DECIPHERING JAMES LEGGE'S 'CONFUCIANISM'

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Critical Studies

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

August, 2019

ABSTRACT

DECIPHERING JAMES LEGGE'S (1815-1897) "CONFUCIANISM"

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This thesis argues that Legge's 'Confucianism' represents his reformation on the teaching of Confucius by making the ancient religion in the Chinese classics Confucius' principal instruction. Legge's reformation has its hermeneutical and contextual legitimacy, it nonetheless embeds Legge's missiological attempt at a constructive Christian encounter with the Chinese Ruism (儒家思想, the Doctrine of Literati School). Through his reformation, Legge anticipates a missiological approach in China that can draw on what is good in the Chinese classics, supplement what is wanting or deficient in the teaching of Confucius, and unravel to Chinese people "what truth there is in Confucianism about God and His moral government."[1] Legge's reformed 'Confucianism' also implies his solution to the Term Question of rendering Elohim/God in translating the Bible into Chinese. Legge's nuanced 'Confucianism' was not understood by the missionaries of his time, nevertheless it is conflated with Max Müller's *the Sacred Books of the East* (50 volumes, 1879 – 1910) and develops into a major aspect of the Sinological notion of Confucianism.

Legge's idea to "reform" and "revolutionize"[2] Confucianism is conceived in his controversial 1877 paper delivered to the Missionary Conference in Shanghai. Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" (1879 -1885) as his contribution to *the Sacred Books of the East* marks his textual reformation of the Chinese classics into religious scriptures of 'Confucianism'. His 1880 Lectures on Confucianism showcases his theological construction of 'Confucianism' that connects the Chinese ritual practices and moral teaching of Confucius back to their originator and creator – Shang Di (Supreme Ruler, God). [3]

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[1] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. A Paper Read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai on May 11th, 1877* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, London: Trübner & Co., 1877), 11.
[2] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*, 12.
[3] James Legge, *the Religions of China. Confucianism and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity*. (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1880).

ABSTRACT

Legge's *Chinese Classics* project (1861 -1872) is more than translation. Legge creates a new set of Chinese Classical commentaries by participating in the Chinese classical commentary tradition and introducing biblical exegetical tradition, literary criticism and Continental hermeneutics into his works. Legge's *Chinese Classics* project results from the aftermath of his Shang Di (Supreme Ruler) advocacy in the Term-Question debate of the 1850s on translating God into Chinese. It is Legge's continued effort to prove his argument and to fulfill his duty to God that "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses him name" (Exodus 20:7).

Legge's scholarship on Chinese Classics and Chinese religion is still meaningful today. Legge's biblical criticism methods and hermeneutical principles provide new perspectives on interpreting Chinese classical texts. More importantly, Legge's scholarship is related to three term questions concerning China-western encounters that have been essential to the mutual understanding. Apart from the Term Question on the proper Chinese term of translating God, there is also the term question of rendering the Chinese term Ru Jiao (the Teaching of Literati School) into English. The third debate concerns whether or not Confucianism/Ru Jiao is religion/*zong jiao* (Chinese expression for "religion"). The last debate is controversial as it is built on two equally controversial term issues: the Sinological Confucianism vs. Chinese Ru Jiao and religion in its western sense vs. *zong jiao* as the Chinese characterization of religion. These three controversies constitute the fundamental barriers in the western-China communication.

Confucianism is not Ruism (the Doctrine of Literati School). Confucianism as an English coinage represents western efforts at studying, interpreting and characterizing the Chinese Ruist classical texts within western disciplines and academic principles. In its Chinese context, the Ruist School consists of an unbroken tradition of pedagogically transmitting, scholarly interpreting the truths contained in the classics, and making practical use of lessons taught by ancient sages for present time. In a sense, they are as different as that between the religious studies on Christianity and the Christian theological studies.

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EXCERPTS ON THE SINOLOGICAL GENESIS OF CONFUCIANISM

"(Of the Religion of the Chinese): There are three principal Sects in the Empire of China: i. The Sect of the learned, who follow the Doctrine of the ancient Books, and look upon Confucius as their Master …"

"It is observable, that in these ancient Books we find Proofs that the primitive Chinese had Knowledge of the Supreme Being, and payed him religious Worship for a long Series of Ages... But Confucius revived it, by giving fresh Reputation to the ancient Books; especially the Shu king, which he recommended as an exact Rule of Manners."

P. J. B. Du Halde, *a Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary*. 1738.

"The primitive religion of China or, at least, those opinions, rites, and ceremonies that prevailed in the time of Confucius, (and before that period all seems to be fable and uncertainty) may be pretty nearly ascertained from the writings that are ascribed to that philosopher."

John Barrow, *Travels in China*. 1804.

"儒释道三教: "The literati, the religion of Fuh, and the religion of Taou, constitute three forms of doctrine, or sects"; 儒家 (Ru Jia): the sect of the learned."

Robert Morrison, *a Dictionary of the Chinese Language*. 1815.

"The Chinese have no generic term for religion. The word keaou, which means to teach, or the things taught, doctrine or instruction, is indeed applied by them to the religious sects of Taou and Budha, as well as to the ethical sect of Confucius."

Robert Morrison, "The state religion of China," *the Chinese Repository*. 1834.

". . . as we have before observed that Confucianism is rather a philosophy than a religion, it can scarcely be said to come into direct collision with religious persuasions."

John Francis Davis, *the Chinese*. 1836.

"The religions of China are three; viz. the systems of Confucius, Laou-tsze, and Buddha… In fact, it is a misnomer to call his (Confucius') system a religion, as it has little or nothing to do with theology, and is merely a scheme of ethics and politics, from which things spiritual and divine are uniformly excluded."

W. H. Medhurst, *China; Its State and Prospects*. 1838.

"Hence Confucianism is, and has long been in the fullest sense of the terms the national, orthodox philosophy and morality of the Chinese people… the dominant Confucianism merely endures Taouism, Buddhism, and Mahommedanism as erroneous and superstitious systems of beliefs prevalent among, because most suited to people of uncultivated or weak minds, … The cause of the prevalence of Taouism, Buddhism, and Mahommedanism in China, in spite of discouragements, lies in the fact that Confucianism says little or nothing of a supernatural world or of a future existence."

Thomas Taylor Meadows, *the Chinese and Their Rebellions*.1856.

"The State-religion, as remodelled by Confucius . . ., Confucianism".

Charles Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters*. 1858.

"Those religions are three: - Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism . . . . II. Confucianism is the religion of China par excellence, and is named from the great sage who lived in the fifth and sixth centuries B. C."

James Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*. Volume III. 1879.

"I use the term Confucianism, therefore, as covering, first of all, the ancient religion of China, and then the views of the great philosopher himself, in illustration or modification of it, his views as committed to writing by himself, or transmitted in the narratives of his disciples. The case is pretty much as when we comprehend under Christianity the records and teachings of the Old Testament as well as those of the New."

James Legge, *the Religions of China*. 1880.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In completing this thesis, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor David Jasper, for leading me into the academic career, for leading me to find James Legge the Scottish missionary and the translator of the Chinese Classics, and for finding my own spiritual inspiration. Without Professor Jasper's continuous encouragement and guidance, I never would have made the decision to break away from my mundane but lucrative professional career. It turned out to be a decision that I had not regretted and will not regret. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to Professor Charles D. Orzech, who was working as Reader in Religion, Conflict, and Transition in Theology and Religious Studies Department of the University of Glasgow during my research period and are now back in the States as the Professor at Colby College. Professor Orzech greatly broadened my knowledge in religious studies, and provided helpful advice and encouragement on my research content and arguments. During my stay at Glasgow, I also had great help from Ruth Dunster from the Theology and Religious Studies Department who kindly reviewed and proofread most of my thesis despite of the affliction of her illness. Thank you Ruth and wish you well soon. Dr Donald Mackenzie also enlightened me a lot on the Scottish religious and philosophical traditions. We have shared a lot of wonderful coffee time.

I also had the honour of meeting Professor Lauren Pfister at Hong Kong Baptist University and obtained useful advice from him concerning Legge's participation with the Chinese Classical commentary tradition. Hong Kong Baptist University library also keeps some valuable collection of documents concerning James Legge due to Professor Pfister's study on Legge. The rare document *the Chinese part of James Legge's library* provided immense guidance in my understanding Legge's depth and breadth of his encounter with China. Finally, my thanks go to Professor Thierry Meynard of Sun Yat-Sen University with whom I have met briefly and who has enlightened me on the Jesuit writings on Confucius.

Finally, I am most indebted to my family, especially my wife and my daughter for their supporting my study decision, for giving me the spiritual consolation while I am away from Beijing for almost four years. This thesis could not have been made possible without them.

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ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, NOTES ON CHINESE PINYIN ROMANIZATION AND CHARACTERS, USAGE OF THE TERM CONFUCIANISM

Acronyms:

CC: *the Chinese Classics*

CC1 (1861): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 1, 1861. Containing *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean*

CC1 (1893): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 1, 1893. Containing *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean.*

CC2 (1861): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 2, 1861. Containing *the Works of Mencius*

CC3.1 (1865): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 3 – Part 1. 1865. Containing first parts of the Shoo King, or the Book of Historical Documents

CC3.2 (1865): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 3 – Part 2. 1865. Containing the fifth part of the Shoo King, or the Book of Chow, and the indexes

CC4.1 (1871): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 4 – part 1. 1871. Containing the first part of the She-King, or the Lessons from the States, and the Prolegomena

CC4.2 (1871): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 4 – part 2. 1871. containing the second, third and fourth parts of the She-King

CC5.1 (1872): *the Chinese Classics*. Volume 5. The Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso Chuen.1872. Part 1: Containing Dukes Yin, Hwan, Chwang, Min, He, wan, Seuen and Ch'ing; and the Prolegomena

CC5.2 (1872): *the Chinese Classics.* Volume 5. The Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso Chuen.1872. Part 2: Containing Dukes Seang, Ch'aou, Ting, And Gae, with Tso's Appendix; and the Indexes

SBE: *the Sacred Books of the East*

SBC: *the Sacred Books of China*

SBE3/SBC1: *the Sacred Books of the East* Vol.3*/ the Sacred Books of China: the Texts of* Confucianism*. 1879. Part 1: the Shu King, the Religious Portions of the Shih King, the Hsiao King*

SBE16/SBC2: *the Sacred Books of the East* Vol.16/*the Sacred Books of China: the Texts of* Confucianism*. 1882. Part 2: the Yi King*

SBE27/SBC3: *the Sacred Books of China: the Texts of* Confucianism*. 1885. Part 3: the LI Ki, I – X*

SBE28/SBC4: *the Sacred Books of the East* Vol.28 / *the Sacred Books of China: the Texts of* Confucianism. *1885. Part 4: the LI Ki, XI-XLVI*

Abbreviations:

Legge, *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God* (1850): James Legge. *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language*. Hong Kong Register Office.1850.

Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* (1852): *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits: with an Examination of the Defense of an Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos, into the Chinese Language, by William J. Boone, D.D.* Hong Kong. 1852.

Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity* (1877): *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. A Paper Read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai on May 11th, 1877.* Shanghai: -Kelly & Walsh., London: - Trübner & Co. 1877.

Legge, *Religions of China* (1880): James Legge. *The Religions of China. Confucianism and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity*. London; Hodder and Stroughton. 1880.

Notes on Chinese Pinyin Romanization System and Chinese Characters:

When Legge worked on his *Chinese Classics* project, he had to follow the orthography of Morrison and Medhurst as the Wade-Giles Romanization system for Chinese mandarins was still in development. In his *Sacred Books of China* (1879 - 1891), Legge started to follow the pronunciation of Thomas Wade. In my thesis, I will adopt the standard Chinese Pinyin Romanization used in mainland China. I will maintain the original orthography when quoting Legge and other references and will give the Chinese Pinyin in brackets.

In the introduction part, a list of principal Chinese characters and terms instrumental in understanding Legge's works is given with brief explanations. With Regard to their definitions, unless otherwise specified, they are taken from *The Modern Chinese Dictionary* (6th edition. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 2012)[4].They will appear in the thesis in their standard Chinese Pinyin system except for the cases of quotations.

With regard to the quotations from the Bible, unless otherwise specified, they are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of The New Oxford Annotated Bible (Fully Revised Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2010).

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[4] 《现代汉语词典》第六版. (北京: 商务印书馆. 2012).

With regard to the translation of quotations from Chinese texts, unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Chinese personal names start with surnames, followed by given names. For example, the author of the ancient Chinese dictionary is Xu Shen (许慎), with the surname of Xu, and the given name Shen. I will also address him as Xu when his name is repeated in the same passage.

Usage of the Term Confucianism in This Thesis

In this thesis, the term Confucianism is used in two different contexts. When it is used as a sinological term in the western writings, it is represented in the normal Roman form. When used in Legge's terminology as including the ancient religion of China, it is represented in the single quotation marks. As for its counterpart expression within the Chinese context, the terms Ruism (儒家思想, the Doctrine of Literati School), Ru Jiao (儒教, the Ruist Teaching) or Ru Jia (儒家, the Ruist School) will be used.

INTRODUCTION

The Argument and Objective of this Thesis

The thesis argues that James Legge's 'Confucianism' is part and parcel Legge's reformation on the teaching of Confucius which features the ancient religion of the Chinese classics as Confucius' principal instruction. Legge's missiological reformation on Confucianism was conceived after some thirty years' investigational translation on the Chinese classics in connection with his Term-Question argument. Legge's reformation was based on the western hermeneutical principle in interpreting what Confucius intended to teach. His 'Confucianism' also embedded his solution to the Term Question debate and to the challenge Christian missionaries faced in China. Legge's reformed 'Confucianism' was not comprehended by the missionaries of his time. Nevertheless, his formulation of 'Confucianism' as a religion was established through his compilation of the religious "Texts of Confucianism" in Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*, and constituted a major aspect of the sinological notions on Confucianism. Legge's statement about 'Confucianism' as a religion became a prelude to a similar debate among the enlightened Chinese intellectuals around the turn of the 20th century, ushering in the Chinese intellectual contemplation on western religion within the Ruist discourse.

In embarking on my discovery journey on Legge's missionary encounter with the Chinese Ruism (the Doctrine of Literati School) and his textual encounter with the Chinese classics that principally shape the orthodox tradition, I seek to unravel, among other things, a seemingly pedantic yet meaningful question: How does the Chinese parlance of Ru Jia/Ru Jiao (儒家/儒教, literally *the Literati School/Teaching*) end up being represented by Confucianism in English vocabulary? It is a pedantic question because it is not a question to the native English speakers, to whom Confucianism clearly has a Chinese origin, deriving from the term "Confucius" which is "Latinised from the Chinese 孔夫子".[5] It is interesting because its Chinese

[5] See the first edition of *Oxford English Dictionary –A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles: Founded mainly on the materials collected by the Philosophical Society* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1888

counterpart –Ru Jia (Ruism)—doesn't come from Confucius at all, though Confucius is deemed an important figure in this scholarly (Ru) tradition. More interestingly, major English dictionaries today have diverse definitions of Confucianism which again don't agree with their Chinese counterpart of Ruism. By exploring Legge, this thesis aims to uncover the textual history which leads Legge to his influential definition of Confucianism.

To distinguish the Sinological term of Confucianism and its Chinese counterpart of Ruism in terms of their references and applications, I will employ "Confucianism" in connection with its western or Sinological context and use "Ruist School" or "Ruism" in the sense it is understood within a Chinese context in this thesis.

The Problem with English Term "Confucianism" and Chinese "Ruism"

A cursory survey over the definition of Confucianism in major modern English dictionaries reflects the diverse opinions on defining Confucianism. The *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd ed. 2010) describes it as "a system of philosophical and ethical teachings founded by Confucius and developed by Mencius", while the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD. 9th ed. 2014) depicts it as "a religion based on the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius." *Collins English Dictionary (*Collinsdictionary.com. *COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary*) is more political by offering two definitions to cater for its different readers. The definition for its British readers reads, "The ethical system of Confucius, emphasizing moral order, the humanity and virtue of China's ancient rulers, and gentlemanly education." The definition for its American audience runs different, being "the ethical teachings formulated by Confucius and introduced into Chinese religion, emphasizing devotion to parents, family, and friends, cultivation of the mind,

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-1933). In the second volume (1893), Confucianism is defined as being derived from *Confucius*, which "is Latinized from the Chinese 孔夫子, meaning "K'ung the (our, your) Master (or philosopher), K'ung being the surname of the great Chinese sage." The dictionary alludes to James Legge's statement on the Jesuit publication of three Chinese classics in 1687 under the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia sinensis Latine exposita* for its origin. It also quotes Legge's 1880 definition of Confucianism: "I use the term Confucianism as covering, first of all the ancient religion of China, and then the views of the great philosopher himself in illustration or modification of it."

self-control, and just social activity." The most perplexing description of Confucianism appears in *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* where after summarizing Confucianism as "the way of life propagated by Confucius . . . and followed by the Chinese people for more than two millennia", the passage proceeds to say that Confucianism is "a Western term that has no counterpart in Chinese."[6] By way of such expression, the article in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* either negates its otherwise good sociological description of Chinese Ruist tradition, or deems Confucianism a notion of western imagination, being both a description about China yet a concept that does not exist in Chinese. As pointed out in the abstract and will be further illustrated in the thesis, the problem with Professor Tu Weiming (杜维明, 1940 -), the author of the article and a renowned Harvard scholar on Confucianism, is that he mistakes his sociological description of the Chinese Ruist tradition for the sinological notion of Confucianism, which principally represents the textual studies on Confucius and on Chinese Ruism from outside that tradition.

There are Chinese counterparts for the English term "Confucianism", only they represent the two sides of the same coin. Both *Oxford* and *Collins* dictionaries render Confucianism into Chinese as Ru Xue (儒学, the studies on Ruism). This Chinese rendition, again, is problematic due to the existence of the established Chinese term Ru Xue, which is defined in its Chinese context as "the scholarship of Ruist School".[7] On the China side, the majority of Chinese bilingual dictionaries translate Confucianism either as Ru Jia (儒家, the Ruist School/Theory), or Ru Jiao (儒教, the Ruist teaching), or "the theory of Confucius*"* (孔子思想), or all of them. In terms of the respective definition of these Chinese terms, the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (6th ed. 2012) thus defines Ru Jia: "(It is) one of the theoretical schools of the ancient pre-Qin period (before the 3rd century BCE) with Confucius as its representative. It advocated the rule of government by the institution of propriety and ritual practices (礼制). It emphasized on the conformity with traditional social relations (伦常)." The dictionary explains Ru Jiao as the same as Ru Jia, the former being adopted to replace

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[6] Tu Weiming, "Confucianism,"Encyclopædia Britannica Website. Publisher: Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Confucianism. Date of publication: March 08, 2019. Access date: June 29, 2019.

[7] "儒学: 儒家的学术. (Ru Xue: the scholarship of Ruist School)." *The Modern Chinese Dictionary*. 6th edition.

the latter around the 5th-6th century when Ruism is ranked side by side with Buddhism and Taoism as the *three jiao* (三教, *three teachings*).

By comparing Confucianism in its English context and Ruism in Chinese text, it can be seen that Confucianism is readily accepted by Chinese dictionaries as the English rendition for the Chinese Ruism. On the other hand, the former focuses on Confucius and his theory while the later denotes a broader Ruist theory. Besides, the English term "Confucianism" tries to characterize, though unsuccessfully, the disciplinary nature of the theory of Confucius; the Chinese "Ruism" focuses on specific value propositions of the theory while shun from placing it into any discipline other than referring to it ambiguously as "academic". In short, Confucianism in its English sense is not a translation of the Chinese Ruism.

As the first edition of *Oxford English Dictionary* (see footnote 4*)* alludes to James Legge in its definition of Confucianism in the western discourse, it is instrumental to explore and decipher why and how Legge arrived at his definition about Confucianism.

The Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six Chapters and a Conclusion, in which I place Legge's writings within his biographical and historical context to examine how Legge's personal background and the historical events impacted and influenced Legge's textual encounters with China, leading to his hermeneutical and missiological reformation on Confucianism. Of these historical events, his dramatic missionary encounter with the Term-Question debate served the turning point in Legge's missionary career. The Term-Question debate, to put it concisely, is the early 19th century debate among the protestant missionaries in China over what is the most appropriate Chinese term to translate God in their effort to revise the Bible Chinese translation. The thesis argues that the Term-Question debate and its dire consequences set Legge off on his thirty-year-plus translational investigation into the Chinese classics and sowed the seed for his later reformation on Confucianism. The other important historical event concerns Legge's 1877 paper to the first Protestant Missionary Conference in Shanghai. Written in response to the request of the Conference on the pre-assigned topic of "Confucianism in relation to Christianity",

the paper triggered Legge's missiological contemplation on Christianity's challenging encounter with Chinese Ruism and gave birth to his idea to reform Confucianism while solving the enduring Term-Question debate. Such reformation was embodied in Legge's compilation of the religious texts out of the Chinese classics in Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* and by way of his addressing them properly as "the Texts of Confucianism". It was further reflected in Legge's reformed concept of Confucianism, in which the ancient religion of China became the principal teaching of Confucius. By putting Legge's writings back into historical perspective, I am able to finally decipher Legge's 'Confucianism'. When he stated, "Confucianism is the religion of China par excellence,"[8] what Legge intended to say was: "The religion of China is Confucianism *par excellence."*

In the first chapter on the biographical account of Legge, I try to identify the key aspects and incidents in Legge's personal, missionary and academic life which are relevant to his encounters and engagement with Chinese classics. Legge's unique training and talent in classical translation during his school years prepared the foundation for his participation in the Term-Question debate, for his methodical and critical translation of the Chinese classics, and for his hermeneutical reformation of Confucianism. Legge's Nonconformist congregational church background enabled him to take independent and anti-authority position during the Term-Question Debate and in his interpretation of the Chinese classics. Also important was his influence by the Scottish Enlightenment thinking and common-sense philosophy which was showcased in his academic approach to the Term-Question issue and his adoption of biblical criticism and hermeneutics in interpreting the Chinese classics.

Chapter Two presents both the historical perspective and the textual examination of the Term-Question debate during the 1840s-1850s. The history of the event indicates that the Term-Question debate was far from a fair and academic debate on a translation issue. Ecclesiastical authority, denominational interests, medium, and politics played considerable part in influencing the missionary opinions and their final votes. The unfortunate aftermath of the Term-Question debate set Legge off on

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[8] James Legge, Trans. Max Müller, Ed. *The Secred Books of the East, Vol 3: The Sacred Books of China, the Texts of Confucianism. Part I: The Shu King, the Religious Portion of the Shih King, the Hsiao King* (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1879), preface, xiv.

his translational investigation of the Chinese Classics in his continued search for evidence of his argument. In the textual examination on Legge's argument much focus is made on Legge's 1850 letters and comparisons are made of the major proponents in terms of their theological principles and translational principles. The Term Question issue was complicated by the predominant participation of missionary writers and their confounding Elohim/God as a meaningful term in the Hebrew/English language with specific Biblical connotations and Elohim/God as the Being in Judeo-Christian religion with its theological attributes. Many participants interpreted the question as: "Is Shang Di of China our true God?" or "if the Chinese language doesn't have a name for our true God Jehovah, can we make our true God claim the name and right of the generic term of Chinese *shen* (神, *spirits, spiritual energy and gods*)?" Understanding these misconceptions and their significances are the key to contextually understanding Legge's arguments and claims. Legge's Shang Di advocacy began as a translational argument for Shang Di as philologically the most corresponding term to Elohim. Nevertheless, Legge's donnish way to meet each and every challenge of his opponents, and his foolhardy effort to "meet this objection by an assertion to the contrary effect (that) Shang Di par excellence of the Chinese is the true God"[9] led to his reputational downfall. At the end of the chapter, I venture my own opinion on the less discussed, yet gradually triumphant term *shen* in the Chinese translation of the Bible and its "pernicious effects".[10] Contrary to the pro-*shen* party's expectation for God to take over *shen*, the rendition of *shen* for God in the Chinese translation of the Bible arguably induced early Chinese enlightenment thinkers' biased opinion on Christianity as superstitious teaching of *gui shen* (鬼神, *ghosts and spirits*). This biased opinion in due time partly contributed to the 20th century Chinese scholarly and political prejudices in ranking Christianity in particular, and religion in general, as part of superstition. The Term Question is far from over today, with mainstream Chinese Bible translations adopting either *shen* or Shang Di.

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[9] James Legge, *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (Hongkong: Hongkong Register Office, 1850). Letter V, 41.
[10] James Legge, *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* (Hong Kong: Hong kong Register Office, 1852), 1.

Chapter Three argues that the aftermath of the Term-Question debate served the catalyst for Legge's life-time translational search for God in Chinese classics, resulting in his heroic *Chinese Classics* series (1861-1872). Legge's endeavour on the Chinese Classics not only constituted his continued argument on the Term Question, but was also in fulfilment of his duty to God that "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuse his name (Exodus 20:7)".

In Chapter Four I describe Legge's amazing textual quest for the historical Confucius, a practice that was analogous to the 19th century European scholarly quest for the historical Jesus. By doing this Legge intended to decipher both the historicity and religiosity of Confucius, which Legge anticipated would provide decisive evidence to his Term Question argument. Legge's encounters with historical figure of Confucius were mixed feelings of anticipation, appreciation and frustration. In the meantime, Legge's immersed reading and empathetic contemplation on Confucius resulted in a strange bond with the Chinese sage. In his later contemplation on the Christianity's missiological encounter with China, Legge placed Confucius as the central figure in his effort at reforming the Chinese religion. Legge not only tried to view Confucius as the man "raised up by God for the instruction of the Chinese people",[11] but also turned the ancient religion of China in the Chinese classical texts into the principal teaching of Confucius, i.e. Leggge's 'Confucianism'.

Chapter Five focuses on the examination of Legge's *Chinese Classics* project and the translational/interpretational principles Legge applied to his works. This chapter argues that Legge's *Chinese Classics* works are more than translations. Legge intimately participated in the Chinese classical commentary tradition of his time and produced a set of Chinese classical commentaries of his own interpretation. In this sense Legge is as much an interpreter of Chinese classics as Zheng Xuan (郑玄) or Zhu Xi (朱熹) are the Chinese classical interpreters. Furthermore, Legge applied the Biblical commentary and critical traditions of the 19th century, adding new methods and different perspectives to interpreting Chinese classics. More interestingly, Legge

[11] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. A Paper Read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai on May 11th, 1877* (Shanghai: -Kelly & Walsh; London: - Trübner &Co., 1877), 10.

employed in his works the hermeneutical principles that resembled strikingly those of Schleiermacher, which enabled Legge new perspectives on the scope and content of Confucian teachings.

In the Sixth Chapter, I track and explore Legge's chronological employment of Confucian terms in his writings to try to decipher his eventual formulation of his new 'Confucianism'. Contrary to some scholarly opinion that Legge championed the term, Legge in his early works exhibited an unusual reticence and restraint on using Confucianism, exemplified by the total absence of the term throughout his Chinese Classics. His first adoption of Confucianism in his controversial 1877 paper—*Confucianism in relation to Christianity*—was a topic requested by the 1877 Missionary Conference in Shanghai. The topic nonetheless set Legge off on a renewed contemplation on how Christianity's encounter with China could make constructive use of the teaching of Confucius, while solving the Term Question issue, leading to his idea of reforming Confucius and his teaching. Such reformation was made possible by his participation in Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* project and represented by his compilation of the religious texts out of the Chinese classics in his *Sacred Books of China*. It was further strengthened by his employment of "Texts of Confucianism" for such religious texts. Despite of the renewed controversy around his 1877 paper and the increasing consensus by his contemporaneous sinologists that Confucianism was an ethical and political system, Legge's religious reformation on Confucianism was amalgamated with Max Müller's historic compilation of comparative religions and became a widely known concept. In the meantime, in the earliest Chinese intercourse with the west, Confucianism was adopted by Chinese scholars to render their Chinese Ruist views and opinions, resulting in the confused usages and notions of Confucianism.

In the concluding chapter, I clarify some of the misrepresentations and misinterpretations of Legge. Legge's scholarship on Chinese classics and Chinese religion also leaves as many lessons as his legacy. Many of these lessons are connected with similar term questions in the China-western encounters. The consequence of the Term Question on rendering God into proper Chinese term has significant impact on the 20th century Chinese perception on the nature of Christianity in particular and of religion at large. Legge's claim about Confucianism as the religion of China took up a similar form among the Chinese intellectuals

around the 20th century and is still echoing today. The one interesting issue worth further research is, how the rendition of God into *shen* in the Chinese Bible translation has impacted and shaped the Chinese perception and characterization of *zong jiao* (Chinese rendition of *religion*) as superstition, and how such characterization further impeded the willingness and courage of the Chinese to have a true belief!

The Methods Used in the Thesis

In writing this thesis, I employ cross-disciplinary methods to present the various contexts in which western writers attempt to describe and characterize the Chinese Ruism within their respective fields, and how these attempts and historical incidents interacted with one another and influenced Legge's eventual formulation of a reformed 'Confucianism'. These methods include historical method, comparative method, textual method and translational method.

Historical method plays a major role in revealing the changes in the course of European interest in Chinese Ruism. It started as a translational effort by the Jesuit writers to depict the Chinese Ru Jiao of their own time as "the Sect of the Learned" within the religious category. It evolved into focused reading and interpretations by 19th century missionary and Sinological scholars on the Confucian texts themselves, henceforth the diverse sinological opinions of Confucianism. In my tracking the influences of the historical studies of Ruism on Legge, I explored Legge's own library and read as many of Legge's readings as possible to try to locate the sources of Legge's opinions and how he digested, accepted or modified them. [12] These readings include earliest Jesuit writings on Chinese religions which were translated and printed in England during the 17th and 19th centuries. My historical approach revealed how historical incidents likely prompted Legge to embark on his *Chinese Classics* project, and how his eventual reformation on Confucianism both inherited and refined the Jesuit narrative on the Chinese religion. Legge built on the Jesuit description of the ancient religion of China, renamed it as 'Confucianism', and

[12] *A Catalogue of Books on China Being the Chinese part of the Library of the Late Rev. Prof. J. Legge. M.A. etc.* (London: Luzac & Co., 1899). I am able to obtain this catelogue from Hong Kong Baptist University library thanks to the help of Professor Lauren Pfister.

substituted it for Ru Jiao (the Sect of the Learned) as one of the "three" "religions of China".[13]

Comparative method is another useful tool in identifying how Legge's Confucianism inherited yet distinguished from his predecessors and peers. Such comparison reveals an interesting Sinological development in the 19th century European discourses that was based on a misrepresented Jesuit expression regarding the Chinese religion. When the Jesuit introduced to the west the "three sects of religion in China" in the 17th and 18th century, they followed the Chinese vernacular of "the three teachings" (*san jiao*).[14] They did not treat the principal sect of their times— "the Sect of the Learned" (*Ru Jiao*) truly as a religion.[15] Neither did they treat Confucius as a religious founder. After the turn of the 19th century, such "Sect of the Learned" was replaced by "religion of Confucius" (John Barrow, *Travel in China*. 1804), "the Confucian School of atheistic Materialists" (Robert Morrison, *Chinese Miscellany*. 1825), "Confucians" (John Francis Davis, *the Chinese*. 1836) and "the system of Confucius" (W.H. Medhurst, China: *its State and Prospects*. 1838). They all followed the Jesuit narrative of three religions of China yet challenged or rejected the religious identity of the Confucian system. This comparative method also revealed the consistent distinction made by Legge between his employments of Confucian terms from those of his contemporaneous writers. Legg's Confucian terms were only related to Confucius alone and had nothing to do with later followers of Confucius, or "the Sect of the Learned (Ru Jiao)".

Textual method and translational method are frequently used in my thesis as the sinological studies on China and Chinese religions are principally textual and translational process. The textual method revealed some interesting aspects about what Legge's concealed intention about his Chinese Classics project and about his nuanced expression of "Texts of Confucianism". For example, Legge's motivation

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[13] James Legge, SBE3/SBC1. Preface, xiii.
[14] J. B. Du Halde, *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary, together with the Kingdoms of Korea, and Tibet: containing the Geography and History (Natural as well as Civil) of those countries*. Translated from French into English. In two volumes. (London. Printed by T. Gardner in Bartholomew-Close, 1738), 639.
[15] Ibid.

for his Chinese classics was principally a religious one, being aimed at his search for God in Chinese classics. However, Legge tried to hide his intention by omitting the term "religious" from his various intentions for examining the Chinese classics.[16] Besides, Legge's silence on Confucianism throughout his *Chinese Classics* works, Legge's mysterious advocacies regarding supplementing "Confucian books" and revolutionizing the people's religion in his 1877 paper, and Legge's final interpretation of his 'Confucianism' can only be understood and comprehended by way of the textual and translational perspectives.

The Originality of the Thesis

The originality of the thesis is illustrated by the facts that most of the arguments put forward in this thesis have either not yet been touched upon or fully elaborated by other Legge scholars. These arguments include 1: Legge's *Chinese Classics* project constitutes Legge's continued effort at arguing for and vindicating his Shang Di advocacy; 2: Legge's *Chinese Classics* project is more than a translation project. It forms a new set of Chinese classical commentaries by way of Legge's combining the Chinese classical commentary tradition with biblical commentary format and hermeneutical principles; 3: Contrary to many missionary charges that Legge advocated supplementing Confucianism with Christianity in his 1877 controversial paper, what Legge intended was a missiological approach to implant the ideas of God in the ancient religion of Chinese classics, leading the Chinese eventually to the full knowledge of Christianity; 4: Legge's 'Confucianism' represented his missiological reformation on the teaching of Confucius by turning it into the religious teaching of the Chinese classics; 5: the thesis further ventures the opinion that the rendition of God into *shen* in the Chinese translation of Bible most probably exerted the pernicious influence of shaping the Chinese scholarly view on Christian religion as a superstitious belief. The influence is still reflected in the Chinese definitions for the terms *shen* and *zong jiao* (Chinese counterpart of religion).

[16] James Legge, CC1 (1861), Preface, vii. When Legge repeated his intentions in CC5.1 (1872), "religious" was the first among his many intentions on translating Chinese classics. See CC5.1 (1872), 51.

The originality of these arguments is made possible principally through my connecting Legge's scholarly endeavours to the Term-Question debate and its consequences to Legge. Such connection answers many seemingly incongruous opinions between his *Chinese Classics* project and his texts of Confucianism. Such connection also partially made his 1877 paper more intelligible. What's more, Legge's missiological proposition in his 1877 paper also implied Legge's ingenious solution to the Term Question debate. By missionaries' adopting Chinese Shang Di for God in their missionary work and in the meantime supplementing it with the ideas of God, Chinese Shang Di would in the end be transformed into the proper rendition of God.

The Key Chinese Terms Explained

This section lists a number of recurring Chinese terms that are fundamental for understanding Legge's argument in the Term-Question debate, his interpretations on the Chinese classics, and his hermeneutical reformation on Confucianism. Brief explanations of these terms are given below to assist readers with their focused reading. For each term, its modern dictionary definitions are given in the brackets, followed by an overview of its historical definitions, their contextual significances in the Ruist discourses and in Legge's works. [17]

***tian* (天)**

(*Noun***.** sky; measurement of a day; a season; nature; in superstition, the overlord and creator of natural world; in superstition, places where spirits/gods, Buddha and immortals live; the court of ancient kings. *Adj*. overhead; natural or relating to that which is acquired naturally).

tian is one of the many primitive Chinese character that are still in active use today. The ancient dictionary *Shuo Wen* thus defines it, "the topmost, thehighest and sublimest; it follows its constituents of "一", meaning 'the first', and "大", meaning 'great'."[18] *Kang Xi Dictionary* quotes the philosopher Xun Zi (荀子, c. BCE 310 – BCE 235), "*tian* does not have a substantial form. It refers all that is above the surface

[17] For the modern definitions of Chinese terms, *the Modern Chinese Dictionary* (现代汉语词典. 6th edition. Beijing: the Commercial Press, 2012) is consulted. For their historical difinitions, the work of Xun Shen (许慎. c. CE 58 –147) titled *Shuo Wen* (说文解字*, Definitions and Explanations of Characters*), and *the Kang Xi Dictionary* (康熙字典. Compilation in 1716) are consulted.

[18] *Shuo Wen*《說文》: 天: 顚也. 至高無上，从一大也".

of the earth." Another quotation from the philosopher Shao Yong (CE.1011 -1077) has more influence on its current usage, "There is no other *tian* but the nature."

tian in the ancient classics of *Shu Jing* (*the Classic of Historical Documents*) and *Shi Jing* (*the Classic of Poetry*), besides its direct reference to sky, is also used with Di (the Ruler) or Shang Di (the Ruler on High) in referring to a supreme power. *tian* gives birth to man, confers man with moral senses. *tian* commands, disciplines, protects, rewards and punishes. The rightful rulers are chosen by the commandment of *tian* and deemed the sons of *tian.* Their primary duty consists of the reverence of *tian*. Their ignorance of worshipping *tian* will cause the wrath of *tian*, and lead to calamities to the people and the downfall of rulers. Also in the classic of *Li Ji* (*the Record of Rites*), sacrifice to *tian* is stipulated as the prerogative of sons of *tian* the emperors.

The classical descriptions of *tian* brought up long debates both among catholic missionaries in the 17th century and the protestant missionaries of the 19th century as to whether or not the ancient Chinese have the knowledge of God. Legge in his 1852 essay resorted to the classical descriptions and *tian* and Shang Di for his argument that the Chinese knew the true God, and concluded that Chinese Shang Di was the term with which the Chinese expressed their knowledge about God. Later in his work, Legge also deduced from the etymological constitution of *tian* that Chinese ancient religion originated as a monotheist religion.

Di (帝)

(In religious belief and mythology, the creator and overlord of the universe; monarchs, emperors.)

Shang Di (上帝)

(In ancient China, it refers to the *shen* [spirit, god] in heaven who lords over all things; the God worshipped in Judaism and Christianity, who is considered to be the creator and overlord of all things in universe.)

The terms Di (the Ruler), and Shang Di (the Ruler on high) are also primitive Chinese characters that have been well preserved in the modern Chinese language. Shang Di is first mentioned in the ancient classic of *Shu Jing* (*the Classic of Historical Documents*) in which the legendary king Shun (c. 22rd century BCE), upon accepting the throne from his predecessor, made special sacrifice to Shang Di

as well as to a host of other spirits. They are used in the *Shu Jing* and *Shi Jing* (*the Classic of Poetry*) copiously and interchangeably with *tian* in referring to a Supreme Being. Di is explained in *Shuo Wen* as "the judge, the style name for the one who rules all under heaven." Major quotations in the *Kang Xi Dictionary* also include, "Di is another appellation of tian. *tian* is styled as Di because, like a judge, *tian* is boundless and free from human feelings. Being impartial to all things and all men and being fair and thorough in the judgement of words and deeds, it is henceforth styled as Di". Still in the *Kang Xi Dictionary*, "Di (帝) is also known as Shang Di (上帝), which is *tian* (天)." It is worth pointing out that given the circular interpretation of *tian* and Shang Di in the Chinese classical commentary tradition, Shang Di has gradually be replaced by *tian* in the Ruist discourse except for the cases of direct quotation from the ancient classics. The term Di was employed as the title of emperors since the late 3rd century BCE.

During the Term-Question debate of 1840s-1850s, the terms Di, especially Shang Di, became one of the key advocacies. Legge was the strongest advocacy for Shang Di. In Legge's argument, the object of Chinese worship is *tian*, which is not the true God. However, when the appellation of Shang Di is used, there appears a Chinese term that philologically corresponds to Elohim by its signifying power and dominion and relations. The phenomenon is the same as the addition of Deus in Latin to Jupiter or of Theos in Greek to Zeus. Most opponents of this advocacy either held that Shang Di was a heathen god like Jupiter, or that it referred to the material sky, which was idolatry.

***shen* (神)**

(Noun. In religious belief, the creator and ruler of the universe; in superstition, the immortals and spirits of the departed great; mythological figures with super powers; manifestation of personal quality, stamina; expression of mental states. Adj. superb, mysterious and amazing; smart.)

Historically, despite the wide application of *shen* in literary works and in popular religious life, its enquiries in the Ruist discourses are scanty, metaphysical and equivocal. *Shuo Wen*'s defines *shen* as "the *shen* in heaven, who bring forward all things." The commentator of the dictionary adds, "*tian* is responsible for issuing down breath that sets all things into motion, thus (*shen*) is said to bring forward all things." *Kang Xi Dictionary* quotes *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Changes*) as saying "*shen*

is the state of things which is neither *yin* (negative and weak in nature) nor *yang* (positive and strong in nature)". *Kang Xi Dictionary* also defines *shen* as a general appellation for ghosts, spirits. *shen* is also widely used as an adjective in literary works for describing the unknown yet wondrous phenomena.

In the ancient Chinese classics of *Shu Jing*, *shen* is employed largely in the sense of its plural form such as "*hundreds of shen"* (百神); it is used as parallel beings with human beings; it is frequently used in conjunction with ghosts, and in connection with natural existences in which they are believed to reside and operate the powers of these natural existences. In popular belief, most of the objects of worship are called *shen*.

shen is another major contender for translating Elohim/God in the Term-Question debate of 1840s-1850s. The advocates of *shen* built their argument on the linguistic basis that *shen* was a generic term like Elohim, and that by adopting *shen,* Elohim would claim all the rights of the polytheistic class of gods and make it to mean the true God. To the anti-*shen* party like Medhurst and Legge, *shen* meant spirits and spirits only. *shen* didn't mean god, neither could it be made to mean God. It was a wrong term.

Ru (**儒,** a literati, a student of Chinese classics**)**

(Also refers to Ru Jia; literate in old Chinese.)

Ru Jia **(**儒家, the Ruist School, Ruism)

(A school of academic theory in pre-Qin period of BCE 6th century – BCE 3rd century, being represented by Confucius and emphasizing the rule of government by propriety and by the observance of traditional social relations.

Ru Jiao **(**儒教**,** the Ruist Teaching, Ruism**)**

(Also refers to Ru Jia. The new name came into use during the 5th-6th century to synchronize it with Buddhism and Taoism as part of the *san jiao*, or "*three teachings"*)

Ru is one of the fundamental Chinese terms that have shaped the Chinese world views, the national characters and the academic tradition. Ru is defined in e *Shuo Wen* as "being pliant; a name for men of skills." *Kang Xi Dictionary* defines it as the general name for those who engage in literary studies, or scholars.

Notwithstanding the laconic dictionary explanations of Ru, there are numerous discourses on this unique category of men in the historical Ruist discourses. The members

of Ru distinguish themselves from the mass of people by their literacy, their moral superiority, their value to the state governance as well as their aspiration to be Jun Zi (a name of moral reputation) and sage. [19] In the ancient classic of *Li Ji (the Record of Rites*), a book is devoted to a dialogue between Confucius and the Duke of Lu on the conduct of Ru. Confucius in the dialogue describes Ru as versant in knowledge, loyal and trustful to his sponsor-to-be, attentive to proper manners and rituals, benevolent and righteous in virtue. Confucius is further quoted in *the Confucian Analects* as saying "you shall make yourself a Ru after the model of Jun Zi".[20] The philosopher Xun Zi (c. BCE 313 –BCE. 238) in the work of his namesake further broadens the base of Ru to embrace all those who distinguish themselves from the 'vulgar people' by their literacy. While he divides the Ru into various levels subject to their proficiency in classical knowledge and their utilities, Xun Zi also associates different levels of Ru with matching social hierarchy, "the great Ru are the kings and their chief ministers, the minor Ru are vassal lords, civil officers and the civil clerks. The rest, being the mass of people, are those who engage in craftsmanship, husbandry, and trade and retail businesses."[21] When the philosopher Zhu Xi (CE 1130 -1200) singles out *Da Xue* (*the Great Learning*) from the classic of *LI Ji* to make it one of the Four Books, the ultimate career path for Ru is set out. "… (Achievement of) personal refinement is followed by regulation of his family/clan; (good) result in this qualifies him for the governance of states; (the success) in this will lead to the ultimate tranquillity of all under heaven."[22] Understanding the entrenched Ruist moral-political integration, with which achievements in classical literacy and in self-cultivations serve fundamental means to obtaining political prominence, are crucial to understanding the way ancient classics are interpreted. Ruism is fundamentally a Ru-ideology centred discourse on Confucius and Chinese classics, not the vice versa.

The modern Chinese definition of Ru Jia is problematic in confining Ru Jia to a historical phenomenon and academic theory while ignoring its continued and dominant influence on the Chinese world-view well into the 20th century. An ancient view given by the historian Ban Gu (CE. 32 – 92) probably offers a more fitting description of this social

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[19] The Chinese term *Jun* Zi literally means princely man. It was agreed in the first century as being an appellation for man of virtue. See《白虎通德论》.
[20] "孔子. 论语. 雍也. "女為君子儒，無為小人儒"
[21] 荀子. 儒效. [大儒者，天子三公也；小儒者，諸侯、大夫、士也；眾人者，工農商賈也].
[22] 子思. 大学. […身修而後家齊，家齊而後國治，國治而後天下平];

elite group. Ban thus summarizes the origin and nature of Ru Jia: "Those of Ru Jia are likely of the former government function of instructors, whose role it is to assist their kings in complying with the changes of *Yin* and *Yang* and in performing their teaching and transforming roles. They avail themselves freely of the Six Jing (classics), paying special attention to such moral aspects as benevolence and justice therein. They make allusions to ancient founding fathers of Yao and Shun, and praising the accomplishments of King Wen and King Wu. They consider Confucius their founding teacher and treat his opinions as authority due to his most profound knowledge."[23] Ban rightfully pointed out the nature of this group. The primary function of Ru Jia is to serve their kings. They make use of the ancient classics to instruct their kings and transform the people. The ancient classics are their tools and text books for achieving their service, not the object of their scholarly enquiries. Since the 7th century CE, the Ruist educational system and doctrinal orthodoxy were fully institutionalized by the imperial government and inherited by succeeding dynastic reigns until the fall of the last Qing dynasty in 1912.

When the early Jesuit writers in China introduced Ru Jia *(*known as Ru Jiao in their time) into Europe, they rendered it as "the Sect of the Learned" or "the Literati Class", and put their emphasis of the description on the "modern Ru Jia". The protestant missionaries of the early 19th century began their own interpretation of Ru Jia by investigating the classics of Ru Jia for themselves. Their principal reading on the Four Books which centred on the sayings of Confucius led them to employ "the Confucian system*"* or "the Confucian School" to represent and to characterize Ru Jia. In contrast, Legge's interpretation of Confucian terms from the very beginning was confined to Confucius alone. Legge's 'Confucianism' was neither his contemporaneous sinological interpretation of the Confucian system, nor the Chinese Ru Jia.

The Four Books and Five Jing (四书五经, the Four Books and Five Classics**)**

When Legge in 1861 titled his translation project as *the Chinese classics*, he introduced in the prolegomena that these classics were known in China as "the Five Jing and the Four Books". Legge' titling of his project implied two meanings. Firstly, the Four Books were not Confucian books, i.e. written by Confucius; secondly, the Five Jing were not

[23]班固. 汉书.艺文志. [儒家者流，蓋出於司徒之官，助人君順陰陽明教化者也。游文於六經之中，留意於仁義之際，祖述堯舜，憲章文武，宗師仲尼，以重其言，於道最為高.]

proprietarily of the classics of the Ruist School, but the classics above all Chinese literature and above all sects. In the official Chinese history records the books of the "Jing" section top all other literary or philosophical categories and form the independent section of Canonical Books (经部). Legge's translations accurately reflected these features of Chinese classics. His translation title ushered in a new term today to represent the Chinese ancient literary monuments –the Chinese Classics (中国经典).

The Five Jing (五经, the Five Classics) [24]

Legge's introduction of the Chinese classics in 1861 nonetheless altered the order with which the Chinese classics were addressed in the Chinese vernacular of his time, which was "the Four Books and the Five Jing". Legge's alteration illustrated his own opinion on the comparative value of respective part of the classics and his participation in the interpretation of Chinese classics.

Indeed, the Five Jing in their canonical position precede the Four Books for well over a thousand years. The Five Jing refer to the five ancient literary works that have been passed down from antiquity, namely, *Shi Jing* (诗经, or *the Classic of Poetry*), *Shu Jing* (书经, or *the Classic of Historical Documents*), *Li Ji* (礼记, or *the Record of Rites*), *Yi Jing* (易经, or *the Classic of Changes*), and *Chun Qiu* 春秋 (*the annals of Spring and Autumn*).

The authorship of the Five Jing has long been a subject of debate within the Ruist classical studies tradition. One school of this tradition hold that the classics are the legacy of ancient sage the Duke of Zhou. They view Confucius only as a historian, compiler and teacher of them;[25] the other school maintain that they are the "making" of Confucius, who is both the creator and teacher of the classics. It is worth pointing out that during the time of Jesuits in China, the former school's opinion was prevailing, whereas in early 19th century the opinion of the latter school became popular among critical classical scholars. A strong argument of them is the testimony of the historiographer Sima Qian (c. BCE 145 – not

[24] The old designation is Six Jing (six classics), which also include *Yue Jing (*乐经, or *the Classic of Music)*. *Yue Jing* is believed to be long lost. Thus, in the 2nd century BCE, the Emperor *Wu* established the ranking positions of Doctors for the studies of these classics, there were named *the Doctors of* Five Jing.

[25] Jiang Boqian 蒋伯潜, A Concise Summary of the Classical Studies 经学纂要 (Nan Jing: Zhengzhong Printing House, 1946. 南京: 正中书局. 1946.)

available) who in his epochal *Book of a Great Historian* (史记) attributed much of composition, compilation or prefix of the Five Jing to Confucius.[26]

In terms of the content and value scope of the Five Jing, it needs to be pointed out that the value and content scope of these classics are stereotyped as early as the texts themselves, either in the words of Confucius or by the ancient historians. Those valuations greatly shape the way with which historical Ruist classical scholars read and study them. Sima Qian in his *History* quotes Confucius as saying, "the Six Arts (Classics) are unified in the central theme of governance. *Li* (*Li Ji, the Record of Rites*) is for regulating man's conducts; *Yue* (*Yue Jing*, the lost *Classic of Music*) is for bringing forth harmony; *Shu* (*the Book of Historical Documents*) is for teaching historical lessons; *Shi* (*the Classic of Poetry*) is for expressing thoughts; *Yi* (*the Classic of Changes*) is for rendering wondrous transformations; and *Chun Qiu* (*the Anals of Spring and Autumn*) is for setting up the principles of justice."[27] Another historian Ban Gu (CE. 32 – 92) associated the Five Jing each with the teaching of a specific moral value (benevolence, justice, propriety, knowledge and trust).[28] While different opinions exist with regard to what moral lesson is associated with each classic, such view on the moral intention of the classics and on their efficacious application in ruling the individual conduct and the nation overwhelmingly shaped and confined the scope in which the Five Jing are interpreted and taught in the Ruist tradition. A brief introduction to these Five Jing is given below

Shi Jing (**诗经,** *The Classic of Poetry*)

Shi Jing is a collection of the most antiquate poems, covering the period of as early as the 11th century BCE down to the 6th century BCE, with some poems arguably older. According to the historian Ban Gu (CE. 32 – 92), it was the duty of the ancient kings to have regular collections of odes and songs from across their kingdoms to facilitate their understanding the trends and feelings of the people. The ancient kings then would evaluate

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[26]司马迁. 史记. 孔子世家. [故書傳、禮記自孔氏], [古者詩三千餘篇，及至孔子，去其重，取可施於禮義…三百五篇孔子皆弦歌之], [吾自衛反魯，然後樂正，雅頌各得其所], [孔子晚而喜易，序彖、繫、象、說卦、文言], [至於為春秋，筆則筆，削則削，子夏之徒不能贊一辭。]

[27]司马迁. 史记. 滑稽列传. [孔子曰：「六藝於治一也。禮以節人，樂以發和，書以道事，詩以達意，易以神化，春秋以義。」

[28]班固. 汉书.艺文志. [六藝之文：樂以和神，仁之表也；詩以正言，義之用也；禮以明體，明者著見，故無訓也；書以廣聽，知之術也；春秋以斷事，信之符也。五者，蓋五常之道，相須而備，而易為之原]

their administrations and make improvements accordingly. This classic contains a total of over three hundred poems and is divided into "Lessons from the States (国风)", "Odes from the Kingdom (雅)", and "Odes of the Temple and Alters (颂)". Some lyrics and love poems are still cited not unfrequently today. While Confucius tried to summarize the classic in one sentence as "having no depraved thoughts",[29] Legge found in it abundant evidence that "the ancient Chinese had some considerable knowledge of God".[30]

Shu Jing **(书经,** *the Book of Historical Documents*), **or *Shang Shu* (尚书)**

Shu Jing, also known as *Shang Shu* 尚书 (the Books of Most Ancient Times), is a collection of records of the earliest Chinese kings concerning their deeds, their speeches, edicts and public decrees. It starts from the legendary figure Yao (尧, c. BCE 22nd or BCE 21st century), Shun (舜, c. BCE 21st or BCE 20th century) and spans a period of more than 1500 years down to the 7th century BCE. Besides the records of major historical events on the dynastic changes, wars and state institutions initiated by the ancient kings and their able ministers, many books in it describe ancient kings' discourses on the mandate of *tian* or Shang Di as the foundation for the legitimacy in upholding or overthrowing sovereignties. There are also many texts recording their prayers and sacrifices to Shang Di and consequent rewards. Some of these records are not unlike those of the Books of Kings in the Old Testament. The government institutions recorded in the classic of *Shang Shu* serve the fundamental model for later Chinese dynasties well into the last dynasty of Qing (1636 - 1912). This is exemplified by the existence of the Board of Rituals as a key function of the government whose duty it is to observe the ancient conventions on the national and local sacrificial proceedings. On the other hand, while Ruist scholars believe the classic to contain the highest teaching on the sagely reign over Chinese nation, Legge discovered the religious origin of the Confucian moral teaching, "The great God has conferred (even) on the inferior people a moral sense."[31]

Li Ji **(礼记,** ***the Record of Rites*****)**

Li Ji is a collection of rules on the performance of various ritual and social ceremonies, interspersed with discourses on their meanings and significances. Its final

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[29] Confucian Analects 论语. 为政. [子曰：詩三百，一言以蔽之，曰思無邪].
[30] James Legge, CC4.1 (1871), 131.
[31]《尚书》, 商书, 汤诰: "惟皇上帝，降衷于下民".

edition being formed by the classical scholar Dai Sheng (戴圣, c. BCE 1st century) from ancient historical documents, it formed one of the three ancient Chinese books on rituals and propriety. In the Tang period (CE 7th century – 10 century) *Li Ji* replaced *Zhou Li* (周礼, *the Ritual Institution of Zhou*) to become properly one of the Five Jing. It is worth mentioning that Legge found in this classic many biographical accounts of Confucius as well as his not infrequent conversations on religious matters, including a most important argument for Legge's Term-Question debate: "By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they served God".[32] On the other hand, while the Chinese Ruist scholars deem both the classics and Confucius as highest authority, some tend to believe that the sayings of Confucius contained in the *Confucian Analects* are more authoritative than those in *Li Ji*. Confucius is quoted in the *Analects* as refraining from subjects on "extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings".[33]

***Yi Jing* (易经, *the Classic of Changes*)**

Yi Jing is of the most enigmatic books among the Five Jing. It consists of sixty-four hexagrams of connected and broken lines, which is believed to be developed from the eight trigrams by Fu Xi (伏羲), a legendary figure of Chinese ancestors, and refined by the King Wen (周文王, around BCE 12nd century – 11th century) into the sixty-four hexagrams with their textual interpretations. The appendixes, also known as the *Ten-Wings* (十翼), are said by Sima Qian the Historian to be the work of Confucius. In terms of its nature, a summary quote from the twentieth century classical scholar Jiang Boqian (蒋伯潜, 1892 - 1956) probably represents some of the Ruist opinion. "Yi (易), being originally a book of divination for practicing witchcraft, is transformed by Confucius into a book of philosophy by his commentary."[34] It is also worth mentioning that the Rational Ruist school (理学) represented by Zhu Xi developed their metaphysical theory of Li (理, universal principle) based on a previously less known term of "Tai Ji" (太极, the Grand Terminus) in the appendix of *Yi Jing*. Early Jesuit writers and the 19th century

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[32] 《礼记》, 中庸: "郊社之禮，所以事上帝也".
[33] 《论语》, 述而, "子不語怪，力，亂，神".
[34] Jiang Boqian 蒋伯潜, *An Overview of the Thirteen Classics* 《十三经概论》 (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Printing House, 1983. 上海古籍出版社, 1983), 47.

sinologists believed it to be the Chinese atheistic interpretation on the First Cause. This interpretation became one major opposition to Legge's advocacy of Shang Di as God.

***Chun Qiu* (春秋, *the Annals of Spring and Autumn*)**

Chun Qiu ranks the last among the Five Jing, yet it claims the most testimonies concerning its Confucian authorship. Both Mencius (孟子, c. BCE. 372 –BCE 279) and Sima Qian claim to cite Confucius's own words as to his authorship. Besides, this book is unanimously agreed by Ruist scholars to have laid out Confucius's measurement on and judgement of what is justice. Being a briefest account of historical events between BCE 722 – BCE 468 in the state of Lu, it is always presented together with three different commentaries, with that of Zuo Qiuming the most influential. As will be discussed later in the thesis, Legge's translation on this book contained both the text and Zuo's commentary. Legge is probably among the few scholars who challenged the so-called principles of justice of Confucius.

Si Shu (四书, The Four Books)

***Lun Yu* (论语, *The Confucian Analects*) (); Meng Zi (孟子, *The Work of Mencius*); *Zhong Yong* (中庸, *The Doctrine of the Mean*); Da Xue (大学, *The Great Learning*)**

It is not until the 12th century that the Song philosopher Cheng Yi (程颐, CE 1033 - 1107) claimed to have rediscovered "the lost book of Confucius"[35] of *Da Xue*. He also claimed *the Doctrine of the Mean* as "the most inner teaching of Confucius".[36] Cheng did not recover the two books, which had been contained in the classics of *Li Ji*. He elevated the two books by attributing them to Confucius. Cheng also commented on Mencius that "his greatest contribution to the world lies in his discourse on the goodness of human nature".[37] Following Cheng's line of discourse, Zhu Xi (CE. 1130-1200) started his strongest advocacy for *the* Four Books as "the stepping stones leading to the understanding of the Six Classics".[38] He also made his *Collected Comments on the Chapters and Sentences of the*

[35]朱熹, 《 四书章句集注》 (上海: 上海书店影印出版, 1987), 1. "子程子曰, 大学, 孔氏之遗书".
[36] Ibid, "此篇乃孔门传授心法".
[37] Ibid, 孟子序. "(程子又曰):'孟子有大功於世，以其言性善也'".
[38]朱熹, 《朱子语类》 (北京: 中华书局, 1988), "四子，六經之階梯".

Four Books. When his commentaries became the standard text books in the national civil office examination in the 14th century, the popularity and influence of the Four Books gradually surpassed that of the Five Jing (classics). A brief introduction of these Four Books is given below.

***Lun Yu* (论语, *The Confucian Analects*)**

To quote Legge's own words for the meaning of the title and his rendition, "'Discourses and Dialogues'; that is, the discourses or discussions of Confucius with his disciples and others on various topics, and his replies to their inquiries… I have styled the work 'Confucian Analects' as being more descriptive of its character than any other name I could think of."[39] By thus titling the book, Legge was indicating implicitly that this book only contained selected portion of the teaching given by Confucius. According to the early historian Ban Gu (CE. 32 – 92), after the death of Confucius, his disciples and/or his disciples' disciples compared their own notes, edited those sayings and compiled them, thus the name of "sayings and replies" (论语). In terms of its content scope, Legge in his biographical account of Confucius admitted that Confucius did not treat any religious subject. Legge only examined his opinion on government. In comparison, a modern Confucian scholar Qian Mu (1895 -1990) attempts to reclassify its content into fourteen categories by the subject contained in each chapter. According to Qian's reclassification, the top five topics are those relating to biographical records of Confucius; those describing his devotion to moral preaching, education and personal cultivation; those relating to his views on how to deal with his surroundings and various social relations; those relating to his view on study; and those relating to his views on truth, on virtues, on words and deeds, and on friendship. One remark by Qian is worth highlighting when he says that "the twenty chapters of *The Confucian Analects* constitute the one and only classic with which to study the conduct and doctrine of Confucius, this has been unanimously agreed for the past two thousand years".[40] In Qian's opinion, Confucianism in its proper Ruist sense is contained solely in *The Confucian Analects*.

***The Work of Mencius* (孟子)**

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[39] James Legge, *CC1 (*1861), the Body of the volume, 1.
[40] Qian Mu (钱穆), A *Biography of Confucius* (孔子传) (Beijing: Jiu Zhou Publishing House, 2011), 143.

The Work of Mencius is named after Mencius who is purported to be the author of the book. . Previously listed in the official history books as part of the subsection of Ruist discourses, it is elevated to the canonical status mostly through Zhu Xi's effort. In terms of his political opinions, Mencius put forward the brave idea that "the people are the most important element in a nation; the spirits of the land and grain are the next; the sovereign is the lightest".[41] Mencius is most noteworthy for arguing that human nature is intrinsically good. While most missionary writers of the 19th century opposed this view as being against the biblical teaching, Legge tried to defend the view of Mencius by associating it with that of Bishop Butler.

***Da Xue* (大学, *the Great Learning*) and *Zhong Yong* (中庸, *the Doctrine of the Mean*)**

Da Xue and *Zhong Yong* are originally two books (chapters) included in the Classic of *Li Ji* (*Record of Rites*). The authorship of *Da Xue* is attributed by the historian Sima Qian to Zeng Shen (曾参, BCE 505 –BCE 435), a disciple of Confucius. Since its elevation to the classical statue, the book is arguably most influential of all Chinese classics in shaping the Ruist view on life by its stipulating a uniform paradigm of specific steps and ultimate aims for the Ruist individual to engage in life. These steps and aims form what is well known in the Ruist tradition as "the Three Aims and Eight Steps" (三纲八目).[42].

Zhong Yong is attributed by Sima Qian to be the work of Zi Si (子思, c. BCE 483 – BCE 402), the grandson of Confucius. This essay distinguishes itself by focusing on discussion of cultivating one's nature, which is given by way of *tian ming* (天命, Mandate of Heaven). The path to attain one's nature is to follow the golden mean, and the means to attaining truth is through sincerity (诚).

The Thirteen Jing (十三经, the Thirteen Classics**)**

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[41] Mencius (孟子), *the Work of Mencius*《孟子》: "民為貴，社稷次之，君為輕."

[42] The Ruist Three Aims (三纲) are "to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the populace; and to rest in the highest excellence"; the Eight steps (八目) are the eight progressive steps with which one advances in his life: " 1: investigation of things (格物); 2) Acquisition of Knowledge (致知); 3) sincerity of thoughts (诚意); 4: rectification of hearts (正心); 5: cultivation of person (修身); 6: regulation of the family (齐家); 7: government of the state (治国); and 8: achieving tranquility of the land under heaven (平天下).

The Thirteen Jing in its general sense represent the cumulative inclusion of thirteen ancient books into the canonical rubric of Jing (经, Classics). Since the Tang dynasty (CE 618 -907), the renewed commentaries on the Five Jing were added gradually by other editions of earlier classical commentaries until a total of thirteen classics and their commentaries were printed or compiled by the time of Song period (CE 960- 1279). They include, besides the Five Jing, *The Confucian Analects*, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, *The Work of Mencius*, two other classics on rituals and propriety, two more commentaries on *Chun Qiu* plus an ancient philological book of *Er Ya* (尔雅).

The Thirteen Jing used in its specific sense, as alluded to by Legge in his Term Question essay and in his *Chinese Classics* project, refers to the compilation work of *the Thirteen Jing, with Commentaries and Explanations* (十三经注疏), which was printed in 1816 under the auspice of Ruan Yuan (阮元, CE 1764 -1849), the governor of Jiang Xi province. The ancient commentaries contained in this compilation not only provided Legge with the convincing argument for his Term-Question debate in rebuking objections to his advocacy, they became Legge's primary reference texts for his *Chinese classics* project.

zong jiao (宗教, literally meaning *sectarian teachings*, it is the Chinese counterpart of the English term *religion*)

> (An ideology, a cultural and historical phenomenon. It is an illusionary reflection of the objective world. It believes a supernatural and transcendental power. It requires people to have faith in and adore (*xin yang*, 信仰) Shang Di, the ways of *shen* (神道), spirits or retribution, putting their hope in the so-called heavenly kingdom or after life.)

The thesis will treat the historical formulation of the Chinese term and its characterization of religion in the Conclusion Chapter. Nevertheless, it is equally necessary to have some idea about how the English term religion was perceived and employed in the 19th century western context, particularly with regard to Legge's writings. The Jesuits were probably the earliest writers to categorize Ru Jiao as "religious", though their choice of words was much nuanced, describing this particular sect as "the Sect of the Learned".[43] By

[43] Du Halde, J. B. Jesuit, *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary, together with the KINIGDOMS of Korea, and Tibet: containing the Geography and History (Natural as well as Civil) of those*

the 19th century, more scholarly efforts were attempted on the definition of religion. In Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of English Language* (1755), religion is defined firstly as "virtue, as founded upon reference of God, and expectation of future rewards and punishments". The 1828 *Webster's Dictionary* defines *religion* firstly (in capital letter) as "…including a belief in the being and perfections of God, in the revelation of his will to man, in man's obligation to obey his commands, in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountableness to God; and also true godliness or piety of life, with the practice of all moral duties…." The fourth definition of religion reads, "Any system of faith and worship. In this sense, religion comprehends the belief and worship of pagans and Mohammedans, as well as of christians; any religion consisting in the belief of a superior power or powers governing the world, and in the worship of such power or powers…."[44] As for Legge the missionary scholar, the meaning of religion is three-fold. Firstly, Christiantiy is THE religion; the Bible contains the revelation from God and discloses the religion as "bearing the stamp of divine authority, and revealing truths to which we could not otherwise have attained."[45] Secondly, the Chinese imperial sacrifices and popular ancestral worship constitute the principal forms of the religion of China. Thirdly, morality and knowledge of God are two indespensible parts of religion. To be religious is to be moral. As such, in Legge's reformed "Texts of Confucianism", Legge incorporated in his construction of the Chinese religion the classical Chinese notion of and sacrifices to God (Shang Di) and the Confucian teaching on filial piety, which Legge deemed the first commandment of the religion of 'Confucianism'. Thirdly, 'Confucianism' was only a particular faith system of China, differerring in substance from Chritianity THE religion.

Key Literary Reviews

The key western scholars on Legge in the 21s century include N. J. Girardot (*The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage.* University of California Press. 2002), Professor Lauren Pfister (*Striving for 'The Whole Duty of*

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countries. Two Volumes. (London. Printed by T. Gardner in Bartholomew-Close, for Edward Cave, at St. John's Gate, 1738), 639.

[44] "Religion", Webster's Dictionary 1828. Data retrieved on December 10, 2019from the website: http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/religion.

[45] James Legge, *The Religions of China. Confucianiam and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity*.(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880), 286.

Man'. Peter Lang. 2004), and recently, Marilyn Laura Bowman (*James Legge and the Chinese Classics.* Friesen Press. 2016*).* In mainland China, Yue Feng published his PhD dissertation on Legge in 2003 (*Building the Bridge between the East and the West – A Study on the British Sinologist James Legge* .Fujian). Duan Huaiqin led the translation of N. J. Girardot's book into Chinese in 2011 and wrote a number of papers on Legge. Other scholars also include Yang Huilin of Renmin University and Wang Hui of Shenzhen University. A number of Chinese scholars on Legge wrote on his translation techniques or on comparative translations.

Girardot's book focuses on Legge's scholarly identity as an academic translator and interpreter at Oxford, and places Legge within the bigger picture of the nineteenth century Sinology and the discipline of Comparative Religions. His book provides more historical and contextual explanations on the causes of why Legge is forgotten and misinterpreted. On the other hand, Girardot's own disagreement with much of Legge's views is shown not unfrequently between the lines. Such attitude of Girardot toward Legge impacts his nuanced study on Legge's personal struggle between his scholar-missionary role in China and his missionary-scholar role at Oxford, which leaves distinct marks in Legge's works. Girardot does not see the link between the missionary Legge's involvement in the Term-Question debate and his scholarly enterprise on the Chinese Classics project. Girardot is aware of Legge's searching effort in the Chinese Classics, but mistakes such effort for Legge's search for Bible within Chinese classics rather than his search for God. What's more, Girardot still has not deciphered Legge's mysterious yet heterodox opinions in his 1877 paper of *Confucianism in relation to Christianity*. Consequently, Girardot fails to see Legge's covert reformation of Confucianism which historically has impacted much of Sinological and Ruist discourse on Confucianism*/Ruism* in relation to religion.

In contrast to Girardot's emphasis on Legge's scholarly identify at Oxford, Lauren Pfister dwells more on Legge as a Scottish lad, his missionary role and his interactions with native Chinese in Hong Kong, aiming to illustrate the missionary Legge's contribution to China in terms of his effort at representing China in more positive light within Sinology. Pfister even moved to Hong Kong and stayed there for an equal length of time as Legge did in order to feel and experience as Legge did. The result of his experience is his empathetic understanding of and admiration for

Legge not unlike the effort Legge made for his empathetic understanding of Confucius. On the other hand, Pfister fails to see Legge's missiological effort to reform the doctrine of Confucius. Pfister's effort to restore the Chinese vernacular of Ru Jiao or Ruism in Legge's discourse on Confucianism will only lead to further misinterpretation of Legge's view on Confucianism within its Chinese context.

Bowman's new book aims to present detailed personal and historical background revolving the life and academic achievements of Legge. Such method, while providing most useful information for Leggian scholars in their respective studies, fails in itself to reveal those decisive moments in the life of Legge and how these incidents impacted and changed Legge. The Chinese Scholar Yue Feng's dissertation on Legge is more of a comprehensive biographical account tackled from various aspects. His evaluation represents an interesting Chinese Ruist criteria of value measurement centred on one's contribution to the society, especially the contribution to China. Other Chinese scholars are more focused on Legge's translation work in terms of his translation techniques and accuracy in comparison with other Chinese or western translators. Few of these Chinese scholars are aware of Legge's interpreter roles on the Chinese classics, and how Legge's biblical criticism methods and hermeneutical principles led Legge to interpretations that would differ significantly to the Ruist interpretational tradition. Besides, with their default equation of Legge's 'Confucianism' with Ruism, they fail to see Legge's nuanced interpretations on Confucianism and its intentional religious emphasis. Lastly, since Ruism is deemed exclusively Chinese knowledge, any disagreement with or deviation from that Chinese knowledge is viewed as dubious, if not wrong, interpretation of Ruism.

Primary Texts and Tools Used

In researching Legge's encounters with China and his eventual formulation of 'Confucianism', I have managed to retrieve the photocopies of most published works of Legge, including but not limited to his *Chinese Classics* series and his *Sacred Books of China* texts. In the meantime, I also tried to browse as many as possible the works of Legge's own time as well as those books that Legge read in relation to his works. They include but are not limited to the *Chinese Repository* journals (1832 – 1851), *Chinese Recorder* journals, *China Review* journals as well as his contemporaneous missionary and Sinologists' works.

Internet plays an important roles in my research. The digital library of Internet Archive (https://archive.org/), a San Francisco based internet library with the mission of universal access to all knowledge, is most invaluable in my retrieving most of Legge's historical works. It also contains large portion of records on the historical west-China encounters. It is a shame that scholars in mainland China do not have the access to it. Another useful internet tool for Chinese classical texts and philosophical texts is the Chinese Text Project webpage (https://ctext.org/). Also an online open-access digital library, the webpage is most handy by providing the Chinese search and filter functions that enabled my statistic and textual analysis. It's worth mentioning that the webpage adopts Legge's translations for the English texts of the Chinese classics. The webpage also provides the ancient Chinese dictionary of *Shuo Wen* and *Kang Xi Dictionary*, which offer most convenient tools for modern Chinese scholars and general readers to better understand the archaic classical texts. I have benefited tremendously from this tool. For other historical books I have also availed myself of the China-based webpage of Guoxuedashi (http://www.guoxuedashi.com/), which focuses on the collection of historical books under the category of "National Learning" (国学). My deepest gratitude to those webpage services and the efforts of their founders to make knowledge accessible to all.

I have made the field trips to the library of SOAS at University of London, Bodleian Libraries at Oxford, and the Library of Hong Kong Baptist University. Reading the manuscript of Legge on the Term-Question issue gave me a most strange feeling of seeing Legge talking in person. During my three years study in Glasgow, I have started my own understanding on the Bible anew by attending a number of bible reading sessions to meet and talk with the brothers and sisters of God's family. At the end of my thesis, I have also revisited the Temple of Heaven and the hometown of Confucius, where Legge visited before his departure from China. These places now take on additional meanings to me.

Conclusion

The current *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD, 9th edition, 2014) still echoes Legge's reformed 'Confucianism'. When Legge made his statement that Confucianism is the religion of China, he was not thinking of either Ru Jia or the Ruist school's discourse on the teaching of Confucius. It was Legge's evasive

manner of expressing his reformed Confucianism: the religion of China is Confucianism. Legge's 'Confucianism' is neither Chinese Ruism, nor the Sinological Confucian system. It is the ancient religion of China, i.e., the sacrifices to Shang Di offered by Chinese emperors and the ancestral worship performed by all the Chinese. Legge extended 'Confucianism' to the ancient religion of China more in recognition of Confucius' role in preserving it through his study and transmission of the ancient Chinese Jing

Legge's reformation on Confucianism originated from his Shang Di advocacy during the 1850's Term-Question debate. The aftermath of the debate initiated his life-time translational search for God in the Chinese classics. His eventual reformation on Confucianism represented not only Legge's missiological proposition towards Christianity's encounter with Ruist China, it also implied Legge's missiological solution to his Shang Di advocacy in the Term Question debate. By adopting the Chinese Shang Di for God and by supplementing Shang Di with the notions of God, Legge anticipated that missionaries in China would eventually turn Shang Di into the proper Chinese rendition of God.

The 19th century Term-Question debate is far from over today. With the triumph of *shen* as the standard rendition of God in the Chinese translation of the Bible around the turn of the 20th century, it arguably contributed to the early Chinese intellectuals' views on Christianity as superstition, and further impacted the orthodox Chinese characterization of religion in Chinese term *zong jiao* (宗教, literally meaning *sectarian teaching).* Further research is needed to examine how much the rendition of God into *shen* in the Bible's Chinese translation has influenced the Chinese perception and characterization of *zong jiao* (宗教, Chinese rendition of *religion*) as superstition, and how such characterization further impeded the willingness and courage of the Chinese to have a true belief!

CHAPTER ONE: JAMES LEGGE (1815-1897)—A BRIEF ACCOUNT

21st Century Opinions on Legge

In May 2018, a blue plaque was unveiled by Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board at Keble Terrace to mark the place where James Legge lived during his Oxford years. The plaque is inscribed with following words:

The inscription underscores the dual identities of many nineteenth century sinological scholars. What distinguishes Legge from other missionary-sinologists is his achievement as the translator of the Chinese classics, more properly known within the Chinese context as the Four Books and Five Jing (Classics). Professor Lauren F. Pfister in his *Striving for 'the Whole Duty of Man'* (Peter Lang, 2004) quotes an interesting remark from the early sinologist Karl Friedrich Neumann, "By far most of the men who have devoted and continue to consecrate their lives to research of the Chinese cultural system have been and are Christian messengers."[46] On the other hand, N.J. Girardot observes that James Legge is now understood primarily as "the heroic translator of the Chinese classics", and, such identity of Legge "was forever tainted by his original vocation as a Congregationalist missionary agent for the London Missionary Society."[47] Their comments in a certain sense represent an

[46] Lauren F. Pfister, *Striving for 'The Whole Duty of Man'* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang. 2004), 67. Pfister quoted Karl Friedrich Neumann's 1847 *Sinologue and their Works*.
[47] N. J. Girardot, "James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology and the Comparative Science of Religion in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, third Series. Vol. 12, No. 2 (July 2002), 155.

intrinsic feature of early Sinological studies. On the China side, the emerging studies on Legge focus predominantly on the linguistic, literary and comparative aspects of Legge's translations. [48] In terms of his achievement, Legge is viewed with a typical Ruist perspective which put emphasis on his contribution to the society and to the Chinese nation. Legge is eulogized as one who "put up a bridge between China and the west" and "transmitted to the west not only the Chinese Classics, but Chinese religion and other cultural phenomena".[49] While those varied judgements on Legge each emphasizes certain value criteria, they need to be put into Legge's historical context to truly understand Legge for what he did. Similarly his value can only be properly evaluated by what progress have been built from his works. Research on Legge's making of his Chinese Classics project convinces me that Legge's achievement is made possible only by his faith in the truth of God; What is more, Legge's translational work on Chinese classics and his opinion on Confucianism were intended both for the west and for China with both merits and deficiencies. To quote Legge's own words in his inaugural speech for his Oxford Chinese Chair, "We cannot know humanity as we ought to do, as in these days we feel that we must do, without it"[50] (note: By it Legge referred to the study of Chinese historical literature).

Thanks to the academic efforts made by Lauren F. Pfister, N. J. Girardot, Marilyn Laura Bowman and many other scholars on Legge, abundant information on Legge is now available from their researches. Therefore my account of the life of Legge will only concentrate on those elements which are relevant to his China encounters, especially those which influence and impact his spiritual and intellectual encounters with China.

The Early Life of James Legge (1815 -1839)

[48] A chart analysis from the Chinese academic webpage CNKI.net shows that, of the 883 Chinese papers on James Legge that are published in the 21st century and collected by the data base, 67% of them deals with the linguistic subject and 13% with the literary subject of Legge. Other focuses include philosophy (6.6%), history (5.7%) and religion (3.7%). Date of source retrieving: 11st November 2018.

[49] Yue Feng 岳峰, *Putting up the Bridge between the East and the West – A Study on the British Sinologist James Legge*《架设东西方的桥梁 – 英国汉学家理雅各研究》PhD dissertation. (Fu Jian Normal University, 2003).

[50] James Legge, *Inaugural Lecture on the Constituting of a Chinese Chair in the University of Oxford*, (London: Trübner & Co, 1876).

James Legge (1815-1897) was born on December 20th, 1815 in Huntly, Aberdeenshire in the northeast of Scotland, being the fourth son and the youngest of Ebenezer and Elizabeth Legge. Legge began his education at the parish Sunday school of Huntly before going on to the Grammar school of Aberdeen in 1829. During this time Legge began to display his unusual language skill in Latin and in the exercise of Latin-English translation. Legge's daughter Helen Edith later wrote about her father's linguistic gift, "As the English words fell from the master's lips, he wrote down the Latin translation, and at the final 'that's all,' handed it up and left the school".[51] In 1831, Legge won his scholarship for King's College, Aberdeen, where Thomas Reid (1710 -1796), the pioneer of Scottish commonsense realism, taught some eighty yearsearlier. Legge's college curriculum already took the shape of modern university disciplines, including such subjects as Greek, Latin, Geometry, Trigonometry, Chemistry, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy and Religion.[52] Legge graduated with the highest scholarly award offered by the University of Aberdeen – the Huttonian Prize. "He had entered the University in 1831 as First Bursar, he left it in 1836 as Huttonian prizeman, being only nineteen years of age."[53]

After a brief teaching at a Congregational secondary school in Blackburn of England, Legge entered Highbury Theological College in London as a student of Divinity. He was accepted by the London Missionary Society in 1839 and, by obtaining an acceptable report for his health check after failing the first, Legge was ready to answer his duty call to the east.

Legge's training in classical translation laid out the foundation for the way with which Legge studied Chinese language and classics. His study of the Chinese language was accompanied by "writing out translations".[54] When Legge wrote out his 1852 essay on the Term-Question issue, Legge had made a large number of translations directly from various Chinese texts for his argument. When quoting Medhurst's translation of

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[51] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar* (London: the Religious Tract Society, 1905), 2.
[52] See Helen Edith's biography of Legge concerning his college years at King's College, Aberdeen. These courses contrast sharply with the ancient Chinese educational tradition, in which the study of the Four Books and Five Classics (四书五经), form the main scope of learning.
[53] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar*, 6.
[54] James Legge, CC1 (1861), preface, viii.

Chinese text for his essay, they were "in every case" verified by Legge's own "independent versions".[55] As can be inferred from his accounts scattered throughout his *Chinese Classics* works, Legge most probably had translated a considerable portion of the Chinese classics by the time of his 1852 essay. Yet, it took nearly another ten years before Legge published his first book of *the Chinese Classics* project in 1861. What took him so long?

Legge's Non-Conformist Religious Background

Like pre-twentieth century China, where individual knowledge and worldview were largely shaped by the Ruist teaching from the time education began, the Scottish Legge lived in a time when education started with church Sunday school, Bible reading, regular church service and prayers. Christianity was the primary context for shaping the individual's worldview and aspiration in Legge's hometown, though enlightenment thinking was blooming in universities and among sceptical intellectuals. What was special with Legge's Scottish Christian background was the evangelical spirit of his time and the Nonconformist and independent "Missioner Kirk" in Huntly.

Legge's family belonged to the "Missioner Kirk", "Kirk" being the Scottish word for Church and "Missioner Kirk" was named as such "owing to the interest in missions which had led to its foundation".[56] Helen Edith made brief mention of Mr. Cowie and how his religious work in Huntly around 1800s impacted Legge's family and even Legge's first career decision. Mr. Cowie (George Cowie) of "fervent apostolic spirit", was expelled from the Presbyterian Church "because of his zeal in regard to new developments of home mission work, including lay preaching and Sunday schools".[57] Cowie consequentially founded an independent Congregational church—the Missioner Kirk – in Huntly. Legge's father was an enthusiastic supporter of the church, and Legge "had been brought up an independent, regularly attending the 'Missioner Kirk'".[58] It is necessary to add that George Cowie was also an important figure in influencing another early Scottish missionary to China –William Milne (1785 – 1822), who "was thus 'born again,' in the very cradle of Missions" under the

[55] James Legge, *Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits, p*reface, iv.
[56] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar,* 6, 7.
[57] Ibid. 6.
[58] Ibid, 6.

guidance of Cowie. [59] Milne went to China in 1812 and became the second British missionary to China following Robert Morrison.

Rev. George Cowie's "Missioner Kirk" was also characterized by its Nonconformist and liberal features. It was part of secessionist churches that broke away from the established Church of Scotland for its opposition to the secular intervention in the religious matters. It was nonconformist in the sense that it was a congregational church in which church matters were run by its congregation. This contrasted sharply to the Presbyterian tradition of the Established Church of Scotland or the Episcopalian Church of England. The anti-authority, dissenting and non-conformist features in Legge's Protestant background were best illustrated in Legge's defiance of church authority in his Term-Question debate and manifested in his independent opinions in interpreting Chinese classics.

Science, the Scottish Skepticism, Common-Sense Philosophy and Natural Religion

Notwithstanding the similarity between the Scottish lad Legge and the Chinese youngsters of the early 19th century in the principal shaping forces of the conventional beliefs on their early education, university education marked the clear departures. The Chinese higher education featured its pragmatic orientation for training administrative servants, with such subjects as rational philosophy (理学), morality, application of classics, history as well as imperial penal code taught to the scores of scholars admitted into each provincial institution annually.[60] In contrast, Legge's university education represented strong influence of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was illustrated by Legge's curriculum at college that covered religion, language, science and philosophy. It was further reflected in Legge's using scientific methods for his Term-Question arguments, in his allusions to

[59] Robert Philip, *The Life and Opinions of the Rev. William Milne, D. D., Missionaries to China, Illustrated by Biographical Annals of Asiatic Missions, from Primitive to Protestant Times; Intended as a Guide to Missionary Spirit*(Philadelphia: Herman Hooker, 1840), 33.

[60] Universities in the early 19th century China were perhaps partly comparable to the provincial and imperial government academies that were set up with state financing to train civil servants. See *the Manuscripts of the History of Qing*, Vol. 106. Chapter 81. (清史稿, 卷 106，志 81.)

enlightenment writers such as Isaac Newton and in his textual quest for the historical Confucius.

The Scottish Enlightenment thinking shared the humanist and rationalist features of the European Enlightenment, yet distinguished itself by its skepticism of established thinking and its pragmatism which emphasized values in terms of their benefits to individual and to the society. The pragmatism philosophy was similar to the Chinese Ruist scholarly tradition, though the value to society in the Ruist view was more associated with the tranquility of the society and good governance of the nation. The emperors were the only ones who could be counted as individuals while the rest was viewed as the mass, the nation.

David Hume (AD 1711 -1776) lived within half a century of Legge's birth and had great influence on the Scottish empiricism and skepticism by his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1738). Immanuel Kant later wrote in his books that Hume awoke him from his "dogmatic slumber."[61] Hume was skeptical about the human power of reasoning. Hume contended that inductive reasoning could not be justified rationally as it was derived from customs and mental habit. With regard to ethics, Hume believed that feelings are what govern our moral actions, and "The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusion of our reason."[62] Hume's opinion formed stark contrast to the Chinese Ruist morality-centered discourse and its proposition to attain the doctrine of the mean through regulating our feelings.

Hume's skepticism of human reasoning led to the critical response from Thomas Reid (1710 -1796) in his famous *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764). Reid argued that there are certain concepts, such as human existence, the existence of solid objects and some basic moral first principles that are intrinsic to the makeup of man and from which all subsequent arguments and systems of morality must be derived. Reid argued that our common sense constituted the foundation of rational thinking of humanity. The principles of common sense are those principles which "we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for

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[61] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (1783),* Introduction.
[62] David Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978 edition), 457.

them".[63] Later Dugald Stewart (1753-1828) further popularized Reid's common sense and moral theory through his teaching career at the University of Edinburgh where he served as professor of Moral Philosophy.

In short, the combined influences of Christian faith, scientific thinking and Scottish commonsense philosophy shaped the religious and intellectual reasoning of Legge. Legge initially attempted to tackle the Term-Question with academic and scientific principles by applying such sciences as philology and etymology. When he was forced to enter a theological discussion, his argument was both liberally theological and philosophical, with allusions to theological authorities like Athanasius and John Calvin and philosophical authorities such as Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. Neither was he antagonistic to the Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi (AD 1130 -1200) as other missionary writers. Legge was appreciative of the Chinese classics for the many common-sense teachings they contained, and critical of them only for their inadequacy of inductive reasoning which constituted a major principle of argument among the Ruist philosophers. Notwithstanding those scientific reasoning, Legge's unwavering conviction of the truth of God came before his reasoning.

Legge's Scholarly Missionary Career in China (1839 -1873)

The London Missionary Society's Register of Missionaries of 1923gives a concise account of Legge's missionary career in the Far East. [64] Being ordained and appointed to Malacca in April 1839, Legge set off on his sea journey in July with his newly-wedded wife Mary Isabela, arriving finally at Malacca in January 1840 (China was not yet open to foreign missionaries until after the first Opium War [1839-1842] when the signing of Nanjing Treaty opened five ports to foreigners). Legge assumed the superintendent role of the Anglo-Chinese College (英华书院) of Malacca for two years

[63] Thomas Reid. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (Edinburgh: Stirling & Slade, 1819).
[64] James Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, etc. from 1796 to 1923* (London: London Missionary Society, 1923).

before moving the Malacca missionary operation and the college to Hong Kong in 1843. In August 1843 Legge attended the first general Missionary Conference in Hong Kong. In this conference, Legge was appointed the principal of the new Anglo-Chinese Theological Seminary in Hong Kong. He was also assigned alongside W.H. Medhurst for a subcommittee to solve the issue of rendering God of the Bible into proper Chinese. Without generating any consensus on the term issue, the meeting nonetheless signified the start of the Term-Question debate among Protestant missionaries in China.

Legge's Predecessors in Christian Mission in China

Legge was among the earliest European protestant missionaries in China, but not the first. Before him Robert Morrison (1782-1834), William Milne (1785 -1822) and W. H. Medhurst (1796 – 1857) had arrived China and left valuable literary legacies or continued this legacy. Furthermore, despite the long enmity between Protestantism and Catholicism in the 19th century, the early European protestant missionaries in China still had to rely on the legacy of the 17th-18th century Jesuit writers for any proper knowledge about China before they could learn the native language themselves. Legge was no exception.

The Jesuits in China, the Rites and Term Controversy, and the Jesuit Writings

In 1582, the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552 -1610) made his first landing in Macao and began the historic Christian encounter with China. Over the following one hundred years, the Jesuit missionaries successfully won the favour of Chinese emperors, especially that of Kang Xi. They succeeded in sowing the seed of Christianity into the hearts of Chinese, who began to know this religion introduced by the Jesuits as Shi Zi Jiao (十字教, the Teaching of the Cross) or Tian Zhu Jiao (天主教, the Teaching of the Heavenly Lord). In the meantime, the Jesuit writers for the first time introduced Confucius and part of the Chinese classics into Europe, with at least four translation efforts on the Four Books part, culminating in the 1687 publication of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive scientia Sinensis* (*Confucius, the Philosopher of China, or the Chinese Learning*). The book contained the complete translation of *the Confucian Analects*, *the Great Learning*, *the Doctrine of the Mean*, together with a biographical account of "the Life of Confucius, Prince of Chinese Philosophers", attached with a

portrait of him. In 1692, the Emperor Kang Xi issued the imperial edict, granting an entire tolerance of Christianity throughout the empire. [65]

The initial success of Jesuit mission in China was brought to an abrupt and tragic end principally due to the notorious Chinese Rites and Term Controversy. The 17th century controversy included two aspects, namely, whether or not the worship to Confucius and to the ancestors were religious service or civil rites, and whether or not the names *tian* (Heaven), and Shang Di *(*Supreme Emperor) should be used to refer to the biblical Deity. For the purpose of this thesis I will only dwell on the latter issue. In 1693, Charles Maigrot (1652 -1703), the Apostolic Vicar of Fujian, issued a provisional mandate of seven decisions. With regard to the term issue, Maigrot declared that "the term *Tien-Zhu, the Lord of Heaven,* was to be universally adopted, to the exclusion of *tian*, Heaven, and Shang Di, Supreme Emperor".[66] Maigrot also sent a copy of this mandate together with supplementary discourses to Paris and Rome to seek the support of Rome to re-examine the rites issue. The controversy soon turned sour and became a debate between Rome and Chinese emperor Kang Xi himself on whether or not the Chinese term *tian* meant the material sky.[67] Rome prevailed by its 1704 decree which approved to signify the true God by the word Tian Zhu (Lord of Heaven) and prohibited the use of *tian* and Shang Di. The Chinese emperor prevailed by publishing a decree in 1707 which forbade all Europeans to remain in China "unless he obtains letters patent from his Majesty".[68] The decree was strengthened by his successor who effectively banned Christian mission in China, bringing the official closure of Chinese empire to the west for another hundred years.

Much speculation has been made on what would have been the result if the Roman judgement had been different. An interesting comment is made by Robert C. Jenkins in his historical examination on the Rites and Term-Question in his *Jesuits in China* (1894).He quoted a memoir addressed to the Vatican Council which said, "…while if, on the other hand, the method of the religious (i.e., Jesuits), against whom the action was taken, had been accepted by the rest, a certain moderation would have been

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[65] Robert C. Jenkins, *The Jesuits in China and the Legation of Cardinal De Tournon* (London: David Nutt, 1894), 98.
[66] Ibid, 25.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid, 116.

applied… the shadow of superstition might have been purged away, and by a toleration of some degree of ritual error (*materialis erroris*) the many storms of controversy might have dissipated, peace retained, and religion preserved".[69]

Despite the 1704 Papal decree and a following Papal bull in 1715 to ban the discussion on the Rites issue, a four-volume book *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary* began to appear in Paris in 1735. Written by the French Jesuit historian Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, the book drew its materials from the Jesuit *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* and the unpublished reports. It also contained many translations of Chinese texts of various origins. It was reprinted in England in 1738 and 1741 and had enormous influence on early European sinologists and missionaries in China. [70] As for Legge, his personal library kept not only four various editions of the book, including the 1735 first edition, but also the four Jesuit translations of the Four Books. As will be shown later in the thesis, the Jesuit translations of the Four Books constituted Legge's primary translation references for his first volume of the *Chinese Classics* project. What's more, Legge's eventual formulation of 'Confucianism' was arguably connected with and built on Du Halde's description of the religions of China.

Robert Morrison, William Milne and W. H. Medhurst

Also according to *the Register* ofLondon Missionary Society, Robert Morrison (1782-1834) was the Pioneer Protestant missionary in China, arriving at Canton (Guangzhou) in September 1807 on the assignment of the L.M.S. After securing a job as a translator to the East India Company, Morrison completed his translation of the New Testament in 1813. Morrison returned to England between 1815 and then accompanied Lord Amherst's Embassy to Beijing in July 1816. He was conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Glasgow in 1817. In 1818, the Anglo-Chinese College was set up in Malacca much to Morrison's effort. He and Milne completed the translation of the whole Scriptures by the end of 1819. During his second return to England in 1824 Morrison was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. He returned China again in 1826 and stayed until his death in 1834. *The Register* commented that "few missionaries have encountered the difficulties with which he had

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[69] Ibid, 162, 163.

[70] Robert Morrison read Du Halde and referred to Du halde's translations for his Chinese English Dictionary. W.H.Medhurst's 1838 book *China; Its Stat and Prospects* listed Du Halde's book as one of his books of consultation. John Francis Davis frequently alluded to Du Halde's book in his book *the Chinese* (1836).

to contend; or have needed the self-denial by which he overcame all obstacles. He saw little direct result in the conversion of the Chinese, but he prepared the path for others".[71]

Of the much literary legacy left by Morrison, he produced the ground-breaking first Chines-English and English-Chinese dictionaries (1815-1823, three parts in six volumes), which included a complete translation of the Chinese lexicon of *Wu Che Yun Fu* (五车韵府). His dictionaries laid the foundation for later protestant missionaries in China to study Chinese and to understand Chinese religions.[72] Besides his dictionaries and the Chinese Bible translation, Morrison also translated the *Three-Character-Classic* and *Da Xue* (*Great Learning*) in his *Horae Sinicae* (1812) and contributed to the earliest missionary magazines. He was among the first to try to interpret the Chinese Ru Jia (the Ruist School) as the "Confucian school", and challenged the identity of the "Confucian sect*"* as a religious sect. He also started using *shen* for rendering God in his Bible translation.

Morrison also secured the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. William Milne in Macau in 1813. Together they set up at Malacca the Ultra-Ganges Mission Station in 1815, which served as the major station for receiving and training other protestant missionaries before they were able to enter into the missionary work in East Asian countries and later on in China. In 1818 they established the Anglo-Chinese College (英华书院), which Legge later joined.

William Milne (1785 – 1822) also came from Huntly, Aberdeenshire. Upon arriving a Macao, he was ordered by the Portuguese governor to leave the place within eight days. Milne spent most of his missionary career in Malacca, where he served as the first principal of the Anglo Chinese College. Being a late starter in his literary enterprise, Milne was prolific in producing Christian tracts in Chinese and a total of 21 Chinese works were attributed to him. Besides helping Morrison with the Chinese Bible translation, Milne started the first Chinese language magazine. *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* (察世俗每月統記傳), almost exclusively written by Milne, started running

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[71] James Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, Etc. from 1796 to 1923* (London: London Missionary Society, 1923), 7.

[72] For the 19th century Protestant Term-Question—the proper rendering of God into Chinese, Morrison's *Chinese Dictionary* became a major tool for contenders of both sides in understanding key Chinese religious terms.

from 1815 to 1822 and totalled some 700 pages. The other magazine edited and chiefly contributed by Milne was the *Indo-Chinese Gleaner* (1817 -1822). Milne also translated the *Sacred Edict of Kang Xi (*康熙圣谕, 1817) which Legge later resorted to for his investigation on "the Imperial Confucianism (1878)". Milne died in 1822 in Malacca, never having the chance to visit his hometown again during his life in the East. In November 1820 the University of Glasgow also conferred on William Milne the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Walter Henry Medhurst (1796 – 1857) arrived at Malacca in 1816 originally as a printer for Rev. William Milne's printing press. However, his zeal for missionary activities and language skill was quickly recognized by Milne, who consequently ordained Medhurst in 1819. By the time of the 1843 Hong Kong missionary meeting, Medhurst had produced a number of dictionaries of English to Chinese dialects, Korean and Japanese, and wrote the book *China: Its State and Prospects* (Boston, 1838,). After moving to Shanghai in 1843, Medhurst took up the leading role in revising the translation of both the New Testament and the Old Testament.[73] In 1846, Medhurst also translated *The Shoo King* (书经) into English for the first time, titling it "*the Historical Classic: Being the Most Ancient Authentic Record of the Annals of the Chinese Empire*". During the Term-Question debate, Medhurst was the most senior Missionary in China, well recognized for his Chinese language and acquaintance with the Chinese Classics. Besides his essays on the Term-Question issue, Medhurst also produced a 300-page strong dissertation on the theology of the Chinese in 1847,[74] and a smaller booklet titled *On the True Meaning of the Word Shin* (*shen,* 神)in 1849.[75] He also published his two-volume *English and Chinese Dictionary* during 1847 and 1848. Medhurst's works

[73] In Alexander Wylie's *Memorial of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghae, 1867), 33, Wylie thus described the authorship of the revised Chinese translation of New Testament: "This translation was ostensibly the work of a Committee of Delegates from various missionary stations in China, consisting of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Boone, the Rev. Drs. Medhurst and Bridgman, and the Revs. J. Stronach, W. Lowrie, and W. C. Milne. The work of the Committee commenced in 1847, and was completed in 1850; the greater part having been done by Dr. Medhurst the President; so that it may well be considered his production." Wylie made similar comment on the translation of the Old Testament.

[74] W.H. Medhurst, *A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese, with a view to the elucidation of the most appropriate term for expressing the Deity, in the Chinese Language* (ShanghaI, Printed at the Mission Press, 1847).

[75] W.H. Medhurst. *On the True Meaning of the word Shin, as exhibited in the Quotations adduced under that Word, in the Chinese Imperial Thesaurus, called 佩文韵府 the Pei-wan-yun-foo* (Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1849).

provided rich raw materials for European scholars in their textual examinations on the religious opinions of the Chinese.

The Breaking-out of the Debate and Legge's Absence in Its Early Stage

The Term-Question of how to render biblical Elohim/Theos into Chinese was brought forward in the 1843 missionary conference in Hong Kong, in which it was agreed that revision on new Chinese version would commence immediately using the *Textus Receptus* as the base text. In 1845, when the progress of the revision led by the chief translator W.H. Medhurst made it evident that Medhurst intended to replace the previous translation of *shen* 神 with Shang Di (上帝) for rendering God, oppositions began to appear in the popular missionary journal *The Chinese Repository*. Partly incited and encouraged by the chief editor of the journal, sporadic criticism gradually evolved into well-formulated article series advocating the old rendition of *shen* by Morrison and Joshua Marshman. Given the seniority of Medhurst in terms of his China experience and his authority on Chinese knowledge, his opponents had to turn to another authority, the newly appointed American Missionary Bishop for China, William J. Boone. When the proper written debate began in 1848 by means of *the Chinese Repository* journal articles, Boone was made the spokesman of the pro-*shen* party less due to his academic statue than his ecclesiastical positon of "Missionary Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States to China."[76] With his participation, the Term-Question debate was turned into a partisan controversy, with the American Board of Commissioners for the Foreign Missions representing the *shen* advocacy while Shang Di was supported principally by those from the London Missionary Society and others.

Legge was absent both from the Chinese Bible translation and from the majority part of the debate, especially during the critical moment of 1845 to 1848. Legge was absent for a reason. His first two years on the "crude island-village" of Hong Kong[77] were fraught with sickness, pains and struggles for survival. In 1843 and 1845, neither of Mary Legge's two new-born babies survived their births. His family members were constantly in illness, sometimes lasting for months, making Legge feel that "my

[76] Boone's essays and defences were all signed by this title. It contasted sharply to Medhurst who had no title to be attached to his name.
[77] James Legge, "The Colony of Hong Kong," *China Review* Vol.1 (1872): 163.

(Legge's) work in time was done".[78] Hong Kong was also in constant turmoil. Legge's family were frequently the target of or eyewitness to the violent burglaries and robberies. Despite all these challenges, Legge managed to open a new chapel in early 1844, spending two hours nearly every day visiting Chinese families, distributing tracts, and honing his Chinese (Cantonese dialect) until "my tongue is really tired."[79] In late July 1845 Legge was again struck by a sickness, this time so serious that doctors attending his illness urged him to return to "the safe climate of Britain".[80] In November 1845, Legge and his family boarded the ship bound for England, taking three of his Chinese students with him.

When Legge returned to Hong Kong in July 1848, the written debates through *The Chinese Repository* was nearly over. Following Boone's essay argument that "the use of the name of any heathen Deity would be derogatory to the glory and honor of Jehovah", [81] Medhurst in his concluding essay in the July issue of the journal mysteriously dropped his Shang Di proposal. The fatal blow to Shang Di advocacy was an anonymous article (later identified as the work of Boone) immediately following Medhurst's last essay in the journal, condemning the use of Shang Di in missionary work as a violation of the First Commandment. With Legge's absence for the better part of the debate, Medhurst missed some key votes on the Term Issue represented by Hong Kong.[82]. More importantly, Medhurst did not have any capable defenders in *The Chinese Repository* as his opponents did while he was fully occupied with the Bible revision. Legge immediately engaged himself in catching up with the Term-Question issue and formally joined the Term-Question debate in early 1850. From June to August, Legge published a series of six letters on the Term Question in the Hong Kong-based *China Mail* journal (strangely, Legge's articles never seemed to find their way in *The Chinese Repository*, the major battle ground for the debate). By his tactful way of reviewing various proposals that were put forward, Legge re-instated Shang Di as a

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[78] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge: Missionary and Scholar*, 49.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Marilyn Laura Bowman, *James Legge and the Chinese Classics: a brilliant Scot in the turmoil of colonial Hong Kong* (Canada: Friesen Press, 2016), 300.
[81] William Boone, "An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language," *the Chinese Repository* Vol. XVII (January, 1848), No.1: 22.
[82] Per the 1843 Hong Kong missionary conference, each station was entitled to one vote for the judgement of the final Bible Chinese revision. Legge represented Hong Kong in this conference. See *The Chinese Repository* Vol. XII, no.10 (October 1843):551-553.

legitimate option. Legge rejected the term *shen* 神 by quoting Remusat the French sinologist, "There is assuredly no expression, which is less befitting in all respects, more inexact, more false, and more opposed to the ideas of Christians of all sects, than Shin."[83] Legge's audacity awakened Dr. Boone from his presumed success and forced him once again to commit to writing through the July to December issues of *The Chinese Repository,* defending his *shen* while directing his attack personally at Legge. In the July issue of *The Chinese Repository*, Dr. Boone charged Legge with "the duty" to prove that "the Bing called *Shangti* (Shang Di)… is truly and properly God".[84]

The Missionary Scholar Legge and His *Chinese Classics* Project

Seven months after his essay on *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, Legge's wife Mary died in October 1852 from the child-birth complications, leaving him with three daughters: the 12-year-old Eliza, 10-year-old Mary and 2-year-old Emma. Legge had to have his daughters sent back to England in 1853 to be taken care of. The youngest Emma died one year later in Scotland, bringing "added sorrow to the father, left solitary in his now desolate home at Hong Kong."[85] In 1858, Legge returned to England where he met and married Hannah Mary Willetts. Legge returned to Hong Kong with Hannah, the two oldest daughters and a step-daughter in September 1859.

1861 marked the historic publication of Legge's *magnum opus* of *The Chinese Classics* series, when his first two volumes embracing the translation, critical annotation and exegesis of the Four Books were printed. Since then Legge continued his steady pace of producing other Chinese Classics. In 1865, the third Volume (*Shu Jing*, or *The Book of Historical Documents*) was published. After that Legge made one more trip back home from 1866-1870. He was conferred the degree of LL. D by the University of Aberdeen where more than 30 years ago he obtained his M.A degree. His financial support from the London Missionary support ended in 1867. Yet, Legge again sailed back to Hong Kong alone in 1870 to carry on his three-year Pastorate arrangement at the church of Union Chapel. Besides fulfilling his

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[83] James Legge, *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (Hongkong: Hongkong Register Office, 1850), Letter IV.
[84] William J. Boone, "Defense of an Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese language," *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XIX, no.7 (July, 1850): 360.
[85] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar,* 83.

pastoral duties, Legge finished the fourth volume in 1871(*Volume IV: The Book of Poetry*) and the fifth volume in 1872 (*Volume V: Spring and autumn).* When Legge left Hong Kong at the end of his Pastorate term, he had to leave his *Chinese Classics* project unfinished. *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Change*s) and *Li Ji* (*the Record of Rites*) had to wait until he embarked on his new project of *the Sacred Books of China* for Max Muller's *Sacred Books of the East* compilation project.

Legge's Last Trip to Northern China

At the end of his three-year service in Hong Kong , Legge in 1873 took his first and also the last trip to northern China to visit some places he had read and discoursed about but never had the chance to see in person. Now that he was equipped with the knowledge of the Chinese history and thoughts of the Chinese people, these places had additional historical and religious significances to Legge. He visited the Temple of Heaven, where "the rulers of China, as the high priest of their people…knelt in worship of the ruler of Heaven and Earth, under no roof and with no image of the Divine Being."[86] He crossed the Yellow River, known both as the cradle of Chinese civilization and as the river of "China's sorrow", Legge rode in a mule cart and travelled along the Great Canal to the Mount Tai (泰山) in Shan Dong province which was "historically the most famous hill in China, and a regular place of pilgrimage". Legge expected to find here traces of Confucius and the old Chinese religion that had been recorded in the Chinese classics. To his disappointment, the place had become "one of the principal seats of the Taoist superstition". It is sad "to see him (Confucius) so discrowned on his own green ground". Legge visited Qu-Foo, the home city of Confucius, and while paying homage to the grave of Confucius, he couldn't help wondering which of the two men was greater, Confucius or Napoleon? "I should be inclined to give the palm to the Chinese worthy." Legge visited the hometown and the tomb of Mencius. An interesting event occurred in Legge's barrow-journey when he found out that the two laborers pushing their wheel-barrows were descendants of Confucius, "it is something to think of that we barbarians should be wheeled along through the country by descendants of the Sage". Legge was reminded of the biblical figure of Aaron, whose descendants were priests and well provided for while the rest of the Levites had to do menial jobs. Legge was acutely aware of

[86] Ibid, 180.

the wide-spread of poppy cultivation, even around the hometown of Confucius, "It is sad to think that we have not only forced our drug upon China, but that we have thus led the people to cultivate it for themselves. There will yet be a heavy retribution for our policy and course in this respect."[87]

Legge left China from Shanghai, sailing first to Japan, then across the Pacific to San Francisco of America. From there Legge visited Chicago and New York, where he sailed again to return to England and his family.

Christian Missionary Spirit and Ruist Spirit of Instructing Dao (道, cause of truth)

Before leaving Legge's missionary life, it is necessary to pause and dwell on what it means to be a missionary, in particular in comparison to the Ruist view on *chuan dao (*传道, *transmission of the cause of truth*) and *chuan jiao* (传教, *transmission of teaching*).[88] Christian missionary spirit has its origin rooted in the New Testament, and is inspired by the instruction of Jesus Christ to his disciples when Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19–20). The same teaching appears in the Gospels of Luke and Mark. The instruction of Christ constitutes the commandment of the Great Commission and missionaries are those who practice their belief.

Within the ancient Chinese classics, there are allusions of *chuan dao* (transmission of the cause of truth) that are not unlike the Christian teaching, only that teaching has evolved into *chuan jiao* (*transmission of teaching*) in the Ruist discourse. A text from *Yi Jing* deduces the origin of how ancient sages start their teaching on the Dao. "When (we) contemplate the spirit-like (*shen*) way of Heaven, we see how the four seasons proceed without error. The sages, in accordance with (this) spirit-like way, laid down their instructions, and all under heaven yield submission to them."[89] Confucius in the *Analects* is quoted as saying, "It is man who can make the Dao (道, cause of truth) known; it is not the

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[87] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar*, 179-203.
[88] The term *Missionary* in modern Chinese is rendered as *chuan jiao shi* (传教士), defined by the Modern Chinese Dictionary (2012) as "the personnel sent out by Christian church to propagate religious teaching".
[89] *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Changes*): "觀天之神道，而四時不忒，聖人以神道設教，而天下服矣." The English translation is from Legge.

Dao that makes the man known."[90] Confucius himself constitutes a model of a missionary (or a transmitter of Dao) when he embarks on his long journey to propagate his moral and political ideals, believing that he is performing the duty to heaven to impart the ancient knowledge to those still living. Probably with this reason Qian Mu (1895 -1990) in his categorization of *The Confucian Analects* set aside a section that relates to Confucian teaching on performing the missionary duties (立行传教精神 *chuan jiao*).[91]

When the Five Jing was instituted as part of the imperial establishment in the 2nd century BCE, the missionary method of *chuan dao (transmission of the cause of truth)* practiced by Confucius and Mencius was replaced by a *chuan jiao* (*transmission of teaching*) system. Its content and purpose were neatly integrated into the state governance with a view on learning classical knowledge, digesting and applying the teaching of the ancient sages to the effective governance. The term *chuan jiao* was also used in military institution as messengers. Nonetheless, the residue of the missionary spirit can still be found in an essay written by Han Yu (韩愈, 768 – 824) on the roles of a teacher when he writes, "By being a teacher, it stands for the responsibilities of transmitting the Dao (the cause of truth), imparting the skills and clearing the doubts in people's hearts".[92]

The term *chuan jiao shi* (传教士, missionary) was applied to missionaries likely in the 19th century. In the modern Chinese (see footnote 82) it is associated exclusively with Christian religion while its ancient Chinese implication all but disappears. The Chinese interpretation also insinuates an alien identity with its planned religious agenda. Lauren Pfister gives a brief account of the 19th century protestant missionaries in terms of the associations between their churches and their respective governments. Though some protestant church organizations in Europe are sponsored financially by their governments, those religious groups from the United States and the nonconformist group, such as the Congregational church Legge is affiliated, are all independent of government financing. The missionary individuals in China had to find their own solution to the "unresolvable conflict in his roles as pastor, missionary and citizen". [93] These multi-identities of missionaries of the

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[90] *Confucian Analects*: "子曰： "人能弘道，非道弘人." Legge renders *dao* as principles. I translate it here as the *cause of truth*.
[91]Qian Mu 钱穆, *A Biography of Confucius*.《孔子传》 (北京: 九州出版社, 2011), 142.
[92] Han Yu 韩愈. A Treatise on Instructors.《师说》: "师者，所以传道受业解惑也".
[93] Lauren F. Pfister, *Striving for 'the Whole Duty of Man' (*Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), 71.

19th century like Legge are hard to comprehend within the Ruist context, in which one's various moral and intellectual identities were all united in and subject to his five social relations and his respective duties or prerogatives. The highest relation is that between him and the ruler of his nation, his duty to that relation being loyalty.

Legge's Scholarly Career at Oxford (1875 -1897)

Legge's years back in England were characterized by his career path shifting from a scholarly missionary to an academic, and by his scholarly focus moving from interpreting Chinese classics to interpreting the Chinese sacred books within the discipline of comparative religions. After retiring fully from his missionary service with the London Missionary Society in 1873, Legge spent his first year in Dollar, Scotland, where he edited the popular version of his first two Chinese classics (*The Life and Teachings of Confucius. Fourth Edition. 1875; The Life and works of Mencius.*1875). Legge also reworked his earlier translation of *Shi Jing* and produced a fully metrical version.[94] In 1875, Legge was awarded the Julien Prize, the first recipient since the institution of the award, for his "publishing the most valuable work on Chinese literature".[95]

The turning point came in 1875, when a chair for the Chinese Professorship was proposed and soon instituted with Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Legge was appointed with unanimous agreement as the first professor of the Chinese Language and Literature in 1876 and remained in that position until 1897. In his 1876 inaugural lecture, Legge repeated his conviction in the qualification of dutiful missionaries, and added: "That missionaries…. should be men that have been disciplined and trained by the fullest and most generous education." What Legge hinted at was that missionaries for China should not only learn to understand China, they should also learn to become the model of the Christian values they propagate in order to be successful in their evangelical work.

Legge's greatest achievement during his Oxford years was his six-volume contribution of *the Sacred Books of China (*Vol. III, V, XVI, XXVII, XXXIX, XL. 1879 - 1891) to Max Müller's compilation of *the Sacred Books of the East*. Max Müller's comparative philology

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[94] James Legge, *the She King; or, The Book of Ancient Poetry, Translated in English Verse, with Essays and Notes* (London: Trubner &Co., 1876).
[95] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar,* 204.

and his propagation for the discipline of comparative religions had significant impact on Legge's interpretation of the Chinese religion during his Oxford years.

Friedrich Max Müller (1823 -1900) was a German philologist and orientalist who spent most of his academic life at Oxford. Beginning as a Sanskrit scholar, he was, as remarked by Girardot, "certainly one of the most noted and influential figures associated with the institutionalized emergence of the 'science of religion' or 'comparative religions' during the last quarter of the nineteenth century".[96] In 1870, Müller delivered a series of four lectures on *the Science of Religion* at the Royal Institution in London, in which Müller properly introduced his idea of comparative study of religion.[97] Starting from 1879, Müller led the tremendous enterprise of translating and publishing the *Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford University Press. 1879 -1910). Totaling fifty volumes, the compilation embraced six non-Christian and Non-Jewish oriental religions and presented to the English world the "most valuable information, not only on the religion, but also on the moral sentiments, the social institutions, the legal maxims of some of the most important nations of antiquity".[98] Legge contributed to the translations of two Chinese religions, including "the Texts of Confucianism, and "the Texts of Taoism".

Max Müller had considerable impact on Legge. In as early as the 1850-1852 Term-Question debate, Müller had expressed his "decided approval of 'Shang-ti' (Shang Di) as the right name to be used for God in Chinese".[99] In 1880, after Legge published his first part of *the Sacred Books of China*, a letter written by the Bishop of Victoria and signed by many missionaries was sent to Müller, accusing Legge of translating Chinese "Shang Di" into "God of revelation" instead of "Supreme Ruler" or "Ruler on High". Max Müller very fitly asked, "Would this expression have evoked in the minds of Europeans any conception different from that of God?"[100] Legge and Müller also shared certain liberal idea of theology, both believing the scientific study of religion. Furthermore, Müller's philological approach

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[96] N. J. Girardot, "Max Müller's 'Sacred Books' and the Nineteenth-Century Production of the Comparative Science," *History of Religions* Vol. 41, No. 3 (February 2002): 213.
[97] The lectures were initially printed in *Fraser's Magazine* of February, March, April, and May issue of 1870. Since then they have been published in America, Italy, France and Germany. In 1873, they were published in London as a separate book.
[98] F. Max Müller, *The Sacred Books of the East*, translated by Various Oriental Scholars and Edited by Max Müller. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), Vol. 1, xxxix.
[99] Georgina Max Müller, *the Life and Letters of the Right Honorable Friedrich Max Müller* (Two Volumes. Longdon: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), 91.
[100] Ibid, 92.

to the study of religion was also employed by Legge in deducing the monotheistic nature of the ancient Chinese religion.

Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" Not the Four Books and Five Jing

It needs be pointed out that Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" were not reproductions of his *Chinese Classics* project, nor did they tally with the Chinese Four Books and Five Jing. Legge's *Chinese Classics* Project, originally intended to include all the Four Books and Five Jing (See Legge's preface to the CC1 [1861]). It ended up without *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Changes*) and *Li Ji (the Record of Rites)* due to the disruption of Legge's departure from Hong Kong in 1873. By finishing these two book in his "Texts of Confucianism", Legge fulfilled his original plan to embrace all the Four Books and Five Jing.

On the other hand, Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* was a project of comparative religions, being intended to include the religious classics of oriental religions. In view of this, Legge in his *Sacred Books of China* made significant redaction to "the Texts of Confucianism", rendering it a totally different project. In comparison to his *Chinese Classics*, "the Texts of Confucianism" excluded the whole Four Books portion (the two books of *Da Xue* and *Zhong Yong* were placed back in their original place and text arrangements in the Classic of *Li Ji)*. In terms of the Five Jing, Legge made up for the two classics of *Yi Jing* and *Li Ji*, retained the *Shu Jing* in entirety, made considerable redaction on the classic of *Shi Jing* to keep only those religious portion, and excluded the classic of *Chun Qiu*. Finally, Legge added *the Hsiao Jing* (孝经, *the Classic of Filial Piety*), a classic purported to be the work of Confucius but had been ranked only in a broader category of the Thirteen Jing.

In comparison with the Ruist rubric of the Four Books and Five Jing, Legge's exclusion of the Four Books part and *Chun Qiu* stripped his texts of the fundamental works that were either related directly to Confucian or to the sayings of Confucius. Even with the addition of *the Hsiao Jing* (孝经, *the Classic of Filial Piety*), Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" in the Chinese Ruist view are principally the texts without Confucian teachings, which are deemed to be contained mainly in *the Confucian Analects* and the *Chun Qiu*. In other words, Legge's 'Confucianism' in his *Sacred Books of China* is neither Ruism in its broad context nor the thought of Confucius as far as Confucian doctrine is concerned. The mystery of Legge's 'Confucianism' will be unraveled later in the thesis.

Legge's Other Works at Oxford and His Later Life

Besides contributing to Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* series, Legge's life at Oxford also saw him rethinking the meaning of Confucianism within the comparative religious study and within the context of Christian encounter with the Ruist China.

Legge's first attempt at Confucianism came with his 1877 paper *Confucianism in relation to Christianity* (Shanghai, 1877), written in response to a request for a paper of the namesake for the 1877 Missionary Conference held in Shanghai. In the same year, Legge delivered a four-part lecture series –"Imperial Confucianism" [101] during the Eastern and Michaelman terms. The lectures were pivotal in Legge's connecting the moral system of Confucius and its religious origin, and led to his 1879 claim that "Confucianism is the religion of China par excellence."[102] In 1880, Legge delivered *The Religions of China* (London, 1880) lecture series to the Presbyterian Church of England, in which Legge discoursed on the two native religions of China –Confucianism and Taoism—and compared them with Christianity in terms of their doctrines of God, their moral teachings and teachings that were particular to Christianity only. Most importantly, Legge in these lectures laid out his theological formulation of his 'Confucianism', a concept that Legge had to defend time and again in his later papers. Besides those lectures, Legge's interest in China further expanded to Chinese Buddhism, with his 1886 translation and annotation of *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Oxford, 1886). After his completion of translating the Taoist classics for Müller's *Sacred Books of East* in 1891, Legge wrote more broadly on China, though always with the intention for his continued search for God in Chinese texts. In 1888, Legge made a new translation of the *Nestorian Monument of HSI-AN Fu* (London. 1888)[103] accompanied by his lecture on the history of the monument and a sketch of Christian missions in China. Underlying Legge's translation of the inscription, there could still be seen his nuanced effort at defending his rendering of Shang Di into God.[104] Legge's 1893 article

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[101] James Legge, "Imperial Confucianism. Four Lectures, Delivered during the Trinity and Michaelmas Terms of 1877," *The China Review* Volume VI (1878), 147-58, 223-35, 299-310, 367-74.
[102] James Legge, *SBE3/SBC1* (1879), preface, xiv.
[103] Legge mentioned in the preface to this translation a number of existent translations, including the two translations by the Jesuit writers Alvarez Semedo and Visdelo, the translation made by E.C. Bridgman and published in *the Chinese Repository*, and the translation made by Alexander Wylie.
[104] The Nestorian inscriptions used the True Lord (真主) for rendering God. Legge in his accompanying lecture raised his own question by way of rephrasing the Jesuit controversy: Did the Chinese really mean God when they spoke of T'ien (Heaven) and Shang Ti (the Supreme Ruler)? Legge provided his answer to this question by entirely agreeing with Ricci's affirmative opinion. (p.58).

"on the Late Appearance of Romances and Novels in the Literature of China"[105] contained a succinct overview of the emergence of popular literature in China. In 1895, Legge contributed to the Journal of *the Royal Asiatic society* a series of three articles on a classic poem Li Sao (离骚)[106] by a famous Chinese poet and exiled politician Qu Yuan (屈原, c. BC. 340 – BC. 278), who tried to make sense of the ways of heaven concerning his mistreatment and the corrupt status of his home state. Legge was now eighty years old.

In 1892, Legge resumed his revision on his *Chinese Classics* project for the reprint by Oxford Press. Legge had his final reconciliation with Confucius, whom in his first edition (1861) Legge didn't think as great man. Thirty years later, however, Legge was able to see "the great benefit" of Confucius to the Chinese, "… his teachings suggest important lessons to ourselves who profess to belong to the school of Christ".[107] Legge revised only the first two volumes of his *Chinese classics* project for Oxford reprint,[108] the other three volumes were exact reprints of their first editions.

Legge lived a quiet scholarly life at 3 Keble Road, Oxford from 1876, maintaining the habit of rising at about three A.M, working at his desk for five hours while the rest of the household slept. This habit was interrupted in October 1897, when he was struck by a sudden illness. Legge passed away in November 1897, eighty-two years of age.

Various eulogies and critique were directed to Legge or to his works both during his life time and after, and the controversy Legge arose during his life time is as much active after his death. Two remarks on him may well illustrate the different perceptions as regard to the significance of Legge's works. Dr. Andrew Martin Fairbairn, then the principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, gave the following remarks on Legge, "and out of understanding came his magnificent edition of the Chinese Classics. Of its learning it does not become me to speak, the invincible patience, the heroic industry that went to its production we can all admire. But only those who knew the man can appreciate the idea, the splendid dream of

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[105] James Legge, "the Late Appearance of Romances and Novels in the Literature of China; With the History of the Great Archer, Yang Yû-chî," *the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (October 1893), 799-822, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25197170 .
[106] James Legge, "the Li Sâo Poem and Its Author," *the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (January 1895), pp. 77-92; (July 1895), pp. 571-599. (October 1895), pp. 839-864, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25197241 , http://www.jstor.org/stable/25197276 , http://www.jstor.org/stable/25207763 .
[107] James Legge, *CC1 (1893).*
[108] The Second edition of *Chinese Classics* Volume Two, containing the works of Mencius was published by Oxford Clarendon Press in 1895.

humanity and religion that gave it birth."[109] On the other hand, Dr. Gu Hongming (辜鸿铭, 1857 -1928), a renowned Chinese scholar of Legge's time who received his academic degrees in Britain and Germany, thus remarked Legge's translations: "Dr. Legge, from his raw literary training when he began his work, and the utter want of critical insight and literary perception he showed to the end, was really nothing more than a great Sinologue, that is to say, a pundit with a very learned but dead knowledge of Chinese books."[110] Being a staunch follower of Confucius and expert on the Chinese classics, Gu was prompted to start his own English translation on the Chinese classics. He only managed to complete the Four Books, that is, the first two books of Legge's *Chinese classics*.

Conclusion

Legge's linguistic talent in classical translation, his nonconformist missionary background of his hometown, and the 19th century Scottish Enlightenment shaped Legge's personal, mental and intellectual capacities which distinguished him from other missionaries in China and provided foundations for his being the 'translator' of Chinese Classics. Legge's participation in the Term-Question debate set off Legge's translational search for God in the Chinese classics. As a result of such quest, Legge produced a new set of Commentaries on Chinese classics that incorporated Chinese Ruist commentary tradition, Biblical criticism and exegesis as well as western hermeneutic principles. Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" in his *Sacred Books of China* represented Legge's reformation on the Chinese classics as religious classics. They also symbolized Legge's reformation on the teaching of Confucius, which featured ancient Chinese religion as its principal component: The religion of China is Confucianism *par excellence.*

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[109] Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge Missionary and Scholar,* 232.
[110] Gu Hongming, *The Discourses and Sayings of Confucius* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1898), p. vii.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TERM-QUESTION DEBATE AND LEGGE'S ENCOUNTER WITH SHANG DI

This chapter attempts to examine the Term-Question debate both in its historical and textual contexts, the aim being to provide a clearer picture regarding what prompted Legge's participation in the debate at its later stage, why Legge put forward his controversial arguments the way he did, and the consequences of the debate both in terms of the Chinese Bible translations and on Legge's missionary life. The readers must be reminded that the 19th century Term-Question debate was not about which Chinese terms was the 'better rendition' of God, *shen* or Shang Di. Each party believed the other advocacy to be totally wrong, with pernicious influence. It was in this spirit that Legge risked his career reputation in meeting the challenges head-on when induced by his opponent to "prove that …Shang Di… is truly and properly God"[111] and endeavoured to counter his opponent's claim that "the Chinese do not know any being who may truly and properly be called God" by its positive statement.[112] The failure in convincing the pro-*shen* 神 party jeopardized Legge's missionary reputation and put him in lasting apprehension for fear of misusing the name of God. The consequences of the Term-Question debate set him off on his life-time translational search for God in the Chinese classics. It constituted Legge's continuous effort to prove his Shang Di advocacy. In the meantime, the pernicious influence of rendering God into *shen* in the Chinese Bible has not been fully evaluated.

A Historical Account of the 19th Century Term-Question Debate

The Inception of the Term Question Debate

Soon after Hong Kong was ceded to the United Kingdom as part of the Treaty of Nanjing (1842), a meeting of missionaries representing various denominations in China was held there during August and September 1843.[113] The meeting resolved to commence the

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[111] William J. Boone, "Defense of An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese language," *Chinese Repository* Vol.XIX (1850), 360.
[112] Ibid, 347.
[113] The participants of the meeting included Benjamin Hobson, a medical missionary; James Legge, W.H. Medhurst, William Charles Milne, and A. and J. Stronach from the London Missionary Society, and Dyer Ball E. C. Bridgman from American Board of Commissioners for the Foreign Missions, William Dean and Issachar

revision of the Chinese translation of the New Testament and agreed upon the principle of translation being "in exact conformity to the Hebrew and Greek originals in senses,"[114] with the *Textus Receptus* as the basis of the revision. The meeting set up a general committee for the revision of the Bible translation and elected W. H. Medhurst as its secretary. The general committee was to be formed by one or more delegates from each station (hence known as the committee of "the Delegates"), each station entitling to one vote only for the judgement of final revision. As mentioned previously, the meeting assigned Medhurst and Legge to solve the issue of rendering the names of deity into Chinese. Though no consensus was reached, the selection of Legge probably indicated certain recognition for his linguistic capacity, being the principal of the Anglo-Chinese College and having assisted with the publication in London of the English translation of a Chinese historical novel by his student Ho Tsin-shen (何进善, 1817 -1871).[115] It was also Legge's first connection the Term-Question issue.

When the revision on the New Testament led by Medhurst and Charles Gutzlaff was in its advanced stage, sporadic debate on the term issue began to appear in *The Chinese Repository*, the first two article being by E.C. Bridgeman, the chief editor and the founder of *The Chinese Repository* Journal.[116] In 1845, Bridgman published a short comparison of six different versions of John 1:1, including Morrison's translation and three revised translations (*Chinese Repository*, Vol. XIV, 1845. No.1. P.54). While all the new translations substituted Shang Di for Morrison's *shen* in rendering God. The article made an emphatic remark that "at present we prefer …*shin* (*shen*)."[117]

Another article appeared in issue 4 of *The Chinese Repository* in 1846. The article briefed the readers on the necessity of revising earlier Bible translations by Morrison, Milne and Marshman, then proceeded to state the difficulties in translating some of the terms, such as "God", "spirit" and "prophet", eliciting readers' attention and discussion. However, following each of these terms under discussion was added a remark of "our opinion". In

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Jacox Roberts from the American Baptist Board, and Mr. Brown of the Morrison Education Society.

[114] *The Chinese Repository* Vol. XII, no.10 (October 1843):551-553.

[115] Tkin *shen*, *the Rambles of the Emperor Ching Tih in Kang Nan. A Chinese Tale*. Translation. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1843).

[116] Most of the articles in Chinese Repository were published anonymously. It was in the final issue—the general index of 1851 that the author of each article was listed.

[117] *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XIV, No.1 (January 1845): 54.

terms of "*God"* and "*Theos"*, "We have already expressed our opinion in favor of this term (note, *shen*); regarding the term *spirit*, "we must confess that the word 风 seems to us better fitted than 神 (*shen*) to stand in the place of חַיִים נְשָׁמַת (spirit)."[118] As the *Chinese Repository* was the primary medium of communications among the missionaries in China, the article's using "we" for giving opinions implicitly created an impression that the article represented a mainstream opinion of missionaries in China.

More anonymous articles appeared in 1845 -1847 to defend the old rendition of *shen.*[119] The argument points for the *shen* advocate were also taking shape. The term *God* originally signified not any one deity, but deity in general, including true God and false gods. The term *shen* in Chinese best represented *God* in this sense. The Chinese term Shang Di only represented one deity and was deemed by the advocate to resemble Jupiter in Greek mythology. It needs to point out that those pro-*shen* articles with their acquaintance with Chinese knowledge were all attributed to Walter Macon Lowrie of American Presbyterian Mission, who just settled down in Ningbo in 1845 after spending most of his two missionary years on the seas between South-Eastern Asian countries.[120] These arguments later formed the principal part of Boone's essay. In contrast, very few articles arguing for Shang Di 上帝 were seen during these two years, the only one short article by Charles Gutzlaff was immediately rebuked in the end-note by the chief editor. [121] It was not until Medhurst made a strong statement in the January issue of the journal in 1847 that the one-sided advocacy for *shen* came to a pause. In the article, Medhurst made it clear that "we must not give up the use of Shang Di… until we find a better." His long experience and examination led him to believe that "*shen* does not mean the one God*."* [122]

In 1846, Medhurst wrote to the editor E. C. Bridgman calling for a meeting of "Delegates" to convene in Shanghai in September to review the Bible revision and the

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[118] *Chinese Repository* Vol. XV, No. 4 (April 1846): 163, 164.
[119] These *pro-shen* articles included in the *Chinese Repository* were: Vol. XIV (1845), 101; Vol. XV (1846), 311, 568, 577 and Vol. XVI (1847), 30.
[120] In the last issue of the *Chinese Repository*:the General Index, the editor E. C. Bridgman finally added all the names of the authors to the articles published in the journals. E.C. Bridgman added Rev. W. M. Lowrie as the author of most of the pro-Shin articles in 1945-1947, including Vol. VIX, 1845. P101; Vol. XV, 1846. P.311, P.568, P.577; Vol. XVI, 1847. P.30. Strangely, Alexander Wylie in his *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai, 1867) did not mention any of these articles in the biography of Lowrie.
[121] Charles Gatzliff, "Remarks regarding the translation of the terms for Deity in the Chinese translation of the Scriptures," *Chinese Repository* Vol. XV (1846), 464.
[122] W. H. Medhurst, "Remarks in favor of Shangti for God," *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XVI (1847), 34-37.

rendition of controversial terms. Bridgman in his article on the bible translation update (*the Chinese Repository*, Vol. XV-1846. No.2. p.108) demurred Medhurst's proposal, citing the 1843 Hong Kong meeting resolution which required all translations to be firstly reviewed by each local station before the final revision by the general committee. The truth was likely that so far there was only the translation led by Medhurst, and Bridgman expected more local stations to review and remark on Medhurst's rendition of God into Shang Di. Besides, Bridgman was also considering the selection of delegates whose votes were pivotal to the final decision on the term issue.

In early 1847, the time for a delegation meeting was set in June together with the selection of the five delegates.[123] It needs to note that the five "appointed" delegates only represented four local stations (the delegate from Hong Kong was missing due to Legge's furlough in England).[124] The new addition of Dr. William J. Boone (1811 – 1864) to Shanghai alongside Medhurst was a tricky move. Dr. Boone was trained in law, theology and medicine. His early missionary years (1837-1845) were spent with constant moving around Batavia, Macao, Hong Kong and home which did not render him much opportunity of studying Chinese or Chinese literature. His selection served more likely as counter balance to Medhurst's scholarly authority on Chinese classics due to Boone's position as the first bishop of China.[125] Rev. E.C. Bridgman, the chief-editor of the *Chinese Repository*, represented Canton (Guangzhou). W.C. Lowrie (1819 – 1847) from Ningbo station was the least experienced, settling down in Ningbo only in 1845. On the other hand, Medhurst (also representing Shanghai) and John Stronach from Amoy (Xiamen) were the two chief translators of the revised New Testament.

The June 1847 delegate meeting result was not published until in January 1848, when the *Chinese Repository* updated what transpired in the meeting. The controversy of that

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[123] *Chinese Repository* Vol. XVI, no.4 (April 1847): 208. the Five delegate are Rev. W.H. Medhurst of London Missionary society (from Shanghai), Rev. William J. Boone of Protestant Episcopal Church Mission (from Shanghai), Rev. John Stronach of London missionary society (from Amoy),), Rev. E.C. Bridgman of American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (from Canton) and Rev. Walter Macon Lowrie of American Presbyterian Mission (from Ningbo).

[124] According to the 1843 Hong Kong meeting resolution, each port station was only entitled to one vote regardless of the number of delegates it selected.

[125] During his return visit the United States Boone was consecrated at St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia in October 1844 as the first Anglican missionary bishop of Shanghai and the first bishop of China outside the Roman tradition. See Gray, G. F. S. Smalley, Martha Lund, ed. *Anglicans in China: A History of the Zhonghua shenggong Hui (Chung Hua sheng Kung Huei)*. Episcopal China Mission History Project (1996).

meeting centered on the translation of God in the revised translation. Three delegates (Bridgman, Boone and Lowrie) proposed to follow Morrison's practice of using *shen* while two delegates (Medhurst and Stronach) preferred Shang Di or Di (帝). This was a tricky representation of the result, as Boone and Medhurst could only count as one vote for Shanghai per 1843 solution. Many later writings on the term debate blamed Medhurst for not respecting the majority vote of the 1847 delegates' meeting. That is a false accusation. Failing to reach any agreement, the meeting resolved to continue the argument by each providing their respective opinions on the term in writing. The article also indicated that the final settlement of the Term Question was to be decided by the missionaries in China based on the debates to be conducted via *the Chinese Repository* journal.

The Term-Question Debate: 1848 -1850

The *Chinese Repository* journals of 1948 to 1850 became the center stage for the Term-Question debate. The pro-*shen* spokesman was officially taken over by William Boone,[126] who signed himself as "Missionary Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States to China".[127] Medhurst represented the pro-Shang Di party. The *Chinese Repository* also opted to publish Boone's two-part essay first in its January and February 1848 issues. This arrangement made a huge difference both to the opinion of Medhurst and to the missionary readers in general, especially when Boone in his essay condemned the usage of Shang Di as derogatory to God. After Boone's articles were completed, the journal then proceeded to publish Medhurst's five-part essays through its March to July issues. [128]

By the time the journal published Medhurst's concluding part, a most dramatic change occurred. In his previous parts, Medhurst devoted lengthy pages enumerating various usages of Shang Di or Di in classical Chinese texts, and a lengthier portion illustrating that *shen* in Chinese texts did not signify deities but spirits, human souls, and invisible intelligences of

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[126] Walter Macon Lowrie, the purported *pro-shen* writer for *the Chinese Repostory*, returned Ningpo in August 1847 before the delegate meeting was concluded and died while crossing the Hangzhou Bay by boat. See Alexander Wylie's *Memorials of the Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai, 1867).

[127] The two essays of Dr. William J. Boone were later on compiled into *An Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language* (Canton: Printed at the Office of the Chinese Repository, 1848).

[128] The five essays of W.H. Medhurst were later compiled into *An Inquiry into the Proper Mode of Rendering the Word God in Translating the Sacred Scriptures into the Chinese Language* (Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1848).

all beings. Nevertheless Medhurst in his conclusion most surprisingly gave up his proposal for Shang Di or Di, his reason being "to secure unanimity among Protestant Missionaries".[129] Instead, Medhurst proposed a less known, yet still an established Chinese term – Tian Di (天帝, Heavenly Ruler). Medhurst was willing to compromise on his own proposal. What he did not compromise at all costs was his firm objection to *shen*.

The less-noticeable aspect of the Term-Question debate were the disgraceful acts by the pro-*shen* party in suppressing fair discussion on Shang Di. In the same issue of *the Chinese Repository* in which Medhurst's concluding part of his essay was printed, there followed an anonymous article addressed to those missionaries who "teach the Chinese to worship Shang Di".[130] The article explained that Shang Di was a proper name indicating a single individual Being, thus it was not God. Secondly, Shang Di was not Jehovah because, despite many shared attributes, there were also characteristic differences. The article concluded that those who taught, or worshipped Shang Di were guilty of breaking the First Commandment of God.[131] The anonymous author in the February 1849 issue revealed his identity as Boone himself. Yet, while explaining that his intent for his 1848 article was not for condemning those who did not know the difference, Dr. Boone in his 1849 article insinuated real condemnation to those who continued their behaviors.

With Medhurst giving up the term Shang Di and with the two articles in *the Chinese Repository* warning against violation of the First Commandment, Boone achieved his mission of driving Shang Di out of the Term-Question debate.[132] He did not bother replying to the further challenges and objections raised by Medhurst[133]

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[129] *Chinese Repository* Vol. XVII, no.7 (July, 1948): 348.
[130] William J. Boone, "A Few Plain Questions Addressed to those Missionaries Who Teach the Chinese to Worship Shangti," *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XVII, no. 7 (July 1848):357.
[131] The First commandment: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3).
[132]The only exception was Rev. Elihu Doty (1809 -1864) from Amoy, an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States. His essay on the Term-Question (Vol. XIX, 1850. P.185) represented a much-refined theological contemplation and cogent reasoning than that of Medhurst. Rev. Elihu argued that the term 帝 (di) was more "synonymous" to Theos while *shen* could not be the word. Yet, he stopped short of recommending Shang Di, an obvious effect of Boone's warning. His essay was later included as part of the *Pro*-Shang Di argument for the American Bible Society's review and decision on the issue.
[133] After Medhurst finished his Term-Question Argument essay in July 1848, he further wrote and published reply and opposition to the *shen* argument of Dr. Boone in the October-December issues of *Chinese Repository*. Dr. Boone never replied.

By 1850 it seemed that the term *shen* was destined to triumph in upcoming general missionary votes. Out of his desperation Dr. Medhurst in January 1850 wrote an appeal letter to all missionaries in China, illustrating why he firmly object the use of *shen* for rendering God, "It is wrong, decidedly and radically wrong; and no definition can make it right." [134] Medhurst tried to make a last attempt by proposing transliteration in rendering God into Chinese. Nevertheless, without a solid and persistent advocate, it seemed the unwavering pro-*shen* party were to triumph. In June 1850, Legge started publishing a series of six letters, firmly and unwaveringly advocating Shang Di. His letters arose Boone from his slumber and forced him to finally defend his own advocacy,[135] and more accurately, to direct some darkest challenges to Legge, any attempts to meet these challenges would only lead to heterodoxy.

In July 1850 the revision for the New Testament translation was all finished except for the terms "God" and "Spirit". When the delegates still failed to agree on the proper Chinese terms "by their inability to come to any decision in regard to it in their body",[136] the Committee of Delegates resolved to provide this version to their respective Bible societies and to the missionaries in China with the terms of "God" and "spirit" left untranslated, throwing the responsibility to the Bible societies to decide their Chinese renditions.

The Break-up of the General Committee of the Bible Revision.

The April 1851 issue of *The Chinese Repository* recorded for the last time the occurrences of several events relating to the Term-Question debate before the journal was closed by its founder at the end of that year. The pro-*shen* party resorted to the American Bible Society, which in turn sought a third-party evaluation on the term issue. The evaluation report, being prepared by an American Hebraists Samuel Hulbert Turner (1790- 1861)[137] and a clergyman Richard Salter Storrs (1821 -1900)[138], recommended the use of *shen* as the best word for God. A deciding factor for their decisions was the voting result of the

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[134] W.H. Medhurst. *A Letter to the Protestant Missionaries Labouring at Hongkong and the Five Ports of China*. Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1850).
[135] William J. Boone, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository* Vol. XIX, 1850, 345, 409,465,569,625.
[136] *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XIX, 1850. P.546.
[137] Samuel Hulbert Turner (1790 -1861) was an American Hebraist. He was professor of the Hebrew Language and Literature at the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church in New York City.
[138] Richard Salter Storrs (1821 -1900) was an American Congregational clergyman.

missionaries in China, which was not officially published in *The Chinese Repository*. According to the evaluation, fifty-five missionaries in China voted in favor of the term *shen*, nineteen missionaries voted for Shang Di, while six voted for the transliteration.

The break-up of the Committee of delegates, or in the words of the journal, "the withdrawal of the agents of the London Missionary society",[139] occurred in February 1851. The resolution of London Missionary society announced its official withdrawal from the Committee of Delegates in China for the Old Testament translation and formed their own Committee for translating the Old Testament under the auspice of London Missionary Society. The resolutions also made mention of inviting Legge to join the translation or revision "in conformity with wishes of the Directors".[140] It seems Legge's role in the Term-Question debate was better recognized by the L.M.S home office.

Understanding this episode of the Term-Question was important as it revealed that the early 19th Century Term-Question debate among missionaries in China was far from a fair and academic debate on the translation issue. By labelling himself the "Missionary Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States to China" in the debate, Dr. Boone assumed an authority not unlike that during the seventeenth century controversies over the Chinese Rites and Term issues (see Chapter One). In Dr. Boone's case, he not only leveraged such authority of judgement to influence most American missionaries sent to China through various US mission organizations, but also participated in the debate as the advocate of pro-*shen* party. Some later missionaries in China put blame on Medhurst and Legge for their disregard of the voting result in favour of *shen* in 1850 and for the break-up of the General committee of the Bible Revision.[141] By putting the whole controversy within its historical context, it is not hard to see that the missionary voting of the 1850 was meddled with and the result compromised.

Legge was connected with the Term Question debate since 1843. However, due to his absence from Hong Kong for the best part of the Term Question debate, he probably felt guilty for not being able to offer adequate support for Medhurst the lone fighter. More

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[139] *Chinese Repository*, Vol. XX, 1851, 222.
[140] Ibid, 222.
[141] In 1854, a pamphlet was printed and published in London titled: 神 Shin V. 上帝 Shang-te. Antagonistic Versions of the Chinese Scriptures. The author claimed himself a life member of the Bible society and strongly criticized Medhurst, Legge and the British and Foregin Bible society for the wrong choice.

importantly, it is partly from Medhurst's thorough investigation into the usage of Chinese terms Shang Di and *shen* that Legge was finally convinced that *shen* was the wrong term. Though Legge was late for the debate, his advocacy for Shang Di was most staunch, and his objection to Boone's argument most absolute. In 1852 Legge published *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits (* Hon Kong, 1852*).* Seemingly a treatise dealing with the Chinese opinion on deities, its content was in direct response to Dr. Boone's 1850 defense essay. In his attempt to overthrow the foundations of Boone's argument and by meeting each of Boones' challenge regardless of dire consequences, Legge engaged into the famous, or infamous argument to prove that "the Chinese know God" and that "Shang Di in Chinese is the true God". Such argument effort forever stigmatized Legge. It was his duty to continue his search and examination of the Chinese classics to vindicate himself that he did not take the name of God in vain.

A Textual Account of the Term-Question Debate

Besides the historical perspective of the Term-Question Debate, it is also necessary to have some ideas about the translational principles and theological principles adopted by the pro-Shang Di advocate Medhurst on the one side and those of Boone on the other side. As mentioned earlier, the 19th Century Term-Question was distorted by the predominant missionary participation which turned the issue from which Chinese term could properly signify the meaning of the biblical Elohim/God into a theological issue of who was God in China. Legge's early arguments on the Term Question contrasted other contenders for his confining the argument principally within the academic scope of translation, i.e. translating the meanings. On the other hand, he could not avoid those theological challenges. By his foolhardy effort to meet those challenges head-on Legge not only wreaked havoc to his missionary reputation but arguably led to other missionaries' aversion to his otherwise most plausible argument.

Medhurst's Translational and Theological Principles for Di/Shang Di Argument

Medhurst was a printer-turned missionary with little proper training in translation or theology. Such disadvantages of Medhurst was compensated by his proficiency with Chinese language and exhaustive examination on the Chinese classical texts. In 1846, Medhurst translated *Shoo Jing* in full, with an aim to delve into its religious content that

had long haunted Jesuit writers for the Noachic origin of Chinese race and its ancient knowledge on the Supreme Being. Besides this, Medhurst further produced *A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese* (Shanghai, 1847) and *On the True Meaning of the Word Shin* (Shanghai, 1849), in which he listed hundreds of passages that "bear on the subject of spiritual and invisible beings"[142] within the Chinese classics, even including the Taoist and Buddhist classics. In short, Medhurst's approach to the Term-Question was a translational approach that he mistook for the "theology of the Chinese".[143] With his dogged effort and thorough examinations of such Chinese terms as *shen* (神), *tian* (天), Shang Di (上帝) and Di (帝), Medhurst came to the conclusion that the literary expressions of Chinese Shang Di were most in line with some of the descriptions or attributes of biblical God:

> Thus out of 175 instances in which the word Shang-ti is used, in the Chinese classics, only one refers to human rulers, and all the rest to the Supreme Ruler… indeed, we are warned against confounding him with the images in the temples; while the Supreme Ruler is declared, again and again, to be distinct from the visible heavens… that no intimation is given us, in all the Chinese classics of anything like the voluptuous character which is attributed to the Jupiter of the Greeks being ascribed him who is Supreme in the estimation of the Chinese; no body, parts, or passions being assigned to him; and the main idea attached to the Shang-te, being that of universal supremacy, uncontrollable power, justice, glory, majesty, and dominion…the superstitious of later ages have gradually corrupted the original idea attached to Shang-te… but these are as different from him whom the ancients worshipped under the title of the Supreme Ruler, as the Jove of the western world is from Jehovah, the God and Father of all, from whom the name the fabled father of gods and men is probably derived.
>
> - W. H. Medhurst. *A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese*, 273

Medhurst accordingly concluded that *Te* (Di 帝) "is the exact representative of Elohim, and is the generic term for God". When the character 上 (*Shang*, *above*) is prefixed, it then expressed the idea of "the Most High God, and is equivalent to the word

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[142] Ibid, iii.

[143] Medhurst's so-called Theology of the Chinese was in fact a collection of philological and philolophical interpretations by Chinese writers on the terms in the Chinese classics that were deemed as religious by Medhurst. See his *A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese, with a View to the Elucidation of the most Appropriate Term for Expressing the Deity, in the Chinese Language* (Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1847).

God, par excellence, as it is expressed in capitals, or with a capital letter, in our editions of the Bible."[144]

With regard to the meaning of Chinese term *shen* (神), Medhurst came to his conclusion after going through some eight hundred references in the Chinese texts:

> … The main idea is that of the expanders and contractors of nature, who, under the authority and direction of a higher power, attend to the bringing forth and nourishing of men and things… while they are supposed to be influenced by sacrifices and to afford protection to nations and individuals, but always subject to the will of a superior, and never are they represented as acting independently and supremely, uncontrollably and ultimately. They are not, therefore, according to the showing of the Chinese, gods, but subordinate spirits, agents, genii, and manes.
>
> W.H. Medhurst. *On the Theology of the Chinese*. 190, 191.

While Medhurst dropped the proposal of Shang Di, his examinations on these two terms provided Legge with important information on their philological significance. When Legge drew up his letters on the Term issue, he dedicated his writing to Medhurst for "the light, which his researches have thrown upon the subject discussed".[145]

Boone's Theological and Translational principles for the *shen* (神) Argument

Boone's argument in favour of *shen* seemingly originated from theological considerations, though his theological consideration was dubious. The translation principle he accordingly landed in rendering Elohim as a generic name was the least theological of all.

Firstly, Boone distinguished the "true God"[146] from Elohim. In his opinion, the true God was a God whose name was Jehovah,[147] and the idea of "true God" could

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[144] Ibid, 277,278.
[145] James Legge, *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (Hong Kong: Hongkong Register Office, 1850), the Dedication page.
[146] William J. Boone, *an Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language,* 1.
[147] In his 1848 article in Chinese Repository warning missionaries against using the term Shang Di, Dr. Boone's one challenge to Shang Di was "Is the Chinese Tien 天 or Shang-ti 上帝 Jehovah, the true God?" See Chinese

not be derived from the term Elohim or Theos but "alone from the revelation He has made of Himself". [148] In other words, the term Elohim/Theos had little to do with the meaning of God other than being "a generic term" that was "applied to heathen deities as well as to Jehovah".[149] Boone didn't bother "to find this knowledge stored up in some word ready for his use".[150] To him such knowledge of God could only be reached "after many days of painful labour" of instruction. [151]

Boone's principles of translation also represented his unique missiological objective. In his opinion, a chief aim of translating God was to forbid polytheism in China. Therefore, "we must use the name of the whole class worshipped as Gods by the Chinese, and not the name of any one Deity."[152] Following such theological and missiological principles, Boone formulated his translational principles and propositions:

> 1st. The Chinese do not know any being who may truly and properly be called God; they have therefore no name for such a being, no word in their language answering to our word God.
>
> 2d. that, this being the state of things, we must seek the general name of their gods, and content ourselves with the use of the word in Chinese that answers to our words a god, gods, as the best that can be done under the circumstances.
>
> 3d. that shin is the general or generic name of the Chinese gods; and therefore it follows,—that this word should be used to render Elohim and Theos into Chinese." Elohim was a generic term that applied to both heathen deities as well as Jehovah, therefore, it shall be rendered using the generic Chinese term, not a proper name.
>
> -William J. Boone. D.D. *Defense of an Essay*, 5.

In contrast to Medhurst's method of forming his conclusion after extensive examination on Chinese classics, Boone first put forward his theological assumption and missiological objective, then tried to seek in Chinese language the term that would meet his requirements. It is not my intention to examine Boone's theological principles in this thesis. Nonetheless Boone's propositions illustrate the complexity of the 19th century Term Question which not

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Repository Vol. XVII. 1848, 357.
[148] William J. Boone, *an Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language*, 1.
[149] Ibid, 3.
[150] Ibid, 2
[151] Ibid, 1, 2.
[152] Ibid, 4.

only involved more than two languages but was compounded with theological considerations. Boone's premise centred theologically on the Being called God in English, which Chinese language did not have a corresponding name; his conclusion turned to the Jewish and Greek languages of Elohim/Theos. By selecting their grammatical nature as a generic term as the basis for rendering God into the Chinese generic term *shen*, Boone's conclusion inevitably brought forth more questions: Is Elohim in its Jewish Biblical context the true God in its English sense? This partly explained why Legge had to spend much of his essay investigating the Bible and to argue in more theological sense that Elohim biblically meant the God, the few exceptions being misuses of the term by men.

Legge's 1850 Letters on the Rendering of the Name God[153]

Legge most likely started as a *shen* supporter. He mentioned that, in 1844, he suggested to his assistant Ho Tsin-shen (何进善)[154] to use the word *shen* for God. However, Ho "continued steadily and quietly to preach about *Shang Te*"(Legge 1850, 73). Ho's opinion and attitude toward Shang Di was crucial as he was conversant with both the Chinese classics and Christian Bible.[155] Ho told Legge that the temples of Shang Di throughout China were those of Taoist god of "*Huen teen Shang Te* (浑天上帝)" or "*Yu Huang Shang Te* (玉皇上帝)", not the classical Shang Di, the sacrifice to whom belonged alone to the emperor as the father of all the people. "The people therefore dare not to erect temples or offer sacrifice to him. They only serve him by obedience." (Legge 1850, 73)

Starting from June to August of 1850, Legge published a series of six letters on the Term-Question in the Hong Kong based local newspaper *China Mail*, in which Legge reviewed "the different opinions which are maintained by the Protestant missionaries" (Legge 1850, 3). By this method Legge successfully reinstated Shang Di as a proper candidate of the Term Question debate.

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[153] James Legge, *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (Hong Kong: printed at the "Hongkong Register" Office, 1850). Legge arranged it in six letters, with the third Letters, the fifth and the sixth letters broken into two parts, thus they were nine letters in total.
[154] Ho Tsin-shen (何进善, 1817 -1871) was Legge Chinese student at Malacca. He later joined Legge in Hong Kong and became his assistant pastor. Ho was viewed as one of the earliest Chinese Christian theologians.
[155] Ho in 1855 wrtoe *A comprehensive commentary to the New Testament* (Hong Kong and Canton), among other Biblical commentaries.

Unlike Medhurst and Boone, Legge in his 1850 letters attempted to confine his argument to the translation field and with proper academic principles. His argument in 1850, therefore, had more to do with the philology, etymology and grammar of the terms under consideration.

Legge started in his first letter with a concise description of the previous Jesuit controversy on the term issue. Despite of the historical enmities between Protestantism and Catholicism, Legge did not shun the academic opinions of Jesuit writings as other contenders did. On the contrary, Legge's letters reflected his extensive reading of Jesuit works on the issue. What the Nonconformist Legge defied was church authority and "so-called Apostolic precepts" (Legge 1850, 3). [156] To Legge, "if parties of independent mind, untrammelled by Church authority, are to unite in adopting any one term, the result will be effected only by the force of truth" (Legge 1850, 3).

In his second letter, Legge dealt with the opinion of some to use the combination of Shang Di and *shen* in translation. An interesting episode here illustrates how un-partisan and dissenting Legge was. Legge singled out the two-page essay on this opinion from the *Chinese Repository* journal and gave harsh remark less due to its legitimacy of proposal than its academic quality displayed by the writer's quoting John Locke. [157] However, the writer, later identified as E.T.R. Moncrieff who also studied at Legge's King's College and was newly sent to Hong Kong by the Church of England Missionary Society,[158] felt so offended by Legge's remark that Moncrieff immediately turned to the Pro-*shen* rank by attacking Legge.[159] The *Chinese Repository* did not hesitate to publish his article of attack though Legge's letters never got a chance in the journal.

Legge also set off an investigation into the usage of Elohim/Theos in the New Testament regarding Boone dubious claim that Elohim/Theos was a 'generic term'. His survey on the usage of Theos in the New Testament revealed that "out of 1,444 cases in which Theos occurs in the New Testament, it appears that in 1,440 of them we have to employ the

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[156] Legge was implying one of Dr. Boone's arguments for adopting *shen* as in conformity with the Apostles' practice.
[157]By A Looker-on, "Letter regarding the word used for God in Chinese," Chinese Repository Vol. XIX, (1850): 280.
[158] Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese; giving a list of their publications, and Obituary notices of the deceased* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), 200. The Church of England Missionary Society is known today as Church Missionary Society (CMS).
[159] See Moncrieff's reply to Legge's letter: "Letter on Dr. Legge's argument on the word for God in Chinese", *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XIX, (1850): 524.

appropriate name of the Supreme Being" (Legge 1850, 7). Legge thus concluded that it was absurd to follow the "generic name for God" (Legge, 7) as the principle to render Elohim/Theos in the Scriptures, neither was it right to use the Chinese generic term "*shen"* to translate Elohim/theos in any case of the Bible.

Having decided that it was wrong to classify Elohim as a generic term, Legge in his third letter began the investigation into the "grammatical class of the nouns of Elohim, Theos, and God" (Legge, 10) and the "radical idea which is represented by them" (Legge. 19). This was a most challenging task for Legge as God in its theological sense so far defied any contemporaneous grammatical classification.[160] Legge needed to further develop the existing grammatical classification to properly reflect the nature of God.

The generic term, which is commonly known today as the Common Noun, indeed held no substantial significance in distinguishing God in capital letter. Legge was aware of the defect of this category as all nouns but Proper Nouns being regarded as Common. The attempts of grammarians of Legge's own time to further break down the common nouns into sub-divisions did not help either. In view of this, Legge began his own pioneering work of refining the categories of nouns. Under the general classes of Proper nouns and Common nouns, Legge further divided Common Nouns into five subdivisions, namely, Appellative or Generic nouns, Material nouns, Collective nouns, Abstract nouns and Relative nouns. Legge introduced a new category of noun -- *Relative nouns*, or names which imply a relation, such as in the cases of my father, our queen, their king, and my God.

While Legge's invention of relative noun did not fare well among his contemporaneous missionary brothers, his pioneering spirit in exploring new fields of knowledge and his courage to invent were to be illustrated in his later interpretations on the Chinese classics and his inventive formulation of 'Confucianism'. Notwithstanding this, Legge's argument that Elohim is not generic term by way of the grammatical usages of God

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[160] Legge quoted Turretin from his *Institutio Theologie Elenctice*, "God, who is a Being most singular, and by his nature distinct from every other, needs not any distinctive name; nor indeed does any name properly fall to him – not an appellative –i.e. a generic—name, which distinguishes different species of the same genus, or a proper name, which distinguishes different individuals of the same species, whence Trismegistus, in Lactant. Book 1, c.6, calls God 'The nameless one.' Because, however, all our knowledge begins from the Noun, God is wont to assume various names, derived from his attributes in Scripture, in order to accommodate himself to us."

is indisputable. No generic term can sustain the same meaning when used without an article, with a definitive article or with a pronoun.

In the second part of his third letter, Legge turned his enquiry to another discipline of linguistic science –Etymology –to investigate the radical meaning of Elohim. Legge believed this necessary, because if the Chinese term failed to represent the radical meanings of Elohim, the sense of the Hebrew Scriptures would be lost. After cross-referencing a dozen of the eminent Orientalists, Legge partially accepted the opinion of Wilhelm Gesenius (1786-1842, German Orientalist) that Eloah was derived from Alah, as preserved in the Arabic, meaning primitively "to strike with awe," rather than "to adore." Legge concluded that both El and Elohim in their radical meanings expressed power, and as nouns they "represent the putter-forth, the manifester of power" (Legge, 22). The relation which they expressed was that of dominion, and the exercise of the relation may be to sustain, to protect, to control and to punish.

In the first three letters, Legge focused his attention on the understanding of Elohim as source language, trying to identify its contextual meaning, radical meaning and grammatical nature. In doing so, Legge seemingly tried to follow either a philological translation method or an essentially literal Biblical translation technique. Only given the drastic difference between the Chinese language and English or Jewish language, not to mention their consequent cultural differences, there was no literal translation in this case.

In the fourth letter, Legge engaged into the evaluation on the term *shen* (神) proposal. Legge once again demonstrated his academic disposition and his increasing familiarity with the European sinological studies.[161] Legge alluded to a broad range of sinological writings on China, including the early Jesuit writings, the various Chinese dictionaries translated into Latin, French and English. From these extensive resources and from the practices of Nestorian Christians and Mohamedans (Muslims) in China Legge was convinced of the illegitimacy of *shen*. Philologically, as Medhurst had concluded, the term in Chinese meant "spirit or spiritual", and did not denote anything related to Elohim or Theos; secondly, *shen* as a generic term became now a principal reason for its illegitimacy. In conclusion, Legge cited the opinion of French Sinologist Remusat on *shen* for translating God, "there is

[161] These Sinologists Legge alluded to include Bayer, Fourmont, Remusat, Jullien, Pauthier, Lacharm, as well as Sir George Staunton and Sir John Davis.

assuredly no expression, which is less befitting in all aspects, more inexact, more false, more opposed to the ideas of Christians of all sects, than *Shin* (*shen*)" (Legge, 36).

In his fifth letter dated July 18th of 1850, Legge explicitly stated his stance as an advocate of Shang Di. In the meantime, Legge also made the blunt and surprising assertion by "holding further that this 'chief God of the Chinese' is the true God" (Legge, 37). Being phrased without giving any indication to its source of quotation, this statement was easily interpreted out of context as heresy, costing Legge dearly in terms of his missionary reputation.

This assertion will make more sense by viewing it within the historical context of the 1850 debate. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, the term "true God" was characteristic of Boone in his 1848 essay to distinguish Jehovah from Elohim.[162] In Legge's second letter and later in his sixth letter, we will see how Legge's investigations in the Bible led him to conclude that Elohim/Theos in biblical context signified properly the true God, there were no other Gods. Secondly, even without this assertion, Legge believed that philologically the Shang Di corresponded in meaning and function to Elohim/Theos/God as they all implied the meanings of "power" and "dominion" and shared the grammatical classification of relative terms (Legge, 38). Thirdly, and also the most important point, was that Legge made clear distinction between Shang Di as the being worshipped by the Chinese and Shang Di as a meaningful name given to that being. "Granted that the Being worshipped by the Chinese under the title is not the true God, yet he is called by the name God. If 天 (*tian*) in its metaphorical acceptation only represented a Jupiter, when the name 上帝 (Shang Di) is given to him, we have just a phenomenon corresponding to the addition of Deus in Latin to Jupiter, or of Theos in Greek to Zeus" (Legge, 38). In other words, Legge's judgement on the legitimacy of the Chinese term Shang Di for rendering God was confined strictly to its philological correspondence to Elohim/God as a textual term. He did not confound Shang Di*'s* textual meaning with Shang Di as a reified object of Chinese worship. Finally, Legge's abrupt and "further" claim had to be viewed in connection with Boone's defense essay published in the July issue of *the Chinese Repository*. Finally aroused from his assumed

[162] In his 1848 essay, Boone's principal definition for Elohim was "1. Elohim, in the Old Testament, is not a proper name of the true God, but is a generic term, applied to heathen Deities as well as to Jehovah." Chinese Repository. Vol. XVII-1848. No.1. 91.

victory, Boone started his vehement and pointed attack on Legge by writing his defence from July 1850 to December 1850 issue of *Chinese Repository.*[163] In his July section of the defence, Boone tactfully laid out his challenge, with the full intention to destroy. "If he (Legge) will prove that the being called Shangti, in any one of the quotations he gives us, is truly and properly God, we will admit that the Shangti mentioned in all the other passages is God too"; "The *onus Probandi* is with DR. Legge" to prove that "ancient Chinese knew and worshipped the true God," said Boone, yet, "we are constrained, 'for conscience sake,' to call upon him to give us the clearest proof, before we can go with him. A mistake here is most fatal."[164]

Regardless of the loaded implications and intentions of Boone's challenges, by taking up the challenge that "the *Shang Te par excellence* of the Chinese is the true God" (Legge, 42), Legge fell right into the trap set up by his opponent. Legge was forced to turn the initially academic debate on Scriptural term translation into a theological one, which indeed was costly, but not fatal.

Even so, Legge's argument in his second part of Letter V was still much less theological than the assertion seemingly claimed. His arguments included the many testimonies of "foreigners" who rendered Shang Di into God in their writings or translations, such as those by early Jewish and Muslims in China, by Jesuit missionaries in China, even in Morrison's dictionary. Besides, there was no lack of evidence from Chinese classical writings and popular literature. Legge most likely encountered the Five Jing around this time and, like the Jesuit missionaries before him, Legge became enthralled by the "Supreme Ruler" recorded in the classics like *Shoo Jing* and *Shi Jing*, which had never ceased to evoke the Christian believers of the Biblical God.

In his last letter Legge vetoed Medhurst's transliteration proposal because this would turn Elohim into a Proper name and would obliterate the meaning and significance embedded in Elohim. Legge then directed his principal attention to Boon's claim that "Elohim, in the Old Testament, is not a proper name of the true God, but is a generic term, applied to heathen

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[163] William J. Boone, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository* Vol. XIX (1850):345, 409,465,569,625.
[164] William J. Boone, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository* VoI. XIX (1850): 360, 384.

Deities as well as to Jehovah".[165] Legge devoted a lengthy part of this letter to chapter-by-chapter listings of the number of cases in which Elohim in the Old Testament was referred to God or applied away from Him. From this data, Legge offered a more fact-based opinion on the significance and grammatical nature of Elohim in its Biblical context: "Elohim belongs properly to God… this name of God was used sinfully by men, and applied to the real or fancied Beings…."[166] Again, "Elohim is a term belong properly to one individual" (Legge, 68), it was not a generic name.

Legge's six letters of 1850 brought the Term-Question debate to a higher academic standard. Legge demonstrated his broad acquaintance into his contemporaneous scientific disciplines in Europe and his high standard of academic investigations, even if the issue under investigation was yet fully developed. In the meantime, Legge intellectual capacity and critical spirit would never cease to doubt and challenge any established authority, being it ecclesiastical or academic. Such academic disposition of Legge and his unwavering faith in God constituted a lasting tension in Legge both as a missionary in China and his later career as an Oxford scholar. On the other hand, Legge's argument for Shang Di as proper rendering is problematic. By his emphasizing principally on their philological correspondence, Legge's argument rendered Shang Di a literal translation of Elohim. He failed to address the fact that the two established words in their respective belief systems contained more different connotations, representations and implications than similarities despite of their philological correspondence. Such translation, more akin to functional dynamic equivalence, requires the more explanations on the side of Legge as to how the Christian Shang Di and Chinese Shang Di could be properly distinguished yet engaging the expected dialogues.

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[165] William J. Boone, "An Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language," *the Chinese Repository*. Vol. XVII no.1 (January1848), 91.

[166] Legge's investigation on the uses of Elohim in the Old Testament showed that, "The word is used in all 2555 times. 2310 times, (including the instance, Gen.3, 5,) it is applied to Jehovah… and 245 times, it is applied away from him. It is used with relevant force apparent, 1476 times, with the definite article, 357 times, and simply, as in the first verse of Genesis, 722 times" (Legge. Letter VI, 67)

Legge's 1852 Essay: the Term-Question Debate Continued[167]

Legge's essay on *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* came at a time when the result of the debate along with its consequences all transpired. A third party commissioned by the American Bible society in December 1850 adjudicated on the term *shen* (神) as their recommendation for the Term Question. Their report also revealed the final vote on the terms by the missionaries in China, who predominantly opted for *shen*, a major factor for the third-party decision. In February 1851 the London Missionary Society withdrew from the General Committee of the Chinese Bible translation and formed their separate translation team. There wasn't much Legge could do to change any of these results.

There was one event in 1852 that was probably linked to Legge's essay—the official printing of the delegates' version of the New Testament. Legge's essay in a sense served as a defense for the adoption of Shang Di in the Chinese Bible translation. Besides, Legge still felt it his duty to close his debate with Boone in a proper way. When he finished his six letters on rendering God in August 1850, the exasperated Boone didn't stop his 'defense' in *the Chinese Repository* until December 1850. The scholarly Legge still felt obligatory to address the numerous challenges despite of Boones' explicit statement that "…if Dr. Legge should succeed in proving to our satisfaction that the being whom the Chinese designate by the phrase Shangti is to be regarded as truly and properly God, I would still object to the use of this phrase to render Elohim and Theos".[168]

Legge's 1852 essay was based on his reflection on Boones' three propositions of translating Elohim in his 1850 defence.[169] As these principles blended ill-defined theological

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[167] James Legge, *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits: with an Examination of the Defense of an Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos, into the Chinese Language, by William J. Boone, D.D.*(Hong Kong, 1852).

[168] W. J. Boone. "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository*, VoI. XIX (1850): 384.

[169] Boone's propositions were: " 1) The Chinese do not know any being who may truly and properly be called God; they have therefore no name for such a being, no word in their language answering to our word God; 2) That, this being the state of things, we must seek the general name of their gods, and content ourselves with the use of the word in Chinese that answers to our words a god, gods, as the best that can be done under the circumstances; 3) That *shen* is the general or generic name of the Chinese gods; and therefore, it follows, — that this word should be used to render Elohim and Theos into Chinese." See his essay, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository* VoI. XIX (1850): 347.

assumption and ill-construed translational method, Legge's attempts at arguing their opposites did not turn them into better propositions other than rendering Legge's own opinions heterodox to many Christians. Legge's arguments in opposite to Boone were stated as: "1) The Chinese do know the true God, and have a word in their language to our word God; 2) No "general or generic name " can be used to render Elohim, Theos, or God, because these are all relative terms; 3) *shen* does not answer even to our words a god, gods, but is the generic name in Chinese corresponding to our word spirit, to the Hebrew ruach, and to the Greek pneuma, and that it ought therefore to be employed to render those terms, and those alone" (Legge. p. 2).

In contrast to Dr. Boone's Christian-Centrism, Legge demonstrated a humane and liberal view of God thanks to the influence of the European Enlightenment thinking. To Legge all humans were of the family of God, "who has not left himself without witness, varied and convincing, among this vast portion of his human family" (Legge,36). What distinguished Legge from his missionary brothers in China was his strong God consciousness, which became manifest the moment Legge was convinced that the Chinese Shang Di philologically corresponded with Elohim. This peculiar God consciousness of Legge strongly impacted his reading of the Chinese classical accounts on Shang Di. By the time of his 1852 essay, Legge had fully identified Chinese Shang Di with God both in terms of its philological sense and its theological sense.

In proving t his first argument that "the Chinese do know God" (Legge, 2), Legge resorted to two types of arguments. One argument was based on his theological examination on the attributes of Shang Di as described in the classical Chinese texts, the other argument was of the European natural theology regarding the human knowledge of God being the evidence of the existence of God.

There was abundant evidence in the Chinese classical texts corroborating the Chinese knowledge of God. Legge's conviction was solidified by his textual encounter with the imperial sacrificial hymns recorded in the historical records of China. Prompted by his opponent's challenge to "gather from history… to decide if the religion of the Chinese be the religion of the true God"[170] , Legge literally dived into the Chinese history records. In

[170] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits,* 22.

"the Collected Statutes of the Ming dynasty" (大明会典),[171] Legge encountered a detailed record of the border sacrifice (郊祭) presided by the emperor Jia Jing (嘉靖, 1522 -1566). Complete with each step of the proceedings and their respective prayers, praises and hymns offered, the text provided Legge with first-hand documents on the form and content of the active imperial sacrifices. The most striking hymn to Legge was the 1st Hymn in greeting the approach of Shang Di:[172]

> Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and the moon to shine. In the midst thereof there existed neither form nor sound. Thou, O spiritual Sovereign, camest forth in Thy presidency, and first didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven; Thou madest earth; Thou madest man. All things with their re-producing power, got their being.
>
> -James Legge. *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*,28

Legge's peculiar God consciousness was best illustrated in the way he read and digested the Chinese text concerning Shang Di. In reading the hymns and songs of the Ming imperial sacrificial service, Legge kept asking himself, "Who is He... He made the heavens and the earth and man. He is the true parent of all things. His love is over all His works. He is the great and lofty One, whose dominion is everlasting. His years are without end. His goodness is infinite. Spirits and men are alike under His government. They rejoice in Him, and praise His great name, though they cannot reach to its comprehension, for it is inexhaustible, unmeasurable…I am confident the Christian world will agree with me in saying, 'this God is our God.'"(Legge31). Legge's textual reading of the hymns and prayers of the Ming imperial sacrifice became the defining moment in Legge's examination of Chinese Shang Di and led to his theological conviction that Shang Di "is our God"(Legge 31).

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[171] The Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty (大明会典) are encyclopedic records of the Ming government institutions and responsibilities, laws and regulations governing all aspects of life, edicts and government letters, as well as templates used for various political, social and sacrificial occasions. Compiled by the imperial order of the Ming Emperor Xiao (孝宗), the collection contains a total of 180 volumes and is first completed in 1502. Many revisions are made successively.

[172] The Chinese text of this hymn song is as folllows: "于昔洪荒之初兮，混蒙，五行未運兮， 兩曜未明，其中挺立兮，有無容聲，神皇出禦兮，始判濁清，立天立地人兮，群物生生".

Besides his theological argument centred on Chinese classical descriptions of Shang Di, Legge also shrewdly placed his Shang Di argument within a more prevailing continental discussion of natural theology --the question concerning the existence of God by His intelligent design. By way of turning the argument to a less controversial discussion within Christianity, the case concerning the Chinese knowledge of God was less a question than a necessary proof for God's intelligent design works. Legge alluded to the theory of James McCosh[173] in his *the Method of Divine Government, Physical and Moral* (Edinburgh, 1850, 5th edition) on the sources with which human mind could form their ideas of God. These sources included: "First, there is the design exhibited in the separate works OF God"; secondly, there are the relations which the physical world bears to man, which we call the providential arrangements of the Divine Government; thirdly, there is the human soul, with its consciousness, its intelligence, and its benign feelings; fourthly, there are the moral qualities of man" (Legge. p. 96). In terms of each of sources, Legge cited solid evidence from the Chinese classical texts regarding the descriptions of Shang Di or *Di*. Legge henceforth concluded that "…in this they agree with the 'majority of mankind,' and in the embodiment of this fact which we have in the name by which they designate the Supreme Being, we have a strong corroboration of both of the theses which I have thus far been arguing, and an interesting illustration, of the unity of mind that lies under all the apparent diversity of human languages and customs" (Legge, 109).

By the time Legge penned his 1852 essay on the Term-Question debate, he was fully convinced that Shang Di of Chinese was not only philologically, but theologically the same as God. Shang Di was the literal translation of God.

The Term-Question Still Unsolved

In 1852 the revised Chinese translation of the New Testament (the Delegates' Version) went into printing under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society,[174] This version was chiefly the work of English missionaries Medhurst, Stronach and Milne, and employed Shang Di 上帝 for rendering God. The Old Testament of the Delegates Version

[173] James McCosh (1811 -1894): Scottish-American minister, philosopher, and college president, summarized the achievements of the Scottish philosophy and prepared Princeton for its transition from a small college to a modern university. "McCosh, James." The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th edition. Encyclopedia.com. 11 Dec. 2018 https://www.encyclopedia.com.

[174] William Canton, *a History of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: John Murray, 1904), Vol.2, 399.

went into press in 1855. Meanwhile, another version of the Chinese Bible translation was completed by Bridgman and Mr. Culberton, adopting *shen* (神) for rendering God.

The Protestant missionary debate on the Term-Question started to ebb a bit but not for long. It came back again around the 1877 Shanghai Missionary Conference and took up considerable portion of *the Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*[175] during 1875 to 1877, forcing the Conference Committee to place a ban on any discussion on the Term-Question during the meeting. In 1877, J.S. Burdon, the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong, had to write two letters, one directed to the Protestant Missionaries in China, and the other to the Archbishop of Canterbury, advocating the catholic rendition of Tien Chu (天主, Lord of Heaven) for God.[176] Also, in 1877, William Armstrong Russell, Missionary Bishop of the Church of England in North China, wrote his Term-Question enquiry and advocated *shen*.[177] A few Bible versions adopting "Tien Chu (天主)" for God were circulated during this period.[178] When the Chinese Christian Council (now known as Hong Kong Bible Society) published its first Chinese Union Version (和合本) in 1919 adopting *shen* for rendering God, the *shen* edition of the Bible gradually became the predominant Protestant Bible version in China, largely due to the vernacular Mandarin Chinese it adopted.

In present day China, the Biblical God is translated into three Chinese names. The Catholic Church's adoption of Tian Zhu 天主 (the Lord of Heaven) resulted in Catholicism being known in Chinese as "the Religion of Tian Zhu (天主教)", being a different religion from "the Religion of the Christ (基督教)". The majority of the Protestant Chinese Bible translations adopt *shen*. Those translations include the most popular Chinese Union Version (CUV, 和合本, 1919), New Chinese Version (NCV, 1992), Chinese Standard Bible (CSB, New Testament, 2011), and Revised Chinese Union Version (RCUV, 和合本修訂版, 2010).

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[175] *Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal,* being in print from 1867 to 1941, is another missionary Journal widely read by Protestant missionaries in China after the close of *Chinese Repository* in 1851. It becomes one of the most popular English language magazines for the missionary community in China.
[176] J.S. Burdon, Bishop of Victoria, *the Chinese Term for God. A Letter to the Protestant Missionaries of China* (Hong Kong, printed by De Souza &Co., 1877).
[177] William Armstrong Russell, *the Term-Question. Shanghai* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1877).
[178] These included the 1874 printing of Samuel Schereschewsky's Colloquial Mandarin translation of the Old Testament; the 1902 printing of the full Bible in the Chinese literary language, also translated by Samuel Schereschewsky.

For the Shang Di version of Chinese Bible translation, the Delegates' Version (translation led by W.H. Medhurst of LMS) soon went out of print. It was until in 1946 that Rev. Lyu Zhengzhong (呂振中, 1898 - 1988), a Chinese Anglican and university lecturer, revived the usage of 上帝 Shang Di in his renewed Chinese translation of the Bible (known as the Lyu Zhengzhong Version. The new Testament was published in 1947 and the Old Testament in 1970). Since then Shang Di has been re-introduced into Chinese Bible translations, such as the Chinese Contemporary Bible (CCB, New Testament, 2012).

An interesting incident occurred with the most popular Chinese Union Bible Version. In its latest 2010 edition, two parallel versions were produced, with one version employing Shang Di, and the other *shen* for translating God. On the inside front cover page of the *shen* version, a short text reads: "This Bible adopts the *shen* version. The places in this book where *shen* is used, it can also be addressed as Shang Di."[179]

Some Further Thought 1: Is *shen* (神) the Most Appropriate Term to Render God?

shen is not the most appropriate term to render God. To quote Boone's own words, "the reader is to be requested to bear in mind that we are not contending that the word *Shin* (*shen*) means God in the proper sense of necessarily existing, supreme, &c.; but that it is the appellative or generic name of God…."[180] What Boone argued was that by making this generic name to mean God, "Jehovah claims the right….to take the place of the whole class of gods".[181] When the third-party report commissioned by the American Bible Society recommended *shen* for rendering Elohim in 1850, it based its judgement on, among other reasons, the argument that *shen* is "precisely analogous to the use of the word god, in the Old and New Testament". Besides, the report counted on an important remark from the American Bible Society that "it is freely granted it does not yet contain (a full meaning of God), but which it is better capable of receiving than any other word yet proposed.[182] The third party experts, having no knowledge of Chinese at all, thus made their recommendation of *shen*. If they were to be informed that one of the methods for turning the Chinese term

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[179] *The Holy Bible*. (圣经. 中国基督教三自爱国运动委员会，中国基督教协会发行. 2011 年 10 月).
[180] William J. Boone, *an Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language*, 38.
[181] Ibid, 6.
[182] *Report on the Chinese Version*, American Bible Society. (New York: Bible Society House, 1850), 5, 7.

shen from gods to God is by leaving an intentional blank space before *shen* in the Chinese Bible printing, perhaps they would have had a second thought.

The central question concerning *shen* is, therefore, can the Chinese concept *shen* be "made" through Bible to mean God the creator, the Supreme and Perfect Being with all its divine attributes in its Chinese sense? To achieve this, the Chinese Bible needs to overcome some obstacles that are intrinsic of Chinese language in general and of the connotation of *shen* in particular.

A great obstacle of making the Chinese *shen* into God has to do with the singularity of the pictographic Chinese language. Chinese characters do not have the inflectional capability as alphabetic languages do in distinguishing singular nouns from plural nouns. As such, when a noun, i.e. *shen,* is used as a standalone term, it implies in general the whole class of spirits and gods (if it indeed means gods) or one god/spirit in that class (subject to its contextual reference). In order for a noun to signify a singular or specific reference, conditional words (compound terms) or specific terms have to be employed. In order for it to represent a singular reference, conditional word(s) has to be added or different terms sought, i.e. the *shen* of heaven (天神), of earth (土地神), of mountains(山神) and rivers (河神). For representing an absolute singular meaning, one has to either prefix it with the definite term "唯一" (the only, the one) to form the compound term 唯一神 (the one God) or to find another term that connotes the oneness of the divinity.

Regarding the particular case of translating the First Commandment, which Boone claimed to best illustrate the legitimacy of *shen*, it was legitimate because Boone was still processing the term in its source language from his mind's eye. "'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; You shall have no other gods before me" (Exo.20:2-3). When processing it in its Chinese translation[183] from a literate but non-Christian Chinese mind, the text distinguishes a specific God whose name is Jehovah, which is not unlike the Greek Zeus and Roman Jupiter. Furthermore, this *shen* Jehovah is a competing god, commands a choice by the people between him and other gods in terms of obedience. In other words, without proper instructions or tools,[184], there is no

[183] The Chinese Union version translation: 我是耶和华你的__神、曾将你从埃及地为奴之家领出来。除了我以外、你不可有别的神。

[184] The current Revised Chinese Union Version (CUV) resorts to a creative method of leaving a blank space

way a Chinese reader of proper literacy can deduce from this text the monotheist God, other than a foreign and jealous *shen* of all the *shen* that is likely to be invoked in the readers' mind.

Another great obstacle with the Chinese term *shen* relates to its etymological usages, its metaphysical interpretations within the scholarly Ruist tradition and its broadest applications in literary and vernacular languages to represent all things unfathomable, spiritual in the physical world and in men.

Per the ancient Chinese cosmology, the world consists of three parts, namely, the heaven, the earth and the men.[185] Concomitant with this three-fold existences are their symbiotic spirits, namely, the celestial spirits (天神), the terrestrial spirits (地祇) and human spirits (人鬼). A passage in Legge's translation on the proceedings of an imperial sacrifice to Shang Di in his 1852 essay best illustrates how these spirits are associated with their respective natural existences. Of the Celestial spirits/gods (天神) there are spirits/gods of the sun, of the moon, of the five chief stars, of the stars of the entire sky, and of the natural phenomena; the terrestrial spirits/gods include spirits/gods of mountains, of seas... In general, the concept of *shen* in Chinese cosmological tradition encompasses all the invisible and intelligible elements that co-exist with and act upon natural existences. In the popular beliefs, *shen* was applied to embrace any object of worship, being it religious or superstitious.

Within the Chinese Ruist literary and philosophical discourses, the term *shen* (神) is commonly used for describing the spirits of men and a quality of inscrutability. It is due to these specific associations of *shen* to natural world and to men that both Medhurst and Legge insist that *shen* means spirits, not gods.

A metaphysical discussion on *shen* (spirits) and *gui* (manes) is recorded in the Chinese classic of *Li Ji* (礼记, *Record of Rites*) in the form of a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zai Wo. The discussion represents a typical Ruist view on *shen* (神).

> Zai Wo said, 'I have heard the names *Gui* (manes) and *shen* (Spirit), but I do not know what they mean.' The Master said, 'The (intelligent) spirit is of the

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before 神 the true God. It is crative as it doesn't fall into any proper grammatical or printing norms. It more likely gives the reader an impression that this is a printing error unless he is properly instructed.

[185] This ancient view is most interestingly illustrated in the ancient Chinese definition for the numeral *san* (三, three), which *Shuo Wen* interpreted as the truth of heaven, earth and men.

> *shen* nature[186], and shows that in fullest measure; the animal soul is of the Gui nature, and shows that in fullest measure. It is the union of *Gui* and *shen* that forms the highest exhibition of doctrine. All the living must die, and dying, return to the ground; this is what is called Gui. The bones and flesh, moulder below, and, hidden away, become the earth of the fields. But the spirit issues forth and is displayed on high in a condition of glorious brightness. The vapours and odours which produce a feeling of sadness, (and arise from the decay of their substance), are the subtle essences of all things, and (also) a manifestation of the *shen* nature. On the ground of these subtle essences of things, with an extreme decision and inventiveness, (the sages) framed distinctly (the names of) *Gui* and *shen*, to constitute a pattern for the black-haired race; and all the multitudes were filled with awe, and the myriads of the people constrained to submission.[187]
>
> -- *Li Ji. The Record of Rites*. The Meaning of Sacrifice. Translation by James Legge.

In line with such metaphysical and materialist view on the nature of *shen* (神), many Ruist discourses treat *shen* in its sense as spirits or gods as superstitious beliefs of the common people.[188] The Ruist scholars incline to interpret the classical term *shen* as a rhetorical figure of speech[189] in describing sages and man of perfect virtue. In modern Chinese language *shen* is frequently used in connection to man, signifying one's mental, intellectual and moral manifestations.

Given the distinct feature of Chinese language in treating singular forms and plural forms, coupled with the intrinsic quality of Chinese *shen* as the spiritual or intelligent forces of nature and of man, the rendition of God into *shen* poses fatal challenges for signifying God as a monotheistic, transcendent and perfect Creator Being in the Chinese context. Medhurst in his emotional 1850 appeal to missionaries in China thus remarked the dire consequence of adopting *shen*: "…But we are not at liberty …to introduce a definition that is entirely new… …No nation would tolerate such liberties with its language…It is wrong,

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[186] Legge made an interpretive translation of the first sentence. A literal translation reads: the vapor (or breath, 氣) is the full manifestation of *shen* while the bodily form (of the dead) is the full manifestation of *Gui*.

[187] *Li Ji:* the Meaning of Sacrifice: "宰我曰：「吾聞鬼神之名，而不知其所謂。」子曰：「氣也者，神之盛也；魄也者，鬼之盛也；合鬼與神，教之至也。眾生必死，死必歸土：此之謂鬼。骨肉斃於下，陰為野土；其氣發揚于上，為昭明，焄蒿，凄愴，此百物之精也，神之著也。因物之精，制為之極，明命鬼神，以為黔首則。百眾以畏，萬民以服。"

[188] Xun Zi, an early Ruist philosopher, states in his discourse that *shen* is the imagination of the mass of people while to the accomplished scholars, the wonderous natural phinomena are representations of natural occurences. 荀子. 天论. [故君子以為文，而百姓以為神].

[189] Mencius in his works employs *shen* as descriptive of the nature and influence of sages and men of perfect viture. [夫君子所過者化，所存者神]. Wherever the man of perfect virtue passes by transformation will occur; wherever the man of perfect virtue stays, wonderous things *(shen*) will happen.

decidedly and radically wrong; and no definition can make it right".[190] What neither Boone nor Medhurst had expected, was that the introduction of *shen* in the Chinese Bible arguably induced a totally different Chinese reading of Christian Bible as a belief in *gui shen* (spirits and manes), which in turn laid the intellectual foundation for interpreting God, Christianity, and religion as superstition in recent Chinese history. To quote Legge's words, "The example of Gracia capta, which captured its fierce conqueror, is more than realized in this extreme east".[191] The thesis will touch upon this view in the Conclusion Chapter.

Over the past century considerable changes have taken place to the Chinese language. The adoption of vernacular Chinese in composition has rendered classical Chinese writing style out of date. Changes also occurred in terms of the structure of Chinese characters (i.e. simplified Chinese characters vs. traditional Chinese characters) and their definitions in modern times. The latest dictionary definitions of *shen*, as illustrated in the introduction part (see page 24), are associated with religion, superstition and man, with more applications in connection with man.

Some Further Thought 2: Is Shang Di (上帝) the Most Appropriate Term for Rendering God?

Based on the 1850 third-party report to the American Bible Society, the term Shang Di is not recommended for four reasons. Firstly, it was a title of office and authority, not an indicative of deity; secondly, it is applied to five different Di (帝, Ruler) besides the Supreme Di (Shang Di); thirdly, despite of its denotation of "Supreme Ruler" philosophically, it is certainly the designation of material idol; lastly, the Chinese emperor is addressed by this title.[192]

Some corrections need to be made. Firstly, no Chinese emperors ever dared to address themselves as Shang Di, other than sons of heaven; secondly, though indeed Di in its contemporary sense signified the office of emperor, that is not the case with Shang Di. The external experts never gave their opinions as to whether Elohim in the Bible signified the God or a class of gods or as to the philological elucidation on the meaning of Elohim. An

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[190] W.H. Medhurst, *a Letter to the Protestant Missionaries Labouring at Hongkong and the Five Ports of China*. (Shanghae: printed at the Missionary press, 1850), 15.
[191] Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 59.
[192] American Bible Society, *Report on the Chinese Version*. (New York: Bible Society House, 1850), 2, 3.

interesting remark nonetheless deserves some contemplation. The report said, "However the word may be understood as denoting the Supreme Ruler by the more enlightened and philosophical part of the nation, it is certainly the designation of a material idol, an object of worship by the mass of the Chinese".[193] One minor correction is needed here: the word Shang Di literally, not philosophically, means the Supreme Ruler. The remark seemed to imply that Supreme Ruler was the correct appellation of God, however, since the Supreme Ruler in Chinese was used for the material idol, God in Chinese should not be addressed as Supreme Ruler.

The experts of the report failed to heed Legge's nuanced opinion on the distinction between the object of worship in Chinese state religion –*tian* (heaven) — and the personalized name of Shang Di used to address *tian*. Legge readily admitted that *tian* was not God. However, by way of employing the name Shang Di to *tian* of the Chinese worship, there appears a similar case to those in which Theos is used for Zeus in Greek, Deus is added to god Jupiter in Latin and Elohim is used for heathen gods. Both Shang Di and Elohim share the Philological significance of power and dominion. Lastly but not the least, while Legge fails to establish the relative noun category as a modern grammatical rule, he rightly pointed out an important nature regarding the idea of God. "We always conceive of God principally in relation to ourselves, and the world around us…."[194] This idea about God and His people is not only the fundamental criterion for Legge's classifying God as a relative term, it is also a valid criterion for testing which Chinese rendition of God can evoke a feeling akin to that between God and man.

As discussed earlier, the Chinese *shen* constitutes an inseparable part of the material world around us and man. The ancient Chinese classics and saying of Confucius play pivotal roles in framing the Chinese opinion concerning the relationship between *shen* and man. Confucius made a famous statement regarding *shen*: "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings (*shen*), to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom".[195] In other words, the Chinese *shen* doesn't have a correlative and reciprocal relationship with men but serves only as a means to cultivate personal moral duties.

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[193] Ibid, 3.
[194] Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 86.
[195] Confucian Analects: "子曰: 務民之義，敬鬼神而遠之，可謂知矣."

On the other hand, Shang Di, or *tian* in the Chinese vernacular, is a term that would connect man with Him. Such connection between Shang Di and Chinese people can be best illustrated when expressing the idea "My God" in Chinese. Despite the notoriously atheistic tendency of the people, it makes perfect Chinese sense when one says "My Shang Di" or "*My tian"*. As a matter of fact, such vernacular expression is not infrequent in the earliest Chinese street literature or in popular drama. When depicting a character under the circumstances of extreme awe, hopelessness and insufferable pain, his or her deepest feeling was most likely to be uttered as "My Heaven! My Grandpa heaven!"

Shang Di was not yet the most appropriate term to render God during the time of Legge given the Ruist monopoly in discoursing the philological, ritualistic and materialistic significances of Shang Di as equivalent to *tian.* Shang Di is today probably the best term to be used for rendering God because its modern Chinese sense has desisted its historical connotation and represents exclusively "God in Christian and Jewish Religions" (see Introduction Chapter on its modern dictionary definition). It is still not yet fully God unless more theological discussions on Shang Di within its native context, similar to the one Legge did in 1852, are made possible by the uniform rendition of God into Shang Di. Legge's controversial Shang Di argument in 1852 essay, in an ironical way, proves that Shang Di is a comparable term with God in terms of its theological implications embedded in the classical texts. *shen* is not the term in the sense that philologically and philosophically it is not relevant to theology. This partly explains some observations from western theologians that there has not been much native theological study in China.

Legge in his 1852 essay thus wrote, "...if we abandon the use of *Shang-Te* (Shang Di) for God, we cut ourselves from all sympathy with the Chinese people. If we speak to them of *Shin* (*shen*), that term has necessarily connected with it the idea of inferiority… We must have a name which will not make void and of none effect the law of God written in their own hearts—a name that shall witness for Jehovah, in harmony with the witness of their own spirits. Such a name we have in *Shang-Te*, and I believe in no other term... it is now our privilege and duty still further to unfold to them His character, and especially to make known

to them how He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing into men their trespasses." [196]

Conclusion

The Term-Question debate among the Protestant missionaries in China during the 1840s to 1850s was mingled with the translation issue, theological issue and missiological issue. What made the Term-Question debate particularly complicated was the fact that it involved the interpretation of God in three languages, i.e. The Hebrew term Elohim, the English term God and the Chinese terms of *shen* and Shang Di. Besides, the predominant missionary participation also distracted the focus of the Term-Question debate from searching for the right translational term to the search for the right God. Last but not the least, the interference of self-assumed church authority negatively impacted what would otherwise be truly fair academic enquiries and debates.

What made Legge stand out, or rather, stand apart, from other participants of the debate was the high academic standard he demonstrated in dealing the Term Question from "scientific"[197] perspectives, which combined philology, linguistics and etymology. Legge further illustrated his intellectual capacity to reason within faith and to explore new areas of knowledge. Such academic breadth and intellectual in-depth placed Legge well ahead of his peer missionaries and beyond the scope of their orthodox teaching. As will be seen in later chapters these academic disciplines and his intellectual in-depth were well applied to his *Chinese Classics* project, creating a new set of Chinese classical commentaries. One feature that characterized Legge in his Term-Question debate was his distinct God Consciousness. Legge's search for the proper Chinese term for God was accompanied by his search for God in the Chinese classical texts. In reading and digesting the classical Chinese texts concerning Shang Di, Legge kept asking himself: who is this Being? –this Shang Te? The Chinese descriptions of Shang Di as the creator of man, the author of our moral nature, governor and judge of kings, all led Legge to one conclusion: "This God is our God."[198] Legge's God Consciousness led him to see God in Shang Te. This God Consciousness of Legge became overwhelming once his philological enquiry proved that Shang Di corresponded Elohim both

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[196] Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 63-64.
[197] Legge considered theology, philology, etymology and philosophy all part of his "natural and theological science". See his essay *the Notion of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits*, 111.
[198] Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 31.

in meaning and in their correlation with man. Legge's 1852 essay can be regarded as one of the earliest theological essays on God and the idea of God derived from the Chinese classical texts on Shang Di.

Legge's essays on the Term-Question debate by no means left him unscathed. The pro-*shen* party never accepted his opinion. As a consequence, as he had foreseen from the outset of his debate, different versions of the Supreme Being was circulated among the Chinese. Legge was fully aware of the pernicious effects of the use of *shen* in Chinese Bible translation. He was also haunted by the implications of his failure to convince his missionary brothers that Shang Di was the most appropriate term to render the name for God. "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name." (Exodus.20:7). It was Legge's duties to continue convincing his missionary brothers and to prove to God that he was not misusing His name. Such continuous effort to prove and vindicate himself kicked off his translational investigation into the Chinese classics and produced the famous *Chinese Classics* translations.

CHAPTER THREE: LEGGE'S UNFINISHED DUTIES AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Legge's Unfinished Duties

Legge's 1852 essay provided the positive proof for convincing himself that Shang Di was the most appropriate term to render Elohim/God, nonetheless he was far from winning the debate. Legge's academic and liberally theological arguments on the capacity of the Chinese as part of God's human family to know God, and his aptly established yet abstruse evidence from Chinese texts proved of little appeal, if not heresy, to the exclusivist pro-*shen* party. Even when Legge tried to correct and update the most recent missionary views and votes for the term issue, the figures he provided still represented a majority vote for *shen.*[199] Legge had to confront some deeply-trenched anti-Shang Di adversaries while further convincing his missionary brothers in China. In 1854, a pamphlet was printed and circulated in London by an anonymous "Life member" of the British Bible Society to rally native support from those in the project of "supplying the Chinese with a million copies of the New Testament" to oppose Shang Di rendition.[200] The anonymous writer dubbed Medhurst and Legge as "insurgents" and accused Legge of resuming the Shang Di proposal and of basing "the whole force of his argument and his reputation, as a logician and divine, upon the assumption that Elohim is a relative and not a generic or absolute term!" To him what Legge defied was the predominant missionary opinion in favour for *shen*. Nevertheless, as illustrated in his article, his understanding of the "real question" of the debate, similar to many pro-*shen* advocates, was about finding "the most suitable name in the Chinese for JEHOVAH, the true God." He confounded the meaningful term of God/Elohim with the term Jehovah, which Legge rightly pointed out in his 1852 essay.[201] Legge had another more

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[199] See Legge's *Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits,* 164-166. According to Legge's own calculation of the missionary votes, of those 84 individuals, 47 were in favour *shen*, while *36* were in favor of Shang Di.By the time he wrote his 1852 essay, "a decided majority of missionaries" agreed with the use of Shang Di (上帝) for rendering God.

[200] A Life Member of the Bible Society of Thirty Years' Standing, 神 *SHIN v.* 上帝 *SHANG-TE. Antagonistic Versions of the Chinese Scriptures. A Review of the Controversy Respecting the Proper Rendering of Elohim and Theos into Chinese (*London:1854)

[201] Legge made a special footnote in page 87 of *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirit*, by quoting *Chambers' Universal Dictionary* article on God. "A distinction ought to be made between the name God, and the name of God.The name or word God in the Hebrew is Eloah, or in the plural Elohim. The name of God is Jehovah, but it is not this name that answers to the Greek Theos, Latin Deus, English God, &c. In

enduring opponent – an anonymous "Inquirer"—who started to haunt Legge since 1877 not only in terms of Legge's Shang Di argument in the Term Question, but also regarding Legge's rendering of Shang Di into God in his *Chinese Classics* translation and in his *Sacred Books of China*. Later revealed as Andrew P. Happer (1818 -1894) of the American Presbyterian Church, he became one of the strongest anti-Shang Di advocates. From 1877, Happer wrote a series of long letters to various missionary societies and Bible and Tract societies, accusing Legge of "maintaining with great ability, that the Being called Shang Di is the same as Jehovah of the Sacred Scriptures".[202] In 1880, Happer wrote anonymously again to Max Müller to protest Legge's translation of Shang Di into God in his *Sacred Books of China.*[203] Happer argued that Shang Di of Chinese worship was deified Heaven; and that the Chinese could not understand that a new and different Being was referred to when he heard the familiar Shang Di. By the time of 1870s, the Shang Di version of the Chinese Bible translation led by Medhurst (also known as the Delegate version) gradually faded out of print to be replaced by the Tian-Zhu (Lord of Heaven) version before Shen 神 was finally agreed upon by different Protestant denominations to be used in the 1919 print of the first Chinese Union Version.

Haunted by those objections and accusations, Legge's argument for Shang Di was far from over. On the contrary, these accusations became perpetual duty weighed on Legge as a Christian. Boone in his *Chinese Repository* article thus warned those missionaries who employed Shang Di in preaching or writing, "the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven,"[204] accusing them of "violation of the first commandment."[205] In his *Defense* paper of 1850, while daring Legge to provide "the clearest proof", he also added a loaded remark -- "A mistake here is most fatal."[206] The Term-Question became Legge's enduring duty to prove and vindicating himself to God that he did not make wrongful use of the name of God. Legge

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reality, none of these languages have any proper name of God, as Jehovah is in the Hebrew".
[202] Inquirer, Part *I: Is the Shant-ti of the Chinese Classics the same Being as Jehovah of the Sacred Scriptures. Part II, What Being is Designated Shang-di in the Chinese Classics and in the Ritual of the State Religion of China.* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1877), I.
[203] By Inquirer. *A Letter to Prof. F. Max Müller on the Sacred Books of China.* (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1880.
[204] *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XVII (1848), 358.
[205] Chinese Repository. Vol. XVIII (1849), 98.
[206] *Chinese Repository*. Vol.XIX (1850), 384.

had to continue to search for God in the Chinese Classical texts and could not stop until he found it.

Legge's Unfinished Argument

A mystery to many early western writers on China concerned its antiquity of existence that surpassed most of the known civilizations. While various theories were put forward, Legge in his Term Question debate came up with an idea that represented both his deep belief in the word of God and his intellectual reasoning within that belief on how it connected with the long Chinese civilization "When I recollect how Sodom and Gomorrah were blotted from the face of the earth, because there were not ten righteous in them… when I recollect these things, and am told to believe in the phenomenon of the Chinese empire, rising, increasing, and still existing, with no word in its language denoting God, I must confess that I am unwilling to admit the phenomenon."[207] Legge's intellectual reasoning could not reconcile the facts of China's long duration, its numerous population and its moral strength with Boone's presumption that the Chinese had no knowledge of God. Legge inferred and ventured his answer, "My own belief is …that which has been as salt preserving its parts from corruption and crumbling away, has been its ancient and modern holding to the doctrine of one only God."[208] To Legge, the Shang Di argument was more of a testimony for the work and truth of God. "God has not left himself without witness, varied and convincing, among this vast portion of His human family."[209] Only Legge needed to seek and substantiate his inference with more solid evidence from Chinese historical texts. The proof of such inference would not only fully vindicate himself, it would serve as the most powerful testimony of the argument for the existence of God.

The Other "Term-Question" and Legge's Unuttered Suspicion

The Term-Question debate of the early nineteenth century took place amidst a renewed Protestant Missionary effort at translating the Bible into Chinese while also translating the Chinese classical texts into English for elucidating the religious opinions of the native people. Interestingly, the latter translation effort brought with it a less discussed

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[207] Legge, *Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 59.
[208] Ibid, 59.
[209] Ibid, 36.

yet no less influential term issue, in this case concerning the most appropriate term to render and characterize Chinese term Ru Jiao (儒教 the sect/teaching of the literati). In earlier Jesuit writings Ru Jiao was rendered more literally as the Sect of the Learned, or the Sect of Literati, and classified as a major sect of the *'three sects of religion"* (三教) in China. The Jesuit rendered the Chinese *jiao* (教, *teaching*) into religion likely in correspondence to their contemporaneous Chinese vernacular in addressing the Catholicism of the Jesuits as "the jiao (teaching) of Cross (十字教)" or "the jiao (teaching) of Lord of Heaven (天主教)". When Protestant missionaries regained access to Chinese texts in the early 19th century they began renewed reading of the so-called "Confucian Classics", employing perspectives and principles of western origin. As a result, the missionaries' interpretations contrasted sharply to the Ruist pedagogical reading and utilitarian interpretation of their ancient legacy. Through their own textual examination of the so-called "Confucian Classics", the early missionary writers coined the "*Confucian"* terminology to characterize the doctrine of Ru Jiao as "Confucian System" and to represent the literati of Ru Jiao as "Confucian school" or "Confucianists". Such "Confucian" terminology brought forth new problems by shifting the attention from the contemporaneous Ruist classical scholarship to the single figure of Confucius. The central problem concerned what was properly "Confucian". The Sinological problem of defining "Confucian" had its origin in the controversy among Chinese scholars regarding the Confucian authorship of the Five Jing. However, the "Confucian" problem within the Chinese Ruist School was not a doctrinal problem because Confucius was part and parcel a Ruist teacher, though perhaps the greatest one.

Robert Morrison played an important part in shaping the 19th century Confucian narrative through his ground-breaking dictionaries of Chinese language. Morrison explained the Chinese character Ru *(*儒) as: "Denomination of persons who, in China, devote themselves to study. Originally their intention was, to improve themselves in morals and science; the object at present is, to acquire a place in the government. The Literati."[210] In this definition Morrison both adopted the Imperial *Kang Xi Dictionary* definition[211] and inserted his own remarks. However, in rendering the term Ru Jiao (儒教) in the context of *san jiao* (三教, the three teachings), Morrison's struggle can be seen from his various translation

[210] Robert Morrison, *a Dictionary of the Chinese Language*, in Three Parts. (Macao. East India Company Press, 1815), Vol.1 – Part 1, 166, 167.
[211] In *Kang Xi Dictionary*, Ru *(*儒) is defined as the appellative for scholars, the educated. (学者之称)

attempts throughout his dictionary. He sometimes translated it as "The literati",[212] other times he used alternative phrases such as "the Sect of the Learned (儒家)",[213] "the Philosophical sect of Confucius (儒家)",[214] or "the Confucian sect (儒家)".[215] Morrison attempted to exclude Ru Jiao from the category of religion. Morrison landed his translation of *san jiao* (三教, the three teachings) as "three schools" and characterized them as "the Confucian School of atheistic Materialism; those of the visionary Alchymic School of Laoukeun, and those of the Hindoo Polytheistic School of Buddha."[216] Morrison considered the Four Books (四书) to "contain the principles of the Confucian School",[217] though he was aware that Confucius "partly compiled, composed, or dictated" all the ancient Chinese classics.[218] In terms of its value to the literati, Morrison remarked that "Confucian System… is the established system in China… the indispensable system by which to attain to honour, offices, and emoluments in that country".[219] In other words, Morrison's Confucian phraseology was no longer the literal translation of Ru Jia but represented his interpretation and characterization of the doctrine of Ru Jia, which he still rendered as "literati".

Medhurst's interpretation of the "System of Confucius" was more associated with Confucius the historical figure and his sayings. In his book *China: Its State and Prospects* (1838), Medhurst observed that Confucius engaged in political affairs for the greatest part of his life, and the system Confucius devoted to establishing was a school of political philosophy rather than religion. Medhurst concluded that "(It) is a misnomer to call his system a religion, as it has little or nothing to do with theology, and is merely a scheme of ethics and politics, from which things spiritual and divine are uniformly excluded."[220]

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[212] Robert Morrison, *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language,* Vol.1 – Part 1, 167: "The literati, the religion of Foh, and the religion of Taou, constitute three forms of doctrine, or sects."
[213] Ibid, 844.
[214] Ibid, 707. Under Xun Zi, Morrison defined him as an eminent writer of the Ru Jia, the philosophical sect of Confucius.
[215] Ibid, 708. Under the Ruist philosopher Yang-Tsze (Yang Chu), Morrison described him as an ancient writer of the Confucian sect.
[216] Robert Morrison, *Chinese Miscellany; Consisting of Original Extracts from Chinese Authors in the Native Character; with Translations and Philological Remarks* (London: London Missionary Scoeity, 1825), 36.
[217] Ibid, 42.
[218] Ibid, 37.
[219] Ibid, 42.
[220] W.H. Medhurst, *China: Its Status and Prospects, with Special Reference to the Spread of the Gospel* (Boston: Grocker & Brewster, 1838), 154.

Medhurst further defined the scope of the Term-Question debate by setting the question within the sphere of the classical writings of "the Confucian School", or "Confucian classics". While both sides agreed on the authority of these classics, Medhurst contrasted Boone by his relying more on the Chinese classical commentators while Boone was more inclined to the sinological opinions and judgements, including those of Morrison. As such Medhurst and Boone had different opinions on their reading of the so-called Confucian classics, being either of the Ruist interpretations or sinological opinions than Confucius himself.

In contrast to the loose application of Confucian terms by Medhurst or Boone, Legge in his 1852 essay exhibited an unusual reticence on the use of Confucian terminology. A close examination shows that, except for his two quotations from Boone in which "Confucian classics" were used,[221] Legge himself did not in any case use the "Confucian" terms, but always pointed his quotations directly to Confucius or to the specific classical text. Instead of "the Confucian school" Legge used "the literary sect" in his reference to the Ru Jiao. For the philosopher Zhu Xi and the rational school he represented, Legge expressed it as "the Sung School", or "the atheo-political school" which the Jesuit writers had used. In other instances, Legge used various terms, such as scholars, philosophers, commentators and interpreters, to describe what were addressed by other missionary writers as Confucians or Confucianists.

Such discriminative rendition of Ruist terms on the one hand best exhibited Legge's scholarly standard in accurate expression, on the other hand, it implied his unuttered suspicion in terms of what is properly "Confucian". To the classicist Legge, "Confucian" could only mean what was related to Confucius. In the similar manner in which Legge argued that the term Elohim properly only applied to God Himself, he considered that "Confucian" could only be used in connection with Confucius. Believing that "the text of Confucius ought to be final" [222] in the Term-Question debate, Legge by then perhaps already harbored the idea of finding out for himself the religious opinion and teaching that were properly Confucius.

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[221] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 11, 14.
[222] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Conerning God and Spirits*, 52.

It is also worth mentioning here that Legge did not champion the use of Confucianism. On the contrary, Legge in his early works on the Chinese Classics consistently shunned the term. It was until in 1877, when Confucianism had become a popular jargon in the writings of comparative religions that Legge finally accepted to use the term. What connected Legge with Confucianism was his contribution of "the Texts of Confucianism" to Max Müller's *Sacred Books of East* series. Legge did not invent Confucianism, what Legge invented was a 'Confucianism' as a religion. Detailed discussion on this will be entered in Chapter Six.

The State Religion of China and Legge's Unanswered Questions

A subject Legge tried to elucidate in his 1852 essay concerned with the so-called "State Religion of China". The subject was brought into the Term-Question debate by Boone who attempted to shift Shang Di from a linguistic concept to the chief deity in the Chinese state religion. Boone alluded to two authoritative accounts on the state religion of China by Robert Morrison and the Jesuit M. Visdelou respectively. The problem with Boone's allusions was that not only did these two accounts conflict each other on what the State Religion of China was, nor did they mention Shang Di in their accounts. In Morrison's account,[223] the "State Religion of China was represented in the form of the sacrificial ceremonies performed by imperial court and by the provincial government. It was not included in the three sects of Buddhist religion, Taoist religion and the ethical sect of Confucius. It was a separate "natural religion" that "does not consist of doctrines which are to be taught, learned and believed".[224] On the other hand, according to the Jesuit writer M. Visdelou, the "State Religion of China" was no other than the "religion of the philosophical sects of China", which "does not exclude sacrifices, including the imperial sacrifices to Heaven, Earth, ancestors and various tutelary spirits".[225] Nevertheless, Boone concluded from their accounts that the Chinese state religion was a heathen religion, therefore Shang Di could not be the true God, but a chief god in the heathen religion.

In contrast to Morrison's reading of the Chinese state religion from the Chinese Legal Code and Visdelou's inference on Chinese religion from reading the metaphysical

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[223] Robert Morrison, "The state religion of China," *Chinese Repository* Vol. III, no.2 (June 1834): 49.
[224] Ibid, .49, 51, 52.
[225] William J. Boone, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos," *Chinese Repository*. Vol. XIX (1850), 381, 382.

interpretation on *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Changes*), Legge went into the textual investigation in the Chinese historical record on the proceeding and liturgical content of the imperial sacrifices. His examination on an imperial sacrifice ceremony recorded in "the Collective Statutes of the Ming dynasty (大明会典)" convinced him that "God has not left himself without witness, varied and convincing, among this vast portion of His human family".[226] Besides, Legge's historical investigation into the state religion of China also revealed its institutional origin from the ancient Chinese classics. It was not a stand-alone religion as claimed by Dr. Morrison, but was modelled strictly from the practices recorded in the ancient classics despite of the corruption over the four thousand years' dynastic changes and misinterpretations. What's more, Legge also discovered the more theistic classical commentaries by "ancient" Chinese interpreters. In reading the ancient commentaries– the *Thirteen Jing with Commentary and Explanations* (十三经注疏), Legge found the decisive ancient interpretation on Tai Ji (太极, *the Great Terminus*) in *Yi King* (易经, *the Book of Changes*), which later was interpreted by the Song philosophers during 10th-12th century as "the First Cause". Such materialistic view of Chinese cosmology was held by the Pro-*shen* party as a central argument against Shang Di proposal. The ancient interpretation by Kong Anguo (孔安国, c. BCE 2nd century – BCE 1st century) –the descendent of Confucius— provided crucial evidence that Tai Ji had nothing to do with "the First Cause" but was only "the condition or period, before heaven and earth were separated, when the original matter was formless and one." [227] The theistic ancient commentaries of Chinese classics strengthened Legge's anticipation for some "work upon the Classics, more critical, fuller and more exact".[228] When he decided to venture such an undertaking himself, *the Thirteen Jing* (十三经注疏) became Legge's primary reference texts for his own critical interpretation of Chinese classics.

Legge's Other Unanswered Questions

Legge still had unanswered questions in his 1852 essay. Legge ventured against all odds that the Chinese religion was not a polytheism, but a monotheism with superstitions associated with it. Yet, Legge was unable to explain the fact that the earliest mention of

[226] Ibid, 36.
[227] Ibid, 12.
[228] Legge, CC1 (1861), preface, viii.

Shang Di in the ancient classic of *Shu Jing* was made side by side with other objects and spirits of worship. Another question concerned the prevailing Chinese practice of ancestral worship. Though Legge accepted the opinion of Confucius that the ancestral worship was part of one's duty of filial piety, he admitted that it had developed into the religious worship of their ancestral spirits for protection and favour. Believing that it had become a stumbling block for the Chinese to receive Christianity, Legge wasn't able to find out when this all started. Legge could only regret that "the portion of the Noachic family which migrated to China, was prone to error, like the other portions that remained nearer to their original seats."[229] Nonetheless, being a thorough scholar who would leave no stones unturned until he had found all the answers, Legge could be anticipated to continue his search for those answers.

Conclusion

Legge's participation in the Term-Question debate didn't succeed in convincing his opponents of his Shang Di argument, though he indeed influence a large number of his peer Protestant missionaries in China to accept his opinion. Neither did Legge fully vindicate himself of the charges of some of his adversaries. There were also unanswered questions left from his debate. It was Legge's duty to God to vindicate himself and his duty to convince his missionary brothers. These duties of Legge led to his translational investigation into the Chinese Classics to continue his search for God.

[229] Ibid, 55.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEGGE'S ENCOUNTER WITH CONFUCIUS

This Chapter argues that Legge's historical quest for the life and teaching of Confucius represented his continued effort at his Term-Question debate. Legge's encounter with the historical and irreligious Confucius did not provide him the proof for his Shang Di argument; Legge's textual encounter with Confucius was also a hermeneutical process with which Legge intended to understand the author as much as the texts. His hermeneutical reading convinced him that Confucius was the transmitter, not the maker of the Chinese classics; and his principal teaching were those contained in the ancient classics and his discourses about them. Legge's hermeneutical reading of Confucius laid the foundation for his later reformation on the principal teaching of Confucius, which Legge dubbed as 'Confucianism'. Legge came to his eventual reconciliation with his reformed and re-imagined Confucius as a religious instructor and a prophet sent by God.

The Conflicting Opinions on Confucius and Confucianists

The Term-Question debate of the 1840s-1850s was conducted principally within the textual scope of Chinese classics and Ruist commentaries. Yet, by applying the loosely defined "Confucian" nomenclature, the participants of the debate created a conflicting Confucius and irreconcilable Confucian system.

An example of this was the way Boone constructed his Confucius. Boone argued that Confucius affirmed the existence of *shen*, but Confucius never in any Confucian classics affirmed that *Shang-ti* generated Heaven and earth. "Heaven is the unknown God of Confucius". On the other hand, Dr. Boone inferred that Confucius in "Confucian writings" seemed to have "some allusions to heaven as the presiding power of nature, and to fate (*li* 理, *reason*) as the determiner of all things", and "the Confucian system of philosophy assumes the existence of two eternal-existing principles, Li and Ki". By his blending Confucius, the ancient literary monuments and the later metaphysical contemplation all into a "Confucian system",

Boone reached his paradoxical conclusion that "the Chinese manage to combine the apparently irreconcilable principles of atheism and polytheism".[230]

As mentioned earlier, Legge in his debate essay restrained from using any "Confucian terms", neither did he accept attributing any ideas to Confucius lightly. Given his firm belief that the writings of Confucius would provide "irrefragable proof"[231] for his Term-Question argument, it was anticipated that Legge would come up with more accurate discourse on Confucius any time. Some ten years late, Legge produced "a more correct narrative of the principal incidents in the life of Confucius than has yet been given in any European language",[232] being the Fifth Chapter of his first volume of *Chinese Classics* Series. Only Legge's finding did not provide any "irrefragable proof" he expected. Neither did he apply 'Confucianism' to the irreligious teaching of the historical Confucius. It took him nearly another twenty years before Legge came to his re-imagination of Confucius and his revolutionary construction of 'Confucianism' as a religion.

Legge's "Life and Teachings of Confucius"

Few scholars on Legge are aware of his biographical account of Confucius. Being titled as "Confucius and His Immediate Disciples*"* and constituting the Fifth Chapter of the Prolegomena to his first *Chinese classics* (1861), Legge's 70-page-plus investigation on Confucius took up more than half of the prolegomena. It was the most exhaustive account of Confucius' life and deeds in any European language by his time and attracted tremendous attention from the western readers.

Such interest from the western reading public in Legge's biography of Confucius could be seen by an anecdote Legge told in his revised version for popular reading published in 1867. In 1866 an American publisher, a Mr. Baker, approached him with a proposal for publishing Legge's translations of the Chinese classics in the United States. By the persuasion of his own publisher, Legge quickly revised a popular version for publication in the states.[233] In the preface of this edition, Legge

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[230] W.J. Boone, "Defense of an essay on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos. *Chinese Repository.* Vol. XIX, 1850. Pp.365,435,
[231] Legge, the *Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits,* 16.
[232] Legge, CC1 (1861), 88.
[233] James Legge, *the Life and Teachings of Confucius* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co.; London: N. Trübner & Co., 1867).

accused the "acts of piracy" by Mr. Baker and criticized his intended depictions of Confucius as "a most religious man, and abundantly recognized the truth of a future life", and of China, "the worship of God was more nearly universal in China than in the Theocracy of Israel". [234]

The light version of Legge's first *Chinese Classic* volume, published simultaneously in England and US, was titled *The Life and Teachings of Confucius*. By 1909 the book had underwent eight reprints in England. In addition to this, the Oxford University Press in 1907 published *the Prolegomena to the Chinese Classics of Confucius and Mencius,* which contained Legge's biographical accounts of both Confucius and Mencius. As for Mr. Baker whose act Legge dubbed as "piracy", he still managed to publish his unauthorized version of Legge's Chinese classics.[235] The pirate version put Confucius as the author of the classical books contained, replaced Legge's Prolegomena with his own introduction on the life and doctrines of Confucius. This version also went through at least two reprints.[236]

Legge's Textual Quest for the Historical Confucius

Legge's quest for Confucius was aimed at both attesting the authenticity of Confucius as a historical figure, and identifying more accurately his teachings, in particular those related to his religious inclination. To attain the dual goals, Legge devoted himself to an exhaustive textual collection concerning Confucius from the available Chinese source texts.[237] It is worth mentioning that Legge's investigational work drew great deal from the critical works of contemporary Chinese classical

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[234] Ibid, Preface, iii

[235] Mr. Baker eventually published Legge's work, most likely without paten approval from Legge. Titled *the Chinese Classics; A Translation by James Legge, D.D., of the London Missionary Society. Part I: Confucius.*New York, Hurd and Houghton, 1870. It also went through several reprints.

[236] The same edition was reprinted in 1883 by John B., Alden, Publisher. 1883. New York.

[237] Legge consulted no less than a dozen of historical, biographical and contemporary critical texts in Chinese sources. Besides *the* Four Books (四书) and the Five Jing (五经), Legge's also consulted *the Records of the Grand Historian*(史记), *The Family Sayings of Confucius* (孔子家语), *Chun Qiu*(春秋) *with Tso's commentaries and Gong yang's commentaries, Confucius and his Disciples* (孔丛子), *Sacrificial Canon of the Sage's Temples, with Plates* (圣庙祀典图考), *On the Tenth Book of the Analects, with Plates* (乡党图考), *General Examination of Records and Scholars* (文献通考) *and its sequal, The annals of the Empires* (历代统计表), *The Complete Rites of Great Qing* (大清通礼), *The Forty Nine Peculiarities of Confucius* (四十九表), *A Collection of Various Writings* (说苑), *and Records of Various States of Chow* (列国志). Legge took his primary content of Confucius from *the Records of the Grand Historian (史记), The Family Sayings of Confucius* (孔子家语), *and the Confucian Analects* (论语), and referred frequently to *On the Tenth Book of the Analects, with Plates* (乡党图考) in cases of controversial and erroneous recordings.

critics. These critics' opinion greatly impacted Legge's method of his *Chinese Classic* project, i.e., not following Zhu Xi's orthodox interpretations, and later on his hermeneutical construction of the teaching of Confucius, or 'Confucianism'. In his quest for the historical Confucius, Legge resorted to the work of Jiang Yong (江永, 1681- 1762).[238] Jiang's famous disquisition *On the Tenth Book of the Analects with Plates* (乡党图考, 1761*)* contained a thorough historical examination on Confucius and became the most influential reference work for scholarly study on Confucius by later Chinese scholars. Legge freely admitted that he had "largely availed himself"[239] of Jiang's work in his account, saying "I take the opportunity to acknowledge my obligations to it".[240] On top of this, Legge's biographical account of Confucius featured his scholarly effort at restoring as many recorded sayings of Confucius back into the historical context of Confucius in which they were likely to occur, thus making it possible for more contextual interpretations. With his enormous work in compiling, chronicling and cross-referencing, Legge finally came up with his "more correct" account of Confucius.

To better appreciate the sinological features of Legge's *Life of Confucius,* a comparison can be made between his work and a similar work by Qian Mu (钱穆, 1895 -1990), a renowned 20th century Chinese Ruist scholar. Qian's *Biography of Confucius,*[241] first published in 1975, is one of the most widely read biographies of Confucius in China. Qian's work is written based on the Ruist belief that "Confucius is the first and greatest sage of the Chinese history".[242] His principal intention for the book is to demonstrate the "(great) personality of Confucius", to "seek the boundless knowledge that Confucius acquired in his life time, and to explore his profound and minute ways of applying his knowledge to education".[243] In contrast, what Legge tries to present in his work is a "correct narrative of the principal incidents in the life

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[238] Jiang Yong (江永 1681 -1762) is a renowned Qing classical scholar during the reign of the emperor Kang-Xi (康熙). He is most famous for his study on the rhyming traditions of ancient Chinese literature and evidential investigations on the Chinese classics. Many of his works are collected in the Complete Qing Imperial library (四库全书).
[239] James Legge, CC1 (1861), 132.
[240] Ibid, 89.
[241] Qian Mu, A *Biography of Confucius* (BeiJing: Jiu Zhou Publishing House, 2011) 钱穆《孔子传》, 北京: 九州出版社, 2011.)
[242] Ibid, Preface 1.
[243] Ibid, Preface 1.

of Confucius,"[244]though beneath that modest expression Legge also hopes to uncover the characters and opinions of Confucius, especially in terms of religion. Secondly, while Qian is familiar with various Chinese texts dealing with Confucius, he opts for *the Confucian Analects* as the primary and most credible source for studying Confucius "academic" opinions, and ranks these opinions in order of their contribution to China, i.e. his pedagogical methods, his political opinions and his writing careers. Unlike Qian, Legge tries to provide a complete depiction of Confucius as a historical figure by his critical textual examinations,[245] and tries to identify his teachings from the full range of the Chinese classics and evaluates them within their respective academic disciplines. Finally, Qian confines his audience to Chinese readers and aims his work to be part of the effort at "revitalizing the Chinese culture and restoring the Ruist tradition taught by Confucius".[246] In contrast, Legge's work is intended for but not limited to the western readers. As such Legge takes a comparative approach in evaluating the teachings of Confucius, giving positive remarks to those value propositions that are shared in the western tradition while criticizing those opinions which were morally, intellectually "defective" or deviating from the Christian values. While Legge's comparison has his limitations in view of the backdrop of the 19th century Euro-Christian superiority, his sinological account of Confucius offers new perspectives with which Confucius can be studied and evaluated.

Legge's Account of Confucius as an Historical Man

Being not bound by the Ruist shackle in discoursing their sages, Legge was able to depict Confucius as an authentic and flesh-and-blood man, i.e. Confucius as a son, a husband, a teacher, or a government official, a political reformer and a seeker of knowledge and truth. In the case when Confucius made unconventional funeral arrangements for his parents, Legge saw not "the important lessons", but Confucius as "a dutiful son paying the last tribute of affection to a good parent…, a man of the

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[244] James Legge, *CC1 (1861), 88.*
[245] For example, Legge faithfully kept those apocryphal Chinese records regarding Confucius in his footnotes, such as the case of Confucius' mother praying for a child in the Ne-Kew hill and how it was answered by the "prodigious occurrences" around the birth of Confucius. Legge then would mark this as "lengend". For other less credible instances, Legge would narrate them, and give his reasonings, doubts and judgment for their being "exaggeration", "apocryphal", "fabulous", or "indiscriminating eulogies".
[246] Qian Mu, *A Biography of Confucius*, Preface: 3.

past as much as of the present, whose own natural feelings were liable to be hampered in their development by the traditions of antiquity which he considered sacred." [247] In the case of Confucius interacting with his own son Li (鲤), Legge remarked that "There is too little room left for the play and development of natural affection."[248] Legge saw the more emotional side of Confucius upon hearing the death of his favorite disciple, Yen Hwuy (颜回, c. BCE 521 – BCE 481), "The tears of Confucius himself would flow over and above the measure of propriety." [249] Legge was impressed by the relationship between Confucius with his disciple –Tsze Loo (子路), remarking that "he stands out a sort of Peter in the Confucian school, a man of impulse, prompt to speak and prompt to act. He gets many a check from the master, but there is evidently a strong sympathy between them." [250] In describing the final moments of Confucius' life, Legge on the one hand sympathized with Confucius' melancholy and disappointment that "the great ones of the empire had not received his teachings",[251] on the other hand, Legge painfully realized that Confucius "uttered no prayer" and gave no sign of "the thought that he had endeavored to serve his generation by the will of God".[252] What Legge did not realize was that, with his many years of immersed and empathetic quest for Confucius, an emotional bond with the sage was forming within him that would make him regret Confucius for what Confucius did some times, yet defending him and willing him to be someone else at other times.

Legge's Initial Finding on the Religious Inclination of Confucius

Legge's quest for the teachings of Confucius did not yield the answer he expected with regard to the religious inclination and opinion of Confucius. Confucius neither speculated on "the creation of things or the end of them", nor did he seek "the origin of man or his hereafter".[253] The *Confucius Analects* stated that "extraordinary things, feats of strength, states of disorder, and spiritual beings, (those things) he did

[247] Legge, *CC1* (1861), 61-62. The primary source of this instance is from *Li Ki* (礼记, or *Record of Rites*).
[248] Ibid, 71. The primary source of the instance comes from *Li Ki* (礼记, or Record of Rites).
[249] Ibid, 72.
[250] Ibid, 87.
[251] Ibid, 87.
[252] Ibid, 87.
[253] Ibid, 98.

not like to talk about".[254] On the rare occasions where Confucius spoke of heaven as the dispenser of mandate or judge, he never used the personal name of Shang Di. Legge grudgingly concluded that Confucius "was unreligious rather than irreligious", by which phrase Legge only admitted that Confucius was indifferent to rather than against religion. Regardless of this Legge attributed the religious indifference of Confucius to the unfavorable attitudes towards the true religion among the Chinese people generally.

On the subject of the Chinese ancestral worship, Legge concluded that the tradition originated from the belief of the existence of souls in a time earlier than Confucius. Legge believed that Confucius recognized the importance of observing this ancient institution, yet Confucius shunned from speaking about this subject matter, saying "while you do not know life, how can you know about death." Legge was mad at Confucius, "why did he not candidly tell his real thoughts on so interesting a subject?"[255] Still Legge refused to view Confucius as a non-believer, but rather a skeptic. Legge was most aware of the power of example in the Chinese tradition and its double-edged influence. In Legge's view, such power of example, when it was linked with the shortcomings of Confucius, such as his insincerity, exerted "injurious influence" upon the people and the government of the nation. [256]

The Teachings of Confucius: Not Yet Legge's 'Confucianism'

When Legge wrote his biographical account of Confucius in 1861, his examination on the teachings of Confucius was confined strictly to the sayings of Confucius, or the discourse on his sayings by his disciples which were principally included in the Four Books part of the Chinese Classics. While such teachings of Confucius would suffice to constitute a Confucian system, or even Confucianism for many missionary writers or sinologists like Morrison or Medhurst, it is interesting to note that Legge did not apply any "Confucian*"* terms to those teachings of Confucius. Legge's reserve on any Confucian terminology was most unusual since in one of the books Legge alluded to –*Christ and Other Masters* (1858), the author officially

[254] Ibid, 99. *The Confucian Analects*, "子不語怪，力，亂，神."
[255] Ibid, 101.
[256] Ibid, 102.

adopted "Confucianism" to replace the Jesuit expression of "the Sect of the Learned" or Medhurst's "System of Confucius".

Legge characterized the principal part of the teachings of Confucius as "what we may call his principles of political science."[257] In Legge's examination, though Confucius uttered many maxims on morality and character refinement, his ultimate objective was to "bring happy tranquility"[258] to the empire. To achieve such "tranquility under heaven",[259] Confucius emphasized on the five relations among the society and the respective duties of man within those relations. "The path to universal government lies in the observance of the five social duties. The duties are those between sovereign and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder brother and younger, and those belonging to the intercourse of friends".[260] Nevertheless Legge pointed out that the idea of the five relations and was not the invention of Confucius but had existed in the teaching of ancient sovereigns. Legge contended that Confucius' teaching on government was to "pursue the old paths and raise up the old standards".[261] The significance of this observation didn't present itself until in 1870s when Legge began to contemplate on the content of his 'Confucianism' again in relevance to his study of comparative religions.

Christian Values vs. Confucian Values

In *the Confucian Analects*, Confucius was quoted as saying, "What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men."[262] Its resemblance to the golden rule taught by Christ and its much earlier utterance by Confucius led to much appreciation and conjecturing by western writers concerning the prophetic role of Confucius. Legge on the one hand confirmed its first utterance by Confucius by his textual investigation, he further compared the different implications between the

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[257] Ibid, 102.
[258] Ibid, 103.
[259] Ibid, 102.
[260] *The Doctrine of the Mean*: "[君臣也，父子也，夫婦也，昆弟也，朋友之交也，五者天下之達道也".
[261] Legge, *CC1* (1861), 104.
[262] *Confucian Analects*: "子貢問曰：'有一言而可以終身行之者乎？'子曰：'其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人。'"Zi Gong asked, saying, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." –Legge's translation.

positive instruction of the Gospel and the negative expression by Confucius. In Legge's view, the lesson taught by the gospel commanded a more proactive course of action in doing what is right and good, while the teaching of Confucius only went so far as to "forbade men to do what they feel to be wrong and harmful".[263] In addition, in the Gospel the priority of this lesson was explicitly emphasized by Christ, "This is the law and the prophets". Its application was for "man as man, having to do with other men, all with himself on the same platform".[264] With Confucius, this principle of action was only addressed to his fellow Chinese, to be observed within the propriety of reciprocity and among the people within their stipulated five social relations. It did not go beyond its national and social boundaries to become a universal principle of men.

The teachings of Confucius also contained a value proposition that went in different direction from the teaching of Christ. When Confucius was approached for opinion on the Taoist teaching of "repaying injury with kindness",[265] Confucius replied, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness".[266] Comparing this with the teaching of Christ to "Love your enemies", Legge deemed the principle of Confucius fell short of Christian standard and reflected Confucius' intellectual reasoning rather than a reaction from his loving heart. Legge attributed many of the contemporaneous practices of the Chinese to the "pernicious effects" caused by the teachings of Confucius. Legge observed that "revenge is sweet to the Chinese".[267] His examination on Confucius revealed its origin in the classic of *Li Ki*, in which Confucius was quoted as saying "not to live with the slayer under the same heaven".[268]

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[263] Legge, *CC1 (1861),* 104, 110.
[264] Ibid, 111.
[265] Lao Zi, *Dao De Jing: "*報怨以德". (to recompense injury with kindness)
[266] *Confucian Analects*: "或曰：'以德報怨，何如？'子曰："何以報德？以直報怨，以德報德.'" (Someone said, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" The Master said, "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." –Legge's translaton)
[267] Legge, *CC1 (1861*), 112.
[268] *Li Ki* (礼记, *the Record of Rites*): "子夏問於孔子曰：'居父母之仇如之何？'夫子曰：'寢苫枕干，不仕，弗與共天下也…'" (Zi-xia asked Confucius, saying, 'How should (a son) conduct himself with reference to the man who has killed his father or mother?' The Master said, 'He should sleep on straw, with his shield for a pillow; he should not take office; he must be determined not to live with the slayer under the same heaven."

Legge's Evaluation on Historical Confucius and His Influences

Legge recognized "a genuine humility" in Confucius as expressed in his own words, daring not to rank himself as either a sage (圣人) or a Superior Man (君子), and never ceasing to study and emulate the characters of ancient sages. Confucius held himself as "a transmitter and not a maker",[269] giving his full consent and approval of the truth and principles he learned and understood in the ancient literature. What made him "superior and alone" was his feeling of "a divine commission as the conservator of ancient truth and rules".[270] On the other hand, Legge maintained that Confucius did not "announce any new truths, or to initiate any new economy," but only strived to "prevent what had been previously known from being lost", and to "lift up a standard against the prevailing lawlessness of his age".[271] As will be laid out in the later chapters, Legge's such vieweventually led him to a hermeneutical reading of Confucianism that went beyond the many maxims of Confucius.

In terms of the influences of Confucius, Legge attributed his unparalleled fame partly to the "extravagant eulogies" heaped on him by his disciples and followers, apart from Confucius' contribution to the preservation of Chinese literary heritage and his effort to live up to the values of the past tradition. When emperors started to endow on Confucius posthumous honors and decreed temples to be built in honour of him, the initial homage to him consequentially became "worship and not mere homage" to Confucius.[272] The Chinese classics that were preserved and interpreted by Confucius became the only text books in China, the mass of the Chinese people "learn of him and do homage to him at once" and "hundreds of millions are his disciples now."[273]

Legge was acutely aware of Confucius's role as the moral and national symbol. He was "in the empire of China, the one man by whom all possible personal excellence was exemplified, and by whom all possible lessons of social virtue and political wisdom are taught". Confucius in the minds of the Chinese became "the

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–Legge's translation)
[269] Ibid, 95.
[270] Ibid, 95.
[271] Ibid, 96.
[272] Legge, CC1 (1861), 93.
[273] Ibid, 94.

beau ideal of humanity in its best and noblest state", "a Chinese of the Chinese."[274] It was with this understanding of Confucius that Legge in his later work warned his missionary brothers against "driving their carriages rudely over the Master's grave".[275]

In his 1861 biographical account, Legge made his first attempt at evaluating Confucius as a historical figure:

> I hope I have not done him injustice; but after long study of his character and opinions, I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not before his age, though he was above the mass of the officers and scholars of his time, he threw no new light on any of the questions which leave a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will henceforth wane. My opinion is, that the faith of the nation in him will speedily and extensively pass away.
>
> Legge. *CC1* (1861),113

Legge's 1861 encounter with the historical Confucius represented his earliest effort to decipher an authentic Confucius and his teachings in connection with his Term-Question debate. Confucius did not furnish Legge with the answers he expected. His judgement of Confucius was deemed by some as "being unjust to him, and dealing with him inhumanly", and by others as "partial, and represented his character and doctrine too favorably".[276] Legge did not stopping his search for Confucius nor did he made any conclusion on the Confucian doctrine. He still had not finished the more ancient Chinese classics which Confucius studied. In 1872, Legge experienced another heavy blow in his textual encounter with Confucius as the author of *Chun Qiu (Spring and Autumn),* one that was no less challenging than his Shang Di argument. Was he to be honest in following his heart and telling what he thought was the truth, or was he to refrain from uttering such things lest provoking the anger of a nation?

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[274] Ibid, 94.
[275] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. A Paper Read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai on May 11th, 1877* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh; London: Trübner &Co., 1877).
[276] Legge, *CC5.1* (1872), Prolegomena, 51.

Legge's Textual Encounter with Confucius as the Author of *Chun Qiu*[277]

Legge harbored high expectation on *Chun Qiu* (*Spring and Autumn*), hoping for new light to dawn upon him regarding Confucius. Legge had valid reason for hoping so, as *Chun Qiu* was the classic among the Five Jing that had the most authoritative testimonies regarding its Confucian authorship. The first testimony is believed to be from Confucius himself. Both Mencius and Sima Qian (司马迁) quoted Confucius as saying, "It is *Chun Qiu* which will make men know me, and it is *Chun Qiu* which will make men condemn me".[278] Mencius again stated that "Confucius completed *Chun Qiu*, and rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror".[279] In terms of its content and value proposition, Mencius stated that "The events (of the Chun Qiu) were those that occurred during Duke Huan of Qi (BCE 685 - BCE 643) and Duke Wen of Jin (BCE 636 -BCE 628), and its content was the historical. Confucius said, 'Its moral judgement I ventured to make.'"[280] Given those heavyweight testimonies, it was reasonable that Legge expected insight into Confucius's "human character" and "new speculations on the divine order of the universe".[281]

However, Legge's translation and comparison of both the classical text and the lengthy commentary made by Zuo Qiuming (左丘明) rendered him with an "intense feeling of disappointment". He could not reconcile what he interpreted from the classic with the Chinese scholarly belief in its being "the truth about things".[282] He could not believe that it was the work of Confucius.

The text of *Chun Qiu* contained only the briefest notes of events under the state Lu's chronological calendar, with neither indication of their causes and consequences, nor express opinions or judgements. The commentator Zuoqiu Ming

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[277] Legge, CC5.1 (1872).
[278] Ibid, 2. Source text is from *the Works of Mencius*: "是故孔子曰：『知我者其惟春秋乎！罪我者其惟春秋乎!"
[279] Ibid, 2. Source text from *the Works of Mencius*: "孔子成《春秋》而亂臣賊子懼." (Confucius completed *the Spring and Autumn*, and rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror." Translation by Legge). The same quotation also appears in *the Records of the Great Historian* (史记).
[280] Ibid, 2. Source text from *the Works of Mencius*: "其事則齊桓、晉文，其文則史。孔子曰：『其義則丘竊取之矣."
[281] Ibid, 3.
[282] Ibid, 3.

(左丘明, c. BCE 502 -BCE 422), on the other hand, not only provided details of events referred to in the classical text, but presented the historical context that went beyond the "praise-and-censure" principle claimed by Mencius or Sima Qian. Upon his comparing the many historical incidents in Zuo's commentary with the classical text, Legge came to his harshest judgement on the classic and "on the character of Confucius as its author". Legge levied three charges on Confucius as its author, feeling it his duty to hold Confucius accountable for its injurious influence on the successive Chinese historical literature and on the Chinese people. Firstly, Confucius showed "no reverence for truth in history" by modifying the historical events to suit his own intention; Secondly, Confucius "shrank from looking the truth fairly in the face" by ignoring or giving incomplete description of it; Finally, he "had more sympathy with power than with weakness, and would overlook wickedness and oppression in authority rather than resentment and revenge in men who were suffering from them." In Legge's observation, their conspicuous and pernicious influence was exhibited in "the extreme reverence for authority which was so remarkable in Confucius, and the shrinking from looking fairly at the realities of their condition and relations".[283]

Amidst his strong charges, Legge once again revealed his deep bond with Confucius in the making. Legge admitted that he had been "forward to accord a generous appreciation to him and his teachings" and reluctant in writing down these accusations, hoping to pursue the golden mean, or denying its Confucian authorship as some Chinese critics did. Yet Legge felt it his duty to tell the truth. Legge offered his more personal evaluation on Confucius: "But I have not been able to make a hero out of Confucius", because "it is he who leads them that cause them to err."[284]

Legge's Revelation and Rethinking Confucius

Among all the Chinese classics that Legge translated and digested, no other book had occupied more of his time and intellectual strength like *Yi Jing (the Book of Changes*). It was recorded by Sima Qian the historian and agreed by most Chinese scholars that Confucius wrote the famous "Ten Wings" (十翼, the Ten Appendixes).

[283] Ibid, 50, 51.
[284] Ibid, 51.

Since Legge made his first translation of *Yi Jing* in 1855, he had been toiling with the scope and the method of the book. It was until in 1874 that Legge was able to get hold of "the clue" as to the content of the book. Firstly, Legge realized that the content of the Appendixes of the book had little to do with the more ancient hexagrams and their explanatory texts due to a time gap of some 700 years in their respective making. A more meaningful realization was that, after investigating the many passages of the Appendixes themselves, it dawned upon Legge that there was no sufficient textual evidence to prove that either the Appendixes in *Yi Jing*, or any Chinese classics, were the making of Confucius except, probably, those sections that were specifically marked as the sayings of "the Master (子曰)". Such revelation set Legge free in his interpretation on the Chinese classics from being "haunted by the name and shade of Confucius".[285] Confucius was set free, too. He was not longer to be defined or interpreted by the texts that were attributed to him. He was to be understood only by what he said himself to be – a transmitter, not a maker.

With such realization came the dramatic change in Legge's encounter with Confucius. Confucius was no longer an unreligious figure as characterized by the Four Books, but to be viewed as the preserver and instructor of the ancient Chinese religion of the Five Jing which he contributed to the preservation. Legge began to reimagine that Confucius "was raised up by God for the instruction of the Chinese people."[286] Confucius was a religious teacher. "He taught morality, but not a morality without reference to the will of God. He taught ceremonialism, but not for the sake of the ceremony merely. His formalism did not content itself with the outward observance of established rites." [287]

With the transformed image of Confucius, Legge came to his reconciliation with the Chinese sage. In his 1880 lectures on the religions of China, Legge spoke of Confucius with a fond sentiment: "K'ung was a great and wonderful man; but I think that the religion which he found, and did so much to transmit to posterity, was still greater and more remarkable than he."[288] When Legge revised his first volume of the

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[285] Legge, *SBE16/SBC2 (*1882), Preface, xiiiv, xvii.
[286] Ibid, 10.
[287] James Legge, *the Religions of China. Confucianism and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity* (London; Hodder and Stroughton. 1880), 123, 124.
[288] Ibid, 149.

Chinese Classics in 1893 for reprint by Oxford, Legge gave his more refined and nuanced opinion on Confucius: "He was a very great man, and his influence has been on the whole a great benefit to the Chinese, while his teachings suggest important lessons to ourselves who profess to belong to the school of Christ."[289]

Conclusion

In his continuous effort to seek evidence for the Shang Di argument, Legge set off his translational investigation and quest for the historical Confucius and his teachings, in particular the religious teaching. Legge's encounters with Confucius were sympathetic to start with and empathetic throughout his thirty-plus years' translational investigation into the Chinese classics. Legge's historical quest for Confucius did not provide the answer he expected, his translational encounter with the ancient religion in Chinese classics provided new perspective on how Confucius would influence the Chinese people in terms of their religious attitudes. Legge's hermeneutical interpretation of what Confucius taught enabled him to rethink and reimagine Confucius as a religious instructor and prophetic figure. Such a religious imagination of Confucius also embedded Legge's missiological solution to propagating Christianity in China.

[289] James Legge, *CC1* (1893), 111.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEGGE'S ENCOUNTER WITH CHINESE CLASSICS

This chapter argues that Legge's *Chinese Classics* project represents a complex amalgamation of inter-cultural and multi-dimensional interpretations of Chinese classics. By his critical participation into the Ruist classical commentary tradition, Legge creates a set of new and unorthodox commentaries and annotations (注疏) of the Chinese classics. Besides, by adopting the biblical commentary format and critical methods, Legge produces a set of *Chinese Classics* works that are not unlike a biblical commentary in style and scholarship. Last but not the least, Legge applies his contemporaneous continental hermeneutical principles of interpretation, featuring emphasis on the understanding of the author and on interpreting Chinese classics as a unity. Such complex interpretation methods render Legge's *Chinese Classics* project far beyond the so-called translation, and constitutes a set of sinological interpretations of the ancient Chinese literary monuments that aimed at deciphering the historical and textual meanings.

The Sinological Studies of Chinese Classics Before Legge

By the time Legge published his first volume of Chinese Classics in 1861, the translation of the Chinese classics into various European languages were fragmented and unsystematic. Since the strife between the Roman Papacy and the Emperor Kang Xi (康熙, 1654 -1722) over the Rites and Term Controversy led to the imperial ban on Christianity in China in 1721, China was essentially closed to the west until 1843. [290] Studies on China as a proper academic discipline, or Sinology as we know today, began when a Chair in Chinese was created for Abel-Rémusat in 1815 at Collège de France, the first of its kind. Nevertheless, the obstacle in accessing the first-hand Chinese textual knowledge led many Sinologue to turn to Jesuit writings in Latin or Italian, or to translating these Latin documents into French, which was the scientific language of the time. As such, the early source materials for the European studies on China were both out-of-date and unsystematic, the interpretations of the Chinese classics in most cases being second-handed or even third-handed. By the first half of

[290] See Chapter One: Legge's predecessors- the Jesuit mission in China, the Rites and Term Controversy.

the 19th century, western writings or translations on Chinese classics can be divided into following three categories.

The Jesuit writings on China made between the sixteenth to the eighteenth century constituted the earliest translations and interpretations of the Chinese classics. According to Professor Thierry Meynard, [291] there were at least four Jesuit translations of Chinese classics into Latin.[292] The Jesuit translations only managed to cover three of the Four-Book classics, namely, *Lun Yu* (论语, or *The Book of Sentences* as the Jesuit writers put it), *Da Xue* (大学, or *School of Adults*) and *Zhong Yong* (中庸, or *The Immutable Medium*). They did not translate either Meng Zi (孟子, or *The Book of Mencius)* or any of the Five Jing classics. Besides, the Jesuit translations were mainly executed in Latin language and mingled the classical texts with the orthodox commentaries (such as those by the philosopher Zhu Xi). It is worth mentioning that the French Jesuit J. B. Du Halde's 1735 compilation of *A Description of the Empire of China* (which was translated into English in 1738 and 1741) contained large portion of excerpts and paragraph-by-paragraph digest of the Five Jing (五经). [293] This book is important as it impacted a number of early European missionary writers in China, such as Medhurst and Legge. In Legge's private library[294] Legge kept not only Du Halde's work in Latin and English, but also other three earlier Jesuit translations of Chinese classics in Latin. In his first volume of the *Chinese Classics,* Legge listed *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in the first place of his many western reference books.

The second category includes translations of Chinese classics made by sinologists of the early nineteenth century, notably those by Jean-Pierre Abel-

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[291] Thierry Meynard, *The Jesuit Reading of Confucius* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[292] These translations include: *Sapientia Sinica (the Wisdom of China*, translation led by the Portuguese Jesuit Inacio Da Costa) in 1662, *the Sinarum scientia politico-moralis (Politico-moral learning of the Chinese)* during 1667-1669 (translated by the Italian Jesuit Propero Intorcetta), and the culminating publication of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive scientia Sinensis (Confucius, the Philosopher of China, or the Chinese Learning*) made possible by Phillippe Couplet in 1687 in Paris. The first translation was made by the famous Jesuit Matthew Ricci and was believed to be incorporated into later Jesuit translations.
[293] Du Halde, J. B. Jesuit, *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary, together with the KINIGDOMS of Korea, and Tibet: containing the Geography and History (Natural as well as Civil) of those countries. T*wo Volumes. (London. Printed by T. Gardner in Bartholomew-Close, for Edward Cave, at St. John's Gate, 1738)
[294] *A Catalogue of Books on China Being the Chinese part of the Library of the Late Rev. Prof. J. Legge. M.A. etc.* (London: Luzac & Co., 1899).

Rémusat[295] (translation of *the Doctrine of the Mean* from Latin to French), Stanislas Julien[296] (partial translation of *the Works of Mencius* in Latin), Guillaume Pauthier[297] (Translation of *the Great Learning* from Latin to French), Julius Mohl[298] (French Translation of *Yi Jing*), and De Guignes[299] (French translation of *Li Ji*). In as early as 1850 Legge was already keeping track of sinological development, as indicated by his allusion in the Term-Question argument. However, as Legge later pointed out from time to time, early sinologists did not have the advantages of direct access to native scholars and textual references that Legge possessed.

The third category consists of the translations made mostly by early British missionaries in China, including Robert Morrison, Joshua Marshman, David Collie, and Walter Henry Medhurst. Robert Morrison, among his many translations of popular Chinese literature, made only one attempt on *Da Xue* (*大学, the Great Learning*).[300] Nevertheless, his ground-breaking Chinese and English Dictionaries contained so many quotations from Chinese classics that they became important references in the Term-Question debate and in Legge's later works of *Chinese classics*. Marshman's 1809 translation of *the Works of Confucius*, in its bilingual format, was more a language primer for the new missionaries, and contained only the content of *the Confucian Analects*, not exactly as his book title claimed.[301] David Collie (? – 1828) was the first English missionary to translate the Four Books section of the Chinese classics into English. During his arduous and unremitting labour at the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca (1822-1828), he learned his Chinese from Morrison and became the third principal of the College in 1827. Collie's translation

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[295] Abel-Rémusat, *L'Invariable Milieu, ouvrage moral de Tèsu-ssê, en Chinois et en Mandchou, Avec une Version littérale Latine, une Traduction Françoise, et des Notes, précédé d'une notice sur les quatre livres moraux communément attribués à Confucius* (Paris: 1817).
[296] Stanislas Julien: *Meng Tseu vel Mencium inter Sinenses philosophos, ingenio, doctrina, nominisque claritate Confucio proximum, edidit, Latina interpretatione, ad interpretationem Tartaricam utramque recensita, instruixit, et perpetuo commentario, e Sinicis deprompto, illustravit Stanislaus Julien* (in Latin). (Paris. 1824-1829).
[297] Par G. Pauthier, *LE Ta Hio, ou La Guande Erude: Traduit en Francois, avec une Version Latin, & c*. (Paris: 1837).
[298] Julius Mohl, *Y-King, Antiquissimus Sinarum liber, ex interpretatione P. Regis* (Stuttgart, 1834–1839).
[299]De Guignes, *Le Chou-king, un des livres sacrés des Chinois, qui renferme les fondements de leur ancienne histoire, les principes de leur gouvernement et de leur morale; Traduit et enrichi de notes, par feu le P. Antoine Gaubil (1689-1759), missionnaire à la Chine. Revu et corrigé, &C., par M. De Guignes, &C. A* (Paris. 1770).
[300] Robert Morrison, *Horae Sinicae: Translations from the Popular Literature of the Chinese* (London: Printed for Black and Parry, 1812).
[301] J. Marshman, *the Works of Confucius; containing the Original texts with a Translation* (Serampore. 1809).

–*The Chinese Classical work Commonly Called the Four Books*[302]—not only consulted sinological translations and those of Morrison and Marshman, but employed "good native assistance", being "guided principally by native commentators".[303] Medhurst's translation of *Shoo King* (书经, *or the Historical Classic*)[304] represented the first direct translation effort on the Five Jing section by any English writers.

In short, when Legge finished his two volumes of *Chinese Classics* project on the Four Books part in 1861, there had been no complete translations of the Chinese canon of Four Books and Five Jing (四书五经), particularly in English language. Of the Five Jing, the classic of *Chun Qiu* (*the Annals of Spring and Autumn*) had not been translated; *Li Ki* (*the Record of Rites*) and *Shi Jing* (*the Classic of Poetry*) were only partially translated. Sinological knowledge on the ancient Five Jing and their associated ancient Chinese religion still relied heavily on the previous Jesuit writings. The Four Books became the principal source for missionary writers to interpret and characterize Chinese Ru Jiao and their world views.

Legge's Inspiration for Translating the Chinese Classics

Legge's inspiration for understanding Chinese classics stemmed from his classicist interests and from his distinct view on how he would engage in the missionary work in China. Legge wrote about his idea when he commenced his Chinese study, "he should not be able to consider himself qualified for the duties of his position until he had thoroughly mastered the Classical Books of the Chinese, and had investigated for himself the whole field of thought through which the sages of China had ranged, and in which were to be found the foundations of the moral, social, and political life of the people."[305] Such scholarly view on the missionary qualifications laid the foundation and provided momentum for Legge's reading of

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[302] David Collie, *The Chinese Classical Work commonly called the Four Books; Translated and Illustrated with notes* (Malacca: Printed at the Mission Press, 1828).
[303] Ibid, Preface.
[304] W.H.Medhurst, *The Shoo King, or the Historical Classic: Being the Most Ancient Authentic Record of the Annals of the Chinese Empire: illustrated by Later Commentators* (Shanghai: Printed at the Mission Press, 1846).
[305] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), Preface, vii.

Chinese classics. In the meantime, since the early stage of his reading the Chinese classics and sinological works Legge felt strongly the need of works that were "more critical, fuller and more exact".[306] When his hope that "some Chinese scholars would prepare something of this kind"[307] failed to materialize soon, Legge in 1841 began his own translations and critical notes. Legge's linguistic talent and the classicist translation hobby that were forged in his school years prepared Legge with the necessary materials for his later project.

The Term-Question Debate proved a catalyst for Legge's focused translational studies on Chinese language and literature. When Legge joined the debate in 1850, he still relied heavily on sinological works, Medhurst's translation, Chinese popular literature, and his common sense judgement. This situation changed dramatically when he penned his 1852 essay. He not only made independent translations to verify those of Medhurst, but started his first attempt at translating *Yi Jing (易经, the Book of Changes)*. Besides, Legge also started his investigation into the Chinese dynastic history records and more ancient commentaries of Chinese classics. From various accounts Legge gave in his *Chinese Classics* works, it can be deduced that Legge had translated a large portion of the Chinese classics around the time of his Term-Question debate.

The dire consequences of Legge's participation in the Term-Question debate also placed Legge under additional duty of continuing his persuasion of large number of missionaries in China who opted for *shen* advocacy. The debate not only led to the break-up of the Bible translation Committee and the circulation of two versions of Chinese Bible translations, it also created a division among protestant missionaries in China. After Legge and his generation of missionaries either passed away or left China, the new generation of missionaries renewed the Term-Question debate in the 1870s, with more of them under the influence of Boone's pro-*shen* opinions.[308] Such consequences would put Legge forever in fear of violating God's Fourth Commandment, "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your

[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid.
[308] In 1877, Dr. Boone's 1848 essay on the Term-Question debate was reprinted by the American Presbyterian Mission Press. On the other hand, Legge's Term-Question letters and essay were rarely mentioned other than scanty allusions by those who opposed his opinions.

God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name."(Exodus. 20:7). It was his life-long duty to God to vindicate himself that he did not take the name of God in vain. Such life-long duty to God led Legge to his translational investigation into the Chinese classics, searching for God or for the proof that the Chinese know God.

Legge's *Chinese Classics*: More than Translations

Legge is widely recognized today as one of the most important western translators of the Chinese classics. However, a puzzling question facing modern Legge scholars concerns whose base texts, or, to be more specific, which classical commentary editions Legge employed for his *Chinese Classics* translations. The fact with the Chinese classics is that, notwithstanding the standard classical texts, the "correct" comprehension of them are to a large degree subject to their commentaries and interpretations (注疏), particularly in the case of the archaic Five Jing. Legge's works are translations insomuch as they are the English rendition of the Chinese classical texts. What makes his translations dubious is that Legge doesn't seem to stick to any specific orthodox commentaries or interpretations in translating the classical texts. By the time of Legge, the interpretations by the rational school of Song period (宋明理学) represented by Zhu Xi (朱熹) have been the orthodoxy for some five hundred years, though new movement was championed by the modern critical scholars to try to return to more ancient commentaries. In light of such Ruist classical interpretational tradition, when Legge endeavored to re-decipher the ancient texts by treating Ruist commentaries merely as references rather than source texts of translation, his *Chinese Classics* works ceased to be translations but became a new set of interpretations on the Chinese classics. What's more, by his adoption of biblical criticism and continental hermeneutical principles, Legge dismantled some of the fundamental Ruist belief in these Chinese classics, i.e., their being the immutable truths taught by ancient sages. Legge is among the earliest critics who ventured his challenges to the moral judgement as manifested in *Chun Qiu* by its purported author of Confucius. Another example of Legge's interpretation rather than translation concerns his treatment of Jun Zi (君子, man of virtue)—the central figure of Ruist ideal in whom is summed up the highest moral and intellectual standards and whom every educated person is aspired to imitate. Legge is well aware of the significance

of the term as representing the figure of accomplished scholarship and man of complete virtue. When Legge rendered it as a "Superior Man" "for want of a better term",[309] he inadvertently turns the Ruist idealistic figure that everyone can associate with to a superman figure whom few can fancy to emulate. The term Superior Man/Superman later became a unique philosophical concept when Nietzsche in his *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883–85) employed its German word *Ubermensch* to describe his imagined superior man/superman.

As a result of his non-conformity to any orthodox Chinese classical interpreters and by his adoption of biblical and hermeneutic principles, Legge produced a new set of inter-cultural and multi-dimensional interpretations of Chinese classics.

Legge's *Chinese Classics*: Inter-cultural and Multi-dimensional Interpretations

The nature of Legge's *Chinese Classics* is best illustrated in the full title of his works. By naming it as *Chinese Classics: with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, Legge included four components in his works. They included an academic exposition, the translation, his chapter-by-chapter exegesis and detailed annotations, and a dictionary-like appendix.

Close examinations on Legge's Chinese Classics project reveals more of what Legge intended for his works. Take his first volume for example (See illustration 4-I). In this 500-plus-page book dealing with three of the Ruist Four-Book classics (*the Confucian Analects, the Great Learning,* and *the Doctrine of the Mean),* the translation portion takes up 298 pages, or a little more than half of the book. The rest of the book contains a 136-page Prolegomena and a 78-page Indexes. The Prolegomena represents Legge's research findings and epitomizes his scholarship on the Chinese classics covered in the book. It contains Legge's historical investigation into the text origin, authorship and authenticity of respective classic, their successive commentaries in history, as well as Legge's own critical evaluation

[309] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), the Body of the Volume, 3.

on their scope and value. The first volume also features a detailed account of the historical Confucius and critical analysis of his teachings. Even the Indexes part is not what we understand it today. It contains the concordances of the subject matters and proper names occurring in each of the three classics, and a *de facto* dictionary of the Chinese characters used in these books, being furnished with their pronunciations and places of occurrence in the books. As regard the main body of the volume—the bilingual translation— (See Illustration 4-2), the Chinese text takes up the top third of each page, followed by its corresponding English translation. The remaining space of the page is occupied with Legge's chapter-by-chapter commentaries, annotations, various interpretations by other commentators, and Legge's reasoning for his own translation decisions.

The content structure and translation page lay-out are not unique to the first volume but applied to all of Legge's *Chinese Classic* works. Several features of Legge's *Chinese Classics* works can be drawn from the illustrations. Firstly, in terms of the compositional format, Legge creates a Chinese Classical commentary that is not unlike the biblical commentary of his time; Secondly, in terms of his interpretations and annotations, Legge's translation only indicates one interpretation. He also retains other Chinese Ruist classical commentaries in his annotations and his own reasoning; thirdly, Legge broadens his audience to include "other students of the Chinese language and literature",[310] who in Legge's mind are no other than those missionaries and sinological scholars. Fourthly, his highly academic prolegomena treats the Chinese classics as classical literature, not the Ruist perception of them as the immutable truths taught by ancient sages.

[310] James Legge, *CC1 (1861)*, preface, ix.

Illustration 5-1: The Content structure of Legge's *Chinese Classics*, Vol. I (1861).

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ERRATA.

I. IN THE CHINESE TEXT.

Page.	Column.			Page.	Column.	
3,	2,	for 人	read 仁	185,	9,	for 湿 read 湛.
21,	1,	曰 is inverted.		199,	5,	耘 " 芸.
70,	9,	for 訳	read 厭.	228,	8,	之 " 知.
92,	4,	transpose	右左.	230,	4,	慕 " 募.
106,	2,	for 體	read 禮.	237,	9,	母 " 毋.
114,	5,	仁	" 人.	256,	1,	致 " 至.
116,	2,	矣	" 詔.	273,	6,	事 " 士.
"	6,	爲	" 謂.	293,	2,	transpose 内外.
130,	10,	曰 is inverted.		245,	2,	for 浅 read 洩.
142,	10,	for 疏	read 疏.	290,	4,	after 資 insert 諸.
142,	3,	雜	" 無.	295,	4,	for 曰 read 日.
181,	7,	與	" 與.			

II. IN THE ENGLISH TEXT.

Page.				And	read
93,	between the 6th and 7th Columns,	for 節	read 節.	ditto	ditto
96,	1st and 2d,	"	"	"	二節.
"	4th and 5th,	for 三	read 二.	"	"
75,	3d and 4th,	by 成	insert 三節.	"	"
116,	6th and 7th,	after 乎	" 三節.	"	"
248,	3d and 4th,	for 二	read 三四.	"	"
205,		五	"	"	"

Illustration 5-2: The page lay-out of Legge's *Chinese classics*, Vol.1 (1861).

Legge's Biblical Criticism Approach to His *Chinese Classics* Project

Biblical criticism as a new way of reading and studying the Bible had its beginning in the 18th century Europe. Instead of relying on the traditional ecclesiastical authority, more disciplined approaches were introduced to interpreting the Bible, including historical and textual criticism. Stemming from the German enlightenment, the earliest Biblical criticism was represented by the German philosopher and Enlightenment freethinker H.S. Reimarus (1694–1768) and his quest to recover the lost historical Jesus. Although Reimarus' intention was "explicitly anti-theological and anti-Christian",[311] his work ushered in the era of scholarly research into the historical Jesus and heralded a time when Biblical criticism began to break away from faith and theology and developed into academic hermeneutics that was based on rational criteria and scientific methods.

In the 19th Century, Biblical criticism developed into two categories: higher criticism and lower criticism. Higher criticism, also known as the historical-critical method, treats the Bible from the historical and structural perspective to understand the text's original meaning in its historical context. The lower criticism, or the textual criticism focuses on the interpretation of the textual meanings through philology, identifying different text variants to reconstruct the original text. In the meantime, the quest for the historical Jesus continued. David Strauss' (1808 -1874) *Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (1860) became a sensation of his time. It is worth mentioning that Ernst Renan's (1823–1892) *Life of Jesus* (1863) is probably one of the earliest such works to be known in China. Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873 -1929), one of the famous progressive intellectuals in modern China, mentioned in his book Renen's work and compared its significance to the finding of the Chinese scholar Yan Ruoqu (阎若璩).[312] Yan's critical investigation in the Chinese classics led to his famous conclusion that a big portion of the "Ancient Text" version of *Shang Shu* (尚书, *The*

[311] David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisvile: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 70.
[312] Liang Qichao, *a Survey of the Academic Development in the Qing Period* (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Printing House, 1998), 15. (梁启超《清代学术概论》上海: 上海古籍出版社, 2000), 15.

Book of Historical Documents) as well as Kong Anguo's commentary on it were forgery.

When Legge used the Biblical term "exegetical" in titling his *Chinese Classics* project, Legge indicated implicitly the biblical commentary approach he was to adopt for Chinese classics. Legge's adoption of such approach had its cause rooted in his bitter experience with the Term-Question debate, in which many later Ruist commentators superseded the classical texts themselves. With the biblical commentary method, Legge hoped "to express the meaning of the original as exactly and concisely as possible",[313] thus uncovering the answers he needed for his Shang Di argument. Such biblical approach to the Chinese classics was characterized by Legge's textual and historical criticism in treating the Chinese texts.

Firstly, Legge availed himself of the various major classical Chinese dictionaries made by the Chinese themselves. Such method of identifying the meanings of Chinese characters might seem an awkward approach so far as learning a foreign language is concerned. Nevertheless, since the ancient Chinese classics were as ancient and distant from the natives as to foreigners, this method provided new philological and historical perspectives in deciphering the original meanings. This was made possible by the fact that the preservation of ancient lexicons in China was no less than that of the classics.

This approach was best illustrated in Legge's interpretation of *Shu Jing*, for which Legge consulted at least seven different kinds of Chinese dictionaries. These dictionaries in a sense represented the evolution of Chinese characters over 1500 years, beginning with *Shuo Wen* (说文解字, or *Definitions and Explanations of Characters*, by Xu Shen in the 1st-2nd century AD), *Shi Ming* (释名, Explanation of Terms, compiled by Liu Xi 刘熙 around 2nd century), down to *the Imperial Kang Xi Dictionary* (御定康熙字典, compiled during 1710 -1716). Through his historical analysis of the Chinese characters Legge endeavored to decode the original meanings of the classics, instead of what they were made by the commentators to signify. An example is Legge's interpretation and translation of the name *Shu Jing*. Initially

[313] James Legge, *SBE16/SBC2* (1882), Preface.

rendering it as *the Book of History*,[314] Legge in 1865 revised it to *"the Book (or Classic) of Historical Documents*". The change came from his reading of the Lexicographer Xu Shen's preface to his dictionary, which tracked the origin of the Chinese characters until they became properly called *shu* (writing), or "in the sense of writings or books, applicable to any consecutive compositions".[315] Legge also examined the term as used by Confucius. Confucius used the term to denote "documents concerning the history of his country from the most ancient times to his own", and the book never claims to "contain a history of China; …it is simply a collection of historical memorials…."[316] Legge therefore made the revision to best reflect its historical significance as employed by Confucius. The other example is his translation of the book title *Li Ji (*礼记, or *Record of Rites*), which Legge rendered initially as *Record of Rites* in 1861. When he completed the whole book in 1885 as part of the *Sacred Books of East* series (Vol.27, 28), Legge wrote a separate chapter to discuss the etymology of Chinese character *Li* (礼, its traditional form being 禮). According to the Xu Shen's *Shuo Wen*, the character is constructed ideographically with the radical 礻 *(shi)*, denoting "spirits", and the component 豊, which signified "a vessel used for performing rites".[317] As such the character etymologically possesses distinct religious significance. By the time of Mencius wrote his book, the character was added moral and philosophical implications to designate "one of the primary constituents of human nature".[318] Given the two-fold meanings of this character and their respective applications in the book, Legge offered a more appropriate rendition of *Li Ji* (礼记) as "*Collection of Treatises on the Rules of Propriety or Ceremonial Usages*".[319]

Besides his consultations with Chinese dictionaries, Legge also shifted his literary references preponderantly to Chinese texts, ranging from various historical classical commentaries to history and geography, with which Legge was advantageously positioned to access. It needs to be pointed out that the concomitant

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[314] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 1.
[315] James Legge, *CC3.1* (1865), 1, 2.
[316] Ibid, 2.
[317] James Legge, *SBE27/SBC3* (1885), Introduction, 10.
[318] Ibid.
[319] See Legge's title translation for his *SBE27/SBC3* (1885).

revival of the critical Chinese classical studies movement in the 18th-19th century also turned up tremendous ancient classical commentaries as well as new critical studies by Chinese scholars.

Legge's dependence on the Chinese reference books is clearly shown in a separate chapter "List of the Principal Works Which Have Been consulted in the Preparation of this Volume" in Legge's *Chinese Classics* project. In his first volume treating the Four-Book part, Legge consulted twenty-five kinds of Chinese source texts, including at least ten different commentaries or treatises on the Four Books. Other references included "the Twenty-Three Histories",[320] Chinese geography and various critical works of his contemporaneous Qing scholars. For his third volume on *Shu Jing,* Legge consulted more than 50 kinds of Chinese reference books. Similar cases included no less than 50 Chinese reference texts for his *Chun Qiu* (*Annals of the Spring and Autumn*) and 57 Chinese texts for *the Book of Poetry*. All these Chinese reference texts made it possible for Legge to engage in a critical commentary practice that was no less than that of the biblical commentary scholarship.

Legge's Chinese Classics vs. Henry Alford's Biblical Commentary

To better appreciate the biblical commentary approach Legge employed in his Chinese classics works, a comparison of his *Chinese Classics* project with the Biblical commentary—*The Greek Testament*—by Henry Alford (1810 – 1871) is shown in below illustration 5.3 and 5.4. Henry Alford was a nineteenth century English theologian, textual critic, poet and writer. From 1841 to 1861, Alford published his four-volume Biblical commentary work of the *New Testament in Greek.* The 1911 *Encyclopedia Britannica* gave following remark on his work: "Philological rather than theological in character, it marked an epochal change from the old homiletic commentary… has largely changed the method of New Testament exegesis".[321]

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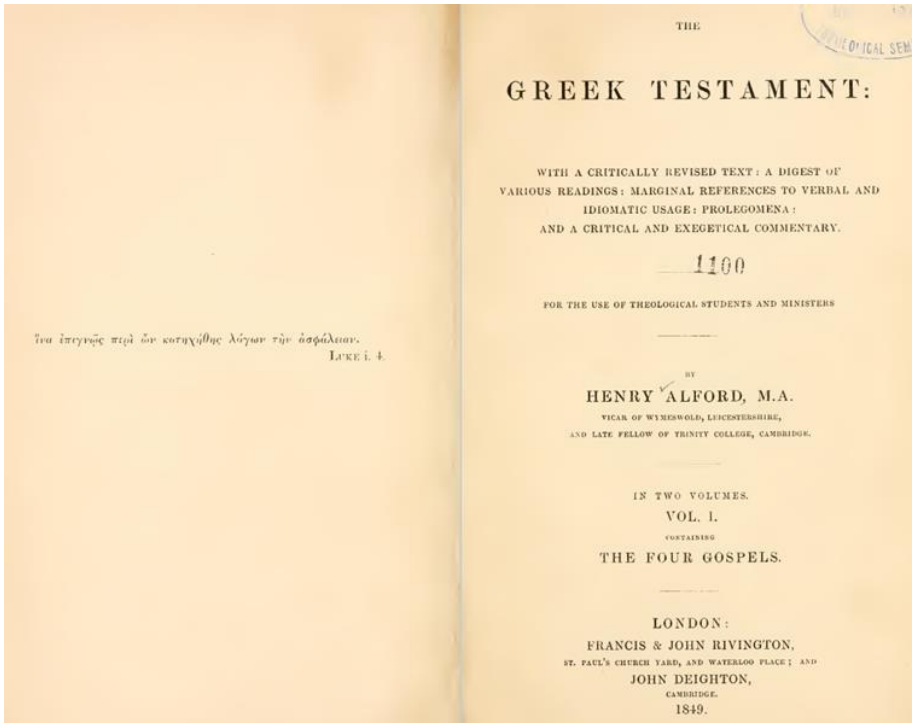
[320] *The Twenty-Three Histories* 二十三史. The compilation is today known as the Twenty-Four Histories, with that of the Qing dynasty added. It is a compilation of the histories encompassing twenty three dynasties from Former Han [BCE 202 -CE8] down to the Min dynasty [1368 -1644]. The first book of the series produced by Sima Qian, 史记, or Records of the Gran Historian, in fact embraces a much longer time span, commencing with the legendary figure of Emperor Huang, dated probably around BCE 28th-26th century)

[321] Source taken from Wikiedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Alford . Date of retrieving: 20th Feb, 2019.

Illustration 5-3: Cover page of Henry Ford's *the Greek Testament*. Vol.1:



ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.
LUKE i. 4.

THE

GREEK TESTAMENT:

WITH A CRITICALLY REVISED TEXT: A DIGEST OF
VARIOUS READINGS: MARGINAL REFERENCES TO VERBAL AND
IDIOMATIC USAGE: PROLEGOMENA:
AND A CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY.

1100

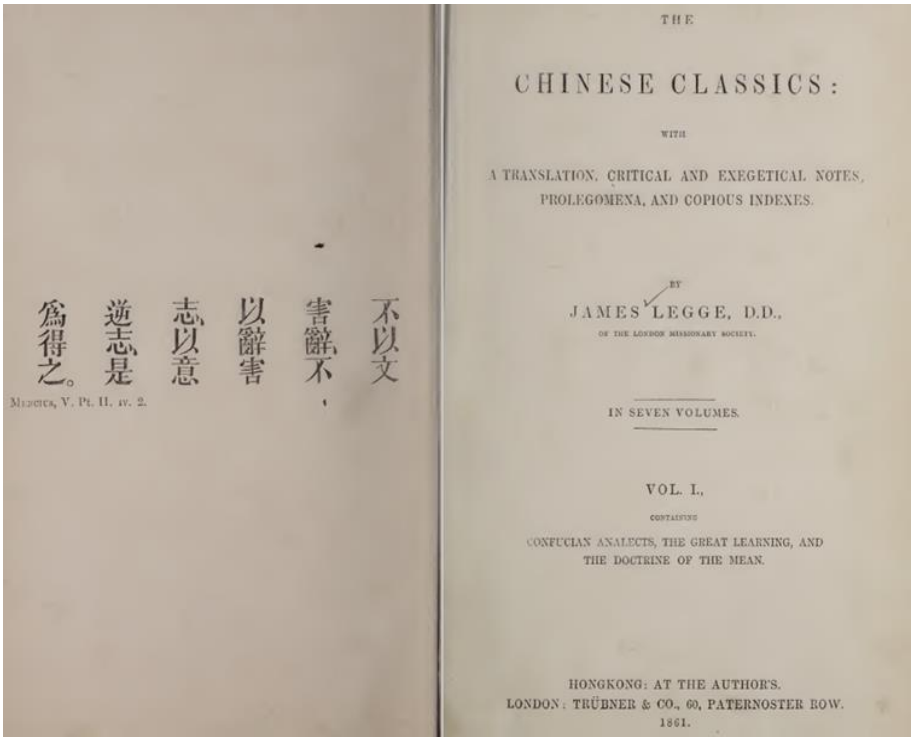
FOR THE USE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS AND MINISTERS

BY
HENRY ALFORD, M.A.
VICAR OF WYMESWOLD, LEICESTERSHIRE,
AND LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
CONTAINING
THE FOUR GOSPELS.

LONDON:
FRANCIS & JOHN RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE; AND
JOHN DEIGHTON,
CAMBRIDGE.
1849.

Illustration 5-4: Cover page of James' Legge's *the Chinese Classics*. Vol.1:



不以文害辭，不以辭害志，以意逆志，是爲得之。
MENCIUS, V. Pt. II. iv. 2.

THE

CHINESE CLASSICS:

WITH

A TRANSLATION, CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL NOTES,
PROLEGOMENA, AND COPIOUS INDEXES.

BY
JAMES LEGGE, D.D.,
OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.,
CONTAINING
CONFUCIAN ANALECTS, THE GREAT LEARNING, AND
THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN.

HONGKONG: AT THE AUTHOR'S.
LONDON: TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1861.

As can be seen from above illustrations, the two works demonstrate striking resemblances in terms of their cover page layout and their scope of content. In Alford's work, he inscribed on the inside cover-page the Greek text of Luke 1:4, "so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed", emphasizing his purpose of interpreting the accurate textual meanings of the Greek New Testament. In Legge's work, he inscribed the Chinese text from the *Works of Mencius* "(Those who explain the odes), may not insist on one term so as to do violence to a sentence, nor on a sentence so as to do violence to the general scope. They must try with their thoughts to meet that scope, and then we shall apprehend it."[322] Legge's inscription suggested more of a translation principle that Legge identifies himself with. In terms of the content scope of the two works, they both contained a lengthy prolegomena, critical and exegetical commentary/notes and indexes/references. In the prolegomena section, both works touched upon the origin, authorship, language, authenticity and authority of the texts. Their differences, other than the Four Gospels in Alford's work vs. the classical Four Books section that Legge deals with, also include that Alford did not provide an English translation of the original text while Legge did. In addition, Alford made clear on the cover-page that his work was intended for the use of theological students and ministers, while Legge's work reflected a more complicated target audiences. In his preface to the book, Legge mentioned that his work is intended "in the first place to satisfy himself", then it was also intended for the missionaries, students of Chinses language and the Chinese intellectuals. Legge was truthful when saying that his *Chinese Classics* were made primarily to "satisfy himself". [323] He was still searching for the evidence of God in the Chinese classics for Shang Di argument. He was fulfilling his unfinished duties to God.

Legge's Historical Criticism in His Chinese Classics Project

Legge's employment of historical criticism was best illustrated in his quest for the historical Confucius. His biographical account of "the Life of Confucius", besides serving to provide him with "a clue to difficulties which I was seeking to

[322] James Legge, *CC2* (1861), 229.
[323] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), Preface, ix.

disentangle,"[324] also represented his application of the historical criticism to the Chinese classics, a practice that probably never would have occurred to Legge within his own Christian belief. In such a quest for the historical Confucius Legge recognized two aspects of Confucius. The historical figure of Confucius was a flesh-and-blood man who lived, taught, suffered and died a melancholy death. Yet, his unreligious inclination and certain "defects" in his characters and in his teachings, rendered Legge "unable to regard him as a great man."[325] The other figure of Confucius was a preserver and transmitter of ancient Chinese monuments, the utterer of Christ's golden rule, and "the *beau ideal* of humanity in its best and noblest estate."[326] That Confucius in Legge's later discourse on the religion of China took on a renewed identity, becoming a man "raised up by God for the instruction of the Chinese people",[327] the instructor of the religious system in China which Legge addressed in his namesake.

Another case of Legge's historical criticism was demonstrated in Legge's historical investigation into the origin and the authenticity of the Chinese classics. In doing so Legge compared the astronomical phenomena of eclipses recorded in *Shang Shu (*尚书*, the Book of Historical Documents*) with those calculated by Jesuit scholars. Legge concluded from such comparisons that the earliest credible chronological year in the book was the year BCE 775, a strong evidence of its authenticity as historical documents. Besides, after his inquiry into and cross-references with various Chinese historical records, Legge challenged the Qing scholar Yan Ruoqu's (阎若璩, AD 1638 -1704) claim on the forgery of *Shang Shu* to be erroneous, stating that "the idea of forgery by them on a large scale is out of the question".[328] In his own examination on the historicity of the classics, Legge came to his most confident estimate that the edition and the compilation of the Chinese classics were finalized latest in the two centuries before Christ, and the materials that were used for such edition could be dated to a still remote time.

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[324] Ibid, 90.
[325] Ibid, 113.
[326] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 94.
[327] James Legge, *Confucianism in relation to Christianity*, 10.
[328] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 10.

Legge's Textual Criticism in Chinese Classics Project

Legge's application of textual criticism is showcased in his exposure of the historical event whereby the texts of *Da Xue* (*Great Learning*) and *Zhong Yong* (*The Doctrine of the Mean*) underwent significant alterations both in terms of their overall chapter order, authorship as well as the content interpretation under the hands of the Song philosophers of Cheng Brothers (程颢 1032-10850, 程颐 1033 -1107) and Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200). The two books were originally part of the Classic of *Li Ji* (*Record of Rites*), being Book Forty-Two and Book Thirty One respectively. They were "rediscovered" more than a thousand years later by the philosopher brothers of Cheng as the legacy of Confucius. Following their line of thinking, Zhu Xi escalated them further in prominence and extracted them as independent books alongside *the Confucian Analects* and *the Work of Mencius* in his *Collective Commentaries on the Four Books* (四书集注). Thanks to Zhu's propagation on these Four Books as the stepping stone for getting the thorough knowledge of the Five Jing, and with his ingenuity in re-arranging the orders of book content, these Four Books gradually ascended to the same canonical position as that of Five Jing.

The altered texts became the orthodox texts while the original texts together with the historical event were buried in history and forgotten. It was not until the turn of the eighteenth century that Mao Xihe (毛西河, 1623 - 1716), a famous critic of Zhu Xi, unearthed this historical incident in his critical writings on Zhu Xi's (朱熹) interpretations of the Four Books. Legge for the first time brought this historical incident to the attention of the western readers in his prolegomena of the *Chinese Classics* project. Legge consequentially provided two translations for these two books, with one translation in his 1861 publication based on Zhu Xi's text due to their being "appear(ing) in nearly all the editions of the work… his view of the classics is what must be regarded as the orthodox one".[329] Another version, following the order of the old text and without reference to Zhu's interpretations was rendered in *Li Ji* in his *Sacred Books of China* (Vol. 27.1885).

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[329] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 219-220.

Legge's argument for the textual authenticity of the classic of *Shu Jing* (*also known as Shang Shu* per Ruist nomenclature) was the result of both his historical criticism and textual criticism. As mentioned earlier, an important milestone in the 17th-19th century Chinese scholars' critical studies of classics was the conclusion by Yan Ruoqu upon his evidential investigations that large portion of the prevailing *Shang Shu* text, together with the existing commentary of Kong Anguo (孔安国) on this book were forgery. The defect with Yan's assertion has to do with how the term "forgery" (伪书) was defined by the critical scholars of the Qing period (1636 -1912), who were also known as the "Modern-Text School"(See the Introcution on the Five Jing). According to this school, Confucius was the author of the Five Jing. Their key criteria for measuring the authenticity of a particular classical text version was whether or not it could be historically or textually traced back to Confucius. As such, Yan's assertion that the prevailing "Ancient-Text" version of *Shu Jing* and its commentary by Kong Anguo (孔安国) only meant that these texts could not be traced back to Confucius. Interestingly, Yan's opinion is still the widely accepted opinion in Chinese classical study today while the basis on which such opinion is formed has been largely forgotten.

In face of this "current opinion" on the forgery of *Shang Shu* (尚书), Legge, on the contrary, believed and argued with "a confidence" for the "authenticity of the ancient text and Kong Gan-kwo's (note: Kong Anguo 孔安国) commentary". [330] Based on his historical and textual investigations and reasoning, Legge contended that, granting that it (the "Ancient-Text" version) was not the original work of Kong Anguo, this anonymous book had appeared since the beginning of the 4th century, being sanctioned and further interpreted upon for at least eight hundred years before the first suspicion occurred. It had become a classic of great value and influence of itself; secondly, Legge's textual investigations shew that a great part of Yan's claimed forgery portion had been either mentioned or quoted by other classics or historical records of more antiquity than the classic. "The Books of the New Testament are not better attested by the citations from them in the works of the early

[330] James Legge, *CC3.1* (1865), 37.

Christian fathers."[331] Thirdly, in refuting the opinion from Chinese critics that "no scholars had seen them before that time" (note, the time when Kong Anguo's commentary reappeared in early 4th century),[332] Legge pointed out that Chinese historical records recorded the existence of Kong's commentary long before its reappearance and were consistent in tracking its existence or whereabouts. It was called the "hidden book (逸书)" before the reappearance, not referred to as "the lost, periled book (亡书)".[333] Fourthly, regarding the critics' argument in rejecting historical records of the existence of the "Ancient Text" version, Legge pointed out that the critics distorted the account of the record to suit their needs. Finally, in terms of the critics' suspicion on the easy style and intelligibility of the "Ancient Text" vs. the "Modern Text", Legge contended that these arguments were not sufficient to prove the "Ancient Text" as forgery since style and intelligibility could vary according to the subjects treated and the approach of Kong Anguo himself in deciphering those "Ancient Text". Legge thus refuted the seven major arguments raised by the Chinese critics in their accusation of the "Ancient Text" version as forgery, believing the interpretations of Kong Anguo as authentic. By "authentic", Legge understood it more as an authentic historical record rather than as the authentic version compiled by Confucius. Besides, Legge's opinion was both in line with and resorted to the early Qing classical critic and scholar Mao Xihe (毛西河 1623 -1716). Legge held great respect for Mao, from whom Legge derived his information on Zhu Xi's (朱熹) alteration of the classic book of *Great Learning* (大学) and *the Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸).

What distinguished Legge's *Chinese Classics* project from other translations of Chinese classics lied in the two-fold roles Legge played. Legge was firstly an interpreter/commentator of the Chinese classics, then a translator. As an interpreter/commentator, Legge tried to interpret the Chinese classical texts as ancient Chinese classical literature. His translator identity was only so much as his interpretations were conducted in the English language. Legge's translations on Chinese classics were more comparable to Henry Alfords as the translator of the

[331] Ibid, 38.
[332] Ibid, 39.
[333] Ibid, 40.

Greek New Testament in that they were more critical interpreters than mere translators.

Given such depth and breadth with which Legge dealt with the Chinese classics, his "translation" would incapacitate many Leggian scholars treating his works as translations. In the meantime, by incorporating interpretations made by commentators of different Ruist sects, Legge's interpretations are also likely to enrage some of the Ruist scholars for his not following any of the authoritative interpretations or for his critical evaluations of the content and scope of the classics as classical literature, not as Chinese classics.

Having said that, it must not be understood that Legge's interpretations differed overwhelmingly from the Chinese commentaries. On the contrary, Legge in most cases chose to follow Chinese commentators. In his annotation part, Legge made available opinions of different commentators, and often brought up his own opinions while following Chinese commentators in translation. Legge admittedly followed Zhu Xi's interpretations in many cases as they made more grammatical senses and were without much superfluity. There were also cases in which Legge tended to follow the older interpretations of Kong Anguo (孔安国) or Zhen Xuan (郑玄), or those of contemporary critics. What differentiated Legge's interpretations from Chinese commentators were his interpretations on religious matters and his literal translations. He consistently interpreted Shang Di as God, *shen* as spirits, and *tian* as heaven regardless of the Chinese interpreters' opinions.

Legge's *Chinese Classics*: A New Set of Chinese classical commentaries

As mentioned earlier, a principal aspect of Legge's Chinese classics featured his intimate reading of his contemporaneous Chinese classical scholars and his participation into the Ruist commentary tradition. Such intimate reading and participation are best illustrated by Legge's choice of his principal Chinese references for his Chinese classical texts, his comparison of various Chinese commentators and his non-denominational interpretation decisions.

Lauren Pfister, in discussing Legge's major principles for his Chinese classics translation, mentioned that Legge used *the Explanations of the Classics, Under the Imperial Dynasty of Ts'ing* (皇清经解) as his base texts for translation.[334] Professor Pfister likely mistakes Legge's statement on "using them"[335] for referring to them as base texts. Besides, this compilation contained some fourteen hundred volumes of books, covering commentaries, critical treatises and discourses by contemporary Qing scholars. They are hardly suitable for Legge to adopt as base texts for translation.

While Legge explicitly stated that he didn't "follow Choo He (Zhu Xi) or any other authority"[336] for his interpretation or translation of the Chinese classics, he indeed had his primary reference works for his classical texts and for understanding earlier commentaries. Legge's primary reference works were Ruan Yuan's[337] (阮元) *the Thirteen Jing, with Commentary and Explanations (*十三经注疏. Hereafter called "*The Thirteen Jing*"). As mentioned earlier, Legge's first encounter with *the Thirteen Jing* occurred in his 1852 debate essay on the Term-Question,[338] when his reading on the ancient commentary of *Yi King* (易经, *the Book of Changes*) in *the Thirteen Jing* provided him with the decisive argument for refuting the later atheistic interpretation of Tai Ji *(*太极, Great Terminus) as the First Cause.

Legge's employment of *the Thirteen Jing* as his primary reference texts is indicated in a number of places in his *Chinese Classics* works. In the prolegomena to volume one (1861) of his *Chinese Classics* project, Legge expressed his earliest ambition for his project, which was to "embrace all the Books in '*The Thirteen King(Jing)*"'[339]. Legge here was not referring to the thirteen Chinese classics in general, but specifically to Ruan Yuan's compilation of *the Thirteen Jing* in its short form. The other proof is demonstrated in the chapter –"List of the Principal works

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[334] This statement was given in one of Professor Lauren Pfister's paper for an international Conference held in BeiJing in 2011.
[335] In Legge's volume three of the Chinese classics, he indeed mentioned in his list of works consulted this huge collection and listed from it five commentaries on *Shu* which he stated as "those of which I have made most use of are…" Legge was referring to his frequent consultations on them, not as base texts.
[336] James Legge*, CC1* (1861), Preface, x.
[337] In Legge's works the name was spelled as Yuen Yuen.
[338] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits,* 12. Legge by then mistook the publishing time of the *Thirteen King* to be "under the T'ang dynasty, about A.D.670."
[339] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), Preface, ix.

which have been consulted in the preparation of this volume"—which existed in all his *Chinese Classics* works. Of the Chinese works listed in the chapter, the first reference book was invariably *the Thirteen Jing* with the respective commentary Legge consulted for his work. [340] In his fifth volume (1872) Legge further remarked on *the Thirteen Jing*: "I have generally used the edition of the *Thirteen King* (Jing) by Yuen Yuen (Ruan Yuan); and to the text of the *She* (诗, *the Book of Poetry*) in it I have referred in the Prolegomena to Vol. IV., P.172. The student should use no other, where this is procurable." [341]

Notwithstanding Legge's preference to *The Thirteen Jing* of Ruan Yuan (阮元), careful comparisons between Legge's *Chinese Classics* project and *the Thirteen Jing* show how Legge was critical even of the classical texts themselves. Legge adopted the classical Chinese text from *the Thirteen Jing* as the base text for his translation, [342]yet his textual criticism also led him to make occasional changes to the classical text itself. For example. In his *Chinese Classics* Vol. III (1865), Legge rearranged the prefaces to each book in *Shang Shu* (尚书, *the Book of Historical Documents*) and formed a separate preface at the beginning of the classic. Legge's reasoning for this was that, besides the precedent made by earlier scholars, it could "afford more facility of reference to it hereafter, to prefix it here as a whole."[343] The other change Legge made to the classical text was the title of the first book in *Shang Shu* from "Yu Shu" (虞书, the Book of Yu*)*, to "Tang Shu" (唐书, the Book of Tang) following the authority of the lexicographer Xu Shen *(*许慎) as well as the opinions of contemporary Qing classical critics. Comparisons between Legge's interpretations and those in *the Thirteen Jing* further illustrated how Legge treated

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[340] In his Chinese Classics Volume 2, the chapter on his consulted Chinese works only included two books related to his expanded translation on two other philosophical works. But Legge preceded this list with a short note that "The works which have been consulted are mostly the same as those used in the preparation f the first volume, of which a list is there given. I have only to add to that: --".

[341] James Legge, *CC5.1* (1872), 136.

[342] The exceptions to this were the *Da Xue* (大学*, or Great Learning*) and *Zhong Yong* (中庸, *or Doctrine of the Mean*) in his Chinese Classics Volume I (1861), which he followed Zhu Xi's edition and arrangements for the classical Chinese text. Nonetheless, in his later work on *Li Ji* (礼记*, or Record of Rites*), Legge reverted to the*the Thirteen King* for original text arrangements. The other exception is Legge's work on *Yi King* (易经*,* or *the Book of Changes*, 1882), in which Legge resorted to Kao Yi Keh Kung (周易折中) and Yu Kih Zah Kiang Yi King Kie I (御制日讲易经解义). See Legge's preface to his *Sacred Books of China*. Vol. 16 (1882).

[343] James Legge, *CC3.1* (1865), the Body of the Volume, 1.

Chinese commentaries as references rather than bases for his translations. In the annotation part of Legge's works he frequently listed and compared the ancient interpreters such as Zhen Xuan (郑玄) and Kong Anguo (孔安国) with later commentators like Zhu Xi (朱熹) or contemporary Chinese classical critics like Mao Qiling (毛奇龄 1623 -1716) and Jiang Yong (江永 1681-1762). What's more, as Legge also had in mind his audience of the missionaries in China and students of Chinese language, he inserted large amount of additional historical or biographical information in his annotations.

In terms of Legge's treatment of different schools of the Chinese classical studies, it is necessary to say a few words about the controversy over "the Modern Text" and "the Ancient Text" within the Chinese classical studies tradition. The readers need to be reminded that "the Modern Text" in this tradition has nothing to do with our modern time. Breaking out in the first century before the Christian era, the controversy over "the Modern Text" and "the Ancient Text" (经今古文学之争) concerned which text version of the Five Jing was the authentic classics. By "Modern Text", it refers to the classical text version of the Five Jing that was passed from the disciples of Confucius on to the literary doctors of Former Han period (BCE 202 – AD 8) and copied down in the prevailing written language of the Han period, hence "the Modern Text" version of the Han period. "The Ancient Text", on the other hand, refers the copies of the classics re-discovered by the imperial commissioned scholar officer Liu Xin (刘歆, BCE 50 – AD 23) from the collected ancient literary documents and written in a language prior to Han period. Each of these two schools had their strict rules as to the authorship, the ranking order of the Jing, and the interpretations on the government institutions recorded. A major difference between the two schools concerned the role of Confucius in connection with the Five Jing. The "Modern Text" School held Confucius as the author of the Five Jing. They viewed Confucius as "an educator, politician and philosopher, but most importantly, the First Author";[344] In contrast, the "Ancient Text" School believed Duke of Zhou (周公, c. BCE. 12th century) as the original author. They viewed Confucius only as

[344] Jiang Boqian, *a Concise Summary of the Classical Studies* (Nanjing: Zhengzhong Printing House, 1946), 163-176. (蒋伯潜《经学撰要》南京: 正中书局, 1946. 163-176).

a compiler and preserver of the ancient literary monuments, his contribution being a "historian role" [345] of editing, preserving and prefacing the ancient literary monuments. In terms of the classical texts, the differences between these two schools had more to do with interpretations rather than with the texts themselves. When Zhen Xuan (郑玄, AD 127 – AD 200), the renowned early commentator of Chinese classics, blended the interpretations of both schools in his commentaries, the "Ancient Text" of the Five Jing gradually triumphed and became the orthodox text version and interpretations.

It was not until the turn of the Ming dynasty (1368 -1644) and Qing dynasty (1636 -1912) that new scholarly movement was championed for reviving "the Modern Text". Liang Qichao (梁启超 AD 1873 -1929) gave a cogent account of this scholarly movement in his *A Survey of the Academic Development in the Qing Period* (1920). Aiming at "overthrowing the School of Reason of the Song and Ming period",[346] the campaign's pioneer of Gu Yanwu (顾炎武, 1613-1682) advocated the opinion that "the textual study of classics is the correct path of study for the school of reason (经学即理学)."[347]He also laid out the classical studies principles as "extensive evidence (博证)" and "aiming for pragmatic application (致用)".[348] When Yan Ruoqu (阎若璩, AD 1638 -1704), a critical classical scholar, puts forward his claim that many books (chapters) in the "Ancient Text" of *Shu Jing (the Book of Historical Documents)* as well as its commentary by Kong Anguo (孔安国, c. BCE 2nd -1st century) were forgeries, his conclusion "shakes the sacred position of the Six Classics".[349] In fact what Yan shook were the orthodox status of the "Ancient Text" School's interpretational authority. In the meantime, considerable effort is being made to recover and restore the interpretations on the classics made before Zhu Xi. Ruan Yuan (阮元, 1764 -1849), the Viceroy of Jiangxi province and a learned doctor of the imperial Han Lin Academy, was a strong supporter of the new scholarly movement. In 1816 Ruan Yuan led the initiative of printing *the Thirteen Jing, with*

[345] Ibid, 183.
[346] Liang Qichao, *a Survey of the Academic Development in the Qing Period* (Shanghai Antiquate Books Publishing House, 1998), 7. (梁启超,《清代学术概论》,上海古籍出版社, 1998, 7)
[347] Ibid, 10.
[348] Ibid, 11, 12.
[349] Ibid, 14.

Commentary and Explanations (十三经注疏), an edition of commentary works on the Chinese classics produced in the late Song period (1127 -1279) and earlier.

Liang Qichao (梁启超) characterized the renewed "Modern Text" movement as the latest classical studies trend to "counteract the School of Reason advanced during the Song (AD 960-1279) and Ming (AD 1368 – 1644) periods, and to return to the ancient way of classical scholarship."[350] Notwithstanding the usage of critical methods by the critical classical scholars similar to the continental literary criticism, the new movement did not go beyond the fundamental belief in the truth of the Five Jing. The aspiration of such scholarly devotion was largely directed to uncovering the "true teaching" of Confucius on the perfect governance of the individual and of the nation.

When Legge adopted the classical text from *the Thirteen Jing* for his translation, Legge inadvertently followed the Qing critical movement in giving up the authoritative interpretations of Zhu Xi. On the other hand, Legge's *Chinese Classics* project again blended both the"Modern Text" and the "Ancient Text" versions. His selection of *Chun Qiu with Zuo's Commentary* (春秋左传) and the full text of *Shu Jing* (书经, *the Book of Historical Documents)* were of the "Ancient Text" version.[351] In the meantime, Legge's conclusion on the authorship of the Five Jing upon his historical criticism differed both from the "Ancient Text*"* School and the "Modern Text" School. Besides, Legge both consulted the ancient commentators and absorbed the works of the contemporary "Modern Text" school of Qing Ruist critics, such as Mao Xihe (毛西河, AD 1623 -1716), Ruan Yuan (阮元, AD 1764 – 1849), Yan Ruoqu (阎若璩, AD 1638 -1704) and Jiang Yong (江永, 1681 年～1762 年), just to name a few. By his mingling different schools of scholarly opinions, reasoning and arguing with them for his own interpretations, Legge formed a set of non-Ruist Chinese classical commentaries featuring biblical criticism and Continental hermeneutics.

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[350] Ibid, 3.

[351] For the Classic of *Chun Qiu* (春秋), the "Modern Text" version is the text commented by Gong Yang (公羊) and Gu Liang (谷梁). The "Modern Text" version of *Shu Jing* has fewer books than the "Ancient Text" Version. The Other classics have few differences between their "Modern Text" version and the "Ancient Text" Versions.

Legge's Western Hermeneutical Interpretation of the Chinese Classics

Throughout his *Chinese Classics* works (1861- 1872) Legge inscribed on the inside cover-page a Chinese text quotation from *the Work of Mencius* (see illustration 5-2). Mencius made this statement in response to his disciple's question concerning interpreting a verse in the *Shi Jing* (*the Book of Poetry*). Legge in his work on Mencius largely followed Zhu Xi (朱熹), who explained the text in his *Collective Commentaries of the Four Books*: "This section speaks of the method of interpreting poetry …He [the reader] should furnish his own thought to meet the mind of the author, then will he obtain the meaning of a poem."[352] While Zhu Xi repeatedly praised this rule of Mencius on reading poetry in his dialogues with his disciples, his own interpretation in this case was ambiguous and his application of the rule problematic. Zhu's mysterious explanation on readers' using his own thought to"meet" or to"welcome" the idea of the author opens the door for liberal interpretation. In application, Zhu Xi sometimes carried out his liberal interpretation on Chinese classics to such an extreme that he inserted his own ideas into the text. It is worth mentioning that in modern Chinese language the phrase to "meet that mind (of the writer) with one's own thought (以意逆志)" has evolved into an idiom of less positive sense, insinuating the act of speculating other's intention from one's own viewpoint.

As to Legge, his appreciation of Mencian interpretive rule was derived from his twenty years' struggle for "the scope and method of the book"[353] of *Yi Jing* (易经, *the Book of Changes).* Legge realized that, unlike the alphabetic English language, the ideographic Chinese characters were themselves symbols of ideas rather than words, and Chinese compositions represented the formation of the writer's thoughts rather than his words, rendering literal translation a futile effort. Legge eventually got the "clue" to *Yi Jing* only by bringing his mind "en rapport with that of his author",

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[352] Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the Four Books by Chapters* (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1987), 127.
[353] James Legge, *SBE16/SBC2 (1882):* Preface.

which in Legge's opinion is what Mencius means by "We must try with our thoughts to meet the scope of a sentence, and then we shall apprehend it."[354] Interestingly, Legge's inscription of this rule of Mencius in his Chinese classics works also indicated his adoption of a similar hermeneutical principle that was not unlike the rule of Mencius. In a similar manner in which Legge unobtrusively introduced the biblical commentary tradition into the Chinese classical commentary tradition, Legge's identification with the Mencian also hinted at his introduction of a parallel interpretation principle of western origin. Legge did not divulge his hermeneutical method for interpreting the Chinese classics in his works. Nevertheless, examination of Legge's interpretive practices evokes strongly, if not his application of, the 19th century continental hermeneutical theory, especially that of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834), the founder of modern hermeneutics. Similarly to the expression of Mencius, Schleiermacher said that "An individual element can only be understood in light of its place in the whole text."[355] Admitting the nuanced differences, both Mencius and Schleiermacher see the necessity of interpreting individual elements in the light of overall text or general scope, and both deem the goal of interpreting text is to try to grasp the intention and motivation of its author.

Legge did not reveal in his works any direct influence from or reference to Schleiermacher, except for his regret about his German language. On the other hand, there are a number of cases in Legge's works indicating the similarities between his interpretational methods and those of Schleiermacher. Friedrich Schleiermacher's principles on hermeneutics is contained mostly in his *Outline of the 1819 Lecture*, a fragmentary handwritten manuscript that was published only after his death. Schleiermacher argues that the major tasks of textual interpretation are to "comprehend the language and historical culture of a text (grammatical interpretation) and to reconstruct the author's purpose (psychological or 'technical' interpretations)."[356] Schleiermacher distinguishes two types of understanding, or interpretive aspects. The grammatical interpretation deals with the understanding of the speech and the language in which it is written. The psychological interpretation

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[354] James Legge, SBE16/SBC2 (1882), XV.
[355] Vincent B. Leitch Ed, *the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. Second Edition), 533.
[356] Ibid, 521,

focuses on the understanding of the mind of the author. Schleiermacher attaches great importance of textual interpretation to the understanding of its author (the psychological interpretation). According to him, the interpreter must "understand the discourse just as well and even better than its creator",[357] and he must "first equate oneself with the author by objective and subjective reconstruction before applying the art,"[358] and he must seek to "understand the writer intimately [unmittelbar] to the point that one transforms oneself into the other".[359] Schleiermacher's interpretive principles includes the historical and divinatory reconstructions, which can be further divided into objective and subjective reconstructions respectively. Objective historical principle requires an interpreter to consider the text "in the totality of the language" while the subjective historical principle requires the interpreter to consider the text as the product from the soul of the author. In the former principle, an interpreter needs to understand both the text of the language and the history of the period in which such text is produced and understood. In the latter reconstruction, the interpreter must equate him with the author, knowing his vocabulary, character and his circumstances.

In terms of understanding the specific words or vocabulary, Schleiermacher believes that the vocabulary and the history in which the author lives constitute the whole unity with which such vocabulary should be understood. Therefore, to understand the individual words, one must consider "the whole literature as a context".[360] He brings forth the famous hermeneutic circle, that "every extraordinary thing can only be understood in the context of the general of which it is a part, and vice versa",[361] and "understanding appears to go in endless circles, for a preliminary understanding of even the individual themselves comes from a general knowledge of the language."[362] Regarding the general unity of the work, Schleiermacher holds that general overview and grasp of the unity of the work precedes the grammatical and psychological interpretations as it reflects the theme, the author's "motivating principle" and his foundation of the composition. The final goal of the psychological

[357] Ibid, 531.
[358] Ibid,.532,
[359] Ibid, 535.
[360] Ibid, 532.
[361] Ibid, 532.
[362] Ibid, 533.

interpretation is to be able to perceive the work "as it is formed by its parts, and to perceive every part in light of the work's overall subject,"[363] or the unity of the work, until the differences between parts and the whole disappears.

In light of these hermeneutical principles of Schleiermacher, we will see how Legge's interpretative practices in his *Chinese Classics* works resonate those of Schleiermacher. Firstly, Legge's quest for the historical Confucius was also his hermeneutic quest for Confucius as the author or the transmitter of the Chinese classics. In order to obtain a thorough and accurate understanding of the teachings of Confucius, i.e. Confucianism, Legge delved into all sorts of ancient Chinese literature to try to place Confucius in his historical circumstances, revealing his characters and religious inclination of Confucius. Legge's account of Confucius was not just "a more correct narrative of the principle incidents in the life of Confucius",[364] but a thorough reconstruction of the person of Confucius with his own thoughts, his temperaments and even his idiosyncratic characteristics. In his biographical account of Confucius Legge tried to place as many sayings of Confucius into the historical events as possible, so that he could grasp the historical moments when those thoughts of Confucius were inspired and intended for. Such intimate and empathetic understanding of Confucius enabled Legge to transform himself into the other, reasoning and arguing on behalf of Confucius. Legge's hermeneutic understanding of the author in interpreting the classical text is further corroborated in his biographical account of "The Life of Mencius*"* in his second volume of the *Chinese classics*, and his effort to create "The Life of Kong Ji" (孔伋, also known as Zi Si, 子思, BCE 483 – BCE 402), the author of *The Doctrine of the Mean*.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, Legge's formulation of his 'Confucianism' best resembles Schleiermacher's hermeneutical principle of "understand[ing] the discourse just as well and even better than its creator".[365] It took Legge nearly thirty years' contemplation on the overall scope of the Chinese classics before he started to reconstruct and exposit his 'Confucianism'. Following

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[363] Ibid, 534.
[364] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 11.
[365] Vincent B. Leitch Ed, *the Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. Second Edition), 531.

Confucius' own claim that he was a transmitter, not an author, Legge concluded that 'Confucianism' should firstly stand for what Confucius professed to be teaching, that is, the ancient Jing (经, or classics), his own expositions on those classics were only secondary. Secondly, given the emphatic religious theme and significance of the ancient Jing, Legge further reconstructed the purpose of Confucian teaching to embrace the ancient religion of China. In other words, Legge's "Confucianism" as Confucian teaching of the Chinese religion of the ancient classics represented his "better understanding" of Confucius as the transmitter and of what the Chinese classics intended to teach.

Legge's Application of Multi-Cultural Hermeneutics in Interpreting Chinese Classics

As mentioned previously, Legge's Chinese Classics project is an amalgamation of the Biblical critical commentary, the Chinese classical commentary tradition, and the western hermeneutical principles. In this part examples will be given to examine how Legge application of these methods in his *Chinese Classic* project relates and distinguishes from the orthodox Chinese commentaries of *the Thirteen Jing* (十三经注疏) and of Zhu Xi (朱熹 AD 1130 -1200). These examples best illustrate how Legge's participation in the Chinese classical commentary tradition and adoption of new interpretative principles characterized his final translations.

Legge's Interpretation of Di /Shang Di and *shen*

Legge translated Di (帝)/Shang Di (上帝) into God for his *Chinese Classics* project when the Chinese terms properly refers to a Supreme Ruler in the context. The practice drew much objection from other missionaries in China. Close tracking of his interpretations on the term indicate that Legge's translation was on the one hand influenced by his own conviction in the Chinese knowledge of God, as he argued in his 1852 essay; On the other hand, such translation augmented the idea of God in the *Chinese Classics* and instilled in the term a personal connotation which had been largely explained away by the Ruist commentators.

Legge's first translation of Di /Shang Di into God appeared in his 1861 work (CC1, 1861).[366] The Book Twenty of *the Confucian Analects* quotes a passage in substance from *Shu Jing* concerning King Tang's (c. BC 17th -16th century) proclamation for his military conduct against the House of Xia. In his annotation, Legge writes, "For the grounds on which I translate 帝 (Di) by God, see my work on '*the notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits*.'"[367] The commentator of *the Thirteen Jing* simply interprets Di as"the Di in heaven", while Zhu Xi just rephrases it as Shang Di (上帝).

The majority part of appearances of Di /Shang Di in the Four Books part of the Chinese classics are either in quotations of the Five Jing or in allusion to the ancient kings therein. The exception occurs in *Zhong Yong* (*the Doctrine of the Mean*), where a chapter quotes Confucius as explaining the meanings of sacrifices:

> [郊社之禮，所以事上帝也；宗廟之禮，所以祀乎其先也。明乎郊社之禮、禘嘗之義，治國其如示諸掌乎！]
>
> By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they served God, and by the ceremonies of the ancestral temple they sacrificed to their ancestors. He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and the meaning of the several sacrifices to ancestors, would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his palm!
>
> James Legge: *CC1* (1861), 268.

Back in Legge's 1852 Term-Question essay, this statement serves a decisive answer in Legge's argument for Shang Di. In his 1861 Chinese classics, Legge further mentioned the Jesuit translation of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687) and the Jesuit reasoning for permitting the Chinese Christian converters to continue their ancestral worship. Legge did not understand how the ancient sacrifice to Shang Di could be an illustration of filial piety, nonetheless he emphasized that this reference contains important message about the ancient religion of China. Legge had good reason for not understanding this connection. The commentators in the *Thirteen Jing* neither mentioned nor interpreted Shang Di. They only saw the observance of the ancient ritual tradition as the moral display of filial piety, which

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[366] James Legge, *CC1* (1861): Book XX: Yao Yue, 214. 「予小子履，敢用玄牡，敢昭告于皇皇后帝：有罪不敢赦。帝臣不蔽，簡在帝心.」Legge translates: ["I, the child Le, presume to use a dark-colored victim, and presume to announce to Thee, O most great and sovereign God, that the sinner I dare not pardon, and thy ministers, O God, I do not keep in obscurity. The examination of them is by thy mind, O God.]
[367] Ibid, 215.

the commentators believed to be the key to the successful governance of the kingdom. The classical commentator's understanding of the rites of sacrifices was based on its purpose of 'remembering the beginning in gratitude' (報本反始). As for what that beginning was, it was of no interest to them. Neither did Zhu Xi bother to explain Shang Di in his commentary, except for an innocuous remark that "all rites have their meanings".[368]. It is also worth noting that in this passage, Legge adopted the past tense. The Chinese language itself doesn't have the inflectional changes, unless it is explicitly defined by additional words. Legge here was indicating that this significance of sacrifices were things past.

By the time Legge started his third volume on *Shu Jing (the Book of Historical Documents,* 1865), Legge offered more commentary information on Shang Di. In "the Canon of Shun (舜典)", the legendary king of Shun (c. BCE 22nd -21st century) "sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms, to God (上帝)".[369] *The Thirteen Jing* listed various commentators' explanations on Shang Di. Zheng Xuan (郑玄, c. CE 127 -200), interpreted Shang Di as the *tian* (*heaven* or *sky*) and the five Di (帝, supreme ruler) in it; another commentator Ma Rung (马融, c. CE 79 -166) explained the term as "the Great One" (大一神) and "the highest of stature among the powers in the heaven"; other commentator interpreted Shang Di simply as "heaven/sky".[370] It seemed to Legge that the actual meaning of Shang Di in the Classical text was already lost by the 1st century. Legge remarked that "I cannot doubt but Shang Te (Shang Di) is here the name of the true God; but the truth concerning Him and His worship had been perverted even in this early time, as appears from the other clauses of the paragraph."[371] Legge added here his interpretation, "By 上帝 (Shang Di), we are to understand God, the supreme Ruler."[372]

While it seemed that the Chinese classical commentators have lost the accurate understanding of the meaning of Shang Di, Legge's hermeneutic reading of *Shu King* provided him a fuller understanding of how the ancient Chinese used this term in forming their primitive idea of God. The ancient Chinese employed *tian* (天, *heaven*) for conveying

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[368]Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the* Four Books *by Chapters* (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1987), 14.
[369] James Legge, *CC3.1* (1865), 34.
[370]Ruan Yuan, *Commentaries and Explanations on the Thirteen Classics. Edited by Ruan yuan* (Beijing: Reprinted by Zhong Hua Publishing House, 1980. In Two Volumes), 126.
[371] James Legge, *CC3.1* (1865), 34.
[372] Ibid.

their ideas of Supremacy, unity, creation and moral dispensation. Shang Di, being the interchangeable term with 天 (*tian*, *heaven*), denoted power and dominion, assigned the kings to rule and to exercise justice, conferred moral sense to people, and rewarded and punished by His judgement. Given all these notions of the Chinese about Shang Di, Legge concluded that the term employed by the ancient Chinese for conveying their understanding of God is Shang Di. Legge's interpretation here constituted a typical hermeneutical circle. By examining the specific expression and implications of Shang Di in the Chinese classics in its totality and unity, Legge came to his belief that the Chinese term Shang Di conveyed Chinese notions of God*;* In the meantime, by his application of God to represent Shang Di for its specific Chinese instances, Legge came to his conviction that Shang Di in Chinese was the true God.

In a similar way with which Legge interpreted and translated Shang Di as God with consistency and conviction, his translation of the term *shen* 神 was equally unvarying. As the consequence of his most bitter experience with the Term-Question debate, Legge firmly believed that *shen* "signifies 'spirits,' 'a spirit,'"[373] and translated all the cases of *shen* in the Chinese classics as "spirit(s)" or "spirit-like". Such stubbornness of him, when executed in its extreme, sometimes causes his rendition awkward and bad translations. Only through careful reading of his annotation can we understand the intention of Legge's such rendition. This is exemplified in his translating of a passage from the Work of Mencius:

> 「可欲之謂善，有諸己之謂信。充實之謂美，充實而有光輝之謂大，大而化之之謂聖，聖而不可知之之謂神」
>
> A man who commands our liking is what is called a good man. He whose goodness is part of himself is what is called real man. He whose goodness has been filled up is what is called beautiful man. He whose completed goodness is brightly displayed is what is called a great man. When this great man exercises a transforming influence, he is what is called a sage. When the sage is beyond our knowledge, he is what is called a spirit-man.
>
> James Legge. *CC2* (1861), 366.

This expression of Mencius represented his literary attempt at exalting men of various levels of moral manifestations. It is interesting to notice that Mencius took a bottom-up view in his observation on moral quality, with its highest manifestation a quality unknowable and mystified to Mencius. In Zhu Xi's commentary, he alluded philosopher

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[373] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), p. 262.

Cheng's interpretation, "By saying that the sage is beyond our knowledge, it means that his sageness is too wondrous to be fathomed, not in the sense that there is another type of spirit-man above the level of sage".[374] Legge was well aware that the term *shen* in ancient Chinese text was frequently used to describe the quality of being mysterious and unfathomably wondrous, he nonetheless rendered the term as "a spirit-man". In his annotation, Legge thus explained, "Some would translate 神 by 'divine,' a rendering which it never can admit of, and yet, in applying to man the term appropriate to the acting and influence of Him whose way is in the sea, and his judgements a great deep, Chinese writers are guilty of blasphemy, in the sense of derogating from the prerogatives of God."[375] In other words, Legge purposefully made such 'bad translation' to prevent the hyperbolic Chinese expressions from elevating men to a stature that comparable to the qualities properly belonging to God.

Lin Yutang (林语堂. 1895 -1976), a famous contemporary Chinese writer and a Christian convert, was most frustrated with Legge's literal translation on the religious terms (such as Legge's emphatic translation of *tian* and *shen* in every case). He commented that "Legge made a fetish of literalness, as if a certain air of foreign remoteness, rather than clarity, were the mark of fidelity".[376]

Legge's Interpretation of Jun Zi

In contrast to Legge's consistent representations of Shang Di and *shen* in translation, his nuanced treatment with the Chinese term Jun Zi *(*君子, the virtuous man) deserves special attention. Jun Zi constitutes the core theme of Ruist discourses and embodies the totality of the wisdom and virtue of man in the Ruist world view since the time of Confucius. In a sense, the term Jun Zi can only be defined by the Chinese classics themselves, more particularly, the *Li Ji* and the Four-Book part of the classics. This is not unlike the case in which the attributes of God within Christianity can be defined only through the Bible itself rather than by the definition of the term God.

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[374]Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the* Four Books *by Chapters*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1987), 201.
[375] James Legge, *CC2* (1861), 366, 367.
[376] Lin Yutang (林语堂), *From Pagan to Christian: The Personal Account of a Distinguished Philosopher's Spiritual Pilgrimage Back to Christianity* (Cleveland: the World Publishing Company, 1959), 51.

What makes the Chinese notion of Jun Zi fascinating is that one does not have to acquire all the qualities of Jun Zi to become a Jun Zi. That is to say, one can be deemed Jun Zi-like by one single commendable act or quality. Hence, one can be called Jun Zi if he "feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him".[377] Such descriptive attributes of Jun Zi, being accessible to all, constitute a major attraction to the Ruist scholars in their aspiration to become Jun Zi through self-cultivation.

However, this Ruist logic on Jun Zi constituted a major challenge for Legge to translate into English. In his 1861 Volume on *The Confucian Analects*, Legge initially rendered Jun Zi as "man of complete virtue".[378] He explained his reasoning in the annotation, "…Literally, it is – 'a princely man.' … it is a technical term in Chinese moral writers, for which there is no exact correspondence in English, and which cannot be rendered always in the same way."[379] Legge soon found the translation of "complete virtue" too strong in other cases. Legge tried "scholar", "accomplished scholars", or "the student of virtue", for the cases where the subject is on learning.[380] There were more cases where Legge couldn't apply any of these terms. He ended up translating it into "the superior man" "for want of a better term."[381] Legge never imagined that sometime later Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 -1900) created a philosophical concept of the Superior Man who stands against all conventional morality (especially the Christian morality) to create his own values.

When Legge rendered the Ruist concept of Jun Zi principally into "the Superior Man", Legge created a strange Sinological figure of Super Man whose superiority was more in terms of his knowledge and his behaving within moral boundary than in terms of his super powers or superior value propositions. Such "Superior Man" translation would be most problematic when the qualities involved were not superior or heroic at all. For example, it would be difficult to comprehend the "Superior man" in a saying of Confucius, "There are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of sages."[382] In Short, by his translation of Jun Zi into "Superior Man" "for want of better word", Legge dismantled

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[377] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), the Main body, 1.
[378] Ibid, 2.
[379] Ibid, 2.
[380] For example. In *Confucian Analect,* Book I – 8, "君子不重則不威，學則不固". Legge translates: If the scholar be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration, and his learning will not be solid.
[381] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), the Main body, 3.
[382] The Chinese text reads, "孔子曰：'君子有三畏：畏天命，畏大人，畏聖人之言'".

the Ruist scholar-moral notion of Jun Zi whom any one is eligible to emulate. It will be interesting to furnish here some of Chinese intellectuals' feedback on Legge's translation. Gu Hongming (辜鸿铭, 1857 -1928), one of the earliest Chinese scholars studying in Europe, was "dissatisfied" with the translation, viewing Legge's translations as "strange and grotesque as to an ordinary Englishman's eyes." Gu was partly prompted by his dissatisfaction with Legge to make his own English translations, hoping that he would "modify their (note: European) preconceptions of the Chinese people" .[383] Gu translated Jun Zi as "moral man", which was equally problematic, as it implied his judgement on those who were not Jun Zi as immoral.

Legge's Interpretation of the Golden Rule From the Chinese Classics

Chapter Fifteen of *the Confucian Analects* contains the famous utterance of the golden rule by Confucius. It attracts much discussion by the 19th century missionary and sinological writers due to its resonance to the Golden Rule of Christ in the Gospel. Comparisons between the commentaries made in *the Thirteen Jing*, in Zhu Xi's commentary and in Legge's work will provide the readers with better ideas on the nature and content scope of Legge's *Chinese Classics*.

The Confucian Analects contained in *the Thirteen Jing* includes the ancient interpretation (注) of He Yan (何晏, around CE 3rd century), with further explanations (疏) by Xing Bing (邢昺，CE 932 -1010). The chapter starts with a synopsis by Xing Bing:

> 卫灵公第十五 何晏集解 邢昺疏
>
> 【疏】正義曰：此章記孔子先禮後兵，去亂就治，并明忠、信、仁、知、勸學，為邦無所毀譽，必察好惡。志士君子之道，事君相師之儀，皆有恥且格之事，故次前篇也。[384]
>
> The Duke Ling of Wei, Book XV. Interpretation by He Yan, Explanation by Xing Bing
>
> [Explanation(by Xing Bing)]: The Correct Meaning says: This chapter records the teachings of Confucius on ceremonial arrangement before military

[383] Gu Hongming (辜鸿铭): *the Discourses and Sayings of Confucius* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Limited., 1898), Preface, 8-10.
[384] Ruan Yuan, *Commentaries and Explanations on the Thirteen Classics. Edited by Ruan yuan* (Beijing: Reprinted by Zhong Hua Publishing House, 1980), 2516.

> engagements,[385] on achieving the state governance through elimination of disorder, on manifestation of loyalty, creditability, benevolence, knowledge, and exhortation to learn; that national interests precede individual fame; that precaution should be taken in one's liking and disliking; that the principles of aspiring man and virtuous man, the manner of serving the sovereign and performing the instructor's role, all these businesses have much to do with one's sense of shame and propriety. Hence this chapter follows the previous chapter in order. *-The Thirteen Jing, 2516*

In Zhu Xi (朱熹)'s commentary on *the Confucian Analects*, not every book (chapter) is given an introductory comment. Zhu only gives a note of his division of this book into "forty-one chapters in all"[386] following the title of Book XV.

Legge followed Zhu Xi's division of the book into forty one chapters. Unlike the explainer in the *Thirteen King* who attempts to make logical sense out of the chapter content and order, Legge's introductory comment on the Book XV combines partially the comment in *the Thirteen King* and his own observation:

> Heading of this Book – 卫灵公第十五, "The Duke, Ling, of Wei – Book XV." The contents of the Book, contained in forty chapters[387], are as miscellaneous as those of the former. Rather they are more so, some chapters bearing on the public administration of government, several being occupied with the superior man, and others containing lessons of practical wisdom. "All the subjects," says Ting Ping [Xing Ping, the explainer], illustrate the feeling of the sense of shame and consequent pursuit of the correct course, and therefore the Book immediately follows the preceding one."
>
> -Legge. Chinese Classics. Vol.1, 158.

As can be seen from Legge's comment above, Legge added his own critical judgement in terms of the textual unity of the book. Such a critical judgement is extremely rare, if any, within the traditional Chinese commentators.

With regard to the chapter containing the golden rule, the three interpretations demonstrate interestingly nuanced differences.

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[385] "先礼后兵". This phrase is still in use in modern Chinese language as an idiom, yet its modern meaning has diviated significantly from its historical usage, an example of misinterpretation of classical text. The *Modern Chinese Idioms Dictionary* explains it as "diplomatic measures shall precede any military engagements". The original connotation of 礼 as ritual ceremony has been explained into a moral term of courteous diplomatic conduct.

[386] Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the Four Books by Chapters*, 113.

[387] This could be Legge's typo. The actual chapters with their number index are forty one.

子貢問曰：有一言而可終身行者乎。子曰：其恕乎。己所不欲，勿施於人。

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言己之所恶勿加施与人.【疏】「子貢」至「於人」。○正義曰：此章言人當恕已不及物也。「子貢問曰：有一言可以終身行之者乎」者，問於孔子，求脩身之要道也。「子曰：其恕乎！己所不欲，勿施於人」者，孔子荅言，唯仁恕之一言，可終身行之也。已之所惡，勿欲施於人，即恕也。

Xing Bing explains this chapter as follows in *the Thirteen Jing:*[388]

[Interpretation by He Yan]Speaking of not imposing what one loathes onto others. [Explanation by Xing Bing] this chapter starts from "Zi Gong" and ends at "others". ○The Correct Meaning says, this chapter speaks of (the teaching that) one ought to hold a lenient heart while not to extend such requirement to others. "Zi Gong asks, 'is there a word that one can abide by throughout his life'". This is a question put to Confucius seeking the fundamental path to self-cultivation. "The Master says: 'That is leniency. Whatever one does not desire, do not impose onto others'". With this Confucius replies that the only word that one should abide by throughout his life is leniency, which is same as benevolence. Whatever one loathes, he should not impose onto others. This is what it means by leniency.

The explanation by Xing Bing exemplifies a typical approach with which earlier Chinese classical interpretations are conducted. Firstly, early interpretations as illustrated in the "Correct Meaning" part are made for the purpose of teaching the students of Classical Chinese, with emphasis on the moral aspects of the text. Secondly, paraphrasing constitutes a major part of interpretation with little attention paid to accurate explanation of key terms. Thirdly, circular interpretation, that is, to use the text itself to interpret the key words in the text, is frequently used. As such this interpretation fails to elucidate the more accurate meaning of the term 恕 *Shu*, though the explainer tries to rephrase it with a more general term of 仁 (Ren, or Love/Benevolence). Finally, the interpretations and explanations are more properly the digest rather than translations of the texts, emphasizing part of the content while ignoring the full text.

These features are also reflected in Zhu Xi's (朱熹) interpretations, though Zhu tends to elaborate the text and applies the text to his own focus of interest through

[388] Ruan Yuan, *Commentaries and Explanations on the Thirteen King* (Beijing: Reprinted by Zhong Hua Publishing House, 1980. In Two Volumes), 2518.

his idiosyncratic reasoning. As shown in below interpretations, Zhu is more interested in study for study's own sake. His ideal of a sage is more related to wisdom of knowledge.

> 推己及物，其施不窮，故可以終身行之。尹氏曰：「學貴於知要。子貢之問，可謂知要矣。孔子告以求仁之方也。推而極之，雖聖人之無我，不出乎此。終身行之，不亦宜乎？」
>
> By extending one's own (thoughts) to other things, their applications are inexhaustible. Therefore this rule can be practiced throughout one's life. Yin Shi said, "In study, it is most valuable to know what is crucial. Zi Gong's question can be called 'knowing what is crucial'. Confucius thus tells him the secret of attaining to benevolence. Applying (the secret) to its extreme, even a self-less sage man can practise no other rule than this one. Isn't it not a proper thing to practise throughout one's life?" Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the Four Books by Chapters*, 117.

It is interesting to see how Zhu's interpretation on the chapter shifts from what is assumed to be as a moral advice to a learning advice both for study and for coping with life. Zhu also turns Confucius's teaching form negative form into a positive statement, rendering his famous saying of "applying one's own opinion to all things" (推己及物). This statement echoes strongly of Protagoras's claim that Man is the Measure of All Things. Yet, Zhu's statement seems to go even further by claiming "Myself is the measure of all things". Finally, Zhu Xi does not explain the key word—恕—in this chapter. In his interpretation on another book *Zhong Yong (*中庸*, The Doctrine of the Mean),* Zhu interpreted 恕 as "applying one's thought to other men" (推己及人)[389]. This phrase of Zhu Xi has profound impact on the thinking paradigm of the Chinese. It is still a popular idiom in modern Chinese language which is considered a crucial principle in our interacting with other people.[390]

In comparison to the Chinese commentaries, Legge's reading of this chapter both evoked in him the fundamental teaching of Christ and a universal moral value for all men.

> 子貢問曰：有一言而可終身行者乎。子曰：其恕乎。己所不欲，勿施於人。

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[389] Zhu Xi, *Collected Commentaries of the* Four Books *by Chapters*, *9.*

[390] In Modern Chinese Dictionary (2012), the idiom *Tui ji ji ren* (推己及人) is defined as "to deduce other's ideas from one's own point of view; to try to understand others by thinking from their positions."

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> Chapter XXIII. Tsze-kung asked, saying, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" The Master said, "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."
>
> - James Legge. *The Chinese Classics*. Vol. 1, 165

Legge's translation of the classical text shall be read in connection with his own comment in the annotation section：

> 23. THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY IS THE RULE OF LIFE. Comp. V. II. It is singular that Tsze-Kung professes there to act on the principle here recommended to him.
>
> - James Legge. The Chinese Classics. Vol. 1, 165

It is worthwhile to contemplate on Legge's rendering the word *shu* (恕) into *"Reciprocity"*. The Chinese character *shu* is one of the fundamental precepts in the teaching of Confucius, evidenced by another chapter in *the Confucian Analects*, "the doctrine of Confucius contains "*zhong"* (忠, *devotion*) and "*shu"* (恕, *leniency*) and nothing else" (*the Confucian Analects*, Book IV- 15). In that chapter, Legge tried to interpret the two words from the etymological approach instead of following the ancient Chinese dictionary or Zhu Xi. As both Chinses characters contain the radical "心" (meaning "heart"), while their upper parts being formed with "中"(middle, center) and "如" (as if) respectively. Legge thus interpreted, "忠 is duty-doing, on a consideration, or from the impulse, of one's own self; 恕 is duty doing, on the principle of reciprocity. The chapter is important, showing that Confucius only claimed to unfold and enforce duties indicated by man's mental constitution. He was simply a moral philosopher."[391] Legge thus interpreted 忠 as "true to the principles of our nature" and 恕 as "the benevolent exercise of them to others".[392] Legge's such interpretation on the two words is established from the western context of man as man in relation to his duties to God and to other men. Within the hierarchical Chinese social context, the virtue of 忠 has long evolved from being truthful to one's own heart to a total devotion and loyalty to one's superior, his ruler in particular.[393] The

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[391] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), the Body of the Volume, 34.
[392] Ibid.
[393] In *the Classic of Filial Piety*, Confucius is quoted as saying: "The superior man serves his ruler in such a

virtue of 恕, on the other hand, has long lost its earlier indication of "empathy" and becomes interchangeable with 仁 (benevolence). [394]

Another feature of Legge's translation of this Confucian golden rule is his preaching style not unlike the teaching of Christ in the Gospel. The Chinese text lays out the rule by an empathetic reasoning: What one does not desire himself, do not impose on others. When Legge rendered it "What you do not want DONE to yourself, do not do to others", his expression resonated remotely to what Jesus teaches, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12).

Finally, Legge recognized and underscored the significance of this rule by putting his remark in capital letters and by calling it "the great principle" and "the Rule of life".[395] In the Chinese commentaries, its significance is confined to Jun Zi and is deemed as a means or a knack for attaining moral or intellectual superiority. The similar expressions of the golden rule appear three times in *the Confucian Analects* (The other two cases being in the Book V[396] and Book XII[397]). In neither case does *the thirteen Jing* (十三经) make any notable remark on the merits or the significance of the rule, treating it simply as one of many traits of a virtuous man. Nor does Zhu Xi see its value in its universal application. Legge, on the other hand, made a comparison between the golden rule expressed by Confucius and "the rule laid down by Christ" in his prolegomena.[398] Legge gives his candid comment that "Confucius delivered his rule to his countrymen only, and only for their guidance in their (five)

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way that, when at court in his presence, his thought is how to discharge his loyal duty to the utmost". (子曰: "君子之事上也，進思盡忠."

[394] In *Kang Xi Dictionary*, an etymological definition of 恕 is "compare one's heart with the other's heart", or empathy.

[395] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), the Body of the Volume. P.165.

[396] Confucian Analects. Book 5-12. 子貢曰：「我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。」子曰：「賜也，非爾所及也。」Legge's translation: [Zi Gong said, "What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men." The Master said, "Ci, you have not attained to that."]

[397] Confucian Analects. Book 12-2. 仲弓問仁。子曰：「出門如見大賓，使民如承大祭。己所不欲，勿施於人。在邦無怨，在家無怨。」仲弓曰：「雍雖不敏，請事斯語矣。」Legge's translation: [Zhong Gong asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, "It is, when you go abroad, to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself; to have no murmuring against you in the country, and none in the family." Zhong Gong said, "Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practice this lesson."]

[398] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 110-111.

relations."[399] In contrast, the rule of Christ is "for man as man, all with himself on the same platform."[400]

Conclusion:

In short, Legge's *Chinese Classics* project goes far beyond what is understood today as a translation. Legge participated in the Chinese classical commentary tradition, reasoned with Chinese commentators, and produced a new set of Chinese classical interpretations the scholarship of which was no less than that of Zhen Xuan or Zhu Xi. His adoption of biblical commentary format and criticism methods improved and enriched the Chinese classical commentary tradition. His application of European hermeneutical principle revealed more about the religious, social and political conditions of the ancient Chinese, not to mention his new opinion as to what Confucius taught in the first place. Legge's *Chinese Classics* works are first and foremost a new set of classical commentaries, his translation being his own critical digest and interpretation of the Chinese text. To quote Legge's own words, "but the translation is independent".[401]

[399] Ibid, 111.
[400] Ibid.
[401] Ibid, preface, x.

CHAPTER SIX: LEGGE'S REFORMATION ON CONFUCIANISM

This chapter argues that, while Legge does not invent the English term Confucianism, he reforms the teaching of Confucius to be that of the ancient Chinese religion. Such invention is partly derived from his hermeneutical interpretation of Confucius as the transmitter and instructor of the Chinese Five Jing in which the ancient Chinese religious tradition is contained. It also embedded Legge's missiological approach to the Christian encounter with the Ruist China. With his reformed Confucian teaching, Legge hopes the Chinese people will be able to read and learn God from their own classics and their own sage; by making use of what is good in the Confucian teaching while supplementing greatly to his teaching, Legge expected his missionary brothers would lead the Chinese further to Christianity with a peaceful revolution instead of confrontation. Legge's reformation on Confucianism is triggered by the 1877 Shanghai Missionary Conference request for his paper on "Confucianism in Relation to Christianity". It was executed through Legge's compilation of the Sacred "Texts of Confucianism" for Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* (1878-1910). Legge's theological construction of the Confucian religion connected Confucius' moral teachings and ritual observance to the Creator and moral dispenser Shang Di in the Five Jing. In this sense Legge invents a new 'Confucianism'.

Confucianism Originates as a Religious Terminology in Western Narrative

Now it has been widely accepted that the term Confucianism is a western coinage. It originates partially as an early 19th century missionary effort to translate and represent the Chinese Ru Jiao by its doctrinal founder of Confucius. When the term becomes a proper subject of studies within the continental discipline of Orientalist Sinology and the Comparative Religious Studies, Confucianism takes on an identify independent from its Chinese counterpart and is deconstructed and reconstructed subject to the academic disciplines in which it is studied and subject to interpretations of what constituted the Confucian teaching.

The earliest European publications placed Confucianism distinctly within the religious context thanks to the Jesuit narrative on Ru Jiao -- the Sect of the Learned-- as one of the "three religious sects" in China. Another reason for the early Sinological association of Confucianism with religion has to do with its popularity within comparative religious studies.

Legge's Early Treatment of Confucian School

As mentioned in the third chapter, one of Legge's unfinished duties from his Term-Question debate concerned his covert intention to discover for himself the authentic teaching of Confucius. His bitter experiences of the various Ruist interpretations on the Term-Question issue led Legge to strong doubt to the so-called "Confucian school" in terms of their interpretations of what Confucius said. By way of his avoiding any Confucian terms other than quoting directly from Confucius himself, Legge in his debate essay made differentiations between the sayings of Confucius and the opinions of the Ruist scholarswho were addressed by Medhurst or Boone as of "the Confucian school". Legge in his essay rendered them as "the literary sect" in general, and scholars, philosophers and interpreters in particular.

Legge redefined "the Confucian School" in his 1861 volume of *the Chinese Classics* project. At the end of his biographical account of Confucius, Legge attached a list of the eighty-six immediate disciples of Confucius with their biographical data. These disciples constituted Legge's interpretation of "Confucian School", or Kong Men (孔门).[402] In other words, Legge's "Confucian school" did not stand for the broad sense of the Ruist School (儒家) as in its Chinese context. Legge's "Confucian School" was more in the sense the Academy (in Greek *Academeia*) stood for Plato's school of philosophy, but applicable narrowly to Confucius' immediate disciples. For the general Ruist School, Legge applied a different name – the Orthodox School. In this sense, Mencius is not of the "Confucian School" but one of the "Orthodox School", though "he is regarded as the ablest of all the followers of Confucius."[403] Zhu Xi is not of the "Confucian School", but of a new "philosophical school".

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[402] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), 220.
[403] James Legge, *CC2 (1861)*: Prolegomena, 2, 7.

Legge's quest for the historical Confucius turned out a Confucius who was "unreligious, unspiritual and open to the charge of insincerity." [404] Legge here alluded to Charles Hardwick's inference that "several changes were effected in the ancient creed of China", being "remodeled by Confucius."[405] Legge did not allude to Hardwick at random. He was well aware that Hardwick in his *Christ and other Masters (1858)* formally employed Confucianism to address one of the three religions in China, defining it as "the State-religion, as remodeled by Confucius". [406]

Hardwick's *Christ and Other Masters* (1858)[407]

Charles Hardwick (1821-1859) was a lecturer in divinity at King's College, Cambridge and a Christian advocate in the university. Despite his lack of experience in China and of Chinese linguistic knowledge, Charles was as much academic as Legge in his extensive reading on China and as insightful in his historical approach to the ancient Chinese religion. Hardwick was probably among the first European scholars to fashion the three Chinese religions uniformly in the "-ism" style – Confucianism, Tao-ism and Fo-ism (Chinese Buddhism). As can be seen below, Hardwick's opinion on the historical evolution of Confucianism has implicit influence on Legge's formulation of the religious Confucianism.

Hardwick's depiction of Confucianism embraced and distinguished several historical phases since the creation of the Jing (经, Classics). Hardwick noted in the Chinese classics the all-knowing, all virtuous figures of the "*holy man*" (圣人) and their enormous influence in shaping the knowledge and belief of Chinese people. The "*holy men*" authored the oldest Chinese Jing and constituted "the great bases of all Chinese history and ethics, philosophy, and religion".[408].

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[404] James Legge, *CC1 (1861*): Prolegomena, 98.
[405] Ibid, 99. Legge's allusion was in connection with Charles Hardwick's *Christ and Other Masters.* Part III., (Cambridge, 1858), 18.
[406] Charles Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters; a Historical Enquiry into some Chief Parallelisms and Contrasts between* Christianity *and the Religious Systems of the Ancient World*. Part III. (Cambridge: McMillan and Co. 1858), 14.
[407] Charles Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters; a Historical Enquiry into some Chief Parallelisms and Contrasts between* Christianity *and the Religious Systems of the Ancient World*. Part III. (Cambridge. McMillan and Co. 1858).
[408] Ibid, 18.

In Hardwick's opinion, Confucius inspected and revised the ancient documents and it was rather to Confucius than to Fu Xi (伏羲) that "the ruling forms of civilization in the Middle Kingdom must be ultimately referred".[409] This opinion seemed also part of Hardwick's reasoning for his employment of Confucianism for the name of the religion. Hardwick viewed Confucius as a "political and social reformer", whose goal was to "lead back his fellow-subject to the ancient models". Hardwick thus summarized the doctrine of Confucianism by quoting Confucius' own words as "the doctrine of Yao (尧) and Shun (舜)" of the ancient times, and to "read the King (Jing, 经, classics*)"* and "reflecting on the various maxims there preserved".[410] Hardwick's way of interpreting Confucianism by interpreting the intention of its author arguably provided Legge with a new perspective of investigating the teaching of Confucius. Confucius's own saying as to what he taught eventually became the foundation for Legge's new interpretation of 'Confucianism'.

Hardwick also touched upon the Term-Question debates both among the 17th century Jesuits and Rome and the 19th century debate of the Protestant missionaries and ventured his own solution. Upon examining various opinions of both sides, Hardwick drew his conclusion. "In China as elsewhere had lingered from primeval ages the conception of one living, bounteous, and paternal providence, whose earthly shadow was believed to sit exalted far above his fellows on the throne of the Middle Kingdom; but that ultimately this conception was broken and obscured, until the unity of God no longer formed the basis of the Chinese creed. Philosophy then came forward as in other countries and attempted to recover the idea of unity."[411] Although Hardwick's conclusion stopped short of mentioning Shang Di, it partly supported Legge's argument, perhaps even strengthened Legge's intention for restoring Shang Di to its earlier conception of God in his *Chinese Classics* project.

Legge did not apply Confucianism to his first attempt at the teaching of Confucius in 1861, nor did he use Confucianism in any of his *Chinese Classics* volumes (1861-1875). It was until 1877 that Legge was made to contemplate Confucianism again when a request came from the committee of the Missionary

[409] Ibid, 19.
[410] Ibid, 20.
[411] Ibid, 42.

Conference in Shanghai for him to write on "Confucianism in relation to Christianity".

Joseph Edkins and his *Religion in China*

While Legge assiduously maintained his translational investigation in the Chinese classics, his peer missionary writers also wrote to express their opinions on Confucianism. In 1859, Joseph Edkins (1823-1905), a long and personal friend of Legge, published *The Religious Condition of the Chinese.*[412]

Joseph Edkins was sent to China in 1848 by the London Missionary Society. Being equally well educated in theology and other sciences at the University of London, Edkins produced a wide range of books on China studies that embraced diverse subjects. He was one of the founders of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society since 1857.[413] His first sea trip to China in 1848 was joined by Legge and his family. Many years later, Edkins also accompanied Legge for his farewell trip to northern China and to the hometown of Confucius. At the Alter of Heaven in Beijing, they "climbed up the vast three terraces to the top, where they took off their shoes as a sign of respect, joining hands, and stood in the center praying to the 'Divine Being', Shang Di."[414] Edkins was also closely involved in the Term-Question debate. Yet, unlike Legge the single-minded Shang Di advocate, Edkins was more diplomatic, supporting all the term proposals put forward by his London missionary peers, including Medhurst's various proposals and later the Tian Zhu (天主, Heavenly Lord) proposal.[415] After resigning from the London Missionary society in 1881, Edkins took a British government appointment and stayed on in China. His later scholarly interests focused more on the Chinese philology and Chinese Buddhism and Taoism, believing that "they ought to be carefully examined, as one of the preliminaries to the spread of Christianity" in China. [416]

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[412] Joseph Edkins, *The Religious Condition of the Chinese: with observations on the Prospects of* Christian *Conversion Among that People* (London: Routledge, Warnes, & Routledge, 1859).
[413] S. W. Bushell, "Obituary Notices: Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Jan.1906): 269-271.
[414] Marilyn Laura Bowman, *James Legge and the Chinese Classics: A Brilliant Scot in the Turmoil of colonial Hong* Kong (Canada: FriesenPress. 2016), 846.
[415] Joseph Edkins was the signed supporter of both W.H. Medhurst's proposal for transliteration and of the later proposal made by the Bishop of Victoria J.S. Burdon to adopt the Catholic usage of 天主 Tian Zhu.
[416] Joseph Edkins, *The Religious Condition of the Chinese: with observations on the Prospects of* Christian

In his 1859 edition of *The Religious Condition of the Chinese (1859),* Edkins tried to employ "Confucianism/Confucian religion" in the cases where his narratives were connected with the religious subjects of the Ruist classical tradition. In the meantime, Edkins tried to distinguish those less religious aspects or opinions of the Ruist scholars by such terms as "Confucian system", "Confucian Philosophy", and "Confucian school". In his second edition published in 1877, Edkins made substantial revision to his first print, not only changing the book title to *Religion in China*, but also highlighting his "nomenclature" of Confucianism as a religion. It is interesting to note that Edkins in his book remarked Confucianism as "knew God, but did not honour him as God". In his opinion, God was spoken of in the old books of China as the Supreme Ruler. Confucius found the religion already existing in China, yet the system he built out of it was a very practical system of morals with nothing spiritual. What is most intriguing is his comment regarding the few books written by the early Jesuits and collected in the imperial library: "Perhaps, however, their real influence is greater than Confucian writers are ready to admit. They may have helped, by their account of God, in His nature and attributes, to render the modern generation of scholars more willing to return to the doctrine of a personal God, and to abandon the notion, so prevalent before the Roman Catholics arrived, that He is nothing but an abstraction."[417] Despite the fact that Edkins' Confucian terminology was still confusing to the readers, his opinions were insightful. He probably strengthens Legge's decision to render Shang Di into God in his *Chinese Classics*, so that in the due time many Chinese intellectuals would be able to "read without prejudice what he may say about the teachings of their sages."[418]

Ernst Faber's Confucianism

Another noteworthy missionary writer in China on Confucianism during this period of time is Ernst Faber (1839 – 1899), a German Protestant missionary sent by the Rhenish Missionary Society to Canton (Guangzhou) in 1864. Faber's view on Confucianism was worth noting because his opinions on the principles of

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Conversion Among that People (London: Routledge, Warnes, & Routledge, Farringdon Street; New York: 56, Walker Street. 1859), Preface.
[417] Ibid, 229 -230.
[418] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), Preface, ix.

investigating Confucianism both resonated with those of Legge while contrasted to Legge.

In his 1875 book *A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius,*[419] Faber expressed his anticipation for a "summarized", "systematic" and "scientific" exposition of Confucianism that would employ both historical and textual methods to categorize the subject matters of the Canonical Confucianism and to differentiate the doctrine of Confucius from those of his disciples and followers. [420] Faber made considerable usage of Legge's *Chinese Classics* works in constituting and digesting his Confucianism. Faber's expression of systematic and scientific exposition of Confucianism indicated his awareness of Legge's critical methods and his dissatisfaction with Legge's religion-centered examinations on the Chinese classics. By then Legge had published Four Books and three out of the Five Jing in his *Chinese Classics* project.

Similar to Legge, Faber indicated in the book his own ambition to proceed with an endeavor on the thorough investigation of Confucianism. His current book nonetheless drew upon almost exclusively from Legge's first volume of *Chinese Classics* Project. Also like Legge, Faber in this book confined his analysis of Confucian doctrine strictly to the sayings of Confucius. Only Faber jumped to his conclusion that these sayings of Confucian in the Four-Book part constituted Confucianism.

One prominent feature of Faber's book was his systematic categorization of the key classical terms of similar subject matters to try to form more complete understanding of the Chinese opinion for that matter. Such classification led Faber to some insightful opinions relating to the Term Question issue. Faber concluded that *shen* in the Chinese classics is equivalent to the Christian concept of "spirit" or "spirits". His nuanced illustration with the Chinese example "*xin shen*" (心神, *the spirit of heart*), signifying only "the spirit that dwells in man", hinted at his

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[419] Ernst Faber, *A Systematical Digest of the Doctrines of Confucius, According to the Analects, Great Learning and Doctrine of the Means, with an introduction on the Authorities upon Confucius and* Confucianism (Hongkong; Canton; Shanghai; London: Trubner & Co. 1875).
[420] Ibid, 1. 3.

disapproval of rendering God into *shen.*[421] As for Shang Di, Faber argued that one could not expect Shang Di to fully agree with Christian or Jewish idea of God. However, the usage of Chinese classical Shang Di would provide "a great advantage"[422] in telling the Chinese that Christian God was not a new god, but the true God of Chinese forefathers. The full comprehension of the Christian doctrine will arrive through later instruction. Legge in his 1877 paper to the Shanghai Missionary Conference resorted to the same argument.

Faber remarked, upon his digestion of the sayings of Confucius, that Confucius "is already estranged from the ancient God… and promoted the worship of spirits without really intending it." [423] He further commented that the Confucian doctrines are "exclusively ethic-anthropological", [424] dealing only with issues concerning man, with regard to his nature, his position in nature, within the various social relations and his qualities. Faber concluded that Confucianism was not religious, but a humanist system in the sense that "man only, among all things in this world, is of interest to him".[425]

In summary, Faber in his 1875 digest of Confucianism attempted to provide a comparative roadmap regarding the similarities, contradictions and deficiencies of Confucianism in comparison with Christian values. Faber hoped that such roadmap would provide assistance to the missionaries in China for their peaceful and intellectual encounters with Chinese Ruism. Faber's 1875 digest on Confucius and Confucianism, on the other hand, was not unlike the Legge's opinion on Confucius and Confucian teachings in his 1861 book. Many years later, Faber also redefined his Confucianism to embrace the whole Thirteen Jing (note, Faber calls them "the Thirteen Sacred Boks of Confucianism").[426]

Confucianism Became Standard Terminology in Comparative Religions in the 1870s

The decade of the 1870s witnessed increased academic interest in the studies on comparative religions and the expanded knowledge of the oriental religions. With

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[421]Ibid, 49.
[422] Ibid, 50.
[423] Ibid, 50.
[424] Ibid, 36.
[425] Ibid, 38.
[426] Ernst Faber, *Confucianism* (Shanghai: Printed at the American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1895).

regard to Chinese religions, the terms of Confucianism, Tao-ism were in the process of becoming the standard religious terminology in expositions. A number of works on the religions of the world published during this period included Confucius and his Confucianism. These works included James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions* (1871),[427] Samuel Johnson's nearly 1000- page China volume of the *Oriental Religions* series (1877) [428] and John Russel's (Viscount of Amberley) *An Analysis of Religious Belief* (1877)[429], to name just a few. Of the various reasons that enabled this development, Legge's *Chinese Classics* series that came out steadily since 1861 provided important impetus for European and American scholars to engage in more in-depth research on Chinese religions. This could be seen from the frequent quotations from Legge's *Chinese Classics* series in many of the comparative religious studies. James Clark in his *Ten Great Religions* (1871) commented, after his copious references to Legge, that "but within a few years the labors of previous Sinologue have been almost superseded by Dr. Legge's splendid work, still in process of publication".[430]

Within China, the term Confucianism was widely used in the popular English journals such as *the Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*[431] and *the China Review.*[432] Nevertheless, it could be seen that Confucianism in those journals was used in two different contexts, one in its specific Chinese sense as in the three Chinese teachings of Ruist orthodoxy, Buddhism and Taoism.[433] The other usage represented a more sinological interpretation and study on the doctrine of Confucius, exemplified by the discussion on Ernst Faber's "Amateur Sinology" on

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[427] James Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions: An Essay in Comparative Theology* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1871).
[428] Samuel Johnson, *Oriental Religions and their Relation to Universal Religion: China* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1877).
[429] John Russel, Viscount Amberley, *an Analysis of Religious Belief* (London: Trubner & Co., 1876).
[430] James Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, 48.
[431] The *Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* was first published by the Methodist Press in Fu Zhou in 1867. The Journal was in print from 1867 to 1941 and became the leading outlet for the English language missionary community in China.
[432] *The China Review, or Notes and Queries on the Far East* was an academic journal published in Hong Kong from 1872 to 1901 as an outlet for scholarly writings on China written by foreign scholars, mainly those living on the China coast. The journal was edited in its initial years by Nicholas Belfeld Dennys, editor of the China Mail. The journal was not supported by any church, but missionaries frequently published articles of sinological interest.
[433] For example, In *the Chinese Recorder* Journal, the No.4 issue of the 1869 Volume printed F. Porter Smith's translation of "Creeds in China", (p, 108)among them are Confucianism-- 儒教 *(*Ru Jiao*)*, Buddhism –释教 (Shi Jiao) and Taoism (Dao Jiao).

Confucianism in the China Review.[434] With the increased number of Protestant missionaries in China, the necessity was felt in 1874 and 1875 for a general conference of all missionaries in China to show that "union of strength", one of the top two subjects to be discussed was "Confucianism in relation to Christianity". [435]

Legge's First Attempt at 'Confucianism' in 1877: A Request from the Shanghai Missionary Conference

1870s also meant great changes to Legge. Having published seven of the Four Books and Five Jing for his *Chinese Classic* series, Legge returned to England and withdrew formally from his Missionary duties in 1873. In 1875 he was named Fellow of Corpus Christi College and in following year appointed the new Chair of Chinese Language and Literature at Oxford. Also around this time Legge accepted Max Müller's offer to contribute the China portion to Müller's monumental *Sacred Books of the East* Series (50 volumes, 1879-1910).

Yet, in a stark contrast to the increasing adoption of Confucianism in the spheres of Sinology or comparative religions in the 1860s and 1870s, Legge had not yet decided to apply Confucianism in any of his *Chinese Classics* works. The challenge of defining Confucianism still haunted him. His historical quest for the life and teaching of Confucius revealed an unreligious Confucius, whose teaching as represented by his sayings and maxims in the Four-Book classics "did not speculate on the creation of things or the end of them."[436] Yet, and more likely than not to Legge, Confucius could not have had his ethical contemplation and formulated his admirable moral lessons without the knowledge of God. On the other hand, the contemporaneous Chinese classical critics claimed that Confucius was the author of the ancient Five Jing, which contained all the teachings of Confucius. Legge's 20-plus years of textual and historical investigations produced no more evidence for such claim than for its counterclaim. Confucius nevertheless contributed to the preservation of the ancient Chinese religious notions and practices. When Legge received the letter from the Committee of Arrangement for the 1877 Shanghai

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[434] See the China Review Vol. 1 (1872) the article of E.J. Eitel on Confucianism*, 260.*
[435] See the proposal for a General Conference of all the missionaries in China in the *Chinese Reocorder Journal* Vol.5 (1874), 298, Vol. 6 (1875), 373.
[436] James Legge, *CC1* (1861), Prolegomena, 98.

General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries to write on "Confucianism in Relation to Christianity", it took Legge more than one year to complete the twelve-page essay.

Marilyn Brown in her *James Legge and the Chinese Classics* (2016) stated that "Legge decided to write comparing Confucianism and Christianity." [437] She further quotes W.C. Smith in claiming that "Legge had been the first to use the term Confucianism to identify it as a religion."[438] As proved by many examples in this thesis, not only was the claim of W.C. Smith mistaken, Brown's former statement was also inaccurate. Legge didn't decide to write on Confucianism in the first place. In the similar way Legge was challenged to argue that Chinese Shang Di was true God, Legge's first attempt at his 'Confucianism' was also a request imposed by the Committee for the 1877 Shanghai General Conference of Protestant missionaries.

It is not my intention to delve into the controversy concerning Legge's paper on Confucianism for the Shanghai General Conference of 1877. My sole interest is to trace the historical circumstances which triggered Legge's decision to employ Confucianism, and how such decision led to Legge's eventual invention of 'Confucianism' as denoting the religious teaching of Confucius. Thanks to the *Chinese Recorder* journals of 1874-1877, a clear historical events were recorded that led to Legge's 1877 paper on Confucianism.

The Committee of Arrangement for the General Missionary Convention was formed in October 1875. The meeting of the Committee of Arrangement resolved on the time for the conference and agreed upon a list of topics to be discussed. Of the dozens of topics listed, the second subject is "Confucianism in relation to Christianity", followed by "Taouism and Buddhism".[439] In December of 1876, the Committee of Arrangements published the "complete programme, with the days, and the names of the writers".[440] In this program, the second topic "Confucianism in relation to Christianity" was further added the names of its proposed writers – Rev. James Legge and Rev. C. Holcombe. That the topic of the paper was stipulated by

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[437] Marilyn Laura Bowman, *James Legge and the Chinese Classics*, 870.
[438] Ibid.
[439] The *Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*. Volume VI (1875), 373.
[440] *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal*. Volume VII (1876), 452.

the Conference rather than Legge was further corroborated in the separate publication of Legge's 1877 paper. Its notice prefixing the paper said, "The following essay on 'Confucianism in relation to Christianity' was written at the request of the Committee…."[441]

In other words, Legge's first writing on Confucianism in 1877 was made in deference to the request from the Committee of the Shanghai Missionary Conference rather than his own voluntary decision. Nonetheless, the request compelled Legge to meet the term head-on and prompted him to contemplate its significance more in light of Christian mission in China. Legge had to find a solution to his Confucianism challenge that could deal with the ancient Chinese religion, the unreligious Confucius, and his commendable moral teaching. A more practical issue for Legge, perhaps more practical than the Term Question given his thirty years missionary experience in China, was how Christianity could make peaceful encounter with Confucianism. Was it possible for his brethren to make practical use of what was good in Confucian teachings to facilitate Christian missionary work in China?

Legge's 1877 Paper: Confucianism in Relation to Christianity[442]

It was probably with these difficult questions in mind that Legge penned his 1877 paper. After excusing himself for delaying the writing for more than a year, Legge set out his "understanding" of Confucianism within its general Sinological sphere. "By Confucianism I understand the subjects set forth in what are styled the Confucian Books – the *Five King* (Jing, classics) more especially and the *Four Shu* (the Four Books)" (Legge 2). With a maneuver similar to that Legge had used previously in bringing back Shang Di into the Term Question debate, Legge availed himself the Sinological notion of "Confucian Books" to include in his 'Confucianism' also the Five Jing alongside the Four Books.[443] Furthermore, as Legge was requested to write on Confucianism in terms of its relation to Christian religion, he further

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[441] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity,* see the note of print.
[442] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. A Paper Read before the Missionary Conference in Shanghai on May 11th, 1877* (Shanghai: -Kelly & Walsh., London: - Trübner & Co., 1877).
[443] By this time, Legge's translational investigation into the Chinese classics has convinced him that none of the Five Jing could be properly attributed to the authorship of Confucius. On the other side, though the Four Books were neither written by Confucius, they were more "Confucian" in that they either recorded his sayings or discoursed about his maxims.

refined his scope and content of Confucianism to "the religious and moral teachings in the Confucian books in relation to Christianity" (Legge 3). Legge thus carved out his first prototype of his religious 'Confucianism' in his 1877 paper.

It is not my intention to examine the controversial aspects of Legge's 1877 paper other than to trace those aspects of Legge's opinions in connection with his formulation of 'Confucianism'. What is worth noting is Legge's emphasis on the missiological significance of the Confucian teachings and on his practical suggestions to his missionary brethren in China. Legge's missiological propositions were centered on cannibalizing what was good in Confucian classics and supplementing them with the knowledge of God. Speaking of the classical term Shang Di, Legge proposed that the missionaries "adopt it in speaking of God" while "supplement largely the statements in the Confucian books about Him – more largely indeed than in dealing with Jews we have to supplement the testimony concerning him in the Old Testament" (Legge 2-3). Legge even went so far as to provide arguments from Chinese classics on how the missionaries should debate and convince the Chinese to turn away from their superstitious practices and return to their monotheist God. Nevertheless, these arguments sounded more like apologetic defense on behalf of the Confucian religion to some missionaries. Regarding the classical teaching on man as the creature of God and the moral instruction from God, Legge suggested that missionaries avail many of the truths stated in the Confucian classics while supplementing them with Christian teachings on human nature. In terms of the Confucian teaching on the moral duties and social relations of man, in particular with Confucian utterance of the golden rule, Legge expressed his full appreciation by commenting it as "in harmony with both the Law and the Gospel" (Legge. 9).

In concluding his comparisons, Legge came to his "practical" suggestion that missionaries should not "exhibit themselves as antagonistic to Confucius and Confucianism" (Legge 10). In Legge's view, Confucius was like Paul in recognizing the power of man as ordained from God. Legge was inclined to believe that Confucius "was raised up by God for the instruction of the Chinese people" (Legge 10). Legge offered his missiological solution, which he assumed with naivety that many of those in the Conference would agree on, that missionaries should be "making the best use of what is good and true in the Confucian system, to give to the

Chinese the knowledge of Christianity" (Legge. 11). Legge did not expect that his 1877 paper would wind up no less controversial than his Term Question advocacy.

The ending passage of Legge's 1877 essay was loaded with meanings both ambiguous yet provocative. Legge mentioned a conversation he had with "one of the ablest and more learned men in England" (Legge 11, 12) over the possible missionary collision with local religions. This led Legge to much contemplation on how the missionaries in China should avoid such collision with 'Confucianism'. Legge mused that "Christianity cannot be tucked on to any heathen religion as its compliment, nor can it absorb any into itself without great changes in it and addition to it" (Legge. 12). In lieu of that, Legge placed missionaries and missiological strategy the central part of successful Christian mission. "Missionaries have not merely to reform, …they have to revolutionize; and as no revolution of a political kind can be effected without disturbance or existing conditions, so neither can a revolution of a people's religion be brought about without heat and excitement" (Legge. 12). Even Legge seemed to think it inevitable that Confucius be pulled down from his elevation. However, Legge ended his essay with an abrupt and seemingly conflicting admonition to his brethren. "(T)he more they avoid driving their carriages rudely over the Master's grave, the more likely are they soon to see Jesus enthroned in his room in the hearts of the people" (Legge. 12).

The 1877 paper depicted a most conflicting Legge. There were as many valuable teachings in the Chinese classics deserving preservation as there were demerits and deficiencies that required disposal or improvement. On the other hand, Christianity would tolerate neither the co-existence of any similar doctrine nor the existence of any other religion. Legge was more acutely aware of the double-edged roles of Confucius both as an exemplary model in shaping the Chinese characters and his competing role as the master of the Chinese. In view of those various conflicts, Legge seemed to insinuate both a religious revolution that would inevitably topple the throne of Confucius and an admonition against any rude and violent missionary actions in doing so. While Legge's ambiguous expression on "revolution of a people's religion" mystified his audience, it was his "supplement" opinion that sparked the new round of controversy.

Soon after the resolution of the Committee of the Conference to remove Legge's essay from the Conference records, the paper was separately printed by Legge's friends in Shanghai and London. In response to the development, Robert Nelson (1819 -1886), the chairman of the Shanghai Conference and one of the editors for the Conference Records, published an article in the July-August issue of the 1877 *Chinese Recorder Journal*.[444]. Nelson first attempted to justify the Committee's decision to omit Legge's essay from the Conference records, citing how Legge's paper was in contravention of the no-term-question "general understanding" and how it aroused "a good deal of excitement" in reading. As a solution, Nelson insisted on withdrawing Legge's paper in order to secure "the unbroken harmony of the Conference".[445] Following the explanation, Nelson devoted the majority part of his article to those "indefensible and unsound" opinions of Legge. Nelson employed "logical, theological and Christian" grounds to refute Legge's opinions on Shang Di being the true God and on Confucian teaching of human nature. Nelson accused Legge of advocating "supplementing" Confucianism with Christianity, "Confucianism is the GREAT BOOK of truth and Christianity the supplement!"[446] The gravest accusation to Legge's essay was its being "calculated to injure the cause of Christian missions in China by its inordinate exaltation of Confucianism to the practical disparagement of Christianity".[447] In the similar way many missionary contenders in the earlier Term-Question debate failed to comprehend Legge's academic arguments for Shang Di, Nelson in his Term-Question debate mode failed to see that Legge in his 1877 paper had moved on to the more pressing issue of practical Christian missiological strategy in China.

For one thing, Legge did not advocate supplementing Confucianism with Christianity. Legge's supplement was meant to add in Shang Di of Confucian books the notions about God, thus transforming the Chinese Shang Di into the proper Chinese translation of God. This method of supplementing Chinese Shang Di was no different from what the Pro-*shen* party had to do with their choosing of Chinese *shen*. The differences lied in that the notion of Shang Di was more compatible with God

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[444] *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal.* Volume VIII (1877), 351-359.
[445] Ibid, 351-352.
[446] Ibid, 358.
[447] Ibid, 358.

and would enable a truly supplement process. In the case of *shen* the supplement process was only possible when the intrinsic conflicting meanings of *shen* could be successfully deprived from the Chinese language. Besides, Legge' supplement process involved a value-by-value dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism to nurture in Chinese mind certain notions that did not exist in Confucianism.

Nelson in his article "accord heartily with the advice" of Legge "not to drive carriages over the Master's grave",[448] yet criticizing Legge's advice of being "mistaken conservatism". He made no mention of Legge's mysterious references to reform or reformation. It was likely that only Legge himself knew what he meant or how such advice would entail. In fact, Legge's missiological opinions in his 1877 paper could not be understood unless it was viewed in connection with Legge's later reformation on Chinese classics and revolutionary invention of Confucius as religious instructor. Legge's later compilation of "the Texts of Confucianism" and his claim of 'Confucianism' as a religion would also make sense by viewing them in connection with his 1877 paper.

The Other Confucianism: "Imperial Confucianism" [449]

Before touching upon Legge's "Texts of Confucianism", mention needs to be made to the lecture series given by Legge in 1877-1878. The four Lectures, fully titled as "Imperial Confucianism, or the Sixteen Maxims of the K'ang-Hsi Period",[450] was delivered by Legge at Oxford for the Eastern and Michaelmas Terms of 1877, the same year in which Legge penned his Shanghai paper. It's note-worthy as it partially solidified Legge's conviction in the connection between the contemporaneous orthodox Confucian teachings and the ancient Chinese religious opinions.

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[448] Ibid, 358.

[449] James Legge, "Imperial Confucianism." Four Lectures, Delivered during the Trinity and Michaelmas Terms of 1877," *The China Review* Volume VI (July 1877 – June 1878), 147-58, 223-35, 299-310, 367-74.

[450] The China Review Journal titled Legge's lecture simply as "Imperial Confucianism", the full title was introduced in its subtitle section.

Also known in Chinese as the Sixteen Maxims of the Sacred Edict (圣谕十六条),[451] the edict was issued by the emperor Kang Xi (康熙, 1654 -1722) in 1670.[452] It exalted the fundamental Ruist values and benefits of filial piety and brotherly submission within the family, harmony and benignity within the clan, peace and concord within the community. The edict also prioritized farming, husbandry and emphasized education in conformity with conventions, orthodoxy and laws. The maxims concluded with various admonitions on failing to perform individual duties, so that "one must abandon any sentiments of animosity and anger to preserve the body and providence that one is endowed (解仇忿以重身命, Legge 149). In the nation-wide propagation of the edict, arrangements were made so that on the first day and fifteenth day of each month, public readings were conducted by government representatives of all the prefectures and districts throughout the empire, involving the attendance of people of every walks of life. The practice was still maintained to certain degree during Legge's stay in China. Kang Xi's successor followed the Edict with *an Amplification of the Sacred Edict* (圣谕广训, 1724), which soon became the standard expositions for the regular public preaching. More paraphrases, pictorial illustrations and colloquial commentaries were also added by the local officials and scholars. The Edict drew considerable interest from missionary writers for its manner of popular dissemination that was not unlike popular Christian sermons. Prior to Legge's lecture on this Edict, at least two English translations were published. Legge's revisit on this edict seemingly was to present to his audience some ideas of "what China, morally, socially, and politically is, or at least of what it is the desire of its rulers that it should be" (Legge 151). On the other hand, Legge once again hid his intention to find out also the "religious ideas" embedded in the imperial interpretation on the Confucian moral teaching.

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[451] The Sixteen Maxims of Kang Xi Edict 康熙十六条: 1, 敦孝弟以重人伦; 2, 笃宗族以昭雍睦; 3, 和乡党以息争讼; 4, 重农桑以足衣食; 5, 尚节俭以惜财用; 6, 隆学校以端士习; 7, 黜异端以崇正学; 8, 讲法律以儆愚顽; 9, 明礼让以厚民俗; 10, 务本业以定民志; 11, 训子弟以禁非为; 12, 息诬告以全善良; 13, 诫匿逃以免株连; l4,完钱粮以省催科; 15,联保甲以弭盗贼; 16, 解仇忿以重身命。

[452] *The History of Qing* stated that the emperor issued the Sixteen Maxims of Sacred Edict in the 9th year of his reign, or 1670, when Kang Xi was only sixteen. It is extraordinary for a Manchurian emperor of only sixteen years to issue an edict so succinctly condensing the essence of the Ruist doctrine. This probably explains why the scholarly Legge would only refer the maxims in the title of his lecture as "the Sixteen Maxims of the K'ang-hsi Period" rather than attributing them to him directly.

Those religious ideas of the Confucian moral teaching were embedded in the Ruist scholarly philosophizing throughout the amplifications and paraphrases. For example, the amplification explained that "filial piety is a rule of Heaven, a righteous principle of Earth, and a practical duty of men". The paraphrases further reasoned, "Look at Heaven and Earth. How without harmony could they produce and nourish the multitudes of men and other creatures?" [453] The paraphraser further illustrated the reward of this virtue by citing one story from the "twenty-four instances of filial piety (二十四孝)", in which the filial act of a poverty-stricken couple was rewarded by Heaven.

The last maxim of the Edict made reference to the preservation of "*ming"* (命, mandate, providence).[454] Legge tried to interpret it by cross-referencing one of the Four Books – *Zhong Yong* (*the Doctrine of the Mean)* — in which "*ming*" (命) was defined as "what Heaven has conferred".[455] The paraphrase of this maxim also gave similar interpretation: "The human nature of men is the gift of heaven, and their bodies are derived from their parents. Heaven made us men, and not brutes." [456]

From his reading of the *Sacred Edict*, Legge came to some important conclusions concerning the moral teaching of Confucius. Legge observed that filial piety constituted "the first commandment of the Confucianism" (Legge 371). On top of this, "*ming"* represented the highest doctrine of the Confucian philosophy, being the "Heavenly conferred nature". It "raises the thoughts higher still, to heaven, and invests the precept with its sacred sanction."(Legge 371).

Legge's Reformation on Chinese Classics: "the Texts of Confucianism"

As mentioned earlier, Legge's *Sacred Books of China* (1879 -1885) portion for Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* series was a different project from his

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[453] James Legge, "Imperial Confucianism," Lecture 1, 151.
[454] "解仇忿以重身命."(Study to remove rooted animosities and angry feelings, in order to show the importance due to the body and (Heaven-given) nature. -Legge's translation)
[455] *The Doctrine of the Mean*, "天命之謂性." (What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature. -Legge's translation)
[456] James Legge, "Imperial Confucianism," Lecture 4, 371.

previous *Chinese Classics* project (1861 -1872. Five volumes in eight books). The *Sacred Books of China* were indeed Legge's translations of Chinese Ruist and Taoist texts of religious relevance for Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*. On the other hand, Legge's textual selection from the Chinese classics and his nomenclature of 'Confucianism' for his selection signified his decisive departure from the Ruist Four Books and Five Jing and his revolution on the teaching of Confucius.

What substantially differentiated Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" from the Ruist rubric of Four Books and Five Jing was Legge's exclusion of the Four Books and the Jing (classic) of *Chun Qiu*.[457] As the classic of *Chun Qiu* and *the Confucian Analects* were deemed by Ruist scholars as fundamental both to the study of Confucian teachings and to the core value propositions of the Ruist tradition, Legge's redacted "Texts of Confucianism" were in essence devoid of Confucius in the orthodox Ruist sense, if not for his assertion of the *Classic of Filial Piety* purported to be Confucian authorship. Besides, Legge's texts also removed some two thirds of the verses from *the Book of Poetry*. In the end, Legge's final "Texts of Confucianism" contained only four of the Five Jing (i.e. *The Book of Historical Documents,* a redacted version of *the Book of Poetry, the Book of Changes, and the Record of Rites*) and a lesser *Classic of Filial Piety.*[458] In summary, Legge's 'Confucianism' was neither Ruism in its general Chinese sense nor the teaching of Confucius within the popular Ruist tradition. Legge's 'Confucianism' was the religious texts of the ancient Chinese Jing.

Given Legge's 30-year investigational translation of the Chinese classics, it can hardly be believed that Legge had made such a fundamental mistake. Some may argue that Müller's *Sacred Books of East* project was principally a compilation of "Sacred Books of all Religions".[459] Legge had to make adaptations to exclude those classical texts that did not fell into the category of religion. Nevertheless, a historical examination on how Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" came to fruition will shed

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[457] For the two Ruist classical books of *Da Xue (Great Learning)* and *Zhong Yong (the Doctrine of the Mean),* Legge reinstated them in their older text versions and put them back to their original places in the classic of *Li Ji*, or *the Record of Rites*.
[458] *The Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao Jing*) is a classic purported to be the work of Confucius. It is ranked as a classic of the broader *Thirteen King*, but not part of standard Four Books and Five Jing.
[459] F.Max Müller, ed. *the Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. Vol. I), Preface, xl.

some light on how and why Legge did what he did. Bearing in mind Legge's mysterious reflection in his 1877 paper on how missionaries should reform and revolutionize the Chinese people's religion while avoiding confronting Confucius, Legge's idiosyncratic formulation of his "Texts of Confucianism" provided a solution as to how to revolutionize Chinese religion in his own manner. Legge was to reform the Chinese classics to turn them into the Chinese religious scriptures about God. By giving that Chinese scriptures the name of 'Confucianism', Legge was also about to revolutionize Confucius. Legge would transform Confucius into a religious instructor, whose principal teachings also included the ancient religion of China.

Legge's formation of "Texts of Confucianism": A Historical Perspective

In 1876, the first issue of the *China Review* journal broke the news on Max Müller's project of translating and publishing six oriental book religions at Oxford. According to the "Short Notices of New Books" of the journal, "Confucianism will be represented by translations of *the Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning, Analects* and *Mencius*…. Dr. Legge will undertake these Chinese translations…."[460] Clearly in the opinion of the journal article, the Four Books represented Confucianism.

Müller shared more detail of his project in the first volume of his *Sacred Books of the East* in 1879, attaching in it both his 1876 "Program of a Translation of The Sacred Books of the East" and an updated list of religions and books to be included. The program listed six eastern religions "which profess to be founded on Sacred Books".[461] Under "The religion of the followers of Khung-fu-sze",[462] the program listed four of the Five Jing (*Chun Qiu* was excluded) plus *the Classic of Filial Piety*, which would "all be given, it is hoped, entire".[463] Also included were the Four Books, of which Müller made special mention of *the Confucian Analects* as "of a religious nature, and refer to the principles of his moral system…."[464] In his updated list of oriental religions and the selected books for translation in 1879, the names of "Confucianism" and "Taoism" were properly adopted for the Chinese

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[460] E. J. Eitel, ed. *the China Review: or, Notes and Queries on the Far East*. Vol. V (July 1876 to June 1877). 67.
[461] F. Max Müller, ed. *the Sacred Books of the East* .Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), Preface, p.xli.
[462] Ibid, xli.
[463] Ibid, xliv-xlv.
[464] Ibid, xlv.

religions. The other change was the omitting of two books, i.e. *the Doctrine of the Mean* and *the Great Learning*, from the book list of Confucianism.

In the same year, Legge's first contribution of *the Sacred Books of China* (Vol. III of Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*) was published. In the Preface, Legge gave a brief account of each of the ancient Five Jing *and* Four Books, in which Legge also intimated in nuanced ways the fate of each classic in his textual selection of 'Confucianism'. For *the Book of Historical Documents* Legge confirmed that "a translation of the whole of this work without abridgement"[465] would be given; for *the Book of Poetry*, "all the pieces that illustrate the religious views of their authors, and the religious practices of their times" would be included. Speaking of *Chun Qiu (*the *Spring and Autumn),* Legge summarized it as "a very brief chronicle compiled by him (Confucius)…", and remarked that "but there is not much to be gleaned from it for the Sacred Texts".[466] Regarding *Yi Jing*, Legge clearly indicated that a translation of the whole book would be given. As for *Li Ji*, Legge had not yet finished the translation, he thus left the question "to be determined after further deliberation".[467] In explaining his rationale for including *the Classic of Filial Piety,* Legge argued that the treatise was attributed to Confucius, and was the first to be given the title of a Jing (classic*).* Not only did the book receive much endorsement from many Chinese emperors, it "seems to me an attempt to construct a religion on the basis of the cardinal virtue of Filial Piety…."[468] Legge's account of the Four Books was brief, characterizing them as "books of the four Philosophers". His intention for excluding them was also equivocal. He expressed his wish that "I hope to be able to give both these works", then adding that these books were all published in 1861.[469] Legge was thinking of excluding them from his Sacred Books of China, after all. In other words, Legge's deliberation on what classics to include in his "Texts of Confucianism" had to do both with their religious relevance and with Legge's own intention of redefining 'Confucianism'in its proper religious sense.

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[465] Ibid, xv.
[466] Ibid, xix, xx.
[467] Ibid, xx.
[468] Ibid, xx.
[469] Ibid, xx.

Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" thus deviated from the popular Ruist nomenclature of the Four Books and Five Jing. His "Texts of Confucianism" seemed an effort to restore the pre-Zhu Xi Ruist taxonomy of Five Jing and echoed the claim of the Qing classical studies critics that what Confucius taught was the Six Jing. [470] His inclusion of the secondary *Classic of Filial Piety* seemed more of his effort to maintain his texts relevant to Confucius. Lastly, by taking away the Four Books and *Chun Qiu*, the ancient Chinese Jing feature prominent religious significance and fit nicely into the category of Chinese religious classics.

Legge's Reformation of 'Confucianism' as Confucian Teaching on the Ancient Chinese Religion

Is Confucianism a religion? This question bothered the 19th century missionary writers and sinologists as much as they are bothering the modern Chinese scholars, Ruist or not. Legge's opinion added weight and heat to this controversy when he stated in his *Sacred Books of China* that "Confucianism is the religion of China *par excellence*, and is named from the great sage who lived in the fifth and sixth centuries B. C".[471] This thesis does not intend to speculate on the question. What the thesis tries to highlight upon historical examination is that this question is first and foremost a 'term-question' not unlike the biblical Term-Question concerning the proper Chinese word to render God. In this case, Confucianism as part of the early 19the century effort to render and to characterize the Chinese Ruist sect, had been superseded by the sinological reading and disciplinary studies of the Chinese classical texts. The result is a sinological scholarship on the Chinese classics, i.e. Confucianism. Confucianism in its sinological realm both parallels with the Ruist scholarship and contrasts Ruist classical studies tradition.

Such sinological departure of Confucianism from Ruism was driven to its extreme by Legge, whose 'Confucianism' was not only derived by his employment of continental hermeneutical principles, but also imbued with his intention to reform

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[470] Pi Rixiu, the Qing classical scholar, stated in his Hisotory of Classical studies that "where is the teaching of Confucius? It is contained in the *Six Jing* that he made". [孔子之教何在？即在所作《六经》之内]. The term *Six Jing* also included the lost ancient classic of Music.
[471] James Legge, *SBE3/SBC1* (1879), xiv.

and transform the Chinese classical texts into religious scriptures. To better understand how Legge reformation inherited yet differentiated from his predecessors, mention needs to be made of a book by the French Jesuit historian Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, which Legge consulted since his 1852 Term-Question debate and digested for his new invention.

Few sinological readers of Du halde's *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary (*See Chapter one on Legge's Predecessors*)* were aware of Du Haldes' nuanced description on the Chinese religions. While Du Halde made the sinologically influential statement that "There are three principal sects…"[472] in the section of "the Religion of the Chinese*"* of his book, he recounted four religions of China following historical order, starting with the worship of the ancient Chinese. In this part, Du Halde described in length a religious tradition taught by the first fathers of the Chinese monarchy "concerning the Grandeur and Power of the Supreme Being", of which the traces could be found in the ancient Chinese books called the "*Five Volume"* (the Five Jing).[473] Du Halde's description in this part embedded the Jesuit opinion that "in these ancient books we find proofs that the primitive Chinese had knowledge of the Supreme Being, and payed him religious worship for a long series of ages; nor can we perceive therein, the least foot-step of idolatrous worship".[474] Du Halde mentioned only one connection between the ancient Chinese religion with Confucius when he wrote, "But Confucius revived it, by giving fresh reputation to the ancient Books, especially the *Shu King* (Jing, Classic), which he recommended as an exact rule of manners".[475]

In Du Halde's proper introduction of Ru Jiao (儒教), he rendered it fittingly as "the Sect of the Learned*"*. He also rightfully depicted this sect in summary as those who "follow the doctrine of the ancient books, and look upon Confucius as their Master".[476] Besides, the detailed account of Du Halde on this sect focused on "the sect of certain literati of these later times",[477] by which Du Halde referred to the

[472] Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese-Tartary,* Vol.1(1741), p.639.
[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid, 647.
[475] Ibid, 647.
[476] Ibid, 639.
[477] Ibid, 657.

learned class after the Song dynasty (CE. 960 -1279) when the new classical interpretations by philosophers like Zhu Xi and Brothers Cheng became orthodox. Within the "modern" literati, Du Halde further distinguished two classes. He deemed one class the true disciples of Confucius who "stick closely to the text of the classical books, and have the same notion of the Supreme Being the author of the universe, as the old Chinese". The other class was dubbed by Halde as the "atheists", being those who "(sought) the sense of the ancient doctrine in the glosses of the new commentators…new philosophy…and fall it may be without design into the most frightful mazes of atheism".[478]

In Du Halde's book, Confucius was introduced in the chapter on the Chinese literature, being the most accomplished interpreter of the Five Jing and the author of the Four Books. A biographical account of Confucius was also provided in connection with the Four Books. Du Halde thus depicts Confucius in the views of the literati: "…during so many ages, he has been looked upon throughout the empire, by way of excellence, as the great master and ornament of his nation, as well as a complete model for all wise men."[479]

As can be seen from the Jesuit description, Confucius was neither a religious instructor for the ancient Chinese worship nor the founder of the "Sect of the Learned". His connection to the ancient Chinese religion had more to do with his interpreter role. His later role as the master of Ru Jiao was due to both his wisdom in ancient knowledge and moral excellence. In short, as Nicolas Standaert correctly points out, "the Jesuits did not manufacture 'Confucianism'".[480] Neither did the Jesuits manufacture a religious instructor of Confucius. Nonetheless, they were to blame for rendering the Chinese *Jiao* (*teaching*) into religion, creating the notoriously sinological notion that there were "three religion/religious sects" in China.

When the early missionary and sinological writers in China, led by Morrison, Medhurst and John Francis Davis, championed the usage of "Confucian" terminology instead of Jesuit rendition of "the sect of the learned" for characterizing

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[478] Ibid, 662.
[479] Ibid, 415.
[480] Nicolas Standaert, *The Jesuits Did Not Manufacture "Confucianism"*. EASTM 16 (199: 115-132).

Ru Jiao, the sinological term of Confucianism came into being.[481] The new terminology substantially altered the scope and content of the Ruist sect, turning the Sinological focus from the flux and evolving Chinese scholarly tradition to a reified "System of Confucius". By way of associating Confucian system with the Confucian books, the Four Books became the principal sinological representation of Confucianism in the 19th century.

However, to the classicist Legge, the term "Confucian" had nothing to do with Ru Jiao or Ruist interpretations. It could only mean those of Confucius or relating to Confucius. For example, in Legge's terminology, "Confucian School" meant only those disciples who received their teaching directly from Confucius. In 1861, Legge made his first attempt at the teachings of Confucius based exclusively on the sayings of Confucius. Depicting it as irreligious and of political science, Legge stopped short of calling it Confucianism, most likely due to his consideration of the other Chinese classics he had not yet explored and translated. When he eventually landed on his 'Confucianism' in his *Sacred Books of China*, it was no more the moral-political teachings of Confucius which his disciples and followers purported and recorded in the Four Books. It was the ancient Jing that Confucius himself claimed to be teaching as a transmitter. More specifically, it was the teaching derived from Legge's hermeneutical reading and missiological view as to what Confucius taught—the ancient religion of China.

In the preface to his first volume of the Sacred Books of China, Legge thus justified his 'Confucianism'. Firstly, Confucius claimed that "he was a transmitter and not a maker, who believed in and loved the ancients"; Then, Confucius' grandson described Confucius as having "handed down the doctrines of Yao and Shun… and elegantly displayed the regulations of Wan and Wu, taking them as his model"; Again, "he discoursed about them freely with the disciples of his school… his favorite method was to direct the attention of his disciples to the ancient literature of the nation". It was through Confucius' study of these classics and his exhortations to his disciples that he contributed to their preservation. Legge hence concluded, "We

[481] Besides Morrision's translation of Ru Jiao into Confucian school in his ground-breaking Chinese-English Dictionaries, John Francis Davis in his 1836 book *the Chinese* rendered the chief religion of China as *Confucians,* W.H.Medhurst used *the system of Confucius* in his 1838 book *China: Its state and Prospects.* The term Confucianism also appeared in these two books, though not yet used as the formal term.

should have been, so far as it is possible for foreigners to be, in the same position as he was for learning the ancient religion of his country".[482] By employing hermeneutical interpretation and by his religious emphasis Legge turned his 'Confucianism' into the ancient Chinese religion of the Chinese classics that were transmitted by Confucius. In view of Legge's reasoning, a more proper statement of Legge is, "The religion of China in the ancient Jing is Confucianism *par excellence*, which is named from the great sage who lived in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C."

Legge's reformed 'Confucianism' absorbed the Jesuit notion on the ancient Chinese religion, yet went further by naming it 'Confucianism' in recognition of his contribution. Most importantly, Legge substituted his reformed 'Confucianism' for the Jesuit narrative of the "sect of the learned", or Ru Jiao, thus implicitly excluding the Ruist School from the religions of China. Such substitution, being conducted without any further ado, finally rendered the Jesuit narrative of the three sects of Chinese religion a valid statement.

Legge's statement about 'Confucianism' as a religion in China is widely misrepresented and misinterpreted both by scholars of Legge's own time and of today. A contemporary Chinese scholar Dr. Wang Hui remarks in his journal article that, "When Legge starts to introduce the Ruist classics to the west as the Sacred Books of China, he has ascertained the religious identity of the Ruism…".[483] Dr. Wang fails in seeing Legge's nuanced 'Confucianism' and his conscious effort to break away from Ruism. Dr. Wang is not to blame. Most Legge scholars in China by default deem the Sinological Confucianism as the English translation of Chinese Ruism. Fewer of them are aware of Legge's hermeneutical reading and missiological reformation of 'Confucianism'.

Legge's Theological Construction of 'Confucianism' as a Religion

Legge's first attempt at addressing the Chinese religion appeared in his 1852 Term-Question essay. In his 1852 essay, Legge's view on the religion of China was principally in connection with the sacrifices in "the public services of religion in

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[482] James Legge, *SBE3/SBC1* (1879), xiv, xv.
[483] Wang Hui, "James Legge's Monotheist Theory on Ruist Religion," *Studies in World Religions Journal*, 2007, No.2, 134 -143.

China". [484] His textual investigation on the border sacrifice implicitly refuted Morrison's opinion that the state religion of China "does not consist of doctrines which are to be taught, learned and believed".[485] Legge realized that the institution of imperial sacrifices was ritualistically and theologically established in conformity with the interpretations of the ancient Chinese Jing. Legge's "Texts of Confucianism" in a sense represented his construction of the scriptures for the state religion of China.

During his 30 years of investigational translation, Legge remained as much reticent on his intention to find out the religious condition of China as he was reticent on his personal endeavor to seek God in the Chinese Classics. It was until in 1880 that Legge delivered one of his few expositions on the religions of China. Presented in the form of a four-lecture series to the Presbyterian Church of England College at Guilford Street, London, it was printed in the same year with the title *The Religions of China: Confucianism and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity* (1880). Though the book was much less known than his *Chinese Classics* project or his *Sacred Books of China,* it contained Legge's systematic construction of his Confucian religion. Legge in this book for the first time laid out his concept of 'Confucianism', which was later accepted by Oxford English Dictionary (Vol. II. 1893) as part of the definition of English term Confucianism. Legge also constructed the development of the ancient Chinese religion from the Chinese classics, and addressed some of his unanswered questions in his 1852 essay.

Legge's 1880 Lectures on 'Confucianism'[486]

Legge's 1880 lectures were delivered in four parts, with the first two lectures focusing on 'Confucianism', the third on Taoism, and the last lecture being his comparisons between Chinese religions and Christianity. For the purpose of this thesis, focus will be given only to Legge's lectures on 'Confucianism'.

In the book format of his lectures, each lecture transcript was prefixed with a pair of epigraphs, one take from the Chinese classics, and the other taken from the

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[484] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits,* 22.
[485] Robert Morrison, "The state religion of China," *The Chinese Repository* Vol. III No.2 (June 1834): 49.
[486] James Legge, *The Religions of China: Confucianism and Taoism Described and Compared with Christianity* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1880).

Bible. These dual epitaphs formed interesting correspondence between the Chinese religious notions and their biblical remarks. The two pairs of epitaphs prefixed to Legge's first two lectures on 'Confucianism' are illustrated as below.

Illustration 6-1:

郊社之礼所以事上帝也

"In the ceremonies at the alters of Heaven and Earth, they served God."

- Confucius. *Doctrine of the Mean*. Chapter xix.

"They Knew God."

- Paul, Romans 1:21.

Legge came across the Chinese text in his 1852 Term-Question debate. This text coupled with the authority of Confucius formed part of Legge's key argument and belief that "the Chinese do know the true God".[487] A noteworthy difference between this rendition of Legge and his 1852 quotation from Medhurst's translation[488] was the change of tense from present tense to the past. It somehow indicated Legge's nuanced refinement on his previous view that "the Chinese do know the true God". The quotation from Paul is also interesting. Putting the quotation back to perspective, Paul says, "for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools" (Romans. 1:21-22).

Illustration 6-2:

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[487] James Legge, *the Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits*, 2.

[488] Legge's 1852 quotation from Medhurst's translation was: "The ceremonies of the celestial and terrestrial sacrifices are those by which men serve Shang-Te". Legge. *Notions of the Chinese* (1852): pp. 50-51.

敦孝弟以重人伦

"Esteem most highly filial piety and brotherly submission, in order to give their due importance to the social relations."
-- 1st maxim, *Kang Xi Edict*

"Honour Thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."
-- Fifth Commandment.

In the second pair of epitaphs, the Chinese quotation was taken, interestingly, from the first maxim of *the Sacred Edict of Kang Xi* rather than from the texts of Chinese classics. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Legge's reading of the Edict led him to conclude that the filial piety constituted the "foundational commandment" of the Confucian moral teachings. In his 1880 lecture on 'Confucianism', filial piety was the first commandment of the Chinese religion of 'Confucianism', contrasting to its being the fifth commandment in the Bible.

Legge's Definition of 'Confucianism': the Ancient Religion of China

Legge commenced his lectures by laying out "in what sense I wish that term (Confucianism) to be understood" (Legge, 3). Legge reemphasized his hermeneutical justification he applied in the *Sacred Books of China* while making further fine-tuning to its scope. Admitting that his 'Confucianism' was an "extended application of the name Confucianism", Legge nonetheless stated, "I use the term Confucianism, therefore, as covering, first of all, the ancient religion of China, and then the views of the great philosopher himself, in illustration or modification of it, his views as committed to writing by himself, or transmitted in the narratives of his disciples." (Legge, 4). In other words, Legge was well aware of the sinological notion of Confucianism. Yet, Legge was perhaps addressing implicitly his missionary brethren, hoping them to make use of his 'Confucianism' in their missionary work in China.

Legge's construction of the ancient Chinese religion began with his etymological examination on the primitive Chinese characters relating to religious subjects. Inspired by Max Müller's academic achievements in comparative philology and comparative mythology, Legge attempted "the position of the Aryan philologists"

(Legge, 6) for the Chinese language to try to decipher the thoughts of ancient Chinese by their root-words. The hieroglyphic nature of the Chinese characters made it next to impossible for Legge to compare with phonetic languages within the scope of comparative philology. Nevertheless, the pictorial and ideographic features of the characters, analyzed with the aid of ancient Chinese dictionaries, made it possible for Legge to deduce some ideas of ancient Chinese with which they formed the primitive characters.

Of these primitive Chinese characters of religious significance, the first character was 天 (*tian*, signifying *heaven or sky*). 天 is composed of two meaningful parts, 一（*one, the first*）and 大(*great*), and signifies "that is above all and over all" (*Shuo Wen Dictionary*). Another character 帝 (Di, ruler, or God per Legge's translation) consists of 上(*above*). Though no convincing explanation can be made of its lower constituent by Chinese writers, *Shuo Wen* explains 帝 as "Lordship and government". A third character 示 (*spirits or spiritual manifestation*) serves both a root word and important constituent in forming other characters associated with spirits. As a root word it signifies "*manifestation and revelation"*. When used for constituting other characters they were commonly associated with spiritual beings, sacrifices and prayers, such as *shen* (神). The ideographical construction of *shen* provided Legge further evidence that *shen* could not be made to signify God.

From his philological examination of the Chinese primitive characters, Legge came to his refined opinion on the monotheistic nature of Chinese religion. In his 1852 essay Legge made a controversial claim concerning Chinese state religion that "Their religion is now what it was four thousand years ago –I do not say a pure monotheism, but certainly a monotheism" (Legge. *Notions of the Chinese,* 1852, 33). In his 1880 lecture Legge's opinion was much nuanced. Legge wrote, "five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists, - not henotheists, but monotheists; and this monotheism was in danger of being corrupted."[489] In other words, the monotheistic feature of the Chinese religion was already in danger of corruption during the earliest traceable Chinese history of 23rd and 22nd century BCE.

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[489] Ibid, 16.

Following his philological examination, Legge proceeded to tackle the evolution of ancient Chinese religion from a historical perspective, attempting to track when and how changes occurred and current practices prevailed. Legge's anthropological examination on the evolution of Chinese religion drew greatly from his intimate knowledge of *Shoo Jing*, *Shi Jing* alongside their later commentaries.

According to Legge's anthropological narrative, two principal forms of worship were gradually instituted in the millennium since the time of Chinese founding father Fu Xi (伏羲) until the ancient kings of Yao (c. B.C 24th century). They were "the worship of God for all… and the worship of ancestors by all" (Legge, 23). Various modifications since then took place, yet the contemporaneous practices in the forms of state worship of God and universal worship of ancestors maintained substantially the same.

According to *Shoo Jing*, Shun the successor to the first recorded ancient king Yao, officially received his charges at the Temple of the Accomplished Ancestors. Shun then "sacrificed specially, but with the ordinary forms, to *Shang Ti*, '—That is, we have seen, to God;' sacrificed purely to the Six objects of Honour; offered their appropriate sacrifices to the hills and rivers; and extended his worship to the host of spirits" [490](Legge, 24-25). This textual record was significant in that it formed the foundation for all the subsequent Chinese dynasties in instituting their sacrificial tradition and practices. Legge wasn't able to answer as to when those superstitious elements were introduced into the sacrifice to Shang Di in his 1852 essay. In his 1880 lectures, Legge's refined interpretation still resonated his continuous defense for his Term-Question argument. While insisting on the "regular worship of God by the sovereign of China" (Legge, 25) as the "primitive monotheism" (Legge, 26), Legge interpreted the worship to various spirits as "subordinate to the homage due to God, resulted from a mistaken idea of His government in Creation" (Legge, 26).

In his 1880 lectures, Legge presented a collection of verbatim translations from *Shoo Jing* and *Shi Jing* as the "testimony" that Chinese classics predicated many things of Shang Di or *tien* that "are true only of the true God" (Legge, 27). Legge observed that these statements were not penned out of inspiration, or "to contain what

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[490]《尚书》, 舜典: "肆類于上帝，禋于六宗，望于山川，徧于群神".

we should call a Revelation". "Historians, poets, and others wrote them as they were moved in their own minds" (Legge. SBE3. Preface, xv).

> He is the ruler of men and all this lower world. Men in general, the mass of the people, are His peculiar care. He appointed grain to be the chief nourishment of all. He watches especially over the conduct of kings, whom he has exalted to their high position for the good of the people. While they reverence Him, and fulfil their duties in His fear, and with reference to His will, taking His ways as their pattern, He maintains them, smells the sweet savour of their offerings, and blesses them and their people with abundance and general prosperity. When they become impious and negligent of their duties, He punishes them, takes away the throne from them, and appoints others in their place. His appointments come from His fore-knowledge and fore-ordination.
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> James Legge. *Religions of China*. 27-28.

Legge adduced an interesting instance from the *Shoo King* –"the Book on Establishment of the Government (立政)" – in which Duke Zhou the ancient sage taught the young king on the lessons from the past dynasties' rises and falls. The founder of the first dynasty Xia sought only those able men who revere Shang Di for filling the positions; the founder of the dynasty Shang, known as Tang the Successful, "grandly administered the bright ordinances of Shang Di". The founders of the current house of Zhou, King Wen and King Wu, were able to employ men who served Shang Di for various appointments. In contrast to them, the last lines of these illustrious kings invariably failed to follow their forefathers' way in their conduct, thus causing the wrath and punishment of *tian* or Shang Di. There were more inferences in the *Shi King* describing the personal characters of Shang Di (上帝). He was the source of awe and fear, "unpitying" and "hating no one", his strange works of evil were to call men to repentance. He "gave birth to the multitudes of the people with a good nature, yet few were able to keep it and held out good till the end" (Legge, 27, 28).

Those were the testimony of the ancient Chinese classics concerning Shang Di (上帝). They also served as Legge's testimony for vindicating his Shang Di argument for rendering God, not because the Chinese Shang Di was as powerful and glorious as God, but that such powers and glory could only be given to God.

Legge once again cited the example from "the Collective Statutes of the Ming dynasty (大明会典)" and the hymn that was not unlike the Biblical narrative of genesis. In Legge's 1852 essay, the hymn served the decisive evidence in Legge's conviction that Shang Di of the Chinese term was God. In his 1880 Lecture, Legge reiterated his conviction while modified some opinions in terms of the nature of sacrifice and the clerical structure in the religion of 'Confucianism'. Firstly, Legge maintained that the Chinese religion was originally of monotheism, which could still be discerned from the contemporaneous state worship despite the deplorable multitude of spirits that had grown up around the state worship. Secondly, the Chinese name for the idea of God was a personal name of Di (帝, Ruler, Lord), and its connection with *tian* (天, Heaven) tended to prevent the polytheism to certain extent. Thirdly, the sacrificial offerings by the emperors were oblations, not propitiations, the ultimate purpose being to acknowledge the obligations of the kings and their nation to God. Lastly, the emperor did not preside the services as the priest as there was no priesthood in China. The cultured or official class bore certain resemblance to a clerical body in the execution of sacrifices, but were not priests. The emperor presided and ministered the religious worship, yet in the meantime he did this also as the representative of the people and the nation, not as a priest.

A major opposition to Legge's Shang Di argument in the 1850s concerned with the opinion that in the state religion of China equal respect and honour were paid to the manes of departed ancestors as they were to *tian* (heaven) or Shang Di. Legge in penning his 1852 essay was vaguely aware that ancestral worship was a manifestation of man's duty of filial piety as prescribed by Confucius. In the meantime he considered the worship "more than the manifestation of filial duty and affection" and held it "contrary to the lessons of God's word" (Legge. Notions of the Chinese, 54, 55).

When Legge revisited the subject in his 1877 paper to the Shanghai Missionary Conference, some nuanced changes began to show in his opinion on the Chinese ancestor worship. Legge now viewed this universal practice in China "more than anything else may be styled the religion of the Chinese". Legge inferred that while the worship to Shang Di became the exclusive religion of the emperors, or the state religion, the ancestral worship constituted the religion of the mass of Chinese people.

Legge still considered it "inconsistent with Christianity and must be forbidden", yet he showed a more tolerant approach towards the ancestor worship, arguing that "the religious state of the people would be much worse and more difficult to deal with, but for the marked difference which appears in the Confucian books between Him and all other objects of worship"(Legge. *Confucianism in relation to Christianity*, 4.5.6).

In his 1880 lectures, Legge further developed his historical and moral theory of the 'Confucian religion' regarding its worship of God and worship of the departed. In this theory, Legge deduced that the worship of God appeared first, as testified by the primitive Chinese characters. Gradually new conceptions were formed from nature as being the manifestation of God and in which were inhabited spirits "in subordination to Him", resulting into worship of spirits. When worship to God became the prerogative of the sovereigns and cut off from the mass people, "Men, however, must worship" (Legge, 69, 70). The Chinese populace were consequently left with only the worship of their ancestors.

In Legge's opinion, Confucius only followed the tradition of the Chinese race, yet he emphasized ancestral worship as the expression of the fundamental duty of filial piety. As the common Chinese people were cut off from worshipping God, the sages of China therefore "dealt with filial duty so as to make a religion of it" to channel the flow of religious feeling of the people. Legge inferred that the ancestral worship was not a stand-alone religion, but always dependent on the belief in God (Legge, 71-84). What's more, Legge thought that the teaching of filial piety embedded in the ancestral worship kept the Chinese people from straying from their fathers' ways and was the root cause for China's enduring existence and growth. By thus reasoning, Legge associated the Chinese filial piety with the Biblical Commandment: "Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you" (Genesis. 20:12). To Legge, the Confucian commandment of filial piety and the lasting existence of Chinese nation served best testament to the truthfulness of God's Fifth Commandment.

Legge concluded his exposition on Chinese ancestral worship with a question for his audience: "Have we reason to think that the worship of the spirits…had or has now a beneficial, a moral and religious influence?" (Legge, 93) Legge ventured to

answer the question himself. The Chinese ancestral worship, though named as a sacrifice, in essence signified spiritual communion and communication with their deceased fathers, in which the descendants contemplated their virtues and resolved to be as good as their ancestors were. Legge alluded Chinese classical texts for expressing such communion and communications. These texts testified the recognition by the Chinese of the omnipresence of spirits, their power in oversighting the moral behavior of men, and men's submission in fasting and purifying themselves.

The ancient Chinese religious teaching concerning man and his nature was principally recorded in the classics of *the Shoo Jing* and *the Shi Jing*. The ancient Chinese saying of "Heaven gives birth to people", or "Heaven gives birth to mankind" [491] constituted the fundamental religious concept on which Legge formulated the religious system of Confucianism. Legge again summarized these fundamental religion opinions from *the Shu Jing and Shi Jing* and rendered them almost verbatim except for the Chinese terms *tian* and Shang Di.

> Thus the religion of China teaches that God made men, and endowed them with a good nature intended to lead them invariably right; and to secure this result, He further appointed for them kings and wise men to rule and instruct them. Instruction to promote their virtue, and government to secure their happiness: these were what Heaven made provision for in behalf of mankind.
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> James Legge. *Religions of China*, 101.

Legge's usage of God for the classical Chinese terms *tian* and Shang Di rendered the Chinese opinion on the theological natures of Shang Di or *tian* in harmony with those of God. Legge in a sense rediscovered in the classics the religious view of ancient Chinese on *tian and* Shang Di as the creator and moral dispenser. On the other hand, it would be equally important to add a few of my observations on how the learned Ruist scholars gradually explained away the existence of the personalized Shang Di by their "wise" interpretations until in the end it became an invisible term in plain sight. Taking for example the well quoted

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[491] *The Book of Historical Documents*, "惟天生民有欲 (商書: 仲虺之誥)"; The Book of Poetry, "天生烝民、有物有則 (大雅: 烝民)".

classical text of "Heaven gives birth to mankind" (天生烝民). When Mencius quoted the text in his work, he resorted to the authority of Confucius in commenting that all things created had to follow certain respective laws, hence it was the duty of man to cherish virtue. Mencius left the creator—heaven—completely out of his exposition. Xun Zi (荀子 c. BC 316 – BC 237), another renowned Ruist philosopher after Confucius, further applied utilitarian rationale in interpreting this text. He explained, "By saying that 'heaven gives birth to the multitudes of people', it means that the people are there to be made use of".[492] Xun Zi can be reckoned as one of the earliest atheistic philosophers of the Ruist School. In the work of his namesake Xun Zi, he proposed that "instead of contemplating on the vast heaven, why not one direct his attention to the taming of things so that he can control them? Instead of abiding by the heaven and praising it, why not one control the heavenly decrees and take advantage of them?"[493] By the time of the former Han dynasty (BC.202 – AD. 8), this text was interpreted by an official-scholar to his emperor as, "the heaven gave birth to the multitudes of people, yet they were not able to get along with each other, so kings were established to command and govern them."[494] To bring this text up to date, the readers may be interested to know that the ancient term *tian sheng* (天生 born of heaven) is still live and actively used in modern Chinese language. Functioning as an adjective, it is defined by the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* as "that which is formed naturally".

Legge Rethinking Confucius as a Religious Instructor

Legge in his 1880 lectures also demonstrated significantly changed views towards Confucius and his role in preserving the Chinese religion. This transformation came both as a result of Legge's life-time contemplation on the ancient Chinese religion and became meaningful in Legge's reformation on the Chinese religion as a religion of God.

Legge's previous encounters with Confucius were intertwined with mixed feelings of respect, appreciation, regret, expectation and frustration. The awakening

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[492] Xun Zi 荀子, *The Works of Xun Zi*《荀子》, "夫天生蒸民，有所以取之-榮辱."
[493] Xun Zi 荀子, *the Works of Xun Zi*. The Chapter on the subject of Heaven.
[494] Ban Gu 班固, *the History of Former Han* 汉书. Record of the Emperor Xiao Cheng Four.孝成皇帝紀四.

came after his twenty-year grappling with the Yi King (易经, *The Book of Changes*) to try to make sense out of its hexagrams, interpretations and the purported appendixes of Confucius. It was not until in 1874 that "for the first time I got hold, as I believe, of the clue, and found that my toil of twenty years before was of no service at all"(Legge. *SBE16/SBC2*, Preface, xiii). One of Legge's major realizations was that, "we had no evidence that any part was his (note: referring to Confucius), unless it might be the paragraphs introduced by the compiler or compilers as sayings of 'the Master'" (Legge. *SBE16/SBC2,* Preface, xiv). In fact, his microscopic examinations of the internal evidence from the so-called Ten Appendixes themselves only proved that large portions of the appendixes bore no signs of Confucian authorship. Not only did the formula of "the Master (note: Confucius) said" appear frequently, there were even additional expositions on the remarks of Confucius. Besides, Legge's critical examinations on the Chinese scholarly controversy over Confucian authorship on all the Five Jing led him to realize that it was more likely that none of the Five Jing was properly authored by Confucius. By 1879, Legge came to his conclusion that it was even "an error to suppose that he compiled historical documents, poems and other ancient books" (Legge. *SBE3/SBC1,* Preface, xiv).

Such realization was both transforming and liberating to Legge. Legge was liberated from the fetter imposed by the sage Confucius, whose opinions and sayings in the Classics "we cannot but receive with deference, not to say with reverence"; he was able to "feel entirely at liberty to exercise our own judgement on their contents and weigh them in the balance of our reason" (Legge. *SBE16/SBC2*. Introduction, 28). More importantly, Legge was liberated from the Chinese Ruist debate concerning what classics Confucius made or wrote. Legge was to apply his own hermeneutical judgement in defining the teaching of Confucius. In his hermeneutically and missiologically reformed 'Confucianism', Confucius was the transmitter of the ancient Chinese classics, in particular the instructor of the ancient Chinese religion in these classics.

Legge in his 1880 lectures corrected the view (including his own old view) of "not regarding Confucius as a religious teacher" (Legge. 4). In his recount of the life of Confucius, Confucius took on an apostolic characteristic. Confucius was the receiver and propagator of the ancient Chinese religion. His teachings on ceremonialism and morality were "pervaded with religious sentiment" and not

"without reference to the will of God" (Legge. 123,124). Confucius' great achievement was his enunciation of the golden rule: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others" (Legge. 137). Legge no longer held any old grudge against Confucius' utterance of the golden rule centuries before Christ, nor cared to criticize Confucius' golden rule in its negative form. Legge connected the Confucian teaching on the duties of man with God by alluding *the Doctrine of the Mean*: "What Heaven has conferred is called the nature; an accordance with this nature is called the path of duty; the regulation of this path is called instruction" (Legge. 138).[495]

Legge's reconciliation with Confucius was illustrated in his revised judgement on the sage. "K'ung (孔子) was a great and wonderful man; but I think that the religion which he found, and did so much to transmit to posterity, was still greater and more remarkable than he" (Legge. 149). In other words, while Legge's judgement recognized Confucius as a great transmitter, he hoped to draw the attention of his audience to the greater Chinese religion about God. This judgement probably best demonstrated what Legge intimated in his 1877 paper about how the missionaries in China should revolutionize the people's religion while "avoiding driving their carriages rudely over the Master's grave".[496]

At the end of his fourth lecture, Legge turned the attention to the issue concerning the Christian mission in China. What was the reason that withheld the success of Christianity in China? While not a few missionaries blamed the entrenched Chinese Ruist tradition as the biggest adversary of Christianity, Legge came up with a discordant voice, "We must blame ourselves: the divisions among Christian churches; the inconsistencies and unrighteousness of professors; the selfishness and greed of our commerce; the ambitious and selfish policy of so-called Christian nations" (Legge. 310). Legge cited a conversation he had with Mr. Guo Songtao, the first ambassador of the Chinese government to England. Guo once asked Legge, "Between England and China, which country do you say is the better of the two?" Legge answered, "England." The disappointed Guo refined his question, "I mean looking at them from the moral standpoint, looked at from the standpoint of

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[495] Zi Si 子思, *The Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸: "天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教."
[496] James Legge, *Confucianism in relation to Christianity*, 12.

benevolence (仁), righteousness (义), and propriety (礼), which country do you say is the better?" [497] When Legge, after some "demur and fencing", still opted for England, the surprised and enraging Guo cried out, "You say that, looked at from the moral standpoint, England is better than China! Then how is it that England insists on our taking her opium?" What was unique about this incident was that it put Christian religion, as represented by Christian nations, under the moral scrutiny of Chinese context. In a certain sense, the 19th century Christian missions in China was greatly tainted with the concomitant injustice inflicted on China by the Christian nations. It partially distorted the views of Chinese scholars and intellectuals on Christian religion, particularly in terms of their perception of the moral significance of the Christian belief.

The decade of the 1880s saw Legge's steady and continuous contribution to Max Müller's *Sacred Books of East* series, which did not stop until he finished the last book on the *Sacred Texts of Taoism* in 1891. After that Legge made revision on his first two volumes of the Chinese Classics project for the Oxford reprint (1893 and 1895). Legge was now 80 years old. He wrote very little on Chinese religions. Only two of his articles on the Confucian religion could be found, one being a lecture given in London and collected in *Religious systems of the World* (London, 1890), and the other paper collected in *Non-Christian Religions of the World* (New York, 1890). In both articles Legge demonstrated his mature reflection on the teaching of Confucius while defending his opinion that 'Confucianism' was a religion.

In his lecture given in 1888 or 1889 on *"*Confucius the Sage and the Religion of China", [498] Legge began by explaining why he didn't title his lecture 'Confucianism'. Legge was aware of the two frequent "errors" associated with Confucius. More accurately, he was referring to the two misrepresentations caused by the term Confucianism. One error was to view Confucius as the author of the state religion of China, the other treating the Confucian teaching as a moral system devoid of any religious elements. Despite of Legge's effort to explain his formulation of

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[497] The three moral standpoints mentioned by Guo was part of the core value of Ruist ethics, which are constituted of benevolence (仁), righteousness (义), propriety (礼), wisdom (智) and Sincerity (信).

[498] James Legge, *"*Confucius the Sage and the Religion of China*,"* in *Religious Systems of the World*, edited by William Sheowring and Conrad W. Thies (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1890), 40-54.

'Confucianism' as incorporating Confucius the sage and the Chinese state religion which Confucius inherited and propagated, and his emphatic usage of Confucian religion, Legge's 'Confucianism' formula did not prevail among his contemporaneous sinologists. Legge himself seemed to have given up the term 'Confucianism' in his lecture.

Legge's 1890 paper on "Christianity and Confucianism Compared in Their Teaching of the Whole Duty of Man"[499] featured his focused comparisons between Confucianism and Christianity in terms of the duties of man. Legge's paper in this book stood out from other papers not due to his favorable opinions on some of the Confucian teachings, but due to his express criticism on the shortcomings of Christendom and "nominally Christian peoples" (Legge. 33). Legge criticized Christian nations for falling "short of the standard of duty and character which we ought to be aiming after" (Legge. 34). Grieving that "Christendom should remain so imperfectly Christian, and so great a portion of mankind be still non-Christian" (Legge. 36), Legge ended his writing by an advocacy: Only when Christian nations could truly show that they were ruled by the principles of love and righteousness in their political and commercial intercourses with Chinese, only when they could truly exercise the golden rule of Christ, they could win the Chinese over.

A Ruist Scholar-official's Encounter with Religion

Before leaving Legge's reformation on Confucianism, it is worthwhile to add here a historical event in which a representative of Chinese Ruist School made his debut on the international stage of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religion. In the conference, Pung Kwangyu (彭光誉), the first Secretary of the Chinese Legation to the US, delivered a paper to the international religious audience and presented his Ruist views on religion, on Confucius and on the religious identity of Ruism. Pung's paper was translated into English by the title "Confucianism"[500] and read in the

[499] James Legge, "Christianity and Confucianism Compared in Their Teaching of the Whole Duty of Man," in *Non*-Christian *Religions of the World* (New York, Chicago Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1890), part II, 1- 36.
[500] Pung Kwang Yu, "Confucianism" in *the World's Parliament of Religions,* Edited by the Rev. John Henry Barrows (Chicago: The parliament Publishing Company, 1893), Vol. 1, 374

conference. The Chinese text of his paper was later printed in China under another title of *Shuo Jiao* (说教, or A *Treatise on Religion.*1896). It is a valuable paper because by reading through its English and Chinese texts it provides an interesting specimen of how the western subjects interpreted in the Ruist Chinese discourse may convey different messages from its English context, especially when the Chinese terms and their western or sinological counterparts were mixed together. It is also worth pointing out that the English translation of Pung's lecture in many cases does not agree with the Chinese text, raising the suspicion of whether or not Pung's Chinese text was faithfully rendered or whether Pung made alterations to his Chinese text.

First of all, it needs to be pointed out that the translation of Chinese term Ru Jiao or Ru Jia (the Ruist School) into the "Confucian School" in Pung's paper was a mistranslation. Pung's writing distinguished two narratives, one concerning specifically his references to the opinions of Confucius, the other being those of the contemporaneous Ruist scholars. Pung made it clear that his mention of Confucius was per the request from the organizer of the Committee to "prepare an address on Confucius, setting forth his teachings concerning God, man, the relationship of man to the spiritual world".[501] On the other hand, most of Pung's views on the religious subjects were from the viewpoint of the Ruist scholars (儒者) of Pung's own time rather than from Confucius. By translating Ruist terminology into "Confucian" terms, especially by rendering "Ruist scholars*"* into "Confucianists", the English text conveyed a false message that his opinions were properly of Confucian doctrine concerning religion. Pung's discourse also illustrated the differences between the sinological "Confucianism" and the Ruist scholarly tradition. The sinological scholars try to decipher the system of Confucianism from their textual analysis of the Chinese classics. The Ruist tradition is characterized by resorting to the authorities of Confucius and of Chinese classics in justifying the prevailing orthodoxy, regardless of whether or not the allusions are accurate or taken out of context.

Pung's Ruist opinion on religion is worth noting, especially in terms of his view on God (Pung's Chinese text reads *shen*), which indicated more influence by

[501] Ibid, 374.

the Chinese term *shen* than the biblical God. Pung attributed to the early translation of western term "religion" into the Chinese "*jiao"* (教, teaching) to Jesuit missionaries. However, Pung pointed out that the Chinese "*jiao"* did not mean religion. (Peng. p. 375). Peng further mentioned that so far as Ruist scholars were concerned there was no such name as Ru Jiao *(*儒教, the Scholarly teaching*)* in China. The only Chinese teaching was the teaching by the imperial government on propriety. Pung accused the Taoists and Buddhists of making up such a name in their attempt to place themselves in the same rank as the Ruist scholars, though they were in Pung's view only heterodox teachings. Pung claimed to have made his enquiry into the meaning of religion by consulting the *Webster Dictionary*. It was worth pointing out here that the definition Pung alluded (though Pung's allusion was also dubious), may sound normal enough in its English context, its Chinese translation,[502] with the rendering of God into *shen* (神), conveyed an impression of the popular Chinese worship of various *shen*. Pung associated the western religion with the primitive Chinese Shaman (巫祝) tradition of the early Zhou Period (BCE 11th – BCE 8th century) and ranked them in the same class as Buddhism and Taoism, which were all "heterodox teachings that were propagated to fool people".[503]

Pung made his observations on the features of religion from his reading the texts of Christianity, Taoism and Buddhism. Pung remarked that all religions have their Gods (*shen* in Chinese text) and names for their Gods. (There were considerable differences in this section between Pung's Chinese text and his English text, I will try to follow his Chinese text when necessary). Pung listed the name of Christian *shen* Jehova as well as the names of the Buddhist and Taoist *shen*. Pung made further generalization of the similarities among these *shen*: they all had names and carving images, all dressed up in the costume of their ancient monarchs, and all having their biographies recording the creation of heaven and earth as if they were the eyewitnesses. Yet they did not agree on the year of creation. Pung commented here that "the Ruist scholars (wrongly rendered as Confucianists), however, have never

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[502] Pung's Chinese rendition of the Webster definition of Religion: [余考英文字书解尔釐利景 (religion) 为教人顺神拜神爱神诚心事真神之理也].

[503] The English text sounded less derogatory, "Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, and even priestism do not teach error. If the subject were merely to teach the foolish to say prayers, the harm would be slight." Pung's Chinese text reads: [仙佛巫祝基督之爾釐利景皆茅邪教也聽愚民之].

indulged in speculations of this nature" (Pung. 376). Pung proceeded to offer the Ruist interpretation of *shen* by alluding to another dubious commentary of *Yi Jing* (*the Book of Changes*). "Di (帝, or 上帝) is the lord of heaven, and Di is heaven. They are of one being. The interaction of heaven and earth produces the third being, which is so unfathomable that it is called *shen.* Such interactions with stars, mountains, rivers result in the wonderful powers which are the *shen* of these things. These *shen* do not have forms, shapes, names and appearances of man. Only Shang Di, being the result of interaction between heaven and earth, takes the form of the *shen* of man. These heavenly, earthly and human *shen* constitute the whole class of *shen*.[504] What made the English text fail to convey Pung's comparison between Ruist *shen* (spirits) and *shen* (God) in western religion was that the unknown translator in this section rendered *shen* all into "spirits" or "spiritual forces". More importantly, the Ruist association of Biblical God with *shen* led Pung into a totally different path of discussion, either treating it as the superstitious *shen* employed to fool the ignorant, or refuting it by the Ruist metaphysical opinions.

Speaking of the opinions of some western scholars that "the system of doctrines of Confucius could not be properly called a religion, or that China did not have a religion of her own", Pung responded, "that the ethical systems of Confucius cannot be a religion may be admitted without fear of contradiction" [505](Pung. 378-379), yet Pung couldn't agree on the latter opinion. Pung placed the religion of China long before the appearance of Ruist scholars, or before the appearances of any other religions. In current times, Taoism and Buddhism were Chinese religions.

Pung as a Ruist scholar did not comprehend the divine nature or the moral significance of God through the Chinese *shen*. Neither could he make practical sense of any merits (the Chinese text used *usage*) of Christianity, only admitting some similarities between the Christian moral teachings with Ruist moral principles. Pung's Ruist thinking model, featuring knowledge through instruction and reasoning by way of its utility to governance, rendered him unable to comprehend belief. As

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[504] Pung, Kwang Yu 彭光誉, *A Treatise on Religion* 原教 (1896).
[505] In Pung's Chinese text, the passage reads: "Some western scholars claim that Confucius is not religious, or China doesn't have a religion of her own". Pung's Chinese text doesn't contain the so-called Confucian doctrine or Confucian system.

such Pung concluded, "what is properly called religion" was "never considered desirable for the people to know and for the government to sanction" (Peng. p.384). Pung cited Chinese historical lessons and concluded that "every attempt to propagate religious doctrines in China has always given rise to the spreading of falsehood and errors, and finally resulted in resistance to legitimate authority and in brining dire calamities upon the country" (Pung. 384).

Conclusion

Confucianism had its origin in the 19th century missionary and sinological writers' efforts to translate and encapsulate Ru Jiao through their textual examinations of the Chinese classics. Legge's unique 'Confucianism' originated from his classicist disapproval of applying "Confucian" term to Ru Jiao at large. It also originated from his intention to decipher the authentic teachings of Confucius as what he said in his writings. Legge did not apply Confucianism to the moral-political teachings of Confucius as a result of his quest for historical Confucius. Legge's eventual 'Confucianism' suggested his missiological proposition to the Christian mission in china and his final solution to his Term-Question debate. In terms of his missiological proposition, Legge by way of his "Texts of Confucianism" in the *Sacred Books of China* reformed the Chinese classics into religious texts about God and transformed Confucius into the instructor of Chinese religion. Legge hoped the missionaries in China would be able to avail themselves of his "Texts of Confucianism" to unravel to the Chinese the ideas of God from their own texts, consequently leading them on to the full knowledge of God in the Bible. Through this missiological approach, Legge also hoped the missionaries to adopt Chinese Shang Di for God while supplementing it with the notions about the Christian God, eventually turning Chinese Shang Di into the proper rendition of the biblical God.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that Legge's 'Confucianism' represents his reformation on the Chinese Jing (classics) as religious texts and his 'revolutionary' construction of the ancient Chinese religion as a religion of God. When Legge used the terms "reform" and "revolution" in his 1877 Shanghai paper, his message seemed mysterious, equivocal and even heretical to his missionary brethren in China. The message became clearer and more intelligible only after Legge produced his "Texts of Confucianism" (1879-1885) as part of his *Sacred Books of China* contribution to Max Muller's project. Through Legge's textual selection and his interpreting Chinese Shang Di as God, Legge reformed the Chinese classics into the scrptures of the ancient Chinese religion concerning God. By applying 'Confucianism' to his reformed scriptures of ancient Chinese religion, Legge transformed Confucius into a prophetic religious instructor, whose moral teaching on man was both inspired by and derived from the ancient scriptures that Confucius contributed in preservation through his propagation of the classics. Such reformation efforts were, in a sense, not unlike what Martin Luther or John Calvin did in the Protestant Reformation by making the Scripture the sole authority of Christian religion (*sola scriptura*). . Legge's reformation on Chinese religion and on the teaching of Confuciusalso implied Legge's missiological proposition for a constructive encounter between Christianity and Ruism. By imaging Confucius as "a man sent of God", Legge expected the missionaries in China would avoid antagonistic confrontation with Confucius, but rather "lay bare his nakedness with a tender hand" as "it was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ"; By making use of what was valuable in the Chinese classics, Legge hoped that his peer missionaries would be able to unfold to the Chinese from their own classics and from their own sage Confucius "about God and His moral government, and about themselves". Finally, Legge's reformation on Confucianism intimated his solution to the controversy over his Shang Di argument. By missionaries' adopting Chinese Shang Di in speaking of God and supplementing the Chinese classical Shang Di with the knowledge of God, Legge hoped to transform the Chinese Shang Di into the proper notion of God. Such transformed notion of

Shang Di as God would eventually lead the Chinese "on to the deeper, richer truth about the same subjects in Christianity."[506]

With the completion of *the Sacred Books of China*, Legge fulfilled the plan he had laid out at the outset of his missionary career – "that he should not be able to consider himself qualified for the duties of his position, until he had thoroughly mastered the Classical Books of the Chinese, and had investigated for himself the whole field of thought through which the sages of China had ranged, and in which were to be found the foundations of the (religious), moral, social, and political life of the people."[507] Legge also achieved more than he had planned in his 1861 book by translating *the Classic of Filial Piety* and by contributing the Taoist texts to Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*. Legge did not say whether or not he found God in his investigation into the Chinese classics, although his search continued after his completion of his *Sacred Books of China.* The answer can be found by the modern Chinese dictionary, in which Shang Di is defined in its modern sense as signifying the God of Abrahamic tradition. Another interesting question is asked: Did Legge convert to the Confucianism he created? To this question I am not ready to say for an answer. What I know for sure is that Legge's conviction that Chinese Shang Di is the true God never wavered throughout his translational investigations in the Chinese classics.

By the end of 19th century, Legge was considered one of the most important sinologists in the west. His *Chinese Classics* (1861-1872) and his *Sacred Books of China* (both the *"*Texts of Confucianism" and "Texts of Taoism") became the must-reads for the comparative religious studies on China on account of his "enormous broadening of the textual foundation for religious studies."[508] Samuel Johnson thus comments, "To the conscientious labors of Dr. Legge we owe the possibility of anything like trustworthy reading of the older Chinese classics." [509] Legge's translations on Chinese classics also influenced other disciplinary studies on China

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[506] James Legge, *Confucianism in Relation to Christianity*. 3, 10, 11.
[507] James Legge, *CC1* (1861). Preface. vii. I added "religious" according to his reiteration of his purposes in the fifth volume of the Chinese classics. See *CC5* (1872). Prelegomena, 51.
[508] Jack Miles, ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Christianity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015), 24.
[509] Samuel Johnson, *Oriental Religions and Their Relation to Universal Religion: China* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1877), 535.

in Europe and America. Scholars such as J .J. M. De Groot (1854 -1921, Dutch Sinologist and historian of religion), Marcel Granet(1884 -1940, French sociologist), Max Weber (1864 – 1920, German Sociologist) and Bertrand Russel (1872 -1970) all consulted Legge's works in one way or another in their works relating China, just to name a few.

Into the twenty-first century, Chinese scholars are begining to step up their studies on Legge's *Chinese Classics* translation, being led partially by the need to seek the lost national tradition as well as by the increasing need to employ international languages in enunciating Chinese value propositions in their intercultural engagements. Legge's translations not only provide Standard English expressions for discoursing about Chinese tradition, they also offer a unique way for the modern Chinese to read their own classics in a language that is probably easier to comprehend than the archaic Chinese classical language. Unfortunately, most reprints of Legge's *Chinese Classics* accessible in China are redacted versions stripped of his critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena and copious indexes, reducing them to dubious translations.

These factors make it necessary and meaningful to revisit the legacy of Legge and as well as the considerable controversy concerning him. Legge participated, argued or contributed his opinions on two major controversies regarding China, namely, the Term-Question debate, and the question of whether or not Confucianism is a religion. Both questions are still open today and Legge's opinions are more often than not alluded to and interpreted out of context. There are still different renditions of God in different versions of the Bible Chinese translations. It is necessary to say a few words about two prominent debates in the 20th century among Chinese intellectuals. Occurring at the turn of the 20th century and the end of the century respectively, these two controversies are centered more on Confucianism or Ruism than religion. What makes the debate interesting is the changing Chinese perception of *zong jiao* (the Chinese expression for religion) and how it impacted the scholarly opinions. These two debates underscore a new term-question that still anticipates the academic engagement: Is *zong jiao* (宗教) the Chinese translation of the English term *religion*?

The Misrepresentations, Consequences, and New Development

The objective of the 19th century Term-Question debate among the missionaries in China was to decide on the most appropriate Chinese term to translate God for the Chinese translation of the Bible. Nevertheless, the translational issue was soon turned into questions of loaded significances—who is God in China? The highly theological question brought with it various misrepresentations and misinterpretations.

The most misrepresented statement was Legge's claim that "Shang Te (Shang Di) *par excellence* of the Chinese is the true God"[510] in his 1850 letters and again in his 1852 essay.[511] Firstly, Legge's claim was made in response to Boone's specific challenge for Legge to prove that the Chinese Shang Di "is God, truly and properly God, --the very identical Being we are taught in the Sacred Scriptures to worship…".[512] Only Legge's counter-claim sounded more of heresy than Dr. Boone's presumptuous claim that "the Chinese do not know the true God".[513] Legge refined his statement in his 1852 essay, "I maintain that the Chinese do know the true God, and have a word in their language answering to our word *God*, to the Hebrew *Elohim*, and to the Greek *Theos*".[514] Nonetheless, the damage was already done. Legge's Shang Di argument became not only a duty imposed by his opponent, but Legge's duty to God to prove that he was not making wrongful use of God's name.

The often-ignored part of Legge's Shang Di argument concerns his nuanced distinction between Shang Di as a meaningful Chinese word and Shang Di as an object of Chinese worship. "…the Being worshipped by the Chinese under the title is not the true God, yet he is called by the name God".[515] Legge's term argument for the legitimacy of Shang Di was founded on its philological correspondence to the Hebrew term of Elohim.

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[510] Legge's Letters on Rendering God (1850): letter V, 42.
[511] James Legge. The Notions of the Chinese (1852), 10, 53.
[512] W.J. Boone. *Defense of an Essay on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language*. Canton: *Chinese Repository*. XIX. 1850. No. 7, 384.
[513] William J. Boone. D.D. *An Essay, on the Proper Rendering of the Words Elohim and Theos into the Chinese Language* (Canton: Printed at the Office of the Chinese Repository, 1848), 3.
[514] Notions of the Chinese (1852), 2.
[515] Legge's *Letters on Rendering God* (1850): letter V, 38.

Another misrepresentation has to do with Boone's *shen* advocacy. Boone did not argue that *shen* was the most appropriate term for God. Putting Boone's principal argument more accurately, although *shen* didn't mean God in any proper sense, Boone believed that the contextual usage of *shen* in the Bible alongside missionary instruction would conquer the polytheistic meaning of *shen*, transforming the Chinese term to mean something totally new—the True God of Christianity. As mentioned in the second chapter, a probable consequence was that *shen* in the Chinese Bible translation conquered the conqueror and turned the biblical God into Chinese *gui shen* (ghosts and spirits). The early enquiries into Christian religion by the enlightenment Chinese thinkers were likely misguided by their reading of "*gui shen"* (ghosts and spirits) in the Christian belief. The biblical *shen* played an important role in forming the initial opinion of Chinese intellectuals on Christianity. Such opinion was further inherited by the orthodox Chinese characterization of Christian religion as superstition in its Chinese context.

Today, Shang Di is defined in mainstream Chinese dictionaries as referring to the God of Judaism and Christianity. Legge has won the Chinese by getting the idea of God into the Chinese language. In the meantime, *shen* is still employed in the major Chinese translations of various Bible versions to render God. A notable change occurred in 2010, when the revised edition of the most popular *Chinese Union Version of the Bible* (RCUV 2010), produced a parallel Shang Di version of the Chinese translation after a hundred years of *shen* editions of Chinese translation. Legge's Shang Di advocacy has yet to witness its full triumph.

Legge's 'Confucianism' as a Religion: Misrepresentation and Misinterpretation

Perhaps the biggest misrepresentation of Legge concerns his statement: "Confucianism is the religion of China *par excellence*, and is named from the great sage…."[516] Many scholars, including Lauren Pfister, attempt to replace or translate Legge's 'Confucianism' into the conventional Chinese term Ru Jia, or Ruism. Such

[516] James Legge, *SBE3/SBC1* (1879): Preface, xiv.

substitution of Legge's 'Confucianism' with Ruism only renders Legge's' opinion both ridiculous and intolerable to many Ruist scholars. As argued in the previous chapters, Legge's 'Confucianism' represented Legge's hermeneutical and missiological reformation in terms of the teaching of Confucius. First and foremost, Legge used the term to refer specifically to the ancient classics that Confucius contributed in preservation. Secondly, it constituted Legge's reformed teaching of Confucius – that of the ancient religion of China. Thirdly, Legge's reformed 'Confucianism' as the ancient Chinese classics and the Chinese religion therein marked his severance from the Ruist discourse about Confucian teachings and his covert exclusion of the Ruism from his narrative of the three religions of China. To put Legge's nuanced statement in more explicit terms: the religion of China is Confucianism par excellence, and is named from the great sage. Viewed in this sense, the Ruist School, is neither Legge's 'Confucianism' nor a religion.

The Legacy of Legge: Sinological Commentaries of Chinese Classics

Legge is recognized today principally on account of his translational achievements, being dubbed as 'the translator of the Chinese Classics'. Such characterization hardly does justice to the much scholarship Legge introduced in his *Chinese Classic* project. First of all, Legg's works constituted a new set of Chinese classical commentaries. Legge was one of the few western scholars who participated in the discussion of Chinese classical commentary tradition, particularly the modern critical classical studies movement (17th century to early 20th century). Legge consulted various versions of Chinese classical commentaries and absorbed many critical opinions of modern scholars. His final Chinese classics works represent the interpretations reasoned on his own terms without taking sides with any Chinese classical commentators. In this sense Legge is as much an interpreter (注疏家) of the Chinese classics as Zheng Xuan (郑玄) or Zhu Xi (朱熹) are the interpreters, though of a newly created sinological school.

What differentiates Legge's interpretations from his Chinese counterparts was his employment of the 19th century biblical criticism and hermeneutical principles aiming at interpreting the classical texts for its historical and original meanings. In contrast, his contemporaneous Chinese counterparts, though not lacking in critical spirit and critical methods, strived to uncover the texts of authentic

Confucian origin and the earliest authoritative interpretations. Besides, Legge's non-Ruist stance enabled him to treat the Chinese classics as literary texts and to examine them critically both in terms of their authenticity, content and scope. In contrast, his contemporaneous Ruist scholars' critical examination was greatly constrained by their Ruist identity. Textual authenticity was confined to its traceability to Confucius; Examination on interpretative correctness was subjective to their denominational affiliations to different classical schools. The cardinal sin within the Ruist classical studies tradition lies in questioning the immutable truth of the Five Jing and the wisdom of the sage Confucius. These shackles left Ruist scholars with little freedom in uttering their different opinions. Some of them had to avail themselves of less scholarly means for breaking those hurdles, either by interpreting the classical texts or Confucius out of context, or by accusing other interpreters of not following Confucius' interpretations. Some even went so far as to altering the classical texts or arguing that some of the texts were 'forgeries' (meaning not attributable to Confucius). What's more, a central principle featuring contemporary classical interpretations was the utilitarian motto –classical studies serve the purpose of practical applications (经学致用). It is in contrast to these features of Chinese classical studies that Legge's Chinese classics project leaves much legacy which today's Chinese scholars can build on in their disciplinary studies of Ruism.

Legge's legacy in his Chinese classic project also features the modern critical methods and hermeneutical theories in interpreting texts. These methods provide new perspectives on how the Chinese classical texts can be read in historical context and their contents critically examined within modern disciplines. As illustrated in the Chinese definition of Ru Jia, the reductionist approach of characterizing the Ruist system and its ambiguous classification render Ruism a scholarship without any proper disciplines. Though Legge's 'Confucianism' represents his hermeneutical invention that made sense only within the 19th century context, the hermeneutical methods Legge introduced provide Chinese Ruist scholars new perspective to read, critique and develop the Chinese traditions. Last but not the least, Legge's adoption of biblical commentary format, with its highly academic prolegomena, the numbering system for easy reference to the chapters and verses of classical texts, set an exemplary model for the continuous classical studies of today.

Legge's *Chinese Classics* project has limitations, too. Legge placed much focus of his interpretations and comparative examination on the religious aspects of the Chinese classics. His missionary background and missiological approach also weakened what could have been more anthropological and sociological expositions on the ancient Chinese civilization and historical Chinese views concerning the world and themselves. Notwithstanding these deficiencies, Legge's academic prolegomena on the Ancient Chinese Empire, its religion and social conditions [517] represented perhaps the earliest effort at a sociological study on China, and anticipated fuller examinations by later sinologists such as Marcel Granet (*La religion des Chinois*, 1922) and Max Weber (*The Religion of China*. Illinois, 1951).

The Impact of the 19th century Sinology on Modern China

The latter half of the 19th century witnessed increased Sinological and comparative religious studies on China, partly enabled by Legge's Chinese classics translations. These studies in turn influenced the Chinese scholarly discourse about their own Ruist tradition, exemplified by new meanings being added to existing Chinese words and new Chinese terms created at the turn of the 20th century to correspond and respond to the occidental discourse. The Chinese character *jiao* (教, *teaching, a sect of teaching*) witnessed its conceptual evolution to include the occidental notion of *religion,* as illustrated in the term *zong jiao (*宗教, a *sect/sects of religion).* The new Chinese expression of Kong Jiao (孔教, *Confucian teaching/religion*) was also introduced around the turn of the 20th century to correspond the sinological term of Confucianism. Nevertheless, as rightly pointed out by Legge regarding the feature of Chinese language as "symbols of ideas" instead of being "representations of words", [518] when these terms became properly part of Chinese language, their meanings were no longer subject to their source language but defined by their constituent Chinese characters and scholarly usages. Alongside these new terms came two debates among the Chinese scholars on whether or not the

[517] CC3.1 (1865): the Prolegomena. Chapter V. *the Ancient Empire of China*. CC4.1 (1871): Chapter IV. *The China of the Book of Poetry, considered in relation to the extent of its territory, and its political sate, its religion, and social conditions*.
[518] SBE16/SBC2 (1882): Preface, xv.

Ruist tradition is a religion at the turn of the 20th century and in late 20th century respectively. However, the two notable debates in their Chinese context are characterized by their distinctive Ruist scholarly tradition in terms of interpretation of words, principle of argument and the utilitarian ends.

Some twenty years after Legge claimed that 'Confucianism' was the religion of China, a similar debate broke out among the progressive Chinese intellectuals. To be more exact, the debate related to a proposal put forward by Kang Youwei (康有为, 1858 -1927) to the imperial Qing government, advocating the establishment of Kong Jiao *(*the teaching of Confucius) as a "*guo jiao*" (state religion). Kang Youwei was a prominent progressive thinker and political reformer in modern Chinese history. In 1898, Kang in his cabinet advisory capacity wrote to the emperor, appealing to "institute the department of religion and religious organizations, to implement the chronological calendar based on the birthdate of Confucius, and to endorse the temple worship to the sage Confucius by the general populace, putting an end to the depraving polytheist worship by turning their focus to the state religion."[519] In a later article written for the General Committee of the Nation-wide Establishment of the Religion of Confucius,[520] Kang began his argument by claiming outright that "Confucian Teaching *(*Kong Jiao)" had been held as the "state religion (*guo jiao*)" in China for thousands of years. Kang's distortion of "Kong Jiao" (the teaching of Confucius) as a religion by way of its shared term "*jiao*" with the Chinese vernacular for western religions *"jiao"* in a sense advanced the definitional evolution of Chinese term *jiao* (教) to include religion. Kang deduced that the Chinese term *zong jiao* (Chinese expression of religion) was imported from Japanese, which in turn was a translation from the English term *religion*. Kang then proceeded to criticize the definition of western religion for limiting itself to the teaching of various *shen* (神). Kang attributed such definitional limitation of religion to the teaching of *shen* (神) in Christianity. Kang ventured to revise the scope of religion so that its

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[519] Kang Youwei, "Appeal to Intitute the Sage Confucius as the State Religion…"in *Complete Works of Kang Youwei* (Beijing, Renmin University Press. 2007), 96. (康有为, "请尊孔圣为国教立教部教会以孔子纪年而废淫祀折," 康有为全集. 第四集. 北京. 人民大学出版社. 2007)

[520]Kang Youwei, "Preface to the Confucian Religion Journal (1912)," in *A Compilation of the* Ruist *Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Printing House. 2003), 4-12. (康有为, "孔教会序 <1912>",《二十世纪儒学研究大系》,中华书局. 2003)

Chinese rendition could properly include the teaching of Confucius. Kang thus reasoned the origin of religion, "…in primitive times the ignorant mass of people revered the manes (*gui*) of dead people, thus holding the teaching of *shen* (神) with respect; in modern civilization, emphasis is put on man, and therefore religion of the way of man is more advanced than the religion of the way of *shen* (神)."[521] Though Kang's advocacy of the religion of Confucius was founded on the more pressing cultural and political considerations of his time, his description and reasoning about *zong jiao*/religion deserve special attention. Firstly, Kang recognized the key component of divinity in the definition of religion, his interpretation of religion nonetheless was influenced by the Chinese expression *Jiao*, deeming religion as a *jiao* (*teaching*) rather than a belief system. Secondly, Kang's recognition of the divinity concept in religion had nothing to do with God the transcendental creator and moral dispenser. Kang associated *shen* in western religion with its Chinese sense of ghosts and manes (鬼神), which most probably indicated his reading of *Shen* rendition of biblical God. Consequently, his opinion on religion arguably showcased how the *shen* rendition of God was shaping the modern Chinese enlightenment thinkers' reading of Christian religion. Equally worth noting is his argument for the religious relevance of the teaching of Confucius. Kang contended, "Confucius revered *tian* and served Shang Di with absolute devotion; he distinctly designed the names of *gui* (鬼 *manes*) and *shen* (神 *spirits*) for the mass of people to worship with submission…it is ignorant to say that Confucius didn't speak of *shen.*"[522] Regardless of Kang's intent and accuracy of his statement, he inadvertently revealed the unconscious Ruist recognition of Shang Di as the ultimate power and master and *shen* as man-made objects. Lastly, it needs to point out that in Kang's advocacy for his religion of Confucius, Confucius was the object of worship.

A few words need to be said about Kang's major opponent Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873 -1929) regarding his sociological and evolutional opinion on religion. Liang in his 1903 debate article depicted *zong jiao* in its "western sense" as "referring to a blind belief, its realm of power being outside the corporeal world, its foundation

[521]Ibid, 10.
[522] Ibid, 10-11.

being rooted in souls. By resorting to the ritual of liturgy, it aims at escape from secular world and strives for rebirth in heavenly kingdom…."[523] Liang recognized the nature of wester religion as a belief system. His opinion on the religion, on the other hand, reflected the influence of the western sociological and evolutional sciences on him. Liang maintained that religion, despite of its great moral merits, represented only the first stage of human evolution, and was likely be hampered by its shortcomings in the second stage of human evolution. Regarding the teaching of Confucius, Liang contended that Confucius taught issues relating to government of states, and discoursed about morality only. Liang therefore concluded that "the teaching of Confucius differed from religion in that it is not for the mass of people".[524] Liang concluded that Confucius was a philosopher and educator, not a religionist. In short, Liang did not reject religion. On the other hand, the teaching-based Chinese thinking model did not configure him, or most Ruist scholars, to comprehend belief. His knowledge of religion was more influenced by his reading of European enlightenment ideas in social sciences and by his own experiences. Liang was able to view in the sociological terms the merits of true Christianity, its declining in Europe and its abuse by political powers in China. Liang particularly admired the spirit of religious belief. He later remarked that the true belief was the religious belief. It is worth-noting that Liang associated Christian God more with the Chinese Shang Di.[525] He did not connect God with the Chinese *shen* as Kang did.

The advocacy on establishing the teaching of Confucius as a religion around the turn of the 20th century was more of a political and nationalist discussion on how the Chinese Ruist tradition were to survive the cultural influence of the west. Kang's proposal did not materialize in mainland China, but was later turned into reality in Hong Kong, Macao and a number of East Asian countries. Today Kong Jiao (the Religion of Confucius) is still a religious belief system in these countries and regions.

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[523] Liang Qichao, "On Religion is not the way to respect Confucius", in *A Compilation of the* Ruist *Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Printing House. 2003) (梁启超, "保教非所以尊孔论," 《二十世纪儒学研究大系》中华书局, 2003) , 20,21.
[524] Ibid.
[525] In comparing Confucius with Jesus, Liang commented that "Jesus called himself the son of *Di (*Shang Di), Confucius never did that."

At the end of 1970s, another debate in mainland China was triggered by Ren Jiyu (任继愈, 1916 -2009), a Chinese Marxist philosopher and historian, when he wrote and claimed again that Ruism was a religion.[526] This thesis will confine to Ren's arguments relating to his interpretation and his perception of western religion. Firstly, Ren adopted the same method as Kang Youwei before him by equating the Chinese Ru Jiao (Ruist teaching) with the Chinese expression of *religion* (宗教) throughout his article by his presumption that Chinese term *jiao* (教, teaching) simply meant "religion". Secondly, Ren held that the historical development from the academic Ru Jia *(*the Ruist school*)* into Ru Jiao (the Ruist religion) was the history of the formation of Ruist religion. He claimed that the rational school of Song period (10th century 13th century) represented by Zhu Xi hallmarked the final establishment of Ruist religion. Thirdly, in Ren's discourse western religion resembled Ruist religion because the Chinese expression of religion (宗教) implied the ancestral-authority based institution (宗法制度) that was characteristic of Ruism. Ren didn't bother to define *zong jiao*, or religion in his essay. Yet, examination of Ren's depiction of Western religion indicated that his perception of western religion was a historical concept, relating more to Christian development during the European dark ages and the scholasticism period. In conclusion, Ren drew upon the Chinese dictionary definition that *zong jiao* was a human delusion and distorted reflection of the external world. As for Ruist religion, Ren concluded its ancestral-authority based autocracy (this seemed to be Ren's interpretation of Chinese *zong jiao*, not religion) was the root cause of the ignorance of Chinese people in history. "We must get rid of Ruist religion because it has become the biggest mental barrier for China's modernization".[527] Like his predecessor Kang Youwei, they both attempted to leverage religion for their political agenda regarding Chinese Ruist tradition. They both twisted the meanings of Chinese Ruism and the English *religion*, rendering their arguments meaningful only politically.

Ren's discourse does not represents the general Chinese scholarly opinion nor the Chinese intellectual standard for that matter. Yet, in a most ironic way, Ren's

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[526] Ren Jiyu. *A Collection of Papers on the Debate of Ruist Religion* (Beijing: Religion and Culture Press, 2000) (任继愈. 《儒教问题争论集》北京: 宗教文化出版社. 2000)
[527] Ibid. p. 34.

assertion that Ruism is *zong jiao* echoes Legge's assertion that 'Confucianism' is religion of China. Only their claims differ on two principal accounts: Legge's 'Confucianism' is not Ren's Ru Jiao, and Ren's *zong jiao* is not Legge's religion.

Legge is guilty of creating a confusing concept of 'Confucianism'. Legge was well aware of the differentiating accounts on the ancient religion of China, the doctrine of Confucius as a philosopher and legislator, and the dubious Ru Jiao—the "sect of the learned" in the Jesuit writings. He was also aware of Morrison's translational effort at characterizing the Ruist sect with Confucian phraseology. By his idiosyncratic invention of 'Confucianism', Legge created a religious teaching of Confucius that is not known in the Chinese Ruist discourse. When Legge substituted his 'Confucianism' for Ru Jiao as one of the three religions of China without explicitly telling his readers, Legge is guilty of misleading many scholars in equating his 'Confucianism' with Ruism. Legge is not guilty of starting the controversy about whether or not Ruism is a religion. The historical Chinese expression of *san jiao (*three teachings*)* ranks Ruism side by side with the Taoist religion and Buddhist religion, begging the question from inquisitive minds.

Why Religion matters to Legge and to China

It took Legge some thirty years to arrive at his idiosyncratic invention of 'Confucianism' as representing the ancient Chinese religion. Nevertheless, few Chinese scholars see the implications of Legge's invention. A major reasoning for Legge to make such an association had to do with the Christian religious tradition in which morality and religion are closely connected by way of God's command. Besides the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament (Exodus 20: 1-17), in the New Testament, Jesus sums up the commandments of God as to love God with all one's heart and soul and mind and to love the neighbor as one's self (Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:37-40). Within the Enlightenment, René Descartes (1596–1650) attributed the source of moral law to God's will, so did John Locke (1632–1704). Joseph Butler (1692–1752) held that God's goodness consisted in benevolence, and in wanting us to be happy, and that we should want the same for each other (*Fifteen Sermons*, 126–27). In one of the earliest English dictionary by Samuel Johnson, the first definition for the word *religion* was "Virtue, as founded upon reverence of God,

and expectation of future rewards and punishments."[528] An interesting idea was given by Frances Hutcheson (1694–1746) who thought that God gave us a moral sense.[529] Hutcheson's view resembles strikingly the text from the Chinese Classic of *Shoo Jing*: "The great God has conferred (even) on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right".[530] This Chinese classical text played the pivotal role in convincing Legge that Confucian moral teaching had its religious origin. To Legge, the moral principles of man are obtainable only through the revelation of God and serve as the evidence of man's knowledge of God. To be moral is to be religious. When Legge claimed that 'Confucianism' was a religion, he was professing his appreciation to the moral principles and moral standards as prescribed in the Chinese classics. Legge's expression of appreciation was not unlike the classical Chinese expression which exalts the highest virtue as "virtue that matches the heaven and earth" (德配天地).

Since the time of Legge, the meaning of religion has evolved considerably, from a term to signify one's belief to God to a general term representing spiritual inspiration of all kinds. Religious phenomenon has been well recognized as a general human phenomenon. In 1878, Max Müller, the chief editor of the *Sacred Books of the East* series, gave a series of lectures on religion as part of the Hibbert Lectures. Müller described religion as a word that changed continuously and had different aspects in every country it was used. He enumerated a number of definitions of religion developed by notable philosophers and thinkers of his time. In Kant's system, religion was morality, and when moral duties were viewed as divine commands, it constituted religion; To Fichte, religion was knowledge; Comte and Feuerbach made man as the only true object of religious knowledge and worship.

Today, religion becomes a term "created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define."[531] Jonathan Z. Smith in his article on

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[528] Samuel Johnson, *a Dictionary of the English Language.* In two Volumes. The Sixth Edition. London: 1780. Vol. II. p. 488.
[529] John Hare, "Religion and Morality", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/religion-morality/>. Retrieved on June 13th, 2019.
[530]"惟皇上帝，降衷于下民。若有恆性，克綏厥猷惟后" . Announcemen of Tang, the Book of Shang, t*he Book of Historical Documents* (尚书. 商书. 汤誥). Translation by Legge.
[531] Jonathan Z. Smith. Relating Religion: Essays in the study Of Religion. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 194.

religion lists two definitions that "command widespread scholarly assent". One of them is given by Paul Tillich from theological perspective. "Religion, in the largest and most basic sense of the word, is ultimate concern ... manifest in the moral sphere as the unconditional seriousness of moral demand [,] ... in the realm of knowledge as the passionate longing for ultimate reality [,] ... in the aesthetic function of the human spirit as the infinite desire to express ultimate meaning."[532] Tillich's definition embraces moral consideration, knowledge and art as the constituents of religion and represents the meaning of religion by those who believe. The other definition is given by Melfored E. Spiro from anthropological perspective, describing religion as "an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings".[533] Though Spiro's definition is more abstruse and involves more elaborate cultural theories, his definition basically views religion as a cultural representation of human consciousness of and interaction with the supernatural powers. The two definitions deal with two major aspects of religion, one in its first-person usage, the other in its third-person scholarly definition as a system of belief by a culturally distinct human group. In both definitions, human beings are the subject of religion.

The Problem with the Chinese Term *zong jiao* (宗教)

Morrison in his 1834 article wrote, "The Chinese have no generic term for religion, the word *Keaou* (*jiao* 教) … means to teach, or the things taught, doctrine or instructions".[534] Morrison was right in saying so. In the instruction-based Ruist study tradition, knowledge was taught by ancient sages and ancient classics, learnt through instruction or by way of making sense of the ancient teachings for present application. Morrison nonetheless had to compromise by rendering *religion* in his English-Chinese dictionary as *jiao* (教, teaching), or *jiao men* (教门, *a sect/sects of teaching*). On the Chinese side, the history of finding the term *zong jiao* to represent

[532] Robert C. Kimball, ed. *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press1959). Quotation taken from Jonathan Z. Smith, "Relating Religion," *Essays in the Study of Religion*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2004), 192, 193.
[533] Ibid. p. 193.
[534] Robert Morrison, "The State Religion of China," *the Chinese Repository* Vol. III no.2 (June 1834), 49-53.

western religion began much later, and underwent more twists and turns. *zong jiao* originated as a Chinese Buddhist term, only to be "rediscovered" by modern Chinese intellectuals from Japanese and introduced into the scholarly Chinese discourse. Its literal sense, "*sectarian teaching",* is less a translation of the English "*religion"* than a Chinese taxonomic term for denominational doctrines. Before the adoption of *zong Jiao*, there was only the general appellation of *jiao* (教, teaching), which the ancient dictionary *Shuo Wen* interpreted in its noun form as "that which is taught by the superior and to be emulated by the inferior".[535] The orthodox teaching of Ruism was the teaching from ancient sages contained in their classics. Different teachings were described by forming compound terms, hence, the Tian Zhu Jiao (天主教, the Teaching of Heavenly Lord) for Catholicism, and Ji Du Jiao (基督教, the Teaching of Christ) for Protestant Christianity.

Not a few scholars hold the opinion that the Chinese term for religion—*zong jiao* (宗教) — is introduced into Chinese from Japanese.[536] This opinion is misinformed and misleading, implying it as a translation. The fact is, *zong jiao* (宗教) is a long established term in Chinese Buddhist texts, signifying the various "*sects of Buddhist teaching"*.[537] Largely due to its usage in the non-orthodox Buddhist texts, the term was not known to the many Ruist scholars until Huang Zunxian (黄遵宪, 1848－1905), an early Chinese diplomat to Japan, published *A Record of the Country of Japan* (日本国志) in 1887. Huang in his book mentioned the Buddhist "sect of teaching*" (zong jiao)* and the western "sect of teaching*"* in Japan, and observed that "in terms of the western knowledge… their discussion on *zong jiao* (the sect of

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[535] *Shuo Wen Dictionary*: "教, 上所施下所效也"..

[536] Wilfred Cantell Smith in *the Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991, 58) cited a professor of Chinese at Oxford, according to whom, the Chinese recognized that they had no word in Chinese to correspond the Western concept, they thus adopted the term *zong jiao* (宗教) from Japanese. In China, Kang Youwei (康有为, 1858-1927), was one of the first to make such a claim in 1913. He was probably the first to make such claim.

[537] The term *zong jiao*(宗教) in Chinese Buddhist text can be traced to as early as the 7th century when it was used not unfrequently to refer to various sects of Buddhist masters' teaching, such as the well-known sects of Huayan sect, Jintu sect, Zen sect, etc.. In one of the earliest Buddhist classic of 华严一乘教义分齐章 written By Fa Cang (法藏, CE 643 -712), he tried to divide the Buddhist denominations into various 'sects of teaching (宗教)'. The official History of Ming Dynasty (CE 1368 -1644) also contained in the collection of Buddhist Literature a book titled 宗教答响 (Explanations on Various Sects of Teaching).

teaching) was about worship of heavenly Lord".[538] It is likely that progressive Chinese intellectuals like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao discovered *zong jiao (*宗教*, sect of teaching)* from these travel books and applied it to replace the previous term *the teaching from Western Ocean* (西洋教).[539]

Today, the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* defines *zong jiao* (宗教) as "an ideology, a cultural and historical phenomenon. It is an illusionary reflection of the objective world. It believes a supernatural and transcendental power. It requires people to have faith and adore (*xin yang*, 信仰) Shang Di, the ways of *shen* (神道*)*, spirits or retribution, putting their hope in the so-called heavenly kingdom or after life". In contrast, The *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd ed. 2010) lists three definitions for religion, the principal one being "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods." Deriving from the base definition are two of its extended meanings, i.e. "a particular system of faith and worship", and "a pursuit or interest followed with great devotion".

By comparing the definitions of Chinese *zong jiao* with its English counterpart, some fundamental differences can be identified. Firstly, Chinese *zong jiao* doesn't contain the fundamental notion of the English term as representing individual belief; secondly, *zong jiao* in its Chinese sense is defined from a third-person and political perspective, characterizing religion as an ideology, an erroneous teaching and blind belief; thirdly, the Chinese description of *zong jiao* is infused with strong disapproval and admonition: *zong jiao* is stupid! Don't do that! Somehow, the Chinese *zong jiao* still echoes remotely one of the maxims in the *Sacred Edict of Kang Xi* regarding *yi duan* (异端, *heterodox doctrine*): "Banish the heterodox doctrine and exalt the correct teaching."[540] The Chinese *zong jiao* is not the

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[538] In Huang's book *A Record of the Country of Japan* (1877), Huang described two kinds of *zong jiao* (宗教) in Japan, the dominant one being the Buddhist religion (其倡为宗教者大概亦宗释氏之说) and the other being the Catholic religion (西学…论宗教则谓敬事天主，即儒教所谓敬天). His book was widely read by progressive Chinese intellectuals after the 1894 Sino-Japanese War and was highly regarded by the political reformers such as Liang Qichao (梁启超) and Kang Youwei (康有为).

[539] During the 18th century and 19th century, the "Teaching from Western Ocean (西洋教)" was used in the government documents and imperial decrees to refer to Christianity. See《清实录嘉庆朝实录》and《世宗宪皇帝上谕内阁》.

[540] *The Sacred Edict of Kang Xi*: "黜异端以崇正学".

translation of religion. It is a third-person antagonistic characterization of religion the manner of which is no different from the Ruist view on heterodox doctrines.

Is there then a Chinese term that can more properly render *religion* as defined in Oxford English Dictionary, or by Paul Tillich or Melfored E. Spiro? The answer is yes. That term is *xin yang* (信仰, *belief and adoration*). Interestingly, *xin yang* also originates from the Chinese Buddhist origin, being used around the same time when *zong jiao* was used in the 7th century. When the Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the 20th century rediscovered *zong jiao*, they also inadvertantly came across *xin yang*. They didn't land on this term for *religion* partly because this term was used initially more in its verb form, partly because it was used more in connection with native Chinese religions, in particular Chinese Buddhism.

Liang Qichao, the major opponent to the advocacy of turning Confucius into a state religion, used *xin yang* (*belief and adoration*) closely in connection with Chinese religions in his book *A Survey of the Academic Development in the Qing Period* (1920). Liang wrote, "…such ascetic practices as described in the (Taoist) chapter "tian xia*"* of *Zhuang Zi* (庄子), can only be truly executed by those who *xin yang* (have belief) in *zong jiao* (religion).*"*[541] In remarking the Buddhist studies of his time, Liang commented that "those who truly *xin yang* (have faith) most likely would convert to Buddhism".[542] Liang admitted with appreciation more than once that the true *xin yang* (belief) is the belief in religion.

In 2015, Mr. Xi, the chairman of China, gave his famous speech regarding *xin yang*, "(only if) the people have *xin yang* (信仰, belief and adoration), the nation will have hope and the country will have strength."[543] An interesting question arises: is it possible that the antagonistic characterization of religion in Chinese term *zong*

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[541] Liang Qichao, *a Survey of the Academic Development in the Qing Period* (Shanghai Ancient Books Printing House, 1998), 27, 28. (梁启超《清代学术概论》,上海古籍出版社. 1998)
[542] Ibid, 99,
[543]Xi Jinping 习近平. An Important Speech to the Representatives of Cultural Construction Work of China. Februray 28th, 2015. (习近平: 2015 年 2 月 28 日，会见第四届全国文明城市、文明村镇、文明单位和未成年人思想道德建设工作先进代表并发表重要讲话. [人民有信仰，民族有希望，国家有力量] Source: http://jhsjk.people.cn/article/29322419 . Retrieved on August 1st, 2019.

jiao has turned the Chinese away from having a true *xin yang* (信仰)? This is a question that anticipates further explorations.

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In my collecting below historical texts of Legge and related references, I am deeply indebted to the Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org), a non-profit digital library. It offers open access to superbly-preserved photo-electronic copies of the full collections of Legge's original *Chinese Classics* series and the *Sacred Books of China* contribution, besides many other valuable historical references. Special thanks also go to the library of SOAS, University of London, and Bodleian library at Oxford where I had the opportunity to go through many manuscripts of Legge's letters in early life and his writings and lectures while working at Oxford. For the Classical Chinese part of my references, I am indebted to Chinese Text Project (https://ctext.org), another great open-access digital library of Chinese classical texts. It is most helpful by digitalizing the ancient Chinese dictionaries of *Shuo Wen* and *Kang Xi Dictionary*, which I have consulted frequently in my reading of Chinese classics. My thanks also go to the libraries of University of Glasgow and of Hong Kong Baptist University.

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