



Panel's title : *Revisiting Legacies of the Sino-French Connection in Early Twentieth-Century China*

Coordinator (Affiliation, University...): Ke Ren (College of the Holy Cross)

Chair & Discussant: Paul Bailey (Durham University)

Language : English

Topics : History

Panel presentation :

France has always occupied a unique place in the history of China's relations to the West. While the eighteenth-century philosophes admired Confucian society, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, France was also one of the active colonial powers in China and Southeast Asia. During the same period, however, Chinese and French diplomats, travelers, workers, and students also began to play a more prominent role in facilitating more concrete exchanges between the two cultures. Meanwhile, due to the complex blend of avant-garde culture and legacies of revolution and republicanism, France also became a gateway to modernity for Chinese writers, artists, educators and activists determined to change China. While much has been written about the political activities of the Chinese anarchists in Paris, the experience of Chinese workers on the Western Front during WWI, and the emergence of the Chinese communists among work-study students in France, much less is known about the legacies of these early movements for scientific, cultural, and intellectual developments. This multidisciplinary panel seeks to re-evaluate the complex cross-cultural flows – in the spheres of medicine, biology, education, and literature – that resulted from the work-study movement and other transnational exchanges between China and France in the first half of the twentieth century. The papers offer four case studies that follow Chinese and French scientists, writers, and translators as they use resources gained from their Sino-French experiences to negotiate problems in China's modernization and to build niches in cultural mediation. Together, these cases suggest more complexity and continuity in the history of twentieth-century Sino-Western interactions.

Key words : History ; China ; France ; medicine ; biology ; literature ; translation

Participants :

- 1) **Name(s) (Affiliation, University...):** Chien-Ling Liu (University of California, Los Angeles)

Communication's title : "Following 'Science,' Serving Fatherland": Pastorian Culture in Republican China

Language : English

Presentation :

In dialogue with the scholarship on the history of Pastorian practices, this paper examines the significance of Chinese Pastorians, externally propagating through the international Pastorian circle and internally arising within the medical community in Republican China. They had played important roles of mediating the flow of knowledge through education, materials, and practices between France and China. With their educational and institutional involvement with the Pasteur Institutes in Paris, Saigon, Chengdu, Tianjin, or Shanghai, I argue that Pastorians in China, Chinese nationals in particular, followed the "science" and employed it to facilitate Chinese modernization. Owing to the emphasis of Pastorian science on localism, considering environmental and socio-cultural factors in its application, Pastorian culture differed from place to place. Chinese Pastorians learned on the ground and incorporated local knowledge and environmental conditions



into their practices on immunity. On the one hand, they read, interpreted, and appropriated medical classics and incorporated them into their practices. On the other hand, they validated Chinese medicine through their scientific experiments in immunology, pharmacology, and toxicology. Such Pastorian culture in China during the 1930s and early 1940s had already demonstrated the root of scientific orientation in the integrative medicine and worked in continuity into the Communist Era.

Key words : ... ; ... ; ... ; ...

2) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : Lijing Jiang (Nanyang Technological University)

Communication's title : Philosophy and Science in France and Zhu Xi's Science Popularization and Agricultural Embryology

Language : English

Presentation :

In the 1950s, a number of Chinese biologists who had pre-1949 focuses on scientific questions began to investigate applied problems. Historians of biology in China have often emphasized Soviet influences to explain the change. However, a close examination shows significant influences from French and Belgian traditions of embryology. Many of them emphasized the malleability of the embryo and paid special attention to environmental influence in shaping heredity. To what extent did their study-abroad experiences in France in the 1920s and 1930s influence this cohort of biologists?

This paper addresses the question through examining the philosophical and scientific transformations of Zhu Xi (1900-1962). After working in factories, Zhu studied with Eugène Bataillon (1864-1953) at Montpellier and investigated the fertilization processes and early developments of amphibians. There, Zhu became attracted to Kropotkin's anarchist philosophy and evolutionary theory of "mutual aid." After returning China in 1932, Zhu published science popularization books and predominantly referenced French biologists. After 1949, Zhu willingly identified himself as a "worker-scientist" and played an important role in developing fish aquaculture and sericulture in the PRC. Zhu's journey from worker-student in France to worker-scientist under Mao reveals the complex strains of understanding that made a "red-expert."

Key words : ... ; ... ; ... ; ...

3) Name(s) (Affiliation) : Ke Ren (College of the Holy Cross)

Communication's title : Toward Unity: Sheng Cheng's Cosmopolitan Odyssey between China and France

Language : English

Presentation :

One of the most colorful mediators between China and France in the twentieth century, Sheng Cheng (1899-1996) came to France as a work-study student in the 1920s. He studied sericulture and animal reproduction at the University of Montpellier but also joined the French Communist and Socialist parties, in addition to entering avant-garde circles in Paris. Emerging as a Francophone writer with his bestselling autobiography *Ma Mère*, Sheng returned to China in the 1930s to



become a celebrity intellectual, writing several travel memoirs and publishing widely on subjects such as Western literature, science, and international politics. Later he would also produce poetry volumes in French and a French translation of the late Qing novel Lao Can You Ji. Throughout the century, Sheng consistently advocated for a philosophy of cross-cultural reconciliation that he called “toward unity” (vers l’unité). This paper reads beyond Sheng’s dilettantism and examines his bicultural journey against the context of his family history, scientific training, and political experiences. Tracing the roots of Sheng’s cosmopolitan ideals to such disparate intellectual sources as the late Qing Taigu neo-Confucian school, French biology, anarchism and socialism, this paper illuminates the complex identity negotiations that both troubled and motivated twentieth-century Chinese cultural mediators.

Key words : ... ; ... ; ... ; ...

4) Name(s) (Affiliation, University...) : Andrea S. Goldman (University of California, Los Angeles)

Communication's title : A Frenchman at the Chinese Opera: Soulié de Morant and the Fashioning of Transnational Masculinities, 1900-1950

Language : English

Presentation :

George Soulié de Morant (1878-1955) was an interpreter of China to the west. He arrived in Beijing in 1901 to work as a translator for the Chinese Railway Association. By 1905, he was serving as interpreter for the Shanghai Mixed Court. He later was appointed as a French consular diplomat in Kunming. Soulié returned to Paris following the 1911 Revolution but, as his publishing record shows, he retained a passion for China. Not formally trained beyond the Bachelor of Letters degree, his numerous publications put him on the margins of a circle of early twentieth-century European Sinologists. Among the more curious of Soulié’s writings is his adaptation of Chen Sen’s novel, Pinhua baojian (1849).

Chen Sen’s novel provides an important window onto the male-male sex trade in the Qing capital, presenting a hierarchized typology of sexualities, with the most rarefied kind tagged as male homoerotic desire. This paper traces the circuitous route by which the homoeroticism of the original was refracted through a sympathetic but Orientalist filter in Soulié’s remake, then was suppressed in a “sexual modernization” of China post-1900, after which the redacted French version reclaimed an unsuspecting agency as an underground gay cult classic in mid twentieth-century France.

Key words : ... ; ... ; ... ; ...