

## INTERVIEW

### SUB AEGIDE PALLAS (II): MARIÁN GÁLIK OCTOGENARIAN\*

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This is an interview with Marián Gálik before his 80th birthday on February 21, 2013 comprising mostly his life and work in the last 10 years. Most attention is devoted to his books, already published, re-published or awaiting publication both in Slovakia and abroad. The interview ends with his future plans, mostly concerned with the Bible and China in our times and in the comparison with ancient China.

#### Abbreviations:

L. Liu Yan; M.G. Marián Gálik; PRC The People Republic of China; CCP Chinese Communist Party; NGOs Non-Governmental Organisations

**Liu Yan:** In the early spring of 2012 I had the opportunity to stay and study at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, and had a wonderful possibility to meet Dr. Marián Gálik in his house and use his library for my studies concerning mainly the impact of the Bible and Christianity on modern Chinese literature and intellectual history. I used this occasion to interview him about the questions of our common interest. Approaching his 80th birthday on February 21, 2013 I put him some questions about his life and work since his 70th birthday in 2003. One of Gálik's students Mr. Radovan Škultéty published in *Asian and African Studies*, 2006, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 113 – 132 an essay entitled “Sub Aegide Pallas: Fifty Years Devoted to Literary Sinology” and before that a similar Chinese work entitled “Hanxuejia Malian Gaolike buoshi 70 sui shouchen” 汉学家马里安·高利克

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博士 70 岁寿辰 [Sinologist Dr. Marián Gálik in His Seventies], appeared in the *Hainan shifan xueyuan xuebao* 海南师范学院学报 *Bulletin of the Hainan Paedagogical Institute*, 2005, No. 3, pp. 50 – 56.<sup>1</sup>

L.Y.: Mr. Gálik, when browsing the bibliography of your works I found out that on October 19, 1956 your first essay: “Lu Sün – priateľ mládeže” [Lu Xun – a Friend of Youth] was published.<sup>2</sup> What does it have in common with the same day after 50 years?

M.G.: The first day was important for Czech Sinology. Dr. Berta Krebsová, a Lu Xun scholar and admirer visited Peking and Shaoxing 绍兴, his birthplace for the first time and participated in the international conference at Peking devoted to his life and work. It was also important for Slovak literature because one of our best poets Vladimír Reisel participated in this conference, too, probably as the first Slovak man of letters in history. October 19, 1956 is my birthday as a young “scholar” in Sinology. On that day exactly after fifty years I read a lecture “The Young Lu Xun and Ethics” at the international symposium: Law and Lawlessness in the Oeuvre of Lu Xun, organized by Professor Richard Trappl, The Institute of East Asian Studies and The Confucian Institute at the University of Vienna in the Palais Altkettenhof. One day earlier the Chinese, European and American guests, among them Prof. Wolfgang Kubin, read their papers at the Palace of Justice. During the lunch reception high above the roofs of other buildings of Vienna not far from Saint Stephan’s Cathedral I pointed to the mountains on the other side and told the present guests something which had nothing to do with our symposium but with the history of Central Europe from the end of the 17th up to now. “Do you see the mountain Kahlenberg on the Western side behind the town Klosterneuburg? On the right side of the United Armies of the Western countries on September 13, 1683 defending Vienna against the attacks of Turkish army and its allies led by Kara Mustafa Pasha was situated the heavy cavalry of the Polish king Jan Sobieski III. It attacked unexpectedly and vehemently the invaders in the midst of their main camp and won the battle, one of the most important in that century. Without this victory probably the history of the Central Europe and part of the Western Europe,

<sup>1</sup> See also Yang Zhiyi 杨治宜. “Zhongguo qingzhu wushi qiu – hanxuejia Gao Like fangtanlu” 中国庆祝 五十秋 – 汉学家高利克访谈录. [Fifty Years in Service for China – Interviewing the Sinologist Marián Gálik]. In *Guoji hanxue* 国际汉学 *International Sinology*, 2007, Vol. 15, pp. 186 – 196 and Yu Xiayun 余厦云, Liang Jiandong 梁建东. “Xianshi yu shenhua” 现实与神话 [Reality and Myth]. In Ji Jin 季进: *Ling yizhong shengyin – haiwai hanxuejia fangtanlu* 另一种声音 – 海外汉学访谈录 *Other Voices – Interviews with the Foreign Sinologists*. Shanghai: Fudan University Publishing House 2011, pp. 168 – 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Smena* (Bratislava).

would be different. And we would live under the Turkish Crescent and a great part of us would follow Islam.

L.Y.: *In your living room I found a few copies of a small booklet in Slovak which I cannot read, but on its cover there are the Chinese characters Ren bi huang hua shou 人比黄花瘦 [I grow more frail than frailest chrysanthemum]. It is the last verse of one of the most beautiful poems by the woman poet Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084 – 1151). On the basis of the transcriptions of the names I observed that all poems were written by women and all the illustrations had been made by a famous decadent painter and poet Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470 – 1523). Does this booklet also have its own story?*

M.G.: Yes, and quite a long one. I studied in China in the years 1958 – 1960 during the infamous campaign against the so-called Rightists, intellectuals who did not always want to follow Mao Zedong's line, or were innocently condemned as such, and suffered as the victims of the *laodong gaizao* (reform through manual labour) and the so-called *da yuejin* Great Leap Forward which ended in great famine and the death of millions of Chinese people. Especially on the Dongan shichang 东安市场 Bazaar of Eastern Peace on Wangfujing Avenue I bought some books written from 1916 to the beginning of the 1930's, read them during my free time and translated some of the poems into Slovak. I liked the books especially by Liang Yizhen 梁乙真,<sup>3</sup> Tao Qiuying 陶秋英<sup>4</sup> and Tan Zhengbi 谭正璧.<sup>5</sup> I liked Tan Zhengbi most of all. I was enthralled by the beauty, the images of mutual love, sensibility and sincerity of this poetry which seemed to be just the opposite of nearly everything I had seen around me in the China of those years. Returning back to my country I took the books and other materials with me and during the worst months in my life when serving in the army during the Cuban crisis in 1961, I read them once again and wrote an epilogue to the book. I was not successful with Maša Hal'amová (1908 – 1995), one of the most talented Slovak women poets. She took the manuscript, kept it for two years, but did not write one verse anew. Then another friend took the manuscript with him, probably read it, but put it aside and only at the end of the 1980's "rediscovered" it in his garage. The book appeared after thirty years translated by the prominent women poet and literary scholar Dr. Viera Prokešová (1957 – 2008).<sup>6</sup> In my living room you have seen its second edition

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<sup>3</sup> *Zhongguo funü wenxue shigang* [An Outline of the History of Chinese Women's Literature]. Shanghai, 1931.

<sup>4</sup> *Zhongguo funü yǐ wenxue* [Chinese Women and Literature]. Shanghai, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> *Zhongguo nüxing de wenxue shenghuo* [Literary Life of Chinese Women]. Peking, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> *Krehkejšie ako chryzantémy* [More Frail than a Chrysanthemum]. Bratislava, 1992.

from the year 2006. As for Tang Yin, my grand daughter Barbara loves paintings of women by this excellent artist and poet. Therefore I selected some of them for this book.

L.Y.: *In your library I have seen a few copies of a collection of papers entitled Decadence [Fin de Siècle] in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation with its Chinese title Zhongxi tuifeizhuyi wenxue yanjiu 中西颓废主义文学研究. Why precisely this title? In China we often regard tuifei decadent, or decadence, as having negative connotation of something not good, or it is regarded as depraved and even abhorrent.*

M.G.: Not depraved or abhorrent, for me it is first of all beautiful. I was afraid to use this term before my post-maodunian period after 1969.<sup>7</sup> Literary Decadence is not similar to the political or just historical decadence, as depicted, for instance in the last chapters of Edward Gibbon's classic *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*<sup>8</sup> or before the end of the political and economic systems in Eastern Europe and the northern part of Asia before 1991. This book stood at the end of my long interest in the literature of Decadence since my work on Yu Dafu's short stories and his literary and critical ideas in 1970s. My essay was entitled "Yu Ta-fu and Panaesthetic Criticism", but "panaesthetic" may be understood as "decadent" now. At that time Decadence or decadent were taboo terms. Later in the 1970's in my essay on Feng Naichao (1901 – 1983) I used the word "symbolic", but this could also be defined as "decadent" when, in the collection of his poems *Hong sha deng* [Red Gauze Lantern], he presents singing of "Holy Night Holy Night/All is calm All is bright" against the background of evening streets as black as sediments of ink and has Saint Mary praying to God that His Son should close his eyes and sleep forever. The political situation after 1979 became more liberal, and I learnt a lot especially from the classical book of European Decadence by Mario Praz *The Romantic Agony* (1970), Jean Pierrot's *The Decadent Imagination* (1981), presented to me by Professor Leo Ou-fan Lee 李欧梵 during my lecture journey in the United States in 1990, and Xie Zhixi's 解志熙 *Mei de pianzhi. Zhongguo xiandai weimei-tuifeizhuyi wenxue sichao yanjiu* 美的偏至。中国现代唯美-颓废主义文学思想研究 [Slanting Beauty. Research into the Contemporary Chinese Aesthetico-Decadent Literature], 1997. For some years I have tried to organize an international conference concerned with the Sino-European literary

<sup>7</sup> *Mao Tun and Modern Chinese Literary Criticism*. Wiesbaden, 1969.

<sup>8</sup> I have in mind the shortened English version published by Hainan Publishing House in 2001.

Decadence, but I did not succeed in persuading the partners abroad in Europe to do it. Probably Venice would be the best. As often, money was the problem. In the end Richard Trappl helped me. In 1999 the American Association of Chinese Studies in collaboration with the University of Vienna organized a conference in Vienna and in Salzburg, and Trappl with a subvention from the authorities of Universities of Vienna agreed that the first morning of the conference on June 9 would be held in the main building of the University with the magnificent paintings by Gustav Klimt. A better place for it could not be found in the whole world. Chinese friends were invited, too. Professor Yue Daiyun 乐黛云 promised to come, she sent a paper, but she did not come, because she did not receive financial help from her University. Her contribution “*Fin-de-siècle* Decadence in China: Shao Xunmei, a Decadent Poet in China” appeared later in her book *Comparative Literature and China – Overseas Lectures by Yue Daiyun* (2004).<sup>9</sup> The proceedings of this symposium appeared in 2005 with the kind support of the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for the International Scholarly Exchange, Taipei, 2005.

L.Y.: *I wonder why you use the word “confrontation” in the titles of your books. Before it was in the well-known and often used and cited in China: Milestones in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation (1898 – 1979)? The translators of this book into Chinese, Wu Xiaoming 伍晓明 and Zhang Wending 张文定, used the Chinese word guanxi 关系 relations instead. Why?*

M.G.: I do not know. Relations or *guanxi* was more often used for this kind of comparative studies at that time and earlier. *Vzaimosvrazi* (mutual relations) and *vzaimodeistvie* (mutual impact) were the most typical for the early Soviet comparative literary theory and, maybe, these had some influence on China, too. “The study of relationships” is, of course, mentioned in the best known American definition of comparative literature by H. H. H. Remak from the year 1961. I took this term from the Hungarian comparatist István Söter entitled “Of the Comparatist Method”, *Neohelicon*, 1974, Vol. 2, No. 1 – 2, p. 9. It is a kind of confrontation between two or more single literatures, very different from the armies of Kara Mustafa and Jan Sobieski mentioned above. Confrontation in literatures evokes more activity than mutual relations. It always gives something to the target literature, or takes something from the source literature. The Chinese translation of my *Milestones* appeared in 1990. In 2007 an essay written by Wang Wei 王伟<sup>10</sup> appeared and in 2009 by Peng Song 彭松<sup>11</sup> where

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<sup>9</sup> No year of publication is given.

<sup>10</sup> Wang Wei. “‘Duikangxing’ yu wenxue jiechu de zongji – Gao Like guanyu xiandai Zhongguo wexue guowai yinsu ji qi zhuanhua de lunshu,” 对抗性与文学接触的踪迹

*duikang* 对抗 contradiction, *jiechu de zongji* 接触的踪迹 traces of contact, or *jiaorong* 交融 blending are more exact renditions of the idea I had in mind. It took a long time to understand the meaning of influence in comparative literature. At first the source literatures were considered to be more important. It was common in the French School of comparative literature. Later in the American School the outcome of influence in the target literature was stressed, but it has been clearly shown in the Central and Eastern European theory, for instance, in the literary critical essays by Slovak theoreticians Dionýz Ďurišin (1929 – 1996) in the creative and by Anton Popovič (1933 – 1984) in translated literature.

L.Y.: *As far as I know your book on the Sino-Western literary Decadence was not translated into, or at least not published in China. Can you give me a copy and I shall find the colleagues, mostly from my students, to translate it into Chinese? It is the first of its kind devoted to the comparative study of this problem in world literary research. I wonder whether it is known in China.*

M.G.: I presented this book to some outstanding Chinese scholars and to the greatest libraries, including the Chinese National Library, Peking University Library, Shanghai Library, to mention just a few. The translation into Chinese is a problem now. In 2008 my introductory study entitled “Decadence (Fin de siècle) in Sino-Western Literary Confrontation and the Vienna Symposium of 1999” was translated.<sup>12</sup> Later I authorized one translator with all rights according to the international and PRC laws with the rendition of all essays of this book but I do not have a response up to now. Since that time one year has passed, I present a copy to you. What would be the best, I do not now. Probably I should wait for more years.

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– 高利克关于现代中国文学国外因素及其转化的论述 – [“‘Contradiction’ and the Traces of Contact – Marián Gálík on the Modern Chinese Literature and its Changes after Meeting with Foreign Literatures”]. In *Shanxi daxue xuebao* 山西大学学报 *Journal of Shanxi University*, 2007, No. 1, pp. 121 – 124.

<sup>11</sup> Peng Song. “Duikang yu jiaorong zhongde zhongxi guanxi – Lun Gao Like de Zhongguoxiandai wenxue yanjiu” 对抗与交融中的中西关系 – 论高利克的中国现代文学研究 [Contradictions and Blendings in the Sino-Western Relations – On Marián Gálík’s Studies of Modern Chinese Literature]. In *Lanzhou xuekan* 兰州学刊 *Lanzhou Academic Journal*, 2009, Issue 3, pp. 200 – 203.

<sup>12</sup> It appeared in Chinese as “Zhongxi wenxue duizhi zhongde tuifeizhuyi” 中西文学对峙中的颓废主义. In *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congkan* 中国现代文学研究丛刊 *Modern Chinese Literature Studies*, 2009, No. 1, pp. 189 – 201. *Duizhi* 对峙 is also a convenient term for “confrontation.”

L.Y.: In 2004 your third most important book was published: *Influence, Translation and Parallels: Selected Studies on the Bible in China*.<sup>13</sup> It was the first of its kind written by a European scholar. It is almost unknown in China. The whole book, except one essay, was translated into Chinese in 2009, but is still awaiting publication. Since about the 1980s there has been a Christianity-Fieber in the PRC and the Bible is its most canonical work. The Bible is also a great work of World Literature and the most influential book in the history of Western civilization. The Chinese readers need to know more about it and also about its impact on Chinese literature and culture in the last and this century. Since 1995<sup>14</sup> Chinese literary scholars have devoted a lot of attention to this impact but their books are more historical and they usually do not try to deeply analyse the influence of the Bible on individual works from the comparative point of view. None of them have more than 70 years of experience of reading the Bible like you. I hope that the book will appear soon.

M.G.: Me, too. I started to devote my attention to the Bible in modern Chinese literature in the summer of 1989. It was after reading the literary “triptych” by Wang Meng 王蒙 (\*1934) Yexin 沙叶新 (\*1939) *Yesu, Kongzi, bitoushi Lienong* 耶稣, 孔子, 彼头士列侬 [Jesus, Confucius and John Lennon] before the revolutionary changes in Central Europe in November – December of the same year. The first essay was read as a paper at the conference “Contemporary Chinese Fiction and Its Literary Antecedents” which took place at the John King Fairbank Center for East Asian Research on May 11 – 13, 1990.<sup>15</sup> The whole book with seventeen essays was presented at the XXVIIIth German Conference of Orientalists on March 26, 2001, at Bamberg (Germany), in the panel Research on Christianity in China presided over by Professor Roman Malek, Director of the Monumenta Serica Institute. After publication it was very well received by at least twelve researchers. Only two of them had critical remarks: Chloë Starr in *The China Review International*, 2005, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 103 – 106 who rightly pointed out that the theological aspects of the impact were not discussed, and Chen-chen Tseng in *Hanxue yanjiu* 汉学研究 *Chinese Studies* (Taipei), 2005, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 515 – 519 who likewise was not happy that only small attention in the book was devoted to the literary

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<sup>13</sup> It appeared in the series “Collectanea serica” in the Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute.

<sup>14</sup> The first book analysing the influence of the Bible on modern Chinese literature has been written by Ma Jia.

<sup>15</sup> My paper “Wang Meng’s Mythopoeic Vision of Golgotha und *Apocalypse*”. In *Annali (Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli)*, 1992, Vol. 52, No. 1, pp. 61 – 82 and even before in rendition by Raoul D. Findeisen as “Mythopoetische Vision von Golgotha und Apokalypse,”. In *Minima sinica* (Bonn), 1991, No. 2, pp. 52 – 82.

reception of the Bible in modern Taiwanese literature. To the first I have to say that I am not a theologian and to the second I did not have enough Taiwanese material at my disposal when writing it. Probably the most careful reader of my book, Professor Irene Eber of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in her “Introduction” wrote the following: “In this volume, Marián Gálik reviewed most, if not all, the Chinese works published on the subject of the Bible and the Chinese Literature between 1921 and 1999. This work therefore truly closes the 20th century. Yet, we should like to believe that it also opens the 21st century, when the Bible, in Gálik’s vision and in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, will become “the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 17:13).”

L.Y.: *After the spiritual devastation during the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976) and before, at least nine books on the Bible and modern Chinese literature in the PRC were published in China from 1995 up to the beginning of 2003 – your 70th birthday year.*<sup>16</sup> *Since then less has been written about the reception of the Bible in modern Chinese literature,*<sup>17</sup> *but more on the*

<sup>16</sup> Apart from the book by Ma Jia mentioned above, Yang Jianlong’s 杨剑龙. *Kuangye de husheng. Zhongguo xiandai zuojia yu jidujiao wenhua* 旷野的呼声。中国现代作家与基督教文化 [Crying in the Wilderness. Modern Chinese Writers and Christian Culture]. Shanghai: Shanghai Paedagogical Publishing House, 1998; Wang Benchao 王本朝. *20shiji Zhongguo wenxue yu jidujiao wenhua* 20 世纪中国文学与基督教文化 [Twentieth Century Chinese Literature and Christian Culture]. Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe 1998, 2nd Ed., 2000; Liu Yong 刘勇. *Zhongguo xiandai zuojia de zongjiao wenhua qingjie* 中国现代作家的宗教文化情结 [The Religious and Cultural Condition in China and Modern Writers]. Peking: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 1998; Wang Xuefu 王学富. *Miwu shensuo de luzhou* 迷雾深锁的绿洲 [Enchanting and Hidden Oasis]. Singapore: Da dianzi chubanshe, n.d.; Wang Lieyao 王列耀. *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo xiandai wenxue* 基督教与中国现代文学 [Christianity and Modern Chinese Literature]. Guangzhou: Jinan daxue chubanshe, 1998 and *Jidujiao wenhua yu Zhongguo xiandai xiju de beiju yishi* 基督教文化与中国现代戏剧的悲剧意识 [Christian Culture and Tragic Consciousness in Modern Drama]. Shanghai: Sanlaim shudian, 2002; Song Jianhua 宋剑华. *Jidu jingshen yu Cao Yu xiju* 基督精神与曹禺戏剧 [Christian Spirit and Cao Yu’s Dramas]. Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2000 and Xu Zhenglin 许正林. *Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yu jidujiao* 中国现代文学与基督教 [Modern Chinese Literature and Christianity]. Shanghai: Shanghai daxue chubanshe, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Yang Jianlun (ed.) *Wenxue de luzhou* 文学的绿洲 – 中国现代文学与基督教文化 *The Oasis of Literature – Modern Chinese Literature and Christian Culture*. Hong Kong: Xuesheng fuyin tuanqi chubanshe 2006, Chen Weihua 陈伟华: *Jidujiao wenhua yu Zhongguo xiaoshuo xushi xinshi* 基督教文化与中国小说叙事新质 *New Quality of Narrative of Chinese Fiction and Christian Culture*, Peking: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 2007. Liu Lixia 刘丽霞: *Zhongguo jidujiao wenxuede lishi cunzai* 中国基督教文学的历史存在 *Historical Existence of Chinese Christian Literature*. Peking: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 2006.



contemporary situation.<sup>18</sup> It is a very promising development. The Bible and many works of great Western writers written under the biblical impact have been translated into Chinese. Especially since the 1990s books have appeared where these writings are analysed and their scholarly standard is higher than earlier, although it is often still not quite satisfactory. Some of them are more or less quotations or adaptations/paraphrases of foreign researches.

M.G.: I welcome the new wave of *lingxing wenxue* spiritual literature highlighted by Professor Yang Jianlong and Dr. Shi Wei 施玮. This is (maybe I am wrong) a new term. I did not find it in the big *Hanying da cidian* 汉英大辞典, Shanghai: Jiaotong daxue chubanshe, 6th edition, 1997. It is good that it is, maybe, not directly connected with another attempt by Professors Yang Huilin 杨慧林, Liu Xiaofeng 刘小枫 and Liang Gong 梁共 trying to study translations of the classics *jingdian fanyi* 经典翻译 and scriptural reasoning *biandu* 辨读<sup>19</sup> and scriptural reading *jiedu* 解读. At the IXth and Xth Congresses of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association in Peking (1908) and Shanghai (2011) the topic of religion and literature was on the programme. Each congress had about thirty papers about literature and different religions. I wrote a positive review about the Seventh Summer Institute, 2011 and the Xth Congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association in a short essay published in Peking.<sup>20</sup> China needs to return to the old values from its past and also to establish a communication with the values, not only religious, but also philosophical, ethical, aesthetic and other, coming from abroad.

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<sup>18</sup> Yang Jianlun (ed.) *Linghun zhengjiu yu lingxing wenxue* 灵魂拯救与灵性文学 [Delivery of Soul and Spiritual Literature]. Singapore: The Youth Book Co., 2009; Ji Fen 季玢. *Yedi lide baihehua. Lun xin shiqi yilai de zhongguo jidujiao wenxue* 野地里的百合花. 论新时期以来的中国基督教文学 [The Lilies on the Waste Ground. Recent Chinese Christian Literature]. Peking: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2010; Shi Wei 施玮 (ed.) *Lingxing wenxue congshu* 灵性文学丛书 [Series in Spiritual Literature]. Peking: Zhongguo guangbo dianshe chubanshe, 2008 – .

<sup>19</sup> One good example may be The Seventh Summer Institute, August 3 – 7, 2011, Renmin University, Peking having as its topic: *Jingdian fanyi yu jingwen biandu* 经典翻译与经文辨读 Translating the Classics and Scriptural Reasoning. Professor Liang Gong and his colleagues started with the *Shengjing wenhua jiedu shuxi* 圣经文化解读书系 [Series of Books on the Scriptural Reading of Biblical Culture] with the first one: *Shengjing jiedu* 圣经解读 [Scriptural Reading of the Bible]. Peking: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003. Up to 2007 five other volumes of this series appeared.

<sup>20</sup> 高利克. “Zhongguo bijiao wenxue de liang ci ‘huigui’” 中国比较文学的两次“回归” Two Returns in the Chinese Comparative Literature Association. In *Zhonghua dushubao* 中华读书报 *China Reading Weekly*, 2011, September 28, p. 10.

L.Y.: In 2008 together with your student Professor Martin Slobodník, you organized two conferences: one on modern Chinese literature and culture at the beginning of the twenty first century and the other on the three Abrahamic religions: Eastern Christianity, Judaism and Islam between the deaths of Muhammad (632) and Tamerlane (1405). Probably all Chinese participants would like to join me in expressing the deep thanks for their invitation to join the first one. It is very rare, and maybe it never happened up to now in a Western country that one third of the participants was of Chinese origin: from the PRC, Macao and Taiwan. As to the second one, it was a contribution to the ecumenical efforts by the Christian Churches which began in 1960s, but the tempo is slow and success meagre. It seems that the responsible people of world politics forgot September 11, 2001. I suppose that it is necessary to emphasize the credit of this undertaking: much interest has been devoted to the Oriental Christian Churches in Asia and Africa, where in many places, with the exception of small enclaves, this Christianity practically ceased to exist.

M.G.: In my 75th year I wanted to meet my old Sinological friends for the last time as an organizer of a conference concerned with Chinese literature and partly also culture. More of them were invited and nearly thirty accepted the invitation. Among them some well-known scholars like Yue Daiyun, her husband Tang Yijie 汤一介, Yan Jiayan 严家炎, Xie Tianzhen 谢天振, Yang Jianlong, Zhu Shoutong 朱寿桐, Chen Peng-hsiang 陈鹏翔, Mabel Lee, Raoul D. Findeisen, Richard Trappl, Ylva Monschein and some younger like Li Ling 李玲, Ye Rong 叶蓉, Lili Yariv-Laor, Amira Katz-Goehr, Fredrik Fällman, David Uher and Jana Benická. The title of the conference was taken from Confucius' *Lunyu* 论语 [*The Analects*]: *yi wen hui you, yi you fu ren* 以文会友, 以友辅仁 [Sharing Culture and Strengthening Humanity with the Help of Friends]. It was held from April 10 – 14, 2008, three days in Bratislava and two days in Vienna. Where literature is concerned Yue Daiyun presented a new view of the humanistic concept of comparative literature in the 21st century, Tang Yijie about the necessity to know better the Chinese philosophy for the Western scholars, but also to translate more of the Western classics into Chinese. Zhu Shoutong spoke about his concept of new literature in the Chinese language which was elaborated by more than fifty colleagues later.<sup>21</sup> Three papers by Findeisen, Fällman and a young Italian Sinologist Monica Romano were connected with the Bible or Christianity. The proceedings of the conference should appear in 2013. Another conference held from June 25 – 28,

<sup>21</sup> ZHU Shoutong et alii. *Hanyu xin wenxue tongshi* 汉语新文学通史 [A Comprehensive History of the New Literature in the Chinese Language]. 2 vols. Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2010.

2008 at Dolná Krupá (Korompa) Castle, Slovakia, was co-organized by the Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences (Bratislava) and the Department of East Asian Studies, Comenius University (Bratislava).<sup>22</sup> More than 20 participants from eight countries took part in the conference, including Professor Liang Hui 梁慧 from Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, Professor Samuel N.C. Lieu from the Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia and Professor Lauren F. Pfister, Hong Kong Baptist University.

L.Y.: *In 2008 the second printing of your Milestones appeared at the Peking University Press. Was it meant as a present for your 75th birthday? Or was it a demand of the book market for a new edition due to the fact that the Milestones together with the Genesis are among the books recommended as reading by the Ministry of Education of the PRC, as well as of many universities, for the students and PhD candidates of Chinese literature and comparative literature?*

M.G.: Probably both these facts were behind the second printing of this book. In addition, two participants in the Bratislava – Vienna conference: Professor Yue Daiyun and Mr. Zhang Wending had personal interests in it being republished. Yue Daiyun was the first to read it among the influential Chinese scholars and Zhang Wending was one of its translators, as already mentioned. Zhang Wending was also the main initiator of a small symposium on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of my beginning of the study at Peking University, my second Alma mater. It was after the IXth Congress of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association, Peking University of Literature and Culture, on October 16, 2008. The symposium was held in the villa of the Chancellor of Peking University, in the Linhuxuan 临湖轩 near the lake Weiming hu 未名湖, in the presence of professors from different Universities and his old friends. The scholars present including Yan Jiayan, Sun Yushi 孙玉石, Xie Tianzhen, Chen Yuehong 陈跃红, Yan Chunde 阎纯德, Xie Zhixi, Dr. Hu Shuangbao 胡双宝, my friend from student years, Mr. Shu Yi 舒乙, Lao She's son, Zhang Wending, Mrs. Zhang Bing 张冰, Editor-in-chief of the Foreign Department of the Peking University Press and Mr. Wang Yong 王勇 representing the Office of International Relations, spoke about their relations to me, my work in the field of Chinese and comparative literature, and about my

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<sup>22</sup> GÁLIK, M., SLOBODNÍK, M. *Eastern Christianity, Judaism and Islam between the Death of Muhammad and Tamerlane (632 – 1405)*. Bratislava: Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences.

cooperation with the former Office for the Foreign Students in 1958 – 1960 during my studies at Peking University.<sup>23</sup>

L.Y.: *In the last few years we in China are living in a foreign Sinology-Fieber. There are some specialized journals connected with it from Hanxue yanjiu 汉学研究 Sinological Studies, Guoji hanxue 国际汉学, Shijie hanxue 世界汉学 World Sinology, Guoji hanxue yanjiu tongxin 國際漢學研究通信 Newsletter for International China Studies. How did you come to the idea to write a book Jieke he Siluofake de hanxue yanjiu 捷克和斯洛伐克的汉学研究 [Studies in Czech and Slovak Sinology]?<sup>24</sup>*

M.G.: My book on Czech and Slovak Sinology was more compiled than written in the last years. Professor Yan Chunde, Editor-in-Chief of the *Lieguo hanxue shi shuxi* 列国汉学史书系 Sinological History Series, often met my colleague Dr. Anna Doležalová (1935 – 1992) during her stay at Peking in the 1980's and she informed him about Slovak Sinology. Much more was written about Czech Sinology in the 1990s and at the beginning of the present century. I became acquainted with Professor Yan Chunde through his young colleague Professor Li Ling, who translated some of my works into Chinese. Professor Yan was not the first person who tried to persuade me to compile a book on Czech and Slovak Sinology. Before him, in the 1990s Professor Yue Daiyun did the same for the series *Zhongguo wenxue zai guowai congshu* 中国文学在国外丛书 [Chinese Literature Abroad]. Yue Daiyun's idea was to write a volume on Chinese literature in the North and East European countries apart from Russia and the Soviet Union. It was an exceptionally heavy task and I declined to do it. To follow Professor Yan Chunde was a much easier job, but there was one special condition: the book should contain a relatively long study on the Prague School of Sinology. I agreed to follow his inner desire and at the beginning of 2008 I wrote "Preliminary Remarks on the Prague School of Sinology" which Professor Yan, for obvious reasons, changed into the "Prague School of

<sup>23</sup> "Bange shiji de zhuiyi – Gao Like jiaoshou liuxue Beida wushi zhounian zuotanhui" 半个世纪的追忆 – 高利克教授留学北大五十周年座谈会 [Fifty Years of Reminiscences] – A Symposium on the Occasion of Fifty Years of Studies of Professor Marián Gálík at Peking University. Available at <http://www.oir.pku.edu.cn/Item/396.aspx>. See also GALÍK, M. "Zai Beida yanjiu Mao Dun" 在北大研究茅盾 [Mao Dun's Studies at Peking University]. In Lin Jianhua 林建华 (ed.) *Hong lou fei xue* 红楼飞雪 [Flying Snow around the Red Tower]. Peking: Peking University Press, 2008, pp. 205 – 209; He Chenlu 何晨璐 and Lin Baixue 林百学 (eds.) "Yi fen qing, liang dai lü" 一份情, 两代绿 [One Sentiment, Two Fates]. In *Yanyuan liuyun* 燕园流云 [Flowing Clouds Over the Swallow Garden]. Peking: Peking University Press, 2010, pp. 28 – 31.

<sup>24</sup> Peking: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2009.

Sinology” in the published book. I suppose that my research is really not satisfactory and it should be done more deeply in a monograph devoted to this important phenomenon in twentieth century Sinology. It took half a century (from the end of 1958 – to the end of August 2008) to collect the materials for this book and to write and translate it into Chinese. I am aware of its inadequacies and I suppose that the history of Chinese, Czech and Slovak relations should be written in the future in its complexities and in a more perfect way. Apart from Professor Yan Chunde, Li Ling, I am very much indebted to the translators into Chinese of those fifteen essays collected in this book. Most of all I would like to thank Dr. Li Yan 李燕, now in Seoul, who has done most of all for its translation and editing.

L.Y.: *What do you mean under the inadequacies of this book? Is it, for instance, that according to the evaluation of Professor Yan, it is a “Sinological history of one man”,<sup>25</sup> namely Marián Gálík?*

M.G.: There are quite a few. You mentioned one of them. Too much in the book is what I enjoy most of all in its history. Every reader may observe that much place is devoted to the literary work of the famous Czech decadent writer Julius Zeyer (1841 – 1901), who was a forerunner of Czech Sinology and an author of excellent *chinoiseries*. I regard myself as being a lover of his literary Decadence also not satisfactorily analysed up to now. Průšek’s studies on ancient literature, medieval popular literature, folklore and the literature of the Qing period,<sup>26</sup> *huaben* 话本<sup>27</sup> are only mentioned in my book, or very little evaluated. His most problematic work *Literatura osvobozené Číny a její lidové tradice* [Literature of the Liberated Areas of China and their Folklore Traditions], Prague, Academia 1970, is not even named in it. Relatively little is to be found there about Chinese linguistics and nothing about Chinese art. It is a pity that I did not find enough time to write about the reception of Lu Xun’s and Ba Jin’s 巴金 (1904 – 2005) works in Czechoslovakia.<sup>28</sup> Among the Chinese intellectuals three men were dear to me: Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896 – 1981), Ye

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<sup>25</sup> YAN Chunde. “Gao Like yu ‘Jieke he Siluofake de hanxue yanjiu’” 高利克与“捷克和斯洛伐克的汉学研究” [Marián Gálík and “Studies in Czech and Slovak Sinology”], *op. cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>26</sup> PRŮŠEK, J. *Chinese History and Literature*. Prague: Academia, 1970.

<sup>27</sup> *The Origins and the Authors of the hua-pen*. Prague: Academia, 1967.

<sup>28</sup> On Lu Xun’s translations and the essays about him I published recently “Lu Xun zai Boximiya he Siluofake.” 鲁迅在波西米亚和斯洛伐克 [Lu Xun in Bohemia and Slovakia]. In ZHOU Lingfei 周玲飞 (ed.) *Lu Xun shehui yingxiang tiaocha baogao* 鲁迅社会影响调查报告 [Investigation Report on the Social Impact of Lu Xun]. Peking: People’s Daily Publishing House, 2011, pp. 307 – 319.

Ziming 叶子明 (1935 – 2005), Gu Cheng 顾城 (1956 – 1993) and his wife Xie Ye 谢烨 (1958 – 1993). In my book there are three essays about our common interests or friendship.

L.Y.: *In the years 2010 and 2011 you participated in two conferences which presented something new in Chinese relations with foreign countries: at the First EU-China High Level Cultural Forum, October 6 – 7, 2010 and at the First Conference of the World Cultural Forum in Suzhou on Taihu 太湖 Lake, May 18 – 19, 2011. Could you describe your impressions from both forums? At the first you were the only Sinologist from the EU and at the second, one among five Sinologists from Central and Western Europe. Apart from you, there was no Sinologist present from the regions between Prague and Vladivostok.*

M.G.: The first of them was organized on the occasion of the 13th EU-China Summit probably on the initiative of the French-Italian Transcultural International Institute and its Chinese counterpart. Its aim was “to bring together key researchers and theorists – both European and Chinese – to engage in cross-cultural reflection as to what might provide the foundation for an alliance between the European and Chinese civilizations”. From the correspondence which the foreign participants, including me, received, and from the changes in the lists of the delegates, it was clear, that in the last stage of preparation, the Chinese Ministry of Culture exerted its influence. The outcome was that the preference was given to the political scientists. Some of the scholars like Umberto Eco, Julia Kristeva and Qiu Xigui 裘锡圭 were the best the EU and China have got, some not, or they were only political propagandists. Politics was not mentioned as a topic of the forum. From four main themes of the forum: globalization, modernities, worldviews and problems of beauty mostly in the fine arts, the organizers asked me to write about the last one, although it had never been the subject of my research. I do not know why. Probably it was because that they knew about my interest in literary Decadence. The time for preparation of the conference was too short. The proceedings of the forum were not published since most of the Chinese participants did not present their contributions in written form. The organizers even had an idea to conceive this forum as a “Cultural Davos”! It was probably too high an ambition. Davos is concerned with the whole world and the EU-China partners are only part of it. The 2nd EU-China High Level Cultural Forum held in Peking on October 22 – 24, 2011 had its topic: “Inventing Cities” with Rem Koolhaas, the well-known Dutch architect as the general key speaker. He is most important for China. It was an improvement in comparison with the first one in Brussels since it had only one topic, but on the other hand, the range of EU representatives was more restricted. Apart from one delegate from Poland,

nobody was invited to participate from Central Europe. One young Greek composer was there probably because of the situation in the present European Commission. Otherwise fourteen scholars or VIPs from Western Europe or having their origin there were present. At least seven West European guests were invited for discussions. Central Europe has Prague, Vienna and Budapest, and certainly has got scholars who could also participate. Are the Central Europeans human beings of the second category within EU, or their Cities not worthy of attention? It is necessary to stress that not even one Sinologist from the EU was invited! Should it mean that the Sinologists do not understand Chinese problems? The First Conference of the World Cultural Forum, Taihu, Suzhou, had the same ambition: to become a “Cultural Davos” of mammoth dimensions. Originally more than a thousand participants were announced to participate from the whole world. At the end hardly one third from those more than one thousand were present! The theme of the conference: “Dialogue and Cooperation for World Harmony and Common Development,” put the stress mostly on culture, its historical background, philosophical, religious and ethical problems. One can say that much attention was paid to economics, which is a part of culture, but in China it is more highlighted than in other parts of the world. Politics was not on the programme of the World Cultural Forum, but the VIPs of the CCP and PRC Government, Army and Navy were present as the Honorary Chairmen and the Senior Consultants. All-China politics was clearly demonstrated and Suzhou economic interests could be observed to every participant. The cultural dialogue and cooperation became problematic at the forum where not even one foreign writer, artist, filmmaker or architect was present. The same could be said about the Chinese men of culture. No Chinese writer or artist, only relatively many nomenclatura cadres of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles could be found on the list or among the audience. On the other hand, the guests included the representatives of the Security Bureau, Suzhou Railway Station and Militia Headquarters. Although the stress was put on the NGO’s role, operational strategies in different contemporary societies and cultures, the First World Cultural Forum was “over-politicized”. Culture, whether Chinese or foreign, was not taken into account as it would deserve. Especially the American contribution was neglected. No American Sinologist was present in spite of the fact the American Sinology is the best in the contemporary world. I wrote about this forum elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Without eliminating the shortcomings just mentioned, the Taihu Cultural Forum will never become a “Cultural Davos”.

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<sup>29</sup> GÁLIK, M. “Quo Vadis Cultura Sinica?: Some Remarks on the First World Cultural Conference, Suzhou, May 18 – 19, 2011.” In *Asian and African Studies*, New Series, 2011, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 289 – 297.

L.Y.: *In the Chinese journals I read that in 2003, shortly after your 70th birthday you were decorated with the Prize of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and two years later in 2005 with the “Alexander of Humboldt Nobel Prize”. In China the Nobel Prize is the highest one human being in some branches of scholarship may achieve and all Chinese intellectuals strive for it. With two exceptions they did not succeed. I never heard about one literary scholar who was decorated with the “Alexander von Humboldt Nobel Prize” like you.*

M.G.: I was never decorated with the “Alexander von Humboldt Nobel Prize”, since it does not and cannot exist. It was a misunderstanding. In September 2006 I lectured in Guangzhou about the reception of biblical motifs in the modern Chinese poetry and one high personality from the University introduced me in the lecture hall to many students, and at its end he mentioned that I am a laureate to this non-existing prize (smile). I do not think that he was a Sinologist. His welcome talk was put on the web and then it was taken over by a few journalists during that and the next year. After Guangzhou I visited that year also Wuhan, Hangzhou, in 2007 Xining, Urumchi, Turfan, and in all places for the media I was usually presented to the readers in this way. The Prize of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Social Sciences is usually given to one older scholar every year. This prize was conferred on me on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and allegedly for my “life time’s” work.

L.Y.: *Now my last question which is connected more than all others with my visit to your Institute and meeting with you in Bratislava: what is the most important and also interesting subject of your studies and work in the 80th sui of your life?*

M.G.: Yes, you are right. One year before becoming an octogenarian according to our European calculating, I am an old man of 80 years according to the Chinese traditional mode. In the present moment when answering your questions, and since January 1, 2011 I am everyday waiting for the publication of my book about the impact of the Bible on modern Chinese literature and culture in its Chinese version. It is to some extent different from the one in the English version published in 2004, without one comparative study on the biblical *Song of Songs* and *Shijing* 诗经,<sup>30</sup> translated into Chinese by you and your student Lin Zhenhua 林振华, and two other studies on modern Chinese

<sup>30</sup> This study appeared in a Chinese version as “Yage” yu “Shijing” de bijiao yanjiu 雅歌与诗经的比较研究 (*Song of Songs* [Šir hašširim] and *Book of Songs* [Shijing]: A Comparative Analysis). *Jidujiao wenhua xuekan* 基督教文化学刊. In *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture*, 2011, Vol. 25, pp. 89 – 132.



poetry. In the book the Chinese readers may find seventeen studies concerned with the biblical translation and the impact of the Bible on modern and contemporary Chinese literature. The preface to it was written by Professor Irene Eber of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and its epilogue is a interview with me by two young literary scholars Yu Xiayun 余夏云 and Liang Jiandong 梁建东 of Suzhou University. The book should appear together with four or five other books in *Haiwai Zhongguo xiandai wenxue yanjiu congshu* [Series of the Studies on Modern Chinese Literature by Foreign Scholars]. Included in it are the works by Mao Dun, Bing Xin 冰心 (1900 – 1999), Wang Duqing 王独清 (1896 – 1940), Xiang Peiliang 向培梁 (1901 – 1961), Rongzi 蓉子 (\*1928), Wang Meng 王蒙 (\*1934), Siren 斯人 (\*1951), Gu Cheng 顾城 (1956 – 1993), Xia Yu 夏宇 (\*1956) and quite a few poets from Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885 – 1967) to Haizi 海子 (1964 – 1989). Some studies concerned with the reception of the Bible by modern Chinese playwrights are waiting for a later publication. During my stay at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem, April – June, 2009, I finished my study entitled “King David (ca. 1037 – 967 B.C.) and Duke Wen of Jin (ca. 697 – 628 B.C.): Two Paradigmatic Rulers from the Hebrew Deuteronomistic and Early Chinese Historiography.” – In *Asian and African Studies*, 2010, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 1 – 25 and started to write another one: “Hebrew Deuteronomistic and Early Chinese Confucian Historiography: A Comparative Approach.” – In *Frontiers of History in China*, 2010, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 343 – 362.<sup>31</sup> In this and in the next years I would like to devote more time to the Sino-Hebrew affinities (not relations) in the realm of the “sacred” and “profane” mostly in the times before the Babylonian captivity (576 B.C.) and starting approximately with the Philistine entry to Palestine (ca. 1180 B.C.) and in China starting with the last decades of the Shang 商 Dynasty up about the compilation of the book *Zuo zhuan* 左传 *Commentary of Zuo* (4th cent. B.C.) during the Zhou 周 Dynasty. As earlier in the similar studies just mentioned, I shall use the methodology of structural-typological affinities, in this case of mythological and historiographical parallels that are appropriate for research on phenomena that have no genetic-contact relations, but they are equally important for achieving new knowledge in the research in this field

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<sup>31</sup> These two essays were published in their Chinese versions as “Dawei wang yu Jin Wengong: Xibolai Shendian lishi xue he Zhongguo zaoqi Rujia biannian shi zhong de liang wei tongzhizhe fanli” 大卫王与晋文公:希伯来申典历史学和中国早期儒家编年史中的两位统治者范例, *Jidujiao sixiang pinglun* 基督教思想评论 [Regent Review of Christian Thoughts], 2011, Vol. 12, pp. 4 – 24 and “Xibolai Shengmingjipai shixue yu Zhongguo Rujia zaoqi shixue – yi zhong bijiao yanjiu fangfa” 希伯来申命记派史学与中国儒家早期史学 – 一种比较研究方法, *Shijie hanxue* 世界汉学. In *World Sinology*, Spring 2010, pp. 50 – 62.

neglected up to now. What is more concerned, I shall need the help of God, you and your students and friends, in translation, editing and publication of my works that not appeared as yet in your country.

L.Y.: *Thank you very much for the time and pains necessary for this long interview. For the future time I wish you bai nian chang shou, wan shi ru yi 百年长寿, 万事如意 to live up to your one hundredth year and good luck in everything!*

M.G.: Many thanks. I do not have such high ambitions.