John K. Fairbank / A PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK

This book is about China's relations with non-Chinese states before the present century, mainly during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1912). The authors look at the Chinese empire and its world order partly through its own eyes and partly as seen by half a dozen outside peoples. The hoary stereotypes of the Chinese tribute system are scrutinized both in theory and in practice, from without as well as from within.

The result, I think, opens the door a bit further on a system that handled the interstate relations of a large part of mankind throughout most of recorded history. This chapter of man's political experience even has some indeterminate relevance to the world's China problem of today.

Before getting down to case studies, we present here a summary of the generalized and ideal structure of tribute relations. This normative pattern, the Chinese world order, was a set of ideas and practices developed and perpetuated by the rulers of China over many centuries.

Sinocentrism and Its Problems

The societies of East Asia—China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and the small island kingdom of Liu-ch'iu (Ryukyu)—had all stemmed from ancient China and developed within the Chinese culture area, the area most influenced by the civilization of ancient China, for example, by the Chinese ideographic writing system, the Confucian classical teachings about family and social order, the official examination system, and the imperial Chinese monarchy and bureaucracy. Age, size, and wealth all made China

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the natural center of this East Asian world. Geography kept the whole region separate from West and South Asia and made it the most distinctive of all the great culture areas. In European parlance, it became the Far East. But in Chinese terms this Far Eastern world was Sinocentric. *T'ien-hsia*,* "all-under-Heaven," presided over by T'ien-tzu, the "Son of Heaven," sometimes was used to embrace the whole world including everything outside of China (Chung-kuo, "the Central States," the Middle Kingdom); but in common usage it was taken to designate the Chinese empire, which in any case included most of the known world.[1]

The relations of the Chinese with surrounding areas, and with non-Chinese peoples generally, were colored by this concept of Sinocentrism and an assumption of Chinese superiority. The Chinese tended to think of their foreign relations as giving expression externally to the same principles of social and political order that were manifested internally within the Chinese state and society. China's foreign relations were accordingly hierarchic and nonegalitarian, like Chinese society itself. In the course of time, there grew up a network of Sino-foreign relations that roughly corresponded in East Asia to the international order that grew up in Europe, although, as we shall see, international and even interstate do not seem appropriate terms for it. We prefer to call it the Chinese world order.

The graded and concentric hierarchy of China's foreign relations included other peoples and countries which we may group in three main zones—first, the Sinic Zone consisting of the most nearby and culturally similar tributaries, Korea and Vietnam, parts of which had anciently been ruled within the Chinese empire, and also the Liu-ch'iu (Ryukyu) Islands and, at brief times, Japan. Secondly, the Inner Asian Zone, consisting of tributary tribes and states of the nomadic or seminomadic peoples of Inner Asia, who were not only ethnically and culturally non-Chinese but were also outside or on the fringe of the Chinese culture area, even though sometimes pressing upon the Great Wall frontier. Third, the Outer Zone, consisting of the "outer barbarians" (*wai-i*) generally, at a further distance over land or sea, including eventually Japan and other states of Southeast and South Asia and Europe that were supposed to send tribute when trading.

All these non-Chinese states and peoples were expected in theory to be properly tributary to the Son of Heaven in the Central Country, but the theory frequently was not observed in fact. Indeed, the chief problem of

*For Chinese characters to accompany all transliterations of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese names and terms, see Glossary.

China's foreign relations was how to square theory with fact, the ideological claim with the actual practice. Russian or British envoys who refused to kotow were considered in effect rebels and were so labeled in Chinese because they were trying consciously or unconsciously to demolish the established scheme of things. China's external order was so closely related to her internal order that one could not long survive without the other; when the barbarians were not submissive abroad, rebels might more easily arise within. Most dynasties collapsed under the twin blows of "inside disorder and outside calamity" (*nei-luan wai-huan*), that is, domestic rebellion and foreign invasion. Every regime was therefore under pressure to make the facts of its foreign relations fit the theory and so confirm its claim to rule China.

The basic fault underlying this Sinocentric world order was the fact that it was not coterminous with the Chinese culture area. The non-Chinese states of that area, forming the Sinic Zone, were umbilically tied to China by cultural bonds such as the Chinese written language and Confucianism, but the Inner Asian Zone was composed of peoples of distinctly non-Chinese culture. Manchus, Mongols, Uighur Turks, Tibetans, and others had to be included, even though their societies and cultures were basically very different from those of China. For example, their writing systems were alphabetic, their economies largely pastoral-nomadic, and their political organizations mainly tribal. Yet they could never be excluded from the Chinese world order because mounted bowmen from the Inner Asian grasslands, in the long equine era of warfare before the use of firearms, provided the dominant military force in the East Asian scene. Thus, the Chinese culture-based theory of the Son of Heaven's supremacy had to come to terms with the geographic fact of nomadic Inner Asian fighting power. In strategic terms the "Chinese empire" had to be actually the great continental "Empire of East Asia," stretching from the Pamirs to Pusan, which all the great Chinese dynasties strove to control. In this empire the non-Chinese tribesmen of Inner Asia came more and more to supply the striking force that constituted the decisive military component of government. China's cultural and economic superiority over the Inner Asian peoples could often be used as means to control them, but sometimes it was not enough. From the Han to the Ch'ing periods, the non-Chinese warriors of Inner Asia played an increasingly important role in war and politics within the empire—witness the "barbarian" inroads that culminated in the Mongol (1279–1368) and Manchu dynasties of conquest.[2]

Once in power at Peking, though such non-Chinese dynasties made many

innovations, on balance they utilized the Chinese tradition in governing China and to a large extent in conducting their foreign relations. One well-marked feature of this tradition was its preservation of the theory of Sinocentrism by the constant use of Sinocentric terminology, as was evidenced in all aspects of the tribute system, which indeed by Ming and Ch'ing times was partly preserved by means of terminology. Outside countries, if they were to have contact with China at all, were expected and when possible obliged to do so as tributaries. Thus their trade must be regarded as a boon granted their ruler by the emperor and must be accompanied by the formalities of presenting tribute through missions to Peking. Economic relations could be formally permitted only within this political framework. In the last resort, even if the foreigner did not actually comply with the forms of tribute, the terminology of tribute would be applied to him in the Chinese record nevertheless. The case of Lord Macartney in 1793, who only bent the knee before the Ch'ien-lung Emperor but was recorded as prostrating himself in the kotow, was not unique.

Thus, Nationalist and Communist China have inherited a set of institutionalized attitudes and historical precedents not easily conformable to the European tradition of international relations among equally sovereign nation states. Modern China's difficulty of adjustment to the international order of nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has come partly from the great tradition of the Chinese world order. This tradition is of more than historical interest and bears upon Chinese political thinking today.

Study of this subject could, of course, take account of the relations with all countries known to China during 2,000 years, on political, economic, military, cultural, and other levels and from both the Chinese and non-Chinese points of view. But so broad a terrain can be covered only by essays such as only a few scholars are as yet capable of writing; it can best be penetrated by case studies, drawn from recent centuries, mainly in the Ch'ing period (1644–1912), such as form the bulk of this volume.

A Set of Assumptions: The Origin and Growth of the Chinese World Order

In modern parlance, this volume appraises the theory and practice of the foreign relations of the Chinese empire in early modern times. We analyze the structure and functioning of an international order composed of China and states or peoples in contact with China. This international order

flourished until the Western powers intruded into East Asia in the mid-nineteenth century; thereafter it survived vestigially down to 1911.

In modern parlance alone, however, we cannot comprehend this international order. As in all historical research, to understand it in our own modern terms in English we must first find out how it was understood by Chinese and other East Asian peoples in their own languages at the time. Once we seek to understand its structure and functioning on this basis, we enter a different world. We find, for example, that the traditional Chinese world order can hardly be called international because the participants in it did not use concepts corresponding to the Western ideas of nation, or sovereignty, or equality of states each having equal sovereignty. In our research we have therefore had to develop quite consciously from the outset two distinct systems of terminology, one derived from East Asian languages to represent the theory and practice of this order as understood by those who participated in it at the time and one to present our own analysis of it in English.

A preliminary framework of assumptions concerning the Chinese world order should include the following points. We begin with a genetic approach: How did it originate and develop?

1. The Chinese world originated as an agrarian-based culture island. It spread outward from North China by the gradual absorption of surrounding territories, mainly southward. It remained the center of the world known to it, only vaguely aware of the other ancient centers to the west. Eventually the steppe nomads appeared on the grasslands of Mongolia and created a different but poorer society on the fringe of the Chinese world, stronger sometimes in warfare but never in the arts of civilization.

2. The Chinese world (*t'ien-hsia*) never lost its sense of all-embracing unity and cultural entity. Even in China's "feudal" age[3] (the Warring States of 403–221 B.C.), the many walled centers that functioned politically as multiple units of equal status, retained the theory of their subordination to the Chou dynasty ruler. In 221 B.C. they were actually unified in the Ch'in empire. Chinese ethnocentrism and unity were reaffirmed. Outward movement continued to push the frontier southward and to maintain Chinese outposts in Korea, North Vietnam, and Central Asia.

3. From the first, the Chinese world was hierarchic and anti-egalitarian. Its people were organized in status levels according to sex, kinship, and social function. Men were superior to women, elders to juniors, and the literate few to the illiterate mass. However, caste was avoided. In theory and to some degree in practice, the outstanding individual's mobility into

the elite was made possible through his virtuous conduct as a "superior man" and through his achievement in examinations or otherwise. The Confucian philosophy that sanctioned this hierarchic order became an orthodoxy. It was supported and perpetuated by the literate elite through doctrines of superordination-subordination summed up in the Three Bonds (*san-kang*) governing the relations of benevolence and obedience, respectively, between father and son, husband and wife, and prince and minister.

4. At the apex of the Chinese world was the Son of Heaven, who eventually became in theory omnicompetent, functioning as military leader, administrator, judge, high priest, philosophical sage, arbiter of taste, and patron of arts and letters, all in one. In performing his multiple roles he was more than human. The ancient Shang kings had been buried with hundreds of sacrificed retainers; Sons of Heaven remained superior to ordinary mortals because of their unique function in maintaining order among mankind and maintaining harmony between human society and the rest of the cosmos.

5. The hierarchic social order under the Son of Heaven included among its structural elements an unusually large ideological component. In other words, the system was sustained by a heavy stress on ideological orthodoxy, especially on the idea that adherence to the correct teachings would be manifested in virtuous conduct and would enhance one's authority and influence (*te*). Right conduct according to the proper norms was believed to move others by its example. According to this mystique, proper ceremonial forms (*li*) influenced the beholder and confirmed in his mind the authority of a ruler, official, or superior man. Thus, right principles exhibited through proper conduct, including ceremonies, gave one prestige among others and power over them.

6. Education and indoctrination in the classics instilled the right standards in men, promoted harmony between rulers and ruled, and so sustained the social order. But inferior persons were not susceptible of being influenced by proper ceremonies (*li*) and right principles (another character also pronounced *li*). For them, regulation and punishment by criminal law (*fa*) were the available and necessary means of control. The canny administrator (*fa-chia* or Legalist) knew how to combine these two tools of government.

7. Leadership both in the propagation of the classical doctrines manifested in *li* (ceremonies) and in the alternative application of *fa* (regulations) to dispense rewards and punishments was taken by the Son of Heaven. Society, including government, centered in his person as its apex.

His personality was the concrete object of loyalty and awe, rather than any impersonal and abstract concept of state, people, or nation. His rule was personal.

8. The emperor in ruling used two types of administrative structure. The more ancient type was based on personal relations between emperor and subject. The less ancient type was bureaucratic. The two structures existed side by side. Throughout the imperial era down to 1912 there still persisted, parallel to the far-flung bureaucratic structure of China's domestic administration, the older power structure of the emperor's personal relationships, both within the dynastic family and with certain other notables outside it. This was what, in broad terms, created the aristocracy under each dynasty. In many respects this could be called a feudal system; using European terms as very rough and often misleading equivalents, we could say that the emperor "invested" (*feng*) a number of hereditary "vassals" (*fan*) who in turn presented him with "tribute" (*kung*). First of all there were "clan vassals" or "clan feudatories" (*tsung-fan*) within the dynastic family who were invested with titles and authority or at least gifts. This group included princes of the imperial house and even imperial concubines. Next came "inner feudatories" or "internal vassals" (*nei-fan*) who were similarly invested. The most famous examples were the three Chinese collaborators in the Manchu conquest of 1644 who in 1672–1683 staged the great rebellion of the Three Feudatories (*san-fan*). Last came the "outer feudatories" or "external vassals" (*wai-fan*) who were rulers of states or other entities outside the borders of China proper. All these vassals had hereditary status, although in some cases it declined one degree each generation until it vanished. Tribute, which had originally meant tax payments, generally came to consist of ceremonial presents, typically of local products (*fang wu*).

9. The second type of administrative structure, the bureaucratic one, was spread over China proper under the unifying Ch'in and Early Han dynasties after 221 B.C. Bureaucratic government using professionally qualified administrators who were given definite territorial jurisdictions, paid by fixed salaries, controlled by written correspondence, and replaced at prearranged periods, was developed mainly by the so-called Legalists, who became most famous for their use of impersonal regulations (*fa*) but were actually the inventors of a strictly regulated bureaucracy in general. They helped divide the empire into commanderies and districts (*chün* and *hsien*) and began the long tradition of Chinese administrative statecraft.[4]

10. We are now able to see that the rule of the central and unique Son

of Heaven could be maintained over so broad and diverse a terrain and so vast a population precisely because it was so superficial. The emperor remained supreme as a symbol of unity because his officials did not attempt to rule directly in the villages. Instead, the indoctrinated local elite, mainly holders of examination degrees, dominated the villages while remaining loyal to the emperor as the keystone of the social order. Their training in Confucianism gave this local elite, or so-called gentry class, an inner-directed commitment to orthodox beliefs and a faith in the social order of which they formed the privileged upper stratum.

11. This ideological commitment was expected not only from the ruling elite within the Chinese world but also from the rulers of states outside China, insofar as they had any contact with it. It became established in the Chinese view that the mystical influence of the all-wise example and virtue (*te*) of the Son of Heaven not only reached throughout China proper but continued outward beyond the borders of China to all mankind and gave them order and peace, albeit with gradually decreasing efficacy, as parts of a concentric hierarchy. But since rulers outside China, or on the fringe, were beyond the reach of the bureaucratic structure of territorial administration, they became attached to the emperor directly as part of the surviving structure of personal or "feudal" administration described above.

The above is the theoretical background of Professor T. Kurihara's finding,[5] from the study of ancient seals, that the interior vassals of the Son of Heaven included high officials, feudal princes, and lesser lords within the area of China proper, where the virtuous influence (*te*) of the Son of Heaven prevailed and both *li* (ceremonies) and *fa* (regulations) were fully effective, whereas exterior vassals were of lower rank and ruled in peripheral areas on the borders of China where the imperial influence (*te*) was only imperfectly diffused and the *li* were effective but *fa* were not (that is, the Son of Heaven lacked direct coercive power). As a third category Professor Kurihara notes that the ruler (*shan-yü*) of the barbarous nomadic Hsiung-nu was a "guest vassal" (*k'o-ch'en*) in an area where the imperial influence was even less prevalent and only special aspects of the *li* were effective.

12. Typically, as the area under Chinese rule expanded, the tendency was for exterior vassals of one period (for example, the Chou) to become interior vassals of a later period (for example, the Ch'in and Han). This was the case with the ruler of the Nan-yueh kingdom in South China, which in time became incorporated into the empire. Similarly, it may be

suggested, the Hsiung-nu guest vassal of the Han in Mongolia was eventually succeeded by the Mongols, first as exterior vassals of the Ming and then as close allies and subjects of the Ch'ing, though still called *wai-fan*. In this way non-Chinese rulers could come into closer contact with the Son of Heaven as the influence of the Chinese world expanded. In theory, they were irresistibly drawn into this relationship, they "came and were transformed" (*lai-hua*), by the superior blessings of (Chinese) civilization.

In comparison, Europe saw the development of a number of nation-states theoretically equal in sovereignty and mutually independent within the culture area of Christendom. The European order, with its interest in precise division of territories and its own concepts of legitimacy, came to depend upon a balance of power among the nation states. The Chinese world order, in contrast, was unified and centralized in theory by the universal preeminence of the Son of Heaven. It was not organized by a division of territories among sovereigns of equal status but rather by the subordination of all local authorities to the central and awe-inspiring power of the emperor. This organizing principle of superordination-subordination was also used in East Asia between non-Chinese regimes in situations in which the rulers of China did not participate at all—for example, between Manchus and Mongols, or between Satsuma and Liu-ch'iu, or even between Nepal and Tibet. The Sinocentric relationship was evidently the archetype of a whole set of often interlocking relations that developed in the East Asian area.

13. As cavalry from the Inner Asian grasslands gradually became the final arbiter of battle in East Asia, it became an established practice that in eras of Chinese weakness non-Chinese rulers could become actual emperors of China, Sons of Heaven at the apex of the structure. Non-Chinese were not only admitted to the Chinese world, they could even reach the point of taking over the imperial function. At first, some ruled parts of China, like the Khitan Liao dynasty after 907 and the Jürched Chin dynasty after 1122. Thus non-Chinese conquerors, having already entered into the power structure of the Chinese world, could seize control of it from the top down without essentially altering it. Eventually, some ruled all China, like the Mongols after 1279 and the Manchus after 1644.

14. This comprehensiveness of the Chinese world order was evidenced in its official terminology. For example, take the term *fan* 藩, translated above as vassal. It has the basic meaning of "a hedge, a boundary, a frontier; to screen, to protect." It has a long and complex history dating from the so-called feudal period before the Ch'in unification of 221 B.C. *Fan*

figures in the Manchu institution for management of Inner Asian relations, the Li-fan yuan (variously and inadequately translated as Court of Colonial Affairs or Mongolian Superintendency). The term *fan* also figures within China in a sense comparable to English vassal or fief. For example, under the Ming there were in all sixty-two Princes of the Blood, for fifty of whom there were "set up fiefs" (*chien-fan*). They were listed as "enfeoffed princes" (*fan-wang*).[6]

Complexity is not diminished by the fact that this term *fan* was identical in sound and close in form to two other terms with slightly different radicals, *fan* 番 and *fan* 蕃, both meaning "foreign" or "barbarous"; so *fan-wang* were "foreign kings" who presented tribute at the Ming court. Thus the sound of *fan* stands ambiguously for characters that mean respectively foreign or vassal; and the latter leaves us with the problem how far to attach to it the connotations of vassal as used in European feudalism. (This same *fan* becomes in Japan the *han* or daimyo domains of Tokugawa feudalism.) In any case, "vassals" are found both inside China and outside.

Similarly the term *kung* is used with reference to tribute presented from non-Chinese rulers abroad and also in connection with domestic matters such as the "tribute rice" (*ts'ao-mi* or *kung-mi*) shipped annually from the Lower Yangtze region to feed Peking; or the "tribute student" (*kung-sheng*), a category of degree-holder by purchase under the Ch'ing examination system. However we may translate such terms, they plainly were used with reference to both foreign and domestic aspects of imperial government.

15. Non-Chinese rulers participated in the Chinese world order by observing the appropriate forms and ceremonies (*li*) in their contact with the Son of Heaven. Taken together, these practices constituted the tribute system. Under its regulations in the Ch'ing period

(a) non-Chinese rulers were given a patent of appointment and an official seal for use in correspondence;

(b) they were given a noble rank in the Ch'ing hierarchy;

(c) they dated their communications by the Ch'ing calendar, that is, by the Ta Ch'ing dynastic reign-title;

(d) they presented tribute memorials of various sorts on appropriate statutory occasions;

(e) they also presented a symbolic tribute (*kung*) of local products;

(f) they or their envoys were escorted to court by the imperial post;

(g) they performed the appropriate ceremonies of the Ch'ing court, notably the kotow;

(h) they received imperial gifts in return; and

(i) they were granted certain privileges of trade at the frontier and at the capital.[7]

The following table shows the regular Ch'ing tributaries in the order listed in the 1818 edition of the Collected Statutes (*Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien*), together with the expected frequency and routes of tribute missions.[8]

TABLE 1. Ch'ing Tributaries as of 1818.

Country	Frequency of missions	Route
Korea	Tribute four times a year presented all together at the end of the year	via Mukden and Shanhaikuan
Lui-ch'iu	Tribute once every other year	via Foochow
Annam	Tribute once in two years, sending an envoy to court once in four years to present two tributes together	via Chen-nan-kuan and Kwangsi
Laos	Tribute once in ten years	via Yunnan
Siam	Tribute once in three years	via Canton
Sulu	Tribute once in five years or more	via Amoy
Holland	Tribute at no fixed period; the old regulations were for tribute once in five years	via Canton
Burma	Tribute once in ten years	via Yunnan
Western Ocean (Portugal, the Papacy, England)	Tribute at no fixed periods	via Macao

Aims and Means: The Diversity of Practice in China's Foreign Relations

Preceding pages stress the Chinese view, in which the imperial government's foreign relations were merely an outward extension of its administration of China proper, so that everyone in contact with China could have a place in the Chinese world order. This view was culturally based and politically oriented. In trying to make it prevail, rulers of China faced problems of several types which raise interesting questions.

Their chief political problem was how to maintain Chinese superiority in situations of military weakness. Solutions included cessation of contact; indoctrinating the foreigner in the Chinese view by cultural-ideological means; buying him off by honors or material inducements or both; using one barbarian against another through diplomatic maneuvers; and in the

final extremity accepting barbarian rulers at the apex of the Chinese world. But it is noteworthy that non-Chinese could rule over Chinese only in certain circumstances, in a certain kind of state. What were these circumstances or prerequisites?

The principal economic problem was the conflict of interest over trade, but here the rulers of China usually declared themselves ready to sacrifice economic substance in order to preserve political form. They ordinarily refused to acknowledge any dependence upon trade, and consequently it remained formally subordinate to tribute. But the informal interplay of economic interests still went on. How far did trade actually motivate tribute relations on either side?

Other recurrent questions arose from the cultural differences between China and certain tributaries, and these differences led the two parties to see their relationship in far different terms at either end. Generally the tributaries from the Inner Asian and Outer zones had their own non-Chinese views of their relationship to China and accepted the Chinese view of it only in part, superficially or tacitly, as a matter of expedience. As the mystique of the imperial virtue grew thin across the cultural gap, in Lhasa, Moscow, or Batavia, alternative theories of politics were asserted and sometimes clashed with the Chinese doctrine. Non-Chinese in contact with China faced a constant problem of adjustment. Eventually, with the arrival of Western navies, China would face this problem even more profoundly. How great was the capacity for adjustment, for toleration of different customs, views, and values, on either side?

In short, the Chinese world order was a unified concept only at the Chinese end and only on the normative level, as an ideal pattern. Because the concept dominates the Chinese record, our researches have been addressed in large part to testing how far it influenced events in fact. What was the actual efficacy of the Chinese grand design?

As an aid to empirical description, I insert here a table of the major types of relationships as conceived from the Chinese side and the principal means used to maintain them. This chart is my own invention, and it may mean more to the inventor than to others.

This table suggests the principal repertoire of means available to rulers of the Chinese empire in their relations with non-Chinese. These means lie along a spectrum that runs from one extreme of military conquest and administrative assimilation (under *Control*) to another extreme of complete nonintercourse and avoidance of contact. In general, China's foreign relations (in a Western sense) will be found to lie between these all-or-

TABLE 2. Aims and Means in China's Foreign Relations.

I. *Types of Relationships*, as developed or at least desired in the Chinese approaches to foreign areas (Ch'ing period to 1840).

Aim in view	A *Control*	B *Attraction*	C *Manipulation*
Means used	A-1 Military (*wu*)	B-1 "Cultural" and ideological (*wen, te*)	C-1 Material interest (*li*)
	A-2 Administrative (*li* and *fa*)	B-2 Religious (chakravartin)	C-2 Diplomatic

II. *Principal means*, used in relations with foreign areas in the Chinese world order of the Ch'ing period. (Parentheses indicate means used briefly or secondarily.)

Sinic Zone (Chinese Culture Area)		*Inner Asian Zone*		*Outer Zone* (Distant Places)	
Korea	B-1	Mongolia	A-1 A-2 B-1 B-2 C-1 C-2	Russia	C-1 C-2 (A-1)
Vietnam	B-1 (A-1)				
				Sulu	C-1
		Tibet	B-2 C-2 (A-1)		
Liu-ch'iu	B-1 C-1 A-2				
				Portugal	C-1 (A-2)
		Central Asia	A-1 A-2 C-1 C-2		
Japan	(B-1) (C-1)			Holland	C-1 (C-2)
				England	C-1

nothing extremes, in between the incorporation of non-Chinese into the bureaucratic empire and a refusal to acknowledge their existence. But the Chinese view was less concerned than the Western over what was foreign because the Son of Heaven was in any case superior to all rulers and peoples and their status therefore might easily shift back and forth through various degrees of proximity to his central authority.

For instance, military conquest and administrative assimilation, by which North Vietnam had been controlled down to the tenth century, gave way to tribute relations thereafter. But control was reasserted by the Ming invasion and rule of North Vietnam from 1406 to 1428. The relationship then reverted to tribute and remained so until 1885 except for the short-lived Ch'ing invasion of 1789. On balance, China's power-holders found it preferable to have Vietnam a regular tributary than to rule it directly.

Again, the distant empire of Russia was first dealt with by use of military force, to secure the limitation of Russian expansion that was at length agreed upon in the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689. Russian interest in trading caravans to Peking was then utilized to demand tribute and the kotow. But the eventually more stable solution, achieved in the Treaty of Kiakhta of 1727, was to permit trade without tribute on the far frontier at the "trading town" of Mai-mai-chen. On balance Peking preferred to let trade continue without tribute on the periphery of the empire, rather than either demand tribute or shut off trade.

The same was true of the distant states of Southeast Asia listed as trading countries in the 1818 edition of the Collected Statutes: Chinese merchant junks traded in these places but they no longer sent tribute as they had in the early Ming period. Of the Europeans at Canton, the Dutch in 1795 sent tribute and actually kotowed; the British were recorded as doing so in 1793; the Americans were disregarded in the record.

It is significant that, of the various means here identified, all were used in the Ch'ing relationship with the Mongols, who provided both the earliest allies and the principal rivals of the Manchu ruling power.

Highlights of This Volume

The following summary comments on each chapter do not by any means do them justice, much less sum them up. They are offered nevertheless to indicate in brief compass the main outlines of this symposium. The first three chapters deal with the growth of Chinese ideas, attitudes, and institutions concerning foreign relations in general.

Mr. Yang begins by contrasting myth and reality in China's traditional attitude toward outsiders. Concepts of kinship or of inner and outer zones had early been applied to foreign relations. But the power-based realism of Han and T'ang was subsequently overlaid by boastful talk. This was the accusation, for example, of the pioneer nineteenth-century diplomat, Kuo

Sung-tao. Mr. Yang therefore takes a realistic look at the tradition by tracing in classical texts the cognate trends toward using militarism or pacifism (coercion or persuasion, power or virtue) as means of dealing with non-Chinese and then looks at ideas used in frontier pacification. Finally, he shows the ancient origin and range of variations in the "loose-rein" or *chi-mi* appeasement policy that was used in dealing with stronger barbarians.

Mr. Wang's masterly study, for which we are all the more indebted because he could not attend our conference, is really much more than a background essay. It is the broadest survey of the evidence concerning pre-Ch'ing tribute relations that has yet been made. It first analyzes the early development of China's myth of superiority as formulated by successive major historians from Han to Sung. As this theory grew up to interpret China's experience of foreign relations it gradually became a conventional framework. Basic to this theory was the idea of the emperor's moral superiority and rule-by-virtue (*te*), as exemplified preeminently during the T'ang (618–907). Consequently the Mongol conquest, achieved by force and not at all by virtue, was a shattering blow to the Chinese theory; but the impermanence of Mongol rule could subsequently be attributed to its having relied on power alone, rather than on the proper balance of power and virtue. Mr. Wang then traces the Ming emperors' vigorous efforts to expand China's tributary relations in the direction of a world order: their claim to an *impartial* superiority, their attempt to *include* all countries. Thus under the Ming and early Ch'ing the theory of China's material-and-moral superiority continued, with ever greater sophistication, to be the principal assumption in her foreign relations.

Mr. Mancall's wide-ranging essay describes how the Chinese world view was variously accepted in Vietnam, Siam, and Central Asia and how it was given new effect by the Ch'ing distinction between the "northwestern crescent" of Inner Asian peoples and those to the east and south. He then examines the various forms of tributary trade, its complex connection with tribute and with the exchange of gifts, and its nature as an administered trade conducted at "ports of trade" on the frontier. This multifaceted analysis concludes with an account of the rather pragmatic foreign trade policies of the early Ch'ing rulers before their sinification.

After these analyses of broad aspects of the Chinese world order, its history and character, we then turn to case studies of particular countries. Mr. Chun gives us the fullest account yet available of the many types and functions of Korean embassies to the Ch'ing court: how they were com-

posed, where they went, what they did in Peking, and their frequency. He also describes the Chinese embassies to Korea. He then analyzes the economic aspect of tribute—the kinds and values of Korean goods presented as local products and of Chinese gifts in reply, the travel costs, and the trade, both legal and illegal. Korea offered the primary example, almost the ideal model, of tributary relations. Mr. Chun's detailed factual analysis leads him to conclude that the main motive of the institution in this case was less economic or cultural than it was political.

The next two chapters are a fine study in ambivalence. Mr. Sakai shows in detail, mainly from the records of Satsuma, how the Liu-ch'iu (Ryukyu) island kingdom was in fact after 1609 tightly controlled as a vassal of the Satsuma daimyo. Yet at the same time Liu-ch'iu was an acknowledged tributary of China, as well as a profitable entrepot for an unacknowledged Sino-Japanese trade. Satsuma therefore fostered this trade, keeping its surveillance and control over the islands hidden from China at the same time that it obliged Liu-ch'iu's rulers to send Japanese-style tribute missions annually to the Satsuma capital at Kagoshima and periodically with great pomp to the Tokugawa capital at Edo (Tokyo). Satsuma's comprehensive policies even extended to preserving the non-Japanese flavor of Liu-ch'iuan life, its cultural and political identity, the better to profit from it materially!

Mr. Sakai's eye-opening account of Japanese control makes Mr. Ch'en's study of the Ch'ing dynasty's solemn investiture of Liu-ch'iu kings all the more fascinating. The regular Sino-Liu-ch'iuan tributary trade is noted here only in passing. Mr. Ch'en focuses on the eight missions sent by the Ch'ing to carry out rituals largely inherited from the Ming, manifest the emperor's moral sway, and generally promote Confucian culture. Liu-ch'iu requested investiture, Peking appointed top-level scholars, and they organized their mission in Foochow, whence some five hundred persons, including many merchants in disguise, sailed to the islands. Their reception, the elaborate imperial rituals, the attendant trading, and the many cultural activities of the Chinese envoys, all throw light on how the imperial virtue really operated in a foreign capital.

Mr. Lam traces the mixed Ch'ing response to the succession crisis in Vietnam in the late eighteenth century. Frightened by the Tâyson rebellion in 1788, the emperor of the effete Lê dynasty (1428–1788) left his capital at Hanoi, and his family actually fled into China. The ambitious governor-general of Kwangtung and Kwangsi won Peking's agreement to intervene in Vietnam and restore the Lê ruler, though he was instructed to do it with only a small force that would let the Vietnamese do the fighting while the

presence of the Ch'ing troops gave them self-confidence. Within a month the Ch'ing forces were in Hanoi and soon the Lê ruler had received investiture. While the Ch'ing commanders, their mission accomplished, were hesitating to withdraw, they suddenly found themselves under rebel attack: the main bridge out of Hanoi collapsed, and much of the Ch'ing force never made it back to the frontier. After this disaster, however, rather than intervene again to escalate its commitment, Peking decided that the Lê dynasty had indeed lost Heaven's mandate, and so it accepted a respectful tribute mission from the new Tâyson ruler of Vietnam. This mission of 1790 was lavishly received by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor at Jehol (the summer capital where Macartney came three years later), thus reaffirming the Sino-Vietnamese tributary relationship.

Turning from the Sinic to the Inner Asian zone of tributaries, Mr. Suzuki begins by surveying the fluctuations in the early relations between the Han dynasty and the powerful nomadic Hsiung-nu rulers in Mongolia, where the culturally based imperial virtue was so much less potent than Chinese arms; instead of virtue, the only alternative to arms was material bribery. Instead of a monarch-subject relationship of superiority, often the best that China could achieve was a sort of equality expressed in fictional family ties. In Tibet Mr. Suzuki finds still another alternative to the emperor's superiority-by-virtue in the form of the priest-patron (*bhikshu-dānapati*) relationship. As a means of controlling the Mongols, who believed in the Tibetan Lamaist faith, early Ch'ing emperors patronized the Dalai Lama as chakravartin monarchs, not as Confucian rulers. From 1720 to 1792, when Ch'ing armies intervened increasingly in Tibetan politics, the relationship gradually added the more familiar element of imperial power. But it declined in the nineteenth century, when the Ch'ing could not help Nepal against Britain in 1814–1816 or even Tibet against Nepal in 1854–1856.

Continuing with the Ch'ing-Mongol relationship, Mr. Farquhar notes its early beginning, long before the Manchu conquest of China in 1644. The Manchus not only recognized their cultural affinity and indebtedness to the Mongols but also regarded the Mongols' country, people, and rulers as essentially equals of their own. The Manchu vocabulary, culture, and political ideas were in large part borrowed from the Mongols (or in some instances from China through the Mongols). Consequently the Manchu rule imposed upon the Mongols under the Ch'ing was nothing strange but had common Mongol–Manchu roots, and this helps to account for its success.

Mr. Fletcher's study of Ming and Ch'ing relations with the oasis states of Central Asia finds these places at first most concerned with caravan trade by non-Chinese merchants in tributary channels, real or pretended. Islamic rulers refused to acknowledge Chinese superiority, but embassies were still exchanged and still recorded in China as tributary, even though the great Yung-lo Emperor seems actually to have addressed Tamerlane's successor, Shāhrukh, on terms of equality. By the time the Western Mongols threatened Ch'ing control of Mongolia and Tibet in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Central Asia had assumed a new strategic importance and the Ch'ing conquests of the 1750's now gave the oases of Kashgaria sixty years of peace under the indirect rule of a local elite of begs, who governed with Islamic law and Ch'ing support. But after 1820 rebellion could not be suppressed nor, in the end, bought off by the weakened regime at Peking. Its surprising comeback in the 1870's, which Mr. Fletcher does not pursue, and the creation of Sinkiang province in 1884, mark another of the pronounced fluctuations of Chinese power in Central Asia. Behind the Chinese record it is possible from non-Chinese sources to see the deviations from the tribute myth that circumstances often required on this most distant geographical and cultural frontier.

Mr. Wills' chapter on Sino-Dutch relations deals with the most active of the Western countries from the Outer Zone that participated in the Ch'ing tribute system. In the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company far excelled its British counterpart, trading with Japan and China on a scale that Britain could not yet match. Mr. Wills summarizes the course of Sino-Dutch relations in a forty-year period that saw their joint naval operations against Taiwan (Formosa), intermittent trade in Fukien, a second Dutch tribute embassy to Peking in 1667, a Ch'ing embassy to Batavia in 1679, and a great deal of negotiation, all of it plagued by problems of communication across the cultural gap. He therefore analyzes the various types of conflict, the mutual lack of curiosity, the discordant expectations and customs, and the administrative-jurisdictional pitfalls on either side, as well as the Chinese diplomatic tradition that was applied to the Dutch.

Mr. Fairbank's paper concerns the twilight of tribute in the nineteenth century: Western treaty relations at first fitted into the Ch'ing tradition. The treaty ports began as special foreign quarters where foreign headmen (consuls) still bore responsibility. By extending the same privileges to all treaty powers through the most-favored-nation clause, the emperor still treated them with equal impartiality, the better to play them off one against

another. After 1860 the emperor could no longer claim superiority over Westerners, but in Ch'ing relations with the Sinic Zone and parts of Inner Asia the concepts and forms of tribute were consistently maintained for another two decades both in fact and in the record. The possibility of taking the Westerners, preeminently Britain, into the power structure of the Chinese state, as still another minority group of conquerors on the Chinese frontier, was checked by cultural differences. The Western barbarians had no intention of learning to rule China in the Chinese way, and the tribute system collapsed with the dynasty.

Our volume concludes with the reflections of a specialist in the history of thought. Mr. Schwartz notes that the Chinese view of world order began with the common ancient notion of universal kingship. In the Chinese case this became inextricably associated with the peculiarly Confucian mystique of rule-by-virtue and with an "absolutization of the Confucian moral order," which made it impossible for nineteenth-century China to accept the Western multistate system. The assumption of universal kingship had hardly been challenged in the Warring States period (403–221 B.C.) and it survived both the attack of Buddhism in the post-Han era and the actual weakness of Chinese power in the Southern Sung (A.D. 1127–1279). In contrast, when in the Near East the idea of universal kingship was passed on through Alexander to the Roman emperorship, its "religio-cosmological foundation" was confused and weakened in the process. In China alone it was progressively strengthened by the refinement of the Confucian concept of a moral social order culminating in the Son of Heaven. But it could not survive into the twentieth century, and Chinese communism has had to develop a new system in a new world.