To any seasoned historian, the seventeen journals presented in digitised form by Gale, Cengage Learning embody a long-cherished dream come true. The digital collection represents the near-totality of journals produced in the English medium in China between 1817 and 1949, not counting ephemeral publications or daily newspapers. The efforts of the three academic advisors to the project should be lauded. Professor David Faure (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Dr Max Ko-Wu Huang (Academic Sinica) and Dr Jin Yilin (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) are all great experts in their own right, and they have managed to oversee a major historical project, that will be remembered as a milestone by all researchers with an interest in late imperial and republican China.

Thematically, the seventeen journals contained in this collection can be subdivided into three different categories, namely journals preoccupied with missionary information and a missiological discourse; publications focusing on the Chinese language and culture (Sinology); and, finally, periodicals elaborating on the social, economic and political problems of the day, often discussed within academic conceptual contexts. These journals will be discussed in this introductory essay in a chronological—rather than thematic—manner, in order to provide a coherent historical context.

The value of the digitisation effort itself is obvious to any student researching the period; however, historians who have lived through more than half a century of dramatic political and technological changes will not fail to emphasise to their younger colleagues the revolutionary changes brought about by digitised documents. The ability to search major collections for keywords, the fact that journals physically kept at different libraries can be viewed simultaneously, as well as their sheer portability, were earthly desires which historians gently turning over brittle pages, not to be photocopied or scanned, scarcely envisaged as a possibility. If there were to be one disadvantage, it would have to be the lack of dusty fragrance—shuxiang！

Before discussing the nature of the database in greater detail, a few words need to be said about the functions that render it into such a useful research tool. First and foremost, the database interface can be displayed in thirty-four different languages—with the exception of Afrikaans, all European (20) or Asian (14) languages. Second, the search engine is capable of not merely locating articles containing the desired term, but also creating a statistical and chronological analysis for this entry across all available volumes. The search terms, however, need to be fed into the engine in the contemporary spelling, which in the case of Chinese transcriptions changed drastically over the period covered by the database. Republican terms following the Wade-Giles transliteration system are easily rendered
into pinyin; older transliteration methods are often more difficult to divine, usually following the author's personal preference. To counterbalance any confusion arising from this fact, the brains who designed the search engine allowed for similar keywords to appear in a drop-down menu. Mao Zedong 毛泽东 thus shows up as mao tse tung, mao tze tung, leader mao tse tung and in all genitive cases thereof (no such success when searching for his name in pinyin; the Wade-Giles hyphen, however, is subsumed into the search).

Once the full range of search results has been displayed, the researcher is able to access all relevant pages by clicking on any of the page numbers in the article displayed for this specific search. The search can then be extended to the same issue or the same periodicalal. A further list of articles from other periodicals appears on the right bottom margin, complete with the relevant page numbers. The scanned pages are impressive in clarity, search terms are highlighted in green and non-relevant articles on the same periodical page are greyed out, though still legible.

**Bright Minds Searching for China’s Future**

The editors who were actively involved in the production of the selected journals include the most illustrious names in the modern history of China. All starts with Robert Morrison (1782–1834), formally a clerk for the (British) East India Company, but for all practical purposes Protestant Christianity’s first proponent in China. Morrison is also regarded as the father of Anglo-Chinese translation, exemplified by his own rendition of the Bible, as well as his Chinese grammar and dictionary. Strongly influenced by the academic and missionary methods of his Jesuit predecessors, Morrison placed the emphasis on linguistic perfection rather than bulk publication, and on individual persuasion rather than mass conversions. In the present database, Morrison is represented as the co-founder of the *Indo-Chinese Gleaner*. One of Morrison’s few fellow missionaries in this early period was Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), an English Congregationalist and avid Bible translator, who also compiled an Anglo-Chinese dictionary. Another fine specimen of early Sinology is James Legge (1815–1897), a Scottish Congregationalist, who for thirty-three years represented the London Missionary Society in Hong Kong and Malacca. Following his return to Europe in 1876, Legge became the first ever professor of Chinese at Oxford University, a position which he held until his death. During this period, Legge translated the Confucian classics and established Sinology in Britain. Following in Legge’s academic footsteps was Herbert Allen Giles (1845–1935), a linguist and diplomat, who stood outside the missionary circle. Concentrating his translation efforts on Daoist classics (Laozi or Zhuangzi), Giles compiled a new dictionary, for which he improved the romanisation system invented by Sinologist Thomas Frances Wade, henceforth known as ‘Wade–Giles’.

A second group of publishers can be clustered around the concept of the May Fourth movement. Belonging to a generation of intellectuals who had been deprived of the traditional routes of promotion into the imperial civil service, these young activists used their positions in newly established universities and publishing houses to promote the political causes close to their hearts. Intellectuals such as Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940, president of Beijing/Peking University 北京大學, the first modern university in China, originally known as 京師大學堂) were determined to propagate the twin values of 'democracy' and 'science'. Another editor belonging to the same category is Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895–1976), a prolific reformist author and translator of the Chinese classics into English. Lin had studied throughout his youth at Western universities (St John's College in Shanghai, as well as the universities of Harvard and Leipzig). He was a champion of Western values while serving as the Dean of the College of Arts at Xiamen University and as a cultural ambassador of the New China. In a similar vein, Cambridge-educated Wen Yuanning 溫源寧 (1900–1984) held professorial roles at Qinghua/Tsinghua and Beijing/ Peking Universities and was the author of several publications (e.g. Imperfect Understanding, Shanghai, 1935) which earned him global recognition. In 1935 he also became the editor of the T'ien Hsia Monthly 天下月刊, a journal devoted to universal knowledge, which also forms part of this collection.

Another representative of the May Fourth generation is Wu Liande 伍連德 (Wu Lien-teh, 1879–1960). A native of Pulau Pinang (Penang Island), then part of British Malaya, Wu identified with the Republic both as an ethnic Chinese and as an ardent proponent of Western-inspired reform. Having studied medicine at the University of Cambridge, Wu devoted himself to the eradication of superstitious attitudes in the population as well as of dangerous epidemics. He is thus remembered for helping to eradicate the pneumonic plague epidemic in Manchuria and Mongolia, which claimed over sixty thousand victims. Wu became the first president of the China Medical Association 中華醫學會, and editor of the Association's prestigious journal 中華醫學雑誌 between 1916 and 1920. In the years before the outbreak of hostilities with Japan, Wu Liande was put in charge of the National Quarantine Service 全國海港檢疫總監, a position he held until the capture of Shanghai by the Japanese in 1937.

**One (Long) Century in Seventeen Journals**

The seventeen periodicals of the present database cover a period of momentous changes in the history of China. By a decisive margin the earliest publication is the Indo-Chinese Gleaner 印中搜聞, first printed in 1817 and edited by Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and William Milne (1785–1822) in Malacca. Their entry into the historical arena coincides with the renewal of contacts between China and the West. First and foremost, it was the Christian missionaries who attempted to re-enter the Qing empire, their presence having been outlawed by imperial decree in 1724. The Yongzheng 雍正 edict was not aimed against Christianity per se, but rather attempted to regulate the proliferation of Christianity along the same lines as China's other religious beliefs, notably Buddhism. State control rather than cultural incompatibility was thus the problem which China's Christian communities faced, and for the very same reason the first Protestant missionaries established themselves on the fringes of the Qing empire, with any more permanent activities—such as publishing—being banished to Southeast Asia. The trading concession of Macau was a theoretical bridgehead, but the fact that Milne and Morrison sought to establish the first Protestant mission meant that this deeply Catholic territory was less suited than the outposts along the South China Sea, which the Protestant Dutch had been exploring for a longer time. The Gleaner was thus based in Malacca and published four issues per year until 1822.
Although also intended to shed light on the missionary efforts, the Morrison-Milne periodical also reported widely on the whole range of current affairs, as well as on the historical and cultural background of the greater Chinese world, including Southeast Asia.

Simultaneously, commercial interests were connecting Europe with East Asia more intensely than ever before in previous centuries. Importantly, it was the European thirst for tea that created an ever-growing impetus for ships belonging to the East India Companies of various European nationalities to seek trade with China. One of the most avid consumers of this particular commodity was Britain, then experiencing an unprecedented expansion of its demographic and economic sphere. At this juncture, the Qing was undergoing developments of a rather different nature, namely the approaching end of the long and stable Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–1796), accompanied by an equally unprecedented proliferation of religiously inspired movements aimed at overthrowing the imperial regime.

Furthermore, the southern shores between Taiwan and Vietnam were plagued by piracy, coinciding with the increasing flow of foreign vessels plying the waves of the South China Sea. In order to stabilise the maritime frontier, the Qing decided to move all Western trade to the port of Guangzhou, imposing a series of restrictions that were intended to prevent foreign traders from spreading undesired goods and ideologies around the empire. One of the most insidious of the unwanted goods was opium, produced in a number of South and West Asian territories and peddled by Dutch, Portuguese and British traders towards Malacca and further into Southeast Asia, including Taiwan. The undesired ideologies included the sharing of “Western teachings” such as Christianity, but the said restrictions also aimed to prevent any foreign intelligence gathering, especially maps. It was for precisely this combination of reasons that Morrison and Milne decided to establish their first missionary press in Malacca. In due course, the attempts by those members of the British East India Company, who chose to circumvent Qing legislation by smuggling a new type of opium that could be smoked in specially produced pipes, would result in the first Anglo-Chinese (Opium) war of 1840. Overpowered by the industrially produced weaponry and armour of the British navy, the Qing was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking that provided for the creation of so-called ‘treaty ports’, allowed for ‘extraterritorial’ rights as well as the free trading of opium and installation of Christian missionaries. In the same treaty, the secession of Hong Kong island to Great Britain was determined, which seemed a small price to pay for the mutual benefits the increased trade promised to bring to China. Given these new conditions, Western publications could for the first time be printed by Westerners in all legality. Against this background, it is all the more remarkable that the anonymous, American-sponsored Canton Miscellany 廣州雜誌 appeared as early as in 1831. To historians, the two Canton Miscellany articles—the first ever in the English medium, outlining the development of Macau—are of particular interest.

"At a former period (1809) the foreign mart was removed to Tien-pih about one hundred miles from Canton. In another year (1834) Kwang-king an officer of that district having received a bribe wrote to the superior officers of Government requesting to remove the mart to Macau on condition of an annual duty of 20,000 pieces of money. Thus the Franks in an underhand way obtained admission into the country. They then began and built lofty and splendid houses. The Merchants of Fu-kien and Canton flocked to them. They in time received addition to their numbers and all the small surrounding nations who formerly came thither were afraid of and shunned them, hence they assumed a sole right to the place."”

"Foreign Intercourse with China." Canton Miscellany 1831, Issue 3: 207+.

Walter Medhurst’s Chinese Miscellany 中國雜誌 pays homage to the new possibilities which the “Unequal Treaties” offered to foreign publishers. The Miscellany was

The next momentous event refers to a series of rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century, including the northern Nian 諸叛 rebels threatening to drive the Manchu rulers out of Beijing and the Taiping 太平 挞 捺 太平 太平 太平 太平 太平 太平 太平 wrestlers from the Qing in much of the south and east of the empire. Enter "Tai-ping" (it is best to try variants such as "Tae-ping" as well) into the search engine, and dozens of contemporary reports will alert the reader to the confusion that reigned supreme concerning the movement's precise ideological identity. Was it "Christian" (or even "Protestant") as some of the earliest Western commentators opined, or did it represent an outgrowth of quintessentially "Chinese" subversion, both temporal and spiritual (the eventual view)? The journals contained in the database reflect the constant flow of changes in chronological sequence, typical of the contemporary Western views in general. For this particular period, the following journals can be regarded as the most representative: The Chinese Recorder 教務雜誌 (1867–1941), which is available in its entirety and which represents a most valuable source material for analysing the missionary impact on China as well as Western perceptions of the Qing empire and East Asia. The same can be said for The Chinese and Japanese Repository 中日叢報 (1863–1865), edited by James Summers (1828–1891), who in his younger years served as a professor of Chinese at King's College (University of London) and subsequently created an English-language teaching programme at the imperial academy in Meiji Tokyo, known as the Kaisei gakuin 開成學院.

Another post-Taiping periodical featured in our collection is the Notes and Queries on China and Japan 中日叢報 (1867–1869) published in Hong Kong and edited by Nicholas Belfield Dennys (1840–1900). Though similar in content (history and culture of China and Japan), this journal should not be confused with Alexander Wylie's Notes and Queries on the Far East 近東 entitled, first published in the same year in Shanghai. Drawing on a similar theme, as well as (English) title is The China Review: or Notes and Queries on the Far East 中國評論 (1872–1901). With contributions by experts in the field of Sinology such as James Legge, Herbert Giles, Joseph Edkins, John Chalmers, Ernst Faber, Edward Oxenham, William Mayers, Alexander Wylie, Edward Parker and Frederic Balfour, the journal could rightfully claim to symbolise the state of the art of academic insight into East Asia for this period.

These journals critically examine the following five decades, in particular the empire's last effort to restructure the imperial economy and administration. The industrial, technological and infrastructural changes implemented in the name of "self-strengthening" at all levels of the Qing state also brought many benefits to those Westerners in the treaty ports and foreign concessions. Unsurprisingly, the Western opinions that can be gleaned from the database offer a positive image of the imperial regime's efforts, whereas any local opposition to the policy was branded reactionary at best and more frequently as superstitious and xenophobic. To the foreign press, progress was Western and China its obedient student.

In this sense, the decade of the deep structural reforms of 1901–1911, i.e. the Late Qing Reforms, known in Chinese as the "New Policies", should have aroused similar approval. However, the thrust of the Late Qing Reforms went so deep that Westerners began to wonder whether any resultant rejuvenated state would be as accommodating to the foreign community as the old and weak Qing empire had been. No foreign observer could have escaped the fact that neighbouring Japan was on the ascent, especially after 1895, threatening China's territorial integrity and the Western powers' extraterritoriality. The contemporary Western media noted with similar concern the rise of a new phenomenon, namely that of Chinese nationalism. It was initially the predilection of young intellectuals and a few millenarian firebrands; however, populist agitators increasingly turned against the Manchus and the Euro-American foreigners as the perceived root of China's woes. Whereas the Taiping rebellion had singled out the Manchus within China Proper as demonic occupiers, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 would do the same with Christians and Westerners. At this point, the foreign press was ill-disposed towards the insurgents from the outset. Had there been a Robin Hood element in the Boxer movement (Yihetuan 義和團 or "Movement for Righteousness"), one of the papers contained in this database would have borne witness to this. Quite the contrary, the Boxers were characterised as ignorant and malicious from the outset, a trend that became more pronounced with every attack against missionary compounds and Western concessions.
The foreigners who used to pray for a weak imperial state that would be incapable of limiting their own privileges now longed for a strong leadership sympathetic to Western concerns.

This conundrum would become even more pronounced following the fall of the Qing empire in 1911. This historic change is visible in three journals in particular, all contained in our database. *The West China Missionary News* 華西教會新聞 (1899–1943), established in Sichuan, had set itself the task of allowing Protestant missionaries in western China to communicate more effectively. It casts light on everyday life and changing views in the same agitated period. The same is also true of *The China Mission Year Book* (1910–1926) and its sequel *China Christian Year Book* (1927–1939; Chinese title for both: 中國基督教年鑑). Providing a vivid picture of the invective that shook life in early republican China and thus shaped the course of the Protestant missions, the *Year Book* charts the gradual rise of an indigenous pastoral leadership. This was propagated by Chinese activists such as Cheng Jingyi 诚静怡 (1881–1939), son of a Manchu pastor and a staunch advocate of greater responsibility to be held by the indigenous churches.

The present database also includes the related publications *The China Mission Hand-book* (1896) and *A Century of Protestant Missions in China* (1807–1907). Interesting insights into the life of the Christian colleges, as well as of the modern universities across China can be found in the *Educational Review: Continuing the Monthly Bulletin of the Educational Association of China* 教育季報 (1907–1938). Following the rise of anti-clericalism in the 1920s, missionary organisations were under increasing pressure to justify their existence by positioning their contributions as championing Republican China's healthcare and education.

Despite their strong reputation amongst commoners and elite members alike, the Christian institutions depended on their cooperation with the political power brokers and the young intellectuals. Amongst the former, nobody was more influential than Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916). Yuan was not merely interested in retaining the cachet of supreme statesman but was also intent on ousting the Nationalist movement revolving around Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian 孫逸仙, 1866–1925) and on declaring himself emperor (1916). Yuan's rise and fall, as well as the increasing rivalry among China's military commanders, the “warlords”軍閥, can be reconstructed from the ever more tightly covered reporting of the political situation in China and East Asia during the following three decades. The bombshell of 1919, when the victorious belligerents decided upon the future of, inter alia, the former German-administered territories in Shandong by allocating these to Japan, would trigger a profound transformation of China's political culture, and of its identity amongst other nations in the world. This, in turn, would in due time also lead to a reinterpretation of its recent history. The rise of the young intellectuals as a modifying force can be easily followed by browsing through the articles in our database; search terms relating to the so-called “Opium Wars”, “Unequal Treaties”, and any evidence of Chinese national reawakening, begin to proliferate from 1919 onwards. In a similar vein, the new vocabulary being added to the articles around 1925, coinciding with the mass demonstrations against Western “imperialism”, indicates a clear turn to the left of the political spectrum—a phenomenon that even the missionary organisations active in the Chinese Republic found it hard to extract themselves from. Their active engagement with the new political realities is covered in *The New China Review* 新中國評論 (1919–1922), founded in 1919 in Shanghai, by the Sinologist Samuel Couling. Eminent contributors included Herbert Giles and Edward H. Parker, the latter being the first Westerner to provide a Chinese version of the Opium Wars in accordance with the May Fourth vision for a global audience. The very same themes of imperialism, equality and urban politics are evident in *The China Critic* 中國評論週報 (1928–1946), founded as a weekly magazine in 1928 by Chinese intellectuals who had returned from America.
A more academic analysis of the burning issues of the Republic is represented by *The Yenching Journal of Social Studies* 燕京社會學界 (1938–1950), focusing on themes of social change. Broader in its range of contributions, the *Bulletin of the Catholic University of Peking* 輔仁英文學志 (1926–1934) showed a distinct interest in traditional Chinese culture. The widely respected sequel, *Monumenta Serica* 華裔學志, was founded as a successor with a purely academic mission, and is still being published today.

The years between 1927 and 1937, referred to as the “Nanjing Decade” since the capital of the Republican territory controlled by the Guomindang 国民黨 or Nationalist Party had been established in Nanjing, provided a rare period of stability. However, this was only the case for the residents of China’s prospering cities, and not for the rural areas where the Nationalists were locked into deadly competition with the Communist forces. In step with the developing stand-off between the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang, the articles of the 1930s and 1940s reflect the growing preponderance of the civil war, in particular during the “Long March” to Yan’an (1934–1935) and during the final act of the Republican drama (1947–1949). The years of Japanese occupation (1937–45) would bring significant censorship and, as in the cases of *The China Quarterly* 英文中國季刊 (1935–1941), *T’ien Hsia Monthly* 天下月刊 (1935–1941) and *The China Year Book* 中華年鑑 (1912–1939), eventual closure. The *China Quarterly* represented the crème of China’s academic, political, economic and journalistic elite, featuring Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, Lin Yutang 林語堂, Wu Liande 伍連德, Gui Zhongshu 桂中樞, Dong Xianguang 董顯光 and John Benjamin Powell. Its rigorous discussion of East Asia’s political affairs was impossible to maintain once Shanghai had fallen to the Japanese army. The *T’ien Hsia* was more oriented towards the cultural and served as a window on China for the wider, Anglophone world. Once again, China’s best minds were united in order to produce this journal, which became another victim of the all-engulfing warfare. The *China Yearbook*, finally, that was edited by H.G.W. Woodhead and spanned almost the entire length of the Republic, also fell victim to the war in 1939. Volume by volume, the changing currents of the Republic become clearly visible. Any students conducting research into the closing years of the Republic will discover a distinct tendency towards self-censorship—which was the only alternative to being closed down altogether. The latter, alas, would become the ultimate fate of China’s Western-language journals following the communist victory in October 1949.

I hope that this brief introduction has provided the researcher with the thematic, technical and historical parameters for appreciating this Gale database. Both for practical reasons and in terms of academic relevance, this digitised collection of periodicals is of significant value—as the witness of epochal changes.

**About the Contributor**

Dr. Lars Laamann is a Lecturer in the History of China from Department of History, SOAS, University of London. His research interests include popular religion in late imperial China; medicine, drugs and healing; and Manchu culture in the Qing empire. He is the author of *Christian heretics in late imperial China: Christian inculturation and state control, 1720-1850* (Abingdon/Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006) and co-author of *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China* (London: Hurst, 2004).