

Fuwu 服務 and the Transformations of Social Relations in China:

Maoism and the Global Service Industry

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1. Introduction

‘*Wei renmin fuwu*’ (爲人民服務 Serve the people) has become a *kitsch phrase* which is often found in such *red commodities* as khaki military bags and the title of a Chinese food guide. In the Maoist era, *fuwu* was one of the most politicized words yet in the post-reform period it is used in a seemingly neutralized way mainly in *fuwu ye* 服務業 (Service industry) reflecting the radical changes of contemporary Chinese society.

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The conceptual history of *fuwu* provides unexpected insights for understanding twentieth century China. By examining the conceptual history of *fuwu*, this paper will analyze the changing social relationships in China. *Fuwu* which describes the relationship between two sides, has been on the front line of the dramatic changes of social relations in twentieth century China. If 'wei renmin fuwu' directed Socialist China's *Zeitgeist*, *fuwu ye* epitomizes post-Socialist China's ambition to become a global superpower.

This paper will explore the social linguistic origin of *fuwu* in East Asia; its significance in Maoist ideas of class, practice and revolution; and its contemporary usage in the global service industry. I will consider questions such as what kinds of social relations *fuwu* reflected in the different periods; how the obvious connotation of subordination and subjugation is accepted in the different periods; and how the issues of class and ideology can be understood through the changing usages of the word.

The characteristics of intangibility, simultaneity, spatial unity and personalization in production and consumption distinguish service in the service industry from other goods. In the mass produced and consumed service, the issue of inequality becomes 'normalized' and invisible. Through the concept of the spectacle, I will explore the colonization of the labourer by the service commodity, the reproduction of the social relations as well as the political totalisation during the Maoist era.

2. *Fuwu* (*Fukumu*, *Bokmu*) in East Asia—The Military Origin

The Chinese word, *fuwu* is known as one of the many Sino-Japanese loanwords existing in modern Chinese such as ‘neirong’ (內容 *naiyō*, content) and ‘jituan’ (集團 *shūdan*, group). Lydia Liu and other scholars distinguish this group from the so-called ‘return graphic loans’ which refer to ‘classical Chinese-character compounds that were used by the Japanese to translate modern European words and were reintroduced into modern Chinese’.¹⁾ In terms of number, the latter group is much greater than the former group. The main difference between these two groups of loanwords is that the former does not necessarily involve European language while the latter derived from the efforts to accommodate and translate European words and ideas such as ‘citizen’ (國民 *kokumin*), ‘individual’ (個人 *kojin*) ‘civilization’ (文明 *bunmei*) and ‘culture’ (文化 *bunka*) into Japanese, which are directly imported by Chinese and Korean.

This means that the Japanese kanji word 服務 *fukumu* was not necessarily coined and used to express the European word of ‘service’ or ‘to serve’. The English noun, ‘service’ originated from the Latin word ‘servus’ (slave), thus, ‘servitium’ (slavery, servitude) perhaps originally from the Etruscan word for slave, ‘Servi’ or ‘Serve’. Service as the sense of ‘act of serving’ is attested from 1230, the meaning of ‘duty of a

1) Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p.302.

military man' from 1580s, hence 'the military as an occupation' from 1706. It is recorded as around mid-14th century when the verb 'serve' attained the meaning, 'to attend to (a customer)'. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the verb seemed to include the meanings, 'to set food on (a table)', the sporting sense, and 'to serve (someone) right.'²⁾

If we link the Japanese noun *fukumu* to 'service', it is close to one particular meaning of 'service', that is, 'duty of a military man'. The early use of *fukumu* is found in the naval regulations about officers' promotion in the Meiji period: 'Sea service (舵上勤務 *kaijō kinmu*) means to work (*fukumu*) aboard on a battleship'.³⁾ *Fukumu* in Japanese dictionaries is defined as 'engaging in work' or 'conducting one's duty'. Compared with 勤務 *kinmu*, *fukumu* bears a stronger sense of duty. In Korea, 服務 *bokmu* began to be used under the direct influence of Japanese in early twentieth century. It is defined as 'strenuously carrying out one's duty and work'.⁴⁾ Its denotation and uses are almost the same as the Japanese counterpart. As *fukumu* becomes a verb by attaching the verbal ending '-*suru*', *bokmu* is used as a verb with the verbal ending, '-*hada*'. In the contemporary Korean language, *bokmu* is primarily used with the word *gun* (military) combined together to produce *gun bokmu* (military service).

In my own research, I cannot find the word, *fuwu* until the end of the Qing dynasty in China. As we have seen, it must have been imported from the Japanese word in the modern period. In contemporary Chinese dictionaries, the primary denotation of the word

2) Chambers ed., *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*, (London: Chambers, 1999).

3) "No. 9, The Regulations about the Naval warrant officer's promotion to a staff sergeant," (1896) in *Nihongo* (2001), p.789.

4) Shin Kichul ed., *Sae urimal* (Seoul: Samsung Publisher, 1992), p.1491.

is 'to work for society or others'. In Japanese and Korean, this meaning is expressed mainly by the same *kanji* (*hanja*) word, 奉仕 (*houshi* in Japanese and *bongsa* in Korean pronunciation). In China, the second definition of *fuwu* is 'to attend (a customer)' as used in *fuwu yuan* (waiter, waitress, shop assistant) *fuwu tai* (服務臺 service desk) *fuwu zhongxin* (服務中心 service centre) and *fuwu ye* (service industry). In Japanese and Korean, the English loanword of 'service' (서비스 *sābisu* and 서비스 *sōbisū*) was imported to denote the meaning of 'attending or assisting customers'. In Japanese and Korean, the meanings of work under the duty for state and work for commercial goals are separated between the Chinese character-word and the English loanword. The Chinese language, which relies on fewer foreign loanwords than Japanese and Korean do, did not separate the two branches of the social, collective or public obligation and of private and commercial labour. It may also be because the country did not develop capitalist commercialism between 1949 and 1978 and therefore did not urgently need a separate word to signify 'attending customers'. If the social relations over the long different historical epochs are inscribed in the English word 'service' such as slavery, religion, the military, sports and commerce, the congruence of the denotation of 'devotion to the collective' and that of 'commercial labour' shows in fact an unmistakable palimpsest of contemporary Chinese history and society.

It is during the Maoist period that *fuwu* became widely used and gained its contemporary meaning. *Fuwu* with the semantic origin in the military became idealized and revolutionized during the Maoist period.

3. *Wei renmin Fuwu* in Maoist Ideas—Verb for Practice

One of the early uses of *fuwu* in Mao Zedong's writings is in 'A fund-raising notice for the Shanghai Work Society Mutual Aid Society' (March 7, 1920). In the itemized summary regulations, 'purpose' and 'membership' are followed by no. 3 'service' (*fuwu*). Under this category, the regulation reads, 'Every member must work six hours every day. If the living expenses cannot be covered by this, the number of labour hours may be increased temporarily after public discussion among the members'.⁵⁾ In this early use, *fuwu* was used in a meaning similar to the Japanese counterpart, not in the sense of the state duty, but as an official obligation in a social organization.

It seems between 1942 and 1945 the word became politicized and popularized. At the memorial meeting for the late communist party member and soldier, Zhang Side, in September 1944, Mao delivered a short speech entitled '*wei renmin fuwu*'. The other famous version of the phrase, '*quanxinquanyi di wei renmin fuwu*' (serve the people whole-heartedly) originated from his talk, 'On the Coalition Government' at the 7th central meeting of the CCP in April 1945. The full-depth discussion on '*wei renmin fuwu*' (serve the people) was given earlier in 1942. His well-known 'Talks at the Yan'an conference on literature and art' provides a detailed explanation of the phrase. In the conclusion of the 'Talks', he clarifies the obligations of writers and

5) Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong zaoqi wengao* (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1991), p.632. Schram's translation is used after revision. Stuart R. Schram, *Mao's Road to Power: Revolutionary Writings 1912-1949* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), p.499.

artists, answering questions such as 'whom our literature and art serve'; 'who are the people'; then 'how to serve the people'; and 'how literature and art should be related to the party'.⁶⁾ Quoting Lenin's statement made in 1905, 'serve tens of millions of the working people,' he brings up the phrase.⁷⁾ The word *fuwu* was used for a practical goal of clarifying the relationship and obligations between groups of the people, and also between the party and the subsectors.

It is significant to note that it was the war period that the word *fuwu* became to be used in the political slogan.⁸⁾ In his talks and writings between 1936 and 1945 including the aforementioned three talks, Mao's primary concern was anti-Japanese or anti-Imperialist war. In the war circumstances, *fuwu* with the heavy military association became to spread and be applied to the whole society including the domains of art and literature.

From the perspective of Mao's ideas, the seemingly uncomplicated catchphrase, '*wei renmin fuwu*' should also be treated seriously, in particular considering the fact that it came to the fore after the so-called Mao's serious study of Marxism period between 1936 and 1937, and after the formation of his major philosophical and political ideas as shown in "On Practice" (1937), "On Contradiction" (1937) and "On New Democracy" (1940).⁹⁾ The propagandist phrase has great

6) Mao Zedong, "Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua," (1942) in *Mao Zedong Xuanji* 3 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp.854-867.

7) *Ibid.* p.854.

8) In his talk celebrating the establishment of the Chinese art and literature Association, Mao also emphasized art and literature must concentrate on the 'more urgent task' of fighting the Japanese imperialist. Mao Zedong, "Zai zhongguo wenyi xiehui chenglidahui shang de jianghua," (1936) in *Baidu wenku*, <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/60b5ef8583d049649b6658a1.html>.

9) Although there exists controversies over whether the works were written at the

significance in configuring social relations or class in his ideas.

Mao's ideas on class and revolution have been almost unanimously characterized by his strong reliance on rural peasants rather than on the urban working class. It has been the central point of debates over whether Mao is an orthodox Marxist as seen in the debates between Maurice Meisner and Nick Knight. It is doubtful how fruitful these controversies were. For instance, Slavoj Žižek understands the discourses on the orthodoxy as part of dialectics of constructing the orthodox. In his reading of Mao's texts, he argues that 'the way this violent transplantation into a foreign context radically affects the original theory itself, so that, when this theory 'returns to itself in its otherness' reinvents itself in the foreign context'.¹⁰⁾ Thus rather than trying to defend Mao as an 'orthodox Marxist', I will take Mao's stress on material as seriously both as ontology and epistemology and apply the principle coherently to the interpretation of his ideas.

In this context, if we rank the importance of the major terms in his ideas, I believe the order should be revolution-practice-class-contradiction rather than contradiction-class-practice-revolution. In order to understand his view on contradiction, one should go back to his writings on class; to comprehend his ideas on class, one should read his works on practice; and the key to understanding of all three terms lies in his stress on revolution.

Arif Dirlik argues that in Mao's ideas class does not merely signify

time or how much was 'copied' from the Soviet philosophical texts, it is widely accepted that the basic and original ideas in particular, principal contradictions were formulated around the time.

10) Slavoj Žižek, "Introduction: The Marxist Lord of Misrule," in *On Practice and Contradiction*, *Mao Tse-Tung* (London, New York: Verso, 2007), p.4.

the social structure fixed by the economic relations between those who own the means of production and those who do not.

In his [Mao Zedong's] delineation of classes in China, he was interested not in a structural determination of class in terms of relationship to the means of production, but in the identification of the status of social groups in terms of hierarchy of power, and especially in terms of relations of exploitation.¹¹⁾

Drawing on E. P. Thompson's view of class, Dirlik interprets class in Maoism as relations. Thompson unfolds a rather creative take of Marx's view on class. He criticizes the view that sees class as a 'thing' 'structure' or 'category' saying it is not what Marx meant. Instead he argues class is an 'historical phenomenon' and a 'historical relationship'.¹²⁾ Furthermore, he indicates the phenomenon or the relationship in the process of making as he shows through the title, 'The *making* of the English working class'. From this context, Dirlik moves on to emphasize the significance of class consciousness in Mao's ideas. As well known, in dialectical materialism, class consciousness and practice mutually affect and form the other. Following Mao's route of thought, under the circumstances of revolution, practice becomes more 'principal' and operational than class consciousness. Mao presents a specified interpretation of the principle of Marxist materialism, 'existence

11) Arif Dirlik "The Predicament of Marxist Revolutionary Consciousness: Mao Zedong, Antonio Gramsci, and the Reformulation of Marxist revolutionary Theory" *Modern China* 9, no. 2 (April 1983): p.196.

12) "By class I understand an historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness." E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1965), p.9.

(reality) decides consciousness' as 'the objective realities of class struggles and national struggles decide our ideas and emotions'.¹³⁾ As class struggles and national struggles are seen as the most important part of the objective reality, practice has more determinant power over class consciousness during revolutions.

Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms—class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits…… Of these other types of social practice, class struggle in particular, in all its various forms, exerts a profound influence on the development of man's knowledge.¹⁴⁾

Fuwu in Mao's phrase of '*wei renmin fuwu*' reflects his view of class as the 'process' of making social relationships and the indicator in class struggle rather than as the fixed structure composed of the groups determined by the production relationship. *Fuwu* is dynamic revolutionary practice that (re)constructs the social relationships of class and class consciousness.

Fuwu is in particular a practice of forming the collective subject in class struggle. *Fuwu* is subjective practice by which peasants and the other potentially revolutionary classes relate themselves to the leading class of the people, the working class, when the working class did not occupy the majority of society. The phrase, 'serve the people,' shows that people are at the same time the subject and the object. In 'Yan'an Talks' which were dictated to writers and artists, the people (*renmin*) are analyzed and objectified: 'The people also have weak points. Many

13) Mao, "Yan'an jianghua," p.852.

14) Mao Zedong, "Shijian lun," (1937) in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 1 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991). Here Schram, *Mao's Road to Power*, p.53.

people among the proletariat continue to have petit-bourgeois ideology'.¹⁵⁾ The collective subject is constructed through objectification as well as idealisation. Confronting the urgent realities of revolution and war, Mao's discussions on class almost invariably begin with the need for discerning the enemy from 'us'. For instance, in his early writing on class, 'The Analysis of Each Class of China' (1925), the first three sentences are 'who are our enemy? Who are our friends? This is the most important question of revolution'.¹⁶⁾ Categorising each class of national capitalists, petit-bourgeoisie, semi-proletariat, proletariat, and floating proletariat, his primary aim in this writing is to distinguish the allies from the enemy. In 'Talks at the Yan'an conference on literature and art', his thesis of 'serve the people' unfolds while drawing the battlefield between the enemy and our side.¹⁷⁾ The collective subject of revolution is constructed first of all by drawing a clear distinction with the other, the enemy. Although class is fluid rather than a fixed relationship, he highlights an insurmountable barrier with the enemy which moves according to political and economic changes.

Fuwu was used predominantly as a verb in its politicized usage. The clear connotation of subordination in the word is ironically used in a dynamic process of constructing social relationships rather than in fixing the hierarchies. During the (post-)reform period, '*wei renmin fuwu*' continues to be used as the political motto in governmental and

15) Mao "Yan'an jianghua," p.849.

16) Mao Zedong, "Zhongguo shehui ge jieji de fenxi," (1925) in *Mao Zedong xuanji* 1 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), p.3.

17) "There are three kinds of people. The first kind is the enemy (*diren*), another is the allies on the united front (*tongyi zhanxian zhong de tongmengzhe*), and the other is our people (*ziji ren*)." Mao "Yan'an jianghua," p.848.

party official documents or in scholarly writings that promote 'socialist' marketisation.¹⁸⁾

4. *Fuwu ye* in the Global Cities

In the Maoist period, the dominant use of the word *fuwu* was as a verb in the imperative which promotes individuals' subordination to a greater abstract entity such as the people (*renmin*) or nation (*guojia* 國家). In parallel with its use as a verb, the noun of *fuwu yuan* became to be gradually used in the period. In *fuwu yuan*, *fuwu* is used as a noun combined with the other noun, *yuan* to denote an occupation. In this secular use of the word in everyday life, *fuwu* meant the specific work of attending and assisting someone else's needs and requests in shops, hotels, restaurants, post offices, train stations etc. Yet in the social relationship under socialism, *fuwu* did not denote the relationship of subordination between the one who provides it and the other who receives it. *Tongzhi* (同志 comrades, literally the people with *same* will or ideal) and *fuwu yuan* were interchangeable in most cases. Socialist China was a production-oriented society rather than a consumption-oriented society or labourers' society rather than consumers' society. Between 1957 and 1978, China had a perpetual shortage of retail and more than half of all household purchases were

18) Zhu Huanxing, "Wei renmin fuwu zai jianshe shehuizhuyi shichang jingji zhong de zuoyong" in *Mao Zedong sixiang luntan* 1 (Changsha: Hunan chubanshe, 1997), 29-30. Yan Rong, "Wei renmin fuwu: shehuizhuyi zhiye daode de hexin" in *Mao Zedong sixiang yanjiu* 25, no. 4 (July 2008): pp.154-157.

subject to some kind of rationing. Under such circumstances, store clerks often acted a rather privileged position of 'gatekeepers of goods'.¹⁹⁾ *Fuwu* in *fuwu yuan* became closer to the English loanword of *sābisu* in Japanese or *sōbisū* in Korean but it still carried an important aspect of *fukumu* or *bokmu*. *Fuwu* was the public or state-related work as most of the workplaces had the state or collective ownership. For instance, about 99% of retail sales were operated by state-run or collectively owned enterprises in the 1960s.²⁰⁾ *Fuwu yuan* became less commonly used throughout the 1990s and 2000s also depending on regions. In the southern metropolises like Shanghai and Guangzhou, the gendered designations like *xiaojie* (Miss) have become to replace the word while rural areas and Beijing *xiaojie* is less commonly used to call shop clerks or waitresses as it is associated with girls in entertainment business. *Jiating fuwu yuan* (家庭服務員 domestic worker) which is the formal version of the informal and traditional word of *baomu* (保姆 housekeeper) was a job that reemerged in the reform period.

The predominant use of the word *fuwu* in the 1990s and 2000s has been as a noun in *fuwu* (hang) *ye* (服務(行)業 service industry). *Fuwu ye* is at the frontier of China's new economy joining in global economy both in the symbolic and practical senses. In the last two decades, in particular after the 16th Party Congress in November 2002, the service industry in China has been rapidly expanding. This turning point is

19) Amy Hanser, *Service Encounters: Class, Gender and the Market for Social distinction in Urban China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 32-34. & Eileen Otis, *Serving the People: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in China's Emerging Service Sector* (PhD Dissertation, Sociology, University of California Davis, 2003), p.3.

20) *Ibid.* p.30.

closely combined to China's entry into the WTO in 2001. The service sector in China more fully opened up to foreign entrepreneurs and went through dramatic changes in the post-WTO period. For instance, in the retail sector, France's Carrefour and the United States' Wal-Mart penetrated into big cities of China and changed the mode of urban consumption by 2005.²¹⁾

The central people's government of the PRC have constantly stressed the significance of the service industry. They say it is at the centre of fulfilling the rapid 'improvement of the living standards' (小康社會 *xiaokang shehui*), industrialization (工業化 *gongye hua*), urbanization (城鎮化 *chengzhen hua*), marketization (市場化 *shichang hua*), and internationalization (國際化 *guoji hua*).²²⁾ By making the service industry as the leading industry of the national economy, they try to transform the economic structure and also the patterns of long-term economic development. The rapid development of the labour-intensive service sector is above all critical in improving the employment rate and thus the people's living conditions.²³⁾ Despite the dramatic growth in the service industry, its contribution ratio to the nation's GDP remains low (around 30% in the 1990s and 40% in the 2000s) compared with 60% to 70% in the 'developed countries' and it has stagnated since 2001.²⁴⁾ In the official economic statistics of the government, the tertiary industry is used in place of the category of the service industry. (Chinese Annual Statistics) Some people argue that the category of the service industry is larger than the tertiary industry, as the former also

21) Hanser, *Service Encounters*, p.41.

22) The Chinese State Congress 2007, 2008.

23) The Chinese State Congress 2007.

24) Chinese Annual Stastics 2009 & Invest in China 2010.

includes some parts of agriculture, manufacturing industry and the construction industry. (*Chongqing Dadukou* District) The central and local governments of China often divide *fuwu ye* into traditional (傳統 *chuantong*) and modern (現代 *xiandai*). The former indicates the service industry which provides everyday service such as commerce, restaurants, hotels and tourism and the latter indicates new technologies, management, methods-based service industry representatively ICT (Information and Communication technology)-based media industries such as internet services, e-commerce, telecommunications and advertising. Similarly, some divide the service industry into the two categories of the productive type (生產型 *shengchan xing*) and the living type (生活型 *shenghuo xing*).²⁵⁾ Both categories of the service industry are becoming dominant or significant in urban China absorbing a rapidly growing number of (migrant) workers and guiding the future development of the irnational economy.

Following the recent Chinese uses of the word, *fuwu ye*, I will explore both areas of the service industry, traditional or the living type service industry and modern or the productive type service industry to examine how social relationships have been changed.

The 'Traditional Service Industry'—The Spectacle of *Fuwu*

I characterize the social relations formed surrounding *fuwu* in the so-called traditional service industry in China as 'the spectacle' drawing on Guy Debord's conception. The spectacle is even more beneficial in capturing the contemporary Chinese characteristics of 'service labour'.

25) Chongqing Dadukou District & Beijing Dongcheng District.

In Debord's ideas, the spectacle is related to a social relation, a wide range of seemingly unconnected phenomena, and a historical stage of society rather than a mere visual deception, a collection of images or concrete social activity.²⁶⁾ His concept of the spectacle is useful in describing the commodity's total colonization of social life and the predominance of appearance.

The Spectacle is the stage at which the commodity has succeeded in totally colonizing social life. Commodification is not only visible, we no longer see anything else: the world we see is the world of the commodity. The spectacle proclaims the predominance of appearance and asserts that all human life, which is to say all social life, is mere appearance.²⁷⁾

I will show that *fuwu* is the spectacle that denotes the total colonization of the labourer by the commodity; the dazzling process of normalizing the obvious subordination relationship between customers and workers; the global standardization of labour and the labourer; the shifting focus of the ideological apparatus from the state institutions to global commodity culture; the mere existence of appearance and performance in which feminine sexuality is magnified; and the intensified gaze of control and monitoring on labourers.

In business, the commodity of service is seen as distinct from other commodities in the sense that production and consumption occur simultaneously. In Marxist economy, service is categorized as nonproduction labour which is carried out in the sectors of distribution, social maintenance and personal consumption in opposition to

26) Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 1983).

27) Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, p.21, 14.

production labour in the production sector.²⁸⁾ Quite a few scholars discard the Marxist categorization of labour seeing it as outdated or as privileging production. Yet we can push further the Marxist view of service labour and see it as the subjugation of the labourer by labour and as the total colonization and commodification of the labourer. Commodity reification is realized by hiding the production process of labour in the final product: in service labour, the production process itself becomes the commodity and becomes the spectacle. However, as we will see this exposure of labour in the dazzling light is not revealing but blinding. In capitalist society of the spectacle, the totally exposed service labour process is received primarily as a commodity not as the labour process. In production/consumption of service, the relationship between the producer and the consumer located in broad daylight is *thingified*.

Unlike the traditional blue-collar or white-collar workers' labour, the nature of service labour incorporates bodily appearance and demeanor as its important constituents. Quite a few sociologists have paid attention to special distinctions of service labour. Arlie Hochschild coined and developed the term, 'emotional labour' from his observation of the jobs such as flight attendants, salespersons, secretaries and bill collectors. The main characteristics of 'emotional labour' are 'face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact with the public'; production of 'emotional state in another person, for example, gratitude or fear'; and the 'employer's control over the emotional activities of employees through training and supervision'.²⁹⁾ He stresses commercialisation of

28) Anwar M. Shaikh and E. Ahmet Tonak, *Measuring the Wealth of Nations: The Political Economy of National Accounts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.20-37.

human feeling in this process of service labour. Some sociologists, often drawing on Judith Butler's performative model of identity, defy Hochschild's view of dividing the authentic and the false selves and his notion of violation of the true self by such work.³⁰⁾ They point out how global service industries are premised upon the notion of the (semi-)autonomous self.³¹⁾ Sherman calls the workplace of the service industry as the service theater. I also see *fuwu* (service labour) as 'performance' which denies the essence of identity and which implicates the spectacular nature of identity but *fuwu* is not the performance in the theater but performance in the ideological global apparatus. Obviously the ideological global apparatus is an adaptation of Louis Althusser's 'ideological state apparatus.'³²⁾ Society of the spectacle also implicates that ideological practices are carried out increasingly more by global entrepreneurs through everyday commodity culture than by state institutions such as school, church and family.

Labour in the Chinese service sector shows a more intense and direct subjugation of the labourer by the commodity culture. The labourer's character as a whole has become the object of the managerial control and monitoring including physical appearance, body pose, dispositions, gesture, facial and aural expression and morality.

Such characteristics appeared already in the early twentieth

29) Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p.147.

30) Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge), 1999.

31) Otis, *Serving the People*, 29-41. Rachel Sherman, *Class Acts: Service and Inequality in Luxury Hotels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp.7-23.

32) Louis Althusser, "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1989), pp.170-86.

century's Chinese service industry although they did not use the word *fuwu ye*. For instance, at the Wing On Department store in Hong Kong and Shanghai run by the Guo brothers, Guo Quan and Guo Le, the sales staff who lived together in the company dormitories received strong and distinctive training or education. Through running separate departments of Moral Education (德育部 *deyu bu*), Intellectual Cultivation (智育部 *zhiyu bu*) and later Physical Education (體育部 *tiyu bu*), Wing On's training of the employees centered on the notion of character building with intellectual (including English education), physical and cultural education. The Christian owners also made the Sunday religious service mandatory for the workers. Some interpret such training from the viewpoint of the Confucian ideal of character building but it also shows the use of moral didacticism as an important way of management then and now.³³⁾

If training of service workers was inflected heavily by the owners' personal beliefs and philosophy in early twentieth century China, it is now strongly led by the ideology of professionalism and the global standards of transnational service entrepreneurs. Recently Amy Hanser (2005, 2008) and Eileen Otis (2003, 2007) carried out ethnographic studies on the service workers in Chinese metropolises. Both focusing on class and gender, Hanser's works deal with Department Stores in Beijing and Harbin and Otis' mainly with luxury hotels in Beijing and Kunming.

Through her fieldwork in what she calls 'transluxury hotels' in Beijing and Kunming, Otis investigates the highly standardized training

33) Ching-hwang Yen, "Wing On and the Kwok Brothers: A Case Study of Pre-War Overseas Chinese Entrepreneus", in *Asian Department Stores*, ed. Kerrie L. MacPherson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), p.55.

program imported from the US-based Galaxy Corporation and explores the highly customized service, which she characterizes as 'virtual personalism'.³⁴⁾ Such greatly customized service for each customer's personal needs is ironically the application of the meticulously detailed global standards of manners and etiquettes of which the global elite class is the main referential point.

Rachel Sherman's ethnographic research of luxury hotels in the US reveals an important point, that is, compared with non-interactive workers in luxury hotels, interactive workers tend to normalize inequality discussing it but not critiquing it.³⁵⁾ The more visible and direct form of inequality is perceived as invisible. Yet the 'normalization of inequality' cannot be attributed primarily to the characteristics of interactive labour because domestic workers' labour, which is a more intense form of interactive labour, has invited more resistance from the workers. I argue that inequality is regulated, polished and becomes invisible in mass production and consumption of service labour or in the spectacle of service commodity.

Otis reports that the staff members find the high level of training program and service useful in developing and maintaining a sense of autonomy, dignity and even superiority to the customer.³⁶⁾ The self-invigorating program and the job entitlement provide workers with the sense of superiority over workers in a less privileged workplace and even over customers. Hanser finds the workers in the Sunshine

34) Otis, *Serving the People*.

35) Sherman, *Class Acts*.

36) Eileen Otis, "Virtual Personalism in Beijing: Learning Deference and Femininity at a Global Luxury Hotel" in *Working in China: Ethnographies of Labor and Workplace Transformation* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p.118.

Department Store in Harbin often reveal the sense of pride and moral superiority over other service workers in less luxurious department stores and outdoor markets.³⁷⁾ Otis points out that in the training, the hotel workers learn to categorize or stereotype customers according to their nationality, class, gender and locality. Customers are also under the scrutinizing gaze that categorizes them into multiple identities. Trained through the high standard of etiquette and demeanor, the workers also feel superiority over some customers who show poor social manner.³⁸⁾

In the 'traditional' service sector in contemporary China, *fuwu* is highly gendered as female. In luxury hotels, restaurants and departments stores, the dominance of the *qingchun fan* (青春飯 the rice-bowl of youth) rule is most perceptible. *Qingchun fan* indicates young (and often beautiful) women's better opportunities or abilities for lucrative employment. Both Otis and Hanser find that the age and physical appearance have become a key factor of job recruitment and allocation in luxury hotels and department stores. The transition from *fuwu yuan* to *fuwu ye* overlaps with that from *tiefanwan* (鐵板碗 the iron rice-bowl) to *qingchun fan* (the rice-bowl of youth). Yet together with the importation of the globalized managing system, service entrepreneurs in China also preserve the trace of the socialist workplace such as workers' heavy reliance on subsidiary products and welfare system which compensate the low wage.

In China that plays the role of the global manufacturer, oversupply becomes an ordinary rule and it intensifies the domestic competition

37) Hanser, *Service Encounters*.

38) Otis, *Serving the People*.

between manufacturers. *Fuwu* denotes service labour under multilayered control and monitoring under the circumstances of oversupply of goods and service labour. Many of contemporary Chinese department stores adopt the factory-in-the store system which indicates a commission sale type based on a sell-first, pay-later principle.³⁹⁾ To workers in department stores, this means a double-layered monitoring. They are monitored and controlled by both store managers and factory representatives who are present in the sales floor on a daily basis. This system increases workload, competition and job insecurity. This system, which was greatly attributed to the oversupply of goods and outnumbered department stores, creates a particularly difficult situation for Chinese service labourers surrounded by manufacturers, managers and consumers.

ICT-based Service Industry—Fuwu of Digital Labour

The way of categorizing the service industry as traditional and modern or living and productive obviously reflects the local and central governments' stress on the modern or productive type service industry. The media spectacle of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics attempted to declare the country's historical initiative and its future leadership in the IT industry. One of the concepts which became to be used in the post-WTO period's Chinese media industry is 'universal service' (普遍服務 *pubian fuwu*). It indicates the government's public service policy objective such as providing telecommunication service to

39) Amy Hanser says that in 2001 and 2002, 60% to 70% of all merchandise in the average Chinese department store was sold on a factory-in-the store basis. Hanser, *Service Encounters*, p.45.

every corner of the nation.⁴⁰⁾

Digital capitalism entails a new form of labour and a new mode of production relations. The ever-increasing sectors of entertainment and service industries in China generate a massive group of workers doing 'non-productive labour', including gray-collar (*huiling*) workers. Jack Linchuan Qiu presents detailed ethnographic research on the making of the new working class in contemporary China. Qiu explores the less rigid concept of the working class which is mobile, heterogeneous, variable and active or 'choice-based.' His formulation of the notion of the 'have-less' reflects his efforts to delineate the changed pool of the urban working class. He calls the population who have 'limited income and limited influence in policy processes' the 'have-less', and the have-less are composed of heterogeneous social groups.

147 million internal migrants, more than 30 million laid-off workers, another 100 million or so retirees, and a large number of the 189 million youth between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, including about 30 million students as well as school dropouts, unemployed and underemployed youth.⁴¹⁾

He examines their ways of interacting with digital media and anticipates the difficulties and the prospect of forming the new collectivity of China's urban working class. In his study, the important constituents of the new working class are seen as network labourers:

40) Yuezhi Zhao, "'Universal Service' and China's telecommunications miracle: discourses, practices, and post-WTO accession challenges," *Info*, vol 9, no. 2/3 (April 2007): pp.108-121.

41) Jack Linchuan Qiu. *Working-Class Network Society: Communication Technology and the Information Have-Less in Urban China* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2009), p.4.

'massive army of labourers behind the burgeoning electronics industry' like workers in Internet cafes, second-hand equipment markets, and stores selling prepaid phone cards and pirated DVDs' or gray-collar workers: 'graphic designers, database operators, technicians, software testers, and others who engage in repetitive work procedures in the production process'.⁴²⁾

A group of media scholars explore the notion of 'digital labour' also referring to Chinese gold farmers.⁴³⁾ In Ge Jin's documentary on the Chinese gold farmers, one worker characterizes his labour as *fuwu* for anonymous American gamers.⁴⁴⁾ Social relations surrounding digital *fuwu* require theoretical and empirical research which internalise the socio-historical questions and the concrete dimension of the interface between body and technology.

5. Conclusion

Fuwu which has the military origin, was brought to the fore to mobilize and unite the greater portion of population in the anti-Japanese and the civil wars. Here I have related *fuwu* to 'practice' of constructing the collective subject in Maoist ideas. During the war period of the 1940s, class did not denote a fixed social group or permanent identity. It was rather constantly shifting and shaped by

42) Qiu, *Working-Class Network Society*, p.14, 105.

43) Lisa Nakamura, 'Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: the Racialization of Labor in World of Warcraft' *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 26, no. 2, (June 2009): pp.128-44.

44) Ge Jin, *Gold Farmers*, 2006.

the ever-changing situations of class struggle. *Fuwu* thus directs the dynamic changes in social relations in the unstable situation of revolution. If *fuwu* in 'wei renmin fuwu' internalizes the anxiety to change the social structure in particular under the circumstances where the urban working class did not occupy the majority of the population, *fuwu* in *fuwu ye* is related to the regulation of the social relations.

Fuwu in both 'wei renmin fuwu' and *fuwu ye* seems to embody the spectacle of society in the sense that they denote the totalization of society. In his observation of the Cultural Revolution, Debord argues that 'if the entire Chinese population has to study Mao to the point of identifying with Mao, this is because there is *nothing else they can be*. The dominion of the concentrated spectacle is a police state'.⁴⁵⁾ *Fuwu* in *fuwu ye* is linked to the totalization by global commodity culture. *Fuwu* as service labour and digital labour is located at the frontline of emulating and confronting the global economy. *Fuwu* above all internalizes the intense struggles between performance and labour; between the imperative and resistance; and between reification and physicality.

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45) Debord, *Spectacle of the Society*, 32, Original emphasis.

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< 국문제요 >

服務의 개념사는 20세기 중국사에 대해 우리가 예상치 못한 새로운 이해를 제공한다. 이 논문은 服務라는 개념을 통해 중국의 사회관계 변화에 대한 접근을 시도한다. 동아시아에서 服務라는 단어의 사회언어학적 기원을 조사하고, 이 용어가 마오주의에서 계급, 실천, 혁명이라는 개념과 어떤 관계를 맺었는지 살펴본다. 또한 포스트 마오 시기 이 용어가 가장 중요하게 사용되는 예인 服務業(서비스산업)을 살펴봄에 服務라는 단어가 각 시기 변화하는 사회관계를 어떻게 반영하는지, 이 단어가 담고 있는 복종이라는 함의가 서로 다른 각 시기에 어떻게 받아들여지는지, 계급과 이데올로기라는 문제가 이

변화하는 용법 속에 어떻게 함축되어 있는지 조사한다. 서비스 산업의 서비스라는 상품
은 무형성, 동시성, 공간적 통일성, 개인성이라는 측면에서 다른 상품들과 차이를 보인
다. 본 논문은 기 디보르의 '스펙타클'이라는 개념을 통해 마오시기 정치적 총체화를 살
펴봄과 동시에 포스트 마오 시기 불평등한 사회관계의 재생산이라는 문제를 조명할 것
이다.

Key words: 服務, 마오주의, 계급, 사회 관계, 서비스 산업, 스펙타클, 정보통
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