

## J. C. Hüttner's Account of the Journey of the British Embassy through China and part of Tartary

Translated and edited by Ian Ferguson

From: *J C Hüttners Nachricht von der Britischen Gesandtschaftreise durch China und einen Theil der Tartarei. Herausgeben von C.B.*, Berlin, in der Vossischen Buchhandlung. 1797.

### Translator's introduction

Johann Christian Hüttner was born in 1766 in Guben in Lusatia<sup>1</sup>. At the time it was within the Margravate of Lower Lusatia, and currently comprises two towns divided across the Germany-Poland border. Hüttner entered the University of Leipzig in 1784, graduating in 1788, and in 1791 was engaged in England as tutor to the 10-years-old George Thomas Staunton<sup>2</sup>. This engagement by George Thomas' father, Sir George Leonard Staunton, was made with the assistance of Professor Christian Beck<sup>3</sup> of Leipzig University. Two years later, departing in September 1792, he accompanied the young Staunton on the Macartney embassy to the Qianlong Emperor in Peking, in which Sir George was the secretary. The latter's acceptance of the appointment in the embassy was dependent on an agreement that his son and his tutor should accompany them<sup>4</sup>. The elder Staunton says of his son, and the latter's tutor, 'In the train of the Ambassador, also, was a page, of years too tender not to have still occasion for a tutor, who was a foreign gentleman, of parts and erudition; and it will be seen that, neither he nor his pupil proved useless to the public.'<sup>5</sup> Hüttner (Fig. 1) was engaged not only as tutor to Staunton<sup>6</sup>, but also as an interpreter with the embassy, though principally of Latin, not Chinese (Fig.2). This was a role particularly needed since Macartney's speeches and communications were often first translated into Latin, then into Chinese<sup>7</sup>.

Hüttner returned to England after the mission, never setting foot again in Germany. He left the employ of Staunton in 1796 and in 1808 obtained an appointment as a translator for the foreign office that lasted for almost 40 years, a position facilitated by the musicologist Dr Charles Burney, who had been greatly interested in Hüttner's observations on Chinese music<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ratzel, *Hüttner, Johann Christian*.

<sup>2</sup> Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*. This is a thesis submitted to the University of Leipzig in 1898 covering Hüttner's life and work.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Daniel Beck, Professor of Greek and Latin at Leipzig University from 1785, and Hüttner's mentor for his philological studies (Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*).

<sup>4</sup> Staunton, G. T., *Memoirs*.

<sup>5</sup> Staunton, G. L., *An Authentic Account*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> See Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting* on Staunton's development and role as an interpreter, along with that of the Chinese interpreter Li Zibiao, who joined the Embassy from the Catholic Chinese College in Naples.

<sup>7</sup> Staunton, G. T., *Memoirs*. G. L. Staunton, in his official account (Staunton, G. L., *An authentic account*, vol 1, p. 499) notes that Hüttner translated the letter from King George to the Emperor into Latin, so that the missionaries in Peking could check on whether any errors had crept in to the Chinese translation. Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, also notes that Hüttner had to instruct the Jesuit priest who had been supplied to the legation as a translator, on how to write in diplomatic Latin, necessary before further translation into Chinese.

<sup>8</sup> Staunton, G.T., *Memoirs*.

Hüttner translated Staunton's official narrative of 1797 into German and this was published in Zurich in 1798-99<sup>9</sup>, and later he added his own notes to his German translation of Barrow's 1804 account<sup>10</sup>. His translation skills were apparently challenged by Staunton's requirement for a very literal translation, whereas the less formal and more lively account of Barrow appears to have suited Hüttner's more informal style<sup>11</sup>. He published a number of German works over his lifetime, reported on English affairs for continental journals and newspapers, and he carried out an extensive correspondence with the literati and political figures in Germany and Austria, including becoming a correspondent of Goethe, both having connections with the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar in Germany. He was active in sending back literary reports to Weimar, including books and prints<sup>12</sup>. Hüttner was married twice, though he had no children, and died in London in 1847 after a street accident.



Fig. 1. Johann Christian Hüttner in his later years. Hüttner was 26 when he joined the embassy in 1792. Unknown artist, possibly an S Bendrom. Source: Heimatmuseum, Nebra.

<sup>9</sup> Staunton, G.L., *Reise der Englischen Gesandtschaft*.

<sup>10</sup> Barrow, J., *Reise durch China*.

<sup>11</sup> Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*. His role as some sort of literary correspondent, including with Goethe, is outlined in Jefcoate, *An Ocean of Literature*, p. 245.

The story of the publication of Hüttner's account is told in the preface provided by his editor and friend, Carl Bottiger<sup>1</sup>, although the veracity of the story has been questioned. Gedan<sup>2</sup>, writing 100 years later, suggests that according to a letter from Hüttner to Bottiger, this preface was a sham, a 'game of hide and seek', written to justify publication in the light of Staunton's official account, with Hüttner also anxious to provide financial assistance to his elderly father. According to Bottiger's Preface, Hüttner responded to requests from his friends for an account that could be distributed amongst themselves, rather than his letters that were being passed around. Hüttner agreed, and his friends agreed not to publish anything, but on his return, he was horrified to find that a Leipzig bookseller was advertising the work. It was the agreed procedure of the time that individuals on such missions, just as with the Cook voyages for example, should not publish a separate account, and certainly not before the publication of the official account; in this case, that would be by Sir George L. Staunton. Diaries were usually handed over to the official writer. Hüttner reluctantly proceeded to publish his account to circumvent the prospective bootlegged publication, and it came out in German from a Berlin publisher in 1797, the same year as Staunton's book. It seems to have attracted interest in Germany and France at least, and a French translation was issued in 1804, as an attachment to the third edition of a French translation of Staunton's account by Jean Henri Castéra<sup>3</sup>. An English translation appears never to have been made, although Staunton included a couple of pages from Hüttner's account, in English, in his own official narrative; this is not a translation from Hüttner's book, but more likely direct from his diaries<sup>4</sup>. Both Staunton and Hüttner, incidentally, were trumped by the publication of a lively and often undiplomatic account by Aeneas Anderson, Macartney's valet, an account<sup>5</sup> much scorned later by Sir John Barrow, who was attached to the embassy as comptroller, and who published his own narrative in 1804<sup>6</sup>.

Because of his role and relationship with the young Staunton, Hüttner was part of the elite inner group in Macartney's entourage. His account<sup>7</sup> follows the arrival of the embassy on the Chinese coast, its landing and transfer by boat and road to Peking and on to the summer palace at Yuen-min-yuen, and the return to Peking. He was lucky then to be included in the group who travelled on beyond the Great Wall to Jehol to meet the Emperor at his summer residence. (The artist William Alexander, John Barrow and scientist James Dinwiddie, for instance, reluctantly stayed in Peking to prepare the Emperor's gifts). Although Hüttner wasn't present at the private audience with the Emperor, he was there for the other events, until, when back in Peking, he was ill and missed the last part of the travels of the embassy in meeting the Emperor again at Yuen-min-yuen. He then recounts the long journey by canal and overland back to Canton, ending with comments on Canton and Macao, and on the nature of the Chinese and China in general.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carl Bottiger (1760-1835) was a German archaeologist and long-time friend and colleague of Hüttner (Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*). Through Herder's influence, he became director of the Weimar gymnasium, and was well acquainted with Wieland, Goethe, and Schiller.

<sup>2</sup> Gedan *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, p. 21, mentions this in a footnote citing a letter from Hüttner to Bottiger on 16 April 1796.

<sup>3</sup> Staunton, G.L., *Voyage dans l'Intérieur de la Chine*. The translation of Hüttner's account is in Vol. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Staunton, G.L., *An Authentic Account*, vol 1, pp. 481-484. Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, states that Hüttner's diary was used in Staunton's account.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*.

<sup>6</sup> Barrow, *Travels in China*.

<sup>7</sup> A modern reprint of the account has been edited and published by Dabringhaus (*Nachricht von der Britischen Gesandtschaftsreise nach China*) in 1996.

Hüttner speaks with a voice that is distinctive amongst the other narratives. It is that of the quiet onlooker, and he seems not to especially identify himself with the official part of the embassy. It is notable that he is only mentioned two or three times in the other published accounts. He often talks of the Englanders and the English as though something apart, and is perhaps more comfortable talking of the Europeans, referencing back to the Europe he is more familiar with in comparing customs and perspectives. He doesn't talk of his role, neither as tutor nor translator, and only mentions his charge, the young 12-year-old George Staunton, a couple of times, with reference to his abilities in speaking the Chinese language and being favoured by the Emperor for doing so.

Hüttner's style often reflects the nature of his original writings, in the form of letters that he had sent back to his friends in Germany. The text is not broken into sections or chapters, but rather is a continuous series of paragraphs, and is not regularly dated. Within these paragraphs, he often abruptly changes subject. He uses structures more associated with writing a letter to a friend than the language of an official account or journal. He will say: 'I think I should say', 'you can see', 'but before I talk about it', and 'thus it is easy to guess, if you think about it'.

This style adds to the authenticity of the account, shared with the diary of Macartney published after his death by Sir John Barrow, and the brief account of Holmes. The first two were not written with any immediate publication in mind. Staunton and Barrow, in their more contemplated narratives, were variously accused of borrowing from previous works, making things up or at least extending the truth in places; Anderson, scorned by Barrow, may have been persuaded by his publisher to exaggerate for an eager public. However, there is a strong feeling across all the accounts of sharing experiences and observations, and probably joint use of them; many accounts of incidences or stories are almost identical in wording. Staunton had the diaries of others at hand, Barrow the advantage of the narratives of Anderson, Staunton, Holmes and Hüttner already having been published. Repeated observations, however, help veracity; more than one account mentions the Chinese pilots unable to help navigate when out of sight of land, the prediction and occurrence of the lunar eclipse, the mandarin who asked after the rarities among the gifts such as the elephant the size of a cat, the use of white planks and the moon's reflection for fishing, or the description of the chain pump. Incidentally, they collectively fail to solve the question of whether Macartney really did in the end perform the kowtow, and not just kneel, at the private audience in Jehol, a mystery that seems embedded now for the rest of time.

Hüttner often shows a fine ability to describe a scene, and to communicate an atmosphere, sometimes almost poetic. The embassy witnesses a lunar eclipse, which is met by the Chinese with a lot of noise to drive away bad spirits:

During our stay in Yeun-min-yuen on August 21 there was an eclipse of the moon, and as soon as the shadow came on, we could clearly hear a great noise in the nearby small town of Kian-hai-tien. Small bells, gongs, rattles and some sort of drums made such a tremendous din that the dragon, which held the full moon in its claws, soon let go of it in horror.

And when the embassy finally meets the emperor, he holds us breathless:

Half an hour after daybreak we saw a rider approaching, and after he arrived, the crowd formed into ranks. This was the time of the approach of the Emperor. All were now quiet. One heard distant music and the sound of gongs, and all the Chinese faces had an expression showing the expectation of something extraordinary.

Hüttner seems particularly knowledgeable and sensitive to music. Later in the work, once they have reached Canton, he expands, in several pages, on Chinese music and instruments. At one stage near the end of this, he takes us back to this moment again, where they meet the Emperor at Jehol. It is as though he can't get it out of his memory:

The finest music that we heard was at the first presentation of the ambassador in Dschecho. When the Emperor ascended the throne, and a religious silence had spread everywhere, we were surprised by the enchanting sounds from the back of the large tent. The gentle sound, the simple melody, the pure sequence of tones, the solemn progression of a slow hymn gave, at least to my soul, that spirit that transports the sentimental dreamer into unknown regions, but can never be described by the cold analyst of reason.

This interest in music stimulated the interest of the great English musicologist, Dr Charles Burney, who, as mentioned, later assisted him in his Foreign Office appointment, and it appears that Lord Macartney would refer to Hüttner in response to any interest or queries on Chinese music resulting from the mission<sup>1</sup>.

He occasionally has an appealing wryness<sup>2</sup>: 'If air and sunshine could be treated by mortals in the same way as the earth, then I have no doubt that the Chinese would grant their great Emperor an exclusive right to pure air and gentle sunshine.' And: 'But since a wolf can never entirely deny its particular character, here too a few features stand out which distinguish the Tartar noticeably from the Chinese.' And again: 'A Tartar among the dancers wore the honour of the blue button; a favour which was more a sign of the emperor's partiality to his countrymen than of the dancer's excellence.' His knowing humour rises again in recounting the story questioning whether the Emperor had pure Tartar blood, since his mother (a Tartar) was found lying dead under the rubble from the Peking earthquake, alongside her devoted Chinese priest, who apparently administered more than just religious services.

Hüttner only references three other written accounts<sup>3</sup>. One is that of the seventeenth-century Jesuit father Louis Le Comte, one of five sent by Louis XIV in 1687 as missionaries and to teach mathematics and astronomy in the court of the Kiangxi Emperor, and counter the influence of Portuguese missionaries at the Peking court. Le Comte published an account<sup>4</sup> of his travels in 1696 on his return to France. The second is that of the French naturalist, writer and traveller Pierre Sonnerat<sup>5</sup>, who published a comprehensive account of his travels around the world in 1782, which included a section on his visit to China. Hüttner has little time, indeed mild contempt, for the latter, as shown in a couple of footnotes, and much time for the Jesuit fathers. Of German Lutheran upbringing, he frequently scorns the Catholic religion. However, he clearly admires the qualities of individual missionaries, such as the French Jesuits of the past, and others such as the Portuguese he

---

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, 'An encounter with Chinese music in mid-18th-century London'.

<sup>2</sup> Hüttner's objectivity, sense of humour and humanity, in contrast with Staunton's more severe narration, has earlier been noted by Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> According to Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, p. 20, Hüttner also consulted the work of Peter Pallas, the Prussian naturalist, traveller and writer employed by Catherine the Great, and the *Lettres édifiantes [et Curieuses]*, the multivolume collection of letters sent back to Europe by Jesuit fathers working in China in the 18<sup>th</sup> C. However, the published text does not include specific reference to these works.

<sup>4</sup> Le Comte, *Memoirs and Observations*. This is the first English edition, the original having been published in French in 1696.

<sup>5</sup> Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine*.

met in Peking. The third account is that of the Swede Peter Osbeck, who's Swedish narrative was translated into German in 1765<sup>1</sup>.

In all, the writing is not always elegant, but as mentioned above and in the Preface, Hüttner did not write for publication and the public, and if he had, might have rewritten, corrected and perhaps polished up the text. However, it is no worse for this, since it has the immediacy and attraction of a first-hand report without the smoothing and softening that politics and society might demand in an official account.

Chinese names have been retained as Hüttner spelled them, with their contemporary or current equivalents provided in footnotes, where possible. He is often not consistent with his Chinese spellings; but then the same names of people or places often have a variety of spellings across the accounts of the other members of the embassy. The asterisked notes, placed here at the end of the relevant paragraphs, are those written by Hüttner in the original text.

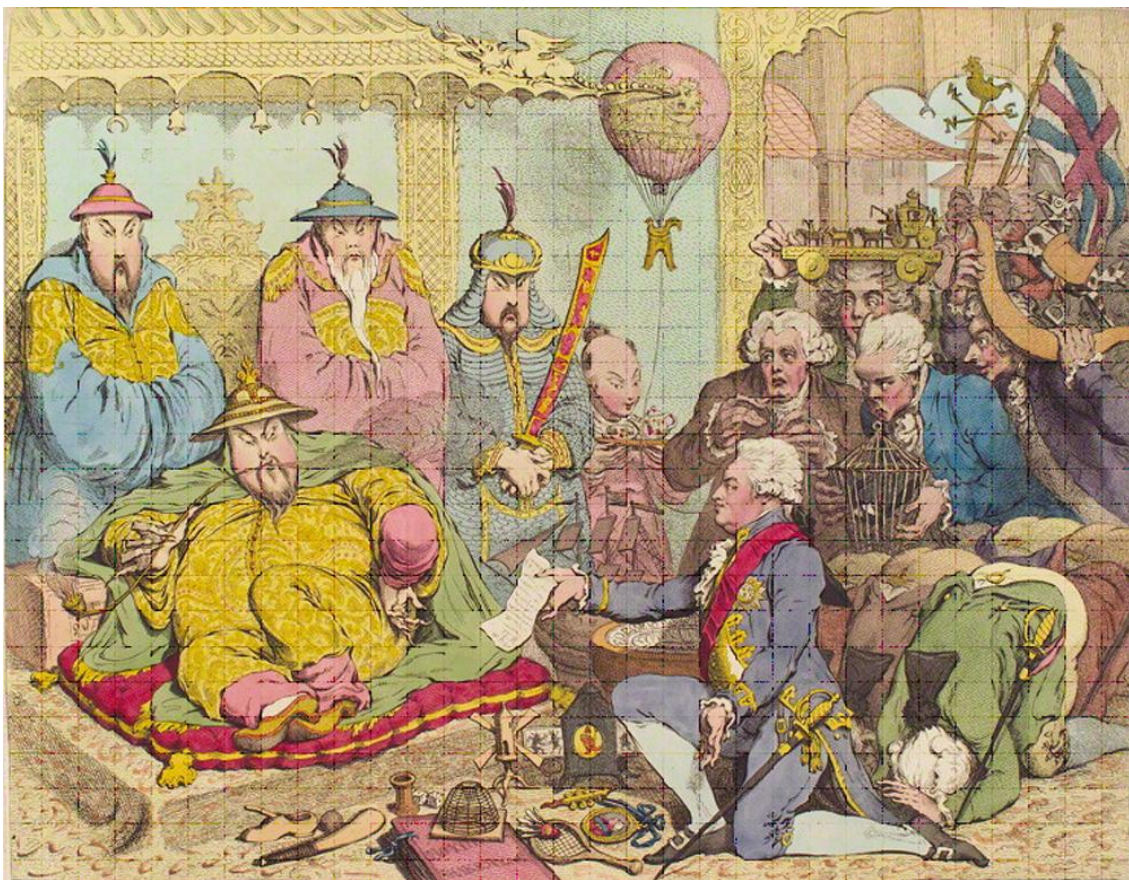


Fig.2. Hüttner appears in the famous 1792 satirical cartoon by James Gillray (published just before the embassy embarked in September, 1792), portraying the audience that the Qianlong Emperor gives to Macartney and the embassy. Hüttner (in the blue coat, holding a birdcage) is shown interpreting, but in eventuality was not present at the audience, and had no Chinese language anyway. Translation was done by Li Zibiao and the young George Thomas Staunton, who along with Macartney, and Sir George Leonard Staunton, were the only embassy personnel present at this momentous reception. (See caricature #88 in Wright, and Evans, *Historical and descriptive account*, pp. 60-61, 'The German face bringing in the cage is, no doubt, intended for the late Mr. Hüttner, of the Foreign Office, who accompanied Lord Macartney, as interpreter, and published his own account of the Embassy, in German, Berlin, 1797.')

<sup>1</sup> Osbeck, *Reisen nach Ostindien und China*. An English translation, by J. Forster, was published in 1771.

# Account of the Journey of the British Embassy through China and part of Tartary

By Johann Christian Hüttner

## Preface by the editor

Before the author left for China, some of his friends asked if he would like to send them back something more about a country so seldom visited, than dry, rough letters. They suggested that it would be less trouble than repeating the same things in separate letters to his friends. He therefore promised a small account, but with the reservation that there would be no printing or further distribution. This was agreed to by his friends, so he was all the more distressed when he later found that one of the Hamburg newspapers was advertising his travel account\*. It had not occurred to him to distribute it, even though several people were interested. Regardless, he kept his word to his friends, and provided his account from Canton, but no sooner had it reached them than he had returned to Europe. Few had seen it while he was writing it and didn't wish to share it, since the diary of the Ambassador was in the hands of the King, who would order its publication. When all diaries had been delivered to Staunton<sup>1</sup>, who was to write the official account of the embassy, Herr Hüttner repeated his request<sup>2</sup>, since he was concerned that some might consider his earlier account to be more worthy<sup>3</sup>. In order to prevent this, they said nothing about it, and those who had seen H. Hüttner's handwritten account sent it back to him, as he requested. Here it remained, and soon no one thought more about the matter, particularly since Anderson had given the public something about the Chinese journey<sup>4</sup>.

\*In one of his letters he said: "Don't think I am so reckless as to say something like that. By the way, I know very well who the man in London is who has, without permission, embellished his newspaper articles in this way. Had he been no less than my enemy, he could scarcely have done more harm than by this indiscretion."

Sometime after Easter in the same year, the editor saw a letter from a respected book dealer in Leipzig, offering '*The travels of a German in China*', and who, because of unreasonable demands, had looked for and found another buyer. There was no doubt who the unnamed German was, since Herr Hüttner was known to be the only one in the entourage of the Embassy. It was also certain that the manuscript on sale could not have come from his hands; it must have been passed on or stolen. It didn't take much to find out that the latter was the case. Shamelessly, a still unknown person had taken a copy of this private account to Germany, and Dr Hüttner would hence be placed in front of the public, against his knowledge and expectations and without him having a say on the matter. A friend found that publication would now be inevitable. It was therefore considered necessary to step in and have the original manuscript printed as soon as possible.

This laborious account may seem very unimportant to some, but it is necessary, in order to shed proper light on what claim these sheets may make on ordinary readers. It is clear that if he had

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Leonard Staunton, second secretary to the embassy.

<sup>2</sup> Not to distribute his account.

<sup>3</sup> Staunton appeared to have had Hüttner's diary at hand (Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*) since as mentioned earlier, he included a couple of pages of it in his account.

<sup>4</sup> As previously mentioned, it was customary that the members of such a mission would have agreed not to publish an account before the official one was issued. In this case, Sir George L Staunton, was to write the official account and duly receive all individual diaries. It is clear that Hüttner expressly wished to follow this protocol and was alarmed at the possibility of it being breached by him.

been concerned with publicity, Herr Hüttner would have added, deleted, corrected and written things differently when he wrote his narrative. It will be noted however, that he carefully passes over the sensitive places where Anderson has been less merciful<sup>1</sup>.

The editor, by the way, hopes that this short account of the British embassy journey will survive alongside Staunton's expected work. Herr Hüttner, an impartial, talented man, saw many things from his own point of view, and as a German, has undoubtedly depicted the Chinese in his writing more precisely than the English could.

August, 1797.

C.B<sup>2</sup>

### Canton, December 1793

When the Emperor of China received the news that an English embassy was enroute, he had an edict made known in Canton and all the seaports of his empire, ordering the mandarins to honour the embassy and assist it in all possible ways to travel to Peking; the embassy should be allowed to sail up the Yellow Sea, "since the British, as is well known, were very experienced in navigation." Accordingly, the two ships which had the embassy and the royal gifts for the Emperor of China on board (the *Lion*, a warship of 74 cannons, and the *Hindustan*, an East India Company ship), went round the islands of Hainan and Macao, and sailed direct to the Strait of Formosa.

We arrived on 1 July 1793 at Tschus-san<sup>3</sup> in the Province of Tschekian<sup>4</sup>. Up to this point, we had a safe journey, since we had the logbooks of English ships which previously could go as far as Tschus-san. Prior to those times, European trade was restricted to Canton, where there was also an English factory<sup>5</sup>. But from what I had heard, no European ship had gone further on from here, and we needed to take on a pilot. It was difficult to deal with this in Tschus-san, since Chinese shipping, still in its infancy and consequently small, differs as much from the English as one nation differs from another. The Chinese always creep along the coast here, and never venture into the middle of the Yellow Sea. Therefore, the pilots were of no help when they could no longer see the land from the ships, which alone determined their means of reckoning<sup>6</sup>. Regardless, and without having a seafarer who could warn us of rocks and sandbanks, we continued to sail confidently, secure that the two brigantines who accompanied us were now sailing ahead, and also since during the night, we spread very few sails, or took them in and cast an anchor.

---

<sup>1</sup> Anderson's account is noted for being more outspoken and critical, as for instance, where he describes the alarm, shame and haste with which the English precipitously departed Peking under orders of the court: 'We entered Peking like paupers; we remained in it like prisoners; and we quitted it like vagrants.' (Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, p. 181). Barrow puts such sensation down to Anderson's London bookseller trying to excite interest in the reading public. Hüttner notably says little on the political reasons for the departure, nor gives any feeling of drama in the event. This hasty departure is also recorded by the embassy scientist Dr James Dinwiddie in his account of his time with the embassy, published by his grandson William Jardine Proudfoot (Proudfoot, *Biographical memoir of James Dinwiddie*). The text on the embassy departure is on p.55.

<sup>2</sup> Carl August Böttiger (1760-1835), archaeologist, classicist and scholar.

<sup>3</sup> Chusan, present day Zhoushan.

<sup>4</sup> Zhejiang province.

<sup>5</sup> Factory was the term for foreign trading houses and warehouses restricted to an area of the Canton suburbs by the Pearl River.

<sup>6</sup> Also noted by the militia man Samuel Holmes (Holmes, *The Journal of Mr Samuel Holmes*), who published his account a year after the official narrative by Staunton, and provides a militia-man's view of the embassy, at distance from Macartney and his immediate entourage. It's particularly notable for recording the number of men who died during the embassy's travels.



For a few days we had very windy weather and heavy fog, so that from the *Lion*, which I was aboard, we could see neither the *Hindustan* nor the brigantines, and also got no answer from repeated firing of the cannons (a procedure that caused fear in inexperienced people). But the fog disappeared, the good wind continued to strengthen, and on 16 July we finally passed the islands and mountains along the Chinese coast, which Sir Erasmus Gower<sup>1</sup>, Captain of the *Lion*, named as follows: Cape Macartney 36° 50' N.L. Long 102° 30'. – Cape Gower 36° 55' N.L. Long 102° 36'. – Staunton Islands 36° 46' N.L. Long 122° 25' E. of Greenwich.

We arrived and anchored on 20 July in the vicinity of Miaotau<sup>2</sup>, a small place in the province of Schantung<sup>3</sup>. Our pilots, who differed so much from each other in their advice during our only storm, agreed that our large ships could not go safely as far as Taku<sup>4</sup> because of the shallow waters. However, it was thought necessary to make an attempt, since it was feared that the gifts for the Emperor, which the mandarins had suggested should be carried overland to Peking, might be damaged. The ambassador sent one of the brigantines to find out exactly how the tide was flowing and to collect other necessary information. We soon learned that the water towards the part of the country where Taku lies, in the great bay which is enclosed by Corea<sup>5</sup>, Leatong<sup>6</sup> and the Chinese provinces of Petscheli<sup>7</sup> and Schantung, was much too shallow to permit our large ships to venture there; even the brigantine, which only needed a few feet of water, had touched ground several times. Therefore, the third small vessel of our squadron, a so-called scow<sup>8</sup>, was sent to Taku with the mandarins to negotiate the landing of the embassy and the gifts. I was sent on two small expeditions, and I can't say enough how much I liked everything that I saw of this strange land<sup>9</sup>. My curiosity was aroused by the many hundreds of junks\* that we came across, the swarms of people on them, their maneuvering, the singing with which they accompanied their rowing, the construction and comfort of their ships, the cleanliness, and then on the land, the houses, soldiers, ceremonies and a hundred other things, just as much as the attention of the Chinese was attracted by our ships, clothing, language and customs. They were particularly amazed that we were able to wrap our necks and bodies in such tight clothing, clearly showing the exact outline of the limbs, and the hair covered with white powder; to which we didn't have much of a response at the time. They liked what they saw of our clothes, as well as our linen, our swords, watches, chains, buckles, and

<sup>1</sup> Gower (1742-1814) was the Commander of the embassy, aboard the 64-gun HMS *Lion*. His notes were used by Staunton in his official account.

<sup>2</sup> The Miao Tau (Miaodau) Islands is a group off the coast of Shandong province.

<sup>3</sup> Shandong.

<sup>4</sup> Taku or Dafu, at the mouth of the Peiho river, which links Peking and Tiajin with the Bohai Sea. The Peiho is now known as the Hai River.

<sup>5</sup> Korea.

<sup>6</sup> Liaoning province, on the northern coast of the Yellow Sea.

<sup>7</sup> This was the name for the Ming Dynasty district at this time, spelled variously in different accounts, and also known as Beizhili, North Zhili. It is currently part of Hebei, Henan and Shandong provinces and the municipal regions of Tianjin and Beijing.

<sup>8</sup> A flat-bottomed, barge-like craft. Hüttner writes 'Snow'. 'Scow' is derived from the Dutch 'Schouw'. Staunton in different places writes 'san-pan' (sampam, the word likely having a Cantonese origin), and also (*An Authentic Account*, vol 2, p. 597), uses the term 'snow'.

<sup>9</sup> Macartney (in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 176) notes that he sent Hüttner on 25 July to talk with the mandarins and Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, pp. 481-484, quotes Hüttner during these trips, answering questions from mandarins representing the Emperor, and negotiating the embassy's progress from the coast to Peking. This is clearly not a direct quote from Hüttner's account, but perhaps from his diaries or journal which would have been passed to Staunton for his official account. Both Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 56, and Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, pp. 57-58, mention Hüttner's visit to the mandarins. Hüttner's mission here is evidence of his largely unseen role in the inner circle of Macartney's entourage.

especially our shoes and boots, although they had no knowledge of the great English skill of preparing leather.

\*Junk in English, Jonc French, Junke Dutch, probably derived from the Chinese word Tschwang, here meaning ship.

In Taku, or Tung-ta-ku-paiho, three mandarins\* were received by the embassy: Tsching-ta-dschin\*\*<sup>1</sup>, a Tartar of very high rank, supervisor of the salt taxes of the empire, on this occasion nominated the Emperor's envoy and supervisor of all the business that concerned the English embassy; Tscho-ta-dschin<sup>2</sup>, a very learned civil mandarin, and ruler of the district of the large city of Tienstin<sup>3</sup> in Petcheli; finally Wang-ta-dschin<sup>4</sup>, a military mandarin, who was very high up in the army. These three gentlemen assured us that the Emperor had given very precise orders to bring the royal gifts (always in front of mind) safely to their destination, along with the embassy and the luggage. They immediately got many junks or large cargo ships ready for this purpose, and within two days these came to our ships, which were anchored not more than four hours from Taku. We were afraid that the large, heavy pieces among the gifts might suffer when being unloaded into the Chinese junks, but we were wrong. What the Chinese lack in skill they make up with numbers, attentiveness, and also with physical strength, which, though far from being able to be compared with Europeans who daily feed on meat and strong drink, especially English sailors (whose strength, in fact, is admirable), was greater than you should expect from people who mostly survive on rice and water.

\*Mandarin is a Portuguese word derived from *mandare*, and denotes all public officials of ranks great or small, military or civil, in the Chinese empire. The Chinese word for it is *quang* or *quangfu*. There are various grades of mandarins, as there must be in so great an empire. One recognises the degree of the rank by the colour of the button, which the mandarins wear on the middle of their hat. Red is the first, then blue, white and gilded. Red and blue have dark and transparent subdivisions.

\*\*Ta-dschin means great man, and is a general title for distinguished people.

In a few days, everything was loaded, and on 5 August, after a ten-month voyage from Europe, we left our ships to travel in Chinese vessels along the coast of Petcheli province. The embassy consisted of a hundred people. When the Ambassador left the ship, he was saluted with nine cannons and three hurrahs, according to his status<sup>5</sup>.

After a few hours, we came up with the tide to Taku, where the Pai-ho<sup>6</sup> river joins the sea. The whole of the surrounding area looked like a country that has only recently been abandoned by the sea; the harbour becomes shallower and the shore wider. Hundreds of large junks come here constantly from the southern provinces with products, mostly salt, from Canton, Fukien, Tschekian, Tschianan<sup>7</sup> and Schantong, especially from Nanking. The nearby capital of the empire and its growing population means that this trade is increasing daily. The gifts, and our baggage, were loaded onto smaller junks by the Chinese, and we had very comfortable vehicles on which we continued our journey through Petcheli province. When it was found out that it was not possible to get by water as far as Peking, but still possible to get very close to this city, I preferred the water journey to an uncomfortable one on land, because I suffered immensely from the inconvenience of

<sup>1</sup> Zhengrui.

<sup>2</sup> Qiao Renjie. Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, gives 'Chow-ta-zhin'.

<sup>3</sup> Tianjin.

<sup>4</sup> Wang Wenxiong. Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, gives 'Van-ta-zhin'

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, pp. 66-67, gives the order of the barges, with Huttner occupying the 5<sup>th</sup> one with Capt. MacIntosh, Mr Maxwell and Dr Gillan.

<sup>6</sup> Also Pei Ho, and Baihe. Today called the Haihe or Hai river.

<sup>7</sup> The old province of Kiangnan, now largely Jiangsu, containing Nanking as mentioned.

the wagons, heat, dust and vermin. The barges that we boarded, besides an anteroom for the servants, had a large central room with tables and chairs, usually four beds, and a kitchen in the back. The windows were partly made from oyster shells, partly of paper from Korea, and were movable. In the boat's cabin, which was covered with strong boards that were lifted by a ring, I had ample space for our chests and bags. The walls, chairs, tables and most of the ship were covered with an exquisite yellowish varnish, which the Chinese prepare from a tree called Tsi-chu\* (*Rhus varnix* Linn.)<sup>1</sup>, and far exceeds the gloss and quality of European varnish.

\*This tree mainly grows in Kan-tschu-fu<sup>2</sup> in Kiansi<sup>3</sup> province.

The length of these boats is on average thirty feet, and the width eight. The companionway rises gradually, as on our ships, and the quarterdeck or foredeck is flat, without a railing. The boatmen slept in a very narrow place, about two and a half feet high, which reached out under the foredeck. We had every comfort in these ships, except for what we Europeans consider to be the most needed<sup>4</sup>. The sails are mostly made of large mats.

Since we went against the current and did not always have a good wind, our ships were pulled along by a rope attached to the mast, not by horses as in Holland and England, but by very poor people who were poorly paid for this heavy work and were exposed to all the discomforts of the hot weather. The ropes used for pulling are braided from bamboo bark, and seem to be very useful for this purpose. Whether the same is for hair and hemp ropes used for other purposes, has not been recorded (both types are very good in China).

There is a small altar on each of these ships, either in the kitchen or in the anteroom, which is decorated according to the captain's beliefs. Every day he offers meat and fruit to this, and lights small sticks that smoke. In addition, on special days, e.g. when entering another river, in the absence of wind, or in stormy weather, he would sacrifice on the fore part of the ship in the following way. He lays out meat and other prepared dishes at the altar, stands smoking sticks on both sides, bows down with his head to the ground, and with the great noise he makes, wakes up the deity who may be sleeping. Then he burns many-sided, silver- or tin-coated papers, which are sold everywhere and used for sacrifice; he bows again and for the sacrifice, throws into the water some salt and broth from the dishes that have been prepared. He takes the rest back to consume with his family. During these ceremonies, the other sailors stand motionless behind the master of the ship, without saying a word.

The Chinese consider the forward part the ship to be very sacred, presumably because they sacrifice there, or because this part is dedicated to river gods: no one is allowed to sit there, and even less to commit any kind of indecency.

Our enjoyment of this pleasant water journey was interrupted to some extent by the noise of a large iron gong (Chinese Lu), which is struck with a wooden knocker to indicate to the pullers when they are to go slower or faster, or when they should stay standing. This deafening roar meant that on many a night we didn't shut our eyes, and it drove us to curses, which were just as fruitless as pleading. If we had a night not bothered by these noises, we were robbed by the heat, which in this province in August is intolerable, and by bloodthirsty creatures (mosquitos) which disturb the night. The residents are used to both; they do not find it as uncomfortable as we do, and travel on such means of transport whenever they can. There are also few great cities not connected to the rest

---

<sup>1</sup> Tung shu, Chinese laquer tree, now known as *Toxicodendron vernicifluum*.

<sup>2</sup> Ganzhou.

<sup>3</sup> Jiangxi.

<sup>4</sup> Probably refers to toilet facilities.

of the empire in any way by river or canal, although the capital itself does not have this convenience.

The Chinese must have been very flattered when they saw an entourage from such a distant country, in so many ships, because written in capital letters on their banners was, in the national language: “These are people who bring the great Emperor gifts\*”.

\*It did not please the Ambassador that the word Kung, which was on the banners, had been substituted by the mandarins for the term Ly in the lists of gifts taken to Dschecho. They explained to him at length that Kung meant nothing more than gifts, and had no hesitation in putting another word in its place, which would remove all suspicion. Kung expresses more a way of thinking, and is commonly used in gifts given to the emperor. In Europe, too, one politely says services instead of favours. Consequently, any suggestion that the writing on the banners was improper is unfounded, as is the interpretation of the word as tribute<sup>1</sup>.

We met barges or passenger boats of various designs all the time. The travellers on them, with and without the aid of glasses, urged each other to see as much as possible of us as they passed. Most of the time their expressions were full of astonishment; but many laughed at the sight of our thick necks, and pointed with their fingers at strange things about our persons or clothing. The land was very flat, although the cultivation of the fields through which the river wandered with the most varied twists and turns, testified everywhere to their great diligence. Our attention was kept occupied by the villages and towns which at times seemed pleasant, by the enormous number of curious people who gathered on the banks to see us, by the shy women who peeked between the houses and over the walls, and by the customs of the Chinese people around us<sup>2</sup>.

From the moment the embassy entered China, the Emperor assumed all its costs and expenses, down to the smallest details. An abundance of the finest food was brought to our boats daily. The Ambassador did indeed wish to cover his entourage at his own expense, but they replied politely that the Emperor could not allow that to happen, since hospitality was one of the first and oldest of the country’s laws.

On 11 August we arrived in Tiensing, which is the second city of Pescheli province. The governor, or ruler of the province lives here. We saw this worthy, elderly man later in Tartary, and he welcomed the Ambassador and his entourage with the most sincere friendship, gave us a splendid public breakfast in the Chinese style, had his theater play across the street from our anchorage all morning, sent us fruit, food, silk materials for gifts, and would have kept us in Tiensing for a long time if the embassy had not wished to get to its destination as soon as possible. As we approached the city<sup>3</sup>, for about two English miles we saw enormous loads of salt covered with mats, which both here and in the southern provinces, is mostly made from seawater. Since we were on the Paiho on the way to the city, we had the opportunity to get an idea of the scope of the domestic Chinese shipping. Apart from the passenger ships which were everywhere in large numbers, we saw probably up to 600 large and small, laden cargo ships, on the rear of which was written in large characters where they came from and what they carried. I'm not exaggerating here, I'm just giving an average number for them. All the vessels in front of us were full of people, and in

---

<sup>1</sup> This reinforces the constant concern of Macartney and the embassy that the gifts were seen by the Court as tribute, but definitely were not regarded as such by the English. See also Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, vol 2, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes, *The Journal of Mr Samuel Holmes*, p. 127, gives numbers of some two million watching as the embassy proceeded to Peking, and notes with surprise the presence of women. Other accounts likewise mention the enormous numbers crowding the riverbanks and streets.

<sup>3</sup> Peking.

the shallow parts of the river, they stood in the water to see the strangers to whom the Tongtu<sup>1</sup> did so much honor. If the people did not believe that this respect was due to an emissary, our regular pennants were enough to convince them, because yellow is the imperial color.

There was a good wind for a few days and we arrived off Tongschu<sup>2</sup> on the eleventh day of our trip (16 August). There was a delay in landing the gifts for the Emperor, and our baggage, so we stayed in the apartments adjoining the temples of Tongschu for a few days. We were completely free to visit the temples associated with these apartments. A certain young woman, who is the Chinese Lucina<sup>3</sup>, is venerated here. Unmarried women turn to her to beg for a husband, and married childless women to become fertile. In these buildings we weren't as exposed to the curiosity of the people as we were on the ships, and for a few days we enjoyed more rest than before. We were alarmed at first by scorpions and quite large centipedes in our bedroom and suitcases, and although as Europeans we were not used to these insects, in the end they just made us wary and didn't bother us.

Two large warehouses were built on the shore for the Emperor's gifts and our baggage. These were swiftly brought from the ships undamaged. But will we go all the way to Peking unscathed? Nothing was easier! Thousands of poor people stood ready to put on their shoulders whatever could not go by ox cart (and that was almost everything). Mr Barrow<sup>4</sup>, who's responsibility this was, said it had taken 3000 porters. The mandarins kept strict order, and our heaviest boxes were easily carried away by sharing the load. In two days, everything was done, and we travelled on to Peking on 21 August. Two or three and half German miles<sup>5</sup> from Tongschu, the road from here to the capital leads to a broader one, paved with sturdy square stones. Apart from the main personnel of the Embassy and the interpreter, who were carried gently, all the other members of the retinue, artists, musicians, soldiers and servants, drove in two-wheeled carriages, which shook us more than the mail wagons that we remembered in my dear fatherland. In addition, there was the hot sun and suffocating clouds of dust, exacerbated by the numerous travellers on both sides of the road, and this did not make this day the most pleasant of our trip.

The mention of the interpreter reminds me that it is time to say something about this person who is so necessary in a remote country. The embassy brought with it a native-born Chinese from Europe. At Naples there is a so-called Chinese monastery<sup>6</sup>, in which native Chinese are educated by the Propaganda<sup>7</sup> to become writers and missionaries of the Catholic religion. The English

---

<sup>1</sup> Zongdu. Viceroy or Governor, the highest form of Governor, usually administering more than one province. There were eight in the Qing period.

<sup>2</sup> Tongzhou, now a south-eastern suburb of Beijing, but in Qing times, it was considered the eastern gateway into the city, at the northern end of the grand canal. Holmes *The Journal of Mr Samuel Holmes*, p. 131, gives 'Tong Chew' as 12 miles from Peking.

<sup>3</sup> Title given to Juno and sometimes Diana in Roman mythology, as the goddesses of childbirth.

<sup>4</sup> Later Sir John Barrow, a friend of George L Staunton, who was engaged as comptroller of the Macartney household, which meant he was second secretary with a wide brief on managing the embassy at large. He went on to serve as private secretary to Macartney in South Africa and eventually had a long career as second secretary to the Admiralty. As well as his account of the embassy, published in 1894, he wrote a further account of the same journey focussing on Cochin China, (Barrow, *A Voyage to Cochin China*, in 1806), and a life of Macartney, which included the first publication of Macartney's diary (Barrow, *Some account of the public life*) in 1807.

<sup>5</sup> A German mile was about 7.5 km.

<sup>6</sup> The Chinese College in Naples, now the *Università degli Studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, was founded by Matteo Ripa of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1732, to provide a school for young Chinese men who would become priests and return to China as missionaries. Hüttner accompanied Staunton to Naples early in 1792 to chose Chinese interpreters for the embassy (Gedan, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*).

<sup>7</sup> The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (the Propaganda or *Propaganda Fide*) was established in 1622 whereby missionaries were given their mandate from Rome. This was basically the administration system for

government sent two from there to return to their fatherland, but only one, Father Jacob Ly<sup>1</sup>, wished to accompany the Ambassador to Beijing. This worthy, holy man, one who is very charitable in heart and knowledge, and does the college in Naples many honors, was very useful to the embassy. How much harm could he have done if he had not been the honest man whom the Ambassador had taken him for, and whom, as I know, he had always found him! Because he was able to translate the Ambassador's ideas into his mother tongue better than a foreigner, he was far superior as an interpreter to any European missionary from Peking. We all learnt some scraps of Chinese to meet the needs of the moment, but the young Staunton, even back then, had developed a skill in speaking, writing and reading in Chinese that amazed everyone. The Ambassador used him several times with good results<sup>2</sup>.

Each day one knew that the embassy came closer to Peking. Already, far from the city, the roads were filled with people, and everyone wished to see the strangers about whom the oddest rumours had spread, like so many foreign wonders. When we stopped because of the great crowd, or because of our long procession, our wagons were instantly surrounded by people. Sometimes they felt our clothes, and sometimes wondered about the peculiar color of our hands until we took off our gloves (things that were very ridiculous for them). They considered us to be men without beards. In short, everything about us was new, and our wagons, when they stopped, resembled peepshow houses aligned one after another. Our proximity to one of the largest cities in the world was confirmed by the suburbs, which are over an hour long from the place where we came in, and the growing bustle of pedestrians, riders and drivers.

Peking is surrounded by a very high and thick wall. From a distance, the tall gates studded with cannons are majestic. What an expectation they arouse, of what is within! As soon as we had entered the city, the impetuosity of the rabble began to become unbearable to us, and we could not help deem the presence of the soldiers as necessary, as long as we did not approve of their brutality. Before I could take in anything else, my attention was caught by the many gentlewomen, who were often carried by twenty people and accompanied by just as many. I do not know how many colors were wasted on them, and how many hanging tassels, ribbons, and decorations there were. What these adornments lacked in taste, they made up for in size and preciousness.

The eyes were first drawn to the gilding on the houses and their exteriors, although they soon became tired because of the glitter of the great gilded characters on long boards in front of the shops, heavily gilded doors and railings, harsh colors and a multitude of brightly colored paper lanterns that hang in front of every house. The streets are broad, but not all are paved. They are watered in summer, and if not, the dust is suffocating. The houses as a rule have no floors, and one rarely sees an exception, and they have many galleries and balconies. The parts of the houses used as shops and workshops have no windows, but a door leads inside to individual apartments which cannot be seen from the street. The square roofs are curved sharply upwards at the corners, with gray tiles of baked stones. Sometimes you see a house with the roof covered with a yellow, glossy glaze. There is no denying that the shops of all kinds displayed their wares to great advantage and looked prosperous. Every now and then triumphal arches had been erected, partly built from stones and partly from wood. They were decorated with pictures and gilding, and painted very brightly and roofed; but whether or not it is from a lack of taste, they do not have the sublimity which, according

---

catholic missionaries.

<sup>1</sup> Li Zibiao. See Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting*, for an account of his life and role with the embassy. The other Chinese missionary from Naples was Ke Zongxiao. Two others were also taken back to China for free, Yan Kuanren and Wang Ying. Li was also called Mr Plum or Plumb by the English.

<sup>2</sup> See Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting*, for an account of the younger Staunton's development and role as interpreter.

to European ideas of architecture, should prevail in this type of building. Although it goes without saying for a big city, I can't remember seeing streets so swarming with an immense number of porters, barkers, stalls, beggars, musicians, wagons, horses, etc. I read somewhere that you don't see a single woman in the streets of Peking. This claim is unfounded, because we not only saw many ordinary women, but also well-dressed and beautiful women on the streets, and in the houses and galleries.

In about two hours, we came to the walls of the Tartar city (Peking was then divided into Chinese and Tartar cities). We passed through, and since we were not able to go to our lodgings in Peking straight away, we travelled a little further to the imperial palace of Yuen-min-yuen<sup>1</sup>, where all the gifts and luggage had been carried for the time being. In a small park laid out here by the Emperor Camhi<sup>2</sup>, some garden houses are still occasionally occupied by the present Emperor and these were given to the Embassy for its use. In their gardens the Chinese love artificial rocks, small hills, natural groups of trees, water, and shade houses, although except for the later, we found everything neglected and dilapidated. Some of the rooms were adorned with beautiful paintings, admired by connoisseurs for the exact replication of the objects and for their vivid colors; the side buildings were almost uninhabitable. The extraordinarily hot weather would have spoiled our lives here if we hadn't been given enough ice, and likewise afterwards in Beijing and Tartary. People in China were well provided with this in the hot season.

Not far from this park is a large palace which the present Emperor<sup>3</sup> built, and frequently lives in. Some of the King's gifts were displayed here, e.g. two magnificent chandeliers from the work of the famous Parker<sup>4</sup>, one celestial and one terrestrial globe, a planetarium, clocks, etc. Chinese palaces are totally different from European ones. This one consists of a ground floor, which is a large room about 90 ft long and 40 ft wide. Outside it is very glossy and has a lot of gilded carvings of golden dragons, flowers and the like, part of which is covered with an iron netting to keep the swallows away. From a distance the eye is blinded by it; but you shouldn't go near it, otherwise you would notice the poor workmanship and bad gilding of the carving. The room is paved with white marble tiles, and a throne with steps stands in the middle. All around is a railing with its carved woodwork made of dark red wood and on either side of the throne are two large, elegant feather fans. Above, one reads in large gold characters: Tschinn ta quann min, "The truly great and radiant light." The throne is bedecked with yellow, the floor with red cloth and the walls decorated with chiming and striking clocks, works of art and Chinese paintings. The windows are made from sheer white paper made in Korea; but since the roof juts out a bit further, the rain cannot reach them. The roof stands on thick wooden pillars painted red. Two colossal five-clawed brass dragons stand at the entrance to the palace (this is the Imperial coat of arms). Further in the foreground, a similar building has been erected, also with only a ground floor, in front of which two large metal lions are placed. It has only a small room, but is a kind of passageway or open hall. The space between this room and the palace forms a handsome open space, paved with large blocks of grained granite. The greatest of these are 10 ft long and 4 ft wide. The palace rests on a stone base about 4 ft high and lined with steps. Behind the palace is pleasant little lake, surrounded by artificial grottos, rocks and tall trees, which form a wonderful view. We saw many eunuchs of great rank

---

<sup>1</sup> The legendary Imperial Summer Palace, destroyed by British and French troops in 1860 under the orders of Lord Elgin. It was about 8 km northwest of the old city walls, currently in the Haidian district of Beijing.

<sup>2</sup> KiangXi Emperor.

<sup>3</sup> Qianlong Emperor.

<sup>4</sup> William Parker (d 1817), the foremost English glassmaker and chandelier manufacturer of the later 18<sup>th</sup> C.

walking here, distinguishing themselves from other Chinese courtiers by their high spirits, intrusiveness, and their ignorance.

During our stay in Yuen-min-yuen on 21 August there was an eclipse of the moon<sup>1</sup>, and as soon as the shadow appeared, we could clearly hear a great noise in the nearby small town of Kian-hai-tien. Small bells, gongs, rattles and some sort of drums made such a tremendous din that the dragon, which held the full moon in its claws, soon let go of it in horror.

After a day, we left Yuen-min-yuen, and travelled back to Peking to a large and roomy palace, comprising a number of different, comfortable buildings. We heard it had previously belonged to a mandarin who was the first Hupu<sup>2</sup>, i.e. chief customs officer, in Canton, and afterwards was a royal overseer of the salt industry in Pesheli province, but was charged with extortion and injustices, deprived of his property and taken to prison, where he also died.

To meet the needs of as many people as were in the embassy, it was very desirable to get in touch with one of the European Catholic clergy and make them known to the mandarins. For this purpose, the Ambassador received a French missionary, Father Rox<sup>3</sup>, who came to the palace every day and was very useful to the embassy.

All that was needed was for the missionary to instruct a few servants, who then could easily have procured everything we needed. However - I don't know whether from thoughtfulness or suspicion - at least twelve mandarins were assigned to provide us with the necessities, based on the missionary's requests. It was amusing to see how they would stay around the palace all day long, as if they had to carry out the most important business. One was the milk-mandarin, the other the bread-mandarin, and a third the mandarin-doorkeeper. Some were there to take care of us, and still others were busy telling the Emperor about everything we did, what we needed and what we received. Nothing was more troublesome than the intrusiveness of the mandarins, who gathered in large numbers, not only at our meals to see our habits at the table, but who also intruded into our bedrooms. Every mandarin had at least one boy with him who carried his tobacco pipe, one of their greatest needs, and so there were as many servants as there were gentlemen. Furthermore, they had their friends who wanted to be introduced. Mandarins also came from the most distant parts of the empire to see us, and these strangers, or those pretending to be, were not admitted without giving considerable gifts to the mandarins who oversaw the palace. Even the two gentlemen who received us on our arrival and accompanied us here, could visit us only with difficulty; they were asked for money because it was assumed that they had already received very valuable gifts from the embassy.

The Chinese courtiers, of whom there are a very considerable number, mostly have small, unprofitable roles, are poor, in debt, and waiting for opportunities to extort money. This was easier for them than usual, since they charged the Emperor tenfold for everything we needed, and gave the soldiers and servants the least that was necessary. Incidentally, they were not in the least bit afraid to ask for anything they liked; our watches were regarded as particularly lucky, which is why several of the delegation no longer wore them. In Yuen-min-yuen, where various gentlemen were

---

<sup>1</sup> Predicting the eclipse of the moon was an important part of the exercise of Imperial power. This is discussed by Peyrefitte, *The Collision of two Civilisations*, 1993, pp. 111-2, where he also quotes Hüttner's observations. Barrow and Dinwiddie (Proudfoot, *Biographical Memoir*, pp. 43-44) also mention it, Dinwiddie pointing out that Barrow got the place wrong, more evidence for Barrow's 'pure inventions', which Dinwiddie publicly criticised.

<sup>2</sup> Identified as Muteng'e (Peyrefitte *The Collision of two Civilisations*, 1993, p. 152.) The term is Hoppo, the Cantonese customs agents widely referred to in the early China travel literature.

<sup>3</sup> Father Nicolas-Joseph Raux (1754-1801), a Lazarist who arrived in China in 1785, became much liked by Macartney and proved very helpful to the embassy (Macartney in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, pp. 222-223.; Peyrefitte, *The Collision of two Civilisations*, pp. 156-157).



busy assembling the planetarium<sup>1</sup>, it happened that an Italian missionary who was their interpreter pulled out his watch. A distinguished courtier saw and admired it. In the evening he sent his servant to the missionary and asked for the watch, which the latter could not refuse. The courtier gave him a few blocks of tea and other trifles, the value of which did not amount to a twelfth that of the watch. We experienced several similar occurrences.

There was no convenient place for our kitchen in this palace, a circumstance that many of us did not regret very much once we got to know Chinese cooking, although some experts have compared it to the French way of cooking. The Chinese dishes are very compact and small, because, as is well known, one does not use knives and forks, but small eating sticks. Even fruit, e.g. oranges, are cut into small pieces. Their broths are very tasty and there was neither a lack of diversity in dishes nor did they lack a pleasing appearance when served. The Chinese make no use of milk<sup>2</sup>, hence it was very difficult to meet this need; I have often seen the Chinese express amazement at us drinking milk.

We now found ourselves in the middle of Peking, but we were not allowed to go wherever we wanted to; we were almost locked in a prison. It cannot be inferred from this that there was a lack of respect for the embassy; I think that on the whole, there was little to complain about. The reasons for the strange ideas which the Chinese have of the Europeans were given as our clothing, our fear of a crowd, and other things, but more hidden causes may be the reason for, what for us, was an inconvenience. Neither were the Chinese allowed to come to visit us. However, our stay in Peking lasted only as long as we needed to put our affairs into some order, as we were in a hurry to be introduced to the Emperor, who was at the time at his summer seat in Dschecho<sup>3</sup> in the Tartar province of Leaotong<sup>4</sup>. Some of the gifts were taken there.

On the 2 September we travelled out of Peking to Tartary. The Ambassador and the Secretary of the embassy were in an English carriage, which they had brought for their own use, and which was viewed everywhere with great astonishment. The retinue rode and the rest walked. If I wanted to give an example of the strange sound of Chinese words, I would give the names of the cities and places on our journey to Tartary, but since most of them are insignificant and do not appear on any map, and since we slept all nights in the imperial palaces, in which the Emperor himself used to spend the night, it is unnecessary to deal with the names of the small places. One small town, however, is too strange not to be mentioned. It is located on the famous Great Wall of China, which marks the boundary between China and Tartary, and is called: Chu-pa-ku<sup>5</sup>, i.e. between or on the wall.

It was about 4 hours before we came to Man-tien-ming gate, i.e. the Gate of the Midday Sky, which sits on a small hill. We had seen the great wall (Tchen-tschung<sup>6</sup> in Chinese) a few days before, but here we passed very close to it, and climbed it. Of course, a wall is only a wall; but such an old one, which cut off the warlike Tartars for 2000 years, and, if we believe the Chinese, for even longer, deserves some attention. I once heard repeated the saying of the famous Samuel Johnston: "That it would be an honor for a man to be able to say that his grandfather had seen the

<sup>1</sup> John Barrow and Dr James Dinwiddie, the scientist member of the entourage, stayed at Yuen-min-yuen to assemble the Emperor's gifts. Barrow, *Travels in China*, quotes Macartney's journal to cover this part of his own narrative.

<sup>2</sup> However milk was drunk by Tartar people, including in their tea.

<sup>3</sup> Jehol, now known as Chengde. At that time, it was beyond the Great Wall, in Tartary.

<sup>4</sup> Liaoning province.

<sup>5</sup> Macartney, in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 239-240, notes they breakfasted at 'Cou-pec-kiou' on Thursday 5 September. The town is 'strongly enclosed by two or three rows of walls, which at a few miles distance converge together, and unite with the main one.'

<sup>6</sup> Changcheng.

Great Wall of China."<sup>1</sup> However, this antique can no longer withstand the effects of time: it has collapsed in many places and it has been completely preserved only in a few places, from which one can deduce the quality of the stones and lime. The wall is filled in the middle with earth and rubble, and is some 10 feet wide. Every 200 paces there are towers, but they are no longer occupied. What is most admirable is that it goes uninterrupted over the steepest mountains. At the place where we climbed it, we saw two other walls some distance from each other, but in the same direction. Perhaps it is double or triple wherever there was fear of Tartar invasion. Among the rarities that we wanted to bring back from this trip were pieces of the stones and limestone of this ancient wall, which everyone took, hoping to sell them at a great profit to European antiquarians. Captain Parish<sup>2</sup>, one of the ambassador's bodyguards, made a very precise drawing of the wall at this spot.

The area through which we traveled around Chu-pa-Ku became mountainous and picturesque at times. We constantly came across villages, and the fields were well-formed, although the area seemed to be poor in water. The onward movements of our large camp were almost never further than three German miles, determined by the distance to the palaces in which the Emperor himself usually spent the night. Every day we arrived there in time for lunch, and spent the rest of the day in the gardens laid out in each of these palaces. During the whole time, there was not a single cloud in the sky. The road was moderate, and when our horses became lame, stumbled or didn't want to go at all, when our saddles had one stirrup or none at all, or when the mandarins' servants came forward with fresh horses leaving behind half-starved Rosinantes<sup>3</sup>, then this only gave us all the more to joke about, and we forgot all the inconveniences. We learned from such things that in China, it is a sign of attentiveness to suddenly spur on someone else's horse with a riding crop; a courtesy which we initially took for the opposite. I can never forget that everywhere we went, we drew the attention of everyone. That was very natural, but the causes of this astonishment were not only our clothes and persons. According to rumours, we had the most extraordinary things as gifts for the Emperor. One day a mandarin approached our interpreter very shyly and mysteriously with the question: would it be possible for him and a friend to see the wonderful rarities that we had brought for the emperor. The interpreter stalled and asked the friend what rarities he meant. Yes, answered the latter, I heard in Peking and elsewhere that you have brought along a hen who needs fifty pounds of coal a day for her food and is fed nothing else, also a dwarf one and a half feet high, an elephant the size of a cat, a pillow with magical powers, which when you put your head on it, instantly transports you to wherever you wish to go, etc<sup>4</sup>. The friend seemed so convinced of the truth of these rumours that it took some effort to get him to see his error. He apparently was dejected to hear that he couldn't possibly see the wonderful things, since we didn't have them. These rumours were all the more credible to the general Chinese, since small, neighbouring countries send strange birds, animals and other natural rarities as gifts. Oddly enough, for several successive days, it happened that we met dromedaries laden with charcoal, a circumstance which may have strengthened the belief of people in our miracle hen.

The strangest thing about our journey to Peking from Dschecho was the imperial road, which was 22 German miles (413 Lys = 125 English miles) long, and rebuilt twice a year. It runs between any two places in the middle of the military road, is ten feet wide and one foot high, and

<sup>1</sup> A comment made by Johnson to Boswell, and recorded in Boswell's *Life*. This is also quoted by Barrow, *Travels in China*, 1804, p.335, suggesting it might have been shared amongst the embassy gentlemen.

<sup>2</sup> William Parish was a member of the Royal Artillery in the entourage, and a trained draftsman who made a number of notable sketches during the journey.

<sup>3</sup> Don Quixote.

<sup>4</sup> Macartney and Dinwiddie also refer to this, the latter stating that it came from one of the Chinese daily papers (Proudfoot, *Biographical Memoir*, p. 51),.

made of sand and clay, which by wetting and pounding, gives it the strength of a threshing floor. The appearance of this road is reminiscent of the tidiness of the floor in an anteroom. Not only the tree leaves, but even the dust is carefully swept away, and in order to moisten the road, water containers are placed every two hundred paces on both sides of the road, the water often being brought very far and with great difficulty. Perhaps there is no more beautiful road in the world than this one, before the Kaiser travels over it<sup>1</sup>. During our comings and goings, we found people everywhere busy constructing this road. Guards are employed day and night to keep people off it, because no-one, without exception, is allowed to tread on the pathway before the Emperor travels on it. Then the road is no longer used and naturally becomes broken down, which is why it has to be built twice a year when the Emperor makes his return visit to Tartary. High, steep mountains are not seen as obstacles and must be overcome, and where rivers are in the way, new bridges are built and covered with earth. Where there is space, there are roads on both sides for those accompanying the Emperor, and these are made with no less care. If air and sunshine could be treated by mortals in the same way as the earth, then I have no doubt that the Chinese would grant their great Emperor an exclusive right to pure air and gentle sunshine.

The small part of Tartary that we traversed during this journey, is too near to China, and too closely connected with this kingdom for there to be a great difference between the two. Mixed marriages of the Tartars and Chinese, one government, and one language, naturally produce the same customs. But since a wolf can never entirely deny its particular character, here too a few features stand out which distinguish the Tartar noticeably from the Chinese. Travelers describe the former as raw, hard, and straight, and that's how we found them. The Tartar is stockier in build, clumsier in manners, more unclean in his way of living than the Chinese, but on the other hand one finds in him neither the deceitfulness nor the cowardly cruelty of his neighbors. Though the Tartars are poorer, they look down with a kind of pride on the Chinese, to whom they give monarchs. Even the common Tartar has difficulty obeying a Chinese mandarin, and I have seen various examples which confirm the well-known dislike of both peoples for one another. Although the considerable dignity and power of the leaders of the embassy, Tscho-ta-dschin and Wang-ta-dschin, gave them great prestige, they still often had great difficulty in supplying us with provisions in Tartary, and gave the stubbornness and arrogance of the Tartars as the primary reasons. Even beatings, which they rightly gave out, were of no avail.

We found goitre<sup>2</sup> in the mountains of Tartary, as also seen among the inhabitants of the Alps and other mountainous regions.

The seventh day was the last of our journey. At various times we had breakfast in a temple. The priests considered it desecration of their idols to have tables set for breakfast on both sides of the altar. However, it is obvious that Chinese gods know far more about the ways of life than the severe idols of other nations. There was nothing more common than enjoying smoking tobacco in front of the altars, drinking tea, and taking other refreshments in good company, while the incense sticks glow under the nose of the god.

The Embassy carried itself in state in Dschecho. Bodyguards, servants, musicians and the entourage went in advance in their various uniforms, and the Ambassador and the Secretary of the embassy followed in wagons<sup>3</sup>. There was a palace situated before the city for him to use to prepare himself. Princes of European pleasure palaces usually display themselves through splendid avenues,

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Holmes, *The Journal*, says that it is 'as level as a bowling green'.

<sup>2</sup> Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, pp. 201-203, describes this at more length.

<sup>3</sup> Macartney (in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, pp. 247-248) gives the details of the procession.

beautiful buildings and art works, and the houses of the inhabitants tend to have an elegant appearance. However, you will be deceived if you bring these ideas with you to the summer residence of the great Tartar-Chan. Dschecho is more like a village than a city. Except for two or three mandarin houses, you won't find anything in this city but miserable huts, crooked streets and much uncleanness. The imperial palace, the magnificent park and the rich lama temple do make a big impression however, and in itself, the choice of the area is a happy one for the quiet summer stay of one of the busiest princes in the world.

Dschecho lies 40° 58' north, in a broad fertile valley. It is surrounded by mountain ranges, and if the easy-going Tartars wanted to imitate the industrious Chinese, it could be turned into most pleasant vineyards, oil crops, or developed in the most advantageous way with other fruit trees and garden plants.

The first period of our stay in Dschecho passed unhappily, and a court cabal was to blame. The good old man who ruled China, in spite of all his caution, could be just as deceived as other princes. The Chinese yearbooks record no such embassies in earlier times, since all the earlier ones were much less significant. The Emperor considered it an honour for his government to receive an embassy from one of the most powerful of princes, from a great distance, and with precious gifts. This made him impatient to see it. It was known that he spoke about it daily, and he wished also to show more honour to the embassy than any European could have boasted of having received in China\*. What could be more obligatory than an order that his first minister should go to meet the Ambassador! But this did not happen. England's enemies had rendered various good services to the embassy, and they became all the stronger since they were assisted by a very powerful man, the Viceroy of Canton<sup>1</sup>, who was at court. This overbearing Songtu (as the Chinese call the Viceroys), who in Canton had been accustomed to treating the English in the most contemptuous manner, and would have been jealous of the honourable reception accorded the embassy. He used all the influence of his rank and relationship with the Emperor (whose son-in-law he is) to harm the embassy. To some extent this succeeded, especially since he convinced the first Minister. This made difficulties which delayed the presentation at court. The humiliating Chinese custom of bowing to the ground nine times before the Emperor did not go well with the dignity of the British ambassador. Lord Macartney rejected it and he was steadfast in his refusal. Instead of the Asiatic court ceremony, he stipulated the use of the English one of bending the knee for the audience<sup>2</sup>.

\*This is what the mandarins tell us; but the Chinese like to embellish and exaggerate just as much as some people in Europe.

During these negotiations something happened that I would pass as insignificant, if it was not that minor things affecting manners deserve attention. The mandarins saw with secret displeasure that the ambassador boldly asserted his dignity in the meetings, and spoke his mind with a boldness that was natural to him. They did not dare address him directly, but tried to deter him by reminding his entourage how effective they could be in doing this. For two days they distributed food so sparingly that many complained of hunger, and all opportunities for shopping were cut off. However, since this ridiculous procedure produced quite the opposite of what they had hoped, and

<sup>1</sup> Probably Suleng'e, a long-time Qing official. He witnessed the presentation by Macartney to the Emperor, and later, with regard to the Amherst embassy, attested to Macartney kowtowing (Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting*, p.213).

<sup>2</sup> There are numerous commentaries on the crucial issue of the kowtow, with regard to both the Macartney and Amherst embassies. There is still some ambiguity in the accounts of the issue for the Macartney embassy with respect to the private audience with the Emperor. It was clearer with Amherst, who refused (although only after George L Staunton convinced him to change his mind). Holmes, *The Journal*, p.149, records the secrecy observed by Macartney on the issue, and the consequent dissatisfaction of members of his suite See Harrison, *The Perils of Interpreting*, for a recent take on the issue.

since they realised from some comments that their behavior was dangerous, they were clever enough to pretend it was a mistake to starve us into submission, and they let us go out.

On the 14 September, eight days after our arrival, the embassy was presented to the Emperor. It is the Chinese custom to go to wait at the court very early, some hours before his arrival. For most of the courtiers it is necessary to spend the night in tents in front of the Imperial Park where the audience is given. We got up early in the morning, in enough time to arrive and wait in the dark for dawn. Except for the small lakes, buildings and tree plantings, there is little to thank art for, but for nature a lot. The northern part consists of hills, which rise in many shapes, sometimes abruptly, and sometimes in groups rising to a height from which one can see the whole area. To the west, the park is bounded by hills that could be easily climbed.

On the south side, Tartar tents were erected, distinguished from all others by the fact that they are completely round and vaulted, and not supported by any poles. They consist of split bamboo, cleverly braided, over which a kind of large, thick felt is stretched. One was far higher and wider than the others, with yellow awnings and carpets, decorated with painted lanterns and paper hangings. In front it had a covered entrance, on both sides of which there were cushions and low tables with a wide variety of refreshments. Behind that one could see a throne of the Emperor. The Chinese gave this particular period of waiting the Tartar name: Mungkubo, the real meaning of which our interpreter could not tell me, and for this short time the Ambassador and his entourage waited the arrival of the Emperor. In the meantime, the courtiers, most of whom were Tartars, arrived largely without any fuss. With the usual crudeness characteristic of their nation, they pointed at each of us with their fingers, as though we were wax figures on show for money. The Chinese have more manners.

With the approach of the day of the Emperor's birthday, the court became more resplendent. Tartar princes paying tribute to their liege, various Chinese viceroys, commanders of districts and cities, etc, lesser mandarins\* of all kinds, some five to six hundred were gathered; their servants, other soldiers, jugglers, musicians made up an equally large number. Other envoys of a dark complexion, who were also presented that same morning, were pointed out to us. They had long robes of red velvet, trimmed with gold, and wore turbans, chewed areca<sup>1</sup> and walked barefoot. The Chinese are not the best at geography, so they couldn't tell us anything more than the Chinese word that they used to name the country of these envoys. In all likelihood it was Pegu<sup>2</sup>.

\*Apart from the buttons and peacock feathers on the hats, from which one can tell the rank of each mandarin, two other marks of high rank are seen in the court. The robes of state of all the mandarins have rich, square embroideries applied on the chest and back. But Viceroys, Kolaos, e.g. Ministers of State, and princes, have round ones, not only on the chest and back, but also on the shoulders of their robes. You also see many dressed in yellow, a colour that is only worn on the front, and by those who have been granted Imperial permission to do so, e.g. Kolaos, viceroys, eunuchs.

Half an hour after daybreak we saw a rider approaching, and after he arrived, the crowd formed into ranks. This was the time of the approach of the Emperor. All were now quiet.

One heard distant music and the sound of gongs, and the Chinese faces all had an expression showing the expectation of something extraordinary. Whatever a European may think of the pomp of an Asiatic prince, he makes a powerful impression on the senses, and through them on the heart of the enthusiastic Oriental.

---

<sup>1</sup> Betel nuts.

<sup>2</sup> Pegu was the former name for Bago in Myanmar.

After some time, the first ministers came, clad in yellow, riding on snow white horses. They dismounted, however, at some distance from the Imperial tent, and formed themselves in ranks. Immediately the retinue followed, with musicians and a small guard proceeding at the front. Then came the Emperor on a heavily gilded chair carried by sixteen people. Behind were the Ministers and some of the foremost mandarins. As the procession advanced through the ranks, all fell down and touched the ground with their faces. The English embassy got down on one knee as the Emperor approached, but he immediately bade us rise, remained silent for a time, and then conversed with the Ambassador with gracious condescension. The most natural friendliness spread across the old monarch's face; he spoke for a long time and with great warmth. His eyes, for eighty-three years, had not yet been robbed of all fire and appeared calm, and their features suggested that he had been one of the finest of young men. He is lean and well-built, and his clothing was very simple without the least adornment. Anyone who doesn't know his age would take him for a man of fifty.

The Emperor turned from our ambassador to the dark-skinned people, and after a short conversation with them, was carried into the tent to the throne. Lord Macartney, the embassy secretary, his son<sup>1</sup>, and the interpreter<sup>2</sup> followed him to the left side of the throne, a close position which was very honourable, and we were told, without precedence. The retinue stayed at a distance, along with the rest of the court. The sun was just coming out and bathed the whole park; a rosy morning descended. The singing of a solemn hymn, accompanied by soft instrumental music matched with the tone of a bright gong, broke the deep stillness. Then followed the ceremony with the nine bows which must be made in the presence of the Emperor. The courtiers fell on their faces, the Ambassador and retinue bowed just a knee<sup>3</sup>. Then the Ambassador approached the throne and presented the King's letter in a precious, square golden box, which had on it the royal coat of arms in enamel set with diamonds. Everyone then settled down to take some refreshments. However, those not used to sitting down cross-legged will find themselves greatly embarrassed. Bare cushions are laid on the earth, which the Chinese, like all Orientals, get down onto with great ease, whereas a European who is hindered by his tight clothes, and not knowing where to put his feet, gets tired and cuts a very ridiculous figure.

In the meantime, we saw various mandarins walking slowly behind one another, bringing the Emperor tea. One carried a golden teapot, another a cup, the third another vessel. Each held what he carried in both hands, before his forehead, and all approached the throne with such solemnity that they might be approaching a deity. The Emperor sent some sort of wine and food to those present as a sign of his special goodwill, and gave some to the Ambassador who was on the left side (that is the favoured side in the Orient) and handed tea to those who were near him. For each such curtesy, which in the eyes of the mandarins was inestimable, bows were made which, because of the frequent repetition, ended up being irksome indeed. Meanwhile, the Emperor conversed with the Ambassador, asking after the well-being of the King of Great Britain, and presented him with a sceptre<sup>4</sup> cut from white agate. He also gave the Ambassador and Sir George<sup>5</sup> things of lesser value, including yellow silk purses from his side, such as the Chinese are wont to

<sup>1</sup> George L and George T Staunton respectively. The 12-year-old son, Hüttner's pupil, assisted with interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> Li Zhibiao

<sup>3</sup> More evidence that the vexed issue of the kowtow was one more promulgated by the courtiers, and less an issue between the Emperor and Macartney themselves. However, this account is hearsay, since Hüttner did not witness this audience. There is still no definitive and agreed description of what happened.

<sup>4</sup> A ruyi or sceptre frequently given as ceremonial gifts. See Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, vol 2, p. 235, for illustrations of such a sceptre and silk purse.

<sup>5</sup> G. L. Staunton, 2<sup>nd</sup> secretary

wear on the belt of their robes. He was very kind to the young Staunton, showing much pleasure at his knowledge of the Chinese language. Then wrestlers, jugglers and dancers appeared in front of the tent, some of whom were very entertaining. We saw better amusements on the following days, so I will pass on them for now.

At the end of the performance, the Emperor left. Sometime after this, the imperial gifts designed for the King and the embassy were handed over by the first Minister. They comprised silk and cotton fabrics, tea, lanterns, porcelain, sugar, silk bags, and fans. One cannot refrain from making some remarks when comparing lanterns with costly mathematical instruments, silk bags and purses with guns of the finest work, and with a great many expensive English manufactures. But in part, China produces nothing better, and one must also remember that the five-month stay of the embassy, which consisted of a hundred people, was costly for the Chinese government, completely outweighing the value of the English gifts.

After that day in Dfchecho, there were almost none when we hadn't gone to the court, and according to the customs of the country, had received gifts. The Emperor was always very gracious, and had the embassy taken everywhere by his Ministers. Among these, Hoa was the first. You either call him the great Kolo<sup>1</sup> because he is one of the six most important ministers called Kolos, or Hoa-tschung-tchan, ie. Hoa from the middle court. He is a well-educated man in his middle years, of noble standing and with engaging manners. Physical pain, which greatly limits the free use of his feet, and perhaps also hidden grief, have given his countenance that impression of suffering which prompts sympathy; an open forehead, penetrating eyes and the expressive play of facial expressions which accompanies his words betrays a man with a resolute mind. He was a secret friend of the embassy. Since his indisposition did not allow him to show the Ambassador around, Tsung-ta-dschin<sup>2</sup>, another minister, took over, accompanying us on the later return journey to Peking.

There were different palaces scattered here and there in the park which deserved to be seen. Some only have a ground floor, others an upper floor, but almost all are by the water, and shaded by tall trees, and all are of superior design; they all have a single plan. The rooms are wide, high, and lit by paper windows and the floors are laid with carpets. Many English chiming clocks, mostly the work of the well-known Cox<sup>3</sup>, are the most prominent ornaments of the palaces. The paintings, which often cover entire walls, represent the Emperor's victories, hunting pleasures and court ceremonies. Connoisseurs find that they are accomplished with extraordinary effort and with the most vivid mixture of colours, but without invention, without spirit. The patience of Chinese artists appears no less in the laborious wooden carvings which appear everywhere on the walls, and in the cut stones that are found here. A white and black agate, 3 feet long, 17 inches wide, and 2 feet high, in a wooden frame resting on a free pedestal, deserved special notice. A hand from the past has given it the form of a rock, out of which trees grow. Chinese verses from the Emperor's poetry are engraved on both sides. It would be unfair to mention the superiority of European art here.

In each room there was a large, gold-plated chair carved from brown wood. On each chair there lay an agate sceptre in the shape of a flower, described by the minister as tokens of happiness and prosperity in the empire. There was no other chair in the room, because it is disrespectful, even

---

<sup>1</sup> Kolo is the name for a chief minister, sometimes written by Hüttner and in other accounts as Colao

<sup>2</sup> Songyun, (Macartney 'Sun-ta-gin') a senior Tartar courtier, who also organised the return inland journey of Macartney, and travelled with them as far as Hangzhou.

<sup>3</sup> James Cox was a leading 18<sup>th</sup> C goldsmith and clockmaker in England. Macartney took a Cox automaton in the form of a chariot pushed by a Chinese attendant as one of his gifts. The Emperor was known for his fondness for clocks, and Cox had been active in producing ornamental pieces for the China trade.

for the great of the empire, to sit on a chair in the presence of the Emperor. This was so pervasive, that no one, even when the Emperor is absent, may sit in any room of his palaces. At least that's what was said to some of the gentlemen in the entourage, who, tired from walking in the greater park, wanted to rest a little. On the tables were laid books, ink, black rubbing stones, brushes and paper. Part of the decoration of the rooms also included large and small mirrors, and sometimes broad panes of glass in the partitions, but never in windows. Everything was befitting the dignity of the owner, but with one exception. European manners may degenerate, but in our country even the most depraved person is ashamed of certain things, though not so in China. In one of these palaces there were, among other works of art, two figures of boys with bound hands and feet, made of white marble and very well worked, in positions which evidently confirm that in China the Greek vice is not an abomination. An old eunuch drew our attention to this with an insolent laugh. It is difficult to decide whether the Emperor seldom comes into this room, as some have supposed, or whether he does not disapprove. Whichever that may be, he is very devout. Besides other temples, he has altars in two or three palaces in the park.

A somewhat hidden, but otherwise very pleasant house, differed from the rest. The rooms were small, very colourful and decorated with paintings, carvings and rare objects, and provided with places to rest. It had lattices for windows, and separate entrances and stairs. The appearance suggested, and no one made a secret of it, that this place was once a harem. But whether the women were always there, or only when needed to please visitors, would have been too curious a question to ask.

One morning as the Ambassador and entourage breakfasted in the park, a puppet show was given. What you saw here was nothing like marionettes. The eunuchs imitated the voices admirably, and it cannot be denied that Chinese clowning is as good as German, and that both are only surpassed by the English Punch. One is, however, a little numb after seeing a Chinese spectacle of any kind, because an unbearable noise is made during the performances with a large iron gong, rattles and other instruments.

The 83rd birthday of the Emperor was on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, and the Ambassador with his entourage again attended the court. This time we assembled in one of the imperial palaces. Here the same celebrations that have been described before, were repeated. However, they began with a notable ceremony. In the middle of the court assembly, a fairly large space was covered with a red, four-sided piece of cloth, on the corners of which four men stood, with large whips at their feet. As soon as the Emperor was on the throne, they lifted their long whips from the ground all together, turned around in simultaneous movements, waved the whips, and then banged them violently on the ground. They did this nine times, with pauses in between. After three strokes the whips were laid down, then lifted again. Perhaps others have heard of this strange ceremony, though I didn't succeed in getting a satisfactory answer from my repeated questions. It may be supposed that few know the origin of this custom, which probably dates from the earliest times of Chinese and Tartar history. It must be related to the divine worship of the Emperor, perhaps indicated by the number nine. This appears to be exclusive to a despot, as observed in the number of bows before the emperor, and not only at the Chinese court, but also in other countries where people are deprived of their rights\*.

\*In a letter to George I, King of Great Britain, from the African prince of Dahomey, read by Mr Henniker in the British Parliament in 1789, one finds the following statement: "Because you are, as I hear, the greatest of the white kings, and I consider myself the greatest of the blacks, or an emperor, having so many kings under me, who dare not come into my presence without falling to the ground, and rubbing the dust with their mouths nine times before they can speak to me; and when distinctions or favors are received from me, they must wipe the soles of my feet with the hair of



their head, etc.” Ms European magazine June 89. – Palace Mongol. Vol. S 198. Notes “the Mongols maintain the number nine.”

On this day, the Emperor had no public engagements. He spent most of it in his temple, where the priests were fasting and saying prayers, before and after his birthday festival. However, the following day, fireworks were put on in the park, to which the Ambassador and all visitors were invited. The Chinese are famous for fireworks. This had raised expectations, which however, were unfulfilled. A great din, which is characteristic of amusements in this country, is something not to be forgotten; the explosions are stronger and more frequent than in our case. It seems that this art, which enchants the eye in Europe, is still in its infancy here. The following alone deserves a mention. A large box with various compartments and a paper floor, lit from underneath, was pulled up between two pillars. From the burned-out floor, long rows of lanterns, still fastened from the top, were let down and quickly lit themselves. The remaining sections of the box burned through one by one, and an equal quantity of lighted lanterns dropped down on different sides, until their number rose to five or six hundred. There were several such lantern boxes. One should mention that in all, a great many fireworks were burned in the daytime, and presumably this would not have happened if the Emperor, who has to go to sleep at six o'clock in the evening, were to sit out in the evening air. Whilst the fireworks were being set off at some distance, two hundred people, all dressed in an olive color and holding lanterns in their hands, danced in front of the large tents. Their diverse figures, and the singing with which they accompanied their movements, were more pleasing to the eye and ear than the fireworks.

Another entertainment then followed. Wrestlers appeared first, always two at a time. They were fully, but lightly clad, and approached one another from opposite sides, and often wrestled for five minutes before one threw the other to the ground, brought about by the best blows to the hollows of the knees. The fight ended when one was felled, and the victor then bowed to the ground before the Imperial throne.

Dancers from different Asiatic nations then performed, some with and some without weapons. Each nation had its own instrumental music, and sang with their dance in the traditional way. The different weapons and musical instruments would have been worthy of more attention if circumstances had allowed a closer examination of them. There was neither lightness nor grace in the movements of the dancers. Almost all of them wore large boots, and their clothing was uncomfortable; nevertheless, they were observed with pleasure. National dance always contains something of the national character, and this natural expression of happiness and love, brings pleasure by its magical effects directly on the senses, or by the awakening of past thoughts. The Russian and Polish national dances are very similar to those of the Tartars. A Tartar among the dancers wore the honour of the blue button, a favour which was more a sign of the emperor's partiality to his countrymen than of the dancer's excellence. From what followed, one saw that the Chinese do not yield to any nation in the agility and skillful use of their limbs. The following example of this was entertaining. A man lay on the ground, and lifted his legs to form an L. A very heavy round, stone water-vessel, 2.5 feet high and 1.5 feet in diameter, was placed flat on the soles of his boots, and to our astonishment he quickly turned it over. But what was amazing was when a boy became the centrepiece of this performance by being placed in the vessel. He forced the supple limbs of his small body into the strangest positions, first twisting his head in, in a very dangerous manner, and then out again with a horrible contortion of his limbs. The weight of the vessel would have shattered man and boy at the slightest movement.

The Chinese are as practiced in so-called cartwheels and somersaults as our best tightrope walkers, and are probably not excelled by any European in balancing, which they perform with extraordinary ability. The day's amusements were concluded with a few firepots, or earth cartridges, which filled the air with a deafening noise for half an hour, without being novel enough to attract attention. The Emperor was carried away shortly before sunset, and everyone then hurried to escape the cold night, which in this month quickly follows the throbbing daytime heat; a change which brings with it dangerous diseases and cost the lives of some of our people.

The following day a play was performed in the presence of the Emperor, also attended by the embassy. There is a special playhouse built in the park, which consists of a raised terrace and two floors. It is surrounded by a courtyard, which encloses various buildings with very good rooms, in a regular square. The Emperor occupied part of this building opposite the stages (of which there are three above each other). These stages have no decorations on the sides, but the background is bordered by a latticed wall decorated with flowers and gilding, with two doors. The play consisted of tournaments and the procession of a sea god. From the start there was no lack of variety, and spectators who had never seen anything better, found pleasure in it. Those actors who present ancient heroes, great warriors, or kings on the Chinese stage, paint their faces black and white all over, have long beards, two wings on each shoulder, large spears, and shout instead of speak. Many such heroes appeared here in different costumes, which, like those of the other actors, were of the richest fabrics and silks. The procession of the sea god brought a lot of sea monsters onto the stage. They couldn't swim in the air, and therefore they combined two or four pairs of feet, and walked in great order one behind the other across the stage. When one further recalled how generous the Chinese were in their plays with rattles, gongs and so-called music, it's easy to see that it requires some patience to be a spectator for three hours.

When the Emperor spoke with the Ambassador this morning, he said to him: "You shouldn't believe that I am wasting my time at the playhouse. An emperor has plenty of business, but on festive days, like the day of my birth, I make an exception, according to the custom of my ancestors." There was now nothing more to see in Dschecho, except for the temples of the Lama<sup>1</sup> and priests, six or seven in number, which the Kolo, Sung-ta-dschin<sup>2</sup>, led the embassy to. The temples stood at a short distance from each other, with forecourts and outbuildings. Overall, one saw extravagance, with some large parts in gold and silver, and others gilded, and in addition, there were exaggerated and comical representations of gods, goddesses and animals, e.g. elephants and snakes. Dishes, of fruit, and incense, stood before the temples. The ignorant can say nothing more about the design of these temples than that they surpassed everything else of its kind that we saw here. However, their appearance also taught us that there could not be the slightest comparison, either in grandeur of style, or in taste of construction, with Italian masterpieces.

One of the temples was filled throughout with wood and heavily gilded statues of bonzes<sup>3</sup> who had distinguished themselves by their holiness. Nothing would have been more interesting than to learn something of the history of these bonzes. Unfortunately, however, our interpreter<sup>4</sup> either did not ask, or did not tell us what he heard. As a missionary, he considered it unworthy of him, if not sinful, to give his opinions on the religion of the country.

---

<sup>1</sup> Generally a Mongolian monk, but here describing a Buddhist leader.

<sup>2</sup> Songyun.

<sup>3</sup> The widespread term for Buddhist monks at the time.

<sup>4</sup> This is probably Fr. Bernardo Almeida, a Portuguese priest provided by the court, but whom the embassy had been warned of as no friend to them (Barrow, *Travels in China*, p. 19, and Macartney in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 208).

In two of the other temples, we found large numbers of lama priests sitting on the ground singing Tartar prayers for the welfare of the Emperor. The deep bass which roared out of their throats, and the semitones which burst out in each sentence, suggested a comparison with the voice of a certain animal. Some had dry rice and water by their sides, which one could conclude was their strict diet at this time.

The most remarkable of these temples is the Putolah\*, or Temple of the Golden Roof, to which more than eight hundred lama priests are said to belong. The hill upon which it is built dominates the valley of Dschecho. The temple itself cannot be seen from the outside, only the outer building, which surrounds it in a square that is 75 rods long and 65 wide. The temple stands in the middle of a wide courtyard paved with square stones, and is reached by climbing two long sets of stairs. It forms a regular square and is about 100 feet high. The rooms of the lama priests are in the four inner sides of the outer buildings. In each direction the eye is offended by the gilding and garish colours; everything is overdone. The same taste prevails even inside the temple. The idols have rich clothing and the walls shimmer with gold. Two very beautifully worked gold models of dragons stand on the altar. They were adorned with jewels and presumably were among the works of art that Cox had produced for China. The lama priests gathered on the ground here as well, and sang Tartar hymns. The exterior of the temples had flat roofs with double rails. From the inside, one can see the golden roof of the temple in the middle. The number of bricks may amount to two or three thousand, are all the size of common roof tiles, and if you want to believe the mandarins, made of solid gold. I myself heard the imperial minister say to the interpreter that they were of pure gold. One could confirm the truth of this answer by considering the taste of the Chinese and the Emperor's immense wealth. However, it was generally believed by the embassy, and perhaps with reason, that the bricks were merely gold-plated. The view that you have from the flat roof is not as varied and extensive as that in the park, but more peaceful and pleasing.

\*From *Tiefenthaler's*<sup>1</sup> *description de l'Inde, chez, Bernoulli 1, p.427*, one sees that *le chateau où le Lama gron, c'est à dire le grand maitre & prince du Tiber, reside, s'appelle Patala ou Patara ou Poutala*. A picture of the same can be found there.

Perhaps this is the right place to mention the great resemblance which the lama priests and bonzes have with the priests of a certain Christian denomination<sup>2</sup>. Their hair is shaven, and their head is covered with a black square cap, just as the fathers wear in monasteries. Their clothing is loose, long and cut like a monastery robe. The lama priests and bonzes live together in a large company, and have vows of chastity, secrecy and obedience. In the Putolah one sees depictions of a female figure with a child in her arms. The Goddess that is worshiped in the temples of the bonzes has many similarities with the Virgin in Christian religious history. Pictures of holy bonzes are made after their deaths and displayed in the Temples. Whether or not one can call this canonization, it is basically the same thing. From this and other similar facts, some in the embassy concluded that such a great resemblance could not exist without some earlier connection. It can be objected that the accounts of the origin and dissemination of the Christian religion, in Christian and non-Christian history books, mention nothing of China, and this country, in inexplicable circumstances, only became known to Christians after well over a thousand years. Finally, nothing certain can be inferred from similarities, since different causes can produce the same effects. Whatever one may think of this opinion, the arguments are presented here impartially; however, anyone who has seen

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Tiefenthaler, Jesuit missionary in India who wrote works on India and religion. Probably he is referring to the Potala monastery in Tibet.

<sup>2</sup> Hüttner was a German Lutheran. His comments on Catholics are generally unfavourable.

China will find it very probable that there was earlier contact between this country and Europe than history indicates. In the event that this is proven one day, then gunpowder would probably have to be erased from the list of German inventions<sup>1</sup>.

The embassy left Dschecho on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, returning by the same route. One of our dysentery patients<sup>2</sup> died on the second day of our return journey. Both mandarins who were always with us, were very affected by the death because they feared that this would become known and bring them great disfavour at court. One must know that in China nobody is allowed to die in an imperial palace, and for this the Emperor may not be remembered for his humanity. Therefore, an illusory game of life with our dead had to be played for a few hours. He was considered to be a hopeless patient, and was brought into the outer building of the palace where the doctor formally visited him, and a guard was asked to obtain food and other necessities for him. The next morning the dead man took to his bed like a sick man, continued his journey, and afterwards it was pretended that he had died on the way. Another sick man, whose terrible illness left no hope of recovery, despaired of the skill of our doctors, and had a Chinese doctor visit him. He felt the pulse of the patient for at least ten minutes, now on the right hand, now on the left, assumed an expression of profound thought, and then gave a long speech about heat and cold in the body, which was incomprehensible to everyone present, and called by some the gibberish<sup>3</sup> of a quack. The root that I am going to send, he said, will immediately restore the warmth and make the patient well in an instant. But after taking this miraculous root, the disease became worse, and the patient recovered only by the slower but safer means of more modest European medicine. This one example shouldn't be taken for anything more than just that. The missionaries, and especially after our presence in China, the now dead Amiot<sup>4</sup>, speak of many Chinese doctors as skillful and humble men, and this should not be denied. Many people in Europe, persuaded by the news about China, are also weak enough to believe that our doctors are far inferior to the Chinese. This folly can be refuted by the fact that the Chinese believe exactly the opposite. Not only were doctors of the embassy asked for advice by the Chinese, and with little effort cured illnesses for which no remedy was known in China, but even a European quack<sup>5</sup>, who is head of the missionaries in Peking, has gained great influence with the first minister of the emperor because of a supposed knowledge of medicine.

We arrived in Peking on the 26<sup>th</sup> September. The Emperor followed in a few days, and went to Yuen-min-yeun, where the Ambassador and entourage awaited him, to hand over the rest of the gifts. The narrator does not know what happened on this occasion<sup>6</sup> and in the following two weeks,

<sup>1</sup> Much has been written on the invention of gunpowder, originally as a Tang Dynasty medicine (see e.g. Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*). Perhaps Hüttner was thinking of the belief that a legendary alchemist Berthold Schwarz (Berthold the Black) of Germany invented gunpowder in the 14<sup>th</sup> C.

<sup>2</sup> This was the artilleryman Jeremiah Read, who was buried the following day at 'Kola-choa-yen' according to Samuel Holmes, *The Journal*, p.145. Dysentery 'had by this time crept amongst us in the most alarming manner' (Holmes). The same medical stories are related in Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, vol 2, pp. 280-281, possibly taken from Hüttner's diaries, or at least another example of the sharing of observations across the various writers in the embassy.

<sup>3</sup> Galimatias (French).

<sup>4</sup> Jean Joseph Maire Amiot, Jesuit missionary in China from 1750 until his death in Peking in 1793, 2 days after the departure of the Macartney embassy. He could not meet Macartney, though wrote letters of advice to him (Macartney in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 225).

<sup>5</sup> Possibly Jean-Baptiste-Joseph de Grammont, mentioned later by Hüttner. Amiot was spiritual leader of the missionaries in Peking at the time, though this statement and the term 'quack' doesn't seem to fit with the previous mention of Amiot above. A further acknowledged leader was mentioned by both Staunton and Barrow. This was the much-liked Portuguese Fr. Alexandre de Gouveia, appointed by the Emperor to be leader of the Europeans at the Bureau of Mathematics, and by the Pope to be Bishop of Peking.

<sup>6</sup> This partly explains the absence of much on the reasons for the precipitate departure of the embassy. However, Hüttner would easily have heard all details and be aware of the embassy's activities and dealings over that time, leading to their departure. It is possible that he was reluctant to portray anything much to the disadvantage of the English, whom

since he was suffering from the aforementioned illness. He began to recover when the embassy began its return journey. The Chinese have always been distrustful of strangers: they never allow an envoy to stay for more than a few months, as may easily be seen from the published accounts of the previous envoys. The departure of the English was hastened for another reason, land journeys are almost everywhere more inconvenient than water journeys, but especially in China. The embassy wished, therefore, to travel by river and canals to Tschus-san to embark on the Lion. The freezing weather, which was already closing the waters here in November, would have made this impossible if arrangements had not been made to return in good time. They started on 7 October. The Emperor's letter to the King of England, written in different languages, was given to the Ambassador with great solemnity a few hours before departure, and was carried from Peking to Tongshu by a messenger on horseback in front of the Ambassador's palanquin. All letters to the Emperor, or from him, were placed in a special case, wrapped in yellow silk, and carried on the backs of bearers on horseback. The yellow colour provides a traveller with a recognised Imperial passport. Thus, when the letter bearer who rode in front of the Ambassador was noticed, those on horseback dismounted, and travellers and passers-by gave way and stood still. The day's travel was brief, and as the required number of vessels was ready in Tongschu, the Ambassador immediately embarked on the Paiho the following day<sup>1</sup>.

The Emperor had the embassy accompanied by the Minister of State Tsung-ta-dschin, the one already mentioned above. He soon won all hearts. This excellent man was distinguished by his modesty, his undisguised benevolence, and the most amiable readiness to please whenever he could. Both the mandarins Tsch-ta-dschin and Wang-ta-dschin, our previous companions, who again had the arduous task of supplying the consulate with everything they needed, were subordinate to him. They must not only be constantly sending messengers on horseback with letters to bring the necessary provisions for so many people, but also, notwithstanding their great rank, very often personally be present at the distribution of them amongst the various vehicles in which we were assigned. Some of the other mandarins who had this specific task, acted so dishonestly at the beginning of the voyage that they not only withheld part of the food, but sometimes some of our ships were completely passed over. Our two would soon have tired of their roles, if they had not felt real affection for the embassy. They developed a better view of Europeans through their daily dealings with us; they loved and admired the openness and honesty of the English character. Mutual trust and mutual favours established an uninterrupted relationship, and seemed to deny that prejudice against whole nations, held on both sides, that dishonours mankind, but is still so common even among the most enlightened European peoples. Tsch-ta-dschin and Wang-ta-dschin were both from Petscheli province, and could only accompany us to its borders. They were very flattered, however, that Lord Macartney asked the Emperor to allow them to accompany the embassy for the whole return journey, a request that was gladly granted. Since we didn't waste any time and only stopped when it couldn't be avoided, the following account is naturally incomplete<sup>2</sup>. It was not

---

he has not criticised in his account. Staunton, Barrow, Dinwiddie, and Anderson all give details of these few days, covering the display and demonstration of the gifts, including the Emperor's dismissive 'These things are good enough to amuse children', exchange of letters, and varying accounts of the reasons for the hasty departure from Peking. Anderson, '*A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*', pp, 177-181, particularly covers the surprise and confusion over the order to depart.

<sup>1</sup> Huttner again was in the 5<sup>th</sup> junk, along with Winder, and Barring (both secretaries), and the interpreter Plumb (Li); see Anderson, '*A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*', p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Staunton, '*An Authentic Account*', in the Atlas volume, gives maps tracking the inland journey from Peking to Canton, with dates, major towns and cities, and geographical features.

always possible for us to see anything more than just that area through which the rivers and canal passed.

The journey continued on the Paiho to Tiensing, where we turned right into another river<sup>1</sup> which flows into the Paiho. As we were going upstream, the vessels were pulled along from the bank, in a gusty wind. Although the poor people were paid to do this, they were either coerced or so ill-treated that sometimes all the haulers of a vessel ran away at once, and the fleet was held back for a few hours. Such incidents happened less frequently with the embassy boatmen than for those boats with the mandarins in. One day even the minister was left more than 40 li (i.e. Chinese miles)<sup>2</sup> behind us. The poor wretches indeed were punished when they were caught, but the running away seemed to be common and not all that notable.

We soon entered the province of Schan-tong<sup>3</sup>. The famous imperial canal starts at Linsching<sup>4</sup>, conveying one from Canton to Peking by water, almost without a break. It goes close to Hank-schu-fu in the province of Tschekian<sup>5</sup>, and has 72 locks (they may be called something else) made from large pieces of granite, where an imperial toll has to be paid. They have no gates, just boards to be lowered to impede the water, and are dangerous for ships because of their narrowness. You could see that there were many accidents when they didn't know how to take the vessels down the middle. To make the impacts less dangerous, bundles of straw were lowered to touch both sides. Many lanterns were lit at night, but the hard work that the lock people undertook when the ships passed through, mentioned by the missionary LeComte<sup>6</sup>, no longer applies. One can clearly see that the European locks stand out as more effective than the Chinese; but in this country the absolute conviction of the excellence of all things, means that a suggestion for a change would be laughed at, or even considered punishable.

The journey no longer continued in this province, as the Ambassador received a message that our warship was leaving Tschusan<sup>7</sup>. The merchant ship that was left behind<sup>8</sup> could have taken the embassy on board, but only with the greatest effort. The Ambassador therefore had a strong desire to continue the journey through China to Canton, for which the Emperor gave his permission as soon as it was presented to him.

The province of Schan-tong is more flat than mountainous, and has various pleasant parts, but falls far short of Tschian-nan<sup>9</sup> province, which we entered at the end of October. Even the Chinese hold this latter province to be the richest and most noble. When China still had emperors from its own people<sup>10</sup>, Nanking was the most glittering city of the empire, and the largest in the world. Its name is known to even the most ignorant of Europeans from a commonly worn material

---

<sup>1</sup> Macartney (in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 322) gives this as the Yu-ho. He mentions it was 80 ft wide and required some 18-20 haulers for each vessel.

<sup>2</sup> Ly of Li – Chinese miles, a little more than 3 English miles.

<sup>3</sup> Shandong.

<sup>4</sup> Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, in the Atlas map, gives this as Lin-sin-choo, dated 21 October. William Alexander, the artist on the embassy, painted watercolours here, at the start of the Grand Canal.

<sup>5</sup> Hangzhou in Zhejiang province.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Le Comte, French Jesuit missionary amongst five sent out to China by Louis XIV at the request of the Jesuit missionary Ferdinand Verbiest. They arrived in 1688 and Le Comte published his account in French in 1696, translated into English in 1697 (Le Comte, *Memoirs and Observations*, 1697).

<sup>7</sup> Chusan, present day Zhoushan.

<sup>8</sup> The *Hindustan*.

<sup>9</sup> The old province of Kiangnan, now largely Jiangsu, containing Nanking as mentioned.

<sup>10</sup> Before the Manchu Tartar invasion, Nanking was variously the Capital or Southern Capital of China through earlier dynasties, up to the transition of Ming to Ching in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> C.

made in abundance here<sup>1</sup>. Everything that comes from this province, especially Sotschu<sup>2</sup> and Nanking, is considered excellent by the Chinese. The largest Chinese river Hoang-ho or Quang-ho, i.e. Yellow river, flows out from Tschian-nan to the sea. We crossed over it, and it seemed to be broader than the confluence of the Rhone and Saone at Lyon. The stretch of land over which it flows is possibly more extensive than any riverbed on the earth. It originates in the mountains of the province of Setschuen<sup>3</sup>, flows through a part of Tartary for a length of three hundred German miles, and finally flows out into the Oriental Sea<sup>4</sup>. The damage caused by this river is immense. It destroys entire cities, despite the many dams which are designed to control it. It carries a lot of clay and earth with it, especially when it rains, which gives it a cloudy, yellowish colour, and its name of Yellow River.

Immediately after it crosses the Hoang-ho, the canal picked up our small fleet again. If neither cities nor beautiful places, nor anything else on the banks, occupied our attention, at least we saw soldiers. It is appropriate to remember here, that the embassy received military honours when travelling on land and water everywhere in China. Apart from the garrisons in towns and villages, guards were found on the streets and along the rivers almost every half hour. We were always under the guns, and when we passed, they started their music, and saluted with cannons. This happened even in the night, and in the larger cities it was a wonderful sight to see the soldiers in long rows facing us with lanterns reflecting in the water. The imperial canal runs through this province for many miles, through marshes on the far side of large lakes. Where it is possible, these are cut through with ditches; the soil is elevated and used as rice fields. Here and there you see houses and small groups of trees. The whole area is a kitchen garden and resembles the fertile land of Holland, especially in the area of Rotterdam.

The lakes are full of delicious fish which serve as the main food source for the inhabitants of the area. Novel ways of capturing the poor water inhabitants, not known anywhere else, have been devised here. The strangest is a kind of duck, called in the local language Hwui-jing<sup>5</sup>, trained to catch fish. The naturalists say it belongs to the genus of pelicans (*Pelicanus piscator*). It is used all over China, and we often saw them in the provinces of Schantung, Tschian-nan, Tschekian, Kiansi and Quantong. They sit on the edge of the fishing boats, and the owner holds them in their hand. No fish that dares come near the boat escapes their keen eyes. They dive into the water quick as an arrow and bring their man the prey. If the fish is too heavy for the bird, you have to help bring it up. These animals have a great craving for fish, and a ring is placed around their necks to prevent them from devouring them. Only smaller ones could go through the narrowed throat, and served as their food. It takes an extraordinary effort to train these thieves, but once achieved the owner has capital that brings great profit. Hence the Emperor requires a considerable tax to be paid on these fishing birds. Their food, which is mostly fish, gives them a very bad smell.

Unfortunately, our route did not lead us to Nanking<sup>6</sup>, but the sight of the much-praised city Sot-schu-fu<sup>7</sup> made that loss bearable. Situated on a mild plateau at 31° N, scarcely two days journey from the sea, surrounded by the most fertile rice-growing country, connected with the other

---

<sup>1</sup> Nankeen, made from a yellow variety of cotton, or common cotton dyed yellow.

<sup>2</sup> Suzhou.

<sup>3</sup> Sichuan.

<sup>4</sup> China Sea.

<sup>5</sup> Cormorant. It belongs to the pelican family at a high taxonomic level, and is not closely related to the pelican species. Most accounts of the time mentioned this means of fishing.

<sup>6</sup> The usual route would have followed the Yangtse river past Nanking to the Poyang lake. However, the embassy followed the canal to Hangzhou, then continued first south, then west to the southern end of the lake.

<sup>7</sup> Suchou, where they arrived on 6 November.

provinces by rivers and canals; the residence of wealthy merchants; nursery of the greatest artists, the most famous scholars, the most skilful actors and the most amusing jugglers; legislator of Chinese taste; the best place for the most beautiful female forms, the smallest feet, the newest fashions, the most refined language; intersection of the most varied pleasures and the most depraved lusts; confluence of all the rich idlers and lustful people in China; with such facts, Sotschu must rank as excellent amongst the Chinese cities. The Chinese go so far to say in a proverb: Above is paradise, below is Sotschu. It is said to be one of the largest cities in China, and although we only saw part of it, it was over four hours before we came to the end. The many thousands of people who came to see us, seemed to confirm the large size of the place. Travelling through the city by canal, or walking along by the houses and over bridges, has led some missionaries to make a comparison with Venice, except that Venice has seawater and Sotschu fresh. However, this, as with most, is not a fitting comparison.

There are more well-built houses here than in other Chinese cities, displaying more wealth and taste. Most buildings have small shops (which are well-decorated), but their unclean and neglected appearance may in part, be due to the fact that residents and visitors spend so much time in the pleasant little gondolas seen in great numbers in and out of the city. These are lacquered all over and exceptionally clean and pleasant. It is said that many people waste all their wealth on them very quickly, and that merchants who trade here are often made into beggars from the pleasures of the gondolas. The rowers can be seen at the front, and also at the back, where one often sees the kitchen. In the middle is a covered cabin with windows, containing a table, some small seats and a seating area with cushions. Young people were riding for pleasure in some of them, in others they were dining, and in many, one heard music and singing. A great many were rowed by women, and had girls on board, whose light dress, joking, and free manners suggested that they were pupils at the academy that has long flourished here. In this country, as in all of Asia, there is the desire to study, and students have become branches of trade. Sotschufu and Hankschufu are the main cities where Chinese girls study the art of giving pleasure, which can be likened to merchant goods from metropolitan cities. The harems of the Emperors and wealthy mandarins can be traced mainly to these two cities. The girls are taught to sing, play the zither, and in poetry and all female arts. Our translator told me that the most popular folk songs are written by these girls. But their greatest art is of the more shameful kind. These cities have a reputation for producing the greatest beauties, and their daughters are one of their finest goods.

The canal was wide at Sotschu, but narrowed soon after. The bridges built in the vicinity of the city and villages nearby, deserve consideration by travellers. I don't have enough knowledge to describe them adequately, but there are so many to be seen that lack neither solidity nor renown. They are built of huge blocks which seem to be held together by no other means than their own weight. The arches, of which there are variable numbers, are very broad and high. Where the marshes on the sides of the canal become impassable, the arches multiply, and one of us\*, whose veracity cannot be doubted, affirmed that he had seen a bridge of ninety arches.

\*Mr Barrow

On 8 November, we came to the limits of the much-praised Tschianan, and entered the province of Tschekian<sup>1</sup>, which yields little in trade and wealth to her neighbour. Silk-making is perfected here, and the local silk factories are the most prosperous in China. If one hadn't already known it from traveller's accounts, one would be led to suspect it from the sight of the country planted everywhere with almost nothing but mulberry trees. It would have been interesting to learn

---

<sup>1</sup> Zhejiang.



how silk manufacture was practiced in a country where it has long been famous. However, this was prevented for several reasons, and one was only glad to learn the following things. There are white and black<sup>1</sup> mulberry trees in China, but the leaves of the former are considered better. You plant the trees in the second or third month, that is in March or April<sup>2</sup>, without any special choice of soil. Therefore, in purchasing mulberry plants, consideration is only given to the size of the plot, not the quality of the soil. For new plantings, one prefers a dry to a damp soil, the latter used for rice growing. The leaves emerge in the first, second, third or fourth month, depending on whether the skies are warmer or colder. Even so, the tree puts out new leaves two or three times a year, depending on whether it is a cold or warm area, although the leaves of the first harvest in the year are the best. Incidentally, the tender leaves are given to the young silkworms, the tougher ones to the older worms. The owner of the mulberry trees does not occupy himself with maintenance of the silkworms. They mostly live in the country and sell their leaves by weight in the towns where the silkworms are kept. In China, no leaves other than that of the mulberry are used for their food. Although the silks of Tschekiang are preferable to those made in the province of Quangtung in terms of strength and durability of the color, the latter are exported more, and almost exclusively to Europe, even though they are interwoven with flowers and figures according to the Chinese style, a style which does not always find favour with us. On the other hand, more simple silk goods are made in Canton, and specific designs and colors are chosen by European merchants.

The plantings of mulberry trees in this province were not interrupted by anything except some rice fields and marshes, which we saw every day on both sides of the canal. The following facts suggest that these<sup>3</sup> were more widespread than in Tschianan. Coffins were seen from time to time on both of the fairly wide banks of the canal, neither buried nor covered with earth, which must also have polluted the air; only a few coffins, which might have belonged to rich people, were surrounded with small walls. The reason for this is largely unknown to us; perhaps the inhabitants of these marshes, who used all the land reclaimed from the water for agriculture, had no place to bury their dead other than leaving them on the banks of the canal. The burial of the coffins would gradually weaken the canal banks and would thus probably not be carried out.

Such sights were now almost the only ones that had any novel appeal, as daily we passed many towns and villages that on the whole were very similar. But if curiosity in this regard was lessened on our side, the desire of the Chinese to see us continued to be strong everywhere. When our soldiers and servants went under cover, to avoid this inconvenience when we travelled through the cities, not only the residents, but also strangers who had come from the surrounding areas to see us, were disappointed in their expectations. The mandarins asked the bodyguard of the Ambassador if the soldiers might hide themselves less thoroughly.

The capital of Tschekian province is Hangtschufu<sup>4</sup>, a neighbour of Sotschu, and a very considerable place in China. It lies nearly in the middle of the empire, with the imperial canal on one side and the Tschiang<sup>5</sup> river on the other, serving as a staging place for northern and southern goods. The design of the houses is very ordinary, the streets are narrow but well-paved and the shops rich and diverse. I don't remember seeing so many public playhouses, proof that there must be many visitors and workers here. Travel writers are enthusiastic when they speak of the area around this city, and you can't blame them for that, particularly if one looks back at Hangtschufu

---

<sup>1</sup> More commonly called red.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably of the Chinese year, which begins with the new moon sometime between January 21 and February 20.

<sup>3</sup> The rice fields and marshes.

<sup>4</sup> Hangzhou.

<sup>5</sup> Qiantang river.

from the banks of the Tschiang River. A picturesque landscape, of green hills and mountains, on which three pagodas can be distinguished, rises from the valley of the city. The beauties of this mountain group are indescribable, at least by my pen, and perhaps only the canvas can do them justice. You don't go directly from the canal to the Tschiang river; one of the suburbs lies in between. Through these we were comfortably carried for more than two hours, and we then embarked on the river Tschiang in vessels smaller than previously, though not lacking in comfort. On the shore there was a large group of soldiers with guns, larger than ever before, and they saluted the embassy with cannons and ringing sounds.

Our previous companion, the minister<sup>1</sup>, left us here, and Tschang-ta-schin<sup>2</sup>, the previous Songtu of this province who was going to Canton as Viceroy, continued his journey with the embassy<sup>3</sup>. We were on the Tschiang only six days. Adding to the shallowness of the river at this time of the year, the rocky riverbed makes navigation here uncomfortable and often dangerous. Each of our boats was dragged and pushed in the water without a break, by twenty or more people, without whom it would have been impossible to proceed. The penetrating clacking of the oars on the stones, the sudden blows threatening to shatter the boat, the boisterous shouting of the captains, and the deafening shouts of the haulers would have made this part of the voyage tiring, if the enchanting country through which the Chiang flows had allowed one to think about it. High mountains lay on both sides of the river, sometimes close and sometimes extending deeper into the country, and at their feet spread fertile plains that were extensively cultivated. Rice fields, sugar plantations, oranges, grapefruit, bananas<sup>4</sup>, pomegranates, chestnuts (excellent in cakes), tea, camphor and tallow trees, and bamboo canes, are continually seen on both banks. Amongst all this growth none attracts the European eyes so much as the tallow tree (*Croton sebiferum* L.), because it seems strange to us that a convenience which we owe to the animal kingdom should come from a tree. It is indeed so, and this is not one of the least of the merits of this considerable country. The tree announces itself from afar by its red leaves, and resembles the cherry tree. The fruit, which contain the insect<sup>5</sup>, resembles that of the spindle tree<sup>6</sup>, the difference being that the peel and flesh are white. The latter contains four seeds, and has a soapy flour. You cook the fruit and skim off the fat floating on top. There would be no candle however, without mixing with oil, since it itself is too brittle. The Chinese candles are noticeably different from ours. They are shorter and thicker, and have wooden wicks entwined with rushes which sometimes smoke. However, their glow is strong, the flame doesn't flicker, and they are cheap.

Just as the tallow fruit is one of the most nutritious in this country, so both the native and foreigner rightly consider the orange fruit to be one of the tastiest and most common. It is well known to us, and according to those in Germany, its home is China. The Portuguese first brought it to Europe, and it's said that the first orange tree is still in Lisbon. There are three genera in China. The first and most desired is widespread, and has a reddish peel, which can be readily separated from the flesh, without leaving any of the intermediary white membrane on it. It is easy to pull apart without losing any of the juice, which is exceptionally sweet and refreshing. The second has a pale yellow, rough peel, can be easily divided, is elongated, but is as sweet and juicy as the first. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Songyun

<sup>2</sup> Changlin.

<sup>3</sup> The English party also split at Hangzhou, with part of it, including Dinwiddie, and Holmes, travelling to the coast via Ningbo to Chusan, to board the *Hindostan* and sail to Canton. The rest proceeded by the inland route.

<sup>4</sup> "Pisang" – Indonesian for banana.

<sup>5</sup> The flea beetle (*Bikasha collaris*), which is an indigenous pest of the tallow tree in China.

<sup>6</sup> "Pfaffenhutchen" - *Euonymus* or spindle tree in Europe.

third, which we only know in Europe, is bright yellow, full of juice, and more tart than either of the others, with firmer flesh. These three types have different names in Canton. The first is called Mandarin-orange, because of its excellence, the second Captain-orange since it is close to the former, and the one known in Europe is called the Coolie-orange<sup>1</sup>, i.e. of the labourer (bearer) because for them, it is the cheapest and most common.

The Northern European has great difficulty growing fine southern fruit, needing to use artificial heat, and when he sees it growing abundantly here on its own accord, he knows that he can't compete with this romantic region. It is extraordinary how often appearances change though. Now there are rough rocks on either side with no grass growing, and then the river turns and suddenly you have the most pleasant fields in front of you. The many turns of the Tschiang feed the curiosity of the traveller, and remove the tedium of travelling through a rice growing or completely desolate region.

Everywhere the local people were busy reaping rice and cutting sugarcane. Both were taken to pounding mills built on the river sandbanks, driven by the streams. The rivers swell soon after the monsoon rains and then the mills, which are built at a very low level, are completely under water and useless. We saw many in these conditions. Strange as this may seem, the Chinese are more concerned about their own interests than understanding that the loss is greater than the gains.

The short river journey on the Tschiang ended on November 21, where we arrived at Tschang-ssan-schein<sup>2</sup>. To carry on to Canton from here, you must travel overland for a day. This was a pleasant change, and fulfilled a general desire to see something of the cultivation of the interior of China. It has become rightly famous; for that whole day, we saw nothing but proof of the greatest of effort. For the Chinese it is not enough to have carefully cultivated the fields; even the hillsides, as in the Tyrol or Switzerland, were divided as far as possible into small beds or plots and planted with various garden plants, although most were rice fields. In order to irrigate them properly, one could see small hollows in which rainwater collected or which were fed by small streams from the nearby mountains. Small canals led from here to the nearby fields, and where the ground was higher than the surface of the water, a kind of chainpump was used to raise the water<sup>3</sup>. This pump is common in China and very necessary because of the way rice is grown. In Schantung province you have very large ones, operated by four to six men. Although there are many kinds of chainpumps in England, they say that they got the idea first from China. There are also many opinions on the compass; it is said that shortly after Marco Polo's return to Italy, a copy of the Chinese compass was made. However, it is more likely, some say, that that they learned about it from us<sup>4</sup>.

It was here that we first saw tea growing, whose flowers and leaves resemble shesmin<sup>5</sup>. However, we only came across scattered bushes, and no real tea plantations, from which the tender leaves used for the drink would be collected. Many mountains were covered with young pine trees, which judging by their size, could hardly have been planted more than a few years ago. China has little timber, and it is sensible to think of the growing demand for this necessity in a country whose inland navigation, to say nothing of other needs, is the greatest in the world. On both sides of the

<sup>1</sup> Kuli.

<sup>2</sup> Barrow gives this as Tchang-san-shien.

<sup>3</sup> Staunton, '*An Authentic Account*', vol 2, pp. 479-481, provides an account and illustration of this.

<sup>4</sup> It is generally believed that the Chinese invented the compass, perhaps as far back as the Han Dynasty, some 2000 years ago. The compass, gunpowder (see above), papermaking and printing, comprise the Four Great Inventions of the Chinese (chosen by Europeans) that had a profound effect on civilisation. See Staunton, '*An Authentic Account*', pp. 441-447 for a description and illustration of the Chinese compass.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly mock orange (*Philadelphus* spp.), known in Europe as shersmin, or the unrelated jasmine.

path were various spruce (*Pinus canadensis* Linn.) bushes, although there were more bamboo canes, which are attractive on account of their bright green, straight trunks. We also saw many camphor trees which all were large and bushy. Tallow trees stood close by nearly every house, and every farmer presumably prepares his own candles from it.

In Chinese cities you can find an oddity, which you can see with more impunity than can be said – the public temples of the cloacina<sup>1</sup>. They are not, as elsewhere, for the convenience of the public, but are erected for the benefit and at the expense of those who use the offerings for the greatest benefits of their fields. They are not found in a hidden part of the city, but on the most common streets. The Chinese also show such great respect for the preservation of such offerings that – but already that's too much.

There were various graves on the sides of the hills, constructed with small walls, sometimes with windows, and with trees growing all around them. The extraordinary attention the Chinese give to the graves of their elders and forefathers is well known. You chose the place with care and decorate it with all the expense that you can bear.

This day we entered Zau-ping<sup>2</sup> in the province of Kiangsi<sup>3</sup>, and embarked on the river Yussan-cho at Jusan-dschien<sup>4</sup>, in very comfortable vessels, which not only had kitchen, bedrooms and dining rooms, but also plenty of space for our luggage, and were either painted or papered with white paper. The Zu-ssan<sup>5</sup> flows, like many other southern and western rivers, into the Po-jang<sup>6</sup> (or Hwon-jang-chu) lake, upon which we sailed. It is rich in fish, and thus feeds thousands of poor people whose only occupation is fishing. However, use of nets and the fishing cormorants are not the only means of doing this. In this area one often sees white-painted planks hanging out over the water on the banks where the boats are. The moon casts a reflection in the water which fools the fish; they jump into the boat or into the nets and the fisherman have no more trouble than to walk away with their easily-caught prey<sup>7</sup>.

The dangers to the ships in this province had been described to us long before our arrival here. They said we had to cross waterfalls. Le Comte, and other missionaries, and especially the account of the Dutch embassy<sup>8</sup> to China, specifically confirmed this worrying statement. To think of crossing waterfalls must make the hair stand on end of anyone who has heard of this, but even more so for those who have seen some of them. But just as poets allow themselves poetic liberties, so travellers take the same with their travel accounts, and to these belong the much-feared waterfalls. The stories are, to say nothing more, exaggerated. A large part of the Tatschiang river, on which we came to the Hwon-jang lake, is rocky and tedious to sail on. But there was nothing more than this, and we heard of not one accident among the sixty vessels of our large fleet.

The part of Kiangsi province through which we travelled was level and productive, due to the frequent, five-monthly floods of the Hwon-jang lake; the other part was rugged and mountainous. For a few days, we saw sugarcane and rice fields here. Large wheels were used to irrigate these where the banks were high, causing the water which was brought up to fall into

<sup>1</sup> A coy reference to public lavatories and the use of human waste as a fertiliser.

<sup>2</sup> Staunton, *'An Authentic Account'*, Atlas map gives this as Tsau-pin.

<sup>3</sup> Jiangxi province.

<sup>4</sup> Macartney gives this as Yu-san-chien, and Staunton as Eu-shan-shien, dated 21 November.

<sup>5</sup> Spelled above as Yussan.

<sup>6</sup> Poyang lake.

<sup>7</sup> This decoy method was mentioned by Du Halde, and later by G T Staunton in his 1824 account of the Amherst embassy.

<sup>8</sup> This is possibly Nieuhof and the first Dutch embassy, 1655-6. They travelled a similar route. The second Dutch embassy led by Titsingh with Houckgeest, who published an account, was in 1794-5, slightly after Macartney.

ditches and be dispersed. Many hillsides were planted with Tscha-chwa, i.e. tea flower bushes (*Camelia japonica* Linn.)<sup>1</sup>. The flowers, which can be used and look very similar to tea, provide an edible oil used by the Chinese. It's not known if it's similar to olive oil, though it is clean, rich and without a foul smell. It is part of the export trade from this province. The local people wear a kind of straw sandal, not unlike that of the ancient Romans, with straps going through the toes and over the heels, giving support to the foot. Presumably the heat of the sand makes this sandal necessary. One sees this piece of costume, above all, in Guangtung province and in Macao.

Until now, I haven't remarked on the pagodas of the regions, which were very common through the whole of our water journey from Tongschu to Canton. They indicate the most beautiful and fertile areas, since the bonzes, just like the founders of monasteries<sup>2</sup>, always made it their business to select the most advantageous places for their temples.

The capital city of Kiangsi province is Nan-tschang-fu<sup>3</sup>. We came close to it and marvelled at the number of both large and small vessels lying before it. There were more than four hundred of the large ones, according to someone who tried to count them. To get an idea of the size of a large vessel, it was noted that it is 150 feet long, 14 feet wide and 12 feet deep, and can carry 250 tons. There were twice as many medium and smaller ones, if the eyes were not deceived. What trading! How great must be the needs of such a city! We also needed haulers here for our barge. They were better clothed than the ones we had before, and, incidentally, often sang and didn't seem to feel their hardship as much as one thought they would. We are not used to seeing men performing the work of animals, although to make a proper comparison, it might perhaps be found that many of our peasants have work which is just as hard. The haulers were wont to pull up sugar canes to quench their thirst: a freedom that they were permitted.

The river Ta-tschiang<sup>4</sup> at the end of Kiangsi province was constrained between rocky hills, until Nanganfu<sup>5</sup>, where it broadened out. We had to make the final land journey from this city. This road, which was moderately paved and rose imperceptibly, passed through well-cultivated valleys which were enclosed on either side by mountains, and formed beautiful views. We saw many rice fields under water. After a period of about two hours travelling, our route led us to the Miling<sup>6</sup> mountain, which separated the Kiangsi and Quantung provinces. The road going over it is paved and has houses built along it, but is very steep and tiring, especially for horses. Many of these poor animals became so exhausted that they fell dead on the road in the afternoon, even though most riders had dismounted. Much of the blame lay with neglect of their feeding, since the Chinese are, if possible, more cruel towards their horses than Europeans are. It is said that Miling is raised 3000 feet above sea level. It is surrounded by several smaller mountains, forming various deep clefts, with trees and tall grasses growing, and these form a romantic picture.

We encountered a lot of people on this day who were carrying the aforementioned Tscha-chwa-oil plant on their shoulders to Manganfu<sup>7</sup> where it is further processed. Most hills had Tscha-chwa shrubs growing on them. As soon as we entered into Quantung province, where Flora has bestowed all her blessings, we saw many women in the fields, which we had never seen before. The

<sup>1</sup> This is the *Camellia sasanqua* described and illustrated in Staunton, 'An Authentic Account', vol 2, p. 167 ('*cha-whaw*'). The flower yields what Staunton calls a '*nut*' or seed from which oil is extracted. The modern taxonomic name for tea is the related *C. sinensis*. Modern garden camellias are varieties of *C. sasanqua* and *C. japonica*.

<sup>2</sup> In Europe.

<sup>3</sup> Nanchang, on 29 November.

<sup>4</sup> Kan-kiang-ho in Staunton, 'An Authentic Account', Atlas map, the modern day Gan.

<sup>5</sup> Reached on 9 December.

<sup>6</sup> Meiling mountain.

<sup>7</sup> Nangan.

people of this province are very hard working, and those from the surrounding districts are preferred as house servants and farm workers. The European is more common in Quantung than in the rest of China. They are disliked and given the name Quitse<sup>1</sup>, i.e. devil, while on their theatre stages, the Chinese depict the devil in tight clothes, such as we wear. Hence it wasn't unexpected to be greeted with the honorific by the rabble. We travelled there, however, with the Viceroy, and our mandarins had a very high rank, so no-one dared insult the embassy openly.

In Nan-tschang-fu<sup>2</sup>, which is the second city of this province, we embarked for the last time, and were only a few days away from our destination. If you think about it, it is easy to understand that we had not received any public news from Europa for fifteen months, and at a time when the most important changes were taking place there<sup>3</sup>. The riverbank of the Si-cho<sup>4</sup>, which flows from here to Canton, is partly mountainous and rugged. One saw various lime and coal mines; the coal in the latter, however was of the smaller kind. Further towards Canton we also saw many brick kilns. Some of the hills had spruce growing and very few were cultivated. Among them, five are distinguished by their peculiar shape, although no-one pays attention to them anymore,. The Chinese have found a likeness here, and these mountains are called U-ma-tchu, i.e. the five horse heads<sup>5</sup>. In Zekian<sup>6</sup> various mountains are said to have the shape of one their idols, and the missionaries have commented that the names and supposed resemblances of mountains in many other provinces are sometimes very strange.

About a day's travel before Canton, we reached the rock Quan-inn-schann<sup>7</sup>, which, because of its rough, jagged, overhanging rock and ancient temples, the Chinese regard with awe. It is about two hundred feet wide and six hundred feet high, with vertical sides, and consequently by nature inaccessible. However, on the side where the river flows, a moderately sized- cave has been hollowed out which has been inhabited by bonzes\* since time immemorial. The cave has three openings above each other: the first is about twelve feet above the water, another fifty feet, and the third a hundred feet. The lowest one serves as a door and the two others as windows of the two floors (if you may call them that), connected by convenient stairs, and they have altars of the Buddha. The first floor has boards and is provided with chairs, and there is no ornament on the rough rock walls of these rooms, other than moral sayings and references to the mythical story of the idols, carved in ancient characters. The friendly bonzes welcomed us with much cordiality, appeared to enjoy meeting strangers, and did not spurn a small offering of alms.

\*The word Bonze is unknown to the natives, and is possibly derived from the Chinese hwoaschang, priest.

The new Viceroy of Canton<sup>8</sup>, in our embassy, as recalled above, completed the last part of this journey, going ahead to Canton some days before to expedite the carrying out of his orders for the reception of the embassy, and our journey was deliberately delayed so he could have more time. Although our boat was comfortable, the Viceroy sent the embassy well-built and ornate state

<sup>1</sup> Guizi is mandarin slang for foreigners, interpreted as meaning devil.

<sup>2</sup> Hüttner means Nan-sheun-foo as given in Staunton, '*An Authentic Account*', Atlas map, the city they reached on 10 December after crossing the Meiling mountains.

<sup>3</sup> Including the execution of Louis XVI on 21 September 1793, and revolutionary wars.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly a tributary of the Pearl (Zhu jiang) river system

<sup>5</sup> There is an engraving of these by the Dutch engraver Jakob van der Schley in Prevost's '*Histoire Generale des Voyages*' (Paris 1746-1759).

<sup>6</sup> Zejiang province.

<sup>7</sup> Guan yin is the female Buddhist bodhisattva, associated with compassion, first given the name of Goddess of Mercy by the Jesuits in China.

<sup>8</sup> Changlin.

vessels, and on 19 December, after an uninterrupted journey of seventy-four days, or over three and a half months from Peking, we arrived in Canton<sup>1</sup>.

The Viceroy showed the English embassy more honour than the other Europeans trading here, and more than the over confident mandarins wished for. He provided a whole garden in the suburbs with very good buildings in it, designed and furnished according to the English style, not to mention the military salute the Viceroy sent the embassy, received with much pomp from the Fujien<sup>2</sup>, the Hupu, and other distinguished mandarins of his court. A reception room was prepared, according to Chinese custom. When embassies are about to leave the empire, the customs of the country require that they solemnly give thanks for favours rendered and for their safe and comfortable journey through the kingdom, and must repeat the same ceremonies that are customary to be performed in the presence of the Emperor. These ceremonies were not difficult for the embassy, since the courtesies given to it on the return journey on the order of the Emperor, had been really excellent, and the Viceroy, a noble man of righteous character, and both our guides Tscho-tadschin and Wang-ta-dschin, of whose attitudes I have spoken above, were most cordial and obliging. In these remaining three weeks in Canton, we received daily proof of the Viceroy's goodness. He made several orders for the benefit of the English. It was to the credit of this nation that it didn't want to exclude other Europeans; all the new arrangements made for the benefit of the English, were subsequently to the advantage of all Europeans.

If the war<sup>3</sup> hadn't made it necessary for the Lion to escort merchant ships, the Ambassador might have been sent on to other parts of Asia, or his return to Europe might have been requested immediately. Some of the more powerful ships returned alone, though most went back to England under the guns of the Lion<sup>4</sup>. But before I talk about it, perhaps one wants to know something about Canton. This is indeed a strange place of trade, and no matter how little information the narrator has, it would be unpardonable not to relate what he has come to know.

Canton, as the capital of the province, residence of the Viceroy, a manufacturing city, one of the largest trading places of the empire, and an inland port for shipping which goes to Japan, Manilla, Cochin China, Batavia etc., would be considerable even without the European trade. But now that the distant foreigner brings his wealth here, it will be held by many to be the first Asiatic trading city. So long as tea continues to be in such great demand in Europe and America, as it has until now, and the Chinese find European manufacturing to their taste and require foreign products, it will presumably always have priority over other Asiatic trading cities. The Songtu (known in the dialect of Canton as Santok or Tschontok), who the Europeans, not wrongly, have compared with a Viceroy, is the most distinguished in the city and province. He is by nationality a Tartar, and related to the Emperor, and therefore one of the first in the empire. He governs over two provinces, Quantung and Kiansi, and his earnings are very handsome. As proof of his despotic power, it is said that the previous Viceroy, picked out the best of precious works of art, such as English chiming clocks (known here as Sing-songs), brought in by European ships. The Cohongs<sup>5</sup> (of which more will be spoken) must immediately buy these with their own money and give them to him as gifts. All these injustices were left unpunished, but it is reasonable to assume that the present, very honest, Viceroy will abandon the shameful habits of his dishonest predecessors.

<sup>1</sup> They left Peking on 7 October and arrived in Canton on 19 December. Hüttner means two and a half months.

<sup>2</sup> The Governor, immediately subordinate to the Viceroy.

<sup>3</sup> France declared war on Britain and the Dutch Republic in 1793 as part of a complex set of wars under the revolutionary regime.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, '*A Narrative of the British Embassy in China*', p. 265, gives 14 ships accompanying the Lion, plus a Spanish, a Portuguese and an American vessel, departing on Monday 17 March, 1794.

<sup>5</sup> Also known as the Hongs, the guild of Chinese merchants controlling the trade at Canton.

Canton lies on a river<sup>1</sup>, which the city is named after, and it flows into the sea fifty English miles from there at the Bocca Tigris. This Bocca or river mouth, which is defended by two small fortifications on either side, is named after Tiger Island lying nearby. All foreign ships sailing to Canton must pass through the Bocca. Among the inconveniences that Europeans are subjected to in trading with China is the necessity of first sailing to the island of Macao, which is sixteen English miles from there. There they pay for pilots and a written permit which they need in order to enter the Bocca. Moreover, this detour for ships which have been long at sea, must be unpleasant, and they often run a risk in doing so as the sea around is extremely stormy, rocky and full of small islands. The shallowness of the river does not allow the ships, when they have come through the Bocca, to go any further than Wampu<sup>2</sup>, where they lie three hours short of the city. Between Wampu and Canton there are no fewer than three toll houses\*, and at each the boats are stopped and carefully searched, before they can get to the factories<sup>3</sup>.

\*In Canton they are called Chop houses. Chop<sup>4</sup> (Osbeck<sup>5</sup> wrote Tiapp and Sonnerat<sup>6</sup> la Chappe) actually means a seal, stamped on all written orders by the mandarins. The Spanish thaler, on which the mandarins have also printed the value in Chinese characters, are called Chop-thaler. Almost all that come into circulation here have these marks, and also cuts on the sides by which one can see whether they are good silver. One hears another strange expression that has taken over in the common shops. Goods and everything else of the best kind are called here: first chop; that which is lesser: second chop.

These are on the western bank of the river, built by the Dutch, English, French, Spanish and Swedes, identified further by their flags, which fly from high poles. The Dutch and English factories have covered galleries, called by the Indian word verandahs. All factories, especially the English, which is by far the largest, have only a single floor, but are spacious with tasteful furniture. The suburbs of Canton, in which they lie, (because the Europeans are not allowed in the city) have a lot of streets that consist only of shops. Several of them are so completely filled with goods that one thinks one is in one of our cities when passing through them. On the whole however, within necessary limitations, no two places can be more alike than the Merceria<sup>7</sup> in Venice and this suburb. Here one has almost all the needs that are met with in European ports, and the quality, quantity and cheapness of the food certainly leaves nothing to be desired. Apart from the delicious meat, one has excellent garden produce and fruit. The Cantonese have come so far in the imitation of European and especially English equipment, tools and household appliances of all kinds, that various objects here are as good as in England, and produced more cheaply. This is the case generally with silverwork, bags, and so on. The numerous Chinese tailors in Canton work almost as well as the English, and are only half as expensive. Since silk and cotton cloth is made here in great quantity, articles of clothing can be bought at lower prices almost nowhere else.

Furthermore, one can bath here very well and cheaply, just as in our large cities. It is easy to see, therefore, that Canton, in this regard, is very convenient for ships. One must however, be very careful in the shops, if you don't want to be deceived by the Cantonese. The nation is generally accused of being dishonest, indeed of considering fraud to be praiseworthy and useful. In this

---

<sup>1</sup> Pearl river.

<sup>2</sup> Whampoa.

<sup>3</sup> The European trading houses and stores.

<sup>4</sup> Tschop-hause. English accounts use "Chop" as the seal or stamp necessary for carrying out business.

<sup>5</sup> Osbeck, *Reisen nach Ostindien und China*. Osbeck was a Swedish traveller and naturalist who published his account in Swedish in 1757, translated into German in 1765.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Sonnerat the French explorer and naturalist who travelled to China in the late 1770s and published his account in 1782.

<sup>7</sup> One of the busiest shopping streets in Venice.



regard, the inhabitants of Canton are very ingenious, and rarely does anyone leave this place without experiencing it. One can at least deal with the cunning of the Canton shopkeepers, but one can only calmly watch the obvious rackets of the Hupu (i.e. the Imperial Chief Customs Collector) and the other mandarins. The ship captains are required to pay these robbers ten percent more than the Emperor demands of them; they take from each large ship, 2200 taels or ounces of silver under his name, and besides this, one thousand, nine hundred and fifty taels are required from each ship. This latter sum at first was simply a gift, but gradually became an obligation, and is now a duty.

The Europeans are not allowed to trade with whomever they want, but only with ten merchants who are assigned to them, called Cohong or more commonly Hong. The Hoppo extorts them as he wants, and in return gives them freedom to ask as much as they like for their goods. In the two months of our stay in Canton, the Hoppo extorted 200,000 imperial thalers from these Cohong merchants. Since the stay of the European merchants in Canton lasts four months, one can easily see the sums that must accumulate from this extortion. However, the most humiliating thing about Europeans trading with Canton is the fact that they are only allowed to stay there for part of the year, which requires spending the rest of the time in Macao. The factories don't belong to them, but to the owners of the land on which they stand, even though built at their own expense. They are not allowed to buy them, and so rent their own houses to live in. Whether or not the Europeans pay with money or goods, they are required to give credit for their own goods and to leave without authorised security. In this annual movement from Canton to Macao and back again, you have to declare anew household effects and other essentials that you take with you, so that they do not possess a single item for which they have not paid a fee, twelve times or more.

Up until the arrival of the English embassy in Canton, there was no way of approaching the Viceroy in person or in writing. It was strictly forbidden to teach Chinese to any foreigner, and according to the custom of the country, the distance between the Viceroy and a merchant is considered so great that a complaint could only be brought personally with the help of an interpreter. The merchant class is much despised in China. Foreign traders feel this humiliation all the more since their standing is honorable in every enlightened European country. The Englander suffers twice, since amongst all barbarians (which is what the Chinese call Europeans) they are simply seen as the wildest. They owe this honour to their sailors, who indeed are not the gentlest of men. And if in the future, Europeans trading here do not take care that their customs do not offend the Chinese, then the contempt and even public abuse that they are subjected to here will be ever increasing. One can understand this when one sees that the rabble has gone so far as to throw stones at Europeans; each mandarin, even the lowest one, thinks he is better than a merchant.

The following is an example, where the embassy would have been treated as contemptuously as this if the Viceroy's actions had not prevented it. Various Cantonese met the Viceroy when he was far away in Kiansi province. We soon found from their ridiculous remarks, that they considered that the whole English nation consisted only of seamen and merchants, that is, according to their concepts, of very worthless people. They viewed the natural cordiality of the mandarins with the embassy with astonishment and indignation because of the open conduct between them. They held this as outrageous, until a serious incident brought their actions against the embassy under closer scrutiny. Two of our scholars had gone out for a day to look for plants. A mandarin of considerable rank from Canton saw this. He either didn't know who they were, or didn't want to know, and ordered a mandarin to send them back. They resist. The soldier hit them. Astonished and enraged, they rush to the mandarin who gave the order, and compel him to get out of the vehicle of the two Imperial mandarins, our companions. He turns pale, and begs, but such a

thing could not go unpunished. The Viceroy not only didn't take him at his word, but also gave him forty strokes with the bamboo cane. The soldier was cruelly punished, regardless of all pleas. They pierced his earlobes with a red-hot iron, hit him mercilessly, and finally clamped him in a very painful apparatus.

Regarding the Europeans in Canton as untrustworthy barbarians also helps explain their local confinement. The factories and some small streets of the suburb are the only places where they are tolerated. You are not allowed to venture into the fields, nor in the city, nor on the river. They say that formerly they had such freedom, but the unruly behaviour of the sailors made it necessary for them to be deprived of it. Whatever it may be, it is not unlikely that they will regain these and many others, if the English court decides it is a good idea to strengthen those connections with the Chinese which have already begun. Already with the presence of the embassy in Canton, the Viceroy gave various orders for the benefit of the English and all other Europeans. Among the two most important were that in future, ships should only be asked to pay imperial customs, and that members of the English trade association should have free access to him. It is of course difficult to answer whether this will take place in the future.

However, if that really doesn't happen, and the restrictions become more burdensome, and if trade should be stopped from one side or the other, England and China would lose much in the process, or would the loss only be individual? Those who might know about the matter maintain that the trade in China is, of the two, least beneficial to England. In 1792, the surplus for the benefit of the Chinese was two and a half million pounds sterling, by which by far the greatest part was paid in silver. In 1793, twenty-three million pounds of tea were sent from Canton to England, and the surplus for the benefit of the Cantonese was not less than in the previous year. It is true, the Company<sup>1</sup>, especially the members themselves who stay in China and the captains of the ships used for this trade, do win. But if the needs and expenses of people are increased by providing them with an abundance of something<sup>2</sup> that they would gladly do without for a short time, is that beneficial for the country?

Would China be hurt if the European trade stopped? How can it be doubted? So many millions in hard cash for tea and other products exported yearly to Europe require maintenance of plantations and manufacture in China, and if those sources dried up, so many thousands would become in need. No one can deny that part of the European wealth must go to the poor Chinese farmer and manufacturer. However, two thirds of the money coming in is taken by the rapacious mandarins, who extort it from the Hong merchants. Irrespective of this, they<sup>3</sup> have their abundant profits, which they squander on gardens and houses, etc. This of course would decline, and Canton also would suffer from it, insofar as their influence extended.

However, what notion one must have of the largest and richest country in the world, to which so many other no less significant ones belong, how little must one know of the inexhaustible, and in part, completely unused resources of China, if one can believe that the influence of such an event would impact on the whole empire.\*

\*Thus Sonnerat in his travels: this man came no further than Canton, and yet he dares to bitterly rebuke Le Comte and other missionaries, who have spent the greater part of their lives in China. Whether he

---

<sup>1</sup> East India Company.

<sup>2</sup> Hüttner seems to think that tea is something the English people could gladly do without. Macartney (in Barrow, 'Some Account of the Public Life', pp. 397-398) also contemplates the economic consequences of a breach with China, including 'We should lose the import from China.....of another indispensable luxury or rather an absolute necessary [sic] of life, tea.'

<sup>3</sup> Presumably the Hong merchants.

was right or wrong, this would not prove anything against the reports of the missionaries. Whoever goes to China will surely on the whole find them faithful and true - how small is a man who censures recognised merit just because there are a few blemishes.

What language can Europeans speak in Canton, when they either don't, or are not allowed to, learn the national language? When Albuquerque<sup>1</sup> made Portugal a formidable power in Asia, Portuguese was learned throughout the islands and coasts of that continent, and the way of making oneself understood almost everywhere in Asia is still by a strange mishmash<sup>2</sup> to which this language comes closest. In Canton, foreigners and local people still use it, no matter how differently they speak, e.g. Comprador<sup>3</sup>, Fiador<sup>4</sup>, Mandarin, etc. However, since British power and trade gained the upper hand, an English patois has become common in Asia. Almost every Cantonese who has anything to do with the Europeans speaks it, although some still understand Portuguese. You can't refrain from laughing when you hear the so-called Canton-English for the first time\*. They think they understand English so well, that they sometimes say to a stranger who cannot speak their jargon: "You no savee that English talkee"; you understand no English. I have already mentioned above, that no Chinese is permitted to teach the local language. This, however, does not prevent the mercenary natives from sometimes teaching Europeans who are eager to learn, and thus to whom we owe in part, translations of Chinese books.

\*Just a few examples: "to much good" for only very. "he hap gone walkee walkee", he went out, "Chop chop", quickly.

The fact that a lot of European traders have lived in Canton and Macao for many years, along with that prohibition and the exceptionally great difficulty of learning Chinese characters, are all reasons why, on the whole, we are as yet strangers to Chinese literature. We know that in Naples for almost a hundred years at least, twelve native Chinese have been trained by the Propaganda to become missionaries, returning to their fatherland after completing their studies, to be replaced by other Chinese, most of whom have an adequate knowledge of the characters of their language. Anyone who knows this, I say, will be surprised that they do not make us familiar with some of the Chinese writings through translations. Whatever the inborn predilection for national literature, the desire to seek out and communicate unknown writings, so natural to the scholar, or, finally, whatever other intentions to either really expand the field of human knowledge, or cultivate it better, these students of the Propaganda are governed by the strong notion that it is a sinful thing for a Catholic priest to make pagan books known, and that such a business is incompatible with the conversion of their blind countrymen, who live in damnable idolatry, and by nature are children of the devil. If the French missionaries had thought this way, we wouldn't know anything about China<sup>5</sup>.

Apart from the Chinese who are brought up to be Catholics in Europe, residents of Canton sometimes also go to England. However, these are common, ignorant people, of whom nothing can be expected. Also, they do it in such great fear and so secretly that they return as quickly as possible, and never dare let anything about it be known in Canton. The Armenians are the most distinguished and richest among the Asian nations trading in Canton. The extent of their trade and what sort it might be, has remained completely unknown to me. The colour of their faces and their

<sup>1</sup> Alfonso de Albuquerque, Viceroy of Portuguese India, 1509-1515.

<sup>2</sup> Mischmasch.

<sup>3</sup> An agent in China and other Asian countries acting for foreigners and foreign companies in trade and business.

<sup>4</sup> Someone who gives a guarantee in business, of Spanish colonial origin.

<sup>5</sup> Hüttner has earlier cited Louis Le Comte favourably, the French Jesuit sent out by Louis XIV in 1687. Thus, it is not all Catholics who are bad. The Naples school was run by Italian Jesuits to train young Chinese men in the Catholic faith, and Macartney sourced his two interpreters from there for this embassy.

dress are little different from the European. They are distinguished from the latter by the fact that they wear high velvet caps instead of hats, and over their trousers, a kind of short women's skirt that reaches down to the knees. They speak Portuguese and deal a lot with Europeans.

I still have a few brief remarks to make about the origin, governance, population, and music of the Chinese, which I think would be most convenient to add here. The origin of the Chinese has long been the subject of painstaking investigations by scholars. It would be ridiculous, however, if the narrator dared to determine which of the various opinions are true from the little experience one can gather from a five-month journey. The names of Guignes<sup>1</sup>, de Pauw<sup>2</sup> and Sir William Jones<sup>3</sup> are too famous to venture into the field lightly armed; though it may well be admitted that Jones' views seem to be the most proven in Asiatic studies. This great and upright man shows, on many grounds, chiefly from the Sanskrit revelations of Menu<sup>4</sup>, that the Tscheinas or Chinese emigrated from India.

They are now ruled by Tschien-lung<sup>5</sup>, the fourth emperor of the Tartar dynasty. However, one believes that he has more Chinese than Tartar blood in his veins. This opinion is based on the following grounds. His father was one of the most ardent Lama- and Pusa<sup>6</sup>-followers, and his wives, by inclination or compulsion, showed no less devotion, such that he allowed priests free entry to his harem. Among others, the mother of the current emperor<sup>7</sup> was particularly devout, and had domestic discourse with a handsome Chinese priest during which he gave not only spiritual comfort. In the great earthquake in Peking some imperial concubines were buried under the ruins, along with the zealous priest next to the pious mother of the emperor; this confirmed the long-held belief only too well. But be it as it may, (because a missionary, from whom I have this anecdote, should be treated with caution when he speaks of priests of other religions), the Emperor's preference for Tartars is obvious. It takes only a little effort for a student of this nation<sup>8</sup> to attain the mandarin status, whereas a Chinese must be skilled to be included amongst the mandarins. However, the Emperor exercises despotic control over the Tartar mandarins; he often has them beaten with the bamboo cane regardless of their rank, an event that a Chinese seldom fears.

Qianlong is esteemed and loved in China. On the other hand, one must not believe that the jealousy of the Chinese nobility and the people against the Tartar government is dormant. Both nations heartily dislike each other, and the word Tartar in China, as we have often had the opportunity to ascertain, is synonymous with cruel and treacherous. One day someone among us complained of a toothache. Why, asked of one of our mandarins, don't you ask a doctor to give you a painkiller? "That I have done," he answered, "but he wants to take my tooth out." O the Tartar! shouted the mandarin. Another time when travelling in Tartary, all the porcelain fascias were stolen from one of the palaces where we stayed, and the Tartar mandarin, who was in charge of the palace, was called to account for this. He answered very stubbornly: he knew nothing about it and was not

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph de Guignes (1721-1800) was French orientalist who published major works on the origins of eastern peoples, including a theory that the Chinese originated from Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius de Pauw (1738-1799) was a Dutch philosopher and geographer who wrote extensively on the Americans, and also rejected the hypothesis that the Chinese originated from the Egyptians.

<sup>3</sup> Jones (1746-1794) was a philologist and scholar, particularly of Indian languages. He established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1804, and proposed that Chinese, along with Egyptian and Japanese were Indo-European languages, and that the Chinese were of Hindu origin. Both Pauw and Jones are discussed by Barrow, *Travels in China*, p.27.

<sup>4</sup> Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Menu, translated and published by Jones. Sometimes spelled as Manu.

<sup>5</sup> Qianlong Emperor (1735-96).

<sup>6</sup> Pusa is a Bodhisattva in Chinese Buddhism, one still on the path of enlightenment.

<sup>7</sup> Known as the Empress Dowager Chongqing, who died in 1777, although there is no record of her dying in an earthquake. Neither did the mother of the previous Emperor, the Yongzheng Emperor, nor the mother of Hongli's grandfather, the Kiangxi Emperor.

<sup>8</sup> The Tartars.

concerned. After that, Tscho-ta-dschin had him beaten without further ado. But this affected the Tartar so little that it was repeated twice more and the number of strokes had to be doubled before he confessed to having some knowledge of the porcelain. Reflecting on this obstinacy, our Chinese mandarin burst out: “Yes, a Tartar remains a Tartar.”<sup>1</sup> The hatred against this nation must thus be increased by the fact that great Tartars are mostly elected to the greatest offices of the empire, Viceroy, Kolaos, etc, a practice that is probably very necessary. According to a popular Chinese rumour, the present Emperor so strongly fears that he will lose the throne, that he gathers into large piles all the money that is not immediately used, and stores it in large vaults under a river bed not far from Mugden<sup>2</sup> in Tartary. It is also reliably said that noble tartars bring the long-buried corpses of their ancestors home to Tartary from China, because they fear that sooner or later they will have to leave this lovely country, and could not bear the thought of exposing the honoured ashes of their ancestors to malicious abuse.

The present Emperor is also honoured as a private man; in a monarch, personal merit is doubly important and laudable. Even his enemies do not deny that his sovereign duties are sacred to him. He always gets up at two o'clock in the morning<sup>3</sup>, prays in the Lama temple, and devotes most of the rest of the day to Government business. His precise knowledge of the empire, customs and regular ceremonies, means that, despite all the ministers' mostly successful efforts to cheat him, he often discovers mistakes, and the many officials administering the government of the country, from the first Kolo down to the lowest mandarin, should beware. He reads all reports, petitions and recommendations etc. himself. They must be written with the utmost accuracy, otherwise the offending person exposes himself to unexpected sharp reprimands and explanations; often he loses his post because of a vague utterance or a carelessly written character.

The Emperor is one of the greatest writers in his kingdom (you can see for yourself why I say writer). He understands Tartar and Chinese so well that he has written history in both languages, including that on tea, which is famous in Europe through a French translation. I have already mentioned above how commendable his appearance is. At the age of eighty-five years, and sixty years from his accession to the throne, he intends to step down from Government altogether. During the stay of the embassy in Macao, this decision was made known through the whole empire by a public edict. However, until then, he is still working with his usual effort. This uncommon activity is the reason why no mandarin has hitherto dared to refuse any office or business on the grounds that he is too old, for the Emperor immediately replies to such an apology: “Don't you see that I am old myself, and notwithstanding that I'm still doing my business?” Nor have eighty-three years of life rendered the emperor's harems unnecessary. One of his seraglios is in China and the other in Tartary. The total number of women in both is supposed to amount to a number that strikes me as a bit exaggerated. In China, prostitutes are a major domestic trade, so the provision of a Chinese harem can't be a strain on the people. However, in Tartary (so someone has told me) every eighteen-year-old girl must go before certain eunuchs who are acquainted with the Emperor's taste and so choose for him. They can only marry when they have been declared unfit for the Khan's service.

The daughter of the Emperor usually marries a noble tartar. The previous Viceroy of Canton (who is now transferred to Tartary) and the son of the above mentioned great Kolo are married to daughters of the Emperor. Which of the Emperor's sons\* will succeed him in government is a

---

<sup>1</sup> Also narrated, with the same quotation, by Macartney, in Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life*, p. 245.

<sup>2</sup> Mukden, the 17<sup>th</sup> C Manchu capital, modern day Shenyang.

<sup>3</sup> Earlier, Hüttner notes that the Emperor goes to bed at 6 pm.

mystery, even to the most distinguished courtiers, since it is not determined by being firstborn, but by the Emperor's wishes. It is said that he has deposited his will in a certain pagoda, and that the prince appointed as his successor learned of his choice no sooner than it had been made.

\*He had seventeen; there are many still alive.

For twelve years the princes lead a very arduous life, both because of the unbending formality which is their station according to the laws of the land, and because of the tyrannical harshness of their teachers. Even the number and nature of their games is fixed. They have no income during their minority, so even their most common needs must be requested from the Emperor. Their chief steward receives the strictest assessments of their conduct, and of their progress in scientific and military exercises, and woe to them if these testimonies sound bad! This carries on to their twenty-fifth year, when they receive a small income and become so-called kings.

The reports of the missionaries about the population of China have been taken, at least by many, to be ridiculous fairy tales. What does one think of the following statement, that the population is almost twice as big again! But one may judge for oneself whether it can be taken as the truth. Every year the population of the empire is entered very precisely in the imperial customs books. Tscho-ta-schin provided the Ambassador with a copy of this register, in which the population of the various provinces was especially calculated. The total sum came to three hundred and thirty-one million, four hundred thousand\*. The missionaries in Peking, among whom are some very venerable and truthful men, do not doubt the accuracy of this number, and if I may express my opinion, I do not believe that it is exaggerated. In China, even the water is inhabited by people. It is well known that millions of people spend their whole lives in small boats on the rivers, are born, marry and die there, without ever having another home.

\*All the tributary lands are in the list, e.g. Tibet, Hainan Island, Tunking, Formosa etc. so the figure of two million in China is the true one<sup>1</sup>.

As I mentioned above, all loads that cannot go on water are everywhere carried by men. And if it's true, as a missionary in Peking has affirmed, that one can buy for four Spanish thaler as much rice (the main food of the Chinese) as a man eats annually, where is there a cheaper country in the world, and one also able to feed such a large population? That's why when rice fails to grow, many thousands of inhabitants die of starvation, which all accounts of this country affirm. An equally sad consequence of this enormous population is the little respect for human life, of which we have also seen some examples, and the well-known abomination that some poor people eat their children out of hunger, although the Chinese do not admit it.

Very little that is new can be said about the music of the Chinese<sup>2</sup>. Their instruments are well known, and one also knows that there is little harmony, nor an ear for it. They like our slow songs, and, as Father Grammond<sup>3</sup> in Peking said, are entranced by the silvery sound of our claviers, grand pianos and flutes. However, every third or fifth, however pleasing to our ears, is a discord for them. They love only octaves, and when they play stringed instruments, the samm-jinn<sup>4</sup> (in the

<sup>1</sup> We must infer that Hüttner is referring to 2 million among the tributary territories.

<sup>2</sup> Barrow, *Travels in China*, 1804, pp. 313-323 discusses Chinese music, and has illustrations of instruments, transcriptions of their songs, and a note (p. 315) that Hüttner took down the melody of a simple song *Moo-lee*, and this was subsequently published in London, 'with head and tail pieces, accompaniments, and all the refined arts of European music; so that it ceases to be a specimen of the plain melody of China.' Hüttner as 'a very good judge of music' is also mentioned earlier in Staunton, *An Authentic Account*, vol 2, p. 262, where he quotes these comments of Hüttner on the Chinese musical scales and keys.

<sup>3</sup> Father Louis de Grammont (1736-1812), ex Jesuit and Vincentian missionary. After the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, the Vincentians took over much of the Jesuit role in Peking, with some former Jesuits joining the Vincentian order. Grammont would have been in Peking at the time of the embassy.

<sup>4</sup> Sanxian, a 3-stringed lute.

Mandarin language sann-jenn, e.g. a kind of four-stringed theorbo) almost always has the melody in the lower octave<sup>1</sup>. The samm-jinn, the yutkonn<sup>2</sup> (Mandarin Yio-kenn), a kind of guitar, and the R'jenn<sup>3</sup>, an instrument with two strings through which a hair bow is drawn, are not unpleasant. However, the Chinese make a horrible noise with large gongs, drums and clappers, and thereby stifle all the effects of the soft and plaintive tones of those instruments. The R'jenn looks like a clumsy wooden hammer, with the head hollowed out for resonance. The two strings of these instruments do not rest on any board, but are gripped with the fingers, like the strings of a violin. The tone of the R'jenn is somewhat hoarse, and gains nothing by playing. This is because instead of making transitions from one chord to the other in simple sequences of tones, one crawls through all the half and quadruple tones in between, which soon irritates European ears; if it were the same in our music, it would rarely have a good effect. The bamboo flutes are the same as our fifes, having a melancholy, subdued tone, which is very appropriate to the elegiac tone sequences of their folksongs.

The Chinese, as with boys, almost always sing in falsetto, which is more like warbling than singing, and their vocal music can never please our ears. Some compare Chinese singing with the miaowing of cats, and their frequent warbling to the bleating of a goat. Incidentally it is most untrue that there is no tempo in Chinese music. Without the benefit of experience, this is opinion is absurd. Beat, as one can easily see, is not just an abstract matter, like our musical signs, but the natural accompaniment of every melody. There are individuals who have no sense of beat, but they are exceptions, and non-one has ever found a whole nation to be such an exception. The Chinese have the *Schiack-pann*<sup>4</sup> wooden sticks and *Scuchu*<sup>5</sup> drums expressly beating time when they sing in their dramas, and I can refer to the testimonies of all music experts in the embassy, who have heard chants beating heavily to time in Cochin China, Tartary and in China, especially in Canton. In Cochin China, where the customs, as you know, are almost the same as in China, we heard a very melodic antiphon from four actresses, which ended in a refrain. In Canton, where we were astonished at the excellent acting from a company of actors from Nanking, we were surprised by an opera in which not only was there very natural recitative, but which included very expressive arias, carried out with very precise tempo and accompanied by measured instrumental music.

The finest music that we heard was at the first presentation of the ambassador in Dschecho. When the Emperor ascended the throne, and a religious silence had spread everywhere, we were surprised by the enchanting sounds from the back of the large tent. The gentle sound, the simple melody, the pure sequence of tones, the solemn progression of a slow hymn gave, at least to my soul, that spirit that transports the sentimental dreamer into unknown regions, but can never be described by cold analysis of reason. I remained doubtful for a long time as to whether I heard human voices or instruments, until the latter were seen by some. They consisted of stringed instruments and a kind of bamboo panpipes<sup>6</sup>. The hymn resembled the hymns of protestant churches, but had no middle voices. The *Schiackpann*-wooden sticks and the *Scuchu* drums, which generally indicate the beat in Chinese music, and deafen the listeners, were fortunately left out here; but at every bar a metal gong was heard, indicating the beginning and the tone of what followed,

---

<sup>1</sup> See Clarke, 'An encounter with Chinese music'.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the 4-stringed yueqin or moon lute.

<sup>3</sup> Erhu, the traditional bowed 2-stringed instrument.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly a frame drum beaten with wooden sticks.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly shu chu, bronze drums.

<sup>6</sup> Bambu-Syrinx.

and was by no means disagreeable. I was prevented from observing anything more by distance from the musicians and shortsightedness.

The various national dances that we saw on the same occasion, all had their own music; but we were too far off and had too short a time at the place where they were dancing for me to observe anything particular, and moreover, the music was not at all itself attractive. I cannot determine with certainty what the Chinese thought of the music that the Ambassador brought with him, since I never especially asked about it. Although I heard that, when others asked about it, the mandarins gave the answer: *Chau*, i.e. good. However, our interpreter said to me that he was very much afraid that they didn't like our music, and only expressed their approval out of politeness, which is so characteristic of them. When we had music, I observed the expressions of both the more distinguished and the general Chinese and Tartars, but could never discover evidence of unmistakable pleasure in anything. The foreign, clever handling of our musical instruments, learned through long practice, was naturally bound to arouse their attention.

The military music of the Chinese is most miserable, without beat, without melody and without the slightest expression. Reed pipes and horns provide from five to six tones here and there, without the slightest variation, and are also blown for hours. Sometimes you come across a kind of cornet that makes a real wolf howl. I can't finish commenting on Chinese music without mentioning the river songs from the northern provinces, especially Petscheli and Schantong, which delighted us all so much.

Our stay in Macao, which was for about two months, was the only rest time for the embassy since their departure from England. And if Macao had been considerable, like the silver-rich and paradisaical Manilla not far away, this idleness would not have been fruitless, and would have been doubly refreshing. But Macao, although unimportant in itself, is remarkable because of the Portuguese settlement. This island, which the Chinese call Gaumin<sup>1</sup>, does not belong entirely to the Portuguese, as some erroneously believe; only a small part of it, which is separated from the rest of the island by an isthmus and a wall built upon it, was granted to them at the time of their power in the Indian waters. But even here, they are not master of all. Besides the great tribute of 500,000 ducats which they pay to the Chinese Emperor, the Governor must be careful not to get into a dispute with the Chinese mandarins who live in the city, since there are more Chinese in the city than Portuguese, and the latter would be easily expelled if they were to violate the conditions laid down, or wished to punish the Chinese for their constant encroachments in the Portuguese areas\*.

\*The Chinese mandarins treat the Portuguese Governor with the greatest respect.

Although the fortifications of the city are good, they would be of no use, since Macau is rocky except for a few unsatisfactory fields, and all the food comes from the islands within the Bocca Tigris. Cutting off the supplies would have the most terrible consequences within a few days. Thus, the Portuguese live peacefully and close with each other. The Governor holds his position for three years, and must pass it on to someone else. He goes to Goa to settle his accounts, and, if he performs well, to obtain a more eminent position of command. One can get a measure of the devotion of the inhabitants by the relatively large number of churches and monasteries, and the following is good proof of the orthodox thinking of the Portuguese. They had recently sent envoys to Peking to argue against an unjust imposition on Macao. Though they did not immediately obtain what they wanted, the Chinese in Macao were exceedingly vexed at this mission, and took revenge in a manner very sensitive to the Portuguese. For three days they carried through the streets all their idols (Dschos, i.e. called Dios by the Europeans) from Macao and the neighbouring area. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Early accounts, particularly German, suggested that the Chinese name for Macao was Gaumin .



Portuguese were so horrified by this idolatry, that none of them dared leave their house at this time. The Bishop offered the Chinese a large sum to refrain from this demonstration, but this provoked the Chinese even more to keep up their teasing for as long as they saw fit.

The Jesuits had a small cloister on a nearby small island, where one can still see the ruins. Since the European merchants were only allowed to stay in Canton for a few months, they spent the remaining time of the year in Macao. The English, Dutch, Swedes, French and Spanish have a well-built Factory here, where they also live, except the English, who are by far the most numerous and prosperous, and apart from the heads of the Company, have moved into individual, spacious houses, built and furnished in the English style, though belonging to the Portuguese. The trade in Macao has decreased so much, and the Portuguese there are so lazy and careless in seeking new sources of help, that all live in great poverty. Even the so-called rich amongst them get interest from renting out their homes to strangers. The considerable sums which are taken from the foreign traders, especially the English, flow mainly to the industrious Chinese. They manufacture and provide everything that the Europeans find necessary; they build all the houses, and nothing that they are paid for is too low or difficult for them. They are also almost the only servants for the foreigners, though the Portuguese have negro slaves.

Many of the inhabitants live in such miserable conditions, that they are not ashamed to do a trade with their women, about which the most scandalous stories are on everyone's lips here. This poverty of the Portuguese is given as the main reason for the total lack of any social connection between their families and foreigners, although the extreme differences in manners, mutual ignorance of the other's language, Portuguese jealousy, and the differences in religion, contribute not a little to it. Not least, the English traders are hated by the local Bishop and the rest of the clergy as the worst of heretics. That the English at least have a community however, along with the rest of the European foreigners, is due more to the peculiarity of the customs of this nation than for other reasons. The Propaganda has always had a Procurator in Macao who sends the missionaries in the provinces their money, Chinese Christians to Italy for their education, and distributes newly-arrived missionaries to their dioceses. There is also a French Procurator here, formerly maintained by the *Missions étrangères*<sup>1</sup>, now totally abandoned however, without any other support. Both these clerics are men with the most irreproachable and amiable manners.

The beautiful Portuguese poem, the *Lusiades*<sup>2</sup>, which has lately become popular from Mickle's<sup>3</sup> English translation, accompanied with extensive annotations, was written in Macao by Camoens. The place where the poet liked to sit is still known; he chose a hollow in a raised rock which was just enough to form a comfortable seat<sup>4</sup>. The view from there covers various small islands which form a very picturesque grouping, at the rising and setting of the sun, when the sea is still. From here he could best observe the sea, when, lashed by the notorious typhoons, it rose in towering waves and broke on the shores with the roar of distant thunder. Here he had the whole Indian ocean before him, the scene of his nation's greatest victories, which he has immortalised. In short, the place does not fail to excite the imagination of a poet.

Macao is healthy, although the summer months are so warm that the English sailors have a saying: "Hell is only separated from Macao by a sheet of paper." The nearby Thief Islands are still

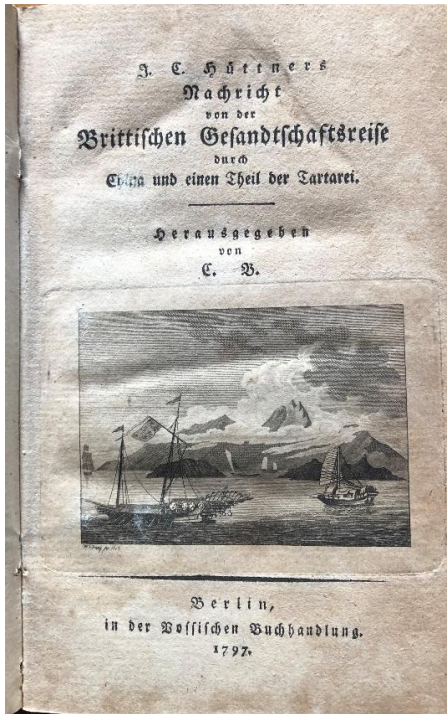
<sup>1</sup> Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris, established in 1658.

<sup>2</sup> The *Lusiades*, by Luís de Camões (Camoens), published in 1572, is the national epic of Portugal, largely based on Vasco De Gama's voyage to India, and others.

<sup>3</sup> W J Mickle, regarded as the first English Portuguese scholar, published his translation in 1776. It went through a number of editions, and has attracted criticisms for taking some liberties with the text, including inserting 300 lines on a naval engagement not in the original, and omitting text unfavourable to de Gama.

<sup>4</sup> Staunton, 'An Authentic Account', vol 2, p. 591, provides an illustration of this.

inhabited by Chinese pirates, who do a lot of damage to incoming and outgoing boats between Canton and Macao. To a European, it might seem easy to destroy these pirates, but the Chinese Government is either too unconcerned or too incapable of driving out these murderers.



**Explanation of the Vignette** [The explanation is on the final page in Hüttner's text. The Vignette is on the title page.]

The peak of Lantao, near the entrance to Bocca Tigris, after an original copper engraving from Meares' Travels\*.

The large ship is a Chinese galley.

The other is a Chinese chop-boat, loaded for the European trade.

The small vessels are Chinese sampans or fishing boats.

\*Meares, John, 'Voyages made in the Years 1788, and 1789 from China to the North West Coast of America'. London, Logographic Press, 1790.

## References

Anderson, A., *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China, in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794; Containing the Various Circumstances of the Embassy, with Accounts of Customs and Manners of the Chinese; and a Description of the Country, Towns, Cities, &c. &c.*, J. Debrett, London, 1795.

Andrade, T., *The Gunpowder Age: China, Military Innovation, and the Rise of the West in World History*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2016.

Barrow, J., *Travels in China, containing descriptions, observations, and comparisons, made and collected in the course of a short residence at the Imperial palace of Yue-Min-Yuen, and on a subsequent journey through the country from Peking to Canton. In which it is attempted to appreciate the rank that this extraordinary empire may be considered to hold in the scale of civilized nations.*, T Cadell and W Davies, London, 1804.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Reise durch China von Peking nach Canton im Gefolge der Grossbritannischen Gesandtschaft in den Jahren 1793 und 1794.*, Weimar, 1804.

\_\_\_\_\_, *A Voyage to Cochin China, in the Years 1792 and 1793...*, Cadell and Davies, London, 1806.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Some account of the public life, and a selection from the unpublished writings of the Earl of Macartney. The latter consisting of extracts from an account of the Russian empire; a sketch of the political history of Ireland; and a journal of the Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China. With an Appendix for each volume.* T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1807.

Clarke, D., 'An encounter with Chinese music in mid-18th-century London'. *Early Music*, 38, 2010, pp. 543–557.

Dabringhaus, S., *Nachricht von der Britischen Gesandtschaftreise nach China 1792-1794*, Thorbecke, Stuttgart, 1996

Gedan, P., *Johann Christian Hüttner : Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geographie*, C. G. Nauman, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 38.

Harrison, H., *The Perils of Interpreting*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2021.

Holmes, S., *The journal of Mr Samuel Holmes, Serjeant-Major of the XIth Light Dragoons, during his attendance, as one of the guard on Lord Macartney's Embassy to China and Tartary. 1792-3.* W. Bulmer & Co., London, 1798.

Jefcoate, G., *An ocean of literature; John Henry Bohte and the Anglo-German book trade in the early nineteenth century*, George Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, Zurich, 2020.

Le Comte, L., *Memoirs and Observations... made in a late Journey through the Empire of China.* Benj. Tooke & Sam. Buckley, London, 1697.

Osbeck, P., *Reisen nach Ostindien und China. Nebst O. Toreens Reisen nach Suratte u. C. G. Ekbergs Nachricht von der Landwirthschaft der Chineser. Aus dem Swedischen v. G. J. Georgi.* Koppe, Rostock, 1765.

Peyerfitte, A., *The collision of two civilisations: the British expedition to China in 1792–4*, London, Harvill, 1993.

Proudfoot, W.J., *Biographical memoir of James Dinwiddie, L.L.D., astronomer in the British Embassy to China, 1792, '3, '4, afterwards Professor of Natural Philosophy in the College of Fort William, Bengal: embracing some account of his travels in China and residence in India. Compiled from his notes and correspondence by his grandson William Jardine Proudfoot.* Edward Howell, Liverpool, 1868.

Ratzel, F., 'Hüttner, Johann Christian', *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 13, 1881, p. 480. URL: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd117053759.html#adbcontent> Accessed March 2022).

Sonnerat, P., *Voyage aux Indes orientales et à la Chine, fait par ordre de Louis XVI, depuis 1774 jusqu'en 1781; dans lequel on traite des moeurs, de la religion, des sciences et des arts des Indiens, des Chinois, des Pégouins et des Madégasses; suivi d'observations sur le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, les îles de France et de Bourbon, les Maldives, Ceylan, Malacca, les Philippines et les Moluques, et de recherches sur l'histoire naturelle de ces pays, etc., etc.*, Chez l'Auteur, Froullé, Nyon, Barrois, Paris, 1782.

Staunton, G.L., *An authentic account of an embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China; including cursory observations made, and information obtained, in travelling through that ancient empire, and a small part of Chinese Tartary. Together with a relation of the voyage undertaken on the occasion by His Majesty's ship The Lion, and the ship Hindostan, in the East India Company's service, to the Yellow Sea, and Gulf of Peking; as well as of their return to Europe; with notices of the several places where they stopped.....*, W Bulmer and Co. for G. Nicol, London, 1797.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Reise der Englischen Gesandtschaft an der Kaiser von China in den Jahren 1792 und 1793*, Heinrich Gessner, Zurich, 1798-99.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Voyage Voyage dans l'Intérieur de la Chine, et en Tartarie, Fait Dans Les Années 1792, 1793 et 1794, par Lord Macartney.....Traduit de l'Anglais, avec des Notes, par J. Castéra*. F. Buisson, Paris, 1798, 1799. Second edition.

Staunton, G. T., *Memoirs of the chief incidents of the public life of Sir George Thomas Staunton. One of the King's Commissioners to the Court of Peking, and afterwards for some time member of Parliament for South Hampshire, and for the borough of Portsmouth*. Printed for Private Circulation, L. Booth, London, 1856.

Wright, T., Evans, R.H. *Historical and descriptive account of the caricatures of James Gillray, comprising a political and humorous history of the latter part of the reign of George the Third*. Henry G. Bohn, London, 1851.