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MONTREAL

18th May 1929

Dear Dr de Risillac-Roese:

I am attaching a very rough outline of the field which I think might be covered by a book dealing with the achievements of the Chinese as engineers. I should not wish to discuss the modern period at all, but would confine the work to the period in China's history previous to the time when it began to be influenced by Western civilization. Modern Chinese engineering is no different from the art in other parts of the world, except insofar as ancient methods still prevail.

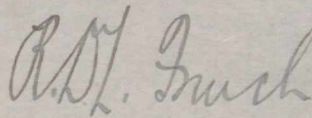
Of course, it is very difficult, as you will realize, to prepare an outline which is at all adequate with no knowledge of what is available in Chinese literature, particularly in the Gest Library. The final form of the book would depend almost entirely upon what information and data you and your assistants were able to find. I imagine that there will be a vast lot of it, but there may be nothing at all on some of the subjects which I have included in this outline, and, on the other hand, there may be a good deal on subjects which I have not included.

As I see it, my position in this project would be that of an editor, whose task it would be to arrange the information supplied by you and your assistants in a more or less logical way, and to present it in English which would, at least, be intelligible to engineering readers. Of course, I feel that credit should be given the Gest Library and its organization in the title.

I am told by the publishers of engineering literature that a book such as this would probably meet with a ready sale, as there is an increasing demand for works dealing with the historical and human sides of the art. If this book proved to be even moderately successful, we might try to issue similar ones dealing with the engineering achievements of other ancients - Greeks, Romans, Hindus, and so forth.

If this project appeals to you at all as a method of making the Gest Library of some use to the public, I should be happy to discuss the details with you.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Robert de Risillac-Roese,
Gest Library, Redpath Library,
McGill University, Montreal.