

Obituaries

William Arthur Charles Harvey Dobson (1913–1982)

During the Cairo Conference in 1943, when the Chinese delegation was having such difficulty presenting its position to its impatient Western allies, Chiang Kai-shek turned to Bill Dobson in desperation and said, “Ni shi bange Zhongguoren, ni gei tamen jiang” (“You’re half-Chinese—you explain to them what we mean!”). Chiang spoke perhaps better than he knew, for Bill Dobson lived up to that reputation, immersing himself for a lifetime in Chinese literature, historical writing, and philosophy and grasping more surely than most of his contemporaries the ethos generated by three millennia of Chinese civilization.

Bill Dobson did not begin his academic studies of China until the age of thirty-three, but he brought to those studies seven years’ experience in Asia. The son of an impoverished aristocratic English family, Bill Dobson put himself through a mission school in London and went to China in 1938 under that mission’s auspices. The missionary calling faded quickly, and he threw himself into the new language and culture he had encountered. He reported to Tianjin for military duty in 1941 and received a commission in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders when he reached Hong Kong. He was in Singapore in February 1942 under orders to remain and transmit military intelligence until the city was overrun by the Japanese, then made his escape by swimming from the island. Involved for a time in Lord Wavell’s operations along the Burma Road, he eventually joined Lord Mountbatten’s personal staff late in 1942. The following year he served as an interpreter to Winston Churchill at the Cairo Conference. While stationed as a military liaison officer in China during 1944, he was awarded China’s Order of the Cloud and Banner.

Bill Dobson entered Oxford in 1946 and from 1948 to 1952 was a lecturer in Chinese there. Then, in 1952 the University of Toronto invited him to set up a program in East Asian studies, and for the next quarter-century he devoted himself tirelessly to the task of building Chinese studies in Canada. He insisted as a matter of principle that all his books should be published in Canada by the University of Toronto Press. But Bill Dobson became the mentor of a whole generation of younger Canadian scholars not only because he was a committed educator who worked individually with his students and guided them in their early careers, but because, as Northrop Frye said of him at the memorial service, “His mere presence seemed to stir intellectual discussion.” Like any great thinker fired by the clarity of his own convictions, Bill Dobson excited controversy as often as he inspired respect, but that too came from his intense devotion to academic discipline.

Bill Dobson was a perceptive historian and deft translator, as his edition of *Mencius* (1963) shows, but he was most of all a grammarian, and it is for his studies in the periodization of the Chinese language and his exhaustive analyses of the grammatical structure of Chinese from *The Book of Songs* to the Six Dynasties that he is best known. The crowning achievement of his research was *A Dictionary of the Chinese Particles* (1974), a comprehensive work built upon the conviction in his four earlier books on Chinese that the classical language operated according to highly precise grammatical rules. Only gradually is the value of this work coming to be recognized.

Bill Dobson died of a heart attack at his desk on the evening of March 7, 1982.

He leaves unpublished a considerable body of work on which he had been concentrating his energies since being elected Ashley Fellow at Trent University in Peterborough following his retirement from Toronto in 1979. This includes a complete translation of the *Zuo zhuan*, a selection of translated poems from Han to Tang, and a partially completed supplement to the dictionary that treats particle usage in the Six Dynasties. His two sons hope that these important works will be published.

A superb scholar, a devoted educator, a broad thinker, a loyal friend, an active artist in oils and lithographs, and an Officer of the Order of Canada, Bill Dobson will long be missed by those who were privileged to know him and learn from him.

ALEXANDER WOODSIDE
University of British Columbia

TIMOTHY BROOK
Harvard University

Richard Storry (1913–1982)

Richard Storry, Emeritus Professor of Japanese Studies in the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow of St. Antony's College, died at his home in Woodeaton on February 19 at the age of 68. He is survived by his wife Dorothea and his son.

Born in Doncaster, Richard Storry was educated at Repton and Merton College, Oxford. In 1937, he accepted an appointment as Lecturer in English at Otaru Kōtō Shōgyō Gakkō (now Otaru University of Commerce), where he taught until 1940, when he returned to wartime Europe. Between 1941 and 1946 he served in the Intelligence Corps in the Middle East, Singapore, India, Burma, and Britain, and he commanded, with the rank of Major, No. 1 Mobile Section, South East Asia Translation and Interrogation Centre, during the battle of Imphal (1944).

Richard Storry began his academic study of Japanese history as a Research Scholar of the Australian National University in 1947. In 1952 he became a Research Fellow of the School of Pacific Studies at the same university, where he remained until 1955. From 1955 to 1960 he was Roger Heyworth Memorial Research Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford. In 1960 he became an Official Fellow of the College and he was appointed a Special Lecturer in Far Eastern Studies. In 1970 he became Director of St. Antony's Far East Centre, succeeding the late G. F. Hudson, and took the chair at its weekly seminar until he retired. In 1981 he was appointed to an *ad hominem* Professorship of Japanese Studies by the university.

Richard Storry's long list of publications includes *The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Nationalism* (1957), *A History of Modern Japan, The Case of Richard Sorge* (1966, with F. W. Deakin), *Japan and the Decline of the West in Asia, 1894–1943* (1979), other monographs, and many articles and reviews. His lecturing covered such subjects as Japanese history since the Meiji Restoration, the Far East in international relations, and Japan, China, and the Great Powers, 1931–1941.

Richard Storry was particularly active in encouraging and developing St. Antony's links with Japan and he was responsible for inviting many distinguished Japanese academics to the college. With the generous help of the Japan Foundation, he established a program of Visiting Fellowships and special seminars. It was his tireless energy in building up Japanese studies that led to the Nissan Benefaction, and his involvement in the expansion of Japanese studies in the university, which resulted from the Benefaction, makes the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies his memorial.

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