The Missionary Root of American Sinology

Abstract: It can be well regarded that the early development of American Sinology pivoted on the missionaries from the United States in the 19th century. The American and Chinese domestic situations as well as the global social context in that historical era put the missionaries in a rather special situation where they were missionaries in the first place and meanwhile they were in the vanguard of American expansion as well as in the study of China. They set a solid foundation for the development of the Chinese Studies by writing, initiating associations and publishing journals, whereby they set up a tradition to focus on practical issues that the American Sinology has been following even till today. In light of the academic significance of the missionary practices in the 19th century, we see the necessity to comb through the missionary root of the American Sinology and the Chinese Studies so that we may have a better interpretation of some essential features in the subject discipline.