

## TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: GOETHE'S WORKS IN CHINESE TRANSLATION PRIOR TO 1985

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The aim of this article is to evaluate most of the translations of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's works into Chinese beginning with 1902 or 1903 and ending 1984 in the Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The greatest attention is devoted to *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Faust*.

The reading and critical study of German literature in China before the present century have been relatively insignificant owing to a number of factors which hinder a successful transposition of the foreign literature on the Chinese soil. The traditional "insularity" of the Chinese, the "close door" policy of the government, the Chinese ignorance of the German language, the lack of able mediators and translators, together with the meager commercial transaction between China and Germany in past centuries all account for the inadequate knowledge of German literature in China in the past centuries. It is not until the second half of the nineteenth century when the "new" climate for China's diplomatic relations with the foreign powers created by various treaties that China was forced to come into closer contact and more frequent cultural exchanges with countries like Germany and the result was a gradual increase in interest among the Chinese intellectuals in German culture and literature.

According to the observations and study of Wang Guangchi (1898–1936), the founder of the Young China Association [Shaonian Zhongquo xuehui], who studied and later died in Germany, Chinese students staying in Germany amounted to a few dozen in the first decade of the twentieth century. The First World War, however, brought the number down to approximately ten, when most of the Chinese students chose to leave Germany for their homeland. As soon as the war was over, the number of Chinese students attending German universities increased again, reaching a record high of over a hundred in 1920. This trend continued right into the 1930 (441–444). This steady flow of Chinese students to Germany marked not only an increasing interest on the part of the Chinese toward Germany, but also the growing cultural contact between the two countries as a whole –

the result of which was reflected in the Chinese interest in various aspects of German culture and the significant literary influence exerted by Germany upon China in the twentieth century.

In the cultural exchange between China and Germany, translation plays a very important role. A good example is Goethe's contact with Chinese culture more than a century ago. It is well known that Goethe was greatly interested in Chinese culture and geography as evidenced in his borrowing of such books about China as *A Narrative of the British Ambassador to China 1792–1794*, *Erzaehlung der Reise und Gesandtschaft des Lord Macartney nach China, 1792–1794*, *Voyages a Peking 1784–1801*, *Neuer Atlas des grossen Reichs Sina, Philosophique sur les Egyptiens et les chinois*, and Marco Polo's *Reise in den Orient* (1272–1295) from the Library of Grossherzog Karl August in Weimar in 1813. Through English, French, and German translations, Goethe was also introduced, in 1827, to Chinese poetry, fables, and novels such as *The Fortunate Union* [Haochiu zhuan], *The History of the Flowery Billet* [Huajian ji], and *The Two Fair Cousins* [Yu jiaoli]. Interestingly enough, the readers in China, too, relied heavily on Chinese translations for their initial knowledge of Germany and Goethe in particular.

According to Bauer's Wolfgang bibliographic research published in 1982, the translation and study of German culture in China can be roughly classified into eleven categories, consisting of philosophy, natural sciences, religion, literature, fine arts, economics, education, politics, history, military sciences, and law (xiii). Bauer's study indicates that of the 2,935 Chinese translations of German monographs and articles included in the bibliography, 687 of them were on German literature, which constituted the largest of the eleven categories. Chinese translations of German works in the fields of natural sciences came next in the scale, with a total of 465. These were followed in order by economics (376), philosophy (357), military (309), politics (224), history (187), education (141), fine arts (74), religion (59), and law (56).

Publications of monographs and articles by Chinese authors on German works are equally numerous according to Bauer's research. The total number reached 2,327, with Chinese publications on German politics (453) in the lead, followed by those on German philosophy (384), economics (382), literature (303), education (242), history (232), military (104), law (82), natural sciences (79), fine arts (58), and religion (8). These figures indicate very clearly that German literature indeed occupied the most prominent and significant position in the cultural exchange between Germany and China. The translation and study of German literature alone constitute nearly one-fifth of the total of all German studies and translations in China (Bauer xiv).

One must bear in mind, however, that any study of this kind is in no way complete and that Bauer's study is no exception. Its focus is primarily on the listing of German monographs and articles translated into Chinese and of Chinese monographs and articles on German culture written by Chinese authors. Many Chinese translations of German literature, poetry in particular, published in various Chinese periodicals and anthologies are omitted so that the picture

presented is merely an approximation and does not represent the full impact of German culture upon modern China. Nevertheless, Bauer's rough figures are sufficient data to show the extent of Chinese interest in German culture as a whole and the tremendous impact of German literature on Chinese readers in twentieth-century China.

As the selection of works to be translated in itself reflects not only the value judgement and personal preference of the translators and the publishers but also the general taste and interest of the reading public at the time, a review of the Chinese translations of Goethe's works should prove relevant and significant to those interested in comparative literature and cross-cultural studies. Such a study will elucidate how translation of Goethe's works has been related to the changing cultural climate and shifting ideology in modern China. It also addresses the "fortune" of Goethe's works in China by taking a close look at the reception of Goethe's works, especially *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* and *Faust* in China in the past eighty years through translation.

Of the many German writers introduced into China, including Heine, Storm, Hauptmann, the Grimm brothers, Marx, and Engels, Goethe was undoubtedly one of the literary authors most widely honoured by translations. Although it is apparent that he must have been one of the first German authors known to the Chinese students abroad in Japan and Germany as well as to those Chinese intellectuals who knew foreign languages at home by the turn of the nineteenth century, the exact historical moment of his inception remains unknown to date. According to Richard Wilhelm and Archer Taylor, Chinese paintings of Werther and Lotte managed to reach Holstein in northern Germany at the close of the eighteenth century. It is presumed that the Chinese must have already had some vague knowledge of Goethe's book then when they made paintings and china plates for foreigners in Canton back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet it is not until more than a century later that concrete evidence of the Chinese contact with and study of Goethe's works is available.

Ma Junwu (1881–1940) was probably the earliest Chinese translator known today to have paid attention to Goethe's works and spread German culture among the Chinese through translation. As an engineering student at Tokyo Imperial University and as the first Chinese student to receive a doctoral degree from a German university (Berlin, 1916), Ma Junwu was among the early admirers of German culture. He regarded *Werther* as Goethe's masterpiece about society. According to A Ying's short article "Early Chinese Translations of Goethe's Works" [Guanyu Gede zuopin chu qi de zhongyi], Ma translated a portion of *Werther* as early as 1902 or 1903 (100). In elegant classical Chinese, Ma reproduced the scene of Werther's and Lotte's last meeting and the last portion of the included songs of Ossian, which Ma entitled "A Ming's Weeping over his Daughter by the Sea" [A Ming lin haian ku nu shi].

This translation, though a very free and brief one, reveals the sensitivity and mastery of Ma Junwu as a poet-translator. His Chinese version on Armin is a delineation of the sorrows of Armin over the death of his beloved daughter. In highly poetical images and in an archaic rhyming scheme, Ma Junwu recreates

the sense of hopelessness and deep sorrow felt by the aged Armin at the loss of his daughter and son. Presented as a lonely figure, Armin lingers at the shore, lamenting the deaths of his children and contemplating his own imminent death. In terms of the overall mood and tone, Ma's translation faithfully echoes those of the original; but since Ma's translation covers only a portion of *Werther* and merely a part of the Ossian songs, it is quite impossible for readers to arrive at a thorough understanding of the German novel as a whole. His conversion of a fragment of the Ossian songs, which is included in *Werther* in German translation, into a Chinese poem makes the latter seem more like a conscious free adaptation than an actual translation.

Besides translating a portion of *Werther*, Ma Junwu was also the author of the earliest Chinese version of Goethe's "Mignon", a song taken from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. In the Chinese translation entitled "The Song of Mignon" [Milijung ge], Ma carefully preserves the essence and rhythm of the original and produces a beautiful love poem written in a natural and simple way in Chinese classical form. At a time when German literature was virtually inaccessible to the Chinese readers, Ma Junwu has indeed done a commendable job in introducing through translation Goethe's work to his country.

Throughout the first decade of the present century, one saw only a few occasional Chinese translations of Goethe's works, or fragments of his work, but no lengthy translation of any decided significance. Ma Junwu remained the only person of the time to have made an attempt to translate Goethe's works. Although his translations prove to be of some literary merit, they received no immediate response in China then. This is not at all surprising as it takes time for a nation like China, which was caught in the transition between traditionalism and modernism then to get familiar or acquainted with such a remote culture as the German, which is so different from Chinese.

If the first decade of the twentieth century signified the inception or germination of interest in Goethe in China, the following ten years or so denoted a period of relative indifference on the part of the Chinese scholars toward Goethe. Wolfgang Franke's and Dschang Schau-dien's *A Bibliography of Chinese Translations of German Texts* [Dezhi hanyi congmu] published in 1942 (21–31) and Bauer's bibliography mentioned earlier indicate no translation or writings devoted solely to Goethe in China in the 1910s. Only in a few general works such as Zhou Zuoren's *A History of European Literature* [Ouzhou wenxue shi] may one find brief sketches of Goethe and short discussions of *Werther* and *Faust* (72–75). The reasons for such a negligence of Goethe are apparent. With the death of the liberal Manchu emperor Guangxi in 1908, China once again found herself caught in a state of political and social unrest. The upheavals leading to the epochal event of the political revolution of 1911, the language reform of 1919, as well as China's declaration of war against Germany in 1917 all tended to divert the attention of Chinese intellectuals from serious attention to German literature.

With the end of the First World War and the victory of the Literary Revolution accomplished, translation entered a new era. To meet the need of the new

mood, a great number of foreign writings in Russian, French, German, and English were introduced. In line with this new climate came a revival of interest in Goethe in the 1920s. Two decades after the initial attempt of Ma Junwu to transplant Goethe on the Chinese soil through translation, the first complete rendition of Goethe's *Werther* finally appeared in China in 1922. It was Guo Moruo's translation of *Werther*, which he entitled *Young Werther's Troubles* [Shao-nian Weite zhi fannao]. Guo began reading Goethe's works while he was a student at Kyushu Imperial University at Fukuoka in the late 1910s. As a student of medicine, he was required to learn German and as a consequence was introduced by his German teachers to the works of Goethe and Heine, whose poems and short stories were frequently used as reading materials or comprehension exercises in the German language classes. It was during this time that Guo started reading Goethe's autobiography and became a warm admirer of the German writer.

Although Guo Moruo found himself greatly attracted to Goethe's works and had conceived the idea of translating *Werther* for more than four years, he did not actually start his translation work until some time in 1919 (2). Urged by his friends, he started translating Goethe's revised version of *Werther* during one of his trips to Shanghai. He planned to finish his draft during his summer vacation in Shanghai but failed owing to an illness which suddenly struck him. It was later, back in Japan, that he managed to complete the translation and have it published in 1922. The first edition of the *Werther* translation was far from satisfactory. Guo detected more than 500 printing errors in his published translation largely because of poor proofreading. Despite these technical defects, his translation of *Werther* was an instantaneous success, and Chinese interest in Goethe was greatly enhanced as a result. Overnight *Werther* became a friend to many Chinese, and for years to come the novel remained the most widely read and appraised Western novel and "the bible of modern Chinese youths" (Lee 188). Guo's translation of *Werther* was so well received that it became the most frequently reprinted translation of the German novel in the country. Not only did his Chinese title of *Werther* become the standard title for the novel in China up to the present, but his text also remained the most authoritative translation, upon which many later editions and new translations of *Werther* were based.

The original publication of Guo's translation of *Werther* was accompanied by the publication of the first issue of the *Creation Quarterly* [Chuangzou jikan], of which he was editor-in-chief. This magazine was the second devotedly to literature at that time, with *The Short Story Monthly* [Xiaoshuo yuebao] being the first purely literary journal of modern China. If the *Creation Quarterly* was designed to provide a garden for the cultivation of literature advocating art for art's sake, then the translation of *Werther* was meant to be in effect a manifesto of the view of the chief editor of the *Creation Quarterly*. In his preface to the *Werther* translation, Guo Moruo clearly states his intention to "create" in China, through his translation of the German work, a universe of love and freedom out of a decadent and paralysed environment. He shared *Werther's* pantheistic view of life, his love of nature, and his admiration for primitive existence.

In the preface to the 1955 revised edition, Guo again explicates the reasons for his translating *Werther* for he discovered great resemblances, in spirit and social situation, between Werther's time and that of his own. For him *Werther* represents a realistic novel of an anti-feudalistic nature, depicting the general spirit of the young generation at the transitional period when Germany began to move away from her feudal and medieval past to a new age of capitalism. The novel fully portrays the restlessness, aspirations, as well as frustrations of the new age when the young revolted against all established systems and old moral standards. Known in German history as the "Sturm und Drang" period, young Goethe's time is highly comparable to the May Fourth period in China.

Similar in spirit to the "Sturm und Drang" period, the May Fourth era represents a time in modern Chinese history when young intellectuals rebelled against Confucianism and feudalism, and upheld the importance of democracy and science. Individualism, freedom, talent, vitality, and nature were highly treasured, while well-established norms and arbitrarily imposed rules were often rejected. Free expressions of one's emotions and feelings were in vogue at the time; and a total break from the literary norms and traditional forms and classical language was welcomed by the young generation. It is thus not at all surprising to find *Werther* warmly received in China, for many Chinese found echoes of their own aspirations and problems in Goethe's protagonist. Besides, not only did Werther the character embody the sentiments, frustrations, uncertainties, and sensitivity of an average young man, but his love for freedom and nature, his emphasis on individuality, his hatred for traditions and social bondage, his romantic inclination, as well as his new socio-intellectual consciousness were also admired by many youths in China at the time.

What is more, Werther's unrequited love and disillusionment in life are universal experiences which easily find resonances among young people in Germany, as well as in China. As the Danish critic George Brandes says, Werther "gives expression not merely to the isolated passion and suffering of a single individual, but to the passions, longings, and sufferings of a whole age. The hero . . . is more than the spirit of the new era, he is its genius" (20). In short, the impact of *Werther* upon the Chinese readers at the time was tremendous. In a speech delivered in July 1931, Cai Yuanpei commented on the effect of translations of foreign novels on the literary reform in China, and he alluded to *Werther* as the first concrete example of the profound influence of a foreign novel upon the psychology of youth (627). For Cai who held an authoritative position in the country to make such an important statement clearly confirms the significant and pronounced effect of *Werther* in China.

As for Guo Moruo, the translator of the novel and a poet and writer himself, Goethe's novel struck him as a piece of lyrical prose poetry rather than as a novel *per se*. In his translation, one finds a great deal of care devoted to the recapturing of the poetic quality, the strength and simplicity of the narrative. Guo succeeds in conveying the spirit of the original in equally poetical, natural, and, at times, lyrical language so that the Chinese translation itself stands as a highly readable piece of poetic prose written in elegant modern Chinese. In order to

aid his Chinese readers in their appreciation of the novel, Guo provides annotations at the end to give further explanation of certain classical or personal allusions, and to offer additional information essential for a better understanding of Goethe's *Werther*. Although the exact text on which Guo Moruo based his translation is unknown, one can, by examining his notes, conclude that his Chinese translation was a direct translation from a German edition of *Werther* and not a "re-translation" based on a Japanese or English edition.

Of the many translators of Goethe's *Werther* in China, Guo Moruo is undoubtedly the most famous and influential one. The year of 1922 may be considered a *Werther* year for the first appearance of Guo's translation of the German novel was so enthusiastically received that it went through four printings in the first year of publication. In the following ten years, there were at least fifteen editions of his translation published by the Creation Society [Chuangzuo she], ten editions by Modern Book Company [Xiandai shuju], seven editions by United Book Company [Lianhe shuju], and several editions by Public Good Publishing Company [Chuanyi chubanshe] according to the research conducted by the Library of Shanghai in 1980 (121–123). The editions and re-editions of Guo's translation provide impressive evidence of the continued popularity of Goethe's novel in the Chinese community. In 1947 there came the revised edition by Guo, followed by yet another ten or so printings based on the revised version before the end of 1960. It has also been reprinted by numerous presses in Hong Kong from the 1960s onwards when the publication industry on the Mainland was carefully controlled by the government.

The warm reception of *Werther* in China is an incontrovertible fact, for, in addition to the many editions of Guo's translation, there were a considerable number of other translations and editions of the novel by other translators. Fu Shaoxian published at least three editions of *Werther* by 1931. Luo Mu, too, published a bilingual (English and Chinese) text of the novel by the Beixin Book Company in Shanghai in 1931, and had four editions in press in the next four years. Da Guansheng provided a new Chinese translation of the German novel which he published in 1932 and 1936. Qian Tianyou's translation in the 1930s also became the blueprint for a reprint in Taipei later in 1956. Another translation by Huang Lubu also appeared in three editions published by Chunming Book Store in Shanghai by 1949. Thus there were at least 60 editions, or reprints of *Werther* circulating in China by the middle of the present century.

From 1949 on, Taipei and Hong Kong rivaled the former centres of Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin for translations of *Werther*. In the year 1956 alone, one saw four different *Werther* translations by Dong Liu, Lin Chun, Lai Siliu, and the Translation Division of the Enlightenment Bookstore [Qiming shudian] in Taiwan. At least two translations of unknown authorship were also available to readers in Hong Kong. *Werther* continued to appear in new translations printed in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s. Seven translations by known translators, and a bilingual edition by Li Muhua appeared in Taiwan, while two more new translations were circulated in Hong Kong.

The most outstanding and authoritative translator of this later period was perhaps Zhou Xuepu, who was a critic of Goethe as well as a translator. He had been a professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the National Taiwan University for twenty-six years. His translation of *Werther* is, on the whole, faithful to the original; yet, it fails to recapture the poetic and lyrical quality or preserve the mood of the original. In terms of its style, Zhou's translation is prose rather than poetic prose as in Guo's translation. Although Zhou's translation is interesting and inspired, it lacks naturalness. Compared with Guo's translation, which is written in natural and fluent Chinese, and as poetical and lyrical as the original German, Zhou's language tends to be less poetical and stiff at times, with some awkward expressions. Sometimes, his sentences are so structured that they would unsettle the general Chinese reader by their Westernized linguistic constructions.

The presence of these blemishes somewhat hampers a Chinese reader's full appreciation of Goethe's work. It is unfortunate that similar weaknesses are also discernible in many translations by other translators. On the whole, however, the translators of *Werther* in China are conscientious and faithful. The plot of *Werther* is often accurately preserved although the lyrical note and poetical sentiment characteristic of the original may not be adequately represented in some cases. The awkward and non-Chinese sentence patterns frequently remind one that the novel is of a foreign origin—an awareness which often affects one's full appreciation and enjoyment of the text. Perhaps it requires the sensitivity and poetic competence of a poet-writer-translator like Guo Moruo to note the essence of the original and to reproduce that accurately in Chinese.

Despite the flood of translations and editions of *Werther* on the mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong after 1949, the novel never again reached the same sweeping popularity among Chinese readers which it succeeded in securing in the 1920s and 1930s. In Mainland China, translation works carried out by individual translators and publishers in the first half of the present century were taken over by organized translation done by translation bureaux. Although *Werther* was still occasionally reprinted, no new translation of the German novel appeared on the mainland for twenty years or so mainly because the attention of the group translators was directed to translating Russian and Marxist literatures and the writings of the Third World countries.

It was not until the late 1970s that one saw a rising trend of Chinese interest in Goethe in Mainland China. Compared with the translation work done on Goethe in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1980s, the accomplishment on the mainland is certainly noteworthy. In the early 1980s, at least four new translations appeared in the region. In the second volume of *A Series of Foreign Short Novels* [Waiguo zhongpian xiaoshuo congkan] published by the People's Publishing House of Anhui in 1981, *Werther* was one of the seven works of fiction included. In another new translation by Yang Wuneng, published by People's Literature Publishing House [Renmin wenxue chubanshe] in Peking in 1981, the story of *Werther* was accompanied by introductory essays which adopt a general historical-biographical approach to discuss Goethe's relationship with *Werther*, the significance of the



novel for its time, and its artistic excellence. The novel's tremendous influence in China was addressed in the form of an appendix. In the following year *Werther* was again collected in Jin Zixin's edition of *Foreign Short Fiction* [Waiguo zhongpian xiaoshuo] in Yunan. On the basis of Verlag von Philipp Reclam jun Leipzig edition of *Goethes sämtliche Werke*, Hou Junji, too, provided a translation of *Werther* in Shanghai in 1982. He included a discussion of the novel as an epistolary novel depicting an individual's love of freedom and his conflict with the existing feudal class system. The translator commends Goethe for his simplicity of style and conciseness of language in his delineation of a young man's spiritual crisis and agony in love, as well as his frustrations at seeing the hypocrisy, corruption, and injustice in society.

The widespread popularity of Guo Moruo's translation of the German novel in the early 1920s led to a more general interest in Goethe and his other writings in China. Indeed it brought about a blossoming period in the translation of Goethe's works in the country. By the mid-1920s Goethe's position as one of the most frequently translated and widely known European authors was firmly established in China. The most enthusiastic attempt to popularize Goethe and German literature as a whole was undertaken by the members of the Chinese-German Society [Zhong De xuehui] at Tongji University, an institution devoted to German studies in Jiangsu. Published in their journal *German Monthly* [Dewen yuekan] were translations of such poems of Goethe as "Gott" and "Des Dichters Vaterland" by Yu Dunpei, "Erlkönig" by Huang Guangchi, and "Der Schatzgraber" and "Gefunden" by Liang Junqing. Guo Moruo also contributed a translation of "Der Fischer" and "Mignon" to the journal in the mid-1920s. Yu Dafu, too, did a translation of "Mignon" which, despite its elegance and faithfulness, tends to be long-winded and rather clumsy in style. In comparison, Ma Junwu's first Chinese version of "Mignon" in 1902 or 1903 is more precise despite his excessive brevity and minor mistranslation. It is generally accepted by scholars that Guo's translation is the most faithful representation, fluent and accurate, of the original.

Generally speaking, Goethe's poems are welcomed in China. The readers find in Goethe's lyrics echoes of their own feelings. As succinctly expressed by the noted Chinese poet Xu Zhimo in *Morning Post Supplement* [Chenbao fukan] in 1928, "the messages in Goethe's [poems]. . . are so close to our heart that they seem to express for us those deep feelings which we fail to put into writing ourselves. This [experience in reading Goethe's poems] is like a meeting an old friend in the spiritual world."

Prompted by the success and popularity of Guo Moruo's translation of *Werther*, the Commercial Press [Shangwu yinshuguan], the largest publishing company in China then, also joined in the promotion of Goethe's works by releasing a translation of *Stella* by Tang Yuanji in 1925, and of *Clavigo* and *Reineke Fuchs* by Wu Guangjian in 1926. It is known that *Stella* was staged several times in China. According to Wang Bosheng, it was performed once at the Academy of Arts [Yishu xueyuan] and another time at Tsinghua University in Peking in 1925. In 1930 it was put on stage again at the Provincial College of

Drama Workshop in Shandong (1). The same play was staged again at the Drama Institute in Guangdong [Guangdong xiju xueyuan] in the 1930s (Zhang 16). However, no further information is available as to the extent of its popularity or influence upon the Chinese stage, nor does one have a clear account of its reception among the Chinese readers as a piece of literature for lack of written documentation on the subject. Whether or not the work was known only among the intellectuals in the country cannot yet be ascertained, but it is clear that it never receives the same kind of attention and popularity enjoyed by *Werther* in the Chinese soil.

Before the close of 1926, another important Goethe translator appeared in China. Chen Chuan started publishing translations of Goethe's poems in *Xueheng*, a relatively conservative magazine. As a full supporter of tradition, Chen was more interested in the study of the influence of Chinese culture on Goethe – an interest which distinguished him from the other Goethe enthusiasts of the time. His interest in Goethe's contact with Chinese literature represents the Chinese awareness of Goethe's high opinion of oriental culture. It also partially accounts for the Chinese incessant interest in Goethe, a literary giant who openly admires the artistic merits and literary achievement of oriental culture.

In the same year 1926 the first translation of *Faust* by Mo Su was published by the Enlightenment Bookstore [Qiming shudian] in Shanghai; yet not much is known about this translation nor the extent of its popularity. In the following year, a collection of German poetry translated jointly by Guo Moruo and Cheng Fangwu was published in 1927 by the Creation Society under the title *Selected Poems from Germany* [Deguo shixuan] in which poems of Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Storm, Lenau, and Hille were presented in translation.

The year 1929 marks another significant date in the history of Goethe translations in China, for Guo Moruo published a complete translation of *Faust, Part I*, which he entitled *Fushide*. As a matter of fact, Guo started translating *Faust* as early as the autumn of 1919, when he was still a student of medicine in Japan. Fragments of his translation were published, thanks to his friend Zong Baihua's suggestion and encouragement, in the literary supplement to the newspaper *The China Times* [Shishi xinbao wenxue fukan] in 1919 and 1920. In the summer of 1920 Guo received an invitation from Zhang Dongsun, the chief editor of *The China Times*, to supply a complete translation of *Faust* to be published in a series of Western masterpieces. For about four weeks, working from five in the morning to late into the night, Guo completed his draft on *Faust, Part I*, which he wrote and recopied with a Chinese brush on a special kind of Japanese paper known as improved *hanshi*.

As he relates in the postscript to the translation later, this first draft was done with great care, in a neat and tidy way, in order to increase legibility and to avoid mistakes in typesetting. Since he had to make preparations for the beginning of his new academic term in the university, he put aside, for the time being, his completed translation in a closet only to find weeks later, to his dismay and great disappointment, that more than one third of his manuscript had been nibbled to pieces by some mice entering the closet through a hole in the wall (87–

92). This incident had such a traumatic effect on Guo that he virtually stopped translating *Faust* and turned his attention to *Werther* and Goethe's poetry in the following few years.

Nearly ten years had elapsed after the loss of his first draft of *Faust* to the mice before Guo decided to "mend" his damaged *Faust* manuscript. In a few days' time, Guo finished retranslating the lost scenes, which were "Night; Faust's Study," "Outside the City Gate," and "Faust's Study". As he stated in his postscript, he felt grateful to those mice after rereading the whole manuscript: "I felt very ashamed when I re-read my old draft again. . . . I considered myself fortunate that the mice had partially destroyed my first draft. In fact, the mice became my benefactor for they had saved me from public disgrace" (383–383). Guo was so dissatisfied with his first draft of *Faust* that he redid the whole draft. In the new translation, the original German verses remained in verse form in their Chinese version. The final product of this re-translation, which Guo completed in November, 1928, proves to be an elegant piece of Chinese rendering the essence of Goethe's masterpiece.

Although Guo has put in more effort in the translation of *Faust* than he did with *Werther*, his rendition of the poetic drama was not as successful, literarily and aesthetically, not because of any major fault of his but largely because of the greater difficulties in language and the greater complexity of thought in the German poetical play. In *Werther* Guo has done a praiseworthy job when he succeeded in preserving the essence and mood of the original, while presenting a highly enjoyable piece of literary work in fluent and well written Chinese. His translation of *Faust*, however, is less interesting and less captivating, although it remains a faithful version of the German text. Despite these artistic shortcomings, Guo's translation of *Faust* was warmly received by the general reading public, partly because of his fame as a poet and the previous success of his *Werther* translation. His *Faust* translation ran through two printings in the first year of its publication; and reprints by different publishers, were regularly issued in the years that followed, according to the statistics provided by the Library of Shanghai (130–134).

The year 1947 saw the completion and publication of the second part of *Faust*. While it took Goethe sixty years to complete his writing of *Faust*, it has also taken Guo Moruo nearly thirty years to produce a complete translation of the German play in China. As he openly admits in his postscript to the second part of *Faust*, it was as a worshipper of Goethe that he had undertaken such a difficult and challenging task. By introducing the first and second part of *Faust* during two outstanding periods in the literary history of modern China, Guo draws the readers' attention to the resemblance between Germany at Goethe's time and his own contemporary society – both being at a stage in history when a society was being transformed into a modern state. In translating *Faust*, Guo further shows his own aspiration as a conscious intellectual as well as his zest for self-liberation. Like Faust, who wanted his actions to be uncontrolled in the play, the young intellectuals in China were eager to free themselves from the bondage of the prevailing feudal system and Confucian ideology. In their yearn-

ing for absolute freedom and for the total liberation of the individual self, the Chinese found a comrade in Faust.

While the first part of *Faust* was translated in the midst of the Literary Revolution, when the young intellectuals including Guo himself were emotionally in alliance with the Faustian desire for freedom and progressive view in life, the second part of the German play was rendered at a time when the Chinese shared a tragic fate comparable to Faust's. As Guo clearly notes in his postscript to the translation of the second part of *Faust*, there shows a strong similarity in the socio-ideological conditions in China and Germany and general expectation for the country: "Seriously speaking, our road today is very clear. . . . The Fausts in China would never get old again, nor would they be blind folded and die. They would never feel satisfied with reclaiming the shoreland, nor with the feudal-lord-type of granted democracy, until they have changed the whole of China into an ocean of democracy where people become their own masters" (42).

From a basic yearning for freedom of the 1920s, Guo manifests in his translation of the second part of the German play his growing desire to see a transformed and progressive China. He saw the reactionary forces which worked against Faust in the course of his self-expansion; and, he realized that Faust's ideal society could only be possible after he made concessions to these powers. Faust's failure to establish an entirely free country, owing to the persisting feudal forces, also leads Guo to feel impatient with the slow disintegration of the traditional feudal system in China. It is thus not surprising to find Guo Moruo feeling strongly akin to Faust. What is more, his translation of *Faust* illustrates Guo's own metamorphosis from his former romantic sentiments of the early 1920s to his earnest advocacy of socialism. Like Faust, Guo emerges from his personal world of love and uncertainty to a conscious and active life after 1924 when he became a socialist convert. He involves himself in the battle against the warlords, the Japanese, and all other forces which hinder the development of the country and the liberation of the people. From Guo Moruo's translation of *Werther* in 1922 and his rendition of *Faust* in 1929, one sees how Guo the intellectual developed from his early individualistic romantic sentiments to become a revolutionary with a romantic spirit.

Besides the translations of *Werther* and *Faust* in the 1920s, the next of Goethe's works to be presented to the Chinese public was *Egmont*, which achieved considerably less notice. It was translated by Hu Renyuan and incorporated into the series *The Complete Library* [Wanyou wenku] in 1929.

In addition to Guo Moruo's translation, *Faust* was frequently in press under the translations of Zhang Yiulin in Tianjin (1933), Zhou Xuepu in Shanghai (1936) and Fujian (1944), and Liu Shengya in Chongqing (1942). Excerpts from the first and second parts of *Faust* were included in the first volume of the *Selected Readings of Western Literary Works* [Xiyang wenxue zuopin xuazndu], a literary series published in Hong Kong in 1961 for the self-cultivation of university students. In the same year, Stewart S. Mo's English-Chinese bilingual edition of *Faust*, which was published as the second volume of the *World Literature Series* [Shijie wenxue daxi], was also released by the Qiming Book Compa-

ny. Two years later in 1963, another English-Chinese edition of *Faust* by Lu Jinhui appeared in Taipei under the title *Faust and the Devil* [Fushide yu mogui], with annotations provided as a help in reading. Both bilingual editions were based on Bayard Taylor's English translation, with the original metres retained.

In the succeeding years, more *Faust* translations were issued in Taiwan – the most popular being those by Ai Ren (1967), Gan Kechao (1968), Cao Kaiyuan (1969), and Zhou Xuepu (1978 and 1982). Of these many translations of *Faust* on the island, Zhou Xuepu's edition is perhaps the best and most popular. Zhou was a graduate of the Department of Foreign Literatures at University of Kyoto. As early as the 1930s, when he was still teaching on the mainland, Chou already planned to provide a translation of the German work as an alternative to Guo's to the Chinese readers. He started translating *Faust* in 1933 and in one and a half years' time he completed the first draft of both parts of the work, but decided not to publish his translation at the time for fear of negative criticism. His work was first published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai in 1936 and later by the Dongnan Book Company in Fujian in 1944. According to Zhou himself, his first translation was far from satisfactory.

It was only years later, after the civil war, that he found time to rewrite and improve the first translated version. While his first translation was written in prose, his revised version, published twice in 1978 and 1982, was in rhymed verse. Later on he further improved his work by turning it into a line-by-line translation, following the numbering of the original exactly and thus allowing easy cross-reference for the readers. Zhou's translation was based on several texts – the major ones being those of Meyer and Witkowskin. He has further referred to translations in English by Bayard Taylor and Latham, to Japanese translations by Mori Ogai, Hata Toyokichi, Sakurai Takamasa, and Sagara Morio, and to Guo Moruo's Chinese translation in the preparation of his manuscript. His work indeed turned out to be a close and careful reproduction of the German play in the Chinese language. For the benefit of readers who may not have known very much about the German writer, Zhou included in his volume two pictures of Goethe – the first being the youthful poet and the other, the old sage. Provided in his edition were also a sketch of Goethe's birthplace and a photograph of a page of the original German manuscript, and photographs taken from a stage version of *Faust*. A painting delineating a scene in the play, which is now kept in Goethe's Museum in Frankfurt, and Goethe's own sketch of the witches' kitchen scene are also found in Zhou's translation. In addition, a brief summary of Goethe's life and the history of the writing of the play are incorporated in the text as well. As Zhou noted in his preface, it was his aim to give the Chinese a deeper understanding and better appreciation of the German writer and his masterpiece. Through the study of this great piece of literature, he wishes to enlighten the spirit of his people, heighten their appreciation of literature, and improve their critical and analytical faculty (42).

While Guo Moruo's translation of *Faust* represents the successful early introduction of *Faust* into China, especially to the readers on the mainland, it was primarily the publication of Zhou's translation in the late 1970s that marks the

popularity of the German poetic drama on the island of Taiwan. Guo's *Faust* shows the admirable effort of an individual writer merely to introduce a German work into China, whereas Zhou's translation illustrates the meticulous care and detailed investigation of a single scholar in presenting a scholarly edition of the same work in Chinese.

A few years shortly after the publication of Zhou's translation in 1978 one saw yet another boom in the translation of *Faust* in China. In the year 1982, at least three new editions of the play appeared in Taiwan and the mainland. Hai Ming's translation, based on Philip Wayne's English translation, was included into the *Series of World Literature* [Shijie wenxue congshu]. It was released by the Distant View Publishing Company [Yuanjing chubanshe], one of the largest commercial presses in Taiwan. On the mainland, two experts of German literature, Qian Chunyi and Dong Wenzhao, contributed two new translations of *Faust* which were printed in simplified Chinese characters. Dong was a scholar of German literature back in the 1930s. He had studied the original text of *Faust* and had seen stage versions and movies adapted from Goethe's work while he was in Germany. As a matter of fact, he spent thirty years on the translation of the play, the first draft of which he finished in the 1960s. Dong's translation shows his painstaking care not only as a responsible and faithful translator but also as a serious *Faust* scholar, who wishes to present a more complete, if not definitive, Chinese text of the German poetic play. In order to help the readers, Dong includes elaborate comments and explanations to the "Prelude", in addition to careful annotations and notes to the text. In fluent and, at times, poetic Chinese, he presents a readable Chinese version of the German work to the Chinese readers today, keeping as close as possible, in meaning, rhythm, and images, to the original without sacrificing the beauty and special structure of the Chinese language.

Qian's translation was published by the Translation Press [Yiwen chubanshe], an authoritative publisher as important as the Foreign Languages Press [Waiwen chubanshe] in China, whereas Dong's *Faust* was issued by Fudan University Press. It is interesting to note that Shanghai remains one of the most important places in the introduction of Western literatures in China, both in the early stage of modernization as well as in the recent re-emphasis on modernization of the country through Western learning and technology.

Although Goethe's great accomplishment in *Faust* has been generally recognized and lauded by most Chinese, the work never gained the same degree of popularity among the readers as that enjoyed by *Werther* in the Chinese soil. The complexity of the plot, the many digressions and classical allusions, as well as the remoteness of the incidents and the legend tend to make Goethe's play more difficult and less interesting to the general reading public. *Werther* is considered by Germany, by the Western World as a whole, and by China as their common heritage, as a work dealing with universal issues of human experience easily understood, deeply felt, and commonly shared by readers in the world; whereas the spiritual and intellectual disturbances of *Faust*, his philosophical speculation, his quest for ultimate knowledge and meaning of life, his search for

happiness, and his pact with the devil are generally regarded as philosophical issues too remote from the immediate experience of an average reader in China. Probably it is due to the difficulty of the text, with its digressions and allusions, and poetic diction, as well as to the profundity of thought which demands from the reader a sound and solid knowledge of Western civilization as a whole, that has hindered many Chinese readers' full understanding and appreciation of the German work. Despite of all these problems, *Faust* and *Werther* have, nonetheless, remained Goethe's best known and most widely read works in China.

While *Werther* and *Faust* were first introduced in the 1920s, it was only in the succeeding decade that more of Goethe's other works were introduced to the Chinese reading public through translation. Goethe's fame and popularity continued to grow in China in the 1930s and translations of his works flooded the Chinese literary world. In 1930 his autobiographical work *Poetry and Truth* [Dichtung und Wahrheit] was translated by Zhang Jingsheng in Shanghai. Yang Bingchen also attempted a new translation of the "Prologue" of *Faust* in the *Tsinghua Weekly* [Qinghua zhoukan] in 1931, while Xi Yi published his Chinese translation of "Erlkönig", "Der Sänger", and "Das Veilchen". In the same issue of the *Tsinghua Weekly*, there were also Li Pengzhou's "Goethe's Poems" and Beixin's translations of "Schäfersklagelied", "Mailied", and "Neue Liebe, neues Leben".

An extract from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* [Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre] was translated by Yu Wenbing under the title Mignon [Meiliang] in Shanghai in 1932. This was followed by an abridged edition of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Wu Lifu in the succeeding year. A general work on famous German poems was also made available in Chinese translation by Zhang Jiamou in 1934; and in the same year a collection of Goethe's poems translated by Zhang Zhuanpu was published under the title *Selected Poems of Goethe* [Gede ming shi ji]. *Goetz von Berlichungen mit der eisernen Hand* was also introduced to the Chinese in a translation Zhou Xuepu in 1936. In the same year, one also saw the publication of Si Mu (penname for Yao Simu)'s two-volume translation of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in Shanghai. His rendition has been for many years the only complete translation of Goethe's autobiography in China. In September of 1936 Wu Guangjian's abridged version of *Wilhelm Meister* was published in a Chinese-English text by the Commercial Press. In 1937 Zhou Xuepu made yet another contribution to the introduction of Goethe's works by translating *Hermann und Dorothea*, which was also published by the Commercial Press.

Before the end of World War II in China, the major literary journal to carry on the publicity of Goethe was *Research and Progress* [Yanjiu yu jinbu], a journal published quarterly in Peking in 1939. Inspired by a similar quarterly journal *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, which was published by the State Centre for Scientific Research Development [Reichszentrale für wissenschaftliche Berichterstattung] in Germany, this Chinese journal was established with the intention of promoting cultural exchanges between Germany and China. With the help of Dr. Karl Kerkhof, the chief editor of the mentioned German journal at the time,

the editors of the Chinese journal were able to introduce to the literary circles in China new research findings in the fields of humanities and natural sciences currently carried out in Germany. The emphasis was primarily on the translation of scholarly German studies, but Chinese studies of German culture were also welcomed.

A year later, the journal changed its name to *Chinese-German Journal* [Zhong De xuezhì], which appeared with a German title *Aus deutschem Geistesleben*. As one saw in the first issue of the re-named journal, not only was the title changed, but the nature of the Chinese journal also underwent modification. Realizing that most of the readers in the field of natural sciences could read German essays in their original without much difficulty, the editors of the journal decided to do away with Chinese translations on natural science. They devoted all of their attention to translating German literary works by such great writers as Goethe and Schiller, and to presenting biographical sketches of these famous German literary figures. The journal further informed readers of news on translation, publication, and teaching of German in China, as well as lectures and books associated with German studies that might be of interest to the Chinese. Their sole aim was to cultivate a better knowledge and appreciation of the German culture in the country. Translations of *Elective Affinities* [Die Wahlverwandschaften], *Wilhelm Meister's Wandering Years* [Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre], Goethe's poems, his correspondence with Schiller, his own study on *Faust*, and Guo Moruo's translation of *Hermann und Dorothea*, were all published in the journal in the 1940s.

The flourishing of Goethe's works in China, involving a considerable number of translators and such major publishers as the Commercial Press, the Creation Society Press, the Beixin Book Company, the Chuanyi Bookstore, the Enlightenment Bookstore, the Oriental Book Company [Yadong tushuguan], and the Kaiming Bookstore not only reflects a high degree of popularity of the German writer among his Chinese readers, but also the close relationship between Germany and China in cultural exchanges. Although not all of the Chinese translations did justice to Goethe's works, they represent, nonetheless, an entirely new source of inspiration and power of expression to the Chinese readers and writers, enriching the cultural life of the Chinese intellectuals as a whole.

The change of the political situation in China in 1949, however, brought about a decline of Goethe translation in China mainland on the one hand, and a sudden boom in the Goethe translation enterprise in Taiwan and Hong Kong on the other. In addition to the numerous translations of *Werther* and *Faust* mentioned, Goethe's poetic works were also published in more than eight different editions by Lin Fan (in Hong Kong, 1956), Lo Xian (in Hong Kong, 1958), Hua Sheng (in Taipei, 1958), Wu Shouren (in Taipei, 1963), Xing Jizhang (in Hong Kong, 1968), Lu Mingxia (in Taipei, 1969), and Li Guisheng (in Taipei, 1970). Reprints of *Die Wahlverwandschaften*, *Stella*, *Clavigo*, *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Hermann und Dorothea* were also made accessible to readers in Taiwan and Hong Kong.



Collections of German short stories in which Goethe's shorter literary works were included, as well as Goethe's love letters, his conversations with Eckermann, his selected works, and his aphorisms and maxims were frequently published in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The more well known titles were Zhou Xuepu's *Conversations with Goethe* [Gede duihua lu], Xuan Zheng's *Selected Short Stories from Germany and Austria* [De Ao duanpian xiaoshuo xuan], Gan Kechao's *Gleams from Goethe* [Gede zhenyan lu], and Ru Xin's *Goethe's Aphorisms* [Rensheng juyu]. In 1975 there appeared a new translation of Goethe's autobiography in Taipei. Its translator Zhao Zhen considers *Dichtung und Wahrheit* a masterpiece of biographical literature, in which the wisdom of a great writer is reflected. By introducing this work to the readers, Zhao believes that his readers can have a deeper understanding of Goethe and be enlightened in the pursuit of truth, love, and happiness.

The situation on the mainland at the time was, however, quite the opposite. From the 1950s to the middle of the 1970s, translation of Goethe was definitely on a decline. During the Cultural Revolution period in particular, the translation of such a Western author as Goethe was nearly equal to committing an unpardonable 'crime'. Liang Zongdai's translation of *Faust*, for example, was purged and destroyed in a fire; and Shang Zhengzi, who was a professor of German literature, was also purged and died before he could fulfil his wish of writing a critical study of *Faust*. It was only with the end of the Cultural Revolution and later the fall of the 'Gang of Four' that the translators of Goethe once again resumed their active role as major promoters of Goethe's works in China. Using Hans T. Kroeber's and Franz Deibel's editions, Zhu Guangqian translated Goethe's conversations with Eckermann and published them in Peking in 1978. Wang Yiju also involved in the translation of selections of Goethe's and Schiller's narrative poems.

From the 1980s on, more of Goethe's poems, short fiction, short stories, and maxims, together with the new translations of *Werther* and *Faust* mentioned earlier, have been repeatedly published by various publishers throughout the mainland as well as in Taiwan. These translations reveal that it is primarily the romantic elements, the rich ideas, the sincere feelings, and the portrayal of nature in Goethe's works as well as his progressive and optimistic view of life that the Chinese readers find most appealing and fascinating. Goethe's own personality, his individuality, his genius as a writer and a scientist, his experience as a minister of a state, and his relationships with women also tend to put him in a more glamorous light than most of other Western writers. At a time when the Chinese government is reemphasizing modernization in the country and welcoming foreign ideas, the renewed interest in Goethe as reflected in the many translations of his works clearly shows his importance. The popularity of *Werther* and *Faust* throughout the years further sheds light on the general taste, temperament, as well as expectation of the Chinese at different stages in her intellectual, social, and political history.

The popularity of *Werther* clearly illustrates the universal appeal of Werther's love and related problems. It further draws one's attention to the resem-

blance between the German novel and the Chinese literary tradition of “talented youth and beautiful maiden” [caizijiaren]. The Chinese find the artistic and talented Werther, with his incurable love sickness, very much in line with their own traditional concept of a gifted student in love. Lotte’s calm and modest composure, her tender feelings, lively spirit, dignified bearing, and graceful movement put her in a very favourable light in the eyes of the Chinese as the ideal type of woman. Taken as a whole, Werther and Lotte agree perfectly with the Chinese conception of an ideal pair of lovers; thus, their inability to marry and the death of Werther greatly move the Chinese emotionally. The yearnings, the intensity of feelings, the frustrations of ambitions, and the unfulfilment in love, as well as the delicate romantic atmosphere heavily laden with lovers’ sighs and tears, and, in many cases, the suicide of one or both of the lovers, are shared features in many Chinese plays, short stories, and novels dated as early as the Tang dynasty (ca. 618–907). “The Story of Ying Ying” [Yingying zhuan] of the T’ang period, *The Romance of the West Chamber* [Xixiang ji] of the Yuan dynasty, and *Dream of the Red Chamber* [Honglou Meng] of the Qing dynasty are some of the more notable examples of this tradition of “gifted youth and charming maiden” in China. The analogy between *Werther* and this tradition of romantic love, dedicated lovers, and unfulfilled love in Chinese literature is apparent. And it is probably the presence of these familiar traits in *Werther* which partially accounts for the easy passage and warm reception of the German novel in China.

Although the German novel is a rich work, touching on many issues besides love, it is basically the sentimental and lyrical qualities of the tragic tale of love that have attracted the general reading public in China. Besides associating Werther and Lotte with their classical conception of ideal lovers, many readers further find the German novel agreeable to their own romantic inclination and to their preoccupation with nature. In a highly artistic and lyrical style, Goethe succeeds in depicting not only the boundless love and frustrations of a young man, but also an idyllic world of peace, harmony, and scenic beauty. The general sense of uncertainty, boredom, and pointless existence characteristic of youths in the world and the indictment of the corrupt social order and conventional morality in the German novel further find resonance in the Chinese youths of the May Fourth era. They shared with Werther in their yearning for the liberation of the self, for spontaneous overflow of feelings, and for individual freedom. Introduced at a time when China was battling against feudalism and Confucianism, the social significance of Goethe’s work was as distinctive as the introduction of Ibsen’s *Nora* or Marx’s theories in twentieth-century China.

While *Werther* appeals to the emotional and aesthetic sides of Chinese readers, it is primarily the Faustian view of life in Goethe’s great poetic drama that holds the attention of Chinese intellectuals. Owing to the national need for progress and development and for perseverance and persistence in times of adversity, the Chinese intellectuals in general tend to see *Faust* as the celebration of a progressive and positive attitude of life—an attitude appropriate and essential in the building and strengthening of a modern nation. Although many inci-

dents and ideas in the play seem remote even to the Chinese readers today, the latter never fail to recognize or hail its progressive approach to life, emphasizing the necessity for action, the human strife toward truth and perfection, and the efforts in establishing a free and happy place for all people. These notions are indeed desirable to all Chinese living on the mainland, in Taiwan, and Hong Kong who realize that the country is still in the process of modernization. This also explains the recent revival of interest in Goethe in mainland China, for readers there saw in Goethe's works, *Werther* and *Faust* in particular, social significance that could help in the education of the people and the development of the nation. While the enthusiasm involved in translating Goethe's works can be taken as a friendly gesture on the part of the Chinese, showing their desire for cultural understanding and intellectual exchange with the Western world, the promotion of Goethe's works through the circulation of these translations in the Chinese milieu definitely mirrors the Chinese recognition of the German author's significance and accomplishment in world literature and their endeavour for intellectual betterment in the country.

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