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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE

American Consulate General, Shanghai, China,
July 20, 1915.

Subject: Meeting Conditions Among a Strahge People.

COMMERCE
AUG 24 1915

Honorable E.E.Pratt, Chief,
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce,
Department of Commerce,
Washington.

Dear Dr.Pratt:

An incident came to my attention recently which illustrates the fact that it is best for our manufacturers that they study the wants of foreign peoples abroad in order to appreciate how best to meet those wants. An American manufacturer of condensed milks put on the market here in China for advertising purposes, a nursing bottle, engraved on which were Chinese characters descriptive of its products. These bottles were fitted with nipples and ready for use. The Chinese people had never used nursing bottles so the Chinese mother was to have the opportunity of introducing this western inovation to her baby. An American would think that it would be no difficult matter to introduce a nursing bottle to a Chinese baby, especially so when its contents was filled with delicious American canned milk, but not so, we forget to take into consideration the fact that a people who for centuries and thousands of years have not known the nursing bottle are not to make friends with this little Western product in a day. It was not because there exists any insurmountable prejudice or adversion toward the Occidental method of feeding babies that the nursing bottle experienced difficulties in receiving a warm welcome from the Chinese mothers, no nothing so serious as this, It was simply because the Chinese mother, even when assisted by the instincts of self preservation so strongly respresented in the make-up up every child, does not know that it is necessary to hold a bottle at an angle of 45 degrees and upwards in order that its contents may be emptied through the small aperture at the end of the nipple covering the opening. The Chinese baby was given the bottle in a vertical position with the bottom of the bottle down and it was expected that so soon as it started sucking on the nipple the milk would rise of its own accord and gently trickle down the throat of the infant. The company is now arranging to have an illustrated leaflet attached to each bottle giving directions as to how to hold a nursing bottle in order to allow of the baby's receiving its contents.

This incident is illustrative of the fact that manufacturers abroad

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must understand how to adapt their products to the wants of a people if they would introduce them successfully. Had the company's representative in the case above cited made no pretense to discover a reason for the failure of the nursing bottle to meet with the approval of the Chinese people, he might easily have concluded that there merely was an insurmountable prejudice to its use and made no further attempts to meet the objections on the part of these people. In this case it will probably only require a leaflet of explanation to adapt it to the conditions which obtain here.

I remember having read of an incident which happened in Mexico some years ago which is in keeping with the above. An American mining company feeling that much energy and time were wasted in the native method of removing earth by the use of boards which were carried on the head, conceived the brilliant idea of introducing American wheelbarrows only to find that the native insisted on putting the wheelbarrow loaded with earth on his head in the manner similar to the practice in vogue with the carrying boards. He had to be taught to wheel the barrow, before it meant anything to him.

Shortly after the Japanese occupation of Formosa, when good roads had been constructed in that insular possession, a demand for bicycles arose and dealers were anxious to effect connections with American manufacturers of bicycles. The American Consul advised the native dealer to make it plain to the American manufacturer that the drop frame wheel alone could be used in Formosa because the Chinese resident there wore gowns and the Japanese worn kimonos. The American manufacturer being short on drop frame wheels sent twenty diamond frame wheels and stated that he would see that the drop frame wheels were sent on the next order. In this case, the costumes of the people would not readily allow of their being taught the use of the drop frame bicycle.

Thus the American manufacturer must bear in mind that conditions abroad in regard to the use of his products are not necessarily the same as those which obtain in his home market and that if he would make a success in trade abroad, it is necessary for him to understand wherein conditions so far as his own products are concerned differ from conditions at home and how he may best meet this difference.

Yours truly,

Wm. H. Arnold
Commercial Attaché