

DISSEMINATING ‘WORLD’ CHILDREN’S STORIES TO THE ROOF OF THE WORLD: RE-READING CHILDREN’S CLASSICS THROUGH THE TIBETAN TRANSLATION

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Abstract

The alleged world classic or famous children's stories are usually Eurocentric, despite titles such as 'world' and 'classic' that carry a suggestion of inclusivity and universality. *World Famous Children's Stories* (འོ་མོ་སྤྱི་དབང་གླེང་སྐད་རྒྱུ་ཆུང་ལོ་ན་མཛན།), a series of translated children's books, demonstrates unquestionable Eurocentrism as the series disproportionately selects stories from countries such as France, the UK, Germany, and the US. Meanwhile, alteration and hybridisation often occur in the process of translation, thus more marginalised voices, such as the Tibetan voice, are woven into the otherwise Eurocentric World Famous Children's Stories. It is critical to deconstruct Eurocentrism; however, the failure to hear the local voice amidst the dominant one results in a performative reiteration of power; that is, it makes the powerful more powerful and the powerless more powerless. In this essay, I offer a cultural reading of World Famous Children's Stories as an alternative beyond the victim's tale. On the one hand, the alternative view recognises the impact of cultural dominance on the World Famous translation project. On the other hand, it presents the much overlooked power of the marginalised local.

Keywords: children's stories; translation; Tibetan; Western; world; Homi Bhabha

བྱ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་དམོ་ཡིན། ལ་དམོ་འི་ནང་ནས་སྤྱ་མཁས་ཡིན།

All things are a matter of imitation.

It is about who imitates best.¹

Tibetan proverb

Tibetan children's literature is for the generation who can shape the future of Tibetan society. Peter Hunt argues that children's books are 'important educationally, socially, and commercially' (1). In this respect, the significance of children's books in the Tibetan language is self-evident. Tibetan children's literature has a considerable impact on children's books in the Greater Himalayan Region. Most Tibetans live in the southwest of China; however, this does not confine Tibetan children's literature to the space

1 The English translation is by the author of this essay.

of China's ethnic minority literature. Historically, the translation and transmission of Tibetan Buddhist scripts standardised the written Tibetan language across many Himalayan regions.² Andreï Vostrikov compares 'the Tibetan literary language' in Himalaya to 'Latin in medieval Europe' (9).

World Famous Children's Stories (འཛམ་གླིང་གླིང་སྐད་ཀྱི་མཛུགས་པུ་མཛུགས་ཅན།) is a series of Tibetan children's books that was published in 1993, in an era when China embraced the Reform and Opening-up policy (改革开放).³ Westernisation comes along with modernisation, and the Tibetan region encountered Western cultures through a nationwide modernising project. In this essay, the main question I address is 'how do we read the role of the West in projects such as *World Famous*?' I offer an alternative reading of *World Famous* through the lens of Homi K. Bhabha's cultural theory and argue that the local has agency because the West could not replicate Western children's stories in Tibet without concessions. For example, despite referring to the same character, the three names *Snow White*, *baixue gongzhu* (白雪公主), and *kanghar semo* (ཀངས་དཀར་སུམ་མོ་) are not identical. It seems that translation could carry the local culture forward via interstice or contingent differences. This essay provides a counternarrative to the often simplified relationship between the source and target cultures of a translation project such as *World Famous Children's Stories*.

It is important to see the Eurocentrism in the *World Famous* edition, but it is equally crucial to resist the total vilification of Western children's stories. The translation of *World Famous* is beneficial for Tibetan children in terms of literacy and language education. The translation project provides Tibetan children with reading material in their native language. The nature of the project is inherently different from horrendous actions such as child abuse and child labour. Thus, it is important to moderate the level of criticism accordingly while answering the question 'who benefits from it?' By addressing this question, my essay takes inspiration from Kaupapa Māori research. One of the key principles of Kaupapa Māori (by Māori, with Māori, for Māori), 'for Māori' advocates for research to be conducted that is beneficial to the Māori people of New Zealand (Walker, Eketone and Gibbs 333). It is effective in tilting cultural marginalisation back towards equity and balance. This approach can be used to understand the role of Western children's stories in the making of Tibetan children's literature. Reading affects children's education and personal identity. What is positive for Tibetan children increases the vitality of the Tibetan community in the long run.

Contextual Information about Tibet and Tibetan Children's Literature

The Greater Himalayan Region is situated at the threshold of East, South, and Central Asia. The land stretches around seven million square kilometres and provides livelihoods for a population of roughly sixty million. It is a place of great importance for Asians as it is 'the Water Tower of Asia' and a cluster of 'biodiversity hotspots' (Xu *et al.* 521).

2 It is worth mentioning that spoken and written Tibetan differ greatly. The spoken form contains multiple dialects and accents, some of which are mutually unintelligible.

3 I offer an English translation of book titles that do not have an established translation.

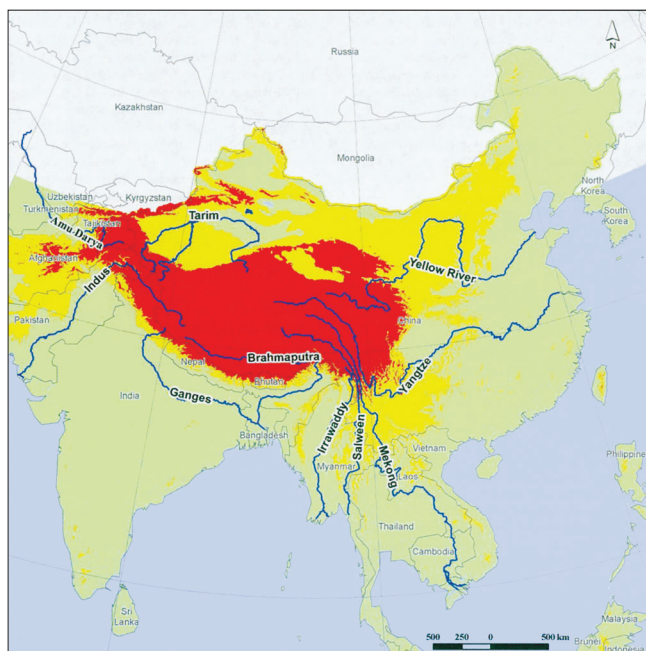


Figure 1: Map of the Greater Himalayan Region (Xu *et al.* 521).

The Tibetan people comprise the diverse ethnicities who reside in this area. Hence, Tibetan children's literature rightly pertains to Asian children's literature when taking the geographical and cultural milieu of Tibet into account. Despite being Asian geographically, linguistically, and culturally, Tibetan children's literature rarely appears in the current scholarly discussion of Asian children's literature.

In addition, Tibetan children's literature remains a *terra incognita* in the Anglophone sphere of Asian Studies. Readers of this essay might have little information about Tibetan children's literature. So far, only eight papers (in Tibetan and Chinese languages) have been published on this topic. Most scholars do not read them due to the language barrier and data accessibility. Without information on Tibetan children's literature, scholars may see *World Famous* as simply a branch from the trunk of Western children's classics. A decontextualised reading of *World Famous* might enhance the prevailing narrative of how Western civilisation conquers the roof of the world. It is thus necessary to show the context of Tibetan children's literature. Though Tibetan children's literature emulates the Western concept, cultural borrowing through translation is not mere duplication. Therefore, I will provide a brief overview of Tibetan children's literature as follows.

The earliest children's books in the Tibetan language were published in the 1980s. In general, the making of literature as age-classified commodities, books for children, takes place in a modern and mercantile society. In the case of Britain, Matthew Grenby

writes that ‘A literature specially for children had become securely established, both culturally and commercially, by the accession of Victoria in 1837’ (137). In non-diasporic Tibetan society, intellectuals initiated the making of Tibetan children’s books in the 1980s. Tibetan children’s literature stands within the larger framework of modernisation. The transition into a modern childhood elevates the importance of literacy education, and the demand for children’s books increases drastically.

The shift in the translators’ role might mirror the adaptive changes that occurred in this period. *World Famous Children’s Stories* uses a new term for translators, *yig sgyur* (ཡིག་སྒྱུར་), which means ‘person who converts words.’ Translators in modern Tibet thus become ‘invisible storytellers,’ as Lawrence Venuti and Gillian Lathey define the role of translators in Western culture. This concept contradicts the traditional social status of translators. In Tibetan Buddhist culture, translators obtain a conspicuous position with the honorary title *lo tsa ba* (ལོ་ཙ་བ་). Lotsāwa Rinchen Zangpo, the great translator, is esteemed in Tibetan culture and history as his statues are present in monasteries. The honour of being a Lotsāwa is no longer available for translators who engage with modern and secular translation projects.

The status quo of childhood and literacy education in Tibet’s past determines that translation of Western children’s stories, instead of Tibetan orature, attribute more to the making of Tibetan children’s books in its early period. Charles Alfred Bell recorded that in 1920 Tibetan children spent ‘most of the day out of doors’ either playing or working (216). He recalled how Tibetan children, when they were nine years old or younger, helped their parents by taking care of siblings, herding yaks and sheep, collecting cow dung for fuel, and getting water from faraway wells and springs (213). Clearly, reading books in a domestic space was not a social norm for most Tibetan children in the past. Moreover, most Tibetans were illiterate, since only children from aristocratic and wealthy families had access to education. The memoir of a former aristocrat states that there was no public school in Lhasa, and the lady from the prominent Tsarong (ཅར་རོང་) family went to school in Darjeeling (Taring 46, 67).⁴ Literacy education mostly depended on private tutoring, home schooling, and overseas education. Alternatively, monasteries could provide literacy training for laymen, and 13 per cent of Tibet’s population were monks (Bass 1). Still, only 29 per cent of monks from Mey College of Sera Monasteries studied Buddhist texts systematically, while the rest spent more time doing chores (Goldstein 21). Later, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Tibetan children experienced social turbulence, hunger, and language loss.

Before the 1980s, most Tibetan children encountered literature through oral, auditory, and visual forms. Memoirs of Tibetans validate the importance of orature,

4 I use part of the author’s name here; however, it is not her family name. Tibetans relinquished their lineal or tribal names and have used names that carry Buddhist meanings. Thus, most Tibetans have one name, and the custom of first and family names is not a norm in Tibetan culture. Children are named either by parents or by respected monks. Before socialist reforms, Tibetan aristocrats had names that resembled the frequent combination of first and family names. However, aristocrats’ ‘extra’ names were not exactly family names. The ‘extra’ names usually referred to their mansion or the place where their manor was or were an honorary title that was given by the local regime.

as stories are 'passed down from nomadic parents to their children' (Dhomba 82).⁵

Additionally, the use of Buddhist-related materials blurs the line between literature used for religious purposes and for educational entertainment. When children reached the age of eight or nine, many could recite Buddhist scripts such as 'The Deliverer' (སྐྱུ་ལ་མ་) and 'Clearing of Obstructions from the Path' (བར་ཆད་ལམ་སེལ་) (Bell 201).

Children could also recite a vast body of proverbs from poetry anthologies, such as *A Jewel Treasury of Good Advice* (མ་སྐྱུ་ལེགས་བཤད་) and *Water-Tree Treaties* (རྩ་ཤིང་བསྐྱར་བཅོས་) (Bell 211).⁶ Both adults and children enjoyed Tibetan opera, an art form that tells stories by combining acting, singing, dancing, acrobatics, and dialogue (Bell 210). Peter Hunt regards children's literature as 'texts for children,' a definition that enables the texts to be 'any form of communication' (3). However, Buddhist scripts and classic poems are not purposely designed for children.

Modern book reading is very different from this traditional literary experience of Tibetan children, so when children's books arrived in the Plateau, they were seen as a localised foreign concept. The mindset of considering Tibetan culture as backward and useless also discouraged people from exploring the historical meaning and value of childhood and children's literary experience from the past. Hence, I understand the initiation of Tibetan children's literature as non-indigenous. Within the context of modernisation, Tibetan children's literature is a cultural production initially established through translation. Early Tibetan children's books were translations of Western children's stories. I have managed to obtain sixteen Tibetan children's books that were published in the 1980s and 1990s while on field trips and by gathering online data. Apart from two books, *The Flying Frog* (སྐྱུ་པ་ན་མ་ཁམ་སྒྱུར་པ་; 1980) and *Secrets of the Crystal House* (རྩ་ཤིང་མོ་བྲང་གི་གསང་བ་; 1980), they are anthologies: *A Collection of World Children's Stories* (འཛམ་གླིང་གྱིས་པའི་སྐྱུང་གཏམ་ལེགས་གཏུག་; 1981), three books of *Selected Folktales from the World* (འཛམ་གླིང་གྱིས་པའི་ལུགས་ཀྱི་དམངས་སྐད་; 1987), eight books of *World Famous Children's Stories* (1993), *Essence of World Children's Stories* (འཛམ་གླིང་གྱིས་སྐྱུང་ཉིང་བསྐྱུ་པ་; 1996), and *Selected Famous Children's Stories* (གྲགས་ཅན་གྱིས་སྐྱུང་ལེགས་བཤད་; 1999).⁷ Except for *Selected Famous Children's Stories* (English to Tibetan), the other books are translated from the Chinese language.⁷

Theoretical Framework: Cultural Hybridity

It is problematic to view Tibetan children's literature through the lens of linearity. Seeing time and space as linear might displace Tibetan children's literature into 'the tired old "Westernisation" story' (Dombroski 50). The Westernisation narrative generates an invalid

5 Dhomba is the author's hometown; it is not an aristocratic name. I use it in the reference instead of the whole name. Nowadays, some Tibetans add their hometown in their names, using the pattern of an aristocrat's name.

6 I quote the English titles of two Buddhist scripts in Bell's book.

7 The role of Chinese-to-Tibetan translation is significant in Tibetan children's literature. It is a complicated topic that fits into a larger research project. My essay focuses on the niche of how *World Famous* represents the cultural interaction between Western input and Tibetan response.

comparison between Tibet and the West as follows: Tibet is ‘backward,’ and it is catching up with the more ‘advanced’ West along a linear path. In such a comparison, *World Famous* becomes a ‘parody’ of the ‘original’ Western writing. This narrative is a way of othering: the future is fixed in the story of how they (Tibetans) become more like us (Westerners). Indeed, the West is technologically more advanced and economically better off, and Tibetan children’s literature could benefit from learning the craft of Western children’s stories. However, a quantified competition between two bodies of literature is an invalid social Darwinist comparison. Tibetan children’s literature is a non-linear, non-binary, and hybrid cultural production that results from the negotiation of power, time, and space.

Criticising the translation as an example of Western dominance within a flawed victim-versus-bully narrative is also consequential. In a neoliberal and individualist world, the victim’s tale rarely brings about empathy and change; instead, the dominant group often consumes the victim’s tale in a self-benefiting fashion. As a result, minorities are often essentialised and then magnified into one word: *problem*. Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes,

One of the sites where different knowledges about indigenous people intersect is in discussions on ‘The ... (*insert name of indigenous group*) problem’. This was sometimes expressed as ‘The ... question’. The ‘indigenous problem’ is a recurrent theme in all imperial and colonial attempts to deal with indigenous peoples. It originates within the wider discourses of racism, sexism, and other forms of positioning the Other. Its neatness and simplicity gives [*sic*] the term its power and durability. (90)

In recognition of such a tendency, a non-binary approach becomes a counter-measure to the problematisation of Tibetans in the West. Within the spectrum of ‘The Tibet Problem,’ the Tibetan region is imagined as a place that is full of conflict and struggle, a narrative that is flawed because it generalises a vast region and diverse peoples. A contemptuous outlook results, as follows: the victim becomes a victim because it is weak and useless, whereas the bully is powerful and capable. The feeling of contempt focuses on one element, resulting in a twisted perception. The problem narrative disempowers Tibetans as their achievements are dislocated and their capacity is questioned and depreciated.

Children’s literature is a cultural production, and its research ‘*is* cultural studies,’ as Seth Lerer emphasises (9). Homi Bhabha understands culture as formless, transformative, and perpetually mobile. In *The Location of Culture*, he tells the story of an exchange between local Indians and an English missionary during the British colonisation of India. Indians localised Christianity, a mimicry in which Bhabha sees the confluence of different cultures into a *hybrid* borderline margin. More importantly, Bhabha considers the localisation of the Bible by Indians as a mockery of the seemingly authoritarian British and a challenge to ‘the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups’ (296). Such a challenge is significant as it breaks ‘the grounds of cultural comparativism’, namely, the basis of constructing a ‘superior’ culture via a ‘homogenous national culture’ and ‘contiguous transmission of historical traditions’ (7). It not only opposes the belief in a certain culture’s so-called purity but also deconstructs the linear and binary comparisons between cultures.

Eurocentrism in *World Famous Children's Stories*

The *World Famous* series is important because it was the largest translation project in Tibet Autonomous Region during the 1990s. It is a collection of eight illustrated books that contain over a hundred stories. (See the list of stories that follows the conclusion of this essay.) In the first and second books of *World Famous*, the illustrated stories are often less than ten pages long, with an average length of seven pages. In the fifth book, stories range from twenty to forty pages long. At a time when children's books were new and scarce, this collection served the reading demands of children as they developed literacy and reading skills over time. *World Famous* was a popular series in China, and it was reprinted in both Tibetan and Chinese languages. It covers a large corpus of well-known children's stories. For example, the third volume includes 'Alice in Wonderland,' 'The Water-Babies,' 'Pinocchio,' 'The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,' and Oscar Wilde's 'The Happy Prince' and 'The Selfish Giant.'

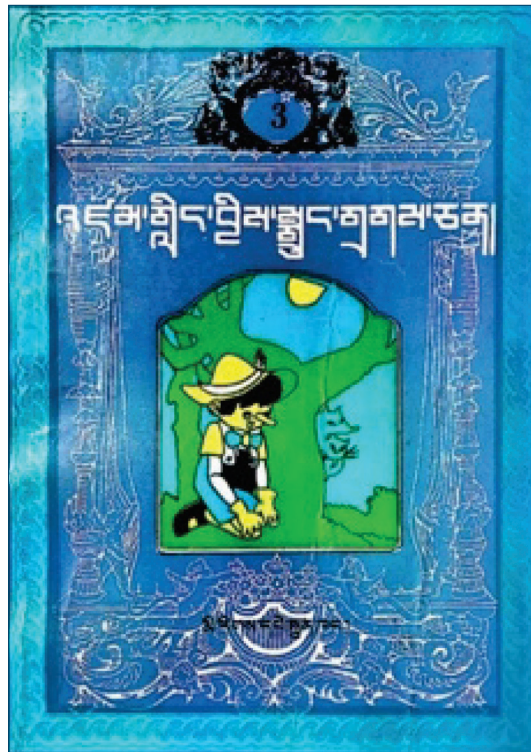


Figure 2. Cover of *World Famous* (vol. 3).

It seems that the West represents the world, because Western children's stories are prominent in this collection. The editors of the anthology arrange the stories chronologically. Each story has an introduction that highlights the author's country of origin for a semblance of world. However, Figure 3 below presents a summary of those introductions in *World Famous*, and it shows a hierarchy of representation that results from power difference.⁸

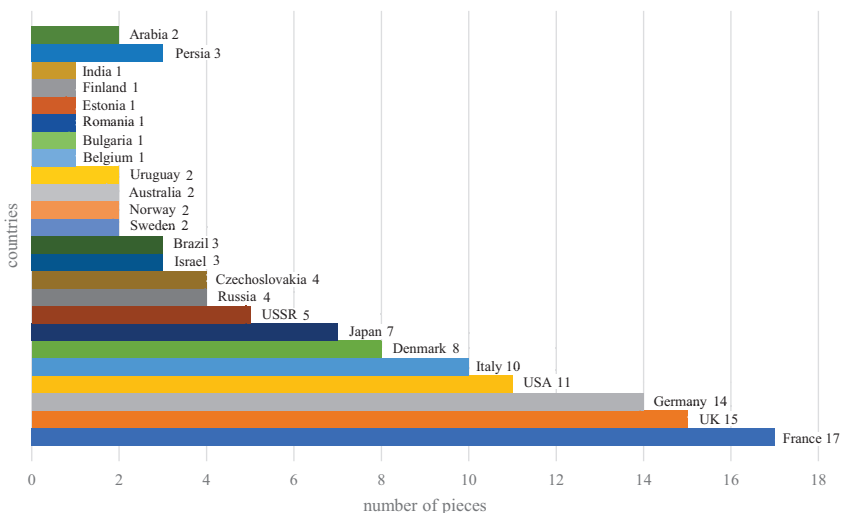


Figure 3. Countries of origin and number of stories in *World Famous*.

Evidently, stories in *World Famous* could not represent the world as those stories are by and large of European origin. More than eighty per cent of the stories are Western.

Werner Friederich describes the term *world literature* as 'a presumptuous and arrogant term' because it deals with less than 'one quarter of NATO-nations' (455). Stephen Owen comments, 'this "world poetry" turns out, unsurprisingly, to be a version of Anglo-American modernism or French modernism, depending on which wave of colonial culture first washed over the intellectuals of the country in question' (28). The presence of non-Western stories has been largely determined by Eurocentric discourse. For example, five Arabian folk stories are selected due to the popularity of *One Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights)* in Europe and America. With 'quite false portrayal,' Antoine Galland's French translation of *Arabian Nights* (1704–1717) initiated the West's internalisation, alteration, appropriation, and interlocation of the

⁸ The appearance of Arabia, Persia, and the USSR might reflect how Chinese scholars, such as Chen Bochui (陈伯吹) and Ren Rongrong (任溶溶), select a representation of world children's stories. The Tibetan version of *World Famous* is based on the Chinese volumes edited by Chen and Ren.

Arabian folktale (Al-Rawi 292). The Chinese translation of *Arabian Nights* appeared during the May Fourth Movement (五四运动) through the rendering of either French, English, or Japanese versions of the story (Ouyang 7).⁹ Other stories from non-European countries come from writers who are famous in Europe, such as Krishan Chander from India and Horacio Quiroga from Uruguay.

Localising *World Famous Children's Stories*: The Meaning of the World

The meaning of world literature is different for Westerners and Tibetans. This difference is generated by an empowering process of localising *World Famous*. Goethe's *Weltliteratur* is probably the origin of world literature in the West; it embodies his interest in works and cultures 'outside the realm of the masterpiece' (Damrosch 9). For Westerners, world literature means something non-Western; as Timothy Brennan writes in his article 'World Music Does Not Exist,' so-called world music is 'local or regional music that either does not travel well or has no ambition to travel' (47). Emer O'Sullivan discusses the topic of world literature in children's literature. She uses the term *contact and transfer studies* to note 'comparative studies of translation, reception and influence' (19).

World literature is not only about 'a work's source culture' but also 'about the host culture's values and needs', and it functions as 'windows on the world' (Damrosch 14). As a result, the meaning of the term *world* changes according to the person who resides at the house and looks through the window. The local and global become each other's foreign entities. Accordingly, the way Tibetan and Western intellectuals perceive world literature has similarities and differences. The outlooks are similar in that they both cast their vision outward and set the other as the world. They are different because, for Westerners, the world in world literature represents a marginalised literary body.

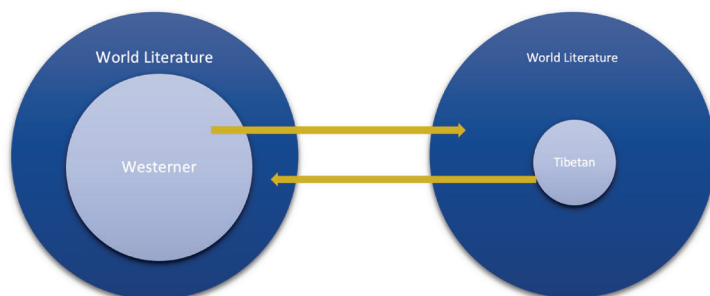


Figure 4. Different meanings of world literature in Western and Tibetan cultural groups.

9 The May Fourth Movement in China started in 1919 with student protests. The younger generation was frustrated with the Treaty of Versailles as it allowed foreign (Japanese) occupation of territories in China's Shandong province. The May Fourth Movement is also called the New Culture Movement as it promotes Western values and cultures.

The purpose is to learn the unknown and the marginalised to diversify Western culture. However, for Tibetans, the world in world literature is a dominant literary body that mostly comes from the global north. The purpose is to fulfil the Tibetans' wish to understand cultures that are powerful, popular, and vigorous at present.

Localising *World Famous Children's Stories*: Translation as Creation

Translation is not merely a mechanical decoding process: it is a way of localising the source text by creating a newness. The stories in *World Famous* are translated by Tibetan intellectuals for Tibetan children. The four translators who completed this translation project are Sonam Dorji (བསོད་ནམས་རྟེན་མེད་), Loden (ལོངས་བསྟན་པ་), Trinle (འབྲིན་ལས་པ་), and Yangzom (ཡམ་མོ་མཚོ་མས་པ་). Tibetan scholars who take part in a modernist project do have a voice, as Dan Smyer Yu argued with the phrase 'forgetting as remembering'; it is about how some Tibetan elites depart from the past to advocate a 'modern empowerment of future Tibetan citizens' (159, 164). The pursuit of modernisation is about speaking 'the language of the powerful' (Yu 168). Moreover, Yu puts forward the idea of how Tibetans execute the power of speaking in public with 'the voice of the dominant that speaks through them' (168). *World Famous* represents a powerful language because those stories come from the dominant global north. The project is about Tibet's participation in the modern world by responding to the legalisation of children's rights as an active member of the world. *World Famous* was published after the international and domestic legalisation of children's rights. The UN General Assembly reached an agreement on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and enacted it in 1990 (United Nations). A year later, the National People's Congress (全国人民代表大会) promulgated the Law of Protection for Minors in the People's Republic of China (中华人民共和国未成年人保护法) (Li 106).

Furthermore, the writing in *World Famous* embodies a mode of self-empowerment: a self-transformation that utilises 'the language of the powerful' (Yu 168). *World Famous* represents a novelty in Tibet, as its texts are revolutionary compared to traditional Tibetan literary writing. To suit young readers better, translators adopted colloquial language and conversational style. The colloquial style of *World Famous* is based on the Lhasa dialect. Table 1 presents a comparison between the two styles; one excerpt is a paragraph about the seven dwarfs from Snow White, and the other is a classical Tibetan poem that children often recite.

The change in textual style is part of the modern Tibetan literature movement, which began in the 1980s. It audaciously challenges the notion of Tibetan literature and the way of writing. Modern Tibetan literature addresses the incompatibility between a drastically changed society and an age-old way of writing (Kāvya poetry), which came to the Tibetan cultural zone in the form of 'cultural borrowings' (Hartley 35).

Table 1. Textual comparison between *World Famous* (Snow White) and *Sakya Legshe*.¹⁰

<i>World Famous Children's Stories</i> (vol. 2, p. 9)	An Examination of the Wise (Stanza 12)
<p>ས་ཐོད་དེ་རུབ་རྗེས་ཁང་རྒྱུད་གི་བདག་པོ་མི་རྒྱུད་བདུན་ལོག་སྟེབས་ ཏེ་སྐྱུ་མ་ལྷ་བདུན་སྤར་འཕལ་ཅ་ལག་ཐོ་ཐོ་གཏོང་མཁན་བྱེད་བ་ ཤེས། མི་རྒྱུད་དང་པོས་ 'དེ་རྒྱུ་བ་བྱུག་སྤར་ལ་སྟོད་མཁན་ བྱེད་འདུག' གཉིས་པས་ 'དེ་ཁ་ལག་བཟས་འདུག' གསུམ་པས་ 'དེ་མེན་པའི་བཟས་འདུག' བཞི་པས་ 'དེ་ཆ་ལ་བཟས་འདུག' ལྔ་པས་ 'དེ་ཐུར་མ་སྤྲད་འདུག' བྱུག་པས་ 'དེ་གི་རྒྱུད་སྤྲད་ འདུག' བདུན་པས་ 'དེ་ཨ་རག་བདུངས་འདུག' ཅེས་བཤད།</p>	<p>ཤེས་རབ་ལྡན་པ་མགོ་སྟོར་ཡང་། བྱ་བའི་ཆ་ལ་སྟོངས་མི་འགྱུར། སྟོག་ཆགས་གྲོག་མ་མིག་མེད་ཀྱང་། མིག་ལྡན་གཞན་ལས་ལྷག་པར་མཐུགས།</p>
<p>When it is dark outside, the seven dwarfs come back home. They light seven oil lamps and see someone has touched their stuff. The first dwarf says, 'someone sat on my chair'; the second goes, 'my food is taken'; the third, 'my bread is gone'; the fourth, 'my vegetable is eaten'; the fifth, 'someone used my spoon'; the sixth, 'this person used my knife'; the seventh, 'the person drank my wine.'¹¹</p>	<p>Even if the wise are deceived, They are not confused about what they do. Although ants are sightless, They are speedier than creatures with eyes. (Davenport 38)</p>

The translation of *World Famous* not only embraces the writing style of modern Tibetan literature but also alters the 'original' version as much as possible. The changes occur in the margin of language translation, which inevitably creates loss, amplification, and alteration of meaning. For example, the name of Cinderella is translated as 'the ash girl' (གོ་ཐལ་བུ་མོ།) in Tibetan; Little Red Riding Hood varies as 'the little one who wears a tiny red hat' (ལྷ་དམར་རྒྱུད་རྒྱུ།). Rapunzel's name turns into the memorable but meaningless name *o ju* (ཨོ་རུ་ཤ།). The title 'Pinocchio' is translated as 'the note of a sudden encounter of a wood person' (ཤིང་མིའི་དོབ་འཕྲད་ཟིན་ཟོ།). The Wonderful Wizard of Oz becomes 'the divine consort of the jade meadows' (གཡུ་གཙལ་ལྷ་ལྷུ་མ།).¹² The Little Match Girl is 'the little

10 I translated the paragraph from 'Snow White,' and the other translation is from John T. Davenport's *Ordinary Wisdom: Sakya Pandita's Treasury of Good Advice*.

11 I offer a literal translation with the aim of keeping the writing and wording styles of the Tibetan text.

12 The Chinese titles of the stories mentioned above are 'The Grey Girl' (灰姑娘) and 'The Little Hat' (小红帽). Rapunzel is *woju* (莴苣; rapunzel the plant's Chinese name). 'Pinocchio' is 'The Adventure of a Wooden Puppet' (木偶奇遇记); 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' is 'The Fairy Trace on the Green Field' (绿野仙踪); and 'Mary Poppins' is 'Aunt Mary Poppins' (马利波平斯阿姨).

girl who sells matches' (བཟོག་སྒྲ་འཛོར་མཁན་གྱི་བུ་མོ་རྩེ་རྩེ); The Princess and the Pea is 'the princess on a pea' (སྒྲན་མའི་རྩེ་རྩེ་སྒྲན་མོ་); The Little Mermaid is 'the daughter of the sea' (རྩེ་མའི་བུ་མོ་); Mary Poppins is 'sister Mary Poppins' (ཨ་ཙག་མ་ལེ་པོ་ཕྱིན་ལེ་).

The comparisons indicate that Tibetan 'parody' is not entirely powerless in the face of the 'original' Western version. Clare Bradford studies the role of Western culture in Indigenous Australian children's literature. Bradford opposes the view of considering Western culture as 'a vast and powerful sea,' one which 'will always engulf small, local and marginal bodies of water' (207). Accordingly, Western influence on Tibetan children's literature cannot be summarised with a clearly defined oppressor-versus-oppressed narrative.

Conclusion

This essay discusses the Tibetan translation of children's stories in the 1980s and 1990s, with the *World Famous Children's Stories* series as an example. I provide a cultural reading of translation in the early years of Tibetan children's literature. The Chinese version of *World Famous* is a direct inspiration for the Tibetan translation project; however, this essay focuses on the interaction between Western influence and local Tibetan response. As Tibetan society changed in the 1980s, it urgently needed to adapt to the modern world. The context generated a need for a modern childhood and children's literature in the Tibetan region. *World Famous* is a response to that urgency. While Eurocentrism is overt in the stories that appear in *World Famous* and the impact of Western children's literature is present in the creation of Tibetan children's books. Yet the harm of whiteness in *World Famous* is less severe than oppression that is more brutal and detrimental. The promising influence of children's books on literacy and literary education should not be undermined by the sentiment of antagonism. In addition, the West could not wipe out the local without leaving residue. When compared with the 'original' writing, the Tibetan version of *World Famous* becomes 'a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 122). This momentary interstice between imitation and localisation empowers Tibetans when they consume *World Famous Children's Stories*.

For a small cultural group, the visibility of local agency depends on seeing the subtle resistance that intertwines with the dominant Western voice. From an angle of cultural reading, I argue that translated Tibetan children's stories such as *World Famous* mirror Tibetan modernity, a much misunderstood phenomenon in the West. In light of Homi Bhabha's theory, I show the local's capacity in cultural borrowing with the recognition of culture's fluidity. Thus, I complicate the view of seeing the *World Famous* project as a burden from the West upon a voiceless victim. A timely engagement with the world is critical for the survival of Tibetan culture.

In the 2000s, the quantity of Tibetan children's books has increased noticeably. Translations from English or Chinese children's books are still major inputs; however, translators try to synchronise with the globalised children's book market, offering Tibetan translations of more recent children's books, such as the *Harry Potter* series. Source texts have become more diverse, beyond a few NATO countries. Local cultural input

has increased in Tibetan children's literature, with writers adapting Tibetan folklore, poems, epic, and riddles. Authors also have written creative stories for children in the Tibetan language. The aspiration of the Tibetan translators in an acknowledgement in *World Famous* might have been proven:

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Ricard Puramu from the U.S. as we received his donation through the Gongtang Fund. His altruistic donation and genuine compassion contribute to this wonderful publication, *World Famous Children's Stories*. His great deeds benefit Tibetan children as they could enjoy children's stories. May their reading of these stories give them wisdom and strength to fly around the whole globe.¹³

Emma Kruse Va'ai, a Samoan writer, considers how the combination of local children's stories with Western children's classics shapes the future of Samoan children 'within and beyond the blue horizon (32).' Similarly, the stories in *World Famous Children's Stories* teach Tibetan children much about foreign cultures so that the horizon of Tibetan children goes beyond the snowy mountains of Himalaya.

Stories in *World Famous Children's Stories*¹⁴

Story	Author
Kalila and Demna	Ibn al-Muqaffa
The Priest and Weasel	Ibn al-Muqaffa
Pigeon	Ibn al-Muqaffa
One Thousand and One Nights: Sinbad the Sailor	
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves	
Reynard the Fox (Le Roman de renart)	Mme. Mad H.-Giraud
Baron Munchausen	Raspe
Sleeping Beauty (La Belle au bois dormant)	Charles Perrault
The Fairies	Charles Perrault

[illegible]

14 This chart is created by the author of this paper according to the book series *World Famous Children's Stories*.

Story	Author
Ricky of the Tuft	Charles Perrault
Little Tom Thumb	Charles Perrault
Puss in Boots	Charles Perrault
Beauty and the Beast	Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve
The Nutcracker and the Mouse King	E.T.A. Hoffmann
Snow White	The Brothers Grimm
The Frog Prince	The Brothers Grimm
Town Musicians of Bremen	The Brothers Grimm
Cinderella	The Brothers Grimm
Little Red Riding Hood	The Brothers Grimm
The Brave Little Tailor	The Brothers Grimm
Rapunzel	The Brothers Grimm
Little Muck	Wilhelm Hauff
Heart of Stone	Wilhelm Hauff
The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish	Alexander Pushkin
The Ugly Duckling	Hans Christian Andersen
The Little Match Girl	Hans Christian Andersen
The Princess and the Pea	Hans Christian Andersen
The Steadfast Tin Soldier	Hans Christian Andersen
The Wild Swans	Hans Christian Andersen
The Emperor's New Clothes	Hans Christian Andersen
The Nightingale	Hans Christian Andersen
The Little Mermaid	Hans Christian Andersen
The Black Hen	Antony Pogorelsky
Folk Fairy Tales and Legends	Božena Němcová
The Story of the Pig	Ion Creangă
The Gorgon's Head	Nathaniel Hawthorne
Mr. Wind and Madam Rain	Paul de Musset
The Water-Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby	Charles Kingsley
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	Lewis Carroll
Uncle Remus (Br'er Rabbit)	Joel Chandler Harris

Story	Author
Pinocchio	Carlo Collodi
Abeille (Honey-Bee)	Anatole France
The Wonderful Sheep	Andrew Lang
The Selfish Giant	Oscar Wilde
The Happy Prince	Oscar Wilde
The Wonderful Adventures of Nils	Selma Lagerlöf
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz	L. Frank Baum
The Frog Went Travelling	Vsevolod Garshin
Peter Pan	J.M. Barrie
The Wind in the Willows	Kenneth Grahame
The Blue Bird	Maurice Maeterlinck
The King of the Golden River	John Ruskin
The Mermaid and the Red Candles	Mimei Ogawa
The Life of a Useless Man	Maxim Gorky
The Alligator's War	Horacio Quiroga
The Giant Turtle	Horacio Quiroga
The Story of Doctor Dolittle	Hugh John Lofting
Winnie-the-Pooh	Alan Alexander Milne
The Postman's Tale	Karel Čapek
Pictures from the Insects' Life	Karel Čapek
Yan Bibiyan	Elin Pelin
La Patte du chat	Marcel Aymé
Le Cerf et le chien	
Mary Poppins	Pamela Lyndon Travers
The Golden Key/The Adventures of Buratino	Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy
Stuart Little	E.B. White
Charlotte's Web	E.B. White
The Story of a Fox	Josef Lada
Rainbow Flower	Valentin Kataev
The Little Prince	Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories	Issac Bashevis Singer

Story	Author
The Jamun Tree	Krishan Chander
Pippi Longstocking	Astrid Lindgren
Karlsson-on-the-Roof	Astrid Lindgren
Kitune to Budou	Johji Tsubota
Moomins	Tove Marika Jansson
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	C.S. Lewis
The Adventures of the Little Onion	Gianni Rodari
Gelsomino in the Country of Liars	Gianni Rodari
The Cake in the Sky	Gianni Rodari
Tinarina	Gianni Rodari
A Violet at the North Pole	Gianni Rodari
The Tear of the Dragon	Hamada Hirotsuke
The Adventures of Dunno and his Friends	Nikolay Nosov
Contes à l'enfant né coiffé	Béatrix Beck
The Yellow Woodpecker Farm and Reforming Nature	José Bento Renato Monteiro Lobato
When the Robbers Came to Cardamom Town	Thorbjørn Egner
The Canary Prince	Italo Calvino
The Little Geese	Italo Calvino
The Happy Man's Shirt	
Digit Dick on the Great Barrier Reef	George Leslie Clarke Rees
The Little Witch	Otfried Preussler
The Robber Hotzenplotz	Otfried Preussler
Taro the Dragon Boy	Miyoko Matsutani
Three Jolly Fellows (Naksitrallid)	Eno Raud
The Cricket in Times Square	George Selden
James and the Giant Peach	Roald Dahl
Wolf (No-No Academy)	Rieko Nakagawa
The Enormous Egg	Oliver Butterworth
The Baker's Cat	Joan Aiken
A Necklace of Raindrops	Joan Aiken
Conrad: The Factory-Made Boy	Christine Nöstlinger
Momo	Michael Ende

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