

See through Hobsbawm's nationalism in the diplomats' diaries: what were the diplomatic differences between Xi-hong Liu and Max von Brandt?

During the late Qing period (1840-1911), the Chinese began to take steps towards intensive communications with the West. During these communications, both the Chinese and the West encountered uncomfortableness. Both of them demonstrated their nationalism within various kinds of clashes. In this essay I will explore the diplomatic histories of China and Germany, focusing on a Chinese diplomat Xi-hong Liu and a Germany diplomat Max von Brandt. By using the "threshold principle" theory of Hobsbawm, I will analyse the diplomatic differences of Liu and Brandt whereby the diplomatic behaviors and ideas were shaped by their own models of nationalism, thus giving the suggested answers of their causes. As for the paradigm in this Chinese case, according to Paul Cohen, there are three conceptual frameworks of American Historical Writing which are the models of "China's response to the West", "Tradition and Modernity" and "Imperialism".¹ For Liu's personal study, I will select the model of "China's response to the West". For Brandt's personal study, I will follow the western historiographies's synthesis of German unification and Prussian expansionism.

Xi-hong Liu (1823-1891)² was the first vice ambassador of Britain and ambassador of Germany from 30th April 1877 to 25th August 1878. He was born in to a poor family and his father sold the fish. In Liu's childhood, he passed the provincial Imperial

¹ Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, Columbia University Press, 2010 pp. 3

² See the birth date arguments in Yu-quan Zhang, (*思想与时代的落差-晚清外交官刘锡鸿研究*) *The gap between thought and times: the study of late Qing diplomat Xi-hong Liu*, Tianjin Gu Ji Publication, 2004, pp. 1

examination.³ Later on, he participated in the war against the peasant revolts, namely the Taiping rebellion (1850-1864)⁴. Later, Liu countered the invasion of the British in the Second Opium War (1856-1860)⁵. In 1870, he dealt with the anti-missionary solution of the Tianjin Massacre⁶. Most importantly to Liu's diplomat career, Liu fostered a relationship with a senior politician called Song-tao Guo (1818-1891) in 1863 and worked under him for three years. Liu maintained his connections with Guo when Liu left to work at Peking in 1866. Finally, Guo was selected as the first ambassador of Britain in 1875 and the first diplomat in Chinese history. Before leaving for Britain, Guo picked Liu to go with him. That was how Liu began his diplomat life. However, Liu and Guo ran foul of each other during their diplomatic journeys which caused the Chinese diplomatic dilemma. As a result of the clashes between Liu and Guo, both of them were repatriated to China. This will be discussed in detail later. In China, Liu hostilely attacked the liberal politicians including Hung-chang Li. Li was the most prominent and powerful figure in Chinese foreign affairs. His power and status in Chinese politics could comparatively match Otto von Bismarck. Eventually, Liu was removed from Chinese politics for attacking Li.

Maxximilian August Scipio von Brandt (1835-1920) was the first German ambassador of China from 1875 to 1893. Although Guido von Rehfues was the first Prussian ambassador of China appointed by the Prussian government in 1864,

³ In Qing Imperial Examination system, the qualification of pass in provincial Imperial examination is the prerequisite for becoming a Qing official. In addition, there still higher levels of Imperial Examination.

⁴ The Taiping Rebellion was a massive civil war in southern China from 1850 to 1864, against the ruling Manchu Qing dynasty.

⁵ the Second Opium War was a war pitting the British Empire and the Second French Empire against the Qing dynasty of China, lasting from 1856 to 1860.

⁶ Tianjin Massacre was one of the most important "missionary incidents" of the late Qing Dynasty, involved attacks on French Catholic priests and nuns, violent belligerence from French diplomats, and armed foreign intervention in Tianjin in 1870.

Rehfues was not recognized by the Qing government. Brandt was the son of August Heinrich von Brandt (1789-1868). Heinrich von Brandt was a Prussian military general and military theorist. He was listed as a member of the general staff in his early career. Heinrich von Brandt attained his peak achievements as a member of the



⁷ The emblem of Eulenburg family

Prussian upper chamber and of the Erfurt parliament in 1849 and 1850 respectively. He was retired as a general of infantry in 1857. He was an influential Prussian in Prussian politics and military. Under the Junker background of a Prussian family, according to the Chinese historian Wei-jiang Wang, Max von Brandt graduated from the elite school “Französisches Gymnasium Berlin” and was later enlisted in the army as a Prussian military officer.⁸ Max von Brandt began his diplomatic career in 1860 when he was selected in the “Preußische Ostasienexpedition” (the Prussian Special Diplomatic Group Sent to East Asia) under the leadership of Graf Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenburg (1815-1881). Eulenburg was a Prussian diplomat and politician. He was

⁷ Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv, (另眼相看晚清德语文献中的上海) *Shanghai in Germany documentaries during late Qing*, Shanghai Cishu Publication, 2009, pp.148

⁸ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 153

born in Königsberg and inherited the blood of the prominently old Eulenburg clan. After the achievements of the “Preußische Ostasienexpedition”, Eulenburg was appointed as Interior Minister of Prussia (1862-1878), which was directly under the leading role of Otto von Bismarck. He was also a member of the Abgeordnetenhaus (the Prussian House of Representatives) from 1866 to 1877. During the “Preußische Ostasienexpedition”, Max von Brandt was one of Eulenburg’s three Attachè (attendants). After the mission was completed, he took a diplomatic role in East Asia as the consul and later general consul of the North German Confederation especially in Japan before becoming the first ambassador of China.

With regards to the diplomatic behaviour of Xi-hong Liu in Germany, Chinese historians have paid much attention to Liu’s struggle with Guo. There are three kinds of interpretations of this focal point. Chinese historian Yu-quan Zhang argues that the major conflict was focusing on the vice ambassador issue, where Guo did not suggest the appointment of Liu as the vice ambassador yet chose the first counsellor.⁹ Either the proposition of the job or the salary did not satisfy Liu. Particularly Liu was not chosen to be presented before the Queen Victoria as he was not listed in the names on the Chinese letter of credence. The second interpretation was the dissension of Guo and Liu in the form of their different viewpoints toward the most important point: the best way to strengthen China and the Qing Empire? This interpretation has mostly been studied by Japanese historians such as Mizoguchi Yuuzou, Ono Yasunori, Ito Momoko. The third interpretation, for instance Chinese historian Shu-cun Jia considers that the quarrel was initiated by the Chinese politics struggle between the

⁹ Yu-quan Zhang, (思想与时代的落差-晚清外交官刘锡鸿研究) *The gap between thought and times: the study of late Qing diplomat Xi-hong Liu*, Tianjin Gu Ji Publication, 2004, pp. 136

conservative and the liberal.¹⁰ Liu was under the instruction of the conservative power in Chinese politics to bring Guo down because Guo belonged to the liberal faction especially evident in his close relationship with Hung-chang Li. These three interpretations each have their merits. Firstly, Referring to Guo's diary that records his activities overseas can be referenced. In the middle of the journey towards Britain, Guo was ill with the uncomfortable climate in the Gulf of Aden. He took the Chinese medicine pill from Liu, showing that they still had a good relationship, at least not at an intensively hostile one. He mentioned Liu fifteen times and began his critique of Liu from the eighth time.¹¹ Moreover, the manner of his words about Liu became more and more malicious.¹² Guo's critique of Liu appeared two days before arriving in Britain. Prior to the beginning of the diplomatic journey, Guo and Liu had maintained a good relationship for twelve years. Furthermore, Guo suggested Liu's admission in the diplomat group and support his first position as counselor and even his vice ambassador after the break out. Although Liu was discontent at the starting point, Liu started to become more resentful after the issue of the presence before Queen Victoria. Liu in his diary complained that Guo already knew that Liu's name was not listed in the letter of credence to Queen Victoria.¹³ However, Guo in his diary wrote about his own surprise about this name accident. He put the blame on the procedure.¹⁴ However,

¹⁰ Shucun Jia, (中国首任驻德使节刘锡鸿) '*Chinese first ambassador accredited to Germany*', *Journal of Huaihua University* Vol. 26 No.10, 2007

¹¹ Zhong-shu Qian and Wei-zheng Zhu (ed.), (郭嵩焘等使西记六种) *Six diaries of Song-tao Guo, Xi-hong Liu etc.*, Zhong Xi Shu Ju, 2012, pp.70

¹² Zhong-shu Qian and Wei-zheng Zhu (ed.), (郭嵩焘等使西记六种) *Six diaries of Song-tao Guo, Xi-hong Liu etc.*, Zhong Xi Shu Ju, 2012, pp. 70, 90, 107, 116, 142, 179, 219, 221

¹³ Xi-hong Liu, (英绍私记随使英俄记) *diary of Xi-hong Liu during journey of the west*, Yue Lu Shu She, 1986, pp.74

¹⁴ Song-tao Guo, (伦敦与巴黎日记) "Song-tao Guo: Diary of London and Paris", Yue Lu Shu She, 1984, pp.104

it is arguable that Guo lied in his diary. In fact, he had already known that Liu was not on the list. There are three factors which meant that Guo did not acknowledge the ability of Liu, referring to the vice ambassador issue. The first factor was that Guo did not identify Liu with the dedicated diplomatic skills and liberal mindset.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Guo acknowledged the traditional political skills of Liu in domestic government. The Chinese historian Yu-quan Zhang uses one chapter to interpret Liu's life experience, particularly the intimate relationship with Guo and Liu's political mindsets towards the domestic administration and the foreign affairs. From Zhang's interpretation, Liu's domestic administration skill was brilliant, and in addition, Liu was comparatively liberal as opposed to other extremely conservative politicians in his viewpoints of the foreign affairs, especially the dispatch of diplomats which Liu agreed with.¹⁶ Guo also complimented of Liu's achievements in the domestic administration. Therefore, Liu was nominated as the first counselor and admitted to the diplomat group by Guo. Guo later commented about his nomination of Liu as the first counselor and later the vice ambassador that this was a considerations for the Qing's interest.¹⁷ Guo made his compromise on the nomination of Liu as the vice ambassador since Liu's self-resignation letter caused the divergences in the Zongli Yamen¹⁸ at Peking. The second suggested answer is that Guo was the dominant figure in Chinese politics with a high reputation and close relationship with Hung-chang Li

¹⁵ Zhong-shu Qian and Wei-zheng Zhu (ed.), (郭嵩焘等使西记六种) *Six diaries of Song-tao Guo, Xi-hong Liu etc.*, Zhong Xi Shu Ju, 2012, pp.70

¹⁶ Yu-quan Zhang, (思想与时代的落差-晚清外交官刘锡鸿研究) *The gap between thought and times: the study of late Qing diplomat Xi-hong Liu*, Tianjin Gu Ji Publication, 2004, pp. 108

¹⁷ Song-tao Guo, (郭嵩焘日记(第三卷)) *The diary of Song-tao Guo Vol.3*, Hu Nan Ren Min publication, 1982, pp.105

¹⁸ Zongli Yamen was the government body in charge of foreign affairs in imperial China during the late Qing dynasty. Prince Gong established it in 1861, following the Convention of Peking. It was abolished in 1901 and replaced with a Foreign Office of ministry rank.

who was the “Otto von Bismarck of the Chinese foreign affairs”. In contrast, Liu was much too lower than Guo’s official status and political reputation. Max von Brandt himself also commented that Liu entered Chinese politics as a “tiny” official, as his reputation and job were inferior.¹⁹ For that reason, Guo intentionally opposed the nomination of Liu as the vice ambassador rather than the first counselor. The last suggested answer is that a struggle of political factions in Chinese politics existed, in Zongli Yamen in particular. Zongli Yamen was the vital place to decide the administration of overseas diplomats. It was the place where the conservative and the liberal factions balanced each other. Aside from the nomination of Liu as a vice ambassador by Guo, the conservative power in Zongli Yamen nominated Liu as well. There was a period where Liu left Guo to work in Peking. So Guo assumed Liu belonged to the conservative faction. In other words, the position of Liu in the diplomatic group was the result of the balance between the conservative and the liberal factions in Zongli Yamen. This interpretation is also supported by the opinions of some Chinese historians (for example, Shu-jun Jia). Liu can be imagined in this issue as a conservative official and a flexible politician to further this interpretation. These two characteristics in his images interact and overlap with each other. My opinion is that Liu before the diplomatic journey Liu did not belonging to any political factions, whether the conservative or the liberal, though he did have connections with both sides. There are two examples of situations where Liu was cashing in himself to gain political benefits. The first one was the diplomatic mission in which Liu failed. The second one was the abuse of Guo and Liu toward each other. In this case, Liu succeeded. In the first situation, it was significantly beneficial for Liu for him to be a vice ambassador as his official position in Chinese politics would

¹⁹ Yun-long Shen (ed.) (近代中国史料丛刊续编) *Modern Chinese historical sources continued edition: the collections of Hung-chang Li*, Wen Ying publication, 1980, pp.3034

be promoted and his salarys would be raised as well. To Liu's surprise, Guo did not promote Liu though they maintained a kind relationship. Before Liu was selected into the diplomatic group, Liu retained his job position in Peking for nine years. It was a hard time for him without the help of Guo. When he knew Guo was appointed as the leader of the diplomat group, he realised a golden opportunity. To a large extent, the disappointment of Liu kept the distance from the liberal faction in Chinese politics. In the second situation, Liu spotted the demise of Guo, that is to say another golden opportunity. The incident of Guo's "Diary of the west journey" affected Guo so significantly that he was later repressed until his death under the denouncements of him as a "traitor". The noun "traitor" does not necessarily indicate that Guo collaborated with the West yet that was expressed perception of Chinese politics. Guo publicly presented his respect and extolled the political structure of Britain, which was definitely intolerable for the conservative power, and even the liberal faction did not dare unequivocally support him under lots of pressure. Guo's attitude of radicalism within the political structure infuriated the top class of leadership as a result of obliteration. Liu joined the attacks of Guo. Liu castigated Guo as a person who disgraced his motherland and his diary had to be burned.²⁰ This indicated that Liu decided to join the conservative power and discerned the terrible aftermath of having a reformed mindset. Liu absorbed the lesson of Guo and limited his liberal role in Chinese politics. To be more specific, the incident of Guo's "Diary of the west journey" strengthened Liu's conservative mindsets in the consideration of political survival even if there were any liberal elements left Liu's brain. He wrote his diary about Germany while he was the first ambassador of Germany in 1877. The diary was partitioned into nine sections with titles. They recorded what Liu experienced while

²⁰ (驻德使馆档案钞) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.90

working in Germany. It is noticeable that Liu used descriptive words instead of commentary words in his diary about Germany. He wrote about the first time he handed the letter of credence to and the Emperor William I, the conversations he had with the German court, the meeting of Leopold II of Belgium and William I, the saloon party, the Christmas day celebrations, the celibacy of westerners, and the wedding of Charlotte of Prussia (the so-called Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen), the granddaughter of William I. In addition, he only used two sections to introduce the institutional units of the German infantry and the German parliaments, mostly focusing on the military section. During his ambassador period as an ambassador, Liu drafted his suggestions for the Qing government in four aspects: politics, corruptions in official rule, economy, and military equipment. For politics, Liu was very vague about the details, only emphasising the necessity to change.²¹ As for corruptions, Liu did not borrow from the foreign experience but instead maintained the traditional way.²² For the economy he ignored the industrialised machine yet promoted the agriculture and manufacturing trade.²³ The only in-depth analysis was for military equipment, especially the infantry, and the naval systems, and weapons,²⁴ which were based on his early military experience in China. Japanese historians have conducted the specific studies of Xi-hong Liu's thinking. Ono Yasunori analysed the divergences of Guo and Liu through two ways: the responsibilities of Chinese scholar-officials and the relationship between Chinese officials and the common

²¹ (驻德使馆档案鈔) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.42-43

²² (驻德使馆档案鈔) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.73-74

²³ (驻德使馆档案鈔) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.50-51, 72-73

²⁴ (驻德使馆档案鈔) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.43-44, 46, 70-72

people.²⁵ Ito Momoko criticised Yu-quan Zhang's work²⁶ as not being able to escape the paradigm of "tradition and modernity" and failing to measure the complex and divergent depth of the conservative atmosphere.²⁷ Compared to Yasunori, Momoko's writing was based more on Liu's resources than Yasunori and analysed the more complex and detailed thinking of Liu. According to Momoko, Mizoguchi Yuuzou was the first Japanese historian who studied the thinking of Xi-hong Liu in a more complete way.²⁸ Yuuzou introduced the methodology of history of mentality, suggesting the psychological activities of Liu's thinking. Yuuzou thought that Liu was consciously aware of the gap between China and the West and held a pessimistic attitude toward the future of China without an appropriate solution. On account of these reasons, he stubbornly remained his conservative position rather than aggressively shook the Chinese traditional structure.²⁹ All of them are significantly understood the thinking of Liu, however, without analysing the circumstances of Liu was being involved with politics. Consequently, the shortage of these three Japanese historians was their failure to cover another more diversified way to look at Liu. His flexibility could be reflected in the gift giving as Liu used considerable amounts of money to buy Chinese antiques for socialising with Germany politicians.³⁰ However,

²⁵ Ono, Yasunori, 'A comparative study of Guo Songtao and Liu Xihong's political thought: Focusing on their views of Chinese scholar-officials and the British political system', *The Qing history journal* Vol.1, 2009

²⁶ Yu-quan Zhang, (思想与时代的落差-晚清外交官刘锡鸿研究) *The gap between thought and times: the study of late Qing diplomat Xi-hong Liu*, Tianjin Gu Ji Publication, 2004

²⁷ Ito, Momoko, 'Liu Xi-hong, the First Qing dynasty deputy ambassador to British, his thought and impressions of the West', *Tajen Journal* Vol.32, 2008

²⁸ Ito, Momoko, 'Liu Xi-hong, the First Qing dynasty deputy ambassador to British, his thought and impressions of the West', *Tajen Journal* Vol.32, 2008

²⁹ Mizoguchi Yuuzou, (中国方法论) "The methodology of China" (translated by You-cong Lin), National Translation Institution Publication, 1999

³⁰ (驻德使馆档案钞) *The archive of Chinese embassy in Germany archive (two volumes)*, Taiwan Xuesheng Shu Ju, 1966, pp.131

Max von Brandt, Brandt expressed the idea that Liu was unwelcome Liu in Germany and criticised Liu as a conservative who unfairly argued against the western conspiracy of taking advantage of Chinese interest.³¹ In addition, Hung-chang Li also indicated the fault of Liu's impoliteness to Germans.³²

Through the comments of Max von Brandt on Xi-hong Liu in 1978, it can be seen that Brandt was a more experienced ambassador than Liu as he had already prepared his diplomacy in East Asia since 1860 when the "Preußische Ostasiensexpedition" (the Prussian Special Diplomatic Group Sent to East Asia) began. In the meanwhile, Brandt was also the East Asia expert who wrote lots of articles analysing various aspects of China. He wrote at least twenty books and most of his writings relate to the East Asian affairs. In his writings, there are at least eight monographs of China. All of these achievements were starting from 1860. For the major goal of the "Preußische Ostasiensexpedition", one of Eulenburg's retinues Joseph Maria von Radowitz clearly states, "we are not just for Prussia yet for the overall Deutschland including Reuss and Greiz to hand in our letter of credence and get theirs (the Qing government's) back."³³ During the mission, Eulenburg and Brandt established a profound friendship under the circumstances of pursuing the approval of letter of credence by the Qing government. According to the Chinese historian Wei-jiang Wang, the "Preußische Ostasiensexpedition" firstly arrived in Japan in 1860 before coming to China a year later. In 1860, the diplomat group lost four-one members in a sea accident before approaching Japan. Furthermore, Japan was undergoing the period of isolation while

³¹ Zhong-shu Qian and Wei-zheng Zhu (ed.), (郭嵩焘等使西记六种) *Six diaries of Song-tao Guo, Xi-hong Liu etc.*, Zhong Xi Shu Ju, 2012, pp.202

³² Yun-long Shen (ed.) (近代中国史料丛刊续编: (李文忠公全集)) *Modern Chinese historical sources continued edition: the collections of Hung-chang Li*, Wen Ying publication, 1980, pp.3034

³³ Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv, (另眼相看晚清德语文献中的上海) *Shanghai in Germany documentaries during late Qing*, Shanghai Cishu Publication, 2009, pp. 325

the conservative power was much too aggressive. Rōnin³⁴, the anarchic samurai was the nightmare of every foreigner in Japan. One Russian naval officer and one sailor were assassinated, as well as an American translator who belonged to the staff of the American ambassador. Fortunately, Prussia signed a commercial treaty with Japan in January 1861.³⁵ Following Japan, Shanghai in China was their next destination. They arrived in Shanghai in March 1861. For the Qing government, no officials had any idea about Prussia, not to mention other countries in Deutschland. Prince Gong, as the leader of Zongli Yamen did not know where was “PO-LO-SU”³⁶ was. The grand coordinator and provincial governor under the direct order of the Emperor (Kaiserlicher Kommissar), Huan Xue mistook Prussia as Belgium.³⁷ In the official report and Eulenburg’s diary, Eulenburg decided to take a chance after only two days after arriving in Shanghai, and promoted the position of Brandt and sent him to Tianjin, a city close to Peking. At the first beginning of April, Eulenburg received a report from Brandt at Tianjin, telling him that the foreign ambassador positioned at Peking would damage the image of the Emperor.³⁸ It was wise for Eulenburg to send Brandt to Tianjin and then Peking. The result was appreciable, for Brandt’s “impetuous” and delicate behaviour was the direct cause of the success of the commercial treaty in 1861. Through the diary of Brandt, he reflected three major

³⁴ A rōnin was a samurai with no lord or master during the feudal period (1185–1868) of Japan. A samurai became masterless from the death or fall of his master, or after the loss of his master's favor or privilege.

³⁵ Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv, (另眼相看晚清德语文献中的上海) *Shanghai in Germany documentaries during late Qing*, Shanghai Cishu Publication, 2009, pp. 1

³⁶ “PO-LO-SU” indicates Prussia in the officials in the Qing government

³⁷ Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv, (另眼相看晚清德语文献中的上海) *Shanghai in Germany documentaries during late Qing*, Shanghai Cishu Publication, 2009, pp.47

³⁸ Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv, (另眼相看晚清德语文献中的上海) *Shanghai in Germany documentaries during late Qing*, Shanghai Cishu Publication, 2009, pp.123

problems that German diplomats encountered in China. Besides the exhausting negotiation with the Chinese officials, Germans like Brandt had to suffer the unaccustomed climate of every new place, the tedious and uncomfortable journey on the Chinese styled carriage, and the lack of translators. All of these problems were recorded in his diary. The perseverance of Brandt kept him on the way to Peking even though he was barely able to walk because of the terrible body condition. He showed his respect for Eulenburg with the call of duty. "If I need to reject the request of Eulenburg on the condition of my ill body, it makes me feel like committing the crime, I so admire him seriously (Eulenburg) for his stamina and optimism. So I tell him I will go for Peking instantly!"³⁹ Brandt ignored the warning of the British and French ambassadors against going to Peking. Nonetheless, he still tried to find help from the foreign diplomats in Peking. He failed after a meeting with the French ambassador and he smartly chose not to approach the British ambassador since Brandt already knew what the result would be. Finally, Brandt made progress in the Russian missionary in Peking and attained a rental house. He then began to contact the British ambassador to let him know the fact that he had to admit. The British were willing to provide the assistance. At this turning point, one Chinese assistant under Prince Gong threatened Brandt with a carrot-and-stick approach. Brandt responded intelligently with the international law and was willing to directly negotiate with Prince Gong.⁴⁰ It was enough for Brandt to show the tough attitude of Prussia, and Eulenberg recalled Brandt back. Brandt also reasonably did not sabotage the sensitive relationship

³⁹ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 155

⁴⁰ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 158-159

between China and Prussia. For Eulenburg the diplomatic ability of Brandt was approved. In the negotiations between the diplomatic group and the Qing government, the Chinese side asked the German diplomats to compromise on the condition that the Qing government only made a commercial treaty with Prussia, not other countries in Deutschland.⁴¹ After much negotiation, finally the major goal of the “Preußische Ostasienexpedition” was achieved and the commercial treaty applied to all the Deutschland countries while Prussia was the only country which had the rights to communicate with the Qing government.⁴² In the next thirteen years, Brandt mainly stayed in East Asia to further the diplomacy in Japan particularly. In 1875, Brandt was appointed as the first ambassador of China. He already had enough diplomatic skills and knowledge of East Asian society. He was not only active in the foreign diplomatic communities in Peking but he also established a close relationship with the Chinese officials in Peking including Hung-chang Li, Prince Gong etc. His diplomatic style, for the Chinese officials, was difficult to deal with, in other words, Brandt was tough in diplomatic negotiations. Even Brandt himself this: “Even so, I have to admit that I am not always a calm-mind person, to be more specific, I am not the one who always made compromise.”⁴³

For the threshold principle of Hobsbawm’s nationalism, three characters are emphasised by him. The first is the common historic tradition under the same authority. The second is the reality that for the educated intellectual in politics,

⁴¹ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 326

⁴² Kai Hu, (中德风云：始于1840年的德国在华形象) *encounter between Germany and China: The Germany image in China since 1840*, Shanghai Renmin Publication, 2013, pp. 43-44

⁴³ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 176

culture aspects remain in the long-term period. The third is the sufficient power to conquer.⁴⁴ By living in China for many years, Brandt expressed his opinions of Chinese nationalism through the case of Guo. If a Chinese diplomat held a friendly attitude toward the foreign countries or he expressed liberalism in the diplomatic relationships, he would be convicted as guilty and never be trusted again, which means he will be cut out in Chinese politics. The example of Guo was a hard fact of the conservatism in Chinese politics as Guo was influenced deeply by the British Cabinet system.⁴⁵ As for the case of Liu, Brandt also mentioned that most Chinese diplomats needed to prove that they did not forget their traditional concepts, which forced them to be more aggressive than other Chinese officials who did not leave China.⁴⁶ Through Xi-hong Liu, we find the former two characters could accommodate Chinese nationalism to some extent. With the increasing influence of the West on China, the Chinese scholar-officials still maintained their position not only for its cultural esteem and the political interest as well. The cultural esteem of the diplomat tried to identify the Western advantages with Chinese elements. The political interests of Chinese nationalism were reflected in the domestic politics struggles and the passive treatments and defenses toward the West as well. As for the situation of Max von Brandt, he fell in to the general categorisation of the Westerners during the Imperialism in the colonies. Two particularities of Brandt were analogous to them were the more objective viewpoints toward the East and the transition of nationalism while other Great Powers had already established a modern nation. For the Junker

⁴⁴ Eric John Ernest Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 37-38

⁴⁵ Friedrich zu Eulenburg and Maximilian August Scipio von Brandt, (德语文献中晚清的北京) *Peking in Germany documentaries during late Qing* (translated by Wei-jiang Wang and Shu Lv,), Fujian Education Publication, 2012, pp. 180

⁴⁶ Ibid.

background of Max von Brandt, it was essential that the Prussian expansionism maintained a strong connection with the German nationalism under the lead of Otto von Bismarck.

In conclusion, it is well known that Liu was an anti-liberal official during the liberal movement led by the Qing government; the so-called the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895)⁴⁷. However, Chinese nationalism was attributed to the conservatism in Chinese politics. Comparatively, we cannot just focus on the thinking of Chinese politics, but instead we should also combine this with their personal circumstances. It is possible to recover the historical facts and see how Chinese nationalism was brought up by such elements. In Germany the historical issue of unification and the issue of the Prussian expansionism were debatable. However, in the case of Brandt, the Prussian domination and the proto-nationalism are evident, to be more specific, the Prussian nationalism for the political interest of Deutschland contributed mostly to the German nationalism.

⁴⁷ the Self-Strengthening Movement was a period of institutional reforms initiated during the late Qing dynasty following a series of military defeats and concessions to foreign powers.

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