerely loyal and entirely follow the system of the Celestial Empire we naturally ought to continue to extend our favour to them in order to fulfil their loyalty in coming from afar to have an audience.¹¹⁰ . . . '

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VII, p. 54a, line 10)

This, then, was the position which had been reached when Macartney had his official audience with the Emperor on September 14th at Jehol. Unfortunately there are no documents in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* describing the audience since the audience itself did not call for any administrative documents. However, Macartney's own description in his Journal is so vivid and well written that it is worth quoting in full at this point.¹¹¹

'*Saturday, September 14.*—This morning at 4 o'clock a.m. we set out for the Court under the convoy of Van-ta-gin and Chou-ta-gin, and reached it in little more than an hour, the distance being about three miles from our hotel. I proceeded in great state with all my train of music, guards, palanquins,

¹⁰⁷ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 298–99.

¹⁰⁸ Described by Macartney in his Journal, the Grand Councillor being Ho-shên. 'When I arose to go away the Minister took me by the hand, and said he should be happy to cultivate my acquaintance. . . . ' Robbins, *ibid.*, pp. 301–302. For a partial translation of the Court Letter see Pritchard, 'The Kotow', pp. 191–192.

¹⁰⁹ i.e. by being a little severe with them, and so putting them in their place.

¹¹⁰ That is, by giving them the opportunity to show their loyalty and to fulfil their mission.

¹¹¹ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 303–307. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years*, pp. 339–340 quotes Macartney's description of the audience which he sent in his official despatch to Henry Dundas, the Home Secretary.

and officers and gentlemen of the Embassy on horseback. Over a rich embroidered velvet I wore the mantle of the Order of the Bath, with the collar and diamond badge and a diamond star.

'Sir George Staunton was dressed in a rich embroidered velvet also, and, being a Doctor of Laws in the University of Oxford, wore the habit of his degree, which is of scarlet silk, full and flowing. I mention these little particulars to show the attention I always paid, where a proper opportunity offered, to Oriental customs and ideas. We alighted at the park gate, from whence we walked to the Imperial encampment, and were conducted to a large, handsome tent prepared for us on one side of the Emperor's. After waiting there about an hour his approach was announced with drums and music, on which we quitted our tent and came forward upon the green carpet.

'He was seated in an open palanquin, carried by sixteen bearers, attended by a number of officers bearing flags, standards, and umbrellas, and as he passed we paid him our compliment by kneeling on one knee, whilst all the Chinese made their usual prostrations. As soon as he had ascended his throne I came to the entrance of the tent, and, holding in both my hands a large gold box enriched with diamonds in which was enclosed the King's letter, I walked deliberately up, and ascending the side-steps of the throne, delivered it into the Emperor's own hands, who, having received it, passed it to the Minister, by whom it was placed on the cushion. He then gave me as the first present from him to His Majesty the Ju-eu-jou or Giou-giou, as the symbol of peace and prosperity, and expressed his hopes that my Sovereign and he should always live in good correspondence and amity. It is a whitish, agate-looking stone about a foot and a half long, curiously carved, and highly prized by the Chinese, but to me it does not appear in itself to be of any great value.¹¹²

'The Emperor then presented me with a Ju-eu-jou of a greenish-coloured stone of the same emblematic character; at the same time he very graciously received from me a pair of beautiful enamelled watches set with diamonds,

¹¹² The character used in the Chinese text where the presents are listed is *ju* 瑞. This was often a piece of jade carved in the form of a sceptre. In early times *ju* were given to the feudal princes as a token of their investiture. However, the word used by Macartney is Ju-eu-jou or Giou-giou, and this is more likely to represent the phrase *ju-i* 如意 meaning 'as you desire'. A *ju-i* was also a carved sceptre, but appears to have had a Taoist or Buddhist origin. It was considered a symbol of good luck, and as such was often given by Emperors to their high officials as a special mark of favour. It is possible that Ch'ien-lung simply intended to give George III a *ju-i* as a symbol for peace and prosperity, but in making out the list of presents some learned official wrote the old character *ju* 瑞, thereby implying that the Emperor was giving George III a symbol of his investiture as a feudal prince. For a discussion on *ju-i* see B. Laufer, *Jade*, pp. 335-339. An illustration of three *ju-i* from the Ch'ien-lung period can be seen opposite page 335. Laufer states that existing specimens of *ju-i* cannot be proved to go back further than Ch'ien-lung's reign. A number of jade *ju-i* can be seen to-day on display in the various palaces of the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace at Peking.

which I had prepared in consequence of the information given me, and which, having looked at, he passed to the Minister. Sir George Staunton, whom, as he had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to act in case of my death or departure, I introduced to him as such, now came forward, and after kneeling upon one knee in the same manner which I had done, presented to him two elegant air-guns, and received from him a Ju-eu-jou of a greenish stone nearly similar to mine. Other presents were sent at the same time to all the gentlemen of my train. We then descended from the steps of the throne, and sat down upon cushions at one of the tables on the Emperor's left hand; and at other tables, according to their different ranks, the chief Tartar Princes and the Mandarins of the Court at the same time took their places, all dressed in the proper robes of their respective ranks. These tables were then uncovered and exhibited a most sumptuous banquet. The Emperor sent us several dishes from his own table, together with some liquors, which the Chinese call wine, not, however, expressed from the grape, but distilled or extracted from rice, herbs, and honey. In about half an hour he sent for Sir George Staunton and me to come to him, and gave to each of us, with his own hands, a cup of warm wine, which we immediately drank in his presence, and found it very pleasant and comfortable, the morning being cold and raw.

'Amongst other things, he asked me the age of my King, and being informed of it, said he hoped he might live as many years as himself, which are eighty-three. His manner is dignified, but affable and condescending, and his reception of us has been very gracious and satisfactory. He is a very fine old gentleman, still healthy and vigorous, not having the appearance of a man of more than sixty.

'The order and regularity in serving and removing the dinner was wonderfully exact, and every function of the ceremony performed with such silence and solemnity as in some measure to resemble the celebration of a religious mystery. The Emperor's tent or pavilion, which is circular, I should calculate to be about twenty-four or twenty-six yards in diameter, and is supported by a number of pillars, either gilded, painted, or varnished, according to their distance or position.

'The material and distribution of the furniture within at once displayed grandeur and elegance. The tapestry, the curtains, the carpets, the lanterns, the fringes, and the tassels were disposed with such harmony, the colours so artfully varied, and the light and shade so judiciously managed, that the whole assemblage filled the eye with delight, and diffused over the mind a pleasing serenity and repose undisturbed by glitter or affected embellishments.

'The commanding feature of the ceremony was that calm dignity, that sober pomp of Asiatic greatness, which European refinements have not yet attained.

'I forgot to mention that there were present on this occasion three ambassadors from Tatze or Pigu¹¹³ and six Mahomedan ambassadors from the Calmucks of the south-west, but their appearance was not very splendid. Neither must I omit that, during the ceremony, which lasted five hours, various entertainments of wrestling, tumbling, and wire-dancing, together with dramatic representations, were exhibited to the tent, but at a considerable distance from it.

'Thus have I seen "*King Solomon in all his glory*". I use this expression, as the scene recalled perfectly to my memory a puppet show of the name which I recollect to have seen in my childhood, and which made so strong an impression on my mind that I then thought it a true representation of the highest pitch of human greatness and felicity.'

The official Chinese record of the audience¹¹⁴ is almost the reverse of Macartney's enthusiastic account. It is extremely terse and matter-of-fact, placing no importance whatever on the reception by the Emperor of a barbarian tribute envoy from a country in the Western Ocean which had not previously sent one. It reads:

'On the day *k'eng-wu* 庚午 (i.e. September 14) the Emperor took his seat in a great tent in the Wanshu Gardens. The Chief English Envoy, Macartney, and the Assistant Envoy, Staunton, had an audience, and were feasted, along with the Princes, Dukes and Ministers in attendance and the Mongolian Princes with their sons 貝勒 and grandsons 貝子, Dukes, Imperial Sons-in-law 額駙, and *t'ai-chi* 台吉,¹¹⁵ as well as the Burmese tribute envoy and others. They were given presents according to rank.

'The Emperor composed a poem recording the fact that the King of the red-haired English had sent his Envoy, Macartney, and others, who had arrived bearing a state message and tribute. It says:

¹¹³ Burmese records show that during the reign of King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) four tribute missions were sent to Peking. The capital of Burma at this time was Amarapura, not Pegu. See G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, p. 279. Henry Burney, in an article entitled 'Some account of the Wars between Burmah and China', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VI, Pt. I (January-June, 1837), pp. 433-4 gives an account of this particular embassy which set out from Amarapura in October 1792. It consisted of five officials who brought valuable presents for the Emperor and for the Governor-General of Yunnan and Kueichow. The King also conferred honorary titles on them both, Ch'ien-lung's title reading in translation 'The illustrious and excellent among the three orders of beings, of the great dragon or snake-god race, the king of kings, who practises good works'. The embassy also brought plates of gold set with rubies on which these titles were engraved. I am grateful to Professor D. G. E. Hall for drawing my attention to Burney's article.

¹¹⁴ See *Ta Ch'ing li-ch'ao shih-lu* (The Veritable Records of the Ch'ing Dynasty), Vol. 1434 pp. 11a-11b.

¹¹⁵ A term used to denote the lowest order of the Mongolian nobility. For the regulations governing the tributary relationship of the Mongols with the Ch'ing rulers see Teng and Fairbank, 'The Ch'ing Tributary System', pp. 160-161.

'Formerly Portugal presented tribute;
 Now England is paying homage.
 They have out-travelled Shu-hai and Hêng-chang;¹¹⁶
 My Ancestors' merit and virtue must have reached their distant shores.¹¹⁷
 Though their tribute is commonplace, my heart approves sincerely.
 Curios and the boasted ingenuity of their devices I prize not.
 Though what they bring is meagre, yet,
 In my kindness to men from afar I make generous return,
 Wanting to preserve my good health and power.'¹¹⁸

On the following day Macartney, Staunton and others were conducted round the eastern part of the Imperial gardens at Jehol by Ho-shên, Fu-ch'ang-an, and the latter's brother Fu-k'ang-an who had recently returned from commanding the Chinese army in Tibet against the Gurkhas of Nepal, and who was openly hostile.¹¹⁹ On September 17th, which was the Emperor's birthday, the Ambassador set out for the Court at 3 a.m., and after a wait of two hours the ceremony began. Macartney describes it in his Journal thus:¹²⁰

'Tuesday, September 17.—This day being the Emperor's birthday, we set out for the Court at 3 o'clock a.m., conducted by Van-ta-gin, Chou-ta-gin, and our usual attendants. We reposed ourselves for above two hours in a large saloon at the entrance of the palace enclosure, where fruit, tea, warm milk, and other refreshments were brought to us. At last notice was given that the festival was going to begin, and we immediately descended the stairs into the garden, where we found all the great men and Mandarins in their

¹¹⁶ I wish to thank my friend Mr James J. Y. Liu, formerly of the Department of Chinese in the University of Hong Kong for help in elucidating this poem and for the suggestions contained in this footnote. Mr Liu has drawn my attention to a passage in the *Huai-nan-tzû* which contains the following reference to Shu-hai (淮南子 *Chüan* 4). '(Emperor) Yü commanded T'ai-chang 太章 to walk from the extreme east to the extreme west for 2,313,500 *li* and 75 paces. He commanded Shu-hai 豎亥 to walk from the extreme north to the extreme south for 2,313,500 *li* and 75 paces.' There is no mention in this passage of Hêng-chang but the name T'ai-chang is given instead. It may well be that the Emperor Ch'ien-lung (or the Han-lin academician who composed this verse) invented the name Hêng-chang in order to make a neat play on words since the character *shu* 豎 normally means 'vertical, (i.e. from N. to S.) while the character *hêng* 橫 as used here means 'horizontal' (i.e. from E. to W.). Apart from this play on words Shu-hai and T'ai-chang were two mythological figures credited with phenomenal powers of travel, and so it was a pleasant conceit to say that Macartney and Staunton, by coming from England to China, had outdistanced even these figures of antiquity.

¹¹⁷ i.e. and so have influenced the King of England to send these envoys.

¹¹⁸ These last two lines can be paraphrased as follows: 'In my kindness to men from afar I give them in return generous treatment and presents, thus gaining moral influence over the barbarians by behaving generously so that I may be able to maintain the fullness of my good health and power without it spilling over', i.e. keep an equilibrium of good fortune and power by right conduct.

¹¹⁹ See Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 310-11. See also footnote 99.

¹²⁰ Robbins, *ibid.*, pp. 314-315.

robes of state, drawn up before the Imperial pavilion. The Emperor did not show himself, but remained behind a screen, from whence, I presume, he could see and enjoy the ceremonies without inconvenience or interruption. All eyes were turned towards the place where His Majesty was imagined to be enthroned, and seemed to express an impatience to begin the devotions of the day. Slow, solemn music, muffled drums, and deep-toned bells were heard at a distance. On a sudden the sound ceased, and all was still; again it was renewed, and then intermitted with short pauses, during which several persons passed backwards and forwards, in the proscenium or foreground of the tent, as if engaged in preparing some *grand coup de théâtre*.

'At length the great band struck up with all their powers of harmony, and instantly the whole Court fell flat upon their faces before this invisible Nebuchadnezzar. "He in his cloudy tabernacle sojourned the while." The music was a sort of birthday ode or State anthem, the burden of which was "*Bow down your heads, all ye dwellers upon earth; bow down your heads before the great Kien-long, the great Kien-long.*" And then all the dwellers upon China earth there present, except ourselves, bowed down their heads, and prostrated themselves upon the ground at every renewal of the chorus. Indeed, in no religion, ancient or modern, has the Divinity ever been addressed, I believe, with stronger exterior marks of worship and adoration than were this morning paid to the phantom of his Chinese Majesty.

'Such is the mode of celebrating the Emperor's anniversary, according to the Court ritual.'

Afterwards Macartney and others were taken sight-seeing in the western part of the grounds, and later they saw a Chinese puppet-show and also a comic drama. Meanwhile Macartney tried to talk with the Chief Minister, Ho-shên, on business, but without success, and he was reduced to putting his requests in writing.¹²¹ This mainly concerned Captain Mackintosh of the East India Company's ship, *Hindustan*, who had accompanied Macartney to Jehol with the presents and had 'paid his obeisance to the Emperor'. Macartney requested that Mackintosh might be allowed to return without delay to Chushan to take charge of his ship, while his purser might be allowed to purchase a cargo of tea for the homeward journey.

The highlights of Macartney's embassy were now over. He had had an audience with the Emperor and presented King George III's letter and the more portable of the presents. He had been present at the solemn ceremony for the Emperor's birthday, and had been present at the subsequent entertainments.¹²² He was now informed by one of his conductors, Van, that it

¹²¹ Robbins, *ibid.*, p. 316.

¹²² Robbins, *ibid.*, pp. 318-321.

would be proper for him to leave Jehol and return to Peking before the Emperor, who was due to set out on September 24th. The Emperor's presents for George III were packed up and the Ambassador and his suite set out for Peking, though as yet Macartney had hardly had a chance to discuss the main business of his mission. Presents for the members of the Embassy were not neglected, and the Grand Council made recommendations for presents to be given to them all, including even the sailors remaining in the ships at Chushan. But this was not quite so munificent as it sounds since in this document there is the admission that:

'We have checked and found that in the storehouses inside and outside the City there are many rolls of Korean cloth¹²³ and other articles. We have reverently made a list of suggested presents for each officer, servant, soldier and sailor remaining on the English tribute ships, and present it for Imperial perusal. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, p. 62a, lines 5-6)

In the list of the actual presents which it was proposed to give to each member or class of person in the English Embassy are mentioned not only rolls of Korean cloth but 'Mohammedan patterned cloth' and rolls of *po-lo-ma* 波羅麻 which may have been a kind of Indian linen.¹²⁴ But it is interesting to know that tribute once given might be distributed to other tributary states later, and one wonders if any of the English 'tribute articles' eventually found their way to Korea or Burma or other countries.

From this point onwards the remaining documents in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* are concerned with the arrangements for the departure of the Embassy from Peking and for security measures to be taken on its return to Canton; above all the tribute Envoy was not to be allowed to make any excuses for remaining in Peking. Thus in a letter containing instructions sent by the Grand Council to Chêng-jui dated September 22nd the following arrangements were made for Macartney's dismissal.

' . . . As regards the tribute Envoys, originally it was intended that after the Imperial chariot had returned they should be given one feast in the Chêng-ta kuang-ming Palace of the Yüan-ming Yüan. Now we have instructed the Grand Councillors to cancel the banquet. In the future after the Envoy has welcomed the Imperial chariot at the 'Ta-t'ung Gate let him then return to the City and stay there for a few days, and then having chosen an auspicious

¹²³ Korea sent an embassy annually to pay tribute to China during Ch'ien-lung's reign and was accorded special privileges as a particularly close and loyal vassal. See Duyvendak, *Last Dutch Embassy*, pp. 48-50.

¹²⁴ *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, pp. 62a-b. Indian cloth could have reached Peking as tribute from Tibet or even from Nepal which had sent its first tribute mission in 1791. See S. Cammann, *Trade through the Himalayas*, p. 120.

day let him receive the Imperial Decree and gifts at the T'ai-ho Gate.¹²⁵ Thus the Envoy's mission to hand over a state message and to bring tribute on behalf of the King of his Country will have been accomplished, and the giving of presents to the King and the Envoy will have been carried out on several occasions. The tribute Envoy will then have no more business to detain him. It will only remain for him to attend to his baggage and to pack up the presents, and then after a few days, before the fifth of the ninth month he can set out to return home. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, p. 63b, line 12 to p. 64a line 6)

The next document in this collection is a Court Letter to Ch'ang, Governor of Chekiang and Governor-General designate of the two Kwangs;¹²⁶ to Chi, transferred Governor of Chekiang; and to Kuo, Governor of Kwangtung, dated September 23rd. It is worth quoting in part because it reveals the attitude of Ho-shên, and by implication of the other Great Ministers and of the Emperor himself to foreign trade at Macao and Canton, and towards the English merchants in particular. The first part of the Letter repeats the arguments set forth in the Imperial Edict to George III,¹²⁷ refusing the King's request for a minister to reside permanently in Peking. Having disposed of this request the Letter continues:

' . . . Perhaps they intend to spy 窺測,¹²⁸ this definitely cannot be done. But the King of that Country has presented a state message with an earnest request (i.e. to be allowed to send a representative to reside in Peking). This is a different matter from the Envoy and others making a petition themselves, which can be refused to their faces. We have already given them an Imperial edict clearly refusing. On this occasion that country has come from afar sailing the ocean, and considering that they are quite reverential and obedient therefore we have been considerate to them in every way. Now, after the

¹²⁵ The gate of 'Supreme Harmony', in the Forbidden City, between the Wu-mên (Meridian gate) and the T'ai-ho Tien (Palace of Supreme Harmony).

¹²⁶ Ch'ang-lin 長麟 a Manchu of the Gioro Clan, who held various high posts, being appointed Governor of Chekiang in January 1793, and Governor-General of the two Kwangs in September 1793. See Duyvendak, *Last Dutch Embassy*, p. 18, note 3. His biography is in the *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Draft History of the Ch'ing Dynasty) chapter 349, biography 130, pp. 3-4. For Chi-ch'ing 吉慶 see footnote 135, and for Kuo Shih-hsün 郭世勳 see footnote 7.

¹²⁷ Translated on pp. 134-137 of this article. It had been submitted to the Emperor in draft on August 3rd, it was promulgated on September 22nd, and was delivered to Macartney when he was preparing to leave Peking on October 3rd. For a description of the ceremony at which it was officially handed to Macartney see Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 331-332.

¹²⁸ The word 'spy' may have too many modern connotations to be a good equivalent for the Chinese here, which literally means 'to peep'. It might be nearer the original to say 'spy out the land'. The Emperor and his ministers were traditionally anxious that foreigners should not learn too much about the Capital, perhaps with memories of former successful barbarian *coups*. That is why, once Westerners had entered the Emperor's service, they were not allowed to return to their native countries.

tribute Envoy arrived they made many entreaties and repeatedly pestered us. It seems that these barbarians after all are ignorant. Now, moreover, we have not allowed them to leave a man at the Capital so that when the King of that Country receives the Imperial edict, because he has not achieved what he wanted, he may be disgruntled, and relying on his distant and strategic position may find a pretext for making trouble. Although that Country is far off and separated (from China) by the oceans they would have to pass through many capitals and many countries,¹²⁹ and definitely would not dare to provoke a quarrel. But perhaps they may conspire to stir up trouble in Macao, and we must be prepared to guard against it. After Ch'ang-lin has arrived in Canton he must act unobtrusively 不動聲色¹³⁰ and must at all times be on the alert. Although the tribute Envoy has seen the Celestial Empire's strict and stern system (i.e. clear-cut rules for dealing with foreign embassies, etc.) with his own eyes, and that the barbarians on all sides are overawed into submission, there must definitely be no unexpected events.¹³¹ If that Country acts rashly through ignorance they may perhaps make minor disturbances in Macao. Many of the Western Ocean men who trade at that place are from other Western Ocean countries and are not subject to that Country, and presumably they will not all be of the same mind as them (i.e. the English).

'When the time comes, those trading from other Western Ocean countries should be looked after and enabled to enjoy their own daily lives so that they may not be led astray. Then, even if England resorts to treacherous plots they will certainly not be able to exercise their cunning. These are merely directions given beforehand so that precautions may be taken in advance. All that Ch'ang-lin should do is to bear this in mind. He should not divulge anything whatever, nor tend to be in the least bit agitated which, on the contrary, would cause the barbarian to become suspicious. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, p. 64b, line 7 ff.)

Later in the same letter further instructions were given to the great officials on how to deal with these barbarians, especially while the tribute Envoy was returning to Canton. One piece of advice offered was helpful:

' . . . If they make unwarrantable requests you ought to speak sternly and justly, categorically rejecting them. You must not be too tolerant or this will encourage them to pester you endlessly. . . .' (*ibid.* p. 65b, line 10)

¹²⁹ It seems that A-kuei and Ho-shên had temporarily forgotten that the English would have to come the whole way by sea, or else, which is more likely, they did not clearly realize this, and imagined them coming overland from the West.

¹³⁰ This is a paraphrase of the Chinese which literally means 'not to excite one's countenance', i.e. not to disclose anything by one's face or in one's manner.

¹³¹ Although he has seen the might of the Chinese Empire, nothing must be left to chance, and Macartney and his suite must not be allowed to make trouble on the way home, especially in Macao.

In fact all the documents of this period, that is between September 24th and 30th, reiterate the need to get Macartney out of Peking at the beginning of October and not let him have any excuse for loitering there, nor to allow him to leave anyone behind in the Capital. As a letter from the Grand Council to Chêng-jui puts it, ' . . . The tribute Envoy is, by nature, very suspicious and fickle. If at this stage we again tell him categorically that no one may be left behind at the Capital it is to be feared that this will make him all the more suspicious, and on the pretext of illness he will procrastinate or will be unwilling to pack up 收拾 the tribute articles, or he may find a pretext for not receiving the state message. Any of these things may happen. All Chêng-jui should do at this moment is to appear as though nothing has happened. . . .'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* VIII, p. 68, lines 2-5).

The remaining ten documents in this collection are concerned with the administrative arrangements for the overland journey from Peking to Canton by Macartney and his suite. Instructions were also sent to the various local officials to be on their guard lest the English should try to sow disaffection among the other Western merchants in Canton and Macao. It was even suggested that Macartney might try to misrepresent the Emperor's Edict, and so try to superintend all the foreign trade there in order to collect revenue from the other foreign merchants simply on the strength of his embassy to Peking. These ideas occur in a Court Letter from the Grand Secretaries, Duke A (kuei) and Earl Ho (shên), sent to Ch'ang-lin, the Governor-General of the two Kwangs, Kuo Shih-hsün, the Governor of Kwangtung, and to Su-lêng-ê,¹³² the Superintendent of Customs at Canton dated the 28th day of the eighth month (October 2). This is a revealing letter, and recapitulates much of the material included in other documents in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* at this time, so I have translated it in full.

'On the twenty-eighth day of the eighth month of the fifty-eighth year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung we¹³³ received Imperial instructions that:

'Because recently in the English state message there was a request to be allowed to depute a man to remain in the Capital, and because We have not permitted what was requested We fear that he (Macartney) may be disappointed, and We have instructed Ch'ang-lin and others to take careful precautions.

'We now realize that England is the most powerful of the Western Ocean nations. Moreover, We have heard that they have been used to plundering

¹³² He occupied this same position in 1794 when the Dutch Embassy was preparing to go to Peking. See Duyvendak, *The Last Dutch Embassy*, p. 16, note 1, and also footnote 91 of this article.

¹³³ 'We' here refers to A-kuei and Ho-shên, the two Grand Secretaries who have sent out this Court Letter, though in the rest of the document the 'We' is the Imperial 'We', since this Letter now gives the gist of the Imperial instructions and is thus put in the mouth of the Emperor.

the merchant ships of other Western nations on the high seas. Therefore in the regions near the Western Ocean the barbarians fear their bullying.¹³⁴ Now that We are not allowing them to leave a man in the Capital We cannot be sure that the King of that Country, when he receives Our Imperial edict, may not use it as a pretext to stir up trouble because he has not achieved what he wanted.

'Although the tribute Envoy has seen for himself the Celestial Empire's strict and stern system and the barbarians on all sides fear and submit, and although since that place is far off across the ocean and they would have to pass through capitals and countries and would not dare recklessly to stir up trouble, yet at Macao the English ships are in the majority. If that Country is ignorant and acts recklessly, or if it plots and agitates among the barbarian merchants at Macao to make trouble in concert with them, we must also not neglect to take precautions. The merchants of the various Western Ocean countries which come to the Celestial Empire to trade have long feared the Emperor's prestige and would not willingly follow it (i.e. England). We are simply afraid that since the English are habitually truculent and since they have many ships and men there, the other barbarian merchants may not be able to help being intimidated by them.

'Chi-ch'ing 吉慶¹³⁵ set out on the twenty-first day to go to Chekiang. Chekiang is quite near Shantung, so that he should reach his post before the tenth day of the ninth month. As soon as he has received this edict Ch'ang-lin should immediately send an official to go forward with the Governor's official seal 關防¹³⁶ to Chia-hsing or thereabouts and hand it over to Chi-ch'ing. Ch'ang-lin should immediately go to his new post at Canton¹³⁷ so that

¹³⁴ This may refer to the recent American War of Independence (1776-1782) during which American and French merchant ships had to run the English blockade while 'Russia, Prussia, Holland and the Scandinavian Powers united their diplomatic and naval forces in the "Armed neutrality of the North" to defend the rights of the neutrals against the mistress of the seas' (G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England*).

¹³⁵ A Manchu of the Gioro Clan. He was Governor of Shantung at the time of Macartney's arrival at Tientsin, but was now being transferred to Chekiang as Governor. Later he became Governor-General of the two Kwangs. He died in 1802, and it is said that he committed suicide by swallowing a bottle of snuff. See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 584-5.

¹³⁶ Each Great Official had a seal of office without which business could not be transacted. It was a serious offence to lose one's seal, and there is the sad story of Chung Hsiang, Governor-General of Chekiang and Fukien in 1839, who had his seal of office stolen while on a tour of inspection, and as a consequence lost his exalted post, and had to be content with a minor one instead. This story is told in Dr Waley's book, *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*, p. 51.

¹³⁷ He was being transferred to Canton on promotion to Governor-General of the two Kwangs. In fact, Macartney met Ch'ang-lin at Hangchow on his journey to Canton and they travelled together, which gave Macartney an opportunity of becoming friendly with him and of explaining to him the grievances of the English merchants. This, however, was of little benefit, since Ch'ang-lin remained in his new post at Canton for only a short while. See Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p. 367. See also footnote 126.

he may, together with Kuo Shih-hsün, respectfully obey the repeated Imperial edicts and from time to time carefully and circumspectly keep an eye open.

'We also think that the intention of the English tribute Envoy in wanting to return to his own country via Canton must be because in bringing tribute to the Celestial Empire he has been treated very graciously by the Mighty Emperor, and so he may allege that he is being allowed to superintend the commercial affairs of all the Western Ocean countries, and may plan to exaggerate to the various barbarian merchants, desiring to get a share of their taxes in order to make a profit. The barbarian merchants of the various Western Ocean countries have always been afraid of England's bullying, while the merchants of that Country transact most of the business at Macao. Now, we cannot be certain whether, borrowing the prestige of the Celestial Empire, they may not fabricate an Imperial edict in order to deceive the barbarian merchants.

'In any case Ch'ang-lin will reach Canton in advance of the tribute Envoy and he must act in conjunction with Kuo Shih-hsün and Su-lêng-ê and clearly and in detail instruct the barbarian merchants of the other Western Ocean countries in advance to the effect that:

The English came to the Celestial Empire to bring tribute and were very reverential, but that after the tribute Envoy reached the Capital, he raised the matter of wanting to dwell in the Capital in order to look after trade, which was refused. Now that he is returning home via Canton we fear lest he may falsify the mighty Emperor's edict and may want to superintend trade and collect taxes and so on. You definitely should not believe his lies; on the contrary it would only be detrimental to you. Now, the mission of the English tribute Envoy in coming to the Capital to present congratulations on the Imperial birthday has been completed, and as usual the mighty Emperor has simply bestowed gifts and then instructed them to return home. Their request to leave a man at the Capital to look after their trade was not granted. We specifically instruct you in advance to know this so that you may avoid being fooled by him in the future.

'If you clearly instruct them in this manner all the heads of the barbarian firms will naturally be grateful. Moreover, you can ascertain in general whether they are on friendly terms with the English or not, and then quickly memorialize in reply.

'Again, we have heard that there are Western Ocean nuns 尼僧 at Macao who burn incense and carry out religious practices and that all the barbarian merchants trust them thoroughly, and that when anything happens (e.g. in a dispute) they usually take orders from them and obey their arbitration. We do not know whether the English barbarians also trust them.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ So much for the Protestant Reformation! But since even the highest Chinese officials had only the vaguest ideas of European geography at this time (see footnote 19), they could hardly be expected to understand the niceties of European religious differences, more especially since there was nothing to prevent a Chinese official being a good Confucian with an interest in Buddhism and Taoist philosophy at the same time. For some idea of Chinese official life during the reign of Ch'ien-lung the reader is referred to Dr Waley's *Yuan Mei*, in which this eighteenth century poet-official is shown against the background of his times.

If these nuns have never been of one mind with and have had no contact 一氣交結¹³⁹ with the English, then you can also have all the points in the Imperial edict to the barbarian merchants made known to them, and let them (i.e. the nuns) discreetly tell them what to do 作主.¹⁴⁰ If these barbarian nuns are of like mind with 通同一氣 the English then you must not inform them, for we fear that on the contrary there might be a leakage (of information). In short, as regards this matter it is better to take precautions rather than wait until it happens and then do something, so that the barbarian Envoy may not succeed in his avaricious plot, and only then will it be all right 方爲妥協.

'The Governors-General should obey the various Imperial edicts and unobtrusively from time to time keep a careful watch, and not lose their composure in the least. It is merely that in so far as we have thought about this we have given instructions in advance in the hope that no unseemly incidents may take place. If by any chance that Country starts wrong-doing, the Governors-General simply ought to pacify the merchants of the other countries and cause them all peacefully to follow their occupations and not allow them to plot with the English. Meanwhile speedily memorialize according to the facts, and await our decision.

'Furthermore, when the Envoy arrived to bring tribute, an Imperial edict was sent to the ports along the route instructing the Governors-General and Governors to pass on instructions to each military post to parade the soldiers in order to make a good impression. Now, when the Envoy goes to Canton to return to his Country let the Governors-General and others also immediately instruct the various regiments 標 and battalions 營 that all the beacons and posts be kept strictly in order and banners and weapons be polished up so that the barbarians will see the Celestial Empire's impressive military power and will not in the least dare to grow disrespectful. Moreover, forbid the barbarian merchants belonging to the foreign firms of the other countries to have intercourse with them which might lead to plotting.

'Have these instructions transmitted to Ch'ang-lin, and also have Kuo Shih-hsün and Su-lêng-ê informed. Have them sent by express courier at the rate of six hundred *li* per day, and memorialize in reply by express at the rate of six hundred *li* per day.

'We are much exercised about this 朕爲此事甚縈念也。¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Literally 'of one breath with and in contact with'. It has a bad sense, like 'in collusion with'.

¹⁴⁰ i.e. to manipulate the merchants from behind the scenes. Macao had been the great Catholic missionary centre for China and Japan since the Portuguese first settled there in the middle of the sixteenth century. It was from Macao that Father Ricci set out to convert the Chinese in 1583. How much influence the nuns at Macao had over the merchants it is hard to say, but it is a pleasant conceit to imagine them being able to manipulate matters from behind the scenes.

¹⁴¹ Here the two Grand Secretaries have emphasized the fact that this document is in the words of the Emperor by using the character *chên* 朕 which signifies the Imperial 'We'. The phrase

'In accordance with the Imperial Will this letter is sent.'

(*Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* IX, p. 70b, ff.)

This is an interesting document, and shows, I think, that the Emperor and his advisors realized that England was capable of causing trouble at Canton and Macao, and that the refusal to meet the requests made by their King might result in trouble in the future. Meanwhile, the old policy of playing off one barbarian country against another was to prevail.

By now Macartney had realized that he would be obliged to leave the Capital very soon, and that as yet he had obtained no real results for his mission. Therefore on October 3rd he drew up a list of requests, in the name of King George III, which he immediately sent to Ho-shên. In his Journal under the entry for this date he recorded what they were.¹⁴²

'The first is a request to allow the English merchants to trade to Cheusan, Limpo (i.e. Ningpo), and Tiensing.

'Second, to allow them to have a warehouse at Peking for the sale of their goods, as the Russians had formerly.

'Third, to allow them some small, detached, unfortified island in the neighbourhood of Cheusan as a magazine for their unsold goods, and as a residence for their people to take care of them.

'Fourth, to allow them a similar privilege near Canton, and some other trifling indulgences.

'Fifth, to abolish the transit duties between Macao and Canton, or at least to reduce them to the standard of 1782.

'Sixth, to prohibit the exaction of any duties from English merchants, over and above those settled by the Emperor's diploma, a copy of which is requested to be given to them, as they have never yet been able to see it for their unequivocal direction.'

The Imperial reply to these requests was issued on October 7th, refusing all six points, and a seventh, concerning the English religion, which had not in any case been included in Macartney's original list. A full translation of this document is given in Morse, *Chronicles*, II, pp. 247-252. This is a reasonably close translation, though couched in eighteenth century English,

'We are very much exercised about this' seems to indicate a real feeling of urgency, and such a phrase is not used in any of the other Macartney documents printed in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*. However, it is possible that the document represents not so much the attitude of Emperor Ch'ien-lung, nor even of A-kuei and Ho-shên, but rather of Fu-k'ang-an 福康安, the illustrious General and former Governor-General of the two Kwangs, who had recently returned from his victorious expedition against the Gurkhas of Nepal, and was full of distrust and disdain for the English. See footnotes 7 and 119, and Staunton, *Embassy*, II, pp. 48-57.

¹⁴² Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 332-333.

and is mistakenly set out as though it were addressed alternately to the Ambassador and the King, whereas in fact the words 'Your Sovereign' should be translated 'You, O King', since the whole document is addressed directly to George III. This was realized by Backhouse and Bland in their translation which can be found in their *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, pp. 325-331. But otherwise their version is so heavily paraphrased as to make it almost misleading, and the version given in Morse does at least show us the version of this document which the English authorities at that time were able to read. However, it too is somewhat removed from the original since it had been translated from a Latin version made from the Chinese by Fathers Poirot and Raux, who purposely toned down some of the expressions so as not to offend the feelings of the English.¹⁴³ I have therefore translated the more important passages of this document direct from the Chinese, and these are given below.¹⁴⁴

' . . . Now, your Envoy has gone beyond what is fixed by custom and made many requests which are entirely contrary to the idea of the Celestial Empire's way of treating people from afar generously, and of pacifying the four barbarian tribes.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, the Celestial Empire is lord over the myriad countries which are all treated with equal kindness. Among the countries which trade at Canton your England is not the only country. If all of them, one after another, were to copy your example in making impossible requests, and repeatedly pestering us, how could we grant what they requested? Realizing that your Country is a long way off and separated by the oceans and has been unacquainted with the system of the Celestial Empire we have, therefore, ordered the Grand Ministers to enlighten the Envoy and others point by point, and then instruct them to return home. . . .'

(*Ta Ch'ing li-ch'ao shih-lu*, Vol. 1435, p. 15b, line 4 ff.)

' . . . According to what your Envoy has said, in the future your Country's merchant ships may come to Ningpo and Chusan in Chekiang as well as to Tientsin and Canton to anchor and trade. In the past, when Western Ocean countries have come to trade with the Celestial Empire it has always

¹⁴³ See Pritchard, 'Letters from Missionaries', pp. 40-42, in which he prints a letter from Poirot to Macartney written from Peking in September 1794, which reads in part: ' . . . quoi qu'il en soit je prend la liberté de marquer à Son Excellence comment et M. Raux, et moi votre Serviteur avons fait la traduction de la Response Imperiale à Sa Majesté Britannique'. After mentioning the clause forbidding the propagation of the English religion, Poirot continued: 'Nous selon notre coutume modifâmes de part et d'autre les expressions, car nous ne pouvions absolument retrancher tout l'article, de peur, que doutant eux de la fidélité de notre Traduction, ils n'appellassent à notre insçut un troisieme Missionnaire pour ainsi s'en assurer'.

¹⁴⁴ The Chinese text is not given in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, but can be found in the *Ta Ch'ing li-ch'ao shih-lu*. Vol. 1435, pp. 15a-20b.

¹⁴⁵ An expression implying all the foreign countries outside the frontiers of the Chinese Empire, lying in the four different directions.

been at Macao where there are 'foreign' *hongs*¹⁴⁶ which buy and sell 收發 various goods. This has been the practice for a long time, and your Country has abided by it without exception for many years without demurring. As to the other ports, namely Ningpo in Chekiang and Tientsin in Chihli, there are no 'foreign' *hongs* established there and even if your Country's ships arrived there they would not be able to sell their goods. Moreover, there are no interpreters there and no one would understand your language so it would be extremely inconvenient. Apart from Macao in Kwangtung where trade is permitted as usual all the requests made by your Envoy for the anchoring of ships and trading at Ningpo and Chusan in Chekiang as well as Tientsin in Chihli cannot be allowed. . . .'

(*ibid.* p. 16a, line 4)

' . . . That formerly the Russians had an establishment at the Capital for trade was because it was set up before Kiakhta¹⁴⁷ 恰克圖 had been established for trade. They were merely given a house to live in temporarily. Subsequently, since Kiakhta was established, the Russians have been doing trade there, and are no longer permitted to reside at the Capital. This has been so for dozens of years.¹⁴⁸ Now Russia, trading on the border at Kiakhta is in a similar position to your Country trading at Macao. Since there are foreign *hongs* at Macao where your Country can sell goods why is it necessary for you to want to establish another *hong* at the Capital as well? The frontiers of the Celestial Empire are strictly demarcated 嚴明, and the subjects of dependencies 外藩 are never allowed under any circumstances to cross the frontier and mingle (with the Chinese). Therefore your Country's request to establish a *hong* at the Capital definitely cannot be granted.

'Again, according to your Envoy's statement you are asking for a small island near Chusan so that when your merchants arrive there they can stay in order to rest and have somewhere to store their goods. The reason why

¹⁴⁶ For Macao one should understand Canton. See footnote 49. The word 'foreign' here means Chinese firms trading with foreign merchants.

¹⁴⁷ Throughout the seventeenth century Russian pioneers and adventurers had been pressing eastwards until they came up against the Chinese Empire on the river Amur in Manchuria. As a result of friction the treaty of Nertchinsk was signed in 1689, and for a time Russian traders holding official passports were allowed to go to Peking in a yearly caravan, and from 1698 every second year. However, because of further friction a new treaty, the treaty of Kiakhta, was signed in 1727 which remained in force and governed Sino-Russian relations until 1858. By this treaty, trading caravans might come to Peking only once in three years, but many restrictions were imposed on this form of trade. Gradually the Russian Court came to the conclusion that it was more profitable to give up direct trade with Peking and to carry on all trade at Kiakhta on the frontier between China and Russia and in 1762 the Manchu Court finally closed the Peking market. See M. N. Pavlovsky, *Chinese-Russian Relations*, pp. 22-23, and Ch'êng T'ien-fang, *A History of Sino-Russian Relations*, pp. 28-30. For an earlier and more detailed work see G. Cahen, *Histoire des Relations de la Russie avec la Chine, 1689-1730*.

¹⁴⁸ Lit. 'several tens of years'.

your Country's (merchants) wish to reside on an island near Chusan is in order to sell their goods. Now, since there are no 'foreign' *hongs* at Chusan nor are there any interpreters, your Country's ships no longer anchor off there.¹⁴⁹ Therefore this island which you want would be useless to you. . . .'
(*ibid.* p. 17a, line 4)

' . . . Now the various requests made by your Envoy not only affect the legal system of the Celestial Empire but even from your own point of view would be useless and impractical 即爲爾國代謀亦俱無益難行. Now we again clearly instruct you, O King, looking upward, to understand our intentions 仰體朕心 and to comply with them for ever, so that we both may enjoy the blessings of peace 共享.
(*ibid.* p. 20a, line 4)

The penultimate document in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* is a Court Letter from A-kuei and Ho-shên to the Governors-General and Governors of Chihli, Shantung, Kiangnan, Kiangsi, and Kwangtung dated the 30th day of the eighth month (October 4) giving final instructions for the journey of the English Envoy and his suite and their return home. The Governors-General and Governors are again warned that since their requests have not been granted the English are likely to be disgruntled, and that therefore the troops must be on the watch, and everyone prepared in case of trouble. A Mongol who was a member of the Council of State, Sung-yün 松筠 was appointed to escort Macartney as far as Hangchow,¹⁵⁰ and in this document he is advised that if he has the slightest need of armed strength to suppress the English he should immediately call on the help of troops under the command of the local officials. Meanwhile Macartney himself was feeling considerable disappointment at the failure of his mission as he shows in his Journal under an entry for October 4th, ' . . . Nevertheless, having been selected for this Commission to China, the first of its kind from Great Britain, of which considerable expectations of success had been formed by many, and by none more than by myself, I cannot help feeling the disappointment most severely. I cannot lose sight of my first prospects without infinite regret. . . .'¹⁵¹ Had he known of the contents of the above Court Letter instructing Sung-yün to use force if necessary this would have added insult to injury, especially since Macartney had been at pains to ensure the good behaviour of his entourage.

¹⁴⁹ 'No longer', because English ships had tried to trade there spasmodically from about 1700-1713.

¹⁵⁰ *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* IX, p. 75a, lines 9-10. For Sung-yün see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 691. At this time he was forty-one years old, and had had some experience of dealing with the Russians on the frontier, having concluded a new agreement with the Russians at Kiakhta in 1792.

¹⁵¹ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, pp. 334-335.

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At this point the Macartney documents in the *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* come to an end, and in fact this point also marks the end of official Chinese interest in the embassy. Macartney had agreed to set out on October 7th, ' . . . and to prevent any likelihood of our being surprised by bad weather, the Emperor had fixed the 7th instant for the beginning of our journey, and given orders that every honour and distinction should be paid on the road.'¹⁵² All arrangements had been made for escorting him to Canton and seeing him safe aboard an English ship. From the Chinese point of view the embassy had gone off quite well. The barbarian Envoy had presented tribute to the Emperor and a new and hitherto unrecorded country had been added to the list of China's vassals. In spite of the requests contained in the state message from the barbarian King, and made verbally by his Envoy, nothing had been granted. The traditional system of trade between the Middle Kingdom and barbarian merchants was to continue at Canton without alteration under the jurisdiction of the local officials. It is true that the English barbarians were a little 'uppish' and went so far in disregarding custom as to sail direct to Tientsin in their own ships. Also the Envoy had steadfastly refused to perform the *kowtow* in spite of repeated exhortations to do so. However, this barbarian country of the red-haired English had sent some quite valuable presents on a reasonably lavish scale, and the next barbarian embassy to arrive could be kept more strictly to the regulations for tribute embassies.¹⁵³ The Grand Councillors, therefore, could sit back and congratulate themselves that the English embassy had gone off reasonably smoothly and that nothing of importance had been promised them.

Thus, on October 7th, 1793, Macartney and his suite set out from Peking on the first stage of their journey to Hangchow by water, which they reached on November 9th. Here Sung-yün said goodbye, and the Governor-General designate of the two Kwangs, Ch'ang-lin, who was to accompany Macartney to Canton, greeted him. Macartney soon liked Ch'ang-lin, as witness the entry for November 12th in his Journal. 'The Viceroy made us another visit, and improves upon us every time we see him.' He soon found an opportunity of discussing with him the trade between England and China at Canton, and this promised to be a more favourable approach, direct to the Governor-General responsible for the two Kwangs, than the more formal approach of

¹⁵² Robbins, *ibid.*, p. 337.

¹⁵³ The next foreign embassy was that of the Dutch in the following year. They were hurried overland from Canton to Peking, their Envoys, Titsingh and van Braam were required to *kowtow* on every possible occasion, until the account of their embassy reads like the scenario for a comic film. Even their presents were despised. 'With regard to additional presents we would observe that the tribute-articles this time presented by that country are ordinary and few in number and far inferior in value to what was presented by England, when it for the first time came to Court and presented tribute. . . .' Translated by Duyvendak from 'Supplementary Documents on the Last Dutch Embassy', p. 338.

King to Emperor. At the end of a discussion on November 20th Macartney handed him a note set out under eleven articles, containing the points which Macartney wished to get put right at Canton.¹⁵⁴ These were extremely practical points concerning the proper duties which were to be paid, regulations governing the conduct of foreigners in Canton, and the request 'that the English merchants be at liberty to trade with any China merchant without being confined to any particular set which are called the Cohong or Hong merchants'. Another request of interest reads: 'That it be allowed to a Chinese to instruct the English merchants, in the Chinese Language, a knowledge of which may enable them to conform more exactly to the Laws and Customs of China'. The final request was rather amusing: 'That the English be not confounded with other persons who trade to Canton and speak the same Language, but (are) a different nation, and inhabit a very different part of the world called America.'¹⁵⁵ Ch'ang-lin immediately memorialized the throne concerning this document and an edict was issued on December 1st, a copy of which reached Ch'ang-lin on December 9th.¹⁵⁶

The party arrived at Canton on December 19th, and while there Macartney gained a more detailed knowledge of the grievances of the English merchants, and since he had so far failed to obtain satisfaction for any of his detailed requests, he now drew up a full statement of what their grievances were and

¹⁵⁴ Printed in Morse, *Chronicles*, II, pp. 252-253, and in an abbreviated form in Pritchards *Crucial Years*, p. 357.

¹⁵⁵ The first American ship arrived at Canton to trade in 1784, and the American merchant, soon complained to the French Consul there in a letter of November 30th, 1784 that they had been reported to the Hoppo as being English, and requested the Consul to tell the Chinese 'that we are the subjects of a free, independent, and sovereign power'. See Josiah Quincy, *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul in Canton, with a life of the Author*. Shaw was appointed Consul in Canton in 1790. Since the ending of the American War of Independence by the Peace of Paris in 1783, the English-speaking peoples seem to have lost no time in impressing on foreigners that the former Colonists were now under entirely different management. Thus Macartney at the end of his first Report to the East India Company, written from Canton in December 1793 adds a PS. 'I have taken care to put the Viceroy sufficiently upon his guard against confounding with British Subjects those of the United States of America, whom the People of Canton have already learned to distinguish under the name of Yankees. I have supplied the Viceroy with the appropriate flags of the respective Nations.' Printed in Pritchard, 'The Instructions of the East India Company to Lord Macartney on his Embassy to China and his Reports to the Company, 1792-4', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1938, pp. 395-6.

¹⁵⁶ It is printed in the *Kao-tsung Shun Huang-ti shêng-hsün* 高宗純皇帝聖訓, Vol. 276, pp. 33-34. The Emperor did not grant any specific requests and merely said that a further tribute embassy would be allowed, but that it should go to Canton first in accordance with precedent. Macartney notes in his Journal: 'As it was explained to me it seems conceived in very friendly terms, saying that if the King should send a Minister again to China he would be well received. But in such case it is desired that he should come to Canton, which implies a sort of disapprobation of our having gone up the Gulf of Pe-che-li. Nevertheless, I would not, for any consideration, that we had not, as by these means we are masters now of the geography of the north-east coasts of China, and have acquired a knowledge of the Yellow Sea, which was never before navigated by European ships'. Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 368. For a partial translation of the edict see Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p. 358.

the reforms which they desired in the Canton trade, which he delivered to the Governor-General on January 1st, 1794. This document gives a full picture of the difficulties and vexations under which the merchants laboured at Canton, and as such is important.¹⁵⁷ As a result Ch'ang-lin issued an edict the following day threatening punishment to anyone who defrauded the English. Another edict was issued by the Governor-General prohibiting extortion from the Europeans. As Professor Pritchard remarks, 'these edicts represented the high water mark of Macartney's achievements.'¹⁵⁸ It was certainly the only immediate and practical result of his embassy, but it was destined to be a very short-lived triumph, since Ch'ang-lin was transferred as Governor-General of Fukien and Chekiang in August 1795. Thus he was only in Canton for about one and a half years. He was succeeded by Chu Kuei 朱珪 who was not bound by any promises towards the English. This was the weakness of Macartney's personal approach since it depended entirely on a temporary official in charge of affairs at Canton. But only the Emperor and his advisors at Peking could make any permanent improvement in the trading conditions of the English merchants, and the Emperor had steadfastly refused to make any concessions.

Macartney remained in Canton until January 10th, 1794 and then sailed down the West River to Macao where he remained until March 8th when he embarked on H.M.S. *Lion* which was to act as convoy to the homeward bound fleet of merchant ships. While at Canton Macartney had written a long report to the East India Company, dated December 23rd, in which he gave some account of his negotiations at Court and discussed the kind of goods which the Chinese might wish to buy from England if a demand could be created. But this letter is more important for revealing Macartney's own impressions of the Chinese Empire and Government, and he makes some pertinent observations. For instance: 'I do not find that there is in fact any fundamental regulation of the Empire prohibitory of foreign Commerce with their northern Ports. Such a reason is put forward only to conceal the real motives, which they do not chuse avowing, and which is their apprehension lest too great a communication with Strangers should interfere with that profound tranquillity and that awful submission among all Classes of Men the maintenance of which is in truth the ever-present and only inalterable maxim of this Government'.¹⁵⁹ On September 4th, 1794 he arrived back in England, while in the same month Titsingh arrived in Canton to lead the Dutch Embassy to Peking.

¹⁵⁷ It is summarized in Morse, *Chronicles*, II, pp. 253-254, and in Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p. 362.

¹⁵⁸ Pritchard, *ibid.*, p. 363.

¹⁵⁹ The whole of this long letter is printed in Pritchard, 'The Instructions of the East India Company to Lord Macartney', pp. 378-396. The extract given here is from p. 387.

What, finally, was the upshot of this first and costly Embassy to the Court of Peking?¹⁶⁰ In general the Macartney mission must be reckoned a failure. As early as 1796 the Select Committee of the East India Company at Canton finding that Macartney's requests had produced no lasting effect, drew up a fresh list which they presented to the Governor of Kwangtung, and which were all refused.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile Macartney and Staunton had hoped to build up permanent communications between the Courts of London and Peking and had hoped that Sir George Staunton might be able to return to China as Minister and Chief of the British Supercargoes at Canton. But Staunton was taken ill and the project had to be shelved. Instead some letters and presents were sent out by an East Indiaman which arrived in Canton at the end of 1795. These were:

A letter from King George III to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung.

A letter from Henry Dundas, Home Secretary in Pitt's Government to Ch'ang-lin, Governor-General of the two Kwangs.

A letter from Lord Macartney and one from Sir George Staunton to Ch'ang-lin.

A letter from the Chairman of the East India Company to the Hoppo at Canton.

Together with these letters were sent ten cases of presents from the King to the Emperor, as well as presents for the other officials. The pantomime which occurred when the Select Committee in Canton wished to present these letters and gifts is amusingly described in the records of the East India Company. As Morse explains, this business put the Governor of Kwangtung in a difficult position but ' . . . he gave way on points of ceremonial as little as possible and did not allow the traders to forget how much inferior they were to Chinese officials.'¹⁶² In fact one of the results of the Macartney Embassy was to cause the local officials in Canton to assert their superiority all the more.

The fashion of giving extravagant admiration to an idealized picture of Chinese government and society which had begun in Europe during the time of the Emperor K'ang-hsi (1663-1722) had reached its climax by the middle of Ch'ien-lung's reign with the publication of Voltaire's *Essai sur les Mœurs* in 1756, and Quesnay's *Le despotisme de la chine* in 1767.¹⁶³ But since that

¹⁶⁰ The approximate cost of the Embassy to the East India Company has been estimated by Pritchard as £78,522. For a detailed expense account see Pritchard, *ibid.*, pp. 507-509.

¹⁶¹ Pritchard, *Crucial Years*, p. 370. For a well-balanced summary of the aims of the Embassy both primary and secondary, and of its achievements, if any, see *ibid.*, pp. 365-374.

¹⁶² Morse, *Chronicles*, II, pp. 273-276.

¹⁶³ For further information on the influence of China on the eighteenth century 'enlightenment' see A. Reichwein, *China and Europe*, pp. 75-98; G. F. Hudson, *Europe and China*, pp. 312-329; W. W. Appleton, *A Cycle of Cathay*, pp. 140-156.

time a cooler appraisal of contemporary Chinese methods of government had prevailed, especially in England. This more critical attitude was well expressed by Macartney himself in his Journal under an entry dated January 2nd-7th, 1794 when he speculated about the future of China after visiting the city of Canton.¹⁶⁴ ' . . . The Empire of China is an old, crazy, first-rate Man of War, which a fortunate succession of able and vigilant officers have contrived to keep afloat for these hundred and fifty years past, and to over-awe their neighbours merely by her bulk and appearance. But whenever an insufficient man happens to have the command on deck, adieu to the discipline and safety of the ship. She may, perhaps, not sink outright; she may drift some time as a wreck, and will then be dashed to pieces on the shore; but she can never be rebuilt on the old bottom. . . .' The façade had been penetrated and the pretensions of the Chinese Empire observed by a trained diplomat who had been enabled by his previous experience to draw comparisons between China and other countries of the world, for among his other previous posts Macartney had been Ambassador to the Court of Catherine the Great of Russia from 1764 until 1766.

The abortive embassy undertaken by Lord Amherst in 1816 and the contemptuous treatment accorded to Lord Napier when he was sent to Canton in 1834 as the representative of the British Government just after the East India Company had lost its trade monopoly in China only serve to confirm the impression that the Macartney embassy had no success in piercing the armour of cultural superiority as typified by the tribute system of the Chinese Empire. In spite of the evidence from the Macartney mission that no concessions were likely to be granted, the Government in England kept trying to negotiate with Imperial China for the improvement of trading conditions. But as we have seen from the Chinese documents examined in this article, the Emperor and his ministers regarded the Macartney embassy as just one more tribute mission from a barbarian state which must be fitted into the traditional tribute system without any modifications being made. Yet in fact the Macartney embassy was the writing on the wall, a warning that Chinese exclusiveness could not be maintained for ever. This embassy provided a head-on collision between Western ideas of trade and diplomacy as conducted between sovereign and equal states and the Chinese concept of a world-state of which China was the centre and in which all other states were inferior. For the next forty-five years Britain kept trying to break down this outmoded and unrealistic Chinese conception, and to get trade and diplomacy established according to Western practices. The Chinese, with equal obstinacy, maintained their traditional view so monumentally preserved in the edict from the Emperor

¹⁶⁴ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 386.

Ch'ien-lung to King George III, and translated earlier in this article.¹⁶⁵ Writing about this edict Bertrand Russell has observed acutely: 'No one understands China until this document has ceased to seem absurd'.¹⁶⁶ Equally no one can understand the First Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-42 (miscalled the Opium War) until he realizes just how absurd this edict appeared to Englishmen at that time. Nothing could have been more galling to the pride of people who were beginning to regard themselves as one of the foremost nations in the world than to have their diplomatic overtures contemptuously brushed aside by other people who happened to consider themselves, without exception, as the only civilized race on earth. The superb snub contained in the Imperial edict was not lightly forgotten by Englishmen of that time.

' . . . Therefore, O King, as regards your request to send someone to remain at the capital, while it is not in harmony with the regulations of the Celestial Empire we also feel very much that it is of no advantage to your Country. Hence we have issued these detailed instructions and have commanded your tribute Envoys to return safely home. You, O King, should simply act in conformity with our wishes by strengthening your loyalty and swearing perpetual obedience so as to ensure that your Country may share the blessings of peace. . . . '

These were provocative words and it is not surprising that war broke out in 1839, it is only surprising that it was delayed for so long. Having failed repeatedly to gain redress for grievances concerning trade and relations with the Chinese Empire the English government finally resorted to arms in 1839, and China was eventually forced, by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, to grant most of the requests made diplomatically by the Macartney embassy in 1793. Opium was not the cause of the war. The causes went far deeper, and stretched back at least to the time of the Macartney embassy; opium was merely the immediate spark which set these smouldering embers alight.¹⁶⁷ Whether any nation has the right to force another to trade is an open question. This was realized by Macartney himself in a note found among his papers concerning the Embassy.¹⁶⁸

'I presume that every nation has a right to regulate its trade, and make such laws for that purpose as appear best to it, however hard they may seem to press upon foreigners. The country is to take care of itself, and what it considers as its own interest, in the first place; if strangers are dissatisfied,

¹⁶⁵ On pp. 134-137.

¹⁶⁶ *The Problem of China* (1922) pp. 49-51.

¹⁶⁷ I have developed this argument in more detail in my review of Dr Waley's *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*, to be included in Vol. V of this *Journal*.

¹⁶⁸ Robbins, *Our First Ambassador*, p. 356.

they need not trade with it. This argument may, like almost every good one, be pushed too far.'

The British Government in 1839 evidently considered that this argument had been pushed too far for too long, and thus went to war. But it took more fighting (the Anglo-French action of 1858-1860) before the Chinese Empire finally admitted the diplomatic representatives of foreign powers to reside at Peking. Certainly, as the Chinese documents examined here show, Ch'ien-lung and his officials seemed quite unaware that the position of Chinese supremacy in the world was being challenged, and that the balance of power among the countries of the world was changing. Even if they had realized that a change was taking place, they could not, in view of their attitude of superiority expressed in these edicts, make any change without loss of face. As events were to prove, the façade of moral superiority was maintained until the end. Meanwhile the Macartney embassy cannot be summed up better than in the epigram printed in 1834 in a book about China by Peter Auber, Secretary to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. 'It has justly been observed that the Ambassador was received with the utmost politeness, treated with utmost hospitality, watched with the utmost vigilance, and dismissed with the utmost civility.'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ *China, an Outline of its Government, Law and Policy; and of the British and Foreign Embassies to and the Intercourse with that Empire*, p. 200.

APPENDIX

LIST OF PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS MENTIONED IN THE CHINESE DOCUMENTS TRANSLATED

Name	Transliteration in Wade-Giles System	Position held at time of Macartney Embassy, 1793	Biographical Reference
阿桂	A-kuei	Senior Grand Councillor	Hummel pp. 6-8
長麟	Ch'ang-lin	Governor of Chekiang and from September 1793 Governor-General of the two Kwangs	<i>Ch'ing-shih kao</i> ,* Ch. 349, biograph. 130, pp. 3a-4b.
徵瑞	Chêng-jui	Salt Administrator of Changlu in Chihli Province	<i>Kuo-ch'ao ch'i-hsien lei-chêng</i> ,† <i>chüan</i> 96, pp. 37a-41a
吉慶	Chi-ch'ing	Governor of Shantung and later of Chekiang	Hummel, pp. 584-5
奇豐額	Ch'i-fêng-ê	Governor of Kiangsi	<i>KCCH</i> , ch. 188, p. 25a
金簡	Chin Chien	President of Board of Works	Hummel, pp. 159-160
福康安	Fu-k'ang-an	Governor-General of the two Kwangs and Commander-in-chief in Tibet	Hummel, pp. 253-55
和珅	Ho-shên	Grand Councillor and Emperor's chief or favourite Minister	Hummel, pp. 288-90
伊齡阿	I-ling-a	A Vice-President of the Board of Works	<i>KCCH</i> , ch. 91, pp. 31a-36b
郭世勳	Kuo Shih-hsün	Governor of Kwangtung and Acting Governor-General of the two Kwangs	<i>CSK</i> , ch. 338, biograph. 119, pp. 12a-13a
梁肯堂	Liang K'ên-t'ang	Governor-General of Chihli	<i>Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan</i> , ch. 27, pp. 33b-35b
盛住	Shêng-chu	Superintendent of Canton Customs (Hoppo) till August 1793	<i>KCCH</i> , ch. 301, p. 40a
書麟	Shu-lin	Governor-General of Kiangsi and Kiangsu	<i>CSK</i> , ch. 349, biograph. 130, pp. 1a-2b
蘇楞額	Su-lêng-ê	Superintendent of Canton Customs (Hoppo) from September 1793	<i>KCCH</i> , ch. 100, pp. 1a-5a
松筠	Sung-yün	Member of the Grand Council	Hummel, pp. 691-92

Note. The Emperor Ch'ien-lung may be found in Hummel under his personal name (Hung-li) or in the *Ch'ing-shih kao* under his temple name (Kao-tsung), Ch'ien-lung being, in fact, his reign title, viz.:

弘歷 Hung-li
高宗 Kao-tsung

Emperor (1736-1796)

Hummel, pp. 369-73
CSK, in the *pên-chi*

* Abbreviated to *CSK* hereafter.

† Abbreviated to *KCCH* hereafter.

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