

# Trans-cultural Exchanges

## through Chinese Studies:

Reflections and Challenges

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The main theme of the Second World Conference on Sinology,<sup>1</sup> hosted, with its usual expertise, by Renmin University of China, Beijing, is in its final formulation is “汉学与跨文化交流” — that is “Sinology and Trans-cultural Exchange”. This theme is particularly worth of attention due to the fact that it succeeds an earlier formulation stated as “文化对话与当代汉学 — Cultural Dialogue and Contemporary Sinology”. Despite the fact that the various topics proposed for further study have remain the same, yet in a slightly different order of discussion, the change in the formulation of the general theme might imply some considerations that should be first addressed.

Concerning the academic disciplines that occupy the participants in this conference, several names have been given outside China and in China proper, which are not totally synonymous.

The most ancient one was first crafted in Europe, probably sometime in the seventeenth century, and in Latin as *Sinologia*. In his book *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*,<sup>2</sup> Professor Mungello does not mention by whom or where neither when the term was first coined. One might suppose that it was used to mean the various studies published mainly in Latin (the academic idiom of that time) and made on the language, the script, the history and the Classics of China. The Chinese Empire captivated the European intelligentsia, beginning with the early ‘Proto-sinologists’ as the Mungello calls Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), Andreas Müller (1630-1694) and Christian Mentzel (1622-1701), and including Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) himself. The name *Sinology* remained in use by the academic world until today.

More recently, that is after the Second World War, a renewed interest for Chinese contemporary history, institutions, society and culture developed in the West. In Europe, to better fit with modernity, the academic fields concerned with China were given another name in the various vernacular languages, that is ‘Chinese Studies’, but the disciplines inherited the legacy of the “sinological” tradition. Following Otto Franke’s definition: “Chinese Studies are the scientific research on the Chinese People, History and Culture.” It is only due to the influence of two new disciplines called Cultural Studies or Area Studies, later developed, that Sinology, in the traditional meaning of the term, is considered mainly in North America as a sub-field of Chinese Studies.

In China proper, it seems that 汉学 is a Chinese retro-translation of the term Sinology, and 国学 a retro-translation of the more recent term of Chinese Studies, but with some difference: 汉学 having an emphasis on its Western origins and developments, 国学 meaning National Studies and therefore having its origins and development in China proper and by Chinese scholars and people.

More reflections will follow that would comment on the final formulation given to the general theme of this conference “Sinology and Trans-cultural exchange”, “汉学与跨文化交流”.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the 2009 世界汉学大会—第二单元: 汉学与文化对话. Panel 2: Sinology and Cultural Dialogue.

<sup>2</sup> D.E. Mungello, *Curious Land : Jesuit Accommodation and The Origins of Sinology*, Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1989, 405 pp.

## I.— From discovery to “trans-cultural” controversy

Under the banner of this theme however, one should first take note that the birth and development of Sinology have soon degenerated into a clash of cultures or a “trans-cultural controversy”.

The first steps of Sinology were of course to decipher the language and its script, attempts done by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in his *Chinese-Portuguese Dictionary* compiled in 1598 and developed later with tone marks by Lazaro Cattaneo (郭居静, 1560-1640). Nicolas Trigault (金尼各, 1577-1628) who arrived in Macao in 1610 — the year Ricci died in Beijing — followed with a larger dictionary entitled 《西儒耳目資》 *Xi Ru Er Mu Zi*, that is “an aid for the ears and eyes of Western scholars”.

Geographic descriptions of China were sent to Europe and translated into various languages, the first being given by Trigault himself who based his text on Ricci’s memoirs (for the years 1608-1610). Others followed with similar compositions, like Alvarez Semedo’s *Relazione della Grande Monarchia della China* [Report on the Great Monarchy of China, Rome 1643, in Italian], or the collection of maps<sup>3</sup> drawn by Martino Martini (衛匡國, 1614-1661), known as *Novus Atlas Sinensis* [New Chinese Atlas] and published in Antwerp (1655).<sup>4</sup> Martini has also contributed his history of the Manchu conquest of China, written in Latin under the title of *De bello Tartarico in Sinis historia* [On the History of the Tartar war in China, 1654], a great success in Europe. It is a work that he developed later in his broader research on Chinese history and titled *Sinicae historiae decas prima res à gentis origine ad Christum natum in extrema Asia, sive Magno Sinarum Imperio gestas complexa* [The first ten divisions of Chinese history, affairs in far Asia from the beginning of the people to the birth of Christ, or surrounding the emerging great empire of the Chinese, Munich 1658 and Amsterdam 1659].

All these explorations made on land or through history or within the characteristics of the language were done in an atmosphere of friendship, esteem and tolerance. Basic “sinological” tools, so to say, were laboriously acquired, like the important two works of Francisco Varo (1627-1687), a Spanish Dominican based in 福寧 Funing (福建 Fukien): first the *Vocabulario de la Lengua Mandarina* [Vocabulary of the Mandarin Language, compiled in not even two years’ time: 1677– 20 May 1679] and his *Arte de la Lengua Mandarina* [Grammar of the Mandarin Language, 1703].<sup>5</sup>

Without these or other unknown tools, one can admire that as early as 1593 Ricci had already translated into Latin the 四书 *Si Shu* under the title *Tetrabiblion Sinense de moribus* that is “The Chinese Four Books on morals”, accompanied by short commentaries, a work that has been lost and was probably never published. Later on, Ignacio da Costa (郭納爵, 1599-1666) did a Latin translation of the 《大學》 *Da Xue* under the title *Sapientia Sinica* [Chinese wisdom]. At this translation a fellow Jesuit, Prosper Intorcetta (殷鐸澤, 1625-1696) added his translation, also in Latin, of the 《中庸》 *Zhong Yong* under the title of *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis* [Politico-moral science of the Chinese], plus a *Vita Confucii, principis sapientiae sinicae* [Life of Confucius,

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<sup>3</sup> On this special field of cartography in Chinese Studies, cf. Chang Min-min, *China in European maps: a library special collection / compiled and edited by Min-min Chang*. 《地圖中國：圖書館特藏 / 編輯者周敏民》. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library, c2003. 香港：香港科技大學圖書館, c2003.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Blaeu, Joan, 1596-1673, 朱思本 Chu Ssu-pên, 1273-ca. 1335, Martini, Martino, 1614-1661, *Novus Atlas Sinensis: 1655. Faksimiles nach der Prachtausgabe der Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel*. Einführung von Yorck Alexander Haase, Stuttgart, Müller und Schindler, 1974. Case contains an introductory volume (14 p.; 40 cm.) and a portfolio (50 cm.) containing a photo reprint of 2 chapters of the original text by Martino Martini and all the maps from the 1655 ed. of *Novus Atlas Sinensis*, which was published by J. Blaeu, Amsterdam as part 6 of his *Theatrum orbis terrarum sive Novus Atlas*; title from introductory volume.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. W. South Coblin, *Francisco Varo's Glossary of the Mandarin Language* Vol. 1: An English and Chinese Annotation of the *Vocabulario de la Lengua Mandarina* Vol. 2: Pinyin and English Index of the *Vocabulario de la Lengua Mandarina*, Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin — Steyler Verlag, Nettetal, 2006, 2 Vols., 1003 pp., and, with the collaboration of Joseph A. Levi, *Francisco Varo's Grammar of the Mandarin Language (1703): An English Translation of 'Arte de la Lengua Mandarina'* (Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2000, 280 pp.

Prince of the Chinese wisdom] and the first part of the 《論語 *Lun Yu*》 under the title *Sententiae* [Maxims].

But all along the one hundred or so years that followed Ricci's death in Beijing, these "trans-cultural approaches", based on serious scholarly study of the language, the history and the Classics of the host culture, ran aground as a ship does on some shallow and uncharted sea bed before reaching the shore.

Controversies among Western missionaries stimulated further studies and research. These were not confined to linguistic improved compilations of dictionaries: for instance the 《文字考 *Wen zi kao*》 (Research on the Characters), a work by Wolfgang Hertdrich (理格, 1625-1684), or the *Chinese Grammar* left in Paris by Philippe Couplet (柏應理, 1622-1693), during his stay in Europe (1682-1692), which became a reference for others to come, neither a *Chinese Dictionary*, very clearly written and work of the missionaries, on which Mentzel based his later dictionary in nine volumes in-folio. The sinological research of this generation went deeper into the fields of history, thought and culture. Following Professor Mungello's remark on the meaning in seventeenth century Europe's academic language of the term *curiositas*, these researches were "curious" studies, that is "in a sense closer to the Latin adjective *curiosus*"; they were done with "painstaking accuracy, attention to detail and skilful inquiry".<sup>6</sup>

In their exile and in the midst of internal controversies, these early sinologists had to defend the understanding they had acquired of their new cultural context by explaining it through new publications. Hence, due to its influence in Europe, the importance attached to the collective work entitled *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive scientia Sinensis latine exposita* (Confucius, philosopher of the Chinese, or the Chinese learning explained in Latin, Paris 1687). The work has a Chinese title 《西文四書直解》 *Xi wen si shu zhi jie* (A Straight Forward explanation of the Four Books given in Western Language). Composed mainly by Philippe Couplet, Prospero Intorcetta, Wolfgang Hertdrich and François de Rougemont (魯日滿, 1624-1676), this important work has an introduction in two parts. The first includes a presentation of the Chinese Classics and of their main commentators, plus some short notes on Daoism and the 道士 *dao shi*, on Buddhism and the bonzes, on the literati and the philosophers, and a table of the 64 hexagrams and their interpretation. The second part explains the world conception of the Chinese, the difficulties encountered by Ricci and the solution he adopted, the original purity of Chinese culture and its notion of the Supreme Being. This is followed by the Life of Confucius and the translations with commentaries, mentioned *supra*, all done by Intorcetta. Couplet has added various *Chronological Tables* (published in Paris, 1686-1687): two of the sexagesimal cycles (from the year 2952 before C.E.<sup>7</sup> till the beginning of the C.E. and after it until the year 1683) plus a genealogy of the first three imperial families since 黃帝 Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, with his 86 successors.

In the same spirit of helping mutual understanding, histories of China were compiled, like *L'État présent de la Chine* (The present state of China, Paris 1697) by Joachim Bouvet (白晋 1656-1730), followed by a *Portrait historique de l'Empereur de Chine* (Historical portrait of the Emperor of China, Paris, 1697), republished as *Histoire de l'Empereur de Chine* (History of the emperor of China, La Haye, 1699), where Bouvet makes comparisons between the king of France and the Chinese emperor. Still more important is the work of Dominique Parrenin (巴多明, 1665-1741), a literal translation in French, which he calls *Histoire de la Chine* (History of China), of 《資治通鑑綱目, 前編》 *Zi zhi tong jian gang mu, qian bian* (Comprehensive Mirror to aid in Government, first part) of 司馬光 Sima Guang (1019-1086), where history is mirrored in the institutions established for good governance.

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<sup>6</sup> Mungello, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> C.E.: Christian Era, Common Era.

All these efforts had a focus: to present the Chinese Rites, object of great attention and study by the Jesuits in their various works and numerous documents and letters. These constitute an abundant source of cultural and anthropological information. In 1668, Intorcetta had composed quite a long treatise called *Testimonium de Cultu Sinensi* (Testimony on Chinese Cults), published in Paris in 1700 (318 pages in-8°). Probably related to it is a larger manuscript in which the author quotes as authorities all the Chinese texts related to these rites in memory of Confucius and of the family ancestors.

At the origin of these and other less known publications was a deeper knowledge, acquired both by observation and by “curious” study through which the real fabric of the Chinese culture in some of its various aspects had manifested itself. Newcomers from the West like younger missionaries, western theologians or Church diplomats, had to face that fact in the same way that the Manchu had done earlier for more than fifty years after their conquest.<sup>8</sup>

It is therefore fitting that mention be made here in passing of the so called “Chinese Rites Controversy”, in particular when it reached its climax at the imperial court of the emperor 康熙 Kang Xi during the visitation of the papal legate Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon in China (1705-1710) and afterwards.<sup>9</sup> It remains a paradigmatic instance of cultural clash not less than a clash of wills. It is enough for this paper to limit itself to stress the cultural aspect of the controversy. Any culture is lived in its people through its rites which might be considered as the dynamic structure that sustains shared values. This is why the Controversy resounded so strongly not only first in China<sup>10</sup> but also in Europe and for a long time.<sup>11</sup> It became “a trans-cultural controversy”.

On the one hand, for the sake of “adaptation” to the Chinese context but without losing their credit in the eyes of Roman authorities in Europe, Western missionaries were led, through some inaccuracies in their studies, to misinterpret ancient Chinese traditions. The age old veneration due to ancestors has been an essential part of the Chinese religious world throughout its own evolution and from the very beginning of the Chinese civilization.<sup>12</sup> As such these rites were religious in their relation with the Supreme Being (whose proper appellation was also part of the debate) without being idolatrous. But such a view could not easily fit at that time with the European understanding of the religious dimensions of the world.

On the other hand, a positive description of the Chinese empire was given by the publications already mentioned. Among them, the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* [edifying and

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<sup>8</sup> On the political dimension at the imperial court between Manchus and Han officials, see Thierry Meynard, “Manchus, Hans and Westerners in Early Qing: The Edict of Toleration of 1692 and Cultural Pluralism – 清初的滿人、漢人和西方人: 1692 年容教詔令和文化多元化” in 《神州交流—Chinese Cross Currents》 No. 6.2 (2009), p. 104-113.

<sup>9</sup> No surprise then for the strong words by which the Kangxi emperor, a Manchu, disagreed with Pope Clement's decree on the Chinese rites and decided to ban Christian missions in China. Cf. the *Decree of Kangxi* (1721) on Pope Clement XI's decision *Ex illa die* (19 March 1715) which officially condemned the Chinese rites: “Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. There is not a single Westerner versed in Chinese works, and their remarks are often incredible and ridiculous. To judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document which contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble.” (Dan J. Li, transl., *China in Transition, 1517-1911*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969, p. 22).

<sup>10</sup> As the document called *Acta Pekingensia* [Facts from Beijing] would later show. For more details on the transcribed Latin text, its English translation and its annotated first ever edition now in preparation, see the Macau Ricci Institute's website at [www.riccimac.org](http://www.riccimac.org).

<sup>11</sup> See Virgile Pinot, *La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique en France (1640-1740)*, Genève, Slatkine Reprints, 1971, translated in Chinese as 《中國對法國哲學思想形成的影響》, 維吉爾·比諾著, 耿昇譯, 北京: 商務印書館, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> For more details on the matter, see for instance Sun Shangyang, “Misreading and its Creativity in Sino-Western Cultural Communication at the End of the Ming Dynasty” in Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung ed., *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006, pp. 2-8: “Western Missionaries' Misinterpretation of Confucianism”.

well researched letters, as we should understand their title]<sup>13</sup> have been particularly influential. Chinese society was shown as ruled by reason and natural virtues without any recourse to supernatural revelation. The picture might not have been complete, as Chinese history or literature could testify, but it had been enthusiastically received with great interest in late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century Europe. It was then fitting the trend of the Enlightenment philosophers who were intent to promote the rule of reason.

These two in a sense self contradicting distortions might indicate how complex trans-cultural encounter, dialogue and exchange can be before being mature enough to bare fruit. The “trans-cultural controversy” mentioned above cooled down, so to say, with the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 and with the turmoil caused by the French Revolution (1789-1799). But in the midst of this European troubled background, an important diplomatic event should not be overlooked, that is in 1793 the failure of the mercantile Macartney Mission to establish a British embassy to China. It is well known that it dashed down for a long time the hopes of some “trans-cultural” exchange and mutual understanding between China and the West.

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## II.— Beyond controversies, the growth of academic research

In this historical context, it is worth noting that the same year 1814 saw two happy and important events: the establishment in Europe of the first ever scholarly chair of Chinese studies at the Collège de France in Paris and, in Rome, the restoration of the Jesuit order, the Society of Jesus. It was a pure coincidence indeed as both events were not connected in their motivations. But trans-cultural exchange through Sinology entered then into a new phase of development.

It is characterized by the fact that sinological research was then equally done in Europe as in China by a new generation of sinologists.

As far European Sinology is concerned, it might be said that its beginnings had started in the precedent period with the help of a young “literate” Chinese and Christian convert named 黄嘉略 Huang Jialue alias Arcadio Huang (1679-1716). The young man, aged 23, was brought to Europe in 1702, in the middle of the Rites Controversy, by Artus de Lionne (1655-1713), a bishop from the Foreign Missions of Paris, who had hoped in vain that Arcadio Huang would accept to be a Catholic priest. But Huang Jialue declined to be ordained and later on settled for good in Paris, had many contacts among the intelligentsia, in particular with Montesquieu, married a French lady and became famous as the Chinese translator of the king Louis XIV and librarian for the Chinese books of the Royal library. With his successful help, some scholars like Nicolas Fréret (1688-1749) or Étienne Fourmont (1683-1745) started to learn Chinese, so much so that Fourmont was commissioned by the king to compile with Huang a Chinese grammar that was only later, in 1742, published with the title *Grammatica Sinica*.

Similarly, in 1732, also in the context of the Rites Controversy, a missionary priest from the kingdom of Naples and attached to the Sacred Congregation "De propaganda fide" [that is “for the propagation of the faith”] in Rome, Matteo Ripa (1692-1746), returned to Europe with four young Chinese Christians. As these were able to teach Chinese as a foreign language to future missionaries, the project was to establish in Naples the first Sinology School in Europe: the "Chinese Institute". The school was destined to be the first nucleus of what would become today's *Università degli studi di Napoli L'Orientale* or the Naples Eastern University.

But it was only fairly later, in 1814, that an academic chair of Chinese and Manchu studies was founded at the Collège de France in Paris. It was entrusted to Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788-1832), who had taught himself Chinese by painfully reading a Chinese herbal found in the

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<sup>13</sup> *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses de Chine par des missionnaires jésuites (1702-1776)*, 34 volumes. There have been many editions and translations.

personal collection of a friend. As such he was to be the first European professor of Chinese in the West.<sup>14</sup>

After his passing, the titular of the chair was his student of Chinese language, Stanislas Julien (1797-1873), an other great scholar and linguist at the Collège de France. His specialty was the ancient Greek Classics. But, at the age of 27, he had already published in Latin part of the 孟子 *Mengzi* [Mencius], a translation that was to be followed by many others. Some were of works taken from the Chinese vernacular literature (like the 《灰闌記》 *Huilan ji* [L'Histoire du cercle de craie—the story of the chalk circle] or 趙氏孤兒 *Zhao shi guer* [The Orphan of Zhao]), or from the Taoist textual tradition (like the 《太上感應篇》 *Taishang Ganying Pian* [Le Livre des récompenses et des peines—the book on rewards and pains], 1835) and the 《道德經》 *Dao De Jing* (1842). Julien turned also his interests towards the Chinese Buddhist literature, studied Sanskrit and started translating the 《大唐西域記》 *Da Tang Xi You Ji*, published in 1853 under the title *Voyages du pèlerin Hiouen-tsang* [Journeys of the pilgrim Xuanzang]. These varied translations made him able to publish some essays on the Chinese grammar coupled with practical exercises of analysis, syntax and Chinese lexicography (1841-1842). He developed these essays later, in 1869, in his *Syntaxe nouvelle de la langue Chinoise fondée sur la position des mots, suivie de deux traités sur les particules et les principaux termes de grammaire, d'une table des idiotismes, de fables, de légendes et d'apologues* [New syntax of the Chinese language based on the position of the words, followed by two treatises on particles and the principal grammatical terms, by a table of idiotisms, fables, legends and apologues] — a work that remained for many years in Europe the standard grammar of the Chinese language. He had also been commissioned to study Chinese sericulture and, based on the 《桑蠶輯要》 *Sangan jiyao* [Compendium on the mulberry worms], he compiled a *Résumé des principaux traits chinois sur la culture des mûriers, et l'éducation des vers-de-soie* [Summary of the principal Chinese aspects of the mulberry trees cultivation and on the education of silk worms], Paris 1837, a great success in Europe with several translations into English, German, Italian and Russian. His attention had also been attracted by other native Chinese industries, like the production of porcelain which he presented in his *Histoire et fabrication de la porcelaine chinoise* [History and production of Chinese porcelain] based on the 《景德鎮陶錄》 *Jingdezhen Taolu*.

With such a wide scope of interests and research, Sinology had made a step forward. It was accompanied by the work of some other scholars, like Thomas Francis Wade (1818-1895), a British diplomat who devised several teaching and learning Chinese tools, in particular the transcription scheme, known by his name, for the pronunciation of the sinograms in Mandarin Chinese. The scheme is now known as the Wade-Giles system since it had been improved sometime later in 1892 by Herbert Giles (1845-1935), another British diplomat to China (1867-1892). Western Sinologists are particularly indebted to him, among several other contributions to the discipline, for his *Chinese Biographical Dictionary*, rewarded in 1897 with the Stanislas Julien Prize of the French Academy.

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<sup>14</sup> As far as Manchu studies are concerned, it is worth remembering that they had earlier found an initiator in the person of Jean Joseph Marie Amiot (1718-1793) or 錢德明 Qian Deming, the last Jesuit superior of that time who died in Beijing. To him western Manchu studies are indebted for the following important works: *Grammaire tartare-mandchoue* (Tartar-Manchu Grammar, Paris, 1788), in French; *Dictionnaire Mandchou-français* (Manchu-French Dictionary, 3 vol. in 4°, Paris, 1789-1790); *Dictionnaire universel de la langue mandchoue* (Universal Dictionary of Manchu Language, 1781), unpublished because entries are classified according to topics; *Dictionnaire polyglotte* (Polyglot dictionary) in five languages (Sanskrit, Tibetan, Manchu, Mongol, Chinese) and three scripts (Tibetan, Manchu, Chinese), compiled in the Imperial Palace with the cooperation of the best local scholars. — Cf. Pfister, Louis, S.J. (1833-1891), *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine, 1552-1773*, Shanghai, Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1932-1934, p. 837-860. Chinese edition: 《明清間在華耶穌會士列傳：1552-1773》 / [法] 費賴之著；梅乘騏，梅乘駿譯。上海：天主教上海教區光啟社，1997.

Even if it is generally accepted that European Sinology has had its start in the early eighteenth century with the individual contributions of Arcadio Huang, already mentioned, it continued to develop in several other countries all along the nineteenth century under the influence and works of outstanding scholars. Only a few of them had been missionaries in China, so it may be said that Sinology was really becoming an academic discipline.

The Confucian Classics, some Taoist Texts (the 《道德經》 *Tao Te Jing*, the 《莊子》 *Zhuang Zi*, the 《太上感應篇》 *Taishang Ganying Pian*, and some others) have been translated into English by James Legge (理雅各 1815-1897), from Scotland. He was sent to China in 1839 by the London Missionary Society and, after two stays in Hong Kong, assumed in 1876 the newly established Chair of Chinese Language and Literature at Oxford, England.

An important and somehow similar series of translations in Latin and French was also done by Séraphin Couvreur (1835-1919), a Jesuit missionary who never left Northern China and is still better known for his *Dictionnaire Classique de la Langue Chinoise* [Dictionary of the Classic Chinese Language, in French], first edition Hokien Fu, 1904, a work which has known several reprints. Couvreur worked with a colleague, Léon Wieger (戴遂良, 1856-1933) who had also an impressive bibliography on Chinese linguistics, history, philosophy, Chinese classics, Taoism, Buddhism, folklore, etc., a series of some 21 monographs, all published in China.<sup>15</sup>

In Germany, the first Professorship of Far Eastern Languages was established at the University of Leipzig in 1878, of which Georg von der Gabelentz (1840-1893), was the first titular. He was known for his *Chinesische Grammatik* (1881), a work that remains the best grammatical study of the Classical Chinese Language since then. — In the field of Chinese history, Otto Franke (1863-1946), who had been interpreter at the German embassy in Beijing and later at the Chinese embassy in Berlin, is also known as a specialist on the 《春秋左傳》 *Chunqiu Zuozhuan*. But his main work in five volumes on the history of the Chinese empire (*Geschichte des Chinesischen Reiches*) was interrupted at the section on Tang dynasty by the Second World War. — As far as translations are concerned, at least two other names must be mentioned. German sinologist and translator by profession Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) will remain the author of the best translation into a western language of the 《易經》 *Yijing, The Classic of Change* and of 《太乙金華宗旨》 *Tai Yi Jin Hua Zong Zhi, The Secret of the Golden Flower*, two important publications for which his friend, the Swiss psychologist Karl Jung (1875-1961) wrote an Introduction. — Many German scholars have shown interest in studying Buddhism, and sinologists have not been an exception. Walter Liebenthal (1886-1982), as a philosopher and sinologist, specialized in Chinese Buddhism and translated a number of texts from Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese into German. His expertise qualified him also to be appointed fellow at the Sino-Indian Institute of Yenjing University in Beijing where he was Lecturer in Sanskrit and German. He translated also the 《肇論》 *Zhao Lun or Book of Zhao*.

At the turn between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries in France, there has been a kind of school of sinologists who were as gifted for translation as for scholarly research based on sociology or field work. The initiator was Édouard Chavannes (沙畹, 1865-1918), titular of the Chair of Chinese at the Collège de France, whose main achievements were his translations of 司馬遷 Sima Qian's 《史記》 *Shiji* [Records of the Grand Scribe] under the title *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien* [Historical Memoirs of Sima Qian], in 5 volumes (1895-1905), and of some sections of the 《後漢書》 *Hou Han shu*, plus a study on Han dynasty stone carvings. His research on Chinese religion remains a masterpiece combining academic textual analysis and fieldwork; it was published in 1910 under the title *Le T'ai chan: essai de monographie d'un culte*

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<sup>15</sup> For more details, see "Jesuits' Journeys in Chinese Studies", Macau Ricci Institute, 2007, p. 16-17 and online at <http://www.ricci.org/eng/features/index.htm>



*chinois. Appendice: Le dieu du sol dans la Chine antique* [Mount Tai: a monographic essay on a Chinese cult – Appendix: the god of the soil in Ancient China].

Chavannes has been fortunate to have three brilliant students who became great sinologists. Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) is the first. He was sent to Beijing to search for Chinese books. As his main interest was the civilizations of Central Asia, he is known for his exploration in the region (1906-1908) during which he found, hidden in one of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas or 敦煌 Dunhuang Caves, the 莫高窟 *mo gāo ku* or Mogao Grottoes, a great quantity of ancient manuscripts. For three weeks, he selected the most important ones, purchased them from the abbot custodian of the monastery and brought them back to Paris in 1909. — His contemporary Henri Maspero (1882-1945) was to succeed Édouard Chavannes in 1918 in the Chair of Chinese at the Collège de France. He is best known for his pioneering research on religious Taoism, published posthumously in 1971 under the title *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises* [Taoism and Chinese Religions].<sup>16</sup> But earlier he had already published his masterly study on Ancient China (*La Chine antique*, 1927)<sup>17</sup> and two important contributions on historical Chinese phonology (*Le dialecte de Tch'ang-ngan sous les T'ang*, 1920<sup>18</sup> and *Préfixes et dérivation en chinois archaïque*, 1930). Sent to Buchenwald, the concentration camp in Germany, for his links to the French resistance, he died in deportation towards the end of the Second World War. — Marcel Granet (1884-1940) was his brilliant cadet in Sociology, Ethnology and Sinology. As student of Émile Durkheim and Édouard Chavannes, he blended sociological inquiry with his study of China. That gave to his research its specific value as exemplified in his study of the “*Coutumes matrimoniales de la Chine antique*” [Matrimonial customs of Ancient China, 1912]. His main publications have followed the same pattern: *Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine* [Ancient feasts and songs of China, 1919]<sup>19</sup>; *La religion des Chinois* [The religion of the Chinese, 1922];<sup>20</sup> *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne* [Dances and legends of Ancient China, 1926]; *La civilisation chinoise* [The Chinese civilization, 1929];<sup>21</sup> *La pensée chinoise* [The Chinese Thought, 1934]; *La féodalité chinoise* [The Chinese feodality, 1952].

With these authors, the scope of sinological studies had already widely expanded in the first half of the twentieth century. This expansion will continue still further in later years as the mention of the following great sinologists could show.

Klas Bernhard Johannes Karlgren (高本漢 Gao Benhan, 1889-1978) from Sweden spent two years (1910-1912) in China to study Chinese in order to analyze the phonology of several dialects. His expertise in historical phonology and interest for Chinese archaeology made him succeed Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874-1960) the founder of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska Museet) as director (1939-1959), a position that allowed him to promote more accuracy through historical linguistics in the way ancient Chinese history is understood by specialists. Through his most authoritative work *Grammata Serica Recensa* (1957), he laid foundations for reconstructing Middle Chinese and Old Chinese phonemes, on the basis of which a more detailed understanding of ancient documents (like the 周禮 *Zhou Li*, 《左傳》

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<sup>16</sup> *Taoism and Chinese religion*, by Henri Maspero, translated by Frank A. Kierman, Jr., Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1981, xxxiii, 578 p.

<sup>17</sup> *China in antiquity*, by Henri Maspero, translated by Frank A. Kierman, Jr., Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1978, xxxii, 527 p.

<sup>18</sup> 唐代长安方言考, 马伯乐著; 聂鸿音译, 北京第1版, 北京市, 中华书局, 2005, 世界汉学论丛.

<sup>19</sup> 古代中国的节庆与歌谣 = *Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine* / 葛兰言 (Marcel Granet) 著; 赵丙祥, 张宏明译; 赵丙祥校. 第1版. 桂林市, 广西师范大学出版社, 2005. 现代人类学经典译丛. 现代人类学经典译丛 (广西师范大学出版社) 附参考文献.

<sup>20</sup> *The religion of the Chinese people*, by Marcel Granet, translated [from the French], edited and with an introduction by Maurice Freedman, Oxford, Blackwell, 1975, viii, 200 p.

<sup>21</sup> *Chinese civilization*, by Marcel Granet, [translated by Kathleen E. Innes and Mabel R. Brailsford], London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1930, xxiii, 444 p.

Zuo Zhuan, 《詩經》 Shi Jing, and 《書經》 Shu Jing) related to the archaic Chinese civilization can be reached.

In America, Herlee Glessner Creel (1905-1994), a specialist on early Chinese civilization, is renowned for his influential teaching and writings, like *The Birth of China* (1936), in which he stresses the importance of the archaeological excavations near 安陽 Anyang, Henan, where the ancient city of Yin, first stable capital of China and birth place of the Yin Dynasty was unearthed; or *Confucius, the Man and the Myth* (1949), a critical appraisal of the philosopher. *The Origins of Statecraft in China, Vol. 1: The Western Chou Empire* (1970) remains also an important contribution to the understanding of the Western Chou dynasty, etc.

This very short summary of the modern growth of Sinology along the last two hundred years could not be complete without mentioning the monumental scholarly contribution done by Joseph Needham (李約瑟, 1900-1995) and his international team of researchers and collaborators of the Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, United Kingdom. His academic career from embryology to classical Chinese, from the Sino-British Science Cooperation Office in Chongqing (1942-1946) to Cambridge University is quite well known as an introduction to the scientific research work that would follow and be published in some apparently unending series of volumes titled *Science and Civilisation in China* (started in 1954, with 25 volumes and more to follow). The title is certainly not misleading as it encompasses philosophical Chinese traditions, like Taoism and Confucianism, and their impact on scientific discoveries and technological applications. Due to them Chinese civilization at various times was more advanced than other civilizations. In some of his publications (like *The Grand Titration: Science and Society in East and West*, 1969; *Science in Traditional China: a Comparative Perspective*, 1982; *The Genius of China*, 1986), Needham shows that he was aware of some hidden aporia: for what reasons, with such a technical advance, did experimental sciences not develop in China? Various tentatively given answers remain controversial. This is all the more meaningful that, quite early during the progress of the series, a Chinese translation had already started to be published,<sup>22</sup> a fact that shows the Chinese academe's concern about the question.

Would "trans-cultural exchange" through Chinese studies help in solving the riddle?

### III. From Sinology to Chinese Studies

Among many other contributions, the works of two scholars could make a transition between classical Sinology and present day's Chinese studies. They have been selected for their importance in the field of contemporary Western historiography of China.

Frederic Evans Wakeman, Jr. (魏斐德, 1937-2006) was an eminent American scholar of Chinese history. His field of predilection was Qing dynasty history and society. He is known for important studies like *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1861* (published in 1966), a research that focuses on the local social repercussions of the First Opium War (1840-1842) in the Pearl River Delta and is based on Chinese documents seized by the British. But his master piece of scholarship will remain *The Great Enterprise: the Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in the 17th Century* (1985).

An other authority on recent history of China was John K. Fairbank (费正清, 1907-1991), who taught Chinese history at Harvard. His courses have been at the origin of two influential publications known as *East Asia: the Great Tradition* (1960) and *East Asia: the Great Transformation*

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. 《中國之科學與文明》 / 李約瑟[尼達姆]著; 陳立夫主譯, 中華文化復興運動推行委員會 "中國之科學與文明" 編譯委員會編 譯。修訂 1 版。臺北: 臺灣商務印書館, 民國 63 [1974- ]。中華文化復興運動推行委員會。中國之科學與文明編譯委員會。

(1965). Among other of his works on Qing studies, Fairbank will also be remembered for his role in initiating Area Studies as a multidisciplinary approach to modern history and for launching in 1966, with the British sinologist and historian Denis C. Twitchett (1925-2006), the monumental series of *The Cambridge History of China*, to be published in 15 volumes. The series is already translated into Chinese, an other instance of “trans-cultural” exchange operated through Chinese studies.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV.— Reflections and Challenges

In the context of this conference, the present essay was intended to reflect first on the birth of Sinology as an academic discipline. That birth was not achieved without pain as the “trans-cultural” Controversy on the Chinese Rites could illustrate. The growth of the discipline has nevertheless been in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the result of the widening scope of the research. It was not confined only on acquiring linguistic tools, knowledge of the language and of the written traditions of texts as in earlier ages. It acquired also a deeper acquaintance with the various sources of the Chinese civilization.

It goes without saying that a limited selection had to be made among the names of illustrious scholars of the past, a selection which ought to be increased with names coming in particular from Russia and Japan, among other regions of the world. Besides that, in the twentieth century, not a few sinologists have been more concerned with contemporary China than with its past. With this shift of focus, Western academe had already lost any fluency in Latin, so Sinology expressed itself better in modern languages with English as a common medium. The discipline then and its many fields received a new name: Chinese Studies.

Pursued in non-Chinese institutions and by foreign scholars and their students, most of them if not all seem to have had the same goal: the study of China as an object of scrutiny. It was done by love and esteem until the end of the eighteenth century, an attitude that, despite the change for the worst in diplomatic and political relations between China and Western powers, remained nevertheless the driving force of later research and publications.

Yet, an important remark may be in place here: among so many important publications done in the West, almost none of them, it seems, concerns the arts of China. It is as if Chinese literature, painting, music, theatre, opera, etc. were all “objectified” as “Chinoiseries”, strange objects of “curiosity” not worth any scholarly study. Such was the case until younger generations of Chinese studies scholars open new fields of “inquiry”. China’s extremely varied self expression through its many artists was running the risk to be ignored, or neglected by over-simplification as “other” or “alien”. Fortunately times have changed.

This over-simplification is running across a few other fields of Chinese Studies. It is as if Chinese society, institutions, ways of thinking, cultural expressions and approach to the outside world, etc. was understood as a monolithic entity, like an “immobile empire”<sup>24</sup> never changing through history. It is to avoid such pitfall that classical sinological studies joined with puri-disciplinary Chinese Studies would be useful. The image of Chinese civilisation would be restored in the diversity of its vivid life through various ages.

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<sup>23</sup> A Chinese revised edition is in process, 11 out of 15 volumes have already been published : 《劍橋中國史》係列叢書已由中國社會科學出版社修訂重版。中央政府門戶網站: [www.gov.cn](http://www.gov.cn), 2007年01月31日。

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Alain Peyrefitte, *L'Empire immobile ou le choc des mondes*, Paris, Fayard, 1989, 551 pp. — *The Immobile Empire: The First Great Collision of East and West*, transl. by Jon Rothschild, Knopf Doubleday, 1992, 624 pp.: the story of the failed British diplomatic mission led by Lord Macartney in 1793 to open the Chinese Empire to Western trade. — Chinese translation: 阿兰·佩雷菲特《停滞的帝国：两个世界的撞击》.— Cf. [www.guyizhou.cn/article/8507.htm](http://www.guyizhou.cn/article/8507.htm).

This could equally be said if researchers would not limit themselves to mainland China proper, but would also consider as important to place in perspective the various modes of participation in the Chinese experience that peoples of the Diaspora have in their many different settings: this participation is a valuable expression of the “Sinophone” world, to use the term coined by certain scholars.<sup>25</sup>

Added to these remarks, new opportunities present themselves with the recent renewal of National Studies in many places and institutions of China. Foreign scholars in Chinese studies have recently been alerted to this happy development of the rebirth or “revival” of this ancient Chinese tradition by Professor Anne Cheng-Wang, the first Chinese scholar elected to the Chair of the Intellectual History of China at the Collège de France. In the midst of her inaugural Lecture, on December 11 2008,<sup>26</sup> she has expressed the following reflections:

“China wants and from now on asserts herself as agent in the repossession of her own past. We therefore cannot allow ourselves to totally ignore her own point of view even if — and I hasten to make it clear — we would be wrong to think that our Chinese contemporaries would per nature be better placed or entitled than we are to appreciate their own tradition since they have been cut from it by the rupture of modernity and by a whole century of revolution. When they are not under the influence of western interpretations, which at times they unconsciously interiorise in a well known process of self-easternisation, they quite often run the risk of falling under the spell of arguments most of the time inspired by culturalism while they imagine that they can boast to detain “the” truth in the name of their authentic, not to say genetic, origin.”

Following this way of thinking, great hopes are possible that National Studies in China and Chinese Studies elsewhere could mutually, that is “trans-culturally”, foster a better knowledge of the legacy that China has to contribute to the world community to assume her role. The translations that have recently been realised in China and elsewhere are a good omen in that direction.

But these “trans-cultural” exchanges carry with them some challenges. The more obvious ones would come from the crossing of various readings of Chinese civilisation, traditions and culture. They might carry with them various bright or obscure aspects, all submitted to critical appreciation. After all, no matter how ancient or influential particular cultures have been in history, they are all variously challenged by “trans-cultural” or universal human values. Beyond past or recent controversies that have overstated differences, the real challenge has always been to discover these values and to remain faithful to them.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Geremie R. Barmé, *On New Sinology*, in “China Heritage Project”, see <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pah/chinaheritageproject/newsinology/newsinology.php>, accessed on July 19 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. [www.college-de-france.fr/default/EN/all/his\\_int/lecon\\_inuagurale\\_du\\_12\\_decembr.jsp](http://www.college-de-france.fr/default/EN/all/his_int/lecon_inuagurale_du_12_decembr.jsp), accessed on August 2 2009.