RAS History Competition 2016

RAS China in Shanghai

The RAS, originally established between 1823 and 1952 in Shanghai returned to China in 2006 when a branch was established in Hangzhou. Its activities were transferred to Shanghai in early 2007 and in September that year under the name of The RAS China in Shanghai it formally reconvened the activities of the North China Branch of the RAS. The Society is very aware of the need to build upon its fine tradition and to embrace the challenges and opportunities it faced in the past, as well as to develop its activities and interests for a wide audience today. Apart from offering a broad range of talks and events the Society has resurrected its journal and has established a new library for the benefit of our members, scholars and the public.

To engage younger members and schools across the region the society is establishing a History Competition – Pilot Programme. Based on the society and college competitions in the UK the essay competition aims to encourage the reading and study of Chinese history amongst younger age groups.

Aims and Guidelines:

The competition gives English speaking students two opportunities to engage with Chinese History. The organizers are interested in providing an occasion for independent research, to encourage curiosity and reflection in those who have studied Chinese History before and those who have not. To this end – there are two strands to the competition.

The first – for older students, is a full essay – this is based on the collegiate essay competitions that many of the RAS council would have entered when they were at school or college. These can still be found today sponsored by Cambridge and Oxford Colleges. The second is a source analysis this is for younger boys and girls who with some assistance could easily answer the questions.

The essay title have been chosen to take account of the wealth of historical resources available and to encourage the widest possible approach to investigation.

Competition rules:

1. Essays or source answers must be submitted electronically as a word document in an e mail –
   to .....
2. The e mail title must be in the following format:
   a. Name of entrant/Age/title of essay
3. Each essay must contain the following details on the first page:
   a. Name
   b. DoB
   c. The first language of the entrant (allowances will be made for non-native English
      Speakers)
   d. School attended in Shanghai
   e. Title of the essay
4. The word document should be formatted in Calibri font, size 12. Each page should be numbered and endnotes should be used.

5. Word limits must be adhered to. The word limit refers to the body of the text and does not include title, personal details or endnotes. (Essay 2000 words, source Question 750 words)

6. By entering an essay you are guaranteeing that it is the work, and only the work of the entrant named at the top of the paper. Each essay will be submitted to an online plagiarism check.

Prizes:

First prize in each category will be the publication of the Essay in the Society’s journal during the following year. A letter of commendation from the society signed by the society president and a family membership of the society for the following year 2016-2017.

Each entrant will receive a letter acknowledging their participation.

No feedback will be offered on essays entered.
**Competition Categories**

**Category 1 The Essay: – for pupils between 16 and 19 (who are still at high school)**

Write an essay that answers this question:

*‘Analyze the impact on China of any person or event between 1206 and 1945’*

The essay can be no longer than 2000 words

It is expected that boys and girls will be able to utilize text books and other resources to complete their essay. The markers will look for evidence of, and will give additional credit for the use of primary source material (even when it has been taken from secondary works). Particular credit will be given to those who have sought out material from the RAS library.

**Category 2: The Sources – for pupils between 12 and 15**

Candidates can select any piece of primary source material from the History of China between 1206 and 1945 and use it to answer the following question:

*What does this source reveal about Chinese History? Refer to aspects of the source and your own knowledge in your answer.*

Where the candidate selects his or her own source material it should be noted credit will be given for the suitability of the source. It is expected that boys and girls will be able to utilize text books and other resources to complete their answer. The markers will look for evidence of, and will give additional credit for the use of primary source material (even when it has been taken from secondary works). Particular credit will be given to those who have sought out material from the RAS library.

The source used must be included as an appendix to the answer

The answer must be no longer than 750 words

The RAS has used the excellent Fordham University Sourcebook to select three sample sources that could be used.
The Taiping Rebellion 1851-1864

Hung Xiuquan (1814-1864) was the son of a farmer and an aspiring Chinese bureaucrat. He came under the influence of Christian missionaries, and reached the conclusion that he was the younger brother of Jesus sent to found the Heavenly Kingdom on earth. Faced with the collapse of Qing dynasty rule (under Western onslaught), Hung tapped into the deep millenarianism of the Chinese peasantry (previously expressed in Buddhist terms) and began a rebellion - the Taiping Rebellion ("Taiping tien-qu" means the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace").

There were many other revolts, but this was by far the most serious. Lasting from 1851 to 1864 it took control of large swerves of south and central China, including the southern capital of Nanking. There a theocratic military government was established.

Although it was millenarian in form, the Taiping leaders adopted many policies which would later become the marks of modernizers in China: prohibition of opium smoking, gambling, the use of tobacco and wine, polygamy, the sale of slaves, and prostitution. They promoted the equality of the sexes: they abolished foot-binding and appointed of women as administrators and officers in the Taiping army. They also tried to abolish the private ownership of land and property, and they developed a program for the equal distribution of land.

The following is an excerpt from the basic document of the Taiping Kingdom, called "The Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom." published in 1853.

All fields are to be divided into nine grades: every mou [6.6 mou equal one acre] of land, which during the two seasons, both early and late, can produce 1,200 catties [of grain] shall be ranked as a superior field of the first class; every mou that produces 1,100 catties as a superior field of the second class; and every mou that produces 1,000 catties as a superior field of the third class. Every mou that produces 900 catties shall be considered as a medium field of the first class; every mou that produces 800 catties as a medium field of the second class; and every mou that produces 700 catties as a medium field of the third class. Every mou that produces 600 catties shall be considered as an inferior field of the first class; every mou that produces 500 catties as an inferior field of the second class; and every mou that produces 400 catties as an inferior field of the third class. One mou of superior field of the first class shall be considered equal to a mou and one tenth of a superior field of the second class, and to a mou and two tenths of a superior field of the third class; also to a mou and three and a half tenths of a medium field of the first class, to a mou and five tenths of a medium field of the second class, and to a mou and seven and a half tenths of a medium field of the third class; also to two mou of an inferior field of the first class, to two mou and four tenths of an inferior field of the second class, and to three mou of an inferior field of the third class.

The division of land must be according to the number of individuals, whether male or female; calculating upon the number of individuals in a household, if they be numerous, then the amount of land will be larger, and if few, smaller; and it shall be a mixture of the nine classes. If there are six persons in a family, then for three there shall be good land and for three poorer
land, and of good and poor each shall have half. All the fields in the empire are to be cultivated by all the people alike. If the land is deficient in one place, then the people must be removed to another, and if the land is deficient in another, then the people must be removed to this place. All the fields throughout the empire, whether of abundant or deficient harvest, shall be taken as a whole: if this place is deficient, then the harvest of that abundant place must be removed to relieve it, and if that place is deficient, then the harvest of this abundant place must be removed in order to relieve the deficient place; thus, all the people in the empire may together enjoy the abundant happiness of the Heavenly Father, Supreme Lord and Great God. There being fields, let all cultivate them; there being food, let all eat; there being clothes, let all be dressed; there being money, let all use it, so that nowhere does inequality exist, and no man is not well fed and clothed.

All men and women, every individual of sixteen years and upwards, shall receive land, twice as much as those of fifteen years of age and under. Thus, those sixteen of years of age and above shall receive a mou of superior land of the first class, and those of fifteen years and under shall receive half that amount, five tenths of a mou of superior land of the first class; again, if those of sixteen years and above receive three mou of inferior land of the third class, then those of fifteen years and below shall receive half that amount, one and one half mou of inferior land of the third class.

Throughout the empire the mulberry tree is to be planted close to every wall, so that all women may engage in rearing silkworms, spinning the silk, and making garments. Throughout the empire every family should keep five hens and two sows, which must not be allowed to miss their proper season. At the time of harvest, every sergeant shall direct the corporals to see to it that of the twenty five families under his charge each individual has a sufficient supply of food, and aside from the new grain each may receive, the remainder must be deposited in the public granary. Of wheat, pulse, hemp; flax, cloth, silk, fowls, dogs, etc., and money, the same is true; for the whole empire is the universal family of our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God. . . . For every twenty five families there must be established one public granary, and one church where the sergeant must reside. Whenever there are marriages, or births, or funerals, all may go to the public granary; but a limit must be observed, and not a cash be used beyond what is necessary. Thus, every family which celebrates a marriage or a birth will be given one thousand cash and a hundred catties of grain....

In every circle of twenty five families, the work of the potter, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the mason, and other artisans must all be performed by the corporal and privates; when free from husbandry they are to attend to these matters. Every sergeant, in superintending marriages and funeral events in the twenty-five families, should in every case offer a eucharistic sacrifice to our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God; all corrupt ceremonies of former times are abolished.

In every circle of twenty five families, all young boys must go to church every day, where the sergeant is to teach them to read the Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as the book of proclamations of the true ordained Sovereign. Every Sabbath the corporals must lead the men and women to the church, where the males and females are to sit in separate rows. There they will listen to sermons, sing praises, and offer sacrifices to our Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God....

In the creation of an army, for each 13,156 families there must first be a corps general; next there must be five colonels under the command of the corps general; next there must be five
captains under the command of each colonel, altogether twenty five captains; next each of the twenty five captains must have under his command five lieutenants, altogether 125 lieutenants; next each of the 125 lieutenants must have under his command four sergeants, altogether 500 sergeants; next each of the 500 sergeants must have under his command five corporals, altogether 2,500 corporals; next each of the 2,500 corporals must have under his command four privates, altogether 10,000 privates, the entire army numbering altogether 13,156 men.

After the creation of an army, should the number of families increase, with the increase of five families there shall be an additional corporal; with the increase of twenty six families there shall be an additional sergeant; with the increase of 105 families there shall be an additional lieutenant; with the increase of 526 families there shall be an additional captain; with the increase of 2,631 families there shall be an additional colonel; with the total increase of 13,156 families there shall be an additional corps general. Before a new corps general is appointed, the colonel and subordinate officers shall remain under the command of the old corps general; with the appointment of a corps general they must be handed over to the command of the new corps general.

Within [the court] and without, all the various officials and people must go every Sabbath to hear the expounding of the Holy Bible, reverently offer their sacrifices, and worship and praise the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God. On every seventh seven, the forty ninth day, the Sabbath, the colonel, captains, and lieutenants shall go in turn to the churches in which reside the sergeants under their command and expound the Holy books, instruct the people, examine whether they obey the Commandments and orders or disobey the Commandments and orders, and whether they are diligent or slothful. On the first seventh seven, the forty ninth day, the Sabbath, the colonel shall go to a certain sergeant's church, on the second seventh seven, the forty ninth day, the Sabbath, the colonel shall then go to another sergeant's church, visiting them all in order, and after having gone the round he must begin again. The captains and lieutenants shall do the same.

Each man throughout the empire who has a wife, sons, and daughters amounting to three or four mouths, or five, six, seven, eight, or nine mouths, must give up one to be a soldier. With regard to the others, the widowers, widows, orphaned, and childless, the disabled and sick, they shall all be exempted from military service and issued provisions from the public granaries for their sustenance.

Throughout the empire all officials must every Sabbath, according to rank and position, reverently present sacrificial animals and offerings, sacrifice and worship, and praise the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God. They must also expound the Holy books; should any dare to neglect this duty, they shall be reduced to husbandmen. Respect this.


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Pierre Loti: When the Allies Entered Peking, 1900

HERE we are at the gates, the double triple gates, deep as tunnels, and formed of the most powerful masonry—gates surmounted by deadly dungeons, each one five stories high, with strange curved roofs—extravagant dungeons, colossal black things above a black inclosing wall. Our horses' hooves sink deeper and deeper, disappear, in fact, in the coal-black dust, which is blinding and all-pervading, in the atmosphere as well as on the ground, in spite of the light rain and the snowflakes which make our faces tingle. Noiselessly, as though we were stepping upon wadding or felt, we pass under the enormous vaults and enter the land of ruin and ashes. A few slatternly beggars shivering in corners in their blue rags, and that is all. Silence and solitude within as well as without these walls. Nothing but rubbish and ruin, ruin. The land of rubbish and ashes, and little gray bricks—little bricks all alike, scattered in countless myriads upon the sites of houses that have been destroyed, or upon the pavement of what once were streets. Little gray bricks—this is the sole material of which Peking was built; a city of small, low houses decorated with a lacework of gilded wood; a city of which only a mass of curious debris is left, after fire and shell have crumbled away its flimsy materials. We have come into the city at one of the corners where there was the fiercest fighting—the Tartar quarter, which contained the European legations. Long straight streets may still be traced in this infinite labyrinth of ruins; ahead of us all is gray or black; to the somber gray of the fallen brick is added the monotonous tone which follows a fire—the gloom of ashes and the gloom of coal. Sometimes in crossing the road they form obstacles, these tiresome little bricks; these are the remains of barricades where fighting must have taken place. After a few hundred meters we enter the street of the legations, upon which for so many months the anxious attention of the whole world was fixed. Everything is in ruins, of course; yet European flags float on every piece of wall; and we suddenly find, as we come out of the smaller streets, the same animation as at Tien-tsin, a continual coming and going of officers and soldiers, and an astonishing array of uniforms. A big flag marks the entrance to what was our legation, two monsters in white marble crouch at the threshold; this is the etiquette for all Chinese palaces. Two of our soldiers guard the door which I enter, my thoughts recurring to the heroes who defended it. We finally dismount, amid piles of rubbish, in an inner square near a chapel, and at the entrance to a garden where the trees are losing their leaves as an effect of the icy winds. The walls about us are so pierced with balls that they look like sieves. The pile of rubbish at our right is the legation proper, destroyed by the explosion of a Chinese mine. At our left is the chancellor's house, where the brave defenders of the place took refuge during the siege, because it was in a less exposed situation. They have offered to take me in there; it was not destroyed, but everything is topsy-turvy, as though it were the day after a battle; and in the room where I am to sleep the plasterers are at work repairing the walls, which will not be finished until this evening. As a new arrival I am taken on a pilgrimage to the garden where those of our sailors who fell on the field of honor were hastily buried amid a shower of balls. There is no grass here, no blossoming plants, only a gray soil trampled by the combatants, crumbling from dryness and cold, trees without leaves and with branches broken by shot, and over all a gloomy, lowering sky, with snowflakes that are cutting. We remove our hats as we enter this garden, for we know not upon whose remains we may be treading. The graves will soon be marked, I doubt not, but have not yet been, so one is not sure as one walks...
of not having under foot some one of the dead who merits a crown. In this house of the chancellor, spared as by a miracle, the besieged lived helter-skelter, slept on a floor space the size of which was day by day decreased by the damage done by shot and shell, and were in imminent danger of death. In the beginning---their number, alas, rapidly diminished---there were sixty French sailors and twenty Austrians meeting death, side by side, with equally magnificent courage. To them were added a few French volunteers, who took their turns on the barricades or on the roofs, and two foreigners, M. and Mme. Rosthorne, of the Austrian Legation. Our officers in command of the defense were Lieutenant Darcy and Midshipman Herber; the latter was struck full in the face by a ball, and sleeps today in the garden. The horrible part of the siege was that no pity was to be expected from the besiegers; if, starved, and at the end of their strength, it became necessary for the besieged to surrender, it was death, and death with atrocious Chinese refinements to prolong the paroxysms of suffering. Neither was there the hope of escape by some supreme sortie; they were in the midst of a swarming city, they were inclosed in a labyrinth of buildings that sheltered a crowd of enemies, and were still further imprisoned by the feeling that, surrounding them, walling in the whole, was the colossal black rampart of Peking. It was during the torrid period of the Chinese summer; it was often necessary to fight while dying of thirst, blinded by dust, under a sun as destructive as the balls, and with the constant sickening fear of infection from dead bodies. Yet, a charming young woman was there with them, an Austrian, to whom should be given one of our most beautiful French crosses. Alone amongst men in distress, she kept an even cheerfulness of the best kind, she cared for the wounded, prepared food for the sick sailors with her own hands, and then went off to aid in carrying bricks and sand for the barricades or to take her turn as watch on the roof. Day by day the circle closed in upon the besieged as their ranks grew thinner and the garden filled with the dead; gradually they lost ground, although disputing with the enemy, who were legion, every piece of wall, every pile of bricks. And when one sees their little barricades hastily erected during the night out of nothing at all, and knows that five or six sailors succeeded in defending them (for five or six toward the end were all that could be spared), it really seems as though there were something supernatural about it all. As I walked through the garden with one of its defenders, and he said to me, "At the foot of that little wall we held out for so many days," and "In front of this little barricade we resisted for a week," it seemed a marvelous tale of heroism.

And their last entrenchment! It was alongside the house, a ditch dug tentatively in a single night, banked up with a few poor sacks of earth and sand; it was all they had to keep off the executioners, who, scarcely six meters away, were threatening them with death from the top of a wall. Beyond is the "cemetary," that is, the corner of the garden in which they buried the dead, until the still more terrible days when they had to put them here and there, concealing the place for fear the graves would be violated, in accordance with the terrible custom of this place. It was a poor little cemetery whose soil had been pressed and trampled upon in close combat, whose trees were shattered and broken by shell. The interments took place under Chinese fire, and an old whiteheaded priest---since a martyr, whose head was dragged in the gutter---said prayers at the grave, in spite of the balls that whistled about him, cutting and breaking the branches.

Toward the end their cemetary was the "contested region," after they had little by little lost much ground, and they trembled for their dead; the enemy had advanced to its very border; they watched and they killed at close quarters over the sleeping warriors so hastily put to rest. If the Chinese had reached this cemtery, and had scaled the last frail trenches of sand and gravel in sacks made of old curtains, then for all who were left there would have been horrible
torture to the sound of music and laughter, horrible dismemberment—nails torn off, feet torn off, disemboweling, and finally the head carried through the streets at the end of a pole. They were attacked from all sides and in every possible manner, often at the most unexpected hours of the night. It usually began with cries and the sudden noise of trumpets and tom-toms; around them thousands of howling men would appear—one must have heard the howlings of the Chinese to imagine what their voices are; their very timber chills your soul. Gongs outside the walls added to the tumult. Occasionally, from a suddenly opened hole in a neighboring house, a pole twenty or thirty feet long, ablaze at the end with oakum and petroleum, emerged slowly and silently, like a thing out of a dream. This was applied to the roofs in the hope of setting them on fire. They were also attacked from below; they heard dull sounds in the earth, and understood that they were being undermined, that their executioners might spring up from the ground at any moment; so that it became necessary, at any risk, to attempt to establish countermines to prevent this subterranean peril. One day, toward noon, two terrible detonations, which brought on a regular tornado of plaster and dust, shook the French Legation, half burying under rubbish the lieutenant in command of the defenses and several of his marines. But this was not all; all but two succeeded in getting clear of the stones and ashes that covered them to the shoulders, but two brave sailors never appeared again. And so the struggle continued, desperately, and under conditions more and more frightful. And still the gentle stranger remained, when she might so easily have taken shelter elsewhere—at the English Legation, for instance, where most of the ministers with their families had found refuge; the balls did not penetrate to them; they were at the center of the quarter defended by a few handfuls of brave soldiers, and could there feel a certain security so long as the barricades held out. But no, she remained and continued in her admirable role at that blazing point, the French Legation—a point which was the key, the cornerstone of the European quadrangle, whose capture would bring about general disaster. One time they saw with their field-glasses the posting of an imperial edict commanding that the fire against foreigners cease. (What they did not see was that the men who put up the notices were attacked by the crowd with knives.) Yet a certain lull, a sort of armistice, did follow; the attacks became less violent. They saw that incendiaries were everywhere abroad; they heard fusillades, cannonades, and prolonged cries among the Chinese; entire districts were in flames; they were killing one another; their fury was fermenting as in a pandemonium, and they were suffocated, stifled with the smell of corpses. Spies came occasionally with information to sell—always false and contradictory—in regard to the relief expedition, which amid ever-increasing anxiety was hourly expected. "It is here, it is there, it is advancing," or, "It has been defeated and is retreating," were the announcements, yet it persisted in not appearing. What, then, was Europe doing? Had they been abandoned? They continued, almost without hope, to defend themselves in their restricted quarters. Each day, they felt that Chinese torture and death were closing in upon them. They began to lack for the essentials of life. It was necessary to economize in everything, particularly in ammunition; they were growing savage—when they captured any Boxers, instead of shooting them they broke their skulls with a revolver. One day their ears, sharpened for all outside noises, distinguished a continued deep, heavy cannonade beyond the great black ramparts whose battlements were visible in the distance, and which inclosed them in a Dantesque circle; Peking was being bombarded! It could only be by the armies of Europe come to their assistance. Yet one last fear troubled their joy. Would not a supreme attack against them be attempted, an effort be made to destroy them before the allied troops could enter? As a matter of fact they were furiously attacked, and this last day, the day of their deliverance, cost the life of one of our officers, Captain Labrousse, who went to join the Austrian commander in the glorious little cemetery of the Legation. But they kept up their resistance, until all at once not a Chinese head
was visible on the barricades of the enemy; all was empty and silent in the devastation about them; the Boxers were flying and the Allies were entering the city!

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Qian Long: Letter to George III, 1793

Qian Long [Ch'ien Lung], (r. 1735-1795) ruled China for much of the 18th century, the last period in which China was strong enough to resist, or better, disdain external influence. Here is letter he sent in response to a request from George III of Britain (r. 1760-1820) for trade privileges. In 1793, while Britain was in the midst of the French Revolutionary situation in Europe, China retained its freedom to act as it wished. But within 50 years, all was to change. By the 1840s the British were able to sail into China's rivers and destroy its fleets.

You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilisation, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your Envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my Court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.

I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your Ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute, I have shown them high favour and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. To manifest my indulgence, I have entertained them at a banquet and made them numerous gifts. I have also caused presents to be forwarded to the Naval Commander and six hundred of his officers and men, although they did not come to Peking, so that they too may share in my all-embracing kindness.

As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court and to be in control of your country's trade with China, this request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. It is true that Europeans, in the service of the dynasty, have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and are never permitted to return home. You are presumably familiar with our dynastic regulations. Your proposed Envoy to my Court could not be placed in a position similar to that of European officials in Peking who are forbidden to leave China, nor could he, on the other hand, be allowed liberty of movement and the privilege of corresponding with his own country; so that you would gain nothing by his residence in our midst.

Moreover, our Celestial dynasty possesses vast territories, and tribute missions from the dependencies are provided for by the Department for Tributary States, which ministers to their wants and exercises strict control over their movements. It would be quite impossible to leave them to their own devices. Supposing that your Envoy should come to our Court, his language and national dress differ from that of our people, and there would be no place in which to bestow him. It may be suggested that he might imitate the Europeans permanently resident in Peking and adopt the dress and customs of China, but, it has never been our dynasty's wish to force people to do things unseemly and inconvenient. Besides, supposing I sent an Ambassador to reside in your country, how could you possibly make for him the requisite arrangements? Europe consists of many other nations besides your own: if each and all demanded to be
represented at our Court, how could we possibly consent? The thing is utterly impracticable. How can our dynasty alter its whole procedure and system of etiquette, established for more than a century, in order to meet your individual views? If it be said that your object is to exercise control over your country's trade, your nationals have had full liberty to trade at Canton for many a year, and have received the greatest consideration at our hands. Missions have been sent by Portugal and Italy, preferring similar requests. The Throne appreciated their sincerity and loaded them with favours, besides authorising measures to facilitate their trade with China. You are no doubt aware that, when my Canton merchant, Wu Chaoping, was in debt to the foreign ships, I made the Viceroy advance the monies due, out of the provincial treasury, and ordered him to punish the culprit severely. Why then should foreign nations advance this utterly unreasonable request to be represented at my Court? Peking is nearly two thousand miles from Canton, and at such a distance what possible control could any British representative exercise?

If you assert that your reverence for Our Celestial dynasty fills you with a desire to acquire our civilisation, our ceremonies and code of laws differ so completely from your own that, even if your Envoy were able to acquire the rudiments of our civilisation, you could not possibly transplant our manners and customs to your alien soil. Therefore, however adept the Envoy might become, nothing would be gained thereby.

Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely, to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfil the duties of the State: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures. This then is my answer to your request to appoint a representative at my Court, a request contrary to our dynastic usage, which would only result in inconvenience to yourself. I have expounded my wishes in detail and have commanded your tribute Envoys to leave in peace on their homeward journey. It behoves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display even greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our Throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter. Besides making gifts (of which I enclose an inventory) to each member of your Mission, I confer upon you, O King, valuable presents in excess of the number usually bestowed on such occasions, including silks and curios-a list of which is likewise enclosed. Do you reverently receive them and take note of my tender goodwill towards you! A special mandate.

In the same letter, a further mandate to King George III dealt in detail with the British ambassador's proposals and the Emperor's reasons for declining them.

You, O King, from afar have yearned after the blessings of our civilisation, and in your eagerness to come into touch with our converting influence have sent an Embassy across the sea bearing a memorial. I have already taken note of your respectful spirit of submission, have treated your mission with extreme favour and loaded it with gifts, besides issuing a mandate to you, O King, and honouring you with the bestowal of valuable presents. Thus has my indulgence been manifested.
Yesterday your Ambassador petitioned my Ministers to memorialise me regarding your trade with China, but his proposal is not consistent with our dynastic usage and cannot be entertained. Hitherto, all European nations, including your own country's barbarian merchants, have carried on their trade with our Celestial Empire at Canton. Such has been the procedure for many years, although our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its own borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. But as the tea, silk and porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces, are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves, we have permitted, as a signal mark of favour, that foreign hongs [merchant firms] should be established at Canton, so that your wants might be supplied and your country thus participate in our beneficence. But your Ambassador has now put forward new requests which completely fail to recognise the Throne's principle to "treat strangers from afar with indulgence," and to exercise a pacifying control over barbarian tribes, the world over. Moreover, our dynasty, swaying the myriad races of the globe, extends the same benevolence towards all. Your England is not the only nation trading at Canton. If other nations, following your bad example, wrongfully importune my ear with further impossible requests, how will it be possible for me to treat them with easy indulgence? Nevertheless, I do not forget the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of sea, nor do I overlook your excusable ignorance of the usages of our Celestial Empire. I have consequently commanded my Ministers to enlighten your Ambassador on the subject, and have ordered the departure of the mission. But I have doubts that, after your Envoy's return he may fail to acquaint you with my view in detail or that he may be lacking in lucidity, so that I shall now proceed . . . to issue my mandate on each question separately. In this way you will, I trust, comprehend my meaning....

(3) Your request for a small island near Chusan, where your merchants may reside and goods be warehoused, arises from your desire to develop trade. As there are neither foreign hongs nor interpreters in or near Chusan, where none of your ships have ever called, such an island would be utterly useless for your purposes. Every inch of the territory of our Empire is marked on the map and the strictest vigilance is exercised over it all: even tiny islets and farling sandbanks are clearly defined as part of the provinces to which they belong. Consider, moreover, that England is not the only barbarian land which wishes to establish . . . trade with our Empire: supposing that other nations were all to imitate your evil example and beseech me to present them each and all with a site for trading purposes, how could I possibly comply? This also is a flagrant infringement of the usage of my Empire and cannot possibly be entertained.

(4) The next request, for a small site in the vicinity of Canton city, where your barbarian merchants may lodge or, alternatively, that there be no longer any restrictions over their movements at Aomen, has arisen from the following causes. Hitherto, the barbarian merchants of Europe have had a definite locality assigned to them at Aomen for residence and trade, and have been forbidden to encroach an inch beyond the limits assigned to that locality.... If these restrictions were withdrawn, friction would inevitably occur between the Chinese and your barbarian subjects, and the results would militate against the benevolent regard that I feel towards you. From every point of view, therefore, it is best that the regulations now in force should continue unchanged....

(7) Regarding your nation's worship of the Lord of Heaven, it is the same religion as that of other European nations. Ever since the beginning of history, sage Emperors and wise rulers have bestowed on China a moral system and inculcated a code, which from time immemorial
has been religiously observed by the myriads of my subjects. There has been no hankering after heterodox doctrines. Even the European (missionary) officials in my capital are forbidden to hold intercourse with Chinese subjects; they are restricted within the limits of their appointed residences, and may not go about propagating their religion. The distinction between Chinese and barbarian is most strict, and your Ambassador's request that barbarians shall be given full liberty to disseminate their religion is utterly unreasonable.

It may be, O King, that the above proposals have been wantonly made by your Ambassador on his own responsibility, or peradventure you yourself are ignorant of our dynastic regulations and had no intention of transgressing them when you expressed these wild ideas and hopes.... If, after the receipt of this explicit decree, you lightly give ear to the representations of your subordinates and allow your barbarian merchants to proceed to Chêkiang and Tientsin, with the object of landing and trading there, the ordinances of my Celestial Empire are strict in the extreme, and the local officials, both civil and military, are bound reverently to obey the law of the land. Should your vessels touch the shore, your merchants will assuredly never be permitted to land or to reside there, but will be subject to instant expulsion. In that event your barbarian merchants will have had a long journey for nothing. Do not say that


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