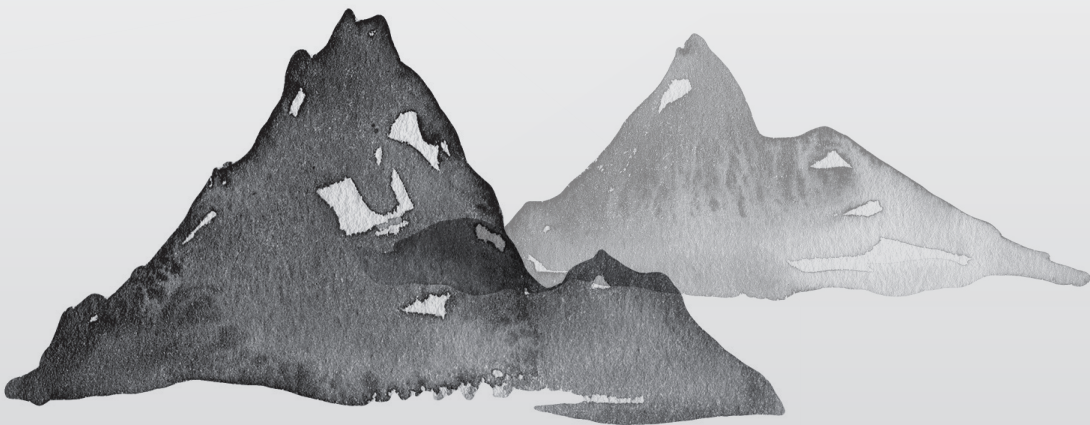


Chapter One



Historical Background 背景介绍





本章介绍第一次鸦片战争前晚清社会的政治、经济和文化背景，以便对晚清社会有一个总体概念。本章重点讨论三个方面：闭关锁国政策、华夷之辨思想和鸦片在中英两国的滥用及其后果。闭关锁国政策的实施使中国人对外界事物一无所知，故在战争中处于劣势。华夷之辨思想影响中国人看清世界趋势、奋起直追、改变落后状况。鸦片的滥用影响了中国人的世界形象。

Drastic changes had taken place between the First Opium War and the end of the Qing Dynasty (1840–1912). The signing of many unequal treaties between China and the foreign countries awoke the Chinese to the serious situation faced by the country. The agonizing moments forced some elites or the scholar officials to open their eyes to the world and began to engage themselves in a series of reforms, such as the Self-Strengthening Movement (洋务运动), the One Hundred Days Reform and the Constitutional Movement. Whether those endeavors were successful or not, China at least took the first hard step toward modernity. People began to peacefully or impartially acknowledge the fact that China was far left behind the other nations and it needed to make a tremendous effort to catch up and join the world-wide competition so as to become a member of the international community. The consensus was that seclusion should be abandoned and integration into the world was the only way out.

When the gate of both China and Japan was pushed open by Western civilizations, the attitudes of the two nations were entirely different. For China, the products of science and technology were something that made the Western countries superior so China urgently needed to learn those things. Accordingly, the Chinese began to invite foreign experts to build up arsenals and manufacture weapons. The Qing government also sent young people to study science and technology abroad. But the progress was still slow and the Self-Strengthening Movement proved to be a failure. However, the Japanese quickly realized that the most important thing to learn was not science and technology but the ideas behind them. So they sent students abroad to study law and politics who came back to change their institutions. The question we ask is: Why does it take China more than 50 years (1840–1895) to respond to Western civilization while it only takes Japan 15 years (1853–1868) before the Meiji Restoration of 1868? And this is also the focus of the whole book. In order to have a better understanding of what had happened, we will provide some



background information regarding the social, economic and political situation prior to the Opium War of 1840. This chapter covers three issues: the Seclusion Policy, the Chinese-barbarians distinction, and the opium abuse in the late Qing Dynasty and the 19th century Britain.

1.1 The Seclusion Policy 闭关锁国政策

The Seclusion Policy refers to the policy China adopted since the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) in order to avoid contacts with other countries by closing the borders. As a matter of fact, China had maintained good relations with its neighboring countries in ancient times. During the Jin and Southern-Northern dynasties (两晋南北朝, AD 222–589), China was trading with some island states in Western Asia and the commodities were basically luxuries, such as wood, spice, coral (珊瑚), incense (香), dye (染料), gem (宝石), opaque glass (不透明玻璃), turmeric (姜黄), styrax (苏合香), and medicine. Due to the introduction of Buddhism to China in the Southern Liang Dynasty (南朝梁代, AD 502–556), the traded commodities with other nations included more products, such as ivory (象牙), sandalwood (檀香), and statues of the Buddha (Leonard, 1984: 37). People in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) were tolerant with different religions. Believers of Nestorianism (景教), Judaism, Islam, and Manichaeism (摩尼教) were allowed to enter China, were received by the emperor and stayed in Chang'an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. Marco Polo (马可·波罗) and his relatives traveled around China during the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and the emperor received Marco Polo (苏慧廉, 2007).

Kublai Khan (忽必烈), Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, was the first Chinese emperor who began to adopt a closed-door policy. Since he invaded Japan and was twice defeated by the Japanese, Kublai Khan decided not to have any contact with them and ordered a ban on maritime trade. But this seclusion situation was worsened in the Ming Dynasty because Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋) was facing two threats coming from the sea. The first threat was from the remnants of Zhang Shicheng (张士诚) and Fang Guozhen (方国珍) along the Coast of Fujian. During the late Yuan Dynasty, both Zhu Yuanzhang and the above mentioned groups were rebels and intended to overthrow the Yuan Dynasty. Yet the two parties were not united and became enemies. Thus, Zhu Yuanzhang was frequently assaulted by Zhang Shicheng's and Fang Guozhen's armies after he took the throne. The second threat was from the Japanese pirates. Fearing that the maritime

trade would facilitate the collaboration between the people living along the coast and the Japanese pirates, Zhu Yuanzhang issued a series of orders not to allow the Chinese to trade with people coming from the sea. The second but decisive ban was issued in 1374, the seventh year of Hongwu (洪武七年), four years after the first ban, and this time three ports were closed. They were Quanzhou in Fujian (福建泉州), Mingzhou in Zhejiang (浙江明州) and Guangzhou in Guangdong (广东广州), which had existed for more than 800 years since the Tang Dynasty. The following four orders of banning the maritime trade were increasingly stricter and were issued respectively in 1381, 1390, 1394 and 1397. Finally, no single boat could be seen from the sea (佚名, 2017). The bans of maritime trade were not effective in deterring piracy and smuggling. On the contrary, it had forced ordinary people who made a living by fishing and trade before became penniless under the bans and turned into pirates and smugglers themselves. In addition, the ban on trade prevented the Chinese from knowing the outside world and made the Chinese lose the chance of developing science and technology too, because the 15th century was an age of discovery. When the Westerners traveled around the world making explorations and seeking treasures, they made great inventions and discoveries in terms of surveying and mapping, seamanship and art of navigation, which promoted the development of science and technology. It was a pity that by banning the trade China lost precious opportunities to communicate with people of different cultures and to make progress in science and technology. Someone might say that China had Zheng He (郑和) who for seven times traveled around the West Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean which showed that China had already enjoyed high marine technology. The sad truth was that those valuable navigation materials had all been burnt by the ignorant official Liu Daxia (刘大夏) (李西堂, 2016).

The seclusion in the Qing Dynasty had become even worse. According to Li Xitang (李西堂, 2016), in the early period, Emperor Shunzhi (顺治) issued several maritime bans in 1647, 1655, and 1656 due to Zheng Chenggong's (郑成功) conspiracy. Zheng Chenggong followed his father's steps in rebelling against the Manchu power because they were loyal to the Ming court. Zheng Chenggong led his army to attack the border along the southern coast, which annoyed Shunzhi a great deal. The maritime ban had come to its climax in 1661 and 1662 when both Shunzhi and Kangxi (康熙) ordered the people living near the coast to move 30–50 *li* toward the inner land. This edict destroyed the living habitat of the local people and made them destitute and homeless. Many of the people affected had to depart from their families tramping and begging and some even died of



hunger and disease. The relocation edict greatly disturbed the social order and economic life of the local people, leaving the once prosperous land a wasteland. It showed that the Qing rulers lacked creativity in administration. Instead of finding ways to deal with the rebels, they made hundreds and thousands of farmers victims of the migration. The Seclusion Policy did nothing to deter the piracy and smuggling, but caused tremendous troubles and pains to the local people. So we can say that the policy was directed to the Chinese people instead of the pirates and rebels (曾燕, 涂楠, 2012). When historians lauded highly the achievement made by the so-called Kang-Qian Flourishing Age (康乾盛世), they needed to take into consideration the failure of the policy and the sufferings inflicted on ordinary people. The long-period of stagnation was interrupted by the strong warships and cannons of the Westerners.

The conflict between China and Britain originated from the bilateral trade. Beginning from 1716, tea became one of the important products that Britain bought from China, in addition to other commodities like raw silk, silks and satins (绸缎), homespun (土布) and porcelain (仲伟民, 2010). However, the demand for tea in Britain had surged after 1784 when the Commutation Act (《抵代税条例》) was issued and the British merchants felt it increasingly inconvenient to trade with China under the Canton System¹ and they needed to have a place to put their goods in. The Commutation Act was a counter measure to deter other European countries, such as France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark from selling smuggled tea to Britain and it successfully dispelled those countries from tea smuggling. In this way, Britain was able to occupy the large share of the tea market in China.

The Canton System was a trade system initiated by Emperor Qianlong (乾隆) in 1757 and continued until 1842. In order to control the Western trade, it regulated that all foreign merchants trading with China needed to contact the Hongs (行商), the Chinese merchants, instead of local officials because they were considered lower in position than the latter. In this way, the merchants instead of real officials functioned as the external liaison intermediary between the Qing Dynasty and foreign countries (Anon, 2016).

Against such background, Lord Macartney (马戛尔尼), British Envoy, was sent to China in 1792 on a mission to negotiate with the Chinese government for more freedom and space for storing their commodities. The whole journey for Macartney China Mission

1 the Canton System 指广州十三行制度, 其中 Canton 是广州的威妥玛式拼法, 因为是专有名词, 后文连用时仍然保持原有拼写, 但单独指广州时则使用汉语拼音。其他类似的词也遵循这一原则。

lasted two years from 1792 to 1794. In order to gain a favorable impression, they came under the name of celebrating Emperor Qianlong's 83rd birthday and Macartney had brought with him the most recent products of science and technology and presented them to the emperor as gifts. Things like telescopes, clocks, barometers, airguns and a hot-air balloon were on the list and they hoped that the emperor would like those things (Lovell, 2011). However to Macartney's great surprise, the Chinese officials showed little interest in those modern products, but paid more attention to how Macartney should follow the rituals for the audience (覲见), i.e. whether he should perform the three rapping ceremony (三叩九拜仪式) and what kinds of gifts the British monarch had brought to the emperor. Although Macartney did have an audience with Qianlong, he was not given any chance to discuss the issues expected. Eventually, the emperor wrote a letter to King George III and let Macartney bring it back home.



Fig. 1-1 乾隆接见马戛尔尼¹

Having spent ten months on the sea and suffered the pains from his rheumatism, Macartney did not fulfill the mission required of him. Instead, the China Mission group were shown around Re He (热河)² where the emperor celebrated his birthday and the Old Summer Palace (圆明园). Finally, their ship moved to Guangdong via Tianjin and

1 本书部分图片为作者自拍，也有一部分图片选自“百度图片”和“360 图片”，在此对相关作者和网站表示衷心的感谢。

2 热河的威妥玛式拼法为 Jehol，常见于西人所著作品中。热河在今河北承德。康熙四十二年（1703）建避暑山庄，乾隆七年（1742）改名为承德府。威妥玛式拼法普遍用于晚清时期的中国地名和人名的注音。



Zhoushan Islands (舟山群岛) and went back home. Macartney seized the opportunity of traveling around China making observations and believed that this country had little hope of moving forward and one day it would be defeated by some powerful states. Macartney's mission simply included some requests from the Qing government:

The first is to request to allow the English merchants to trade to Cheusan (舟山)¹, Limpo (宁波)², and Tiensing (天津)³.

Second, to allow them to have a warehouse at Pekin (北京)⁴ for the sale of their goods, as the Russians had formerly⁵.

Third, to allow them some small, detached, unfortified island in the neighborhood of Cheusan as a magazine (仓库) for their unsold goods, and as a residence (住宅) for their people to take care of them.

Fourth, to allow them a similar privilege near Canton, and some other trifling indulgences.

Fifth, to abolish the transit duties (过境税) between Macao and Canton, or at least to reduce them to the standard of 1782.

Sixth, to prohibit the exaction (勒索) of any duties from English merchants, over and above those settled by the Emperor's diploma (公文), a copy of which is requested to be given to them, as they have never yet been able to see it for their unequivocal (明确的) direction. (Robins, 2010: 333)

No matter how anxious and painful Macartney was, he had never found a formal occasion for the negotiation. The local officials were perfunctory and avoided talking directly about the business. A mission of almost a hundred people were wasting their time doing something unrelated to their mission. In addition, Macartney was suffering from rheumatism and the long journey made things worse. But sometimes he had to go through the formalities in spite of the pain. In the letter to King George III, Qianlong boasted that China did not need to buy anything from Britain because the tributary states came with abundant goods that satisfied China. But paradoxically in the royal palace, Qianlong kept a great variety of British objects that were worthy of two millions sterling. They were various toys, jewelry, glass, musical automatons, and other figures, instruments of different kinds, clocks, watches, etc. (Robins, 2010). When Qianlong criticized the Western products as

1-4 这几个地名的拼写皆沿用了威妥玛式拼法。

5 Russia had good relation with the Qing government and was given a place for storing their commodities.

clever tricks and wicked craft, he did not really mean it. What it suggested was that the emperor felt so ashamed of his own country that he had to play down Western goods in order to save face or to hide his jealousy. The assumption was that Qianlong might have felt a certain threat from the Westerners but he did not want to acknowledge it. Therefore, he had to find some excuse like what he had written in the letter to evade the shyness. But the refusal to trade with Western countries was the least wanted measure because it would prevent China from advancement.

By visiting different places in China, Macartney found that the development of science was very slow. Take printing for instance. Printing in China was quite backward compared with that of the West because the Chinese were still using block printing (雕版印刷) though the art of printing was said to be invented in China and it was not known in Europe a hundred and fifty years after Marco Polo's return from China. It showed that the dissemination of knowledge was extremely slow in China. Compared with the four-wheeled open carriage, the Chinese two-wheeled carriage without springs appeared less convenient and less comfortable. Perhaps the Qing ministers had already noticed it and were surprised at seeing Macartney using phosphorus to light a fire and carry it in his pocket. They very much admired Macartney's description of how to save the drowning person and how to treat glaucoma. When the parts of the telescope were put together in the Old Summer Palace, the Chinese ministers were attracted to it and even asked Mr Barrow to make another one on the spot (Robins, 2010).

But many Chinese showed little interest in the British products of newly developed science and technology. For instance, when Macartney introduced the hot-air balloon, the latest achievement in Britain, it drew no one's attention. It made Macartney wonder why Kangxi's interest in science was not passed down to the following generations. He found that the Chinese did have great interest in smallwares (小商品), such as dressing tables (梳妆台), dressing table mirrors (梳妆台镜), pocket instruments (袖珍仪表), and collapsible knives (可折叠刀), which made him think that those petty commodities might have market in China. Seeing the Chinese using their hands or chopsticks when eating, Macartney did not think it hygienic and wanted to introduce British cutlery like knives and forks to China. Yet what Macartney did not expect was that tableware was a kind of custom or tradition that could hardly be changed. So cutlery found no market in China and neither did the woolen cloths because it was pretty warm in Guangdong Province.

Qianlong's foreign policy was modeled after by the following Qing emperors. In 1816, twenty-three years after Lord Macartney's visit, the British government sent another China



Mission led by Lord Amherst (阿美士德勋爵) and this time it was under the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (嘉庆). The main reason for this mission was to ask the Qing government to loosen the restraints imposed on the British merchants caused by the Canton System. Specifically, the following two requests were made:

1. To replace the current Hongs with the ones that the Commission Agent thinks proper;
2. To establish a direct connection with Beijing by sending British envoys to China. (埃利斯, 2013: 32, 37)

Lord Amherst was not optimistic about this mission due to the shadow of the previous one. But still together with 70 members, he set off to China. After a five-month journey, Amherst China Mission arrived in Tianjin. Yet the thorny issue of kowtow rites was raised for the second time. Lord Amherst discussed with his assistant George Staunton Junior but the latter was firmly against following the Chinese kowtow rituals. Eventually, Lord Amherst did not have an audience with Emperor Jiaqing and the Mission had to follow the same route of Macartney to go back to Britain via Guangzhou.

The above two failures of the China Mission did not stop the British from having trade with China and trying for a third time. Eighteen years after the second mission, Lord Napier (律劳卑勋爵) was sent in 1834 to work as a trade superintendent in China when British East India Company was dismissed because of its monopoly. As an official, Lord Napier wanted to discuss issues directly with his counterpart in China. But under the Canton System, foreigners should talk with the Hongs instead of the ministers. Not following this rule, Lord Napier deliberately sent his letter to Guangzhou Governor Lu Kun (卢坤), asking to discuss business. When being rejected, Lord Napier began to criticize the Qing government by distributing leaflets. He even resorted to force. The situation was becoming more sensitive this time because it involved the drug opium. Eventually, Lord Napier had to withdraw to Macao where he died of malaria.

Following Lord Napier's death, William Jardine (威廉·渣甸) and James Matheson (詹姆士·马地臣), together with 64 British merchants, wrote a petition on December 9, 1834 to the King's cabinet. They requested sending three warships to China demanding from the Qing court the dismissal of Lu Kun and renewing the trade. They thought that Lord Napier had been maltreated by the Qing government and the British honor was harmed. Therefore, a war seemed to be the only way out (Anon, 2017). Six years later, in 1840 the

war truly took place between Britain and China¹.

1.2 The Chinese-Barbarians Distinction 华夷之辨

The fact that the British failed three times in their attempt to open the gate of China was closely related to the Chinese arrogance and contempt for foreigners and this mentality was derived from the idea of the “Chinese-barbarians distinction”. In ancient China, Zhongyuan or the Central Plains comprising the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River (part of Henan, Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, Anhui and Jiangsu), was deemed to be the best place and people living in this area were deemed to be civilized and cultural, while people living in the peripheral areas were thought to be barbarous and uncivilized. This was very much like the ancient Romans, who considered themselves cultural and civilized but other Europeans, such as Angles, Saxons, Goths, and Vandals as barbarians. Four terms were given to those uncivilized Chinese: Beidi (北狄), people living in the northern periphery, Xirong (西戎), people living in the western edge, Dongyi (东夷), people living in the eastern border, and Nanman (南蛮), people living in the southern periphery. These four terms Di (狄), Rong (戎), Yi (夷) and Man (蛮) all stood for barbarians. Initially in the Western Zhou Dynasty (西周, 1046–771 BC), this concept only had its geographical connotation. Yet when it came to the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (770–221 BC), the geographical terms had gradually evolved into a cultural one entrenched in the mind of every Chinese (雷颐, 2017; 尹传政, 2016).

Once formed, this attitude of exclusion or anti-foreignism had become part of the Chinese national character. That explained why Qianlong refused to acknowledge the superiority of the British products. Although he fully understood those products were much more sophisticated and better in quality, Qianlong never wanted to admit it in public. On the contrary, he took a dismissive attitude to foreign products and openly claimed that China had no need for British goods.

Seeing the rapid development of the Western countries, Qianlong felt ashamed being the emperor of such a large and civilized country, especially when the Chinese always boasted about their own culture. Behind the superficial contempt, Qianlong in his heart had deep worries about it so that the emperor decided to close the country's door to the

¹ Regarding the beginning of the First Opium War, Western scholarship has different views from the Chinese one. The former thinks that the war began in 1839 due to the fire opened between the two countries, while the Chinese scholarship has the opinion that the war began in 1840 because in that year the British government formerly declared war against China. (王建朗, 黄克武, 2016)