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The Kowtow.

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I.

WHO would have thought that this old-world custom would once again become the topic of modern conversation, and that "to kowtow" would become an expression in common use throughout the Western world? Now-a-days it is quite usual in Berlin to hear one remark to another: "Ah, it will be a long time before I 'kowtow' to him."

It is true we already make the acquaintance of the term in the higher schools of the West, but there only where old-time lore is crammed into the heads of luckless wights. In his efforts to translate the stately sentences of Cornelius Nepos, the long-suffering third-form boy will, to add to his other miseries, come across a word written in Greek letters, "Proskynein."

The word may be different, but its significance is the same as "kowtow." We have to thank the Athenian Konon for the acquaintance that we, as third-form boys, make with a thing over which older people at a later stage of existence rack their brains. It is said that Konon was once sent as ambassador by the Athenians to Artaxerxes Mnemon. On demanding an audience at the Court, the noble designated to introduce embassies said to Konon: "Certainly you may obtain an audience, but I should ask you whether you would not prefer to express yourself in writing; for at a reception by the king the "proskynein" is indispensable. But, should this condition appear to you to be too onerous, you may charge me with the fulfilment of your mission." Konon thought that, while he personally would be glad to show the king honour, still having regard to the interests of the State he represented, he preferred to transact his business in writing. He, no doubt, recalled the fate of Timagoras who, having likewise been sent by the Athenians as ambassador to Darius, had performed the Persian ceremonial of "proskynein," and for this was afterwards sentenced to death by his fellow-citizens. The proud Athenians considered that by that act Timagoras had degraded the dignity of their town; as though Athens had been a vassal state of the Persian King! "Unius civis humilibus blanditiis totius urbis suae decus Persicæ dominationi submissum graditer ferentes." (Valer. Maxim. VI. 3.)

Another Athenian, however, adapted himself easily enough to the custom and behaved quite in Persian fashion. This was Themistocles. Cornelius Nepos mentions nothing of the event, but we find it described in Plutarch.

It is true, Themistocles did not come to the great king as ambassador, but as an exile, and that fact, no doubt, made it easier for him to place Athenian pride second to political considerations. Upon his request for an audience with the king upon important matters of state he, too, was notified of the usage of the Court by the proper official, at that time the great leader Artabanes. "With you Grecians there was liberty and equality in the ceremonial, but with us the custom is to worship through the king the image of God, the Upholder of all things. Without the 'proskynein' there is no audience." Themistocles obeyed the law: throwing himself on his knees before the king, he touched the ground with his forehead. When the great king discovered who it was that lay thus prostrate before him, he was no less astonished than pleased. Thereupon he gave a great feast, and even while he slumbered at night he was heard saying "Themistocles, the Athenian, is mine!"

But there were few Greeks who found it compatible with their nature to follow the example of Themistocles. With them it went against the grain. As cited in the above case, the "proskynein" was performed by kneeling and throwing oneself upon the ground and then touching the head to the earth. According to the explanation of the Asiatics, the act was one of worship of the godhead contained in the person of the Sovereign, whose very name often expressed that idea. The Greeks, however, only saw in it a human invention, a servile, barbaric, custom, an Asiatic flattery, a humiliation unworthy of the dignity of man. As a matter of fact the whole was indeed an Asiatic production.

So far as can be ascertained, the "proskynein" was first used under Cyrus (Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, VIII., 3). It was part of the court ceremonial of the Medes and Persians. Elsewhere it was also adopted and traces of it can be found in various places. Carthaginian ambassadors, coming to Tunis, prostrated themselves before the Romans. Tigranes, King of Armenia, wished to greet Pompeius in this fashion, but was prevented by the latter from doing so (Plutarch, *Pompeius*). Zenobia introduced it as a custom into her court. (Treb Poll.)

To the Greeks, as to the rest of the Western world, the custom remained hateful and abominable. That this was so is often proved by some noteworthy cases in history. Ambassadors of Darius had been killed in Sparta, and on this account an expiatory mission was sent by the Spartans to the Court of Xerxes. The two envoys were to atone by means of their own death the breach committed against international law. After their arrival in Suza they were admitted to an audience with the great king. On this occasion the Persians tried to compel them to perform the "proskynein." They resisted energetically and said they had not come to perform such a ceremony, but merely as an act of expiation. Undauntedly they appealed to the king in these terms: "King of the Medes, the Lacedemonians have sent us to atone by our death for the death of your ambassadors." To these words

Xerxes' noble reply was that he was not desirous of ranking himself with the Lacedemonians who, by the murder of his ambassadors, had outraged the holiest of human rights. Nor did he now wish to justify the crime of the Lacedemonians by the indirect way of killing their envoys.

With that the "proskynein" was also dropped.

After his immense conquest in Asia, Alexander the Great introduced the Asiatic ceremonial into his Court. To many in his entourage this was far from agreeable. According to Arrian, the philosopher Callisthenes asked him whether he intended to force the freest people on earth, the Grecians, to perform this humiliating obeisance, or whether he only designed it as an insult to the Macedonians? For, said the philosopher, he should bear in mind the lesson furnished the presumptuous Persian kings, in the person of Darius by the Scythes; to Xerxes by the Athenians and Lacedemonians; to Artaxerxes by Clearch and Xenophon; and, lastly, to King Darius by Alexander himself.

Nevertheless, Alexander continued his insistence.

One day Cassander, the son of Antipater, came to the Court and saw how the king was greeted by certain Asiatics with the "proskynein." Brought up in Greek ways, Cassander had never yet seen such a thing and burst into loud laughter thereat. The King was so enraged at this that seizing the former by the hair he dashed his head against the wall.

It is hardly to be imagined that by this forcible treatment Alexander succeeded in converting Cassander to an appreciation of the Persian customs.

To the Grecian world it always remained unacceptable. Like in many other things the Greeks were the opposite of the Orientals. "Unfortunately," says the French savant, Pauthier, whose excellent researches we have so far followed, "this Grecian world is now only a memory."

In another part of the globe this old custom found great acceptance about this time. For from European lands it has ever since been upheld, and comes now after many centuries to be the talk of the day. In East Asia, in the rising Chinese Empire, it was at once adopted. There men prostrated themselves before the Throne of the Sovereign and lowering the head touched the ground therewith. In Chinese this was and is still called the "kowitz."

II.

The reign of the "proskynein" was over in the kingdom of the Medes and Persians when it was adopted as a custom in the Kingdom of the East under the name of the "kowitz."

According to Pauthier (who must be held responsible for all the following accounts) the custom of the "kowitz" is said to have been introduced from the West into the East. Between China and the great Asiatic Monarchies amicable relations had existed for centuries already and embassies came and went between them.

There is no ground whatever for attributing the custom to Confucius' foundation. It is true that hints of knee-bending are found from time to time in the oldest chronicles, but the "Chouli," *i.e.*, the "Book of Rites of the Chou Dynasty" (1122—249 B.C.), mentions no word of the "kowitz." The reception ceremonial of those sovereigns was quite a different one. In the reign of Tsin Shi Huangti, 221-209 B.C. the new custom, with many other West Asiatic usages, may, perhaps, have been introduced into the Chinese Court. But it is certain that at whatever period it may have come into fashion the custom found in China congenial soil and at once took root.

A fact it is that as soon as Western nations come into relations with the Chinese Empire and its rulers, this perennial question of the "kowitz" is raised again.

When towards the year 713 B.C., the Caliph Walid's envoys appeared before the Emperor Kuan Tsung they demanded dispensation from performing the "kowitz." Thereupon they were placed on trial and adjudged worthy of death for committing an unpardonable breach against the etiquette of the land.

Finally they were pardoned by the Emperor. After this came new envoys from the Caliph to explain that in their country men only prostrated themselves before the Supreme Being and never before earthly kings. For this they were severely reprimanded and the matter ended by their performing the "kowitz" in the usual manner.

The same thing was repeated in the case of the three envoys sent by Haroun-al-Raschid in 798; they knelt, prostrated themselves, and then knocked their heads on the earth, an occurrence recorded with much satisfaction in the Annals of the Tang Dynasty.

With the Roman embassies which came to China before and after this time, the question does not appear to have arisen. Chinese historians mention an embassy from Marcus Aurelius in 166, another from Carus in 244, and three later ones from Byzantium, in 643, 1078 and 1371, respectively. Of one mission it is said that it brought presents and of the other tribute. Doubtless the chief object of these embassies was to inaugurate direct commercial relations with China. Perhaps, too, in their efforts to obtain concessions and by reason of their distance from the seat of their home government, their stately Roman pride unbent somewhat. The "kowitz" was not insisted upon in the case of the Byzantine missions; in any event the ambassadors made no demur to following the Court prescription provided.

Active relations existed between the West and the Mongol Emperors during the reigns of the latter rulers. Abel Remusat mentions nine principal efforts of Christian rulers to foster connections with the Mongols and of some fifteen embassies to Europe from the latter, principally to the Pope and the Kings of France. At the courts of the Mongol Sovereigns, who ruled the whole of China at this time, this ceremonial according to Chinese fashion was in use. Scarcely had the European envoys approached the Mongol Emperor's tent, when the question of the "kowitz" was propounded to them.

It is entertaining to read their accounts in this connection and to see in what manner they settled that question, and what they went through in so doing.

In the year 1246, the Franciscan monk, Plano Carpini, accompanied by one other, travelled as the ambassador of Innocent IV. to the Mongols. Already on his journey thither had he been obliged to perform the act of knee-bending at audiences with the two vassal-kings. But neither did this nor the usual ceremony demanded at his reception by the Great Khan appear to have caused him much embarrassment. Only once, and that at the accession of the new ruler, where Carpini figured as a spectator, did he refuse to rank himself with the Mongol Princes, great men, and the people of the land, by prostrating himself before the Sovereign. "For," said he, "we owe him nothing nor are we his subjects." However, the two monks did not seem to have suffered in consequence of this refusal. Still, they heard of others who did not fare as well on like occasions. Thus, a short time before, a Russian grand-duke, Michael, having appeared as vassal at the Court of the Mongol Prince, Baty, was commanded to "kowtow" to the image of the dead Khan, Djingis. The duke refused. "To Baty," said he, "he would willingly bow, but never to the picture of a dead man. As a Christian he could not do such a thing." Thereat he was threatened with death but remained inflexible in his refusal. The Mongol then caused the duke to be so trampled upon in the region of the stomach and abdomen that he died. One of his servants, who had reminded his master of the reward awaiting his martyrdom was, for this offence, beheaded, as was the duke after his death.

Commissioned by the Pope, the Monk Ascellin travelled with three companions to the Mongol Court in 1246. They came into the presence of the Prince Bajothney (Batshu Nuyan) who resided in Persia at that time. They were requested to "kowtow" to Bajothney and worship him "as Son of God ruling on Earth." In great embarrassment the monks inquired first into the significance of the ceremony. A certain Fra Guichard di Cremona, who happened to be present at the time and who had lived for a long time among the Mongols, then explained to the monks that it was not a question of idolatry as they feared, but that the whole was a token of the dependence of the Pope and the entire Romish Church on the Khan, who demanded the same ceremony of all envoys. At this the monks determined rather to die than submit to the custom; firstly, on account of the honour of the Church, and secondly, in order to make no trouble for the Georgians, Armenians, Persians, Greeks, and Turks, who would all regard their submission as a sign of tribute and vassalage. Contempt and ill treatment of the Christians would be the consequence of it. They, therefore, explained that they would be willing to show any token of submission and respect to the Mongol Ruler which might be demanded of priests of God and ambassadors of the Pope, on condition that such tokens should not derogate the dignity of the Christian religion and the liberty of the Church. In fact, they would exhibit such reverence as they were accustomed to do to their chiefs, princes and kings, but the ceremony demanded of them they considered shameful and insulting to their religion and rather than perform it they were willing to die. Should, however, Bajothney become a Christian as was the earnest wish of the Pope and

all Christians, then would they be glad not only to kneel to him, but even to kiss his feet and those of the lowliest of the Mongols, to the glory of God. The Mongols were enraged at these words and abused the monks in the coarsest language, calling them and the Pope dogs, and demanding how dared they, dogs, ask Mongols to become Christians? Bajothney also was furious at the words and ordered the monks to be instantly beheaded. Finally, however, chiefly at the request of one of his six wives, he relented. He desired to send the monks to the Great Khan, but on their refusal to go willingly, he left them in his camp and for nine weeks "treated them as dogs." In vain did they wait day after day at the door of his tent to know his decision. Half dead with hunger and thirst they crept back to their tents at night where often the only meal they found consisted of bread and water. The Mongol officials tried every means of enforcing the "kowitz" from them, but all to no purpose. On being asked how they greeted their rulers at home, Brother Ascellin removed his cowl and bowed his venerable head. This mode of greeting one's superiors did not appeal to the Mongols who considered that, in praying to the cross, Christians worshipped wood and stone. Ascellin replied that it was not wood and stone, but Christ the Redeemer that they worshipped through the symbol of the cross and that such honour could not be arrogated to himself by their Mongol Sovereign. Still Bajothney would not admit the monks to his presence, but after causing them many more hardships and sufferings sent them with letters back to the Pope in which the Pontiff was requested to submit and appear to render homage to the writer.

In the years 1253 and 1254, William of Ruisbroeck, the Minorite, made his famous journey to the land of the Mongols at the command of Saint Louis of France, and which he himself has described. On his way to the Great Khan, Ruisbroeck also passed through the courts of two vassal kings, named Sartach and Batu. At neither of these was the triple prostration demanded; however, at the audience with Batu a remarkable incident took place. When Ruisbroeck was requested to speak, his guide commanded him to kneel to his lord. The monk bent one knee to the earth, "as before a man," but was at once given to understand that he must kneel on both knees. Not daring to refuse, he thought of a means whereby he would still salve his conscience. "I conceived," he said, "to pray to God, so kneeling, I began: Sir, we pray God from Whom all things come and Who has been pleased to bestow on you all these temporal benefits, that He shall add to them spiritual ones, for the former without the latter are both useless and vain. You must also know that you will never obtain spiritual benefits unless you become a Christian, for God hath said: Who believes and is baptized shall be saved, and whoso does not believe shall be damned." At these words Batu smiled and his courtiers began to rub their hands and to mock, for the way in which Ruisbroeck had attempted to escape the "kowitz" was both new and ingenious and must have given cause for many jeering remarks. Still, he had to kneel. At a later date when, before the Great Khan, he behaved in the same way, he was asked whether he and his companion intended to greet the Khan according to the custom of the land or of their own country. He replied: "We are

priests and given to the service of God. The princes and lords of our land do not permit priests to kneel before them. Still, we are willing for the love of our God to submit ourselves to everyone. We have come from very distant countries, and if agreeable to you, we will first thank God for having brought us so far in safety and health, and then do what your lord pleases, on condition that he orders nothing against the honour and service of God." The Khan was satisfied, and so they entered his palace on the 4th of January, 1254, intoning the hymn, "A solis ortus cardini." The Great Khan received them surrounded by all his court ladies and first offered them refreshments. After this the farce of the kneeling was again repeated. On his knees before his host Ruisbroeck began: "We thank God for having brought us far in safety to see and greet the Great Khan Mangu, to whom He has given great power on earth, and we pray our Lord Jesus Christ to bestow on His Majesty a long and happy life." Mangu also replied, but only a little of his answer was intelligible. The interpreter who accompanied the envoys had done too much justice to the liquid fare placed before him and was quite intoxicated. Mangu was likewise not quite himself at that moment. Later Ruisbroeck had another audience with the Great Khan to whom he made "the reverence." From what has gone before this could have meant nothing less than the "kowitz" proper. Whether he again imagined himself to be praying to the Divinity Ruisbroeck does not state. In any event no complaint was registered regarding his breach of prescribed etiquette. At a later date this often occurred: it is conclusive from demands made by the Mongol prince Argun through his envoys to Philip of France that ambassadors of the latter refused to conform to the custom of "kowitzing." Angered at this conduct Argun told the King of France to command his envoys to comport themselves at the Mongol Court according to its ceremonial "as all other peoples, kings, princes and potentates, who come to our court do." All in all the French had unpleasant experiences with their diplomatic missions to the East: these were accepted as an act of homage from vassals, and found expression in the question of the "kowitz" alone. In the meantime relations between the West and Far East ceased and, for a time, the bone of contention was set aside.

The celebrated Polos, from Venice, who came to Peking as private individuals in the same century as Ruisbroeck to the court of Kublai Khan (at that time Khanbaligh), behaved among the Mongols as Mongols and among the Chinese as Chinese. They adapted themselves to the customs and habits of the land: to them, therefore, the "kowitz" presented no problem for solution. They performed the ceremony as would the inhabitants.

III.

The "kowitz" question was raised again in the 16th century when the European Powers once more sent embassies to China. Portuguese, Dutchmen, Russians, and English, appeared in Peking in the following centuries and sought audiences at court. While some performed the prescribed ceremony, others refused. With every new mission the question was advanced and was treated anew. When one envoy obtained some

advantage, the other would try to wrest it from him. Whatever one did, whether he performed the "kowitz" or not, he was sure to become a source of annoyance to another and to be the occasion for bitter remarks.

The Batavian Dutch despatched a mission to the Emperor Shun Chi in 1655, the members of which all performed the "kowitz" at the Court, for the Dutch have never shown themselves ultra-conservative or difficult to treat with in their relations towards East Asiatics. The same may be said of their second and third missions. In the latter, not only did they "kowitz" in the reception-hall, but on one occasion even in one of the courts of the palace when the Emperor happened to be borne in his chair. As a Frenchman remarked, it was an action *sans façon*, but the Hollanders nevertheless touched their foreheads to the earth. They had come to present their congratulations on the sixtieth anniversary of the Emperor K'ien Lung's reign. The Sovereign upon consideration thought that mayhap too much had been demanded of the Dutchmen, and he commanded that on their return journey the envoys should be treated with the utmost respect and attention. They should not be able to say they had been less graciously received than the English, nor accuse the Chinese, as a nation, of impoliteness. Thus the mission left the court loaded with gifts and charged with an amicable and paternal letter from the aged Emperor to the Stadtholder. This was the last mission from Holland.

At the time when Neuhof was in Peking with the first embassy, there were there envoys from Russia. They refused to "kowitz" and had therefore to return without having attained the object of their visit. They had desired to establish commercial relations between Russia and China but declined to be treated as Chinese vassals even in return for concessions they might obtain. Neuhof, who was the *entrepreneur* of the Dutch Mission, and who, with his fellows had "kowitz" when and where it was expected of them, spoke very bitterly of the attitude adopted by the Russians. In his book which appeared at a later period in Amsterdam, he caused the following relating to the Russians to be printed in large type. "There are people who have been so taken up by their pride and conceit that they preferred rather to remain firm and inflexible in these, than descend a little from their pedestals according to the demands of time and place."

In the year 1667 a second Portuguese Embassy appeared in Peking. The members "kowitz" and for this were rewarded with honours.

Very differently from the first Russian Embassy did the second one of 1693 comport itself. Previous to this there had been negotiations over the regulation of the frontier between Chinese and Russian territories which were brought to a conclusion by the Treaty of Nerchinsk. For over eighteen months had the Russian Embassy travelled by land. Isbrand Ides has given us a description of it. He recounts that at the reception by the Emperor the Ambassador had made the "official obeisance in a most humble way." From this, and as Ides expressly mentions that in one instance obeisance was made according to European mode, we may conclude that, on all other occasions, the Chinese custom prevailed, and the "kowitz" was performed.

In 1720, the fourth Russian Ambassador, Leo Ismailoff, entered Peking with a brilliant suite of some one hundred attendants. At this time it was the intention of Peter the Great to establish a permanent Embassy in Peking and, on this account, he requested the Emperor Kang Hsi to permit his representative to reside in Peking till recalled. Ismailoff at first refused to perform the "kowitz." According to Chinese records the difficulty was overcome by a Mandarin of high rank first "kowitzing" to the letters of the Emperor of Russia. Thereupon Ismailoff performed the ceremony before the Emperor of China. Previous to this he had deemed the act humiliating and degrading. Bell, the physician to the Embassy, however, gives a different account of the incident. Ismailoff about to present his credentials to the Emperor was told to lay them upon a table. This done, the Emperor made a sign, but thereat Ismailoff seized the papers and took them to the Emperor, and then, bending his knee, laid them before him. The Sovereign touched them with his hand and said, that he so esteemed and respected the Czar that he had dispensed his ambassador from observing Chinese etiquette at the presentation of the letters. The ambassador's suite in the meantime had remained without the reception-hall. Already it was thought that everything had been happily accomplished when the Master of Ceremonies led the ambassador back and signed to him to "kowitz." The efforts of the Russians to avoid the ceremony were in vain. The "kowitz" was performed.

After the departure of Ismailoff Lange remained in Peking from March, 1721, to July, 1722, as the agent of Russia, trying to obtain for his country liberty to trade with China. He was obliged to withdraw, however, the Emperor refusing to accept his credentials. In reply to a memorial presented by him he was given very plainly to understand that the Chinese Government did not wish to precipitate complications by the admission of Russian merchants.

In 1727 Count Sawa Vladislavitch arrived in Peking to revise the Treaty of Nerchinsk. As the result of his efforts the Treaty of 1728 was made, in which it was stipulated that not more than 200 Russians might come to Peking in the course of three years; at the same time a religious mission was established which consisted of six clerical and four lay members, with its permanent quarters in Peking.

In respect of the etiquette the Chinese on their part yielded in some points to the Russians, among others, the latter were permitted to hand the credentials to the Emperor himself instead of laying them upon a table.

When Don Metello Susa was sent to Peking by the Portuguese in the same year, he heard of the privilege granted to the Russians and demanded the same for himself. Finally he obtained certain permissions by special favour from the Emperor. The displeasure of the Chinese ministers fell upon the Jesuit Father, Parennin, for having disclosed the matter to the Portuguese. One of the Emperor's brothers reproached him bitterly in these terms: "Has the King of Portugal sent his ambassador for the purpose of reading the Russian records? Should these have mentioned that Princes of the Blood had 'kowitzed' to the Russian envoy, would Metello have the right to demand the same honour for himself? What do we care whether or not Metello

comes to our Court? Do we reap any benefit from it? He says he came to thank the Emperor and to congratulate him on his accession. That is agreeable enough to us; but should he not have come it would have made no difference to us. Scarcely has he arrived but he annoys us with trifles; to-day it is this, to-morrow that"

The audience took place at a later date. The "kowtow" was performed, and Don Metello charmed the whole Court by the exactness with which he carried out this part of the ceremony. The Emperor considered him agreeable and well-bred. On his way to Peking he had strewn gold broadcast. At the farewell audience he received on his knees a golden goblet of wine from the Emperor's hand.

All these envoys as well as those that came after found Europeans at the Chinese Court who, in the matter of "kowtowing," might have served as an example to them. These were the Jesuit Fathers who enjoyed great favour with some of the Emperors, and who, conducting themselves entirely according to Chinese custom, also included the "kowtow" in the code.

In 1703 Lord Macartney arrived in China as the chief of the first English Embassy to that country and which had cost a great sum to get together. He was determined to "kowtow" only if the same ceremony should be accorded his own Sovereign. After negotiating on this matter, it was agreed that Lord Macartney should conduct himself towards the Emperor of China as he had been accustomed to towards his own royal master. Consequently, when presenting his letters, he bent one knee before the Emperor, ignoring all else which pertained to the ceremony of the "kowtow." The occurrence was witnessed by the English, one German, and many other Europeans present in Peking at that time. Later on the Roman Catholic Missionary de Grammont attributed the little success achieved by this brilliant embassy to the fact that, without giving sufficient reason for their course of action, the English had failed in fulfilling the ceremonial of the land. Besides this there are other references to this matter.

When in 1816 Lord Amherst came to China with the second English mission the question was raised once again. According to Chinese custom, the "kowtow" was, as usual, demanded, and Lord Amherst sought means to evade it. He offered to bend one knee three times and bow nine times; he claimed the same privileges as had been accorded to Lord Macartney. Then suddenly it was given out that Lord Macartney *had* "kowtowed." The Emperor himself published an edict in which he maintained having witnessed Lord Macartney "kowtowing" to the Emperor of that date. At this time Count Golowkin on the side of the Russians claimed the same rights as had been Lord Macartney's; the Chinese Court replied that these rights had never been accorded, and that Macartney *had* "kowtowed."

The result of the contention was that Lord Amherst was not received officially. The Emperor informed his subjects in an edict that the English Ambassador had not observed the rules of politeness; that in Tungchou he had indeed agreed to "kowtow," but when all was in readiness for the audience, he had not appeared. Consequently the Emperor had to dismiss him; still, in order not to offend the King

of England, the Emperor had accepted some little things from the gifts presented and had sent back valuable ones.

The Russian Embassy of 1805 had already begun negotiations in Mongolia over the "kowtow" question. The Ambassador wished to be received as Lord Macartney had been. Thereupon a trial was made with him (the Russian envoy.) At a feast given by the Viceroy of Mongolia the ambassador was commanded to "kowtow" to the Imperial Throne. He refused and was consequently not permitted to enter Peking. Neither the Russian envoys of 1808 nor those of 1820 were accorded an audience with the Emperor. Soon after this the situation in the Far East was so changed that the "kowtow" question was also treated from quite another point of view and settled on quite other conditions.

Casting a retrospective glance at the question at issue and considering in what condition it remained till the middle of the past century, it must be admitted that till that time the Chinese remained very consistent in their demands. These rested on a firm and traditional basis.

In the statutes referring to the government of the States of the Manchu Dynasty, the following countries as tributary states were added on: Corea, Liukiu, Tonkin, Cochin China, Siam, the Philippines, Holland, Ava, and the kingdoms of the "Western Ocean" or Europe. A Chinese commentator names as the last: Portugal, Italy and England. Among the kingdoms with which there existed commercial relations Japan, Cambodia, Sweden, Denmark, and France were named. The decisions contained in the "General Ceremonial" of the Manchu Dynasty (published in 1824 in Peking, in 54 volumes) were intended to apply to the ambassadors of all these countries. According to these, foreign ambassadors had to "kowtow": firstly, when delivering their credentials; secondly, at the solemn reception by the Emperor (and then, several times); thirdly, at the presentation of the Emperor's gifts to the ambassadors. The "kowtow" before the Throne consisted in kneeling three times and at each genuflexion to touch the ground with the head three times. The orders effecting the ceremony were to be given by the Master of Ceremonies: "Kneel, prostrate yourself to the earth, arise, etc."

The attitude of foreigners in regard to this question was, as has been previously indicated, variable and doubtful. The matter was difficult of solution. It was based on no written commands or prohibitions. Resistance to this Asiatic ceremonial arose chiefly from disinclination to accomplish an act which was degrading to the dignity of man, from the standpoint of the Westerner and which also, so to speak, stamped the one performing it a vassal of the Chinese Emperor.

The worst feature in the matter was that all were not united in determination to resist the Asiatics in their demands.

Side by side with the disinclination of certain foreigners stood the willingness of politicians to yield to the demands of the Court. From the Athenian Konon down to the Frenchman de Sagrene, most embassies were inclined to sacrifice prejudice to political considerations. It was for the sake of their politics that Dutchmen, Jesuits, Papal envoys and, in some cases, ambassadors of the Czar, performed the "kowtow."

Lord Amherst had been instructed by the English Ministry during his incumbency to conform to the Chinese ceremonial, should he find it necessary for the accomplishment of the object his embassy had in view. When Napoleon heard in St. Helena of the difficulties of the English envoys in China, he opined that the English should have commanded their ambassador to adjust himself to the customs of the Chinese or else not to send him upon the mission at all. "Were I to send an ambassador to China," said he, "I would command him to make himself acquainted with the ceremonial prescribed on appearance before the Emperor, and when demanded of him, to perform it." By their attitude, said Napoleon, the English were liable to lose great commercial advantages.

When in 1844 France sent a mission to China the ambassador was especially instructed by the French Ministry *not* to submit to the Chinese ceremonial. However, Mons. de Sagrene, the ambassador in question, considered that he personally found nothing objectionable in the custom, and that ambassadors must conduct themselves according to the usages of the Court to which they were accredited.

After the victories of the Western Powers over the Chinese, the whole matter acquired a different aspect. From the thirties of the preceding century till 1860 European ambassadors did not appear in the presence of the Chinese Sovereign. After 1860, however, permanent legations were established in Peking and then again envoys were accorded audience with the Emperor. The "kowitz" was not insisted upon, and even should the question have arisen then or afterwards, the ceremony could have only been from the first refused by the foreign ministers. They had now other powerful means by way of support and could afford to remain inflexible in their refusal to accede to Chinese demands. Thenceforth they conducted themselves according to European etiquette, *i.e.*, only bowing before the Emperor.

It may be asked whether on the other hand Chinese envoys were not expected to "kowitz" before European Sovereigns to whose Courts they were accredited. It seems not, and until the present day such a demand seemed hardly possible to become the subject of controversy. Westerners have an only too deeply rooted dislike to this usage, essentially Asiatic.

Whether, however, the question has at last been solved is doubtful; perhaps it will always remain a disputed point as it has hitherto been. Perhaps, also, quite unexpectedly it will be put forward from the European point of view. One aspect of it, which has not been touched upon, may be briefly treated in conclusion.

All over the Chinese Empire a certain mark of reverence, also denominated the "kowitz" it is rendered by Chinese when they officially appear before their judges and officials. In how far this "kowitz" resembles that which is performed before the Emperor is not our purpose to ascertain herein. Whenever European subjects have found themselves in the position of having to appear before Chinese authorities and judges, they have set the custom aside and behaved in European fashion, indifferent to the pleasure or displeasure of the mandarins.

But latterly thousands of Chinese have come under European rule and authority, and these have allowed the Chinese to kneel to *them*. There are not lacking people who, like Cassander before the Macedonian king, laugh and shake their heads over the usage. But whereas in old days this was regarded as an act of worship of the sovereign, and may still be considered such by most Asiatics when this is rendered to him alone, the "kowitz" as performed before officials is, to the masses in China, only a mark of respect and of reverence: and what Chinese authorities may demand of their subordinates, might not Europeans likewise do: if only to maintain their prestige in the eyes of the Asiatics they are set to rule?

