

Review of the book:

Shen Yaming 沈亚明.

Zhong Xing He Li Li: Shen Zhongzhang He Tade Pengyoumen
众星何历历: 沈仲章和他的朋友们 (Why are the Stars So Bright:
Shen Zhongzhang and His Friends). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju,
2022. 464 pp. — ISBN 978-7-101-15834-2 (in Chinese)

Hartmut WALRAVENS

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Freie Universität
Berlin, Germany

DOI: 10.55512/WMO639928

Received 10.04.2024.

Key words: Shen Zhongzhang (1905–1987) — biography, Vincenz Hundhausen (1878–1955), Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), Sven Hedin (1865–1952).

For citation: Walravens, Hartmut [Rev. of the book:] “Shen Yaming 沈亚明. *Zhong Xing He Li Li: Shen Zhongzhang He Tade Pengyoumen* 众星何历历: 沈仲章和他的朋友们 (Why are the Stars So Bright: Shen Zhongzhang and His Friends). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2022. 464 pp.”. *Pis'mennye pamiatniki Vostoka*, 2024, vol. 21, no. 4 (iss. 59), pp. 141–146 (in Russian). DOI: 10.55512/WMO639928.

About the author: WALRAVENS Hartmut, Dr. habil., Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Freie Universität (Berlin, Germany) (hwalravens@gmx.net).

© Hartmut Walravens, 2024

The book under review is a collection of essays, published before individually but now revised, which the authoress dedicated to the biography of her late father Shen Zhongzhang 沈仲章 (1905–1987). In the preface and postface, she details the genesis of this book and describes the difficulties she had to cope with in the course of her efforts to present a *documented* portrait of her father. The first obstacle was already to label or classify Shen Zhongzhang — was he a musicologist (in the footsteps of his teacher Liu Tianhua), a linguist, a cultural manager, a scholar, a useful assistant to others, an administrator (e.g., for the explorer Sven Hedin)? He took many jobs but lacked the ambition to get to the top — not because he felt unfit for a higher level position, but because he enjoyed doing and achieving things according to his own ideas and plans. He held the view that, as soon as

you climb the ladder and are in the limelight, you are no longer free to do what you really want, i.e., things that *count*. Usually those were other people's projects or matters that *counted* for him, not his own role in them. So, when he was asked to become the editor of an Uighur dictionary on the basis of the imperial pentaglot dictionary 御製五體清文鑒 (finished ca. 1795) he refused this honour. And he did not take over the teaching responsibilities of Liu Tianhua after the sudden death of the master — after all, he was just a student. There are more examples of this uncommon modesty or disinterest in worldly glory. Still another case of this sort is the recovery for safekeeping of the famous Juyan wooden text strips — they had been found in the Ejina area (Qarakhoto) and were deposited with Peking University: valuable documents from the Han dynasty. Shen Yaming tells the story of how these strips were saved from the Japanese occupied territory and then via Hong Kong shipped to the USA as a deposit: Shen Zhongzhang was the main actor of this deed of daring. But you will look in vain for a Wikipedia article on him or even his name mentioned in connection with the Juyan strips which are now housed at Academia Sinica in Taipei.

Small wonder then that Shen Zhongzhang did not leave many traces in archives, universities or museums. And some that did exist may not have survived the civil war and the Cultural Revolution. So, his memory was mainly kept alive in the recollections of scholars he worked with or served as an impresario or amanuensis. The main source of the present book is the memory of the authoress — her father kept telling her episodes from his life, among the other stories that parents tell their children to entertain them, and again when he was at an advanced age and may have felt that some information on the bygone events should not vanish completely. Ms. Shen recorded a number of these reminiscences and later on tried to verify facts and statements but again: there were hardly any *documents*.

Among C.C. Shen's collaborators and friends were a number of foreigners, including a few German speakers, and as the present reviewer is based in Germany, it may be appropriate to focus on these scholars. Today the best known one is Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930); Vincenz Hundhausen is less famous while the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin is a celebrity.

Vincenz Hundhausen¹ (1878–1955, he adopted the Chinese name 洪濤生 as documented by his personal seal) was a native of Grevenbroich in the German Rhineland. He studied law and established himself as a lawyer in Berlin but also cultivated the company of writers and artists. When he was asked to go to China in 1924 to take care of the Pape inheritance he expected to return to Europe after a few weeks. But he fell in love with China and re-discovered Chinese literature for himself. He remained in Peking where he acquired a lot outside the Southwestern corner of the city wall (together with Wang Yuede, librarian at Peking University, with whose help he prepared the translation of the drama *Xixiangji*),

¹ Cf. the following contributions by H. Walravens: *Vincenz Hundhausen (1887–1955). Leben und Werk des Dichters, Druckers, Verlegers, Professors, Regisseurs und Anwalts in Peking*. Mit einer Fundliste der chinesischen Texte von Lutz Bieg. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999. — 211 pp. — ISBN 3-447-04201-X (Orientalistik Bibliographien und Dokumentationen 6); *Vincenz Hundhausen (1878–1955). Das Pekinger Umfeld und die Literaturzeitschrift Die Dschunke*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000. — 203 pp. (Orientalistik Bibliographien und Dokumentationen 7); *Vincenz Hundhausen (1878–1955). Nachdichtungen, Pekinger Bühnenspiele und zeitgenössische Kritik*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000. — 183 pp. (Orientalistik Bibliographien und Dokumentationen 8); *Vincenz Hundhausen (1878–1955). Korrespondenzen 1934–1954. Briefe an Rudolf Pannwitz 1931–1954. Abbildungen und Dokumente zu Leben und Werk*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001. — 176 pp. — ISBN 3-447-04374-1.

which he dubbed 楊樹島. As he had poetic talent and was well read (and owned a splendid library of appr. 10,000 volumes) he accepted the position of teaching German language and literature at the university, succeeding Waldemar Oehlke (1879–1949) and Richard Wilhelm. He motivated his students to translate important works of Chinese literature, especially poetry and drama, for him, which he turned into polished German rhymes. For this purpose, he established a publishing house in Leipzig and Peking under the name of *Pekinger Verlag*; after the Japanese occupation, he took over the University printing shop and became a commercial printer to make a living. But he also published his own works, some of them printed and bound with great finesse. He also commemorated the jubilees of famous writers (Goethe 1932, Spinoza 1932, Wieland 1933, Schiller 1934, W. von Humboldt 1935, Platen 1936, Horace 1936) in festschriften as supplements to the daily *Deutsch-Chinesische Nachrichten* (Tianjin). It should also be noted that, together with the journalist Erich Wilberg, he published a monthly German literature journal under the title of *Die Dschunke* (63 issues, 1940–1945). While most Germans were repatriated in 1947 as “enemy aliens”, Hundhausen was allowed to stay on to teach German at a school for interpreters. Then, in 1954, he was suddenly forced by the authorities to leave — this broke his heart, and within one year he passed away. Currently, his rich book collection is probably housed at the University Library.

Around 1932, Hundhausen (jocularly nicknamed 狗房子 in the German community), played with the idea of establishing his own theatre company (Pekinger Bühnenspiele); especially the performance of *Die beiden Gattinnen* won him much praise in the media, even by Sinologists like Hellmut Wilhelm 衛德明 (1905–1990). In 1936, he took the theatre troupe to Europe and gave performances in various places like Vienna, Zurich and Berlin. Hundhausen himself could not attend and supervise the Berlin event; as an adamant adversary of the Nazi regime he was not allowed to enter the country. The star actress Rosa Jung received an offer from the Ufa movie company, and, without her and Hundhausen, the group soon disbanded.

Shen Zhongzhang considered serving as an impresario for the theatre company but there were some practical obstacles in the way, and therefore the intended collaboration never happened. A pity!

Hundhausen was not, and still is not, well-known in China. The difficult historical development both in China and in Germany contributed to this situation.

Ms. Shen devotes a lengthy chapter to Richard Wilhelm 衛禮賢 (1873–1930), the well-known missionary to China, translator of Chinese philosophy and founding director of the China Institute in Frankfurt/M. Much has been written about him and he is probably the best known German Sinologist in China as he was a prolific writer and translator and a keen advocate of Chinese culture.² The authoress describes the course of her investigations of the possible connections of her father with Richard Wilhelm and his work or work plans.

² See e.g. H. Walravens: *Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930). Missionar in China und Vermittler chinesischen Geistesguts. Schriftenverzeichnis, Katalog seiner chinesischen Bibliothek und Briefe von Heinrich Hackmann und Ku Hung-ming. Mit einem Beitrag von Thomas Zimmer.* St. Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2008. — 316 pp. (Collectanea Serica) [with a comprehensive list of secondary publications] — Dokumente zur Geschichte des Frankfurter China-Instituts aus den Jahren 1930 bis 1949. *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 163/164.1998, 77–171. H. Walravens: Zur Geschichte des Chinainstituts nach Richard Wilhelm. In: *Wege und Kreuzungen der China-Kunde an der J.W. Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main.* Beiträge des Symposiums «90 Jahre Universität Frankfurt, 2004: Chinaforschung — Chinabilder — Chinabezüge» an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main vom 08. und 09. Juli 2004. (Frankfurt am Main, London) IKO (2007), 139–158.

R. Wilhelm returned to Europe in 1924 and did not visit China again afterwards. So there was no option of a personal and direct cooperation between the men. The idea of some kind of a connection was triggered by a reminiscence of C.C. Shen that the Buddhologist Alexander von Staël-Holstein (1876–1937) had suggested to him he might help “a German professor” (sometimes also “Wilhelm”) with the translation of Buddhist sutras. R. Wilhelm is not known to have been particularly interested in translating Buddhist works — his main focus were the Confucian classics and older Daoist philosophers like Zhuangzi and Liezi, and so the authoress follows Ursula Ballin’s suggestion that the “German professor” might be Erwin Rousselle³ who succeeded R. Wilhelm as director of the China Institute and who translated Buddhist sutras and wrote a monograph on Buddhist sculpture and imagery in temples. The fact that abbot Taixu visited R. Wilhelm and the China Institute, and R. Wilhelm interpreted for him does not conclusively point to any shared translation project. R. Wilhelm, however, supported Taixu’s idea of establishing an International Buddhist Research Institute which, in part, had similarities with R. Wilhelm’s previous plan of an “Orient-Institut” in Peking.⁴ A circular was sent out but nothing came of it, mainly for financial reasons. One should not forget that 1929 was the year of the world economic crisis and funding of such projects proved almost impossible. C.C. Shen’s connections with other German Buddhologists in China are not known: Friedrich Weller (1889–1980) was Research Assistant at the Sino-Indian Institute 1930–1933; Walter Liebenthal (1886–1982) joined the Institute in 1934 and switched to Peking University in 1937: both scholars were able Buddhologists and collaborators of Staël-Holstein (1877–1937), the director of the Institute. So, C.C. Shen may well have met them, even advised them, but again — there is no evidence.

The possibility that the reference “Wilhelm” might point at R. Wilhelm’s son Hellmut (1905–1990) is not probable. Hellmut went to China in 1932 and became the German manager of the newly founded *Deutschland-Institut Zhong-De xuehui* 中德學會, but resigned already in 1934 because his wife was from a Jewish family, and the Nazi regime in Germany would have withdrawn the funding from the Institute. But he continued to work for the Institute under the disguise of his Chinese name 衛德明; he worked as a journalist for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and compiled a bulky German-Chinese dictionary which was published by Hundhausen on his Poplar Island in 1945. So, he was not interested in translating Buddhist sutras.

The third scholar treated in this section by Ms. Shen in connection with her father is Sven Hedin (1865–1952). Hedin the great explorer of Central Asia⁵ does not have to be

³ H. Walravens: Erwin Rousselle (Hanau 8. April 1890–Eschenlohe/Obb. 11. Juni 1949). Notizen zu Leben und Werk. *Monumenta Serica* 41. 1993: 283–298.

⁴ See H. Walravens: Ein deutsches Forschungsinstitut in China. *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 171/172. 2002: 109–223.

⁵ For a listing of Hedin’s own works see Willy Hess: *Die Werke Sven Hedins. Versuch eines vollständigen Verzeichnisses* (= *Sven Hedin — Leben und Briefe*, Vol. I.) Stockholm, 1962. [Supplement:] Erster Nachtrag. Stockholm 1965. Secondary material is enumerated by Manfred Kleinert: *Sven Anders Hedin 1865–1952. Eine Bibliografie der Sekundärliteratur*. Eigenverlag Manfred Kleinert, Princeton, 2001.

Some papers on Hedin’s work by the present reviewer are listed here: *Ferdinand Lessing (1882–1961), Sinologe, Mongolist und Kenner des Lamaismus. Materialien zu Leben und Werk, mit dem Briefwechsel mit Sven Hedin*. Osnabrück: Zeller Verlag, 2000. 425 pp. — W.A. Unkrig (1883–1956): *Korrespondenz mit Herbert Franke und Sven Hedin. Briefwechsel über Tibet, die Mongolei und China*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003. 293 S. — ISBN 3-447-04774-7 (Asien- und Afrika-Studien der Humboldt-Universität

introduced here as he is so well known — he himself published many books as a result of his researches and an additional series of monographs presents the collected works of his collaborators, mostly Swedes and Germans. C.C. Shen did not take part in the field work of the main Fourth Expedition (Sino-Swedish Expedition, 1927–1935) but was connected with the Chinese sub-expedition of 1933–1935, which was dedicated to the exploration of future motorways and the water and irrigation systems. C.C. Shen was involved with the administration of the results of this undertaking, the listing of the collected objects, the negotiation on the loan of objects to Sweden for research purposes, etc. So, he did valuable work in the back office, so to speak. Ms. Shen investigates her father's activities in this respect and tries to sort the evidence.

As can be deduced from the survey of this section of the book, Ms. Shen has done enormous work in detecting references to her father's achievements and presenting a true picture of the life and labours of this unsung hero — C.C. Shen. As a perfect example of filial piety, his daughter deserves high praise for her indefatigable and admirable efforts to uncover sources and evaluate them.

Рецензия на книгу:

Шэнь Ямин 沈亚明.

Zhong Xing He Li Li: Shen Zhongzhang He Tade Pengyoumen

众星何历历: 沈仲章和他的朋友们 (Почему звезды такие яркие:

Шэнь Чжунчжан и его друзья). — Пекин: Чжунхуа шуцзюй, 2022. — 464 с. — ISBN 978-7-101-15834-2

Хартмут ВАЛПРАВЕНС

Государственная библиотека Берлина, Свободный университет
Берлин, Германия

Рецензия поступила в редакцию 10.04.2024.

Ключевые слова: Шэнь Чжунчжан (1905–1987) — биография, Винсенц Хундхаузен (1878–1955), Ричард Вильгельм (1873–1930), Свен Гедин (1865–1952).

zu Berlin 15) — Die Hedin-Expedition 1930–1932. Briefe Sven Hedins an seinen sinologischen Mitarbeiter Ferdinand Lessing. In: *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 173/174.2003, 227–253. — Sven Hedin and German scholars: the case of Ferdinand Lessing and W.A. Unkrig. In: *Nordic Ideology between Religion and Scholarship*. Horst Junginger, Andreas Åkerlund (eds.). Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang (2013), 193–206 (Civilizations and History 24).

РЕЦЕНЗИИ

Для цитирования: *Валравенс Х.* [Рец. на:] *Шэнь Ямин* 沈亚明. Zhong Xing He Li Li: Shen Zhongzhang He Tade Pengyoumen 众星何历历: 沈仲章和他的朋友们 (Почему звезды такие яркие: Шэнь Чжунчжан и его друзья). — Пекин: Чжунхуа шуцзюй, 2022. — 464 с. // Письменные памятники Востока. 2024. Том 21. № 4 (вып. 59). С. 141–146. DOI: 10.55512/WMO639928.

Об авторе: ВАЛПРАВЕНС Хартмут, доктор, Государственная библиотека Берлина, Свободный университет Берлина (Берлин, Германия) (hwalravens@gmx.net).