

FOR REFERENCE ONLY: RESTRICTED PUBLICATION
AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN LITERATURE
DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

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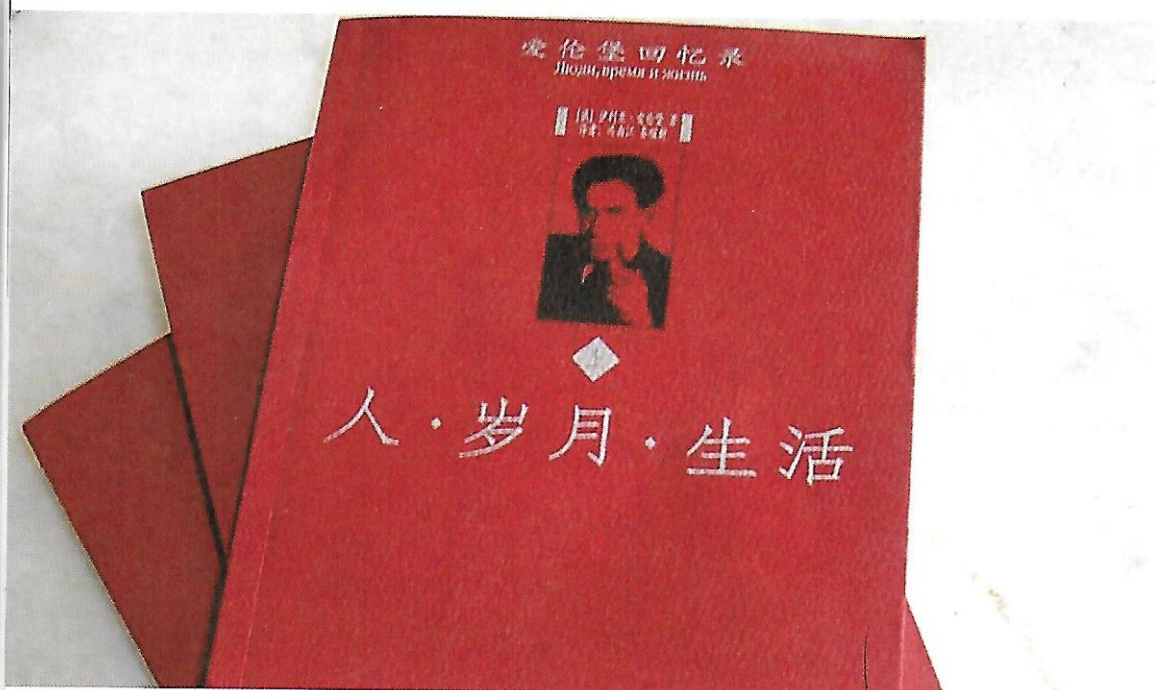


Figure 1: New edition of *Years, People, Life*. Courtesy of the author

For many years, both Chinese and Westerners have viewed the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) as a bleak winter for cultural production, a time when artists of all kinds were silenced, and apart from pieces of blatant propaganda, few real artistic works were produced. Although this view is justified to a certain extent, it is based on a rather narrow definition of culture, namely official published state culture, and it over-simplifies the complicated and stratified nature of cultural production and circulation in society. More recent studies of literary production during the Cultural Revolution, especially those dealing with underground literature, have revealed the existence of an unofficial and unorthodox reading and writing, and this in turn provides a convincing explanation for the apparently sudden burst of intellectual and literary creativity that occurred in the late 1970s. Underground literature, such as that produced by the Baiyangdian poetry group in the early 1970s (the main antecedent to Misty poetry) and hand-copied novels circulated during the same period, indicate that there were intellectual doubts, rebellion against revolutionary orthodoxy, and germination of the seeds of change even in the so-called barren years of the Cultural Revolution.¹

Internal publication, the subject of this paper, is another source for us to study the complexity and stratification of culture in Socialist China, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. According to the *Quanguo neibu faxing tushu zongmu* (1949-1979) (Catalogue for national internal distribution [1949-1979]), in the three decades from 1949 to 1979, over 18,301 internal publications appeared, including nearly 9,700 titles in the humanities and social sciences. Among the latter were a large number of modern literary works from outside China, and I will focus on these foreign works in this paper, since they give a particularly clear indication of the functions and unintended consequences of the internal publication system.²

Internal publication of significant amounts of contemporary foreign literature began in the early 1960s and continued right up to the mid-1980s. Initiated in the early 1960s, and picking up again in 1972 after a break from 1966 to 1971, internal publication was actually one of the most important and systematic venues for introducing and disseminating foreign literature during the decades of 1960s and 1970s. Though commissioned by the government, the selection principles and titles of these works differed dramatically from those for openly published and unrestricted foreign literary works. They included some of the most challenging and “decadent” works of the European and American modernists and “Revisionist” writing from the Soviet Union — in other words, books reflecting world-views that the Chinese government officially considered to be anathema.

Though internal publication of such works completely ceased during the most turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1971), their circulation was, paradoxically, broadened in this period. As I will show, despite the fact that they were originally designated for internal circulation only among “high level” readers above specified official ranks, these books spread much further during the chaotic years of the late 1960s and reached many readers who would never have encountered them in more peaceful times. As a result, such foreign literary works became the main avenue for intellectuals, officials and especially educated youth to find out about the contemporary world beyond the borders of China, and to become familiar with its challenging intellectual currents. In many cases, particularly among the “urban youth” generation, these works profoundly influenced and altered their intellectual development and helped to form an intellectual and literary undercurrent that dramatically reshaped the ideological and aesthetic topography of China over the next three decades.

In this paper I will take a preliminary look at the cultural phenomenon of internal publication of foreign literature in China during the period from the early 1960s to mid-1970s, focussing especially on three aspects: the origins of the internal publication system, the criteria for selection of titles, and the unexpectedly powerful influence of internal publications during and immediately after the Cultural Revolution. Before dealing with these aspects, however, I will first briefly describe the kinds of foreign literature that were openly available in Socialist China, in order to demonstrate the contrast with titles chosen for internal publication.

OPENLY PUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS OF FOREIGN LITERATURE FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1970S
Translating and publishing foreign literature has been an important cultural enterprise in China since the late nineteenth century. The first large-scale translation of foreign literature began in the late Qing and early Republican period and right from the start there were high expectations among many Chinese thinkers for the results of this enterprise. Most reformers and socially engaged intellectuals saw foreign literature as a vehicle for social reform. They took what they considered to be mainstream Western culture as their model in promoting a thoroughgoing transformation of Chinese culture and society, and the translation of foreign literary, philosophical, and other academic works became an integral part of their new cultural movement. Due to this focus, the works that they chose to translate, whether it was the late Qing craze for political fiction, or writings by “oppressed groups” in Eastern Europe and Russia translated by the May Fourth Generation and the leftists of the 1930s, all displayed more or less overt political and social concerns.

Yet at the same time, a newly emerging urban culture and print media technology created the economic conditions for professional translators, writers, publishers and bookstores to introduce

more popular foreign literature for mass consumption in newspapers and magazines. In contrast to the works selected by reformers and serious intellectuals, such popular fiction was mainly for entertainment and light reading, a way to become acquainted with Western life and to satisfy readers' curiosity. And thirdly, there were also some elite intellectuals and literary professors, often trained abroad, who claimed to believe in "art for art's sake," and tried to promote writings and theories about the autonomy of literature. Their translations included works of Western and Japanese literary classics as well as modernist writings.

This relatively diverse approach to foreign literature became considerably narrower in the early 1950s when China's relationship with the rest of the world changed following the Communist takeover. The translation of foreign literature in Maoist China (1949-1976) was strongly influenced by the following factors:³ First, after the government took over the publishing industry and nationalized the culture business in the early 1950s, literary production became an integral part of the state plan: subsidized, but at the same time, regulated. Foreign literature was watched especially closely due to the sensitive nature of Sino-foreign relations. Only a handful of "reliable" state-run publishing houses had the privilege to translate and publish foreign literature, such as People's Literature Publishing House (Renmin wenzue), World Knowledge Publishing House (Shijie zhishi), and Shanghai People's Publishing House (Shanghai renmin). This virtual monopoly effectively controlled the publication process, from planning, title selection, and hiring of translators to printing and distribution, and prevented other publishing houses from introducing controversial foreign works.

Second, in terms of title selection, political considerations were paramount. For this reason, contemporary titles were clearly slanted towards works from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and many small Asian, African and Latin American countries, which were either friends or allies of Socialist China.⁴ Often these foreign works were used, together with revolutionary historical novels by Chinese writers, to "engineer" the socialist revolution and play a central role in the "socialist education" of the 1950s — especially in schools and colleges. For example, those works on the Soviet Socialist revolution and construction, and the Soviet resistance against Hitler in the Second World War were especially prominent. Some of these translated titles, such as *Gangtie shi zenyang lian cheng de* (The tempering of steel) by Nicolay Ostrovsky (1952), *Qingnian jinweijun* (The young guard) by Alexander Fadeyev (1954), and works by M. Gorky and V. Mayakovsky were among the most popular books, with millions of copies sold.

By contrast, there were few translations of contemporary works from North America and Western Europe. Instead, most works from the West were "classics" written before the twentieth century, especially the so-called "critical realist" novels of the eighteenth or nineteenth century that displayed the corruption and social problems of Western society (by Dickens, Balzac, Hugo, Stendhal and Tolstoy, etc.). It was not until the 1980s that a more representative selection of twentieth century foreign literature appeared on regular bookstore shelves. The three collaborative projects initiated by People's Literature Publishing House with the Institute of Foreign Literature of Chinese Academy of Social Science and Shanghai Translation Publishing House (Shanghai yiwu), starting in 1959, illuminate this highly selective tendency. They included the *Waiguo wenzue mingzhu xilie* (Foreign masterpieces series), *Waiguo wenzue lilun xilie* (Foreign literary theory series), and *Makeshi zhuyi jingdian zhuzuo* (Marxist literary and art theory series).

With regard to openly published works, therefore, it is clear that prior to the 1980s, cultural elitism and political engagement were the dominant factors controlling the selection and translation of

foreign literature in Maoist China. Like other cultural institutions, the policies and practices of the publication business were centrally planned and regulated, often blatantly servicing the political demands of the leadership and undergoing frequent revisions to keep in line with changing political winds. Moreover, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), even these highly selected works were denounced as poisonous.

INTERNAL PUBLICATION: ORIGINS AND SELECTION PROCESS

The internal publication of foreign literature, like many other cultural developments in socialist China, resulted from political considerations, especially the disputes and subsequent fierce debates between China and the Soviet Union from the end of the 1950s onwards. During these debates, the Chinese government accused the Soviets of “revisionism” and treated the reforms of Khrushchev as evidence of Soviet capitulation to Western Imperialists. This anti-revisionist, anti-imperialist foreign policy took center stage in China for the next fifteen years. But at the same time, many leaders in the Chinese Communist Party felt that they themselves should gain a deeper understanding of ideological trends in international Communist movements, especially in the Soviet Union, as well as an understanding of some of the latest Western ideas, in order to equip themselves better to oppose the revisionists. As a result, at the end of 1960, officials of the Department of Propaganda and Ministry of Culture called a meeting in Beijing’s Xinqiao Hotel with editors involved in foreign literature publishing. In this meeting, Lu Dingyi (or Zhou Yang?), the official in charge of propaganda and cultural affairs, admitted, “We are in complete darkness about the West and have only scanty knowledge of the Soviet Union.” They thus proposed to translate some of the most important contemporary works from abroad, with the proviso that these publications should be circulated only “internally.”⁵

According to Qin Shunxin, who was editor and translator of Russian and Soviet literature in People’s Literature Publishing House and involved in internal publication since 1960, a few such books, identified on their back covers as *neibu faxing* (internal publications), were published in the two years following this meeting, but they were not much different in appearance from openly published books. It was from 1963 that, at the suggestion of Lin Mohan (or Wei Junyi?), the head of People’s Publishing House at that time, the internal publication of foreign works assumed the character of a vast and organized activity and a much more systematic and uniform packaging of internal books began.

There were two main categories of translated works: the first category included books dealing with politics, philosophy, and international affairs, such as the works of Leon Trotsky, and books by or about Khrushchev. These were covered in plain gray paper, hence they were later referred to as *hui pi shu* (gray covered books). The second category mainly focused on literature, including works of literary theory and criticism. Most of these were so-called humanist (*rendao zhuyi*) works or the thaw literature from the 1950s and 1960s’ Soviet Union, and contemporary modernist works from the West. They were all packaged in plain yellow covers, and later became known as *huang pi shu* (yellow covered books).

The print numbers cannot be exactly confirmed, except to say that they were very small. According to Qin Shunxin, gray covered books were more “restricted,” with a print run of around three to four hundred, and yellow covered books were relatively “loose,” with around nine hundred copies. The small numbers confirm that the original function of these translations was as reference books for high officials—according to Qin Shunxin, the general guide for the ranks was division commanders and directors of bureau and prefects (*shi, ju, diwei shuji* or *zhuan yuan* etc.).⁶ The supply of

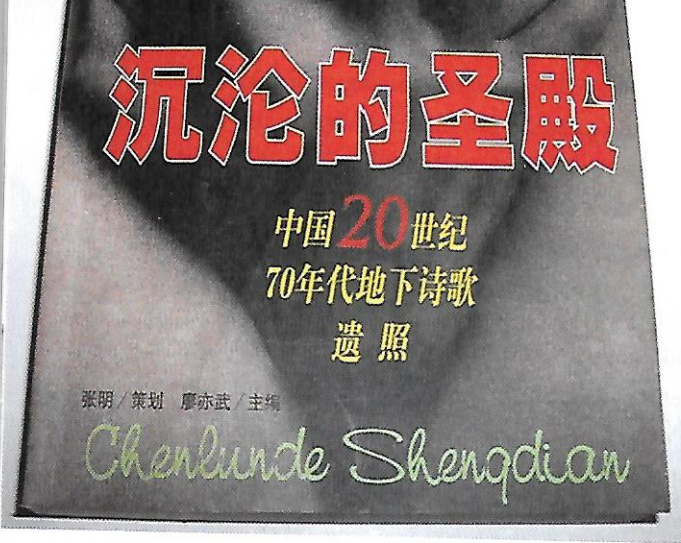


Figure 2: *Sunken Cathedral*: a research on underground poetry during the Cultural Revolution. Courtesy of the author

internal publications of literary works in Beijing went to cultural officials, libraries and reference rooms in the Propaganda Department and Ministry of Culture, and some also went to famous writers and university professors. In the provinces, only the directors of the local Propaganda Departments and Bureau of Culture would be allowed access to them.

The selection, translation and publication of foreign literature titles was mainly carried out in Beijing by Writers Publishing House (Zuojia) and Chinese

Drama Publishing House (Zhongguo xiju), both of which were at that time affiliated with People's Literature Publishing House. These institutions already employed the most talented translators and editors, many of whom had received their training before 1949. After 1964, some of the translation work was split with the Shanghai Office of Writer's Publishing House (Zuojia chubanshe Shanghai bianji suo), but the Shanghai Office focused mainly on translation rather than selection of titles. According to Qin Shunxin, this process was not controlled as tightly as one might imagine. Apart from the fact that these books were produced in very small numbers for internal circulation, there weren't many regulations or restrictions designed to keep the process secret: their publication was treated as part of the normal work of the publishing house.

Most of the works were chosen and translated by editors like Qin Shunxin, who were also experts in the source language. Of course, as experienced state-employed intellectuals, they would have been very aware of the current Chinese political agenda and the need for a certain amount of self-censorship.⁷ They would first collect information and materials by reading newspapers, journals and books from abroad. Qin Shunxin himself had the task of locating books by Russian/Soviet humanists and the third or fourth generation of Soviet writers influenced by contemporary Western modernist writers and ideas, since these were being hotly debated in the Soviet Union at the time. The editors would then obtain copies of the selected works for the publishing house, and if approved, would find a translator, or in many cases, carry out the translation work themselves. Every quarter or half year, the president and chief-editor of the publishing house would report to officials in the Propaganda Department and Ministry of Culture, but it seems that the top leadership seldom intervened with the selection and editing process.

This internal publication of contemporary foreign literature was cut short when the Cultural Revolution broke out in earnest in mid-1966 and most cultural institutions collapsed, with virtually all intellectuals sent to be reformed in cadres' schools. When Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping brought the various state bureau and institutes back into operation after 1972, many exiled officials and intellectuals returned, and the work of internal publication resumed once more. This time Shanghai started first, and took a much more active role.⁸ Shanghai translators published while still at cadres' school, for example, the Translation Team of the Cadres' School of Shanghai News and Press System (Shanghai xinwen chuban xitong wuqi ganxiao fanyi zu) had work published by Shanghai People's Publishing House as early as the end of 1971. In 1973, a Shanghai journal entitled *Zhaiyi* (Translation digest) appeared, which mainly introduced contemporary literature and literary trends from the Soviet Union, Japan and the United States

for internal circulation. In Beijing, the People's Publishing House also brought out more titles, but many were not printed until 1977 or 1978.

The internal publication of translated foreign literature continued at least to the mid-1980s, but from the late 1970s the titles selected and the assumed audience greatly changed. More literary books with fewer political undertones were introduced, along with some popular entertainment works, such as detective and love stories, and bestsellers like the novels of Margaret Mitchell and Arthur Hailey.⁹ Once again, however, the stated aim of these translations was to allow responsible officials to learn about the social problems of foreign countries. The kinds of books chosen were obviously aimed at a much broader audience than the political and cultural elite of the earlier period. During this period, there were also more publishing houses (especially provincial ones) that became involved, such as the Masses Publishing House (Qunzhong chubanshe) run by the Ministry of Public Security, Jiangsu People's Publishing House (Jiangsu renmin), and the Shanghai Translation Publishing House (Shanghai yiwen), and the restrictions on internal publication were gradually loosened. Finally, many of the translated works were openly released in new editions, creating the first wave in the commercial publication of foreign literature in the mid and late 1980s.

TITLES AND FORMAT

In terms of their titles and authors, the internal publications that appeared in the early 1960s and 1970s differed dramatically from those of openly published foreign literary works. As noted above, they were contemporary-oriented, focusing on writers and works that exerted a major influence on ideological and cultural trends, no matter whether they were produced in socialist or capitalist societies. A large proportion of these works were modernist in style or content, and directly challenged publicly advocated policies in China at that time. Based on the titles listed in the *Catalogue for National Internal Distribution* (1949-1979), most of the foreign literary works were still from the Soviet Union (over one hundred titles), American works were second most popular, with nearly thirty titles, then Japan (twenty-four titles), France (fifteen), and Britain (fourteen).¹⁰ The large proportion of contemporary Western works contrasts greatly with the tiny numbers of that category that were openly published in China during 1950s and early 1960s. And even though works from the Soviet Union predominated in both internal and open publication lists, the kinds of works selected were completely different. The open publications emphasized "progressive models of socialist revolution, construction and patriotic spirit," whereas the internal publications included many controversial works by dissident humanist writers and modernist writers of a younger generation, such as Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967), Konstantin Simonov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Vasily Aksyonov. For example, Ehrenburg's famous novel *The Thaw* was available as early as 1963, and four volumes of his six-volume memoir *Ren sui yue sheng huo* (Years, people, life) appeared between 1962 and 1964.¹¹ Qin Shunxin, the editor and one of the translators of *Years*, recalls that the latter work was one of the few titles whose translation was directly ordered by the top leadership, due to the great influence of Ehrenburg's writings and the frequent appearance of the writer and his works in Western reports.

Along with this translation of unorthodox and "revisionist" literature from the Soviet Union, many major contemporary Western modernist works were also translated. These included the existentialist Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea and Other Stories* (Yanwu ji qita, 1965) and Albert Camus' *The Outsider* (Ju wairen, 1961), Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* (Dengdai geduo, 1965), *The Trial and Other Stories* (Shenpan ji qita, 1966) by Kafka, *Collection of Essays by T.S. Eliot* (Tuo Shi Ailue lunwen xuan, 1962), *On the Road* (Zai lushang, 1962) by Jack Kerouac and *Catcher in the Rye* (Maitian li de shouwangzhe, 1963) by J.D. Salinger.

The format of these publications is also noteworthy. The books had a uniform appearance with their plain yellow covers and “internal publication” labels. For those internal publications that came out before 1966, most of the books were prefaced with brief publication notes (*chuban shuoming*), which were basically the publication information of the original work. Occasionally there were more detailed introductions to the work or the writer, mostly objective and balanced. For instance, there is an extended afterword to *Catcher in the Rye* by the translator Shi Xianrong, who was then also an editor at People’s Literature Publishing House. It is clear that the translator had read extensively among journals and newspaper reviews of this book, both those from America and the Soviet Union. He gives an introduction to the writer and the reception of the work, but avoids making his own reading or interpretation of the novel. As a result, the tone of his remarks is scholarly, based on careful collection of a broad sample of materials, rather than stridently political. By contrast, in the late years of the Cultural Revolution, the internal publications that were produced in Shanghai were all prefaced with “criticisms” written in fierce politicized language, and giving distorted interpretations of the work from a “revolutionary” point of view.

Besides works of literature, there were also a substantial number of collections of literary theory and criticism among the internal publications, especially introducing the various debates among Soviet writers. The topics included: *Sulian yixie pipingjia zuojia lun yishu gexin yu ziwo biaoqian wenti* (Soviet critics and writers on artistic renovation and self-expression), *Sulian wenxue yu rendao zhuyi* (Soviet literature and humanism), and *Rendao zhuyi yu xiandai wenxue* (Humanism and modern literature). These topics reflected and provoked many of the literary debates that raged among Chinese writers of the period. They were mainly collected and edited by the editorial board of the Translation of Modern Literary Theory Series of Writers’ Publishing House.

DISSEMINATION AND INFLUENCE

The original aim was to circulate these internal publications among a small group of high-ranking officials in the propaganda departments and culture bureau and elite intellectuals, to help them understand international affairs and ideological trends, and better equip them to resist the threat of enemies outside. However, it was not long before many of these works gained a much wider readership than the government intended. This occurred to a certain extent when the children of high cultural officials and intellectuals, especially those of high school and college age, gained access to their parents’ books and passed them among their friends within what has been called the young elitist “underground salon,” giving them a kind of unexpected intellectual enlightenment.¹² Yet a much wider dissemination of these internal publications occurred during the most turbulent period of the Cultural Revolution, when all order and boundaries broke down. From 1966 on, Red Guards made frequent raids on libraries and reference rooms in cultural institutions and on the homes of high officials, famous writers, and scholars. After confiscating many of these restricted works as evidence of wicked bourgeois influence, some Guards were then tempted to read them and pass them around. The most popular of these translated works were also circulated in hand-written copies.

After 1968, most of these urban youth were sent down to the countryside, and carried some of these books away with them, allowing them to spread further among Chinese youth. Some of the most popular books were the existentialist or beat generation works that seemed to give some kind of meaning, or at least an identification with the spiritual crisis that these young people were experiencing. Among them were Kerouac’s *On the Road*, Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* and Camus’ *The Outsider*. According to many of the urban youth of the early 1970s, especially those from

Beijing who were used by Mao in the Red Guard movement but then exiled to the remote countryside, their prevailing disillusionment and doubt found echoes in the spiritual world of alienation and loss depicted in these works. In fact some of these urban youth even imitated the protagonists in those works and set out on their own wild wandering journeys around the country, for instance, the poets Mang Ke and Peng Gang in 1971 and 1972.¹³

The most direct and obvious influence of these accidentally circulated internal publications on contemporary Chinese intellectual thought and literature is revealed in numerous memoirs from the urban educated youth generation. As Xiaoxiao points out in a paper on underground reading movements during the Cultural Revolution, during the first seventeen years after 1949, the openly available books for young people, including approved translations of foreign literature, were monotonously similar in style and tone: mainly Marxist, Leninist and Maoist works, and revolutionary literature from China and the Soviet Union, along with some carefully selected and edited classic literature from China and the West. These works, often accompanied by simplistic and distorted interpretation, are filled with intonation, single-mindedness and purity. However, as many who grew up in that period have acknowledged, they did little to help young people resolve the confusion that they suddenly experienced during the wild ups and downs of the Cultural Revolution. Instead, it was the unorthodox titles among the internal publications that seemed to speak directly to their shattered lives, and provided the spiritual fuel for the subsequent “nuclear fission” in their intellectual thought.¹⁴ According to Xiaoxiao’s survey, which is based on recollections of the sent-down youth generation, forty titles from among the internal publications were particularly influential.

Yet the most frequently mentioned case is the influence of such publications on the Baiyangdian poetry group¹⁵ — the precursor to the popular Misty Poetry and Today poetry groups of the late 1970s. The Baiyangdian poetry group was made up of young poets mainly from Beijing, such as Duoduo, Yue Zhong, Mang Ke, Peng Gang, and Ma Jia, who produced a substantial amount of poetry around early 1970s which circulated widely as underground literature and gave a voice to a whole generation of sent-down youth. (Fig. 2) Ma Jia underscores the importance of these books on the intellectual development of young people:

That was a closed society, but there were still a few people who had privileged access to these books... Only those several yellow covered books could provide some real information. [These young people] thus shared the sources of this information. Despite considerable differences in their cultural backgrounds, they all shared a similar response [to those works].

Ma claims that the spiritual source of a whole younger generation of Chinese writers, such as Duoduo and even later writers like Wang Shuo, was those internal publications, and concludes, “the influence of these books on contemporary Chinese poetry and literature is immeasurable.”¹⁶ Duoduo himself describes the winter of 1970 as an “early spring of the spirit for Beijing youth,” and declares that reading the two most popular books, *Catcher in the Rye* and *Dai xingxing de huochepiao* (The ticket to the stars), a Soviet version of *Catcher in the Rye* by Vasily Aksyonov, allowed a fresh breeze to blow over them.¹⁷ Poet Lin Mang also relates how many of these books were circulated as hot items, often in hand-written copies, concluding, “Those books had a great influence on the Baiyangdian poetry group, and changed many peoples’ way of thinking.” Lin describes the shock of pleasure he felt when reading his first internal book, *The Ticket to the Stars*: “I realized that the rebellious consciousness and awakening of a whole young generation in that novel was indeed very similar to our own experience, and I felt that the pace of the novel was fast, and the contents very refreshing, not like Balzac’s old-fashioned dreary style.”¹⁸ There is no doubt

that these internal publications, especially modernist writings from the West and Soviet Union, allowed a whole generation of literary youth to break away from the narrow intellectual perspective that the first seventeen years of socialist education instilled in them and learn to think for themselves.

Another equally important influence of these internal publications was to unconsciously prepare the groundwork for the time when China did eventually begin to reopen to the world outside. Though the open translation and dissemination of Western modernist works was the result of the open-door policy of Deng's era, especially after the Fourth Congress of the Writers and Artists in October and November 1979 when Deng urged people to learn from Western writers in their modernization, many talented translators and gifted scholars had already paved the way by producing these internal publications during the Maoist period; and even though their circulation was initially restricted, the fact that they were already complete helps to explain the sudden appearance of so many openly published translations of foreign philosophy, literature and culture in the late 1970s and early 1980s, so soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Most of the foreign modernist works that emerged on bookshelves at that time were actually just reprints of translations completed long before, in the 1960s. And the fertile discussions and experimentation with modernist writing techniques that occupied many Chinese writers of the 1980s, among them Wang Meng, Gao Xingjian, Bei Dao, Liu Suola, Xu Xing etc., benefited greatly from the fact that the major modernist literary works were readily available in Chinese translations.

Even by the end of the twentieth century, the lingering influence of some of these translations was still significant: on the popular side, for instance, *Catcher in the Rye* translated by Shi Xianrong has remained on most popular book lists for almost two decades; and at the elite level, a new six volume edition of *Years, People, Life* was recently brought out by Hainan Publishing Company (Hainan chuban gongsi, 1999), accompanied by a nostalgic cultural discussion on the plight of intellectuals in the Soviet Union, viewed as mirror images of Chinese intellectuals (fig. 1).

In conclusion, although from the 1960s to the late 1970s little foreign literature was openly published, the existence of these internal publications demonstrates that the stereotypical view of China in the 1960s and 1970s as a self-enclosed, monolithic society is misleading. On the one hand, internal publication shows the contradiction between the extreme cultural elitism and claimed "elimination of class" in Socialist China. In fact, access to knowledge was heavily guarded in the name of revolution. On the other hand, internal publication did serve as an avenue for works of modern literature and Western ideas to enter China, and once introduced, these works also became an exclusive source for Chinese intelligentsia and urban youth, exerting a profound influence on contemporary Chinese intellectual thought and literary development, aided in part by the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Thus, in order to give a complete picture of the complicated process of cultural exchange and development in society, we should not ignore the fact there was still a certain degree of literary exchange and communication with the world outside even in such a totalitarian socialist society as Maoist China, and even during the Cultural Revolution. If we wish to fully understand the sources of the profound and apparently sudden changes that have taken place in China since the late 1970s, we also should take into account the immense intellectual influence of these internal publications, accidental though it may have been. Just as in the natural world, so in human society when we see "flowers blooming in spring," it is only because the seeds of change have been planted much earlier, and spread their roots in the cold winter ground.

Notes

A version of this paper was presented on March 22, 2002, at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design for the "Cultural Production and the Cultural Revolution" conference. The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery organized the conference in collaboration with the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, the Department of History, University of Victoria, and the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Victoria. The conference was in conjunction with the exhibition *Art of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery (March 22 - August 25, 2002).

¹ In his recent study of contemporary Chinese literature, *Zhongguo dangdai wenxueshi jiaocheng* (A course in contemporary Chinese literary history), Chinese scholar Chen Sihe rewrites contemporary Chinese literary history by introducing the once neglected underground literature, and reevaluates some of the Socialist classics from 1950s and 1960s. He coins concepts of *qianzai xiezu* (invisible writing) and *minjian yishi* (unofficial consciousness) to indicate the stratification of literature in Socialist China. Professor Hong Zicheng of Peking University also points out the existence of divided literary worlds during the Cultural Revolution. See chapter 15 in Hong's *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue shi* (History of contemporary Chinese literature) (Peking: Peking University Press, 1999).

² *Neibu faxing tushu* (internal publication) refers to a large number of publications that are designed for "internal" circulation only. Only people who are above certain ranks are allowed to buy or borrow these books. Such publications made up a very large proportion of the total published titles, and their production lasted over an extended period in Maoist China. Perry Link discusses internal publications during the second half of 1970s, that is, in the early Deng Xiaoping years, in his *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). He also recognizes the big proportion of internal and unofficial publications and analyses the rationale and functions of this kind of publication in the Socialist literary system. However, there are some differences between the internal publications discussed in his book and those dealt with in this paper, as will become clear below.

³ Although I here refer to the general situation over a three-decade period, my description is more valid for the situation before 1966 and after the mid-1970s, because from 1966 to 1976, there was virtually no official publication of foreign literature.

⁴ This observation is partly based on statistics collected from *Waiguo wenxue tushu mulu* (1951-1990) (Catalogue of foreign literature, [1951-1990]) from People's Literature Publishing House, which has been the most important and representative publisher in foreign literature over the last five decades.

⁵ Interview with Qin Shunxin, former Associate Editor-in-Chief in charge of Foreign Literature in People's Literature Publishing House, June 2001. There are a couple of vague points (for which I put a question mark) that Qin could not guarantee from his memory.

⁶ Qin, interview with the author, June 2001.

⁷ Qin Shunxin, for example, was educated in Catholic school in Xi'an and Shanghai. He later studied Russian and in 1954, he was assigned to People's Literature Publishing House as editor of Russian/Soviet literature. Since 1960, he was involved in editing works for internal publication, in charge of the Russian and Soviet section. From 1965 to 1973, he was sent to Cadres' School, and returned to his position as editor of foreign literature in 1973. In 1983, he became Director of the Foreign Literature section, and in 1986, became Associate Editor-in-Chief, and had been in that position until 1993, when he retired. Other editors, such as Huang Yushi and Shi Xianrong, who were in charge of English and American Literature, were also well-trained translators and scholars.

⁸ According to Qin, this is related to the influence of two prominent cultural officials, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, whose base was in Shanghai, and their active involvement in literature and art.

⁹ Link, *Uses of Literature*, 183-186.

¹⁰ My comparison of the *Catalogue of Internal Publication* with titles of internal publication listed in People's Literature Publishing House's *Catalogue of Foreign Literature* shows that the former is an incomplete one, which missed a few titles. However, the information is enough to give the general idea of this shift in title selection.

¹¹ The translation of the fifth and sixth volumes was finished before the summer of 1966 but was not printed until 1979 due to the chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution.

¹² Before 1966, there existed small circles of children from the elite class, often literary youth who wrote poems and loved the arts, and often met in private houses. The most famous underground salons in early 1960s were the *taiyang zongdui* (Sun column) hosted by Zhang Langlang, son of famous artist and art critic Zhang Ding, and then a college student at Central Academy of Arts, and the *X shishe* (X poetry society), hosted by Guo Shiyang, son of Guo Moruo, who was then a student of philosophy in Peking University. Zhang Langlang recalls that many internal books were secretly circulated among the literary youth in Beijing at that time, they were so popular that some young people even handcopied them. See his "The Legend of Sun Column and Others," in *Chenlun de shengdian: Zhongguo ershi shiji qishi niandai dixia shige yizhao* (Sunken cathedral: commemorative pictures of underground poetry from 1970s China), ed. Liao Yiwu (Xinjiang Youth Publishing House, 1999), 30-52. These underground salons revived in the early 1970s among the young elite in Beijing. For example, the one hosted by Xu Haoyuan, located in the residence of State Council and Ministry of Transportation, and had a close relation with the Baiyangdian poetry group. See Duoduo, "Bei maizang de zhongguo shiren 1972-1978" (The Chinese poets buried: 1972-1978), in Liao, *Sunken Cathedral*, 195-202. Another is the famous "Peiduofei Club" hosted by He Jingjie, the daughter of famous poet He Qifang. See Ge Xiaoli "Soviet Songs and Us," *Beijing Literature* 8 (1999): 96-100.

¹³ See "Interview with Peng Gang and Mang Ke," in Liao, *Sunken Cathedral*, 183-94.

¹⁴ Xiaoxiao, "Shu de guidao, yi bu jingshen yuedu shi" (Trajectory of books: a history of spiritual reading), in Liao, *Sunken Cathedral*, 4-16.

¹⁵ The name comes from the place where most of these young poets stayed during their "sent down" years. It is a rural area in Hebei province and famous for its Baiyangdian lake.

¹⁶ See "Interview With Ma Jia," in Liao, *Sunken Cathedral*, 221, 219.

¹⁷ Duoduo, "Bei maizang de zhongguo shiren 1972-1978," 195-202.

¹⁸ See "Interview With Lin Mang," in Liao, *Sunken Cathedral*, 287, 292.