

## Censorship in Translation: The Dynamics of Non-, Partial and Full Translations in the Chinese Context

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## Censorship in Translation: The Dynamics of Non-, Partial and Full Translations in the Chinese Context

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In a previous paper on censorship and the translator-author relationship, I addressed the issue of how censorship in China affects the translator's commitment to his or her author, culminating in "non-translations" and various "partial translations." Building from the same premise, that of varying degrees of translatorial commitment to the author's text – ranging from "non-" to "partial" and/or "full" translations – my present research focuses upon how the translation of certain types of literature in China shifted historically: from "non-translations" (that is, "translations" unmade as well as made and yet strictly forbidden under the given censorial system of the country) to "partial" or, even, "full" translations set against the backdrop of changing practices required by the country's censorship policies. My analysis begins with an overview of various types of literature affected by such shifting degrees of censorship, across different periods since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This overview, in turn, allows me to resituate specific translations, including the once absented translations of earlier times (that is, prior to the 1949 Revolution or prior to the Cultural Revolution), which were initially taken at face value as "non-translations" and yet which, later on, became "partial" or "full" translations under the country's subsequently more relaxed implementation of its censorial policies. I attempt to illustrate such shifts in translational practice by means of in-depth discussion of the dynamic nature of translational commitment in connection with the change-resistant properties and evolving priorities of censorship. In illustrating my arguments, I will draw specific examples from case studies of three well-known censorship-affected translations – Henry Kissinger's *On China*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, which, I argue, epitomise the shifting degrees of translational commitment ("non-," "partial" and "full") as they occurred in the Chinese context.

Zaixi Tan is Professor of Translation at Hong Kong Baptist University. He obtained his first degree in English Language and Literature at Hunan Normal University (China), and MA (research-based) and PhD in General and Applied Linguistics at Exeter University (UK). He is the author of some twenty books including *Translation and Translation Studies: Perceptions, Perspectives and Methodology* (Chinese), *A History of Translation in the West* (Chinese; recommended by the Chinese Ministry of Education as a postgraduate research coursebook), and *The Science of Translation* (Chinese), and a wide range of papers published in major Chinese and international journals including *Chinese Translators Journal*, *Meta*, *Neohelicon*, *The Translator*, *Across Languages and Cultures*, *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies* and *Babel*. His major interests: translation theory, and contrastive language-cultural studies.