Beyond the "Bhai-Bhai" Rhetoric: China-India Literary Relations, 1950-1990

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines the multi-layered relationship between the literary spheres of the People's Republic of China (1949-) and the Republic of India (1947-) from the 1950s to the 1980s. Drawing on previously underexplored materials in Chinese, Hindi, and English, this thesis focuses on a range of writerly, textual, and readerly contacts — three aspects of what, following Karen Thornber (2009), I call "literary relations" — between the two newly established Asian nation-states. Considering literary relations as inextricable from political relations, I argue that China and India embarked on similar and related paths since 1950, but in order to understand these relations we need to keep multiple frames in mind: of each country's national culture and foreign policy; of bilateral relations; and of broader leftist internationalism, the anti-imperialist Third World solidarity movement, and Cold War world politics.

Specifically, I identify and analyse five different yet overlapping trajectories that tied modern Chinese and Indian literatures together: first, a bilateral mechanism of writerly contact intended to enhance the China-India friendship; second, a multinational forum of Afro-Asian writers designed to advance cultural self-determination and literary solidarity in the Third World; third, India's enthusiastic import of modern Chinese fiction under the rubric of "revolutionary" with the Foreign Languages Press acting as the main text provider; fourth, China's systematic reception of "progressive" Indian fiction as part of the PRC's model of world literature; and fifth, a counter-intuitive yet strikingly productive and cross-media transplantation of Hindi popular fiction in 1980s China. Although post-1950 China and India shared considerable common grounds for developing literary contact, nevertheless the ways they engaged with each other's modern literature differed significantly due to their different literary cultures, political systems, and Cold War ideologies. The result is a landscape of literary relations that is markedly horizontal but nonetheless asymmetrical.

Men and women grow old,
if they give up their dreams;
One remains young if one has faith,
but one becomes grey with doubts;
One is as young as one's capacity,
as old as one's wrinkled brow;
One is as young as one's hope,
as old as one's despair;
Life is in the struggle against the odds —
And to love without concealed hates.

Mulk Raj Anand, 1988
(A Poem for Wang Huaiting)

老之将至，男女皆同，
如若梦想不再。
无论是谁，
信念在，青春回，
疑虑来，精神萎。
智能存，保青春，
眉锁紧，老迈近。
希望高，身体好，
绝望深，厄运增。
生命在于与困难作斗争——
还有爱人，对谁都不心怀仇与恨。

穆尔克·拉吉·安纳德，一九八八
(Wang Huaiting's translation)

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

In this thesis, I have followed the *pinyin* system in transliterating all Chinese terms, names, and titles. Hindi words are presented with diacritical marks according to the transliteration scheme used by R.S. McGregor in the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (1993), except the names of persons and places and those that have become part of the English language. Different forms of transliteration may be kept only when appearing in quotations. I have translated all Chinese and Hindi quotations into English without including the original script. All translations from Chinese and Hindi are mine unless indicated otherwise.

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Introduction: Mapping Post-1950 China-India Literary Relations

On November 9th, 1986, Wang Huaiting (1931-2007) finally met Mulk Raj Anand (1905-2004), a world-renowned Indian English writer, at the latter's home in Delhi. For Wang, this was a long-awaited meeting. A literary scholar associated with the South Asian Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, he had single-handedly translated three novels by Anand since 1981 — *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1940) and *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), collectively known as the "Lalu Trilogy" — and had exchanged letters with the author for four years. The enthusiasm turned out to be mutual. Finding time in his busy schedule, the 81-year-old Anand introduced his writings and thoughts in detail in two exclusive interviews with Wang, took him to several literary and artistic events, and accompanied him on a six-hour trip around Delhi and the neighbouring state of Haryana, in order to deepen the Chinese translator's understanding of "the past and present of the Indian village", a recurring theme in Anand's early novels.[1]

This meeting was just one of numerous fruitful, yet largely forgotten, contacts between the literary spheres of China and India in the second half of the twentieth century. For Anand, this meeting invoked a plethora of memories of his own engagement with China and Chinese literature. Wang remembered clearly how Anand began the conversation when they first met:

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[1] See Wang Huaiting, 'Yu Annade zai Yiqi', *Nanya Dongnanya Pinglun*, no. 1 (1988): 69–75. Also personal correspondence between Wang Huaiting and Zhang Wei, the first Chinese scholar to conduct systematic research into Anand's fiction. I am grateful to Zhang for sharing the materials Wang left to her before he passed away.

He first talked about his interactions with Ye Junjian when they were in Britain in the 1930s, and then recollected how he visited Beijing in 1951 as part of an Indian goodwill mission invited to attend the National Day ceremony where he saw Chairman Mao. He also mentioned his contacts with Guo Moruo, Mao Dun and other Chinese writers at international conferences. He talked delightedly and unceasingly. These memories seemed to make him happy.[2]

Anand's relationship with Chinese literature was not limited to personal acquaintance with Chinese writers but also included reading Chinese works. When asked by Wang to suggest a collective title for the Chinese edition of the "Lalu Trilogy", Anand proposed "All Men Are Brothers", a title emblematic of his social ideal that explicitly invoked the title of Pearl Buck's 1933 English translation of the Ming Chinese novel S*hui Hu Zhuan* (literarily meaning "Water Margin"), which Anand read while writing the trilogy in London at the turn of the 1940s. He had also enjoyed reading the works of noted modern Chinese authors such as Mao Dun (1896-1981), Lao She (1899-1966), Zhang Tianyi (1906-1985) and Ding Ling (1904-1986), and was particularly impressed by Lao She's novel *Luotuo Xiangzi* (Rickshaw Boy, 1937), whose protagonist, Xiangzi, resembled that of his own novel *Coolie* (1936), Munoo, in terms of their life of struggle at the bottom of society as rickshaw pullers.[3] Even more significantly, Anand admitted that he had drawn inspiration from — although without detailing how — the short story "A Q Zhengzhuan" (The True Story of Ah Q, 1922) by Lu Xun (1881-1936), the leading figure of modern Chinese literature. In fact, Wang spotted on Anand's bookshelf the four-volume *Selected Works of Lu Hsun* (published by the Beijing-based Foreign Languages Press, 1956-1960). At the top of the bookshelf was a Buddha statue presented to Anand by Guo Moruo (1892-1978), symbolising their

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[2] Ibid., 69.
[3] For a comparative study of the two novels, see Caitlin Vandertop, 'Peripheral Urbanism, Imperial Maturity and the Fiction of Development in Lao She's *Rickshaw* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, forthcoming.

personal friendship and the longstanding China-India cultural exchange. All this evidence suggests that while Anand's works were being rendered into Chinese and read by hundreds of thousands of Chinese readers from the 1950s onwards,[4] he was also enthusiastically reading, appreciating and drawing inspiration from modern Chinese literary works.

This study stems from a discomfort with the significant lack of attention to the richness of contemporary East-East or intra-Global South literary contacts epitomised by examples like Anand's in existing scholarship on world literature. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of "cultural field" or "world system" derived from the social sciences, some of the most influential theorists in the field of world literature, such as Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti and the Warwick Research Collective, have produced systemic and globalising formulations of world literature, which tend to fix non-Western literatures in a position "peripheral" to the European "centres". For them, inter-"peripheral" movements of literary forms and texts necessarily need to "pass through the centre" or need to be mediated by Western "consecration".[5] David Damrosch has proposed a more open-ended understanding of world literature by arguing: "For any given observer, even a genuinely global perspective remains a perspective *from somewhere*, and global patterns of the circulation of world literature take shape in their local manifestations".[6] While Damrosch's emphasis on the "local" in studying world literature is instructive, I doubt if there are certain "global patterns of the circulation of world literature" as such and caution against considering East-East literary interactions

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[4] See Zhang Wei, 'Yindu Yingyu Zuojia M.R. Annade zai Zhongguo: Zuopin Yijie, Yanjiu ji Zuojia Jiaowang', in *Dongfang Yanjiu 2006, Edited by Zhang Yu'an* (Beijing: Jingji ribao chubanshe, 2007), 166–75.
[5] See Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Franco Moretti, 'Evolution, World-Systems, Weltliteratur', in *Studying Transcultural Literary History,* edited by Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 113–21; and Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).
[6] David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 27; emphasis in original.

"local manifestations" that either conform to or deviate from such assumed "global patterns". A more effective way to "resist the urge to flatten world literature and make it monologic", as Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora and Francesca Orsini astutely suggest, is an approach that works "from the ground up" and "employs multilingualism and location/locatedness".[7] Such a "located" approach has been proved highly productive by a number of recent studies that examine East-East literary trajectories from different prisms. I am thinking here of Karen Thornber's book on the intra-East Asian "literary contact nebulae" that usefully shows the "rapidly changing and frequently ambiguous borders" within the seemingly hierarchical Japanese Empire, Adhira Mangalagiri's study of the "literary encounters" between China and India in the colonial period, Duncan Yoon's work on the "Africa-China imaginary" that emerged from the Afro-Asian Writers Bureau during the Cold War, Mahruba Mowtushi's research on Africa in the Bengali imagination, Ronit Ricci's harnessing of translation and adaptation to trace the spread of Islam eastward into South and Southeast Asia, and Anindita Banerjee and Sonja Fritzsche's edited volume on the circulation of popular genre in the Global South.[8] I see my study firmly rooted in this growing and exciting scholarship.

This thesis examines the tangled and multi-layered relationship between the literary spheres of the People's Republic of China (est. 1949) and the Republic of India (est. 1947) between the 1950s and 1980s, the decades immediately after the two largest Asian countries became independent political, social and cultural entities and

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[7] Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora, and Francesca Orsini, 'Significant Geographies in Lieu of World Literature', *Journal of World Literature*, no. 3 (2018): 290–310.

[8] See Karen Laura Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Adhira Mangalagiri, 'At the Limits of Comparison: Literary Encounters between China and India in the Colonial World' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2017); Duncan Yoon, 'Cold War Africa and China: The Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau and the Rise of Postcolonial Literature' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Los Angeles: University of California, 2014); Mahruba T. Mowtushi, 'Africa in the Bengali Imagination from Calcutta to Kampala: 1928-1973' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, London: King's College London, 2016); Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversation, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); and, Banerjee Anindita and Sonja Fritzsche, eds., *Science Fiction Circuits of the South and East* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018).

established mutual diplomatic relations. Based on a range of underexplored archival materials in Chinese, Hindi and English, personal interviews with key literary agents (e.g. writers, translators, and publishers) and close reading of selected texts and paratexts, this thesis is arguably the first systematic study in any language that combines textual and historical methods to explore the various ways in which modern Chinese and Indian literatures came into contact and generated creative spaces of interaction in the postcolonial world. In this thesis, I address the following questions: what kinds of social, cultural and political conjunctures and motivations made post-1950 Chinese and Indian writers and readers turn to each other's literatures? Did they engage with each other's literature in similar ways, or differently? What particular institutional arrangements or personal endeavours made these engagements possible? Did these literary engagements have concrete influences on the host and guest cultures, or were they simply fleeting diplomatic encounters? Can we speak of particular trajectories, themes and concerns that characterise the literary contacts between China and India in the second half of the twentieth century?

Inspired by the methodology Karen Thornber has used to study Chinese, Korean and Taiwanese transculturations of Japanese literature during the early twentieth century in *Empire of Texts in Motion* (2009),[9] this thesis seeks to answer these questions using what I call "literary relations" as its analytical framework. As I elaborate further below, "literary relations" denote the interlinked processes of readerly, writerly, and textual contacts that literary agents and agencies from two countries develop with each other, typically in interaction with the political circumstances and agendas of each country and the broader geopolitical forces of which they are part. Considering literary relations as inextricable from political relations, I argue that China and India embarked

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[9] See Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*.

on similar and related paths since 1950, but in order to understand these relations we need to keep multiple frames in mind: of each country's national culture and foreign policy; of bilateral relations; and of broader leftist internationalism, the anti-imperialist Third World solidarity movement, and Cold War world politics. Specifically, I identify and analyse five different yet overlapping networks that tied modern Chinese and Indian literatures together: first, a bilateral mechanism of writerly contact intended to enhance the China-India friendship; second, a multinational forum of Afro-Asian writers designed to advance cultural self-determination and literary solidarity in the Third World; third, India's enthusiastic import of modern Chinese fiction under the rubric of "revolutionary" with the Foreign Languages Press acting as the main text provider; fourth, China's systematic reception of "progressive" Indian fiction as part of the PRC's model of world literature; and fifth, a counter-intuitive yet strikingly productive and cross-media transplantation of Hindi popular fiction in 1980s China. As I show, although post-1950 China and India shared considerable common grounds for developing literary contact, nevertheless the ways they engaged with each other's modern literature differed significantly due to their different literary cultures, political systems, and Cold War ideologies. The result is a landscape of literary relations that is markedly horizontal but nonetheless asymmetrical.

Beyond Buddhism and Tagore: Chinese and Indian Literatures in Comparative Studies

The idea of studying Chinese and Indian literature together is not new. Though a neglected subfield of comparative and world literature in the West, this topic has been discussed by scholars from China and India for decades. In China, for example, scholarly investigation of Chinese literature in relation to Indian literature appeared

already in the 1920s.[10] Most of the existing comparative studies of Chinese and Indian

literatures fall into one of three categories. The first category, pioneered by noted

Indologist Ji Xianlin, explores how the repertoire of stories in Indian Buddhist literature

influenced ancient Chinese literature through large-scale translations and

popularisations of the Indian Buddhist scriptures in China during the first millennium.[11]

In the Six Dynasties period (220-589), the earliest form of Chinese fiction, called

Zhiguai (records of anomalies), emerged, featuring an assortment of supernatural motifs

(ghosts, demons and deities) and spiritual concepts (*karma*) borrowed from Indian

Buddhist stories, which were alien to Confucian conventions.[12] This influence reached

its zenith during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), giving rise to two new literary forms that

enjoyed significant popularity: *Chuanqi* (tales of strange events) and *Bianwen* (literally

meaning "transformation texts"). In addition to carrying on *Zhiguai*'s characteristic

invocation of the supernatural, *Chuanqi* writers such as Wang Du, author of *Gujing Ji*

(Record of an Ancient Mirror), also borrowed the structure of the frame story from the

Buddhist *Jātaka* tales (and perhaps *Pañcatantra* stories included in Buddhist sutras as

well), in which various stories about the previous lives of the Buddha are organised

under a larger narrative framework. Composed in semi-colloquial Chinese for the

purpose of preaching Buddhist doctrine to illiterate people, *Bianwen* drew directly from

Indian Buddhist literature, not only for its vast pool of stories, but also for its

prosimetric style.[13]

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[10] In one of the first Chinese essay collections of comparative studies of China-India literary relations, Yu Longyu, ed., *Zhongyin Wenxue Guanxi Yuanliu* (Changsha: Hunan wenyi chubanshe, 1987), the earliest essay included is from Kang Youwei's (a prominent reformist intellectual) 1920 monograph *Fanyi Wenxue yu Fodian* (Translated Literature and the Buddhist Canon), which discusses how the translation of Indian Buddhist scriptures shaped China's literary landscape and translation theory.

[11] For a differentiation of "Indian Buddhist literature" from the broader category of "Buddhist scripture", see Xue Keqiao, *Zhongyin Wenxue Bijiao Yanjiu* (Beijing: Kunlun chubanshe, 2003), 3-6.

[12] See Ji Xianlin, 'Yindu Wenxue zai Zhongguo', *Wenxue Yichan* 1980, no. 1 (1980): 146.

[13] See ibid. According to Ji, the prosimetric style rarely seen in previous Chinese literary tradition was very likely influenced by Indian Buddhist scriptures such as the *Mahāvastu* (Great Event).

Although the transmission of Buddhism from India to China declined significantly in the twelfth century, Indian Buddhist literature continued to inspire later Chinese writings. While the operatic dramas of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) drew heavily on *Chuanqi* tales, many novels composed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) also incorporated various Buddhist elements. The famous Ming novel *Xi You Ji* (Journey to the West), for instance, portrays the Tang Dynasty monk Xuanzang's (602-664) pilgrimage to India, with numerous non-human characters added. Among these characters is Sun Wukong (also known as the Monkey King), the image of which many scholars have speculated originated from the monkey god, Hanuman, from the Hindu epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.[14] The epic's plot became known to Chinese people no later than the third century, again through translated Buddhist texts.[15]

In the wake of the New Culture Movement (mid-1910s to 1920s) that called for a new Chinese culture based on *baihua wen* (vernacular literature) and Western concepts such as science and democracy, European and Japanese literatures began to supersede Indian Buddhist literature as Chinese literature's major foreign source of inspiration.[16] During the decade after the Communists took over China in 1949, Buddhism continued to be a subject of academic inquiry and a symbol of China-India cultural intercourse, but it seldom figured prominently in the textual transfers and interactions between writers of the two nations.[17] Admittedly, Buddhist sites like Nalanda became part of the standard itinerary for Chinese writers who visited India in

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[14] Other intellectuals, including Lu Xun, held different views. They considered Wu Zhiqi, a local water god in traditional Chinese mythology, Sun Wukong's prototype. For a review of this debate, see Xiao Bing, 'Wu Zhiqi Hanuman Sun Wukong Tongkao', *Wenxue Pinglun*, no. 5 (1982): 66–82.

[15] See Zhong yin lianhe bianshen weiyuanhui, ed., *Zhong Yin Wenhua Jiaoliu Baikequanshu* (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaikequanshu chubanshe, 2014), 310-16.

[16] Here I distinguish "Indian Buddhist literature" as a foreign source from the later localised Chinese Buddhist literature. For a thorough study of how early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals drew new words, concepts and discourses from European/Japanese languages and literature, see Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity–China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[17] Rahul Sankrityayan, a Hindi writer whose faith straddled Buddhism and Communism, was an exception. He went to China at the invitation of China's Buddhist Association. For more details, see his travelogue in Hindi *Cīn meṁ Kyā Dekhā* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1960).

the 1950s, and a visit to these sites indeed evoked tributes to ancient Buddhist pilgrims like Xuanzang. However, for writers of socialist China, Xuanzang's days were not a "golden age" to return to, but a past that was limited in scope and needed to be transcended for a greater cause. Comparing post-war cultural exchanges between China and India with Xuanzang and his Indian teacher Silabhadra, the noted Chinese author Bing Xin (1900-1999) wrote in her India travelogue: "Our goals are higher than theirs, because we are striving together not only for the Buddhists in the two countries, but for the sustainable peace of Asia and the entire world."[18] Considering the Buddha statue that Guo Moruo presented to Anand and Bing Xin's comment together, it is clear that in the 1950s, although Buddhism was invoked to suggest a continuity of friendly contact and had therefore a symbolic and ideological meaning, new, broader and more relevant templates — in this case, the World Peace Movement — emerged to carry the China-India interchange forward. This thesis will focus on these emerging templates.

The second category of comparative research on Chinese and Indian literature has focused on Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and his multiple connections with China's literary circles. Many scholars have studied Tagore's controversial visit to China in 1924, highlighting the polarised responses of Chinese writers to his speeches. Sisir Kumar Das has offered a thorough examination of the controversy in the context of the "ideological regroupings of the Chinese intellectuals" during the New Culture Movement.[19] Liberal intellectuals like Hu Shi (1891-1962) and Xu Zhimo (1897-1931) welcomed Tagore's emphasis on Eastern spiritualism and his criticism of Western materialism, whilst leftists like Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Mao Dun expressed objections, wary of the potential for Tagore's ideas to undermine the emerging

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[18] Bing Xin, 'Yindu zhi Xing', in *Bing Xin Quanji Di San Ce*, ed. Zhuo Ru. (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi chubanshe, 1994), 249.
[19] Sisir Kumar Das, 'The Controversial Guest: Tagore in China', *China Report* 29, no. 3 (1993): 246.

ideological grounds among the Chinese youth for a Leninist revolution. Das interprets the controversy as a result of misunderstanding, partly attributable to Tagore's inadequate knowledge of the changing political scene in China and partly to the reductionist ways in which Tagore's Chinese hosts (mostly liberal writers) presented him to the public: they introduced Tagore as a kind of "living god" by foregrounding his spiritual side and disregarding his anti-imperialist attitude and interest in social issues.[20] Das's approach, which attends to the intentions and practices on both sides and asks how competing socio-political currents in the host culture complicated the evaluation of this contact, inspires my examination of the meetings between Chinese and Indian writers in the 1950s (Chapters 1 and 2).

Tagore's influence on modern Chinese poetry is another often-studied aspect of his relationship with Chinese literature.[21] The decade from 1915 to 1925, which roughly overlapped with the period between Tagore winning the 1913 Nobel Prize and his 1924 visit to China, saw the emergence of a "Tagore wave" marked by immense enthusiasm among Chinese intellectuals for translating (almost always from English), discussing, and emulating Tagore's poems.[22] In addition to shaping the language and style of individual poets like Guo Moruo and Bing Xin, Tagore's poems gave birth to the "Xinyue" (Crescent Moon) school, a poetic society founded in 1926 that created its aesthetic principles on the basis of Tagore's collection *The Crescent Moon* (1913). As Tan Chung notes, Tagore's poems were enthusiastically received in China during the New Culture Movement, not only because they offered a model of vernacular poetry for

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[20] See Ji Xianlin, 'Taige'er yu Zhongguo', *Shehui Kexue Zhanxian*, no. 2 (1979): 291.

[21] Several essays on Tagore's manifold influence on Chinese new poetry are found in Tan Chung et al., eds., *Tagore and China* (New Delhi and Beijing: SAGE Publications and Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2011), particularly Chapters 4 and 7. For a recent discussion of this topic, see Gal Gvili, 'Pan-Asian Poetics: Tagore and the Interpersonal in May Fourth New Poetry', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 181–203.

[22] Tagore's poetry was first introduced to Chinese readers in 1915 by Chen Duxiu. By 1925, almost all of Tagore's major works available in English, including *Stray Birds*, *The Crescent Moon* and *Gitanjali*, had been translated into Chinese and published, mainly in journals and newspapers. See Yan Zhiqiang, 'Taige'er Fanyi Bainian Ji', *Zhongguo Fanyi*, no. 6 (2012): 24.

Chinese poets to draw on, but also because they illuminated a path by which Asian poets could bring their nations to the forefront of world literature.[23]

China's literary engagement with Tagore remained strong after his death in 1941, and such engagements mainly took the form of translation. Compared with the preceding decades, the 1950s stands out in China's century-long history of translating Tagore for two reasons: the first appearance of book-length translations of Tagore's poem collections, including Bing Xin's translation of *Gitanjali* (1912), which became a classic in its own right; and a heightened emphasis on translating Tagore's novels and short stories. After a break due to the 1962 Indo-China war and then the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), translations of Tagore experienced a revival in the 1980s. According to translation historians, over 70 book-length translations of Tagore's works, many of which retranslations or reissues of old translations, were published in China between 1978 and 2006, making up nearly one third of all the Indian works translated during the period.[24]

While cognisant of Tagore's special connection with twentieth-century Chinese literature, I have decided not to focus on this extensively studied case. Amit Chaudhuri's comment on Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981) that the novel "erected as a sort of gigantic edifice that all but obstructs the view of what lies behind" holds true of Tagore in the context of China-India literary contacts.[25] Tagore's "gigantic" figure, a symbol of both world literature and China-India friendship, has attracted perhaps too much scholarly attention, inevitably drawing it away from other cases and topics.[26] Aiming to discover "what lies behind" and do justice to the diversity

[23] See Tan Chung, 'Tagore's Inspiration in Chinese New Poetry', in *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding China* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998), 335–56.

[24] See Ma Zuyi, *Zhongguo Fanyi Tongshi, Xiandai Bufen*, vol. 2 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2006), 600-05.

[25] Amit Chaudhuri, '"Huge Baggy Monster": Mimetic Theories of the Indian Novel after Rushdie', in *Clearing a Space: Reflections on India, Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 113.

[26] My keyword search for essays and dissertations whose subjects contain "Tagore" and "China" in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI, www.cnki.net), the largest Chinese academic database, yielded an

of China-India literary contacts, this thesis turns to other canonical modern writers such as Premchand (1880-1936), Lu Xun and Mulk Raj Anand, alongside non-canonical authors such as Gulshan Nanda (1929-1985), whose important role in bridging the Chinese and Indian literary fields has yet to be recognised.

What prompted me not to focus on Tagore is also the realisation that he was not representative of the features and patterns of post-1950 China-India literary contact. Tagore's case is atypical for two reasons. First, the highly canonised position he enjoyed in China as a "world author" obscured his national identity as an "Indian author" and therefore made the reception of his works much less susceptible to the changing dynamics of Sino-Indian relations.[27] For example, even as translations of modern Indian literature in general experienced a dramatic downturn in 1961 due to the mounting tension between China and India, the state-run People's Literature Publishing House (Renmin wenxue chubanshe) brought out the first Chinese collection of Tagore's works in ten volumes, commemorating the author's centenary.[28] Second, Tagore's canonicity has also meant that the Chinese reception of his works has been relatively free from current literary ideologies. Although in the 1950s Tagore's novels and short stories became subject to a "progressive" mode of interpretation that highlighted anti-imperialist and anti-feudal elements, they did not in fact fit into "progressive literature" (*jinbu wenxue*) — the officially-sanctioned standard used in the 1950s to select modern literature from the Third World, including India — as squarely as the works of Premchand, Mulk Raj Anand, Krishan Chander and others who were directly associated

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impressive 1,666 results (accessed November 2, 2018). Many studies of Tagore's connections with Chinese literature simply recast old findings, suggesting some degree of excess.

[27] A quantitative study shows that Tagore ranks fourteenth on the list of the most translated foreign authors in twentieth-century China. He follows Tolstoy, Gorky, Shakespeare, Turgenev, Dickens, Balzac, Conan Doyle, Hans Christian Andersen, Chekhov, Jules Verne, Victor Hugo, Maupassant and Alexandre Dumas, and comes before Pushkin, Mark Twain, Agatha Christie and Goethe. Tagore is the only Asian writer in the top 20. See He Huibin, 'Zhongguo Ershi Shiji Waiguo Wenxue Fanyi yu Pinglun Zongmao de Lianghua Yanjiu', *Dongwu Xueshu*, no. 6 (2015): 123.

[28] Even after the two countries became rivals in 1962, Tagore's works were still included in China's textbooks. See Jiang Jingkui, ed., *Zhongguo Xuezhe Lun Taige'er Xia Ce* (Yinchuan: Yangguang chubanshe, 2011), 856.

with the Progressive Writers' Association of India (Chapter 4). Thus, as far as post-1950 Chinese reception of Indian literature is concerned, Tagore's case is an *exception* rather than the norm. It should therefore be examined in further studies as a phenomenon constituted by its own singularities.

This thesis departs methodologically from existing comparative studies by consciously adopting a bilateral perspective. Although historians have discovered ample evidence that confirms the reciprocal nature of China-India relations in terms of trade, technology and arts,[29] the perception of their literary relationship is largely that it was unidirectional, as in studies emphasising the influence of Buddhism and Tagore on Chinese literature. Adopting a bilateral perspective that looks at both directions, my study of the post-1950 period attempts to show that literary flows went both ways.

An empirical approach that focuses on actual contact and transfer is certainly not the only way to study Chinese and Indian literature and their relationship, however. A growing body of scholarship has juxtaposed virtually unrelated Chinese and Indian texts and looked for parallels in terms of theme, imagery, style and author's outlook. Liu Anwu's monograph *Yindu Wenxue he Zhongguo Wenxue Bijiao Yanjiu* (A Comparative Study of Indian and Chinese Literature, 2005) illustrates the productivity of this approach by linking ancient texts like the Hindu epic *Mahābhārata* and the Ming novel *Sanguo Yanyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms), and between modern writers such as Premchand and Lu Xun. In the latter case, Liu discovers many similarities between Premchand and Lu Xun, two contemporaries who were very likely unaware of one another, in terms of their use of fiction as a means by which to stimulate social

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[29] The areas in which China influenced India include, among many others, sugar and paper production, the technique of reverse glass painting and the making of fishing nets. For more examples, see Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts Joint Compilation Committee, *Encyclopedia of India-China Cultural Contacts* (New Delhi: MaXposure Media Group, 2014), available at: https://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?23520/Encyclopedia+of+IndiaChina+Cultural+Contacts (accessed October 20th, 2018). For the Chinese version, see Zhong yin lianhe bianshen weiyuanhui, *Zhong Yin Wenhua Jiaoliu Baikequanshu* (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaikequanshu chubanshe, 2014).

awakening and resistance, and their sympathetic depiction of marginalised groups like peasants and women. Examining them together, Liu maintains, "helps uncover the common features oppressed nations shared in developing their literatures".[30] In her recent doctoral study on the "literary encounters" between China and India in the first half of the twentieth century, Adhira Mangalagiri crafts a creative conceptual framework by which to read together Lu Xun and Premchand. She sets the two writers in an "absent dialogue" by configuring an "aesthetic network" mediated by a range of "intermediary figures" like Zheng Zhenduo and Vasili Eroshenko.[31] In this way, Mangalagiri demonstrates that the rebellious elements embedded in Premchand's short stories in fact defy Lu Xun's claim that resistant voices in colonial India were wanting.

In terms of period, my thesis focuses on the period after Mangalagiri's, with a marked transition from the colonial to the postcolonial period. Methodologically, however, I have adopted a different approach, one that prioritises *actual contact* over conceptually crafted linkage. This means that instead of bringing Premchand and Lu Xun into a historically unrealised conversation, my thesis considers how Premchand's works were received in China (Chapter 4) and Lu Xun's in India (Chapter 3). Mangalagiri's study mainly focuses on texts that "orchestrate" encounters between China and India; in other words, the key texts she analyses are themselves sites where the two countries meet: the colonial archival document with which the foreign ratepayers of the British-run International Settlement in Shanghai attempted to augment the Indian Branch of the city's Police Force, Chinese fiction featuring Indian policemen stationed in Shanghai, Agyeya's Hindi stories imagining the Chinese communist

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[30] Liu Anwu, *Yindu Wenxue he Zhongguo Wenxue Bijiao Yanjiu* (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo chubanshe, 2005), 389. For comparative studies of the two authors in Hindi, see Alakh Narayan, *Premchand aur Lū Śun* (Delhi: Yatri Prakashan, 1995).
[31] Adhira Mangalagiri, 'At the Limits of Comparison: Literary Encounters between China and India in the Colonial World' (Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Chicago, 2017), 158.

revolution, and Lu Xun's treatise that labels India a "shadow nation".[32] By contrast, I am mostly interested in exploring the encounters between Chinese and Indian literature, with "literature" understood not only textually, but also sociologically (i.e. agents and agencies such as writers, translators, readers and publishers). Therefore, the Chinese and Indian texts I examine do not necessarily engage thematically with the other country, but they travelled there, creating moments of translation, circulation, reading, adaptation or influence across the two literary spheres. Literary representations of the historical connections between China and India are outside the purview of this study.[33]

In the following sections, I will explain why I consider approaching post-1950 China-India literary relations through actual moments of contact the most suitable and productive methodological option to address the questions I raised above.

1950-1990: Timeframe and Historical Context

The year 1950 has been widely considered the beginning of "contemporary" Sino-Indian relations.[34] On April 1st, 1950, the Republic of India (est. 1947) became the first non-socialist country to establish diplomatic relations with the Communist-led People's Republic of China (est. 1949). This event inaugurated a decade of fraternity that was famously embodied by the slogan "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai" (Indians and Chinese are brothers). Despite their ideological differences and constant negotiations over unsettled

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[32] Ibid., 18-19.

[33] Contemporary literary works representing historical encounters between China and India — ancient or present-day, sympathetic or antagonistic — constitute an exciting subject of study in their own right, e.g. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's 1944 novel *And One Did Not Come Back*, which delineates Dr Kotnis's humanitarian activities in wartime China and spawned the 1946 film *Dr Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani*; Krishan Chander's *Ek Gadhā Nefā meṁ* (A Donkey in Nefa, 196?), an imaginative satire featuring a donkey as its protagonist who witnesses the Indo-China war of 1962 and travels to Beijing; and , more recently, Amitav Ghosh's "Ibis Trilogy" — *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015) — a historical fiction series dealing with the opium trade between China and India carried out by the East India Company; and Kunwar Narain's Hindi epic poem *Kumārajīva* (2015), which deals with the fourth-century monk, traveller and translator, Kumarajiva, who played an important role in introducing Buddhism to China. Works like these, which warrant systematic studies of their own, provide a literary lens through which to revisit the China-India history.

[34] See B.R. Deepak, *India-China Relations during the First Half of the 20th Century* (New Delhi: APH Publishers, 2001), 16.

geopolitical issues such as the demarcation of borders, the two emerging Asian states made significant efforts to collaborate under various diplomatic frames, with the shared intention of consolidating their newly-won independence and reshaping the Cold War international order. As a result of these joint efforts, new forms of political alliance, conduits of knowledge flow, spaces to meet, and modes of textual transfer emerged between China and India, enabling an unprecedented wealth of literary contacts. Therefore, only by foregrounding these burgeoning contacts and their effects can we do justice to the distinguishing features of China-India literary relations in the second half of the twentieth century.

More specifically, I have identified three different yet overlapping frames through which China and India cooperated in the 1950s: the bilateral frame of Sino-Indian relations, the multilateral frame of Afro-Asian solidarity, and the multilateral frame of Soviet-dominated internationalism. 1954 was a milestone in the bilateral relations between China and India due to the first exchange of visits between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964). It was during Zhou's visit to India that he and Nehru proposed the concept of "Panchsheel" or Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.[35] Initially introduced to resolve bilateral disputes over Tibet, "Panchsheel" gained international recognition at the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia as the basis for Afro-Asian solidarity and an alternative code of behaviour in international affairs to the Cold War framework of competing systems of alliances. In order to prevent the Bandung Conference from being associated with either of the Cold War blocs, the five convenors — India, Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) — did not invite the Soviet

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[35] First enunciated in the Preamble to the "Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India" signed by Zhou and Nehru, the "Panchsheel" includes: (1) mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; (2) mutual non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful coexistence.

Central Asian republics. However, China, a member of the Eastern bloc at that time, was invited, primarily "as an exponent of Panch Shila [Panchsheel]" and "as an Asian rather than a Communist state".[36] Indeed, Nehru played a key role in securing China's inclusion in the conference and introducing Zhou to other Afro-Asian leaders, in the belief that "Chinese participation in such events would at once weaken Peking's ties to Moscow while strengthening her ties with her Asian neighbors".[37]

Whilst absent from Bandung, the Soviet Union nonetheless sponsored other "fronts" of internationalism that involved both China and India. This thesis deals with two such organisations: the World Peace Council (WPC), founded in 1950 under the auspices of the Soviet-dominated Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), set up at the first Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in Cairo from December 1957 to January 1958. The fact that AAPSO was established soon after the Bandung Conference reflects the Soviet attempt to have a stronger voice in Third World affairs.

Aimed at enhancing cooperation through "soft" methods, all these political frames had their cultural platforms and involved many literary figures. In the area of bilateral relations, cultural diplomacy mobilised numerous writers on both sides to visit one another's countries as cultural ambassadors and report their observations back home by giving public speeches and publishing travelogues (see Chapter 1). Cultural diplomacy also allowed Chinese and Indian writers to meet at reception dinners and literary seminars and exchange correspondence after they returned home, which helped them stay abreast of one another's literary developments, exchange texts, and seek out collaborations.

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[36] Charles Neuhauser, *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970), 3.
[37] Ibid., 4.

On a multilateral level, the WPC itself had a cultural predecessor — the 1948 World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace in Wroclaw, Poland. The Soviet-backed WPC and US-backed Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a CIA-funded organisation established in 1950 to counter the WPC, served as the cultural "fronts" for the two Cold War superpowers, propagating "peace" and "freedom" as competing codes that respectively implied a pro-Soviet and pro-US position.[38] In the 1950s, the WPC and the CCF had an uneven presence in China and India: while Nehru's policy of neutrality in world affairs allowed both organisations to establish branches in India — the Indian Council for World Peace (ICWP) and the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), China engaged exclusively with the WPC due to its pro-Soviet, anti-American policy. As a common platform, the WPC expanded the scale of China-India cultural diplomacy by offering additional sites (mostly European cities) where Chinese and Indian writers could meet and communicate, as we shall see in Chapter 1.

Designed as the cultural wing of the AAPSO, the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau (AAWB) was set up at the 1957 Cairo conference, one year before the first Afro-Asian Writers' Conference met in Tashkent. As Chapter 2 shows, examining the Tashkent conference in relation to its often-neglected forerunner, the 1956 Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi, offers a useful lens through which to consider the continuities and discontinuities between the two paradigms of Afro-Asian solidarity represented by the Bandung Conference and the AAPSO. Further, compared with other cultural platforms, Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences brought Chinese writers into contact with a more heterogeneous group of Indian writers, including ICCF-affiliated authors like Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan "Agyeya" (1911-1987), who had no presence in the

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[38] On how the US and the Soviet Union fought the cultural Cold War, see Frances Stonor Saunders, ed., *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999); and Elise Boulding, *Cultures of Peace: The Hidden Side of History* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), Chapter 3.

left-dominated bilateral cultural diplomacy. This increased heterogeneity enables a more holistic view of how the cultural Cold War affected China and India.

By the early 1960s, all these frames, alongside their cultural platforms, lost significance in strengthening China-India cooperation. The 1962 border war not only brought Sino-Indian relations to a standstill but also left "Panchsheel" — the core of Bandung spirit — in crisis. Meanwhile, both China and India stopped being active participants in Soviet-sponsored internationalist organisations: while the Sino-Soviet split in 1960 divided the AAPSO and the AAWB, India initiated the non-aligned movement with Yugoslavia in 1961. This thesis, however, focuses on the 1950s, when all three frames coexisted to create most opportunities for Chinese and Indian writers to interact, collaborate and negotiate, and which set up the infrastructure of translations.

The various pathways of formal and cultural diplomacy newly opened in the 1950s enabled new phenomena and dynamics within China-India literary relations, compared to the first half of the twentieth century when both countries were enmeshed in anti-imperialist struggles. Quantitatively, while visits between Chinese and Indian writers in the two decades following Tagore's 1924 visit are almost unheard of, the 1950s alone saw at least 40 authors travel between the two nations (see Appendices 1 and 2). The volume and diversity of textual transfers also increased: before 1950 modern Indian literature in Chinese translation concentrated primarily on Tagore, whereas the 1950s saw over 20 modern and contemporary Indian authors introduced to Chinese readers. Among them, progressive authors like Mulk Raj Anand, Premchand and Krishan Chander were translated most enthusiastically (see Table 1).[39]

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[39] For a fuller list, see Appendix 3.

	Tagore	Mulk Raj Anand	Premchand	Krishan Chander	Kalidasa
Short Stories		1	3	3	
Novels	1	3	2		
Poetry	8				1
Plays	2				4
Fables		3		2	
Total	**11**	**7**	**5**	**5**	**5**

Table 1: Indian authors with the largest number of book-length translations into Chinese, 1950-1962

This quantitative change took place alongside a qualitative one, which was marked by a significant decrease in reliance on indirect translation, European locales and Western scholarship. A brief comparison of the 1950s and the period immediately before it, World War II, shows that the mediating role of Europe weakened in two ways in particular. First, during World War II, Chinese and Indian authors used European metropoles, not their homelands, as sites of interaction.[40] It was in wartime London — more specifically, literary forums established by European writers such as the Bloomsbury Group gatherings and PEN International conferences — that Mulk Raj Anand became acquainted with Ye Junjian (1914-1999) and Xiao Qian (1910-1999), two Chinese writers who had gone to England as journalists to enhance the Britain-China anti-Fascist alliance.[41] Underlying their friendship was a shared aspiration to make the oppressed voices of China and India heard in the West by writing in English and participating in England's literary life, albeit from a marginalised position.[42] By

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[40] This is not to say that direct cultural exchanges did not take place on Chinese and Indian soil during the war. Cheena Bhavana (Chinese Hall) at Visva-Bharati, the oldest hub of Chinese studies in India, founded by Tagore and Tan Yunshan in 1937, hosted passionate direct interactions between Indian intellectuals and visiting Chinese academics (e.g. W. Pachow or Bazhou), artists (e.g. Xu Beihong), Buddhist monks (e.g. Fafang), and political leaders (e.g. Chiang Kai-shek). Literary figures were rarely involved. See Tansen Sen, *India, China, and the World: A Connected History* (Lanham: Rowman & and Littlefield, 2017), Chapter 4.

[41] These are in fact the only cases of close relationships forged between Chinese and Indian writers during World War II that I have so far been able to identify.

[42] Xiao Qian laments in his memoir that when he attended a PEN seminar hosted by E.M. Forster in 1944, he and Anand were the only two representatives of the East. See Xiao Qian, *Wenxue Huiyilu* (Ha'erbin: Beifang wenyi

contrast, post-1950 Chinese and Indian writers could meet frequently on home ground and thus play a central role; they no longer needed to become members of European literary organisations in order to speak to an international audience. Although they continued to meet in European cities (especially under the WPC frame) during this period, these cities functioned as supplementary rather than main sites of contact.

Second, post-1950 China and India depended much less on the Western intellectuals as mediators of textual transfer. Prior to 1950, the scarcity of direct cultural contact and specialists who knew each other's languages meant that Chinese and Indian works had to first be rendered into a major Western language (usually English) and gain reputation in the West before reaching each other's readers. The "Tagore wave" in China would have been impossible without Tagore himself translating his poems into English and being consecrated by the Nobel Prize; similarly, Indian readers would have missed a number of Chinese works had they not first become available in English thanks to British sinologists like Arthur Waley (1889-1966) or American journalists like Edgar Snow (1905-1972).[43] After 1950, by contrast, Western literary agents and agencies no longer had the authority to decide the content of textual transfer between China and India. As we shall see repeatedly in the following chapters, direct exchanges of cultural delegations, coupled with China's outward translation project, created new channels of textual flow between the two nations. Through visits to one another's literary organisations (e.g. China Writers Association in Beijing and the Sahitya Akademi in Delhi), meetings between writers, and the transmission of literary journals,

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chubanshe, 2014), 278.

[43] Tagore became fascinated with Tang-dynasty poets Li Bai and Du Fu after reading Herbert Giles and Arthur Waley's translations of classical Chinese poetry. See Tan Chung, 'Influence of Classical Chinese Poetry on Tagore's Works: A Tentative Discourse', in *Tagore and China*, ed. Tan Chung et al. (New Delhi and Beijing: SAGE Publications and Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2011), 273–94. *Living China* (1936), an English anthology of modern Chinese short stories edited by Edgar Snow, became available in India soon after its publication. Translated into Urdu by a Bihar-based progressive writer named Tamanai in the mid-1940s, this was perhaps the earliest collection of modern Chinese literature translated into Indian vernaculars. See Sajjad Zaheer, *The Light: A History of the Movement for Progressive Literature in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent,* trans. Amina Azfar (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 227.

many opportunities emerged to acquire first-hand knowledge about each other's literary field, with literary value and legitimacy defined in local, not Western, terms. Western intellectuals were invited to attend the Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences (see Chapter 2), but they joined as observers and interlocutors rather than "gatekeepers" conferring recognition on Asian and African writers, the role they had played in the colonial period.

Although the timeframe of this thesis stretches from 1950 to 1990, my examination primarily focuses on the 1950s and, to a lesser extent, the 1980s. The two decades in between will barely be discussed here because literary contacts — writerly, textual and, to a less degree, readerly (more on these analytical terms below) — significantly decreased following the 1962 war and they remained dormant until 1976, when ambassadorial relations between the two countries were restored. This seemingly imbalanced thesis structure — four out of five chapters dedicated to the 1950s and only one to the 1980s — by no means implies that the latter period is less important, however. Instead, it results from my intention to fully present the multifaceted nature of post-1950 China-India literary relations. As other studies and my fieldwork have shown, some of the major markers of China-India literary contact in the 1950s, such as China's preference for progressive Indian authors, India's favouring of Chinese works filled with revolutionary elements, and the role of the Foreign Languages Press (FLP), the PRC's official body for external publicity, in disseminating Chinese works to India, continued to figure prominently in the 1980s.[44] But rather than looking at these continuities (a topic worth probing in the future), the final chapter focuses on discontinuity through the case of the many Chinese translations and transcreations of

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[44] For an overview of China's continuous preference for Indian progressive literature, see Li Yuejin, 'Xin Zhongguo Yindu Wenxue Sichao Liupai Yijie yu Yanjiu de Kaocha', *Waiyu yu Fanyi* 84, no. 1 (2015): 62–66.

the novels of Hindi bestselling writer Gulshan Nanda, which differ substantially from the stories discussed in Chapters 1 to 4.

I decided to end my study around 1990 not only because in the early 1990s the enthusiastic reception of Gulshan Nanda's popular fiction in China came to an end, but more importantly because the ways in which China and India engaged with one another's literature underwent notable changes during this period. In India, it was in the early 1990s that direct translation of Chinese literature by sinologists into regional languages like Hindi and Bengali gained momentum. This largely resulted from Rajiv Gandhi's (1944-1991) ice-breaking visit to China in 1988,[45] which called for closer cooperation in the cultural field and enabled a greater emphasis on Chinese culture/literature in India's formerly geopolitical-centred modern Chinese studies.[46] In the case of Chinese translation of Indian literature, the early 1990s marked a different transformation. China's signing of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works in 1992 made its previously unregulated translation activities subject to international copyright protection. As many publishers did not want or could not afford to pay copyright, they turned either to classics/modern masterpieces whose copyright had expired, or to contemporary works that had proved successful in the global book market.[47] This policy change led to a dramatic polarisation in the Chinese translation of Indian literature: while Tagore's works, free from copyright, continued to be published and republished, living progressive authors like Anand and contemporary Indian writers who wrote in Indian languages rapidly dropped off publishers' lists. Even though Anand offered Shanghai Translation Publishing House (Shanghai yiwen

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[45] This was the first prime ministerial visit between China and India since the 1962 war.

[46] Some of the most prolific Indian academic translators of Chinese literature emerging in the 1990s include B.R. Deepak, Sabaree Mitra, and Priyadarsi Mukherji. Unfortunately, their translations are beyond the purview of this thesis.

[47] For more information on how joining the Berne Convention impacted China's translation culture in the 1990s, see Zha Mingjian and Xie Tianzhen, *Zhongguo Ershi Shiji Waiguo Wenxue Fanyi Shi Xia* (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), 808-13.

chubanshe), which had brought out two novels in the "Lalu Trilogy" in the 1980s, copyright exemption for the third one, it was nonetheless rejected for its "lack of market value".[48] The new phenomena that emerged after 1990 thus warrant separate studies.

Literary Relations: A Framework

Drawing on Karen Thornber's concept of "literary contact nebulae" and redefining it in a context that is neither necessarily imperial nor hierarchical,[49] I propose the notion of "literary relations" as the analytical framework of this thesis. By literary relations, I mean the interlinked processes of reader contact, writerly contact, and textual contact that literary agents/agencies from two different nations develop with each other, which are interrelated with the two nations' bilateral or multilateral political dynamics.[50] This framework is particularly suitable and productive for fulfilling the research objectives of this thesis because it enables a layered analysis of the actual contacts between post-1950 Chinese and Indian literary spheres, while linking the different levels and modes of literary contact to the wider political environments and dynamics.

     As an analytical framework, literary relations comprise three levels of analysis — i.e. writerly, readerly and textual contacts — and consider these different yet

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[48] Personal exchanges between Wang Huaiting and Zhang Wei. The third novel, *Sword and Sickle*, did not get published until 2011 with a special fund granted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

[49] Thornber defines "literary contact nebulae" as "active sites both physical and creative of readerly contact, writerly contact, and textual contact, intertwined modes of transculturation that depend to some degree on linguistic contact and often involve travel". Focusing on the literary trajectories within the Japanese Empire, Thornber confines her definition of these literary contacts to the hierarchical context of "asymmetrical power relationships" or "conflicting societies". See Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*, 2.

[50] Although some studies have used "literary relations" as a keyword, in most cases it is used to denote transactions between different literary systems without sufficient conceptualisation. See, for example, Henri Peyre, 'Franco-German Literary Relations: A Survey of Problems', *Comparative Literature* 2, no. 1 (1950): 1–15; and Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Other scholars have used "literary relation(s)" in the context of interpersonal connections between authors from different nations, such as Tom Boll, *Octavio Paz and T.S. Eliot: Modern Poetry and the Translation of Influence* (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2012). Although Boll's approach works well in tracing one author's reception of a foreign author, I find it difficult to apply this approach to examine the relations between two national literatures, which necessarily involve multiple networks of authors, processes of textual transfer, and modes of reading.

interconnected types of literary contacts in relation to the specific cultural and political contexts in which they emerge and develop.

Writerly contact refers to "interactions among creative writers" from different nations.[51] The Chinese and Indian writers I examine in this thesis include novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists and literary theorists, many of whom straddle multiple fields of writing and work in journalism as well. Some of the Chinese writers, such as Guo Moruo and Mao Dun, stopped publishing creative works after becoming the PRC's high-ranking cultural bureaucrats in the late 1940s, but they nonetheless qualify as writers in my view. Writerly contact can take place as face-to-face interaction in the same physical location (cultural diplomacy activities or writers' conferences) or interpersonal communication maintained through exchange of correspondence, such as Anand's letter to the editors of *Yiwen* (see Chapter 1). The locations for face-to-face interaction can be either the writers' home countries or a third one.

Textual contact refers to acts of "transculturating creative texts", which include "appropriating genres, styles, and themes, as well as transculturating individual literary works via the related and at times concomitant strategies of interpreting, adapting, translating, and intertextualizing".[52] On this basis, Thornber proposes a more applicable definition that classifies textual contact into three kinds of textual reconfiguration: interpretive reconfiguration (literary criticism), interlingual reconfiguration (translation and adaptation), and intertextual reconfiguration (weaving transposed fragments from predecessors into one's own creative works).[53] As I show in this thesis, studying literary relations involves excavating, categorising and analysing all these kinds of textual reconfiguration on each side of the relations. Unlike Tom Boll's understanding of

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[51] Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*, 2.
[52] Ibid.
[53] See ibid., 4.

"literary relation" (note its singular form) that centres on decisive influence one author (T.S. Eliot) has on another (Octavio Paz),[54] the framework of literary relations, defined in its plurality, considers influence one kind of textual contact. This perspective can usefully take comparative studies of Chinese and Indian literature beyond the influence-focused topics — for instance, Buddhist literature's impact on Chinese fiction and Tagore's on "Crescent Moon" poets — and therefore helps us think of China-India literary relations as a two-way process.

Readerly contact refers to "reading creative texts (texts with aesthetic ambitions, imaginative writing)" of each other.[55] It illustrates how one nation's readers approach and make sense of the other's texts. In order to collect information about the motivation and effect of readerly contact, I focus on writers, who are active readers as well and whose accounts of reading experiences are more publicly available than those of general readers. Compared with writerly contact and textual contact, readerly contact is less (if at all) concerned with the political relations between two nations. Largely a personal activity, reading a foreign work seldom affects the diplomatic relations with that foreign country either positively or negatively. Similarly, reading each other's literature is less subject to the dynamics of bilateral relations than the other two kinds of literary contact. In China, for example, while writer's visit to and from India and translation of modern Indian literature (except Tagore) stopped in 1962 due to deteriorated Sino-Indian relations, that same year saw novelist Hao Ran start reading and become attracted to Premchand's fiction, which led to his intertextual reconfiguration of *Godān* (Chapter 4).

This framework of writerly, textual, and readerly contacts helps encompass the plurality and layeredness of literary relations, as it pays balanced attention to texts

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[54] See Boll, *Octavio Paz and T.S. Eliot*, particularly Introduction.
[55] Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*, 2.

(whether in the original language, translated or adapted), human agents (writers, translators, compilers, adapters, readers), and institutional set-ups (state and non-state cultural/literary associations, publishing houses, writers' delegations and conferences). While drawing on Thornber's definition, I nevertheless retrieve the notions of writerly, readerly and textual contact from the imperial context in which she originally proposed them, because the framework of literary relations, as I understand it, works for both hierarchical and non-hierarchical situations, and my study focuses on the latter one.[56]

This thesis analyses literary relations *together* with political relations as *interrelated* but not synonymous processes. This analytical choice is mainly based on three considerations. The first consideration is that the literary/aesthetic should not be considered something purely in-and-for-itself or as necessarily in tension or even incommensurable with the political/ideological. Such an understanding presupposes that the literary value of a text decreases the more it is, or it is read as, political — it produces and projects a binary between "literature" and "political propaganda" that falsely implies that there can be literature without ideology. Rather, I follow Terry Eagleton's definition of "literature" as something constituted by "value-judgements" that are "historically variable" and "have a close relation to social ideologies".[57] This means that I am particularly interested in how "literature" was constructed and used in local terms at a particular historical juncture and how texts were in fact valorised on each side of the literary relations. Self-consciously political texts can be very artful, and if one takes pleasure in texts that enable an ideological message, this is an aesthetic experience. Although many of the texts discussed in the chapters were labelled in their

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[56] Ibid.

[57] "Value", in Eagleton's words, "is a transitive term: it means whatever is valued by certain people in specific situations, according to particular criteria and in the light of given purposes." Connected to this view, "ideology" can be understood as "those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to the maintenance and reproduction of social power." Terry Eagleton, "Introduction: What is Literature?" in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 9-14.

times in highly political terms (e.g. "progressive" and "revolutionary"), the aesthetic in fact worked out in various ways as the texts were valued by literary agents belonging to each other's society: it could be a thematic resonance that enabled an expression of local concern, an appreciation of the work's artfulness in, for example, narration and characterisation, or a psychological appeal that evoked a private, emotive connection; sometimes these aesthetic processes took place simultaneously in the reception of a single author, as we will see in the case of Lu Xun's Indian "afterlives".

This understanding of literature and aesthetics helps us *acknowledge* literary debates that, in India for example, pitted aesthetics against ideology without subscribing to the dichotomy. It also helps us but move away from the trajectory of "literary evolution" that underwrites Pascale Casanova's account of literary fields "accruing" literary value as they move from political ideology to aesthetic autonomy, a model taken from Pierre Bourdieu's study of the French literary field.[58] Casanova envisages the emergence of an autonomous "world literary space" that is relatively free from political, national, diplomatic and other "extrinsic limitations".[59] For her, there exists a "structural internationalism" comprised of "the most literary countries", where writers "stand united against literary nationalism, against the intrusion of politics into literary life" and thereby the autonomy of the world of letters can be safeguarded.[60] What is problematic about this statement is not only the political register through which Casanova claims an apolitical identity for the "international literary field", but also her denial of the inseparability of literary and political factors in any writer's outlook and practice. A good counter-example is that of the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre. Although held by Casanova as a key "gatekeeper" of the literariness of the world

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[58] Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, particularly Chapter 1 "Principles of a World History of Literature".
[59] Ibid., 350.
[60] Ibid., 68.

republic of letters, Sartre was in fact also an advocate for an "engaged literature"
(littérature engagée) and an enthusiastic participant in various political and intellectual
movements since the 1930s.[61] Therefore, focusing on located understandings of
literature and practices of world literature with due awareness of the aesthetics of the
political and the politics of aesthetics proves to be an approach more suited to study
world literature in the Cold War period than the systemic approach obsessed with
artistic autonomy and literary capital.

The second consideration that propels me to emphasise the interrelatedness
between literary relations and political relations is that contacts newly developed
between the literary fields of two states in the Cold War period, especially following
their immediate freedom from imperial oppression, cannot be sufficiently studied if the
political vector is not taken seriously. Political and diplomatic frames often create
spaces and set up infrastructures for literary figures, texts and ideas to travel across
borders, particularly between nations like China and India that were previously weakly
connected due to distance, geographic barriers and imperial segregations. The general
modes and dynamics of literary contact are also determined to a significant degree by
how their political relations unfold, as we have seen above in the case of China and
India, with a burgeoning of direct contact immediately after 1950 and an abrupt decline
following the 1962 border conflict. Moreover, either voluntarily or mobilised by the
state, literary agents can play an important role in cementing political ties by taking part
in cultural diplomacy and employing their social influence and creative talent to
disseminate political discourses (see, for example, Bing Xin's travelogue and
"friendship narrative" in Chapter 1). For formerly (semi-)colonised nations, peoples and
languages, as Francesca Orsini and Neelam Srivastava have shown, translating each

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[61] See Francois Bondy, 'Jean-Paul Sartre and Politics', *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (1967): 25-48.

other's literature in the postcolonial era is frequently a political act that can have "revolutionary, anticolonial dimensions" and "construct a shared solidarity and sensibility".[62] Another vibrant solidarity-building enterprise, as Hala Halim, Duncan Yoon and this thesis show, was the Afro-Asian writers' movement, in which both China and India were actively engaged.[63] In a subtler way, attention to political relations can affect the ways in which literary intermediaries select, transculturate and represent one another's texts. As we shall see in the abridged Chinese version of Krishan Chander's "Mahālakshmī kā Pul" that criticised Nehru's governance (Chapter 4), intermediaries — particularly those from an official background — frequently harnessed strategic inclusion and exclusion when they deemed certain texts/authors to be worth introducing but potentially harmful to the enhancement of China-India friendship.

The third consideration underlying my conception of literary relations as interrelated but *non-interchangeable* with political relations is that literary contacts always exceed the political parameters according to which they are formed, largely because of the dependence of such contacts on the creative labour of individual agents. Although some texts were transmitted primarily to fulfil an ideological agenda, they invite ever new readings that move beyond it: Premchand's "progressive" fiction, which were originally translated to consolidate the PRC's hierarchical model of world literature, became artfully attractive to Hao Ran for its aesthetically nuanced rural characters; exported by the FLP with the view to inspiring India's communist revolution, Lu Xun's short stories were used by Vidyasagar Nautiyal mainly as expressive mediums of his private feelings and specimen of narrative experiments. The

[62] Francesca Orsini and Neelam Srivastava, 'Translation and the Postcolonial', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013): 328.

[63] See Hala Halim, 'Lotus, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 563–83; and Duncan M. Yoon, '"Our Forces Have Redoubled": World Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau', *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 2, no. 2 (2015): 233–52.

interpretive aesthetic frames of the host culture are therefore very significant for exploring the complexity of literary relations. This requires the researcher to pay careful attention to the host society's literary and translation culture, in relation to the specific tastes and ideologies of individual literary agents.

In some cases, the effect of literary contacts ran counter to the aims of state-to-state policies. As Chapters 1 and 2 show, whereas some writers helped articulate political rhetoric, such as "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai", Panchsheel and Afro-Asian solidarity, there were also moments of tension, cross-purpose, negotiation and competition between Chinese and Indian writers, due to their differences in literary culture, political system, and Cold War policy — differences that political rhetoric tended to gloss over. These "moments of discord" between writers make literary contacts fascinating opportunities to challenge established political discourses, and political/ideological distinctions useful lenses to problematise the view of a unified national and transnational literary field. Methodologically, to investigate these "moments of discord" requires reading official materials (policy documents, conference proceedings, speeches), public discourse (news reports and journal essays) and private accounts (diaries and memoirs) in a combinative and comparative way.

Moreover, considering literary and political relations as interrelated but not interchangeable allows us to form a more nuanced understanding of the three constituents of China-India literary relations. Compared to textual and readerly contact, writerly contact was arguably the one most strongly tied up to and thus affected by political relations, because most of the writerly contacts directly emerged from the diplomatic frames of bilateral cultural diplomacy, Afro-Asian solidarity or Soviet-dominated internationalism introduced above, or from the platform of Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences. While the 1962 Sino-Indian split led to an immediate termination

of direct writerly contact between the two countries, their textual and readerly contact continued in one form or another. As Chapter 4 shows, after 1962 Indian texts kept being translated into Chinese through a strategic exclusion of modern and contemporary works, and Indian literature continued to be appreciated by Chinese readers like Hao Ran due to the relatively private nature of reading. According to my fieldwork findings, despite the fierce nationalist sentiments that exploded in India following the border war, some Indian readers and writers continued to engage with Chinese literature, partly because of the existence of a group of pro-Chinese leftists and partly because the Indian literary field was not so centralised by the state.[64] Therefore, although the period between 1962 and 1978 largely falls outside the scope of this thesis due to the scarcity of dynamic literary contacts, it would be unfair to claim that China-India literary relations as a whole broke up during this period thanks to the break-up of political ties.

Since the framework of literary relations is concerned with two nations instead of two individuals, the number of relevant interpretive, interlingual and intertextual reconfigurations can be hundreds or even thousands, depending on the timespan of the research. This means that the analysis of textual contact must be methodologically selective and strategic. In this thesis, I foreground three different yet sometimes overlapping categories of literary text that deserve particular attention and close reading. The first category comprises the texts or genres of one nation that are most enthusiastically translated and valorised in the other nation, such as "revolutionary" Chinese works in India (Chapter 3) and "progressive" Indian works in China (Chapter 4). Such works help reveal the main themes and styles each nation expects from each other. The second category encompasses the kind of work whose reception in the other

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[64] For instance, *Anuvād*, the journal of Indian Translation Association, published an advertisement of the Hindi edition of Lu Xun's "A Q Zhengzhuan" in 1964, and Arnab Roy's Bengali translation of the same work was published in Calcutta in 1973. See Jia Yan and Jiang Jingkui, 'Fanyi yu Chuanbo: Lu Xun de Yindu Laisheng', *Lu Xun Yanjiu Yuekan*11 (2017): 30.

nation involves all three forms of textual reconfiguration (interlingual, interpretive and intertextual), such as Lu Xun's short stories in India (Chapter 3) and Premchand's *Godān* in China (Chapter 4). This type of works indicates the depth of transculturation and the potential of one literature being the other's source of inspiration. The third category involves the works — mostly uncanonical ones — that make a surprising presence in the other nation through interlingual reconfiguration and acquire a meaning, value, or function rarely recognisable in their own nations. As I show in my case study of Zhang Zhaohe's unusual inclusion in Panikkar's anthology and the extraordinary reception of Gulshan Nanda's popular fiction in 1980s China (Nanda's case also falls into the first category because of its popularity), textual contacts like these inform us of the unpredictability of literary relations and how literary agents in the host culture utilise seemingly unusual texts from the guest culture to make locally significant points.

In addition to texts, analysing textual contact also entails consideration of intermediaries, whose profession, nationality, ideological disposition, education and literary taste all go some way toward determining how they select and reconfigure a text. Apart from intermediaries directly involved in interpretive, interlingual and intertextual reconfigurations, such as translators, adapters, critics and writers, I also look at intermediaries who facilitate the cross-border circulation of literary texts, such as publishers, distributers and media. The fact that the English translations published by the FLP in Beijing constituted the main source from which Indian intellectuals read and reconfigured Chinese literary works complicates our usual perception that textual contacts are generally initiated by the host culture.

Through the lens of readerly contact, I propose considering literary relations as relational and often self-reflexive engagements, through which approaching the other's texts usually produces a reflection on the self. I pay attention to the parallels drawn by

the writers, translators, adapters and critics themselves when they made sense of the other country's texts in relation to the experiences of their own. Shu-mei Shih calls this process "relational comparison", which refers to "setting in motion relationalities between entities" while drawing a comparison — an act of "relationing" that can work "directly upon objects, terms, languages, texts, peoples and societies".[65]

In the case of China-India literary relations, relationalities were usually set in motion in the name of commonality, not difference. Literary agents from both sides customarily highlighted the commonalities between the social conditions depicted in the other's works and the societies they lived in, no matter whether the text was about peasant struggles or romantic love. When Jainendra Kumar considers the protagonist of Lu Xun's story "A Q Zhengzhuan" a Chinese man who epitomises the characteristics of Indian people under colonial rule (Chapter 3); when Hao Ran calls Premchand "the Indian Lu Xun" and identifies with his rural novels more strongly than with some officially-promulgated Soviet works (Chapter 4); and when Chinese drama adapters and critics highlight the social aspects of Gulshan Nanda's melodrama as expressive of China's own problems, such as moral crisis and gender inequality (Chapter 5), we realise that shared historical experiences and similar stages of social development not only provide an easier entry into each other's textual world, but also help turn the other's texts into commentaries on the self.

It should be noted that although I fully recognise that women writers, translators, and critics have often played an important role in developing literary exchanges (e.g. Victoria Ocampo in Argentina and the Egyptian women translators in the journal *Lotus*), this thesis focuses less on them than their male counterparts, largely because cultural diplomacy and textual transcreation between China and India during the period

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[65] Shu-mei Shih, 'World Studies and Relational Comparison', *PMLA* 130, no. 2 (2015), 436.

under discussion was mainly a male affair (see Appendices for an idea of the gender imbalance). However, some women do stand out, and I have paid particular attention to them, with a focus on how their female subjectivities contributed to producing views and assessments that were largely absent in the voices of their male counterparts. Examples of this kind include Bing Xin's sensory depiction of the female Indian peasant and her identification of the peasant with "Mother India" (Chapter 1), as well as Shen Weide's reflection on womanhood in China and India in her evaluation of the *huju* adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (Chapter 5).

I have already pointed out that this thesis explores a specific, non-hierarchical case of literary relations. By a non-hierarchical power relationship, I mean a relationship between two nations whose political, economic and cultural capital and authority are relatively balanced. It must not involve either of the following two scenarios, which generally produce a hierarchical relationship. First, colonial/imperialist intervention, as in the case of India and Britain or that of China and Japan from the 1930s to the 1940s, which forces the (semi)colonised society, people and culture into a subordinate position vis-à-vis the coloniser, a position fortified by military operation, economic exploitation, colonial education and orientalist discourses that represent the colonised society as exotic, static and inferior.[66] Second, strong ideological affiliation, as in the case of the PRC and the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, which often causes one nation to take the other as a "model" that exemplifies a higher level of sociocultural development. Post-1950 China and India constitute one such non-hierarchical power relationship, not only because they never became one another's colonial subject or ideological follower, but also because they in fact undertook ground-breaking efforts to mould equal economic, political and cultural ties based on mutual respect and affinity.

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[66] See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

This relationship may be disturbed by political tension and even military confrontation, but its non-hierarchical nature remains unchanged.

This thesis suggests that we can conceptualise post-1950 China-India literary relations (and other literary relations between nations/cultures involved in a non-hierarchical power relationship) in terms of "horizontality". For me, horizontality can be understood at two levels. First, it is a perspective — i.e. looking horizontally — for studying world literature. Focusing on the literary nexus between non-hierarchical contexts helps us more effectively recognise the plurality of literary contacts in the world by moving beyond concepts like "diffusion", "impact" and "literary modernity". These concepts have been widely used to describe literary transactions in the vertically configured model, wittingly or unwittingly fixing almost all non-Western literatures in a passive or peripheral position. Second, horizontality is a set of attributes that can be used to characterise the literary landscape between non-hierarchical cultures. I have identified at least four attributes that make the literary landscape of post-1950 China and India a relatively horizontal one: (1) Mutual attention and valorisation between Chinese and Indian writers, which reflects the increased inter-dependence and cooperation between new-born Asian nations in the postwar world. As the examples of Ye Junjian and Mulk Raj Anand, who lived in London during the colonial period and shared a sense of being undervalued as authors from the "East", shows, what characterised the contacts between Chinese and Indian writers in the 1950s was not just a greater equality but also the great significance they attached to one another. (2) Textual contact within horizontal literary relations seldom entail one literature as a whole being judged intrinsically "superior" or "inferior" to the other. In all the cases discussed in this thesis, translators, adapters, critics and readers may have had preference for a particular kind of work for their artistic excellence, proximity to one's favoured literary ideology, or

relevance to personal needs, yet they never made orientalist claims about the "backwardness" of the other's literature. (3) As discussed above, when it came to selecting and reading each other's literary works, the horizontality of China-India literary relations was marked by a greater emphasis on commonality than on difference. (4) Another factor that may also shape a horizontal literary relation is the cooperative mode of production and dissemination, which suggests a degree of partnership and mutual dependence. For Panikkar, involving Chinese scholars who were close to Shen Congwen while preparing his anthology helped overcome the language barrier and gain an insider view of the PRC's turbulent literary world; this anthology was also likely used by these Chinese scholars to express their defence of Shen and reaction against the PRC's cultural establishment. In the case of the Foreign Languages Press, Indian communist publishers, bookstores and media together played a vital role in disseminating FLP publications, which in turn met the demand of these intermediaries for publicising Marxist ideas and knowledge of the socialist world in India.

However, horizontal literary relations should not be simply understood in terms of political parity. As Thornber has shown, "transcultural encounters in intra-East Asian artistic contact nebulae rarely replicated either the steep hierarchies presupposed by (post)colonial and (post)semicolonial peoples, or those promoted by imperial discourse".[67] On the contrary, they were characterised by "atmospheres of greater reciprocity and diminished claims of authority than those of many other (post)imperial spaces" mainly because in the East Asian literary contact nebulae, Japan's imperial supremacy was diluted by China's longstanding cultural impact and the co-presence of Western colonial powers in the region.[68] Similarly, the seemingly equal and reciprocal relations between China and India in the 1950s should not blind us to moments of

[67] Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion*, 3.
[68] Ibid.

conflict and estrangement that took place between the two literary fields. Literary relations — non-interchangeable with political relations, as discussed above — in fact can provide a useful lens to reflect on the limits of political rhetoric calling for a utopian state of fraternity or coexistence.

Once again, my emphasis on the horizontality of post-1950 China-India literary relations does not mean I am unaware of the stratifications within the terrain of literary exchange: only a small number of writers who possessed high symbolic capital play a significant role in cultural diplomacy, and only particular kinds of texts and genres were highly valued and enthusiastically received in the host culture. In fact, this thesis pays much attention to the factors that produced these stratifications, particularly those related to literary recognition (e.g. pan-socialist cultural diplomacy as a provider of literary recognition) and legitimacy (e.g. the PRC's literary norms by which "progressive" was the most "legitimate" kind of modern Indian literature). I am particularly interested in how discursive and real hierarchies established in one literary field were challenged in a transcultural literary engagement, as we shall see in K.M. Panikkar's "subterranean translation" of the marginalised author Shen Congwen, as well as in the Chinese reception of Gulshan Nanda. However, I consider these stratifications and hierarchies as complicating rather than disqualifying the overall horizonal structure of post-1950 China-India literary relations.

If China and India indeed succeeded in forging a relatively equal relationship in the 1950s, did this horizontal relationship make their literary relations symmetrical in terms of interest, expectation, investment and outcome? This is a fundamental question that I will repeatedly address throughout this thesis. I suggest that the absence of domination/subordination between contemporary China and India should not make us blind to the differences between them in terms of literary culture, political system,

foreign policy and so on. Taking these differences into account and giving them significant weight, as all the chapters will do, helps uncover and explain the internal structure and working of a literary relationship. I argue that post-1950 China-India literary relations were horizontal but asymmetrical, and the asymmetry took various forms: their different perceptions of one another's sociocultural realities and literary developments, as suggested by travel writings (Chapter 1); their differing responses to the common agenda of building Afro-Asian literary solidarity and different ways of presenting their "national literature" to an international audience (Chapter 2); the disparate motives and concerns underlying their selection of each other's texts for translation and reading (Chapters 3 and 4); and their contrasting evaluations of the same author and, more broadly, the same genre (Chapter 5).

One of the most important factors contributing to this asymmetry is the imbalanced degree of state involvement in literary affairs. In socialist China, literary activities ranging from translation to publishing and from meeting with foreign writers to interpreting foreign works, were largely organised by the state and subject to a particular ideology (this condition continued in the 1980s, but to a lesser extent). By contrast, the literary sphere of post-independence India, which received limited state interference, was more divided along ideological and linguistic lines, as were Indian writers' attitudes towards the PRC, Chinese literature, and the idea of an Afro-Asian literary community (Chapters 1 and 2). Therefore, a more nuanced approach to studying the asymmetry and complexity of literary relations should pay attention not only to how conditions change from one nation to the other, but also to the plural, sometimes conflicting, voices within a single nation. Therefore, in this thesis, I will avoid such generalised terms as "Indian literature" or "Indian authors" whenever it is possible to

use a more specific designation, such as "progressive literature in Hindi" or "ICCF-affiliated authors".

I caution against perceiving this asymmetrical or uneven literary landscape as indexing a structural relationship in which the literature that translates more is "dominating/subjugating" and the other "dominated/subjugated", as some translation sociologists such as Gisèle Sapiro would argue.[69] In the 1950s, China translated a lot more Indian works than the other way around, and it was the PRC-founded FLP rather than Indian translators who produced the majority of Chinese works in English translation that circulated in India. However, the imbalanced investment of money and manpower in translating the other's literature does not necessarily infer the same imbalance in terms of investment of interest. The fact that Indian writers wrote more frequently and enthusiastically about their experiences of reading Chinese works and identified more strongly with Chinese authors (especially Lu Xun) than how Chinese writers engaged with Indian literature indicates that Indian literature was by no means "dominating" Chinese literature with a higher level of literary capital. This is why readerly contact will be taken seriously in this thesis, because textual contact alone cannot sufficiently show the dynamics and degree of reception (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Contributions of the Thesis

Through a systematic study of China-India literary relations between 1950 and 1990, this thesis contributes in particular to three areas of scholarship. First, it enriches the extant scholarship on comparative and world literature by shifting the perspective from the often-studied hierarchical transactions between (former) Western metropoles and

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[69] For Sapiro's sociological approach to studying the "world translation field" by drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, see Gisèle Sapiro, 'Translation and Symbolic Capital in the Era of Globalization: French Literature in the United States', *Cultural Sociology* 9, no. 3 (2015): 320–46.

(former) non-Western colonies to horizontal networks across non-Western literary spheres. Without depreciating the importance of Western literature in the development of modern Chinese and Indian literatures, this study emphasises the important role that non-Western literatures played as objects of appreciation and sources of inspiration. In so doing, this study not only serves as an immediate refusal of Moretti's deterministic claim that "movement [of literary forms] from one periphery to another (without passing through the centre) is almost unheard of",[70] but also sheds new light on "the complex, multitextured, and frequently nuanced and ambiguous connections among peoples and cultures globally".[71]

Second, this thesis contributes a thick history of literary relations to the growing field of China-India studies.[72] Considering literary and political relations together as interrelated processes, and highlighting how writers' interactions and textual transfers simultaneously affirmed and challenged state-to-state policies, this thesis contributes fresh findings and arguments that complicate the conventional understandings of post-1950 China and India either romantically as brothers or as geopolitical rivals. In this sense, my work responds to Arunabh Ghosh's call for "decentering the teleology of 1962 and its overt emphasis on the evolution of Sino-Indian relations" by taking seriously moments of "cooperation, contact, comparison, and competition" rather than focusing primarily on the causes of conflicts.[73] As a study of the literary fields of, and literary relations between, two nation-states, this thesis pays attention to the role of state

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[70] Franco Moretti, 'More Conjectures', *New Left Review*, no. 20 (2003): 75.

[71] Karen Thornber, 'Comparative Literature, World Literature, and Asia', *State of the Discipline Report*, 2014, https://stateofthediscipline.acla.org/entry/comparative-literature-world-literature-and-asia#_edn5 (accessed November 15th, 2018). Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat, eds., *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[72] See, for example, Benjamin Elman and Sheldon Pollock, eds., *What China and India Once Were: The Pasts that May Shape the Global Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Peter van der Veer, *The Spiritual and the Secular in China and India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds., *Beyond Regimes: China and India Compared* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018); Tansen Sen, *India, China, and the World: A Connected History* (Lanham: Rowman & and Littlefield, 2017); and, Arunabh Ghosh, 'Before 1962: The Case for 1950s China-India History', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 3 (2017): 697–727.

[73] Ghosh, 'Before 1962', 700.

institutions and regimes in terms of advancing cultural diplomacy and making literary

policies. At the same time, it foregrounds what Tansen Sen calls a "nonstatist

perspective", or what Prasenjit Duara and Elizabeth J. Perry refer to as "subnational

currents" in doing China-India studies, which can to be found in the writings of

individuals instead of official documents.[74] Rather than presenting China and India as

singular entities, I understand each as comprising separate groups with disparate

ideological, political and cultural dispositions — this produces a more nuanced

understanding of the multi-layeredness and multiplicity of China-India relations.

Following Duara and Perry's approach of "convergent comparison",[75] this thesis also

examines how Chinese and Indian responses to similar "global circulatory forces" (i.e.

communism, Third Worldist movement, cultural Cold War and popular culture)

converged and diverged. By highlighting a range of South-South connections that fall

largely outside Soviet- and US-centric frameworks and are nonetheless coloured by

Cold War politics, this thesis also adds new insights to the growing body of scholarship

on the Cold War in the Global South.[76]

Finally, this work contributes to the fields of modern Chinese literature and

Indian literature by suggesting a particular perspective that focuses on the point of

interaction between the two literary spheres. This is a viewpoint that looks at both sides

through the other's eyes, with particular attention to how themes, concepts and

aesthetics widely accepted in one literary sphere acquire a different meaning as they

travel into another sphere. This perspective broadens the extant knowledge on several

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[74] Sen, *India, China, and the World*, 380.
[75] The approach of "convergent comparison" stresses that "particular developments within nations are conditioned as much by circulatory global forces *and* subnational currents as by purely national or internal processes". "These circulatory forces, which demand local responses, form the zone of convergence; the various subnational and national responses, in turn, form the basis of convergent comparison." See Duara and Perry, eds., *Beyond Regimes*, 2.
[76] See, for example, Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi, eds., *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); and Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat, eds., *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

canonical Chinese and Indian authors by bringing neglected aspects of their literary lives into consideration, such as the reception of their writings in a fellow Asian country (e.g. Lu Xun and Premchand), their internationalist activism (e.g. Mulk Raj Anand), or their lesser-known works (e.g. Shen Congwen's diaries). This thesis also foregrounds some uncanonical authors, such as Zhang Zhaohe and Gulshan Nanda, whose works have remained obscure (if not infamous) within the "high" literary circles of their home countries but found unexpected fortune on the other side of the Himalayas. Furthermore, exploring how Chinese and Indian literati selected, translated and read each other's works and participated in the Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences provides useful insights for understanding each country' literary culture. While the highly systematic model of world literature emerging from the journal *Yiwen/Shijie Wenxue* and the politically charged presentation of Chinese literature at Tashkent reflect the centralised nature of the PRC's literary culture, Hao Ran's preference of Premchand over the officially-sanctioned Soviet canons nonetheless shows the leeway Chinese writers enjoyed even at the time of high socialism. Finally, this thesis helps construct a fuller picture of the transnational networks and literary activism of Chinese and Indian writers, whose foreign connections have primarily been considered to be with Western Europe or the Soviet Union.[77]

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[77] To take Anand as an example, several studies have explored Anand's interactions with British literary circles during his 20-year exile in England. See, for example, Kristin Bluemel, 'Mulk Raj Anand's Passage through Bloomsbury', in *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 67–102; and Susheila Nasta, 'Sealing a Friendship', *Wasafiri* 26, no. 4 (2011): 14–18. The only detailed survey of Anand's relationship with China that I have so far discovered is Zhang, 'Yindu Yingyu Zuojia M.R. Annade zai Zhongguo'. Katerina Clark has offered a rare study of Anand's contact with the broader socialist world in 'Indian Leftist Writers of the 1930s Maneuver among India, London, and Moscow: The Case of Mulk Raj Anand and His Patron Ralph Fox', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 1 (2017): 63–87, but her analysis does not extend to the 1950s, when Anand's association with the Soviet Union was even closer because of the peace movement and the Afro-Asian writers' conferences.

Chapter Outline

My thesis begins by examining writerly contacts between China and India in the 1950s. Chapter 1 identifies cultural diplomacy as the most prominent driving force that brought previously unrelated Chinese and Indian authors into direct contact, creating unprecedented and largely institutionalised mechanisms of friendship building, knowledge sharing, and textual exchange. Focusing on the bilateral platforms facilitated by friendship associations and the multilateral platform of the World Peace Council, I argue that while the significance of cultural diplomacy was recognised by the leaders of both states, it was carried out in contrasting ways due to the different degrees of state involvement. Through a close reading of select travelogues written by Chinese and Indian writers who visited each other's country as "cultural diplomats", with particular attention to their motives, angles of observation and impressions, this chapter presents the landscape of 1950s China-India literary relations as horizontal but asymmetrical: despite the unmistakably mutual interest and respect, Chinese authors reported on India in an univocally favourable tone; by contrast, the assessments of the PRC's social and cultural achievements by Indian visitors diverged between leftist and non-leftist writers. Taken together, these travelogues simultaneously helped construct the political rhetoric "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai" and called it into question.

Chapter 2 continues to examine China-India writerly contacts by approaching them as part of the supranational movement of Afro-Asian writers, a Third Worldist initiative beginning in the mid-1950s that differed from bilateral cultural diplomacy due to its profession-specific orientation, greater geographical inclusiveness, and stronger entanglement in Cold War politics. This chapter traces the changing roles of Chinese and Indian author-delegates in advancing this movement at its early stage, from the 1956 Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi to the 1958 Afro-Asian Writers' Conference

in Tashkent. Considering various understudied materials, such as official proceedings, news reports and diaries kept by both Chinese and Indian delegates, this chapter furthers the argument that China-India literary relations were asymmetrical by focusing on three major moments of dissent between Chinese and Indian writers and among Indian writers themselves: the selection of delegates, the inclusion of anticolonialism in the conference agenda, and the configuration of "national literature". These moments of dissent will be examined in relation to the different ways in which China and India positioned themselves in the Cold War world order and also in relation to the competing ideological stances of leftist and liberal Indian writers. Meanwhile, this chapter offers a detailed historiography of the Afro-Asian writers' movement in its formative years by tracing how the Indian delegation underwent a process of marginalisation as the conference shifted from India to Soviet Uzbekistan, and how they sought to prevent the Delhi conference's legacy of "neutrality" from being undercut by the Soviet-dominated, politically charged Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Movement.

Chapter 3 explores Indian intellectuals' textual and readerly contacts with modern Chinese literature after 1950, which had its origins in the early 1940s when members of the Indian People's Theatre Association drew on Chinese plays to create their own anti-Fascist theatre. Most of the Chinese works circulating in 1950s India, whether in English or Hindi, were either explicitly labelled as or can be considered "revolutionary." Using the idea of "revolution" as an analytical tool, I categorise the Chinese works introduced to India in the 1950s into three kinds: first, works that depicted the Chinese revolution as a historical narrative; second, works espousing revolutionary thoughts that were considered relevant to Indian society; and third, works selected to reshape public views about the Chinese revolution by reflecting on its negative effects of the Chinese revolution. As my analysis will reveal, the major

provider of the first two types of works was the Foreign Languages Press, whose English translations were widely disseminated across India before 1960, largely due to local Communist publishers, distributers and media. By analysing how Hindi writers like Jainendra Kumar, Vidyasagar Nautiyal, Muktibodh and Nur Nabi Abbasi engaged with Lu Xun's short stories, I argue that the Chinese works published by the FLP attracted a wide spectrum of readers with different political outlooks and were open to various modes of reading. Understandably absent from the FLP collection, the third kind of texts — critiques of the Chinese revolution — are exemplified by the English anthology *Modern Chinese Stories* compiled by K.M. Panikkar. Focusing on the seemingly odd inclusion of Zhang Zhaohe, a relatively minor writer best known as the wife of the great novelist Shen Congwen, who was denied legitimacy by the PRC's cultural authorities, I contend that Zhang's work can be understood as Panikkar's strategic choice to include Shen in disguise — a strategy that I call "subterranean translation". Central to this strategy, as my close reading will show, is a notable intertextuality between Shen's real-life predicament and the protagonist's dilemma in Zhang's story.

Also concerned with textual and readerly contact, Chapter 4 examines the reception of Indian "progressive" literature in socialist China in the 1950s and early 1960s. This chapter begins by situating modern Indian literature within the PRC's officially-prescribed, politically-oriented model of world literature, and explaining why the "progressive" works of Afro-Asian countries like India mattered to China. A comparison of the works emerging from the Indian progressive movement and those translated into Chinese indicates that the reception was highly selective. There was, for instance, a striking absence of the later progressive works set in post-independence India, although they were aesthetically closer to the mainstream literary norms of the

PRC. I attribute the absence of such works to their explicit or implicit criticism of the newly-established Congress government led by Nehru, which, when introduced to Chinese readers, might run the risk of undermining the growth of China-India fraternity. This argument is substantiated by Feng Jinxin's manipulation of the original text in his revised translation of Krishan Chander's "Mahālakshmī ka pul", which appeared at the height of the "Bhai-Bhai" period. In this chapter, I also use Yan Shaoduan's preface to his translation of Premchand's *Godān* as an example to illustrate how Chinese translators managed to present the specific aesthetic values of the early Indian progressive canons while framing them in line with the standardised, ideologically-charged critical discourse. The aesthetics of Premchand's fiction, marked by his vivid characterisation and depiction of the Indian village, appealed to Hao Ran and other leading novelists of socialist China. My analysis of Hao Ran's readerly contact with Premchand in the 1960s shows that Indian progressive literature not only served as an alternative to the officially promulgated foreign (especially Soviet) classics in private reading, but also had a discernible influence on the Chinese village novels of the time.

Chapter 5 continues this discussion of the Chinese reception of Indian literature by stretching the temporal focus to the 1980s, focusing this time on the genre of popular, melodramatic fiction that had up to this point not enjoyed a prominent place in modern China-India literary relations. The central figure of this chapter is Gulshan Nanda, one of the best-selling writers of Hindi popular fiction. From 1980 to 1991, seven titles by Nanda were translated into Chinese directly from Hindi, of which *Kaṭī Pataṅg* alone spawned nearly 20 theatrical and *lianhuanhua* (picture-book) adaptations. Alongside this popularity of Nanda's melodramatic narratives in China was a tendency among translators, adapters and critics to take them seriously, which led to his achieving "canonical" status in China. This chapter argues that the extraordinary reception of

Nanda's popular fiction in China — unheard of in any other countries outside India and condemned by high-brow Indian writers — should be understood with regard to the sociocultural milieu of post-Cultural Revolution China. As I show, Nanda's fiction contributed to China's cultural reconstruction in the 1980s: first, by fulfilling the need among Chinese readers for literary works that could simultaneously entertain and invoke a desirable moral world; second, by enabling Chinese translators of Indian literature to introduce a fresh image of India and to engage with the wider literary debate about re-evaluating popular literature; and third, by providing new resources that combined melodramatic effects, relatable social issues and exotic cultural elements to revitalise Chinese theatre in a time of crisis.

Chapter 1 | China-India Cultural Diplomacy and Writerly Contact in the 1950s

In the November 1956 issue of *Yiwen* (Translated Literature), the most prestigious

Chinese periodical dedicated to foreign literature, a letter sent to the editorial board by

the noted Indian English writer Mulk Raj Anand was published:

> I went to the countryside for a while to recuperate after having had a
> slight pleurisy, and just returned to Bombay this week. I read your letter
> dated 11th May, which made me very gratified. […] I have finished a
> revised draft of the novel *The Old Woman and the Cow*, and am currently
> writing up my second autobiographical novel, *Morning Face*. When this
> work is done, I am about to publish a collection of short stories entitled
> *The Power of Darkness and Other Stories*. By that time, I will have to
> deal with the heavy workload of the Asian Writers' Conference
> Secretariat. […] Whenever I go to Delhi, I will send the manuscript of
> *The Old Woman and the Cow* alongside some short stories to China. […]
> But, more importantly, there should be more translations of modern
> Chinese works into different Indian languages.

<div align="right">

Mulk Raj Anand
31st May 1956[1]

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Whilst at first glance, this letter simply reads as a short message about the author's

recent activities and work plans, there is in fact a great deal more that can be extracted

from this seemingly mundane letter. Although it was published in an official literary

journal, the letter strikes a distinctly informal tone: the use of the second person singular

form of "you" (*ni*) highlights that there was a specific correspondent on the editorial

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[1] 'Yindu Zuojia Annade Laixin', *Yiwen*, November 1956: 187.

board, and the sharing of personal information like health condition, travel itinerary, and details about writing progress suggests Anand's familiarity with his Chinese correspondent. The fact that this is a letter written in reply to another letter sent from China indicates a longstanding exchange of correspondence, through which friendship could be maintained and familiarity enhanced. More importantly, Anand's promise to send the manuscript of his latest novel *The Old Woman and the Cow* to the *Yiwen* editorial department suggests a direct flow of literary texts from India to China, very likely for translation, particularly based on the last sentence that calls for more translations from Chinese into Indian languages. The translation of this particular novel did not materialise, for unknown reasons, but what we do know is that by the time this letter was published, nine works by Anand had already appeared in the pages of *Yiwen*, alongside five titles in book-form,[2] making him the most translated contemporary Indian author in China in the 1950s. If we take further notice of Anand's reference to the Asian Writers' Conference, the letter also served as an advertisement for this upcoming multinational literary event; one month after *Yiwen* published the letter, a Chinese writers' delegation led by the journal's editor-in-chief Mao Dun met Anand — the conference's general secretary — in Delhi (see Chapter 2).

On closer inspection, this letter is not an ordinary and isolated message, but instead a notable intersecting point in a large web of relations constituted by many threads of writerly, readerly, and textual contact. It reflects a microcosm of the dynamics of China-India literary relations in the 1950s. Considering that such contact took place only on a highly limited scale in the 1940s, as discussed in the Introduction,

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[2] These translated works include two short stories in *Yiwen*, "The Cobbler and the Machine" and "A Kashmir Idyll" (July 1953), six stories selected from *Indian Fairy Tale* (December 1954), a specially contributed novella entitled "Road" (June 1956), and, in book form, *Untouchable* (1954), *Selected Stories of Mulk Raj Anand* (1955), *Coolie* (1955), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1955) and *Indian Fairy Tale* (1955). For more details about the book-length translations, see Appendix 3.

we should consider what specific changes had taken place in such a short span of time that made the Chinese and Indian literary circles increasingly interlinked and their writers remarkably close?

Situating China-India literary relations in the connected history of the two countries in the 1950s and the global Cold War, this chapter explores the ways in which Chinese and Indian writers like Anand came into direct contact with each other. Cultural diplomacy, I argue, served as a pivotal driving force that made possible a series of unprecedentedly frequent writerly contact between the two countries. The establishment of different agencies of cultural diplomacy, such as friendship associations on a bilateral level and national chapters of the World Peace Council on a multilateral level, provided effective institutional frameworks within which Chinese and Indian writers, enacting the role of cultural agents, could travel abroad, meet face-to-face, acquire first-hand knowledge of each other's culture and society, exchange ideas and works, and build personal friendships.

However, despite the goodwill shared by both Chinese and Indian leaders to create fraternity between to two countries for the larger cause of Asian solidarity and world peace, vastly differing political cultures and national interests resulted cultural diplomacy being carried out differently on each side. In this regard, travel writings kept by visiting writers who were engaged in China-India cultural diplomacy are of special help in bringing to view the different motivations and impressions. As we shall see, while Chinese authors travelling to India took upon them the duty to present a good image of their new nation and wrote almost unanimously about the friendship they received from Indian people, their Indian counterparts, who were preoccupied with the PRC's experience of social reform and observed it from varying angles, had contrasting impressions and evaluations of communist China. Particularly noteworthy is the

comparative approach Anand and other Indian authors adopted in reading the social text of the new China, which often led to a self-reflective rethinking of the Indian society they inhabited. This chapter concludes with a reflection on the limited effect China-India cultural diplomacy had on textual contact. I argue that while directly spurring a small number of translations, China-India cultural diplomacy mainly served as a mechanism that set texts in motion and granted literary recognition.

Sino-Indian Relations in the Early Cold War Period

China-India relations in the post-World War II period, like the overall international order, took place under the influence of the Cold War, which was characterised by the contest between the socialist bloc and the capitalist bloc led respectively by the Soviet Union and the United States. The Republic of India (ROI) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), two nascent nation-states founded respectively in 1947 and 1949, reacted to Cold War politics in different ways, but they also succeeded in finding common grounds for collaboration.

On the one hand, the leaders of the two states formulated the basis for their post-war foreign policies along distinctly ideological lines. The PRC resolutely established strategic alliances with the Soviet Union and confirmed its membership in the socialist bloc by following the "Lean to One Side" policy that Mao Zedong announced in June 1949.[3] By contrast, India adopted the tenet of non-alignment conceived by Jawaharlal Nehru to enable India to avoid being entangled in the confrontation between the two

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[3] "Lean to One Side" refers to leaning to the side of the Soviet Union in the divided world. According to Chen Jian, Mao proposed this policy for two main reasons: first, he saw the Chinese revolution as an integral part of the Soviet-led international proletarian movement; and second, he regarded the US as a serious threat because it supported the Guomindang (the opponent of the Communist Party) during the civil war. See Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 51-53. The Sino-Soviet alliance broke in 1960 due to their different interpretations of Marxism-Leninism.

superpowers and, at the same time, to secure economic and political assistance from them both.[4]

On the other hand, China and India shared similar concerns and aspirations. Entering the 1950s as the two most populous countries in the world, their leaders realised that they needed to play a decisive role in post-war world affairs, instead of being swayed again by foreign powers. To this end, the two countries considered mutual friendship and support indispensable. When Mao Zedong announced China's policy of alliance with the Soviet Union, he also emphasised the need to form "an international united front" that would encompass not only the socialist bloc, but also "the proletariat and the broad masses of the people in all other countries".[5] As a way to implement this united front strategy, Mao proposed the "Intermediate Zone" theory that complicated the normal division of the Cold War world into two oppositional blocs. He stated that between the Soviet Union and the United States there existed a vast intermediate zone spanning Asia, Africa and Europe, and that the "American imperialists" would first attempt to encroach on these areas before formally waging war against the Soviet Union.[6] "The international united front that communist China encouraged after 1949", Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea contends, "had a single reference point at its core — anti-imperialism".[7] By situating China itself as part of the intermediate zone, Mao emphasised China's solidarity with all countries that had been liberated from colonial rule or were still undergoing national liberation struggles. "As long as all these continued to be anticolonial and anti-imperialism even though not led by communist

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[4] See Rajendra Prasad Dube, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Study in Ideology and Social Change* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1988), 242-43.
[5] Chen, *Mao's China*, 50.
[6] See Chen Jian, 'China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations', in *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order*, eds. See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), 133.
[7] Mira Sinha Bhattacharjea, 'Mao: China, the World and India', *China Report* 31, no. 1 (1995): 25.

parties, they were regarded by Mao as being revolutionary in nature."[8] India, therefore,

began to establish a significant place in China's international united front due to its

successful anti-colonial experience and the leading role Nehru was playing in the Third

World.[9]

Mao's intermediate zone theory and united front strategy appealed to Nehru

because they matched some of the key elements of the non-alignment framework, such

as world peace and Asian solidarity. Nehru had long considered China integral to his

imagination of pan-Asianism. This was manifest in his moral support and practical

assistance during China's anti-Japanese struggle.[10] Envisaging that the Chinese

Communist Party (CCP) would soon win the civil war, Nehru wrote in 1949:

> What is happening in China is of course of major importance not only to
> Asia but to the whole world and every step that we might take in regard to
> it has to be most carefully considered. Our desire has always been and is
> to retain the friendship of the Chinese people and to cooperate with them
> as far as possible. That will be our guiding principle.[11]

The fact that India was the first non-socialist country to build diplomatic ties with the

PRC (on April 1st, 1950) further testifies to Nehru's conviction about the need to

befriend China. Mao reciprocated by unexpectedly attending the National Day reception

held by the Indian Embassy in Beijing in 1951. Mao's attendance carried significant

symbolic value, as the Indian Embassy was the only foreign land he had ever visited

apart from the Soviet Union. Mao's speech delivered at the reception, echoing Nehru's

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[8] Ibid.

[9] As I will illustrate further in Chapter 4, the peculiar worldview of Mao, characterised by his emphasis on the intermediate zone, had direct consequences for the conceptualisation of "world literature" in China in the 1950s and 1960s.

[10] Under Nehru's patronage, a five-member goodwill medical team led by Dr Madanlal Atal went to China in September 1938. All members returned to India except Dr Dwarkanath Kotnis, who died in China. The medical team and Dr Kotnis in particular are remembered to this day in both China and India as emblematic of the friendship of the two peoples. A popular Hindi film named *Dr Kotnis ki amar kahani* (The Immortal Story of Dr Kotnis) was released in 1946.

[11] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Letters to the Premiers of Provinces I', in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series*, ed. S. Gopal, vol. 11 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1991), 269.

rhetoric of friendship and calling for China-India unity in striving for peace, gave

official endorsement to China's special relationship with India.[12] Based on this mutual

dependence emphasised by the two leaders at the turn of the 1950s, China and India

ushered in a decade of frequent diplomatic exchanges, both formal and informal.

By the time of the first exchange of formal diplomatic visits between the Indian

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1954, various

activities of cultural diplomacy between the two states had been underway for four

years, with a view to creating a favourable environment in the media and in the minds

of the general public whilst developing the official diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy,

defined in the most neutral sense, is "a course of actions, which are based on and utilize

the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether

to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation, promote national

interests and beyond".[13] In practice, cultural diplomacy usually takes the form of

exhibitions, seminars, cultural programmes, film screenings, circulation and translation

of books and magazines, student exchanges and mutual visit of cultural figures, such as

writers, artists, academics, scientists and so on.[14] However, as the volume *Searching for*

a Cultural Diplomacy shows, "the intentions inherent in cultural diplomacy depend very

much on the cultural mindsets of the actors involved as well as the immediate

organizational and structural circumstances".[15] The meaning, mechanism and effect of

cultural diplomacy can vary greatly from context to context: in the case of VOKS, the

USSR's Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, cultural diplomacy was

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[12] For an account of Mao's visit to the embassy, see Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1955), 125.
[13] Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, 'What is Cultural Diplomacy?',
http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/index.php?en_culturaldiplomacy (accessed September 30th, 2018).
[14] For a good outline of China-India cultural diplomacy, see Herbert Passin, 'Sino-Indian Cultural Relations', *The China Quarterly*, no. 7 (1961): 85-100.
[15] Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried, 'The Model of Cultural Diplomacy: Power, Distance, and the Promise of Civil Society', in *Searching for A Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 8.

very much state propaganda despite its non-governmental disguise, whereas in the case

of the early interpreters of Japanese culture for the foreign audience, cultural diplomacy

was essentially a personal affair with no state involvement.[16] Therefore, my study of

cultural diplomacy in 1950s China and India focuses on specific local configurations

and practices, rather than following a generalised definition or model.

Existing studies on cultural diplomacy during the Cold War period have paid

significant attention to the ways in which cultural agents and products were strategically

deployed by the Soviet Union and the United States to propagate their respective values

and, in doing so, to "win the minds of men" in Europe and the Third World.[17] "Both

superpowers deliberately employed psychological warfare and cultural infiltration to

weaken the opponent and its client states on the other side of the Iron Curtain".[18] As we

shall see below, this high level of competitiveness, which turned the relationship

between the cultural diplomacy practiced by each Cold War superpower almost into a

zero-sum game, was barely visible in the case of China and India. Rather, China-India

cultural diplomacy in the 1950s aimed to achieve a win-win situation, based on which a

reciprocal, egalitarian bilateral relationship and a better mutual understanding between

the two peoples could grow.

However, despite this shared purpose, China and India directed cultural

diplomacy at each other in different ways, thus generating different results. A major

element that caused this difference, I argue, was the state-individual relationship. As a

form of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy is inevitably related to the state and its politics.

The involvement of the state means that the exchange activities carried out by cultural

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[16] See Jean-François Fayer, "VOKS: The Third Dimension of Soviet Foreign Policy", in *Searching for A Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 33-49; and Yuzo Ota, "Difficulties Faced by Native Japan Interpreters: Nitobe Inazō (1862-1933) and His Generation", in *Searching for A Cultural Diplomacy*, eds. Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 189-211.

[17] Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 'The Model of Cultural Diplomacy', 13-15.

[18] Ibid., 15.

agents are, to varying degrees, "in the service of the 'national interest,' as defined by the government of the time".[19] However, what complicates the understanding of cultural diplomacy and differentiates it from inter-governmental diplomacy is the fact that "the state cannot do much without the support of nongovernmental actors. [...] The moment these actors enter, the desires, the lines of policy, the targets and the very definition of state interests become blurred and multiply".[20] Therefore, the state-individual relationship is central to our investigation of the mechanisms, strategies, agents, and effects of China-India cultural diplomacy.

In the following analysis, I will follow the two-level approach proposed by Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht and Mark C. Donfried that holds together the "structural" and "conceptual" dimensions of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, the structural level focuses on the "setup" by asking "who are the responsible agents of cultural diplomacy, and how do they correlate with state interests?" The conceptual level considers "motivations", that is "what do nations, rulers, governments, and citizens desire to achieve by familiarising others with their culture, and what is the context of their programmes?"[21]

The Setup of China-India Cultural Diplomacy and the Role of Writers

China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s mainly operated at two different, yet overlapping, structural levels: the bilateral and the multilateral.

At the bilateral level, the China-India Friendship Association (CIFA) and India-China Friendship Association (ICFA), two non-governmental organisations created respectively in 1952 and 1953, initiated and streamlined a series of exchange

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[19] Giles Scott-Smith, 'Cultural Diplomacy', in *Global Diplomacy: Theories, Types, and Models*, ed. Alison Holmes and J. Simon Rofe (Boulder: Westview Press, 2016), 177.
[20] Ibid.
[21] See Gienow-Hecht and Donfried, 'The Model of Cultural Diplomacy', 16-25.

programmes.[22] They sent cultural delegations to visit one another's country; they organised receptions, meetings, cultural programmes, and sightseeing for visiting delegations and individuals; they helped popularise each other's culture by organising exhibitions, seminars, cultural programmes and film screenings; and they also attempted to mould a climate of favourable public opinion to one another by inviting influential delegates, who had returned from their visits, to deliver public speeches and disseminate the friendship sentiment to a larger audience.

Despite the same naming pattern and similar functions, the CIFA and the ICFA differed saliently in terms of administration and leadership. Although established to promote people-to-people contact with India, the CIFA was sponsored by the state. From its inception in May 1952 the CIFA was a centralised, national-level association with no provincial branches.[23] It functioned efficiently in cooperation with the central government, various national people's organisations[24] and regional governments (when involving places outside Beijing) to form Chinese delegations to India, invite and receive Indian visitors to China, and organise a range of India-related cultural activities. The CIFA leadership constituted accomplished intellectuals who also held important governmental posts, such as the president Ding Xilin (1893-1974) and the heads of CIFA delegations to India such as Zheng Zhenduo (1898-1958) and Wu Han (1909-1969).[25] The CIFA Executive Council featured a large number of literary, artistic, and

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[22] Both proud of the richness of their cultures and aware of the potential to employ them as diplomatic resources, the new Chinese and Indian regimes set to introduce specialised institutions to promote cultural engagement with foreign countries in general. In China, such institutions include the Bureau for External Cultural Relations (est. 1949) of the State Council and the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (est. 1954). In India, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, or ICCR (est. 1950), was the most notable agency of cultural diplomacy, but it targeted mainly South Asia, Commonwealth countries, and countries where Indian diaspora was concentrated.

[23] The CIFA ceased functioning in 1962 due to the breakup of Sino-Indian relations, and it was restored in 1992.

[24] Some of the people's organisations with which the CIFA frequently worked include All-China Peace Council, All-China Federation of Literature and Arts Circles, Chinese Writers' Association, All-China Federation of Labour, All-China Democratic Federation of Youth, and All-China Democratic Women's Federation.

[25] Both Ding Xilin (physicist and playwright) and Zheng Zhenduo (poet and translator) were vice-ministers of culture; Wu Han (essayist and historian) was the deputy mayor of Beijing.

scholarly figures with administrative positions in related people's organisations, together with several government officials.[26]

Figure 1.1: Assembly celebrating the founding of the CIFA, Beijing, May 16th, 1952. On the podium, from left to right: K.M. Panikkar (Indian Ambassador to the PRC), Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (Nehru's sister and envoy to the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Nations, who was leading an Indian delegation to visit China), Ding Xilin (President, CIFA), Guo Moruo (Vice Premier of the PRC), and Zhang Xiruo (President, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs). Source: *Renmin huabao* (People's Pictorial), June 1952, 6.

In contrast to the CIFA and its distinctively official makeup, the ICFA remained a civil society organisation with little formal attachment to the government of India or any particular political party. It developed from local branches created by enthusiastic intellectuals, before becoming a nation-wide organisation in December 1953.[27] While the National Executive Committee of the ICFA was mainly responsible for organising national conferences, processing resolutions, and making plans, it was the local branches that organised specific activities. The unofficial and voluntary nature of the

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[26] The CIFA Executive Council initially had 30 members. In April 1956, 18 new members were co-opted into the Council. A few members will appear in the following discussion: Yan Wenjing (writer and essayist) and Bing Xin (poet and translator) both served as secretaries of the Secretariat of Chinese Writers' Association; Zhou Erfu (essayist and novelist) was deputy director of the Publicity Department of the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee. For a complete list, see People's Handbook Editorial Board, Ta Kung Pao, *Renmin Shouce 1956* (Tianjin: Dagongbao she, 1956), 145, and *Xinhuashe xinwengao*, April 29, 1956: 21.
[27] The Calcutta branch was founded on February 12th, 1951, with Tripurari Chakravarty, a lecturer in Chinese history at Calcutta University, serving as the president. The Bombay branch, established on May 15th, 1951, was presided over by R.K. Karanjia, editor of the newspaper *Blitz*. In December 11th-13th, 1953, the first national conference of the ICFA was held in Delhi and Pandit Sundarlal was elected president.

ICFA helped it gain impetus in organisational expansion and quickly turned it into a widespread movement that was joined by people from all over the country. By February 1958, the ICFA was reported to have 18 state or regional branches and as many as 140 district and primary branches.[28] However, this was "mostly haphazard and atomised growth" because member commitment and stability, as well as systematic programmes of work, were crucially wanting.[29]

Figure 1.2: A reception organised by the ICFA (Kanpur) for Chinese visitors in the 1980s. Figures in this photo are unidentifiable. Source: Personal album of Anil Khetan, the Current Book Depot, Kanpur.

Moreover, although large in number, the ICFA branches were of uneven strength and significance, depending on the local political environment and the influence of local intellectuals. The major ICFA branches were generally located in industrial cities such as Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Kanpur, Ahmedabad, Patna, Vijayawada, and Madras, where communist and socialist thoughts had flourished due to a larger number of and more organised working classes. In most cases, only the cities where ICFA branches functioned well were included in the itinerary of visiting Chinese delegations. The Bombay branch was undoubtedly the most dynamic, partly because of

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[28] See *New Age*, February 16th, 1958: 16.
[29] Ghosh, 'Before 1962', 709.

the city's central position in India's communist movement — Bombay housed the headquarters of the Communist Party of India (CPI) at the time — and partly because of its high concentration of non-communist left-leaning intellectuals, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (1914-1987), Rustom Khurshedji Karanjia (1912-2008), and Krishan Chander (1914-1977), some of whom were drawn to the city by the film industry.[30]

The ICFA leadership was politically hybrid. It comprised mainly leftist cultural personalities with no official affiliation, but also included some communists and members of the ruling Congress government, who joined the association in their individual capacity. However, this political hybridity did not emerge without obstacles. Nehru's open and tolerant China policy notwithstanding, some high-ranking conservative (and mostly communist-phobic) politicians of the Congress Party posed a challenge to the ICFA from its inception in 1953. Not only did they publicly label the association "communist-sponsored" in spite of its openness to people from all political backgrounds, but the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) — the presidium of the central decision-making assembly of the Congress Party — also issued a formal ban preventing Congressmen from joining the ICFA, which was not lifted until early 1958.[31] It therefore seems that, at least during the "Bhai-Bhai" period from 1954 to 1958, India's China-oriented cultural diplomacy faced a contradiction between how Nehru envisioned it and how it was actually carried out. This contradiction, mainly attributable to India's complex political system, can be also seen in the experiences of Indian writers

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[30] See Iffat Fatima and Syeda Hameed, eds., *Bread, Beauty, Revolution: Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, 1914-1987* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2015), 111.

[31] A considerable number of leading Congressmen, including the Defence Minister Krishna Menon were present at the inauguration of the ICFA's third national conference, which met briefly after the ban removal. See Romesh Chandra, 'India-China Friendship Movement Comes of Age', *New Age*, February 16th, 1958: n.p.

who visited China (see below) and participated in the Asian/Afro-Asian Writers' Conferences (see Chapter 2).

In addition to this bilateral framework, China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s also operated at the multilateral level. The main arena in this regard was the World Peace Movement, a post-war international movement directed by the Soviet-dominated Communist Information Bureau (Cominform).[32] Based on the perceived demarcation between the "forces of peace" led by the Soviet Union and the "forces of war" headed by the United States,[33] the World Peace Movement was essentially created to serve the Soviet Union's Cold War politics. However, soon after its inception, it began to have a universal appeal to both communists and non-communists. When the second World Peace Congress was held in Warsaw in November 1950, which led to the creation of the World Peace Council (WPC), it attracted 2,065 delegates from 81 countries, including China and India.[34] The wide appeal of the movement was partly due to the Cominform hoping to make it as "extensive" as possible, instead of limited to communists only,[35] and partly because pacifists around the world, who had witnessed the tragedies caused by fascism and were now worried about a potential nuclear war waged by the United States, identified with and advocated the concept of "peace".

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[32] The Cominform was an agency of international communism founded under Soviet auspices in 1947 with the intention of coordinating actions between communist parties. It was the successor to the Communist International (Comintern), which dissolved in 1943.

[33] 'Defence of Peace and Struggle Against the Warmongers', *For a Lasting Peace for a People's Democracy*, no. 28 (1949), 1; cited in Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 412. It should be noted that the book *Communism in India* was published in the United States at the height of the Cold War with a view to establishing a better understanding and calmer measurement of the international communist movement in the hope of destroying it. Despite its ideological orientation, the book provides detailed and comprehensive historical information regarding the ICFA and the peace movement in India. A tentative test in relation to other available sources suggested the accuracy of the information. Therefore, I will refer to this book, while remaining sceptical about the authors' arguments.

[34] See Shijie zhishi shouce bianji weiyuanhui, *Shijie Zhishi Shouce 1954* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi she, 1954), 784-85. The first World Peace Congress was held in Paris (and in Prague, for those who were denied visas by the French authorities, including the Chinese delegation led by Guo Moruo) in April 1949. No Indian delegation attended the Congress for the government of India refused to issue passports to the delegates, but some Indians who happened to be in Europe were present at the Paris session. See Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, 411.

[35] Ibid., 410-11.

Despite its obvious political underpinnings, the World Peace Movement qualifies as a framework of cultural diplomacy for two main reasons. First, the founders and key participants of the movement were not politicians, but instead politically conscious cultural figures. The origin of the movement can be traced back to the World Congress of Intellectuals held in Wroclaw, Poland in August 1948.[36] Among its organisers were eminent European intellectuals like the French physicist Frédéric Joliot-Curie (1900-1958), the Spanish painter Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), and the French poet Louis Aragon (1897-1982).[37] It is noteworthy that the only two Asian intellectuals invited to the Wroclaw Congress were Mulk Raj Anand and Ye Junjian, marking India and China's engagement in the peace movement from its very beginnings. Second, the movement encouraged the use of cultural methods to meet political ends. The WPC promoted intercultural friendship by organising delegation visits and cultural festivals, and it publicised the peril of US imperialism and the urgency of world peace by producing multilingual publications.[38] Aiming to preserve culture and humanity, the WPC annually selected several "Noted Figures of World Culture" from 1952 onwards and it called on national chapters to organise commemorative activities.[39] It also awarded the "International Peace Prize" to intellectuals who made a particular contribution to the movement. When Anand received the award in 1952, he gained a greater reputation in non-literary circles globally and this in turn boosted the translation

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[36] See Günter Wernicke, 'The Unity of Peace and Socialism? The World Peace Council on a Cold War Tightrope Between the Peace Struggle and Intrasystemic Communist Conflicts', *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (2001): 332-51.

[37] The movement also attracted a large number of world-renowned intellectuals in its early years, mostly communists or revolutionaries, such as Ilya Ehrenburg, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pablo Neruda, Nâzım Hikmet, W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and Howard Fast.

[38] See Yang Lijun, '"Baowei Shijie Heping Yundong": Dongfang Zhenying Yingdui Xifang Lengzhan de Yishixingtai Xingwei', *Heilongjiang Shehui Kexue* 136, no. 1 (2013): 133-38.

[39] After the Indian playwright and poet Kalidasa (fl. 5th century CE) was selected in 1955, the Chinese chapter of the WPC launched commemorative events in collaboration with the CIFA. Similarly, the ICFA organised ceremonies in memory of the Chinese poet Qu Yuan (c. 340-278 BCE) when the WPC selected him in 1953. Noted Indian writers such as Banarsidas Chaturvedi, Jainendra Kumar, and Harindranath Chattopadhyay joined the ceremony. The Indian chapter of the WPC was not reported in the news, but it was very likely to have played an organisational role. See *Renmin Ribao*, May 27th, 1956; and *Xinhuashe Xinwengao*, August 15th, 1953: 437.

of his literary works in the socialist world, including China. In this regard, therefore, it was the honouring of his multinational cultural activism, rather than a prominent international literary prize, that acted as the agent of recognition and enabled his works to have an "effective life as world literature".[40]

The World Peace Movement became formalised in both China and India in 1949, marked by the establishment of the two national chapters — the Chinese People's Committee for Defending World Peace (CPCDWP) and the All-India Peace Committee (AIPC). The communist party-led PRC embraced the Soviet-dominated peace movement wholeheartedly because it was not only in line with Mao's "Lean to One Side" policy, but also regarded as a beneficial platform by the new government, allowing it to broaden its external relations and gain international recognition. The fact that the CPCDWP was founded on October 2nd, 1949 — the day after the PRC was born — testifies to the country's enthusiasm for joining the movement. Compared to the CIFA, the CPCDWP had stronger official endorsement with the Vice Premier Guo Moruo (1892-1978), who was at the same time a poet, playwright, and archaeologist, serving as president. In addition to Guo, the CPCDWP leadership included a few other noted literary figures such as novelist Mao Dun and poet Xiao San (1896-1983). These three, among several others, also represented China on the WPC Permanent Bureau.[41]

Unlike China, the World Peace Movement in India began with a dilemma, due to the complicated domestic political juncture at the start of the 1950s. On the one hand, since the movement was under the leadership of the communist-dominated Cominform, the mandate to create an Indian version initially went to the CPI.[42] However, the movement did not receive sufficient attention and support from the CPI because at that

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[40] Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 4.
[41] See Shijie zhishi shouce bianji weiyuanhui, *Shijie Zhishi Shouce 1954*, 787.
[42] Most of my discussion about the peace movement in India in this chapter is informed by Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, 411-29.

time the party was undergoing a period of radicalisation and militarisation (1948-1951)

launched by ultra-left leaders Bhalchandra Trimbak Ranadive (1904-1990) and,

subsequently, Chandra Rajeswar Rao (1914-1994).[43] Although the communist-

dominated All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) managed to convene the first All-

India Congress for Peace and set up the AIPC in November 1949, the CPI made little

progress in advancing the movement in the following two years as its radical, anti-

bourgeois strategy contradicted Cominform's call to broaden the movement by uniting

all possible forces. On the other hand, while insufficiently backed by the CPI, the peace

movement also had to face obstacles put in place by the Congress government. As the

CPI had been waging a class war against the "bourgeois" Congress since 1949, relations

between the two parties were deteriorating dramatically. Aware of the movement's

innate (though weak) connection with the communists, the Congress government took a

hostile attitude towards it: not only did the government reject giving passports to the

Indian delegates who were to attend the 1949 Peace Congress in Paris, it also thwarted

the AIPC's attempt to host a gathering in Delhi.[44]

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[43] According to Bhabani Sen Gupta, the CPI was divided into two polarising factions in the wake of the Independence: the "soft-line" majority led by then general secretary P.C. Joshi and the "hard-line" minority championed by Ranadive. While the "soft-line" followers proposed to "participate in working within the Indian political system toward gradual incremental change", the "hard-line" advocates intended to participate as a way "to break the system and achieve revolutionary transformation". Under Joshi's leadership from 1935 to 1947, the CPI maintained a generally benign relationship with the Congress under the common cause of independence. It was also during this period that Nehru became gradually charmed by Marxism, leaned towards the idea of democratic socialism and sympathised with the Indian communists. The CPI-Congress relationship reached its zenith in late 1947, when the Communist Party explicitly "urged all progressive Congressmen to rally behind the prime minister". However, when the CPI underwent a dramatic change in early 1948, so did its relations with the Congress. The new CPI general secretary, Ranadive, adopted a radicalised political stance to declare a class war on the entire national bourgeoisie represented by the Congress, rather than differentiating the progressives from the reactionaries, as Joshi had done before. In May 1950, Rajeshwar Rao, a Maoist leader from Andhra, replaced Ranadive and openly called for an expanded armed struggle by copying China's experience. Communist-backed uprisings, such as the Telangana Movement, placed the CPI in absolute opposition to the Congress government, and the government eventually sent in the army to halt the turmoil. With their attempts at radicalisation having failed, the CPI turned back from the ultra-left line and re-embraced the established political framework of parliamentary democracy. In India's first general election held in 1952, the CPI became the largest opposition party. However, radicalisation by the turn of the 1950s made the tension between the CPI and the Congress engrained in India's political structure. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, *Communism in Indian Politics* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 1-65.

[44] The Home Minister of the Indian government, C. Rajagopalachari, declined the proposal to use Delhi as the venue for the 1951 All-India Peace Convention, which was eventually held in Bombay. See Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, 416-17.

The hostility continued after the CPI party line was moderated in 1951. While the general attitude of the Congress leadership towards the communists may have changed, on the provincial level relations remained strained because leaders of provincial Congress ministries were mostly conservatives.[45] For this reason, communists continued to encounter problems when applying for passports to visit China, and sometimes they had to resort to approaching the central government for a solution. For example, the District Magistrate turned down the communist Hindi writer Amrit Rai's (1921-1996) passport application to visit Beijing to attend the Asian and Pacific Rim Peace Conference in October 1952. He filed a complaint and the central government, where people were "relatively more open-minded" and considered him "not very dangerous" (*itnā bahut khatarnāk nahīn*), eventually issued him a passport.[46]

In the face of the peace movement's predicament under the CPI leadership due to its radicalised party line and troubled relations with Congress, critical changes were made to the structure of the AIPC Bombay branch in October 1950. A group of leftist intellectuals with public influence, including Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Karanjia, K.A. Abbas and Krishan Chander, were elected to the leadership, and they proved to be more committed to the movement than their communist predecessors. Anand and Chander, among several others, were recommended to represent India on the WPC Bureau and they became fixed leaders in the peace movement of India, both at home and abroad. Meanwhile, the CPI's apathetic attitude towards the movement continued in spite of the change of general secretary and moderated party line. The very limited presence of CPI members in both the AIPC leadership and in the Indian delegations sent to WPC conferences abroad remained notable in the 1950s.[47] While US scholars argued that "the

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[45] See Gupta, *Communism in Indian Politics*, 26-27.
[46] See Amrit Rai, *Subah ke Raṅg* (Allahabad: Hans Prakashan, 1953), 6-7.
[47] Romesh Chandra, member of the Central Committee of the CPI, seemed to be the only card-carrying communist, who held an important position within the AIPC leadership.

peace movement has proved to be an effective device with which the Communists can gain influence among the non-Communist intelligentsia and the middle-class in general",[48] its development in India was in fact mainly driven by non-communist leftist intellectuals. Apart from Anand, Karanjia, Abbas, and Chander, other non-communist leftist writers closely associated with the peace movement included the English poet and independent Member of Parliament Harindranath Chattopadhyay (1898-1990), the Malayalam poet Vallathol (1878-1958), the Punjabi novelist Gurbaksh Singh (1895-1977), the writer and president of the ICFA Pandit Sundarlal (1886-1981), the director, actor and playwright Prithvi Raj Kapoor (1906-1972), and the Bengali playwright Sachin Sengupta (1891-1961).[49]

A comparison of the bilateral framework (i.e. friendship associations) and the multilateral framework (i.e. the peace movement) is useful for us to draw out a few observations regarding China-India cultural diplomacy, which will facilitate our understanding of the literary relations between the two countries in the 1950s. First, although frequently labelled "communist fronts" in non/anti-communist discourse,[50] the ICFA and the AIPC's connections with the communist movement, domestic or international, were quite ambiguous and limited in practice. Institutionally, as shown above, the two associations were only loosely connected to the CPI; there is also no evidence suggesting they had any direct links with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Strong direct nexuses between the CCP and the CPI were in fact hardly noticeable, either in cultural or formal diplomacy between the two countries in the 1950s.[51] The CCP did not exert any direct influence on India's indigenous revolutionary

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[48] Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*, 429.
[49] Chattopadhyay attended the Second World Peace Congress in Warsaw; Vallathol was on the preparatory committee for the second All-India Peace Convention; Singh, Kapoor, Sundarlal and Sengupta were Indian representatives on the WPC Bureau, like Anand and Chander.
[50] See, for example, Overstreet and Windmiller, *Communism in India*.
[51] Other than the CPI delegation led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad that observed the eighth CCP Central Committee Conference in September 1956, there was no CPI leader invited to Beijing for in-depth exchanges of opinions and

movements, although these were self-claimed "Maoist movements". Instead, according to Bhabani Sen Gupta, the CCP "maintained a policy of studied non-involvement in Indian communism all through the 1950s" because it accepted the Soviet Union's direct supervision of the Indian communist movement.[52] Indeed, as the CCP leaders might have been aware of the CPI-Congress tensions, they may have prevented the state-to-state friendship from being undermined by unnecessary inter-communist party interactions. All these factors can explain the scarcity of Indian communists, including communist writers, in China-India cultural exchanges in the 1950s. A few card-carrying Indian communists such as Amrit Rai did visit China, but they were mainly selected because of their active engagement in the peace movement or their friendly attitudes towards China, rather than their ideological affiliation to communism.

Second, both frameworks featured strong participation from intellectuals, and writers in particular.[53] The Chinese writers selected to participate in India-oriented cultural diplomacy comprised both communists and non-communists. Yet the fact that non-communist writers, such as Ding Xilin (president of the ICFA), Zheng Zhenduo (leader of the 1954-55 cultural delegation to India) and Bing Xin (who visited India twice), were given a prominent role to play suggests the PRC government's intention to de-emphasise communist elements in its cultural diplomacy with India.

The variety of Indian writers in terms of their position on the ideological spectrum is also noteworthy. In addition to a small number of communists, China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s attracted a considerable number of non-communist leftists and Gandhians, who played more decisive roles than the communists. Leftist

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experiences. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, 'China and Indian Communism', *The China Quarterly* 50 (1972): 279.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Because the PRC government implemented strict regulation of border management in the 1950s and 60s, personal travel to and from India was nearly impossible for writers. Although some writers visited each other's country without necessarily being part of a delegation, such as Harindranath Chattopadhyay's 1953 tour in China, they were nonetheless integrated into the larger framework of cultural diplomacy.

writers like Anand and Abbas worked closely with CPI-backed progressive cultural organisations such as the All-India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA) and the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) when the party was under P.C. Joshi's leadership. However, they were expelled from these organisations in the late 1940s, falling victim to the CPI's ultra-left radicalism and dogmatism.[54] Therefore, their engagement in the ICFA and the peace movement in the early 1950s can be understood as an attempt to seek an alternative path for their leftist activism, a path that turned from the domestic to international level.

How then do we explain the participation of Gandhians like Pandit Sundarlal?[55] As Herbert Passin points out, although Gandhians considered the nature of revolution to contradict Gandhi's creed of non-violence, they regarded it as "something of the past" and were instead attracted by "Chinese 'communitarianism', mass persuasion techniques, and puritanical morality".[56] They even attempted to make Gandhism a new template for India-China fraternity, in addition to the prevalent discourses of civilisational bonds and anti-imperialism. In an interview with Guo Moruo in Beijing, Sundarlal, leader of the 1951 Indian goodwill mission to China, expressed that "if some of the angularities could be removed", the teachings of Gandhi and Marx "could become supplementary to each other and could even become one". Highlighting Gandhi's role in spreading the idea of peace in India, Sundarlal argued that such an idea would also make Gandhism widely appreciated by Chinese people and, in this way, it

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[54] The communist-dominated Bombay group of the AIPWA edged out Anand in 1949, mainly because "he did not portray in his poor all the virtues the party line demanded". Anand never forgave the AIPWA for its dogmatism. See Saros Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977), 31. For Abbas's relationship with Indian communism and various united front organisations, see Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, *I Am Not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography* (New Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Calcutta, Kanpur: Vikas Publishing House, 1977), 329-37.

[55] Other Gandhians who played a vital role in the cultural exchanges with China and the world peace movement include the two noted economists J.C. Kumarappa and Gyan Chand. Not all Gandhians viewed the PRC as positively as Sundarlal. For Kumarappa's negative evaluation, see Margaret W. Fisher and Joan V. Bondurant, 'The Impact of Communist China on Visitors from India', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1956): 249–65.

[56] Passin, 'Sino-Indian Cultural Relations', 88. According to Passin, some Gandhians even held that "apart from violence […] Gandhian ideals are more nearly realised in China than anywhere else in the world".

could bring "the two countries still nearer to each other". Seconding Sundarlal's opinion, Guo Moruo considered Marx and Gandhi as "eternal pillars of World Peace" in spite of their doctrinal differences.[57]

Third, the bilateral and multilateral frameworks interconnected and overlapped in terms of setup and workings. This interconnectedness is evidenced by the fact that the Bombay-based intellectuals — Anand, Karanjia and Abbas — who led the Indian chapter of the WPC in the 1950s were also founding members of the Bombay branch of the ICFA and delegates on the first Indian goodwill mission to China (the CIFA and CPCDWP did not overlap so much in terms of personnel). The two frameworks operated complementarily in bringing about frequent travel and contact between Chinese and Indian writers in the 1950s. Whereas the two friendship associations provided bilateral channels through which writers could visit each other's country and meet their counterparts, the many WPC conferences offered additional locations — usually in European cities such as Warsaw, Berlin, Vienna, and Stockholm — where leading Chinese and Indian literary figures could meet.[58] Let's consider the busy and intersected itineraries of Mulk Raj Anand and Guo Moruo in the year 1951 alone as an example: they met first at a WPC meeting in Berlin in February; seven months later, on September 28th, Guo welcomed Anand and the Indian goodwill mission in Beijing (see Figure 1.3) and accepted an interview with him; before the mission officially ended its China trip, Anand left early for Vienna to take part in the second WPC meeting starting on November 1st and there he and Guo met again.

The establishment of both bilateral and multilateral frameworks of cultural diplomacy enabled Chinese and Indian writers to visit one another's countries and

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[57] See Pandit Sundarlal, *China Today* (Allahabad: Hindustani Culture Society, 1952), 72-73.
[58] Occasionally, the WPC held regional conferences in China and India, such as the Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference in Beijing in October 1952 and the Asian Nations Conference in Delhi in April 1955.

engage in face-to-face interactions. These general frameworks of cultural diplomacy together served as the most effective mechanism facilitating writerly contact until specialised transnational writers' conferences emerged in the second half of the 1950s (see Chapter 2).

Figure 1.3: Guo Moruo (middle) seeing off Anand (left), Sundarlal (right) and other Indian delegates of the 1951 goodwill mission at the Beijing airport. Source: Pandit Sundarlal, *China Today* (Allahabad: Hindustani Culture Society, 1952), n.p.

Traveling Writers and Travel Writings

Having examined the structural dimension of China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s, we will now consider the conceptual level — the motivations underlying these cultural exchanges. As discussed above, Chinese and Indian leaders shared the intention of befriending each other and they regarded cultural diplomacy as a useful tool to meet this end. They both saw the first decade following the Second World War as a critical juncture for the two Asian neighbours renewing bonds of friendship that had existed for over 2,000 years — a widely cited civilisational rhetoric at the time — and, simultaneously, setting up the principles of peaceful coexistence as an ethical model for newly independent nations to follow.

However, glaring asymmetries emerge between China and India when we focus on individual practitioners of cultural diplomacy. I find travel writings produced by Chinese and Indian writers who visited each other's country as part of the organised cultural diplomacy to be particularly helpful in revealing these asymmetries. Unlike the press reports that mostly offer bare summaries of major activities and are often charged with official rhetoric, travel writings usually blend formal and informal voices and therefore can bring into view the authors' negotiation between their individual interests and the "national interests" they perceive. This is determined by the intrinsically ambivalent quality of travel writing (a term often used interchangeably with travelogue and travel literature) as a literary genre. The genre, according to Carl Thompson, has three distinguishing features: a pronounced first-person account of the journey, the author's characteristic sensibility and style, and an ostensibly non-fictional narrative of what really happened.[59] Therefore, travel writings are simultaneously informative and emotional, objective and subjective. The ambivalence of travel writing gives the form both an epistemological depth and an affective weight. What makes the form a particularly good carrier of ideology in the context of cultural diplomacy is the authority engendered by the sense of *being there* and *seeing it*, especially given the fact that travel between China and India was very much a privilege enjoyed only by a few elites in the 1950s.

As discussed above, the Chinese agents and agencies of cultural diplomacy were sponsored by the government and were thus largely bound by official ideology. For the PRC, whose identity as a sovereign country still lacked international recognition in the early 1950s, the paramount purpose of its cultural diplomacy was to promote its new image as an independent, sovereign and progressive state. Thus, cultural diplomacy for

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[59] See Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 9-33.

the PRC, whether inward or outward, featured a strong element of self-presentation. Official involvement was considered by the state to be necessary to ensure that its "cultural ambassadors" — writers, scholars, dancers, musicians and athletes — presented the nation's image properly. Considering the first unofficial Chinese cultural delegation to India in September 1951 as an example, Premier Zhou Enlai was said to have scrutinised the list of delegates himself. To prepare for a photo exhibition in India, particular effort was made to take pictures that would best showcase China's new image, and these were gathered at a hall in the Summer Palace for officials to select.[60] Before leaving for India, the delegation, comprising renowned scholars, writers, artists and scientists, were asked to gather in Beijing for a short-term course. The contents taught included the history of the Communist Party of China, the current situation in Asia, and China's Asian policy, in order to equip delegates with the requisite political awareness and knowledge for communicating "appropriately" with their Indian hosts.[61]

Chinese policymakers were fully aware of the ideological discrepancy between the two countries — Mao's communist People's Republic and Nehru's socialist Democratic Republic — that, if mismanaged, could impede the success of bilateral cultural exchange. One of the key strategies deployed to avoid potential conflict was to distance the Chinese agents and products of cultural diplomacy from any explicit political agenda that might be deemed provocative by the Indian authority.[62] The

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[60] See Liang Zhigang, *Ren zhong Lingfeng Ji Xianlin* (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2009), 144.

[61] See Tian Wenjun, *Feng Youlan* (Beijing: Qunyan chubanshe, 2014), 328-29.

[62] However, the emphasis on not provoking the Indian authority in the process of cultural exchanges did not necessarily prevent the Chinese authority from being provoked by the Indians. While the 1951 Chinese delegation was received by the Indian host with extraordinary hospitality and honour in general, some of the honouring gestures appeared undesirable to Chinese officials, indicating the Indian host's insufficient knowledge of the dramatic change in China's social, political and intellectual lives. For example, Rajendra Prasad, president of India and vice-chancellor of the University of Delhi, conferred an honorary doctorate on the delegate Feng Youlan (1895-1990), a world-renowned Chinese philosopher, in recognition of his academic achievements, especially the two-volume *Zhongguo Zhexue Shi* (A History of Chinese Philosophy) and the collection "Zhenyuan Liu Shu" (Six Books of Zhenyuan). However, these works produced in the 1930s and 1940s had been under attack since the founding of the communist regime because they did not conform to the Marxist-Leninist school of philosophical thought. Instructed by the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Feng claimed in a later speech he delivered in Calcutta that his past research was "worthless". See Xie Yong, *Shiqu de Niandai: Zhongguo Ziyou Zhishi Fenzi de Mingyun* (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 2013), 3-4.

novelist Zhou Erfu (1914-2004), who co-led an official Chinese cultural delegation to India in late 1954, recollected the points Zhou Enlai emphasised when the delegates were preparing cultural programmes for the Indian audience:

> The selection of programmes […] should express Chinese people's wish for peace rather than imposing on them [the audience] programmes that are charged with strong political overtones. Improving the cultural exchanges and friendly interactions between Chinese and Indian […] governments and peoples itself is politics.[63]

However, the PRC's India-targeted cultural diplomacy in the 1950s was far from a monolithic story, because "cultural exchanges" and "friendly interactions" were carried out in quite different ways in the different cultural fields. Dance diplomacy, for instance, emphasised mutual learning, and its primary goal was to learn from, rather than export to, India. As Emily Wilcox argues, it was mainly the sweat and pain Chinese dancers endured in practising Bharatanatyam moves that made their bodies representative of "the dedication [that] China as a nation espoused toward ideals such as working together, valuing diverse Asian cultural traditions, and learning from one another".[64] Sino-Indian statistical exchange in the 1950s, according to Arunabh Ghosh, also highlighted the idea of "learning from each other's experiences", but it differs from the dance diplomacy for a pragmatic emphasis on the outcome, rather than the process, of learning. It was characterised by the PRC's desire to solve its social problems by learning about the cutting-edge statistical method of random sampling, in which Indian scientists were playing a leading role.[65] China's writerly contact with India, by contrast, did not emphasise the idea of "learning from", but rather "learning about". While

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[63] Zhou Erfu, *Hangxing zai Daxiyang Shang* (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1992), 417.
[64] Emily Wilcox, 'Performing Bandung: China's Dance Diplomacy with India, Indonesia, and Burma, 1953–1962', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 18, no. 4 (2017): 520.
[65] Arunabh Ghosh, 'Accepting Difference, Seeking Common Ground: Sino-Indian Statistical Exchanges 1951–1959', *BJHS: Themes*, no. 1 (2016): 63.

responsible for presenting a positive image of the PRC in India, Chinese writers were also required to bring a positive image of India back home. Publishing travel writings was an important means by which to fulfil this objective.

Looking through Chinese travel writings about India published in the 1950s, their homogeneity in terms of both what and how they report India is immediately noticeable. For most Chinese writers visiting India in the 1950s, the gateway to acquiring knowledge about the country was predominantly its rich cultural heritage. Comments (not to mention criticism) about India's social realities and political system are barely visible in published travel accounts.[66] In these documents, it is generally the experience of the local cultural attractions or artistic performances that elicit discussion of the relevant aspects of Indian society or history. Bing Xin's essay, "Yindu zhi Xing" (A Journey to India), published after her 1953 India trip with a CIFA delegation, can serve as a good example. In the piece, the magnificence of the Jama Masjid and Taj Mahal leads to an introduction to emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666) and Mughal history; appreciation of the classical Bharathanatyam dance led by the Travancore sisters is followed by a paragraph on Hindu deities and mythology; and a visit to the tomb of Lakshmibai (1828-1858), the queen of Jhansi, provokes a contemplation of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the origin of Indian nationalism (see Figure 1.4).[67]

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[66] Only in the diaries kept by a few visiting Chinese writers, which remained unpublished until the 1980s and 1990s, can we find negative comments about India (e.g. caste and criminal acts). See, for example, Ye Shengtao, 'Pianduan zhi Si', in *Ye Shengtao Ji Di Ershisan Juan*, eds. Ye Zhishan, Ye Zhimei and Ye Zhicheng (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 166-98.

[67] See Bing Xin, 'Yindu zhi Xing', in *Bing Xin Quanji Di San Ce*, ed. Zhuo Ru, (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi chubanshe, 1994), 199-216. The essay was first serialised in the magazine *Xin guancha* (New Observation) in three instalments in late 1954. For the sake of consistency, I refer to the version published in *Bing Xin Quanji* (Complete Works of Bing Xin) in its entirety.

Figure 1.4: A page from Bing Xin's "Yindu zhi Xing" depicting a visit to the tomb of Lakshmibai, with a picture attached. Source: Bing Xin, "Yindu zhi Xing" (part two), *Xin Guancha,* no. 11 (1954): 12.

In general, Bing Xin and other Chinese writers provide the reader with India-related knowledge in the style of a tourist, echoing their own sightseeing led by local guides. Given that the majority of places they visited in India, aside from formal exchange activities, were sites of cultural heritage, the India they have perceived and articulated is inevitably confined to the past.

Many of these travel writings contain messages of friendship and testimonies to the "success" of cultural exchange. If the slogan "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai" is a utopia, travel writings offer eyewitness accounts of the realisation of that utopia. China-India friendship in travel writings is embodied in numerous "encountering moments", moments when a visiting writer first enters into and mingles with a local crowd. Such encountering moments usually took place at transport hubs like airports, railway stations and ports, or places of public gatherings like civic squares and conference halls,

and the depiction of these encounters is always detailed and emotive. Bing Xin, for instance, recounts different types of encountering moment in her travel essay "Yindu zhi Xing". In her portrayal of formal receptions and mass rallies, the host's acts presenting garlands, bouquets and gifts are used extensively as tropes that epitomise goodwill. These symbolic items are sometimes even quantified to convince the reader of the goodwill's magnitude. In a passage summarising the India trip, Bing Xin writes: "We received more than three thousand garlands (this is just a conservative estimation as bouquets and metal garlands are not included), which weighed over four hundred kilograms and would form a line of four kilometres if connected end-to-end."[68]

It is Bing Xin's depiction of unexpected moments of encounter that really make her friendship narrative affective. Recounting a train journey in Andhra Pradesh, Bing Xin delineates a "passionate picture" she "will never forget":

> The train stopped, as it stopped when passing other small stations. Someone was knocking on the door. When the door was opened and we looked down, several flaming torches showed up, clustering around a red flag. Illuminated by the glittering flare were scores of exciting and unadorned faces. The one who was holding the flag was a thin and small woman, under whose leadership gathered a contingent of peasants dressed in tattered clothes. They shouted welcoming words and the slogan "Long Live Comrade Mao Zedong", with their eyes filled with tears of delight, zeal and pride. As we embraced, I could smell the pleasing odour of the sun and dust on her worn-out clothes. She was everything about the Indian people and earth. I have held tight in my arms "Mother India"![69]

This is a scene filled with sensory touches. The burning flare, red flag, and political slogan typical of socialist symbolism of comradeship reinforce the joy, excitement, and pride in their tears, making this ephemeral encounter emotionally intense. The emphasis

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[68] Ibid., 200.
[69] Ibid., 213.

on the simplicity of the peasants' dresses has a narrative function as it suggests the purity and authenticity of their emotional response. The embrace is at once real and symbolic. Romanticising the identity of a female peasant and blurring it with that of the nation — "Mother India"[70] — the author presents the embrace of two individuals as an allegory of the mutual affection between Chinese and Indian peoples. The unpredictability of the Indian woman appearing at the station, along with her fellow peasants, lends strength to the suggestion that she represents the "Indian people".

In "Yindu zhi Xing", both formal and unexpected encounters appear repeatedly. Bing Xin seems to deploy them as narrative devices that constantly remind the reader that China-India friendship is something that can be, and in fact has been, *felt* time and again in real life. Here, the structure of Bing Xin's travel narrative, which follows a chronological order in accordance with her itinerary, instead of being arranged thematically, seems to be a deliberate choice. In doing so, it naturally creates an opportunity to reintroduce such an encountering moment whenever the place changes; the continuous representation of India-China brotherhood in this case is largely (re)produced by the writer's own mobility. It should also be noted that the author's reintroduction of encountering moments does not entail mechanical iteration of the same content. Rather, the story and object depicted alter from one place to another, although characteristic motifs like garlands, gifts and embraces occur regularly. For example, while the above episode that takes place in Andhra Pradesh centres on Indian peasants, the author later moves to encounters with two women in Bhopal and an old couple in Calcutta, each representing a different social group in India — women and the

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[70] Here, the notion of "Mother India" is best understood as in the 1957 film, *Mother India*, which features the hardships and moral values of a village woman and alludes to a sense of post-independence nation-building, rather than the Mother India goddess icon of the nationalist movement.

elderly. In this way, India's affinity with Chinese people is represented as a ubiquitous phenomenon that crosses differences of geography, class, gender and age.

Compared to the Chinese records discussed above, India's governmental intervention in its cultural diplomacy with China seemed rather limited. Apart from a few official delegations sent by the Indian government, most of the Indian missions visiting China, like the 1951 goodwill mission, were unofficial, with few participants holding bureaucratic posts. In his travelogue, Pandit Sundarlal stresses the nature of the delegation he headed: "Ours was an Indian *people*'s mission, neither sponsored by nor representing the Government of India"; according to him, the government was involved only as a provider of passports and other facilities.[71] There is no evidence showing that Nehru formally summoned the delegation before they left, as his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai did. However, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, one of the Indian delegates, did have a personal meeting with Nehru before leaving, asking for his "suggestions for the angle of observation, the line of enquiry, one must pursue in China".[72] The Prime Minister did not give any instructions but he only shared his broad knowledge of China, as well as of the historical and modern interactions between the two cultures. The meeting left Abbas with a positive impression that "he [Nehru] was keenly and sympathetically interested in the great revolutionary experiment that was being carried out in the Chinese society by the new regime".[73] Although not an official mandate, Nehru's response suggested his support of extending cultural diplomacy with China in the very early 1950s.

The absence of overarching official agenda and guidelines allowed the motives, expectations and outlooks of individual delegates to surface more freely. Diverse and sometimes contrasting voices are clearly reflected in the China travelogues kept by

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[71] Sundarlal, *China Today*, 4; my emphasis.
[72] Abbas, *I Am Not an Island*, 341.
[73] Ibid., 342.

Indian writers, whose perspectives were largely circumscribed by their respective ideologies. However, before looking more closely at the discursive diversity and contestation in these travel writings, it is useful to point out a few singularities they have in common. First, almost all Indian writers who went to China had a strong epistemological drive to educate themselves about the country prior to their visit. This partly derived from curiosity about what the Chinese revolution had created for its society and people, and partly from dissatisfaction with India's status quo. Even the writer who produced the most negative travel account of the PRC admitted before the visit that "China seemed to offer a new way by which the Asian people could acquire the means of improving their lot".[74] Second, the quest for a Chinese antidote to Indian problems, as we shall see, equipped Indian observers with a comparative approach when viewing China, which often led to a self-reflective discussion in relation to their own society. This contrasts starkly with the ambassadorial attitude of the Chinese visitors to India. Even when the Indian observers' self-reflection led to harsh criticism of the social crisis and misgovernment in their own country, they did so in the service of a greater cause, that is, the nation's interest.[75] Third, despite the conspicuously discrepant appraisals included in these travel accounts (even on the same issue), they share a common claim to accuracy and objectivity: while some writers flag their truthfulness explicitly by using terms such as "candid" or "undecorated" in the title or preface,[76] others do so more implicitly by incorporating detailed statistics or exhaustive

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[74] Raja Hutheesing, *The Great Peace: An Asian's Candid Report on Red China* (New York: Harper, 1953), 4.

[75] Karanjia wrote in his travel book *China Stands Up* that the position as "the leader of the opposition press […] does not make me any less an Indian, proud of that nationality and name […] always my country first. YES, MY COUNTRY, RIGHT OR WRONG!"; quoted in Fisher and Bondurant, 'The Impact of Communist China', 252.

[76] For example, Hutheesing's book is entitled *The Great Peace: An Asian's Candid Report on Red China*. In the preface to *Subah ke Raṅg*, Amrit Rai wrote: "Exaggeration and decoration make the truth weak. There is no stronger word than bare and undecorated truth. Therefore, I will tell the truth, and the truth only." See Amrit Rai, 'Bhūmikā ke Do Śabd', in *Subah ke Raṅg,* n.p.

description of their day-to-day itinerary.[77] Read together, however, they create an image of China that is ambivalent and paradoxical.

Apart from a few anti-communist liberals educated in the West, such as Raja Hutheesing (1902-?) and Frank Moraes (1907-1974), who were suspicious of almost everything they found in the PRC and communism in general, most Indian visitors had favourable impressions and wrote sympathetically of what the new Chinese government had accomplished within a short period of time. This included social dynamism, equality across class and gender, industrialisation, agrarian reform, the development of a judicial system, mass literacy, and cultural rejuvenation. There seems to be no better way to categorise these observers than considering them under the broad label of "pro-Chinese", as it is difficult to undertake further intragroup differentiation along ideological lines: the comments of a Gandhian intellectual like Sundarlal could be equally (if not more) positive when compared to those of leftist writers like Anand and Abbas, and the non-communist Karanjia could praise the efficiency of the communist system as much as a party member like Rai.[78]

It is in the travel accounts of these pro-Chinese writers that the self-reflective tendency is most evident, as they repeatedly compare India unfavourably with communist China, especially in terms of social conditions. Whilst Hutheesing argues that the increase in the PRC's agricultural production is essentially "normal returns" due to the "peace and order" gained after the liberation,[79] Karanjia considers the increase as resulting from the new government's administrative efforts to enact land reform, introduce proper distribution, establish an efficient transport system and control

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[77] See, for example, Sundarlal's *China Today* and Abbas's *China Can Make It*.
[78] Karanjia urged his readers to overcome their prejudice against communism: "You have to go to China and see Chinese Communists at work to realise the vitality, dynamism and glory of Communism. They do not regard themselves as a privileged class, nor do they claim fat salaries and other unfair advantages over the people." See R.K. Karanjia, 'How China Solved its Problem — and Ours?', in *China Today*, ed. Pandit Sundarlal (Allahabad: Hindustani Culture Society, 1952), 400.
[79] Hutheesing, *The Great Peace*, 17 and 87.

antisocial elements.[80] It is only through these recent efforts, Karanjia contends, that the communist government has been able to achieve self-sufficiency of food and raw material, and China has been able to rise from the ashes of the nation under Guomindang rule (1928-1949). Karanjia sees similarities between India and China, but these are similarities between Nehru's Congress India (India today) and Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang China (China yesterday) in their incapacity to cast off dependence to foreign imports, eradicate inflation and gender inequality, and liberate the peasantry from feudal exploitation. For Karanjia, while India is still "groping in the dark", China has turned its darkness into "brilliant light" due to the takeover by the CCP.[81] Karanjia's articulation of India-China comparisons through concept pairs such as yesterday/today and darkness/light have temporal connotations. Although he does not suggest a single, linear process of Asian development in which India should follow China's lead, he does indicate that India is lagging behind in the process of transforming itself and creating prosperity, especially considering that India preceded China in obtaining independence. The warning here is that if the Congress government keeps failing to introduce efficient social and economic reform, India will remain in darkness. To avoid this future, Karanjia considers the PRC, which had been reforming all its social sectors, capable of providing "a moral and a lesson for our own country".[82]

Like Karanjia, most of the Indian visitors compare their home country with China by crafting links between their experiences of the two separate geographical units. In rare cases the contrast reveals itself to a surprising extent when the two objects of comparison appear simultaneously in one space. In an article entitled "The Frozen Snows Have Melted", Mulk Raj Anand recalls a "deeply moving experience" in China.

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[80] Karanjia, 'How China Solved its Problem', 424.
[81] Ibid., 420.
[82] Ibid., 418.

He was especially impressed by how prostitution, beggary and other social diseases that grew out of the misrule of the Guomindang had been effectively treated by the new government. While other Indian visitors were surprised by the total absence of beggars on Chinese streets, Anand found one on the bund in Shanghai, who happened to be an Indian. Hailing from Madras State, the beggar had been a well-off peddler working in the black-market of Shanghai, but he failed to find a job after the communist regime rectified the market order. Irrespective of his illegal history, Anand sympathises with this Indian beggar and offers help by referring him to the Indian Consul. However, the beggar chooses to stay on the bund and continue to benefit from "easier prey", something that disappoints Anand greatly:

> The contrast between the attitude of this one Indian beggar, amid the whole population of China, filled me with remorse for our failings. For, it is, indeed, our society with its no care attitude towards poverty and the rights of its citizens, that produces the beggar, and not the new Chinese society which is based on the recognition of the dignity of man and his right to work with a corresponding obligation from him "to render unto Caesar the goods that are Caesar's".[83]

Here, Anand's experience can be read as a traveller's unexpected physical encounter with the self (the "one Indian beggar" who shares the same nationality) in the space of the other (the "whole population of China"). The encounter does not generate a sense of reunion, but rather that of detachment, not because of the beggar's humble social status, but because of his choice that betrays, for Anand, a whole nation's cultural and psychological mindset. His powerlessness and unwillingness to change, while the Chinese society in which he is living is changing rapidly, is, for Anand, symptomatic of the lack of drive and dynamism in India at large. The very existence of the Indian

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[83] Mulk Raj Anand, 'The Frozen Snows Have Melted', in *China Today*, ed. Pandit Sundarlal (Allahabad: Hindustani Culture Society, 1952), 523.

beggar on a Chinese street — no matter how coincidental it might have been — makes the contrast between the two societies immediately visible and shocking. Anand's failure to identify with his own countryman in this encounter positions him in an in-between situation, giving him a critical distance from which he can scrutinise the shortcomings of his own society with relative impartiality.

While pro-Chinese writers wrote favourably about what they saw and learnt in China, there were others who offered dissenting voices and contradictory testimonies. One of the questions frequently raised was about the "conducted" nature of the trip — the extent to which the Indian visitors could only see what the Chinese host wanted to show. Recalling his visit with the 1951 goodwill mission, Hutheesing concludes with full assurance that "any journey through China was a conducted tour, and all talks, meetings and contacts were possible only under the watchful eyes of the interpreters".[84] Despite the fact that Abbas, a member of the same mission, was given a car and an interpreter and encouraged to go wherever he desired,[85] Hutheesing insists in his travel report: "[…] no visit to any place in China is possible without prearrangement. It is impossible for any visitor to go where he chooses though he may decline to go where the program expects him to go".[86] In terms of social conditions, whereas the pro-Chinese visitors often compare India negatively to China, the nationalist Hindi poet Ramdhari Singh "Dinkar" (1908-1974),[87] who visited China in 1958, presents his comparison differently. Not only does he label China a "backward country" (*pichṛā huā deś*) in terms of mass literacy (which was a fact), but he also argues that Chinese

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[84] Hutheesing, *The Great Peace*, 10.
[85] Abbas deliberately demanded this kind of trip in order to "shatter the image of the 'conducted tour'". He chose to stay in a mud hut situated at the end of a bind alley 50 miles away from Beijing to ensure the ordinariness of the trip and prove that free access to non-metropolitan Chinese was possible. Through his conversations with the peasants who lived there, as well as his own observations, Abbas found that this was but one of thousands of normal households in rural China — households that had some land, a small number of domestic animals, and electricity. See Abbas, *I Am Not an Island*, 355.
[86] Hutheesing, *The Great Peace*, 12.
[87] Dinkar was hailed in India as a "national poet" (*rāṣṭrakavi*). After the Sino-Indian border conflicts, Dinkar wrote a number of nationalist poems attacking the Chinese regime.

peasants are more impoverished than the average Indian peasant and Chinese villages less developed than Indian villages.[88] While appreciating some of the results of the sociocultural reforms the revolutionary government brought about in China, Dinkar takes issue with the methods employed, which he and a few other Indian visitors consider effective only at the expense of individual voice and freedom.[89] Questions concerning the means of governance and political system were sometimes even raised when Indian and Chinese writers met at formal occasions of cultural diplomacy, complicating such occasions that were meant to boost friendship. In a reception given by the Chinese Writers' Association, for instance, Dinkar condemned the "regimentation of communism" when talking with the Chinese novelist Lao She.[90] Trying to steer the conversation to something pleasant while firmly defending his position, Lao She raised a cup of yellow rice wine and responded metaphorically: "Mr Dinkar! It is impossible to keep six hundred million people in control simply by force. Yet they are likely to be controlled by this cup of wine".[91]

The critical stances of Hutheesing and Dinkar might appear to be in the minority amongst the Indian travel writings about China produced in the 1950s, which is due largely to the selective nature of cultural diplomacy in terms of forming delegations. However, they are nonetheless illustrative of the scepticism about and attacks on communism that were prevalent in India throughout the decade. Therefore, Marxist Indian visitors — especially the communist writer Amrit Rai — not only present positive appraisals of the new China in their travel accounts, but also occasionally adopt a defensive position to counter the negative perception and accusations about

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[88] Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, 'Cīn ke Saṃsmaraṇ', *Dharmyug*, November 9th, 1958: 10.
[89] For other visitors' critiques, see Fisher and Bondurant, 'The Impact of Communist China on Visitors from India'. As we will see in Chapter 3, K.M. Panikkar raised the same concern and expressed his critique more covertly and creatively in his anthology *Modern Chinese Stories*.
[90] "Condemn" (*nindā karnā*) is in fact the word used by Dinkar. See Dinkar, 'Cīn Ke Saṃsmaraṇ', 11.
[91] Ibid.

communism that abounded in the Indian public sphere. Rai joined this debate by publishing a travel book titled *Subah ke Raṅg* (Morning Colours) after his visit to China to attend the Asian and Pacific Peace Conference in 1952.[92] Similar to Karanjia, who associates China metaphorically with light, Rai also draws on a motif that reflects newness and hope — morning — to express his admiration. "If the glow of the new morning", Rai writes, "have made today's Chinese life bright, it is only because this new morning is true. It is impossible for one not to see its gleam and colours".[93] Here, the "new morning" can be interpreted as the new communist government, and the "gleam and colours" as its policies and achievements. Rai believed that presenting the morning colours as they appeared would allow the truth to speak for itself, because they were too obvious to deny. In his book, Rai adopts a "people's perspective" and regards the Chinese people's reaction as the principal proof of the effect and legitimacy of the communist administration. For example, Rai enjoyed being welcomed by hundreds of thousands of ordinary Chinese people with applause, flowers, handshaking and embrace at different places. Like Bing Xin, he spends pages of his travel account describing these exhilarating moments of encounter, which Hutheesing would have regarded with discomfort as "the usual Chinese manner of greeting".[94] In this way, he constantly labours to offer evidence that dismantles some of the labels anti-Communist Indians regularly prescribed to the new Chinese regime, such as "bamboo curtain", "regimentation" and "imprisonment of thought". Challenged by someone who considered the government's coercive measures behind such welcoming scenes, Rai responds with his faith in humanity by arguing that no government could force its

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[92] The outbreak of the Cultural Revolution shocked Rai and propelled him to re-evaluate his earlier impression of China and the CCP policy. Deeply disappointed, Rai excluded this travel memoir from his oeuvre and stopped mentioning it in public. Interview with Alok Rai on October 23rd, 2016.
[93] Rai, 'Bhūmikā ke Do Śabd', n.p.
[94] Hutheesing, *The Great Peace*, 91.

thousands of people to feign delight and excitement and he could feel the genuineness of their emotions.[95]

Conclusion

As a result of the shared needs of nation-building and international participation, post-war China-India cultural diplomacy brought Chinese and Indian writers together on various formerly non-existent platforms, creating new relationships while also raising new questions. As politically-sensitive, socially-responsible, and publicly-influential intellectuals, these writers navigated national and personal interests by enacting multiple roles. As well as being accomplished writers, they were simultaneously travellers, representatives and ambassadors of their newly-developed national cultures, advocates and disseminators of China-India fraternity, observers of one another's societal conditions, and sometimes seekers of external resources to solve domestic issues. This mixed identity means that the writerly contacts facilitated by cultural diplomacy seldom focused solely on literature.

However, this should not prevent us from noticing the fact that these writerly contacts also engendered some textual contacts. Yet these textual contacts, which mostly took the form of translation, were unsystematic and highly dependent on individuals, because China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s did not produce the kind of formal cultural exchange agreements that the PRC signed with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Asia, which usually laid down detailed plans of mutual translation and publication of literary works.[96] Occasionally, contacts between Chinese and Indian writers converted directly into textual contacts, as with

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[95] Rai, 'Bhūmikā ke Do Śabd', n.p.
[96] For more information about the cultural exchange agreements the PRC signed with socialist countries, see Nicolai Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945-1965* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), Chapter 1.

Bing Xin's 1955 translation of Anand's English anthology *Indian Fairy Tales* (1946) and Li Shui's (1916-1995) 1959 translation of Jainendra Kumar's Hindi novella *Tyāg-patra* (*The Resignation*, 1937).[97] But cases like these were unusual because their fruition was not only contingent on a high degree of mutual interest, but also required for the writers in the host culture (e.g. Bing Xin and Li Shui) to be qualified translators themselves, and for the original works available in a language that the translators knew. This has special relevance to Li Shui's case, for his translation would not have been possible had the Hindi text of *Tyāg-patra* not been already translated into English in 1946. On the Indian side, hardly any writer who visited China in the 1950s subsequently embarked on translating the works of the Chinese writers they had met into Indian languages. Lack of proficiency in Chinese language was certainly a hindrance, but more complex reasons pertinent to the supply of Chinese texts and the necessity of translation were also at work, as I show in Chapter 3. As a consequence, in most cases the effect of writerly contact on textual (and readerly) contact was delayed.

And yet, although China-India cultural diplomacy in the 1950s did not directly encourage literary translation, it was nevertheless an important mechanism that set texts in motion and granted literary visibility and name. Works presented at writers' meetings during delegation visits formed a growing reservoir of texts that interested translators could exploit.[98] Some works were also sent by post from both sides after the visits, either spontaneously or on invitation, as in the case of Virendra Pandey's translation of

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[97] Anand requested Bing Xin to translate *Indian Fairy Tales* when the latter was visiting India with a CIFA delegation in late 1953. Bing Xin chose to translate *Indian Fairy Tales* instead of Anand's social realist fiction perhaps because the fairy tale genre matched with Bing Xin's literary taste as an established writer of children's literature. Li Shui (commonly known as Huang Wu) was a prolific translator of American literature (e.g. plays by Eugene O'Neill and poems by Walt Whitman) and a poet in his own right. When Jainendra visited Beijing on behalf of the Indian government to attend the conference commemorating the 20th anniversary of Lu Xun's death in October 1956, Yi Shui accompanied him and perhaps served as an English translator.

[98] For instance, a Chinese collection of Punjabi short stories by Navtej Singh, a young progressive writer and the son of Gurbakhsh Singh (an active participant in the peace movement), was produced on the basis of the English translations Singh brought to Beijing. See Navtej Singh, *Meiyou Jiang de Pochuan*, trans. Yan Shaoduan and Shi Zhujun (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1953), 75.

the Chinese novel *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* (New Legend of Heroic Sons and Daughters, 1949) and Anand's special contribution to *Yiwen*.[99] The fact that most of the contemporary Indian authors translated into Chinese in the 1950s had either visited China or received Chinese delegations in India indeed suggests that cultural diplomacy worked as a particularly effective means of recognition on the Chinese side. As I will show in Chapter 4, the degree of "progressiveness" or political proximity to socialism was a crucial standard that determined if a foreign writer was worth translating in 1950s China, and active engagement in China-related cultural diplomacy was considered an index of Indian writers' progressiveness.

By reading the travelogues written by Chinese and Indian writers through a comparative lens, this chapter has highlighted the political divisions, not only between the two nations, but also within India itself, which led to different motivations for travel, different angles of observation, and different directions of interpretation. With anti-communist liberals taking a skeptical (if not antagonistic) attitude and card-carrying communists largely off the scene, non-communist leftist intellectuals should be singled out as the most significant group on the Indian side in fostering cultural bonds with communist China. This transnational leftist trajectory also marks the textual transfer between China and India in the 1950s (Chapters 3 and 4).

It should be noted, however, that due to the nature of generic cultural diplomacy, which emphasised variety and efficacy, over depth, in cross-cultural experience and put overwhelming weight on friendship, the moments of writerly contact largely manifested in the form of sharing rather than debate. Tensions such as those between Dinkar and Lao She may have occasionally occurred, but most were laughed off immediately and were rarely documented in public records. As Chapter 2 will demonstrate, such tensions

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[99] For Pandey's case, see Chapter 3. For Anand's special contribution, see Mulk Raj Anand, 'Lu', trans. Shui Jianfu, *Yiwen*, June 1956: 56-62.

became intensified on the transnational platform of the Asian/Afro-Asian Writers' Conference, where Chinese and Indian writers were joined by authors from other countries with a stronger link to Cold War politics, and where they had to negotiate different national interests, ideological stances and literary values in order to produce a conference agenda acceptable to all participants.

Chapter 2 | Toward Third World Literary Solidarity? India, China and the Asian/Afro-Asian Writers' Conferences

On an October day in 1958 in Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan, where the first Afro-Asian Writers' Conference was being held in the newly refurbished Alisher Navoi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Chinese delegate Ye Junjian encountered his Indian counterpart, Mulk Raj Anand, in the corridor. Less than two years since their last meeting at the Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi, a distinctive sense of unfamiliarity had grown between the two men. Ye wrote about his brief and disconcerting interaction with Anand after returning from Tashkent:

> Apparently, the person had changed. His hair was thinner, although his smile was amiable as always. He too seemed to sense how people had changed. After a brief conversation, he said: "You are genuinely a *Chinese* and I have become more an *Indian*." Of course, our distinctive characteristics did not prevent us from maintaining our friendship, although we had different opinions on a lot of issues. But, after all, friends are friends. After we had a thorough discussion — argument at times — over those issues, we immediately came to an understanding, with our mutual knowledge deepened.[1]

While the friendship between the two individual writers seemingly remained intact, Ye's downplaying of the discord between the Chinese and Indian delegation at Tashkent did not prevent the subsequent Chinese reception of Anand from cooling. For Anand, till then the contemporary Indian author with the closest contacts with Chinese

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[1] Ye Junjian, 'Keren he Zhuren: Yafei Zuojia Huiyi Sanji Zhi Er', in *Ye Junjian Quanji Di Shiqi Juan* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2010), 216; my emphasis.

writers and the largest number of Chinese translations, the Tashkent conference marked

a watershed: he was not invited to visit China until 1992, nor was any new translation of

his work produced until the 1980s. What happened in Tashkent that caused Anand to be

marginalised in this way in the Chinese literary field? Why did the Chinese and Indian

delegations experience greater conflict than they did at the Delhi conference? Does this

tension at the Tashkent conference suggest a fissure in 1950s China-India literary

relations that was largely invisible in the bilateral framework, a fissure that already

existed before Sino-Indian political relations turned explicitly antagonistic in 1959?

 This chapter examines the writerly contact between China and India in the

context of the 1956 Asian Writers' Conference (AWC) in Delhi and the 1958 Afro-

Asian Writers' Conference (AAWC) in Tashkent — two inaugural events in what was

arguably the most influential transnational literary project in the Third World, later

known as the Afro-Asian writers' movement.[2] The two conferences, in a sense, can be

understood as events of cultural diplomacy because of their employment of cultural

forms (mostly literature) to enhance solidarity as well as mutual understanding and

cooperation across different countries and peoples. However, they differ from the

bilateral framework discussed in the previous chapter in three main respects, which add

new perspectives and findings to our understanding of 1950s China-India literary

relations by highlighting the tensions in China-India writerly contact.

 First, unlike bilateral cultural diplomacy, but also the World Peace congresses,

in which writers acted primarily as conveyers of goodwill and social observers as part

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[2] Although I have not found evidence clearly suggesting that the term "Third World" was used at either the Delhi conference or the Tashkent conference, I nevertheless argue that the two conferences featured conspicuous Third Worldist ideas and sentiments. The Third Worldism expressed at the AWC resembled the "Bandung Spirit" as both of them highlighted the idea of generating solidarity and mutual support among non-aligned nations. The Tashkent conference, as Duncan Yoon shows, championed a Third Worldism that was more closely related "to anticolonial struggle into the realm of culture and aesthetics" and "the role of writers in decolonization and national cultural projects". This foreshadowed the Maoist Third Worlds Theory that was proposed in the 1970s. Emerging from the Tashkent conference, Yoon argues, was a "third world literature" that "valorized non-Western histories through cultural exchanges and promoted these traditions as examples of humanism". See Yoon, '"Our Forces Have Redoubled"', 241.

of larger heterogeneous missions, the AWC and AAWC created specialised forums where Chinese and Indian literary figures interacted as professionals and public intellectuals and discussed specific literary matters, including the development of national literatures and the freedom of writers. Second, there was greater geographical inclusiveness. At such supranational conferences, China-India writerly contact was no longer a bilateral exchange but rather part of a complex and multidirectional network. As we shall see, the relationship and dynamics between Chinese and Indian writers often involved and were simultaneously affected by writers from other countries, as in the case of the Tashkent conference, where the leaders of the Indian delegation found themselves at a disadvantage partly due to Chinese delegates' active lobbying of Soviet, African, Japanese and Burmese delegates.

Third, these conferences were influenced to a much stronger degree by Cold War politics because they encompassed a politically more heterogeneous group of writers on both the national and international levels. In the case of India, whereas China-oriented cultural diplomacy was mostly confined to leftist, though non-communist, Indian writers, the two writers' conferences (the AWC in particular) attracted Indian writers with various political outlooks, including progressives who were both communist (e.g. Ali Sardar Jafri) and non-communist (e.g. Anand), Congress-associated Gandhians (e.g. Banarsidas Chaturvedi) and even modernists affiliated with the anti-communist ICCF (e.g. Agyeya). Their conflicts at the conferences along political lines became more acute because of the active participation of communist countries like China and the Soviet Union. At times, ideological fault lines cut across national boundaries to such an extent that a pro-US Indian writer at the Tashkent conference disqualified the "Indian communist writer" from being an "Indian writer", because he considered the former to be "indistinguishable from the solid and

monotonous rest".[3] As we will see in the case of the AWC, Cold War politics

manifested not only as political struggle but also as competition between modernist and

socialist realist aesthetic systems promoted respectively by the United States and the

Soviet Union.

Considering China-India writerly contacts as part of this complex and

sometimes competitive multinational project, I examine the collaborative efforts that

Chinese and Indian delegates made to build Third World literary solidarity, but also

moments of estrangement, dissent, debate and confrontation. For me, these moments of

discord are by no means marks of failure, but rather indicators of the unavoidably

difficult processes through which a ground-breaking project like the Afro-Asian writers'

movement needed to advance. Methodologically, I consider not only the official

auditorium, but also what Rossen Djagalov calls "the periphery of the conference" —

the corridors, hotel rooms, dining tables, and poetry recitations.[4] I draw on both public

archives, such as official proceedings, news reports and review articles, and private

accounts, such as participating writers' diaries and recently declassified NATO

documents. In terms of the Indian delegates, I pay equal attention to the views held by

the left and right. Comparing the different ways in which the same event is presented

and appraised provides interesting contrasts and insights.

This chapter also shows how considering the subject from the differently

"located" perspectives of China and India can contribute to the scholarship on Third

World solidarity and the Afro-Asian writers' movement.[5] First, I highlight the role of

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[3] Krishnalal Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation at Tashkent', *Indian Literature* 2, no. 1 (October 1958 - March 1959): 57.
[4] Rossen Djagalov, 'The People's Republic of Letters: Towards a Media History of Twentieth-century Socialist Internationalism' (Unpublished PhD thesis, New Haven: Yale University, 2011), 120.
[5] For an insightful discussion of the "locations" and "locatedness" of world literature, see Francesca Orsini and Laetizia Zecchini, 'The Locations of (World) Literature: Perspectives from Africa and South Asia', *Journal of World Literature*, forthcoming. Orsini and Zecchini argue that location "is not simply a geographical, historical, or cultural context but a standpoint, a position, an orientation, a necessarily partial and particular view, however ample and multiversal it may be".

India in initiating the format of the post-war Third World writers' conference through careful examination of the AWC, an event largely neglected in existing studies of the movement, which always begin with Tashkent.[6] Examining the Tashkent conference in relation to the Delhi conference reconstructs the genealogy of the Afro-Asian writers' movement before its formal institutionalisation into the permanent bureau (established immediately after the Tashkent conference) and its split in the 1960s due to the breakup of Sino-Soviet relations. Second, comparing the different ways in which Chinese and Indians participated in the Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences and analysing the causes of tension show that although Third World literary solidarity was established with supra-nationality as its defining feature, this solidarity was in fact destabilised by vastly differing national situations, such as political structure, cultural climate and foreign policy. As we shall see from the changing attitude with which Chinese delegates engaged respectively at the AWC and the AAWC, as well as some Indian delegates' objections to anticolonialism being included in the Tashkent conference agenda, nation-level specificities heavily influenced how writers performed their roles, presented their literature, and interacted with one another. Considering these national specificities helps us understand Anand's subtle message to Ye: "You are genuinely a Chinese and I have become more an Indian."

The 1956 Delhi AWC and Cold War Politics

The Asian Writers' Conference (AWC) took place in Delhi on December 23rd-28th, 1956. Attended by nearly 275 delegates from 17 Asian countries, 150 or more from India alone, for the first time in modern history the AWC brought together Asian writers

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[6] See, for example, Duncan Yoon, 'Cold War Africa and China: The Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau and the Rise of Postcolonial Literature' (University of California, unpublished PhD thesis, 2014); Hala Halim, 'Lotus, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 563-83.

in face-to-face exchanges.[7] For many participants, such as the Chinese Ye Junjian, the sheer fact that such a multinational cultural event organised by Asians primarily for Asians could take place in the capital of an independent Asian country was a "historic" event in itself.[8] Widely held as symbolic of a "resurgent Asia", the conference was imbued with high hopes of contributing to the region's cultural decolonisation and self-determination. Writers participated in each of the four topics for discussion: (1) the traditions of Asia; (2) the freedom of the writer; (3) the writer and his trade; and (4) cultural exchange. In addition, almost throughout the six-day conference writers reported on the state of literature in their own country.

By reassessing the ancient traditions of different parts of Asia, rediscovering their cultural connections, and re-examining how these connections had been severed by colonialism, the AWC presented "Asia" as an age-old space of cultural contact that could and should be renewed in the modern world through "the acquisition of knowledge of one another's country", "mutual cultural exchange", and "exchange of information", as the conference statement highlighted.[9] Apart from stressing "tolerance", "universality", and "humanism" as common qualities of Asian traditions that the world rent by the Cold War needed, the AWC did not project "Asia" in terms of an integrated cultural identity, although ambitious ideas were proposed and subsequently judged to be "premature", such as the plea by the Marathi Indian scholar and writer Kaka Kalelkar (1885-1981) for a common Asian language to replace English as the lingual franca of Asian intellectuals.[10] In general, the gist of the literary solidarity the AWC set out to establish was the renewal of cultural exchanges. Colonialism was

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[7] Participating countries include Burma, Ceylon, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, North Korea, Malaya, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Syria, the Soviet Asian Republics, North Vietnam and South Vietnam.
[8] Ye Junjian, 'Yazhou Zuojia de Huijian: Ji Yijiuwuliu Nian Shi'er Yue zai Xin Deli Zhaokai de Yazhou Zuojia Huiyi', in *Ye Junjian Quanji Di Shiqi Juan* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2010), 195.
[9] See David Cohen, 'Resurgent Asia's Writers Meet', *New Age*, December 30th, 1956: 11.
[10] See 'Common Language for Asia Urged', *The Times of India*, July 30th, 1956: 8. For a critique of the idea of a common Asian language, see 'The Asian Mind', *The Times of India*, August 6th, 1956: 6.

repeatedly mentioned at the conference but mostly as a past phenomenon that had

divided Asian cultures, rather than an ongoing problem, and political solidarity based on

anticolonialism was barely visible.

Although the AWC defined "Asia" primarily in cultural terms, this was closely

related to existing Cold War political frameworks. In fact, the 1956 Delhi AWC

stemmed from the ongoing Third World movement, and in particular the Bandung

Conference that had taken place one year earlier. According to the memoir of Mulk Raj

Anand – the conference's general secretary – the idea of organising the AWC was

essentially his response to Prime Minister Nehru's call in Bandung to reinforce inter-

Asian cultural exchange:

> At the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Bandung, Jawaharlal
> Nehru moved a resolution that spoke of cultural exchange between
> Asians. When he returned I suggested to him that the intellectuals of Asia
> had not met for more than a thousand years, after the last Buddhist
> Conference in the 6th Century A.D. under Harsha. I persuaded him to let
> us organise the first Asian Writers Conference. With his help and
> financial support we were able to mobilize writers from Ceylon, Burma,
> Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Japan, China, Soviet Union, Comobodia [*sic*] and
> Indonesia.[11]

Although Anand does not detail what specifically made Nehru accept the proposal to

organise the AWC in Delhi, it is clear that the conference fit well into Nehru's plan to

represent India as a "core state" in Asian and African countries, and himself as a

"region-builder", a plan that had been in practice since the 1947 Asian Relations

Conference and culminated at the 1955 Bandung Conference.[12] Both Anand and Mao

Dun, head of the Chinese delegation, referred to the heritage of Bandung and considered

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[11] Mulk Raj Anand, 'Mulk Raj Anand Remembers', *Indian Literature* 36, no. 2 (1993): 183. This Buddhist
conference held by Harsha (590-647) in fact took place in 642, in which the Chinese monk Xuanzang participated.
[12] See Sinderpal Singh, 'From Delhi to Bandung: Nehru, "Indian-ness" and "Pan-Asian-ness"', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2011): 51-64.

the political principles of "Panchsheel" as applicable to developing relations among Asian writers. In his address at the inauguration, Anand suggested that participants should accept a kind of "Panch Shila [*sic*] in cultural matters": "That is to say we may accept a variety of ways of living, thinking and feeling, while at the same time we agree to coexist without any attempt to exert pressure on each other."[13] Echoing Anand's words, Mao Dun said in an interview with the CPI weekly, *New Age*, that Panchsheel should serve as "a basis for the unity of Asian writers".[14] Anand's framing of the AWC in relation to ancient Buddhist gatherings made it all the more attractive because it helped restore the historical status of India as a centre where Asian intellectuals meet.[15]

In addition to bringing Asian writers together, the AWC was also significant because it enabled the first national-level gathering of Indian writers after Independence.[16] The literary field in 1950s India was fragmented along both linguistic and political lines. Literary organisations had been formed either on a linguistic basis (e.g. the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan for Hindi writers and the Sahitya Parishad for Bengali writers) or an ideological basis (e.g. Progressive Writers Association and ICCF/PEN India). The Sahitya Akademi, founded in 1954 under the aegis of the Indian government, was given national status; its task, however, was to promote the development of modern Indian literature through conferring literary prizes and fostering literary translations across regional languages rather than to organise writers. By contrast, the AWC invited Indian writers from divergent schools of thought and different linguistic regions, who might not have been able to meet otherwise.[17] Nearly

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[13] Cited in David Cohen, 'Resurgent Asia's Writers Meet', n.p.

[14] 'Panch Shila Serves as Basis for Asian Writers' Unity', *New Age*, January 13th, 1957: 5.

[15] In fact, India hosted various gatherings of intellectuals under the "Asian" category in the mid-1950s. See, for example, 'Asian Lawyers' Conference', *The Times of India*, March 5th, 1955: 6.

[16] A Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad was established in the 1930s.

[17] The AWC made possible not only meetings between writers of different languages, but also between those belonging to the same linguistic group. The young Hindi writer Phanishwarnath Renu, for example, was exhilarated about attending the Delhi conference because he would finally have face-to-face meetings with such prominent Hindi writers as Yashpal. See Phanishwarnath Renu, *Renu Racanāvalī Pāṁc*, ed. Bharat Yayawar. (New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1995), 28-35.

300 Indian writers attended the Indian Writers' Convention held on the eve of the AWC. However, as we shall see below, the removal of physical distance did not necessarily mitigate the estrangement between Indian writers. Just like the AWC, the gathering revealed chasms, while also establishing ties.

Unlike the Bandung Conference, in which state leaders took the initiative, the AWC was essentially a non-official event organised by and for writers. Nehru's involvement in the AWC was limited and mostly symbolic. He offered financial support (as Anand remembers), but individual Indian writers, as well as several participating delegations, including China, also contributed financially. Although he received the international members of the preparatory committee, who met in Delhi four months ahead of the formal conference,[18] and made an unexpected appearance at the closing ceremony at Anand's request, Nehru did not play an explicit role in drafting the conference agenda, selecting Indian delegates or choosing the convenors. Nor did the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, offer any direct organisational support to the conference, except for providing a list of recommended writers for the preparatory committee to consult for the purpose of selecting Indian delegates and holding a reception to entertain the participants.[19]

By limiting state intervention, the organisers of the AWC, including Anand and some of the veteran politicians who lent endorsement, such as C. Rajagopalachari (1878-1972), then chief minister of Madras, hoped to keep the conference at a distance from political issues and Cold War politics in particular. For Anand, as he told a Chinese cultural delegation that visited India in early 1956, India was an "appropriate" place to hold the first AWC because of its "neutral position" in the current world

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[18] 'Yin Zongtong Jiejian Yazhou Zuojia Huiyi Choubei Weiyuanhui Daibiao', *Xinhuashe Xinwengao*, August 1st, 1956: 20.
[19] See 'Settlement Reached by Indian Writers on Forming Team for Asian Talks', *The Times of India*, December 23rd, 1956: 9.

divided by the Cold War.[20] However, a careful survey of the declarations and debates emerging from the Delhi conference and their implications in relation to the complex cultural-political scene of India shows that Cold War politics significantly influenced the AWC. This also determined the ways in which writers articulated their own national literature and perceived one another's literature.

The cultural Cold War manifested itself at the AWC not so much in the form of direct interference from the United States or the Soviet Union,[21] but rather as competing political-cultural value systems embodied by the Asian writers themselves. In the case of India, what complicated the AWC most was the challenge anti-communist writers and progressive/communist Indian writers frequently presented to one another. Anti-communist writers mainly consisted of two groups: Congress-affiliated writers (consider the Congress-communist tension discussed in Chapter 1), such as Banarsidas Chaturvedi (1892-1985) and Ramdhari Singh "Dinkar"; and writers associated with the pro-US ICCF, which was "designed to promote anti-communist cultural freedom",[22] such as Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsyayan "Agyeya" and Prabhakar Padhye (1926-1996). Cold War politics can be found to be working on three different levels in the AWC: first, the composition of the Indian delegation; second, the invitations to foreign and in particular Chinese delegates; and third, aesthetic views.

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[20] See Yan Wenjing, 'Women Jiechu le Yindu de Wenxue Jie', *Wenyi Bao*, no. 10 (1956): 40-42.

[21] The only American writer invited to the conference was Edith (Edita) Morris, a Swedish-American pacifist author who opposed nuclear weapons and the Cold War. No evidence in either news report or the writers' diaries suggest that the participating Soviet writers, either formal delegates from the Soviet Asian Republics or observers from the European Soviet Union, engaged in posing a particular ideology at the conference. For a list of the Western observers, see '275 Asian Writers to Attend: Western Observers for Delhi Conference', *The Times of India*, December 15th, 1956: 7.

[22] According to Eric Pullin, in its formative years, the ICCF "often concerned itself more with the partisan politics of opposing the Nehru government than with defending free cultural expression". The CCF leaders worried that "the ICCF enjoyed alienating the Nehru government rather than fostering alliances among the Congress party in the international struggle for cultural freedom". Eric Pullin, 'Quest: Twenty Years of Cultural Politics', in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War: The Journals of the Congress for Cultural Freedom*, eds. Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte A. Lerg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 286. See also Eric D. Pullin, ''Money Does Not Make Any Difference to the Opinions That We Hold': India, the CIA, and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1951-58', *Intelligence and National Security* 26 (2011): 377-98.

First of all, Cold War politics impacted the selection of Indian authors, both to the organising committee and as general delegates. A flurry of balancing acts in the form of negotiations, debates, and political struggles took place repeatedly between right- and left-wing authors before the AWC was formally inaugurated, with a view to ensuring that the conference was not dominated by any particular group.[23] There was, for instance, a clear balance in the makeup of the three convenors — Mulk Raj Anand, Jainendra Kumar and Banarsidas Chaturvedi, who were elected by a heterogeneous group of Indian writers at a meeting held in March 1956. As shown in Chapter 1, Anand was a leftist author, who co-founded the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) in 1936 and enthusiastically participated in China-oriented cultural diplomacy and the Soviet-driven World Peace movement in the 1950s. Due to these activities, Anand was often considered to be pro-communist by right-wing authors, although he never in fact became a card-carrying communist and was no longer associated with the PWA by 1956. By contrast, Banarsidas Chaturvedi, correspondent, Hindi writer, Gandhian and Congressman, represented anti-communist voices on the organising board, and was praised by some participants for effectively "handling" the communists.[24] Finally, a Gandhian and accomplished Hindi author renowned for his psychological novel, Jainendra Kumar was not particularly interested in politics: he was neither a progressive nor a vocal critic of communism. His role as a convenor of the AWC was relatively neutral. The fact that these three convenors were chosen by fellow Indian writers instead of being appointed by any particular institution shows that as a collective they were considered representative.[25]

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[23] The noted English-language newspaper, *The Times of India*, followed these controversial acts in a series of reports published between late November and late December 1956.

[24] See Banarsidas Chaturvedi, 'Eśiyāī Lekhak-pariṣad: Kuc Vicār', *Sāptāhik Hindustān*, January 27th, 1957: 30. In Chaturvedi's opinion, those who could really benefit from the conference were leftist writers, many of whom he considered "secondary writers" (*do-cār coṭī ke lekhak*), whilst for an "ordinary writer" like him, the value of the conference was nothing more than a "fair-spectacle" (*melā-tamāśā*).

[25] See 'Asian Writers' Conference Planned', *New Age*, June 17th, 1956: 3.

A more conspicuous political division can be found among the Indian members of the steering committee, which was responsible for selecting Indian delegates to the AWC. For example, three days before the conference five Indian members of the committee — Dinkar, Jainendra, Agyeya, Padhye and Krishnalal Shridharani — issued a joint statement, expressing their misgivings: "the conference is inspired and controlled by persons of a particular political persuasion".[26] The statement was clearly directed at the communist presence at the conference. In response, Anand repeatedly insisted that "red domination" was impossible because "there were only two communist writers among the Indian delegates", and he was not to be blamed if communist countries sent communist writers.[27] Agyeya and Padhye may have criticised the communists too strongly in this process, leading the ICCF journal *Quest* to comment that "they played a useful role inasmuch as they kept the conference politically neutral, but their anger and interruptions had a strictly limited, functional urgency".[28] A counterattack took place at the Indian Writers' Convention, where progressive Hindi and Urdu writers associated with the PWA like Ali Sardar Jafri, Bhairav Prasad Gupta and Surendra Balupuri contended that the steering committee should be disqualified from selecting Indian delegates because the committee itself "was not a representative body of the writers".[29] Making a similar appeal but in a more explicit way, Balupuri and Amrit Rai insisted that Agyeya be excluded from the committee. In addition, progressive writers scrapped a proposed list of Hindi delegates because they alleged that the proposed candidates "were more representative of the Indian Council for Cultural Freedom than of Hindi literature".[30]

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[26] 'Renewed Split Emerges among Organisers', *The Times of India*, December 21st, 1956: 9.
[27] Ibid.
[28] V. Anant, 'The Asian Writers' Conference', *Quest* 11, no. 4 (1957): 45.
[29] 'Settlement Reached by Indian Writers on Forming Team for Asian Talks', *The Times of India*, December 23rd, 1956: 9
[30] Cited in David Cohen, 'Resurgent Asia's Writers Meet', *New Age*, Dec 30, 1956: n.p.

The second aspect of the AWC that was permeated with Cold War politics concerned the invitation of delegates from communist countries, and China in particular. The above-mentioned statement about "red domination" was very likely triggered by the selection of Chinese delegates. The five signatories to the statement suggested that five writers including Lin Yutang (1895-1976), who wrote in Chinese language but lived outside mainland China, should be invited to the conference.[31] The proposal, however, was objected to by the Chinese representatives on the secretariat (Yang Shuo and Han Beiping), and Anand and Zaheer, the two leftist Indian members on the secretariat, may have seconded this objection.

Ideological division aside, this controversy effectively reveals the gap between "Chinese literature" as formulated by the PRC's cultural authorities and that imagined by Indian writers, especially the liberals. It is understandable that Lin Yutang, who had been twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature (1940; 1950), may have been much more well-known in India than some of the PRC's mainstream authors writing about land reform.[32] However, he was labelled a "reactionary comprador bourgeois writer" under Maoist ideology and socialist realist literary conventions, and his name was politically taboo in 1950s PRC.[33] The Indian proposal had challenged the PRC's officially sanctioned version of Chinese literature, from which the entire category that would be later known as "Sinophone" was excluded.

Finally, Cold War cultural politics found expression at the AWC in the panel discussion, and the most controversial topic was "the freedom of the writer". It is unknown whether this topic, which highlighted "freedom" — the keyword of America's

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[31] 'Renewed Split Emerges among Organisers', *The Times of India*, December 21st, 1956: 9. No evidence suggests this was a premeditated ICCF move.

[32] Not only was Lin well-known among liberal Indian writers, but he also maintained connections with progressive Indian authors. For example, Lin penned a foreword to K.A. Abbas's book *And One Did Not Come Back!* (1944), which depicts the story of the Indian Medical Mission to China.

[33] See Qian Suoqiao, *Liberal Cosmopolitan: Lin Yutang and Middling Chinese Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 10-11.

Cold War global propaganda to counter the Soviet-promulgated term "peace", was inserted into the conference agenda by ICCF members, but ICCF-associated participants enthusiastically engaged with it. Reflecting on this subject in his address to the conference, C. Rajagopalachari, chief minister of Madras and a senior member of the ICCF, said: "We should not imagine writers should be asked to dole out any regimented ideas. We become slaves if ideas are circulated according to order."[34] He considered India a country where "nobody controls writing", and asked Indian writers to sympathise with writers of other countries who had less freedom to write.[35] Given Rajagopalachari's previous anti-communist remarks,[36] his address at the AWC was clearly a partisan declaration targeting writers from communist countries such as China and the Soviet Union, which was in line with the widespread anti-communist discourse that customarily equated communist culture with state imposition (consider the encounter between Dinkar and Lao She discussed in Chapter 1).

The AWC panel discussion on the relationship between freedom and the writer shows that Asian writers of different nationalities and political outlooks within the same national boundaries (e.g. India) wittingly or unwittingly positioned themselves within the cultural Cold War by accepting one of the two competing aesthetic systems: the modernist system promoted by the United States, which foregrounded individualism and artistic autonomy, or the Soviet system of socialist realism that emphasised literature's relationship with the people and its purposefulness.[37] When writers tried to define what freedom meant to a writer, vastly differing views emerged. The Chinese

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[34] Cited in M.V. Desai, 'The Asian Writers' Conference December 1956: New Delhi', *Books Abroad* 31, no. 3 (1957): 243-44.

[35] Ibid.

[36] In his inaugural address to the 1953 ICCF annual conference, Rajagopalachari spoke on the concept of freedom in culture and presented a scathing critique of communism and Soviet-style state-regulation. See C. Rajagopalachari, 'True Freedom', *Freedom First*, October 1953, 1; 7-9. *Freedom First* was a liberal monthly published by the ICCF.

[37] For a discussion about how the United States established modernism as its cultural weapon in opposition to socialist realism after the Second World War, see Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), Chapter 1.

delegate Ye Junjian recorded one such debate between the modernist Gangadhar Gadgil (1923-2008), who initiated the *Navakatha* (New Story) movement in Marathi literature, and the communist Urdu poet Ali Sardar Jafri:

> A professor named Gadgil presented an abstruse paper that ran about 5,000-6,000 words. He pulled various things into his presentation, which ranged from the psychology of art and aesthetics to the claim that "communist countries do not have real freedom and art". His paper used obscure terminology, but its content was readily understandable. Its thesis was that "the characteristic of an artistic work is its spontaneity", and it is not a reflection of the objective environment but rather "an organism emerging from the writer's consciousness". The writer arranges (unconsciously) this spontaneously "emergent" organism and makes it into a work of art. Writing is the realisation of such arrangement, and that is why a writer gains a sense of pleasure in writing. This sense of pleasure is completely autonomous and irrelevant to any moral or social value, […] and, therefore, a work of art has no moral or social purpose. Art itself is the purpose. This is the real art; every other type of art is fake. The freedom a writer needs is the freedom to create "real art".
>
> This statement was refuted by many writers. The Indian author Jafri said frankly that such abstract theory of writing was beyond his understanding. He further pointed out that, like this professor, he had no choice but to speak a foreign language [English], because the language of his own nation had not developed freely in the past two centuries or more. If we don't have the freedom to develop our own languages, how can we speak of writing for pleasure? If the sole purpose of a work is aesthetic pleasure instead of moral or social value, why is this professor reading his paper out? By no means can the audience share his pleasure in writing this paper. What then is the purpose of presenting this paper? Since it has been read out, it naturally has the purpose of influencing the audience. In this sense, it is no longer concerned only with "pleasure", but moves into the domain of "social value".[38]

Although Ye did not explicitly outline his stance (or that of the Chinese delegation in general) in this debate, it is clear that he supported Jafri's view, given that in mid-1950s China socialist realism was the dominant literary framework, whilst modernism was

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[38] Ye Junjian, 'Yazhou Zuojia de Huijian', 206.

largely off-limits (see Chapter 4). We also get a sense of Ye's dissent from his tone in presenting Gadgil's argument — note his frequent use of inverted commas, a sign of suspicion, and his emphasis on Gadgil's obscure language, excessively long paper, ostensibly profound idea, and the overt attack on communist countries for lacking "real art". Ye also mentions the ICCF-affiliated Marathi author Prabhakar Padhye, who seconded Gadgil's "art for pleasure's sake" theory by using the case of the Taj Mahal to argue that "all works of art serve the people" because they provide pleasure and enjoyment to them.[39] Clearly a response to the socialist realist critique of modernism for its "divorce of art from the people",[40] Padhye's argument, as Ye recounts, was challenged by Anand, who did not consider the Taj Mahal a pleasure-inducing piece of art because it was essentially "a monument of death" built "at the cost of substantial human and financial resources".[41] By invoking the polemics of Jafri, Anand and other progressive writers, such as the Soviet Siberian playwright Anatoly Sofronov (1911-1990), Ye emphasises the socialist realist meaning of "art for people's sake", as well as the limited and purposeful nature of a writer's freedom.

China's Participation in the AWC and China-India Writerly Contact

Despite the misgivings some non-communist Indian writers expressed about the participation of China, and their critique of communism as a whole, the Chinese delegation nevertheless actively engaged in the AWC. The delegation leader, Mao Dun, declared clearly at the opening ceremony that "Chinese writers will spare no effort to make the Asian Writers' Conference a success, and strive for the solidarity of Asian and

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[39] Ibid., 207.
[40] See Greg Barnhisel, *Cold War Modernists*, 49.
[41] Ye Junjian, 'Yazhou Zuojia de Huijian', 207. The Taj Mahal was commissioned by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, to house the tomb of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

world writers".[42] Indeed, the conference would have been very different if China had not lent symbolic and material support. In the spring of 1956, Mulk Raj Anand paid a special visit to Beijing, which took place outside the framework of bilateral cultural diplomacy, to discuss the possibility of holding the conference and received a positive response from the PRC's leading literary figures.[43] In addition to providing the Indian organisers with financial aid, China also endowed the AWC with a large amount of symbolic capital by sending a delegation comprising 11 leading Chinese authors. Unlike the Indian delegates, who were selected by a temporary non-official steering committee, the Chinese delegates were appointed by the Chinese Writers' Association (CWA), a "people's organisation" closely supervised by the government. The Chinese delegation mainly consisted of author-turned cultural bureaucrats, such as Mao Dun (minister of culture and chairman of the CWA), Zhou Yang (vice-president of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China) and Ye Shengtao (vice-minister of education). Although most of the delegates were communists, the delegation also included a few non-communist writers, such as Lao She (vice-chairman of the CWA), the renowned novelist of Manchu ethnicity, and Uyghur writer Ziya Saimidi (chairman of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region's Writers Association). Signalling the PRC's multiculturalism and open ethnic policy to an international audience, these non-communist writers had become part of the new regime's "united front of writers" and behaved very much in line with the regime's literary norms (see the marginalisation of Shen Congwen in Chapter 3).

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[42] 'Yazhou Zuojia Huiyi', *Yiwen*, February 1957: 193.
[43] This visit of Anand's was not reported by the media at the time. The only document that mentions this visit in passing is Ye Junjian's memoir. See Ye Junjian, 'Annade de Laifang: Bing zhong Zaji', in *Zuopin Wenxuan: 'Zuopin' Chuangkan Wushi Zhounian Wenxuan vol.3*, eds. Liao Hongqiu and Xie Wangxin (Guangzhou: Huacheng chubanshe, 2005), 189.

Why did China participate so enthusiastically in the AWC? Like the Bandung Conference, the AWC offered China a valuable platform that the new regime could use to expand its international networks beyond the socialist camp.[44] The active engagement of the Chinese delegation in the AWC embodied China's aspiration to build its image not only as a dedicated player, but also as a potential leader in Third World affairs, alongside the Soviet Union. Using the breaks between and after conference sessions, the Chinese delegation turned the AWC into a busy platform for bi- and multi-lateral cultural diplomacy. For example, they wined and dined delegates from at least four countries — Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and India — in order to enhance friendships. Mao Dun and Ye Shengtao paid a visit to the education minister of India.[45] The cultural attaché of the Chinese embassy also held a reception and invited all delegates to the conference, as well as other prominent literary and cultural personalities in Delhi.[46] Through these proactive moves outside the conference hall, the Chinese established a role that was close to that of host.

While playing a supportive and collaborative role in Delhi, the Chinese delegates were aware of the conflicts within the Indian delegation and the pervasive anti-communist sentiment in the AWC. In fact, they commented on these antagonistic moments in their private writings, which, unpublished at the time, in retrospect help us recreate a more nuanced picture of the writerly contact between China and India at the AWC by making visible the undercurrent of tension beneath the collaboration. Ye Shengtao, for instance, kept a diary throughout the conference, which was published after his death in 1988. Unlike the three leaders of the Chinese delegation (Mao Dun,

[44] See Wang Zhongchen, 'Yafei Zuojia Huiyi Yu Zhongguo Zuojia de Shijie Renshi', *Zhongguo Xiandai Wenxue Yanjiu Congkan* 2 (2003): 71.
[45] See Ye Shengtao, *Ye Shengtao Ji Di Ershisan Juan*, eds. Ye Zhishan, Ye Zhimei, and Ye Zhicheng (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 176.
[46] See Sajjad Zaheer, 'Closer Bonds between Resurgent Asia's Writers: Forthcoming Conference will be a Historic Landmark', *New Age*, August 19, 1956: 15.

Zhou Yang and Lao She) and the two Chinese representatives on the secretariat (Han Beiping and Yang Shuo), Ye was not responsible for supervising the delegation and coordinating its interaction with other delegations, and therefore he had more time to observe and keep an account. According to him, as soon as the Chinese delegation arrived in Delhi, the Chinese ambassador informed them of the political split between the Indian organisers:

> We went to the embassy to meet ambassador Pan [Zili] and discuss the situation of the writers' conference. India initiated the conference, but there is disunity among the three initiators [convenors]. The number of Indian writers is large. They comprise three groups: progressives, right-leaning centrists, and bad ones [elie zhe]. The centrists have apprehensions and even hope that the conference won't go well, because a considerable number of participants are from socialist countries. The bad ones are trying to make trouble. Our delegation intends nothing but an open and honest discussion. We are taking part in this conference simply in the hope of making friends through literature and strengthening unity, cultural exchange and peace. It was decided that Yanbing [Mao Dun], Zhou Yang, and Lao She would talk to two of the Indian initiators respectively this afternoon. […] I am terribly unfamiliar with tackling such affairs, so I stood aside listening, without comment.[47]

In a later passage, Ye writes explicitly about the political leanings of the three conveners:

> At lunchtime, our delegation entertained our Indian friends who organised the Asian Writers' Conference. Four came, including Anand and Kumar. Both of them have visited our country several times. Anand is a progressive writer, whereas Kumar is neither a leftist nor rightist. Anand writes in English and Kumar in Hindi. A Gandhian, Kumar is a simply-dressed vegetarian.[48]

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[47] Ye Shengtao, 'Pianduan zhi Si', in *Ye Shengtao Ji Di Ershisan Juan*, ed. Ye Zhishan, Ye Zhimei and Ye Zhicheng (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 170.
[48] Ibid., 178.

Ye's diary shows that in the eyes of the Chinese delegates, Indian writers were

constantly subject to ideological inspection, demarcation and grouping. Their political

tendencies and past experiences of visiting China further determined their proximity to

the Chinese people: the progressive Mulk Raj Anand and centrist Jainendra Kumar were

considered "friends", whereas Banarsidas Chaturvedi, the rightist "bad one", who is

silenced in both private and public Chinese documents about the AWC, is not.[49]

The observations and comments in Ye Shengtao's diary did not find expression

in the public sphere. In a short report Ye wrote for *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), the

official newspaper of the communist party, he discussed the conference with great

optimism as a significant opportunity for Asian writers to develop mutual understanding

and "make friends through literature" (*yi wen hui you*). This report briefly mentions the

divergent views held by writers but stresses the spirit of "seeking commonality while

preserving difference" (*cun qi yi er qiu qi tong*). This contrast between Ye's private and

public presentation suggests that the Chinese delegation participated in the AWC with a

politically tolerant attitude. They took issue with the expressions and acts of rightist

Indian delegates, but refrained from any overt criticism. Interestingly, although Ye

Shengtao clearly sensed the anti-communist undertones of C. Rajagopalachari's address

that told participants "you are writers, not politicians",[50] he nonetheless found this

address to be "very humorous" and "its thrust generally good", as his diary reveals.[51]

This suggests that the Chinese delegation at the AWC did not adopt a hard-line

approach that prioritised political principles over cultural factors.

[49] In a report on the conference published in *Chinese Literature*, an official English-language journal issued from Beijing that aimed to publicise Chinese literature globally and had a particularly large readership in India in the 1950s (see Chapter 3), Anand and Kumar received special thanks, while Chaturvedi was not mentioned. See 'Asian Writers' Conference', *Chinese Literature*, February 1957: 216.
[50] 'Writer Must be Free to Write What He Feels: Mr. Rajagopalachari's Call at Asian Conference', *The Times of India*, December 25, 1956: 8.
[51] Ye Shengtao, 'Pianduan zhi Si', 174.

The relatively open attitude of the Chinese delegates in Delhi, as Adhira Mangalagiri astutely points out, partly resulted from the relaxation of the PRC's cultural climate due to the ongoing "Hundred Flowers Campaign" that lasted from mid-1956 to mid-1957.[52] Launched by Mao Zedong and underpinned by the slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend", this campaign encouraged writers and artists to create freely and openly express their views on the communist regime.[53] The Delhi AWC held in December 1956 coincided with the heyday of that campaign. The loosening of domestic political restrictions therefore seems to have influenced the way in which Chinese writers participated in the AWC and presented Chinese literature.

At the conference, Mao Dun delivered a speech entitled "Zhongguo Wenxue Xianzhuang" (The Present State of Chinese Literature). After outlining the evolution of Chinese literature in the first half of the twentieth century and the main literary developments under communist rule (e.g. the diversification of subject matter and the increased translation of foreign works), Mao Dun's speech ended with a self-critique that resonated with the "Hundred Flowers Campaign":

> Generally speaking, the current condition of our literature is
> unsatisfactory. Although we have produced many works, these works are
> thematically limited and stylistically homogenous. Most of them are
> either about warfare or agricultural and industrial construction. The other
> aspects of people's lives have rarely been depicted in our literary works.
> There are a lot of works that lack originality, novel artistic conception or
> an elegant language style. In terms of literary criticism, our attention has
> often gone to the content and theme of a work, rather than analysing its
> artistry. All of these shortcomings are related to the dogmatic tendency in
> our critical theory and creative method. The slogan "Let a hundred
> flowers bloom and let a hundred schools of thought contend" proposed by

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[52] Adhira Mangalagiri, 'The Art of Non-alliance in Cold War-era Chinese Literature', unpublished paper presented at an invited talk at the University of Oxford China Centre, November 14th, 2017.
[53] For more details about this campaign, see Hong Zicheng, *Yijiuwuliu: Baihua Shidai* (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998).

the [communist] party in June 1956 has aimed to reduce these shortcomings. [… This] proposal will undoubtedly take our new literature a step further.[54]

Mao Dun's self-reflective evaluation of Chinese literature, which called for a turn from dogmatism to inclusiveness and from overemphasis on content to balanced treatment of content and form, found fuller and more vocal expression in Lao She's speech at the panel discussion on writerly freedom. Reflecting on the relationship between literature and politics, Lao She said:

> Every literary work can definitely become a weapon of political propaganda, but it should be "real" literature that has power and impact. Literature is subject to its own laws. No one is prepared to read a work that claims to be literature but in fact has nothing but political jargon.[55]

In the context of the AWC and the larger cultural Cold War, this declaration can be read as a response to the attack modernists usually directed at communists for subordinating the literary to the political. Echoing the spirit of the "Hundred Flowers Campaign", Lao She further called the authority of socialist realism into question and invoked a more eclectic literary environment that would allow all forms of works to flourish, as long as they reflect "people's lives":

> It is acknowledged that socialist realism is the progressive form of writing, but does this mean all other creative styles are worthless? My answer is negative. All the works that mirror people's lives enrich our treasure trove. This can help our literature thrive. In addition, we should encourage every writer to form their own style, instead of discouraging them from doing so. We should let our literary works flourish in various shapes, not cast them into one narrow mould. We should encourage different schools to coexist in our literary field. In so doing, every writer

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[54] Mao Dun, 'Zhongguo Wenxue Xianzhuang', in *Mao Dun Quanji Di Ershisi Juan* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1996), 522.

[55] Lao She, 'Lekhak aur Āzādī', *Nayā Path*, March 1957: 253.

will get inspired and set out to write, no matter what their political affiliations are, which "school" they follow, whether they are scholars of classical literature or bold authors belonging to a new generation. Only then can we have a literature as bright and beautiful as satin, rich in the selection of subject matter and unique in style. Only in this way can we do full justice to the principle of making diverse kinds of flowers bloom.[56]

By highlighting intrinsic literary value ("power and impact") as the prerequisite for fulfilling a work's political potential, and presenting socialist realism as one of many possible literary styles, Lao She's speech at the AWC offered a nuanced theory that dismantled the antithesis between the doctrine of "art for people's sake" and that of "art for art's sake". This speech received a great deal of attention from the Indian media. Not only did both communist and non-communist news reports on the AWC cited this speech in excerpts,[57] but its full script, which is not even available in Chinese language, was published in Hindi translation in the progressive literary journal *Nayā Path* (New Road).[58] Its editors, including novelist Yashpal, who also attended the AWC, found Lao She's ideas not only "worth reading" (*paṭhnīy*), but also "worth contemplating" (*mānnīy*).[59] This is an example of the transnational flow of leftist literary texts and thoughts from China to India, which is the focus of Chapter 3.

Partly because the Chinese delegation did not adopt a politically unyielding attitude, the ideological difference between Chinese delegates and some liberal Indian writers at the AWC did not turn into open confrontation. This allowed their contact to focus more on literary subjects and, indeed, fostered effective exchange of information,

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[56] Ibid., 254-55.
[57] The CPI weekly *New Age* praised it as "the most brilliant paper" presented on the subject of writers and freedom. See David Cohen, 'Resurgent Asia's Writers Meet': 13. For a non-communist view, see M.V. Desai, 'The Asian Writers' Conference December 1956'.
[58] It is unknown why Lao She's speech was never published or mentioned in the Chinese reports of the AWC. Adhira Mangalagiri argues that even under the circumstances of the "Hundred Flowers Campaign", Lao She's ideas may have been too bold to publish.
[59] "Yah Aṅk", *Nayā Path*, March 1957, n.p.

ideas and experiences. First of all, public presentation and private communication deepened their understanding of one another's literary traditions and their recent developments. The Chinese delegates were particularly impressed with the multilingual literary culture of India, and at one event they listened to presentations made by Indian writers who represented 14 different regional languages. Such a concentrated yet comprehensive display of "Indian literature" as a federation of letters rarely occurred in bilateral cultural visits, in which writers only travelled to a few regions and literature was seldom the focal point of exchange. Ye Junjiian's report published after the AWC shows how the conference made Asian writers aware of their ignorance of each other's literature and corrected their conceptions of one another:

> At this conference, over 20 reports were presented on the literatures of different Indian languages. We hadn't even heard of some of their names, such as Oriya literature, Orissa [*sic*] literature, Sindhi literature, Marathi literature, Rajasthani literature, Gujarati literature, Malayalam literature, Telugu literature, Dogri literature and Kannada literature. All of them have a longstanding tradition and rich heritage, which are still developing, but none of us has ever studied them. Even the literatures of the regions geographically close to us, such as Kashmir and Assam, have rarely come to our notice. The most interesting report is the one about Sanskrit literature in modern times. It is generally held that Sanskrit is a dead language like Greek and Latin, but in fact people still use it today to write and even to translate Shakespeare's plays.[60]

The significance of the AWC also meant learning about the self through the other. For example, it was only through the presentation of Indian regional literatures that the Chinese delegates learnt for the first time that Chinese literature had influenced modern Kashmiri literature, and that the works of Lu Xun (alongside those of Gorky and

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[60] Ye Junjian, 'Yazhou Zuojia de Huijian', 197-98. Note the erroneous juxtaposition of Oriya literature with "Orissa literature" (Orissa is a state in India whose official language is Oriya), which to some extent is proof of this ignorance.

Tolstoy) had stimulated the evolution of the modern short story in Assamese.[61]

Exchanges like these not only increased Chinese writers' knowledge of the overseas

reception of their own literature, but also helped present an image of "resurgent Asia",

where some contact had already taken place in recent times and left a mark.

Second, if the conference hall, where the addresses, presentations, and panel

discussions took place, mainly served as a formal site of exchange of information, the

spaces outside offered subtler, more informal and more aesthetically-driven mediums of

contact, which allowed writers to not only know, but also *feel*. For the Chinese

delegates, perhaps the most impressive informal activity organised during the AWC was

a *kavi sammelan*, a modern tradition in which Indian poets, and on this occasion poets

from all the participating countries were asked to recite their works in public in their

own languages, sometimes followed by explanations in English. The linguistic barrier

did not prevent participants from appreciating each other's poems. In the case of Xiao

San, a Chinese poet who attended the *kavi sammelan*, he was struck by the physical and

emotional aesthetic responses of those listening to Indian and Pakistani poets and who

understood the meaning: "What touched me deeply and what I admired were their

engrossed expressions while watching and listening, as well as the moves and sounds

they made while conveying appreciation and praise."[62] Attending a larger poetry

recitation in Jullundur, Punjab, with over 2,000 people in the audience, another Chinese

poet, Han Beiping, who represented China on the preparatory committee of the AWC,

was also impressed by how the audience — in this case ordinary citizens, not

professional poets — reacted to different poems with varying exclamations, facial

expressions, and bodily gestures. Without understanding the Punjabi language, Han

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[61] Ibid., 198.
[62] Xiao San, 'Ji Yazhou Shiren de Huijian', *Shikan*, no. 3 (1957): 84. Adhira Mangalagiri made a similar point in her talk at Oxford.

could tell that "each poem has its own metre and tune", which sounded similar to Chinese folk songs and *ci*, a form of classical Chinese poetry.

For Xiao San, Han Beiping and other poets of socialist China, being part of the *kavi sammelan* or poetry recitation — an opportunity for literary immersion of a kind that infrequently appeared in the schedule of bilateral cultural visits — opened a window to perceptual knowledge of how literary practices were actually carried out in India, in addition to the knowledge they acquired through formal conference participation. In an essay written after the AWC, Han Beiping described several scenes of the poetry recitation in Jullundur, at which he was surprised by the zeal and connoisseurship ordinary people displayed in enjoying poetry:

> The audience's ability to appreciate was high. When the reciter read out the first line, they could immediately name its rhyme […]
> Listeners had an immediate and prompt reaction to the content and form of a poem. They gasped with admiration after hearing an "epigrammatic" or extremely vivid line […]
> When the reciter read out an excellent line, he [a young Indian poet] forgot the existence of myself and the others around him, slapped his thighs heavily, and shouted: "Wah! Wah!" Hundreds out of 2,000 in the audience shouted loudly like him. That was a spectacular moment. Their excitement and selflessness were so strong, something I have never seen at any poetry recitation before. There is no better way to encourage a reciter than with such direct and instant affirmation."[63]

Having learnt that public involvement in poetry recitation is a longstanding tradition in India, Han turned this experience into an introspective process by relating it to his own tradition and suggesting that reforms be applied to China's poetic life:

> I have gained some inspiration from attending these recitals. Poets should meet their readers more often and recite the poems to them. This is beneficial to both social and artistic activities. We should befriend

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[63] Han Beiping, 'He Yindu Shiren zai Yiqi', *Shikan*, no. 10 (1957): 116.

readers, because their face-to-face feedback is the quickest and best way to appraise our own works. Moreover, the recitations we have organised so far paid too little attention to traditional and folk elements. If we don't limit the scope of recitation to new poetry and "spoken language" [*shuobai*], not only will our poems reflect social reality more acutely but the group of reciters will also expand to include folk singers and artists. In so doing, the content of our recitations will surely become richer and the audience larger.[64]

Han's observation links to the question of the relationship between writer and audience and, more fundamentally, between literature and the people. The new Chinese literary culture he envisions needs the participation of the people not only as readers, but also as evaluators and interlocutors. In this way, the interaction between the literati and audience would simultaneously cultivate the public and improve the writers' artistic creations. Like the remarks of Mao Duan and Lao She discussed above, Han's reflections were also in tune with the spirit of the "Hundred Flowers Campaign", which welcomed unconventional ideas, constructive critique, and the introduction of new forms and practices. Although the "Anti-rightist Campaign" that began in July 1957 made these reformist moves impossible, Han's example nevertheless suggests the potential of Indian literature to inspire Chinese writers and reform the Chinese literary field.

Debating Anti-colonialism in Tashkent

Less than two years after the AWC, the first Afro-Asian Writers' Conference (AAWC) was held from October 7th to 13th 1958 in Tashkent, with over 200 delegates representing more than 40 Asian and African nations, ranging from Nepal to Nigeria and from Cambodia to Cameroon. The inception of the AAWC can ostensibly be traced

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[64] Ibid., 117.

to the AWC: at the AWC's closing session, the Uzbek poet Madame Zulfia's invitation on behalf of the Soviet Asian writers to meet again in Tashkent was greeted with enthusiasm and approved by the secretariat.[65] Although a few African writers, such as John Coleman de Graft-Johnson (1919-1977) from the Gold Coast (later Ghana), attended the Delhi AWC and stressed the imperative of "Africans speaking for themselves in the comity of nations", they only took part as observers, alongside European and Latin American writers.[66] In fact, when Zulfia's invitation was offered in Delhi, the Tashkent conference was simply intended as a second AWC.[67]

The most decisive event contributing to the conference's paradigmatic transformation from "Asian" to "Afro-Asian" was the first conference of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO), which met in Cairo from December 26th, 1957 to January 1st, 1958. As I mentioned in the Introduction, the AAPSO reflected the ambition of the Soviet Union to exert a stronger influence in Third World affairs, partly in response to its exclusion from Bandung. The Cairo conference, which led to the establishment of the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau (AAWB), passed a resolution urging writers from the two continents to actively participate in the upcoming Tashkent conference. In this way, what was originally intended to be the "second AWC" began to be reframed into an "Afro-Asian" template, and for this reason some scholars have considered the Cairo conference the origin of the AAWC.[68] The official decision to include Africa in the Tashkent conference was made during a preliminary meeting that took place in Moscow in June 1958. The manifesto issued at the Moscow meeting, which outlined that "the feeling of those present in Delhi, which gathered strength later,

[65] 'Cultural Co-operation among Asian Nations: End of Writers' Conference', *The Times of India,* December 29th, 1956: 3.
[66] 'World Writers' Views on "Crisis of Culture"', *The Times of India*, December 29th, 1956: 3.
[67] Ibid.
[68] See, for example, Hala Halim, 'Afro-Asian Third-Worldism into Global South: The Case of Lotus Journal', *Global South Studies*, November 22nd, 2017, https://globalsouthstudies.as.virginia.edu/key-moments/afro-asian-third-worldism-global-south-case-lotus-journal (accessed January 10th, 2019); and Yoon, '"Our Forces Have Redoubled"'.

was that the writers of Africa should also join the Asians",[69] offered a narrative for the Tashkent conference's origin, in which this "later" event — the Cairo conference — played a significant role in giving the "feeling" at the Delhi AWC an institutional shape.

The Tashkent conference continued several conventions the Delhi conference had established, such as the "nation-state" as the organisational unit, the emphasis on valorising indigenous cultural traditions, and the call to enhance cultural ties across nations. There was a strong continuity between the two conferences also in terms of delegate participation, especially on the Asian side. For example, the 21-member Chinese delegation was led once again by Mao Dun, with Zhou Yang, Ye Junjian, Xiao San and a few others remaining on the team. The majority of the 26-member Indian delegation also took part in the Delhi conference, including the two delegation leaders, Mulk Raj Anand and Bengali novelist Tarashankar Banerjee, who respectively served as general secretary and leader of the Indian delegation at the Delhi conference.[70] While this continuity indicates sustained interest and cumulative familiarity, it also inevitably led to the perpetuation of a number of the same problems. For instance, although the Indian delegation present in Tashkent was much smaller in size compared with the over 150 delegates in Delhi, it was nonetheless a heterogeneous group divided along political lines. Despite the absence of ICCF-associated anti-communist writers (e.g. Agyeya and Padhye), largely due to the shift of venue to the Soviet Union, and the withdrawal of a few non-communist writers (e.g. Jainendra Kumar and Ramdhari Singh "Dinkar") who took issue with how Indian delegates were selected, the Indian delegates at Tashkent were still drawn from a wide political spectrum, ranging from communists (like Sajjad Zaheer and Shivdan Singh Chauhan) to non-communist leftists (Anand), from Gandhian

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[69] 'Afro-Asian Writers: Talks in Tashkent on October 1', *The Times of India*, August 31st, 1958: 4.
[70] Tarashankar replaced Humayun Kabir as head of Indian delegation in the last four days of the AWC.

(Tarashankar) to anti-communists (Krishnalal Shridharani).[71] As we shall see, different

political stances translated into divergent opinions within the Indian delegation.

Figure 2.3: The Chinese delegation at the Tashkent AAWC, 1958. Front row (from left to right): Xiao San (2nd), Liu Baiyu (3rd), Ye Junjian (4th), Xu Guangping (5th), Zhou Yang (6th), Mao Dun (7th), Ba Jin (8th), Bing Xin (9th), Yang Mo (10th), Qu Bo (10th). Back row (from left to right): Guo Xiaochuan (3rd), Gao Mang (4th), Ji Xianlin (5th), Zhao Shuli (14th). Source: Kongfuzi Old Book Web, http://book.kongfz.com/21389/946329776/

Figure 2.4: Nikhil Khrushchev shaking hands with Indian and Chinese writers (from right to left): Sant Singh Sekhon (1st, uncertain), Tarashankar Banerjee (2nd, uncertain) and Mao Dun (3rd). Source: Image from front matter to *Tashigen Jingshen Wansui*, 1959.

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[71] Like the Delhi AWC, the Tashkent Conference was preceded by political struggles between Indian writers over the issue of selecting delegates. Jainendra and Dinkar initially agreed to work for the preparatory committee but later withdrew because they found that "invitations were issued arbitrarily and sometimes even without reference to or cognisance of those concerned". They also disagreed with the fact that Indian delegates had to travel to Tashkent at their own expense; rather, they wished that "delegates should be invited purely on merit, regardless of their ability or readiness to undertake the expense involved". See 'Writers' Meet', *The Times of India*, October 3rd, 1958: 6. Jainendra and Dinkar's proposal to use the residual funds of the AWC to pay the Indian delegates' fares was objected to by Anand, who said that the Indian government had "laid down a clear ruling that each delegate must pay for himself". See 'Writers' Meet', *The Times of India*, September 27th, 1958: 6.

The discontinuities between the two conferences were significant, too. Apart from the inclusion of African writers, the most salient difference was the AAWC's heightened attention to political issues, in particular the issue of "anticolonialism". The final version of the Tashkent conference agenda for discussion included two items:

1. The development of national literature and culture in Asia and Africa and their place in human progress, the struggle for national independence, *anticolonialism*, defence of freedom and world peace.
2. Asian and African cultures and their links with Western culture.[72]

Compared with the agenda at the Delhi conference, which focused almost exclusively on culture and literature (e.g. the state of national literature, the traditions of Asia, the freedom of the writer, the writer and his trade, and cultural exchange), the Tashkent conference agenda reduced the emphasis on cultural topics and suggested they be discussed in the relevant political contexts (i.e. the struggle for national independence, anticolonialism, defence of freedom, and world peace). This change in the conference's guiding document had a direct impact on the focus of the discussion. According to Ye Junjian's memoir, only slightly over a third of the six-day Tashkent conference was dedicated to discussing specific issues related to literature, such as children's literature and the development of theatre in Asia and Africa. For the most of the time the participants talked about how colonialism had hindered the development of their national language and literature, as well as the role of writers in decolonisation.[73] The predominant understanding of "literature" at the Tashkent conference was therefore not a form of art governed by autonomous aesthetic norms, but rather an "undertaking"

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[72] Cited in Mao Dun, 'Zhu Yafei Zuojia Huiyi', *Renmin Wenxue*, no. 10 (1958): 9; my emphasis.
[73] See Ye Junjian, 'Weile Yige Weida de Shiye: Yafei Zuojia Huiyi Sanji zhi San', in *Ye Junjian Quanji Di Shiqi Juan* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2010), 221. This memoir was first published in 1959.

closely related to a nation's political condition, as laid out in the "Appeal to the Writers of the World":

> It is our shared conviction that the literary undertaking is inseparable from the destiny of the people of our nations. Only after the people have gained freedom, independence and autonomy can literature truly thrive. Literary creation cannot sufficiently develop without the eradication of colonialism and racism.[74]

Chinese writers played a vital role in making "anticolonialism" a priority topic at the Tashkent conference, and "anticolonialism" was indeed the keyword that Chinese official media used to characterise the Tashkent conference.[75] This emphasis on anticolonialism, I argue, should be understood in relation to the PRC's changing foreign policy from 1956 to 1958. The 1956 Delhi AWC took place in the middle of the "Bandung phase" of China's foreign policy (1955-1957), which was marked by an emphasis on peaceful coexistence and, in particular, a conciliatory position vis-à-vis the United States.[76] The rationale behind this relatively moderate foreign policy was that winning new friends in Asia (and Africa) would establish the newly founded communist regime in a more favourable position, thereby helping to end its isolation in world affairs and pursue its objectives in terms of liberating Taiwan and entering the United Nations.[77] However, from August 1958 onwards the PRC adopted a much more militant attitude towards the US as a result of the Eisenhower administration's imperialist

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[74] Afro-Asian Writers, 'Yafei Guojia Zuojia Huiyi Gao Shijie Zuojia Shu', in *Tashigan Jingshen Wansui: Zhongguo Zuojia Lun Yafei Zuojia Huiyi,* ed. Shijie Wenxue she (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1959), 1.

[75] The editorials published in *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) and *Wenyi Bao* (Literary Gazette) on the Tashkent conference both highlighted "upholding the banner of anticolonialism". See Shijie Wenxue she, *Tashigan Jingshen Wansui: Zhongguo Zuojia Lun Yafei Zuojia Huiyi,* 10-19.

[76] See Charles Neuhauser, *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970), 5-10.

[77] This tendency is evident in Zhou Enlai's report to the PRC State Council on the Bandung conference: "At the conference we put forward no proposals either against the occupation of Taiwan by the United States and its creation of tension in the Taiwan area or for the restoration to the People's Republic of China of her legitimate status in the United Nations; for we did not want to see the Asian-African Conference bogged down in disputes and antagonisms on these two questions as the result of outside pressures." Cited in ibid., 6.

military intervention in the Taiwan Strait in defence of the Guomindang (KMT) regime, considered illegitimate by the PRC. This crisis severely damaged PRC-US relations and brought the two countries once again to the verge of direct military confrontation after the Korean War (1950-1953). The Taiwan Strait Crisis (23rd August to 22nd September 1958) almost ran in parallel with the preparations for the Tashkent conference, from the preliminary meeting in Moscow in June to the establishment and beginning work of the preparatory committee in September; consequently, it shaped the Chinese delegation's unequivocal anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and, more specifically, anti-US position in Tashkent.

In fact, as Xiong Ying points out, when representatives from China (Ge Baoquan and Yuan Shuipai), India (Mulk Raj Anand and Tarashankar Banerjee), the Soviet Union, Japan and the United Arab Republic (UAR) met in Moscow in June to hold the preliminary meeting, they passed an eight-point draft agenda that made no direct reference to "anticolonialism".[78] It was only in September, when representatives from ten member nations gathered in Tashkent to begin working for the preparatory committee, that the two Chinese representatives, Liu Baiyu and Guo Xiaochuan, proposed adding "anticolonialism" to the agenda.[79] Unlike the Moscow meeting, the preparatory committee's meeting (and the formal AAWC) took place after the start of the Taiwan Strait Crisis and it was therefore considered by the PRC's policymakers as a crucial international event for showcasing the country's reconstituted diplomatic stance and gathering support from fellow Asian and African countries in its anti-US mission.

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[78] The eight points are: 1) the development of national literature in Asian and African countries; 2) the cultural relations between East and West; 3) international situations and their impact on writers; 4) children's literature and its educational significance; 5) women's contribution to literature; 6) the development of theatre in Asian and African countries; 7) the connections of literature with radio, film and theatre; and 8) promoting exchanges between Afro-Asian writers. See Xiong Ying, 'Lianxu yu Zhuanzhe: Minzu Duli Yundong Zhong de "Fan Zhimin Zhuyi" Wenti', *Kaifang Shidai*, no. 1 (2018): 109-10.

[79] The ten nations include: the Soviet Union, China, India, Burma, Indonesia, Mongolia, Thailand, Ceylon, Japan and Cameroon.

Before his departure for Tashkent, Guo Xiaochuan was exhorted by Liao Chengzhi (1908-1983), who overlooked the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council, to "take an unambiguous stand" (*qizhi xianming*) and "seek the widest solidarity" (*guangfan tuanjie*).[80] Largely because of Guo and Liu's lobbying within the preparatory committee, the inclusion of "anticolonialism" in the agenda's first item (listed above) received Soviet endorsement and was passed unanimously on September 10th, about a month before the AAWC was formally inaugurated.[81] This change, as we shall see, provoked strong dissent among some of the Indian delegates, including the two leaders, Tarashankar and Anand.

In Tashkent, the stress on anticolonialism shaped the way in which Chinese writers presented their national literature and imagined Third World solidarity. This point becomes evident if we compare the report on Chinese literature that Mao Dun presented in Tashkent with the one he had presented two years before in Delhi (outlined above). Although both reports begin with a description of the "new literature" emerging with the 1919 May Fourth New Cultural Movement, there is a stark contrast in terms of how he valorised the writer in them. For instance, while Mao Dun's AWC report praised Lu Xun mainly for his critique of the feudal ethics in old China, his Tashkent report presented Lu Xun's works as a major inspiration and "a powerful weapon" for Chinese intellectuals, who fought first against the Japanese and then against the "American imperialists and their accomplice" (i.e. the Guomindang).[82]

Significantly, Mao Dun's Tashkent report includes a passage (absent in the Delhi report) that shows how he redefined Third World literary solidarity by framing China and Chinese writers in the larger context of decolonisation:

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[80] See Guo Xiaochuan, *Guo Xiaochuan Quanji Jiu* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2000), 347.
[81] See ibid., 365.
[82] Mao Dun, 'Wei Minzu Duli he Renlei Jinbu Shiye er Douzheng de Zhongguo Wenxue', in *Tashigan Jingshen Wansui*, ed. Shijie Wenxue she (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1959), 53.

When the claws of American imperialists posed a threat to the independence of North Korea and the security of China, Chinese writers, as part of the Chinese people, stood hand-in-hand with the people of North Korea and fought a just war in defence of national independence and world peace. […] When the British-French imperialists encroached on Egypt in the winter of 1956, Chinese writers denounced imperialism, together with the Chinese people, raised their pens to voice support for the just struggles in Egypt, and celebrated the victory of the Egyptian people. […] After the news about the American and British military invasion of Lebanon and Jordan reached China, poetry-style leaflets immediately appeared in the streets of every major city, every newspaper was filled with poems and cartoons, every literary and artistic magazine published a special issue, every wall was covered with paintings, and every theatrical troupe performed in the open air… [Whatever the form of expression], they made one cry in a thousand voices: "Solidarity with the Arab people! American-British troops out of Arab countries!" The recent provocative act of American imperialists in the Taiwan Strait of our country infuriated the people of China and the whole world. […] Chinese writers, who have mobilised all possible strength, are ready to defend our country and peace in the sacred war with the weapon of literature.[83]

By linking China's struggle in the Taiwan Strait Crisis with the struggles in Korea, the Suez Crisis in Egypt and interference in the Middle East, Mao Dun aligned China with other anti-imperialist/anticolonial forces in Africa and Asia as part of a single force and a single narrative. This narrative had three main features: first, it considered Western colonialism, and in particular American imperialism/neo-colonialism, a common enemy; second, it regarded imperialism/(neo-)colonialism as an ongoing evil that required immediate counter-attack; and third, it emphasised the social-political role of writers, assuming that they both could and should fight imperialism/(neo-)colonialism by turning literature into a weapon. In this context, Mao Dun conceived of Third World literary solidarity as a "united front" of Afro-Asian writers who would lend moral support to each other's anti-imperialist/anti-colonial struggles through literary expression. While presenting Chinese writers as already actively engaged in this literary

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[83] Ibid., 57.

solidarity, Mao Dun also extended an appeal that Afro-Asian writers should offer their support to China in its ongoing struggle against American intrusion in Taiwan.

The political agenda Chinese writers took to Tashkent made them particularly enthusiastic about the inclusion of sub-Saharan African countries in the former "Asian" framework of the Delhi conference. Due to the fact that many of these African countries were still fighting European colonialism or American neo-colonialism in the late 1950s, including them in the writers' conference would strengthen the Third World literary solidarity that Mao Dun configured in the quote above by consolidating the immediate relevance of anticolonialism and rallying more supporting voices. Not only did the speeches of African delegates figure prominently in Chinese proceedings of the Tashkent conference,[84] but several of them, including the Senegalese Majhemout Diop (1922-2007), Angolan Mário Coelho Pinto de Andrade (1928-1990) and Ghanaian Cameron Duodu (b. 1937), were also invited to visit China immediately after the Tashkent conference.[85]

While it was supported by Chinese and African delegates, the idea of highlighting anticolonialism was deeply problematic for some Indian delegates, including Tarashankar and Anand, who, upon their arrival in Tashkent, were astonished by the insertion of the term into the agenda that they had helped draft in Moscow in June.[86] The fact that Tarashankar and Anand were unaware of the preliminary committee's alteration of the agenda in September is surprising because India was in fact represented on the committee by Gopal Haldar (1902-1993) and Sant Singh Sekhon (1908-1997), who seconded the Chinese proposal to include anticolonialism. This lack of foreknowledge could have resulted from a miscommunication or a failed negotiation

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[84] See Ye, 'Weile Yige Weida de Shiye', 219-20.
[85] See Xiao San, 'Cong Tashigan Guilai', *Shijie Wenxue*, January 1959: 14.
[86] Shivdan Singh Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan 1958: Tāśkand Ḍāyrī', in *Pragatishīl Smṛti-Pravāh* (Jaipur: Rachana Prakashan, 2002), 19-20.

between disparate political groups within the Indian delegation, given that both Haldar and Sekhon were communists and were criticised by the pro-US Krishnalal Shridharani for being "politicians, not writers".[87]

 As leaders of the Indian delegation, Tarashankar and Anand made a last-minute attempt to get the secretariat to remove anticolonialism from the agenda, but their attempt was unsuccessful largely due to the opposition of the Chinese writers. The diary Guo Xiaochuan kept during the Tashkent conference, which was not published until 2000, captures several moments of dissension and negotiation between the leaders of the Chinese and Indian delegations:

> October 5th: Indian delegates raised objection to the first item on the conference agenda.

> October 6th: […] By the time [Liu] Baiyu came, the Indian delegation had finished discussing with Mao [Dun], Zhou [Yang] and Ba [Jin]. But they still held onto their opinions, and said it was the Soviets' plan. Simonov came and clarified that they had no such plan. […] Took a walk in the evening near the entrance and discussed with Baiyu how to deal with India. Had a cough and headache. Went to sleep at 11pm.

> October 7th: […] We went out separately and got in contact with Yindaoyue [unidentified delegate], the leader and Wu Daying [unidentified delegate] from the Burmese delegation, and the Japanese. Everyone refused the Indian proposal of an amendment. 1:30pm, at the meeting of the organising committee, everyone rejected the Indian proposal of an amendment. […] 5pm, at the meeting of the heads of delegations and the preparatory committee, we debated for an hour. India was still isolated. […] 11pm, returned from dinner with Mao and Liu, and the meeting went on. [Tarashankar] Banerjee and Anand, again, delivered long-winded speeches, which made us all extremely annoyed [*taoyan zhi zhi*]. We all decided to keep the agenda as it was. Banerjee compromised

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[87] Ibid., 5.

in the end. The meeting finally reached a consensus by 2am. Extremely excited and sleepless […][88]

The uncompromising attitude on both sides that led to a long-standing impasse, the "isolation" of Tarashankar and Anand in the face of the "united front" that Chinese delegates had endeavoured to create through lobbying, and Guo's sense of "victory" ("Extremely excited and sleepless") all suggest that the Tashkent conference was not just a literary event but also a site of competitive political struggle.

At the centre of the competitive relations between Chinese and Indian writers at Tashkent lies a paradox: why did Indian writers, who had personally experienced British colonialism and fought it, became hesitant about joining the chorus of anticolonialism at Tashkent, while writers from China, which had never been completely colonised, firmly embraced it? Surely Tarashankar and Anand did not disagree with the idea of anticolonialism per se, so were they rather concerned with the political message that the inclusion of anticolonialism would convey? Since Guo's diary provides no answer to these questions and neither Tarashankar nor Anand wrote about their Tashkent experience, my analysis here mainly relies on the records kept by two other Indian delegates of diverging outlooks: Krishnalal Shridharani's essay titled "Association and Isolation at Tashkent", which justifies Tarashankar and Anand's behaviour throughout the conference, and the progressive literary critic Shivdan Singh Chauhan's "Tashkent Diary", written in Hindi. Read together, they offer a relatively balanced and objective picture of the crux of the contradiction.

The immediate reason Tarashankar and Anand offered for their objection was that a writers' conference should not focus on politics, and "anticolonialism" was too political an issue to be in the conference agenda. According to Shridharni, they did not

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[88] Guo, *Guo Xiaochuan Quanji*, 380-81.

shun discussion of colonialism altogether but took issue with the politically-charged

way in which colonialism was being linked to literature:

> The phenomenon of colonialism can indeed come in while considering
> the freedom of the writer and the growth of an indigenous literature, but it
> would not be a writers' conference which mainly discussed colonialism
> and thought of writers and literature insofar as they have fought against
> colonialism and are capable of fighting against colonialism.[89]

Shridharani's understanding of the writer's role contrasts with Mao Dun's.[90] This

apolitical stance appeared apathetic at a conference where anticolonialism had gained

strong identification, and it even led to the Indian delegation being labelled "anti-

anticolonialism".[91] According to Chauhan's diary, the attitude of Tarashankar, Anand

and Shridharani was opposed by delegates from China, African countries and the UAR,

but the most vocal challenge came from the Pakistani author Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-

1984), who spoke from the vantage point of a shared colonial past:

> Ten years ago, Hindustan [India] was enslaved as well. It was a colony of
> the British Empire, and it was indeed colonialism that its independence
> struggle was against. At that time, Hindustan asked for sympathy from all
> independent countries around the world. Having obtained independence,
> India is now a country that all the enslaved countries in Asia and Africa
> look to for inspiration, sympathy and all sorts of support. It would bring
> little honour if Hindustan, after tasting ten years of independence, forgets
> either her own colonial past or the fact that numerous African and Asian
> countries are still fighting colonialism.[92]

While Chauhan suggests that Faiz's view resonated with many African delegates,

Tarashankar and Anand's reluctance towards the insertion of anticolonialism as a major

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[89] Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation at Tashkent', 58.
[90] Shridharani's claim can not be simply understood as a denial of the responsibility to participate in anticolonial struggles. It seems more like a critique of postcolonialism — that is, a writer from a colonised or formerly colonised country should not only be read (and write) in relation to that axis.
[91] Ibid., 59.
[92] Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan', 22.

topic for discussion should not be understood simply as a sign of amnesia or indifference from India's vantage point as an already liberated country. More pragmatic considerations, I argue, were in fact at work.

First of all, Tarashankar and Anand considered dissociating literature from politics a way by which to prevent the Delhi conference's legacy from being undermined. Although Cold War politics persisted at the AWC in terms of the selection of delegates and competing aesthetic systems (as discussed above), the conference's cultural focus was largely maintained through a series of procedural arrangements, such as limiting the topics of presentations and panel discussions to cultural issues and keeping voting (except on procedural matters) and passing of resolutions to a minimum.[93] By serving as convenors and occupying nine seats in the secretariat vis-à-vis only one seat to each of the other countries (China, Soviet Tajikistan, Burma and Japan),[94] Indian writers as a whole had played a determining role in laying the rules at the Delhi conference. In addition, the political balancing within the Indian delegation itself had prevented any particular political agenda from dominating the conference.

In Tashkent, where Soviet writers played host and writers from China, the UAR, and Sub-Saharan Africa showed a strong desire to engage, the Indian delegation found itself in a rather reactive and defensive position. A major challenge that Tarashankar and Anand faced was the Soviets' proposal of an alternative narrative about the conference's genesis, which tended to undermine the Indian initiative.[95] As Shridharani observed, at the Tashkent conference two competing genealogies of Third World literary solidarity emerged:

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[93] David Cohen, 'Resurgent Asia's Writers Meet', *New Age*, Dec 30th, 1956.
[94] See Wang, 'Yafei Zuojia Huiyi Yu Zhongguo Zuojia de Shijie Renshi', 74-75.
[95] For a detailed study of Soviet engagement with the Tashkent conference, see Djagalov, 'The People's Republic of Letters', Chapter 4.

While Indian speakers continued to trace the roots of the Tashkent
Conference to the Delhi Conference of Asian writers, Sharaf [*sic*]
Rashidov, that charming and dignified pivot of the Conference, squarely
traced its origin to the Cairo Conference of the Afro-Asian Solidarity
Committee.[96]

The fact that Sharof Rashidov (1917-1983), the Uzbek writer-politician who chaired the

preparatory committee of the Tashkent conference, had led a large Soviet delegation to

the AAPSO conference in Cairo confirms the Soviets' aspiration to take control of the

AAWC. Under such circumstances, Tarashankar and Anand's insistence that

"anticolonialism" be taken off the Tashkent agenda was arguably an attempt to retain

the legacy of the Delhi conference by reinstating its cultural/literary focus.

Shridharani's assertion that "a conference of writers should be a conference of writers

and not of politicians or of willing or unwilling tools of politicians" also echoed C.

Rajagopalachari's speech in Delhi (see above).[97]

The legacy of the Delhi conference was further challenged at Tashkent when the

discussion about establishing a permanent bureau emerged. At the Indian Writers'

Convention held on the eve of the Delhi AWC, some communist Indian writers had

proposed to establish a permanent organisation, but this proposal was turned down by

non-communist Indian delegates because the latter "feared that such an organisation

would come to be dominated by writers from communist countries in view of the fact

that they would enjoy the support of their governments and that individual writers

would not be able to resist such domination".[98] At Mao Dun's suggestion, it was agreed

at the end of the AWC that a small committee be set up for six months in order to

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[96] Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation', 58. "Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee" is an erroneous name for the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO).
[97] Ibid.
[98] 'Delegates to Asian Writers' Talks: Selection Criticised by Four Members', *The Times of India*, September 23, 1958: 6.

promote cultural exchanges.[99] When the question of permanent bureau was raised again at Tashkent, Tarashankar, Anand and Shridharani strongly opposed it and insisted on adhering to the Delhi conference's decision. Concerned by the preponderance of communists at Tashkent, Shridharani stressed that the birth of a permanent writers' organ "should take place at a less political moment and venue".[100] However, this attempt to redress the Tashkent conference in accordance with the Delhi conference's "apolitical" or at least politically balanced tradition, according to Chauhan's diary, encountered objections from a considerable number of fellow Afro-Asian delegates:

> Some young delegates from African countries, who were acting, in a sense, under the leadership of the United Arab Republic, had very bad feeling about this. They said that the decision made in Delhi had no binding legal force on the Tashkent conference, and they were free to make any new decision.[101]

Although India was respectfully placed first in the drafted list of the nine-country permanent bureau,[102] Tarashankar and Anand nevertheless turned down the invitation. With the view to keeping the writers' conference from Soviet/communist control, they also opposed the proposal to base the permanent bureau in Cairo, where an Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau (AAWB) had been in existence since 1957 as the cultural wing of the AAPSO. Eventually, Colombo was chosen due to its relatively neutral position.[103]

Tarashankar and Anand's objection to including "anticolonialism" in the Tashkent conference agenda should also be considered on the level of national interest. Although the Indian delegation at Tashkent was an unofficial one, the two delegation

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[99] See 'World Writers' Views on "Crisis of Culture": Appeal to Foster Relations among Various Nations', *The Times of India*, December 29, 1956: 3.
[100] Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation at Tashkent', 60.
[101] Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan', 30.
[102] See ibid., 29.
[103] See Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation at Tashkent', 60.

leaders, Tarashankar and Anand, nevertheless conducted themselves in keeping with

India's foreign policy, partly because they received instructions from Nehru himself and

partly because they were aware of the international influence an event like the AAWC

would exert. In fact, "how would Nehru react" became a key factor that they constantly

took into consideration when they made decision and justified their behaviour.

Chauhan's diary has an account of the first words Tarashankar said to fellow Indian

delegates after learning about the amendment to the agenda:

> We have been deceived. How should I explain to Pandit Nehru after we
> get back? […] These people want to turn this conference into a political
> platform. This is something I cannot stand. Before our departure, Dr.
> Anand and I met Pandit Nehru, who said that such a conference would be
> inevitably political, but we should try not to let its literary character
> vanish. Now how can I show my face to Pandit ji?[104]

 At the heart of Tarashankar and Anand's protest at Tashkent was not an

opposition to the idea of anticolonialism per se; rather, it was their concern that joining

the chorus of discussing anticolonialism — a discourse that was explicitly associated

with the ongoing American and European interference in Asia and Africa — in a

socialist country would make the Indian delegation look too pro-Soviet and hostile to

the West. In fact, according to Chauhan's recollection, the explanation Tarashankar and

Anand offered for their insistence on removing "anticolonialism" was that "keeping this

term would translate into condemnation of America, England, France, Belgium, Spain,

Portugal, Holland and other Western countries, which have maintained friendly

relations with India".[105] This concern makes more sense if we consider it in the context

of Indo-American relations: by the time of the Tashkent conference, Nehru's

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[104] Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan', 19-20.
[105] Ibid., 23.

government had been receiving crucial economic aid from the Eisenhower administration to meet the target of its second Five Year Plan.[106] This particular situation may have contributed to the Indian delegation leaders taking a politically moderate stance at Tashkent.

Perhaps with the view to counterbalance the effect of inserting "anticolonialism" into the first item of the agenda, Tarashankar and Anand insisted on and succeed in expanding the second item, which was initially about Afro-Asian cultures, to include "their relations with Western culture".[107] In fact, as a declassified NATO file suggests, the United Kingdom delegation to the Tashkent conference (as observers) had a meeting with Commonwealth Heads of Mission in Moscow and subsequently sent a letter to the NATO headquarters in Paris, reporting the ambassadors' impressions of the AAWC. This letter summarises the Indian ambassador's observation as follows:

> According to the Indian Ambassador, one of the Indian delegates, Mulk Raj Anand, (the well-known novelist and writer in English) had taken part in the preparatory commission which drew up an agenda for the Conference. When the Conference opened, he discovered that this agenda had been scrapped, and another, strictly anti-colonial, substituted. I understand, however, that the Indians succeeded in having an item on relations between Afro-Asian and European literature inserted into the agenda.[108]

This narrative clearly shows that the Indian delegates proposed the insertion of

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[106] From 1957 onward, the US government launched an expansive economic aid for India, because the US policymakers were "concerned that the Soviet Union was beginning to gain influence with India through liberal aid and trade inducements, and fearful that India's inability to meet its ambitious development goals might lead to an upsurge of communist strength within the country". See Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 7.

[107] See Ralph Parker, 'The Tashkent Conference: Establishing Cultural Contacts', *The Times of India*, October 17, 1958: 6.

[108] Committee on Information and Cultural Relations, 'Afro-Asian Writers' Conference, Tashkent, October 1958', 2, NATO archive online, http://archives.nato.int/afro-asian-writers-conference-tashkent-october-1958;isad (accessed on January 20th, 2019).

"European literature" ("Western culture" as it appeared in the agenda) with the view to compensating for their failure to have "anticolonialism" removed. The fact that the Indian ambassador emphasised this move as an "Indian success" and the UK delegation further reported this to the NATO headquarters suggests that this Indian move was expected to receive affirmative feedback from the US's European allies.

At Tashkent, Tarashankar and Anand's attempt to protect India's national interest and international relations was regarded by the Chinese delegates as being "afraid of offending the imperialists".[109] They also faced criticism from within the Indian delegation, mainly from communist delegates like Shivdan Singh Chauhan and Sajjad Zaheer. When Tarashankar encouraged fellow Indian delegates to stage a walkout in the middle of the conference as a protest against the insertion of anticolonialism in the agenda and the association of this literary event with political issues, Chauhan and Zaheer expressed their opinion:

> We definitely hope that this conference can reach a high literary standard without taking up a politically-oriented attitude. Therefore, it would be good if this term [anticolonialism] had been removed from the agenda's first item. However, even if the vast majority do not oppose it, it is not necessary for us to opt for a walkout or protest — such methods themselves are politically charged. If we consider employing these methods only for a term that Indian people — Pandit Nehru in particular —have never opposed, it would run counter to Pandit Nehru's foreign policy and our national honour. Representing the oldest country in Asia and Africa, whose leadership in international affairs is recognised by all, we should play a positive role so that this conference can be successful. […] If India's proposal or amendment is not passed at the United Nation assembly or any other international conference, will Pandit Nehru order the delegation to stage a walkout?[110]

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[109] See Shijie Wenxue she, *Tashigan Jingshen Wansui: Zhongguo Zuojia Lun Yafei Zuojia Huiyi*, 141-47. This criticism was made anonymously, but it clearly targets India because the Indian delegation was the only delegation, with which the Chinese delegates strongly took issue.
[110] Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan', 21.

Clearly, Indian delegates had different interpretations of "neutrality", the core concept of Nehru's Cold War-period foreign policy and the ideological basis of the Non-Aligned Movement. Whereas Tarashankar and Anand interpreted India's neutrality in terms of being friendly to both superpowers without necessarily taking sides, Chauhan and Zaheer understood it as a way to consolidate India's leading role in Third World affairs and contribute to India's solidarity with — not isolation from — the rest of the Afro-Asian world. This difference in perception of India's foreign policy, coupled with their ideological differences, significantly divided the Indian delegation at Tashkent. While the Tashkent conference was considered by the Chinese delegates a great "victory" only disturbed by a "minor counter-current" (a reference to Indian dissent),[111] it proved to be a disappointment for the Indian delegates irrespective of their leanings. Chauhan felt embarrassed by the manner in which Tarashankar and Anand misinterpreted Nehru's policy while acting as his "devotees" (*bhakt*), thereby turning India into a "ridiculous" (*hāsyāspad*) object in front of other Afro-Asian countries.[112] According to Shridharani, on the other hand, "the Indian writer", excluding communist Indian writers, "found himself in splendid isolation or utter loneliness".[113]

Conclusion

The writerly contacts between China and India during the formative years of the Third World writers' movement were characterised by a negotiation between cooperation and competition. From Delhi to Tashkent, the competitiveness and tension of China-India writerly contacts became intensified and more explicit. At the Delhi AWC, Cold War politics, which mainly transpired in the shape of pre-conference partisan struggles

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[111] Shijie Wenxue she, *Tashigan Jingshen Wansui*, 147.
[112] Chauhan, 'Pratham Afro-Eśiyāī Lekhak Sammelan', 30.
[113] Shridharani, 'Association and Isolation at Tashkent', 57.

between progressive and modernist Indian writers and competing literary values within the panel discussions, did not turn China-India writerly contact into overt political conflict, partly because the Indian organisers emphasised the conference's cultural focus, and partly because the Chinese delegates engaged with a politically moderate and culturally open attitude. This relatively relaxed atmosphere enabled a fruitful exchange of knowledge — both objective and affective — of each other's literary tradition and development. Although the AWC gathered a large and heterogeneous group of Indian writers, private accounts by the Chinese delegates show that they nevertheless differentiated their Indian counterparts in ideological terms and the Indian authors they interacted most closely were either leftists (like Mulk Raj Anand and Navtej Singh) or pro-Chinese non-leftists (like Amrita Pritam and Jainendra Kumar).

At the Tashkent AAWC, however, the hardened anti-imperialist/anti-US position of the Chinese delegation, supported by the delegates from sub-Saharan Africa, the UAR and the Soviet Union, put the Indian delegation leaders in a minority and in a delicate and defensive situation, and they reacted by protesting over multiple issues. At Tashkent, while ideological difference persisted, competing national interests as manifested in different ways of self-positioning in Cold War geopolitics became a prominent factor that sharpened the division between the Chinese and Indian delegations; different interpretations of Nehru's non-aligned policy also divided the Indian delegation itself. It seems that, as leader of the Indian delegation, Anand prioritised national interest over his own leftist persuasion, and this explains why he said that he felt himself becoming "more Indian" and his Chinese friend, Ye Junjian, "more Chinese".

Highlighting the ideological and national fault lines of the AWC and AAWC does not suggest the project of Third World literary solidarity destined to failure from

the start; rather, it helps interrogate and deconstruct discursive categories such as "humanism", "Pan-Asianism/Africanism" and "anticolonialism" — the focus of my examination — that tend to simplify this substantially complex and difficult project into romantic configurations. The disparate artistic creeds, ideological persuasions, geopolitical considerations, and national expressions in Delhi and, to an even greater extent, in Tashkent anticipated the dramatic division of this movement into the Soviet-sponsored permanent bureau and the Chinese-sponsored Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau (AAWB) in the 1960s, following the Sino-Soviet split. The two conferences, which took place during the "Bhai-Bhai" period, also suggest that conspicuous fissures were already present in China-India literary relations before bilateral political conflicts became explicit in early 1959.

Chapter 3 | Imagining the Land of Revolution: India's Reception of Modern Chinese Literature in the 1950s

This chapter explores the reception of modern Chinese literature, especially fiction, in 1950s India with a focus on textual and readerly contacts. Indian readers, I will argue, actively engaged with modern Chinese literature in order to acquire knowledge about China but also, at the same time, reflect upon Indian realities, as with the China travelogues written by leftist Indian visitors (see Chapter 1).

This remains a largely under-investigated aspect of India-China literary relations. A few scholars, like B.R. Deepak and Zeng Qiong for example, have suggested that the translation of Chinese works in post-independence India was "abysmal" and that Indian readers' attitudes toward Chinese literature were much less enthusiastic than Chinese readers' towards Indian literature. They attribute this "bleak" translation scene to various factors, such as the lack of Indian translators versed in Chinese and the centrality of Western literature among India's English-educated intelligentsia and education system.[1] While the latter factor may go some way towards explaining why Western literature has been more popular than Chinese literature in modern India, the former seems problematic. Already in the early twentieth century, English became as much a medium as a source of reading for many Indian intellectuals. In fact, relay translation was the most common way through which Indian readers got

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[1] See B.R. Deepak, 'Transmission of Chinese Cultural Capital: Translation of Classics and Contemporary Chinese Works in India', *Zhongguo Fanyi*, no. 2 (2016): 36–43; and Zeng Qiong, 'Text and Alter Text: Chinese Literature in Indian Translations', in *Quest of a Discipline: Academic Directions for Comparative Literature*, ed. Rizio Yohannan Raj (Bengaluru: Foundation Books, 2012), 182–90.

access to French and Russian literature. Therefore, the lack of direct translators from Chinese was not a major issue.

As I show in this Chapter, a more comprehensive and productive approach to gauging the visibility and circulation of modern Chinese literature in 1950s India requires attention to the significant public interest in China's communist revolution, the widespread presence of Chinese books and periodicals in English, and the regional language archives including both books and magazines. Between 1950 and 1962, at least seven book-length Hindi translations of Chinese literature were published (see Appendix 4) and translations of modern Chinese stories appeared regularly in Hindi magazines like *Nayā Path* and *Kahānī*. The fact that none of these are mentioned by Deepak or Zeng makes it too soon to call the translation scene "bleak".

This chapter's emphasis on the practice of reading and readerly contact, a vector neglected by Deepak and Zeng, emerges from an awareness of India's bilingual educated reading public, who read Chinese literature also in English without necessarily turning to the translations in Indian languages. This differs significantly from the situation in 1950s China, where most people only read Indian works in Chinese translation due to the prevalence of mandarin Chinese. Although the English versions of Chinese literary works circulating in India were translations, scholars seldom identify them as "Indian" translations because most were produced outside India. As mentioned in the Introduction, before 1950 it was mostly British sinologists (e.g. Arthur Waley) and American journalists (e.g. Edgar Snow) who contributed to building this English repository of Chinese literature, from which Indian writers like Tagore and Mulk Raj Anand gained knowledge of the Chinese literary field and tradition. The decade following the founding of the PRC saw the Beijing-based Foreign Languages Press (FLP), the new regime's central machinery of external publicity, begin to carry out the

world's most systematic and productive translation project of Chinese literature into English, with India as the most important target country in its global network.

This chapter presents FLP books and journals as an integral part of the Indian library of Chinese literature in the 1950s. In fact, they constituted the primary source from which Indian intellectuals got access to Chinese literary works and from which they translated some works into Indian languages. However, this aspect of China-India literary relations has been largely overlooked in existing studies: while the few studies of the Indian translation and transmission of Chinese literature focus essentially on projects initiated by the host culture,[2] the more systematic research into the PRC's external publicity has not paid sufficient attention to India.[3]

Rather than a one-sided scheme of Chinese overseas propaganda, as some scholars seem to suggest,[4] the well-received dissemination of FLP publications in India during the period of Sino-Indian fraternity, I argue, should be considered a reciprocal and combined cultural process. This process was reciprocal because the Chinese desire to represent a positive image of the country's revolutionary history and cultural tradition by exporting literary works met the pre-existing Indian expectation of China as a source of leftist literary texts, theory, and praxis; it also satisfied the Indian demand to understand the rationale behind the rise of communist China and desire to draw lessons from the Chinese experience (as in Indian travellers' curiosity about China discussed in Chapter 1). It was combined because FLP publications could not have circulated so widely without the nationwide network established by local Indian publishers, distributors, and media, especially those affiliated to the Communist Party of India

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[2] See Deepak, 'Transmission of Chinese Cultural Capital', and Zeng, 'Text and Alter Text'.
[3] See, for example, Ni Xiuhua, 'Zuowei Zhengzhi Xingwei de Zhongguo Wenxue Duiwai Fanyi: Yi Jianguo "Shiqi Nian" Shiqi de Zhongguo Wenxue Duiwai Fanyi Huodong wei Li', *Translation Quarterly* 72 (2014): 1–32; and Zheng Ye, 'Guojia Jigou Zanzhu xia Zhongguo Wenxue de Duiwai Yijie: Yi Yingwen Ban "Zhongguo Wenxue" (1951-2000) wei Ge'an' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Shanghai: Shanghai International Studies University, 2012).
[4] See Cagdas Ungor, 'Reaching the Distant Comrade: Chinese Communist Propaganda Abroad (1949-1976)' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Binghamton, NY: Binghamton University, 2009).

(CPI). Focusing particularly on how Hindi writers engaged with FLP publications, this chapter addresses the following questions: To what extent was the Chinese outward translation of literary works effective in India? Were the translated books and magazines popular, or were they simply available? Did these translations remain in English, or did they take on new lives by stimulating further translation into Indian languages? Did Chinese literature reach only progressive writers or readers, or did it gain a broader readership?

In this chapter, I deliberately use the term "revolution" as a central concept, not only because it was frequently adopted to characterise modern Chinese authors and works in 1950s India, but also because it can serve as a useful analytical tool to unpack what Chinese literature meant to Indian readers. Specifically, modern Chinese literary works read in India can be divided into three categories, based on their relationship to the concept of revolution. The first category includes works about the revolution that represented the Chinese revolution as a historical narrative. For instance, revolutionary historical novels such as Yuan Jing and Kong Jue's *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* (New Legend of Heroic Sons and Daughters, 1949) opened a window for Indian readers who craved knowledge about China's revolutionary experience. The second category includes literature capable of revolutionising sociocultural conventions, such as the works of Lu Xun. As I will show, Hindi writers often transformed reading Lu Xun's short stories into serious reflections on Indian situations, whether it was the country's feudal society and colonial history, or the crisis faced by the post-independence middle classes and student activists. The third category comprises literary practices that rethought revolution by considering its "hidden" side — that is, by focusing on the figures and texts that were marginalised or silenced after the communist takeover due to their non-compliance with the PRC's mainstream political and literary norms. While

this aspect of the literature-revolution relationship found no expression in FLP publications, it was made visible in a few literary projects self-initiated by Indian intellectuals, such as K.M. Panikkar's anthology *Modern Chinese Stories*. As we shall see, this anthology included Shen Congwen, a prominent Chinese author who was labelled "illegitimate" by the PRC's cultural bureaucrats in the early 1950s, not through a direct translation of his works, perhaps due to political consideration, but rather through a translation of a text by Shen's wife that intertextualises Shen's writing and mirrors his real-life crisis. I call this method "subterranean translation".

Following my definition of "literary relations" as encounters between two literatures rather than one literature's thematic engagement with the other country, my conception of revolutionary literature in this chapter is not concerned with the representation of China as a revolutionary trope. This produced its own literary genre, which was characterised by a heightened ideological attachment, and requires separate research.[5]

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[5] China and Mao were recurring motifs of revolution in the political poems composed by Urdu poets in support of the Telangana movement. Makhdum Mohiuddin, the only Indian writer branded as "revolutionary" in Chinese literary discourse in the 1950s (see Chapter 4), wrote a poem entitled "Tilangānah" (Telangana) in 1947. While regarding the Telangana movement as a "guide for India", Mohiuddin saw China as a guide for the Telangana movement:

    O land of red martyrs, greetings to you!
    Greetings to you, O high resolution and iron determination!
    Greetings to you, O bright forehead of warriors!
    Greetings to you, O Chinese land, beloved of India!

Another Urdu poet, Ali Sardar Jafri, praised China from a more internationalist perspective, which is evident in his long poem "Eshiyā jāg uṭhā" (Asia Awakes). Although Jafri believed that the salvation of Asia should ultimately be found in the Soviet Union, he nevertheless gave Mao a crucial position in the communist lineage:

    Mao, Stalin's brother, son of great Lenin,
    In his grasp rests the spirit of months and years like butterflies;
    Love in his soft eyes, majesty on his warm brow;
    In his rowing hands moves the barge of Asians.

See Carlo Coppola, 'Urdu Poetry, 1935-1970: The Progressive Episode' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1975), 553-54, 581. For Agyeya's fictional representation of the Chinese revolution in the 1930s, see Mangalagiri, 'At the Limits of Comparison', Chapter 3. In the 1960s, as Duncan Yoon shows, Maoism had great appeal to African writers who participated in the Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau. Drawing on Fredric Jameson, Yoon calls it "symbolic Maoism". "'Symbolic Maoism' is not Maoism as it was implemented in China. It exists when it is 'read' into existence by an outside actor". The concept of "symbolic Maoism" may be useful to examine the Indian Naxlites' textual or readerly contacts with Chinese literature in the 1960s. See Yoon, "Our Forces Have Redoubled", 238.

Chinese Publications in 1950s India and the Foreign Languages Press

The literary works and periodicals that were published in China, mostly in English translation, as part of the PRC's global agenda of external publicity (*duiwai xuanchuan*), played a crucial role in the circulation of Chinese literature in India during the 1950s. The government-sponsored external publicity project began immediately after the founding of the PRC, with the establishment of the International News Bureau (*guoji xinwen ju*) in October 1949. As a proactive response to the Cold War, and especially in order to counteract the anti-communist propaganda launched by the United States, the PRC's external publicity activities — carried out through various media, such as radio, films, periodicals, pamphlets, and books — aimed to disseminate a positive image of China, seek widespread international support and sympathy, and transmit the experience of the Chinese communist revolution abroad, especially to fellow Third World countries.[6] The outward translation of Chinese literary works was integral to this grand project, to which the PRC government attached particular importance because it promised to be a "relatively more concealed and acceptable mode" of publicity, and thus more capable of affecting foreign audiences and simultaneously dodging censorship.[7]

Two state-run institutes based in Beijing — the Foreign Languages Press (*waiwen chubanshe*, hereafter "FLP") and the International Bookstore (*guoji shudian*, hereafter "IB") — operated behind this large-scale outward translation project.[8] The FLP was in charge of the selection, translation, and publication of Chinese literary texts, while the IB was responsible for distributing them internationally through both

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[6] See Ni, 'Zuowei Zhengzhi Zingwei de Zhongguo Wenxue Duiwai Fanyi', 4.
[7] See ibid. As Sarah Brouillette shows, the United States and the Soviet Union employed similar techniques of "indirect propaganda" — through works that focused on "non-political, entertaining, or scientific and technical materials that did not appear to have direct didactic purpose" — in launching their book programmes in India in the 1950s. See Sarah Brouillette, 'US-Soviet Antagonism and the "Indirect Propaganda" of Book Schemes in India in the 1950s', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (2015): 170–88.
[8] The IB was later renamed China International Book Trading Corporation.

commercial and non-commercial channels. Between 1949 and 1966, a total of 171 titles

in English translation were published in book form, and hundreds of titles were

published in the English journal *Chinese Literature*, the only FLP periodical dedicated

to literature. At the peak of its global network in 1963, the IB was able to distribute FLP

publications to 87 countries and regions in the world with the help of 545 local agents,

among whom leftist publishers and distributers played an important role.[9]

India occupied a pivotal position within this global network throughout the

1950s. As early as 1952, nearly one third of the FLP's English publications reached

India, making it the largest among all the foreign markets.[10] India's yearly import of

FLP books and periodicals amounted to 1.7 million copies at its peak in 1958.[11] As a

Chinese writer was told while visiting India in 1956, *Chinese Literature* and other FLP

journals were more popular than many local magazines.[12] Although the FLP recruited a

small Hindi team in 1957, they were mostly assigned to produce Hindi versions of

China Pictorial (the most popular FLP periodical), picture-story books, and political

pamphlets, rather than literary works.[13] During the 1950s, therefore, India's textual and

readerly contact with Chinese literature, channelled by the FLP and the IB, took place

predominantly in English.

The English-language books and journals published by the FLP were not simply

available in India; they were in fact received enthusiastically by Indian readers, most of

whom were progressives. Since the International News Bureau, the FLP's precursor,

had established cooperative relations with the communist publisher and distributor

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[9] Zheng, 'Guojia Jigou Zanzhu xia Zhongguo Wenxue de Duiwai Yijie', 110-11.
[10] See Zhou Dongyuan and Qi Wengong, eds., *Zhongguo Waiwen Ju Wushi Nian: Shiliao Xuanbian vol.1* (Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 1999), 65.
[11] See Zhongguo guoji tushu maoyi zonggongsi shiliao bianxie zu, ed., *Zhongguo Guoji Tushu Maoyi Zonggongsi Sishi Zhounian Jinian Wenji: Shilun Ji* (Internal Material, 1989). I thank Mrs. Xu Han for giving me access to the archive of the China International Book Trading Corporation.
[12] See Yan, 'Women Jiechu le Yindu de Wenxue Jie'.
[13] Interview with Lin Fuji, December 18th, 2014. A very small number of books in Urdu and Gujarati also became available in 1958.

People's Publishing House in Bombay as early as in 1950, Indian readers were among the first overseas readers to respond directly to the Chinese editors and, notably, most of the responses came from the left. After the founding issue of *Chinese Literature* (1951) reached India, not only did the CPI's cultural sector send an official letter praising the journal as a timely publication about China's new literature and the Chinese revolution, but many progressive writers also wrote individually to the journal's editorial department to convey their positive impressions of the journal and its delineation of the new image of the Chinese people.[14] Although reader's letters were a common practice in both Indian and Chinese journals in the 1950s, what is striking here is that these Indian readers wrote all the way to China to express their feedback.

Another indicator of the enthusiastic reception of FLP publications in 1950s India is that while being read widely in English, they also spawned translations into Indian languages. In fact, FLP publications constituted the main source from which Chinese literary works became available in Indian languages. To take Hindi as an example, at least seven book-length Hindi translations of modern Chinese literature appeared in the 1950s, six of which were based on the English versions published by the FLP (see Appendix 4).[15] The only exception was the anthology *Ādhunik Cīnī Kahāniyāṁ* (Modern Chinese Stories), translated by Shivdan Singh Chauhan and Vijay Chauhan from the English anthology complied by K.M. Panikkar (see below).

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[14] Zheng Ye, 'Guojia Jigou Zanzhu xia Zhongguo Wenxue de Duiwai Yijie', 103. According to my fieldwork at the FLP and the IB, these readers' letters are not available now.

[15] There is no available bibliography of Indian translation of Chinese literature as such. The most comprehensive list of Indian publications on China is B.K. Kumar, *China through Indian Eyes: A Select Bibliography 1911-1977* (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1978). However, the bibliographer pays little attention to literature and non-English publications. Although my list may not cover all the relevant items, it is so far the most complete. To prepare this list, I searched: (a) some of the largest multilingual libraries in India, including the National Library in Kolkata and, in Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Sahitya Akademi Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and Delhi University Central Library; (b) institutions specialising in Hindi literature, such as the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the Hindustani Akademi in Allahabad, as well as the Nagri Pracharini Sabha in Varanasi; (c) specialised libraries in Chinese studies, such as the East Asian Studies library of Delhi University and the Cheena Bhavana library in Santiniketan.

How to explain the reasons behind this enthusiastic reception? Instead of viewing the dissemination of FLP publications as a propaganda project unilaterally driven by the PRC, as the direction of textual flow seems to imply, I propose considering it as a reciprocal and combined enterprise that also relied considerably on the Indian side. Specifically, I identify and discuss three "Indian factors" that contributed to the enthusiastic reception of FLP publications in general, and the publications related to modern Chinese literature in particular, in 1950s India: first, a pre-existing expectation for China as a source of leftist literature; second, a generally favourable attitude toward China held by the Indian government and general public opinion, as press coverage indicates; and third, an effective distribution network established by Indian communists.

First of all, the emergence of FLP publications did not mark the beginning of India's textual contact with modern Chinese literature; rather, it met a pre-existing expectation of Indian writers (especially leftist ones), who had actively looked to China as a source of literary discourse, theory, and praxis since the early 1940s. A prominent example in this respect is the involvement of Chinese elements in the creation and development of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), the CPI-sponsored progressive organisation established in 1942. In line with the CPI's anti-fascist stance between 1942 and 1945, IPTA looked to China, which had been fighting Japan for years, for practical experience with regard to using theatre to propagate an anti-fascist ideology among the people. IPTA playwrights drew on various Chinese anti-fascist plays to build their own repertoire,[16] and Ding Ling's one-act play *Chongfeng* (Reunion, 1937) was considered a model in terms of conveying political messages through

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[16] According to a report prepared around 1943, at least seven Chinese plays had been included in the IPTA repertoire, alongside nine Hindustani plays written or adapted by Indian playwrights, and three Russian pieces. See Sudhi Pradhan, ed., *Marxist Cultural Movement in India vol. 1: Chronicles and Documents (1936-1947)* (Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1979), 160.

emotionally effective action in order to maximise the theatre's capacity for social mobilisation.[17] Moreover, IPTA also drew inspiration from China, where "vast masses of peasants are being given education in socialist citizenship and having their morale reinforced through the efforts of groups of strolling players who stage anti-Fascist plays".[18] The Chinese experience of itinerant troupes helped IPTA artists replace conventionally enclosed theatre with an open-air stage that removed the division between the audience and the performers and made their performances mobile.[19]

Whether IPTA drew directly on Chinese materials is difficult to ascertain, but it certainly kept abreast of new Chinese theatrical experiments by consulting books and articles published by Yan'an-based Western journalists, such as Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China* (1937) and Anna Louise Strong's *One-fifth of Mankind* (1938). Snow's account of the People's Anti-Japanese Red Dramatic Society, which circulated widely among IPTA members, offered extensive details, ranging from descriptions of the non-hierarchical arrangement of seating, the primitive staging, costumes and props, to analyses of how a dramatisation of the peasants' "poignant truth" with "sparkling humour" contributed to the Red Theatre's popularity in rural areas.[20] Although intended to be read as reportage, these accounts might have served as useful manuals for IPTA artists in developing their own people's theatre.

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[17] Ostensibly a wartime melodrama, *Chongfeng* portrays a couple of young comrades working in desperate situations under the Japanese aggression: the revolutionary Bai Lan is arrested by the Japanese and is unexpectedly reunited with her past boyfriend, Ma Daming, who now works for the Japanese Intelligence Department. Astonished by Ma's defection to the enemy, Bai stabs him with a knife. Before his death, Ma tells Bai that he was actually a spy and instructs Bai on to escape from the Japanese camp with the secret information he has collected. After kissing Ma with great remorse, Bai escapes and eventually fulfils their mission. Available in both English and Hindi, *Chongfeng* was the only foreign play staged at the first All India People's Theatre Conference in Bombay on May 25th, 1943. Whereas *Chongfeng* was considered the only work that "had every ingredient that goes to make up a good drama", the three Indian pieces were found to be disappointing due to their highly didactic nature. See Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India vol.1*, 138-140.

[18] Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, 'India's Anti-Fascist Theatre', *Asia and the Americas* 42, no. 12 (1942): 711.

[19] See Nandi Bhatia, *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theatre and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 77.

[20] See Pradhan, *Marxist Cultural Movement in India vol.1*, 161-68.

Alongside *Red Star over China*, Snow's English anthology of modern Chinese short stories, *Living China* (1936), which included a range of modern Chinese authors such as Lu Xun, Ding Ling, Mao Dun, Shen Congwen and Ling Yutang, also circulated among Indian progressives and was even translated into Indian languages (e.g. Urdu) in the early 1940s.[21] This mediated engagement with modern Chinese literary texts — both drama and fiction — shaped the Indian progressive intellectuals' "horizon of expectation" for Chinese texts. It also established a remarkable asymmetry between Chinese and Indian writers in terms of their knowledge of each other's literary fields before the FLP publications developed a significant presence in India in the early 1950s. This asymmetry of knowledge becomes clear if we compare the travelogues kept by Chinese and Indian writers visiting each other's countries in the early 1950s: while most Chinese writers' impression of modern Indian literature barely extended to writers other than Tagore, Indian writers like Mulk Raj Anand and Amrit Rai could readily name a string of contemporary Chinese writers, including Ding Ling, Mao Dun, Guo Moruo, Lao She and Zhang Tianyi, and comment on their notable works.[22]

Before FLP publications became available, Indian progressive writers also regarded China as an important source of socialist literary theory. Mao Zedong's 1942 "Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua" (Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, hereafter "Yan'an Talks"), which defined literature and art in terms of their relationship with politics and the people and subsequently constituted the foundation for the PRC's literary policy, were particularly influential. First translated into Bengali by Shi Zhen and Amitendranath Tagore, the "Yan'an Talks" became available in English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam and 19,000 copies

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[21] See Zaheer, *The Light*, 227.
[22] See Mulk Raj Anand, 'Old Wine in New Bottles', in *China Today* (Allahabad: Hindustani Culture Society, 1952), 513-19; and Amrit Rai, *Subah ke Raṅg*, 115-48.

had been circulated in India by mid-1952.[23] Commemorating the tenth anniversary of Mao's "Yan'an Talks" in 1952, several leading Indian progressive writers, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Amrit Rai, Yashpal, and Manik Bandopadhyay (1908-1956), spoke to *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) and reflected on their personal readerly contacts with the text.[24] Regarding the "Yan'an Talks" as "a full-fledged elaboration on the task of democratic cultural revolution in colonial and semi-colonial societies", Amrit Rai emphasised their usefulness in helping the progressive intellectuals of India formulate their own cultural tasks and implement them through tested methods.[25] The "Yan'an Talks" were considered particularly relevant to Indian intellectuals, to use Anand's words, due to their capacity for "directing their mind toward a literature in the service of the people and distracting it from the path of art for art's sake".[26] In this sense, Indian progressives used Mao's theory to enhance their aesthetic affiliation in the Cold War.

For Indian progressive intellectuals, FLP publications considerably multiplied their choice of Chinese creative writings and also offered a channel for keeping abreast of new and more specific Chinese literary theories following the "Yan'an Talks". While I will elaborate on the former point in the next section, the latter argument is supported by the fact that in the 1950s progressive Indian journals and newspapers (both English and Hindi) continuously published leading Chinese authors' theoretical essays that had appeared in FLP periodicals: for instance, *Nayā Path* published a Hindi translation of Ding Ling's "Life and Creative Writing", which was originally published in *Chinese*

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[23] See 'Yindu Jinbu Zuojia, Yishujia Zanyang Mao Zhuxi "Zai Yan'an Wenyi Zuotanhui shang de Jianghua"', *Renmin Ribao*, June 22nd, 1952: 3. Shi Zhen was a veteran Chinese translator of Bengali literature. Amitendranath Tagore was one of India's earliest specialists in Chinese literature as well as a member of the Tagore family.
[24] See ibid
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

Literature (issue 3, 1954);[27] the CPI English weekly *New Age* serialised "Two Lines in Literature" by Zhou Yang, which originally appeared in *People's Daily*.[28]

The second "Indian factor" that contributed to the considerable reception of FLP publications in 1950s India is the Indian government's generally friendly attitude to China, which offered a favourable environment for these Chinese publications to circulate in a fairly extensive and stable way. Due to the official nature of the FLP's project, which made it susceptible to the charge of political propaganda, friendly bilateral relationships not only helped secure a relatively agreeable readership, but also helped reduce the possibility of censorship being exercised by the government of the receiving culture. Therefore, during the period of "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai", not only could the IB develop a large and stable network of local outlets in India, as we shall see below, but FLP publications could go through Indian customs without much difficulty and reach their readers through either commercial networks, free distribution by the Chinese Embassy and Consulates, or the numerous ICFA branches. However, when the Tibetan issue began to disturb Sino-Indian relations in March 1959, the Indian government started to impose increasingly restrictive measures to straightjacket the entry and dissemination of FLP publications, which led to a slump in the circulation from 1.7 million in 1958 to 160,000 in the first five months of 1961 alone.[29] Predictably, the FLP lost almost its entire distribution network in India, in addition to 80,000 Indian subscribers, following the border war in October 1962.[30] This dramatic loss resulted not only from the Indian government's blockage, but also from the heightened nationalism felt by the readers and distributors themselves.

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[27] See Ding Ling, 'Sāhity Sṛjan aur Jīvan', in *Nayā Path*, June 1955: 385-86.
[28] See Chou [Zhou] Yang, 'Two Lines in Literature', *New Age*, March 15th, 1958: 15; and March 23rd, 1958: 10.
[29] See He Mingxing, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Waiwen Tushu Chuban Faxing Biannianshi, 1949-1979*, vol. 1 (Beijing: Xuexi chubanshe, 2013), 183.
[30] See ibid., 205.

Arguably, government-driven outward translation was circumscribed by, but at the same time helped shape, the diplomatic dynamics between the two countries. In keeping with the ongoing China-India cultural diplomacy, the FLP chose a number of titles dealing with the interconnectedness of the two cultures, such as a translation of *Foguo Ji* (Record of Buddhist Countries) by the 4th-century Chinese monk Faxian for *Chinese Literature* (see Figure 3.1), a collection of pictures and essays about the 1955 Indian cultural delegation in China, and a book-length translation of Jin Kemu's book *Zhongyin Renmin Youhao Shihua* (A History of Friendship between Chinese and Indians, 1957).[31] Distributed internationally, rather than exclusively to India, these titles spoke to two audiences: while designed as an unequivocal gesture of goodwill towards Indian readers, they also served to impress readers of other countries with a sense of China-India solidarity that had stood the test of time. For visiting Indian delegations, on occasion the FLP itself became a site of cultural diplomacy: Amrit Rai interviewed Ye Junjian, the executive editor of *Chinese Literature* in 1953;[32] Rahul Sankrityayan paid a visit to the Hindi section of *China Pictorial* in 1958;[33] and many Indian visitors received FLP publications as gifts before leaving Beijing. Most significantly, Indian writers contributed directly to designing the PRC's external publicity policy and distribution strategies. Whilst visiting Beijing with the Indian goodwill mission in October 1951, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Karanjia attended a consultation meeting at the invitation of the International News Bureau, the predecessor of the FLP, and made suggestions on China's publicity strategies. The main target audience, they suggested, should be those who might have a favourable impression of China but would not

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[31] The collection *The Indian Cultural Delegation* (1955), which came out a few months after the delegation's visit, sold 17,520 copies and was also translated into other languages, such as Indonesian, before being removed from the FLP's publishing list in 1959. The English translation of Jin Kemu's book published one year after the original book appeared. The fact that these translations were prepared with great urgency confirms their cultural diplomacy-oriented nature. See ibid., 37 and 68.
[32] See Rai, *Subah ke Raṅg*, 138.
[33] See Sankrityayan, *Cīn meṁ Kyā Dekhā*, 24.

unconditionally stand by the impression, and this group was larger in number compared to steadfast communists and anti-communists. The Chinese policymakers in fact took their suggestions into account.[34]
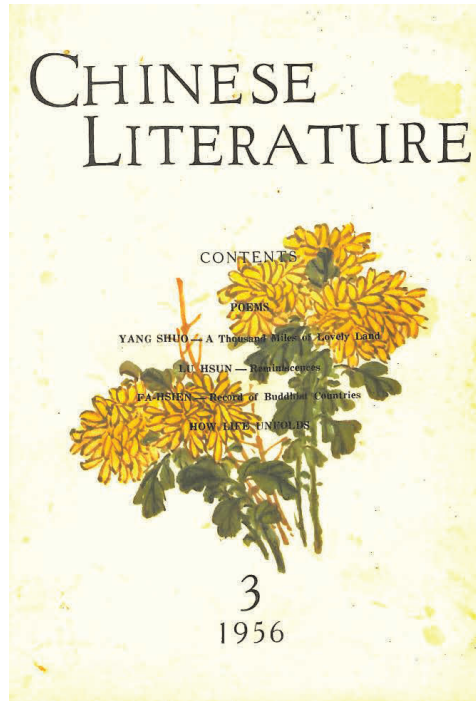

Figure 3.1: Cover of the No.3 1956 issue of *Chinese Literature*, in which
Faxian's *Foguo Ji* was published.

The third "Indian factor" that facilitated such a substantial number of FLP publications to effectively reach the Indian readers who desired them is the large and stable substructure comprising mainly communist publishers, bookdealers, cadres and editors. These communist intermediaries were enthusiastic about disseminating China-related material and, more broadly, communist ideas in India through selling and distributing FLP publications. This is where the Indian communists, who remained largely on the margins of China-India official/cultural diplomacy (see Chapter 1), became visible and played an active role.

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[34] See Dai Yannian and Chen Rinong, eds., *Zhongguo Waiwen Ju Wushi Nian: Dashi Ji vol. 1* (Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 1999), 19. As well as Anand and Karanjia, a few Pakistani and Burmese delegates were also present.

The IB's major agency in India was the CPI-owned publishing company People's Publishing House (PPH), which also served the Soviet network. The 14 PPH branches in major cities such as Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Amritsar, Hyderabad, and Madras formed an effective nationwide circulation system for Chinese and Soviet publications. Strikingly, as early as 1950, the year Sino-Indian diplomatic relations were established, the PPH Bombay branch was already the most important agency on the International News Bureau's network that stretched over 50 countries.[35] The PPH not only sold and distributed almost all English books and periodicals, including literary ones, published by the FLP, it was also authorised to reprint them and reproduce selected titles in regional languages. For example, the English version of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, distributed by the PPH (Bombay) in 1953, was subsequently published in Hindi by the PPH (Delhi) as *Mao Tse-tung Granthāvalī*, involving key progressive writers and critics like Ramvilas Sharma as translators.

Outside the nationwide PPH apparatus, other locally-based distributive conduits operated by individual communists were also at work. The best example of this is arguably the Current Book Depot in Kanpur, founded by Mahadeo Khetan — a lifetime supporter of communism — in 1951. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the Current Book Depot functioned as one of the few book agents receiving FLP publications directly from Beijing and distributing them nationwide.[36] Its dedication to selling Chinese books clearly had much to do with Mahadeo Khetan's own commitment to communism and personal interest in the socialist world in general, and in China in particular. This is manifest in the bookstore's brand, which used a book-reading panda

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[35] See Zheng, 'Guojia Jigou Zanzhu xia Zhongguo Wenxue de Duiwai Yijie', 110. In the 1940s, when no direct book trading existed between China and India, the PPH (Bombay) showed a keen interest in publishing works about China's revolution written by Western observers, such as Israel Epstein's *I Visit Yenan: Eye Witness Account of the Communist-led Liberated Areas in North-west China* (1945), *The Unfinished Revolution in China*, and Anna Louise Strong's *Dawn out of China*: *An Intimate Account of the Liberated Areas in China* (1948).
[36] Interview with Anil Khetan, October 20th, 2016.

— a symbol of China — as its logo. Another reason underpinning the Current Book Depot's successful sale of FLP publications was its location. As the cradle of the CPI, Kanpur was proud of its decades-long association with India's communist movement.[37] The city's distinct communist culture helped create a considerable pro-China and pro-Soviet reading public, resulting in a local market for publications from socialist countries.[38] However, building its reputation largely upon selling Chinese books, the Current Book Depot inevitably became a target of nationalist agitation following the border conflicts.[39] It was primarily because of the Current Book Depot and Mahadeo Khetan, who took a pro-Chinese side when the CPI split in 1964, that a small number of FLP publications continued to arrive in India in the post-1962 years when other book agents, including the PPH, refused to cooperate with the FLP.[40]

Figure 3.2: The interior of Current Book Depot, Kanpur. Note the panda logo as well as the photos of communist leaders — Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Source: My fieldwork photo collection.

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[37] Kanpur was the place where the first quarterly reports of the CPI and the earliest communist activities took place. The CPI has officially stated that it was formed on December 26th, 1920, at the first Party Conference in Kanpur. See John Patrick Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India: M.N. Roy and Comintern Policy, 1920-1939* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 44.

[38] It was indeed in Kanpur that the visiting Chinese delegation usually received the warmest reception while travelling around India. See Yan Wenjing, 'Fangwen Yindu Guangan', *Guangbo Aihaozhe*, no. 7 (1956): 16.

[39] In December 1962, two months following the border war, about 25,000 people attacked the CBD. They even attempted to burn it down but failed. Interview with Anil Khetan, October 20th, 2016.

[40] Interview with Anil Khetan, October 20th, 2016.

At least in part thanks to Anand and Karanjia's advice, in addition to 30 CPI-related bookstores, the IB managed to establish trade relations with over ten book dealers labelled as "capitalist merchants" (*zishang*). However, maintaining relations with the "capitalist merchants" proved problematic because they only agreed to sell works deemed to be apolitical and were more susceptible to government control and changes in the climate of the Sino-Indian relationship.[41]

For communist-run book agents, either organisational or individual, FLP publications were usually sold alongside books and periodicals from other socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union and, to a much lesser degree, the German Democratic Republic. Although drawing on the Soviet model of external publicity that had been in operation since the 1920s, as a latecomer the FLP placed its publications in competition with their Soviet counterparts in order to access a larger and more dedicated readership.[42] This was partly achieved by setting a lower price; in 1959, for instance, the annual subscription for the monthly *Chinese Literature* in India was five rupees, whereas the monthly *Soviet Literature* cost six rupees.

The considerable sales and subscriptions of FLP publications in 1950s India are also attributable to the work of local intermediaries in advertising and promotion, some of which received subsidies from the FLP.[43] If we consider the literature-related FLP publications as an example, advertisements for these publications appeared in a variety of Indian newspapers and magazines that belonged to different linguistic, thematic, and political categories and thus circulated among different groups of readers. As my fieldwork showed, these ranged from the CPI official weekly *New Age* and the

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[41] Dai and Chen, eds., *Zhongguo Waiwen Ju Wushi Nian*, 19.
[42] Inspired by the Soviet model, the FLP made a plan in 1958 to set up an outpost in India in charge of local translation and publication. However, this plan was mostly aborted due to the Tibetan issue in March 1959. See Zhou and Qi, *Zhongguo Waiwen Ju Wushi Nian*, 141.
[43] See ibid., 66.

progressive Hindi literary journal *Nayā Path* to the nationally renowned daily

newspaper *The Times of India*.[44] Methods of advertising also varied. For instance, *New*

Age carried frequent small section adverts for *Chinese Literature* alongside other FLP

periodicals like *Peking Review*, *China Pictorial*, and *China Reconstructs*.[45] Following

the idea of targeted advertising, these adverts were usually placed alongside China-

related content, such as reports on ICFA events or articles by Chinese authors (see

Figure 3.4). This ensured that anyone with an interest in China would easily identify the

adverts and become a potential subscriber. Marketing strategies like promotions and

special offers were also sometimes adopted to solicit readers: discounts were given on

annual subscription plans; new subscribers received a gift from the FLP, which could be

a calendar, a Chinese painting in miniature, a set of postage stamps, or an album of

multi-coloured pictures. Once one subscribed to a FLP journal, the advertisements

contained within it would lead the reader to other FLP publications. *Chinese Literature*

also included occasional lists of local outlets where orders could be placed.[46]

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[44] According to the librarian of the CPI library at Ajay Bhavan, the number of *New Age*'s subscribers in the 1950s was around 5,000. Interview with Palan Krishna, December 16th, 2016.

[45] See, for example, *New Age*, December 9th, 1956.

[46] See, for example, *Chinese Literature*, no. 4, 1957, n.p. This issue contained a list of dealers that the journal could be obtained from. India topped the list with 22 dealers covering a wide geographical span from Ahmedabad to Guahati, from Bombay to Banaras, and from Calcutta to Mysore.

Figure 3.3: Advertisement for FLP periodicals in *The Times of India*. Presented alongside is an advertisement for Soviet projectors. Source: "India-China Friendship Association Supplement" to *The Times of India* (December 1st, 1956).

Figure 3.4: Advertisement for *Peking Review* in *New Age*, which appears together with Zhou Yang's theoretical essay "Two Lines in Literature". Source: *New Age*, March 16th, 1958: 15.

Figure 3.5: Advertisement for FLP books and periodicals published by the Current Book Depot in *New Age*. This advertisement appeared in the middle of the Indo-China war and was in fact the last advertisement for FLP publications *New Age* published. Source: *New Age*, September 30th, 1962: 15.

While *New Age* preferred to advertise various kinds of FLP periodicals, *Nayā Path*, a journal dedicated to literature, opted exclusively for translations of Chinese literary works published by the FLP and distributed by the PPH. At least two full back page adverts appeared in *Nayā Path* during the 1950s, and the modes of advertising they adopted were informative in different ways. One advertisement (see Figure 3.6), published in English, lists the basic information (title, author name, and price) of nine FLP translations of Chinese literature under the heading "Literary Works from China".[47] Although this advertisement has a distinctly simple and straightforward format, the use of bright yellow to highlight the heading and publisher nevertheless

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[47] See *Nayā Path*, May 1955, back cover. These titles include: *China's New Literature and Art* by Zhou Yang, *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun* by Lu Xun, *The Sun Shines Over the Sangkan River* by Ding Ling, *The True Story of Ah Q* by Lu Xun, *Changes in Li Village* by Zhao Shuli, *The Wall of Bronze* by Liu Qing, *The People Speak Out* (A selection of poems and songs of China), *Flames Ahead* by Liu Baiyu, and *The Dragon King's Daughter* (A collection of ten Tang Dynasty stories).

makes it more attractive than the usual black-and-white design. Displaying multiple titles on one page, this advertisement signals an influx of Chinese books and intends to give the reader a considerable variety of options. The fact that this advertisement was published in a Hindi journal but in English and for Chinese books in English translations further suggests that there was an understanding at the time that the English and Hindi readerships were not necessarily distinct, as Aakriti Mandhwani shows.[48]

The other advertisement (see Figure 3.7), designed especially for the Hindi translation of Feng Xuefeng's anthology *Fables* (1953), is written in Hindi and contains two sections. Taking advantage of the fable genre's succinct nature, the upper section directly gives the reader a textual taste of the anthology by showcasing a brief and thought-provoking story titled "The Boat and the Tide". In this story, a man builds a boat in order to save his life when the tide comes. The tide gets bigger and bigger, but the man constantly asserts that the tide is "not big enough" and moves the boat to a higher place, until "the water rises so high that there is no time to put the boat in".[49] While this fable was originally composed to satirise those who sat back and looked on when the tide of communist revolution arrived in China,[50] the editors of *Nayā Path* kept the moral lesson — do not wait until it is too late — open to interpretation, perhaps because they were unaware of the Chinese context. The lower section presents a blurb for this anthology, praising Feng Xuefeng as a "well-known Chinese writer" and the illustrated Hindi translation as an "invaluable book for a price of eight annas only". The effect of this advertisement lies in its combined use of perceptual and rational knowledge to give the book a rounded presentation.

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[48] See Aakriti Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading: Commercial Magazines and Book Publishing in Post-Independence India' (Unpublished PhD thesis, London: SOAS, University of London, 2018).
[49] See *Nayā Path*, March 1954, back cover.
[50] See Yi Xinding, 'Zhihui de Shanguang, Yiyuan de Lanhua: Lun Feng Xuegeng de Yuyan', *Xin Wenxue Luncong*, no. 2 (1981): 175.
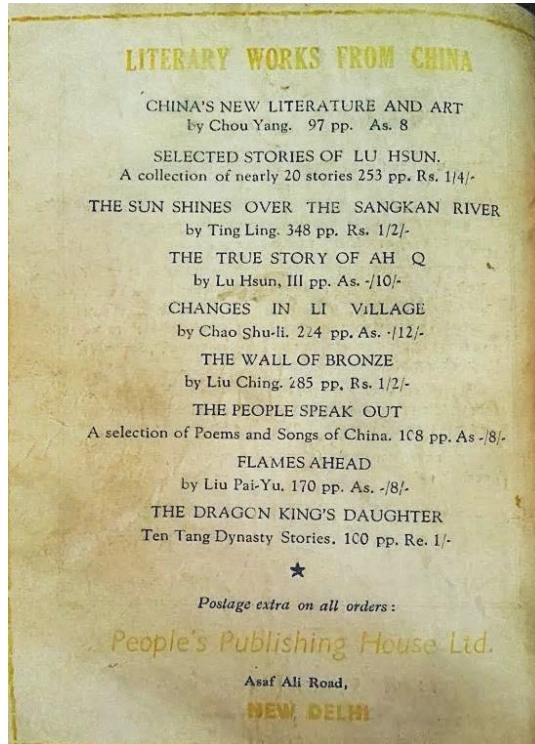
Figure 3.6: Advertisement for nine FLP translations of modern Chinese literature in *Nayā Path*. Source: *Nayā Path*, May 1955, back cover.
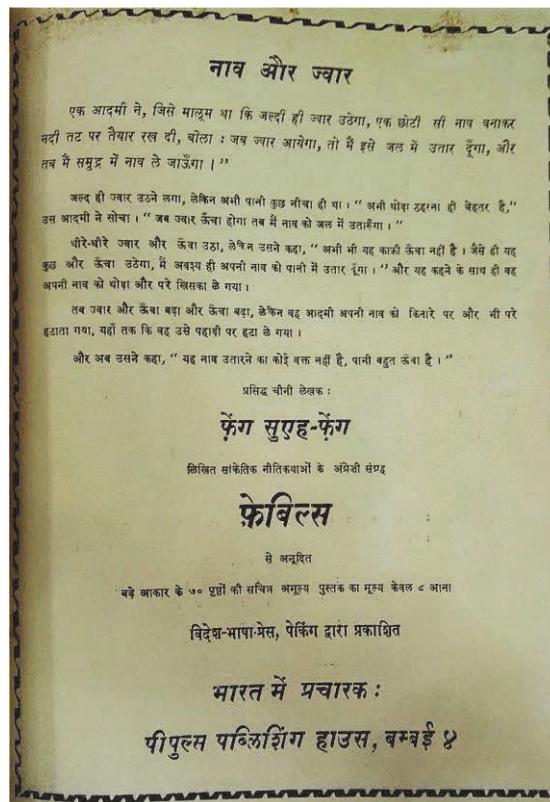
Figure 3.7: Advertisement for the Hindi translation of Feng Xuefeng's *Fables* in *Nayā Path*. Source: *Nayā Path*, March 1954, back cover.

Having considered the "Indian factors" that contributed to the enthusiastic reception of FLP publications as a whole, I move next to a more nuanced investigation of this reception by focusing on practices of reading, or what Karen Thornber calls "readerly contacts". Were certain types of literary works published by the FLP favoured over others? Were these works read by progressive intellectuals only, or did they appeal to non-progressives as well? In what specific ways did Indian writers made sense of the Chinese works they read? The next section addresses these questions by focusing on Hindi writers' readerly contacts with literature-related FLP publications in the 1950s.

Reading Chinese Revolutionary Canon Old and New

Throughout the 1950s, the FLP published English translations of a variety of Chinese literary texts which, in the case of the journal *Chinese Literature*, were classified in three categories. These categories included: first, "contemporary literature", i.e. works written on the basis of Mao's 1942 "Yan'an Talks" and the Soviet doctrine of socialist realism, such as Yuan Jing and Kong Jue's *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*; second, "May Fourth literature", i.e. progressive/leftist works published roughly between the 1919 May Fourth Movement and the end of the anti-Japanese war in 1945, such as Lu Xun's short stories; and third, "ancient classics", i.e. canonical works written before the 20th century. From 1951 to 1959, *Chinese Literature* invariably preferred contemporary literature (35%-45%) to May Fourth literature (10%-25%) and ancient classics (15%-20%).[51] This embodied the journal's editorial policy, which aimed to introduce foreign readers to literary texts that depicted how Chinese people struggled to liberate the country, endeavoured to build a socialist society and seek world peace, and created literary and artistic works under the guidance of Mao Zedong.[52] From its inception, the

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[51] See Zheng, 'Guojia Jigou Zanzhu xia Zhongguo Wenxue de Duiwai Yijie', 65.
[52] See ibid., 7.

journal targeted primarily English-reading intellectuals in Third World countries. In 1959, the journal editors increased the proportion of May Fourth literature, based on the consideration that "the May Fourth New Culture Movement can help and influence the development of national culture in Asia, Africa and Latin America".[53]

The state-driven selection of literary works for outward translation entailed a process of canonisation. Drawing on Itamar Even-Zohar's definition, I understand "canonical" or "canonised" as "those literary norms and works (i.e., both models and texts) which are accepted as legitimate by the dominant circles within a culture and whose conspicuous products are preserved by the community to become part of its historical heritage".[54] For the PRC's cultural policy makers, canonising "revolutionary literature" not only set up models that epitomised the literary norms proposed by Mao, but also produced a historical narrative of the Chinese revolution, a "legend" about the genesis of new China that legitimised the communist regime.[55] It was largely for the latter purpose that fiction was favoured over other genres, and within poetry narrative poems were given prominence.

The contemporary works published in *Chinese Literature* and in book form comprised two subcategories: revolutionary historical novels and novels about land reform. While the former focused on the Chinese people's struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party in the anti-Japanese war and the civil war, the latter focused on how the Party led the Chinese proletariat to build a better life through land reform.[56] While both subcategories figured significantly in the FLP's outward translations, they had uneven receptions in India if we consider their further translations into Hindi. Revolutionary historical novels seem to have been more popular, as two novels

[53] See Zhou and Qi, *Zhongguo Waiwen Ju Wushi Nian*, 159.
[54] Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Polysystem Theory', *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990): 15.
[55] See Cai Xiang, 'Chongshu Geming Lishi: Cong Yingxiong dao Chuanqi', *Wenyi Zhengming*, no. 10 (2008): 53.
[56] See Ni Xiuhua, 'Fanyi Xin Zhongguo: "Zhongguo Wenxue" Yingyi Zhongguo Wenxue Kaocha, 1951-1966', 37.

belonging to this category — Yuan Jing and Kong Jue's *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* and Shi Yan's *Liubao de Gushi* (The Story of Liubao Village, 1950) — spurred two Hindi translations each (see Appendix 4). By contrast, celebrated novels about land reform, such as Ding Ling's *Taiyang Zhao zai Sangganhe shang* (Sun over the Sanggan River, 1948) and Zhou Libo's *Baofeng Zhouyu* (The Hurricane, 1948), had no Hindi versions and triggered little public discussion, although both of them received the prestigious Stalin Prize in 1951 and were translated into various languages of socialist countries.[57] Perhaps these novels did not resonate with Indian readers as they did with the readers of socialist countries because the communist-style land reform depicted in these novels was considered unlikely in the Indian scenario and in fact differed significantly from the land reform project that was being carried out by the Nehru administration in the 1950s: while land reform in Mao's China was characterised by class struggle, mass agitation and reliance on the landless poor, that in Nehru's India was largely confined to the abolition of landlordism by legislative measures, which considered landless farmers "a secondary concern" and in practice marginalised them.[58]

Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan by Yuan Jing and Kong Jue, which spawned two different Hindi versions, was one of the most popular Chinese revolutionary historical novels in 1950s India. Both versions, based on Sidney Shapiro's English translation *Daughters and Sons*, published in the founding issue of *Chinese Literature* in 1951, appeared even before the FLP published it in book form in 1958. A quintessential novel based on Mao's literary principles, *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* tells the story of a group

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[57] Both novels, based on the authors' personal experiences, portray the life of peasants and their struggle against landlords at the time of the Communist Party-led land reform in north China. For the reception of these two novels in the socialist bloc, see Nicolai Volland, 'Inventing a Proletarian Fiction for China: The Stalin Prize, Cultural Diplomacy, and the Creation of a Pan-Socialist Identity', in Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia, ed. Tuong Vu and Wasana Wongsurawat (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 93-111.

[58] See Lin Chun, 'Rethinking Land Reform: Comparative Lessons from China and India', in *The Land Question: Socialism, Capitalism, and the Market*, ed. Mahmood Mamdani (Kampala: Makerere Institute of Social Research, 2015), 95–157.

of ordinary men and women led by the Communist Party, who defend their village

against the Japanese invaders and their accomplices. It shows the gallantry and

patriotism of Chinese people in the anti-imperialist war between 1937 and 1945.

Focusing on the relationship between the young couple, Niu Dashui and Yang Xiaomei,

the novel is essentially a collective Bildungsroman about how ordinary peasants were

enlightened by the Communist Party, developed a sense of purpose, and became

dedicated fighters in the wars. In the words of Guo Moruo, this novel showed how

"ordinary daughters and sons" (*pingfan de ernü*) could transform into "collective

heroes" (*jiti de yingxiong*).[59]

One of the main reasons why *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* was particularly well

received in India is because it offered a vivid and ostensibly "real" account of how the

Chinese revolution took place. "Realness" is indeed a key point that both Hindi

translators of the novel, Virendra Pandey and Nur Nabi Abbasi, highlighted in their

paratexts.[60] They emphasised that the novel was based on "true events" and the authors'

personal wartime experiences.[61] For Pandey, the novel represented the Chinese

revolution in miniature and explained why it was triumphant:

> Through the present novel we can catch a glimpse of the Chinese
> revolution. Only after reading it we will realise how great and
> praiseworthy China's sons and daughters are, in terms of unity, principle,

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[59] Guo Moruo, 'Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan Xu', *Renmin Ribao*, September 18, 1948.

[60] In December 1953, a Chinese delegation led by Ding Xilin, first president of the China-India Friendship Association (CIFA), was touring India at the invitation of its Indian counterpart, the India-China Friendship Association (ICFA). When the delegation arrived in Lucknow, Virendra Pandey, the editor of the local weekly *Jannmat* (Public Opinion), who had looked upon China "with love and respect" since childhood, held a private reception for the Chinese delegates. The reception's grandeur was said to have eclipsed all other welcome activities in town, including the reception organised by the ICFA Lucknow branch. Pandey's focus was not simply on hosting the most impressive reception, however. Considering the growth of mutual understanding as crucial to heightening friendship between India and China, he also decided to "do his duty" as a writer and journalist by translating "at least 12 titles" of modern Chinese literature into Hindi. For unknown reasons, this ambitious translation project did not materialise beyond the translation of *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*. Pandey translated this "world-renowned novel based on the people's revolution of China", as he called it, from an English version sent by the Chinese Writers' Association (CWA), together with a "Foreword" by the author Yuan Jing praising China-India friendship and Pandey's effort. See Virendra Pandey, 'Yah Upanyās; Yah Prayatn', in *Jab Santāneṃ Jāg Uṭhīṃ* (Lucknow: Hindi Pracharak Mandal, 1957), ka-kha.

[61] See ibid; and Nur Nabi Abbasi, 'Upanyās ke Pūrv', in *Nayā Sūraj* (Delhi: Sahitya Prakashan, 1956), n.p.

love, discipline, and sacrifice. The leaders there upheld democracy not simply as a slogan; rather, they have expanded the meaning of democracy within its limits and put it in practice as broadly and concretely as possible. To understand this point, I believe the novel will prove very helpful.[62]

What makes *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* particularly appealing is its combination of the revolution theme with popular literary formulas. For example, the novel features a distinct linear and action-centred narrative, a plethora of dramatic incidents like battles, sieges and torture, an unmistakable moral distinction between good and evil, romantic love between the hero and the heroine, and simple language and colloquial speech. These popular literary devices, which were originally employed by the Chinese authors to create a book that was simultaneously about the people and for the people in order to seek the widest possible mass mobilisation, nevertheless made the novel easily accessible and entertaining for Indian readers. In his introduction to the novel, Abbasi briefly but astutely points out the authors' use of amusing speeches that "decorated this thrilling novel with elements of optimism".[63]

It should, however, be noted that in the published English translation of the novel Sydney Shapiro actually deleted numerous folk songs, local idioms, and oral expressions, which would have been a major source of narrative pleasure for Chinese readers. What Shapiro deleted for the sake of "clarity" and "succinctness" may have been enjoyable to Indian readers, particularly Hindi readers who appreciated regionalist (Anchalik) writing.[64] Renu's novel *Mailā Anchal* (Soiled Border, 1956), for example, contains numerous folk songs. Many of them are thematically similar to the songs inserted into *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*, for example political and patriotic songs that

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[62] Pandey, 'Yah Upanyās', ka.
[63] Abbasi, 'Upanyās ke Pūrv', n.p.
[64] For a study of the strategies Shapiro adopted in translating the novel, see Xu Tingting, 'Sha Boli "Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan" Ying Yiben Yizhe Zhutixing Tanxi', *Waiguo Yuwen* 33, no. 3 (2017): 104-10.

praise national heroes (Nehru/Gandhi and Mao), songs related to particular festivals or dramatic events, and romantic songs. In both novels, songs function in the novel's narrative as intensifiers of sentiments, comments upon the surrounding story material, and signs of upcoming events. What Shapiro found "unnecessary" in *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* may have elicited a particularly familiar and enjoyable reading experience for Hindi readers. This evinces one negative side of the PRC's culturally indiscriminate project of outward literary translation.

Among the May Fourth writers, Lu Xun appeared most frequently in the pages of *Chinese Literature*. Although both were labelled "revolutionary" in the Indian context, *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* and Lu Xun's fiction are "revolutionary" in different ways. While *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan* offered a "verisimilar" account of the history of the Chinese revolution, Lu Xun's works were revolutionary in their critique of China's feudal value system and their call for the transformation of Chinese society. Lu Xun was not only the modern writer to appear most frequently in *Chinese Literature*,[65] but also the most well-known and widely discussed Chinese author in India throughout the 1950s. A small number of Lu Xun's most celebrated short stories, such as "A Q Zhengzhuan" and "Kuangren Riji", had already been circulated in India in the late 1930s and 1940s, mainly thanks to the English anthologies of modern Chinese literature published in Europe (and perhaps America too), such as Edgar Snow's *Living China*. The significance of FLP publications lay in the fact that they substantially broadened this pre-existing repertoire by introducing not only more short stories by Lu Xun, but also his non-fictional works such as *zawen* (satirical critical essays). This broadened repertoire resulted in a more rounded image of Lu Xun that combined his literary and political persona. Lu Xun's mixture of stingingly satirical commentary on

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[65] See Ni, 'Fanyi Xin Zhongguo', 37.

Chinese society and deeply humanistic sympathy for the proletarian made his works appealing to both leftist and non-leftist intellectuals in India. Kamleshwar, a leading figure in the modernist *Nayī Kahānī* (New Story) group, once said: "The entire young generation of Hindi writers, including me, came into contact with Lu Xun's works right after independence. In fact, Lu Xun helped us better join the trend of our times."[66]

Indian writers of the 1950s were captivated by different facets of Lu Xun's fiction. The various ways in which they engaged with Lu Xun's stories belies Fredric Jameson's reductionist claim, based largely on discussing Lu Xun, that "all third-world texts are necessarily…*national allegories*".[67] To be sure, some Indian readers, as we shall see in the case of Nur Nabi Abbasi and Jainendra Kumar, indeed read Lu Xun's texts as national allegories. However, if reading allegorically was, as Jameson implies, the last resort or a passive choice for "Western readers" to overcome their cognitive incapability to understand the "freshness of information" and the "social interest" embedded in the alien "third world" text, it was instead a privilege and an active engagement for readers from the "third world" like India. Indian intellectuals could readily identify with Lu Xun's characters, who embodied some of the mental and behavioural characteristics common to people from feudal societies under foreign intervention. It was precisely because of such an allegorical reading that Indian readers turned Lu Xun's texts into further commentaries on their own conditions.

The first book-length Hindi translation of Lu Xun's fiction was Nur Nabi Abbasi's *Āh Kyū*. It was based on Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang's English translation of the novella *A Q Zhengzhuan* (The True Story of Ah Q, 1922), which the FLP first published in the 1952 issue of *Chinese Literature* and then in book form in 1953.

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[66] Zhou Zhikuan, 'Lu Xun yu Zhongyin Wenhua Jiaoliu', in *Lu Xun Yanjiu Niankan 1990 Nian Hao*, ed. Song Qingling Foundation and Northwest University (Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1990), 389.
[67] Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text*, no. 15 (1986): 65-88.

Details about Abbasi are unavailable, but we know that he was a prolific Hindi translator of foreign works and his taste inclined towards, but was not limited to, the leftist canon: he not only translated Maxim Gorky and Howard Fast, but also W. Somerset Maugham and Saadat Hasan Manto. Abbasi was particularly interested in modern Chinese literature; as well as Lu Xun, he also translated a collection of Feng Xuefeng's fables and Yuan Jing and Kong Jue's novel *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*, as mentioned above. These Hindi translations contained no reference to official initiatives, nor were they produced to serve the purpose of cultural diplomacy. Therefore, Abbasi's enthusiastic engagement with modern Chinese works can be considered a personal undertaking.

Abbasi's *Āh Kyū* followed the format of the FLP English version, as he translated not only the main text but also an essay by Feng Xuefeng that offered an interpretation of the text based on class analysis. Abbasi also wrote a preface which, although not as detailed as Yan Shaoduan's preface to Premchand in the Chinese translation of *Godān* (see Chapter 4), presented Lu Xun's multifaceted role as "the father of modern Chinese literature".[68] Abbasi offered a quite comprehensive picture of the critical moments in Lu Xun's participation in the New Cultural Movement as a standard-bearer who engaged in disputes with the Creative Society (*chuangzao she*) writers and other literary figures, joined the League of Left-wing Writers, and wrote for progressive journals constantly subject to the censorship of the Guomindang regime. As Abbasi notes, "there is no one who was more badly wounded than Lu Xun in clearing a path of revolutionary literature through the thorny bushes".[69] Perhaps for the first time in Indian literary discourse, Lu Xun was labelled as the "Chinese Premchand" (*Cīn ke Premchand*), a designation that appeared conspicuously on the front cover of the

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[68] Nur Nabi Abbasi, 'Lekhak kā Paricay', in *Āh Kyū* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1955), ka.
[69] Ibid., ga.

translation. Abbasi drew this analogy between Lu Xun and Premchand not just on account of the fact that they died in the same year, but also because of their similar, significant contribution to revolutionising the literary traditions of their languages and countries. The analogy made Lu Xun's literary world more accessible to Indian readers who were relatively new to modern Chinese literature.

Abbasi also showed due appreciation of the revolutionary aspects of Lu Xun's writings in terms of their power to diagnose the psychological defects of the Chinese people and call for structural change in the social system. Considering the novella "the best work" of Lu Xun, Abbasi read it as "a story of a man who, despite being an individual, is strongly emblematic of China at that time, of the prevalent social conditions there, and of the deficiencies and weakness of Chinese people".[70] This allegorical reading was taken one step further by the Hindi novelist Jainendra Kumar, who linked Lu Xun's China to colonial India and saw the characters Lu Xun created as being of transnational relevance for other peoples impacted by a feudal value system and foreign domination. Invited by the Chinese government to attend the conference in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Lu Xun's death in 1956 in Beijing, Jainendra wrote in his speech:

> The life and society depicted in Lu Xun's works greatly resemble our own during the dark days under foreign rule. In Lu Xun's works we can immediately discern the kind of cry for a national revolution that we too expressed during the pre-independence years. In other words, we see in Lu Xun the writers and fighters who fought for the cause of India. Take his character Ah Q as an example. Despite his Chinese name, Ah Q's characteristics and mentalities, the way in which he treats himself and others with contempt, his propensity to forget the things that have hurt him, and the "method of spiritual victory" he often adopts to relieve the

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[70] Ibid., gha.

pain of loss are all common to subjugated races. Apart from his Chinese name, Ah Q is a character we have seen in India.[71]

While Jainendra's socio-historical identification with Lu Xun's fiction inevitably produced a time lag between the Chinese text and the Indian reader because the links only existed in the past, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh (1917-1964), a prominent Communist modernist poet, associated Lu Xun's short stories written in the 1910s and 1920s with contemporary India in terms of the predicament being faced by intellectuals. In 1954, Muktibodh published an essay entitled "Lū Śun kī kahāniyaṃ" (Lu Xun's Short Stories) after reading the FLP English collection *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun*.[72] While Muktibodh praised Lu Xun's exploration of the individuals' interiority in such well-known stories as "Kuangren Riji" (A Madman's Diary, 1918), he was equally impressed by the author's other stories that depicted the intractable conundrums faced by Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s as they were caught between the urge to change and the shackles of old conventions. For Muktibodh, Lu Xun's story "Guduzhe" (The Misanthrope, 1925), which likens the Chinese intellectual to a "wounded wolf crying in the wilderness in the depth of night, anger and sorrow mingled in its agony", was applicable to India's intellectualist youth (*buddhivādī naujavān*) of the time, including Muktibodh himself, whose "life paths had all closed up".[73] The young married couples with modern ideas in "Xingfu de Jiating" (Happy Family, 1924) and "Shangshi" (Regret for the Past, 1925), who attempt to break away from old definitions of love and marriage but end up either mired in endless quotidian errands or suffering from tragic

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[71] Jainendra Kumar, 'Yindu Zuojia Bannaji de Jianghua Gao', *A Supplement to Wenyi Bao*, no. 20 (1956): 28-29.
[72] Muktibodh first published this essay in the November 30th, 1954 issue of the Hindi magazine *Sārathī* (Charioteer) under the pseudonym Yaugandharayan. This essay was included in the book *Lū Śun kī virāsat* (The Legacy of Lu Xun), which was the product of a seminar held in Delhi during November 27th-29th, 1981 to commemorate Lu Xun's birthday anniversary. See Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh, 'Lū Śun kī Kahāniyaṃ', in *Lū Śun kī Virāsat*, ed. Shivmangal Sidhantkar et al. (New Delhi: Hiraval Prakashan, 1981), 55-58. Although Muktibodh did not offer details about the collection he read, I can confirm that the collection was the 1954 FLP version translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang because the stories Muktibodh discussed in his essay and their title in the Hindi translation perfectly match the stories included in the FLP collection.
[73] Ibid., 58.

separation, intimately touched Muktibodh because the dreams, aspirations, and relationships of the Chinese characters read like those of the educated, middle-class Indians themselves.[74]

Like Jainendra, Muktibodh recognised the Indian relevance of Lu Xun's works and felt that the author was not talking about a foreign context: "Change the names and some of the customs, the story will completely become one of our times."[75] The fact that Muktibodh associated Lu Xun's stories with the present Indian realities is illustrative of the prevalent sentiment of disenchantment among the Indian middle classes grown out of the failed promise of independence — a phenomenon called "*moh-bhaṅg*" (disillusionment) in Hindi. More specifically, the stories resonated with the Indian readers of the 1950s because they expressed the alienation, detachment and melancholy being faced by intellectuals in a time when the old system had been shattered and an alternative was yet to be established. The deeper implication of this is that individual emancipation and gender equality could not be achieved without profound transformations in social and economic structures.

Allegory was indeed but "one kind of meaning-producing form", to use Shu-mei Shih's term, that Indian writers brought into action when reading Lu Xun's works in the 1950s.[76] For the communist Hindi author Vidyasagar Nautiyal (1933-2012), as I will show, Lu Xun's fiction held significance largely on a private and psychological level. This challenges Jameson's claim that "the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Challenging Jameson, Shih argues that "clever readers can […] interpret any text as an allegory, as long as they labor to do so." She further poses an incisive question: "Perhaps Lu Xun meant to write national allegories, as Jameson's ready equation of Lu Xun's character Ah Q with China suggests, but are we not supposed to be looking for polysemic, discontinuity, and heterogeneity rather than equivalence?" Shu-Mei Shih, 'Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition', *PMLA* 119, no. 1 (2004): 21-22.

society".[77] Although Nautiyal did not read Lu Xun through the lens of national allegory, the way he transcreated Lu Xun's fiction nevertheless retained the text's intrinsic capacity to address and interrogate public issues.

In a Hindi short story entitled "Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād" (Translating "A Madman's Diary") published sometime between 1957 and 1958, Nautiyal wove together excerpts from his translation of "Kuangren Riji" (A Madman's Diary) and his real-life predicament mirroring the madman's trouble in the story.[78] A CPI-affiliated student leader at Benares Hindu University in the 1950s, Nautiyal was disqualified from taking the exams because of his conflict with university officials and his intense involvement in politics.[79] "Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād" shows how fellow students, at the suggestion of officials, made every attempt to expel Nautiyal from the hostel and how he defended himself by keeping the door to his room locked for days. In order to make Nautiyal leave the room, his fellow students used both coercion and bribery: they cut off his food supply; they also offered him an opportunity to publish a translation in a prominent journal, assuming that he would have to come out to buy paper. Constant external disturbance and internal restlessness began to drive Nautiyal to the edge of madness. Looking for something to do whilst in confinement, Nautiyal decided to do translation on his school certificates and the work he chose was "Kuangren Riji":

> I was considering for several days translating Lu Xun's short story "A Madman's Diary", which features a miserable man exactly like me. […]
> I wrote on both sides of my B.A. degree:

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[77] Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', 69.

[78] According to Nautiyal's story, the translation of 'Kuangren Riji' was sent to *Kalpanā*, a modernist Hindi literary monthly published in Allahabad. However, the translation somehow did not get published. Thanks to Francesca Orsini for checking the issues of *Kalpanā* and confirming this information.

[79] In 1956, Nautiyal was elected Chairman of the All Indian Student Federation. He stayed in Banaras until 1959. Between 1953 and 1957, he was elected chief minister of the student parliament. He was put in jail for opposing the Indian government's Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) or Mudaliar Commission.

Translation is an extremely difficult task and Lu Xun is a great artist. I came to realise this after starting my translation of "A Madman's Diary".[80]

Nautiyal's identification with the "madman" in terms of their shared misery suggests his personal and psychological association with Lu Xun's works, contrasting with Abbasi and Jainendra's socially-driven approaches. For Nautiyal, translating "Kuangren Riji" involved an effort to understand his own isolation as an anti-establishment fighter. As the translation work proceeded, the boundaries between the textual world of Lu Xun's story and the real world Nautiyal inhabited became progressively blurred: he empathised with the "madman", someone driven to the brink of mental crisis by being segregated from the community he used to be part of. Here, the two "worlds" are interlinked and referencing each other. On the one hand, the translation helped Nautiyal realise that he was not alone, and better understand the reality: "That man, as well-educated as I am, may appear mad. In my view, he is not. Lu Xun declared him to be mad only to satirise the entire world."[81] On the other hand, being actually stuck in a psychical crisis allowed Nautiyal to gain a deeper appreciation of Lu Xun's artistic competence and how vivid and powerful his characterisation of the "madman" was.[82]

Lu Xun is among the few writers that Nautiyal explicitly acknowledged having drawn inspiration from.[83] "Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād" marks one of the earliest textual traces of Lu Xun's influence. In this story, it is possible to detect multiple efforts made by Nautiyal, a fledgling writer in his mid-twenties, to imitate Lu Xun's "Kuangren

[80] Vidyasagar Nautiyal, 'Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād', in *Merī Kathā-yātrā* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2008), 399.
[81] Ibid., 400.
[82] Ibid., 399.
[83] In an interview, Nautiyal named three authors who had the greatest influence on his writing: Ernest Hemingway, Premchand, and Lu Xun. See Vidyasagar Nautiyal, *Mohan Gātā Jāegā* (New Delhi: Radhakrishna Prakashan, 2004), 136.

Riji"; as well as featuring an alienated intellectual suffering from delusions as the central character, Nautiyal also borrowed the diary form, a stream-of-consciousness style, and several tropes, such as moonlight, darkness, dogs, and children, as the key signifiers of the character's deepening paranoia. What elevates Nautiyal's piece above pastiche is his experimental attempt to work a number of passages from the original story into his own narrative. What follows is an episode in which Nautiyal appropriates the dog imagery:

> His diary begins — "Tonight the moon is very bright". Then he says that he had not seen the moon for the past thirty years, and that's why seeing it that day made him feel in unusual high spirits. However, he also realised that he must be extremely careful in the future because Zhao's dog glared at him in the daytime.
>
> The night came, a completely dark night. At least that was how it felt in my room, where both the door and windows were closed. But action was still being taken in order to fulfil their scheme. The dog, which I used to feed morning and evening everyday with the two rotis saved from my meal, came and began shaking my door. I looked through the slit of the door — the dog, which used to chew the rotis I gave him, was pushing it with his mouth.
>
> I have heard that dog bites can make people mad. So I didn't open the door. I was thinking that as long as it didn't bite me, I would not become mad. I was also afraid that those people might have already driven the dog mad as they did with the bullock. If bitten by a mad dog, I will definitely go mad. How can I be sure that they didn't make the dog mad? If I go out the door, they will get rid of me either by shoving me out to leave or driving me mad.
>
> I was not ready for either option — going out or going mad. I went on translating the diary. "Zhao's dog glared at me today."
>
> "Tonight, there is no moon at all. I know that this bodes ill." What a hapless person! There must be someone like me left. The difference between him and me is so stark that he was mad, and I am not.[84]

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[84] Nautiyal, 'Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād', 400-01. The last sentence contradicts his earlier assertion that the "madman" in Lu Xun's story is not mad. This can be read as signalling the disorder of Nautiyal's mental state.

These deliberately selected and inserted passages, quoted in inverted commas, add a completely different set of spatiotemporal coordinates to Nautiyal's campus life. Constantly navigating between the two contexts — Chinese and Indian, past and present, the reader easily develops a sense of hallucination, which helps establish connections with the "mad" protagonist's state of mind.

"Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād" lacks the historical and philosophical depth of "Kuangren Riji", given that the latter was written to reveal the "cannibalism" — a metaphor for feudalism — that had existed in the Confucian tradition of China for thousands of years. Yet, towards the end of "Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād", Nautiyal engages with Lu Xun's metaphor of cannibalism and associates it with his own experience:

> He recalled that people had been eating human beings since ancient times. He began reading history, until he found that the whole book was filled with two words — "Eat people".
> "I too am a man, and they want to eat me."
> I lost the courage to translate any further — "Eat people". That man came into this world to smile and play, but he is now feeling that everyone has become a man eater and will remain so for centuries, and he, too, will likely be eaten by someone someday.
> I am a man who came here to study, but everyone wants to drive me crazy and make me leave.[85]

Here, Nautiyal used cannibalism to reflect on his own suffering as a student activist and address various issues characteristic of post-partition India: the estrangement between people holding different views, the prosecution of dissidents by those in power, and the failure of education to equip the young generation with a belief in humanism, tolerance, and equality. Nautiyal made the last point particularly clear by explicitly showing how

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[85] Nautiyal, 'Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād', 402.

old friends hailing from the same village had suddenly turned into strangers. The fact that Nautiyal wrote the translation on his university transcripts, certificates and diplomas deserves special attention. For Nautiyal, I argue, tarnishing these invaluable records of academic progress with a translation mirroring his suffering from campus politics was a subversive act, and it expressed his disappointment in the education system. Nautiyal's work comes closer to Lu Xun's "Kuangren Riji" in that they both "resist all forms of unequal relationship and the mechanisms that (re)produce them".[86]

Subterranean Translation: The Absent Presence of Shen Congwen

Looking beyond the FLP translations, this section intends to show what modern Chinese literature looked like in an Indian-led project without the direct participation of official Chinese institutions, and how literary translation was used tactically as a lens to view not only revolution, but also its ramifications. The selected text is the English anthology entitled *Modern Chinese Stories* (1953) compiled by K.M. Panikkar, the first Indian ambassador to China between 1948 and 1952, and translated by Huang Kun.[87] As the first English anthology of modern Chinese literature compiled by an Indian and perhaps the only one in the 1950s, *Modern Chinese Stories* was well received in India and was subsequently translated into Hindi by Shivdan Singh Chauhan and Vijay Chauhan.[88] Although the anthology was not an FLP publication, it was still a highly collaborative enterprise involving the conspicuous participation of Chinese agents and

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[86] Wang Hui, *Fankang Juewang: Lu Xun ji qi Wenxue Shijie* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 25.

[87] The anthology contained no information about the translator Huang Kun. I speculate that he might be the celebrated physicist Huang Kun because: (a) he mastered English, partly because he studied in the UK for years during the 1940s and partly because he had a British wife; (b) he returned to Peking University in 1951 and became colleagues with the other two scholars Panikkar consulted; and (c) he had been enthusiastic about literature since childhood.

[88] See Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, ed., *Ādhunik Cīnī Kahāniyāṁ*, trans. Shivdan Singh Chauhan and Vijay Chauhan (Delhi: Ranjit Printers and Publishers, n.d.). The front matter of the translation makes no reference to the year of publishing. It can be postulated that the translation was published sometime between 1953 (when the English collection appeared) and 1957 (a copy of the translation from the library of Allahabad University carries a stamp indicating that the book was registered on August 14th, 1957).

agencies, including the translator, literary consultants, and even the Embassy of the PRC in New Delhi.[89] However, this qualifies as an Indian-led project not only because it was published by an Indian press and compiled by an Indian academic-diplomat, K.M. Panikkar, who had good knowledge and taste of Chinese literature, but also because the preface written by Panikkar himself — a sign of paramount editorship — clearly indicates that his own interests and evaluations played a crucial role in the selection of materials. Hence, I approach *Modern Chinese Literature* first as a collection illustrative of Panikkar's own perception of China's literary landscape during the revolutionary period. However, given that the collection was mostly prepared during Panikkar's tenure in Beijing, with considerable involvement of Chinese collaborators, his choice of authors and texts could not have been completely uninfluenced by the mainstream literary conventions of 1950s China. As we shall see, the interplay between Panikkar's subjectivity (and that of his literary consultants) and the interference of Chinese literary norms created an interestingly ambiguous space in the anthology, to such a degree that Shen Congwen, an accomplished writer who was deprived of literary legitimacy on the eve of the founding of the PRC due to political problems, acquired an "absent presence" through a strategic act of textual selection.

The anthology includes 12 short stories by nine modern Chinese authors, with biographical notes of varying length on each author, a preface by Panikkar, and an appendix entitled "The Modern Chinese Literary Movement" by the translator Huang K'un. The primary aim of the anthology, as Panikkar suggests in the preface dated 1951, was to offer a picture of "the actual, living people of China whose manners, customs and outlook have been changing rapidly in a revolutionary era" that was little

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[89] The embassy lent the designs for the woodcuts inserted in the book and aided in designing the outer jacket. See Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, ed., *Modern Chinese Stories* (Delhi: Ranjit Printers and Publishers, 1953), iv.

known about abroad.[90] Having lived in China for years and become deeply fascinated by its history and culture (though without mastering the Chinese language), Panikkar aspired to introduce the country and its impressive social-political transformation to the world from an insider's point of view.[91] If *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (1955) is an account of the China he witnessed with his own eyes from 1948 to 1951, *Modern Chinese Stories* is a showcase of the revolutionary past of modern China that he had not experienced. Clearly reflecting discontent with how China's revolution had been "misinterpreted abroad", Panikkar held that "only the Chinese writers themselves can tell adequately of the problems confronting their people and of how they have been solved".[92]

In terms of the criteria of selection, Panikkar emphasised both the texts' "intrinsic interest" and their ability to "give a true picture of the development of China since the Revolution of 1911".[93] Thus, Panikkar saw the potential for the literary anthology to be read not only as an artistic creation, but also as a historical archive.[94] The compiler made the latter objective even more conspicuous by placing the authors in a roughly chronological order: Lu Xun and Yu Dafu (1896-1945), who had died by the time the anthology was published, are followed by seven living authors in sequence of the period in which they gained recognition within literary circles. More significantly, the stories are arranged chronologically in that each portrays an episode in the revolution's progress. Placing Lu Xun and the peasant writer Zhao Shuli (1906-1970) at opposite ends of the collection, Panikkar regards the three decades in between as a "big"

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[90] Ibid., v.

[91] Despite the fact that the anthology was published in Delhi, Panikkar did not address a particular "Indian audience" in his preface and the other paratexts. This suggests that he had a global audience in mind when compiling the anthology.

[92] Panikkar, *Modern Chinese Stories*, v, vii.

[93] Ibid., v.

[94] This perspective might be explained by the fact that Panikkar was trained as a historian and he wrote several books on Asian history.

but "logical" step: "Lu Hsün [Lu Xun] cleared the way for the triumph that Chao Shu-li [Zhao Shuli] epitomises. Lu Hsün's fierceness has turned into good humour in Chao Shu-li, which breaks out like sunshine."[95] Read as an episodic narrative, the anthology charts the communist revolution of China as a linear and gradually ascending course from old to new, from pessimistic to optimistic.

At first glance, Panikkar's selection of authors largely conforms to the PRC's officially-sanctioned literary norms in the 1950s. While Lu Xun, Yu Dafu, Mao Dun, Lao She and Yang Zhensheng (1890-1956) were accomplished "new literature" writers influenced by the May Fourth Movement, Ding Ling and Zhao Shuli were models of the "liberated area literature" (*jiefangqu wenxue*) of the 1940s, following the creed of the "Yan'an Talks". Their works not only entered the literary canon of socialist China in the early 1950s, but were also well-known in other socialist countries through translation. The inclusion of Shao Zunan, a writer scarcely remembered today, was not surprising in the 1950s. As an author who fought in and wrote about the anti-Japanese guerrilla war, Shao exemplified the third aspect of what Mao called "worker-peasant-soldier literature".[96]

While Panikkar's selection of authors largely corresponded with the PRC's literary conventions of the time, what is unexpected is the inclusion of Shu Wen, pseudonym of Zhang Zhaohe (1910-2003), who is more widely known as the wife of Shen Congwen (1902-1988), one of the greatest Chinese writers of the twentieth century.[97] From the perspective of literary merit, the anthology's choice of Zhang Zhaohe over Shen Congwen seems rather problematic. Far from being a prolific author,

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[95] Panikkar, *Modern Chinese Stories*, vi.

[96] See Xiaomei Chen, 'Worker-Peasant-Soldier Literature', in *Words and Their Stories: Essays on the Language of the Chinese Revolution*, ed. Ban Wang (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 65-84.

[97] Shen Congwen was the most famous nativist writer in the 1930s and 1940s. He would have won the 1988 Nobel Prize in Literature if he had not died the same year.

Zhang's oeuvre consisted of only four short stories, which were collectively published in 1941 as *Hupan* (Lakeside) and did not receive much attention.[98] Although personally connected to many prominent intellectuals, she did not play a significant role in advancing literary, academic, or educational reforms during the Republican period, and her position in the PRC's literary life was limited to that of an editor at the People's Literature Publishing House. Her literary fame was barely recognised abroad, whereas almost all English anthologies of modern Chinese literature published in the 1930s and 1940s contained works by her husband. In fact, one of Zhang's main achievements remembered today by literary historians and critics is her painstaking efforts to sort Shen's manuscripts and publish his family letters after his death in 1988.

Given the engagement of Chinese intellectuals in preparing the anthology, as well as Panikkar's own taste and prudence, I consider this surprising choice not a misjudgement, but rather a sophisticated tactic. As I will show below, the explicit selection of Zhang Zhaohe and her short story "Xiaohuan de bei'ai" (The Sorrow of Little Huan) functioned as an implicit inclusion of Shen Congwen at a particularly sensitive time when he was denied legitimacy by the PRC's literary authorities. Shen Congwen was therefore present in the anthology, not through direct textual translation, but through a strong intertextuality between his and Zhang's short stories and between his real-life predicament and the protagonist's dilemma in Zhang's story. For Panikkar and the Chinese intellectuals who assisted in the anthology, this tactical process of translation in disguise, or what I call "subterranean translation", not only served as a gesture of sympathy towards an admired writer, but also allowed them to extend a critique on the revolution's impact on individual lives.

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[98] For more details about Zhang Zhaohe's literary career and the reception of *Hupan*, see Zhao Huifang, *Shengtai Piping Shiye Zhong Shen Congwen Fufu Chuangzuo Yanjiu* (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2015), 133-35.

Why should Shen Congwen have been included in this particular collection?[99]

Beyond Shen's literary excellence, we also need to take a closer look at the subjectivity of those who produced the anthology. One factor that requires emphasis is Shen's close relationship with Yang Zhensheng and Chang Fengzhuan (1910-2002), two scholars who helped in selecting and editing the works and whose advice, as Panikkar put it, was "of the utmost value".[100] Yang and Chang were Shen's colleagues at Peking University when he became subject to political attack. The three of them had been friends since the 1930s and they all held similar literary outlooks. Between 1933 and 1935, Yang and Shen co-edited the "Literary and Art Supplement" to the *Dagong Daily* (*Dagong bao wenyi fukan*), an influential non-leftist literary forum, to which Chang frequently contributed critical essays and book reviews. More significantly, Shen and Yang spearheaded a literary group later known as the Beijing School (*jingpai*), marked by a particular cultural position that "simultaneously opposed both May Fourth Occidentalism and the commercialism of the Shanghai School, *haipai*".[101] Over nearly two decades of intimate professional and personal contact, Yang became not just a co-worker to Shen, but also a mentor and family friend. This special relationship, alongside a shared dissent with the politicisation of literature, may have led to Yang recommending Shen.[102] In his turn, only by including Shen together with the May Fourth writers and the Yan'an writers could Panikkar give a full expression to his complex understanding of the Chinese revolution. Despite his admiration for the achievements of the revolution, he nevertheless wrote in *In Two Chinas*:

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[99] Indeed, many similarly accomplished writers like Ba Jin and Guo Moruo did not appear in the anthology either, but their exclusion does not justify Shen Congwen's. As Panikkar laid out in the preface, he did not bring in the works of Ba Jin and Guo Moruo because they were not famed as short story writers (Ba Jin specialised in novels and Guo Moruo in poetry and plays). By contrast, Shen Congwen was famous primarily for his novels and short stories. See Panikkar, *Modern Chinese Stories*, viii.

[100] Ibid., iv.

[101] Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 175.

[102] For a detailed account of the relationship between Shen and Yang, see Zhi Xiaomin, 'Shen Congwen yu Yang Zhensheng', in *Yang Zhensheng Yanjiu Ziliao Xuanbian* (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 2016), 218-23.

> The means employed to achieve these very desirable ends are in many cases of a kind which revolts the free mind. Compared to the State, the individual has lost all value, and this is the strange thing in China which adds a tinge of sorrow even when one appreciates and admires what the revolution has done for China and Asia generally.[103]

From 1948, Shen Congwen became rapidly sidelined as part of a "structural change" in the literary sphere, which was characterised by a "large-scale replacement of writers and groups of writers, and the shift in their positions".[104] This shift in positions was "the result of the typological delineation of authors and literary groups begun in the late 1940s by the left-wing literary powers to establish a 'new direction for literature'".[105] An advocate of the "independence" of literature, Shen had cautioned against the politicisation of literature since the 1930s, and his works were characterised by distinct personal expression and lyricism. This stark divergence in ideological position and creative outlook rendered Shen vulnerable to critique by leftist writers who became the literary authorities when the PRC was founded. During the reshuffling of writers, Shen was officially labelled "reactionary" in 1948 and subsequently disqualified from participating in the first All-China Congress of Literature and Art Workers held in July 1949. Being ostracised from the PRC's united front of writers didn't just mean forfeiture of symbolic capital, but also denial of the right to publish. Shen also lost his job at Peking University, where he taught Chinese literature, and he even became estranged from his wife, Zhang Zhaohe, who had a more "progressive" outlook. While many writers of the 1920s and 1930s faced difficulties harmonising their creative tenet with the new literary principles, but they nevertheless managed to secure a place within the literary circles, partly by criticising their past writings, Shen

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[103] Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1955), 179.
[104] Hong Zicheng, *A History of Contemporary Chinese Literature*, trans. Michael M. Day (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 33.
[105] Ibid., 34.

Congwen found it altogether impossible to be accommodated in the new age and suffered severe mental crises that caused him to attempt suicide in March 1949. Saved, but still deeply confused, Shen stopped writing fiction and became a textile archaeologist in 1950. The official restriction on publishing his previous works was not lifted until the "Hundred Flowers" period between 1956 and 1957.[106]

This biographical sketch of Shen Congwen explains why his works could not be explicitly included in the anthology. Panikkar prepared the anthology in Beijing during his tenure as the first Indian ambassador to the PRC, a period that coincided with the official expulsion of Shen from the Chinese literary sphere. Thus, there might have been serious consideration given to the diplomatic hazards of including such an officially "illegitimate" figure.[107]

To use Zhang Zhaohe as Shen Congwen in disguise was, first of all, to acknowledge the entangled relationship between their fictional creations in terms of both praxis and style. Shen helped Zhang develop her writing skills and often edited her drafts before they were sent for publication. As a result, many of their works featured similar themes and expressions, such as childhood, rural life, and strong lyricism. At times, they wrote short stories that were thematically complementary with each other — such as Shen's "Nvren" (Women) and Zhang's "Nanren" (Men) — as a kind of "literary marriage" mirroring their married life in reality.[108] However, what makes Zhang's "Xiaohuan de Bei'ai" (hereafter, "Xiaohuan") a particularly powerful text that enabled Shen's presence and a critical engagement with the PRC's policy in the anthology is, I

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[106] In 1957, People's Literature Publishing House published a collection of Shen Congwen's fiction. For a biographical study of Shen Congwen, see Jeffrey C. Kinkley, *The Odyssey of Shen Congwen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

[107] In Chapter 4, we will encounter a similar situation in relation to the Chinese version of Krishan Chander's "Mahālakshmī ka pul", in which bilateral political relations may have intervened with literary translation.

[108] See Zhao Huifang, *Shengtai Piping Shiye Zhong Shen Congwen Fufu Chuangzuo Yanjiu*, 137.

argue, the work's intertextuality with the private writings Shen kept in late 1949, which recorded his mental crises.

 Like most of Zhang Zhaohe's short stories, "Xiaohuan" features a child as the protagonist and depicts the "solitariness of childhood" by investigating the protagonist's psychological activities.[109] "Xiaohuan" stands out in Zhang's oeuvre, however, in that it is the only work marked by historical depth. Set in Republican China, the story begins with a history class in which Big Head Wu, the teacher, preaches about how the opium thrust on China by the foreign imperialists has been destroying the country and the race. Wu's nationalist argument ignites fierce discussion among the students and leads to a point at which everyone shouts, "Down with opium friends!"[110] Little Huan is isolated because the students call his mother, who smokes opium for health reasons, a "traitor" and they claim that he has "the poison in his veins".[111] Escaping the classroom with his heart "filled with indescribable ferment",[112] Little Huan goes home and tries to persuade his mother to give up smoking opium, only to be rebuffed by her stubborn attitude and harsh words. The most engaging part of the short story is Zhang's depiction of Little Huan's inner struggle on his way home: he runs into rickshaws, collides with a fruit vendor, passes people of all kinds, and goes into a trance:

> Little Huan was quite dizzy. People came and people went. The noise of shouting and of traffic invaded him. Motorcars passed, raising clouds of dust. He tried to concentrate, and wiping the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve, he murmured to himself, "It was all a dream."[113]

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[109] Ibid., 140.
[110] Panikkar, *Modern Chinese Stories*, 104.
[111] Ibid., 106.
[112] Ibid., 98.
[113] Ibid., 100. English translations of "Xiaohuan" quoted in this chapter are Huang K'un's.

Knowing "perfectly well that it was not a dream", Little Huan moves on and reaches the front door to his home:

> He lingered on the doorstep with a feeling of shame mounting in his heart. He hesitated. He didn't want to go in. From this day, from this very moment, he disliked that dirty old front door. He positively hated someone, something. But who it was he hated so, he could not have said.[114]

The hallucination, shame, and inexpressible anger of Little Huan, the protagonist of Zhang Zhaohe's 1937 short story, mirror Shen Congwen's predicament 12 years later. On the evening of May 30th, 1949, Shen wrote a short essay entitled "Wuyue Sa Xia Shidian Beiping Sushe" (In a Dormitory, Peking, May 30, 10 pm; hereafter "Wuyue"), filled with fragmentary, raving sentences indicative of his mental instability after surviving a suicide attempt. The essay, which remained unpublished until the 1990s, instigated a stream of what Chen Sihe calls "subterranean writing" (*qianzai xiezuo*) or "the private works of those intellectuals deprived of the right to write in their time."[115] For Chen, such works deserve a place in the history of Chinese literature because they contain genuine and sophisticated reflection upon Mao's era, which mainstream writings following the party line could not offer.

Like Little Huan, the narrator in "Wuyue" — Shen Congwen himself — is overwhelmed by a deep yet indescribable sense of isolation. He tries to explain where the isolation came from by making sense of the world around him, but he fails. Asking himself "Am I mad, again?" Shen writes:

> My family appears exactly the same as it was before. Zhaohe is healthy and high-principled, the kids are full of great self-respect, and I am still

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[114] Ibid., 101.
[115] Chen Sihe, ed., *Zhongguo Dangdai Wenxue Shi Jiaocheng* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1999), 30.

working at my desk. But the world has changed. Everything has lost its original meaning. It seems that I have returned to the long-gone past of oblivion, segregated from all happiness. I don't know where the sorrow comes from. I am simply facing the world without aim. All things are moving, whereas I am looking at them, motionlessly and pityingly, without playing a role in any of them. I am not mad! But why am I feeling so isolated and helpless while my family remains the same. Why? Answer me, please.[116]

While the causes of Shen's deep yet indescribable isolation are left unanswered in "Wuyue", we can better understand this by considering Little Huan's experience. As Zhao Huifang observes, the sorrow Little Huan experiences originates from the pressures of history, society, and family, which are comparable to the pressures faced by Shen Congwen.[117]

Both Little Huan and Shen live in a time of transformation when a new political and social force is gaining power and the complex history is being placed into a grand narrative attached to a dominant ideology, which tends to ignore particularities and exceptions. The nationalist message "all opium friends are traitors" the history teacher conveys to Little Huan and his classmates seems to have unchallengeable validity in the anti-imperialist era. However, Little Huan intuitively questions this message because although his mother developed an opium habit due to illness, she has never betrayed the country. As one scholar rightly points out, Zhang Zhaohe expressed her discontent with such a generalised historical narrative by satirically naming the history teacher Big Head Wu and characterising him as a didactic person.[118] If Little Huan is "illegitimate" in his time because of the "original sin" passed on from his mother (he is deemed to have "the poison in his veins"), Shen Congwen was denied legitimacy because of his

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[116] Shen Congwen, 'Wuyue Sa Xia Shidian Beiping Sushe', in *Congwen Jiashu: Congwen Zhaohe Shuxin Xuan*, ed. Shen Huchu (Shanghai: Yuandong chubanshe, 1996), 160-62.
[117] See Zhao Huifang, *Shengtai Piping Shiye Zhong Shen Congwen Fufu Chuangzuo Yanjiu*, 142.
[118] Ibid.

disagreement with the leftist intellectuals who became the writers of China's revolutionary history after the founding of the PRC. Despite the fact that Shen aspired to contribute to the literary enterprise of the new regime by "producing a dozen of works wholeheartedly",[119] he was nevertheless disqualified from being part of the PRC's literary history.

This historical illegitimacy inevitably leads to the breakup of social relationships and subsequent segregation. Like Little Huan, who leaves the class due to the unbearable scorn and stigma he faces, Shen Congwen was discharged from public employment and became a social outcast. At the beginning of "Wuyue," Shen mentions a photo he took with Ding Ling, a close friend from 19 years earlier. As Ding Ling followed the Yan'an path and became one of the PRC's literary authorities, she ended her friendship with Shen, like many others. Perhaps in order to imply how Shen was deserted by friends and colleagues, the translator/selector of "Xiaohuan" added a sentence to describe Little Huan's isolation in the class, which was absent in the original text: "One by one they sneaked away, obeying the primitive instinct to abandon the wounded of their kind."[120]

In both "Xiaohuan" and "Wuyue", home is not a haven where social pressures can be left outside and the isolated can gain a sense of belonging. Instead, returning home intensifies pressures and anxiety. Little Huan's hesitation on the doorstep is suggestive of his struggle between understanding his mother's reliance on opium and the effort of persuading her to give up the habit. In Shen Congwen's case, the temporary tranquillity of the dormitory at night-time does not conceal his tension with Zhang Zhaohe, who was receiving Marxist training and trying to adapt to the new age. The

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[119] Shen Congwen and Zhang Zhaohe, *Congwen Jiashu: Congwen Zhaohe Shuxin Xuan*, ed. Shen Huchu (Shanghai: Yuandong chubanshe, 1996), 145.
[120] Panikkar, *Modern Chinese Stories*, 106.

physical status of Shen (awake) and Zhang (asleep) in the evening contrasts with their ideological status as perceived by society.

Precisely because the threefold pressures work on Little Huan and Shen Congwen in similar ways, the fictitious story of an isolated boy can be interpreted as an allegory for the real-life suffering of an outcast intellectual who was unable to keep up with the fast-changing world. Admittedly, for the average Indian reader who did not stay abreast of the PRC's literary activities, it would be difficult to extract the implications of the inclusion of "Xiaohuan". However, this should not invalidate the subjective consciousness and statements of the anthology makers. By reading the surprising inclusion of Zhang Zhaohe's "Xiaohuan" as a "subterranean translation" of Shen Congwen's "Wuyue", we can fully appreciate the intervention of Panikkar's *Modern Chinese Stories* and its importance to modern China-India literary relations: it not only represented a wide spectrum of revolutionary heroes and heroines who collectively built modern China as an unstoppable historical course from pessimistic to optimistic, but also enabled reflection on the dilemmas of repressed individuals who also hoped for the best for the nation, yet in a different way.

Conclusion

The Indian reception of modern Chinese literature in the 1950s was marked by the emergence of China's Foreign Languages Press as the major text supplier. Produced in Beijing as part of the PRC's external publicity project and transmitted to different areas of India mainly by local communist publishers and distributers, the FLP's English translations of Chinese works reached a large number of Indian readers who desired to know about China's revolutionary experience and its contribution to the new state. FLP publications remarkably enlarged the Indian library of Chinese literature by making

available in English a lot of works that had remained unnoticed in the West. They also constituted a sizable pool of Chinese texts from which both new and old canonical texts, such as the revolutionary historical novel, *Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*, and Lu Xun's short stories, were translated into Indian languages. However, due to their official nature, FLP publications were inevitably subject to the changing dynamics of Sino-Indian relations.

Considering textual contact alongside readerly contact as different yet related categories of literary relations, this chapter has offered a nuanced understanding of how FLP publications were received in 1950s India. Although the FLP books and periodicals were published by communist China, and their distribution in India mainly relied on communist networks and intermediaries such as the People's Publishing House, the Current Book Depot in Kanpur, and the CPI weekly *New Age*, their actual readership covered a wide spectrum of literary figures, ranging from communists (Vidyasagar Nautiyal) to Gandhians (Jainendra Kumar) and to Marxist modernists (Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh). As my analysis of Hindi writers' readerly contact with Lu Xun showed, which of Lu Xun's texts Hindi writers felt most strongly about and how they made sense of them seemed to have no palpable relation to the writer's political leaning: while Jainendra Kumar, who stood aloof from the progressive movement and was famous for his application of Freud's psychoanalysis to creative writing, emphasised Ah Q's allegorical relevance to Indian society, Vidyasagar Naudiyal, a lifelong communist, found himself profoundly connected with the madman's mental world. This contrast further confirms the polysemic and heterogeneous relationships between a third world reader and a third world text.

The preponderance of the PRC's out-translations in 1950s India should not blind

us to the translation projects launched by Indians themselves.[121] K.M. Panikkar's *Modern Chinese Stories*, as we saw, stands out as an Indian-initiated project with a hybrid nature. The hybridity lies in Panikkar's double-character as the first Indian ambassador to the PRC and a critical observer of the nation's revolutionary legacy. His strategic use of "subterranean translation" to include Shen Congwen through Zhang Zhaohe's textual mediation shows how he negotiated the relationship between his official identity and critical rationale. Reading Zhang's "Xiaohuan" as Shen's "Wuyue" in disguise not only uncovers Panikkar's subjectivity, but also activates new and meaningful linkages between two texts by one of the most famous writer couples in modern China, linkages that have yet to be discovered by literary historians.

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[121] In the 1950s, English books and magazines produced in the West — Britain in particular — remained effective when Hindi literati encountered and became interested in translating Chinese works. For example, before the English translation of Mao Zedong's nineteen poems was published by the FLP in 1958, his poems had appeared sporadically in Hindi journals. The June 1957 and September-October 1958 issues of *Nayā Path*, for instance, published seven poems by Mao, translated into Hindi by Rajeev Saxena from *Labour Monthly*, a journal associated with the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Chapter 4 | "Premchand is the Indian Lu Xun": Indian Progressive Literature in Socialist China, 1950-1964

> When I read Chinese books, I feel quiescent and detached from real life. When I read foreign books, except for Indian books, I feel in touch with life and aspire to act.
>
> Lu Xun[1]

> Having read Premchand's short story collection and his novel *Gedan* [*Godān*], I felt thrilled. An introspective reading of it deepened my understanding of our own villages and prompted my eagerness and determination to depict Chinese peasants who are now striving for better lives. [...] Premchand is the Indian Lu Xun.
>
> Hao Ran[2]

An inquiry into socialist China's reception of Indian literature in the 1950s and 1960s first requires a look at the preceding decades, because it is through the many levels of continuity and rupture in terms of people, ideas, and motives that we can gain a clearer profile of the period in question. During the first half of the twentieth century, as discussed in the Introduction, Rabindranath Tagore had a significant impact on the Chinese literary scene, through both his work and his visit. While contributing to the birth of Chinese vernacular poetry (see Introduction) and showing Chinese writers the possibility that Asian authors could in fact gain international reputation, Tagore also offered a discursive prism through which Chinese intellectuals debated various issues, such as tradition, modernity, nationalism, pan-Asianism, and anti-colonialism.[3] The

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[1] Lu Xun, 'Qingnian Bidu Shu', *Jingbao Fukan* 67 (1925): 8.
[2] Hao Ran, 'Wo Chang Dao Nali Liuliu Waner', *Waiguo Wenxue Pinglun* 2 (1989): 121.
[3] See Sen, *India, China, and the World*, in particular Chapters 3 and 4.

most renowned modern Chinese writer, Lu Xun, for instance, approached Indian literature with an ambivalent attitude. He unequivocally recognised the debt of Chinese fiction to Indian fables and praised the legacy of ancient Indian literature such as the Vedas, Sanskrit poems, plays by Kalidasa and the epics *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*. However, he considered this glorious Indian cultural past as contrasting with its decaying culture under colonial rule. In his 1908 article "Moluo shili shuo" (On the Power of Mara Poetry), Lu Xun incites the "Mara poets" who are "determined to [enact] rebellion" and whose "shout makes those hear it rise up".[4] Yet, although he borrows the word "Mara" (demon) from Indian culture, Lu Xun sees no "stirring voices" in modern India, which instead, he suggests, "seems to be in the depth of profound silence, utterly motionless".[5] Tagore winning the Nobel Prize and subsequently visiting China did not change Lu Xun's view; instead, he was disappointed by the way in which Tagore was "idolised" by his Chinese hosts, which left Tagore alienated from the Chinese youth. This led to Lu Xun's refusal in 1925 to recommend Indian books to young readers, as noted in the first quote.

The kind of "Mara poets" that Lu Xun envisaged did in fact emerge in India as a powerful force in the mid-1930s, but Lu Xun, who died in 1936, did not get to know them. Growing from a small group of London-based Marxist Indian writers, including Mulk Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer, the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) spearheaded an influential movement of literary-political radicalism in the subcontinent from the late 1930s to the 1950s. In his presidential speech at the first All-India Progressive Writers' Conference (AIPW conference) in Lucknow in 1936, Premchand (1880-1936), a leading figure of modern Indian literature, defined "good literature" as

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[4] Cited in Adhira Mangalagiri, 'At the Limits of Comparison', 152.
[5] Cited in ibid., 153.

literature that "stirs our feelings and thoughts into motion",[6] thereby echoing the "stirring voices" Lu Xun had called for three decades earlier. However, the voices of Indian progressive writers barely travelled to China in the 1930s and 1940s, mainly due to British censorship. This reflects what Adhira Mangalagiri calls "the irony of access in the colonial world", in which "those voices that espouse Mara qualities become subject to the very suppression and silence that Mara writers rebel against".[7]

It was not until the early 1950s, when both China and India became fully independent and established a direct connection, that Indian progressive literature gained a strong presence in the Chinese literary sphere. Over 80 Indian titles were published in book form and 70 in journals, either as "progressive works" or "works by progressive writers"; comments on Indian progressive writers and news reports pertinent to the progressive movement appeared repeatedly in leading Chinese literary journals and newspapers; and some of the progressives maintained personal contact with Chinese writers through channels of cultural diplomacy (see Chapter 1).

The considerable presence of Indian progressive writing also led to engaged readerly contact. Premchand, for instance, became an indispensable source to draw on when Hao Ran (1932-2008), a celebrated Chinese peasant writer, made his foray into writing a rural novel in the early 1960s. His remarks expressing his exhilaration and restlessness after reading Premchand, quoted at the start of the chapter, call into question Lu Xun's dismissal of Indian books. By equating Premchand with Lu Xun in his claim "Premchand is the Indian Lu Xun", Hao Ran reflects awareness of the two authors' equally ground-breaking contribution to modern Indian and Chinese literature and identifies the similarities in their literary outlooks.

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[6] Premchand, 'The Aim of Literature', trans. Francesca Orsini, in *The Oxford India Premchand,* trans. David Rubin, Alok Rai and Christopher R. King (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), Appendix.
[7] Mangalagiri, 'At the Limits of Comparison', 160.

This chapter examines the ways in which Indian progressive literature in general and Premchand's fiction in particular were received in socialist China during the 1950s and early 1960s. Since the reception of foreign literature was largely a systematic enterprise controlled by the state's cultural authorities, I will draw on official Chinese discourse about world literature, documents about translation policy and the Indian works published in the state-run translation journal *Yiwen*/*Shijie Wenxue* to explain why "progressive literature" was the favoured genre of modern Indian literature and how it fitted into China's state-sanctioned model of world literature geographically, temporally and politically. Through the lens of India, this chapter enriches existing studies of *Yiwen/Shijie Wenxue* by moving beyond their usual focus on the journal's representation of Soviet, Western European, and American literature and by reflecting more critically on the term "progressive".[8]

By comparing the works emerging from India's progressive movement between the 1930s and 1950s with those translated into Chinese in the 1950s, I argue that this translation process was highly selective, with early progressive works being continuously favoured and later works set in post-independence India largely ignored. While producing an inevitable "time lag" between the contemporary Indian and Chinese literary universes, this selective strategy effectively avoided introducing the anti-Nehru/anti-Congress elements widely seen in the later progressive works, at a time when the PRC sought to maintain good political relations with Nehru's government. Such consideration of the political issues, as we shall see, sometimes even led to translators manipulating the original text.

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[8] For systematic research of the journal, see Nicolai Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism: The Chinese Literary Universe, 1945-1965* (Columbia University Press, 2017), Chapter 6 and 'Clandestine Cosmopolitanism: Foreign Literature in the People's Republic of China, 1957-1977', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 185-210; Paola Iovene, *Tales of Futures Past: Anticipation and the Ends of Literature in Contemporary China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), Chapter 2; and, Cui Feng, *Zhengzhi, Wenxue yu Fanyi: Yi Shijie Wenxue wei Li, 1953-1966* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, 2012).

As a representative of the early Indian progressive works and the first Hindi novel translated into Chinese, Premchand's *Godān* (The Gift of a Cow, 1936) will be singled out in this chapter for close reading. Focusing on Yan Shaoduan's preface to his translation of *Godān*, I will examine the techniques he used to provide an affirmative framing for the novel that was in line with the PRC's ideologically-driven literary conventions, while doing justice to its aesthetic value that contributed to Hao Ran's close connection with Premchand. Analysing Hao Ran's first novel *Yanyang Tian* (Sunny Days, 1964-1966) and *Godān* alongside one another, I argue that reading Premchand may have had a further impact on Hao Ran's writing in terms of creating aesthetically nuanced rural characters. Highlighting the importance of readerly contact, this case study suggests that even when writerly and textual contact with modern India became impossible due to the breakup of Sino-Indian relations, modern Indian literature continued to live through the more private practice of reading. The fact that Hao Ran developed a close attachment, both epistemological and emotional, to Premchand, rather than the officially-promulgated Soviet authors, suggests that even in a time of intense state control over literary activities, Chinese authors enjoyed more freedom in reading as compared to writing activities; and indeed, even in their writing, certain roles (e.g. minor characters) enjoyed more freedom than others (e.g. main characters such as heroes and villains).

Locating India in the PRC's World Literature

From 1949 to 1966, foreign literature in Chinese translation occupied a crucial place in the PRC's literary sphere. Translation activities were carried out with significant care and enthusiasm, not only with a view to continuing the intellectual tradition of cosmopolitanism that had begun in the late Qing and peaked after the New Culture

Movement, but also to draw on all possible sources in building a cultural identity for the new socialist state and educating its people. Meticulously selected, translated, and interpreted foreign literary works were intended to influence Chinese readers in a largely educational way: as artistic creations to appreciate, learning materials to hone writing skills, textbooks to elevate moral standards, and tools to learn about the world, whilst at the same time shaping the public perception of the world.[9] Precisely because of the significant educational functions attached to foreign literature, literary translation in socialist China was subject to state regulation and supervision, just like Chinese literature itself. The translation and publication of foreign literature underwent a rapid process of systematisation and state planning after the National Working Conference on Literary Translation in August 1954. The process involved, for instance, evaluating the qualification of translators, providing qualified translators with state subsidies, transforming private presses into public-private presses, and encouraging inter-publisher exchanges of translation plans.[10] These measures integrated the previously "haphazard" translation market and increased the efficiency and productivity of translation work by eradicating various problems such as mistranslation, hasty translation, unnecessary retranslation, and translation of pornographic works.[11] However, state-sponsored translation activities also inevitably led to greater conformity to mainstream ideology and poetics. Translating foreign works, including Indian works, thus became a selective enterprise, and it was based on this selective translation that a systematic world literature project emerged.

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[9] Mao Dun, 'Wei Fazhan Wenxue Fanyi Shiye he Tigao Fanyi Zhiliang er Fendou: Yijiuwusi Nian Ba Yue Shijiu Ri zai Quanguo Wenxue Fanyi Gongzuo Huiyi shang de Baogao', *Yiwen* 1954, no. 10: 1–17.

[10] In 1954, a nationwide project was implemented in the publishing industry to transform ownership from private to public-private. At the turn of the 1950s, there were 300-odd private presses in Shanghai, where the largest number of China's private presses were concentrated. After 1954, there were only ten private-public presses. See Zou Zhenhuan, *Ershi Shiji Shanghai Fanyi Chuban yu Wenhua Bianqian* (Nanning: Guangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000), 276.

[11] A report produced in 1959 shows that, from October 1949 to December 1958, a total of 5,356 titles of foreign literature and arts were translated into Chinese and published in 110,132,000 copies, nearly two and a half times the number of all translated works produced between the 1920s and 1940s. See Bian Zhilin et al., 'Shinian lai de Waiguo Wenxue Fanyi he Yanjiu Gongzuo'.

How was the map of world literature perceived in socialist China? Where is the location of India? Could its location be pinpointed at all? A survey of the journal *Yiwen/Shijie Wenxue* can help answer these questions. The monthly *Yiwen* (Translated Literature) was launched in July 1953 under the guidance of the Chinese Writers' Association (CWA) and it was renamed *Shijie Wenxue* (World Literature) in January 1959.[12] The fact that *Yiwen*'s founding editor-in-chief was Mao Dun (1896-1981), one of China's leading novelists, as well as Minister of Culture and President of the CWA, testifies to the journal's significant position in the PRC's cultural life. In Mao Dun's foreword to *Yiwen*'s founding issue, he contextualises the newly-founded socialist China in a fast-changing Cold War world and then addresses the imperative to understand the world through foreign literature:

> Living in such a great epoch, our people are increasingly in need of acquaintance with international affairs. We should keep abreast of the changing power dynamics of the two blocs in the world not only via statistics or treatises analysing global situations. We also need literary and artistic works to gain a closer understanding of the energy and happiness the working people in the Soviet Union and people's democracies have shown in building good lives and undertaking creative labours. Similarly, we need literary and artistic works to obtain a clearer view of how the people in capitalist countries, colonies and semi-colonies are fighting bravely and decidedly for peace and democracy.
>
> As for literary workers, today we have an urgent need to enhance our learning of excellent socialist realist [*shehui zhuyi xianshi zhuyi*] literature from the Soviet Union and people's democracies. We should at the same time borrow from [*jiejian*] other sources in order to improve our professional skills. Therefore, it is also necessary to familiarise ourselves with classical [*gudian*] literature from foreign countries and revolutionary [*geming de*] and progressive [*jinbu de*] literature of all capitalist countries, colonies and semi-colonies.[13]

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[12] The journal ceased publication when the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966. Resumed in 1977, it continues to the present day.

[13] Mao Dun, 'Fa Kan Ci', *Yiwen*, July (1953): 2.

Mao Dun's elaboration of the "world" in world literature follows a distinct geopolitical

line, echoing the three-way division of the world Mao Zedong put forward in 1949,

which interposed an "intermediate zone" between the socialist and capitalist blocs (see

Chapter 1). Mao Dun and the PRC's cultural authority he represented assigned different

literary tasks to these three divisions, making the landscape of this world literature

highly uneven.

The journal's preference for socialist realist literature from the Soviet Union and

people's democracies was unmistakable. Established as the only style appropriate for

Soviet literature at the first Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, socialist realism had wide

application in the subsequent decades in the socialist world, including the PRC and the

German Democratic Republic.[14] Formalised as the foremost principle for all literary and

artistic creation in China in 1953, socialist realism dominated the Chinese literary scene

until the Sino-Soviet split in the late 1950s, and its influence continued in a disguised

form into the 1960s.[15] *Yiwen*'s emphasis on translating socialist realist literature had

two purposes, each targeting a different readership: it provided Chinese writers with the

materials to improve their writing skills; and it presented positive characters as role

models for ordinary readers to emulate in the ongoing construction of socialism.[16] By

the standard of socialist realism, modernist literature was labelled "degenerate",

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[14] According to the official definition, socialist realism requires an artist to offer "a truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development. At the same time, truthfulness and historical concreteness of artistic representation of reality must (*or* should) be combined with the task of ideologically remaking and training the labouring people in the spirit of socialism". For a detailed discussion of the definition of socialist realism and its global circulation, see Hilary Chung, ed., *In the Party Spirit: Socialist Realism and Literary Practice in the Soviet Union, East Germany and China* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996).

[15] As Lorenz Bichler observes, although the term "socialist realism" had already been introduced to China in 1933 by Zhou Yang, a leading communist literary theorist and propagandist, it remained an exclusively Soviet phenomenon in Chinese discourse until 1953. Zhou Yang's 1953 article "Socialist Realism — The Road of Advancement for Chinese Literature" marked the establishment of socialist realism as China's official literary model. In 1958, socialist realism was replaced with Mao Zedong's proposed "combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism" in Chinese discourse, through the new literary doctrine clearly borrowed from Gorky's theorisation of socialist realism in the 1930s. See Lorenz Bichler, 'Coming to Terms with a Term: Notes on the History of the Use of Socialist Realism in China', in *In the Party Spirit: Socialist Realism and Literary Practice in the Soviet Union, East Germany and China*, ed. Hilary Chung (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), 30-43.

[16] For an in-depth study of how Soviet socialist realism functioned in China as "a manual of practice", see Mark Gamsa, *The Reading of Russian Literature in China: A Moral Example and Manual of Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), in particular Chapter 4.

"backward" and "decadent" due to its emphasis on the individual over the collective, the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, and pessimism over optimism. For this reason, Indian authors associated with the modernist schools, such as *Nayī Kahānī* (New Story) and *Nayī Kavitā* (New Poetry), in Hindi remained largely off-limits to Chinese translation throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[17] The same holds true for the absence of *Chāyāvād* (literally "shaded") poetry, a prominent branch of Hindi literature in the 1920s and 1930s, which was characterised by its individualistic expression, romantic content and subjective voice.

"Revolutionary and progressive literature from capitalist countries, the colonies and semi-colonies" — the category into which Indian progressive literature was usually pigeonholed — was considered appropriate to "borrow from". Their artistry was secondary to socialist realism, which was designed to "enhance learning". However, these works were also worth introducing because they could elevate Chinese readers' class consciousness by demonstrating "how the people living in these parts of the world were waging arduous and unyielding struggles against reactionary rule and imperialist slavery".[18] In this way, they were able to elicit Chinese readers' sympathy and thus form an imagined solidarity. Mao Dun explains how such an affective mechanism could play out through people relating to the characters depicted in such "revolutionary and progressive literature": "The miserable and bitter lives they are suffering *today* are what we experienced *yesterday*".[19] This was in fact the same appellation — "revolutionary and progressive" — that Mao Dun employed in his foreword to *Yiwen*'s founding issue

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[17] Indian modernist writers found limited presence in news reports. For example, the December 1959 issue of *Shijie Wenxue* published a short report introducing Rajendra Yadav's (1929-2013) recent short story collection *Abhimanyu kī Ātmahatyā* (The Suicide of Abhimanyu, 1959). American and European modernist writings were translated on a limited scale during the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956-1957. See Cui Feng, 'Bieyang Zhanfang de "E zhi Hua": "Shuang Bai" Shiqi Yiwen de Xiandai Pai Wenxue Yijie', *Dongfang Fanyi*, no. 2 (2015): 46-54.
[18] Mao Dun, 'Wei Fazhan Wenxue Fanyi Shiye', 504.
[19] Ibid.

to describe the nature of the left-wing writers' movement during Chiang Kai-shek's brutal rule in the 1930s — socialist China's "yesterday".

Therefore, Mao Dun's geopolitical configuration of world literature was also a temporal one. It selected certain kinds of literature belonging to different geopolitical areas of the world and framed them into a narrative of linear progression from a Marxist historical perspective. In this narrative, Soviet socialist realist works offered a literary representation of an ideal socialist society towards which China was moving, whilst revolutionary and progressive works from the non-socialist world, including India, recalled China's near past and had the potential to "catch up". Such a temporal imagination of world literature inevitably engendered a "time lag" between the literary universe of the non-socialist world and that of China, though these writers may have been coevals in real life, such as the Chinese and Indian writers involved in cultural diplomacy.

This "time lag" is confirmed if we consider the Indian progressive novels selected for Chinese translation in the 1950s. In these fictional works, Chinese readers accustomed to encountering "positive heroes" in Soviet and Chinese socialist realist narratives find themselves exposed to a very different group of characters, experiences, and concerns. Almost all of these works thematise underprivileged people who suffer from various kinds of oppression, be it religious, economic, gender, or a mixture of everything. For example, Dalits like Bakha in Mulk Raj Anand's English novel *Untouchable* (1935) and Kalu in Krishan Chander's Urdu short story "Kālū Bhangī" (Kalu — the Sweeper, 1948) constantly endure disparagement and abuse from the upper castes; poor tenant farmers like Hori in Premchand's Hindi novel *Godān* are subjected to multiple exploitations by greedy landowners, brahmins and ursurers; destitute villagers destroyed by the man-made Bengal famine in 1942 are depicted in Chander's

Urdu novella *Annadātā* (The Giver of Grain, 1943) and Bhabani Bhattacharya's English novel *So Many Hungers* (1947); the teenage factory labourers Munoo and Gangu are deprived of economic freedom in Anand's novels *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and One Bud* (1937); and a young woman is pushed into an ill-fated arranged marriage in Premchand's Hindi novel *Nirmalā* (1927). What is common to these Indian progressive works, all of which were translated into Chinese in the 1950s, is their realistic portrayal of the everyday tragedies of the downtrodden in colonial India. Although not completely devoid of rebellious characters, they primarily concentrate on the suffering of the oppressed, instead of their protest, and they always end with either the enduring plight or death of the protagonists, hinting at an unbreakable social structure of subjugation. Such progressive writings constituted the bulk of modern and contemporary Indian literature translated into Chinese in 1953-1959, a period roughly overlapping the "Bhai-Bhai" years, and it consequently shaped the image of India in Chinese eyes.

The Sino-Soviet split of 1960 disrupted the Chinese model of world literature. While eschewing the use of "socialist realism" and discouraging the translation of Soviet literature, Chinese literary authorities began to lay much greater emphasis on revolutionary and progressive works from Asia, Africa and Latin America, roughly what Mao Zedong had called "the intermediate zone".[20] Unlike the previously Soviet-dominated configuration, the new world literature highlighted China's position as the world's "revolutionary centre", rallying the revolutionary strength of the entire "intermediate zone" against "American imperialism" (*meidi*) and "Soviet revisionism" (*suxiu*). From 1959 onward, the Chinese selection of Asian, African and Latin American works therefore underwent a notable process of propagandisation, which favoured

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[20] For detailed discussion of journal's transformation from *Yiwen* to *Shijie Wenxue*, see Volland, *Socialist Cosmopolitanism,* Chapter 6; and Iovene, *Tales of Futures Past*, Chapter 2.

writings that either praised the PRC or Mao's leadership or voiced solidarity with current anti-imperialist movements that the PRC supported. These works, as Teng Wei notes in the Latin American works translated into Chinese in the 1960s, usually highlighted "strong and direct political appeals" at the expense of literariness.[21]

Due to the deterioration of Sino-Indian relations from early 1959 onwards, Indian literature did not enjoy the same centripetal movement on the new Chinese map of world literature as the literatures of other third world countries; instead, it became increasingly marginal, before completely disappearing from the Chinese literary sphere in 1964.[22] The trajectory of Indian literature, like that of Soviet literature, suggests the decisive impact of political relations on literary relations in socialist China. Interestingly, before Indian literature as a whole dropped off *Shijie Wenxue*'s map in 1964, a few ancient classics translated from Sanskrit and Pali, such as the *Daśakumāracarita* (Tales of Ten Princes) and the *Jātaka* tales (stories of the Buddha's former lives), appeared between 1962 and 1963, in spite of the overt hostility between the two countries. The selection of ancient texts in lieu of modern progressive works reflects the politics at work: by assigning Indian literature further into the past, it was denied relevance to China's literary present and thus disqualified as a member of the literary international that *Shijie Wenxue* was aspiring to reconstitute in the wake of the Sino-Soviet split.[23]

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[21] For example, a large number of Latin American works published between 1960 and 1962, either in book form or in *Shijie Wenxue*, were political poems devoted to eulogising the victory of the Cuban Revolution. See Teng Wei, *'Bianjing' zhi Nan: Lading Meizhou Wenuxe Hanyi yu Zhongguo Dangdai Wenxue 1949-1999* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 17-18.

[22] As Cui Feng observes, Soviet literature disappeared from the journal *Shijie Wenxue* from July 1963, and from all Chinese public publications from 1964 onward. See Cui, *Zhengzhi, Wenxue yu Fanyi*, 397.

[23] From 1959 onward, strategic use of temporality or what Paola Iovene refers to as "chronopolitics" became a particularly crucial method for the journal to decide the value of a literary work. As Iovene argues, translators' commentaries published on *Shijie Wenxue* were "often conveyed through temporal tropes": "acclaimed works were those that anticipated the future, while those that allegedly returned to the past were criticized." See Iovene, *Tales of Futures Past*, 68.

Existing studies on China-India literary relations usually write with regret about the 1960s, blaming the border conflict for severing the ties of textual exchange.[24] However, I consider the political turmoil as creating an ambivalent rather than an entirely negative Chinese reception of Indian literature. Due to the silencing of modern Indian literature in the Chinese literary field following the 1962 conflict, few Indian texts underwent the same process of propagandisation as those of many other Third World countries when introduced into Chinese in the 1960s. Largely formed between 1953 and 1959, the Chinese library of Indian progressive literature was characterised therefore by a considerably higher level of literariness compared to other Third World literatures in Chinese reception. Although my understanding of "literature" in this thesis includes texts that are self-consciously political, it is still often the case that works written for a particular political occasion or championed in a very instrumental way are significant only to a limited group of people and for a limited period of time compared to works characterised by high artistic sophistication and attentiveness to human condition. The Indian progressive works translated into Chinese in the 1950s reflected the political awakening, social concerns, and artistic experiments of the Indian progressives in the 1930s and 1940s. These qualities, well preserved in the Chinese context through faithful translation, had immediate appeal for Chinese readers and, as we will see later, writers like Hao Ran. They also allowed the works to be repeatedly read, appreciated, and studied in post-Cultural Revolution China, whereas most propaganda-driven translations sank into oblivion.

However, one question remains: why did the Chinese literary agents in the 1950s keep reiterating the "literary time lag" between China and India by opting almost exclusively for progressive texts set in the colonial period? Could this "time difference"

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[24] See, for example, Xue Keqiao, *Zhongguo Yindu Wenhua Jiaoliu Shi* (Beijing: Kunlun chubanshe, 2008); and Liu Anwu, 'Hanyi Yindu Wenxue', *Zhongguo Fanyi* 1991, no. 6 (1991): 44-46.

have been erased, or at least calibrated, by introducing more postcolonial Indian progressive texts? To address this, it is important to revisit Mao Dun's geopolitical-temporal conceptualisation of world literature. On the one hand, Mao Dun's choice of the term "colonies" instead of the more inclusive "(former) colonies" primarily referred to the Asian, African, and Latin American countries that were still subject to colonial encroachment. Technically speaking, this ruled out India, which had enjoyed six years of independence from Britain by the time Mao Dun proposed his taxonomy of world literature. On the other hand, we should consider the ambiguous relationship between independent India and capitalism. Nehru, as India's first Prime Minister, attempted to commit the country to a "socialistic pattern of society" by initiating state planning and nationalisation of heavy industrial sectors. However, his belief in "peaceful and democratic methods", not class struggle and revolution, and his encouragement of both public and private enterprises differentiated the Nehruvian socialism from the socialist path of Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China.[25] Nehru's anti-imperialist stance was commended in 1950s China, but it is difficult to ignore that from an orthodox socialist perspective the ruling Congress under his leadership belonged to the bourgeoisie. K.M. Panikkar reflects the Chinese people's ambivalent perception of India:

> They were in two minds. Instinctively they recognized that India was friendly to them; but as communists they could only think of India as a capitalist country, and by all textbook maxims it seemed clear that India must be reactionary and must belong to the opposite camp.[26]

Nonetheless, such a class-based approach to India was overwhelmed by the agenda of forging Sino-Indian brotherhood between 1954 and 1959.

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[25] See S.C. Ghosh, *Nehru's Idea of Socialism* (Calcutta: Oceania Publishing House, 1984), 178-198.
[26] Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, *In Two Chinas: Memoirs of a Diplomat* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1955), 101.

India's ambiguous position on the Chinese geopolitical map of world literature suggests that Indian literature could have been less subject to the conventions (and the consequential "time lag") assigned to "colonies/semi-colonies". It also problematises Mao Dun's indiscriminate use of the terms "revolutionary" and "progressive". In the Chinese literary sphere of the 1950s, the term "revolutionary" was used quite sparingly when referring to foreign authors. Apart from the Russian writers who were directly associated with the October Revolution, such as Maxim Gorky (1968-1936) and Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), contemporary foreign writers deemed "revolutionary" shared some commonalities: they were mostly committed communists who suffered imprisonment or prosecution for denouncing the ruling capitalist regimes by means of writing and activism.[27] By contrast, "progressive" was a looser category. Some celebrated "progressive" foreign writers were card-carrying communists,[28] but in most cases "progressive" suggested a political tendency, not a strict ideological affiliation. This required a Marxist understanding of class, a critical position against feudal, imperialist and colonial forces, a sympathetic attitude towards the masses, and a close relationship with China and the wider socialist world (particularly the USSR).

In the case of Indian literature, it is important to note that not all contemporary Indian writers were labelled "progressive". The communist Urdu poet Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969), a stalwart associated with the Hyderabad branch of the PWA, enjoyed the epithet "revolutionary" in Chinese publications.[29] In an article published in the most prestigious Chinese literary journal *Renmin Wenxue* (People's Literature) in 1952, Ali Sardar Jafri (1913-2000), another communist member of the PWA,

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[27] Such revolutionary writers included Yuriko Miyamoto from Japan, Nâzım Hikmet from Turkey, Pablo Neruda from Chile, and Nicolás Guillén from Cuba.

[28] To name a few: Howard Fast, Theodore Dreiser and Albert Maltz from the United States, Louis Aragon from France, Sunao Tokunaga from Japan, and Jorge Amado from Brazil. Howard Fast left the Communist Party in 1957 and was subsequently denounced in China as a "traitor".

[29] See Ali Sardar Jafri, 'Yindu Geming Shiren Makedeng Mohading', trans. Lian You, *Remin Wenxue*, no. 9 (1952): 77-80. For Mohiuddin's China-related poetry, see Chapter 3.

reminisced about his camaraderie with the "revolutionary poet" Mohiuddin, who was at that time in jail for playing a leading role in the Telangana peasant movement.[30] However, while there were a lot of "revolutionary" writers in post-independence India, they were rarely introduced to Chinese readers in the 1950s, nor was any Indian writer deemed "revolutionary" after Mohiuddin.

This hesitation in introducing post-independence Indian progressive works and making India a major source of revolutionary writings is worthy of further investigation. It reflects that Indian progressive literature was received in China through a particular lens. The following section addresses one fundamental question: what does "progressivism" mean in the context of modern Indian literature? More specifically, I ask how was the concept "progressive" (*pragatishīl* in Hindi) articulated when it first appeared in the literary sphere in India and how did this change over time and under what circumstances? Only by probing the meaning of literary progressivism in its original Indian context can we obtain a clearer view of what was retained, gained and lost when the notion and its associated texts were received in China.

Indian Progressivism, Chinese Context

Literary progressivism in India was formally conceptualised and institutionalised in the 1930s. The Progressive Writers' Association (PWA), initiated by a group of London-based Marxist writers such as Sajjad Zaheer and Mulk Raj Anand in 1935, dramatically changed the face of modern Indian literature by redefining the role of writers, the attitude towards tradition and the meaning of "new literature". Held in Lucknow in April 1936, the first All-India Progressive Writer's (AIPW) conference issued a

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[30] This article was originally published in the July 1951 issue of *India Today*, an Allahabad-based monthly founded by P.C. Joshi, former CPI General Secretary.

manifesto in which "progressive" was abstractly defined as a critical but not

iconoclastic stance towards India's cultural past:

> All those things which take us toward confusion, dissension, and blind
> imitation is conservative; also, all that which engenders in us a critical
> capacity, which induces us to test our dear traditions on the touchstone of
> our reason and perception, which makes us healthy and produces among
> us the strength of unity and integration, that is what we call progressive.[31]

Envisioned as a unifying and equalising force, progressivism is thus a reaction against

"the monopolistic control of priests, pundits, and other conservatives" on literature and

arts, and progressive writers bring these artistic forms "nearer the people" and make

them "reflect life and reality" to pave the way to the future.[32] Underpinning this

definition is an invocation of a purposive and useful literature.

Although not explicitly using the term "progressive", the ending of Premchand's

presidential speech at the 1936 AIPW conference, entitled "Sāhitya kā uddeśya" (The

Aim of Literature), best enunciates the crux of literary progressivism by combining its

political and aesthetic aspects:

> The only literature that will pass our test is that which contains high
> thinking, a sense of freedom, the essence of beauty, the soul of creativity
> and the light that emanates from the truths of life, a literature which instils
> in us dynamism and restlessness, not sleep; because to go on sleeping
> now would be a sign of death.[33]

As the two main documents emerging from the first AIPW conference, the manifesto

and Premchand's speech set up two basic parameters that characterise progressivism in

Indian literature: a Marxist tendency in the writer's outlook, and literary realism in

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[31] Carlo Coppola, 'The All-India Progressive Writers' Association: The Early Phases', in *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*, ed. Carlo Coppola (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1988), 41.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Premchand, 'The Aim of Literature', n.p.

writing and criticism. However, since realism can take various forms, it is worth asking: what kind of realism did the Indian progressives have in mind when they set out to create a "new literature"?

Some scholars have highlighted the Soviet-style socialist realism in the new literature, asserting that "the doctrine of socialist realism found a receptive audience among Indian writers in the mid-1930s".[34] For them, the Indian progressive movement consciously embraced the idea of socialist realism from the very beginning; the only problem is to what extent the Indian works fit or do not fit the Soviet formula. Although it is important to note the impact of socialist realism on Indian writers, I would question linking it to the progressive movement at such an early stage. This is firstly because no reference to the term "socialist realism" or explicit traces of direct influence can be found in the major documents associated with the founding of the PWA and its first all-India conference, such as the two discussed above. Secondly, a more fundamental reason is that the Indian progressive works produced in the 1930s and early 1940s, which I have called the "early progressive canon", rarely conform to the socialist realist tradition.

Although Katerina Clark has warned us against considering Soviet socialist realism as a single doctrine because it has indeed taken different forms in practice, she admits that most of the Soviet canon of socialist realist novels do share a "master plot".[35] Based on this concept of the "master plot", we can outline some general characteristics of socialist realism: it should have a positive hero as the protagonist; it

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[34] Ann Lowry Weir, 'Socialist Realism and South Asian Literature', *Journal of South Asian Literature* 27, no. 2 (1992): 136. Carlo Coppola makes similar arguments; see Coppola, 'The All-India Progressive Writers' Association: The Early Phases'.

[35] The master plot in socialist realist novels, to summarise Clark's thesis, "personalizes" historical processes "by encoding them in biographical terms" — that is, "the positive hero passes in stages from a state of relative 'spontaneity' to a higher degree of 'consciousness', which he attains by some individual revolution". In reality, Clark further points out, fictionalising the tale of the positive hero is often associated with some big events, making journalistic another marker of socialist realism. See Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 3rd ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 15.

should accept temporary suffering, but always have a happy ending; it should serve the cause of building communism, often party-minded. Few traces of these characteristics can be found in the early progressive canon of India, such as Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) in English, Premchand's *Godān* (1936) in Hindi, the short story collection *Angāre* in Urdu, and Manik Bandopadhyay's *Padmā nadīr mājhi* (1936) in Bengali, to name a few. Although these works are analogous with the Soviet novels in terms of portraying the "proletariat" (Dalits, labourers, peasants, and fishermen) in a realistic manner, they do not share the socialist realist master plot; instead, oppressed protagonists deprived of their means of production struggle to earn a living, rather than undertaking a communist mission; they aspire to stay optimistic toward life against all odds, but eventually remain trapped in poverty and subjugation. The creation of such wretched protagonists serves more as a social commentary in the hope of stirring people's feelings and thoughts to action. In this sense, "social realism" is a more appropriate term to describe the features of the early progressive canon.

The doctrine of socialist realism did not find palpable expression among Indian progressives until the late 1940s, when the PWA became increasingly subject to the CPI's ultra-left party line. As the CPI-led peasant movements developed and were subsequently suppressed by the Congress government in 1948, a sectarian view of progressivism loomed large within the PWA. Now, only those who wrote about these movements and fully identified with the communist ideology could qualify as progressive.[36] This took Indian literary progressivism closer to the Soviet practice of socialist realism in terms of its explicit ideological affiliation and journalistic nature. Many communist writers, such as Jafri and Mohinuddin, and some non-communist sympathisers with the peasantry, like Krishan Chander, followed this new path.

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[36] Talat Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism: The Progressive Writers' Movement in South Asia, 1932-56* (London, New York, New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), 160.

Another factor emerging in the 1950s that took Indian literary progressivism closer to socialist realism was the emphasis on constructing positive heroes. In his 1952 article "What is Progressive Literature", the noted Marxist Hindi theorist Ramvilas Sharma praised Premchand and Tagore for their sympathy with the deprived class, which embodied "the principle of art in the service of the people" as opposed to the "reactionary" idea of "art for art's sake". However, Sharma went further, arguing that "to serve the people, progressive literature depicts the life of the people, specially the heroic efforts they make to change that life".[37] In this statement, while traditions are given due respect, the accentuation of "heroic efforts" signals a new tendency, one that is reminiscent of the "positive heroes" in Katerina Clark's discussion of the "master plot" of the typical Soviet socialist realist novel. This new tendency didn't just find expression in theory, but also in writing. As Yogendra Malik shows, positive heroes (and heroines) indeed became distinctive in the progressive Hindi novels produced in the late 1940s and 1950s by noted writers like Yashpal, Amrit Rai, Nagarjun, Rangey Raghav, and Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh. Presented as models of behaviour, the positive heroes in these writings share some distinguishing traits, summarised by Malik as follows: "party loyalty", "willingness to make personal sacrifice and bear hardships", "rejection of traditional norms of social behaviour", "liberal attitudes towards sexual behaviour", "loyalty towards the Soviet Union", "identification with the cause of the workers and peasants", "belief in Hindu-Muslim harmony" and "activism and love of work".[38]

Here we encounter a striking paradox. One the one hand, post-independence Indian progressive works seem to measure up, both theoretically and practically, to the

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[37] Ramvilas Sharma, 'What is Progressive Literature', in *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: Chronicles and Documents*, ed. Sudhi Pradhan, vol. 3 (Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 1985), 57.
[38] See Yogendra K. Malik, 'Socialist Realism and Hindi Novels', in *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*, ed. Carlo Coppola (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1988), 115-36.

socialist realism that China advocated in the 1950s. In fact, in his 1952 article Ramvilas

Sharma explicitly maintained that Indian progressive literature, an organic part of

"world progressive literature", was "specially close to the new literature of China which

won immense popularity in the country even though it has begun to come down to us

only recently".[39] On the other hand, these post-independence progressive works were

rarely translated into Chinese in the 1950s. By contrast, it was the early progressive

writers like Anand and Premchand that were most frequently selected. How then do we

explain this? Why does a seemingly higher level of "progressiveness" in Indian

literature not translate into greater popularity among Chinese intellectuals, who claimed

to seek "progressive literature" from countries like India? It could be argued that the

progressive works published after Independence had not obtained the same status of

"canon" as those by the founding members of the PWA. This argument is tenable, but it

cannot fully explain the phenomenon. A more convincing explanation requires a

rethinking of the Indian texts in question, together with the particularities of China-India

political relations.

I argue that the PRC had limited interest in translating post-independence Indian

progressive works, mainly because many of them were replete with criticism of Nehru's

Congress government, a major partner with whom the PRC was seeking peaceful

coexistence, a fraternal relationship and collaboration in third world affairs. As I have

shown, the translation and publication of foreign literature in 1950s China was largely a

state-sponsored enterprise. Therefore, introducing such works could be politically

sensitive (if not hazardous) because it would have suggested official endorsement of the

anti-Congress opinions these works convey. Such an act could have been detrimental to

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[39] Sharma, 'What is Progressive Literature', 56.

the China-India brotherhood in the making. The logic behind this choice is similar to that of Chinese leaders' controlled interaction with the CPI discussed in Chapter 1.

The profusion of unfavourable opinions on Nehru and his Congress government in post-independence progressive literature is attributable to two main factors. First, the government's armed suppression of the CPI-led peasantry struggles in 1948, which reportedly left 10,000 activists arrested and hundreds killed, pushed communists and sympathisers of the peasantry to vocal opposition.[40] Many progressive writers were emotionally frustrated and several communist writers, such as Jafri, Mohiuddin, and Amrit Rai, were briefly put in jail.[41] The frustration and hostility caused by these incidents turned into denunciation and sarcasm about the Congress in both progressive poetry and fiction. Second, while anti-Congress sentiments were toned down at the 1953 AIPW conference as the CPI sought to repair relations with Congress, disenchantment with the government's failure to bring about economic development and social justice prevailed. "Congress leaders", complained Ramvilas Sharma, "promised the abolition of feudal survivals in the country. But the condition of the peasantry has grown worse than what was depicted in the pages of Premchand".[42]

It was under such circumstances that criticism levelled against the ruling Congress and Nehru — although sometimes extreme and presenting distorted truths — became a strong marker of the progressive works produced after the late 1940s. In poetry, for instance, attacks on the Nehru regime and eulogies to the Telangana movement can be found frequently in the Urdu verses by Mohiuddin and Jafri.[43] Despite the glorious image of China in these Telangana poems, however, they were

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[40] See Ahmed, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nationalism*, 160.
[41] See ibid., 157-161.
[42] Sharma, 'What is Progressive Literature', 47.
[43] Similar subject matter can be found in Nagarjun's Hindi poems. See Anjani Kumar Sinha, 'Socialist Realism in Modern Hindi Poetry', in *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*, ed. Carlo Coppola (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1988), 147-48.

never translated into Chinese.[44] In Hindi novels dealing with post-independence Indian society, it is often the ruling Congress elites that play the role of "negative heroes" who are opportunistic, depraved and sexually abusive. Amrit Rai's *Hāthī ke Dāṅt* (Elephant Trunks, 1957), Rangey Raghav's *Hazūr* (Sir, 1952) and, to a lesser extent, Nagarjun's *Balacanmā* (1952) are exemplary in this respect.[45]

Ali Sardar Jafri, Yashpal and Amrit Rai are of particular interest in this regard because they present the conditions in which writerly contact fails to translate into effective textual contact; they also demonstrate how consideration of political factors can make literary relations more complex than we would normally imagine. All three authors were committed CPI members for a long time.[46] Among them, Jafri and Yashpal had interactions with Chinese writers at international writers' meetings; Rai's contact was more direct as he visited China in 1952 and wrote a travelogue afterwards (see Chapter 1). However, only one short story by Jafri and two by Yashpal — all free from criticism of the Congress regime — appeared in the journal *Yiwen* and none of Rai's works had a Chinese version. Nonetheless, it should be noted that absence of translation does not mean absence of recognition. The Beijing-based Foreign Languages Press, for instance, trusted Amrit Rai to produce a Hindi translation of Mao Dun's novel *Ziye* (Midnight, 1933) from English. This was a clear Chinese acknowledgement of Rai's influence in the Hindi literary sphere.[47]

Anti-Congress/Nehru sentiments certainly did not abound in all post-independence Indian progressive writings, but the considerable presence of such

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[44] See Coppola, 'Urdu Poetry', 554.
[45] For details, see Malik, 'Socialist Realism and Hindi Novels', 118. I thank Ren Xiaoke for providing relevant information.
[46] Amrit Rai quit the CPI in 1956. Interview with Alok Rai, October 20th, 2017.
[47] Amrit Rai completed the translation and sent it to Beijing. However, the Foreign Languages Press did not publish it, perhaps because of the growing tension between the two countries over the border issue. The 1962 border war dramatically changed Rai's attitude to China and thereafter he rarely listed *Subah ke Raṅg*, an effusive China travelogue, when enumerating his literary output. Interview with Alok Rai, October 20th, 2017.

sentiments and the extra judiciousness it may have required from Chinese translators, editors, and publishers might have rendered them all "inappropriate". The case of the Urdu short story writer Krishan Chander bears testimony to this argument. Chander was the most popular living Indian author in China and he was closely affiliated to the PWA throughout the 1950s.[48] Apart from the balanced mixture of biting sarcasm, insightfulness and humanity that made his fiction at once readable and thought-provoking, the popularity of Chander's works in China was also due to his official role as general secretary of the AIPWA and his active presence in India-China/India-Soviet cultural diplomacy. Although never a CPI member, Chander showed great sympathy for the struggles of the Telangana peasants, which inspired his novel *Jab Khet Jāge* (When the Fields Awoke, 1952).

Like his fellow progressives, Chander was frustrated by Nehru's handling of the peasant movement and his unfulfilled socialist convictions, and he occasionally vented his frustration in his literature. This is evident in "Mahālakshmī kā Pul" (Mahalakshmi Bridge, 1949), one of Chander's most well-known short stories. The story uses the Mahalakshmi Bridge in Bombay to symbolise the stark differences between rich and poor. The narrator, waiting on the bridge for the Prime Minister to arrive, outlines the bleak living conditions of slum-dwellers on the left side and the luxurious lifestyle of the wealthy on the other. Hanging on the left side of the bridge are six worn-out saris made of coarse cloth, each owned by a poor woman from the working-class settlements and each a point of entry to a different story of suffering. Their plight becomes more striking when the narrator introduces the shining and costly saris belonging to the rich

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[48] Mulk Raj Anand had more books translated into Chinese than Chander, but he was detached from the PWA after 1948. Six collections of Chander's short stories were published in Chinese in the 1950s. Notably, Chander was one of a few Indian writers whose works had become available in the Chinese language before he physically went to China. While he visited China in 1955 as a member of the Indian filmmakers' delegation led by the director Prithviraj Kapoor (1906-1972), the first book by Chander was translated into Chinese as early as 1953.

women, which have been washed carefully by dhobis and hung out on the right side of the bridge. Chander turns the story into a stinging criticism of Nehru by weaving the above narrative into an unsuccessful meeting with the Prime Minister, whose car is said to pass the bridge. The narrator's plan to draw the Prime Minister's attention to the slum-dwellers fails because the Prime Minister's car passes without stopping. Chander concludes the story with an appeal by the narrator to the Prime Minister to seriously reflect on his self-positioning, in which the spatial terms "left" and "right" are assigned clear political meaning:

> So, I am requesting that when your car passes by next time, you must take a look at the six saris that are hanging on the left side of Mahalakshmi Bridge. Then you should also look at those bright-coloured saris hung up on the right to dry. […] Look to both the right and left sides of the bridge and ask yourself in which direction you want to move. Look, I am not saying that you should become a communist. I am not preaching you to the sermon of class struggle either. I only want to know whether you stand on the left or the right side of Mahalakshmi Bridge.[49]

Despite the overt criticism of Nehru, "Mahālakshmī kā Pul" had an impressive reception in China, with an unusually long trajectory of publication. First translated into Chinese by Feng Jinxin and published in 1953 by Brightness Bookstore (Guangming shuju), a private press in Shanghai, the story was subsequently included in two different collections of Chander's short stories published by the prestigious People's Literature Press in 1955 and 1958. However, striking differences emerge from a parallel reading of the three versions. While the 1953 translation is a relatively faithful rendering, with different layers of the narrative and all characters kept intact, the following two versions, although produced by the same translator, have the character of the Prime

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[49] Krishan Chander, 'Mahālakshmī kā Pul', in *Kriśan Caṃdar aur unkī śreṣṭh kahāniyāṁ*, ed. Nand Kishore Vikram (Delhi: Indraprastha Prakashan, 1998), 97-108. I have chosen to translate this passage from the Hindi version rather than using the English version published by Sahitya Akademi in 1990 due to the latter's unsatisfying accuracy.

Minister and the subplot revolving around him, such as the failed meeting, entirely removed. The powerful question posited by the narrator at the end of the story remains, but the target has changed from the Prime Minister to an unnamed collective:

> **Dear friends** (*qinai de pengyou*), I am now turning to you — **brothers of my brothers, neighbours of my neighbours** (*wo de xiongdi de xiongdi, wo de linju de linju*). I am requesting you to turn your heads and take a look at the six saris hanging on the left side of Mahalakshmi Bridge. Then I ask you to turn to look at the silk saris hanging on the right side of that bridge. […] **Oh, my dear brothers** (*wo qinai de xiongdi a*), look to your left and right and then ask yourself which path is the one you want to take. No, I am not asking you to be a communist. Nor do I wish to make you believe in class-struggle. I just want to know one thing: Are you standing on the right or the left side of Mahalakshmi Bridge?[50]

For anyone who has not read the original narrative, the altered Chinese translation would not appear incoherent and with the symbolic portrayal of the gap between rich and poor preserved, the story does not lose its social critique either. However, given the extraordinary sharpness of protest and satire the Nehru subplot adds to the story, the alteration made by either the translator or the editors is dramatic. How then do we interpret the driving imperative behind this alteration? The most valid explanation is, as I have argued above, the potential political unease the Nehru subplot could have instigated. This may also be connected to the geographic shift in publication — from a politically less significant private press in Shanghai to one of the foremost state-run presses in Beijing. However, a more important factor is timing: criticism that was acceptable in 1953 became problematic from 1955 onwards.

If we recall the significant efforts and achievements made between 1954 and 1955 by Chinese and Indian leaders to enhance the bilateral relationship and seek

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[50] Krishan Chander, 'Mahalemi Qiao', trans. Feng Jinxin, in *Qianda'er Duanpian Xiaoshuo Ji* (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1955), 129.

multilateral cooperation it becomes further clear why this difficulty noted above would emerge. While the first exchange of visits between Nehru and Zhou Enlai and the proposal of the five principles of peaceful coexistence took place in 1954, 1955 saw the first Conference of Asian Countries in Delhi and the first Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung; it was in these two years that the "Bhai-Bhai" discourse found the most euphoric expression in both countries. I would not go so far as to suggest that the collective terms — "friends", "brothers" and "neighbours" — invoked in the altered ending indicate a strategic appropriation of the official brotherhood discourse, but it is very likely that the omission of the Nehru-targeted critique was a deliberate decision, prompted by concern that a state-sanctioned translation containing these critiques would make the Indian side uneasy, if not offended, and therefore harm the improving relationship between the two states.

Affirmative Framing: Yan Shaoduan's Translation and Interpretation of *Godān*

Having explained the logic behind the selection of Indian progressive texts in 1950s China, I intend to show how they were presented to the reader by translators, editors and other intermediaries involved in the textual contact. Since foreign literature was charged with epistemologically, morally and artistically educational functions in socialist China, what was selected and how they were introduced to readers had great significance. In studying the ways in which foreign literary works were received in the PRC's public sphere before and during the Cultural Revolution, Nicholai Volland identifies two modes of interpretation: the "affirmative" and the "negative". The affirmative mode justified the translation of desirable but less-known works, mostly progressive works

from non-Soviet countries like India, and it took the form of prefaces, afterwords, translator's notes or other paratextual devices. The negative mode, which usually appeared in critical essays, exposed the pernicious influence of certain types of work — especially Western modernist works — that would harm socialist morality.[51] Before the Sino-Soviet split, Volland notes, socialist realist works from the Soviet Union required no justification, and in fact critical essays by Soviet critics were frequently used to legitimise the entry of non-Soviet works.[52] While Volland astutely shows that negative framing did not always function negatively, but could enrich a reader's knowledge of the work/author, he does not elaborate on the nuanced workings of affirmative framing. As Yan Shaoduan's reading of Premchand's novel *Godān* will show, affirmative framing also necessitates a certain degree of criticism. This is a process of push and pull — pushing the "progressive" elements to the fore and pulling the "retrogressive" aside. The aim is to "expand the positive effect" and at the same time "eliminate potential negative influence".[53]

In the 1950s, the task of this affirmative interpreting of Indian texts often fell to the translators. Their prefaces, afterwords and translator's notes, irrespective of length, can be read as critical pieces intended to provide the reader with a set of coordinates to help them navigate that particular textual space. The Chinese critic-translators of Indian progressive works came from varied backgrounds. First, there were university-based scholars specialising in modern Indian languages, although this group was relatively small and less productive in the 1950s because the pedagogical development of these languages in China was still in its formative years and most of the teachers and

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[51] In studying the presence of American avant-garde writings in *Shijie Wenxue*, Volland shows that negative framing was not all about unfavourable value judgments; it also presented, intentionally or unintentionally, a wealth of factual details and lengthy excerpts from the work that allowed readers in Mao's China to have up-to-date and accurate knowledge of the literary trends in America. See Nicolai Volland, 'Clandestine Cosmopolitanism: Foreign Literature in the People's Republic of China, 1957-1977', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 201-205.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Bian Zhilin et al., 'Shinian lai de Waiguo Wenxue Fanyi'.

graduates were not encouraged to engage in literary translation.[54] If we take Hindi as an example, the first book-length direct translation produced by a university scholar, Premchand's novel *Nirmalā* translated by Jin Dinghan under the pseudonym of Suo Na, came out as late as 1959 and it remained the only one of its kind until the early 1980s.

The second, a larger group, comprised editors affiliated with the foreign literature departments at state-level publishing houses like People's Literature Press (Renmin wenxue chubanshe), China Youth Press (Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe), and Writer's Press (Zuojia chubanshe). Using English or Russian as mediating languages, these editors partly filled the gap left by the lack of specialists in Indian languages and they produced the majority of Indian progressive works in Chinese translation in the 1950s. The source texts they consulted include Russian translations published in Moscow and, to an even greater extent, English versions brought out by Indian publishers, especially the left-leaning publishers based in Bombay, such as Kutub, Current Book House, and People's Publishing House.[55] The dominance of the latter

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[54] The first Hindi programme in China was launched in 1942 at the National Institute of Oriental Languages in Yunnan, mainly designed to train wartime language specialists. This programme was merged into Peking University in 1949. In 1954, Peking University began China's first Urdu programme. Beijing Broadcasting Institute (today's Communication University of China) followed by introducing degree programmes in Tamil, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and Assamese in the 1960s. In contrast, traditional Indology has a longer history. The two founding fathers, Ji Xianlin and Jin Kemu, received good training in Sanskrit and Pali — Ji in Göttingen and Jin in Shantiniketan — before the founding of the PRC. They became prolific translators of ancient Indian classics from the 1950s onward. For a detailed history of Indian studies in China, see Xue Keqiao, *Zhongguo Yindu Wenhua Jiaoliu Shi*. In the case of Hindi, the lack of engagement in literary translation was not due to lack of interest, but rather a practical need. Hindi teachers at Peking University were to lay solid foundations in the field by focusing more on teaching, editing textbooks and compiling dictionaries. Hindi graduates were mostly assigned jobs at state-run institutions such as the Foreign Languages Press, Beijing People's Radio, and People's Pictorial, which involved India-targeted publicity (see Chapter 3). Interviews with Yin Hongyuan, July 3rd, 2016; and with Lin Fuji, December 18th, 2014.
[55] The Soviet Union played an indispensable role in mediating the textual flow from India to China. Compared to China, the Soviet Union undertook a much larger scale translation of Indian literature in the 1950s, partly because it had a systematic programme of world literature that had been underway for over three decades, and partly because of its well-developed Indology and modern Indian studies. The PRC's literary agents paid regular attention to the Indian works published in Moscow, either in book form or in literary journals like *Inostrannaya Literatura* (Foreign Literature), *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literature Gazette), and *Ogoniok* (Spark). However, in most cases, the Soviet Union served more as an agent of recognition rather than a source of texts. In many Indian works published in China, the Soviet presence was simply a short translator note outlining that this work had a Russian version. Indeed, Soviet critics were at times invoked to provide positive framing for Indian authors, such as Dubikova's introduction to Mulk Raj Anand in the 1955 Chinese translation of *Coolie*. Yet it is also important to note that Soviet critics did not hold absolute legitimising authority. An interesting example in support of this argument is the Chinese translation of Krishan Chander's short story "Kālū bhangī" (Kalu: The Sweeper), published in the January 1955 issue of *Yiwen*. Though translating from Russian, the translator Yi Xin used Mulk Raj Anand's comments to legitimise the selection of Chander. Hence, China-Soviet-India literary relations in the 1950s were highly entangled, rather than conforming to a fixed structure. For Soviet projects of world literature, see Maria Khotimsky, 'World Literature, Soviet Style: A

source can be explained as resulting from China-Indian cultural diplomacy: the texts could either be presented by Indian authors themselves, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Krishan Chander, K.A. Abbas and Navtej Singh, or brought in by the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing, which had dynamic trading relations with the Bombay-based People's Publishing House (see Chapter 3).

Two individuals within the second group deserve particular attention: Yan Shaoduan and Shi Zhujun from China Youth Press. Unlike most other editors, both of them had worked in India for local or Chinese media before joining the PRC's publishing industry in the early 1950s.[56] Their personal ties made them more committed to introducing modern Indian works, and the first-hand knowledge they had gained through years of living experience made their translations stand out due to attentiveness to and accurate rendering of India's sociocultural specificities. While Shi translated exclusively from English, Yan was perhaps the only Chinese translator at the time who worked in both English and Hindi.[57] He co-translated Anand's *Coolie* and a collection of Navtej Singh's Punjabi short stories from English with Shi — both of these Indian authors maintained close ties with Chinese literary circles through cultural diplomacy. However, Yan's single-handed direct translation of Premchand's Hindi novel *Godān*, which took him over a decade, was largely a personal undertaking that happened to correspond with socialist China's preference for progressive aesthetics.[58] Yan's desire

Forgotten Episode in the History of the Idea', *Ab Imperio*, no. 3 (2013): 119-54; and Rossen Djagalov, 'Progress Publishers', in *Soviet Books in India*, eds. Vijay Prasad (forthcoming). For accounts of Indian literature and Russian reception before and during the 1950s, see Katerina Clark, 'Indian Leftist Writers of the 1930s Maneuver among India, London, and Moscow: The Case of Mulk Raj Anand and His Patron Ralph Fox', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 1 (2017): 63-87; Guzel Strelkova, 'Premchand in Russian: Translation, Reception, Adaptation', in *Premchand in World Languages: Translation, Reception and Cinematic Representations*, ed. M. Asaduddin (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 76–93; and, J.A. Naik, *Russia's Policy towards India: From Stalin to Yeltsin* (New Delhi: MD Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1995), 112-15.

[56] Yan worked in Calcutta for local Chinese newspapers in the early 1940s and moved to Delhi around the time of India's independence. From Delhi, he wrote for the Shanghai-based magazine *Guancha* (Observation). Shi worked for All-India Radio as a translator and reporter in the late 1940s. Married in India, Yan and Shi went back to China in 1953 and both worked at China Youth Press.

[57] As well as Indian works, Yan also translated *Towards New Shores* by the Latvian writer-politician Vilis Lācis and fairy tales by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen from English.

[58] According to a contract dated June 14th, 1958 (accessed from Kongfuzi old book web in 2016, now unavailable),

to teach himself Hindi while living in India during the 1940s mainly stemmed from an unease with English as the predominant medium through which Chinese readers had long been acquiring knowledge about India. Underlying his search for linguistic alternatives and his translation of *Godān*, a sprawling realist account of Indian society by one of its most sharp-sighted observers, Premchand, was an impulse to improve Chinese understanding of Indian realities. This impulse to seek unmediated exchange between China and India was also evident in the work of Jin Kemu, a leading Chinese Indologist who studied Sanskrit, Hindi and Buddhism in India during the first half of the 1940s. Uncomfortable with the Indian image disseminated by "them" (*renjia*) — the West — in 1943 Jin urged an independent appraisal and empathy for India:

> In their propagandist materials, India is a place that has thousands of languages, hundreds of races, numerous incompatible sects, ferocious lions, giant elephants, venomous snakes, shockingly undesirable customs and unusual deeds, and an ancient civilisation which seems to have been long gone like ancient Greek. But we are Chinese. We cannot echo what they say and repeat the words they could have used to mock us to mock our neighbours. We should have our own evaluation. What we need is to understand with empathy (*tongqing de liaojie*) and to empathise with understanding (*liaojie de tongqing*).[59]

Yan Shaoduan's personal history as a journalist reporting from 1940s India meant that his introduction of modern Indian literature in the 1950s was well informed and contextualised. In addition to translation, he wrote several essays for major Chinese literary journals and newspapers, such as *Yiwen* and *Wenyi Bao* (Literature and Art Gazette), discussing the latest trends, events and debates related to the progressive

Yan Shaoduan was planning to translate another of Premchand's Hindi novels, *Raṅgbhūmi* (Ground for Play, 1924). The translation was scheduled to be finished by 1962 and to be published by the People's Literature Press. The translation, however, was not completed because Yan fell victim to the political upheavals of the Cultural Revolution. See Shi Zhujun, 'Chongdu Gedan yi Shaoduan', *Dushu Zazhi*, no. 11 (1980): 113-18. *Raṅgbhūmi* became available in Chinese in 1980, co-translated by Hindi scholars Ma Menggang, Sun Baogang, Xu Xiaoyang and Wu Dashen under the pen name "Zhuang Zhong".

[59] Jin Kemu, 'Dangdai Yindu Congkan Bianyan', *Dushu Tongxun*, no. 67 (1943): 12.

movement in India.[60] Moreover, the understanding of India's history, politics and society that Yan had gained from reporting on various issues, including the independence and partition of India and Gandhi in the late 1940s, translated well in the width and depth of his reading of modern Indian works in the 1950s.[61] The preface to his translation of *Godān* is a good example.[62]

Running for 21 pages, Yan Shaoduan's preface, simply entitled "Puliemuchangde" (Premchand), was the longest Chinese critical piece devoted to modern Indian literature in the 1950s. It has five individual yet interrelated sections. The first section offers an overall evaluation of Premchand's status in the literary history of modern India. Calling Premchand "a great standard-bearer of Indian progressive literature", Yan highlights the author's role in spearheading the transformation from romanticism to realism in the Hindi/Urdu literary sphere. Providing a concise but affecting biography, the second section charts the twists and turns of Premchand's life from childhood to death. It covers some of the main episodes of the author's literary activism, such as running the two literary magazines *Haṃs* and *Jāgaran*, his founding of the Saraswati Press, and presiding over the first AIPW conference. The third section traces the evolution of Premchand's literary creations in relation to the development of the Indian nationalist movement. Referring to eight of Premchand's works, ranging from his first collection of stories *Soz-e-Watan* (Cries of the Motherland, 1907), to the later novels like *Karmabhūmi* (The Field of Action, 1932), Yan argues that Premchand's works composed during different periods of the

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[60] See, for example, Yan Shaoduan, 'Quanyin Jinbu Zuojia Xiehui Di Liu Ci Dahui', *Yiwen*, July 1953: 241-42; and 'Zhi Yin Tuoli le Shenghuo: Yindi Jinbu Wenxue "Tingzhi" Wenti de Tantao', *Wenyi Bao*, no. 4 (1957): 14-15.
[61] See, for example, Yan Shaoduan, 'Gandi yu Xin Yindu', *Guancha* 4, no. 1 (1948): 12-13; and 'Yindu de Daolu', *Guancha* 3, no. 19 (1948): 9-11.
[62] Set in a North Indian village called Belari, *Godān* revolves around the exploitation of tenant farmers and addresses the entire socio-economic structure. The protagonist, Hori, is one of millions of Indian peasants who want to own a cow, a means of production and a symbol of prestige in rural India. However, his wish never truly materialises. Instead, subject to constant exploitation from the village zamindar, the Panchayat and moneylenders, Hori declines from a tenet farmer to a landless labourer and dies of overwork. See Premchand, *Godān* (Allahabad: Sarasvati Press, 1960).

nationalist movement reflect the zeitgeist of that period. After three sections contextualising Premchand's oeuvre, Yan offers his reading of *Godān* in section four. His analysis concentrates on the author's characterisation instead of narration, and it is through the evaluation of different types of characters — farmers like Hori, village women like Dhaniya and Silia, zamindars like Rai Shib and brahmins like Matadin — that Yan pieces together a synopsis of the novel. For Yan, *Godān* presents a group of characters who are "vivid and lifelike". Whilst the first four sections of this text work as affirmative framing, the last one, by contrast, reflects on the negative or retrogressive elements in *Godān* in particular and Premchand's literary output in general.

This summary of Yan's preface shows that the affirmative framing of Indian progressive literature operated on two basic levels: the author and the text. The political importance of a foreign author was so crucial in socialist China that it often served as a prerequisite for the text's legitimacy. As in the case of Mulk Raj Anand, once the author was deemed progressive, his less radical works, such as fables and the autobiographical story "Lu" (The Road), became acceptable. By contrast, when a progressive author turned "reactionary", such as the American novelist Howard Fast, his formerly acclaimed texts soon became targets for attack.

In constructing Premchand's progressive persona, Yan Shaoduan foregrounds actions of the author's that challenged social and political taboos, such as his marrying a widow and writing polemical stories against British rule, as evidence of his anti-feudal and anti-colonial position. It is particularly interesting how Yan retells the beginning of Premchand's literary career by alluding to Lu Xun's story. Having outlined that Premchand's dream to pursue a master's degree in law did not materialise, Yan writes metaphorically:

He soon realised that to become a true lawyer of the ordinary people he had to make the entire society his tribunal and defend the oppressed and exploited masses. In order to become such a lawyer, he decided to devote himself to literary enterprise.[63]

This articulation is akin to the household story in China that Lu Xun abandoned his medical studies in Japan to become a writer, a literary physician to China's social ills. Through this allusion, Premchand is endowed with the qualities of a forerunner of modern Chinese literature because they both sacrificed personal success to empower the people. Yan's emphasis on Premchand's admiration for the Soviet writer Maxim Gorky is equally interesting; Gorky was a key figure in advancing the theory of socialist realism. Yan recounts a touching moment when Premchand said to his wife a few weeks before his death: "There will eventually come a day when the people of India revere Gorky as one of their own writers."[64] This strategy of using Soviet literary authorities to "progressivise" Indian writers can be found in the case of Tagore as well.[65]

While these strategies could be sufficient to build a progressive identity for authors like Premchand and Tagore who were dead by the 1950s, another method proved very useful and relevant to frame living authors within the progressive discourse. This method was used to highlight their roles in the ongoing China-India cultural exchanges. In the paratextual documents attached to the Chinese translations of Anand, Chander, Abbas, Navtej Singh, Balwant Gargi and Harindranath, a large amount of the affirmative framing focuses on enumerating their visits to China, their

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[63] Yan Shaoduan, 'Puliemuchangde', in *Gedan* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), 3.
[64] Ibid., 6.
[65] Tagore didn't publish in *Yiwen* with his famous poems, which had been deemed in China, from a revolutionary perspective, a far cry from progressive. Rather, the first work of Tagore's published by the journal was an abridged translation of *Rāśiyār Chiṭhi* (Letters from Russia), a collection of letters the author wrote while paying his first and only visit to the Soviet Union in 1930. In a later issue, the journal editors craftily put Tagore into dialogue with Ilya Ehrenburg, an eminent Soviet writer, by publishing the latter's recent travel essay, "Impressions of India", which praised Tagore's "progressive turn" after his Soviet trip. See Jia Yan, 'World of Literary Relations as World Literature: The Chinese Journal Yiwen/Shijie Wenxue and its Representation of Indian Literature, 1953-1963', in *World Literature in Motion: Institution, Recognition, Location*, ed. Flair Donglai Shi and Gareth Guangming Tan (Stuttgart and Hannover: Ibidem, 2019), (forthcoming).

participation in the peace movement and their direct contact with the Chinese Writers' Association. These connections serve as signs of friendship and proof of their links to the socialist world in general, and China in particular. The example of the Hindi writer Jainendra Kumar (1905-1988) attests to this argument. It seems surprising that Jainendra's *Tyāgpatra* (The Resignation, 1937), a novella about the middle-class protagonist's devotion to his young aunt, who refuses to abide by social norms, leaves her husband and family and is generally a far cry from progressive conventions, was published in Chinese in 1959 by People's Literature Press despite the fact that the translator Li Shui had been labelled a "rightist" during the Anti-rightist Campaign. The most likely explanation for this is that Jainendra, although neither a Marxist nor a PWA member, created a good impression on the Chinese literary authorities by attending the conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Lu Xun's death in Beijing in October 1956 (see Chapters 1 and 2). This fact is singled out in the brief afterword to the translation as a clear sign of affirmative framing, although the translator adds that the creation of "characters fraught with fatalistic thoughts" is a "flaw" in the book.[66]

As I have noted above, affirmative framing focuses on both the writer and the text. The translator or publisher was responsible for "explaining and justifying why certain works were not just acceptable, but meaningful and valuable within the Chinese public sphere".[67] In Yan Shaoduan's reading of *Godān*, we can identify two main affirmative strategies at work. The first involves stressing the typicality of the main characters and their circumstances. This is in line with the socialist realist doctrine that favours literary representation of the collective over the individual. However, what is typical in the progressive works of India (and perhaps other non-socialist countries) should not be understood in the socialist realist sense where typicality is "a device for

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[66] Jainendra Kumar, *Cizhi*, trans. Li Shui (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), 89.
[67] Volland, 'Clandestine Cosmopolitanism', 201.

presenting reality as it is supposed to be" or "a means of evading or idealizing reality".[68]

Rather, "typical" in novels like *Godān* reflects the majority of Indian people and their

social situations and relations as they were at a particular historical juncture, hence the

"time lag" discussed above. Yan begins his interpretation of *Godān* by sketching the

social system of 1930s India, in which the peasantry had to face exploitation on various

levels, imposed by the police, feudal aristocracy, landlords, multiple layers of

leaseholders of the land, moneylenders and the upper-caste. He then moves on to argue

that "Hori, the protagonist of *Godān*, is a specimen of millions of such peasants, and the

village Belari delineated in the novel is an Indian village-in-miniature".[69] In doing so,

the novel becomes an entry into the nation and the reader identifies Hori with the Indian

peasantry at large.

By reading Hori and every main character, positive and negative, as typical of a

particular class, Yan turns *Godān* into a novel about class struggle. This links to his

second strategy: highlighting the resistance of the oppressed class. Since the protagonist

Hori is a peasant who acquiesces to his exploitation and the entire novel reads like a

reiteration of his incapability to escape from the upper-classes' machinations, Yan

devotes a good deal of his critical energy to the more vocal characters around Hori. For

example, he praises Dhaniya, Hori's wife, for her brave (although always unsuccessful)

fight for truth instead of yielding to the village powers. His appreciation for the

character of Gobar, Hori's son, plays out in the preface, where the only excerpt from the

novel is a short skit that Gobar directs on the occasion of Holi.[70] In the skit, a peasant

masquerades as the moneylender Jhinguri Singh and enacts his attempt to exploit the

poor, but he ends up being mocked. Referring to the skit as an "imagined revenge"

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[68] Paul Hollander, *The Many Faces of Socialism: Comparative Sociology and Politics* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1983), 35
[69] Yan, 'Puliemuchangde', 11.
[70] See Premchand, *Godān*, Chapter 15.

taking place in a moment of "festive jollification and bantering", Yan astutely pinpoints the "carnivalesque" nature of the scene in the Bakhtinian sense, in which normative social hierarchies are temporarily overturned and suppressed voices are released.[71] Although he takes note of the punishment that follows the skit, Yan nevertheless cherishes the scene for the protest it effectively displays.

However, Yan Shaoduan's affirmative reading is accompanied by criticisms that largely fit the criteria of Marxist-Leninist historical materialism and the standards of socialist realism. In the last section of the preface, Yan praises Premchand's realistic portrayal of the exploitation of the poor and the engrained social problems in colonial India. However, he argues against a few novels of Premchand's, such as *Premāśram* (Love Sanctuary, 1921), for providing impossibly optimistic solutions to these problems by pinning hope on the "good" bourgeois. Similarly, he is unconvinced that the character of Malti in *Godān* could transform from a Westernised vain woman into a wholehearted servant of the people under the influence of professor Mehta's social reformist philosophy. Citing Mao Dun's work of socialist-realistic criticism, *Yedu Ouji* (Random Notes from Readings at Night, 1958), Yan Shaoduan labels Premchand's creative tendency "critical realism", a term Mao Dun had used to describe writers who succeeded in uncovering the real face of social conflict, but failed to illuminate the correct solution to this.[72] Yan attributes Premchand's creation of "unreal" characters to his early beliefs in the non-violent movement led by Gandhi and calls this a "historical limitation." However, by charting the historical trajectory of Premchand's literary career, Yan nonetheless stresses the author's gradual departure from the influence of Gandhi's reformism:

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[71] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[72] See Yan, 'Puliemuchangde', 20.

His tendency to break thorough the limitation of non-violent resistance was becoming more and more evident [when he wrote *Godān*], and his worldview was subject to constant changes during this period. That is, the progressive elements that had already occupied a dominant position were squeezing out the residual backward elements.[73]

In this transitional process, "progressive writer", the attribute always preceding Premchand in China in the 1950s, was no longer an epithet directly adapted from the Indian literary field. Rather, it was recontextualised into a narrative that literally meant "a writer in constant progress", with "progress" understood both diachronically and ideologically.

However, Yan Shaodan presents *Godān* to the reader in not only political but also aesthetic terms. His understanding of Premchand's peasant characters as "typical" does not stop at the level of external social conditions but penetrates into the characters' internal worlds. Yan astutely highlights the duality in Hori's personality: "He has all the merits and demerits of an unsophisticated countryman: honest but a bit cunning; humble but a little arrogant; weak but tenacious; selfish but full of compassion".[74] He further argues that "Premchand created some characters with extremely contradictory personalities, which had been rarely seen in the history of modern Indian literature and in his past writing, by digging into their hearts and bringing out both the treasure and waste matter in their souls".[75] In saying so, Yan Shaoduan echoes Premchand's own opinion of characterisation: "Faults make the character into a human being".[76]

In Yan Shaoduan's preface to *Godān*, three forces are brought into play: the author, the critic and the literary norms of socialist China. Roland Barthes' idea of "the death of the author" had no place here. In presenting *Godān*, Yan not only highlights

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[73] Ibid., 21.
[74] Ibid., 11.
[75] Ibid., 18.
[76] Cited in Ulka Anjaria, *Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel: Colonial Difference and Literary Form* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 41.

various aspects of Premchand's progressive persona, but also interprets the novel as largely in line with the author's own literary outlook. More importantly, only by historicising Premchand's literary trajectory does Yan Shaoduan find a way to deal with the author's "backward" tendency. However, Yan's use of socialist realist criteria to criticise Premchand, such as his creation of "unreal" characters and his failure to identify the "right" solution, imposes an impossible mission on the author. In this regard, I consider Yan Shaoduan's critical role as crucial in presenting the first Hindi novel in Chinese translation. His skilful method in navigating between the two ends of the text — the author in the original culture and the authority in the receiving culture — offers an ideologically appropriate framing to the work, while doing justice to its aesthetic excellence. While the framing legitimised the translation, the aesthetic excellence proved to be the true attraction for Chinese writers like Hao Ran, who encountered Premchand's fiction in the 1960s.

Hao Ran's Readerly Contact with Premchand

Hao Ran (1932-2008), the penname of Liang Jinguang, is known as "the socialist writer laureate par excellence".[77] He enjoyed undisputed literary stardom before and during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), mainly because his works embodied the contemporary official literary model of "revolutionary realism plus revolutionary romanticism".[78] Making his foray into fiction in 1956, Hao Ran climbed to the zenith of

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[77] Xiaofei Tian, 'Hao Ran and the Cultural Revolution', *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Chinese Literature* (2016): n.p.

[78] "Revolutionary realism plus revolutionary romanticism" was the slogan Mao Zedong promoted in 1958 in lieu of socialist realism. According to Yang Lan, the new literary model can be differentiated from socialist realism in the following four respects: "prominence given to idealism", "emphasis on a Marxist world outlook and ideological utilitarianism", "emphasis on tendentiousness in literary *zhenshi* [truth]" and "emphasis on creating idealised heroic characters". For more detail, see Yang Lan, '"Socialist Realism" Versus "Revolutionary Realism Plus Revolutionary Romanticism"', in *In the Party Spirit: Socialist Realism and Literary Practice in the Soviet Union, East Germany and China*, ed. Hilary Chung (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), 88-105.

his literary fame in the 1960s with the publication of two novels depicting the agrarian collectivisation in North China: *Yanyang Tian* (Sunny Days, 1964-1966) and *Jinguang Dadao* (The Golden Road, 1972-1974). An heir to the socialist genealogy of rural fiction that had been developed by Zhao Shuli, Ding Ling, Zhou Libo, Liu Qing and others since the 1940s, Hao Ran's novels were characterised by a preoccupation with class struggles in Chinese villages after the land reform was accomplished.

Hao Ran encountered Premchand's fiction in 1962, when he decided to draw inspiration from foreign writings on rural subjects in his first novel, *Yanyang Tian*.[79] Given the literary environment in socialist China, Hao Ran's readerly contact with Premchand seems surprising. Firstly, Premchand's name seldom entered public literary discussions during that period, and it certainly did not enjoy the status of a "model" for aspiring Chinese writers, as Mikhail Sholokhov and other Soviet writers had done in the 1950s. Moreover, Premchand's realist portrayal of enduring poverty in colonial Indian villages did not fit the standards of "revolutionary realism plus revolutionary romanticism" by which Hao Ran set out to conceive his plot and characters. Nonetheless, Hao Ran's reading of Premchand's *Godān* and his short stories engendered striking effects, not just because they left the Chinese author "thrilled", a reaction Lu Xun would have hardly associated with Indian literature. More surprisingly, as we shall see, Hao Ran's positive reception of Premchand was in fact coupled with disenchantment with the widely promulgated Soviet classics and aesthetics. Thus, Premchand's fiction offered something valuable that was lacking in the literary life of socialist China, something that became an alternative to the normative practices of Chinese writers at the time.

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[79] See Hao, 'Wo Chang Dao Nali Liuliu Waner', 120-21.

In a short memoir published in 1989, ten years after the Cultural Revolution,

Hao Ran recollected his uncanny experience of reading foreign literature in the 1950s

and early 1960s, which he did not (and could not) reveal publicly back then. He

acknowledged that the Soviet classics of socialist realism, such as *How the Steel Was*

Tempered (1934), *The Story of Zoya and Shura* (1953) and in particular *Harvest* (1950)

by Galina Nikolayeva, attracted him because of their techniques in presenting

revolutionary heroes and heroines. However, his relationship with these Soviet works

was complex. By emulating Soviet writers, Hao Ran perfected his skills in

characterising revolutionaries, but he also found his artistic outlook "hedged in with

rules and regulations that could not be shaken off for a long time".[80] Reading rural

novels while planning *Yanyang Tian* in 1962, Hao Ran experienced difficulty

identifying with such works, which were "praised in superlative terms by some

authorities between the 1930s and the 1950s" and some he could not even finish

reading.[81] On the contrary:

> It was rather the works by two foreign writers who received few
> compliments from the authorities that truly appealed to me. One was
> Bulgaria's Elin Pelin, the other was India's Premchand. For me their
> works felt alien yet familiar and intimate, unusual yet capable of invoking
> associations and thoughts. They were writers who genuinely understood
> peasants and could go deep into their hearts. They were superior to those
> writers who looked at peasants with a distant gaze or pitied them from
> high above simply by chanting a paean or an elegy.[82]

Hao Ran's preference for the less ideologically-driven rural novels of Premchand (and

Elin Pelin) over the authority-sanctioned socialist realist masterpieces is striking

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[80] Ibid., 120.

[81] Hao Ran did not name these works, but we can readily think of such Soviet rural novels as *Virgin Soil Upturned*
(1935) and *And Quiet Flows the Don* (1940) by Sholokhov.

[82] Hao, 'Wo Chang Dao Nali Liuliu Waner', 121.

because it contrasts dramatically with the strong ideological message of his own novelistic creations. This contrast implies that even for the most "disciplined" mainstream author in socialist China, writing was one thing, and reading was quite another; it was thus in reading that writers enjoyed greater autonomy.

What is of particular interest in the above quote is the contradictory feelings Hao Ran's reading of Premchand elicited. Why did Premchand's works produce both "alien" and "intimate" reading experiences? The alienation may have come from the rich "Indianness" embedded in Premchand's writing. By Indianness in this regard I do not mean the kind of (self)orientalist representation of India as an exotic and unfathomable "other", which Jin Kemu criticised in the 1940s. Rather, I understand the Indianness in Premchand's writing as what Li Yuejin calls "nativist style" (*xiangtu fengge*), reflected by an accurate and in-depth representation of the reality of rural India.[83] Therefore, what made Hao Ran feel immediately unfamiliar in reading such realist depictions might have simply been the objective differences across time and space between 1930s colonial India and 1960s socialist China. However, if we take into consideration that Hao Ran's readerly contact with Premchand took place in translation, we should also give credit to the translators for effectively preserving these differences. Yan Shaoduan's translation of *Godān* is a good example of this. First, Yan's comprehension of the religious customs, mythological references, local idioms and other cultural specificities in the original is largely correct due in part to his experience of living in India and in part to his consultation with Indian friends.[84] Second, Yan's translation strategy was one that combined what Lawrence Venuti calls "domestication" and "foreignisation".[85] He domesticised when translating dialogues so as to make the

[83] Li Yuejin, 'Puliemuchangde zai Zhongguo: Yijie, Yanjiu yu Yingxiang', in *Yindu Wenxue Wenhua Lun*, eds. Tang Renhu, Liu Shuxiong and Jiang Jingkui (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 164.
[84] See Shi Zhujun, 'Chongdu Gedan'.
[85] See Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge,

characters speak "naturally", and he foreignised when it came to cultural specificities, usually by employing transliterations and footnotes. However, I argue that Yan's "foreignising translation" was not intended to "resist dominant target-language cultural values", as Venuti suggests when putting forward this theory in the Anglo-American context,[86] but rather necessitated by an awareness of what Emily Apter calls "the untranslatable" caused by the "incommensurability" between cultures and languages.[87] Yan Shaoduan's decade-long cross-cultural experience between China and India might have allowed him to understand the "untranslatability" of certain Indian cultural phenomena, especially those replete with religious connotations, making him cautious of finding Chinese "equivalences" for these. This is evident in his decision to transliterate the Hindi title *Godān* into "Gedan", a signifier with no concrete meaning in Chinese, instead of rendering it into existing words like "xian niu" (presenting a cow) or "xisheng" (sacrifice), as later scholars suggest.[88] Such a translation strategy is largely attributable to Hao Ran's sense of alienation.

Why also "intimate" then? Hao Ran's impression of Premchand as someone "who genuinely understood peasants and could go deep into their hearts" gestures towards Premchand's exploration of the psychological nuances of peasant classes that transcends cultural distinction. Although writing from a privileged position in the 1960s, Hao Ran was born into a poor rural family, orphaned at the age of 11, and he grew up in the tumultuous 1930s and 1940s.[89] His experience of unsettled village life

1995), 1-42.

[86] Ibid., 23.

[87] Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (New York: Verso, 2013).

[88] See Tao Dezhen, ed., *Waiguo Wenxue Shi Gang* (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1990), 140. Similarly, Vishwanath Naravane criticises Gordan Roadarmel's English rendering of "The Gift of a Cow" for failing to "convey adequately the religious and sentimental associations and suggestions of the word 'godan'." See Vishwanath S. Naravane, *Premchand, His Life and Work* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1980), 156.

[89] See Hao Ran, *Wo de Rensheng: Hao Ran Koushu Zizhuan*, ed. Zheng Shi (Beijing: Huayi chubanshe, 2000), 1-50.

and severe deprivation might have made it easier for him to identify with characters such as Hori and Dhaniya.

If Hao Ran developed such an enthusiastic attitude toward Premchand before writing his novel *Yanyang Tian*, can we trace the Indian author's influence on his novel? Or did Hao Ran's contact with Premchand simply remain a private act of reading?[90] A cursory comparison of *Godān* and *Yanyang Tian* does reveal some generic similarities. Both are sprawling novels covering a wide range of social, economic and political relationships (though the 1,250-page *Yanyang Tian* is nearly three times the size of *Godān*). Both are set in a small village with numerous characters belonging to different classes. Both use the technique of omniscient third-person narration and plain language peppered with "earthy" speeches. However, these characteristics of *Yanyang Tian* are clearly inherited from the socialist rural novels published in the 1950s, rather than reflecting marks of Premchand.

Further comparison shows that *Yanyang Tian* differs from *Godān* in profound ways. The most conspicuous difference is in the plot. Set in the village Dongshanwu during the summer harvest of 1957, *Yanyang Tian* is a novel about class struggles in relation to dividends on land share between different village groups. It traces how Xiao Changchun, party secretary of the agricultural cooperative, mobilises the peasants to deal with and eventually triumph over the colluded reactionary forces led by Ma Zhiyue, the demoted former party secretary, and Ma Xiaobian, a former landlord. The novel captures a particular moment in the socialist transformation of the Chinese

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[90] Li Yuejin argues that Hao Ran's short story "Wangshi" (The Past) is almost a miniature of *Godān* because of their similarities in terms of theme and narrative structure. While *Godān* is about Hori's unfulfilled wish to have a cow, "Wangshi" tells the story of a peasant Zhu Dacheng who fails to own a donkey due to natural disasters and the exploitation of moneylenders. See Li Yuejin, 'Puliemuchangde zai Zhongguo', 164. I find such a direct influence between the two works untenable, because when "Wangshi" was written (completed in 1957 and published two years later), Yan Shaoduan's translation of *Godān* had not come out yet. Nevertheless, the resemblance is indicative of the fact that Chinese and Indian peasants had similar problems and aspirations, and both Premchand and Hao Ran addressed them through their fiction.

countryside and hence it addresses a set of social problems and political dynamics that are significantly alien to those faced by the villagers of Belari under the feudal and colonial order. Moreover, although both novels are arguably realist novels, *Yanyang Tian*, composed according to the party-sanctioned "revolutionary realism plus revolutionary romanticism", features some key elements that are absent in Premchand's social realist (or, in Mao Dun's view, "critical realist") writing. For example, *Yanyang Tian* focuses on the idealised heroic protagonist Xiao Changchun, a cadre of peasant origin, who embodies all good virtues and enlightens the other peasants. By contrast, Hori, the protagonist in *Godān*, lacks the bravery and agency to fight exploitation and he cannot even save himself from oppression. In creating party cadres like Xiao Changchun as positive heroes and portraying Ma Zhiyue and Ma Xiaobian as morally decadent villains, *Yanyang Tian*, like most other Chinese rural novels published in 1949-1978, is didactic in its intention, with an unmistakable message about the superiority of the party and socialism that cannot be found in *Godān* at all.

However, if we shift focus from the heroes and villains, to the "middle characters" in *Yanyang Tian*, evidence of Premchand's influence on Hao Ran begins to manifest. "Middle characters" usually comprise former lower-middle, poor and landless peasants. Ideologically unstable, they are the group of villagers that cadres like Xiao Changchun attempt to mobilise and the villains attempt to manipulate. This ideological uncertainty not only endows these "middle characters" with indispensable narrative weight that can influence the direction of the class struggle, but also gives the author the aesthetic space to develop more rounded characterisation. It is among this group that a Hori-like peasant character emerges.

Han Bai'an is a sixty-year-old widower who lives a poor life with his son. Among the peasants in Dongshanwu village, Han Bai'an is described in the novel as

"the most honest, most timid, most selfish and most stubborn".[91] He is a character of considerable ambiguity, who Hao Ran both criticises and sympathises with. Like Hori, Han Bai'an is hard-working, frugal, and righteous. As the name "Bai'an" (literally meaning "hundredfold peacefulness") implies, all he aspires to is a peaceful, self-sufficient life. In the face of the sweeping agricultural cooperative movement, Han Bai'an finds himself caught between the external progressive forces leading toward a collectivised socialist society and his "selfish" desire to keep a few bags of wheat to himself and his son. Having tasted poverty, Han Bai'an stands aloof from the surrounding strife in order to avoid involvement in disputes that could put his tenuous private possessions at risk. However, like Hori, Han Bai'an has a son with a progressive outlook, Han Mandao, who takes issue with his father's "backward" ideas and behaviour. A dramatic conflict breaks out when Han Mandao discovers the hidden wheat and decides to submit it to the cooperative. Han Bai'an's confusion, fear and despair are heart-breaking as he kneels to beg his son to reconsider.[92] The way he cherishes the wheat is analogous to Hori's affection for the cow.

A further inspiration that Hao Ran may have consciously or unconsciously drawn from Premchand is in the fact that, like Hori, Han Bai'an is presented at the start of the novel as double-dealing and false, currying favour with the powerful in the village. Hori believes that flattering and running errands for the zamindar Rai Sahib, who is at the same time a member of the Legislative Council, will make his life easier. Similarly, "the extremely stingy" Han Bai'an presents Ma Zhiyue, an enemy who has joined the revolutionary ranks in disguise, with a precious hen and meekly asks to work for him.[93] It is only when both Hori and Han Bai'an later fall victim to the two villains'

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[91] Hao Ran, *Yanyang Tian Diyi Juan* (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1964), 298.
[92] Ibid., 326-31.
[93] Ibid., 71.

deception and oppression that they come to realise their naivety. Nonetheless, they both submit to their hardships without protest. Han Bai'an's philosophy finds expression in Hori when he says: "When we have to live in the water, we cannot risk antagonising the crocodile."[94] However, in the socialist rural novel, "middle characters" like Han Bai'an must always be enlightened and take action by the end. While Hori works himself to death, Han Bai'an confronts Ma Zhiyue and exposes the villain's evil actions.

In the Chinese socialist rural novels published in the 1950s and 1960s, moral superiority was often considered a corollary of political progressiveness.[95] It is based on political divisions that the good and bad characters in *Yanyang Tian* are differentiated. However, if we look at Hao Ran's characterisation of Han Bai'an, this message is not conveyed in an overtly didactic manner. Having observed the conflict between Xiao Changchun and Ma Zhiyue and experienced numerous hardships himself, Han Bai'an still finds it difficult to have faith in socialism. When indoctrinated again by his progressive son and other cadres, Han Bai'an says:

> You have all been talking about socialism. My mind is still unsettled because I am not sure whether this socialism will be reached or not in the future; and if it will be, whether it will be a good thing or not. But I have come to realise at least one point, that is, anyone who advocates this "ism" is goodhearted and associated with good acts. Anyone who opposes this "ism" has a corrupt heart and does bad acts — all kinds of bad acts, no matter to whom.[96]

Here, the political-moral link is convincing because it is established not by way of indoctrination, but rather through a peasant's genuine lived experience. As honest, timid and righteous as Hori, Han Bai'an's social interactions with the others in the village

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[94] Premchand, *Godān*, 14.

[95] Cai Xiang, *Revolution and its Narratives: China's Socialist Literary and Cultural Imaginaries, 1949-1966*, trans. Rebecca E. Karl and Xueping Zhong (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 111.

[96] Hao, *Yanyang Tian Disan Juan* (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1966), 1531.

become a touchstone not of their allegiance to an ideology, but of their morality. Since in most Chinese rural novels of the time "stereotypical heroes and villains are unambiguously divided along class lines",[97] Hao Ran's creation and humanisation of "middle characters" like Han Bai'an is to some extent aesthetically experimental.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter is more concerned with textual and readerly contacts than writerly contact. By situating "progressive" Indian literature within the PRC's officially-prescribed model of world literature, I have identified a "time lag" between the "India" embodied in the imported "progressive" Indian works and the "China" in the 1950s. Contrasting the works emerging from the Indian progressive movement with those translated into Chinese, I have shown that the reception was a highly selective process and the "time lag" was further confirmed by a striking absence of the later progressive works set in post-independence India due to political considerations.

In this chapter, I also used Yan Shaoduan's preface to his translation of Premchand's *Godān* as an example to illustrate how Chinese translators managed to present the specific aesthetic values of the early Indian progressive canons while framing them in line with the PRC's socialist realist literary norms. The aesthetics of Premchand's fiction, marked by his vivid characterisation and depiction of the Indian village, appealed to Hao Ran. My analysis of Hao Ran's readerly contact with Premchand, which enabled a dialogue between Premchand and Lu Xun to actually happen, shows that Indian progressive literature not only served as an alternative to the

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[97] Bonnie S. McDougall and Kam Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers, 1997), 259.

officially promulgated Soviet classics in private reading, but also had a discernible

influence on the Chinese village novels of the time. Reviewing the Chinese rural fiction

produced in this period, literary critic Hong Zicheng rightly observes:

> The political campaigns and key events that occurred in rural areas, such
> as agricultural cooperativization, the 'Great Leap Forward,' the 'People's
> Communes' movement, and the 'struggle over the two roads' in rural
> areas, became the core of rural fiction. Everyday life, social customs, and
> feudal relationships in the countryside largely receded from the view of
> writers, or were supplemental to and corroboration of the 'current
> struggle.'[98]

In this respect, the translation and publication of *Godān* and other Indian progressive

works of the 1930s and early 1940s, rich in cultural specificities, psychological nuances

and realist representation of the everyday, went some way toward making the "receded"

return. This argument is further supported by the comparison of *Yanyang Tian* and

Godān, which reflects the potential influence of Premchand on Hao Ran in creating

rounded and complex peasant characters.

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[98] Hong Zicheng, *A History of Contemporary Chinese Literature*, trans. Michael M. Day (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 104.

Chapter 5 | Gulshan Nanda's Hindi Popular Fiction in 1980s China

When interviewed by a Chinese scholar in 1985, the leading Hindi author and critic Rajendra Yadav (1929-2013) noted that he was appalled by China's extraordinarily enthusiastic reception of Gulshan Nanda (1929-1985), a best-selling writer of Hindi popular fiction in the 1960s and 1970s. Labelling Nanda's writing "vulgar" and "formulaic", Yadav suggested that the "international recognition" the Chinese translations had given Nanda was a "heavy blow to India's literary circles".[1] The interview was published in a respected Chinese literary journal in 1987, but Yadav's polemic on behalf of the "literary circles of India" did little to curb Nanda's continued popularity in China. From 1980 to 1991, three novels and four novellas by Nanda were translated directly from Hindi into Chinese, of which *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (The Severed Kite, 1968) alone sold 251,400 copies, spawning 14 theatrical adaptations and five *lianhuanhua* (picture book) adaptations. Read, watched, listened to, sung and discussed in different dialects of Chinese, and even in some of China's minority ethnic group languages (e.g. Uighur and Mongolian) across a vast distance stretching 17 provincial-level administrative divisions (out of 33 in total), the story of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* attracted a vast audience ranging from urban middle-classes to villagers by taking on different forms.

Considered in relation to Yadav's comments noted above, China's enthusiastic reception of Gulshan Nanda also raises interesting questions pertinent to world

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[1] Yin Tong, 'Yibu Yindu Fanyi Xiaoshuo Yinqi de Fankui', *Waiguo Wenxue Pinglun*, no. 2 (1987): 134.

literature. If we follow David Damrosch's definition, Nanda's popular fiction had an undeniably "effective life as world literature" because it was "actively present within another literary system beyond that of its original culture".[2] In contrast to the low status Nanda held in the literary field in India, as Yadav's polemic suggests, in China his works were regularly included amongst modern Indian literature, and sometimes even considered "classics".[3] Some Chinese media went so far as to claim that Nanda's *Kaṭī Pataṅg* was better than the works of Tagore.[4] This contrast indicates that the symbolic value of Nanda's novels was elevated and their cultural meanings altered, as they travelled from India to China. What led to this? If the lack of canonicity in India mattered so little in Nanda's case, what factors made his "afterlife" in China so "effective"? More broadly, who decides what becomes world literature — the host culture or the guest one? Are there different reasons for popular fiction and the more "literary" genres becoming transnationally mobile?

Bearing the above questions in mind, this chapter considers China's enthusiastic textual and readerly contact with Nanda's popular fiction as an exceptional episode in contemporary China-India literary relations, as well as a significant case of trans-Asian cultural borrowing and cross-fertilising, rather than a transnational scandal (as Yadav suggests). Through a close reading of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* from both an aesthetic and social perspective, I examine the particular aspects of Nanda's popular fiction that appealed to Chinese readers — most notably its successful combination of melodramatic devices and engagement with social issues. Using the paratexts of selected translations, two core theatrical adaptations of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* and relevant critical discourse, I also explore how Chinese intermediaries, such as translators, adapters and critics, emphasised these

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[2] Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 15.
[3] See Hu Guangli, *Yindu Ershi Shiji Jingdian Xiaoshuo* (Heilongjiang: Ha'erbin chubanshe, 2006).
[4] See Yin, 'Yindu Fanyi Xiaoshuo', 134.

aspects of Nanda's fiction to make different locally-significant points. I argue that a deep understanding of Nanda's cross-border popularity requires approaching the literary world unfolding in his texts in relation to the spatial-temporal contingencies of post-Cultural Revolution China.

Nanda's works emerged in China at a time when Indian literature had regained its presence in the country due to its restored political legitimacy as a result of the normalisation of Sino-Indian relations in 1976, and the generally freer cultural climate following the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). From 1978 to 2000, more than 200 translated books of Indian literature by about 50 Indian authors appeared on China's market, and nearly half of them were being introduced to Chinese readers for the first time.[5] Situated within the larger context of post-1950 China-India literary relations, Nanda's case shows how the Chinese reception of Indian literature in the post-Mao period both departed from and carried on the values and practices of the 1950s, a decade of high socialism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, during Mao's time translations of Indian literature and foreign literature in general had been a state-driven affair, dominated by "progressive" authors with leftist orientation and considerably dependent on writerly contact facilitated by cultural diplomacy. By contrast, Gulshan Nanda became popular in China with no assistance from cultural diplomacy or any other form of official endorsement. Nor did writerly contact play a role in creating this extraordinary literary flow — no evidence suggests that Nanda visited China or had direct contact with Chinese writers.[6] The popularity of Nanda epitomises the relatively loosened cultural environment in China following Deng Xiaoping's proposal of the reform and opening-up (*gaige kaifang*) policy in 1978, at which point translator-driven

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[5] See Zhu Xiaolan, 'Zhongguo Yinduxue Zong Shumu III', *Nanya Yanjiu* no. 1 (2002): 91-96.
[6] It is said that a Chinese journalist (perhaps from the Xinhua News Agency) visited Nanda in Mumbai in the early 1980s. Interview with Zhou Zhikuan, September 9th, 2016.

selection and market-oriented publication of popular genres became possible. The larger community of Chinese scholars of Indian languages in the 1980s also meant that most of the Indian works in Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and Sanskrit could be translated directly, without the aid of a third language (English or Russian in the 1950s).

At the same time, older expectations and preferences continued to exist and impact the selection of texts after the Cultural Revolution, partly because leftist tendencies lingered in the literary field at large and partly because the Indian literary studies circle in China featured a strong intergenerational influence. As we shall see, the translation of Nanda's popular fiction resembled older practices in several respects, including a self-reflexive mode of reading and the use of paratexts as cultural contextualisation. This continuity transpired more subtly in the *huju* (Shanghai opera) adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg,* in which various legacies of the previous China-India cultural exchange were brought into play, which anchored Gulshan Nanda in the longer history of Sino-Indian cultural relations.

Gulshan Nanda's Transnational Popularity

The period between the 1960s and the 1980s is generally held as the heyday of post-independence Hindi popular literature in North India, a phenomenon that was coupled with the rise of the urban middle classes and large-scale migration to the cities.[7] This was a time when an industry, a concept crucial to defining popular fiction, emerged and operated behind the production, circulation, and consumption of Hindi popular texts,

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[7] Unfortunately, no book-length study of Hindi popular fiction has been published yet. For a good introduction to the rise and fall of Hindi "pulp" fiction, see Rashmi Singh, 'Hindi Pulp Fiction: On its Last Pages', n.d., https://www.news18.com/news/immersive/hindi-pulp-fiction.html (accessed September 25th, 2018).

which involved numerous writers, publishing houses, magazines, book sellers, and

millions of readers.[8]

With over 50 titles to his name, Gulshan Nanda was one of the period's most

prolific and successful writers of Hindi popular fiction and he has been hailed as a

forerunner in the "romance" genre.[9] Indeed, he redefined the notion of the "bestseller";

while previously a Hindi novel would qualify as a "bestseller" with a print run of 3,000-

5,000 copies, the first print order for a Gulshan Nanda novel — reportedly *Jhīl ke Us*

Pār (The Other Side of the Lake, 1971) — reached 500,000 copies, "a phenomenon

unheard of in Indian publishing history".[10] Sold cheaply at bus/train station bookstalls

and considered the perfect travel companion and after-work entertainment, Nanda's

novels enjoyed a vast readership across the Hindi hinterlands. Having obtained

significant fan frenzy among schoolboys and girls, his novels also went a long way

towards shaping the adolescent taste in fashion and their embryonic "idea of love".[11]

Nanda's popularity dwindled from the late 1980s onward, partly because of his death in

1985 and partly because of the fall of the Hindi popular fiction industry as a whole in

the wake of the advent of cable television and other forms of entertainment.[12]

Gulshan Nanda's popularity at home was transgeneric. Based in Bombay, the

centre of Hindi cinema (now famously known as Bollywood), he was closely associated

with the film industry from 1963 to 1984.[13] Writing novels in a cinematic fashion and

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[8] Ken Gelder defines popular fiction in terms of how it is "processed": "The field of popular fiction is made up not simply of the novels themselves but an entire apparatus of production, distribution and consumption…it is both cultural and industrial/commercial in character." See Ken Gelder, *Popular Fiction: The Logics and Practices of a Literary Field* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 75. In the case of Hindi popular fiction, Meerut was home to a huge industry of Hindi detective novels. See Peter Friedlander, 'Hindi Detective Pulp Fiction', *Situations* 8, no. 2 (2015): 27-47.
[9] "Romance" is how Nanda's novels have been customarily labelled in India. I take issue with this simplistic categorisation and, as I will discuss later, propose the more complex concept of "melodrama" as the genre to which they belong.
[10] A Staff Reporter, 'Paperback Sale Up by 200 Per Cent', *The Times of India*, 17 June 1971: 5. For Nanda's relationship with the Hind Pocket Books, see Mandhwani, 'Everyday Reading', 70.
[11] See Avijit Ghosh, *Bandicoots in the Moonlight* (New Delhi: Penguin Global, 2009), 168.
[12] See Friedlander, 'Hindi Detective Pulp Fiction'.
[13] See Satish Chandra Singh, 'Re-Evaluating Gulshan Nanda', 2006, http://www.boloji.com/index.cfm?md=Content&sd=Articles&ArticleID=1454 (accessed September 25th, 2018).

penning screenplays himself, Nanda had the largest number of novels translated onto celluloid at the time, with over 20 films based on his novels — many of them smash-hits of the time and later classics, such as *Neel Kamal* (1968), *Kati Patang* (1970), *Daag* (1973), *Jheel Ke Uss Paar* (1973), *Ajnabee* (1974) and *Mehbooba* (1976). The fact that Nanda was nominated six times for the *Filmfare* awards for Best Story, more times than any other author, suggests that his screenwriting talent was not just commercially proven, but also institutionally recognised within the film industry.[14]

Despite Nanda's successful dual career as a popular novelist and screenwriter in North India, world literature theorist Pascale Casanova would have hardly considered him an author capable of gaining international influence due to his lack of literary "consecration".[15] Popular fiction, the genre Nanda worked in, is positioned by Pierre Bourdieu — Casanova's main theoretical inspiration — as belonging to the "field of large-scale production" for its subordination to the taste of the "mass public", dependence on economic profitability, and lack of artistic originality.[16] This relatively disparaging view of popular fiction, widely shared by "high-brow" writers across the world, such as Rajendra Yadav, means that despite Nanda's high status in Bollywood, he lacked the recognition of literary critics in India, let alone in the so-called "centres" of the international literary field, such as Paris, London, and New York. Yadav was by no means the only gatekeeper of contemporary Indian literature who viewed Nanda with disdain. The noted novelist and journalist Khushwant Singh (1915-2014), echoing Bourdieu's delineation of the cultural field as an "economic world reversed", once

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[14] For discussions of Nanda's novels in cinematic reproduction, see Sangita Gopal, '"Coming to a Multiplex Near You": Indian Fiction in English and New Bollywood Cinema', in *A History of the Indian Novel in English*, ed. Ulka Anjaria (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 362-63.

[15] For Casanova, "consecration" is an act of granting literary capital that allows a work from the "peripheries" to enter into world literature. She argues that "critical recognition and translation are weapons in the struggle by and for literary capital", and Paris is "the chief place of consecration in the world of literature". See Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 17-21, 23 and 127.

[16] See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 125-31.

argued that although "monetarily successful", Nanda had "no standing whatsoever in the Hindi-Hindustani world of letters".[17] As a result, Nanda does not appear in any literary history of India/Hindi, anthologies of modern Indian literature, noted literary awards, or other formal recognising institutions that could bolster the cross-border transmission of his works.

Another explanation for Nanda's lack of national consecration, and thus his limited potential to go abroad, was the lack of effective translation and circulation. Although available in a few non-Hindi vernaculars, such as Urdu and Marathi, Nanda's works remained linguistically and geographically confined to particular parts of India, especially in the north and west. Despite the fact that five of Nanda's novels had been translated into English by the 1970s (English translation is supposedly an effective method of consecration) and four published in Delhi, these translations circulated poorly even locally. For instance, Mukul Kesavan, an English-reading elite living in Delhi, who craved Nanda's novels, was simply unable to find any English translation.[18] The limited influence of these English translations is perhaps because they were produced by obscure translators and published by small local publishers that did not have the same distribution network and marketing strength as Nanda's Hindi publishers, such as the Hind Pocket Books.[19] The failure to target a local audience made it even less likely that these English translations would capture a foreign readership.

However, the exceptional popularity of Gulshan Nanda's novels in China from the 1980s onward defies Casanova's theories on transnational textual flow. This was

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[17] Rahul Singh, ed., *Khushwant Singh's View of India* (Bombay: IBH Publishing Company, 1974), 268-69.
[18] See Mukul Kesavan, 'Kamala's Agony', https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/kamalas-agony/237776 (accessed September 25th, 2018).
[19] The five translated titles are: *Air Hostess* (*Ṭuṭe Paṃkh*, 1968), *Frozen Lips* (*Patthar ke Hoṃṭh*, 1967), *Love at Crossroads* (*Kaṭī Pataṅg*, 1972), *Neel Kamal* (*Nīl Kamal*, 1968) and *The Sinner* (*Kalaṃkinī*, 1969). For more details, see Dipali Ghosh, ed., *Translation of Hindi Works into English: A Bibliography* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1995). According to Ghosh's statistics, Gulshan Nanda was in fact the Hindi writer whose novels had been most frequently translated into English by the mid-1990s. By contrast, there were only four English versions of Premchand's novels, of which three were translations of *Godān*.

neither facilitated by Western or Indian literary gatekeepers' consecration, nor enabled by translation into English or other dominant European languages. Rather, all the novels were selected on the basis of the Chinese translators' own preference and interests, and were translated directly from Hindi. It is equally striking that such a large-scale, lasting and multi-layered transnational literary phenomenon thrived completely without government involvement or the capital operation of international publishing houses. Instead of being ideologically motivated, it was largely driven by academic and artistic considerations.

The entry of Nanda's novels into the Chinese cultural sphere was entirely dependent on direct translation from Hindi. Since 1980, seven titles by Gulshan Nanda, both novels and novellas, have been made available in mandarin Chinese, either in book form or in literary journals and anthologies.[20] In fact, Nanda is the second most translated Hindi author in China, second only to Premchand, the father of modern Hindi fiction. Interestingly, the translation of Nanda's popular fiction into mandarin Chinese has also led to the translation of a few titles into minority ethnic languages like Mongolian and Uighur. The intra-China translingual reception of Nanda further confirms the broad appeal of his writing to readers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Figure 5.1: Covers of Gulshan Nanda's novels in Chinese translation: *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (left) and two different versions of *Jhīl ke Us Pār* (middle and right).

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[20] These include *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, *Jhīl ke Us Pār, Sisakte Sāz, Ajanabī* and three unidentifiable works due to substantial alteration of the book titles in the Chinese translations.

Kaṭī Pataṅg or *Duanxian Fengzheng* was the earliest and it remains the most popular among all Nanda's works in Chinese translation. Translated by Tang Shengyuan and first published in 1980 by Shanxi People's Publishing House (Shanxi renmin chubanshe), it sold 174,000 copies in the first print run. After being reprinted in 1982 and republished by a different press in 1996, *Duanxian Fengzheng* is estimated to have sold over 260,000 copies in total, making it one of China's best-selling Indian novels.[21] *Jhīl ke Us Pār*, a record-breaking bestseller in India, also proved to be a success in the Chinese marketplace. Produced by two different groups of translators, who were unaware of each other's work, and released by two different publishers in 1983, *Jhīl ke Us Pār* reached a considerable Chinese readership with a total print run of more than 120,000 copies.[22]

Of Nanda's works, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* is particularly noteworthy, not only because it marked his debut in China and had the largest sales, but also because it led to an impressive body of theatrical and comic adaptations, an unprecedented phenomenon of textual contact in the history of Chinese reception of modern Indian literature. Set in contemporary North India and involving a tangled plot about a runaway bride who lives in disguise as another woman, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* spawned at least 14 theatrical adaptations in China, including ten in various forms of *xiqu* (indigenous Chinese opera), three in the form of *huaju* (modern Western-style drama) and one in *gewuju* (song-and-dance

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[21] The best-selling Indian novel in 1980s China was not *Kaṭī Pataṅg* but Krishan Chander's Urdu novella *Ek 'Aurat Hazār Dīvāne* (One Woman, a Thousand Lovers). Like *Jhīl ke Us Pār*, it had two different Chinese renditions — one translated from Russian and the other from Hindi — which together sold nearly 665,000 copies. As one critic rightly argues, "the book title might have boosted the sale, but it is a serious work of high quality." See Liu Anwu, *Yindu Wenxue he Zhongguo Wenxue Bijiao Yanjiu*, 434. Aside from the eye-catching title, we can also attribute the book's success to the popularity that Chander had gained in China since the 1950s (see Chapter 4), an advantage that Gulshan Nanda did not have.

[22] Interview with the translator Zhou Zhikuan, September 9th, 2016. It should be noted that all the Chinese translations of Nanda's novels were undertaken without paying royalties, mainly because China was not a member of the International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works until 1992. It is also said that Nanda permitted future Chinese translators exemption from royalties when he met a Chinese journalist in Bombay not long before his death in 1985.

drama) form. These adaptations were not discrete practices inspired directly by the

translated novel, but rather developed along three parallel strands, each based on a "core

adaptation" with a specific set of strategies of cultural appropriation and representation.

I therefore argue that *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s theatrical afterlife in China consisted of two

moments: the three core adaptations, produced in different locales, but all in 1983,

define the first moment, characterised by creative novel-to-theatre adaptation; and the

later (re)adaptations can be regarded as belonging to a second moment, one of intra-

theatrical reworking stimulated by the core versions' artistic and market success.

Adaptations related to the first strand mostly took the form of modern *huaju* and

had particular connections with the restored theatre education in post-Cultural

Revolution China. The core version in this strand is a seven-act play named *Duanxian

Fengzheng*, adapted by Wang Yansong, who worked for Shenyang Huaju Troupe in

Liaoning (a province in the northeast) after graduating from Shanghai Theatre Academy

in 1982.[23] Experimenting with the "exotic" Indian elements, including songs and

dances, the play not only gained exceptional regional popularity in the Northeast in

1984, but was also staged in Beijing later that same year.[24] In 1985, this play was

selected by Shanghai Theatre Academy, the playwright's alma mater, as part of its

repertoire for training both actors and directors. The play was prepared in particular for

trainees from minority ethnic groups, partly because of a widely held stereotype in

China that minority ethnic people are better at singing and dancing than the Han people.

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[23] See Wang Xiulin, 'Nianqing de Yishu Tansuozhe: Ji Huaju Daoyan Wang Yansong', in *Yilin Yiye* (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2003), 141-44. Wang Yansong was not the only *huaju* adapter of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in 1983 China. Sheng Kefa, a theatre actor and playwright from Benxi City in the same province, brought out an adaptation named *Taohun* (Running Away from the Wedding). The influences of the two plays on one another are difficult to trace because they used different titles and emphasised different subplots of the novel. Moreover, unlike Wang, Sheng was not interested in incorporating Indian-style songs and dances, though he employed Indian music. I do not regard Sheng's version as a core adaptation because it did not spawn readaptations. In addition, another *huaju* readaptation emerged in Fujian, one of the southern provinces of China, in 1984.

[24] The play had been staged over 150 times before its popularity fell in 1985 due to the nationwide shrinking of theatre caused by the popularisation of television sets and other modes of entertainment. See An Yutian, *Xitan* (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1992), 89. Its popularity attracted a *huaju* troupe in the neighbouring Jilin province to perform the same play in 1985.

The "Mongolian class" from the acting department — a group of undergraduates recruited from Inner Mongolia in order to cultivate talent for the development of local theatre — performed the play in late 1985.[25] Having gained training at the Shanghai Theatre Academy, some theatre directors from Guangxi and Sichuan — two provinces in the Southwest that have a concentration of minority ethnic communities — readapted *Duanxian Fengzheng* using local dramatic and musical forms.[26]

The second and third strands of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in Chinese adaptations both developed within the realm of indigenous operas. The major difference between these two strands is that while the second combines the setting of contemporary India in the novel with local dramatic expressions, the third translocates the story to ancient China and removes all links to India. This dramatic difference in approaching and appropriating *Kaṭī Pataṅg* suggests that what mattered to the Chinese adapters was both the novel's unique cultural appeal and its plot.

The second strand originated with the 1983 *huju* (Shanghai opera) adaptation produced by Shen Ying, a veteran playwright affiliated to Taicang Huju Troupe from Jiangsu province in Eastern China. This *huju* version gained immediate recognition from professionals and general audiences alike: it won several important theatre awards for adaptation, directing, acting, and stage design at both the city and provincial levels; it was published in respected journals such as *Jiangsu xiju* (The Jiangsu Journal of Drama) and received positive appraisal from theatre critics;[27] it ran over 400 performances and was later made into TV programmes and comic books.[28] Following

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[25] See Dai Ping, *Chuying de Jiyi: Shanghai Xiju Xueyuan Peiyang Shaoshu Minzu Yishu Rencai Jishi 1959-2006* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 2007), 177.

[26] In Guangxi province, the play was readapted into *caidiaoju* (colour tune opera) as *Fangcao Xin* (Heart of Fragrant Grass) by Liuzhou Song and Dance Troupe around 1985. In Sichuan, the play was reproduced in musical form by Wanxian Song and Dance Troupe with the name *Duanxian Fengzheng* retained. See ibid., 232; and Sichuan sheng wanxian shi wenhua ju, *Wanxian Diqu Wenhua Yishu Zhi* (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996), 187-89.

[27] See, for example, Shen Weide, 'Yibu Yiguo Qingdiao de Chuanqi: Xi Du Huju Duanxian Fengzheng', *Jiangsu Xiju*, no. 6 (1984): 40-42.

[28] For more details about the play's popularity, see Chen Youjue, 'Taicang Huju Tuan de Sanshiwu Nian', in *Taicang Wenshi Ziliao Jicun*, ed. Zhengxie taicang xian wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, vol. 7 (Taicang: Zhengxie taicang xian

the success of the *huju* adaptation, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* soon became available in other traditional operatic forms in Eastern China, such as *yueju*, *yongju* and *xiju*.[29] The *huju* adaptation even reached far-flung areas like Guangdong province in the south, inspiring a readaptation into *shangeju* (mountain song opera), a popular form performed in Hakka dialect by the Pingyuan Shangeju Troupe. Touring mostly rural and industrial areas, the opera ran for 133 performances in six months, drawing in about 160,000 spectators.[30]

The third strand, as mentioned above, is characterised by a tendency to indigenise; it originated with the 1983 *pingju* adaptation *Feng Luo Wutong* (A Phoenix Landing on the Wutong Tree) created by Shijiazhuang Pingju Troupe from Hebei province in North China. It replaced the novel's spatial, temporal, and cultural coordinates, while maintaining the narrative and key character relationships; these dramatic but successful alterations spawned a series of readaptations into various regional operas, like *yuju* in Henan province, *qiongju* in Hainan province, and *hanju* in Guangdong province. In 1987, *Fengluo wutong* was adapted into *jingju* or Beijing Opera by Beijing Jingju Troupe, as *Chanjuan wu* (The Wronged Moon).

The translations and theatrical adaptations of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* led to another much-loved type of adaptation — *lianhuanhua*. A kind of mass-produced pocket book combining pictures and words, *lianhuanhua* was "the most characteristic and dominant form of comic popular in China since the 1920s and at least until the late 1980s".[31] Being rendered as a *linhuanhua* was generally indicative of a work's intrinsic adaptability and its strong potential to entertain. While the 1980s saw a handful of

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wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui, 1990), 84-90.

[29] The *yueju* adaptation was prepared by Wenling Yueju Troupe in Zhejinag province in 1983, the *xiju* adaptation by Qingpu Xiju Troupe in Shanghai in 1984, and the *yongju* adaptation by Ningbo Yongju Troupe in 1985. While the *yongju* adaptation was entitled *Duanxian Fengzheng*, the *yueju* and *xiju* versions were named *Weihun de guafu* (An Unmarried Widow), a name Taicang Huju Troupe adopted briefly.

[30] See Ling Yuzheng, 'Pingyuan Shangeju Tuan Jianchi wei Qunzhong Fuwu', in *Pingyuan Xiangqing*, ed. Pingyuan xiangqing bianji zu (Pingyuan: Pingyuan xiangqing bianji zu, 1986), 95.

[31] Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 331.

lianhuanhua adaptations of Indian films, such as *Awaara*, *Carvan*, *Noorie*, and *Sargam*, which had all been released in China, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* — whose film adaptation was not released in China — was one of a few Indian literary works that attracted Chinese *lianhuanhua* producers.[32] At least five *lianhuanhua* titles related to the novel emerged in the 1980s: three were hand-drawn comics based on the translation, and the other two were collections of stills from the aforementioned *huju* and *pingju* performances, indicating their exceptional success. Altogether, these *lianhuanhua* adaptations sold more than a million copies, although the exact number of readers is difficult to calculate as these low-priced pocket books were circulated from reader to reader within families, schools, factories and circles of friends. Furthermore, these cheap and portable reading materials could more easily reach rural readers, unlike book-length novels that were mainly distributed in cities and towns.

Figure 5.2: Five different *lianhuanhua* adaptations of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, of which three are hand-drawn comics (above) and the other two are collections of stills from the *pingju* and *huju* theatrical performances (below).

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[32] Apart from *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, Kalidasa's Sanskrit play *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and Krishan Chander's novella *Ek 'aurat hazār dīvāne* were also available as *lianhuanhua* adaptations.

As the above has shown, the introduction of Nanda's popular Hindi novels, and *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in particular, engendered a vast, multi-layered and generative cultural space, which involved numerous translators, publishers, theatre directors, adapters, actors, singers, dancers, stage designers, literary and drama critics, painters and other agents of textual and artistic contact. Considering the guest and host cultures alongside one another, in the following sections I will explain the reasons for Nanda's immense popularity by focusing successively on the novel *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, the Chinese translators' choices, and the adapters' strategies.

Kaṭī Pataṅg: A Relevant Indian Melodrama

In this section, I undertake a two-layered analysis of the novel *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, first in its own right as an effective melodrama, and then in relation to the spatial-temporal contingencies of the host culture — post-Cultural Revolution China. This approach is based on two basic assumptions. First, popular fiction has universal appeal unbounded by cultural and national boundaries. Second, readers of popular fiction, as Janice Radway argues, are far from uncritical, passive, and escapist; rather, they engage with the characters by relating to their own lived experience and expectations.[33] Extending the second assumption to the transnational context, I regard the host culture readers as equally, if not more, critical. As we shall see, Chinese readers' relationship with *Kaṭī Pataṅg* involved what Shu-mei Shih has referred to as "relational comparison", because the novel addressed social concerns and issues of moral order that were easily relatable to Chinese realities immediately after the Cultural Revolution.[34]

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[33] See Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
[34] Shih, 'World Studies and Relational Comparison'.

Although love appears to be the dominant theme of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, I would caution against labelling this simply as a romantic novel. Rather, following John Cawelti's classification of genre-fiction formulas, I read the novel as a "melodrama" characterised by a combination of generic hybridity, intensified effects, and moral fantasies.[35] The first characteristic of melodrama, according to Cawelti, is that it "can contain all the other fantasies and often does".[36] *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, I argue, in fact contains three major genres of popular fiction: adventure, crime fiction and, to a greater extent, romance. Set in contemporary North India, the novel opens *in media res* with an adventure-like scene. It begins with a titillating scene in which Banvari and Shabnam (the villain and the vamp) are about to have sex in a hotel room. The protagonist, Anjana, who has run away from home on the day of her wedding, has come to join her beloved Banvari, only to discover that he is with another woman and he was only pursuing her for her money. Disgusted and shocked by this revelation, Anjana attempts to repair her misstep by returning to the wedding mandap. However, a car accident prevents her from reaching home in time. By the time Anjana finally arrives, her uncle — her sole guardian since the death of her parents — has died of shock and humiliation. Leaving for the railway station, Anjana encounters her old friend Poonam, who recently lost her husband, Shekar, in a car accident and is taking their son to her father-in-law Lala Jagannath, a retired deputy collector in Nainital. Poonam has never met her in-laws because Shekar married her against their will. Poonam convinces Anjana to accompany her to begin her new life, but a rail crash separates them and kills Poonam. Just before her death, Poonam entrusts her child, Rajeev, to Anjana. Promising to take care of the baby as if it were her own, Anjana continues the journey to Nainital by taxi but is

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[35] See John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 44-47.
[36] Ibid., 45.

robbed by the driver. A local forestry officer, Kamal, saves her and escorts her to meet Lala Jagannath, who he knows well. After such a whirlwind of dramatic events — all presented at speed in four chapters — Anjana is propelled by circumstances to live as Poonam, taking care of the latter's baby and in-laws. Although unmarried, she now has to embrace not just motherhood and bahu-hood (life as a daughter-in-law), but also widowhood.

The initial four chapters, in which Anjana has just met the hero, Kamal, but no mutual affection has been established, read like Anjana's solo adventure, marked by her extensive travels and the many adversaries she has grappled with *en route*. While the point at which Anjana settles in Lala Jagannath's family as their widowed daughter-in-law renders her less mobile, I consider her adventure unfinished: it transforms from an external to an internal journey and from a physical to a psychological one in the sense that she has to keep her secrets and retains a fear of recognition by people who know her as Anjana. Such a potential identity crisis produces a number of thrilling moments when Anjana manages the situations with a seemingly clear head but internal turmoil.

After Anjana/Poonam's harmonious encounter with Kamal and her in-laws, who take her in without hesitation and even with a sense of guilt for having neglected her in the first place, the narrative settles into a calmer rhythm, yet with a precarious new balance. When Kamal finally reveals his love for Anjana/Poonam and she reciprocates, she also finds out that he was in fact her intended groom and she thus has to hide her feelings and secrets. Here we encounter a typical melodramatic trick, which Steve Neale calls the "discrepancy in knowledge and point of view": Anjana knows and we the readers know, but Kamal doesn't.[37] By making Anjana the character who is equipped with more information and hence obliged to make choices, the novel focalises on her

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[37] See Steve Neale, 'Melodrama and Tears', *Screen* 27, no. 6 (1986): 6-23.

and shows the development and setback in the couple's relationship from her point of view, not Kamal's. Thus, the romantic narrative in *Kaṭī Pataṅg* is heroine-oriented and foregrounds female subjectivity. In this respect, the novel differs from typical Western romance fiction. Tania Modleski, for instance, has shown that the heroines in Harlequin Romances often engage in a "continual deciphering of the hero's behaviour" and probe for "the secret underlying the masculine enigma",[38] whereas in *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, it is the hero, Kamal, who tries again and again to "decipher" the meaning of Anjana's comments and actions resulting from her internal conflict.

The story comes to a point of crisis when Banvari and Shabnam intrude on Anjana's life with an evil scheme. From this point on, the novel reads like a work of crime fiction in that the author presents various thrilling elements typical of the genre, such as blackmailing, murder, plotting, counterplotting, and detection. Familiar with Anjana's secrets, Banvari blackmails her for a large share of the money that he thinks Anjana/Poonam will inherit from her deceased husband and her aged father-in-law. With no intention of profiting from the family, Anjana refuses Banvari's demands and tells him she will not meet him again. There are a few horrifying moments when Banvari "penetrates" the safe haven of the villa. The most shocking scene comes when Banvari secretly poisons Lala Jagannath with a heavy dose of sleeping pills and plants evidence to implicate his daughter-in-law. The case gets even more intricate when Banvari claims that Anjana is his wife and Shabnam is the real Poonam in order that Shabnam can secure Lala's inheritance. Anjana is put behind bars as all evidence is against her. After finding out Anjana's true identity and the poignant story behind her choice, however, Kamal decides to forgive her and save her. In the climax of the last three chapters, things fall into place, with Kamal, Anjana, and the police counterplotting

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[38] Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-produced Fantasies for Women* (London: Methuen, 1982), 34.

to ensnare the Banvari and Shabnam. In a dénouement that ingeniously mirrors the opening, Anjana visits Banvari in a hotel room claiming to be his wife and she pretends to still be in love with him, begging him to run away with her. This provokes Shabnam so much that she blurts out the truth in a panic, which is heard by the police waiting outside. As a result, the evil couple are ultimately brought to justice.

Reading *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in part as crime fiction is of particular interest in terms of its presentation of the detection episode. As Francesca Orsini shows, one of the major tasks in studying detective novels is uncovering who holds the "detective function".[39] In *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, while a policeman from the Crime Investigation Department (CID) steps in to investigate the case, the one who actually does the detecting and designs the counterplot is Kamal. Moving back and forth between the police station, Lala's villa, the chemist's and the clinic to find witnesses, collect proof and eventually exonerate Anjana, Kamal is depicted here as an intelligent and chivalrous hero.

In fusing romance, crime, detection and adventure into one, Gulshan Nanda creates a prismatic world filled with diverse entertaining elements that offer abundant emotional stimuli. However, the hybridisation of different formulae is only one part of melodrama's appeal. To better understand how *Kaṭī Pataṅg* has such a special hold on both Indian and Chinese readers, we should consider the ways in which Nanda takes advantage of the second characteristic of melodrama: intensified effects. According to Cawelti, one of the most effective melodramatic techniques to intensify effect is "simplifying" the narrative by predominantly directing the reader's attention towards "moments of crisis" because these are the most powerful in inducing direct and immediate emotional responses. "The successful melodramatist has the ability to invent a great variety of plausible crises and to move us hurriedly but persuasively from one to

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[39] See Francesca Orsini, *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India* (Permanent Black, 2009), 247-53.

the other."[40] Here, the keywords that Cawelti puts forward but fails to address are "hurriedly" and "persuasively". I argue that Gulshan Nanda succeeded in achieving these two effects in *Kaṭī Pataṅg* by skilfully making the protagonist, Anjana, constantly caught between what I designate "external crises" and "internal crises", instead of throwing a plethora of sensational events indiscriminately onto to the pages.

In *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, major external crises usually take the form of dramatic accidents that involve matters of life and death; for example, Anjana's escape, the train accident and the poisoning, which lead to the deaths of Anjana's uncle, Poonam and Lala Jagannath respectively, all of which leave Anjana in a conundrum. Broadly speaking, all coincidental events that cause sudden changes in a character's fate or the relationship dynamics between characters can be regarded as external crises. Such moments include the exposure of Anjana's disguise when she encounters Shabnam in the restaurant, and her transformation from demure daughter-in-law into suspicious profiteer when her letter of confession to Kamal ends up in Lala's hands. As key melodramatic plot devices, these life-changing accidental and coincidental events are constantly used to drive the narrative forward. As I have shown in discussing the novel's beginning (and ending) chapters, a high density of such crises can speed up the narrative tempo considerably. They place Anjana immediately in an extreme situation that implies the threat of a bad end and, in so doing, quickly establish the reader's sympathy for her. Throughout the novel, external crises are deployed to temporarily impede the fulfilment of desire whenever the story seems to be unfolding in a promising direction. For instance, by making Anjana's letter fall into the wrong hands, the union of the loving couple is delayed; even in the last few pages, the author still entertains the possibility that Anjana might leave Kamal after being released. This is the time, according to Steve

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[40] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, 264.

Neale, when tears — a "product of powerlessness" — are likely to be shed because of the fear that the revelation may come "too late".[41] Only after undergoing all the twists and turns caused by external crises, can the readers' satisfaction be maximised when Anjana and Kamal come together through love and confession at the novel's end.

Theoretically, "the greater the gloom and uncertainty the melodramatist can plunge us into, before revealing the basic morality and order of the world, the more fully he can achieve the basic effect of melodrama."[42] However, how can the melodramatist ensure that the work, characterised by a succession of fictitious coincidences, affects the readers "persuasively"? Gulshan Nanda solved this problem in *Kaṭī Pataṅg* by devoting a large amount of creative energy to showing the protagonist's inner struggles, exploring her motives, and justifying her actions. These uncharacteristic melodramatic objectives are achieved through a number of internal crises featuring bewildering psychological dilemmas. If external crises are designed to propel Anjana incessantly to move and react, internal crises allow her to stop and reflect. Appearing only episodically between various incidental events, internal crises create interstitial spaces where the reader can penetrate the protagonist's mental world and generate deeper empathy.

In *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, internal crises are presented with the assistance of spatial arrangements. As mentioned above, Anjana's mobility is mostly limited to the villa after her arrival in Nainital in the guise of Poonam. Though part of a private residence, the villa's living room does not differ much from the outside world in that both are spaces where Anjana can potentially fall victim to external crises: while she always faces new problems when she goes out, life in the living room does not seem to be any easier as her activities are always under the gaze of her in-laws and the maidservant;

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[41] Neale, 'Melodrama and Tears', 11.
[42] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, 264.

more worryingly, Banvari can also visit at any time. As well as these public and semi-public spaces, Gulshan Nanda also carves out a space within the villa that is almost exclusive to Anjana — her "dead husband" Shekhar's bedroom —attaching considerable aesthetic significance to it. The bedroom functions in the novel as a haven where Anjana can enjoy momentary but important privacy. It offers an undisturbed place for Anjana to retreat to, avoid public inspection, look through the window without being looked at and, most significantly, stop acting as Poonam. However, this self-returning process is by no means easy, and every time she comes back to the bedroom at the end of the day, she does so experiencing the aftershock of all the external crises she has suffered in the daytime, which reinforces her dilemma between discarding the disguise and keeping it. In chapter ten, for instance, Kamal drives Anjana/Poonam back to the villa and makes his courtship explicit for the first time, which makes her deeply anxious. Without giving any affirmative or negative answer, Anjana rushes back to her bedroom, where she tries to suppress her desire for Kamal, but fails. While writing a letter to Kamal revealing her concealed identity and her love, Anjana is caught in a deeper psychological plight:

> All of a sudden, her hand ceased moving. Ink spread over the paper and a shadow appeared indistinctly from behind the flapping curtains. The words Poonam uttered in her last breath came to haunt her. What came together was the promise she made to her dying friend, a promise she had sworn to keep for a lifetime. It all came back. Her eyes couldn't help falling on Rajeev's tender cheeks. She looked at what she had written on the paper once again — perhaps reading a few words out — and then tore it into pieces. When she was about to throw the torn-up letter through the window, God knows what changed her mind. She drew her hands back, turned around, and threw the scraps into the burning flames of the brazier.[43]

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[43] Gulshan Nanda, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books Pvt. Ltd., 1968), 88.

In making Anjana's quandary tangible to the reader, Gulshan Nanda does not simply tell us through the omniscient narrator that it is Poonam's voice that makes her hesitant. More nuanced techniques are at play, such as the use of symbolism to externalise Anjana's feelings: while the dark ink transforming into a dark shadow is a sign of threat, the flapping curtains clearly symbolise the restlessness of her mind.[44] Anjana's mental activities are also represented through a subtle description of silent but meaningful movement: her gaze shifting between Rajeev, Poonam's baby, and the letter to Kamal reflects her choice between duty and love; her act of "reading a few words out" reveals her uncontrollable desire for Kamal; and, finally, her decision to burn the scraps manifests her resolution to suppress her wish.

Unlike the later scene in which Anjana writes another letter to Kamal and actually sends it, the scene under discussion delays the fulfilment of desire not through an external accident (the letter falling into the wrong hands), but through an internal struggle, which not only makes Anjana's uncomfortable interactions with Kamal in the following chapters logical, but also helps intensify the reader's sadness when the second letter also gets her into trouble. Furthermore, as most of the bedroom scenes take place toward the end of a chapter, they help end each episode with suspense — Anjana's unsolved conundrum — and hence drive the reader constantly forward with the question: what will she do next?

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[44] The use of symbolism as a means to represent inner feelings is ubiquitous in *Kaṭī Pataṅg*. For more examples, see ibid., 70-71.

Figure 5.3: The bedroom scene in three different *lianhuanhua* adaptations.

A third and final characteristic of melodrama, as Cawelti observes, is its "moral fantasy of showing forth the essential 'rightness' of the world order".[45] Like most melodramatic works, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* supports the idea that "good is rewarded and evil is punished" by giving the story a happy ending after several acts suggesting that the good may in fact fail. For Anjana, the reward is two-fold: justice and romantic love. If we consider the timing of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s appearance in China — only four years after the end of the Cultural Revolution, both justice and romantic love were important themes that might have led to the novel's popularity, because they gave expression to feelings that had been repressed during the Cultural Revolution.

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[45] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, 45.

First, personal and romantic love emphasised the importance of individual desires that had previously been subordinated to collectivism. Gulshan Nanda's depiction of the love between Anjana and Kamal is never sensuous (eye contact is the main vehicle for communicating their love). While eroticism is stressed in Banvari and Shabnam's hotel scenes, they never contain any explicit sexual description and the author clearly suggests a relationship between love of carnal pleasure and moral decay. This controlled representation of individual love chimed with the generally puritanical and morally-charged public discourse about love in China in the early 1980s, which would have made the novel at once tempting and officially acceptable. In fact, the novel's moralistic potential for educating people about love, as we shall see below, was taken even further in the *pingju* adaptation.

Second, like many popular fictional works in 1980s China, *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s emphasis on justice, in the sense that the innocent are ultimately exculpated while the guilty are punished, fitted with China's political environment at the turn of the 1980s, which was marked by a movement called "bringing order out of chaos and distinguishing the true from the false" (*boluan fanzheng*).[46] The way in which the novel appealed to thousands of Chinese readers and spectators bears some resemblance to China's enthusiastic reception of the Hindi film *Awaara*, in which the "depiction of justice resonated powerfully with people who had suffered through many political upheavals as well as the legal anarchy of the Cultural Revolution".[47] However, unlike *Awaara*'s social realist orientation, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* is less interested in showing the importance of a modern legal system — courtroom, procedural trials, and lawyers — for restoring justice than in highlighting the forgiving and chivalrous hero and the

[46] See Ye Xumin et al., *Bashi Niandai Zhongguo Tongsu Wenxue*, eds. Wang Xianpei and Yu Kexun (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 46.
[47] Alison W. Conner, 'Trials and Justice in Awaara: A Post-colonial Movie on Post-revolutionary Screens?', *Law Text Culture* 18 (2014): 47.

morally unassailable heroine. Thus, if *Awaara* impressed post-Mao Chinese people mainly due to its call to use the law instead of bloodline as the criteria to define good and bad, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* did so by emphasising the importance of a person's moral fibre and qualities expressed through interpersonal relationships, such as forgiveness, trust, and affection between family members, friends, and lovers. The fact that these values and relations had been challenged during the Cultural Revolution might have led Chinese readers to search for them in any given work. After all, reading is always a historically circumscribed act. The socio-political milieu at a particular juncture may substantially alter the way a text is read. This argument is supported by a comparison between the way in which Premchand's *Godān* was interpreted by Chinese readers in the 1950s and in the 1980s. As analysed in Chapter 4, Yan Shaoduan's interpretive focus was on the novel's depiction of the plight of the Indian peasantry. However, in a 1980 article by Shi Zhujun, Yan's wife, in memory of her husband who had been labelled a "class enemy" and died in a labour camp during the Cultural Revolution, the author recounted how she was separated from Yan and forced to expose his "crimes". This experience led to a new approach to the text: when re-reading it after a decade of catastrophe caused by the Gang of Four, Shi was now deeply touched by the enduring love between Hori and Dhaniya. The characters' relationship was invoked to mirror a real-life relationship, generating a kind of "relational comparison".[48]

Although *Kaṭī Pataṅg* does not fit neatly into what Cawelti calls "social melodrama" in that it does not aim to combine the melodramatic aspects discussed with an "interest inherent in a detailed, intimate, and realistic analysis of major social or historical phenomena",[49] this should not prevent us from noticing the novel's social fabric and the author's treatment of social topics, particularly regarding women. By

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[48] See Shi, 'Chongdu Gedan yi Shaoduan'.
[49] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, 261.

centring *Kaṭī Pataṅg* on an upper middle-class Hindu family located in Nainital, a small town that had been a British hill station, Gulshan Nanda designed a refined social setting that reflected a postcolonial India that combines tradition and modernity. On the one hand, there is a lot of genteel and modern sociability centred around clubs, birthday parties, Western music, speaking English, drinking tea (not *chai*) and coffee, which help us recall the town's colonial legacy. On the other hand, time and again we encounter various signs of Hindu tradition, such as arranged marriage, the chaste widow, the honour (*izzat*) of a family, and a woman's domesticity and propriety (*maryādā*).

As a heroine-oriented melodrama, *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s narrative about widowhood under patriarchal pressures comes across as "vraisemblable" in that the characters' "actions answer…to a body of maxims accepted as true by the public to which the narrative is addressed".[50] Although experiences of widowhood in India varied greatly by this time, Nanda draws a plausible picture of the duties and responsibilities (*zimmedārīs*) widows were expected to fulfil by describing Anjana/Poonam's selfless domestic life and showing how the seemingly big-hearted patriarch and society (*samāj vāle*) react when she behaves "unconventionally". For instance, Anjana/Poonam is encouraged to go out, but there are clear boundaries that become verbalised once they are crossed, if she goes out walking alone or comes back too late. Widow re-marriage seems to be possible, and even encouraged, but the father-in-law insists on marrying her off "like a daughter", not the widowed daughter-in-law, so as to maintain the family's honour.[51] At numerous places, the social perception of widow remarriage is described in explicit terms: while Anjana/Poonam herself calls it a "sin" (*pāp*),[52] Kamal's father refers to a widow as a "moth-eaten apple" (*ghun lag gayā* seb).[53]

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[50] Gérard Genette, '"Vraisemblance" and Motivation', trans. David Gorman, *Narrative* 9, no. 3 (2001; 1969): 242.
[51] Nanda, *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, 164.
[52] See, for example, ibid., 166.
[53] Ibid., 171.

Gulshan Nanda's depiction of the predicaments of women, especially regarding widowhood and arranged marriage, were not unfamiliar to Chinese people in the early 1980s.[54] In fact, these aspects were used by Chinese critics, especially female critics, as a point of reference to activate a "relational comparison" between the textual world and the world they lived in. In her assessment of the *huju* (Shanghai opera) adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in a 1984 article, Shen Weide praises Anjana's escape from an arranged marriage and Kamal's love for a widowed mother as rebellious attitudes toward "feudal" marriage. Referring to Anjana and Poonam by using the Chinese idiom "beautiful women are always ill-fated" (*zigu hongyan duo boming*), Shen also links their repressed subjectivity and dependence on men to a similar array of problems faced by Chinese women in pre-socialist times and, to a lesser extent, in the present. This self-reflexive reading process led to comments on the recent efforts by the Communist Party to enact new laws to protect women's rights. In this respect, she regards *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s *huju* adaptation as an artistic piece that depicts Indian life but is also of practical relevance to China.[55] Interestingly, while neither the novel nor its Hindi film adaptation shows whether Anjana and Kamal will (and can) ultimately get married, almost all Chinese adaptations end with a wedding scene or agreement, suggesting that a conjugal union is underway. This alteration can be seen as the Chinese adapters' way of providing a more unequivocal answer to the social questions Nanda's novel raised.

Re-evaluating Popular Fiction

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[54] Despite the fact that a new marriage law had been adopted in 1950 that prohibited interference with the remarriage of widows and emphasised free choice of partners, these problems still existed in the 1980s, especially in rural areas and small towns. These problems were frequently criticised in China's public sphere. See, for example, Ren Guojun, 'Lue Lun Fengjian Hunyin zai Dangqian de Biaoxian ji Weihai', *Zhengfa Luntan*, no. 1 (1980): 23, 72-78.
[55] See Shen, 'Yibu Yiguo Qingdiao de Chuanqi', 41.

Gulshan Nanda's higher symbolic capital in China was largely due to the strong scholarly elements underpinning the translation of his novels: all his translators emerged from a younger generation of academy-trained Hindi specialists; book copies were purchased by academic institutions like the South Asia Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and most of the selected titles were translated in a scholarly style. Why did Chinese academic translators opt for a Hindi popular fiction writer in the first place and why did they approach his works so seriously? In this section, I will address these questions by exploring the Chinese translations of Nanda's novels in relation to their material features and the translators' subjectivity.

The availability of texts seems to be a valid point of departure. Gulshan Nanda's works became available in China mainly through academic conduits, which resulted from China's revived institutional effort to bolster Indian studies in the country. Considering that the period in which Gulshan Nanda was at the height of his success in India — the 1960s and 1970s — coincided with political chaos in China and the breakup of formal relations between the two countries, it seems fair to suggest that his novels became available in China no earlier than the late 1970s. Although we know little about how Tang Shengyuan — the first Chinese to introduce Nanda by translating *Kaṭī Pataṅg* — encountered the novel,[56] it is clear that later translators obtained Nanda's novels from the book collection at the South Asia Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.[57] One of two revived centres of Indian studies in China (the other was Peking University), the institute received subsidies to purchase books directly from India for research purposes from the late 1970s onward. Members of the

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[56] The only information about Tang I have gathered is that he joined the Hindi division of Radio Beijing (today's China Radio International) in the late 1970s after studying Hindi at Beijing Broadcasting College (today's Communication University of China). He died young, leaving behind two translations — one of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* and the other of Krishan Chander's satire *Ek Gadhe kī Ātmakathā* (co-translated with Wang Suomin). Interview with Trinetra Joshi, October 20th, 2017.

[57] Interview with Xue Keqiao, July 19th, 2016; and interview with Zhou Zhikuan, September 9th, 2016.

institute enjoyed considerable freedom in selecting literary titles from the publishing catalogues provided by Indian book dealers. As well as well-known titles and canonical authors, many unfamiliar ones were also selected based on interest or "instinct".[58] Since it was Indian book suppliers that prepared the book lists, it is not surprising that the names of popular writers like Gulshan Nanda were appearing.[59]

As soon as texts become accessible in the host culture, the motivations for translation can be complex, and the case of Gulshan Nanda in China serves as a good example of this. First, it is important to consider that academic translators are not just creative intermediaries, but also pleasure-seeking readers in their own right. In fact, the two translators I interviewed both emphasised that their enjoyment of Nanda's novels was a crucial impetus to their translation, which is proof of the effectiveness of Nanda's melodrama, as shown above. Moreover, Nanda's use of the Hindi combines liveliness and literariness: while dialogues and descriptions are generally written in a colloquial style, they are peppered with stock metaphors and poetic expressions. Characterised by this simple but refined language style, Nanda's novels were regarded by young Chinese scholars of Hindi literature, who had little contact with the language and literary texts written in that language during the Cultural Revolution, as useful materials for learning Hindi, and translation promised to be an enhancement of that learning process.[60]

Simpler language meant quicker translation. Whilst translating a novel by Premchand could take years of labour, a novel by Gulshan Nanda took, in Xue Keqiao's

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[58] Interview with Xue Keqiao, July 19th, 2016.

[59] This claim is attested by the way in which UK public libraries ordered Hindi books from Indian booksellers around the same period. "If the library requested a book supplier to supply 100 popular fiction, the book supplier should supply books written by popular writers like Gulshan Nanda and Premchand, not books translated into Hindi of the well-known authors of the other languages e.g. Rabindranath Tagore." See S.K. Rait, *Acquisition and Cataloguing of Punjabi Literature in the Public Libraries of the United Kingdom* (Leeds: School of Librarianship, Leeds Polytechnic, 1985), 70.

[60] Interview with Xue Keqiao, August 17th, 2015; and interview with Zhou Zhikuan, September 9th, 2016. The pedagogic function of Nanda's novels in popularising Hindi among Indian students was similarly noted by Indian critics: "Gulshan Nanda should be introduced in the curriculum if Hindi had to gain wider acceptance and popularity." See Singh, 'Re-Evaluating Gulshan Nanda'.

case, only two months.[61] Due to the fact that a translator's earnings at that time were calculated by word rather than copies sold, and the rate differed little from translating Nanda to translating Premchand, working on a Gulshan Nanda novel promised faster financial returns.[62] Moreover, a compelling story, which was typical of Nanda's melodramas, normally secured a greater readership for lesser-known foreign authors, thus raising the likelihood of the work being favoured by publishers.[63] However, it is important to stress that economic benefit was by no means the foremost factor that Chinese translators of Indian literature considered. The fact that all translators of Gulshan Nanda also engaged with more difficult works by canonised Indian authors such as Premchand and Phanishwarnath Renu indicates that their pursuit of economic and symbolic capital went hand in hand. Some more intellectual considerations were also at work.

One of the main reasons why the younger generation of Chinese Hindi specialists chose Gulshan Nanda was their shared intention of introducing a younger image of India by translating novels set in a contemporary period. This choice reflected China's renewed public interest in India's recent development in the wake of the normalisation of Sino-Indian relations. Such a consideration conferred a special function on Nanda's popular fiction in Chinese translation that would have escaped his Hindi readers: in China, Nanda's novels were treated as epistemological pathways to, and ethnographic accounts of, contemporary India. This explains the seriousness Chinese translators demonstrated in presenting Nanda's novels: they adopted a meticulous translation style to enable a precise representation of details; they wrote

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[61] Interview with Xue Keqiao, August 17th, 2015.
[62] Interview with Zhou Zhikuan, September 9th, 2016.
[63] The publishing of foreign literature in 1980s China was dominated by publishers. In the case of Indian literature, the publication of a work usually began with the translator proposing a title to the publisher, who would then decide if the proposed title was worth translating.

prefaces that highlighted the author's engagement with social themes; and they inserted footnotes to explain cultural specificities and religious references, such as mehendi and Shiva, despite the fact that these entertaining stories ought to be read with uninterrupted pleasure. This added ethnographic value seems to often characterise the transcultural flows of popular fiction and apply not only to transnational scenarios like China-India, but also to translingual ones within the same country. Suman Gupta, for example, identifies a similar process in the Blaft English anthologies of Tamil pulp fiction. These anthologies, he astutely argues, "were presented in a curiously dislocated fashion for English-reading Indians: as ethnographic objects that capture this 'different world' for a kind of academic or tourist gaze, rather than as straightforwardly pulp fiction to be consumed for unthinking and transient entertainment".[64] This argument helps us better understand Gulshan Nanda's "upward" trajectory in its Chinese reception.

Alongside the academic investment made by the translators, Nanda's popular fiction underwent a distinctive value-adding process in China thanks to what may be considered the publishers' "devulgarising" methods of presentation. My definition of "devulgarising" here is limited to the materiality of publication. It denotes a series of methods used by the publishers to make popular fiction look more refined. This point becomes clearer if we briefly compare how Nanda's novels appeared in India and China in terms of production quality, pricing, and locations of sale. In India, Nanda's books were printed on rough paper in poor publishing quality (hence, the derogatory designation "pulp" or *lugadī*). They were sold cheaply — around a third of the price of "highbrow" Hindi literary books — at mobile bookstalls in bus or railway stations, or were for rent from local grocery stores. By contrast, the Chinese translations of Nanda's books were very similar to canonised Hindi writers at first glance. For example,

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[64] Suman Gupta, 'Big Issues around A Small-Scale Phenomenon: Vernacular Pulp Fiction in English Translation for Indian Readers', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 48, no. 1 (2013): 169.

Nanda's *Kaṭī Pataṅg* and Premchand's *Gaban* (Embezzlement, 1931), brought out by the same publishing house and around the same time, shared a strong resemblance: they were printed on the same kind of paper in the same format; they were priced at the same level (about 0.38 yuan /100,000 words), distributed by the same provincial branch of the state-owned New China Bookstore (*xinhua shudian*) and sold in similar bookstores.[65] The differences in the way Nanda's novels were produced, distributed, and consumed likely went some way towards making the readers approach them in a more serious fashion in China than in India.
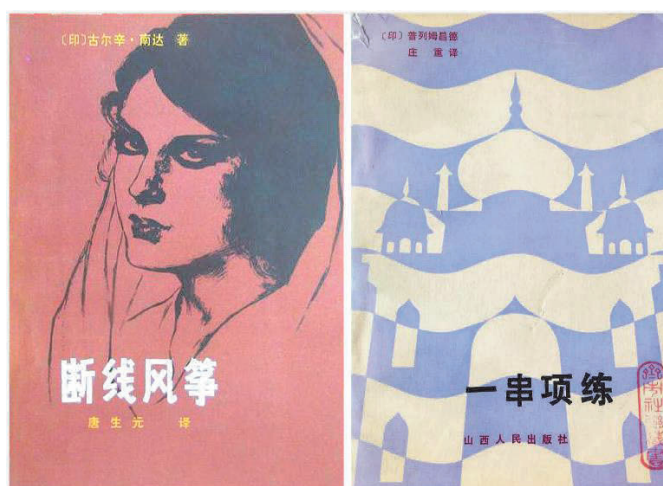
Figure 5.4: Book covers of the Chinese version of Nanda's *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (left) and that of Premchand's *Gaban* (right) published by Shanxi remin chubanshe.

As this comparison of Gulshan Nanda and Premchand shows, the structural difference between "middle-brow" popular fiction and "high-brow" literary fiction was obfuscated in the Chinese translations of Indian literature in the 1980s. While an elitist tendency, characterised by an exclusive preference for canonised Indian authors and titles, persisted among senior academic translators and the state-owned People's Literature Press (Renmin wenxue chubanshe), a large number of junior translators and provincial publishers engaged with both. However, the blurred line between the two

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[65] See Gulshan Nanda, *Duanxian Fengzheng*, trans. Tang Shengyuan (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1980), and Premchand, *Yichuan Xianglian*, trans. Zhuang Zhong (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1983).

categories should not be interpreted as the translators and publishers' ploy to sell popular fiction as "high-brow" masterpieces. Rather, most Chinese versions of Nanda's novels positioned themselves unambiguously as "popular fiction" (*tongsu xiaoshuo*) by including prefaces or translator's notes that defended the genre itself as intellectually and artistically rewarding. In this way, the translators of Gulshan Nanda self-consciously engaged with one of the most vibrant literary debates in 1980s China: the debate about re-evaluating popular fiction.

The opening up of the Chinese literary sphere following the end of the Cultural Revolution enabled previously repressed themes and banned genres — romances, thrillers, detective novels, and martial arts fiction, to name a few — to resurface and flourish in the 1980s.[66] Yet the enthusiastic consumption of popular texts, both domestic and foreign, also faced difficulties. First, formerly dominant literary ideologies lingered as some hard-line leftist cultural authorities continued to indiscriminately label popular fiction "unhealthy", "backward" and "detrimental to the development of socialist Chinese literature".[67] As popular fiction grew into a highly profitable business in the mid-1980s, a wave of illegal books and periodicals that featured pornographic and violent content proliferated in the marketplace, leading to the state's nationwide "anti-pornography, anti-illegal publications" (*saohuang dafei*) campaign in 1989. The ephemeral but strong presence of these publications led to the stigmatisation of popular fiction as a whole. A third difficulty, partly resulting from the former two, was the idea held by many writers and critics that popular fiction was intrinsically inferior to "refined literature" (*ya wenxue*), "serious literature" (*yansu wenxue*), or "*belles-lettres*" (*chun*

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[66] See Eugene Perry Link, *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), in particular Chapters 5 and 6.

[67] For the attack by Feng Zhi, a veteran translator of German literature, on the journal *Yilin*'s (Translation Grove) publication of Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* (1937) in 1979, see Li Jingrui, 'Waiguo Wenxue Chuban de Yiduan Bozhe', *Chuban Shiliao*, no. 2 (2005): 28-37.

wenxue) — three terms often used interchangeably in the debate.[68] This disparaging attitude towards popular fiction met with challenges from a broad group of literary practitioners, and I see the translators of Gulshan Nanda as integral to them.

Xue Keqiao's use of Nanda's novel as a counterexample seems to be one of the most self-conscious and elaborate interventions in this debate.[69] In his preface to the Chinese translation of *Sisakte Sāz* (Sobbing Musical Instruments, 1971), Xue begins with a terse but informative account of Gulshan Nanda's popularity in India and China. He had better knowledge of Nanda than other translators as a result of living in Agra between 1987 and 1988 as a visiting scholar. For this reason, his description of the extent to which Indian people loved Nanda (even after his death) is based on first-hand knowledge: "Even to this day, his works are sold with undying enthusiasm on the streets and at the station bookstalls in different North Indian cities, and the movies adapted from his novels have been constantly screened in Indian cinemas."[70]

Xue then proceeds to focus on the controversial critical reception of Nanda in India, highlighting the polarisation of his image between "an excellent novelist most favoured by the people" and an oft-criticised figure "kept away from the literary gates" — the latter description recalls Rajendra Yadav's critique of Nanda.[71] For Xue, Nanda's case is quintessential of the paradoxical situation a popular fiction writer faces in any culture. Reflecting upon the categorical binary of "refined" (*ya*) and "unrefined" (*su*), Xue argues:

> The reason [why Gulshan Nanda's novels have been off-limits in India's literary circles] is simply because what he wrote is popular fiction (*tongsu xiaoshuo*), something that has been charged with "not appealing to refined

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[68] See Ye. et al., *Bashi Niandai Zhongguo Tongsu Wenxue*.
[69] The translation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* contains no such preface, but a brief synopsis.
[70] Gulshan Nanda, *Huan Wo Xiangsi Zhai*, trans. Xue Keqiao (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1991), I.
[71] Ibid.

tastes". Here, the refined and the unrefined are pitted against each other. However, no literature has been absolutely refined or absolutely unrefined at any time and in any place. Isn't our *Shijing* (The Book of Songs) refined? It has been hailed as a classic because it appeared extremely refined to later generations. But among the three parts that constitute *Shijing*, *feng* (ballads) is unrefined compared to *ya* (odes) and *song* (hymns). Don't the *Vedic Saṃhitās* of India look extremely refined? They do, in the eyes of later generations, hence their status as sacred books. But they nonetheless contain a good deal of unrefined lyrics orally composed by uncultured people in ancient times. In today's China and India alike, there are some people who produce unrefined writings but instead sell them as refined literature. Yet it is the same group of writers who show no sympathy for what they call "unrefined literature." This is unjust and intolerable.[72]

Xue here questions the arbitrary division of literature into the two oppositional categories of refined and unrefined. Using examples of ancient literary texts, Chinese and Indian, he further suggests that the division into the two categories is historically mutable and conceptually ambivalent. It can even be politically manipulated as the authority to define what is (un)refined is often held by literary gatekeepers.

While other Chinese advocates of popular fiction tried to do justice to the genre within the refined/unrefined framework,[73] Xue's defence is exceptional because he proposes doing away with the framework altogether. Instead, he suggests a new set of criteria by drawing on the triad of "the true, the good, and the beautiful" (*zhen shan mei*).[74] The bulk of the preface is dedicated to showing how *Sisakte Sāz* meets these criteria, and his arguments echo my analysis of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in many ways. To sum up Xue's points, the novel is "true" because it is based on a vast canvas of social realities and it engenders a sense of "emotional reality" by arranging melodramatic events in a

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[72] Ibid., I-II.
[73] Holding onto the idea that popular fiction and *belles-lettres* are two equally important literary categories, these critics propose finding refined and unrefined works within each category. See Ye et al., *Bashi Niandai Zhongguo Tongsu Wenxue*.
[74] Nanda, *Huan Wo Xiangsi Zhai*, II.

"vraisemblable" way and investigating the main characters' complex personalities. Although *Sisakte Sāz*, unlike *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, is a tragedy that ends with the suicide of both the hero and the heroine, and it replaces villainous characters with intangible feudal conventions, it nevertheless upholds the idea of goodness because the author "takes the side of the good people" by making readers "love, hate, sympathise and mourn".[75] Finally, this is a beautiful novel in that Gulshan Nanda not only created beautiful and good-hearted characters, but also showed "the beauty of tragedy", which produced a sensation that interwove empathy and excitement.[76] With these new criteria, Xue deems *Sisakte Sāz* "a novel worth reading" that, he believes, "will pass the test of any un-biased reader".[77]

Between Indianisation and Indigenisation: Staging *Kaṭī Pataṅg*

Largely due to the translations produced by Xue Keqiao and other Chinese scholars of Hindi literature, as well as their presentation, the impact of Gulshan Nanda's popular aesthetics on Chinese culture was not limited to the realm of literature, but also penetrated into other artistic practices such as theatre. During the 1980s, as outlined above, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* spread widely in the Chinese theatrical sphere along three parallel strands, each based on a "core adaptation" with a specific strategy of representation. The three "core adaptations" belonged to the western-style *huaju* and two indigenous forms of Chinese opera — *pingju* (ping opera) and *huju* (Shanghai opera).

The fact that all three theatrical forms sought inspiration from Indian popular fiction in 1983 is no coincidence. This choice epitomises the collective attempt by theatre practitioners in China to renovate their repertoire in a time of crisis. After a few

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[75] Ibid., V.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

thriving years immediately after the end of the Cultural Revolution, theatre in China began to experience severe setbacks, partly because of the popularisation of films and television, which led to a dramatic decline in theatre spectatorship, and partly because of the withdrawal of government funding due to the reform of marketisation.[78] Under such circumstances, theatre playwrights and directors drew on foreign works to attract spectators. While the plays by canonical Western dramatists like Shakespeare were the most enthusiastically adapted, the example of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* proved that Indian popular fiction was no less inspirational a source for creating thematically and formally appealing adaptations.

In the following pages, I explore how *Kaṭī Pataṅg* was adapted in Chinese theatre with a focus on the *huaju* and *pingju* versions because they represented two distinct strategies of appropriation — Indianisation and indigenisation — and thus two distinct directions in which the novel interacted with local artistic forms and related to local concerns.[79] A mixture of both strategies, the *huju* adaptation will not be discussed separately but in comparison with the other two adaptations where necessary. Following Linda Hutcheon, I view each Chinese adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* as "a derivation that is not derivative" and "a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging".[80] Hence, what I intend to show is not the extent to which these adaptations are "faithful" to the novel. Rather, the questions that interest me are: how were meanings of the novel

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[78] See Daniel S.P. Yang, 'Theatre Activities in Post-Cultural Revolution China', in *Drama in the People's Republic of China*, ed. Constantine Tung and Colin Mackerras (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 164-80.
[79] My analysis of the *huaju* adaptation is based on the unpublished play script used by Wu Zhiqiang — a member of the "Mongolian class" who played Kamal in the 1985 performance — and relevant stage photos, news reports, and reviews (videos are not available). Due to the fact that the 1983 version initially performed by Shenyang Huaju Troupe is now unavailable, I use the "Mongolian class" version instead as the core *huju* adaptation because it was adapted by the same playwrights, Wang Yansong and Chen Yuhang. My examination of the *pingju* and *huju* adaptations is based on published play scripts, online video recordings, follow-up *lianhuanhua* adaptations, and critical essays. For the *pingju* adaptation, see Li Yongxin, Wang Fuquan and Ma Youtian, 'Feng Luo Wutong', *Shijiazhuang Xiju* 4 (1984): 87-124. For the *huju* adaptation, see Shen Ying, 'Duanxian Fengzheng', *Jiangsu Xiju*, no. 6 (1984): 18-39.
[80] See Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 7-9.

decoded and recoded in the creative process of adaptation and what functions were these adaptations expected to fulfil in the Chinese context?

Readers of the script of Wang Yansong's *huaju* adaptation, which was based on Tang Shengyuan's translation, are immediately impressed by the highly self-conscious employment of the Indianisation strategy. In this case, Indianisation not only refers to the preservation of cultural-specific signifiers, such as the names of characters, places, and objects included in the novel; it also entails an augmentation of the "sense of India" by bringing in new elements that are absent in the novel, including familiar geographical and religious motifs and visual artistic forms such as Indian-style songs and dances. The *huaju* form, featuring realistic spoken dialogue, allows for the insertion of these elements, which is less possible in indigenous operatic forms characterised by relatively fixed singing and performing conventions. One valid explanation for the adoption of the Indianisation strategy is that the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed Chinese people's increased interest in Indian culture, influenced by the country-wide release of Hindi movies, and *Awaara* in particular. Given that the Hindi film adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* was not released in China, the ways in which the novel was Indianised in the *huaju* adaptation illustrate how previously-imported Indian cultural products shaped China's public perception of India.

Indianisation works in the *huaju* adaptation first through the maintenance of Indian names. All the names of characters and locales are maintained in the transliterated form in which they appear in Tang Shengyuan's translation: Enjiena for Anjana, Kama'er for Kamal, and Nailita'er for Nainital. Moreover, the adaptor introduces new and more well-known locales and uses them to reconstruct an imaginary geographical canvas of India, in which the story is more familiarly anchored. For instance, in the scene in which Anjana first meets Poonam at the railway station, the

adaptor adds two passengers heading to two Indian cities that are much more famous in China than Nainital — one to Mumbai and the other to Agra (where the Taj Mahal is located). When Anjana comes onstage, an offstage voice imitating the station broadcast announces the incoming trains, including an "Oriental Express" to Mumbai.[81] By contrast, the *huju* adaptation features a naming strategy that mixes Indianisation and localisation, which makes the setting appear simultaneously foreign and familiar. The *huju* adaptor, Shen Ying, turned the names of characters transliterated in Tang Shengyuan's translation into Chinese characters commonly found in Chinese people's names, with the surnames unchanged or alliterated: <u>En</u>jiena (transliteration of Anjana) becomes <u>En</u> Zhuping and <u>K</u>ama'er (transliteration of Kamal) <u>K</u>e Wei. Henggebu'<u>er</u> (transliteration of Gangapur), the town where the story is set at the start, becomes Su'<u>er</u>, in which the second part (er) remains the same, while the first part becomes the name of the province where the *huju* adaption was produced and performed ("Su" is short for Jiangsu Province).[82]

A more striking aspect of the Indianisation is the adaptors' deliberate use of religious trappings. While religious particularities are kept to a modest level in *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (the characters' Hindu identity is clear from their names and their habitual visits to a Shiva temple), the *huaju* performers did not naturalise, but instead intensified them. The original play script used by Wu Zhiqiang shows interesting traces where *shangtian*, a concept Chinese people refer to as a supreme being, has been changed into *luomo*, the transliteration of the Hindu deity Rama.[83] Images of Hindu gods were also used on the performance's publicity materials. The playbill, for instance, featured a hand-drawn dancing Shiva superimposed on the play's Chinese title *Duanxian Fengzheng* in

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[81] See Wang Yansong and Chen Yuhang, *Duanxian Fengzheng.* Unpublished *huaju* adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (Shanghai: Shanghai xiju xueyuan, 1985), n.p.
[82] See Shen, 'Duanxian Fengzheng', 18.
[83] See Wang and Chen, *Duanxian Fengzheng*, Act 3(8).

calligraphic style. The choice of Shiva is perhaps derived from the Shiva temple

mentioned in the novel (see Figure 5.5).
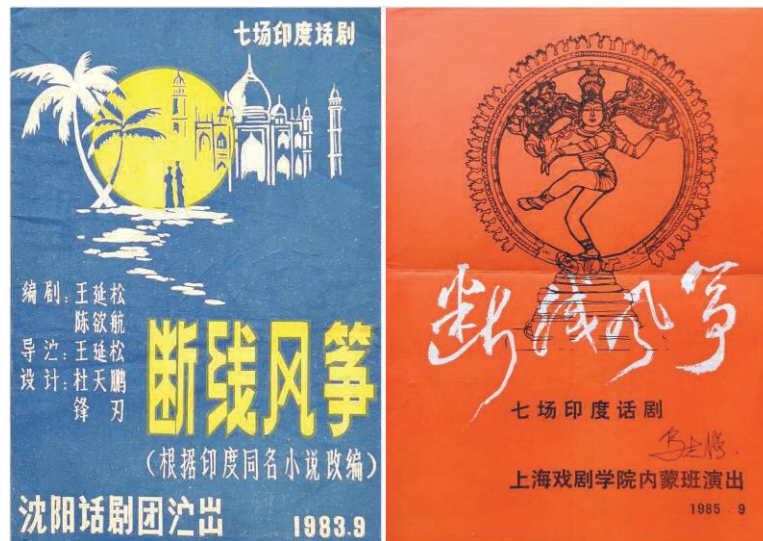
Figure 5.5: Playbills of two different *huaju* adaptations of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* perfomed by the Shenyang Huaju Troupe (left) and the Mongolian class at Shanghai Theatre Academy (right) respectively.

Increased religious elements work in the *huaju* adaptation not only as cultural

signifiers, but also as creative tools of characterisation. Perhaps the most artistically

imaginative scene in the play takes place towards the end of the first act, when Anjana

finds out about Banvari's true nature and the death of her uncle, and she subsequently

undergoes a mental breakdown:

> Anjana: Shut up, you scoundrel! You manipulative liar, get off!
> > [Anjana drives Banvari away. Music begins. Anjana flings
> > herself on the pillar in extreme grief. Four dancing goddesses
> > dressed in pure white encircle her.]
> Anjana: I am sinful! Uncle, don't go! Wait for me, wait! I am coming
> > after you for my redemption!
> > [She collapses on the stage. Curtain falls.][84]

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[84] Ibid., Act 1(9).

In this emotionally charged moment, the entrance of the four goddesses dancing around the collapsed Anjana form a theatrical spectacle that symbolises her confession before the supernatural power and her wish for atonement. The emotional effects of this surreal scene are strengthened by the use of various stage devices, such as music, dance, mist and light, all of which help externalise the mental upheaval of the protagonist overpowered by guilt and misgivings. To create this scene, the adaptors perhaps drew upon the famous dream sequence in *Awaara*, in which the director employed similar visual elements, though to a much more spectacular degree, to represent the inner struggle of the character (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6: A comparison of Anjana's mental breakdown in the *huaju* adaptation (left) with the dream sequence in *Awaara* (right). Source: Dai Ping, Chuying de Jiyi (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanhse), 177; and Awaara, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4mjCJaJe-g (accessed January 20th, 2019).

Intensifying the social, cultural, and religious elements relating to India is not the only means of Indianisation discernible in the *huaju* adaptation. An interesting and perhaps subtler strategy of Indianisation, which is also visible in the *huju* adaptation and Sheng Kefa's *huaju* adaption as well, consists of foreignising the Chinese elements. In one scene, Anjana/Poonam's in-laws, Lala Jagannath and Shanti, try to persuade Kamal, who is mourning his abandonment on his wedding day by Anjana, to reconsider marriage:

> Jagannath: Do not let unnecessary thoughts further confuse your mind.
>
> > "Once bitten by a snake, ten years in fear of a well rope"
> >
> > [*yizhao bei she yao, shinian pa jingsheng*] is certainly not a
> >
> > good attitude.
>
> Shanti: That's what Chinese people say.
>
> Jagannath: Chinese people are good at drawing lessons from experiences.
>
> > I think the saying describes Kamal's situation well.[85]

The insertion of a famous Chinese proverb, I argue, carries contrasting functions here. On the one hand, it reaffirms the Indian setting within the textual world of the play by identifying China as foreign and unfamiliar. On the other hand, the evocation of a local proverb that is extremely well-known in China immediately establishes an extra-textual fraternity between the Indian characters and the Chinese audience and helps the latter better understand Kamal's dilemma. Therefore, this is a strategy that simultaneously distances the audience and brings them closer.

As well as adaptation, the acting was also considered an important part of the Indianising process. The portrayal of Indian characters involved more than wearing traditional Indian costumes and imitating basic Indian dance moves. Most of the *huaju* adaptations were associated with Shanghai Theatre Academy and followed the Stanislavskian approach of acting, which prevailed in China's theatre training in the 1980s.[86] Actors were meant to "experience" the role before enacting it and they therefore drew upon various India-related resources to increase their familiarity with "Indian" life. They adopted an approach that can be referred to as "cultural immersion": they performed shorter Indian plays,[87] imitated the acting in Indian films, studied an

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[85] Ibid., Act 3(8).
[86] See Yang, 'Theatre Activities', 171.
[87] Before playing *Duanxian Fengzheng*, the class had culturally prepared by working on an Indian one-act play — "Kallu" (Eyes) by the Telugu playwright Gollapudi Maruti Rao — for their performing class. See Gollapudi Maruti Rao, 'Yanjing', trans. Yu Longyu, *Waiguo Xiju*, no. 2 (1983): 4-18.

earlier Chinese performance of Kalidasa's Sanskrit play *Abhijñānaśakuntalā* (The Recognition of Shakuntala, c. 500 CE), and visited a local Buddhist temple.[88] The mixture of heterogeneous elements indicates that "India" was generally conceived by Chinese people as one whole, rather than in terms of its social, cultural and linguistic specificities.

A different type of cultural immersion was employed in preparing the *caidiaoju* (colour tune opera) adaptation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in the southwestern province of Guangxi. Here the actors visited a local Overseas Chinese Farm (huaqiao nongchang), where some Chinese nationals expelled from India after the 1962 border conflict and their relatives of Indian descent had settled. Through interviews, the actors gained better knowledge of the customs, religious beliefs, and moral outlook of the "Indian people".[89] As these examples suggest, the Chinese reception of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* should not be considered merely as a 1980s phenomenon, but one that is anchored in the longer history of Sino-Indian relations; the adaptations were produced by incorporating various tangible and intangible legacies of past exchanges between the two countries.

Unlike the *huaju* adaptation, the *pingju* adaptation, *Feng Luo Wutong*, engages a completely different strategy: an indigenising strategy that naturalises the Indian story to fit the Chinese context in general and the artistic structure of the *pingju* tradition in particular. Unlike *huju*, *pingju* is a traditional operatic form prevalent in the centre-north of mainland China, which is less enthusiastic about staging contemporary life and incorporating foreign themes.[90] With the setting transmuted from contemporary India to ancient China (in the *jingju* adaptation Ming Dynasty), *Feng Luo Wutong* was a truly novel creation for *pingju* practitioners and fans alike in the early 1980s. The

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[88] See Dai, *Chuying de Jiyi*, 185.
[89] Ibid., 232.
[90] Before *Feng Luo Wutong*, it seems that the only foreign works that had appeared in the *pingju* form were North Korean and Vietnamese novels during the high socialist period between the 1950s and early 1960s.

transformation is so dramatic that no trace of India can be found in the adaptation. Consequently, there was little room for formal experiments with Indian elements, as in the *huaju* case. This suggests that *Kaṭī Pataṅg* was attractive to Chinese adaptors not only for its "exotic" cultural trappings, but also for its melodramatic narrative. Yet the Indian origin of the story was not hidden from the public. The hybrid nature of the adaptation was outlined on the playbill: "We have attempted to use a modern Indian story set in Ancient China to praise honesty, kindness, rectitude and all kinds of lofty sentiments."[91]

Figure 5.7: *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in *pingju* (left) and *huju* adaptations (right). Source: *Feng Luo Wutong*, https://v.qq.com/x/page/h0533b9misl.html (accessed January 16th, 2019); *Duanxian Fengzheng*, https://www.iqiyi.com/w_19rrhxaru9.html (accessed January 16th, 2019).

In keeping with a major principle of Chinese indigenous theatrical arts that a good work should provide education in the form of entertainment (*yu jiao yu le*), the *pingju* adaptors highlighted the moral aspects of the narrative, as the playbill shows. The emphasis on the significance of morality played out in the *pingju* adaptation not only through the dramatisation of the antithesis between justice and evil, but also in the contrast between physical attraction and moral scruples in pursuing love. While the former is addressed in other Chinese theatrical adaptations of the novel, the latter is

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[91] Playbill of *Feng Luo Wutong*, Shijiazhuang Pingju Troupe, 1984.

exclusive to the *pingju* adaptation and it was in fact the driving force motivating this adaptation.

As one of the three adaptors recollected, the idea of writing *Feng Luo Wutong* did not come directly from reading the translation of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, but from a discomfort with the "unhealthy trend" prevalent among Chinese youngsters to increasingly favour appearance over integrity when choosing their partners. This "inappropriate attitude towards love", according to the adaptor, was becoming so serious that "it brought both mental and economic damage to many young people and caused direct impact on their work and life".[92] In order to warn the young generation about the demerits of judging by appearance with a story about how an unattractive man wins the heart of a beautiful woman through his care and uprightness, the *pingju* adaptors turned to *Kaṭī Pataṅg* (in translation), which, at its heart has a plot about a woman's relationship with two men of contrasting moral standing. In order to achieve their educational aim, the adaptors made the good-looking man bad and the unattractive one good, and they made the heroine, attracted to the former at the beginning, ultimately choose the latter.

Indigenising *Kaṭī Pataṅg* entailed replacing certain objects and places with things that could match the ancient Chinese setting; for instance, the train was turned into a donkey chart and the police station the county court (xianya), an important local judicial institute before and during the Qing Dynasty. In a more sophisticated example of indigenisation, the characters were renamed — Anjana became Zhang Jinfeng ("jinfeng" literarily means "golden phoenix" and suggests her beauty and noble ancestry) and Kamal, Wu Tong, a homophony for "wutong" — the Chinese term for *Firmiana simplex*. According to Chinese folktales, although normal in appearance, the wutong is the only type of tree that the phoenix will land on. By weaving the names of

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[92] Wang Fuquan, 'Pingju Feng Luo Wutong de Bianxie Qianhou', *Shijiazhuang Xiju* 4 (1984): 24.

the heroine and hero into the title "Feng Luo Wutong", which means a phoenix landing on a wutong tree, the adaptors used the Chinese allusion to prefigure the union of the couple. With regard to the negative characters, Banvari was renamed Jia Jun, with the character "jun" or "handsomeness". Shabnam became Shuiyue, a name taken from the Chinese idiom "jinghua shuiyue" (flowers in the mirror and moon in the water) that suggested her attractive but superficial nature. From this highly referential naming system recreated on the basis of Chinese culture, the average educated Chinese theatre-goer could readily extract a wealth of information about the physical features and moral fibre of the characters and their mutual relationships even before seeing the performance.

In characterisation, the novel and its *pingju* adaptation differ most strikingly in terms of who functions as the moral model. In *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, as I have shown, Anjana/Poonam is the protagonist and she embodies numerous virtues that ultimately allow her to obtain justice, as well as Kamal's forgiveness and love. However, in line with the adaptors' intention to dramatise the contrast between good and evil and appearance and interior qualities, the *pingju* adaptation establishes the hero, Wu Tong, as the moral but unattractive model from the start. This re-characterisation is, as we shall see, accompanied by a shift of focalisation and a reconfiguration of melodramatic narrative devices, either taken directly from the novel, or introduced by the adaptors.

While the novel begins with Anjana's sufferings and Kamal's entry occurs quite late, the opening of *Feng Luo Wutong* is shown from Wu Tong's point of view. On his way to Zhang Jinfeng's home to escort his bride to the wedding venue, Wu Tong runs into Jinfeng's father, the aged widower Zhang Kuan, and finds out that Jinfeng has forsaken him because he is dark-skinned and ill-favoured. Though humiliated by Jinfeng's abandonment, Wu Tong treats her father with due respect and stops him from

attempting suicide. The first act ends with a comic scene: Wu Tong convinces Zhang

Kuan to sit in the sedan chair initially prepared for Jinfeng and he takes him home.[93]

This divergence from the novel, in which Anjana's uncle (not father) dies of shock soon

after Anjana leaves, allows the audience to note Wu Tong's kind heart from the start

and further enhances this impression. As the play unfolds, while Zhang Jinfeng lives in

the guise of Li Xuemei (the equivalent of Poonam), Wu Tong takes care of Zhang Kuan

and buries him after his death.[94] These actions were deliberately added to show Wu

Tong's magnanimity.

While retaining most of the major characters, the adapters of *Feng Luo Wutong*

removed the father-in-law, who plays a key role in *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in determining Anjana's

life after she arrives at the villa as Poonam; the mother-in-law remains but she plays an

insignificant role. This change creates a series of rearrangements of characters and

melodramatic crises. For example, the father-in-law's ambivalent attitude towards

marrying off Anjana/Poonam as his daughter is replaced by the mother-in-law's

unconditional support for Zhang Jinfeng/Li Xuemei's remarriage to Wu Tong. While

the poisoning of the father-in-law serves as a key moment that demonstrates Banvari's

wickedness, the adaptation illustrates this by making Jia Jun the cause of Li Xuemei's

death (in *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, Poonam dies in a train accident).[95] Moreover, Jinfeng's domestic

activities as a dutiful daughter-in-law, a loving mother and a properly behaved widow,

which constitute about one third of the novel, are compressed into one act out of seven.

Unlike the novel, she doesn't struggle significantly with problems related to her

widowhood. From these rearrangements, we can see how the *pingju* adaptors turned the

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[93] See Li, Wang and Ma, 'Feng Luo Wutong', 90.
[94] See ibid., 100.
[95] Fearing that Zhang Jinfeng might sue him for ruining her marriage, Jia Jun sends an assassin in the disguise of a donkey cart driver, who startles the donkey on purpose and causes Zhang Jinfeng and Li Xuemei to fall off the cliff. This scene provides an example of the way in which a modern setting is transformed into an ancient one. See ibid., 98.

novel into a short play and prioritised different concerns. They were less interested in engaging with women's difficulties in a patriarchal society than showcasing the importance of morality in a man.

However, this reduction in the heroine's narrative weight does not make her a less impressive character in performance. While making Wu Tong the moral focus, the adapters turned Zhang Jinfeng into the artistic focus by assigning her the largest proportion of arias, in which she expresses feelings, makes comments, and recounts past events by using different singing styles. Further, with some of Jinfeng's most melodramatic crises retained, the actor is given opportunities to perform these emotionally charged scenes by showing off her operatic skill. In fact, when *Feng Luo Wutong* was staged in Beijing, the main attraction of the show was Shang Lihua, who played Jinfeng and used various spectacular dancing, singing, and acting techniques, such as shuixiu ("water sleeves").[96]

While representing the story of *Kaṭī Pataṅg* with stock *pingju* arias, dances and acting techniques, the adapters also took the opportunity to revive indigenous artistic forms. Like the novel, *Feng Luo Wutong* climaxes with a direct confrontation between the good characters and the villains, with the heroine first being falsely accused and then proven innocent. As a result of contraction, the novel's final scenes — Anjana's questioning at the police station, Kamal's investigative effort, and the counterplot and arrest in the hotel room — are merged into a single act that takes place in the courtroom of the county government, where the melodramatic "moral fantasy" plays out. In order to avoid didacticism, the adapters drew upon the theatrical *shuanghuang* form — where one actor at the back speaks, while an actor in the front acts out the story — to turn the trial scene into a comedy. Though the history of *shuanghuang* dates back to the Qing

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[96] See Xing Zi, 'Duocai Duoyi de Shang Lihua', *Shijiazhuang Xiju* 4 (1984): 1–2.

Dynasty, it had rarely appeared on stage during the Cultural Revolution and was almost a "lost art" by the early 1980s.[97]

The *shuanghuang* scene is performed by Wu Tong and the County Magistrate Hu as Shui Yue and Jinfeng are about to receive court trial. Like Wu Tong, Hu is extremely upright, but physically ill-favoured, intertextualising the famous historical/literary figure Judge Bao. Since Hu begins to stammer badly as the case gets increasingly complicated, Wu Tong decides to hide behind him to speak and let him do the performance, which enhances the role-playing twist in the novel. In order to allow Jinfeng to tell the truth, Wu Tong/Hu threatens her with punishment, but without the intention of seeing it through. Through her response in a 49-line aria, Jinfeng recounts the entire story and reveals her love for Wu Tong:

Zhang Jinfeng: Magistrate,
Please wait.
I dare not conspire to murder anyone for their money.
I changed my name only to keep my promise to a friend.
Let me tell you the whole story.

Magistrate Hu: Don't be afraid! [Wu Tong darts out to cover Hu's mouth, while Hu pushes Wu Tong back, hurriedly]

Zhang Jinfeng: […]
Oh, my beloved Wu,
I hope you'll readily forget me,
May an ideal spouse accompany you for a lifetime.
[Deeply moved, Wu Tong steps out. Magistrate Hu pulls him back in position.]

Wu Tong: No gourd is perfectly round, just as no one is perfectly good. As long as you acknowledge your mistake, I will still love you…

Magistrate Hu: [Shaking his hands quickly in disapproval] No, no! [Zhang Jinfeng transfixed]

Wu Tong: [Correcting himself] No, I mean, I will not blame you!

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[97] See Wei Xikui and Zhou Huan, 'Qiaozuo Chuxin Xi Dongren: Shijiazhuang Shi Pingju Tuan Yanchu Guangan', *Shijiazhuang Xiju* 4 (1984): 7.

As we can see, the humour of the *shuanghuang* mainly plays out through what I call "momentary breaches of contract" — a slip of the tongue or a failure in hiding — which reveal the characters' inner thoughts. In this way, the moralistic message "no gourd is perfectly round, just as no one is perfectly good" is conveyed in an entertaining way.

Figure 5.8: The trial scene at the county court where Jinfeng (left) is being questioned while Magistrate Hu (middle) and Wu Tong (right) are doing a *shuanghuang*/double act. Source: *Feng Luo Wutong* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chuban gongsi, 1985).

Conclusion

The influx of Gulshan Nanda's Hindi popular fiction into 1980s China marks a significant episode in modern China-India literary relations, not just because of the sheer scale of its circulation but, more importantly, because of its deep penetration into and interaction with local cultural practices. Arguably, the only other Indian writer to have enjoyed this level of popularity among Chinese people is Tagore.

Nanda's novels, and *Kaṭī Pataṅg* in particular, contributed to China's cultural reconstruction in the 1980s in three ways: first, they fulfilled the previously repressed

need of Chinese readers for entertainment that nonetheless conveyed a moral order; second, they enabled Chinese translators of Indian literature to engage with the wider debate in the Chinese literary field about the re-evaluation of popular fiction; and third, *Kaṭī Pataṅg* helped revitalise Chinese theatre in a time of crisis by offering a compelling melodrama that could be adapted in numerous ways. All these processes helped Nanda, a Hindi writer with no literary "consecration", either in India or in the West, gain exceptional popularity on the other side of the Himalayas.

Starting as a scholarly initiative in the literary field and contributing to the rejuvenation of Chinese theatre, the cross-generic trajectories of Nanda's melodrama in translation and adaptation further raised his literary stature in China. In a 2006 Chinese anthology of twentieth century Indian classics,[98] the works of Gulshan Nanda were included alongside those of Tagore and Rajendra Yadav, Nanda's fierce critic. While the inclusion of Yadav was unquestionably recognition of his literary merit, the editor nevertheless dismantled the sharp antithesis proposed by Yadav between his and Nanda's literary paths and the assumed incommensurability between popular literature and classics. This anthology, echoing Xue's argument, reminds us that the evaluation of popular literature is always a matter of perspective. When received transculturally with an expectation of ethnographic details, or as "windows into foreign worlds",[99] popular texts often gain an extra layer of significance in the host culture that may lead, as in this case, to their canonicity.

China-India constitutes a fascinating trans-regional Asian context that awaits further exploration. While they belong to separate "world regions" — East Asia and South Asia — characterised by distinct cultural and linguistic differences, they have shared historical legacies and have also faced similar developmental challenges. As we

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[98] See Hu, *Yindu Ershi Shiji Jingdian Xiaoshuo*.
[99] Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, 15.

have seen with regard to the Chinese reception of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*, it was the text's potential to activate interplay between unfamiliar cultural trappings and familiar social issues that engendered curious and productive literary contact, even though the geopolitical relationship between the two countries remained competitive. This argument also goes some way toward explaining the recent enthusiasm among Chinese audiences for Aamir Khan's Hindi melodramas — consider how *Dangal* (2017) addresses serious issues like women's struggles in a patriarchal society and authoritarian parenting through a story largely located in a North Indian village. Linking *Kaṭī Pataṅg* to *Dangal* not only reflects a peculiar trans-Asian trajectory of popular aesthetics, but also shows that Asia works as an "imaginary anchoring point" and a self-rebuilding method, not just as an abstract formulation, but also in practice.

Conclusion

The initial idea for this thesis arose from my participation in the project "Mutual Translation and Publication of Classic and Contemporary Works" (hereafter "Mutual Translation Project") in 2015. Jointly supported by the Chinese and Indian governments and carried out by professional academic translators from the two countries who specialise in each other's languages, this project, first of its kind, aims to bring out 25 titles of each other's literary works in a five-year period.[1] Joining this project as a translator as well as an assistant of the joint working group, I became increasingly aware of the richness and layers of literary engagements between contemporary China and India. At the same time, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of systematic investigation in the history of these engagements. Studying contemporary China-India literary relations seemed an opportunity to address this scholarly lacuna and, at the same time, develop a more self-conscious and historically-informed position within the "field" as a Chinese academic specialised in studying and translating modern Indian (Hindi) literature. Proposing "literary relations" as an approach that considers readerly, writerly and textual contacts in constant interaction with the two nations' political dynamics, in this thesis I have offered a thick description of the interconnected Chinese and Indian literary spheres between 1950 and 1990. It is a thick description because of the following reasons.

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[1] The Memorandum of Understanding for this project was signed between the Ministry of External Affairs, India and the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, China during the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to India in 2013. The Chinese and Indian teams have been led by Prof. Jiang Jingkui and Prof. B.R. Deepak respectively.

First, highlighting the interrelation between the literary and the political, the approach of literary relations has enabled fresh reading of familiar texts, such as "progressive" Indian fiction, which constitutes a significant portion of the Chinese library of modern Indian literature and of the reading list of Chinese students who study Indian literature at college. By problematising the two nations' ostensibly shared and equivalent literary progressivism and contrasting the works emerging from India's progressive writers' movement with those translated into Chinese, Chapter 4 has shown that what is now preserved in the Chinese translation and known by Chinese readers as "Indian progressive fiction" is but a partial representation of the Indian corpus: while the early progressive canon like *Godān* was favoured because its realist depiction of India's colonial past fitted in the PRC's tripartite (i.e. geographical-political-temporal) formulation of world literature, post-independence progressive works were largely excluded because their prevalent anti-Nehru/anti-Congress sentiments were considered detrimental to Sino-Indian friendship, in spite of their stylistic proximity to socialist realism. Reading different Chinese versions of "Mahālakshmī kā Pul" together with the original revealed the translator's striking textual manipulations in accordance with political considerations; this requires Chinese readers adopting a more critical attitude towards the Indian literary texts translated into Chinese in the 1950s.

Second, as an inclusive framework that attends to both the typical and the exceptional without favouring "high" genres and canonical authors over "low" genres and uncanonical authors, literary relations help valorise even the texts and writers that are normally marginalised in their domestic literary discourses. While showing that popular fiction can stimulate effective transculturation between contemporary China and India, the case study of Gulshan Nanda in Chapter 5 has also shown the extent to which a transcultural perspective can make us better appreciate a popular melodrama's

intrinsic appeal in terms of its affective, discursive and ethnographic relevance to a foreign readership. However, my fieldwork in 2016 suggested that the additional cultural value that Nanda's popular novels had accumulated in China since the 1980s was drastically diminished partly because their Chinese translators, now senior scholars of Indian studies, have tended to remove Nanda's name from their translation portfolio as a way to protect their symbolic capital, and partly because most of *Kaṭī Pataṅg*'s theatrical adaptations have disappeared from the stage.[2] Under such circumstances, I hope my rediscovery and revaluation of Nanda's popular fiction in Chinese reception can serve as a timely intervention and open up new avenues that future scholars from various disciplines (e.g. comparative literature, China-India relations, popular fiction, theatre studies) can continue exploring.

Third, although the approach of literary relations, as mentioned in the Introduction, does not prioritise "influence" over other forms of textual contact, paying attention to readerly contacts and subsequent intertextual reconfigurations has thickened my description of post-1950 China-India literary relations by uncovering previously unexplored evidence of mutual impact between modern Chinese and Indian literature. Vidyasagar Nautiyal's formal and thematic appropriation of Lu Xun's "Kuangren Riji" and Hao Ran's creation of "middle characters" drawing on Premchand's *Godān* both suggest that the visibility of each other's literary texts in 1950s China and India in fact translated into creative inspiration and actual influence. My analysis of the two examples have offered different methods for conducting influence-focused research on contemporary China-India literary relations: in the case of Nautiyal's short story 'Pāgal kī Ḍāyrī kā Anuvād", explicit intertextualisation needs to be understood in relation to the author's personal experience and the wider socio-political milieu at the time when

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[2] As far as I know, the *huju* adaptation is still performed now and then by the Shanghai-based Wenhui Huju Troupe.

the readerly/textual contact took place; in the case of Hao Ran, instead, the textual relationship between *Yanyang Tian* and *Godān*, which is only implicitly suggested by an active readerly contact, can be confirmed by careful parallel reading of the two novels in terms of their theme and characterisation.

The fourth characteristic that has marked this thesis as a thick description of contemporary China-India literary relations is its emphasis on writers, which decentres the conventional focus on translation in existing studies of the topic. In the politically charged context of the Cold War, the Afro-Asian writers' movement and the ebb and flow of Sino-Indian relations, writers played a significant role in negotiating differences and building solidarities across national and ideological borders, a role that translation of literary texts alone could not effectively fulfil. As Chapters 1 and 2 have shown, the concept of writerly contact offers a particularly enabling perspective to reflect on the complexity and entanglement of China-India literary relations in the 1950s because it helps visibilise the "moments of discord" — disagreements, debates, protests, critiques — that are much less explicit in textual and readerly contacts and tend to get ironed out by rhetorical claims, such as "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai" and Afro-Asian solidarity.

In summary, this thesis has identified and analysed five distinct yet intersecting trajectories of post-1950 China-India literary relations: first, a stream of cultural diplomacy-oriented writerly contacts, which typically encompassed more than literature and enabled Chinese and Indian authors to directly know about each other's country and disseminate a particular impression by publishing travel writings (Chapter 1). Second came writerly contacts at the multinational forum of Asian/Afro-Asian writers conferences designed to foster Third World solidarities through literary and cultural exchanges (Chapter 2). The third trajectory I followed was India's enthusiastic import of modern Chinese fiction under the rubric of "revolutionary" with the Foreign

Languages Press acting as the main text provider (Chapter 3). The fourth was China's systematic reception of "progressive" Indian fiction as part of the PRC's model of world literature (Chapter 4); and, finally, a counter-intuitive yet strikingly productive and cross-media transplantation of Hindi popular fiction in 1980s China (Chapter 5). These unprecedented literary trajectories allow us to consider post-1950 China and India as a "significant geography" for each other. "Significant geography" is a notion Francesca Orsini, Karima Laachir and Sara Marzagora have proposed to rethink world literature from a "located" perspective, replacing the binary local and global with specific geographies that are significant to a location or an actor.[3] While Pascale Casanova would have assigned a "peripheral" position to both China and India, which "demanded access to literary legitimacy and existence" in the singular, Eurocentric "world republic of letters",[4] the notion of "significant geographies" helps us seriously consider the trajectories, imaginaries, and relations that really "mattered" to the "actors and texts" of the two countries. This thesis has presented contemporary China-India literary relations as constituting their own "significant geography" without undervaluing the other geographies that were significant for the two countries, primarily with the Soviet Union, but also, for Indian writers, also Europe and the USA.

More specifically, the lens of literary relations enables us to see that the "significant geography" of contemporary China and India was both temporally mutable and spatially flexible. The ups and downs of the two nations' political relations rendered their literary relations wildly fluctuating: a major geopolitical conflict like the 1962 war could very quickly turn a "significant geography" into "distant neighbours", whereas a

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[3] The concept of "Significant geographies" is defined as "*conceptual*, *imaginative*, and *real* geographies" that "texts, authors, and language communities inhabit, produce, and reach, which typically extend outwards without (ever?) having a truly global reach". Karima Laachir, Sara Marzagora, and Francesca Orsini, 'Significant Geographies in Lieu of World Literature', *Journal of World Literature*, no. 3 (2018): 294.

[4] Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 11.

renewed interest in knowing about each other following the normalisation of bilateral relations in the late 1970s could soon make the geography significant again (if not more), as I have shown in the case of China's reception of Gulshan Nanda's popular fiction.

Spatially, writerly contacts operated on both bilateral and multilateral levels; on the multilateral level, Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences took place mostly in Asian and African countries (including the Soviet republics in Central Asia), whereas the World Peace Council operated in both Europe and (to a lesser extent) Asia. In terms of textual contacts, the meaningful reach of some texts remained more confined to China and India than others: while China is one of the many countries where Premchand's works are well-received,[5] it is probably the only place Gulshan Nanda's popular fiction has successfully travelled to. And while India was only one locale, though a significant one, for the vast global distribution network of the Foreign Language Press's publications in the 1950s, it was arguably the only place beyond China where Zhang Zhaohe's short story was published, thanks to Panikkar's anthology. One could argue that the less an author is canonised domestically, the more contingent their reception abroad will be on the socio-cultural specificities and the subjective tastes of their intermediaries in the host culture, and also the more confined the geography of its cross-cultural circulation will be.

While constituting a "significant geography", contemporary China and India were in fact "significant" to one another in different ways. An argument I have repeatedly made throughout this thesis is that the landscape of post-1950 China-India literary relations is horizontal and asymmetrical. Horizontality manifested in the mutual respect between writers, the reciprocity in cultural diplomacy, a shared intention to

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[5] See Asaduddin, *Premchand in World Languages*.

build solidarities, the lack of Orientalist value judgements, and combined efforts in producing and circulating translations, and so on. At the same time, though, there were marked asymmetries caused by the differences between the two countries in terms of literary culture, political system, and foreign policy. The asymmetries were particularly strong in the 1950s, mainly due to the contrast between the PRC's centralisation of the cultural field and the more diversified situation on the Indian side, with multiple state and non-state actors, as the writerly contacts between China and India at cultural diplomacy activities and the Asian/Afro-Asian writers' conferences have shown. Asymmetries also transpired in textual contacts: while both China and India were active importers of each other's literary works, China also acted as an exporter of its own texts through the state-run Foreign Languages Press and International Bookstore. However, as I stressed in Chapter 3, India's lack of investment of money and manpower in translating Chinese works does not mean a lack of interest.

An argument running through Chapters 1-3 is that in the 1950s China served as a "significant geography" to leftist/communist Indian intellectuals in particular: while most of the Indian authors who engaged in China-related cultural diplomacy and actively interacted with the Chinese delegation at the two writers' conferences were leftists like Mulk Raj Anand, the circulation of Chinese books and periodicals were primarily facilitated by communist publishers, distributors and media. This means that we can carve out a "transnational socialist geography" within the broader geography of China and India. The fact that Mao's Little Red Book or *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, which probably arrived via Nepal, Burma, and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), enjoyed popularity in the Naxalite Movement under Charu Majumdar's leadership between 1967 and 1972 suggests that this "transnational socialist geography" remained dynamic at a time when the broader "significant geography" of China and India had

declined due to breakup of intergovernmental relations.[6] It is therefore a valid

conjecture that "proletarian novels" from China, many of which published in English

translation by the Foreign Languages Press, may have reached the Naxalites and

inspired them the way they later inspired the Maoist combatants and cadres in the

Nepali communist movement between1996 and 2006, as Michael Hutt has shown.[7]

If we look beyond the temporal limit of this thesis, China-India literary relations

in the recent two decades seem to have suffered from an amnesia. For instance, after the

Chinese version of Yashpal's Hindi masterpiece *Jhūṭhā sac* was published in 2000, the

dynamic tradition of translating Indian vernacular literatures quickly became a

phenomenon of the past, until the "Mutual Translation Project" brought out its first

publication — a three-volume annotated Chinese translation of the Brajbhasha/early

Hindi classic *Sursāgar* — in 2016. For the years in between, "Indian literature" was

represented in China's literary market and academic discourse mostly under the rubric

of "postcolonial literature", like many other places in the globalising world, by a

constellation of best-selling Anglophone Indian authors such as V.S. Naipaul, Salman

Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Aravind Adiga and Kiran Desai, winners of international

prizes like the Nobel prize (Naipaul) or the Man Booker prize and published by

international conglomerates. This choice suggests that non-Western countries rapidly

integrated into globalisation, such as China, became subject to what Shu-mei Shih has

called the "mechanisms in the discursive (un)conscious…that produce 'the West' as the

agent of recognition and 'the rest' as the object of recognition, in representation".[8]

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[6] See Sreemati Chakrabarti, 'Empty Symbol: The Little Red Book in India', in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 117–29.
[7] See Michael Hutt, 'Ganga Bahadur's Books: Landmark Proletarian Novels and the Nepali Communist Movement', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3 (2016): 357–74.
[8] Shih, 'Global Literature and the Technologies of Recognition', 17.

I hope that this situation will be rectified by the "Mutual Translation Project", which intends to make available more direct Chinese translations of Indian literature written in non-English languages and valorises local literary prizes (e.g. the Jnanpith Award and the Sahitya Akademi Award) as the foremost agents of recognition. Supported by seasoned national-level publishers (the Encyclopaedia of China Publishing House in China and the National Book Trust in India), this project also utilises book launches and influential book fairs to gain media attention and public visibility for its publications. In the meantime, I consider my thesis making a similar effort in the direction of dismantling the Eurocentric discourse of world literature scholarship by visibilising the richness and complexity of contemporary China-India literary contacts, in which Europe was only marginally involved, if at all.

As opening the way for the study of bilateral South-South literary relations, this thesis could not, and did not seek to, survey *all* the writerly, textual and readerly contacts that took place between China and India from 1950 to 1990. One of the obvious limitations has been language. Although my combination of Hindi and English has offered a fuller picture of the "Indian" side of China-India literary relations than relying on only one of them, a broader repertoire of Indian languages would likely reveal more comparative vectors but also interesting differences. Did Tagore's personal attachment with China and his founding of Cheena Bhavana in Santiniketan, which set up the first Chinese programme in India, make Bengali more productive a language than Hindi in terms of translating Chinese literature? Did the geographical and cultural proximity of Assam and Kashmir to China (recall Ye Junjian's knowledge gleaned from the Asian Writers' Conference in Chapter 2) or the strong presence of communist ideas in West Bengal and Kerala in recent decades lead to more avid textual and readerly contacts with Chinese literature in Assamese, Kashmiri, Bengali and Malayalam?

Addressing these questions would allow a more nuanced mapping of the China-India "significant geography".

Another topic that my thesis has opened up has been the role played by the Soviet Union in Cold War-era China-India literary relations. Soviet writers and cultural bureaucrats, I showed in Chapter 2, exerted a growing influence on the Asian/Afro-Asian writers' movement and posed challenges to the Indian delegation leaders when the venue shifted from Delhi to Tashkent. It would be useful to examine the 1962 AAWC in Cairo and see how the Sino-Soviet split of 1960 and mounting Sino-Indian border conflicts further changed the triangular dynamic in the movement and how India subsequently gravitated to the Soviet branch of the movement.[9] Chapter 3 showed that the Chinese project of external publicity was modelled on Soviet experiences; Foreign Language Press books and periodicals were in fact distributed, advertised and sold together with Soviet publications in communist/leftist bookstores across India — a phenomenon that continued into the 1980s. It would worth exploring further whether Indian readers consumed Foreign Language Press publications in alternative or in addition to Soviet ones. And what difference did Indian progressive intellectuals see when they simultaneously drew on the Soviet Union and China as sources of socialist literary works and theories?

Finally, it would be useful to approach post-1950 Chinese reception of Hindi literature in relation to its reception of Hindi films. For example, *Awaara*, released in China in 1955 and again in 1979, prompts a series of interesting comparisons: did the "progressivism" embedded in Premchand's works and that conveyed by *Awaara* (a melodrama critical of social injustice) mean different things in 1950s China? How can the different ways in which *Awaara* was received in China before and after the Cultural

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[9] There are zero Chinese writers in the magazine *Lotus* throughout the thirty or so years of its existence, whereas Indian authors appeared occasionally. See Halim, 'Lotus, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism'.

Revolution help us understand the trajectory from Premchand to Gulshan Nanda in the Chinese reception of Hindi literature? How did *Awaara* shape (and circumscribe?) the imagination of India in the Chinese theatrical adaptations of Nanda's popular fiction? I offered a preliminary answer to the two last questions in Chapter 5, but further exploration will be rewarding.

Appendix 1 | The Visits of Chinese Writers to India in the 1950s

October-December 1951

Visiting writers

Ding Xilin 丁西林 (playwright, Vice-Minister of Culture, President of CIFA)

Liu Baiyu 刘白羽 (essayist, reportage writer)

Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 (poet, translator of Tagore's *Stray Birds*)

Ji Xianlin 季羡林 (essayist, Indologist)

Objective of visit

To visit India (and Burma) on a Chinese cultural delegation with Ding Xilin acting as the delegation leader and Liu Baiyu the secretary-general

Literary activities involved

Poetry readings were organised; delegates paid homage to Tagore's former residence.

December 1953-January 1954

Visiting writers

Ding Xilin 丁西林

Xia Yan 夏衍 (screenwriter)

Yuan Shuipai 袁水拍 (poet)

Bing Xin 冰心 (poet, children's literature writer, translator of Tagore's *Gitanjali*)

Objective of visit

To attend the first ICFA national congress with a CIFA Delegation headed by Ding Xilin

Literary activities involved

Delegates participated in two receptions given by the literary and artistic figures in Calcutta; received numerous presents from local writers (mostly their own works); Yuan Shuipai read his poem about India in a gathering in Delhi; a warm reception was given by Bombay-based litterateurs and artists, who introduced the recent development in the Indian literary and art fields.

November 1954-January 1955

Visiting writers

Zheng Zhenduo 郑振铎 (poet, translator, newly-elected Vice-Minister of Culture)

Zhou Erfu 周而复(essayist, calligrapher)

Objective of visit

To tour India with a Chinese cultural delegation led by Zheng Zhenduo

Literary activities involved

Delegates attended a special meeting with over fifty writers and artists in Delhi, in which lots of gifts were presented; met with various writers and artists in Mumbai, where Mulk Raj Anand's proposal to convene an Asian Writers' Conference in 1956 was acclaimed.

April 1955

Visiting writers

Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (poet, playwright, vice-premier of the PRC, director of China Federation of Literary and Art Circles)

Ba Jin 巴金 (novelist)

Bing Xin 冰心

Ding Xilin 丁西林

Ji Xianlin 季羡林

Huang Zuolin 黄佐临 (playwright, film director)

Objective of visit

To attend the Asian Nations' Conference in Delhi with a forty-member delegation led by Guo Moruo

Literary activities involved

The Sahitya Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi held a reception in Delhi for visiting writers and artists (including the Chinese), where Indian authors such as Mulk Raj Anand, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Krishan Chander, and Sardar Ali Jafri attended.

January-February 1956

Visiting Writers

Wu Han 吴晗 (essayist, historian, deputy mayor of Beijing)

Yan Wenjing 严文井 (essayist, children's literature writer, editor-in-chief of the journal *People's Literature*)

Lu Kanru 陆侃如 (literary critic)

Objective of visit

To tour India on a CIFA cultural delegation headed by Wu Han

Literary activities involved

Delegates visited Sahitya Akademi; had meetings with Indian writers in Delhi, Mumbai, Nagpur, Jabalpur, Ahmedabad, Allahabad and Hyderabad.

July 1956

Visiting writers

Cao Yu 曹禺 (playwright, director of Beijing People's Art Theatre)

Yang Shuo 杨朔 (essayist, novelist, deputy-secretary of Chinese People's Committee for the Defence of World Peace, vice-president of the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity)

Han Beiping 韩北屏 (poet)

Objective of visit

To attend the preparatory meeting of Asian Writers' Conference representing China

Literary activities involved

Representatives worked with nine Indian writers on the preparatory committee, including the three convenors, Mulk Raj Anand, Jainendra Kumar and Banarsidas Chaturvedi; Han Beiping, accompanied by Anand, attended the Punjabi Writers' Convention in Jullundur (see Chapter 2).

December 1956

Visiting writers

Mao Dun 茅盾 (novelist, minister of culture, director of Chinese Writers' Association)

Zhou Yang 周扬 (critic, theorist)

Ye Shengtao 叶圣陶 (writer, educator, vice-minister of education)

Lao She 老舍 (novelist, playwright)

Yang Shuo 杨朔

Ye Junjian 叶君健 (novelist, translator)

Ba Jin 巴金

Xiao San 萧三 (poet, translator)

Han Beiping 韩北屏 (poet)

Wang Shuren 王书稔(Director, People's Literature Publishing House)

Yu Guanying 余冠英(scholar of classical Chinese literature)

Bai Lang 白朗 (author)

Ziya 孜亚(Uygur poet)

Objective of visit

To attend the Asian Writers' Conference in Delhi on a Chinese delegation led by Mao Dun

Literary activities involved

Delegates met, discussed and debated with dozens of Indian writers partaking in the conference, which, apart from the convenors, include Tarashankar Banerjee, Bishnu Dey, Dharamvir Bharati, Ali Sardar Jafri and Sajjad Zaheer and so on; had good impression of and exchanged books with the Punjabi poet Amrita Pritam; were invited by Navtej Singh and his father Gurbakhsh Singh, two Punjabi writers, for dinner; attended the Indian Writers' Convention prior to the Asian Writers' Conference; attended a reception hosted by Sahitya Akademi; entertained two convenors of the conference, Anand and Jainendra Kumar; dined Jainendra alone at the cultural wing of Chinese Embassy, visited his residence and publishing house, and received lots of books (all in Hindi) from the author; Han Beiping attended a gathering of progressive poets at Jamia Millia Islamia and a gathering of progressive writers and poets near Delhi (see Chapter 2).

Appendix 2 | The Visits of Indian Writers to China in the 1950s

1950-1952

Visiting writers

K.M. Panikkar (diplomat, historian, writer, journalist, translator)

Objective of visit

To serve as India's first ambassador to the PRC

Literary activities involved

Had conversations with the PRC's cultural bureaucrats such as Guo Moruo and Mao Dun; appreciated traditional Chinese drama; obtained knowledge of Chinese literature through foreign intellectuals teaching in Beijing, such as the German poet and scholar Vincenz Hundhausen and the British poet and critic William Empson — the former's German translation of the Chinese classical drama *Xixiangji* (The Western Chamber) might have inspired Panikkar's translation of the same work into Malayalam; compiled *Modern Chinese Stories* (see Chapter 3).

September-October 1951

Visiting writers

Mulk Raj Anand (novelist, member of AIPC)

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (novelist, screenwriter, co-founder of IPTA)

Pandit Sundarlal (writer, Gandhian, president of ICFA)

Raja Hutheesing (writer, journalist)

Objective of visit

To attend the National Day ceremony and tour China on an Indian goodwill mission led by Sundarlal

Literary activities involved

Delegates exchanged views with the PRC's leading literary figures like Zhou Yang and Ding Ling; paid homage at the tomb of Lu Xun; received books and journals published by the Foreign Languages Press (see Chapter 1).

April 1952-May 1953

Visiting writers

Jagadish Chandra Jain (writer, Indologist)

Objective of visit

To teach Hindi at Peking University

Literary activities involved

Frequently met Chinese intellectuals and authors, including Ding Xilin and Jin Kemu (poet, Indologist); devoured Chinese literature of all kinds, which triggered his translation of the classic *Tao Te Ching into Hindi* (*Path ka brabhāv*).

October1952

Visiting writers

Amrit Rai (Hindi novelist)

Dinanath Nadim (Kashmiri poet)

Umashankar Joshi (Gujarati author)

Manoj Basu (Bengali novelist)

Objective of visit

To attend the Asia and Pacific Rim Peace Conference in Beijing on an Indian delegation comprising about sixty members

Literary activities involved

Delegates watched Beijing opera *Baimaonv* (The White-haired Girl); interviewed Mao Dun; had a meeting with Xiao San, Ai Qing and Zhou Libo; conversed with Ye Junjian (see Chapter 1).

September 1952

Visiting writers

Kunwar Narain

Literary activities involved

Passed by China with and International delegation after celebrating the 5th World Youth Festival in Poland (other Indian members on the delegation include former PM V.P. Singh and the actor Balraj Sahni).

September-October 1953

Visiting writers

Harindranath Chattopadhyay (poet, dramatist, independent MP)

Objective of visit

To attend the National Day celebration

Literary activities involved

Met and discussed with many leading Chinese writers like Zheng Zhenduo, Lao She, Ai Qing, Yuan Shuipai, Ji Xianlin, Liu Baiyu, Xia Yan, Tian Han, Tian Jian, Bing Xin among others.

October1953

Visiting writers

Navtej Singh (Punjabi novelist)

Objective of visit

Unknown

Literary activities involved

Presented his works to the Chinese Writers' Association.

October1955

Visiting writers

Krishan Chander (novelist, screenwriter)

Objective of visit

To visit China with a film delegation led by Prithviraj Kapoor

Literary Activities Involved

Visited the Chinese Writers' Association.

Spring 1956

Visiting writers

Mulk Raj Anand

Objectives of visit

To seek China's support for the Asian Writers' Conference

Literary activities involved

Met and negotiated with the PRC's cultural bureaucrats (probably leaders of the Chinese Writers' Association).

October 1956

Visiting writers

Tarashankar Banerjee (Bengali novelist)

Jainendra Kumar (Hindi novelist)

Objective of visit

To attend the conference commemorating the 20th anniversary of Lu Xun's death representing India

Literary activities involved

Met with leading Chinese authors; Tarashankar read out an essay on Lu Xun written by Jainendra (see Chapter 3).

November 1957

Visiting writers

Ramdhari Singh "Dinkar" (poet)

Objectives of Visit

Unknown

Literary activities involved

Had conversations with Chinese authors Li Ji and Lao She (see Chapter 1).

June-November 1958

Visiting writers

Rahul Sankrityayan

Objectives of visit

To conduct a cultural tour in China (mainly Beijing and Tibet).

Literary activities involved

Visited the Hindi sections of *China Pictorial* and the Foreign Languages Press; read Chinese folk tales while hospitalised and intended to translate them.

Appendix 3 | Book-length Translations of Indian Works into Chinese, 1950-1962

No	Author	Original	Language	Translation	Translator	Year	Genre	Progressive
1	Kalidasa	*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*	Sanskrit	*Shapidaluo*	Mi Wenkai	1950	Play	
2	Vyāsa/Vālmīki	*Mahābhārata/Rāmāyāna*	Sanskrit	*Gu Yindu Liangda Shishi*	Mi Wenkai	1951	Epic	
3	Tulsi Lahiri	*Chhenrā Tār*	Bengali	*Duan Xian*	Gu Huawu	1953	Play	
4	Krishan Chander	*Shole aur Phūl*	Urdu	*Huoyan yu Hua*	Feng Jinxin	1953	Stories	Yes
5	Navtej Singh	*[A Broken Boat without Oars]*	Punjabi	*Meiyou Jiang de Pochuan*	Yan Shaoduan, Shi zhujun	1953	Stories	Yes
6	Premchand, Krishan Chander, Mulk Raj Anand, Navtej Singh, Ibrahim Zareesh?, Manik Bandopadhyay	*[Various Souces]*	Hindi, Urdu, English, Punjabi, Bengali	*Yindu Duanpian Xiaoshuoji*	Yuan Ruo	1953	Anthology of Stories	Yes
7	Mulk Raj Anand	*Untouchable*	English	*Buke Jiechu de Jianmin*	Wang Keyi	1954	Novel	Yes
8	Mulk Raj Anand, Navtej, Samaresh Basu?, Sushil Jana?	*The Barber's Trade Union*	English, Punjabi, Bengali	*Lifashi Gonghui*	Gu Huawu, Zhou Jinnan	1954	Anthology of Stories	Yes
9	Kalidasa	*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*	Sanskrit	*Shagongdaluo*	Wang Weike	1954	Play	
10	Rabindranath Tagore	*My Childhood Days*	English	*Wo de Tongnian*	Jin Kemu	1954	Memoir	
11	Rabindranath Tagore	*The Crescent Moon*	English	*Xinyue Ji*	Zheng Zhenduo	1954	Poems	
12	Mulk Raj Anand	*Reflections on the Golden Bed and Other Stories*	English	*Annade Duanpian Xiaoshuo Xuan*	Hou Junji	1955	Stories	Yes
13	Bhabani Bhattacharya	*So Many Hungers!*	English	*Ji'e*	Feng Jinxin, Guo Kailan	1955	Novel	Yes
14	Rabindranath Tagore	*Gitanjali*	English	*Jitanjiali*	Xie Bingxin	1955	Poems	

No.	Author	Title	Language		Translator	Year	Genre	
15	Mulk Raj Anand	*Coolie*	English	*Kuli*	Yan Shaoduan, Shi Zhujun	1955	Novel	Yes
16	Mulk Raj Anand	*Two Leaves and A Bud*	English	*Liangye Yiya*	Huang Xingqi, Cao Yong, Shi Song	1955	Novel	Yes
17	Krishan Chander	*[Various Sources]*	Urdu	*Qianda'er Duanpian Xiaoshuo Ji*	Feng Jinxin, et al.	1955	Stories	Yes
18	Harindranath Chattopadhyay	*I Sing of Man and Other Poems*	English	*Wo Gechang Renlei*	Zhang Qi	1955	Poems	Yes
19	Baren Basu	*Rangrut*	Bengali	*Xinbing*	Shi Xianrong, Wang Yangle, Liu Shoukang, Feng Jinxin	1955	Novel	Yes
20	Mulk Raj Anand	*Indian Fairy Tales*	English	*Yindu Minjian Gushi*	Xie Bingxin	1955	Tales	Yes
21	Premchand	*[A Heart Changing Man]*	Hindi	*Bianxin de Ren*	Zheng Qiu	1956	Stories	Yes
22	Balwant Gargi	*[The First Rippee]*	Punjabi	*Diyi Ge Weibo*	Lin Qi	1956	Play	Yes
23	Rabindranath Tagore	*Stray Birds*	English	*Feiniao Ji*	Zheng Zhenduo	1956	Poems	
24	Krishan Chander	*[Black Sun]*	Urdu	*Hei Taiyang*	Hong Yan	1956	Children's literature	Yes
25	Sarat Chandra Chatterji	*Arakshanīyā*	Bengali	*Jia Bu Chuqu de Nv'er*	Shi Zhen	1956	Novel	
26	Harsa	*Nāgānanda*	Sanskrit	*Long Xi Ji*	Wu Xiaoling	1956	Play	
27	Dev Hari?	*Folktales of Bengal*	English	*Mengjiala Minjian Gushi*	Xu Dishan	1956	Tales	
28	Manik Bandopadhyay	*Padmā Nadira mājhi*	Bengali	*Pademahe Shang De Chuanfu*	Guo Kailan	1956	Novel	Yes
29	Kalidasa	*Abhijñānaśākuntalam*	Sanskrit	*Shagongdaluo*	Ji Xianlin	1956	Play	
30	Balwant Gargi	*Sohnī Māhiwāl*	Punjabi	*Suni he Maxiwali*	Yao Gen	1956	Play	Yes
31	Rabindranath Tagore	*The Gardener*	English	*Yuanding Ji*	Wu Yan	1956	Poems	
32	Kalidasa	*Meghadūta*	Sanskrit	*Yunshi*	Jin Kemu	1956	Poetry	

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	Author	Title	Romanized Title	Translator	Year	Genre	
33	K.A. Abbas	Rice and other stories	Abasi Duanpian Xiaoshuo Ji	Feng Jinxin, Huang Yushi	1957	Stories	Yes
34	Sanghasena	Śatāvadāna	Baiyujing Gushi	Ni Hairu	1957	Tales	
35	Premchand	[A Collection of Premchand's Short Stories] translated from three different sources	Puliemuchangde Duanpian Xiaoshuo Ji	Yuan Ding	1957	Stories	Yes
36	Śūdraka	Mrcchakatika	Xiao Niche	Wu Xiaoling	1957	Play	
37	Iqbal	[A Selection of Iqbal's Poems]	Yikeba er Shixuan	Zou Difan	1957	Poems	
38	?	[Indian Folktales]	Yindu Minjian Gushi	Jiang Shaoyuan	1957	Tales	
39	Ganguly?	[A Collection of Indian Folktaless]	Yindu Minjian Gushi Ji	Chen Zhanggen	1957	Tales	
40	Rabindranath Tagore	The Fugitive	Yousi Ji	Tang Yongkuan	1957	Poems	
41	Krishan Chander	Ultā Darakht	Daozhangn De Shu	Zhang Jizhi	1958	Children's literature	Yes
42	C. Rajagopalachari	Mahābhārata	Mohepoluoduo De Gushi	Tang Jiyong	1958	Epic (retold)	
43	Rabindranath Tagore	Muktodhārā	Mokeduotala	Shi Zhen	1958	Play	
44	Rabindranath Tagore	[Selected Plays of Tagore]	Taige'er Xiju Ji	Zhai Junong, Feng Jinxin	1958-1959	Play	
45	Premchand	Sawā ser gehūn	Yi Ba Xiaomai	Yi Min	1958	Stories	Yes
46	?	Śukasaptati	Yindu Yingwu Gushi	Wu Guodong	1958	Fables	
47	Rabindranath Tagore	[Selected Poems]	Shixuan	Shi Zhen, Xie Bingxin	1958	Poems	
48	Premchand	Godān	Gedan	Yan Shaoduan	1958	Novel	Yes
49	Rahul Sankrityayan	Volgā se Gangā	Yindu Shihua	Zhou Jinkai	1958	Stories	Yes
50	Krishan Chander	[Selected Short Stories]	Wo Buneng Si	Yan Shaoduan	1958	Stories	Yes
51	Rabindranath Tagore	Gorā	Gela	Huang Xingqi	1959	Novel	
52	Jainendra Kumar	Tyāgapatra	Cizhi	Li Shui	1959	Novella	
53	K.A. Abbas	[Selected Short Stories]	Xiaomai Yu Meigui	Sun Jingzhao	1959	Stories	Yes

	Author	Title	Language	Chinese Title	Translator	Year	Genre	
54	Rabindranath Tagore	*Dui Bighā Jami*	Bengali	*Liang Mu Di*	Shi Zhen	1959	Poems	
55	?	[Selected Tales from Buddhist Literature]	Sanskrit	*Fojing Wenxue Gushi Xuan*	Chang Renxia	1959	Tales	
56	Rabindranath Tagore	[Selected Lyric Poetry of Tagore]	English	*Taige'er Shuqingshi Xuan*	Xie Bingxin	1959	Poems	
57	Premchand	*Nirmalā*	Hindi	*Nimola*	Suo Na	1959	Novel	Yes
58	N/A	*Pañcatantra*	Sanskrit	*Wu Juan Shu*	Ji Xianlin	1959	Fables	
59	Rabindranath Tagore	[A Colloction of Tagore's Works]	Bengali/ English	*Taige'er Zuopin Ji*	Shi Zhen, et al.	1961	Poems, Novels, Stories, Plays	
60	Vālmīki, Sudha Muzumdar	*Rāmāyāna*	Sanskrit	*Luomoyanna De Gushi*	Feng Jinxin, Qi Guangxiu	1962	Epic	
61	Vyāsa/Vālmīki	*Mahābhārata/Rāmāyāna*	Sanskrit	*Lamayanna/ Mahapalada*	Sun Yong	1962	Epic	
62	Kalidasa	*Vikramōrvaśīyam*	Sanskrit	*Youliposhi*	Ji Xianlin	1962	Play	

Appendix 4 | Book-length Indian Translations of Chinese Works into English and Hindi, 1950-1962

No	Author	Original	Language	Translation	Translator	Year	Genre	FLP-based*
1	Lu Xun, Lao She, Mao Dun, Ding Ling, et al	*Various Sources*	English	*Modern Chinese Stories*	K.M. Panikkar (comp.); Huang Kun (trans.)	1953	Short story anthology	
2	Lu Xun	*A Q Zhengzhuan*	Hindi	*Āh Kyū*	Nur Nabi Abbasi	1955	Novella	Yes
3	Lu Xun, Lao She, Mao Dun, Ding Ling, et al	*Modern Chinese Stories by K.M. Panmikar*	Hindi	*Ādhunik Cīnī Kahāniyāṃ*	Shivadansingh Chauhan, Vijay Chauhan	1956?	Short story anthology	
4	Feng Xuefeng	*Xuefeng Yuyan*	Hindi	*Subah ke Bādal*	Nur Nabi Abbasi	1956	Fable collection	Yes
5	Kong Jue, Yuan Jing	*Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*	Hindi	*Nayā Suraj*	Nur Nabi Abbasi	1956	Novel	Yes
6	Kong Jue, Yuan Jing	*Xin Ernü Yingxiong Zhuan*	Hindi	*Jab Saṃtāneṃ Jāg Uṭhīṃ*	Virendra Pandey	1957	Novel	Yes
7	Hu Shiyan	*Liubao de Gushi*	Hindi	*Bed Vṛkshoṃ Kī Chāya Meṃ*	Ramgopalsingh Chauhan	195?	Novel	Yes
8	Hu Shiyan	*Liubao de Gushi*	Hindi	*Sainik kā Prem*	Chand Mohammad B.	1957	Novel	Yes

* This column denotes the Indian translations that were prepared on the basis of the English versions produced by the FLP in China.

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