

# The Origin of The Ultra-Ganges Missions and Its Periodical Press

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In the early 19th century, Robert Morrison and William Milne, the first Protestant missionaries to China, commenced The Ultra-Ganges Missions, formally kicking off the Protestant missions in China and Southeast Asia. The Ultra-Ganges Missions not only marked a major milestone for the early missionary works of Protestantism, but also fueled the rise of Chinese modern press with its China-oriented periodicals such as *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* and *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner*. Based on the history of Protestantism in the 18th and 19th centuries, this article examines the origin of The Ultra-Ganges Missions and its periodical publication, in order to provide reference to the studies of Chinese Protestantism and China's periodical press.

*Keywords:* Morrison, Milne, The Ultra-Ganges Missions, religious periodical

With the further development of The Evangelical Revival in England, the London Missionary Society was established in 1795 and became the “first protestant society to enter China” (MacGillivray, 1907, p. 1) by sending Robert Morrison (1782-1834) and William Milne (1785-1822) there respectively in 1807 and 1813. Due to the strict Christianity Prohibition Policy implemented by the Qing government and oppression from the Catholic churches in Macao, Morrison and Milne were faced with great difficulties in their first few years in China. Until 1815, they proposed a series of resolutions about The Ultra-Ganges Missions, laying the foundation for the development of Protestant missions in China. Since then, *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* (1815-1822) and *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* (1817-1822) were successively launched in Malacca, becoming the first China-oriented religious periodicals.

A great deal of research have been done in China and abroad on such subjects as Morrison's Chinese studies, the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca, and the above-mentioned periodicals. This article attempts to associate The Ultra-Ganges Missions with the early development of Protestant missions and examines the common features between the periodicals published in Ultra-Ganges nations and those in 18th-century Britain, thereby providing insight into the cultural exchange between China and Britain through Protestant missionaries and the origin of Chinese modern press in the early 19th century.

## **The Evangelical Revival and the Origin of Religious Periodicals**

In the 16th century, Anglicanism was established as the identity of the Church of England after the English Reformation. Nevertheless, due to a mix of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, religious disputes followed shortly afterwards. As a result, a constant steam of Nonconformists immigrated to the North American colonies

to escape religious persecution at home. With the expansion of British colonies in America, churches in New England began to preach among the local Indians, and formed in 1649 the first Protestant missionary organization—Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England. Under the auspices of this body, the first Protestant missionaries, represented by John Eliot (1604-1690), began their early missionary activities in North America.

Until the 18th century, the Anglicanism remained dominant in Britain. However, corruption within the churches was rampant, and the public had almost lost their religious convictions. Hence, “the first quarter of the eighteenth century became one of the worst periods in the religious history of the English people” (Lovett, 1899, p. 3). Since the 1830s, John Wesley (1703-1791) delivered sermons around Britain and founded Methodism, which marked the beginning of the Evangelical Revival. By emphasizing charity and support for the poor, Methodism attracted a large number of converts from the lower classes. At the same time, the North American colonies were also going through a wave of Religious Revival. “The immediate occasion of its commencement was a series of sermons by the elder Edwards, on the doctrine of Justification by Faith” (Tracy, 1842, p. 1). Although Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) did not provide an explicit theological rationale for overseas missions, his various theological works and the biography he wrote for David Brainerd (1718-1747) exerted a profound influence on later missionaries, no wonder it was said that he “provided the theological underpinnings for the possibility of foreign missions” (Kling, 2003, p. 793).

The Great Awakening in America and the Evangelical Revival in England complemented each other and made a huge impact on the religious landscape of 18th-century Europe. Until the end of the century,

the increasing wealth as a benefit from the Industrial Revolution, the vast colonies and peoples recently gained throughout the world, the fascinating voyages of Captain Cook and other adventurers and, more directly, the religious revival led by the Wesleys and Whitfield—all were, psychologically or materially, significant factors contributing to the emergence of large-scale missionary enterprises. (Su, 1996, p. 27)

In 1792, William Carey (1761-1834), a British Baptist minister, published *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, calling attention to foreign missions. In the same year, he founded the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen, marking the beginning of modern Protestant missions.

In 1794, inspired by the first report of Carey’s mission in India, the Congregationalist minister David Bogue (1750-1825) and the Anglican clergyman Melville Horne (1761-1841), who was then preaching in Sierra Leone, published articles successively appealing for overseas mission. Against this background, the London Missionary Society (LMS) was established in 1795, and “its sole object was to spread the knowledge of Christ among heathen and other unenlightened nations” (Lovett, 1899, p. 30). From 1796 to 1798, the Society made its first missionary voyage to the South Pacific islands via the *Duff*, a merchant ship belonging to the East India Company. This successful debut gave the Society a boost of confidence and it began to look forward to the second missionary journey. However, as one of the directors in the LMS, David Bogue expressed his dissent: First, the methods for selecting missionaries were too hasty to be approved; second, missionary works should not be combined with commercial enterprise (Lovett, 1899, pp. 56-57). Bogue’s concerns soon became a reality. On the second voyage, the *Duff* was plundered, causing great loss of life. Even worse, a dozen missionaries who had been on the island of Tahiti went absent without leave and completely lost their contact with England. In the wake of this major failure, the LMS began to adjust its strategy and paid more attention to the training of

qualified missionaries. In 1800, the Gosport Academy was established as the official seminary of LMS, of which Bogue was appointed as the instructor. Under the direction of David Bogue, both Morrison and Milne graduated here and, to some extent, inherited some of Bogue's basic thoughts on missions.

In 1799, ancient Chinese translations of parts of the Bible were discovered in the British Museum, fully justifying the feasibility of translating the whole Bible into Chinese language. Then Bogue proposed to send a mission to China. His reasons were mainly based on the following facts: First, China was the most populous country in the world; second, it was highly civilized and its people could more easily understand the gospel; third, with a higher state of civilization, China had a great influence on its neighbouring countries and regions; fourth, printing and publishing the Sacred Scriptures in a civilized nation could facilitate the spreading of the Christian Doctrine; fifth, in a civilized country it is easier to convert the natives as preachers spreading the gospel among their fellows (Terpstra, 1959, p. 129). With the support of David Bogue and others, the LMS decided to send missionaries to China and selected Morrison as the first to do so.

### **The Beginning of Modern Religious Press in Britain**

The modern British press originated in the 17th century and grew steadily after the Glorious Revolution. Until the 18th century, the press coverage continued to be dominated by political commentary and current events. Although the religious landscape in Britain began to change in the wake of the struggle of Nonconformists, "religious developments produced less newsworthy material and events than the world politics" (Black, 1987, p. 248). For Methodists, the publication of religious tracts was a better way to spread the gospel than periodicals. As Wesley said in his diary,

Two-and-forty years ago, having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny apiece; and afterwards several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of; and, by this mean, I, unawares, became rich. But I never desired or endeavored after it. (Wesley, 1829, p. 305)

George Whitefield (1714-1770), another early leader of Methodism, also played an important role during the First Great Awakening in England and North America. "Whitefield and his preachers made great use of the spoken words and religious tracts, but it was felt appropriate that Christians should have their own periodical" (Billington, 1986, p. 114). Until 1741, Whitefield's followers established *The Christian's Amusement* (1741-1748), becoming one of the first religious periodicals appearing in the Evangelical Revival.

In the second half of the 18th century, with the further development of Evangelical Revival, religious disputes began to arise among the Protestant denominations. Calvinists launched *The Spiritual Magazine* and *The Gospel Magazine* to expound their theological views. In response, Wesley founded *The Arminian Magazine* in 1778. As the first religious journals in England, they "began this species of periodical publications in the Protestant world" (Stevens, 1858, p. 507). After the 1790s, different Protestant denominations began to set aside their religious disputes and to seek cooperation. In 1793, *The Evangelical Magazine* was established accordingly. As an inter-denominational periodical, this journal then became an official medium of the LMS, and had a great influence on later religious press.

### **Establishment of The Ultra-Ganges Missions and Its Early Periodical Publications**

In September 1807, Morrison arrived in China. During the first few years in Guangzhou and Macao, his missionary activities were limited in the temporary accommodation, with few connections with the outside

world but to translate the Bible and learn Chinese language. In 1809, in order to secure permanent residency in Guangzhou, he began to serve for the British East India Company as a Chinese translator. In the light of Bogue's comments during the first missions in South Pacific islands, the LMS had strict requirements for overseas missionaries to avoid any commercial activity and to keep connection with the Society. Therefore, after accepting the East India Company's offer, Morrison wrote to the directors of the Society explaining the reasons,

You are already informed of my having accepted, for the present, the office of Chinese translator to the English Factory at Canton. This arrangement I submitted to your consideration, and left it with you either to annul or confirm it, as the Company's servants here left their choice and appointment to the decision of the Court of Directors. I stated to you my reasons for accepting this situation; they were briefly—that it secured my residence; that its duties contributed to my improvement in the language—I mean, they all tended to it; and thirdly, its salary would enable us to make our labour in the gospel less chargeable to the churches of Britain. These appeared reasons sufficient to warrant the measure. I have little doubt but that they would also appear the same to you. It might also tend to do away any aversion of the Directors of the East India Company to missionaries, when they found that they were ready to serve the interests of the Company. (Morrison, 1839, p. 266)

Serving for the East India Company greatly facilitated Morrison's missionary efforts in China, but the East India Company had never abandoned its hostility against the missionaries. Until Milne arrived in Guangzhou in 1813, there was still no convenient location to conduct the mission. Therefore, they decided to find a new station to further their missionary works in China and the adjacent countries.

In 1815, Morrison and Milne submitted their resolutions to the LMS with regard to The Ultra-Ganges Missions (Milne, 1820, pp. 137-139). They determined, in the first two resolutions, to found a station in Malacca, which was under some European Protestant Government and near to China, thereby doing some groundwork in a relatively free environment. In the third resolution, they proposed to create a free Chinese school, as a preparation for a seminary to cultivate native ministers and facilitate missionary endeavors in China and the adjacent countries. This plan followed exactly Bogue's instruction,

in his opinion, greatly neglected in modern missions was the training of the most hopeful of the native converts to become preachers of the gospel. For this reason a seminary should be established in every mission, and if needs be in every station. (Terpstra, 1959, p. 128)

This school was the forerunner of the Anglo-Chinese College, "the first of its kind on any Protestant mission field" (Terpstra, 1959, p. 132). The fifth and sixth resolutions pointed out that the target group of Malacca mission was the Chinese people, and named the organization The Ultra-Ganges Missions. This was because they had anticipated that the LMS would send more missionaries to Malaysia and the neighboring countries, and that the missionary stations in Ultra-Ganges nations would then band together, just like different Protestant denominations united under the leadership of the LMS. The seventh plan included the publication of Chinese Bible translations, Christian works in Chinese, Malay and English languages, as well as English books covering local languages and customs. The Christian publications were mainly funded by the British and Foreign Bible Society and The Religious Tract Society in London, while those English books were published under the authority of the LMS. For example, Morrison's *Horae Sinicae: Translations From the Popular Literature of the Chinese* has been published in London in 1812. As directors of the LMS said in the preface,

the genuineness and authenticity of the Specimens of Chinese Literature exhibited in the following Translations, are guaranteed by the Directors of the Missionary Society, to whom they were sent by the Translator, and with whose permission they are now published. (Morrison, 1812, Advertisement)

In the ninth and tenth resolutions, they proposed to conduct religious services in Chinese and to finish the translation of the whole Bible, which was the first step of missions in China.

In addition, the fourth and eighth resolutions expressed respectively the ideas of publishing a monthly Chinese magazine and an English periodical, later known as *Cha-shi-su mei-yue tong-ji-zhuan* (察世俗每月统记传), or *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* and *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner*. In a letter to The Religious Tract Society in December 1815, Milne acknowledged his gratitude to the Society for their grant of £400 to enable him to print and publish a series of religious tracts in the Chinese language. He reported the circulation of these tracts since February 1814 and provided a list of publications, including “a small monthly magazine” (Unknown Author, 1816, p. 312), which was exactly *The Chinese Monthly Magazine*. So it’s clear that *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* was a religious tract supported by The Religious Tract Society in nature. And in terms of the content, “the magazine contained little news and its expository and evangelistic articles had little or no timely point in the journalistic sense. It was a periodical tract rather than a monthly journal” (Britton, 1966, pp. 19-20); they stated in the eighth resolution that the purpose of publishing *The Gleaner* was to promote union and cooperation among the missionary stations in Ultra-Ganges nations. On the one hand, “the importance of periodicals had been learned by Morrison through his experience and thirst for communication with the outside world in ill-informed Canton or Macao” (Su, 1996, p. 57). On the other hand, both Morrison and Milne had realized that Malacca, as the center of The Ultra-Ganges Missions, should possess an internal periodical to strengthen connection among different stations, like what *The Evangelical Magazine* was to the London Missionary Society.

In late 1817 and early 1818, Morrison and Milne submitted another 15 resolutions and four additional resolutions to the LMS. Apart from a subsequent work arrangement in Ultra-Ganges nations, they resolved to establish The Fund for Widows and Orphans of the Ultra-Ganges Missions, which was also a continuation of the LMS’s practice. In February 1798, the Society’s Board of Directors has set up insurance for missionaries. “Their life shall be insured to the amount of such a sum as shall be agreed on for the benefit of his family, should he die in the missionary service” (Lovett, 1899, p. 54). And since such official media as *The Evangelical Magazine* and *The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle* were established, the profits were used to help missionary widows and orphans. Therefore, The Ultra-Ganges Missions was, to some extent, “a microcosmic replica of the LMS administration in London” (Daily, 2013, p. 162).

### ***The Chinese Monthly Magazine*—The First Religious Periodical in the Chinese Language**

As proposed in the *Resolutions*, the main content of *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* was a combination of the diffusion of general knowledge and that of Christianity, in which the religious content constituted the main part, and the rest were Western scientific knowledge and some current news. Compared with the religious periodicals in 19th-century Britain, *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* was more of a religious tract tailored for the ordinary Chinese than a professional religious periodical or newspaper. However, in terms of the compilation method, Milne was still more or less influenced by his fellows in England. From the second volume onwards, articles on astronomy began to appear as a special column, all of which were extracted and translated from various Western astronomy books. They were included, as Milne said, “not so much for

purposes of science, as with a view to counteract the false opinions concerning God and the Universe, to which Chinese astronomy uniformly leads” (Milne, 1820, p. 277). This practice has occurred early in 18th-century English periodicals. “There was no shortage of material, provided largely by correspondent but also available from books...A lot of informative material was scientific, with a particular interest in astronomy” (Black, 1987, p. 257). Early secular periodicals in England extracted materials from scientific books merely to attract attention from readers, thereby boosting sales; while Milne adopted the same way for a missionary purpose.

Both Morrison and Milne have mentioned to make *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* interesting. Morrison said in a letter to the LMS that “we think of publishing a periodical work in Chinese...we should endeavor to make it instructive and amusing” (Unknown Author, 1814, pp. 373-374). Milne also said, “to render this work generally interesting, it would require a full half of the time and labor of a missionary” (Milne, 1820, p. 155). This idea was also initiated by David Bogue. After the establishment of the Religious Tract Society in 1799, Bogue published *An Address to Christians, Recommending the Distribution of Cheap Religious Tracts* to serve as a framework for compiling religious tracts. Bogue said:

It should be entertaining. A plain didactic essay on a religious subject may be read by a Christian with much pleasure; but the persons for whom these tracts are chiefly designed, will fall asleep over it. This will not do: it is throwing money and labor away. There must be something to allure the listless to read, and this can only be done by blending entertainment with instruction. Where narrative can be made the medium of conveying truth, it is eagerly to be embraced, as it not only engages the attention, but also assists the memory, and makes a deeper impression on the heart. Dialogue is another way of rendering a tract entertaining. The conversation draws the reader insensibly along. He is generally one of the speakers introduced: he finds his own sentiments and reasonings attacked and defended...Where neither of these methods can be used, ingenuity will have recourse to various other ways of giving an agreeable relish to truth, and of seasoning it so as to whet the appetite of the reader. (Bogue, 1802, p. 13)

Under this instruction, Milne serialized the religious novel *Zhang-yuan liang-you xiang-lun* (张远两友相论) (*The Conversation Between Two Friends of Zhang and Yuan*) in *The Chinese Monthly Magazine*. Through a dialogue between two friends—the Christian “Zhang” and the ignorant Chinese “Yuan”—this novel explained Christian doctrine in a way highly acceptable to the ordinary Chinese. As a sinicized version of the traditional Catechism, this work was very popular and later issued as an offprint, becoming the first Chinese religious novel. Walter Henry Medhurst (1796-1857), an assistant to Milne in printing and publication, also carried on this method in his missionary works. Medhurst used to write books attacking upon Chinese customs and idolatry, provoking a strong reaction from the Chinese people. Then he said that “it was necessary for the missionary to defend himself by publishing a few familiar dialogues, in which these objections were introduced, with the most conclusive answers that could be found” (Medhurst, 1838, p. 339).

### ***The Indo-Chinese Gleaner*—The Beginning of the Secularization of Religious Periodicals**

The first number of the *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* was published in May 1817. In the *Introduction*, Milne made it clear that this journal was published “under the direction of the Missionary Society” (Milne, 1817, p. 5). After the publication of the second number in August, Milne went to Guangzhou to join Morrison. In November, they set up The Provisional Committee of The Ultra-Ganges Missions and submitted another 15 resolutions to the LMS, of which the 7th term stated that “the *Gleaner* shall be continued, and under the direction of its present Editor”. In January 1818, the Committee submitted four additional resolutions, in which they further resolved that “*The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* be carried on at the joint expense of Morrison and Milne, and that whatever expense it may already have cost, be paid by them to LMS”. Shortly afterwards, the third

number was released, but the content and arrangement were markedly changed and had been adjusted several times since then, reflecting a tendency towards secularization. In February 1819, a letter from the LMS was received by Morrison, in which the directors made their attitude clearly. “You have done well in taking the ‘*Gleaner*’ under your own care, and that of Mr. Milne: as the publication is somewhat too general in its nature, to be distinctly sanctioned by the Society” (Morrison, 1839, p. 538). It is evident that since the publication of the second issue, Milne has begun to concern about the potential opposition by the Society. Thus, he went to Guangzhou and reached a consensus with Morrison, deciding to continue *The Gleaner* without the support of the LMS.

Milne also said in the *Introduction*.

The numberless sources of mental improvement, delight, and edification which our friends in Europe possess in their Monthly Magazines, Reports of Societies, and other periodical works, are but few of them enjoyed by us; and those of them which we do now and then obtain, seem to have lost part of their interest, by the oldness of the date before they reach the East. These considerations suggest the propriety of our endeavoring to furnish similar resources among ourselves. (Milne, 1817, p. 5)

This suggests that from the beginning, Milne was not content with solely providing religious content, but also hoped *The Gleaner* to be as interesting as “other newspapers”. The first two issues of *The Gleaner* were divided into three columns: “Accounts From the Missions—Extracts From Missionary Reports and Letters”, “General Intelligence—A Brief Account of the State of Christianity in the World”, and “Miscellanea—Literary, Philosophical and Historical Reviews of the Missionary Countries”, whereas religious periodicals in England like *The Arminian Magazine* and *The Evangelical Magazine* included mainly “Biographies of the Late Clergymen”, “Articles on Protestantism”, “Religious News”, “Obituaries”, “Religious Literature”, and “Comments on Religious Publications”. Compared with English religious periodicals, the first two issues of *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* were mostly “pan-religious”, except the “Miscellanea” section deviating from the religious theme. However, after the third issue, the proportion of such secular contents as “Occurrences in China”, “Studies of Chinese Culture”, or “Introduction of the Ultra-Ganges Nations” significantly exceeded that of the religious content. This is exactly the reason why the LMS called it “general” and disapproved of it.

Under the influence of Methodism, English religious press in the 18th century also paid attention to secular issues like food shortages, poverty, and unemployment. “It was possibly in providing this moral perspective on instruction and enlightenment that religious considerations had their greatest impact on the press” (Black, 1987, p. 255). But they were merely discussing social problems through a religious perspective. The secularization of British religious press formerly began in the 1830s.

New technology made possible cheap illustrated magazines in great quantities. Although the churches constantly expressed alarm about the “pernicious trash” which circulated among the lower classes, it was the better quality cheap magazines that offered direct competition to religious publishers. (Billington, 1986, p. 126)

In this context, the Religious Tract Society took the lead in publishing secular journals. *The Weekly Visitor*, founded in 1835, focused entirely on practical matters such as history, astronomy, and travel notes. Then religious newspapers of all kinds began a slow transition. It was not until 1870 that “the massively expanded religious press was closer to its secular counterpart in tone and business methods” (Billington, 1986, p. 132). From this point of view, *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner*, published in Malacca, was not only a continuation of British religious press in China and its nearby countries, but also a forerunner of their “secularization”. In

December 1819, Joseph Reyner, the treasurer of the Religious Tract Society wrote to Morrison, “I am interested in your periodical work, ‘The Gleaner’, and hope it will prepare the Chinese for the diffusion of truth. I have not seen all the numbers, but what I have are highly encouraging” (Morrison, 1839, p. 548). This paragraph suggests that the Religious Tract Society not only approved of the philosophy of *The Gleaner*, but may even have been influenced by it in their own periodical press.

### Other Periodical Publications of The Ultra-Ganges Missions

As Milne died in 1822, *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* and *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* ceased publication accordingly, “because no missionary then at Malacca was sufficiently versed in the Chinese language or publishing” (O’Sullivan, 1984, p. 67). In 1823, Medhurst launched another Chinese monthly magazine in Batavia station, which was entitled *Te-xuan cuo-yao mei-yue ji-zhuan* (特选撮要每月纪传) (*Monthly Magazine*, 1823-1826). The front cover followed exactly the same style and form as that of its predecessor, and Medhurst also made clear his intention to carry on the legacy of Milne. As he said in the preface, “I now continue the *Chinese Monthly Magazine*, but change the name as *Te-xuan cuo-yao mei-yue ji-zhuan*. The name is changed, but the principle is still the same” (Medhurst, 1823, preface). In 1828, Samuel Kidd (1804-1843), then director of the Anglo-Chinese College, founded the Chinese monthly magazine *Universal Gazette* (1828-1829) in Malacca. With its patrons being two British businessmen, the journal mainly covered news from China and outside world, as well as “paragraphs illustrative of European science, history, religion and morals” (Wylie, 1867, p. 49). In 1833, the Prussian missionary Karl Gützlaff (1803-1851) founded another Chinese monthly magazine *Dong-xi-yang-kao mei-yue tong-ji-zhuan* (东西洋考每月统记传) (*The Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*, 1833-1837) in Guangzhou. Originally from the Dutch Missionary Society, Gützlaff went to the Malacca Station in 1829 and began to serve for the London Missionary Society. Therefore, he could be regarded as a member of The Ultra-Ganges Missions. *The Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* was in the same vein as *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* and Medhurst’s *Monthly Magazine* both in terms of form and style, except that it was more secular than religious in content. As said by Gützlaff in the introduction,

the monthly periodical which is now offered for the patronage of the foreign community of Canton and Macao, is published with a view to counteract these high and exclusive notions, by making the Chinese acquainted with our arts, sciences and principles. (Periodical Magazines, 1833, p. 187)

It took a step further from the conversational style favoured by Milne and Medhurst, publishing a large number of articles in the form of traditional Chinese novels and added with many dialogues. In 1833, Morrison founded *The Evangelist and Miscellanea Sinica* and *Za-wen-bian* (杂文编) (*Serial Miscellany*) in Macao, both of which focused on spreading Protestantism and were ceased in the same year due to suppression from local Catholic churches. In 1836, John Evans, the sixth director of the Anglo-Chinese College, launched the English monthly *The Periodical Miscellany and Juvenile Instructor* (1836-1837) in Malacca. “It was intended to be a successor to the *Indo-Chinese Gleaner*” (Wylie, 1867, p. 76). In 1841, The Ultra-Ganges Missions were disbanded.

There were also a number of newspapers that were more or less associated with The Ultra-Ganges Missions. In 1824, *The Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register* (1824-1837) began to be printed in the Mission Press of Singapore Station. As a commercial newspaper run by the British government in Singapore, it contained mainly official government notices and business news. In September 1826, a semi-monthly English journal entitled *Malacca Observer and Chinese Chronicle* (1826-1829) was launched in the Anglo-Chinese



College. Created by the college graduate J. H. Moor, the journal was “very close to the mission” (Su, 1996, p. 144).

The *Observer* was ably conducted on liberal principles. Not only the cause of education, and the diffusion of useful knowledge, but the freedom of the press, and the abolition of slavery were advocated in strong but temperate terms...Until the establishment of the Canton Register, Dr. Morrison was a constant contributor to the pages of the *Observer*. (European Periodicals Beyond the Ganges, 1836, p. 148)

The Canton Register was founded in 1827 by James Matheson, a British merchant, as a bimonthly English newspaper in Guangzhou.

This paper shows the zeal of the Merchants...Dr. Morrison’s aid was earnestly solicited to support this new publication, and it was promised upon condition that he should have full liberty to express his opinions on those moral and religious subjects which it was his object to promote: this privilege was readily granted, with an offer of 300 dollars a-year, to be bestowed on any benevolent institution he chose. From this time, Dr. Morrison contributed essentially to its support, till the last number that was published previous to his decease. (Morrison, 1839, pp. 383-384)

After *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner*, Morrison has never abandoned the idea of creating a secular newspaper. In November 1827, *Malacca Observer and Chinese Chronicle* published Morrison’s “proposed plan of work”, in which he expressed his desire to establish a quarterly English journal named *The Indo-Chinese Repository*. “The Repository will comprise original essays on the language, philosophy, manners, customs and general literature of the Indo-Chinese nations, together with such local information as may be deemed new and interesting” (European Periodicals Beyond the Ganges, 1836, p. 149). This prospectus was not realized until 1832, when, on the initiative of Morrison, the American missionary Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801-1861) founded the English quarterly *The Chinese Repository* (1832-1851) in Guangzhou.

Since Milne’s death, periodicals published by The Ultra-Ganges Missions have never reached the previous height both in terms of the consistency and influence. However, this period witnessed the beginning of a trend towards diversification as merchants from different countries joined the media industry in China and the neighboring nations. It was not until after the First Opium War that various foreign newspapers flourished in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and other ports cities, directly driving the emergence of local periodical press in modern China.

## Conclusion

The Protestant Revival in Britain and its North American colonies in the 18th century rekindled religious fervour of the ordinary people. With the global expansion of Britain and the rise of the industrial revolution, large-scale overseas missions followed thereafter. China, as the most populous country in the world, was naturally chosen as a destination for Protestant missions. The failure of the London Missionary Society’s initial mission to the South Pacific islands prepared it well for its entry into China. Therefore, The Ultra-Ganges Missions, as the first missionary attempt in China and the adjacent nations, was well positioned for success. The Ultra-Ganges Missions marked a major breakthrough for the LMS, and its periodical publications can also be regarded as a product of English religious press in China. As the first China-oriented religious periodicals in Chinese and English language respectively, *The Chinese Monthly Magazine* and *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* not only contributed to the rise of modern press in China, but also promoted the further development of Chinese studies in England.

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