

# Bringing a Global Perspective to Chinese Studies: A Tribute to Rudolf Wagner's Scholarship

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To write a tribute to Rudolf Wagner's scholarship in an impersonal voice is impossible, especially for someone like me who, over the years, has amassed so much intellectual debt to him. In this essay, I would like to discuss Rudolf's contributions to the field of modern Chinese studies by highlighting some of the memorable instances of his scholarly impact on me. Therefore, I am consciously using the format of a scholarly narrative combined with analysis in order to show the immense range and depth of his ideas and findings, emanating from his massive research.

Rudolf was a born researcher, for whom, as for Jorge Luis Borges, the world can be imagined as a huge library. If the phantom collection of a Chinese imperial library serves as a source of inspiration for Borges's literary imagination, for Rudolf the world of archives—books, articles, all kinds of print and visual sources—was his life-world, one that could be contained by his mind and controlled at his fingertips. Therefore, I would like to dismiss the notion of a China specialist as an epithet for Rudolf. As an undergraduate student with a philosophic bent, he wanted to study hermeneutics with Hans-Georg Gadamer but found Chinese Buddhism and Daoism more challenging, which then led him to sinology. Like many German sinologists of his generation, he was drawn to the study of modern and contemporary China by the forces of ideological trends. But his background in European sinology had the advantage of non-specialization. A scholar of such prodigious talent was able to move at ease between ancient and modern periods, unlike American-trained China specialists such as myself who are confined to a narrow field and discipline.

I cannot remember when I first met Rudolf, but can recall the gist of our conversation. In the early 1980s, I was asked to edit a series of translations of modern and contemporary Chinese literature for Indiana University Press. One of the proposed books was a translation of Liu Binyan's 劉賓雁 reportage (*texie* 特寫) *Renyao zhi jian* 人妖之間 (People or Monsters). Upon hearing it, Rudolf casually dropped the hint that the *texie* genre that made Liu famous came from Soviet Russia, was called *ocherk*, and practiced by the Soviet writer

Valentin Ovechkin.<sup>1</sup> I hastily incorporated this reference in my brief introduction for the volume. Rudolf's gentle reminder alerted me to the fact that contemporary Chinese literature, especially in the period from the 1950s to the early 1980s, was heavily influenced by Soviet Russia, yet few scholars in the field of modern Chinese literature knew anything about Soviet literature. Rudolf was then known as a Soviet expert—which to me sounded like an insult to his intelligence—not because I look down on Soviet studies but because I realized even then, when he was relatively unknown in the United States, Rudolf's knowledge far exceeded anybody I knew in the field of modern and contemporary China studies. This was the time before his Habilitation work on the third-century scholar Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) was known. His reputation was established by a solidly researched book on the Taiping Rebellion in which he argues that the religious vision of the Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814–1864) was genuine and based on an authentic understanding of Christianity. The thesis thus challenges the typical Chinese view that the Taiping were native rebels with no clear knowledge of foreign religion. At the time, I was dubious and thought that Rudolf gave the Taiping too much credit. But I soon found out that he was correcting a widespread bias: China scholars tended to see China as a world unto its own, with its own traditions largely shaping its modern transformation. Rudolf was challenging the so-called “Western impact, Chinese response” model promulgated by John Fairbank, my own professor. Yet in giving China and Chinese culture a holistic shade combined with an ideological stance of anti-imperialism, we China scholars had lost sight of the world. Rudolf, on the other hand, held on to a global vision of culture from the very beginning. For him the world was not divided into East and West, and China itself was never a closed world. It was rather the ghost of chauvinistic nationalism—certainly a modern product—that haunts all China scholarship, especially that of native Chinese scholars who seem to have harbored a deep-seated distrust of all foreign scholarship on China. But I must hasten to point out that Rudolf's globalism was different from the current notion of globalization, which is driven by transnational capitalism and market forces. Rudolf's global vision embodied by his work was essentially cultural; the world is never flat but characterized by the asymmetries of cultural flow, which have never been equal or smooth. We as scholars must embrace them as a matter of fact (to use Rudolf's trademark phrase in its literal meaning). In her November 14, 2019 acceptance speech on behalf of Rudolf for the Karl Jaspers Prize (*Karl-Jaspers-Preis*) at Heidelberg University, Catherine Yeh openly states that “Rudolf was intensely anti-nationalistic” and always advocated a position that emphasizes transcultural engagement as a condition underlying the flow of knowledge and literary forms, and that he refused to study Chinese culture through an exclusively

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1 Rudolf had since published a long article on the subject, see Rudolf G. Wagner, “Liu Binyan and the *Texie*,” *Modern Chinese Literature* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 63–98.

“Chinese lens.”<sup>2</sup> It takes intellectual guts to challenge the self-righteous essentialists in the China field, but eventually Rudolf won: the establishment of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” at Heidelberg University is an institutional testament to his victory.

Scholars of China should consider themselves lucky to have Rudolf in their midst, since he could have become an equally prominent Sanskritist or Indologist. Indeed China—as culture but not necessarily nation-state—became his base of operation in order to realize his scholarly vision. Most probably, I would not have been able to meet him if he had chosen to stay in Germany and become a philosopher. I can still feel the “sting” from Rudolf’s casual remark about the Soviet prose genre. Our conversations at that early meeting moved from Soviet prose to French journalism. According to Rudolf, around the time of the French Revolution the French newspapers initiated a feature called *esquisses physiologiques*, a form of a detailed sociological sketch each day on a particular area of the city of Paris, which was the origin of both Ovechkin’s *oçerk*, Liu Binyan’s *texie*, and Qu Qiubai’s 瞿秋白 *feuilleton*—a genre related to the French newspapers.<sup>3</sup> Another reminder of the impact of Soviet literature was his paper on Pavel and Tonia, which he presented at a Harvard conference “From May Fourth to June Fourth” (1990). The two names are from a novel that influenced a whole generation of Chinese writers and intellectuals—*How the Steel Was Tempered*, by another Soviet writer, Nikolai Ostrovsky. The names of the two leading characters were, once upon a time, household names in China. Rudolf treated a host of such works and explored their impact on Chinese intellectuals in a book with a modest title *Inside a Service Trade*, which to me is a neglected masterpiece of scholarship.<sup>4</sup> Only one other European scholar, Douwe Fokkema, wrote a comparable, but not similar, book on the Soviet influence on China from the perspective of literary theory and doctrine in a limited period.<sup>5</sup> Rudolf’s volume is far richer and contains all kinds of revealing tidbits about the post-Mao scene in China, as if he were an insider. The information he gave me about the Soviet origin of the *texie* was fully confirmed when I later asked Liu himself.

The question I wanted to ask Rudolf but did not is: Where did he find such materials? He compared himself to an archaeological explorer, but no one

2 See Catherine V. Yeh, “Rudolf Wagner, The Making of a Scholar of His Time,” *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 9–17; 9–10.

3 See Rudolf G. Wagner, “Third Layer: *Oçerk*, *Physiologie* and *The Limping Devil*,” in *Inside a Service Trade: Studies in Contemporary Chinese Prose* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 359–375.

4 Wagner, *Inside a Service Trade*.

5 Douwe W. Fokkema, *China and the Soviet Influence, 1956–1960* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965).

had dug so deeply and widely in all kinds of sources in the modern Chinese literary field. As we became friends, he would shower me with research leads as well as his recent discoveries. On one occasion, he informed me that one of my Chinese essays about Chinatown in New York had been included in a high-school textbook in China! Where did he find it? From obscure newspapers to obscure scholarly journals, from textbooks to encyclopedias (more on this later), from Soviet Russia to Revolutionary France, from the post-Mao era to the early Qin and Later Han, from China to Europe—Rudolf’s research map is boundless, as were the fields of his interest and knowledge. As a historian, his expertise sweeps across all periods, although he was drawn more and more to the modern period, which seemed to offer more space for his global ventures. In literature, he was never bound by the literary text per se, as all trained literary scholars and critics are wont to be, but chose rather to investigate both the texts and their materiality as well as their transmission to different parts of the world.

Of one area, however, he was not so enamored: literary and cultural theory. As a matter of fact, Rudolf was not at all spellbound by trendy theory, especially when it was applied without close understanding to Chinese texts. Yet he was certainly knowledgeable of hermeneutics, and adopted Jürgen Habermas’s theory of the public sphere for his own study of late Qing newspapers and public opinion. The title of a book he edited is revealing—*Joining the Global Public*.<sup>6</sup> I particularly treasure this book because Rudolf gave it to me personally as a gift. Upon rereading this volume, especially Rudolf’s introduction and his study of the *Dianshizhai huabao* 點石齋畫報 (Illustrated news from the Dianshizhai Studio, hereafter *Dianshizhai huabao*), I began to see the true nature and value of Rudolf’s scholarly vision. His deliberations at Heidelberg University with an informal research group were conducted roughly at the same time as the debate on the Chinese public sphere took off in the United States. The journal *Modern China*, edited by Philip Huang, published a special issue on the subject containing articles presented at a special forum at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), which I attended as a fellow faculty member there. I recall that some of the leading China scholars, adopting a China-centered approach, had reservations about the concept of the public sphere as not applicable to the Chinese case. In his introduction to *Joining the Global Public*, Rudolf takes an opposite position, by redefining Habermas’s original concept in functional terms and recasting it on a global scale. In so doing, he has succeeded in giving China a central place in the emergent wave of globalization, defined as transcultural flow of public opinion. Here is what he says in the introduction:

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6 Rudolf G. Wagner, ed., *Joining the Global Public: Word, Image, and City in Early Chinese Newspapers, 1870–1910* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007).

I would suggest that we formalize this concept and reduce it to its functional value in a constellation not bound by a “bourgeois society.” In this sense, the notion “public sphere” conceptualizes the space in which state and society as well as different segments of society articulate their interests and opinions within culturally and historically defined rules of rationality and propriety. ... In this formalized sense, a public sphere did exist in premodern China not only in fact but also in the social imagination of how things could be, should be, and had been in the utopian past when sages had ruled the land.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, Habermas’s structural concept is opened up to include China, rather than rigidly applied or denied to China. The historical constellation is also made global with a Chinese semantic resonance: globe or universe (*yinghuan* 瀛寰). I think all his life Rudolf strived to destroy the national boundaries to restore the world as one—long before the market-oriented economists hijacked this cultural concept to describe the current phenomenon of globalization. Rudolf’s concept, moreover, is also grounded on solid historical research, as he reminds us: “His [Habermas’s] sociological study could draw on a wide range of empirical studies done by historians. Without them, broader conceptualizations have a weak foundation.”<sup>8</sup> With a team of capable students he has done precisely that—lay the empirical foundations for the study of the development of the late Qing press as the first instance of a Chinese public sphere that is linked up with the West. I had the pleasure of being invited to his seminar at Heidelberg University, and witnessed the thorough and conscientious way in which he conducted it. The experience deepened my conviction in the crucial significance of the late Qing period, and provided further impetus for my work on late Qing fiction and translations.

As noted earlier, Rudolf never considered literature in isolation, but rather as a cultural product, hence his analysis is always historically grounded. I have just reread his long chapter (nearly sixty pages) on *Dianshizhai huabao*, the centerpiece of the entire volume of *Joining the Global Public*, and became immensely impressed by both the scope and the vast amount of details he was able to compress into his chapter.<sup>9</sup> Of course, Chinese scholars like Chen Pingyuan 陳平原 and others have also published their work on the *Dianshizhai huabao* but it is less global in scope and perspective. For Rudolf’s underlying thesis is that the new public sphere was constructed by Westerners, specifically English missionaries and entrepreneurs like Ernest Major, following the model

7 Rudolf G. Wagner, “Introduction,” in *Joining the Global Public*, 1–11; 3.

8 Wagner, “Introduction,” 1.

9 Rudolf G. Wagner, “Joining the Global Imagination: The Shanghai Illustrated Newspaper *Dianshizhai huabao*,” in *Joining the Global Public*, 105–173.

of Western newspapers. Yet once established, it provided a panoramic window of the world and for the world, in which China is included. “In this print world, China was a frequent object of description and depiction,” if “not [yet] a subject.”<sup>10</sup> The last clause is a sober reminder that China was yet to regain its subjectivity (defined as national sovereignty) in this transitional period from empire to nation-state. Also, the physical site of this public sphere is located in the foreign “enclave” of Shanghai, a treaty port. It would be easy to see this entire phenomenon as an aspect of Western imperialism but Rudolf insists that no evidence exists that could implicate Major and his company as imperialist agents. The historical fact of Major’s contributions stands by itself for all researchers to see. Yet no one bothers to reconstruct the entire historical context of Major’s journalistic enterprise. Rudolf had amassed enough materials to write a big book, which, alas, he was not able to finish. Catherine Yeh, who is now putting it together, kindly sent me the completed first chapter and the book’s table of contents, which will consist of ten chapters, including three published papers on the subject plus drafts of other papers. It is tentatively titled *The Life and Times of a Cultural Broker: Ernest Major and His Shenbao Publishing House in Shanghai (1872–1889)*.

Clearly, Rudolf identifies with his subject and wishes to rehabilitate him to his rightful place in the history of print. In the drafted first chapter, Rudolf states, not without a sense of historical irony, that the central importance of Major has been written off by both Chinese and Western scholarly studies and handbooks. Rudolf’s complaint is fully justified. As a matter of fact, none of the Chinese studies I have read gives enough credit. He is often mentioned in passing only by his Chinese name Meicha 美查. Interestingly, even Western scholars have left him out of their research on Western missionaries in China. In the past two decades, several compilations and source books on the *Dianshizhai huabao* appeared in China, yet there was no coverage of Major and his major contribution. Most scholars in the art history field tend to treat the contents of the *Dianshizhai huabao* as part of a pictorial evolution from traditional Chinese painting to modern commercial art. Chinese historians tend to regard it as a pictorial supplement to historical events (like the Sino-French War of 1884) or as Chinese images of Westerners. The role of Major as the initiator of the whole enterprise is ignored. In contrast, Rudolf’s narrative begins with Major and his discovery of the potential of lithograph printing. It then follows Major step by step, from his early pictorial ventures—*Huanying tuhua* 寰瀛圖畫 (Universal illustrations) and *Huanying huabao* 寰瀛畫報 (Globe illustrated)—and pictorial reproductions of the Great Wall and scenes of Shanghai, as well as a map of East Asia, to establishing the *Dianshizhai* Studio and hiring of native painters, to the publication of the *Dianshizhai*

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10 Wagner, “Joining the Global Imaginaire,” 105.

*huabao*, which became his crowning achievement. Rudolf's analysis of the illustrations per se is not so detailed; instead, he stresses their role in the global *imaginaire*. Rudolf uses this French word instead of the English "imaginary," perhaps because it came to him from French sources, just like *feuilleton* and *esquisse physiologique*. The English equivalent, imaginary or social imaginary,<sup>11</sup> is defined by Charles Taylor as "that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy."<sup>12</sup> I think this is what Rudolf had in mind, except that he seemed to stress the concept's creative potential and global horizon as the values and symbols that were in the making. As for me, I am particularly intrigued by the connective dynamics between the two illustrated newspapers: the *Dianshizhai huabao* and the *Illustrated London News*. Each of the two pictorial journals not only knew about the other's existence, but also sometimes reproduced the other's illustrations. On the English side, to reproduce a painting from the *Dianshizhai huabao* such as "A Chinese Suttee"<sup>13</sup> may be a piece of curiosity, but for the Chinese painters at the *Dianshizhai huabao* English illustrations often served as originals. On the one side is fantasy, but on the other reality. How would this asymmetry of the flow of images affect the transcultural enterprise? To answer this question, we must begin with empirical research in tracking down all the pictorials. I once asked Rudolf if some of the paintings in the *Dianshizhai huabao* were directly copied from the *Illustrated London News* and other journals like the *Graphic*, and he responded with a research note: one of his students already did a thesis on the subject.<sup>14</sup>

Rudolf's cosmopolitan stance is even more pronounced in his writings on the early Republican period. Here his revelations are truly eye-opening, especially for scholars like me. Again, personal reminiscences serve as clues to Rudolf's research directions. At a chance encounter in Taipei, where we both stayed in the same hostel without prior knowledge, we had breakfast together—a long and most memorable breakfast, for Rudolf gave a fascinating account of a foreigner who played a seminal role in early Republican politics, an Australian journalist by the name of William Henry Donald (1875–1946), who spent the latter part of his life in China and served, among other roles, as advisor to Sun Yat-sen, and later to Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. At the end of our conversation, Rudolf said to me: "Read *Donald of China*, it's a most fascinating book." I can understand now in hindsight why

11 For a relevant treatment of the concept, see Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

12 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 172.

13 See Figure 3.9 in Wagner, "Joining the Global Imaginaire," 141.

14 Julia Henningsmeier, "The Foreign Sources of *Dianshizhai Huabao* 點石齋畫報: A Nineteenth Century Shanghai Illustrated Magazine," *Ming Qing yanjiu* 7, no. 1 (1998): 59–91.

Rudolf would find Donald appealing, for Donald was a counterpart to Ernest Major as a journalist and a true friend of China, yet he was utterly ignored in most Chinese histories and scholarly works. If a biography of Donald had not already existed,<sup>15</sup> Rudolf would have written one, or at least a long and learned article which would have also thrown a new light on the person Donald served, Sun Yat-sen. Rudolf's two latest articles are both related to Sun Yat-sen: one on Sun Yat-sen's burial and commemoration, the other on how Sun's public image as "father of the nation" is based on the Chinese image of George Washington. The two long articles (each over fifty pages long) can be read as two parts of a monograph. As he amusingly noted about the latter article: "The present article grew out of a footnote for this study that refused to stop growing."<sup>16</sup> I read both articles with great interest, especially the one on George Washington. Who among China scholars would have thought to start with coins and bills as carriers of images of public leaders and who would care to trace the origin of this practice to Julius Caesar and then move on to Qing dynasty coins, which did not carry any imperial image? In one stroke, Rudolf demonstrated a world vision underscoring his research. In the previous article, he had already done exhaustive research on Sun's public "afterlife," beginning with the design of his tomb by Western architects. In this latest piece, he adds the visual dimension and uses the "father" of another nation for comparison. He even touches on such details about Sun's own self-fashioning as the gifting of his photograph on a postcard to an admirer—like a Hollywood star! To say that I was immensely impressed is an understatement. For I was brought up in a political environment under the Guomindang in Taiwan where as high school students we had to go through the weekly ritual of reading the "Will of the National Father" (*Guofu yizhu* 國父遺囑) aloud every Monday morning in a gathering of all teachers and students.

Perhaps a biography of Sun Yat-sen from a global angle was not challenging enough for a scholar of Rudolf's caliber. There were many other important figures in China, both Chinese and Western, who played crucial roles in Republican politics and culture. Recently I listened to a taped keynote speech Rudolf gave at a conference at Harvard's Fairbank Center to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the May Fourth Movement. As I listened to his fast and frenzied delivery, I found myself mesmerized—perhaps more so than most of the people in the audience—by what he managed to cover in one hour. He titled his talk "Reconstructing May Fourth." For me it was nothing less than part of a new interpretation, which he had begun to formulate in an article written for a conference "The Burden of the May Fourth Movement"

15 Earl Albert Selle, *Donald of China* (New York: Harper, 1948).

16 Rudolf G. Wagner, "Living up to the Image of the Ideal Public Leader: George Washington's Image in China," *The Journal of Transcultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 18–77; 24.

held in Prague in 1994.<sup>17</sup> Rudolf's fifty-three page contribution is titled "The Canonization of May Fourth"; in it he raised twenty-two key points to illustrate his central thesis that the May Fourth was a self-conscious movement made possible by forces both internal and external, whose canonization was prompted by the May Fourth intellectual leaders themselves.<sup>18</sup> The point that strikes me as particularly significant (the fifth point) is that the May Fourth activists were quite aware of what went on elsewhere, especially in Korea, where young activists protested in an open demand for independence on March 1, 1919. In other words, the May Fourth demonstrators saw themselves "as a part of an international upsurge against the big powers and their local representatives and actively copied forms of action employed by other such 'movements.'" <sup>19</sup> This point about the international dimension was reinforced with more details about foreign individuals in Rudolf's Harvard keynote speech. He talked about several prominent Americans, including the Harvard-educated banker Thomas Lamont, who came to China and actively helped the fledgling Republican government under warlords to resist Japan's increasing encroachments on Chinese soil, especially with the so-called Twenty-One Demands in 1915.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in reconstructing May Fourth, Rudolf has placed it fully in its historical and political context. I wish he could have delivered a third speech or written another paper on the international components of the New Culture, which was often identified with the May Fourth Movement. Here I have to make a last personal detour.

Rudolf visited Hong Kong in April 2017 and gave a series of lectures at four major universities there. I attended most of them and learned a great deal. In his talks, he shared his immense knowledge and disclosed some of his new findings and scholarly insights. What impressed me most was the novelty of his materials. In one talk he showed slides of several cartoons from obscure American newspapers (*The Weekly Miner* from Butte, Montana), showing that China was about to be "cut up like a melon." Since these types of caricatures had reached such remote regions in the American hinterland, Rudolf seemed to imply that the crisis in China had become an international issue that drew world attention. Western imperialism was certainly a historical fact, but Rudolf has sharpened the focus visually across the globe. Where did he find

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17 Published as Rudolf G. Wagner, "The Canonization of May Fourth," in *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project*, ed. Milena Doleželova-Velingerová and Oldřich Král (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center, 2001), 66–120.

18 Wagner, "The Canonization of May Fourth," 66–120.

19 Wagner, "The Canonization of May Fourth," 91.

20 As a viewer and not a participant, I could only listen to Rudolf's talk without the benefit of his slides. Therefore, I missed some of the American names he mentioned, including Hu Shih's long-time American friend.

such provincial political cartoons? Still, he was not satisfied, so he managed to amass a special collection of late Qing and early Republican newspapers and other materials at Heidelberg University. He gave me privileged internet access for six months but I failed to use it. To stimulate my interest further, he gave me a flash drive that contained the full text of the *Xin wenhua cidian* 新文化辭典 (An Encyclopedic Dictionary of New Knowledge; hereafter XWHCD), first published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai in 1923. He told me that he discovered this 1300-page tome in a library in China and scanned it page by page! The gift carried a clear mandate that I should study it and spread the word about its significance. So I did and wrote a paper as my contribution to the multi-volume publication, fittingly titled, *China and the World—the World and China*, to commemorate the collection's reinstallation in a new building at the University of Heidelberg.

The XWHCD was the first of its kind, for it was both a dictionary and an encyclopedia. I think Rudolf would also argue that its intellectual quality was far above any of the encyclopedias published before. While its Chinese title uses the prevalent term “New Culture,” the English title translates it as “new knowledge,” which if retranslated into Chinese would be *xinzhī* 新知, the genealogy of which goes back to the late Qing New Learning (*xinxue* 新學), a body of translated practical knowledge from the West. To what extent does this new *Encyclopedic Dictionary of New Knowledge* differ in content and format from all previous examples? Rudolf would be in a better position than I to answer this question, for he participated in a project on Chinese encyclopedias initiated by Professor Milena Doleželova-Velingerová (who was sadly unable to see its publication).<sup>21</sup> Rudolf served as co-editor for the project and contributed an article on a group of late Qing encyclopedias that copied each other and developed a stock of shared information. However, the XWHCD represented something new and unprecedented, for the new knowledge contained therein is entirely foreign and not a duplication of previous Chinese sources. I can understand why Rudolf was so excited by this discovery because the new knowledge contained in its numerous entries is heavily intellectual, with a large dosage of philosophy and religion, particularly Buddhism. The editors certainly set a high standard for its contemporary readers; at the same time, it also reveals a higher expectation of what the New Culture as new knowledge should be. As Rudolf would probably say, this foreign-sourced “global knowledge” has finally become an integral part of modern Chinese culture—indeed forming its intellectual core. But Chinese historians still refused to study this phenomenon in depth. Rudolf alluded to the XWHCD as the key document of May Fourth culture in his talk at Harvard University.

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21 See Milena Doleželova-Velingerová and Rudolf G. Wagner ed., *Chinese Encyclopedias of New Global Knowledge (1870–1930): Changing Ways of Thought* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014).

I am sure he had also given special talks on the XWHCD elsewhere. Alas, I was not able to partake of his wisdom. Instead, I wrote a modest paper on its contents, using a present-day perspective, which is probably misplaced.<sup>22</sup> Rudolf would have unveiled more insight about the international arena of ideas and scholarship, as illustrated in the volume *China and the World—the World and China*.

In his lecture given at the Chinese University, he chose to talk about the historian Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and his stance of “doubting antiquity” (*yigu* 疑古). The question he wished to address, if I understand him correctly, is how knowledge about antiquity can be used both positively and negatively by modern scholars for different purposes. Almost as a casual reference, he mentioned that German scholars were doing something similar around the same time, and that if you checked the footnotes you would find citations of works by German scholars in the Chinese scholarly works of the period. Once again, Rudolf pitches a comparative insight against the blindness of Chinese scholarship centered on China. The widening of intellectual horizons was his lifelong mission. His scholarship sets an example, and a high standard of what scholarship is and should be. As his friend and professional colleague, I am forever in his debt.

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22 Leo Ou-fan Lee, “*Xin wenhua cishu* (An Encyclopedic Dictionary of New Knowledge): An Exploratory Reading,” in *China and the World—the World and China: Transcultural Perspectives on Modern China*, ed. Barbara Mittler, Joachim Gentz, Natascha Gentz, and Catherine Vance Yeh (Gossensberg: Ostasien Verlag, 2019), 41–54.