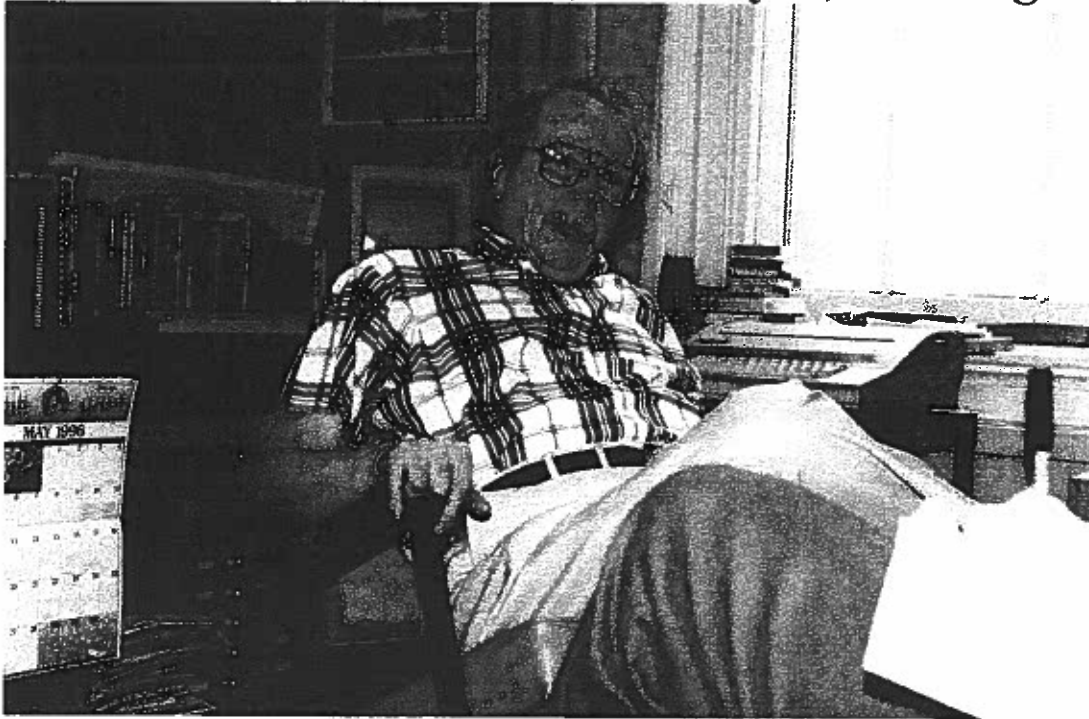


# **The Man They Call Yahweh**

## **Hall Peebles: The Man, The Myth, The Legend**



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History 498  
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## Preface

I started this project with a great deal of enthusiasm. I was excited by the prospect of writing about one of the Wabash College legends. I had heard a few stories about Hall Peebles, and had lived next to him as a Phi Psi for three years. However, I did not get to know him until this past summer when I spent numerous hours in front of a computer scanning some of his numerous slides of China and Japan and burning them on to a CD. I thought that since I had some previous personal experience with Dr. Peebles that I would have a head start on the rest of class. While this may have been the case, I was nowhere near prepared for the amount of information I would find about him. I knew that I was really in for a task when the first three items I found about him in the Wabash archives all contained the phrase, "It's difficult to describe Dr. Peebles on paper, or in words." Little did I know how true this statement would be. After many hours of interviews and archival research here I am, attempting to write about a man who meant so much to so many people. I am frightened by the possibility that I may not be able to do him justice, but at the same time excited by the possibility to write down the story of one the legends here at Wabash. I would like to thank Dr. Peebles for all of his help and time on this project and also for the relationship that I have formed with him. He truly is a remarkable man. I also want to thank Dr. David Blix '70 for his interview and his constant support on this project. I would also like to thank Tom Bambrey '68, Dean of Students for his interview and his eagerness to help on this project. Along those same lines, I want to thank Dr. William Placher '70 for his help and contributions. Lastly, I thank Dr. Peter Frederick for not only being my advisor for four years but also for constantly poking and prodding me along on this project. Steve Webb '83 also needs to

be thanked. From his last minute interview before the first draft was due, to his farewell speech to Hall upon his retirement, his contributions are greatly appreciated. In addition, Dr. Frederick needs to be thanked for all of the support and ideas he has supplied towards this project. So without further ado, here is my attempt at trying to reach the essence of Hall Peebles, the man, the myth, the legend.

Adam Pope '04

## The Man They Call Yahweh.

### Hall Peebles: The Man, The Myth, The Legend

Picture a classroom full of students, many of them having no interest in the actual context of the class. The majority of them are in the room only because of what they have heard about the man who teaches the course. They have been told by upperclassmen in their living units to take a course in Religion taught by Hall Peebles. By the end of the first lecture, the majority of the class knows they have just listened to something special. Instantly, their interest in the study of Religion, whether it be the Old Testament or the Analects of Confucius has been piqued and they eagerly await the remainder of the semester and the chance to hear exciting lectures multiple times a week. This is the story for countless Wabash students for the forty years from 1958 to 1998. What started as a mere suggestion ended up changing the lives of many.

For forty years, I. Hall Peebles taught religion at Wabash. During this time, he touched many lives, and left a legacy on this campus that may never be equaled. Upon his retirement in 1998, hundreds of former students wrote him letters through the Wabash Magazine, telling him how much he meant to them during their time at Wabash. According to Reverend Pierce Klemmt '72, Dr. Peebles' "Insistence that we think and respond in classes and not sit as sponges....my life and vocation continue to be shaped and influenced by {Dr. Peebles'} example and mentoring."<sup>1</sup> His influence extended beyond the classroom as well. One former student thanks Dr. Peebles for leading him towards Judaism. Another thanks him for sending him down the path to become an ordained minister. Countless others recall firsthand experiences with Peebles, all filled with praise and admiration.

So what was it about Hall Peebles that made him so unique? How was he able to touch so many students over such a long period of time? How did a Southern gentleman from Georgia come to be known affectionately as Yahweh, the Hebrew God? Many people have wonderful things to say about Dr. Peebles, yet few can put into words what made him so special. These pages are an attempt to try to put together the pieces of the puzzle as to who Hall Peebles really is and what makes him so important to so many people.

A good place to start when thinking about Peebles is looking at his nickname, “Yahweh”. This title refers to the word the Ancient Hebrews used to personify the great “I AM.” Joshua Patty, former managing editor of The Bachelor, stated, “This is not to say that Hall Peebles is the Hebrew God, though he might be a minor Hindu deity.” He goes on to add, “It (the nickname) pays homage to his stature on campus and attests to the respect he has earned over the years. More than anything though, no other name could better evoke the distinctive qualities of Hall Peebles.”<sup>2</sup> Other former students also agreed that the nickname was quite appropriate. Dean of Students, Thomas Bambrey ‘68 stated that the name was, “Honorific. It was like being called Sir.”<sup>3</sup> David Blix ’70 put it this way. “The name became very distinctive, the way he said it. He had acquired the status of being a sage. He WAS Yahweh.”<sup>4</sup>

Peebles himself was a good sport about the whole thing. When asked about his feelings on the name, he laughed out loud in his distinctive way. “It didn’t bother me at all. There are a lot worse nicknames one could be called,” he said. He went on to admit

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<sup>1</sup> “Like the Sun Rises Strength.” Wabash Magazine Summer 1998: 32.

<sup>2</sup> Patty, Joshua. “Yahweh and the Tribes of Wabash.” The Bachelor 16 May 1998: 14+

<sup>3</sup> From Interview conducted on October 28, 2003 in the Dean’s Office

<sup>4</sup> From Interview conducted on October 16, 2003 in his office

that he probably should be afraid of it, but that he knew the students were well intentioned in giving him the name.<sup>5</sup>

The nickname, which plays a large role in the legacy of Dr. Peebles, will be discussed later on. However, it is now my intention to turn to the events of his life that led up to his making his way to Wabash. What brought him to study religion, and more importantly, what brought him to Wabash? What was it about this small school in a small town, in the middle of nowhere that made the so-called “greatest lecturer ever” stick around for forty-five years?

Peebles grew up in Georgia, during the Great Depression. His father was a lawyer, and by his own accounts, “We were never rich, but I was very fortunate. I was sheltered.”<sup>6</sup> He spent six years going to Catholic school but then moved to the County Junior Senior High School, partly because they had better science programs. He spent some of his time in high school debating. His one regret from his youth is that he “did not have greater athletic ability.”<sup>7</sup> He played golf and he swam, although he never competed in the latter.

After graduation he moved on to the University of Georgia, in Athens. Here he joined the Sigma Nu fraternity where he had many great experiences and memories. From the fall of 1946 until spring of 1950 he was a student at Georgia. He claims that there is not a great deal about this time that is very exciting but that he had a good time and made some good memories. Again he was a member of the varsity debate team, which helped him hone his skills he would later use in the classroom. He recently returned for his 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion, in 2000 and enjoyed catching up with old friends.

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<sup>5</sup> From interview conducted on October 30, 2003 in Dr. Peebles Office

<sup>6</sup> October 30, 2003 interview.

During his time growing up, all of the schools were segregated racially. He claims, he never thought about it growing up, “It was just the way things were.”<sup>8</sup> He never considered himself living in a racist family; however, he never considered the fact that African Americans were not all that different from everyone else. It was while in college that he began to run into people who began to question this view. It did seem strange to him, but living in the South, there was little that could be done about this.

After graduating in 1950, he went to Yale for Divinity School. In 1953 he received his Bachelor’s Degree from the Divinity School. He stayed at Yale until earning his masters in 1957, and finally his Ph.D. in 1959, after his first year of teaching at Wabash. He claims that there were not many African Americans at Yale, but there were some. It was in the mid 50’s that he began to become sympathetic to the cause of equal civil rights. This belief came about due to his involvement in the Church. In his own words he said, “I was never the most pious churchgoer,” but he did develop an interest. After studying the Bible, he found that segregation was not Biblical. “There was no reason for it.”<sup>9</sup>

Once again, Peebles claims to have lived an uneventful life at Yale. “There was nothing terribly dramatic, but it was a very good, positive thing.”<sup>10</sup> He claims to have made many good friends while he was here, and still keeps in contact with some of them to this day. Dr. Placher however had an interesting story to share about Peebles and his Yale experiences.

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<sup>7</sup> October 30, 2003 interview

<sup>8</sup> October 30, 2003 interview

<sup>9</sup> October 30, 2003 interview

<sup>10</sup> October 30, 2003 interview

When Hall was a student at Yale Divinity School, he lived next to a deeply pious young Baptist who grew ever more horrified as the year went on to find himself sharing a garbage receptacle with someone whose trash seemed to consist primarily of wine and beer bottles. It was custom of that institution that every member of the senior class should on one occasion preach a sermon at daily chapel, and this posed a great crisis for Hall's pious neighbor. As a matter of principle, he never missed chapel, but how could he bring himself to attend services presided over by such an obvious reprobate—a term I use here in the technical Calvinist sense. But loyalty to word and worship in the end triumphed, and he attended the service, and was afterwards seen weeping in one of the back pews.

“What's the matter?” someone kindly inquired, and it turned out the young man was suffering a crisis of faith. How could God, he demanded, allow such a wicked person to be such a good preacher?<sup>11</sup>

It seems that Dr. Peebles was already accustomed to the Wabash stereotype before he ever stepped foot on campus. But on a more serious note, this young man from the previous story saw firsthand what many future Wabash men would see on a daily basis, namely the powerful lectures by Hall Peebles.

While finishing his last year at Yale, Dr. Peebles was intrigued by the idea of teaching while finishing his Ph.D. dissertation. He let it be known around the divinity school that he was interested in looking for a teaching job. “It so happened that (theologian) Hans Frei, who was from Yale and had taught at Wabash, kept up contact with both Wabash and Yale. In the spring of 1957, (Wabash President) Byron Trippet

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<sup>11</sup> On the Occasion of Hall Peebles' Retirement. May 1998. Speech by William C. Placher



called Frei and asked him if he knew someone who might be interested in a teaching job at Wabash. Hans called my advisor, Claude Welsh, and Claude told him about me.”<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after this time, he was on a plane headed for Indianapolis. He was met at the airport by a student, Joe Johnson, son of Willis Johnson of the Biology Department.

When he was on campus he only met four people. They happened to be Byron K Trippet, the President of the College at the time, Ben Rogge, the Dean, Harry Cotton, the Chair of Division II and Eric Dean, chair of the Religion Department. Peebles said that he immediately liked all of them, and thought that, “If Wabash has people like that, it must be a pretty nice place.”<sup>13</sup> He also said about his first Wabash experience, “If you were to meet four Wabash College faculty and administrators, these are the four you’d want anybody to meet. They were excellent people who made excellent impressions.”<sup>14</sup>

Shortly after this time, he was offered a job in the Religion Department and soon accepted. At the time he felt he would probably not stay more than two or three years before moving on. He liked the students, but felt that Crawfordsville was “a little dull.”<sup>15</sup> After his first year he was offered a second contract which he accepted. Crawfordsville began to grow on him and he soon accepted a three-year appointment, a decision that he says he never really regretted. Thus is the story of how a Southern Gentleman made his way from Georgia to Wabash with a short stop at Yale along the way.

## **Part I. Hall Peebles the Man**

When talking about the character of Hall Peebles one phrase kept coming up. In almost every interview, he was referred to as a Southern Gentleman. Perhaps Dr. Blix

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<sup>12</sup> A Conversation With Hall Peebles. Interview, Wabash Magazine, Summer 1996

<sup>13</sup> From interview conducted on October 2, 2003 in Dr. Peebles Office

<sup>14</sup> Conversation With Hall Peebles

<sup>15</sup> October 2, 2003 Interview

said it best when he stated, “He has a gentlemanly manner and courtesy. I never saw him angry. If he had to disagree, he had a way of saying it. Weeeelllll..... I see it more like this.” Dr. Steve Webb ’83 adds on to this. “He has a Southern graciousness. I’ve never seen him angry or mad.” He also goes on to add that Dr. Peebles avoids conflicts. “He is hesitant to state his personal opinion publicly for the fear of disagreeing.”<sup>16</sup> Placher adds that he is full of kindness and graciousness. He claims that you can disagree with Peebles, “but he’s never impolite, you never get into a fight.”<sup>17</sup> He also brought up the fact that although Peebles and Eric Dean were colleagues for more than twenty-five years, they never exchanged a hostile word. This is a testament to the character of both men.

This all stems from his Southern roots. You can see the humility and the kindness in him when talking to him. No one has a mean word to say about him, but he still carries on as if he were nothing special. He does not consider himself special, in fact he feels lucky to have found such a place as Wabash where he fits in so well.

Perhaps a more appropriate comment about Peebles comes from Blix. He claims that Peebles is a true “Confucian Gentleman.” At first glance this is readily apparent. He has nothing but praise for those who were here before him. This is very similar to the Chinese idea of filial piety. Of Byron K. Trippet he said he was very warm and engaging. He also “gave the best chapel talks I ever heard. He was kind of on a pedestal. For most of Wabash he was the right hand of God.”<sup>18</sup> In a separate interview he referred to him as “God’s own College President.”<sup>19</sup> About Ben Rogge he says, “He was

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<sup>16</sup> From Interview with Steve Webb November 18, 2003, In his office

<sup>17</sup> Placher Interview 11/13/03

<sup>18</sup> Peebles Interview 10/2/03

<sup>19</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30.03

a great Dean. He believed in a free market economy. Things were best when left alone. Never had the sense of the administration interfering. Nobody was butting in.”<sup>20</sup> He claims that Harry Cotton was a “true gentleman of the old school.”<sup>21</sup> Of Eric Dean he said, “We got along quite well; he let me teach what I wanted. He was thoroughly comfortable in the American scene. We never got in one another’s way.”<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Webb characterizes him a little differently. He agrees with the idea of Dr. Peebles’ graciousness, but instead of Confucian, he thinks he is more Buddhist.

There is something of the air of eastern religions that seems to flow through your presence. Or maybe it is just a southern elegance and graciousness. You exude a kind of peacefulness and confidence. You have been the center of the department, in terms of your graceful energy and your positive influence on all of us. I think of you as a kind of Buddhist saint, who keeps so many mysteries within, but who is so open to all.<sup>23</sup>

This idea of him being open to all was readily apparent when I started to work on this project. Peebles was more than willing to sit down with me and answer my questions, as were all of his former students that I interviewed. Everyone who I talked to about this project was more than willing to sit down with me for an hour or so to talk about a man who had such an impact on his or her lives. I almost had a problem of having too much information to work with on this project.

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<sup>20</sup> Peebles Interview 10/2/03

<sup>21</sup> Peebles Interview 10/2/03

<sup>22</sup> Peebles Interview 10/2/03

<sup>23</sup> “On Celebrating your Retirement.” Letter by Steve Webb, 1998.

Dr. Placher offers a similar view of Peebles. Keeping with the idea of eastern religions, he sees Hall as more of a Taoist. In his speech about Peebles' retirement he stated, "Hall really is a Taoist sage, fit company for the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove. In his leadership of our department, committees and the faculty, he perfects the technique of action through inaction."<sup>24</sup> He went on in his speech to quote from the Tao Te Ching to back up his ideas. The one example that seems to fit best is, "A good leader achieves his purpose and stops, But does not seek to dominate the world. He achieves his purpose but does not brag about it..."<sup>25</sup> This is another accurate portrayal of the humility and the kindness that Peebles exudes.

So which of the three religions does he fit into best? Perhaps all of them equally, or perhaps none of them. Perhaps still, he is a combination Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist, Christian sage. Dean Bambrey had much to say about the personality of Peebles. He remembers him as "Eccentric and very learned. I mean that in a fond way. He was a personality."<sup>26</sup> A Renaissance Man if ever there were one. He taught classes all over the Religious Spectrum. He taught Eastern Religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism in Religion 3 and Religion 4. He also taught Western Religions especially Christianity, with classes ranging from the Old Testament to Religious Ethics. He also was very active in teaching Cultures and Traditions as well as a class on the History of Religion. Peter Frederick said, "I always thought of Hall as another member of the History Department. His C and T lectures were superb history lectures."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> On the Occasion of Hall Peebles' Retirement. May 1998. Speech by William C. Placher

<sup>25</sup> On the Occasion of Hall Peebles' Retirement. May 1998. Speech by William C. Placher

<sup>26</sup> Bambrey Interview 10/28/03

<sup>27</sup> Frederick Comment on Rough Draft of this Project, November 22, 2003

Along with his graciousness also comes his affinity for fine wine and fine food. Dr. Blix recalled being invited over to his house for dinner when he was a senior in 1970. This was not a common occurrence as Peebles liked to keep his distance from the students as much as possible. “To him, he chose not to socialize with students other than for faculty dinners or going to his home to have dinner. He thought that it was not right. It didn’t make him seem distant though.”<sup>28</sup> Blix also said that during this time he found out that Hall did most of the cooking for these dinners at his house. This was very odd for him because during this time men did not do a lot of cooking. He recalled Peebles saying something along the lines of, “It’s so nice to get in there and do things with your hands.”<sup>29</sup> This is just one more example of the Hall Peebles that the majority of Wabash never got to see.

Bill Placher has another fond memory of Peebles. He recalled taking Religion Department trips for conferences in Chicago. When the members of the department were out at a restaurant, Peebles would be the center of attention. He would always pick out a great wine, and would often recommend a dish to have. Placher said, “Having dinner with him is always a great experience. He’s a great connoisseur of food and wine.”<sup>30</sup> Dr. Webb recalled a similar experience. After his first year as a member of the faculty, the other Religion professors put on a dinner in his honor. Peebles, “of course, picked out the wine! (And none of us will ever order wine for a religion department function without being a bit nervous about your absence.)”<sup>31</sup> His knowledge of the finer things in life

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<sup>28</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

<sup>29</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Placher 11/13/03

<sup>31</sup> “On Celebrating your Retirement.” Letter by Steve Webb, 1998

went beyond the classroom, as these examples help prove. His reputation as a jack-of-all-trades is well supported by his mastery of the culinary arts.

## **Part II: Hall Peebles the Teacher**

A typical Peebles lecture is not something that is easily forgotten. His style is very dynamic and memorable. After watching him give a Cultures and Traditions lecture on Friday November 14, I was able to see firsthand what so many of his former students have said repeatedly. The way he lectures is like performance. It truly is an honor to watch him perform his craft with such skill and ease. In the fifty-minute lecture about Taoism, very rarely did he glance at his notes. Even rarer did he ever pause or stumble over a word. Yet it seemed to me that he was just simply having a conversation with the audience. His command of the material was amazing, and this is after five years of being retired from teaching. I can only imagine what one of his lectures during the middle of the year must have been like.



Drs. Blix, Webb, Placher, and Dean Bambrey all have vivid memories of him standing before a class delivering one of his famous lectures. Placher remembers them as “Amazing lectures. They were so clear. There was all this material and he presented it in a perfectly organized way.”<sup>32</sup> Placher went on to add that there was always a great deal of humor in a Peebles lecture. He also hits on the idea of the lecture as a performance. He said that there was a sense that Peebles had “absolute command of the material. If you asked him any question he would know the answer.”<sup>33</sup> He also remembered the clarity of

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<sup>32</sup> Placher interview 11/13/03

<sup>33</sup> Placher Interview 11/13/03

the lectures. He commented that one could always take outline notes that were easy to study from come test time. He was also “good at using the blackboard. You never wondered on how to spell anything. He knew exactly what he needed to write down so you could get it in to your notes correctly.”<sup>34</sup> His clarity and his organization were just one part of the dynamic of his lectures.

Webb also claims that Peebles was the best lecturer he ever heard. He said that Peebles is to lecturing, “What Pistol Pete [Maravich] was to the jump shot. There is something calming, graceful, and pure about your lecture. You do not read from notes, and yet there is a flowing elegance to your lectures—like a poem, not one word should be different from what it is. Every word, every gesture is economical, saying exactly what needs to be said. And all the while, the whole performance seems utterly improvisational, utterly spontaneous, as if you were just now thinking these thoughts!”<sup>35</sup> There is a flow to his lecture style that is almost hypnotic. Peebles’ lectures were not the typical C & T lecture type that brings on a forty-five minute nap but rather more like a hypnotic trance where one just gets lost in ideas and concepts, yet somehow manages to leave feeling as though one grasped the material at hand.

Dean Bambrey remembers Peebles as having a great memory. Although he himself never really taught lecture courses, he gained a lot from Peebles’ lectures. Part of the reason he never really lectured in class was because one “just couldn’t be a better lecturer than a guy like Hall. The lectures were educational and entertaining.”<sup>36</sup> He also remembers taking many notes during his time in the classroom with Peebles. Bambrey

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<sup>34</sup> Placher Interview 11/13/03

<sup>35</sup> On Celebrating your Retirement, Steve Webb

<sup>36</sup> Bambrey Interview 10/28/03



remember that Peebles had high standards and high expectations for his students. “I wanted to do well for him in his classes.”<sup>37</sup>

Dr. Blix has memories of Peebles from before his time at Wabash. He remembers as he was growing up in Ladoga, Indiana that Peebles would sometimes fill in on Sundays at the Ladoga Presbyterian Church. He said, “There was no doubt in my mind that Peebles was one of the best lecturers we had ever encountered.”<sup>38</sup> Upon arriving at Wabash, he was amazed by the way Peebles would come into class with only a three by five note card. He remembers the lectures as being, “clear, detailed, eloquent, and funny.”<sup>39</sup> This idea of humor in his lectures what even obvious to me when I was listening to him give a C and T lecture on Taoism. Before concluding his lecture he commented on the irony of giving a lecture on Taoism, when a true Taoist would have been opposed to this. Instead of lecturing he would have preferred meditation, or drinking under the moonlight with Li Po.

Peebles himself had quite a bit to say about his own lecturing abilities. He considered the ability to lecture a skill. He also said that he enjoyed it quite a bit. “You never know what you think until you verbalize it. Lecturing helped me get my thoughts in order.” This seems quite ironic that he used lecturing to organize his thoughts, when everyone seemed to think that they were perfectly ordered and easy to follow. He said he learned a lot about lecturing from preaching and debating. “Debating was a great skill.” As for Preaching, “You want to look your audience in the eyes.”<sup>40</sup> Also, on the fact that he used very few notes in class he had this to say. “Lots of notes got in my way. You

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<sup>37</sup> Bambrey Interview 10/28/03

<sup>38</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

<sup>39</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

<sup>40</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

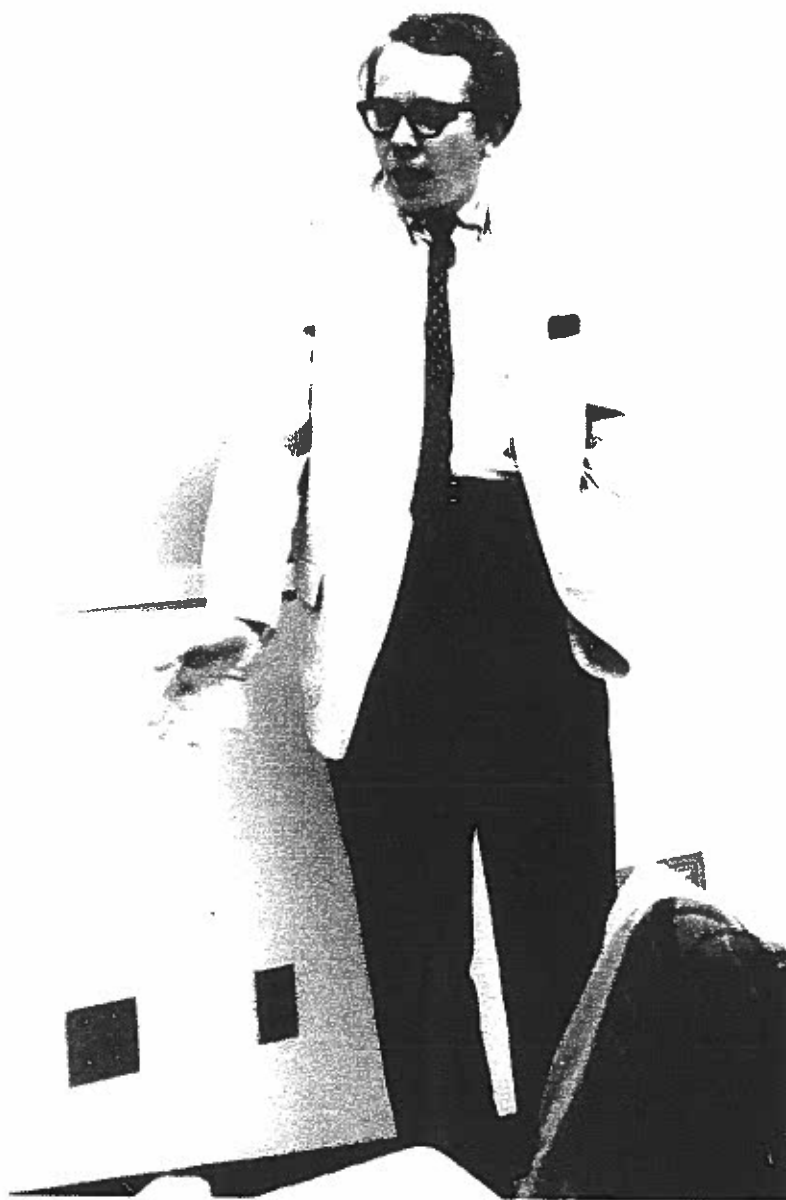
have to have your thoughts in your head, not in your notes.”<sup>41</sup> He claims that the best teachers he ever had were excellent lecturers and that he heard some superb lectures during his time at Yale. A lecture, he claims, gives a certain focus to the material. It seems quite obvious that Peebles was a gifted lecturer, but there was much more to his teachings than just the way he presented it.

After joining the Religion Department in 1958 he was made an assistant professor in 1960, associate professor in 1964 and then a full professor of Religion in 1977. He was then appointed to the Edgar H. Evans Chair of Religion in 1980. Commenting on this, in the Wabash Notes section of the Wabash Magazine in the winter of 1980 Dean Victor Powell had this to say. “In appointing Professor Peebles to the Evans Chair of Religion, Wabash again recognizes distinguished teaching. For more than 20 years, the Old Testament and its prophets have come alive through the teaching and particularly the lecturing of Dr. Peebles. In the future, as in the past, the Evans Chair will continue to gain luster from its holder.”<sup>42</sup> In 1993 and 1994 Peebles served as the acting chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion.

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<sup>41</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

<sup>42</sup> “Peebles Appointed to Evans Chair of Religion” Wabash Magazine Winter 1980



Dr. Blix commented on the style of Peebles, and the way he handled the study of religion. "He brought a humorous irony to the study of religion. He clearly took it seriously, but you don't make a fetish of your religious beliefs and you don't suppress the historical facts associated with it."<sup>43</sup> The Reverend Thomas C. Bartley '93 also agreed

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<sup>43</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

that his approach to the material was quite unique. He remembered, “figuring this class (Old Testament) would only be a glorified version of the Sunday School classes I grew up around. I was wrong. It was in this class that I began to discover that it was all right, even necessary to approach the Bible from a critical viewpoint. In that class the stories of the Bible took on a new life.”<sup>44</sup> These are just a few examples of how Peebles took a different approach to the study of religion than most students had ever had before. This is also quite possibly why he was so effective. Instead of regurgitating tired old stories, he brought a new view of them to class. It seems as though every former student has a fond memory of Peebles telling the story of Amos from the Old Testament. Bambrey adds that people paid attention in his classes. Everyone knew there would be a lot of material to cover, and they knew it would be hard. By the same token, this made students study harder for his tests and thus reach a better understanding of the stories that many of them were already familiar with.

Another aspect of the Peebles teaching style that needs to be touched upon were his classroom mannerisms and the way he used his hands when lecturing. Placher mentioned many of the characteristic gestures that hundreds of Wabash students have come to associate and remember Hall Peebles by. From bobbing his head in a way when listening to students and yet another when speaking on his own to his “wing flapping gestures” that he made with his hands.<sup>45</sup> Another one of his mannerisms, and something that he is remembered for was wiping his mouth with a handkerchief during class. He also had a memorable way of walking around the classroom and all of these things added up to the whole Peebles performance.

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<sup>44</sup> “Like the Sun Rises Strength.” Wabash Magazine Summer 1998: 32.

<sup>45</sup> Placher Interview 11/13/03

Dr. Webb compared his classroom performance to that of a magician. “I never saw Hall sweat or even appear to be working. It all just seems to roll off. You don’t see the labor that goes in to it. You can’t imagine him working hard.” He also claims that this natural feel was “so much a part of his teaching.” He presented a completely coherent package with a splendid story form with out any hesitations. He also echoed Placher’s idea of his hand gestures. “They seemed disconnected. They definitely moved with their own rhythm.”<sup>46</sup> Finally, in Webb’s letter to Peebles upon his retirement he states,

Your lectures... are like rituals. They are reassuring and moving at the same time, timeless, and like all good rituals, one wants to do it again and again, without tiring of hearing them...It will be good for the soul of the College to have you continue to give lectures on China for C and T. We would lose something essential to this place if we could not hear your voice, listen to your pauses, see your characteristic gestures.<sup>47</sup>

Another part of the Peebles mystique comes from his legendary Chapel Speeches. Two of the most famous are from his Monon Bell Chapels. One of them, entitled “The Tribe of the Dan,” relates Depauw to the least respectable of the tribes of Israel. Peebles himself claims that the “Dannies were an offshoot of them. I had fun with that.”<sup>48</sup> But then again humbles himself by saying, “You could recite nursery rhymes and people would still cheer” during the Monon Bell Chapels.”<sup>49</sup> The following is from a portion of one of these speeches that appeared in the 1982 yearbook, The Wabash. “Because they

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<sup>46</sup> Webb Interview 11/19/03

<sup>47</sup> On celebrating your retirement! Webb, 1998

<sup>48</sup> First Peebles Interview

<sup>49</sup> First Peebles Interview

have coveted their neighbors' Bell, they shall never possess the Bell, and it shall remain in stronger hands than theirs all the days of their lives, and they shall hear its sounds ringing in their ears, and they shall lust after it, but they shall be forever frustrated.



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The other famous speech and a favorite of Dr. Placher had a Taoist feel to it. It follows the general idea of "Let Depauw beat themselves." It hits on the Taoist idea that

the way to be successful is through inaction. Unfortunately, Peebles never wrote down the words to his speeches. He claimed that the ideas just kind of came to him while he was preparing to give the speeches. He could not remember any of the great lines from the speech and I was not able to find any written copies of the speech in the archives.



Another theme that needs to be mentioned when it comes to Peebles the Teacher is his own personal love of learning. According to Dr. Blix, “He reads constantly. You don’t see that in public. He keeps his light under a bushel. All you see is the end result.”<sup>50</sup> This goes hand in hand with what Placher and Webb call his brilliant memory. Placher said, “He does have something like a photographic memory. It really is visual

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<sup>50</sup> Blix Interview

and quite amazing”<sup>51</sup> while Webb stated, “It might be photographic. Every detail seems to be right there in his brain.”<sup>52</sup>

One more example of Peebles’ love for learning needs to be mentioned. The man has traveled all across the globe in order to get a firsthand experience of what he teaches. From spending a year in Italy or Switzerland to experience European life or from his numerous travels through Asia he has done it. Whether it be voyaging to India to better understand Hinduism, or China to better understand Confucianism and Taoism, or traveling to Japan to see Shinto and Buddhism up close, Peebles has experienced all that the world has to offer. Having his summers free allowed him to experience things that the average person can only dream of.

To understand how much he has traveled you have to look at the story of how he met his wife. He claims, “I had to go to Rome to meet Emmy.”<sup>53</sup> In a piece for the Wabash Magazine, he expounded further on this.

I met Emmy while traveling in Rome in 1961. I was staying at a hotel called the Flora that had a wonderful bar. There weren’t that many air-conditioned places in Rome in 1961, and the Hotel Flora had this very comfortable basement bar with superb air conditioning.... I was waiting to meet another American I’d met there who had the unlikely name John Smith, reading the *Herald Tribune*, and there was a guy there who ran a hardware store in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was a gregarious type, sort of sociable- a salesman type. He’d had a drink or two and was feeling sort of mellow and he got the bright idea that all the Americans in the bar should

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<sup>51</sup> Placher Interview

<sup>52</sup> Webb Interview 11/19/03



meet one another. So he went around introducing himself and introducing people to each other- a Chamber of Commerce sort of thing- and he introduced Emmy to me. John Smith came in about that time, and since we were going to dinner, we asked Emmy to come to dinner with us. She joined us. So you could say that Emmy and I were formally introduced. When I found out she was teaching at Eastern Illinois in Charleston, which is almost an even 100 miles from here, I thought that I might go see her again sometime. I made that trip many times.”<sup>54</sup>

This story sounds like a typical Wabash man. He finds the woman of his dreams while taking a break in a bar. This whole story was left in here for a few reasons. First of all, it shows just how remarkable Peebles’ memory is. More than 40 years later he can remember the name of the man he was having dinner with, and even more remarkable he can remember that the man who introduced himself and Emmy was a hardware store owner from Lincoln, Nebraska. It also shows the kindness and gentlemanly manner of Hall Peebles. Despite the fact that he knew nothing about her, or the man that introduced them, he still invited Emmy to dinner with him and his other new friend. After spending some time with Dr. Peebles you cannot doubt this story at all, and can even visualize this experience exactly as he describes it.

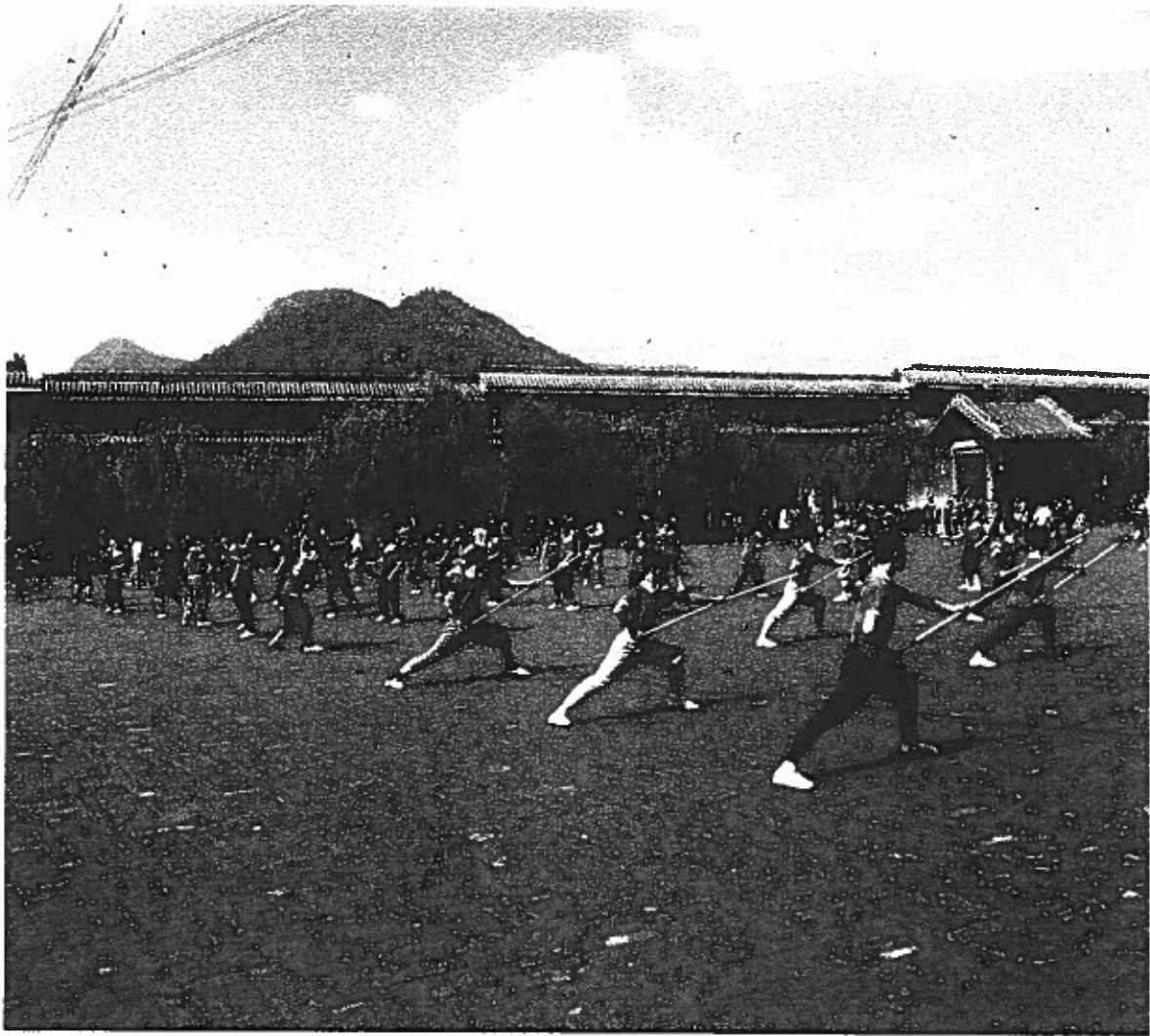
Along with his travels throughout the world one must comment on his skill as a photographer. Peebles has the eye of a gifted photojournalist. His photos look like they came out of a National Geographic Magazine. Whether it be shooting through a hole in the Great Wall or watching a martial arts practice in Shaolin his photos are amazing.

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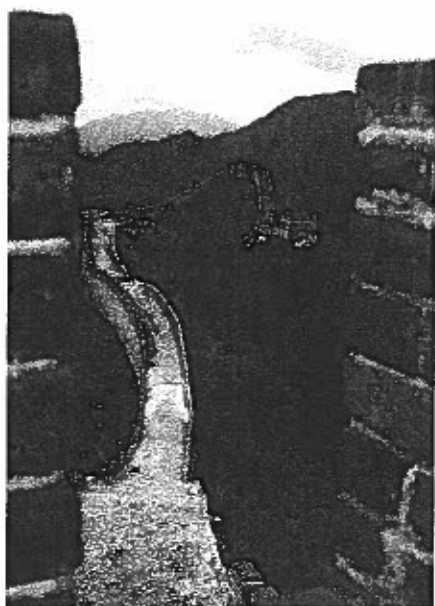
<sup>53</sup> First Peebles Interview

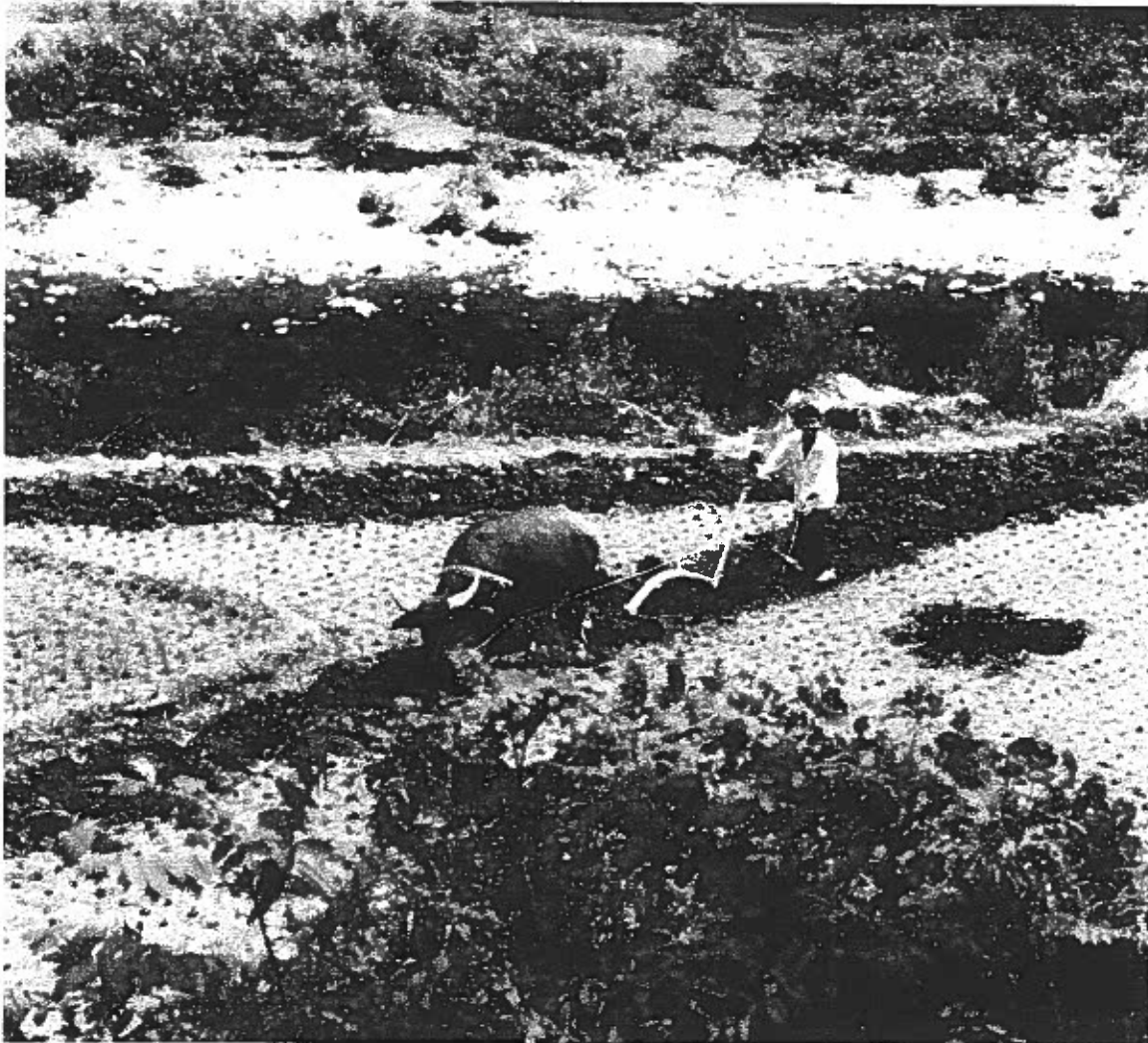
<sup>54</sup> Wabash Magazine Interview





In addition, while he does manage to capture images of famous places such as the Great Wall in China or the Emperors Palace, he also manages to capture the everyday people toiling over their own work. His pictures are some of the most amazing images I have ever seen, and yet he still humbly shrugs them off as if it were no big deal. He always seems to make the viewer see exactly what he is supposed to see. Whether it is a sculpture into the side of a mountain or a typical migrant worker it is purely amazing how he captures the image, and makes the viewer feel as if he is standing right there next to Peebles as he snaps his photos





### **Part Three. Hall Peebles as a Renaissance (Wabash) Man**

Aside from his teaching, Peebles was very involved on the Wabash campus during his forty years as a member of the Wabash faculty. He served as the secretary of the faculty from 1975 until 1997. For twenty-two years, the highlight of the faculty meetings was listening to him read the minutes from the previous meeting. Dr. Blix recalls, "He was very precise and careful. The minutes were full of elegant prose. It was

a pleasure to listen to him read the minutes.”<sup>55</sup> Professor of History Peter Frederick commented in a History 498 class that, Peebles had an “elegantly entertaining and witty way of reading the minutes.”<sup>56</sup> He also called his style “Peeblesque”, a term referring to his unique and memorable way of speaking. After looking through the minutes, his attention to detail is blatantly obvious.

Peebles had a few comments on his role as well. He said he thoroughly enjoyed serving as the secretary. One of his roles as secretary was introducing the graduating seniors at Commencement. He greatly enjoyed this part of his job. “Kind of makes you feel good,”<sup>57</sup> he said about being the last voice the students heard before they got their diplomas each May. His Southern accent helped add to the aura that surrounded him on these special occasions.



WABASH COLLEGE  
160th Commencement  
May 17, 1998

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<sup>55</sup> Blix Interview 10/16/03

<sup>56</sup> Taken from 498 discussion, October 2003

<sup>57</sup> First Peebles Interview

Peebles was also very active in the restructuring of the curriculum. One of his proudest moments as a member of the Wabash community was helping to bring in other cultures into the curriculum. Along with Paul McKinney, Jack Charles and Peter Frederick, in the mid 1970's he helped change the formerly required Contemporary Civilizations course to the Cultures and Traditions course that all sophomores are required to take. The previous course was entirely Western. It focused on the Greeks, Hebrews, Europeans and a few readings by Native Americans. He "came to think that it was too narrow and it should be broadened out. We only studied dead white males."<sup>58</sup> Professor Frederick was in favor of bringing other voices into the class such as African Americans and Women. Peebles agreed and suggested bringing in some Asian sources as well. They both reminded the faculty that the term "Cultures" was in the title. "There was an emphasis on the plural"<sup>59</sup> that was not present at the time. This is only one part of the curriculum change that he had a part in, but he felt that the group was very effective in selling this point.

This brings up another side of Peebles. Placher recalled that, "He was never impolite. You could disagree, but you never got into a fight with him. One of his gifts is he won't say a lot, and you won't feel he's pushing his opinion but he still wins"<sup>60</sup> when it is all said and done. His ability to speak well and his kind demeanor helped him accomplish many things on the Wabash campus.

Along with the positions that he held on campus, Peebles was also a great mentor to his students. Dr. Blix brings forward the idea, "He modeled the idea that you take students with the utmost seriousness. They are younger, and don't know what you do but

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<sup>58</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

<sup>59</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

it is your job to guide them to that.”<sup>61</sup> Peebles refers to the class of 1970 as a special class. He also claims that he can probably remember every student he had in the first two years of teaching here. He said, “I taught a lot of very good students. As long as there are former students here (working at Wabash) by no means do I claim credit. It’s just nice to know that I had a hand in teaching them.”<sup>62</sup>

Dr. Blix talked about Peebles role as a colleague in the Religion Department. He said Peebles was a type of mentor to him when he began teaching at Wabash. From his first day, Peebles treated him like he was a colleague. Blix also said, “It was hard to learn to call him Hall.”<sup>63</sup> He also stated that he still consults with Peebles when he thinks of changing some of the material in Religion 103 or Religion 104, both former classes of Peebles. Placher commented that the transition from student to colleague was very easy with Peebles. “It seemed very smooth. He was so gracious, he made the change comfortable.”<sup>64</sup> He claimed that this was not so with all of his former professors. This just contributed to the aura of Hall Peebles and helped add to his mystique as a Renaissance Man.

## **Part Four: The Essence of Hall Peebles**

So what is it that makes Hall Peebles so unique? What is it that places him among the favorite professors of so many Wabash students? What is the essence of Hall Peebles? There are many different views on this, I am sure that if I asked one hundred former students, I would get one hundred different answers. Nevertheless, they all seem to have one thread or one theme in common. The fact that he is an ideal gentleman left

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<sup>60</sup> Placher Interview 11/13/03

<sup>61</sup> Blix Interview

<sup>62</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

<sup>63</sup> Blix Interview



an indelible impression on every one of his former students. Dr. Webb calls it a Southern thing. “He is a very mysterious man. He’s very open and gracious and warm, but you are never sure what he really thinks. He keeps his private self to himself. But this is part of his charm.”<sup>65</sup>

Dean Bambrey stated, “He truly is a gentleman. He’s a throwback to an earlier era. It comes from his roots in the South.” He also said that everyone “admires him because he treats people right.”<sup>66</sup> His Southern charm and his kind nature left their mark on everyone he met. Blix feels that the best way to sum up Hall Peebles is as “A consummate gentleman scholar. To say any more would be to move away from it.”<sup>67</sup> These representations are very accurate. The only other word that I would add to this mix would be humble. The man has accomplished so much in his time here and has affected so many people. He deserves all the praise in the world, yet he always shrugs it off and instead chooses to praise others. His favorite moments include helping rewrite the curriculum and announcing the graduating seniors. One of the only times he even mentioned an award or praise as one of his favorite moments was when he was talking about the McLain-McTurnan Outstanding Teacher Award that he won. He did not even know the exact name of the award, and just mentioned it in passing. I had to do some research to find out what he was talking about but it sounds as if it is a teacher of the year award. Yet like everything else, he simply shrugs it off as if it were nothing; another tireless example of his gentlemanly nature. He also mentioned being made an honorary

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<sup>64</sup> Placher Interview

<sup>65</sup> Webb Interview

<sup>66</sup> Bambrey Interview

<sup>67</sup> Blix Interview

member of the Sphinx Club as a “great honor”<sup>68</sup> because it came from the students. Similarly, he was very pleased to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men because it came from former students.

As I come to a close on this project, I still feel that I have not done Peebles justice. I am left with the feeling that I have not captured him well enough, or that I have not given him what he deserves. I know that when he reads this, he will get the same smile across his face that I saw when he was recalling some of his experiences here at Wabash. Yet it still feels as if it is an incomplete work. Perhaps the only way to get at the essence of Hall Peebles and what he has meant to so many Wabash Men is to spend time with him. It is extremely difficult to put into words just who he is, and why he is so revered.

One thing about him is that he is consistent. Every day for the past four years, I have seen him walking across campus to Kingery to go to his office. He no longer teaches, he no longer serves as the secretary to the faculty, yet he still makes the trek around the mall from his house on Wabash Avenue across campus to Kingery every morning.

He continues to give C & T lectures on China in the fall. Many of the students who hear these lectures are completely unaware of his legend. They have no idea how many alumni would eagerly come back to campus for one day to hear Yahweh speak on something he knows so well. Perhaps Dean Bambrey said it best about his return to Wabash after 30 years teaching elsewhere. “Thirty years later he proved that we don’t change. There was Hall Peebles, doing the same thing he did when I was a student. That

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<sup>68</sup> Peebles Interview December 12, 2003

was a real treat for me.”<sup>69</sup> Peebles put his time and energy, his heart and soul into Wabash and is quite happy about the fact that it remains very similar to the same school it was when he arrived here forty-five years ago. He readily admits that there is a much better physical plan than when he arrived but, “In spite of all the physical changes, Wabash is very much what I remember from 1958. People make the college, not the buildings. We continue to have good quality, serious students and a faculty that is a little more sophisticated who are still interested in teaching. The changes have been good but not all that sweeping. We are doing the same things we’ve always done, maybe a little better.”<sup>70</sup> Peebles himself is another one of those things about Wabash that has not changed in the last forty-five years.

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<sup>69</sup> Bambrey Interview

<sup>70</sup> Peebles Interview 10/30/03

## Appendix I. Peebles' Photos



China, Beijing, Imperial Palace



China, Tienamin Square.

## Appendix II. Other Documents

### "That Once Was The Dannies"

*The following passage was taken from Hall Paschke address to 400 "sons of Wabash" on the eve of the 88th Annual Monon Ball Classic.*

"For three transgressions of the Dannies and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, says Wallace of the Wabash.

Because they have coveted their neighbors' bell, they shall never possess the bell, and it shall remain in stronger hands than theirs all the days of their lives, and they shall hear its sounds ringing in their ears, and they shall lust after it, but they shall be forever frustrated.

Because they have defaced their neighbors' campus, they shall fall before Stan Parrish and his mighty men, and they shall be powerless before the run, before the pass, and before the field goal, and they shall see many points on the scoreboard, but none shall be theirs, and they shall hear many cheers, but none shall praise them.

Because they have broken their neighbors' windows, their own conceit will be broken. And because they have stolen their neighbors' banner, their tiger's tail will be cut in pieces. And because they have dared to oppose the sons of Wabash in open combat, they shall be cut off out of the

land of the living, and their name shall perish from the face of the earth.

But with the sons of Wabash it is not so. The sons of Wabash will possess the goals of the Dannies, and the mighty men of Parrish will trample the faces of the Dannies in the mud, and the hosts of Wabash will arise in the stands of the Dannies and call their team blessed. And even the Dannies will remember that giants trod once again upon the earth that day.

And the sons of Wabash will possess the women of the Dannies, and will bear them triumphantly away from Greencastle to a fair land to the north, a land flowing with beer, yea with much fine beer and with other pleasures that gladden the hearts of men, and there they shall dwell securely and in happiness all the days of their lives. And the sons of Wabash shall leave the shadow of their own vines, and their own fig trees, only once a year, as they travel triumphantly to and from Phoenix City, and as they pass a brown spot on the Indiana earth, they will say, that once was the Dannies."

Taken from The Wabash, 1982.

Hall Peebles

14 November, 2003

### Introduction

The primary texts of classical Taoism  
Tao Te Ching ("The Classic of the Way and Its Virtue [or Power],"  
attributed to Lao Tzu, c. 6th or 4th cen. B.C.)  
Chuang Tzu (c. 399-295 B.C.)

The historical setting  
The "Warring States" Era (circa 403-221 B.C.)  
Longing for a Golden Age in remote antiquity  
Simplicity and naturalness of the past  
The evils of government and technology

### The Taoist in Society: How best to live in an evil time?

Withdraw, or refrain from unnatural activity?  
With Chuang Tzu on the river bank  
The paradox of wu-wei  
Criticisms of Confucius  
Freedom  
Unconventional behavior and spontaneity (e.g., Liu Ling)  
The freedom to conform

### Living in Harmony with the Tao

The Tao is elusive, but it is everywhere.  
The Tao is a dynamic pattern or energy, but it is not a thing.  
The Tao can be found, but it cannot be expressed in words.  
The Tao appears weak and lowly, but it ultimately prevails.  
The Tao is power, but it precludes artificiality and excessive striving.  
Images of the Tao: water, the valley, the female, the infant, the  
void  
Two methods of flood control: Kun and Yü

### The True Man

Identity of opposites  
Yin and Yang  
Indifference to life and death  
Monism ("The Uncarved Block")  
Unity gives rise to multiplicity, which returns to unity.  
The perils of language  
Being and non-being  
The importance of knowing what to seek

## Later Taoist Developments

The search for long and healthy life

Sometimes leading to the quest for immortality

Ways toward long/healthy/immortal life

1. Meditation (including breath control)
2. Exercise and proper diet
3. Alchemy (search for elixir of immortality)
4. Search for magic plant or drug

Taoist priests and masters

Importance of ritual

Taoism, science, and medicine

Chinese inventions

Gunpowder, compass, printing press

Poetry

Li Po, "Drinking in Moonlight"

Painting

"Mountain and Water" (Landscape painting)

Yin and Yang



## Postscript

Taoism and Legalism

Action through inaction (wu-wei)

Taoism and War

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

A quotation from Mao Tse-tung (1936)

Confucianism and Taoism

"Waking on two legs"

Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism as responses to an age of disorder

The end of the warring states Era

The Ch'in Empire (221-206 B.C.)

The Han Empire (206 B.C.-220 A.D.)

"Though the hundred rivers rise from different sources, they all find their destination in the sea; though the hundred schools of philosophy teach different methods, they all seek the ordering of the state." – The Huai-nan Tzu (second century B.C.).



**PART I: CLASSICAL CHINA**

Jan. 10	Religion in the Shang Era	
12	Religion in the Chou Era	Chan, 3-13; Sommer, 13-19
15	Confucius	Chan, 14-48
17	Mo Tzu	Sommer, 49-54
19	Mencius and Hsün Tzu	Sommer, 55-70
22	The I Ching	Chan, 244-250; Sommer, 3-6
24	The Tao Te Ching	Chan, 136-176
26	Chuang Tzu	Chan, 177-210
29	Legalism	Chan, 251-261
31	The Ch'in and Han Empires	Sommer, 85-98
Feb. 2	Confucianism under the Han	Chan, 271-288, 292-304
5	Taoism under the Han	Chan, 289-291, 305-308
7*	The Collapse of the Han Order	Sommer, 101-116
9	Neo-Taoism	Chan, 309-335
12	<b>TEST</b>	

**PART II: BUDDHISM**

14	The Indian Background of Buddhism	No assigned reading
16	The Coming of Buddhism to China	Sommer, 119-132
19	Early Chinese Buddhism	Chan, 336-342
21	Schools of Chinese Buddhism	Chan, 396-424
23	Buddhism under the T'ang	Sommer, 165-180
26	Buddhism and Confucianism in the Sung	Sommer, 183-198
28	Neo-Confucianism	Chan, 544-571
Mar. 1	Religion under the Mongols and the Ming	Sommer, 199-223, 233-246
	<b>Spring Vacation</b>	
11	Buddhism in Tibet	No assigned reading
13	Buddhism and Confucianism in Korea	No assigned reading
15	Pre-Buddhist Japan: Shinto	Tsunoda, 1-33
18	The Coming of Buddhism to Japan	Tsunoda, 34-37, 42-60
20	Early Japanese Buddhism	Tsunoda, 91-132
22	Pure Land Buddhism	Tsunoda, 184-212
25*	Buddhism in the Kamakura Period	Tsunoda, 213-225
27	The Chinese Origins of Zen Buddhism	Sommer, 155-164
29	The Coming of Zen to Japan	Tsunoda, 226-255
Apr. 1	Zen and Japanese Culture	Tsunoda, 255-260, 277-297
3	<b>TEST</b>	

**PART III: CHINA AND JAPAN IN MODERN TIMES**

5	The Jesuits in China	Sommer, 249-278
8	Missionaries and Gunboats	No assigned reading
10	The Breakdown of Confucian China	Chan, 723-750
12	Confucians, Christians, and Communists	Sommer, 281-302
15	Religion in Republican China	No assigned reading
17	Religion in Communist China	Sommer, 303-329
19	Tokugawa Japan	Tsunoda, 298-334
22	Meiji Japan	Tsunoda, 493-496
24*	Religion in Twentieth Century Japan	No assigned reading
26	Contemporary Japanese Religion	Sommer, 331-348

\*Dates on which papers are due.

Grades in Religion 4 are assigned upon the following basis:

Three short papers, each 10%

Two hour tests, each 20%

One final examination, 30%

The papers are due on February 7, March 25, and April 24. You are welcome to submit an outline or first draft of your paper for an informal evaluation any time before the due date, but please bear in mind that late papers will not be accepted.

Each paper is to be no more than three pages in length. The primary source for each paper should be the assigned readings. In addition, you may refer to other materials of any sort, though you need not do so. You will probably want to write on one of the suggested topics below; but if there is some topic which interests you, you are invited to discuss it with the instructor.

Possible Paper Topics for February 7:

Classical Chinese philosophers have never doubted or denied the existence of Heaven (T'ien), but they have often expressed different views about the nature of Heaven. Select two philosophers from the classical period and discuss their understanding(s) of Heaven. What are their major points of agreement and disagreement? Why do they regard the nature of Heaven to be important to man?

**OR**

Confucianism came ultimately to dominate the "Great Tradition" of Chinese intellectual life, and for over two thousand years Mo Tzu has been of interest mainly to historians and students of Chinese philosophy. However, for about two centuries Moism (the philosophy based on Mo Tzu's teachings) was a principal (and perhaps the principal) rival to Confucianism. What do you see as the major differences between Confucianism and Moism? Are there any significant points of agreement between the two? Why in your opinion did Confucianism eventually triumph over Moism? Which of the two do you yourself find the more appealing?

Possible Paper Topics for March 25:

Is it possible for a person to be both a Buddhist and a Confucianist? Please give your own answer to this question, with supporting reasons. Then refer more briefly to at least one individual from Chinese history who would agree with you and one who would disagree.

**OR**

What are the principal features of Pure Land Buddhism? How do you account for the rapid growth and continued popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in both China and Japan?

Possible Paper Topics for April 24:

What was Mao Tse-tung's view or opinion of religion (particular religions or "religion in general") in his early years (until about 1927) and in his later life (the 1960s and 1970s)? What changes do you see? Are there any constant factors? How do you account for Mao's attitude(s) towards religion?

**OR**

Compare the religious policies of the Tokugawa Shogunate with those of the Meiji Era in Japan. What are the major continuities? What are the major differences? How do you account for the policies followed by the Tokugawa and by the Meiji governments?

This is intended as a two-hour examination, though you may use the entire three hours if you wish. Write on two of the following:

1. Buddhism has traditionally seen itself as a missionary religion, and in the centuries following the parinirvana or death of Sakyamuni (Gautama, the historical Buddha), Buddhism spread far beyond its original homeland into much of south, central, and east Asia. Discuss the coming of Buddhism into East Asia, i.e., into China and Japan, though references to Korea are also appropriate. How did Buddhism reach these countries? What form or forms of Buddhism eventually won acceptance (or partial acceptance) in China and Japan? What has been the role or status of Buddhism in China and Japan in the last two hundred years or so? (As most of you wrote your second paper about the debates concerning Buddhism in Japan in 538 or 552 and in China in 819, it is unnecessary to consider either of these controversies again.) How do you evaluate the place or function of Buddhism in China and Japan today?
2. Most or perhaps all religions are concerned with the individual and what might be called his or her private goals, such as salvation, enlightenment, or the attainment of immortality or nirvana, however these might be defined. However, religions in China and Japan (and presumably elsewhere as well) also have things to say about human communities on this earth, about what the social order is or should be, and about the state or nation. That is, Asian religions have views or opinions about government, the relation of subjects to rulers, and human society in general. What are the teachings of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Shinto concerning the proper ordering or government of human beings on this earth? What form of government do they advocate, and what do they see as the privileges and responsibilities of rulers? (You need not treat all four traditions in the same full detail, but please include some reference to both China and Japan.)
3. Imagine that you are a Chinese student about to graduate from Beijing (Peking) National University in 1921 or 1922. You have received an excellent education in both traditional Chinese and in modern Western thought. There are several options open to you. You have been offered scholarships to attend a leading American university, where you can study either natural or political science, and you are also offered the opportunity to remain in China and study traditional Chinese philosophy. Your two best friends have been offered similar scholarships and have turned them down, one because he intends to become a Buddhist monk and the other because he is going to join the Chinese Communist Party. Each urges you to remain in China and join him. What would you do, and why?
4. For well over two thousand years, all educated Chinese have had to adopt some positions toward Confucius and Confucianism. Some have regarded Confucius as the supreme sage and have sought to follow his teachings in every situation; some have denounced him and everything he advocated. Others have sought to combine elements of Confucianism with some other philosophy or religion such as Taoism, Buddhism, or Christianity; but no Chinese intellectual has ever been able to ignore Confucius or Confucianism. Select five or more individuals from several periods of Chinese history who represent different evaluations or interpretations of Confucius and Confucianism, and indicate in some detail how they regard Confucius and Confucianism.