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Language and Politics in Modern China
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**Revolutionary Rudeness:
The Language of Red Guards and
Rebel Workers in China's Cultural Revolution**

Elizabeth J. Perry and Li Xun
University of California, Berkeley

AND

**Recent Translation Theory
and Linguistic Borrowing in the
Modern Sino-Chinese Cultural Context**

Joshua A. Fogel
University of California, Santa Barbara

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Jeffrey Wasserstrom and Sue Tuohy, editors
Language and Politics in Modern China
East Asian Studies Center, Memorial W207
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405
Phone: 812/855-3765; Fax: 812/855-7762

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Introduction

Revolutions spark fundamental changes in the way people think about the world. Since people generally think with words, one measure of a movement's revolutionary impact is the extent to which it generates new wordings. Thus recent reappraisals of the French Revolution, for example, have focused considerable attention on the language of the participants.¹

In the case of the Chinese Revolution, scholars are also beginning to devote serious consideration to the question of linguistic change.² But the Chinese case is particularly complicated. Unlike the French Revolution—which is usually dated rather narrowly as the events surrounding the storming of the Bastille in 1789—what we refer to as the Chinese Revolution is usually said to have begun a century and a half ago (with the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century) and to be still underway today.³ The linguistic issues surrounding such a long and momentous period are obviously complex. To try to cut into this unwieldy subject, this paper will examine but a small temporal slice—the decade of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), especially its early years, 1966-68. The choice is not entirely arbitrary, for as one student of the subject points out,

1. On the language of the French Revolution, see for example William Sewall, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); John Renwick, ed., *Language and Rhetoric of the Revolution* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

2. Perry Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament* (New York: Norton, 1992), especially chapter four; Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992); and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "The First Chinese Red Scare: 'Fanchi' Propaganda and Pro-Red Responses during the Northern Expedition," *Republican China* 11, 1 (1985): 32-51. On the special importance in Chinese politics of the written word, as expressed through the practice of calligraphy, see Richard Curt Kraus, *Brushes with Power: Modern Politics and the Chinese Art of Calligraphy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

3. John K. Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

"rhetoric played a more integral role in the Cultural Revolution than in previous movements."⁴

Even when we delimit the time period, however, a further difficulty remains: the substantial cultural and linguistic gap that separates China from the West. Although Western scholars are increasingly interested in Chinese revolutionary discourse,⁵ seldom are they linguistically and culturally equipped to do the topic justice. The co-authorship of this paper—joining a Chinese participant in the Cultural Revolution with a Western student of the Chinese Revolution—is an attempt to help bridge the abyss.

As a very preliminary foray into uncharted waters, this paper will briefly consider several aspects of Cultural Revolution language as it took shape in the writings and speech of young Red Guards. We touch upon the use of military terminology, the techniques of slandering one's opponents, the conventions of color coding, and the like. Although each of these features has received some attention from previous analysts, earlier studies have overlooked an important thread linking these rhetorical practices: a striking characteristic of Red Guard language—at least to the native Chinese ear—was its *vulgarity*. The use of curses and other crude expressions was a conscious effort on the part of rebellious young students to adopt what they took to be the revolutionary language of the masses.

4. Lowell Dittmer, *China's Continuous Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 90-91. Previous studies of Cultural Revolution language include H.C. Chuang, *The Great Proletarian Revolution - A Terminological Study* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1967); H.C. Chuang, *The Little Red Book and Current Chinese Language* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1968); Lowell Dittmer and Chen Ruoxi, *Ethics and Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1981); and Jin Chunming et al., eds., *"Wenge" shiqi guaishi guaiyu* [Strange things and strange words of the "Cultural Revolution" era] (Beijing: Qiushi chubanshe, 1989).

5. See Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China: Learning from 1989* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) as one example of revived interest in Chinese revolutionary political culture.

Recent approaches to revolutionary culture, in contrast to an earlier generation of scholarship,⁶ highlight its socially *variegated* character. Thus Robert Darnton, in his masterful study of *l'histoire des mentalités* in eighteenth-century France, devotes separate chapters to peasants, urban artisans, bourgeois, police, and intellectuals.⁷ Each social group, it turns out, exhibited distinctive modes of thought, talk, and action.

In the case of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, this sort of social differentiation remains relatively unexplored.⁸ The comparison, which we draw toward the end of this paper, between students and workers is intended to open a discussion on this important issue. As we will suggest, however, the term "Great *Proletarian* Cultural Revolution" is something of a misnomer. Important as workers were in the later stages of the movement, the cultural transformation of this era—reflected in linguistic change—was largely the work of brash young students. Despite their pretense of embracing proletarian rhetoric, these fledgling intellectuals were in fact advocating a type of language that was rather far removed from that of the Chinese working class.

Red Guard Crudeness

One of the more arresting features of the language of the Chinese Cultural Revolution was simply how crude and rude it was. The trend was prefigured in a seminal series of big-character posters penned by Beijing Red Guards in the summer of 1966 and subsequently emulated by rebel organizations around the country.

Still operating under the thumb of school work teams, these student Red Guards nevertheless made clear their defiance of conventional authority. Titled "Long Live the Revolutionary Rebel Spirit of the Proletariat," their poster series raised the famous slogan

6. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965); Lucian W. Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1968); Richard Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

7. Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

8. For one illuminating study along these lines, see Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

of ‘rebellion’ (*zaofan*) that quickly caught fire on campuses across the land. While the Beijing Red Guards are widely credited with this contribution to Cultural Revolution sloganeering,⁹ another aspect of their linguistic influence has received less attention. Yet every bit as significant as the introduction of the electrifying new slogan of rebellion was the crude language that appeared in several of the posters: ‘as for balance and tact, damn it all to hell’ (*shenma quanmian celue, gun tama de dan*)!

The imprecation ‘damn it’ (*tama de*) had originated in the spoken vernacular of North China. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, it was rarely found in written works and then only in fictional literature to describe the speech of coarse characters. In the Red Guard posters, by contrast, this vulgar phrase was being used in a formal essay to clinch a political argument. Although both the content and the language of these big-character posters aroused the ire of the work teams, they caught the sympathetic eye of Jiang Qing, who shared them with her husband. In a few days Chairman Mao’s verdict was publicized: “Very good big-character posters.” Immediately the essays were distributed and imitated by radicals across the country. Not only rebellion, but rudeness, was thereby justified. ‘Damn it’ became a hallmark of Red Guard phraseology—an expletive that served to differentiate these young rebels from their more complacent classmates by demonstrating their utter disdain for traditional linguistic restraint.

Soon every Red Guard poster, whether the content called for it or not, inserted several ‘damn it’s or ‘damn it to hell’s. During the highpoint of the Red Guard movement in August 1966, these curses seemed omnipresent. The then popular adage “On Blood Lineage” and the related Red Guard song “Gloomy Ghosts” contained a string of such epithets appended as slogans. As the song goes,

If one’s old man is a hero, his son is a brave fellow.
 If one’s old man is a reactionary, his son is a bastard.
 If you’re a revolutionary, then stand up.
 If you’re not a revolutionary, then damn you to hell.
 Damn, damn, damn, damn you to hell!

9. On the Red Guards’ promotion of the term *zaofan*, see H.C. Chuang, 1967, 13ff.

The insertion of these colloquial North China swear words had a shocking effect, especially in southern dialects of Chinese.

The phrase 'damn it' was the harbinger of a veritable flood of vulgarity that engulfed popular and official publications alike. Expletives like 'bastard' (*hundān*), 'to hell' (*gundān*), 'son of a bitch' (*wāng bā dān*), 'cuckold kid' (*wāngbā gāozǐ*), 'go to hell' (*jiān guī qū*), and 'damnable' (*gāisǐ*) became commonplace in big-character posters, handbills, and even government directives.¹⁰ Newly coined invectives, e.g., 'rotten dog's head' (*zalan goutou*), also made an appearance. What had previously passed as proper language was now regarded as altogether too conformist. Polite phrasing was reviled as "the disgusting etiquette of the bourgeois and feudal classes." The cruder one's language, the closer one felt to the workers, peasants and soldiers. The less refined, the more revolutionary.

The young students did not sever all identification with the "feudal" Chinese literati tradition, however. As an ex-Red Guard remembered, "Following the practice of the ancients who composed couplets to commemorate staying somewhere, Red Guards covered the walls of temples with untidy characters like 'XXX of Class 302, Fudan University Shanghai, visited this place September 20, 1966.'" This habit exercised other Red Guards, as evidenced in one defiant—and of course ironic—wall scribbling: "Damn it all, I oppose writing characters all over these walls!"¹¹ But Red Guard graffiti was in any event no more than a faint echo of the cultivated tradition of literati travel inscriptions.

Vulgarity permeated the spoken language as well. Firsthand accounts of Red Guard experiences are replete with coarse verbiage. One former Red Guard described a conflict

10. On uses (and pictorial representations) of these and related terms in ordinary folk language as well as in previous and subsequent popular protest movements, see Wolfram Eberhard, *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 80-83, 268-296; Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 125, 222-223, 319; and Roxane Witke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), 335.

11. Gordon A. Bennett and Ronald M. Montaperto, *Red Guard: The Political Biography of Dai Hsiao-ai* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), 99.

over space on a train: "they began to curse those inside: 'You rotten sons of bitches, sitting in there so cozy, get the hell out right away. . . . Those inside came back strongly. 'If you dare, I'll push your face in'."¹² This sort of gutter language had long been the trademark of Chinese gangsters, but never before had it enjoyed such currency among the educated.

Villification of the Other

The general corruption of language brought with it a whole new vocabulary of abuse toward one's opponents. Terms intended to belittle or dehumanize members of an enemy faction became standard fare in political debate: 'tiny minority' (*ji shaoshu*), 'handful' (*yi xiaocuo*), 'little reptile' (*xiao pachong*), 'big pickpocket' (*da pashou*), 'big black umbrella' (*da heisan*), 'big black hand' (*da heishou*), 'cow-devils and snake-spirits' (*niugui sheshen*), 'evil wind' (*yao feng*), 'out-and-out scoundrel' (*hunzhang touding*). The emotions, motivations and behaviors of one's rivals were characterized as 'gall' (*dangan*), 'monstrous audacity' (*goudan baotian*), 'vain attempts' (*wangtu*), 'threats' (*yangyan*), 'howls' (*jiaorang*), 'clamorings' (*jiaoxiao*), 'false pretenses' (*menghun guoguan*), 'new counteroffensives' (*xin fanpu*), 'launching unbridled attacks' (*dasi gongji*), 'inflaming and agitating' (*shanfeng dianhuo*).

Metaphors of vampirism and bestiality were commonplace in the stinging criticisms leveled against so-called "enemies of the people." One former Red Guard recalls the shock he experienced when he came upon a big-character poster portraying his father as sub-human: "He used the *blood he sucked* away to fatten himself up, and what did he give the people? Not artwork, but shit, garbage, poisonous weeds. . . . We now order Liang Shan to confess his crimes, or else we will break his *dog's head*!!!!!"¹³ A popular refrain sung by the Red Guards vowed that "armed with Mao Zedong's Thought, we'll wipe out all *pests and vermin*."¹⁴

12. Bennett and Montaperto, 116.

13. Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 54.

14. Gao Yuan, *Born Red* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 86.

The phrase "cow-devils and snake-spirits," rooted in Buddhist demonology, was an especially potent weapon in the battle to demonize one's opponents.¹⁵ As an ex-Red Guard explained, "We forced the teachers to wear caps and collars which stated things like 'I am a monster [snake-spirit]'. . . . While we respected them before, our feelings changed to hatred as soon as they were denounced as 'monsters and ghosts [cow-devils and snake-spirits]'. "¹⁶ Another Red Guard, searching for his friend and her grandmother, was informed by an inhabitant of their former village: "People said they were monsters and ghosts. They can't stay in our town."¹⁷ To be deemed "monsters and ghosts" was to be banished from the community.

Women were often likened to the White Bone Demon (*baigu jing*), a nefarious and chameleonic serpent from the Buddhist-inspired novel, *Journey to the West*. A Red Guard remembered the poster attacking his teacher: "Guo Pei is a venomous snake who disguised herself as a beautiful woman. . . . We must break the venomous snake's spine!"¹⁸ Accusations of promiscuity and bestiality were linked with political crimes, as in the common epithets "counterrevolutionary whore" and "counterrevolutionary savage."¹⁹

Dehumanizing terminology permeated popular and official discourse alike.²⁰ On 1 June 1966, *People's Daily* published an editorial titled "Sweep out All Cow-Devils and Snake-Spirits." The following spring, the public denunciation of top-Party officials Liu Shaoqi, Deng Tuo and Tao Zhu was punctuated by strident cries of "Down with Liu,

15. On the origins of this metaphor, see H.C. Chuang, 1967, 23-24.

16. Bennett and Montaperto, 39.

17. Gao Yuan, 124.

18. Gao Yuan, 68.

19. Gao Yuan, 285.

20. The influence of this derogatory rhetoric outlasted the Cultural Revolution and spread far beyond China's own borders. Thus the Shining Path in Peru, a Maoist guerrilla outfit much enamored of Cultural Revolution exemplars, refers today to its enemies as "reptiles," "serpents," "wimpering revisionists," "animal generals with worm-eaten brains," "beetles," "genocidal hyenas," "man-eating imperialist lackeys" and the like. See James Brooke, "Guerrilla Newspaper in Peru Tries to Dehumanize Enemy," in *The New York Times*, 10 February 1993. We are grateful to Elinor Levine for bringing this to our attention.

Deng and Tao! Down with cow-devils and snake-spirits!"²¹ Verbal abuse was accented by material symbolism; victims of struggle were made to don five-meter-high dunce caps decorated with paper cutouts of skeletons, monsters, turtles and oxheads.²²

Martial Influence

While enemies of the people were forced into garb that marked them as the demonic "other," the Red Guards themselves were inclined toward military attire. The heavily peasant and proletarian composition of the army rendered it an alluring exemplar to students seeking to merge with "the masses" in waging class struggle. Military uniforms accented by wide leather belts became standard dress for young "radicals" anxious to claim the mantle of the People's Liberation Army. The attraction was intensified by Mao's slogan, raised on the eve of the Cultural Revolution: "Let the whole nation learn from the PLA."

Vocabulary drawn from the military tradition assumed an important place in the Red Guard lexicon. To be sure, civilian adoption of martial terminology was not born in the Cultural Revolution. The trend can be traced back to the early years of the PRC when large numbers of demobilized soldiers assumed positions as local cadres, taking with them certain military phrases. Accordingly, local assignments became known as 'work stations' (*gongzuo gangwei*), especially burdensome posts were designated 'frontlines' (*qianxian*), and tackling a problem involved 'staging an offensive' (*faqǐ jìngōng*). Military phraseology reached new heights with the launching of the Great Leap Forward.²³ But only during the Cultural Revolution, encouraged by the youthful adulation of martial ways, did this sort of language move beyond administrative circles to pervade ordinary speech.

21. William Hinton, *Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 104.

22. Gao Yuan, 75. Here again we can find precursors in earlier protest movements. For analogies with the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925, see Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 256; and Wasserstrom, 1991, 223.

23. T.A. Hsia, *Metaphor, Myth, Ritual and the People's Commune* (Berkeley: University of California Center for Chinese Studies, 1961).

Political struggles were now characterized as 'fiercely opening fire' (*menglie kaihuo*), 'shooting wars' (*daxiang zhandou*), 'staging general offensives' (*faqì zonggong*), 'sounding the signal to charge' (*chuixiang jinjun hao*), 'standing guard, standing sentry' (*zhangang fangshao*). Targets of condemnation meetings were told to "surrender or be destroyed."²⁴ At a school pageant in the spring of 1966 to criticize "Three-Family Village"—a group of writers whose works were denounced as "poisonous weeds"—the children, acting the role of workers, peasants and soldiers, "wielded huge cardboard pencils like bayonets, shouting, 'Angrily open fire!'"²⁵

The nomenclature for rebel organizations also evidenced military inspiration: 'struggle small-groups' (*zhandou xiaozu*), 'columns' (*zongduì*), 'headquarters' (*zhìhuì bù*), 'general command' (*sìlìng bù*), 'allied corps' (*liánhe bīngtuán*). Increasingly the country resembled a military barracks, with 'Red Guard warriors' (*hóngweibīng zhànshì*) dressed in military uniforms, organized in martial hierarchies, speaking like soldiers, and even opening fire with real guns and ammunition. By the summer of 1967 the fondness for the military had been superseded by a love of violence itself, resulting in pitched battles against the regular military forces in some parts of the country (e.g., Qinghai, Wuhan, Sichuan). The nation seemed poised at the brink of civil war.

Color Coding

The intense struggles of the day afforded little opportunity for compromise or complexity. People were either friends or foes; thoughts were either correct or incorrect. As previous scholars have noted, color coding was a key component of the Manichean imagery underlying the Cultural Revolution. Red, the symbol for revolutionary valor, was contrasted to black, the color of counterrevolutionary evil.²⁶ Thus "Red Guard" students from 'five kinds of red' (*hóng wulei*) class backgrounds battled 'black elements' (*hei fenzì*) and 'five kinds of black' (*hei wulei*). The supreme good, Chairman Mao, was none other than the 'red sun' (*hóng tàiyang*).

24. Bennett and Montaperto, 35.

25. Liang and Shapiro, 41.

26. Dittmer, 1987, 81-82; H.C. Chuang, 1967, 6-10, 17-22.

As in the French Revolution, street names were changed to fit the new revolutionary symbology.²⁷ Thus Beijing's 'Boulevard of Perpetual Peace' (*Changan jie*) became 'East-is-Red Boulevard' (*Dongfang hong jie*).²⁸ Personal names were also altered, with more than a few youngsters assuming the appellation 'inherit red' (*Jihong*).²⁹ On 16 July 1966 newspapers took the startling step of printing with red ink to commemorate Chairman Mao's swim in the Yangzi River. The occasion marked the start of color battles within the media: "the printing color became an issue of unusual revolutionary sensitivity. Once, when black ink was used when it should have been red, there were demonstrations for days."³⁰ Enemies were accused of attempting to manipulate colors in sinister fashion. "Waving the red flag to oppose the red flag" was a common characterization of counterrevolutionary activity. Similarly, at a school morality play the counterrevolutionaries were assigned the blasphemous lines "The sun is black" and "Not all flowers are red."³¹

Debating Techniques

The strategy of wrapping oneself in revolutionary colors at the same time that one painted the opponent in counterrevolutionary hues was one element in a whole repertoire of debating techniques that marked Cultural Revolution discourse. Yao Wenyuan, the infamous Shanghai essayist, developed a prose style of debate widely imitated by the young Red Guards: "The method was, first, to declare yourself a defender of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought; second, to pose a series of accusatory questions about your target; and third, to expose it as yet another example of counterrevolutionary infiltration of the Party."³²

27. On the French case, see Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 20-21.

28. Gao Yuan, 85.

29. Gao Hong, 96. Others took on more militaristic names, such as 'Liquidate the bourgeoisie' (*Miezi*).

30. Liang and Shapiro, 43.

31. Liang and Shapiro, 41.

32. Gao Yuan, 41.

Integral to this new style of debate was a brashness that embraced the accusations of one's opponents with gusto, thereby turning the criticism around: "You say the smell of our gunpowder is too strong? Well, what we're after is a *super*-strong smell of gunpowder!" "So you call us rude? Well, just for that we'll *be* rude to you!" Again the phrasing was reminiscent of a type of speech previously associated with gangsters: "You say I hit people? Well, then, I'll just *give* you a thrashing and see what you can do about it!"

This sort of debate style proceeded not by countering competing arguments with the power of logic, but by "out-*machoing*" one's adversaries—whether real or imagined—with the force of sheer bravado. A supercilious tone infused the big-character posters, delighting youngsters dissatisfied with the status quo and itching to let off some steam. From 1966 to 1968, Red Guard handbills, tabloids and ordinary speech were filled with such bluff and bluster. Imperious terms like 'order' (*leling*), 'general order' (*tongling*), and 'stern warning' (*zhenggao*) imbued rebel utterances with an arrogant aura of assumed authority.

This daredevilish and defiant debate technique was captured by several popular Red Guard phrases: [when outwitted] 'don't surrender, just declare total victory' (*bu touxiang jiu jiao ta miawang*), 'rein in only at the brink of the precipice' (*xuanya le ma*), 'struggle till they collapse, criticize till they stink' (*doudao pichou*).

Maoist Influence

The highhanded manner of dispensing with one's foes was matched by a servile, obsequious demeanor toward the ultimate authority of Chairman Mao. A notable feature of the language of the period was of its adulation of Mao Zedong, exemplified in the widespread emulation of Mao's writings. In addition to the ubiquitous practice of liberally citing from the Chairman's *Quotations* and poems, rebel writers strived to structure their own essays according to Mao's stylistic exemplar. Mao Zedong's "Combat Liberalism" was an especially popular model for adaptation to the analysis of problems internal to the rebel faction, whereas attacks on enemy "capitalist-roaders" or "small reptiles" were typically patterned on Mao's "Letter to Urge the Surrender of Du Luming."

After the January Revolution of 1967, a new method of honoring Chairman Mao became common. Especially visible in so-called 'telegrams of respect' (*zhijing dian*) and 'loyalty letters' (*xian zhongxin shu*), a flowery literary style replete with terms of adoration and flattery developed. This type of essay, ostensibly addressed to the Chairman himself, demonstrated considerable rhetorical skill in its use of parallelism, matching couplets, and the like. Although utterly devoid of the subtlety and elegance of the best of traditional Chinese poetry, it nevertheless self-consciously emulated the structure of classical verse (*fu*):

Chairman Mao, oh Chairman Mao,
Heaven is vast, earth is vast,
But vaster still is your loving-kindness.
Rivers run deep, seas run deep,
But deeper still is your loving-kindness.

Whoever supports you is our friend;
Whoever opposes you we'll fight to the end.

Heaven may change, earth may change,
But our red hearts—loyal to you—will never change.
The earth may move, the mountains may shake,
But our great red banner raised high to your glorious thought
Will never waiver.

In 1967, when revolutionary committees were established around the country, the telegrams of respect—composed to commemorate the occasion—were invariably of this adulatory genre. This sort of sycophantic language, arising in right tandem with the explosion in vulgarity, reinforced the "binary oppositions" so characteristic of Cultural Revolution thought and expression.³³

After the restoration of order in 1969, Mao evidently began to weary of the escalating adoration. With handbills and tabloids banned from circulation, one saw fewer written examples of the ornate language characteristic of the opening years of the Cultural Revolution. In ordinary speech, however, the influence of early Red Guard rhetoric

33. See Dittmer, 1987, 81-90. Although Dittmer does not focus specifically on the use of either obscene or obsequious language, the dichotomy fits well within his pure/defiled distinction.

lingered on. Flowery exaggeration joined vulgar curses and militaristic commands as the linguistic legacy of this period.

Working-class Language

The fundamental changes in language that can be traced to the Red Guard movement of 1966-68 had implications for other segments of the populace, most notably the workers. Thanks to Red Guard efforts to link their activities to proletarian revolution, the working class was quickly drawn into the vortex of the struggle. The earliest big-character posters put up by workers' rebel factions replicated the point of view of contemporary Red Guard tabloids and handbills. Compared to the writings by students, however, the language adopted in workers' posters was fairly tame. Absent were the shocking shibboleths of Red Guard fame.

At that time most of the printed handbills and political essays issued in the name of workers' rebel factions were in fact penned by Red Guards or pre-Cultural Revolution cadres. The workers' rebels were quite limited in their literary abilities; the public speeches of Wang Hongwen and other top leaders of the Shanghai workers' general headquarters were ghost-written by their secretaries, for example. From the remaining records of their meetings, we see that the impromptu remarks of these rebel worker leaders—like their big-character posters—were notably lacking in the fiery rhetoric of their student mentors. What we find instead is a straightforward, rather lacklustre style of expression.

Eventually the public vulgarity pioneered by the Red Guards did make its way into the factory workshop. The uncouth mannerisms of 'ruffians' (*da lao cu*) were celebrated, and a number of heretofore derogatory terms were transformed into compliments. Phrases such as 'horns on the head, thorns on the body' (*toushang zhangjiao shenshang zhangci*) or 'shrewish' (*pola*)—which in the past had indicated impolite behavior—were now used to characterize a proper revolutionary spirit. When recommending workers for admission to the Party or factory cadres for promotion, the designation 'shrewish work style' (*zuofeng pola*) in their dossiers served as a ringing endorsement of a bold and vigorous manner. Chinese workers were no strangers to crude phrases, of course, but the Red Guards' exaltation of vulgarity was an invitation to go public with such language.

After 1968, Chairman Mao—via an essay by Yao Wenyuan—insisted that "the working class must lead in everything." Accordingly, workers' propaganda teams were dispatched to schools and other elements of the "superstructure." Almost overnight, working-class rebels replaced student Red Guards as the most influential "revolutionary" force. Drove of Red Guards were now assigned jobs, mostly down in the countryside. Rather than strut proudly into factories as "young revolutionary marshalls" to stir up cultural revolution, these erstwhile mentors were forced to undergo re-education themselves—as pupils of the working class. The era of the Red Guard had ended.

With this changing of the revolutionary vanguard, one might well have expected a commensurate linguistic change. However, a substantial number of former Red Guards were assigned to factory work at this time. Having experienced the heady exhilaration of political activism and revolutionary responsibility, these youngsters were reluctant to withdraw from such engagement. Boasting literary skills well above those of the average worker, more than a few ex-Red Guards became secretaries in their factory propaganda departments. Thus many of the articles published in the media in the name of workers were actually authored by these former student radicals.

During the Criticize Lin Biao-Criticize Confucius campaign of the early 1970s, "workers' small groups for theoretical study" were established around the country. The group leaders were typically workers who had entered their factory before 1966; often they were older workers with lengthy work experience. At the same time, however, the backbones of these groups were virtually all young students sent down to the factory during the Cultural Revolution. Take, for example, the nationally famous workers' theory group at the Number Two Workshop of Shanghai's Number Five Steel Mill. The deputy-director of the group, a middle school student who entered the factory in 1968, was responsible for composing or rewriting almost all the literary output of that prolific group.

By late 1968, virtually everything published in the press in the name of workers was really written by Red Guards or reporters. But because of the need to honor the principle of the leading role of the proletariat, these articles went to great lengths to adopt a veneer of working-class language. Artificial, stilted adages were invented to serve as the "authentic" voice of labor:

- Be masters of the wharf, not slaves of the tonnage
- In a downpour work as usual, in a light rain work hard, and when there's no rain work your heart out
- For the revolution, no bone is too hard to gnaw through
- A hand that can hold a hammer can also hold a slide rule
- This rule, that regulation — every stipulation is a rope that binds the hands and feet of us workers
- Homemade equipment brings credit to the working class

These unfelicitous aphorisms were widely propagated as "the language of labor." When Shanghai's *Liberation Daily* ran the news headline "Be masters of the wharf, not slaves of the tonnage," copy-cat phrases cropped up in other periodicals: "Be masters of the machine, not slaves of the product," "Be masters of the electrical machine, not slaves of the kilowattage," and the like. Prevalent as such maxims became during the Criticize Lin Biao-Criticize Confucius Campaign, they were never really accepted into ordinary speech.

Conclusion

In contrast to the French Revolution, with its marked distinctions among social classes, China's Cultural Revolution fell linguistically flat. The influential role of the brash young Red Guards from Beijing lent the language of this period a peculiar uniformity. The very efforts of the young radicals to represent the Chinese masses led them to construct a rhetorical style that was alien to literati and popular practice alike.

Part of the explanation for the relative social homogeneity of Cultural Revolution language lies simply in historical timing. While the French Revolution was aimed at a monarchy whose feudal hierarchy remained largely intact, the Cultural Revolution occurred more than half a century after the Chinese imperial system had collapsed. Moreover, thanks to the New Culture Movement of the 1920s, linguistic distinctions based on class status had already been considerably muted in China.

A second factor in the uniformity of Cultural Revolution language was the authoritarian role of Chairman Mao. As an event inspired and directed by the "Great

Helmsman," the movement was severely constrained in its cultural expression. Again the contrast with France is instructive. There the revolution brought an explosion in the publication of new periodicals and the performance of new dramas:

The crumbling of the French state after 1786 let loose a deluge of words, in print, in conversations, and in political meetings. There had been a few dozen periodicals—hardly any of which carried what we call news—circulating in Paris during the 1780s; more than 500 appeared between 14 July 1789 and 10 August 1792. Something similar happened in theater: in contrast to the handful of new plays produced annually before the Revolution, at least 1,500 new plays, many of them topical, were produced between 1789 and 1799, and more than 750 were staged just in the years 1792-94.³⁴

In China, the situation was exactly the reverse. The Cultural Revolution Small Group—which reported directly to Mao—shut down hundreds of journals and placed unprecedented restrictions on the performing arts.³⁵ Only works deemed politically correct by the central leadership were permitted.

A third, and perhaps most telling, reason for the flatness of cultural expression lies in the changing role of Chinese intellectuals. Classical Confucian theory, institutionalized in an "open" examination system for aspiring literati, had served to elevate intellectuals to a pivotal position as mediators between state and society. With their upward mobility dependent upon performance in government-sponsored examinations, intellectuals in imperial China tended to identify closely with state interests. Charged with shepherding the masses, they nonetheless spoke in the orthodox language of the state.

The abolition of the Confucian examinations in 1905, followed by the toppling of the dynastic system a few years later, loosened the centuries-old grip that had held educated Chinese in the tight embrace of the state. The extraordinary cultural ferment which exploded in the aftermath of the May Fourth Movement of 1919 revealed the power of an intelligentsia freed from the bonds of state servitude. In the first half of the twentieth century, educated Chinese broke with their Confucian forbearers by going to the masses for linguistic inspiration as well as political mobilization.

34. Lynn Hunt, 1984, 19-20.

35. See An-jen Chiang, *Models in China's Policy Toward Literature and Art*, University of Washington PhD dissertation (Seattle, 1992).

The Communist revolution was launched by young intellectuals who learned to speak the language of the people so as to mount a united assault against a discredited Republican regime. The process of merging with the masses was by no means easy. Linguistic barriers proved especially formidable to overcome. As a young Communist cadre reported his disillusionment after returning to his home province of Henan to organize the masses in the summer of 1927:

According to all we had heard, the Henan peasantry was very revolutionary. So when we went to Henan we were prepared to lead the peasants to participate in revolutionary work. Our hopes were very high. However, when we arrived in Henan we saw that conditions were completely different from our expectations. . . . Because the peasants' conservatism was so strong and their feudalist thought so pronounced, we had great difficulty in propaganda work, finding that all the handbills and slogans we had brought with us were inappropriate. We were forced to change our strategy, writing in official government style and affixing seals in order to gain their trust. . . . Furthermore, our cadres are too few and lack experience. Most are from South Henan and, because of language difficulties, cannot work effectively in the north.³⁶

Tortuous as the process of popular mobilization was, Communist cadres did of course eventually succeed in rendering their cause intelligible to a mass constituency. The outcome of this effort was a powerful new socialist state capable of demanding once again the full allegiance of its educated youths.

The bizarre language of the Cultural Revolution bespoke the altered status of the Chinese intellectual under socialism—rewedded to the state apparatus, but now required to masquerade as part of the ordinary masses.³⁷ The schizophrenic rhetoric of the Red Guards expressed this ambivalent position. On the one hand, the extravagant praise of "red sun" Chairman Mao reflected the heliotropic pull of the central state. On the other hand, the vulgarity, violence, and vain construction of a phoney "language of labor" represented the forced efforts of young students to present themselves as *bona fide* proletarians.

36. Jiang Yongjing, *Baoluoding yu Wuhan zhengquan* [Borodin and the Wuhan government] (Taipei: Chuanji wensue chubanshe, 1963), 373-74.

37. For a fuller discussion of relations between the state and intellectuals in socialist China, see Timothy Cheek, "From Priests to Professionals: Intellectuals and the State under the CCP," in Wasserstrom and Perry, eds., 124-45.

Superficial similarities to the proletarian culture of the French Revolution—with its occult symbolism of witchcraft, its "burlesque legalism" of mock trials and its vulgar sexual imagery of cuckolding, for example³⁸—belie a deeper difference. The class variation so characteristic of political discourse in eighteenth-century France was much less apparent in China's Cultural Revolution. Despite constant lip service to carrying on class struggle, the language of the Red Guards was surprisingly "classless"—a crude attempt by rude youngsters to appropriate the revolutionary culture of the Chinese proletariat.

38. Darnton, 1984, 97.

**Recent Translation Theory
and Linguistic Borrowing in the
Modern Sino-Chinese Cultural Context**

Joshua A. Fogel
University of California, Santa Barbara

Fascinating developments in the new field of translation studies may help us advance our understanding of the evolving vocabulary of the Chinese Revolution in the twentieth century. Indeed, there has been an unconscious theoretical convergence between translation studies outside the China field and modern Chinese cultural history. The key concept is "culture" writ large in both cases.

Translation theory has been virtually unknown in China until recent times. It is not that the Chinese historically have never been forced to confront the issue; on the whole, however, until the later decades of the nineteenth century, most of those who came to China were prepared to communicate in Chinese. The important exceptions were the nativization of the Buddhist canon and the undoubtedly extensive use of Manchu during the early decades of the Qing dynasty. Since the Western nations only tagged on to the long parade of countries coming to China over the centuries, we need to look first at the other countries of East Asia for clues about translation theory in an ideographic context. Literary Chinese was the *lingua franca* of the East Asian world for two millennia. Although the Japanese invented a native script as early as the tenth century, the Vietnamese in the thirteenth, and the Koreans only in the fifteenth, in all of these cases Chinese remained the primary domestic language for politics and high intellectual culture until the dawn of the twentieth century. We shall return to this issue below.

There have been several traditions of translation theory in the West. The oldest and most long-lasting of them—the transmission of holy scripture into lands in which its language was impenetrable—interestingly parallels developments in East Asia. The story of the Septuagint graphically typifies a whole conception of translation. When the community of Greek rabbis was called upon, ostensibly, to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, seventy rabbis separately assumed the task. They reconvened to discover that all seventy Greek translations were identical. The implication is that only one true and correct—and implicitly divinely inspired—translation existed of this text and accordingly any text. The veracity is thus guaranteed if the translator is properly trained and equipped for the task. In the case of Bible translation, the translator performs a semi-divine function—working with God—to spread the holy word to those unable to master the original, for via translation they will now be assured of the equivalent experience. God may have spoken in Hebrew, but He also guided the Greek translators to the one and

only possible translation of His word.¹ By the same token, translation errors were, on occasion, regarded as blasphemy and punished accordingly.

This conception of translation bespeaks a word-by-word transmission of a text from one context into another. It was not important that the Greek rabbis merely conveyed the general meaning of the Hebrew Bible nor that they simply had the sentences more or less in the same order. The telling points were two: first, that every word was the same in all seventy translations, and second, that the unique translation was the equivalent (though not the equal) of the original.

Despite the multilingual nature of literate culture in Europe through the turn of the nineteenth century, no specific theory of translation was forthcoming. Many would write in Latin or translate their ideas mentally from the vernacular into Latin rather than write them down in the mother tongue. Few needed translation. George Steiner has suggested one possible reason for the lack of translation theory: "The epistemological and formal grounds for the treatment of 'meaning' as dissociable from and augmentative to 'word' are shaky at best." In spite of the absence of theory, translation not only continued, but was deeply intertwined with the evolution of modern languages: "The evolution of modern German is inseparable from the Luther Bible, from Voss's Homer, from the successive versions of Shakespeare by Wieland, Schlegel, and Tieck."²

Translation theory began to undergo a radical transformation in the nineteenth century, as translation began to involve a conscious manipulation to "move the author toward the reader," to make literary texts as palatable in the target language and culture as they were in the source language and culture. This development marks the effective realization that precise translation, especially in the case of literary works, was

1. André Lefevere, "Translation: Its Geneology in the West," in *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 14.

2. George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 265-66, 276-78, citations on 277, 266, respectively. See also Lefevere, "Translation: Its Geneology in the West," 16-18; Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies* (London and New York: Methuen, 1980), 54, 56, 58.

inconceivable without regard for norms of the target language and culture.³ It is also cotermporal with the widespread emergence of vernaculars as literary mediums, where in the past Latin would have been more frequently employed. As people became less and less multilingual and as Latin declined in generic use, the multilingual knowledge necessary for remaining abreast of "world" literature made translation all the more crucial.

We have here the emergence of a new understanding of the relationship between source text (and perhaps author) and target text (and translator). No longer was a work worthy of translation approached as a long string of words, but as an entire text. The translator now performed the all-important function of bringing into one universe a text from another which often might have remained unknown. Without English or French translations of their work, it is highly unlikely, for example, that the writings of Ibsen or Strindberg or Kierkegaard or Tolstoy or, in more recent times, I. B. Singer would have been known outside the realm of native speakers of their mother tongues; it is inconceivable, as well, that Singer would have won the Nobel Prize.

This development has now reached the point that readers outside the native languages of such authors have ceased thinking of their writings as foreign. The same is true of the King James Bible. Translation has actually energized the target languages with new themes and genres deriving from the source languages. The phrase, "Yea, that I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"—despite the fact that it is not an entirely correct translation—has so fully entered our discourse as to make ordinary mortals believe King David spoke English.

Advances over the past two decades in translation studies have evolved from this trend. We are now in the midst of a "cultural turn." The important unit for translation is now seen not as a series of words or sentences between languages nor even as a text moving from one setting to another. Rather they themselves are now seen as emblematic of their contexts, as cultural entities that emerge from one distinctive cultural universe. Without an appreciation of that enveloping context, translation into the target language

3. Lefevere, "Translation: Its Geneology in the West," 18-20 (p. 19, paraphrasing Schleiermacher).

loses much. But traditional bemoaning of what is "lost in the translation" should also not consume our efforts excessively, for there are countless instances in which translation can clarify or elucidate a cryptic original, in which the target language rises above the source language. Generations of Germans have turned to the English translations of Kant's critiques to understand them, and you have not lived until you have read Tsubouchi Shōyō's translations of Shakespeare: "Yo ni aru, yo ni aran. Sore ga gimon jya!"

Translators now speak not of source and target languages alone, but of source and target cultures as well, and the target culture is now beginning to loom almost as large as the source. There is as well less talk of good versus bad translations or faithful versus unfaithful ones. This particular extension of the development of translation studies has a profoundly dangerous aspect to it. In the hands of theorists influenced by postmodernist literary criticism, everything becomes relativized.⁴ All texts, translations as well as originals, emerge on an even plain. While it strikes me that there certainly is much room for nuance and uncertainty in translation, there are also certain definable criteria, if not absolutes, that must remain in play. War is not peace, and love is not hate.

Responsible members of the community of translation studies, however, are fully aware of such potential pitfalls while remaining sensitive to the new directions in their field. As Jirí Levý had noted: "A translation is not a monistic composition, but an interpretation and conglomerate of two structures. On the one hand there are the semantic content and the formal contour of the original, on the other hand the entire system of aesthetic features bound up with the language of the translation."⁵ The new realization, then, is that translation is not simply the transference of meaning from one language system into another with the able use of dictionary and grammar. Language is at the heart of culture; it gives voice to culture, and translators must see the source text

4. For a sampling of the interface between postmodern literary criticism and translation theory, see Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1991); and Suzanne Jill Levine, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction* (St. Paul, MN: Greywolf Press, 1991). The latter is particularly self-impressed. Denis Donohue sums up some of the almost offensive views of the late "don of deconstruction," Paul de Man, in "Translation in Theory and in a Certain Practice," in *The Art of Translation: Voices from the Field*, ed. Rosanna Warren (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 225.

5. Cited in Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, 5-6.

within its surrounding cultural context. Texts have images in cultures and these are not always the same in the source and the target. Images in turn have power through language.⁶

In this connection, Susan Bassnett-McGuire has argued:

To attempt to impose the value system of the SL [source language] culture onto the TL [target language] culture is dangerous ground, and the translator should not be tempted by the school that pretends to determine the original intentions of an author on the basis of a self-contained text. The translator cannot be the author of the SL text, but as the author of the TL text has a clear moral responsibility to the TL readers.⁷

Mary Snell-Hornby goes this one half-step further. She notes that, as we move toward an understanding of translation that sees it as more a cultural (rather than a linguistic) transfer, the act of translation is no longer a "transcoding" from one context into another, but an "act of communication." Texts are part of the worlds they inhabit and cannot be neatly ripped from their surroundings. The new orientation in translation studies is toward the "function of the target text" rather than the "prescriptions of the source text." Hans J. Vermeer has argued that translation is first and foremost a "crosscultural transfer." Thus, the translator must not only be bilingual—that's a given—but effectively bicultural as well. "Translation is not the transcoding of words or sentences from one language to another, but a complex form of action, whereby someone provides information on a text (source language material) in a new situation and under changed functional, cultural, and linguistic conditions, preserving formal aspects as closely as possible."⁸

With the misgivings expressed above, I believe that the cultural turn in translation studies marks a major stride forward, and it can be especially useful to those of us trying to understand the evolution of the new vocabulary of the Chinese Revolution. We should

6. Lefevere, "Translation: Its Genealogy in the West," 26-27.

7. Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, 23.

8. Mary Snell-Hornby, "Linguistic Transcoding or Cultural Transfer: A Critique of Translation Theory in Germany," in *Translation, History and Culture*, 81-82, all citations from 82. See also her book, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988).

note in passing that the identification of language with culture is elemental in East Asia where the two words share the same root, *wen*. This is, of course, not to say that Chinese and Japanese cultures are the same. Especially (though not exclusively) at the elite level, however, Neo-Confucian culture—a core canon of texts, a shared tradition of commentaries on them, specific family and societal values deriving from them, and the like—had become strikingly similar in both countries from at least the seventeenth century forward. Significant differences in social organization and particularly in the procedures by which men were chosen for political decision-making jobs remained, making the Japanese and Chinese cultural contexts similar as opposed to identical, different strings on the same guitar, different variations on the same theme.

The Japanese descendants of these elite men of the Edo period, men from the *bakumatsu* (late Edo) and Meiji eras who were trained initially in the Confucian classics, would later in their careers learn Western languages and take upon themselves the formidable tasks of transmitting Western concepts into Japanese. Had it been the mid- to late twentieth century, they would surely have conveyed—as their own descendants have—the new ideas from the West into *katakana* expressions taken largely from English. There are two reasons for this shift: English now enjoys the reputation of an international language, and the new "coiners" lack the training in Kanbun (literary Chinese) of their forefathers. A brief trip to any electronics store in Japan will reveal just how dependent on English the new Japanese terminology is. Because these new terms are not written in Chinese characters, they cannot easily be imported (let alone reimported) into China now, as was the case with the Chinese-character compounds coined by Japanese earlier.

In the Meiji period, however, the only appropriate language for transmitting new philosophical, literary, and scientific terms was Chinese. Many of these creators of new terms were famous in their own right for composing works in literary Chinese. One of the most famous case is undoubtedly the great liberal thinker, Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901), who translated Rousseau's Social Contract into Kanbun in the 1880s.⁹ Via

9. Chōmin's translation of Rousseau did in fact not only circulate in China (often with the knowledge that the translator was Japanese); it was reprinted there as well. On its reception in China, see Shimada Kenji, "Chūgoku de no Chōmin juyō" [The reception of Nakae Chōmin in China], *Nakae Chōmin zenshū geppō* 2 (December 1983), 1-6; Shimada Kenji, "Nakae Chōmin

such routes, numerous new words were coined in Chinese for the literate Japanese reading public. Because the terms then existed in Chinese ideographs, they were ready made for transport into Chinese. The second stage began roughly from the turn of the century, and, although not all terms were renativized into Chinese, the carriers were usually Chinese studying in Japan or those who had taken refuge there.

To make matters even more complicated, the Japanese coiners frequently derived their neologisms from traditional Chinese texts. The research of Sanetō Keishū and its further development in the research of Tam Yue-him has now documented over 1000 such terms, usually two- or four-character expressions. Many of these same terms also entered the Korean and Vietnamese languages in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁰

Although it is not completely exceptional, an ideographic language like Chinese—and the other East Asian languages that used Chinese and developed their own vernaculars later—may require a variety of qualifications in discussing translation, either to or from. Achilles Fang overstated the case, though he raised some important considerations:

Another fetish of a group of Sinologists who still think Chinese (classical Chinese) is a "language" in the conventional sense is their firm conviction that a perfect dictionary will smooth their way. Alas, they are whoring after false gods. First, such a dictionary is impossible to make; next, what earthly use is a two-hundred-volume dictionary to anyone? After all is said and done, the meaning is determined from the context in the largest sense of the word, and there no dictionary will avail him. Moreover, a dictionary is no help if the wrong entry is chosen.¹¹

Min'yaku yakkai no Chūgoku han [A Chinese edition of Nakae Chōmin's translation of the *Social Contract*], *Dōhō* 40 (October 1981): 1; Hazama Naoki, "Chūgokujin ni yoru *Min'yaku yakkai* no jūkan o megutte: Chūgoku de no Chōmin juyō, zoku" [On the reprinting of (Nakae's translation) of the *Social Contract* by Chinese: Chōmin's reception in China, continued], *Nakae Chōmin zenshū geppō* 18 (April 1986), 1-9; Hazama Naoki, "Rusō *Min'yaku ron* to Chūgoku" [Rousseau's *Social Contract* and China], paper presented at the international conference, "Jindai shijie yu Zhongguo" [The modern world and China], Beijing, 31 August-3 September 1990.

10. Tam Yue-him (Tan Ruqian), "Xiandai Hanyu de Riyu wailaici jiqi souji he bianren wenti" [Japanese loanwords in contemporary Chinese and the issues involved in collecting and recognizing them], in his *Jindai Zhong-Ri wenhua guanxi yanjiu* [Studies in modern Sino-Japanese cultural relations] (Hong Kong: Xianggang Riben yanjiusuo, 1986), 327-49.

11. Achilles Fang, "Some Reflections on the Difficulty of Translation," in *On Translation*, ed. Reuben A. Brower (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 130-31.

A great deal of research has been done on the entrance into Chinese and Japanese of the Meiji-period Japanese neologisms, though it remains scattered. An entire generation of intellectuals in China tried to read Yan Fu's Chinese renderings of Western concepts in his translations of Mill, Smith, Spencer, and Huxley, though most of his neologisms simply did not stick. For example, perhaps his most famous term, *tianyanlun* as a translation for the "theory of evolution," was soon replaced in the new Chinese lexicon by the Japanese created term, *shinkaron* (Ch., *jinhualun*). Why such terms did not "take" in China cannot simply be sluffed off on the fact that they were too literary or assumed too profound a knowledge of classical Chinese lore. When Yan Fu was writing, there was no widespread vernacular Chinese language in use, and most of those who were able to read his translations undoubtedly understood his allusions (even if the Western ideas behind them remained partially obscured). Was Yan Fu aware of the Japanese translations by Nakamura Keiu of the same texts he labored over? Has anyone ever compared the vocabularies devised by Nakamura and Yan to render Western philosophical, political, and economic concepts?

There is a widespread, but extremely thin understanding of the process by which the abovementioned 1000 or so Japanese coinages were formed and entered Chinese. In fact, there are any number of actual, far more complex routes by which these terms were created and adopted into modern, vernacular Chinese. Saitō Tsuyoshi has examined a number of fascinating cases in great detail in his major work, *Meiji no kotoba* (Meiji words).¹² He is concerned primarily with how a discrete set of expressions was forged in Meiji Japanese and how it came to be part of the modern spoken and written Japanese language. Although most of the terms studied—such as *Seiyō* (Ch. *Xīyang*, the West), *shakai* (Ch. *shehui*, society), *kyōwakoku* (Ch. *gongheguo*, republic), *hoken* (Ch. *baoxian*, insurance), and other philosophical and academic terms—also found their way into Chinese, Saitō does not examine that phase of the process. He does, though, discuss many of the terms that were suggested and subsequently dropped for various Western political institutions and systems.

12. Saitō Tsuyoshi, *Meiji no kotoba, higashi kara nishi e no kakehashi* [Meiji words: A bridge from East to West] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977).

In a series of fascinating studies that approaches a similar topic, though largely from the Chinese side of the picture, Mizoguchi Yūzō looks at the numerous Chinese terms that surround the complex of issues involved in laying out the modern distinctions drawn between the public (*gong*) and the private (*si*). He begins his analysis in Chinese antiquity and demonstrates the remarkable changes that transpired in the uses to which these terms were put over time. From the late nineteenth century, however, these terms became caught up in demands by Chinese intellectuals for Western-style political institutions. China's readiness for such institutions, such as representative government or democracy, were frequently justified on putative long traditions in which, for example, the "people were the basis" of the state.¹³

Let me conclude with one small case which should demonstrate succinctly just how thoroughly complicated this transmission process was: the particle *de* (J. *teki*), used in general to form adjectives from nouns, adverbs from adjectives, or to create the genitive case. In his unsurpassed study of the transmission of Western learning to China and Japan, Masuda Wataru (1903-77) has described part of the story in discussing the important work of Yanagawa Shunsan (1832-70). Yanagawa was a scholar of Western learning at the end of the Edo period and head of the Kaiseijo, the main center for Western studies at the time in Japan; he also reputedly knew Dutch, French, English, and German. A few biographical details about the life and work of the coiners of these neologisms may help us anthropomorphize this process; it puts flesh on the bones.

Yanagawa was also, though, a punctuator of Kanbun texts, written by Chinese or translations by Chinese of Western works. His reputation as a scholar was sufficiently formidable and well known that he appeared as a character at the very beginning of *Nagori no yume* (Lingering Dreams) by Imaizumi Mine (1858-1937),¹⁴ the daughter of Katsuragawa Hoshū (1822-81), a physician to the family of the shogun and a scholar of

13. Mizoguchi Yūzō, "Chūgoku ni okeru kō/shi kinen no tenkai" [The development of the concepts of *gong* and *si* in China], *Shisō* 669 (March 1980): 19-38; Mizoguchi Yūzō, "Chūgoku no 'kō/shi'" (2 parts), *Bungaku* 56 (September 1988): 88-102; *Bungaku* 56 (October 1988): 73-84.

14. Privately published, 1940. Reprints: Nagasaki shoten, 1941; Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1963. See also Osatake Tateki's study *Shinbun zasshi no sōshisha Yanagawa Shunsan* [Yanagawa Shunsan, initiator of newspapers and magazines] (Tokyo: Takayama shoten, 1940).

Dutch learning. Clearly, the community of Kangaku scholars and that of Western learning scholars had significant overlap. Among his many works, Yanagawa wrote Furansu buntan (A Grammar of French), Igirisu nichiyō tsūgo [Everyday colloquial English], and Yōgaku benran [A manual of Western Learning]; and his skills at Kanbun can be found in the literary Chinese versions of popular Japanese songs he prepared, his punctuation work on the Japanese version of the *Zhihuan qimeng* (The circle of knowledge), a work comprising lessons on English, Christianity, and natural science, based on James Legge's Chinese translation. Yanagawa was also involved in a project to prepare a complete Japanese translation in twenty string-bound volumes of the *Gewu rumen* (Introduction to science) by W. A. P. Martin.¹⁵

Among the many terms nativized into Japan by Yanagawa and his associates was the aforementioned particle *teki* (Ch. *de*). In his personal recollections, Ōtsuki Fumihiko (1847-1928) once described the group of men who worked together translating so many of these Chinese and Western texts. The group included:

Yanagawa Shunsan, Katsuragawa Hoshū, Kurosawa Magoshirō, Mitsukuri Keigo [d. 1871], Kumazawa Zen'an [1845-1906], and even myself. Odd as it might seem, this group in general [also] enjoyed reading Chinese novels, such as *Shuihu zhuan* [Water margin] and *Jinpingmei* [Golden lotus]. One day we got together and began chatting, and someone mentioned inadvertently the following. It was fine to translate "system" as *soshiki* (Ch. *zuzhi*), but it was difficult to translate the term "systematic." The suffix "tic" sounded similar to the character *teki* (*de*) as used in [Chinese] fiction; so why not render "systematic" as *soshiki teki* (Ch. *zuzhi de*). Everyone thought it was a brilliant idea and agreed to give it a try. Eventually, we paid someone to write out the expression *soshiki teki* clearly and bring it to the authorities. "Have you put this into use?" "Yes." "This is rather extraordinary, isn't it?" "Not that I am aware, no." We joked with these sorts of comic play-acting, but very often we were only able to escape difficult [translation] points with this character *teki*. Ultimately, it moved from pure invention to fact, and it was used later without a second thought, as people picked

15. Masuda Wataru, *Seigaku tōzen to Chūgoku jijō: 'zassho' sakki* [The Eastern spread of Western learning: Notes on "Various Books"] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1979), 17-20, 22. On Yanagawa, Narushima Ryūhoku has also written: "Yanagawa sensei ryakujō" [Brief biography of Professor Yanagawa] and "Yanagawa sensei itsuji" [Unknown facts about Professor Yanagawa], both included in *Ryūhoku ishō* [Ryūhoku's posthumous manuscripts] (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1892).

up on this usage.¹⁶

Again, though, this is only half of our story. We need to know if this new colloquial usage in Japanese of *teki* was the source for *de* as a comparable particle in colloquial Chinese, or whether *de* entered modern *baihua* directly from its much earlier usage in colloquial Chinese literary texts of the Yuan and Ming periods. While twentieth-century spoken Chinese uses *de* almost exclusively, written vernacular texts often use *de* alongside the other genitive-forming particles *zhi* and *di*. Japanese has its own manner of forming the genitive, with the particle *no*, not the precise counterpart of *teki* but the two perform something more on the order of complementary, and occasionally overlapping, roles.¹⁷

Most serious scholars of the modern Chinese historical experience, even those most closely wedded to statistical data, consider culture—actually, cultural differences—elemental to their considerations in research and writing. It would be almost impossible to imagine someone making the claim that study of China could be pursued without taking culture into account. Thus, the recent turn in translation studies toward a broader, more cultural appreciation of both source and target contexts segues neatly with this widespread scholarly criterion, and concerted attention toward the linguistic Sino-Japanese innovations over the past century could not have come at a better time.

Before blanket characterizations can be put forth about the nature of this borrowing—and long before we can generalize or theorize about it—we need closer examination of as many of the different routes by which the terminology of the Chinese Revolution entered the modern Chinese lexicon from Japanese as possible. We need to study the very texts in which these terms were first used, what Western concepts they were meant to translate, what they conjured up in the Japanese setting, the process by which they entered Chinese, and the images (however different or similar from Japanese) these terms gave rise to in China. I do not mean to suggest that we conduct 1000 separate studies, but we do need many separate studies for different clusters of terms.

16. Ōtsuki Fumihiko, *Fukken zassan* [Miscellaneous collection of Fukken] (Tokyo: Kōbundō shoten, 1902), as cited in Masuda Wataru, *Seigaku tōzen to Chūgoku jijō: 'zassho' sakki*, 20.

17. Some of the complexity concerning this issue is conveyed in a somewhat popular essay by Suzuki Shūji, "Teki no bunka" [The culture of "teki"], in his *Kango to Nihonjin* [Chinese terms and the Japanese people] (Tokyo: Misuzu shobō, 1979), 1-25.

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