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# Translating Darwin's Metaphors in East Asia

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## I. The Scholar from the West

In the year of 1873, *Shen bao* [申報: *The Shanghai Daily*], released an article under the title "Dr. Xi [Doctor West]'s Newly Published Book, *Renben* [*The Origin of Man*]."

> A British scholar known as Darwin has become preeminent in the world through his new publication, Ren ben. In his work, Darwin examines whether the temperament and vigor of all humans in the universe originate from the same basis or not. Prior to writing, he conveyed his ideas to scholars around the world, and requested them to investigate and research the variation of temperament as it shows on the body by each ethnic group. Taking the Chinese as an example, the task involved observing the tendency of eyebrows relaxing and mouths opening when they are feeling relief, curling of the body and leg shaking when in shock, reddening of the face when in shame, and whatever that can be observed when in rage and resentful. From one aspect to all, if all cases appear to be identical, it then becomes clear that the innate temperament indeed retreats back to a single origin. If not, such trait can be thought as an element which has extended from the same essence. This book is already complete and when translated in summary from the Western language into Chinese, the contents are as stated above. Through such work, readers can gain a glimpse into the heart and pragmatism of Western civilization. (2)

Here, "Dr. Xi" refers to Charles Darwin (1809–82), the scholar from the West, and *Ren ben* is an English–to–Chinese translation of Darwin's 1871 publication, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Within almost two years of its publication in London, it was introduced in the largest daily newspaper distributed in the foreigners' district of Shanghai. The intellectual

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movement that was taking place in England thus reached the distant, faraway readers of China. Somewhat owing to the fact that the publisher of *Shen bao*, Ernest Major was a British merchant, who came to China for the purpose of trade not evangelism, the introduction of Darwin's new book in China can almost be seen as contemporary.

Instead of directly stating Darwin's argument that man descended from the same ancestor of the great ape, *Shen bao* highlights Darwin's scholarly manner of empirically exploring the relation between temperaments and behaviors of different races. Although Darwin's work contained empirical research that covered far more regions than the research done in the past, the content itself was not a source of fascination to the Chinese readers. This is because the study of human nature embodies the very core of Chinese philosophy. Hence, despite *Shen bao*'s nation–wide circulation, it seems its promotional advertisement of Darwin and his work failed to have full effect among the Chinese readers. Darwin, who had triggered fierce controversy in Western academia, was being portrayed in China as a sincere and benign scholar.

It was the last years of the nineteenth century when Western notions of evolution elicited a reaction in Chinese society; by this time, twenty years had passed since Darwin's name had first made its appearance in Chinese newspapers. The Qing government had lost to Japan in the Sino–Japanese War and had ceded the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan, and the Penghu islands to Japan. Soon after, in 1897, Germany forcibly seized Jiaozhou Bay and, within a year, turned it into leased territory. During this period, people's fear of the nation's collapse by the imperialist powers had intensified. Having experienced the reality of international politics, witnessing the world order being determined by power relations, and not policies of the good neighbor, the Chinese began to channel their interest towards Western science and the so–called theory of evolution.

Since the mid–nineteenth century, China had taken its first step into world history emerging from its Sino–centric system based on self–sufficiency. Increased talks and trade with the West triggered the spread of Western institutions, cultures, and thoughts into China; moreover, through translation, a linguistic filtering of the Western language, scholarly work from the West entered the deepest layers of the culture sphere within East Asia held together by their common use of Chinese characters. Although Darwin and his work were initially introduced to Chinese readers in the 1870s, a particular social and political condition was needed for them to be generally

accepted. Furthermore, this would require the linguistic practice of the Chinese terminologies of evolution involving its wide usage by a considerable number of people in explaining their past and present society and designing the future of the Chinese nation.

The purpose of this writing is to analyze the process of translating the basic terms used in biological evolutionary theory to the Chinese language and also to contemplate on the usage, functions and the newly attached meanings of the translated language of evolution in Chinese society. Around the twentieth century, diverse knowledge systems of the West including the theory of evolution gushed into China almost at once. Translated into multiple versions of Chinese characters, terms used in evolutionary biology were thus coined in close connection to diverse contexts such as social Darwinism, historical consciousness led by the Enlightenment, and socialism, instead of acquiring literal meanings. These words then obtained new meanings and evolved within the process of political and social changes. Some of these words coexisted within a single text, and others were led to have entirely different meanings. The main goal here is to analyze the creation of meanings and development of these words and explore the political and social significance of these phrases from modern China, created through the process of translation.

## II. The Theory of Evolution as a Scientific Knowledge

Since the end of the Second Opium War, the Qing government, discerning the power of Western military weapons, executed policies to strengthen national power by adopting science and technology from the West. Established in Shanghai in 1865, Jiangnan Arsenal was a weapons factory that the advocates of the Westernization movement had chosen for modernization of national defense, and it was also an educational center for training and cultivating technicians who were to learn Western science. The most up–to–date information on the theory of evolution in China was provided by publications from the Jiangnan Arsenal Translation Department. The English–to–Chinese translation of Charles Lyell's *Dixue qianshi* [地學淺釋: *Elements of Geology*] (1873), which describes the evolution of geological structures, presents Jean–Baptiste Lamarck's and Darwin's theories as following:

> If previous discussions posit that when all things are created

> by Nature, its feature and temperament are each thought to be constant and therefore immutable, and also if an object is thought to be unchangeable from one form to another, then such theories can be considered as outdated. Lamarck states that species can all evolve over time and that transmutation occurs from one to another organism, and from one form to another. People still do not find Lamarck's claim credible.… Recently, Darwin claimed that each organism chooses a habitat most suitable to itself and also that its whole temperament can change. (Hua and Macgowan 16)

This book came into existence when Chinese mathematician Hua Hengfang [華蘅芳] wrote the translation of the original text, which was provided verbally by British doctor, Daniel Macgowan. The first edition of Lyell's work was published in London in 1830, but the version that these scholars chose for their translation was the sixth which was published in 1865 (Long 11). Although they had transliterated proper nouns such as names of people or organisms, the general content was translated without altering much of the preexistent Chinese lexicon. In the translated work, the Western theory of evolution is introduced, in which claims such as the evolution of ancient organisms were based on their geological remains. Through a large–scale geological survey, Lyell put forward the theory of uniformitarianism which assumes that the earth changes over a long period of time in a consistent manner while rejecting the creation theory; on the other hand, he stood against Lamarck's theory on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Lyell's work is also known to have been read by Darwin when he was on board of the Beagle, having much influence on his future work. Lyell's work in Chinese translation presents how creationism is criticized and considered as outdated in the West. Moreover, it mentions that Darwin recently proposed his theory on the transmutation and adaptation of species despite the public's lasting skepticism towards Lamarck's theory of evolution. It is worth noting that the aforementioned quote was not part of Lyell's original text; it was additional information that the translators inserted into the translated text.

Interestingly, such theories on the transmutation of species and the origin of mankind were first distributed by missionaries residing in China. A British consul, Walter Medhurst suggested the establishment of an educational institution of science and technology to Chinese residents in Shanghai. Soon enough in 1886, Chinese and foreign missionaries in China raised funds

to build the Gezhishuyuan [格致書院: Chinese Polytechnic Institution and Reading Room]. Even though the General Governor of Zhili, Li Hongzhang's contribution to the institution was the greatest, Gezhi shuyuan was fundamentally a non–governmental institution constructed in joint collabora tion with foreign investors, foreign companies, and Chinese government officials. John Fryer, a missionary from the Anglican Church of England, was appointed as one of board members of this institution, Besides managing the institution, Fryer also published *Gezhi huibian* [格致彙编: *The Chinese Scientific Magazine*] in hopes to expand knowledge on science technology throughout China (Wang, *Shanghai gezhi* 6). In an article of this magazine, the biological evolution of man from the great ape is explained:

> Foreign scholars are thoroughly investigating how the human race came about, how man has evolved, and how much time has passed since the appearance of mankind on earth. These scholars, at times, have studied the Old Testament to learn about the origin of the human race; on the other hand, a geologist, by thoroughly examining the fossils and the remains of animals and mankind found in the strata, has discovered how much time has elapsed since the appearance of man on earth. They also made a claim that animals from the very beginning may have started off simple, but as time passed by, became more complex in later generations. From the very beginning, only insects existed on earth, but fish and mammals came into existence. Among the mammals existed the great ape and the scholars expounded on how humans have evolved from such anthropoid. What seemed to be base became valuable, and things that seemed simple became complex. Such descriptions are strictly based on reason, which makes them credible. ("Hundun shuo" 6)

In 1883, William Alexander Parsons Martin, a missionary from the United Presbyterian Church of North America, who since the early 1860s had participated in the translation enterprise of the Qing Dynasty at the Jingshi Tongwenguan [Capital Institute for Foreign Languages] in Beijing, published the *Xixie kaolue* [西學考略: *Synopsis of Western Learning*], a book that introduces recent academic studies of the West. In this work, he introduces Carl Linnaeus's taxonomy and Lamarck's theory that humans have evolved from animals like chimpanzees that walk erect. After giving a historical

account of how these opinions were not widely accepted at the time, Martin elaborates on Darwin's theory:

> Forty years ago, a British scholar Darwin studied the animals and plants of each region by travelling around the world and readdressed Lamarck's theory. According to Darwin, there are three reasons why each organism changes its form. First, it occurs due to geographical conditions. For example, climate in northern regions tends to be so cold that there are many organisms with thick furs, but the same species in southern regions where the climate is much warmer tend to be without furs. This theory can be proven by observing the traces of fossils in each layer of the strata. In ancient times, a great amount of water covered the surface of the earth, and organisms of that period adapted to both land and water simultaneously. Later when land and water were divided, birds first appeared on land. Judging from the remains of mankind found from the newest layer of strata, it can be assumed that the appearance of man was the last. The second reason for transmutation is the selection of mates. When an organism unexpectedly undergoes transmutation, it is bound to choose a partner with the same features. For instance, a sea bird that unexpectedly flies may choose the same type of bird for its mate and together they would reproduce the new type of species. Thirdly, power or strength decides the life and death of an organism. If gradual changes of environment occur due to natural heat, coldness, and high and low level surfaces, an organism that adapts to such conditions will be able to sustain its life and become much stronger. In 1859, Darwin wrote a book that elaborates on the principles of such a notion, which is titled *Wulei tuiyuan* [物類推原: *Tracing Categories of Things*]. This book carries deep meanings and content that are clear and distinct, which led to a worldwide competition to spread his text through translation. Even today, there are many scholars who revere his findings. (Martin 64–65)

According to Martin, an organism adapts to its environment, and during such process transmutation takes place by chance. This particular organism selects its mate that has undergone the same transition and these two pass their characteristics on to the next generation, enabling a species that can well–adapt to the environment to survive and become stronger. By translating

Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Martin succeeded in describing biological evolution more methodically than previous publications. Explanation on the appearance of mankind based on biological evolution already existed in the 1870s, but Martin's work pertaining to Darwin's evolutionary theory provided a more thorough understanding of the concept. Unlike in the West, there were barely any objections to biological evolution in China. In Chinese society, the creation of all organisms and the changes found in them were understood as a way of circulating the energy of the world (qi [氣]). In addition, since the Chinese did not find God's creation as plausible, claims made on biological ties between mankind and animals were not all that shocking to the public.

In 1885, Wang Tao [王韜] was granted the title of honorary scholar by the Chinese Polytechnic Institution, and at Fryer's request, hosted a quarterly academic event known as the China Prize Essay Contest, which was designed for Chinese literati to write about Western science. In the Fall 1889 contest, one of the essay topics was this: "Can the dozens of scientific theories proposed by Chinese scholars including Zheng Xuan's notes on the investigation of things and extension of knowledge (Gezhi [格致]) in *Daxue* [*Great Learning*] be perceived as comparable to the recent studies of the West? Even though Aristotle from Greece initiated the science (gezhi) of the West, British philosopher and scientist, Francis Bacon overturned the previously published theories and polished Western learning. Through works written by two scholars, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, Western science has become more refined. Considering all this, is it still possible to trace the science of today back to its origin?" (Wang, *Shanghai gezhi* 56). The fact that the examiner of this topic was Li Hongzhang, the highest government official of the Qing dynasty, makes evident the interest and enthusiasm that the Chinese had for Western science. The essay which was awarded the special prize starts, "Investigation and extension of knowledge are different between China and the West." It then proceeds to examine the flow of Western science by elaborating on the theories of Aristotle, Bacon, Darwin, and Spencer.

> In 1809, Darwin was born.… In 1859, he specially wrote how all creations divide into certain species and also explained the principle of how the strong survives while the weak becomes extinct. The context of this work is as follows. All species of plants and animals evolve by time and never remain unchanged from the very beginning of their existence to the present. Animals that fail to adapt become

> extinct, and those that successfully adapt can sustain their lives longer. This is based on the laws of nature. However, such notion goes against the argument of Jesus, so scholars from various nations disagreed with the evolutionary theory. Many have indeed criticized him; however, now the number of his followers is increasing and the study of the investigation and extension of knowledge has drastically changed. Hence, Darwin is indeed a distinguished figure who will forever be remembered throughout history. (Wang, *Jindai kexue* 341–42)

The author of this essay was Zhong Tianwei [鍾天緯], a scholar who passed the civil service examination at the age of 25, but left office when he witnessed the drastic changes that were taking place in China. At age 33, he then enrolled himself in Guang Fangyan Guan [School for the Diffusion of Languages] in Shanghai and began to learn the English language. While the Qing dynasty was gradually perishing, the new knowledge of the West was slowly being accepted by a few Chinese intellectuals. Zhong lived in such era, in which he vigorously chose to embrace the new wave of Western culture unlike the general literati. While working at the Jiangnan Arsenal Translation Centre, together with Fryer, Zhong was mainly in charge of editing a non–periodical print known as *Xiguo jinshi huibian* [*Compendium of a Recent Western Affairs*], which ran foreign news articles in Chinese (Xue 16–35). Since he had the most immediate access to foreign news, it can easily be said that he had amassed vast knowledge on Western learning.

Zhong did not directly mention Darwin's name in his essay, but he mentions the principle of evolution, which is simply translated as "the principle that the strong survive and the weak perish." It is noteworthy Zhong mentions that, though such a principle contradicts the Christian teachings of the West, evolutionary theory is gradually gaining recognition. On Spencer, he comments, "most of his arguments proceed from Darwin's theory." He also mentions *Yiye yaolan* [肄業要覽: *Essential Guides for Study*] (1882), which is a Chinese translation of Spencer's theory of education and succinctly summarizes Spencer's discussion on the validity of knowledge. This book is a translation of the first chapter "What Knowledge is of Most Worth?" from *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (1861). It could be said that at the time, Chinese intellectuals were clearly not interested in Spencer's social Darwinism; what is more, Darwin's key terms that are essential in

understanding evolutionary biology had not yet been translated and utilized. Until the 1880s, Western discourse on evolution was delivered to China via translations almost instantaneously. The contents of these translations were not about social evolution but mainly geology, biology, and other fields of science. Indeed, such academic research neither incited China's intellectual curiosity on man's biological ancestor nor provoked or intensified their interest in the transmutation of plants and animals. The dynamics of power or the power struggle between the strong and the weak were also not considered a serious issue by the Chinese. This indifference was not due to the partial delivery of the Western knowledge system; rather, the Chinese society was simply not sufficiently equipped for such discussions to be applied.

## III. The Japanese Kanji Translation of Darwin's Metaphor

Although "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest" are both phrases of great importance in Darwin's theory of evolutionary biology, in reality it was not Darwin who coined them. The former was first used by Thomas Robert Malthus in *An Essay of the Principle of Population* (1798), and the latter by Spencer in an essay written in 1852. Later, having read Darwin's work, Spencer equates the meaning of "survival of the fittest" to Darwin's "natural selection" in his *Principles of Biology* (1864) (Unoura 84–94). Despite Darwin's appropriation of these phrases in explaining his theory, he made it very clear that this was done in "a large and metaphorical sense" (Darwin 50). When his own coinage "natural selection" faced criticism, he went as far as to point out that in the literal sense it is a "false term" and that its usage can be likened to that of laws of nature such as gravitational attraction (Ibid. 63). Moreover, to illustrate the variation of species, the word "transmutation" is used in his first edition of *The Origin of Species*, and only in the sixth edition does he begin to use the trending term "evolution." Therefore, it was only in the late 1870s through the tireless work of Thomas Huxley that the term "evolution" became the authoritative phrasing, spreading Darwin's theory of evolution in Europe.

Just when the system of knowledge regarding evolution had established itself as a biological theory in the Western world, it was being introduced not only in China but also in Japan. Edward Sylvester Morse, the American visiting professor of Zoology at the University of Tokyo, ran a series of lectures

on evolution in 1877 which was to be the first official lecture on evolutionary biology held in Japan. Chiyomatsu Ishikawa, who was his student at the time, put these lectures together and had them published under the title, *Dobutsu shinkaron* [*On the Evolution of Animals*] in 1883, around which publications on the theory of evolution began to flourish in Japan. *Seishu genshiron* [生種原始論] (1879), a translation of the first two chapters of Huxley's *On the Origin of Species: or, the Causes of the Phenomena of Organic Nature* (1863); its complete translation, *Shinka genron* (1889); *Zinsoron* [人祖論] (1881), the translation of the second edition of Darwin's *The Descent of Man; Manbutsu taika shinsetsu* (1889), a translation of August Weismann's work known for its criticism on the inheritance of acquired characteristics; and *Shinka shinon* [進化新論] (1891) written by Chiyomatsu Ishikawa himself were among the work published around this time. While evolution theory accounted for less than 1% as a topic of discussion among articles of varied importance published in the 1880s by the British journal *Nature* and the American journal *Science*, it was reported by Japan's general–interest magazine, *Toyo gakugei zasshi* [*Journal of Asian Arts and Sciences*] that "evolution" decorated 8% of all published journal articles (Watanabe 109–10), testifying its popularity and establishment as biological knowledge in Japanese academia of the time.

The overwhelming support that Spencer received from America in the 1880s was also evident in Japan as he proved to be most prominent among Western scholars who were being introduced during that time. Within a single decade from the publication of the first translation of his work, *Daigi seitairon* [*Representative Government*] in 1878 to its re–translation as *Daigi seitai tokushitsuron* in 1888, a total of 21 translated books were published (Yamashita 5–6), demonstrating the enthusiasm with which Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer, the leading scholars of England, were concurrently being discussed Japan.

The first country in East Asia to translate Darwin's basic terminology explaining the theory of evolution was none other than Japan, whose doors were first to be opened to the West. On the topic of "evolution," based on pre–existing examples such as "heaven and earth came together, and all things take shape and find form [天地絪縕, 萬物化醇]" from *Yijing* [*The Book of Changes*] (Wilhelm 368) and "chunhua [淳化: harmonious change]" from *Shiji* [*Historical Records*] (Sima 6), the term "kazyun [化醇]" in Japanese pronunciation was commonly used in translation. However, "shinka [進化]" and "kaishin [開進]" were also being used, leading to the translation

of "the theory of evolution" as "kajunron [化醇論]" or "shinkaron [進化論]" (Wadagaki 32). The separation of the meaning of shinka from that of kajun, which signifies the harmonious order of the natural world, can be traced back to the work of Hiroyuki Kato [加藤弘之], the first president of Tokyo Imperial University. Although he lectured the emperor on the theory of natural human rights using his own written work, *Shinsei daigi* [*General Theory of True Government Policy*] (1870), as he studied the theory of evolution he sought to "defeat the theory of natural human rights through evolutionism, a field of study related to the laws of nature" (Kato 6). According to his definition, evolutionism is "a study of principles which explain the gradual evolution of species and the creation of higher life forms that occur through the struggle for existence and natural selection" (Ibid. 13). The theory of evolution was thus elevated to this ideology of "evolutionism" and Darwin's metaphors began to settle as Japanese kanji expressions such as "Seizon kyoso [生存競爭]" and "shizen tota [自然淘汰]." These principles were described as forever unchanging "shizen kiritsu [自然規律: natural law]" and "banbutsu ho [萬物法: universal law]," and were further explained as "yusho reppai [優勝劣敗: the victory of the superior and the defeat of the inferior]." His main attempt was to promote a world of conflict rather than harmony, clearly expressed by the phrase "the victory of the superior and the defeat of the inferior is the principle of Heaven" handwritten onto the cover of his book *Jinken shinsetsu* [*New Treatise on Human Rights*], where he also made evident such change in his ideology. As Darwin's metaphorical expressions were given a more specific meaning through Japanese kanji, their role as a "theory" of evolution exploring the origin of life form was less recognized, and instead emphasis was placed on "evolutionism" which justified the power struggles between the strong and the weak through phrases such as "struggle for existence" and "the victory of the superior and the defeat of the inferior."

It was only after Darwin's work was given this new role as a branch of social science criticizing natural rights and the Freedom and People's Right Movement that his most famous book began to be translated into Japanese. In 1896, *Seibutsu shigen*, translated by Senzaburo Tachibana, was published by an economy magazine in Tokyo. After graduating from Tokyo Imperial University with a degree in philosophy, he translated Darwin's most celebrated work on the evolution of life forms while teaching sociology at Gakushuin University. A voluminous work of over 1,000 pages, containing the complete translation of the original, it states in the preface that the translation is based

on the sixth edition of *The Origin of Species*. Primarily schooled in philosophy and sociology instead of the natural sciences, the translator stayed close to the Japanese kanji translation of "saiteki seizon [最適生存]," as exemplified by "shinka," "seizon kyoso," and "shizen tota." In the 1880s, Kato's treatment of Darwin's metaphorical language was heavily informed by the political landscape of modern Japan, and his Japanese kanji translation continued to live on through Japanese translations of Darwin's work in the 1890s. Translated by the scholars at Tokyo kaiseikan and proofread and published by zoologist Senjiro Oka, the title which was given at the time—*Shu no kigen: Seizon kyoso Tekisha seizon no genri* [種之起原: 生存競爭適者生存の原理]—suggests the continuation of the Japanese kanji translation through the twentieth century.

## IV. Chinese Understanding and Appropriation of Darwin's Metaphors

The first to translate *The Origin of Species* to Chinese was Ma Junwu [馬君武]. It was through him that the appendix that Darwin attached to the third edition—"An Historical Sketch of the Recent Progress of Opinion on the Origin of Species" was translated as "Xinpai shengwuxue (tianyanxue) jia xiaoshi [新派生物學(卽天演學)家小史]." In the same year, he translated Chapter 3 of *The Origin of Species*, and published it together with the translation of Chapter 16 "The Rights of Women" of Spencer's Social Statics. In 1903, he published Chapter 4 of *The Origin of Species as Dawen tianze pian*, and completed the translation of Chapter 1, 2, and 5 in the following year, and published them as *Wuzhong youlai* [物種由來] together with previous translations. *Dawen wuzhong yuanshi* [達爾文物種原始], the first complete translation of *The Origin of Species* came about upon his return to China after completing his doctorate at the Agricultural College of Berlin. Considering the 1930 publication of *Renlei yuanshi ji leize* [人類原始及類擇], the translation of Darwin's *Descent of Man*, his devotion in translating Darwin's work continued for thirty odd years.

Ma's early translations were done during his studies in Japan, where he was also giving speeches at the Chinese Student Union on ousting the Manchu empire and bringing an end to the Qing dynasty. In fact, he became a member of the Tongmenghui [Chinese Revolutionary Alliance] led by Sun Yat-sen in 1905. During this period, taking Tachibana's Japanese translation into

consideration, he had substantially abbreviated Darwin's work and translated it to colloquial Chinese. While his translation has noticeable traces of Japanese kanji vocabulary, he did not abide by the Japanese completely. In China, Darwin's metaphorical language had already been translated to Chinese characters which Ma had the option of utilizing before he embarked on his own work. Through Ma's translation, Darwin's evolutionary biology was termed "tianyanxue [天演学]." For the translation of "struggle for existence," he used expressions such as "wujing [物競]" and "jingzheng shengcun [競爭生存]," for "natural selection" he chose "tianze [天擇]," and "survival of the fittest" was translated to expressions such as "zuiyizhe cun [最宜者存]" (Wang, *Jindai kexue* 146). On the other hand, Japanese kanji expressions such as "shengcun jingzheng [生存競爭]" and "ziran taotai [自然淘汰]" were still prevalent in his complete translation of *The Origin of Species* published in 1919, also as apparent in his introduction of Darwin as the "founder [初祖] of evolutionary theory" (Ma 282, 297), and his translation of "evolution" to "jinhua." To this day, traces of Japanese kanji translation persist in Chinese academia.

Before Ma's translation was published, it was Yan Fu [嚴復], whose early years as a student at the Naval College in Greenwich were spent in England, who translated the theory of evolution using renewed Chinese expressions and spread them throughout Chinese society. Before Darwin's works had been completely translated, he had translated his metaphors into Chinese and used them to call for an overall reform in China. Concepts such as "tianyan [天演]," "wujing," and "tianze" that were used in Ma's translation of *The Origin of Species* were among the new vocabulary added to modern Chinese language through *Tianyanlun* [天演論]. *Tianyanlun* was Yan's translation of the English scholar Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* (1894) into classical Chinese. He explains the theory of evolution as the following:

> Endless change occurs in the natural state, among which there exists an unchanging principle. What is an unchanging principle? It is "tianyan." There are two mechanisms of the basic principle of "tianyan": "wujing" and "tianze." This principle is applied to all occurrences of the world, particularly those of the biological world. "Wujing" refers to the fight among living things for the purpose of self-preservation. One living organism may live or die through a fight with another, and this result depends on "tianze." (Wang, *Yan Fu ji* 1324)

The quote above is an additional section written by Yan himself that does not exist in Huxley's original text. Yan stayed faithful to the traditional grammar of Chinese when translating Darwin's metaphors. Expressions such as "zheng zicun [爭自存: Fight for survival of oneself]" and "yi yizhong [遺宜種: Survival of the fittest]" that were found in early translations (Wang, *Yan Fu ji* 5–6), were later changed to "wujing" and "tianze" in *Tianyanlun*. Yan understood Darwin's theory of evolution as "a study of the world," and believed that the principles of "wujing" and "tianze" ran through the fabric of the natural and human world. The terminologies created by Yan through the work of translation "were increasingly circulated through newspapers and magazines, and became oft–mentioned words among patriots" (Hu 70). In this manner, terminologies related to the Western theory of evolution were not limited to discussions within the field of biology, and became core concepts used by those interested in Chinese politics in reflecting the nation's present and future. Not only was Ma's particular phrasing primarily based on Yan's translation of Darwin's metaphor, but it was also through Yan Fu's newly coined words that the intellectuals who called for revolution in Chinese society legitimized such political project, and attempted to react to foreign powers that plotted the division of China while criticizing the ruling system of the slowly crumbling Qing dynasty.

Yan's translation of Western thought was also far from limited to Darwin's theory. Before translating Huxley's work, he had already been studying the works of Darwin and Spencer. In an explanatory note found in *Tianyanlun*, Spencer writes "Evolution is always the integration of matter and the dissipation of motion." (Wang, *Yan Fu ji* 309). This is based on the definition of evolution provided by Spencer in the first volume of *A System of Synthetic Philosophy entitled First Principles* (Spencer 94; pt. 2, ch.7). Spencer held that the principles of mass and motion develop from simpler forms to the more complex, from the homogenous to heterogeneous, from the unstable to stable, and from chaos to order. The term "evolution" defined by Spencer, the pioneering scholar of social evolution theory of late nineteenth century England, was thus translated by Yan to "tianyan." He was evidently aware of the structure and trends of Western knowledge when he noted that "'tianyan' is a translation of the English word 'evolution' which was first used by Spencer" (Wang, *Yan Fu ji* 309). Therefore, the worldview based on "tianyan" formulated in China was a translation of Darwin's metaphor into Chinese characters through a thorough awareness of Darwin, Spencer and Huxley,

made anew through traditional Chinese grammar.

Within the context of ancient Chinese grammar, the letter "yan [演]" is used in words such as "yanchu [演出]" and "yanyi [演繹]," and signifies manifestation, or progression and flow. Therefore, what "tianyan" refers to is literally the changes of the universe including the natural world and human society. Yan himself explained that the letter "tian [天]" does not signify an ultimate supreme being nor the commonly found blue sky, but "a process that clearly outlines the details of cause and result, that flows naturally as if by chance even when this causal relationship is unidentifiable" (Wang, *Yan Fu ji* 345). What he intended to express by "tianyan" was that the innumerable changes of the world denotes competition for survival and its natural results, and seen through an optimistic worldview, that these changes would eventually progress in an ideal direction. It is for these reasons that Yan translated Huxley's later argument that contested the ethics of evolution as "shengtian [勝天: overcome the heaven]" according to the grammatical rules of ancient Chinese, while Spencer's optimistic social evolution theory was translated as "rentian [任天: submit to the heaven]." As he went on translating Huxley's work, he relied on Spencer's optimistic world view in his continued criticisms against Huxley.

Huxley pointed out the optimistic viewpoint embedded in the simple evolutionary understanding that there is a competition for survival and that in this competition, the fittest would survive. In doing so, he adds that "I suspect that this fallacy has arisen out of the unfortunate ambiguity of the phrase 'survival of the fittest.' 'Fittest' has a connotation of 'best'; and about 'best' there hangs a moral flavor. In cosmic nature, however, what is 'fittest' depends upon the conditions" (Huxley 80). Such criticism against Darwin's metaphor originated from Huxley, whose passionate efforts in spreading the theory of evolution throughout the West earned him the nickname, Darwin's bulldog. On the other hand, it was the notion of "tianyan" and an understanding based on its Chinese grammar that provided Yan Fu the theoretical framework to criticize Huxley's argument, and also an understanding of Darwin's metaphor.

In *Yishu jingyanlu* [譯書経眼錄: *A Short Biography of Translated Books*], an anthology of numerous translated books on Western learning published in the beginning of the twentieth century, Ma's translation, *Daerwen wujing pian* [*Darwin's Chapter of the Struggle for Existence*] is reviewed as follows:

> The present publication clearly explicates the relationship that links

> "wujing," "tianze," and the competition for survival among plants, and with the competition for survival demonstrated by various fauna and flora of the African and American continents as its basis, warns that all life forms should not fear "tianzhan [天戰: fight against Nature]," and always discipline one's mind and body in order to avoid extinction. This can be said to be a sensible advice. (Gu 329)

"Tianzhan," the combative notion of war with the natural world, is an example of Ma's unique understanding of the Western theory of evolution. He observed that within the principle of evolution, even if the various species of today were to be integrated as a single species in the future, the move for one's survival will not cease, and that even at the last moment, the fight against "tian" will forever continue. Ma not only translated Darwin's work, but also as an early advocate of socialism, he argued "what we call social progress does not merely function under the simple principle of fighting for one's own survival; competition and harmony are also the unavoidable principles of social progress" (Zhang 89). While the theory of social evolution and socialism both work under the premise of social progress, their principle understanding of social development is found to each be based on competition and harmony. Nevertheless, through a theory of social development that moves from the evolutionary stage characterized by the pursuit of individual interest to the more advanced stage of collective cooperation, Ma attempts to overcome the theoretical dichotomy of opposing perspectives by understanding them as linear stages of social development. Against this theoretical backdrop, he writes "Even when the world's species become integrated as one, the fight for one's survival does not end. With whom do we fight? The opponent is 'tian.' 'Tian' is the great force of world's nature, and is the destroyer of human. 'Tian' is mankind's last and greatest enemy" (Ibid. 87). By putting forth the notion of "tianzhan," a principle of endless competition, he took part in the early socialist revolution that plotted to overthrow the Qing dynasty. In this sense, unlike Yan Fu whose optimistic perspective allowed him to anticipate an ideal world through competition under the understanding of "ren tian," Ma took part in the grand cause of revolution.

*Xinmin congbao*'s introduction of Ma's translation of Darwin and Spencer states "This book is a translation that took English and Japanese into consider –ation. In many cases, the verbs and nouns are based on old translations and follows a somewhat different format from Yan Fu's work" ("Shaojie xinshu"

89). The first Chinese translation of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was thus completed in an environment characterized by the coexistence of English and Japanese. Although both Ma's translation which was based on the Japanese translation, and Yan's translation which was based on an understanding of Darwin through Spencer and Huxley were typical translations of Darwin's metaphors into Chinese characters, all translated versions diverged from Darwin's own usage of metaphor and were appropriated through the translator's own pre–existing intellect and the surrounding social conditions. If one were to posit that Darwin's metaphors worked as a target of praise or criticism, its Chinese translation clearly played different role within China's political and social climate.

## V. Conclusion

Darwin's metaphors were widely utilized. This was not just the case among the Chinese who began to feel a sense of urgency regarding the volatile future of their nation, particularly in the aftermath of the Sino–Japanese War. They were also being used in Korea whose diplomatic rights had recently been lost to Japan. Not long after Yan's translation *Tianyanlun* was officially published, faithful as it was to the ancient Chinese language, phrases such as "shinka," "seizon kyoso," and "shizen tota"—translated neologism that originated from Japanese kanji—existed side by side or in competition within the Chinese translated version that emerged from China; thus, creating a sphere of knowledge that can better suit the discussions of the theory of evolution within China. Although it was indeed Yan who introduced the theories of Darwin and Spencer as "tianyan," it was the most prominent activist in the late years of the Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao, who had a decisive role in the spreading of this term. Most notably, he remembered Yan as "Father of Philosophy, Dr. 'tianyan' Yan" (Liang, "Kuang shizhong baxian ge" 97).

Liang Qichao was an avid reader of *Tianyanlun*, and was to some degree knowledgeable on the basics of the evolution of life forms through the work of missionaries. He had no question in that "from the ape comes the human, and the base species becomes the valued species of civilization" (Liang, "Bianfa tongyi" 3). Theories of biological evolution encompassing the origin of man, changes of the earth, and the variation of life forms, were accepted in China before the twentieth century as scientific facts, but did not develop as a line

of thought within the geographical confines of China. Although discussions surrounding the theory of evolution that ensued throughout the West in the 1870s and 80s were introduced in China almost as it was happening, it was for similar reasons that they were only embraced within the context of science.

Having fled to Japan after the failure of the Hundred Days of Reform (1898), by studying books published in Japan on Western thought, Liang began to increasingly utilize newly formed Japanese vocabulary. Expressions such as "wujing" and "tianze" that he learned from Yan began to be used synonymously with the Japanese term, "Seizon kyoso" and "yusho reppai." He would go further to create phrases in which Japanese and Chinese exist side by side such as "wujing tianze / yusho reppai" (Liang, "fangqi ziyou zhi zui" 5). The Chinese translations of Darwin's metaphors that arose from China and Japan were each altered from its genealogical origin. Rather than demonstrating the laws of the natural world and how they relate to human practice, the translated metaphors functioned as scientific evidence for social evolution theories which demonstrate, in a more symbolic manner, the harsh reality of the world order where the fittest prey on the weak.

Metaphors function in diverse ways. Darwin's use of metaphors in *The Origin of Species* is an appropriation of words written by previous scholars for the purpose of effectively delivering his opinion. By the use of metaphorical wording he succeeded in spreading his scientific theory far and wide; moreover, from Huxley he managed to gain both approval and criticism. However, beyond the West and its spatial boundaries of discourse, the words used in translating the theory of evolution were in fact not an example of metaphor but political action. Darwin's use of metaphors can be seen as a type of intralingual translation within the same language. On the other hand, in the culture sphere that shares Chinese characters, the Chinese translations that took place in countries that differ in culture and history were examples of an intersemiotic translation of language that closely resembled social practice.

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## Abstract

In this essay, I aim to analyze the process of translating Charles Darwin's language to Chinese or Japanese Kanji, and also to contemplate on the usage and the newly attached meanings of the translated language of evolutionism in East Asia. To this end, I begin to trace Chinese and Japanese documents, including the papers and the magazines and some translated books which introduced evolutionary theory as scientific knowledge for the first time, published during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As Darwin's metaphorical expressions were given a more specific meaning through Japanese kanji by scholars such as Hiroyuki Kato, their role as a "theory" of evolution exploring the origin of life form was less recognized, and instead emphasis was placed on "evolutionism" which justified the power struggles between the strong and the weak. Second, I compare two Chinese translations of the European theory of evolution. One is Yan Fu's direct translation of Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, and the other is the first Chinese translation of Darwin's *Origin of Species* based on the Japanese translation. Both translated versions diverged from Darwin's usage of metaphors and were appropriated through the translator's own pre–existing intellect and the surrounding social conditions. To sum up, Darwin's use of metaphors was an appropriation of words written by previous scholars for the purpose of effectively delivering his opinion. However, beyond the West and its spatial boundaries of discourse, the words used in translating the theory of evolution were in fact not an example of metaphor but political action. In the culture sphere that shares Chinese characters, the Chinese translations that took place in countries that differ in culture and history were examples of an intersemiotic translation of language that closely resembled social practice.

**Keywords:** evolution, Evolutionary Theory, translation, metaphor, science, East Asia

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