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A Civilizational Dialogue across Mountains and Seas: A Review of Professor Zhang Xiping's *Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*

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Abstract: Zhang Xiping, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University, a specially-appointed professor at Beijing Language and Culture University, and a doctoral supervisor, is the honorary chief editor of “International Sinology”. His research mainly focuses on the history of Sino-Western cultural exchanges, the study of early Western Sinology, and the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture. He has authored several books, including *An Introduction to the Research on the Dissemination and Influence of Ancient Chinese Cultural Classics Abroad in the 20th Century*, *Wandering Between Chinese and Western Cultures: A Self-Selected Collection of Academic Works by Zhang Xiping*, *Interwoven Cultural History: A Draft History of Early Missionary Sinology Studies*, *An Introduction to the Study of the Westward Spread of Confucianism in Europe: The Trajectory and Impact of the Spread of Chinese Learning in the 16th-18th Centuries*, and *Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*. Professor Zhang Xiping's book *Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges* uses solid historical materials and a broad perspective to restore the life of Benoît de Joinville, a messenger traveling between the two civilizations, and also provides a vivid sample for understanding the early cultural interaction between China and the West.

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标题: 跨越山海的文明对话——评张西平教授《白晋：中西文化交流的使者》

摘要: 张西平，北京外国语大学教授、北京语言大学特聘教授、博士生导师、《国际汉学》名誉主编，主要从事中西文化交流史、西方早期汉学研究与中国文化海外传播研究，著有《20世纪中国古代文化典籍在域外的传播与影响研究导论》《游走于中西文化之间：张西平学术自选集》《交错的文化史：早期传教士汉学研究史稿》《儒学西传欧洲研究导论：16-18世纪中学西传的轨迹与影响》《白晋：中西文化交流的使者》等。张西平教授所著的《白晋：中西文化交流的使者》以扎实的史料与开阔的视野，为我们还原了白晋这位行走在两个文明之间的使者的一生，也为理解早期中西文化互动提供了鲜活的样本。

关键词: 文明对话；中西文化交流；白晋；《白晋：中西文化交流的使者》

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When we look back at the history of cultural exchanges between China and the West during the 16th to 18th centuries, the Jesuits are an indispensable key group. They initially came to China with the intention of spreading religion, but inadvertently became the bridge for dialogue between Eastern and Western civilizations. They established a cross-cultural exchange and mutual learning platform in fields such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, and the study of the I Ching. Among them, Jean-François Gerbillon (Benoît de Joinville, 1656-1730) is undoubtedly a key figure who cannot be ignored. Gerbillon, a French Jesuit sent to China by King Louis XIV of France, spent nearly 42 years in China and became a crucial bridge for communication between Eastern and Western civilizations. He not only imparted Western scientific knowledge such as mathematics, medicine, and astronomy to Emperor Kangxi, but also delved into Chinese classics and systematically introduced the I Ching and other Confucian thoughts to Europe, promoting the westward spread of Chinese culture. He also engaged in cross-cultural dialogues with European Enlightenment thinkers like Leibniz, making him a representative figure of milestone significance in the history of cultural exchanges between China and Europe.

For a long time, academic research on the history of cultural exchanges between China and the West has mostly focused on the macro and institutional levels. Although there have been accumulations of detailed

studies on individual figures, they often suffer from fragmentation and one-sidedness, making it difficult to fully present the unique value of individuals in the dialogue between Chinese and Western civilizations. Professor Zhang Xiping has been deeply engaged in the study of Sino-Western cultural exchanges for decades, always adhering to a global historical perspective and an interdisciplinary approach to examining history. His previous publication, “*A History of Sino-European Cultural Exchanges*” (2016), has established an overall framework for the two-way interaction between Chinese and European civilizations during the 16th to 18th centuries. The new book “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*” (The Commercial Press, 2026), published by The Commercial Press on January 1, 2026, is an extension and deepening of this research line.

“*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*” adopts a grand global historical perspective, rigorous textual research, and a profound sense of intercultural dialogue to systematically sort out Gerbillon’s life trajectory, academic practice, and cultural influence, filling many gaps in Gerbillon’s specialized research. It showcases Gerbillon’s outstanding contributions as a “bridge messenger” between Chinese and Western civilizations and the complex picture of the interaction between Chinese and Western civilizations during the 16th to 18th centuries. As the World Center for Sinology commented on the book, “This book conducts a comprehensive and in-depth study of Gerbillon, revealing the panorama of Sino-Western cultural exchanges during the 16th to 18th centuries through the case study of Gerbillon, and demonstrating the global significance of Chinese civilization.¹” The book is over a million words long. Apart from the “Introduction”, “Conclusion”, “Postscript”, and appendices, it uses a broad scope of 21 chapters to systematically sort out Gerbillon’s life trajectory and cultural practice, presenting a complete picture of a cross-cultural messenger in the collision and integration of civilizations, and providing a highly in-depth historical reference for contemporary studies on cultural exchanges.

1. Reconstructing a Complete Picture of Joachim Bouvet’s Research

Academic research on Joachim Bouvet can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Western Sinology and the history of the Chinese church were emerging fields. Early studies mainly focused on Bouvet’s biographical details, his activities in China, and his interactions with Emperor Kangxi. The sources of these studies were mostly Western church archives and missionaries’ letters, lacking a systematic examination of his thoughts and academic practices. In the middle and late 20th century, with the rise of research on Sino-Western cultural exchanges, Bouvet gradually became a focus of academic attention. Scholars began to pay attention to his contributions in *the translation of Euclid’s Elements*, the dissemination of Western medicine, and the study of the *I Ching*. The discovery of Bouvet’s *I Ching* manuscript in the Vatican Library further advanced the study of his *I Ching* research. However, overall, existing research still has significant limitations: first, studies are mostly concentrated on a single academic field or a specific period of

¹ Retrieved from the internet, CCTSS (March 12, 2026): “World Center for Sinology Academic Achievement Update | Professor Zhang Xiping’s New Book Published”, Retrieved from: <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/y3CW0G570f8-kOVI3jQ9BA>.

his life, lacking an overall view of his complete life trajectory and ideological system; second, the use of historical materials is mostly limited to a single language, and the systematic integration and cross-verification of multi-language materials such as Chinese, Latin, and French are relatively weak, leading to one-sided evaluations and even being confined to the unidirectional narrative framework of “Western learning spreading to the East” or “Chinese learning spreading to the West”, which has fragmented the bidirectional and holistic nature of his cross-cultural practices and thus restricted the complete construction of the overall academic picture of Bouvet’s research.

Professor Zhang Xiping’s “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*” aims to reconstruct a complete picture of Bouvet’s research. This book, based on breaking through the limitations of existing research, has achieved a comprehensive advancement in Bouvet’s research. The book takes time as the vertical axis and fields as the horizontal axis, placing Bouvet’s life and academic practices in the macro context of Sino-Western cultural exchanges from the 16th to the 18th century. It systematically reviews his entire journey from coming to China from France, serving in the imperial court, being sent to France, getting involved in the Rites Controversy, delving into I Ching research, and participating in the Qianlong’s Secret History group. At the same time, it conducts detailed examinations and in-depth analyses of his contributions in mathematics, medicine, geography, Sinology, and I Ching studies, truly achieving the research goal of “using a person to lead the history” and “using history to explain the person”. More importantly, the book breaks the binary opposition narrative of “Western learning spreading to the East” and “Chinese learning spreading to the West”, highlighting that Bouvet’s practical research was always bidirectional. He not only introduced Western science and religious thought to China but also brought Chinese culture and wisdom to Europe. This bidirectional interaction is the core feature of Sino-Western civilization exchanges from the 16th to the 18th century.

As typical examples shown in the book, during the Kangxi era in the imperial court, Bouvet systematically introduced Western geometry, anatomy, and surveying techniques, participated in *the translation of Euclid’s Elements*, the dissemination of Western medicine, and the drawing of the “*Comprehensive Map of the Empire*”, promoting the rooting of Western scientific knowledge in the Chinese imperial court. The book clearly records that Bouvet, in collaboration with fellow French Jesuit Jean-François Gerbillon, translated *Euclid’s Elements* into Manchu and Chinese based on the French mathematician Baudet’s “*Practical and Theoretical Geometry*”, with the entire process receiving the personal participation and guidance of Emperor Kangxi. Kangxi not only carefully read the translation drafts and wrote his own comments in red ink but also ordered the relevant translation drafts to be compiled into “*The Essence of Mathematics and Physics*”, making it an important text for the dissemination of Western mathematics in the Qing imperial court and a typical practice of “Western learning spreading to the East”. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 29)

In terms of the dissemination of Western medicine, the book meticulously reviews the historical fact that Emperor Kangxi contracted malaria in 1693 and was unable to recover despite prolonged treatment. Bai Jin

and Zhang Cheng jointly presented quinine to the emperor. After it was tested by court officials without any adverse effects, it was administered to Emperor Kangxi, who eventually recovered. Subsequently, Bai Jin wrote a lecture on human anatomy in Manchu, citing the latest research results from the French Royal Academy of Sciences, systematically introducing Western anatomy to Emperor Kangxi. He also participated in the compilation of “*Complete Record of the Human Body*” and “*Western Medical Book*”, introducing Western pharmacological theories and treatment methods to the Qing court, filling the gap in the understanding of Western medicine in China at that time. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 43) In the mapping project of “*Comprehensive Map of the Empire*”, the book, after thorough research, points out that Bai Jin, as a core member, was ordered by Emperor Kangxi to collaborate with missionaries such as Le Comte and Dominique Parrenin. They spent over a decade traveling throughout China, using modern Western surveying techniques to conduct systematic field surveys. They first completed the mapping of the Beijing area and gradually expanded to the frontier regions, finally completing the compilation of the map in 1718. “*Comprehensive Map of the Empire*” was not only the first national map in Chinese history to be drawn using scientific surveying methods, representing the highest level of map-making in East Asia at that time, but also provided important geographical basis for the Qing central government’s territorial governance and border control, highlighting the significant role of Bai Jin in promoting the eastward transmission of Western geographic surveying technology. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 442)

In fact, Professor Zhang Xiping, in his book “*The Early History of Sinology in Europe: Sino-Western Cultural Exchange and the Rise of Western Sinology*”, had already dedicated a chapter to the sixteen I Ching manuscripts of Bai Jin stored in the Vatican Library, meticulously examining the ideological context of his works such as “*The True Meaning of Heavenly Learning*” and “*Inner Chapters of the Original Meaning of the I Ching*”, providing solid textual support for interpreting Bai Jin’s method of seeking hidden meanings and the communication between Chinese and Western thought. (Zhang Xiping, 2009, p. 189) Additionally, his article “*A Dialogue between Chinese and Western Cultures: The I Ching Research of the Early Qing Missionaries*” further elaborated on the intrinsic connection between Bai Jin’s I Ching research and the Rites Controversy, clearly revealing the practical logic and ideological core of Bai Jin’s efforts to maintain cultural dialogue and resolve cultural barriers in a cross-cultural conflict context. (Zhang Xiping, 2006, p. 74)

What is even more notable is that in “*Leibniz and Bai Jin’s Discussion on Binary and the I Ching*”, Professor Zhang Xiping analyzed through specific cases the specific path by which Bai Jin transmitted Chinese I Ching thought to Europe and influenced Western academic development, confirming the practical effectiveness of “Sinology in the West”. It is precisely this kind of practice that does not lean towards one end or one domain that enabled Bai Jin to transcend the identity of a mere missionary or technical expert and become a true cultural envoy shuttling between the two great civilizations of China and Europe. (Zhang Xiping, 2020, p. 5) Through meticulous examination and in-depth interpretation of these key events and academic activities, Professor Zhang Xiping vividly presents the complex picture of the 16th to 18th centuries where Chinese and Western civilizations were not unidirectional transmissions but rather mutual illumination, mutual

interpretation, and mutual integration. This has more successfully reconstructed a complete picture of Bai Jin's research and transformed the abstract concept of "cultural exchange" into a tangible historical reality. This core viewpoint is also consistently present in "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*", constructing a complete academic framework for the study of Sino-Western cultural exchange and providing a new model and reference for subsequent research on Bai Jin and Sino-Western cultural exchange.

2. The Value and Implications of "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*" for Sino-Western Cultural Exchange

Professor Zhang Xiping's "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*", guided by a global historical perspective, supported by a multi-disciplinary approach and cross-verification of multi-language historical materials, not only systematically reconstructs the complete academic picture of Benoit de Montequin's research, but also, through a detailed examination and in-depth analysis of his cross-cultural practices, profoundly dissects the internal mechanisms and core characteristics of Sino-Western cultural exchange in the 16th to 18th centuries, providing a valuable historical mirror and practical guidance for contemporary Sino-Western cultural interaction. The academic and practical value of this book runs through the historical process and contemporary context of Sino-Western civilization mutual learning, all of which can be fully supported by numerous verifiable specific cases in the book.

2.1 The Value of "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*" for Sino-Western Cultural Exchange

Professor Zhang Xiping's "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*" is not only a systematic personal biography of Benoit de Montequin's academic career, but also an academic masterpiece that re-examines the overall pattern of Sino-Western cultural exchange in the 16th to 18th centuries from an individual perspective. Guided by a global historical perspective, using a multi-disciplinary approach, and supported by cross-verification of multi-language historical materials, the book systematically restores the complete trajectory of Benoit de Montequin's travels between the two major civilizations of China and the West and his practice of two-way communication and mutual learning. It has irreplaceable academic value and practical guiding significance for deepening research in the field of Sino-Western cultural exchange history and promoting contemporary civilizational dialogue and mutual learning.

Firstly, the primary value of this book for the study of Sino-Western cultural exchange lies in its use of a global historical perspective to break away from isolated narratives of civilizations and restore the true picture of two-way mutual learning between Chinese and Western cultures. This is one of the most pioneering contributions of the work. Professor Zhang Xiping has always adhered to a global historical perspective in examining the history of Sino-Western cultural exchange, resolutely rejecting the one-sided biases of "Western centrism" and "Chinese centrism". He places Benoit de Montequin's cross-cultural practices within the overall historical process of the 16th to 18th centuries, paying attention not only to the impact of his "Western learning

spreading to the East” on Chinese society but also to the nourishment of his “Chinese learning spreading to the West” on European civilization. This two-way perspective frees the study of Sino-Western cultural exchange from the limitations of a single civilizational perspective.

The book clearly records that while Benoit de Montequin introduced Western science and technology in the Qing court during the Kangxi era, he also kept a close eye on the development of the European Enlightenment. He systematically sent his research results on the “*I Ching*”, the political system and social customs of the Kangxi era back to Europe, and engaged in long-term correspondence with the German philosopher Leibniz, elaborating on the connection between the Fuxi’s Eight Trigrams and binary theory. It was this inspiration that led Leibniz to further refine the theory of binary. This case is highlighted in the book as a core example of “Chinese learning spreading to the West” promoting the development of Western academia. (Zhang Xiping, 2020, p. 5) At the same time, the book meticulously documents Benoit de Montequin’s specific practices of introducing Western science to China. For instance, he and Zhang Cheng jointly translated “*Elements of Geometry*”, using the work of the French mathematician Baudry as the base text and making adjustments to meet the academic needs of the Qing court, with the entire process guided by Emperor Kangxi. The translation was eventually included in “*Essentials of Mathematics*”, becoming a core text for the dissemination of Western mathematics in the Qing court and facilitating the systematic spread of Western mathematical knowledge in China. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 27) In the field of cartography, Benoit de Montequin, as a core participant, worked with missionaries such as Jean-Baptiste Regis to use Western cartographic techniques to complete the mapping and compilation of the “*Complete Map of the Empire*” over a period of more than ten years. This project not only introduced advanced Western geographic measurement methods but also improved the mapping system in line with the actual territory of China, becoming a typical example of the integration of Sino-Western scientific and cultural exchanges. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 447) This research perspective, which combines Bai Jin’s cross-cultural practice with the European Enlightenment and the academic demands of the Qing court, clearly reveals that the interaction between Chinese and Western civilizations during the 16th to 18th centuries was not a one-way transmission but a two-way mutual learning process where both influenced and complemented each other. It provides a brand-new global perspective for the study of Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

Secondly, the book adopts a rigorous research method of cross-verifying multi-language historical materials, which solidifies the historical material foundation for the study of Sino-Western cultural exchanges, restores the true details of Bai Jin’s cross-cultural practice, and provides solid documentary support for related field research. It also highlights the academic rigor of the work itself. Professor Zhang Xiping extensively collected and integrated rare historical materials in Chinese, Latin, French, and other languages. Many of these materials were systematically sorted and utilized for the first time. Through the cross-verification and cross-checking of multi-language historical materials, it overcame the one-sided interpretation dilemma caused by the singularity of historical materials in existing research, enabling the historical details of Sino-Western cultural exchanges to be truly restored.

For example, when verifying Bai Jin's research on the I Ching, the book not only used Chinese historical materials to sort out the academic interaction between Bai Jin and Emperor Kangxi around the *I Ching*, but also utilized Latin and French manuscripts from the Vatican Library to meticulously examine the compilation background and ideological context of documents such as “*The Meaning of Heavenly Learning*” and “*The Key to the I Ching*”, clarifying the complete process of Bai Jin’s research on the I Ching and correcting the one-sided interpretation of his allegorical thinking in previous studies (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 329). When verifying Bai Jin’s mission to France, the book combined French royal archives (in French), letters from Bai Jin to the Roman Church (in Latin), and Qing court archives (in Manchu and Chinese), restoring the specific process of Bai Jin’s mission to France as an envoy of Emperor Kangxi, clearly sorting out the details of his introduction of Chinese culture to the French royal family and scholars and his return of Western scientific achievements, confirming his “East-to-West transmission of Chinese learning” and “West-to-East transmission of Western learning” two-way practice; when verifying the connection between Bai Jin and the Rites Controversy, the book integrated Western church archives, missionary letters, and Qing court documents, detailing Bai Jin’s stance and practice during the Rites Controversy, truly restoring his communication process of seeking a balance between upholding the core of Christian faith and respecting Chinese ritual traditions, highlighting the important value of “mutual understanding” in the context of cross-cultural conflicts. This method of cross-verifying multi-language historical materials not only makes the conclusions of the book more solid and reliable but also fills the gap in historical materials for the study of Sino-Western cultural exchanges, providing important historical material references for subsequent research on Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

2.2 The Implications of “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*” for Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges

The book “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*” provides profound practical implications for contemporary Sino-Western cultural exchanges. Professor Zhang Xiping, through a detailed sorting and in-depth interpretation of Bai Jin’s cross-cultural practice, has transformed the historical experience of this cultural messenger from over 300 years ago into an actionable guide for contemporary cultural dialogue. The three core principles of equality and respect, cultural adaptation, and two-way mutual learning presented in the book are all supported by concrete historical cases, fully demonstrating the important guiding significance of historical practice for promoting contemporary cultural dialogue.

Firstly, the premise of Sino-Western cultural exchanges is equality and respect, which is the core prerequisite for Bai Jin to build a communication bridge between Chinese and Western civilizations and is also an important concept emphasized in “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*”. The book clearly records that as a “King’s Mathematician” sent to China by King Louis XIV of France, Bai Jin always rejected the prevalent “Western civilization superiority” bias in Western society at that time. He did not promote religious dissemination in a condescending manner nor force Western science and culture as “universal truths” upon others. Instead, he treated Chinese traditional culture with an equal

perspective, actively integrated into Chinese society, and learned Chinese culture. To facilitate better communication, Bai Jin spent a considerable amount of time learning Chinese and Manchu, delving deeply into Chinese classics such as the *I Ching* and *the Analects of Confucius*, and even voluntarily adapting to Chinese customs and etiquette, engaging in equal dialogue and academic exchanges with Emperor Kangxi, Qing officials, and scholars. The book provides detailed accounts of the numerous academic discussions between Bai Jin and Emperor Kangxi on the principles of the *I Ching* and mathematical problems. They were on an equal footing, with only the exchange and collision of academic viewpoints. Emperor Kangxi listened attentively to Bai Jin's interpretations of Western science and religious thought, and Bai Jin humbly accepted Kangxi's explanations of the *I Ching*. This attitude of equal dialogue enabled the smooth introduction of Western science to China and also allowed Bai Jin to systematically organize and disseminate Chinese culture to Europe. Meanwhile, Bai Jin remained steadfast in his religious beliefs and cultural roots, not blindly adhering to or abandoning his core convictions due to adaptation to Chinese culture. He respected the traditional Chinese rituals of ancestor worship and reverence for Confucius, clearly explaining to the Roman Church that these were not religious worship but important customs for maintaining social ethics in China. He also firmly held onto the core beliefs of Christianity, attempting to bridge the gap between Chinese and Western religious thoughts through allegorical methods rather than unilateral compromise. This unassuming and equal attitude is precisely what is needed in contemporary Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

In the context of globalization, there is no hierarchy among different civilizations. Only by discarding the "civilization superiority complex" and "cultural inferiority complex", and treating each other's cultures with respect and equality, respecting the development paths and value systems of different civilizations, can cultural barriers be broken down and a relationship of mutual trust be established, laying a solid foundation for Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

Secondly, the key to Sino-Western cultural exchanges lies in cultural adaptation. The cultural adaptation strategies practiced by Bai Jin in cross-cultural exchanges are detailed in the book "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*", providing valuable practical references for contemporary Sino-Western cultural exchanges. The book points out that the core of cultural exchange is "effective communication", and the prerequisite for effective communication is to learn to interpret one's own culture and convey core values using the language system and communication methods that the other party can understand, and to abandon the limitations of "cultural chauvinism" to achieve precise cultural dissemination. This is vividly demonstrated in Bai Jin's practice. During the process of "Western learning spreading to the East", Bai Jin deeply realized that for Western science and religious thought to be accepted by the Chinese court and the people, they must be adapted to the Chinese cultural context and actual needs rather than being transplanted mechanically. Therefore, he wrote lecture notes on human anatomy and Western mathematics in Manchu, avoiding the use of obscure Latin terms, and combined the academic needs of the Qing court to popularize and localize Western scientific knowledge, making it easy for Emperor Kangxi and court officials to understand. When disseminating Western medical knowledge, he did not merely emphasize the superiority

of Western medicine but combined traditional Chinese medical knowledge to interpret Western pharmacological theories and treatment methods. When participating in the compilation of “*Complete Record of the Human Body*” and “*Western Medical Book*”, he took into account the characteristics of both Chinese and Western medicine, allowing Western medical knowledge to be integrated into the traditional Chinese medical system and widely accepted. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 45)

In the process of “Eastern learning spreading to the West”, Bai Jin also paid attention to cultural adaptation. He did not simply translate and introduce Chinese classics such as the *I Ching* and the *Analects of Confucius* directly to Europe but adapted their explanations to the academic context and ideological demands of Europe at that time. He combined the Fuxi’s Eight Trigrams in the *I Ching* with Western binary and Christian doctrines, explaining the core connotations of Chinese I Ching thought in a language that European scholars could understand. In his correspondence with Leibniz, he precisely met the demands of the development of European philosophy and science, focusing on expounding the value of Chinese Yi (I Ching) thought for Western academia. This eventually sparked widespread attention to Chinese culture in the European intellectual circle, igniting the “China Fever” in 18th-century Europe and facilitating the in-depth dissemination of Chinese culture in Europe.

The detailed account of Bai Jin’s practices in this book provides significant inspiration for contemporary Sino-Western cultural exchanges: Sino-Western cultural exchanges should abandon the “self-centered” communication model, deeply study the cultural context, value concepts, and acceptance habits of the other party, learn to “put oneself in the other's shoes”, and disseminate one’s own culture in a way that is appealing to the other party; at the same time, actively adapt to the cultural atmosphere of the other party, and under the premise of adhering to one’s own cultural core, achieve effective adaptation of cultural dissemination. Only in this way can the barriers of language and culture be broken, and more smooth and efficient communication between different civilizations be promoted.

Finally, the core of Sino-Western cultural exchanges is mutual learning, which is the core concept conveyed in the book “*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*”, and also a true reflection of Bai Jin’s life-long cross-cultural practices, and provides a direction for contemporary Sino-Western cultural exchanges. Through numerous cases in the book, it is proven that cultural exchanges are never one-way “input” or “output”, but rather two-way “mutual learning and mutual complementation”, and only by adhering to two-way interaction can the common development of different civilizations be achieved. This is fully demonstrated in Bai Jin’s two-way practices of “Western learning spreading to the East” and “Chinese learning spreading to the West”.

In terms of “Western learning spreading to the East”, as a core promoter, Bai Jin systematically introduced advanced Western science and technology and religious ideas to China: His translation of “*Elements of Geometry*” with Zhang Cheng filled the gap in the systematic dissemination of Western mathematics in the Qing Dynasty, promoting the integration of traditional Chinese mathematics and Western mathematics and providing new ideas for mathematical research in the Qing Dynasty. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 29) The cinchona

bark he presented cured Emperor Kangxi's malaria, promoting the spread of Western medical knowledge in the Qing court and filling the gap in China's understanding of Western medicine at that time. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 51) The "*Comprehensive Map of the Empire*" he participated in drawing introduced advanced Western surveying techniques, combined with the actual situation of China's territory to improve the surveying system, and became an important basis for the governance of the Qing Dynasty's territory, also promoting the development of Chinese geography. (Zhang Xiping, 2026, p. 447)

In terms of "Chinese learning spreading to the West", Bai Jin also made irreplaceable contributions. For example, he systematically introduced the research results of Chinese Confucian classics such as the "*I Ching*" to Europe, and his collated Yi (I Ching) manuscripts were widely studied by European scholars, injecting important Eastern ideological nutrients into the European Enlightenment; his works such as "*The Life of Emperor Kangxi*" and "*The Current Situation of the Chinese Empire*" systematically introduced China's political system, social customs, and cultural traditions to Europe, triggering the "China Fever" in Europe and influencing the ideological concepts of Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Leibniz; his academic discussions with Leibniz on binary and the "*I Ching*" promoted the cross-border integration of Chinese Yi (I Ching) thought and Western science, providing a new perspective for the development of Western science.

The detailed explanation of Bai Jin's two-way practices in this book profoundly reveals the essence of "cultural mutual learning": Different civilizations each have their own advantages, and only through mutual learning and mutual borrowing can they achieve complementary advantages and common progress. Currently, Sino-Western cultural interaction and exchange are facing many new opportunities and challenges. We should not only actively introduce advanced Western science and technology and ideological concepts to inject new impetus into our own development, but also actively promote the spread of China's excellent traditional culture to the world, allowing the wisdom and unique value of Chinese culture to be recognized by the international community. At the same time, in the process of cross-cultural communication, the principles of respecting differences and embracing diversity should be adhered to, with mutual learning as the path, to resolve cultural barriers and conflicts, and to build a consensus on civilization, thereby promoting the establishment of an equal, mutually learning, dialogic and inclusive relationship between civilizations, and facilitating the coexistence, co-prosperity and common development of different civilizations.

In summary, Professor Zhang Xiping's book "*Benoît de Joinville: A Messenger of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*" takes the Sino-Western cultural exchange from the 16th to the 18th century as the macro background, and Benoit de Boissy's cross-cultural practice as the core case. Relying on the mutual verification and comparison of rare historical materials in Chinese, Latin, French and other languages, it systematically reconstructs the complete life trajectory and academic thought system of Benoit de Boissy, filling the fragmented limitations of existing research on him. It provides a new academic perspective and methodological demonstration for the study of the history of Sino-Western cultural exchange, and has significant academic value and practical significance.

This book breaks through the long-standing binary opposition narrative of “Western learning spreading to the East” and “Chinese learning spreading to the West” in the study of Sino-Western cultural exchanges. It takes “mutual learning and reference” as its core logic and meticulously examines the dual practices of Jean-François Gerbillon in the eastward transmission of Western science and the westward transmission of Chinese culture. For instance, his collaboration with Joachim Bouvet in translating Euclid’s *Elements*, his participation in *the compilation of the Complete Map of the Empire*, and his efforts to disseminate Western medicine promoted the introduction and dissemination of advanced Western science and technology in the Qing court, enriching the traditional Chinese academic and cultural system. Another example is his in-depth study of the *I Ching*, his writing of Sinology works, and his academic dialogue with Leibniz, which systematically introduced Chinese Confucian classics, philosophical thoughts, and political systems to Europe, providing important Eastern intellectual nourishment for the European Enlightenment. It clearly presents the dynamic historical picture of mutual reflection, interpretation, and integration of Chinese and Western civilizations from the 16th to the 18th century.

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