

# Wang T'ao's Contribution to James Legge's Translation of the Chinese Classics

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## 1. Foreword

After the establishment of the treaty port system in China following 1842, an increasing number of Western Protestant missionary scholars came to China, primarily driven by their religious ardour. Beyond their evangelical efforts, they also endeavored to promote academic exchange between China and the West. A prominent scholar among those pioneers was James Legge (1815-1897), a British missionary from Scotland.

James Legge was born in 1815 at Huntly, Scotland, and educated at Aberdeen University and Highbury Congregational College. Appointed by the London Missionary Society to Malacca, he arrived there in 1839. In 1843 he was removed to Hong Kong and given charge of the Anglo-Chinese Theological Seminary. Beginning in the 1850's, he concentrated all his effort on completing the translation of *The Chinese Classics*.<sup>1</sup> In 1861 Legge had already published, with Joseph Jardine in Hong Kong, his translation of *The Chinese Classics*, volume I, which includes the *Confucian Analects*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and in 1862 he published the translation of *Mencius* as volume II.<sup>2</sup> In the following eleven years, from 1862 to 1873, he completed the remaining five works in the translation series with Wang T'ao's 王韜 assistance.

Wang T'ao (1828-1897) was a prolific writer in the late nineteenth century. Because he played an undeniably significant role in helping Legge convey the orthodox ideas of the Confucian Classics to the West, the purpose of this paper is therefore limited to the field of tracing his educational background and bicultural experience, investigating the extent he contributed

to Legge's translation of the Classical works, and evaluating the contribution he made to the Classical studies.

## 2. Life and Bicultural Experience

Wang T'ao was born on November 10, 1828, in a small village named Fu-li 甫里, a district under the jurisdiction of Soochow County in Kiangsu Province. His formal name in his early years was Wang Li-pin 王利賓, and his courtesy name was Lan-ch'ing 蘭卿. He changed his formal name twice in his life; the first time he changed it from Wang Li-pin to Wang Han when he started to work in Shanghai, and the second time he changed it from Wang Han to Wang T'ao in 1862 when he arrived at Hong Kong.<sup>3</sup> Because the name "Wang T'ao" has been widely known, I employ it throughout the whole text of this paper.

Wang T'ao's primary education was in a large degree given by his father, who was a respected teacher in his home town. At the age of four, he started to learn Chinese characters, and at the age of eight, he began to study the Chinese Classics. In 1839 his father went to teach in a wealthy family at Wu-ts'un 吳村; although he was only eleven years old at the time, he accompanied his father in order to continue his studies there. He learned to write letters in 1840 and compositions in 1841. A solid foundation for his prose, poetry, and study of the Classics was laid at this time.<sup>4</sup> In 1844 his father returned to Fu-li and taught a number of students in his own home. At that time Wang T'ao was reunited with whole family and reappeared in his native community as a youth of sixteen, remarkable for his liking of wine and women.<sup>5</sup>

In 1845 Wang T'ao, at the age of seventeen, passed the civil service examination and obtained his first degree, *hsiu-ts'ai* 秀才, in the county of Hsin-yang 新陽,<sup>6</sup> the present K'un-shan 崑山. The following year, he arranged to study with Ku Hsing 顧惺 at Chin-ch'i 錦溪, a small town in Yüan-ho 元和 County. Ku was a *ming-ching* 明經 degree holder. With Ku's guidance, he made an extensive reading of various collections. In the autumn of 1846, accompanied by his father and Ku Hsing, Wang T'ao went to Nanking in the hope of obtaining his second degree. However, he was unsuccessful in the examination. Thus greatly disappointed, he had to go back to his studies with Ku Hsing.<sup>7</sup> Probably in the spring of 1847, when his father, finding it more and more difficult to earn a living in the countryside, left Fu-li and went to teach in Shanghai, Wang T'ao

returned to Fu-li and taught a number of students at home himself.<sup>8</sup> In February of 1848 Wang T'ao visited his father in Shanghai and stayed there for four days,<sup>9</sup> and this visit proved to be an important turning point in his life.

It is not quite clear whether it was his father or his father's employer who had some association with the British missionaries. In any event, as soon as he arrived at Shanghai, he was introduced by one or the other to the missionary scholar Walter Henry Medhurst (1796-1856). Medhurst, born in London and educated at St. Paul's School, had learned the printing trade and belonged to the London Missionary Society at the time. He went to Shanghai in 1843, where he remained until his return to England in 1856. The Society established the London Mission Press in Shanghai in 1847 and put it under Medhurst's direction.<sup>10</sup> At that time, the Press was printing Chinese books by the use of movable type. Wang T'ao's first desire was to see the great novelty of the printing press.

Mr. Medhurst seemed to have taken an immediate liking to this young man. In Medhurst's home, Wang T'ao was welcomed by Mary and Helen, Medhurst's two daughters, who offered him some grape wine in a shining glass and encouraged him to drink. Then they played a foreign tune for him on the piano; it charmed him with its rising and falling cadences. After that Medhurst led him to see where the printing was done. The press was turned by an ox, and it worked fast enough to produce several thousand impressions a day. The type was arranged in cases according to the order of the Chinese dictionary. Another thing that impressed him was that Medhurst's English colleagues, including William Muirhead (1822-1900) and Joseph Edkins (1823-1905), all knew Chinese. He expressed, in his writings at a later date, his considerable admiration for the foreign culture with which he made his first contact.<sup>11</sup> In the summer of 1849, his father died in Shanghai. It seems that Medhurst was well-informed of this young man's situation, for he immediately procured for him an offer of a post in the Mission Press in Shanghai. As Wang had no other prospects, he accepted the position and went to Shanghai in October of the same year.<sup>12</sup>

In his post as editor at the Press, he was the main translator, from 1849 to 1861, of the Chinese Delegates Version of the Bible. This project had been started in 1843 in Hong Kong by Medhurst, James Legge, and several others. When Medhurst assumed the missionary post in Shanghai, the center of the project was transferred there as well. At times Wang tutored foreigners in Chinese, and also assisted Medhurst and other missionaries in such

evangelical work as distributing Christian literature.<sup>13</sup> According to Rev. Hung Te-jen 洪德仁, Wang's translation of the Bible captured the elegant and flowing style of literary Chinese; both its diction and rhythm were beautiful. In one sense, it tended to employ Chinese philosophical expressions, obscuring the religious quality of Christian tenets. Nevertheless, his translated version was a very important text in the late nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> It was widely read by the gentry for its delightful style, and served to moderate the anti-Christian feelings in Kiangsu and Chekiang areas.

The year 1856 likewise seemed to have been a crucial time for Wang in the realignment of his career. Although Wang repeatedly stated that he had no idea of working for the Mission Press permanently, yet, he stayed on his job invariably without any interruption. It is not inaccurate to say that it was Medhurst's warm friendship that kept Wang working in the Press for so long. Unfortunately, Medhurst had to retire and leave for England in September 1856. In four Chinese poems presented to Medhurst on his departure from China, Wang gave a touching description of their friendship which had prospered over the past eight years. The first two of these poems run as follows:

The farewell-song is sounding,  
 Its melancholy tune whimpers an oversea departing.  
 On a long voyage of twenty-four thousand miles,  
 You are setting out for a remote destination.  
 Forget not the familiar tide from the Huang-p'u River,  
 Nor yet the evening moon rising from the east.  
 The birds are singing among flowers,  
 Deepening the sorrows of separation.

The music is flowing out from the upper chamber,  
 Touching the grief of my heart.  
 Endless thoughts outlast my mind,  
 How can I bear any more  
 The affectionate burden of distant separation!

\* \* \* \* \*

Among many friends you have been a close intimate;  
 Among many scholars from maritime countries,  
 You are the most distinguished.

Your inborn knowledge stands without peer;  
 Your religious teaching has proved  
 The truth of universalism.  
 My worthless ability is honored by your estimate;  
 Yet you never troubled me with any difficult task  
 Beyond my humble knowledge.  
 Eight years of amiable gathering have elapsed,  
 How lamentable that time is running by so fast!<sup>15</sup>

愴調騷歌海外行，迢迢七萬里征程。  
 潮從黃歇江邊熟，月自袁公壘畔生。  
 花底禽言添別恨，樓頭琴語帶離聲。  
 撫今追昔無窮意，更著天涯兩地情。

\* \* \* \*

知己平生首數公，海邦物望最爲崇。  
 學從天授推無敵，道自西來證大同。  
 有媿龔才憐阮籍，不將奇字詫揚雄。  
 八年聚首情如昨，歲月因循感慨中。

The loss of Medhurst was one of the reasons that prevented him from returning to his work at the Press for a long time. However, in 1857, even though Wang had little motivation to return to his work at the Press, it appears that he had no choice but to return. But now his main attention was to a considerable degree diverted to the activities of the Taiping rebellion entrenched in Nanking.

The Taiping rebellion occurred from 1850 to 1864; and a great crisis in Wang's life coincided with the menace of the Taiping rebels felt by Shanghai in the winter of 1861 and spring of 1862. Many Chinese believed that Wang defected to the rebels during this time for taking the civil service examination given by the Taipings in Nanking, and obtained a degree of highest level as *T'ai-p'ing chuang-yüan* 太平狀元.<sup>16</sup> Although Wang denied his desertion and protested his innocence, his sworn brother Chao Lieh-wen 趙烈文 stated in his diary, *Neng-ching-chu jih-chi* 能靜居日記, dated April 11, 1861, that Wang did go to Nanking and Hankow, the area occupied by the rebels, in the spring time of 1861, for almost two months.<sup>17</sup> And Lo Erh-kang 羅爾綱, a distinguished historian of the Taiping rebellion, asserted that Wang joined the British in a trip as a member among the British negotiators, who sought an agreement of non-invasion of Shanghai and its vicinity with the Taiping leaders at this time.<sup>18</sup> In any event, the Ch'ing

government authorities in Shanghai indicted Wang for collusion with rebel leaders. However, his life was saved through the help of William Muirhead and the protection of the Acting British Consul Walter H. Medhurst, Jr. (1823-1885), son of his old friend and benefactor, the Rev. Medhurst. For one hundred and thirty-five days he lived as a refugee in the British Consulate.<sup>19</sup> The Chinese authorities in Shanghai and Peking exerted pressure to have him handed over for punishment. Sir Frederick Bruce, then the Minister Plenipotentiary of the British Legation in Peking, rejected Prince Kung 恭親王 I-hsin's 奕訢 request for Wang's extradition.<sup>20</sup> While the case was still unsettled, the British sent Wang to Hong Kong, where he lived as an exile for twenty-three years.

Because of his academic association, Wang was invited to visit the United Kingdom in 1867 by James Legge, who had returned to Scotland from Hong Kong for a vacation. He sailed from Hong Kong for England on December 15, 1867.<sup>21</sup> With a stop of three days in Cairo and a stop of eleven days in Paris, he arrived in London in early January 1868.<sup>22</sup> It is clear that Wang had quite a useful command of spoken English by this time, although he always disclaimed any special knowledge of the language. Before he left for Scotland, he was invited to give a speech in Chinese to a group of students at Oxford University. The subject of the speech was Sino-British relations. Wang chose to emphasize that communications between England and China had benefited both sides. "China is in the east of Asia while Britain is in the western end of Europe, separated by 75,000 Chinese miles of land and water. . . . But the two countries have crossed the oceans frequently regardless the farthest distance and difficulties, and grown spiritually closer and closer together, for no other reason than that they live in peace and friendship." In response to a question raised by someone in the audience concerning the Way of Confucius as contrasted with the Way of Heaven propagated in the West, he replied:

The Way of Confucius is the way of man. It exists along with the existence of human beings. The Way of Confucius will remain unchanged as long as humanity survives. When people in the West discuss *tao* 道, they trace the origin of everything back to Heaven (God); but the spread of Heaven's Way in this world still depends upon human efforts. No blessings can be expected from Heaven if human beings have not made the utmost efforts. Heaven is impartial, and both ways will

eventually result in one. The divergence of today will soon end by proceeding to the identity of tomorrow. The ideals of both Western and Eastern sages have manifested no difference but are intended to benefit the human world. After all, we are optimistic for the prospective *ta-t'ung* 大同 (Grand Harmony).<sup>23</sup>

Wang arrived in Scotland in the spring of 1868. For the better part of two years he lived very quietly with Legge's family at Dallar in Clackmannanshire. Early in 1870, the time came for Wang and Legge to leave for Hong Kong. Before setting off to London, he went to Edinburgh, where arrangement was made by Legge and some others for him to give two lectures on the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. When the lectures were over, the audience asked him to chant some Chinese poems. He recited Pai Chü-i's 白居易 (772-846) "P'i-p'a hsing" 琵琶行 (The Lute Girl's Song) to satisfy their wishes. On this occasion, he felt surely that it was his honor to be the first Chinese scholar to introduce Confucianism to the West.<sup>24</sup> From Edinburgh to London, he was accompanied by Legge and the latter's second daughter, Mary. Before he took leave of London, he presented to a Museum 11,000 *chüan* of Chinese books he had brought with him.<sup>25</sup> He did not state clearly whether it was the British Museum or the Museum of Oxford University. After he paid several visits to his Western friends in London he returned to Hong Kong via Paris in the spring of 1870.

It is apparent, from the biographical accounts presented above, that Wang T'ao's family background, education, and social environment in his earlier years were not very different from those of numerous intellectuals in each generation. The only difference in his life was that a new kind of career began to develop in the treaty ports after the mid-nineteenth century. Not only did this development help him to work his way out of the dead end of an official career through civil service examination, but it also enabled him to gain exposure to Westerners and Western knowledge. It made him a qualified person to offer the fruits of his researches on the Classics which were incorporated into the works of Legge; that is his chief claim to importance up to the present time.

### 3. Synthetic Commentaries on Chinese Classics

Since Wang T'ao had worked in the London Mission Press in Shanghai

for thirteen years, he became well known to the circle of the London Missionary Society in China. As soon as he escaped arrest and fled to Hong Kong with the help of the British in October 1862, he found a position waiting for him with James Legge,<sup>26</sup> presumably on the recommendation of William Muirhead and Walter Henry Medhurst, Jr., on the basis of his joint contribution of translating the Delegates Version of the Chinese Bible.

Wang's great potential as an assistant in translation of *The Chinese Classics* series, though little apparent when he worked in Shanghai, became manifest soon after his arrival in Hong Kong. From 1849 to 1862, he had only devoted his time and talents to assisting Western scholars in translation of the Bible and of scientific works. After he began his long and intimate association with James Legge, he conducted research exclusively in the field of Confucian studies. His assistance to Legge began with the *Shu Ching* 書經 (Book of Historical Documents). Unfortunately, a number of Wang's works on Chinese Classics are not extant today. It will therefore be necessary to rely partly on Wang's annotated bibliography of his own works entitled *T'ao-yüan chu-shu tsung-mu* 弢園著述總目, published by the Mei-hua Book Company (The Presbyterian Press) in 1889 at Shanghai. Legge's prefaces to his translations of *Shu Ching*, *Shih Ching* 詩經 (Book of Poetry), *Ch'un-ch'iu and Tso chuan* 春秋左傳 (Book of the Spring and Autumn Annals with the Tso Commentary), and *Li Chi* 禮記 (Book of Rites), in which he acknowledged Wang's contributions, and revealed, to some extent, the scope of Wang's research, provide another important resource. Both of these sources are sketchy, but furnish some valuable information concerning Wang's works on Confucian Classics.

In the year 1865 James Legge published the book of *Shu Ching*, the third volume of his translations of *The Chinese Classics*. In the preface, after thanking the Rev. John Chalmers (1825-1900) for help with the work, he went on to say:

... Nor must he fail to acknowledge gratefully the services rendered to him by Wang T'ao, a graduate of Soo-chow. This scholar, far excelling in Classical lore any of his countrymen whom the author had previously known, came to Hong Kong in the end of 1863 (sic.), and placed at his disposal all the treasures of a large and well-selected library. At the same time, entering with spirit into his labours, now explaining, now arguing, as the case might be, he has not only helped but also enlivened many a day of toil.<sup>27</sup>



This was the first time that Wang's scholarship had been publicized and recognized by a Western sinologist. In spite of the fact that his contribution was much appreciated by Legge, Wang did not write any commentary on the *Book of Historical Documents*.

In a letter to his wife written about 1870, Legge also revealed how valuable was Wang's assistance to him:

... By the end of next year the *She King* (Shih Ching) ought to be out. We have printed 380 pages, but the expense is heavy, about 105 dollars a month — including twenty dollars to Dr. Wong, my native assistant. Sometimes I grudge keeping him on, as a whole week may pass without my needing to refer to him. But then again, an occasion occurs when he is worth a great deal to me, and when I have got the Prolegomena fairly in hand, he will be of much use. None but a first-rate native scholar would be of any value to me, and here I could not get anyone comparable to him...<sup>28</sup>

It is clear here that Wang, his name being romanized as Wong in accordance with the Cantonese pronunciation, had been indispensable to James Legge in his work of translation. Their association for eleven years must be at least partially attributable to this.

Wang wrote ten books in the field of Confucian Classics; eight of them were prepared with a view toward being of special assistance to Legge. These include five works on *Ch'un-ch'iu* and *Tso-chuan*, three works on *Shih Ching*, *Li Chi*, and *I Ching* 易經 (Book of Changes), and two collections on the classical works by Ch'ing scholars. All of the works written by Wang will be reviewed, in the ensuing pages, according to the sequence of dates in which Legge's translations of *Chinese Classics* were published.

In discussing his Confucian studies, Wang declared himself, in a letter to his teacher Yen Yü-t'ao 嚴馭濤 in the 1850's, to be an eclectic in his interpretation of the Classics. He said that the Han School of learning, represented by Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127-200) and K'ung Ying-ta 孔穎達 (174-648), suffered from pigheadedness, while the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung School, represented by Ch'eng Ying 程穎 (1033-1107) and Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), fell short of accuracy.<sup>29</sup> Evidently he was not bound to either of these two main schools.

In his complimentary article on James Legge at Legge's departure for England in 1873, Wang commended Legge for his judicious eclecticism,

saying:

... he threaded together, scrutinized, examined into sources, and analysed. He maintained his own views and did not simply follow tradition. In his study of the Classics, he did not favour any one school or devote himself to any one theory, but he made wide and extensive his studies in order to reach a perfect comprehension. General speaking, he took his materials from Ma (Yung) 馬融 (79-166) and Cheng (Hsüan), and blended them with the views of the two Ch'engs (Ch'eng Ying and Ch'eng Hao 程顥) and Chu (Hsi). He was not partial either to the Han School or to the Sung School. . . .<sup>30</sup>

Wang also stood outside the tendency current since the eighteenth century, which increasingly cast doubt upon the authenticity of the text of the *Shu Ching* written in "ancient character" (*ku-wen* 古文), and downgraded it as the forgery of K'ung An-kuo 孔安國 (fl. 156-74 B.C.). He approved Legge's view that the text was authentic, consisting of bequeathed sayings and teachings of ancient times and the Three Dynasties, since these works had been quoted widely in various books of the same periods. Though collated by later generations, they were still worthy of preservation and study.<sup>31</sup> From all of the above information we can acquire a general view of Wang's approach and contributions to the studies of *Shu Ching*.

The fourth volume of Legge's translation of *The Chinese Classics* is the *She King* (Shih Ching), published in 1871 in Hong Kong. The *Shih Ching* is a collection of 305 songs; the circumstances of compilation are uncertain. It has been traditionally believed that Confucius used this collection as one of the texts for his teachings. Later scholars regarded it as a part of Confucian literature.

The language of the poems is difficult because we have so few other sources describing the life and customs of the period. Therefore, commentary has become an indispensable part of the text. The earliest systematic commentary on the poems is that found in the Mao text, which consists of a brief commentary (*chuan* 傳) to each poem, explaining its general meanings and providing philological glosses on individual words and phrases. Presumably these comments represent the views of a scholar named Mao Heng 毛亨 of pre-Ch'in times. Later on, Mao Ch'ang 毛長 (2nd century B.C.), the second Mao scholar, contributed some further comments which were designed to give the songs a political significance and, wherever

possible, to relate them to some specific historic person or event.

Wang's contribution to Legge's translation of the *Shih Ching* is a work entitled *Mao-shih chi-shih* 毛詩集釋 which exists only in manuscript. I have examined this manuscript closely. It is divided into 30 *chüan*, but the pages are not numbered. In the preface, Wang stated clearly that his father was a disciple of Tuan Yü-ts'ai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), and a close and scholarly friend of Ch'en Huan 陳奐 (1786-1863). Both were authoritative scholars in classical studies concerning the *Shih Ching*. Benefiting from his father's tutelage, Wang developed a solid foundation in this field. When he wrote the *Mao-shih chi-shih*, he took Ch'en Huan's *Shih Mao-shih chuan shu* 詩毛氏傳疏 as a basic source and syncretized it, with Tuan Yü-ts'ai's *Mao-shih ku-hsün-chuan* 毛詩故訓傳, and Hu Ch'eng-kung's 胡承珙 (1776-1832) *Mao-shih hou chien* 毛詩後箋. He adopted an approach similar to Ch'en Huan's work: defining the lexical meanings and pronunciations of individual words, identifying various personages, mountains, rivers, trees, flowers, insects, fishes, birds, and discussing the geographical and institutional backgrounds.<sup>32</sup> In order to arrive at satisfactory conclusion, he extended his references, as Legge declared in his prolegomena to the book of *Shih Ching*, to include materials from 124 different works. The only defect in it, Legge incidentally remarked, was its excessive devotion throughout to the views of the Mao text.<sup>33</sup>

Wang praised Ch'en's work, in his autobiography, as being a great accomplishment in the study of Mao's commentary, and said that no one could expect to surpass it. For this reason, Wang gave up his plan to polish his book for publication, and did not enter it in his own annotated bibliography.

In the preface to his *Glosses on the Book of Odes*, Bernhard Karlgren criticized James Legge for having taken so little account of the best philological studies, produced by Ch'en Huan and a few others, on the book of *Shih Ching*.<sup>34</sup> It cannot be denied that Ch'en Huan's work had escaped Legge's attention, and he depended, to a large degree, on Wang's collection of commentaries. But on the other hand, Karlgren himself neglected Wang's *Mao-shih chi-shih*, which approached the *Shih Ching* in similar manner and summarized the fruits of Ch'en Huan's studies. Although the pre-existence of Ch'en's work rendered Wang's commentary obsolete in China, it had nevertheless been incorporated into Legge's translation.

The general pattern of Wang's manuscript appears to be in the traditional vein of what is termed "recording and not creating" (*shu erh pu-tso* 述而不

作); he just collected and arranged various glosses and commentaries under each appropriate poem or stanza of the classical text. However, Wang was not merely a collector without principle. His knowledge and contributions in the field of classical poetry reveal themselves in three aspects. First, he had an extensive bibliographical knowledge which enabled him to select valuable commentaries from among the voluminous works produced by previous scholars. Moreover, by the order of his arrangement of these various glosses and commentaries, he showed his sound judgment on certain commentators' theories. For example, in discerning forgeries, omissions, errors, and obscurities, he emphasized Tuan Yü-ts'ai's findings and conclusions; in elucidating the hidden but significant meaning (*fa-hui i-yün* 發揮義蘊), he depended upon Hu Ch'eng-kung's interpretations; in developing philological connotations, he culled his sources from Ch'en Huan's inquisitive annotations. And finally, if there remained any questionable or difficult points which could not be resolved through reference to these basic sources, he resorted to various studies of other Ch'ing scholars for solutions, or construed the poems himself, relying upon the classical text itself and unbound by the preconceived ideas of any school.

The most lengthy work Wang wrote was a book entitled *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-shih-chuan chi-shih* 春秋左氏傳集釋 of 60 *chüan*. The *Ch'un-ch'iu* (Lu Annals) is a chronicle of events in the feudal state of Lu 魯 covering the years from 722 to 481 B.C. Its commentary, the *Tso-chuan*, also starts in 722 B.C., but carries its narrative down to 468 B.C., covering thirteen more years than the *Lu Annals*. The compilation of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* has been attributed to Confucius, and the *Tso-chuan* is believed to have been the work of a Tso-ch'iu Ming 左丘明. However, nothing is known of who Tso-ch'iu Ming was, when he lived, or what connection he had with the work that bears his name. Wang's book was a collection of various commentaries on both of these classical works. In some instances, Wang expressed his satisfaction with the exhaustive research he had done for his book. In the beginning, he was very anxious to have it printed for the benefit of Chinese readers. One factor preventing its publication was the lack of sufficient funds to defray the printing cost, for it would make a sizable volume. Moreover, study of the classics was not a favored subject in Wang's own day. He often lamented the unseasonal appearance of this valuable work. The combination of these two factors might have led to the eventual dropping of his plan to publish it.

Although this book is not extant today, some aspects of its contents

can be inferred from Wang's own annotated bibliography, mentioned earlier in this paper. He remarked in the annotation that he had gathered an extensive range of source materials and organized them along the lines of Tu Yü's 杜預 (222-284) work entitled *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-shih ching chuan chi-chieh* 春秋左氏經傳集釋. The extant version of Tu's work includes comprehensive explanations for *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and *Tso-chuan* commentary on geographical history, ancient pronunciation, modern (Chin times') pronunciation, lexical meaning, and historical background.<sup>35</sup> Wang stated clearly that he did not depend upon Tu's explanations alone because he found that Tu had neglected the ancient lexical meaning. Apparently he deemed that a number of lexical meanings in the two classical works had changed in the course of time. In order to render satisfactory explanations, it was therefore necessary to devote a section to the study of this field. Wang also felt the need to include some valuable works of different interpretations which appeared after Tu's time, and to syncretize them into a balanced conclusion.<sup>36</sup> Obviously, this reflects his effort to produce a book that would be in close accord with Legge's desire for an objective introduction for Western readers.

Wang also wrote another series of three related treatises, his studies on astronomical phenomena of the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 B.C.). Among these treatises, the *Ch'un-ch'iu shuo jun jih-chih k'ao* 春秋朔閏日至考 of 3 *chüan* examines the first day of lunar months, the intercalary months, and the solstices. The *Ch'un-ch'iu shuo-chih piao* 春秋朔至表 of 1 *chüan* is a table of the first dates of lunar months and the intercalary months. The *Ch'un-ch'iu jih-shih pien-cheng* 春秋日蝕辨正 of 1 *chüan* investigates the solar eclipses mentioned in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and is accompanied by a table of solar eclipses. These three treatises were published by the Mei-hua shu-kuan at Shanghai for the first time in 1889. In recent years, Tseng Tz'u-liang 曾次亮 revised them and dropped twelve short sections which Tseng considered as insignificant or as overlapping discussions. This revised edition was published by the Chung-hua Book Company in Peking in 1959 under the composite title, *Ch'un-ch'iu li-hsüeh san-chung* 春秋曆學三種.

The chronology of the Spring and Autumn period is not a major point in the canon. Nevertheless, the astronomical phenomena mentioned in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and the *Tso-chuan* commentary often appealed to the academic interest of some scholars; they took it as an instrumental knowledge for the study of ancient Chinese astronomy and calendar. Wang's interest

in this field seems to have been stimulated by the unsatisfactory nature of the chronological schemes written by John Chalmers and Yao Wen-t'ien 姚文田. The former's work was the table entitled "Eclipses Recorded by the Ancient Chinese" (*Yu-wang i-lai jih-shih piao* 幽王以來日蝕表) appended to Legge's translation of the *Shu Ching*, and the latter's the *Ch'un-ch'iu ching chuan shuo jun piao* 春秋經傳朔閏表 which has been included in the *Sui-ya-t'ang hsüeh-ku lu* 邃雅堂學古錄. In three letters to John Chalmers written about 1868, Wang pointed out three errors in Chalmers' table, and four errors in Yao's table.<sup>37</sup> He then proceeded in his own task. The basic sources of his studies were the data of astronomical phenomena from the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and the *Tso-chuan* commentary, the scheme of the *Shou-shih* calendar 授時曆 made by Kuo Shou-ching 郭守敬 (fl. 1279), the verified Western dates of solar eclipses from Western sources, and a wide range of related references from works by Tu Yü, Chiang Yung 江永 (1681-1762), Ku Tung-kao 顧棟高 (1679-1759), Shih Yen-shih 施彥士, and numerous others.

In examining the occurrences of winter solstices, the summer solstices, solar eclipses, and lunar eclipses recorded in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and the *Tso-chuan* commentary, Wang found a number of discrepancies existing among these classical works. In sorting out the causes, he took the winter solstice as a starting point to determine the first day of every lunar month, and set the solar eclipse as a fixed point to determine the date of the year's commencement, i.e., the first *shuo jih* 朔日 after *li-ch'un* 立春, on which rested the calculations of intercalary months. After a correct view had been acquired from the data on the movements of the sun and the moon in orbit, the actual causes of discrepancies and mistakes became traceable in a chronological table.

As a result of his investigations, Wang discovered twenty-five astronomical errors in the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals, and seventeen in the *Tso-chuan* commentary. He concluded that due to a lack of knowledge of astronomy on the part of the Lu historian(s), these errors were written into the records and were in turn incorporated into these two classical works. It implied that both the authors of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals and the *Tso-chuan* commentary were not aware of at least some of these mistakes. He further asserted that the *Ch'un-ch'iu* annals used the Chou calendar, and the *Tso-chuan* commentary used the calendar of the Chin feudal state which had been inherited from the Hsia dynasty. The first month of the Chou calendar corresponded to the eleventh month of Chin calendar; thus the former

was two months ahead of the latter. These points had been occasionally mentioned by some scholars such as Yen Jo-chü 閻若璩 (1636-1704), Mei Wen-ting 梅文鼎 (1633-1721), and Chiang Jung before him, but his affirmation was reinforced by systematic verifications. In spite of a number of contradictory and unscientific points contained in these three treatises, his contributions have been assessed by Shinsho Shinzo 新城新藏 and Tseng Tz'u-liang as a major advance in classical scholarship, and Shinsho Shinzo's study in this field is based partly on his achievements.<sup>38</sup>

In his endeavor to answer the questions posed by Legge while they engaged in the preparation of the translation of *Ch'un-ch'iu*, Wang also wrote in question and answer form a treatise of one *chüan* entitled *Ch'un-ch'iu ta wen* 春秋答問. It seems that Wang had no intention of publishing it because the title does not appear in the list of his own annotated bibliography, and its manuscript is not extant today. Legge remarked in the preface of his translation of the *Ch'un-ch'iu* with the *Tso-chuan* that it embraced a wide range of subjects, and that Wang's answers therein were more or less satisfactory, but showed the conservative character of the Chinese mind in regard to views on the Classics which had been current since the Han times.<sup>39</sup>

Legge's translation of the *Ch'un-ts'ew* (*Ch'un-ch'iu*) and *Tso chuen* (*Tso-chuan*) was published in Hong Kong in 1872 as volume V of *The Chinese Classics*; it contains much fuller commentaries than his other translations, presumably because Wang had gathered for him considerably more materials on these two classical works.

To help Legge with the translation of the *I Ching* and *Li Chi*, Wang again prepared two brief collections of commentaries entitled *Chou I Chi-shih* 周易集釋 and *Li Chi chi-shih* 禮記集釋, each of one *chüan*. Both of these exist only in manuscript.

The *I Ching* (The Book of Changes) consists of a manual of divination and ten "wings," or commentaries. The former part has been traditionally attributed to the sage rulers of ancient times and of the Chou dynasty, while the latter part (the "wings") has been believed the work of Confucius or his followers. In the course of time, this work came to be accepted as one of the Confucian Classics. Wang's book was thought to be a collection of commentaries on *I Ching*. But when I examined the manuscript, I found that it is only a brief book explaining different phenomena of divination diagrams, not a collection of commentaries or interpretations. Yet, there is no explanation or commentary whatever on the ten "wings," and the

lack of this part makes the book less comprehensive than Wang's other compilations on the classical works.

The *Li Chi* (The Book of Rites) contains forty-nine sections discussing different topics of rituals. The authorship and the date of composition are both uncertain. These forty-nine sections were put together in the early part of the first century B.C. from various texts of late Chou, Ch'in, and early Han times. Since most of the ideas expressed are those of early Confucianism, this work has been regarded as a part of the Confucian Classics. Wang's collected commentaries, as Legge mentioned in the preface of his translation of the *Li Chi*, contained various interpretations by most of the writers in the 250 years of the Ch'ing dynasty.<sup>40</sup> The manuscript of Wang's *Li Chi chi-shih*, which I examined, however, appears to be spoilt and incomplete. Seventeen sections, 1 to 17, are in the wrong order, and a few papers are damaged by Chinese ink. Since the pages are not numbered, it is difficult to read or to rearrange it into an orderly sequence. Sections 18 to 31 are in good shape, and different interpretations and commentaries appear each under the appropriate paragraph of the classical text. But the manuscript stops at section 31 and does not present commentary on the whole text. It appears that the remaining sections were removed from the manuscript before it reached the New York Public Library.

Legge's translation of the *Yi King* (I Ching) was published in London in 1882, and that of the *Li Chi* in 1885. Neither of them, however, was included in the series of *The Chinese Classics*.

#### 4. Contribution to Classical Studies

Aside from the above-mentioned collections, Wang wrote two more books on the Classics in his late years, presumably for his own interest. Neither of them is extant, but their contents can be inferred from his own annotated bibliography. One was the *Huang Ch'ing ching-chieh chiao-k'an-chi* 皇清經解校勘記 of 24 *chüan*; another, of eight *chüan*, was the *Kuo-ch'ao ching-chi-chih* 國朝經籍志. The *Huang Ch'ing ching-chieh* was edited by Yen Chieh 嚴杰 (1763-1843) under the sponsorship of the distinguished scholar-official Juan Yüan 阮元 (1764-1849). This collectanea contains more than 180 works, all written in the Ch'ing times to explain the Classics from various approaches, and it was printed by 1829 in 366 *ts'e* 冊. Wang's book was a collation on this large compilation. His criticisms of Yen's editorship were many. Specifically, the shortcomings appeared



to him to be: inadequacy resulting from insufficient search of sources, lack of discrimination between excellence and inferiority, unfairness in exclusions, poor choices, ineptitude of classifications, defects of transcription, inferiority in printing, and inadequate correction of proofs. In his opinion, the sequence should have been arranged by periods, and the selection should have been extended to include those discussions on Classics to be found in various literary works and fictions.<sup>41</sup>

It appears that Wang's interest in Classical studies went beyond mere acceptance of it as a part of scholarly routine. In his judgment, the full flowering of these studies in the Ch'ing period far exceeded those of the Han and of the T'ang, and was praiseworthy without peer. In spite of the fact that a second series of collectanea entitled *Huang Ch'ing ching-chieh hsü-pien* 皇清經解續編, compiled by Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙 (1842-1918), was published in 1881, Wang realized that the search was still incomplete and that many valuable works had been excluded. In order to relay an exhaustive list for a possible compilation in the future, he spent more than ten years in editing the *Kuo-ch'ao ching-chi-chih*, which listed all such works not included in the two large collectanea. He divided those works into two main categories, the Han and the Sung schools. Most items had annotations indicating their essential contents.<sup>42</sup>

Enthusiasm for Classical studies was well over in the late Ch'ing period, and thus Confucian works could arouse no more scholarly interest in the intellectual circles. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Wang indicated in his own annotated bibliography that the Classical works were not the highest and favored subjects of studies even in his own day. From the point of view of modern scholarship, however, the academic effect of Legge and Wang devoted to the translation of the Classics was nevertheless significant for its beneficial effect on Sino-Western relations. Their accomplishment had undoubtedly helped Westerners to understand the basic shaping ingredients of Chinese cultural life.

Legge's judicious eclecticism is plausible. In the effort to make English translations of the Classics congenial to Western readers, Wang also shared his non-biased view, and did not undertake any extended argument of the traditional controversy of various schools; their scholarly product appears to be the fruits of many previous studies of various scholars who had interpreted the Classics from different approaches.

It is fairly clear that Wang's assistance was of great value to Legge in two ways. Aside from the collected commentaries and interpretations,

which Legge incorporated into his translations, it is highly probable that Wang promoted the inclusion of Chinese texts and the index of Chinese characters into the translated *Book of Historical Documents*, *Book of Poetry*, and *Book of the Spring-Autumn Annals with Tso Commentary* in their printed forms. The translated *Book of Changes* and *Book of Rites* include neither Chinese texts, nor Chinese index, because these last two translations were published in the 1880's, almost ten years after Wang and Legge's scholarly association had lapsed. And also because Wang collected fewer commentaries on the *I Ching* compared to his previous compilations for Legge, the translated *Book of Changes* seems to be inferior to Legge's other translations of *The Chinese Classics*.

The inadequacy of Wang's commentaries on *I Ching* may be explained in three ways. First of all, he probably had neither a predilection nor academic foundation for *I Ching* studies; there is no mention nor reference to any context or quotation from the *I Ching* in his other writings. The second reason is that he had contributed his books to a museum in England. Therefore, no valuable references were available for him in Hong Kong. The last and more convincing reason is that according to ample evidence his interest had shifted to Western studies upon his return to Hong Kong from Europe in 1870. It seems that he started to write the *Fa-kuo chih-lieh* 法國志略 (A General History of France) immediately upon his return to Hong Kong. And two years later, he began to write another book entitled *P'u Fa chan-chi* 普法戰紀 (An Account of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871). In order to lay a basis for the academic exchange and mutual understanding between China and the West, he was really anxious to disseminate Western knowledge to Chinese readers afterwards.

A number of his contemporaries and later writers reported that Wang was a leading figure among scholars and men of letters in late nineteenth century China.<sup>43</sup> Few people who ever met him found it possible to free themselves from the spell of Wang's humorous and fascinating conversation and refined repartee.<sup>44</sup> In the meantime, however, he frequently displayed insolence to others and often criticized them sarcastically after he had drunk several cups of wine.<sup>45</sup> From these contradictory statements we may still conclude that Wang was primarily a literati who refused to conform to social conventions, and a junior Confucianist without any particular bias towards any school of thought. For this very reason, he was able to interpret the Confucian Classics to the West fairly and eclectically, and not be perplexed by his immersion in Western civilization in the East.

## Notes

1. D. MacGillivray, *A Century of Protestant Missions in China, 1807-1907* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission, 1907) 662-63.
2. Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge, Missionary and Scholar* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1905) 39-40.
3. Wang T'ao, "T'ao-yüan lao-min tzu-chuan" 弢園老民自傳, in *T'ao-yüan wen-lu wai-pien* 弢園文錄外編 (hereafter cited as *Wai-pien*) (Hong Kong: 1883) *chüan* 11, 16b.
4. Wang Tao, "Ch'ih-tu hsu-ch'ao tzu-hsu" 尺牘續鈔自序, in *Wai-pien*, *chüan* 9, 8a.
5. Wang T'ao, *Man-yu sui-lu* 漫遊隨錄, in Wang Hsi-ch'i 王錫祺, *Hsiao-fang-hu-chai yü-ti ts'ung-ch'ao* 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔 (Shanghai: Chu-i-t'ang, 1890-1891) series 11, 531a-b; 532b.
6. Wang T'ao, "Hai-tsoy yeh-yu lu tzu-hsu" 海陬冶遊錄自序, in *Wai-pien*, *chüan* 9, 8b.
7. Wang T'ao, "T'ien-nan tun-sou" 天南遯叟, in *Tun-k'u lan-yen* 遯窟謠言 (Shanghai: Shen-pao kuan, 1875) 1a-2b.
8. Wang T'ao, "Hsien-shih Yang shuo-jen hsiao-chuan" 先室楊碩人小傳, in *Wai-pien*, *chüan* 11, 22a.
9. Wang T'ao, "Hu-shang kan-shih shih" 滬上感事詩, in *Heng-hua-kuan shih-lu* 蘅華館詩錄 (Shanghai: Sung-yin-lu, 1890) *chüan* 1, 17b-18a.
10. D. MacGillivray, 665-66; xvii.
11. Wang T'ao, *Man-yu sui-lu*, in Wang Hsi-ch'i, *op. cit.*, series 11, 533a-b.
12. Wang T'ao, "T'ao-yüan lao-min tzu-chuan," in *Wai-pien*, *chüan* 11, 17a.
13. Lo Hsiang-lin 羅香林, "Wang T'ao tsai Kang yü Chung-kuo wen-hua chih kuan-hsi" 王韜在港與中國文化之關係, in *Hsiang-kang yü Chung-Hsi wen-hua chih chiao-liu* 香港與中西文化之交流 (Hong Kong: Chung-kuo shu she, 1963) 44-5.
14. *Ibid* 43.
15. Wang T'ao, "Sung Mai hsi-shih hui-kuo" 送麥西士回國, in *Heng-hua-kuan shih-lu*, *chüan* 2, 11b-12a.  
 The historical allusions of line 4 of the first poem, and line 5 and line 6 of the second poem in the original are not translated here. Instead, these are presented in literary translation.  
 The allusion Yüan-kung-lei 袁公壘, in the first poem, refers to the Shanghai area which is the eastern end of China. The two allusions in the second poem are names of two distinguished men of letters in Chinese history. The first one is Juan Chi 阮籍 (210-263), and the second one Yang Hsiung 揚雄 (53 B.C. - A.D. 18). Both of these two lines allude to Wang's talent to be equal with those of the two persons.
16. Chien Yu-wen 簡又文, a distinguished historian of Taiping rebellion, published a letter written by a well-known journalist, Hung Hsiao-ch'ung 洪孝充, in the 33rd issue of *I ching* 逸經 fortnightly; in which both of them asserted that Wang T'ao passed the Taiping civil service examination and obtained his title of the third degree, *Chuang-yüan*, with supreme honors.
17. Chao Lieh-wen, *Neng-ching-chu jih-chi* (Taipei: Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1964) I: 522.
18. Lo Erh-kang 羅爾綱, *T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo shih chi-tsai ting-miu chi* 太平天國史記載訂謬集 (Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1955) 138-39.

- Stanley Lane-Poole, *Sir Harry Parkes in China* (Taipei: Cheng-wen Publishing Co., 1968 reprint of 1901 edit.) 160-273.
19. Wang T'ao, "Shu-ai 述哀," in *Heng-hua-kuan shih-lu, chüan* 3, 13a.
  20. Ku-kung po-wu-yüan 故宮博物院, *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien* 文獻叢編 (Peiping: Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, 1928-1943) series 20, section of Taiping rebellion, 1a-4b.
  21. Wang T'ao, "T'ao-yüan lao-min tzu-chuan," in *Wai-pien, chüan* 11, 18b.
  22. Wang T'ao, *Man-yu sui-lu*, in Wang Hsi-ch'i, *op. cit.*, series 11, 539b-540a; 543a-b.
  23. *Ibid* 543b-544a.
  24. *Ibid* 555a.
  25. Wang T'ao, "Tai shang Ting Chung-ch'eng shu" 代上丁中丞書, in *T'ao-yüan ch'ih-tu* 設園尺牘 (Shanghai: Sung-ying-lu, 1893) *chüan* 8, 4a.
  26. Wang T'ao, "Yü Ying-kuo Li-ya-ko hsüeh-shih" 與英國理雅各學士, in *T'ao-yüan ch'ih-tu, chüan* 6, 15a.
  27. James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Jardine, 1865) vol. III, preface, viii.
  28. Helen Edith Legge 43.
  29. Wang T'ao, "Ch'eng Yen Yü-t'ao Chung-han shih" 呈嚴馭濤中翰師, in *T'ao-yüan ch'ih-tu, chüan* 1, 7b-8a.
  30. Wang T'ao, "Sung Hsi-ju Li-ya-ko hui-kuo hsü 送西儒理雅各回國," in *Wai-pien, chüan* 8, 4a.
- The English translation of this article was done by Lindsay Ride, see his "biographical note," in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: University Press, 1960) 16-17.
31. Lindsay Ride 17.
  32. Wang T'ao, *Mao-shih chi-shih*, unpublished manuscript written in 1863 and 1864, preface, no page number, held by the New York Public Library.
  33. James Legge, vol. IV, prolegomena, 176.
  34. Bernhard Karlgren, *Glosses on the Book of Odes* (Stockholm: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1964), section of "Glosses on the Kuo-feng Odes" 75.
  35. Tu Yü, *Ch'un-ch'iu ching chuan chi-chieh*, in *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* 四部叢刊 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1917-1936) 30 *chüan*.
  36. Wang T'ao, *T'ao-yüan chu-shu tsung-mu*, under the entry of "Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-shih-chuan chi-shih" 4b.
  37. Wang T'ao, "Yü Chan Yüeh-han shu" 與湛約翰書 in *Ch'un-ch'iu li-hsüeh san-chung* 1-15.
  38. Tseng Tz'u-liang, "Kai-pien shuo-ming" 改編說明, in Wang T'ao, *Ch'un-ch'iu li-hsüeh san-chung* 1-15.
- Shinsho Shinzo, *Toyo temmon gakushi ken-kyu*, trans. Shen Chün 沈濤, *Tung-yang t'ien-wen hsüeh shih yen-ch'iu* 東洋天文學史研究 (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1928) 325-27; 342-44.
39. James Legge, vol. V, prolegomena, 145-46.
  40. *Li Chi*, trans. James Legge (London: 1885, and New York: University Books, 1967), translator's preface lxxxii.
  41. Wang T'ao, *T'ao-yüan chu-shu tsung-mu*, under the entry of "Huang-Ch'ing ching-chieh chiao-k'an chi" 5b-6a.
  42. *Ibid.*, under the entry of "Kuo-ch'ao ching-chi-chih" 6a.
  43. Cheng Chen-to 鄭振鐸, *Ch'a-t'u-pen Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh shih* 插圖本中國文學史 (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1961) 834.
  44. Ch'iu Yü-lin 裘毓麟, *Ch'ing-tai i-wen* 清代軼聞 (Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-

chü, 1915) *chüan* 5, 8-9.

Tsou T'ao 鄒弢, *San-chieh-lu pi-t'an* 三借廬筆談, in *Pi-chi hsiao-shuo ta-kuan hsü-pien* 筆記小說大觀續編 (Taipei: Hsin-hsin shu-chü, 1962) 6: 5765-6.

45. Ch'en Chen-kuo 陳鎮國, "Ch'ang-mao chuang-yüan" 長毛狀元, in *I ching* (July 5, 1937) 42.

