

# Traveling Sages: Translation and Reform in Japan and China in the Late Nineteenth Century

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## Introduction

“The intercultural encounters that resulted in the great cultural shifts from one civilization to another have been made possible through translation, which, by conventional definition, deals with the ‘beyond’ (other) of one’s immediate known world (self).”<sup>1</sup>

This paper concerns the Japanese influence on reformist thought in China during the late Qing period by means of the circulation of Meiji period translations of Western political, social and economic concepts. In examining the transmission of ideas through translation, this paper hopes to elucidate the role of language in creating new forms of consciousness and facilitating social change. Indeed, the act of translation exposes the subjectivity and conceptual significance of words themselves, and the capacity of translators to “expand existing concepts in new directions.”<sup>2</sup> The close linguistic relationship of Japan and China had significant implications for the dissemination of terminology and concepts coming from the West, as translators and intellectuals drew from shared cultural traditions expressed through Chinese characters. Moreover, this active language contact between Japan and China at the end of the nineteenth century reveals a great

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<sup>1</sup> Said Faiq, *Translated: Translation and Cultural Manipulation* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 28.

deal regarding the complex effect of Sino-Japanese relations on modernization in both countries.

As Japan grew increasingly aware of the prospect of a pervasive Western presence in East Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century, government officials and members of the scholarly elite grasped the immediate need to educate themselves about the West. Study missions to the United States and Europe introduced volumes of Western literature on humanities, politics and science to Japan, and the translation of these works was decisive in setting the course of reforms during the Meiji Restoration, beginning in 1868. The chief translators and purveyors of Western learning were members of the Meirokusha group, or the 'Sixth Year Meiji Society' who, as educated citizens and members of the former samurai-elite, felt it their duty to facilitate the enlightenment of the Japanese people. In doing so, they confronted the complex task of translating unfamiliar ideas rooted in Western cultural and political traditions into the context of a heavily Confucian-influenced cultural context.

Insofar as they strove to successfully adapt modern Western notions for the benefit of Japan's development, these early translators had to reconcile the ideal of fidelity to the source materials with the need for accessibility among Japanese readers. To this end, they looked to the connotative power of Chinese characters, or *kanji*, to transmit cultural referents in order to adapt Western influence to what might be called a 'Japanese' mindset. At the time of the Meiji Restoration, however, the 'Japanese' mindset was a contentious, dynamic concept, full of unresolved implications for political and social development. As such, the Meirokusha group's own elite views on Japanese society as well as their personal visions for the future informed their methods of translation and in turn defined the terms of Japan's modernization. It would be through these terms that Japan's progress would most effectively influence the intellectual and reform movements in China during the last decade of the Qing dynasty.

In the final years of the Qing state, reform was driven by a sense of urgency but fractured along Confucian fault lines. The issue of translation helps to illuminate some of the tensions between tradition and national progress that characterized reform thought in the late Qing period. The intellectuals of the Xinzheng (new policy) reform movement, which lasted from 1898 to the Xinhai Revolution

of 1911, were not seeking a clean, swift break with Confucian learning and traditional culture. For those translators of Western learning, enduring translations could not be achieved without an accessible cultural experience for domestic readers to draw from. This meant a reliance on literary Chinese, which had been the carrier of traditional Confucian values for two thousand years. However, increasing associations of traditional culture with the deficiencies of the failing Qing State led intellectuals to seek out a more progressive medium between China and the West. Japan, which had tackled the endeavor of translating the West thirty years earlier, emerged as the most logical conduit through which Western learning could be channeled into China. Given that Japan shared a common script and a long history of cultural affinity with China, many Chinese reformers viewed Japanese translations of Western political, scientific and technological notions and terms as trustworthy foundations for their reform efforts. Thus, Japan presented an avenue to modernization without direct Westernization, which served as a model for China's Hundred Days Reform of 1898, and ultimately for the 1911 Revolution.

Japanese translation techniques were influential in their use of neologisms as well as re-appropriated Chinese characters in informing Chinese intellectuals on the issue of reconciling cultural continuity with modern thinking. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Chinese translators and literary figures like Yan Fu and Lu Xun became versed in the semiotic philosophies that Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakamura Keiu had promoted in the 1870s, while popular rights advocates like Yano Fumio informed the national reformism of Liang Qichao and Sun Yat-sen leading up to the 1911 Revolution. The Japanese figures who had drawn upon Chinese cultural and literary traditions in adapting the language of liberalism and modernization to their own domestic experience now offered a new, syncretistic fusion of East and West that would inform China's efforts to construct a language of modernity.

As such, China came to acknowledge Japan for the first time in history as a viable source of linguistic and cultural practice. This, in conjunction with Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, marked an important shift in the transmission of 'civilization' in East Asia. This transmission of knowledge was facilitated by the travels of intellectuals and reformers between Japan and China from the final decade of the nineteenth century into the first decade of the

twentieth century. Both governments sponsored educational missions with perhaps the only salient motivation being to resist foreign domination by the West. This period thus illuminates the paradoxical role of Japan in incipient Chinese nationalism as an inspirational and facilitating force in the effort to define China as a modern nation, as well as a galvanizing threat against which reformers would define their movement. This linguistic relationship was an essential factor in Sino-Japanese relations as well as the respective formations of modern national identity in Japan and China.

### **Translation and Invention**

Marius B. Jansen wrote, “The surest form of diffusion of cultural influence... is probably the translation of books.”<sup>3</sup> While this statement is not limited to Japan and China, it can be assumed that, given Jansen’s eminent role as a scholar of Japanese history, it is informed by a deep appreciation for the particularly strong relationship between language and culture in Japan and China. Therefore, in narrowing the scope of Jansen’s claim to Japan and China, it feels necessary to begin by briefly demonstrating the strength of this relationship through the Sino-Japanese script itself. Indeed, the Sino-Japanese compound for “culture” proves the existence of an enduring domestic conception of the cultural power of language. This conception is an necessary foundation for any further argumentation in that it reinforces the agency of Japanese and Chinese translators in this process of cultural diffusion, as opposed to the casting of them as passive receptors of foreign influence. Understanding the agency of translators is essential to understanding the ways in which new ideas took root during the periods of modernization in Japan and China.

The word “culture” in modern usage is rendered as 文化 (*bunka*) in Japanese. Setting aside for now the implications of the term within the Chinese context, the very characters that compose the Japanese compound for “culture” speak to the cultural importance that the Japanese assign to language. The first character

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<sup>3</sup> Douglas R. Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzhen Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 123.

文 (*bun*) is the character for script or writing, and forms the root of the words for literature (文学 – *bungaku*), grammar (文法 – *bunpon*) and stationary (文具 – *bungu*), among many others. The second character 化 (*ka*), which denotes the transformative influence of one entity on another, or the –ization of something, is attached to create a gloss to the effect of “language-ization”. The compound therefore conveys the notion that culture represents a common language of precepts and, in a metaphorical sense, the merging of beliefs and value systems into a mutually intelligible system of recognizable signs. When considered in the context of Japan’s transition into modernity, however, the term is significant beyond the metaphorical level, moreover promoting the notion that “language... provides its users with the tools to realize their culture,” and can in turn shape cultural transformation.<sup>4</sup> The process by which 文化 (*bunka*) gained its current meaning will be addressed shortly. For now, it simply serves to illustrate the relevance of language beyond its immediate, communicative function.

With this perspective on language in mind, the issue of translation then becomes especially meaningful, particularly when one abandons the notion that words possess universally fixed meanings that can be simply reproduced through translation. Rather, translation can be more usefully viewed as “the processes whereby new words (and new uses of existing words) generate meaning.”<sup>5</sup> In this sense, meanings are not magnetic forces unto themselves that move from one language to the next, pulling signifiers together independent of the will of the translator. The introduction of a new word in a language requires the translator to “invent,” using Lydia Liu’s term, a new meaning “within the local environment of (the host language).”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this new invention is ideally informed by a motivation to faithfully capture the linguistic experience of the original language

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<sup>4</sup> Said, *TransLated* 2007, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Howland, *Translating the West* 2002, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture and Translated Modernity – China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 26.

and “produce an adequate set of correspondences.”<sup>7</sup> However, the translator is not merely a conduit of linguistic “transformation,” and as such, one cannot assess the quality of translation based only on its fidelity to the source, nor can one dismiss the presence of the translator beyond his immediate, communicative function. Doing so de-legitimizes the agency of the translator and in a sense gives the source language the authority on meaning. One must take into account the efforts of the translator to adapt words and concepts to a domestic context and, by extension, the political and ideological motivations surrounding the act of translation.<sup>8</sup>

In setting out to translate a new concept from a different cultural context, there must be a motivation in mind. Drawing on the philosophical pragmatism of Richard Rorty, “effectiveness depends on purpose,” not least when one is determining the proper vocabulary within which to promote a certain ideology.<sup>9</sup> Words can be chosen for their connotative power so as to acclimate new ideas into the target language according to the aim of the translator. As such, if one accepts the pragmatism inherent in the act of translating conceptual terms, a number of questions are then demanded of the translator in order to understand the role of new words in setting the course of political and cultural reform. Lydia Liu asks, “In whose terms, for which linguistic constituency, and in the name of what kinds of knowledge or intellectual authority does one perform acts of translation between cultures?”<sup>10</sup> These questions will first be addressed in regard to the role of reformist scholars like Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakamura Keiu in Japan’s early Meiji period. Their skillful manipulation of the Japanese written language for the purpose of establishing national consciousness and promoting modernization demonstrates the dependence of meaning on purpose, as well as the

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<sup>7</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 63.

<sup>8</sup> Liu *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 26

<sup>9</sup> Theo Hermans, “Cross-Cultural Translation Studies as Thick Translation,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 66 (2003): 385.

<sup>10</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 1.

usefulness of approaching words as signifiers of potential meaning as opposed to fixed, static entities.

### **Translation in Japan and the Meirokusha Group**

Prior to the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, Japan was a highly stratified, feudalistic society that restricted most conceptions of personal identity to the level of the domain, or 藩 (*han*), within which one would be further defined according to family and class status. Severely limited social mobility under the Tokugawa regime's class system enforced this static and localized notion of citizenship on the institutional level. The newly centralized Meiji government formally abolished the four classes and incorporated the feudal domains into a central prefecture system. However, widely divergent dialects between regions and entrenched class differences perpetuated this parochial mentality on a deeper cultural-linguistic level, impeding the development of a national identity. As Naoki Sakai states, "Nowhere could the Japanese language as spoken by the "Japanese people" be found" during the Tokugawa period.<sup>11</sup> This feudal babelism was perhaps the most striking manifestation of the entrenched *han* mentality. Translation would therefore perform the dual function of bringing in new ideas for reform and in turn developing these ideas in a 'language of modernization' that could transcend regional variation and appeal to a common 'Japanese' essence. It then became the contentious task of the elites to determine what constituted this common essence in the first place, and how best to promote it through the Japanese written language.

The Meirokusha group, or 'Meiji Sixth Year Society' (明六社), appropriately named for its formation in 1874, the sixth year of the Meiji period, assigned itself the task of introducing Western ideas to Japan for the purpose of "smash(ing) the people's ignorance" and promoting civilization and enlightenment (文明開化 *bunmeikaiika*).<sup>12</sup> The original members of the group, which included founder Mori

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<sup>11</sup> Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 48-49.

Arinori, Fukuzawa Yukichi, Nishi Amane and Nakamura Keiu, were all well suited to the task; they represented the leading voices in education, philosophy and political policy in the early Meiji period, and had an unparalleled collective knowledge of foreign language and Western culture. Many, including those mentioned above, traveled extensively in Western Europe, Britain and the United States, and produced essays on the West and translated works by John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer and Samuel Smiles, among other representative texts of Western liberalism including the United States Declaration of Independence. These works constituted the first major body of literature translated from English in Japan's history, and were instrumental in creating the language of the Meiji enlightenment discourse. However, as translators and scholars of the West, they were not the first of their kind; Japan's history of Western study dates back to the early seventeenth century, with the Dutch language officers (オランダ通事 – *oranda tsuji*) operating under the employ of the Tokugawa shogunate in Nagasaki.<sup>13</sup>

In an effort to filter out Christianity and other threatening foreign influences, the Tokugawa government established an exclusive, highly regulated trade relationship with Chinese and Dutch merchants in Nagasaki. Throughout the Edo period, the government employed the *oranda tsuji* officers to manage affairs with the Dutch, who were not permitted to leave the small island of Dejima in the Nagasaki harbor. These officers initially engaged in simple interpretation and administrative work, but the eighteenth century saw an expansion of interest in Dutch science, medicine, natural history and other secular fields, which became known as “Dutch Learning” (蘭学 – *rangaku*).<sup>14</sup> This scholarly field was home of many future intellectuals and reformers in translation and study of the West, including Fukuzawa Yukichi. However, in the final years of the Tokugawa regime (the Bakumatsu period, 1853-1867), increased exposure to Great Britain and the United States galvanized the government to establish a bureau devoted to “Western learning”

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<sup>13</sup> Kimiko Torikai, *Voices of the Invisible Presence: Diplomatic Interpreters in Post-World War II Japan* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., 2009), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 9.



(洋学 – *yougaku*), with a new emphasis on learning English.<sup>15</sup> With government support, scholars hurried to translate English texts with an enthusiasm that created what Maruyama Masao calls “translation culture” (翻訳文化 – *bonyaku bunka*).<sup>16</sup>

The origin of the Meirokusha group’s main members as employees of the shogunate reveals an element of their collective character that is essential in understanding their motivations as translators and their influence as public intellectuals. Historically, translation in Japan was not a neutral endeavor. Though the Meirokusha scholars no longer operated as state employees, government policy continued to influence their translations. Indeed, the very foundation of the group’s existence reflected their shared background as Neo-Confucian-educated members of the former samurai class. Although they supported the abolition of the class system based on the Confucian model of social division, the Meirokusha intellectuals still valued their implied status as educators, and even framed themselves in Western liberal terms as members of a meritocratic elite, speaking often on behalf of the oligarchic government for the benefit of the masses.<sup>17</sup>

This elite view of ‘the masses’ was patronizing but not uniformly dismissive; while Ogawa Tameji referred to the common population in an essay entitled “Questions and Answers About Enlightenment” (開化問答 – *kaika mondou*) as “the ignorant poor” and “stupid people,” Fukuzawa Yukichi spoke more sympathetically about the lack of opportunity afforded to the able members of the lower classes.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, Fukuzawa often evoked his former-samurai status, famously in the instance in which he paradoxically threatened to kill a peasant for kneeling in front of him.<sup>19</sup> These

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<sup>15</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Torikai. *Voices of the Invisible Presence*, 2009, 31.

<sup>17</sup> Howland, *Translating the West* 2002, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Michael A. Cusumano, “An Enlightenment Dialogue with Fukuzawa Yukichi: Ogawa Tameji’s Kaika Mondo, 1874-1875,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 37 (1982): 383.

<sup>19</sup> Howland, *Translating the West* 2002, 22.

views, even in the most condescending of terms, represented a Confucian belief in the cultivation of the people and a sense of paternalistic duty to promote liberalism and enlightenment. The Meirokusha translators' initial grounding of liberalism and modernization within this Confucian framework would in turn inform their translation techniques, and their ultimate influence on China's reform movement to follow.

### The Role of *Kanji*: Words as Sages

“In countries where identity and nationhood are under negotiation, every aspect of language, including its phonological description and forms of graphic representation can be contested... Thus, orthographic systems cannot be conceptualized simply as reducing speech to writing, but rather they are symbols that carry historical, cultural, and political meanings.”<sup>20</sup>

In the initial stages of the Meiji Restoration, no aspect of language escaped scrutiny. Language was at the center of many major issues, from the problem of standardizing *han* dialects and improving literacy to the language of the Meiji constitution and, of course, the translation of foreign terminology. The Japanese script was contested in terms of its utility in adapting the language of science, industry and Western political philosophy, and the endurance of the complex *kanji* system was far from a foregone conclusion. As early as 1866, proposals to reform the Japanese script circulated within the bureaucracy and in intellectual circles as scholar-officials debated how best to proliferate the messages of modernization. These arguments were widely recognized and debated throughout the Meiji period, and a number of Meirokusha scholars including Fukuzawa and Nishi experimented with simplified style, Romanized script and *kanji* limits. However, it was widely accepted that the translation of Western terms required the use of classical Chinese in order to create neologisms and compounds that would most effectively adapt

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<sup>20</sup> Kathryn A. Woolard and Bambi B. Schieffelin, “Language Ideology,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), 65.

notions of individualism, society and liberal government into Japan's cultural and political environment. This consensus among the Meiji elites was founded upon their backgrounds in classical Chinese studies and the Confucian classics, which headed the curriculum of samurai education during the Edo period.

The Meirokusha group saw classical Chinese characters as serving a function in modernization similar to the one that they envisioned for themselves: the capacity to draw on cultural traditions in order to educate the populace in a manner that would engender a feeling of national consciousness as well as an enthusiasm for reform. The classical language of officialdom, which represented the classical Chinese understanding of the term 文化 (*bunka*), or "culture", as cultivation and refinement, would now function to promote 文化 as it corresponded to "culture" in the English sense, or to the German notion of *kultur*, which denoted a shared system of beliefs emblematic of a distinct national character. In this sense, the language of Amane, Fukuzawa and Nakamura could reconcile, or at least juxtapose multiple meanings at once, occupying what Lydia Liu deems a "middle zone," in which the "neologistic imagination... becomes the very ground for change."<sup>21</sup> Liu argues that the tension of linguistic representation implicit in the use of existing signs to translate foreign words creates a space within which the connotations of the old meaning can support and inform the creation of a new meaning according to the motivation of the translator. This dual meaning of 文化 therefore demonstrates the power of Chinese-based neologisms as "excellent trope(s) for change," in that the translator could truly generate new meaning in the host language by demonstrating the potential of new meaning to fill an existing form.<sup>22</sup>

The Meirokusha scholars did not, therefore, evoke Neo-Confucian ideals through their translations due to a latent traditionalism or an aversion to rapid change; Fukuzawa even decried Chinese learning as "promot(ing) hierarchy and encouraging a

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<sup>21</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 40.

<sup>22</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 40

backwards, slavish morality,” and in 1873 Nishi Amane called the *kanji* system an “onerous burden” on students.<sup>23</sup> Rather, they saw the potential of Chinese neologisms to acclimate Western concepts by way of traditional cultural values, and in turn used their own elite learning as a tool for reform. Reformers in China and Japan had historically invoked the wisdom of a distant past in order to legitimate new systems of governance, and had done so by assuming the role of enlightened educators. Since the wisdom of the sages was a nebulous notion with no representative text to draw from, the enlightened educators had considerable leeway in re-interpreting tradition in order to suit the changing needs of their time. In China’s history, scholar-officials entrusted themselves with the license to discern the role of ancient wisdom in their contemporary society and re-invent it accordingly. Tradition was therefore used as a framework to facilitate change, and the long-enduring Chinese script functioned as the manifestation of this continuous structure that could house new meanings while retaining its essential form.

The term for civilization 文明 (*bunmei*) suggests that the creation of civilization was the creation, or the clear understanding (明) of a written language. As such, the venerable sages were the words themselves, containing centuries of cultural memory that educators could invoke rhetorically in order to justify change and maintain political legitimacy. The very form of Chinese characters bestowed an air of authority on texts, and the Tokugawa regime accordingly used the Chinese literary style, known as *kambun*, in historical records, laws and official correspondence. Having been established as the written language of the bureaucracy during the Edo period, *kambun* retained its clout as former Tokugawa officials regrouped in the new Meiji government. The Japanese *kana* scripts remained confined to expressing the trivialities of daily life, and it was not until the end of century that Nishi Amane’s populist arguments for vernacular writing took hold via the emergence of the modern Japanese novel. During the critical period of modernization in the 1870s, the Meirokusha scholars agreed upon the utility of Chinese characters in their translations. However, the venerable terms of tradition were not so easily fitted to unfamiliar Western terms, nor

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<sup>23</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 46-50.

were neologisms effortlessly produced. The translation of words like “liberty” and “democracy” posed significant ideological and political dilemmas, to which we will now turn.

### **Liberty, Enlightenment and Democracy**

The Meirokusha scholars intended for their works to stimulate reform while using words that would engender a feeling of citizenship among *han* communities and elite officials alike. However, the word “liberty” posed translators with the daunting task of presenting the term in a manner that would soften its threatening connotations and serve to move Japan toward democracy. Fukuzawa’s 1866-1870 account *Seiyō Jijō* (Conditions in the West) and Nakamura Keiū’s 1871 translation of John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* (*Jiyū no ri*) were two of the most influential treatments of “liberty” during this formative period. Fukuzawa and Nakamura both used the existing word 自由 (J: *jīyū* Ch: *zìyóu*) to translate “liberty”, which certainly felt more “Japanese” than the transliterated *riberuchi* in katakana, but carried an undesirable meaning in its traditional use.<sup>24</sup>

The word 自由 had long carried a meaning in both Chinese and Japanese of “license”, or “following one’s intentions without restrictions”, which implied a selfish determinism in opposition to the interests of the community.<sup>25</sup> This traditional interpretation of liberty corresponded to the aspect of “negative freedom” in the West, which emphasized one’s freedom *from* the impositions of others, as opposed to the “positive freedom” which embodied the principle of civil liberty, or one’s active participation in “the collective enactment of the law.”<sup>26</sup> Although they understood that Mill, Herbert Spencer and other writers promoted liberty in the negative sense, Fukuzawa and Nakamura chose to emphasize liberty as a kind of positive freedom constrained by a moral duty to the collective good.

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<sup>24</sup> Tadashi Aruga. “The Declaration of Independence in Japan: Translation and Transplantation, 1854-1997,” *The Journal of American History* 85 (1999): 1414.

<sup>25</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 102.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 95

Fukuzawa and Nakamura were careful to let their explanations of the term yield to the ideal of self-governance in accord with the goal of collective prosperity. Fukuzawa, for instance, couched the term in a traditional context by applying the samurai ideal of duty, or *shoku* (色) as a limit on selfish excesses.<sup>27</sup> Fukuzawa and Nakamura further promoted the term by appealing to its historical role in “political reform and revolution” in a manner that evoked the Meiji Restoration.<sup>28</sup> They emphasized the redefinition of the populace as “a new form of social dynamism animating the talents of each individual for what promise(d) to be a progressive collective whole.”<sup>29</sup> Their arguments were repeated in numerous essays that extolled the value of the Meiji Restoration in terms of its fruitful reforms, further casting liberty as a tool for prosperity.

By changing the context in which 自由 appeared, Fukuzawa and Nakamura succeeded in reshaping the meaning of the word itself. In doing so, they expanded the notion of liberty in the context of the enlightenment movement and the ultimate goal of democracy. The word "democracy", however, required a great deal of caution in its translation so as not to upset the legitimacy of the Emperor or the constitutional monarchy in power. The word that now represents democracy is 民主 (*minshu*), which translates popular sovereignty as “people – rule”. However, the character 主 historically denoted the Imperial sovereign, who derived this legitimacy from Heaven. Thus, the use of 民主, granting the Heavenly mandate to every single person in Japan would have been a dangerous heresy. Yano Fumio promoted 民権 (*minken*), which stressed the rights and power of the people without usurping the Emperor’s sovereignty.<sup>30</sup> However, this term was utilized by the left-leaning People’s Rights Movement, and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 106

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 103

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>30</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*, 1993, 29.

became politically dangerous when the Meiji government turned against leftist organizations toward the end of the Meiji period.

The term 民本 (*minpon*) was a moderate translation that put people (民) at the “root” (本) of government, emphasizing the duty of the government to place the welfare of the people at the root of its interest. As an idealized form of legitimacy, this notion was not unfamiliar in the Confucian political order; all rulers throughout Chinese and Japanese history voiced this incentive, if only in rhetorical terms. As such, the term reinforced the legitimacy of the Meiji Emperor while approximating the spirit of democracy, tacitly leaving open the potential for popular sovereignty in the future. However, since the ideal of 民主 in its true sense of popular sovereignty has since been achieved, the term 民本主義 (*minponshugi*) has fallen out of popular use in Japan.

Reflecting on the pragmatic idea of purpose in creating meaning, the translators’ active restructuring of the context in which an existing Chinese word or neologism appeared allowed them to guide readers toward the meaning that they intended. Still, the Meirokusha members did not wish to assume absolute authority over meaning, but rather endeavored to challenge readers to actively free these new ideas from their Western connotations in the context of their own experiences. Nishi Amane hoped that his readers would “guess at the context and try to illuminate that which precedes and follows the section in question, pondering it energetically.”<sup>31</sup> He worried about the potential for outright mistranslation, but ultimately upheld the ideal of popular cultivation through his cautious faith in the reader’s power of “metaphorical extension.”<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the new terms remained volatile, and the efforts of Fukuzawa, Nakamura and Nishi reached a point beyond which the fate of liberty, democracy and enlightenment were subject to Japan’s shifting political climate. Intensifying nationalism in the early 1890s ended the period of enlightenment in which the Meirokusha thrived. However, the words that they introduced found a new life in China in the wake of the Sino-Japanese war in 1895.

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<sup>31</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 2002, 83

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 84

## China's Efforts to Modernize and the Meiji Model

The British victory over China in the 1840 Opium War set the Qing dynasty on a path to decline and colonial occupation. Unequal treaties with the United States and France followed in 1844, granting extraterritorial privileges to Westerners within the country and imposing tariffs and indemnities on the state. The Qing regime continued to weaken over the next several decades under the demands of foreign powers and internal tumult, losing legitimacy in the minds of the Chinese population. China's loss to Japan in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 brought feelings of national humiliation and uncertainty to a boil/climax. Japan, for centuries a Chinese tributary state, had surpassed China in military might and development. The need for imminent reform was clear, but in what direction and against what forces? Fledgling nationalists rallied against Western imperialism, but could barely justify supporting the corrupt, crumbling Qing regime. The culmination of disasters at the end of the nineteenth century signaled a dynastic shift, but defeat and foreign occupation caused many to look beyond the institutions and cultural assumptions that had previously sustained the dynastic cycle. Foreign imperialism gave reform in China a sense of urgency, but the intellectual shifts in the last decade of the nineteenth century were not a monolithic response to external threats. The intellectual and institutional stagnation of the Qing state galvanized figures like Liang Qichao to invigorate and expand traditional thinking in new directions, and traditional notions of statecraft came under intense scrutiny. Liang Qichao vocalized the growing sentiment that "institutional correctiveness, even if available, could at best alleviate the intensity and urgency of China's crisis but would never provide the fundamental solution."<sup>33</sup> Liang Qichao argued, "The essence of civilization lay not in external forms of technique and materials but in

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<sup>33</sup> W.K. Cheng, "Enlightenment and Unity: Language Reformism in Late Qing China," *Modern Asian Studies* 35 (2001): 482.



qualities of mind and spirit.”<sup>34</sup> Implicit in this argument was not only a distrust of the governing capacities of the Qing dynasty, but also a call for the education of the populace. Yan Fu, the foremost translator in the late Qing period, echoed this notion, citing intellect (*min zhi*) and morality (*min de*) as important points of cultivation.<sup>35</sup> Subsequent arguments for reform would further stress the role of the people, and the need for “a sense of solidarity of interest between the governing and the governed.”<sup>36</sup> While these arguments evoked the Confucian values of education and the cultivation of talent, they also flirted with traces of liberalism, creating an intellectual environment within which education could take on new forms and facilitate modernization.

The Chinese defeat in the Sino-Japanese War led many intellectuals to inspect the phenomenon of Japan’s rapid success in modernization. The experience of a coercive Western presence and the inefficacy of the Qing government’s conservative Self-strengthening movement convinced reformers like Liang Qichao that the secret of Japan’s success lay not in the mere reproduction of Western programmes but in the “ability... to select and assimilate foreign values in the existing social and cultural tradition.”<sup>37</sup> The Self-strengthening movement promoted Zhang Zhidong’s phrase “Chinese learning for basic principle, Western learning for practical utility (*Zhongxue wei ti, Xixue wei yong*),” but this notion was rooted in a moralistic condescension to ideas falling outside of the Confucian tradition upon which the Qing dynasty derived its legitimacy.<sup>38</sup> The

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<sup>34</sup> Hiroko Willcock, , “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction in Early Twentieth Century China: A Study of Liang Qichao,” *Modern Asian Studies* 29 (1995): 824.

<sup>35</sup> Cheng “Enlightenment and Unity”, 2001, 473

<sup>36</sup> Paul A. Cohen, “Wang T’ao and Incipient Nationalism,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26 (1967): 566.

<sup>37</sup> Willcock, , “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction,” 1995, 818

<sup>38</sup> Reynolds, *China*, 1993, 43

Self-strengthening movement, in other words, focused on dichotomy rather than syncretism. The Qing court under Empress Dowager Cixi propagated this conservative orientation in order to restrict reform to the institutional level and maintain a basis for its rule. However, the weakness and corruption of its own institutions rendered most efforts ineffective.

As an alternative, Liang looked to Fukuzawa Yukichi's concept of *jitsugaku*, or practical learning, which emphasized a similarly utilitarian approach without separating East and West in moral terms.<sup>39</sup> Rather, it sought to utilize the practical elements of both schools of thought in order to achieve a synthesis that would most effectively aid in modernization. While the conservative leadership in the Qing court defined itself in opposition with the West, Liang argued, the Meiji government succeeded by treating all learning in instrumental terms and empowering its citizens through education. This perspective informed a number of measures in the Hundred Days' Reform of 1898, which intended/served to create more room within institutions for innovation. However, the Empress Dowager's crackdown on the movement sent many reformers fleeing for their lives. Liang and his teacher Kang Youwei fled to Japan and continued to develop their political and philosophical views in exile. In the decade that followed, reformers increasingly turned to Japan as a model for reform, translating and importing definitive texts from the enlightenment period. The writings of the Meirokusha group thus served as an important model for the new Chinese reform thought, which coalesced under the Xinzheng (new policy) movement in 1898.

### **Linguistic Contact and Sino-Japanese Relations in 1898**

The function of translation "as a catalyst for social change" and ideological evolution is a recurring motif in China's history.<sup>40</sup> Two

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<sup>39</sup> Willcock, , "Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction, 1995, 819.

<sup>40</sup> Lin Kenan, "Translation as a Catalyst for Social Change in China," in *Translation and Power*, ed. Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 172.

notable examples are the translation of Buddhist scriptures from India during the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 C.E.) and the importation of Western scientific and technological texts in the late Ming dynasty (1368-1644).<sup>41</sup> These translations of foreign cultural and material learning ushered in periods of cultural transformation and development. However, these developments through linguistic contact were political as much they were cultural exchanges. The idea that “translation always implies an unstable balance between the power one culture can exert over another” reveals the unique significance of translation in the late Qing period within China’s history of linguistic transmission. Chinese civilization under the Han and Ming dynasties was robust and convinced of its own superior status in relation to Indian and Western society. As such, translated works were accepted as forms of tribute to enrich an already flourishing empire. The Qing dynasty, by contrast, was forced to accept foreign influence from a subordinated position, engendering conservative suspicions of translation as a tool of Western hegemony. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Chinese experienced translation and foreign learning mostly in the context of unequal interactions with European powers via Christian missionary schools. Christianity and colonialist policies were forced upon local populations who came to view any foreign influence as inherently coercive. In the years immediately preceding the Boxer Uprising in 1902, many Chinese regarded Christianity as one of the most corrosive social ills in Chinese society, and Western learning in turn suffered conflation with colonialism and Eurocentric proselytizing. Japan, however, did not share such an acrimonious history with Western learning due to the Tokugawa shogunate’s conscious effort to exclude missionary influence and secularize Dutch Learning throughout the Edo Period. As a result of the stringent foreign policy under shogunal rule, Japan was able to approach Western learning on its own terms, which gave Japanese translators the freedom to approach Western learning pragmatically and according to their own motivations. It was too late for China to follow these policy steps, but Chinese reformers recognized Japan as having “a rich and already cultivated soil with a syncretistic mixture of traditional and Western

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<sup>41</sup> Kenan, “Translation as a Catalyst”, 2002, 161

thought” from which they could benefit without further subjecting China to the perils of direct contact with the West.<sup>42</sup>

Conservatives in China advocated study in Japan as enthusiastically as progressive reformers, with many arguments occupying a Sino-centric zone of moderate diplomacy where Japan’s proximity, in terms of geography as well as language and culture, made it the safest and most viable model for modernization without Westernization. Zhang Zhidong coined yet another catchphrase in reference to Japan, which echoed the conservative sentiments of his earlier position on Western learning; *Shi ban gong bei*, or “twice the results with half the effort”, which placed/fixing Japan as “a stepping stone, a shortcut to Western knowledge... to be used for a moment and then discarded.”<sup>43</sup> This argument exposes a level of wariness from China in accepting Japanese influence, keeping it at a distance in light of Japan’s interest in expanding into China. Still, Japan’s physical proximity was emphasized as an economy, and the similarity of the writing system afforded Chinese translators convenience as well as a cautious sense of trust in the Confucian sympathies of the Meiji reforms. Furthermore, the Meiji reforms appealed to Qing conservatives for their gradualist approach to reform. However, Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei stressed the opening of education and discourse to Western ideas and the demonstrable success with which Japanese reformers had, with Confucian principles at heart, revitalized and transcended stagnant traditions.

While the Qing government justified engagement with Japan as a means of “escap(ing) Western aggression” and preserving political legitimacy, the Meiji government had an interest in protecting China from occupation for its own national interests.<sup>44</sup> Japanese leaders organized education initiatives abroad and set up schools in Japan for Chinese students in the interest of “reinforc(ing) China as a kind of outer ring of defense” against Western expansion

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<sup>42</sup> Willcock, “Japanese Modernization and the Emergence of New Fiction, 1995, 840.

<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*, 41-44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

into their own sovereign territory.<sup>45</sup> The Qing government allowed relations to develop, albeit cautiously, due to Japan's many diplomatic overtures between 1898 and 1900, as well as Japanese military assistance in quelling the Boxer Incident in 1900.<sup>46</sup> However, despite the thinly veiled political opportunism from both sides motivating this cooperative relationship, the most popular argument was that of the cultural affinity between Japan and China. Zhang Zhidong put this historical relationship in terms of 同文 (Common culture), 同種 (Common race) and 同学 (Common learning).<sup>47</sup>

The most representative term among the three is common 同文, or common culture (Ch. *tongwen* J. *doubun*). This term literally means "common writing system". However, in recalling the wide implications of the term 文 in both Chinese and Japanese traditions, 同文 represents a common culture, as was clearly Zhang's intended meaning. Indeed, the Japanese writing system is not identical on a grammatical or phonetic level to Chinese. However, both countries shared veneration for the sage-like importance of Chinese characters and were hence united by a common ancestry of cultural wisdom and ideals. Japanese scholars would refer to this relationship as 漢字文化 (*kanji bunka*), similarly implying a "greater immediacy of Sino-Japanese 'understanding'" if one spoke with the brush rather than the tongue.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, while Japan's espousal of this cultural affinity may have been disingenuous in light of the Meiji government's expansionist agendas, Chinese intellectuals found the real evidence for this argument in the Meirokusha group's "brush", or their philosophy of translation.

The irony did not escape the Chinese, however, that the cultural influence that their civilization had imparted to Japan in the form of 文 was now being given back to them by the Japanese in the form of the translations of Western works. The words and characters

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<sup>45</sup> Fogel, *The Cultural Dimension*, 1995, 92.

<sup>46</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*, 1993, 7

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Fogel. *The Cultural Dimension*, 1995, 80.

whose meanings had originated in China were now imbued with new meanings informed by a Japanese perspective. As one Chinese magazine wrote, “Yesterday’s master teacher has today become inferior to its student.”<sup>49</sup> The reversal of national power had been made evident by the Sino-Japanese war. However, the reversal of cultural and intellectual influence was now apparent in the need for China to learn from Japan’s translations of Western liberal concepts. These translations carried modern notions of liberal government, individualism and national identity. Indeed, Japan had emerged as the new source of 文明 (*bunmei*), or civilization.

### New Ideas in Familiar Words

“I have been in Japan under these grievous circumstances for a number of months now, learning the Japanese language and reading Japanese books. Books like I have never encountered before baffle my brain. It is like seeing the sun after being confined to a dark room, or like a parched throat after getting wine.”<sup>50</sup>

Liang Qichao wrote these words in 1899, during his first year of exile in Japan. His enthusiasm in this and later writings reveals a clear sense of liberation from traditional modes of thinking, and perhaps a sense of dislocation, or “bafflement” in seeing these new ideas expressed in the language of the Confucian establishment. Indeed, words for “revolution” (革命 Ch. *Geming* J. *kakumei*), religion (宗教 Ch. *Zongjiao* J. *shuukyō*) and, of course “culture” (文化 Ch. *wenhua* J. *bunka*) demonstrated that, by some feat of alchemy, Chinese characters that had left China nearly one thousand years earlier had returned with new meanings. Some Chinese words had long fallen out of use; the term that the Japanese now used for religion, 宗教, was an ancient word in China that found new currency during the

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<sup>49</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*, 1993, 62.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

Neo-Confucian revival in Japan's Edo Period. Furthermore, familiar characters had been juxtaposed in new ways to express "race" (種族 Ch. *zhongzu* J. *shuzoku*), "international" (國際 Ch. *guoji* J. *kokusai*) and "national character" (國民性 Ch. *guomin xing* J. *kokuminsei*).<sup>51</sup> While these words emerged out of the social and political climate of Meiji Japan, the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity spoke powerfully to Liang Qichao in the Chinese context.

The ideals of Chinese civilization that informed the Meirokusha scholars' choice of language were based less in the realities of Chinese life than in mythified notions that legitimated their own role as educators in Japan. Many Japanese translators had never been to China, and the Neo-Confucian values that they espoused were formed out of a "vibrant imagination" affirmed by their elite status in Japanese society.<sup>52</sup> Reformers in China, however, were involved in an ongoing struggle with the Qing court to move the country out of internal conflict and semicolonialism. As such, the Japanized terms that entered China may have resonated with Chinese scholars on a deeper, albeit mythified cultural level that transcended associations with the dismal state of Qing society. The Japanese use of classical Chinese appealed to what virtues *should* be in place, reflecting the rhetorical arguments that had historically preceded dynastic changes in China. In that sense, Japanese neologisms and re-appropriated *kanji* became metaphorical criticisms of the current, broken state of the Qing dynasty and the need for reform. However, reform would be achieved through the assimilation of Western notions rather than by a mere reiteration of Confucian principles.

### Implications of New Terms

China's lowered status among nations at the end of the nineteenth century inspired many to seek change, but engendered reluctance even among the likes of Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei to abandon Chinese traditions in subservience to Western hegemonic ideals. Moreover, major translators such as Yan Fu belonged to and wrote

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<sup>51</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 33.

<sup>52</sup> Fogel. *The Cultural Dimension*, 1995, 82.

mainly for the feudal intelligentsia, who remained skeptical of new ideas. As Lin Kenan states, “translators such as Yan (Fu) had to comply with the linguistic and literary norms if they were to attain their aims of inculcating Western ideas and achieving social change.”<sup>53</sup> The Meirokusha group dealt with, and to a large extent shared these views regarding literary Chinese style and had succeeded by/in creating an intellectual environment receptive to Western reforms. In China, reformist intellectuals like Liang, in addition to Zhang Binglin, Lu Xun and Cai Yuanpei, worked to create a similar spirit of reform, but met with considerable political resistance. Those who opposed Western-style reform utilized the new Japanese terms to affirm their arguments as well, pointing to the incompatibilities between Western and Eastern thought. These debates demonstrate the subjectivity of meaning in translation, and in turn the importance of context in assimilating new terms.

The translation of “liberty” presented Fukuzawa and Nakamura with significant problems in the 1870s. However, their placement of liberty within the greater interests of society according to the ideal of duty (色 J. *shoku*) expanded the meaning of 自由 as well as “liberty” in the Western sense. However, 自由 (Ch. *zìyóu* J. *jìyóu*) excited opposition among conservative Chinese elites due to its previously conventional meaning. Zhang Zhidong saw 自由 as unbound license, a notion directly antithetical to the Confucian virtues of “loyalty and righteousness.”<sup>54</sup> Zhang interpreted liberty as an appendage of Christianity, or “the foreign religion,” in which “every family and village would serve its own ends,” disregarding every tenet of filial piety, deference and proper governance for the purpose of selfish gain.<sup>55</sup> Rather than attempting to grasp Fukuzawa or Nakamura’s argumentative context for the term, Zhang chose to deem its new meaning as a mistranslation, exploiting the accepted,

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<sup>53</sup> Kenan, “Translation as a Catalyst, 177.

<sup>54</sup> Pei-Kai Cheng, Michael Lestz and Jonathan D. Spence, eds., *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 185.

<sup>55</sup> Cheng, Lest, Spence *The Search for Modern China*, 1999, 184-185



Chinese definition in order to preserve the core of the Confucian political order. However, the term garnered the support of those reformers who had traveled to Japan to observe the Meiji conception of liberty in practice.

Yano Fumio, Japan's ambassador to China during the Hundred Days Reform, was an influential advocate of Western liberal ideals and a key facilitator of Chinese study missions to Japan. Through his goodwill diplomacy, 1911 revolutionary Sun Yat-sen traveled to Japan and came into contact with the Japanese People's Rights Movement (自由民権運動 J. *jiyuu minken undou*) of which Yano had been a leading member. This movement, founded on expanding the concepts of 自由 and people-based democracy expressed as 民権 (J. *minken*) greatly influenced Sun Yat-sen's political ideology. His populist platform and espousal of "People's Rights Theory" (自由民権論 Ch. *ziyou minquan lilun*), itself a direct borrowing of the terminology of the aforementioned Japanese movement, shows a clear intellectual debt to the Meiji translators. His ideology synthesized the several translations of "democracy" in connection with socialism (社会主義 Ch. *kexue fangfa* J. *shakai sugi*), which was a Japanese neologism, and Western constitutional theory to create a distinct brand of nationalism.<sup>56</sup> Sun Yat-sen's political ideas therefore trace a direct line of thought from the Meirokusha group to China's 1911 Revolution.

The Japanese neologism for "national character" (国民性 Ch. *guomin xing* J. *kokuminsei*) exerted a strong influence on Liang Qichao's reflections upon the state of the Chinese people and the prevailing characteristics therein that stood as advantages or impediments to national progress. The European idea of national character derived from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German romanticist notion of *Volkegeist* (folk spirit), which "subsume(d) human differences under the totalizing category of national identity" and applied essentialist traits on national populations.<sup>57</sup> The Japanese interpreted the German mythification of *Volk* with the evocation of the nation as a tribe or family in the term 民族 (*minzoku*), which

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<sup>56</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912* 1993, 123.

<sup>57</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, 47-48.

became the Japanese and Chinese term for nationalism. Prior to this development, the categorical 国民性 compelled Liang and other intellectuals to begin examining the organic qualities of “the Chinese” relative to other nations. Liang’s 1902 essay “Xinmin Yi (Discourse on the new citizen) attributed the “deplorable state” of Qing society to the flaws of China’s national character.<sup>58</sup> Liang’s arguments found new currency in Sun Yat-sen’s nationalist agenda, and his criticisms of Chinese character reappeared with radical urgency among the May Fourth reformers, among them Zhang Binglin, Cai Yuanpei and Lu Xun. All three had studied in Japan during the Xinzheng period, and expanded their own political perspectives on Chinese society with the idea of 国民性 in mind.

Exposure to Japanese neologisms for nationalism and national character as well as individualism (個人主義 Ch. *geren zhuyi* J. *kojin shugi*) led the influential writer Lu Xun to channel his literary pursuits into reforming the Chinese national character. Japan was not simply a conduit through which these European notions passed; Meiji organizations such as the People’s Rights Movement and the intellectual circles that circulated Meirokusha essays detached nationalism from its Western imperialist roots and demonstrated the power an Asian nation could derive from a strong national spirit. Liang and Sun Yat-sen’s intellectual (re)awakenings while abroad during the Xinzheng period led them to create a public spirit of modern progress that culminated in China’s bourgeois revolution in 1911. Japanese translations were not, however, unidirectional in their influence, nor did their relevance diminish with the reaction against previous reform during the May Fourth Movement. Indeed, many leading May Fourth intellectuals such as Zhang Binglin and Cai Yuanpei produced a definitive corpus of translations rooted in Meiji enlightenment thought (啓蒙思想).<sup>59</sup> Although they sought a clean break with any notions couched in Confucian terms, it was “within and against the boundaries of these translated theories and discourses

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<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912*, 1993, 122-123.

that May Fourth writers stake(d) some of their claims to modernity.”<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

Lydia Liu poses the question, “At which moment and in what context does (modernity’s) equivalence or translation become meaningful?”<sup>61</sup> Her question is mainly rhetorical, but it points to the process of transformation through which new ideas establish continuity and then transcend their representational forms. Because histories of revolutionary events often submit to “the oppositional paradigm that predefines what is modern and what is traditional,” the true substance of revolution and reform can become obscure. Yan Fu based his three principles of translation, truthfulness (xin), expressiveness (da) and grace (da), on the words of Confucius, and wrote in the classical literary style that he believed most faithfully captured the spirit of these ideals.<sup>62</sup> The educator-reformers in early Meiji Japan and late Qing China employed these principles not only out of concern for accessibility among the intelligentsia but also out of genuine belief in the capacity for continuity to facilitate change. Indeed, the iconoclasm of the May Fourth Movement should not disguise the fact that the leading voices developed their radical views through translations that reached China via an ancient and erudite script.

As Kathryn Woolard and Bambi Schieffelin state, “To understand one’s own linguistic usage is potentially to change it.”<sup>63</sup> The language reformers in the May Fourth Movement rebelled against Confucianism and classical Chinese perhaps due to a reawakening to the possibilities of language upon seeing conventional or long-forgotten terms re-employed or recombined to express

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<sup>60</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 1995, xix.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, xvii

<sup>62</sup> Hermans, “Cross-Cultural” 2003, 382.

<sup>63</sup> Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994, 70.

modern notions such as citizenship and liberty. The symbolic power of linguistic transformation demonstrated through Japanese translations must surely have inspired many to use language to achieve the full potential of the ideals of the Xinzheng reforms. Qian Xuantong, a prominent advocate of phonetization and the abolition of classical Chinese during the May Fourth period, was a student of Zhang Binglin. Inspired by the liberal evocations of Nishi Amane and Fukuzawa Yukichi, he and many other figures worked to dismantle the paradox they perceived in expressing notions like popular democracy (民權) in a literary style understood mainly by the literati. As this paper has attempted to reconcile this paradox, it should not, then, be difficult to reconcile the fact that these radical arguments were defined, indeed invented, in the very language they sought to abandon.

China has a long history of couching reform ideas in the language of prevailing ideology, from each successive dynasty claiming for itself the Mandate of Heaven to current democratic movements co-opting the rhetorical devices of the Communist Party. With this enduring model in mind, Japan's Meiji reformers employed symbols that had a proven capacity to acclimate new ideas into existing political paradigms. However, the influence of China's translators and reformers in the Xinzheng period gave existing ideas a foothold in new political paradigms extending far beyond the May Fourth Movement. Ideology rooted in linguistic experience still continues to stimulate reform by juxtaposing form and content, thereby proving that space for change exists within traditional mentalities. Language will remain an important factor in social change, and translators will continue to find reason and continuity within the intersection of ideologies. Their actions in brokering shifts into modernity or new stages of enlightenment will in turn reveal the threads of purpose woven into an otherwise ineffable process of mental transformation.