

# MORE THAN ONE ADAM?

## Revelation and Philology in Nineteenth-Century China

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From Marco Polo to Richard Nixon, narratives of the encounter between Chinese and Westerners have been defining texts of European cultures and their descendants. Successive but sporadic reports from travellers, missionaries, diplomats, traders and others have provided a model of an alternative way of arranging people, of organizing their lives, of thinking about the state of being human; one that described a government that was, or at least was represented as being, as authoritative as anything at home, with military power that could challenge any other, and with cultural achievements as profound. Traditionally labelled “inscrutable”, China nonetheless possessed a written literature, an esteemed bureaucracy, technological achievements, complex financial systems, codes and courts of law, and religions that had texts, buildings and hierarchies of priests. In other words, though not like us at all, they were exactly like us.

The voluminous literature of the encounter with China is above all, and consistently, a literature of *comparison*. From eating manners, to the rigging on boats, from city design to imperial customs, reports of the Chinese exotic have been seized on by centuries of eager western readers and, latterly, viewers. But the thrill these stories generate is possible only

as a response to a condition where recognition and bafflement are mixed in equal parts, where things are close enough to be familiar but far enough away to be bizarre. This is psychically exciting but it is also discomforting and unstable, and one of the effects of this has been to move the Chinese to the discursive comfort of one extreme or the other; to find a way of welcoming them into the fold or to define the conditions of their exclusion. Neither move is unproblematic: if, fundamentally, the Chinese are like us then their very obvious differences must be accounted for or, less satisfactorily, elided; if they are basically not like us, the reverse is the case. What these two moves have in common, however, is that they have sought the fundamental similarity — or difference — between China and the West in features deemed to lie at the core of what it means, or meant, to be Chinese and whatever it is, or was, that we conceived ourselves to be at that moment in history: early on it was religion; later, language came onto centre stage; now perhaps it is in conceptions of the rights of individuals.

This paper focuses on a largely forgotten chapter in this history in the form of a book that attempts to show, in the words of its subtitle, that *the Languages of Europe and Asia have a Common Origin*, and in

doing so that the people of China and Europe, too, share a common descent. The book is *China's Place in Philology*, written by the Reverend Joseph Edkins, Doctor of Divinity, who lived from 1823 until 1905 and was resident in China from 1848 until his death.<sup>1</sup> Edkins left an enormous legacy of work across the whole range of topics in the history, religions, literature, geography, philosophy, and economy of China (as well as its language) in English, apart from his copious translations into Chinese — not least of the Bible — and original works in that language. Published in 1871, *China's Place in Philology* did not meet with universal acclaim; indeed, in some quarters it was derided, but his work in this field remained, in Edkins's own opinion, his most valuable and far-reaching.

Edkins was sent to China by the London Missionary Society or LMS, an evangelical Protestant society based in London established in 1795 as The Missionary Society, changing its name in 1818. This was by no means the only mission society active in China through the nineteenth century: there were representatives of most of the Christian denominations, Roman Catholic and Orthodox as well as Protestant. Among the Protestants were missionaries from across the English-speaking world, usually attached to their own national and denominational groups, and also from many European countries, each with their own goals and emphases. Even amongst the British evangelical societies, there were clear demarcations: not only in the region, or mission field, but in strategy and theology as well.<sup>2</sup>

For many years, mission history was an unfashionable field of research, bedev-

illed as it was, and to a certain extent still is, by people for whom conversion was not just a phenomenon to be studied but a goal to be prayed for. However, in Chinese Studies at least, to ignore missionary writings is to ignore a vast and valuable archive. And to understand the nature of these writings, the particularities and specific contexts of each author have to be understood: to regard them all as having the same ideologies, the same attitudes to Chinese people, the same project, is much mistaken. From the 1950s to the 1980s, a standard textbook on modern Chinese history was Teng and Fairbanks's *China's Response to the West*.<sup>3</sup> This title reflected the commonly accepted totalizing binary of the time. Fortunately, however, in more recent years a pluralizing tendency has gained ground, with both of the categories "China" and "the West" gradually becoming disaggregated in the scholarly literature. In Edkins's time, under the category "the West" there existed a web of heterogeneous possibilities of involvement with all sorts of different Chinese people. Europeans of many kinds, Americans, Australasians; missionaries as well as traders, customs officials, military personnel and diplomats; and bureaucrats and scholars who worked on China based in western capitals — to aggregate all these into a single entity that had a unified project is to grant, perhaps, more credence to justifications emanating from the metropolitan capitals for foreign adventurism of various kinds than the complex situation on the ground might warrant.

Thus, it is important to place Joseph Edkins in his place and time, to grant him his individuality and idiosyncrasy, and to allow him his disputes with colleagues, fellow nationals and co-religionists.

Edkins, along with most of his colleagues — with the major exception of James Legge — has received only passing scholarly attention.<sup>4</sup> One of the goals of this paper, and the larger project of which it is a part, is to rescue Edkins and his scholarly colleagues from the academic obscurity into which they have fallen. It is my contention that this notable group of scholar-missionaries — not that they would have seen themselves as a group — laid down the analytical categories for understanding aspects of Chinese society that stood for decades in the West and in various Chinese societies across the world, including the People's Republic, and indeed to some extent still stand. Before moving on to a detailed discussion of Edkins, his work and its reception, and Edkins's conception of his own position in relation to the Chinese people amongst whom he lived most of his adult life, it may be useful to review and discuss some of the vocabulary of encounter.

## CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

While we may judge that what Edkins was doing in *China's Place in Philology* — which was completed in 1870, the year Tylor's *Primitive Culture* appeared in London — was what we would call “cross-cultural research”, the word “culture” in its common usage does not appear in his book. Indeed it was not until 1912 that the title of a book in English about China used the word “culture” in this sense — in Ernst Boerschmann's pamphlet *Chinese Architecture and its Relation to Chinese Culture*.<sup>5</sup> Boerschmann was a German photographer resident in China who is not generally recognized as a writer in English and this sense of culture is of German de-

rivation, so Boerschmann's case is complicated. The first clear case of a work by an English native speaker is Maurice Price's *Christian Missions and Oriental Civilizations, a Study in Culture Contact; the Reactions of Non-Christian Peoples to Protestant Missions from the Standpoint of Individual and Group Behaviour: Outline, Materials, Problems, and Tentative Interpretations*, privately printed in Shanghai in 1924.<sup>6</sup>

What word — what category — did Edkins and his colleagues use instead of “culture”? Or did they simply get by without one? One candidate for this task was “civilization”, but if culture is complicated, civilization is perhaps even more so, in this context at least. Raymond Williams' *Keywords* proves a useful starting point. Starting life as a term that described a process, originally “to make a criminal matter into a civil matter, and thence, by extension, to bring within a form of social organization”, by the latter part of the eighteenth century “civilization” had acquired the sense of “a state of social order and refinement, especially in conscious historical or cultural contrast with *barbarism*”.<sup>7</sup> This sense of civilization places it at one end of a unilinear scale against which all societies, and activities, can be placed and compared. The fact that this unilinear scale was generally accepted at the time did not mean that there was general acceptance of what societies occupied what positions on the scale. In the case of China, it managed to occupy positions corresponding to both barbarism and to civilization according to different people at different times. Thus, while its criminal justice system with its public executions, torture and physical punishments like the *cangue* was deemed barbaric in the extreme by some outraged expatriates, its

court and ritual code could equally be held up at the same time as the epitome of civil human relations.<sup>8</sup> The sense of civilization as “an achieved condition of refinement and order” finds its way into discussion of China by at least the early-nineteenth century. In 1804 Sir John Barrow, Secretary to the Admiralty and founder of the Royal Geographical Society, published his account of Britain’s first embassy to China of 1793, on which he accompanied Earl Macartney, the appointed envoy. This book is called *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations and Comparisons Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-min-yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey from Peking to Canton. In which it is Attempted to Appreciate the Rank that this Extraordinary Empire may be Considered to Hold in the Scale of Civilized Nations*. In this book, Barrow claims to show the Chinese as they really were, as opposed to the view of them commonly held on the basis of reports from the Jesuit missionaries which had held sway for decades. Thus, he writes:

The voluminous communications of the missionaries are by no means satisfactory; and some of their defects will be noticed and accounted for in the course of this work; the chief aim of which is to show this extraordinary people in their proper colours, not as their own moral maxims would represent them, but as they really are...and to endeavour to draw from such a sketch...as may enable the reader to settle, in his own mind, the point of rank which China may be considered to hold in the scale of civilized nations.<sup>9</sup>

Barrow’s discussions of China’s position in this scale of civilization begin by asserting that “civilization” depends to a large extent on material progress: science, arts, manufactures, the conveniences and luxuries of life, to use his measures. On this scale he judges China “greatly superior” to Europe “from the middle to the end of the sixteenth century”. Indeed, “when the King of France introduced the luxury of silk stockings, which, about eighteen years afterwards, was adopted by Elizabeth of England, the peasantry of China were clothed in silks from head to foot.”

However, “the Chinese were, at that period, pretty much in the same state in which they still are; and in which they are likely to continue”; that is, they had not developed further in the previous two centuries and had been overtaken by Europe during that time.<sup>10</sup>

For Barrow, this civilization is a matter of social attainment rather than being defined or limited by descent. Thus, he asserts that while the Chinese and those he calls “Malays” were both “unquestionably descended from the ancient inhabitants of Scythia or Tartary,” the Malays’ conversion to Islam “first inspired, then rendered habitual, that cruel and sanguinary disposition for which they are remarkable”.<sup>11</sup> Thus while the Chinese have bettered themselves on the scale of civilization, people of the same ancestry, the Malays, have regressed.<sup>12</sup> For Barrow, then, civilization is a state that societies achieve or lose, and on the basis of which societies can be compared, like to like, favourably or unfavourably on a single scale, taking into account attributes such as material progress or the propensity to spill blood.<sup>13</sup>

In 1840, some 36 years after Barrow's book had appeared and, importantly, after the first wave of British Protestant missionaries had made their way to China, the Reverend W.H. Medhurst, who had arrived in Malacca in 1817 to work on the mission to the Chinese — moving to Shanghai after the First Opium War — and who was, like Edkins, employed by the London Missionary Society, published his *China: its State and Prospects, with Especial Reference to the Spread of the Gospel, Containing Allusions to the Antiquity, Extent, Population, Civilization, Literature, and Religion of the Chinese*.<sup>14</sup>

Medhurst begins his chapter on "The Civilization of China" in this way:

In seeking to evangelize the heathen world, two descriptions of people claim our attention: namely, the barbarous and the civilized. China belongs to the latter class. Instead of a savage and untutored people — without a settled government, or written laws, — roaming the desert, and living in caves, — dressed in skins, and sitting on the ground, — knowing nothing of fashion, nor tasting luxuries; we behold in the Chinese a quiet, orderly, well-behaved nation, exhibiting many traces of civilization, and displaying them at a period when the rest of mankind were for the most part sunk in barbarism.

We see here the same evaluation of China as a civilized nation, familiar from Barrow but, unlike him, Medhurst tempers his enthusiasm with an explicit appeal to religion: "Of course we must not look for that high degree of improvement, and those

well-defined civil rights, which are in great measure the effects of Christianity."<sup>15</sup>

With Medhurst, then, the categories "civilization" and "barbarism" are overlaid with another set, namely "heathen" and "Christian". That these categories do not necessarily map onto each other is clear from the evaluation of China as both civilized and heathen — distinguishing it from much of the mission field where "heathen" and "barbarism" collocated comfortably. Indeed, China stood as the exemplum, if not the only case, of a civilized and heathen nation of the present though it had precursors in the ancient world in pre-Christian Greece and Rome. "Christian" and "barbarism", needless to say, is not a possible combination.

Williams notes, in his article on "civilization", that "there was a critical moment when civilization was used in the plural", noting that the English use is later than the French.<sup>16</sup> This use of "civilizations" approaches the contemporary meaning of "cultures", at least insofar as it implies that different places have distinctive ways of life and thought that are organically whole. What distinguishes this meaning of "civilization" from the comparable meaning of "culture" — as in "Chinese civilization" and "Chinese culture" — is a question of register: discussions of "Chinese civilization" usually begin with the ancient philosophical systems and include examples of artistic and technological achievements arranged in historical sequence. "Chinese culture" on the other hand tends to be less historical and more concerned with the lives of ordinary people. Of course, there are no firm lines of demarcation between civilization and

culture, as there equally are not between the senses of civilization in the singular and the plural. It is worth stressing that such changes in meaning are gradual and uneven and single authors may shift almost imperceptibly from one sense to another; indeed, we should acknowledge that the use of the singular form “civilization” and the plural “civilizations” sometimes overlaps.

In writings on China in English the plural sense of civilization seems to appear in the latter part of the 1880s, well after Edkins’s cogitations on the nature and origins of the Chinese language, and his understanding of the meaning of civilization seems close to Medhurst’s. It is interesting, though, given Williams’s observation on the earlier French use of the plural form “civilizations”, that perhaps its first clear use in relation to China is in a translation from that language: Pierre Laffitte’s *A General View of Chinese Civilization and of the Relations of the West with China*, published in French in 1861, and in English translation not until 1887. Laffitte, who revelled in the wonderful title “Director of Positivism”, was Auguste Comte’s direct disciple but was no specialist on China. This did not stop him in his ambitious undertaking, in three lectures:

Gentlemen, We are to enter to-day upon a survey of the whole field of Chinese civilization. In view of the importance of such a study, both in itself and in its bearings on the problems of the science of society, we shall devote to it three lectures...At the base of the farthest East is a noteworthy civilization, which, say what we may about it, is in constant devel-

opment and in full activity, and is being brought day by day into closer contact with the West. This civilization, in so many respects so much misunderstood, is that of China.<sup>17</sup>

In these lectures, Laffitte treats “Chinese civilization” as a discrete entity that possesses certain distinctive features, has specific traits and manifests a particular pattern of development. A civilization, for Laffitte, is a kind of entity made up of selected elements of a nation’s lifeways, rather than an attribute a nation has more or less of, as it was for Barrow and Medhurst. Civilizations, so conceived, can still be judged against each other in terms of their attainments or levels, but Laffitte’s approach also pointed to the possibility of a model of human development that moved away, potentially at least, from an uncompromising unilinearity. With this model, the possibility is raised of the ways of life and systems of thought of different places developing along their own tracks to equally civilized points but remaining thoroughly distinct. That such a possibility was conceived in the middle of the nineteenth century is, of course, no accident, parallel as it is to the rise of nationalist movements across Europe with their conceptions of specific national essences and peculiarities. Aligned to this distinction, though different from it, are discussions related to whether humankind — or particular features of people’s lives — had a single origin or multiple origins. Arguments about monogenetic and polygenetic theories, as they are called, featured crucially in the study of the origins of language and the history of specific languages, as will be discussed below.

Along with the two models of development, leading respectively to “civilization” and to “civilizations”, a third story should be considered. Specifically Christian, and, in relation to studies of China, usually Protestant, this story is found most explicitly in works of those highly educated and thoroughly modern scholar-missionaries (including Edkins) who we would now also refer to as scriptural literalists; that is, people who took the words of the Bible as literally true. So with the book of Genesis in one hand and a knowledge of recent scientific advances in the other, these scholars set about to demonstrate as well as they could that the ultimate monogenetic hypothesis, namely that we all derive from Adam and Eve, was not only compatible with the state of knowledge of the time but could be proved with academic rigour. In Edkins’s words — about language but it could equally apply in many other fields — this work was “for the vindication of Scripture and the progress of knowledge”.<sup>18</sup>

Positing Adam and Eve at the root of the tree of humanity, as this position did, the process of change that produced human diversity often became understood as one of degeneration, as moving away, step-by-step from the point of our common origin and God’s first revelation, both literally in geography and metaphorically in culture. From this point of view, however savage or barbaric the people you might meet in your travels, their origins were the same as yours and, though subject to different conditions since the original revelation, you and they were all part of a common brotherhood and their forebears had, therefore, received the same revelation from God as had yours. One attraction, then, for the study of ancient societ-

ies and languages in the nineteenth century — Egyptian, Accadian, Sanskrit, Chinese — was to try to recover those remnant parts of the original revelation preserved in non-Semitic textual traditions. As Max Müller, Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, editor of the Sacred Books of the East series and doyen of comparative philology, wrote in 1878: “The more I see of the so-called heathen religions, the more I feel convinced that they contain germs of the highest truth.”<sup>19</sup>

Yet the fact remained that European civilization was only made possible, in some versions of this theory at least, by its Christian character. The revelation of Jesus reversed the degenerative process and not only granted salvation to humanity but also a civilized character to society. As Medhurst wrote: “Of course we must not look for that high degree of improvement, and those well-defined civil rights, which are in great measure the effects of Christianity.”

It was on this theoretical terrain that Edkins produced his work that attempted to demonstrate that “the Languages of Europe and Asia have a Common Origin”. To understand this work — its motivations and its methodologies — we must walk this ideological landscape with him, following the same scholarly maps, observing what lay at his horizon. Setting aside the arrogance of hindsight, we can approach an understanding of how Edkins and his colleagues saw themselves and their work among Chinese people only by allowing argument from a literal reading of Genesis to stand as the unassailable foundation of theory.

## JOSEPH EDKINS

Edkins's death at 81, in 1905, produced four obituaries, one in each of the major Chinese Studies journals of his day.<sup>20</sup> The overriding impression from them is of an old campaigner who had died in harness, a figure notable a generation or two before who continued to plough his furrow with energy but whose best work had been produced some time earlier. There is, in one at least, the snide tone of a younger competitor keen to prick the bubble of what he evidently saw as an overblown reputation.

Edkins was born in Nailsworth, near Stroud, in Gloucestershire, on December 19, 1823. The son of a Congregational minister who also ran the school where Edkins was first educated, he later entered Coward College for theological training. He graduated in arts from the University of London and was ordained in 1847 at the age of 24 in the Stepney Meeting House, London, a Congregational institution. On gaining ordination, he left England for China under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, arriving in Hong Kong in July 1848 and proceeding to Shanghai soon after. In his first correspondence with the LMS in London in 1848 Edkins started to plead for a Miss Phillips to join him in China. These pleas continued for almost two years, and were evidently never acceded to, as he finally had to let the London office know that his engagement had terminated.<sup>21</sup> His colleagues at Shanghai included Medhurst, William Lockhart, a notable medical missionary with whom he would later travel to Beijing, and Alexander Wylie. With Wylie, in 1857, he formed the Shanghai Literary and Debating Society that later became the North China

Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of North China. In 1858 he left for England in order to marry his wife, Jane (nee Stobbs, 1838–61), a Presbyterian minister's daughter from Orkney. Returning the following year, in 1860 he made several famous visits to the leaders of the Taiping Rebellion in Nanjing and Suzhou, not far up the Yangtse from Shanghai.

After the opening of more treaty ports after the Second Opium War, in 1860 Edkins moved to Yantai in Shandong, then to Tianjin in 1861 and finally in May 1863 to live permanently in Beijing, where he spent nearly 30 years. Jane Edkins had died of dysentery in 1861 at the age of 23 but some of her letters home were published posthumously under the title *Chinese Scenes and People, with Notices of Christian Missions and Missionary Life in a Series of Letters from Various Parts of China*. In one of her letters to Edkins's brother she wrote endearingly:

You ask me to tell you about your brother. He is very well indeed, and is busy as a bee. We breakfast every morning at eight, and have prayers before. He spends the morning at home studying, and in the after part of the day he is in the city preaching, and otherwise attending to the work of the Mission. I have got his study all in nice order, and there he is in his glory. From nine till one each day you might take a peep in and find him excogitating, diving deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Buddhism and Confucianism. Seated thus by his study table he puts me in mind of that picture, "As Happy as a King," for he looks



quite that, with all his Chinese books in notable confusion beside him.<sup>22</sup>

In Beijing, Edkins spent much of his time preaching in the hospital Lockhart had established and otherwise going about mission business in Beijing and surrounds. In 1862 he requested that a Miss White be sent to marry him and she arrived early the following year. They married on May 9, 1863.<sup>23</sup> The second Mrs Edkins subsequently founded a school for girls and gave birth to three daughters. The family went to England in 1873, when Edkins was honoured in 1875 with a doctorate in divinity from Edinburgh University. They subsequently returned to Beijing in 1876, but his wife died the next year from breast cancer — two of their children had already died and, two years later, the third girl was buried next to her mother and two sisters.<sup>24</sup>

Relations between Edkins and some younger missionaries from the LMS stationed in Beijing became strained by the late 1870s. In particular, it would appear that Edkins was viewed as being too generous to Chinese converts with the mission's funds. His younger colleagues were rather more suspicious than Edkins of the motivations of new converts who were given to "backsliding" as it was called. Ultimately, as Box wrote in his obituary: "In 1880 he resigned his connection with the L.M.S., not through any lack of interest in mission work, for until his death he was devoted to the cause of missions, but through difference of opinion with his colleagues as to methods of mission work."

There was, however, another side to this story revealed in his unpublished correspondence. For the second time in

his life, head office of the LMS appears to have refused Edkins's request to get married — this time to an expatriate German missionary by the name of Miss Johanna Schmidt.<sup>25</sup> After resigning from the LMS, Edkins married Miss Schmidt and began working for the Inspector-General of Imperial Maritime Customs while still active in the life of the church. About 1890 they moved to Shanghai, where they stayed until his death. Little is known about the third Mrs Edkins, including how long she stayed in China, and when and where she died. Box relates Edkins's passing in a superb description of the "good death":

As she [Johanna] sat by his bedside she saw his eyes fixed upward and his face suffused with a strange light. His lips moved, and presently she heard him murmur, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" She asked him what he saw, and he replied, "I cannot tell you, but you will know what it means tomorrow!" It was on the morrow he passed through the gates of death into "the Glory Land", of which he evidently had a vision.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout his time as a missionary, Edkins was also writing. His scholarly output is extraordinary in its sheer volume, its range and its quality. Henri Cordier's obituary is, in reality, a catalogue of Edkins's works and incomplete though it is, it lists more than 140 books and learned articles. His best-known work today, though it is by no means as well-known as it ought to be, is his *Chinese Buddhism: a Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive and Critical* from 1880.<sup>27</sup> However, it is clear that, as Bushell wrote in his obituary, "*China's Place in Philology*

was probably the book nearest the author's heart".<sup>28</sup> But he continues:

...the general consensus of opinion is that it hardly suffices to prove his somewhat daring thesis of the common origin of the languages of Europe and Asia. Dr Edkins was always original. His reading of Chinese literature was most extensive, and the words of the other languages cited in the text were actually taken down from the mouths of Tibetans, Koreans, Manchus, and Mongols, yet the theme was almost too discursive even for his power of concentration.

Others, too, marvelled at his proficiency in languages; thus Box: "His knowledge of languages was most extensive — English, German, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Assyrian, Persian, Sanscrit, Tamil, Chinese (in most of its dialects), the Miao dialects (...), Japanese, Manchu, Corean, Thibetan, Mongolian and others."

The anonymous obituarist in the *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* was more caustic:

It is only fair to say that in his philological theories Dr Edkins stood almost alone, and that very little sympathy, sometimes even very little patience, was shown to them by other scholars whose study of the Chinese language itself had perhaps been more thorough than that of Dr Edkins. However, it must be said that in combining a knowledge of Eastern languages — of Hebrew, Persian and Sanskrit — with a knowledge

of the modern languages of Europe, Dr Edkins was perhaps the foremost of his generation. The vast scope of his language studies made them all more or less superficial, while at the same time it made it possible for him to make philological comparisons which would have been impossible to anyone else.<sup>29</sup>

In these comments it is possible to see the emergence of one style of scholarship, and the concomitant decline in another, which has ruled much of humanities scholarship to this day. Edkins was one of the last generation, in Chinese Studies at least, of the grand comparativists. Partly as a result of the decline in the kind of broad linguistic training he received, and partly because of the growth in university departments concentrating on a single subject (the Chairs in Chinese Studies at Oxford and Cambridge date to 1876 and 1888 respectively), scholars of later generations have ploughed much narrower, but much deeper.

## CHINA'S PLACE IN PHILOLOGY

By Edkins's time, the shared history of the Indo-European languages had been demonstrated and accepted. The great impetus for this study had been the growth of European scholarship on Sanskrit, and the major figure in the first half of the nineteenth century in this field had been Franz Bopp (1791–1867). Bopp had shown the relationship between Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin and the Germanic languages (and later Old Slavonian, Lithuanian, and Zend — the language of the Zoroastrian Avesta scriptures) through his comparative study of grammatical forms; thus his first

work was on verbal inflexions. He is best known for his *Comparative Grammar of the Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic, German, and Slavonic Languages* which appeared in German from 1833 and in English translation beginning in 1845.<sup>30</sup>

Edkins's comments on the Indo-European project open his book:

To show that the languages of Europe and Asia may be conveniently referred to one origin in the Mesopotamian and Armenian region, is the aim of the present work. Sanscrit philologists, entranced with admiration of the treasure they discovered south of the Himalayan chain, forgot to look north of that mighty barrier. Limiting their researches to the regions traversed by Alexander the Great, they allowed themselves to assume that there was no accessible path by which the linguistic investigator could legitimately reach the vast area existing beyond their adopted boundary. The result of this abstinence on the part of Bopp and other scholars of high fame has been that the idea of comparing Chinese, Mongol, and Japanese with our own mother-tongue appears to some chimerical, hopeless, and uncalled for.

"Yet," he continues:

...Scripture, speaking with an authoritative voice and from an immense antiquity, asserts the unity of the human race, traces the most general features of the primeval planting of nations, and declares

that all men once spoke a common language. The most revered and most ancient of human books, in making these statements, sheds a bright and steady light on the obscurity of history, and at the same time reveals the imperfection of those views held by some modern thinkers and writers who deny that the languages of the world had one origin and that its races came from one stock.

Edkins was by no means the first to see links between Chinese and languages of peoples far to the west — such discussions go back at least to John Webb's *An Historical Essay Endeavouring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language*, published in 1669.<sup>31</sup> Most of these works refer to Biblical chronology, a detailed discussion of which will occur below, as the crucial evidence put forward for the truth of Edkins's proposition comes from the beginning of the eleventh chapter of Genesis: "And the whole of earth was of one language, and of one speech." First, however, we should note that Scripture was only the spur to Edkins's work, and did not relieve the scholar from further research, informed by the most advanced studies of his time. Indeed, Edkins placed his work in a thoroughly modern linguistic context and in this book was launching a serious critique of accepted linguistic wisdom. Thus, relying on Max Müller's hypothesis of "dialectal regeneration" — first published in Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Language* in 1864 — to bolster his argument, Edkins contended that the Indo-European inflected languages and agglutinative languages (such as those of Tartary, South India and Japan) were fundamentally related. This

flew in the face of contemporary ideas about language taxonomy and was one reason, Edkins claimed, for the exclusion of Asian languages from comparative philology.

Another was the so-called isolating nature of some of these languages, Chinese being the classic case. In Chinese most morphemes are free-floating and rely on syntax to acquire grammatical function: words neither inflect, as in most European languages, nor glue together — the etymological root of “agglutinative” — as in Japanese. In the case of Chinese, it was obviously impossible to compare its verb endings with those in, say, Sanskrit, because it didn’t have any. Thus, Edkins proposed that the word roots of Chinese and similar languages should be compared to bring them into the comparative fold. This did not find favour with some reviewers but it did represent an attempt to introduce into the discussion an original methodology designed to address a question that had previously simply been ignored.

Implicit in Edkins’s arguments is his defence not only of Scripture in general but, more specifically, for the position that the languages of humankind had a single origin. For Edkins, with his scientific cast of mind, finding the language of Adam himself was never going to be a viable scholarly project, though he did allow himself some speculations of the nature of “the primeval language”. Rather, in arguing the monogenetic case on purely philological grounds, Edkins, arguably, sought to lay a scientific foundation for faith. In these debates it is worth stressing once more that for Edkins, Scripture was not the proof; rather, it was philological — and other modern scientific — argu-

ment that worked towards a vindication of Scripture. He applies the same attitude to another lively field in nineteenth-century scholarship: “After a careful sifting of recent discoveries by the geologists on the antiquity of man, it will be the duty of the Christian theologian to examine afresh the question of early Biblical chronology. All new light brought upon this subject from unexpected quarters must be cheerfully accepted...”<sup>32</sup>

And, similarly, Edkins adopted a model of linguistic evolution pioneered by Max Müller on the Darwinian model. *The Origin of Species* had been published in 1859, and provided linguistics with the tools capable of turning the study into a science, as it was perceived, with linguistic laws being the equivalent of the laws of the natural sciences. Müller adopted a model of natural selection in language with alacrity arguing, in the *Lectures on the Science of Language*, that languages formed, changed and died out through a series of processes corresponding to the biological model, except that:

...natural selection, if we could but always see it, is invariably rational selection. It is not any accidental variety that survives and perpetuates itself; it is the individual that comes nearest to the original intention of its creator, or what is best calculated to accomplish the ends for which the type or species to which it belongs was called into being, that conquers in the great struggle for life. So it is in thought and language.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the imperatives of religion and science were both met: the fundamentals of the faith were safe from being overthrown

by the discoveries of comparative philology and comparative philology would be able to take its place beside astronomy and geology in the scientific pantheon.

This position, was, of course, more than acceptable to Edkins, providing him with a mechanism of linguistic change to apply to his grand model of the development of the world's languages. It should be noted, however, that for Edkins language evolution is not teleological. We are, perhaps, too accustomed to seeing the process of biological evolution leading inexorably to us; that is, from lesser to greater complexity up a developmental ladder. In fact, however, natural selection need not lead to greater complexity, simply to greater suitability to the environment in which the organism finds him or herself. Thus, for Bible-believing linguists, language evolution could simply mean language change as the people who spoke each language found themselves in new environments. This is important from two points of view: firstly, the original language was given by God to Adam and it would be inconceivable to believe that this first language could be improved over time — if anything the reverse should be the case, as in the model of degeneration; secondly, Edkins and his colleagues were linguistically very capable and would have appreciated that languages do not necessarily increase in complexity as time passes. Ancient languages like Latin, Greek and Hebrew were, after all, no less complex than modern English or modern Chinese.

To return to the book itself: *China's Place in Philology* reads as a linguistic and cultural history, from prehistory up to the development of European languages in comparatively recent historical times.

There is not the space here to give a complete summary of Edkins's work, and indeed much of it is complex and needs to be read closely to follow his arguments, so here I will concentrate on the underpinnings of his research and give a broad outline of his views.

Edkins's argument does not, in fact, begin with language but with a comparison between the civilizations of the ancient Chinese and the ancient inhabitants of the Middle East: "The resemblance existing between the old [that is, ancient] Chinese civilization and that of the Hamite race [that is, the descendants of Ham, the second son of Noah] long ago developed on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates is very remarkable."<sup>34</sup>

There follows a catalogue of similarities in customs, agricultural methods, and architecture, amongst other topics, and the basic proposition is raised:

So close a similarity in genius between the descendants of Cush and Mizraim [two of the sons of Ham], who founded the first arts of the west, and the Chinese, who on the east of the Indo-European area have always reigned supreme in intellect and manual ingenuity, argues a probable connexion of race.<sup>35</sup>

Importantly, for Edkins, there were also (as he saw them) close affinities between the worship, sacrifices and religious buildings in the ancient Holy Land and those in China. For him this pointed to an original monotheism in the Chinese, a monotheism that derived from their shared ancestry with the Semitic peoples. This stance echoes throughout the history of

the Western encounter with China, most particularly, of course, in missionary circles where the possibility of conversion was seen to be enhanced if, at the very root of Chinese religion, lay a belief in a single all-powerful deity — especially if that deity was actually, originally, Jehovah. It also had direct consequences for perhaps the longest-running and most bitterly fought controversy amongst the missionary fraternity in nineteenth-century China — the so-called term question. The essence of the “term question” can be easily stated: what is the best translation of the word “God” in Chinese? Which, if any, of the words found in Chinese texts meant what Christians mean by God? Huge storehouses of human effort were expended on these questions, and acrimony was often not far from the surface, as, for Protestants at least, translation of Scripture was at the core of their vocation and it was obviously imperative to get the word for “God” right. So, if the ancient Chinese were truly the descendants of people who had received the original revelation, the mystery and nature of ancient Chinese religion could be understood and the right words could be identified.

Now, as obvious for Edkins that the Chinese were originally monotheistic was the fact, observable about him in Beijing as well as in the most ancient of texts, that Chinese religious practice also included features not found in ancient semitic religion. One of these clearly non-monotheistic practices was the role played by heavenly bodies in astrology as well as in star cults. Edkins uses the term “Sabeanism” to describe this style of worship, explaining: “That the early Chinese should, in addition to their monotheism, have become infected with the Sabeanism that Job

condemned, and with some other heathen usages found to prevail long after in the countries from which they came and through which they passed, need not be wondered at...”<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the people we know as Chinese originated in the Mesopotamian region and migrated slowly eastward, arriving in China at “nearly 3,000 years B.C.”. They entered that land, “by the usual highway from Mohammedan Tartary, into Kansu and Shensi, founding colonies along the banks of the western tributaries of the Yellow River, where we find the ancestors of the family,”<sup>37</sup> then subsequently spread out into those areas of early Chinese settlement we know from the ancient texts.

These Chinese were not, however, the first to enter the territory of China. In Edkins’s scheme, the “migrations of races have been in the direction of radii from a common centre where the first human pair were created”.<sup>38</sup> One route was into India through the Punjab and was followed first by the Dravidians “and after them the Hindoos”. Another group — “the Eastern and Western Himalaic races” — crossed Tibet and followed the Brahmaputra, heading south and east into Indo-China and north and east into south-western China. The Chinese, meantime, went north and west along what became known, much later, as the Silk Route. The Himalaic branch that entered China from the south constituted, according to Edkins, the “Miau, Lo lo, Nung, [and] Yau” ethnic groups known under the current dispensation as “national minorities”. This southerly branch met with the northerly branch in various regions across China.

Following this explanation of how the Chinese entered their destined territory, Edkins moves back to postulate on the origins of language itself. He proposes that some elements and characteristics of “the primeval language” are retrievable by philological comparison. Thus, “that it was monosyllabic is deducible from the fact, that in all the families, from the Indo-European upwards, the roots are monosyllables”<sup>39</sup> and “the structure of sentences in the primeval language, it may be reasonably concluded, was according to the order of nature. The nominative preceded the transitive verb, and the transitive verb preceded its object. The Chinese, the Hebrew, and the English here agree.”<sup>40</sup> The other way of determining the nature of the first language, of course, is by recourse to Scripture. The classic statement of language origin in the Bible is from the second chapter of Genesis: “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field; and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”<sup>41</sup> This, in Edkins’s reading, meant that while “divine assistance” was required to make language, it was not fully developed at that stage. This was so because the initial language act was simply the naming of animals — full language competence was a gradual process aided by divine assistance but not granted complete. Edkins quotes a Dr Magee approvingly in this context: “It is sufficient if we suppose the use of language taught him [Adam] with respect to such things as were necessary, and that he was left to the exercise of his own faculties for further improvement upon this foundation.”<sup>42</sup>

Having established the essential characteristics of the primeval language, Edkins addresses the important issue of combining Biblical chronology with his scheme of language development. The downfall of the primeval language was, of course, the Confusion of Tongues at the Tower of Babel, an event Edkins dates to 400 years after Noah’s Flood, which itself took place 2,200 years after Creation.<sup>43</sup> However, his position on Babel is, perhaps, surprising:

The Scriptural account of the Deluge and of the Confusion of Tongues I suppose to refer particularly to the world according to its dimensions as then understood, the *πᾶσα οἰκουμένη* [*pasa oikoumene*, all inhabited regions of the day]. Colonies that went beyond the limits of the Flood of Noah, if there were such, were lost from view.<sup>44</sup>

What this enables, for him, is the possibility that in some specific cases the primeval language may have survived God’s intervention, if the speakers of the primeval language, or their descendents, no longer lived in the world as known by the Babylonians. He cites two cases of this: first, in Genesis 4 it says that when Cain was expelled from the presence of the Lord, he “dwelt in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden”.<sup>45</sup> With his wife, he subsequently produced the line of succession that ran from Enoch to Lamech and beyond. Of this, Edkins says:

The Cainites went...to the east. Whether any of them and the other descendents of Adam passed into East Asia and America during those 2,000 years now so little

known, we cannot tell. If they did, they would have there been beyond the reach of the Deluge, which science has shown did not extend to the more distant parts of the continent.<sup>46</sup>

The second case is that of the Cushites, the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham, grandson of Noah and father of Nimrod, the mighty hunter. The Cushites were, then, Nimrod's people who built the Tower at Babel. Edkins proposes, on the basis of the shared culture of the Babylonians and the Chinese that he observed earlier, that the wave of emigration that produced the ancient Chinese left the Cushite region after the Flood — thereby acquiring Babylonian civilization — but before the Confusion of Tongues — to preserve the primeval language. Thus, when these Chinese arrived in China from the north they displaced the people they met there, the Eastern and Western Himalaics who had arrived earlier from the south, and who were the result of migrations from before the Flood, and therefore less civilized. This accounts for why both groups in China spoke monosyllabic languages like the primeval tongue as they were not subjected to God's punishment after the Tower of Babel.

I have spent a good deal of space on Edkins's explanations of the origins of the Chinese people and their language. In the rest of the book, he proceeds to explain in similar terms the Semitic, Himalaic, Turanian, Malayo-Polynesian and Indo-European language families, though I will not cover that ground here. Let me add that, while cataloguing those parts of his work I have neglected in this paper, each step of his developmental edifice is illus-

trated with copious linguistic examples displaying his remarkable breadth of knowledge. The point of the whole enterprise, however, remains a proof of the fundamental unity of the world's languages and of the world's peoples, and especially the original revelation that all peoples received in the beginning. In his conclusion he writes, *inter alia* quoting the seventeenth chapter of Acts and a famous passage from Max Müller's *Lectures on the Science of Religion*:

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." When the European goes into the other continents of the world, as traveller, colonist, missionary, and civilizer, he meets everywhere with men of the same race. "But what have we in common with the Turanians, with Chinese, and Samoyedes? Very little it may seem: and yet it is not very little, for it is our common humanity. It is not the yellow skin, or the high cheek-bones, that make the man. Nay, if we look but steadily into those black Chinese eyes, we shall find that there, too, there is a soul that responds to a soul, and that the God whom they mean is the same God whom we mean, however hopeless their utterance, however imperfect their worship." Language proves them to be one with ourselves.<sup>47</sup>

Edkins's radical monogenism is, thus, buttressed on the one hand by his firm belief in the literal truth of Scripture, and on the other by an ethic of the common brotherhood of all peoples; the savage, the barbaric and the civilized. In a kind of



reply essay in *The China Review* to some harsh reviews of *China's Place in Philology*, Edkins describes the two schools of thought relating to ancient China. The first, he claims, "looks upon its old civilization as self-grown, desiderates no connection with the old Asiatic empires of the Old Testament, and detracts in many ways from the credit hitherto allowed to the ancient Chinese". "The other party", of which Edkins was a member, he suggests, "desires to harmonize the safe conclusions of modern geologists and ethnologists with regard to the antiquity of man, both with the historical traditions of Judea and Babylon, and with those of the Chinese." The choice between them, he says, is between the proposition that "religion, language and history are one in origin" and the alternative that, "there was more than one Adam".<sup>48</sup> In his view, any polygenetic model was, by definition, against science, against Scripture, and against common brotherhood.

## CONCLUSION

Edkins's book was ambitious in its scope, taking in all the world's peoples and their languages. There is, however, a striking absence: the living, breathing, speaking Chinese he lived among. This is somewhat strange as his other writings, on Buddhism, on fengshui, on other aspects of folklore and religion, are full of anecdotes and the fruits of his day-to-day interactions. We also know from various sources, including his correspondence, that he spent much of each day while at home preaching and circulating among the Chinese who attended the mission hospital to which he was attached in Beijing.

Even stranger, perhaps, given that the kind of philology Edkins practised stressed seeking out the most ancient of texts and reconstructing the early pronunciation of characters, is his lack of interest in what the classical Chinese texts said themselves about the origins of their language. They are certainly not silent on matters of how writing was invented, how people communicated before writing, and how things came to be named. It must be observed, however, that the Chinese literary tradition always stressed the written over the oral, and speech itself appears to have been taken as a given. With the only written language in their known world, the ancient Chinese do not seem to have been much interested in comparative language studies and since Edkins's project relied on the twin pillars of spoken language and comparison, it may simply have been that the ancient Chinese texts were simply answering different questions from the ones he was asking.

Comparative studies of all kinds on the scale that Edkins undertook, especially the comparative study of languages, are particularly notable for including in their purview both the language (or mythology, or religion, etc.) of the observed people, or peoples, and the language (or whatever) of the observer. Thus, in Edkins's study the Chinese language and the European languages stand at each end of the scheme he sets out of the unrolling of linguistic history. To be sure, the European languages are seen to be the last group to have evolved but they are not, as I explained earlier, regarded as the most complex or most perfect of linguistic creations. By including his own language and Chinese in the same scheme, Edkins's model, and indeed comparative philology

as a discipline, can be seen both as relativizing the language of the analyst and granting the language of study a degree of respect. On the other hand, with the move to the study of single languages and societies at the end of the nineteenth century, and the decline of this kind of comparative study, the scholar became removed from the object of research. The Chinese became discursively disconnected, if not from the rest of the world, certainly from Europe and the West.

With this kind of model — us here and them over there — there developed a sense that we inhabited discrete worlds and ways of being. And from this, perhaps, developed an anxiety that something needed to be crossed to get from one to the other; a psychic metaphor of the vast Eurasian steppe. Nineteenth-century missionary writings on China in English certainly display anxieties on the part of their authors but those anxieties do not, in my reading, appear to include the sense that no matter how hard we try we will never truly understand the Chinese mind. “East is east and west is west and never the twain will meet” is a notion surprisingly absent in this context. It is absent, I would suggest, because these were people of religion, something we must take seriously if we are to approach an understanding of the encounter between Chinese people and Westerners before our times. Edkins and others like him knew exactly what they were doing in China and why they were there. We may not approve of what they were trying to achieve but there is little doubt that the only meaningful thing that divided Europeans and Chinese was that we were Christian and, by and large, they were not — yet.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edkins, Rev. J, *China's Place in Philology: An Attempt to Show that the Languages of Europe and Asia have a Common Origin* (London: Trubner, 1871).

<sup>2</sup> For an outline of the multitude of missions, see Latourette, K.S., *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929).

<sup>3</sup> Teng, Ssu-yü and J.K. Fairbank, with E-tu Zen Sun, Chaoying Fang and others, *China's Response to the West; a Documentary Survey, 1839–1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954, reprinted until at least 1979).

<sup>4</sup> On Legge, see Girardot, N., *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Progress* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), and numerous papers by Laurence Pfister. On Edkins, see my “Meeting the Celestial Master”, *East Asian History*, 15/16, June/December pp.53–66.

<sup>5</sup> Boerschmann, Ernst, *Chinese Architecture and its Relation to Chinese Culture* (Washington: Govt. Print. Office, 1912). This was an offprint from the Smithsonian report for 1911.

<sup>6</sup> Price, Maurice, *Christian Missions and Oriental Civilizations, a Study in Culture Contact; the Reactions of Non-Christian Peoples to Protestant Missions from the Standpoint of Individual and Group Behaviour: Outline, Materials, Problems, and Tentative Interpretations* (Shanghai: privately printed, 1924).

<sup>7</sup> Williams, Raymond, *Keywords* (London: Fontana, 1983), pp.57–8, italics in the original.

<sup>8</sup> On Chinese punishments, see Mason, G.H., *The Punishments of China, illustrated by twenty-two engravings: with explanations in English and French* (London :W. Miller, 1801). Although he did not use the word “civilized” or its equivalents it is worth noting that Leibniz ranked China in advance of Europe itself in areas of human relations at the very end of the seventeenth century. See, for instance, in his “Preface to the *NOVISSIMA SINICA*” (trans. Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemount, Jr.), in Cook and Rosemount, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Writings on China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), pp.46–7: “...who would have believed that there is on earth a people who, though we are in our view so very advanced in every branch of behaviour, still surpass us in comprehending the precepts of civil life?...certainly they surpass us (though it is also shameful to confess this) in practical philosophy, that is, in the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of morals. Indeed it is difficult to describe how beautifully all the laws of the Chinese, in contrast to those of other peoples, are

directed to the achievement of public tranquillity and the establishment of social order..."

<sup>9</sup> Barrow, Sir John, *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations and Comparisons Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-min-yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey from Peking to Canton. In which it is Attempted to Appreciate the Rank that this Extraordinary Empire may be Considered to Hold in the Scale of Civilized Nations* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1804), pp.3–4. Underlining in the original.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp.28–9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp.50–1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.29.

<sup>13</sup> This is not to say that Barrow does not dabble in racial theory of a more egregious sort. In a bizarre passage he cites his own *Travels into the Interior of South Africa* of 1802 (a journey he made after returning from China) opining that the structure of the upper lid of the eye of "a real Hottentot" was just like that of a Chinese and, in general, "their physical characters agree in almost every point". Recalling "a Hottentot who attended me," he claims this man was "so very like a Chinese servant I had in Canton, both in person, features, manners, and tone of voice, that almost always inadvertently I called him by the name of the latter": Ibid, pp.48–9.

<sup>14</sup> Medhurst, W.H., *China: its State and Prospects, with Especial Reference to the Spread of the Gospel, Containing Allusions to the Antiquity, Extent, Population, Civilization, Literature, and Religion of the Chinese* (London: J. Snow, 1840).

<sup>15</sup> Medhurst, W.H., *China: Its State and Prospects*, pp.97–8. It is worth noting in this context that also like Barrow, Medhurst points out that "China possesses as much civilization as Turkey now, or England a few centuries ago" and that the Chinese are exaggerated in their self-assessment: "They denominate China 'the flowery nation,' — 'the region of eternal summer,' — 'the land of the sages,' — 'the celestial empire,' — while they unscrupulously term all foreigners 'barbarians,' and sometimes load them with epithets still more degrading and contemptuous, such as swine, monkeys, and devils." (p.98) He concludes with a discussion of the advantages of attempting evangelization in "civilized nations" rather than in those "altogether barbarous": in the latter case he notes, "Instances have occurred of savage tribes falling upon the messengers of mercy; and, immediately on their arrival, proceeding to plunder, murder, and, even eat them. But this is not likely to occur among a people, in a great measure, civilized" (p.120).

<sup>16</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, p.59.

<sup>17</sup> Laffitte, Pierre (trans. John Carey Hall), *A General View of Chinese Civilization and of the Relations of the*

*West with China* (London: Trübner and Co; Yokohama, Shanghai & Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh; Tokyo & Yokohama: Z.P. Maruya & Co., 1887).

<sup>18</sup> Edkins, *China's Place in Philology*, p.xii.

<sup>19</sup> Müller, M., Letter to A.P. Stanley, quoted in Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, p.245.

<sup>20</sup> Bushell, S.W., "Obituary Rev Joseph Edkins, D.D.", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (January, 1906), pp.269–71, Box, Rev. E., "In Memorium, Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D.", *The Chinese Recorder*, 36 (June, 1905), pp.282–9 (see also "Editorial Comment" in the May 1905 issue, pp.261–2), Anon., "In Memorium Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D.", *Journal of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol 36 (1905), pp.157–9, Cordier, H., "Nécrologie Joseph Edkins", *T'oung Pao*, VI (July, 1905), pp.359–66. See also, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: giving a list of their publication, and obituary notices of the deceased with copious indexes* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867, reprinted Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Publishing Company, 1967), pp.187–91.

<sup>21</sup> Edkins, letters to Rev J.J. Freeman (13.10.1848) and to Rev. Arthur Tidman (14.1.1849, 13.7.1849, 11.4.1850, 11.6.1850) in the Archives of the Council for World Mission: Central China, London University, SOAS.

<sup>22</sup> Edkins, Jane, *Chinese Scenes and People, with Notices of Christian Missions and Missionary Life in a Series of Letters from Various Parts of China, with a Narrative of a Visit to Nanking by Her Husband the Rev. J. Edkins, also a Memoir by her Father, the Rev. W. Stobbs* (London: J. Nisbet, 1863). The excerpt is quoted in Box's obituary of Joseph, p.284.

<sup>23</sup> Edkins, letters to Tidman (6.9.1862, 11.4.1863, 25.5.1863), Council for World Mission: North China, London University, SOAS.

<sup>24</sup> Edkins, letters to Tidman (12.9.1865) letters to Mullens (27.2.1866, 14.11.1867, 28.12.1877), Meech to Whitehouse (22.9.1879), Council for World Mission: North China.

<sup>25</sup> Edkins, letter to Whitehouse (13.12.1880), letters to Thompson (21.12.1880, 1.2.1881), Council for World Mission: North China.

<sup>26</sup> Box, Obituary, p.289. See also the editorial comment from *The Chinese Recorder*: "We said it was with mingled feelings that we write of his death. While his place will be vacant here and his presence missed, yet when one, like this, is gathered in as a shock of corn, fully ripe, when the streets of toil are changed for the streets of gold, when the mortal puts on immortality, one cannot refrain from a feeling of sympathy with the joy of one who has gone up higher, who has stepped across the border and sees his Master face to face."

<sup>27</sup> Edkins, J., *Chinese Buddhism: a Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive and Critical* (London: Trubner & Co., 1880).

<sup>28</sup> Bushell, "Obituary," p.270.

<sup>29</sup> Anon, "In Memorium," pp.158–9. It is probably scholars such as the one that wrote this obituary that Box was referring to when he wrote, "[Edkins's] two pet aversions (and I believe his only aversions) were the Higher Critics and those Philologists who declined to accept his theories on words, their origin and connection with each other. He rightly, I think, applied the laws of evolution to language, but his methods, I must confess, went beyond the limits of my poor comprehension." ("Obituary," p. 288).

<sup>30</sup> Bopp, Franz (trans. Edward B. Eastwick), *A Comparative Grammar of the Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian, Gothic, German, and Slavonic Languages* (London, Madden & Malcolm; James Malcolm: London, 1845–50)

<sup>31</sup> See, Rachel Ramsey, "China and the Ideal of Order in John Webb's 'An Historical Essay...'" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, 3 (July 2001), 483–503.

<sup>32</sup> Edkins, *China's Place in Philology*, p.xx.

<sup>33</sup> Müller, M., *Lectures on the Science of Language*, quoted in Harris, R. and Taylor, T.J., *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought: The Western Tradition from Socrates to Saussure* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.166.

<sup>34</sup> Edkins, *China's Place in Philology*, p.1

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p.30. Job's condemnation can be found at Job 31:26–28: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.34.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.51.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.55.

<sup>41</sup> Genesis 2:19.

<sup>42</sup> 65, On the Atonement, Dissert. 53. This is likely to be William Magee, successively Bishop of Raphoe and Archbishop of Dublin, *Discourses & Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement & Sacrifice: and on the Principal Arguments Advanced, and the Mode of Reasoning Employed, by the Opponents of those Doctrines as Held by the Established Church: with an Appendix Containing some Strictures on Mr. Belsham's account of the Unitarian Scheme, in his Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise* (London, 1801).

<sup>43</sup> Edkins seems generally to follow the chronology of Dr. William Hales (1778–1821) found in his *A New Analysis of Chronology: in which an Attempt is Made to Explain the History and Antiquities of the Primitive Nations of the World, and the Prophecies Relating to them, on Principles Tending to Remove the Imperfection and Discordance of Preceding Systems*, 3 vol. (London, 1809–12). Hales followed the Septuagint text, unlike the more-famous chronology of Archbishop James Ussher (dating Creation to 4004 B.C) who based his work on the Masoretic text.

<sup>44</sup> Edkins, *China's Place in Philology*, p.67–8.

<sup>45</sup> Genesis 4:16.

<sup>46</sup> Edkins, *China's Place in Philology*, p.68.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.395.

<sup>48</sup> Edkins, "Chinese Philology", *The China Review* 1, 3 (1872), 181–90, 1, 5 (1873), 293–300, pp.181–2.