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# A Comparative Analysis of “自由主义” and *Liberalism*<sup>[1]</sup>

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**中文提要：**当代译学作为比较文学的一个重要分支，主要是从文化的视角对翻译这一跨语际的实践进行跨文化的研究。传统翻译理论讲究“信、达、雅”，注重的是翻译的技巧；而译学研究则把重心放在翻译的历史过程上，即翻译的历史背景、文化环境以及翻译者的取向等等问题。关键词的翻译及其文化模铸作用便是译学研究关注的一个重点。“个人主义”作为19世纪末20世纪初大量翻译的外来关键词之一，在当时的历史环境中有所选择的被引入。源词的意义被有意识的重组，目的词在汉语语言环境中得到了新的含义，从而对中国文化范式的构建起到不可磨灭的作用。本文对英语“liberalism”及汉语“自由主义”进行追根溯源，对二者作一些训诂的研究，并讨论了两者的翻译和应用过程，分析关键词的翻译对构建当时中国文化的范式所起的模铸作用。

The Chinese people had begun their translation activity as early as in the Han Dynasty. Unfortunately, the Chinese translators have attached importance only to the skills while ignoring the process. With the introduction of the translation studies into this country, some Chinese scholars, such as Gao Mingkai, Liu He, have begun to concern themselves with the importation of some key terms and have made great achievements in the field. A new term derived from one language might experience a process of reconstruction in new circumstances rather than that of transformation. Translation is no longer a neutral behavior far away from political involvement and any other ideological endeavors. On the contrary, it has undergone a gradual process of the reconstruction in the place where those conflicts happen, a place where the

source language and the target language encounter *vis-à-vis*, until new terms or new meanings of those terms set down new roots in the target language for perpetual attempt at the convergence or the divergence of diverse cultures.<sup>[2]</sup>

In order to sort out and reclassify some key terms in the light of translation, the present study attempts at the possible insight into the question how some key terms rooted on foreign soil have found their ways, by translation or (in other words) by translingual communication practice, into modern China, and, when deposited, served as shaping influences upon the makings of their seemingly equivalent expressions and the cultural transformation in Chinese context. Limited by space, my research has to be confined in a nutshell to the key term 自由主义(*Liberalism*).

### **I. Exegetic Examination of *Liberalism* in Western Cultures**

It is obvious that terms often change in meaning over time, and what a term should have been meant in one period may have only an overlapping sense compared to another time, or even no shared sense at all. In order to understand source term *liberalism*, a glance of its history is necessary.

#### **1. Changes of *Liberalism* in Western History**

Since the birth of its conception, the meaning of liberalism has always been diverse. Earlier 18<sup>th</sup>-century uses, in both English and French, appear just to mean “ample, generous, or free”, a meaning the word still bears. In 1810, the Spanish term *Liberale* was used as the name of a Spanish political party. The establisher tried to express that their party was neither conservative nor radical. From then on, this word became a popular pronoun of a genre of bourgeois thoughts in Western countries. However, we could trace idea of liberalism from scholars such as Locke, Montesquieu and Adam Smith, and then later Tocqueville, Mill, Dewey, Keynes and Hayek and Rawls nowadays.<sup>[3]</sup> As for a more shaped concept it is said that liberalism “emerged in England in the political struggle that culminated in the 1688 Glorious Revolution against James II” and was related to English polity in the period between Glorious Revolution and the great French Revolution.<sup>[4]</sup> Montesquieu who came in England in 1730 realized that the relatively free political system in England was a key factor for a more prosperous system and then it had been heard in French from the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The connotation of liberalism is changing from time to time because Liberalists always deal with problems pragmatically. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there appeared modern liberalism, i.e., reform or welfare liberalism. This new

version of liberalism developed a lot especially in Great Britain. To a certain degree its evolution may be traced in the development of the social ideas and theories of John Stuard Mill (1806-1873), as he emerged from the shadow of his father—James Mill, and the Locke-Bentham tradition in British public life and social analysis. The fully matured Mill is plausibly seen as the first fully formed modern liberal. Yet as Peter Loftson said,

[T]he liberal theory of human nature is only somewhat elusively, and not particularly uniquely, attributable to him. It is a development or extension of Enlightenment liberal theory, and others than Mill, some earlier than him, come to much the same conception. Most notable among these was Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), in Germany, whose writings give almost as full an articulation of this view as Mill's.<sup>[5]</sup>

At any rate, liberalism has experienced two great phases: first, when it mostly consisted of ideas, only gradually and in the face of much opposition being implemented; second, when not previously seen complexities occasioned in part by that implementation, and in part by advances in social knowledge, led to a rethinking of the first version. The first or classical phase of liberalism appears self-consciously in the mid-eighteenth century in France and Britain, from sparks held then and since to have been ignited by John Locke. The second stage—reform, welfare, or perfectionist liberalism—first appeared fully self-consciously in the work of T. H. Green, but was embryonic and half articulated in the earlier writings of John Stuard Mill. The former began at 17<sup>th</sup> century and lasted for more than two centuries, always called classical liberalism. And the latter, also called as new liberalism, last from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century till now.

## 2. Introduction of *Classical Liberalism*

European intellectuals generally regarded Britain as the embodiment of the liberal ideal. They attributed the nation's relative stability and industrial predominance to the virtues of its intellectual tradition and institutions. John Locke, known as the father of liberalism, firstly proposed principles of liberalism. He expatiated upon the connotation of liberty systematically. As far as he was concerned, liberty consists of three aspects, i.e. politics, possession and thoughts. He suggested that a government should be established on the basis of people's opinion. The famous Declaration of Independence of 1776 and Bill of Rights in 1791 ascertained principles of liberalism.

In fact, the eighteen-century French philosophers including Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, and still more fully the later figures, supremely, Condorcet, are plausibly assigned such a theory although they didn't use the term "liberalism". Lopton expressed this clearly and emphatically.

[T]hey "self-consciously believed in the possibility of substantive human progress, moral and economic, through the repudiation of priestly authority, and its replacement with institutions that would respect ideological diversity and implement rights to non-interference held against government as well as other individuals."<sup>[5]</sup>

Contemporary evaluations of the Enlightenment thinkers vary widely and their theory influenced the Western culture entirely. Liberalism was then the most powerful weapon for fighting feudalism.

From the last stage of 18<sup>th</sup> century Adam Smith, James Mill, John Stuard Mill, David Ricardo and other idealists had discussed on individual liberty and nation's function in order to solve economic problems. They suggested that nation should not interfere with economic and social activities too much and should give sufficient freedom to individuals. Smith's much-maligned metaphor of the invisible hand has become the most commonly recognized example of the reasoning associated with this tradition. Jeremy Bentham was the founder and central figure of the utilitarian school in British moral, social, and legal theory. His theory has set a new theoretical basis for liberalism. John Stuard Mill, a supporter of him, extended the study to the wider social field. In contrast to Herbert Spencer, he pointed out that suitable laissez-faire with government intervention was necessary. He made a great alternation in the development of liberalism and then, modern liberalism was prepared to enter the stage.

### 3. Introduction of *Modern Liberalism*

T. H. Green and L. T. Hobhouse were pioneers in the study of reform liberalism or new liberalism in Britain. They followed J. H. Mill and based their theory on ethics and approved the consistency of individual liberty, commonweal and social development. It was the function of nation to offer environment and security for individual rights. Government intervention was necessary. They wanted more social cooperation and melioration. They criticized both imperialism and socialism and tried to take a third way.

Unlike Mill, T. H. Green (1836-82) was a professional academic. Although he

endorsed Mill's radicalism, his theory was very different. There is an argument among intellectuals whether his theory belonged to classical or new liberalism but he was mostly regarded as a new liberalist. His idealism had definite religious overtones that would have offended the utilitarian's aggressive secularism. According to Green, personal identity derived not from a number of pre-social biological or psychological determinants, but through the medium of social roles and relationships just as language of some sort is necessary to the real existence of thought.<sup>[6]</sup> Perhaps that provided Green with his definition of common good. This did not refer to a number of particular goods individuals commonly desired, but rather to the common pursuit of self-realization by the members of a given society. Like Mill, Green did not believe individual freedom could be secured simply by protecting an individual's right to non-interference from others.<sup>[6]</sup>

Historians have looked typically to L.T. Hobhouse's volume on Liberalism for the best formulation of the new English liberalism. In his book Hobhouse expressed emphatically that liberalism is the belief that society can safely be founded on this self-directing power of personality, and it is only on this foundation that a true community can be built.<sup>[7]</sup>

Therefore, Official liberal theory has tended to be somewhat less expressive of semi-socialist commitments to social harmony. Personal freedom had been put in a significant position. Since 1932 the practice of liberal governments and administrations all over the Western world has been to implement precisely the kinds of policies seeking to enlarge positive liberty that Hobhouse's views would prompt.

The view holds that while biology, individual and that of our species, imposes certain constraints and boundaries, these are not great, indeed much exaggerated by other theories. "Liberalism is conscious, and in fact a principal articulator, of so-called nature-versus-nurture questions".<sup>[5]</sup>

I do not want to venture too far into the issue of the pros and cons of liberal social ethic. But in order to make it possible to study the Chinese translation of liberalism I run a risk to set my foot in the field. As Mill said:

Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne if they are so fortunate as to find one.<sup>[8]</sup>

## II. Exegetic Interpretation of 自由主义 in Chinese Context

Liberty is a term with abroad and profound connotation. This term was translated into Chinese by the word 自由 or 自繇 that have been existing in Chinese context for thousand years. This section attempts to do a study on 自由 and 自由主义 in Chinese culture.

### 1. Definitions of 自由

Definition of Liberty can be found in *Modern Chinese Dictionary*<sup>[9]</sup>:

- 1) 在法律规定的范围内，随自己意志活动的权利。
- 2) 哲学上把人认识了事物发展的规律性，自觉地运用到实践中去，叫做自由。
- 3) 不受拘束，不受限制。

In ancient Chinese tradition 自由 was sometimes equal to 自然(*natural*). Tao Qian in Jin Dynasty wrote a poem saying “久在樊笼里，复得反自然” (living in a cage so long, at last I came back to liberty). Here the word 自然 has both the meaning of freedom and nature. Tao admired free pastoral living all his life. He regarded pastoral life as entire freedom of heart.

However, we Chinese have been accustomed to associating liberty with debouch and reckless. Liberty was sometimes misunderstood as no obligation and restrict at all. That's unfair for the term. Yan Fu, one of the earliest scholars that introduced liberty in China, translated *On Liberty* by J. S. Mill. A lot of people were stirred so much by his works. During translating the great work on liberalism, Yan Fu found it important to give a proper definition to this term.

Yan Fu thought that the special meaning of 自由 in Chinese context was far from the original meaning. He said at first the term had been used to describe the state of being free, unbound. Being a word widely used it had neither commendatory nor derogatory sense. If human beings were separated from each other a free man living out of the social limit was capable of doing any thing he likes and no one could restrict him. But since the individuals were in the society and were in existence with other people he had to consider the rights of other people. Since everyone was one part of human society and possessed liberty, each of them should consider the limit of other people lest there would be confrontations. Following are his words:

中文自繇，常含放诞、恣睢、无忌惮诸劣义。然此自是后起附属之诂，与初义无涉。初义但云不为外物拘牵而已，无胜义亦无劣义也。夫人而自繇，固不必须以为恶，即



欲为善，亦须自繇。其字义训，本为最宽，自繇者凡所欲为，理无不可，此如有人独居世外，其自繇界域，岂有限制？为善为恶，一切皆自本身起义，谁复禁之！但自入群而后，我自繇者人亦自繇，使无限制约束，便入强权世界，而相冲突。故曰人得自繇，而必以他人之自繇为界，此则《大学》絮矩之道，君子所恃以平天下者矣。……<sup>[10]</sup>

It appeared obviously that Yan Fu, by these dissertations, wanted to express that his liberty was one that had certain restrictions. In addition, individualism was involved in the discussion of liberalism.

## 2. *Liberalism* and Its Relation to Chinese Tradition

Although liberalism is always regarded as an exotic it has its own tradition in Chinese history. From Mo Di, Yang Zhu to Fan Zhen and Han Yu, all kinds of people with lofty ideas have been in pursuit of liberty one after another. Not any famous historical activities in ancient time had happened with the banners of liberty, but this term has been contained in each period of the long history.

The Spring and Autumn Periods was the first free era for thoughts and ideas. Laozi, the first one that can be called a master of ideas, criticized government a lot. Hu Shi believed him a man of liberty<sup>[11]</sup> because he helped people strive for civil rights. He said, “天下多忌讳，而民弥贫”，“民之饥，以其上食税之多，是以饥”，“民不畏死，赖以死惧之”。<sup>[12]</sup>

Zhuangzi, another Taoist, was a typical representative of *Liberalism*. His time, the Warring States Period, was full of wars. Since traps were everywhere Zhuangzi approved 无为(inact) and 无用(inutility). His thoughts were inclined to be negative yet his prose showed his longing for liberty. He said that there was a gigantic fish called *Kun*(鯀) that could change into a huge roc. When there was a gale over the sea the bird would fly to the extreme south of the world. In his fable, a cicada and a little culver don't believe the truth and laughed at the roc: “我决起飞，抢榆枋，时则不至而控于地而已矣，奚以之九万里而南为？”<sup>[13]</sup> As far as Zhuangzi was concerned this kind of liberty was not easy to understand for the two little creatures.

In the same prose Zhuangzi said that Liezi could fill away with fair wind, agile and brisk, “泠然善也”，but he still depended on some outside force; without wind he could do nothing, i.e. “犹有所待者也”。“有待”，opposite to “无待” means relying on outside force. That is not real liberty.

“夫列子御风而行，泠然善也，旬有五日而后反。彼于致福者，未数数然也。此岁免乎性，犹有所待者也。”



若夫乘天地之正，而御六气之辩，以游无穷者，彼且恶乎待哉！故曰：至人无己，神人无功，圣人无名。”<sup>[14]</sup>

Here Zhuangzi also mentioned 无穷, which means the infinitude of time and space, in other words, the realm of absolute freedom. The highest realm of life is relying on nothing.

Taoists pursued a kind of freedom of heart. Immortals in their fairy tales always led a free life without any restriction. They played Chinese chess or draughts or went fishing. They lived without food. However, it is clear that the liberty was not the same as what we are talking about today.

Buddhism is one of the basic factors of Chinese philosophy. Although it was first transferred from India it has become a local product of Chinese culture in the new land. The last and best product of traditional Buddhism of China is *Zen*(禅).

Buddhists have always believed that suffering is inseparable from existence but the extinction of the worldly desire and the inward self will culminate in a state of spiritual enlightenment beyond both suffering and existence. Zenists have attempted to a state of freedom and purification of heart by meditation. Purification here means *having no desire*(无念). They pursue to exceeding *empty*(空) and *naught*(无) of time and space. This is a realm of real freedom. As for Zenists, 空 and 无 are the decisive characteristics of human nature.

When 空 and 无 correspond with each other a real liberty is attained. However, this kind of freedom was attached to the feeling of *earthliness* (不离世间觉). The combination of 空 and 无 has been involved in *Zen* but the practical influences on spirit and real life have been avoided, probably intentionally.<sup>[15]</sup>

We have discussed *Taoism* hereinbefore. Zhuangzi assured the *spiritual liberty* by the use of 无待 while Zenists have applied the concept of 空 and 无. Thus confirmed the spiritual liberty proved to be an essential character of human nature.

In the West, Nietzsche claimed the death of God, attempting to free people from traditional morality. Compared with Western existentialism *Zen* has a similarity in the aspect of the way the problems are tabled and solved, although their backgrounds varied from each other. Existentialism has been fighting spiritual crisis of modern capitalism: advanced technology and industry may dissimilate human mind and lead to the *Lethe* of human's existence. Only when they find themselves can Man achieve liberty(自在). *Zen*, on the other hand, has proposed a way to regress human nature. For these reasons *Zen* has provoked resonance to some

Western idealists.

The concept of liberalism is very complicated. Liberalism is a flourishing tree, with the root in humanism of Renaissance and the branches growing in the development of market economy, civil community and constitution countries. The purpose and focus of liberalism have varied from time to time but its constant kernel has been retained. It is still a humanitarian social philosophy. In order to comprehend Chinese concept's deviation from Western origin a comparative study of the two terms is given here.

### 3. Various Opinions of *Liberalism*

Since it was created the term liberalism has never a fixed meaning. After it was introduced into China as a new tide of ideas arguments has never stopped. However, various opinions of liberalism influenced much on Chinese history of culture.

#### a) Yan Fu's View of *Liberalism*

Yan Fu is said to be the first one in Chinese history that introduced the theory of liberalism into China. He is a great idealist and translator. A lot of Western works on philosophy and modern sciences were recommended to Chinese people by his translation. It was he that made Evolutionism known to Chinese. It was he that let Spencer Herbert heard and he again, made the theory of liberalism noticed.

It was well known that Yan Fu translated *On Liberty* of J. S. Mill. He used the title of “群己权界论” which means *division between public rights and individual rights*. Obviously he regarded the division as the most important key word of liberty. He criticized those who had translated liberty in the past considering the term as the justice of everything. He gave a large number of examples to illustrate the mistake. In his article he admitted and abhorred that problems were produced when concepts in other cultural context were translated into Chinese.<sup>[16]</sup> Thereafter, he wished to give Chinese people a correct impression by his translation. Yet it was not an easy work. Yan said the original work was written in abstruse and abstractive English that he had to translate the book in light of Chinese convention in order to make it better understood.<sup>[17]</sup> Thus he was the originator of free translation. Deviation and misunderstanding, by doing this, would be produced as he had predicted.

We have tracked some imprints of Liberalism in Chinese tradition as we have discussed hereinbefore. However, Yan Fu found the difference. He also distinguished liberalism and liberty in Western context by use of traditional Chinese

culture. He thought the corresponding English term of 无待 in Taoism should be *self-existence* while 自在 of Buddhism can be translated as *persistence, eternity, or conservation*.

Yan Fu had mentioned the liberty of speech and religion in his article. He considered it the most difficult part. Nevertheless, he pointed out that the practical and realistic speeches instead of vituperation and scotch were free saying no matter who was the speaker.

须知言论自繇，只是平实地说实话求真理，一不为古人所欺，二不为权势所屈而已。使理真事实，虽出之仇敌，不可废也。使理谬事诬，虽以君父，不可从也。此之谓自繇。<sup>[18]</sup>

He also realized that liberty was a thing of relativity. Goodness to one person may be evil to others (往往人所谓恶，乃实吾善，人所谓善，反为吾恶) so interloping was not feasible (此干涉所以必不可行，非任其自繇不可也).

The translation was published in a special time. The translator attempted to inspire the Chinese people in the abyss of suffering by recommending a new theory. Just as he had exclaimed, “将四百兆同胞待命于此者深，而天不忍塞其一隙之明欤？”

#### b) Liang Qichao's View of *Liberalism*

A reformist pioneer in Modern Times, Liang Qichao(1873–1929) spark-plugged reforms of poetry, novel and new style. Although he was called a conservative for his political opinions he added fuels to the fire of liberalism.

Liang created the concepts of 公德(*social morality*) and 私德(*private morality*)<sup>[19]</sup>. He considered these two terms opposite and relative to each other. He quoted Spencer's words<sup>[20]</sup> that enormous one made up to one collection. The formal is total and the latter, only. He had focused much on the relationship between the social morality and the private morality and especially stressed on the importance of the latter.

He believed that the private morality in China had degenerated so much. One of the reasons was the disadvantage of autocracy. Outstanding people did appear in the history but their ambition drained away bit by bit depressed by the improper system. If they had been luckily born in countries of liberty they would have been useful to public. He said,

……夫所谓达识热诚欲为生民请命者，岂非一国中不可多得之彦哉。其在自由之国，则大政治家、大教育家、大慈善家以纯全之德性，温和之手段，以利其群者也，而今乃迫之使不得不出于此途，而因是墮落者十八九焉。<sup>[21]</sup>

It is well known that Liang Qichao admired the constitutional government of some Western countries. As far as he was concerned constitutionalism gave enough *liberty* to people. He had expressed great hope to the youth. Only after the youth got *liberty* could the nation become a liberal one.<sup>[22]</sup>

Liang also made a comparison between liberty and obedience. These two terms are always considered opposite. Obedience, hated by most people, was absolutely necessary to Liang. He said that obedience is both the best and worst word in the world. Readers were told that people in the West lived in liberty and liberty was their second life. However, they never neglected obedience while pursuing liberty because they understood deeply that real liberty relied much on obedience or obligation. Liberty would be a mass of turbulence without obedience. Liang Qichao reprimanded severely those who attempted to gain self-interest in the name of liberty.<sup>[23]</sup>

Liang said that all the true lovers of liberty approved appropriate obedience. Laws were made to obey by all members of a certain social circle. A little later than Liang Qichao, Li Dazhao took a similar view of liberty.<sup>[24]</sup>

### c) Hu Shi and *Liberalism*

Another pioneer of liberalism in China, Hu Shi devoted himself much to the introduction of liberalism. He wrote a lot of articles about this new idea.

Hu Shi went abroad and learned much distillation of Western thoughts therefore his opinion might be of more values. Hu Shi realized the difference between Chinese “自由” and Western liberty. He said that liberty in Europe contained the meaning of liberation, which means that people should be freed from certain external forces and then obtain self-determination. “自由” in classical Chinese usually emphasized much on self. According to the words of Hu Shi, the fact that Chinese people had paid too much attention to self had resulted in several endings: the first was reclusion by which those recluses lived a life in remote mountains without communicating with the earthly people; the second one was the dream of immortal. No matter Zhuangzi or Buddhists dreamt of immortal life. However,

these were not the same to the Western conception.

As for Hu Shi, oriental liberal movements had never found the way of democratic construction because of the ignorance of the essentiality of political liberty. Westerners' contribution lied in that they knew it was democratic politics that could guarantee *civic* liberty. Another special connotation of liberty was tolerance. Hu considered it the most essential and admirable thing of modern liberalism. It is well known that Lu Xun and other left-wingers criticized Hu Shi for his proposition of peace revolution. Hu claimed that peace revolution was another connotation of liberalism without concealment. He said those key points were the kernels of liberalism.

至少在现代，自由的保障全靠一种互相容忍的精神，无论是东风压了西风，还是西风压了东风，都是不容忍，都是摧残自由。

……和平改革有两个意义，第一就是和平的转移政权，第二就是用立法的方法，一步步的做具体改革，一点一滴的求进步。容忍反对党。

……总结起来，自由注意的第一个意义是自由，第二个意义是民主，第三个意义是容忍——容忍反对党，第四个意义是和平的渐进的改革。<sup>[25]</sup>

Although some of Hu's opinions were sneered at, he was a one-hundred-percent liberalist anyway.

At the mention of Hu Shi, I would like to refer to his book *History of Colloquial Literature*.<sup>[26]</sup> A half-finished work, this book introduced a lot of classical Chinese works from Han Dynasty to the early period of Tang Dynasty. The specialty is that all these classical works are studied as colloquialism, which is opposite to classical Chinese. The book becomes very particular for this point.

This book, in fact, is not only a work on literature but also a special production of that certain time. The proposal for colloquialism had begun much earlier than May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. Magazines by colloquialism had emerged at the end of Qing Dynasty but most people proposed colloquialism with the view of generalizing education then. Hu Shi and his coteries did the same thing with a different view. Besides the former purpose, they aspired after the construction of a new paradigm of cultural tradition. New ideas came from the West and therefore confronted stale tradition of which Classical Chinese represent one aspect. Trite form of language did not consist with the demand of social revolution any longer. Actually, this was one of the signs of liberalism.

#### 4. Deviation of *Liberalism* in China

Chinese liberalism has its own tradition. If Yan Fu's translation of *On Liberty* could be regarded as the beginning Chinese liberalism has a history more than one hundred years. During these years the Chinese tradition of liberalism has been formed. Although the origin of the tradition was the Western culture, much selection and processing has been added to it.

After the selection and processing, liberalism in China stressed much on politics and culture while economic liberty was ignored. On the contrary, liberalists in China appreciated the planned economy and made an emphasis on equal economy. Take Hu Shi, who had gone abroad, for instance, he also admired the planned model of Soviet Union greatly. Thereupon, liberalism on economy never played a proper role in the history of Chinese liberalism.

However, all the representatives of liberalism, no matter Locke Smith or Hayek, talk about liberalism from the aspect of economy. It is undoubtedly that liberty is the most essential one among all the values while free market is the engine of development and civilization. Economic liberalism is the guarantee and has offered the most effective way for extension of other liberalism. In the Western tradition, economic liberalism is the basis of all the other liberalism. No real liberalism could be in existence without economic sense. Economic liberty is not only a purpose but also an instrument for approaching political liberty. In fact, modern economy of the West has been amplified on the basis of economic freedom.

Therefore, it is apparent that China's liberalism rooted unsteadily. Since minds were still restrained at that time, market economy was then a castle in the air. It is claimed that Chinese liberalism was unfortunately born in an improper time.

After the victory of Sino-Japanese War, new tide of liberalism was up from 1943 when Kuomintang advocated giving rights to citizen and tried to rearrange China's postwar political order. Liberal movements had showed up vigorously. People in various classes had started a heated argument. Furthermore, Democratic Federation had their first congress, announcing that China had become a sheer democratic country. The creed past by the congress was almost the Charter of liberalism in China.

However, China's social and political resources were not suitable for the growth of liberalism. It was not long before the civil war of China broke out. Rupture between Kuomintang and Communist Party resulted in the failure of liberalism. Once reasonable talking was replaced by violent war, liberalism lost its living space.



China's Democratic Federation was forced to disband in 1947, which indicated the fatal frustration of liberalism in China.

After the liberation, socialism commenced to play a main role in the stage. At the beginning of People's Republic of China the planned economy took place of all the other economy modes. Liberalism could hardly develop any longer under such circumstances.

Then there came the Cultural Revolution. It seems that those Red Guards could do anything they wanted but that was almost the deadline of liberalism. No social order existed. No civil right was guaranteed. In the passages mentioned above, we've learned that liberalism could not survive without order.

Democracy became the hottest topic in 1980s as people began to rethink the Cultural Revolution. Thanks to the confirmation of market economy, the issue finally turned to liberty and liberalism again in 1990s. Yet the tradition of Chinese liberalism has been in effect. More efforts have been concentrated on politics and culture than on economy. Liberalism was born in China with the characteristics of equalitarianism and resisting free market so that mentioning liberalism again has not impelled China's market economy to develop much. At least we could confirm that the deviation of Chinese meaning of liberty—ignorance of property rights and economic liberty has long affected the advancement of China's economy.

#### **IV. Shaping Influences of 自由主义 in Chinese Context**

Millennium came in a free atmosphere. Liberalism glows extraordinary splendor all over the world, so does it in China. Trends of liberalism have encountered some suppress but liberalism itself has allured large numbers of intellectuals. The future of liberalism in China depends on not only political factors but also its own maturation. No matter what had happened, the influences of liberalism in China could never be neglected. The liberal thoughts and movements in the last century has deposited in the dust of memory for some time. In fact, they are really valuable legacy bequeathed by history.

##### **1. Influences of American Revisionist Liberalism**

Yan Fu and Liang Qichao introduced some theories of liberalism. Yet strictly speaking, they were pioneers of liberalism instead of real liberalists. Only after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Period when most intellectuals accepted values of individualism and liberalism did liberalists present themselves in the stage of China.

However we could not affirm that authentic liberalism was born in China in



respect of the birth of liberalists. The main reason is that at the beginning of last century liberalism was in somewhat disorder even in the West, let alone in China. What I want to say is that all kinds of schools of liberalism such as utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham, Democratic liberalism of John Dewey, exploded at the same time. Then Chinese pioneers imported the thoughts that had already been revised. Therefore, they had little knowledge of those classic works by John Locke, David Hume and Adam Smith. In other words, liberalism in China was born with confusion. At last, it turned to either neo-conservatism or radicalism in the complicated situation without careful observation. That has indicated the inborn deficiency of China's liberalism.

China's liberal thoughts were mainly imported from Britain and America. Actually, there are great differences between the two origins. Chinese intellectuals absorbed the new thoughts and modified them according to different local environments. American thoughts of John Dewey were advocated by Hu Shi and gave an impact to Chinese people. After the revision three gifts had remained: pragmatism methodology, gradual social reform and amplification of Democracy. Thereafter, the sheer political concept of Democracy acquired more extensive social attributes and had aroused the advocacy of Democracy and Science.

## 2. Influences of *Fabian Liberalism*

Most important exotic thoughts were from Britain because of a man named Harold Laski. Laski was a famous member of Fabian. He had a lot of loyal apostles in China such as Luo Longji, Wang Zaoshi and Zhang Junli.<sup>[27]</sup> They organized a small party similar to the Fabian Society in late 1920s, translating plenty of works of Laski and other Fabians.

Actually Fabian thoughts were also revised liberalism. Laski had reserved the essential principles of liberalism and attempted to make them accordance with socialist justice and equality, therefore, gave birth to the system of Democratic Socialism. These thoughts, totally new to Chinese liberalists, turned out to be a gospel.

Capitalism had received a lot of criticism in the West when the buds began to sprout in China. As an advocacy of Capitalism, classic liberalism had no corresponding recourses in Chinese tradition. At the same time, socialism, either Soviet model or Fabian one, could find support in China. Laski made Capitalism in accordance with Socialism and formed a systematical social reform project. The birth of Fabian Liberalism inspired Chinese much. Therefore, Social Democracy

became the main melody of Chinese liberalism.

Xiao Qian (萧乾) once made an explanation of this kind of liberalism that it was only a pronoun that could be placed by progressivism or social democracy.

自由主义者对外并不拥护十九世纪以富欺贫的自由贸易，对外也不支持作为资本主义精髓的自由企业。在政治在文化上自由主义者尊重个人，因而也可说带了颇浓的个人主义色彩，在经济上，见于贫富悬殊的必然恶果，自由主义者赞成合理的统制，因而社会主义的色彩也不淡。自由主义不过是个通用的代名词，它可以换成进步主义，可以换为民主社会主义。<sup>[28]</sup>

Among the few liberal theories in China, most are marked with social democratic distinctions. Apparently, Chinese intellectuals welcomed the Fabian ideas and the coming socialism, then, made them the most dazzling scene in the history of Chinese liberalism.

### 3. Influences of Chinese Liberalists

Liberalism of modern China was still in a phase of chaos at the beginning of the last century. By and by there appeared several kinds of the thoughts but they didn't impress the whole society until 1940s, when liberalists were born in China. We could not infer that liberalism existed after liberalists were born yet they had impressive influence on the history. Yin Haiguang divided Chinese liberalists into two parts: ideal personality(观念人物) and action personality(行动人物).<sup>[29]</sup>

Most of the Ideal characters of liberalists were intellectuals in academia. They had fixed job and steady income and usually had gone abroad. They concerned themselves with state affairs yet was devoted to their scholarship attainments. So they advocated principles of liberalism by giving lectures, writing articles and so on. Among them Hu Shi was the spiritual head.

All these intellectuals had their own ideas and beliefs. Their actions were not organized, just like a plateful of sands. Although some active ones would canvass some important statesmen personally, following our famous Confucius, most of them remained independent, refusing to be involved into any political party directly. As the symbol of social morality and public conscience, these scholars made great contribution to liberalism movement. Their effects were worth memorizing.

Few leading characters were born ideal liberals because of their lax in discipline. Then some active ones decided to take further actions besides lectures and articles. Some of them planned to establish some political groups or parties to propel

liberalism movement.

These characters, including Luo Longji, Zhang Junli and Wang Zaoshi, had no settled profession. They traveled from this university to that one and part of their time was devoted to political activity.

Ideal ones were accustomed to discussing single problems, refusing to consider an all-in plan for China's reform while action liberalists were keen on specific creed. Their endeavor at last led to the establishment of China's Democratic Federation, meaning that liberalism in China was organized formally.

#### 4. Influences on Economy

Affected by Chinese tradition, domestic liberalists today still stick to politics and cultures only. They have advocated the political and cultural value of liberalism without considering economy. Another problem is that liberalism seems to be separated from Chinese common people. It always belongs to the intellectuals in the tower of ivory. Without the economic connotation and the support of free market, liberalism would abort and the society would be lacking in liberty, equality, justice and competition. A malformed market will lead to disastrous consequences. The economic crisis of South-east Asia proved to be evidence.

But why do Chinese people dislike studying liberalism concerning free market? At first, the influences of Confucius require us not to talk about profit; secondly, not enough scholars know Economics; and the third, even free market has its own defects.

Fortunately, we have witnessed the consequences of South-east Asia crisis and have sobered down because of the reality. Chinese people have taken a lot of measures to develop economy, using the principles of liberalism, consciously or unconsciously.

Since we have found the entrance to market economy, the gate to liberalism will never be closed again.

#### V. Shaping Influences of Translation of New Terms in Chinese Context

Translators reiterate the story of Babel, trying to explain the puzzle of communication. In fact the story itself has shown the long history of the Bible's translation and symbolized human's dream of complete intercommunication. However, no object could be replaced by another thing completely and translation is only the employment of one thing to explain another thing so the conflict of translation is not avoided.

More and more people doubted the commensurability of different languages although most translations are made on the basis of the so-called commensurability. Derrida made a deconstruction of the story of Babel and concluded that no real commensurability was in existence.<sup>[30]</sup>

This study, made in Chinese context, attempts to exceed the phase of proving whether those commensurable terms exist in different languages but to discuss why and how those so-called commensurable terms were produced and what were their influences.

Early in the Han Dynasty, a lot of loan-words from mid-Asia, Arab and north-Asia appeared in Chinese. Later on, some important translation of sutra added a lot of Sanskrit words to Chinese. Between 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century new words from foreign languages sprang out like asparagus. Modern thoughts of China began with importation of some Western ideas. At the beginning of modern history, large numbers of Western ideas were introduced into China. Obviously these translations had significant influences on Chinese history.

Yan Fu translated the famous work of Huxley systematically and let a lot of novel thoughts be known to Chinese people. His endeavor helped to change a whole generation. After him, Chinese intellectuals realized that only the stronger one could survive in the cruel competition of nature as well as the competition of human society. They were inspired to look for a new way to save the country. In the literary field Lin Zhu "translated" a lot of foreign novels into Chinese. His works had been published much earlier than Lu Xun's short stories collection and very popular with the whole country.<sup>[31]</sup> Most writers at that time had been bent on translation. Even Lu Xun translated a plenty of foreign works in Russian and Japanese. Actually, his first work published was a collection of translations. The prosperity of translation was closely connected with modern newspapering and publishing. Therefore, translation works had brought forth a lot of key words.

Then here come the problems of new terms and the reconstruction of lexis. Large amounts of semantic translation flowed into Chinese context and get a variation both in meaning and the role they play. Therefore the original meaning was sometimes interrupted. For example, Chinese term 文化 originated from Japanese *bunka* so the commensurability of 文化 and English term culture (French culture and German die Kultur) was made by means of Japanese. Therefore, the connotation of 文化 cannot be comprehended completely without studying the Japanese word *bunka*. Ancient meaning of the Chinese term is the opposite of

conquering by force, meaning achievements in culture and education. Obviously the ancient meaning has been interrupted by certain occurrence. However, the relationship among the three languages (English-Japanese-Chinese) is not the only thing that involved in the course of translation. In order to reconstruct the whole Chinese cultural environment these key words were introduced into Chinese at the time of cultural explosion. And in the new context, the terms got new connotation and extension. By touching the new terms Chinese people who were eager for new Weltanschauung and new future, got more acquainted with the outside world. The citizens of Central Kingdom at last touched the new world around their land.

Encounter of two languages has resulted in encounter of various cultures and brought in a lot of new thoughts. The choices of the translators depended on the requirement of that time. Terms that they had chosen in Chinese for translating foreign thoughts had indicated their idea inclination and their expectation. Some terms were chosen for affinity. Some were chosen to arouse attraction. That is why some scholars hold that adapted terms were recreated rather than translated in target language. In the course of recreation these key terms have played a great role in Chinese cultural history.

#### Notes:

[1] In this chapter, the concepts of Liberty and Freedom are some time consistent. However that does not mean the confusion of the two concepts is taken for granted. The differentia was mentioned by Amartya Sen in his *Development as Freedom* (Alfred A Knope, New York, September 1999, page 57) . This study does not concern about the distinction between Liberty and Freedom because of the limit of space and writer's ability.

[2] 刘禾 (1999), 《语际书写: 现代思想史写作批判纲要》, 上海三联书店, 上海。该书第 36 页写道: “……当概念从一种语言进入另一种语言时, 意义与其说发生了‘转型’, 不如说在后者的地域性环境中得到了 (再) 创造。在这个意义上, 翻译已不是一种中性的, 远离政治及意识形态斗争和利益的冲突的行为。相反, 它成了这类冲突的场所, 在这里被译语言不得不与译体语言对面遭遇。……这里有对权威的引用和对权威的挑战, ……直到新词或新意义在译体语言中出现。”

[3] Manning, Cf. D. J *Liberalism*. London: Dent, 1976. p.9.

[4] Merquior, JoséGuilherme. *Liberarism, Old and New*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. 1991. p.2.

[5] Loptson, Peter .1995. *Theories of Human Nature*. Broadview Press. p71.

[6] Bellamy, Richard. 1992. *Liberalism and Modern Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press association with Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. pp 35-47.

[7] Hobhouse, L.T. *Liberalism*, London: Richard and Sons,Ltd., 1911.

[8] Mill, John Stuard. 1978. *On Liberty*. Indianapolis: Hackett.

[9] 中国社会科学语言研究所词典编辑室 (1985), 《现代汉语词典》, 商务印书馆出版, 北京, 1537 页。

[10] 严复 (1996), 《群己权界论》译凡例, 《中国科学翻译史料》, 黎唯秋主编, 中国科学技术大学出版社, 151 页。

Original text was published in *Division of Public Rights and Individual Rights* (《群己权界论》), which was Yan's translation of *On Liberty* by J. S. Mill.

[11] 胡适 (1998), 自由主义, 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 刘军宁主编, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 65-71 页。

[12] 老子 (2000), 《道德经》, 陈忠评译, 吉林文史出版社, 长春。

[13] 庄子, 逍遥游, 见《中国古代文学作品选》(上) 中央广播电视大学文学教研室古代文学选注, 北京大学出版社 1986 年出版, 第 123 页。

[14] 见庄子逍遥游。

[15] 王树人 (1997), 禅与非理性思潮, 《文化的冲突与融合——张申府、梁漱溟、汤用彤百年诞辰纪念文集》, 张岱年, 杨一介等编, 北京大学出版社, 北京, 336-339 页。

[16] 严复 (1996), 《群己权界论》译凡例, 《中国科学翻译史料》, 黎唯秋主编, 中国科学技术大学出版社, 151 页。“……西名东译, 失其固多, 独此天成, 殆无以易。”

[17] 严复 (1996), 《群己权界论》译凡例, 《中国科学翻译史料》, 黎唯秋主编, 中国科学技术大学出版社, 152 页。

[18] 严复 (1996), 《群己权界论》译凡例, 《中国科学翻译史料》, 黎唯秋主编, 中国科学技术大学出版社, 152-153 页。

[19] 刘军宁主编 (1998), 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 470-498 页。

[20] 梁启超 (1998), 论私德, 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 刘军宁主编, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 475 页。

The writer said: “群者谓之拓都, 一者谓之么匿。拓都之性情形制, 么匿为之; 么匿之所本无者, 不能从拓都而成有, 么匿之所同具也, 不能以拓都而忽亡。”It seems that 拓都 and 么匿 were the transliteration of “total” and “only”.

[21] 梁启超 (1998), 论私德, 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 刘军宁主编, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 477 页。

[22] 梁启超 (1986), 少年中国说, 参见《中国古代文学作品选》(下), 中央广播电视大学文学教研室古代文学选注, 北京大学出版社, 440 页。“……少年自由则国自由……”

[23] 梁启超 (1998), 服从释义, 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 刘军宁主编, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 499 页。“恶夫假自由以济其私者, 其弊更甚于恶法。恣睢暴乱, 毒自由以毒天下, 其败坏将不可收拾也。”

[24] Li Dazhao published an article titled with *Liberty and Order* (李大钊 1921, 自由与秩序, 《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 515 页), referring the restriction of individual liberty in society. Although he didn't mention obedience he adopted “order” in his article, which seemed to have similar effect. The writer said “我们要求的自由, 是秩序中的自由……个人与社会、自由与秩序, 原是不可分的东西。”It is obvious that the introduction of liberty had aroused a hot discussion at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century and the focus lied on two aspects of liberty: Individual rights and individual regulations.



[25] 胡适 (1998), 自由主义, 参见《自由主义的先声: 北大传统与近代中国》, 刘军宁主编, 中国人事出版社, 北京, 65-71 页。

In this article Hu's proposition of developing "drop by drop"(一点一滴的求进步) was criticized by Lu Xun. however, this shows his way of pursuing liberty and his sight of liberty is worthy of being remembered.

[26] 胡适 (1999), 《白话文学史》, 上海古籍出版社, 上海。

It was first published by Crescent Press(新月书店) in 1928. The writer only finished half of the work.

[27] Luo Longji(罗隆基), Wang Zaoshi(王造时), Zhang Junli(张君勱) were famous liberalists that tried to conciliate Capitalism and Socialism by use of liberal theory of Fabian.

见许纪霖 (1997), 现代中国的自由主义传统, 《二十一世纪》, 1997 年 8 月第 42 期。

[28] 见许纪霖 (1997), 现代中国的自由主义传统, 《二十一世纪》, 1997 年 8 月号第 42 期。

[29] 殷海光 (1998), 《中国文化的愿望》, 中国和平出版社, 北京。他把中国的自由主义者划分为观念人物和行动人物。

[30] Derrida, Jacques. 1985. Des tours de babel. trans. Joseph F. Graham. in J. F. Graham( ed.) *Difference in Translation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pp 165- 208.

[31] Lin Zhu(林纾, 字琴南) who did not understand English translated a lot of foreign novels. Most of the works were from Britain and French. Here the verb "translate" is actually in place of "adapt", "transplant" or other terms concerning *translingual* practice.

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