

ON INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION OF WORKS OF MAO ZEDONG**DESPRE DISEMINAREA INTERNAȚIONALĂ ÎN OPERELE LUI MAO ZEDONG****Hu QIN¹**College of Foreign Languages, Guizhou University, P.R. China
qhu90@sina.com**Abstract**

Mao Zedong, the founder of P.R. China, is a prolific writer, his writing ranging from philosophical and military works, poems to Ci (also called Long and short sentences) etc.. He was once called the first journalist of Xinhua News Agency. His works includes Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (I-V) , Selected poems of Mao Tse-tung, Military Works of Mao Zedong (I-VI), and etc. Twenty century witnessed the distribution of about a billion of the publications of Mao Zedong's works all over the world, and most of the translations are the products of the Culture Revolution. And the translation of Mao Zedong's Works has a very complicated history because many countries, institutions and many people contribute to this work. Mao's thoughts is well known to the people of that time and his influence still can be seen. What we should ask why in that period of time from 1950-1976 so many Mao's works were published in so many different languages? What are the factors that makes it possible? And what are the typical features of the dissemination? It is easy to see that the ideology plays very important part in the translation of Works of Mao Zedong. The value of these translation activities are worth exploring. This paper focuses on social context of the translation and the features of the dissemination of Works of Mao Zedong.

Key words: *Works of Mao Zedong, dissemination, translation studies*

Perhaps the slogan "women hold up half of the sky" could be familiar to you, in Trump's inauguration ceremony, thousands of American women resisted him with the Slogan in the protest march, which is a very famous and influential quotation of Mao Zedong. Women's rights were further promoted by the enforcement of the Marriage Law of 1950, which guaranteed the equality of sexes in marriage. Several decades ago Chinese women were encouraged to go out of private sphere, had the equal rights of men and become a part of the society. "Enable every woman who can work to take her place on the labour front, under the principle of equal pay for equal work."(Mao, p298, 1966) As a result of Mao's policies, the economic and political status of women are improve greatly and the role of women in Chinese society was totally transformed. Today, there are women in all trades and professions. Women work side by side with men on a equal footing.

Mao Zedong is a great leader and one of the greatest poets in the history of China. He has changed the country greatly and changed its destiny. Led by Chairman Mao Zedong, China developed so fast that it laid a solid foundation for the complete industrial system . Compared with the counterpart India, the achievements of China is remarkable that can be easily seen from people's spirit, efficient government, economic prosperity and energetic culture. Mao becomes a bridge which connects China's past and now. His unique status that distinguishes him from his predecessors and contemporaries lies not only in his remarkable revolutionary accomplishments but also in his extraordinary literary achievements. He is a prolific writer, his works ranging from

¹ Hu Qin, Doctor of Comparative Literature , professor of college of Foreign Languages of Guizhou University P.R. China.

philosophical and military works, poems, and to Ci (also called Long and short sentences). He was once called the first journalist of Xinhua News Agency which is the biggest and most influential media organization in China. His works includes Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung (I-V) , *Selected Poems of Mao Tse-tung*, *Military Works of Mao Zedong* (I-VI)(1993), and etc. His earliest works was in 1917 and last one in 1970.² He writes a lot of works which are known to the people and many of his quotations become a part of our daily expressions. Many people are determined practitioners of his thought. A lot of people apply his thought to running business, analyzing the market and solving problems they meet, and finally making great success, such as the President of Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., Ren Zhengfei, the president of Alibaba Group Ma Yun, etc. Mao was once called the heart , the engine, the flag or the tower of his time. Till now people tend to seek strength from his works. Thanks to the translations of his works, his thoughts is also very popular all over the world, such as “Where there is oppression, there is resistance.”, “Ten thousand years are too long to delay, Be sure to seize the night and day.”(Gu Zhengkun, p.199, 1993)... There are many translations in the past decades and a lot of researches have been done on these translations. What is interesting to me is the translation history of international dissemination of Mao’s works. What we should ask why in that period of time from 1950-1976 so many Mao’s works were published in so many different languages? What are the factors that makes it possible? And what are the typical features of the dissemination? It is easy to see that the ideology plays very important part in the translation of Works of Mao Zedong. The value of these translation activities are worth exploring. This paper will focus on social context and the characters of the dissemination. The purpose is to find out the value of these translation activities and to understand the social context in which the translation activity is greatly affected.

1、 Translations of Works of Mao Zedong

When looking back, we find that the translation of Works of Mao Zedong has a very long history. And it is a very complicated history because many countries, institutions and many people contribute their efforts in the project. Up to now *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement In Hunan (March 1927)* was thought to be the first translation of Mao’s works known to the foreign readers. In 1927, it was translated into Russian on *The Communist International*³. And his poem “Long March” was the first poem known to the western world translated by Edgar Snow who was the first western journalist to give a full account of the history of the Chinese Communist Party in his book *The Red Star over China* in 1936. In1947, Mao’s article *On New Democracy*(1940) was published in the name of *China’s New Democracy* with an introduction by Earl Browder, who was the American activist of International Workers Movement and one of the main leaders of American Communist Party, on *New Century*, New York. There are 12 translations of *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship (June 30, 1949)*, nine of them published by Foreign Language Press in Beijing , one by Britain Lawrence and Wishart in 1950 and other two translated by Li Tien, appeared on the magazine *Institute of Far Eastern Languages of Yale University in 1951 &1968*.⁴ In 1948, Stalin offered to publish Mao’s works, and sent theorist Eugene to China. *On Practice, On Contradiction, and Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* were published by Publication of Soviet Union Central Organization *Bolshevik* and reprinted by *Moskovskaya Pravda* .⁵ And *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* from Volume One to Volume Three were translated into Russian by Shi Ze and Fei Delin (Николай Трофимович Федоренко)⁶, which were changed into four volumes and published separately in 1952 and in 1953. With the instruction

² <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/date-index.htm>

³ The Communist International, abbreviated as Comintern and also known as the Third International (1919–1943), was an international communist organization that advocated world communism.

⁴ Yang Yuying, *The Translation Study On Mao Zedong in the English World*, Maozedong Thought Study, May 2014, p

⁵ <https://kknews.cc/history/82p531.html>

⁶ Fei Delin is the Chinese Name of Николай Трофимович Федоренко . He is an ambassador, translator and Sinologist. He is a prolific writer, nearly all of his works are relating to China. He translated Mao Zedong’s poems into Russian.

of Premier Zhou Enlai, Beijing Foreign Language Press in Beijing and China International Bookstore took charge of translating *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (1917-1949) in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Japanese and distributing to the foreign countries. There are four different versions of Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare* in the United States. The first two were published by New York Praeger respectively in 1961 and 1967. And of the other two, one is translated by Samuel B. Griffith II with a new introduction, published by New York Anchor Press, 1978 and the other is Samuel B. Griffith II's version with an introduction to the 2nd edition by Arthur Waldron and Edward O' Dowd, published by Nautical & Aviation Pub. Co. of America in 1992. There are seven translation versions of *Quotations of Chairman Mao. Mao Zedong and the Political Economy of the Border Region: A Translation of Mao's Economic and Financial Problems* was edited and translated by Andrew Watson, published by Cambridge University Press in 1980. Roger R. Thompson translated *Report from Xunwu*, which was written in 1930 by Mao Zedong, published by Stanford University Press, 1990. And Slavoj Žižek, the eminent scholar of Slovakia, translated Mao's *On Practice and Contradiction* published by Verso in London & New York in 2007. Besides all of these publications, Japan is another important source of Works of Mao Zedong. It has collected more Mao's works than China and there are some important findings.

As far as Mao's poems are concerned, the influences can be seen from their popularity in China and among the foreign countries. Mao's poetry is a reflection of his literary and artistic ideas, a combination of revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism, a harmonious integration of profound philosophical ideas and artistic representation, it is no wonder that people worldwide highly cherish Mao's poems. In January 1957, at the request of the Chief Editor of the Poetry magazine, Mao Zedong agreed to release his poems in the inaugural issue of Poetry⁷ and among them six poems were newly exposed to the public. They were warmly welcomed by Chinese people by lining a long way to buy the magazine. And in the following year Culture Relics Publishing House engraved a large edition of *Chairman Mao's 19 Poems*. The English version of the 18 poems translated by Robert Payne included his article appeared in Chinese Literature Volume II in 1958, in the article he mentioned that in 1945 when Mao's poem *Qin Yuanchun Snow*⁸ cause a sensation in Chongqing, he realized there would have been more Mao's poems in the publications. With his endeavor other two poems were found and he translated the three in 1947. In Sept. 1958 Foreign Languages Press in Beijing published *Mao Tzedong: Nineteen Poems*. Between 1950s and 1970s English translation versions of Mao's poems were up to 30, there were also many French and Japanese versions along with other versions in different languages. As a result the publications of Mao's poems overseas amounted to 75 millions all around the world.⁹ Among them one of the editions needed to mention is the version of 1976. It was called "official edition" because of two reasons. On the one hand, a group of translators, including famous scholars such as Yuan Shuipo, Ye Junjian, Qian Zhongshu, cooperated with some foreign scholars to ensure the accuracy and readability of the poems. And the translation to large extent is matched with the original from the word order to the meaning. On the other hand, the translation work was under the leadership of the government. In other words, it is a collective product. This edition contains 39 poems with few of Mao's notes but without translators'. It becomes the original version of the Beijing Foreign Languages Press for the other languages' versions. In 1993, the 100th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth, there were 4 new translation versions with diverse styles appeared: Zhao Zengtao's *Mao Zedong Poems* (43 poems, 1992), Huang Long's *An English Version of Mao's Poems* (50 poems, 1993), Xu Yuanchong's *Selected Poems of Mao Zedong* (50 poems, 1993), Gu Zhengkun's *Poems of Mao Zedong with Rhymed Versions and Annotations* (49 poems, 1993). Compared with the older versions, there are some obvious new traits. Firstly, the four translators are all for personal interests,

⁷ Poetry is a prestigious Chinese magazine,

⁸ Qin Yuanchun Snow is a very famous poem written by Mao Zedong in 1939 when he arrived Shanbei he was impressed by the winter scenery. It was said that Jiang Jieshi who was the president of Guo MIndang and the Republic of China asked the men of letters to write a better one but in vain.

⁹ <http://renwu.people.com.cn/n/2014/0917/c357069-25681000.html>

somewith an introduction and notes, and some just with notes. Secondly, more poems are translated, reached to 50. Thirdly, translations are in English metrical verse. Three-Beauty Theory¹⁰ was followed in Xu Yuanchong 's translation. In Hong Kong, there are five more versions. *Mao Zedong as Poet and Revolutionary Leader: Social and Historical Perspectives* is written by C. Edwin Vaughan and Zhang Chunhou, a professor of Xi'An International Studies University, it contains 88 poems more than any other editions.

2. The social context of translation of Works of Mao Zedong

From the data sources we can see the translation work of Mao's works started very early. At the early stage, it was disseminated among the Communist International which was a platform for the communist parties. Then China became the major force. Actually most of Mao's works were translated after P.R. China was founded. So what we should ask why in that period of time from 1950-1976 so many works of Mao Zedong were published in so many different languages? It is easy to see that the ideology plays very important part in the translation of Works of Mao Zedong.

For the most part is the cold war. After the second world war, the whole world was divided into two big groups: Eastern Bloc and Western Bloc. Both sides have their own ideology. As the leader, the United States wanted to dominate the world order, a market free and open to American goods and more and more countries modeling on American institutions and values. However it encountered determined resistance from Soviet Union. And China at that time was a very poor big country. Chinese Communist Party succeeded in defeating GMD and built a socialist country. It faced the economic blockade of the western world. According to the White Paper on China issued by the State Department of U.S. in 1949 showed American hostility to the new republic.¹¹ In Asia, US containment policy was directed against P.R. China.¹² How to break the blockage? How to expose the image of P.R. China to the outside world? The task for the newly built P.R. China was to consolidate the proletariat regime, to advocate socialism and communism and to disclose the immoral of the capitalism and imperialism. To get a high standpoint and to get more support and understanding was not an easy job. Several English magazines such as *China Daily*, *China Today* were published and translating works of Mao Zedong is as a part of the huge project.

The second reason is the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. The intense conflicts between the ways of socialism and capitalism in the Chinese Communist Party were along with the conflicts with Soviet Union. The situations in and outside of China caused Chairman Mao Zedong to take the future of the country seriously. He launched cultural revolution with the intention to eliminate the remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society. It was a social and political movement that took place in China from 1966 until 1976, for Mao Zedong believes that the ideology is crucial for "Anyone wanting to overthrow a political régime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as to revolutionary classes."¹³ Its goal was to preserve 'true' Communist ideology and re-impose Maoist thought as the dominant ideology within the Party. Dissemination of Mao's thought can be regarded as creating public opinion and doing some preparatory ideological work, in my view.

The third reason is that the world political map changed greatly. After the world war II many colonies gained their independence through hard fighting just like China. As one of the national liberation movement, China shares many common grounds with these countries, which all belongs

¹⁰ Three-Beauty Theory put forward by professor Xu Yuanchong who advocates that poetry translation should be beauty in sense, beauty in sound and beauty in form.

¹¹ *The society and culture of major English speaking countries*, Higher Education Press, Beijing, 2005.8, p195

¹² U.S. had many over military bases surround China: south Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan. Taiwan's military base was dismantled after China and U.S. formally establish diplomatic relation 1979.

¹³ https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_63.htm

to “the third world”.¹⁴ Take for example, 1960 was called “Year of Africa”, for there were 17 African countries declaring independence. From 1955 to 1990 there had been 34 countries established socialist system and what they needed most was economical, technological, cultural support, especially the successful experience. Supporting these countries is regarded as the compelling obligation of P. R. China. At different stages Mao Zedong would analyze advantages and disadvantages of the revolutionary situations, pointed out ways to deal with the problems. China revolutionary process benefited a lot and avoided a lot of unpredictable damages under his guidance. The successful experiences would contribute to the poor and the proletariat of other countries. The need of the ex-colonies and the obligation of Chinese Communist Party helped to bring about the translation of Mao’s works.

3. The typical features of the dissemination of Works of Mao Zedong

When we look back at the dissemination of Mao’s works, its effective way marks some typical features. The dissemination history we mentioned above shows three obvious phases. In the first phase Mao’s works spread among socialist countries and communist parties all over the world before 1950s. The articles or the poems were translated sporadically, usually by foreigners. Some literature sources show that besides the translations, there were a lot of introductions or researches on Mao’s works. For example in 1957 Mao’s 18 poems published in Soviet Union were translated by Fei Delin and Eydlin. In the introduction, Fei Delin highly praised the artistry of Mao’s poems as “rich in social contents, sublime thoughts, and firmly revolutionary faith”. In the following years Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France and many other countries also published their own edition respectively.¹⁵ Second phase from mid 1950s to 1976 is the most important one, for Mao’s works published and disseminated all over the world, especially during the Cultural Revolution. They were translated by the government. The third phase after Mao’s phase. The translation work keeps on but no comparison with the second phase. What we discuss here is the dissemination characters of the second phase: discourse power, national image and dissemination effects.

● Cultural hegemony

According to Antonio Gramsci, cultural hegemony is that the ruling class can manipulate the value system and mores of a society, so that their view becomes the world view. Since the founding of P.R. China, Chinese Communist Party was intended to distribute China’s success history to the outside world, and propaganda the legitimacy of the government and the Party, so translating Mao Zedong Thought became a part of the project. I think it is a very effective way to gain the discourse power. To make it known to all that What is Mao Zedong Thought has great significance. It is an integration of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese revolution. It’s application and development of Marxism-Leninism in China achieves success. Facts have proven it to be the correct theoretical principles and summary of experiences on China’s revolution. It gets the support of the overwhelming majority of Chinese people.

Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text.¹⁶ Target language in translation usually indicates the native one while source language is the foreign one. However translating works’ of Mao Zedong is from native language to foreign language. It begins with the first three volumes of selected works of Mao Zedong, covering the history of the Chinese Communist Movement to the end of the war against Japan in 1945. In 1960 the Central committee of the communist party of China made a decision to organize groups of English and Russian translators for Volume IV, 20 people in each group. Then in 1961 French and Spanish groups were organized. The suggestion of a specific institution which was in charge of international communication of Mao Zedong thought was confirmed. In 1966,

¹⁴ Three worlds theory” is raised by Mao Zedong. He regards US and Soviet Union as one world, western developed countries are the group, and the exploited countries are the third.

¹⁵ Yin Chengdong, On Translation work of Works of Mao Zedong after Founding of P.R. China from Chinese to English, Chinese Translator’s Journal, 2009.5

¹⁶ The Oxford Companion to the English Language, Namit Bhatia, ed., 1992, pp. 1,051–54.

there were 30 translation groups of different languages, each with two or three foreign specialists worked together to translate Volume V. To ensure the translation accuracy there were five-step procedures: first translation, discussion-retranslation, discussion-correction, scrutiny of the Foreign Languages Press and finally press proof. The foreign specialists took the responsibility of ensuring the language and the expressions were acceptable for the people of other cultural backgrounds.

There are three institutions responsible for the translation and publications: the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC, the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the CPCC and Committee for Editing and Publishing Works of Mao Zedong, they are committed to a part of the project from selection of articles to translation and to publication respectively. In a word, the production process, including translation, publication and distribution of Mao's works are well-organized, efficient and effective.

- State image of New China

Translation dissemination plays an active part in advertising China. The significance of the work is to build the image of the new socialist country that is completely different from the Old China--Chinese people stand up.

Firstly, achievements in all fields. Translations of Mao's works and other publications aimed to show that China had made great progress in the first 27 years under the leadership of Chairman Mao. The achievements are as follows: atomic bomb in 1964, hydrogen bomb in 1967, manmade satellite in 1970, intercontinental ballistic missile in 1975, man-made synthetic bovine insulin in 1965, hybrid rice in 1975, laser phototypesetting in 1978, and etc.

More than 90% people got primary education which laid a good foundation for the future development. Average life-span till 1976, which is a comprehensive index to judge the society and environment of a country, raised greatly from 35 of 1949 to 67 according to the statistics of world bank. The population increased from 541.67 million to 937.17 million. The integrated industrial system had been set up, the economy developed rapidly. China could produce nearly all kinds of things from nuclear weapon to daily necessities although people's life was not so plentiful. China attracted the world attention. Some young people of western countries came to visit China.

Secondly, support the third world countries to gain independence. In 1950s-1970s saw the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. China chose to stand by the side of the Asians, Africans and Latin Americans, supporting them to cast off the yoke of colonialism. For instance many African countries got assistance from China including the publications. Many assistances are non-reimbursable. As a large country China aims to promote justice. Whenever there is an unfair or an invasion of the super powers to the other countries, there would be strong denunciation from China. Socialist China should show the world through its actions that it opposes to hegemonies and power politics and will never seek hegemony. Through translation, many of Mao's words could be quoted and gave them strengthen, such as:

We should support whatever our enemies oppose and oppose whatever our enemies support. (Mao Zedong, p15, 1966)

Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. (Mao Zedong, p12, 1966)

A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery. It cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another (Mao Zedong, p11, 1966)

In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage. (Mao Zedong, p199, 1966)

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful. (Mao, p72, 1966)

We stand for self-reliance. We hope for foreign aid but cannot be dependent on it; we depend on our own efforts, on the creative power of the whole army and the entire people. (Mao, p.195, 1966)

We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun. (Mao, p.63, 1966)

The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, of criticism, of persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression. (Mao, p52, 1966)

It was a commonplace for China to criticize the U.S. at that time. A case in point is the American civil rights movement. Robert F. Williams, president of the Monroe, North Carolina, chapter of the NAACP in the 1950s and early 1960s, had written two letters to Chairman Mao Zedong asking for support. In August 8th, 1963 Mao's statement of "Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism" was released. In 1968, Martin Luther K. was assassinated, Chairman Mao made another statement condemn to the cruelty:

Comrade Mao Tse-tung, chairman of the Central committee of the Communist Party of China, in support of the Afro-American struggle against violent repression

(April 16, 1968)(Peking : Foreign Languages Press, 1968.)

Thirdly, Return to United Nations. P.R. China had not been recognized by the most of the capitalist countries for a long time. So seldom could be seen China on the international stage. On October 25, 1971, Albania's motion to recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legal China was passed as General Assembly Resolution 2758. It was supported by most of the communist countries (including the Soviet Union) and non-aligned countries (such as India), but also by some American allies such as the UK and France. From 1949 to 1976, 100 countries had set up foreign relationships with China. During that time many heads of governments including western countries, Latin American, African countries and Asian countries visited China and it is a great honor for them to be invited to Zhongnanhai, where Mao lived and worked, to visit Chairman Mao. Some facts are, for instance , American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist W.E. duBois, Argentine Marxist revolutionary Che Guevara, President of United States Richard Milhous Nixon, Premier Minister of United States Henry Kissinger, Prime Minister of Japan Fukuda etc.

- The effects of dissemination

Making friends all over the world. Through all kinds of ways China broke through the blockage of the western countries. The common ground for communication of Mao Zedong thought is to identify with the poor, the oppressed and depressed and to support the justice. This position helped China win a lot of friends. Along with the facts mentioned above, many non official Latin American delegations visited China and were impressed deeply. According to the incomplete statistics, Chairman Mao Zedong had interviews with Latin American delegations 55 times.

Dissemination of Chinese culture. Mao's poems not only inherit the fine qualities of classical Chinese poems but also make some innovations: it's the record of Mao Zedong and the epic of Chinese revolutionary history, it's the combination of romanticism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism. They are full of idealism with the passion to change the old social system. Up to now there are more than 100 versions of Poetry of Mao Zedong. All the translators has their own understanding and all want to make it more close to the original. It is an impossible goal to reach because Mao is a master of language and in his poems he likes to use images, myths, idioms along with adaptation of lines of ancient poets. Further more trans-culture dissemination means overcome the barriers of the language, culture, values and aesthetics. It is a process of negotiation. Between 1996 to 2001, there were three international conferences on Poetry of Mao Zedong, which promoted the communication of Chinese culture.

Another effect is that each year Center for East Asian Research at Harvard which was established by John Fairbank hold annual conference to exchange the latest findings of Mao Zedong study. They have hosted several international conferences on Mao Zedong thought these years.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the ideology plays very important part in the translation of Works of Mao Zedong. Translation and dissemination of *Works of Mao Zedong* in 1960s and 70s was a spectacle in the translation history of P.R. China. So many people participated in and so many people were influenced by. It helps China build its national image and hold its discourse power. When facing a difficult situation, China actively dealt with and finally succeeded in making friends and returned to United Union.

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