Introduction

James St. André and Barbara Jiawei Li

After more than thirty years of service at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Professor Lawrence Wang-chi Wong will retire in July 2026. To celebrate his long and distinguished career, the Department of Translation of CUHK has invited fourteen scholars from North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia to contribute articles in his honor for this festschrift.

After obtaining his BA and MPhil degrees from The University of Hong Kong, Professor Wong received his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1986, where he wrote on the League of Left-Wing Writers in Shanghai under the supervision of David Pollard. Although this work did not focus on translation, his BA degree was in that subject and he had translation experience and so, after a brief stint as tutor and lecturer at The University of Hong Kong, Professor Wong joined the Department of Translation at CUHK, an institution that—although he absented himself from it for a few years to serve as Founding Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and then Founding Dean of the College of Humanities at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore—became his academic home for the rest of his fruitful career.

To date he has written and edited over two dozen books and authored over 130 articles and book chapters. We have included a selected bibliography at the end of this volume and will therefore not go into detail here, simply noting that his work ranges over modern Chinese literature, translation during the Republican Era, translation in the late Qing, translation and relations between China and the West, international diplomacy, and also Hong Kong translation history and Hong Kong studies more broadly. His translations include both academic and literary works, including historiography, literary theory, and some poetry by Robert Frost.

Besides serving in numerous capacities at CUHK, Professor Wong has contributed substantial time and energy in various types of service to the fields of translation and Chinese literature. As Director of the Research Centre for Translation for the past twenty years, he has overseen the publication of *Renditions* magazine as its Executive Editor, and Editor of the *Renditions* Books and *Renditions* Paperbacks translation series. The *Renditions* series has attracted renowned translators such as Howard Goldblatt, Patrick Hanan, Nicky Harman, Brian Holton, Wilt L. Idema, Andrew F. Jones, Sylvia Li-chun Lin, Bonnie S. McDougall, David E. Pollard, Christopher G. Rea, Burton Watson, and many others. Special issues of *Renditions* have included No. 71 (Spring 2009) on Chinese film, No. 76 (Autumn 2011) celebrating Yang Jiang's centenary, and Nos. 77 & 78 (Spring & Autumn 2012) on Chinese science fiction. Other highlights include Nos. 81 & 82 (Spring & Autumn 2014) on Ming and Qing fiction, Nos. 87 & 88 (Spring & Autumn 2017) on urban Chinese fiction from 1916–1949, and No. 99 (Spring 2023) on modern Taiwanese poetry. Before that, Professor Wong was Director of the Research Institute for the Humanities and Director of the Hong Kong Cultural Studies Programme. He was the founding editor of *Studies in Translation History*, and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Translation Studies*, as well as serving on the boards of numerous other academic journals. Professor Wong also launched several book series, including "Studies in Translation History" (since 2010, with four titles), "Towards a History of Translating" (launched in 2011 for the Research Centre for Translation's fortieth anniversary), "Asian Translation Traditions Series" (2014, with five titles), and most recently, "Young Researchers' Studies in Translation History."

Professor Wong has taught thousands of undergraduate and MA students over his long career, and supervised over thirty PhD students to completion, many of whom have gone on to hold important teaching posts in various universities such as Fudan University, Nanyang Technological University, Xiamen University, East China Normal University, Shanghai International Studies University, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications,

China University of Mining and Technology, Chongqing University of Posts and Telecommunications, and Hunan University of Science and Technology.

Besides his teaching over the years, Professor Wong has also been keen to create opportunities for young researchers to gain experience as presenters and to receive feedback from leading figures in the field of translation history. In 2004, he thus began organizing the Young Researchers' Conference on Chinese Translation Studies, held biannually, inviting senior scholars in the field to read and comment upon the work of junior researchers, both PhD candidates and fresh assistant professors. In 2009, he launched the biennial Summer School on Chinese Translation History, providing a platform for students to engage with translation research through lectures and group discussions led by prominent scholars. The program is organized in collaboration with various partner institutions in mainland China, such as Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Fudan University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Hunan University of Science and Technology, Central China Normal University, Xi'an International Studies University, and Guizhou University. He also has organized five international conferences on Chinese translation history, another venue where junior researchers have a chance to present their work to a wide audience from Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

Finally, he also instituted the "Sinologists as Translators" conference, which was first held to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Renditions*, and subsequently developed as a series. Venues so far have included SOAS, Sapienza University of Rome, and Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg.

The breadth and depth of Professor Wong's contributions—as a scholar, translator, mentor, and institution builder—have left an indelible mark on the field of translation studies, especially translation history, and on the many individuals who have had the privilege to work and study alongside him. In assembling this festschrift, we honor his extraordinary achievements and hope to reflect the spirit of intellectual curiosity, collegiality, and generosity that he has modeled throughout his career.

Our collection begins with two papers on early translation activity between Europe and China done by Catholic missionaries. The first chapter is Thierry Meynard's "Translating Jesuit Political Thought in Late Ming: The Writings of Alfonso Vagnone." This paper explores how the Italian Jesuit Alfonso Vagnone (1566–1640) introduced adaptations of Western political thought to Late Ming (1573–1644) China through his writings. Building on the Renaissance tradition of Jesuit education, which emphasized moral cultivation and political participation, Vagnone sought to align European political ideals with Confucian values, fostering intercultural dialogue and reform. His many works reflect his efforts to present Western concepts of governance, ethics, and citizenship in a way that resonated with Chinese literati. Vagnone's political ideas were rooted in Renaissance humanism and Jesuit opposition to Machiavellian realism. He emphasized the virtuous ruler, whose moral integrity ensures social harmony, while cautiously acknowledging the necessity of pragmatic governance. Drawing on Aristotle and Cicero, as well as Jesuit scholars like Francisco Suárez and Juan de Mariana, he introduced theories of monarchy, social contract, and the role of councils in advising rulers. His *Zhiping xixue* (治平西學; *Western Learning on Managing the Country and the Pacification of the World*), regarded as one of the first systematic introductions of Western political thought in China, integrates European concepts of state-building, economic governance, and social welfare within a Confucian framework. Vagnone's writings strategically aligned with Confucian ideals, emphasizing the ruler's moral duty to ensure the people's welfare while minimizing discussions on democracy or mixed regimes, which to a modern audience must appear paternalistic and elitist. Yet his emphasis on servant-master relationships and the role of women demonstrates a concern for marginalized groups. By translating Jesuit political philosophy into a Confucian context, Vagnone bridged two intellectual traditions, offering a model of governance that sought to harmonize Western and Chinese values while addressing the challenges of the Late Ming period. Despite its limitations, Vagnone's work represents a significant step in the intercultural exchange of political ideas and the Jesuit mission to reform and integrate with Chinese society.

Chapter Two, "Diplomacy and Powerplay: The Trilingual Juggling Act of Two Jesuits in the Treaty of Nerchinsk" by Sophie Ling-chia Wei, explores the pivotal role of Jesuits Tomás Pereira (1645–1708) and Jean-François Gerbillon (1654–1707) as interpreters and mediators during the negotiation of the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), the first formal accord between Qing China and Tsarist Russia. By examining their diaries and using a micro-historical lens, her study reveals how these Jesuits leveraged their linguistic expertise and unique position to serve their mission of proselytization while navigating the complex power dynamics among the Qing court, the Russian Empire, and the Roman Catholic Church. Wei situates this diplomatic episode within the broader context of Jesuit activity in the Qing court. Unlike Protestant missionaries of the late Qing, Jesuits of the early Qing targeted the emperor and the elite, using Western science, particularly astronomy and cartography, as tools of persuasion. The Jesuits' translation activities exemplify "translation as action," a concept emphasizing the agency of translators in shaping outcomes. By introducing advanced European cartographic techniques and assisting in drafting maps like the *Kun yu wanguo quan tu* 坤輿萬國全圖 (Great universal geographic map) and *Huang yu quan lan tu* 皇輿全覽圖 (Comprehensive map of the imperial territory), Jesuits helped the Qing consolidate imperial control while furthering their own proselytizing efforts. Ultimately, this paper argues that Pereira and Gerbillon were neither mere tools of imperial power nor neutral translators. Instead, they were active agents in a triangular powerplay, weaving their spiritual mission into the fabric of Qing-Russian diplomacy. Their role in the Nerchinsk negotiations underscores the transformative potential of translation in shaping political and cultural exchanges in the early modern era.

Chapter Three, "Intellectual Labor, Social Capital, and Economic Power in Robert Morrison's Social Network" by James St. André, shifts to nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries, exploring the role of social networks in the power and success of Robert Morrison (1782–1834), Britain's first Protestant missionary to China and a pioneering translator of Chinese into English. Using digital humanities tools, including a large database and network visualization software, St. André examines Morrison's extensive

social network to illustrate how his intellectual labor and social connections facilitated his achievements in translation, missionary work, and cross-cultural communication. Morrison's network, reconstructed from more than 2,800 pages of biographical and archival materials, includes 661 unique connections spanning kinship, professional, religious, and educational ties. These connections enabled Morrison to navigate four key social spheres: commercial, religious, governmental, and academic. His social network ranged from prominent figures such as Sir George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859) to missionaries in distant regions, and it was maintained through direct interactions and a voluminous correspondence. This network served as a critical resource for Morrison, opening doors to employment, funding, and collaboration. The paper highlights Morrison's strategic use of his network to accumulate various forms of capital. Beginning with his own labor-intensive mastery of Chinese, Morrison leveraged his linguistic expertise to secure influential roles, including Chinese Secretary for the East India Company, interpreter on the Amherst Mission (1816), and translator during Lord Napier's mission (1834). His translations, including the monumental *Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (1815–1823), were made possible by financial support garnered from aristocrats, merchants, and religious organizations. Morrison also raised funds to found the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca and other educational initiatives. Network visualizations reveal Morrison's unique position as a bridge between the commercial and missionary translators. While the former were tied to the East India Company, the latter were more interconnected and central to the network due to shared translation activities. Morrison's dual role allowed him to integrate these distinct spheres, underscoring his importance in early cross-cultural exchanges. This study challenges traditional models of power in translation studies, particularly Bourdieu's field theory, which largely ignores the role of labor in accumulating capital. Morrison's success highlights how labor and social connections can generate capital and reshape societal hierarchies. By focusing on Morrison's network, the paper sheds light on the translator's agency, emphasizing the importance of intellectual labor and relational capital in achieving cross-cultural influence.

Chapter Four looks at the work of one of Morrison's most important patrons and early friends in China, Sir George Thomas Staunton. "'Imperishably Connected with China': Responses to Sir George Thomas Staunton's *Memoirs* of 1856, by His 'Private Friends'" by Caroline Stevenson examines the responses to Sir George Thomas Staunton's *Memoirs of the Chief Incidents of the Public Life of Sir George Thomas Staunton* (1856), a privately circulated autobiography documenting his life and career as Britain's first sinologist and an influential figure in Anglo-Chinese relations. Staunton, who distributed 100 copies of his *Memoirs* to his close friends and associates, later published their letters of gratitude and praise in a rare booklet, *Select Letters* (1857). These letters, representing an unusual historical source, provide valuable insight into Staunton's social networks and challenges the portrayal of Staunton as a reclusive bachelor, instead demonstrating his deep connections with Britain's scientific, diplomatic, and intellectual elite. The responses reveal warm camaraderie, particularly with fellow "Old China Hands" and figures with shared interests in botany, diplomacy, and academia. They also affirm Staunton's transformation from a successful East India Company merchant into an esteemed English country gentleman and scholar. This reinvention was achieved through his active participation in learned societies, the cultivation of his estate at Leigh Park, and his efforts to promote his social and intellectual standing. The letters illustrate the enduring respect and admiration Staunton commanded among his peers, even as they reflect his frustrations over unfulfilled ambitions, such as being denied an ambassadorship to China and a Privy Council appointment. While some letters celebrate his personal accomplishments, others serve as evidence of the tightly-knit networks of Britain's elite, which defined nineteenth-century sociability and status. By analyzing *Select Letters*, Stevenson sheds light on Staunton's legacy and how he positioned himself for historical remembrance. The *Memoirs* and the accompanying responses affirm his lasting contributions to sinology and Anglo-Chinese relations, while also reflecting his desire to craft an enduring image of himself as a scholar, diplomat, and gentleman. Despite criticisms of egotism from the press, Staunton's efforts to preserve his legacy were successful, as his reputation

as Britain's leading expert on China continues to be remembered long after his time.

Staying with British translators but moving into the late nineteenth century, in Chapter Five, "Narrative Structure, Characterization, and the Reinvention of the Chinese Short Story in Robert Kennaway Douglas's Translation Anthology *Chinese Stories*," Lingjie Ji examines how Robert Kennaway Douglas's (1838–1913) *Chinese Stories* (1893) transformed traditional Chinese vernacular fiction into the emerging English short story form of the late nineteenth century. Through an analysis of narrative structure, characterization, and genre adaptation, Ji reveals how Douglas's translations aligned Chinese narratives with Victorian literary conventions, reflecting broader cultural and ideological concerns. Douglas held reservations about traditional Chinese fiction, criticizing its perceived verbosity, lack of psychological depth, and simplistic characterization. However, he recognized the potential of Chinese short-form narratives for translation, given their brevity and episodic structure. In *Chinese Stories*, Douglas eliminated the traditional prologue and its moral commentary, streamlined plots, and restructured events to emphasize unity, dramatic tension, and climactic revelations—key features of the modern English short story as theorized by figures like Edgar Allan Poe and Brander Matthews. Douglas's translations also addressed what he viewed as deficiencies in Chinese characterization. Traditional Chinese narratives often relied on external focalization and formulaic direct speech to convey character psychology. Douglas introduced internal focalization and free indirect discourse to create layered psychological portraits, particularly in moments of moral or emotional conflict. For example, he expanded concise descriptions of characters' actions in the Chinese originals into detailed introspections, aligning with the Victorian literary emphasis on psychological realism. These additions not only enhanced the dramatic and emotional impact of the stories but also conformed to Victorian readers' expectations of complex, individualized characters. Ji argues that Douglas's translation strategies were deeply informed by the ideological framework of British imperialism. His alterations reflected an implicit belief in the superiority of Western literary standards,

positioning Chinese fiction as deficient and in need of "improvement." By reshaping Chinese vernacular narratives into Victorian short stories, Douglas enacted a form of cultural appropriation, aligning Chinese texts with Western aesthetic and ideological norms. Ultimately, *Chinese Stories* serves as a case study in how translation operates as a site of cultural negotiation and transformation. It underscores how genre equivalence between Chinese and Western literary traditions is not a natural given but a constructed and politically charged process, shaped by both literary conventions and the power dynamics of empire.

In Chapter Six, "The Making of Arthur Waley," Tim Barrett argues that Waley (1889–1966) was among the most influential translators and interpreters of Chinese and Japanese literature in the twentieth century. Barrett examines the complex factors shaping Waley's career, emphasizing his self-taught approach, personal relationships, and the broader cultural context of his work. Barrett situates Waley within the lineage of British sinologists, contrasting him with missionary scholars like Robert Morrison and James Legge (1815–1897), whose religious motivations shaped their studies. By contrast, Waley emerged in a post-Victorian era, grounded in secular literary circles and deeply connected to the Bloomsbury Group. Barrett highlights the vital role of Waley's personal relationships, particularly with his long-term partner, Beryl de Zoete, and later with his wife, Alison Robinson. These relationships, alongside his interactions with contemporaries like Ezra Pound (1885–1972), Lionel Giles (1875–1958), and Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), not only shaped his intellectual trajectory but also brought scrutiny to his private life. Waley's association with Japanese scholars and students during his early career at the British Museum was pivotal in building his expertise in classical Chinese and Japanese texts, as formal training in premodern Chinese was unavailable in London at the time.

Waley's rise to prominence was marked by his 1918 publication *A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems*, which introduced Chinese poetry to a wide English-speaking audience. Barrett notes that Waley's approach to translation, which emphasized literary fluency over strict scholarly accuracy, earned both admiration and criticism. His style made Chinese

poets like Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) accessible and influential to readers in Britain and North America, yet academic sinologists like Giles and Pelliot faulted Waley for neglecting Chinese commentaries and scholarly rigor.

Barrett explores Waley's transition from Chinese to Japanese literature, notably his acclaimed translation of *The Tale of Genji*, which shielded him from criticism by Chinese specialists. Nevertheless, Waley continued to engage with Chinese culture, producing works that addressed gaps in British understanding, such as *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes* (1958). Barrett concludes that Waley's legacy lay in his ability to bridge East and West, bringing Chinese and Japanese literature to a broader audience. While Waley's scholarship was shaped by isolation, personal costs, and criticism, his enduring contributions demand respect and solidify his position as a pioneer of literary translation.

In Chapter Seven, "The Chinese Translation by Zenoni Volpicelli, First Italian Consul in Hong Kong, of the Sixteenth Chapter of Cesare Beccaria's *Dei delitti e delle pene* (1764) and an Unknown Letter by Sun Yat-sen" by Federico Masini, we shift from Anglo-American translators to Italy. Masini investigates the groundbreaking Chinese translation of a sixteenth-century Italian legal text into Chinese in 1905, the first of its kind in modern times. Volpicelli was the first Italian Consul in Hong Kong, and the study contextualizes his translation within his broader campaign against judicial torture in China and examines his interactions with Chinese intellectuals, including Sun Yat-sen, who later expressed his admiration for Volpicelli in a personal letter. Volpicelli's Chinese translation of Beccaria's seminal critique of torture and capital punishment was part of a larger movement to reform China's judicial system in the wake of the Qing dynasty's (1644–1912) institutional reforms. Volpicelli personally financed the printing of 500 copies of the translation, entitled *Kuxing bigong lun* (酷刑逼供論, On judicial torture), which he distributed to Chinese officials and published in newspapers in Canton and Hong Kong. Drawing from Beccaria's Enlightenment ideals, the translation emphasized the moral and practical failures of torture, arguing that it undermines justice and disproportionately harms the innocent. Volpicelli

adapted the text for a Chinese audience, omitting metaphysical references and reinforcing practical arguments that aligned with contemporary reformist discourse.

The translation is written in classical Chinese but incorporates emerging modern Chinese terms, such as *pingquan* (平權, equal rights) and *ziyou* (自由, freedom), reflecting the influence of Japanese translations of Western concepts and the linguistic shift toward modernity in late Qing China. The paper also highlights Volpicelli's strategic use of this translation as a diplomatic tool, drawing support from figures such as the Duke of the Abruzzi and other international allies in Hong Kong, further cementing Italy's role in advocating for China's legal reforms. In addition to analyzing Volpicelli's translation, the paper presents, for the first time, an Italian letter from Sun Yat-sen to Volpicelli, discovered in Italian archives. Written in 1920, the letter reflects Sun's deep respect for Volpicelli's impartiality, statesmanship, and support for China's struggle for national freedom. Sun's use of Virgil's *Aeneid* underscores his familiarity with Western classics and highlights Volpicelli's influence during Sun's time in Canton. Thus Masini sees Volpicelli's work as a testament to the cultural and intellectual exchanges between Italy and China during a pivotal period of reform and modernization, showcasing how translation served as a vehicle for legal, cultural, and political transformation.

Chapters Eight to Ten look at what was happening in China in the late Qing and Republican eras, focusing on Chinese writers and translators. First Theodore Huters, in "Wu Jianren's Hybrid Modernity: The Late Qing Intellectual Crisis as Reflected in *The New Story of the Stone*," explores the intellectual tensions of late Qing China through *The New Story of the Stone* (*Xin shitou ji* 新石頭記), a novel by Wu Jianren 吳趼人 (1866–1910) that reflects the era's struggle to reconcile Chinese tradition with imported Western modernity. Written in the wake of China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the novel examines the destabilization of the long-held binary of Chinese cultural superiority versus Western inferiority, showcasing a shifting intellectual landscape marked by uncertainty and flux. The novel follows Jia Baoyu, the protagonist of Cao Xueqin's classic *The Story of the Stone* (*Shitou ji* 石

頭記); often referred to by its alternate title *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Honglou meng* 紅樓夢), who awakens in early twentieth-century China after decades in a coma. As Baoyu navigates the rapidly modernizing cities of Shanghai and Beijing, he encounters the political, economic, and cultural upheavals of the time. Wu Jianren uses Baoyu's experiences to critique the intellectual and moral failings of various social groups, particularly the Shanghai merchant class, represented by the feckless Xue Pan. Baoyu's evolving perspective on Western imports reveals a pragmatic nationalism: he rejects xenophobia while advocating for the adoption and adaptation of foreign technologies through Chinese innovation. The novel's second half shifts to an imagined utopia, the "Civilized Realm" (*wenming jing* 文明境), where scientific and social advancements combine elements of Western modernity with traditional Chinese values. Guided by Lao Shaonian (whose name fuses "old" and "youth"), Baoyu witnesses a society driven by rationality, technology, and egalitarian ideals rooted in classical Chinese thought. However, this utopia's sterility and reliance on mythologized Chinese superiority raise questions about its viability. Wu juxtaposes the idealized realm with the fractured realities of China, underscoring the challenges of integrating tradition and modernity. Central to the novel is the contested concept of "civilization" (*wenming* 文明), which oscillates between its Western and Chinese interpretations. Wu critiques the superficiality of Western civilization while asserting the enduring relevance of China's ancient values. Yet the novel's unresolved tensions—evident in Baoyu's frustrations and the disquieting treatment of cultural symbols like the *peng* 鵬 bird—reflect the broader uncertainties of late Qing intellectual life. Wu's work ultimately exemplifies the creative potential and contradictions of a hybrid modernity, where neither tradition nor imported modernity can dominate. By examining *The New Story of the Stone*, Huters argues that Wu Jianren's narrative captures the late Qing crisis of intellectual identity, offering a nuanced exploration of the interplay between tradition, modernity, and the search for a cohesive cultural future.

In Chapter Nine, "'Ave atque vale': On Translated Texts, Fraternal Strife, and the Study of Literature," Michel Hockx explores the

intersection of translation, literary creation, and personal relationships through the lens of Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881–1936) and Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), two of modern China's most prominent literary figures. Hockx highlights how translation served as both a medium of literary innovation and a vehicle for personal and intellectual conflict between the brothers. Central to this discussion is Zhou Zuoren's 1925 Chinese translation of *Catullus 101*, a Roman elegy mourning a brother's death, and its striking parallels to Lu Xun's short story *Shangshi* 傷逝 (Mourning the dead). The article argues that these works are intertwined not only in terms of theme but also in the context of the brothers' estrangement, offering a poignant reflection on mourning, regret, and unresolved familial tension. Zhou Zuoren's translation, titled *Shangshi*, embodies his belief in "free verse" translation, a hallmark of the "Europeanized vernacular" style championed by the *New Youth* writers. Published during a minor literary quarrel, Zhou's translation gains deeper significance when viewed alongside Lu Xun's *Shangshi*, completed just weeks later. The story, narrated by Juansheng, recounts his failed relationship with Zijun, a woman whose progressive ideals are stifled by societal pressures and Juansheng's own self-centeredness. While often interpreted as a critique of male intellectual hypocrisy, the story also functions as an allegory of Lu Xun's estranged relationship with his brother. Zhou himself later insisted that *Shangshi* was not a love story but rather a veiled reflection on their fraternal discord. The article contextualizes the Zhou brothers' estrangement within their shared history. Their once-close relationship fractured in 1923, with Zhou accusing Lu Xun of personal transgressions involving his wife, Habuto Nobuko. This rift, compounded by diverging intellectual trajectories, became a recurring undercurrent in their subsequent writings. Lu Xun's subtle barbs in his fiction and Zhou's translation of a poem about a brother's death illustrate how personal grievances shaped their literary output. Hockx also critiques Western scholarship's tendency to downplay the personal dimensions of Lu Xun's work, often prioritizing textual analysis over biographical context. By revisiting the connections between translation, personal experience, and literary creation, the article underscores the significance of *Shangshi* not merely as a literary work

but as a deeply personal text. It also highlights Zhou Zuoren's translation as a key to understanding how the brothers' estrangement informed their creative output. Hockx thus demonstrates how translation, often viewed as secondary to original creation, can serve as a critical lens for examining the intersections of literature, personal relationships, and cultural history.

In Chapter Ten, " 'Whither the Chinese Stage?': Yao Ke's Translation of Traditional Chinese Opera," Barbara Jiawei Li examines Yao Ke's 姚克 (1905–1991) critical writings and English translations of traditional Chinese opera during the 1930s, a pivotal decade for Chinese theater. Amidst calls for modernization and the global success of Chinese opera through figures like Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894–1961) and Xiong Shiyi 熊式一 (1902–1991), Yao emerged as a significant advocate and critic of Chinese opera. His translations of *Fanma ji* 販馬記 (*Madame Cassia*, 1935) and *Dayu shajia* 打漁殺家 (*The Right to Kill*, 1936) provide key insights into the hybridization of traditional Chinese performance with modern realistic drama. On one hand, he criticized traditional opera for its outdated themes, excessive focus on musicality, and structural disorganization, arguing that opera had grown irrelevant to modern Chinese society and needed comprehensive reform, including the development of realistic "human drama" that prioritized social relevance, dialogue-driven narratives, and cohesive staging. Inspired by Chen Dabei's 陳大悲 (1887–1944) concept of "human drama," Yao sought to create theater that reflected the realities of human life and national struggles, aligning drama with the pressing social issues of 1930s China. On the other hand, Yao's translations reveal a deep respect for the cultural and thematic elements of traditional Chinese opera. *Madame Cassia* reflects a belief in divine intervention as the source of justice, while *The Right to Kill* celebrates human agency and rebellion against oppression. Yao's preference for the latter is evident in his amplification of its revolutionary spirit through added dialogue and dramatic emphasis, aligning the play with the patriotic resistance movements of the 1930s. Yao adapted these operas into the framework of modern realistic drama by transforming sung arias into spoken dialogue and incorporating detailed stage

directions. However, his translations retained distinctly operatic elements, such as asides and autonomous stage directions, which disrupted the illusion of realism. These hybrid texts, blending traditional Chinese aesthetics with Western dramatic conventions, reflect the broader cultural negotiations of 1930s China as intellectuals sought to redefine Chinese theater. Yao Ke's translations were well received both as literary works and in performance, bridging cultural gaps and presenting Chinese opera to Western audiences in accessible yet innovative formats. Li argues that Yao's translational practice exemplifies selective synthesis, challenging binary notions of tradition versus modernity. Yao's work offers a model for understanding cross-cultural adaptation and the evolving dynamics of cultural exchange, particularly during a transformative era in Chinese theater history.

The last four chapters broaden out to larger questions about history and historiography. In Chapter Eleven, "Discovering 'Historian' in Early China: Debates on Translating *Taishi gong*," Lily Li Li explores the enduring scholarly debates over how to translate the title *Shiji* 史記, authored by Sima Qian (c. 145–c. 87 BCE), one of China's most influential historical texts. The competing English renderings—such as *Records of the Grand Historian* and *The Grand Scribe's Records*—reflect more than linguistic preference; they reveal fundamental questions about how Western scholars interpret early Chinese historiography, authorship, and historical writing. By tracing the evolution of these debates, this study examines how translation acts as a form of scholarly inquiry, bridging distinct traditions of historical thought and revealing the challenges of cross-cultural interpretation. Li begins by analyzing two pivotal waves of translation debates. The first, catalyzed by Burton Watson's (1925–2017) *Records of the Grand Historian* (1961), focused on whether the term *taishi gong* should be translated as "historian" or "scribe." Watson's choice of "historian" introduced a Western historiographical framework but invited criticism for inaccurately equating Sima Qian's role with that of a modern historian. Scholars such as Homer H. Dubs argued that the term *shi* 史 in early China referred to a court official responsible for recording celestial and political events, a role distinct from Western notions of historical

analysis. This debate raised larger questions about the nature of historical writing in early China and the extent to which Western concepts could be applied to Chinese texts.

The second wave emerged in the 1990s with William H. Nienhauser Jr.'s *The Grand Scribe's Records* (1994), which deliberately replaced "historian" with "scribe." While "scribe" avoided anachronistic associations, it sparked new debates about whether the term reductively portrayed Sima Qian as a mere record-keeper, neglecting his intellectual contributions. These discussions expanded into broader inquiries into the *Shiji*'s authorship, its compilation process, and the institutional context of early Chinese historiography. Scholars like Stephen Durrant and Martin Kern have since emphasized the importance of understanding Sima Qian's work within its own cultural and intellectual milieu, moving beyond Western frameworks of historiography. Li thus argues that translation is not a neutral act but a method of research that shapes both scholarly discourse and cultural understanding. The debates over the *Shiji*'s title illustrate how translation challenges have led to deeper investigations into Chinese intellectual traditions, historiographical practices, and the complexities of cross-cultural interpretation. By treating translation as research, this study highlights the transformative potential of translation in fostering nuanced, globally informed approaches to historical texts and traditions.

Joshua Fogel, in Chapter Twelve, "Translation and Interpretation: Chinese Struggles to Understand and Explain the Japanese Language," examines the evolving Chinese attempts to study, understand, and explain the Japanese language, focusing on the period from the late Ming dynasty (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries) through the Qing dynasty (seventeenth–nineteenth centuries). While Japan's historical and cultural debt to Chinese literary Sinitic is widely recognized, the reverse dynamic—Chinese engagement with the Japanese language—emerged only sporadically and under particular historical contexts. Fogel explores why Chinese interest in Japanese linguistics intensified in the late Ming, how it was expressed, and why it waned during the Qing. The first sustained Chinese efforts to analyze the Japanese language coincided with the Ming dynasty's maritime challenges, particularly "Japanese"

piracy (*wokou* 倭寇). Works such as Zheng Shungong's 鄭舜功 *Riben yijian* 日本一鑑 (A mirror on Japan, 1557) and other Ming texts introduced Chinese audiences to Japanese *kana* syllabaries, extensive glossaries, and even grammatical explanations. These texts reflect both practical concerns for diplomacy and defense and a broader intellectual curiosity about Japan. They also reveal how Chinese scholars relied on Japanese informants, Buddhist monks, and captured pirates to assemble their linguistic knowledge, often transcribing Japanese sounds with Chinese characters in ways shaped by local Chinese dialects.

By contrast, the Qing period saw a decline in systematic Chinese engagement with the Japanese language. The Qing intellectual movement of *kaozheng* 考證 (evidential research) focused exclusively on Chinese language and texts, reflecting a broader cultural solipsism. The Qing ruling elite's sense of cultural self-sufficiency and relative isolation further discouraged interest in foreign languages. Weng Guangping's 翁廣平 (Haichen 海琛, 1760–1843) *Wuqi jing bu* 吾妻鏡補 (Commentary on the *Azuma Kagami*, 1814), a monumental but linguistically limited study of Japanese history and culture, exemplifies this shift. While Weng compiled an extensive Japanese vocabulary list and attempted to document *kana* syllabaries, his lack of Japanese language proficiency underscores the Qing-era disconnect between intellectual ambition and linguistic engagement. Fogel argues that the fluctuating Chinese interest in Japanese language and culture was shaped by shifting political, cultural, and intellectual priorities. In the Ming, the need to understand Japan was driven by immediate security threats and practical concerns. By the Qing, however, Japan's diminished threat and the rise of inward-focused textual studies relegated Japanese linguistic studies to a marginal intellectual pursuit. It was only after Japan's rise as a regional power in the late nineteenth century that Chinese interest in the Japanese language and culture was revived, spurred by a new urgency to learn from Japan's modernization efforts. This trajectory highlights the interplay between language, cultural capital, and geopolitics in Sino-Japanese relations.

In Chapter Thirteen, "Changing Patterns of Reception of Ancient

Texts," Susan Bassnett explores the evolving reception and translation of ancient texts, emphasizing how shifting cultural norms, literary aesthetics, and translator subjectivities shape the transmission of these works across time. Drawing on foundational theories such as Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem model, the study highlights how translation functions as either a conservative force adhering to established norms or an innovative practice introducing new forms and ideas. The discussion spans examples from classical Chinese poetry to Greco-Roman epics, illustrating the dynamic interplay between ancient texts and their modern reinterpretations. Weinberger and Paz's *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei* (1987) serves as a central case study, showcasing how diverse translations of a single Tang-dynasty poem reflect translators' cultural contexts and creative strategies. From Kenneth Rexroth's "poet's translation," praised for its spirit, to the conservative rhymed stanzas of W. J. B. Fletcher, the study demonstrates how translation oscillates between innovation and tradition. The multiplicity of interpretations underscores Even-Zohar's claim that translations are inherently shaped by their position in the polysystem and the cultural expectations of their target audiences. Bassnett extends the discussion to classical Western texts, featuring Seamus Heaney's translations of *Beowulf* and Virgil's *Aeneid* (Book VI), whose use of familiar cadences from his Northern Irish upbringing exemplifies how translators navigate between preserving ancient aesthetics and creating accessible, contemporary works. Similarly, Michael Longley's sonnet "Ceasefire," a reinterpretation of a scene from Homer's *Iliad*, compresses ancient themes into a modern poetic form while addressing the Northern Irish Troubles. These examples reveal how translators often transform ancient texts to reflect contemporary ideologies and artistic trends. Bassnett also highlights the "democratization" of classical literature, as translations make works once confined to elite audiences accessible to broader readerships. Writers such as Alice Oswald and Christopher Logue reimagine Homer's epics through modern lenses, emphasizing themes like the futility of war. Josephine Balmer's "transgressive" translations further illustrate how fragmented ancient texts inspire creative reinterpretations, blending scholarship with innovation.

Ultimately, the article argues that translation is not merely a process of linguistic transfer but a transformative act that reimagines ancient texts for new audiences. By examining changing patterns in the reception and translation of ancient works, this study underscores the enduring relevance of these texts and the creative potential of translation as a medium for cultural renewal.

Finally, in Chapter Fourteen, "Historiography as History: China's Tenacious Tributary System," Richard J. Smith looks at the historiography and enduring debates surrounding China's tributary system, with a focus on the scholarship of John King Fairbank (1907–1991), whose work on the subject has been both groundbreaking and contentious. Fairbank's seminal contributions, beginning with his 1941 article co-authored with Teng Ssu-yü 鄧嗣禹 (1906–1988), conceptualized the tributary system as a framework for understanding China's foreign relations, particularly during the Qing dynasty. However, his work also attracted criticism for presenting a Sinocentric and static model that some scholars argue reified Chinese superiority and justified Western imperial aggression. Critics, including James Millward, Judith Farquhar, and James Hevia, have portrayed Fairbank as complicit in perpetuating Orientalist narratives. These critiques, while illuminating, often oversimplify Fairbank's nuanced understanding of culture and his acknowledgment of the complexities and contradictions inherent in Qing foreign policy. Smith situates the tributary system within broader historical and institutional contexts, emphasizing its dynamic and multifaceted nature. Qing rulers, particularly the Manchus, adapted and expanded the system, incorporating diverse Inner Asian and maritime states into a hierarchical yet flexible framework. Institutions like the Court of Colonial Affairs and the Board of Ritual, alongside visual and cartographic representations, reinforced Qing authority. Yet, as the analysis of the Macartney Mission of 1793 demonstrates, the system's rigidity was tempered by pragmatic accommodations to foreign powers, highlighting its adaptability in the face of geopolitical challenges. Recent historiography, including works by Laura Hostetler, Henrietta Harrison, and Takeshi Hamashita, underscores the tributary system's fluidity and its role in fostering economic and cultural

exchanges. This scholarship challenges monolithic views of the system, presenting it as an evolving network of asymmetrical yet mutually beneficial relationships. Similarly, Paul Cohen's "China-centered" approach critiques the imposition of Western frameworks onto Chinese history, advocating a more nuanced understanding of China's modernization within its own cultural and historical contexts. Concluding with reflections on Fairbank's legacy, Smith argues that while his work has rightly faced revision, it remains a critical foundation for understanding the tributary system and its historiographical significance. Fairbank's openness to critique and his pursuit of broad historical patterns serve as a model for contemporary scholarship, inviting ongoing dialogue on China's past and its global interactions.

As the essays in this volume collectively demonstrate, Professor Wong's career has been defined not only by his own formidable scholarship and tireless service, but also by his ability to inspire and connect generations of researchers across continents and disciplines. Each chapter in this festschrift, though diverse in topic and approach, resonates with the intellectual curiosity, methodological rigor, and cross-cultural vision that have characterized Professor Wong's work. By engaging with the complexities of translation, literary history, and intercultural dialogue, the contributors both honor his enduring legacy and advance the fields to which he has dedicated his life. It is our hope that this collection will serve not only as a tribute to Professor Wong's remarkable achievements but also as a stimulus for further research and collaboration in the vibrant scholarly communities he has helped to cultivate.