



THE
C H I N E S E
T Y P E W R I T E R

A HISTORY

THOMAS S. MULLANEY

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—**Wang Hui**, Professor of Literature and History, Tsinghua University; author of *China's Twentieth Century*

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THE CHINESE TYPEWRITER

Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University

The Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University were inaugurated in 1962 to bring to a wider public the results of significant new research on modern and contemporary East Asia.

Per Chiara

漢字無罪

Chinese characters are innocent.

Zhou Houkun

1915

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

What is your problem? Out of all possible questions you could be asking in this life, which one defines the flight path of your mental holding pattern? What is the question that you are always asking, even when to others (and perhaps to yourself) you seem to be changing the subject constantly? And why this problem? To answer these questions is exhausting and wonderful. It takes everything you have.

But to the outside world, it is socially and financially essential to make this process seem orderly and composed. To seem like we have things under control. At the outset of a new project, we say what needs saying in cover letters and funding proposals, at conferences and cocktail parties. But the truth knows better. The first thousand miles are propelled by faith, not in the answer you will find, but in the joy of the labor itself, and a fragile but persistent sense that something of value awaits if only you can hold on.

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My colleagues at Stanford may not know this, but a substantial part of my decision to set out on this book project was inspired by informal lunchtime conversations that followed my mid-term reappointment. Senior colleagues I deeply admire took me aside and subjected my entire intellectual being to dissection and scrutiny. It was unsettling, but I like unsettling. Although the idea of the Chinese typewriter had already taken hold of me by this point, it was in large part thanks to these conversations that I decided to be true to myself—unapologetically, radically, and uncompromisingly true to that inner sense of which I just spoke.

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