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Abstract: In this chapter, Liu Jianhui describes the informational network that developed in nineteenth century Shanghai thanks much to the translation efforts of Western missionaries and their Chinese collaborators. Among the institutions of central importance in this effort is the Mohai shuguan, where a large body of Western scientific and other works were translated by Western missionaries William Muirhead, Alexander Wylie, and others and underwent correction and improvement by over a dozen Chinese assistants, including Wang Tao, Li Shanlan, Guan Sifu, Zhang Fuxi, and Jiang Dunfu.

Demon Capital Shanghai:
The “Modern” Experience of Japanese Intellectuals¹
Liu Jianhui 劉建輝

Translated by Joshua A Fogel

Chapter 3
Shanghai and the Opening of Japan (Part 1)

The London Missionary Society Press, Site for the Dispatch of Information

The Base of Protestant Activities

In the 1850s, not only trade and transportation but an “informational network” was reorganized with Shanghai at the center of operations. An examination of the movements of Protestant missionaries, the most important transmitters of information on the West from before the Opium War, will make this amply clear. In what appears to be for the benefit of spreading the Gospel at the time, the missionaries who were scattered about the five opened ports after the Opium War gathered more and more in Shanghai and began to make this site, central as it was to the networks of trade and transportation, their base of operations.

The first missionaries to enter Shanghai were William Medhurst (Mai Dusi 麥都思, 1796-1857) and William Lockhart (Luo Weilin 雒魏林, 1811-96) of the London Missionary Society. The two men moved in 1843, shortly after the opening of the port, from their respective bases—Medhurst from Guangzhou and Lockhart from Dinghai (Zhoushan)—and thus brought to this new terrain the printing operations of the London Missionary Society originally in Batavia and Dr. Lockhart’s clinic in Dinghai. These two institutions were named, respectively, the Mohai shuguan 墨海書館 (London Missionary Society Press) and the Renji yiguan 仁濟醫館 (“Chinese Hospital”), and, as we shall see later, the Tian’antang 天安堂, church for the London Missionary Society, was subsequently added. These three organizations would later expand greatly at a site known as Majiaquan 麥家圈, a name linked to Medhurst’s Chinese name, presently located near Shandong Road. It was to become a great hub of activity not only for the London Missionary Society but for all Protestant sects in Shanghai.

¹ *Mato Shanhai: Nihon chishikijin no “kindai” taiken* 魔都上海：日本知識人の「近代」体験 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2000), pp. 75-93. See also the Chinese translation by Gan Huijie, *Modu Shanghai: Riben zhishiren de “jindai” tiyan* 魔都上海：日本知识人的“近代”体验 (Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), pp. 37-45.



Missionary Walter Medhurst
with Choo Tih Lang and a Malay Boy



William Lockhart

Medhurst was, in effect, the successor to Robert Morrison who had pioneered Protestant evangelizing in the Nanyang area. After Morrison's death, Medhurst played a central role in the missionary work of the London Missionary Society in China. Accordingly, his move to Shanghai was of momentous import. One might go so far as to say that this event marked Shanghai's becoming the new center of Protestant missionary work in China.

Extraordinary Levels of Activity

In actual fact, the London Missionary Society Press under his direction held sway over the world of Christian publishing over the next fifteen or more years. Nearly 150,000 copies of a Chinese-language translation of the Bible² and some 171 missionary tracts and scientific texts in Chinese were distributed to the public. In addition, thirty missionaries, drawn one after the next to Medhurst personally or the London Missionary Society Press, took up residence in Shanghai.³

In the course of their proselytizing work, many of these missionaries introduced large quantities of knowledge from the West, either in works they themselves wrote or by translating works by Western scholars. Let us now introduce some of the more important of these works by discipline. In the field of astronomy and geography, William Muirhead wrote his *Dili quanzhi* 地理全志 (Complete gazetteer of geography) over the period 1853-54. It described modern Western geography and explained in detailed and simple terms not only human geography but natural geography as well. Richard Quarteman Way (Yi Lizhe 裨理哲, 1819-95, based in Ningbo) did a broad revision of the *Diqiu tushuo* 地球圖說 (Illustrated description of the globe) in 1856 and strove to explain the

² Ruan Renze 阮仁泽 and Gao Zhenong 高振农, eds., *Shanghai zongjiao shi* 上海宗教史 (History of religion in Shanghai) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1992).

³ Zhang Zhongli 张仲礼, ed., *Dongnan yanhai dushi yu Zhongguo jindaihua* 东南沿海都市与中国近代化 (Cities along the southeast coast and the modernization of China) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1996).

theories of a spherical Earth and a heliocentric system, still not fully accepted by Chinese intellectuals, and to introduce national conditions pertaining to the various countries of the world. Although not the author's own work, Alexander Wylie (Weilieyali 偉烈亞力, 1815-87) translated in 1859 *Outlines of Astronomy* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1849), a famous work by John F. W. Herschel (Houshile Yuehan 侯失勒約翰, 1792-1871), former head of the Royal Astronomical Society, as *Tan tian* 談天. He explained in this book the flow of modern Western astronomical theory from Copernicus to Kepler and on to Newton, as well as the most recent scientific research in this branch of science.

In the field of historical studies, the same Muirhead prepared a Chinese translation of *The History of England* by Thomas Milner, entitled *Da Yingguo zhi* 大英國志, in which he traced by dynasties the 2000-year history of England, "that land at the height of prosperity...and the glory of whose church and state crowns those to the east and west."⁴ In the process he offered clear information, which had hitherto not been explained in works such as the *Haiguo tuzhi*, about the British political system—with concise explanations of the two houses of Parliament (*Balimen yihui* 巴力門議會), the upper House of Lords (*Laoerdeshi* 勞爾德士) and the lower House of Commons (*Gaomenshi* 高門士), the limited electoral system (*tuixuan* 推選), and the leading role played by the lower house.

Also, in 1861 as an enlarged edition of his own *Meilige heshengguo zhilüe* 美理哥合省國志略 (Brief account of the United States of America, 1838), mentioned in an earlier chapter, Elijah Bridgman (1801-61) wrote *Lianbang zhilüe* 聯邦志略 (Brief account of the United States). He began with a history of the independence of the newly-arisen United States, and then systematically introduced the nation's politics, economics, education, religions, and the concrete state of affairs in each state.



Elijah Bridgman

⁴ "Hanwen xuwen" 漢文序文 (Introduction to the Chinese edition), in *Da Yingguo zhi* (Shanghai: Mohai shuguan, 1856).

In the fields of mathematics and physics, Wylie first wrote in 1853 the *Shuxue qimeng* 數學啟蒙 (Introduction to mathematics) which explained the rudiments of this field of knowledge in the West. In addition, he translated in 1857 the latter half of Euclid's *Geometry*—Matteo Ricci (利瑪竇, 1552-1610) had only translated the first half—as *Xu jihe yuanben* 續幾何原本 (Elements of geometry, continued), and thus completed the translation of this famous work from ancient Greece after a hiatus of 250 years from Ricci's time.

The following year, 1858, he published *Zhongxue qianshuo* 重學淺說 (A simple theory of dynamics). This was an effort to explain for the first time in Chinese the science of Western physics centering on dynamics, and the next year he translated *Elements of Algebra* (1837) by the British mathematician Augustus De Morgan (Di Mogan 棣麼甘, 1806-71) as *Daishuxue* 代數學 (Algebra), and *Elements of Analytical Geometry and Differential and Integral Calculus* (1850) by the American mathematician Elias Loomis (Luo Mishi 羅密士, 1811-89) as *Dai wei ji shiji* 代微積拾級. In the latter work, in particular, he not only introduced modern Western mathematical knowledge, but also simultaneously coined numerous new mathematical terms, such as *xishu* 係數 (coefficient), *hanshu* 函數 (function), *bianshu* 變數 (variable), *weifen* 微分 (differential calculus), and *jifen* 積分 (integral calculus), among others.

In other fields as well, Protestant missionaries produced Chinese translations of Western works in numbers almost too many to count: such as in medicine, *Quanti xinlun* 全體新論 (A new essay on the entire body) (first published in Guangzhou in 1851, reprinted by the Mohai shuguan in 1855), *Xiyi luelun* 西醫略論 (Outlines of Western medicine) (published by the Renji yiguan, 1857), *Fuying xinshuo* 婦嬰新說 (A new theory of childbirth and infant care) (Renji yiguan, 1858), and *Neike xinshuo* 內科新說 (A new theory of internal medicine) (Renji yiguan, 1858) by Benjamin Hobson (Hexin 合信, 1816-73), who took over the job of supervising the Renji yiguan after Lockhart; and in the fields of natural history and biology, *Bowu xinbian* 博物新編 (A new essay on scientific knowledge) (first published in Guangzhou in 1855, reprinted by the Mohai shuguan that same year) by Hobson, and *Zhiwuxue* 植物學 (Botany) (Mohai shuguan, 1859) by Alexander Williamson (Wei Lianchen 韋廉臣, 1829-90).⁵

By virtue of their extraordinary level of activity, by the latter half of the 1850s Shanghai rapidly developed as the transmission site for information from the West, forming an immense informational network centered entirely on itself.

Production Base for Information

How is it that Muirhead, Wylie, and the other missionaries all of a sudden in the 1850s began to publish with such concentrated effort these Chinese translations of Western works? And, with the exception of Medhurst, how were these men who had not live in China for such a long period of time able to produce translations in literary

⁵ Translator's note. The original, *An Introduction to Botany* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman) by John Lindley (1799-1865), was published in 1832.

Chinese of Western works of science with such a high degree of abstraction? In the light of their recognized activities, most everyone will surely be entertaining such doubts.

To answers these questions, we need to examine a bit more closely the actual site which made the production of information possible: the concrete daily activities of the missionaries, the environment surrounding them, and, most important, the Mohai shuguan. As we noted earlier, the Mohai shuguan was established when Medhurst moved to Shanghai in 1843 and brought with him the publishing facilities of the London Missionary Society from Batavia.

It was located for roughly the first two years on the first floor of Medhurst's rented home outside the Eastern Gate of the walled Chinese city of Shanghai. In 1846 it moved to a detached, two-storey home newly built outside the Northern Gate of the walled city. Adjacent to the Mohai shuguan, also newly constructed, were Medhurst's own home and the Renji yiguan. Later still the Tian'antang Church was built. The aforementioned Maijiaquan referred to the enclosure within which these institutions were concentrated.

At first when the Mohai shuguan was established, it had only one manual printing press and only one set of metal type which was missing numerous characters. There was also only one young Chinese pressman, and he had to prepare every piece of work while checking the type available on hand. It was an extremely cumbersome process.

To deal with the printing of many copies of the Bible the next year, 1847, a twin-cylinder printing press was sent from the home office of the London Missionary Society, and prior to this Alexander Wylie, a specialist in printing, was dispatched to Shanghai. Of course, the Mohai shuguan had begun in 1844, shortly after it was founded, printing missionary pamphlets, but the heightened activities in their operations seems only to have become possible with the arrival of new machinery and specialized staff. It is worth noting in this connect that the twin-cylinder printing press could, it was said, print several tens of thousands of pages in a single day.

Using Bovine Power

Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-97), who later worked as a Chinese language assistant for the missionaries there, recounted in the following manner the general features of the Mohai shuguan in the latter half of the 1840s:

The Westerner Medhurst is now in charge of the Mohai shuguan, and they print books there with movable type machines. He said they had a new invention, and I made a point of going to take a look at it. A bamboo fence with floral support and a bed of chrysanthemums and orchids encircle [the building], altogether a thoroughly rural elegance. Upon entering one sees it is replete with light blue shelves, a resplendent sight. Medhurst has two daughters, the older named Mary and the younger named Ellen [?]. All came out to greet me....

I was later taken in to see the printing of books. An ox pulls the machine on a wooden floor and the gears move at a great speed. They claim that several thousand sheets can be printed in a single day. It moves with truly stunning speed. The study has glass windows that emit an emerald glow throughout [the room]. Bookshelves arranged east to west are filled with dictionaries neatly lined up.

Like Medhurst, they all—William C. Milne (Mei Weicha 美魏茶, 1815-63), Lockhart, Muirhead, and Joseph Edkins (Ai Yuese 艾約瑟, 1823-1905)—know how to read and speak Chinese.⁶



Joseph Edkins



Wang Tao

The use of an ox to power the movement of a printing press must have been an extraordinary event for Chinese of the day. In another essay Wang Tao offered details about a completely unfamiliar machine imported from the West:

The Westerners have set up a number of printing facilities, although the best known is the Mohai [shuguan]. They have a metal printing press there, some ten feet long and three feet wide.

It has two heavy gears on either side, and two people on each side carry out the printing in coordination. An ox is used to turn the gears, pushing them in and out. Above hang two large hollow shafts connected to a belt below that feeds paper into the machine [i.e., the press]. With each revolution the paper is printed on both sides. [The process] is both exceedingly simple and rapid. In a single day over 40,000 sheets can be printed. The typography is done with lead cast type, and the ink is a refined mixture of gelatin and soot oil.

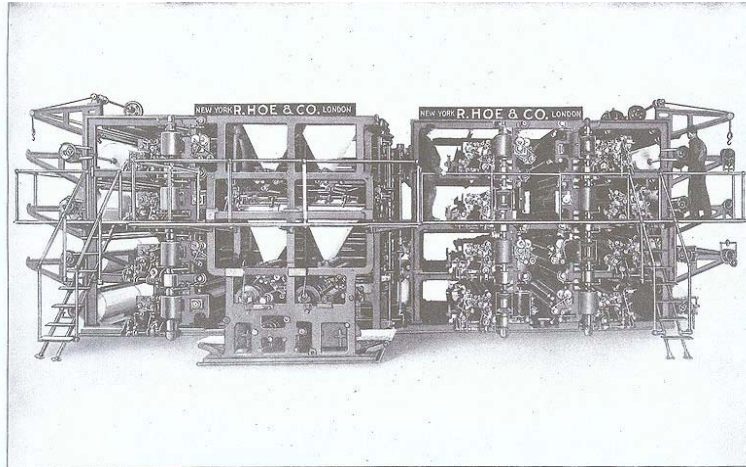
Inkpots sit on either side of the press, and when the metal cylinder is rotated, it conveys ink to a flat plate. To the side ink cylinders are lined up at discreet spaces, and the ink is applied to the flat surface and conveyed to the character types. In this manner, the characters appear naturally without shadowing.

Because the ink is applied evenly, the characters are sharp, making this far superior to traditional Chinese printing. Although the power of an ox is needed to move the printing press, the use of an ox replaces the use of steam [to power the press].⁷

⁶ Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu* 漫遊隨錄 (Random notes on leisurely travel) (1887; Changsha rpt.: Hunan remin chubanshe, 1982; Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007).

⁷ Wang Tao, *Yingruan zazhi* 瀛壖雜誌 (Miscellaneous notes from the marshes) (1875; Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1969; Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1988; Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989).

It is well known that an American by the name of Robert Hoe III (1839-1909) invented the steam-powered rotary printing press in 1846. The Mohai shuguan was said to have introduced its cylinder printing press in the autumn of 1847, making the possibility scant that it was a Hoe-type machine. Nonetheless, it was doubtless the rotary press of a generation preceding Hoe's and would have been considerably advanced technology for its time. The outstanding capacity of this rotary press was put to work printing Bibles and other materials. Over the course of the 1850s, it was a mainstay supporting the Mohai shuguan.



Hoe Printing Press

The First Chinese Translations of the Bible

To understand the Mohai shuguan at its initial stage, we looked at the rotary printing press that was its effective “trademark,” but the ultimate purpose of introducing such a machine was to print the newly translated Bible. To that end we need to take a further look at the “site” of Chinese-language translations of the Bible, the press’s most important undertaking.

As a missionary in China, the first Protestant to translate the Bible into Chinese was Robert Morrison. Arriving in China in 1807, Morrison worked almost entirely by himself before completing a translation of the New Testament in 1813. In cooperation with William Milne, who was sent to China by the same London Missionary Society later, he completed a translation of the Old Testament in 1819. The two books were published together in 1824 as *Shentian shengshu* 神天聖書 (also known as *Shengshu quanshu* 聖書全書). This was the first Chinese-language translation of the Bible produced in China. There were numerous problems, however, in Morrison’s translation, making the text extremely difficult for Chinese readers to comprehend.⁸

⁸ Yoshida Tora 吉田寅, *Chūgoku Purotesutanto dendō shi kenkyū* 中国プロテスタント伝道史研究 (Studies in the history of Protestant evangelizing in China) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997). I have gained a great deal of information about Protestant missionaries and their work in China from this work.

Given these difficulties, such later arrivals to China as Medhurst, Gützlaff, and Bridgman worked together to revise Morrison's translation. They first jointly published in 1837 a translation of the New Testament under the title *Xin yizhao shu* 新遺詔書; and Gützlaff alone in 1838 brought a revised translation of the Old Testament as *Jiu yizhao shengshu* 舊遺詔聖書. This marked the completion of the first revised edition of the *Shentian shengshu*. Gützlaff later evinced dissatisfaction with this revision, and in 1840 he published his revision of the *Xin yizhao shu* under the title *Jiushizhu Yesu xin yizhao shu* 救世主耶穌新遺詔書 (New Testament of Jesus the Savior).

Is it *Shen* 神 or *Shangdi* 上帝?

The Bible translated without the participation of educated native speakers was, to be sure, not terribly popular. Thus, in 1843 representatives of the London Missionary Society and various other Protestant sects gathered in Hong Kong to confer on subsequent revision work. They organized a new Translation Committee with Medhurst as its head and decided to bring out a definitive edition of the Bible in Chinese.

The Translation Committee was comprised of five men, including Medhurst and Charles Milne, son of the aforementioned William Milne. From roughly June 1847 they gathered at the Medhurst residence in Shanghai and “practically every day from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.” with the assistance of Chinese they set to work translating the Bible for a definitive edition, “polishing every single character and phrase.”⁹ Working together in this manner, they finished their Chinese translation of the New Testament (*Xinyue quanshu* 新約全書) in 1850 (published 1852) and of the Old Testament (*Jiuyue quanshu* 舊約全書) in 1853 (published 1855).

In the course of their translation work, a controversy arose between Medhurst and the British missionaries and Bridgman and the American missionaries over the proper translation into Chinese for “God.” The former argued for *Shangdi*, while the latter preferred *Shen* because, they argued, *Shangdi* was linked to a temporal, mundane image. In the end they did not compromise, but printed one edition (by the British and Foreign Bible Society) with God translated as *Shangdi* and another edition (by the American Bible Society) with God translated *Shen*. And, the fact that “God” was later rendered *kami* 神 in Japanese in the early Meiji period was due to the influence of this American translation.

This definitive translation of the Bible that the Translation Committee completed enjoyed an excellent reputation. In particular, the New Testament had undergone eleven reprintings by 1859 and was said to be still in use through the 1920s. Behind this success story stood one man hidden from view who had offered distinguished service, Wang Tao, whose name has now been mentioned several times. His addition to the translation staff

⁹ Paul Cohen, *Zai chuantong yu xiandaixing zhi jian: Wang Tao yu wan-Qing geming* 在传统与现代性之间：王韬与晚清革命 (Between tradition and modernity: Wang Tao and revolution in the late Qing), trans. Lei Yi 雷颐 and Luo Jianqiu 罗检秋 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1994). This is a translation of Cohen's *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang Tao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

transformed the work on the Bible completely. The translation now became a refined work later deemed a “fine literary Bible.”¹⁰

The *Rōnin* Cultivated Talents (*xiucai*) of the Mohai shuguan

Born in Fuli 甬里, Jiangsu Province in 1828, Wang Tao was an extraordinarily talented intellectual—from his youth his writing was said to have a “wonderful spirit” (*qiqi* 奇氣). At age seventeen he passed the first level of the civil service examinations at the prefectural level and became a *xiucai* 秀才 (or *shengyuan* 生員, government student), but he failed the next step, the provincial examinations, and thus the route into government service as an official was effectively severed for him. When his father died in 1849, Wang took over as head of his family of six and moved to Shanghai to support them. He lived on the grounds of the Mohai shuguan and worked as Medhurst’s Chinese language assistant for the next thirteen years.

As noted earlier, soon after joining the Mohai shuguan, Wang assisted in translation of the Bible then being undertaken by the Translation Committee. Concretely, this meant that he corrected the translated text of the missionaries, adding distinctly Chinese rhetorical flourishes to the prose. The work was extremely easy and enjoyable for him. This was, though, the very first time the missionaries had employed an educated Chinese assistant, and they came to deeply appreciate Wang extraordinary talent so much that they later came to rely on him to correct their translations of hymns as well.

Having reached such a high level of trust, once the Bible translation was completed, he went on in 1853 to work with Edkins on a translation known as *Gezhi xixue tigang* 格致西學題綱 (Outlines of scientific Western learning), and from 1857 he worked together with Wylie on the editing of a journal entitled *Liuhe congtan* 六合叢談 (Stories from around the world) as well as completing the aforementioned *Zhongxue qianshuo*.

Wang Tao’s contributions to the Mohai shuguan, however, did not stop here. Later, at his introduction, a number of Chinese intellectuals, such as the mathematician Li Shanlan 李善蘭 (1810-82) in 1852 and the literature scholar Jiang Dunfu 蔣敦復 (1808-67) the following year, joined the staff of the Mohai shuguan and began carrying out the same kind of translation assistance as he had been engaged in.¹¹ The aforementioned translations by Wylie of *Xu jihe yuanben*, *Daishuxue*, *Dai wei ji shiji*, and *Tan tian*, as well as that of Williamson of *Zhiwuxue*, were all done collaboratively with Li Shanlan. And, Muirhead’s *Da Yingguo zhi* was completed together with Jiang Dunfu. The activities of these three Chinese men became a model by which over a dozen Chinese collaborators—including Guan Sifu 管嗣復 (fl. 1830-70), an authority in the field of medicine, and Zhang Fuxi 張福僊 (d. 1862), who had training in astronomy—subsequently worked for the Mohai shuguan for varying periods of time.¹² Among them,

¹⁰ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*.

¹¹ Zhang Zhiqun 张志春, *Wang Tao nianpu* 王韜年譜 (Chronological biography of Wang Tao) (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994).

¹² Wang Jiarong 王家熔, *Shangwu yinshuguan shi ji qita* 商務印書館史及其他 (A history and other matters concerning the Commercial Press) (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 1998).

not only did Guan Sifu assist in the Chinese translation on *Xiyi lüelun*, *Fuying xinshuo*, and *Neike xinshuo*, all by Hobson, but he also offered his help in editing *Meilige heshengguo zhiliie* (*Lianbang zhiliie*) by Elijah Bridgman who was not connected to the London Missionary Society.

Like Wang Tao, these men had all achieved the *xiucai* degree, but had failed at the next level of the examinations, thus affording them an existence not unlike the *rōnin* 浪人 (masterless samurai) in Japan. With their entrance into the government bureaucracy effectively cut off, the Mohai shuguan may not have been the most appropriate mode of employment, even with its high level of compensation, but it was by no means a bad alternative.

It was just when they arrived at the Mohai shuguan that the latter had completed the Chinese translation of the Bible, and the Missionaries had an abundance of time on their hands to allocate to translating works on conditions in the West and scientific writings. Precisely because these two conditions came together so nicely that a “mass production” of Chinese translations of Western works became possible. The historical background to the sudden increase of such Chinese translations by missionaries in the 1850s is rooted in this convergence.

Impetus to an Enlightenment Group

One essay remains that describes the Mohai shuguan at its peak.¹³ The author was Guo Songtao 郭嵩焘 (1818-91) who would later work at the Chinese Mission in England. At this time he was serving under Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-72), who was just then suppressing the Taiping rebels, involved in collecting taxes monies, such as on salt, to help finance the military. This may have been the reason he initially came to Shanghai.



Guo Songtao



Zeng Guofan

I later visited the Mohai shuguan. A man there named Medhurst is a Western missionary who calls himself Old Man Mohai (Mohai laoren 墨海老人). The front half of his residence is a chapel, and the rear half is comprised of guest

¹³ The citation that follows comes from *Guo Songtao riji* 郭嵩焘日記 (The diary of Guo Songtao) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981), entry for the fifteenth day of the third lunar month of Xianfeng 咸豐 6 (1856).

rooms lined with numerous books. Two globes have been placed by the windows on the east and west, one on each side; the one on the right is a celestial globe and the one on the left is an earthly globe. Medhurst works extremely hard at his writing. His writings are being edited by Li Renshu 李壬叔 (Li Shanlan) of Haiyan 海鹽 and Wang Lanqing 王蘭卿 (Wang Tao) of Suzhou. Li is a man of extraordinary erudition who claims to have been studying mathematics for a long time. Wang is a man of generosity and considerable refinement. He located for me a work entitled *Shuxue qimeng* by [Alexander] Wylie. This fellow Wylie is a man of average features who has acquired considerable specialty in mathematics. There is also a man named [Joseph] Edkins, a man of exceptional knowledge, who has been placed in charge by Medhurst of all their books.

They also gave me several volumes of *Xia'er guanzhen* 遐邇貫珍 (Rarities from near and far). There are a number of essays in the first half [of each volume] about science, and thereafter each volume is filled with excerpts from domestic and foreign events—they call it a newspaper (*xinwenzhi* 新聞紙).... Wang [Tao] lives there with his family. An elegant couplet...hangs in his room. When I asked him about his work, he said he spends two or three hours each day in the library, correcting the grammatical errors in their [the Westerners'] writings. He edits the texts to make them sound appropriately Chinese.

One story has it that Guo Songtao's Shanghai experiences and, in particular, his visit to the Mohai shuguan provided the initial impetus to his subsequent concern about conditions in the West and his becoming a member of the enlightened officialdom which led the early Westernization movement.¹⁴ While this may only be one author's estimation, it certainly rings true. The Mohai shuguan at this time had a certain "impact" on a segment of the Chinese intellectual class, for it functioned as a window introducing the "West" to Chinese society. We may have glimpsed something of this from the quotation cited earlier, but let us now look more closely at Wang Tao's diary from this time which offers a detailed picture of the goings-on at the Mohai shuguan.¹⁵

Operation of a Steam Engine

Reading through Wang Tao's diary, among the numerous accounts of his meetings with men of letters, especially striking is that oft-repeated note that he and others associated with the Mohai shuguan frequently presented "Western writings" (Chinese translations of Western works) to Chinese intellectuals. The recipients were not just his friends, but included such important officials as Wu Jianzhang 吳健彰 (1791-1866), the *daotai* 道臺 (circuit intendant, a high-level local post) of Shanghai. As he

¹⁴ Zeng Yongling 曾永玲, *Guo Songtai dazhuan: Zhongguo Qingdai diyiwei zhuwai gongshi* 郭嵩焘大传: 中国清代第一位驻外公使 (A major biography of Guo Songtao, China's first minister resident abroad under the Qing) (Shenyang: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 1989).

¹⁵ Fang Xing 方行 and Tang Zhijun 汤志钧, eds., *Wang Tao riji* 王韜日记 (Diary of Wang Tao) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987).

notes in an entry for December 25, 1858: “At the wishes of the missionaries, several copies of ‘Hobson’s medical texts’ were sent to Japan.” Because, of course, proselytizing was the primary motivation, these were not necessarily purely “enlightenment” activities. Nonetheless, the role of the Mohai shuguan as a transmitter of information emerges clearly here.

The second most frequent topic of entries after the donation of books concerns the numerous visitors from many locales who came to the Mohai shuguan to observe its printing machinery and facilities. Among them such figures as Xu Youren 徐有壬 (1800-60), later to rise to the position of governor of Jiangsu Province, and Zhang Sigui 張斯桂 (1816-88), vice-minister to the first Chinese Mission in Japan. One can clearly see that the Mohai shuguan’s influence had extended to Chinese intellectuals of some import.

Among the entries concerned with observation of the facilities, it was the missionaries’ actual operation of the steam-powered printing press that elicited the most interest among Chinese. For example, Wang’s diary for January 27, 1860 reads: “We watched Wylie operate the steam engine. Water boils, steam rises, and [the machine] rotates with great speed.” Similar entries later appear on any number of occasions, indicating that the Mohai shuguan held demonstrations for Chinese visitors on a regular basis. Wang also notes in his diary that he was personally studying photography (*zhaoyingfa* 照影法) and that he had tried to take pictures at the home of a friend.

Many different “everyday” customs of Westerners can be found in Wang’s diary, such as his sampling of beef, the wedding of a friend carried out according to “barbarian rites” (*yili* 夷禮, meaning Western-style), a violin performance by a Western woman, and the like. These entries all add flavor to the general scene surrounding the Mohai shuguan at the time. Wang did not, of course, unilaterally accept everything he saw, for we find entries in which he recounts arguing with Wylie and others, criticizing the “great errors of Western government,” and advocating the “ways of high antiquity” in China. This all affords us a complex perspective on perceptions of the West among such Chinese intellectual as Wang Tao at this time.

A Living Window

In the nearly twenty-year period between the end of the first Opium War and the conclusion of the Arrow War (the second Opium War), the Mohai shuguan, through the activities of its missionaries and their extraordinarily talented *rōnin* assistants, was not only a transmitter of information on the West through the publication of Chinese-language translations of Western works, but it functioned in a big way as well as a “living” window on the West. The basic purpose of “proselytizing” notwithstanding, the Mohai shuguan in China, which at the time had no state run agency for the dissemination of Western learning, was similar in many ways to the Yōgakusho 洋學所 (Institute for Western learning) established in 1855 by the Edo shogunate in Japan.

The Interpreters’ College (Tongwenguan 同文館) in Beijing, the Broader Translation Bureau (Guang fangyanguan 廣方言館), and the Translation Department of the Jiangnan Arsenal (Jiangnan zhizaiju fanyibu 江南製造局翻譯部)—comparable to the Yōgakusho—were all set up in China only in the 1860s, some twenty years after the

Mohai shuguan. As we shall describe in a subsequent section, the influence of the Mohai shuguan was not restricted to China itself but extended to Japan, conferring countless blessings of “information” upon late Edo-period Japanese.

Due to differences of opinion among missionaries concerning proselytizing and translation work, in the 1860s the activities of the Mohai shuguan went into a rapid decline.¹⁶ In November 1860 Wylie, the man responsible for the printing press and the central figure in the translation of Western works into China, returned to Britain for vacation. Thereafter, the great majority of its printing operations fell to the Mei-Hua shuguan 美華書館, the publishing wing of the American Presbyterian Church which had recently moved from Ningbo to Shanghai—in its Ningbo days, it was known as the Huahua Shengjing shufang 華花聖經書房, founded in Macao in 1844. Soon thereafter, the printing apparatus itself was sold to the Zilin yanghang 字林洋行 which was then making preparations to publish *Shanghai xinbao* 上海新報 (Shanghai newspaper). Thus, the golden era of the Mohai shuguan came to an end.

¹⁶ Shen Guowei 沈国威, ed., “*Rikugō sōdan*” no gakusaiteki kenkyū 『六合叢談』(1857-58)の学際的研究 (Interdisciplinary study of the *Liuhe congtan*, 1857-58) (Tokyo: Hakuteisha, 1999).