

# A Preliminary Study on the First Selected Translation of *The Book of Poetry* into French

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## Abstract

This article aims to sketch a preliminary analysis of eight poems from *The Book of Poetry*, translated into French by the French Jesuit Joseph de Prémare (1660–1736) in the early 18th century. Prémare implanted the doctrines of Christianity in his translation of the eight poems that were selected from the *Greater Odes of the Kingdom* (大雅), *Minor Odes of the Kingdom* (小雅) and the *Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* (周頌), which were analysed from three aspects: firstly, the theme of the eight odes, king and kingship, allude to the Lord; and the first ode *Jing Zhi* (敬之), meaning to reverence *Tian* (敬天) by title, refers virtually to reverence God. Secondly, the Christianized translation is especially obvious in the translation of the words *Tian* (天), *Haotian* (昊天), and *Shangdi* (上帝): these were translated as the God in Christianity. Thirdly, even the story of Paradise Lost in the Bible is implanted in the translation of the ode *Zhan Yang* (瞻仰). This article also clarifies that because of Prémare's translation the image of the wise king Wen (文王) was shaped and became known in Europe.

**Keywords:** *The Book of Poetry*, Prémare, translation, Christianity, king Wen

## Izvilleček:

Pričujoči prispevek podaja preliminarne analizo osmih pesmi iz *Knjige pesmi*, ki jih je v zgodnjem 18. stoletju v francoščino prevedel francoski jezuit Jesuit Joseph de Prémare (1660–1736). Prémare je v svojih prevodih osmih pesmi, ki so bile izbrane iz sklopov *Velike ode* (大雅), *Male ode* (小雅) ter *Obredne pesmi dinastije Zhou* (周頌), uporabil krščansko doktrino. Pesmi so bili analizirane iz treh vidikov: avtor najprej prikaže, da teme osmih od, kralj in kraljestvo, namigujejo na Gospoda; pri tem prikaže, da prva oda *Jing Zhi* (敬之), ki v naslovu izraža častiti Nebo (*Tian*) (敬天), v prevodu tako rekoč izraža čaščenje Boga. Krščanska terminologija in prevodi so nadalje še posebej opazni tudi v prevodu besed *Tian* (天), *Haotian* (昊天) in *Shangdi* (上帝), saj so prevedene kot krščanski Bog. Kot tretjič izpostavi zgodbo izgubljenega raja v Bibliji, ki je ravno tako vključena v prevod ode *Zhan Yang* (瞻仰). Prispevek v nadaljevanju prikaže, da je Prémarejev prevod pripomogel tudi k uveljavitve podobe modrega kralja Wen (文王) v Evropi.

**Ključne besede:** *Knjiga pesmi*, Prémare, prevod, krščanstvo, kralj Wen

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## Introduction

During the French Jesuit Joseph de Prémare's (1660–1736) (Dudink and Standaert 2015) stay in China he translated eight odes from *The Book of Poetry* and published them for the first time in his *Déscription Géographique, historique, chronologique, politique et physique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise* (Du Halde 1736, 308–17) edited by Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743). This is the earliest translation of the odes in *The Book of Poetry* into a European language, and one of the very limited publications in French that Prémare published in Europe in his life, among which the French version of the Chinese tragedy *Le Petit Orphelin de la Maison de Tchao* (趙氏孤兒), also published for the first time in Du Halde's work, is the most famous one. Scholars have conducted many studies on *Le Petit Orphelin de la Maison de Tchao* (Chen 1929, 114–46; Fan 1932; Meng 1993, 113–23), while little has been done to the eight translated poems from *The Book of Poetry* (Liu 2010; Du 2012, 43–71).

The eight poems translated are *Jing Zhi* (敬之) and *Tian Zuo* (天作) from the *Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* (周頌), *Huang Yi* (皇矣), *Yi* (抑), *Zhan Yang* (瞻仰), *Ban* (板) and *Dang* (盪) from the *Greater Odes of the Kingdom* (大雅), and *Zheng Yue* (月) from the *Minor Odes of the Kingdom* (小雅). One notable fact is that among the eight poems, five are from the *Greater Odes of the Kingdom*, two are from the *Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* and one is from the *Minor Odes of the Kingdom*, while not one ode was selected from the *Lessons from the States* (國風), a record of the social customs and habits of the people from the different states of the time.

This paper discusses how the French Jesuit scholar Prémare translated the eight odes, to find what is strengthened, what is transplanted and displaced in the translation, what the translations of the key concepts like *Tian* (天), *Haotian* (昊天) and *Shangdi* (上帝) are, and what their theological significance is both in the original and the translated text.

## Theme: King and Kingship

The eight translated odes do not appear in the same order as in *The Book of Poetry* (Zhu 1996, 1–169). For example, the first translated ode *Jing Zhi* is the last one among the eight in the original text, while they do obey a certain order, namely the order of the historical process of the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BCE–256 BCE). In the first ode *Jing Zhi*, the young king adjusts his relations with Heaven and his ministers; he commands himself to pay reverence to Tian (敬天) and asks his ministers to assist him in fulfilling his administrative duties. The second

ode *Tian Zuo* and the third one *Huang Yi* commemorate the sacred kings of the Zhou Dynasty: the former narrates how kings of various generations constructed roads out of the Qi Mountain, and the latter narrates the epic of the Zhou Dynasty. From the fourth ode *Yi*, the tone of the odes turns to admonishing, criticizing, and lamenting the way the kingdom is being ruled: *Yi* is to satirize king Ping (周平王), who indulged himself in wine and women and ruined his reign as a result; the fifth ode *Zhan Yang* criticizes king You (周幽王), who spoiled his concubine Bao Si (褒姒) and expelled his loyal ministers; the sixth ode *Zheng Yue* laments the misery of the dynasty; the seventh and eighth odes *Ban* and *Dang* end with the downfall of the dynasty. In modern Chinese, *Ban* (板) and *Tang* (蕩) constitute a phrase “Bandang” (板蕩), which means ruling disorder and social turbulence.

In this historical process of the Zhou Dynasty manifested in the eight odes, either in odes 1 to 3, which worship and praise the king, or in odes 4 to 8, which admonish and satirize the king, the king is present from the very beginning to the end as the main character, and the ruling of the dynasty is the uniform subject. Thus the eight translated odes seem to have constituted a self-sufficient and comprehensive whole, which indicates Prémare’s purpose in translating these eight odes, i.e., to demonstrate a complicated historical process and a centralized subject.

The subject of king and kingship is also manifested in his translation of the title of the odes. In the original texts, the title of each ode is its first two words; in contradistinction, Prémare gave a new title to each ode according to its content. The titles of the eight translated odes are as follows:

1. *Jing Zhi*: Un jeune Roi prie ses Ministres de l'instruire (A Young King Asks His Ministers to Instruct Him)
2. *Tian Zuo*: À la louange de Wen wang (Praise to King Wen)
3. *Huang Yi*: À la louange du même (Praise to the Same)
4. *Yi*: Conseils donnez à un Roi (Suggestions Given to a King)
5. *Zhan Yang*: Sur la perte du genre humain (On the Fall of the Human Being)
6. *Zheng Yue*: Lamentations sur les misères du genre humain (Lament of the Miseries of the Human Being)
7. *Ban*: Exhortation (Exhortation)
8. *Dang*: Avis au Roy (Advice to the King)

The word “king” appears in all the French titles of the eight odes, besides the fifth, sixth, and seventh ones. Although the word king is absent in the titles of the fifth, sixth, and seventh odes, the reappearance of the key word king in the eighth ode indicates that the translation of the eight odes is a whole with king and kingship as its subject.

In the translated odes about kings, king Wen (文王) was the most prominent. The translator entitled the second ode *Tian Zuo* and the third one in the name of king Wen, which was not the same as that in the original odes. As in *Huang Yi*, there are many words in praise of king Wang Ji (王季), father of king Wen:

The state thus founded, God prepared the king,  
And he through Ta-pai's flight from Chi shall spring.  
Ta's son was Chi, whose praises now I sing.  
A younger brother's heart within him glowed;  
He to his elder rendered all he owed,  
And when *he* fled, a patriot's heart Chi showed.  
So through his course his brother's flight appeared  
With glory crowned. Head of the name, Chi reared  
The throne to which Chou's way erelong was cleared.  
Gifted was Chi by God with wisdom high  
  
His judgments true drew on him every eye;  
With silent growth his fame spread far and nigh.  
Most ken, most wise, to yield or to command,  
And sway to exercise throughout the land,  
He was 'twixt king and chief a powerful band. (Legge 2009)

While in Prémare's translation, all these praises go to king Wen:

C'est l'ouvrage du Très-Haut; il a mis le cadet à la place de l'aîné: il n'y a que Ven vang, dont le cœur sache aimer ses frères: il faut tout leur bonheur & toute leur gloire: le Seigneur l'a comblé de ses biens, & lui a donné tout l'Univers pour récompense.

Le Seigneur pénètre dans le cœur de Ven vang & il y trouve une vertu secrète & inexplicable, dont l'odeur se repand par tout. C'est un merveilleux assemblage de ses dons les plus précieux; l'intelligence pour régler tout; la sagesse pour éclairer tout; la science, pour enseigner; le Conseil, pour gouverner; la piété & la douceur, pour le faire aimer; la force & la majesté, pour se faire craindre; une grace enfin & un charme qui lui attire tous les cœurs: vertus toujours les mêmes, & incapables de changer. C'est comme un appanage qu'il a reçu de Très-Haut: c'est un bonheur qu'il a répandu sur sa postérité. (Du Halde 1736, 310)

This is the work of the Most High; he put his second son in the place of the first one: this is no other than king Wen, whose heart knew how to love his brothers: he should have all their happiness and glory: the

Lord satisfied him with beatitude and gave him the whole Universe for compensation.

The Lord penetrated into the heart of king Wen and found a secret & inexplicable virtue, which exudes its fragrance everywhere. This is a splendid assemblage of the most precious talents; the intelligence for regulating everything; the wisdom for enlightening everything; the science for teaching; the advice for governing; the sincerity & the gentleness for loving; the force & the dignity for fearing; a grace & charm that attracts all hearts: virtues are always the same and are unable to change. This is like an attribute he received from the Most High: this is the happiness that he dispersed to his posterity.

Did Prémare misunderstand the ode? Or did he intentionally translate it this way? Whatever the truth might be, a result of such translation is that it established the image of an ideal king Wen. This had an influencing effect about fifty years later: when the German poet Goethe read this, he acclaimed the ancient Chinese king: “Oven Ouang!” (Zhao and Zhao 1998, 100).

What does king in these eight odes signify on earth? Is it a metaphor? Does Prémare’s king only refer to the ruler of the earthly world? We all know that king is the address to Jehovah in the Bible: “the Lord is King forever” (Psalms 9: 7); “the Lord is seated as King forever” (Psalms 29: 10); “the King of glory” (Psalms 24: 8, 9, 10). We have reason to believe that Prémare emphasizes the word king in his translation to suggest the creator and governor of the universe, King of kings, the Lord.

A further analysis of the first ode *Jing Zhi* also leads us to believe that Prémare reconstructed the eight odes in accordance with Christian doctrines and theological principles. *Jing Zhi* made it clear that paying reverence to Tian (敬天) is the first and the most important rule that a king should obey. The Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) of the South Song Dynasty (1127–1279) explained that the ministers suggested the Way of Tian (天道) to king Cheng (成王). In his explanation the divinity of Tian (天) was secularised, and the religious and theological tendency in ancient China turned into an ethical trend, which is one of the main characters of the Li school (理學). While things are different in Prémare’s translation. It shows his ingenuity when he started the eight odes with *Jing Zhi*. When Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and his colleagues endeavoured to spread Christianity in China in the sixteenth century, they found Tian (天) and Shangdi (上帝) in Chinese classics and expounded them as equivalent to Deus (God) in Christianity. With this strategy they succeeded

in winning the support of the Chinese Emperor. In 1675, the Qing Emperor Kangxi (1654–1722) wrote two characters “敬天” (Reverence Tian) on a board and explained: “What I meant in Reverence Tian is the same as in Reverence the Lord.” (Zhang 2008, 210). This way the Qing court officially permitted and approved the Christianity that was spread by the European Jesuits in China. After that the learning of Tian (天學) became another word for the Christian theology. It is said that a board with the two characters 敬天 in imitation of the board by Kangxi was hung on the front of every Catholic church at that time, to remind people to pay reverence to Tian, which is a synonym for the Deus of Christianity (Li 2007, 75). Prémare put *Jing Zhi* at the very beginning and laid the keynote for the universe constituted by the eight odes: Tian is the highest principle. Tian here not only refers to the sky, but also to the creator of the universe, the God.

In short, king and kingship is the outward subject of the eight odes, while there is an implied, metaphorical subject in them, which is the Christian theology with reverence of Tian as its principle. This is the most important point in the French version of the eight odes from *The Book of Poetry*, ingeniously and tactfully put forward by Prémare.

### The Name of Tian (天) and Shangdi (上帝)

Joseph de Prémare is a representative Jesuit scholar in the Figurism movement of the eighteenth century. As a student of Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), Prémare inherited this method and applied it in his study of the Chinese classics, searching for what might match the Christian doctrines in them. His important works of Figurism include *Selecta quaedam vestigia praecipuorum religionis christianae dogmatum ex antiquis Sinarum libris eruta* (1712–1724) and *the Real Meaning of Confucianism* (儒教實義, 1715–1718). In his French translation of *The Orphan of the Zhao Family* (趙氏孤兒), there is little connection with Figurism, as it is a drama of the Yuan dynasty. While *the Book of Poetry* is a classic of pre-Qin China, Prémare’s translation of the eight odes shows that he was apparently influenced by Figurism. As literary translation is a kind of trans-cultural creative treason (Xie 2011, 185–93), there are many points in Prémare’s translation that are worthy of discussion. Next we are going to analyse the French translation of the words Tian (天), Di (帝), Shangdi (上帝), Huangtian Shangdi (皇天上帝), which appear very often in the eight odes, and to explore Prémare’s endeavour in merging Christianity and the pristine religion in ancient China.



## Tian (天)

In the eight odes, Tian appears 20 times, Tianxia (天下) once, Haotian (昊天) 5 times, and Huangtian (皇天) once. In the translation, if “le Ciel” (the Sky) indicates the material sky, “Maître de l’Univers” (Master of the Universe) and “Le Seigneur” (the Lord) are obvious references to the God of Christianity, as are “Le Tien suprême” (the supreme Tian) and “L’auguste Ciel” (the august Sky). This proves that Prémare took Tian as God when translating the odes from *The Book of Poetry*. If we take a closer look at these two words, there are at least three similarities between the Tian in *The Book of Poetry* and God of Christianity: firstly, they have the ability to create the world. As written in *Tian Zuo*, “The Tian made the lofty hill”. According to Christianity, God is the creator of all things and creatures in the universe. Secondly, they both have the power of rewarding and punishing. Like God of Christianity, Tian in *The Book of Poetry* has two important roles to play; one is to give orders to wise persons, the other is to punish evil persons, and the latter overtakes the former (Standaert 1995, 110). Thirdly, they share the same personality of deity. In the ode *Jing Zhi*, Tian is “remote on high”, “inspecting all that we do” (Legge 2009); the only attitude that the earthly people should take toward Tian is reverence. Tian is “L’auguste Ciel” (the august Sky), or “Maître de l’Univers” (Master of the Universe): it is a supreme existence with certain personality.

In short, as to Tian, Prémare gave translations like “Maître de l’Univers” (Master of the Universe), “Le Tien suprême” (the supreme Tian), “Le Seigneur” (the Lord) and “L’auguste Ciel” (the august Sky), which are closely related to the God of Christianity.

## Di (帝), Shangdi (上帝)

In the eight odes Di (帝) appears 9 times, Shangdi (上帝) 6 times, Huangyi Shangdi (皇矣上帝), and Youhuang Shangdi (有皇上帝) once respectively. The translation to Di and Shangdi is unified: “le Seigneur” (the Lord) is the most frequently used, sometimes some descriptive words such as “Grand” and “suprême” were added before it; sometimes Prémare used “le Très-Haut” (the Most High); other times Prémare expounded Shangdi as “le souverain Maître du monde” (the supreme Master of the world), “l’Être suprême” (the supreme Existence), or “le seul Souverain” (the only Governor). The nature of supreme of Di or Shangdi and its identity as governor of the universe was highlighted through such translation.

From the translations of Di and Shangdi we can find the similarities and differences between Tian and Di or Shangdi in Prémare’s opinion: similar as Tian, Shangdi

would look for someone virtuous and sacred as governor of the secular world. Compared to Tian, the image of Di or Shangdi is more like a concrete supervisor of the human world. Tian is the Creator of the world, while Di is Father of Tian with stronger personalities. The image of Tian is more abstract. This shows that Di or Shangdi is closer to the God of Christianity than Tian in Prémare's vision. Actually as early as in 1603, Matteo Ricci used Shangdi as the Chinese translation of the Deus of Christianity in his *the True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (天主實義). In 1633 the Society of Jesus had decided to abandon Shangdi and created *Tianzhu* (天主) for the translation (Li 2007, 75). In 1704, the Pope Clement XI announced a prohibition on the use of Tian or Shangdi to translate Deus, and approved the use of *Dousi* (陡斯), a translation of the pronunciation. Prémare did not use Deus to translate Di or Shangdi, but used "le Seigneur", the common address of Deus for Christians, which expresses his opinion about the religion of ancient China and his point of view in spreading Christianity in China.

It may not be Prémare's intention to apply Figurism in his translation of *The Book of Poetry*, but his choice of the French words for Tian, Di, and Shangdi indicates that he was influenced by it. It also shows that Prémare was at Matteo Ricci's side in the Rites Controversy, which had raged for a century. He admitted that Tian and Shangdi were equivalent to the God of Christianity. Some years before this, Yan Mo (嚴謨, 1640?–1720?), a Chinese Catholic, had supported the idea of the European Jesuits in his *A Study on Di and Tian* (帝天考), which was written "from the 1680s" (Standaert 1995, 25). Prémare undoubtedly was in agreement with Yan Mo: to use Tian and Shangdi in referring to God, and to respect the Chinese customs of worshipping Confucius and ancestors. This is evident in his letter to the French scholar Étienne Fourmont (1683–1745) of October 3, 1728:

If only Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide could tell us directly that we can freely explain to the Chinese that the Tian and Shangdi discussed by their ancient authors is exactly the God in Christianity... (Lundbaek 2009, 32)

Chen Lai indicates that the God of Yin (殷) and Shang (商) in China was an "irritable, changeable God, having nothing to do with ethics", while during the Zhou dynasty Tian became ethicized: Tian "loves and listens to his people, and would take his people's will as his own will, and turn his will into that of his people", which makes sure that "if Tian supervises himself, so will his people ; and if Tian listens to himself, so will his people", in this way to achieve the unification of Tian and the people (Chen 2014, 8–9). That is to say, in the Zhou Dynasty there was an ethicized relationship between God and the people. This explains the



difference between the theological measurement of Christianity and the ancient Chinese thought that developed into a system of ethnics and, later on, when combined with Confucianism, into Confucian humanism. Prémare might not have seen this; he took Tian and Shangdi as the God of his religion because this was beneficial to the spread of Christianity in China.

### A Reference to the Bible Story

The fifth ode *Zhan Yang* criticizes king You of the Zhou Dynasty for spoiling his concubine Bao Si and expelling his ministers. In the French translation it was titled *Sur la perte du genre humain* (On the Fall of the human being) and Prémare permitted the biblical story of “paradise lost” into the text:

le Monde est perdu: le crime se répand comme un poison fatal: les filets du péché sont rendus de toutes parts; & l'on ne voit point d'apparence de guérison. (Du Halde 1736, 313)

The world is lost; crime spreads like a fatal poison; the fishing nets are cast everywhere and no one sees any trace of a cure.

Then the cause for the loss of the world was attributed to the woman:

Nous avions d'heureux champs, la femme nous les a ravés. Tous nous étoit soumis, la femme nous a jetté dans l'esclavage. Ce qu'elle hait, c'est l'innocence, & ce qu'elle aime, c'est le crime. (Du Halde 1736, 313)

We had fertile lands; the woman took them away from us. All that had been submissive the woman threw into enslavement. What she hates is innocence, and what she loves is the crime.

Who could be the woman who wants to know everything, if not Eve who picked and ate the fruit from the tree of wisdom? It is not because of Tian that human beings became depraved, but because of the woman:

Notre perte ne vient point du Ciel, c'est la femme qui en est cause.

Elle a perdu le genre humain: ce fut d'abord une erreur, & puis un crime.

Ni la femme se mêler d'autre chose, que de coudre & de filer. (Du Halde 1736, 313)

Our loss does not come from the Sky at all; it's the woman who is the cause.

She had destroyed the human kind: this is a mistake firstly, and then a crime.

The woman should not intervene in other things but sewing and weaving.

In the sixth ode *Zheng Yue*, Bao Si was also accused of ruining the kingdom:

D'où viennent donc tous les désordres qui naissent aujourd'hui? L'incendie va toujours croissant, & il est impossible de l'éteindre. Ah! Malheureuse *Pao Seë*, (a) c'est toi qui as allumé le feu qui nous consume. (Du Halde 1736, 315)

Where do all the disorders today come from? The fire is always getting aggravated and it is impossible to put it down. Oh! The unfortunate Bao Si! It is you who ignited the fire that burns us out.

Here in the translation Prémare presented the story of king You's concubine Bao Si, and at the same time he alluded to the story of Eve of Eden in the Bible. The similarity of the two stories is that the main character is a woman: Eve and Bao Si; but the causes of their fault are different: Eve violated the rules in Eden by eating the forbidden fruit; Bao Si made king You lose his dynasty just for gaining her smile. Prémare transplanted the story of Eve through the translation and added to it a strong dose of religious preaching.

Besides, there are many other traces of Prémare's Christian worldviews in the translation. In the original ode of *Zhan Yang*, it says that the world was in "chaos" (*luan* 亂); Prémare translated 亂 (*luan*) as "notre perte" (our Fall), which was repeated more than once in the translation: "L'homme s'est perdu; & l'Univers est sur le point de sa ruine" (the human is lost and the universe is at the point of its ruin). The choice of the words such as "perdu" (lost) for "none; disappearing" (*wang* 亡) and "l'Univers" for "le royaume" (*bang guo* 邦國: the kingdom) shows the influence of the translator's religion and worldviews in his translation.

## Conclusion

For conclusion, we may say that Joseph de Prémare translated the eight odes from *The Book of Poetry* with his worldviews as a Christian: his religious background is implanted in the translation, which makes it a Christianised translation. Firstly, the theme of the eight translated odes are about king and kingship—"king" is not only the worldly king, but also the King of kings, the Lord; the first ode, *Jing Zhi*, meaning to reverence Tian by title, is virtually Reverence God. Secondly, in the translation of the words like Tian, Haotian, Di, Shangdi, Prémare applied many

different terms including “Maître de l’Univers” (Master of the Universe), “Le Seigneur” (the Lord), “Le Tien suprême” (the supreme Tian), “L’auguste Ciel” (the august Sky), “le Très-Haut” (the Most High), “le seul Souverain” (the only Lord), which all refer to God of Christianity. Thirdly, when explaining the historical story of king You and his concubine Bao Si in the odes *Zhang Yang* and *Zheng Yue*, Prémare alluded to the biblical story of Paradise Lost. This is obvious concerning the translation of the title *Zhang Yang: Sur la perte du genre humain* (On the Fall of the human being). Prémare intentionally translated the eight odes into a Christianized text because, as a supporter of the Ricci methods, he knew this was good not only for the spread of Christianity in China, but would also be beneficial in winning the support of more European readers for the Jesuits in China. Objectively his translation is helpful indeed for Europeans to understand ancient China with its original religion. Finally, Prémare’s sometimes mistranslation even helped to shape the image of the wise king Wen and promoted its spread in Europe.

However, in the 17th and the 18th centuries, and throughout the 19th century, it was only a small part of the Chinese literature that has a Christianized translation. The European missionaries in the China of the 17th and the 18th centuries, besides Prémare, depicted China with a genuine religious culture that is in little conflict with Christianity through their Christianized translations, like what is represented in Du Halde’s work. This Christianized translation impacted the West’s understanding of China, and contributed a great deal in helping people from the East and the West better understand each other. It not only provides either Chinese or westerners an opportunity to reflect on their own traditions and culture, but still influences people’s worldviews and enlarges their horizons to this day.

As this article is only a preliminary study, it will be furthered in two ways: one way is to collect and analyse more Christian translations of classical Chinese literature in the 17th and the 18th centuries, like the earliest translation of *Daxue* (大學), etc. A comparison of the original text and the translation would follow, so as to explore the mixture of the western and the eastern learning in the translated text; the other way is to compare Prémare’s translation of *The Book of Poetry* with those of the 19th century English missionary translator James Legge (1815–1897)—they are also Christian translations, but obviously with a different emphasis and style.

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