

Sinologists as Translators in the 17 – 19th century Conference

An International Conference
Organized by
Research Centre for Translation,
Institute of Chinese Studies,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

On
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In Celebration of The Fortieth Anniversary of the
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Organized by the Research Centre for Translation, Institute of Chinese Studies,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Sponsored by Institute of Chinese Studies and Chung Chi College,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



Conference Programme

Day 1 • 27 October 2011 • Thursday	
9:15 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 10:00	Opening Introducing RCT + Group photo
10:00 – 10:40 Chair: Lawrence Wang-chi Wong	August Pfizmaier (1808 – 1849) and his Translations of Chinese Poetry Bernhard Fuehrer (University of London)
10:45 – 11:00	Tea break
11:00 – 11:40 Chair: Theodore Hutters	The German Rendition of <i>Huajian ji</i> by Heinrich Kurz (<i>Das Blumenblatt</i> , 1836): Translation or Retranslation? Roland Altenburger (The University of Zürich)
11:45 – 12:25 Chair: Theodore Hutters	Early Translations of Chinese Literature from Chinese into German – The Example of Wilhelm Grube (1855 – 1908) and His Translation of <i>Investiture of the Gods</i> 封神演義 Thomas Zimmer (University of Cologne)
12:30 – 14:00	
14:00 – 14:40 Chair: Man Kong Wong	Translation and British Colonial Mission: The Establishment of Chinese Studies in King's College London and Its First Chinese Professor, Samuel Turner Fearon Uganda Sze Pui Kwan (Nanyang Technological University)
14:45 – 15:25 Chair: Man Kong Wong	“Objects of Curiosity”: Sir John Davis as Sinologist and Translator Lawrence Wang Chi Wong (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

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15:30 – 15:45	Tea break
15:45 – 16:25 Chair: Bernhard Fuehrer	Collaborators and Competitors: Western Translators of the <i>Yijing</i> (易經 or <i>Classic of Changes</i>) in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Richard J. Smith (Rice University)
16:30 – 17:10 Chair: Bernhard Fuehrer	Nineteenth Century Missionary-Translators as Sinologists: A Study of Translations of <i>Daodejing</i> by John Chalmers and James Legge Man Kong Wong (Hong Kong Baptist University)

Day 2 • 28 October 2011 • Friday

9:30 – 10:10 Chair: Richard Smith	The Translation of the <i>Lunyu</i> in the <i>Confucius Sinarum Philosophus</i> (1687) Thierry Meynard (Sun Yat-sen University)
10:15 – 10:55 Chair: Richard Smith	Elijah J. Bridgman and the Translation of <i>Xiaojing</i> Feng-Chuan Pan (National Taiwan Normal University)
11:00 – 11:15	Tea break
11:15 – 11:55 Chair: Uganda Sze Pui Kwan	Technologies of Translation: Peter Perring Thoms Bilingual Edition of the Cantonese Ballad <i>Huajian</i> 花箋 / Chinese Courtship (1824) Patricia Sieber (The Ohio State University)
12:00 – 12:30	Closing Building a Research Programme on Sinologists as Translators

**The German rendition of *Huajian ji* by Heinrich Kurz
(*Das Blumenblatt*, 1836): translation or retranslation?**

Roland Altenburger
The University of Zürich

Abstract

Heinrich Kurz (1805–1873) was a devout student of Abel Remusat's whom he defended against allegations from German Sinologists. His only major Sinological translation, though, was a German rendition of the ballad *Huajian ji* which was published by the title *Das Blumenblatt* in 1836, and which is considered by some being the first full-length translation of any Chinese literary text into German. In 1824, P. P. Thoms, the printer of the East India Company, already had published an English rendition of this text, *Chinese Courtship in Verse*. Kurz has been suspected for having translated the English text rather than directly from the Chinese. This claim shall be scrutinized by the present paper. *Huajian ji* was later also translated, or further retranslated, into French and Dutch. Although a text of merely regional significance, *Huajian ji* became one of the often-translated and rather widely read Chinese works of 19th century European Sinology. This curious fact also sheds light on the distorted perception of the Chinese literary canon by early European Sinologists. Moreover, the case of *Huajian ji* translations also highlights the various interconnections — genealogical ties, influences, but also rivalries — among the various centers of European Sinology during the 19th century.

August Pfizmaier (1808–1849) and his Translations of Chinese Poetry

Bernhard Fuehrer
University of London

Abstract

This paper discusses August Pfizmaier's translations from the *Chuci* (*Songs of Chu*) and from Bai Juyi's (772–846) *Bai Xiangshan shiji*. Translations from these two collections show rather different approaches which, in the view of the translator, aim at reflecting the stylistic differences. Whereas the reception of his translations from the *Chuci* was mainly restricted to academic circles, Pfizmaier's translations of Bai Juyi's poems formed the basis of poetic renderings up to the first half of the twentieth century.

**Translation and British Colonial Mission:
The Establishment of Chinese Studies in King's College London and
Its First Chinese Professor, Samuel Turner Fearon**

Uganda Sze Pui Kwan
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract

The University of London was the first institution to set up a Chinese professorship in the United Kingdom. Within a decade in the first half of the 19th century, two professorships of Chinese were created in its two colleges: the first in University College in 1837 and the second in King's College in 1847. Previous studies of British sinology have devoted sufficient attention to the establishment of the program and the first professorship of Chinese. However, despite the latter professorship being established by the same patron (Sir George Thomas Staunton; 1781-1859) during the same era as the former, the institutionalization of the Chinese program at King's College London seems to have been totally forgotten. Indeed, if we take into account British colonial policy and the mission of the Empire in the early 19th century, we are able to understand the strategic purpose served by the Chinese studies program at King's College London in the 19th century and the special reason for its establishment at a crucial moment in the history of Sino-British relations. To regard it from this perspective, we reveal unresolved doubts concerning the selection and appointment of the first Chinese professor at King's College London. Unlike other inaugural Chinese professors appointed during the 19th century at other universities in the United Kingdom, the first Chinese professor at King's College London, Samuel Turner Fearon (1819-1854), was not a Sinophile. He did not translate any Chinese classics or other works. His inaugural lecture has not even survived. This is why most Sinologists have failed to conduct an in-depth study on Fearon and the genealogy of the Chinese program at King's College London. Nevertheless, Samuel Fearon did indeed play a very significant role in Sino-British relations due to his ability as an interpreter and his Chinese knowledge. He was not only an interpreter in the first Opium War (1839-1842), but was also a colonial civil servant and senior government official in British Hong Kong when the colonial government started to take shape after the war. This paper both reexamines his contribution during this "period of conflict and difficulty" in Sino-British relations and demonstrates the very nature of British sinology.

**The translation of the *Lunyu* in the
Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687)**

Thierry Meynard
Sun Yat-sen University

Abstract

Whether or not Catholic missionaries in China are accounted as sinologists, their pioneer work in translating Chinese literature into Western languages should be acknowledged. Especially, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, published by the Royal Library in Paris in 1687, can be considered as a founding stone, presenting for the first time in the West the translations of the *Daxue*, *Zhongyong* and *Lunyu*, and their commentaries. We shall focus here on the book which is the most important for the knowledge of Confucius, the *Lunyu*, explaining how this Classical text and its commentaries came to be translated. In the second part, starting from the content of the translation itself, we shall analyze how Confucius is portrayed as a philosopher in the broad sense of the term, someone who had a firm grasp of moral truths, able to embody them in his own life, and could teach them to his disciples. In the last part, we shall look at the reception of this first version of the *Lunyu* in the West and we shall raise some methodological questions.

Elijah J. Bridgman and the Translation of *Xiaojing*

Feng-Chuan Pan

National Taiwan Normal University

Abstract

This paper explores the historical significance of the first English translation of *Xiaojing* (孝經, *Heaou King* or Book of *Filial Duty*) by Elijah Coleman Bridgman (裨治文, 1801–1861). Different from his Jesuit predecessors such as François Noël (衛方濟, 1651–1729) and Pierre-Martial Cibot (韓國英, 1727-1780), and his contemporary British missionary James Legge (理雅各, 1815–1897), Bridgman ranks *Heaou King* as the middle one between “the primary school books” and the “highest classical productions” of the Chinese and published it in the fourth volume of *Chinese Repository* in 1835 Canton, together with the other Chinese primary school books: *Santsze King* (三字經, *the Trimetrical Classic*), *Pih Keä Sing* (百家姓, *the Hundred Family Names*) and *Tseën Tzse Wan* (千字文, *the Thousand Character Classic*). Though criticized by Legge for its accuracy and lack of explanatory notes, I try to reexamine Bridgman’s translation by placing it within the historical and textual context of the Western translations of *Xiaojing* in Early Modern time.

**Technologies of Translation: Peter Perring Thoms Bilingual Edition of the
Cantonese Ballad *Huajian* 花箋 / *Chinese Courtship* (1824)**

Patricia Sieber
The Ohio State University

Abstract

Early sinology has been subject to widely divergent characterizations, ranging from charges of an uncritical rehearsing of native point of view to claims of an orientalist silencing of the other. In order to develop a more nuanced and empirically based understanding of the practices of early sinology, this study focuses on one important facet of sinological activity—translation—in an effort to delineate how a particular translator-cum-sinologist, Peter Perring Thoms, negotiated technological, editorial, and genre-related aspects of translation between source and target cultures in his 1824 edition-cum-translation of the Cantonese ballad *Huajian/Chinese Courtship* (The Flowery Notepaper).

As is well-known, Chinese vernacular texts, particularly those that belonged to the so-called “books of genius” (*caizi shu*) category, were notoriously unstable in terms of content and text found in different imprints, as these stories and their paratexts were being published and republished for different writing and reading communities. The Cantonese ballad *Huajian* (The Flowery Notepaper), the so-called “eighth book of genius,” is a case in point. The ballad circulated in three major forms, namely as a fine commentaried edition (preface 1714) under the title “The Romance of the Flowery Notepaper” (*Huajian ji*), as an illustrated, annotated edition with the addition of numerous examination style essays based on poetic lines drawn from the ballad itself (earliest extant version dates to 1771), and as a cheap, unannotated, variant-graph performance edition entitled *Huajian* (no later than 1818). Concurrent with the wide circulation of the tale in print and performance venues in the Guangdong region in the first half of the nineteenth century, Peter Perring Thoms (d. after 1851), the printer who produced Robert Morrison’s (1782-1834) *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (1822) and an amateur sinologist in his own right, prepared a bilingual Chinese/English edition of this text and published it in Macao in 1824 under the dual title of *Huajian* 花箋 / *Chinese Courtship*.

In order to understand the significance of that publication, this paper seeks to address the following concerns: First, from a technological point of view, what was the history of bilingual publishing in a Chinese/European language context up to that point? What were the motivations, purposes, and effects of replicating Chinese text alongside a translation? Does the fact of translation of Chinese text into Chinese text across differing media of reproduction

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require us to broaden the category of “sinologist”? Second, from an editorial point of view, how did Thoms’ Chinese text intersect with particular extant Chinese editions of the *Huajian(ji)*? Did Thoms’ Chinese text valorize a particular set of Chinese editions or did it constitute a new Chinese edition of its own? If the latter, what were its hallmarks and what if any kind of discourses of authentication did the text invoke? Can we consider it a form of intralingual translation? If so, does such translation across textual editions invite us to rethink the nature of editorial practices and its place in the history of sinology? Third, from a genre-oriented point of view, how did Thoms’ translation aim to position *Huajian* in the rapidly evolving definition of “literature” in general and “Chinese literature” in particular? To what extent were his generic contextualizations modeled on locally Chinese understandings of the vernacular literary canon and to what extent did they invoke emergent English ideas of literary values? How were Thoms’ genre-specific negotiations received within the wider European sinological community and beyond? As the paper will show, Thoms’ translation strategies point to a hybridizing approach that is commensurate neither with the practices of the source nor of the target cultures and hence calls for a reconsideration of early sinological practices.

**Collaborators and Competitors:
Western Translators of the *Yijing* (易經 or *Classic of Changes*)
in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries**

Richard J. Smith
Rice University

Abstract

All area specialists—including Sinologists—are "translators," at least in the general sense that they try to make their specialized cultural knowledge accessible and comprehensible to non-specialists. But the translation of particular texts is, of course, a very different activity, involving the use of special linguistic skills, an awareness of the problem of reconciling literal fidelity with literary style, and often proceeding from a wide variety of personal and political motives. In the case of the translation of the *Yijing* by Western scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the process was especially complex. Unlike the transmission of the *Changes* to East Asia, where local elites were completely comfortable with the classical Chinese script until the late nineteenth century, in the West, the *Yijing* required (and still requires) translation into radically different European languages, raising issues of commensurability and incommensurability that are still hotly debated today. The first translators of the *Changes* were the Jesuits, who labored under a double burden. Their primary duty was to bring Christianity to China (and to other parts of the world), but they also had to justify their evangelical methods to their colleagues and superiors in Europe (including, of course, Rome). A kind of "double domestication" thus took place: In China, the Jesuits had to make the Bible appear familiar to the Chinese, while in Europe they had to make Chinese works such as the *Yijing* appear familiar (or at least reasonable) to Europeans. In the process, as texts were translated in both directions, personal rivalries and institutional politics influenced the outcome in sometimes striking ways. This paper focus on the politics of both cooperation and competition in the work of Western intellectuals such as Joachim Bouvet, Jean-François Fouçquet, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Jean-Baptiste Regis Pierre-Vincent de Tartre, and Joseph Marie Anne de Moyriac de Mailla in the eighteenth century and Julius Mohl, Canon Thomas McClatchie, Angelo Zottoli, James Legge, Paul-Louis-Felix Philastre, Charles de Harlez, and Albert Étienne Jean-Baptiste Terrien in the nineteenth.

Nineteenth Century Missionary-Translators as Sinologists: A Study of Translations of *Daodejing* by John Chalmers and James Legge

Man Kong Wong
Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

Daodejing is one of the most important pieces in Chinese culture. It is rich in revealing salient features of the notions of Chinese religiosity and Chinese worldview. For obvious reasons, it would have been one of the “must-reads” for missionaries. It took, however, more than 60 years for Protestant missionaries to produce the first complete translation namely, *The Speculations on Metaphysics, Polity, and Morality of the “Old Philosopher,” Lau Tsze; Translated from the Chinese with an Introduction*. It was written and published by John Chalmers in 1868. In 1880, James Legge gave a public lecture that covered *Daodejing*, which was published in *The Religions of China: Confucianism and Taoism; Described and Compared with Christianity*. In 1891, Legge published *The Texts of Taoism, Part I: The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzū*, in which he produced another translation.

James Legge and John Chalmers worked together in Canton and Hong Kong as members of the London Missionary Society. The former was the senior and he was acknowledged in the latter’s translation in 1868. These suggested that they had had good interactions in their scholarly pursuit. Legge was generous with his compliments on the quality of Chalmers’s translation. Yet, he came to a point in later part of his professorial career at Oxford where he saw the need to start afresh in translating the *Daodejing* and ultimately published his version.

This paper tries to see how these translations were made, and to compare and contrast the two versions. Special attention will be made to reveal the interactions between the two translators. In doing so, this paper may shed some new light on the strength(s) and weakness(es) of “missionary-translators” and their contribution(s) as sinologists.

**“Objects of Curiosity”:
Sir John Davis as Sinologist and Translator**

Lawrence Wang Chi Wong
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Sir John Francis Davis (1795-1890) was the second governor of the British Crown colony of Hong Kong. Unfortunately he was one of the most hated governors among the Chinese residents, and worse still, he was also extremely unpopular among the British community in Hong Kong. This seems unreasonable, given his high proficiency in Chinese and long years of working experience in Guangzhou.

Davis started his career as a writer in the East India Company in Guangzhou in 1813 and he learned his Chinese with Robert Morrison. He quickly began translating both official documents and literary works from Chinese and was soon considered as one of the most promising Chinese experts. He acted as an interpreter for the Amherst Mission to Beijing in 1816. After the termination of trade monopoly of the EIC and the disastrous Napier Fizzle in 1834, he was appointed Superintendent of Trade. He got heavily involved in the First Opium War in 1839-42, and subsequently appointed as the governor of Hong Kong in 1844. After introducing some highly controversial policies, he was severely criticized both in Hong Kong and in London, and finally forced to resign in 1848.

In translating Chinese works, Davis marked himself distinct from most of his fellow countrymen at that time in that he concentrated on literature, *Belles Lettres*. In fact, apart from literary works, he did not translate other kinds of writing, with the exception of the official documents of the EIC that he might have to translate in the capacity of the Company's translator. Further, with his long years working closely with the Chinese, he developed a view of his own on China and its people. This is reflected in his own writings as well as his translations of Chinese literature.

The present paper examines the case of John Davis as a Sinologist and translator. We will analyze the motivation behind Davis's translation activities, in particular his choice of works for translation. His writings on the subject matters as well as the techniques employed in the works will be discussed to establish his own notion that the value of his translation lied in revealing incidents that constituted “objects of curiosity”. As Davis was the earliest major British translator of Chinese literature, a detailed case study of him will enhance our understanding of early British Sinology.

**Early translations of Chinese literature from Chinese into German –
the example of Wilhelm Grube (1855–1908) and his translation of
Investiture of the Gods 封神演義**

Thomas Zimmer
University of Cologne

Abstract

Wider reception of Chinese literature in German language started after translations of ancient Chinese poetry from *The Book of Songs* 詩經, and pieces like the musical comedy *The Orphan from the House of Zhao* 趙氏孤兒 (ascribed to Ji Junxiang 紀君祥, approx. 13th/14th century) as well as stories written in colloquial Chinese from collections like *Strange Stories from Ancient times and Today* 今古奇觀 had been made in England and France during the 17th century. Later on in the 18th century themes and motives from different genres of Chinese literature were adopted for performance in theaters. Most of the pieces of Chinese literature which became available to the German speaking public until the 19th century were second translations from texts which had been done earlier by English or French experts. One important French sinologist and translator active in the early 19th century was Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832) who translated the popular *caizi jiaren* novel *Yu Jiao Li* 玉嬌梨 into French. This version became the origin for one of the earliest Chinese novels in German, published in 1827.

Translations directly from Chinese into German developed slowly compared with England and France. Most of what was published and sold as Chinese literature has to be taken as free adaptations by poets and scholars like Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866, adapted *The Book of Songs*) who knew (among many other languages) Persian and is one of the founders of Orientalism in Germany.

Although "Sinology" as an academic subject in the context of Orientalism at German universities was only established during the first years of 20th century, it was because of political and diplomatic reasons that Chinese language teaching had been established at the School for Oriental Languages in 1887, an institution attached to the Foreign Ministry.

In the paper about Wilhelm Grube I will give a short account on his education and profession as a linguist, ethnologist and sinologist. Main interest will be his translation of one of the early vernacular novels, i.e. *Investiture of the Gods* 封神演義, which is supposed to be written in the 16th century but relied on much older mythological material. The paper will try to deal

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in more detail with questions like: why did Grube choose this novel which has been neither popular nor well known even among Chinese readers (at least when compared with famous examples like *Three Kingdoms*, *Journey to the West*, *Red Chamber* etc.); did his choice have influence on his technique of translation; how artistic was Grube's translational approach to the novel, did he really understand the novel as a work of art; what kind of "message" did he want to convey to the German readers? And last but not least the paper will try to show similarities and differences between Grube as one of the earliest translators of Chinese literature into German and translators from later time.