The Multilingual Dimensions of International Sinology

David R. Knechtges*

Abstract

Sinology is a new scholarly discipline with a history of several hundred years. It did not become a systematic form of scholarship until the Qing dynasty. Western Sinology emerged about the same time as Qing dynasty Hanxue. International Sinology is intrinsically a multilingual form of scholarship. Besides Chinese, Sinologists must also master several other languages including English, Japanese, French, and German. In this article I discuss the multilingual aspects of international Sinology beginning with the Jesuits in the sixteenth century up to recent times. I provide a detailed account of the famous German Sinologist Richard Wilhelm, and his son, Hellmut Wilhelm, who was my teacher and who inspired me to take up the study of China. I also discuss the importance of translating contemporary Chinese scholarly works into Western languages. I discuss two Chinese works the translation of which I have overseen: Gong Kechang’s Studies of the Han fu and the Peking University History of Chinese Civilization. Finally, I also say something about a large four-volume reference guide to ancient and early medieval Chinese literature that I have recently published.

Key words: international Sinology, western Sinology, Richard Wilhelm, Hellmut Wilhelm

* Professor Emeritus, Department of Asian Languages and Literature, University of Washington, USA
The subject of this article is international Sinology or Hanxue 漢學.

By this term I mean the study of Chinese civilization from a global and international perspective. Being international, this approach to the study of Chinese civilization by its very nature involves a knowledge of more than one language. This type of scholarship perhaps is somewhat different from traditional guoxue 国學, which is mainly confined to a single focus on scholarly writing in Chinese. I have great respect for traditional guoxue, and I have long learned much from it. What I would like to discuss today is what international Sinology may contribute to enlarging our knowledge of Chinese civilization.

The Chinese term Hanxue is generally considered to be a translation of a term that was first used in Europe. By a strange coincidence, the French, German, and Dutch word for Hanxue is spelled exactly the same: “Sinologie.” However, the pronunciations are somewhat different. The Italian and Spanish forms are also quite similar: Sinologia (Italian) Sinologia (Spanish). Russian is also quite similar even in its Cyrillic spelling: Синология (Sinológija). In Scandinavia the word is spelled Sinologi. The English word of course is Sinology.

Sinology in the West does not properly begin until the sixteenth century, when the Jesuit missionaries commenced their activities in China. Many of the Jesuits were prominent scholars, and they had an intense curiosity about Chinese civilization. They also knew many languages, including modern European languages, Latin, Greek, and in some cases Sanskrit. When they came to China, they learned Chinese quite quickly. In the Qing 清 dynasty, many of them studied Manchu. Thus, from the very beginning European Sinology was a multilingual scholarly field.
The Jesuits and other Catholic priests who came to China in the late Ming and Qing dynasties became interested in the Confucian Classics. Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1551-1610) was one of the first European scholars to learn to speak, read, and write Chinese. He also translated the Si shu 四書 into Latin. This work, titled *Tetrabiblion Sinense de Moribus* (Four Chinese books on morals 關於中國禮俗規範的四部書), was never published and probably is now lost.

Father Nicolas Trigault 金尼閣 (1577-1628) was a Belgian Jesuit who came to China the year Ricci died. He was a missionary in Nanjing.

---


Trigault prepared a translation of the *Wu jing* 五經 (*Yi jing* 易經, *Shu jing* 書經, *Shi jing* 詩經, *Li ji* 禮記, and *Chunqiu* 春秋) into Latin under the title *Pentabiblion Sinense* (Five Books of China 中國五經). It was published in Hangzhou in 1626. It also seems to have been lost. This was not a complete translation, but a Latin paraphrase (Latina Paraphrasi explicuit, 拉丁文改寫本).

One of the first of the Chinese Classics to be translated into a European language was the *Yi jing*. This is a translation into Latin titled *Y-King: Antiquissimus Sinarum Liber* (*Yi jing*, the oldest Chinese book, 易經: 中國最古的書) which was published in 1834. This translation had been done much earlier by the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Régis 雷孝思 (1663-1738) who first went to China in 1698. Régis based his translation on two earlier unpublished versions, one by Joseph de Mailla 馮秉正 (1669-1748), who is known for his monumental history of China, and Pierre Vincent de Tartre 湯尚賢 (1669-1724). De Mailla

---


seems to have worked mainly from a Manchu translation. Régis based his translation on the Zhou yi zhe zhong 周易折中, the famous imperial edition prepared under the auspices of the Kangxi 康熙 emperor in 1715. It is this edition that most of the subsequent translators of the Yi jing used. Régis is known for his profound knowledge of Chinese. Régis completed his translation in 1736, but it remained unpublished until it was edited and published by the German Orientalist Julius von Mohl (1800-1876) in two volumes that appeared at Stuttgart 斯圖加特 and Tübingen 圖賓根 in 1834 and 1839.

Translations from Chinese into Latin continued to be produced, mostly by Jesuit scholars, until the late nineteenth century. One of the greatest of the Latin translations was done by the Italian Jesuit Angelo Zottoli 晁德蒞 (1826-1902). This is the Cursus Litteraturæ Sinicæ 中國文學教程 published in Shanghai at T’ou-sé-wé (Tushanwan 土山灣) between 1879 and 1882 in five volumes. There is an excellent recent study of Zottoli’s work by Nicholas Wiliams. A French translation of

---


6 See Abel Rémusat, Nouveaux Mélanges asiatiques, ou Recueil de morceaux de critique et de mémoires relatifs aux religions, aux sciences, aux coutumes, à l’histoire et à la géographie des nations orientales (Paris: Schubart et Heideloff, 1829), 2:235-36: “Régis avait acquis une connaissance approfondie de la langue chinoise, et il s’en servit pour rédiger un tradition latine du Yi-king....”


volume 1 was published in 1891. I used Zottoli’s Latin translation when I first began studying classical Chinese literature in the early 1960s, and I found the translations to be quite accurate. In volume three, Zottoli translated a portion of the *Yi jing*: Hexagrams 1 to 6, 15, and 33 as well as the “Xi ci zhuan 繫辭傳,” “Shuo gua 說卦” “Xu gua 序卦,” and “Za gua 雜卦.”

10 James Legge, who published a complete English translation of the *Yi jing* in 1882, comments favorably upon Zottoli’s work: “Long after my translation had been completed…I received from Shanghai the third volume of P. Angelo Zottoli’s ‘Cursus Litteraturæ Sinicæ,’ which had appeared in 1880. About 100 pages of it are occupied by the Yi. The Latin version is a great improvement on the work of Regis….”

I mention this and other Latin works to show that even a Western classical language has been a useful Sinological tool for several hundred years. Unfortunately, few younger European or American scholars have studied Latin, and these monumental works of European Sinology are now largely forgotten.

The European country where Sinology first became part of a university curriculum was in France. The first chair of Sinology in the world was established in 1814 at the Collège de France. Appointed to the first chair of Sinology at the Collège de France, what was

---


then called “Chaire de Langues and Littératures chinoises and tartares-manchois (Chair of Chinese and Tartar-Manchu Language and Literatures)” was a young 27 year-old scholar named Jean-Pierre Abel Rémusat 雷暮沙 (1788-1832). 12 Rémusat’s early training was in medicine, and he wrote his doctoral thesis on Chinese medicine. When he assumed the chair of Sinology at the Collège de France, Rémusat was primarily concerned with establishing a firm philological foundation for Sinology. 13 His most important contribution was his grammar of the Chinese language, *Éléments de grammair chinoise, ou principes généraux du Kou-wen, ou style antique, et Kouan-houa* 漢語語法基礎，或古文及中國帝國通用語言即官話總則 published in Paris by the Imprimerie Royale in 1822. His work formed the basis for the linguistic approach to Chinese texts that has been a strength of both European and North American Sinology for much of its history.

Rémusat had a profound knowledge of Manchu. Mark Elliott 歐立


德，Professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History and Vice-Provost for International Affairs at Harvard 哈佛大學國際事務副教務長，has written a detailed account of Rémusat’s pioneering work in Manchu studies. I should mention that Elliot's article is written in French.14

There have been numerous talented French Sinologists since Rémusat. I would include on the list of greats Stanislas Julien 儒蓮 (1797-1873), Édouard Chavannes 沙畹 (1865-1918), Paul Pelliot 伯希和 (1878-1945), and Paul Demiéville 戴密微 (1894-1979). All of these scholars had a command of numerous languages.

Stanislas Julien was born 13 April 1797 in Orléans of a poor family.15 In 1823 he began studying Chinese with Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat. In 1832 Julien succeeded Rémusat in the chair of Sinology. Julien was a polyglot—he knew Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Manchu as well as most of the modern European languages including English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and even Russian. Julien had such a strong facility in foreign languages, he

would write replies to foreign scholars in English, German, and Russian.

Julien’s first Sinological work was a translation of *Mengzi* 孟子 which was issued in installments between 1824 to 1829. Julien also did a thoroughly annotated translation of the *Daode jing* 道德經. He was one of the first Europeans to do serious work on Chinese Buddhism, and he translated with amazing skill the travel records pertaining to the journey to the west of the Tang Buddhist monk Xuanzang 玄奘, the *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 and *Da ci’en si Sanzang fashi zhuan* 大慈恩寺三藏法師傳. In 1859, Julien published a three-volume collection of translations of Buddhist *avadānas* or *piyu* 譬喻. Two years later he issued a 235-page handbook explaining his method of transcribing Sanskrit names into Chinese.

Like Rémusat, Julien had a strong interest in *belles lettres*, and he

---


was the first to do extensive studies and translations of Chinese drama. He retranslated the *Zhaoshi guer* 趙氏孤兒 that his mentor Rémuasat had previously translated,21 made a French version of *Huilan ji* 灰闌記 the famous “Chalk-circle” drama that was adapted by several European dramatists,22 and made the first translation of the *Xixiang ji* 西廂記.23 Julien also translated a number of minor Chinese novels.

Julien was not only a polyglot, he was a polymath who did research on a wide variety of subjects. He did extensive research on Chinese agriculture, printing, metallurgy, ceramics, and medicine.24 In 1837 he published a book on sericulture based on the agricultural treatise *Shou shi tongkao* 授時通考 (Companion of works and days) presented to the Qing court in 1742.25 This work was in such demand it was published in Italian (1837), German (1844), English (1838), Russian (1840), and even Greek (1847) versions. Charles Darwin consulted it for information about the raising of silkworms in ancient China.26 Julien was one of the first Europeans to take an interest in the *Tiagong kaifu* 天工開物 of Song Yingxing 宋應星 (1587-1666). His *Industries anciennes et modernes de L’Empire chinois* 中華帝國工業之今昔 published in 1869 is based on

---

this work.\textsuperscript{27} In 1856 Julien published a monograph on Chinese porcelain based on Lan Pu 藍浦 (fl. 1715), \textit{Jingdezhen tao lu} 景德鎮陶錄.\textsuperscript{28}

Stanislas Julien dominated French Sinology much the way that Paul Pelliot did in the twentieth century. He was, however, extremely difficult to get along with. Paul Demiéville says: “Il avait un caractère aussi abominable que sa science était irréprochable. Jaloux, colérique, acariâtre, il accapara les charges et écartera tout concurrent”; “He had a character as abominable as his learning was irreproachable. Jealous, irascible, quarrelsome, he monopolized positions and dismissed all rivals.” 他也有一個令人討厭的個性，當然他的才能也是無可非議的。他嫉妒、易怒、好尋釁爭吵、獨攬大權、排斥所有對手。\textsuperscript{29}

I wish to mention one piece of erroneous information about Julien that is found in some Chinese accounts: that he was Jewish. The source for this claim is Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-1897) who traveled in Europe from 1867 to 1870. In Paris he visited Stanislas Julien. This is his account:

\begin{quote}
是日風清日暖，往訪博士儒蓮—法所稱博士，猶中華之翰林掌院學士也——為素波那書院監督。院中庋華書三萬冊，目錄凡三卷。儒蓮好學媚古，一志窮經，足跡雖未至禹域，而譯書已裒然盈尺。……儒蓮通中國文字，能作筆談；今有導者為傳言，
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{28} Stanislas Julien, \textit{Histoire et fabrication de la porcelaine chinoise} (Paris: Mallet-Bachelier, 1856).

\textsuperscript{29} Demiéville, “Aperçus,” 81. Jean-Pierre Drège has written yet to be published article on Julien’s feuds with other scholars. See Jean-Pierre Drège, “Stanislas Julien (1797-1873), savant éminent, était-il un vilain homme?” (paper presented at the Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat et ses successeurs, du 11 au 13 juin 2014 au Collège de France et à l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres). I wish to thank Pierre-Étienne Will for providing me with a copy of this article.
On this day with a cool breeze and under a warm sun, I went to visit Julien—in France one who is designated as professor is like an academician in the Hanlin Academy. He oversees the library at the Sorbonne. The library has 30,000 Chinese books, and it has a catalogue in three fasicles. Julien is passionately devoted to learning and the study of antiquity, and concentrates his full attention to the investigation of the Classics. Although he has never set foot in China, his translations of Chinese works are in piled in tall stacks…. Julien is well versed in Chinese script, and is able to communicate through writing. However, my guide served as translator, and thus there was no need to use the writing brush to communicate. Julien is of Jewish origin.30

It is very clear that Julien was not Jewish. He was Catholic. We know this because Henri Wallon, who wrote the Julien obituary for Julien for Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, mentions that after the death of his mother, Julien was sent to a seminary for study with the aim his pursuing a career as a Catholic priest.31 Wallon also mentions Julien “mourut en chrétien /died as a Christian.”32 In an article on Chinese Jews in European thought, Solomon Wald casts doubt on Wang Tao’s assertion that Julien was Jewish:

31 See Wallon, “Notice,” 387: “It perdit sa mère quelque temps après et fut confié aux soins d’un tuteur, qui, le destinant à l’état ecclésiastique, le plaça au séminaire.”
32 See Ibid., 430.
Julien left a curious echo in China. The first important classical Chinese scholar to spend considerable time in the West was Wang Tao (1829-1897). On his visit to Paris, he met Stanislas Julien who, by then, was considered the great old man of French Sinology. Wang reported in his *Travel Diaries* that he was thrilled to meet a Jew, not just any Jew, but one who admired the Chinese classics and culture. This is strange since Julien was never considered a Jew in France, and as a Jew he would have had difficulties in making such a brilliant academic career in the first half of the century. Also, what is known of his family history in Orléans does not point to Jewish roots.33

The most important French Sinologist of the early twentieth century was Édouard Chavannes 沙畹.34 He was the teacher of Paul Pelliot 伯希和, Henri Maspero 馬伯樂, and Paul Demiéville 戴密微. Chavannes was born in Lyon 里昂 in 1865 of a distinguished family. His grandfather was a famous botanist. Chavannes received his introduction to Chinese studies at l’École Normal superieure of Paris 巴黎高等師範學院. His initial interest lay in philosophy. His first scholarly work, published in

---


1891, was a study of Kant. In 1889, at the age of twenty-five, Chavannes went to China. He resided for three years in Peking in the capacity of attaché-at-large to the French Legation. He was thus able to devote himself fully to his studies, and it was at this time that he began, with the assistance of a Chinese tutor, to translate Sima Qian’s Shi ji 司馬遷 史記. In 1890 he published in the Journal of the Peking Oriental Society 北京東方學會雜誌 a translation of the Shi ji “Feng shan shu” 封禅書 chapter. In 1893, at the age of twenty-eight, Chavannes assumed the Chair of Sinology at the Collège de France. His inaugural lecture was on the social role of Chinese literature. This is the only work in which Chavannes discusses Chinese literature. In this lecture he actually does not discuss what the French call belles lettres, but rather focuses on role the Ruist Classics have played in providing order and coherence in traditional Chinese society. I will say something later about Chavannes’ distaste for Chinese belles lettres.

Between 1895 and 1905 Chavannes published a translation of forty-seven chapters of the Shi ji in five volumes under the title Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts’ien 司馬遷的史記. Many scholars even today regard Chavannes’ work as the most authoritative Western language translation of the Shi ji.

In 1907 Chavannes returned to China to undertake an archeological

---

35 Édouard Chavannes and Charles Andler, Premiers principes métaphysiques de la science de la nature, par Emmanuel Kant, traduits pour la première fois en français, et accompagnés d’une introduction sur la philosophie de la nature dans Kant (Paris: F. Alcan, 1891).
expedition to Manchuria and the northern provinces of Hebei 河北, Shandong 山東, Henan 河南, Shaanxi 陝西, and Shanxi 山西. He collected much material including cultural artefacts, inscriptions, and mural paintings. In Shandong he climbed Mount Tai, and after his return to France he published in 1910 a monumental monograph on this great sacred peak Le T’ai-chan 泰山. Accompanying him on the expedition was the young Russian Sinologist Vassilii Alekseev 阿列克諧耶夫 (1880-1951). The book consists of six chapters:

1. “Le culte du T’ai chan” 泰山宗教服拜;
2. “Description du T’ai chan” 泰山名勝景點描寫;
3. “Texts relatifs aux sacrifices fong et chan” taken from Hou Han shu 後漢書, Jiu Tang shu 舊唐書, and Song shi 宋史 泰山封禪文選, 分為《後漢書》、《舊唐書》、《宋史》3 部分;
4. 33 “Prières” 祭告泰山祈祝文選 (33 篇);
5. “Epigraphie” 泰山碑銘文選 (11 篇);
6. “Croyance populaires” 泰山民間信仰;
Appendix “Le dieu du sol dans la Chine antique” 古代中國的社神.38

I mention this book because it is one of a number of older European Sinological works that deserve to be translated into Chinese and other languages. The only complete translation is by Kikuchi Noritaka 菊地章

Although French is still studied in Europe, many younger American Sinologists do not know French, or if they have studied it, they do not read French well. Thus, works of even great scholars like Chavannes are not all that much in vogue in American Sinology.

According to Paul Demiéville, there was hardly any discipline that Chavannes did not approach during his career: epigraphy, paleography, history of Serindia, Chinese documents on the Western Turks, Chinese geography and cartography, and even Taoism, on which he worked before his death. “seules y manquent les belles lettres dont il avait horreur, et la philosophie qui avait été pourtant son but lorsqu’il s’était lancé dans la sinologie;” “He only lacked belles lettres, which he abhorred, and philosophy, which, however, had been his aim when he made his first start in Sinology…”

I do not know how many foreign languages Chavannes knew. He probably did not know as many languages as Rémusat or Julien. A French polyglot who could rival either of these Sinologists was Paul Pelliot 伯希和. Paul Demiéville aptly characterizes him as “philologue de génie.

40 See Demiéville, “Aperçus.”
Du philologue, il avait tous les dons: celui des langues, qu’il apprenait en se jouant, la curiosité, le gout incoercible de la recherche, un jugement sûr et ferme qui le guidait à travers les problèmes les plus embrouillés et ne l’a pour ainsi dire jamais trompé”; He was “a philologist of genius. In philology he had all the gifts: that of languages, which he learned as if they were games, curiosity, an unquenchable thirst for research, a firm and steady judgment that guided him across the most perplexing problems and thus on that account never did he say he was wrong.” 在文献學方面，他具有切天賦。語言天賦使他學習語言就像遊戲一樣，對語言的好奇心，對研究以一直的興趣，準確而有力的判斷，引導他解決了極其複雜的問題，可以說任何問題都未曾使他迷惑不解。42

Pelliot was born in Paris. While a teenager he studied Chinese at the Collège de France. During this time, he met Chavannes who was impressed with Pelliot’s linguistic ability. At this time Pelliot began the study of Sanskrit with the distinguished Indologist Sylvain Lévi (1863-1935). Chavannes used his influence to obtain an appointment for Pelliot as research fellow at the École française d’Extrême-Orient 法國遠東學院, which had its headquarters in Hanoi, Vietnam. From 1900 to 1904 Pelliot worked in Indo-China (Southeast Asia).

In February 1900, Pelliot headed a mission to Peking to obtain a collection of books for the École’s library. This was the time of the Boxer Uprising, and Pelliot, with his consummate skill in speaking Chinese, established contacts with the Boxer insurgents. During the siege of the foreign legation, he was able to persuade the Boxers to give the besieged foreigners fresh fruit. Pelliot also stole a flag from the Boxer forces. For these actions the French government gave him the Legion of Honor. The Russian Tsar named him knight of the Order of Saint Anna. He was only twenty-one years old at this time. Among the books Pelliot acquired were several volumes of the *Yongle dadian*. Pelliot returned to Hanoi in 1901 where he was named professor at the École française d’Extrême-Orient. He was twenty-two at that time.

Pelliot’s earliest work concerned the history of Indo-China, particularly as reflected in Chinese sources. One of his first publications in 1902 was a translation of the *Zhènluò fēngtù jì* by the Yuan dynasty scholar-official Zhou Daguan who visited Ankor in Cambodia in 1296-97. Pelliot also did extensive work on Chinese bibliography, notably on Chinese texts that were recently discovered in Japan by Yang Shoujing. He also did pioneering studies of the early history of printing in China. His studies were collected in one of his posthumous works, *Les débuts de*...
Pelliot probably is most famous for his Central Asian expedition of 1906-1908 during which he obtained numerous Central Asian documents. It was also during this expedition that Pelliot visited the grottos of Dunhuang (February 1908), where he obtained over 2,000 juan of manuscripts now held in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. They consist of texts in Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Khotanese, Sogdian, and Uighur. Pelliot was not the most pleasant traveling companion. Accompanying Pelliot on part of his journey was the Finnish explorer and military leader Carl Mannerheim (1867-1951). In 1906, Mannerheim received an order from the general staff of the Russian army to go to western China to conduct an intelligence operation with the aim of investigating the extent of the power and influence of the Qing government authority in Xinjiang and Gansu, and the attitude of local authorities to the “new reforms.” There is a recent book on Mannerheim’s expedition, Eric Enno Tamm, *The Horse that Leaps through Clouds.* The title is a translation of Mannerheim’s Chinese name which he received from a Chinese scholar in Kashgar: Ma Dahan 马達漢. According to Mannerheim,

> Pelliot insisted on long, strenuous marches each day that left the caravan in “a miserable condition.” It rained the second day, making the trek more treacherous. The horses slipped in the mud.

---


46 Eric Enno Tamm, *The Horse that Leaps through Clouds: A Tale of Espionage, the Silk Road and the Rise of Modern China* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011).
and stumbled over wet stones. The route was littered with the skeletons and rotting carcasses of dead packhorses and asses. After another “exceedingly strenuous march,” Mannerheim lost his temper. “Only a philologist, orientalist, archaeologist, and on top of that, a sinologist like Pelliot is able to divide his route in this way,” he complained. Fed up, Mannerheim stopped for a day’s rest, while Pelliot stubbornly plodded on with his caravan of injured and galled horses.47

The success Pelliot attained on this mission earned him a chair, especially created for him, at the Collège de France: the chair of Langues, histoire, and archéologie de l’Asie Centrale 中亞西亞歷史地理考古學講座. He occupied this chair from 1911 until his death in 1945. During World War I Pelliot served as an officer in the French army. In 1918, he was named military attaché at the French legation in Beijing.

Most of Pelliot’s published work concerned Central Asia, the languages of which he knew extremely well. He reputedly knew thirteen languages including English, German, French, Chinese, Persian, Tibetan, Arabic, Vietnamese, Mongolian, Turkic, Uighur, and Tocharian. Pelliot was also editor of the most prestigious Sinological scholarly journal T’oung Pao 通報 from 1920 to 1945. For this period, T’oung Pao might very well be called the “Journal of Pelliot Studies,” for most of its pages were filled with Pelliot’s own articles and reviews. A bibliography of his writings published in 2001 consists of 866 items.48

47 Ibid., 112.
48 Hartmut Walravens, Harmut, Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) His Life and Works—a Bibliography (Bloomington: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2001).
A large portion of Pelliot’s work remained unpublished upon his death. After his death, six volumes of his *Oeuvres posthumes* were published in Paris.⁴⁹

Another great European Sinological tradition is the German Sinological tradition. Most of the Sinologists who write in German are of course from Germany. However, there is at least one great Austrian Sinologist who also wrote in German. I will discuss him shortly.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Chinese studies in Germany were far behind those in France. The first chair of Sinology was not established in Germany until 1909. Throughout the twentieth century and until this day, the German Sinological tradition has been quite distinguished. I have space to discuss only one German Sinologist, Richard Wilhelm 衛禮賢 (1873-1930).⁵⁰ It will soon be apparent why I

---


have selected him for special treatment.

Richard Wilhelm was born in Stuttgart in 1873. Wilhelm was nine when his father died, and he was raised by his mother and maternal grandmother. In 1891, at age eighteen he entered University of Tübingen, where he studied poetry, music, art, and philosophy. He soon acquired a strong interest in theology and entered the Tübingen Theological Seminary. After serving several years as a minister, Wilhelm decided to go to China as a missionary for the Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein which is known in Chinese as the Tongshan hui 同善會. In 1899 he arrived in Qingdao 青島. He did not know a single word of Chinese at the time. His arrival in China coincided with the Boxer uprising, and during his stay in China he saw the great Republican revolution take place. Beginning in 1901, Wilhelm founded several schools including a school for girls that his wife Salome managed. The most famous of these schools is the Lixian shuyuan 禮賢書院 (Richard Wilhelm Schule) which is now the site of the Qingdao dijiu zhongxue 青島第九中學. He invited both traditional scholars and newly educated intellectuals to serve as teachers. In 1906 the Qing court granted Richard Wilhelm the 四品頂戴 (Rank four hat button). Although Richard Wilhelm was a pastor in a church, he considered his role that of an educator, not a missionary. He was very proud that he never converted a single Chinese to Christianity during his twenty-year
residence in China.51

Richard Wilhelm quickly learned Chinese, and he soon began to prepare translations of Chinese literature in journals published in Germany. Richard Wilhelm returned briefly to Germany in 1920. In 1922 he returned to China where he served as scientific adviser to the German legation. During this time, he became acquainted with Hu Shih, Cai Yuanpei, 蔡元培, and other famous Chinese intellectuals. In 1923 he was named honorary professor at Peking University where he taught German literature and language. He together with Luo Zhenyu, 羅振玉, Wang Guowei, 王國維, and Gu Hongming, 辜鴻銘 founded the Orient Institut 東方學社 to promote cultural exchange between Western and Eastern scholars.

In 1924 the University of Frankfurt named Richard Wilhelm an honorary professor and appointed him to the newly founded Chair in Sinology. In 1925 Wilhelm established at Frankfurt the China-Institut 中國學社, which was the only center for Chinese studies in Germany at the time. In 1926, he invited Hu Shih to lecture at the institute. The institute also published a scholarly journal, *Sinica* 中國學刊.

Between 1910 and 1928 Wilhelm produced translations of the *Lun yu* 論語, *Laozi* 老子, *Liezi* 列子, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Mengzi*, *Yi jing*, *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, and the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋. He also published a number of books about China that were addressed to general

---

readers including a history of Chinese civilization and a history of Chinese literature.\(^{52}\) The history of Chinese literature is lavishly illustrated and even has a number of color illustrations.

Richard Wilhelm’s best-known work is the translation of the *Yijing*,\(^{53}\) which he did in collaboration with the Chinese scholar Lao Naixuan 劳乃宣 (1843-1921).\(^{54}\) Wilhelm began his translation in March of 1913 at the suggestion of Lao Naixuan. Richard Wilhelm had invited Lao in that year to come to Qingdao to preside over the Confucius Society 尊孔文社 located in that city. Wilhelm’s method of translating the *Yijing* was to have Lao explain the text to him and, following Lao's explanation, Wilhelm translated it into German. Wilhelm then retranslated the German version into Chinese. After consulting Lao, he then produced a new German translation. With the outbreak of World War I, the Japanese seized Qingdao in November 1914, and Lao Naixuan

---


\(^{54}\) For an English language study of Lao see Joan Eleanor Molino, “A Study in Late Ch’ing Conservatism: Lao Na-i-hsuan (1943-1921),” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1986).
moved to Qufu 曲阜. At the conclusion of the war, Lao Naixuan returned to Qingdao to help Wilhelm finish the translation. However, Lao Naixuan did not live to see the published translation. Lao died on 21 July 1921 in Qufu. By this time Wilhelm had already returned to Germany and had virtually completed his translation. However, he mentions that a friend in Germany provided him with an edition of the Yi jing for which he “had hunted in vain through all the bookstores of Peking.” Although Wilhelm does not mention the name of this edition of the Yi jing, it undoubtedly is the 1715 Kangxi edition of the Zhou yi zhe zhong. Richard Wilhelm passed this book on to his son Hellmut Wilhelm 衛德明 (1905-1990). Hellmut Wilhelm was my teacher at the University of Washington in the late 1960s. When my wife and I were married in Seattle in 1977, the wedding present we received from Professor Wilhelm was the very copy of the Zhou yi zhe zhong that Richard Wilhelm had used in completing his translation of the Yi jing.

Richard Wilhelm’s translation of the Yi jing was published in 1924. Wilhelm was acquainted with the psychologist Carl Jung 樂格 (1865-1961), who in the late 1920s had recruited a student of his, Cary F. Baynes (1883-1977), to translate Wilhelm’s German version into English.55 Mrs. Baynes intended to work under Wilhelm’s supervision, but his death in 1930 ended the opportunity for them to work together. Baynes did not complete her English translation until 1949, and during the time she was working on the translation, she was able to consult Richard Wilhelm’s son Hellmut, who had just taken up residence in

Seattle by then. The Wilhelm-Baynes translation was first published in 1950 with a foreword by Carl Jung. This was reprinted in 1955. The third edition, issued in 1967, contains some slight revision and a preface by Hellmut Wilhelm.

The English version of Richard Wilhelm’s *Yi jing* actually became more popular than the German version both in Europe and North America. In addition to the English version, Richard Wilhelm’s *Yi jing* translation has been translated into seven other languages: Spanish, Dutch, French, Russian, Italian, Polish, and Portuguese.56

Richard Wilhelm’s *Yi jing* translation is an excellent example of the multilingual dimensions of Sinology. Although one normally would not recommend translating a translation of the Chinese classic into Chinese, an argument could be made for producing a translation of Wilhelm’s version with his commentary, which is highly original and has many new insights.

One other scholar who wrote in German but was not German was Erwin Ritter von Zach 赞克 (1872-1942).57 Erwin von Zach was born

56 For a list of these translations see Hellmut Wilhelm, *The Book of Changes in the Western Tradition: A Selective Bibliography, Parerga 2* (Seattle: Institute for Comparative and Foreign Area Studies, University of Washington, 1975), 9-10.

in Austria in an aristocratic military family. He was a member of the Austro-Hungarian consular service from 1901 to 1919, and during most of this period he served in China. He had a profound knowledge of Chinese as well as Manchu and Tibetan. In 1897 he studied at Leiden under Gustav Schlegel, but he seems to have been self-trained. His first major publications, which were corrections to Giles’ *Chinese-English Dictionary*, were first published in China. In 1909 he presented a portion of this work as a dissertation at Vienna University.

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire in 1919, von Zach moved to Batavia (modern Jakarta, Indonesia), where he worked for the Dutch consular service in the Netherlands East Indies until 1924, when he resigned to pursue his scholarly studies full time. In 1942 the Netherlands East Indies were bombed by the Japanese. The foreign residents evacuated the island. The ship that von Zach was on was hit by torpedoes. The Dutch citizens were rescued, but most of the Germans including von Zach drowned.

Von Zach translated nearly all of the poetry of Du Fu 杜甫, Han Yu 韓愈, and Li Bo 李白, and about 90% of the *Wen xuan* 文選.58 Von

---

Zach’s irascible personality and penchant for nasty criticism of other scholar’s work eventually made it difficult for him to publish in established Sinological journals. Von Zach and the famous French Sinologist Paul Pelliot had a particularly bitter exchange in the late 1920s. Pelliot eventually became so angered, he would not allow von Zach to publish in the *T'oung Pao*. In an open letter he said the following: “M. E. von Zach s’est déconsidéré comme savant par ses balourdises. M. E. von Zach s’est disqualifié comme homme par ses grossièretés. Il ne sera plus question de M. E. von Zach dans le *T'oung Pao*. ”

“Mister E. von Zach is discredited as a scholar because of his gross blunders. Mister E. von Zach is disqualified as a man because of his rudeness. There will be no more question of Mister E. von Zach in the *T'oung Pao*. ”

Nearly all of von Zach’s publications appeared in obscure journals that were issued in Batavia. He also issued some publications at his own expense. Fortunately, most of his translations have been collected and published by the Harvard-Yenching Institute. In the introduction to volume one of my *Wen xuan* translation, I wrote the following about von Zach’s renderings: “Any defects of Zach’s translations might have are offset by the overall excellence of his work. He was obviously working under a severe handicap. He had few reference materials—I suspect that

---


many of his ‘mistakes’ could have been corrected had he access to a good Sinological collection—yet his translations are right most of the time. Zach had an astounding knowledge of Chinese, and few Western scholars, given the same resources available to Zach, could have done as well.”

I mentioned earlier that I had a special reason for singling out Richard Wilhelm as the only German Sinologist that I discuss in my talk. The reason is very simple. I had the good fortune to study with Richard Wilhelm’s son, Hellmut Wilhelm 衛德明. Hellmut Wilhelm was Richard Wilhelm’s third child. He was born in Qingdao in 1905. He was bilingual both in Chinese and German. He also learned English and French at a young age as well as Japanese. Hellmut Wilhelm received his early Sinological education from his father. He returned with his father to Germany in 1920. Hellmut Wilhelm served as his father’s assistant at the China Institut. Hellmut continued his study of Chinese while preparing for a career in law. In 1928 he passed the State Examination in law and briefly worked as an intern in the Frankfurt courts.

After the sudden death of Richard Wilhelm in 1930, Hellmut decided to continue his father’s Sinological work and undertook a Ph.D. degree in Sinology at the University of Berlin. He completed his degree in 1932 with a dissertation on the seventeenth century scholar Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682). For various reasons, most notably the rise to power of Hitler and the Nazi Party, Wilhelm decided to leave Germany for China, where he remained until 1948. During this time, he was a

---

correspondent for German and Swiss newspapers and then held an appointment as Lecturer (1933-37), and then Professor (1946-48) of German Language and Literature at National Peking University. During these years, Wilhelm developed ties with leading Chinese intellectuals, including Hu Shih 胡適, Fu Sinian 傅斯年, and Ding Wenjiang 丁文江. Wilhelm also knew prominent Chinese writers. The poet Feng Zhi 馮至 studied German literature with Wilhelm, and when Wilhelm left China in 1948, Shen Congwen 沈從文 gave him a complete set of his writings, which are now held by the East Asia Library at the University of Washington.

The years Professor Wilhelm spent in China allowed him the time to do research on a broad range of subjects in Chinese history, thought, and literature. In the early 1940s he delivered a series of lectures on Chinese thought and history to the German community in Peking. One set of lectures was on the Yi jing. The German version of the lectures appeared in 1944 under the title Die Wandlung: Acht Vorträge zum I-Ging 易經八講. They were subsequently translated into English by Cary Baynes and published under the title Change: Eight Lectures on the I Ching. This remains the most widely read introduction to the Book of Changes in a Western language. This is a book well worth translating into Chinese.

While on the University of Washington faculty, Professor Wilhelm taught almost every aspect of Chinese studies, including literature and philosophy, politics and religion, ancient and modern history. He used to teach one full year of courses on Chinese history, followed in the next year by courses on Chinese literature. These courses included a year-long history of China from earliest times to 1848, followed by a year-long history of Chinese literature from earliest times to the present. Both of
these courses were lecture courses, and following the practice common at the time, Professor Wilhelm lectured five days a week. There was no textbook, no assigned readings, no mid-term, only a final exam and a term paper. Students were free—in fact were encouraged—to read whatever interested them. And what an array of interesting material we were presented with! Each lecture began with Professor Wilhelm writing on the board the titles of books and articles pertaining to the topic of the lecture. I think it would be no exaggeration to say that Professor Wilhelm had the most comprehensive command of Sinological scholarship among Sinologists of his generation. He was a true multilingual scholar, and his bibliographies contained references to works in numerous languages including Chinese, Japanese, Latin, French, German, English, Dutch, Russian, Swedish, Danish, and several East European languages. It is from him that I learned that Sinology was indeed a multilingual scholarly discipline.

Professor Wilhelm viewed Sinology as an outgrowth of the European philological tradition. Another of his favorite definitions of Sinology was “Chinese philology.” Professor Wilhelm did not conceive of philology in the narrow sense of linguistic and textual study. Rather, philology meant the study of literary, historical, religious, and philosophical texts to explore major and minor themes of Chinese intellectual and literary history, and as well to relate those themes to the modes of thought and complex workings of the human mind in pre-modern and even modern China.

Professor Wilhelm also was a consummate bibliographer, who possessed one of the best private Sinological collections in the world. He sold his Chinese books to the University of Washington Far Eastern
Library (now the East Asia Library) in 1958. His Western language Sinological collection is now at Princeton University.

One of Professor Wilhelm’s strengths was his broad scholarly interests. At a time when American scholars were intent on establishing narrow disciplinary boundaries, Hellmut Wilhelm continued to explore many different fields. He did research on classical Chinese literature. Among his most noteworthy published works are studies of the Han fu 漢賦, Zhong Rong’s Shi pin 鍾嶸詩品, the ci of Zhang Zhihe 張志和的詞, and the Jingu yuan of Shi Chong 石崇金谷園. Wilhelm also wrote extensively on Chinese intellectual history. His important works include studies of the Song political philosopher Chen Liang 陳亮, the early Qing scholars who refused to serve the Manchu regime, the myths surrounding the Song dynasty hero Yue Fei 岳飛, Qing dynasty thought before the encounter with the West, Yang Xiong’s Taixuan jing 太玄經, and orthodoxy in the Ming dynasty.

Professor Wilhelm’s first love was the Yi jing, a book that he believed embodied the essence of Chinese thought and values. Between 1951 and 1967 he presented a series of lectures at the Eranos Roundtable Sessions 愛諾思圓桌會議 sponsored by the Eranos Foundation 愛諾思基金會 in Ascona, Switzerland 瑞士阿斯柯納. In these lectures, which were published in 1977 by the University of Washington Press under the title Heaven, Earth, and Man in the Book of Changes, Professor Wilhelm showed how the Yi jing addressed the most profound questions of human life: the place of humankind in the cosmos and its relationship to nature; change versus continuity; peace as an intellectual concept; leadership and authority; and last but not least, freedom. Professor Wilhelm had personally witnessed the brutal suppression of freedom in Nazi Germany,
and freedom to him was more than just an abstract concept.

I should also mention that Hellmut Wilhelm is responsible for my becoming a Sinologist. I have been studying China, its language, and culture for fifty-eight years. My interest in China came quite accidentally, for I had virtually no exposure to Chinese culture until my senior year in high school. I was born in 1942 in the state of Montana, famous for its “Big Sky” and mountains. During the 1940s when I lived in Montana, there were only about 200 Chinese in the entire state. The city where I was born, Great Falls, which was the largest city in Montana at that time, had a population of about 30,000 people. I do not remember ever seeing a single Chinese person during the time I lived there.

My family moved to the state of Washington in 1949. We lived in a small town in the suburbs of Seattle. The only contact I had with Chinese culture was a restaurant run by the Chinese family of one of my schoolmates. My academic interests during my teenage years focused mainly on the sciences. My mother was a registered nurse, and she wanted me to become a doctor. When I was in high school, I had a strong interest in chemistry. My mother wanted me to go to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore to study chemistry in preparation for entering medical school, also at Johns Hopkins. When I applied for universities in my senior year of high school, Hopkins was my first choice.

My career plans changed suddenly when in my senior year of high school, I took a course called “Far East.” It was an introduction to the history and culture of East Asia, with a major focus on China. One of the course assignments was to read two books, Pearl S. Buck’s *The Good Earth* and an English translation of Lao She’s *Luotuo xiangzi 驱骆祥子*. As part of our study we had the good fortune to attend a lecture
on these two books by Professor Hellmut Wilhelm 衛德明 of the University of Washington.

I was mesmerized by Professor Wilhelm’s lecture. Not only did he give a highly illuminating interpretation of both works and their relationship to the times in which they were written, he displayed a remarkable literary sensibility. I was shocked to learn from him that the translator of Rickshaw Boy had drastically altered the ending—to end happily rather than tragically to conform to Western readers’ tastes. By this time, I had already studied two foreign languages, Latin and French, I had become acutely aware to be suspicious of how translators distort the original version of a work. But I was outraged that a translator would not only change the wording of the original text, but go so far as to change the ending! After his lecture, Professor Wilhelm kindly sat down with several of the students to answer our questions. At that time, I was impressed with Professor Wilhelm’s first-hand knowledge of China. Here was a man, born in China, who had lived in China during critical times of the modern era, well-read in Chinese history and literature, and able to bring his vast learning down to the level of high school students.

It was shortly after this encounter with Professor Wilhelm that I began to reconsider what field of study I should pursue in college. Although I still had a naive conception of what Chinese culture and civilization was all about, I decided that I must begin formal study of Chinese history, language, and literature. I thus began my undergraduate studies not as a chemistry major at Johns Hopkins, but at the University of Washington as a major in Chinese. I believe I was the only major in Chinese at that time.

Both Hellmut Wilhelm and his father Richard Wilhelm had a great
love of Chinese culture. Richard Wilhelm was often referred to as the “German Confucius” 德國的孔夫子. Richard and Hellmut Wilhelm both had great respect for Chinese scholarship. They may in fact have been rare in their generations for their open attitude toward Chinese scholarship and their willingness to consult and collaborate with Chinese scholars. If Sinology is to be multilingual, one of the tasks of Western Sinologists should be to introduce and translate the works of Chinese scholars into English. Early in my career I oversaw the translation of Gong Kechang’s 龔克昌 Han fu yanjiu 漢賦研究. This book has been warmly received by scholars in Europe and North America. More recently I had the privilege of editing the English translation of the four-volume Zhonghua wenming shi 中華文明史 produced by Professor Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈 and his colleagues at Peking University. The English version was published in 2012 by Cambridge University Press. It has received great praise from the venerable British Sinologist Michael Loewe 魯惟一.

Recently, my wife Chang Taiping 張泰平 and I have been involved in producing a four-volume reference guide to pre-Tang literature. I should mention that Taiping was born in Taiwan. Our reference guide was published by Brill in Holland.61 My wife and I have written most of the entries. However, we have included two entries translated from unpublished manuscripts by Chinese scholars. One is an essay on the Han fu by the late Professor Cao Daoheng 曹道衡. The second is a long article on Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 by Professor Yuan Xingpei. I

remember when I submitted sample entries to the Dutch editor of the reference guide series Albert Hoffstädt. This is a man who has a Ph.D. in Western classical languages. The one entry Dr. Hoffstädt singled out for special praise was Professor Yuan’s article. I remember his comment was “this is a scholar who loves literature.” Dr. Hoffstädt thought the article was written by a European or American. He was quite surprised when I told him the article was written in Chinese by a distinguished scholar in China, and I had translated it into English. This short anecdote well illustrates a point I have been making about the multilingual dimensions of Sinology. An article written in Chinese translated into English impresses a scholar who is not a Sinologist, but is an expert in Latin and Greek, and whose first language is Dutch. This is a true multilingual intellectual and cultural exchange. I hope there are more of them in the future.

（責任校對：李奇鴻）
國際漢學和多種外語研究的範疇

康達維*

摘要

西方漢學是近數百年來出現的一種學術新傳統，西方漢學要到清朝才在中國成為一套有系統的學術研究。西方漢學的研究和清代的「漢學」大約同時出現，國際漢學本身就是以多種外語來研究中國題材的學術，漢學家除了必須通曉中國語文外，還必須同時精通多種外國語文，其中主要包括英文、日文、法文和德文。這篇論文主要是討論以多種外語研究國際漢學所涉及的層面，從十六世紀耶穌會傳教士開始，到今天研究的狀況與成果。其中最著名的是兩位德籍漢學家衛禮賢博士和他的兒子衛德明教授（在中國青島出生），衛教授是我在大學的老師，由於衛教授的引導，使我走上研究中國古典文學的道路。另外，我也將談談將當代中文學術著作翻譯成西方語文的重要性。將舉三個例子作為佐證：其一，龔克昌先生漢賦研究的英譯本；其二是北京大學《中華文明史》的英譯工作，從中體悟了一些有關國際漢學新的看法；其三，我將談談最近出版英文本《先秦漢魏晉南北朝世界漢學資料彙編》（四冊）的心得。

關鍵詞：國際漢學、西方漢學、衛禮賢、衛德明

* 美國華盛頓大學亞洲語言及文學系名譽教授。