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An authentic account of an embassy from the king of Great Britain to the emperor of China ... together with a relation of the voyage undertaken ... / taken chiefly from the papers of ... the Earl of Macartney ... Sir Erasmus Gower ... and other gentlemen ... of the embassy, by Sir George Staunton. London : W. Bulmer and Co. for G. Nicol, 1798. 2nd ed., corr. [extra-illustrated] in 5 vols

Call number ULB 951.074 S79 a

Mrs Dorothea Scott, former University Librarian (1951-1960), once prized this five-volume set as the most valuable title of the Libraries' rare book collection. The volumes bear the bookplate of R. H. Alexander-Bennett, and the stamp of A. W. Bahr, who is said to have acquired the set from a descendant of Lord Macartney. The set is believed to have been Lord Macartney's own copy.

Sir George Leonard Staunton (1737-1859) was appointed Secretary to the first British embassy to China, under the leadership of Lord Macartney, set sail from Portsmouth on 26 September 1792 and returned on 6 September 1794. On his return, Staunton produced the official account of embassy, *An Authentic Account of An Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: G. Nicol, 1797), taken chiefly from the papers of the First Earl of Macartney, Ambassador and Sir E. Gower, Commander of the Expedition in the years. The two volumes of text with engravings and a folio volume of plates, produced in 1797, depict the diplomatic mission from King George III of Great Britain to the Qianlong Emperor of China, containing the various circumstances of the Embassy, with accounts of customs and manners of the Chinese and a description of the country, towns and cities.

This second corrected edition of 1798 in our rare collection had been enlarged to five volumes of folio size. The text is inlaid throughout, the plates from the original folio volume are bound with the text, and there are 210 extra illustrations in colour, mostly on rice paper. These were probably specially commissioned by Lord Macartney or a member of his embassy, and include a portrait of the Emperor Qianlong, which is presumed to be unique. Others include 90 illustrations of flowering plants; there are also moths, fish, birds, street sellers and portraits of spirits and mythological beings.

This five-volume set of gems is kept in a fire-proof safe in the Fung Ping Shan Library. For enquiries, please approach the Special Collections counter.



A Chinese Military Post



A View of the front of the hall of audience at the palace of Yuen-men-yuen

Portrait of the Emperor Qianlong



Flowers of Cotton Tree