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TCHENG KI-TONG AND ORIENTALISM: WRITING AND CULTURAL  
DIPLOMACY IN LATE 19<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY FRANCE

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the degree of MA History by taught course.

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## Introduction



<sup>1</sup>Portrait of Tcheng Ki-tong

Tcheng Ki-tong (1852-1907) was a diplomat and writer in France. He studied French at the Ecole Française des Constructions Navales (French Shipbuilding College) in China for eight years (1866-1875). The major aim of the college was to train naval officers but Tcheng was designated to study the skills of diplomacy, by the order of Li Hung Chang, the dominant figure in Chinese politics. He was sent to France to study law by the Qing government in 1875 and graduated two years later. He then became the diplomat to Germany for seven years (1877-1883) and from 1883 to 1891, Tcheng moved to France for his last nine years in Europe.<sup>2</sup> During his time in France, Tcheng acted both as a diplomat and as a writer. One thing needs to be pointed out; although

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Meyer, 'drawing of Tcheng Ki-tong', *Le Journal Illustré*, 3 August 1884, p. 245

<sup>2</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), (Kindle version), Loc 1044-1102 of 4667

Tcheng's official title was martial, his work focused on diplomatic intercourse. He was given the official military title of Fu Jiang (rank three) in Qing's military rank system with the actual function of You Ji (rank five) on 17th February 1881.<sup>3</sup> In September, he was promoted to the actual function of Can Jiang (rank four) and rewarded with the symbolic hat, with a peacock plume, for his diligent work.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the French and other newspapers addressed him as Colonel Tcheng Ki-tong or General Tcheng Ki-tong. As a diplomat, he joined the negotiations of the Sino-French War (1883-1885). As a writer, he published a series of French writings about China and France.

The action of Tcheng to challenge French Orientalism accorded with his identity as a diplomat of the Qing government. The book *The Chinese painted by themselves* marked his tremendous debut as a writer. It was published during the period before the Sino-French war, when the question of Franco-Chinese relations gained much attention. It was firstly published by Calmann Lévy on 10th July 1884 and republished at least five times within one year. By May 1886, this book had already been published eleven times and in many foreign languages such as English and German.<sup>5</sup> This blockbuster granted Tcheng zealous popularity, a highly regarded reputation, appreciable money and most importantly, distinguishing social esteem. To the French public, Tcheng was popularly recognised as a writer and a diplomat. Tcheng was overwhelmingly welcomed by French audiences as he spoke eloquently. Well-known Roman Rolland noted down his experience in his diary 'expressing the view that Tcheng was supercilious and manipulated his audiences at the Sorbonne with wit and humour'.<sup>6</sup> For describing how liberal minded Tcheng was, we can look to one of Tcheng's friends, the French Sinologist Henri Cordier: 'I have never seen a Chinese so thoroughly accept European demeanour.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鴻章全集) *The compilation of Li Hung Chang*, ed. by Bo Ning and Jia-min Yang, 12 vols (Chang Chun: Shi Dai Wen Yi Publication, 1998), pp. 1571-1572

<sup>4</sup> Li Fongbao, (駐德使館檔案鈔) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive*, ed. by Xiang-xiang Wu, 2 vols (Taipei: Taiwan Xue Sheng Shu Ju Publication, 1966), pp. 177-179

<sup>5</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking University Publication, 2004), (Kindle version), Loc 1192 of 4667

<sup>6</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (中国人的快乐) *The happiness of Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Yi-yu Han (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Xian-qing Zhang, (陈季同—晚清沟通中西文化的使者) 'Tcheng Ki-tong, the envoy who played the role as bridge to communicate the East and the West culture in the late Qing period', in *National Knowledge Infrastructure* <<http://www.cnki.net>><sup>[1]</sup> [accessed 10 May 2015]

In 1891, Tcheng was repatriated to China after being involved in a debt scandal. Before the scandal, he had been asked to negotiate financial funds with foreigners by the secret order of Li Hung Chang. However, his senior official speculated on the behaviour of Tcheng by associating him with corruption. In fact, historians have not given a clear answer as to whether Tcheng had committed the act of corruption or not. Instead, I suggest that Tcheng was involved in a political struggle. After returning to China, Tcheng devoted himself to several important Chinese liberal movements. For instance, he led the campaign of the Republic of Formosa to resist the Japanese invasion in 1895. In addition, he had connections with the Hundred Days' Reform, an overwhelming and thorough reform undertaken in the Qing government in 1898.<sup>8</sup> Even so, he was relatively unknown in Chinese politics. The influential British consular in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Custom Service, Robert Hart commented on 8th December, 1889, that Tcheng was a cipher in Chinese politics.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the name of Tcheng Ki-tong was similar to the French words 'Chien qui tombe' (the drowning dog) meant that jokes could easily circulate about his rise and fall.<sup>10</sup>

If compared to the studies of contemporary Chinese intellectuals who made literary achievements overseas, like Gu Hongming and Yan Fu, Tcheng Ki-tong was only unearthed decades later. Tcheng Ki-tong was only studied by historians in the late 1980s. The journal articles of historian Marianne Bastid-Bruguère, in 1985, and Catherine Vance Yeh, in 1997, involved the analysis of some parts of Tcheng's life. Otherwise, the study of Tcheng Ki-tong has mostly been conducted by Chinese scholars. The early Chinese historians like Xian-Qing Zhang and Bing Sang, in 1999, published journal articles detailing Tcheng's life, while Chinese literary experts later started analysing Tcheng's literature. Not until 2000, was there any monographic books about Tcheng Ki-tong. Historian, Hua-chuan Li published the book *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing* and systematically studied Tcheng Ki-tong's life and literature. Even so, the published studies of Tcheng are still more or less sparse. It could be attributed to the scarcity of related Tcheng's sources and the French language barrier.

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<sup>8</sup> The Hundred Days' Reform was a national cultural, political and educational reform movement in 1898. The liberal ultimately failed under attack from the conservative party after one hundred days.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Hart, (中国海关密档) *Chinese Imperial Maritime Custom secret files*, ed. by Xia-fei Chen, 9 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Publication, 1990-1996), v (1994), 146

<sup>10</sup> Zhi-mian Xu, (陈季同往事) 'Something about Tcheng Ki-tong', *Du Shu*, (1993), 5 (p. 49)

Nevertheless, the historiography of Tcheng Ki-tong had already positioned Tcheng as the pioneer of cultural communications between the West and China, his achievements in literature, in France, especially. His literature was particularly helpful in understanding China after the mainstream of French Orientalism, in the late 19th Century, which reflected the historiography of Edward Said's Orientalism as well. In other words, Tcheng's literature exposes French Orientalism towards China, providing a 'two-way linkage' that helps us to understand more about Sino-French societies and how his literature was produced. In what way was French Orientalism towards China expressed in France? In what way did Tcheng react to French Orientalism? How did the anti-Orientalist perspective of Tcheng in Paris shape his later movements in China? It is this transnational dimension which is under focus in this dissertation. Besides his literature, Tcheng's other resources, like his Chinese writings in China, provide an angle for seeing his later activities in China. It is fair to say that Tcheng Ki-tong is a prism through which to view French Orientalism. In addition to that, Tcheng was a liberal Chinese intellectual and Qing's overseas official, providing a symbolic example for representing its communities.

The approach in this present work differs from that of established scholars due to the exploration of the broader context of French Orientalism. I will analyse Tcheng's literature as an exercise in anti-Orientalism within French Orientalist entertainment in the 1880s. Others historians even Historian Hua-chuan Li's monographic book about Tcheng, omitted a study of the French Orientalist market towards China, in France, in the late 19th century, which was important for understanding the background of Tcheng's literature and how it was written. As for the Chinese literary experts, they have commented on Tcheng's literature though these comments have been isolated, without offering a more comprehensive delineation of Tcheng's and the Sino-French backgrounds for the reader.

The central figure of the dissertation is Tcheng Ki-tong. In order to study his relationship with French Orientalism, the present paper will analyse his literature published in France, his active participation in Sino-French conflicts before the war and later movements in China. In order to flesh out such a relationship, the author will also put it in the context of the Sino-French War, French Orientalism in the late 19th century, and the personal circumstances of Tcheng Ki-tong. With regard to the illustrations, most of them will be analysed and used to interpret French Orientalism in the late 19th century. All the sources and contexts will perform their function to analyse the

relationship of Tcheng with French Orientalism. In other words, how did these two elements interact with each other?

According to Edward Said, French Orientalism was produced by French imperialism after the late 18th century, particularly after the Napoleonic invasion in Europe and the Near East.<sup>11</sup> In the 1880s, French imperialists were at war with China in the so-called Sino-French War (1884-1885). On the eve of the war, Tcheng Ki-tong, as a Chinese diplomat and the trustee of Li Hung Chang, was sent to Paris for gaining further information. He was technically a private visitor, yet Tcheng's visiting was conducted under the order of Li Hung Chang. Not only was he tasked with such a mission, Tcheng as the inferior of Li, inherited Li's diplomatic mind-set as well. The diplomatic mind-set of Li, before the war, was to avoid any possible war with France, yet some specific interests of China had to be proclaimed and maintained. The private visits of Tcheng in Paris was made documented a series of diaries. The international hostility between Britain and France could also be detected through the diaries.

Nicola Cooper argues that the orientalism in French colonial discourses was not monolithic.<sup>12</sup> According to Said, French Orientalism was first initiated by the Egypt Campaign under French Imperialism in the late 18th century. Since then, the definition of the Orient was confined as a backward and barbarian location following the steps of French colonial expansion. Meanwhile, the assertion of the overwhelming military power and civilisation of France was echoed with the former definition of French Orientalism. However, what Cooper argued here means that there were not only one discourse of French imperialism, but other discourses emerged in France as well. In the 1880s, there were commercial activities about China, in France, voicing out heterogeneous characters of what French Orientalism always despised for the backwardness and barbarianism of the Orient. Rather than direct exposure and harshness that may trigger distaste, the commercial activities, especially in the entertainment industries were inclined to emphasise the 'exotic' qualities of China. Through posters and advertisements circulated in France, the element of backwardness and barbarianism were moderated into the 'exotic' qualities that were used to attract the curiosity of the French public for gaining the commercial profits in France.

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 42

<sup>12</sup> Nicola Cooper, 'Disturbing the Colonial Order: Dystopia and Disillusionment in Indochina', in *France and "Indochina": Cultural representation*, ed. by Kathryn Robson and Jennifer Yee, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), p. 79

The examples embedded in the long tradition of French Orientalism could be traced in the writing of historian Porterfield through the salon paintings of the Egypt Campaign under funded by General Napoleon. These paintings delineated an official romanticism of the victory of the French Empire and its civilisation in French Orientalism. These paintings also reflected the backwardness and the barbarianism of Egypt at the same time. In contrast to the official romanticism in French Orientalism, there were commercial activities in the 19th century, divergently expressing unofficial romanticism through the 'exotic' qualities of China, through themes such as romance and suspense. Notwithstanding the kind of different expressions, the French Orientalist entertainments were still unavoidably shadowed by French Orientalism, the discourse of French Imperialism.

As for the personal life of Tcheng Ki-tong, Tcheng went through a rise and fall. The rise was the period in which he made enormous achievements in France, while the fall was the debt scandal. The debt scandal brought Tcheng's diplomatic career to an end. Actually, it was significant to discover that the effect of French Orientalism helped Tcheng to shape his liberal views in China. Tcheng addressed French Orientalism by legitimating Chinese traditional culture and rule in France, thus discerning the pros and cons of the Sino-French societies and cultures. That is to say Tcheng held an equal mind-set towards the Sino-French societies and cultures, and wished for their unity with a humanitarian spirit. Unlike French Orientalism, which perceived China as a backward and barbarian country, Tcheng thought there were parts of China outstripped by France, especially in the fields of science and art. He believed such situations could be changed by liberal, social movements. Unlike a racial and ignorant Orientalist, Tcheng contributed himself to understanding China and addressing its shortages through his later liberal activities in China, which were the best ways to counter French Orientalism. Following the debt scandal and the Sino-Japanese War, the restrictions on Tcheng, of being an official, gradually diminished during his later life in China. Tcheng not only tried to promote the fields of science and art in China, he also started to grumble about, and even protest the Qing government. Furthermore, he acknowledged the weak Qing government that was necessary to be reformed. One point must be clarified: Tcheng did not share any extent of what French Orientalism towards China because Tcheng was a liberal intellectual recognising the advantages and disadvantages of both civilisation. In fact, French Orientalism was an importantly wrong concept for his liberal perspectives to understand and recognised the legitimacies



of both countries. There was no doubt to define Tcheng Ki-tong as a warrior who kept fighting with French Orientalism after repatriating back to China. The weak and barbarian parts of China triggered Tcheng's discontent about the Qing government and his nationalism. He wanted a better country and its shortages could be made up by using France as a model. Specifically, the relatively objective analysis of both civilisations, in particularly the disadvantages of China, were largely given by his experiences in France and his French writings.

The following chapters will be set out as follows: Chapter one will delineate the diplomatic contribution of Tcheng in the Sino-French conflicts before the war. Chapter two will study how Tcheng addressed French Orientalism, his motivation and the capitalisation on French Orientalism in some extent. Chapter three will analyse two kinds of romantic expressionism in French Orientalism and French Orientalist entertainments, which attributed to the acceptance of Tcheng's French writings by the French public. Chapter four looks into how Tcheng conducted the political activities and social movements in China, which reflected the element of French Orientalism in distinguishing and shaping his perspectives as a liberal intellectual rather than as an Orientalist or a Chinese conservative.

## Chapter one: A courier before the ominous war

This chapter will concentrate on the diplomatic contribution of Tcheng to Sino-French conflicts before the Sino-French War. Tcheng's diplomatic contributions mostly focused on the private visits of Tcheng in Paris from 17th July to 31st July, in 1883, which is documented in Tcheng's half-month diaries, a primary source of edited historical archives. Through Tcheng's observations and analyses in the diaries, Tcheng accomplished his mission. Dramatically, Sino-French conflicts gave the opportunity for Tcheng to stay France for the next nine years. To be more specific, Tcheng was under the instruction of the dominant Chinese Politian, Li Hung Chang, to join the negotiation of Sino-French conflicts and was later assigned as the counsellor in France. In the meantime, Tcheng published his French writings about anti-Orientalism for legitimating China and its customs, which will be under focus in the next chapter.



<sup>13</sup> Portraits of Li Hung Chang and Tcheng Ki-tong

<sup>13</sup> Henri Meyer, 'drawing of Tcheng Ki-tong', *Le Journal Illustré*, 3 August 1884, p. 245

On 3rd August, 1884, the French weekly newspaper *Le Journal Illustré* published the portraits of two Chinese diplomatic figures. Twenty-three days later, the Qing government declared war on France. Around the rapidly changing Sino-French relationship, *Le Journal Illustré* sensitively pointed out the two diplomats. One was Li Fong Chang and the other was Tcheng Ki-tong. When we look at its detailed information, we learn that Li Fong Chang was the Chinese ambassador to France and Tcheng Ki-tong was a colonel. *Le Journal Illustré* was wrong. The true Chinese ambassador to France, supposedly, was Xu Jincheng, since May, 1884. His predecessor the Marquis Tseng was dismissed on 28th April 1884. There were no Chinese ambassadors to France called Li Fong Chang. According to his portrait and the historical facts, we could suggest that this man was Li Hung Chang, the dominant politician in the Qing court. Li Hung Chang was also a diplomat, though most of the time he spent in China. He conducted many diplomatic negotiations through his political career including the Sino-French War. It was fair to call Li Hung Chang a diplomat but not an ambassador. The pronunciation of Li Fong Chang was close to Li Hung Chang. Even though *Le Journal Illustré* was wrong about Li's information, these paintings of Li and Tcheng corresponded to their noticeable influence in the Sino-French negotiations before the war.

Although Tcheng Ki-tong ought to be absent from the negotiation with French officials as he was merely a second rank translator of a Chinese diplomat in Germany, Tcheng took a secret mission under Li Hung Chang. During the fourth quarter of 1882, Tcheng Ki-tong went back to China for a-half-year holiday in the name of renovating the family tomb.<sup>14</sup> The truth was that Li ordered Tcheng to go to Tientsin for consulting further news, in the spring of 1883. Li asked Tcheng to go to Paris for exacting more information, as Tcheng had influential social connections with French officials.<sup>15</sup> When Tcheng arrived in Paris, there was a half-month of private visits between Tcheng and French officials and elites, from 17th July to 31st July. The *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive* had its full records of Tcheng's diaries. These diaries were being sent to Li.

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<sup>14</sup> Li Fongbao, (驻德使馆档案钞) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive*, ed. by Xiang-xiang Wu, 2 vols (Taipei: Taiwan Xue Sheng Shu Ju Publication, 1966), p. 523

<sup>15</sup> Li Hung Chang, (中法战争文献汇编) *Sino-Franco War archive edition*, ed. by Jia-luo Yang, 7 vols (Taipei: Ding Wen Shu Ju Publication, 1973), IV (1973), 91-92

To Tcheng, this secret mission was conducted as a private visitor to Paris. The top priority was to ascertain the intention of the French government towards three Tonkin issues, such as the protectorate rights over the Annam government, the commercial interest in the Red Delta and the Black Flag Army issue. The Black Flag Army issue was attributed to a former Chinese Triad leader, Liu Yung Fu who led The Black Flag Army in the Tonkin area and was responsible for the demise of the French colonial officer, Francis Garnier's and later the death of Henri Rivière.<sup>16</sup> The protectorate right was the primary motivator for the Sino-French conflict. On 28th November, 1882, the French ambassador to China M. Bourée and Li Hung Chang made a memorandum of understanding on the Tonkin issue, agreeing upon the retreat of both military power in Tonkin and their sphere of influence in the Red Delta. The then French Prime Minister, Jules Ferry, refused to admit to the memoir and recalled Bourée on 5th March, 1883. The commercial interest in the Red Delta was an economic concern for French Imperialism, which provoked the interference from other Great Powers, especially Britain.<sup>17</sup>

Other aims for Tcheng were to probe into French military power in the Far East and make French officials know about the improper actions of the deputy of the French ambassador to China, Artuhur Tricou. After Ferry recalled M. Bourée, Tricou replaced the function of Bourée to negotiate with Li after March, 1883. Within early negotiations between Tricou and Li, in June, 1883, Li was irritated by the abrupt protocol of Tricou and asked Tcheng to report this situation to the French government.<sup>18</sup> As for the French military power, there was an influential Chinese modern newspaper named *Shen Bao* (申报), commenting on the weaknesses and improvements of China in various aspects such as the economy and politics etc. It was a liberal and commercial newspaper for the Chinese elite to know about foreign affairs.<sup>19</sup> Shen Bao expressed worry about the weak

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<sup>16</sup> David G. Marr, *Vietnamese: Anticolonialism 1885-1925*, (California: University of California Press, 1971), p. 42

<sup>17</sup> 'France, China and Tonquin', *The Times*, 24 December 1883, ,31001, p. 5

<sup>18</sup> Li Hung Chang, (中法战争文献汇编) *Sino-Franco War archive edition*, ed. by Jia-luo Yang, 7 vols (Taipei: Ding Wen Shu Ju Publication, 1973), IV (1973), 51

<sup>19</sup> Wei-jiang Wang, (‘清流’与《申报》) ‘The Qingliu and Shen Bao’, *Modern Chinese history studies*, (2007), 6 (pp. 62-77)

Chinese naval power, which should be considered for the diplomatic considerations as to whether they went for war or peace.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, the private dialogues between Tcheng Ki-tong and French officials remedied the diplomatic shutdown at that very moment. Such an interrupting situation was caused by an unfriendly deadlock since 1880s between the Chinese ambassador to France, the Marquis Tseng, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Challemeil-Lacour. As for the interrupted diplomatic progress between the Marquis Tseng and Lacour, the French counsellor to Germany commented on the private visits of Tcheng on 31st July, 1883.<sup>21</sup> From the counsellor, Lacour was so satisfied that he still could negotiate with other Chinese (Tcheng Ki-tong) and the discontinued Sino-French relationship could carry on.

Within a short period, Tcheng visited fifteen people: fourteen of them were French and they were thirteen government officials and one merchant, including French Prime minister, Jules Ferry, and the minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Challemeil-Lacour. As for the private visits, Tcheng did have a widespread social intercourse with French government officials.

On 19th and 20th July, Tcheng visited two important French officials separately, Ferry and Lacour.<sup>22</sup> According to their viewpoints on protectorate rights over Annam, they only accepted the Second treaty of Saigon, made in 1874, instead of a memorandum of understanding made in 1883. In other words, Ferry insisted on the 1874 treaty and that the Annam government recognised French protectorate rights. Tcheng debated the historical relationship of Indochina with China, expressing the necessity of the geopolitical sphere of Chinese influence. Tcheng exerted his knowledge of International Law during an argument with Cochinchina governor Vilers. Tcheng put forward the principle that 'the International law is superior to the interest'. Tcheng was using the foreign diplomatic mindset to state the Chinese stand. Through all the conversations of Tcheng, he was neither humble nor pert, which demonstrated him as a qualified diplomat. He not only demonstrated the suzerain tradition between China and

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<sup>20</sup> Li-zhi Peng, (中法战争期间《申报》舆论) 'The reports of Shen Bao during the Sino-French War', (unpublished thesis, East China Normal University, 2004), p. 9

<sup>21</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (中法战争: 中国近代史资料丛刊) *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive*, ed. by Zhen-kun Zhang, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1996-2002), 1 (1996), 527

<sup>22</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (中法战争: 中国近代史资料丛刊) *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive*, ed. by Zhen-kun Zhang, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1996-2002), 1 (1996), 544-549

Indochina, but presented the unwillingness to clash with France. Both Ferry and Lacour talked about their determination to revenge the death of Henri Rivière on the Black Flag Army and the Annam government. The only thing they wanted to know was the final attitude of the Qing government. For Tcheng, he could not decide this affair and even Li did not have such power. Therefore, Tcheng did not give the exact answer, yet reasserted the legitimacy of Chinese intervention. On the issue of partitioning commercial interests in the Red Delta, Ferry mentioned Britain. He noticed the speculation of the British in Sino-French conflicts and its dominated territories in Southeast Asia. Lacour also conceded to this idea. These two French officials did not announce an ambition to conquer Tonkin. In addition, Tcheng did report the Tricou incident to Lacour. Lacour promised the replacement of him would proceed. Accordingly, Tricou's attitude got milder towards Li, not like in previous negotiations and he was replaced in the end. Li attributed these changes to the informant Tcheng Ki-tong in Li's memorials.<sup>23</sup>

On 20th July, Tcheng had a dinner with a naval commander. Through the commander, Tcheng discerned the details of French military power in the Far East. The details were about how many, and what kind, of French naval power there were off the coast of China, Tonkin and Saigon. In addition, the size of the French army was around 4,200, including 3,500 regular army and seven hundred 'Tirailleurs indochinois'.<sup>24</sup> The number of French sailors was 1,200. As a result, there were 5,400 French soldiers in these territories. On the same day, Tcheng reported this key information back to Li Hung Chang.<sup>25</sup> To understand how many French infantries and navies were in the Far East was important for Li in influencing the diplomatic strategies for China.

Besides that, Tcheng analysed the political strategies of the French government and the Sino-French future. He had clear idea of the contradictory attitude of the French government. On 24th July, he noted in his diary that France would not like to provoke the war in its politics and international community in the negotiation. However, Ferry declined the request of ceasing the military procession and Lacour took further

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<sup>23</sup> Li Hung Chang, (*中法战争文献汇编*) *Sino-Franco War archive edition*, ed. by Jia-luo Yang, 7 vols (Taipei: Ding Wen Shu Ju Publication, 1973), IV (1973), 91-92

<sup>24</sup> The Tirailleurs indochinois were soldiers of several regiments of local ethnic Indochinese infantry organized as Tirailleurs by the French colonial authorities.

<sup>25</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (*中法战争: 中国近代史资料丛刊*) *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive*, ed. by Zhen-kun Zhang, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1996-2002), I (1996), 549

precautions for the Tonkin conquest in the French Chamber.<sup>26</sup> He commented in the diaries: ‘Nowadays the procession of French troops was not far away from Bac Ninh where were stationed, which was eventful’.<sup>27</sup> What happened in the following four months was an upgraded level of Sino-French collision, which took place in December, 1883.

At the end of this secret mission, the information and opinion provided by Tcheng was adopted by Li. In Li’s report to the Chinese governmental institution of Foreign Affairs, Zongli Yamen, Li mentioned the negotiation through Tcheng’s secret mission and referred to Tcheng’s conclusion about the incorporated French attitude.<sup>28</sup> More importantly for the personal life of Tcheng, Tcheng was praised by Li and promoted to counsellor later did his job in Paris since May, 1884.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, Tcheng Ki-tong closely connected to France for his writings and diplomatic activities.

Prior to the Sino-French War on 26th August 1884, Tcheng was asked to go to Paris for more diplomatic information on 27th April, 1884.<sup>30</sup> With his superior, Li Fong Bao, as the deputy of the Chinese ambassador to France, Tcheng met Jules Ferry many times and negotiated for settling the Sino-French conflict from July to August.<sup>31</sup> During the war, Tcheng was given the order from Li to stay in Paris. Tcheng needed to help the Qing government obtain French public opinion and further French government news.<sup>32</sup> Before the War, Tcheng had already published articles *China and The Chinese (La Chine et les Chinois)* in the French Magazine *Revue des deux Mondes*.<sup>33</sup> There were

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<sup>26</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (中法战争: 中国近代史资料丛刊) *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive*, ed. by Zhen-kun Zhang, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1996-2002), I (1996), 557

<sup>27</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (中法战争: 中国近代史资料丛刊) *Sino-French War: Chinese modern history archive*, ed. by Zhen-kun Zhang, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1996-2002), I (1996), 561

<sup>28</sup> Li Hung Chang, (中法战争文献汇编) *Sino-Franco War archive edition*, ed. by Jia-luo Yang, 7 vols (Taipei: Ding Wen Shu Ju Publication, 1973), IV (1973), 91-92

<sup>29</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004) (Kindle Version) Loc 676 of 4667

<sup>30</sup> Bing Sang, (陈季同述论) ‘Chen Jitong’, *Modern Chinese History Studies*, (1999), 4, (pp. 113-141)

<sup>31</sup> Zhang Long, (越南与中法战争) *Vietnam and the Sino-French War*, (New Taipei: Taiwan commercial Press, 1996), pp. 255- 261

<sup>32</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, (清季外交史料) *The Qing diplomatic archive*, ed. by Yan-wei Wang, 5 vols (Peking: Shu Mu Wen Xian Publication, 1987-1989), II (1987) 817

<sup>33</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong, ‘La Chine et les Chinois’, *Revue des deux Mondes*, 15 May 1884, p. 278

eighteen articles by Tcheng Ki-tong read by the French public before and throughout the Sino-French War.<sup>34</sup> It promoted positive attention and pushed forward the feeling of a sympathetic French public about Chinese customs, which was positive for the negotiation between China and France. These eighteen articles were the proto-version of Tcheng's first French writing about China – *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*.

Above all, we could conclude that Tcheng Ki-tong as a qualified diplomat had contributed to the Chinese diplomacy in a positive way. Through his private visits during the secret mission, he brought out beneficial and worthy information for the Qing government. During build up to the imminent war, he was dedicated to the last possible peace negotiations between China and France. Because of that, Tcheng maintained a close relationship with his superior Li Hung Chang and worked under instructions from him. Even though the war happened, he still used his French writings about China to strive for the sympathy of the French public opinion and kept teleporting the latest war-time information from France to China. In addition, it was important that Tcheng was allocated to France where he became popular for his French writings about China. It is his French writings in France that will be studied in the next chapter.

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<sup>34</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004) (Kindle Version) Loc 687 of 4667



## Chapter two: Tcheng vs. French Orientalism in France

Before the imminent Sino-French War, Tcheng published a series of eighteen articles under the title *China and The Chinese (La Chine et les Chinois)* from May 15th, 1884 to June 15th, 1884.<sup>35</sup> One month later, its compilation, *The Chinese Painted by Themselves (Les Chinois peints par eux meme)* was published. It was firstly published by Calmann Lévy, in Paris, and republished at least five times in the same year.<sup>36</sup> By May 1886, it had been republished eleven times and had been translated into other languages such as English and German.<sup>37</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong won intensive success and became popular as a writer and a diplomat among the French public later on. For Tcheng's publications in France, there were five books, one translation, one drama article and one long novel.<sup>38</sup> It is worthwhile studying why the French writings of Tcheng were accepted and welcomed by the French public and it will be discussed in the next chapter. In this chapter, the motivations of Tcheng in responding to French Orientalism will be examined first followed by an analysis of the content written by Tcheng in addressing French Orientalism. Based on that content, I will explore the methods that were used to argue against French Orientalism through his literature.

Before arriving in Europe, Tcheng studied at the French Shipbuilding College (Ecole Française des Constructions Navales), in China for eight years, from 1866 to 1875. The college taught Tcheng how to manoeuvre ocean-faring ships and their related technologies and the teaching medium was French.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Tcheng fostered an intensive interest in French literature, referred to in the article '*Le Général Tcheng-Ki-*

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<sup>35</sup> These eighteen articles later constituted *Paris painted by themselves*, the first book of Tcheng's French writings. They were Chinese family, religion and philosophy, marriage, divorce, women, writing language, social class, the press and public opinion, the prehistoric age, proverb, education, admiration of ancestors, nursery charity, labour class, poetry, recreation and European society.

<sup>36</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), Loc 1185 of 4667

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> The five books are *The Chinese Painted by Themselves (Les Chinois peints par eux memes)*, *The Chinese Drama (Le théâtre des Chinois)*, *Parisians Painted by a Chinese (Les Parisiens peints par un Chinois)*, *My Country (Mon pays, la Chine d'aujourd'hui)*, and *The Happiness of The Chinese (Les Plaisirs en Chine)*. The translation is *Strange stories from a Chinese Studio (Contes étranges du studio du loisir)*. The long novel is *The Romance of The Yellow Man (Le Roman de l'Homme Jaune)*. The drama article is *Brave Love (L'Amour héroïque)*.

<sup>39</sup> Yan Shen, (船政学堂) *Chuan Zheng School*, (Peking: Science Publication, 2007), p. 35

Tong' in *La Revue illustrée* written by his friend Henri Bryois in 1890.<sup>40</sup> Before going abroad, Tcheng was already familiar with French writings of classists, such as Molière, Blaise Pascal, Michel Eyquem de Montaigne and Pierre Corneille, which was an important factor in leading him to be a writer, especially Molière, the idol whose brave fight with the bias of authorised social opinion deeply influenced Tcheng's attitude of anti-Orientalism in France. He used the case of Molière in the preface of *The Chinese Drama*. Meanwhile, he started to protest against French Orientalism towards Chinese customs and cultural practices.<sup>41</sup> Tcheng's understanding of French Orientalism was precise in the opening of *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*. Tcheng pointed out that the misinterpretation of China was not because of ignorance, but due to purposeful bias.<sup>42</sup> That the French were not ignoring China was evidenced in the classical and overwhelming *chinoiserie* in the French market. However, the ways of presenting Chinese people for the French public totally disgusted Tcheng. Most French travelling books about China were incorrect and ridiculous, and were purely for satisfying the curiosity and entertainments of the French public. For instance, the travel notes lied about how the Chinese liked eating dogs, serving snake eggs and grilled lizard for guests. In addition to that, it was thought that Chinese marriage was polygamous and that the Chinese even gave their own children to ferocious animals for worship, amongst other misconceptions.

Tcheng had noticed the fanaticism of the French public, who never got tired of pursuing any news for their discussions and curiosity.<sup>43</sup> Tcheng himself mentioned that he liked reading French newspapers and thought them as a valuable tool for understanding France.<sup>44</sup> To a certain degree, Tcheng thought newspapers taught more information than professors and textbooks.<sup>45</sup> He also indicated that the French public

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<sup>40</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), Loc 1072 of 4667

<sup>41</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的戏剧) *The Chinese Drama*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by. Hua-chuan Li and Min Ling (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), pp.1-2

<sup>42</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的自画像) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 37 of 4667

<sup>43</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 11

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

did not have any interests in serious articles.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, the French public from the top to the bottom class, were absorbing news no matter whether it was true or not.<sup>47</sup> Not only did the French public demand interesting, or even spooky stories, or news, about China for satisfying their curiosity and desire for gossip, the French commercial environment intrigued what the French public wanted as well. From the peddler to the newspaper institution, they were stimulating the imagination of the French public to spread the seed of curiosity for profit.<sup>48</sup> In Paris, Tcheng visited newspaper institutions, witnessing how newspapers were produced and how the contents were thought up.<sup>49</sup> Tcheng was shocked by the number of newspapers being produced per day and interested in how the editors sometimes made up some fake news just for relaxing and entertaining the reader. We will learn that the French public had the enthusiasm for information about China, regardless of its authenticity and the entertainment products catered solely for the desires of the French public.

When Tcheng lived in France, he was always being asked absurd questions by French people.<sup>50</sup> In Tcheng's words, 'such naïve questions could cause my life to end'.<sup>51</sup> Tcheng did not know whether to laugh or to cry. Even worse than that, he encountered some personal conflicts with some Parisian citizens who racially attacked him. A French magazine itself published one of these racial attacks and commented that Tcheng was beyond the French public's imagination of a Chinese.<sup>52</sup> The story was that Tcheng was nearly run down by a cart and the cart driver nastily shouted at him. Tcheng countered him with a French insult, 'collignon', which referred to a cart driver who

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<sup>46</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的自画像》) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 610 of 3210

<sup>47</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《巴黎印象记》) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 10

<sup>48</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《巴黎印象记》) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 11

<sup>49</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《巴黎印象记》) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), pp. 111-113

<sup>50</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的自画像》) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 37 of 4667

<sup>51</sup> Zeng Pu, (答胡适书) 'answering to Shih Hu', in (《胡适文存》) *Hu Shi Wen Cun*, ed. by Shih Hu, 9 vols (He Fei: Huang Shan Shu She, 1996), VIII (1996), 561

<sup>52</sup> Da-li Shen, (一位震惊法国的中国人) 'The diplomat Tcheng Ki-tong in late Qing: France shocked by a Chinese', *Guang Ming Newspaper*, 22 November 2011, p. 14

murdered two passengers during a quarrel in the 19th century. The cart driver and Parisian citizens had never expected that Tcheng could speak in such slang deemed suitable only for the French. The other case was recorded in *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*: a French woman gesticulated at Tcheng and said that she bought Tcheng, a Chinese, with a half pence to indicate her philanthropic act to help the abandoned baby in China.<sup>53</sup> The demeanour of this French women reflected bare French Orientalism, which will be discussed later.

Before writing *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*, Tcheng was already equipped with the French language and the knowledge of French literature. He was not only resentful of the fact that French Orientalism demonised China and its customs but also endured such attacks in his personal experience in France. It was natural for most of his French writings to be strewn with an element of anti-Orientalism, to address the perception of the French public towards China as a backward and barbaric country. On the other hand, Tcheng had a sharp sense of the Orientalist market in France, noticing the fanaticism of French public and its producers for relaxing and entertaining information about China. In fact, Tcheng was featured the ‘exotic’ qualities that distinguished himself. Besides being a writer, like any of his French counterparts, Tcheng was a Chinese who could exert the French language and knowledge of French literature, and more importantly, had the self-evident credibility of writing the facts about China and the Chinese. Moreover, he was a diplomat and a colonel, and later a general in the Chinese government. This kind of high-class image helped further the attraction and respect for what he wrote about China. Not for nothing was he the best person for the French public if any of them wanted to read information about China during the 1880s, when Sino-French conflicts intensified. As Tcheng wrote: ‘the writings of Chinese customs will be based on my personal experience with the style of European mind-set.’<sup>54</sup> In order to target French Orientalism, Tcheng learned that not only should he correct these falsehoods but target the French reader in a relaxing and entertaining way.

Tcheng was represented with the ‘exotic’ qualities and so were his French writings about China, especially *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*. In fact, *The*

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<sup>53</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 1039 of 4667

<sup>54</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 61 of 3210

*Chinese Painted by Themselves* overlaps with some parts of his other books about China, as it was the foundation of these other books. In *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*, Tcheng raised a principle angle for understanding China and its circumstances. That was that the Chinese family was the primary unit of the country and it took up the most vital position in Chinese social and political organisation.<sup>55</sup> Such a kind of family was totally different from the French nuclear family. The regular organisation of a Chinese family was generations of family members living together. Therefore, the idea of organisation was essentially different for French and Chinese social organisation.<sup>56</sup> The western society was basically regulated by the common law of the government while the Chinese family had the stipulated rule for their own management, even though they still abided by the common law. The family rules followed the legacies of traditional patriarchy and primogeniture. Accordingly, Chinese families had many more mutual obligations than the western nuclear family and its ultimate aim was prosperity and glory.<sup>57</sup> Basically, Tcheng extended this principle over the descriptions of Chinese life and Chinese government, which was to legitimatise China and its circumstances. That was the primary position and important way in which Tcheng targeted French Orientalism, as he revealed in the first chapter, *Family*, in *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*.<sup>58</sup>

In Tcheng's French writings about China and its customs, he described the 'exotic' qualities of Chinese life and social activities, like the mid-autumn festival and admiration of ancestors under the principle of family.<sup>59</sup> However, there are some parts of his French writings about China that were directly against French Orientalism, since these parts included highly-charged issues for the French public such as Chinese women, the abandoned baby and cuisine. For the French public, these issues were evidence that reflected the tradition of an uncivilised and backward China and its culture. In these three topics, Tcheng emphasised its Chinese 'exotic' qualities and argued against

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<sup>55</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 111 of 3210

<sup>56</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 88 of 3210

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Mid-autumn festival is a Chinese festival that signifies the union of family and the missing of people who away from home.

French Orientalism with examples. In order to help the French public understand these issues, Tcheng used some European axioms to support and help his arguments, like Christianity.

On the issue of Chinese women, the French public thought the Chinese woman was a kind of pitiful and odd creature that was silent and living for the birth of children.<sup>60</sup> For example, Tcheng surprisingly found out that the definition of Chinese women was similar to the lobster in one authorised French dictionary. He proclaimed that all the women are the daughters of Eve, including Chinese women. They were naturally women though they did have their own distinctions from western women. Tcheng admitted that men were more advantageous than women in Chinese society. This natural law sublimates into the establishment of Chinese customs, Chinese rights and obligations. Therefore, Tcheng directly admitted that the abstruse knowledge was a useless burden for women, while elegance and gentleness was a necessity for the happiness of a family.<sup>61</sup> As for the French misinterpretation of Chinese marriage as polygamous, Tcheng clarified such marriage was monogamy, but with concubines. Tcheng made his satire that Chinese concubines would be more acceptable if they were called Chinese mistress for the French. He did not see the real difference between the Chinese concubine and the French mistress except the name of their status. The Chinese concubine was in the name of marriage and admitted by the law. Meanwhile, Tcheng exposed the mistress culture in the French relationship even within Christians. Moreover, Tcheng pointed out it was serious if there were no legalised concubines because the problems of illegitimate offspring would emerge. In conclusion, he thought Europeans were hypocritical in attacking the Chinese marriages.<sup>62</sup> In contrast, Tcheng legitimated the tradition of concubines as the necessary method to maintain the family in some special cases. These cases could interrupt the normal marriage like the sexual problems between husband and wife. Chinese wives were praised to accept such a kind

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<sup>60</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 394 of 3210

<sup>61</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 404 of 3210

<sup>62</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (*中国人的自画像*) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 432 of 3210

of sacrifice for the family rather than for themselves. Tcheng substantiated the tradition with a comparison by way of the example of Abraham and Sarah in the Bible.<sup>63</sup>

On the topic of the abandoned baby, Tcheng despised the rumour that Chinese parents threw their children in the rubbish or around atrocious animals. Furthermore, the idea that a half pence could save one Chinese child, he found ridiculous.<sup>64</sup> Tcheng declared that the abandonment of a baby would be seriously punished, collectively, by their neighbours and relatives. Besides, there were all kinds of solutions to prevent it.<sup>65</sup> Private and public charities could help and take care of these babies. Although it was more likely that such abandonments happened to baby girls in destitute families, their parents could let them be adopted by way of a marriage with a boy whose family was rich. As for the issue of demonised Chinese cuisine, Tcheng wrote a whole chapter on Chinese cuisine in his book *The Happiness of The Chinese*.<sup>66</sup> Tcheng used examples to show that Chinese cuisine was elaborate, varied and abundant in the scenarios of poetry gathering, tea parties, the usage of chopsticks and banquets. In its delineations, Tcheng referred to the historical facts and elegant Chinese poetry to reflect the romance and enjoyment of the Chinese and to explore the further information of the unfamiliar face of China for the French public.

Apart from these focal points of Chinese issues that were picked up in French Orientalism, Tcheng used new initiatives to discuss the religious hatred of the Jews in France.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to the situation of Jews in France, China was a peaceful soil that nurtured many kinds of religions if they were harmless to the individual and society. Hitherto the Muslims and the Jews could freely hold their ceremonies. The Jews in China did not have the problems of being prosecuted as they followed the rules of avoiding conflict with other religions. By raising this issue, Tcheng was implicitly

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<sup>63</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的自画像》) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 445 of 3210

<sup>64</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的自画像》) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 1030 of 3210

<sup>65</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的自画像》) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 1041-1055 of 3210

<sup>66</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《中国人的快乐》) *The Happiness of Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Yi-yu Han (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 117-136

<sup>67</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (《吾国》) *My Country*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), pp.130-132

criticising French Orientalism and Protestants as the French public were aware of the injustice towards the Jews. A sense that the minority religions were harmful in France was perpetuated as a rationalised prejudice.<sup>68</sup> Besides the ‘Jews issue’ in France, Tcheng criticised the European duel.<sup>69</sup>

Throughout Tcheng’s literature about China, he used diverse methods to argue against French Orientalism to make the French public more understanding of these ‘exotic’ qualities of China and its customs. However, he did not introduce it to his French reader in a formal way. He picked up some light-hearted writing methods and applied them to different cases to make Chinese culture more comprehensible. In his arguments against French Orientalism, he accorded with one methodology applied in *The Chinese Drama*. That was a method of criticism through what Tcheng called ‘the habit of comparison in our spirit’.<sup>70</sup> Sinology professor, Thøgersen, commented that this kind of application did make Tcheng’s writings more attractive and humorous.<sup>71</sup> The compared cases of France and China gave the French reader a brand new perspective to revalue the dominant viewpoints towards China that circulated in French culture. On the other hand, Tcheng used the essay writing style in introducing China and making it more acceptable, with the sense of romantic pleasure. There was Chinese poetry to add to the charm of the Chinese tradition and French classics by French writers for the comparison. He quoted from lots of famous French writers after the 17th century, like Tcheng’s favourite Molière (1622-1673). The French readers were more familiar with these writers, which strengthened Tcheng’s arguments. According to literary professor Jian-hua Peng, Tcheng chose a precise writing style especially in *The Chinese Painted by Themselves*, which was an expression of cultural comparison. Specifically, it was the form of a critical essay with strong emotion. Later such a style extended to his other French writings about China and accorded with the traditional definition of the French

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<sup>68</sup> Christopher Tozzi, ‘Jews, soldiering, and citizenship in revolutionary and Napoleonic France’, *the journal of modern history*, 86 (2014), 2 (pp. 233-257)

<sup>69</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Paris painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 64

<sup>70</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的戏剧) *The Chinese Drama*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li and Min Ling (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 8

<sup>71</sup> Carsten Boyer Thøgersen, (书写东西方文化差异的三位中国作家) ‘Three Chinese Writers on Cultural Differences Between the East and the West’, in *World Sinology*, ed. by Hui-lin Yang, 14 vols, (Ren Min University Publication, 1998-2014), XIV (2013), 65-77



essay, and also in being lively.<sup>72</sup> In other writings, he kept exploring his Chinese elements by translating *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* and writing one drama, *Brave Love*, and one long nove, *The Romance of The Yellow Man*, to promote the understanding of the French public about Chinese culture.

Clearly, Tcheng wanted to address in French Orientalism in his literature. That is to say Tcheng idealised the image of China by legitimating the tradition of Chinese culture to arrive at anti-Orientalism to a large degree. In his book *Parisians Painted by a Chinese*, Tcheng extolled the cosmopolitanism and novelty in Paris without mentioning any backwardness of China in terms of technology or public institutions. Tcheng just mentioned it was sorry for China without further comments in the chapters about public libraries and The Louvre.<sup>73</sup> Even though he did not directly show support for China in Sino-French conflicts, he acted as a person who had a humanitarian spirit against war and wished for more communication between China and France. Just as he claimed that ‘the hostility between races and countries will diminish under the glittering light of civilisation. The world will be in peace and friendly.’<sup>74</sup> The idea of anti-Imperialism and the willingness towards peace on the part of Tcheng, were expressed in almost all his works about China. Rather than a serious diplomat formally negotiating with French officials, Tcheng maintained his identity as a writer to write in a relaxing and entertaining style in an attempt to influence the French public.

Motivated by the unfair treatments from French Orientalism when Tcheng was living in France, in Tcheng’s literature, the major purpose for him was to make legitimate Chinese culture in order to counter French Orientalism.<sup>75</sup> There is no doubt that Tcheng had a strong intention to promote the image of China. If this was bias, Tcheng excused himself as a patriot.<sup>76</sup> In the introduction to and analysis of China,

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<sup>72</sup> Jian-hua Peng, (晚清民初的法国文学接受) ‘Chinese translation and critics of French Literature in the period between 1872 and 1919’, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fujian Normal University, 2009), p. 87

<sup>73</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 75, 129

<sup>74</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (吾国) *My Country*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p.127

<sup>75</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), Loc 2467 of 4667

<sup>76</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的自画像) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, Tran. Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 75 of 4667

Tcheng presented his French reader with how to understand these ‘exotic’ qualities of China and its customs. By guiding their curiosity and sympathy, it helped Tcheng to build up his arguments and the idealised image of China. Through his well-accepted literature, it granted Tcheng zealous popularity, a highly regarded reputation and distinguishing social standing.<sup>77</sup> So far as it goes, we can see the tendency that Tcheng had already established an oppositional relationship with French Orientalism through Sino-French diplomatic conflicts and French writings. At the same time, Tcheng’s French writings within the context of the French Orientalist environment is worthy exploring. To be more specific, understanding the cultural contents in which the French public saw Tcheng’s works will explain the popularity of Tcheng while also showing how Orientalism permeated France. In the next chapter, the French Orientalist environment of the 1880s will be studied.

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<sup>77</sup> Pei-de Li, (曾孟朴的文学旅程) *The literary journey of Zeng Pu*, trans. by Meng-jian Chen, (Taipei: Zhuan Ji Wen Xue publication, 1977), p.45

### Chapter three: French Orientalist entertainment in the 1880s

In this chapter, the French Orientalist environment, with respect to China in the 1880s, will be examined and compared with the Orientalism evident in the Egypt Campaign a hundred years before. The way China was portrayed in France during the 1880s was inherited from the tradition that was defined in the Egypt Campaign. The former resounded through the latter. The progress of French Orientalism will be presented through examples of Egypt and China to analyse how French Orientalism towards China developed and what were its 'exotic' features that were emerging through the century. Understanding that would be beneficial for us to better know why the writings of Tcheng were blockbusters in the 1880s. In other words, the success of Tcheng was closely connected to such an Orientalist environment in the 1880s. Although the French writings of Tcheng focused on anti-Orientalism and establishing an idealised China, his delineation of Chinese 'exotic' qualities was well-perceived by the French public. Such qualities revealed the flavour of romanticism as a great tool to intrigue the French public in a relaxing and entertaining way. It meant that Tcheng's French writing followed the market demand of the romanticism elements in French Orientalist entertainment in the 1880s. Such kinds of elements will be examined and analysed through the following examples from the starting point of French Orientalism to the 1880s.

The romanticism in French Orientalism could be categorised into two ends. One was to serve French colonialism as the 'subject'. The other was to serve the Orient as the 'other'. For the 'subject', such usage of romanticist elements helped the legitimacy of colonisation by hailing the superiority of the French civilisation and creating the magnificent image of hard power. In contrast, it exposed the inferiority of the Orient, even though this was covered under the camouflage of romanticist decoration. The superior, sophisticated and invincible 'subject' was justified to control the inferior, backward, barbarian 'other'. The usage of romanticism was unavoidably attached to colonialism and the government reacted in chorus. This is substantiated through the paintings from one of romanticist painters, Antoine-Jean Gros, especially his works of the Egypt Campaign.<sup>78</sup> The later usage of romanticism was driven by market demands, which could be interpreted as a demand for 'exotic' products catering for the curiosity

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<sup>78</sup> Jessica Gunderson, *Romanticism (Movements in Art)*, (Mankato: creative education, 2008), p. 12

of the French public about their extending empire. For the ‘other’, the kind of romanticism created the sympathetic image, rather than straightforward harshness grabbing the curiosity of the French public through the ‘exotic’. Therefore, I suggest that we call them respectively official romanticism and unofficial romanticism in French Orientalism respectively. Official romanticism served the ‘subject’ while unofficial romanticism interpreted the ‘Other’ in a romantic and intriguing way. In other words, official romanticism exercised the discourse of French Imperialism and unofficial romanticism was inclined to emphasise the quality of the ‘exotic’. Still, unofficial romanticism was compounded in official romanticism, which was decided by the dominant French Imperialism in France during its period. Importantly, even romantic and less harsh unofficial romanticism was still produced and mixed by the Imperialist environment in that endorsed Imperialism. These two parts constituted the French Orientalist environment. Accordingly, the popular acceptance of Tcheng’s writings were attributed to its ‘exotic’ contents and constituted part of the unofficial romanticism of the Orientalist entertainment in the 1880s.

According to the historian Todd Porterfield, the paintings of the Egypt Campaign by the painters who were ordered by Napoleon became necessities in Napoleonic Salons and fostered public art.<sup>79</sup> Porterfield analysed many paintings of Antoine-Jean Gros. Gros not only painted the battles of the Egypt Campaign but also the visits of General Napoleon in Egypt. In one of the oil on canvas paintings of the battle of Aboukir in 1806, what Gros tried to emphasise was the heroic spirit of the French military and the defeat of the Orient. The French army was in an absolute advantage to overwhelm their Oriental enemies. Many details reflected this hailing of invincible power. In *Battle of Aboukir* (figure 1), Gros painted it in a closer and intense way to angle the fighting. French infantry was pursuing the escaping enemies. The faces of enemies were scary and some of their bodies were bare, trying to run away yet helplessly waiting for condemnation to death. Layers and layers of escaping people were piled up on the ground as a result of their inability to stand up. French soldiers had the same clear-cut

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<sup>79</sup> Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 6-7

uniform while the clothes of enemies were silk and miscellaneous.<sup>80</sup> Porterfield interpreted this painting as representing the clash between civilisation and barbarism.<sup>81</sup>

Besides battle, Gros painted the visits of General Bonaparte. In *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa* (figure 2), Napoleon was visiting the hospital while the army was enduring a disastrous plague. In order to appease the sorrow and panic, Napoleon has close contact with the patients. In front of Napoleon, there were dying victims and dead bodies, including the French. Even though there was nothing beneficial Napoleon could do, he still gave his healing touch to cheer the moral and pacified others into believing that the plague was not contagious. Porterfield suggested that what Gros painted was a religious painting with the sacrifice of a martyr in the road of French civilisation, which would achieve final victory in the end.<sup>82</sup> Such paintings gave a sense of sympathy towards French Imperialism. To the French public, it was martyrdom, and maybe they called it in the modernised term - nationalism. Gros used these paintings to commemorate the victory of French Imperialism and the glittering image of General Bonaparte, which were all under the official name and order of Bonaparte and its behind the French Empire.<sup>83</sup>

In contrast to the official romanticism, which was initiated during the Egypt Campaign, a hybrid of official and unofficial romanticism towards the Orient emerged from French Imperialism. It combines the direct exposure of backwardness and barbarianism and the 'exotic' quality of peculiar civilisations as well. French Orientalism followed in the steps of French Imperialism and the discovery of China was already under progress during the same period. A member of the French Academy Jean-François de La Harpe started gathering the travelers' stories from 1780 to 1801.<sup>84</sup> During this time, he published his compilation, *Abrégé de l'histoire générale des voyages* (*Abstract of the General History of Travel*) with the attachments of illustrations

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<sup>80</sup> Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 51

<sup>81</sup> Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 50

<sup>82</sup> Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 56

<sup>83</sup> Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism 1798-1836*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 50, 53

<sup>84</sup> Jeremy L. Caradonna, *The Enlightenment in Practice: Academic Prize Contests and intellectual culture in France 1679-1794*, (Cornell: Cornell university press, 2012), p. 77

in France. After the death of Harpe in 1803, this compilation work (figure 3) was refurbished with more stories and republished in France by historian Gorges Bernard Depping in 1825.<sup>85</sup>

The compilation was sold and circulated in the French market. Through the attached illustrations by Harpe from 1780 to 1801, the places covered Africa, India and China etc. Compared to the official romanticism in the Egypt Campaign by Gros, the Orient in the lithography had different expressions of their situations. In Africa and India, the native people wore bare clothes and were portrayed in simple scenarios. Most backgrounds were jungles and unsophisticated, with a sense of straightforward barbarism for the French reader. In contrast to Africa and India, China was relatively more civilised since people wore featured clothes or decorations to indicate their identity and social status. In addition, they were expressing a misunderstood ‘exotic’ quality rather than direct backward or barbarian feeling. The seven illustrations of China depicted different scenarios of miscellaneous Chinese lifestyles such as the official and ordinary dress of the emperor, the peasant, the Chinese women, the tomb of the Chinese, the comedy of the Chinese, Chinese monks, kinds of militants and a Chinese funeral. The scene of the Chinese funeral (figure 4) was a long procession that passed the temples and finally ended at the ancestral hall.<sup>86</sup> There were countless palanquins and bearers in this funeral march. Many relatives and friends of the dead surrounded the coffin and walked with the procession. Other people were carrying the offerings of sacrifice, two by two, to the ancestral hall. In these illustrations, one could not perceive any sign of industrialization and it showed a rural society, which was substantiated in Tcheng’s *My Country*: ‘China in natural is a rural country.’<sup>87</sup> The unsophisticated backgrounds of jungle applied to the depiction of the Chinese. Compared to the industrialisation progress of France, in China was revealed barbarism and backwardness, meanwhile, its customs and lifestyle in the lithographs implied the inexplicable ‘exotic’

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<sup>85</sup> Jean-François de La Harpe and George Bernard Depping. *ABRÉGÉ DE L'HISTOIRE GÉNÉRALE DES VOYAGES*, (Paris: Ménard et Desenne, 1825), p. 1

<sup>86</sup> Bernard (engraver) and Jean-François de La Harpe, ‘Illustrations de Abrégé de l'histoire générale des voyages’, in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>87</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (吾國) *My country*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 144

qualities for the French public. In addition, every illustration did not have enough elaboration and needed further introduction. The reader could only obtain the information from the illustrations. One thing was for sure; French readers unconsciously defined China as a barbarian and backward place through lithography, even though there were the 'exotic' qualities that existed in Chinese civilisation in particular. Since then, China was gradually excavated. Unlike Egypt, the French public had relatively less knowledge of China. It was important that the Egypt Campaign laid down the foundations for French Orientalism, especially how romanticism in French Orientalism treated the 'subject' and the 'other' under the tutelage of French Imperialism since the late 18th century. In addition, the peculiar 'exotic' quality of China revealed further development of unofficial romanticism in later French commercial activities. Such peculiar qualities were moderately transformed into a more acceptable way for the French public.

Since the beginning of the 19th century, the French public could observe more Chinese elements in entertainment, such as fashion, opera, ballet, museums, drama and so on. The unofficial romanticism in French Orientalism towards China catered for market demands. In other words, the Chinese elements were being transgressed as what the French public would like to see rather than what they in truth were. Hitherto, the French public would unconsciously perceive what they saw as the reality in China. These 'realities' were certainly under suppression by French Imperialist discourse and it was impossible for them to pierce through French Orientalism. There was a domination of racism and ignorance in the French public shaped by the discourse of French Imperialism. The concepts of the Chinese 'exotic' qualities existed in the perspectives of the French public. At the same time, French commercial environments with the flavour of French Imperialism created the imagined communities of China. In the following paragraph, the Orientalist entertainment examples will be presented.

These manipulated 'realities' were what Tchong expressed his resentment over in his anti-Orientalist writings. To Tchong, the French public objectified China and degraded it. Since the early 19th century, several historical illustrations depicting the Chinese were examined and analysed to test if Tchong was right about that. One page of lithograph was published in 1834, portraying a Chinese female in a ballet-pantomime entertainment, in a bride costume. The lithograph was titled the Chinese *Costume of the*

*Bride: The Dancer Chao-Kang* (figure 5).<sup>88</sup> If we examine the clothes of the dancer Chao-Kang, there should not be any exposure of the shoulders not to mention the upper breast, for a normal Chinese female in China. The corset was unbelievable for the Chinese mind-set. Chinese females should not highlight their breast and body shape to the public. In Tcheng's *Parisians Painted by a Chinese*, Tcheng commented on his uncomfortable feeling about the dressing of French female audiences at the first performance of a drama in a theatre. He could not imagine the exposure of breasts, back and arms in the dresses of Chinese females in China.<sup>89</sup> As for such kind of interpretation of Chinese elements in France, Tcheng Ki-tong stated his penetrating protest to French Orientalism in *The Chinese Painted by Themselves* by stating that the French public put the Chinese in the spotlight and perceived that as 'the true exhibition'.<sup>90</sup> Through that, the French public indirectly revealed what they wanted to see. After the exhibition, they could 'legitimately' interpret what they had seen and then start to talk about the topic of China freely. Consequently, their understanding about China was not beyond French Orientalism.

Tcheng also commented about how the French public objectified China and the Chinese. For the French public, the Chinese were like acclimatised animals to a human shell and could do any kinds of movements to fulfil their curiosities.<sup>91</sup> In 1854, a lithograph about Chinese acrobatics (figure 6) was published, in which a group of Chinese children were practising the throwing knives. A Chinese dwarf was watching the practice. They worked for the theatrical group that lived on their acrobatic skills. The dwarf was holding a feather fan that was unsymmetrical with his small body, which was laughable. The throwing knives were very alarming and dangerous to the French reader. However, these Chinese children did not make it big. They were wearing shabby

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<sup>88</sup> Louis Maleuvre (engraver), 'Chao-Kang, ballet- pantomime de Louis Henry et Luigi Carlini: costume d'une Chinoise de la suite de la mariée', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN>> [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>89</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Paris painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 39

<sup>90</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的自画像) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version), Loc 37 of 3210

<sup>91</sup> Tcheng Ki-Tong, (中国人的自画像) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version), Loc 37 of 3210



clothes and relaxingly practicing the throwing knives.<sup>92</sup> Tcheng Ki-tong argued there were negative images of China flowing under the ocean of French Orientalism. French artist Gustave Doré painted a scenario of an opium smoking Chinese in the book of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* by famous writer Charles Dickens.<sup>93</sup> It was printed in 1872. After the Second Opium War in 1860, the British and French armies defeated China. In 1861, a comic magazine painted the French conscripts in the Chinese expedition (figure 7). It insulted China in a mean, yet hilarious way for French readers. A French soldier pulled the hair of a Chinese soldier. The French soldier asked the Chinese to get inside and fill up in the giant Chinese porcelain. In the drawing, the Frenchman was depicted as the naughty boy, taking the expedition as a game, while the Chinese were toys to play with.<sup>94</sup>

These cases can be categorised as unofficial romanticism in French Orientalism with the Chinese elements that satisfy the curiosity of the French public. The character of its 'exotic' quality was satisfactory for the viewers. However, the presentation of China was endowed with racism and ignorance, which did not record the truth of China.

In the 1880s, the French commercial posters about China were more likely to use paintings and drawings, which could reveal more attractive 'exotic' qualities instead of disgusted backwardness and barbarism. Unofficial romanticism took the major role in promoting the business activities in France. Since the 1880s, the clash of China and France over Tonkin became increasingly serious. The military issue, for example. The Black Flag Army in the Sino-French conflicts was transformed into unofficial romanticism by French commerce. In such an atmosphere, French commerce used unofficial romanticism to capitalise on French Imperialism.

Since the 1880s, there were French novels about the China and the Tonkin area. The French novelists promoted their novels through the magazines and periodicals. One of these novelists was Pierre Zaccone. A commercial poster promoted his latest novel

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<sup>92</sup> 'La Chine à Paris d'Ernest Bourget et Char- les Dupeuty : documents iconographiques', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>93</sup> Gustave Doré, 'Opium smoking: The Lascar's Room in 'Edwin Drood'', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>94</sup> 'Mounpesat the Auvergne conscript', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN>> [accessed 10 May 2015]

*The Mysteries of China (Les Mystères de la Chine)*.<sup>95</sup> The illustrator was a French poster artist, Leon Choubrac. In this poster, above the name of his novel, there were three words: *Les Pavillons Noirs*, The Black Flag Army (figure 8). Two people in the centre of the poster attracted the eye. One was a beautiful French girl and the other was a soldier of the Black Flag Army. The soldier was lifting the French girl up and watching her, a sleeping beauty. Behind them was the blurry Black Flag Army with a wavering black flag. This poster created a spooky romance that aroused curiosity for French readers. It gave the sense of attractive suspense. In other words, the poster sought to attract readers to the novel by dwelling on themes of romance and suspense. In the bottom of the poster, more selling information was given, such as that the first delivery of the illustration was free and the illustrations would be delivered twice a week. I would suggest that *The Mysteries of China* was a serial novel that was published and sold in a magazine or periodical and Choubrac designed this poster for promoting Zaccone's novel. Another poster was about the journal *The Family (Les Famille)*. The novel *Pirates of Tonkin (Les Pirates du Tonkin)* by Abel Picard was introduced at the bottom.<sup>96</sup> In the cover, two scenarios were combined. One was a Chinese government official followed by their retinue of guards. The other was a group of Japanese geisha girls. The miscellaneous Oriental elements were mixed to emphasise the 'exotic' qualities of China and capitalises on French Imperialism over Tonkin. Posters and novels such as these suggest a commercial market for romantic orientalism that had already started since the beginning of nineteenth-century France.<sup>97</sup>

Besides French novels, other institutions were sharing the cake of French Orientalism in French commercial activities. For instance, the wax museum Musée Grévin launched the *Expedition of Tonkin (Expedition du Tonkin)* exhibition (figure 9) in 1883.<sup>98</sup> Jules Chéret painted this poster: the contents of *Expedition of Tonkin* were circling around the death of Henri Rivière, the French expedition commander who

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<sup>95</sup> Leon Choubrac, 'Les Pavillons noirs : les mystères de la Chine', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>96</sup> 'La Famille journal illustré', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>97</sup> Eric Meyer, 'I know thee not, I loathe thy race': Romantic orientalism in the eye of the other', *ELH*, 58 (1991), 3 (pp. 657-699)

<sup>98</sup> Jules Chéret, 'Musée Grévin: Expédition du Tonkin', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* < <http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN> > [accessed 10 May 2015]

charged this expedition in 1883. His death caused a massive shock for the French government and public, followed by the assertion of revenge on the Black Flag Army and Annam government. In the picture of the confrontations between the enemy and French army, Rivière dressed like a salon gentleman in the Tonkin scenes of fighting and jungle and his behaviour was brave. Rivière was enlisted in the gallery of modern celebrities in the Musée Grévin. Musée Grévin was the classic synthesis of official and unofficial romanticism. Both the aim of French Imperialism and promotion of Musée Grévin were arrived at. In addition to the commercial posters, there was the Chinese acrobatics, in 1879.<sup>99</sup> There were also French dramas that originated from China. For instance, a Qing official saw the performance of *Fleur-de-thé* in 1869. *Fleur-de-thé* still performed in 1880s and there even emerged the drama, *The Black Flag Army*, in Paris theatres.<sup>100</sup> The comments given by its French audiences were superficial in terms of curiosity and amazement.<sup>101</sup>

Initiated by the Egypt Campaign in the late 18th century, French Imperialism set the official romanticism model with the definition of a backward and barbarian 'Orient'. French commercial environments effectively inherited its voice. However, French Imperialism could not control the monolithic form of French Orientalism. Contradicting the emphasis of the backward and barbarian Orient, unofficial romanticism transformed this totally negative perception to an emphasis on the 'exotic' quality of China. According to Tcheng, these 'exotic' qualities of China were misinterpreted. Therefore, it gave him an opportunity to address French Orientalism, meanwhile suggesting that there were French commercial demands for 'exotic' information about China. Tracing the unofficial romanticism of China, we could understand how popularly the 'exotic' quality was enjoyed by the French public and transgressed into various kinds of French entertainment. The products of unofficial romanticism in French Orientalism towards China were easily circulated through the French public in the 1880s. Through the market demand of unofficial romanticism, we could notice the enthusiasm of the French public's curiosity towards China in the 1880s and the Sino-French War highlighted it

<sup>99</sup> 'Tous les soirs à 8h 1/2..., Hippodrome. Ismaïloff en Chine...', in *Gallica Bibliothèque Numérique* <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/?lang=EN>> [accessed 10 May 2015]

<sup>100</sup> Shih-lung Lo, (《茶花兒》與《天神與貓》：張德彝《述奇》系列兩齣中國題材戲劇新探) 'Fleur-de-thé and The Cat and the Cherub: A Survey on Two Chinese-subject Plays in Zhang', *Zhong Zheng Sinology studies*, 2 (2014) (p. 189, 203)

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

further. Following such trends, the ‘exotic’ qualities of Tcheng Ki-tong’s writings won the popularity of the French public.

In contrast to that, the peak of Tcheng’s diplomat career in France retreated seriously in 1890, the year the debt scandal broke out. Tcheng started to fade out in France, where French Orientalism in fact endowed him with the reputation of anti-Orientalism. Dramatically in *My Country* and *Paris Painted by Themselves*, Tcheng admitted some parts of China were weak and backward. Such antinomies were embedded in his French, and his later Chinese, writings. This is properly defined and analysed, though his later life, in chapter four.

## Chapter four: The anti-Orientalism warrior in China

Tcheng contributed himself in anti-French imperialism as a qualified diplomat. The idealised image of Chinese society was in his French writings, presenting a perfect Qing government, ruralised economy, and justified Chinese customs. It would give us the illusion that Tcheng was totally agreed with Chinese society and culture if we had not examined his later life in China. In contrast, in *My Country*, Tcheng had clearly stated: 'Europe (France) had already outstripped China in the fields of science and art.'<sup>102</sup> To be more specific, in *Paris Painted by Themselves*, he demonstrated many of the latest technologies in France, such as the train and the hot air balloon.<sup>103</sup> In the field of art, Tcheng admitted that Chinese art had seen no progress in the last centuries, even without any developments.<sup>104</sup> This could give us the illusion that Tcheng was agreeing with French Orientalism and was not supporting the legitimacy of Chinese society and culture. Such contradictions are worth examining and analysing in this chapter. I suggest that Tcheng was not an Orientalist, although his ideas about the fields of science and art may cause confusion. In addition, Tcheng was not a member of the Chinese conservatives, who stubbornly insisted upon the tradition of Chinese society. Although his preference for China in his French writings was obvious, he actually expressed the idea that both the Sino-French society and its cultures had pros and cons. In other words, they were naturally equal. He indicated the Chinese perception in the legitimacy of China paralleled with what French Orientalism negatively evaluated with China. Meanwhile, under the discourse of French Imperialism, Tcheng exposed the uncivilised sides of French culture. Therefore, Tcheng was more like a liberal intellectual rather than an Orientalist that viewed China in a racial and ignorant way, or a conservative that viewed the French in the same way. He could be relatively more objective to analyse the Sino-French culture.

We should define precisely Tcheng's mind-set of the inequalities between China and France. According to *My Country*, we could understand that Tcheng admitted the

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<sup>102</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (吾国) *My Country*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p.129

<sup>103</sup> Tcheng, Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 81, 93

<sup>104</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (中国人的自画像) *The Chinese painted by themselves*, tran. by Hao Chen (Peking: Jin Cheng Publication, 2010), (Kindle Version) Loc 2617 of 4667

Chinese shortages in the fields of science and art. To be more specific, science, in Tcheng's cases, could be defined as the way to arrive at advanced industrialisation and political systems in China. It connected with his disappointed, even protesting, attitude towards the Qing government as well. Art could be defined as the importation of good literary works from France to China. These definitions help explain the reason why he later complained about the debt scandal, conducted the 'Republic of Formosa' campaign after the Sino-Japanese war, established the newspaper (求是报) *International Review*, formed the Chinese girls' schools and connected himself to the Hundred Days' Reform. What Tcheng also planned was to contribute to the effort in further cultural communications between China and France, in order to counter French Orientalism. These cases will be examined in the following paragraphs.

Building up the railway in China was always a charged issue between the liberal and the conservative parties in Qing politics. Li Hung Chang, as a dominant politician in the liberal party, was always attacked by the conservatives as a traitor, not only for his pro-peace attitude and negotiations in the war, but also the misinterpreted liberal reforms. Before the debt scandal, Li asked for Tcheng to borrow the capital for building the railway. The focal point was that the Chinese ambassador to France, Xue Fucheng relentlessly declared that Tcheng was guilty of capitalising on the authority of the Chinese embassy and Tcheng protested that charge. Tcheng interpreted the debt as a private debt not a governmental debt. When Xue received the overdue payment letter from the bank of Paris and Holland in spring 1890, Tcheng borrowed the debt in the name of the Chinese embassy.<sup>105</sup> While Tcheng protested that it was used for the government.<sup>106</sup>

Historians did not give a clear answer about whether Tcheng committed the corruption. Regardless of that, in the author's view, Xue had interests in the conservative party and Tcheng was involved in a political struggle. What Xue did to Tcheng later was suspicious. From this starting point, Xue unceasingly attacked Tcheng and asked the Qing government to remove Tcheng from his diplomatic position.<sup>107</sup> Xue

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<sup>105</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), (Kindle version) Loc 853 of 4667

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Li Hung Chang, (光绪朝东华录) *The records of the foreign affairs of the Qing government during Guangxu Emperor*, ed. by Shou-peng Zhu, 5 vols (Shanghai: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1958), p. 2997

even issued a declaration in the newspaper to publicise the guilt of Tcheng in the name of the Chinese ambassador to France. The debt scandal broke out. At the same time, Li was protecting Tcheng and held a different attitude towards the debt scandal. Li thought the debt of Tcheng was private rather than governmental and Tcheng should sort it out by himself.<sup>108</sup> Li enquired of Xue if the case of Tcheng could be left some room for discussion.<sup>109</sup> Although Xue understood Li's favoritism towards Tcheng, Xue still asked the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zongli Yamen to convict Tcheng of swindling money.<sup>110</sup> Li wrote to Xue and wished for Xue's mercy over the debt issue of Tcheng. Li pointed out if we treated it as a private debt rather than the governmental debt, Tcheng would avoid losing all standing and reputation.<sup>111</sup> Xue ignored the request of Li and kept reporting the crime of Tcheng to Zongli Yamen.

At the end of the debt scandal, Tcheng was removed from diplomatic position and repatriated back to China. The plan to build a railway was cancelled. In his later life, Tcheng, he wrote a poem that expressed his helpless complaints towards the debt scandal: he compared himself to a patriotic poet Qu Yuan.<sup>112</sup> Qu Yuan drowned himself because of the fatuous government. Tcheng was repatriated back to China because he was involved in a political struggle that should have been avoided. Tcheng thought himself innocent. To a certain degree, Tcheng had a grievance towards the dark politics in the Qing government.

Although Xue ruined the diplomatic career of Tcheng, Tcheng was still protected by Li and Li recovered his military official title in 1892.<sup>113</sup> After resuming his post with the protection of Li in 1892, Tcheng still acted in the role of capable assistant to Li. For China, Tcheng was a western-educated intellectual and a patriot who determinately

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<sup>108</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鸿章全集) *"the collections of Hung-chang Li"*, ed. by Ting-long Gu and Ya-lian Ye, 3 vols (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Publication, 1985-1987), II (1986), 315

<sup>109</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鸿章全集) *"the collections of Hung-chang Li"*, ed. by Ting-long Gu and Ya-lian Ye, 3 vols (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Publication, 1985-1987), II (1986), 340

<sup>110</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鸿章全集) *"the collections of Hung-chang Li"*, ed. by Ting-long Gu and Ya-lian Ye, 3 vols (Shanghai: Shanghai Ren Min Publication, 1985-1987), II (1986), 367

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Yan Shen, (清代陈季同《学贾吟》手稿校注) *Tcheng Ki-tong in Qing dynasty "Xue Gu Yin" manuscript anotation*, (Peking: National Library of China Publishing House, 2011), p. 188

<sup>113</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鸿章全集) *The compilation of Li Hung Chang*, ed. by Bo Ning and Jia-min Yang, 12 vols (Ji Lin: Shi Dai Wen Yi Publication, 1998), p. 2124

maintained the national interest especially in the event of the Sino-Japanese War. In the meantime, he realised the impotency of the Qing government.

The Sino-Japanese War ended with the defeat of the Qing government and the disgrace of every Chinese. One of the concessions for the Qing government was to cede Taiwan to Japan. Tcheng was given the mission by Li to smoothly transfer the territory to Japan. Unexpectedly, Tcheng went against the will of Li in Taiwan. The reason for this decision was because the anti-Japanese feeling in Taiwan was so large that Taiwanese would have liked to fight against the Japanese to their death, rather than succumb to slavery. He asked Li to postpone the Japanese arrival in Taiwan or to think twice about whether Taiwan should really be ceded to Japan. A telegraph was sent on 23rd May 1895.<sup>114</sup> This telegraph demonstrated that Tcheng did his job to report the reality of Taiwan to Li, expressing his attitude of loyalty and perseverance toward this mission. On the other hand, Tcheng showed his deep concern about the patriotism in Taiwan and his protest to the Qing government. Indirectly, Tcheng revealed his reluctant attitude towards Li's negotiation about conceding Taiwan to Japan. In fact, Tcheng opposed this result and felt the contagious patriotism of the Taiwanese. He knew that it was useless to expect the Qing government to oppose the treaty. He also dreamed that French navies might come to Taiwan for assistance. During this period, Tcheng wrote two Chinese poems: *No Arrival of French Navies in Taipei* (台北待法国兵船不至) and *Reading Chang Hen Ge in Taipei Municipal* (台北衙斋读长恨歌).<sup>115</sup> In *No Arrival of French Navies in Taipei*, Tcheng did not expect the assistance of the Qing government, rather than the French navies. He was sorrowfully looking forward to the possible life-saving French navies for preventing Taiwan from being abandoning by China. *Chang Hen Ge* was a poem telling the romantic story of an Emperor of the Dynasty and his most favourite concubine. Their true love was succumbed to the reality of a defeated country and they lived like vagrants. Tcheng made it a metaphor for his thoughts about the treaty that lost Taiwan to Japan. Tcheng was hopeless and helpless under the circumstances of an abandoned Taiwan. Two days later, Tcheng launched the campaign, 'Republic of Formosa', and Tcheng was assigned the leadership of Foreign

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<sup>114</sup> Li Hung Chang, (李鸿章全集) *The compilation of Li Hung Chang*, ed. by Bo Ning and Jia-min Yang, 12 vols (Ji Lin: Shi Dai Wen Yi Publication, 1998), pp. 6329-6330

<sup>115</sup> Yan Shen, (清代陈季同《学贾吟》手稿校注) *Tcheng Ki-tong in Qing dynasty "Xue Gu Yin"* manuscript anotation, (Peiking: National Library of China Publishing House, 2011), p. 183



Affairs. Tcheng referred to the No. 286 article of International Law, that the concession of territory should gain the permission of local residents.<sup>116</sup> Such a proposal was attributed to his knowledge of International Law and diplomatic experience in France.

What Tcheng Ki-tong did in Taiwan, in fact, enraged Li as Tcheng did not obey his order.<sup>117</sup> The Republic of Formosa was more like a demonstration of the idealistic wish of Tcheng, which was that of a strong and intact China, without any foreign bullies or humiliation. After Taiwan fell under the control of Japan, Tcheng wrote four Chinese poems titled *Mourning Taiwan* (吊台湾), directly voicing the grief and indignation about how the national territory was split by the weaknesses of the Qing government.<sup>118</sup>

After the Republic of Formosa, Tcheng Ki-tong was dismissed as he acted against government orders and participated in the campaign for the Republic of Formosa. In his last years, Tcheng moved to Shanghai, which was the most heterogeneous and westernised place in China. To be more specific, Tcheng found Shanghai was a second Paris where he could exert his accumulated skills from Europe and release his romantic and unrestrained literati character. His student Zeng Pu wrote Tcheng into his novel *Fleur d'ombre*, and portrayed Tcheng as a romantic and unrestrained person after he went back China. He was an intellectual character, though his official title was military. In the novel, Tcheng was named 'the pillar of the embassy' in Shanghai, representing how popular he was in his social intercourse with Shanghai's celebrities and the importance of his importance that were fostered in France.<sup>119</sup> According to the *Fujian Selected Biographies* (福建通志列传选), the westerners would approach Tcheng when they could not sort out their diplomatic or lawsuit problems in Shanghai.<sup>120</sup> Consequently, Tcheng was praised and well known in the western community in Shanghai. Tcheng solved these westerners' questions precisely and succinctly. We

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<sup>116</sup> Guo-hui Zhao, (陈季同与台湾民主国策略) 'Chen Jitong and Taiwan Democracy Strategy', *Shonan journal: The International Journal of the Shonan Research Institute Bunkyo University*, 1 (2010), (pp.37-46)

<sup>117</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), (Kindle version) Loc 1900 of 4667

<sup>118</sup> Yan Shen, (清代陈季同《学贾吟》手稿校注) *Tcheng Ki-tong in Qing dynasty "Xue Gu Yin" manuscript anotation*, (Peking: National Library of China Publishing House, 2011), pp. 184-186

<sup>119</sup> Zeng Pu, (孽海花) *Fleur d'ombre*, (Peking: Jie Fang Jun Wen Yi Publication, 2000), p. 393

<sup>120</sup> Yan Chen, (福建通志列传选) 'Fujian selected biographies', <<http://yuedu.baidu.com/ebook/d2960139844769eae009ed7e?pn=1>> [accessed 10 May 2015]

could attribute Tcheng's diplomatic skills and his knowledge of the law to his law study from 1875 to 1877, in France, and to his later diplomatic experience. An understanding of law and western politics was reflected in Tcheng's writings of his *International Review*.

The *International Review* published twelve volumes from September 1897 to March 1898. The *International Review* referred to many French sources.<sup>121</sup> The French news within the international news section was translated and occupied around sixty percent of the content.<sup>122</sup> The pieces of news were extracted from different kinds of French domestic and overseas newspapers. In the political column of the *International Review*, Tcheng translated the Napoleon Code in every volume. The reason why he wanted to translate the Napoleon Code was because he perceived it as the political foundation of a prosperous and militarily strong France.<sup>123</sup> We could suggest that this proposition was one reason why Tcheng participated in the Hundred Days' Reform that indicated that the backward and weak government needed to be reformed. Tcheng also introduced economical information and industrial technology from France, such as the building of the bridges, the Sino-French economical treaty and the activities of French merchants in China.<sup>124</sup> Tcheng had learned the lessons of the Sino-French War in 1884 and the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Tcheng expressed his political and economics ideas through the translation of the Napoleon Code and French industrial economy.

As for the translation of French literature, Tcheng translated *Georges and Marguerite* by the French writer, Jules Nicolas Theodore Cahu, in the *International Review* from volume two to twelve.<sup>125</sup> The reason why Tcheng did so could be found through his French writings and his student Zeng Pu. Through his French writings, Tcheng knew more about French literature, especially about the classics of French literature, which were referred in his French writings. Later these representatives of French literature were translated in the *International Review* as well. His student Zeng Pu was deeply influenced by Tcheng. Zeng described what Tcheng taught him and the

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<sup>121</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (清末<求是报>中的法国) 'France in International Review at the late Qing period', *Etudes Francaises*, 2 (2000) (pp. 196-205)

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

opinion of Tcheng about the isolation of Chinese literature in 1898, the year of Hundred Days' Reform started. Tcheng systematically guided Zeng to learn French literature.<sup>126</sup> Tcheng instructed Zeng to understand the relationship of the Renaissance, the difference between Classicism and Romanticism, other modern schools, such as Naturalism and Symbolism, and other famous literature from foreign countries such as Britain, Italy, Spain and Germany. From Zeng, we know that Tcheng was greatly influenced by French literature of different periods. We can also understand this influence through his French writings. French literature occupied an important position in western literature and in Tcheng's mind, it was worth learning for the sake of Chinese literature.<sup>127</sup> In addition, Tcheng pointed out that Chinese literature set a gap between the Sino-French literatures.<sup>128</sup> In contrast to the reputational dramas and novels in French literature, the Chinese promoted traditional poetry and held dramas and novels in contempt. Tcheng thought it was necessary to translate French literature to let the public better understand the real value of French drama and novels for furthering Sino-French literary communication. Therefore, Tcheng thought Chinese literature had its disadvantages and limitations, which could be made up by the importation of high quality French literature. Chinese literary intellectuals needed to reform their mind-set to update it to the latest, advanced knowledge from a strong France, in order to promote Chinese literature in Sino-French literary communications.<sup>129</sup> Tcheng thought the best way to achieve that was to translate French classic literature in Chinese, for Chinese people.<sup>130</sup>

However, what he justified about Chinese women in France could not be accorded with his practice in Shanghai. In France, Tcheng legitimated Chinese customs involving women. For instance, they were encouraged not to study and regulated under the family law to sacrifice themselves for the family. In addition, women followed the social custom of foot binding, which was interpreted as a natural thing in the aesthetic taste of Chinese people. However, Tcheng participated in the establishment of a

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<sup>126</sup> Zeng, Pu, (答胡适书) 'answering to Shih Hu', in (胡适文存) *Hu Shi Wen Cun*, ed. by Shih Hu, 9 vols (He Fei: Huang Shan Shu She, 1996), VIII (1996), 560-561

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Zeng, Pu, (答胡适书) 'answering to Shih Hu', in (胡适文存) *Hu Shi Wen Cun*, ed. by Shih Hu, 9 vols (He Fei: Huang Shan Shu She, 1996), VIII (1996), 562

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Chinese girl's school at Shanghai in October 1897.<sup>131</sup> It expressed that Tcheng thought it was necessary to enlighten the Chinese minds for the development of the weakness in Chinese science and art. That was the reason why this school aimed to teach the female students the latest knowledge of science and art and abolish the backward customs of foot binding. According to historian Nanxiu Qian, the female students had the opportunity to study sixteen subjects including self-cultivation, education, home economics, calisthenics, the Mandarin dialect, the Chinese language, foreign languages, history, geography, arithmetic, chemistry, physics, calligraphy, drawing, sewing and music.<sup>132</sup> Chinese female issues such as foot binding and illiteracy were interpreted as one of the reasons for the obstruction of Chinese enlightenment. Tcheng Ki-tong himself not only helped the establishment of a Chinese girl's school but brought his two daughters and his French wife as helpers. His French wife Lai Mayi acted as the role of superintendent in the Chinese girls' school. In addition, Tcheng cared about the other aspects of the common people, with his humanitarian spirit, in Chinese society through his Chinese poetry. He commented that opium was spreading over China even in the rural areas.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, farmers could not gain a good livelihood and stayed conservative. He also condemned the harshness of government officials towards the common people and the social atmosphere of the striking gap between the rich and poor.<sup>134</sup> These factors were also important in understanding Tcheng's motivation in supporting the Hundred Day's Reform, which aimed to improve the livelihood of the common people and to get rid of the dissatisfying government and the weakness and backwardness of the fields of science and art. However, it totally failed under the attack of the conservative powers in the Qing government. Tcheng tried to save as many liberal figures as he could.<sup>135</sup> In the last few years, Tcheng acted in the role of translator

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<sup>131</sup> Hua-chuan Li, (晚清一个外交官的文化历程) *Cultural experience of a diplomat in late Qing*, (Peking: Peking University Publication, 2004), (Kindle version) Loc 1900 of 4667

<sup>132</sup> Nanxiu Qian, 'Revitalizing the Xianyuan (Worthy Ladies) Tradition: Women in the 1898 Reforms', *Modern China*, 29 (2003), 4 (pp. 399-454)

<sup>133</sup> Yan Shen, (清代陈季同《学贾吟》手稿校注) *Tcheng Ki-tong in Qing dynasty "Xue Gu Yin" manuscript anotation*, (Peking: National Library of China Publishing House, 2011), p. 12, 140

<sup>134</sup> Yan Shen, (清代陈季同《学贾吟》手稿校注) *Tcheng Ki-tong in Qing dynasty "Xue Gu Yin" manuscript anotation*, (Peking: National Library of China Publishing House, 2011), p.102, 173

<sup>135</sup> Bing Sang, (陈季同述论) 'Chen Jitong', *Modern Chinese History Studies*, (1999), 4 (pp. 113-141)

in a compilation and translation bureau in Shanghai.<sup>136</sup> He focused on the translation of the cultural books from China and France. He maintained and contributed his last energies to Sino-French literature until 1907, when Tcheng Ki-tong died in Nanking.

Through his later life in China, we could learn that Tcheng was aware of the shortcomings of China in the fields of science and art. Specifically, he devoted the rest of his life in promoting the industrialisation, valuable political model, the classical literature and the individual enlightenment from France, which was mostly based on his experience in France. To a large extent, French Orientalism as an importantly wrong concept that helped Tcheng as a liberal intellectual who understood the pros and cons of Sino-French cultures and the weakness and backwardness of China, in the fields of science and art. Such thinking was inevitably stimulated by his personal circumstances, especially the significant change that came about during the debt scandal and his political participation in the Chinese wars with the foreign imperialism. It gradually gave him the urgency call to change these situations in China. What Tcheng did in China contributed to Sino-French communication. We should make way with the illusion that Tcheng might share the opinions of French Orientalism. French Orientalism was a racial perspective, while Tcheng was a liberal intellectual with a humanitarian spirit, just like what he proclaimed in *My Country*.<sup>137</sup> Additionally, the same expression was in *Paris Painted by Themselves*: 'China and France will sincerely embrace the Great Unity one day in peace and love.'<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Tcheng-Ki-Tong, (吾国) *My Country*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Hua-chuan Li (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p.128

<sup>138</sup> Tcheng, Ki-Tong, (巴黎印象记) *Parisians painted by a Chinese*, ed. by Hua Meng and Hua-chuan Li trans. by Ying-hong Duan (Guang Xi: Guang Xi Shi Fan Da Xue Publication, 2006), p. 85

## Conclusion

Through the interaction between Tcheng and French Orientalism, the early life of Tcheng had already studied the International Law and learned the classical French literature for being as a qualified diplomat and writer. As a diplomat he had to defend aggressive imperialism including its discourse. In addition, as a writer whose interest in French literature had prepared the possibility of his later French writings. The real connection of Tcheng with French Orientalism started at the Sino-French conflicts. These diplomatic conflicts decided his anti-imperialism intention, which permeated in his French writings about China during such a highly attentional period. To be more specific, his intention to address in the discourse of French Imperialism, French Orientalism. His diplomat duty and the unwelcoming personal contacts with French Orientalism forged the anti-Orientalism attitude especially in his first popular French book *Chinese painted by themselves*. In a large extent, Tcheng understood his French public through his life experience in France. For instance, the visiting of newspaper institution. On the other hand, Tcheng applied various techniques showing his writing skills to emphasised the ‘exotic’ qualities of his French writings for intriguing his French audience. It would be more convincible that Tcheng’ French writings followed the general rule of unofficial romanticism in the French Orientalist entertainment in the 1880s. Notwithstanding the atmosphere of French Imperialism in the French Orientalist entertainment, the way to apply unofficial romanticism for gaining profit was relatively welcomed even naturalised French Orientalism. That the ‘exotic’ qualities of Tcheng himself and its French writings about China catered for what the commercial producers wanted and its customers desired. As a result, Tcheng made a great success and became a public figure in France. It was fair to say that Tcheng had capitalised on his French Orientalism in some extent as it granted him the popularity, money and reputation.

However, Tcheng was not a person without principle. Since the Sino-French conflicts, Tcheng had targeted French Orientalism in his French writings about China. These writings legitimated Chinese society and its culture through the perspective of a Chinese rather than a Orientalist. Tcheng strategically explained three important issues that were mostly criticised by French public: The Chinese women, the abandoned baby in China and Chinese eating habits. In addition, Tcheng had mentioned the negative

sides of French culture. All these cases were listed to counter French Orientalism and helped French public to understand Chinese society and its culture, meanwhile, their uncivilised sides in French society. However, it did not mean that Tcheng was like a Chinese conservative who stubbornly protected the all aspects of China. Tcheng had revealed that China was disadvantaged in the fields of science and art while France was strong at industrialised science and art especially French literature. It would be wrong to interpret Tcheng thought China was backward and weak country. We could suggest that for the levels of society and its culture, both of China and France were equal in Tcheng's mind as he could tolerate its pros and cons. Accordingly, Tcheng Ki-tong was a liberal intellectual that could be substantiated by his French writings about China and France. He held the humanitarian spirit to perceived both societies and its cultures. Even he had the cultural preference of China and nationalism, the major goal for Tcheng was to address French Orientalism not to slander the positive parts that Tcheng admired in France. We could understand Tcheng's strategy to promote bilateral communication and anti-Orientalism attitude in his French writings was at least well accepted by the market and its French public. Only with such interpretation, we could legitimate the contradictory views of Tcheng's French writings out of confusion.

It was undeniable that Tcheng's personal circumstances contacting with French Orientalism in France were the motivators to influence his position of anti-Orientalism until his life ended. Specifically, the activities Tcheng did in China was to tackle the disadvantages of China he had already noticed in France. Therefore, he established the *International Review* and the Chinese girl's school for promoting the advantages of France and individual enlightenment. With the involvements of political activities in China, Tcheng also aware of the weak Qing government that should be reformed as well in terms of its dark politics and failed diplomacies. Tcheng thought France could be the model for China to learn from especially in the fields of science and art such as the industrialised science, political system, French literature. Even before his death, Tcheng was still translating the Chinese literature to break the chain of French Orientalism that impeded the Sino-French cultural communications.

French Orientalism was the starting point of Tcheng to demonstrate his anti-Orientalism attitude as a diplomat and towards French public. In other words, French Orientalism towards China had motivated and direct Tcheng to foster the skills and humanitarian spirit to against it, which gave him a more clear mind as a liberal intellectual to understand what shortages of China should be dealt with, which was

formed during his time in France and later influenced his movements in China. As for Tcheng's personal circumstances, the influence of French Orientalism could be traced in the rise and fall of Tcheng. What Tcheng addressed in French Orientalism was important to push the Sino-French communication forward and that means French Orientalism was relatively undermined. It is valuable that Tcheng Ki-tong was a prism to understand French Orientalism towards China and its influence dramatically affected his life time.

Word Count: 14,382



## Appendix



Fig. 1 Antoine-Jean Gros, *the Battle of Aboukir*, 1806. Oil on canvas, 18 ft. 11 1/2 in. x 31 ft. 9 18/ in. (578 x 968 cm). Musée National du Château, Versailles



Fig.2 Antoine-Jean Gros, *General Bonaparte Visiting the Pesthouse at Jaffa*, 1804. Oil on canvas, 17 ft. 1 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. x 23 ft. 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (523 x 715 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

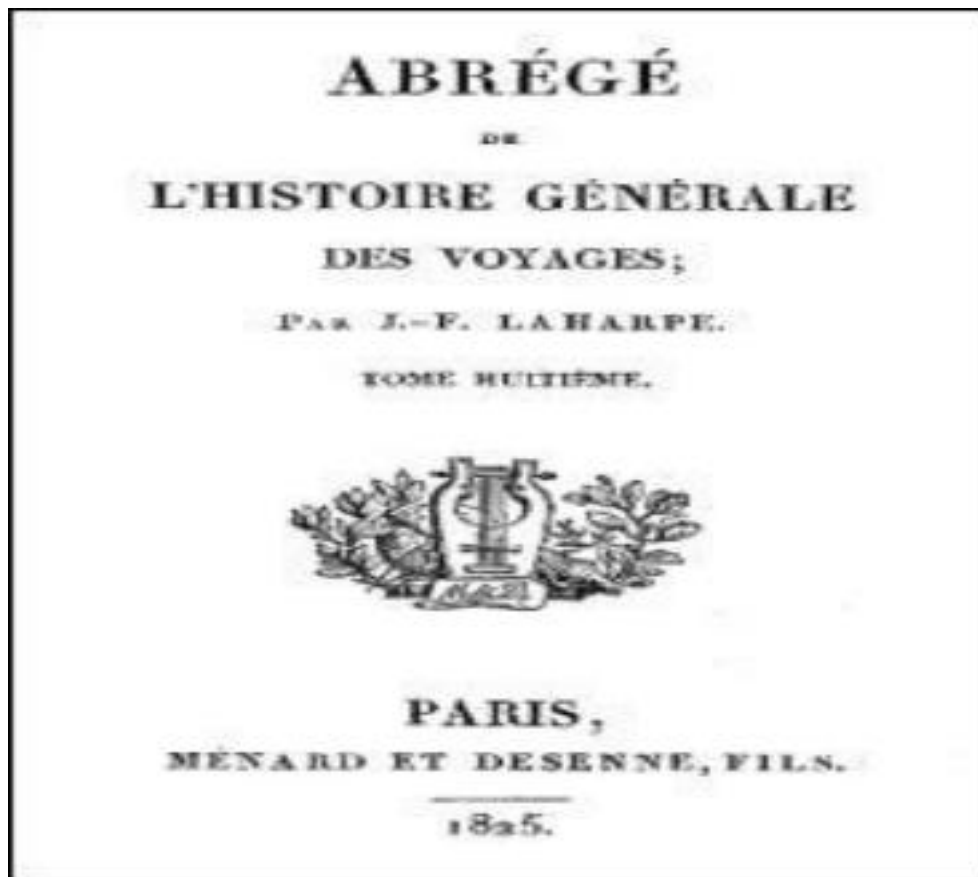


Fig.3 Jean-François de La Harpe and George Bernard Depping, the cover of *ABRÉGÉ DE L'HISTOIRE GÉNÉRALE DES VOYAGES*





Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 4 Bernard (engraver) and Jean-François de La Harpe, the Chinese funeral scene in *Illustrations de Abrégé de l'histoire générale des voyages*



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Fig. 5 *Chao-Kang*, ballet- pantomime de Louis Henry et Luigi Carlini: costume d'une Chinoise de la suite de la mariée



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Fig. 6 *La Chine à Paris* d'Ernest Bourget et Char- les Dupeuty







Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 8 *Les Pavillons noirs : les mystères de la Chine*





Fig. 9 Musée Grévin: Expédition du Tonkin

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