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# THE KOTOW IN THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY TO CHINA IN 1793\*

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ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1792, George Lord Viscount Macartney, the first British envoy ever to reach China, sailed from Portsmouth with a commission as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China. The aims of the mission were to put Sino-British relations upon a treaty basis, redress various grievances in the existing commercial arrangements at Canton, open new ports to trade in north and central China, and, if possible, establish a permanent legation in China. As the objectives of the embassy were important and as it would establish precedents for future British missions to China, the government had planned it with care, and had placed at its head an especially competent diplomat and colonial administrator. The British were well aware that the Chinese considered foreign embassies as tribute-bearing missions and generally, if not always, demanded that the ambassador perform the kotow before the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Sovereign Western states naturally objected to being classed as tributaries of China, and the opinion was generally held that the

\* During the preparation of this article, which has extended over a period of ten years, the writer has become indebted to a number of people. Some have called his attention to important materials, others have given helpful hints and suggestions, and still others have helped with or made suggestions about translations. To all of these people the writer wishes to express his deep appreciation: Gussie E. Gaskill, J. J. L. Duyvendak, Arthur W. Hummel, Cyrus H. Peake, C. C. Wang, L. Carrington Goodrich, George A. Kennedy, Knight Biggerstaff, John K. Fairbank, Chou Ch'eng-yao, J. C. Yang, and Tai Jen.

<sup>1</sup> For the official Chinese regulations for the reception of foreign envoys during the Ch'ien-lung period see the *Ch'in-ting Ta Ch'ing hui-tien: Ch'ien-lung 欽定大清會典: 乾隆* [Collected administrative statutes of the Ch'ing dynasty: Ch'ien-lung period] (Peking, 1764), ch. 56, pp. 1-8b, especially section 9, as translated by J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng, "On the Ch'ing tributary system," *Harvard journal of Asiatic studies* (hereafter *HJAS*), 6 (June, 1941), 170-73. This article is an excellent study of the Chinese conception of foreign intercourse which can be summed up in the term tributary system. For additional information about tributary ceremony as given in *ch'üan* 43 of the *Ta Ch'ing t'ung-li 大清通禮* [Current ceremonials of the Ch'ing period] (Peking, 1756), see G. Pauthier, "Documents officiels Chinois sur les ambassades étrangères, envoyées près de l'empereur de la Chine," *Revue de l'Orient*, 2 (Paris, 1843), 14-22. Pauthier also translates similar material from the 1824 edition of the *T'ung-li* in *Histoire des relations politiques de la Chine avec les puissances occidentales* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1859), pp. 185 ff. For a contemporary Western interpretation by the Jesuit Father Amiot see *Mémoires concernant . . . des Chinois*, 14 (Paris, 1789), 534.

kotow was a ceremony which not only humiliated and degraded the ambassador but was one which implied the submission of his sovereign to the Chinese Emperor. Under these circumstances the British naturally wished to escape it, and the Ambassador was determined to avoid it if at all possible.

Lord Macartney landed at Taku, a port near Tientsin off the mouth of the Pei river, on August 5, 1793, where he was met by Chinese conductors who escorted him to Peking. From Peking he traveled northward to the Emperor's summer residence at Jehol, where on September 14th he was granted a formal audience by the Ch'ien-lung emperor. On September 17th he attended the ceremonies celebrating the Emperor's birthday, and on the 21st departed for Peking, having on two other occasions seen and conversed with the Emperor. On September 30th, as the Emperor was returning to Peking, the Ambassador for the last time attended the imperial presence. Unable to open satisfactory negotiations with the chief ministers and having received the Emperor's reply to the King's letter on October 3rd, the Ambassador departed from Peking on the 7th, receiving as he did so an imperial edict refusing the few requests he had been able to present to the chief minister, the Manchu, Ho-shen. Further discussion of the embassy as a whole need not detain us now. Besides the contemporary accounts of it written by members of the mission, the present writer has elsewhere published a detailed study of the embassy.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE KOTOW AND THE MACARTNEY EMBASSY

The purpose of the present paper is to study the ceremonial followed at the time of Lord Macartney's reception in order to determine, if possible, whether or not he performed the so-called kotow. Kotow is a Western form of *k'ou-t'ou* 叩頭 or *k'ou-shou* 叩首 which literally means to "knock the head (upon the ground)." The ceremony involves kneeling on both knees and bowing the head to the earth. Kotow is, however, also used by Westerners more specifically to refer to the form of obeisance performed by persons when received in audience by the Emperor or when receiving an imperial mandate or on ceremonial occasions in honor of the Emperor. This obeisance properly speaking is called the *san-kuei chiu-k'ou shou*

<sup>2</sup> *The crucial years of early Anglo-Chinese relations, 1750-1800*, Research studies of the State College of Washington, vol. IV, nos. 3-4 (Pullman, Washington, 1936), chaps. 7-9; "Lord Macartney's journal of the China embassy," in Helen H. Robbins, *Our first ambassador to China* (London: John Murray, 1908), pp. 180 ff. The *Journal* was first published in volume two of John Barrow's *Some account of the public life and a selection from the unpublished writings of the Earl of Macartney* (London: T. Cadell, 1807). Hereafter the more reliable edition in Robbins will be referred to as *Macartney's Journal*; Aeneas Anderson, *A narrative of the British embassy to China, in the years 1792, 1793, and 1794* (London: J. Debrett, 1795).

三跪九叩首 and literally means "three kneelings and nine knockings of the head." It is performed by kneeling three times upon both knees and at each kneeling bowing the head three times to the ground.<sup>3</sup> It is the question of the performance of this latter ceremony which interests us in the present study, but for convenience sake it will be referred to as the kotow.

According to the official British account of the embassy (written by Sir George Leonard Staunton, Secretary of the Embassy and Minister Plenipotentiary in the absence of the Ambassador),<sup>4</sup> Lord Macartney's *Journal* and other published British accounts, the Ambassador was received in audience and entertained by the Emperor without having at any time to perform the three kneelings and the nine head-knockings, which ceremony was generally demanded by the Chinese court of foreign envoys who were granted an audience until as late as 1873.<sup>5</sup> This version has been generally accepted by Western writers and historians.

On the other hand in China, until recently at least, a very different version was generally current. The conductors of the Amherst embassy in 1816 asserted that Lord Macartney had kotowed (see note 20 below), and various published Chinese documents and books, by indirect statement, innuendo or inference left the impression that the normal ceremony—that is, the *san-kuei chiu-k'ou shou*—was performed without directly saying so. The following extracts may be taken as typical. The *Tung-hua lu* (Records of the eastern gate),<sup>6</sup> which might well be considered the official Chinese version, is ambiguous, merely stating that in the 58th year, the 8th month and the 10th day of Ch'ien-lung (September 14, 1793) the English envoys Macartney, Staun-

<sup>3</sup> See the *Tz'u hai* 辭海 dictionary (Shanghai: Chung-hua publishing co., 1936-37) and Robert Morrison, *A memoir of the principal occurrences during an embassy from the British government to the court of China in the year 1816* (London: Hatchard & son, 1820), p. 9. See also the *Ch'ien-lung hui-tien*, *op. cit.*, ch. 56, pp. 1-8b, especially section 9; Fairbank and Teng, *op. cit.*, *passim* and other references in note one. For a picture of the ceremony proposed by the Chinese at the time of the English embassy under Lord Amherst in 1816 see H. B. Morse, *Chronicles of the East India company trading to China* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1926-29), vol. 3, pp. 295-97.

<sup>4</sup> *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: G. Nicol, 1797), vol. 2, pp. 232, 256 and *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> As late as 1859 the American Minister John E. Ward was not given an audience because he refused to perform even one kneeling and three head-knockings. In 1873 the foreign diplomats at Peking demanded and were granted by the T'ung-chih emperor an audience without the performance of the kotow in any form. See W. W. Rockhill, "Diplomatic missions to the court of China," *American historical review*, 2 (1897), 638.

<sup>6</sup> *Tung-hua ch'uan-lu* 東華全錄 (Peking: Shan-ch'eng-t'ang, 1887-90), Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 118, p. 3. This is a great collection of documents relating to the Ch'ing dynasty compiled principally by Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙 (1847-1917). The edition referred to is found at Columbia and Cornell. For a detailed account of the *Tung-hua lu* see Knight Biggerstaff, "Some notes on the *Tung-hua lu* and the *Shih-lu*," *HJAS*, 4 (July, 1939), 101-15.

ton and others "had an audience with the Emperor" 入覲, leaving the Chinese reader naturally to infer that the kotow was performed. Another work dealing with the foreign relations of the Ch'ing dynasty, compiled by Wang Chih-ch'un 王之春 and published in 1891, simply states that the English ambassadors were "led into an audience with the Emperor" 引見.<sup>7</sup>

The idea that perhaps, after all, Macartney had kotoed also crept into some Western writings, apparently primarily from Russian sources. The first person to present this view in detail was the French savant M. Jean Pierre Abel-Rémusat in 1825.<sup>8</sup> The arguments used by Rémusat were reiterated and supported in the *American historical review* (1897) by no less a scholar than W. W. Rockhill, in the following words:<sup>9</sup>

There is a strong suspicion in the minds of many that Lord Macartney made the detested prostrations. Aeneas Anderson, a member of the embassy, but who, it is true, was not present at the audience, says that the ceremonial followed was kept a profound secret by those who witnessed it, and intimates that something that had

<sup>7</sup> *Kuo-ch'ao jou-yüan chi* 國朝柔遠記 [Record of the Chinese court's graciousness to strangers] (Canton: Kuang-ya shu-chü, 1891), ch. 6, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Mélanges asiatiques* (Paris: Dondey-Dupré, 1825-26), vol. 1, pp. 440-41. Rémusat's evidence, a considerable portion of which is drawn from the records of the Amherst embassy in 1816, is as follows: When Lord Amherst was asked to perform the kotow he asked to be exempted as in the case of Lord Macartney. "Les négociateurs chinois nièrent avec force qu'on eût accordé au lord [Macartney] une exemption si contraire aux lois de l'empire; ils citèrent les gazettes officielles et les édicts qui exprimaient précisément le contraire, et appelèrent en témoignage sir George [Thomas] Staunton lui-même, qui avait assisté à l'audience de lord Macartney; mais sir George, craignant les effets d'une réponse catégorique, s'excusa sur sa grande jeunesse au moment de cette réception. Enfin l'empereur [Chia-ch'ing] lui-même fit sortir un édit dans lequel il déclarait se souvenir très-exactement d'avoir vu de ses propres yeux lord Macartney pratiquer le *kheou-theou* devant son père [Ch'ien-lung]. . . .

Toutes les personnes qui composaient l'ambassade de 1793, affirment que lord Macartney a été dispensé des cérémonies du *kheou-theou*, et il est certain qu'en toute autre matière cette simple assertion de la part de personnes si respectables et si dignes de foi, ne devrait pas permettre le plus léger doute. Je n'opposerai à ce témoignage unanime, ni les insinuations d'Anderson, répétées et malignement interprétées tout récemment par un pamphlétaire anglais,\* ni même le témoignage peu désintéressé des mandarins chinois [at the time of the Amherst Embassy, 1816]. Toutefois celui de l'empereur me paraît mériter quelque considération: d'ailleurs, l'interprète russe Vladykin, qui était à Peking au moment de la réception du lord Macartney, d'autres personnes encore qui ont pu avoir de ce fait une connaissance toute particulière, s'accordent à rapporter des circonstances bien contraires au récit des Anglais. Le comte Golowkin, ambassadeur de Russie [1805-06], ayant voulu se prévaloir de l'exemption accordée au lord Macartney, on lui assura très-positivement que cette exemption n'avait jamais eu lieu. Enfin, indépendamment de tous ces témoignages, on aurait peine à concevoir le motif qui eût fait enfreindre ainsi, sans nécessité, le plus sacré des rites de la cour. L'histoire chinoise ne contribue pas peu à faire douter de cette possibilité." \*The English pamphlet, *Delicate inquiry into the embassies to China, and a legitimate conclusion from the premises* (London, 1818), gives no positive evidence and is merely a vitriolic attack on both the Macartney and Amherst embassies.

<sup>9</sup> Rockhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 632-33. Rockhill's evidence is taken from Rémusat, Anderson, Ellis' journal of the Amherst embassy, and O'Meara's life of Napoleon.

to be concealed then happened. The Chinese on their side emphatically assert that Lord Macartney kowtowed. Furthermore, the Russian interpreter Vladykin, who was in Peking at the time, and other persons who must have had good opportunities for ascertaining the facts, state that the British ambassador did perform the three kneelings and nine head-knockings.

Finally, as recently as 1928, Dr. E. T. Williams, has questioned the official English account, basing his arguments upon Rockhill, who "believed that Macartney had kowtowed and based his belief on what seemed to him conclusive evidence."<sup>10</sup>

In view of this wide divergence of opinion in regard to the question, an effort to determine the historical truth regarding the case seems worthwhile. Furthermore there are several published Western sources<sup>11</sup> relating to the matter which either have been ignored or missed by writers upon the subject, while the manuscript sources in the India Office, the British Museum, the Ministère des affaires étrangères, and the Wason Collection on China at Cornell University, throwing light upon the subject have not been used. Finally, Western writers who have dealt with the kowtow have largely ignored Chinese sources, and these have recently become especially valuable with the publication of the official *Draft history of the Ch'ing dynasty*,<sup>12</sup> the *Veritable records*,<sup>13</sup> and several collections of documents from the archives of the Council of State.<sup>14</sup> The study will of necessity be primarily one of historical criticism, but it is hoped that it will serve to illustrate the larger field of Chinese ceremonial practice and the problems of early intercourse with the West which grew out of divergent practices and ideas.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Thomas Williams, *A short history of China* (New York: Harpers, 1928), p. 249.

<sup>11</sup> Notably, Macartney's *Journal*, referred to in note two; J. C. Hüttner, *Nachricht von der Britischen gesandtschaftsreise durch China und einen theil der Tartarei* (Berlin: Vossischen buchhandlung, 1797), published in French translation at Paris by Pillot in 1803 under title, *Voyage à la Chine*. Herr Hüttner accompanied the embassy as tutor to young George Thomas Staunton, and aided in the extensive Latin translating necessary; also Samuel Holmes, *Journal of Mr. Samuel Holmes . . . as one of the guard on Lord Macartney's embassy* (London: W. Bulmer, 1798), and the journal of James Dinwiddie, one of the scientists who accompanied the embassy, published in part in William Jardine Proudfoot, *Biographical memoir of J. Dinwiddie* (Liverpool, 1868).

<sup>12</sup> *Ch'ing shih kao* 清史稿 (Peking, 1928; revised 3rd ed., Mukden, 1937). For a discussion of this work and its various editions see C. H. Peake, "A comparison of the various editions of the *Ch'ing shih kao*," *T'oung pao*, 35 (1940), 354-63.

<sup>13</sup> *Ch'ing shih-lu*, published in 1937 by the Council of State Affairs of the Government of Manchoukuo under the title of *Ta Ch'ing li-ch'ao shih-lu* 大清歷朝實錄, in 4485 *ch'ian* (chapters), 1220 *ts'e* (volumes). The *Shih-lu* is an official collection of documents giving an annual chronological, almost day by day, record of the affairs of a dynasty. This one was compiled according to customary procedure to serve as the basic historical source for the Ch'ing dynasty and was of course used by the compilers of the *Ch'ing shih kao*. The published edition is a photolithographic printing of the Mukden mss. copy. See Biggerstaff, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-02 and J. J. L. Duyvendak, "The last Dutch embassy in the 'Veritable records,'" *T'oung pao*, 34 (1938), 223-27.

<sup>14</sup> See notes 23, 26 and 68 to follow.

## MISCELLANEOUS EVIDENCE THAT LORD MACARTNEY KOTOWED

Let us first consider the evidence which implies or tends to show that Lord Macartney did perform the kotow. It consists of a number of points. First, there is a statement (referred to by Rockhill) made by Napoleon at St. Helena on August 26, 1817, at the time of the Amherst embassy, to the effect that, "it appears, that . . . Lord Macartney, was obliged in 1793, to submit to the *ko-tou*, without doing which he would not have been received."<sup>15</sup> The most obvious comment is that Napoleon was in Europe in 1793, and, therefore, had no opportunities whatever for personal observation. Thus his statement, if based on anything at all beyond inference from the experience of the Amherst mission, must, of necessity, depend upon second-hand information, which most likely would have come either through his Russian connections or through the French missionaries at Peking. Unfortunately, the only document on the subject in the Ministère des affaires étrangères, a copy of a letter from the missionary Père Joseph de Grammont, belies Napoleon, and states that Lord Macartney did not conform to the court ceremonials.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it seems likely that personal vanity and a desire to lecture Lord Amherst for his failure to obtain an audience might have led Napoleon to make such a statement. Finally, as Napoleon was merely speaking from memory and not writing from records before him, it is unwise to place much reliance on his assertion. It seems unnecessary, therefore, to give any weight whatsoever to his statement.

The second argument is based upon the alleged implication of a statement made by Anderson, who was a body servant of Lord Macartney during the embassy. Anderson and the whole retinue accompanied the Ambassador to the place of audience on September 14th, and then all except the gentlemen of the suite returned to their quarters without seeing the Emperor or witnessing the ceremony. Since he was not present at the audience, Anderson does not state what kind of a ceremony took place, nor is there anything in his statement which could be made, except by a vivid imagination, to imply that the "ceremonial followed was kept a profound secret." The only implication in his statement is that he and other members of the suite were not officially told what had transpired (which was natural), and that there were varying bits of gossip among members of the suite as to the several events of the morning.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> B. E. O'Meara, *Napoleon in exile* (London, 1822), vol. 2, pp. 174-79.

<sup>16</sup> MSS. Ministère des affaires étrangères, Mémoires et documents: Chine (1793-1855), vol. 17. The letter was from Grammont at Peking to Señor Agoté, Spanish chief at Canton, and was written in the winter of 1793-94. It will be referred to in more detail later. See note 103.

<sup>17</sup> Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-48. He states that the audience "was a visit of mere form and

Regarding the casual meeting between the Ambassador and the Emperor on the 15th, Anderson states that he learned from the interpreter that business had been taken up with the chief minister. He states, however, that on the Emperor's birthday he and other members of the suite were present at the ceremonies, that "the approach of the Emperor was announced, by the prostration of the mandarins" (the implication being that he did not prostrate himself), and that he actually saw the Emperor.<sup>18</sup> According to the other accounts, the Emperor did not appear in person before those who were assembled to pay him homage but remained hidden behind a screen.<sup>19</sup> It is possible that Anderson was located outside the main hall where he might have seen the Emperor pass, or that in order to embellish his narrative he added at this point a description of the Emperor given by someone else. However this may be, it seems quite certain that nothing in Anderson can be taken to insinuate or imply that special secrecy was maintained about the ceremonial or that the kotow was performed.

#### EVIDENCE FROM THE RECORDS OF THE AMHERST EMBASSY

The third thread of evidence is based upon various statements made by the conductors of the Amherst embassy in 1816 when they were trying to persuade the Ambassador to perform the kotow. Throughout the long controversy between Lord Amherst and his conductors, the Ambassador consistently maintained that Lord Macartney had not kowtowed and requested the same treatment for himself. The conductors, on the other hand, resorted to every device possible to force him to comply with their desires. When Lord Amherst first pleaded the Macartney precedent the subordinate conductors appeared unaware of exactly what ceremony had been performed. Later the chief conductors, Su-leng-o 蘇楞額 and Kuang Hui 廣惠, maintained that Lord Macartney had kowtowed before the Emperor. Su-leng-o even said that he personally remembered seeing Lord Macartney kowtow at Canton (which is obviously false), but upon being closely questioned he admitted that Lord Macartney performed the English ceremony at the imperial audience but asserted that he later kowtowed, although he could not name the place. The two subordinate conductors admitted that Lord Macartney did not kowtow at the first audience, but maintained that he did so on the Emper-

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presentation," and that "the Emperor, it was said, received the credentials of the embassy with a most ceremonious formality. All, however, that could be learned, as matter of indubitable occurrence, was the notice his Imperial Majesty was pleased to take of Master Staunton" (p. 148).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 151-53.

<sup>19</sup> Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 98-102; Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 314-15; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 255-56.



or's birthday. Later still the Chinese reasserted their position that Lord Macartney had kotoed on numerous occasions.<sup>20</sup>

From this evidence it is obvious that the Chinese conductors were hopelessly inconsistent and contradictory, and that they were more interested in getting Lord Amherst to consent to their demands than they were in stating the truth. By asserting that Lord Macartney had first delivered a copy of the King's letter to his conductors and not to the chief minister after his arrival at Jehol, and by suggesting that Lord Amherst perform the ceremony and suppress the fact, the conductors also gave ample proof that their accuracy and veracity were not to be relied upon.<sup>21</sup> None of them, except Su-leng-o, who saw Lord Macartney only at Canton, asserted that they knew from personal observation that he had performed the ceremony.<sup>22</sup> The assertions of these officials must, therefore, be completely discounted because of their inconsistencies, contradictions, inaccuracies, and obvious bias, and because the persons who made them had never been in a position to observe the events of which they spoke.

A court letter, an imperial edict, and a transcript from the imperial records presented to the Amherst embassy constitute a fourth thread of evidence. The court letter, issued by the Council of State (*Chün-chi-ch'u*) as confidential instructions to the conductors on August 15, 1816, was presented verbally to the commissioners of the English embassy on the 16th. It explains how the conductors were to go about convincing Sir George Thomas Staunton, one of the commissioners of the embassy who had also accompanied the Macartney embassy as a page, that Lord Macartney had performed the koto. They were to state to Staunton that he had seen with his own eyes the audiences and the banquets, and that "at that time the former court's Great Emperor did not permit your kingdom's envoy to perform the ceremonies of his country, and that it was only when he subsequently did (perform the) three kneelings and nine knockings of the head that favors were bestowed upon him" 其時先朝大皇帝不准爾國使臣行本國之禮，嗣經三跪九叩頭始，蒙恩賚。<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Henry Ellis, *Journal of the proceedings of the late embassy to China* (London: John Murray, 1817), pp. 72, 92-95, 108, 110, 118, 123, 139-40, 147-48; Morrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30, 48; G. T. Staunton, *Notes of proceedings and occurrences during the British embassy to Peking in 1816* (London: Henry Skelton, 1824), pp. 22-24, 44-51, 53-54, 59-62; John Francis Davis, *Sketches of China* (London: Charles Knight, 1841), vol. 1, pp. 35-38, 64-69, 83-84, 91-92, 102-04. Ellis and Staunton were two of the three commissioners who headed the embassy, while Morrison was the chief interpreter and Davis was an assistant interpreter.

<sup>21</sup> Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 141; Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 103-04.

<sup>22</sup> Su-leng-o was Hoppo at Canton in 1793 and 1794. Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Liang T'ing-nan, *Yüeh hai-kuan chih* 梁廷枏：粵海關志 [Gazetteer of the Kwangtung customs] (Canton? ca. 1839), ch. 7, gives a list of the governor-generals and superintendents of customs (Hoppo) at Canton.

<sup>23</sup> "Ch'ing Chia-ch'ing ju-i-nien Ying-shih lai p'ing-an" 清嘉慶廿一年英使來聘案 [Docu-

This seems a very specific statement to the effect that Lord Macartney did kowtow and if actually based upon authentic records of the year 1793 must command respect. In reality, however, it is a statement designed to suggest to Staunton's mind a particular picture of events which the officials wished him to remember. Such a stratagem was natural in view of the fact that Staunton, to avoid a direct personal contradiction of the Chinese, had pleaded, that because of his youth at the time, he did not remember clearly exactly what had happened.<sup>24</sup> It is a suggestive argument, not necessarily a statement of fact, and may well have been formulated by one of the ministers without reference to reliable documents substantiating it. Unless supported by more direct and reliable evidence it cannot be given great weight.

The transcript from the imperial records, purporting to show that Lord Macartney had kowtowed, was presented to the Amherst embassy on August 23rd. According to Davis the transcript was from the records of the Board of Rites, and Staunton says that it was an official record which stated in some detail that Lord Macartney had kowtowed.<sup>25</sup> The published English accounts have not troubled to reproduce a copy of this document, and it is missing from the various Chinese collections relating to the Amherst mission. The collection of *Historical materials concerning foreign relations in the Ch'ing period*<sup>26</sup> contains a memorial from the Council of State dated August 2, 1816, reporting the results of their examination of the records relating to the English embassy of 1793. The memorial itself contains no information, being but a covering document for two enclosures, one setting forth the obeisance prescribed and the other listing presents given to the Macartney embassy. The first of these enclosures is probably the transcript presented to the Amherst mission, but unfortunately both enclosures are missing (i.e. they were no longer in the record file when the documents were published in 1932).

The fact that these enclosures are missing is peculiar. It suggests that they were removed, probably in 1816, because they contained something that someone did not want preserved, possibly either unpalatable truths or mis-

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ments relating to the coming of the English embassy in the 21st year of Chia-ch'ing, in *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien* 文獻叢編 [Collectanea from the historical records office] (Peking: Palace Museum, 1930-37), vol. 11, p. 20b; Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 118; Staunton, *British embassy, 1816*, pp. 59-62; Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 91-93.

<sup>24</sup> Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 108.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 120; Staunton, *British embassy, 1816*, pp. 107-08; Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>26</sup> *Ch'ing-tai wai-chiao shih-liao* 清代外交史料 (Peking: Palace Museum, 1932-33), vol. 5, p. 14. This publication contains documents from the archives of the Council of State covering the years 1796 to 1835.

representation of facts. Be this as it may, the transcript in question probably was a record from the Board of Rites setting forth the ceremonies planned at the time of the Macartney embassy. Since the final decision regarding the ceremony was not made until three days before the audience,<sup>27</sup> it is certain that the Chinese had already drawn up elaborate plans for the Ambassador's reception, and this document probably represented them. As such it was an authentic document, but one drawn up before, not after the events, and consequently it has no value so far as the point in question is concerned. There is also the possibility that the transcript was actually a record drawn up after the events. Lord Macartney was only one of a number of envoys received by the Emperor on September 14, 1793, and but one of a large group who took part in the ceremonies celebrating the Emperor's birthday. All of the other personages performed the kotow, and a report on the events of those two days would naturally mention the presence of the English Ambassador along with the other envoys and officials as is done in numerous other documents of that date. There would be no imperative reason for saying that the members of the English embassy alone did not conform exactly to the prescribed forms. Altogether it seems unwise to place much reliance upon this apparently no longer extant document unless it is adequately substantiated by other information.

The imperial edict referred to above was issued on August 30, 1816, after the Amherst embassy had been dismissed without an audience. It is a command-edict to the English King and explains why the embassy was not received. Among other things it states that in the 58th year of Ch'ien-lung (1793) "your kingdom's envoy respectfully fulfilled the ceremonies (*li*) and did not transgress the usages (*i*)" 爾國使臣恪恭成禮不愆於儀. It further states that in regard to the present embassy, the high officials were commanded to explain to the envoys, that in the case of the Macartney embassy "your envoy performed all of the ceremonies (*li*) and knelt and knocked (bowed the head) according to the usages (*i*)" 爾使臣行禮悉跪叩如儀.<sup>28</sup>

The first thing to note about this document is that its aim is to picture in as favorable light as possible for the Chinese a very unpleasant event. Even so it does not actually say that Macartney performed the three kneelings and nine knockings of the head, which usage (*i*) he should have followed. Equally

<sup>27</sup> See *infra*, material relating to notes 85-91.

<sup>28</sup> *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien*, Amherst documents, vol. 11, p. 37b. The document is undated but is entered between two dated August 30, 1816. It also appears in slightly abbreviated form in the *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Chia-ch'ing period, ch. 320, p. 4b, where it is dated August 30, 1816 (Chia-ch'ing 21:7.8). An English translation, made by Morrison from the official copy delivered to the embassy, is dated September 11th, and is found in Morse, *Chronicles*, vol. 3, pp. 299-302.

significant is the fact that it does not even follow the very specific language of the court letter cited in note twenty-three above (a thing generally done in Chinese documents). There is no reason for not using the phrase *san-kuei chiu-k'ou shou* if the writers of this document intended to say specifically that Macartney had kotowed. That they did not wish to say this is borne out by the fact that the Emperor did not maintain that the kotow had been performed.<sup>29</sup> There is a quality of face-saving about the document. Weasel words such as “performed the *li*,” “did not transgress the *i*,” and “knelt and knocked (bowed)” are used instead of the obvious and specific ones. These phrases seem calculated to (and would) leave the unsuspecting reader with the impression that the kotow had been performed without actually saying so. Looked at in the most favorable light the document does not say that Lord Macartney kotowed and so cannot be used as specific evidence to prove that he did.

## STATEMENT OF THE CHIA-CH'ING EMPEROR

The last thread of evidence from the Amherst mission is an alleged statement of the Chia-ch'ing emperor that he remembered seeing Lord Macartney kotow before his father. This statement was not issued in the form of an imperial edict as Rémusat states. In fact, although Lord Amherst requested his conductors to procure such a positive statement from the Emperor, none was delivered.<sup>30</sup> This alleged statement of the Emperor was reported to Lord Amherst by his conductors and was almost certainly an invention of their own, because there is direct evidence that the Emperor thought and stated something very different. The Emperor was probably present at the audience of Lord Macartney,<sup>31</sup> and this makes his words doubly important. On August 25, 1816, the Emperor inserted the following comment into a court letter from the Council of State to the conductors of the embassy directing them to insist that Amherst practice the kotow: “In all such matters be not so excessively meticulous about trifles as reversely to err in the proper form when managing foreigners. Accordingly in the 58th year [of Ch'ien-lung] it was also a case of making the best of the situation (or accommodating ourselves to the situation). This is a similar affair. In a word, to expel them is not as good as to receive them” 凡事不可過於苛細轉失馭外之禮。卽五十八年亦係將就了。此一事耳。總之逐回不如接見之。<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See next paragraph.

<sup>30</sup> Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 169–70; Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 53; G. T. Staunton, *British embassy, 1816*, pp. 94–96; Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 120.

<sup>31</sup> G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 224–25.

<sup>32</sup> *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien*, Amherst documents, vol. 11, p. 30a. The key phrase is *chiang-chiu-liao*

This is a most revealing and significant statement. It does not maintain the rigid and unbending attitude assumed by the ministers; it indicates that concessions were made in the case of Lord Macartney, and it seems to indicate that the Emperor was willing to receive the Amherst mission regardless of the ceremony performed.<sup>33</sup> In view of this statement of the Emperor (who probably observed the audience in 1793), which, although it does not specifically say that Macartney did not kowtow, does imply that he did not, all of the evidence from the Amherst embassy that Macartney did kowtow loses the little value that it had. The officials who maintained that he conformed in every way to all of the usages are made prevaricators, and the one solitary reliable fact emerges, that the Chinese accommodated themselves to the situation in 1793.

#### EVIDENCE FROM RUSSIAN SOURCES

At the time of Count Golovkin's embassy from Russia to China in 1805–06, the Chinese asserted that no exception from the usual ceremonies had been granted to Lord Macartney, when the Russian requested that he be treated in the same manner as Lord Macartney. This constitutes another argument to show that the English ambassador performed the kowtow.<sup>34</sup> The most reasonable answer to this argument is that, as in the Amherst embassy, the Chinese conductors were more interested in getting the Russian ambassador to submit to their views than in stating the truth. No real reliance can be placed upon the arguments of Chinese officials of this period when the preservation of imperial tradition and the attainment of a material end were of far more importance in their minds than the statement of specific truths. It seems, therefore, that no dependence can be placed upon the unsubstantiated statements made by the Chinese conductors to Count Golovkin.

There is also the reported testimony of the Russian interpreter Vladykin.

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at the end of the second sentence. This rather colloquial and idiomatic phrase means "to make the best of anything," "to put up with," "to let pass," "to overlook" and implies that one accommodates oneself to or makes concessions to the circumstances. Some might take this statement of the Emperor as conclusive proof that Macartney did not kowtow. This can hardly be done because there were a number of usages that were relaxed in the case of the embassy. It went directly to Tientsin instead of to Canton, and over eighty persons made the trip to Peking instead of the customary twenty. The Emperor's statement may have reference to matters like these, although the context indicates that the ceremonial was the thing referred to.

<sup>33</sup> For a similar imperial statement see *ibid.*, p. 36a.

<sup>34</sup> *Die Russische gesandtschaft nach China im jahr 1805* (St. Petersburg and Leipzig: Ziemssenschen verlag, 1809), p. 45 ff. The well known sinologist Henri-Jules Klaproth, who accompanied the Golovkin embassy says, "Lord Macartney did not submit to the Chinese ceremonial, though such a report was circulated while he was at Peking." See George Timkowski, *Travels of the Russian mission through Mongolia to China, 1820–21* (London: Longmans, 1827), vol. 1, p. 135.

This was first mentioned by Rémusat, but unfortunately he and others who refer to Vladykin's evidence do not cite a source. Dr. John W. Stanton, when he was at the University of Michigan, permitted the writer to examine his partially completed manuscript on Russo-Chinese relations. This manuscript on page 161 indicated that Russian sources stated that Macartney had kotosed, and cited a report by Anton Vladykin, dated November 12, 1795, contained in a work published in Moscow in 1839, as the source. Unfortunately Dr. Stanton has never furnished the writer with an exact reference. Vladykin, a member of the Russian ecclesiastical mission, was unquestionably in Peking at the time of the embassy,<sup>35</sup> but it is not at all certain that he was at Jehol and witnessed the ceremonies. In fact there is reason to doubt that he was there, because the presence of members of the Russian mission at the ceremonies was not noted by any member of the British embassy who has left an account. Nor is there reason to believe that Vladykin acted as an interpreter for the Chinese officials, because Fathers Bernardo de Almeyda, Raux and Poirot are known to have served in such a capacity.<sup>36</sup> In view of these facts, and since we do not have Vladykin's exact statement before us and so cannot tell precisely what he said or how he said it, it seems justifiable to presume that it may have been based on nothing more than hearsay. Altogether Vladykin's evidence is of too uncertain a quality to be given much weight unless otherwise substantiated.

#### EVIDENCE FROM CHINESE SOURCES

Further evidence that must be discussed is supplied by various Chinese works which either state or leave the impression that Lord Macartney performed the kotow. One group of these works does not mention the audience or the ceremonial and merely says that tribute was presented. Thus the *Gazetteer of Kwangtung province*<sup>37</sup> says, "England sent envoys to bring tribute"; the *Illustrated gazetteer of the maritime countries*<sup>38</sup> says that the English king sent his Ambassador Macartney to bring tribute; the *Record of Sino-Western affairs*<sup>39</sup> says that the English king sent his Ambassador

<sup>35</sup> N. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Diplomaticheskoe sobranie diel mezhdru Rossiiskim i Kitaishim gosudarstvam i 1619 po 1792 god* [Diplomatic relations between the governments of Russia and China] (Kazan, 1882), pp. 325-26. Also Stanton's manuscript, the chapter dealing with the Russian colony in Peking.

<sup>36</sup> E. H. Pritchard, "Letters from missionaries at Peking relating to the Macartney embassy," *T'oung pao*, 31 (1934), pp. 11, 20-21, 24, 40-43.

<sup>37</sup> *Kwangtung t'ung-chih* 廣東通志, edited by Juan Yüan 阮元 (Canton, 1822), ch. 170, p. 42.

<sup>38</sup> Wei Yüan, *Hai-kuo t'u-chih* 魏源: 海國圖志 (Edition of 1852), ch. 53, p. 10a.

<sup>39</sup> Hsia Hsieh, *Chung-Hsi chi-shih* 夏燮: 中西紀事 (Last preface, 1865), ch. 3, pp. 3-4. Parts of this work have been translated by E. H. Parker in *China's intercourse with Europe* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh [1888]).

Macartney by sea to Tientsin to bring tribute; the *Complete record of the English attempts to get Macao*<sup>40</sup> says that the English sent envoys bringing tribute, and a *Study of the red-haired English barbarians*<sup>41</sup> says, "in the 56th year [should be 58th year] of Ch'ien-lung [the English] first came to the court with tribute" 朝貢. Even so recent a work as the *Draft history of the Ch'ing dynasty*,<sup>42</sup> in the essay on foreign relations, uses the same archaic terminology, saying that "Macartney and others came to court and presented tribute" 來朝貢表. A contemporary edict at the time of the Dutch embassy of 1794-95 says that "the English Ambassador came to the capitol in order respectfully to present tribute" 恭進表貢. It further says, that since the Dutch and English are "two exactly identical cases of tribute Ambassadors from Western countries," the Dutch should be treated according to the precedent of the English Ambassador,<sup>43</sup> but the Dutch were expected to (and did) kotow. None of these works say that the kotow was performed and prove nothing one way or the other. They are, of course, quite worthless as direct evidence about the question and so can be disregarded. They do, however, show clearly that the Chinese considered the embassy as a tribute bearing mission, and they would leave the ordinary 19th century Chinese reader with the presumption that the kotow had been performed.

Another group of works, most of them official or semi-official in nature, mention the audience, but they do it so briefly and in such general terms as to be of no positive value for our present purpose. Furthermore, with the exception of Liang T'ing-nan's work, all of them can be traced back directly or indirectly to a common source—the *Veritable records*—which, there is reason to believe, was deliberately made ambiguous.<sup>44</sup> Like the works just discussed they do, however, leave the unsuspecting reader with the impression that the normal usages were followed. Thus the *Veritable records*<sup>45</sup> say that on September 14, 1793, "in a temporary large tent in the imperial Wanshu gardens the English first Ambassador Macartney and the second Ambassador Staunton and others had an audience" 上御萬樹園大幄次英

<sup>40</sup> Hsiao Mei-sheng, *Chi Ying-chi-li ch'iu Ao shih-mo* 簫枚生:記英吉利求澳始末 (No date or place), p. 1. MSS. in Cornell University library. There also is an undated printed version.

<sup>41</sup> Wang Wen-t'ai, *Hung-mao-fan Ying-chi-li k'ao-lüeh* 汪文泰:紅毛番英吉利考略 (Published, 1841), p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ch'ing shih kao: Pang-chiao chih* 邦交志, ch. 2, p. 1a-b.

<sup>43</sup> The edict is reproduced and translated in J. J. L. Duyvendak's article, "The last Dutch embassy to the Chinese court (1794-1795)," *T'oung pao*, 34 (1938), 86-88, and most of it is found in *Kao-tung ch'un-huang-ti sheng-hsün* 高宗純皇帝聖訓 [Sacred edicts of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor] (Peking, 1879), ch. 276, pp. 20b-21a.

<sup>44</sup> See below notes 90-91.

<sup>45</sup> *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 1434, p. 11a-b.

吉利國正使臣馬戛爾尼副使臣斯當東等入覲。The *Tung-hua lu*,<sup>46</sup> which probably was the chief source for many of the previous works cited, copies almost the exact wording of the *Veritable records*. Wang Chih-ch'un,<sup>47</sup> already cited and writing as late as 1891, uses almost the same wording in saying that Macartney, Staunton and others were "led into an audience with the Emperor" 引見。Even the *Ch'ing shih kao*,<sup>48</sup> in the imperial annals, with the exception of three non-essential characters, copies exactly the above wording. The *Gazetteer of the maritime customs of Kwangtung*,<sup>49</sup> much of which is based upon the Canton archives, says that the English "brought as tribute the products of their locality" 入貢方物。It omits any specific reference to the audience of September 14th, but says that at the festival in celebration of the Emperor's birthday the English envoys "performed the ceremony of congratulation" 行慶賀禮。

This procession of vague and ambiguous statements will be concluded by three more literary effusions which are liberally sprinkled with "kneelings and knockings," but which still fail to say specifically that the kotow was performed. In a work on administration written sometime before 1862 by Wang Ch'ing-yün 王慶雲 (1798-1862),<sup>50</sup> an official who rose to be president of the Board of Works, it is stated that "Macartney together with the vice-envoy Staunton and others finally, along with the tributary officials of Burma, posturing the arms and legs knelt (on both knees) and knocked (bowed the head) 舞蹈跪叩。<sup>51</sup> After a banquet and the bestowal of gifts had completed the ceremonies then they retired." The wretched phrase *wu-tao kuei-k'ou* can be interpreted as meaning almost anything that the reader wishes to make it mean. At most it cannot technically mean more than one kneeling upon both knees and three bowings of the head to the ground. It might conceivably also mean kneeling on one knee and making

<sup>46</sup> Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 118, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Kuo-ch'ao jou-yüan chi*, ch. 6, pp. 3-4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ch'ing shih kao: Pen-chi* 本紀, ch. 15, pp. 12b-13a.

<sup>49</sup> Liang T'ing-nan, *op. cit.*, ch. 23, pp. 3-4. The same wording is used in the *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 1434, p. 18a, in regard to the birthday ceremony.

<sup>50</sup> *Shih-ch'ü yü-chi* 石渠餘記, ch. 5, p. 56 as found in the *Pi-lin lang-kuan ts'ung-shu* 碧琳瑯館叢書, edited by Fang Kung-hui 方功惠 and printed in 1884. There also seems to be independent editions in 1888 and 1890. The publisher's preface to the 1888 edition (found at Columbia) says the work was never published before. It is also called the *Hsi-ch'ao chi-cheng* 熙朝紀政. See Fairbank and Teng, *HJAS*, 6 (June, 1941), 216.

<sup>51</sup> The exact meaning of *wu-tao* is not clear. Its ordinary meaning is to dance about or gesticulate, but it also means to manipulate the arms and legs. It also refers to an ancient form of court ceremonial mentioned in the biography of Ssu-Ma Kuang in the *Sung shih* (Sung history). *Kuei* means to kneel, and in accordance with the Chinese manner this would be upon both knees. For our purpose the term carries a certain ambiguity unless the number of knees knelt upon is specified and unless we are sure of what motive the author had in using the phrase.



one bow. The linking of the British and Burmese envoys also frees the author from being specific about the British. The whole phrase may have been designed to mystify and mislead, but it is equally likely that the author, who himself did not witness the ceremony, is merely seeking to picture what he thought happened according to the best traditions of literary obscurantism. Beside its ambiguities it fails to qualify as first hand observation and cannot stand alone.

Another author, in a work compiled as late as 1880, has the following amazing words to say.<sup>52</sup> In 1793 when it was proper for the English Ambassador to be led into an audience "he stated that he was not accustomed to kneeling on both knees and prostrating himself.<sup>53</sup> Being strongly urged to do it, he [consented] only to bend one knee, but when he arrived within the palace he unconsciously (or involuntarily) knelt (on both knees) and prostrated himself" 自陳不習拜跪。強之，止屈一膝，及至殿上，不學雙跪俯伏。<sup>54\*</sup> The naïvete of this statement is what amazes one. It begins by admitting that Macartney refused to kowtow and consented to bend one knee only, and yet, wonder of wonders, when he came into the imperial presence he was so awestruck and overpowered that *unconsciously* his knees knelt and his body prostrated itself. We are not dealing with objective facts here (and in the paragraph to follow) but with the peculiar psychology of Emperor venerator and worshipers. Even if the author himself does not believe in such miracles he expects most of his readers to accept it as a plausible explanation. It would not be so surprising to find an 18th century Chinese perpetrating such an explanation, but it is strange to find a late 19th century person, who had witnessed the barbarian's utter lack of respect for the Son of Heaven, giving in all seriousness such an explanation. As evidence it is meaningless and is no better than its source, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

<sup>52</sup> Ch'en K'ang-ch'i (born ca. 1838), *Lang-ch'ien chi-wen* 陳康祺：郎潛紀聞 [Memoires of a retired gentleman]. First series (Preface dated 1880. Sao-yeh Shan-fang edition 掃葉山房, 1910) ch. 5, p. 11. The statement is incompletely quoted by Chu Chieh-ch'in, "Ying-kuo ti-i-tz'u shih-ch'en lai Hua chi" 朱傑勤：英國第一次使臣來華記 [Account of the first British Ambassador's coming to China], *Hsien-tai shih-hsieh* 現代史學 3 (May 25, 1936), 27.

<sup>53</sup> The phrase *pai-kuei* might well be translated "to do obeisance kneeling," but the longer rendering has been used to bring out the full flavor of the phrase.

<sup>54</sup> *Fu-fu* ordinarily means "to prostrate or to render obeisance," and so it has been rendered here as the intended meaning of the writer. In reference to Western customs, however, it was used in 1816 to mean "to raise the hat and bow the head" 免冠頓首 [See *Ch'ing-ch'ao-hsü wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 清朝續文獻通考 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1936), ch. 334, p. 10,745. For a discussion of this book see S. Y. Teng and K. Biggerstaff, *An annotated bibliography of selected Chinese reference works* (Peiping: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1936), p. 137]. Mr. Ch'en may thus be using the term from a document in which it actually means something almost the opposite from what he believes and intends it to mean. \* Fifth character from end should be *chüch*, to perceive, to be conscious of.

Ch'en, the author of the statement quoted above, quotes as proof of his assertion the following poetical lines attributed to the poet, essayist, and official Kuan Shih-ming (1738-1798). "As soon as [Macartney] reached the palace he evened his knees with the ground. The celestial majesty could cause the ten-thousand hearts to submit"\* 到殿廷齊膝地。天威能使萬心降。<sup>56</sup> Kuan at the time of the embassy was probably departmental director of the Board of Punishments, an office to which he had been promoted in 1789. He was also a trusted friend of the grand secretary A-kuei 阿桂 and became a censor in 1795.<sup>56</sup> He may well have witnessed the audience of Lord Macartney, although, since it was held in Jehol, it is equally likely that he did not. At any rate, he should have been in a position to find out the facts, but unfortunately, a poem, where literary elegance and dramatic effect are striven for, is not the most desirable sort of evidence. The passage, further, seems to suggest the same kind of irrational happening that the previous writer so readily accepts. One can hardly believe that an 18th century British official who had charmed Catherine of Russia, defied the French at Grenada and tamed Rajas in India would be so overwhelmed by the sight of the Emperor that he would fall prostrate before him. If the passage is taken at its face value it does not say that the kotow was performed, and it can well be taken as a perfectly legitimate description of bowing upon one knee. Ch'en may be completely misinterpreting Kuan's poetical description of the ceremony. At all events it constitutes very inconclusive testimony.

#### EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BY CUSTOMARY PROCEDURE

This concludes the direct evidence supplied by Chinese writers.<sup>57</sup> There remains only to consider the very weighty argument to the effect that immemorial usage in China required the kotow and that it would not have been relaxed in the case of Lord Macartney. The *Collected administrative statutes*

<sup>56</sup> Kuan Shih-ming, *Yün-shan-t'ang shih-chi* 管世銘：鱣山堂詩集 [Collected poems of the Yün-shan court]. Unfortunately it has been impossible to consult the original work, and so the extract has been copied exactly as given in Ch'en K'ang-ch'i, *op. cit.*, ch. 5, p. 1] and Chu Chieh-ch'in, *op. cit.*, p. 27. We may assume that the quotation is correct and that it actually refers to the Macartney embassy. The passage might also be rendered, "No sooner had he reached the palace than he arranged his knee(s) upon the ground. The celestial majesty could cause all hearts to be subdued." \*The character *i*, one is missing.

<sup>56</sup> For information about Kuan see the forthcoming biographical dictionary, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, edited by Arthur W. Hummel. The biographical data was supplied by Dr. Hummel.

<sup>57</sup> Before examination one might think that a work like Liu Fu's *Ch'ien-lung Ying-shih chin-chien chi* 劉綽：乾隆英使覲見記 [Record of the English Ambassador's audience with the Ch'ien-lung emperor (First published in 1917; Shanghai: Chung-hua book company, 1930), would contain invaluable information. But it is a translation of Lord Macartney's *Journal*.

for the *Ch'ien-lung* period are quite specific about the kotow. Tribute missions (all embassies) from Western ocean countries were under the management of the reception department of the Board of Rites. Such missions were to disembark at Canton where the ambassador was to surrender his credentials and await orders from the capital. The vessels accompanying the ambassador were not to exceed three, with not more than 100 persons on each vessel, and not more than 20 persons were to proceed to the capital. At the audience the envoys were to appear in their native dress and were to "perform the ceremony of three kneelings and nine knockings of the head," after which they were graciously permitted to sit down and tea was imperially bestowed upon them.<sup>58</sup>

Such then were the regulations and usages. It remains only to be seen whether or not they were universally and uniformly applied to Westerners. Between 1520 and 1840, of the thirty-three (excluding Macartney) ambassadors or agents who were sent by European states to China,<sup>59</sup> nineteen, in all probability, kotowed, six were refused an audience because they would not kotow, had no presents or lacked proper credentials; one was imprisoned; one was driven away; four did not reach the capital, and only two were received without the kotow.

In the case of the Russian envoy, Nicolas G. Spathar, who was granted an audience without the kotow, there was much discussion. The K'ang-hsi emperor, it appears, ultimately issued an edict stating that since the Russians had had little intercourse with China and did not understand the etiquette it was not necessary for the envoy to follow Chinese custom. Spathar bowed three times as he entered the palace and once in front of the Emperor. The whole incident and his subsequent refusal to receive the presents from the Emperor to the Tzar on his knees led to his dismissal without an official letter to the Tzar. He was further informed that future envoys would be received only upon the following conditions: that the ambassador be a reasonable person who would do what the Chinese court demanded of him; that communications from the ambassador to the Emperor be in the form of letters from an inferior to a superior; that presents brought be called tribute; and that gifts received be called gratuities and not presents.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Fairbank and Teng, "On the Ch'ing tributary system," *HJAS*, 6 (June, 1941), 163-64, 171, 176 and *passim*. See also the *Chinese repository*, 14 (April, 1845), 153-56 and Pauthier, *Histoire des relations*, pp. 185-206.

<sup>59</sup> See appendix.

<sup>60</sup> Hsüan-min Liu, "Russo-Chinese relations up to the treaty of Nerchinsk," *Chinese social and political science review*, 23 (1940), 407-09; John F. Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China* (London: Macmillan, 1919), vol. 2, pp. 242-422.

The *Draft history of the Ch'ing dynasty*, in the essay on rites and ceremonies, has the following to say about the reception of Westerners.

In the early years of the K'ang-hsi period countries from the outer ocean first brought tribute to the Chinese court. Their reception was somewhat different from that of frontier dependencies. Verbiest 南懷仁, an official of the Imperial Board of Astronomy and honorary vice-president of the Board of Works, commonly when summoned to an audience in the palace also was permitted to attend standing and did not perform the ceremony of kneeling (on both knees) and bowing. In the Yung-cheng period the Roman Pope sent envoys [Gothard and Ildephonse, 1725] to come to the capital. Shih-tsung permitted them to perform the Western ceremony and moreover shook hands with them.<sup>61</sup>

From the above facts it is apparent that there was an exceedingly strong precedent that Western envoys should conform to Chinese usage if they were to be given an audience, but it is also evident that the usages were not invariably enforced. In both the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng periods Western envoys had been received without the kotow, and in the 1690 (K'ang-hsi) edition of the *Collected administrative statutes* there is an interesting regulation capable of wide interpretation. It states that "in 1664 it was settled that whenever foreign countries admire (Chinese) civilization (mu-hua) and come with a tribute of local produce, it should be examined and accepted as they present it, without adhering too closely to the old regulations."<sup>62</sup> One must conclude that precedents and regulations could be found to justify the exemption of Lord Macartney from the kotow if the Chinese so desired, although the weight of customs was in the other direction.

#### THE UNRELIABILITY OF THE EVIDENCE THAT MACARTNEY KOTOWED

From the foregoing analysis of the evidence to show that Lord Macartney performed the kotow, it is obvious that well over half of it is absolutely worthless, being based on hearsay, alleged but unsubstantiated statements, worthless opinions and unjustifiable inference from ambiguous statements. Some of the evidence represents slavish copying from the *Veritable records*, a source which one suspects of having been deliberately made ambiguous. Other of the evidence is inaccurate, inconsistent, and contradictory and was given by persons who were not disinterested, who had not witnessed the audience, and who on several occasions misrepresented the truth. The best of the evidence presented at the time of the Amherst embassy seems to be

<sup>61</sup> *Ch'ing shih kao: Li-chih 禮志*, ch. 10, p. 4a-b.

<sup>62</sup> *K'ang-hsi hui-tien*, ch. 72 (Board of Rites, ch. 33), pp. 1-3b, section 12, as quoted in Fairbank and Teng, *op. cit.*, p. 166. An Arab envoy was also received by the T'ang Emperor in 713 without kotowing. See Rockhill, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

contradicted by the statement of the Chia-ch'ing emperor and is suspect for other reasons. The testimony of the Censor Kuan Shih-ming, who may have witnessed the audience, is not only ambiguous but reflects a hopeless naivete about the effect of the imperial presence upon Westerners, as does that of his copiers. Even the argument from precedent is breached at several points. Taken individually most of the threads of evidence are worthless and even the best are suspect, yet the best of them when taken in conjunction with the fact that nearly all Western envoys were forced to kotow, establish at least a strong presumption that Lord Macartney did kotow unless they are contradicted by positive, specific and accurate evidence to the contrary.

#### THE RELIABILITY OF THE ENGLISH RECORDS

To the examination of this positive evidence let us now turn. It can best be done by tracing the course of events from the time that the kotow issue was first raised until Lord Macartney's departure from the capital, basing this account upon both Chinese and Western original sources. Before plunging into this narrative, however, it may be wise to give some estimate of the reliability of the English sources, since those who believe that Macartney kotowed must, of necessity, assert that the English records have been falsified.

All of the English accounts and records, both published<sup>63</sup> and unpublished, are in complete agreement as to all of the essential happenings from the time of the landing of the embassy at Taku until its final departure from Peking in-so-far as the authors of the accounts personally observed the events. They are, however, not so exactly alike as to suggest conformity to a dictated narrative. There are minor discrepancies and variations in details as one would expect in independent accounts, but upon all essential points relating to the preliminary arrangements and to the actual ceremonies performed they are in agreement. So natural, so logical and so internally consistent are the accounts, that if fabricated, they represent a scheme so elaborate, so carefully calculated and so perfectly and consistently executed as to cause one to doubt its possibility.

Furthermore, no three Englishmen of the 18th or early 19th centuries present more unimpeachable characters so far as honesty and probity are concerned than do Lord Macartney, Sir George Leonard Staunton, and his son Sir George Thomas Staunton. Lord Macartney's career as a public servant was characterized by uprightness and scrupulous honesty, and he

<sup>63</sup> The accounts are by Macartney, the elder and younger Staunton, Hüttner, Dinwiddie, Barrow, Anderson and Holmes. See notes 2, 4, 11, 20 and 89.

was one of the few governors of the Madras Presidency whose administration was marked by honesty and the subjection of personal interests to public duty.<sup>64</sup> Sir George Leonard Staunton, who was associated with Lord Macartney throughout the greater part of his career, had most rigid standards of honesty and devotion to public service, which he instilled in his son. The latter is never known to have departed from them during his long career as a servant of the East India Company and as a member of Parliament.<sup>65</sup> Herr Hüttner, the tutor of young George Thomas Staunton, must have possessed the qualities admired by the elder Staunton, and as Hüttner's narrative was edited and published by German friends without his consent, it presumably is free from any taint of official tampering. Barrow's testimony is less reliable, although his chief fault seems to have been to alter facts in order to make himself appear a more important figure than he really was. Dinwiddie is often critical of the management of the mission and of some of its members, and as his narrative was not published until 1868 it must represent an independent record of events. Anderson's account was published before the official account and without the consent of the Ambassador, but neither he nor Holmes (whose account was officially sanctioned) witnessed the actual ceremonies performed by the Ambassador and so do not say what he did.

If we admit that these men might have wished to conceal the truth, it is impossible to see how they could have done so. There were many other persons in the suite who witnessed the ceremonies, and others, who, although not present at the audiences, were on friendly terms with Jacob Ly, Lord Macartney's interpreter. Had the kotow been performed the information would have somehow leaked out to all members of the suite. There were also at Peking a dozen or more European missionaries who would have become acquainted with the facts and would have transferred them to Europe by letter. Yet the only letters from missionaries which deal with the subject, with the exception of the Russian Vladykin's, confirm the English story. The English gentlemen undoubtedly were aware that concealment was impossible and would hardly have attempted to do something, which, so easily discovered, would have led to disgrace and dishonor.

The reliability of the British accounts may be tested in still another way—namely, was there any imperative reason for falsifying them in regard to the kotow? The answer to this question is no. Lord Macartney's instruc-

<sup>64</sup> See the biographies by Robbins and Barrow mentioned in note 2 and the *Dictionary of national biography*.

<sup>65</sup> See the *Dictionary of national biography* and G. T. Staunton, *Memoir of the life and family of the late Sir George Leonard Staunton* (London: Havant press, 1823).

tions did not specifically forbid him to perform the ceremony but directed him to

procure an audience as early as possible after your arrival, conforming to all ceremonials of that Court which may not commit the honor of your Sovereign or lessen your own dignity, so as to endanger the success of your negotiation.

Whilst I make this reserve I am satisfied you will be too prudent and considerate to let any trifling punctilio stand in the way of the important benefits which may be obtained by engaging the favorable disposition of the Emperor and his ministers.<sup>66</sup>

These instructions might conceivably be interpreted to mean a positive prohibition upon the kotow, but actually they leave to the Ambassador the decision as to what would commit the honor of his sovereign or lessen his own personal dignity. At most they would require only that he obtain in return for the performance of the kotow some *quid pro quo*, such as the promise that any Chinese envoy to England would conform to all British court ceremonials. Actually Macartney wrote his own instructions,<sup>67</sup> and although he was determined to avoid the kotow unless he obtained a *quid pro quo*, his discretionary power was so great and his personal prestige so high, that he could have performed the kotow without obtaining a compensating commitment.

The reliability of the British records meet every test, and their dependability will be further confirmed when they are checked against the Chinese documents in the account of the controversy over the kotow to follow.

#### AMBASSADOR CONSIDERED A TRIBUTE-BEARER BY THE CHINESE

From the first the Chinese considered the British embassy as a tribute-bearing mission, although they drew a distinction between it and the regular tribute missions from nearby Oriental kingdoms. This was clearly shown in several early edicts, especially one of July 24, 1793, relating to the reception of the Macartney embassy. It states that in dealing with barbarian affairs a medium between extravagance and penury should be followed; that in the case of the English tribute-bearers the entertainment should not be too lavish, but, that since the English had come from afar for the first time to see the greatness of China, they could not be compared with those who brought tribute regularly from Burma and Annam, and that they should be treated in such a manner that they would not go away with contemptuous

<sup>66</sup> Morse, *Chronicles*, vol. 2, p. 236. Drafts and originals of the instructions may be found in MSS. India Office, China: Macartney embassy, vol. 91, pp. 341-74 and MSS. Wason collection, Cornell University, Macartney correspondence, nos. 155-58, 194.

<sup>67</sup> Pritchard, *Crucial years*, p. 299.

feelings.<sup>68</sup> The flags on the barges which carried the embassy up the river from Taku bore the words "The Ambassador bearing tribute from the Kingdom of England."<sup>69</sup> Lord Macartney was aware of this fact, but he did not consider it a matter of primary importance, and, fearing that a protest might not be followed by redress, which circumstance would have put a stop to the mission, he refrained from making a remonstrance.<sup>70</sup>

The Chinese had made all necessary preparations for reception of the Ambassador. Liang K'en-t'ang 梁肯堂, governor-general of Chihli province, and Cheng-jui 徵瑞, a Manchu member of the imperial household and salt commissioner of Changlu 長蘆, had been appointed to receive the Ambassador. The latter, in his capacity as imperial commissioner or legate, was to supervise proceedings and conduct the embassy to the capital. Chou, a minor civil official, and Van (probably Wan), a minor military official, were also appointed to help in conducting the mission.<sup>71</sup> Before the embassy landed the officious Cheng-jui seems to have reported to the capital upon the various ceremonials which he planned to have the Ambassador practice, because on August 5, 1793, a court letter from Ho-shen, the chief minister at that time, directed him not to be too exacting in his demands upon these strangers who had traveled so far to come to court.<sup>72</sup>

#### AMBASSADOR DOES NOT KOTOW AT PRELIMINARY CEREMONIES

The embassy disembarked at Taku on August 5, 1793, and the next day Lord Macartney was graciously received by Liang K'en-t'ang. This meeting provided the Chinese with the first opportunity to observe the British attitude toward the kotow, when the Ambassador, instead of kneeling or prostrating himself, merely took off his hat and listened respectfully when Liang

<sup>68</sup> "Ying-shih Ma-ka-erh-ni lai p'ing-an" in *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien* 英使馬戛爾尼來聘案：掌故叢編 [Records relating to the English ambassador Macartney in Collected historical documents] (Peking: Palace Museum, 1928-29), vol. 2, p. 12a-b; also *Kao-tsung ch'un-huang-ti sheng-hsün*, ch. 276, pp. 17-18 and 4-5, 6-8, 16.

<sup>69</sup> Presumably 英吉利國使臣恭進表貢

<sup>70</sup> MSS. India Office, China: miscellaneous documents, vol. 20, Macartney to Dundas, November 9, 1793. This document is Lord Macartney's original despatch (unpublished) to Henry Dundas reporting on the embassy. Hereafter it will be referred to as MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793. Duplicates and copies of it are to be found in volumes 92 and 93 of the China records in the India Office. See also G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 130; Macartney's *Journal*, p. 269; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> *Kao-tsung ch'un-huang-ti sheng-hsün*, ch. 276, p. 16; Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 251-52, 256, 260. It is impossible to identify Chou and Van as they seem not to be mentioned in the Chinese documents.

<sup>72</sup> *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 5, Macartney documents, p. 25a.



proclaimed the Emperor's edict of welcome. These facts were accurately reported to the capital by the governor-general, and in the meantime the Ambassador moved on to Tientsin where, on August 11th, he was met by Cheng-jui and entertained at a ceremonial banquet provided by the Emperor. During the ceremonies he made only "a profound inclination of the body" instead of the customary prostrations.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless the conductors did not remonstrate with him, and Cheng-jui (and apparently Liang) reported that he had raised his hat and knocked his head. The discrepancies between the reported behavior of the Ambassador at Taku and Tientsin led the officials at the capital to raise questions and issue instructions, as is shown in the following court letter from Ho-shen dated August 14th.<sup>74</sup>

. . . Again in the memorials of Liang K'en-t'ang and Cheng-jui they both stated that at the time of the banquet [August 11, at Tientsin] the said envoy and the members of his suite raised the hat and knocked 免冠叩首 the head. Formerly, according to Liang K'en-t'ang's memorial, at the said envoy's first interview, when Liang respectfully proclaimed the gracious edict from the Emperor [August 6, at Taku], the said envoy raised the hat and stood attentive 免冠竦立. In this memorial how is it that he now states that the envoy raised the hat and knocked the head?

Hitherto we have heard it said that Western peoples use cloth to bind their legs; that it is inconvenient to kneel on both knees and bow (prostrate) 跪拜, and that this country's customs do not know the ceremony of knocking the head 叩首. Perhaps it is that they only raised the cap, bowed the body, and nodded the head 免冠鞠躬點首, and that in their statement in the memorial the said governor-general and others were not able to make it clear and therefore stated it to be the knocking of the head. Which it is we are unable to determine. We command him [Liang] to instruct Cheng-jui that if the said envoy at the time of the banquet truly knocked the head then that will end the matter, but if he as earlier only raised the cap and nodded the head 免冠點首, then inadvertently when chatting tell him in obliging words that:

"In regard to the various frontier places 處藩封 (feudatory fiefs) who come to the celestial court to bring tribute and have an audience, not only do all of the officials of the tributary states make the ceremony of the three kneelings and the nine knockings of the head 行三跪九叩首之禮, but even those kings who themselves come to court also unite in the ceremony (*li*). Now your king has sent you and your suite to come with felicitious birthday wishes and naturally you should obey the regulations of the celestial court. Although the customs of your country all use cloth bindings and you are unable to kneel on both knees and bow, yet when you have

<sup>73</sup> See the document quoted below in connection with note 74; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 9, 13, 26-27, 30; Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 256-58, 260-63.

<sup>74</sup> *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 5, Macartney documents, pp. 31a-b. This document is quoted at length because of its inherent interest and because it shows the origin of a legend, long current at Peking, that Macartney did not kowtow because he could not bend his knees. See W. W. Rockhill, *Diplomatic audiences at the court of China* (London, 1905), p. 32. A revised issue of his earlier article.

an audience, why not for a short time loosen the bindings, and after you have performed the ceremony (*li*) then you can again put on the bindings. Moreover it is very convenient. If you and others bigotedly adhere to your country's customs and do not perform this ceremony (*li*), you turn round and neglect the sincerity of your king who sent you to sail the seas and come from afar to pray for blessings and offer presents. Moreover you will be laughed at and ridiculed by the envoys of the various frontier peoples, and I fear that at court the ministers of state who lead the ceremonies moreover will not permit it. These are words which I confidentially say to you."

If thus indirectly he is instructed, after the said envoy reaches the residence of the Emperor he certainly will not fail respectfully to fall in with (obey) the court etiquette and then all will be satisfactory. . . .

#### CONTROVERSY OVER THE CEREMONIAL TO BE FOLLOWED

The conductors lost no time in acting upon these instructions, for on August 15th, as the embassy was nearing Tungchow, Cheng-jui, Chou and Van raised the question of the kotow in a very adroit manner. After discussing various modes of dress, they suggested that the English should adopt the Chinese mode before appearing at court, because the knee buckles and garters would cause much inconvenience when performing the genuflections and prostrations before the Emperor. His Lordship observed that he supposed the Emperor would prefer the Ambassador to pay the same obeisance to him that he would to his own sovereign. The officials then presumed the ceremonies of the two courts to be much alike and went on to describe their own which "never has been, and never could be, dispensed with." The Ambassador explained that the English custom was somewhat different, but that he had an earnest desire to be agreeable to the Emperor, although his first duty was to his King, and that if they were really serious in their observations he would give them a written reply when he reached Peking. The discussion was closed by the mandarin's commenting upon the length and dangers of a voyage from England.<sup>75</sup>

Despite this rebuff Cheng-jui memorialized the court indicating that the English were deeply ashamed of their lack of proficiency in the court ceremonials and were daily, under his guidance, practicing kneeling and knocking the head 跪叩. On August 18th the court expressed its satisfaction with this report and its belief that the Ambassador would obey the ceremonial usages.<sup>76</sup> Cheng-jui apparently believed that he could convince the Ambassa-

<sup>75</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 266; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 135.

<sup>76</sup> *Chang-ku is'ung-pien*, vol. 7, Macartney documents, p. 41a. That Cheng-jui and not the English misrepresented the situation is adequately borne out by later Chinese documents. See notes 81 and 82.

dor that he must perform the kotow, because on August 19th, when the embassy was waiting at Tungchow before beginning the land portage to Peking, Van and Chou again opened the question of the ceremony. They requested the Ambassador to practice it and gave a demonstration themselves. When Lord Macartney declined they requested his Chinese interpreter to practice the ceremony, but he refused, saying that he could do only what the Ambassador directed. The officials appeared much disgruntled at finding the Ambassador so unamenable to their wishes, but the subject was dropped for the time.<sup>77</sup>

When next this vexing question was raised on August 25th, the embassy was housed near the Yüanmingyüan palace. On this occasion the legate, who from the first had evinced a decided unfriendliness towards the embassy, wished to practise the ceremony before Lord Macartney. The Ambassador put a stop to the discussion by saying that he had a paper relative to the subject which he would be ready to deliver in a few days.<sup>78</sup> This paper, in the form of a note to Ho-shen, was dated August 28th, and proposed that in order to please the Emperor and yet avoid the displeasure of the English King, the Ambassador was willing to conform to "every exterior ceremony practised by His Imperial Majesty's Subjects and the Neighbouring Princes attending his Court,"<sup>79</sup> on condition that the Emperor order

that one of the Ministers of his Court, equal in station to the Ambassador shall perform before His Britannic Majesty's Picture at large in his Royal Robes, and in the Ambassador's possession now at Peking, the same ceremonies, as shall be performed by the Ambassador before the Throne of His Imperial Majesty.

This paper was delivered to Cheng-jui on the 29th with a request that he forward it to Ho-shen. The legate did not like the proposal, but Van and Chou favored it as an expedient.

The Ambassador and most of his suite left Peking for Jehol on September 2nd. On the 5th Chou told the Ambassador that he had every reason to believe that the proposal regarding the ceremony would be approved, and consequently Lord Macartney was somewhat surprised when immediately after his arrival at Jehol on the 8th, Cheng-jui returned the letter opened, and suggested that the Ambassador deliver it himself.<sup>80</sup> A little later the same day Lord Macartney declined a request to an interview with Ho-shen

<sup>77</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 272.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793.

<sup>79</sup> MSS. India Office, China: Macartney Embassy, vol. 92, pp. 209-10; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 143-44; Macartney's *Journal*, p. 284.

<sup>80</sup> MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 292, 295, 297.

but sent Sir George Staunton in his place. The subject of the ceremony was taken up, and Ho-shen in his arguments betrayed the fact that he was acquainted with the contents of Lord Macartney's letter relating to the kotow. The minister, without success, tried to contrive means whereby the Ambassador might be induced to perform the kotow without the admission of the equivalent proposal. In the end Sir George delivered to Ho-shen the Ambassador's letter, and Ho-shen directed that his views be presented to the Ambassador.<sup>81</sup>

The next day, September 9th, a court letter to certain provincial governor-generals and governors announced that when the Ambassador and his suite reached Jehol they were not acquainted with or versed in the court ceremonials and directed that when the embassy returned the provincial officials were not to be so respectful or lavish in their entertainment.<sup>82</sup> On the same day Cheng-ju, Chou and Van urged the Ambassador to give up the reciprocal complement demanded, but he insisted on the "propriety of something to distinguish between the homage of tributary Princes and the ceremony used on the part of a great independent Sovereign."<sup>83</sup>

On September 10th the whole question was reviewed at length in a despatch from Ho-shen to the princes and ministers of state at the capital. The Ambassador was accused of ignorance of the ceremonies, of procrastination, of presenting improper proposals, and of bad faith and arrogance. Further he had been ordered to practice the court ceremonials and his supplies and provisions were to be decreased. The ceremonies in his honor were to be reduced, and after the Emperor's birthday he was to return immediately to Peking, where he was to be received very simply by the resident officials, his tribute was to be refused, and after the bestowal of imperial gifts he was to be summarily dismissed. Throughout the whole document, however, there is no suggestion that he was not to be received.<sup>84</sup> In conformity with this order the supplies to the embassy were delayed until after a protest had been made. During the day the conductors resumed the conversations about the ceremony. The Ambassador expressed his earnest desire to pay every respect to the Emperor but stated that it was unnatural to expect him to pay more respect to a foreign prince than to his own sovereign. He expressed his willingness to kneel on one knee and kiss the hand of the Emperor, the

<sup>81</sup> *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 7, Macartney documents, pp. 53a-54a; *Macartney's Journal*, pp. 297-98; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 212.

<sup>82</sup> *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 7, Macartney documents, pp. 52b-53a.

<sup>83</sup> *Macartney's Journal*, pp. 298-99.

<sup>84</sup> *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 7, Macartney documents, pp. 53a-54a.

obesance which he would perform before his own sovereign, and he demonstrated the ceremony. This seemed to satisfy the Chinese and they retired.<sup>85</sup>

DECEPTION OF THE *Veritable Records*

Macartney was privately informed that up to this point the Emperor had not been told of the situation, and this seems the most plausible explanation.<sup>86</sup> It is also probable that the officials, after the above conversation, were convinced of the Ambassador's sincerity and his desire to honor the Emperor. As a result when the matter was presented to the Emperor he agreed to dispense with the kotow. This fact is made very clear in the essay on rites in the *Draft history of the Ch'ing dynasty*. The compilers of this section of the history had available to them the records of the Board of Rites which have not been published. Here it is stated, that<sup>87</sup>

In regard to the audience ceremony of the English envoy Macartney during the last years of the Ch'ien-lung period, the officials discussed the form of the ceremony with him. He argued for an audience similar to that with the English king, and as a result a special imperial edict was issued permitting the use of the Western ceremony 特旨允用西禮.

During the afternoon of this same eventful day Cheng-jui informed the Ambassador that the English ceremony would be adopted, but he proposed that, in lieu of kissing the hand, the Ambassador kneel upon both knees. His Lordship replied that he would "kneel upon one knee only on those occasions when it was usual for the Chinese to prostrate themselves." The legate assented to this, but indicated that the kissing of the hand would have to be dispensed with, to which the Ambassador agreed.<sup>88</sup> The next day, September 11th, Ho-shen received the Ambassador and officially informed him, that, because of the great distance which he had traveled to pay his respects to the Emperor, he would be allowed to perform the English ceremony, that he would be permitted to deliver the King's letter into the Em-

<sup>85</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 299-300; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 213-14; Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 75-76; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793.

<sup>86</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 299.

<sup>87</sup> *Ch'ing shih kao: Li-chih* section, ch. 10, p. 4a-b. Mr. John Kullgren informs the writer that Doctor Yüan Tung-li, of the National Library of Peiping, informed him that the memorial presenting the matter to the Emperor explained that among the English kneeling on both knees was reserved for the worship of God; that the highest compliment which they could pay to earthly beings was to kneel on one knee as they did before their king, and that they were willing to perform the same ceremony before the Emperor as a mark of their great respect. This seems so reasonable and logical that it may well have convinced the Emperor.

<sup>88</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 300.

peror's own hand, and that the first audience would be on Saturday, September 14th.<sup>89</sup>

On this same day, September 11, 1793, Ho-shen issued a very verbose and high sounding court letter which found its way into the *Veritable records*, and which is undoubtedly responsible for the view expressed in so many Chinese works that Lord Macartney performed the kotow. It is a typical face-saving document, and, although it nowhere says that Macartney agreed to the three kneelings and nine knockings, it leaves the impression that he did agree to them. Its enshrinement in the *Veritable records*, together with the fact, that that work dismisses the actual audience with the statement that the English Ambassador had an audience,<sup>90</sup> proves pretty conclusively that the compilers of the *Veritable records* intended to misrepresent this fact to posterity. The document in question is of sufficient interest to justify quotation at length.<sup>91</sup>

Yesterday, because the English envoy was not versed in the requirements of etiquette, we therefore decided that after our birthday festivals he should be caused immediately to return to the capital. As to the presents which it is proper to bestow [upon him], we commanded that the princes and ministers of state resident at the capital, after having summoned him to an interview, should bestow the present [upon the Ambassador] outside the Wumen (Wu gate). Now, the said Ambassador and his suite, after the ministers of the Council of State had instructed and warned them, quite understand and are repentant and careful. Today the first and second envoys had a preliminary audience with the ministers of the Council of State, and in regard to the requirements of etiquette they were very respectful and obedient.

They have sailed the seas and come from afar, and because when they first arrived at our celestial court they were not fully acquainted with the ceremonial system, we could not but impose some restraint on them. Now since they are sincere in heart and loyally (follow) and wholly obey the regulations of our celestial court, naturally we should again regard them with added kindness because of the sincerity with which they have followed this distant road looking forward to an audience. After the Ambassador has presented his congratulatory wishes, when he first has returned to the capital the princes and ministers of state and others should not sum-

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300-301; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 218-19; John Barrow, *Travels in China* (London: T. Cadell, 1804), pp. 17-18. Barrow did not accompany the embassy to Jehol but remained at the Yüanmingyüan palace. As he took no direct part in the events at Jehol, his testimony cannot be given much weight. There is another reason for using Barrow with considerable caution and skepticism. In this volume in particular he is guilty of inaccuracy, exaggeration and misrepresentation, with the object of making himself appear in a more important role than he actually occupied. See William Jardine Proudfoot, "Barrow's travels in China." *An investigation into the origin and authenticity of the "facts and observations" [in it]* (London: George Philip & Son, 1861).

<sup>90</sup> *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 1434, p. 11a-b. See note 45.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 1434, pp. 8a-9b; *Chang-ku ts'ung-pien*, vol. 7, Macartney documents, p. 54a-b.

mons him to an interview, but should order him as before to remain at his hotel.

As to the various places in the capital—those places which we formerly decided to permit him to gaze upon with reverence—and the necessary arrangements for banqueting and bestowing rewards, all can wait until after our return, when we will again issue decrees to be carried out. Take this and again transmit it for the knowledge of the princes and ministers of state resident at the capital, and moreover proclaim it to Chin Chien 金簡 and I-ling-a 伊齡阿 that they may know it.

#### THE AUDIENCES AT JEHOLO AND PEKING

Nothing further of importance happened until September 14, 1793, the day of the audience, when early in the morning the Ambassador and the gentlemen of his suite assembled outside a large tent in the Wanshu gardens 萬樹園.<sup>92</sup> As the Emperor passed to take his seat in the audience tent, "die Englische Gesandtschaft liess sich bei der Annäherung des Kaisers auf ein Knie nieder," according to both Hüttner and Lord Macartney.<sup>93</sup> When the Emperor was seated the Ambassador, Sir George Leonard Staunton, his son George Thomas and the Chinese interpreter, Jacob Ly, were conducted near the foot and to the left side of the throne (the side of honor), while the other gentlemen of the embassy stood at the opening of the tent. As the sun began to rise a solemn hymn was played. "Après cette musique, on fit les neuf inclinaisons qui sont d'usage on présence de l'Empereur. Les courtisans prosternèrent leur visage; l'Ambassadeur et sa suite mirent seulement un genou en terre." This is confirmed by the Ch'ing history which states that "when they came into the imperial presence they then knelt and bowed according to their custom" 至御前而跪伏自若.<sup>94</sup>

After this ceremony, Lord Macartney states, that "holding his Majesty's letter in the gold box with both hands above my head, and mounting the side steps I delivered the box and letter into his Imperial Majesty's own hands and with one knee bent, as had been settled, I made the most reverential obeisance."<sup>95</sup> After a brief conversation and an exchange of presents between the Emperor and Ambassador, Sir George was introduced to the Emperor and kneeled "upon one knee" as the Ambassador had done. A breakfast was served after other visiting ambassadors had been received, at the end of

<sup>92</sup> *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 1434, p. 11a-b.

<sup>93</sup> Hüttner, *Brittischen gesandtschaft*, p. 66; Macartney's *Journal*, p. 304. Hüttner's testimony is especially valuable because his journal was edited and published by friends in Germany without his consent and prior to the appearance of the official account by Staunton.

<sup>94</sup> Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 85-86 and the German edition, pp. 67-68; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 230; *Ch'ing shih kao: Li-chih* section, ch. 10, p. 3a.

<sup>95</sup> MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 232.

which, the Emperor presented with his own hands to the Ambassador "a goblet of warm Chinese wine, not unlike Madeira of an inferior quality."<sup>96</sup>

On the following morning, September 15th, the Ambassador again exchanged a few words with the Emperor as the latter was on the way to his morning devotions. In describing this meeting Lord Macartney says, "I met him and paid my obeisance to him," while Staunton says that the Emperor stopped "to receive the Ambassador's salutations."<sup>97</sup> "My obeisance" and "Ambassador's salutations," as used by these men, obviously mean the same mark of respect as used on the previous day and imply kneeling on one knee only. The next ceremony occurred on the 17th, the Emperor's birthday. The celebration took place in one of the halls of the palace, and the Emperor remained hidden behind a screen during the whole performance. Staunton says that "all the persons present prostrated themselves nine times, except the Ambassador and his suite, who made a profound obeisance," while Hüttner states that ceremonies similar to those of the imperial audience on the 14th were performed.<sup>98</sup> Lord Macartney is more graphic in his description which deserves quoting.<sup>99</sup>

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 . . . .

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 Chinese earth there present, except ourselves, bowed down their heads, and prostrated themselves upon the ground at every renewal of the chorus.

What obeisance was paid by the Ambassador to the Emperor at their meeting during the festivities on the 18th is not mentioned by any of the writers, but

<sup>96</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 304; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 233, 237-38; *Ch'ing shih kao: Li-chih*, ch. 10, p. 4a-b; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 86-88.

<sup>97</sup> MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 240; Macartney's *Journal*, p. 308.

<sup>98</sup> G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 256; Hüttner, *Brittischen gesandtschaft*, pp. 77-78 and the French edition, pp. 98-100; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; *Ch'ing shih-lu*, Ch'ien-lung period, ch. 1434, pp. 17a-18a; Liang T'ing-nan, *op. cit.*, ch. 23, pp. 3-4, referred to in note 49. It seems possible that at each prostration of the Chinese the English may have made a profound bow, which, to an observer at a distance, might easily have been mistaken for the kotow and thus have given rise to the Chinese claim that at the birthday celebration the English kotowed.

<sup>99</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 314.



it can hardly be assumed that greater respect was then shown than on the Emperor's birthday or at the imperial audience.<sup>100</sup>

Such then is the positive evidence regarding the Jehol meetings as given in contemporary documents or publications by persons who witnessed the events. This account is substantiated by the testimony of four other persons, two of whom probably participated in the ceremonies. When writing his journal of the Amherst embassy, Sir George Thomas Staunton, who certainly was present at Macartney's audience, states positively that Lord Macartney did not kotow, although he thought it inadvisable to make such a statement to the Chinese conductors of the Amherst embassy.<sup>101</sup> The other evidence by a probable participant is supplied by no less a person than the son of the Ch'ien-lung emperor, the Chia-ch'ing emperor. The inference to be drawn from his statement, which has already been quoted, is that the customary ceremonials were relaxed in the case of the Macartney embassy.<sup>102</sup>

The other two persons who have left us contemporary and independent evidence are missionaries who were at Peking at the time of the embassy. In writing to his friend Señor Agoté, Spanish chief at Canton, during the winter of 1793-94, Père Grammont, French ex-Jesuit at Peking, gives as one reason for the failure of the embassy to obtain its material aims the fact that "ils ont manqué au Ceremonial du pays dans leurs saluts faits à l'Empereur sans pouvoir en expliquer la raison d'une maniere satisfaisante."<sup>103</sup> Another letter from Peking written in Spanish, the authorship of which is unknown, was also received by Señor Agoté during the spring of 1794. The writer states that "son Excellence n'a pas voulu se soumettre à la Ceremonie du pays," but that "a la fin l'Embassadeur consentit à faire quelque Ceremonie qui n'étoit pas toutefois celle qui étoit d'usage en Chine."<sup>104</sup>

There were three later occasions when, according to Chinese usage, the Ambassador might have kotowed. The first was on September 30th when the Ambassador and his suite attended the Emperor as he passed on his

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 318-21; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 264-67; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 111-12; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793.

<sup>101</sup> G. T. Staunton, *British embassy, 1816*, pp. 31-32, 47, 53.

<sup>102</sup> See material relating to note 32 above.

<sup>103</sup> MSS. Cornell, Macartney correspondence, no. 292, reproduced in *T'oung pao*, 31 (1934), 35. Another printed copy of the letter, varying in minor detail, is found in Van Braam, *Voyage de l'ambassade de la compagnie des Indes orientales hollandaises vers l'empereur de la Chine* (Philadelphia, 1797), vol. 2, pp. 415-18. Another copy, referred to in note 16, is found in the Ministère des affaires étrangères, and English translations are found in MSS. British Museum, Stowe, no. 307, pp. 256-57 and Barrow, *China*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>104</sup> MSS. Cornell, Macartney correspondence, no. 293, reproduced in *T'oung pao*, 31 (1934), 37-38. The only known version of this letter is in French translation.

return to Peking. In his *Journal* Lord Macartney says, "we paid him our complement as he passed," and in his official report to Henry Dundas he uses the words "my obeisance," both of which imply the English ceremony.<sup>105</sup> Staunton and Hüttner are silent on the point, but Dinwiddie and Barrow, both of whom were present on this occasion, say that the English "made the required salutation on the right knee."<sup>106</sup> On October 3rd the imperial presents and the first letter to the English King were delivered to the Ambassador, at which time he made his "usual reverences" before the imperial yellow (the Emperor himself not being present). On the 7th of October, as the embassy left the gates of Peking, the final imperial letter was delivered to the Ambassador by the chief ministers. Neither Lord Macartney nor Staunton refer to what ceremony was performed, but they both remark on the fact that the Chinese who carried the letter to Tungchow for them was forced to remain on his knees while the letter was fastened on his back. It is inconceivable that at the very end of his unsuccessful mission the Ambassador would have consented to perform the ceremony unless he had done so earlier.<sup>107</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: THE KOTOW NOT PERFORMED

In view of the evidence there can be no doubt about the conclusion. All of the evidence which points to the fact that Lord Macartney did kotow is either worthless, contradictory, equivocal or otherwise open to question. Much of it can be shown to have emanated directly or indirectly from the misleading document in the *Veritable records*, and even the powerful argument that traditional usage would not have been relaxed is weakened by the fact that the kotow had been dispensed with on two previous occasions. On the other hand, the evidence to support the view that he did not kotow found in reliable documents and contemporary memoirs is consistent, specific and unanimous, and leads to but one conclusion—that Lord Macartney did not perform the kotow.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, p. 327; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793.

<sup>106</sup> Proudfoot, *J. Dinwiddie*, p. 52; Barrow, *China*, pp. 119–20; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, p. 322; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, p. 125.

<sup>107</sup> Macartney's *Journal*, pp. 331, 339–40; G. L. Staunton, *Embassy*, vol. 2, pp. 331, 342–43; MSS. Macartney to Dundas, Nov. 9, 1793; Hüttner, *Voyage à la Chine*, pp. 127–28.

<sup>108</sup> It should be noted that this conclusion is supported (or seems to be supported) by three recent Chinese writers. They accept the view of the English documents that Macartney did not kotow, although none of them have collected enough evidence to definitely settle the matter. These writers are Siao I-shan [Hsiao I-shan], *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih* 清一山：清代通史 [General history of the Ch'ing period] (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928), vol. 2, pp. 751–64; Chu Chieh-ch'in, *op. cit.* (referred to in note 52), pp. 21, 24, 27; and Kuo T'ing-i, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo shih* 郭廷以：近代中國史 [History of modern China] (Changsha: Commercial Press, 1940), pp. 223–57.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KOTOW

Before closing this paper it may be valuable to raise the question of the significance of the kotow. Its origin and exact meaning are undoubtedly lost in the distant past of Chinese history, and it is not the purpose of this brief discussion to investigate that question. In general form it is not unlike the ceremonials of humble submission and veneration practiced in nearly all early theocratic Oriental states,<sup>109</sup> and as a device for social control it originally undoubtedly was designed to emphasize the sharp distinction between the humble subject and the god-like sovereign. Long usage in China, however, had probably somewhat obscured and softened its early significance, and it had become the customary (and therefore right and necessary) form of respectful salutation to the Emperor, albeit one which emphasized the vast difference in station between the subject and the Son of Heaven. It was regularly used in the religious ceremonies in veneration of the Emperor—the agent of heaven and the mediator between man and nature—and thus beyond a doubt possessed more of a theocratic significance, although its civil meaning (but this cannot be separated from its religious) may have been no greater, than the ceremony of kneeling and kissing the hand of the sovereign practiced in Western monarchies. It should be noted that the Emperor himself practiced the kotow before the altar of heaven and before his ancestral tablets and that friends and officials sometimes practiced it mutually to each other.<sup>110</sup>

Be this as it may the questions which primarily interest us here are two: did the performance of the kotow personally humiliate and degrade the envoy and his sovereign, and did its performance represent the primary act in accepting the status of tributary of China. These questions cannot be answered unless one realizes, as Fairbank<sup>111</sup> has so admirably pointed out in two recent articles, that the Chinese recognized only suzerain-vassal (patron-protégé) relationships in international relations. This relationship expressed the Chinese conception of a world society under China's cultural and religious-ceremonial leadership and was carried on through the tributary system which was expanded to cover trade. The conception was distinctly a Confucian one of the relationship between superiors and inferiors in which each had duties and obligations (*jen* 仁 and *i* 義) toward one another which

<sup>109</sup> For some account both of early Chinese and Persian ceremonials see Rockhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-13; A. Moret, *The Nile and Egyptian civilization* (New York: Knopf, 1927), pp. 157-67, especially 164-65; C. W. McEwan, *The Oriental origin of Hellenistic kingship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 1-30, especially 22-23.

<sup>110</sup> For an excellent further discussion see J. K. Fairbank, "Tributary trade and China's relations with the West," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 1 (Feb. 1942), 129-49, especially pp. 134-35.

<sup>111</sup> See the articles mentioned in notes 110 and 1.

were expressed through the appropriate ceremonials (*li* 禮).<sup>112</sup> Tribute and the kotow were ceremonial obligations of the vassal; presents and benevolence were the duties of the suzerain.

In view of all the evidence there can be little doubt but that the Chinese viewed their contacts with outside peoples as the relationship between superior and inferior. They did not, however, think of this relationship as a humiliating one for the inferior, but rather as a part of the natural order of things from which mutual benefits flowed to both parties. Whether Westerners came to China or not they were considered as inferiors. Their sending of embassies with presents merely indicated that they had recognized the natural order of things and consequently had presented tribute and recognized Chinese suzerainty. The Chinese conception of suzerainty was, however, primarily cultural and less political than in the West, and the failure of Westerners to recognize this fact complicated matters somewhat.

Once the Ambassador arrived at court he was expected to adhere to the customary ceremonials, not because they were essential to the establishment of the tributary relationship, but because they represented the proper form of expressing it. An ambassador who refused to kotow was not, from the Chinese point of view, denying the tributary relationship but was merely being tiresome and bad mannered. The essential thing in establishing the tributary relationship was the sending of an embassy with gifts, for this indicated to the Chinese that yet another barbarian had recognized China's all-pervading goodness and had come to seek benefit from it. The kotow was not meant or thought to be humiliating or degrading. It was the normal salutation to heaven's representative upon earth, and, as such, it did of course in a general way imply to the Chinese the submission of both the ambassador and the sovereign whose agent he was.<sup>113</sup> But it was not essential to this submission which was already expressed by the sending of the embassy.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> The interpretation of *i* and *jen* here presented reflects the view of Professor J. J. L. Duyvendak as presented in various lectures upon Confucius at Columbia University in the spring of 1939. *Jen* represents the benevolence, compassion and goodness which the superior should show to the inferior. *I* represents the obligations owed by right to the superior by the inferior, hence that which is right or righteousness. See also Arthur Waley, *The analects of Confucius* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), pp. 27-29, 31, 54-69.

<sup>113</sup> See the document quoted in connection with note 74. The Chinese looked upon ambassadors as agents, not as representatives of their sovereign. See Rockhill, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> This whole discussion has been kept in the realm of the theory of the suzerain-vassal relationship. Practically, the Chinese did realize that states like Russia, England and perhaps Japan were in a different category than kingdoms like Korea and Annam, at least so far as power was concerned. For that very reason it was desirable to keep them at a distance if possible through the ceremonial fiction of the suzerain-vassal relationship.

It is obvious that the Chinese view was almost entirely ethnocentric, and Western countries might conceivably have satisfied themselves by adopting a similar position. That is, they might have ignored the Chinese view and have maintained in their own minds that no suzerain-vassal relationship existed had such ethnocentric thinking been as profitable to them as it was to the Chinese. To a certain extent they actually did this, but in the end they were unable to get what they wanted by this procedure and so shifted their position.

The Dutch and Portuguese ambassadors, being either primarily the representatives of trading companies or of East Indian officials, seem to have accepted being called tribute-bearers and to have conformed to the kotow without too much objection, and the Papal envoys, being in a special position, seem not to have objected seriously. The Russians, on the other hand, from the first objected to the term tribute and to the kotow. When, after the Spathar embassy in 1676, they found that no further embassies would be received at Peking unless the Chinese position were accepted, they partially solved the issue either by sending ambassadors only to the frontier to negotiate, as in the case of Golovin in 1689, or by sending persons who were primarily commercial envoys, as in the case of Ides (1693–94).<sup>115</sup> No full-fledged Russian ambassador kotowed until Izmailov in 1720–21, and he only after obtaining the *quid pro quo* that any Chinese ambassador to Russia would conform to all Russian ceremonials.<sup>116</sup> He and others before him did, however, tacitly accept being dubbed tribute-bearers. A precedent was thus established which both Russia and China accepted throughout the rest of the 18th century.

Essentially this position was accepted by Lord Macartney. He did not object to being called a tribute-bearer, but he would not kotow without a *quid pro quo*. He insisted that there must be something in the whole process which would, to his own satisfaction, distinguish him from an ordinary

<sup>115</sup> For facts about the embassies see the Appendix. Also consider Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 391–400, and W. S. Ridge, "The k'ot'ow," *CSPSR*, 24 (1941), 357–82. The writer agrees with Mr. Ridge's view that performance of the kotow did not in itself imply "suzerainty and subjection" (p. 372), but Mr. Ridge seems to ignore the fact that the sending of an embassy did imply, in the minds of the Chinese, submission to their cultural suzerainty. No such verbal gymnastics as those indulged in by Mr. Ridge can alter the fact that there was a fundamental cleavage between Chinese and Western conceptions as to the equality between states. This came to be symbolized by the kotow, and, in so far as the kotow symbolized this difference in view, the writer agrees with John Quincy Adams (and strongly disagrees with Mr. Ridge) to this extent, that the kotow was one important cause of the first war between China and England.

<sup>116</sup> John Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg in Russia to diverse parts of Asia, in 1716, 1719, 1722* (Glasgow: Foulis, 1763), vol. 2, p. 4.

tribute-bearer. The position was essentially illogical even from the Western point of view and totally so from the Chinese.<sup>117</sup> To refuse to kowtow after having conformed to all other parts of the suzerain-vassal relationship was in reality pointless, and grew out of a profound misunderstanding of the meaning of the act itself<sup>118</sup> and out of the European's belief, that, although the Chinese view of an ambassador as a tribute-bearer could not commit a European sovereign to that status, the actual physical acts of the Ambassador before the Emperor not only could so commit him but would actually be as if the King himself were groveling before the Emperor. Napoleon combatted this latter view when he said, "It is an error, but still one which is very generally believed, that an ambassador represents the sovereign."<sup>119</sup> He argued further that an ambassador should be treated at a foreign court as the other great nobles of that court were treated, and that he should readily conform to the ceremonials of the court to which he was accredited. This was essentially the Chinese position. They considered an ambassador as an agent only, and they did not object when their ambassadors to Russia in 1731 and 1733 conformed to Russian court etiquette. These envoys, in fact, voluntarily kowtowed before the Russian Tsarina Anne.<sup>120</sup>

The immediate difficulty over the kowtow lay in the Westerner's psychology, in his lack of knowledge of its true significance, and in his own doctrine that the ambassador's acts were acts of his sovereign. If the kowtow demeaned and degraded the Ambassador and his sovereign, it was only because they thought so, not because the Chinese did. If the kowtow signaled vassalage, it was only because the Westerner believed this to be true, not because the Chinese so considered it. To the Chinese the sending of a mission with presents was the important act in vassalage and submission, and if Westerners wished to avoid this they could do so only by refraining from sending embassies.

<sup>117</sup> Amherst in 1816 and the Russian Golovkin in 1806 maintained the same illogical position but insisted on avoiding the kowtow altogether because Macartney had not performed it. Thereafter the Westerners became more logical and did not send any more ambassadors until they had compelled the Chinese to recognize in writing their equality, and did not approach the person of the Emperor until he agreed to receive them with what they considered proper courtesy and respect.

<sup>118</sup> Even in the 19th century well informed men like Sir George Thomas Staunton, Robert Morrison and Sir John Francis Davis strongly presented the view that the kowtow was a degrading ceremony which was an all important act in the submission of one state to another. Their view was no doubt influenced by their personal conflicts with the Chinese officials at Canton over equality. Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 52-57; George Thomas Staunton, *Miscellaneous notices relating to China* (London: John Murray, 1850), pp. 213, 235, 246.

<sup>119</sup> O'Meara, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 174-76.

<sup>120</sup> Ridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-72; Bantysh-Kamenskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-94.

In final conclusion one can state that, although Macartney did not kowtow and so preserved in his own mind the honor of his sovereign and the independence of his country, he did not prevent his country from being enrolled among the tribute-bearing nations both in Chinese thinking and records.

## APPENDIX

*Foreign Missions to China, 1520–1840*

Other varying lists of missions to China are to be found in Fairbank and Teng, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–89; Louis Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur des Jésuites* (Shanghai: Mission Catholique, 1932), pp. 505–06; Samuel Couling, *Encyclopaedia Sinica* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1917), pp. 160, 491–92; W. S. Ridge, "The k'ot'ow," *CSPSR*, 24 (Jan.–March, 1941), 357–82 and Pauthier, *Histoire des relations*, pp. 40–184. In addition to the published journals of the various missions, other more recent critical works have been examined, and at least one especially valuable reference is cited for each mission. Much obscurity still prevails about some of the missions. Every mission mentioned in other lists has been included if for no other reason than to refute its diplomatic status. Those missions which appear to have possessed some diplomatic status (i.e. carried credentials directly from their sovereigns, or indirect credentials empowering them to conclude diplomatic arrangements) have been numbered. Commercial agents who merely carried or transmitted official letters have been excluded unless mentioned in other lists. The dates indicate when the mission was at the Chinese capital or approached nearest to it. "Presumably kowtowed" means that there is some evidence that the kowtow was performed and none that it was not.

*Portuguese*

1. 1520–21 Thomé Pires. At Peking but not given an audience. Imprisoned at Canton where he died in 1524. T'ien-tse Chang, *Sino-Portuguese trade* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1934), pp. 38–46, 48–53, 56, 61.
2. 1522 Martim Affonso de Mello Coutinho. Driven away from Canton by the Chinese. Chang, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–60.
3. 1552 Ambassador sent by the viceroy of Goa. Stopped by governor of Malacca. H. B. Morse, *International relations of the Chinese empire* (London: Longmans, 1910), vol. 1, p. 42.
4. 1670 Manoel de Saldanha. *Presumably kowtowed*. Paul Pelliot, "L'Ambassade de Manoel de Saldanha à Peking," *T'oung pao*, 27 (1930), 421–24. Pauthier, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
5. 1678 Bento Pereyra de Faria. *Presumably kowtowed*. Fairbank and Teng, *op. cit.*, p. 181; Pfister, *op. cit.*, p. 242.
6. 1727 A. Metello de Souza e Menezes. *Kowtowed*. Andrew Ljungstedt, *Historical sketch of the Portuguese settlement in China* (Boston: James Munroe, 1836), pp. 99–100.

7. 1753 Francisco Xavier Assiz Pacheco e Sampayo. *Kotowed*. Ljungstedt, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–04.
- Russian*
- 1567 Petrov and Yalychev. A myth. John F. Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China* (London: Macmillan, 1919), vol. 2, p. 69.
- 1616 Vasili Tiumenets. Probably not at Peking. Stanton's manuscript, chap. 2. See note 35.
8. 1618 Ivan Petlin (agent). Not given an audience because he lacked presents. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 71–72.
- 1649 Special mission of congratulation to Ch'ing. Probably apocryphal.
- 1655 Setkoul Ablin (agent of Baikov). Not given an audience. Hsüan-min Liu, "Russo-Chinese relations up to the treaty of Nerchinsk." *Chinese social and political science review*, 23 (1940), 404; *Ching shih-lu: Shun-chih*, ch. 135, pp. 2–3a.
- 1655 Yarykine. From Tobolsk. Unofficial if not apocryphal.
9. 1656 Féodor Isakovitch Baikov (agent). Refused to koto and so audience not granted. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 143–46.
10. 1660 Ivan Perfil'ev (agent). Audience not granted. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 167–68; Liu, *op. cit.*, p. 405; *Ch'ing shih-lu, op. cit.*, pp. 2–3a.
- 1669–71 Setkoul Ablin. Probably commercial agent only. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 194.
11. 1670 Ignatii Milovanov (agent). *Kotowed*. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 195–201; Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 405–07.
- 1674 Ivan Porshennikov. Commercial agent only. Couling, *op. cit.*, p. 492.
- 1675 Milovanov (agent of Spathar). Probably no audience. Stanton's MSS. Chap. 3.
12. 1676 Nicolas G. Spathar Milescu (envoy). *Received without kotow*. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 330–422; Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 407–09.
13. 1686 Nikephor Veniukov and Ivan Favarov (agents). Probably no audience. Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 411–12; Gaston Cahen, *Histoire des relations de la Russie avec la Chine* (Paris: Alcan, 1912), pp. 35–38.
- 1688 Stephen Korovin (agent of Golovin). Probably no audience. Cahen, *op. cit.*, p. 41
- 1689 Ivan Loginov (agent of Golovin). Probably no audience. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 44–45.
14. 1689 Féodor Alexiévitsh Golovin (ambassador). At Nerchinsk only. Liu, *op. cit.*, pp. 412–22.
15. 1693–94 Eberhardt Isbrand Ides (envoy). *Kotowed*. Ides, *Three years travel from Moscow . . . to China* (London: Freeman, 1706), pp. 68–77.
16. 1716–17 Laurents Lange and Thomas Garvin (agents). *Kotowed*. T. Astley, *New general collection of voyages and travels* (London: Thomas Astley, 1745–47), vol. 3, pp. 575–78.



17. 1720–21 Leon Vassiliévitch Izmailov (ambassador). *Kotorwed*. John Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg . . .* (Glasgow: Foulis, 1763), vol. 2, pp. 1–7.
18. 1721–22 Laurents Lange (consul). *Kotorwed*. Bell, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 321.  
1726 David Grave (agent of Lange). Probably no audience. G. Cahen, *Some early Russo-Chinese relations* (Shanghai: National review, 1914), p. 96.
19. 1726–27 Sava Lukich Vladislavitch-Raguzinskii (ambassador). *Kotorwed*. Cahen (French edition), p. 212.  
1728 Laurents Lange (commercial agent). Had an audience and *presumably koto*wed. Cahen (English translation), p. 109.
20. 1757 Vasili Bratishchev (envoy?). *Presumably koto*wed. John W. Stanton, “Russian embassies to Peking . . .” in *University of Michigan historical essays* (Ann Arbor, 1937), p. 109, says the mission was sent in 1754, but his manuscript, in chap. 6, makes it plain that the mission reached China in 1757.
21. 1763 I. Kropotov (agent). *Presumably koto*wed. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 313–14.
22. 1767–68 I. Kropotov (ambassador). *Presumably koto*wed. *Ibid.*, pp. 324–25.  
1790–92 L. Nagil (governor of Irkutsk). At frontier only. Couling, *op. cit.*, p. 492.
23. 1806 G. A. Golovkin (ambassador). *Refused to koto*w and so turned back at Urga. Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 111. See also note 34 above.  
1808 and 1820, ecclesiastical missions only, not proper diplomatic agents.

*Dutch*

24. 1656 Pieter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer. *Kotorwed*. John Nieuhoff, *An embassy . . . to China* (London: Macock, 1669), pp. 105–39.
25. 1662 Jan van Kampen and Konstantyn Nobel. To governor of Fukien only. Astley, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 431–40. Also see Ogilby below.
26. 1667 Pieter van Hoorn. *Kotorwed*. John Ogilby, *Atlas Chinensis* (London: Thos. Johnson, 1671), pp. 319–38 and Olfert Dapper, *Gedenkwaerdig bedrijf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische maatschappije, op de kuste en in het keizerrijk van taising of Sina* (Amsterdam, 1670). Duyvendak (as cited below) dates this embassy as 1665, but both the original Dutch account and the English translation as well as Chinese sources fix the date as 1667.
27. 1685–86 Paats and Keyzer. *Kotorwed*. Liu, *op. cit.*, p. 410. J. J. L. Duyvendak, *Wegen en gestalten der Chineesche geschiedenis* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1935), p. 277.
28. 1795 Isaac Titsingh and A. E. van Braam Houckgeest. *Kotorwed*. Duyvendak in *T'oung pao*, 34 (1938), 1–137 and 35 (1940), 329–53.

*Papal*

29. 1705–06 Carlo Tommaso Maillard di Tournon. *Kotorwed*. R. C. Jenkins, *The Jesuits in China* (London: D. Nutt, 1894), pp. 53–82.

30. 1720–21 Gio. Ambrogio Carlo Mezzabarba. *Kotowed*. Astley, *op. cit.*,  
vol. 3, pp. 593–98.
31. 1725 Gothard and Ildephonse. *Received without kotow*. See note 61 above.

*English*

32. 1788 Charles Cathcart. Died on way to China. Pritchard, *Crucial years*,  
pp. 236–64.
33. 1793 George Macartney. *Did not kotow*.
34. 1816 William Pitt Amherst. *Refused to kotow* and audience not granted.