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## Contemporary Chinese Translation as a Response to the Western Vision of Globalization

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### Abstract

Contemporary Chinese translation of the West as part of China's dream of rejuvenation started with unstable foundations when Communist China was opened to a West that was guided by the neo-liberal vision of globalization. This has developed into a complex pattern of interplay among different forces, both domestic and international, for their own political ends through translation. Being conditioned by a general market-as-theology mentality, Chinese translation has a long way to go in reclaiming its hermeneutic and intercultural value, possibly through inter-civilizational dialogue between the traditional Chinese notion of Great Harmony and the dominating Western vision of globalization.

### Where Contemporary Chinese Translation Started

#### *Contemporary Chinese Translation of the West and Globalization*

In China, the word *contemporary* usually refers to the current period of time beginning from the end of 1978, when the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was held in Beijing from Dec.18 to Dec.22. Among other things, the Plenary Session brought an end to the radical Maoism of class struggle, and shifted the focus to economic development through opening China's door to the rest of the world (see Zhu *et al* eds., 1992). This state policy placed a heavy political emphasis on translation, which was expected to pave the way for the tremendous historical re-orientation and transition in terms of politics, economy, diplomatic relations, military affairs, science and technology, society, education, and culture.

The trajectory of this ongoing massive translation presents itself as being kaleidoscopic, confusing, contradictory, and at times ironic, fundamentally different from the previous, some 380-year-old Sinocentric, anti-colonial, self-colonizing, and de-colonizing translation of the West (see Guo, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008). One could hardly make sense of what has been happening without putting it in the context of globalization, whose Chinese equivalent, *quanqiuhua*, came into being through translation.

Globalization, according to Smith (2000), can be understood in two phases or modalities - as facticity and as imaginary. In terms of *facticity*, globalization refers to the current global physical condition of inter-connection, inter-relatedness, and inter-dependence starting from the Great Discoveries, and the conflicting tension between Euro-American globalizing agendas and projects based upon the global forces of resistance to the same. In terms of *imaginary*, it refers mainly to regnant essentialist and formulaic Euro-American economic theory, derived from Christian Fall and Redemption mythology and the Enlightenment Reason, which claims itself to be universally applicable. It is fundamentally the old colonial dream disguised in the new vision of globalization.

When globalization is regarded as a Euro-American dream of empire extending into the postcolonial world, it is easier to see that contemporary Chinese translation of the West has been in the form of varied responses to that Western vision. These mixed and constantly changing responses as reflected in textual, verbal, and cultural translations have been both active and passive, positive and negative, friendly and hostile. They have taken place at different levels and in different dimensions—personal, communal, group, social, and national, constituting a dynamic picture of various competing forces at work: individual vs. collective, private vs. public, elite vs. the masses, conservative vs. radical, reform-minded vs. revolution-minded, official vs. non-official, and national vs. international. In this paper, the author intends to show some patterns of interaction and interplay between and among different players of translation that is contextualized within the vision of a globalization of Western design, and that has to be redefined and reshaped through global inter-translation.

### *Mao's Legacy in Translation*

Contemporary Chinese translation of the West started on a shaky and almost undermined basis within an essentially anti-translation mentality as a result of the disastrous Great Cultural Revolution (1966-76). When Chairman Mao and many other founding fathers of the New China had “gone to see Marx” (a phrase Mao had used to refer to a Communist’s death) toward the end of 1976, they left behind a world of linguistic, intellectual, and cultural poverty and disorientation, with a completely destroyed infrastructure for translation. Under Mao’s leadership, translation had been used as a political weapon and manipulated as part of the Communist propaganda to achieve ideological unification and build a revolutionary discourse. Translating the West had been accomplished through actually an absence of translation in any intercultural sense (see Guo, 2007).

In terms of language and culture, China had been confined to the vocabulary and grammar of a revolutionary language that expressed anything but culture in its usual sense. Mao’s practice of personality cult did not allow his people to think or to speak with him. Instead, he was thinking and speaking for the whole nation. This was achieved, first and foremost, through abolishing of the national education system during the Cultural Revolution. Elementary and secondary schools were carrying out Mao’s ‘open-door education,’ by which is meant that students were for the most part to do physical labour in factories or out in the fields rather than study in the classroom. Higher education institutions were basically shut down. According to Zhu *et al.* (1992, p.810), within ten years, over sixteen million urban graduates from primary and middle schools were sent to the countryside to be ‘re-educated’ by peasants.

Secondly in those ten years, what the Chinese had access to was mostly Mao’s ‘Little Red Book’ containing decontextualized excerpts from the four volumes of Mao’s selected works. What they could see and watch were the “Eight Revolutionary Model Plays”<sup>1</sup> of “lofty, noble and perfect” revolutionary heroes without family ties or human love, as well as a few equally revolutionary movies from North Korea, Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Thirdly, virtually every day people had to attend what was called “Mental/Ideological Struggle Meetings,” at which each and every one had to conduct self-criticism in the light of Mao’s teachings.

All those processes, called *brainwashing* in the West, did work, in a way. Gradually the Chinese could conceive or think of their individual and collective life only in revolutionary terms. Ironically, most

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<sup>1</sup> These were revolutionary operas clothed in the forms of the traditional Beijing Opera and ballet opera under the supervision of Mao’s wife Jiang Qing. They were made into movies and played everywhere in the country. They include: *Hong deng ji* (The Red Lantern), *Sha jia bang*, *Qixi baihutuan* (Raid on the White Tiger Regiment), *Zhiqu weihushan* (Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy), *Hai gang* (On the Docks), *Long jiang song*, *Hongse niangzijun* (Red Detachment of Women) and *Baimaonu* (The White-Haired Girl).

daily vocabulary, including terms such as *class struggle*, *proletarian*, *bourgeois*, *petit bourgeois*, *political criterion*, were translated or borrowed from the West or Soviet Union. To some extent, the Chinese language or speech that was used had become devoid of worldly, earthly, or human concerns. The nation seemed to have been, culturally, moved to a linguistic 'outer space' that was cut off from either the traditional Confucian or the contemporary living Western discourses of human life (see Guo, 2002).

With regard to the infrastructure of translation, there was a shortage of qualified translators. Most of the older generation of translators had been either persecuted to death or disengaged from any translation practice. The foreign language education policies practiced in the previous three decades had allowed little space for a new generation of translators to grow. For example, from 1949 to 1956, Russian was the dominating foreign language taught in seven colleges and institutes specializing in Russian. It was also offered in 17 universities that had Russian faculties or departments as well as in a large number of normal colleges and universities. In secondary and post-secondary education, Russian was a compulsory course. In comparison, up until the end of 1956, English was taught only in 23, French in 5 and German in 4 universities with corresponding specialties (see Fu, 1988, pp.68-69).

From 1966 to 1976, foreign language education became one of the focal targets of the Cultural Revolution. The popular slogan was "Without learning ABC, (one can) still be a good revolutionary." As Fu wrote (*ibid.* p.84. Translation mine):

Ignorant-ism and radical nationalism were assiduously propagated and boosted... The big sticks of "worshipping things foreign and fawning on foreigners" and "maintaining illicit relations with foreign countries" were vigorously waved to readily come down on anyone. Anything that had the character *wai* (foreign) was said to be reactionary. Anything foreign was absolutely forbidden. Numerous foreign classics were sealed up, and no modern or contemporary foreign literature was permitted (to come into China). As for foreign newspapers, magazines, radio broadcast, movies in the original-all these were forbidden zones which nobody dared to approach. Those older or middle-aged teachers who had returned to China from abroad before liberation or had been sent to study overseas by the government after liberation were distrusted as "special agents" or "spies," and were all placed on file for investigation and prosecution. Those teachers and students who showed high academic performances were labeled as "only expert but not red," or "revisionist seedlings." Large numbers of teachers and students were sent to the remote countryside "to be re-educated by the peasants."

Ironically, it was during this time that China established diplomatic relationships with many countries: 5 including Canada, Italy and Chile in 1970; 15 including Austria, Belgium, Iran and Peru in 1971; 16 including Japan, United Kingdom, West Germany, New Zealand, Australia and Mexico in 1972. In February 1972, President Nixon visited China and signed the Shanghai Joint Communique (see Fu, 1988). Up to this point, politically and diplomatically China had rejoined the international community. In order to meet the needs of the new international ties, a number of foreign language colleges and faculties began to restore foreign language courses from 1971. However, the domestic political climate forced, for example, English education to use anything but contemporary colloquial English in class. Since anything written by foreigners was categorized as 'feudal, bourgeois and revisionist,' to protect students from 'being poisoned,' only English translations of political writings by Mao or about Mao Zedong Thought were adopted as texts. Consequently, the very first thing a Chinese student of English learned was "Long live Chairman Mao" and "Long live the Communist Party of China" (see Guo, 1999).

It was against the above background that contemporary Chinese translation set out on its historical mission on the Chinese Communist Party's agendas for national rejuvenation through the Four Moderniza-

tions (of industry, agriculture, defence, and science and technology). Defined as part of the superstructure, it was under the tight control of the Four Cardinal Principles<sup>1</sup> laid out by Deng Xiaoping (1904-97). In one of his most important speeches about the Four Principles delivered on March 30, 1979, Deng (2001. Translation mine) said:

We must selectively, and in an orderly manner, import advanced technologies and other useful things from capitalist countries. But we will never learn or introduce capitalist systems; we will never learn or introduce various ugly and decadent things (from those countries)... We should introduce to the people, particularly young people, the progressive and useful things, and criticize the reactionary and decadent things from capitalist countries.

We have, for many years, ignored studies of political science, law, sociology, and international politics. We should urgently do some makeup work. Most of our ideological and theoretical workers should specialize in one or several areas of studies. Those who are able to learn foreign languages should learn foreign languages, to the extent that they can read, without any difficulty, major foreign works in social sciences and humanities. We have already admitted that we have lagged way behind foreign countries in natural sciences. Now we should also admit that our research in social sciences and humanities (in aspects that are comparable) has fallen behind foreign countries. Our level is very low. For many years, we have not even had statistical figures. This of course poses tremendous challenges to serious research in social sciences and humanities.

To catch up with the West, therefore, translation had a vital role to play.

### **Preparing China for Globalization: “The West’s Moon Is Rounder Than China’s”**

#### *Rebuilding on the Ruins*

At the outset, contemporary Chinese translation of the West was an officially organized activity. First of all, Deng systematically restored elementary, secondary and post-secondary education that held any promise of producing qualified translators. Secondly, the ban on foreign works was lifted. What had been translated over a decade before was massively reprinted, including the older translations by Yan Fu and Lin Shu. Moreover those better qualified translators, some of whom had survived the Revolution partly because they had been translating Marxist-Leninist classics into Chinese or Mao’s works into foreign languages, were leading the way into the new era of translation. Some were professional translators of either the politically oriented *Cankao xiaoxi* or of literature from the United Nations. Others, including those working in education institutions and social science academies and individual freelance translators, were translating what they found politically correct and important for socialist reconstruction (see Guo, 2002).

For instance, since 1953 Jiang Chunfang (1912-1987) had been one of the lead translators of the *Complete Works of Marx and Engels*, *Complete Works of Lenin* and *Complete Works of Stalin*. He had also been actively engaged in translating into foreign languages *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* and important political documents of the Chinese Communist Party (see Chen, 1992, p.452). From the end of 1970s, Jiang devoted himself to organizing and promoting translation. Due to his efforts, on June 23, 1982, the Translators’ Association of China was formally established in Beijing. The small but influential journal *Fanyi tongxun* (Translation Newsletter/Bulletin), formally *UN Literatures Translation Bulletin*, became the

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<sup>1</sup> Keeping to the socialist road, and upholding the people’s democratic dictatorship, leadership by the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

Association's journal. In its introductory note, the improved leading journal stated its purpose as follows (*Fanyi tong xun*, 1980. Translation mine):

conduct theoretical research of translatology, exchange translation experience, transmit knowledge of translation, advance foreign language education, introduce old and new translators, report both domestic and international intellectual trends in the translation world and promote the cause of translation.

Indeed, the journal, later renamed *Chinese Translators Journal*, helped bring up a new generation of translators, who were working diligently to 'make up for the lost youth,' a saying most popular among middle-aged and young people since late 1970s. Things were developing so fast that in 1983, as president of the Association, Jiang was confident to claim (in Wang ed., 1989, p.4. Translation mine):

Today the world of Chinese translation is different from what it was in the periods of the late Qing-early Republic, the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, the Anti-Japanese War and Civil War, the beginning years of the New China, or the Cultural Revolution. Our translators have greatly advanced beyond those periods in foreign languages, Chinese, political ideology and artistic qualifications.

This confidence, however, was severely challenged in actual textual translation. For a largely pre-modern or modernizing nation that had been out of touch with the post-industrial, postmodern and post-colonial Western cultures, great linguistic, intellectual and cultural gaps were there for Chinese translators to bridge. Not only had older Western words familiar to Chinese taken on new meanings, but the new meanings and new vocabulary had been contextualized in the new way of life and new intellectual paradigms that were alien to Chinese. For instance, at the beginning of 1980s, the well accomplished translator Dong Leshan (1924-) wrote a series of papers illustrating the maze of intercultural (mis) understandings in translation. As translator and proofreader of such contemporary books as *The Glory and the Dream* (by W. Manchester, tr. in 1978) *Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (tr. in 1979), Dong and his colleagues had faced a world of untranslatabilities. In particular, Manchester's unconventional, kaleidoscopic verbal scanning of American life since the end of WW II had put the Chinese translators in a situation where they were often lost in social, political and cultural references and anecdotes in the original works.

Massive efforts were made to alleviate this linguistic and intellectual poverty. In the field of education, English (Russian, French or Japanese in some parts of China) became a compulsory course from junior high through to graduate programs. Foreign language departments, faculties and colleges were mushrooming up across the country. English textbooks were soon replaced by *English 900* and *English for Today* (from USA), *Follow Me*, *Essential English* and *New Concept English* (from the UK) especially in higher education institutions. To facilitate the enormous demand for foreign language (predominantly English) teaching and learning, scores of journals specializing in foreign studies (language, literature, translation, culture, etc.) (re) started publication. Meanwhile, native English speakers from Europe, North America and Oceania were employed at China's education and research institutions. And a new wave of Chinese students and scholars going to the West was building (see Guo, 2002).

Soon newly compiled, revised or updated dictionaries and reference books appeared. For instance, the *English-Chinese Dictionary of Knowledge of the American Society* (1984), edited by Dong, was helpful for many Chinese translators of the West now represented by USA. Although it was difficult to find equivalents for new concepts and ideas from the West since WW II, it did not seem to hinder Chinese translation. Just as Chinese had borrowed Japanese translations of the West at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Guo, 2005), mainland Chinese could now turn to Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese-speaking communi-

ties all over the world for help and inspiration in creating equivalents. New theories and techniques of Chinese translatology by Chinese scholars from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Europe and North America were introduced to mainland China.

For example, beginning from 1980, volumes of works by Qian Gechuan (1903-1990) hit bookstores across the country. Born in Hunan, Qian went to Japan and England as a student in 1920s. When he returned to China in the 30s, he served as editor of *The New China* and translated works by Sinclair, Tolstoy and Hardy into Chinese. In 1950, he became Dean of the Faculty of Literature, University of Taiwan, and started to teach translation. In 1964, Qian went to Singapore, where he taught translation at several universities. Upon retirement, he moved to the United States (see Chen, 1992; Lin et al. ed.1988). In Qian we see how Chinese translation and translatology in the vernacular had kept growing outside of the mainland from 1949 to the end of 1970s. Qian's multi-volumed *Techniques of Translation, Basic Knowledge of Translation* and *On Translation*, were now driving translation studies to a new era in the mainland.

In a short period of time, Western works since WW II in nearly all fields of studies and academic disciplines were introduced to the intellectually hungry nation. In the area of translation studies, Western theories of translation, including Structural, Philological, Sociolinguistic, Semantic and Hermeneutic schools, began to be imported. Eugene Nida, Newmark and Steiner were among the best received theorists. In literature, for example, those unheard-of schools of individual writers became known to the Chinese (Existentialism, Theatre of the Absurd, Nouveau roman, Angry Young Men, Beat Generation, Black Humour, Realismomagico, etc). Even anti-Communist works such as *Animal Farm* and *1984* were introduced, translated and studied (see Guo, 2002).

With the rapid development in electrical and electronic industries and communications technology imported from the West, Chinese educators and students soon had easy access to audio and visual equipment for foreign language teaching and learning. With popularization of new educational technologies came Western cultural products. Euro-American newspapers, magazines, movies, cassettes and video tapes stormed into the country. As a result, Chinese translation entered a new epoch in which the West was and is being translated simultaneously in various ways and forms, including audio, visual, electronic, digital, verbal, nonverbal, textual and non-textual.

#### *The Ugly Chinese and the Rounder Moon of the West*

What was happening to the translation of the West was in practice working against what Deng and his Party had imagined and planned (importing Western advanced science and technology while keeping out anything harmful) at the start of the economic reform. What was being translated was increasingly subversive of the Communist power in various ways.

At the superficial level, popular culture, the end of 1970s began to witness a fast-growing import of Western movies and soap operas (all well dubbed), magazines and bestsellers (in translation). The first foreign movies hitting China's theatres were from Japan. In 1978, the first Japanese movie came to China. Soon Japanese movie and TV stars Momoe Yamaguchi (山口百恵), Ken Takakura (高倉健), Ken Utsui (宇津井健), Tomokazu Miura (三浦友和), Ryoko Nakano (中野良子), and Komaki Kurihara (栗原小巻) became household names across the country. In 1980, American, French, German, and Italian movies and TV shows found their way to China's cinemas and TV channels, immediately dwarfing their Chinese counterparts. For instance, in 1980, more than 70 million people watched the French movie *Zorro* (starring A. Delon); in 1981, having more than one billion viewers, the sensational ABC TV series *Garrison's Gorillas* became so popular and influential that the Chinese government had to stop running the show - it was reported that the crime rate suddenly rose as many young people were imitating Garrison and his team of commandos (see Jiang, 2005, online).

Although the media was undoubtedly under strict government control, and the printed, audio and vis-

ual materials had been officially reviewed and screened, what was shown to the Chinese started to create a new image of the previously demonized West as rich, free, happy, vibrant, vigorous, creative, democratic, scientifically and technologically advanced. This powerful image, imaginatively embellished, idealized and fantasized by ordinary Chinese, created a popular sense of anger and indignation, of suppression, oppression and exploitation, and one where they felt cheated, deceived and misguided. It re-introduced a haunting and painful sense of national inferiority that had been miraculously healed by Mao. It found its best expression in the then popular saying “The West’s Moon is rounder than China’s.”

At a deeper, philosophical level, Chinese intellectuals started to re-examine and re-evaluate what had happened since Mao took power in 1949 by introducing and translating various schools of Western philosophy and cultural studies. For a time, works in the humanities (e.g. E. Cassirer), and other discourses such as Existentialism (e.g. Sartre and Camus), the Frankfurt School’s critical theory (especially neo-Marxists such as H. Marcuse), Psychoanalysis (e.g. Freud and Jung), and Feminism (e.g. de Beauvoir) became hot topics among the better educated (see Guo, 2002). All this created a subversive discourse of emancipation, freedom, equality, and ultimately democracy. In particular, the call to return to basic humanity as opposed to the “divinity” or theology of Communism and dogmatic Maoism was so powerful and controversial that the then head of the Ministry of Propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party, Hu Qi-aomu (1912-92), the renowned authority on Marxism, had to come out and end the ideological war with his *On the Issues of Humanitarianism and Alienation* (Hu, 1984).

The debate then took a strategic turn to cultural issues surrounding the more negative Chinese national characteristics versus the more positive Western traditions. This started with *The Ugly Chinese* (officially published in mainland China in 1986) by the Taiwanese political writer Bo Yang (1920-2008), modeling on *The Ugly American* (1958, by Eugene Burdick) and *The Ugly Japanese* (1970, by the Japanese cultural anthropologist Takahashi, 高桥敷), which were soon translated into Chinese and became bestsellers. It involved the participation of people from different walks of life, and it was built into a historical moment of China-West contrastive and comparative studies. A more serious inferiority complex was emerging at the intellectual level, which was deeply tied to a new awareness and understanding of Chinese traditional, especially political, culture from a perspective translated from the West.

At the socio-economic level, Deng’s introduction of the Market economy (although with a political prefix of Socialist), with its complex mechanism of deep-rooted, inherent resistance against human or governmental control, found its way to the motivation, production, distribution, and consumption of translations. Although the media, press, and educational and academic research were all Party-run and state-sponsored (with their family name persistently being “Socialism” rather than “Capitalism,” to use Deng’s phrasing), the power and iron principles of the Market and selling points began to override other interests and concerns. Gradually the press, media, professional and amateur translators were (mis) guided by a strong sense of profit. Beginning from early 1980s, in line with the Communist Party’s policy of institutional reform, the predominant majority of the state-run publishing houses, journals, and magazines no longer enjoyed full financing from the government. As public or state institutions in name, they were driven to the market to financially survive on their own. This created a situation in which the previous political and professional practice of strict planning, censoring, reviewing, and proofreading processes of translations would no longer be strictly observed.<sup>1</sup>

To secure their survival in the increasingly competitive market, the publishing and entertainment industries started to “play edge balls” (to use a phrase popular at that time) with the officially documented principles and regulations regarding translations. They even developed a slogan of “以文养文, 以译养译,”

<sup>1</sup> As an active translator and editor of two translation series of Western literary criticism and fiction, the author had extensive first-hand and inside knowledge of what was happening to the translation circle in this period in mainland China.

literally publishing what is profitable to support publication of what is not. In a society that had a long history of Confucian and Communist stoicism, suppression and oppression, what sold best, realistically, included translations of Western exotic, sensual, and sensational works of crime, romance, violence, sadism, and (semi) pornography that seemed to possess, ironically, irresistible, releasing, and venting power of liberation and emancipation. For a period of time, while the more classical works like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* found their way to China's book market, there was a tremendous craze for popular writers such as Irving Wallace, Ken Follet, Jackie Collins, and Toshiyuki Nishimura (see Wang, 2006). In fact, driven by the market, from mid-80s to mid-90s, an international flow process of original text providers, translators, publishers, and distributors was well organized. No sooner was a bestseller published in the United States than it would reach a group of contract translators in China. It was then rapidly turned into Chinese sometimes even without being coherent, when, for example, the names of the protagonists or plots were mis-translated as the translators of the same book had no time to compare notes. Within two or three weeks the translations would be widely available across the country (Guo, 2002).

The quality of market-oriented translations was disturbing. For instance, the first Chinese version of Lee Iacocca's *Talking Straight* (hastily rendered into Chinese soon after the original work was published in 1988) is riddled with absurd and pitiful mistakes. The "Big Apple," nickname of New York, that has a special term in Chinese, is half-translated and half-transliterated into *Da a pu er*, which doesn't make any sense. The major munitions contractor, Hughes Aircraft, is rendered into *Xiusi feiting* (Hughes airship), and "2300 most outstanding Americans," reads the translation, "are working on this airship for the Space Wars and other advanced projects." When the original work says because of the oil crisis, twice within 10 years Americans stood like idiots in long lines waiting to refill their vehicles, the Chinese translation reads, literally, "Americans lined up for 10 years to get refueled twice." At one point, the author says quality means when something goes wrong with a product, somebody will come over with a smile to do maintenance for you. The Chinese translator turns it into: "Quality means even if something goes wrong with a product, it (the product) will still serve you smilingly" (see Guo, 1992). Certainly, such ugly products of translation were not to be received with a smile from critics, educators, or the more serious readers.

In particular, what was happening to the Chinese translation of the West - in the narrowest and broadest sense of the term - was becoming less and less tolerable to the Communist Party under Deng. There emerged increasingly stronger challenges to the political legitimacy of the new generation of Communist leadership that was facing numerous conflicts and contradictions: between the current system of one-party leadership and the dissenting demand for a multi-party democracy; between the socialist public/state ownership and the urgent request for capitalist/private ownership; between the state planned economy and the market economy; between tight ideological control regarded as necessary and the need for intellectual freedom for reform and opening, etc. Socially, intellectually, and politically, underground democratic movements aiming at changing the one-party system were gathering pace. Young people started to openly express their rebellious feelings by wearing hippie-style clothes, their hair long, and dancing to disco music, experimenting with sex and drugs, and imitating Western ways of life they had read about, heard about or seen, as they attempted to find their own identities in a rapidly changing society. Social crimes such as theft, robbery, prostitution, rape and drugs, which had been successfully curbed during Mao's leadership, reappeared. Just as what had happened to the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, the new generation of translators, writers, scholars and academics were re-translating their own experiences of the West and interpretations of various Western texts into their writings.

In July 1988, less than a year before the Tiananmen Incident, one of the most shocking cultural events

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<sup>1</sup> The above historical accounts come from many different sources, including, for instance, *Major events in the People's Republic of China* (Zhu, Jianhua et al. eds., 1992. Changchun, China: Jilin Education Press).



took place. The voice of the Communist government, CCTV (China Central Television) broadcast a TV series *He Shang* (河殇, *Death of the Yellow River*), an extraordinary political commentary. By carefully choosing and translating historical facts all over the world in a unique China-West contrastive context, and narrated in a poetic voice, *He Shang* sent the following message to its vast audience: the Chinese yellow civilization, symbolized by the mother river, was already dead. The only way ahead for China would be to embrace the “blue or ocean civilization,” symbolized of course by the West.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Deng and his Party were heavy-handed against Western “decadent” things that poured into China with and/or through translations. As early as 1983, Deng launched a nationwide “Anti-Spiritual Pollution Movement,” in which many rebellious young people and liberal-minded, outspoken intellectuals and translators were punished. In 1986, with students and workers staging demonstrations for political reform, a far-reaching “Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization” movement was carried out. Specifically in the field of translation, in 1988, more than 30 magazines and publishers of “decadent” Western bestsellers such as *Hollywood Wives*, *Fan Club*, and *If Tomorrow Comes* were either politically disciplined or legally prosecuted, and the magazines and books were either banned or consigned to flames (see Wang, 2006).

But what was suppressed was still there, growing in both its economic basis and ideological superstructure. It led to the tragic Tian’anmen Incident in 1989.

### Exploring the Chinese Way: China Can Say No

#### *China’s Great Harmony vs. The Western Vision of Globalization*

At present it might be too early to make any conclusive evaluation of the Tian’anmen Incident. But as Deng Xiaoping remarked the next day after, the revolt was inevitable. It would come sooner or later. It was determined by the larger international climate, and by the smaller domestic climate created through a small number of people holding Western bourgeois liberal values and determined to westernize China (see Guo, 2002).

Although Deng did not elaborate on what “the larger international climate” was, it was clear that he was referring to the vision of globalization represented by the Reagan-Thatcher alliance, to which Deng had opened his China a few years before. Guided by that vision, a series of neo-liberal initiatives were implemented on two interrelated international fronts: 1) establishing a global, universal, and non-negotiable system of market economy that would leave no communal, social, or national ground unturned; and 2) launching ideological wars against non-Western political systems represented by the “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union, whose fall at the beginning of the 90s was then interpreted as a proclamation of the self-evident universal truth of economic fundamentalism in ideological, political and intellectual terms (see Smith, 2000).

Being the West’s target of “peaceful transformation,” Deng’s China was contained and restrained on almost all fronts in terms of international politics that was dependent on economy. Although what Western forces were behind the Tian’anmen Incident has not been brought to light yet, it is fairly clear that at the economic level, the West had been pushing China onto the market economy track. This means China had to “play” by the rules of Western design, including democracy and human rights, and the impact of the World Bank, GATT, IMF, and WTO on China’s economic policy-making has been far deeper than hitherto realized (see Chen *et al.*, 2006). The Western neo-liberal will and agendas inevitably ran against Deng’s vision of national rejuvenation inspired by China’s traditional Confucian values of Great Harmony under the Sun, and the more recent Communist notion of internationalism, that are beyond the scope of the present paper.

Between the two different visions, there have been conflicts, contradictions, and compromises, and Chinese translation has been, in a sense, an agent and a tool both for mediating as well as contesting.

### *China Can Say No*

The multi-faced Western vision of globalization soon started to look very different even to the Chinese pro-democracy students of the Tian'anmen Square, who had actually demanded "importing a premier" from the West (see Guo, 2002). Inspired by *The Japan That Can Say No* (A. Morita & S. Ishihara, 1988), which was translated and published in China, a book titled *China Can Say No* (Song *et al.*, 1996), written by five young men in their twenties and thirties who had never been to the West, hit the Chinese book market in June 1996. Within three weeks, over two hundred thousand copies were sold out. In October, the five authors published their next bestseller *China Can Still Say No* (Song *et al.*, 1996). In December, another bestseller, *Behind Demonization of China* (Li *et al.*, 1996) by eight Chinese scholars and students in the United States, became No.1 bestseller. The books listed the negative things done to the Chinese by the West, from the position of Western values, including the Taiwan Issue, Hong Kong's return, Tibet, the alleged nuclear proliferation, China's application to join the WTO, and China's bidding for the 2000 Olympic Games. Indeed, the year 1996 can be called an anti-American year in China. The popular sentiments and resentment against a globalizing West, particularly the United States, reached their peak however when a NATO aircraft bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999. This event triggered off Chinese protests and demonstrations worldwide. It was perhaps the first time that ordinary Chinese all over the world united spontaneously with the Chinese Communist government.

But *saying no* did not, and does not, work. By then China had been too deeply involved in the process of globalization to realistically go its own way, although Deng created another political slogan for China: "Build a socialism with Chinese characteristics." Before the Tian'anmen Incident, the aforementioned political documentary described the rate, range and depth of Western economic penetration and expansion into China with the following example:

One day, the director of a large state-owned automobile manufacturing factory was standing at the Tower of Tian'anmen. He looked down below at the passing vehicles. When he counted to one hundred, he found 97 of the vehicles were foreign made. (*He shang*, 1988. Translation mine)

However, at that time Western spiritual and cultural products had not taken such a large share in China's market as today. After the Incident, with Deng retiring from the political spotlight, China opened its door wider to Western intellectual and popular culture.

### *Market-oriented Translation*

Ironically, when the West was generous in offering its spiritual and cultural values to China in order to open this potentially greatest market, Chinese translation was fettered under domestic political control, as illustrated earlier. When China became ready for more of the West, it came to be contained by the greater politics of the West - the iron principles of the Market. Under increasingly stronger pressure from the West for intellectual property protection, China kept confiscating and publicly destroying quantities of pirated products, closing large numbers of factories, and sentencing many people involved in piracy to prison. In 1992, China joined the Bern Copyright Convention. For a time, Chinese people had less access to translations. In particular, translations of contemporary Western works sharply decreased in number. But the market of translation was still there to be created and manipulated, growing day by day with the establishment of a new, more internationalized system of choice of the original, copyright transfer, translation, publishing, and distribution (see Guo, 2002; Wang, 2005).

For instance, under the new system in the entertainment industry, Hollywood blockbuster movies, commercially fully armed and protected, started to be imported through what is called *fenzhang fa* (Hollywood collecting a certain percentage from every ticket sold in China). In 1994, *The Fugitive* (starring Har-

ri son Ford, 1993) made its way, empty-handed, to China with *fenzhang fa* and returned to the US full-handed. Then, in 1995 came *True Lies* (starring A. Schwarzenegger, 1993), and *Forrest Gump* (starring Tom Hanks, 1994). One of the most popular was of course the *Titanic*, which sailed to China with a few copies in 1998 and returned a few weeks later with 104,000,000 RMB (see Wang, 2005), partly because the movie had received favourable comments from the then Chinese president Jiang Zemin. At a time when an ordinary Chinese worker's monthly salary was less than 800 RMB, a Hollywood blockbuster movie ticket cost from 70 to 80 RMB each.

In the publishing industry, translations of works on information technology, management and marketing have been popular enough for Chinese publishers to buy copyrights from the original publishers. For instance, books on the stock market and the WTO or by such billionaires as Bill Gates have been best-sellers. Meanwhile, Western popular figures in the fields of politics, sports and entertainment have also been selling well. To a certain extent, the profit-oriented book market has been cultivating readers who desire and crave Western popular culture, and the huge number of popular readers is creating and giving life to the money-centred book market.

Euro-American efforts to protect their copyrights in China have created a space for (re)translating Western classics. In the field of literature, for example, (re)translations of classics ranging from Greek, Roman, Medieval and Renaissance writers to modernists can be found in China's bookstores. Postmodern, postcolonial and other contemporary classics that are still under copyright protection are imported more in the form of Chinese reviews, treatises and commentaries than through translation. In fact, since the Tian'anmen Incident, Euro-American "post" scholarships and globalization theories have been hot topics among the more elite circle of academics.

In the field of literature, the rate of textual translation and publication is still growing. According to Li (*Guangming Daily*, Dec. 13, 2001), from 1980 to 1986, on average, 657 translations of foreign literary works were published annually. In 1988, the number grew to over one thousand and has remained consistently high since. According to Wang (2005, online), on October 6, 2000, six hundred thousand copies of the Chinese version of *Harry Potter* hit the market.

With advanced communications technologies including the Internet, and the efforts of large numbers of West-based Chinese journalists, students and scholars, new forms of electronic, optical and digital translation have largely replaced the more traditional ways of textual translation. In fact, what is happening globally is translated into Chinese almost immediately. In particular, popular access to the Internet has created a kind of information democracy, which enables the Chinese to be more open in view and better informed of the West. Although the Chinese government has been trying to build a 'Great Fire Wall' to block this 'subversive' flow of information, a massive influx of Western capital investments, technology, and methods of management, are eroding the government's authority and power. It is rendering the 'fire wall' more a symbol than a real defense.

### *The Need for Intercivilizational Dialogue*

In conclusion, from the Rounder Moon of the West, *The Ugly Chinese*, through *China Can Say No*, to the current focus on translation for economic purposes, it can be seen that contemporary Chinese translation of the West, contextualized within a Western vision of globalization, has been different forms of Chinese responses to the West. These responses are derived, on the other hand, from a Chinese vision of national rejuvenation in relation to a West that had a colonial history in China, which has evolved into a neo-colonial dream of globalization. With China rising as a global power, there are inevitable clashes of civilization, in the words of Huntington (1996), between the two different, self-centered visions that date back to China's first encounter with the West through missionary-convert translations 400 years ago (Guo, 2008). What has happened recently around the Beijing Olympics and Tibetan issues is already pointing to the ur-

gent need for negotiation and mediation.

With its power of hermeneutic interpretation and mediation, translation and translatology can play a special and vital role in bringing the two visions together for dialogue. In fact, some leading scholars from China, including philosopher Liang Suming (?-1988), social anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1910-2005) and cultural critic Ji Xianlin (1911-), have been calling for China-West intercultural dialogue. Their main idea is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China can contribute to the world by referencing Confucianism which they argue holds a key to a more humane and harmonious world. For instance, in his article "Cultural Reflections on Economic Globalization and China's Triple Jump," Fei briefly outlined the history of Western globalization in relation to China. In his view:

Chinese culture enjoys a long history. Many thinkers throughout the ages have left us extremely valuable intellectual wealth and resources. Traditional Chinese culture is intellectually characterized by its pursuit of balance and harmony, emphasis on the relationship between Self and Others, and advocacy of *tian ren he yi* (the theory that humankind is an integral part of nature)... To the Chinese, *tian ren he yi* is an ideal realm, whose social norm is *he* (harmoniousness, gentleness, peacefulness, etc.). This idea of *he* is the basic starting-point of the inner structure of the Chinese society and of all the Chinese social relations. In living together with other nations and nationalities, the theory of *he er bu tong* (harmony/peace within differences/diversities) developed, which is very different from Western concepts of nations... The ancient idea of *he er bu tong* is still full of vitality, and can serve as a standard and goal for modern social development. 'He' should be preserved while differences are acknowledged. This is an inevitable road for the global pluralistic cultures. Otherwise, conflicts will arise. If *tong* (sameness/identity) is to be achieved at the cost of *he*, it may lead to an extreme state of conflicts which will result only in destruction. Therefore *he er bu tong* should be a fundamental condition for human co-existence (*Guangming Daily*, November 7, 2000. Translation mine).

In establishing a world of *he er bu tong*, contemporary Chinese translation of the West still has much to say.

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