



Cultural Translators of Communication Studies in Greater China

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How is English-language communication scholarship translated into Chinese academia? This article uses the concept of cultural translators to understand the development of media and communication studies in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. After providing a brief history of translation in China and of communication studies in Greater China, the article zooms in on the work of two prominent cultural translators: HE Daokuan (何道寬) at Shenzhen University in mainland China and FENG Chien-san (馮建) at National Chengchi University in Taiwan. Georgette Wang's notion of cultural, conceptual, and structural incommensurabilities is adapted into a comparative framework for analyzing the translators, their motivations, and their modes of work. In addition to in-depth interviews with HE and FENG, the analysis draws from secondary materials and participation in various Chinese communication studies programs. Broader implications of this comparative exercise are discussed for Chinese communication studies and for the globalization of communication scholarship worldwide.

Keywords: translation, communication scholarship, Greater China, FENG Chien-san, HE Daokuan

This article examines the contemporary history of media and communication studies from the perspective of translation, especially English-Chinese translation. With English being the lingua franca of global academic exchange, the study of communication, like most disciplines, has been largely Eurocentric (Downing, 1996). In such contexts, translation from English serves as a hegemonic vehicle for spreading ideas from the intellectual center to the peripheries while drawing scholars toward Western scholarship. Could translation play a different role? If so, how does it play out for students of communication in Greater China? Answering these questions entails an in-depth study of translation and translators at work.

Since the 1990s, growing interest in non-Western phenomena has been an interdisciplinary trend. Media and communication scholars have noted "the rise of the Asian economy" (Curran & Park, 2000, p. 2) and emerging "Asian approaches to human communication" (Chen & Starosta, 2003, p. 1).

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With China's soaring global status coupled with economic crises in the West, a new pitfall has come into view: "Chinese exceptionalism," which, like other kinds of methodological nationalism, creates intellectual myopia and isolation (Chan, 2015). The problem is exacerbated by the phenomenal growth of communication studies in China since the 1990s, which this article will discuss in more detail. Through a binary conception of East versus West, the so-called Chinese model, including in communication studies, is often taken as "nothing more than a variant of authoritarian ideology" (G. Wang, 2010a, p. 4).

This article contends that both Eurocentrism and Chinese exceptionalism offer oversimplified conceptions for the globalization of communication research via translation practices. Working within structural parameters of the university and/or the market, translators are individual actors with agency and autonomy. Hence, there are divergent trajectories of intellectual globalization in different Chinese societies. As Ricoeur (2007) points out, translators can never translate a body of foreign text perfectly at linguistic and ontological levels. There is, therefore, significant room for creativity in translation.

Although the analytical scope of this article is limited to Greater China, the methodological approach is inter-Asian, whereby ideas and practices of communication scholarship in Asian contexts are compared "from the standpoint of Asians as subjects rather than objects" (Miike, 2003, p. 251). By tackling the basic question—how media and communication studies are translated from English into Chinese academia—this study provides a systematic comparison among key translators, how they work, under what circumstances, and applying what criteria, revealing patterns about the translation of communication scholarship in different Chinese societies, regionally, and over time.

Three Dimensions of Cultural Translation

According to Huiyi Kong (2002), "cultural translators" are different from "administrative translators" who conduct "government translation" for the authorities. Comparatively speaking, cultural translators are less dependent on institutional structures, less constrained by established routines and formats; they also have more freedom and creativity. The conception of cultural-versus-administrative translators is a promising point of departure for this analysis. It is, however, not an exhaustive summation; nor is it an unconnected dichotomy. Rather, it constitutes a continuum between two modes of translation. Whereas the role of administrative translators "is to facilitate the smooth operation of the current system," cultural translators often "challenge existing systems and frameworks" (Kong, 2002, p. 50).

In her analysis of post-Eurocentric communication research, "After the Fall of the Tower of Babel," Georgette Wang (2010b) calls attention to three challenges often overlooked in discussions of scholarly translation:

- Cultural incommensurability—differences in value orientation, historical and cultural context or world-view that cannot be expressed through translation;
- Conceptual incommensurability—differences in ideas, terminologies, practices, or categories that cannot be expressed through translation;

Structural incommensurability—differences in the way political, social, economic or educational institutions are organized and patterned that cannot be expressed through translation. (pp. 263–264)

Extending Wang's framework, this article takes the (in)commensurabilities as three comparative dimensions within the broad concept of cultural translation. Because perfect translation is impossible, as Ricoeur (2007) maintains, how, then, does the practice of translation vary culturally, conceptually, and structurally—within Chinese communication studies communities? Why is it so? What insights can be distilled from this comparative exercise that will focus on two prominent translators: HE Daokuan (何道寬) and FENG Chien-san (馮建三)?² How does their translation work influence the circulation of Western communication scholarship in Greater China?

Historical accounts of communication studies often focus on individual scholars (Lent, 1995; Rogers, 1997). As will be detailed below, HE and FENG are by far the most productive translators in mainland China and Taiwan, respectively. For more than two decades, both have accumulated tremendous influence in Greater China due to their translated volumes. It is therefore valuable to examine their modes of translation and their similarities and differences along cultural, conceptual, and structural dimensions, to shed light on the translating of Western communication scholarship into Asian contexts.

This study is the first attempt to bring these two leading translators into a coherent analytical framework. I traveled to Taipei and Shenzhen to conduct in-depth interviews, which were supplemented by secondary materials and participation in various Chinese communication studies programs since 1995 in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Before presenting the comparisons, it will be useful to provide some cultural and institutional background.

Translation in Chinese History

Since ancient times, China has used a unified writing system operated by and for the ruling elite in a variegated linguistic landscape. Translation in varying degrees from oral/informal dialects to written/formal Chinese has been typical of Chinese communication for millennia, but it is not uncommon for Chinese media systems to be disconnected from one another, as in today's mainland China and Taiwan. The ruling class needed more translation service when nomadic groups established their dynasties, especially the Yuan (i.e., Mongols) and the Qing (i.e., Manchus) long before encounters with European languages (Kong, 2002).

² What's in a name? The alphabetic spelling of Asian names has a politics of its own. This article deals with this issue in two ways. If the person is known in English publications using her or his family name after his or her given name(s)—for example, Huiyi Kong and Timothy Yu—we will use Western-style spelling as such. However, if the person does not publish in English or prefers to go by the order of her or his family names preceding given names according to customs of naming in East Asia, we will follow this traditional order while capitalizing the family names, such as HE Daokuan and FENG Chien-san.

Russian-Chinese translators played a similar role of administrative translation in the early years of communist rule, although Russian literature was also translated from its English versions (Hill, 2012). Until the 1970s, China invested heavily in exporting Maoism to the rest of the world. This was coordinated by the Foreign Languages Publication Bureau (外文局), which was also crucial for foreign-to-Chinese translation.

Institutionally, key players such as the Foreign Languages Publication Bureau and Radio Beijing operated under a "foreign propaganda work leadership group" in the Central Propaganda Division of the Chinese Communist Party. The Maoist period until 1970s begs more analysis, because it was a unique episode of administrative translation from China to the world, in not only Western languages including English but also often-neglected languages of the global South. Despite the revolutionary spirit of Maoism, the mode of such translation remained prototypically administrative.

Cultural translation from non-Chinese languages is, on the other hand, more concentrated in two periods: (1) the translation of Buddhism from Sanskrit to Chinese that lasted on and off from the 2nd to 11th centuries and (2) the import of various European-language texts under the rubric of "Western studies" (*xixue*) since the 16th century. The latter period also consists of two phases: (a) Christian missionary translation, especially by Jesuits living in China from the 1500s to the 1700s; and (b) exponential growth of Western texts since the mid-1800s, which is unprecedented in both scale and diversity, especially since 1978 (Kong, 2002).

Except during these two periods, the bulk of Chinese translation history has been characterized by the absence of cultural translation. Most of the time, cultural translators were far exceeded by administrative translators in quantity and influence. Overall, China had been inward looking until fairly recently, when the Chinese literati had to make sense of not only Western military and technological superiority but Western civilization and ways of thinking (Schell & Delury, 2013).

Tracing the specific modes of work among the most prominent cultural translators, Kong (2002) identified three additional features of Chinese cultural translators in history. First is the practice of "tandem translation"—because some key translators knew only Chinese, they had to work with bilingual cotranslators, who first translated content into oral Chinese, then the great scholar-translator (e.g., LIN Shu) would translate it again into literary Chinese (Hill, 2012). Second, cultural translators often collaborate with numerous colleagues and constitute "cultural translation movements" (Kong, 2002, pp. 52–53). This is inevitable because carving out space of relative autonomy is a formidable task under statism and authoritarian conditions. Cultural translators need mutual support when resources are scarce and conservative opposition is strong against foreign influence.

Third, cultural translators often need to establish themselves with a clear identity apart from the dominant culture of their time. In so doing, they become vanguards, mavericks, and iconic figures who exercise visible leadership in the social movement promoting foreign ideas. This is a major difference between influential Chinese translators and their English-language counterparts, because English-language readers continue to see authorship as individualistic rather than collectivistic; hence, "only the foreign text

can be original, an authentic copy, true to the author's personality or intention, whereas the translation is derivative, fake, potentially a false copy" (Venuti, 2002, Loc 272).

With the integration of foreign language (especially English) learning in Chinese schools, there is less need for translators nowadays to depend on oral interpreters. But cultural translation as a unique type of intellectual activity has become more important than ever due to increased availability of foreign texts through global media.

Meanwhile, although Chinese societies remain statist to varying degrees (more so in mainland China than in Taiwan or Hong Kong), the risks faced by cultural translators have greatly declined compared to earlier periods, when Buddhism and Christianity were first introduced. It was under such circumstances when cultural translation activities peaked in quantity and influence from the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

It was during this period when the preeminent translator-scholar YAN Fu (嚴復), known for his translation of social Darwinism into Chinese, proposed "*xin, da, ya* (信達雅 or 'faithfulness, effectiveness, elegance')" (Tang, 2009, p. 180), the most widely used criteria for translation in China today. Although translators around the world need to be (or at least claim to be) faithful and effective in producing/reproducing fluent texts that work and not just "translatese," the criterion of elegance, or *ya*, is a more uniquely Chinese yardstick. More than a reflection of personal taste, *ya* is a collective standard that emerged from Confucian classics more than two millennia ago.

Translating Western Communication Studies Into Greater China

Western communication research followed different paths in entering mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong due to colonial and Cold War legacies. Although cross-border convergence has increased, the trajectories remain distinctive, as do the life and work of leading translators in the field (see Appendix One).

As early as 1956, teachers in selected journalism departments in the mainland were exposed to excerpts of Western publications through the *Journalism Translation Series* (新聞學譯叢), a journal hosted by the Department of Journalism at Fudan University to mount ideological critique of the West. An article translated by LIU Tongshun (劉同舜), for example, was entitled "Dispel the Lies of Free and Independent Press" (J. Liu, 2013). The journal, however, had limited influence due to the political situation at the time (Wang & Hu, 2010).

The second wave of translation lasted from the late 1970s to the early 1980s in sync with intellectual movements in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Until then, Taiwan had followed a tradition of journalism education long ago set in motion by the so-called Missouri model since 1921 (Volz & Lee, 2009). Hong Kong only started to have university-level journalism programs in 1965. In 1977, Wilbur Schramm arrived to help launch the MPhil communication degree program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Yu, 2012).

Led by his former student, Timothy Yu (余也魯), Schramm played a leading role introducing American-style empirical communication studies into Greater China. Two conferences were held in 1978—one in Hong Kong, the other in Taiwan—organized by HSU Chia-shih (徐佳士). Yu then accompanied Schramm on a historic trip to mainland China in 1982, when Schramm gave a seven-day lecture in Guangzhou, followed by visits to universities in Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing, where they also visited *People's Daily* (J. Liu, 2013; Wu, 2014; Yu, 2012).

Yu is known for translating Schramm's work. His approach is indicative of this period for cultural translators in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Most influential was Yu's rendering of Schramm's 1973 book *Men, Messages, and Media: A Look at Human Communication*. The Chinese version is entitled *Chuanxue gailun*, meaning literally "a general theory of communication" (Schramm, 1977). Yu's intention to do more than linguistic translation was palpable in his "Foreword by the Translator and Narrator":

This translation includes additions and subtractions with the consent of the author [i.e., Schramm]. Additions are materials about Chinese history and culture as well as examples that are more familiar to Chinese readers. Subtractions are instances written for American readers so that they could understand more easily. I have also added materials that are relatively new in order to shorten the temporal distance. (Yu, 1977, p. 16, author's translation)

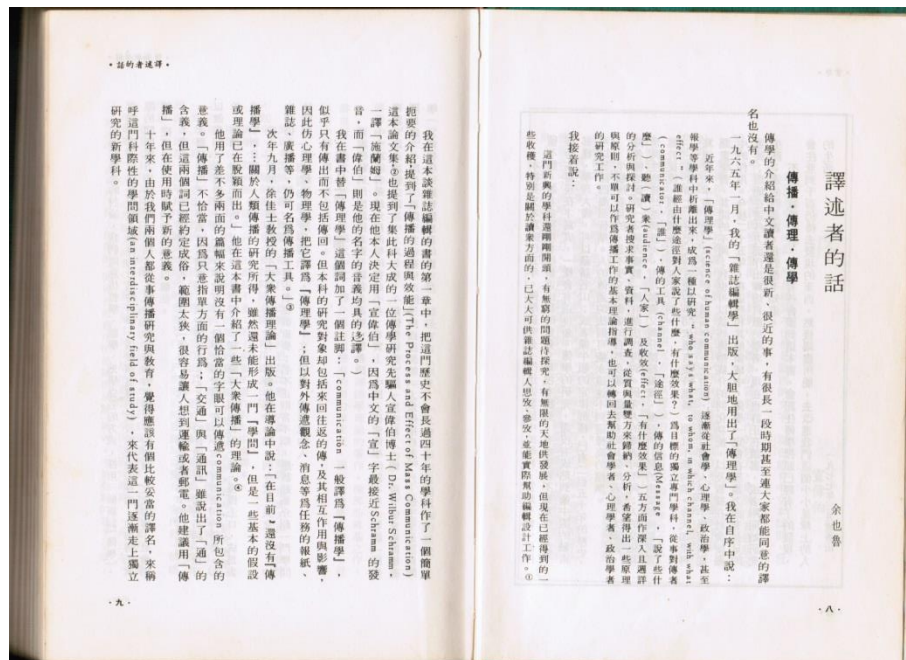


Figure 1. Timothy Yu's foreword for the Chinese version of *Men, Messages, and Media* (Schramm, 1977).

Yu's translated volume was not an isolated development. In 1978, Japanese scholar UCHIKAWA Yoshimi also gave a lecture at the newly established Institute of Journalism Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Because his interpreter did not know how to translate the keyword of his talk, he had to write the English term "mass communication" on the blackboard (Wu, 2014).

Also in 1978, two of Warren K. Agee's articles on mass communication were translated by ZHENG Beiwei (鄭北渭) and appeared in the inaugural issue of *Foreign Journalism Materials* (外國新聞事業資料) published at Fudan University (Y. Wang, 2010, p. 9), which included excerpts from Edwin Emery's *Introduction to Mass Communication* translated by CHEN Yunzhao (陳韻昭) (J. Liu, 2013). In 1981, when Fudan started *Journalism Monthly* (新聞大學), this new journal became the first in mainland China to regularly feature translations from English, especially by CHEN Yunzhao (J. Liu, 2013; Y. Wang, 2010).

Soon after Schramm's and Yu's visit, mainland China had its first conference on Western communication studies in 1982 (J. Liu, 2013). However, troubled by ideological suspicion, communication studies did not take off in mainland China in the 1980s (W. Zhang, 2010).

In Hong Kong and Taiwan, American-style communication studies proceeded to grow with increasing emphasis on public opinion, media effects, and questionnaire surveys. This was notable in Taiwan following YANG Kuo-shu (楊國樞)'s edited volume, *Research Methods for Social and Behavioral Sciences*, which became a methodological "Bible" for Taiwanese researchers from the late 1970s through the 1980s (Chen, 2004). Later generations of researchers must build on, while wrestling with, this empiricist tradition.

In Hong Kong, translation of communication research remains sporadic partly due to colonial legacies prioritizing English teaching and research. Students either read English or use translated books imported from Taiwan and mainland China, which are cheaper. Universities in Hong Kong also started earlier with the shift to emphasize original research, which undermines reward systems for academic translation. As a result, few followed the footsteps of Timothy Yu.

Since Beijing recognized communication studies as a legitimate discipline in 1998, hundreds of departments emerged throughout China. This third wave constitutes a great leap forward in communication studies. In 2004–2005 alone, 202 undergraduate and postgraduate programs were added (Pan, Zhu, & Yuan, 2005). In 2003, mainland Chinese universities admitted more than 20,000 freshmen into journalism and communication BA programs (B. Liu, 2014). The influx of students created a huge market for translated work, as did the arrival of new teachers who were not trained in media and communication studies. This period saw the publication of several translation book series by key publishers: Renmin University Press, Fudan University Press, and Communication University of China Press, under the coordination of leading scholars such as HUANG Dan (黃旦), ZHAN Jiang (展江), Zhongdang Pan (潘忠黨), and Yuezhi Zhao (趙月枝).

In addition to mainstream behavioral studies being translated, there has been a surge of alternative frameworks—structuralism, semiotics, critical political economy—especially since the 2008–

2009 global financial crisis (Wu, 2014). A pioneering figure was CHEN Weixing (陳衛星), who translated Armand Mattelart's *La Communication-monde* from French into Chinese (Mattelart, 2005). Another influential series is *Communication, Culture, Society* from Huaxia Press, which included representative volumes by Gaye Tuchman, James Carey, Michael Schudson, and Norman Fairclough (Huang & Ding, 2009).

These developments were, however, relatively late compared to Taiwan, where a similar trend had been under way since 1992, and several translated books on cultural studies and critical political economy came out as part of the Hall of Communication series (Feng, 2003). It was published by Yuan-Liou Publishing Co. throughout the 1990s, under the coordination of CHEN Shih-min (陳世敏), PAN Jia-qing (潘家慶), and CHENG Jei-cheng (鄭瑞城).

Despite diverging paths in mainland China and Taiwan, both systems possess traits of cultural translation. Although institutional resources for translators remain limited, historically speaking, the emergence of communication studies would have been impossible without translated texts. By one account, there were 14 translated volumes in mainland China in the 1980s, accounting for 60.9% of all the books published on media and communication during this period (W. Zhang, 2010). This happened at a time when China was still dubious about the ideological nature of Western communication studies.

Similarly, in Taiwan, CHEN Shih-min and colleagues worked with Yuan-Liou, a private publisher, rather than the resourceful National Science Council to put out the definitive Hall of Communication series, including especially critical political economy volumes, at a time when behavioral approaches to communication were dominant. On both sides of the Taiwan Strait, pioneers of communication studies were ahead of their time, producing major work before the full institutionalization of the discipline.

HE Daokuan: McLuhan, Media Ecology, and the Message of Translation

Following a trajectory typical of his generation, HE Daokuan began his career in 1963 as an English teacher in Sichuan, southwest China. In 1978, he went on to study linguistics and American literature in Nanjing. During 1980–1981, as an exchange scholar, he joined Goshen College, a liberal arts college in Indiana, and was exposed to McLuhan. He was obsessed with McLuhan's work because "it was completely incomprehensible" (personal interview, August 5, 2015). He published his first translation of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* in 1992 and, in time, became China's most prominent translator of McLuhan's work and books of the media ecology school—for example, by Paul Levinson, Robert Logan, and Walter Ong.

HE's 65 translated volumes are remarkable in quantity and exhibit extraordinary intellectual scope (see a complete list of translated works by HE Daokuan (see Appendix Two at <http://ow.ly/TEH6I>). In addition to books of media ecology and related topics (e.g., Harold Innis), there are books of cultural studies, sociology, and history. In media and communication studies, his prolific translations include volumes by Harold Lasswell, John Peters, and Nick Couldry.

HE was among the first to introduce Western intercultural communication research to Chinese readers through Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (2013/1946), Prosser's *The Cultural Dialogue* (2013/1978), especially Edward T. Hall's *Silent Language* (2010/1959) and *Beyond Culture* (2010/1976; 1990/1976). During the publication of *Beyond Culture* in 1990, HE had to use a pseudonym, because his editor worried about possible criticism against the hegemony of one translator for all three volumes in the series, whose first book, Ralph Linton's *The Tree of Culture*, was criticized for its western-centric tendencies after its publication in 1989.

Teaching linguistics, literature, written translation, and oral interpretation, HE Daokuan did not see himself as a media scholar until 2001, when he attended his first communication conference, one year before his retirement in 2002. By then he had become deputy dean of humanities at Shenzhen University. He was nicely shocked to see the profound impact of his translated texts: "Several senior communication colleagues including a department chair thanked me, saying that they shifted direction to study media after reading my translation of McLuhan's *Understanding Media*." "Almost every time they [communication scholars] made a presentation, they started by referring to my translation" (personal interview, August 5, 2015).

After retirement, HE devoted 8 to 10 hours each day to translating full-time. By 2002, he had translated 11 books. Since then, he has produced another 54. Whereas a few of these are newer versions of the same book (e.g., *Understanding Media*), the great majority are brand-new translations.

Although HE Daokuan achieved most of his influence in the 21st century, his intellectual outlook is distinctively of the 1980s, the first post-Mao decade when academics in mainland China were keen to learn from the world. He was deeply influenced by the *Toward the Future* book series as well as by ZHONG Shuhe (鍾叔河)'s book series *From East to West: Chinese Travelers Before 1911*. The 1980–1981 experience in the United States was life changing for him. In our interview, he kept referring to that experience as *buke*, "make up missed classes," showing his eagerness and humility to absorb new knowledge from the West.

Yet, unlike leading intellectuals of the 1980s who worshipped Western civilization and despised traditional Chinese culture, HE Daokuan cannot be more proud of his Chinese identity. "That is another reason I like McLuhan: He always loves Canada and develops his thinking from a Canadian vantage point" (personal interview). HE sees his work as a service to China, to the large number of Chinese readers who do not read English books: students, academics, media practitioners, and the general public.

How does HE select what to translate? He applies three standards: (1) lasting value of the English texts, (2) urgent needs in Chinese society, and (3) readable style of writing. These are also the criteria he uses to assess his own translations. In so doing, he endeavors to "live up to the hopes of the author, the publisher, the reader, myself and the coming generations after I am gone." HE is, however, fully aware that "Translation can hardly endure the test of time for more than half a century. . . . Each generation needs to update its language in translation practice" (e-mail interview, August 3, 2015).

In providing high-quality translation, HE does not find it satisfactory to use YAN Fu's "faithfulness, effectiveness, and elegance" as the criteria. Instead, he aspires to the ideal of *huajing*, or "realm of transformation," proposed by the literary authority QIAN Zhongshu (錢鐘書): "In conveying the words of one language into those of another, no traces are left of one's having been constrained to accommodate linguistic differences to which one is habituated, though the 'feel' of the original is fully conveyed" (Qian, 1984, p. 696).

The influence of HE Daokuan's translation comes as much from his translated text as from his extended translator's forewords and afterwords, some containing 20,000 Chinese characters and published as stand-alone essays. This was how he introduced McLuhan's *Understanding Media* in the first Chinese edition of 1992 (the book was translated in 1987–1988 but could not be published then):

Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980) is a great craftsman of western communication studies. This 1964 volume was the book that made him famous. Its publication was like a massive earthquake, sending strong seismic waves and aftershocks to the entire West and the entire world. No wonder McLuhan is referred to as "the most important thinker since Freud and Einstein." (HE, 1992, p. 1, author's translation).

HE does not hide behind the lines of translated text. He sees himself as an advocate of new ideas, a figure of enlightenment. This can be seen repeatedly in his extended prologues and epilogues as well as in dozens of essays he has written for newspapers, literary magazines, and academic journals. An active planner of six translated book series, HE has worked with leading scholars such as ZHAN Jiang (展江) and WU Xinxun (吳信訊). The publishers include Renmin University Press, Fudan University Press, Peking University Press, and the Communication University of China Press.

Why is HE so productive and persistent? Not for the meager translation fee, which is about 80 yuan, or US\$12.90, per 1,000 Chinese characters in 2015 (already much higher than most translators in China; HE himself earned 30–35 yuan, or US\$5.60, per 1,000 characters a few years ago). Not just because he loves translating and enjoys his work. In our interview, he revealed a deeper motivation: "It is sad to see poor translations flooding the book market, 'poisoning' the Chinese mind. I am determined to drive out 'bad money' with 'good money'" (personal interview, August 5, 2015).

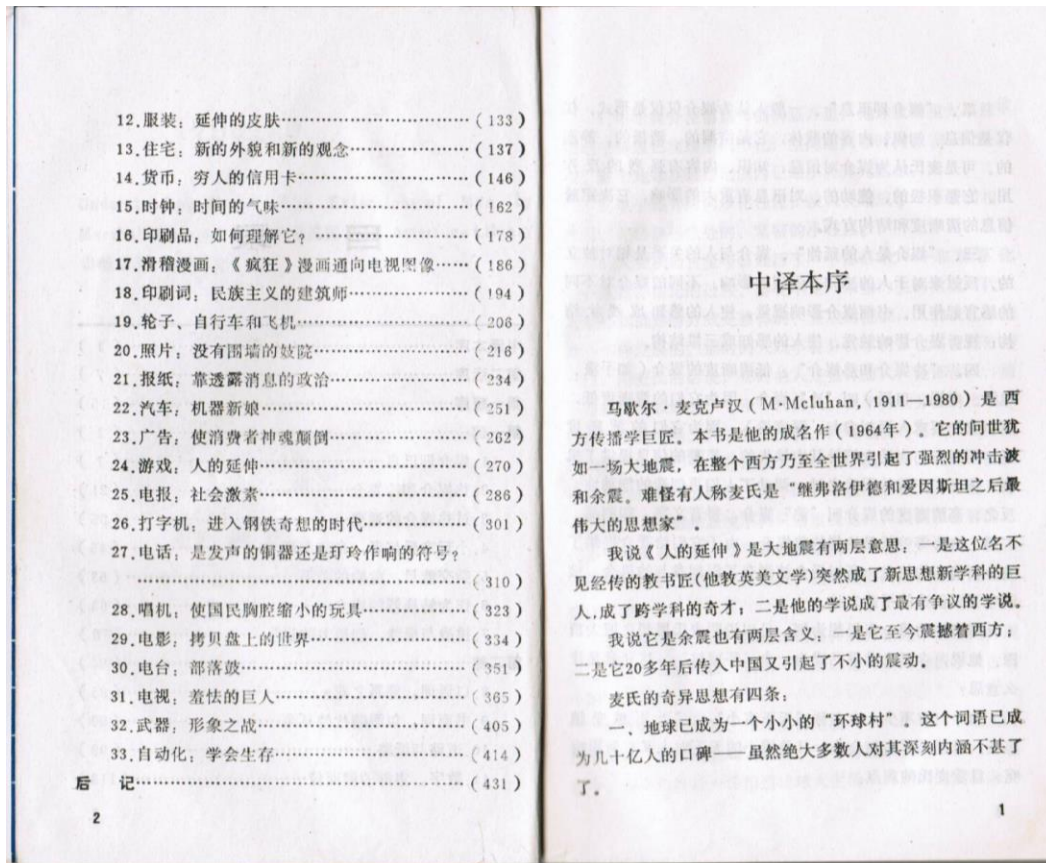


Figure 2. HE Daokuan's prologue for the first Chinese edition of Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1992, Sichuan People's Press).

FENG Chien-san: Political Economy and Critical Intervention

FENG Chien-san studied at the National Chengchi University (NCCU), where he conducted a survey on Taiwan's political magazines in 1983 (Feng, 2005). Later at Leister, he pursued an MPhil degree with Peter Golding and doctoral studies with Graham Murdock. His dissertation was on Taiwan's information society.

Studying and living in the UK gave me a second inspiration, which comes from a broad definition of politics. That is, politics is not limited to officialdom. Nor is it confined to elections. It occurs in everyday life and in the workplace. (Feng, 2005, p. 84, author's translation)

Returning to NCCU to start a course titled "The Political Economy of Communication" (Chen, 2010), FENG gradually became Taiwan's leading scholar in critical communication research. His interests

span media policy, social movements, information technology, and market socialism, especially in Taiwan and Greater China, Cuba and Latin America, and Western Europe.

FENG's translation career began in 1992. That year, he translated Dallas Smythe's article "Communications: Blindspot of Western Marxism" along with three books for the Hall of Communication series by Raymond Williams, Sut Jhally, and Charles Curran. By 2015, he had translated 21 books and 4 articles, including works by Edwin Baker, Robert Picard, and Dan Schiller (see Appendix Three at <http://ow.ly/TEH8T> for a complete list). His translations are timely, with the Chinese version coming out two or three years after the publication of the English book—for example, with books by John Tomlinson, David Morley, Vincent Mosco, Toby Miller, Robert McChesney, and James Curran. He is by far the most productive translator of media and communication studies in Taiwan.

Translation is, however, the third priority in FENG's academic activities, because he devotes more to teaching and activism. FENG takes part in Taiwanese social movements as a public intellectual, especially on issues of media reform. He spends less than a quarter of his working time on translation. Yet, for more than two decades, he has kept the pace of translating about three books every two years.

FENG's interests in translation originate from his hobby to search for new information from abroad when he was a student in Taipei in the 1970s and early 1980s. He developed his skills by reading key translation texts of the time, such as *English-to-Chinese Translation Handbook* (Sun & Jin, 1977), *On Translation* (Chu, 1973), and *Principles of Translation* (Z. Zhang, 1966).

FENG conducts translation because he thinks that the field has too many administrative studies and hair-splitting research; that fundamental questions are neglected regarding the media system, political power, structural imbalance, and issues of labor. When asked whether his work belongs to a social or cultural movement, he replied: "I've never thought about it this way. My translation usually starts with a simple idea: introducing standpoints that I agree with and would like to promote. But in retrospect, if you call it a cultural renaissance movement, I won't object" (personal interview, July 29, 2015).

This humble answer of "a simple idea" does not do justice to FENG's strategic interventions. FENG almost always chooses books that fill a gap or foreground certain theories that are relatively marginal or alternative. "I won't translate books with well-accepted viewpoints" (personal interview, July 30, 2015). He also avoids translating works that are overly descriptive and easily outdated.

By "mainstream" FENG understands more specifically mainstream economics, because, as a political economy researcher and public intellectual working on media policy, he has to confront conservative economics. A case in point is Ronald Coase, the Nobel Prize in Economics laureate, whose work was introduced into Taiwan to justify the deregulation of broadcasting. FENG saw this as a dangerous tendency. To counter it, he translated Edwin Baker's *Media, Markets and Democracy*, which develops a systematic rebuttal of Coase's theory.

Among FENG's translated books, the most widely used is Frank Webster's *Theories of the Information Society*, which had six reprints. It was, however, an atypical book because FENG only wrote a

relatively short epilogue (10 pages out of the 477-page volume). Most of FENG's other translated texts include extensive prologues and/or epilogues. Raymond Williams' *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* has, for example, 206 pages, including an 18-page "Translator's Introduction" that begins:

The author of this book, Raymond Williams, is a distinguished thinker of politics, who has been known for his unsurpassed excellence among British intellectuals. From a British standpoint, one could say that the standing of Sartre in France might be comparable to that of Williams in the UK. Trained in literary criticism, Williams published in a wide range of fields, with so many achievements that his colleagues at Cambridge often referred to him as a sociologist or historian. (Feng, 1996, p. 5, author's translation)

This introduction concludes with a cautionary note on mainstream conceptions of communication à la Lasswell:

The Lasswellian formula—"who, says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?"—has had quite some influence on behaviorist mass media research. Yet, to Williams, this is insufficient because it "forgets" to ask: "for what purpose?" Why television could come into being? What social consequences did television produce? Williams first analyzed two different types of opinions, then developed a critique, from where he elucidated his understanding of the relationship between technology and society. (Feng, 1996, p. 15, author's translation)

Efficient and elegant, FENG's translation style conveys a sense of historical gravity. The ultimate goal for his translations is to pave the way for better original work by communication researchers in Taiwan and other Chinese societies. "We have to know what good things are out there before we go about creating new substance." "I hope they [the translated works] can lead to an 'industrial upgrade,' if I may use this cliché" (personal interview, July 29, 2015).

FENG is confident that there is a stable market for translated work in Greater China, where readers prefer to read books in their mother tongue. But he confesses that he sometimes worried there would be too few readers for his translation due not only to less expensive books imported from mainland China (which reached their pinnacle around 2008–2009) but also to his style of condensed prose, a habit he has no intention to adjust.

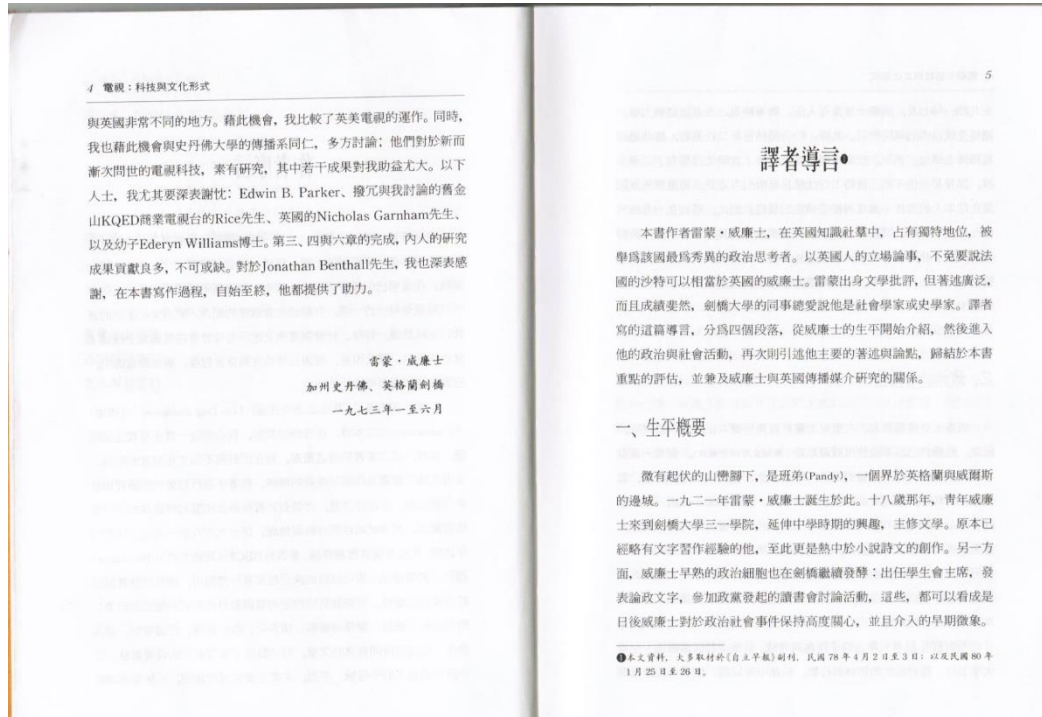


Figure 3. FENG Chien-san's "Translator's Introduction" for the Chinese edition of *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Feng, 1996).

Despite this concern, FENG spends no time promoting his translations. "There is no such platform in Taiwan" (personal interview, July 30, 2015) was his explanation, which probably has more to do with his low-key personality and his target readership of the intellectual circles rather than a broader market. He cares little about the translation fee, which is not his main source of income, and he does translation as a hobby. Yuan-Liou's Hall of Communication series in the 1990s remains the best-paying for him: TW\$800, or US\$24.80, per 1,000 Chinese characters—much higher than today, when he sometimes has to work at half that rate or charge no translator fee at all except for royalty based on sales.

"This is understandable," he said, referring to the decreasing financial reward. "The Taiwanese publication industry enjoyed monopoly profits back then. But this is no longer the case. Publishers have to make a profit in order to survive." "I am their volunteer so long as they put out books that are valuable, worth the effort" (personal interview, July 30, 2015).

What FENG misses is the support from National Science Council for the translation of foreign classics, which once benefited his work. "If they approve your proposal, they will take care of everything, including purchasing copyright and other paperwork. You get to concentrate on translating. And the fee is pretty good: TW\$750 [US\$23.10] per thousand characters" (personal interview, July 29, 2015). What a pity this source of public funding has dried up.

Speaking about the development of Taiwan's media and communication studies, FENG declines to give much credit to his translated work in shaping the field. "I'm still not sure if translation brings about innovation. I still have to wait and see." "Language is not the key. What matters is the theoretical perspective, whether it is progressive or alternative, not whether it is from French or German or English" (personal interview, July 30, 2015).

Discussion: Cultural, Conceptual, and Structural (In)commensurabilities

Like Timothy Yu's exceptional position in the history of communication studies in Hong Kong, HE Daokuan and FENG Chien-san are not representative of mainland Chinese or Taiwanese translators as a whole. But how could both of them be so productive for more than two decades? Certainly there are reasons in their life histories, intellectual gifts, and the unique circumstances of their times, although the goal of this comparison is about general patterns beyond the individual. Although the notion of cultural translators may help make sense of diverse practices against the backdrop of Chinese translation history (Kong, 2002), this discussion focuses on the conceptual, structural, and cultural (in)commensurabilities, based on Georgette Wang's (2010b) framework about translation and communication research in non-Western contexts. It is important to note that these three dimensions are not the only ways to analyze translation practices. Rather, they offer one inductive framework, proposed by a Chinese scholar, which will help organize and compare our observations from the ground up.

First, have HE and FENG succeeded in translating the "value orientation, historical and cultural contexts or world-view" (G. Wang, 2010b, p. 263) of Western media and communication studies into Chinese? How do they deal with cultural incommensurabilities—in similar or different ways?

Here, the poverty of old cultural stereotypes—be they Confucianism or "socialism with Chinese characteristics"—is evident. Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong follow different paths in importing Western thought. More importantly, a special aspect of translation, arguably much more so than other activities of scholarly exchange, is its personal engagement. Collective contexts matter. But ultimately, cultural translation, as HE and FENG practice it, is a personal act and individual commitment.

While translating, both HE and FENG are as Chinese as they are cosmopolitan. Their identity in the global communication studies community is as important as their role in serving students, colleagues, and readers in Greater China. More precisely, they see themselves as bridges—a new value orientation that breaks from any cultural essentialism in the East or the West.

On the surface, their translations can be taken as tools of Westernization, but scrutiny of their work and interviews reveals that they are not foot soldiers of intellectual imperialism. Instead, they share

a commitment to advance knowledge production in Chinese communication studies, locally and across spatial boundaries. This worldview of bridging is among the strongest commonalities between HE and FENG, which contributes to their productivity in the long run.

Much value is attached to this bridging identity of cultural translators who help connect academic cultures across geographical distance (G. Wang, 2010b). It is equally important to achieve commensurability across linguistic communities over time. This is why HE Daokuan emphasizes that "translation can hardly endure the test of time for more than half a century"; and that "each generation needs to update its language in translation practice." Culture evolves, yet the translated text is relatively static. Cultural incommensurability arises from not only the importing of foreign ideas but the dynamics of linguistic communities themselves.

In both Taiwan and mainland China, we see the emergence of a social-intellectual movement behind the works of HE and FENG, which contribute to the kinds of communication studies that exist in the two societies as we know them today. A characteristic of such "cultural translation movements," borrowing the term from Kong (2002, p. 50), is the visibility of the translator in leading a new intellectual pursuit, a common trait of cultural translators that defies conventional conceptions of "Chinese culture." Although HE and FENG's writing styles differ (because they have different training and target readerships), they both write significant forewords and/or afterwords for the translated volumes. Some of their works contain hundreds of translator's footnotes to overcome cultural incommensurability. Their attempts surpass descriptions about the life of the foreign author and the impact of the translated volumes. Instead, they use the occasion to guide readers into new ways of thinking and reflecting on what is missing in the intellectual status quo.

This is most remarkable if we compare HE and FENG's work with other books, for example, on communication research methods or communication theories. Many such translated texts exist, but few have a proper prologue or epilogue. The contrast is sharp. In those works, the translators are more invisible, probably because they do not see themselves as starting a movement, or they feel more like administrative translators whose main job is to bring more stability. None would repeat their translation service and produce such impressive lists of programmatic intervention (see lists of the translated works by HE Daokuan at Appendix Two at <http://ow.ly/TEH6I> and FENG Chien-san Appendix Three at <http://ow.ly/TEH8T>).

At the conceptual level, HE and FENG have different academic lineages: one moving from English literature to media ecology, the other from journalism to critical political economy. There are considerable overlaps in their cosmopolitan outlook, although the most fundamental is that neither accepts Western ideas indiscriminately. Selective and reflexive, they develop conceptions of media and communication that are quite distinct from each other, too.

Both translators are proud of their role in promoting "alternative" theories. For HE, this means alternative to conventional literary translation, foreign-affairs translation (i.e., serving political leaders), and science-and-technology translation (i.e., serving China's large army of engineers). For FENG, it means alternative to the media effects tradition and mainstream economics. Despite their differences, both

promote communication scholarship beyond the conventional domain of American-style behaviorist communication research.

Nevertheless, HE and FENG see themselves as “social science translators,” whose job is to introduce new knowledge and spur scholarly production. To this end, they use similar criteria in selecting what to translate and for judging their own translation—with effectiveness being the ultimate goal. As long as readers understand the meaning of the work being translated, other considerations are secondary.

Another commonality is the collaborative practices as they initiate their “social movements” not just among communication scholars but as part and parcel of a larger intellectual movement. In Taiwan, HSU Chia-Shih, CHEN Shih-min, and FENG Chien-san collaborated with colleagues in media and communication studies and beyond. In the mainland, the decade of the 1980s is known as a period of enthusiastic importing of Western thought in history, economics, and political science as well as media and communication. One interdisciplinary attempt, which HE admits he is indebted to, was the *Toward the Future* book series led by JIN Guantao (金觀濤) and LIU Qingfeng (劉青峰). The series contained nearly 80 books and almost 100 translators and authors before the authorities banned it in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests. A concerted effort of this series was to introduce social science thinking, including both theories and methods, that departed significantly from the past practices of Chinese translators working mostly in literary translation (Kong, 2002).

Both translators are similarly selective to counter the larger tendency that Western communication research has introduced almost exclusively as mass communication studies. As HU Yiqing (胡翼青) explains in the case of mainland China, research at interpersonal, organizational, and group levels was seldom translated due to the focus on journalism studies dominating the interests of faculty members (Hu, 2010). To a great extent, this observation also applies to Hong Kong and Taiwan. The full name of Timothy Yu’s department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong is the Department of Journalism and Communication. NCCU, to which TSU Chia-Shih, CHEN Shih-min, and FENG Chien-san all belong, has been the leading school for journalism education and research in Taiwan. According to CHEN:

In importing communication studies, we have only imported mass communication research, while ignoring language (speech) communication, in-person (interpersonal) communication, organizational communication, and other fields that have equal if not more legitimacy in European and American universities. (2010, p. 595, author’s translation)

Unsurprisingly, new media technologies are crucial to the conception of communication for both scholars, although they historicize technological advancement differently. Both of them focus on the intellectual challenge brought by the Internet, yet neither possess a mobile phone—in order not to be distracted.

Structural incommensurabilities result from “differences in the way political, social, economic or educational institutions are organized” (G. Wang, 2010b, p. 264). They constitute a vital dimension of comparison because cultural translation is less dependent on the authorities, more creative in content and

format, and more likely to foster new schools of thinking. Precisely because of this, we see notable divergence in the ways in which Western communication studies are translated into Greater China.

For one thing, it is rare to have prolific translators such as HE and FENG. Their achievements come from agentic action of the individual rather than institutional mechanisms. Although most translators of media and communication studies once held administrative posts (see Appendix One), the experiences matter little for the two translators who are the focus of this article. HE had almost retired before becoming renowned among media and communication scholars in mainland China; FENG became department chair long after establishing himself similarly in Taiwan. Institutional support is important, but it is not a decisive factor.

The strongest case for an administrative role facilitating academic translation is in Hong Kong, where the trajectory of communication research would have been quite different without Timothy Yu's translation work—both textually and institutionally. Yet Yu's legacy has no followers there due to the city-state's postcolonial language politics and university policies.

From Yu onward, a general observation for Greater China as a whole is the dominance of book translation. This is particularly noteworthy as "policies in many Asian nations push for research output that is geared to the interest of Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) journals" (G. Wang, 2010b, p. 256). Yet HE and FENG keep translating books. The book-centric approach reveals the "alternative" practice of cultural translation challenging prevailing tendencies of the West and the East alike.

Here lies another overlap between HE and FENG: Whereas HE has retired and does not depend on a university salary, Feng is also insensitive toward SSCI-based assessment schemes. Both thrive at the relative margins of the ivory tower. Both found their unique ways of using translation to guide transition. It is fortunate that neither went with the flow of neoliberalizing universities.

Meanwhile, it is erroneous to assume along the line of Chinese exceptionalism that Beijing must exert more state intervention, which in turn must make a difference in translation practices in mainland China. A surprising finding is that, since the late 1990s, the authorities have had minimal influence on the import of Western communication scholarship, for example, through HE's translation. Although he did face political risk in the 1980s and early 1990s, that is no longer true since his official retirement in 2002, when his second career took off in translating media and communication books.

Equally surprising is that cultural translation of communication studies in Taiwan benefits more than in the mainland from public resources, which include special support provided by National Science Council for the translation of foreign-language classics. FENG's tenure at NCCU also offers sufficient professional stability for him to continue his translation intervention. Depending on the specific organizational setup, financial security does not necessarily lead to administrative translation.

Both HE and FENG lamented that traditional educational institutions are problematic in supporting scholarly translation. Hence, both have little choice but to turn to the increasingly competitive marketplace. HE spoke more than FENG in favor of market principles. He emphasized the need for more consideration

by the translator from the standpoint of ordinary readers—similar to how a good designer has to make her designs user-friendly to better serve customers.

Yet HE had to endure more exploitation in this marketplace of translated ideas. Despite the huge sales volume in mainland China, his translation fee per 1,000 characters is about half what FENG receives in Taiwan. A renowned publisher in Beijing even asked HE to share one-third the cost for copyright—after he finished translating the book at the miserable level of US\$4.70 per 1,000 characters. In retrospect, HE blames the greediness of the publisher's boss rather than the market institution.

FENG, on the other hand, saw himself as a "volunteer" working with commercial publishers, who are finding it difficult to make ends meet. He is not a "translabor" whose livelihood depends on market dynamics. It is great if there are generous publishers such as Yuan-Liou. It is even better if public support is still available. But neither are decisive factors. FENG uses the market to extend the intellectual and policy impact of critical communication research regardless of the financial reward. The real rewards for him are cultural, social, and political.

A final note should be made on the integration of Chinese publishers with the international copyright regime. Before the 1990s, Chinese publishers operated mostly outside the Universal Copyright Convention (UCC). During the 1990s, Beijing signed the UCC and gradually stepped up its enforcement, especially in the audiovisual sector (Sigismondi, 2009). Similar transformation took place in Taiwan because Taipei was also trying to join the World Trade Organization (Peng, 2000). However, these important changes at the system level seem to have little impact on the translation practices of FENG and HE. This is probably because industry-wide transformation is too crude a predictor, especially for cultural translators.

Concluding Remarks

Contextualized in Chinese history and the contemporary history of communication research in Greater China, this article is one of the first accounts of the role of translation in Chinese communication studies. From an inter-Asian comparative perspective, it offers the first meeting place for two leading cultural translators, HE Daokuan and Feng Chien-san (although they have not yet met in person), while introducing key institutional players such as NCCU, Fudan University, and Huaxia Press.

The main arguments are that cultural translators play a vital role in shaping Chinese media and communication studies; that translation adds to rather than reduces the complexity of communication scholarship. Although institutional structures of the university and the market are relevant factors, the most decisive force is the agency of individual translators working toward collective goals of knowledge production—based on local experiences, beyond methodological nationalism, beyond the simple borrowing of Western theories.

Eurocentrism is still around. It will keep haunting Chinese communication scholars as much as it will in other parts of Asia and the global South. But this is only the beginning of cultural translation, with inevitable incommensurabilities and ample room to enrich our understanding of the history of media and communication studies in Greater China, in Asia, and around the world.

Regardless of the basic sociopolitical setup of a society, regardless of the market dynamics and institutional inclinations of the universities, there is a need for cultural translation despite cultural, conceptual, and structural variation. That need, well channeled or not, may give rise to pioneering cultural translators on the frontiers of academic globalization, as we have encountered them in this analysis.

How these practices of cultural translation influence readers and the intellectual geopolitics of media and communication studies is an issue deserving future research. Another nagging question is whether the current model of individually initiated translation projects will be sustainable. Will FENG and HE be succeeded by a new generation of cultural translators, who are similarly dedicated and talented? Or in two decades, will they join the same category as Timothy Yu, as a rare species that had become extinct? If that is the case, will Eurocentrism be even more entrenched or seriously weakened? Will Chinese communication researchers be ready to step beyond Chinese exceptionalism? The answer will depend, at least in part, on our capacities to engage in meaningful scholarly translation and initiate cultural translation movements, linguistically and ontologically, across geographical boundaries and over time, collectively and as individuals.

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Yu, T., (2012). In retrospect: The first trip of communication studies in China. *Journalism and Communication Studies*, (4), 4–9. (in Chinese)

Zhang, W. (2010). Explorations and standpoints: Five debates during three decades of communication studies in China. In Y. Wang & Y. Hu (Eds.), *Thirty years of communication studies in China, 1978–2008* (pp. 469–507). Beijing, China: China Encyclopedia Press. (in Chinese)

Zhang, Z.-Y. (1966). *Principles of translation*. Taipei, Taiwan: Renren Press. (in Chinese)

Appendix One
Translators of Media and Communication Studies in Greater China

| Name (surname alphabetic order) | Institutional affiliation | Job post/current status |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| CHEN Shih-min 陳世敏 | Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University | Professor and former chair/retired |
| CHEN Weixing 陳衛星 | Center for International Communication Studies, Communication University of China | Professor and director |
| CHEN Yunzhao 陳韻昭 | Department of Journalism, Fudan University | Professor/retired |
| CHENG Jei-cheng 鄭瑞城 | School of Communication, National Chengchi University | Professor and former dean/retired |
| FENG Chien-san 馮建三 | Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University | Professor and former chair |
| HE Daokuan 何道寬 | Faculty of Humanities, Shenzhen University | Professor and former associate dean/retired |
| HSU Chia-shih 徐佳士 | Department of Journalism, National Chengchi University | Professor and former chair/retired |
| HUANG Dan 黃旦 | Department of Journalism, Fudan University | Professor and former chair |
| LIU Tongshun 劉同舜 | School of Economics, Fudan University | Professor/retired |
| PAN Jia-qin 潘家慶 | School of Communication, National Chengchi University | Professor and former dean/retired |
| Zhongdang Pan 潘忠黨 | Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison | Professor |
| WU Xinxun 吳信訓 | China Academy for Art Industries, Shanghai University | Professor and executive dean |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Timothy Yu 余也鲁 | Department of Journalism and Communication, the Chinese University of Hong Kong | Professor and former chair/passed away in 2012 |
| ZHAN Jiang 展江 | School of International Journalism and Communication, Beijing Foreign Studies University | Professor and director of Media Ethics and Regulation Research Center |
| Yuezhi Zhao 趙月枝 | School of Communication, Simon Fraser University | Professor and Canada Research Chair in the Political Economy of Global Communication |
| ZHENG Beiwei 鄭北渭 | Department of Journalism, Fudan University | Professor/passed away in 2012 |

Appendix Two**Translated Works by HE Daokuan****Located at <http://ow.ly/TEH6I>****Appendix Three****Translated Works by FENG Chien-san****Located at <http://ow.ly/TEH8T>**