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**Interdisciplinary Studies of Modern and  
Contemporary Sinologists' Classical Translations  
and Chinese Works: Description of a New  
Research Development in Hong Kong**

***I. Historical Background to this Interdisciplinary Sinological Project***

**A. Current Trends**

During the past two decades there is a growing scholarly recognition in mainland China of the need to investigate and evaluate the foreign works of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars of China, who are regularly referred to as *hànxuéjiā* 漢學家 or sinologists<sup>1</sup>. These Chinese scholars are pursuing these areas of interest to understand the roles foreign sinologists have had in (1) the modernization of China, including (2) the transformation of Chinese vocabulary into a post-traditional cultural context. In this way they are seeking to interpret more carefully and thoroughly the complicated cross-cultural problems imbedded in these foreigners' works, evaluating their hermeneutic orientations and revealing the interpretive challenges they faced in coming to understand numerous dimensions of Chinese cultures during the last 200 years.

My own efforts in seeking to become attuned to textual subtleties and the general features of the publication of Chinese classical works in foreign languages focused initially on the major contributions of some of the most prominent foreign missionary-scholars who rendered many of the canonical texts into specific target languages. Their efforts were summarized in a chart published in 2010 (see Appendix 1) which indicated the richness and complexity of their output, including the works of the Scottish Congregational missionary, James Legge 理雅各 (1815–1897), the French Jesuit missionary, Séraphin Couvreur 顧賽芬 (1835–1919), and

the German Lutheran missionary, Richard Wilhelm 衛[尉]禮賢 (1873–1930). Having recognized their major contributions in the realm of renderings of Chinese classical texts, I and others became very interested in discovering how many other scholars of China in various linguistic realms had done other translations of this sort, while also pursuing independent studies of modern and contemporary China from other disciplinary and interpretive angles.

It was with this in mind that a group of six scholars at Hong Kong Baptist University coordinated their disciplinary research interests to form an interdisciplinary group focusing on the creation of a poly-lingual collection of sinological translations of Chinese classical texts as well as other relevant studies.

## ***II. Distinctives and Limitations of our Interdisciplinary Sinological Project***

Very fortunately, we were successful in our application, and so as of early January 2013, the Research Committee of Hong Kong Baptist University provided funding for our interdisciplinary project. Structurally speaking, the project involves two dimensions: first of all, we received funding to create a special sinological archive related to two major realms of publications: (1) translations in languages other than standard Chinese of «canonical Chinese texts» produced by overseas sinologists, and (2) works produced by overseas sinologists in Chinese (whether by themselves or by others who translated articles / books originally written by these sinologists in other languages). In addition, over the process of time we have planned to invite other colleagues from our university to join in the research team, so that we can extend the expertise of our co-investigators into new disciplinary realms as well as enrich our collection by means of the linguistic competences and foreign scholars they know who may help us properly enrich our collection and obtain suitable secondary literature that will aid future scholars in their own research projects based upon these materials.

Our intention is to obtain or purchase 1000 tomes of foreign language renderings of canonical Chinese texts representing over 20 distinct language traditions of sinology or Chinese studies, and then to accompany them with Chinese materials and other relevant secondary sources that will enhance readers' access to understanding the materials which are held in this sinological archival collection.

What have we taken to be the standard for clarifying and delimiting the nature of those «canonical Chinese texts»? We have taken that standard to rely on those texts identified as part of the *Imperial Library of the*

*Four Treasuries* (*Sikù quánhū* 四庫全書) produced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century under the aegis of the Qiánlóng emperor. Because this collectanea itself involves just over 10,000 titles, we have also narrowed the focus of our attention to the first and third of the «four treasuries»; that is to say, during the initial phase of our collection work, we have been seeking to locate modern and contemporary renderings in foreign languages of canonical texts found within the two sections of this imperial library referred to as the *jīng* 經 (authorized canon) and the *zǐ* 子 (ancient masters). Nevertheless, we realized that there was an inherent historical restriction in this choice that we also wanted to transcend in wise and justified ways. That is to say, since the Qiánlóng Imperial Library had been completed before the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we also wanted to remain open to identifying and obtaining other major texts dealing with China in foreign languages which were published during the most recent 200 years, especially if they have become particularly important for understanding the study of China in that particular linguistic environment.

So, for example, there have been works of immense importance published after 1800 that have definitely shaped the advancement of sinological studies in particular language traditions. In light of the previous statements related to the three monumental missionary-scholars of Western Europe – James Legge, Séraphin Couvreur, and Richard Wilhelm – we discovered that in our own university where French language is taught, we did not have a copy of the *Dictionnaire classique de la langue chinoise* which Couvreur produced in 1904. In these kind of cases, we are prompted to do research not only into the nature of the dictionary itself, but also its various versions, and so sometimes will seek to purchase an original edition of such a formidable work, so that we might also study how it has been reshaped, edited, and republished subsequent to the death of the author<sup>2</sup>. My own studies of Richard Wilhelm's corpus<sup>3</sup> has revealed that there have been «anonymous editors» who have edited and reduced the original editions of his works, so that obtaining original editions (whenever it is still possible) is a great advantage for future sinological studies. As a further example in this realm, we learned only in 2012 that a massive ten volume encyclopedia of China developed by Russian sinologists had been published in 2010. We take this as a prime example of a major contribution to contemporary sinological studies in Russia, believing that it will also be a source of important interpretive study for other international communities of sinologists. To purchase this kind of work goes beyond our assumed standard for «canonical Chinese texts», but is still directly related to the goals of our research project and its sinological collection, since many important studies of China have been produced by modern and contemporary

sinologists since the 1800. So we are relying on the disciplinary training of our co-investigators as well as their linguistic abilities in order to identify and locate items of this sort which are produced by trained sinologists and so can strengthen our comprehension of the study of China by modern and contemporary sinologists in particular interpretive traditions. Having access to such an encyclopedia in Hong Kong, we believe, will bring about new research projects related to the on-going interpretation of numerous dimensions of Chinese life and culture, and so prove to be a very significant addition to our archive as well as an immense stimulus for future research into Russian sinological trends by capable scholars within Hong Kong and other parts of China.

What this kind of a commitment has meant from the angle of «interpreting China» is that we have privileged scholarly works over popular renderings and other historical materials which have not required sinological training or access to Chinese materials. Within some sinological traditions there is a plethora of popularizing trends documentable in published materials in literary, historical, and renderings of Chinese classical texts on the basis of other foreign language renderings, and not produced by direct study of those Chinese texts. These works do have a value of their own, but due to the limits of the funding and the intention of creating a substantial foundation for this sinological archive at HKBU, we have chosen to focus our attention for the first two years on texts that are produced by identifiable modern and contemporary sinologists, including within them a number of very prolific missionary-scholars (as has been illustrated previously).

### ***III. Three Major Research Subprojects and some Recent Examples***

A major reason for creating this poly-lingual sinological archive is to foster new realms of interdisciplinary research, starting with three areas of research. Members of our current research team are involved with at least one of three general areas of research, which we refer to as «research sub-projects» within our general project. Our purpose is to generate interest in and studies of the materials collected in our sinological archive so that new research projects may become feasible based upon the discoveries obtained through careful and informed study of those materials.

The three realms of interdisciplinary research involve the following three major trajectories. (1) One realm will involve careful exegetical work related to comparing the standard versions of the Chinese scriptures and their renderings into non-Chinese languages. In this realm, inter-lingual and diachronic studies will also be pursued, so that terminological and translation differences between different versions within varying historical periods will be carefully documented. (2) A second realm of study will involve

both the Chinese scriptures and the Chinese works produced by sinologists, focusing on how technical terminology in various disciplinary traditions have been rendered into Chinese language over time (primarily from 1800 to the present). These will include natural scientific and technological terms, religious and philosophical terms and phrases, and those new terms developed to adjust to modern forms of Chinese life and culture. (3) The third trajectory in this interdisciplinary study will involve pursuing critically interpretive studies of all these materials from perspectives in literary criticism, translatology, historical interpretation, and religious and philosophical evaluations.

Due to limits of space, I will provide just two examples of the work that has been done so far related to our sinological archive. We have had the very good fortune of being able to hire a fine young sinological scholar from Paris, Dr. Dimitri Drettas 賀旦思, who while serving as the Senior Research Associate of the project and being associated with the Religion and Philosophy Department, has been able also to pursue many dimensions of the polylingual facets of our project. Due to his native fluency in French and my own continued interest in the person and works of the French Jesuit missionary-scholar, Séraphin Couvreur, we have been able to proceed through a series of research advances, so that we have located archives of the French Jesuit collections that were originally in northeastern China, where Couvreur spent the whole of his adult life, and have been able to have several fruitful visits there. In the process, we discovered that along with Couvreur there was a younger French Jesuit who was both a medical doctor as well as prolific in scholarly realms of Chinese language study, Léon Wieger 戴遂良 (1856–1933). As we studied Weiger's materials more thoroughly, we discovered that he produced a large range of materials in Chinese as well, including documents related to medical materials, religious homilies rendered for the reading and use of Roman Catholic priests, as well as worship services related to specific holidays and festivals. As a consequence of our systematic efforts in understanding the character of the Jesuit mission in which they lived in Héběi province, research into the roles they had within that mission community, and collecting a more broad bibliography of their own works and other related works that reveal something about their efforts in French as well as other languages, we have recently submitted a new grant proposal for a three-year long project related to the study of the classical works rendered by Couvreur and the linguistic materials produced by Wieger. From the character of this research, then, it can be seen that this particular research sub-project actually involves themes in both the first and third of our major research sub-projects, exciting our interest in pursuing this work, while also indicating how further research can

reveal creative alternatives which we had not previously been able to conceive, due to the newness of the materials being studied.

Among the more surprising discoveries made during our first year of collecting documents and research into their sinological qualities has been the extensive renderings of canonical Chinese literature produced by the Portuguese Jesuit scholar, Joaquim Angélico de Jesus Guerra (1908–1993). Having rendered a large amount of the Ruist («Confucian») canon into Portuguese, which involved decades of study and work, Guerra also produced a transcription system for Chinese characters reflecting his experiences in the Cantonese speaking circles of Macau. Very little has been done to study his works in Portuguese, and within other linguistic traditions of sinology, his name is generally not known. We expect that there are others like Guerra within the ambit of our research, and so are continuing to pursue international colleagues and helpful scholars to identify their works, locate exemplars of those that are still available, and ultimately include them within our sinological archive.

These are three examples of new research coming from focused studies of particular texts and persons represented in our sinological archive are offered to indicate the fruitfulness of the basic conception of our HKBU interdisciplinary research project.

#### ***IV. Our Current Situation and Continuing Efforts***

Based upon this unusual collection of sinological materials, we have now gathered together a group of colleagues from a variety of disciplines to pursue interdisciplinary research in three particular realms of study based upon materials collected in this archive. Up to this point in time we have a research team of thirteen persons coming from five distinct departments and several research units including studies in the modern disciplines of philosophy, religion, history, literature, translation and sociology, while also having those who have done work in the history of European sinology and the study of missionary-scholars. Though our current collection is still in the beginning stages of its development, with no more than 300 volumes or texts in various forms that we have managed to collect so far. Currently we hold texts representing up to this point in time 15 different language traditions including (in alphabetical order which do not include Chinese or English) Arabic, Basque, Castilian, Catalan, Estonian, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Mongolian, Persian, Portuguese, Russian and Thai; we are currently doing further research for items or intending to pursue contacts for obtaining relevant works in Japanese, Korean, Polish, Tagalog, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Whatever the outcome of this first phase of the development of our sinological archive at HKBU, we intend to make it available through our

HKBU Library website sometime during 2015, so that international interest in this collection might be promoted, and the continuing development of this archive become a major feature of our university's intellectual contribution to international sinological research.

## Appendix 1

Comparison of Translations in Major Ruist and Daoist Scriptures  
by James Legge (1815–1897), Séraphin Cuvreur (1835–1919)  
and Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930)

(Titles followed by dates when first published)

Chinese Title	Legge's works / first and later editions	Cuvreur's works / first and later editions	Wilhelm's works / first and later editions
論語	<i>The Analects</i> (1861, 1867, 1893)	<i>Liun Iu, Entretiens de Confucius et de ses disciples</i> (1895)	<i>Kongfutse Gespräche</i> (Lun Yü)
大學	<i>Great Learning</i> (1861, 1867, 1893, "new Version" by Zhu Xi); [1882 "Old Version" in <i>The Book of Rites</i> ]	<i>Ta Hio, La Grande Étude</i> (1895, "New Version" by Zhu Xi) [1899 "Old Version" in <i>Li Ki</i> ]	<i>Da Hio</i> (1905 "New" Version by Zhu Xi); <i>Die Höhere Bildung</i> (1920 "Old Version"); <i>Die Grosse Wissenschaft</i> (1930 "Old Version")
中庸	<i>The Doctrine of the Mean</i> (1861, 1867, 1893, All "New Version" by Zhu Xi) [1882 "Old Version" in <i>The Book of Rites</i> ]	<i>Tchoung Ioung, L'Invariable Milieu</i> (1895, "New Version" by Zhu Xi) [1899 "Old Version" in <i>Li Ki</i> ]	<i>Dschung Yung, Maß und Mitte</i> (1930) ("Old Version")
孟子	<i>The Mencius</i> (1861, 1872, 1893)	<i>Œuvres de Meng Tzeu</i> (1895)	<i>Mong Dsi (Mong Ko)</i> (1914)
易經	<i>The Yi King or Book of Changes</i> (1882)	[None published]	<i>I-Ging, Das Buch der Wandlungen</i> (1924)
書經	<i>The Shoo King, or The Book of Historical Documents</i> (1865); <i>The Shu King or Book of Historical Documents</i> (1879)	<i>Chou King</i> (1897)	[None published, partial Mss version made 1915–1917]
詩經	<i>The She King, or The Book of Poetry</i> (1871); <i>The Shih King or Book of Poetry</i> (1879). [Selecting only religious sections]	<i>Cheu King</i> (1896)	[None produced]
禮記	<i>The Li Ki or Collection of Treatises on the Rules of Propriety or Ceremonial Usages</i> (1885)	<i>Li Ki ou Mémoires sur les Bienséances et les Cérémonies</i> (1899)	<i>Li Gi: Das Buch der Sitte des Älteren und Jüngerer Dai</i> (1930, posthumously published)

from the PI's article, "China's Missionary-Scholars" in R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China -- Volume Two: 1800-present* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010): 759–760.

Chinese Title	Legge's works / first and later editions	Couvreur's works / first and later editions	Wilhelm's works / first and later editions
春秋左傳	<i>The Ch'un Ts'ew, with The Tso Chuen</i> (1872)	<i>Tch'ouen Ts'iou et Tso Tchouan, La Chronique de la Principauté de Lôu</i> (1914)	[None produced]
儀禮	[None produced]	<i>I Li, Cérémonial</i> (1916)	[None produced]
孝經	<i>The Hsiao King, or Classic of Filial Piety</i> (1879)	[None published]	<i>Hiau Ging. Das Buch der Ehrfurcht</i> (1939)
道德經	<i>The Tào Teh King, or The Tào and its Characteristics</i> (1891)	[None published]	<i>Laotse Tao te king. Das Buch des Alten vom Sinn und Leben</i> (1911)
莊子	<i>The Writings of Kwang-tze</i> (1891)	[None published]	<i>Dschuang Dsi: Das wahre Buch vom südlichen Blütenland. Nan Hua Dschen Ging</i> (1912)

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, 陳致主編《當代西方漢學集萃·中國上古史卷》，上海：上海古籍出版社，2012年；董海櫻著《16世紀至19世紀初西人漢語研究》，北京：商務印書館，2011年；張西平主編，李雪濤 副主編《西方漢學十六講》，北京：外語教學與研究出版社，2011年；李明濱著《俄羅斯漢學史》，鄭州：大象出版社，2008年；張西平著《傳教士漢學研究》，鄭州：大象出版社，2005年；李慶著《日本漢學史》，上海：上海外語教育出版社，2003年（三冊）。

<sup>2</sup> Couvreur passed away in 1919, but versions of this dictionary have continued to be published in France and Taiwan for many decades afterwards.

<sup>3</sup> Documentation of these problems in Wilhelm's works was done in part in the following article, the problems becoming manifest when comparing Wilhelm's renderings with those in English produced by James Legge in his *Chinese Classics* (first edition, 1861–1872) and *The Sacred Books of China* (1879–1891); this article focuses on details related to Wilhelm's and Legge's renderings of the *Yijing*《易經》 and the *Liji*《禮記》。「攀登漢學中喜瑪拉雅山的巨擘——從比較理雅各 (1815–1897) 和尉禮賢 (1873–1930) 翻譯及詮釋儒教古典經文中所得之啟迪」載《中央研究院中國文哲研究所通訊》(*The Newsletter of the Institute for Chinese Literature and Philosophy of Academia Sinica*) 15:2 (2005年六月)，頁21至。