

*Cent-cinquantième de l'École des Langues orientales*, Paris, 1948.

Louis MALLERET, "Aperçu d'un demi-siècle de travaux scientifiques à l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient," *France-Asie* (Saigon), Oct.-Dec. 1956.

Yves HERVOUET, *Les bibliothèques chinoises d'Europe occidentale*, Mélanges publiés par l'Institut des Hautes Etudes chinoises, I, Paris, 1957.

The author of this notice wishes to thank his colleagues who have helped him to correct or complete it.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Editor, *The Journal of Asian Studies*

Dear Sir:

Professor Edward H. Schafer has contributed two interesting and thought-provoking letters to the May 1958 issue of the *Journal* (pp. 509 and 512). He argues some meaningful questions in a forceful manner, and I find myself sympathetic to many of his points of view. However, in the second of these two letters, apparently in excess of enthusiasm for good causes, he has made some rather drastic charges, and has too hastily pounced on some examples which do not sustain even his best arguments. Since they refer to a book review of mine recently published in the *Journal*, I request an opportunity to reply. The evaluation of the book which I reviewed is not the real issue, either in Professor Schafer's remarks or in my reply, hence I shall not refer to it again here.

Professor Schafer, in comparing word forms of "Classical" and "Mandarin" Chinese (his terms), criticizes me for suggesting that certain multiple-character expressions in the "Classical" should be understood as words. In this he states that I am being "anachronistic," i.e., am asking that Classical Chinese be treated as if it were Mandarin, thereby "yielding to the temptation to simplify his [i.e., a translator's] task by the application of the unscholarly principles of 'Mandarinization' and 'etiolation.'" Strong words, indeed! Professor Schafer appears to mean that words like *shou-shih* (jewelry) and *shu-chi* (books)—both are his examples—belong solely to modern "Mandarin" and could appear in literary Chinese only when a modern Mandarin-speaking writer of literary Chinese unconsciously borrowed it from his speech and used it in his writing, where by stricter standards it should be considered out of place. "Mandarin" is a dialect of modern spoken Chinese; *shu-chi* and *shou-shih* as "words" in the sense given above are very old. Even if Mr. Schafer avoids that difficulty by making "Mandarin" mean the spoken Chinese of any place or period, he still is in difficulty with regard to what his remarks imply about the relationship between the literary and spoken languages. Multiple-character expressions like these did not all necessarily originate in the spoken language and move into the literary. His line of argument appears to me to show inadequate regard for the long development of both the literary and the spoken languages. Particularly in the literary Chinese of somewhat informal collections of notes and sketches such as the fourteenth-century text in question, but in fact in almost all literary Chinese of the last two millennia or more, the influence of the spoken idiom is to be discerned. Both literary and spoken Chinese have developed much in the long period between the earliest literary monuments and the present, through interrelated processes of development showing mutual influences throughout. Many general nouns such as *shu-chi* and *shou-shih* are to be found in fourteenth-century

literary Chinese. Some undoubtedly originated in the spoken language; others no less certainly moved from the literary into the spoken language. No matter what the explanation of their existence may be, they are "words." To dissect them and translate them according to the most antique or most ingenious lexical equivalents of their parts does not necessarily produce correct meaning. And, one most important element of meaning Professor Schafer has ignored completely in his criticism—that of context. This, even more than abstract philologizing, still must be decisive in determining the sense of usages like these. Professor Schafer charges others with yielding to unscholarly temptations, yet it is interesting that in no single example chosen by him to illustrate my "theoretical errors . . . leading to undeserved criticism" has he made any reference to the meaning of the sentence or the passage in which the word or words appeared. Nor could he. None of the translations he defends is defensible.

With regard to euphemisms, Professor Schafer seems to be overreaching a bit to say that I have revealed a dislike for translating them. Where in my remarks is this revelation? He does grant that I am aware of euphemisms. The problem, as I see it, lies precisely in being aware of them. He finds it "shocking" that I should want to see the word *te-yin* translated "imperial edict" instead of "virtuous intonation." (Here he apparently is not defending the victim of my "undeserved criticism," since the translation to which I objected took the word to be an adverbial phrase meaning "in virtuous harmony.") As a matter of fact, I stated that it should be translated *to mean* "imperial edict," and if this can be done in a manner that *also* carries the color of the original euphemism, I shall applaud the achievement. However, my criticism was of a translation which revealed no more awareness of the author's intent than does Professor Schafer's delightful suggestion "virtuous intonation." Euphemisms frequently are employed in highly original fashion, and even more frequently simply as standardized formulae, but seldom purposively to conceal their user's real intent. When the translator can think of nothing more meaningful than "virtuous intonation" in a case like this one, he might better be satisfied simply with "imperial edict." Otherwise he is concealing meaning, and he may well be accused by the reader who takes the trouble to check against the original (which Professor Schafer must not have done) of having misunderstood that meaning as well. I fear that Professor Schafer is emitting here merely a "virtuous intonation" of his own; a principle that means much to him may be at stake here, and it may be a good one, but he has chosen examples that simply cannot sustain his arguments.

Finally, I must state that I am as fond of the "metaphors, metonymies, euphemisms, and tropes of all kinds" as is Professor Schafer. They are the inexhaustible delight of Chinese literature. However, the translator's first duty is accuracy in conveying an author's intent. *Neither* the translator's aim of achieving accuracy *nor*, I believe, his aim of achieving literary excellence, is aided by employing the device of creating word-for-word *or* word-for-character lexical equivalences, especially when the English so produced may well be outlandish and bizarre. Professor Schafer feels that we should take as our models King James' translators of the Bible. Thus he argues that what were once "clumsy Hebraicisms" are now regarded as models of English style. This too strikes me as being merely a "virtuous intonation." The analogy to the translators of the Bible is far-fetched. I shall be glad if my contemporaries can get a measure of clear and full meaning from translations, be they mine or those of others. I am delighted when I find literary value in them as well. But I shall not expect any "clumsy Sinicisms" of mine, nor even those of my learned colleagues, to pass into ordinary English speech and to serve future generations as models of style. Does Professor Schafer really expect that of his?

FREDERICK W. MOTE

Princeton University  
May 27, 1958

Dear Sir:

My attention has been recently called to a review article on *The Beginnings of Chinese Civilization* which appeared in the May issue of your *Journal* this year, pp. 464–465. It is apparent that in this article the main point developed by Bishop William C. White, my critic, is that I have not done justice to my subject matter and committed a great sin by “putting into three lectures what a score of lectures could not exhaust.” He cited Dr. Joseph Needham’s work for comparison, implying that besides the seven big volumes of *Science and Civilization in China* by the Cambridge scholar (only two volumes have been published so far), my book looks pitifully thin and small. I must declare that I do not agree with him at all; it is by no means true that big topics must be dealt with always in big volumes. The late Professor Henri Frankfort, for instance, treated the *Birth of Civilization in the Near East*, a theme far greater in scope than mine, in less than five chapters. Besides, Dr. Joseph Needham and I are not dealing “with the same great theme”; Needham’s subject is a complete history of science and civilization in China, while I am concerned with only their beginnings. Our methods of approach and source materials are not the same; Needham is making use of all available data, while my task, on the other hand, is to discuss some basic problems related to the ancient history of China. And my discussions were based exclusively on the archaeological finds scientifically excavated. Both Needham and I know our respective interests and their differences; certainly Needham did not find my small book as reviewed by him last November in *Science* (CXXVI, Nov. 8, 1957) smaller in value on account of its physical size.

Bishop White’s remark, “The result in the case of these three lectures is a confusion of facts and ideas most difficult to read, conveying a feeling of unscientific arrangement,” is a much more serious charge and needs some analysis. But my critic adopted a strange procedure; he scarcely cared to back up his wholesale condemnation with specific evidence. He made it abundantly clear, however, that he found it easier to review what I did not say than what I said, and compiled a list of what he thought my errors of omission. But finally he admitted that “. . . he cannot but be deeply impressed with the value of the data here assembled. . . .” This seems to indicate the possibility that my critic’s feeling as registered in the first paragraph of his review had become almost completely evaporated by the time he wrote his last paragraph. In any case, Bishop White’s famous book, *Tombs of Old Lo-yang*, hardly suggests that he is the one to show us the line between “facts” and “ideas.”

LI CHI

*Academia Sinica, Taipei*  
June 22, 1958

Dear Sir:

This communication concerns Professor Charles Hucker’s review of my book, *China’s Cultural Tradition: What and Whither?*, which appeared in the August Number of the *Journal*, pages 619–620. This comment is offered in no mere spirit of controversy, but simply because Professor Hucker’s review was written prior to the preparation of a one-page loose-leaf “Note from the Publisher,” in which the general objectives of the series to which my book belongs are explained, and which today goes forth with each copy of every book belonging to that series. Had this “Note” been available at the time Professor Hucker wrote his review, I think it might have forestalled, or at least caused him to modify, some of his criticisms. These, it seems to me, can be summarized under two main heads:

(1) *China’s Cultural Tradition* “almost ignore[s] the great artistic and literary heritage of China as such and fail[s] to suggest the rich and varied life of the literati in intel-

lectual and aesthetic realms." However, as I have indicated in greater detail elsewhere (*JAOS*, LXXVIII [1958], 57-59), the book was limited by the overall plan of its series to 96 closely packed pages, with the result that nothing could have been added to its contents without the deletion of something else already there. What then could this "something else" have been? It is still my opinion that any discussion of Chinese art and literature (over and above the brief remarks on their ideological background attempted on pp. 31 ff.) would, in order to be worthwhile, have necessitated an inordinate sacrifice of other material equal, and probably more than equal, in importance. Incidentally, I do not feel that Professor Hucker's inclusion of the word "intellectual" in his criticism is really fair, since much of the book discusses what may be called the Chinese philosophical *Weltanschauung*, and this is surely a major and basic creation of the intellect.

(2) Professor Hucker also objects to the many quotations from other writers used in my book, the fact that they are often contradictory, and that I myself have commonly abstained from personal judgments, lengthy analyses or interpretations, and attempts to reconcile the contradictions. This criticism, in a sense, is personally gratifying, because it indicates I have had some success in carrying out the far-from-easy overall objectives of the series—objectives which called precisely for a maximum of quotation from other (preferably diverse) sources, a minimum of subjective judgment by the author himself, and a consequent encouragement to the reader to formulate his own conclusions independently and, when necessary, to explore further those topics which space limitations prevented from being exhaustively treated in the series pamphlets themselves. All this is made clear in the "Note from the Publisher" when it says:

The material presented in each pamphlet of this series has been selected by an expert as a representative sample of the kinds of evidence with which the historian works. . . . An effort has been made to present as many different points of view as possible, although obviously space limitations preclude exhaustive coverage. . . . You are encouraged to reach your own answer to the question presented or, if your judgment so dictates, to revise the question and defend your revision. In case you are stimulated to explore a problem more deeply, you will find plentiful suggestions for further reading.

Despite his strictures, Professor Hucker admits that "it seems possible that his [my] pamphlet might stimulate satisfying seminar-level discussion." This too is gratifying, since a major aim of this and all the other pamphlets in the series is precisely to stimulate their readers toward further thought and discussion, rather than simply to provide answers—either ready-made or exhaustive—to the many questions they pose.

DERK BODDE

*University of Pennsylvania*  
September 18, 1958