

Dedication to Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank

As NACCL-20 organizer, I am extremely pleased that we were able to invite Professor Edwin (“Ted”) G. Pulleyblank (蒲立本), Professor Emeritus of the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada), as a special invited guest and speaker. The invitation to Ted Pulleyblank—and his gracious acceptance—took place in August 2007, a few days after his 85th birthday. The auspicious timing served as the basis for paying tribute by dedicating to Professor Pulleyblank the *Proceedings of the 20th North American Conference (NACCL-20)* in honor of his 85th birthday, which he celebrated on 7 August 2007.

Professor Pulleyblank’s plenary speech at NACCL-20—“Language as Digital: A New Theory of the Origin and Nature of Human Speech”—was co-sponsored by The Ohio State University’s Institute for Chinese Studies (ICS), as part of the Institute’s “Re-thinking China” Lecture Series. As a result of the co-sponsorship, Professor Pulleyblank’s plenary speech was a public lecture and, hence, open to all.

Professor E.G. Pulleyblank is one of the world’s most respected and influential scholars in Chinese history and Chinese linguistics, and those of us who were his students were most fortunate in having obtained his patient guidance and in having benefited from his deep erudition even years and decades after receiving our training from him. Two other former students of Professor Pulleyblank who presented at NACCL-20, namely, Professor Jennifer W. Jay (University of Alberta) in Chinese history, and Professor Derek Herforth (University of Sidney) in Chinese historical linguistics, graciously agreed to introduce Professor Pulleyblank at the ICS lecture. As part of the NACCL-20 Proceedings’ dedication to Professor Pulleyblank, my colleagues’ introductions at the lecture are included here in the following pages.

Marjorie K.M. Chan
NACCL-20 Organizer

Introducing Ted Pulleyblank

Presented by Jennifer W. Jay
Department of History and Classics, University of Alberta

Professor Ted Pulleyblank began his academic career in Classics, from which he obtained an honors degree from the University of Alberta in 1942, where I now teach. For a comprehensive look at Ted’s scholarship in history and linguistics, I refer you to the UBC website (<http://www.asia.ubc.ca/index.php?id=5053>).

PROFESSOR EDWIN G. PULLEYBLANK

Ted needs no introduction to his versatile and prolific work on Tang historiography and Central Asian history. *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), published 53 years ago, remains the most authoritative scholarship on the period in any language. Ted's other monographs and hundreds of substantive articles have served to mentor two generations of historians of the middle period of Chinese history and Central Asia. For example, he examined the doctoral dissertation of the late Professor Denis Twitchett on Tang financial administration and he supervised Professor Wang Gungwu, my own co-supervisor, whose dissertation on the Five Dynasties remains unsurpassed. I want to publicly apologize to Ted for coming up short of his expectations for me, and I also want to thank him for protecting me with his scholarly reputation. I have always felt that my co-supervisor, Professor Igor de Rachewiltz, whose Mongolian studies benefited from Ted's linguistic reconstructions, treated me better because I had studied under Ted. Ted, I stood in awe of your scholarship in 1976, and I remain inspired today, and it is with the greatest honor that I present you as my teacher.

And here to also introduce Ted is Derek Herforth, my UBC classmate.

Introduction of Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank

Presented by Derek Herforth

Department of Chinese Studies, University of Sidney

Thank you, Jennifer, my *lao tongxue* (old classmate) from UBC (University of British Columbia). It's a great honor to be asked to present the scholar to whom this, the twentieth annual meeting of NACCL, has been especially dedicated.

About the same time that Jennifer was studying history with Professor Pulleyblank, I was beginning to get my feet wet in Chinese historical linguistics under his tutelege. So let me begin with the briefest of personl memories of that time.

I recall Ted as a rather demanding mentor, as you might expect. But, in the way he interacted with his students, he somehow managed to be both invariably incisive and extraordinarily fair. In reading his comments on my student work, I recall being at times overwhelmed by the sheer number of things he knew that I hadn't even thought of. One was constantly made aware of the vast number of issues to be taken into account in doing justice to a problem. At other times, when my efforts fared better, he was unstinting in his praise, support, and encouragement. As a teacher myself, I can deeply appreciate not only the amount of learning he managed to impart to those lucky enough to study with him, but also the attitude with which he instructed and educated us.

In the rest of my brief introduction, I'm going to commit a gross oxymoron, partly demanded by time constraints. I'm going to try to pigeonhole Professor Edwin Pulleyblank.

Now, of course, he can't be pigeonholed, but I find that this is perhaps a useful figure of speech, because even the lowly pigeonhole has three dimensions—breadth, height, and depth. Allow me to make a few remarks in terms of these three dimensions in an effort to characterize briefly Professor Pulleyblank's scholarship.

Jennifer has referred you to the excellent website, maintained by UBC. I would simply like to point out that the totality of Professor Pulleyblank's productivity has not been represented there, in a single place. If you go to the website, you will find listed all his publications since the late 1980s. But the site also includes the information that, for work published prior to 1989, one must go to a special volume of the journal *T'ang Studies* where a catalog of his earlier work has been assembled.¹ This productivity surely correlates with the dimension of height. The number of things Professor Pulleyblank has published, if piled atop each other, would reach very high.

As for breadth, it is well known that Professor Pulleyblank was especially active in the study of the middle period of China's history, dealing both with China per se and with China's nearest neighbors. Within the broad area of linguistics, he has also ranged very widely. Chinese diachronic linguistics was always a major concern, especially phonology and classical grammar. In addition to these, however, he has worked on broader areas in general linguistics, on the typology of vowel systems, for example, and how such studies support new proposals in the reconstruction not only of Chinese but of Indo-European as well. He has written on the early history of the study of Chinese phonology in Europe, and published in the fascinating area which is the subject of tonight's talk, the origin of language itself. So, the breadth is there in ways that have nothing to do with pigeonholes.

The dimension of depth can be appreciated by recognizing that virtually all of the major results of Professor Pulleyblank's research have been definitive in that scholars in the relevant fields have felt it necessary to respond to them. He has defined, over and over again, the nature of the questions, the nature of the current answers, and many of the methodological issues that determine solutions to problems in the several fields he has tended most closely over the decades.

So, while I think that the pigeonhole figure of speech is in one sense hardly apt, at least it can help us capture within a brief compass some of the breadth, depth, and height of Ted Pulleyblank's scholarly achievements. Without further ado, then, allow me to introduce tonight's speaker, the eminent scholar whose career we are honoring here at NACCL-20, Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank.

¹ *T'ang Studies* 7 (1989), prepared by Jennifer W. Jay and Marjorie K.M. Chan, is a Festschrift volume to honor Professor Edwin G. Pulleyblank, with papers from some of his students. The volume contains the complete list of Professor Pulleyblank's publications at the time of that Festschrift.

