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„Identity and Group Conflict in the  
First British Embassy to China in 1792“

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Danlin Wang

angestrebter akademischer Grad

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## **Identity and Group Conflict in the First British Embassy to China in 1792**

Verfasser /Author

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### **Abstract English**

The Macartney Embassy to China in 1792 was the first British delegation that visited China officially, which has also left a notable influence in history. The typical character of that time was prejudice and misunderstanding between people from different cultures. This paper aims to carry out a case study of the embassy to see how and why prejudice was at play during the contact between people of different nations. The historical records and writings of the embassy will be analyzed to understand prejudice as a psychological phenomenon that exists across time and civilization. By using social psychological theory and Freud's psychoanalysis theory, the encounter is analyzed on three parallel levels, understanding, frustration and acculturation. The author argues that both groups carried prejudice against each other before and during their contact and were unconsciously controlled by it. Both had put themselves in a higher position in the world than the other, and had met with frustration when their needs were not satisfied; at the same time, their contact also helped them acculturate to the other without prejudice being wiped out. Although the failure of the embassy was not only due to psychological instinct of prejudice but also historical and political reasons, we could reflect on this pattern in the studies of international relations and group conflicts in the future.

### **Abstract German**

Die Macartney Botschaft nach China im Jahr 1792 war die erste offizielle britische Delegation, die China besuchte und einen nachweisbaren Einfluss auf die Geschichte hatte. Die typische Charakterisierung dieser Zeit war Vorurteile und Missverständnisse zwischen Völkern von unterschiedlichen Kulturen. Diese Arbeit zielt darauf ab, ein Fallbeispiel dieser Botschaft zu geben und zu untersuchen, ob und wie Vorurteile eine Rolle bei dem Kontakt zwischen den unterschiedlichen Völkern spielten. Historische Dokumente und Schriften der Botschaft werden untersucht, um zu verstehen, dass Vorurteile als ein psychologisches Phänomen über Zeit und Zivilisationen hinweg existieren. Unter der Verwendung einer sozial psychologischen Theorie und Freuds Psychoanalyse Theorie, wird die Begegnung auf drei parallelen Ebenen analysiert: Verstehen, Frustration und Akkulturation. Die Autorin argumentiert, dass beide Gruppen vor und während des Kontakts Vorurteile gegen einander hatten, und beide unterbewusst durch diese kontrolliert wurden. Beide stellten sich auf eine höhere Stufe als der Rest der Welt, und wurden frustriert wenn sich ihre Erwartungen nicht erfüllen ließen. Gleichzeitig ermöglichte dieser Kontakt eine gegenseitige Akkulturation, wobei die Vorurteile nicht eliminiert wurden. Obwohl das Scheitern der Botschaft nicht nur auf psychologische Faktoren wie Vorurteilen zurückzuführen ist, sondern auch historische und politische Gründe hatte, könnten wir über diese Muster in zukünftigen Studien der internationalen Beziehungen und Gruppenkonflikten reflektieren.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

In 1792, the British King George III sent its first ever diplomatic mission to China led by Lord Macartney in order to set up a permanent mission in Beijing. The meeting between the Macartney Embassy and the Chinese emperor Qianlong was then one of the most interesting topics of East-West contact at that time when understanding of each other were mostly illusory. The mission failed to set up an Embassy and had to leave within five months since many political and cultural differences between the two parties cannot be agreed, and had led to other consequences such as the breakdown of idealized view of China<sup>1</sup> and the opium dispute between Qing China and Britain.

Analysis of the proceedings and journals of the participants of this event could be seen in many historian's books and writings.<sup>2</sup> Some believe the fact that Macartney refused to Kowtow in front of the emperor has irritated Qianlong<sup>3</sup>, others are more critical to the closed and unfriendly attitude of the Chinese. However, one thing historians have overlooked in studying is the psychology of human beings as seen from the behaviours of the members of the embassy. It is very important for historians to know what has happened during that time, but also important for sociologists and psychologists to understand how and why it turned out to be a failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang Shunhong, "British Views on China during the Time of the Embassies of Lord Macartney and Lord Amherst (1790-1820)" (PhD diss., University of London, 1990), 2.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Macartney's journal during the embassy was published by J.L. Cranmer-Byng as *An Embassy to China, Lord Macartney's Journal 1793-4* (New York: Routledge, 1962), a complete list of books is included in the bibliography in the end of the thesis.

<sup>3</sup> Huang Yinong, "印象與真相-清朝中英兩國的觀禮之爭 (Impression and Truth, Ritual Conflicts between China and Britain during the Qing)," *中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊第七十八本第一分本* (Central Academy Institute of History and Language Compiled Publication No.78 Volume 1): 42-43.

As long as the author's knowledge can fulfil the purpose of interdisciplinary research in China studies and psychology, it is not difficult to reassess the historical material in Chinese and English with the help of historians such as Alain Peyrefitte and Zhu Yong who have done extensive research on the issue. Compiled from the original court files, the First Historical Archive of China has also published a complete collection of records regarding the Macartney embassy's visit to China.<sup>4</sup> The research is also facilitated by a series of published journals of the British members of this embassy, including Lord Macartney himself and Sir George Stauton.

The purpose of this thesis is to give a new interpretation of the Macartney embassy in 1792, which could demonstrate the development of psychology as a comparatively new discipline. While psychological theory has mostly defined prejudice in theories of social psychology which studies the behaviour of group. In this thesis, the prejudicial mechanism is seen more from an individual point of view. Although it is not possible to ignore the cultural and racial difference, the author finds it more appropriate to analyse the individual decision making process while consulting Freud's interpretation of the unconscious and the social norm.

Although there are literature and historical records of different kinds in hand, the author has mostly used two sources for analysing the attitudes and thoughts of both the Chinese and British during the Embassy. They are the comprehensive record of Alain Peyrefitte: *L'empire immobile ou le Choc des Mondes* (Chinese: *Tingzhi de diguo, liangge shijie de zhuangji*) and the Chinese translation of Macartney's Journal during the embassy: Liu, Bannong, *Qianlong Yingshi Jinjian Ji*. Several other references will be used in order to provide a historical background in the second chapter.

## 1.1 Research Background

Psychology is a discipline that studies our mind. Mostly established by observation and experiment, scientific psychology can explain many things from memory, needs to affections and love. Our mind, same as our body, operates in a way according to our physical and mental structure and principles, and psychologists work to find out how is our mind constructed and functioning. Social psychology, as a branch of psychology, studies the variation of social life, i.e. individual in the environment of a society. Its topics include but are not limited to

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<sup>4</sup> First History Archive of China, *英使马戛尔尼访华档案史料汇编* (*Compiled Historical Records of Lord Macartney's Visit to China*). (Beijing: China International Culture Press, 1996).

interpersonal relationship, leadership as well as prejudice and discrimination.

Prejudice is a term to describe some ungrounded notions and understanding of a person or a group of people other than oneself and one's group. It could be seen in many situations especially between unfamiliar groups of people. It is mostly unreasonable and particularly wrong opinion on something one unconsciously regard as a threat to oneself, however it could also be positive such as an exaggeration of the merits of others. No matter is it depreciation or a glorification of the others, prejudice is regarded as defect of the human mind that we should avoid in the contact with others.

During the past thousands of years of civilization, human being has changed the world greatly, but couldn't change ourselves as the way we want to be. With the development of medical science, we can now live much longer than before; and transfer many of our jobs and tasks to machines and robots with technology in mechanics and engineering. Even though we could change our appearance physically by surgery, we did not manage to do that on our primary nature - our psyche, our body and our gene. In terms of psychology, there are differences in temperament and character, which are the natural classification of human beings, but our brain and the way it operates has no difference among us. Evolution theory do support that we evolved by the unit of tens of thousands of years, the fact that evolution is neither visible nor initiative strongly challenged our superiority over nature. The feeling of omnipotence is lost in front of the fact we are among the animals in our physical presence.

Even though it's quite improbable that we are going to change the human nature or eliminate the weakness of us, our superiority over animal stands in the fact that we are self-conscious about our existence. It does help to understand the principal rules and facts about us, in order to be controlled of ourselves, rather than by our animal instinct. We have also invented law to install order in modern civilization, in order to define boundaries of every individual against our defects, such as greediness, selfishness, and aggressiveness.

On the other hand, modern technology has made the world a smaller place, which has not yet been well adopted by us. One basic contradiction of the human society in total is that although we are the same species, we look different in our appearance, including complexion, hair color and facial features between races. Physical appearance is set by birth and carries a lot of meaning in our daily life although most people are not conscious about it. In the past, ethnic groups mostly live separately from one another, being alone or a

minority within another group is rare and difficult. In today's world, migration is now more often, and contact between races is now easier and more necessary. One still feels different when seeing someone with foreign appearance, sometimes also with prejudice, while the language barrier also added to the feeling of uncertainty and distance.

Language, religion, nationality, and culture, are all things that separate a group from another. There are other features too, such as political affiliation, place of birth, age and profession. Imagining that there is no physical difference between people anymore, will there still be prejudice? The answer is probably yes, the fact is categorization of people and the differentiation of self and other is deeply rooted in our mind, it is a mechanism to allow us to accelerate the decision process of friends or enemies.

Because of the same mechanism, human being has staged too many atrocities against each other, all claiming to be protecting one's own group. With the contact between groups being closer than before, it has not reduced the number of group conflicts. Other than regular war in the past, the conflicts have taken new forms, such as terrorism and cultural extinction. Is all the hate and killing of the other group necessary? Or is it just some illusion that got control of us?

By giving assumptions and simulate reality by experiment, social psychologists have now many explanations of prejudice. For the sake of understanding the Macartney embassy, it will be important to understand how theories of social psychology comprehend prejudice. On the other hand, such is only a way of describing prejudice; it doesn't answer the question of why it is there. For that reason, we should also see prejudice as an unconscious mechanism of our mind, of which Sigmund Freud and other psychoanalysts have given their interpretation.

Of this theoretical structure in mind, we could then combine the reality of Marcarney Embassy's visit to China with the existence of prejudice. In fact, prejudice is not a static effect; it follows the whole contact process between groups. It is not only the misunderstanding of the Chinese as a highly civilized nation before the British arrived in China; it also exist in the fact that the Chinese find it difficult to accept anything that says they are not as good as the British; and it will also be demonstrated in the resistance of learning from each other.

Many important scholars have also contributed to the study of group relations from various perspectives other than psychology. Among them, theorists of international politics have given us insights into the clash of civilisations from cultural and religious perspectives. To name

but a few, Samuel Huntington believed that conflicts would remain in world as long as there is the separation of Islam and Christianity.<sup>5</sup> While he did anticipated one of the central conflict in the world nowadays, understanding religious conflict is more than just an expectation of the future trends. Except for the on-going threat from Islamist fundamentalists, beliefs of all kinds do have a tendency of separating believers from non-believers. The separation is both ways, while people trying to use culture and customs to strengthen its own group-tie, they also tries to distance the other group in defence of such unique existence of themselves.

There are also useful thoughts in literal studies that we might find related to this research topic. After the collapse of colonialism, Edward Said criticised the Eurocentric discourse of the West that created a passive and feministic image of the Orient in order to fulfil political needs of the West.<sup>6</sup> Said's sense of a prejudice on the Orient, together with the post-colonialism and subaltern description of cultural hegemony are also good example of prejudice in real life. It helped us to understand the immense depth in the meaning and extension of culture and the difficulty we are facing in bringing the East and West together as one people.

Among others, there are also translation studies, Marxist philosophy which all have provided windows and approach to look into cultural gap and class struggle. The international movement of communism was another failed example to see how difficult it is to eliminate inequality in our society. In the end, we should look back in psychology to look for the answer of our probe in prejudice.

Social psychology theories tried to explain group-conflict from the angle of society. They also ended up inventing different terms to describe their central concerns. Prejudice, stereotype, discrimination or racism, are all used to describe the differences in our feelings and behaviours towards groups of people. Prejudice is more of a biased altitude, as discrimination and racism are more used for behaviour that is carried out by such altitude.<sup>7</sup> For most members of the society, prejudice is mostly unconscious and cannot be controlled while discrimination is clearly forbidden by law.

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 312-313.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 2-4.

<sup>7</sup> David G. Myers, *Social Psychology. Eighth Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 242-277.

As any person living in this world, one has complicated tasks throughout his life, and the central goal of his thinking and action is to survive. Through various ways the survival instinct expresses itself in order to function, the purpose of which might not even be realised, but it is through the unconscious interplay of these expressions of needs that we keep on living. According to Freud, most of our emotions are actually unconscious; those that we are conscious of are only a tip of the iceberg.<sup>8</sup> The rational of prejudice according to Freud is described in detail in his book *Civilization and Its Discontents* as well as *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*. The two different approaches to prejudice, as the one of social psychology and psychoanalysis, are going to be discussed in the following paragraphs of introduction. However, there is also link between the two theoretical bases so that we can see prejudice from a larger viewpoint in the end of this thesis.

## 1.2 The Social Psychology Observation of Prejudice

After the Second World War and the in the self-examination of the Holocaust, social psychologists had extensive discussion on the way human being treated each other. The topics are not limited to the breeding ground for prejudice and discrimination, but also under what conditions are those effects playing a role. In general, social psychologists believe that prejudice is a natural instinct of us. And by categorizing ourselves into groups and by making it better for one's own group, individuals feel themselves safe and satisfied.

From the evolutionary perspectives, that survival in competition instead of inter-group cooperation was the most important character of ancient societies, the so-called ethnocentrism became a central idea and guideline for human development. Prejudice, war, genocide are all related with this ethnocentric instinct. All of the inter-group conflicts that lead to mass killings in Rwanda, the apartheid in South Africa, and anti-Semitism share something in common. Although it need real economic or political dispute for conflicts to develop into war, in all of these instances, the central reason involves a fundamental divide of racial, ideological or other kind. It is only when the groups started to behave narrow-minded and consider their own benefits without thinking about other, did it became too late for friendship to stay in boundaries.

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<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VII (1901-1905): A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 123.

In the kind of situation similar to Macartney's visit to China, specially typical among travellers, the visitor has the identity as a permanent member of his in-group but an outsider to the new group, and wherever he goes, it is the home group he is representing because it is quite certain that this person is returning to the in-group once this visit is finished. It seems, like the phenomena of self-sacrifice for the benefit of group or blindly following order, group identity plays the same role as a kind of investment that has an interest in return to oneself.

Any person living in a rented home (someone else's property) would not like it or decorate it like his own home, because the investment (love) would not turn out into proportionate return. However, the love of your own home can stay in you memory and makes one feel continuously satisfied. Group functions the same way as any objects we treats as our own. No matter how friendly and nice the other group is, there is no comparable profit one gets as from one's own group. And hate in the other hand, created a basis of better cooperation of the in-group in the face of fierce competition against enemies.

To tell oneself from another is in fact very easy. In the 1960s, Jane Elliot, a schoolteacher in Iowa conducted an experiment on one of third-grade class in a primary school to have the kids experience what it is like to be racially discriminated. She asked the children's agreement to conduct an exercise and divided them into two groups based on the colour of their eyes. She intentionally told them that the blue-eyed kids are smarter, nicer and better than the brown-eyed ones. In order to clearly separate the two groups, she has also asked the brown-eyed ones to wear collar on their neck. Although her students do not know the meaning behind such a division, they started to behave differently in the way they interact with one another on the same day.<sup>9</sup> The brown-eyed students started to feel depressed and performed below average in tests on that day compared with the blue-eyed ones. The fact that this man-made discrimination had a negative effect on the kids proved on the other hand how important it is to believe that one belongs to a superior group.

Another experiment used adults for a similar situation and turned out to be bold discrimination in reality. Philipp Zimbardo in the 1970s hired university students as testees to engage in a role-play in a prison setting. Prison guards and prisoners were randomly chosen. Although everyone knew that this is just an experiment, the guards and prisoners turned to act against each other and were quite immersed in the role they were hired to play. The guards started to physically torture the

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<sup>9</sup> "A Class Divided," Frontline, PBS. Accessed October 4, 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/etc/view.html>.

prisoners although they were told in the beginning of the experiment that bodily assault against anyone is forbidden. The experiment is planned originally to last two weeks, but had to end after six days since the situation went out of control when “prisoners” started a hunger strike.<sup>10</sup>

Compared with children, adults in Zimbardo’s experiment have more rational thinking about right and wrong. In fact, all of them were educated normal people when they were selected as testees. One should imagine that they would not engage in any illegal treatment of one another, and neither were they forced to follow orders of such behaviour. However, even though the prison guards know that actors of prisoners did not do anything wrong in real life, being in the role of prison guards or prisoners unconsciously made them to differentiate each other.

Henri Tajfel, a British social psychologist further confirmed Jane and Zimbardo’s finding that any given group division changes individual’s preference and behaviour and would have the so called group-serving bias in them. The result of the bias would be that one naturally favours one’s own group, and make themselves believe that their group is stronger and better than any others.<sup>11</sup> Prejudice, discrimination and in-group bias are all related together and influence one’s choices in our daily life.

On the other hand, cognitive psychologists argue that prejudice is a mechanism for us to more efficiently process information on enemy or friends. Recognizing people’s faces and define their role is something we need to go through everyday. When meeting a person, one quickly finds out if he is a familiar one or not. For a stranger, our brain record information automatically such as body size, hair, clothes, and speech that helps us to recognize the person in the future. Such process is very much automatically done by our sense organs and central nervous system without us even to notice the processing of such information. The prejudice, on the other hand, also belongs to the same process and mechanism, and it is for the same reason, we are unaware of having prejudice and discrimination on someone else.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect, Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York: Random House, 2007), 61-79.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 268-276.

<sup>12</sup> David G. Myers, *Social Psychology. Eighth Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 242-277.

The reason behind the fact that we need to process information quickly is that there might be a real competition between groups, although in most of the situations it is not real competition but imagined competition. However, the real competition theory also provided thoughts for us to know why this prejudice mechanism came into being. On this consumption, Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Sherif the Robbers Cave experiment. The group conflict showed in this case comes in when a real or imagined scarcity of resources is perceived and it depends on the result of competition over these resources. Still nowadays, territory disputes remain acute between countries since there are has resources and historical reputation at stake for the territory. To avoid war and dispute between nations, one needs the same courage and efforts to avoid prejudice.

An opposite phenomenon we've found in the Macartney's embassy to China is that many prejudice of the British delegation are overemphasis the advancement of the Chinese civilization. Such is a combined effect of the European trends of Chinese products as well as the untruthful description of the missionaries. However, it is also a quite popular mistake of us such as shown in the blind worship of celebrity and leaders. In the case of group prejudice, it is more a result of acculturation, helped by the natural instinct of imitation and learning.

The good news is, since prejudice and discrimination are possible to be proven, by realizing it and by restraining from taking action, one could still avoid being driven by them. Some other social psychologists were looking for the difference traits in people, to determine who is more discriminative or tolerant in order to know how to cultivate such ground for non-discrimination. Among them, Adorno has found that people grown up with stricter parents tend to be more discriminative, not only would they have prejudice against the Blacks, but also women, Asians, or any other groups that is not their own.<sup>13</sup> The reason could be the lack of the ability to love due to childhood dissatisfaction. Adorno's questionnaire also proved that the higher one's education is, also the less possible that they will have prejudiced attitude.

In a nutshell, social psychologists gave us lots of thoughts on prejudice that could be summarized in the following findings: First, we liked to categorize people into group; we give tags on the groups and tend to believe that they are mostly the same people within their group. Second, we often have the altitude that our own group is better than other outsider groups. In the end, we treat the other groups differently from our

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<sup>13</sup> T. W. Adorno, E. Frenkel-Brunswik, D.J. Levinson, and R.N. Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Norton, 1950).

own group member and might end in inhuman actions against members of the other group.

### 1.3 The Psychoanalytical Approach

While social psychologists probed in depth how prejudice exists in our society, they have only provided an observation of how prejudice is influencing our choices. While we are also conscious being who wants not to be controlled only by our body and basic instincts, we might also be wondering, why are we putting ourselves in the control of prejudice? The reasons of prejudice, as found by social psychologists are real competition or imagined competition, or a cognitive mechanism that help us to process information faster. Since social psychologists have to use solid experiment to support their hypothesis, they've stopped at that point. Freud and the psychoanalytical school, on the other hand, discussed the human instincts in a more philosophical and experimental way thus might be a valuable methodology for us to further understand prejudice.

The Freudian thoughts on human behaviour are based on his definition of unconsciousness and primitive instinct embedded and developed in us since infancy.<sup>14</sup> A fundamental assumption of the psychoanalytical approach is that desire determines people's behaviour but most of the expressions of desire are actually unconscious to us and are suppressed in daily activities. Except for the two dimensions, there are also memories and understanding we had before but however not recalled for a while, since these can be transferred to conscious when we need, which is called by Freud as the pre-conscious.

Freud has then further categorized the psychic of an individual into three dimensions, the id, ego and super-ego. The id is the mostly unconscious part of us that is lead by our primitive desires; it could be selfish, aggressive, animal-like, and is only looking for ways to satisfy ourselves. On the contrary, ego represents reality, which is the self we are conscious of. It is made of rational thinking and on the other hand controlling the unlimited desire of the id. There is as well a super-ego, according to Freud, that incorporates the highest level of morality and pursuit of human being. It is then in the interaction of the three dimension of oneself that our desire and behaviour are in balance.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, (Translated) 1949), 59.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

The ultimate purpose of an individual is to live happy. In Freud's interpretation, being happy is largely defined by our physical needs. According to him, many psychological diseases are caused by suppression of our physical desires in childhood. Since humans are not sexually mature from the day we are born, the physical instincts shift through several psychosexual periods from oral, anal to genital. The pursuit of the relative desire in those periods largely defines the concern of our id. When the desires were not satisfied during the day, it shows itself in a disguised way during the night in our dreams and as a result could be interpreted in order to analyze the patient in a therapy.

Since prejudice is a phenomenon of our mind, it also fits into Freud's interpretation of its dimensions, across conscious, preconscious and unconscious, and it's the unconscious part that we are most interested to interpret since social psychologists have also already covered the part on conscious. On the one hand, prejudice is part of our psychic mechanism to avoid inner pain by projecting unpleasant affects unto others instead of ourselves. While there are good and bad traits of the people we define as not-me, we unconsciously choose to see only the bad ones. Thus as a result, we feel that we are always winning in the competition with other groups of people.

From early childhood, one of the central needs of us is to define self and other in order to avoid pain and danger in the outside world. If we assume that this talent is not inherited, it might be as psychoanalyst argues, acquired in the early stage of our infancy.<sup>16</sup> We have gradually learned to separate ourselves from others, and differentiate the good and bad depend on our own desire. Throughout the interaction with other people, one of the central characteristics of our unconscious is selfishness. Although we seem to respect others, to listen to their needs, the unconscious part of only cares what the others can do for us. Consequently, we attach merits (our desire) to people we like, and the weakness are attributed to the people and things we dislike in a self-fulfilling paradigm.

When we see a married couple, no matter how they behave, prejudice say that they are happy, if we also desire to be happy in a marriage. This prejudice is a rationalisation of our own desire. On the other hand, when we see people in extreme poverty, prejudices attach various negative characteristics to them if we dislike poverty, because we also want to rationalise our desire to be rich. As a matter of fact, there is desire and hate first, then we started to form prejudice according to our

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<sup>16</sup> D.W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena - A Study of the First Not-Me Possession," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 34 (1953): 89-97.

preferences. In fact, married couple might not be happy and poor people might not be sad, if we judge from other information but not only our own needs.

Any individual when frustrated by their shortcomings or mistakes know the best way to be relieved, to blame someone else. We are only happy when we feel that we are the best of all and so that we are loved by our parents. We would also like to reinterpret the needs for a general term of love, including brotherly love, patriotism and universal love for the living things. Since prejudice is a social phenomenon, the reason of its existence should be somewhere already beyond the need of pleasure seeking in childhood but more parallel with the structure of social units and its development such as family and ethnic group, even possibly with the coexistence of human and ecosystem on earth.

This same effect of eliminating one's own mistakes is called by social psychologists as the scapegoating phenomenon. The best example is anti-Semitism. During Hitler's time in power, the German nation was told that the failure of Germany in the First World War was caused largely by the greed of the Jews. Together with the belief that Jews are genetically inferior to Arians, Anti-Semitism rose to a historical high. It is the kind of people who can't separate their pleasure instinct with the reality that will easily be deceived by prejudice. As far as psychic mechanism is at play, we will also need a strong self-control in order not to use the shortcut for pleasure that often.

In order for individual to survive, self-recognition, safety and resource abundance are all related desires are also important for self-preservation. Some of them tend to be repetitive and extra. For example, we hoard and repeat rituals in religious activities; we'd like to stay in a familiar environment. While Freud has also discussed repetition in detail, prejudice could also be understood in a way as a repetition of pleasure seeking on not only some people of a certain group, but all member of that group. In, general, repetition can be a simple way of self-preservation that we could not neglect in the research of human behaviour.

On the other hand, we have also found that prejudice is closely linked with discrimination and aggression. According to Freud, aggression is another common impulse in everyone just as the need of love.<sup>17</sup> There is no way to avoid it except to find drainage to evacuate the aggression before it starts to have negative effect. Children especially boys in most of the cultures, show an early affection for weapons and games that

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<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1949), 90.

involve bodily assault, but more often, aggression in children and grown-ups is activated by frustration, the result of not being able to satisfy our desire. Although we might quite often find internal factors to be the reason for this failure, we tend to blame external factors of causing it, as a way to protect our ego. This means, quite often, the frustration we face and the aggression that follows could be pointed to the outside, either on other people or on objective conditions.

In the process of inter-group contact, it is also worth noticing, that the more frustration one gets from another group, the bigger hate and discrimination one might produce, to let out this unhealthy elements of one's psyche. We could refer to many kinds of social discrimination from frustration, such as the envy one has against someone higher in social class or hate against outlaws. Attacking others can actually make us feel better, since it on the other hand, has cancelled the negative happening by denying its legitimacy. On this, social psychologists have also found a positive link between frustration and prejudice in many of their experiments.<sup>18</sup>

If the mentioned unconscious human character is true and functional, we might also want to ask, is there a way to avoid unnecessary conflicts in this new environment? Most of the scientists pointed out the way of contact and acculturation, for it is the separation between races that created gaps and misunderstanding. Human being also has the ability to adapt, simply by learning new customs and skills and by imitation. Imitation is one of the basic instincts that help the brain to learn, as babies, we went through most of our necessary survival lessons by imitating the mother. Acculturation as well, supports our need for learning new things. Human beings have endless curiosities in things which is also one the most importance factors that separate human from animals.

We know from previous chapter that group-identities are a flexible understanding of ourselves that would be changed according to the environment. So it is the same when we visit a foreign country. Suppose you are staying in a foreign place to work for a few years, or travel for a few weeks, the feelings and identity that imply would be quite different. What scientists believe to play a big role is the process of acculturation. If we only think of civilization as a way to organize ourselves in production and culture is some random invented system to keep the civilization difference from other, there is always possible to switch sides and reinvent oneself to be a citizen of another country. However, the difficulty in acculturation lies in the fact that culture

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<sup>18</sup> David G. Myers, *Social Psychology. Eighth Edition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 242-277.

comparativism doesn't speak of the truth, and there are more attractive places in the world indeed.

In a nutshell, what makes psychoanalytical interpretation different from social psychology is that we could look at prejudice from a developmental angle. Prejudice is the part and parcel of human society and it won't be eliminated easily, so that it will be very important to analyse its root cause, instead of simply going around it to assume the almightiness of human being. Prejudice as an unconscious psychological phenomenon is helpful in a way for us to maintain our identity but also need to be controlled when we need to face the reality instead of the illusion.

In the next chapters, we are going to follow Macartney's visit in China by reading historical records and journals of the participants and reflect on these theories and presumptions about prejudice. In order to reflect all instincts and effect we separate the analysis into three parts: First, the understanding part which reflect the need of being loved and recognized. Second, frustration that reflects other needs that were not fulfilled. Third, acculturation that reflect the needs of novelty and adaptation. The second chapter gives an overview of the historical background and general expectation of the both sides followed by the third chapter when details of the visit and responses will be discussed.

## Chapter Two

### Historical Background

The challenge from analysing a historical event is the understanding of the overall social and political background at the time when it took place. As a preparation for the following analysis, we have to set out in this chapter to review specifically on the background of the 1792 embassy in order not to misunderstand people's perspective and behaviour by judging from today's viewpoint. It is not possible in these short pages to provide a comprehensive narrative of the 18th century Britain and China but only related information will be provided that had a role to play that might influence our analysis.

In the next paragraphs, we are going to review the historical background and the event of the Macartney embassy in order to have a solid understanding of their prejudice in the next chapter. In terms of literature, writings in Chinese and English are consulted without selection of a specific methodology of historical studies. In the field of East-West comparison and contact, different schools of historians tried to focus on different aspects of history. The Californian School represented by Kenneth Pomeranz and Roy Bin Wong has a strong influence among academics in modern Asian history. Their main argument is that China's economic development in the 18th century was not backward if not more advanced as compared with corresponding areas in Europe's core. Chinese historians, on the other hand, are more concerned about the decision-making process and consequences of the closing up policy in the Qing Dynasty. No matter how different their concerns are, it is a matter of fact that the 18th century was a critical period economically and politically for the deterioration in power of the Chinese Empire. The visit of Macartney has become a showcase for that decline.

On the other hand, although the violent expansion of Britain is criticised for imperialism, it is no doubt a result of a fast developing capitalist economy. Not to lead further to the question of why industrialisation initialled in Europe but not the rest of the world, we are only going to find the difference that influenced individuals' worldview during that time in the next paragraphs.

#### **2.1 The British Empire in 1792**

In 1877, Qing China wanted to send its first ambassador to Britain. Very few people dared to take the position as the ambassador to Britain since it's frowned up to visit a barbarian country. This was almost a century after Macartney's first visit to China, but still a very distorted picture lingered in the Chinese's mind about the British Empire. They have, for at least a century's time, underestimated the country much smaller in size but considerably stronger in many aspects than themselves.

In 1792, Britain was ahead of many European countries in religious reform, and economic and political system. Henry the eighth broke the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and established the Church of England in the 16th century. Although the aim of the break was only for the King to divorce his wife without the consent from Rome, this move has encouraged greatly as a by-product the development of the Protestant Church and England's reformation. The confiscation of monasteries also moved the centre of England's political power from the church to aristocrats.

Oliver Cromwell as a representative for the protestant and the bourgeois defeated the King's army in 1649 and declared England to be a Republic. The following years saw a continuous growth in the public's power against authoritarian government that has lead to the Glorious Revolution in 1688. Until then, a primitive constitutional democracy with a parliament, which is above the King, has been established in Britain, so does a two-party political system that enabled the cabinet and prime ministers to be rotated at a regular basis.

Freedom in religion and politics has also helped the development of Britain's military power. Although Spain and the Netherlands have preceded other European countries in enlarging merchants' fleet and trading colonies, in the 16th and 17th century, England defeated both the Spanish the Dutch Navy and established its leading position in maritime warfare in Europe and the world. As a result, with such achievements in nation building, the British ambassador to China could brag its own country to be the strongest in the world. However, because of a still existent competition between European powers, other informants for the Chinese courts, mostly Jesuit priests from other European countries didn't seemed to helped promote such an image for England in China.

Much of the pride in the British embassy also came from technological development outside the military field. Many historians in industrial revolution have argued for the importance of technology in economic development, especially supported by Ricardian economists. As

summarised by Marx in his analysis of capitalism development, England was such a place that allowed the steam engine , spinner and productive looms to enter into the market. Most of the inventions came from ordinary worker of the factories, but there was also enough incentives and support from the whole society for these important breakthroughs in technology. The steam engines made it possible to build factory away from rivers, thus cities with a new working class and a cluster of factories flourished in England. While the same buds of capitalism was found in China, geographic and infrastructure barriers stopped it from developing like Britain and other European countries.

Moreover, at the end of the 18th century, the openness of the society was also a unique character that has influenced both the industrial revolution and Macartney's visit to China. Many Californian school historians have also noticed the customs of women working outside before marrying and the fact that the average age for marriage is older as compared with previous times.<sup>19</sup> For Macartney who was educated in Dublin and London in the 18th century, rigidness and social pressure as seen in China would become a signal of backwardness, comparatively speaking. Among other things, there was also no limit in moving and travelling as people immigrate in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The purge for Protestants and extended political debate drove large numbers of its believers to America. And in some newly founded states, the immigrants were still taken care by the home country, which would also appoint governors for the immigrants in the new continent.

Because of a traditional exchange between European countries, we cannot find such reluctance to learn from others as seen in China. Europeans, in a large extent, are natural explorers since the expedition of Columbus. The aim of such curiosity was both scientifically and economically driven, as an atmosphere to desire for new territories and trade routes was prevalent in England and other advanced European countries. According to Marx Weber, the protestant spirit was also at play that helped the development of certain ethic, which promoted large-scale profit-pursuing activities. In a comparison with the Confucian value, he has argued that this breakout from traditional doctrines of Christianity has helped promote capitalism.<sup>20</sup> Although it's hard to prove, culture and religion did play a very important role in the historical trajectory of the 18th century. Against what traditional religion tells us, to be obedient servant to the god and be thankful of what we already have, new religious thoughts allowed people to be

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<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence, China, Europe and the Making of Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1930), 3.

greedy, to earn for what one desire with one's own hands. This was still one of the biggest differences between the Chinese and the British during time of the Macartney embassy.

European writers and the public at the time of the 18th century have complicated views on China. Philosophers such as Leibnitz and Voltaire promoted China as a civilized and advanced nation while some others wrote about the Chinese quite negatively.<sup>21</sup> While the view point have resulted in different result of judgement, in general, there was still a pride in being European in comparison with other parts of the world. A more common view among British writers was that Chinese civilization was more advanced than those of other Asian nations, but less so than that of Europe.<sup>22</sup>

In fact, the embassy sent by King George the third presented mostly the interest of the British East India Company in China. In the beginning of the 17th century, European power one after another established their respective East India Companies to monopolise import and export of exotic goods. The British East India Company was one of the most successful ones. From 1757 on, the company controlled the most of India, which contributed to a large sum of revenue. But since the cost for retaining tax from India was high, Chinese tea trade remained the most important part of the company's business. As a matter of fact, sales from tea provided about ten per cent of the total revenue of England and the whole profit of the East India Company in Canton.<sup>23</sup> But since the British had long a trade deficit with China, they were also eager to open up the Chinese market for British made goods in order to achieve trade balance.

Grievance on barriers to open up the Chinese market as well as the limitation in trade has long been seen in the correspondence between supercargoes of the company and London. Company managers believed that it was the government's role to negotiate for more rights for the benefit of the British merchants. Though some reluctance was seen also in these merchants who were afraid to irritate the Chinese by sending this embassy, agreement was reached for politicians' persistence in defending the honour for their country.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Zhang Shunhong, "British Views on China during the Time of the Embassies of Lord Macartney and Lord Amherst." 21.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>24</sup> Alain Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile ou le Choc des Mondes (停滞的帝国: 两个世界的撞击)* (Beijing: Sanlian Publisher, 1993), 4.

An important pursuit of the Macartney Embassy was to reform the Chinese policy. However, the word reform had different meaning for Britain and China. It seems that the value of tradition is higher in China, which makes it uncomfortable to change, while the British welcome not only reform but also revolution as long as it will bring positive result. As the French revolution went on during the Embassy's visit in China, very different attitudes from the British and Chinese have also proved such a divide.

It took much courage and investment for a country so far away from China to undertake such a mission to improve its image in the East, for the value of such a relationship was seen by the British as important for itself. Looking back upon, it is still quite a rational choice seeing from the historical background. Trade with the East is not only a profitable business, but was seen as an exciting adventure as well. However we should not ignore that not only the Europeans were adventurous businessmen, the Chinese were equally adventurous in their immigration to the Southeast Asia, the only difference being the lack of national support.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.2 The Chinese Empire in 1792

It was in the eyes of the enlightenment philosophers that China was ruled not by religion or an authoritarian King but a benevolent Confucian scholar. But in fact this was never the truth or did not last longer than a few years occasionally between tyrant rules and continuous wars. Although shortly ruled by northern nomads, China remained by and large an agrarian society dependant mainly on subsistence farming. Trade and handicraft did exist but never could compare in importance with small-family farming. As a result, policies and norms were designed largely for ensuring farmers' livelihood and defending northern barbarians from raiding central plains.

The Qing Dynasty was one of the very few periods of foreign rule in the Chinese history. In 1664 when a peasant uprising devastated the collapsing Ming government, the northern Manchurians who saw the control of Chinese politics and resources closely related to their own survival took the chance to lead the country's future.<sup>26</sup> The role of the Manchurians' rule in Chinese history was much debated by historians, for although the Han Chinese were not immune of corruption and weak military defence, they represented a higher standard in

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>26</sup> , W. J. Peterson, Ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9, Part One, The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 64.

development and civilisation. The expedition by Zheng He in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Ming Dynasty for example, found no counterpart thereafter during the Qing's rule. Judging from a few other aspects, the Qing's rule differentiated itself from the traditional Han Chinese methodology to promote Confucian culture to a wider audience that also influenced the governing strategy of the Qing Empire.

Internally, Qing's governance of China proper was that of a minority ruling a majority. Before a strong government was established after the overturning of the Ming, the Manchurians put a lot of efforts in gaining respects from Han Chinese. First it was the "braid or head" campaign that forced people to shave their heads and raise a braid in the back of the head in the Manchurian style.<sup>27</sup> Such a forced adaptation did not win good feelings from the conquered Chinese but only resulted in insincere obedience. Secondly, the rulers did not promote equality between Manchurians and Chinese to win favourable impression but instead created racist hatred and segregation between the two ethnic groups. Various regulations permitted a preference of ethnic Manchurian over Han Chinese in higher government positions and other resource distributions. These inequalities in policies in return put a constant threat to the Manchurians in suppressing discontent from below.

Literary inquisition, used by the Qing more than other dynasty also targeted mainly the Han Chinese who criticised the Qing ruler on either general or specific issues. Strict as it is, educated literati easily became disappointed in efforts to carry out reforms that are essential for the development of the society. And as a result, avoidance of political talking had on the other hand made the general public ignorant in political affairs. While printing was introduced in China no later than any other countries, the influence it has in education and information distribution was small due to the limitations of its application.<sup>28</sup>

Except for a political insistence of Manchurian's superiority to the Han Chinese, development of the Manchurian court before 1644 and subsequent governance of China after the conquer took Ming and Han Chinese customs as model. Therefore, traditional Chinese literature and Confucian moral were also taught to elite Manchurians, not only to facilitate administration but also to transform the Manchurian aristocrats into a civilized group with better education.<sup>29</sup> The Qing had also inherited the traditional worldview of China's position in Asia and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>28</sup> Pomeranz, *The great Divergence*, 143.

<sup>29</sup> Peterson, Ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9*, 66-68.

the world, i.e. being the centre of civilisation, which all the other countries have to learn from.

This authoritarian governance as a result influenced individual's character and altitude, which also made a difference in their view on foreigners. Qing Chinese normally thought of foreigners as barbarians and "ghosts" no matter where they are from. In the beginning, the stereotyped perception and identity of China's position in the world came into existence through previous interaction with the tributary states. Unlike Europe where no hegemony in economic and politic existed, China in terms of territory and population was much stronger than other neighbouring countries. Being consistently harassed by nomadic people from the north, Han Chinese were more used to viewing foreigners as blood-drinking illiterate barbarians. The same altitude was adopted by **the** Manchurians.<sup>30</sup>

However, it was only during the Qing that severe restrictions were applied to cross-culture communication. As it became forbidden to teach foreigners Chinese, and there was also a ban on the Chinese people for leaving China mainland for over a year, even though large numbers of Chinese traders in Southeast Asia could only earn enough money to return after a few years' hard work overseas. These returnees, once captured, would be forced to join the army and his belongings confiscated.<sup>31</sup> Rather to think the restrictions as discrimination against foreigners, it seems more important a goal to limit the freedom of the Chinese, while the Qing emperors believed that foreigners could only incite the Han Chinese to rebel against their rule.<sup>32</sup>

The person that had the most influence in the failure of the Macartney's embassy was the Qianlong Emperor. Being the third ruler of the flourishing Kang-Yong-Qian period, he was more of a squander than a keeper. And compared with Kangxi, who carefully observed the activities of the Russians in China's Northwest and brought delegates to negotiate when direct arm-conflict was unnecessary, Qianlong went on long distance and consuming wars against the Golden Stream hill people and the Burmese only to defend his dignity as the strongest emperor in the continent.<sup>33</sup> There was not enough tolerance seen in

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<sup>30</sup> Peterson, Ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9*, 158-159.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz and Steven. Topik, *The World that Trade Created, Society, Culture, And the World Economy, 1400 to the Present* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 10.

<sup>32</sup> Zhu Yong, *The Closed Chinese Gate – Sino-British Relations during the Qianlong's Reign*. (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Peterson, Ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9*, 265.

him as in his grandfather and he didn't possess the courage to reform like his father Yongzheng.

Also important is, in comparison with Kangxi who saw corruptions in Qing officials a serious threat for the livelihood of the common people, Qianlong turned a blind eye to many illegal acts of higher officials. He also allowed his favourite minister Heshen to become the most corrupted mandarin of China. While an emperor had all the responsibilities including setting policies for education and commerce, Qianlong admitted himself that he is not as interested in science as his grandfather Kangxi was which had in consequence influenced the court's emphasis in technological improvement.<sup>34</sup> As of his leadership style, occasionally, Qianlong did enquire his ministers and officials for advice and opinions, but decisions and policies were enforced strictly from the top down and the result of failed execution of order would be serious. These personal traits of him had a decisive role in the governing and management of his reign, which also had an impact on his decision with the British embassy. Lord Macartney after coming back to England compared China to a big rotten boat that would definitely sink once commanded by an unqualified person. The weakest link of such a system is that it depended too much on the top decision maker, the emperor, instead of relying on a well-functioning group of professionals to run the country.<sup>35</sup>

Last but not the least, as a topic which the British embassy put a lot of emphasis on, trade policies during the Qianlong's reign was also changed. We have seen a trend towards limitations of trade during the Qing, especially in Qianlong's reign. While four ports were allowed to trade with foreign merchants from the Kangxi reign until early years of the Qianlong's rule, it was then limited to Guangzhou in 1755 as a decision of Qianlong to better control foreigners' activities in China. Many of the conflicts we are about to talk about were due to this limitation of trading ports as well as irregular taxes on trade that reduced the revenue of the British merchants greatly.

### **2.3 The Anglo-Chinese Relations and the Macartney Embassy**

In the decades before Macartney's visit to China, there was not at all any official relationship between Qing and Britain. Contacts among the people were also rare. Merchants buying a few consumable goods such as tea and silk became the only link between the two countries. Because

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<sup>34</sup> Zhu Yong, *The Closed Chinese Gate*, 13.

<sup>35</sup> Alain Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 532.

of the previous mentioned limitations of trade, individual merchants and the East India Company were the only present British in China, and their activities were strictly confined. They were only allowed to live in a certain area in Guangzhou and were only authorized to communicate with Hong merchants, appointed by the local government to do business with foreigners. Price was not set by market, and coerced bribe were oftentimes expected by local officials. Most Chinese, at that time, did not understand why the foreigners came and what they were doing. Even the government, the emperor and his staff misunderstood the main reason of the foreigners' presence in China. There was an information dissymmetry, while the Chinese thought that the British were coming to "beg for" a few products they wasn't able to produce, the British thought of their action as a sustainable profit-making business.

All these lack of administration raised the cost of the British and resulted in many complaints.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, British trade with China saw large deficit in transaction, which made them concerned about possibility of selling more British goods to China to balance the silver they needed to pay for the tea they were buying. But without such freedom of travelling freely in China, there was no way to open a market for the British products by presenting them to a few designated merchants.

In 1759, the Supercargo of the British India Company handed in an official complaint to the Viceroy of Liangguang that listed necessary reform in the customs and among the Hong merchants for the convenience of the company. These appeals include the opening of a new port near Zhoushan, and similar demands as seen in the Macartney Embassy's pursuit such as leasing an island as warehouse as the Portuguese did in Macau. The Viceroy denied any possibility of such demands and led to the James Flint incident when the British captain named Flint, despite all the rules on foreigners, sailed directly to Tianjin and delivered a letter of complaint with the help of a local mandarin to the Qianlong Emperor.<sup>37</sup> Although the Viceroy was punished and related loss of the British recovered, the root of corruption and limit of freedom was still not raised after this incident.

The critical divide between the two countries is that of political emphasis. The interest the British had was the high return on trade, which has a strong role to play on the British economy. However, the Chinese officials and Qianlong emperor saw **very little** value in commercial interest and would sacrifice it for many other things,

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<sup>36</sup> Zhu Yong, *The Closed Chinese Gate*, 33-37.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-76.

among which national security and convenience in administration are the most important.

Moreover, the expectations of an international relationship were nowhere the same between China and Britain. While Britain had since long ago practiced equal diplomatic negotiation with neighboring European countries to settle dispute, imperial China had fewer official contacts with foreign countries and her position was always seen as higher than small tributary states around it.<sup>38</sup> Even this kind of tributary relationship was more of a ceremonial one than real communication over material issues. During the Qing dynasty when tributary trade already decreased as normal trade in ports and markets increased, tributary missions from the neighboring countries has reduced its frequency.<sup>39</sup>

After losing hope by trying to persuade the Chinese mandarins in Liangguang, the British East India Company called for political support from politicians at home hoping a diplomatic mission in the name of the British King would change the emperor's mind. The first mission was planed already in 1787, however, severe condition at sea prevented it from reaching China, the ambassador Colonel Charles Cathcard had suffered from illness and died in Africa.<sup>40</sup> The Macartney's embassy was already the second attempt after another 5 years of discussion and planning.<sup>41</sup> The hope for their success was so great among merchants and politicians that Macartney was offered a fortune and the rank or Earl as remuneration.<sup>42</sup>

Other European countries had also tried in sending missions to China for similar purposes before 1792. Portugal sent five missions between 1521 and 1754, the Netherlands three from 1656 to 1686, and Russia 7 times between 1656 and 1767.<sup>43</sup> Among them, only Russia had some real negotiation with the Chinese because of the existence of actual territorial dispute between the two countries and that the Chinese view Russia as a powerful opponent. The rest of the missions were simply

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<sup>38</sup> Li Yunquan, *朝贡制度史论 - 中国古代对外关系体制研究 (History of the Tributary System - A Study of the International Relations of Ancient China)*. (Beijing: New China Press, 2004), 270-271.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p141.

<sup>40</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 7

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> J.L. Cranmer-Byng, Ed., *An Embassy to China, Lord Macartney's Journal 1793-4* (New York: Routledge, 1962).

treated as unimportant envoys from small countries. As the 16th mission from Europe to China, the prospect of the British embassy was not very promising. However, the British believed that their power was stronger than the rest of the Europeans and would impress China in no way that the others could. They had also strong faith in the choice of their ambassador who is one of the best diplomats of that time.

George Macartney was an experienced politician and had served previously as imperial envoy to Russia and negotiated successfully with Catherine the Second on behalf of the British King. His previous positions include as well the Governor of Madras, at that time British colony in India.<sup>44</sup> After receiving this designation, he carefully selected George Staunton to be his assistant and as the second ambassador should he be prevented from performing the responsibility. Thomas Staunton, who was the son of George Staunton went along as page in the embassy. Later in the year 1816 when the second mission of Britain to China was sent, he served as the advisor to the ambassador Amherst. All of the team members of the embassy were under the sole leadership of Lord Macartney. The management structure included as well the captains, guards' commander and the steward in charge of all the servants. The whole mission consists of scientists, musicians, servants and soldiers numbered to over seven hundred. However, most of the decisions were only made by Macartney and Staunton including the delivery of the gifts and the choice of accommodation. Upon arrival in China, Macartney had given clear order to all the members of the embassy and urged them to behave as civilised British citizens. He also threatened, especially the soldiers and people of lower status and educational level that the violation of the local law would result in being handed in to the local authority. In order to give a good impression to the Chinese, most members had also behaved politely and carefully not to get into problems.

The delegation sailed out from Portsmouth and arrived after 9 months of tedious journey in Canton in 1793. There were four boats that took the retinue and the goods as gifts, the H.M. Lion, Hindustan, Clarence and Jackall. They then sailed directly to Tianjin and received the reception from the Chinese court. Two Chinese low-rank officials Qiao Renjie and Wang Wenxiong were assigned with the task of taking care of the delegation, as well as watching them. The members of the embassy were settled in a residence in Beijing and then moved to the Summer Palace where the gifts were installed for the inspection of the emperor. Lord Macartney, ambassador, and George Staunton, vice-ambassador, the page, George Staunton's son as well as a few others attend

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<sup>44</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 3.

the ceremony of the Qianlong Emperor's birthday and met with the emperor.

The list of gifts of the embassy was translated by Father Li, a Chinese priest who could only talk with the British in Latin. He obviously had some difficulty translating with formal Chinese as well since he was not well educated in China but received his education in Rome. The meeting and explanation of the gifts to the emperor were not smooth as well since the translator could not well explain the delicacy of British battle ship, astrology lenses as well as weaponry. The small Thomas Stauton had been learning Chinese with Father Li and had also a chance to speak a few sentence with the emperor while he asked if anyone else in he group knew Chinese. While the Chinese thought of this embassy as simple a delegation congratulating for the Qianlong's birthday, the British had a goal in their mind.

Macartney officially hand in the letter of the British King to the Chinese emperor but received only a letter that was mostly refusal to their proposal. The Chinese would not allow the British to set up a permanent embassy in Beijing since they found it not necessary to have a diplomatic relationship with a far away country they've never heard of. They also didn't allow opening more ports and reform the foreign trade arrangement in Canton. Although Lord Macartney insisted the benefits of such decision, and lobbied other Chinese mandarin for them to persuade Qianlong, they still did not impress him and received anything they've wanted for this visit. Since Macartney also refused to Kowtow in front of the emperor, he was not happy and ordered a degradation of their reception and shortened their stay in Beijing<sup>45</sup>.

After the formal business was done, the embassy traveled from Beijing to Guangzhou by inland transportation and had also seen in that few months the real lives of the Chinese people. The Chinese court order a high-rank official Songyun who is one of the Grand Secretariats to accompany them. They've traveled south by the Grand Canal to Hangzhou and by land with the company of Changling, the Viceroy of Liangguang, until Guangzhou. More than 15 members of the group has written and published their version of understanding from this journey which has later also influenced the British people's view on the real China. The visit though had less influence on China, especially not much compared with the opium war in 1840, when the British finally open the Chinese door by force.

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<sup>45</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 243-249.

In the next chapters, we will start to analyze desire and expectations of this mission during their encounter with the Chinese in order to see their prejudice and where their prejudice came from. One chapter each would be given to Lord Macartney, Chinese officials as well as other member of the embassy.

### Chapter Three

#### Prejudice of Lord Macartney and Other Members of His Embassy

As this is both a historical and psychological enquiry about 18th century group relations, we start in this chapter the enquiry into the historical description in order to find out what is in the unconscious of the visitors and hosts that had a role to play on the result of this mission. As we read through diaries written by members of the groups, many perspectives and behaviours of them would be easy to understand, however, as observers, we might choose to act differently while we know more about the situation from both sides and could also judge from a outsider's point of view without our own prejudice and desire entangled in the process of the historical event. The most interesting magic of this analysis is expressed in the Chinese poem:

不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中。<sup>46</sup>

If we think about modern diplomatic relations we find three types of bilateral international contacts, one as a delegate visits a foreign country, another of receiving representatives of a foreign country, or meeting of two parties in a third country. Diplomats carefully choose the best place for the discussion of the topic for the benefits of one's own country. Lord Macartney's visit belongs to the first category. By natural logic, visiting a country means that one has to conform to the local customs, of reception, dining or other cultural and political activities, but for most of the European missions to China in the 17th and 18th century, conforming to the Chinese customs was very difficult. Continuous negotiation has been seen in ritual and etiquette aspects with a lot of involvement of one's opinion in his own country's power relation with the country he is visiting. So for the first thing, Eurocentric worldview has hindered a pleasant encounter between two cultures.

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<sup>46</sup> 题西林壁 (On the Wall of Xilin), 苏轼诗词选 (*Selected Poems and Lyrics of Susbi*). (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju), 121.

But **the** Chinese wasn't any better; they have been living in an isolated world for centuries and kept pushing the visitors to believe that their system was in fact the best in the world. The inequality in identity awareness between the Europeans and the Chinese created a gap for the two parties to understand each other. In psychological point of view, there are prejudice, frustration and acculturation that played a role in influencing people's choice as we talked about in the first chapter. The prejudice as a central altitude keep pushing the visitors away, trying to persuade them not to connect with those foreign people while making other people well off is not his major responsibility. There are three levels of the visit that we need to analyse in this chapter: the prejudice in understanding each other, expectation-frustration, and the acculturation of the British embassy. Only if we have objectively understood a groups' feeling against the foreigners, we could then reflect on our own prejudices and prevent them from harming international relationship in the future. The main sources used in this chapter are the Chinese version of Lord Macartney's diary in China translated by Liu Bannong and Peyrefitte's *L'empire immobile ou le Choc des Mondes*. By the end of this chapter, we will see the intensions and altitude of the British clearly before we start to ask the same questions for the Chinese side of participants.

In comparison to Macartney and Staunton, other British were more truthful to their reader and in fact did not cover for the fact that they were not respected in China. While the ambassador had to worry about pleasing the Chinese in order to win their appreciation, people like the comptroller, John Barrow, could act and think more freely according to his own preference. Other members of the embassy whose writing were also consulted include: Sir George Staunton, second ambassador; Thomas Staunton (Son of Sir Staunton); J. C. Hüttner, teacher of the small Thomas Staunton; Aeneas Anderson, Macartney's servant; J. Barrow, coordinator of the embassy; W. Alexander, painter; as well as S. Holmes, officer of the Lord Macartney's guards.

### **3.1 Chinese in the Eyes of the British**

The Macartney embassy arrived in China in July 1793. The Chinese court had already been informed beforehand about the need of reception of this huge delegation. They have also been instructed on how to receive and transport the British gifts to the Qianlong emperor for the occasion of his 83rd birthday. When the embassy arrived in Tianjin and was ready to transport from Tianjin to Beijing, they have noticed the words "Tributary Envoy from Britain" to be written on the

flags on their boats.<sup>47</sup> The degrading from ambassador to tributary envoy was not how they hope to be treated, at the same level with Japan, Korea and other central Asian countries' envoys. As it went on during the communication with the Chinese officials and the Qianlong emperor, the conflict that was in the centre of everything stands in the question of who is the strongest of all countries. While the British firmly believed that they were, the Chinese openly challenged the notion and insisted on treating Britain as a tributary state to the Celestial Empire.

We should start from the military point of view on how Lord Macartney thought of China as a nation. Since masculinity and military power represent the possibility to defend oneself from competitors and enemies, it stands as one of the most important needs for human being, especially men to be able to survive. In real competition, not much in China as in Europe though, maritime weaponry and man-of-war determined the success of domination in trade routes and the possibilities to discover new colonies. And most of these are included in the gifts and communication contents that the embassy wanted to show to the Chinese.

During the British Embassy to China, we have noticed that members of the delegation constantly referred to the innovation in weaponry of Britain, no matter of the newest model of rifle to be given as gift to the Qianlong Emperor or the cannons that were demonstrated in the Old Summer Palace.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, they've carefully observed equipment, costume, and moral of the Chinese army and concluded that if a war broke out between China and Britain, there was no chance for the Chinese to be able to win. This conclusion was not a misunderstanding of the fact, however, the kind of pride it had given to Lord Macartney is worth noticing.

As an official embassy sent by the King of England, Lord Macartney was also very interested in discovering the political difference between China and Britain. While some collective political influence from aristocrats had already been seen in Britain, the Chinese political system was of a pyramid that was tied strictly layer-by-layer with the emperor commanding everyone that was underneath him. Though there is no real democracy established in Britain compared with what we see as democracy today. At that time, aristocrats could at least discuss and debate openly with themselves in the Parliament to decide policies related to their interests and the future of the country. However, without the influence of the enlightenment movement, the Chinese

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<sup>47</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 101.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

literati hadn't been given the chance to influence the political leader of the empire thus could hardly imagine such a system and understand its advancement.

While Macartney's observation had summarised basically the truth of the political situation in China during that time, he failed to understand something. He thought that the politeness and extravagant reception with luxury and care from the Chinese mandarins should be seen as a respect so that there was not much discrimination on foreigners as described by the missionaries. But actually one can hardly define, if the politeness was faked to follow the orders from above or real admiration to these civilised people with so much achievement. While Macartney reckoned that the Chinese and Russian were only half-civilised people<sup>49</sup>, the Chinese thought of the British as inferior to them in civilised level as well. In this conflict of who is the strongest, the Chinese treated territory and culture as the most important parameters while the British considered their military advancement and democracy in political decision-making as the most important factors. Because both saw the hegemonic power as something to desire for, there were surely conflict and prejudice against each other competing for that position. From the psychological point of view, it is a natural protection for one's ego to think of one's own group as superior to the other. Though we can see this effect as a healthy improvement on group solidarity, on certain occasions it also has negative or aggressive consequences that we need to avoid.

Another aspects that gave Lord Macartney feeling of superiority was the comparison he made between the British and Chinese judicial system. To him, the Chinese way of law and regulation is not objective and fair compared with Britain.<sup>50</sup> Through asking Chinese mandarins for relieves on the criminals who conducted a minor mistake, he had also shown the tolerance of him embedded in the characteristics of a more civilised nation. Since Macartney himself was trained as a lawyer<sup>51</sup>, he should have been influenced by popular scholars in the second half of the 18th century such as Jeremy Bentham, Voltaire and Cesare Beccaria. The English legal practises were also containing and keep adding the enlightenment reasoning as well as utilitarianism ideas.

On the contrary, other members of the retinue, such as Anderson, the ambassador's servant, criticised the British themselves for punishing a

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<sup>49</sup> Liu Bannong, *乾隆英使觀見記* (*Record of the British Embassy to China during Qianlong's Reign*). (Tianjin: People's Press of Tianjin, 2006), 23.

<sup>50</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 117.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

British soldier for stealing using corporal punishment in his journal.<sup>52</sup> He even said that the local Chinese at the scene were quite surprised to see such a punishment. This might not be true since chastise by thrashing was also used in China quite commonly. In comparison, although the Chinese judicial procedures were yet to be reformed, the British were not too advanced either. However, the focus of the two persons, Macartney and Anderson, either on the irrational judicial procedure of the Chinese or the suffering of the British soldier, contain much prejudice because of the central concern in the description were themselves. While Macartney wanted to satisfy his proud of the British law and order, Anderson on the other hand pictured the Chinese as more tolerant in order to criticise the British so that he might not necessarily be punished again by thrashing.

Did it ever occur to Macartney that the traditional Chinese culture that emphasize on obedience in family and court was to be blamed in creating such a different picture from Britain in its judicial system? Even though he might have thought so and tried to understand, instead of thinking about ways to introduce rational reasoning to the judicial procedures in China, his line of thoughts stopped until the feel of superiority was realised through this comparison and left it the Chinese's responsibility to solve the problem. It is typical among travellers to a third country, whether they wanted to borrow advanced innovation or they felt funny for stupid practises in that country, it is always the home country that they care about and would like to see better than any other countries in the world.

While the 18th century Britain had not yet achieved much equality between aristocracy and the commoners, and obviously in his journal, Macartney remained very conscious in recognising people's wealth and social status in China. He both criticised and praised the Chinese labourers, farmers and other civilians he met during the visit: the criticism stems from the fact that they were uneducated and were doing meaningless jobs. When he heard from the translator that a Chinese newspaper depicted the embassy as magicians who brought elephant in the size of a mouse and pillow that can bring people wherever they wanted in dreams, a very sarcastic assessment was given on the educational level of the common Chinese. The praise on the other hand was for the hardworking labourers. Related to the exploitation's pleasure by Marx's argument on the bourgeoisie, he found a natural pleasure is employing other people as servants. The usage of maids and servants was still a norm in that time's Britain. When them Chinese

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 302.

labourers were working hard without complaining, he felt very pleased and commented that such spirit was actually rare in Britain.<sup>53</sup>

Most of the British had a sense of superiority to the Chinese they saw and the development level of the industries they were expert in. Captain Gower, on the way of sailing towards Tianjin, named the peninsulas and islands with Macartney, Staunton and his own name, as the British did in other colonies. He had the impression that the Chinese did not discover or bothered to name these small and unvisited places. It was as well, such unwanted island that the British tried to rent from China that would serve as a trading port and place for warehouses such as what the Portuguese used for Macau. The captain, also measured the exact coordinate of the capes and islands that he named for the convenience to locate them, in an attempt to increase the possibility of owning them in the future.<sup>54</sup> Except for the islands, the British had also criticised the lack of training of the Chinese sailors and local captains. According to their standards, the navigator they hired lacked the basic geographic knowledge and maritime experience.<sup>55</sup> In fact most of the Chinese were indeed astonished to see such huge ships of the British that reflected the rareness of such ship-making technology in China.

The interpreter Father Li accompanied the embassy for the entire journey while another Chinese the embassy hired escaped when they arrived in Canton being afraid that he would be punished serving the British. However, Father Li remained very faithful to his employer, and did not discriminate against them at all as a local Chinese would do. When the Chinese mandarins were trying to persuade Macartney to Kowtow in front of the Emperor, they asked the interpreter to demonstrate but he refused. Father Li stated that he was hired by the British and did not need to follow the orders of the Chinese.<sup>56</sup> His experience of living abroad for many years had surely changed his identity and perspectives that made it easy for him to confront Chinese authority.

We should also notice that Macartney or other members of the embassy did not mentioned any occasion of direct communication with commoners in China. This sole representation of Chinese by higher-ranked mandarins was a setback of acculturation and mutual

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<sup>53</sup> Liu Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> George L. Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London : G. Nicol, 1797), 456.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>56</sup> Zhu Yong, *The Closed Chinese Gate*, 222.

understanding. In Spivak's word, the subalterns weren't able to speak for themselves after all, which has added to the British isolated view of the Chinese.<sup>57</sup> Although Father Li, the translator of the embassy was able to report some discussion and situation among the commoners in China, the life of the Chinese people remained during his journey, a very insignificant question. However, most of the British undoubtedly believed that the English goods could be well received among common Chinese once the political barrier of market would be removed.

In conclusion, during the British's visit to China, they have demonstrated their prejudice of the Chinese people and its government both from a point of view of their own interests and the Chinese's benefit to modernize. Their prejudice lies in the fact that they wanted in their subconscious to be a superior nation to the Chinese although their territory was much smaller compared to the Qing China. As a matter of fact, the Chinese had clearly noticed this but refused to listen to the arrangement of Lord Macartney and his King.

### 3.2 Expectation-Frustration

On the second level, the central question of our enquiry is whether Lord Macartney had certain expectations for the Chinese and when those were not fulfilled produced frustration that further strengthened the prejudice and misunderstanding. According to the theory we mentioned in the first Chapter, normally when we failed to reach the goals we set for ourselves, the frustration that comes with it could easily lead to discrimination to an out-group as a self-protection strategy. This is the same self-protection as seen in the first level, but rather more linked with real competition, instead of a imagined competition, or a competition over a nominal meaning. The record actually showed that Macartney was very much disappointed though he carefully avoided showing it in front of the Chinese.

This frustration was largely due to the impossibility to achieve these intended goals, as the British merchants failed to do so by convincing the Qianlong Emperor and Chinese mandarins. By coming to China, the British would like to see a few things related to their commercial and political interest to be taken care by the Chinese. Seeing it objectively, the main reason that this exchange did not succeed was on the British since it was them who actually demanded changes when the Chinese did not have any interest in it at all. If the Chinese do not bother to provide such help to a foreign country that they had very few

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<sup>57</sup> Gayatri C. Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 21-28.

relations with, it remained the visitor's responsibility to provide an equal exchange. However, the British embassy failed to see what they could provide to the Chinese for helping them and assumed that commercial interest and open market would be equally valuable to the Chinese. Historians argued that if Macartney performed Kowtow in front of the Qianlong emperor or even bribed other officials into assisting them to persuade the emperor, goals might already been achieved through such gestures welcomed by the Chinese. While we could never verify such assumption, the mission in reality failed to realise their expectation and ended up in depression due to false strategy. As a result, the frustration led to unhappy sentiment towards the Chinese, since Macartney would not necessarily blame himself of this failure. To anybody of this mission as well, it would be much easier to say that because the Chinese were too stubborn, corrupted and authoritarian that this mission failed in order to make themselves feel better.

With a long list of gifts presented to the Qianlong emperor, it was expected by the British as well that the Chinese would be surprised and happy to receive such delicate inventions and art works. With this, the Macartney embassy expected to establish regular contact with the Chinese court by setting up a permanent embassy or at least stay as long as possible in order to have normal relations with the Chinese officials. Among the long list of gifts, telescope, horse-carriage, watches and planetarium were shown and explained to Qianlong and officials, but did not impress them as much as the British thought.<sup>58</sup> Gifts from the Chinese side equally disappointed Macartney. He thought that those precious stones and ornaments not very valuable compared to his watches and telescopes.

In their limited contacts with the Chinese officials, scientist Dinwiddle and comptroller of households John Barrow found it very humiliating as well that the Chinese could not appreciate the British inventions and culture. They were laughed at when assembling the planetarium and other scientific gadgets while the Chinese could not get out of their narcissism and admit that astronomical science was not something that they understood. On the other hand, when introducing the hereditary system of British aristocrats, the Chinese were again sarcastic when they were told that a child could also be named as Sir if he inherited his father's **title**.<sup>59</sup> To the Chinese, the only logical system in the world exist in China and no other places in the world, so that there was no need to listen to the British of how they were running their country at all. Similar encounter with the Chinese was considered by the British as

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<sup>58</sup> Partly due to the incompetence of the hired translator as well.

<sup>59</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 172.

humiliation, and would add on their negative impression of the Chinese who did not respect the invention the British were very much proud of. Dinwiddle also wrote in his journal, that the prejudice of the Chinese was so deep that could only be removed by violence.<sup>60</sup>

The failure of impressing the Chinese with gifts created such a frustration among the British that they must have hated or at least did not like the Chinese for being such an ignorant nation. However the difference in appreciation was quite understandable considering the culture difference and lack of previous communication between the delegates and Chinese officials. When Macartney presented a horse-carriage to Qianlong as a personal gift, he was told that the emperor would not use it because it was strictly forbidden in China for the coachman to sit higher than the emperor.<sup>61</sup> The coach was found unused and disserted by a later delegation of the Netherlands.<sup>62</sup> Any gift exchanging activities in the world would fall into the same category of mistake, not fitting the receiver's need. Though the frustration was centred on the recognition of gifts' value, the core conflict was still the status of Britain as a nation and respect for it in terms of development level as well as its hard and soft power. Because the embassy could not within such a short time persuade the Chinese how much advanced they actually were, it remained between the two countries, a huge gap impossible to cross at that time.

On the other hand, the British were also disappointed in the reception they received during their stay in China. Although in his journal, Macartney has carefully noticed the high level of importance given to the embassy, much of the arrangement was not quite satisfactory according to the British's standards. The contacts with most Chinese officials were friendly and pleasant, however with some other, the atmosphere was tense and unfriendly. There was also no way for complaining the arrogant attitude of some of the top officials; especially Manchurians who were quite powerful and were close with the emperor. In the lower level of the embassies, people seemed to concentrate more on issues, such as the accommodation and the attitudes of the local Chinese towards them. In comparison to Macartney whose major tasks was to achieve the political goals of the British, other participants had an idle life in China when waiting and observing became their main engagement. They were, quite annoyed that the Chinese kept laughing upon seeing them, and that the carriage they were supposed to take on the way were very poorly designed that

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 209; Liu Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 91;

<sup>62</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 574.

they had to sit on the floor of it. The comfort they enjoyed at home were not comparable to the Chinese way of treating the guests that had an big impression on them.<sup>63</sup> The same frustration was also seen from Macartney who had illnesses a few times during the stay in China.

Food, as also a very important part of the Chinese's life was given top priority in the reception of the embassy. Baskets of fresh vegetables, fruits and meat were delivered everyday to their accommodation. Meals arranged at Chinese officials' venue were even more exquisite that satisfied Lord Macartney very much in its delicacy. Compared with modern days mythology of Chinese eating all kinds of strange things such as chicken feet or dog meat, Macartney's adaptation to Chinese food were much more successful. The problem on the food issue were two-folded, firstly when the British received proper food, they thought of the reception very common since they **thought that the Chinese was obliged to** treat them by the highest standard; secondly they would still compare and prefer British food even though the food they have enjoyed were perfectly served. As we have talked about in the previous chapter, the highest level of reception was only given to the ambassador while most of the other members had to take care of their comfort by themselves. The servant of Macartney, Anderson, criticised specially the dining customs in China, since the table was too low, and they had to as the Chinese did, sit on the floor while eating.<sup>64</sup>

Accommodation, on the other hand, was very rough for ambassador and other members of the embassy. They found the rooms in the Old Summer Place deserted and crude, with mosquitos and scorpions disturbing their sleep.<sup>65</sup> Noise, as well as unwelcomed visitors, mostly curious Chinese commoners, made them uncomfortable as well. Quite obviously, in China, the standard of hotels for people other than the emperor remained rudimentary while the emperor had palaces built specially for his visits to other places. Many of the members had to sleep on benches at night since there were not enough beds for such a big delegation. When there was a complaint, hardly was there someone to communicate the problem for them. It was not that urgent to bother the ambassador, but it was also impossible to communicate with the Chinese officials since the only translator of the embassy had to accompany Macartney instead of the others.

The most annoying part of all, was that the British did not have freedom of movement in China. Except for the ambassador, other

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<sup>63</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 148.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>65</sup> Liu Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 34, 74.

members of the embassy were strictly confined to their residence and any attempt of going out would be treated with assault. They were not allowed to leave the group along the journey to Chengde or Guangzhou. And wherever they went, guards would be constantly following and watching them although the official explanation was for their safety.<sup>66</sup> They were even not allowed to peek over the walls, when found doing so, a Chinese official would angrily drove them away. This had greatly disappointed their curiosity in discovering China but also made them feel discriminated against. It was to many of them, an insult of their identity and integrity. The low standard of reception together with the lack of communication between them and local Chinese made it a very difficult time for other British in the embassy. As a result, hardly would they gain anything after this trip except for some curious finding that they could talk about with friends after returning to Britain.

As a result, the Macartney embassy felt depressed because of the substandard reception compared to what they expected similar to visiting a European country. They were told to accept the Chinese rule, which were quite discriminative and restrictive to some basic freedom in their understanding. Macartney's servant Aeneas Anderson told the truth in his word, which became one of the favorite accounts for historians. He described his perception of the embassy in his diaries, "We entered Peking like paupers, remained in it like prisoners and departed from it like vagabonds."<sup>67</sup> Compared with Macartney, Anderson or Thomas Stauton might have described their encounter in Beijing more correctly since they were not worried about a nation's honour and talk about the truth without embellishing it.

Moreover, the rigid social hierarchy in China between people of status and commoners were quite difficult to understand for Macartney. He was astonished to see the severe punishment given to servants ordered by mandarins not very high in rank and commented that back in England, not even the King had such a power and respect. The occasion of the Qianlong emperor's birthday was even a bigger surprise for him. At the reception, even when some small and not valuable gifts were presented by the emperor to the Chinese officials, they would show enormous gratitude, as it was the god who gave them such an honour. Also Macartney noticed in various situations, when the emperor was present, people could talk only if the emperor started the conversation and it's not allowed for officials to converse with themselves.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>67</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 340.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 82-84.

This kind of worship of the emperor was rare to Macartney, since he would find it abnormal for the Chinese to be such slaves to the imperial family. But he became more frustrated when he found that the Chinese wanted to force him to do the same. While he insisted that a British way of kneeling down one knee is commonly accepted in Europe, in the weeks prior to the birthday ceremony of Qianlong, Chinese mandarins kept persuading them to use Chinese clothes and perform the Kowtow<sup>69</sup> as everyone else would do. In fact, previous European missions were also told to do that and several of them accepted.<sup>70</sup> All these rituals and procedures concerning tributary mission, although as a minor issue seen from the British side, had been attached great importance since the rite, remained a central part of the Chinese political system.<sup>71</sup> It was also difficult for the Chinese to understand that the British King in his country would not be expected to enjoy such a respectful ritual.

In the end, the British had won this contest, but the consequence of it was an order from the Qianlong emperor to degrade the reception of the embassy.<sup>72</sup> This was as well a frustrating result for the embassy since the insistency on ritual was a continuation of a discriminative treatment of the British and a result of their envoy status that was not accepted by Macartney.

During Macartney's visit to China, he had met with the emperor for a few times, but these ended up only in formality and small talks but did not touch upon any real issues. The official letter from King George the third was read and replied by the emperor, however, all of the demand were denied. Macartney did not give up and tried to negotiate with the Grand Secretariat Heshen, whose arrogant attitude towards them were obvious and he also refused to do anything for the British embassy.

At the same time, Macartney, hoping that they could also influence the decision-making, also adopted lobby strategy with other powerful officials in China including the Zhili and Liangguang viceroys. But the truth is, although it was easier for the lower-rank officials to sympathise Macartney and understand the reason of his effort, in the political situation of China, as a liberal individual, one could not challenge the

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<sup>69</sup> By kneeling down with both legs and touch the ground with one's head, normally performed three nine times in front of the emperor.

<sup>70</sup> Li Yunquan, *History of the Tributary System*, 231.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-210.

<sup>72</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 241.

rigid system too much or had much influence on the emperor. Such a reality was not how Macartney expected and was indeed another big disappointment.

It was not expected that this embassy will be met with a thorough success, but all these frustration adding up was still a huge psychological burden for anyone ready to take the post as an ambassador. Macartney had done still a comparatively good job in his continuous effort to the last day in order to reach his goals and at the same time not provoke the Chinese emperor and officials. If there weren't these frustrations, it might now lead to the same result, although it's not only up to him to be successful or not. Along these lines we could see, due to cultural difference and lack of understanding, it was easy for two parties trying to achieve different goals ended in deeper prejudice and blaming each other for causing it. If this kind of frustration is not removed, it will catalyse the perhaps already existed prejudice and racial discrimination, when conditions went worse, into aggressive behaviour that will need a longer time to repair, such as what happened to the Amherst embassy and afterwards.

### **3.3 Acculturation**

The solution we have discussed in the first chapter for solving group conflict is through acculturation process. But from Macartney's experience in China, we found that the acculturation was very difficult to realise both because of short duration and a very result-oriented purpose of this mission. Both Macartney and Staunton found it unnecessary to learn Chinese, and because of a prejudice against the Chinese judging from the lower development level, they didn't find it very interesting to integrate too much with the Chinese.

Though many conditions were at play, we couldn't ignore that the language barrier was one the biggest problem for them to understand each other. Translation, on one hand, slows down conversation between people, not to mention the mistakes in translation which are difficult to avoid when the proficiency of the translators could not be ensured. Moreover, the national policy at that time forbid the Chinese to teach foreigner to speak Chinese. Both Macartney and other British merchants in China would find it difficult communicating with the Chinese when people fluent in both languages were hard to find.

The real acculturation such as that for immigrants could not happen for the Macartney embassy when one slowly forget about the home country and embrace as much as one could the new culture and environment. It is also arguable how much could acculturation help for

immigrants to blend in their places of residence, since many will still keep their religion and customs with them. The United States served as a good example for us to learn how it is like to be a salad bowl of races, and it remained an important topic for psychologists and sociologists to find out what will make people to acculturate.

Macartney tried to learn about China by reading Chinese history from the books he collected in London. So a few aspects of the current political situation was known to him from the Manchurian-Han divide to the legacy of the Kangxi emperor, the father of Qianlong. What he couldn't find though were the smaller aspects such as rankings of officials and their responsibilities, which he also learned from observation and direct communication with the Chinese.

Knowledge about one's own history normally arouses patriotism because one feels proud towards the achievement of his ancestors. The learning of an out-group's history didn't mean the same. The Chinese historical story learned by Macartney, too, served as mere knowledge in order for him to communicate better with Chinese official when once in a while he showed them that he actually know something about China. However, if he was provided better materials or taught systematically on Chinese history and philosophical thinking, we might also expect a different altitude and result of this embassy.

When Lord Macartney was ill during the stay in China, a Chinese doctor was provided for Macartney, whom he carefully observed and recorded in his journal. He had noticed the use of pulse feeling and learned how doctor could use a thin line to feel the pulse of woman from another room, since it's not allowed for men and women who are not related to touch each other. He was satisfied as well that the medicine he received from the Chinese doctor was very effective. However, it did not occur to him that he could introduce the Chinese traditional medicine to Britain. It was still true in his eyes, that modern western medicine was actually more advanced than the Chinese counterpart. While there was not much obvious advancement in the Chinese medicine, the acculturation to Chinese medicine remained only a temporary choice without an alternative.

Macartney has also used a few times the mail system in China and also heard from Chinese officials that government mails were delivered much more efficiently than in Britain. He also learned that hundreds of horses were used between mail stations so that the mail wouldn't need to stop at all before it reaches the destination.<sup>73</sup> Compared to late 18th century Europe when steam engine was already invented to be used on

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 386.

machines and train, such an animal-based transport system was also not interesting enough for Macartney. And even though the service could deliver mail at such a fast speed, the service was only limited to the emperor and high officials, while common citizens had no access to it at all. Such a monopolised industry would not do much good to a country as a whole but only benefit the strict control of the bureaucracy and wouldn't impress either the British visitors.

During their travel in China, the British also paid special attention to women's life in towns and the countryside. One obvious difference of them compared with European women is that many had to bind their feet small. Foot binding was a cruel practise adopted by Chinese women in order to impress their husbands with a pair of exquisite feet. They had to from an early age, bent the toes and the feet tight with cotton cloth in order to prevent them from growing. If they endured this pain, when they grew up, the feet would become abnormal in size and even walking became difficult. But if they didn't, chances will be small that they will find a prosperous family to marry into. Women from common households and farmers would not do this but in exchange they would be looked down upon by other women for their lower status. He described in his journal the difference he noticed between working-class women and aristocrat and that the custom of foot binding was more in trend in northern part of China. He also showed understanding for this custom comparing it to the use of high-heels in Europe.<sup>74</sup>

Like the practice of suttee in India, foot binding was oppression on women that were also agreed by women themselves for hundreds of years. Upon the impact of western-style reformation, the practice would be eventually abandoned in the 20th century, but such a change came from within, from the Chinese themselves who finally decided to overthrow the Qing Empire and replace it with a republic. This acculturation from the opposite side, of the Chinese adopting a European ideology was then another possibility. When contacts between nations has become closer than before, the overall respect for humanity also improved as civilisation develop.

The other aspects of the Chinese culture, including art and architecture were also difficult to understand by the British. Most of them felt nostalgic about the British houses that are normally a few floors higher than the Chinese buildings, with decorated windows to the street on each floor. On the contrary, northern Chinese houses have normally a courtyard design that windows were only found inside the courtyard so the walls are simple and bare. They have also found it difficult to

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 69.

appreciate Chinese paintings that don't apply the rule of perspective. In these aspects which there was a mere difference of tradition, one would still be resistant to acculturate because of the need of keeping one's life and environment same as the past.

We did not find much appreciation from the British in Chinese chamber music and opera, contradictory to what European aristocrats felt for porcelains and art in Chinese style. Such a trend was highly related to the prejudice Europeans attached to Chinese royal and aristocrat life. In Beijing and Guangzhou, when Chinese opera was shown, Macartney expressed considerate interest about Chinese music and performance art but couldn't really enjoy them in the end. It seems that in art, the passion for acculturation will only last for some short period of time and the understanding of such would not go deep enough while learning a new instrument or a totally different opera is quite difficult. However, compared with nowadays, western classical music and Chinese martial arts are already popular in China and Europe. We have proved in that acculturation is still possible given adequate time and spaces.

The British embassy in 1792 was not the first foreigners arrived in Beijing. Compared with them, the European missionaries in Beijing had much different stories in terms of acculturation. Most of them dressed in Chinese, held position in the government, spoke good Chinese and performed Kowtow without any problem. Since they weren't there representing their country but prepared to live in China for the rest of their life. Prejudice on the Chinese from them would be much less compared to Macartney. However, these foreigners might not have total freedom in China as well. They were allowed to stay only because that they had given up the possibility of returning to their own country, and that the Chinese court could use their skills such as painting and mechanic knowledge. Difference in originate countries had also separated them into small groups. When Macartney arrived in Beijing, a few informants also warned him the possibility of some Portuguese priest trying to disturb their plan since he wouldn't want to see anyone else except for Portuguese to earn from Chinese trade.<sup>75</sup> The conflict between Europeans themselves showed again how difficult it is to overcome ethnocentric identity and cooperate with out-groups on a rational ground.

If Macartney, as the Jesuit missionaries did, gave up his British citizenship in order to reside in Beijing, he might have been able to at the same time communicate with the court on British commercial interest. However, neither was the ambassador prepared to sacrifice

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 183-188.

that much for a mission, nor did he consider the total acculturation appropriate with his promotion strategy of the British identity and power. For the same reason, he refused to Kowtow, for it might degrade his identity by doing so. However, it didn't impress the emperor or made them respect the British more than before.

Another person worth mentioning was the 13-year-old Thomas Staunton, son of George Staunton, who managed to learn Chinese on the way to China. He had copied a few letters and the gifts' list in neat Chinese calligraphy and was asked to converse with the Qianlong Emperor in Chinese. As a young person, Thomas should be the most capable person of acculturation and in fact was the only British in the embassy who could speak Chinese. Although, as a child, he didn't held any important position in the embassy, he had accompanied his father to many meetings with the officials and carefully observed the situation. After returning, he kept engaging with Chinese studies and translated the complete Qing Penal Code into English. However, Thomas Staunton remained uncomfortable of the Chinese on issues that the Britain and China was competing on. He was one of the members in the parliament that advocated going on war with China in 1842.

Comparing with a modern embassy, the Macartney's embassy was also undertrained to understand the Chinese people; most people only excelled in their fields but lacked the general knowledge of the country they were visiting. If they had the chance to meet with Chinese contacts in respective fields, such as painters with Chinese painters, army commanders with each other, they might have provided more in-depth findings about each other. However, because of the limited resources, nothing like today's diplomatic relations happened at that time.

In general, the Macartney embassy did not accommodate themselves to satisfy the Chinese and on the contrary, used their own criteria to judge the Chinese for the sake of satisfying themselves. While the British were indeed superior in technology development and social system than China in a few ways, they have ignored the fact the Chinese did not think that way. People with different perspectives found it difficult to cooperate with each other; their prejudice was the main reason that separates them apart. On the other hand, expectation that speaks to the needs of the British were not fulfilled which also brought in their frustration such as described by Lord Macartney subtly and by Anderson and Thomas boldly. When one needs to persuade himself to work together with a different group of people, it is firstly his unconscious needs that had to be satisfied or else they had to be mentally strong enough to overcome such frustration.

When we think about the possibility of acculturation, of course here again, the usual thinking and perspectives get in the way, it is easy to adopt in merely custom aspects than religious and political aspects as shown in the British and Chinese's attempt to learn from each other. We would like to see all human beings ruled by the same habits and rational thinking, however, geographical separation prevents it from happening too quickly. It will turn out to be the challenge of the next centuries to achieve such a world order for cultures to blend in and finally became a world without conflicts.

## Chapter Four

### Prejudice of Qianlong and Chinese Officials

So far we have summarised the expressions of prejudice and frustration, as well as possibility for acculturation for the British in the Macartney embassy. Since prejudice was at play, it was difficult for the British to accept that the Chinese did not want to open up and increase trade. But if we look at the conflict from another side, the Chinese should have been more experienced and prepared for such a visit. Was there a similar or even more intense ethnocentric identity seen in the Chinese? And what prevented the Chinese from acculturation to the British? In comparison, when American merchant fleet threatened Japan in the 19th century, visionary politicians initialled comprehensive plans to modernise the Japanese society, which started the era of Meiji Restoration and Japan's industrial development. As an equally backward society, even with a much bigger population, China failed to catch up when it was still possible to do it without being defeated in the Opium War.

In this chapter, we are going to analyse the Chinese prejudice against the British, which was not less but more narrow-minded and focused of one's own interest. The term given to it is Sinocentrism. The Chinese saw themselves as the centre of the world and the mandate of ruling was given by heaven. Thus no other country in the world could compare itself in terms of power with the Celestial Empire so that paying tribute and receiving recognition in return was the only way to connect with it. While there was the Westphalian system of equal relations between European states, Asian countries surrounding China including Japan, Korea and Vietnam conformed to this system long enough that the Chinese never saw a reason to change.

As a result, the same mechanism made it seem natural for the Chinese to regard the British as an inferior nation. Their curiosity for these foreign visitors remained well controlled not to give them too much

appreciation. Without any extensive communication with the British delegate, the discrimination on foreigners was not much changed after the embassy's visit. The Europeans had to use military forces to persuade the Chinese of the reality of power disparity a few decades later, when their patience had run out being treated as a second-level civilisation. The Macartney's embassy, however, was intended to solve the issues in a peaceful way. Consequently his strategy was, to impress the Chinese with gifts, act politely and educated, show appreciation to Chinese culture with dignity and trying to establish long-term relations by setting up an embassy.

The Qianlong emperor rebuffed the whole package of British plead for their trade with China and showed considerate vigilance in their intentions. His consideration was to remain distanced from foreign disturbance as much as possible. Foreigners in China were forced to totally acculturate to Chinese language, food and dress. Should it be considered racism is debatable but the contrast of an eagerly active ambassador and a diligent but authoritarian emperor was a dead-end of mutual communication.

Since acculturation could be made in both directions, we might also think about the possibility of the Chinese to acculturate themselves to the visiting British. However, it was even more difficult for the Chinese to do so. First of all, they are comfortably sitting in their own houses but not visiting a foreign country and have every right to arrange activities according to the Chinese style. Their own restrictions on foreigners made it only possible for them to acculturate to Chinese but not vice versa. Also if we take into consideration the authoritarian political system of China that even though acculturation and rational thinking instead of prejudice could be seen from below, it would fail to influence other people, from the bottom up.

#### **4.1 Foreigners in the Eyes of the Chinese**

The Chinese people used to be a very mysterious nation to the British. In the eyes of the British before they've arrived in China, it seems that the Chinese were educated, polite and benevolent, very much civilized as other European nation. They had found it different when they saw it by their own eyes. The Chinese were in fact, conservative, timid and discriminative on foreigners. The Qianlong emperor, at the time of receiving the Macartney embassy, saw himself as the most powerful person in the world and Britain as a small island not worth mentioning. He said in his conversation to Macartney that he was very proud of himself to live as long as 83 years old, and hope that the British King

could also achieve that.<sup>76</sup> Although Macartney's mission were mainly there for negotiation on trade policies, the emperor believed and was also persuaded by mandarins that the reason they came was to congratulate his own birthday.

Nothing could be more misleading if the king had ultimate power in the whole country that no criticism or unpleasant sound could be heard at all from below. This was exactly the case of the Qing China in 1792. A confident emperor with a long list of flattering officials was the common pattern for many dynasties in China that ended up overthrown by peasants' uprising. If the king believed that the British had no comparable military power to place a threat, no other mandarins dare to bring out the truth even though they might knew it. It was equally difficult for the Qianlong emperor to accept the fact that the British did not want to Kowtow, not to mention other demands that he had never heard before.

Though Qianlong had thought about the military threat of the British and intentionally threatened the embassy by showing his army at ceremonies and reception.<sup>77</sup> However, he chose not to carefully study the military strength of Britain because of his deep prejudice. Neither did he bothered to examine thoroughly the rifles and cannons sent to him as gifts, nor had he any interest in talking with the ambassador to enquire about issues of national defence. Of course, he had the right to believe that he was the leading character of this meeting, but a lack of curiosity in other nations was a tradition that were practised by all levels of official during the envoys' visit to China.

Moreover, there wasn't enough impact from inside China to change the Chinese' attitude towards foreigners. There was as well, a considerate information gap between the two countries, especially among the ruling class. While interests of wealthy aristocrats were mostly valued, the Confucian ideology pointed to a quite unimportant role of material prosperity but spiritual satisfaction or moral standards and philosophical thinking. In the end, the trade issues, and tax disputes were troubles made by foreign visitors. So that they thought if one trading port was not enough to satisfy their needs, opening up more port would only be a problem than a solution. If countries could be compared to human beings, in terms of family differences, China was the only child that was spoilt by the parents, while European countries, growing up with many competitors who are like brothers and sister, ended up more conscious of the environment and other countries.

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<sup>76</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 266.

<sup>77</sup> Zhu Yong, *The Closed Chinese Gate*, 249.

Many of the personal characteristics were acquired in environment, so does the prejudice of the Chinese as well.

When treating the ritual issue, Qianlong emperor expressed that whether or not Macartney perform the kowtow in front of imperial official Zhengrui was not really important. However, he then showed opposite attitude when they also refused to kowtow at the present of himself. Although Macartney saw himself as an imperial envoy, the Qianlong court though that him used the word inappropriately since a tributary state had no status equal to China, so that official sent by Qianlong to receive him was also higher in ranking. In an order given to Zhengrui, Qianlong also specified that a high official as Zhengrui didn't need to accompany the delegate all the way to Beijing because the Macartney embassy would be too proud of such an honour.<sup>78</sup> In this we can see, that both a need of emphasising Chinese customs as well as treating Chinese officials higher than a British counterpart were an obvious strategy from the Qianlong emperor.

The overall attitude against foreigners in China was discriminative. Discrimination on foreigners at that time was not only a luxury of the emperor, but also a national ideology. Any Chinese, from the emperor to common labourers could laugh at the clothes and appearance of a Western visitor, thinking that they look absurd and must be brought up in a barbarian country. The lack of contact between Chinese and foreigners had worsened the prejudice.

Traditional Chinese philosophy put China at the centre of the world when the neighbouring countries were only able to look up to the Chinese empire in terms of development level and prosperity. Although during the Tang and Song, international trade and communication was still developing in the capital cities and coastal areas, during the Qing, foreigners had much less appearance in the Chinese life. During the Song dynasty, foreigners were given accommodations in designated areas where trade flourished, and schools were built for their children to learn Chinese culture. On the contrary, the Qing court had officially banned individuals to associate with foreigners and made it a serious crime to teach foreigner Chinese.

As the exchange of goods being the most important way of international communication at that time, once strict regulations on trade were raised, channels of communication with foreigner culture would also be affected. When the Chinese believed that they had everything they need by producing themselves, the need of trade would also be overlooked. International trade at that time, was dominated by

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 221.

the government using monopoly and official rent seeking activities. Although potentially there might be an enlarging market for textile and consumer goods, it was not the traders and consumers but the government that would decide what should be sold and bought in trade.

The Qianlong emperor himself had very limited curiosity in the British embassy. It seemed that he assumed himself to know everything about this country and that it was just like other tributary visit that he had seen many times before. Those gifts didn't impress him either, because similar products had already been sent to him by other European merchants. For him, this embassy came as any other foreign delegates to admire how magnificent his power was and it would be a honour for the ambassador to be able to meet the Chinese emperor given that even Chinese people might not have the chance in a life time. He looked down upon the foreigners on their shameless pursuit of profits. As classical writings of the Chinese taught, it was not the material wealth but virtue and cultural training that makes oneself distinguished. He also thought that foreigners coming to China without totally adopting Chinese culture and customs were just some ignorant barbarians. Since China played a father-like personality in caring for small and weak states, if the foreigners did not perform well, in his mind, they won't be worth being treated as guests to China.

As formality and a gesture of his benevolence, Qianlong showed fatherly care to Macartney in meetings with him. He invited Macartney to accompany him to the Buddhist temple, showed concern for his health and during banquets, made sure that the ambassador had enough food and drink.<sup>79</sup> However, behind all these entertaining, Qianlong remained largely prejudiced against these visitors. The truth had all been recorded in the imperial edicts. The Macartney embassy had also slowly realised that the mandarins ordered to accompany them, was not only there for their service, but also stationed to watch their behaviour and report everything to the emperor. But these reports, because of the need of mandarins to please the emperor, contained lots of lies and exaggeration. They normally tried to fabricate or overemphasise the admiration the British showed to the emperor and his rule.<sup>80</sup> The result was that the emperor might not be quite aware of the real attitude of the British and stayed equally prejudiced as before.

It is hard to separate whether the authoritarian decision of refusing the foreign barbarians should be attributed to Qianlong only or that his officials should also be blamed for supporting and advising him. Although, the Chinese mandarins shared the ethnocentric identity of

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<sup>79</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 287.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

being a superior nation, there also existed a different pattern between individuals. In general, Manchurian officials showed more prejudiced attitude against the foreigners than the Han Chinese officials. Possible reason was that they were already used to a prejudiced attitude against the Han Chinese for being the dominating group in China. So that replacing the Han Chinese with some foreigner was also easy. In the Qing system, for most of the assignments given by the emperor, in distrust of the Han Chinese, there would always be a Manchurian official supervising the process. In fact, the British to them were even lower than the Han Chinese in social strata. Officials related to the Macartney's reception, including Heshen and Zhengrui, were openly rude to Macartney and quite indifferent to their demands. On the other hand, Han Chinese probably had sympathy with the Macartney's embassy being equally discriminated against. There was as well, as a result of the treatment to the rest of the members of the embassy, some kind of conflicts between them and the lower Chinese officials who were ordered to watch the British visitors. For these officials, it was contradicting to have such an assignment and a tolerant attitude towards the people they should be watching as prisoners, as it proved in Zimbardo's experiment in Stanford that we talked about in the first chapter.

A set of different reasons had separated the Chinese from getting too close with the British visitors. And the result would be that they would find it difficult to keep their position and at the same time acculturate to the British. Even though a slight grievance might be present on the lack of flexibility of the Chinese ideology and the ignorance of foreign development, the Confucius teaching of remaining faithful to the Emperor persuaded them to stay quiet most of the times when disagreed with higher officials. However, when officials were not able to help the British, they had to a large extent chosen to provide the truth to the British. When the viceroy of Liangguang Changling was asked about corruption in the province, he clearly mentioned to Macartney the difficulty of reform due to the influence of the last viceroy in office.<sup>81</sup> By exposing this fact to foreigner, he was not worrying about saving the face of the Chinese bureaucratic system but to enhance mutual understanding.

But there are also other officials who chose not to speak frankly with the foreigners. People, Macartney has noticed, tried to cover the fact that they were impressed by the delicacy of the gift the embassy presented to the emperor, and claimed that such things were also manufactured in China with even better quality although there was no

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<sup>81</sup> Liu, Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 143.

proof whatsoever.<sup>82</sup> The grandsons of Qianlong, after the British repaired the watch that belonged to one of them, had not appreciated their help but instead uttered some discontent of the British showing off their knowledge on watches.<sup>83</sup> Even the eunuchs who were normally not educated expressed that such things were not rare and in fact they have seen many already as gifts stored in the palace. To them, the important thing was not to invent them but to possess them. The disparity of education level also matters here, since the result of Adorno's psychological research pointed out, less educated class might be more prejudiced comparably since they are not used to rational thinking.

Sadly the Macartney embassy with keen hope that they could be treated as honourable guests from an equally if not more civilised country failed to change this cruel discrimination against non-Chinese "barbarians". And their prejudice remained unchanged for many years after, until liberals realised how backward their country was compared with Western imperialists during the war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. If we see from the educational point of view, the Chinese were much more strict in terms of family hierarchy and obedience to the elders, while protestants in Europe find more ration in loyalty to god which is more personal than societal. As a result, the parental style and social rules made the Chinese to be prone to discrimination, as a defence strategy to the limitation and suffering one experienced from family.

It was worth mention as well that there was as well prejudice among the Chinese and the British for their own people. In a comparison between the Chinese Emperor and his officials and between them and the common people, there were actually very few similarities, in other words, huge inequality. While the emperor solely possessed many privileges, the official and the emperor together also monopolised knowledge and information.<sup>84</sup> Comparing to them, the common Chinese were not educated and not worth educating. As a result, the same kind of discrimination existed among the officials towards common Chinese and foreigners. We have also seen from the reception of the British embassy, that only Lord Macartney and the second ambassador, Staunton was treated with highest courtesy, while the rest of the group could not enjoy these privileges and luxuries presented by the Chinese.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 141, 168.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>84</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 128.

## 4.2 Expectation-Frustration

The Macartney embassy's real intention was finally discovered from the official letter to the Qianlong emperor. The exchange of letter was one of the most important aspects of this embassy, although it again failed to make an impact on the trading system of China. The disagreement was showed through the refusal of British's demand, which was also central to the group conflict between the Chinese and the British. What the Chinese desired was incompatible with what the British were eager for, and the two parties didn't find a solution to accommodate both groups in these issues.

In the official reply to King George the third, Qianlong wrote the following words:

As your ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures.<sup>85</sup>

With this he stated the superior position of China since it was only in the need of Britain that trade should be improved. He also mentioned that Britain, as an island surrounded by sea, was understandable not having the ability to produce enough commodities and had to import from China what the Chinese had surplus of. While these products could still be bought in Canton, where the Hong merchants were, there was no need to open up more ports that would only make troubles for the Chinese. On the other hand, he definitely believed that as the emperor, he could represent all of the Chinese people and decide for them what they needed and what they didn't need. Traditionally, European style gifts were luxury goods that only aristocrats and the royal family could enjoy using. And if the Chinese common people were only subjects that working hard and paying government tax were their only responsibility, there was no such need to indulge them with imported items.

In comparison with the King of England, whose legitimacy stood on his ability to please the aristocrats, in Qing China, an emperor's power was beyond doubt the highest of all kinds. Not only could him represent the heaven to decide for the Chinese people, he was also responsible for educating and civilising the foreign barbarians. In a separate letter, Qianlong in an attempt to prove the righteous of his decision listed the respective reasons for his refusal. Except for the trade that would create trouble for China, he also mentioned that a permanent embassy was not necessary since in China, the rules were

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 228.

given that only when a foreign barbarian gave up his original nationality and adopted Chinese clothes and way of life could he be accepted. As a result, the correspondence between the two Kings was not a negotiation but similar of a higher official to his subordinate, due to the Chinese prejudiced worldview. And before the British could prove the necessity of bringing a change to the unequal position, the Chinese emperor could hardly adopt the appeals of their merchants.

In general, Qianlong was surprised and impatient to receive the unrealistic request of the British delegation. He was equally irritated by the fact that the British were arrogant enough not to conform to the Chinese court etiquette such as Kowtow.<sup>86</sup> His expectation of the visit was centered around the Sinocentric view of the world. However, he was not much devastated since the British, according to him, did not present much of a threat. The whole visit would be better fitted as a learning session for the barbarians on the power and greatness of the Chinese empire according to his understanding.

On the other hand, Chinese officials reacted differently due to their own expectation of the embassy. Mandarins such as Heshen and Zhenrui were quite indifferent. They had no expectations for the British except for them to cause less trouble. For those people, it is not very important how foreigners were living in their countries; they cared only about their own gains which are only a result of the Qianlong Emperor's satisfaction. If the foreigners made Qianlong unhappy, they should be blamed and driven out of China. While Macartney tried a few times to talk with Heshen on the possibilities of trade reform, he showed little interest and didn't bother to report to Qianlong as an important issue. He was even irritated when Macartney showed some understanding about China, and the simple curiosity of a foreigner was not allowed by him.<sup>87</sup>

On the contrary, officials such as Songyun and the viceroy of Liangguang had less prejudice on the British and did not have much frustration during the embassy's visit to China. They were, according to the record of the British, quite honest with them on the issues the British had raised. Other officials such as Wang Wenxiong and Qiao Renjie even expressed their sadness when they could not do much for the British and that their time together was too short, it might not be possible to meet again in their lifetime. They were only frustrated in the Chinese officials themselves and the incapability of them to change the strict and rigid system of the Chinese court. However, outside of their conversation with the British, they could not dare to defile the

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<sup>86</sup> Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile*, 243-249.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

decision and judgement of the Qianlong Emperor trying to help the British with their demands.

### 4.3 Acculturation

Having realised the problem the two parties faced entertaining each other, if we look at the acculturation perspectives, for the Chinese to acculturate to the Europeans was the most difficult thing at that time. Regarding the Chinese as inferior to them, the British had found it unnecessary to learn from the Chinese. It was the same for the Chinese, and their exposure to British culture was even lower than what the British experienced in China.

Exposure to the foreign culture was one thing; the other was the similarity between cultures. People of closer distance from each other tend to easily communicate and histories of interaction also helped to enhance mutual understanding. The Chinese and British, being unfamiliar civilisation during the previous eras, were extremely uninterested in assimilating with each other. As a result, without previous contact, it was also easier to form prejudice such as Qianlong's presumption that as such a small island, there couldn't be any level of civilisation comparable to China.

If there was the necessity of reform in the Chinese society, when a foreigner gave advices for the Chinese to do it, it will hurt the ego of the Sinocentric Chinese to accept the fact that the out-group might be superior to them who could give them valuable advices instead of vice versa. This way, even though that the corruption, lack of efficiency, and bureaucracy were found harmful, they would not necessary change them to please the foreign barbarians. On the contrary, to satisfy their ego, insisting that the Chinese system was correct was the solution in order to keep this feel of superiority.

On the other hand, bureaucratic hierarchy was rigid in China that only orders from the top could possibly change the way lower officials dealt with things. Mandarins in China were extremely afraid of giving opposite opinions to their supervisors and the emperor. There was a difference between what Chinese officials wanted to do and what they were ordered to. The accompanying mandarins, Wang and Qiao, who followed the order of Zhengrui, were nice and friendly to the Macartney embassy. For better communicating with the British, they learned to shake hands, eat with knife and fork, and even tried to learn the English language.<sup>88</sup> With such curiosity and acceptance of the foreign culture, there shouldn't be any difficulty at all to discuss trade

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<sup>88</sup> Liu Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 10.

matters and carry out negotiation. However, when the date of the reception came close, they were also made to enforce the order from above, which was to teach the British how to kowtow and a lot of pressure could be seen on the success of the persuasive tactics. If the supervisors were irritated, they might face the consequences of dismissal, years of imprisonment or even death penalty. Authorities as well, had the right of giving punishment with the smallest mistake found on its subordinates. Although many officials who had direct contact with the British felt the eagerness of the British to change the trade system in Canton, they had tried to avoid the problem by giving the comment that it was beyond their extent of jurisdiction or choose not to report to the emperor about this. During the Macartney's embassy to China, most of their responsibility was only to accompany and monitor the British, doing more than they were required to would be a dangerous attempt.

The Qianlong Emperor, on the other hand, was the centre character of the Macartney's visit to China. He showed some interest in the British's invention but also could not get rid of this prejudice on the power relation of China and Britain. It was most difficult for him as well to engage in in-depth communication with the British. Most information his lower officials received did not reach him since they were afraid such bold and surprising statement of the foreigners would only irritate the emperor. The only thing Qianlong managed to realize was that the British might probably become a threat in its military power in the future, however he failed to know that they had already become a threat.

Except for the mandarins and Qianlong, we have also seen a positive reaction from people bearing other responsibility who find it easy to acculturate. The imperial musician, found in Macartney's journal, showed a great interest in Western music, which at the late 18th century were much developed compared with the repertoire of the Chinese traditional orchestra. When the embassy was staying in Beijing, Macartney had arranged concerts every night at their residence, attracting many Chinese visitors. This musician in particular, made drawings of the instruments and commented that he would like to make replicates himself and play them in China in the future.<sup>89</sup>

Acculturation, the rational result of people's instinct to imitate should be a strategy of survival and self-improvement. However, much of the cultural background at the 18th century China hindered the process of healthy learning from foreign countries. For the same reason, in 1886, when the first Chinese ambassador Guo Songtao was sent to London,

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<sup>89</sup> Liu Bannong, *Record of the British Embassy*, 50, 74.

upper society found him and his wife easily adapted to social life and British culture. However, when found wearing an English-style wool coat in public occasion, the ambassador was serious condemned for betraying his home country by jealous officials in Beijing.<sup>90</sup> Even sincere apologise could not change the criticism on him that lead to the removal from office. Compared to the prominent career Lord Macartney had after returning from China, Guo Songtao's story was a real tragedy, even though Macartney's mission to China was equally unsuccessful.

Therefore, it was not a single cause-effect pair that led to the group conflict between the British and the Chinese. It was in a series of related factors that hindered the process of learning and exchange in China. These include, the philosophy of Confucian teachings, political and cultural system of following orders, clear division between classes and monopoly of knowledge and information. All of these have made China very reluctant to innovation and new ideas, but on the contrary, the British Empire had achieved development largely due to the innovation in the religious and industrial revolutions.

In the modern era, we have also heard a lot of criticism and interpretation of this particular meeting between the advanced and the backward nations. In general, the British had dominated the discourse. And although the Chinese were also responsible for the lack of interest in communication, very little literature offered a thorough analysis of the Chinese's attitudes. No matter within the embassy or later in the academics, understanding of the other was limited as we reflect on what Said has summarized in *Orientalism*. This essay although had referred to many narrations of the Chinese, it would be more valuable if more documents would be discovered that will cover not only the behaviour but also the real attitude and emotions of the Chinese at that time.

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<sup>90</sup> Guo Songtao. *London and Paris Journal* (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1984).

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

For the Chinese and for the British, the meeting in 1792 was a failure due to the psychological incompetence embedded in the human genes. During their contact, both parties tried to impose a different system of beliefs and customs on each other. They have demonstrated their attachment to their own group and incapability of satisfying or acculturation to another. At the center, prejudice was the cause of the need to attribute positive characteristics to oneself and negative traits to the other. Both for individual and for the group, it is very difficult for us to admit our own mistakes and learning from another group which at most will be a rather slow and painful process.

In the world either of today or the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is rather common that people have very limited understanding of those from another culture, another nation. During the embassy's visit to China, the perspectives of the British and the Chinese in individual's happiness and a society's collective goal differed greatly. The British had wished for a world of free trade and individuals with great freedom and wealth; they also thought of themselves as citizens of the most powerful nation in the world. The Chinese, on the other hand, could not accept that there was any country in the world that could be more developed or flourishing than the Qing Empire; they proudly believed that not a single culture in the world could be compared with the complexity and depth of the Chinese culture.

Because of the blind expectation without knowledge of the other group, frustration would build up when those expectations were not met. As it showed in the Macartney Embassy, both the Chinese and the British were disappointed from the other's behavior, which made it difficult for them to communicate with each other. As it is difficult to persuade

the poor to contribute to philanthropy, it is for the same reason that one has to fulfill one's own needs before they can understand the needs of other people. The same is in interpersonal communication, while one prefers to hear compliments instead of criticism. In order to create a friendly atmosphere for exchange of information and opinion, it would be very useful if both parties try to entertain each other. When Macartney tried to defend his honor by not accepting proposals that do not suit his position in England, including not visiting Heshen's residence and refuse to Kowtow, to some extent, it had increased the frustration of the Chinese. The Chinese as well, destroyed the British's pride by not showing interest in their products and frustrated their ego by refusing their request in trade affairs.

We have also analyzed the tendency of acculturation of the British and Chinese in the previous chapters. It turned out that there were, during the Macartney Embassy to China, very limited efforts of acculturation that took place. While acculturation is a natural instinct of human being, the prejudice and frustration stood in the way of meaningful exchange of ideas and customs from acculturation. Only lower officials from the Chinese court managed to learn something from the British which might have left some influence in the general public afterwards. But the biggest obstacles in the comprehensive acculturation come from the government in China, its monopolized idea, worldview, and culture that was already in stagnation.

The observation of this thesis on the British and the Chinese during the first British embassy to China has reflected what psychologists found on prejudice: that the prejudice is an irrational and unconscious attitude towards outsiders of one's own group and prevented us from treating them as ourselves. On the other hand, because of unfulfilled needs, one always finds frustration and would blame the other group for causing the problem, which is called as the scapegoat effect. All of those unconscious needs are caused by our ultimate desire for the pursuit of happiness, no matter in terms of protection, social support or material satisfaction. Not being able to acculturate and learn from other is one of the many defects of the mechanism of prejudice.

Most often, our needs of acculturation reflect our own desire and are helping us either as a group or an individual to survive. Although the contents of "culture" are socially determined, acculturation could mean a broad range of things from food, living spaces to philosophical thinking. Although our first response is normally to have other people understand our own culture, when the desire reflects the common traits of another group, this will express itself in the willingness to assimilate

ourselves to that group. Only when the expectation has more characteristics of one's own group, the members of this group would stubbornly insist on their own prejudice and make other groups acculturate to themselves. However, such an expectation is already influenced by our prejudice and it's difficult to tell if there is simply no need to acculturate or it is just a prejudice illusion.

In order to rationalize our desire and to strengthen our self-esteem, both of ourselves as individual and group, we used prejudice as an easy way of finding happiness. We could also understand it as a survival instinct, for the self-preservation purpose as Freud explained. The reason we had those instincts is because they helped us in the long years of evolution survive even under the worst circumstances. For the same reason, the most important reason for our body and psychological mechanism is to help us survive and preserve human being as a strong species. The simplest way to explain our survival instinct is that we love ourselves, and wished to be loved.

For the people who are used to live in a homogeneous environment, difference and unfamiliar things arouses feeling of uncertainty and insecure. We have also confirmed the social psychologists' finding, when two people of different nations meet together, nationality was first of all the biggest difference between them, when a defense system would already at play by the first sight of "other people". When individuals were in company of a group, it became even easier to fall into prejudice and discrimination with the influence from each other. Any group has a consistency between their members that no matter what it actually means, the consistency itself could hold this group together and enlarge the possibility of survival.

We also love to be in company. It is the social instinct that makes us always willing to communicate and cooperate with each other. By that way we work more efficiently than everyone on his own since we communicate, help each other and do the things that we are best at. Prejudice works for the good of the social instinct as well for it strengthens the internal ties of a group. We are all familiar with the feeling of patriotism which is stronger when the threat of enemy is at the gate, and the so called schadenfreude to see other people suffer which in comparison only showed the good fortune of one's own group.

Although in general, Freud might have a tendency of over-emphasizing the physical satisfaction, using his theory to interpret prejudice is still helpful in many ways. It is important for us to remember that most of instincts we've talked about are unconscious; they work in an

automated way without us noticing them. Prejudice's most important effect is for us to get rid of the barriers in our way towards happiness, and is also used to lessen the frustration when happiness is not achieved. However, prejudice and acculturation work against each other, and prejudice are most often winning against its competitor. In a general point of view, the pursuit of happiness might be too simple that it overlooked the possibility for long-term happiness. We might also assume, that rational thinking and basic instincts work opposite ways too. Or it might be, as Freud understood, the relationship of Ego and Id is always like rider and his horse. No matter how we understand prejudice come from, we should always bear in mind, that prejudice should be controlled in its limit in order to avoid negative effects.

However, we also need to know that Freud's interpretation of the human instincts and need ignored human being's capability of creation. Although he has dedicated most of his work in looking for the unconscious desires of human being, he has forgotten that once those were found by our own mind and thinking, it would not remained unconscious anymore. It is still possible for us to control our own behavior, and by knowing the true meaning of such behavior including the unconscious needs, stop them from controlling us and contain it as ego is controlling the id. There is no need to stay in absolute pessimistic seeing that we have at least moved from a slightly connected world in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to a world regulated by international law and conventions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the era of globalization, we could see on one hand that technology had helped us eliminate the barriers of communication no matter in terms of translation or by means of transportation. Language is not a problem anymore compared with before, the number of multi-linguals is growing every year; news and information can travel to every corners of the world by Internet. There are various opportunities for us to travel abroad, compared with the success of the British's travel journals, nowadays more people choose to see for themselves what it's really like in China. In most of the places now, people are free to choose which group they preferred to belong to. They could either immigrate to the culture and environment they would like to live in or change their membership to another group by altering their identity. If the change of membership became normal, barriers between cultures would decrease gradually until the so-called universal value became strong enough to direct most other aspects of culture and identity. Immigration will also increase awareness of culture so that less prejudice could be expected.

On the other hand, there is still an absolute lack of law and regulations to manage and control international and intercultural behavior. Countries all around the world still could not exempt themselves from territory disputes, or the ever-lasting debate over the responsibility of global warming. Healthy communication and cooperation between countries do exist, however, unhealthy competition and confrontation also linger around, such as the issue of Syria and North Korea's nuclear trial. In general, we still lack of a mechanism to normalize international relations in order to define what we could and could not do. People keep disagreeing with each other when the group's interests are at stake that determined who gets to win in this real or imagined competition. Although this mechanism protected our ancestor from dying out from the earth, we should evolve to be rational enough in order not to engage too much on negative competition. Eliminating competition is something neither desirable nor possible, since it also provided us with the urge and desire to improve. Avoiding prejudice would be desirable since it is better to be realistic and find a solution that satisfies both groups. One also tends to ignore that there are various groups with various needs and pursuit within nation states as well. Many countries have issued laws against discrimination, but there is still a long way to go before everyone in the society realizes the harm of prejudice and discrimination.

After the Macartney Embassy's visit to China, many had happened between the two countries that not only prejudice was at play, but also military conflicts as well as acculturation. There was the second embassy of Amherst, the First and Second Opium War and the annexation of Hong Kong, as well as the new establishment of relations after the founding of the People's Republic. Researchers on the Sino-British relations will found many interesting topics to look at and compare with the Macartney embassy. In general, mutual understanding has been improved; trade, investment and academic exchange have increased contacts between the general public as well as higher officials in China and Britain. However, it is still possible that similar conflictive contacts are still happening between the two people. Although background and contents changed, similar pattern could still be observed and should be carefully avoid in the future.

In the past, it was the Manchurian that was ruling China who looked down upon all nations in the world. Nowadays, it is the Han Chinese who immigrant to Xinjiang and Tibet not understanding minority culture and identity in these provinces. Han Chinese immigrants from inland provinces moved to Urumqi and other cities in Xinjiang, open restaurant or run their own business, without knowing any local Uyghur in the neighborhood. The locals felt that their birthplace and

territory is being taken away from outsiders, which also developed into hatred and violence. No matter which people represent higher development level of civilization, it is equally surprising how every group of people have problems coexisting with each other. The same issue could also be seen in North Ireland, where even though people speak the same language, difference in religion and identity could drive people to extreme ends.

We could see from Macartney's visit to China that an authoritarian structure of a group, compared with democratic or cooperative structure, would make its members more ethnocentric and more prone to prejudice and discrimination. Leaders of the group like the Qianlong Emperor have unlimited power to achieve his own wish by ignoring the other's; Members controlled in the pyramid of management does not have alternatives but to follow orders of irrational judgment either. As studies of group psychology also point out, that individuals do have a tendency of blindly following orders. As a result, one thing we could do in lessen the influence of prejudice is by promoting democracy and improve individual's freedom. People are born equal and free, which should be the basic doctrine for the whole society to hold together in order for us to build a world without prejudice and hatred.

What we could learn from the Macartney embassy is that one could not easily change some prejudice that have been existed for a long time especially those that fits into one's ethnocentric identity. The Chinese did gradually learned the hard way in the following decades but it was not possible to change it at all from one visit of some educated and prepared diplomats. In modern times as well, when developed countries are trying to save the people of Afghanistan from authoritarian Taliban, they also need to know what the Afghans expect from them, but not to arbitrarily presume what they needed to change and force upon them. Most of the times, it would be more efficient and effective if the change happens from within instead of from outside. Hope that in the future, we could really learn to treat our neighbor like ourselves.

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## Danlin Wang

Address: Room 1201, Bldg 2, No.138 Pudian Road,  
Shanghai, 200122, China  
Mobile: +86 189 1107 3747  
Email: [callmelinda@gmail.com](mailto:callmelinda@gmail.com)

### Education

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- Sep.2009-June 2012 **University of Leipzig / University of Vienna**, Germany; Austria  
Erasmus Mundus Master in Global Studies  
Courses: Development Economics, International Organizations, Theory and aspects of International Migration, China's Investment in Africa, Advance German
- Sep. 2003-July 2007 **University of International Business and Economics**, Beijing, China  
Bachelor of Arts in English **Average: 81**  
Courses: English Reading and Writing, Linguistics, Management, Marketing, Micro/Macroeconomics, Intercultural Communication
- Sep.2006-Jan.2007 **Reims Management School**, Reims, France (Exchange)  
TEMA program (Technology and Management) **GPA: 3.7/5.0**  
Courses: Business Strategy, Customer Relationship Management, Information System, Corporate Finance, French.

### Language proficiency

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- Mother tongue: Chinese Mandarin  
-Fluent in English (IELTS: 8)
- Fluent in German (TestDaf: 4)  
-Basic French, Russian, Polish, and Kiswahili

### Work experience

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- ◆ Jul.23, 2012-present **Fair Labor Association** **Assessor**  
In charge of factory assessments on social responsibility compliance with FLA code of conduct. Clients including Apple, H&M, and Nike.
- ◆ Oct.7, 2011-Jan.31, 2012 **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime(UNODC)** **Intern**  
Internship at the UN headquarters in Vienna, responsible of data collecting and analysis with the Afghan Opiate Trade Project, coordinate with government bodies and IOs.
- ◆ Feb.18-Jul.31, 2008 **KPIT Cummins Infosystems Ltd., India** **Trainee in HR**  
Coordinator in Human Resource for international employees and projects outside of India
- ◆ Aug.27-Dec.27, 2007 **Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art Zone, Beijing** **Director Assistant**  
Assisted the director in PR activities and interviews, communicate on behalf of the director with artists, support departments and media.

### Honors and other Accomplishments

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- 2003-2004, 2004-2005, University Academic Scholarship winner
- Winner of UIBE English Drama Competition as a leading actress

### Activities

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- University magazine Study in UIBE English editor
- AIESEC member and took part in various international AIESEC conferences in China and India.