

ENCOUNTER BETWEEN LANGUAGES: LIANG QICHAO'S TRANSLATION AND TRANSLINGUAL PRACTICE

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In the 19th and early 20th century, China underwent a transition to modernization to cope with the serious challenges brought about by the Western powers and the humiliating defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese war of 1895. While this modernization was by no means equivalent to Westernization,¹ many Chinese intellectuals saw the West as a model for modernization. In this process of learning from the West, translation played a crucial role in introducing Western knowledge, ideas and concepts.

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) is among the Chinese modern pioneers who considered translating Western thoughts and knowledge as an effective means to “renovate the people” and transform Chinese society and culture. Liang’s socio-political and intellectual impact on the late Qing period China is profound, as can be testified by the large volume of existing Chinese literature and an increasing volume of Western scholarship detailing his impact. Among the scholarship published in the Chinese language, *Liang Qichao nianpu changbian* (Chronological biography of Liang Qichao) edited by Ding Wenjiang and Zhao Fengtian is the most detailed chronological record of Liang’s entire life. The academic value of this book was well explained by Fogel:

Everyone who works primarily in the late Qing period, especially those in intellectual and cultural history, has had to make use of Liang’s *nianpu*. There is simply no avoiding it. Liang knew so many people and had contact through the mail with so many more that he virtually lived the period itself. Easier access to Liang’s chronological biography pushes the scholarly bar one level up (2005: 19).

In terms of Western literature published in the English language, Tang Xiaobing’s *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao*, is the most cited according to Google scholar. There are many other seminal studies in Chinese, Japanese, and English that explore topics ranging from

1 See Joseph Levenson (1965), in his *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, used the word “westernization” rather than “modernization” in describing the transforming efforts in late Qing China.

Liang's intellectual development and contribution, to his socio-political role in this period to his influence on Chinese newspapers.²

While much research was carried out on Liang's contribution as a newspaper journalist, a reformist and an intellectual, few have studied his thoughts on translation and his translation practice. Fewer still have tried to connect Liang's translation practice with his "translingual practice"³ and examine this connection in a historical context. Liang's thoughts on these matters and his translation and translingual practice provide evidence of Chinese intellectuals' commitment to China's modernity. They are also the product of the historical crisis that developed at a time when China's own cultural heritage, when faced with the threat of Western and Japanese military superiority, became obviously inadequate and incapable of self-regeneration. Liang, and other Chinese intellectual elites, such as Wei Yuan, Huang Zunxian, and Kang Youwei, were compelled to seek the seeds of China's future rejuvenation.

As described below, the process of intellectual exploration and the move toward modernity was embodied in, among other things, Liang's writings to promote translations as well as his own translations. Believing that learning from the West could be a "sharp sword" strengthening China, renovating its people, and transforming its society, Liang Qichao not only wrote many articles promoting translation of Western ideas, but he also put such ideas into practice. Compared with other prestigious intellectuals, Liang's voice had maximum impact owing to his prominence in China's emerging tradition of journalism. This helps to explain why most of the new terms and ideas that appeared in Liang's articles all became widespread in China.

It is widely known that Liang lived in exile in Japan from 1898 to 1912 after the failure of the Hundred Days Reform, where he wrote voluminously and translated many works from Japanese into Chinese, some of which were retranslations of Japanese translations of Western works. Nevertheless, the impact of his translation practice and his efforts to introduce Western concepts and terms in this process have not been clearly delineated nor adequately documented in Western scholarly writings. This paper aims to fill this research gap by providing a contextual analysis of Liang's thoughts and practice of translation and investigating some of the major concepts and terms that were either introduced or popularized through Liang's introduction of Western ideas from Japanese writings.

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- 2 e.g., Wu Mingneng, *Liang Qichao yanjiu congkao* (Studies on Liang Qichao in traditional Chinese) (Taiwan, 2001); Collaborative research on Liang Qichao: Meiji Japan and the reception of modern Western thought (in Japanese), ed. Hazama Noaki; Liang Qichao, Meiji Japan, the West (in Japanese), also edited by Hazama Noaki; Joseph Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*; For an analysis of Liang's political role in this period, see Philip C. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism* (Seattle, 1972), and *The Role of Japan in Liang Qichao's Introduction of Modern Western Civilization to China*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel.
 - 3 The term was adopted by Lydia H. Liu (1995) to refer to the process by which new words, meanings, discourses, and modes of representation arose, circulated, and acquired legitimacy in early Modern China through contact with Japanese/European languages and literatures. The term "translingual practice" refers to the same meaning in this paper.

Translation: a means to “renew” the nation

The last decades of the Qing dynasty witnessed traumatic defeats for China in the Opium War (1839-1842), and then in the Sino-Japanese war of 1895, and finally the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911. It was during this historical period that China experienced a breakdown of the dynastic socio-political order and long-standing cultural insularity. The humiliating realities of the defeats, the unequal treaties, and the mid-century mass uprisings, the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), all forced the Qing court to recognize the need for change.

China's loss in the Sino-Japanese war came as a considerable blow that shook the self-confidence of the Chinese people, not only because historically, Japan had long been China's disciple,⁴ but also because this failure came after the Qing government had tried to modernize its naval forces by purchasing expensive warships from the West and training its military staff with advanced Western knowledge. The defeat also provoked a radical response among Chinese intellectuals towards the previous reform efforts of the Qing dynasty and called for a more systematic institutional reform following along the lines of the Meiji reforms introduced in Japan.⁵ Kang Youwei (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao, two chief advocates, called for fundamental reform of the crippled dynasty. This reform, known as Wuxu Reform, or Hundred Days Reform, was intended to make sweeping social and institutional changes for the Chinese nation's survival.

The first effort to emulate the Japanese Meiji reform was to embark on Western learning. The Datong Translation Bureau (Datong Yishu Ju) was established in 1897 in Shanghai with a goal to translate and introduce Western learning. Liang Qichao was the main founder of the organization. Liang decided that the Bureau should mainly translate Japanese works or Japanese-translated Western works (*dong wen*), and that the Bureau should also mainly translate political works (*zheng xue*) with more focus on introducing the reforms of other countries (Liang, 1999: 57-58).

The late Qing period witnessed a great surge in the translation of Western works with more than half of such works retranslated from Japanese.⁶ Among the 533

4 See *Zhongguoren liuxue riben shi (The history of Chinese Studying in Japan)* by Shi Teng Hui Xiu (trans. By Tan Ruqian and Lin Qiyao) published by Sanlian shushe, 1983. This book is written by a Japanese professor, who gave a detailed account of Chinese people studying in Japan from the late Qing period (1896 to 1937), and the Republic of China period. In the beginning of Chapter 1, the author mentioned that since the 7th century, Japan had started to send students to study in China. For about a thousand years, Japan was always the one who sent students to learn from China, and China was always the one who received disciples from Japan.

5 In Japan, the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) led to enormous changes in Japan's political, economic and social structure and finally made the country a great power. They carried out educational reforms and learning from the West by translating Western thoughts and knowledge of modern science and technology. Japan's success in modernization made the Chinese people recognize the necessity to learn from the West.

6 See Xiong, Yuezhi (1996) An overview of the dissemination of Western learning in late Qing China, *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 4(1): 13-27.

translations of Western works in the late Qing period, 321 of them were retranslated from Japanese, accounting for about 60% of the translations (Saneto, 1983: 241). Among these, Japanese political novels of the Meiji period were popular fodder for Chinese translators between 1898 and 1903. Shiba Shirou, Yano Humio, Miyabe Hikoya and Suehiro Tetcho were included among the popular translated authors of the time (Tarumoto, 1998: 40). Liang, later ventured to write a political novel also, translated Shiba Shirou's *Jiaren zhi qiyu* (Romantic Encounters with Two Fair Ladies) and introduced Yano Ryuukei (1850-1931)'s *Jing guo meitan* (A Beautiful Story of Statesmanship). These translations from Japanese proved to be an efficient means of introducing and disseminating Western knowledge and thoughts, and they soon outnumbered translations by foreign missionaries from the originals.⁷

Under the direction of modern-thinking Chinese officials, Western science and languages were studied, special schools were opened in the larger cities, and arsenals, factories, and shipyards were established according to Western models.⁸ In March 1896 (according to the Chinese lunar calendar), the first 13 Chinese students were sent to Japan by the Qing government to study Western science, technology, medicine, economics and political science (Saneto, 1983: 1). The reform that began in 1898, three years after the Sino-Japanese War, and 30 years after the Japanese Meiji Restoration (which began in 1868) revealed the reformers' ambition to copy Japanese success with modernization. But all these efforts climaxed in a short-lived movement in 1898, the Hundred Days Reform.⁹ Liang was sentenced to death as one of the chief advocates of the reform, and fled to Japan in September, 1898.

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- 7 Foreign missionaries did a lot of scientific and technical translation in this period, e.g. the Chinese mathematician—Li Shanlan (1811-1882) collaborated with the British missionary Alexander Wylies (1815-1877) on a translation of a work on differential and integral calculus. The Chinese mathematician Hua Hengfang (1833-1902) and the British Missionary John Fryer (1839-1928) translated a text on probability taken from the Encyclopedia Britannica.
- 8 See Elman, Benjamin A.'s "Rethinking the Twentieth Century Denigration of Traditional Chinese Science and Medicine in the Twenty-first Century", prepared for the 6th International Conference on the New Significance of Chinese Culture in the Twenty-first Century held at Charles University in 2003. Available at: <http://www.princeton.edu/~elman/> and also Sang, Xianzhi's *Wanqing shehui yu wenhua* (Society and Culture in Late Qing China) published by China Social Sciences Press, 1996.
- 9 The imperial edicts for reform issued by the emperor, Guangxu (1871-1908), covered a broad range of subjects, including stamping out corruption and remaking the academic and civil-service examination systems, legal system, governmental structure, defense establishment, and postal services. The edicts attempted to modernize agriculture, medicine, and mining and to promote practical studies instead of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. The court also planned to send students abroad for first-hand observation and technical studies. Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧 1835-1908) forced the young reform-minded Guangxu into seclusion and she herself took over the government as regent. The Hundred Days' Reform ended and the new edicts were cancelled.

Liang's promotion of Western learning through translation

Liang's translation of Japanese works began during his exile journey on a Japanese warship to Japan in 1898. However, his support of learning from the West and reforming the decadent Qing dynasty started well before his exile to Japan. Liang showed his familiarity with the existing literature of the Western world in Chinese in his book list "Dushu fenyue kecheng" published in 1894, in which he recommended the *Wanguo shiji* (Okamoto Kansuke's *A History of the World*), Xu Jiyu's *Yinghuan zhilue* (Short treatise of the maritime circuit), *Lieguo sui ji zhengyao* (Frederick Martin's *The Statesman's Year Book*) and the informative journals on the West such as *Xiguo jinshi huibian* (A collection of current events on the West). Liang believed that these readings could provide Chinese readers with knowledge of Western reforms, politics, economies, current events, as well as world geography (Liang, 1999: 5).

Liang shared the population's rebellious dissatisfaction with feudalism and imperial tyranny, and was an ardent advocate of reform. He attributed the success of modernization of Meiji Japan to its assimilation of Western ideas in its existing economic, social and political traditions.

At the beginning of his famous "Xixue shumu biao" (A bibliography of Western learning) published in the newspaper, *Shiwu bao* (*Contemporary Affairs*) in 1896, Liang wrote, "(i)n order to reinvigorate the country, we shall translate more Western works; in order to become an independent thinker, one should read more Western works."¹⁰ Liang's list of Western works was arranged by subject matter into three major divisions: xixue (Western learning), xizheng (Western politics), and zalei (Miscellaneous). There were also 28 subdivisions, ranging from sciences to applied technology, travel accounts and Western cookbooks (Liang, 1999: 82-86).

Also in 1896, Liang published a selected list of *Western works on Agriculture* – "Xishu tiyao nongxue", in *Shiwu bao*, arguing that China's economic development should be based on the growth of agriculture. He contended that even in the West, the revenue from the agricultural sector accounted for much more than that from the trade sector (*ibid.*: 87).

One year later, in 1897, *Xizheng congshu* (Collectanea of the Western art of government) compiled by Liang was published. As mentioned above, Liang pointed out that previously translated Western works were mostly on military studies. For Liang it was regrettable that few works on Western politics and the art of government were introduced into China. Therefore, this Collectanea was Liang's attempt to fill the gap in existing translated Western literature. The book was composed of 32 categories, covering topics ranging from agriculture (e.g., the illustration of Western sericulture), education (e.g., Western curriculum), to mechanics (e.g., the illustration of the textile machine) (Liang, 1999: 137).

10 The original is "国家欲自强，以多译西书为本，学者欲自立，以多读西书为功" (guojia yu ziqiang, yi duoyi xishu weiben, xuezhe yu zili, yi duodu xishu weigong). The translation is mine.

In the same year, Liang published “Lun Yishu”, an article that gives the most comprehensive account of his thoughts on translation. He stressed the necessity of adding English courses into the elementary school curriculum, arguing that the effect of this change would be felt 10 years later. He also stated the necessity of retranslating the selected Western works from Japanese and also some relevant Japanese works. Indeed, Liang firmly believed that translation was crucial for the survival of the Chinese nation. He said that “isn’t it obvious that if China is to stand among the world nations, the foremost thing to do now is to strengthen the country through translating Western learning” (Liang, 1999: 44). In this article, Liang put forward the idea that China should first learn from Japan since “when we looked into the Japanese laws, we saw the most detailed regulations and postulates, which, however, were mostly learnt from the West. Therefore, to expedite the process of learning from the West, we should first and foremost translate from the relevant Japanese works” (*ibid.*, 47). Liang even commented on how the translator should translate. Though translation strategy is still receiving much attention among researchers in translation studies, Liang, more than 100 years ago, pointed out that word-for-word translation would not produce good translation. In translation, addition and deletion can be regarded as legitimate as long as the translator could convey the gist of the original text. An ideal translator, according to Liang, should be someone who had the background knowledge of the subject he intended to translate because it would be more likely that the translation can convey the gist of the source text. Liang considered Yan Fu’s translation of Huxley’s *Evolution and Ethics* (Tian yan lun) as such an example (*ibid.*, 50). Liang also commented on the overall quality of Chinese translations of Western texts. Also in “On translation”, Liang aired his views on the common mistakes that a translator may make such as allowing Chinese thinking to misinterpret Western meaning, or preserving Western meaning but presenting such ideas awkwardly in Chinese text (Liang, 1999: 50).

Concerning the need to first translate from Japanese translated Western works, Liang explained in “Datong yishuju xu li” (xu li) that as most important Western works had already been introduced to Japanese, it would be wise to take advantage of the Japanese translations (Ding and Zhao, 1983: 176). Liang stated in the “xu li” that the Datong Translation Bureau (founded in 1897) in Shanghai was to give priority to translating the Japanese-translated Western works, and translating the original Western works would have a lesser focus (yi dongwen weizhu, er fuyi xiwen) (*ibid.*, 132).

Liang’s translation practice

Liang’s own translation practice started in August, 1898 (according to the Chinese lunar calendar). When Liang fled for his life on a Japanese warship to Japan, the captain gave him Shiba Shiroo (1852-1922)’s *Romantic Encounters with Two Fair Ladies* (in Japanese) to read. Liang started to translate this novel into Chinese while aboard the warship (Ding and Zhao, 1983: 158). This Chinese translation, *Jiaren zhi qiyou* (*Jiaren*), was later published in serial form in *Qing yi bao* (Journal of Pure Critique).

Although a suspicious scholar might argue that in 1898, Liang didn’t know much Japanese, thereby questioning how he could translate a Japanese novel, Xia (2006: 200)

provided an explanation for this conundrum. She compared the beginning paragraph of the original and Liang's translation of *Jaren*, showing that a shallow knowledge of Japanese would help Liang to grasp the main idea of the original text (2006: 201). Liang also explained in "Lun xue ribenwen zhi yi" (The benefits of learning Japanese) that the written Japanese at the time still contained a lot of Chinese characters. Even if "hewen" (hiragana and katakana) has been more widely used in Japanese, Chinese characters still accounted for 60 to 70% of Japanese writing (qtd., Xia: 172). In fact, in the late 19th century, the Japanese were still using many kanji (Chinese-character) words in their own writing and in the translations of Western works, which made it possible for Chinese translators to grasp the main idea of a Japanese text without too much knowledge of the Japanese language.

Liang suggested in his *Hewen han dufa* (Learning Japanese from Chinese) that learning Japanese should take up much less time than learning Western languages, especially as regards reading. Given the geographical proximity and linguistic affiliation between Japan and China, a lot of Chinese intellectuals including Liang Qichao tried to gain Western knowledge through Japanese translations (Xia, 2006: 174).

It is worth mentioning here that Liang, as a translator, was different from other Chinese student-translators in Japan at that time in that Liang was, by then, already an influential political figure who had sought refuge in Japan. Therefore, his intention to translate a Japanese political novel was certainly not just to introduce another literary work to the Chinese readers. Instead, Liang intended to promote a particular political message. In the "Yi yin zhengzhi xiaoshuo xu" (Forward to the Publication of Political Novels), Liang wrote that novels were read and discussed by persons in all walks of life. A good novel could even influence and change the views of the whole nation. In the case of the political novel, it "should be given the highest credit for being instrumental in the steady progress made in the political sphere in America, England, ... and Japan" (Liang, 1996: 73). So, when Liang decided to translate Japanese political novels, he chose *Jaren* to present and diffuse the idea of "national rights" (Asian nations' rights to avoid oppression from Western nations) that the original novel advocated.

It was mentioned earlier that Xia compared the first paragraph of Liang's translation and the original, and found that Liang followed the original faithfully in terms of content and even the wording. When we look at the first half of the novel, we can see why Liang translated the first half faithfully, but made changes and adaptations to the latter part. Japan, as well as China, was depicted in the first half of the novel as one of the oppressed countries, suffering from the aggression of Western powers and striving hard for national independence and freedom. This is the most appealing part for Liang Qichao (Wong, 1998: 111).

But this faithfulness to the Japanese text didn't last long. As soon as Liang came across the part in the original that expressed Japan's desire to become the leader in Asia (see Chapters 10 to 16 of the novel), Liang made changes in his translation of the novel. Wong pointed out that when the Japanese author moved from the original topic of nationalism to that of imperialism, Liang's translation strayed owing to his opposition of imperialism and his Chinese identity (qtd., Wong: 113). When China's interest was in

conflict with Japan in the novel, Liang's own nationalism immediately took precedence and he did not hesitate to rewrite the original. However, Liang's alterations went so far at some points that his translation did not accorded with the story line any more.¹¹

After *Jiaren*, another Japanese political novel *Keikoku Bidan* (A Beautiful Story of Statesmanship) by Yano Ryuukei, was published in *Qing yi bao* with *Jing guo mei tan* (*Jingguo*) as its Chinese title. For a while, it was believed that *Jingguo* was translated by Liang Qichao. However, researchers have argued that Liang was not involved in the translation of *Jingguo* (Kou, 2008: 77). According to Xia, when *Jiaren* and *Jingguo* were published in *Qing yi bao*, no translator's name was given for either book (2006: 201). It is now widely acknowledged that Liang was the translator of *Jiaren*, yet there is no consensus on whether *Jingguo* is Liang's translation.

It is clear, however, that Liang thought very highly of both *Jiaren* and *Jingguo*, saying that the two novels stood out among Japanese political novels, as well as filling a gap in existing Chinese literature. In the preface of *Qingyi Bao Quanbian* (A complete collection of Qingyi Bao), Liang listed 10 features of the book, one of which was that the two political novels (*Jiaren* and *Jingguo*) were included in this larger book. Liang wrote that once begun, one could hardly put them down. What's more, these works could easily arouse a patriotic feeling in readers (qtd. in Xia, 2006: 201). For Liang, the value of translating political novels was to disseminate political ideas and to promote political reforms. Liang observed that a fictional work could exert an immense power if it could move people. Fiction, as Liang saw it, was a powerful vehicle to "renovate the people of a nation" (Liang, 1996: 74).

Shiwu Xiao Haojie (*Shiwu*) (Two Year's Vocation), that Liang co-translated with Luo Xiaogao, became an instant success when it was published in *Xinmin Congbao* in 1902 from issue 2-24. *Two Year's Vocation* (French: *Deux ans de vacances*) is an adventure novel by Jules Verne published in 1888. There is no evidence that Liang knew any *Western* language even though he stayed in Australia in 1901 for two months, and America (e.g., Liang stayed in Honolulu for about half a year in 1900), so it's not surprising that Liang and Luo retranslated this French novel from the Japanese translation. Interestingly, the Japanese version was also a retranslation from an English translation of the French novel (Wang, 2000: 64). No wonder, when we compare the Chinese translation with the original, it's barely recognizable any more.

In his translation, Liang tended to adopt a style of translation that has been referred to as "haojie yi" (meaning free translation). Liang combined the unique features of Chinese traditional vernacular fiction and the original story into a new compound. compared with the Japanese translation of *Shiwu*, the Chinese translation shows some of the traditional Chinese vernacular novels: the interplay between audience and storytellers associated with popular orality (Wang, 2000: 72). These features were added to the original text with the aim of making a foreign adventure story familiar to Chinese readers. As Wang (2000: 66) rightly pointed out, this change also was designed to adapt a long novel to a newspaper serial: the long novel was divided into different

11 See Wong (1998)'s paper for more information of the story line of *Jiaren* and contrastive study between the original and the translated text.

installments, which began by directly addressing the “readers” (kan guan), and ended with an endearing cliché: “Please read the next installment, if you want to know what will next happen” (yu zhi houshi ruhe, qie ting xiahui fenjie).

Liang retranslated two more short stories from Japanese translations: *Shijie mori ji* of Camille Flammarion (1842-1925)’s *La Fin du Monde* (The End of the World) and E huanggong zhong zhi Rengui (Ghostly Humans in the Russian Palace). The latter, according to Liang, was written by an ambassador of France to Russia, although Liang didn’t identify who this ambassador was. These two stories were both published in *Xin xiaoshuo* (New novel) magazine in 1902.

Liang tried his hand translating Byron’s poem, “The Isles of Greece” (Liang, 1999: xix: 5631), when he wrote the *Xin zhongguo weilai ji* (*Xin zhongguo*) (The Future of New China), a political novel in which Liang wanted to project a picture of a strong China 60 years in the future. Unfortunately, he was not able to finish this work (xia, 2006: 68-69). Although *Xin zhongguo* showed an obvious influence of Japanese political novels and was constructed in a rather crude manner (Wong, 1998: 115), it is the first Chinese political novel (Xia, 2006: 62), and added a new genre to Chinese fiction.

It has been pointed out that Liang’s other political writings also manifest an influence of Japanese writings. Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957), a Japanese journalist and writer, influenced Liang’s thinking and writing profoundly. For instance, there are cases in which Liang appropriated Soho’s articles directly into his own writing. Liang’s “yan shi pi li chun (INSPIRATION)” is such an example. Liang even kept the original title of Soho’s article, and adapted or deleted sections of the original text, and then had the article published in *Qingyi Bao* without giving credit to the original author (Xia, 2006: 248). Liang also translated the following three articles of Soho: “Wuming zhi yingxiong” (Unknown hero), “Wuyu yu duoyu” (No desire versus many desires), and “Jiai de ge yan” (Jiai’s motto).

Nevertheless, to view Liang’s appropriation of such Japanese writings as an exact copy of the Japanese model is to underestimate the creative element of his writing. As Xia observed, Liang’s appropriation of Japanese writing was most often combined with his own interpretation and narration in an attempt to alleviate the historical crises that were threatening China’s existence (2006: 249). Liang himself also admitted to have borrowed ideas from Japanese writers in the preface of his *Yinbinshi ziyou shu* (Yinbinshi collection of articles on freedom) (qtd. in Xia, 2006: 249).

Liang’s above achievement at this time gives grounds for thinking that he “represents a central figure in translation in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century” (Luo, 2009: 124) in that translation actually played a major role in Liang’s writings. Although Liang’s achievement in translating Western works seems secondary when compared with two other translators of his generation, Yan Fu (who translated Huxley’s *Evolution and ethics* and Social Darwinism into Chinese) and Lin Shu (who made available to Chinese readers more than 170 Western novels).¹²

12 For more comment on the two translators, see: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/112603/Chinese-literature/61300/19th-century-translations-of-Western-literature>

For such reasons, I argue that the contribution of Liang's translations in the late Qing period mainly lies in his efforts to promote translations and to introduce Western works to help strengthen the Chinese nation-state. Likewise, Liang's immense influence as a journalist paved the way for him to diffuse Western ideas and concepts in his periodical articles to a wider audience. This might explain why Zheng Zhengduo wrote in his memorial article "Liang renong xiansheng" (Mr. Liang Rengong-Rengong-Liang Qichao's pseudonym) that it is Liang, rather than Yan Fu, who made Western thoughts and concepts more accessible to ordinary Chinese readers (Zheng, 1934: 122-123). Liang's view and practice of translation, therefore, constitutes an indispensable part of his achievement as a highly influential figure of his time. With Liang Qichao and his translanguing practice, we also witness the process of combining the neologisms, new words, into the Chinese language.

Liang's translanguing practice

Liang played a momentous role in the transformation of the Chinese language from the traditional Chinese, "wen yan", to the modern vernacular Chinese, "bai hua". As described by Kellman, translanguing writers such as Liang could "flaunt their freedom from the constraints of the culture into which they happen to be born" (2003, ix). Indeed, Liang's translanguing practice between Chinese and Japanese helped to introduce "a vast number of new terms from Japanese into Chinese".¹³

As stated above, from the 19th century, Japan began to import a large amount of information about the West, firstly from relevant texts written by Chinese authors or Protestant missionaries in China, e.g. Wei Yuan's *Haiguo Tuzhi* (Illustrated account of the maritime countries) (Masini, 1993: 84). In this process, they adopted "a good many" terms contained in the works from China. For example "tielu" (railway), "xinwen" (news), "yiyuan" (parliament), "wenxue" (literature, often mistaken as a loaned word from Japan) and "gongsi" (company) were terms that first appeared in *Haiguo Tuzhi* before being introduced into Japan (*ibid.*: 85, 86).

However, after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895, and especially after the failure of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898, "China's intellectual elite" started to view Japan as a model for a fundamental and comprehensive reform in China. Liang's involvement in this monumental evolution of the Chinese language is inextricably connected to the fact that he took refuge in Japan for 14 years, where he came into contact with an enormous amount of Western thoughts and concepts that were already translated into Japanese.

Again as described above, Liang had retranslated novels and articles from Japanese into Chinese, but most of the time he absorbed what he read from Japanese writings and included the seminal ideas and concepts in his own periodical articles. In some cases, even his writing style emulated Japanese writings (Xia, 2006: 247-259). There are numerous studies of the neologisms and language contact between Chinese

13 See Mareshi, Satto (2004) article.

and Japanese.¹⁴ Those studies, (e.g., Masini 1993), provide a very general overview of language borrowing between Chinese and Japanese. This paper focuses on just some of the loanwords that can be found in Liang Qichao's periodical articles.

For example, "jingji" (economy) is a returned Japanese loanword, which can be found in the four-character word "**jing shi ji su**" (Govern the country and serve the people) in the Chinese language since the 4th century. In a Taoist book, *Baopuzi* written by Ge Hong (284-364) during the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), the author used the word "jing shi ji su" to comment on the value of Confucianism (Ge, 2005: 12, 365).¹⁵ "Jingji" was shortened to a two-character word (but the meaning remained the same as "**jing shi ji su**") later in the 7th century, in *Jinshu* (The Book of Jin), according to Liu (1995: 315) and in *Songshi* (History of Song Dynasty) in the 14th century, according to Liu and Gao (1984: 163).

"Jingji" had been borrowed into Japanese to translate the Western term "economy" and then, reloaned from the Japanese lexicon to Chinese that bears the meaning of this key Western concept, "economy". Interestingly, this term was once translated by Yan Fu (1854-1921) directly from English as "jisheng" (see Yan's note in *Guo fu lun*, a Chinese version of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*). Distinct from Masini's account that Yan translated "economy" in 1898 (1993: 115), Yan began to translate the book in 1897, and completed the project in 1900. The translation *Guo fu lun* was published in 1902 by Shanghai nanyang gongxue yishu yuan (Song, 2005: 73). However, Liang had mentioned previously in 1896, that the Japanese translation of "economy" was "jingji" in his article "Lun yishu" (On translation of books), and Liang used the word "jingji" in his "Lun zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai" (On the future of the Chinese race) published in 1899, which is part of his seminal work *Bianfa tongyi* (General ideas on reform) (Liang, 1999: 47, 262).¹⁶ What became widespread in China is the term "jingji" introduced by Liang, not Yan Fu's "jisheng".

The term, "falü" (law), first appeared in 1838 in the American missionary Elijah Coleman Bridgman's *Meilige heshengguo zhilue* (A brief account of the United States of America; published in Singapore in Chinese, 1838), and then was cited in Wei Yuan's *Haiguo tuzhi*. It was in this latter text that Liang most likely picked up the term (Masini, 1993: 82) and Liang subsequently helped to introduce this term to Chinese society in his article "Lun zhongguo yi jiangqiu falü zhi xue" (Why China should promote the study of law) published in 1896. Although it is clear that missionary publications also

14 See, for example, Masini 1993, Liu 1995, Lackner et. al 2001, Saneto, 1983 (original in Japanese and translation in Chinese) and Liu and Gao, 1984 (in Chinese).

15 Jing shi ji su was mentioned in Ge Hong's volume 10- mingben, Bappizzo, the internal chapter. The original reads "...huan you li yue zhi shi, jing ji jisuo zhi lue, ruzhe zhi suo wu ye" (欢忧礼乐之事, 经世济俗之略, 儒者之所务也, meaning those who believe in Confucianism take care of the ritual things and concern themselves about how to govern the country and serve the people)

16 Mori Tokihiko gave a detailed analysis of Liang's inconsistent use of "political economy" or "economics" in his own writing. Liang wrote that "in Japan, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was translated as the book of jingji" ("富国学之书日本名为经济书" fuguoxue zhishu riben mingwei jingji shu) in his article "On Translation of Books" published in *Shiwubao* (Contemporary Affairs).

contributed to the enrichment of the Chinese language with the “modern” words they created in their translations, such words would have been confined to a much smaller circle had they not been cited in Liang’s articles.

The following table shows us four words that exemplify key Western concepts that are return loans from Japan and they became widely known in China through their appearance in Liang’s articles:

Chinese romanization	English	Sources that identify the loan words	Usage from Liang’s articles
zhengce	policy	Liu and Gao, 1984: 405	Lun zhina duli zhi shili yu riben dongfang zhengce (On China’s independence and Japan’s Asian polity, 1899) (Liang, 1999: 316).
shijie	world	Liu, 1995: 342	Lun zhina duli zhi shili yu riben dongfang zhengce (On China’s independence and Japan’s Asian polity, 1899) (Liang, 1999: 316).
ziyou	freedom	Liu and Gao, 1984: 410	Geguo xianfa yitong lun””(A comparison of constitutions of different countries) (“Geguo”) (1899) (Liang, 1999: 322).
xianfa	constitution	Liu and Gao, 1984: 370	Geguo xianfa yitong lun””(A comparison of constitutions of different countries) (“Geguo”) (1899) (Liang, 1999: 322).

In “Dongji yuedan” (A review of Japanese books) published in 1902, Liang introduced most school subjects that were already well-established in Japanese schools but were just beginning to enter into the Chinese educational system, e.g., lishi (history), dili (geography), shuxue (math), wuli (physics), huaxue (chemistry), fazhi (law), jingji (economics), and tiyu (physical education). Among the names of the subjects, “wuli”, “huaxue”, and “tiyu” were direct loanwords from Japan, and were spread in Liang’s above article.

In *Lun Xue Riben Wen zhi Yi* (*The Benefits of Learning Japanese*) published in *Qingyi bao* in 1899, Liang compared the Chinese and Japanese translations of the following terms: political economy (licai xue in Chinese and jingji xue in Japanese), philosophy (zhixue in Chinese and zhexue in Japanese), and social studies (Qunxue in Chinese and Shehui xue in Japanese) (Zhao and Ding, 1983: 176). Indeed, it is such borrowed Japanese translations that have been retained in the Chinese language to the present day. Such examples testify that when the loanwords from Japan clashed with the terms bearing the same meaning in China, but the Chinese terms had been translated into Chinese directly from English, the Japanese loanwords usually prevailed. Although it is difficult to give an exact reason why this was the case, it is possible, however, that Chinese intellectuals like Liang Qichao used Japanese loanwords in their articles

to spread Western learning, and when these articles were published in periodicals, a medium that was becoming popular in the late Qing period, these loanwords could go beyond the small literary circles and reach a wide Chinese readership.

Sapir (1884–1939), in his seminal work, *Language*, expounds how languages influence each other, remarking that “the language of a people that is looked upon as a center of culture is naturally far more likely to exert an appreciable influence on other languages spoken in its vicinity than to be influenced by them”. Sapir also says that “Chinese has flooded the vocabularies of Korean, Japanese, and Annamite for centuries, but has received nothing in return” (1921: 205). But now, we can see clearly that in modern history, Japanese exercised a similar influence on Chinese, and moreover, that Chinese actually borrowed heavily from Japanese during Sapir’s lifetime. Particularly in the late 19th century, the terms and loanwords were brought to the attention of Chinese readers by elite writers such as Wei Yuan, Huang Zunxian, and Liang Qichao. It is widely acknowledged now that intellectuals have been extremely important in this language borrowing process. Influential intellectuals are pioneers in introducing new terminology and concepts. It is normally these people like Liang Qichao, who finally get loanwords established. Likewise, Japan borrowed classic Chinese terms from China, and these terms then became firmly established in Japanese language through the work of Japanese scholars.

Indeed, languages of the same writing style usually borrow more easily from each other than those of a different style. For example, English can easily borrow much from French but comparatively little from Chinese and Japanese. That explains why most terms introduced by Liang Qichao prevail in Chinese. Basically, Japanese kanji and Chinese have the same writing style and the borrowed words can easily be assimilated, although it should be noted that even borrowed words undergo change when introduced into a new language. Thus, most Chinese words experienced semantic change after they were loaned into Japanese. Compared to their Chinese origins, the meaning of these words might be extended, narrowed, or completely changed when introduced into Japanese. Likewise, when modern Chinese loaned considerably from Japanese as Liang’s case demonstrates, the same words could mean something quite different and represent totally different concepts.

It is estimated that there are at least 1,000 Chinese words borrowed from Japanese. Liang, in his efforts to introduce Western ideas to China is thought to have imported more than 141 new words, that is more than 10% of the total borrowed words (Li, 2003: 40). As stated in *New Terms for New Ideas* published in Shanghai by the Presbyterian Mission Press in 1913, the new terms were then “cull(ed) from the pages of Chinese Mandarin newspapers” (qtd. in Lackner et al., 2001: xi). Furthermore, almost all of the 141 loanwords have remained well established in modern Chinese since Liang’s introduction. The neologisms and concepts introduced by Liang have not only enlarged the lexical stock of Chinese, but they have enriched the expressive power of the Chinese language, and most of all, they have helped with the dissemination of Western ideas. It seems likely that Liang’s effort to spread Western thoughts has exerted a profound impact on the values of the Chinese people and also on China’s road to modernity.

Conclusion

Liang took advantage of his career in journalism, and used periodicals as a forum to spread Western thoughts, emphasizing that “translating Western learning is the most important tool to rejuvenate China” (Liang, 1999: 45). He advocated the practice of “Chinese learning as the fundamental structure for Chinese society, and western learning as a useful tool with significance for practical matters (zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong)” (*ibid.*, 85). Liang’s thoughts on translation and his efforts to bring new ideas into China were an attempt to strengthen China so as to survive the political and military aggression while the Western powers and Japan vied for position in China in the late Qing period. Liang’s translations and thoughts on translation served an important role at this time and therefore, deserve more focused study and analysis. The language borrowing activity between Japanese and Chinese in the late Qing period has received wide attention in both Asian and Western academia. The present paper has contributed additional groundwork, examining Liang’s contribution in this process and hopefully, can serve as a stimulus for more studies on Liang’s translation and translanguing practice.

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